CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Enjoy Every Season With Us!
CEDAR RAPIDS
PARKS & RECREATION

APRIL 2010

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Introduction & Planning Context

1. Introduction

In June 2008, six months into the planning process for this Master Plan, the City of Cedar Rapids was hit by a record-breaking flood that engulfed river-edge parks and recreation facilities, neighborhoods, and a large part of downtown. Out of this disaster, the Cedar Rapids community came together to create a bold and visionary *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* that includes groundbreaking riverfront plans that will drive community revitalization. With input from an extensive community engagement process, this Master Plan reflects the community's vision and aspirations, while addressing creative strategies for meeting future needs within budget limitations.

A high-quality parks and recreation system will help to increase residents' quality of life, attract and retain the next-generation workforce, and encourage residential and business reinvestment in the wake of the devastating 2008 flood. This plan proposes unique places ranging from grand gathering spaces that can host festivals and events to intimate spaces for the daily enjoyment of the parks. It includes a new destination riverfront to attract residents and visitors to the heart of the City, Signature Parks that will serve the neighborhoods with high-quality recreational amenities, and increased connectivity and sustainability for the region. The City of Cedar Rapids held a series of three Parks and Recreation Master Plan Open Houses from June to November of 2009. Over a thousand participants gave feedback on the City's parks and recreation needs, culminating in this *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* that will direct reinvestment in the City and the region in years to come.

2. Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of the Cedar Rapids *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* is to establish clear goals and strategies that will provide direction to Department staff and elected officials to enhance the community's parks and recreation programs, services, and facilities. The Master Plan seeks to build on the community's unique parks and recreation assets in order to meet the needs of current and future residents.

The Cedar Rapids *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* will act as a blueprint to guide decisions about investments in park improvements and development along with recreation programs over the next 15 years. The plan will:

- Prioritize investments to ensure a system that meets community needs.
- Establish strategies to improve operational efficiencies, cost recovery, and land acceptance standards.
- Demonstrate community need and support to assist in the pursuit of alternative funding.
- Ensure a system that accommodates changing community demographics.
- Ensure a parks and recreation system that is sustainable and financially feasible into the future.

3. Goals & Challenges

The following overarching goals provide a framework for this Master Plan.

- Meet the needs to **attract and retain residents** and the next generation workforce.
- Provide a **community-wide perspective** to the parks and recreation system as priorities are set to meet operational funding constraints.
- Enhance the recreational **use of the riverfront**.
- Ensure that **indoor recreational facility** needs are met and are affordable to the community.
- Address **flood damage** to the parks and recreation system.
- Enhance **connectivity** of parks and open space though the trail system.
- Ensure a system that the City and its taxpayers can **afford**.

Many American cities are seeking to reposition themselves to attract and retain future workforce by planning for and creating high-quality parks and recreation systems, knowing that amenities, trails, recreational opportunities, and open space are critical keys to a higher quality of life. The challenge is that many Parks and Recreation Departments are also facing cuts in funding for capital improvements, operations, and maintenance. In Cedar Rapids, this has been all the more challenging due to the flood of 2008 - recorded as the 5th largest natural disaster in United States history and causing over five billion dollars worth of damage.

This Master Plan seeks to address the following challenges.

- What are the best future **investments** to achieve the City's Vision to improve residents' **quality of life**, **compete** with other Midwestern cities, and encourage **community development**?
- How does the City of Cedar Rapids meet the community's **indoor and outdoor** parks and recreation **needs** and ensure that the system is **sustainable and affordable** both now and in the future?

4. A Wise Investment for the Future of the City

Why are Parks Important to Retain and Attract Our Future Workforce?

A high-quality parks and recreation system is integral to realizing the City's Vision, contributing to residents' quality of life, health, and property values; the City's ability to retain and attract residents, businesses, tourists, and investors; and the quality of the environment.

- Studies by Next Generation Consulting indicate that a city's commitment to providing access to green space and natural environments for its residents is one of the best indicators of an up-and-coming, "Next City." Quality-of-place amenities help to retain the young knowledge workers that drive innovation and economic growth.

- According to studies by the Trust for Public Land, a high-quality parks system is integral to attracting the next-generation workforce and contributing to a community's quality of life in the following ways:

    1. Parks boost values and property taxes as much as 22 percent.
    2. Parks boost local economies by attracting businesses and residents.
    3. Parks increase tourism and visitation.
    4. Conservation saves money.
    5. Parks and open space preserve the value of ecosystems.
    6. Parks reduce health care costs.

What Economic Activity can be Generated by a High-Quality Parks System?

- A high-quality parks system with riverfront park destinations can help to create a vibrant downtown environment.
    - New amenities are anticipated to bring 1.3 million more visitors downtown per year.
    - On average, these new daytrips are anticipated to generate over $80 million more in meals, hotel, retail, and travel expenses that will help downtown businesses and the community.

- Public investment in parks and public amenities establishes a foundation for private investment.

- A high-quality parks system increases property value.

5. Contents of this Plan

The *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* is organized into four sections:

- Introduction & Planning Context
- Needs & Resource Assessment
- Master Plan Recommendations
- Implementation & Funding

The Master Plan Recommendations section identifies six themes:

1. Create a Vibrant, Destination Riverfront
2. Provide Signature Neighborhood Parks and a Quality Park System
3. Promote Diverse Recreation Opportunities and Quality Indoor Facilities
4. Increase Connectivity
5. Improve the Ecological Health of the City
6. Be Efficient and Cost-Effective to Maintain

Each of these themes includes key findings, followed by recommended goals and strategies.

6. Related Planning Efforts

The City of Cedar Rapids' planning documents, both existing and in-progress, helped to inform the parks and recreation master planning process. These planning documents include:

- *Cedar Rapids Comprehensive Plan*, 1999
- *Linn County Park & Outdoor Recreation Master Plan*, 2004
- *Recreation Needs Assessment and Master Plan*, June 2004
- *Vision Cedar Rapids: Downtown Framework Plan*, May 2007
- *City of Cedar Rapids Framework Plan for Reinvestment and Revitalization,* December 2008
- *City of Cedar Rapids Neighborhood Planning Process,* September 2009
- *Feasibility Study for a Multi-Component Community/Recreation Center*, 2009 (in progress)

The Recreation Department underwent a planning process in 2003-04 that resulted in the development of a *Recreation Master Plan*. This master planning process builds on that plan. As a recommendation of the 2004 plan, and as part of the City's reorganization efforts, the Parks and Recreation and Ushers Ferry and Golf departments were consolidated in 2007. This project focuses on park planning issues and opportunities and providing a cohesive plan to guide this new department.

Another recommendation from the *2004 Recreation Plan*, to conduct a *Feasibility Study for a Multi-Component Community/Recreation Center,* was nearing completion at the time of this plan. The key recommendations of that project are incorporated into this *Parks & Recreation Master Plan.*

7. Methodology of this Planning Process

This project has been guided by a project team made up of managers and key staff within the Parks and Recreation Department, as well as a public input process. The project team met with consultants from the GreenPlay team and provided input throughout the planning process. In the spring of 2009, the City also undertook separate parks and recreation related planning projects – Riverfront planning with Sasaki and the *Multigenerational Community Life Center Feasibility Study* with Williams Architects. These projects were coordinated with this master planning process. This collaborative effort creates a Master Plan that fully utilizes the consultants' expertise and incorporates local knowledge and institutional history. The project consisted of the following tasks:

Needs Assessment and Public Involvement

- Review of previous planning efforts and City historical information.
- Review of community demographics, including anticipated population growth.
- Extensive community involvement effort including community focus groups, meetings with key stakeholders, a brownbag lunch with City Council members, community-wide public meetings, a statistically-valid survey, and a series of three public input open houses held between June and November 2009.
- Research of trends related to American lifestyles to help guide parks and recreation service delivery efforts.

Inventory and Level of Service Analysis

- Inventory (pre and post-flood) of parks and facilities using existing mapping, staff interviews, and on-site visits to verify amenities and assess the condition of the amenities and surrounding areas.
- Analysis addressing parks, recreation, open space, trails, and related services.
- Measurement of the current delivery of service using the Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Process (GRASP®) Level of Service Analysis represented graphically through maps.

Recommendations and Implementation Strategies

- Identification and categorization of recommendations into themes, goals, and strategies for implementation.
- Exploration of funding mechanisms to support development and sustainability of the system.

8. Timeline for Completing the Master Plan

Initial Community Meetings and Stakeholder Input	January 2008
Inventory and Assessment of Existing Facilities and Services	January-April 2008
Community Survey	February-April 2008
Benchmarking, Demographic, and Trends Analysis	February-April 2008
Flood	*June 2008*
Post-Flood Inventory Update and Level of Service Analysis	August-November 2008
Series of Three Public Input Open Houses	June, August, November 2009
Presentations of Draft Master Plan	February 2010
Adoption of Master Plan by City Council	April 13, 2010

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Needs & Resource Assessment

This section provides the framework for this *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* that includes a profile of the Cedar Rapids community and Department of Parks and Recreation, recreation trend highlights, a summary of the community input process for this Master Plan, and an inventory and analysis of the City parks and recreation system.

1. Community Profile

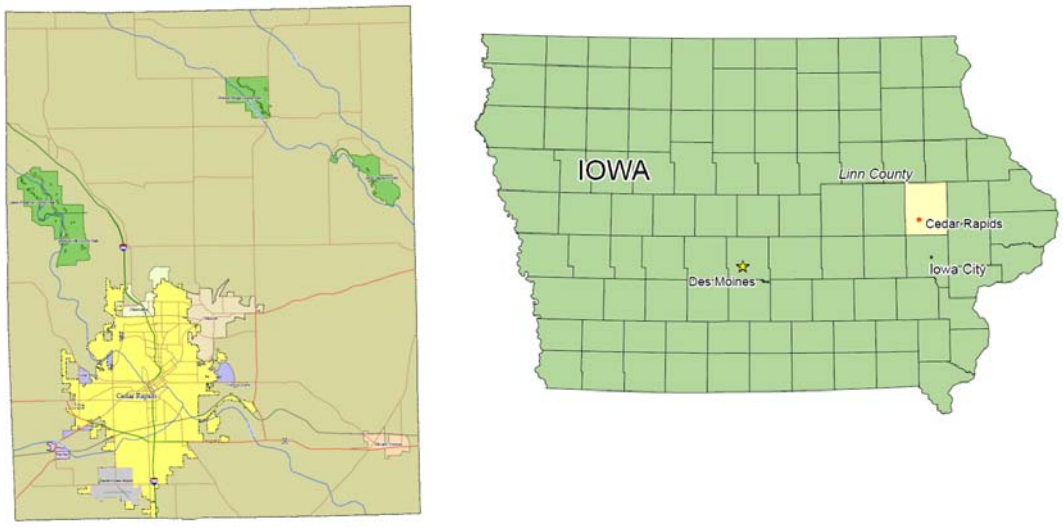
Context

Cedar Rapids is located in the East Central part of Iowa (***Figure 1***). This part of the state is known for its rolling hills, which define development patterns and create many opportunities for recreation along the hills and waterways. In 2008, the City had a population of 128,056 residents, and it is home to many industries, from agricultural processing to high tech defense contractors.

The City was founded on the banks of the Cedar River in 1838 and is now the second most populous city in Iowa. Throughout its history, Cedar Rapids has been an industrial city, taking advantage of nearby transportation routes to promote business. Now, as Cedar Rapids comes out of a slow economic period and a devastating flood, it is making efforts to revive the downtown and riverfront areas and encourage mixed land uses in order to create a vibrant heart of the City. Outside of downtown, Cedar Rapids is proud of its historic ethnic areas that have developed over the years. Of special note is the Czech Village that boasts the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library (which at the time of this plan is rebuilding after devastating damage from the 2008 flood).

Figure 1: City of Cedar Rapids Context Map

Note: A larger version of the map is located in ***Appendix 3.***

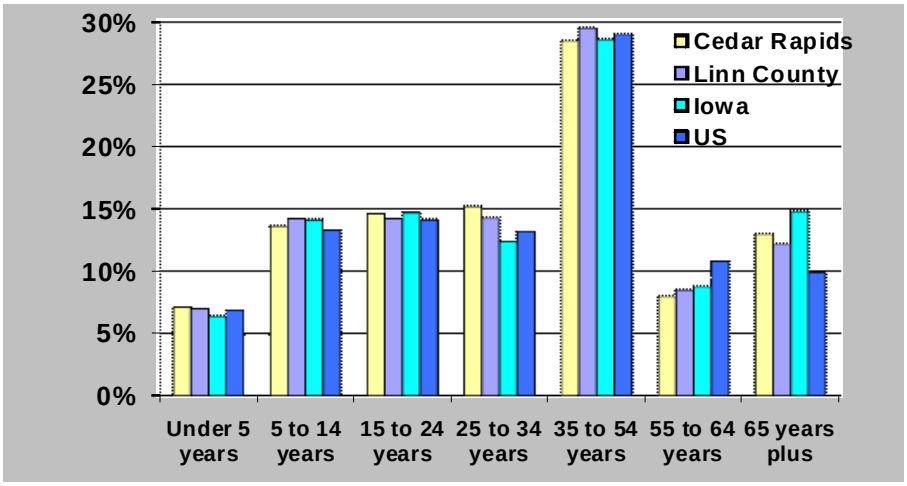


Demographics

Following is a summary of Cedar Rapids' demographics. Sources of information include ESRI Business Solutions, the U.S. Census, the City of Cedar Rapids, and the United Health Foundation.

- The U.S. Census 2008 population estimate for Cedar Rapids is 128,056. The population is forecasted to increase to 137,293 by 2015 (an increase of 7.2 percent).
- Cedar Rapids and Linn County have a slightly higher number (2-3 percent more) of adults 65 years of age and older, when compared with the entire United States.
- The race with the largest population is White (91.9 percent for Cedar Rapids, 93.9 percent for Linn County).
- Of the total population, those who identify themselves as being of Hispanic origin make up 1.8 percent in Cedar Rapids and 1.4 percent in Linn County.
- Cedar Rapids and Linn County have a higher percentage of the population with a college education than Iowa and the country as a whole. Twenty-eight-point-four (28.4) percent of the Cedar Rapids' population, and 27.7 percent of Linn County's population, have a Bachelor's Degree or higher. This is higher than both the U.S. (24.4 percent) and the state of Iowa (21.2 percent).
- The 2007 median household income in Cedar Rapids is $55,965 and is $58,795 in Linn County, which is higher than Iowa and the nation.
- Per capita income in Cedar Rapids is $29,171 and is $29,765 in Linn County, which is higher than Iowa and the nation.
- Iowa is ranked 14th in its 2007 overall State Health Rankings, down from 2006 ranking of 11th.
- Obesity rates continue to climb, up from 21.5 percent of the population in 2000 to 25.7 percent in 2007, ranking Iowa at 29th in the nation. (These rates are significantly higher than the 1990 level of 12.8 percent.)

Figure 2: Population Comparisons – Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Iowa, and US (2007)



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

2. Agency Profile

Department of Parks and Recreation

History

The City of Cedar Rapids enjoys a long history of serving the recreational needs of the community. In 1894, the first standing park committee was established to manage and oversee park system operations. Several years later, in 1908, parks were placed under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Parks and Public Property.

Formerly known as the Playground Commission, the Recreation Department was created in 1924 by a referendum passed by Cedar Rapids voters. Due to the financial challenges of the 1930's, the Playground Commission came under the control of the City Council for several years. The Council oversaw the department and adopted rules and regulations for playgrounds and recreation centers, while managing expenditures, salaries, and terms of employment

The Recreation Commission continually strived to serve the needs of a changing community by implementing garden programs, which in turn produced food to feed needy families during the Depression, and by hiring WPA workers to lead various programs. Creation of the Riverside Roundhouse in 1971 and renovation of the Buchanan School into a recreation center in 1975 expanded the staff and services offered to citizens of Cedar Rapids. Programming for individuals with disabilities began as early as 1938, and in 1954, a playground program was formed for children with developmental disabilities.

In 2005, the City changed from a Commission to a City Manager/Council form of government, and the separate Parks Department and Recreation Department were consolidated into one department, along with the Ushers Ferry Historic Village Department and the Golf Department. This *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* will provide a guiding framework for the Parks and Recreation Department.

(Historical information paraphrased from *Park and Recreation History of Cedar Rapids, Iowa*, copyright 2000, Cedar Rapids Recreation Department)

Parks and Recreation Department Overview

The Parks and Recreation Department was created in July 2007 as part of a City reorganization resulting from the transition to a City Manager from a Commission form of government. Four separate departments – Recreation, Parks, Ushers Ferry Historic Village, and Golf – were combined into one department.

Through its Mission, the Department is:

> *"Dedicated to provide and enhance a quality parks and recreation system through creative, affordable and sustainable programs and professional services enriching the lives of the community and its visitors, now and in the future."*

The Parks and Recreation Department is organized into five main areas or divisions.

- Recreation (includes Ushers Ferry staff) and Aquatics
- Parks
- Landscape Design & Construction
- Marketing
- Golf

(Note: The Golf Division operates as an enterprise fund. The Golf Manager reports to the Parks and Recreation Director, but golf operates as an enterprise department and operations are separate from the rest of the Department. Golf operations were not included in this master plan study.)

3. Community Input & Surveys

Summary of Community Input Opportunities

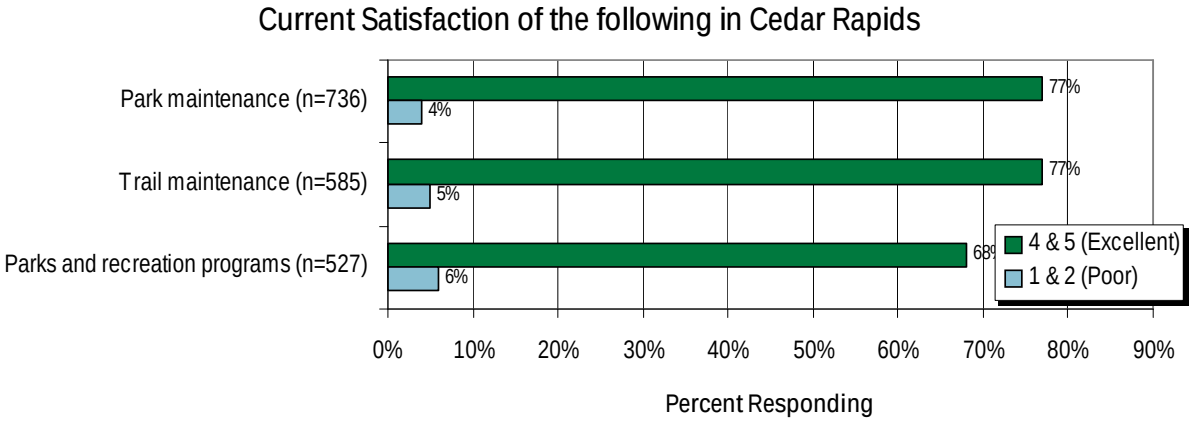
Community input from a number of community surveys and input opportunities were drawn upon for this Master Plan. Following are highlights from this input. (See the Master Plan Recommendation Chapter for references to additional surveys from the *2004 Recreation Master Plan* and the *2008 Multi-Generational Life Center Feasibility Study.)*

Community Survey for Parks & Recreation Master Plan

A Community Survey for the *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* was conducted from February through April, 2008. The survey response rate to the mailed survey was 12.1 percent (829 out of a net of 6,852 delivered). Below is summary of highlights from the survey results.

Overall satisfaction of trail maintenance, park maintenance, and parks and recreation programs rated "Excellent or Good."

Figure 3: Current Satisfaction



Top three most important concerns for the City to address that would increase utilization of Cedar Rapids parks and recreation facilities:

- Condition of parks
- More trails
- Awareness of programs (communication)

Top five most important <u>outdoor facilities</u> to be added, expanded, or improved:

- Trails (Cedar River/Sac & Fox)
- Picnic shelters/pavilions
- Outdoor swimming pool and aquatic centers
- Playgrounds
- Neighborhood walking trails (e.g. Cherokee Park, Cherry Hill Park)

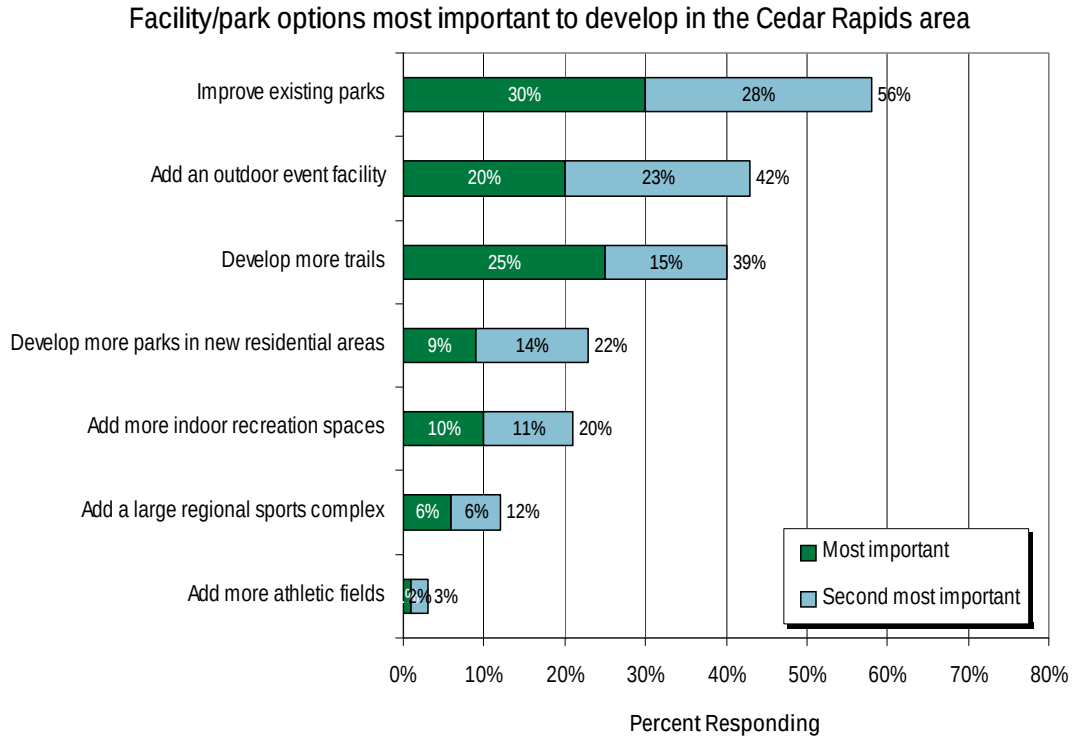
<u>Top priorities</u> for park and facility development:

- Improve existing parks
- Develop more trails
- Add outdoor event center

<u>Parks and recreation values</u> and preferences responses:

- Eighty-two (82) percent would like a mix of parks that incorporates both native and manicured parks.
- Eighty-two (82) percent value having active recreation opportunities in the parks near their home.
- Eighty (80) percent feel that it is important to have a park within walking distance of home.

