



Rochester

Parks and Recreation System Plan

Approved Summer 2016



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Thank you to the many members of the Rochester community who took the time to provide valuable input on this plan.

The Rochester Parks and Recreation System Plan was adopted on August 9, 2016.

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Executive Summary

What is it?

- 1** The 2016 Rochester Parks and Recreation System Plan sets the direction for parks and recreation in Rochester for the next 20 years.
- 2** The System Plan ensures the parks and recreation system continues to meet community needs now and in the future.
- 3** The System Plan weighs community needs and desires with financial realities to ensure the system is economically sustainable and responsible with tax dollars.
- 4** The System Plan determines priorities for future investment and has more than 30 goals, 100 policies, and 250 strategies, only a fraction of which can be highlighted here.

Guided By

Development of the System Plan was guided by the following principles:



Support Excellence - by maintaining system quality, condition, and safety; identifying state-of-the-art improvements; being a regional destination for tournaments/events; and strengthening partnerships.



Cultivate Health - by providing a variety of facilities for life-long activity; expanding the pedestrian/bicycling network; protecting environmental health; and partnering on health education and programming.



Create Connections - by developing a connected system; expanding opportunities for gathering; improving accessibility; and strengthening links to neighborhoods and diverse communities.



Encourage Exploration - by making the system easy to navigate; expanding access to nature; and inspiring discovery of new places, activities, arts, and culture.



Be Flexible and Responsive - by supporting all users; adapting to new trends; collaborating on park/facility development; and capitalizing on technology.



Grow Gracefully - by ensuring distribution of parks and facilities; pursuing financial stability; staffing appropriately to maintain a quality system; and engaging volunteers to expand capabilities.

The City's existing system is thriving; with more than 4,200 acres of parkland, 120 parks, and 85 miles of trails. Maintaining and updating Rochester's recreational offerings in order to keep them fresh, exciting, and relevant in light of changing demographic and recreational trends is essential to the system's continued success.

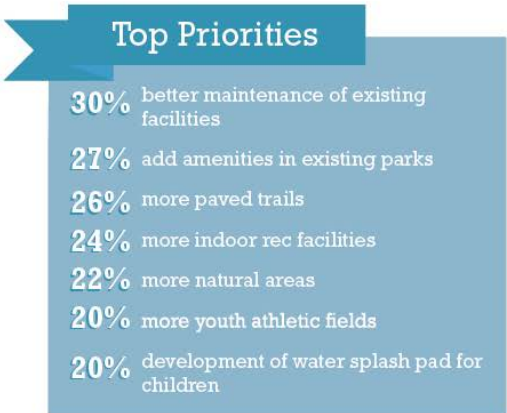
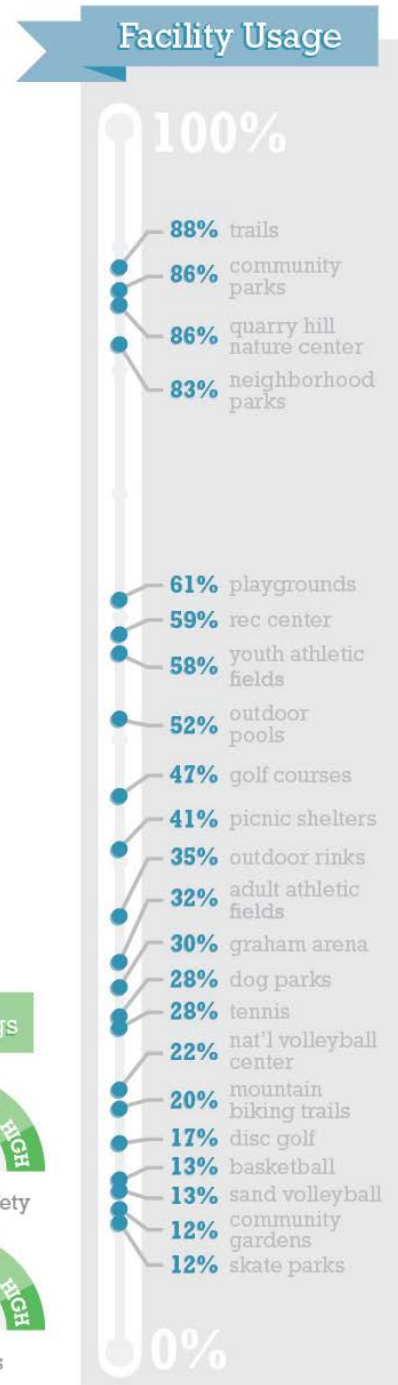
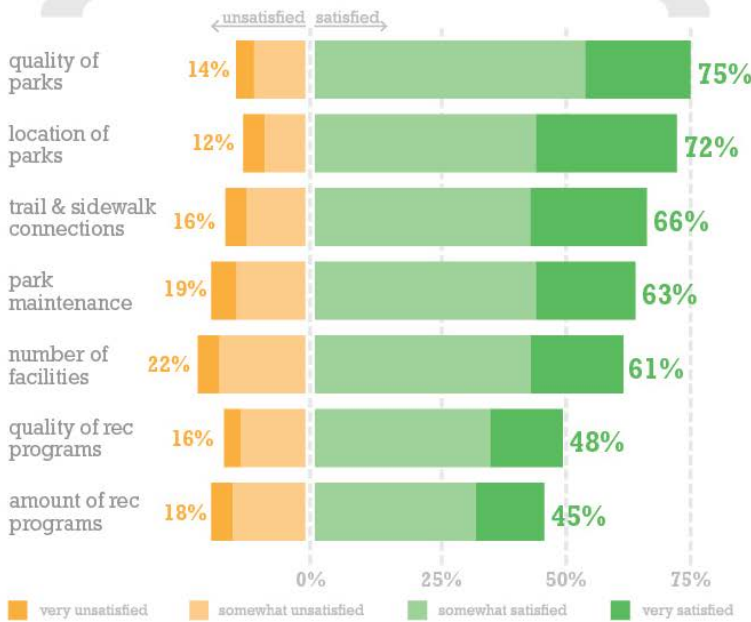
Planning Process

