COUNCIL BLUFFS PARKS AND RECREATION

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

CREATING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY
ANALYSIS

County-wide Survey Results: 56% of respondents living within Council Bluffs city limits.

MOST DESIRED AMENITIES FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Survey Options: Tennis Courts, Basketball Courts, Children's Play Equipment, Picnic Tables, Benches, Horseshoe Pits, Sandbox, Restrooms, Sprayground, Picnic Pavilion, Night Lighting, Sand Volleyball

Top 3 Amenities

Physical Improve and Enhance the populations likelihood to Walk/Exercise

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<th>Item Description</th>
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<th>Unit</th>
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| Bahnsen Park              |          |      |            |         |
| Renovate rest shelter & restrooms | 1 | LS | $50,000.00 | $50,000.00 |
| Resurface parking areas  | 3,200 SY | $28.00 | $89,600.00 |
| Provide batting cages    | 1        | LS   | $10,000.00 | $10,000.00 |
| Standardize park amenities | 1       | LS   | $10,000.00 | $10,000.00 |
| Consistent park signage  | 1        | LS   | $3,500.00  | $3,500.00 |
| Construction Contingency  | 25%      |      |            | $40,775.00 |
| Design Fees               | 15%      |      |            | $30,581.25 |
| **Total**                 |          |      | **$234,456.25** |         |

| Bayliss Park              |          |      |            |         |
| No improvements           |          |      |            | $0.00    |
| **Subtotal**              |          |      | **$0.00**  |         |
| Construction Contingency  | 25%      |      |            | $0.00    |
| Design Fees               | 15%      |      |            | $0.00    |
| **Total**                 |          |      | **$0.00**  |         |

DIRECTION

Improve and Enhance the populations likelihood to Walk/Exercise
Council Bluffs’ 2012 Park Master Plan Update builds upon the foundation of the 2002 *Park System Master Plan*. While expanding to include completed capital improvements and requisite program changes, the update also takes a cue from the current health initiatives of Council Bluffs and begins a pivotal change in the way community embraces health as a product of healthy lifestyles supported by parks and recreation opportunities.

We begin with the five points of purpose stated in the *2002 Master Plan*, updating them to address the state of recreation and goals of Council Bluffs today.
TAKE CARE
OF WHAT WE HAVE

Great strides have brought improvements throughout the park system since the 2002 Master Plan. A program of playground equipment replacement has been underway and continues to update parks with safer, new play equipment. Maintenance is a high and continuous priority of the City and will carry forward into the years ahead.

NEW FACILITY ROADMAP

Council Bluffs continues to see population growth, emphasizing the need to acquire appropriately-located parcels of land for future parks in new development and redevelopable areas. Mapping will illustrate underserved areas in which new facilities should be considered.

SERVE THE COMMUNITY

As discerned from public response in the recent County-wide Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment, community needs and desires take the forefront of the recommendations set forth within this Update.
SUSTAINABILITY

An extension of the original core value of the 2002 Master Plan, sustainability expands the reach from natural resource preservation, to the incorporation of planning, design and maintenance standards that enhance positive impacts on environment, health, and the local economy. Practices are evaluated by their value in sustaining themselves and the land for years to come.

HISTORIC LEGACY

Council Bluffs possesses a wealth of history: natural history in the unique formation of Loess Hills; cultural history as the expansion of the nation to the west played out along the Missouri shores; and then later as pioneers of design laid down the foundations of the town. We continue the objective that all existing parks be renovated with this history in mind and that new parks learn from the past.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council Bluffs recognizes the importance of its network of parks, trails and recreation services. Public approval rates confirm this in polls measuring overall satisfaction with facilities and park maintenance. Some amenities identified by the 2002 Parks Master Plan, and other facilities that have since joined the public wish-list have not yet been constructed. This master plan update provides a summary of those facility requests and recommendations.

Further, this plan documents current trends in recreation across the United States and within Council Bluffs, and offers recommendations for future additions and reductions based upon service levels for existing and proposed neighborhood parks.

Bridging beyond the basics of park facilities planning, this master plan update takes this park improvement information to the next level by evaluating current and proposed facilities by public and environmental health benefit. This is done by GIS modeling and analysis of true walkability (the distance and quality of walking conditions, including safety, comfort and convenience) surrounding each park.

Increased walkability has been shown to increase health of a community while decreasing transportation, environmental and social costs. Changes like these are valued by Council Bluffs as evidenced by the interest in the Live Well Pottawattamie County initiative.

These changes are the roots of a community’s improved quality of life. This is exactly what the City of Council Bluffs aims to provide for its citizens: an overall increase in the quality of health and life in Council Bluffs, starting within the framework of the parks and recreation system.

Implementation recommendations that are set forth within this document include the proposal of twelve new neighborhood and community parks to be constructed. These new parks take into account the recommendations for new facilities from the 2002 Park Master Plan, areas currently deficient of park service and community input from the Pottawattamie County-wide Parks, Recreation and Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment (2011/2012).

Recommendations for modifications to existing parks are made on the basis of community input and facilities’ current condition.

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Recommendations for modifications to existing parks are made on the basis of community input and facilities’ current condition.

Information on each of these park locations and features can be found in later sections of this document.

An opinion of cost for proposed improvements is available under the chapter titled “Direction”. Total opinion of cost for all improvements to existing parks is approximately $11.4 mil. Estimated cost of improvements for the proposed parks is $7.3 mil. The capital investment is anticipated to be spread over a 20 year period and is pending available funding opportunities. Suggested funding sources are also listed within the “Direction” chapter of this Plan.
PRIORITY

Determination for prioritizing which improvements are to be completed first was based upon existing planning, funds allocation, and public input. Priorities include:

- Community/Regional Parks
  1. Finish River’s Edge Park
  2. Fairmount Park Phase 1
  3. Valley View Phase 1
  4. Roberts Park

- Neighborhood Parks
  1. Kirn Park
  2. P6 Proposed Park
  3. Cochran Park
  4. Twin City Park

- Special Use Park
  1. 1st Avenue Greenway
  2. Mid-City Eco Park
  3. Mid-America Center Entertainment Court
  4. Field House

- New Parks for Purchase/Development
  1. P5 Proposed Park

- Non-Traditional
  1. 15th Street Dog Park

GUIDANCE

The 2012 Council Bluffs Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update is the product of multiple-source background research, and is based upon the extensive public input received both for the 2002 Council Bluffs Parks Master Plan and the 2012 Pottawattamie County-wide Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment.

Research gleaned pertinent data from the following sources:

- Parks and Community Development Administration and Staff

- A Park System Master Plan for the City of Council Bluffs: 2002

- Pottawattamie County-wide Parks, Recreation and Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment: 2011/2012

- NPS Pottawattamie County Trails Plan: 2012

- Pottawattamie County Census Data

- Pottawattamie County GIS Database

- 1994 Council Bluffs Community Master Plan

- H. Ken Cordell’s Research through the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, a federal survey of Americans’ outdoor recreation activities.

- The Pottawattamie County Health Rankings project (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)

- The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)
The following tasks were completed while creating the master plan update:

**Task 1: Document Review**

This plan utilizes the information in the Pottawattamie County Parks, Recreation and Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment. In 2011, The Iowa West Foundation retained Winston and Associates to identify the County’s current and future public Park/Recreation needs. The 2002 Council Bluffs Park/Recreation Master Plan was regarded, by Winston, as the “starting place” for developing the County-Wide analysis, since the 2002 Park Master Plan’s extensive public input and adoption by the City of Council Bluffs established it as an accurate depiction of the community’s recreation/park facility needs in 2002. The public input they received, especially within Council Bluffs, has been used to refine and update the 2002 Council Bluffs Park System Master Plan. Additionally, the Winston County-Wide Plan was leveraged which also contains specific observations and findings, primarily addressing facility needs and shortcomings.

**Task 2: Data Collection**

Using the existing conditions survey, the inventory of existing city parks, open space and recreation/sports facilities were updated and also include other public and private parks, open space and recreation/sports facilities within Pottawattamie County. City Staff already had this information updated, and a cursory review and amendments were performed as required.

While working in the field to inventory and evaluate the park system, pictures were taken and notes developed to critique the park branding program and verify park conditions. This information was used to determine what changes are needed.

National, regional, and local trends in park facilities were researched, covering the latest in both traditional and non-traditional parks, leisure trends, trails & networks, natural and cultural resources, funding, and management.

**Task 3: Data Analysis**

After the Data Collection Phase was completed, the project entered the Data Analysis Phase during which the following were undertaken:

- Parks, Facilities, and Open Space Analysis
- Evaluate natural resources in the park system to determine where protection is needed.
- Determine if trails and greenways are in place to connect Council Bluffs with neighboring communities.
- Level of Service Confirmation & Base Mapping

**Task 4: Preliminary Master Plan Preparation**

Upon conclusion of all data collection and analysis, a preliminary master plan was prepared which updated the 2002 master plan with recommendations for the following:

- Improvements to existing parks
- Location and content of new parks
- General location of new trails and how they should connect parks.
- Natural / conservation areas for preservation
- Lands for disposition/acquisition.
- Non-traditional park facilities location
- Other identified new features
- Sustainability & health recommendations for the park system

The time has come for our park systems to better understand the ‘carbon footprint’ they impose on the environment. As the public becomes increasingly desirable of living a more ‘sustainable lifestyle’,
they expect a similar level of environmental responsibility of their community. Hence, a component of this master plan is a Sustainability Analysis to include the following:

- Maintenance Practice & Cost
- Environmental quality and habitat
- Energy reduction
- Landscape design for energy conservation
- Health benefits to the community.

The goal of this Sustainability Analysis is to create a health enhancing park system, and an environmentally responsible park system which can be marketed by and to the community, and, a cost effective park system.