Figure 4: Most Important Facilities/Park Options to Develop in Cedar Rapids



Financial Choices

- Fifty-three (53) percent of respondents indicated that they would "definitely" or "probably" support an increase in user fees to offset operating costs of the types of parks or facilities that are important to their household.
- Forty-six (46) percent of respondents indicated that they would "definitely" or "probably" vote yes on a property or sales tax increase to allow the City to issue bonds in support of building, renovating, and operating facilities important to their household.

Summary

Residents tend to be slightly more supportive of an increase in user fees to help offset operating expenses than they are of a tax increase to build or renovate facilities. This general attitude is also born out in the desire of residents to place a priority on improving existing parks. Among new facilities, trails are clearly a top priority.

Stakeholder Meetings, January 2008

Three initial community stakeholder focus groups were held January 30-31, 2008 to obtain public input for the *Parks & Recreation Master Plan*. Participants were asked to discuss key issues, challenges, and opportunities related to parks and recreation in Cedar Rapids. In addition, a public meeting was held January 31, 2008 to summarize the input from the focus groups and solicit additional feedback. Below is a summary of comments from these meetings. (*Note: The summary below represents comments made by individuals attending the above meetings. These comments should be reviewed along with the statistically-valid survey results, which show community preferences, opinions, and priorities.*)

Strengths

- Expansive, well-planned park system.
- Diverse park system with unique features.
- Trails system.
- New aquatics centers.
- Undeveloped natural areas.
- Quality, dedicated staff.
- Affordable programs.
- Public values parks and recreation system.

Challenges/Weaknesses

- Awareness/publicity of facilities and programs.
- Lack of trail connectivity.
- Riverfront improvements are needed.
- Budget limitations.
- Concerns about reduced maintenance staffing levels, deferred maintenance.
- More recreational opportunities needed.
- Lack of adequate indoor recreation space (indoor pools, gyms, etc.).
- Insufficient athletic field space for practices and games.
- Need for more green space in new developments.

Opportunities

- Develop a long-term parks vision and plan.
- Pursue additional funding sources (capital and operations).
- Expand partnerships (e.g. schools, businesses).
- Expand and enhance marketing.
- Promote river recreation.
- Improve trail connectivity.
- Provide new facilities (amphitheatre, indoor center, skate park, etc.).
- Expand creative programming.
- Increase volunteer involvement (maintenance, gardening, etc.).
- Educate public about the benefits of natural areas.
- Develop park land dedication requirements to serve new growth.

City Council Input, January 2008

Input from Cedar Rapids City Council members was provided at a meeting on January 30, 2008. Following is a summary of Council member input on the strengths, challenges, and opportunities related to the parks and recreation system in Cedar Rapids.

Strengths

- The public recognizes the value of parks, recreation, and trails.
- Cedar Rapids has ample park land.
- Park planning has served neighborhoods well (good "blueprint" for the parks system).
- The City does a good job providing affordable programs.
- New outdoor aquatic centers and swimming pools.
- Many programs have a great history and tradition (e.g. summer programs).
- Plentiful green spaces.

Challenges/Weaknesses

- Some facilities are outdated.
- System is energy intensive.
    - Select mowed turf areas could be replaced with natural areas.
- Some parkland is being underutilized.
- Need to ensure affordable programs for inner city kids.
- Funding issues.
- Insufficient in meeting community fitness needs.
- Lack creative programming opportunities for young adults between the ages of 18-25 and females.
- Need for more winter activities and lifelong learning activities.

Opportunities

- Need a progressive vision.
- Improve connectivity (e.g. schools to parks and parks to trails) to encourage biking and walking.
- Focus on retaining residents as well as attracting new residents.
    - Work with businesses to make the City a desirable place to live.
    - Determine what will attract people to Cedar Rapids.
- Improve marketing efforts to attract new residents and inspire current citizens to be more involved.
- Learn about and apply best practices towards community parks and recreation needs.
- Improve signage to better direct residents to local parks and recreation resources.
- Ensure that any changes made are sustainable over the long-term and responsive to evolving trends.
- Need more community partnerships (schools, History Center, and Ushers Ferry, etc.).
- Evaluate programs and services to avoid duplication of community amenities.
- Focus on winter-time activities, especially for youth.
- Identify the activities people most desire.
- Explore non-traditional offerings.
- Use the river as a recreational asset.
- Consider building parks in newly-developed areas.
- Identify future land acquisitions.

2009 Open Houses Series

In 2009, a series of three open houses were conducted to get broad public input for the development of the *Parks & Recreation Master Plan*.

- **Open House #1, June 23**
  Provided background information on parks and recreation needs assessments and solicited input on park and recreation issues and needs.

- **Open House #2, August 19**
  Shared feedback from the first open house and solicited feedback on options for the parks and recreation facilities and programs – riverfront, parks and open space, trails, and indoor recreation.

- **Open House #3, November 17**
  Shared feedback from the second open house and received feedback on the Preferred Option for the future of the parks and recreation system.

The preferred parks and recreation system options set forth in Open House #3 form the foundation for the goals and strategies outlined in the *Recommendations* Chapter of this Master Plan.

4. Recreation Trends

It is important for recreation providers to stay on top of current trends that impact parks and recreation. A strategic focus on key parks and recreation trends will allow Cedar Rapids to maintain a competitive edge while maintaining the quality of life for current and future residents.

The following information highlights relevant local, regional, and national parks and recreation trends from various sources. (Additional trend information was provided to staff separately.)

Adult Sports

- The top three adult athletic activities ranked by total participation include:
  - Exercise walking
  - Exercising with equipment
  - Swimming
- Adult team sports experiencing large increases in participation include:
  - Baseball
  - Basketball
  - Lacrosse
- Adult team sports experiencing decreases in participation include:
  - In-line Hockey
  - Volleyball
- The average age for participants in team sports ranges from 16 to 29 years.
- Adult exercise activities including – working out at a club, weight lifting, aerobic exercising, and exercising with equipment – increased significantly.

Currently, the Cedar Rapids Park and Recreation Department does not have adequate indoor facilities to respond to the recreation trends of indoor swimming and exercising with equipment. Opportunities to expand these facilities should be pursued.

Youth Sports

- Youth participation has increased (Ages 7-11 years) in:
  - Skateboarding
  - Tennis
  - Soccer

- Youth participation has decreased (Ages 7-11 years) in:
  - In-line skating
  - Softball
  - Golf

- Youth participation has increased (Ages 12-17 years) in:
  - Skateboarding
  - Tackle Football
  - Lacrosse

- Youth participation has decreased (Ages 12-17 years) in:
  - In-line skating
  - Softball
  - Golf

(2008 National Sporting Goods Association Survey)

Cedar Rapids has one skate park that is beginning to age located at Riverside Park. To respond to the popularity of skateboarding, the City should look for opportunities to add or improve skateboarding facilities. Youth field sports (soccer, football, and lacrosse) are experiencing increased participation, while soccer and lacrosse fields rated lower in the survey. Continued attention to the usage, number, and quality of multi-purpose fields will be important.

General Adult Trends

- There is a growing trend among adult populations of a need for more drop-in programming within recreation facilities, and less structured classes.
- According to the *Generation Iowa Commission Report (2008)*, young adults seek a rich cultural life with access to nature and the arts as well as program variety.

New and creative programs to meet the changing needs of adults should be pursued by the Parks and Recreation Department with a focus on environmental education and cultural programs and events.

Cultural Arts

- The highest percentage of persons visiting historic sites was in the 45-54 age group (28.0%), followed by the 55-64 age group (27.6%) and then by the 35-44 age group (26.8%). *(2008 Statistical Abstract)*
- Attendance at traditional performing arts events has steadily increased between 2000 and 2007 for all categories except opera and symphony/orchestra. (*2008 Statistical Abstract*)

Adding an outdoor event facility was rated highly in the community survey, indicating an interest in community gathering places for special events such as performing arts. Targeted marketing of Usher's Ferry Historic Village toward key age groups is desirable to increase visitor rates.

Economic Benefits

- Organized events held in public parks (arts festivals, athletic events, etc.) often bring substantial positive economic impacts (filling hotel rooms and restaurants and bringing customers to local stores). *(Trust for Public Land)*
- Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home. *(National Association of Home Builders and National Association of Realtors)*

Outdoor events, facilities, and trails were rated as high priorities in the community survey. Interest in developing more parks in new residential areas has also been expressed through the community input process.

Facilities

- The current national trend is toward a "one-stop" facility to serve all ages. Large, multipurpose regional centers help increase cost recovery, promote retention, and encourage cross-use.
- Leisure and therapeutic pools, as well as "splash pads."
- Nature centers/outdoor recreation and education centers.
- Skate parks.
- Partnerships with private providers or other government agencies.
- Green design techniques and certifications such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®).

Opportunities to expand indoor multi-purpose recreation facilities to include a leisure pool should continue to be pursued using best practices in green building design, as is recommended in the *Multi-Generational Life Center Feasibility Study.*

5. Inventory & Level of Service Analysis

Overview of the Parks and Recreation System

The City's existing parks and recreation system consists of the following:

Parks and Open Space

- There are 3,091 acres of named park areas, excluding golf courses, at 57 sites.
- An additional 60 parcels of land comprising 268 acres are located throughout the City.
- The majority of this acreage is in large parks such as Ellis Park and the Tuma Sports Complex.
- There are also many small parks that serve the City's neighborhoods and areas that are natural and undeveloped.
- The system includes specialized facilities including the Ushers Ferry Historic Village, and an open living history facility featuring exhibit buildings located on ten acres adjacent to Seminole Valley Park.

The Riverfront

- Forty-three (43) percent of all of the floodplains found within city limits are protected as parkland.
- Forty-eight (48) percent of the City's parkland (in and out of city limits) lies within a FEMA-designated floodplain.
- Eighty (80) percent of the City's open space, greenways, and natural areas are within FEMA-designated floodplains.
- A vast majority of the native ecosystems present are riparian.

Indoor Recreation

- There are three (3) functioning indoor facilities – Bender Pool, Ambroz Recreation Center, and Noelridge Greenhouse.
- Two (2) indoor facilities were destroyed by the flood – Time Check Recreation Center and the Riverside Roundhouse.

Trails

- The City has 24 miles of existing trails (hard surface to walking trails within parks).

Flood Impacts

The 2008 flood had a wide range of impacts to the parks and recreation system:

- **Temporarily impacted operationally**
  The Sac and Fox Greenway, for example, was impassable during the flood. This unpaved trail has since been repaired but faces periodic flooding damage.

- **Moderately impacted/Needed repair**
  Forty-six (46) of the City's parks and recreation properties were impacted; thirteen (13) of these were in need of repair.

- **Significantly damaged/Candidate for replacement**
  Riverside Park's Roundhouse was damaged and the Time Check Recreation Center was severely damaged by the flood. In addition, 34 of the 36 buildings at Ushers Ferry Historic Village were flooded, and six of the structures were destroyed.

- **New park space created**
  The City's adopted Flood Management Strategy will create over 200 acres of Greenway with approximately 70 acres of new park space between the flood protection line and the Cedar River.

The park and open space system, at the same time, fulfilled one of its purposes by helping to offset some of the flood's impact on the community by storing water, absorbing water, and by preventing development in flood-prone areas.

Level of Service Analysis

A level of service analysis was completed to determine how various parts of the community are being served by parks and recreation facilities.

1. Cedar Rapids' parks and recreation facilities (including each component such as playgrounds, shelters, ballfields, etc.) were inventoried and mapped to establish a complete and accurate database of parks and recreation amenities.

2. An area within a 10-minute walk (one-third mile; three to four blocks) and 10-minute bike ride (one mile) of each facility was shaded to show access.

3. Areas on the map with darker shading have greater access to parks and recreation facilities– a higher level of service.

4. A target was established of having one park (with four components) and one multi-use trail within walking distance of home.

The level of service was analyzed in two ways: how well neighborhoods are served in general and the *walkability* of the park and recreation system. (A detailed inventory level of service analysis and associated maps are found in ***Appendices 3 and 4**.)* The results showed:

Neighborhood Service/General Access (one-mile)
(*Note: This map is for reference only. See **Appendix 3** for a full-size map*.)

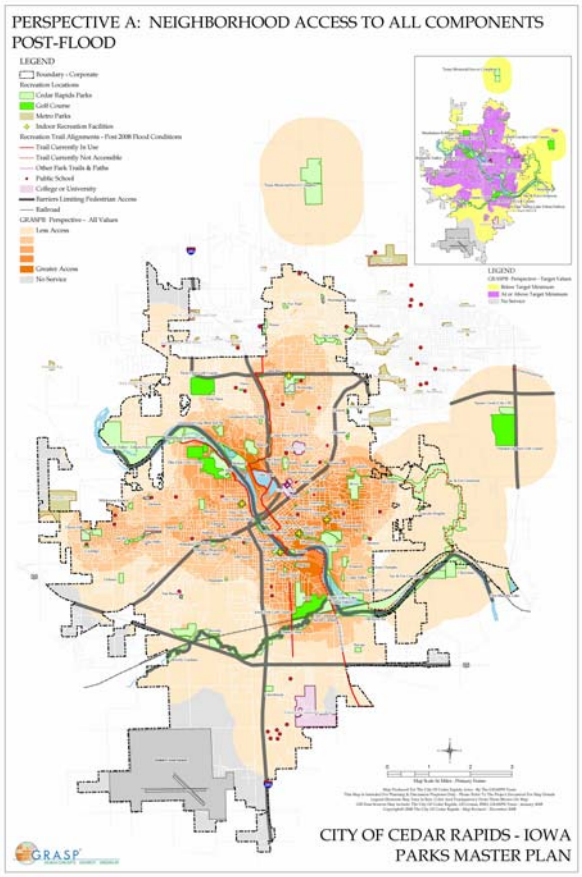
- Eighty-five (85) percent of Cedar Rapids has neighborhood access to parks; of that, 62 percent has service that meets or exceeds the target.

- The airport and agricultural lands comprise much of the areas that do not have service.

Walkable Service/Access (One-third mile or 10-minute walk)

- Fifty-seven (57) percent of Cedar Rapids has walkable access to parks; of that, 23 percent is meeting targets.

- Overall, 34 percent of Cedar Rapids has walkable access to service that is meeting target levels.



- There are significant areas in which residents do not have access to parks and recreation within walking distance of their home.
- Walkable level of service is higher for areas near trails.
- There is a lower level of service in growing areas of Cedar Rapids.
- Much of the service available to lower density residential areas is being provided by schools.
- Some service in the older and denser residential areas is being provided by very small streetscape parks.

Master Plan Goals & Recommendations

The *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* recommendations are organized by the following themes:

1. Create a Vibrant, Destination Riverfront
2. Provide Signature Neighborhood Parks and a Quality Park System
3. Promote Diverse Recreation Opportunities and Quality Indoor Facilities
4. Increase Connectivity
5. Improve the Ecological Health of the City
6. Be Efficient and Cost-Effective to Maintain

The following six sections highlight the key findings and recommendations for each of the Master Plan themes.

1. Create a Vibrant, Destination Riverfront

The Cedar Rapids Riverfront extends from Seminole Valley and Ushers Ferry Historic Village in the north, through the City of Cedar Rapids, to Cheyenne Park in the south. Prior to the Flood, the *Downtown Vision 2007 for Cedar Rapids* recognized the revitalization of the Riverfront as a top priority to:

- *Create a centralized destination for Greater Cedar Rapids,*
- *Provide civic places and spaces for gathering on the river; and,*
- *Create continuous public access via trails and connected park spaces.*

Key Findings – Riverfront

The Flood Management System – The Greenway

Following the 2008 flood, the City and its citizens mobilized to create a plan for reinvestment and recovery. During the first phase of planning, the River Corridor Redevelopment Process, a flood management strategy, was identified to provide greater flood protection for the community.

Cedar Rapids' new flood management system will include riverwalls, levees, and a 220-acre open space between the levees and floodwalls and the river. This new space, called "The Greenway," will help to absorb flood waters and will become a community recreational area.

Within this 220-acre Greenway, 192 properties were deemed eligible for acquisition through the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Properties acquired through this program carry permanent restrictions on what can be developed.

Allowable Uses:

- Open Air Structures
- Public Restrooms
- Camping
- Agriculture
- Unpaved roads, trails
- Boat ramps, docks, piers for public recreation
- Multi-purpose fields

Uses Not Allowed:

- Enclosed Structures
- Indoor Performance Venue
- Indoor Pavilion
- Impermeable Surfaces
- Paved Sports Courts
- Swimming Pools
- Paved Streets

Neighborhood Planning Process (Post-flood) – September 2009

Some of the community parks and open space-related goals that came out of the neighborhood planning process include:

- Promote green space as a central amenity.
- Support art, culture, and entertainment opportunities.
- Create exciting downtown destinations.
- Encourage economic vitality.

Framework Plan for Reinvestment and Revitalization – December 2008

Additional Greenway goals identified in the *Framework Plan for Reinvestment and Revitalization* include:

- Leverage flood management measures to maximize open space.
- Keep riverfront open to the public.
- Develop pedestrian and bike trails along greenway corridor connecting downtown to the neighborhoods.
- Implement desired greenway program (i.e. trails, amphitheatre, wetlands).
- Maintain views to the river.

Open House Public Input – June-November 2009

The input gained from the series of three open houses as part of this parks and recreation master planning process helped shape the following Riverfront recommendations. These proposed Riverfront enhancements build on the plans mentioned above.

Recommendations – Riverfront

GOAL: Create a series of Riverfront attractions that draw Cedar Rapids residents and visitors to the River.

Strategies:

1. Develop a City Promenade.
    - The City Promenade runs from the I-380 bridge to 8th Avenue. It creates two levels of access – one at the urban edge, where visitors can stroll along shops and cafés, and one at a lower level, closer to the water's edge, that allows continuous access for walkers and bikers without street crossings. Ramps between the upper and lower walks create ADA accessible and bike-friendly access.

2. Develop a Riverfront Amphitheater.
    - A new 5,000-person amphitheater located on the Western Bank of the Cedar River, orienting to a stage at the River's edge and overlooking May's Island and Downtown. The amphitheater could be used for informal performances or closed off for concerts that would draw people to Cedar Rapids and generate revenue for the City.

3. Develop May's Island Plaza.
    - The Plaza at May's Island is a year-round attraction. In the summer time, visitors can sit beneath groves of trees or splash in the fountain's spray jets. In the winter, the plaza is transformed into an ice skating rink at the heart of the City with a pavilion for skate rental and concessions.

4. Develop Time Check Greenway.
    - The Time Check Greenway becomes a new recreational destination for the City. The park includes three (3) multi-purpose fields, a ballfield, a new skate and BMX park, a boat dock in addition to existing boating at Ellis Harbor, trails and naturalized areas. The park connects to Time Check Park to the west and the "West Bank" park to the South.

5. Enhance Seminole Valley Park.
    - Activities at Seminole Valley expand to include both new multi-purpose fields for active recreation and a wetland park with an environmental education trail. The park also includes a dock with public fishing and boating access, a lodge available for event rental, and would accommodate informal camping.

6. Create a New Bohemia Wetland Park.
    - The New Bohemia Wetland Park includes pathways, boardwalks, and overlooks moving along the river's edge and through a wetland restoration area that provides habitat for wildlife and birds. The park serves an ecological function, collecting storm water from future Downtown development and filtering it before it reaches the Cedar River, helping to improve water quality.

2. Provide Signature Neighborhood Parks & a Quality Park System

Key Findings – Park System

Inventory

The City of Cedar Rapids has a variety of parklands, trails, and indoor facilities that form a network of properties that cover the City. Facilities provide a variety of options including opportunities for sports, picnics, nature study, water recreation, and quiet contemplation. The park properties can be grouped in four main categories:

- Large urban parks
- Small developed parks
- Streetscapes
- Natural areas, greenways, and trails

The large urban parks and the small developed parks serve primarily as recreational functions. Large urban parks include five larger parks that each serve a quadrant of the City including Noelridge, Bever, Jones, Cherry Hill, and Ellis Parks. Also included in this category are many of the City's special facilities such as Ellis Boat Harbor, Ushers Ferry Historic Village, and Old MacDonald's Farm in Bever Park. Small developed parks include neighborhood and mini-parks and include typical park elements such as open turf and playgrounds. Streetscapes and natural areas are a large part of the maintenance considerations of the department but do not serve the public as recreational amenities.