Starting in August 2015, this planning process has involved: gathering input from the community, stakeholders, city staff and officials; analyzing peer communities best practices and national benchmarking data; and an extensive system-wide evaluation performed by city staff and the consultant team.

The goal of the planning process was to educate and raise awareness about the importance of parks and recreation while ensuring that future investment in Rochester's system meets the needs of the community.

Benefits of a Parks and Recreation System Plan

- » Road map for system revitalization and expansion
- » Defensible rationale for decision-making
- » Strategic resource allocation (budgeting and staffing)
- » Fosters strong partnerships
- » Creates safe and welcoming parks
- » An updated recreation facility mix
- » A more connected City
- » Improved access to nature
- » Selective programming to meet gaps and needs
- » Long-term economic sustainability



Community Input

To ensure that the System Plan is reflective of community needs and desires, the planning process was guided by a 16 member Advisory Committee, input gathered by previous community planning efforts, and community outreach performed twice during this effort:

- » Fall 2015
 - Community Open House to collect input
 - Listening sessions with key stakeholder groups
 - Online community questionnaire

- » Spring 2016
 - Community Open House to affirm plan direction
 - Online community questionnaire to evaluate proposed direction

The graphics above summarize aspects of the initial online questionnaire, which received over 2,000 responses.

System at a Glance

- » Over **4,200 acres** of city-owned parks, preserves, and open space
- » **120 Parks**
- » **85 miles** of trails
- » **9%** of land within the City is **park or open space**

