

A *Appendix A*

Park and Recreation Goals and Strategies

Parks and Recreation Goals and Strategies

Introduction

Parks and open spaces, comprising one-third of the total land area of Bloomington, are among the City's most treasured assets. Feedback from the on-line survey, community meetings, and focus groups highlighted the importance of protecting and preserving these assets. Respondents and participants emphasized the need for stewardship of open spaces and natural resources.

Bloomington's recreational programs and facilities bring people together and add to a sense of civic pride and belonging. As a fully developed community, maintaining and updating park and recreational facilities will preserve the value and popularity of the City's park system. Demographic and lifestyle changes will lead to new demands such as for more biking and walking trails or intergenerational programming.

The City's arts, culture, and historic assets add vibrancy and meaning to community life. Residents want places to gather, socialize, and meet one's neighbors. Residents also encourage activities that build a sense of community such as city-wide festivals and events that celebrate Bloomington's cultural diversity.

The Parks and Recreation Goals and Strategies are based on draft parks and recreation goals and strategies from [Imagine Bloomington 2025 Strategic Plan](#) planning process, and modified to reflect the Parks and Recreation Division's Mission and community needs.

Community Values

We have high quality recreation and open spaces available to all.

We support actions that promote our physical and emotional well-being.

We protect and preserve our environmental resources.

We are a community that appeals to families with children.

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.**

Potential Strategies and Actions

1 Goal – Maintain and enhance City park and recreational assets.

Strategy: Keep Parks Master Plan updated and relevant

Review and refine the Park Master Plan annually as needed and do a major update every ten years.

Strategy: Promote community stewardship of parks

Enhance the neighborhood adopt-a-park program.
Solicit private sector sponsorship to support park improvements.
Host a community park clean-up day.
Create a business park stewardship forum.

Strategy: Improve access to and promote use of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR)

Increase the number of bike and pedestrian access points.
Provide connections to the City trail system.
Improve signage for access points.
Coordinate connections to the planned DNR Minnesota Valley river trail.
Partner with U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Friends of Minnesota River Valley to market MVNWR facilities and programming.
Enhance interpretive and educational opportunities in MVNWR.
Replace the Long Meadow Bridge (Old Cedar Ave. Bridge) for bicyclists and pedestrian traffic.
Provide docks and piers for fishing and water access.
Improve Natural Surface Trails to enhance safety and reduce erosion.

Strategy: Create a city-wide loop to link parks and open spaces throughout City

Designate route and provide signage.
Create landscaped boulevards with a continuous bikeway and walkway.
Provide amenities such as public art, gardens, and benches along route.
Create linkages to trail systems in adjacent communities.
Develop maps of City trail system for distribution and on-line reference.

Strategy: Preserve and manage aquatic and terrestrial environments

- Develop and implement control methods for nuisance species such as geese and deer.
- Control invasive plant species.
- Monitor plant and animal disease outbreaks and plan/act accordingly.

Strategy: Use native plants to meet environmental objectives and reduce maintenance requirements

- Use native plants to reduce watering, fertilizing, and mowing.
- Promote the use of native plants as a source of food and shelter for wildlife.
- Restore and manage native prairie where appropriate.

2 Goal – Anticipate the needs of the changing community and structure programs and facilities accordingly.

Strategy: Keep Park Master Plan updated and relevant

- Review and refine the Park Master Plan annually as needed and do a major update every ten years.

Strategy: Modify park and recreational assets to meet a range of needs for an aging population

- Market options and opportunities for passive and unstructured recreation.
- Develop facilities for passive and unstructured recreation to address trends and changing tastes.
- Identify and eliminate barriers to physical accessibility.
- Add loop trail opportunities within parks.

Strategy: Serve a spectrum of age, ability, and interest

- Survey residents biannually to determine needs and trends.
- Implement intergenerational programming.
- Provide recreational and educational opportunities for active adults.

Strategy: Partner with athletic, arts, and business organizations

- Partner with businesses and hotels to identify needs of non-resident population.
- Produce marketing materials to be distributed to hotels and businesses.

Notify hotels of community events to promote visitor participation and enhance the City's reputation as a tourist destination.

Foster partnerships with businesses to develop and provide resources for recreational programs.

Strategy: Improve customer service and marketing to increase participation in programs and knowledge of recreational opportunities

Use census data and participant mapping to locate programs.

Use internet and new technology to provide 24/7 customer service.

Provide translation, work with cultural groups, and recruit leaders to reach an ethnically diverse population.