Cedar Rapids has an extensive park system that is well-maintained and includes large natural areas. These parks, although well-cared for, often have components that are either very basic or aging. The parks could generally benefit from capital improvements through an infusion of new and diverse park components. Park shelters and ball fields are two prime examples of this condition. Ball fields are basic and often do not include dugouts or outfield fences. Shelters and pavilions are well-maintained, but they are old and very simple architecturally. In both cases improvements and upgrades to the components would serve the community at a higher level. The City should continue its efforts in this area by seeking out and developing facilities and programming that are on the cutting edge of parks and recreation. Continuing to diversify recreational opportunities in Cedar Rapids' existing parks will ensure that residents can continue to meet the majority of their recreational needs within the City's diverse and expansive system.

Level of Service

The parks and trails system serves the public in most areas of the City at levels that meet expectations for service close to home. At a neighborhood level, 85 percent of the community has service that is meeting or exceeding expectations. Overall, the level of service analysis shows that the established core of the community has service that is meeting target levels. In areas of new growth, residents have access to some service, and at the very periphery of the corporate limit there is no neighborhood service where there are few residences to require it.

Image provided by Sasaki

For residents wanting to walk to a park or trail, service is lower. People that live close to a large park or trail may find that their needs are being met, but those that live further away may have to get in the car to access a park or trail. The current comprehensive plan states that *walkability* should be a goal for the City.

Growth of the System

Unlike many municipalities, the City of Cedar Rapids does not have a parkland dedication ordinance that sets parkland standards and requirements for new residential developments. It has been the practice of the City to plan for park needs through a negotiation process with developers. This has resulted in variable quantities and quality of parkland. The community input process (through the survey and focus groups) indicated a need to more effectively plan for parks for new residential areas. Furthermore, support was shown for a parkland dedication requirement by participants of the series of open houses from June through November 2009.

Public Input

According to the statistically-valid community survey that was conducted as a part of the *Parks & Recreation Master Plan*, residents highly value their parks and trails, and they are generally satisfied with the level of maintenance the parks and trails receive. In the survey, residents were asked what they value about parks and what about the current system could be expanded or improved.

The top ranking items for improvement and expansion include:

- Trails/neighborhood walking trails
- Picnic Shelters/Pavilions
- Outdoor Swimming and Aquatics/Splash pads
- Playgrounds

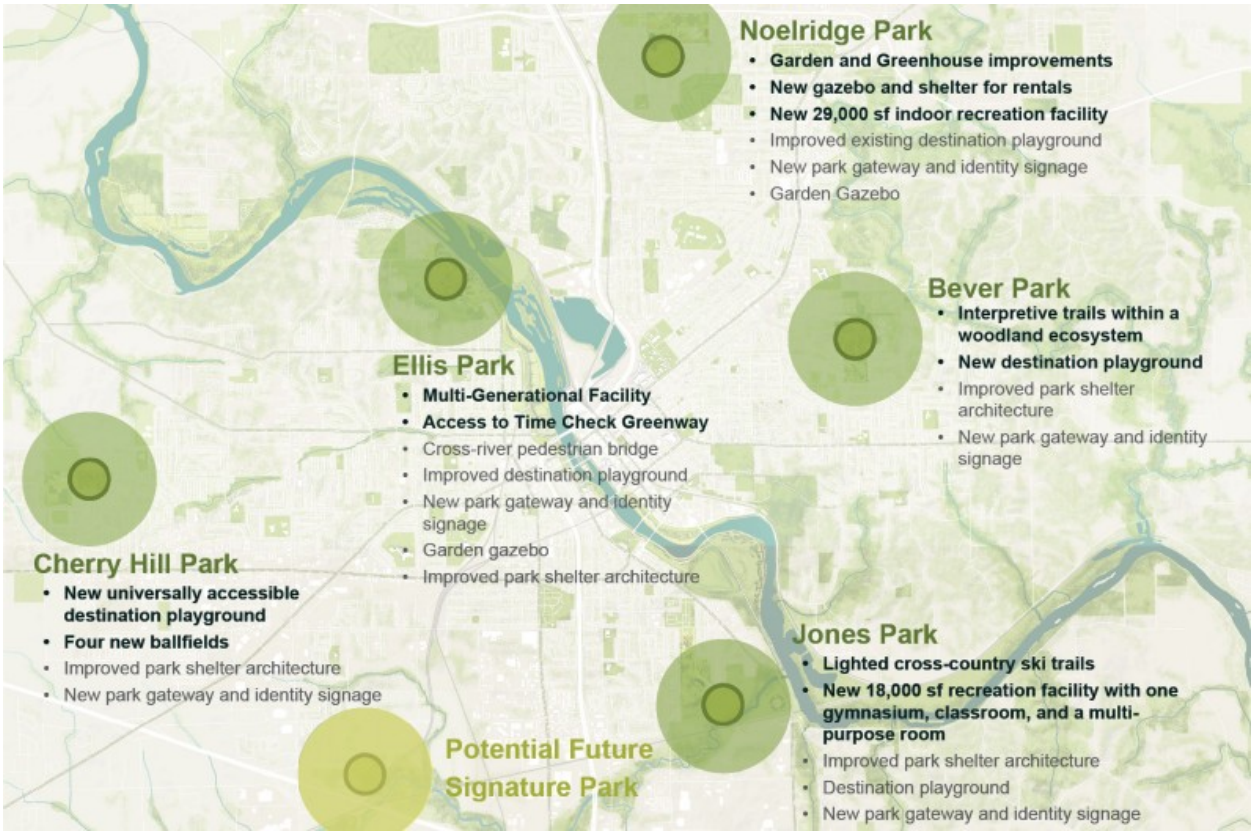
Characteristics of parks that the residents of Cedar Rapids highly value include:

- A mix of native and manicured parks
- Having a park within walking distance of their home
- Unique park features such as Ushers Ferry and Old MacDonald's Farm

Residents that attended public meetings held during the process voiced opinions that closely mirrored the results of the mail survey expressing interest in increased trail opportunities and improved park facilities.

Recommendations – Park System

GOAL: Create Signature Parks.



Popular "signature" parks – Ellis, Cherry Hill, Jones, Bever, and Noelridge – are enhanced as multi-neighborhood destinations with high quality features. Each Signature Park has a unique identity, high level of design, and recreational components that create a community draw.

Strategies:

1. Develop Site Master Plans for each Signature Park prior to making improvements.

2. Make improvements to **Noelridge Park.**
   - Make Garden and Greenhouse improvements (including new greenhouse entry with restrooms and an outdoor plaza).
   - Add a new gazebo and shelter for rentals.
   - Enhance existing destination playground.
   - Create a new park gateway and identity signage.
   - Consider adding a new indoor recreation facility (29,000 square feet).

3. Make improvements to **Bever Park.**
    - Develop Site Master Plan prior to making park improvements.
    - Add interpretive trails within the woodland ecosystem in the park.
    - Add a new destination playground.
    - Construct a new group shelter with custom architecture.
    - Create a new park gateway and identity signage.

4. Make improvements to **Ellis Park.**
    - Add a cross-river pedestrian bridge connecting the East and West sides of the City at Ellis Park.
    - Improve existing destination playground.
    - Create a new park gateway and identity signage.
    - Add a garden gazebo at Shakespeare Garden.
    - Construct new park shelters with custom architecture.
    - Add interpretative trails and connections to the Greenway.
    - Construct a Multi-Generational Community Life Center. (See recommendations in the next section *3*. *Promote Diverse Recreation Opportunities and Quality Indoor Recreation* for a more detailed description.)

5. Make improvements to **Jones Park.**
    - Add a lighted cross-country ski trail.
    - Add new park shelters with custom architecture.
    - Add a destination playground.
    - Create new park gateway and identity signage.
    - Consider adding a neighborhood recreation center (18,000 square feet) with one gymnasium and multipurpose rooms.

6. Make improvements to **Cherry Hill Park.**
    - Add a destination playground that is universally accessible to people of all abilities.
    - Add a new group shelter with custom architecture.
    - Create new park gateway and identity signage.
    - Replace existing four practice ballfields with four new tournament quality ballfields.

GOAL: Increase level of service of athletic fields.

Strategies:

1. Improve the ball fields at Cherry Hill Park by reconfiguring the fields to add outfield fences, covered dugouts, and spectator seating.
2. Improve the ball fields at Ellis Park by reconfiguring the fields around the proposed multi-generational center and adding outfield fences, covered dugouts, and spectator seating.
3. Improve Tuma Complex by lighting at least two soccer fields and adding spectator seating.
4. Add ballfield tournament facilities at the Tuma Complex as funding becomes available. (See ***Appendix 5*** for a conceptual plan for potential future ballfields at the Tuma Complex, pending funding availability.)

GOAL: Increase park component diversity.

Strategies:

1. Add loop walks to parks as possible.
2. Continue to look for opportunities to add a modern splash pad to an existing or new park. Prioritize the replacement of wading pools in the southwest part of the community with modern splash pads.
3. Reconstruct the dog park at Cherokee Park.
4. Add a new dog park at Squaw Creek Park.
5. Look for opportunities to add one additional dog park in the Western part of Cedar Rapids.
6. Construct a new skate park. (See Time Check Greenway in Riverfront section.)
7. Identify new inventory components to integrate into the park system over time based on community interests, as funding allows. Work with neighborhood residents to identify new components and evaluate the diversity and distribution of other less common park components (examples include: environmental interpretation, climbing walls, sledding hills, and bocce ball).

GOAL: Ensure that adequate and appropriate parks and open space is provided to new residential developments as the City grows.

Strategies:

1. Develop a parkland dedication ordinance for developers of new residential developments to contribute adequate parkland or a fee-in-lieu to the City. (See ***Appendix 6: Neighborhood Open Space Requirements***.)
2. Adopt parkland acquisition criteria to assure that dedications are appropriate for intended use.
3. Include a Parks and Recreation Department representative on the City's Project Review Group to provide expertise related to parks and recreation planning for new residential developments.
4. Promote the development of state enabling legislation to allow park impact fees to provide funding for improvement of the dedicated parkland to serve new residential communities.

3. Promote Diverse Recreation Opportunities & Quality Indoor Facilities

Recreation – Key Findings

Indoor Facilities Overview & Key Issues

Current indoor recreation space is very limited, in both scope and availability, to meet the demands of the residents. The Time Check Recreation Center was destroyed and Riverside Roundhouse was damaged by the 2008 flood. In addition, the Ambroz Recreation Center, a nearly 100-year old former school building, presents severe limitations to accommodate current recreation needs and to accommodate people with disabilities. The infrastructure of Bender Pool, a stand-alone building, is past its life expectancy, and the facility's size and configuration (five-lane, 25- yard), is inadequate to meet the aquatic needs of a city of Cedar Rapids' size. Linn County, the Obesity Prevention Task Force for the Cedar Rapids School District, and the City of Cedar Rapids have all identified the need for multi-generational, multi-use indoor recreation space.

Key findings related to indoor recreation facilities:

- Demonstrated lack of indoor facility space (documented since 1999, see *Other Planning Efforts* below).
- Current facilities have reached or exceeded life expectancy and don't meet accessibility requirements or program needs.
- Desire to expand program offerings, but the lack of adequate indoor recreation spaces presents limitations.
- A grass roots initiative (five years of support) is seeking a new community facility.
- Additional facilities have been lost due to the flood.
- Neighborhoods desire replacement of lost facilities.
- Appropriate location and operational sustainability of a new facility are paramount.
- The current national trend is toward a "one-stop" facility to serve all ages. Large, multipurpose regional centers help increase cost recovery, promote retention, and encourage cross-use.

Other Planning Efforts

Numerous studies and planning efforts for well over a decade have supported the development of enhanced public indoor recreation facilities in Cedar Rapids.

Cedar Rapids Comprehensive Plan

The City's *Comprehensive Plan* adopted in May 19, 1999 identified the need for recreational facilities in Policy 5.3.3, and efforts have been underway since this plan was adopted to realize this goal.

> *Plan for the development of an indoor multi-purpose recreation center to serve the entire community. The planning process should include efforts to garner support for funding the development of the facility.*

2004 Recreation Master Plan

The 2004 *Recreation Master Plan* recommended more non-sports activities, environmental programs, fitness, services for the "new older adult" with a focus on wellness, and inclusion for people with disabilities. Implementing these recommendations with the limitations of existing indoor facilities has been a challenge. The plan also recommended a centralized indoor recreation center that would replace both the Ambroz and Time Check Recreation Centers, and potentially Bender Pool. Key 2003 *Community Survey* findings included:

- Top three "needed" facilities based on unmet indoor needs: gymnasiums, exercise and fitness facilities, and swimming pools.
- Top four "most important" outdoor facilities based on unmet needs: outdoor theatre, off-leash dog parks, indoor exercise and fitness facilities, and indoor swimming pools.
- Top three "most important" indoor facilities to build or expand: indoor warm water family oriented swimming pool, indoor running/walking track, weight room/cardiovascular equipment area.
- Top two actions to improve or expand that over one-third of respondents said they were very supportive of: upgrade existing parks and develop a new indoor recreation center.
- Fifty-seven (57) percent of households said they would vote in favor (36%) or might vote in favor (21%) of increased sales tax to fund recreation facilities important to them. An additional 18 percent were not sure.
- Over 50 percent of respondents to a teen survey said they would use the following indoor spaces at least one time per month: weight room/cardiovascular equipment area, gathering spaces, swimming pool, game room, rock wall, and running/walking track. Many expressed interest in use several times per week.

Staff Experience

The Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation Department has experienced a lack of programming space with many classes filling to capacity in the first week of registration. There is a shortage of capacity for youth swimming lessons, lap, and exercise swim, especially in the indoor season, and an unmet demand for family recreational swimming. Use of school facilities, while somewhat available, provides challenges specifically with lack of gymnasium space and time.

Witwer Senior Center space was already inadequate and undersized for its meal program, all educational/wellness programs and activities, storage, and parking. Due to the flood, it is temporarily relocated but still remains interested in a partnership with the City in the Multi-Generational Community Life Center.

Multi-Generational Community Life Center Feasibility Study

PLAY (Planning Lifelong Activities for You) in Linn County, is a community based organization that evolved from the 2004 15-in-5 group charged with building a state-of-the-art, multi-component community center/recreation complex. This group began looking at the feasibility of a center in 2004. In 2008, concurrent with this master planning effort, this evolved into a County-sponsored facility feasibility study. The vision for the project expands beyond a traditional recreation center, with gyms and an indoor aquatic center, to include multipurpose spaces, providing a variety of activities for all ages. This vision also includes the potential of partnering with other community service providers to meet mutual goals. While there are many different opportunities for other government or non-profit organizations to partner with this facility, the two most significant at this time are an Older Adults service organization and early childhood education. Witwer Senior Center has been a committed partner since the inception of the feasibility study. The Community Early Learning Institute (CELI), another 15-in-5 initiative, has also expressed strong interest in having dedicated space in the facility. The connection between indoor and outdoor recreational programs and spaces is also important; the selected site should be connected to trails and provide both passive and active recreational opportunities.

The PLAY organization raised the original funding for this feasibility study to help decide the life center's location, whom it would serve, and how to fund construction and operation. Contributors are the City of Cedar Rapids (Hotel-Motel Tax funds), AegonUSA, Linn County Supervisors (Economic Development Fund), Van Meter Industrial, members of PLAY Committee, and the Greater Cedar Rapids Foundation, among others.

A Community Survey in 2008, conducted as part of the indoor center feasibility study, revealed the following relative to indoor recreation:

- Approximately half of respondents use indoor recreation facilities, and half do not. The facilities that are used the most include private health clubs, the YMCA, and churches.

- Of those who use indoor recreation facilities, approximately 40 percent indicate the facilities they use meet all their needs, and nearly 60 percent indicate only some of their needs are being met.

- Respondents feel that it is very important for the new multipurpose community/recreation center to serve the needs of a wide range of groups, including senior adults, adults, families, teenagers, young adults, grade school children, and preschool children.

- The main aquatic purposes respondents would use in a new multipurpose community/recreation center include recreational swimming and fitness and exercise.

- The indoor **recreation** programming spaces most likely to be used in a new center:

    - Youth – indoor aquatics/swimming center, indoor children's playground, and indoor turf fields.
    - Adults – indoor running/walking track, weight room/cardiovascular equipment area, and indoor aquatics/swimming center.

- The indoor aquatic programming spaces most likely to be used:

    - Youth – family-oriented pool, areas for swim lessons, and diving boards.
      Adults – whirlpool or hot tub, family oriented pool, warm water areas, and lanes for lap swimming.

- Approximately one-third of respondents would use a new multipurpose community/recreation center at least once per week, with an additional 25 percent using the center at least once per month. Approximately 20 percent of respondents indicated that they would not use the center.

- A majority of respondents feel that operating costs for a new multipurpose community/recreation center should be funded through a combination of user fees and taxes.

State studies have illuminated the upcoming worker shortfall. A key element in attracting/retaining high quality workers to the community has been the availability of quality of life amenities. Other communities are investing in parks and recreation facilities, such as indoor recreation centers, to help stimulate economic growth.

Partnerships

The Parks and Recreation Department works with a variety of groups that offer recreation-related programs and services. In some cases, the Department partners with another organization to jointly provide these programs services. Following are descriptions of a few of the key partnerships.

Environmental Education

It is a trend for public parks and recreation agencies to offer environmental and outdoor education programming. The City of Cedar Rapids has a partnership and long-term lease with the Indian Creek Nature Center, a non-profit organization, to provide this programming. The Center is located in 210 acres of parkland with four miles of trails. The woodlands, prairies, wetlands, and riparian forests that make up the park provide a unique outdoor classroom. Nature Center staff and volunteers facilitate a variety of learning experiences that include public, school, preschool, and youth programs. The Parks Division provides some maintenance support (e.g. plowing parking lot).

School District

The Department has an Intergovernmental Agreement 28E with the Cedar Rapids Community School District to use the Viola Gibson Elementary School to provide school-age and community programming. In addition, the Department continues to use Harding school for programming.

Partnerships have been sought for school facility use but are limited due to existing agreements between many schools and the YMCA daycare program and private organizations.

Non-Profit

As a result of the 2004 *Recreation Master Plan*, childhood wellness initiatives are being supported through a partnership with the American Heart Association. As indicated above partnerships are also being considered for the Multi-Generational Community Life Center

Recreation – Recommendations

GOAL: Contribute to community health and wellness through the provision of quality public indoor recreation facilities.

Strategies:

1. Provide a new centralized indoor Multi-Generational Community Life Center to serve the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area. This facility would replace the Time Check Recreation Center, Bender Pool, Ambroz Recreation Center, Witwer Senior Center, and Riverside Roundhouse. (See separate *Multi-Generational Life Center Feasibility Report* for detailed analysis.) Program elements would include:
    - Gyms, indoor track, and dance space
    - Pools (including lap lanes and a family leisure pool)
    - Wellness and fitness space
    - Multi-use rooms
    - Social and cultural programming rooms

2. In accordance with community needs and funding availability, provide indoor community recreation space in the Northern part of Cedar Rapids (possibly Noelridge Signature Park) to meet the growing needs of Cedar Rapids on the north side. Amenities could include a gymnasium, fitness area, banquet/multi-purpose rooms, and rooms for other recreational programs and cultural arts.

3. Provide indoor neighborhood recreation space to bolster indoor opportunities in the Southern part of Cedar Rapids (possibly Jones Signature Park) to include one gymnasium and general program rooms.

GOAL: Broaden the scope and number of program offerings in the City.

Strategies:

1. Through collaboration, partnership, or rental agreement, work with other service providers and/or facility owners, such as schools and churches, to bring programming closer to all residents.
2. As new City-owned indoor recreation facilities are phased in, provide a broad range of programming to residents in the southeast and north sides of the City.

GOAL: Broaden the scope of program offerings in non-sport activities.

Strategies:

1. Develop more cultural activities and general activities such as cooking.
2. Add fitness and wellness program with the addition of a new indoor recreation facility.
3. Develop an environmental program area to include natural history and appreciation of nature, stewardship of natural resources, walking, hiking, etc.
4. Create services for the "new older adult" (more active) with a focus on wellness and healthy lifestyles.
5. Expand inclusion programs for people with disabilities to complement the existing offerings.

GOAL: Pursue collaborative efforts and partnerships with schools and other community facilities to meet recreation needs of the community.

Strategies:

1. Develop a Partnership Agreement with the Cedar Rapids School District for joint-use of facilities.
2. Strengthen existing relationships and pursue new relationships to broaden program offerings and co-locate programs within schools or churches in neighborhoods.
3. Seek opportunities to offer social programs such as *Say NO to Drugs* and co-locate programs with police or community service centers.

GOAL: Build community and generate positive economic impact by hosting special events.

Strategy:

1. Celebrate the Cedar Rapids community and neighborhoods by hosting riverfront and neighborhood outdoor events throughout the year. (In support of initiative from the City of Cedar Rapids Neighborhood Planning Process, September 2009, p. 15)

4. Increase Connectivity & Awareness

Trails & Awareness – Key Findings

Inventory and Level of Service

Cedar Rapids takes advantage of its greenways and riparian corridors to provide residents with two extensive trails that follow the Cedar River and the Sac and Fox Greenway. Levels of service in the areas immediately surrounding the trails is much higher than in areas that are farther than a 10 minute walk from a trail. These two main corridors provide exceptional recreational value to the community and to the region; however, as transportation corridors, they lack connectivity. As recreational trails, they also lack the number of trailheads and comfort stations that make recreational trails more accessible. By expanding the trail system to follow other drainages and include more east-west routes, the value of these trails would increase dramatically. An expanded trail system would provide links to other services and increase the overall walkability of the system.

Outside of the City of Cedar Rapids, several regional trails are available for connections to Cedar Rapids Trails. Linn County, as well as the neighboring communities of Marion and Hiawatha, has trails that make regional connections.

Public Input

In both the statistically-valid survey and in the public meetings that were a part of the master planning process, trails were ranked as a top recreational feature to improve and expand. Residents noted the value of the existing trails and expressed strong desires to have more recreational trails.

Growth and Maintenance

Currently, the City maintains both hard and soft surface trails. This diversity of trail type is appealing to trails users of all kinds. As the system grows, the City will need to expand maintenance efforts and develop standards for both trail construction and maintenance. Care will also need to be taken to accommodate a variety of trail users.