 **86** playground areas

 **54** diamond fields

 **37** rectangular fields

 **34** horseshoe courts


 **34** tennis courts

 **19** sand volleyball courts

 **17** picnic shelters

 **15** basketball courts

 **12** indoor gyms

 **7** outdoor hockey rinks, **6** indoor hockey rinks, and **4** pleasure rinks

 **4** golf courses

 **3** groomed cross country ski trails

 **2** archery ranges

 **2** disc golf courses

 **2** dog parks

 **2** garden plot sites

 **1** indoor/**2** outdoor pools

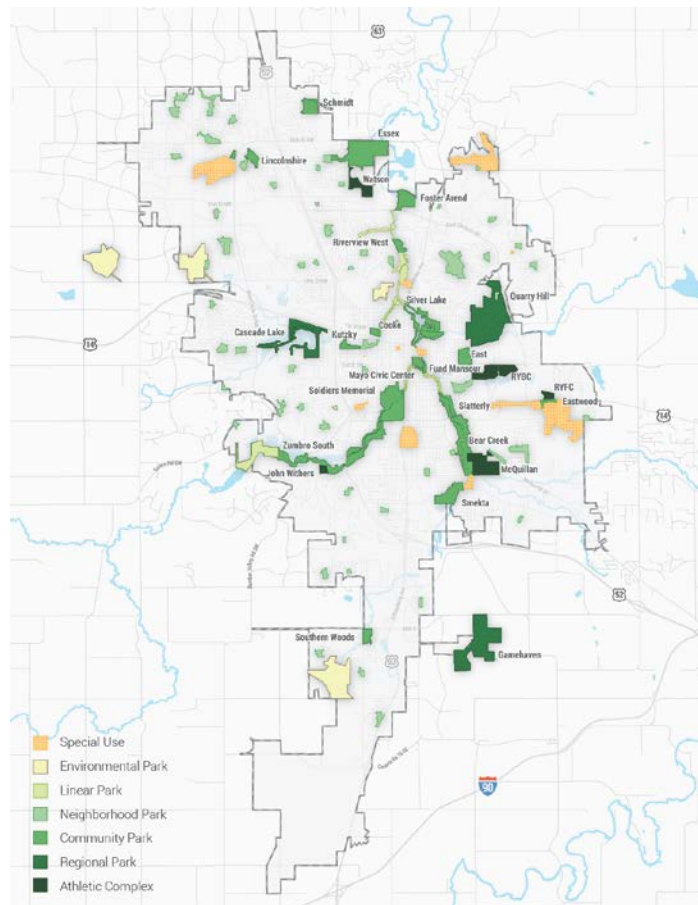
Trends

In order to meet the demands of a growing population, the City needs to consider the following national population trends:

- » Increasing demands on time
- » Increasingly anxious about safety
- » Increasingly disconnected from nature
- » Increased importance of place + experiences
- » Increasing physical and mental health problems
- » Increased interest in aging actively
- » Increasing diversity
- » More transient
- » Pinched household budgets
- » Pinched government budgets
- » Demand for green alternatives
- » Rise in informal adult recreation versus league participation
- » Interest in specialized facilities and new/non-traditional sports