Task 5: Final Master Plan Preparation

Modify preliminary master plan facility recommendations based on input from review meetings to create a final master plan.
“The true object of all human life is play. Earth is a task garden; heaven is a playground.” —G. K. Chesterton
Trends in recreation tell us what is popular with the public now and what is becoming more and less favored for public play. Ranking popularity of forms of play (organized sports, picnicking, swimming, playgrounds and more) sets the tone for what is important to the community and where public funds should be spent. The following trends have been identified as strongly supported in the City of Council Bluffs and within the region.

**Trails and Connections**

According to the Pottawattamie County-wide, Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment, trail construction is rated very high for community support. This encompasses both trails and connections between existing trails, including walking trails within parks.

**Splash Pads**

Aquatics facilities are also rated very high by the community. Council Bluffs has two pool and play complexes that successfully serve the City. Additional amenities that are trending as popular in the region are splash pads. In these facilities, water play is accommodated with zero-depth surfacing and fountain components or water spray structures that can be set up to interact with children’s actions and input.

**Dog Parks**

Among K-9 pet owners, dog parks are becoming very popular destinations. These facilities offer fenced areas where dogs are allowed to play off-leash and with other dogs where many urban neighborhoods would otherwise prohibit such interaction. Dog parks provide shade, seating, and water fountains to refresh pets and owners. Council bluffs does not currently offer a
facility like this, but could benefit from such a provision.

Bike Parks
Bike parks offer destinations where bike enthusiasts of all levels can come to exercise and hone their skills. Off—road courses can be dirt or wooden track, and can be outfitted with a set of platforms, curves, ramps and jumps that follow each other in sequence. A variety of courses with a range of obstacles test the avid biker and train the new rider. Other forms of bike parks include BMX tracks and trick parks where facilities are similar to a skate park, yet laid out with larger distances between the features to accommodate the speed of a bike.

Sustainability
Communities across the US are on a mission of developing new facilities in such a way that they may continue in self-supporting use and expend fewer natural and economic resources over their life cycle. Sustainability is the initiative at work with the goal of increasing public and environmental health while elevating ecological stewardship.

Parks can be made more sustainable by powering lights with alternative energy, paving parking and walks with permeable materials to allow stormwater to soak into the ground rather than run off and cause erosion, and mowing less to reduce pollution and the burning of fossil fuels. Native plants reduce landscape maintenance and the use of chemicals to assist growth.

Sustainable measures are easy to implement and provide positive impacts for people, nature, and municipal finances.

Nature Recreation
Getting out into nature is a trend that is on the upswing across the US. The following activities have seen an increase in days per capita participation and increase in participants:

- Viewing and photographing natural scenery, flowers, trees, wildlife, birds and fish,
- Visiting nature centers,
- Sightseeing,
- Visiting water bodies,
- Visiting wilderness,
- Developed camping,
- Boating,
- ATVing, and
- Kayaking

Cyclocross Racing
Just one of the possible activities that can be planned within a bike park in the Council Bluffs park system, Cyclocross began in England in the early 1900’s and continues to gain popularity within the US today. Major events have the ability to draw riders from across the country.
Council Bluffs is in the position to convert public interest in nature into active support of and engagement in conservation of forests, grasslands, and wetlands.

Outdoor activities can contribute to better physical conditioning, as well as better emotional health. Council Bluffs has an opportunity to use interest in nature as a means of stimulating greater physical activity, while still accommodating participants with disabilities. Trails, overlooks, and wildlife observation sites can be designed to require some physical effort to enjoy.

High gasoline prices may further change the mix of outdoor activities that people choose. They will also likely reduce trips to distant destinations. This may mean greater—not less—visitation to local parks, state parks, and federal lands near Council Bluffs.

**Destination Playgrounds**

Not your typical playground, destination playgrounds draw children and adults from across the community for extended play visits. The draw is in the design of the playground which often develops around a central theme and is brought to life with a variety of play materials and equipment. Landscape, boulders, trees and shaped earth become things of play, and not necessarily to the exclusion of swings and slides and spinning objects.

Variety, imagination, and amenities which support the extended visit of families (shade, picnic shelters, rest rooms) are what guarantee success of destination playgrounds.

**Tourism**

Also attributable to higher gasoline prices, stay-cations or near-cations have become more popular. Council Bluffs can take advantage of this by promoting a group of park and community destinations as a package. Council Bluffs “Go Cards” could provide tourists with a one-stop admission package to all attractions. This is a great opportunity for partnership between the City and other organizations which offer arts, culture and recreational services.

**Enrichment Programs**

Due to an increase in the number of children who complete their education at home (home-schooled), there is an increased need for ancillary programs which can fill gaps in child socialization and physical education and health. These pro-
grams can be as simple as providing indoor social gathering space for children and teens. This space can work in conjunction with indoor gymnasiums and fitness or sports programs public schools would normally provide.

**Preventative Health Care**

Within a park system, preventative health care is approached differently, yet in concert with what is encountered in the medical field. A few ways park systems can promote preventative health care:

- Increase community desire and ability to walk to their destinations:
  - Update/provide walks and trails between neighborhoods and shopping, play, schools, worship centers, government facilities.
  - Provide shade, benches, beauty and clean paths of travel.
- Incorporate fitness equipment in parks and/or along trails.
- Provide educational campaigns relative to getting fit and healthy, including tips on where in the City to do so and what facilities are available.
- Promote community gardens and farmers’ markets to increase access to healthy, fresh foods throughout the community.

This master plan will discuss the impacts and importance of health promotion within the Council Bluffs park system later in the document.
Community Bike Rental Programs
Alternative transportation is encouraged by the provision of short term bike rentals. Patrons are able to round-trip or check a bicycle out from one location and check it back in at their destination, reducing emissions and boosting community health along the way.
The current status of the recommendations put forth in the 2002 Park Master Plan, identified planning needs of City Staff, and findings of the County-wide Needs Assessment are provided in the following text:

**Important Facts for Council Bluffs from the County-wide Plan:**

- The trend is for an aging population over the next 10 years in Council Bluffs.
- Council Bluffs has 39 miles of concrete and asphalt trails. Bicycle lanes are commonly used as connectors. CB is the current terminus of the 63 mile Wabash Trace Trail which runs to the Iowa/Missouri border.
- Inter-governmental cooperation in providing amenities is desired by the public to prevent duplication of effort and unnecessary overlap.

**2002 Master Plan Projects Completed:**

- Bahnsen Park Renovation- park signage, fencing, irrigation and the addition of agri-lime infields.
- Big Lake North Rehabilitation- boardwalk, expanded nature and walking trails, renovation of the soccer and baseball fields.
- Big Lake South Improvements- picnic shelter, expand walking paths, fishing access points, bank stabilization.
- Broadway Park Construction- skatepark, playground and landscaping.
- IWF Trailhead Construction- paved parking lot, landscaping, signage, and playground.
2002 Master Plan Major Objectives and their Status:

- CB Rec Complex Additions - football fields
- Lewis & Clark Monument Renovations - resurfaced roads, parking lot and restrooms
- Lincoln Monument Improvements - new and rebuilt walls, steps, landscape; new walkway connections to trail and neighborhood
- Malmore - new trees, fencing and accessible parking
- Manawa North Shore - park area returned to the State of Iowa
- Tom Hanafan River’s Edge Park - master plan and phase one completed and opened to the public in May, 2013
- Sternhill Park Improvements - picnic shelter with tables, grill and trash receptacles.
- Sunset Park Improvements - replace cracked paving at pavilion and add amenities around the pool.

Inventory

- Indoor Rec/Aquatics Center: Has not yet been completed. A feasibility study should be conducted that enumerates the facilities that are needed; measures impact on the existing and future expansions of existing facilities; and makes recommendations for funding.
- Landscaping and City-wide Beautification: Broadway’s west entrance complete. IWF Streetscape Initiative has made improvements in numerous areas. Major City efforts have also been directed into improved rights-of-way.
- Aquatic Centers: Wilson Pool has been renovation into an aquatic center with leisure amenities. Identify additional ways to address water-play needs.
- Trail/Greenways: The City has greatly expanded its trail system. This is an ongoing objective.
- Riverfront Development: Phase one of Tom Hanafan River’s Edge Park has been completed. Missouri River Chute has been constructed.
- Fairmount Park: Master Plan completed.
- New Neighborhood Parks: Additional property acquired for Valley View Park. Other smaller areas have been or are being considered for acquisition, but no further acquisition has been initiated.
- Lake Manawa North Shore: The IDNR lease for this land has expired and the land returned to the State for maintenance and control. The 2002 Plan objective can no longer be met.
- Nature Center at Big Lake and Vincent Preserve: Renovations completed, elevated environmental walkway constructed. A volunteer group managing Vincent Preserve continues to establish improved environmental elements.
Park Signage
Council Bluffs' majority of parks utilize the pictured sign standard which, while cost effective, is difficult to read. Newer installations of park signage that match the stone materials and styling of Lewis and Clark, Bayliss and/or Sunset Parks are easier to read and provide a higher quality aesthetic.
• Radius method service coverage for parks within walking distance of patrons’ homes.
• Neighborhoods outside of dashed circles are underserved by neighborhood and community parks.
• Neighborhood Parks: 1/2 Mile service radius in areas of the City with flatter terrain. 1/3 Mile service radius in areas of the City with steeper terrain.
• Radius method service coverage for parks within walking and driving distance of patrons' homes.
• Neighborhoods outside of dashed circles are underserved by neighborhood and community parks.
• Neighborhood Parks: 1/2 Mile service radius in areas of the City with flatter terrain. 1/3 Mile service radius in areas of the City with steeper terrain.
• Community Parks: 1 mile service area radius.
• Walkability method service coverage for parks within walking distance of patrons’ homes.

