

# 5 Goals and Guidelines

## **Parks, Recreation & Open Space Goals**

The following parks and recreation goals are based on draft goals of the Imagine Bloomington 2025 Strategic Plan with additional goals added to reflect the Parks and Recreation Division mission and community needs (See Appendix A for the Parks and Recreation Goals).

1. Maintain and enhance city park and recreational assets.
2. Anticipate the needs of the changing community and structure programs and facilities accordingly.
3. Preserve and maintain our natural resources for ourselves and future generations.
4. Enhance the City's arts, cultural, and historic assets.
5. Promote a sense of community through recreation programming.
6. Connect the community with trails, walks and bikeways.
7. Build community support for parks and recreation.

## **Park and Facility Guidelines**

### **Level of Service Standards**

Future demand for parkland and facilities is based on comparing projected populations with recognized level of service standards and responding to changing trends. Park and recreation needs are also related directly to the characteristics of a city's population. For example, areas with more young children require outdoor recreation opportunities close to home and within comfortable walking distance. Areas with older populations can benefit from having passive open spaces located near residential areas, community centers, and transit to accommodate senior activities. A balance of parks and facilities is necessary to accommodate the population mix. Because of changing demographics over time, facilities need to be flexible enough to meet changing demands for services.

The concept of level of service standards for parks and playgrounds was first introduced by the Playground Association of America and the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) in the early 1900s. NRPA first published the National Park, Recreation and Open Space Standards in 1971, which guided park and recreation agencies throughout the major growth years of the 1970s. Over the past 30 years, the NRPA has been involved in the refinement of standards for parks, recreation, and open space. These standards are used throughout the United States; however, it should be recognized that standards such as these represent only one measure of a successful park system and a “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate for all cities. Standards do not measure the qualitative factors of a park system. For a complete analysis of a park system, both qualitative and quantitative factors should be considered. The Master Plan recommendations consider the unique qualities, needs, and opportunities found in Bloomington; however, there are two basic sets of standards or benchmarks used by the NRPA for park system evaluation which are informative:

1. Park classifications – classifications based on park use and function, including geographic and population service guidelines.
2. Recreation facility guidelines – guideline for minimum facility needs based on population or area.

#### Updated Park Classifications

The existing park classifications found in the City’s [2000 Comprehensive Plan](#) (See Figure 2.9) are not well aligned to the function of the City’s parks. As a result, the park classifications have been updated and are shown in Figure 5.2 along with their use, function and a summary of total acreage of each type of city park, or classification. Park classifications are intended to act as a general guide to park planning, acquisition and use. A summary of parks by new classification, quantity and acreage can be found on Figure 5.1

**Figure 5.1 - Park Classification Summary, 2008**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Playlot	19	32.15
Neighborhood Park	23	218.03
Community Park	7	202.04
Community Playfield	4	122.40
Pond	18	113.10
Large Urban Park	2	369.75
Regional Park	2	961.22
Conservation Area	14	1,564.75
Special Use Area	8	203.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>3,787.43</b>
* Figures do not include Regional, State, Federal, School or other non-City owned open space.		

#### Park Classification Changes

**Conservation Parks** - The park classification fits well with the Bloomington Park System; however, the term Conservation Park does not accurately describe the character or function of the storm ponds within the park system. The definition of Conservation Parks have been modified and those parks that are primarily storm ponds with limited conservation value have been reclassified (See Ponds Classification).

**Corridor Parks** - Nine Mile Creek is the only park in the system classified as a Corridor Park. The term corridor park gives the connotation of public access. Nine Mile Creek Park only has access across the creek and no access along the length of the corridor. Furthermore, the corridor itself appears to have more conservation value than recreation value. This park has been reclassified as a Conservation Park and the Corridor Park classification has been deleted.