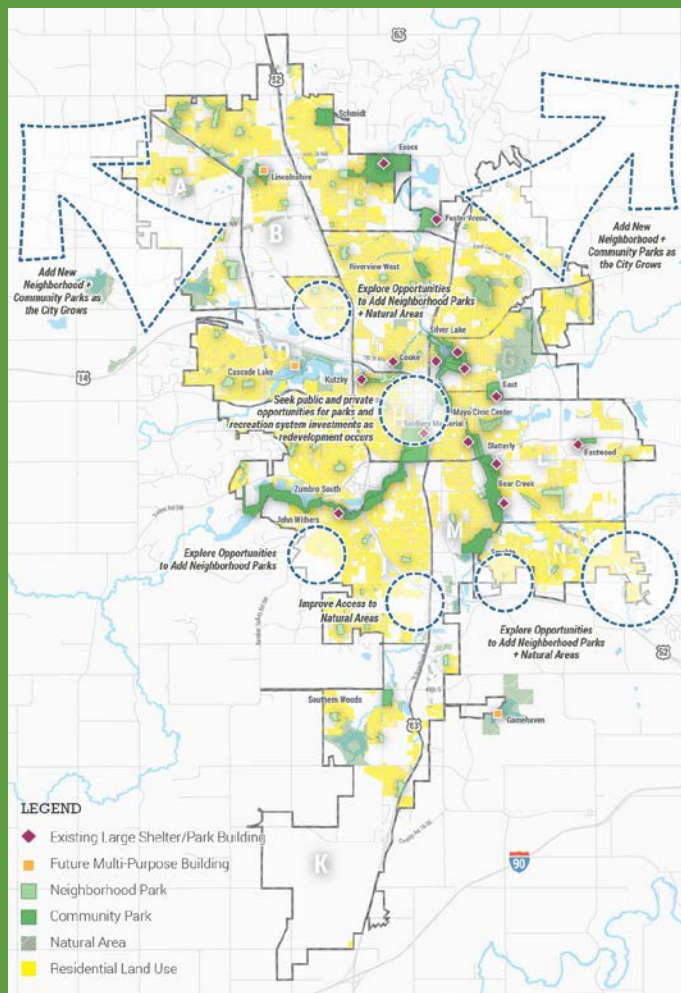
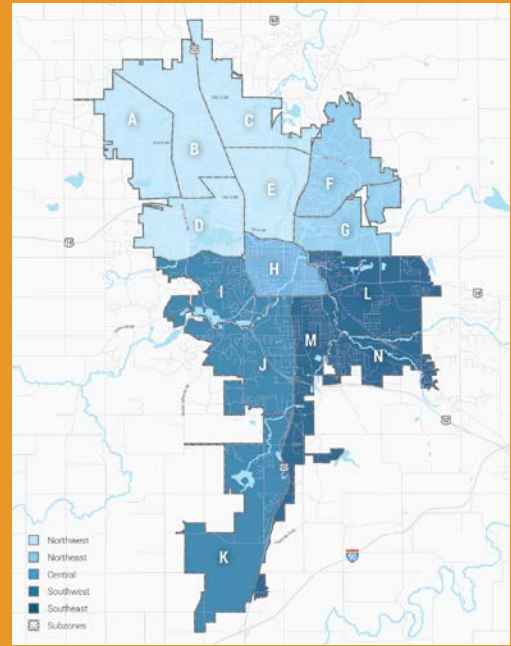
Existing Conditions

Taking care of Rochester's existing system is the number one priority identified by the community. The current parks and recreation system is quite extensive, and expanded marketing surrounding system offerings will increase community awareness and participation. Moving forward, significant investment will be needed to restore aging amenities. Additionally, anticipated population growth will require an increased distribution of amenities to meet future needs.



Zones + Subzones

To assist in ensuring system components are distributed equitably across the City, a system of park zones and subzones were created. The zones were developed recognizing the uniqueness of the central core of the community and the park dedication ordinance which requires that land and funds dedicated within an area must stay within that general area. The five zones therefore consist of central, northwest, northeast, southeast, and southwest. Subzones further divide the zones using connectivity barriers like roadways and waterways. Zones and subzones are used throughout the plan's recommendations to identify how frequent an amenity should be distributed within the system.



Park + Natural Areas Access

Accessibility is an important consideration when looking at the success of existing park facilities as well as the placement of future amenities.

- » To ensure that all community members have equitable access to parks and natural areas, it is recommended that **Neighborhood Parks** (2-15 acres) and **Small Natural Areas** (1-10 acres) be located within a 10-15 minute walk of every resident. **Community Parks** (15-100 acres) and **Large Natural Areas** (20+ acres) should be located within a 5 minute drive or 15 minute bike ride of every resident.
- » A **Large Picnic Shelter** or a **Small Multi-Purpose Building** should be located in every Community Park, with the type of structure dependent on the other uses and activities located within each particular park.
- » As the community continues to grow, new development areas should be targeted for new parks, while existing parks should be continually maintained and enhanced to keep pace with the increasing population.

Natural Areas + Sustainability

Natural areas provide a link between people and their environment; a fact that is becoming increasingly important to communities across the nation. There are many opportunities for Rochester's parks and recreation system to connect people to nature while positively impacting the ecosystem.

- » Expanding **nature-based programming, outreach, and educational opportunities** will spread the word about the value of natural resources.
- » Moving forward, areas of natural value should be **preserved from development**, especially those that offer connections between existing parks and other destinations.
- » Incorporating sustainable and innovative design and maintenance practices will make Rochester a **model for sustainability**.

