# City of Edina

PARK, RECREATION AND TRAILS

# STRATEGIC PLAN

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

A number of key stakeholders from the Community have provided invaluable input into the creation of this Strategic Plan including:

School/ Community Ed. Groups

Athletic Associations

Arts and Culture

Top 10 Business Organizations

Environmental Groups

Neighborhood Groups

Agency Commissions

Civic Groups

City Staff

Park Maintenance Staff

## CONSULTANTS

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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS & ABBREVIATIONS

B3 - Buildings, Benchmarks & Beyond Guidelines - State of MN guidelines for sustainability of general bond funding projects within the State.

BMP - Best Management Practice (referring to stormwater practices for the sake of this document)

CAPRA - Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies

CWRMP - Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan

DNR - Department of Natural Resources

EAB - Emerald Ash Borer

EPRB - Edina Parks and Recreation Board

ESRI - an international supplier of Geographic Information System software, web GIS and geodatabase management applications

FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency

FFE - Furniture, Fittings, and Equipment

FTE - Full Time Equivalents

GIS - Geographic Information System

LEED - Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

LOS - Level of Service Standards

MCWD - Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

MPCA - The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

MPI - Market Potential Index

NMCWD - Nine Mile Creek Watershed District

NRPA - National Recreation and Park Association

SITES - Sustainable Sites Initiative

SFIA - Sports and Fitness Industry Association

STORMWATER - is water that originates during precipitation evens and snow and ice melt.

SWOT - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

WAYFINDING - encompasses all of the ways in which people orient and navigate from place to place

UFTF - Urban Forestry Task Force (City of Edina Initiative)

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# 1.0
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PROJECT PROCESS

The foundation of the Strategic Plan was the compilation of a number of different public input sessions, stakeholder input, staff and city official insight, and consultant experience and expertise. It was important to engage community members who enjoy participating in the planning process and encourage participation among those members that typically do not contribute. The consultant team conducted a series of 14 focus groups with key stakeholders of the Department. Focus groups took place in December of 2014, and solicited valuable input from more than one hundred individuals. Participants included residents, community leaders, business owners, recreation providers, athletic associations, civic groups, neighborhood associations, environmental organizations, departmental staff, maintenance staff, City Council, the Executive Leadership Team, and the Park Board. The information received from these community input processes was applied to the overall planning process and was combined with the expertise of the consultant team, benchmarking data, standards from the National Recreation and Parks Association and best practices from other communities. This is critical when accurately articulating the true unmet needs, addressing key issues, providing recommendations for change, and strategizing to move the Department forward for optimum results.

The Community Values Model ™ was modified to provide the foundations of the Edina Parks Recreation and Trails Strategic Plan. The Community Values Model ™ is an innovative process to utilize comprehensive public input and insight in a meaningful way. Input, guidance, and values from key community leaders, stakeholders, and the general public were used to create overall guiding principles and values of the community related to the delivery of parks, recreation facilities, and program services. The model is then used as the basis for developing or reaffirming the vision, mission, and goals for the strategic plan. The strategic objectives address unique areas of parks and recreation planning that guide the plan.

# EDINA TODAY

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

Community profile looked at demographics and similar providers in order to help understand what Edina is today and how they could potentially be tomorrow. This is an important step to evaluate how the Edina Parks and Recreation Department (EPRD) is meeting the needs of current residents and what gaps or opportunities are present now, and compared to projected demographics in the future. Overall, findings from this analysis inform the plan's strategic recommendations to keep the EPRD relevant to the population of today and tomorrow.

### Demographics

Although Edina is growing in size rather slowly, it is aging at a notable pace – with nearly half of the population projected to be 55 or older by the year 2029. Income characteristics reflect levels above state and national rates, suggesting cost is less of a barrier to parks and recreation activities than in other communities. The demographics analysis clearly suggest that addressing Edina's aging population should be a focus for EPRD now and into the future.

### Similar Providers

The similar provider analysis is intended to help the Department understand and plan their role in delivering parks and recreation services amid the landscape of other providers from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The analysis identifies potential gaps and overlaps in service delivery and helps the City assess their market share. It can also be used as a tool for the Department to stay competitive in terms of pricing, location, time, and quality of service.

One of the key findings from the analysis shows that EPRD is one of the community's few providers of Adaptive Recreation and Adult Athletic programming. And while there are multiple providers of Youth Athletic programming, most do so in collaboration with the EPRD. Areas for ongoing monitoring and coordination include Arts, Senior, Special Event, and Youth programming.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A critical element of the parks and recreation master planning process is community engagement, which is necessary to effectively deliver a community-oriented parks and recreation system. A balanced, open, and collaborative engagement process builds community-wide trust in the plan and the planning process. Community engagement for this project was carefully planned in order to accurately capture all major community needs and included conducting focus groups, public workshops, stakeholder and staff interviews, and a statistically-valid community survey. Several needs and desired amenities were identified. This list of items and programs was utilized throughout the

Strategic Plan's analysis to inform recommendations and all of the analysis was combined to distinguish between "wish list" items and those that are critical to meeting EPRD's mission and values.

Through the exploration of the focus group meetings, the community workshop and the community survey, the following were identified as priorities:

- Walking and Biking Trails are a high priority amongst the community, and supported by the City of Edina Park and Recreation staff. Mountain bike trails have also been shown to have strong support.
- The community and the Department would like to see increased natural areas within parks, including nature trails, and invasive species control (such as Buckthorn).
- The Department has been praised for the outstanding service to youth recreation, however with the aging community in mind, many residents would like to see more opportunities for seniors and passive recreation in the parks.
- Parking is at a premium at parks hosting organized sports.
- An indoor fitness facility is desired by some in the community, including an indoor walking/jogging track and an indoor pool.
- Budget and funding is a high priority. It was expressed that alternative funding sources should be explored.
- Park signage and wayfinding methods are in need of improvement.
- The Department leadership is praised and there is an overall satisfaction with the Edina Parks System.

### LEADERS AMONG BENCHMARKS IN:

- Park acreage/ resident
- Ice sheet facilities
- Cost recovery for operating expenses

### AVERAGE AMONG BENCHMARKS IN:

- Operations budget
- Capital budget
- Staffing (operations and programming)
- Rectangular athletic fields
- Trails and total trail mileage (near bottom third)

### BEHIND AMONG BENCHMARKS IN:

- Indoor recreation space
- Capital budget sources
- Expenditures distributed to planning and development

## BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

A benchmark analysis provides a side-by-side look between EPRD and similar, industry-leading park and recreation systems nationwide in terms of park acreage, recreation facilities, staffing levels, budget, and a variety of other operational metrics. A total of eight benchmark agencies were selected for comparison to Edina based upon comparable demographic characteristics and best practice recognition, such as earning accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), and placing as finalists or winners of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Gold Medal Award. While differences exist in how each agency tracks and reports data, the overall objective of the benchmark analysis is to understand how Edina compares to these peer agencies on key system characteristics and operational measures. Benchmarking is just one of several technical assessment tools used by the planning team to develop recommendations that are specific to Edina's unique circumstances and issues.

Results from the benchmark analysis show that Edina is a leader in providing park acreage per resident; in providing ice sheet facilities; and cost recovery for operating expenses. The city ranks in the middle of the benchmark range in terms of operational budget; capital budget; staffing; and rectangular athletic fields. Edina lags behind other benchmark communities in indoor recreation space; trail mileage; capital budget sources; and distribution of expenditures for planning and development.

## LEVEL OF SERVICE

The Level of Service Analysis (LOS) produces guidelines that inform investment decisions related to parks, facilities and other built amenities. It puts Edina's inventory of parkland and facilities in terms of "units per population" and creates recommendations based upon National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines; recreation activity participation rates reported by the Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2014 Study of Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Participation as it applies to activities that occur in the United States and in the Edina area; community and stakeholder input; the 2014 Community Needs Assessment Survey; and the planning team's observations. The LOS analysis can also help identify future gaps in facilities and services compared to demographic projections. The following is the LOS summary for Edina.

| PARKS: | 2014 Facility Standards | | | 2019 Facility Standards | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Park Type | Meet Standard/ Need Exists | Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed | | Meet Standard/ Need Exists | Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed | |
| Mini Parks | Need Exists | 7 | Acre(s) | Need Exists | 8 | Acre(s) |
| Neighborhood Parks | Meets Standard | - | Acre(s) | Meets Standard | - | Acre(s) |
| Community Parks | Need Exists | 21 | Acre(s) | Need Exists | 34 | Acre(s) |
| Special-Use Parks | Meets Standard | - | Acre(s) | Meets Standard | - | Acre(s) |
| Open Space/Greenway | Need Exists | 27 | Acre(s) | Need Exists | 36 | Acre(s) |
| Total Park Acres | Meets Standard | - | Acre(s) | Meets Standard | - | Acre(s) |
| OUTDOOR AMENITIES: | | | | | | |
| Picnic Pavilions (Small & Medium) | Need Exists | 3 | Sites(s) | Need Exists | 3 | Sites(s) |
| Pavilions (Large & Indoor) | Need Exists | 2 | Sites(s) | Need Exists | 2 | Sites(s) |
| Baseball Fields | Need Exists | 1 | Field(s) | Need Exists | 2 | Field(s) |
| Softball Fields | Need Exists | 1 | Field(s) | Need Exists | 2 | Field(s) |
| Multi-Use Field (Soccer/Lacrosse/Football/Rugby) (Youth Size) | Need Exists | 2 | Field(s) | Need Exists | 2 | Field(s) |
| Multi-Use Field (Soccer/Lacrosse/Football/Rugby) (Adult Size) | Need Exists | 5 | Field(s) | Need Exists | 1 | Field(s) |
| Outdoor Basketball Courts | Need Exists | 3 | Court(s) | Need Exists | 4 | Court(s) |
| Tennis Courts | Meets Standard | - | Court(s) | Meets Standard | - | Court(s) |
| Indoor Ice Sheets | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) |
| Outdoor Ice Sheets | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) |
| Playgrounds (Youth & Tot) | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) |
| Dog Parks | Need Exists | 1 | Site(s) | Need Exists | 1 | Site(s) |
| Volleyball Pit | Need Exists | 1 | Site(s) | Need Exists | 2 | Site(s) |
| Skate Board Area | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) |
| Multi-Use Trails (Miles) | Need Exists | 23 | Mile(s) | Need Exists | 15 | Mile(s) |
| Community Gardens | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) |
| Disc Golf Courses | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) |
| Outdoor Pools | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) |
| INDOOR AMENITIES: | | | | | | |
| Recreation Centers (Square Feet) | Need Exists | 55,252 | Square Feet | Need Exists | 59,008 | Square Feet |

*Figure 1.1 - Level of Service Summary*

## ENTERPRISE FACILITIES

Braemar
- Braemar Golf Course
- Braemar Arena
- Braemar Field

Centennial Lakes
Edinborough
Rosland
- Edina Aquatic Center
- Edina Art Center

## SPECIAL USE PARKS AND FACILITIES

Arneson Acres
Braemar
Bredesen
Edina Promenade
Frank Tupa Park
Nine Mile Creek Trail
Van Valkenburg
Yorktown
Senior Center

## COMMUNITY PARKS

Creek Valley
Fred Richards
Garden Park
Highlands
Lewis
Pamela
Todd
Walnut Ridge

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Alden
Arden
Cornelia School
Countryside
Normandale
Strachauer
Utley
Weber
Wooddale

## MINI PARKS

Birchcrest
Browndale
Chowen
Fox Meadow
Heights
Lake Edina
McGuire
Melody Lake
Robert J. Kojetin
Sherwood
St. John's
Tingdale
Williams
York

## PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

It is important to classify the types of parks located within Edina to understand what functions and facilities currently provided in comparison to those recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). These classifications are based on NRPA definitions; staff and consultant analysis; and field visits. Defining park classifications helps establish a standard for level of service to the residents and future recommendations on facility development or improvement. The parks were grouped and categorized to assist in planning efforts, level of service expectation, as well as future planning efforts (e.g. facilities standards, maintenance needs, etc.). Figure 1.2 shows the classifications of ERPD parks and the recommended service area.

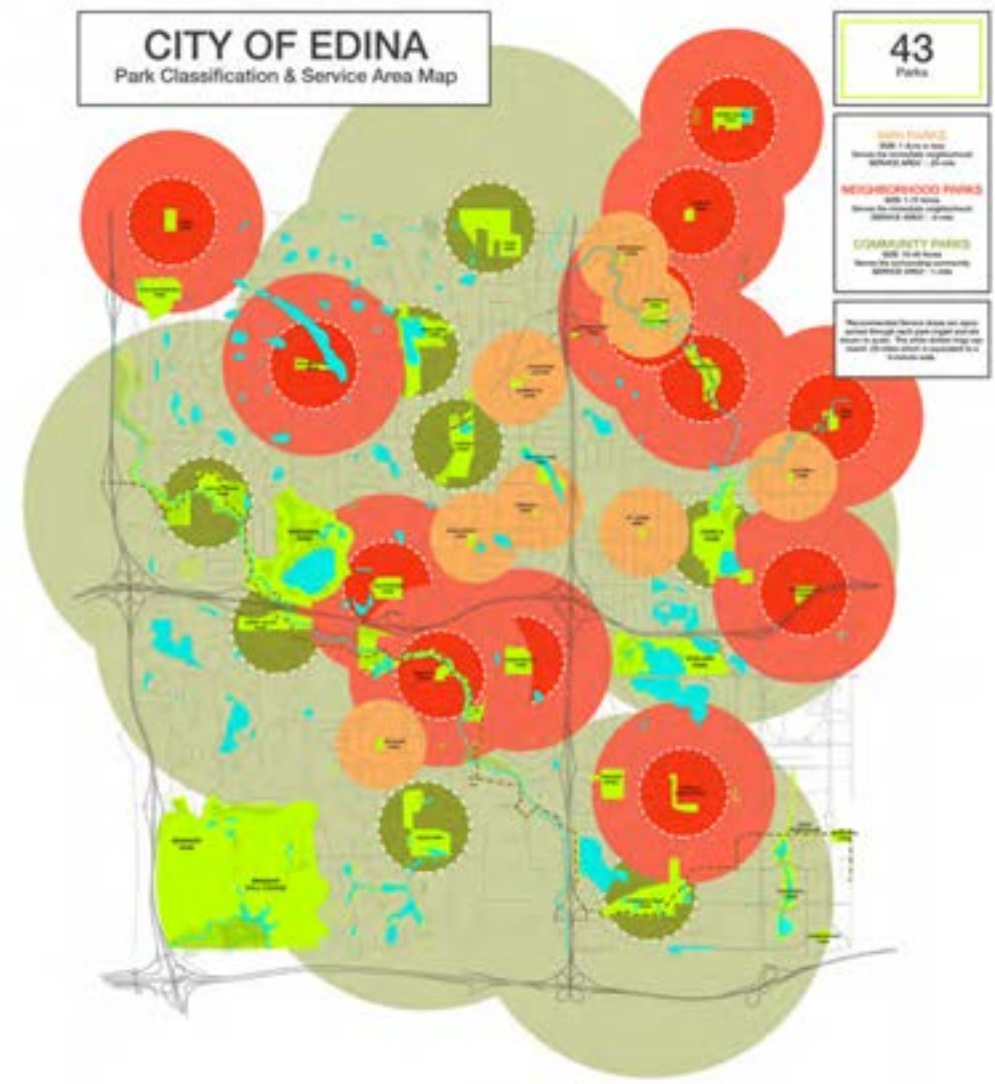



*Figure 1.2 - Park Classification Map*

## PARK SYSTEM ASSESSMENTS

The following systems were assessed by staff and the consultant team to identify issues and provide recommendations and strategies to create and maintain a level of excellence in the future. Natural resources and sustainable parks; parks, open spaces and trails; recreation facilities; recreation programs; and finance and management were studied in depth with recommendations created for system improvements.

The full assessment findings and analysis can be found in the Community Needs Document with detailed inventories of each park located in the *Appendix B*. These key systems are crucial to maintaining and improving the efficiency and quality of the facilities and services offered by EPRD. The following table is a summary of key recommendations resulting from the assessments. These key recommendations provide considerable input into developing the Strategic Plan Implementation Framework and priority project identification.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ASSESSMENTS

#### NATURAL RESOURCES & SUSTAINABLE PARKS

1. Hire a Natural Resource Manager to guide natural resource efforts.
2. Complete a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) for the City.
3. Provide greater access to natural areas for passive recreation and interpretation.
4. Protect and improve Edina's water resources
5. Provide more environmenatal educational opportunities.
6. Prepare for impacts of climate change.

#### PARKS, OPEN SPACES & TRAILS

1. Build a multi-use trail loop to connect parks.
2. Replace insufficient play areas/ playgrounds and provide new facilities to fill gaps.
3. Improve branding and wayfinding to parks.
4. Provide additional community gathering areas.
5. Develop community driven master plans for parks.
6. Provide more specialized facilities - dog parks, frisbee golf, etc.

#### RECREATION FACILITIES

1. Consider adding a multi-generational community/ recreation center that is all-inclusive.
2. Replace or decommission community park buildings that have outlived lifespan.
3. Consider relocation of the Edina Art Center to support successful programs.
4. Develop an FFE program for parts, furnishings, etc. to unify aesthetics and streamline maintenance and replacement.

#### RECREATION PROGRAMS

1. Provide a variety of programs that meet community needs and interests and maintain the highest level of excellence.
2. Deliver park and recreation programming more efficiently and effectively utilizing City Staff and partnership with outside agencies like the Edina Community Education.
3. Provide more community building/ socialization programming.

#### FINANCE & MANAGEMENT

1. Improve marketing and communication delivery.
2. Dedicate staff specifically to EPRD marketing and communication.
3. Strengthen financial sustainability.
4. Develop business plans for all enterprise facilities.

*Figure 1.3 - Key Recommendations from Assessments*

# EDINA TOMORROW

## TREND ANALYSIS

Tracking parks and recreation trends across the country, state, and region help EPRD maintain a level of excellence in providing opportunities for their residents. A direct correlation exists between the national participatory trends and the local market trends, in that the service area shows a high propensity to engage in recreational activities pertaining to fitness. Based on market potential index figures, the Department should expect residents to participate in fitness activities at a much higher rate than the national average. This would indicate that the Department should offer a wide variety of fitness programming, with a willingness to introduce innovative and trending activities.

The local participatory trends also show that residents of Edina attend sporting events and theme parks at a high level, as index figures for these categories are well above average. This demonstrates that the local community is very social and residents enjoy attending a variety of events. From a programming standpoint, this presents an opportunity for the department to offer more special events and excursions, such as day trips for seniors or a community day at the ballpark. From an infrastructure standpoint, EPRD should look to provide facilities that accommodate and encourage this socialization, which corresponds to many other initiatives in the City that strive to further build community.

Based on the findings from the demographic and trends analysis, the Department is very fortunate to have an ideal service area. Not only are income characteristics well above average, but the user base also has a strong tendency to spend their time and money on activities that are in the Department's wheelhouse. The future success of the Department will rely heavily on its ability to capitalize on these favorable market conditions by providing facilities, amenities, and programs that are geared toward the needs and interests of the local community.

## COMMUNITY RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES

Additional activities and facilities were identified by the public through the input sessions that directly relate to the changing needs of the community and their expectations for the EPRD. While some of the activities identified currently exist within the park system and are successful or show signs of growth, others were new ideas presented by the public.

PICKLE BALL COURTS

OUTDOOR SPLASH PADS

FRISBEE GOLF

ARCHERY RANGE

COMMUNITY GARDENS/ URBAN AGRICULTURE

INDOOR FITNESS

## CHANGING COMMUNITY, CHANGING NEEDS

The community needs assessment and trends analysis paints a picture of Edina as a changing community with changing needs. Addressing these needs is a focus of the Strategic Plan and critical for EPRD to continue their high standard of excellence in meeting the Community's needs into the future. The following issues provide a glimpse of how the park system could support residents in the future, and the opportunities and challenges that have emerged during analysis for this Strategic Plan.

CLIMATE CHANGE

HEALTHY, ACTIVE AGING

HEALTH CONSCIOUS & ACTIVE

FINANCIAL COMPETITION

YOUTH AND FAMILY FOCUS

TIME AND TECHNOLOGY

ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL

NATURE AND HEALTH

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

# STRATEGY AND PLAN

The synthesis of significant data collection and inventories; system analysis; community and staff input; and consultant experience is the creation of the Strategic Plan and Implementation Framework. Full details of the Implementation Framework can be found in *Appendix A*. The Implementation Framework is broken down by purpose statements, goals, strategies, and tactics that are intended to be a living document; evaluated and updated every 5-years to gauge progress and adapt to changing needs and realities. The Implementation Framework was informed by EPRD's existing vision and mission statements and will be critical to achieving them. The EPRD vision and mission are as follows:

## EDINA PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT VISION

*To be recognized as having Minnesota's premier parks, recreation and trail system that provides unrivaled opportunities to maximize Edina's quality of life by nurturing the health and well-being of our people, our community, our environment, and our economy.*

## EDINA PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT MISSION

*We create parks, facilities, and programs to foster a healthy inclusive community. We accomplish this through creative leadership, collaborations, environmentally sustainable practices, and the responsible use of available resources.*

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles were crafted for the strategic plan to establish the fundamental directives that represent what is desirable for the park system. The principles should remain constant regardless of changes in goals, strategies, and types of projects embarked upon. Park board members and staff developed the following Guiding Principles for the Strategic Plan:

- Promote community health and wellness for residents in our parks and programming.
- Provide excellence and innovation in parks and recreation services and facilities to meet the needs of the community.
- Promote equity and engagement within the parks system and its programs.
- Protect Edina's assets through strong financial stewardship and creative funding.
- Connect residents to park facilities and their programs.
- Advance environmental stewardship and conservation to preserve and protect natural resources and build excellence through sustainability.

## KEY AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

Five key areas of development have been identified that constitute broad categories of EPRD improvements, activities, and initiatives necessary to implement the Strategic Plan. These areas allow focused investigation and recommendations to be explored that will have the greatest impact on the overall Park system. The key areas of development include:

- Natural Resources & Sustainable Parks
- Parks, Open Spaces & Trails
- Recreation Facilities
- Recreation Programs;
- Finance & Management

## IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Each of the key areas of development are further broken down to create an Implementation Framework that can act as a road map to implementing the Strategic Plan. The following aspects further break down the Key Areas of Development to define the Implementation Framework:

- **Purpose** - statements that recognize the critical elements and over-arching philosophy of approach for each key area of development.
- **Goals** - define the most critical objectives that will need to be focused on under each key areas of development to ensure the purpose is addressed.
- **Strategies** - provide guidance on actions necessary to accomplish the goals.
- **Tactics** - are specified in *Appendix A - Implementation Plan* and list specific actions to achieve the strategies. The tactics are intended to be actionable items, where progress and timelines can be tracked, evaluated, and modified as needed.

Together, the purpose, goals, strategies and tactics are intended to serve as a flexible guide to adapt to changing trends, needs, and City priorities. They should be re-evaluated and updated every 5-years to gauge progress and ensure that the master plan truly serves as a living document, that is dynamic and pro-actively meeting the Community's needs and vision.

| GUIDING PRINCIPLES KEY | |
|---|---|
| | Promote community health and wellness by engaging all residents in our parks and programming |
| | Provide excellence and innovation in parks and recreation services to meet the needs of the community |
| | Develop creative funding opportunities and programming partnerships to ensure excellence in facilities, programs, and financial stewardship for future generations |
| | Advance environmental stewardship and conservation to preserve and protect natural resources and build excellence through sustainability |
| | Connect residents to park facilities and their programs |
| | Promote social equity and engagement within the parks system and its programs. |

*Figure 1.4 - Guiding Principles Key*

## KEY PROJECTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The following key projects have been identified based on community engagement, city staff and park board recommendations, and focus group and stakeholder input. These projects will require a variety of strategies and tactics to achieve - as defined in this document and *Appendix A - Implementation Framework*. The implementation will require continued efforts from the Park Board, Parks and Recreation Staff, other City Departments and Administration and support from the community. Progress will be evaluated annually and presented in the EPRD Annual Report.

The key projects identified are supported by the guiding principles and the icons in Figure 1.4 link the projects back to the applicable guiding principles.