Provide information on the City's web site and in other publications about parks and facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Gather program feedback on a regular and systematic basis to determine customer needs and seek input from non-users on barriers to participation and programs/service needs.

Use feedback to continue to refine program content, delivery and outreach to increase participation and satisfaction.

Become a clearinghouse for community events, facilities and recreation programs.

Strategy: Emphasize quality programming

Use participant and community feedback to keep programs and activities fresh and appealing.

Benchmark programs annually to determine effectiveness.

Evaluate, retool programs not achieving benchmark targets.

Use pilot programs to determine effectiveness and increase efficiency.

Strategy: Improve program accessibility to allow for broad community participation

Continue to offer programming and facilities to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Continue to develop accessible playgrounds with appropriate equipment for children with disabilities.

Provide an accessible athletic field to promote use by people with disabilities.

Provide grants and scholarships to eliminate financial barriers.

Provide translation, work with cultural groups, and recruit leaders to assist with overcoming language, social, and cultural barriers.

Create a blog to allow networking between program participants.

3 Goal – Preserve and maintain our natural resources for ourselves and future generations.

Strategy: Preserve and maintain our natural resources for ourselves and future generations

Coordinate with Hennepin County development of “Land Cover Mapping Inventory Report”.

Utilize the Land Cover Mapping to prioritize preservation and management activities.

Develop a City policy for delineating and creating wetland buffer zones.

Inform citizens of available maps of areas that are currently considered wetland areas, park-related, and non-buildable areas.

Strategy: Promote community stewardship of natural areas

Create an advisory commission on environmental resources.

Add a natural resource coordinator City staff position.

Be a model for stewardship through city practices, maintenance, operations, land management and facilities.

Coordinate activities for Arbor Day and Earth Day with local neighborhoods and schools.

Develop a public information program and prepare materials on specific areas of environmental interest.

Evaluate the effectiveness of adopt-a-wetland and/or adopt-a-park programs and identify ways to improve these programs.

Continue curbside cleanup and include hazardous household materials such as fluorescent bulbs, thermostats, and paint cans to prevent inappropriate disposal.

Work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MnDNR, and private organizations to establish a trout stream from a bluff seep or stream to the Minnesota River.

Develop programs to reconnect families and children to nature.

Add natural resource and environmental interpretation/education signs and information in conservation areas and during environmental management activities.

Strategy: Continue development of existing stormwater maintenance and management policies and programs

Implement and enhance City policies and criteria for stormwater maintenance activities consistent with planning objectives for development.

Implement and enhance criteria to determine ponding requirements, acceptable storm sewer drain expectations, and reasonable sediment levels.

Evaluate best management practices to improve storm water management techniques and reduce levels of pollutants in water.

Encourage broad citizen participation in the development of policies, programs, and criteria for stormwater management.

Strategy: Partner with agencies, organizations and businesses to enhance natural resource access and management.

Leverage available resources by pursuing co-funded and or cooperative agreements for provision and maintenance of natural resources and management.

Support public and private efforts to acquire, develop and maintain open space for public use.

Take advantage of opportunities that arise from redevelopment activities to add to or to enhance access to the City's open space and natural resources while protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

Form a trail coalition of surrounding communities and stakeholders to lobby and fund the development of a trail along the MN River from Fort Snelling to LeSueur.

Work with partner agencies to develop an appropriate trail signage that provides way-finding and education and interpretation of the natural resources.

Develop an "adopt a park" program for maintenance and management of open spaces and natural resources.

Work to enhance appropriate access to natural resource and conservation areas.

Strategy: Develop and implement sustainable practices

Integrate low-impact development techniques into stormwater management plans for development and redevelopment projects.

Cut energy use in vehicles and equipment

Partner with environmental groups to provide educational opportunities.

Hold an annual "green business" awards ceremony.

Promote the use of native plants in landscaping.

Sign the U.S. Mayors Conference Climate Protection Agreement.

4 Goal – Enhance the City’s arts, cultural, and historic assets.

Strategy: Integrate public art into community life

Designate locations for public art.

Seek sponsors for creation of public art.

Hold an annual art fair.

Integrate art into park and public space improvement projects. This can be free-standing art elements or artistically designed infrastructure, such as fences, benches, lighting, etc.

Strategy: Increase opportunities to participate in arts and culture activities

Provide informal/drop-in activities for people of all ages.

Increase the variety and number of opportunities for interactive participation.

Partner with the Bloomington Fine Arts Council to bring art and cultural activities into neighborhoods.