Other Planning Efforts

The City is currently undertaking the process of creating a *Comprehensive Trails Plan*. This plan will address in detail both transportation and recreational routes for trails and pedestrian and bike travel throughout the community. It will also outline construction priorities and detail preferred construction and maintenance methods. The Parks and Recreation Department should work closely with the planning division to coordinate trail planning efforts.

Awareness

Residents of Cedar Rapids are aware of the parks in their neighborhoods, but may be less familiar with other parks and recreation facilities and services throughout the City. Strategic marketing and communication efforts, along with a comprehensive signage program can help raise awareness and contribute to active lifestyles and a healthy community.

According to the *Community Survey* (2008), awareness of the majority programs (communications) was identified by respondents as the third most important concern for the City to address to increase utilization of Cedar Rapids parks and recreation facilities. The majority of survey respondents (62 %) currently get information on recreation services and programs in the Cedar Rapids area from the *Gazette*. Other sources of information include recreation program catalogs (*PLAY*) (42% of respondents), *Penny Saver* (35 %), local radio stations (34%), flyers (32%), Parks and Recreation Department website (22 %), Public Access Channel (6%), and e-mail newsletters (5 %).

When asked how the City can best communicate with respondents, the *Gazette* was again mentioned the most (by 24% of respondents), followed by e-mail newsletters (20%), and recreation program catalogs (18%). The significant difference in the proportion of residents who currently get their information from e-mail newsletters and the proportion that would like to get their information through e-mail is notable, and poses a potential opportunity for the City to explore in future communications.

Trails & Awareness – Recommendations

Trails

GOAL: Develop a connected recreational trail system.

Strategies:

1. Prioritize recreational trail construction that:
    - Connects signature parks , downtown, and the riverfront
    - Creates loops within the system
    - Connects to regional trails
2. Improve trailheads and signage.
3. Complete the *Comprehensive Trails Plan*.
4. Require trail development as a part of new residential construction in parkland dedication ordinances in accordance with the citywide trail system plan. (See ***Appendix 7**.)*
5. Designate a staff trails resource person to interact and coordinate with other City and County departments, the public, and Parks and Recreation Department staff. This staff person should also investigate grant opportunities and advocate for trails funding.

GOAL: Provide adequate maintenance of the trail system.

Strategies:

1. Develop trail maintenance standards.
2. Identify a dedicated full-time trails maintenance staff with a seasonal trails crew.
3. Coordinate with other City departments such as Public Works and Community Development about upcoming trail construction and new trails that will need to be maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department.
4. Create a maintenance plan for new trails and ensure adequate trail maintenance funds are allocated in the general budget.

Communications & Awareness

GOAL: Increase awareness of parks and recreation facilities and services.

Strategies:

1. Develop a comprehensive, clear signage system to create a recognizable and attractive identity for the parks and recreation system (e.g. park identifier, wayfinding signage, etc.).
2. Expand web-based marketing (i.e. e-newsletters, redesign Department website, and social networking sites).
3. Collaborate with other agencies with like-missions to cross-market the City's parks and recreation services and facilities through webpage links and printed materials (e.g. health agencies, Chamber of Commerce, etc.).
4. Highlight marketing efforts for specialty facilities to increase awareness and usage (including the Noelridge Greenhouse, Old MacDonald's Farm in Bever Park, and Ushers Ferry Historic Village.)

GOAL: Engage public input in parks and recreation services and facility planning efforts.

Strategies:

1. Continue to work with the advisory Parks and Recreation Commission to gain public input and advice.
2. Continue targeted focus groups to get input on Department services.
3. Use e-mail surveys to receive ongoing input.
4. Conduct a statistically-valid survey at least every five years.
5. Provide public input opportunities for major parks and recreation planning and development projects.

5. Improve the Ecological Health of the City

Natural Areas – Key Findings

Inventory

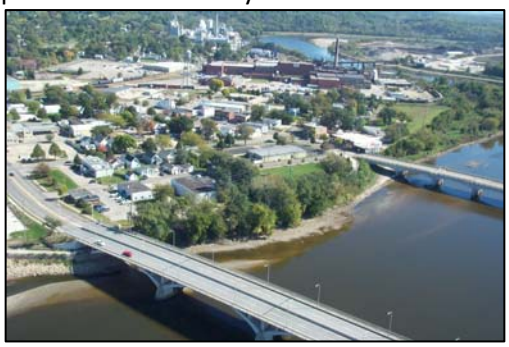
A large part of Cedar Rapids' park system has environmental significance as floodplains and wetlands as shown in Resource Maps C and D in ***Appendix 3***. The significance of these maps is seen when overlapping land types are broken down into percentages – over 43 percent of the floodplain existing in the corporate limit (including both 100 year and 500 year flood levels) are protected as parkland. This is a very large number and demonstrates Cedar Rapids' proactive approach toward land conservation, compared to many other communities.

The riparian corridors present an excellent opportunity for natural areas conservation. When these areas are preserved and naturally vegetated, they maintain biological diversity, improve water quality, provide wildlife travel corridors, and provide recreation opportunities. The foresight of the City leaders in protecting these corridors has allowed the City to boast that it is protecting almost half of the existing riparian areas in city limits. Public input received through the series of master plan open houses in 2009 included support for environmental initiatives such as preservation of natural areas. The community survey results demonstrate this point: 81 percent of respondents indicated that they would like a mix of native and manicured parks.

The existing inventory of riparian areas in Cedar Rapids opens the door to protecting, acquiring or improving more properties to be sanctuaries of biodiversity and native ecosystems. *In this case it would be a logical step to also offer undeveloped woodlands and prairies to the residents as a part of the parks system.*

When examined from the parks perspective, 48 percent of City-owned parkland is located within the FEMA 100 and 500 year floodplain. These lands account for the high amount of park acres per 1000 population in Cedar Rapids at 29 acres per 1000, where a commonly referenced ratio is 10 acres per 1000. Appropriately, of the parkland that is in the floodplain, 80 percent of it is a natural area, greenway, or open land.

In plans for the redevelopment of the flood affected areas of the City, strategies include the addition of more floodplain to the park system, which will increase the area of total floodplain that is under the protection of the City. This addition of land also highlights the ecological importance of maintaining undeveloped riparian corridors within the City.



The Value of Riverfront Landscapes in Cedar Rapids

Currently, almost half of the existing river corridor areas within Cedar Rapids city limits are protected by parkland. These protected Riverfront areas maintain biological diversity, improve water quality, provide wildlife travel corridors, and create recreation opportunities, as well as offer increased flood protection.

Water Quality
The Master Plan elements help improve the Cedar River's water quality, by the treating of stormwater in wetlands, and reducing erosion through river's edge restoration. While the Master Plan can help improve the Cedar River's water quality, long-term water quality improvements also require efforts to reduce pollution in upstream communities and agricultural land.

River's Edge Restoration
Erosion occurs when high velocity water flow eats away at the bottom of the slope, causing it to collapse. Restoration can help stabilize the banks, make them more attractive, reduce erosion, and help reduce future flooding. At urban, Downtown locations, a harder edge condition is most effective. In other areas, a naturalized edge with a mix of grassy plantings and flood-tolerant tree species will help stabilize the River's edge.

Natural Areas – Recommendations

GOAL: Improve ecological management of natural resources.

Strategies:
1. Create a natural areas inventory and management plan for parklands.
2. Convert select areas park turfgrass to native prairie plantings to create wildlife habitat and reduce long-term maintenance costs.
3. Create open space and natural areas acquisition goals based on findings of the recommended natural areas inventory.
4. Conduct staff trainings on maintenance procedures for natural areas.

GOAL: Increase ecological diversity in parklands to promote healthy ecosystems and communities.

Strategies:
1. Create natural areas in developed parks based on findings from the recommended natural areas inventory.
2. Identify opportunities to create or enhance riparian, prairie, and woodland ecosystems on parkland. (See Riverfront section for additional information about wetland areas.)

GOAL: Educate the public about the importance of ecological health.

Strategies:
1. Include interpretive signage in natural areas and native plantings, when appropriate, in developed parks.
2. Create interpretive walks in riparian areas and along the Riverfront.
3. Create demonstration plots to showcase native Iowa plants.
4. Continue to partner with the Indian Creek Nature Center for environmental education programs.
5. Work with other agencies such as the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa State Parks, and Linn County to provide environmental programming in parks.

6. Be Efficient and Cost-Effective to Maintain

Management & Operations – Key Findings

Maintenance

Generally, the public is satisfied with the level of maintenance that the parks receive. However, the Parks Division is facing increasing responsibilities and decreasing budgets. In order to improve the maintenance, operational efficiencies must be put into place. Currently, mowing operations are a large part of the parks maintenance tasks. Reducing the amount and frequency of mowing could increase department efficiencies.

Many of the Department's staff has worked in the parks for ten or more years. This kind of institutional knowledge can be integral to the operations parks maintenance; however, it should be paired with written procedures and tracking so that efficiencies can more easily be integrated into the daily procedures of the park staff.

Financial Management

Due to financial operating constraints, the Parks and Recreation Department, like many other City agencies, has creatively managed its resources to do more with less. Across the board, the City of Cedar Rapids has experienced budget cuts over the last several years. While the Department budget decreased every year from FY 03 to FY 06, the non-tax revenues steadily increased resulting in a department-wide cost recovery high of 36.6 percent in FY 06. This demonstrates diligent efforts from staff to increase revenue to assist in filling the budget gaps. Since FY 06, the Department budget has slightly increased annually. The overall Department cost recovery was 32 percent in FY 08 and 33 percent in FY 09, slight decreases from the high of 36 percent considering the loss of two indoor programming sites from flood damage and the poor economy. The benchmarking comparison of similar communities in the region shows that the Department has the 2nd highest cost recovery for recreation services. (See ***Appendix 2*** for full benchmarking summary.) Ongoing efforts to enhance maintenance efficiencies and increase revenue-generation and alternative funding sources are needed.

Partnerships & Volunteerism

Partnerships are a trend in agencies across the nation as a means to maximize resources to meet community parks and recreation needs and interests. Putting partnership policies in place ensures mutually beneficial and effective partnerships.

Through the community input process for this plan, residents indicated a willingness to contribute their time and talents to improving the parks and recreation system in Cedar Rapids. There is an opportunity to capitalize on this spirit of volunteerism by expanding opportunities for community members to contribute, whether it be through donating their time as a docent at Ushers Ferry Historic Village (as many do now), as part of a park clean-up effort, through an Adopt-a-Trail program, or through a donation for a park improvement in their neighborhood park.

Information Technology

The Information Technology Department provides City departments with technology infrastructure and support. Since the *Recreation Master Plan* (2004), the Parks and Recreation Department has enhanced its website and added online class registration. However, while park pavilion rental information is provided on the website, online registration is not yet available.

Another issue identified by staff is the need to further expand the computer networking of all Department computers to increase work productivity and efficiency. This is a goal carried forward from the 2004 *Recreation Master Plan*.

Management & Operations – Recommendations

Maintenance

GOAL: Provide adequate maintenance of the parks and recreation facilities.

Strategies:

1. Adequately fund park maintenance budgets to keep staffing at levels sufficient to maintain quality parks and recreation facilities as park acreage, amenities, and maintenance responsibilities increase.
2. Develop a lifecycle replacement program for parks and recreation amenities and infrastructure and budget accordingly.

GOAL: Streamline the Parks System.

Strategies:

1. Convert portions of park turf grass to prairie or native plantings. (See ***Appendix 8***, *Guidelines for Converting Turf Areas to Native Planting* for more detail.)
2. Close 12 old spray pools. (These older spray pools are being phased out. New splash pads are being added at appropriate park locations throughout the City.)
3. Consider the feasibility of transferring maintenance of select pocket parks to neighborhoods.
4. Repurpose or transfer maintenance of property adjacent to schools.

GOAL: Increase maintenance and operational efficiencies.

Strategies:

1. Develop tiered Park Maintenance Standards (e.g. Level 1-High-level maintenance such as gardens and public plazas, Level 2 – moderate-level maintenance, and Level 3 – non-developed or natural area).
2. Align staffing and equipment with tiered Park Maintenance Standards.
3. Incorporate sustainable design and energy efficiency into all new parks and recreation development projects.

Financial Management

GOAL: Fairly allocate tax payer resources to support core parks and recreation services.

Strategies:

1. Develop a resource allocation/cost recovery philosophy and policy aligning fees with individual and community benefit received. (See ***Appendix 9*** for Pyramid Methodology.)
2. Continue to identify ways to increase cost recovery through strategic review and refinement of fees and charges and identification of additional alternative funding sources (grants, sponsorships, etc.).

GOAL: Increase alternative funding sources to support the parks and recreation system.

Strategies:

1. Aggressively seek grant funding to support elements of the *Parks & Recreation Master Plan*. (See ***Appendix 10*** for a list of grant resources.)
2. Refine and adopt a comprehensive *Sponsorship Policy*. (Staff members were provided with a *Sample Sponsorship Policy*.)
3. Develop and implement *Sponsorship Solicitation Plan*.
4. Identify opportunities to expand private endowments to fund operations of specialty facilities (such as Old MacDonald's Farm).
5. Develop and implement a private donations/giving program (with catalog of giving opportunities and price levels).
6. Support existing "Friends" groups (i.e. Ushers Ferry Historic Village, Noelridge Greenhouse), and consider creating an umbrella "Friends of Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation" Group to coordinate and expand fundraising efforts.

GOAL: Continue responsible fiscal management of parks and recreation system.

Strategies:

1. Track direct expenses related to park facility rentals and adjust rental fees to recover, at a minimum, these direct costs.
2. Identify and track expenses incurred by the Parks Division for maintaining non-park properties (i.e. mowing right-of-ways, plowing non-park properties).
3. Evaluate current parkland use agreement guidelines and fees and re-classify as leases, rentals, or partnerships.

GOAL: Identify opportunities to increase revenue generation and cost recovery.

Strategies:

1. Adjust fee structure at Tuma Sports Complex to cover operating and maintenance costs.
2. Increase independence of Ushers Ferry Historic Village with reduced subsidy and increased revenues. (See ***Appendix 11,*** *an Institutional Assessment Report under the Museum Assessment Program of the American Association of Museums,* for more detail on a broad array of recommendations for Ushers Ferry services and management.)
3. Expand rental facilities (i.e. garden and picnic pavilions). (See recommendations under Signature Parks.)

4. Offer park concessions at strategic locations (e.g. bike rentals, food concessions, etc.).

Partnerships & Volunteerism

GOAL: Initiate strategic partnerships to efficiently provide parks and recreation services.

Strategies:

1. Develop and adopt Partnership Policies. (*Sample Partnership Policies* were provided to Department staff.)
2. Pursue partnership opportunities to maximize resources. (Focus efforts on indoor center and environmental education partnerships, including the Nature Center.)

GOAL: Promote community stewardship and operational efficiencies through expanded volunteer opportunities.

Strategies:

1. Invest in a volunteer coordinator to develop a Department-wide volunteer program.
2. Track volunteer hours and cost savings to the Department.
3. Expand volunteer opportunities (e.g. park clean-ups, floral garden enhancements, etc.).
4. Expand environmental stewardship volunteer opportunities and partnerships (e.g. Trees Forever, Coe College biology and botany program, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Nature Center, etc.).
5. Promote Adopt-a-Park or Trail opportunities on the City's website and in promotional brochures and outreach efforts.

Information Technology

GOAL: Maximize efficiencies through the use of information technology.

Strategies:

1. Streamline online program registration.
2. Add online park pavilion rentals registration to improve efficiencies and service delivery.
3. Network all staff computers at all work sites (i.e. Greenhouse).
4. Train staff to fully utilize the reporting capabilities of the registration software.

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Implementation & Funding

1. Introduction

Cedar Rapids' new Riverfront Greenway, Signature Parks, indoor recreation facility, and other improvements will greatly contribute to the revitalization of the City, bringing markedly increased economic growth, commercial and residential revitalization, and enhanced property values. It will be a parks and recreation system for future generations, attracting and retaining residents and making Cedar Rapids competitive with other Midwestern cities. The Master Plan, so crucial to the entire region, will be funded with a mix of Federal, State, and local funding sources. As the City revitalizes following the 2008 flood, many park and recreation system elements must be achieved through grants and private support. The unique features of this parks and recreation system provide compelling opportunities to for private giving. This financial support will help propel the parks and recreation system to become a compelling economic, recreational, and social engine for Cedar Rapids and the region. Alternatively, investments in the system help improve the ecological health of Cedar Rapids, by investing in restoring the River's edge to help improve water quality, and to create an attractive Riverfront.

2. Implementation Plan Matrix

The following matrix is intended to guide staff and City leaders in the implementation of plan recommendation. The matrix identifies which department(s) are involved in the implementation of a given recommendation, the financial impact (staff time or estimated costs in 2009 dollars), and the priority for the Master Plan recommendations (1st, 2nd and 3rd). This matrix should be reviewed and updated annually to reflect funding opportunities and constraints and community priorities.

Riverfront Recommendations

RIVERFRONT ***Create a Vibrant, Destination Riverfront***			
Goals & Strategies	**Responsibility**	**Financial Impact**	**Priority Level**
GOAL: Create a series of Riverfront attractions that draw Cedar Rapids residents and visitors to the River.			
Strategies: 1. Develop a City Promenade	Community Development (CD), Parks and Recreation Department (P&R)	$3,746,000	2nd
2. Develop a Riverfront Amphitheater	CD, P&R	$4,285,322	1st
3. Develop May's Island Plaza	CD, P&R	$2,778,000	1st
4. Develop Time Check Greenway	CD, P&R	$20,468,956	1st
5. Enhance Seminole Valley Park	P&R	$7,800,000	2nd
6. Create a New Bohemia Wetland Park	P&R	$10,530,000	2nd

Park System Recommendations

PARK SYSTEM *Provide Signature Neighborhood Parks and a Quality Park System*			
Goals & Strategies	**Responsibility**	**Financial Impact**	**Priority Level**
GOAL: Create Signature Parks.			
Strategies: 1. Develop Site Master Plans for each Signature Park prior to making improvements	P&R	Staff time or Consultant fee ($40,000 for each park)	1st
2. Make improvements to **Noelridge Park**			
• Make Garden and Greenhouse improvements (including new greenhouse entry with restrooms and an outdoor plaza)	P&R	$2,700,000	2nd
• Add a new gazebo and shelter for rentals	P&R	$275,000	1st
• Enhance existing destination playground	P&R	$520,000	2nd
• Create a new park gateway and identity signage	P&R	$55,000	1st
• Consider adding a new indoor recreation facility (29,000 square feet). Determine feasibility	P&R	$12,700,000	2nd
3. Make improvements to **Bever Park**			
• Add interpretive trails within the woodland ecosystem in the park	P&R	$10,000	2nd
• Add a new destination playground	P&R	$750,000	2nd
• Construct a new group shelter with custom architecture	P&R	$225,000	2nd
• Create a new park gateway and identity signage	P&R	$55,000	1st
4. Make improvements to **Ellis Park**			
• Add a cross-river pedestrian bridge connecting the East and West sides of the City at Ellis Park	P&R	TBD	2nd
• Enhance existing destination playground	P&R	$520,000	2nd
• Create a new park gateway and identity signage	P&R	$55,000	1st
• Add garden gazebo at Shakespeare Garden	P&R	$50,000	1st
• Construct new park shelters with custom architecture	P&R	$225,000	2nd

Goals & Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Priority Level
• Construct a Multi-Generational Community Life Center (235,000 sq ft)	P&R	$69,000,000 ($337K - $595K operating)	2nd
5. Make improvements to **Jones Park**			
• Add a lighted cross-country ski trail	P&R	$125,500	3rd
• Add new park shelters with custom architecture.	P&R	$100,000	2nd
• Add a destination playground	P&R	$750,00	2nd
• Create new park gateway and identity signage	P&R	$55,000	1st
• Consider adding a neighborhood recreation center (18,000 square feet) with one gymnasium and multipurpose rooms.	P&R	$5,200,000	2nd
6. Make improvements to **Cherry Hill Park**			
• Add a destination playground that is universally accessible to people of all abilities	P&R	$750,000	3rd
• Add a new group shelter with custom architecture	P&R	$100,000	3rd
• Create new park gateway and identity signage	P&R	$55,000	1st
• Replace existing four practice ballfields with four new tournament quality ballfields	P&R	$1,120,000 ($280,000 per field without lights)	3rd
GOAL: Increase level of service of athletic fields.			
1. Improve the ball fields at Cherry Hill Park by reconfiguring the fields to add outfield fences, covered dugouts, and spectator seating	P&R	See costs above	3rd
2. Improve the ball fields at Ellis Park by reconfiguring the fields around the proposed multi-generational center and adding outfield fences, covered dugouts, and spectator seating	P&R	$300,000	2nd
3. Add ballfield tournament facilities at the Tuma Complex as funding becomes available (See concept plan in ***Appendix 5***)	P&R	$10.5-$13,000,000	2nd

Goals & Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Priority Level
GOAL: Increase park component diversity.			
1. Add loop walks to parks as possible	P&R	Varies	1st
2. Continue to look for opportunities to add a modern splash pad to an existing or new park. Prioritize the replacement of wading pools in the Southwest part of the community with modern splash pads	P&R	$225,000 each	Ongoing
3. Reconstruct the dog park at Cherokee Park	P&R	Currently budgeted	1st
4. Add a new dog park at Squaw Creek Park	P&R	$300,000	2nd
5. Look for opportunities to add one additional dog park in the Western part of Cedar Rapids	P&R	$300,000	3rd
6. Construct a new skate park (See Time Check Greenway in Riverfront section)	P&R	$400,000	1st
7. Identify new inventory components to integrate into the park system over time based on community interests	P&R	Varies	Ongoing
GOAL: Ensure that adequate and appropriate parks and open space is provided to new residential developments as the City grows.			
1. Develop a parkland dedication ordinance for developers of new residential developments to contribute adequate parkland or a fee-in-lieu to the City (See ***Appendix 6:*** *Neighborhood Open Space Requirements*)	Community Development (CD), P&R	Staff time	1st
2. Adopt parkland acquisition criteria to ensure that dedications are appropriate for intended use	CD, P&R	Staff time	1st
3. Include a Parks and Recreation Department representative on the City's Project Review Group to provide expertise related to parks and recreation planning for new residential developments	CD	Staff time	1st
4. Promote the development of state enabling legislation to allow park impact fees to provide funding for improvement of the dedicated parkland to serve new residential communities.	City of Cedar Rapids	Staff time	1st