*Applicable Guiding Principles:*

1. CREATE A MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM THROUGH THE CITY TO CONNECT PARKS AND ENTERPRISE FACILITIES.
2. EXPLORE A MULTI-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTER THAT IS ALL-INCLUSIVE.
3. CREATE A NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGER TO GUIDE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NATURAL AREAS, ACCESS AND INTERPRETIVE / EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.
4. IMPROVE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION DELIVERY.
5. REPLACE OR DECOMMISSION COMMUNITY PARK BUILDINGS THAT HAVE OUTLIVED THEIR DESIGNED LIFESPAN AND ARE CURRENTLY INSUFFICIENT IN PROVIDING SERVICES.
6. RELOCATE THE EDINA ART CENTER TO PROVIDE A FACILITY THAT BEST SUPPORTS THEIR PROGRAMMING NEEDS.
7. REPLACE INADEQUATE AND OUTDATED PLAY AREAS AND PLAYGROUNDS AND PROVIDE NEW FACILITIES TO ADDRESS UNDER SERVED AREAS.
8. IMPROVE BRANDING AND WAYFINDING TO PARKS THROUGHOUT THE CITY AND INTERNALLY.
9. STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY.
10. PROVIDE ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY GATHERING AREAS.
11. DEVELOP COMMUNITY DRIVEN MASTER PLANS FOR PARKS THROUGHOUT THE SYSTEM.
12. DEVELOP BUSINESS PLANS FOR ALL ENTERPRISE FACILITIES THROUGHOUT THE PARK SYSTEM.

## PROGRESS MEASUREMENT

Measuring progress of the Implementation Framework and overall park system is valuable, to justify and validate funds, staff time, and overall progress. Regular evaluations can help EPRD continually gauge which improvements better serve system users and provide excellence for the Park system. EPRD already conducts some periodic evaluation of its services, including surveys distributed to members of the community, recreation program participants and users of its fee based services. Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data will be important for EPRD to evaluate their progress and the overall system.

Additionally, EPRD will be reviewing the Implementation Framework annually in order to update the Board, Council and community on progress toward the strategic implementation framework and Priority Projects identified in this plan. An annual report will be the primary communication tool and document generated by EPRD in this effort.

**NATURAL RESOURCES GOAL 2 -** CREATE MORE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE PARKS AND LANDSCAPES.

**STRATEGY 2.1**

*Maintain excellence in park maintenance operations, continue to explore environmentally friendly/ sustainable practices, and increase natural areas maintenance expertise and ability.*

| Tactic | Implementation Year | Performance Measure |
|---|---|---|
| **2.1.1** Follow recommendations of the 2013 UFTF report. | 2015 | Review items from report for completion. |
| **2.1.2** Educate residents on current initiatives (e.g. turf grass maintenance). | 2015 | Create marketing materials and post in park and/or give presentations throughout City. |
| **2.1.3** Complete cost/ benefit analysis of the long term cost/ benefits of turf grass maintenance vs. natural areas and communicate results to Park Board, City Council, and Public. | 2016 | Create marketing materials and post in park and/or give presentations throughout City. |
| **2.1.4** Identify key species or planting strategies to be used throughout the City that maximize benefits and minimize future maintenance - work with Garden Club to grow. | 2016 | Complete 1 native plant demonstration garden in park. |
| **2.1.5** Provide training for Park Maintenance staff to maximize efficiency and quality of natural resource management. | 2017 | Natural resource management plan informed training. |
| **2.1.6** Consider hiring or supplementing natural resource maintenance activities with an outside consultant. | 2017 | Identify maintenance and operations responsibilities. |
| **2.1.7** Identify funding sources for operations and maintenance. | 2017 | Maintenance and operations budget. |

**STRATEGY 2.2**

*Develop more sustainable parks and trails infrastructure that are resilient to impacts of climate change.*

| Tactic | Implementation Year | Performance Measure |
|---|---|---|
| **2.2.1** Conduct a climate change risk assessment for all Parks facilities, infrastructure, vegetation, and areas susceptible to extensive storm damage. | 2016 | Complete climate change risk assessment. |
| **2.2.2** Create a strategy to mitigate expected impacts of climate change on the park system - coordinate with Public Works Dept. | 2017 | Complete climate change risk assessment. |
| **2.2.3** Use the Sustainable Sites Initiate (SITES®) as a guide for for new park development and retrofits, and to create a green operations plan. SITES® is the landscape and site equivalent to LEED and is the most comprehensive guide and objective sustainability rating system for the landscape *www.sustainablesites.org* | 2017 | Utilize SSI checklist for all new and major renovation projects. |
| **2.2.4** Utilize Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED), Minnesota's B3 program, and/or the Living Building Challenge to guide future parks and facilities renovations and new construction projects. Prioritize energy efficiency, water conservation and other building functions with direct cost impacts. | 2018 | Integrate into all master plans and redevelopment guides. Hire only LEED certified consultants. Require LEED certification for new buildings. |

*Figure 1.5 - Implementation Framework*

## LIVING DOCUMENT

The premier park and recreation system in Minnesota will not only measure progress by assessing community needs and satisfaction, but will also adapt to meet those changing needs. Recreation is dynamic and is constantly changing. New recreation activities and equipment emerge (in-line skates, the mountain bike, etc.) and recreation trends ebb and flow. Inherently, this means flexible and adaptive facilities and programs. It also means regular review and refinement of the Strategic Plan based on community feedback. Annual review of this plan is necessary to make sure that priority projects, recommendations, and the implementation framework are still relevant and updated to reflect progress is an essential component of becoming the premier park and recreation system in Minnesota.

## CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Edina Parks and Recreation Department (EPRD) has provided City residents with excellent parks and recreation facilities that are currently well used and appreciated by the community. Moving forward, additional actions are required to maintain a quality system and stay ahead of the park infrastructure and asset needs of the Department. Improving the existing park system to address underserved populations and changing needs will ensure the system continues to meet the high expectations of Edina's residents.

For each element of key development areas the Strategic Plan outlines many recommendations, which will require government and resident support. These recommendations address un-met community needs and expectations and have been cross referenced with other existing City programs. The Strategic Plan is intended to support and provide synergies with efforts such as the City's Comprehensive Plan; Vision Edina; Bike Edina; Living Streets; Active Routes to School; Neighborhood Small Area Plans; and several other programs currently underway in the City.

The Strategic Plan highlights the importance of creating master plans for several existing parks, and how these efforts will contribute to the overall success and sustainability of the system. The Implementation Framework will inform, and be informed by, these master plans and other planning projects throughout the city. Intended to be a "living document", EPRD staff can utilize the Implementation Framework to track progress and modify to meet changing needs, realities, and opportunities available. This Strategic Plan allows the department to manage proactively. EPRD has become a major service provider to the community and has helped develop one of the key quality of life components that make the City of Edina such a great place to live, work, and play. Community support follows great vision and the Strategic Plan is a critical step in communicating EPRD's vision to the City.

# 2.0
# INTRODUCTION

The City of Edina operates one of the most well-regarded parks and recreation systems in the metropolitan Twin Cities. This system, along with numerous programs and collaborations with local youth sports associations, greatly contribute to the quality of life in the City of Edina.

In order to maintain this high quality of life as well as adapt to changing populations and parks system needs, the City of Edina is developing a comprehensive Park, Recreation, and Trails System Strategic Plan to provide a clear vision that guides decision making for the next 20 years. This plan will include both short-term and long-term recommendations regarding the development and redevelopment of parks, trails, and recreational opportunities, as well as potential funding strategies.

Edina has a strong history of providing high quality parks facilities and programs that are loved and well used by the community. A focus on youth athletics has resulted in some of the best development programs in the State; excellent programs for special needs populations; and several unique and regionally popular Enterprise facilities. Volunteer support, creative funding partnerships, efficient maintenance and operations management, and an affluent community have helped the Park and Recreation Department remain in good financial standing compared to many other Park Departments throughout the State. The community highly values the park system, but also carries high expectations, as they know that the parks system contributes greatly to the high quality of life in Edina.

This Strategic Plan identifies some key aspects of the park system that will need to be improved in order for EPRD to create the premier parks and trails system in the State. Some of the key investments focus on making the parks more accessible to underserved populations through trails, programs, community gathering spaces, passive areas, and higher quality natural resources and natural areas.

The recommendations of this strategic plan are pragmatic actions that will require effort and investment over the long-term. However, these actions will provide tremendous cost benefit for the future by providing significant improvements to make the overall environment and community healthier, more active, and more connected.

## CONTEXT

Edina is a first ring suburb of Minneapolis that has been fully developed for a number of years. While there are few opportunities for major expansion or acquisition, the system continues to be improved with targeted additions, partnerships, and innovations in operations. The park system is well loved by residents and they understand its role in creating the high quality of life in Edina. The last comprehensive plan was completed in 2008. The parks and recreation section noted the important role of volunteers in Edina's parks as well as the desire of residents to create more trail and greenway connections, and improve the City and park systems natural and water resources. Additionally, it was recognized that encouraging fitness and healthy, active lifestyles was an important aspiration of future parks and recreation facilities and programs. Many of these same themes are still prominent, as discovered in the Needs Assessment, public surveys and focus groups. While the City has begun to address these identified community desires and needs, there is still work to be done to fully address. For instance, the major recent addition to the Park system at the time of this writing includes the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail, which is an east-west connection through the City. This improvement will provide much needed trail and greenway connections for residents through the City and connecting to regional trails outside of the City. However, there are still needs for additional trail mileage to connect other parks throughout the City from north-south, and across the four quadrants. The Nine Mile Creek Trail is a great beginning and will hopefully serve as a catalyst for the rest of the system.

Edina has always boasted excellent, forward thinking parks facilities, especially those that support youth athletics. An example of this legacy is the fact that Braemar Arena, one of the premier facilities in the system, and best community ice rink facilities in the State, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The Arena has continued to evolve, adapt, and make improvements to make it as important to today's residents as it was to the Village of Edina, and surrounding communities when it was originally built. In this same spirit, Edina will continue to adapt, innovate, and provide high quality park facilities and programs to become the premier park system in the Minnesota.

## EDINA PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Currently, the EPRD oversees 43 parks and open spaces totaling more than 1,550 acres. Park amenities include baseball and softball diamonds; football and soccer fields; basketball and tennis courts; outdoor skating rinks; playground equipment for young children; and picnic shelters. The Department also maintains eight miles of scenic pathways for bicycling, walking, jogging, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

The Parks & Recreation Department operates 10 facilities, which include the Edina Aquatic Center; Art Center; Braemar Arena; Braemar Golf Courses; Braemar Golf Dome; Centennial Lakes Park; Edinborough Park; Fred Richards Park; Arneson Acres Park; and the Edina Senior Center.

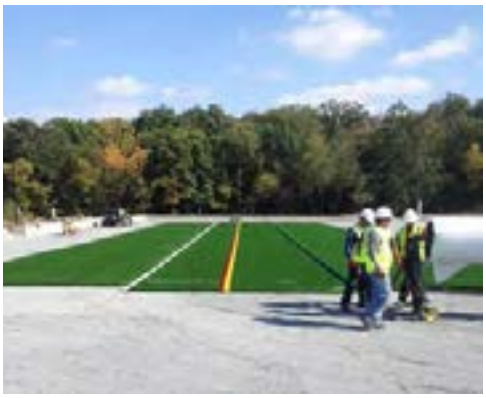
Parks and Recreation staff works with 14 different local youth sports associations. City staff coordinates game schedules and helps make facility reservations.

Many year-round programs are planned for people with disabilities. Inclusion of youth with special needs in programming is a City priority.

# PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Purpose of the Park System Strategic Plan is to:

- Establish clear and realistic goals, objectives, and implementation strategies that can guide Edina's decision making for the next 5-10 years;
- Provide system-wide recommendations which incorporate any detailed studies completed to date as well as ongoing planning and design initiatives;
- Provide a strategy to preserve and maintain open space and significant natural resources in Edina;
- Evaluate current facilities and programs to determine if the recreation and leisure needs of Edina's citizens are being adequately met;
- Identify and evaluate potential cooperative local community, non-profit, and private sector ventures that can aid in meeting recreation needs;
- Assist the community in establishing a vision for the future of their park and recreation system;



- Provide a user-friendly roadmap to guide the implementation of the community's vision for a sustainable 21st century Parks and Recreation system.

The plan is not intended to deal comprehensively with every aspect of the EPRD, but instead focuses on gaps in service and key areas of development including parks, open spaces, and trails, recreation facilities, recreation programs, and finance and management.

## PLAN PROCESS

This Strategic Plan was developed through a balanced, open, and collaborative community engagement process that builds community-wide trust in the plan and the planning methods used. Community engagement for this project was carefully planned in order to accurately capture all major community needs. The design team conducted 14 focus group meetings; public workshops including an open house; and a statistically-valid community survey.

This information was combined with additional community needs assessments including benchmark comparisons with other similar communities and award winning park systems; assessments and analysis of key development areas; full park system inventories; consultant expertise and experience; comparisons with overlapping City programs; and EPRD staff analysis and input.

## WHY THE PLAN IS IMPORTANT

Throughout the planning process, community members continually voiced their support for the excellence, value, and benefits of Edina's quality park system. Despite the existing quality of the Parks System there are numerous challenges to address in the short and long term. Responding to aging populations; changing community needs and desires; and creating a more environmentally and financially sustainable system, are a few challenges that must be addressed. The Strategic Plan will offer a vision for how the Parks Department can meet these challenges and build on a proud history of high quality parks to be recognized as the premier park system in the State. A powerful vision, innovative strategic plan, and strong leadership will allow the Department to address changing issues and strengthen the environmental and financial sustainability of the park system.

## CONCLUSION

The EPRD has provided City residents with excellent parks and recreation facilities that are currently well used and appreciated by the community. Moving forward, additional actions are required to maintain a quality system and stay ahead of the Department's park infrastructure and asset needs. Improving the existing park system to address underserved populations and changing needs will ensure the system continues to meet the high expectations of Edina's residents.

**Key Aspects:**

- 43 parks
- 1,550 total acres
- 13.8 miles of scenic pathways
- 10 high quality recreation facilities
- 14 local youth sports assoc. collaborations
- Year-round disability programs
- 26 indoor & outdoor ice sheets
- 13 tennis courts
- 27 playgrounds

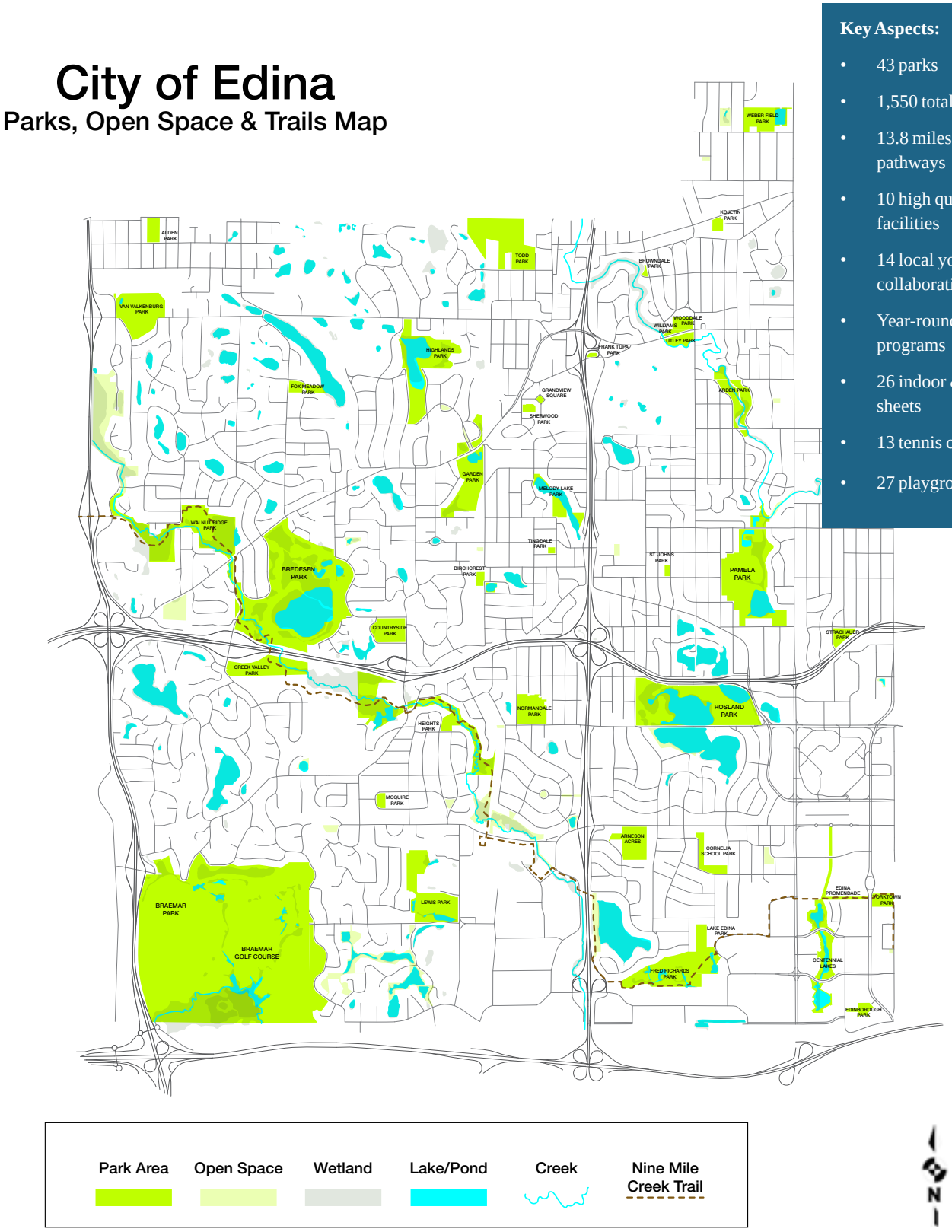



*Figure 2.1- Parks, Open Spaces and Trails Map*

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# 3.0

# EDINA TODAY

## DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS
## SIMILAR PROVIDER ANALYSIS
## BENCHMARK COMPARISON
## PARK ASSESSMENT

## UNDERSTANDING EDINA TODAY

Successful park and recreation master plans are built around the unique qualities of a community. Understanding the people and existing park system is a critical foundation to build the future of Edina's parks upon. A community changes over time and the effectiveness of the park system is dependent upon how well the infrastructure and programs support the community's needs. As part of the planning process, our consultant team examined the demographics now and into the future; analyzed the local providers of services that overlap with EPRD's services; compared Edina's parks with other top notch park systems in the region and country; and assessed the park system's infrastructure and programs. This analysis allowed us to establis a clear understanding of the community and park system today, and guide our actions into the future. Overall, findings from this analysis inform the plan's strategic recommendations to help keep the Edina Parks and Recreation Department relevant to the population of today and of tomorrow. The following section is a summary of the full analysis and report that can be found in the Community Needs Assessment Document.

*Figure 3.1*

*Figure 3.2*

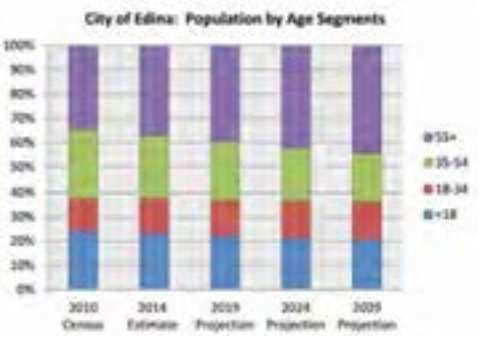



*Figure 3.3*

## EDINA'S POPULATION

Key aspects of demographics studied include the population, age, race, and income. Each aspect is analyzed and projected 15 years into the future. The total population of Edina has consistently grown at a slow rate in recent history and this trend is expected to continue into the future. The City appears to be very family-oriented, as approximately 62% of total households are represented as families.

When analyzing Edina's demographics, there are two prominent features from the demographic analysis for EPRD to note and focus on for the strategic plan: the aging trend and the elevated incomes of the service area.

### INCOME

City of Edina's median household income ($88,201) and per capita income ($54,649) are well above the state and national averages. This suggests increased disposable income among residents and greater elasticity in pricing programs and services. These elevated income levels may suggest more flexibility in programming, including programs that have high barriers of entry (i.e. expensive equipment, cutting-edge technology, specialized amenities, etc.). The fact that residents have greater earning capabilities signals that they are likely willing to pay for high-quality programs and services that require a greater financial commitment, as long as the quality reflects the price.

### AGE SEGMENT

Although Edina is growing in size rather slowly, it is aging at a notable pace – with nearly half of the population projected to be 55 or older by the year 2029.

In 2014, the highest segment by population is the 55+ age group representing 36.9%, and the lowest is the 18-34 segment which constitutes 14.7% of the population.

Over time, the overall composition of the population of the city continue on an aging trend. Future projections through 2029 show that the 55+ group will grow most rapidly, with some minimal growth from the 18-34 segment. The 55+ segment is expected to represent approximately 44.3% of the population by 2029. The senior population will be the single largest age segment by a large margin, with each of the remaining segments accounting for 15%-20% of the populace. This is consistent with general national trends. The Department must ensure that it is in tune with the needs and interests of the 55+ group by offering a variety of quality programs and facilities that cater to the senior crowd, while still adequately serving the youth and adult segments. This will require careful planning and development of a program curriculum that is sensitive to the changing demographic.

### POPULATION OF AGES 0-14 BY NEIGHBORHOOD

The population of ages 0-14 by neighborhood are important to study because the park and recreation needs for this age group vary drastically from other ages. Youth rely on

either walking, biking or transportation from others to get around the city. This age group will also have the most need for nearby play areas and playgrounds, as well as youth-size athletic fields. They are the most likely users of mini and neighborhood parks where amenities are more youth-oriented.

As Figure 3.4 shows, the highest concentration of youth ages 0-14 reside in the northeast neighborhoods of Edina, including Country Club, Golf Terrace Heights, Sunny Slope, Birchcrest and Arden Park.

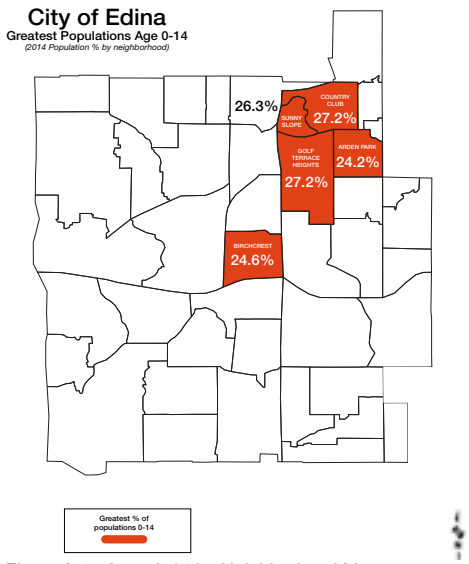



*Figure 3.4 - Ages 0-14 by Neighborhood Map*

### POPULATION OF AGES 55+ BY NEIGHBORHOOD

The population of ages 55+ by neighborhood also begin reflect where the highest concentration of Elders (age 55+) live. The most popular activity for Americans over 45 is exercise walking. It will be important to ensure that aging citizens of Edina have access to amenities that fit their needs.

As Figure 3.5 shows, the highest concentration of aging adults ages 55+ is in the very southeast neighborhoods of Edina including Centennial Lakes, Promenade and Edinborough. The location of the existing Senior Center (highlighted in Figure 3.5) is currently located in an area of the City with a younger population. Future location and demographics should be considered if the Senior Center were to be moved.

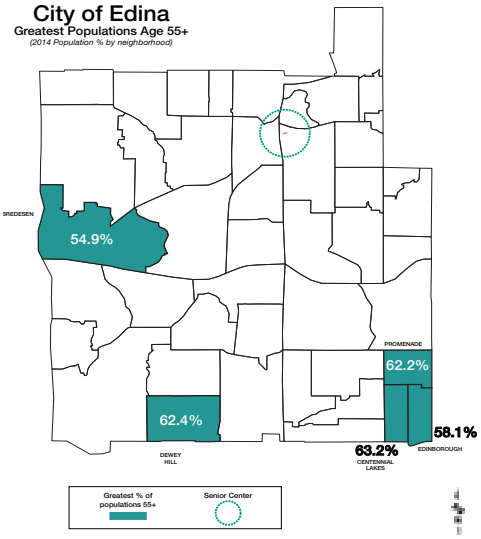



*Figure 3.5 - Ages 55+ by Neighborhood Map*

## EDINA SIMILAR PROVIDER ANALYSIS

Analysis of the City for similar providers of facilities and programs is useful in that it helps identify gaps and overlaps in the service delivery of recreational opportunities for Edina residents. Each facility or organization was evaluated based on the Core Program areas of the Department, which were defined by staff during the recreational program assessment as:

- Adaptive Recreation
- Adult Athletics
- Arts
- Golf
- Senior
- Special Events
- Youth
- Youth Athletics

In addition, the analysis notes additional details regarding services that fall outside of these Core Program areas or other notes that are relevant to the analysis. The search produced a variety of public, private, and not-for-profit facilities and organizations within the City, including assets owned by Edina Public Schools, recreation/community centers, fitness/wellness facilities, golf courses, churches, retail locations, entertainment venues, and local athletic associations.

The analysis utilized current information available from the City, consultant research and data provided within the Community Facility Inventory conducted for the Grandview District master planning project. The geographic area of interest included all of Edina and nearby cities of St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, Eden Prairie,

Bloomington and Richfield. Only major facilities located in southwest Minneapolis were included because many of the other publicly-available facilities tend to be located a considerable distance from Edina.