• Dark green coverage areas use street networks, slopes, and barriers to determine a more realistic representation of the ability to walk to a park.

• Neighborhood Parks: 1/2 Mile service radius in areas of the City with flatter terrain. 1/3 Mile service radius in areas of the City with steeper terrain.
Using Radius and Walkability service area methods of analysis, areas underserved by the park system emerge as a constant.

Underserved areas are shown in this diagram by the Service Deficiency Area dashed ovals. These are the areas in need of park services.
Bayliss Park
Council Bluffs’ Signature Park, Bayliss sets the standard for park aesthetic and quality.
ANALYSIS Where we want to be.

**Department Identified Issues and Needs for Additional Facilities/Activities Planning:**

- **City Wide Trail Plan** - has been informally updated, but needs:
  - A comprehensive review which incorporates the Complete Streets philosophy,
  - Connections between the exterior trails to downtown,
  - A recommended connection between the riverfront and downtown,
  - A look at incorporating new trails on newly constructed/renovated river levees,
  - Consider connecting neighborhoods to the trail system,
  - NPS has recently completed a county trail plan. Cooperation and coordination between the City Plan and the County Plan is necessary.

- **River’s Edge Park** - Phases to be re-evaluated and adjusted as necessary. Must finish the job.

- **Water Playgrounds** - Explore areas of town that are underserved with swimming pools or water amenities and consider placing splashpads/water playgrounds within parks in those areas.

- **Signage** - A comprehensive approach to signage within the City is needed and warrants a study in appropriate branding strategies, cost and feasibility.

- **Golf development** - A professional long range plan for improvements to the golf course and its amenities is needed.

- **Mid-City Redevelopment Area** - study for future uses including opportunities for green space and trails.

- **Underserved Areas** - Determine how best to identify underserved areas of the community.

- **Non-traditional Facilities/Programs** - Identify types such as BMX parks, dog parks, and others, and evaluate possible locations.

- **Partnerships** - Expand community and inter-governmental partnerships for the provision of parks and programs.

- **Stewardship** - Increase environmental stewardship in the community by starting in the parks.

**Continued Rehabilitation of Existing Parks and other Facilities:**

- **Funding** should be increased for rehabilitation.

- **Eighteen Tennis courts** have not been renovated in over ten years. A system-wide plan for tennis facilities is necessary.

- **Some playground structures** that have been removed may need replacement.
Goals and Priorities set by the 2012 County-wide Needs Assessment:

The 2012 County-wide Needs Assessment was commissioned by the Iowa West Foundation (IWF) to determine the recreational needs and desires of the citizens of Pottawattamie County.

IWF’s vision is to foster a community “where families choose to live, and businesses choose to locate, because of its quality of life and high standard of living.”

Through community surveys and public meetings, the recreational desires of the community were gathered and existing facilities were inventoried. Once this was complete, an analysis of the gap between the two was published as an over-arching set of recommendations for providers of recreational services within the County.

The following summary includes recommendations specific to the City of Council Bluffs.

Most Important to Add or Expand:

- Trails, trail connections and trail-based activities

General Goals:

- “Take care of what we have”: upgrade aging equipment, improve safety and incorporate universal design. The quality of maintenance for public facilities is a reflection of a community’s economic health, which is an important factor in retaining existing residents and attracting new residents and businesses.
- Preserve natural areas, unique or sensitive habitats as parks for public access.
- Provide a centralized recreation info source for county-wide recreational opportunities.

Non-traditional Recreation and Programming Needs:

- Nature-based Recreation: camping, fishing, nature education, hiking and boating/canoeing. This was a very important topic in the community engagement portion of the County-wide Plan's research efforts. The following items came up repeatedly:
  - Implementation of the Fairmount Park Plan
  - Better Fishing Access and support facilities along the Missouri River.

Among the most desired future recreational programs and services, according to a survey:

- Fitness/Wellness: 62%
- Outdoor Activities (non-sports): 62%
- Aquatics: 47%

Survey Options:
Aquatics, Cultural Arts, Sports, Outdoor Activities (non-sports), Fitness/Wellness, Special Events
Cultural Arts

- Outdoor amphitheaters are a priority for county residents, though other cultural arts programs and facilities were not, according to the information gathered during the County-wide Needs Assessment.

As stated by the Needs Assessment:
"Providing opportunities for activities such as performing and visual arts is an ‘essential element’ of a well-rounded parks and rec program. The Foundation should encourage efforts to modify, remodel or build new cultural arts facilities as well as the recreation programming associates with these types of facilities. These facilities should need to be regional in nature and preceded by a comprehensive feasibility study."

Community Parks:

- Council Bluffs has need for a community park in the northeast quadrant of the City
- An updated plan for Valley View Park is needed due to land recently added.
- Plans for River’s Edge Park should be continually evaluated based upon the recent flooding and damage potential.
- The Mid-City Redevelopment area should be studied for future uses including opportunities for green space and trails.

Sports Fields:

While the City of Council Bluffs is currently well-served by sports fields for games at the existing CB Rec Complex, more fields are needed for increasing number of teams in leagues and for practices for all teams. During peak sports seasons there are usually 100-150 teams playing in the leagues with only 6-8 fields on which to practice each day. The City should look at adding another 4-6 baseball/softball fields and 3-4 soccer fields to allow for expanding growth to leagues and practice sites for existing teams. Partnerships with the Council Bluffs School District and Iowa Western Community College may allow for joint use and funding opportunities.

Neighborhood Parks:

- Restrooms, playgrounds and picnic tables ranked the highest in participant surveys as desirable amenities within neighborhood parks.
• Provide more neighborhood parks to address underserved areas of Council Bluffs, particularly in eastern portions of the City.

Indoor Recreation Facility:
• Indoor recreation center needed within 20 minute drive for most Pottawatamie County residents, however, a feasibility study is needed first. Observations have determined Council Bluffs to be highly underserved by both private and public facilities
• This would ideally be a partnership with Council Bluffs and YMCA and potentially other agencies in cooperation.

Field House Facility:
• Following the Foundation’s County-wide Needs Assessment, and based on that process and further input, the IWF formed a Working Group to evaluate the construction of a major indoor Field House type facility.
• Facility would provide multiple and variable courts for indoor sports practice, games, tournaments, events and gatherings.
• Programmed to serve both local and regional needs.

Youth Gathering Places and Activities:
• A “lack of things to do” (particularly in the winter months) came up frequently among the youth during the Needs Analysis Study.
• The County-wide Plan encourages the development of gathering areas where teens would be welcome; for example: coffee houses, soda shops, art studios and the successful Phoenix Theater in Neola, where local high school students take an active role in its operation.

Top 3 Amenities

**Destination Playground**
- 32%

**Outdoor Amphitheater**
- 49%

**Natural Parks**
- 51%

County-wide Survey Results: 56% of respondents living within Council Bluffs city limits.

**MOST DESIRED NON-TRADITIONAL RECREATION FACILITIES**

Survey Options:
- Target Shooting, Leisure Ice Skating, Outdoor Roller Skating, Disc Golf, Rock Climbing, Outdoor Amphitheater, ATV Trails, Destination Playground, Natural Parks, Motocross, BMX Facility, Dog Park, Skate Park

**FUTURE FACILITIES MOST IMPORTANT TO ADD**

Survey Options:
Council Bluffs Parks, Recreation and Public Properties Department currently mows a total of 2,765 acres of turfgrass. A weekly mowing cycle requires 414 man-hours and 266 gallons of gasoline to complete. Most parks are mowed once a week while ballfields and high-profile parks like Bayliss are mowed twice a week.

**The Cost of Mowing**

Maintenance and environmental costs can be reduced by converting lesser-used turf areas to natural landscapes. Benefits of participating in (no-mow) natural landscaping include:

- Reduced maintenance effort, such as mowing, weeding and aerating for lower maintenance costs.
- Lower use of pesticides, fertilizers and watering to maintain the landscape.
- Reduced emissions of smog, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide from mowers and other maintenance equipment. Improved regional air quality which results in fewer ozone alert days in the summertime.
- Better accommodation of storm and flood waters and prevention of land erosion.
- Natural landscapes filter more CO2 out of the air than turf areas.
- Feeding and sheltering more birds and butterflies.
- Natural greens provide the health benefits of relieving stress and increasing mental focus for the visitor.

**Health Impacts**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states, “Operating a typical gasoline-powered lawn mower for one hour produces the same amount of smog-forming hydrocarbons as driving an average car almost 200 miles under typical driving conditions.” Mowers, leaf blowers, power trimmers, chainsaws, aerators, and other gas-powered equipment also emit hydrocarbons (VOCs), carbon monoxide (CO), and nitrogen oxides (NOx), all of which contrib-
ute to the formation of ground level ozone (smog).

Smog impairs lung function in humans, and is known to cause or aggravate a number of diseases or respiratory illnesses such as asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Short-term, or acute, exposure to particle pollution has been linked to increases in heart attacks, strokes, and emergency-room visits for asthma and cardiovascular disease. The “driver” of such equipment is most often positioned where exposure to toxic emission is greatest.

Smog also inhibits plant growth which can cause widespread damage to crops and forests. Pesticides and fertilizers used for turf-grass can run off site and pollute streams and groundwater causing further health detriment.

**What Can Be Done in Council Bluffs?**

**Going No-mow in Designated Areas**

By converting 25% of park area (460 acres) from mowed turf to natural landscape, the Parks and Recreation Department (assuming a 29 week mowing season) can reduce fuel costs by $6,500 annually; and (assuming $15/hour wage to the mowing crew) reduce labor costs by $43,500 annually. Further, reduced mowing will lower ozone emissions by 50 tons annually. And converting turf to natural landscape will increase its capacity to clean CO2 out of the air from 400 to 1,612 tons per year.

The results are cleaner air and water, less expenditure on maintenance and a healthier community overall.