Programming

Users engage in recreational programming for enjoyment, health, skill development, socialization, enrichment, entertainment, physical fitness, and relaxation. The majority of Rochester's programming is successfully provided by private organizations and associations, which the parks and recreation department will continue to support by addressing gaps and spreading awareness.

- » Collaborating with cultural groups, schools, neighborhoods, and other partners should continue to provide recreational opportunities and community events that are **accessible to all ages and income levels**.
- » Informal, or self-direction, recreation should be established and promoted.

Trails + Public Health

Trails are an essential component of an accessible recreation system; creating safe and equitable connections between park amenities and supporting a healthy and active population. An extensive trail network combines with the rest of the parks and recreation initiatives to forward public health and Rochester's Healthy City Image.

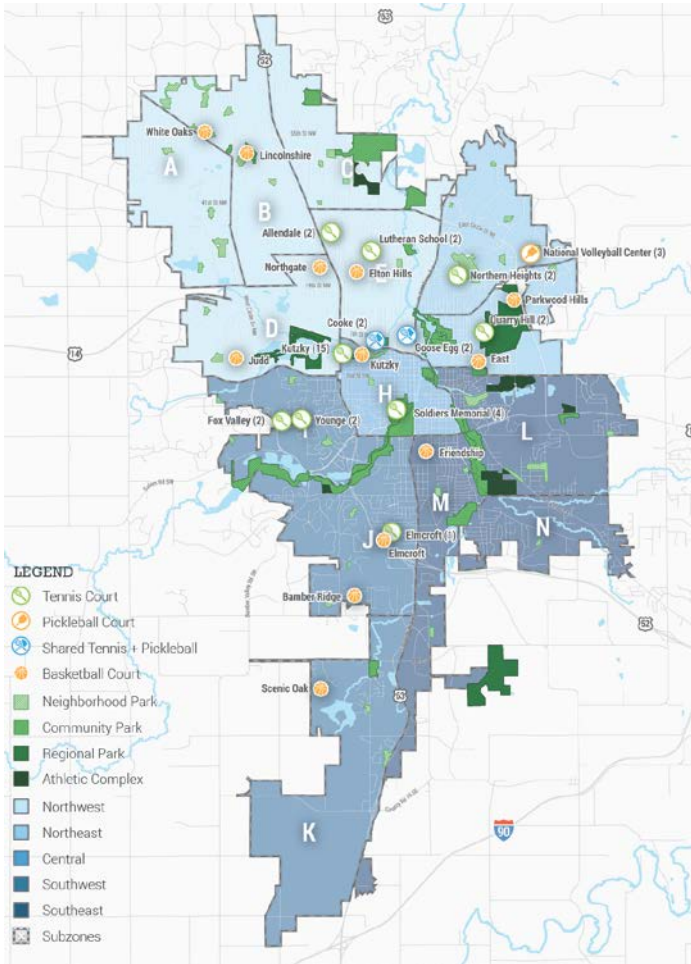
- » To maximize the amount of connections offered to every resident, the number of cross-city trails and recreational trail loops should be expanded.
- » Diversifying and expanding the types of trails offered (i.e. paved, natural surface, mountain biking, cross-country skiing) will serve a larger audience of users.
- » Supporting the use of trails for active transportation to daily destinations will promote both sustainable transportation and healthy living.
- » Parks and recreation should be leveraged to maximize public health and well-being by encouraging activating living, seeking and supporting partnerships to address public health, exploring and communicating health benefits associated with parks and recreation, and creating a 'Find Your Healthy Place' campaign.