The types of facilities studied included community centers, parks, meeting or event rooms, class rooms, theatrical facilities, gymnasiums, swimming pools, art centers, commercial fitness centers, athletic complexes, ice rinks, golf courses and other businesses with a fitness or wellness orientation.

There is an abundance of public and private facilities in and near Edina that fit into the broad category of civic, recreational, cultural and social facilities. Edina and its neighbors are mature, fully-developed communities with active governments and a generally high degree of affluence. Consequently, there are many public or private buildings, rooms, parks and other facilities. The 2014 Edina community facility inventory identified these facilities in great detail. The full inventory of these facilities can be found in the Community Needs Assessment Document.

## HOW DOES EDINA COMPARE TO OTHER PARK SYSTEMS?

In order to be the premier park system in the State, a thorough understanding of other high quality park systems is imperative. PROS Consulting, along with Edina Parks and Recreation, identified operating metrics to be used in a benchmarking analysis to compare to industry leading park and recreation systems nationwide. The benchmark agencies selected for analysis included jurisdictions with demographic characteristics similar to the City of Edina, as well as departments that are Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accredited or were finalists or winners of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Gold Medal Award in recent years. These awards highlight the best parks systems in the country. The complexity in this analysis was ensuring direct comparison through a methodology of statistics and ratios in order to provide comparable information, as best as possible. Benchmarking is just one of several technical assessment tools used by the planning team to develop recommendations that are specific to Edina's unique circumstances and issues.

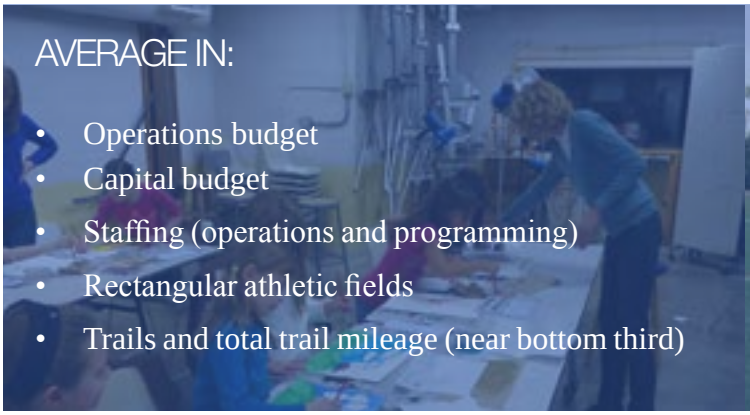
The agencies included in the benchmark analysis are Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation (Indiana); Castle Rock Parks & Recreation (Colorado); Eagan Parks & Recreation (Minnesota); Kettering Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Arts (Ohio); Maple Grove Parks & Recreation Board (Minnesota); Plymouth Parks & Recreation (Minnesota); Waukegan Park District (Illinois); and Westerville Parks & Recreation (Ohio).

A benchmark comparison provides a side-by-side look between Edina Parks and Recreation and similar, industry-leading park and recreation systems nationwide in terms of park acreage, recreation facilities, staffing levels, budget, and a variety of other operational metrics. Results from the benchmark analysis show that Edina is a leader in providing park acreage per resident; water park facilities (not splashpads); ice sheet facilities; and in cost recovery for operating expenses. The city ranks in the middle of the benchmark range in terms of operational budget; capital budget; staffing; and rectangular athletic fields. Edina lags behind other benchmark communities in indoor community space; capital budget sources; and distribution of expenditures for planning and development. One area that the system has strong potential for improvement is in total trail miles and trail mileage per capita.

# HOW DOES EDINA COMPARE TO OTHER COMMUNITIES?

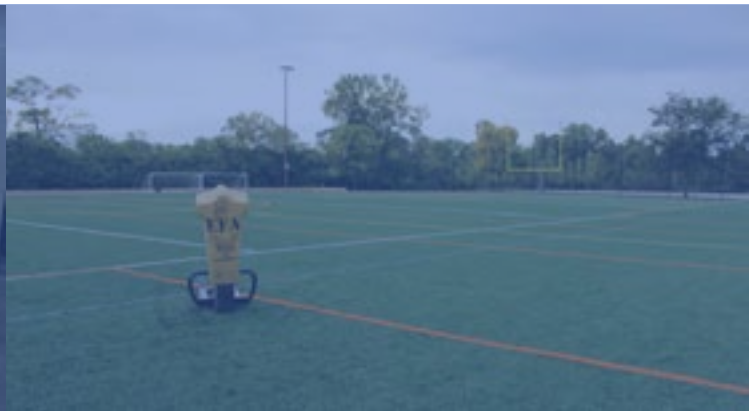
## LEADERS IN:

- Park acreage/ resident
- Water park facilities
- Ice sheet facilities
- Cost recovery for operating expenses



## AVERAGE IN:

- Operations budget
- Capital budget
- Staffing (operations and programming)
- Rectangular athletic fields
- Trails and total trail mileage (near bottom third)



## BEHIND IN:

- Indoor recreation space
- Capital budget sources
- Expenditures distributed to planning and development

**1,550**
**ACRES**
PARKLAND

**42,000**
**SQ.FT**
REC. CENTERS

**13.8**
**MILES**
TRAILS

**26**
**ICE**
SHEETS

## THE CURRENT PARK SYSTEM

Our team has reviewed and incorporated previous inventories and has assessed all Parks, Open Space and Trails in the system. This has provided use a full understanding of the current offerings, infrastructure conditions, and opportunities for improvement throughout the system. The team divided the assessment into areas that comprise the critical elements of the park system:

- NATURAL AND WATER RESOURCES
- PARK, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS
- ENTERPRISE FACILITIES
- BRANDING, SIGNAGE, AND WAYFINDING
- PROGRAM ASSESSMENT
- FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Generally, the system is in excellent shape and provides a rich variety of park experiences for the citizens of Edina. The Enterprise facilities, especially, are the envy of other park systems in the state, and represent the best of EPRD's innovative approach to facilities, programs, and partnerships. Facilities and programs for youth athletics are of very high quality - especially hockey.

The biggest opportunities for improvement are in targeting underserved populations; supporting activities outside of youth athletics; and connecting people to their parks. Additionally, there are opportunities for improvements to the City's natural resources and trails that were apparent to the consultant team, staff, and the general public. Addressing these two items would go a long way toward addressing multiple objectives and targeting underserved populations that are looking to the park system for something other than traditional athletics. Additional results of analysis and recommendations include:

- Additional publicly owned indoor community space is needed and desired. Location within the City should be considered to balance the spread of Enterprise facilities.
- Park buildings that are in disrepair should be evaluated for need prior to replacement.
- Address branding, signage, and wayfinding for the park system throughout the City. Use a consistent theme and aesthetic throughout the City's marketing materials and signage.
- Target underserved populations - aging demographics - with alternative programs and park facilities and passive recreation opportunities.
- Integrate community driven design for significant park projects.
- Keep playground maintenance up to date and consider adding facilities in areas underrepresented.
- Trails, trails, trails - while a difficult issue to address, a trail system will provide the greatest benefit for the park system and City.

**EDINA PARKS ARE EXCELLING AT:**

- Overall community satisfaction.
- Quality of infrastructure, programs, and operations.
- Enterprise Facilities are unique, well used, and highly valued amenities in the City..
- Youth athletics programs and organizations support is excellent.
- Excellent financial management and innovation.

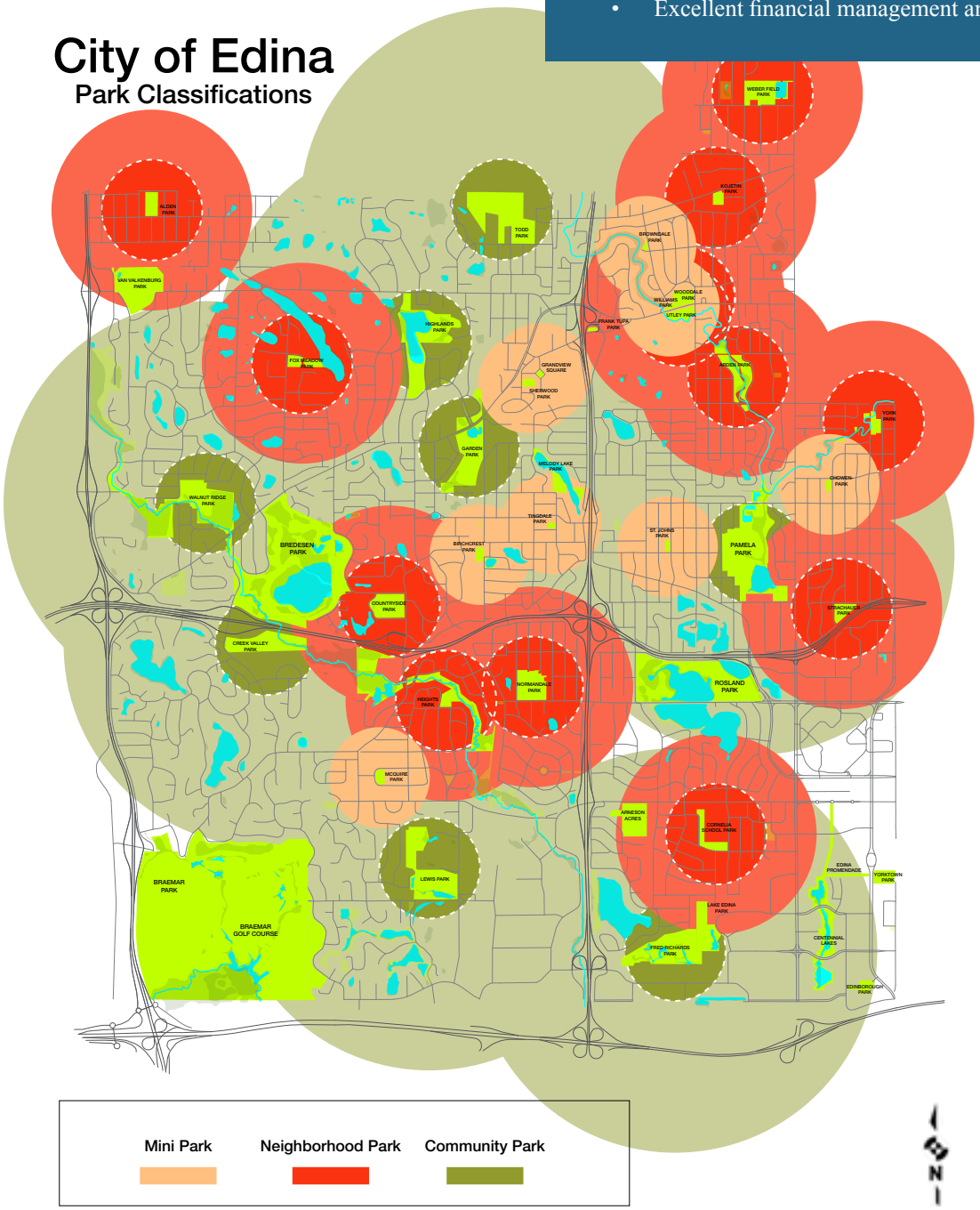



*Figure 3.6 - Park Classifications Map*

**NATURAL RESOURCES OPPORTUNITIES**

- Conduct a natural resources inventory and write a Natural Resources Master Plan.
- Protect existing resources and heritage trees, control invasive species, and restore native plant communities.
- Create a full-time natural resources manager position to coordinate and lead efforts.

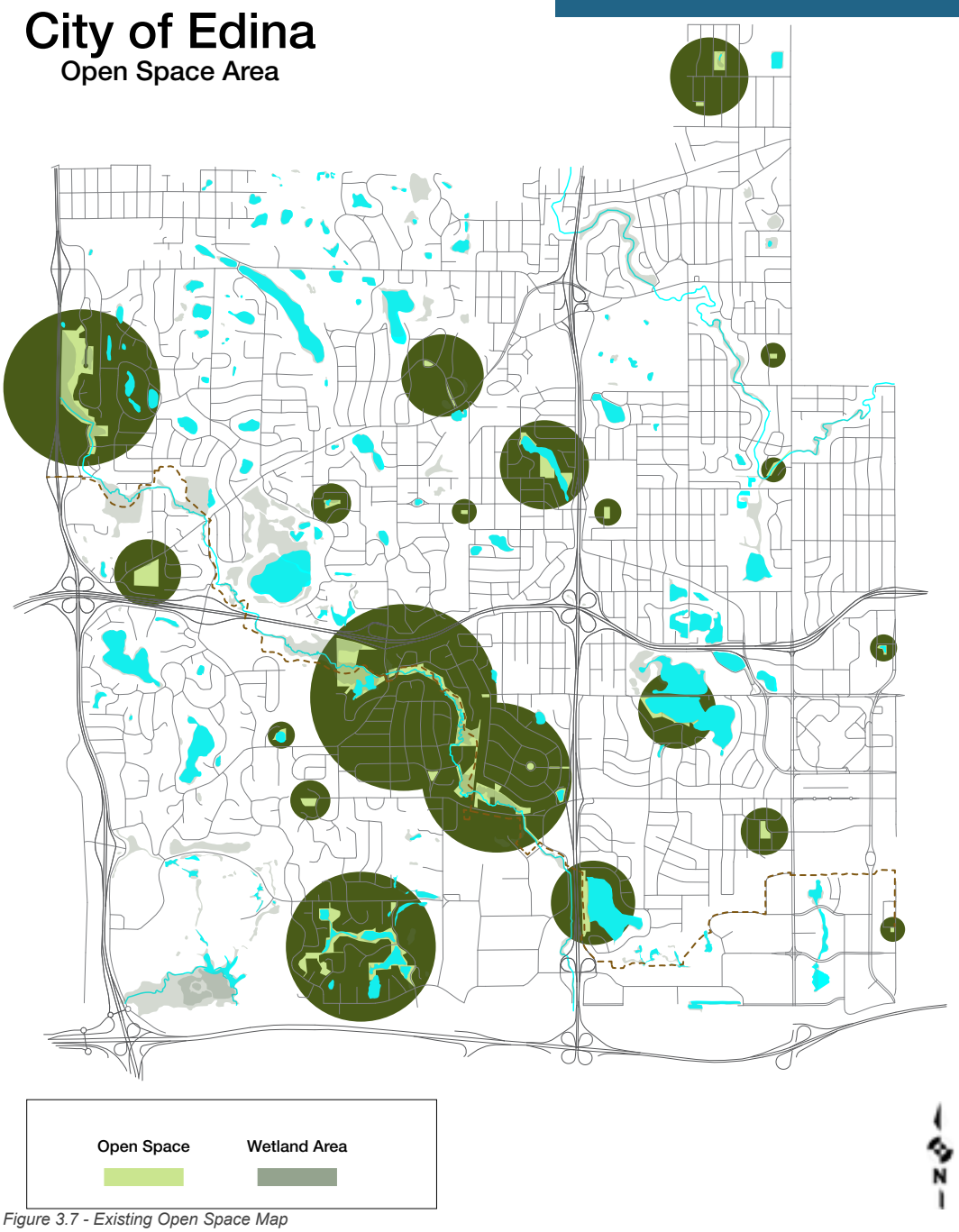



*Figure 3.7 - Existing Open Space Map*

## TRAILS, CONNECTIONS, HEALTH, SAFETY

- Complete a multi-use trail system to connect parks and neighborhoods.
- Connect to Nine Mile Creek Trail currently being constructed.
- Create a Grand Loop trail system to connect all 4 quadrants of the city.

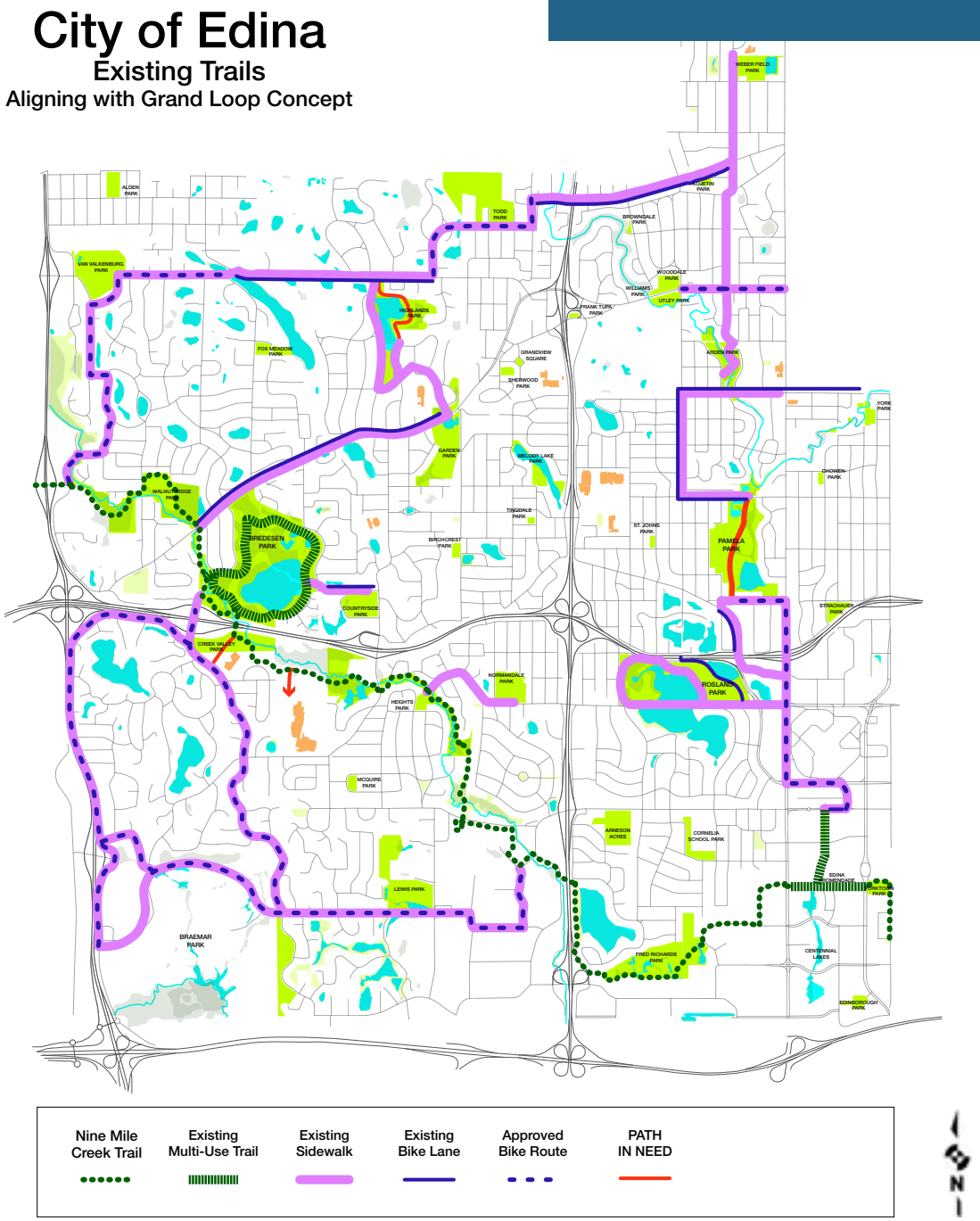



*Figure 3.8 - Existing Trails Map*

## PARK BUILDINGS

- Provide consistent quality and accessibility.
- Revaluate needs prior to replacement of park buildings.
- Examine need for additional community center space.
- The Edina Art Center and Senior Center require different buildings to better serve their users and programs.

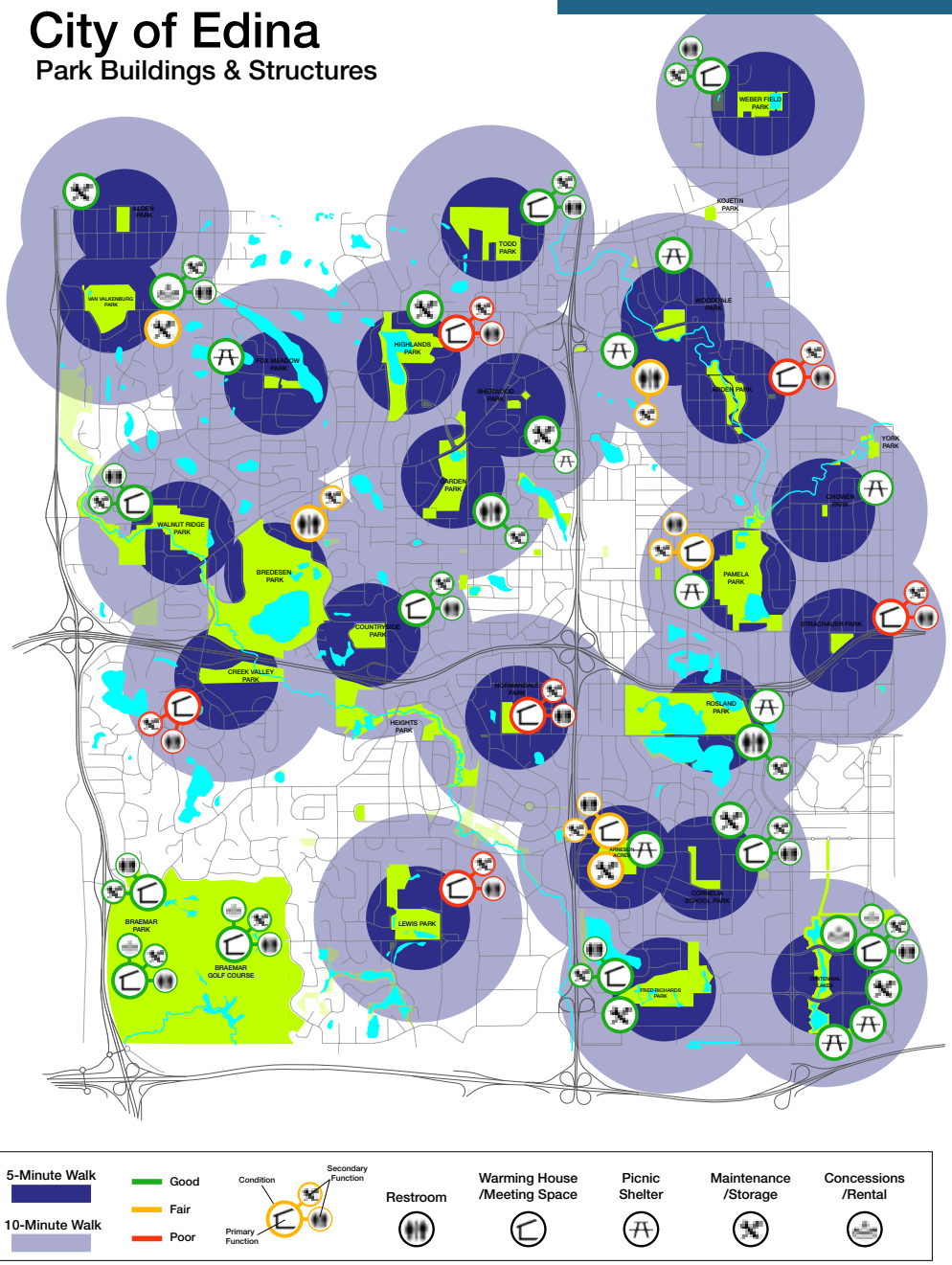


*Figure 3.9 - Existing Building and Structures Map*

## PLAYGROUNDS AND PLAY AREAS

- Provide consistent quality and accessibility.
- Review locations and underserved areas - consider adding where needed.
- Maintain a variety of play structures for a range of age and skill levels.