Recreation Recommendations

RECREATION *Promote Diverse Recreation Opportunities & Quality Indoor Facilities*			
Goals & Strategies	**Responsibility**	**Financial Impact**	**Priority Level**
GOAL: Contribute to community health and wellness through the provision of quality public recreation indoor facilities.			
1. Provide a new centralized indoor Multi-Generational Community Life Center to serve the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area	P&R in collaboration with Linn County & other partners	$69,000,000	1st
2. In accordance with community needs and funding availability, provide indoor community recreation space in the Northern part of Cedar Rapids (possibly Noelridge Signature Park)	P&R	$12,700,000	2nd
3. Provide indoor neighborhood recreation space to bolster indoor opportunities in the Southern part of Cedar Rapids (possibly Jones Signature Park) to include one gymnasium and general program rooms	P&R	$5,200,000	2nd
GOAL: Broaden the scope and number of program offerings in the City.			
1. Through collaboration, partnership, or rental agreement, work with other service providers and/or facility owners, such as schools and churches, to bring programming closer to all residents	P&R in collaboration with other providers/ owners	Staff time	1st
2. As new City-owned indoor recreation facilities are phased in, provide a broad range of programming to residents in the southeast and north sides of the City	P&R	Staff time	2nd
GOAL: Broaden the scope of program offerings in non-sport activities.			
1. Develop more cultural activities and general activities such as cooking	P&R	Staff time	1st
2. Add fitness and wellness program with the addition of a new indoor recreation facility	P&R	Staff time	2nd
3. Develop an environmental program area to include natural history and appreciation of nature, stewardship of natural resources, walking, hiking, etc.	P&R	Staff time	1st

Goals & Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Priority Level
4. Expand inclusion programs for people with disabilities to complement the existing offerings	P&R	Staff time	Ongoing
GOAL: Pursue collaborative efforts and partnerships with schools and other community facilities to meet recreation needs of the community.			
1. Develop a Partnership Agreement with the Cedar Rapids School District for joint-use of facilities	P&R in collaboration with School District	Staff Time	1st
2. Strengthen existing relationships and pursue new relationships to broaden program offerings and co-locate programs within schools or churches in neighborhoods	P&R in collaboration with other providers	Staff time, Costs vary	1st
3. Seek opportunities to offer social programs such as *Say NO to Drugs* and co-locate programs with police or community service centers	P&R in collaboration with other providers	Varies	1st
GOAL: Build community and generate positive economic impact by hosting special events.			
1. Celebrate the Cedar Rapids community and neighborhoods by hosting riverfront and neighborhood outdoor events throughout the year	P&R	Varies	1st

Trails & Awareness Recommendations

TRAILS & AWARENESS *Increase Connectivity & Awareness*			
Goals & Strategies	**Responsibility**	**Financial Impact**	**Priority Level**
GOAL: Develop a connected recreational trail system.			
1. Prioritize recreational trail construction that: • Connects signature parks, downtown, and the riverfront • Creates loops within the system • Connects to regional trails	Public Works Department, P&R	Approx. $500,000 per mile of trail	1st
2. Improve trailheads and signage	Public Works Department, P&R	$60,000 per trailhead	2nd
3. Complete the *Comprehensive Trails Plan*	Public Works Department, P&R	Funded	1st
4. Require trail development as a part of new residential construction in parkland dedication ordinances in accordance with the citywide trail system plan (See ***Appendix 7**.)*	CD, P&R	Staff time	1st
5. Designate a staff trails resource person to interact and coordinate with other City and County departments, the public, and Parks and Recreation Department staff	City of Cedar Rapids	Staff time	1st
GOAL: Provide adequate maintenance of the trail system.			
1. Develop trail maintenance standards	P&R	Staff time	1st
2. Identify a dedicated full-time trails maintenance staff with a seasonal trails crew	P&R	Seasonal staff budget	1st
3. Coordinate with other City departments such as Public Works and Community Development about upcoming trail construction and new trails that will need to be maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department	P&R in collaboration with Public Works and CD	Staff time	1st
4. Create a maintenance plan for new trails and ensure adequate trail maintenance funds are allocated in the general budget.	P&R	Staff time, Maintenance budget	1st

Goals & Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Priority Level
GOAL: Increase awareness of parks and recreation facilities and services.			
1. Develop a comprehensive, clear signage system to create a recognizable and attractive identity for the parks and recreation system (e.g. park identifier, wayfinding signage, etc.)	P&R	Staff time	1st
2. Expand web-based marketing (i.e. e-newsletters, redesign Department website, and social networking sites)	P&R	Staff time	1st
3. Collaborate with other agencies with like-missions to cross-market the City's parks and recreation services and facilities through webpage links and printed materials (e.g. health agencies, Chamber of Commerce, etc.)	P&R	Staff time	2nd
4. Highlight marketing efforts for specialty facilities to increase awareness and usage (including the Noelridge Greenhouse, Old MacDonald's Farm in Bever Park, and Ushers Ferry Historic Village)	P&R	Staff time	1st
GOAL: Engage public input in parks and recreation services and facility planning efforts.			
1. Continue to work with the advisory Parks and Recreation Commission to gain public input and advice	P&R P&R Commission	Staff time	1st
2. Continue targeted focus groups to get input on Department services	P&R	Staff time	1st
3. Use e-mail surveys to receive ongoing input	P&R	Staff time	1st
4. Conduct a statistically-valid survey at least every five years	P&R	Staff time	2nd
5. Provide public input opportunities for major parks and recreation planning and development projects	P&R	Staff time	Ongoing

Natural Areas Recommendations

NATURAL AREAS *Improve the Ecological Health of the City*			
Goals & Strategies	**Responsibility**	**Financial Impact**	**Priority Level**
GOAL: Improve ecological management of natural resources.			
1. Create a natural areas inventory and management plan for parklands	P&R	Staff time, Consultant fee	1st
2. Convert select areas park turfgrass to native prairie plantings to create wildlife habitat and reduce long-term maintenance costs	P&R	$45,000-$194,800 savings over ten years	1st
3. Create open space and natural areas acquisition goals based on findings of the recommended natural areas inventory	P&R	Staff time	2nd
4. Conduct staff trainings on maintenance procedures for natural areas	P&R	Staff time	1st
GOAL: Increase ecological diversity in parklands to promote healthy ecosystems and communities.			
1. Create natural areas in developed parks based on findings from the recommended natural areas inventory	P&R	$250 per acre	1st
2. Identify opportunities to create or enhance riparian, prairie, and woodland ecosystems on parkland	P&R	$435,000 per acre – riparian $108,000 per acre – woodland	1st
GOAL: Educate the public about the importance of ecological health.			
1. Include interpretive signage in natural areas and native plantings, when appropriate, in developed parks	P&R	$15,000 per park/trail	1st
2. Create interpretive walks in riparian areas and along the Riverfront	P&R	$1,000,000 per mile	2nd
3. Create demonstration plots to showcase native Iowa plants	P&R	$5,000 per site	2nd
4. Continue to partner with the Indian Creek Nature Center for environmental education programs	P&R in collaboration with Indian Creek Nature Center	Staff time	Ongoing
5. Work with other agencies such as the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa State Parks, and Linn County to provide environmental programming in parks	P&R in collaboration with other agencies	Staff time	Ongoing

Operations & Management Recommendations

OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT *Be Efficient and Cost-Effective to Maintain*			
Goals & Strategies	**Responsibility**	**Financial Impact**	**Priority Level**
GOAL: Provide adequate maintenance of the parks and recreation facilities.			
1. Adequately fund park maintenance budgets to keep staffing at levels sufficient to maintain quality parks and recreation facilities as park acreage, amenities, and maintenance responsibilities increase	City of Cedar Rapids P&R	Staff time	1st
2. Develop a lifecycle replacement program for parks and recreation amenities and infrastructure and budget accordingly	P&R	Staff time	1st
GOAL: Streamline the Parks System.			
1. Convert portions of park turf grass to prairie or native plantings (See ***Appendix 8***, *Guidelines for Converting Turf Areas to Native Planting* for more detail)	P&R	$45,000-$194,800 savings over ten years	1st
2. Close 12 old spray pools (These older spray pools are being phased out. New splash pads are being added at appropriate park locations throughout the City.)	P&R	$22,000 savings annually	1st
3. Consider the feasibility of transferring maintenance of select pocket parks to neighborhoods.	P&R in collaboration with neighborhood groups	Staff time	1st
4. Repurpose or transfer maintenance of property adjacent to schools.	P&R in collaboration with school districts	Staff time	2nd
GOAL: Increase maintenance and operational efficiencies.			
1. Develop tiered Park Maintenance Standards	P&R	Staff time	1st
2. Align staffing and equipment with tiered Park Maintenance Standards	P&R	Staff time	1st
3. Incorporate sustainable design and energy efficiency into all new parks and recreation development projects	P&R	Staff time	Ongoing

Goals & Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Timing
GOAL: Fairly allocate tax payer resources to support core parks and recreation services.			
1. Develop a resource allocation/cost recovery philosophy and policy aligning fees with individual and community benefit received (See ***Appendix 9*** for Pyramid Methodology)	P&R Budget and Finance City Council Approval	Staff time, Consultant fee $30,000	1st
2. Continue to identify ways to increase cost recovery through strategic review and refinement of fees and charges and identification of additional alternative funding sources	P&R	Staff time	1st
GOAL: Increase alternative funding sources to support the parks and recreation system.			
1. Aggressively seek grant funding to support elements of the *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* (See ***Appendix 10*** for a list of grant resources)	P&R	Staff time	Ongoing
2. Refine and adopt a comprehensive *Sponsorship Policy* (Staff members were provided with a *Sample Sponsorship Policy*)	P&R P&R Commission	Staff time	1st
3. Develop and implement *Sponsorship Solicitation Plan*.	P&R	Staff time	1st
4. Identify opportunities to expand private endowments to fund operations of specialty facilities (such as Old MacDonald's Farm)	P&R	Staff time	2nd
5. Develop and implement a private donations/giving program (with catalog of giving opportunities and price levels)	P&R	Staff time	1st
6. Support existing "Friends" groups (i.e. Ushers Ferry Historic Village, Noelridge Greenhouse), and consider creating an umbrella "Friends of Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation" Group to coordinate and expand fundraising efforts	P&R	Staff time	2nd

Goals & Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Timing
GOAL: Continue responsible fiscal management of parks and recreation system.			
1. Track direct expenses related to park facility rentals and adjust rental fees to recover, at a minimum, these direct costs	P&R	Staff time	1st
2. Identify and track expenses incurred by the Parks Division for maintaining non-park properties (i.e. mowing right-of-ways, plowing non-park properties)	P&R	Staff time	1st
3. Evaluate current parkland use agreement guidelines and fees and re-classify as leases, rentals, or partnerships	P&R	Staff time	1st
GOAL: Identify opportunities to increase revenue generation and cost recovery.			
1. Adjust fee structure at Tuma Sports Complex to cover operating and maintenance costs	P&R	Staff time	1st
2. Increase independence of Ushers Ferry Historic Village with reduced subsidy and increased revenues	P&R	Staff time	1st
3. Expand rental facilities (i.e. garden and picnic pavilions) (See recommendations under Signature Parks)	P&R	Varies	1st
4. Offer park concessions at strategic locations (e.g. bike rentals, food concessions, etc.)	P&R	TBD	2nd
GOAL: Initiate strategic partnerships to efficiently provide parks and recreation services.			
1. Develop and adopt Partnership Policies. (*Sample Partnership Policies* were provided to Department staff)	P&R P&R Commission	Staff time	1st
2. Pursue partnership opportunities to maximize resources. (Focus efforts on indoor center and environmental education partnerships, including the Nature Center.)	P&R	Staff time	Ongoing
GOAL: Promote community stewardship and operational efficiencies through expanded volunteer opportunities.			
1. Invest in a volunteer coordinator to develop a Department-wide volunteer program	P&R	$58,500 (includes benefits)	1st
2. Track volunteer hours and cost savings to the Department	P&R	Staff time	Ongoing

Goals & Strategies	Responsibility	Financial Impact	Timing
3. Expand volunteer opportunities (e.g. park clean-ups, floral garden enhancements, etc.)	P&R	Staff time	1st
4. Expand environmental stewardship volunteer opportunities and partnerships	P&R	Staff time	2nd
5. Promote Adopt-a-Park or Trail opportunities on the City's website and in promotional brochures and outreach efforts	P&R	Staff time	1st
GOAL: Maximize efficiencies through the use of information technology.			
1. Streamline online program registration	P&R	Staff time	1st
2. Add online park pavilion rentals registration to improve efficiencies and service delivery	P&R	$4,000 (software)	1st
3. Network all staff computers at all work sites (i.e. Greenhouse)	P&R, IT support	Staff time	1st
4. Train staff to fully utilize the reporting capabilities of the registration software	P&R	Staff time	1st

3. Capital Improvement Summary

Following is a summary of the capital cost estimates of Master Plan recommendations in the previous section. (*Note: these cost estimates are based on 2009 dollars*.)

Riverfront	Capital Cost Estimate	Priority Level
City Promenade	$3,746,000	2nd
Develop a Riverfront Amphitheater	$4,285,322	1st
May's Island Plaza	$2,778,000	1st
Develop Time Check Greenway	$20,468,956	1st
Enhance Seminole Valley Park	$7,800,000	2nd
Create a New Bohemia Wetland Park	$10,530,000	2nd

Park System	Capital Cost Estimate	Priority Level
Noelridge Park: Garden and Greenhouse improvements (including new greenhouse entry with restrooms and an outdoor plaza)	$2,700,000	2nd
New gazebo and shelter for rentals	$275,000	1st
Enhance existing destination playground	$520,000	2nd
New park gateway and identity signage	$55,000	1st
Potential new indoor recreation facility (29,000 square feet)	$12,700,000	2nd
Bever Park: Interpretive trails within the woodland ecosystem in the park	$10,000	2nd
New destination playground	$750,000	2nd
New group shelter with custom architecture	$225,000	2nd
New park gateway and identity signage	$50,000	1st
Ellis Park: Destination playground (enhance existing)	$540,800	2nd
New park gateway and identity signage	$55,000	1st
New garden gazebo at Shakespeare Garden	$50,000	1st
New park shelters with custom architecture	$225,000	2nd
Interpretative trails and connections to the Greenway	Included in Multi-Generational Center cost	1st
Multi-Generational Community Life Center (235,000 sq ft)	$69,000,000	2nd
Jones Park: Lighted cross-country ski trail	$125,000	3rd
New park shelters with custom architecture	$100,000	2nd
Destination playground	$750,000	2nd
New park gateway and identity signage	$55,000	1st

Park System (continued)	Capital Cost Estimate	Priority Level
Potential neighborhood recreation center (18,000 square feet – with one gymnasium and multipurpose rooms)	$5,200,000	2nd
Cherry Hill Park: Destination playground that is universally accessible to people of all abilities	$750,000	3rd
New group shelter with custom architecture	$100,000	3rd
New park gateway and identity signage	$55,000	1st
Replace existing four practice ballfields with four new tournament quality ballfields	$1,120,000 ($280,000 per field without lights)	3rd
Athletic Fields: Improve the ball fields at Ellis Park by reconfiguring the fields around the proposed multi-generational center and adding outfield fences, covered dugouts, and spectator seating	$300,000	2nd
Improve Tuma Complex by lighting at least two soccer fields and adding spectator seating	$500,000	1st
Add ballfield tournament facilities at the Tuma Complex as funding becomes available (See concept plan in ***Appendix 5***)	$10-$13,000,000	2nd
Diverse Amenities: Add a modern splash pad to an existing or new park	$225,000 each	Ongoing
Add a new dog park at Squaw Creek Park	$300,000	2nd
Add one additional dog park in the Western part of Cedar Rapids	$300,000	3rd
Construct a new skate park. (Cost factored into Time Check Greenway in Riverfront section.)	$400,000	1st

Recreation	Capital Cost Estimate	Priority Level
Centralized indoor Multi-Generational Community Life Center (to serve the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area)	See cost above under Ellis Park	1st
Indoor community recreation space in the Northern part of Cedar Rapids (possibly Noelridge Signature Park)	See cost estimate above under Noelridge Park	2nd
Indoor neighborhood recreation space in the Southern part of Cedar Rapids (possibly Jones Signature Park) to include one gymnasium and general program rooms	See cost estimate above under Jones Park	2nd

Trails & Awareness	Capital Cost Estimate	Priority Level
Recreational trail construction that: • Connects signature parks , downtown, and the riverfront • Creates loops within the system • Connects to regional trails	Approx. $500,000 per mile of trail	1st
Trailhead amenities and signage	$60,000 per trailhead	2nd
Comprehensive, clear park signage system (e.g. park identifier, wayfinding, etc.)	TBD	2nd

Natural Areas	Capital Cost Estimate	Priority Level
Conversion of turf grass to natural areas in developed parks	$250+ per acre	1st
Creation of riparian, prairie, and woodland ecosystems on parkland	$435,000 per acre-riparian $108,000 per acre-woodland	1st
Interpretive signage in natural areas	$15,000 per park/trail	1st
Interpretive walks in riparian areas and along the Riverfront	$1,000,000 per mile	2nd
Demonstration plots to showcase native Iowa plants	$5,000 per site	2nd

4. Operational Efficiencies

Strategic operational changes, such as the conversion of some parkland area to prairie plantings (reduced mowing schedules) or increasing cost recovery for certain programs, will decrease expenses or increase revenues. It is anticipated that these changes will save the City $1,258,500 over the 15-year phased planning period. Savings will increase from phase to phase as adjustments are implemented.

Expanding volunteer effort from the community will also result in savings; however, it is important to note that resource will need to be dedicated toward this effort though the hiring of a volunteer coordinator.

	Average Savings Per year		
Operational Adjustment	**Phase I**	**Phase II**	**Phase III**
	1-5 Years	**6-10 Years**	**11-15 Years**
Close 12 old spray pools	$22,000	$22,000	$22,000
New fee structure covers Tuma Complex costs	$54,000	$90,000	$90,000
Increase independence of Ushers Ferry with reduced subsidy and increased revenues	$15,000	$70,000	$100,000
Reduce mowing schedule in some areas	$34,500	$34,500	$34,500
Transfer maintenance of pocket parks to neighborhoods (Central, Garnett, Iroquois, Lincoln Heights, Glass Road, Long Bluff Road, Sinclair, Whittam)	$19,000	$32,500	$32,500
Repurpose or transfer maintenance of property adjacent to schools (Coolridge, Monroe, Pierce, Reed, Van Buren, Viola Gibson Park)	$35,000	$35,000	$35,000
Convert portions of parkland to prairie (Cheyenne, Lincoln Way, Osborne, Stejskal, Sun Valley, Interstate Ramp Areas, Tait Cummins, Shawnee, Nixon, Seminole Valley, Cherokee extended, Navajo, Bowman Woods)	$94,500	$191,500	$195,000
Total Annual Operational Efficiencies	**$274,000**	**$475,000**	**$509,000**

Note: Some of these proposed operational adjustments are subject to additional review and discussions with community and stakeholder groups.

5. Funding Opportunities

Funding the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will be phased over 15+ years and come from various sources.

Federal Funding sources include:

- FEMA allocations for facilities impacted by the flood.
- Army Corps of Engineers cost sharing for portions of the plan that assist with flood mitigation.
- Federal grant programs that fund emergency shelters and health related facilities will be sought for the Multi-Generational Community Life Center.
- Federal grant programs for trails.

State Funding sources include:

- CAT (Community Attraction and Tourism) and RECAT (River Enhancement CAT) grant funding will be sought for riverfront improvements and the Multi-Generational Community Life Center.
- Naturalization projects are eligible for REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection) funding.

Foundation sources include:

- Funding will be sought from foundations including Tony Hawk, Baseball Tomorrow, and the United States Soccer Foundation. There will also be continuing pursuit of partnerships with local foundations such as Hall Perrine and Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation.

Private Funding sources include:

- Businesses, corporations, and service organizations invested in a vibrant downtown have expressed interest in partnerships that will provide funding for downtown improvements.
- Interest groups will help to solicit funds for specific facilities including dog parks, recreation centers, sports fields and the skate park.
- An Annual Giving/Friends Organization would be created.
- Sponsorships would be sought for new recreational amenities.
- Naming rights would be sought for new recreational amenities.

City and Other Partners sources include:

- Investment will be required from the City of Cedar Rapids and Linn County.
- Adoption of parkland dedication and impact fee will pay for new parks to meet future needs from population growth.

Fees and Charges include:

- The department will increase revenues by identifying ways to increase cost recovery through strategic review and refinement of fees and charges, aligning fees with individual and community benefit received.

Grant sources include:

- Numerous Iowa Grant Resources are detailed in ***Appendix 10*** and will be sought to support specific programs or capital improvements.