**Figure 5.2 - Park Classifications, 2007**

<b>PLAYLOT/MINI-PARK</b>	
<i>Use:</i>	Intended for families with children up to ten years of age in areas that cannot be served by a neighborhood park service area. Usually includes play apparatus and turf areas. Area considered a Mini-Park if no play apparatus is provided.
<i>Service Area:</i>	1/3 Mile Radius
<i>Size:</i>	1 to 2 Acres
<i>Location:</i>	Spaced throughout the community to serve neighborhoods. Frequently within neighborhood playgrounds or community parks.
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD PARK</b>	
<i>Use:</i>	Intended to meet primary recreation needs of a neighborhood. Focus is on family and informal play needs of 5 to 17 year olds. Usually includes play apparatus and areas for field games, court games and skating.
<i>Service Area:</i>	1/2 Mile Radius
<i>Size:</i>	5 to 10 Acres
<i>Location:</i>	Spaced throughout the community to serve neighborhoods. Can co-locate with elementary schools.
<b>COMMUNITY PARK</b>	
<i>Use:</i>	Intended for use by all ages. Usually includes areas of natural or ornamental quality for walking, bicycling, viewing, sitting or picnicking. Often includes a playlot.
<i>Service Area:</i>	Two Mile Radius
<i>Size:</i>	10-50 Acres
<i>Location:</i>	Determined by existing natural features.
<b>COMMUNITY PLAYFIELD</b>	
<i>Use:</i>	Emphasis on facilities for organized and individual sports. Usually includes lighted athletic fields, areas for court games and skating.
<i>Service Area:</i>	20 minute driving distance
<i>Size:</i>	20-80 Acres
<i>Location:</i>	Determined by existing topography and good transportation access.
<b>LARGE URBAN PARK</b>	
<i>Use:</i>	Attractive natural features contrast to urban environment. Caters to nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as picnicking, boating, walking and skiing.
<i>Service Area:</i>	Southwest metropolitan area
<i>Size:</i>	100+ Acres
<i>Location:</i>	Determined by existing natural features.
<b>REGIONAL PARK</b>	
<i>Use:</i>	Continuous or groupings of open spaces offering facilities/activities (trails, picnic, wildlife observation, water sports, etc.) determined by natural assets. Extent of active recreation development area is typically limited to a proportion of park area. Much of park retained in a natural state.
<i>Service Area:</i>	Twin Cities Metropolitan Area
<i>Size:</i>	250 + Acres
<i>Location:</i>	Determined by existing natural features.
<b>CONSERVATION AREA</b>	
<i>Use:</i>	Protects natural environment, wildlife habitat and scenic quality rather than satisfying demand for recreation opportunities. Secondary, passive or active recreation uses can coexist with primary conservation function.
<i>Service Area:</i>	Local and Twin Cities Metropolitan Area
<i>Size:</i>	20 + Acres
<i>Location:</i>	Determined by existing natural features.
<b>POND AREA</b>	
<i>Use:</i>	Ensures proper functioning of hydrologic systems. Provides some scenic observation.
<i>Service Area:</i>	Watershed and sub-watersheds
<i>Size:</i>	Varies
<i>Location:</i>	Proximity to water resources.
<b>SPECIAL USE AREAS</b>	
<i>Use:</i>	Preserves and maintain buildings, sites, or objects of historical, or archeological significance. Provide for community activities such as golf courses, fine arts, indoor ice facilities, gymnasiums, etc.
<i>Service Area:</i>	Varied
<i>Size:</i>	Varied
<i>Location:</i>	Where resources occur.
<b>SCHOOL/PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITIES</b>	
<i>Use:</i>	Recreation facilities on private or school property that typically provide some level of recreation and access to the public. Public use is typically formalized with an agreement or easement for public use. Development and maintenance costs are often shared with the City.
<i>Service Area:</i>	Varied
<i>Size:</i>	Varied
<i>Location:</i>	School district or private property

Playlots/Mini-Parks - The Playlot classification fits well with the Bloomington Park System; however there are several Playlots with no play apparatus. Playlots with no apparatus will be referred to as Mini-Parks to better address the distinction.

Neighborhood Parks - The classification fits well with the Bloomington Park System. There are several neighborhood parks that have been reclassified based on their function primarily as conservation areas or ponds.

School/Private Recreation Facility - There are many schools or private recreation facilities that are utilized by the Park System by joint powers agreements. These facilities should be recognized distinctly from City Parks, yet recognized as contributing to the park system with their own classification referred as School/Private Recreation Facility.

Special Use Areas - Golf courses have been added to the special use area category and do not need their own category and the Golf Course classification has been deleted.

Ponds - Many of the Conservation Parks identified in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan are pond areas that serve primarily a storm water utility function. These have been given a new classification; Ponds. Many of these areas have maintenance and protection guidelines under the 1997 Wetland Protection and Management Plan.

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### **Recreation Facility Guidelines**

The NRPA recreation facility guidelines are the most recognized guide to minimum recreation facility needs within a community. The City of Bloomington at present does not have any formal guidelines in which to measure facility needs.