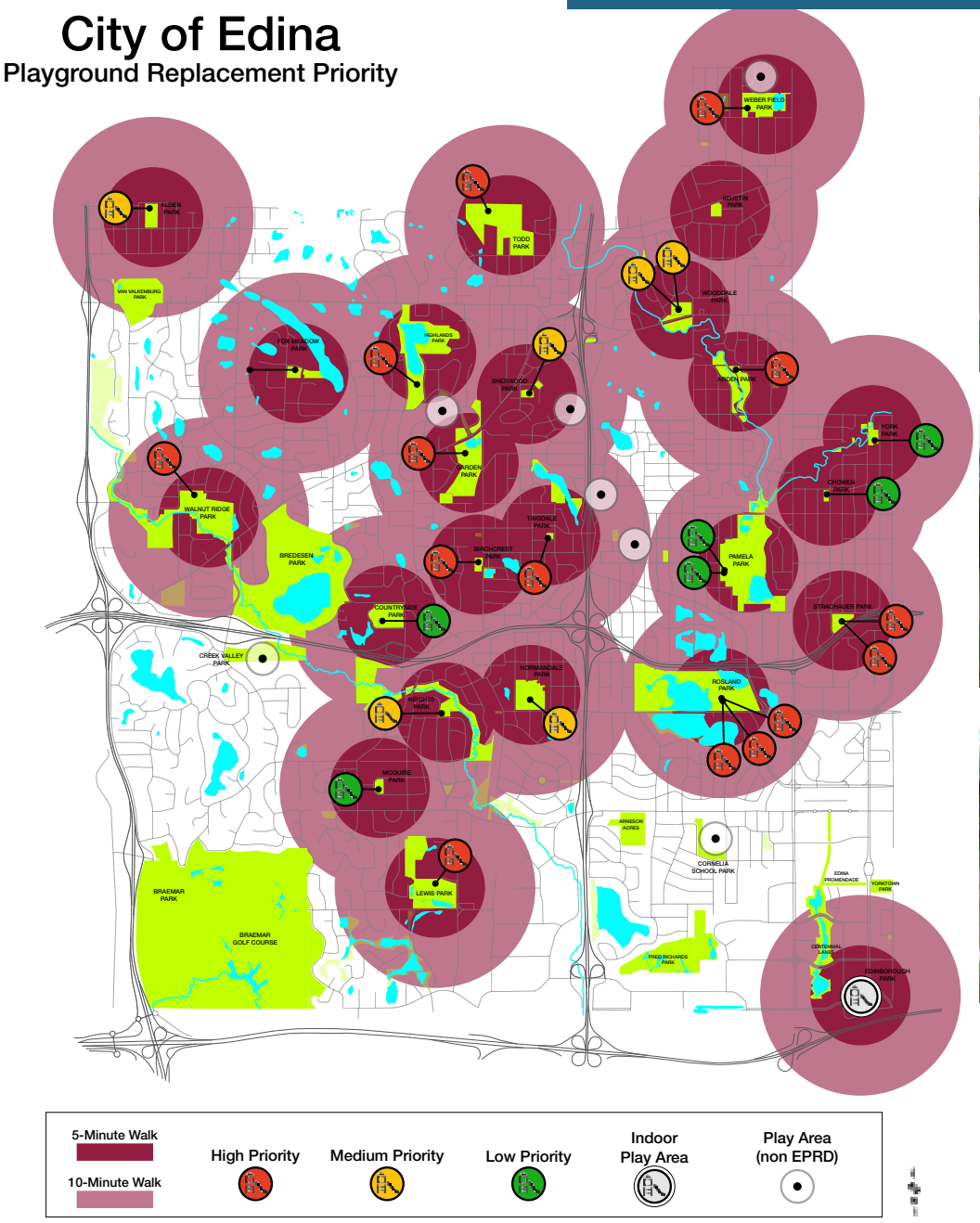


*Figure 3.9 - Existing Playground Equipment Map*

## COMMUNITY GATHERING AREAS

- Provide more infrastructure to support community gathering.
- Low cost structures such as open air pavilions or gazebos.
- Provide furnishings that support the community such as restrooms, drinking fountains, adequate lighting, waste receptacles, etc.
- Make community gathering a priority at all facilities.

# City of Edina
## Picnic Shelters

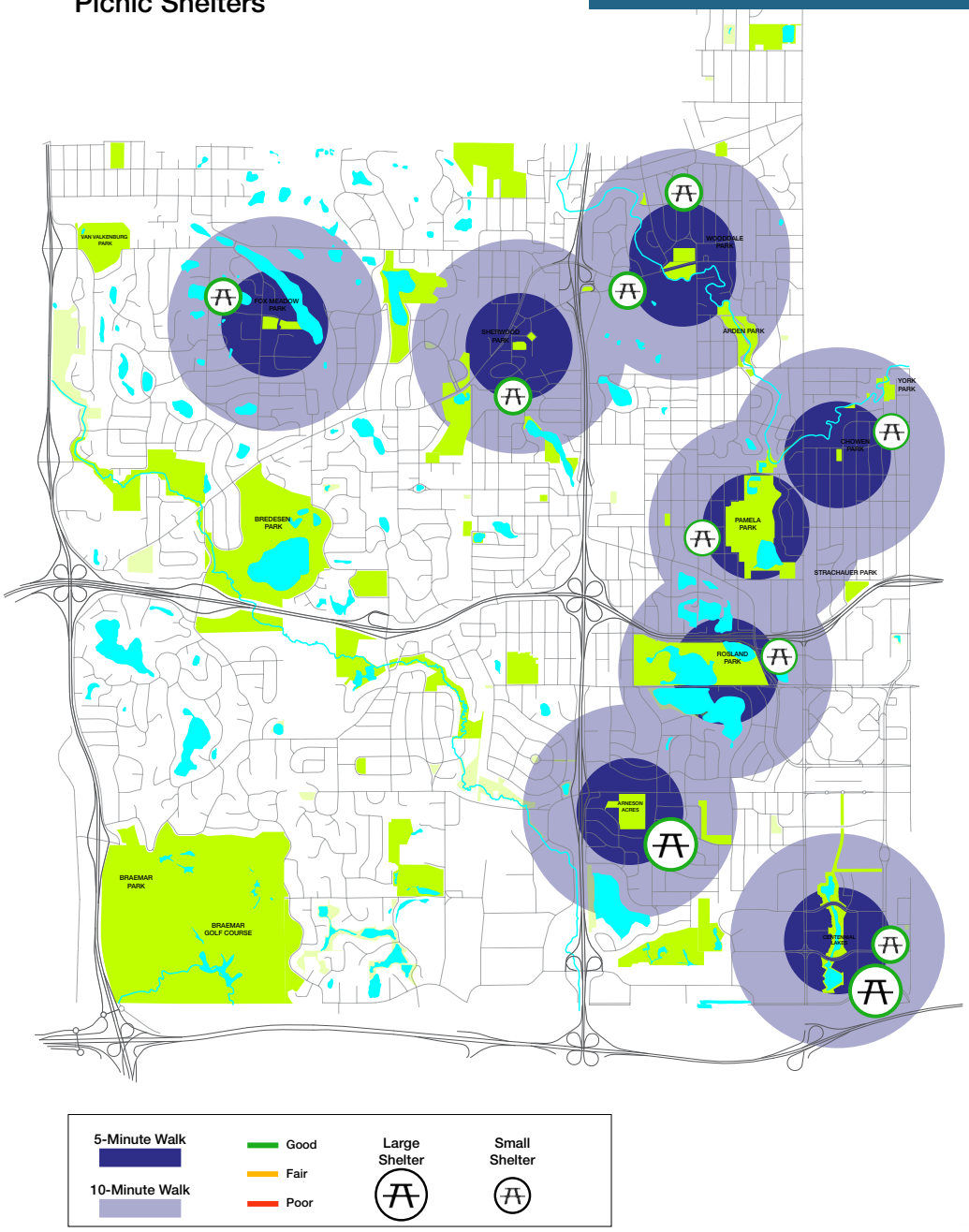
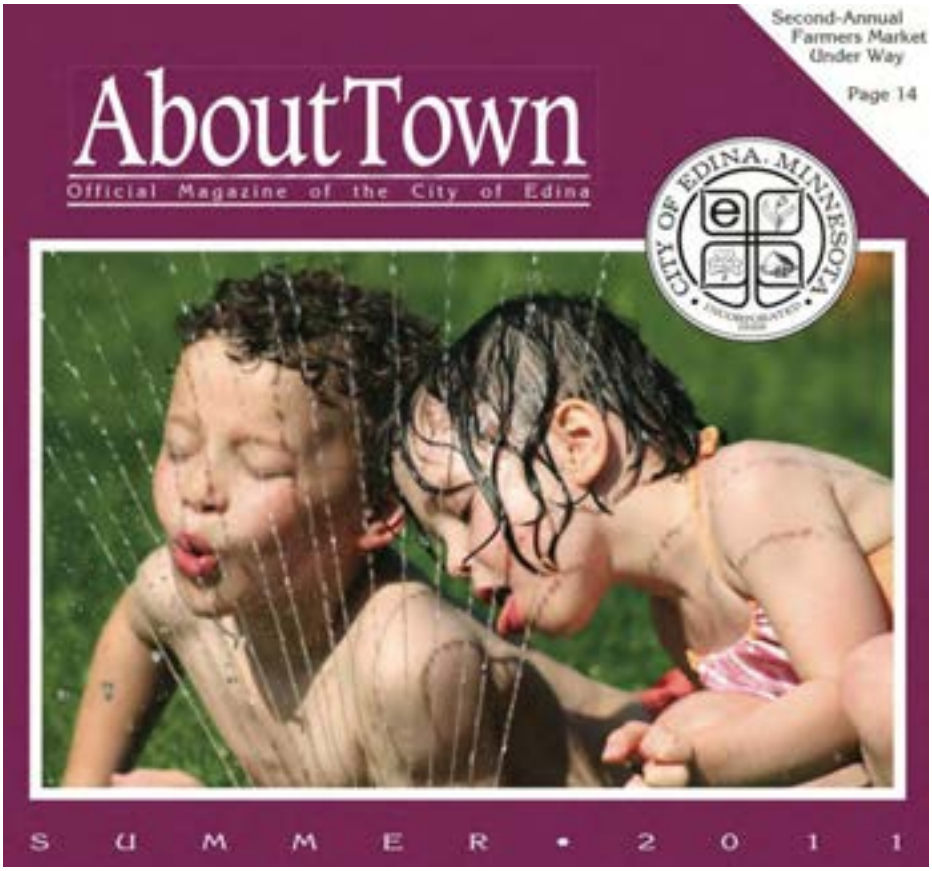
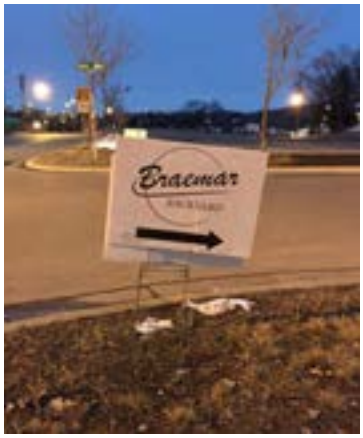


*Figure 3.10 - Existing Picnic Shelters Map*

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

- Provide dedicated staff for EPRD marketing & communication.
- Create consistent park-wide branding.
- Create a marketing and communication plan to improve effectiveness.
- Media formats should be evaluated for greatest cost effectiveness.



# LEVEL OF SERVICE

The Level of Service (LOS) analysis provides the basis to guide investment decisions related to parks, facilities and other built amenities. It puts Edina's inventory of parkland and facilities in terms of "units per population" and creates recommendations based upon multiple resources. These standards need to be viewed as a guide. The standards are to be coupled with conventional wisdom and judgement related to the particular situation and needs of the community. By applying these facility standards to the population of Edina, gaps and surpluses in park and facility/amenity types are revealed. The LOS analysis can also help identify future gaps in facilities and services compared to demographic projections. The following is the LOS summary for Edina:

| PARKS: | 2014 Facility Standards | | | 2019 Facility Standards | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Park Type | Meet Standard/ Need Exists | Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed | | Meet Standard/ Need Exists | Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed | |
| Mini Parks | Need Exists | 7 | Acre(s) | Need Exists | 8 | Acre(s) |
| Neighborhood Parks | Meets Standard | - | Acre(s) | Meets Standard | - | Acre(s) |
| Community Parks | Need Exists | 21 | Acre(s) | Need Exists | 34 | Acre(s) |
| Special-Use Parks | Meets Standard | - | Acre(s) | Meets Standard | - | Acre(s) |
| Open Space/Greenway | Need Exists | 27 | Acre(s) | Need Exists | 36 | Acre(s) |
| Total Park Acres | Meets Standard | - | Acre(s) | Meets Standard | - | Acre(s) |
| OUTDOOR AMENITIES: | | | | | | |
| Picnic Pavilions (Small & Medium) | Need Exists | 3 | Sites(s) | Need Exists | 3 | Sites(s) |
| Pavilions (Large & Indoor) | Need Exists | 2 | Sites(s) | Need Exists | 2 | Sites(s) |
| Baseball Fields | Need Exists | 1 | Field(s) | Need Exists | 2 | Field(s) |
| Softball Fields | Need Exists | 1 | Field(s) | Need Exists | 2 | Field(s) |
| Multi-Use Field (Soccer/Lacrosse/Football/Rugby) (Youth Size) | Need Exists | 2 | Field(s) | Need Exists | 2 | Field(s) |
| Multi-Use Field (Soccer/Lacrosse/Football/Rugby) (Adult Size) | Need Exists | 5 | Field(s) | Need Exists | 1 | Field(s) |
| Outdoor Basketball Courts | Need Exists | 3 | Court(s) | Need Exists | 4 | Court(s) |
| Tennis Courts | Meets Standard | - | Court(s) | Meets Standard | - | Court(s) |
| Indoor Ice Sheets | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) |
| Outdoor Ice Sheets | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) |
| Playgrounds (Youth & Tot) | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) |
| Dog Parks | Need Exists | 1 | Site(s) | Need Exists | 1 | Site(s) |
| Volleyball Pit | Need Exists | 1 | Site(s) | Need Exists | 2 | Site(s) |
| Skate Board Area | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) |
| Multi-Use Trails (Miles) | Need Exists | 23 | Mile(s) | Need Exists | 15 | Mile(s) |
| Community Gardens | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) |
| Disc Golf Courses | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) | Meets Standard | - | Site(s) |
| Outdoor Pools | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) | Meets Standard | - | Sites(s) |
| INDOOR AMENITIES: | | | | | | |
| Recreation Centers (Square Feet) | Need Exists | 55,252 | Square Feet | Need Exists | 59,008 | Square Feet |

*Figure 3.11 - Level of Service Summary*

## ADDITIONAL FACILITIES/ AMENITIES NEEDED SUMMARY

The two most prominent features within Edina's exisitng park system that are showing a deficit are multi-use trails and indoor recreation center space. These facilities will be the most difficult to achieve the LOS due to cost, available land areas/ easements, and political considerations. However, they have the greatest potential for making immediate and dramatic impacts for the residents of Edina. A summary of facilities/ amenities that were identified as needed in the LOS as having a need for include the following:

MULTI-USE TRAILS - The LOS projections show a need for 15 additional miles of trails in Edina after the implementation of Nine-Mile Creek Trail. This need also correlated with the community survey in which Walking and Biking Trails were ranked the highest priority for Edina with Nature Trails being ranked second highest. There is a risk that the community may not see as much of a need for this after the completion of Nine Mile Creek Trail. Efforts to implement should be prioritized to build on the success of the Nine-Mile Creek Trail.

RECREATION CENTER - The LOS projections show a need for 59,008 square feet of additional indoor recreation space. This is double the existing square footage and likely will require a new facility to meet this need. A flexible building that could meet a variety of needs and that can adapt to future changes in demographics and recreation trends would be the most prudent investment. Any studies of new facilities should examine the potential of addressing other facility shortfalls such as the Edina Art Center and Senior Center.

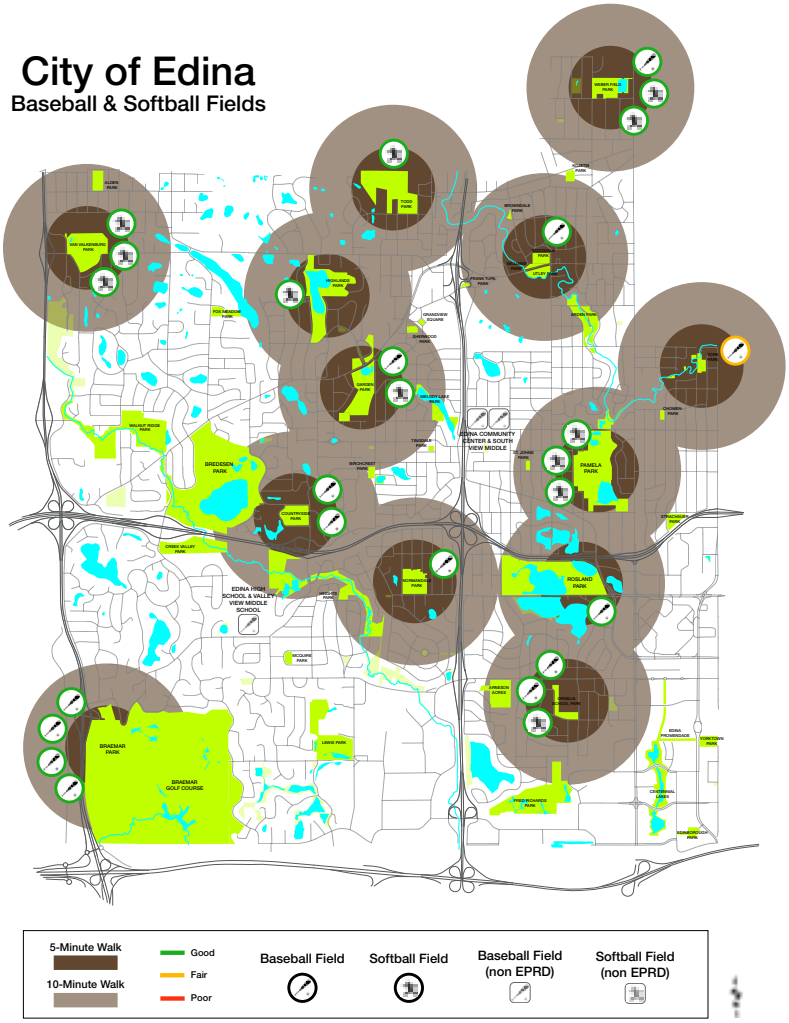



*Figure 3.12 - Existing Baseball and Softball Field Map*

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL FIELDS - The LOS projections show a need for two additional baseball fields and two additional softball fields in Edina. However, the need was not correlated in the community survey and was ranked very low in overall priorities. It is recommended that the current baseball and softball fields should be maintained, and the addition of more baseball and softball fields should be put on hold and revisited as the need is expressed by the community. Figure 3.12 shows all EPRD baseball/softball fields and other non-EPRD baseball/softball fields.

MULTI-USE FIELDS - After the construction of the fields at Pamela Park, the LOS projections show a need for three additional multi-use fields in Edina. EPRD should look at other multi-use field opportunities in the City for partnerships to fulfill this need. An example of this would be the multi-use lacrosse fields at Creek Valley that are on school property and are not currently being counted in the Park System. There may be additional field space at schools and properties throughout the City that could fulfill this need. Multi-use fields can accommodate a number of activities and allow the park system to be very flexible into the future. Sports such as ultimate frisbee, soccer, target golf, and a host of other activities can be utilized by multi-use fields and open lawn areas. Figure 3.13 shows all EPRD multi-use fields and other non-EPRD multi-use fields.

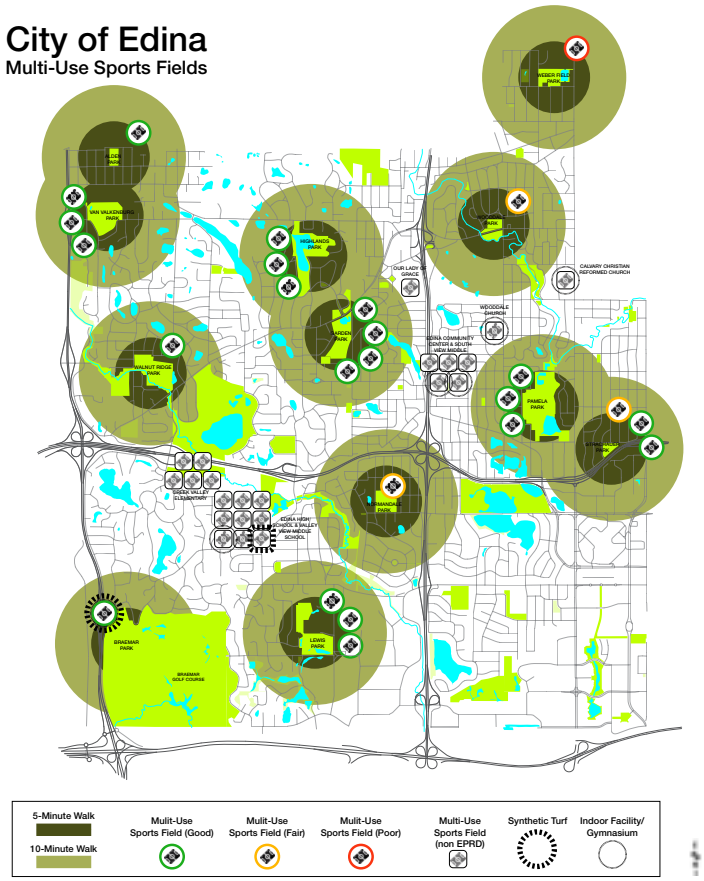



*Figure 3.13 - Existing Sports Fields Map*

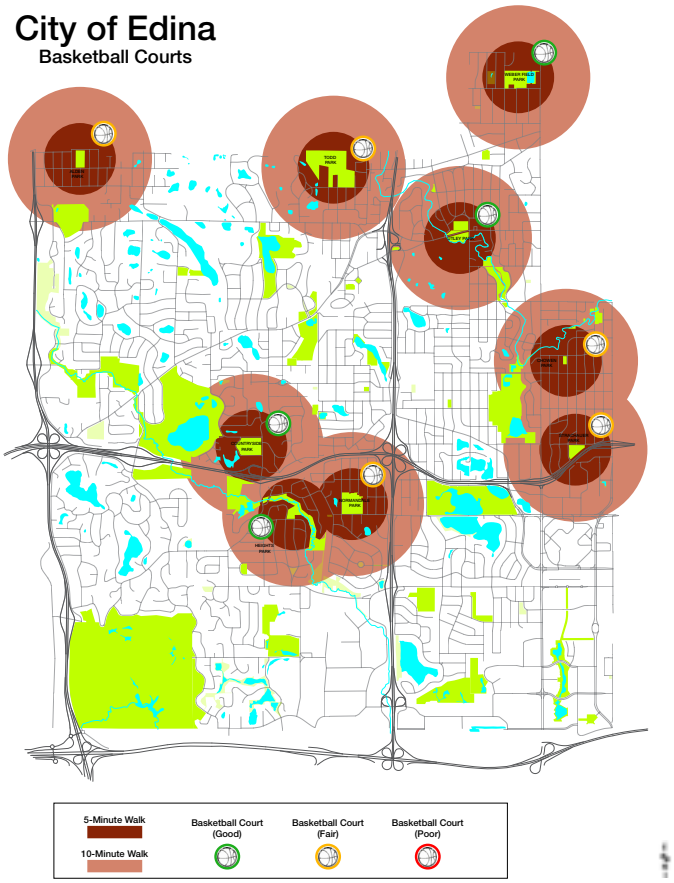



*Figure 3.14 - Existing Basketball Courts Map*

OUTDOOR BASKETBALL COURTS - The LOS projections show a need for four additional outdoor basketball courts in Edina. Figure 3.14 can begin to show the need for basketball courts based of proximity mapping. The figure shows the current parks with basketball courts with both a 5-minute and 10-minute walking radius from them. The figure also shows the condition of each basketball court. It is recommended to look into placement of future basketball courts in underserved areas.

PICNIC PAVILIONS - The LOS projections show a need for five additional picnic pavilions (3 small/medium and 2 large/indoor). This calculation correlated with the results of the community survey and should be explored. Figure 3.10 can begin to show the need for picnic pavilions based on proximity mapping. The figure shows currently which parks have picnic pavilions with both a 5-minute and 10-minute walking radius from them. It is also shown how many picnic pavilions there are, what size and what condition they are in (icons). Picnic pavilions in underserved areas should be explored for cost-benefits.

VOLLEYBALL PITS - The LOS projections show a need for two additional volleyball pits in Edina. Currently, the only exisitng pit is located in Rosland Park. However, the community survey didn't reflect any preferences for additional volleyball pits. It is recommended that EPRD maintains and monitors the use of the existing volleyball pit at Rosland. The addition of more volleyball pits should be evaluated further with future park master planning efforts and needs analyses.

DOG PARKS - The LOS projections show a need for one additional dog park in Edina. Currently, only one exists. It is located in Van Valkenburg Park in the far northwest part of the city. This park is mainly accessible by car, and is a difficult park for people (and their dogs) to walk to. The community survey correlated with this need and ranks Dog Parks as a high priority for Edina. Additional opportunities for dog agility testing, specialized events, and training activities could also be provided.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- Focus Groups
- Public workshops
- Statistically-valid Community Survey

# HOW THE COMMUNITY SEES THEIR PARKS

A critical element of the parks and recreation master planning process is community engagement, which is necessary to effectively deliver a community-oriented parks and recreation system. A balanced, open, and collaborative engagement process builds community-wide trust in the plan and the planning methods used. Community engagement for this project was carefully planned in order to accurately capture all major community needs and included conducting focus groups, public workshops, and a statistically-valid community survey.

The full results of this input is found in the Community Needs Assessment document. A summary of the key points are found in the following section - including both staff and public input on the current state of Edina's Park System.

## FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

As part of the public engagement process for the Master Plan, the consultant team conducted a series of 14 focus group meetings with key stakeholders of the Department. Focus groups took place in December of 2014, and solicited valuable input from more than 100 individuals. Participants included residents, community leaders, business owners, recreation providers, athletic associations, civic groups, neighborhood associations, environmental organizations, departmental staff, maintenance staff, City Council, the Executive Leadership Team, and the Park Board. Seeking community input is critical to the planning process, in that it is an early indicator of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and it identifies how the Department is perceived in and around Edina.