Appendices

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Appendix 1 – Community Survey Results

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Cedar Rapids Parks & Recreation Master Plan Survey 2008

F I N A L R E S U L T S
M A Y 2 0 0 8

P R E P A R E D F O R :

GreenPlay LLC

City of Cedar Rapids, IA

P R E P A R E D B Y :

RRC Associates
4940 Pearl East Circle, Suite 103
Boulder, Colorado 80301
303/449-6558

INTRODUCTION/METHODOLOGY

The Master Plan Survey was conducted through a mailback methodology. The survey was originally sent to 5,000 randomly selected households within the city limits of Cedar Rapids, but was followed up by a second mailing of 2,000 surveys targeted at respondents under the age of 45 in order to achieve an overall sample which more closely matches the true age profile of Cedar Rapids.

Completed surveys received following the two rounds of mailing total 829 out of a net estimated 6,852 delivered (approximately 148 surveys out of the 7,000 mailed were returned "undeliverable" due to invalid addresses and/or residents who have moved and no longer reside at a particular address). This represents a good response rate of approximately 12.1%. Based upon the total sample size of 829 responses received, overall results have a margin of error of approximately +/- 3.4 percentage points calculated for questions at 50% response[1].

The primary list source used for the mailing was a third party list purchased from Equifax, one of the three largest credit reporting agencies in the world. Use of the Equifax list also includes renters in the sample who are frequently missed in other list sources such as utility billing lists (survey results show 13% of respondents to be renters). For the second mailing, an Equifax list, identifying age of residents (where available), was used in order to better target respondents under the age of 45.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Survey respondents were overall more commonly female than male (62/38 percent, respectively) with the age profile of respondents being fairly evenly distributed across all age segments. The majority of responding households were made up of households with children at home (40 percent of respondents) and empty-nesters (29 percent of respondents), with an average household size of 2.7 persons. Respondents were most likely to own their own residence (87 percent of respondents vs. 13 percent renters) with average length of residency being approximately 27 years. Respondents were relatively evenly distributed throughout the Cedar Rapids area with 34 percent in the northeast quadrant, 26 percent in the southwest, 19 percent in the northwest, and 18 percent in the southeast.

[1] For the total sample size of 829, margin of error is +/- 3.4 percent calculated for questions at 50% response (if the response for a particular question is "50%"—the standard way to generalize margin of error is to state the larger margin, which occurs for responses at 50%). Note that the margin of error is different for every single question response on the survey depending on the resultant sample sizes, proportion of responses, and number of answer categories for each question. Comparison of differences in the data between various segments, therefore, should take into consideration these factors. As a general comment, it is sometimes more appropriate to focus attention on the general trends and patterns in the data rather than on the individual percentages.

Figure 1
Demographics

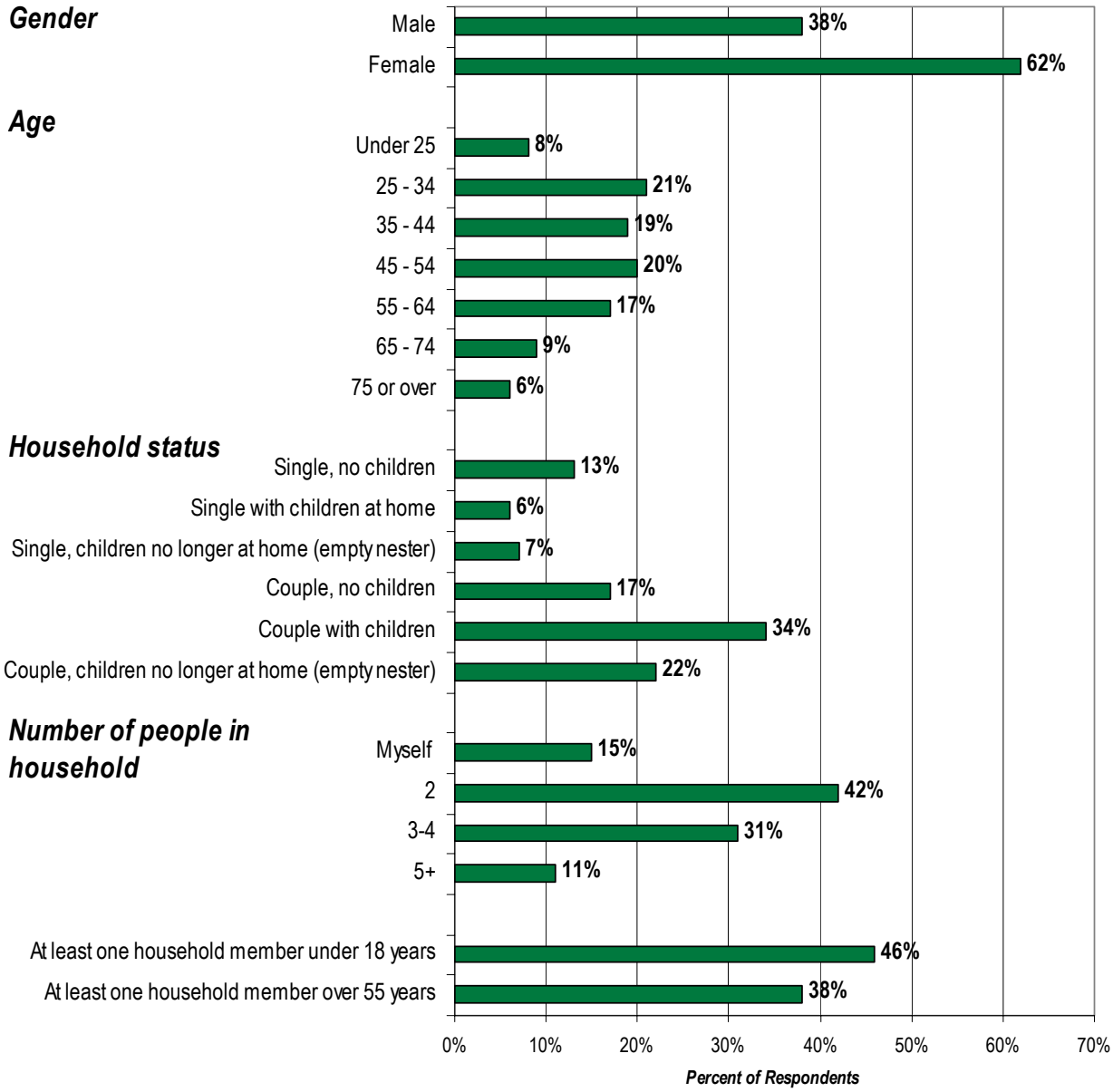
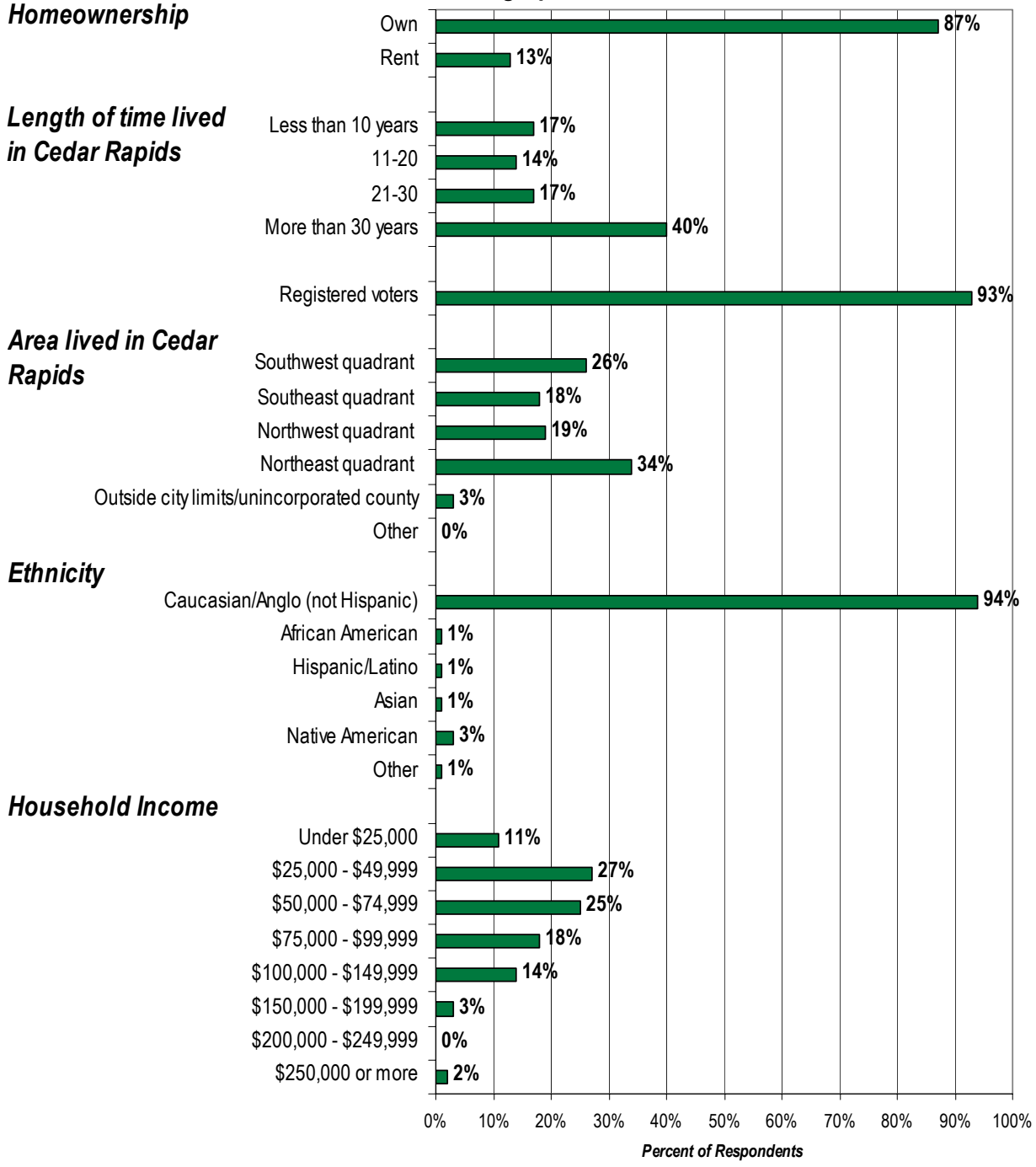


Figure 2
Demographics



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Key findings from the study are summarized below, in addition to a series of figures throughout the report that further detail the results. Additionally, several of the questions on the survey form allowed respondents to "write in" their response or comment. Major themes that emerge from the comments are summarized in the report, while a complete set of the comments is provided as an appendix section.

In addition to overall responses, results are also segmented comparing respondents by location of residence, length of time lived in Cedar Rapids, household status, and age. This segmentation of the results helps to further "explain" local opinions and provides additional insight to parks and recreation issues in the area. Two sets of data tables showing these segmentations are provided as appendix sections.

Current Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities

Usage levels. Of the facilities and amenities currently available in Cedar Rapids, Noelridge Park, Ellis Park, Bever Park, and Trails such as Sac & Fox and Cedar River are among the most frequently utilized amenities (53 to 65 percent have used the facilities at least once in the last 12 months). (See Figure 3) Usage levels varied by residential location of respondents and can be seen in Figure 4. When asked about their frequency of use, respondents indicated the highest number of average visits per year for trails (8.6 times per year), followed by Noelridge Park (7.1 times per year), Aquatic centers and outdoor parks (6.1 times per year), Ellis Park (5.2 times per year), other neighborhood parks (5.1 times per year), Bever Park (4.7 times per year), playgrounds (4.7 times per year), and neighborhood walking trails (4.4 times per year).

Figure 3
Current Usage of Facilities and Areas

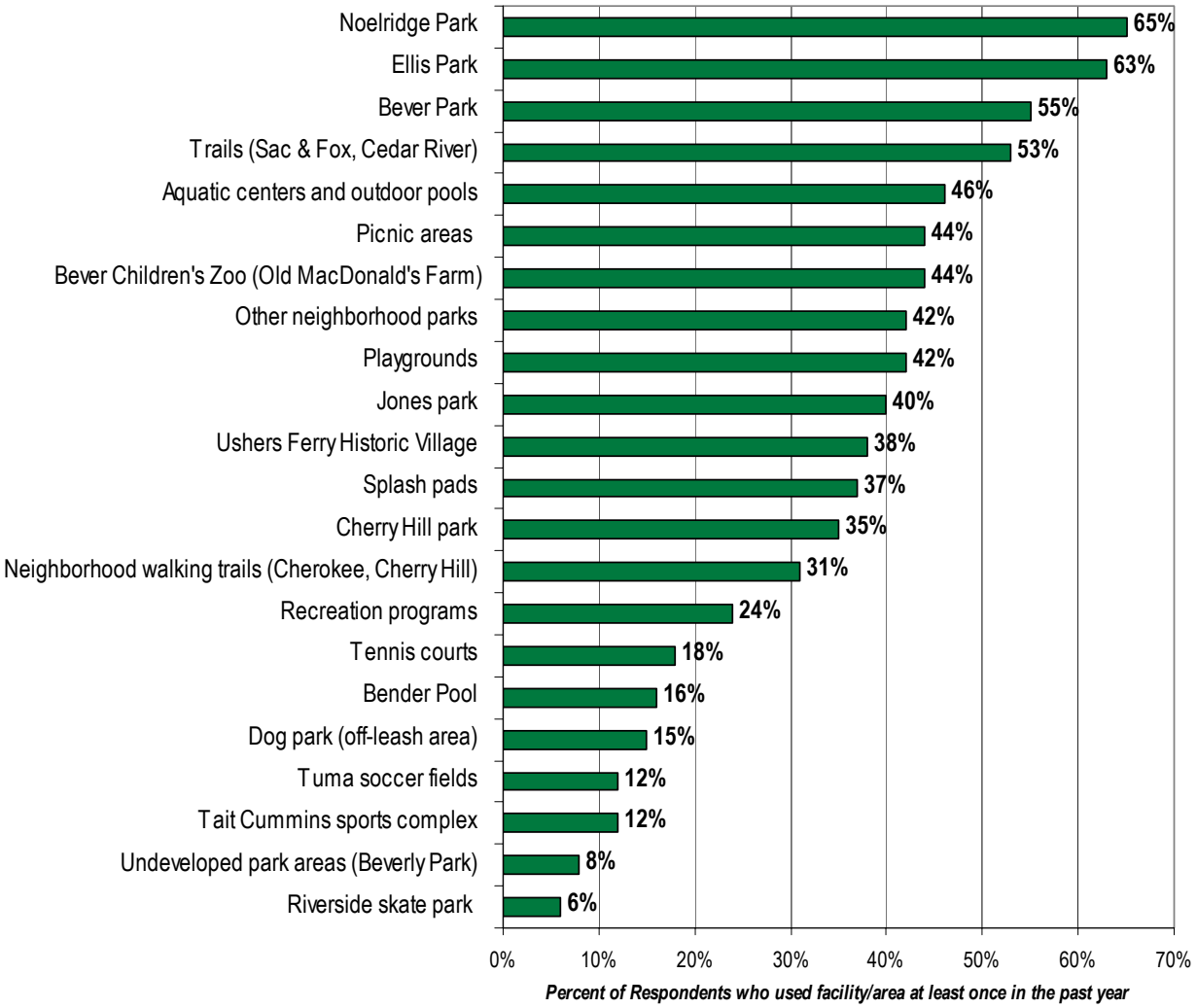
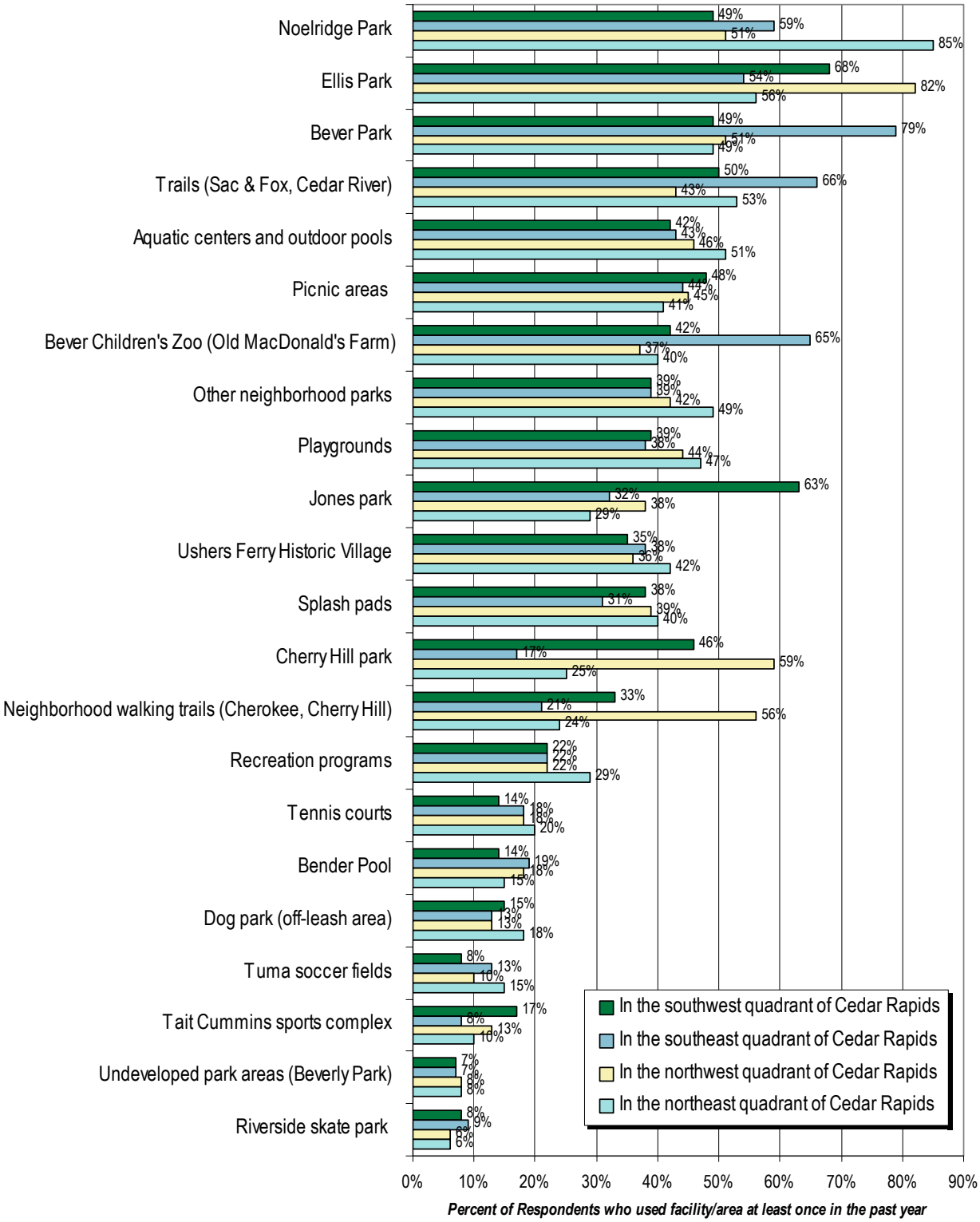
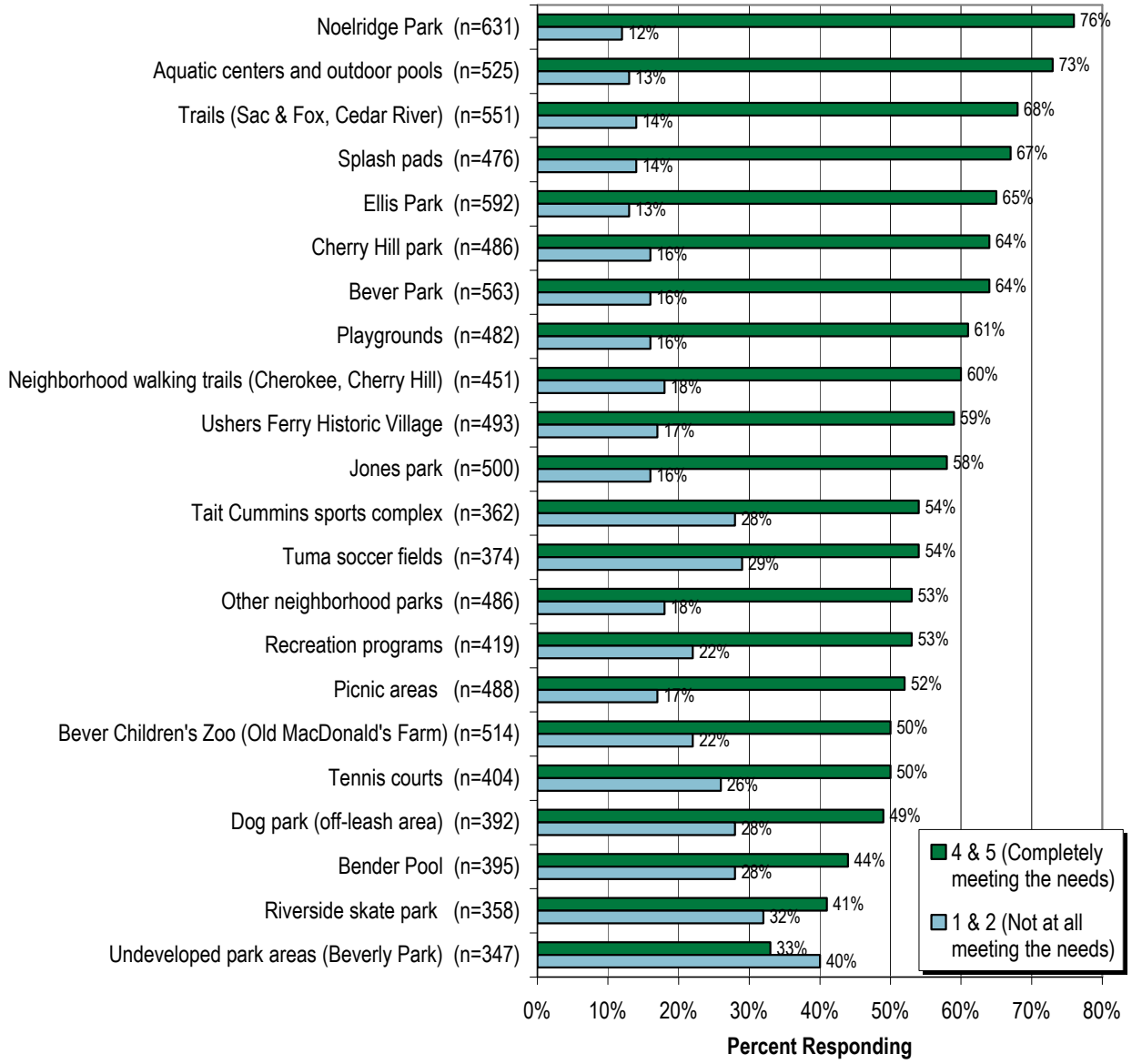


Figure 4
Current Usage of Facilities and Areas, by area of residence



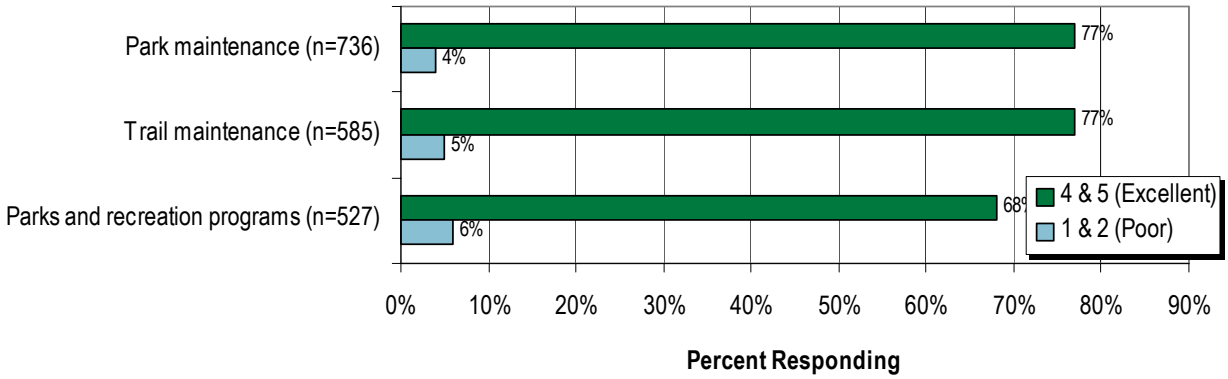
How well are parks, trails, recreation facilities, and/or programs meeting the needs of the community? Similar to the frequency of use of current facilities, respondents felt Noelridge Park and Aquatic centers and outdoor pools were meeting the needs of the community the most (73-76 percent of respondents indicated that they were "completely meeting the needs of the community"). Trails, splash pads, Ellis Park, Cherry Hill Park, and Bever Park also received positive ratings of meeting the needs of the community (64-68 percent of respondents). Conversely, undeveloped park areas, Riverside skate park, Bender Pool, and the dog park were listed as areas respondents felt were not currently meeting the needs of the community. (See Figure 5)

Figure 5
How well are parks, trails, recreation facilities, and/or programs meeting the needs of the community?