(Sources: Clean Air Counts campaign cleanaircounts.org; Environmental Protection Agency [EPA]; Council Bluffs Parks, Recreation and Public Properties Department)
Sustainable Mowing Practices
When there are areas that must remain mowed turf, consider mowing less frequently. Setting the cutting blade higher allows the soil to retain more moisture and the taller grass shades out weeds. Tune up mower engines and provide regular maintenance to keep them running most efficiently.

Natives in the Landscape
Native and native cultivars of landscape plants located within their preferred eco-zones (wetland, woodland, prairie, and so on) in most cases, provides the lowest maintenance plant alternative for a public landscape. This is because the native plant is already adapted to the local climate and soil types and will not require the extra care exotics often need to keep growing.

Native plant materials are also well-adapted to growing in conjunction with other native plants. Rather than outcompeting or being outcompeted by each other, they work together in a balance that provides a diverse habitat for local animal species. That balance also reduces the establishment of weed colonies which limits the needs for herbicide treatment and resulting runoff into streams.

Native plants provide a pest and disease-resistant, and no-mow alternative to turfgrass and can replace turf where constant foot-traffic isn’t necessary.

Plant Trees
Trees offer shade, habitat, environmental cooling, erosion and flooding protection and they clean the air. Planting trees is one of the most impactful ways to improve the living conditions of our cities.

It is wise to put a plan in place for the replacement of tree species that are damaged by pests and disease.

Windscreens
Planting windscreens reduces utility costs, protects less hardy plantings and provides safe corridors of travel for wildlife. Windscreens are typically made up of deciduous and coniferous trees, and include shrubs on the windward side to create a dense barrier. Reductions in wind speed of up to 50% are possible by the addition of tree canopy. If the overall neighborhood is tree shaded, the area will be 3-6 degrees cooler than treeless neighborhoods. (envirolandscaping.org)

Protect Streambanks
Plant water loving trees, shrubs and perennials on streambanks to hold the soil and limit erosion. Prevent mowing within 50 feet of the stream to increase infiltration, reduce loss of soil, and enhance clean water. Letting these areas grow naturally also blocks stream use by nuisance species such as geese.

Capture and Detain Water
Reduce runoff, conserve water, reduce pollution and reduce erosion by capturing water in wetlands, ponds and in rain barrels at downspouts. Slow the rate of flow by planting vegetation and mulching, and by terracing slopes. Limit impervious surfaces throughout the city by replacing unnecessary expanses of concrete with stepping stones, brick walkways, pervious concrete or asphalt, decking or gravel fines.

Bank Protection
Stable streambanks and pond edges are beautiful when native wetland edge plants are used to hold the soil.
A coalition of local health systems and health departments has been sponsoring periodic (2002, 2008, 2011) Community Health Needs Assessments, hiring nationally recognized healthcare consulting firm Professional Research Consultants, Inc. (PRC) to collect information for the Council Bluffs community to use to inform decisions and guide efforts to improve community health and wellness. Findings include:

- Adult overweight (70.15%) and obesity (34.6%) exceed not only national medians, but also state levels (66.2% overweight or obese and 29.1% obese) which marked the highest level of obesity for the state of Iowa yet seen.

- Cardiovascular mortality is highest in Pottawattamie County in the metro area at 191.9/100,000 persons which is higher than the Iowa average of 173.3.

- Prevalence of diabetes is the highest in the metro area of Pottawattamie County compared to state and national averages.

- 23% of Pottawattamie indicated it is very or somewhat difficult to purchase fresh produce. This was much worse for those with low income at 45.2% and for minority populations; Black at 38.3% and Hispanic at 32.4%
In addition, Pottawattamie County has a rate of unintentional injury higher than the regional average.

Rates of major depression and those with fair/poor mental health are amongst the highest in the region.

Weekly Usage of local parks by Pottawattamie county residents are the lowest in the region.

Children in Pottawattamie walk to school at a rate half of the regional average.

Pottawattamie County has the highest self-evaluated rate of stress in the region.

Health Goals and Objectives

To help focus on the health benefits of the Parks Master Plan, it is important to identify, of those specific health issues outlined in the HNA that can be addressed through the framework of this project. Based upon the health needs noted above, there are four goals that this new Master Plan will attempt to improve. These 4 goals are as follows:

1) **Increase access to physical activity:**
   Improve and enhance the populations likelihood to Walk/Exercise.

2) **Improve Mental Health by Reducing Stress:**
   Increase the access to positive activities that help relieve stress. Stress, in addition to physical effects, can negatively influence a person’s ability to cope with daily stress in a positive manner.

3) **Make neighborhoods safe:**
   Maintained parks along with adequately marked and designed trail connections reduce conflicts between pedestrian and vehicles, increasing the perception of safety in a neighborhood.

4) **Help foster greater access to healthy foods:**
   Because of the distinct need for healthy food access, it would be advantageous to find opportunities to integrate food access, such as farmers markets, community gardens, and healthy food programming into the park system.
Integrated neighborhood park network - gap analysis

Three out of the four health goals are directly attributable to the walkability of a neighborhood. Studies have shown that walkable access (1/2 mile) to small parks has positive correlations on the neighborhood health, including BMI. The overall health goal of this park master plan is to provide the majority of the community walkable access to park features.

While it is important to meet the regional demands of the park system, that approach does not address the population who either do not have a vehicle to drive to a regional destination, or those who do not participate in activities typically found in regional destinations (organized sports, for example).

The approach to maximize walkability stems from the theory that by making the activity of walking to a park as easy and as incorporated into the framework of infrastructure as possible, the park system can encourage even moderately inactive people to walk - thus giving access to park amenities to populations who otherwise would not be accessing it. To increase the ability to for the park system to encourage walking and healthy physical activity, the existing parks were modeled to determine the range and service based upon a 1/3 mile network connection. The result indicated a large gap in the northeast quadrant of Council Bluffs, which may or may not be attributable to the current health issues.

With this gap analysis, it is now possible to determine how the park master plan can help fill in the walking gaps. Whether it be by developing additional neighborhood parks, or perhaps taking it further by analyzing existing vacant lots to see if there are opportunities to solve two issues - filling in park access gaps, and addressing derelict properties that reduce neighborhood capital.

Walking neighborhood population analysis/localized park affordances

To encourage walking to parks and maximizing usage of the small neighborhood parks, it is important to know the population who live within parks walkable service area. Once the population is understood, that information can then be used to integrate as many ‘affordances’ as possible. An affordance is a quality of an object, or an environment, which allows an individual to perform an action (wiki definition).

These affordances are what draw people into the park. Whether it be a pond that can be walked around, a playground that can be played upon, a bench under a shade tree, the more activities and affordances that would appeal to the surrounding population, the more likely they will be to walk and use the park. This master plan recommends such improvements in the park system’s affordances.

Additional program opportunities

It must be understood that while this framework is focused on improving the overall health of the community, its success is

PROPOSED SOLUTION

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gent upon a wide range of factors. Among these factors that the framework depends upon the most important physical factor are maintained network of trails and sidewalks: if the actual connections to the walkable neighborhood parks are in poor condition or non-existent, it will discourage people from walking to the park. To make this park system successful, it may mean that the Park and Public Works Departments work together to either build or repair the network of sidewalks within the city of Council Bluffs.

But aside from the physical aspects of the network, the park system can be a bridge to a wide range of programming opportunities to help improve the health of the community. Based upon the HIA, the most vital of these programming opportunities includes those activities that center around providing access to healthy foods. Within the constraints of the park system, a wide range of programming elements can be integrated including:

1. Community gardens
2. Farmers Markets
3. Organized activities, such as health fairs, or demonstrations, teaming with local health advocates.
4. Perennial food gardens, such as orchards, fruiting shrubs or vineyards, for example. These could be plantings that have deliberate visual and landscape functions, but also demonstrate how to incorporate perennial food plants into the landscape.

**Healthful Foods**
An example fresh food source is the Council Bluffs’ Main Street Farmer’s Market.
**ATV Park** *(River Valley OHV Area)*

Location: 4300 S. Omaha Bridge Road  
Size: 380ac  
Classification: Neighborhood Park  
Existing Amenities:  
ATV area, restrooms, connection to city-wide trail system  

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**  
△ Consistent park signage per new brand to be created

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**Bahnsen Park**

Location: 1720 Avenue L  
Size: 13.7ac  
Classification: Community Park  
Existing Amenities:  
Playground, picnic shelter, restrooms, soccer field (1) and baseball/softball fields (3). Park is in exceptional condition. Signature facility. Convenient parking areas off Avenues ‘L’ & ‘O’ (125 stalls +/-).