### STRENGTHS

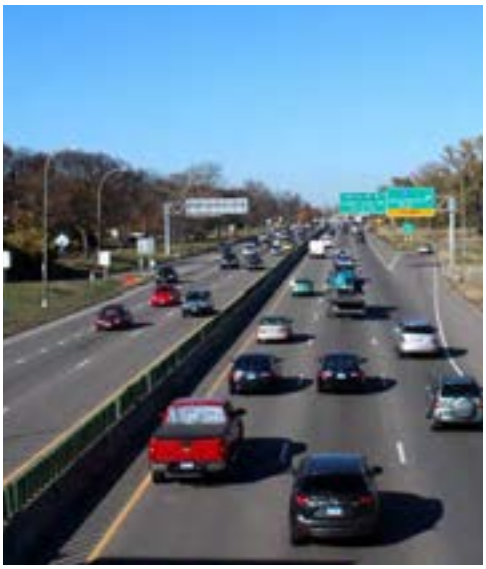
- The City of Edina has a nice variety of unique, top-notch facilities that are among the best in the Metro Area. In general, parks and facilities are very well maintained and aesthetically pleasing.
- Many focus group participants praised the leadership of the Department, noting the positive impact of personnel changes in recent years. Residents are excited about the leadership team that is in place, and there is an elevated level of confidence that the Department is primed for success.
- EPRD has been diligent in community involvement and input.
- Youth sports have very high levels of participation, and develops excellent teams. The ice hockey program in Edina has a long tradition of excellence and is a well-known powerhouse in the Twin Cities Area.
- Edina residents are very proud of their parks system and the community is very engaged in the offerings of the Department.

## WEAKNESSES

- Parking at parks and facilities is inadequate and spills into adjacent neighborhoods during large events.
- Residents feel some areas of Edina are not consistent with others in terms of parks, facilities, amenities, and general upkeep and maintenance.
- Accessibility and connectivity of the parks within the City and with adjacent systems is poor. Need better connections between parks and recreational facilities with neighborhoods, commercial centers, and the public transportation system.
- The park and recreation system lacks sufficient park signage, which makes wayfinding to park properties difficult.
- Focus group participants mentioned a number of amenities in short supply or missing from the Edina park and recreation system. Amenities identified reflect new trends and/ or targeted underserved populations such as seniors.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- A multi-use trail system is eagerly anticipated and completion should be a high priority of the City.
- Improve marketing strategies to better inform a broader spectrum of users about departmental offerings.
- Improve existing parks, facilities, and amenities versus building new ones.
- Increase the number of passive recreational opportunities available to residents.
- Be a better facilitator of recreation by bringing people, especially adults, with common interests together and providing more spaces that are open to interpretation of the user.
- The Department should strive to expand its target market to be all-inclusive. There is a large portion of the community that is currently underserved.
- There is a clear deficiency of recreational opportunities for adults and seniors, and the Department must improve its multi-generational appeal.
- There are ample opportunities to seek additional partnerships and strengthen existing ones - especially marketing and operations.
- There is notable disconnect between the numerous sports organizations currently operating in Edina. The organized sports community would benefit from an athletic organization commission that facilitates and unifies all of these groups.
- The Department would benefit from a thorough natural resource inventory, which identifies where lakes, water bodies, wetlands, tree types, invasive species exist.
- Opportunities also exist internally in terms of strategic planning for the future.
- From a programming standpoint, the Department must establish an identity that defines level and scope of services offered; identifies core services; and determines its role in the community as a recreation provider.



### THREATS

- Out of control invasive species, most notoriously buckthorn, are severely limiting acres of usable parkland.
- The highways and freeways that transect Edina impede the ability to develop alternative transportation corridors such as trails and greenways.
- There is a territorial tendency among some residents in relation to neighborhood parks, in that many remain isolated to their local park and do not take advantage of recreational opportunities elsewhere in the City.
- The changing demographic profile of Edina, particularly due to an aging population, will put new and different demands on the Department in terms of the programs and facilities it provides to the public.
- There are several similar recreation facility and service providers that are already well established in Edina, such as Community Education and private fitness facilities, that can be considered as possible competition and/or partners

## COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SUMMARY

On December 18th, 2014 The design team led a Discovery Session Open House for Edina's Park, Recreation and Trails Strategic Master Plan. There were approximately 30 attendees. The following is a summary of the suggestions and comments from that session. A full report can be found in the Community Needs Assessment Document.

### DESCRIPTIVE WORDS

Attendees were asked to use 2-3 words to describe Edina Parks, Recreation and Trails system today, as well as words they would use to describe it in the future.

Common Descriptions today included words such as:

- Outdated
- Inconsistent
- Decentralized
- Maintenance challenged
- Adequate
- Fantastic
- Plentiful
- Well distributed

Common descriptions for the future included words such as:

- All-ages
- Connected
- Appealing
- Natural areas
- Arts and culture
- Multi-modal
- Multi-purpose
- Organized
- Community Center

## STRENGTHS

Each participant was asked to identify the strengths of the Edina Parks, Recreation and Trails system. Strengths were then shared amongst the group, and written down for review and comments. The following is a summary of responses:

- The existing land is an amenity and there is no need for further acquisition.
- The parks and trails are well-dispersed and vary in size and amenities.
- There are many water features such as Nine Mile Creek that are valued by the public.
- There are great special-use parks and facilities such as Bredesen walking trails, Centennial Lakes, Fred Richards Golf Course, the new Braemar sports dome and Arneson Acres.
- There is a great management team and the overall system is valued by the public.

## WEAKNESSES

Each participant was asked to identify the weaknesses of the Edina Parks, Recreation and Trails system. Weaknesses were then shared amongst the group, and written down for review and comments. The following is a summary of responses:

- It is costly to manage and there are a lot of management needs.
- There is no coordination between school districts/city.
- Parking access is poor at many facilities.
- There are storm water and drainage issues in some areas including Braemar and Walnut Ridge.
- There is not enough emphasis on ADULT recreation, and there is too much focus on youth athletics only.
- Parks are not very walkable/bikeable and signage/identity between parks is an issue.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Each participant was asked to identify the opportunities of the Edina Parks, Recreation and Trails system. Opportunities were then shared amongst the group, and written down for review and comments. The following is a summary of responses:

- Increased natural areas to promote biodiversity.
- Land acquisition particularly at Weber Woods.
- Adult and more passive recreational programming like walking trails or group yoga in the park.
- Braemar (golf course) was a big concern, but participants thought there was opportunity to make it profitable.
- Sense of ownership and volunteerism could positively impact the system.

- Coordinated efforts with the school district.
- Other programming ideas were brought up such as archery, mountain biking, skateboard parks, off-leash dog parks, Nordic ski trails, urban gardening, and birding.

## THREATS

Each participant was asked to identify the weaknesses of the Edina Parks, Recreation and Trails system. Weaknesses were then shared amongst the group and written down for review and comments. The following is a summary of responses:

- Budget and Lack of funding.
- Changing demographics - aging.
- Dismissal of public opinion for private benefit.
- Over duplication of amenities and activities.
- Environmental threats, such as global warming.
- Maintenance issues.

## VISION DIAGRAM

The diagram shown as Figure 3.15 was developed by the participants and consultant team, that reflected the overall vision of the Edina Parks, Recreation and Trails system:

*Figure 3.15 - Vision Diagram*

## COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY SUMMARY

In the summer of 2014, ETC/Leisure Vision conducted a City of Edina Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment Survey to help establish priorities for programs and facilities within the City of Edina. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Edina. The survey was administered by mail, web and phone.

Of the 3,000 sample households mailed the seven-page survey, 1,222 surveys were completed. The following summarize major survey findings:

- Ninety-four percent (94%) of respondent households have visited the City of Edina parks or recreation facilities over the past year.
- Fifty-one percent (51%) of respondent households have visited playgrounds over the past 12 months. Other facilities respondent households have used or visited include: Ponds/lakes (48%), grassy areas (44%), park shelter buildings (30%) and youth soccer, football, lacrosse fields (29%).
- Forty-one percent (41%) of respondent rate the condition of all the parks. trails and recreation facilities they have used or visited in the City of Edina as excellent. Other ratings include: Good (54%), fair (5%) and poor (1%).
- Forty-two percent (42%) of respondent households would most like to see restroom additions made to the City of Edina neighborhood parks. Other additions respondents indicated include: Pedestrian and bike routes to parks (37%) and drinking fountains (30%).
- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of respondent households have not participated in recreation programs offered by the City of Edina in the past 12 months.
    - Based on the thirty-two percent (32%) of respondent who have participated in programs, 53% have participated in 2 to 3 programs. Other participation rates include: 1 program (26%), 4 to 6 programs (15%), 7-10 programs (5%) and 11 or more programs (1%).
    - Based on the thirty-two percent (32%) of respondent who have participated in programs, 39% rate the overall quality as excellent. Other ratings include: Good (57%), fair (4%) and less than 1% indicated poor.
- Eighty-five percent (85%) or 17,613 households have a need for walking and biking trails. Other facility needs include: Nature trails (69% or 14,326 households), and natural areas and wildlife habitats (56% or 11,638 households).
- Based on the sum of respondent households, the top choice indicated that walking and biking trails (66%) were the most important to their household. Other most important facilities include: Nature trails (33%), natural areas and wildlife habitats (23%), 18 and 19 hole golf courses (21%) and playground equipment (20%).
- Fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondent households would use indoor walking and jogging track if developed. Other indoor program spaces include: Exercise facility for adults 50+ (34%), aerobics/fitness/dance class space (33%) and weight room/cardiovascular equipment area (33%).

$$$

**How Respondent Would Allocate $100 in Funds for Services Provided by the City of Edina:**

- Maintaining and improving walking/biking trails ($24.00);
- Maintaining and improving parks ($21.00);
- Maintaining and improving indoor facilities ($13.00);
- Maintaining and improving outdoor sports field ($10.00);
- Creating parks and playgrounds within an easy walk for all residents ($9.00);
- Maintaining and improving golf courses ($8.00);
- Creating a new centrally located community gathering place ($6.00);
- Other ($4.00);
- Add public arts to the parks ($3.00);
- LEED certifying all future park buildings ($2.00);

- Fifty-one percent (51%) of respondent household are very supportive for an indoor community space being developed on part of the vacant land near highway 100 and Vernon Ave. Other levels of support include: Somewhat supportive (22%), not sure (18%) and not supportive (10%).
- Sixty percent (60%) of respondent households learn about the City of Edina parks and recreation programs and activities through the Park and Recreation Activities Directory. Other ways include: From friends and neighbors (59%), newspaper articles (52%) and City of Edina website (46%).
- Forty-three percent (43%) of respondent households are deterred from using parks, recreation facilities and programs of the City more often because they are too busy. Other deterrents include: I don't know what is being offered (26%), program or facility not offered (16%), too far from our residence (15%), program times are not convenient (15%), fees are too high (14%), use facilities in neighboring cities (14%) and I do not know locations of facilities (13%).
- Forty-five percent (45%) of respondent households were somewhat satisfied with the overall value their household receives from the City of Edina parks and recreation system. Other levels of satisfaction include: Very satisfied (35%), neutral (15%), somewhat dissatisfied (4%) and very dissatisfied (2%).

## KEY FINDINGS

Through the exploration of the focus group meetings, the community workshop and the community needs assessment survey, the following were key findings of how the community views Edina's parks:

- Walking and Biking Trails are a high priority amongst the community, and supported by the City of Edina Park and Recreation staff. Mountain bike trails have also been shown to have strong support.
- The community and the Department would like to see increased natural areas within parks, including nature trails, and invasive species control (such as Buckthorn).
- The Department has been praised for the outstanding service to youth recreation, however with the aging community in mind, many residents would like to see more opportunities for seniors and passive recreation in the parks.
- Parking is at a premium at parks hosting organized sports.
- An indoor fitness facility is desired by some in the community, including an indoor walking/jogging track and an indoor pool.
- Budget and funding is a high priority, it was expressed that alternative funding sources should be explored.
- Park signage and wayfinding methods are in need of improvements.
- The Department leadership is praised and there is an overall satisfaction with the Edina Parks System.

# 4.0
# EDINA TOMORROW

## INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreation trends are constantly changing, as are the community's demographics, finances, and environment. These factors are important considerations in setting the future direction of EPRD. Edina must continue to keep up with current and future recreation trends in order to promote excellence in everything it does. The following chapter examines key trends in parks and recreation by looking at a broad range of recreational activities to help understand what activities are growing (or declining) in popularity. In order to stay relevant to the community at large, the Parks, Recreation and Trails Strategic Plan must take into consideration a wide variety of leisure pursuits in order to inform how the Department should adjust its provision of park and recreation facilities and services over time. It is prudent to review both national and local information so as to balance knowledge of trending activities across the county with those happening in and near Edina.

## TRENDS ANALYSIS

The following summarize the findings from the Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2014 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report. The local market potential index data compares the demand for recreation activities and spending of the City of Edina's residents to the national averages.

SFIA is the premeir source for sport and fitness research. The study is based on online interviews carried out in January and February of 2014 from more than 19,000 individuals and households.

### SUMMARY OF NATIONAL PARTICIPATORY TRENDS ANALYSIS

#### MOST POPULAR SPORT AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES

- Fitness Walking (117 million)
- Running/Jogging (54 million)
- Treadmill (48 million)

#### MOST PARTICIPATED IN TEAM SPORTS

- Basketball (23.7 million)
- Tennis (17.7 million)
- Baseball (13.3 million)

#### ACTIVITIES MOST RAPIDLY GROWING OVER LAST FIVE YEARS

- Adventure Racing – up 159%
- Non-traditional/Off-road Triathlon – up 156%
- Traditional/Road Triathlon – up 140%
- Squash – up 115%
- Rugby – up 81%

#### ACTIVITIES MOST RAPIDLY DECLINING OVER LAST FIVE YEARS

- Wrestling – down 45%
- In-line Roller Skating – down 40%
- Touch Football – down 32%
- Horseback Riding – down 29%
- Slow-pitch Softball – down 29%

#### NUMBER OF "INACTIVES" INCREASED OVER 10%, BUT THOSE WHO ARE ACTIVE ARE PARTICIPATING IN MORE

- "Inactives" up 10% between 2009-2014, from 74.8 million to 82.7 million
- Although inactivity has increased, those who are active seem to be participating more often and in multiple activities.

## NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL SPORTS

In terms of total participants, the most popular activities in the general sports category in 2013 include basketball (23.7 million), tennis (17.7 million), baseball (13.3 million), outdoor soccer (12.7 million), and slow pitch softball (6.9 million). Although three out of five of these sports have been declining in recent years, the sheer number of participants demands the continued support of these activities.

Since 2008, squash and other niche sports like lacrosse and rugby have experienced strong growth. Squash has emerged as the overall fastest growing sport, as participation levels have increased by nearly 115% over the last five years. Based on survey findings from 2008-2013, rugby and lacrosse have also experienced significant growth, increasing by 80.9% and 66% respectively. Other sports with notable growth in participation over the last five years were field hockey (31.4%), ice hockey (27.9%), gymnastics (25.1%), and beach volleyball (18.5%).

## NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL FITNESS

National participatory trends in general fitness have experienced some strong growth in recent years. Many of these activities have become popular due to an increased interest among people to improve their health by engaging in an active lifestyle. These activities also have very few barriers to entry, and can be performed by nearly anyone with no time restrictions.

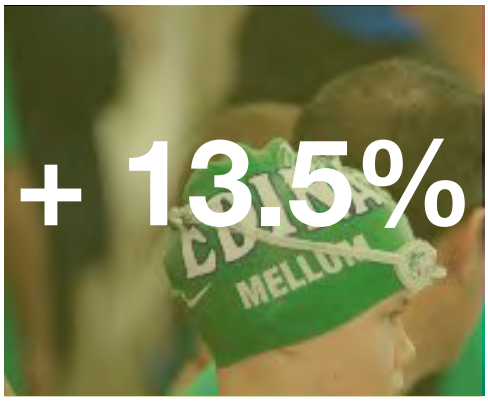
The most popular fitness activity by far is fitness walking, which had over 117 million participants in 2013. This change represents 2.9% increase from the previous year. Other leading fitness activities based on number of participants include running/jogging (over 54 million), treadmill (48.1 million), and hand free weights (43.2 million), and weight/resistant machines (36.3 million).

Over the last five years, the activities that are growing most rapidly are high impact aerobics (up 47.1%), yoga (up 36.9%), running/jogging (up 31.9%), cardio kickboxing (28.7% increase), and group stationary cycling (up 27.8%).

## NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL RECREATION

Results from the SFIA's Topline Participation Report demonstrate increased popularity among Americans in numerous general recreation activities. These activities encourage an active lifestyle, can be performed individually or with a group, and are not limited by time restraints. In 2013, the most popular activities in the general recreation category include road bicycling (over 40 million participants), freshwater fishing (nearly 38 million participants), and day hiking (over 34 million participants).

From 2008-2013, general recreation activities that have undergone very rapid growth are adventure racing (up 159%), non-traditional/off-road triathlons (up 156%), traditional/road triathlon (up 139.9%), and trail running (up 49.7%). In-line roller skating, horseback riding, and skateboarding have all seen a substantial drop in participation, decreasing by 40%, 29.4%, and 21.8% respectively over the last five years.




## NATIONAL TRENDS IN AQUATIC ACTIVITY

Swimming is a lifetime sport and has remained very popular among Americans. Recreation swimming is the absolute leader in multigenerational appeal with over 26 million reported participants in 2013, a 13.5% increase from the previous year.

## WINTER RECREATION TRENDS

Winter sports and recreation is a key consideration for EPRD. Though national and local recreation trend and market potential information includes a few basic winter sports, there is a need for more consistent market tracking in this area.

Participation in outdoor winter recreation can be influenced yearly by weather, convenience (distance to venue, availability/cost of equipment), ability to participate with others, and whether it is an Olympic year. In general, Minnesotans tend to have higher than average participation rates in hockey, skiing, ice skating, ice fishing, snowmobiling, and broomball. Because the median household income for residents in Edina is $88,201, participation in winter sports is not as limited by financial barriers such as purchasing gear and equipment, lessons, leagues or teams, resorts, and indoor ice time. Tracking of usage statistics at the city or service area level in outdoor recreation would help Edina to identify localized trends more accurately for winter recreation in the future.

### ICE SKATING

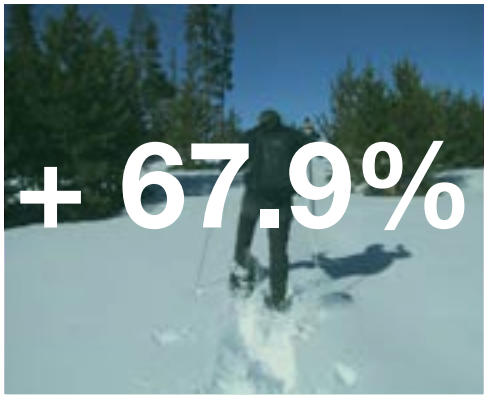
According to the U.S. Figure Skating data, the national trend for membership is down just 0.7% over the last 10 seasons. This indicates a relatively flat trend nationally over time. However, in the service area about 25% more people watch figure skating than the national average. Approximately 3.4% of Edina residents (1,270 people) participated in ice skating in the past 12 months, which is about 25% above average for participation nationally, with an MPI of 126. Therefore, we can extrapolate that Edina residents are upwards of one-fourth more likely to participate or spectate in figure skating than the U.S. population, and ice skating will continue to be an important part of Edina.

### HOCKEY& BROOMBALL

According to USA Hockey, there were 519,417 registered hockey players in the U.S. in 2013-14, an increase of 9,000 over the previous year (1.7%). Minnesota continues to reign as the State of Hockey. According to USA Hockey, the 10-year growth rate in Minnesota hockey participation from 2002-2013 was 20.2%. Minnesota as a state has seen a 1% growth in players over the past year, and continues to be ranked #1 in the country with a player population of 54,507, with Michigan just behind at 50,585. Hockey will continue to be a major focus of EPRD for the foreseeable future.

Broomball is a popular league sport in Minnesota, and there are several recreational to semi-professional leagues in the Minneapolis area. 90% of participants in the national title game are from Minnesota. There are 19 registered Broomball leagues in Minnesota.

EPRD also runs its own broomball league and it competes for ice time with other activities throughout the winter.




## SNOW SPORTS - SKIING, SNOWBOARDING AND SNOWSHOEING

According to the Sports Industry Association/Physical Activity Council 2012-2013 Snow Sports Participant Study, there were approximately 19,286,000 snow sports participants in 2012-13, showing an overall decline of 2% from the previous season. National trends in skiing include:

- Alpine skiers and snowboarders make up 49% of all snow sports participants.
- Snowshoeing is the most popular snow sport amongst women, representing 46% of snowshoers.
- 54% of snow sports participants make more than $75K a year.
- Over 39% of snowboarders are under age 24.
- 74% of snow sports participants are homeowners.

According to the 2013 Physical Activity Council Participation Study, in the West North Central Region (includes Minnesota) of the United States, 7.8% of the population Alpine Skis, 7.2% Snowboard, 10.7% Cross Country Ski, 7.3% Freeski, 12.4% Snowshoe, and 5.5% Telemark Ski.

- Of those who Alpine Ski, 10% do so on Ungroomed Trails or Other, with the remainder using Resorts.
- Of those who Snowboard, 36% do so on Ungroomed Trails, in Urban Areas, Terrain Parks, or Golf Courses, with the remainder using Resorts.
- Of those who Cross Country Ski, 28% do so on Ungroomed Trails or in the Backcountry, with the remainder using Nordic Centers.
- Of those who Freeski, 30% do so in Urban Areas, Golf Courses, or Other, while 32% ski at Terrain Parks and 38% ski at Resorts.

Cross Country, Freeskiing, Telemark Skiing, and Snowshoeing are all growing and have participants which are likely to use local amenities such as Urban Areas, Golf Courses, or Trails that may be amenities managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. Snowboarders may be looking to use these local amenities as well. Though

According to Snowsports Industries America, **cross country skiing is growing at a rate of 9% a year**, downhill is increasing at less than 1% percent and snowboarding is growing at 5% a year. Salomon, an international outdoor equipment provider indicates that overall Nordic business in the US is up 17% from 2013 to 2014. Salomon sales numbers in MN/WI for Nordic equipment is up 22% from 2013 to 2014 as well.

Because the median income of Edina is over $88,000 and 54% of participants in snow

sports have an income of over $75,000 per year, in theory, residents in this area are much more likely to participate in snow sports than the national average. Therefore, residents of Edina are skiing much more than the national average and may be looking for related programming offered through the Department (i.e., in local parks).

### OTHER WINTER SPORTS

Nationally, 11.9% of the population spent the same or more on winter sports for 2011 compared to 2010, and 16.3% planned to spend the same or more in 2012 (Physical Activity Council's 2012 Participation Report).

Within the City of Edina, 8.2% of residents (3,059) watch extreme winter sports on television, nearly equivalent to the national average, and 33.7% (12,588) watch the winter Olympics, which is well above the national average. Edina residents are more likely inclined to engage in newer winter activities. Of these winter sports growing in popularity that EPRD could evaluate the potential to integrate into the park system include - **curling, biathlon, skijoring, and fat tire biking.**

## REGIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL RECREATION

The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. Every year, the Metropolitan Council reports the estimated number of visits to regional parks and an overview of the recreation activities visitors engage in through their report entitled Annual Use Estimate of the Metropolitan Regional Parks System. The latest available report presents information from 2013.

Regional park visitation has steadily increased over the past decade. Between 2004 and 2013, annual visitation to regional parks increased 29.9%. with walking/hiking (21% of activity occasions), swimming (16%), biking (10%), and picnicking (10%) being the pursuits with the most participation. On trails the top activities were biking (45%), walking/hiking (30%), jogging/running (10%), and dog-walking (7%).

## LOCAL SPORT AND MARKET POTENTIAL

Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4 show sport and leisure market potential data from ESRI. A Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the probable demand for a product or service in the target area. The MPI shows the likelihood that an adult resident of the city will participate in certain activities when compared to the US National average. The National average is 100 therefore numbers below 100 would represent a lower than average participation rate and numbers above 100 would represent higher than average participation rate. The city is compared to the national average in four (4) categories – general sports by activity, fitness by activity, outdoor activities, and money spent on miscellaneous recreation.

The City of Edina demonstrates very high market potential index numbers for fitness activities, outdoor activities, and money spent on recreation while producing mixed results for general sports. All activities related to fitness reported well above average market potential, as well as some select general sports activities (e.g. downhill

skiing, tennis, and golf). These high index numbers paired with the above average household income characteristics of residents is very promising from a programming standpoint. The Department has strong potential to generate revenues from programs by capitalizing on the favorable earning ability of the service area and the residents' willingness to spend money on recreational activities, as exhibited by the market potential index figures.