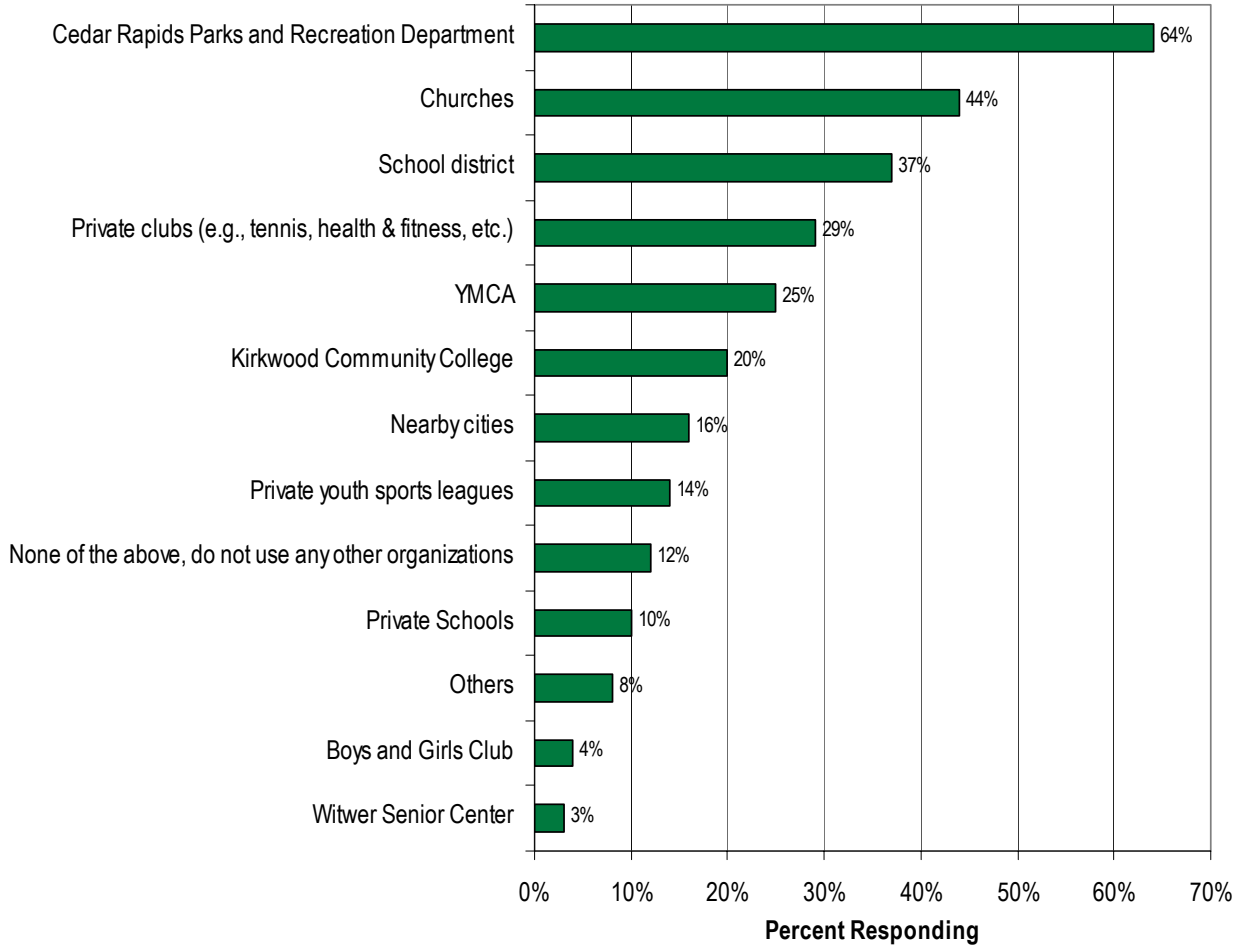
Current satisfaction. Respondents were asked to indicate their current satisfaction with the facilities and programs provided in Cedar Rapids. Overall, maintenance of trails and parks was rated relatively high (77 percent of respondents rated each as "excellent" 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale). While still receiving a positive rating, parks and recreation programs were rated slightly lower (68 percent of respondents rated them as "excellent"). (See Figure 6)

Figure 6
Current Satisfaction of the following in Cedar Rapids



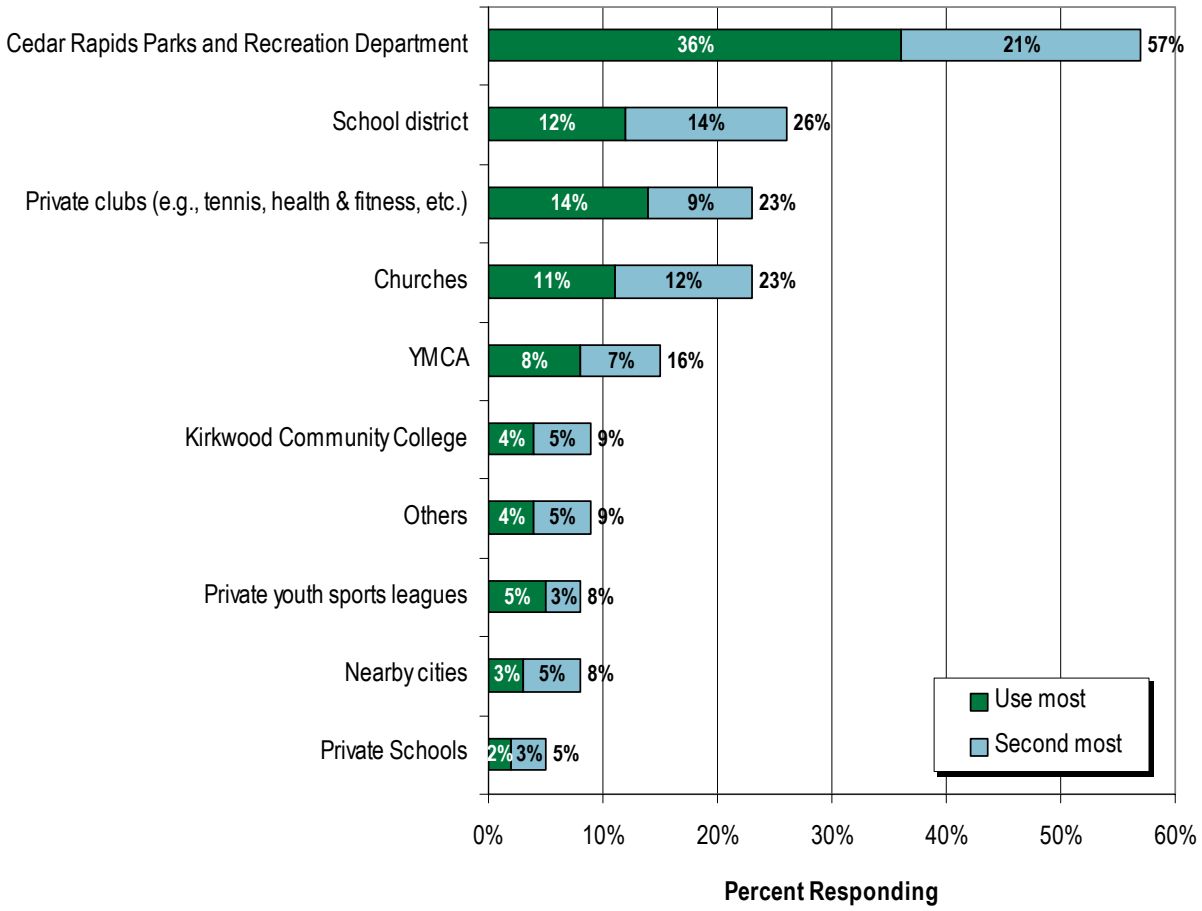
Organizations and areas used most for recreation programs, facilities, and parks. When asked which organizations respondents and their household members use, 64 percent of respondents indicated that they use Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation Department, followed by churches (44 percent), school district (37 percent), private clubs (29 percent), and the YMCA (25 percent). (See Figure 7)

Figure 7
All organizations currently used for recreation programs and facilities



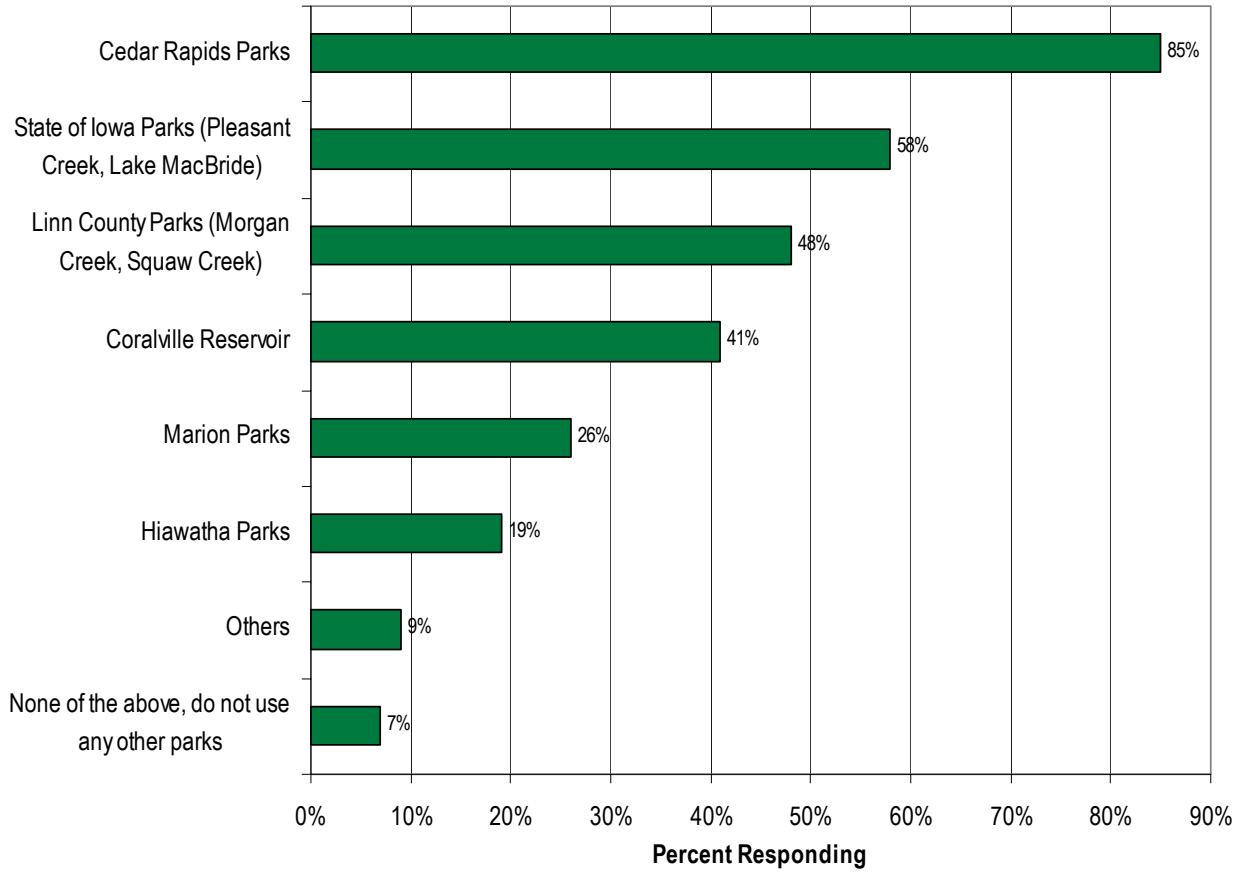
When asked which two organizations respondents and their household members use the most, 57 percent of respondents indicated that they use Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation Department the most. Other organizations named include the school district (26 percent), private clubs (23 percent), and churches (23 percent). (See Figure 8)

Figure 8
Organizations most used for recreation programs and facilities
(Top Two)



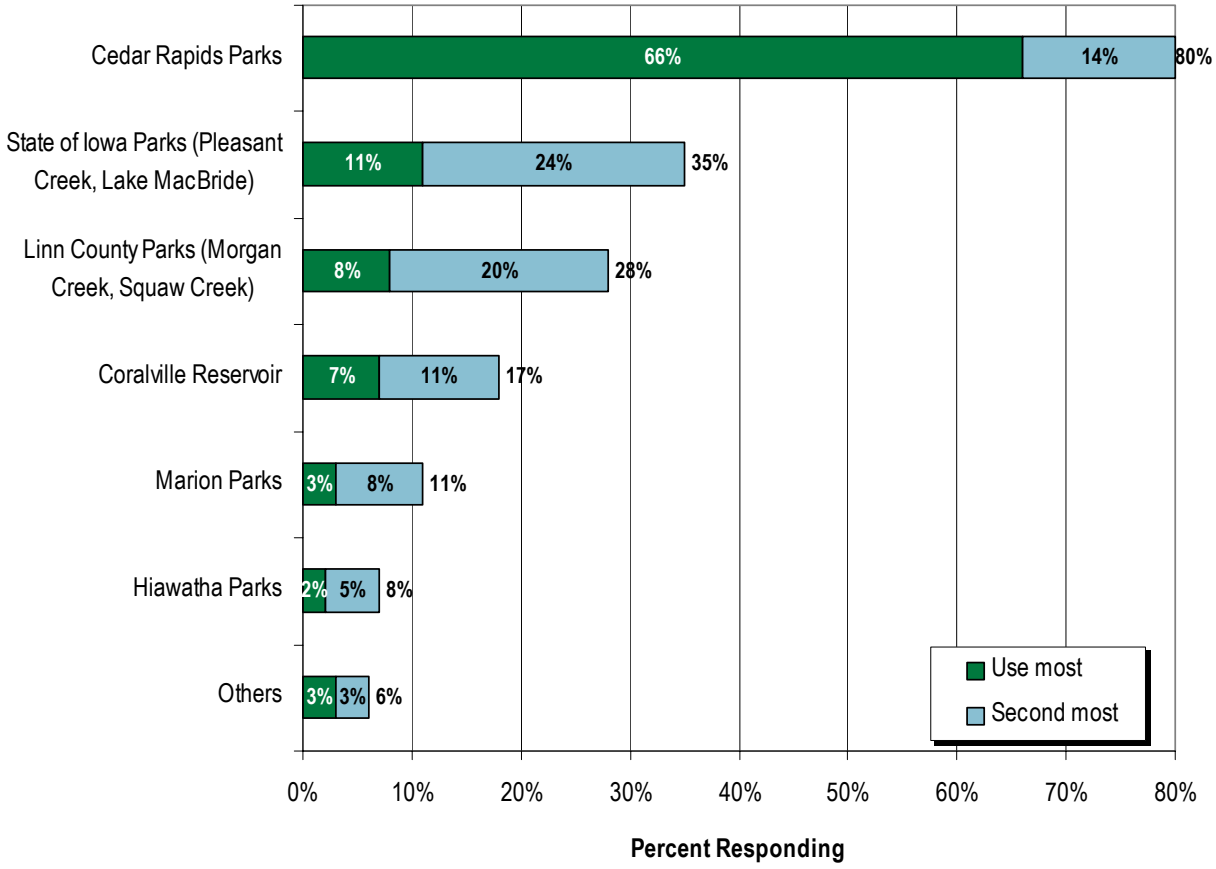
When asked which areas (outdoor parks) they use for recreation, 85 percent of respondents indicated that they use Cedar Rapids Parks, followed by State of Iowa Parks (58 percent), Linn County Parks (48 percent), and Coralville Reservoir (41 percent). (See Figure 9)

Figure 9
All areas currently used for outdoor park recreation



When asked which two areas they use most for recreation, 80 percent of respondents indicated that they use Cedar Rapids Parks the most. Other areas used the most by respondents include State of Iowa Parks (35 percent) and Linn County Parks (28 percent). (See Figure 10)

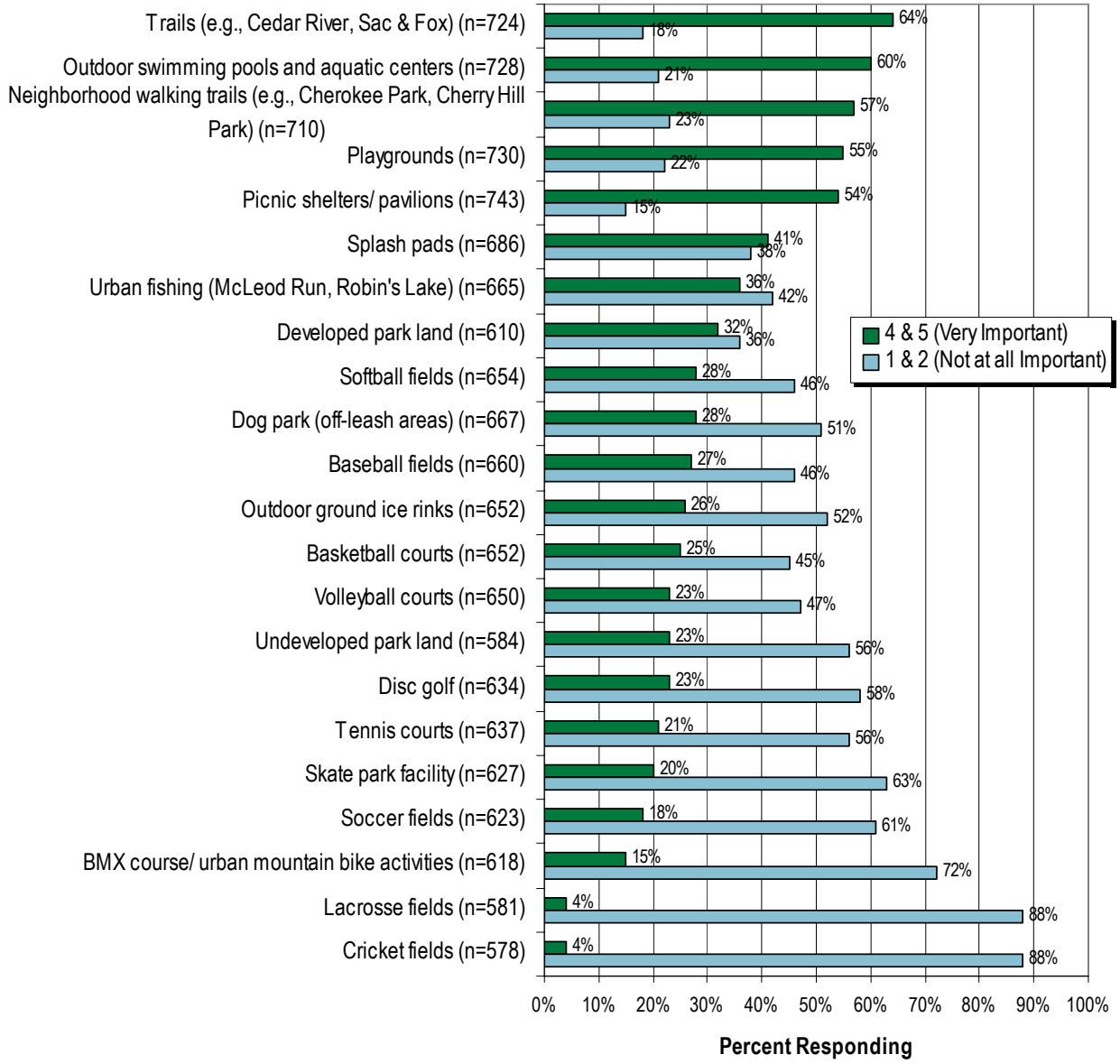
Figure 10
Areas most used for recreation in outdoor parks (Top Two)