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**  
△ Upgrade soccer field with irrigation  
△ Consistent park signage per new brand to be created
Bayliss Park
Location: 100 Pearl Street
Size: 3.9ac
Classification: Community Park

Existing Amenities:
Major fountain/art display. Image icon for community. Historic monuments, seating, floral displays and informal use lawn areas. ‘Town Square’ of the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Maintain highest level of maintenance
△ Priority for funding & staffing resources

Big Lake Park (North & South)
Location: 2600 North 8th Street
Size: 163ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park

Existing Amenities:
Playground, picnic shelter, restroom, floral displays, renovated baseball/softball field (1), renovated soccer field (1), tennis court (2) and public access for fishing, expanded nature trails & nature viewing boardwalk. Beautiful natural setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Provide new park shelter by playground (between soccer field & playground)
△ Replace wood pole barrier with split rail fence or naturalized boulders & plantings
△ Study alternative uses and appearance upgrades for the tennis courts
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
△ Consistent park signage per new brand
Black Angel
Location: Lafayette & North 2nd Street
Size: 1ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Historic monument and floral display

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Preserve quaint landscape setting
△ Continued high level of landscape maintenance & preservation of this historic & storied monument
△ Study opportunities for handicap accessibility
△ Improve pedestrian connection between Black Angel and Lincoln Monument
△ Consistent park signage per new brand

Broadway Skate Park
Location: 1300 West Broadway
Size: 1.2ac
Classification: Community Park
Existing Amenities:
Urban skate park facility with observation area, playground, climbing wall, informal lawn areas, on-street & off-street parking area of approximately 20 stalls. Connectivity to Mid-City trail system. Excellent visibility & accessibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Continue high level of maintenance to deter graffiti
△ Explore alternative uses for the building at the park or consider building removal.
Cochran Park
Location: 100 South 21st Street
Size: 3.1ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Playground, basketball court (1), tennis court (2) and informal lawn/open space. Park abuts the 1st Avenue redevelopment corridor.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Provide picnic shelter with tables
△ Remove chain link fence surrounding open lawn to west
△ Tree plantings to create park form and shade west half of park
△ Integrate design amenities with future 1st Avenue corridor redevelopment
△ Study alternative uses and appearance upgrades to the tennis and basketball courts.
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
△ Consistent park signage per new brand

Cook Park
Location: Gould & Morningside Streets
Size: 4ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Natural area

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Continue as minimally developed park/natural area
△ No capital improvements
△ Consistent park signage per new brand
**Council Bluffs Recreation Complex**

Location: 2900 Richard Downing Avenue  
Size: 84ac  
Classification: Community Park  
Existing Amenities:  
Baseball/softball field (10), soccer field (10), football field (4), extensive event parking, playground, picnic shelter, restroom and walking trails. Facility among the best is the metropolitan area. Connected to regional trail system. Regional draw from western Pottawattamie County.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**  
△ Maintain highest level of maintenance  
△ Priority for funding & staffing resources  
△ Complete remaining items on Council Bluffs Recreation Complex Master Plan

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**Fairmount Park**

Location: Graham & Park Entrance Streets  
Size: 80ac  
Classification: Community Park  
Existing Amenities:  
Playground, restroom, trails and floral display

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**  
△ Reconfirm master plan  
△ Initiate a Phase 1 to address areas most critically in need of rehabilitation  
△ Evaluate inclusion of non-traditional elements including a water playground, Frisbee golf, dog park, etc.  
△ Consistent park signage per new brand
Fairview Cemetery
Location: 308 Lafayette Avenue
Size: 30ac (+/-)
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities: Greenspace, trails

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Link to other parks and trails

Golden Spike Monument
Location: 21st Street & 9th Avenue
Size: 2.5ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities: Historic Monument

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ No “traditional” park improvements recommended (recreational needs supplied by Cochran & Sunset parks)
△ Remove gravel area to east and reseed lawn
△ Install tree plantings to create backdrop to monument and improve park aesthetic.
△ Maintain high quality maintenance of monument
△ Consistent park signage per new brand
**Graham Park**
Location: Frank & Gleason Streets
Size: 5.1ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Playground & baseball/softball field (1)

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- Construct looped walking trail with benches
- Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
- Consistent park signage per new brand

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**Iowa West Foundation Trailhead Park**
Location: Hwy. 275 & South Omaha Bridge Rd
Size: 3ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Trailhead parking (approximately 70 stalls), playground & shelter, portable toilets and access to Wabash Trace Trail

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- Additional tree plantings for shade
- Evaluate for inclusion of non-traditional facilities
- Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
- Consistent park signage per new brand
Katelman Water Park
Location: 1230 16th Avenue
Size: 0.9ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Aquatic center, playground, picnic shelter, restroom & loop trail. Signature facility which has been a catalyst to neighborhood reinvestment. Functions nicely with co-located / adjacent Sunset Park.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Maintain high quality level of service
△ Priority for funding & staffing resources
△ Explore opportunities to increase attendance via speed slide(s) and/or spray ground to replace sand volleyball pit
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
△ Consistent park signage per new brand

Kimball Park
Location: 1801 North Broadway
Size: 1.6ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Basketball court, playground and tennis court (1)

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Upgrade playground for expanded ages
△ Work with the neighborhood association to develop a plan for new park amenities.
Kirn Park
Location: 100-1/2 5th Avenue
Size: 5ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Playground, picnic shelter, restroom, historic monument, soccer field(1) and football field(1). This park’s cinder-type running rack provides a unique exercise element not available elsewhere in the metro area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ A new Rehabilitation Plan will address needed renovations to facilities, improved access, expanded parking, removal of a deteriorated building, and other improvements.
△ Consistent park signage per new brand

Lewis & Clark Monument
Location: 19962 Monument Road
Size: 54ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Historic monument, floral display, restroom and trail access to Big Lake Park North. Newly resurfaced roads and new restroom facility. High quality, durable materials. Signature facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Maintain high level of maintenance
△ Provide clearer directional signage off Monument Road
△ Consistent park signage per new brand
Lincoln Monument
Location: Western End of Lafayette Avenue
Size: 2.8ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Historic monument and floral display.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Beautifully renovated facility
△ Maintain high level of maintenance
△ Priority for funding & staffing resources
△ Improve pedestrian connection to the Black Angel Memorial
△ Consistent park signage per new brand

Malmore Park
Location: 3600 Scott Drive
Size: 2ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Playground and picnic shelter.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Over-seed park to improve turf area
△ Construct trail linkage to Highway 275 trail via 37th street R.O.W. corridor
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
△ Consistent park signage per new brand
Manawa City Park
Location: Navajo & Mohawk Streets
Size: 0.9ac (State Owned)
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Playground.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Provide small park shelter, picnic tables & new grill
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
△ Consistent park signage per new brand

Peterson Park
Location: 2500 South 8th Street
Size: 3.1ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Playground, picnic shelter, restrooms and soccer field(1)

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
△ Replace old playground system and consider park for a sprayground location.
△ Consistent park signage per new brand
**Pirate Cove Water Park**  
**Location:** 915 North 21st Street  
**Size:** 0.9ac  
**Classification:** Neighborhood Park  

**Existing Amenities:**  
Aquatics facility, playground, picnic shelter, restrooms and floral display. Adequate parking (approximately 110 stalls) with good accessibility & visibility. High quality signature facility. Excellent joint-use facility with Woodrow Wilson JHS.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**  
△ Maintain high quality level of service  
△ Priority for funding & staffing resources  
△ Consistent park signage per new brand

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**Playland Park**  
**Location:** 4000 Avenue B  
**Size:** 4.9ac  
**Classification:** Neighborhood Park  

**Existing Amenities:**  
Playground, picnic shelter, restroom, tennis court (1), basketball court (1) and access to city-wide / regional trail system.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**  
△ Ensure continued trail connectivity to the city-wide/ regional system as new mixed-use development occurs to west  
△ Total renovation of turf area  
△ Park and facilities to be adapted as part of mixed- use development plan or take existing facilities and relocate them into other existing or new parks.  
△ New tree plantings to define new park area boundaries and visual connectivity to new development  
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand
Prospect Park
Location: 1000 Harrison Street
Size: 2.4ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Playground

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Provide trail link to neighborhood using current ‘footpath’ from playground to northwest corner of park. Connect to existing sidewalk on east side of Millard Street
△ Landscape south side of south play pod retaining wall to prevent erosion and enhance ‘front door’ image of park
△ Reduce/eliminate mowing of all sloped areas to enhance natural character of park and reduce maintenance
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
△ Consistent park signage per new brand

River’s Edge Park
Location: 4200 Avenue B
Size: 77ac
Classification: Community Park
Existing Amenities:
“Great Lawn” for community & regional events. This is the communities ‘Great Park’. Signature/iconic space.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Develop per River’s Edge Master Plan
△ Ensure connectivity to future development to east & current neighborhood
△ Continue connectivity to city-wide & regional trail systems
△ Ensure the highest of maintenance resources are allocated
Roberts Park
Location: 1000 North 25th Street
Size: 8.9ac
Classification: Community Park

Existing Amenities:
Playground, picnic shelter, restroom, activities center, floral displays, baseball/softball field(1), soccer field(1) and tennis courts(4). Connectivity to city-wide trail system via 25th Street. Excellent visibility & accessibility. Ample parking (65 stalls.)

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Provide Internal walking loop trail with benches
△ Renovate tennis courts or consider for alternative uses
△ Make improvements to the shelter facility
△ Evaluate for non-traditional facilities
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
△ Consistent park signage per new brand

Sternhill Park
Location: 1031 North 8th Street
Size: 12ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park

Existing Amenities:
Playground, picnic shelter, restroom, horseshoe pits(2), soccer field(1). Ample parking (20 stalls).

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Reduce / eliminate mowing north of parking area and eastern edge of park (approx. 1-1.5 ac) to reduce maintenance and further ‘naturalize’ park
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
△ Consistent park signage per new brand
Sunset Park
Location: 1000 16th Avenue
Size: 6ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Provide three(3) benches to observe playground
△ Maintain high level of maintenance
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
△ Renovate tennis courts or consider for alternative uses
△ Consistent park signage per new brand

Trolley Park
Location: 2803 Avenue B
Size: 2.7ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Playground, picnic shelter, skateboard amenities, half basketball court(1), and floral display. Informal open space. Perimeter sidewalk in rights-of-way serves as loop trail. Maturing park.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Evaluate for non-traditional facilities
△ Preserve informal open space
△ Over-seed / enhance turf conditions
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
**Twin City Park**  
**Location:** 3300 Renner Street  
**Size:** 6.4ac  
**Classification:** Neighborhood Park  
**Existing Amenities:**  
Playground, soccer field(1) w/practice area  

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**  
- Consider joint-use agreement with Lewis Central School District for use of Kreft Elementary playground  
- Develop a master plan with the neighborhood association for new park amenities to have ecology-based theme consisting of a nature-based playground, a small park shelter, picnic tables, landscaping, park signage and possibly a small splash pad.  
- Consistent park signage per new brand

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**Valley View Park**  
**Location:** 1300 Franklin Street  
**Size:** 89ac (approx. with new acquisitions)  
**Classification:** Neighborhood Park  
**Existing Amenities:**  
Playground, picnic shelter, restroom, baseball/softball fields(2), tennis courts(2) and soccer fields(2). Ample parking (130 stalls). Mosquito Creek provides natural amenity. Park is connected to city-wide trail system. Additional parkland acquisitions to both the north and south have expanded the capabilities of this park.  