Although the local market potential for most activities is very promising, there is one area of notable concern. In analyzing the local trends in general sports, the majority of activities fall below the national average. These activities are some of the most popular sports and typically considered programming staples in athletics for departments nationwide. This deviation might indicate a lack of awareness among potential users, programs that don't align with community needs and interests, a lack of available amenities and/or a need to motivate residents to participate in offerings at a higher level.

As observed in Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4 the following sport and leisure trends are most prevalent for residents within the City of Edina: average market potential, as well as some select general sports activities.

| City of Edina Participatory Trends - General Sports | |
|---|---|
| **Activity** | **MPI** |
| Participated in Skiing | **176** |
| Participated in Tennis | **149** |
| Participated in Golf | **125** |
| Participated in Soccer | **102** |
| Participated in Softball | **93** |
| Participated in Volleyball | **89** |
| Participated in Baseball | **88** |
| Participated in Basketball | **87** |
| Participated in Football | **80** |

*Figure 4.1*

| City of Edina Participatory Trends - Fitness | |
|---|---|
| **Activity** | **MPI** |
| Participated in Yoga | **140** |
| Participated in Aerobics | **129** |
| Participated in Jogging/ Running | **118** |
| Participated in Pilates | **118** |
| Participated in Walking for Exercise | **118** |
| Participated in Swimming | **117** |
| Participated in Weight Lifting | **116** |

*Figure 4.3*

*Figure 4.2*

## COMMUNITY RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES

Additional activities and facilities were identified by the public through the input sessions that directly relate to the changing needs of the community and their expectations for the EPRD. Some existing park activities have been successful, and show signs of growth, while others are new ideas from the public.

PICKLE BALL COURTS - Pickle ball has become increasingly popular with aging populations and there is a need for more courts - outdoor and potentially indoor.

OUTDOOR SPLASH PADS - Smaller scale outdoor splash pads are becoming increasingly popular as an attractive alternative to outdoor pools. There are currently no outdoor splash pads outside of the Aquatic Center in the City. Splash pads should be evaluated as an attractive alternative to pools as they require less safety supervision and operating costs than traditional pool facilities.

FRISBEE GOLF - There is one frisbee golf course at Rosland that is very popular and is showing signs of wear on the grass and trees. This could be an indication that there is a greater need for more facilities in other parts of the City. Frisbee golf courses are very affordable compared to other recreational activities.

ARCHERY RANGE - Archery is growing in popularity and has been identified by the community as a need. There are currently no formalized places for archery in the parks system and there may be benefits to setting up a structured area for archery practice. Archery facilities are relatively inexpensive compared to other recreation activities. The Minnesota State Archery Association and/ or MnDNR could be coordinated with for education programs and events.

| City of Edina Participatory Trends - Outdoor Activity | |
|---|---|
| **Activity** | **MPI** |
| Bicycling (mountain) | **137** |
| Hiking | **127** |
| Bicycling (road) | **126** |
| Canoeing/kayaking | **124** |
| Backpacking | **115** |
| Birdwatching | **103** |
| Boating (power) | **102** |
| Horseback riding | **97** |
| Went overnight camping | **91** |
| Fishing (fresh water) | **74** |

| City of Edina Participatory Trends - Money Spent on Recreation | |
|---|---|
| **Activity** | **MPI** |
| Attend sports event: baseball game - MLB reg seas | **136** |
| Spent on sports/rec equipment in last 12 mo: $250+ | **123** |
| Attend sports event: football game - NFL Mon/Thurs | **119** |
| Attend sports event: ice hockey - NHL reg seas | **118** |
| Attend sports event | **116** |
| Attend sports event: basketball game (college) | **115** |
| Attend sports event: football game - NFL weekend | **114** |
| Visited a theme park in last 12 months | **113** |
| Attend sports event: basketball game - NBA reg seas | **109** |
| Spent on sports/rec equipment in last 12 mo: $100-249 | **106** |
| Went to zoo in last 12 months | **106** |
| Attend sports event: football game (college) | **101** |
| Went on overnight camping trip in last 12 months | **91** |
| Spent on sports/rec equipment in last 12 mo: $1-99 | **85** |
| Attend sports event: high school sports | **82** |

*Figure 4.4*

COMMUNITY GARDENS/ URBAN AGRICULTURE - The community gardens at Yorktown support healthy lifestyles, promote community engagement, and are very popular. Other opportunities for community gardens should be explored. Infrastructure is relatively affordable compared to other recreation activities. Soil tests should be performed prior to installation of any garden beds if any evidence of contamination is shown. Organic leaf compost is an excellent addition to soils to increase production and condition existing soils.

INDOOR FITNESS - A desire for increased access to a range of indoor fitness activities was expressed. Flexible indoor facilities could host a variety of activities for a wide-range of ages and ability levels. Some recent trending activities that could be found indoors include:

- **Indoor pickleball**
- **Boxing**
- **Indoor parkour**
- **Treadmill only workouts**
- **Group rowing**
- **Stationary cycling/ spin**
- **Futsal - 5 person indoor soccer**
- **Dodgeball**
- **Yoga, pilates, hot yoga**
- **Mommy fitness**

## POTENTIAL USES FOR EXISTING FACILITIES

The following activities and facilities were not brought up in community input sessions, but do parallel national and regional trends, and could be integrated into Edina's parks with little additional financial or infrastructure inputs. These activities were informed by public input, evaluations of the park system, and national trends information.

FOOT GOLF - Foot golf's introduction and growth in popularity has corresponded directly with traditional golf's decline. Two courses exist in Minneapolis. Usually taking place in the rough, or next to the fairway, it is played simultaneously with golf and allows courses another form of revenue. Foot golf is cheaper than regular golf, requires a ball for equipment, and is generally accessible to a broader population.

GEOCACHING - Geocaching is a passive recreational opportunity that would allow greater exposure to underutilized natural areas of the park. A great family activity that requires very little investment and/ or management.

RESTAURANTS AND BEER GARDENS - Integrating food and beverage into the park system is another form of revenue generation. Cross-pollinating activities by bringing more people into an area has worked well in other areas of the country and is something Edina is currently pursuing. The synergy of tapping into the Twin Cities emergence as a midwestern Food and MicroBrew leader has a lot of potential for creative partnership opportunities. The Consultant team identified the lawn bowling green at Centennial Lakes as an exciting opportunity to bring more consistent users to the area. Food trucks could also be a way to bring an added service to the population, and EPRD should study how to encourage and accommodate food trucks in key areas of the park system.

AERIAL CHALLENGE COURSES - ROPE CHALLENGES - Aerial ropes courses have become popular and offer a unique experience opportunity for Edina's parks. Partnerships may be an effective way to deliver this feature to residents.

FRISBEE GAMES (BEYOND GOLF) - Frisbee and disc games have consistently increased in popularity over the years and groups in Edina have organized the "Edina Family Frisbee Festival" in the past. Frisbee games can be family friendly and can accommodate a wide range of abilities. EPRD could work with existing groups to encourage and help integrate frisbee activities and facilities into the Park System.

TARGET GOLF GAMES - Golf oriented games can be played in a number of settings including parks. Sometimes played using a soft core type ball (to reduce injury and property damage from errant shots) and higher lofted clubs, players aim for targets and non-traditional golf holes. Cost is typically free and no additional infrastructure would necessarily be needed in a park. Divot repair would be the main maintenance issue needing to be addressed. EPRD could designate certain areas to encourage target golf (potentially nearby in Braemar), and potentially organize education events.

BIKING - Different forms of biking have become popular, often in association with the X Games. Biking activities include a host of BMX related events - BMX vert, dirt, Big Air, Street, and others. Many of these events are somewhat related to skateboarding and future facility construction should evaluate the need and requirements to host these biking events. Building large ramps and dirt tracks may be beyond the purview of EPRD but partnerships and programming could be explored. Mountain biking is discussed further in this document.

PLATFORM TENNIS - The platform tennis court is similar in size to the pickleball court; however, it requires a greater infrastructure investment in building the courts that are usually heated - allowing outdoor winter use.

FUTSAL - Futsal is a form of soccer that is mainly played indoors, on a smaller field, with a smaller ball, and 5 people per team. This version of soccer is a new introduction to the City of Edina being played by the Edina Soccer Club as a way to extend the season and crosstrain.

There are a number of additional activities and sports that could be integrated into EPRD facilities and programs. The list is continuously changing and EPRD should reevaluate current trends and existing offerings every few years to ensure they are consistently meeting current resident needs.

## TRENDS ANALYSIS FINDINGS

A direct correlation exists between the national participatory trends and the local market trends, in that the service area shows a high propensity to engage in recreational

activities pertaining to fitness. Based on market potential index figures, the Department should expect residents to participate in fitness activities at a much higher rate than the national average. This would indicate that the Department should offer a wide variety of fitness programming, with a willingness to introduce innovative and trending activities.

The local participatory trends also show that residents of Edina attend sporting events and theme parks at a high level, as index figures for these categories are well above average. This demonstrates that the local community is very social and residents enjoy attending a variety of events. From a programming standpoint, this presents an opportunity for the department to offer more special events and excursions, such as day trips for seniors or a community day at the ballpark.

Based on the findings from the demographic and trends analysis, the Department is very fortunate to have an ideal service area. Not only are income characteristics well above average, but the user base also has a strong tendency to spend their time and money on activities that are in the Department's wheelhouse. The future success of the Department will rely heavily on its ability to capitalize on these favorable market conditions by providing facilities, amenities, and programs that are geared toward the needs and interests of the local community.

## CHANGING COMMUNITY, CHANGING NEEDS

Throughout the planning process, community members continually voiced their support for the excellence, value, and benefits of Edina's quality park system. However, to maintain this excellence, there are numerous challenges to address in the short and long term. An aging population, changing interests, increased competition for resources, technological advances, and environmental pressures are a few of the issues that will continue to challenge the parks and recreation services in Edina.

A powerful vision, innovative strategic plan, and strong leadership will allow the Department to address changing issues and strengthen the environmental and financial sustainability of the park system. The community needs assessment and trends analysis shows Edina to be a changing community that has changing needs. Addressing these needs is a focus of the Strategic Plan and critical for EPRD to continue their high standard of excellence in meeting the Community's needs into the future. The following issues provide a glimpse of how the park system could support residents in the future, and the opportunities and challenges that have emerged during analysis for this Strategic Plan.

## HEALTHY, ACTIVE AGING

Edina has a rapidly growing population over the age of 55. In 2014 nearly 35% of the population was above age 55 and that number is projected to be approximately 45% by 2019. Many individuals in older populations are seeking changes in lifestyle to reflect their shifting family responsibilities, reduced work loads, and expanded recreational, educational, and cultural interests. Baby boomers are aging more actively than previous generations with more focus on continuing to participate in physical and social activities. Edina will need to provide opportunities for civic participation, active and passive recreation, and social interaction to facilitate the health and wellness of its aging population. Fortunately, income will not be a limiting factor in participation for a majority of older Edina residents.

## YOUTH AND FAMILY FOCUS

Edina remains a strong community for attracting families with its history of excellence in quality education and youth support. Providing opportunities to engage youth in a variety of activities is important for teaching them the tools to create a life-long healthy and active lifestyles. Teaching healthy habits and developing self esteem in the community's youth are important functions that the park and recreation system can provide in collaboration with other community organizations including schools, sports associations, non-profits, and other youth focused groups. While Edina's youth athletic associations are excellent at teaching important active lifestyle lessons, diversifying the activities and supporting a broader range of interests will attract a larger youth population that may be underserved by traditional athletic centric facilities and programming.

## NATURE AND HEALTH

Reduced access to natural areas, increased use of technology, and more programmed lives have created a lifestyle for many children that don't allow them the opportunity to engage with the natural world in any meaningful way. This is amplified in Edina where the natural resources are scattered throughout the City and difficult to access without an automobile. The mental health benefits from exposure to natural areas can help reduce depression, anxiety, and other mental and learning disorders related to attention deficit disorder. Natural areas, passive trails and open spaces, nature based play areas, and unstructured imaginative play have a significant impact on physical and mental health and development. Connecting all of Edina's residents to natural areas is an important component of a high quality park system, but is particularly important to youth.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Recent climate trends and future forecasts will impact parks facilities with increased storm intensities, longer periods of drought between storms, higher temperatures (summer and winter), decreased snow cover, impacts to traditional vegetation, and increased threats from insects and invasive species. These changes will have significant impacts on the park system's ability to provide key services throughout the seasons, protect park users during and after storms, and support quality turf grass required for active field play. Storm damage will likely increase and these issues can create additional pressures for City and Park system resources. Emerald ash borer outbreaks and new pathogens and infestations are likely to strengthen in intensity and frequency and will require a dedicated plan to remediate.

## FINANCIAL COMPETITION

Increased costs in areas like health care, energy, and construction are occurring at a time of reduced financial contributions from State and local taxes. This often places parks lower in priority than other public services. Many parks have aging infrastructure that will need to be evaluated and selectively reinvested in to maintain level of service expectations. Funding reductions for maintenance and operations can have a significant impact on the health and usability of the park system. New revenue opportunities will need to be explored for maintenance and capitol improvements. Partnerships, volunteers, donations, and other sources will need to be identified as funding inputs, as well as communicating the value of parks and recreation to the general community. Edina has historically been an innovator in this area and has had excellent volunteer programs that have left the system in good shape. This approach will need to continue and evolve in order to maintain the city's excellence in providing park and recreation services.

## ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL

Active lifestyles, independent lives, and community involvement should be made available to all residents. By law, parks and recreation facilities are required to be accessible, and the parks department will continue to update and adapt infrastructure to provide inclusive, accessible facilities for residents with various abilities. Providing these opportunities empowers more independent individuals that can contribute positively to the community. Lower mobility populations, including older individuals, will greatly benefit from an approach that emphasizes accessibility for all. This approach will allow the EPRD to provide health and wellness opportunities to all of Edina's residents.

## HEALTH CONSCIOUS & ACTIVE LIVING

National obesity trends are shifting as the general public becomes more educated and is engaging in active lifestyles throughout all age groups. Active lifestyles are becoming more popular and health and recreation centers are seeing increased memberships and use. As a result, the general public is demanding facilities and programs that support healthier lifestyles - in every season. Walking, running, and biking are becoming more popular as both recreation activities and methods of transportation. These modes of transportation require necessary infrastructure that has historically not been a priority in Edina. Supporting these individuals with appropriate infrastructure is a key function of EPRD and can go a long way toward building a healthier community. Streets, sidewalks, and trails throughout the city also support health and wellness and the parks department should collaborate with other programs existing in the city to address this need.

## TIME AND TECHNOLOGY

While technology can help address some time pressures of modern life, it can also exacerbate the issues of time management and scheduling in our daily lives. Because of the pressures on time, people are seeking activities and infrastructure that are close to home and easily accommodated in their typical schedules. Unstructured participation activities that meet busy schedules and allow them to engage with their family, friends, and community are highly desired. This will require a flexible park system with facilities and programs that include options that fit multiple needs.

Additionally, technology can be embraced by the parks department for communication, marketing, increasing administrative efficiency, as well as creating entirely new activities (e.g. geocaching).

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

The general public's increased awareness of environmental issues in Minnesota, such as clean water, air, and energy efficiency have put increased demands on EPRD to provide more quality natural resources and areas. People associate the natural world with healthy environments and view the parks department as stewards of the natural environment in their city. Additionally, the parks department has an opportunity to foster sustainability throughout the community by providing leadership in advancing environmentally sensitive practices. Sustainable development and redevelopment, native landscapes, environmentally friendly stormwater management, and energy efficiency are all commonly understood aspects of sustainability that are directly impacted by parks and facilities.

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# 5.0
# STRATEGY AND PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

In developing a master plan, it is important to establish a vision and mission for the Department to guide its efforts for the future. Vision is a declaration of what the Department wants to be known for and Mission indicates how they will get there. The following vision has been developed in conjunction with the Strategic Plan, and complements EPRD's existing mission statement:

### EDINA PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT VISION

*To be recognized as having Minnesota's premiere parks, recreation and trail system that provides unrivaled opportunities to maximize Edina's quality of life by nurturing the health and well-being of our people, our community, our environment, and our economy.*

### EDINA PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

*We create parks, facilities, and programs to foster a healthy inclusive community. We accomplish this through creative leadership, collaborations, environmentally sustainable practices, and the responsible use of available resources.*

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Supporting the vision and mission statements, six Guiding Principles will identify how the organization will go about it's work and help frame the vision, goals, and strategies for the Strategic Plan.

### Promote community health and wellness for all residents in our parks and programming.

The health and wellness benefits of parks include:

- Physical activity makes people healthier. Access to parks and trails increases physical activity.
- Contact with nature improves physical and psychological health.
- Trees and natural areas directly improve air quality, reduce the urban heat island effect, and help improve water quality.

EPRD will lead by example in areas of health and wellness, by promoting and providing health opportunities for the community and making health and wellness a priority for all future development.

### Provide excellence and innovation in parks and recreation services and facilities to meet the needs of the community.

Edina has a strong history of creating innovative parks and facilities, such as Edinborough, Braemar, Centennial Lakes, and numerous other park facilities. EPRD will continue to provide exceptional facilities to support the community's quality of life. We will first seek to strengthen existing facilities by re-examining their role and making improvements that heighten their value.

The City's demographics are shifting, park trends and expectations are constantly changing, and recent understanding of the natural world's benefits in a healthy community require us to develop an innovative plan to continue meeting our community's needs. Innovation will be required to improve the environmental and financial sustainability of our parks and recreation facilities; providing future generations with the same access to a high quality park system.

### Protect Edina's assets through strong financial stewardship and creative funding.

Creative partnerships with private business and public associations have helped create the high quality park and recreation system of Edina. Strengthening these partnerships is critical to meeting continued expectations for quality.

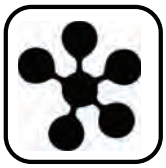
Re-evaluating the needs of the community and the resources of the Department and City will allow us to develop new partnerships to provide exceptional parks services and facilities to all of our community.

## Advance environmental stewardship and conservation to preserve and protect natural resources and build excellence through sustainability.

Edina residents are increasingly aware of the value that natural resources and the natural world provides to their community. Residents are desiring an increase in healthy natural areas to provide passive open space for recreation, interpretation, and overall environmental health. Sustainability is a key component of protecting the natural environment and we will explore opportunities to integrate environmentally friendly practices into our parks to increase the community's health and wellness.

The parks department will provide leadership in natural resource management, connecting people to their natural environment, providing environmental education programs, and fostering a sense of stewardship.

## Connect residents to park facilities and their programs.



Edina's park system is open to everyone, but connections can be strengthened to enhance access for all residents. A multi-use trail system, along with a city wide pedestrian network, will create a strong connective fiber that will allow residents the ability to access park facilities and programs without the use of an automobile. EPRD will pursue a connective multi-use trail system, and partner with organizations and programs advocating for a strong pedestrian and bicycle realm throughout the city.

Communication, marketing, and social networking can help EPRD reach out to a wide net of new users. Reaching out to underserved populations with targeted programming will help all residents pursue a healthy lifestyle and add to the financial security of the park system.

## Promote equity and engagement within the parks system and its programs.

EPRD will strive to make the park system accessible to all, regardless of racial, cultural, earning potential, or mobility differences. As Edina's demographics shift, EPRD will continue to reevaluate their current offerings, fee structures, and location of amenities and programs in order to match evolving needs of the community. Providing equal opportunity to all of Edina's residents will maximize the overall health and wellness of the City.

Creating a strong trail network, developing fair fee structures, and providing programming that is desired and needed by the Community will go a long way toward providing social equity. Focusing facilities and programs on those with lower mobility is another way to meet the changing needs of the City as a larger percentage of residents advance in age.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE PURPOSE, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES

To accomplish the Strategic Plan's vision, **five key areas of development** have been identified that constitute broad categories of EPRD improvements, activities, and initiatives necessary to implement the Strategic Plan. Each of the key development areas is broken down by the following:

- **Purpose** - statements recognize the critical elements and over-arching philosophy of approach for each key area of development.
- **Goals** - define the most critical objectives that will need to be focused on under each key area of development to ensure the purpose is addressed.
- **Strategies** - provide guidance on actions necessary to accomplish the goals.
- **Tactics** - are specified in *Appendix A - Implementation Plan* and list specific actions to achieve the strategies. The tactics are intended to be actionable items, where progress and timelines can be tracked, evaluated, and modified as needed.

Together, the purpose, goals, strategies and tactics are intended to serve as a flexible guide to adapt to changing trends, needs, and City priorities. They should be re-evaluated and updated every 5-years to ensure that the master plan truly serves as a living document that is dynamic and proactively meeting the Community's needs and vision.

*The Implementation Framework* is separated as an Appendix in order to allow staff to edit with new information/ expertise not available at the time of this document, adapt to physical and political realities, and adjust timelines as needed. The scope of *Appendix A* is informed by the bulk of the Strategic Plan and is connected to the document through the following Purpose, Goals, and Strategies for the Key Areas of Development.

The end of this Chapter will identify the top Priorities of the Strategic Plan that have been identified based on public surveys, staff input, consultant team experience and recommendations, and current opportunities.

## KEY AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

1. Natural Resources & Sustainable Parks
2. Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails
3. Recreation Facilities
4. Recreation Programs
5. Finance & Management

# DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR 1:

## NATURAL RESOURCES & SUSTAINABLE PARKS

*Protect, enhance, engage and restore our urban forests, natural areas and water resources in order to sustain a healthy, diverse and balanced natural environment for all to enjoy and understand.*

"for in the end we will conserve only what we love.

we will love only what we understand.

we will understand only what we are taught."

Baba Dioum - 1970

### GOAL 01 - PROTECT, ENHANCE, AND RESTORE THE CITY'S NATURAL RESOURCES AND NATURAL AREAS

#### Strategies:

1. Create a full-time position for a Natural Resource Manager to lead and manage natural resource related efforts - as recommended in 2013 Urban Forest Task Force report (UFTF).
2. Complete a comprehensive Natural Resources Inventory on all Park properties with an emphasis on invasive species assessment and management. Continue to fund and implement existing successful programs.
3. Increase connections and access to natural areas and environmental resources.

### GOAL 02 - CREATE MORE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE PARKS, FACILITIES, AND LANDSCAPES

#### Strategies:

1. Maintain excellence in park maintenance operations, continue to explore environmentally friendly/ sustainable practices, and increase natural areas maintenance expertise and ability.
2. Develop more sustainable parks and trails infrastructure that are resilient to impacts of climate change.

### GOAL 03 - PROTECT AND RESTORE EDINA'S WATER RESOURCES.

#### Strategies:

1. Maintain the Park System's flood storage abilities and follow floodplain regulations.
2. Improve Edina's water resources through the Park System.
3. Provide more active and passive recreation opportunities and educational efforts focused on water resources.

# DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR 2: PARKS, OPEN SPACES & TRAILS

*Ensure parks are a source of community pride by providing a balance of active and passive spaces that are well connected and reflect high quality design principles and maintenance standards; that allow all residents to engage in healthy activities.*

## GOAL 01 - PROMOTE CONNECTIONS TO THE PARK SYSTEM WITHIN THE CITY, AND TO THE SURROUNDING REGION

### Strategies:

1. Prioritize the development and implementation of a multi-use trail network connecting parks and facilities together, and to key destinations throughout the City.
2. Develop, refine, and implement the Branding, Signage, and Wayfinding Plan included in this Strategic Plan.
3. Market parks and programs throughout the City to inform residents of offerings.

## GOAL 02 - ENSURE EXCELLENCE AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PARKS FOR ALL RESIDENTS

### Strategies:

1. Pursue Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) Accreditation and strive for Gold Medal Recognition.
2. Match development and redevelopment of park system and maintenance facilities to population growth and demographics changes.

## GOAL 03 - INCREASE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE PARKS AND TRAIL SYSTEM

### Strategies:

1. Update all parks and trail facilities to 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design.
2. Ensure safety throughout the park system.

## GOAL 04 - REVITALIZE EXISTING PARKS BY ALIGNING PARK, OPEN SPACE AND TRAIL INFRASTRUCTURE WITH CURRENT AND ANTICIPATED COMMUNITY NEEDS

### Strategies:

1. Design flexibility into outdoor spaces and athletic fields to meet current needs and readily adapt to future recreation trends.
2. Provide specialized park infrastructure to address under served needs, emerging trends, and support year round uses.

# DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR 3: RECREATION FACILITIES

*Provide safe, clean, and reliable facilities and program spaces that provide users the highest level of value which support their health and wellness, while supporting financial sustainability for the Department in the future.*

## GOAL 01 – PROVIDE HIGH FUNCTIONING COMMUNITY PARKS, RECREATION, LEARNING AND GATHERING FACILITIES THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO CHANGING COMMUNITY NEEDS AND INTERESTS.

### Strategies:

1. Explore a flexible community center for the City that provides opportunities for recreation, education, and gathering for all ages, incomes, and races.
2. Develop an arts and cultural center to support cultural art programming with suitable facilities.
3. Implement a policy-supported business management model for Enterprise Facilities that addresses a cost recovery model toward financial sustainability.
4. Explore the development of innovative infrastructure in the park system to support environmental education and natural resource programming.