Public Art

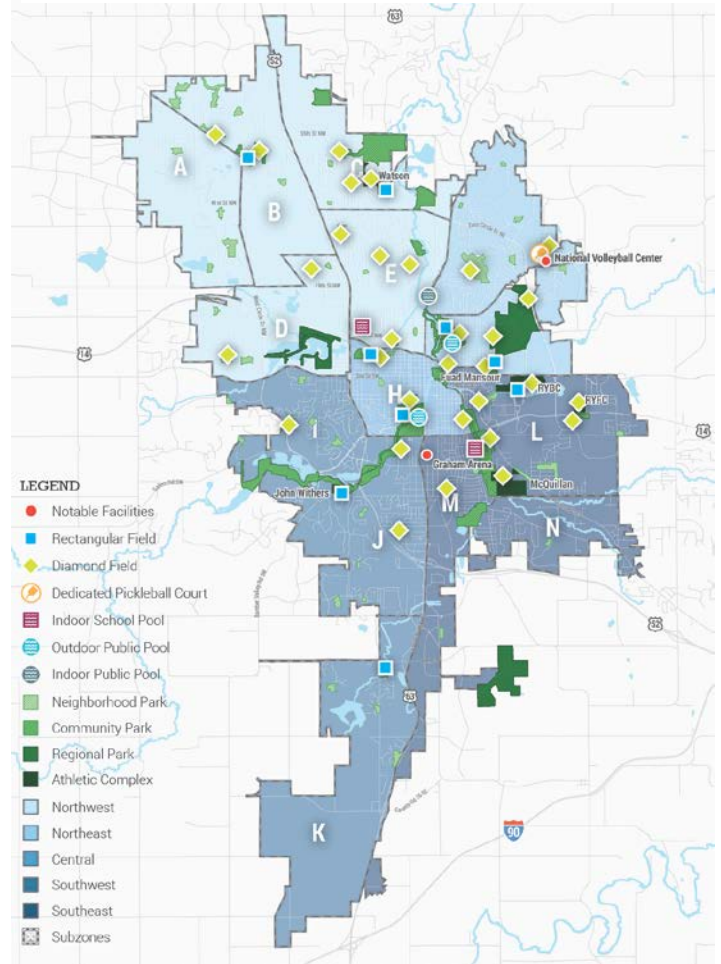
A thriving arts and cultural community is considered vital to creating a vibrant community.

- » Incorporating permanent and temporary forms of public art throughout the park system will enhance livability and economic vitality, bring diverse groups of people together, celebrate history and heritage, enhance learning, raise awareness of social issues, and bring beauty and meaning to the built environment.

INFORMAL RECREATION FACILITY DISTRIBUTION (BASKETBALL, TENNIS, & PICKLEBALL)



LOCAL AND REGIONAL TOURNAMENT FACILITIES DISTRIBUTION



Facilities

Rochester's parks and recreation system offers a wide range of recreational facilities, which are distributed differently based on the varied needs of users participating in informal recreation, practice, local leagues, regional tournaments, or specialized recreation.