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**  
- Author a park master plan to address the current park and the additional property recently acquired. This plan should consider the following:  
  - Additional sports facilities  
  - Improved vehicle and pedestrian access  
  - Non-traditional facilities including bike park, Frisbee golf, climbing wall, water playground, and dog park  
  - Improved visibility  
- Consistent park signage per new brand
Vincent Bluff Preserve
Location: 2230 Thallas Street
Size: 36.5ac
Classification: Community Park
Existing Amenities:
Picnic shelter and walking/nature trails. Natural area of loess hills restoration/preservation. Overlook area with vistas.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Link existing parking area off Thallas Street to Skyline Neighborhood to north. Possible use of Fairoaks Drive (currently used) and Bennett Avenue.
△ Provide sensitively sited ‘Nature-Adventure Playground’
△ Consider cooperative agreements to provide public education/research opportunities
△ Area to remain in passive/natural state. Preservation of natural resources.
△ Consistent park signage per new brand
△ Pursue expansion by acquisition of adjoining loess hill properties.

Westwood Park
Location: 1200 South 35th Street
Size: 7ac
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Existing Amenities:
Playground, picnic shelter, restroom, baseball/softball field(1), and soccer field(1). Ample parking (approx. 50 stalls).

RECOMMENDATIONS:
△ Study usage of the park for baseball/softball usage and dimension needs of the large baseball field in the community. Consider shortening the field to allow for internal walking trail loop along with added grading for better water drainage.
△ Explore additional parking options
△ Standardize park amenities (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.) consistent with new brand to be created
△ Consistent park signage per new brand
How to get there. Proposed Parks.
P1
Mid-City Greenway

Location:
Located within the current First Avenue R.O.W. (abandoned railroad) from the Mid-City Eco Park on the east to approximately 36th Street on the west. The greenway should be connected to River’s Edge Park via a trail on 2nd Avenue under I-29.

Type:
Linear Park

Approx. Size:
34ac / 15,000LF

Characteristics:
This linear park should be integrally and creatively designed incorporating landscaping and quality amenities. Greenway may include art installations and ‘edu-tainment’ oriented displays. Greenway should serve as the spine for urban redevelopment actions and be integrally designed into such projects. Create master plan.

Timing:
Since this project will serve as a catalyst to redevelopment, portions of the trail should be implemented as soon as possible. Consider temporary surfacing for a portion of trail to signify City’s commitment to revitalization.

P2
Mid-City Eco Park

Location:
Approximately Indian Creek (open section) on the West; 11th Street on the east; Creek Top Avenue on the North to 2nd Avenue on the South.

Type:
Special Use

Approx. Size:
5.5ac

Characteristics:
This park is intended to serve as an environmental education / urban sustainability model site. Located in the heart of the city, the park will expand the current community gardens and serve as an eastern terminus to the Mid-City Greenway. The potential is high that a ‘Brownfield Demonstration Project’ can be created with funding assistance by the Federal EPA. Create master plan.

Content:
• Urban agriculture / community farming plots
• Creek habitat restoration
• Sustainability demonstrations: net zero energy, stormwater filtration, urban soils reclamation, etc.
• Consider for non-traditional recreation facilities

Timing:
Land acquisition should occur immediately followed by new park implementation.

P3
Neighborhood Park ‘A’

Location:
Approximately 2200 east Kanesville Avenue in the location of the current landfill site and the vacant commercial real estate frontage.

Type:
Neighborhood Park

Approx. Size:
2-7ac

Characteristics:
This proposed park will provide needed recreation for the underserved neighborhood of McKenzie Avenue and the current/future growth of the Sherwood area. The park should preserve the wooded area along Kanesville Avenue. Access to the park should be via both Kanesville and McKenzie Avenue. Create master plan.

Content:
• Playground
• Park shelter w/picnicking
• Informal open space
• Parking 12-15 stalls
• Looped walking trail w/benches
• Basketball court

Timing:
Land acquisition should occur in the near future (2-3years) followed by new park implementation with the next platting / development of nearby residential.
P4  
**Neighborhood Park ‘B’**

**Location:**  
East of Highway 191 on the southwest corner of Yellow Pole Road & Follett Road.

**Type:**  
*Neighborhood Park*

**Approx. Size:**  
*3.7ac*

**Characteristics:**  
This proposed park will provide needed recreation for the future growth area in the northeast areas of the city. The park is bordered on the west by Mosquito Creek providing a natural feature to the future park. The site is currently agricultural ground and is relatively flat. The site is highly visible and highly accessible. Create master plan.

**Content:**  
- Playground  
- Park shelter w/picnicking  
- Informal open space  
- Parking 12-15 stalls  
- Looping walking trail w/ benches  
- Half-court basketball  
- Landscape development to create park character

**Timing:**  
Land acquisition should occur in the medium future (5-7 years). Park development should not occur until residential platting begins to occur with a 3-5 block distance (walking distance).

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P5  
**Valley View Park North**

**Location:**  
East side of Valley View Road north of McPherson Avenue across from New Horizon Presbyterian Church.

**Type:**  
*Neighborhood Park*

**Approx. Size:**  
*2.7ac*

**Characteristics:**  
This park will serve as an extension of the current Valley View Park. The park is bordered on the west by Mosquito Creek providing a natural feature and backdrop to the site when viewed from Valley View Drive. The site is currently agricultural ground and is relatively flat. The site is highly visible and highly accessible. The site is complimentary by the adjacency of College View Elementary School and Iowa Western Community College. The site lies within the current growth area of the city. Create master plan.

**Content:**  
- Signature style ‘spray ground’ / splash pad  
- Park shelter w/picnicking  
- Small playground  
- Off-street parking 25-50 stalls  
- Connection to the existing trail  
- Landscape development to enhance the site character

**Timing:**  
Land acquisition should occur immediately. Park development should occur immediately due to the demand for such water play facilities and the growth of the area.

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P6  
**Neighborhood Park ‘C’**

**Location:**  
East of State Orchard Road and south of Eastern Hills Drive. The park will partially utilize existing City-owned property along the drainageway.

**Type:**  
*Neighborhood Park*

**Approx. Size:**  
*8-10ac*

**Characteristics:**  
This park is intended to serve existing / future growth areas in the general vicinity of State Orchard Road and the Eastern hills Neighborhood. Park should preserve the natural features of the site. Create master plan.

**Content:**  
- Playground  
- Park shelter w/picnicking  
- Informal open space  
- Half-court basketball  
- Natural resource education

**Timing:**  
This is a higher priority project.
**P7 Neighborhood Park ‘D’**

**Location:**
North side of Greenview Road west of the water tower. Co-locate with the Lewis Central School District.

**Type:** Neighborhood Park

**Approx. Size:** 5-8ac

**Characteristics:**
This park serves the recreational needs of the existing neighborhood south of Greenview Road and the future development north of Greenview Road. As the north area is platted, interconnected trails should be provided to the park. A pedestrian cross signal should be studied/provided at the Greenview Road and Longview Loop Drive intersection to allow safe crossing to the park. Develop a trail from this intersection running east to the park on the north side of Greenview. The rolling topography and wooded setting should be preserved. Create master plan.

**Content:**
- Playground
- Park shelter w/picnicking
- Splash pad
- Informal open space
- Half-court basketball
- Off-street parking (12 –15 stalls)
- Looped walking trail to connect to future trail on Greenview Road

**Timing:**
Progress should coordinate with future school development.

---

**P8 Community Park**

**Location:**
Within a one-mile vicinity of the approximate intersection of State Orchard Road & Cedar Road.

**Type:** Community Park

**Approx. Size:** 20-25ac

**Characteristics:**
This is a major community park planned to accommodate active and passive uses and provide significant recreational opportunities for the southeast area of the city. Park should be planned to take major access off either State Orchard or Cedar Road. Park development should contain extensive tree plantings and preserve as many of the natural features/resources as possible. Create master plan.

**Content:**
- Playground
- Park shelter & picnicking
- Informal open space
- Basketball court
- One tennis court co-located with two pickle ball courts
- Ballfield 4-plex
- Soccer fields (2)
- Skate park
- Aquatics center
- Frisbee golf (18 holes)
- Looped walking trail to connect to future trail on either State Orchard or Greenview Road
- Parking (100-125 stalls)

**Timing:**
Land acquisition should occur in the near future (2-3 years) prior to the land being platted. Park development should occur in the medium/longer future (5-10 years).

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**P9 City-County Bike Camp**

**Location:**
Located within close proximity to the Wabash Trace Trail. Area should afford convenient access to the trail.

**Type:** Special Use

**Approx. Size:** 2-3ac

**Characteristics:**
This facility is will offer the ‘touring cyclist’ and the ‘overnighter’ the opportunity for camping in close proximity to the Wabash Trace Trail. The facility is also intended to offer groups such as Boy & Girls scouts a unique facility for camping in close proximity to the trail. This facility should be a joint venture project with local special interest groups, the County and other organizations/agencies to both build and operate. Tourism attraction & economic generator. Create master plan.

**Content:**
- Group park shelter w/picnicking
- Restroom (vault type)
- Off-street parking (granular surfacing)

**Timing:**
Land acquisition should occur in the medium future (3-5 years) prior to the land being platted thereby escalating land values. Park development should occur in the medium/longer future (5-10 years).
P10
**Future Park Facility**

Location:
South side of Gifford Road (flood prone side of the levee). Exact location to coincide with the current floodplain buyout program. Coordinate with City Community Development Department.