## GOAL 02 – INCREASE FACILITY ACCESSIBILITY AND CONSISTENCY THROUGHOUT THE CITY

### Strategies:

1. Identify facilities not meeting community needs and develop plan for replacement, renovation, or decommissioning.
2. Update all building facilities to 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design to create safe pedestrian access for low mobility park users.

# DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR 4: RECREATION PROGRAMS

*Develop, provide, and manage recreation programs to support the community's needs for health and wellness, individual skill development, and community connectivity in a safe and enjoyable environment.*

## GOAL 01 - PROVIDE A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS THAT MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS AND INTERESTS AND MAINTAIN THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE

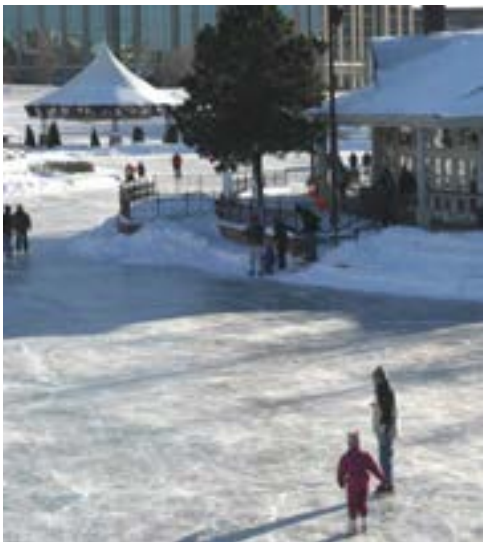
### Strategies:

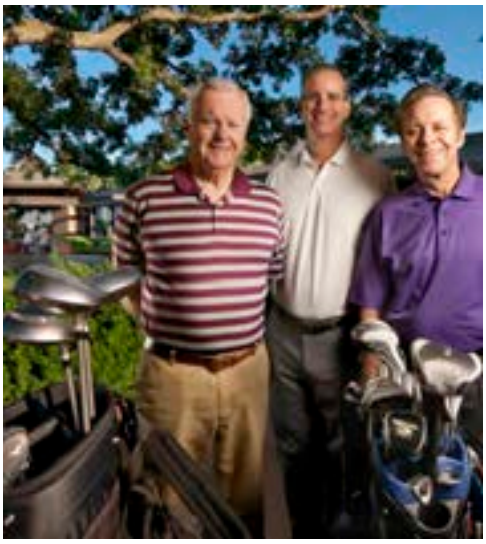
1. Attract 30-35% of all Edina residents to experience an organized recreation program through EPRD by identifying and closing programming gaps.
2. Keep up with evolving needs and trends by re-evaluating offered programs and interest levels.

## GOAL 02 – DELIVER PARK AND RECREATION PROGRAMMING MORE EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY

### Strategies:

1. Clearly define program providers to eliminate overlap and define the level and scope of services offered.
2. Continue to provide high quality youth sports programming and work with athletic associations to provide recreational opportunities.
3. Incorporate programming standards for all services provided across the system.





# DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR 5: FINANCE & MANAGEMENT

*Provide and encourage use of quality parks, trails, facilities, and programs that deliver on the community's expectations for a safe and enjoyable experience while keeping the infrastructure of the system in a quality state.*

## GOAL 01 - INCREASE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY, EFFICIENCY, AND STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

### Strategies:

1. Collaborate with the Park Maintenance Department on the planning and maintenance of all park lands, facilities, and trails.
2. Strengthen departmental partnerships with similar providers and establish more formal partnership policies.
3. Create opportunities for entrepreneurs, both non-profit and for-profit, to enrich the park experience and implement innovative approaches to revenue generation.
4. Develop mini business plans for all Enterprise Facilities to achieve financial sustainability.
5. Maximize staffing efficiency and effectiveness by reviewing staff levels and providing key staffing related to management and programming of Park facilities.
6. Ensure adequate financing for growth of the system as continued development occurs.

## GOAL 02 - STRENGTHEN BUSINESS AND MARKETING DEVELOPMENT

### Strategies:

1. Develop a Department-wide strategic marketing plan.
2. Provide best marketing opportunities for programs and targeted populations.

# KEY PROJECTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The following key projects have been identified based on community engagement, city staff and park board recommendations, and focus group and stakeholder input. These projects will require a variety of strategies and tactics to achieve - as defined in this document and *Appendix A - Implementation Framework*. The implementation will require continued efforts from the Park Board, Parks and Recreation Staff, other City Departments and Administration and support from the community. Progress will be evaluated annually and presented in the EPRD Annual Report.

The key projects identified are supported by the guiding principles and the icons below link the projects back to the applicable guiding principles.

| GUIDING PRINCIPLES KEY | |
|---|---|
| | Promote community health and wellness by engaging all residents in our parks and programming |
| | Provide excellence and innovation in parks and recreation services to meet the needs of the community |
| | Develop creative funding opportunities and programming partnerships to ensure excellence in facilities, programs, and financial stewardship for future generations |
| | Advance environmental stewardship and conservation to preserve and protect natural resources and build excellence through sustainability |
| | Connect residents to park facilities and their programs |
| | Promote social equity and engagement within the parks system and its programs. |

*Applicable Guiding Principles:*

## SEPARATED LANES

*Fully separated by boulevard*

*Separated by landscape beds*

*Barrier separation*

*Green lanes (and landscape separation)*

## 1. CREATE A MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM THROUGH THE CITY TO CONNECT PARKS AND ENTERPRISE FACILITIES.

A multi-use trail system has been identified as a priority by residents for several years, and would serve multiple objectives and goals of EPRD. These include providing greater access to parks, increasing health and wellness opportunities, providing more sustainable transportation options, strengthening community and safety through complete streets, and providing another source of recreation The time is right to begin implementation, building on the success and excitement of the new Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail soon to be constructed through the City. Reference Figure 5.1.

### MULTI-USE PAVED TRAILS - THE GREEN LOOP

A multi-use trail connecting the parks is one of the top community priorities. Developing this trail system in a fully developed suburban environment will have some challenges but to maximize the use of trails and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, it should be physically separated from the roadway traffic. Ideally, this would be with a designated multi-use trail with a landscaped buffer separation. In areas where this isn't possible, the lane should be separated with striping, curbing, signage, and/or other physical dividers that distinctly separate the automobile and bike traffic lanes. A combination of these strategies, in addition to on-road bike lane strategies, will likely be needed but there is significant data highlighting not only the safety of separated trails, but also dramatic increases in usage compared to on-street striped trails.

### NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

These trails are informal, generally not ADA accessible, and allow a more intimate experience with nature. Surfacing can be native ground, wood chips, loose gravel, or a combination of natural surfaces. These trails are generally utilized by pedestrians but can accommodate specialized bike uses (e.g. mountain bikes). Natural surface trails exist at Bredesen and other parks throughout the system.

### ON-ROAD BIKEWAYS

The City of Edina has completed extensive studies and planning for on-road bikeways that will help connect the City and allow better access to parks for bicyclists. The difference between on-road bikeways and the the Multi-Use trail proposed in this Strategic Plan is the physical separation that greatly increases safety and usage. Additionally, the Green Loop helps directly connect the parks to each other and the on-road bikeway network will feed into that system. Similar branding and wayfinding techniques should be utilized throughout the trail network to further tie the system together.

# City of Edina
## Proposed Trail Network

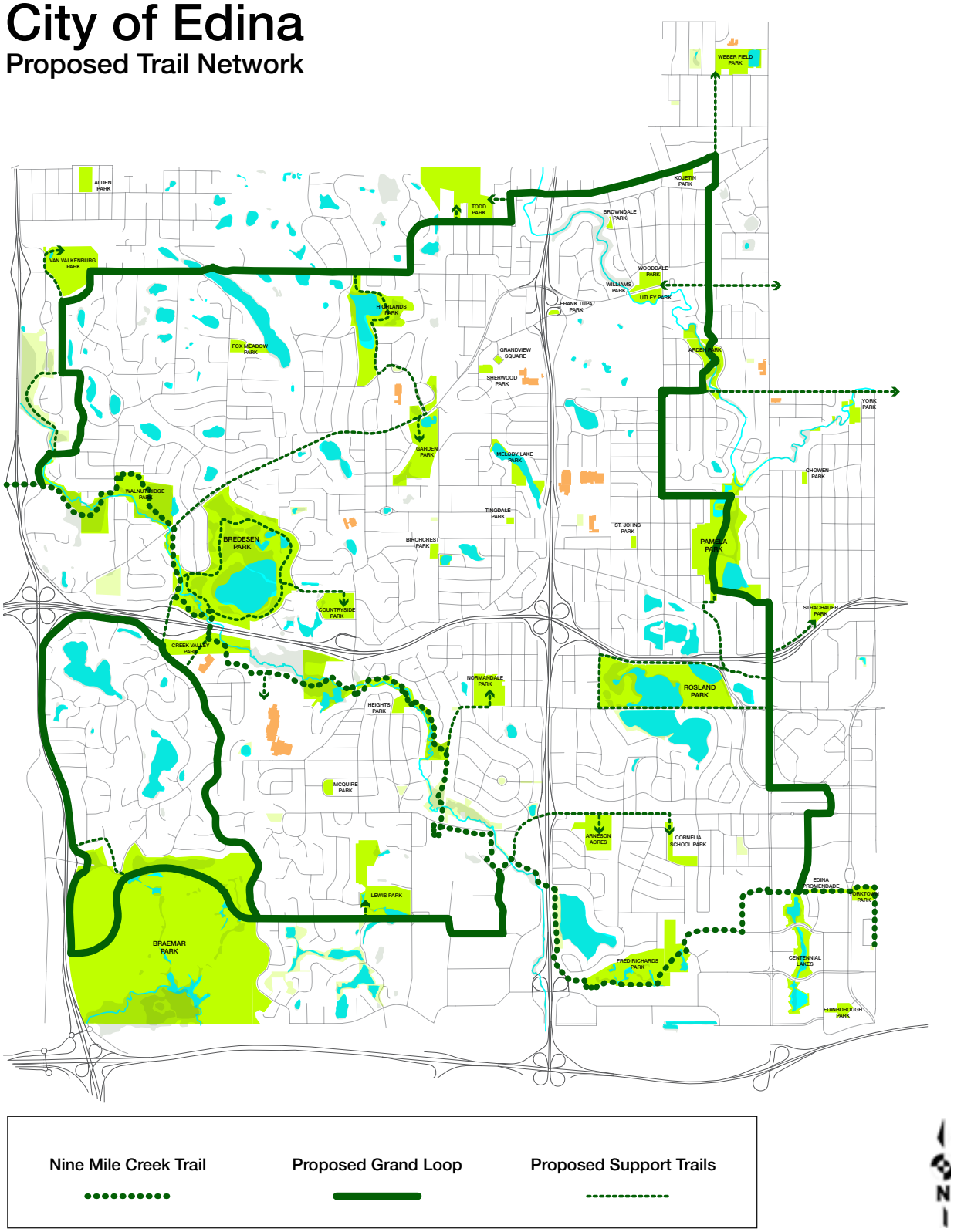



*Figure 5.1 - Proposed Park Trail Network Map*

## WINTER USE TRAILS

Providing opportunities to stay active and recreate during the winter months is important in Minnesota. A variety of potential activities are becoming increasingly popular in cold climates and should be planned for in future master planning efforts. Specifically, Braemar would lend itself to increasing winter activities that are compatible with existing facilities and uses. Current planning efforts should explore the revenue potential of winter activities as well as current trends in health, wellness, and recreation including:

- **Cross Country Skiing** - Edina High School has a strong history in Nordic ski racing and cross country skiing has become more popular with people of all ages and mobility levels. EPRD has plans for providing more cross country trails, and should continue to look for opportunities to expand infrastructure and services. Partnerships with ski organizations and clubs should be explored to support maintenance and grooming activities for an expanded network of trail options.
- **Snowshoeing** - There are ample opportunities to provide snowshoe opportunities in several parks. Snowshoeing facilities can vary from very informal - open to anyone with gear and a sense of adventure, to formal trails that accommodate lower skill and fitness levels. Snowshoe trails can be combined with other winter multi-use activities including skijorning, fat tire biking, etc.
- **Skijoring** - Skiing with dogs is becoming increasingly popular and provides an excellent opportunity to keep pets and their owners active during winter months. Skijoring trails should be kept separate from traditional nordic skiing trails as grooming needs are different between them.
- **Fat tire biking** - Fat tire bikes have become much more common in Minnesota and dedicated trails could provide an important amenity to the area. Trails can utilize the same traditional mountain biking trails but require grooming to pack down snow. Some trails could be part of a multi-use groomed winter trail that accommodates skijoring and snowshoeing. Bike trails have been incorporated into traditional nordic trails by creating a separate lane to the outside of classic tracks and skate skiing lanes.
- **Winter walking/ running** - There is demand for walking and running throughout the winter months and safe, accessible, plowed trails would likely be well used by residents. Creating a trail and sidewalk plowing plan for parks and facilities should be explored during operations and maintenance planning, as well as during master planning efforts for parks throughout the system.

**Typical trail classifications in Minnesota**

| Trail Category | Classifications | Typical User Groups | Edina Existing Trails and Opportunities |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Multi-Use Paved Trails** | Park Trails<br>City Trails<br>Regional Trails<br>State Trails | Walking, jogging, bicycling, and in-line skating typically assumed to be accommo-dated when paved. | Existing – Bredesen, park circulation trails, Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail<br>Opportunities – Green Loop, Internal circulators at larger parks |
| **Natural Surface Trails** | Hiking Trails<br>Nature/ Interpretive Trails<br>Mountain Biking Trail<br>Shared Use Trails | Trail user groups consistent with classifications. | Existing – Bredesen nature trails, infor-mal local trails<br>Opportunities – Mountain biking |
| **On-Road Bikeways** | Bike Routes<br>Bike Lanes<br>Provided on street as shoulders or designated lanes (markings) | Bicyclists are primary user. Some in-line skating potential. | Existing - Several streets identified in Comprehensive Bike Plan<br>Opportunities – Realize previous plans, connect to Green Loop and parks throughout City |
| **Winter-Use Trails** | Cross Country Skiing<br>Snowshoeing<br>Winter Hiking<br>Skijoring<br>Fat Tire Biking | Trail user groups consistent with classifications. | Existing – School skiing trails, informal snowshoeing<br>Opportunities – create well defined winter trail network opportunities – Braemar, Bredesen, Fred Richards stand out |

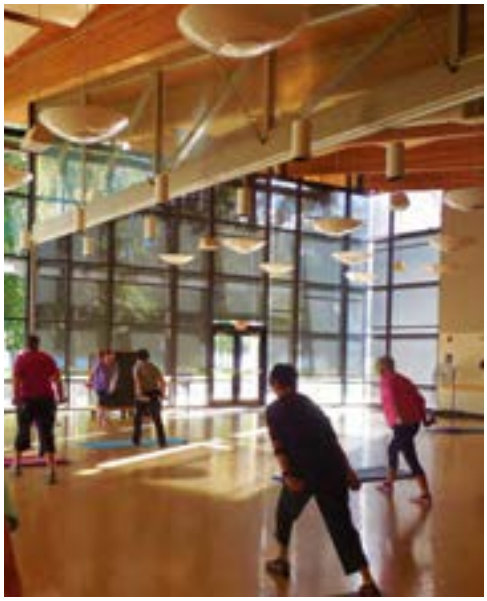
**based on MnDNR Trail Planning, Design, and Development GuidelineS*

*Figure 5.2 - Typical Trail Classification sin Minnesota*

## 2. EXPLORE A MULTI-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTER THAT IS ALL-INCLUSIVE.

*Applicable Guiding Principles:*

A community center need was identified in the community survey and the Level of Service Analysis. A facility of this type would fill multiple needs including the creation of community meeting and gathering spaces, provide a space for the multiple generations and their ability to interact, and supporting recreation activities and users that are currently under-served. The City will need to study the programmatic, spatial, and amenity requirements of the facility. The location of this facility should be reviewed in the context of providing a much needed community gathering or Enterprise facility north of Highway 62. Reference Figure 5.3



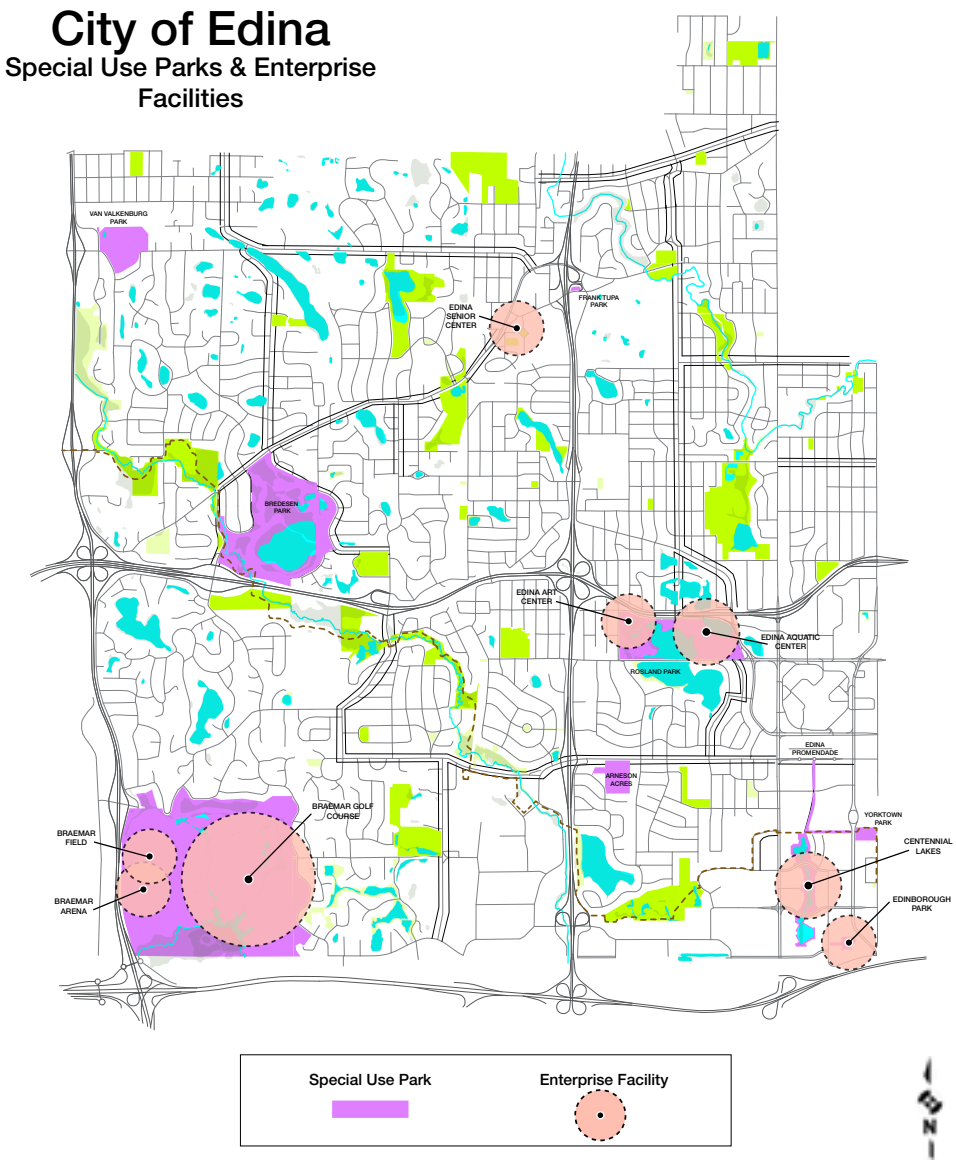



*Figure 5.3 - Special Use Parks & Enterprise Facilities Map*

*Applicable Guiding Principles:*

*State threatened turtles likely found in Edina parks*

*Pollinators are important, often under appreciated wildlife*

*Buckthorn seeds are spread quickly by birds*

## 3. CREATE A NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGER TO GUIDE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NATURAL AREAS, ACCESS AND INTERPRETIVE / EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

A Natural Resource Manager will provide leadership in defining and implementing critical aspects of the City's natural areas development and preservation, intending to provide access to healthier, more sustainable landscapes for residents. The Natural Resource Manager's first effort should be to complete a Natural Resource Inventory and Management plan for the City. The Natural Resource Manager will coordinate invasive species control (buckthorn), public outreach, interpretation opportunities and environmental education, and volunteer efforts. This person will work to provide maintenance and protection of high quality natural resources throughout the City.

### FULL TIME NATURAL RESOURCE POSITIONS

### NEARBY CITIES WITH FULL TIME NATURAL RESOURCE POSITIONS:

**Eden Prairie** - Forester, Forest Technician, Environmental Coordinator

**Golden Valley** - Environmental Coordinator

**Minnetonka** - Nat. Resource Manager, Forester, Water Resource Specialist, Nat. Resource Restoration Specialist

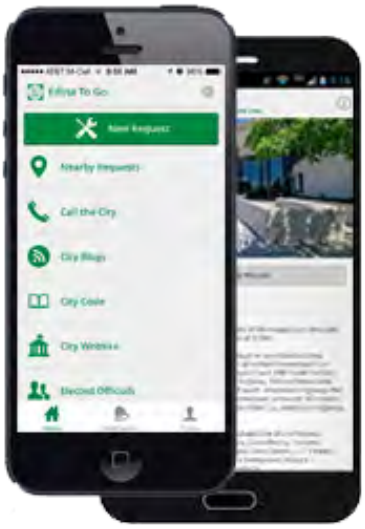
**Plymouth** - Forester, Forestry Technician

**St. Louis Park** - Forester, Seasonal Forestry Technician

## 4. IMPROVE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION DELIVERY.

Create a marketing and communication plan to improve marketing effectiveness, cross marketing of services, and efficiency. Park wide branding, program communication delivery, and media format should be explored and evaluated for greatest cost effectiveness.

*Applicable Guiding Principles:*



## Edina Art Center | POTTERY & CLAY SCULPTURE

# Pottery & Clay Sculpture

Pottery students should expect to pay additional fees for clay, firing fees and special tools during the class session. Registration and studio fees cover the cost of instruction and maintenance of kilns, equipment and the facility. We separate the fees to keep costs lower for individual students.

### Pottery Skill Levels

BEGINNER
Student has no experience in the medium or needs instruction with basic skills.

INTERMEDIATE
Student can manage basic fundamental skills: wedging, centering, trimming. Student is interested in experimenting with a variety of techniques and materials. Student has taken a minimum of three previous sessions in clay.

ADVANCED
Student is able to work independently and has control of the medium. Student seeks to discuss or examine ideas behind his or her work and has begun to document and create a portfolio of work.

## Pottery Classes

### INTRODUCTION TO CLAY

**(Ages 12 to Adult)**

*Bradley Benn & Siiri Silpala Doan*

Making things from clay and throwing pots on the wheel touches something primal in us. We will supply all that you need to learn the basic process and make, trim and glaze several pieces. This four-week class is designed as a basic introduction class. A fun class to take with your child! *No class Nov. 29. Maximum 8.

| | |
|---|---|
| **1091:** | Sundays 1-4 p.m., 4 weeks - starts Sept. 13, ends Oct. 4 |
| **1092:** | Sundays 1-4 p.m., 4 weeks - starts Oct. 11, ends Nov. 1 |
| **1093:** | Sundays 1-4 p.m., 4 weeks - starts Nov. 8, ends Dec. 6* |
| **Cost:** | $108 nm/$97 m + $15 studio fee |

### SATURDAY AFTERNOON POTTERY

**Beginner to Intermediate (Ages 15 to Adult)**

*Vanessa Greene*

In this class, we will introduce and refine the basic skills of throwing on the wheel. Beginners will learn to throw and trim simple bowls and cylinders, make and attach handles and try some simple hand-built forms. More advanced students will be encouraged to try new forms and refine their basic skills. *No class Nov. 28 & Dec. 5. Maximum 10.

| | |
|---|---|
| **1101:** | Saturdays 12:30-3:30 p.m., 6 weeks - starts Sept. 19, ends Oct. 24 |
| **1102:** | Saturdays 12:30-3:30 p.m., 6 weeks - starts Oct. 31, ends Dec. 19* |
| **Cost:** | $162 nm/$146 m + $12 studio fee |

*Applicable Guiding Principles:*

## 5. REPLACE OR DECOMMISSION COMMUNITY PARK BUILDINGS THAT HAVE OUTLIVED THEIR DESIGNED LIFESPAN AND ARE CURRENTLY INSUFFICIENT IN PROVIDING SERVICES.

A handful of community park buildings are extremely outdated and need to be permanently decommissioned or replaced with new buildings that can adequately support their intended uses. Edina's Capital Improvements Plan for 2015-2019 identifies repairs or replacement for several of these buildings. The decision to replace roofs and siding for several community park buildings has already been made. However, there are several buildings that will need to be addressed in the near future. EPRD should reevaluate the need and use of these buildings prior to committing any more budget dollars to rebuild in the future.