Strategy: Increase arts activity to embrace the ethnic diversity of Bloomington

Build on the popularity of the Latino music festival and provide similar events focused on other cultures.

Create another multi-ethnic food and culture festival.

Strategy: Identify and preserve sites and properties of historic significance

Increase programming to educate residents about the region’s history, including Native American history, and preservation of historic assets.

Adopt evaluation criteria for potential sites and properties to be added to the Bloomington Historical Register.

Rebuild the historic barn at Pond-Dakota Mission Park.

Work with Bloomington Historical Society to improve quality of artifacts and interpretation of the BHS museum and collections.

5 Goal – Promote a sense of community through recreation programming and facilities.

Strategy: Distribute community events geographically across the quadrants of the City

Match park attributes to prospective events.

Use census data and participant mapping to determine likely popularity of specific events with neighborhoods.

Use block clubs to plan and promote neighborhood events.

Strategy: Develop community gathering locations

Build a community or neighborhood center(s).

Develop Normandale Lake Park to improve profile and access for large community gatherings.

Develop a lawn games location.

Strategy: Promote informal and casual gatherings

Schedule neighborhood get-togethers at picnic shelters.

Coordinate a community garden.

Identify and promote a “Game of the Week” to encourage casual get-togethers.

Strategy: Increase arts activity to embrace the ethnic diversity of Bloomington

Include shows for children and diverse cultures at Center for the Arts concert series.

Increase profile and marketing of the Latin music festival.

Add another ethnic festival.

Strategy: Host a City-wide community festival

Partner with civic organizations to form a festival planning committee.

Hold events in various locations across City of Bloomington.

Include a variety of activities to appeal to the diverse community.

Seek volunteers and sponsors to finance, plan, and run the festival.

Strategy: Develop/improve facilities and parks to enhance sense of community.

Evaluate Community Center needs, benefits and feasibility.

Develop signature facilities in parks to serve as neighborhood focal points and icons.

Determine the role of park buildings in neighborhood activities.

6 Goal – Connect the community with trails, walks and bikeways.

Strategy: Adopt an Alternative Transportation Plan.

Identify planned bike trails, lanes, routes and sidewalks.

Pursue non-motorized transportation implementation and funding strategies.

Support Active Living movement in facilities, events and programs.

Integrates parks with transportation, transit and other destinations.

Strategy: Improve bicycle and pedestrian access across highways and major roads and the Minnesota River.

Replace the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge trail crossing.

Add safe and convenient bike and pedestrian crossings of I-494, I-35W, TH 169 and TH 77.

Strategy: Connect to neighboring cities trails and bikeway systems.

Add a trail from I-494 to the Minnesota River Valley largely within the Xcel Energy power line corridor. Work with Richfield and Minneapolis to extend that trail north to the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes.

Work to develop a MN River valley trail from Fort Snelling to LeSueur.

7 Goal – Build community support for parks and recreation.

Strategy: Increase outreach and communications with advocacy groups, partners, the business community and others about recreation system needs and benefits.

Adopt a challenge grant program to leverage and match private and foundation funds with public dollars.

Add a business liaison to the Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission.

Highlight the economic and quality of life benefits of parks, trails, recreation and open space.

Engage businesses and employees in active living actions and facility development.

Strategy: Utilize a VIP (Vision, Insight and Planning) approach to positioning parks and recreation as a vital element of a quality community.

Consistently portray the benefits of parks and recreation in “Creating Community Through People, Parks and Programs”.

Market sustainable actions and initiatives to build community good will.

Strategy: Adopt and fund a facility management/replacement program for park infrastructure.

Identify the life-cycle and replacement costs for key park and recreation facilities such as shelters, trails, playgrounds, parking areas, and lighting.

Budget the replacement cost of these assets over their life cycles and fund replacement through the general fund.

If necessary, pursue localized benefit assessment districts to fund area park facility replacement/renovation.

Strategy: Develop collaborative partnerships with individuals, businesses, public, private and non-profit organizations, schools and associations to build support for parks and recreation.

Work with other fellow parks and recreation departments in other municipalities to promote and provide special event services.

Develop challenge grants for park and recreation facility improvements.

Update Joint Use and Programming Agreements with the school district, college and other entities serving residents to maximize public access to community resources.

Establish and maintain ongoing formal relationships with partners to facilitate communication, needs identification and program delivery.

Establish agreements and relationships with service clubs to enhance program opportunities through the sharing of resources.

Create an “adopt a park” program for parks and open space maintenance and management