Type:
Special Use

Approx. Size:
TBD

Characteristics:
This site offers good accessibility, visibility and a blend of open and wooded areas ideally suited to various recreational uses. Create master plan.

Content:
- To be determined by future recreation demands
- Off-street parking (granular surfacing) Quantity TBD

Timing:
Land acquisition and park development should occur in conjunction with future recreation demands.

P11
**15th Street Dog Park**

Location:
East side of 15th Street from 23rd -28th Avenue. A parcel approximately 100’ deep terminating at the toe of the Indian Creek levee. Located north of the current animal shelter.

Type:
Special Use

Approx. Size:
3-3.5ac

Characteristics:
This facility will meet the demands for a secured outdoor exercise/release area for dogs in the southeast area of the city (with the northeast area demand being satisfied by the proposed similar facility in Valley View Park).

Content:
- Separated enclosed fenced areas for both small & large dogs.
- Off-street parking area serving both areas

Timing:
Land is currently owned by the City. Demand exists to develop park as soon as funding allows.

P12
**Regional Recreation Facility**

Location:
Within close proximity to the entertainment venues offered near the Interchange of I-80 & I-29.

Type:
TBD

Approx. Size:
TBD

Characteristics:
An opportunity exists for a major recreational attraction/facility. This facility should complement and encourage the positive economic performance of the Mid-America Center (MAC).

Content:
- TBD

Timing:
TBD
## PRELIMINARY OPINION OF PROBABLE COSTS
### MASTER PLAN LEVEL

All costs based upon 2012 construction costing data

### Existing Parks

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### Notes
- All costs based upon 2012 construction costing data.
- Costs are summarized for existing parks, with specific focus on the ATV Park, Bahnsen Park, and Bayliss Park.
## Opinion of Cost

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| **Iowa West Foundation Trailhead Park** |          |      |            |             |
| Tree Plantings                      | 25       | EA   | $300.00    | $7,500.00   |
| Standardize park amenities          | 1        | LS   | $10,000.00 | $10,000.00  |
| Consistent park signage             | 1        | LS   | $3,500.00  | $3,500.00   |
| **Subtotal:**                       |          |      |            | $21,000.00  |
| Construction Contingency            | 25%      |      |            | $5,250.00   |
| Design Fees                         | 15%      |      |            | $3,937.50   |
| **Total:**                          |          |      |            | $30,187.50  |

| **Katelman Water Park**             |          |      |            |             |
| Standardize park amenities          | 1        | LS   | $10,000.00 | $10,000.00  |
| Convert volleyball area to aquatic play | 1        | LS   | $100,000.00| $100,000.00 |
| Consistent park signage             | 1        | LS   | $3,500.00  | $3,500.00   |
| **Subtotal:**                       |          |      |            | $113,500.00 |
| Construction Contingency            | 25%      |      |            | $28,375.00  |
| Design Fees                         | 15%      |      |            | $21,281.25  |
| **Total:**                          |          |      |            | $163,156.25 |

<p>| <strong>Kimball Park</strong>                    |          |      |            |             |
| Upgrade playground for expanded ages | 1        | LS   | $75,000.00 | $75,000.00  |
| Consistent park signage             | 1        | LS   | $3,500.00  | $3,500.00   |
| <strong>Subtotal:</strong>                       |          |      |            | $78,500.00  |
| Construction Contingency            | 25%      |      |            | $19,625.00  |
| Design Fees                         | 15%      |      |            | $14,718.75  |
| <strong>Total:</strong>                          |          |      |            | $112,843.75 |</p>
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| **Sternhill Park**                        |          |      |            |             |
| Conc. loop walking trail (8')             | 1,650    | LF   | $42.00     | $69,300.00  |
| Standardize park amenities                | 1        | LS   | $10,000.00 | $10,000.00  |
| Consistent park signage                  | 1        | LS   | $3,500.00  | $3,500.00   |
| **Subtotal:**                            |          |      |            | $82,800.00  |
| **Total:**                               |          |      |            | $119,025.00 |

| **Sunset Park**                           |          |      |            |             |
| Benches                                  | 3        | EA   | $700.00    | $2,100.00   |
| Standardize park amenities                | 1        | LS   | $10,000.00 | $10,000.00  |
| Consistent park signage                  | 1        | LS   | $3,500.00  | $3,500.00   |
| **Subtotal:**                            |          |      |            | $15,600.00  |
| **Total:**                               |          |      |            | $22,425.00  |

<p>| <strong>Trolley Park</strong>                          |          |      |            |             |
| Overseed park turf areas                  | 3        | AC   | $1,600.00  | $4,320.00   |
| Standardize park amenities                | 1        | LS   | $10,000.00 | $10,000.00  |
| Consistent park signage                  | 1        | LS   | $3,500.00  | $3,500.00   |
| <strong>Subtotal:</strong>                            |          |      |            | $17,820.00  |
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# Preliminary Opinion of Probable Costs

**Master Plan Level**

All costs based upon 2012 construction costing data

## Proposed Parks

### Park 1 (P1) Mid-City Greenway

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<td>$23,320.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>Picnic Table</td>
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<td>EA</td>
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<td>$1,650.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cook Grill</td>
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<td>EA</td>
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<td>$300.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benches</td>
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<td>EA</td>
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| Park 6 (P6) Neighborhood Park ‘C’                                    |          |        |             |             |
| Land Acquisition (in progress)                                      | 1        | AC     | 0           | $0.00       |
| Earthwork in (3ac @ ave. 2’)                                        | 9,680    | CY     | $5.50       | $53,240.00  |
| Parking (15 stalls)                                                 | 583      | SY     | $40.00      | $23,320.00  |
| Playground w/ safety surface                                       | 1        | LS     | $75,000.00  | $75,000.00  |
| Internal LoopTrail (8' wide, 5" concrete)                          | 2,100    | LF     | $42.00      | $88,200.00  |
| Park shelter                                                        | 1        | LS     | $30,000.00  | $30,000.00  |
| Picnic Table                                                        | 3        | EA     | $550.00     | $1,650.00   |
| Cook Grill                                                          | 1        | EA     | $300.00     | $300.00     |
| Benches                                                             | 3        | EA     | $700.00     | $2,100.00   |
| Half Court Basketball Court                                         | 2,500    | SF     | $12.00      | $30,000.00  |
| Tree Plantings                                                      | 50       | EA     | $150.00     | $7,500.00   |
| Consistent park signage                                             | 1        | LS     | $3,500.00   | $3,500.00   |
| **Subtotal:**                                                       |          |        |             | $314,810.00 |
| Construction Contingency                                            |          |        |             | $78,702.50  |
| Design Fees                                                         |          |        |             | $59,026.88  |
| **Total:**                                                          |          |        |             | $452,539.38 |
## Opinion of Cost

### Park 7 (P7) Neighborhood Park ‘D’

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<td>SY</td>
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<td>$30,000.00</td>
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<td>$1,650.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cook Grill</td>
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<td>EA</td>
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<td>$300.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benches</td>
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<td>EA</td>
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<td>Half Court Basketball Court</td>
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### Park 8 (P8) Community Park

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<td>$30,000.00</td>
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<td>Benches</td>
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<td>EA</td>
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<td>Basketball court</td>
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<td>Earthwork in (3ac @ ave. 2')</td>
<td>9,680</td>
<td>CY</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>$53,240.00</td>
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<td>Park entrance road (allowance)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>LS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Park shelter</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>$30,000.00</td>
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<td>Picnic table</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>$550.00</td>
<td>$3,300.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cook grill</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restroom (vault type)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$157,140.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction Contingency</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$225,888.75</td>
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</table>

| **Park 10 (P10) Future Park Facility** | | | | |
| Land Acquisition (currently city owned) | 1 | AC | - | $0.00 |
| Allowance for park development | 1 | LS | - | $0.00 |
| **Subtotal:** | | | | $0.00 |
| Construction Contingency | 25% | | | $0.00 |
| Design Fees | 15% | | | $0.00 |
| **Total:** | | | | $0.00 |

<p>| <strong>Park 11 (P11) 15th Street Dog Park Facility</strong> | | | | |
| Land Acquisition (currently city owned) | 0 | AC | - | $0.00 |
| Parking (20 stalls) | 777 | SY | $40.00 | $31,080.00 |
| Dog park fencing | 2,500 | LF | $25.00 | $62,500.00 |
| <strong>Subtotal:</strong> | | | | $93,580.00 |
| Construction Contingency | 25% | | | $23,395.00 |
| Design Fees | 15% | | | $17,546.25 |
| <strong>Total:</strong> | | | | $134,521.25 |</p>
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<tr>
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<th>Unit Price</th>
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<td>Park 12 (P12) Regional Recreation Facility (TBD)</td>
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<td>Land Acquisition (currently city owned)</td>
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<td>AC</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allowance for park development (TBD)</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal:</td>
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<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Contingency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design Fees</td>
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**Summary Total All Proposed Parks Improvements**

Grand Total: $7,348,247.72
Priorities have been established for park development based upon areas of deficiency, planning efforts already in progress, current funding and community input. Implementation priorities are organized based upon three facility types: community/regional park rehabilitation; neighborhood park rehabilitation; and special use parks.
Funding

Neighborhood Parks

1. Kirn Park
2. P6 Proposed Park
3. Cochran Park
4. Twin City Park

Special Use Parks

1. 1st Avenue Greenway
2. MAC
3. Mid-City Eco Park
4. Field House
The Pottawattamie County-wide Needs Assessment identifies the popularity of the effort to coordinate provision and management of parks, amenities, and programs across government agencies and community groups. Likewise, this master plan encourages the coordination between governments, schools, health agencies and community service providers such as the YMCA.