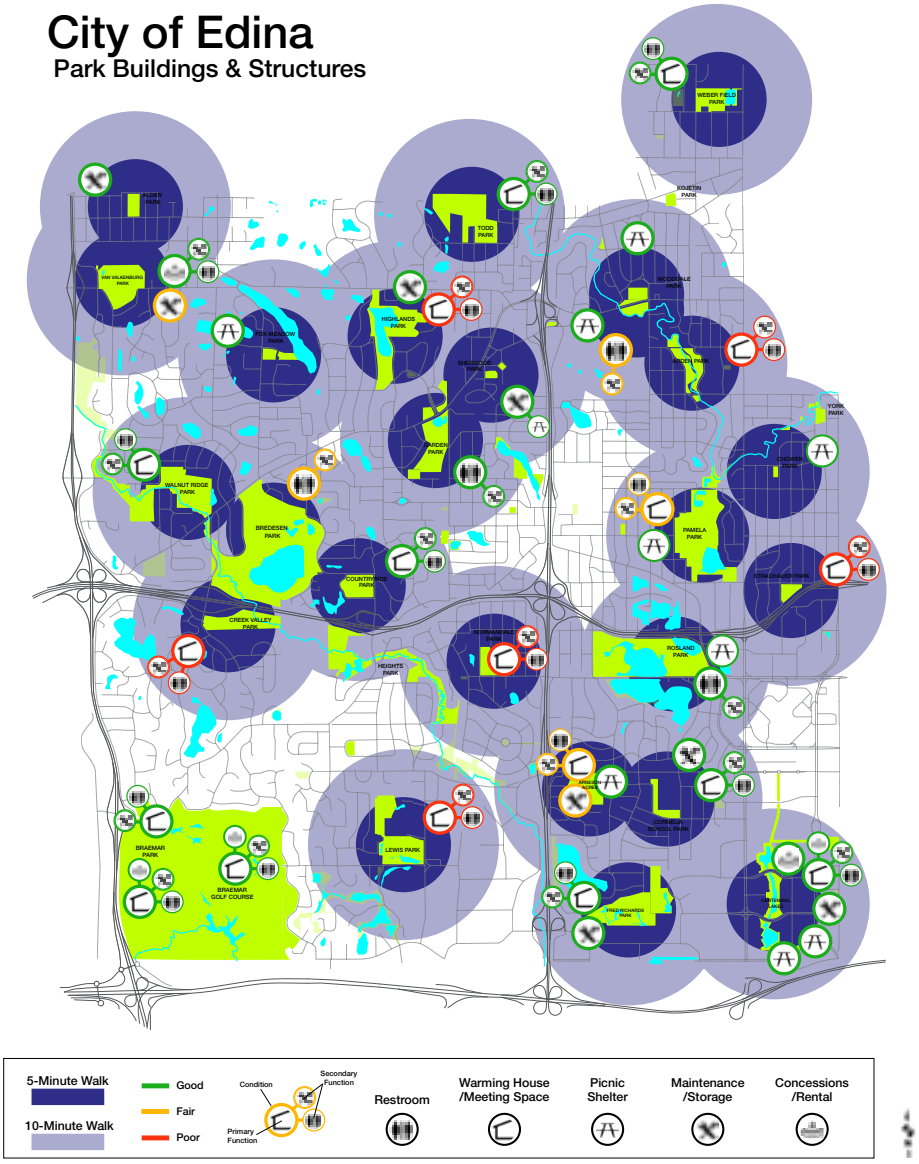



*Figure 5.4 - Existing Buildings and Structures Map*

## 6. RELOCATE THE EDINA ART CENTER TO PROVIDE A FACILITY THAT BEST SUPPORTS THEIR PROGRAMMING NEEDS.

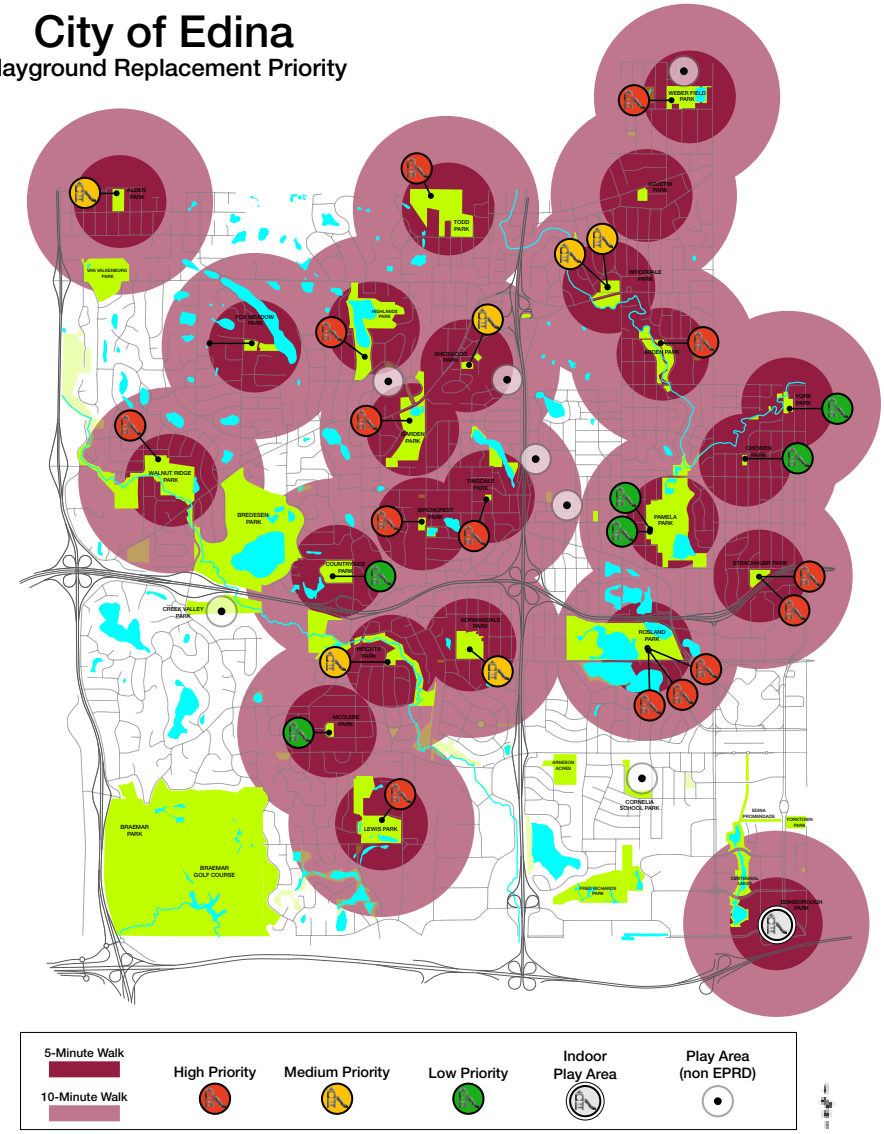
*Applicable Guiding Principles:*

The Edina Art Center is a highly successful Enterprise Facility that has outgrown its current building. The recommendation of the Strategic Plan would be to explore the cost/ benefits of relocating the Art Center to another existing facility (likely requiring renovation), or constructing a new facility. Additionally, the location of the building should be evaluated for maximizing transportation, transit, and filling geographic gaps of Enterprise Facilities spread throughout the City. The Grandview site has been identified as a potential location for a multi-purpose facility that could potentially include the Edina Art Center.

*Applicable Guiding Principles:*

## 7. REPLACE INADEQUATE AND OUTDATED PLAY AREAS AND PLAYGROUNDS AND PROVIDE NEW FACILITIES TO ADDRESS UNDERSERVED AREAS.

EPRD should strive to provide a high quality accessible and inclusive play area/ playground within a 10-minute walk of every resident in the City. Inadequate or outdated facilities not meeting current ADA standards should be repaired or replaced. Innovative play structures should be explored including natural play areas and new approaches to child inclusive recreation.




**Installation Year**

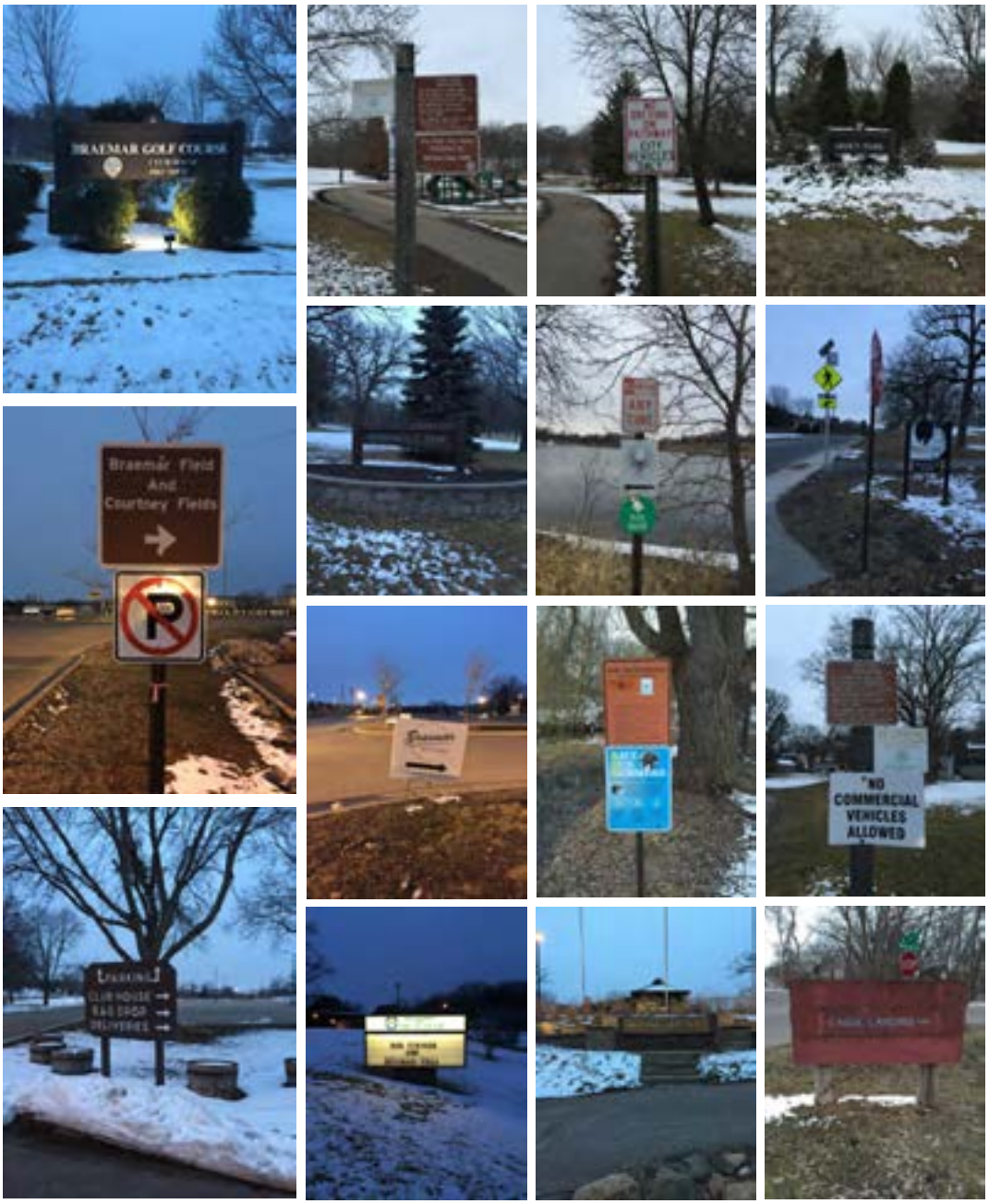
| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lewis Park | 1995 | Tingdale Park | 1997 | Kojetin Park | 2005 |
| Rosland Park | 1996 | Todd Park | 1997 | Alden Park | 2007 |
| Strachauer Park | 1996 | Walnut Ridge Park | 1997 | McGuire Park | 2008 |
| Arden Park | 1997 | Weber Park | 1997 | York Park | 2008 |
| Birchcrest Park | 1997 | Wooddale Park | 2000 | Pamela Park | 2009 |
| Braemar Park | 1997 | Heights Park | 2002 | Chowen Park | 2011 |
| Garden Park | 1997 | Normandale Park | 2003 | Countryside Park | 2013 |
| Highlands Park | 1997 | Sherwood Park | 2003 | | |

*Figure 5.5 - Playground Replacement Priority Map*

## 8. IMPROVE BRANDING AND WAYFINDING TO PARKS THROUGHOUT THE CITY AND INTERNALLY.

*Applicable Guiding Principles:*

The Strategic Plan recommends that the EPRD develop a consistent branding and wayfinding system for the parks and enterprise facilities. This effort includes graphics and messaging that will create an identifiable image for the parks system, but also includes signage to make amenities and facilities easily identifiable in the City. Wayfinding to park facilities throughout the City should establish a hierarchy for automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrian traffic that will increase safety - focusing on circulation and parking facilities.



*Applicable Guiding Principles:*

## 9. STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY.

Increasing efficiencies of staffing, maintenance, marketing and other management and administration activities will help build financial sustainability. Providing new revenues through continued park dedication fee for new development and redevelopment of properties, innovative business development, creative partnerships, and adding services for fee at parks throughout the system will provide funds to support the parks and maintenance.

## 10. PROVIDE ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY GATHERING AREAS.

*Applicable Guiding Principles:*

Integrating low cost infrastructure to support and promote community gathering should be prioritized. Open air pavilions, gazebos/ picnic structures, as well as outdoor classrooms and amphitheaters provide a means to allow more informal gathering in a cost effective manner. Simple amenities such as restrooms, drinking fountains and proper waste/recycling receptacles can go a long way toward creating positive environments for community gathering and should be a priority at all existing facilities.

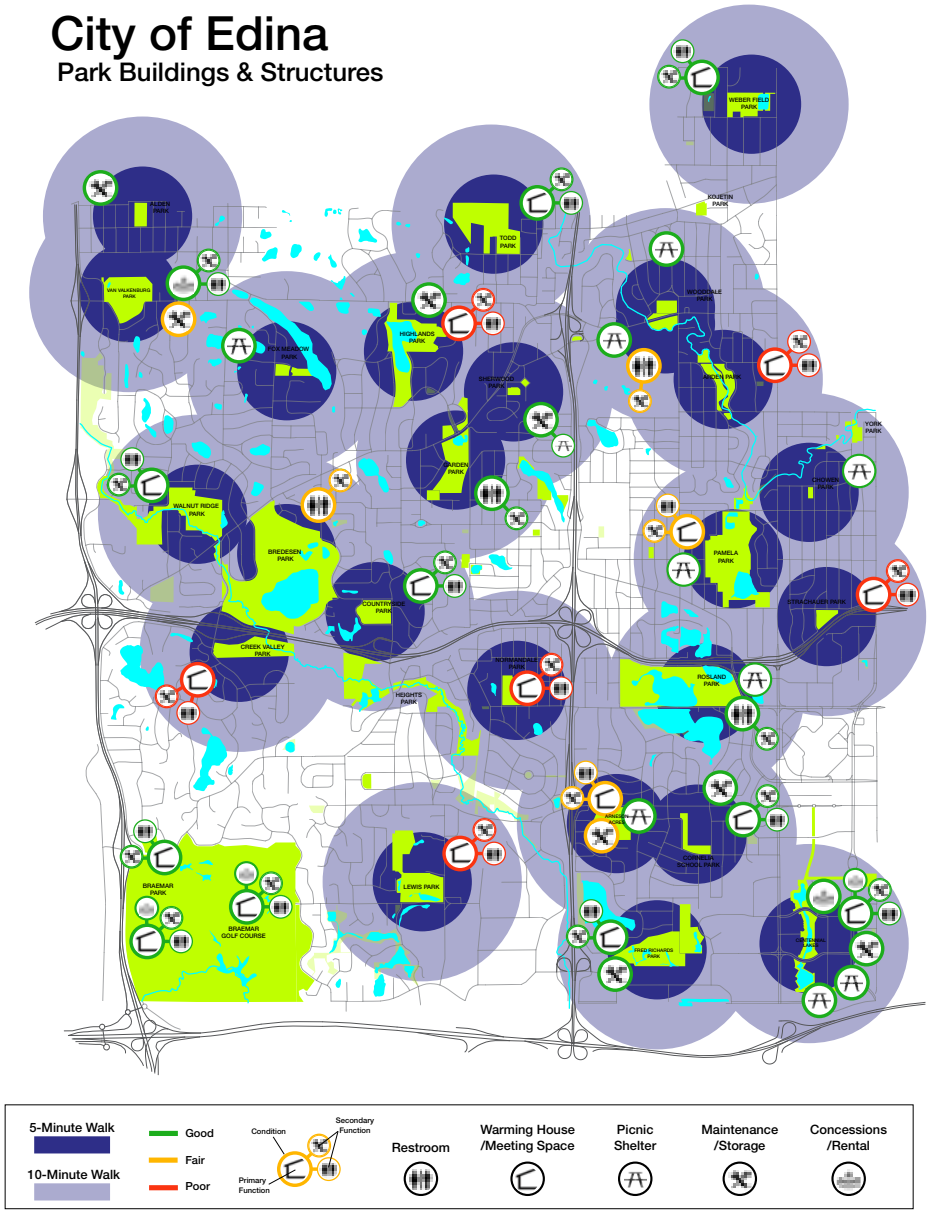



*Figure 5.6 - Existing Building and Structures Map*

*Applicable Guiding Principles:*

## 11. DEVELOP COMMUNITY DRIVEN MASTER PLANS FOR PARKS THROUGHOUT THE SYSTEM.

Planning and design should be used as a tool to build excellence throughout the park system. The EPRD should create master plans for individual parks within the system that do not have one currently or have not had one completed within the last 20 years. These master plans will help guide and prioritize maintenance, development and programming within the parks and provide a basis for all decision making. Priority should be given to master planning efforts for Fred Richards, Braemar, and Arneson Acres to maximize their long-term quality, financial and environmental sustainability.

## 12. DEVELOP BUSINESS PLANS FOR ALL ENTERPRISE FACILITIES THROUGHOUT THE PARK SYSTEM.

*Applicable Guiding Principles:*

The EPRD should create business and management plans for all enterprise facilities to move toward generating a profit or break even scenario. The business plans should be developed for facilities within the system that do not have one currently or have not had one completed within the last 10 years. These business plans will help guide and prioritize staffing, expenses, maintenance, development and programming within the enterprise facilities and provide a basis for all decision making. Business plans should be updated every 2 years.

## APPENDIX E.2 – MINI BUSINESS PLAN

**Program Area:** _____

**Completed By:** _____ **Date:** _____

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM AREA

| |
|---|
| |
| |

### DEPARTMENT VISION STATEMENT

| |
|---|
| |

### DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

| |
|---|
| |

### PROGRAM AREA OUTCOMES

**NATURAL RESOURCES GOAL 2 -** CREATE MORE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE PARKS AND LANDSCAPES.

**STRATEGY 2.1**

*Maintain excellence in park maintenance operations, continue to explore environmentally friendly/ sustainable practices, and increase natural areas maintenance expertise and ability.*

| Tactic | Implementation Year | Performance Measure |
|---|---|---|
| **2.1.1** Follow recommendations of the 2013 UFTF report. | 2015 | Review items from report for completion. |
| **2.1.2** Educate residents on current initiatives (e.g. turf grass maintenance). | 2015 | Create marketing materials and post in park and/or give presentations throughout City. |
| **2.1.3** Complete cost/ benefit analysis of the long term cost/ benefits of turf grass maintenance vs. natural areas and communicate results to Park Board, City Council, and Public. | 2016 | Create marketing materials and post in park and/or give presentations throughout City. |
| **2.1.4** Identify key species or planting strategies to be used throughout the City that maximize benefits and minimize future maintenance - work with Garden Club to grow. | 2016 | Complete 1 native plant demonstration garden in park. |
| **2.1.5** Provide training for Park Maintenance staff to maximize efficiency and quality of natural resource management. | 2017 | Natural resource management plan informed training. |
| **2.1.6** Consider hiring or supplementing natural resource maintenance activities with an outside consultant. | 2017 | Identify maintenance and operations responsibilities. |
| **2.1.7** Identify funding sources for operations and maintenance. | 2017 | Maintenance and operations budget. |

**STRATEGY 2.2**

*Develop more sustainable parks and trails infrastructure that are resilient to impacts of climate change.*

| Tactic | Implementation Year | Performance Measure |
|---|---|---|
| **2.2.1** Conduct a climate change risk assessment for all Parks facilities, infrastructure, vegetation, and areas susceptible to extensive storm damage. | 2016 | Complete climate change risk assessment. |
| **2.2.2** Create a strategy to mitigate expected impacts of climate change on the park system - coordinate with Public Works Dept. | 2017 | Complete climate change risk assessment. |
| **2.2.3** Use the Sustainable Sites Initiate (SITES®) as a guide for for new park development and retrofits, and to create a green operations plan. SITES® is the landscape and site equivalent to LEED and is the most comprehensive guide and objective sustainability rating system for the landscape *www.sustainablesites.org* | 2017 | Utilize SSI checklist for all new and major renovation projects. |
| **2.2.4** Utilize Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED), Minnesota's B3 program, and/or the Living Building Challenge to guide future parks and facilities renovations and new construction projects. Prioritize energy efficiency, water conservation and other building functions with direct cost impacts. | 2018 | Integrate into all master plans and redevelopment guides. Hire only LEED certified consultants. Require LEED certification for new buildings. |

*Figure 5.7 - Implementation Framework*

## PROGRESS MEASUREMENT

Measuring progress of the Implementation Framework and overall park system is valuable, to justify and validate funds, staff time, and overall progress. Regular evaluations can help EPRD continually gauge which improvements better serve system users and provide excellence for the Park system. EPRD already conducts some periodic evaluation of its services, including community surveys, recreation program participants, and users of its fee based services. Additionally, EPRD will be reviewing the Implementation Framework annually in order to update the Board, Council and community on progress toward the strategic implementation framework and Priority Projects. An annual report will be the primary communication tool and document generated by EPRD in this effort.

Additionally, performance measures are provided for all tactics found in *Appendix A - Implementation Framework*. These performance measures will assist EPRD staff in evaluations of implementation items and progress. The Implementation Framework should be updated and amended as needed to adjust priorities and tactics for implementation.

Information that should be in the annual report includes a combination of quantitative and qualitative data - many of which are currently collected by EPRD. The annual report should also be used as a marketing tool to summarize the system and its programs, as well as discuss progress toward Priority Projects and the challenges associated with completion. Qualitative tools, such as surveys, are relatively easy to conduct and are important in gauging satisfactions, trends, and need. Surveys though do not tell the entire picture. Quantitative methods, such as counts, are important in capturing the who, what, where, and when of park and recreation use. Counts are the most beneficial in demonstrating the magnitude of usage. Examples of both quantitative and qualitative data that could be collected and displayed in the annual report include:

### Quantitative Data

- Number of recreation activities and participants tracked through registrations
- Number of events, facility users and participants tracked through reservations, permitting and in requests of associations
- Number of volunteer participants
- Number of people using parks, trails and other non fee based facilities through the development of a user count program - counting cars in parking lots, creating a volunteer counting program, or installing technology to count trail users
- Number of park master plans completed and how many participated in each process
- Miles of sidewalks/trail completed

### Qualitative Data

- City-wide survey on a regular basis and evaluate trends over time.
- Conduct satisfaction surveys of recreation activity participants.
- Evaluate perceptions of safety in use of parks and trails.
- Create evaluation for associations and other groups which regularly use facilities. Interview park users to find out how they got there, why they came, how long they stayed, and the importance of the park's different attributes and facilities. If done regularly, this can be informative in terms of trends.
- Conduct focus groups to gather information about park use habits and desires for future park system directions.

### Priority Projects Analysis

- Identify progress on individual priority projects.
- Remove projects that have been achieved and update project list.
- Identify major obstacles for projects that have not been realized or where little progress has been made - identify what steps have been taken to address the obstacles.
- Outline steps taken toward implementing the priority projects.
- Evaluate the ability and sources to fund the desired project.
- Summarize the amount of outside funding (partnerships, grants, etc.) secured.

## LIVING DOCUMENT

The premier park and recreation system in Minnesota will not only measure progress by assessing community needs and satisfaction, but will also adapt to meet those changing needs. Recreation is dynamic and is constantly changing. New recreation activities and equipment emerge (in-line skates, the mountain bike, etc) and recreation trends ebb and flow. Inherently, this means flexible and adaptive facilities and programs. It also means regular review and refinement of the Strategic Plan based on community feedback. Annual review of this plan to make sure that priority projects, recommendations, and the implementation framework are still relevant and updated to reflect progress is an essential component of becoming the premier park and recreation system in Minnesota.

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