The guidelines presented in Figure 5.3 are a modified version of standards prepared by the NRPA in 1990. The NRPA standards have been modified to take into account changing recreation “wants” (e.g., increased participation in soccer, lacrosse, etc.) and to more accurately reflect facility “needs” in the City of Bloomington. The Recreation Facility Guidelines contain a summary of minimum standards by facility type (e.g., basketball court or football field). The guidelines and criteria should be used as a guide to meeting minimum facility needs. The guidelines are flexible to account for changing local demands and specific conditions.

**Figure 5.3 - Recreation Facility Guidelines**

Activity/Facility	Space Requirements	Recommended Size & Dimensions	Recommended Orientation	Minimum Number per Population	Minimum Service Radius	Notes
Outdoor Basketball	2,400-3,100 sq. ft.	Full court: 46' - 50' x 84' with 5' unobstructed space on all sides Half Court: 40' x 40'	Long axis north-south	Full Court: 1 per 5,000 Half Court: 1 per 3,000	¼ to ½ mile	Usually at a school or community park  Half court typically in neighborhood parks
Ice Hockey	22,000 sq. ft. including support area plus parking	Rink 85' x 200' (minimum 85' x 185') + additional support area	Long axis north-south	Outdoor - 1/3,000 Indoor - 1/20,000	10-15 minutes travel time maximum	Lighted facility. Outdoor rinks usually includes a general skating area
Free Skating	Minimum 20,000 SF	Varies flat terrain for ease of flooding	None		¾ - 1 mile	Lighted facility
Tennis	Minimum of 7,200 SF single court	36' x 78' 12' clearance on both sides; 21' clearance on both sides	Long Axis north-south	1 court per 2,000	½ mile	Best in batteries of two or more. Usually concentrated at schools and community parks and/or spread throughout the city in neighborhood parks
Sand volleyball	Minimum of 2,000 SF	20' x 60' Minimum 6' clearance on all sides	Long Axis north-south	1 court per 7,500	1 mile	Same as other court activities (e.g., basketball, etc.) Sometimes associated with larger rental picnic shelters
Field Hockey	Minimum 1.5 AC	180' x 300' with a minimum of 6' clearance	long axis north to south	1 per 20,000	10-15 minutes travel time	Usually part of sports complex in community park or adjacent to high school
Football	Minimum 1.5 AC	160' x 360' with a minimum of 6' clearance on all sides	Same as field hockey	1 per 20,000	10-15 minutes travel time	Same as field hockey
Baseball Official	Minimum 3.0-3.85 AC	- Base lines - 90' Pitching distance 60 ½' Foul lines min. 320' Center field 400'+	North northeast - South-southwest (home plate to center field)	1/city plus 1 per 5,000 plus lighted - 1 per 15,000	10-15 minute travel time	Lighted fields part of community complex
Little League	Minimum 1.2 AC	Base lines - 60' Pitching distance 46' Foul lines 200' Center field 200'-250'		1 per 5,000	¼ - ½ mile	

**Sources: National Recreation and Parks Association and Hoisington Koegler Group, inc.**

**Figure 5.3 - Recreation Facility Guidelines (continued)**

Activity/ Facility	Space Requirements	Recommended Size & Dimensions	Recommended Orientation	Minimum Number per Population	Minimum Service Radius	Notes
Softball	1.5 to 2.0 AC	Base lines 65' Pitching distance 50' -men, 40' - women. Fast pitch radius from plate - 225', Slow pitch 275'- 320' (men) 265"- 275' (women)	Same as baseball	adult fields 1 / 5,000  Youth fields 1 per 2,500	1-2 miles  ¼ - ½ mile	Sight difference in dimensions for 16" slow pitch. May also be used for youth baseball
Indoor Gym Courts for public use	10,000 SF	120' x 80'	NA	1 per 20,000	10-15 minute travel time	Usually in schools and/or community centers
Swimming Pools	Varies on size of pool & amenities. Usually ½ to 2 AC site + parking	Teaching - Min. 25' x 45' Competitive- min. 25m x 16m. Aquatic - varies. Unusually has zero depth entry and spray/play feature	Indoor NA. Outdoor - None, but requires careful siting of life-guard stations in relation to afternoon sun	1 per 20,000 (pools should accommodat e 3-5% of total population at a time)	15-30 minute travel time	Typically in a community park, school site or stand alone facility
Soccer 1 Full size  2. Age specific	1.7 to 2.1 AC	Full size: 195' to 225' x 300' to 360' with a 10' min. clearance on all sides, plus age appropriate size fields	long axis north to south	1/7,500  1/4,000 people	1-2 miles	Number of fields depends on popularity

**Sources: National Recreation and Parks Association and Hoisington Koegler Group, inc.**