With a system-wide goals of increasing public and environmental health, improving alternative transportation routes, promoting art and culture, educating and preserving history, funding sources are available through private, state and federal grant opportunities.

**Sources for Capital Improvement Dollars**

**Iowa West Foundation**

IWF funds projects that support:

- Community Development & Beautification
- Economic Development
- Education
- Human and Social Needs

All of which apply to one or more projects proposed within this park master plan.

Further, Iowa West Public Art’s priority is improving the quality of life through its community-wide public art initiative.

**General Obligation Bond**

A general obligation bond is a municipal bond secured by a taxing authority or multiple taxing authorities to improve a public asset that benefits the municipal agencies involved that oversee the parks and recreation facilities.

**Governmental Funding Programs**

A variety of funding sources are available from federal and state government for park-related projects. For example, the Land and Water Conservation Fund can provide capital funds to state and local governments to acquire, develop, and improve outdoor recreation areas.

Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are used to support open space related improvements including development of parks and recreation facilities.

AmeriCorps Grants can be used to fund support for park maintenance.

In 2012, the Federal Department of Transportation Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program takes over
the funding goals of the former DOT Transportation Enhancements, Safe Routes to Schools, Recreational Trails and Scenic Byways funds. Though the amount of money allocated to these types of projects is reduced by roughly 35%, project funding is still a viable possibility.

Real Estate Transfer Taxes (RETTs)
In the State of Iowa, fees are assessed with the sale and transfer of real estate. RETTs are state, county, and/or municipal sales taxes most often used as general revenue. However, they can be devoted to specific uses such as neighborhood improvements or open space protection. They are usually based on the sales price, become part of closing costs, and are paid every time a property is sold.

Park Impact Fees
Park impact fees are attached to the cost of new residential development that benefit from the parks usually based on a per unit or per lot basis. Impact fees typically range from a low of $200 dollars per unit to a high of $2,000 dollars per unit or lot and should be periodically updated to address market valuations. This funding source would apply to new development in an approximate 3-4 block radius surrounding the park or recreation facility for residential land uses, and in an approximate 3-4 mile radius for commercial land uses. These distances should be determined by legal resources to determine the proper ‘nexus’ of payment in for benefits received.

Internal Park Improvement Fund
This funding source is created from a percentage of the overall park admissions to attractions or events in the park and would allow a percentage usually in the 3-5% of gross revenues as a tax be dedicate to the park for capital improvements. This funding source is used for sports complexes, aquatic parks, campgrounds, and fee based parks.

Tax Allocation or Tax Increment District
Commonly used for financing redevelopment projects. A Tax Allocation District (TAD) involves the issuance of tax-exempt bonds to pay front-end infrastructure and eligible development costs in partnership with private developers. As redevelopment occurs in the city, the “tax increment” resulting from redevelopment projects is used. The public portion of the redevelopment project funds itself using the additional taxes generated by the project. TADs can be used to fund park improvements and development as an essential infrastructure cost.

Cash-in-Lieu of Open Space Requirement
Ordinances requiring the dedication of open space within developments to meet the park and recreation needs of the new residents often have provisions allowing cash contribution to substitute for the land requirement.

Facility Authority
A Facility Authority is sometimes used by park and recreation agencies to improve a specific park or develop a specific improvement such as a stadium, large recreation center, large aquatic center, or sports venue for competitive events. Repayment of bonds to fund the project usually comes from a sales tax in the form of food and beverage.

Utility Fee
Utility fees have been used to support parks in the form of utility companies supporting a park from utility easements, storm water runoff and paying for development rights below the ground. This funding source is derived from fees on property owners based on measures such as the amount of impervious surfacing as well as fees from utility companies having access through the park. It is used by many cities to acquire and develop greenways and other open space resources that provide improvements in the park. Improvements can include trails, drainage areas, and retention ponds that serve multiple purposes such as recreation, environmental protection, and storm water management. This could be a source for the utilities to make a contribution to support the parks in the future.

Transient Occupancy Tax
This funding source is used by many cities to fund improvements to parks from hotels that benefit from the park in the way of the events held in the park such as sports tournaments and various regional competition running or biking events as well as from regional special events. The hotels who benefit from these park-related activities could participate in supporting the parks funding through the transient occupancy tax.
Development of park-related improvements that continue to benefit the hotels could be made so they will always benefit from the park. Transient Occupancy Taxes are typically set at 3-5% on the value of a hotel room and can be dedicated for park and recreation improvement purposes. This funding source should be implemented progressively as the city increases the number of events it sponsors.

**Capital Improvement Fee**

A capital improvement fee can be added to an admission fee to a recreation facility or park attraction to help pay back the cost of developing the facility or attraction. This fee is usually applied to golf courses, aquatic facilities, recreation centers, stadiums, amphitheaters, and special use facilities such as sports complexes. The funds generated can be used either to pay back the cost of the capital improvement or the revenue bond that was used to develop the facility.

**Lease Back**

Lease backs are a source of capital funding in which a private sector entity such as a development company buys the land or leases the park land and develops a facility such as a park, recreation attraction, recreation center, pool, or sports complex; and leases the facility back to the municipality to pay off the capital costs over a 30 to 40 year period.

This approach takes advantage of the efficiencies of private sector development while relieving the burden on the municipality to raise upfront capital funds. This funding source is typically used for aquatic facilities and stadiums.

**Food and Beverage Tax**

In many cities they seek ¼ or ½ cent sales tax on retail food and beverages to support parks and recreation needs in their community and can raise a substantial amount of revenue that can be used to develop a bond to help pay for needed improvements. These dollars can come from the local community as well as visitors to the city to help pay for a bond to finance future improvements. Food and Beverage Taxes are very well accepted in most Midwest communities.

**Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Program**

A fund for environmental education, City parks and open space, soil and water enhancement, historical resources, and roadside vegetation. REAP funds are administered by Iowa DNR; Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation; Department of Cultural Affairs, State Historical Society; and the Department of Transportation.

**Certified Local Government Grant**

State Historical Society of Iowa provides funding for local history education projects.

**Land Leases/Concessions**

Land leases and concessions are public/private partnerships in which the municipality provides land or space for private commercial operations that enhance the park and recreational experience in exchange for payments to help reduce operating costs. They can range from vending machines to food service operations to full management of recreation attractions.

**Admission to the Park**

Many of the great American parks in the United States have admission fees on a per car, per bike and per person basis that is used to help support operational costs. Car costs range from $3 to $5 a car and $2 dollars a bicycle or $2 dollars a person.

**Parking Fee**

Many of the great American parks that don’t charge an admission fee will charge a parking fee. Parking rates range from $3 to $4 dollars a day.

**User Fees**

User fees are fees paid by a user of recreational facilities or programs to offset the costs of services provided by the city in operating a park, a recreation facility or in delivering programs. Future fees could be charged based on cost recovery goals for the parks and/or core recreation services based on the level of exclusivity the user
receives compared to the general taxpayer. User fees charged for programs create a perception of value for the user and operational revenue for the Parks and Recreation Departments.

Corporate Naming Rights
In this arrangement, corporations invest in the right to name an event, facility, or product within a park in exchange for an annual fee, typically over a ten-year period. The cost of the naming right is based on the impression points the facility or event will receive from the newspapers, TV, websites, and visitors or users to the park. Naming rights for park facilities are typically attached to sports complexes, amphitheaters, recreation centers, aquatic facilities, stadiums, and events.

Corporate Sponsorships
Corporations can also underwrite a portion or all of the cost of an event, program, or activity based on their name being associated with the service. Sponsorships typically are title sponsors, presenting sponsors, associate sponsors, product sponsors, or in-kind sponsors.

Maintenance Endowment Fund
This is a fund dedicated exclusively for a park’s maintenance, funded by a percentage of user fees from programs, events, and rentals. If Memorial Park gets redeveloped the City should consider developing a maintenance endowment to keep the updated facilities in the highest level of productivity as possible.

Private Funding Opportunities

Business/Citizen Donations
Individual donations from corporations and citizens can be sought to support the Park and Recreation Department for various improvements and amenities.

Public Private Partnerships
Public Private Partnerships through a cooperative agreement between public and private sectors. This involves the direct investment of public dollars in private enterprises to stimulate business development and thereby creating jobs and deepen the local tax base. They include the issuance of industrial revenue bonds, providing tax exempt financing for private capital expenditures on publicly-owned land.

Private Foundation Funds
Nonprofit community foundations can be strong sources of support and should be pursued for specific park and recreation amenities.

Conservancy or Friends Organization
This type of nonprofit is devoted to supporting a specific park. These Park Conservancies or Friends Groups are a major funding source for all of the great American parks in the United States.

Parks Foundation
Established to support system-wide parks and recreation needs. Park foundations have helped many cities across the nation to acquire land and develop parks.

Greenway Foundations
Greenway foundations focus on developing and maintaining trails and green corridors on a citywide basis. Cities seek land leases along their trails as a funding source, in addition to selling miles of trails to community corporations and nonprofits. The development rights along the trails can also be sold to local utilities for water, sewer, fiber optic, and cable lines on a per mile basis to support development and management of these corridors.
Adopt-an-Area of a Park or Trail

In this approach, local neighborhood groups or businesses make a volunteer commitment to maintaining a specific area of a park.

Community Service Workers

Community service workers are assigned by the court to pay off some of their sentence through maintenance activities in parks, such as picking up litter, removing graffiti, and assisting in painting or fix up activities. Most workers are assigned 30 to 60 hours of work. This would seem to be a good opportunity for the parks to work with the sheriff’s department on using community service workers.

Playland Park ca. 1959

Vintage Playland Park photo shows what is possible with the support of the community and cooperation between public and private sectors.