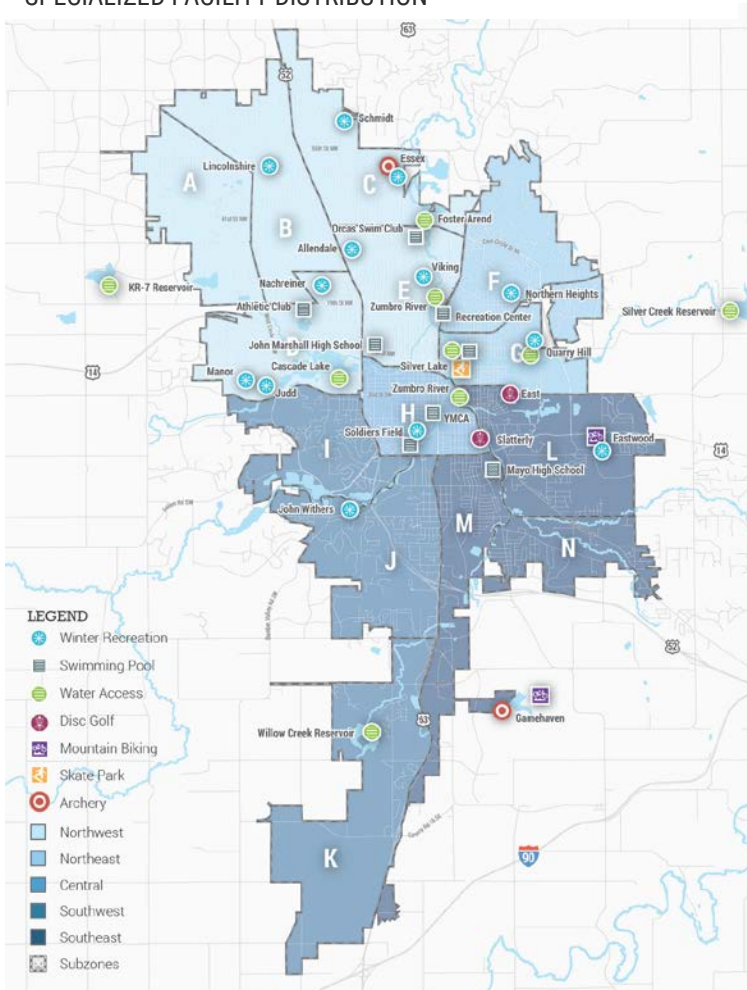
Informal Facilities

- » Provide a set of 2 to 4 Tennis Courts in each zone and one set of 7 courts in a community park.
- » Provide a dedicated Pickleball Facility at a community park and stripe at least one tennis court for pickleball in each zone.
- » Provide one, small Multi-Purpose Building per zone.
- » Provide at least one full-sized Basketball Court per zone in a Community Park and at least one half-court within each subzone.
- » Maintain Aquatics at the Recreation Center and the beaches. Replace the lap pool at Soldiers Field and add a children's activity area and pool activities like water basketball and climbing wall. Add small interactive water features throughout the City to provide free access to water play.

Tournament Facilities

- » Provide a set of 2 to 3 Baseball/Softball Fields in each zone and utilize Watson, McQuillan and RYSA for tournaments.
- » Provide a set of 2 to 3 Rectangular Fields (soccer, football, lacrosse) per zone, maintain Fuad Mansour, and develop a new complex with 10 to 12 fields. Continue to offer multi-purpose fields at Soldiers Field, Kutzky, and East parks. Make sure half of all parks in each zone have open turf areas for pick-up games.
- » Maintain the Recreation Center, National Volleyball Center, and Graham Arena.

SPECIALIZED FACILITY DISTRIBUTION



Specialized Facilities

- » Maintain and manage Golf Courses to meet demands and marketplace trends.
- » Provide Mountain Biking at 3 locations distributed throughout the City.
- » Provide 4 Disc Golf Courses distributed throughout the City.
- » Expand and improve the Silver Lake Skate Park.
- » Maintain and expand 2 Archery Facilities.
- » Provide 4 Dog Parks distributed throughout the City.
- » Make sure each zone has at least one outdoor Hockey/Skating Rink, identify 2 to 3 locations for Sledding, and provide locations for Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing.
- » Maintain Aquatics at the Recreation Center and the beaches. Replace the lap pool at Soldiers Field and add a children’s activity area and pool activities like water basketball and climbing wall. Add small interactive water features throughout the City to provide free access to water play.

Implementation

Achieving the vision set forth in the Parks and Recreation System Plan will take additional funding, not only for big, exciting, new facilities like a regional park or interactive water feature, but for neighborhood park revitalization, new programs, and outreach, etc. The City needs to ensure that adequate funding is available by identifying and regularly communicating system funding needs, expanding and diversifying funding sources, and maximizing the use of volunteers to support system development and operations. The System Plan identifies initiatives for the next 20 years in the areas of Facilities, Marketing, Programming and Events, and Operations. It is estimated that the priorities identified will cost \$70 to \$83 million to implement. Top priorities are listed below.

Facilities

- » Development of Cascade and Gamehaven Regional Parks
- » Completion of Quarry Hill Improvements
- » Modernization of facilities/addition of user amenities

Marketing

- » Improve department website and social media presence
- » Improve system awareness and navigation through improved signage, wayfinding, and maps

Programming + Events

- » Program and support partners’ events to draw residents to parks and recreation facilities
- » Low-cost/low commitment trial programs

Operations

- » Improve system maintenance and cleanliness
- » Expand volunteerism