Future Recreation Facilities and Amenities

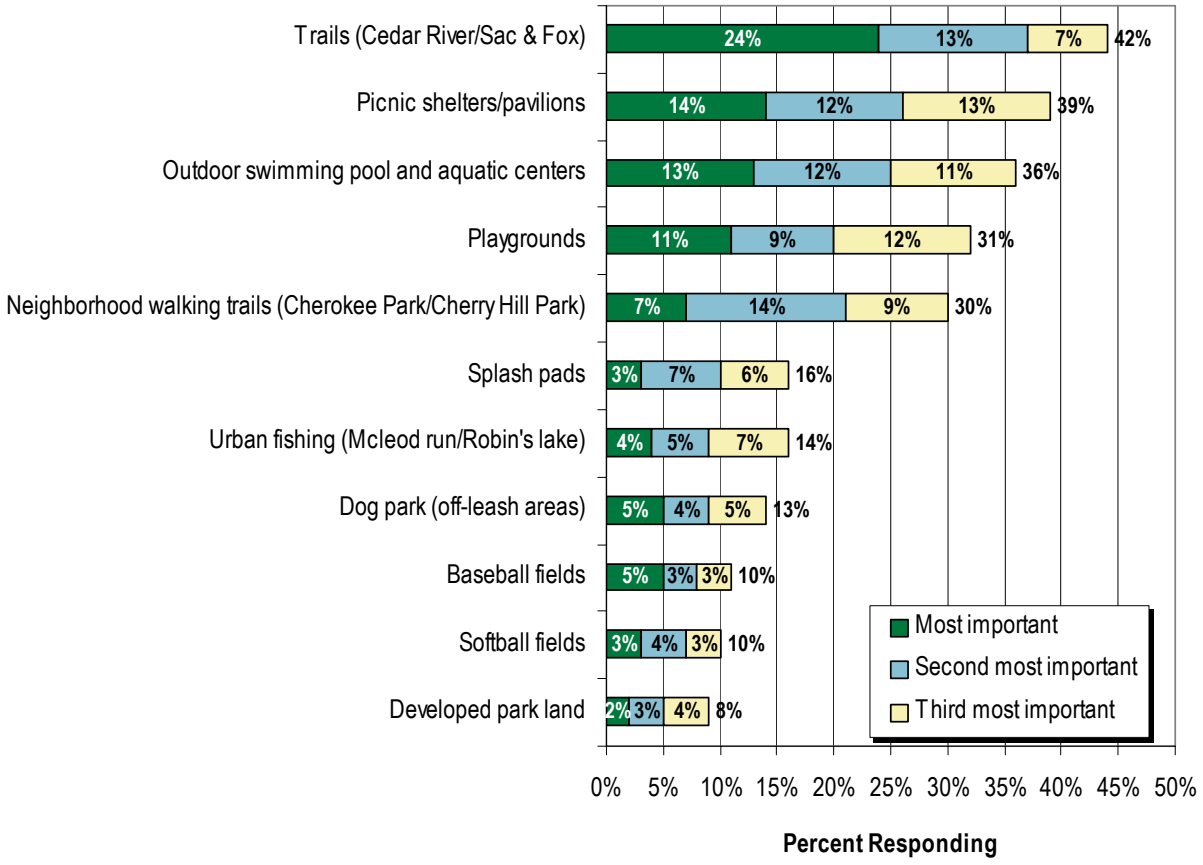
Importance of adding, expanding, or improving outdoor recreation facilities. The survey provided a list of facilities/amenities that could be added, expanded, or improved in the Cedar Rapids area. The results show that respondents felt trails, outdoor swimming pools and aquatic centers, neighborhood walking trails, playgrounds, and picnic shelters/pavilions were the most important to add, expand, or improve. Also mentioned by a number of respondents as open-ended "other" suggestions to add, expand, or improve were golf courses. Amenities such as cricket fields, lacrosse fields, and BMX course/urban mountain bike activities were among the least important. (See Figure 11)

Figure 11
Importance of the following outdoor recreation facilities to be added, expanded, or improved



Respondents were also asked to indicate which of the potential facilities and amenities were the three most important to them and their household. This provides the opportunity to not only see what amenities are important to respondents, but also to get an idea of how the same amenities are viewed in relation to each other. Trails remained as the clear top priority (24 percent of respondents listing it as their number one priority and 42 percent of respondents listing it as one of their top three priorities). In a slight shift in priorities though, picnic shelters (14 percent of respondents listing it as their number one priority and 39 percent of respondents listing it as one of their top three priorities) moved ahead of outdoor swimming pool/aquatic centers as "most important" (13 percent and 36 percent). (See Figure 12)

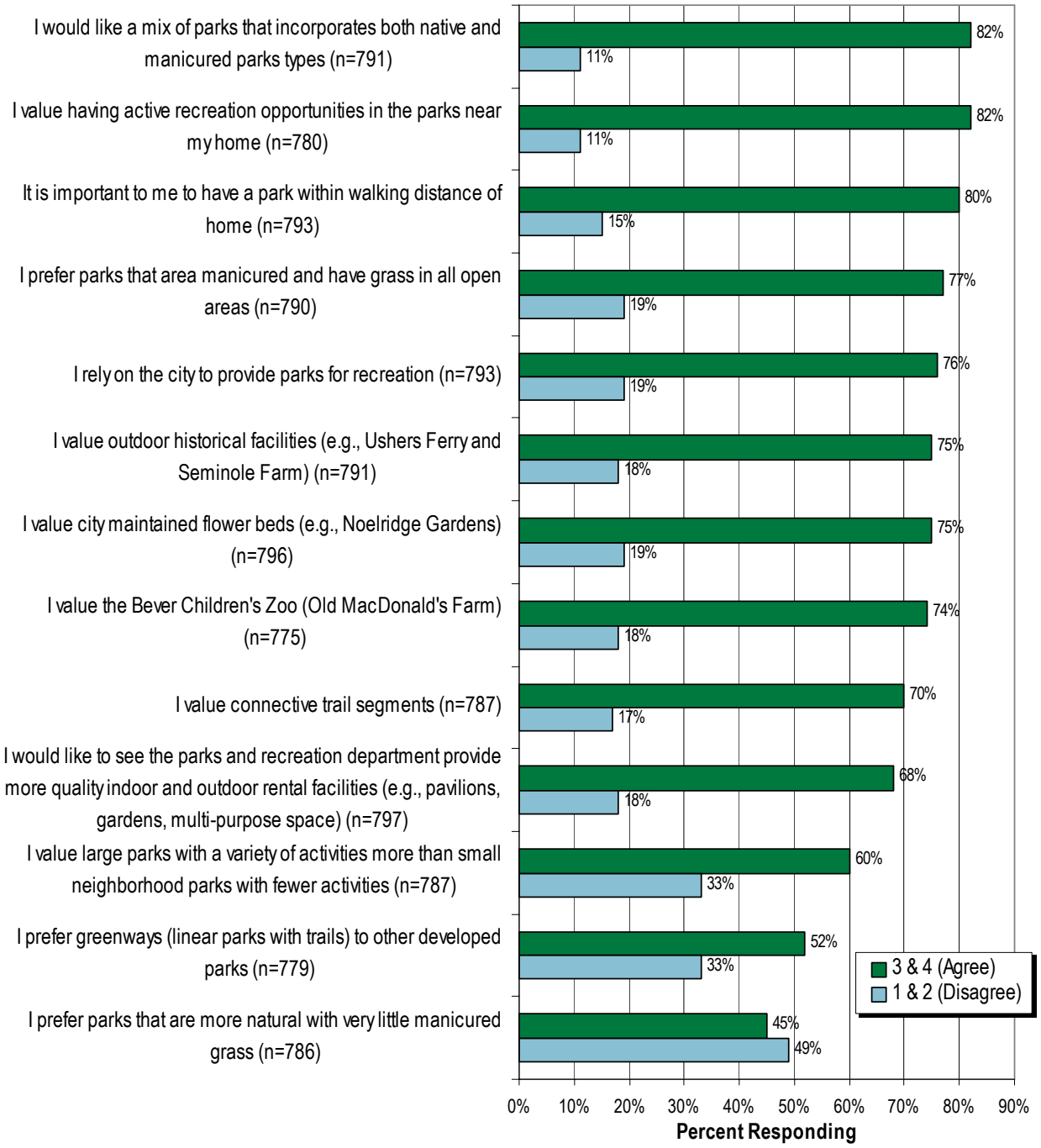
Figure 12
Most important outdoor facilities to be added, expanded, or improved



Maintenance improvements for parks, athletic fields, and trails. When given the opportunity to pick three maintenance priorities they would like to see addressed, the majority of respondents (75 percent) indicated restroom maintenance is important (e.g., scheduled cleaning, longer operating hours). Other priorities include amenities maintenance (e.g., playgrounds, water fountains, picnic tables, shelters, signage, etc.) (67 percent), trash pickup and removal (58 percent), and trail maintenance (e.g., snow removal, surface repair, etc.) (42 percent).

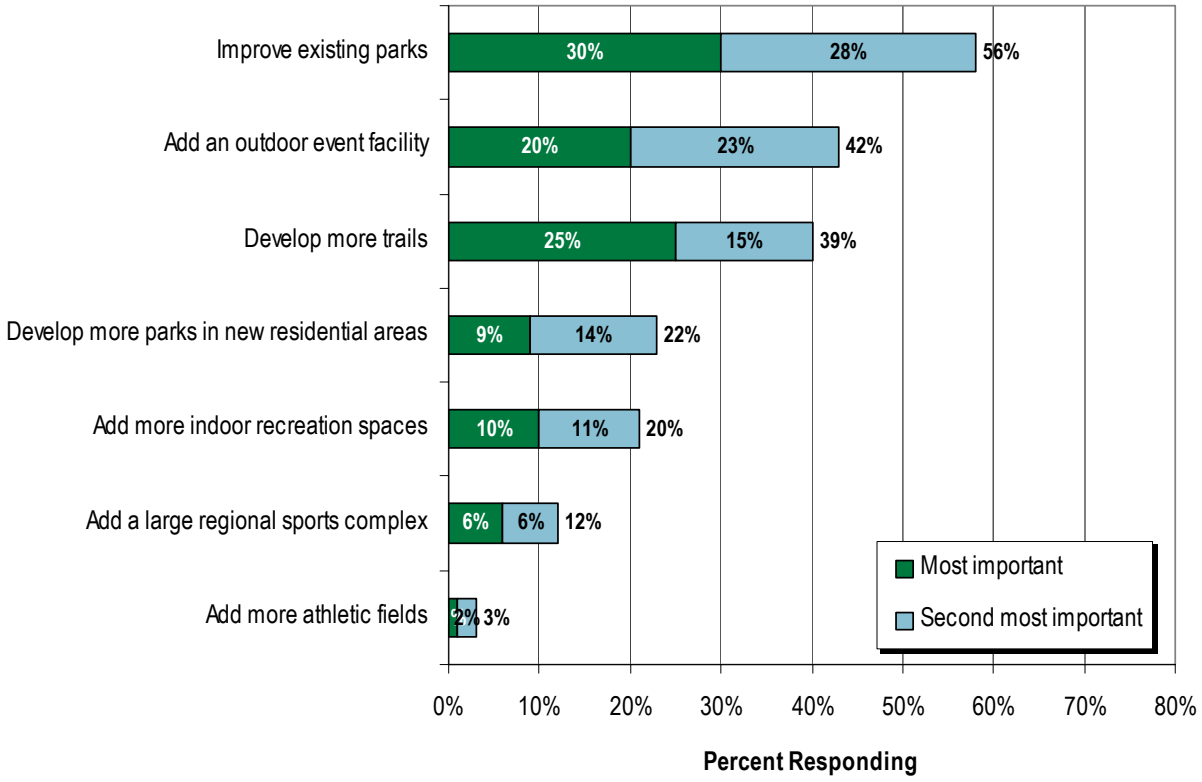
Parks and recreation values and preferences. The survey listed a number of statements regarding respondents' preferences and values for parks and recreation amenities, with which respondents were to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. For a full list of the statements, refer to Figure 13. Overall, respondents indicated a high level of agreement with all statements, with the exception of "I prefer parks that are more natural with very little manicured grass" (45 percent of respondents agreed with this statement, while 49 percent disagreed). Respondents agreed the most with the statement "I would like a mix of parks that incorporates both native and manicured park types" (82 percent agreed, 11 percent disagreed). When asked what respondents thought were the most important functions of park, natural, and preservation areas, protecting rivers, creeks, and wetlands was the most important (69 percent of respondents selected it as one of their top three choices), followed by preserving wildlife habitat (67 percent) and providing access for people to natural areas and (63 percent).

Figure 13
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Facility and Park options that could be developed in the Cedar Rapids area. The survey listed seven general options of facilities or parks from which respondents were asked to choose their top two priorities. Indicated as the top priority was to improve existing parks (30 percent of respondents chose it as their number one priority and 56 percent chose it as one of their top two priorities). Other high priorities were to develop more trails (25 percent chose it as their number one priority and 39 percent indicated it as one of their top two priorities) and add an outdoor event facility (20 percent chose it as their number one priority and 42 percent indicated it as one of their top two priorities). (See Figure 14)

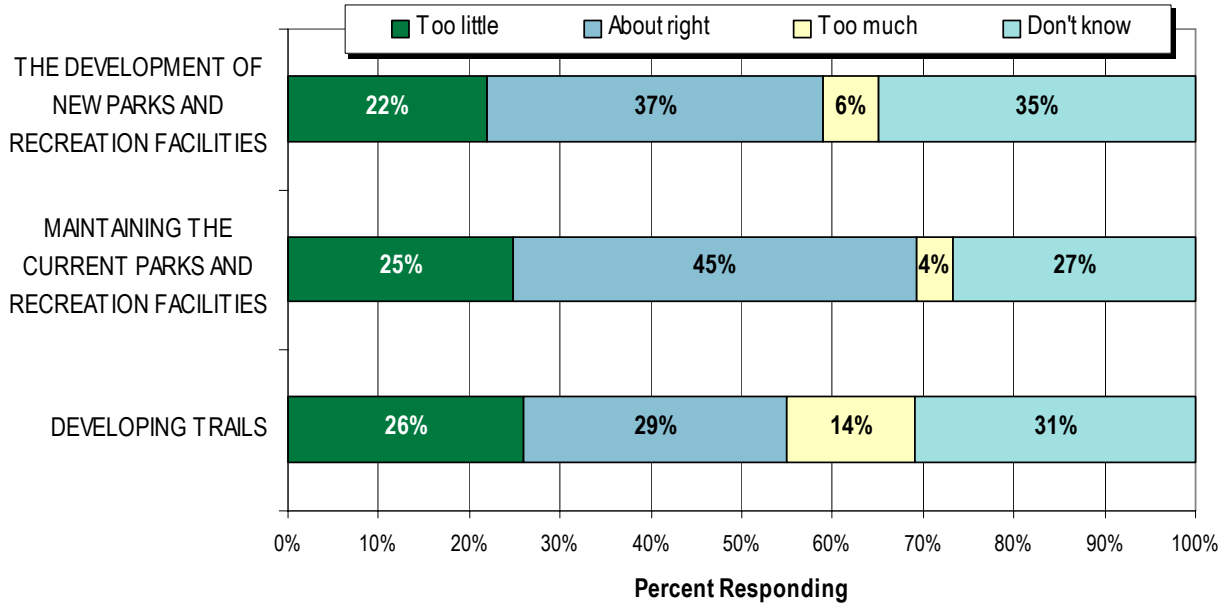
Figure 14
Facility/park options most important to develop in the Cedar Rapids area



Financial Choices

Amount of money currently being spent by the City of Cedar Rapids. Respondents were asked what their opinion is concerning how much money is currently being spent to develop new parks and recreation facilities, maintain current parks and recreation facilities, and develop trails. The majority of respondents either feel the amount of money being spent by the City is "about right" or are unsure about how much is being spent. Approximately one-fourth (between 22 and 26 percent) of the respondents overall feel the City spends "too little" on parks, recreation facilities, and trails, compared to a relatively small proportion (between 4 and 14 percent) of respondents who feel "too much" is being spent. (See Figure 15)

Figure 15
What is your opinion concerning the amount of money currently being spent by the City of Cedar Rapids on:

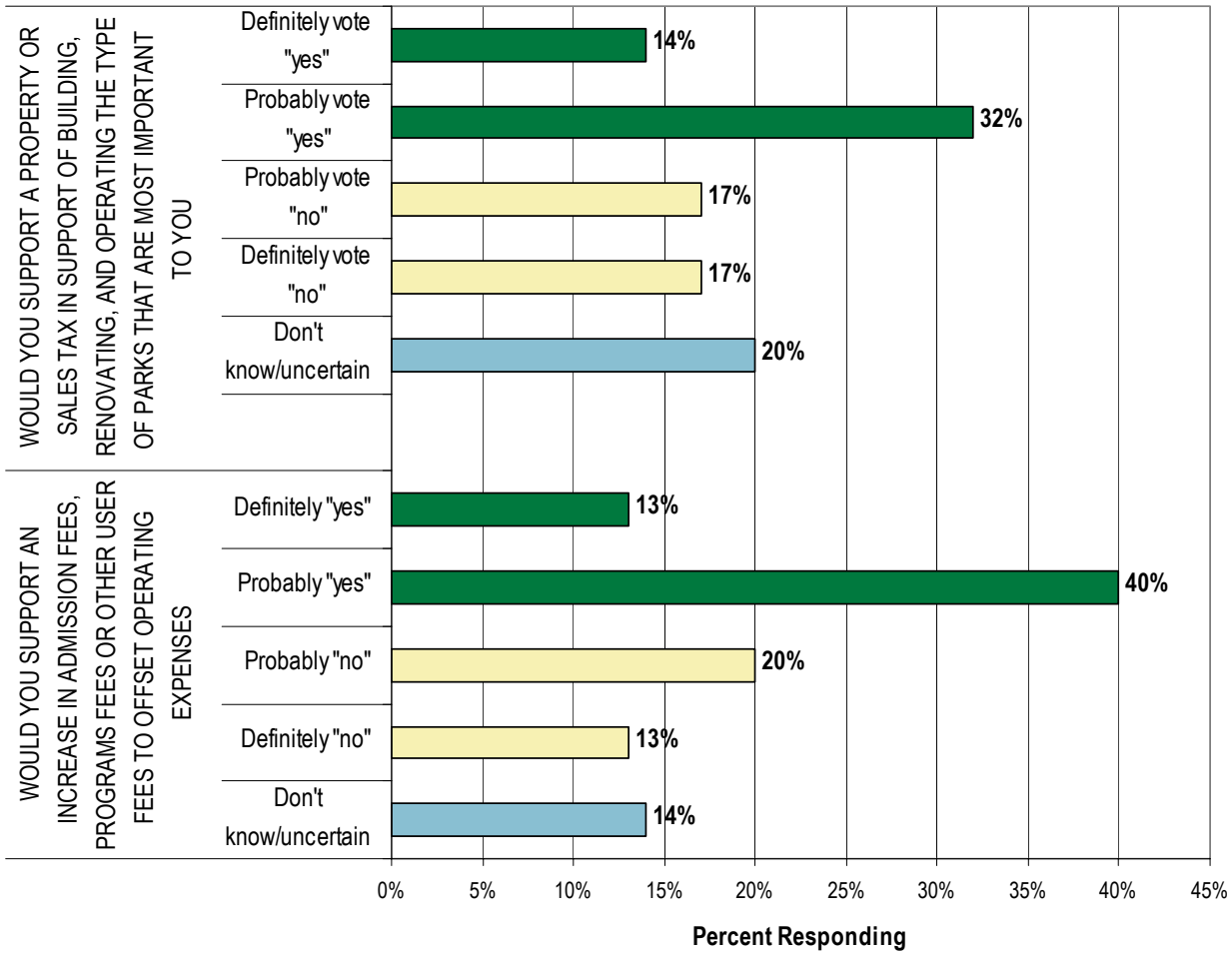


For the type of parks or facilities that are most important to you and your household, would you support a property or sales tax, in order to allow the City to issue bonds in support of building, renovating, and operate these facilities?* Overall, 46 percent of respondents indicated that they would "definitely" or "probably" vote yes, while 20 percent were unsure, and 34 percent would "definitely" or "probably" vote no. (See Figure 16) The results show that support is slightly stronger among residents who live in the southeast and northeast quadrants of Cedar Rapids, and respondents overall who have lived in the area for a shorter amount of time (less than 10 years).

*The survey asked respondents to answer this question in regards to which facility or park option they had chosen as most important to them and their household in a previous question (Figure 14).

For the type of parks or facilities that are most important to you and your household, would you support an increase in admission fees, program fees, or other user fees to offset operating expenses? Overall, 53 percent of respondents indicated that they would "definitely" or "probably" support an increase, while 14 percent were unsure, and 33 percent would "definitely" or "probably" not support an increase. (See Figure 16) Similar to the support described in the previous paragraph for a property or sales tax, residents who live in the southeast and northeast quadrants of Cedar Rapids indicated slightly higher support for an increase in fees.

Figure 16
Financial Choices



Transportation, Communication, and Other Issues

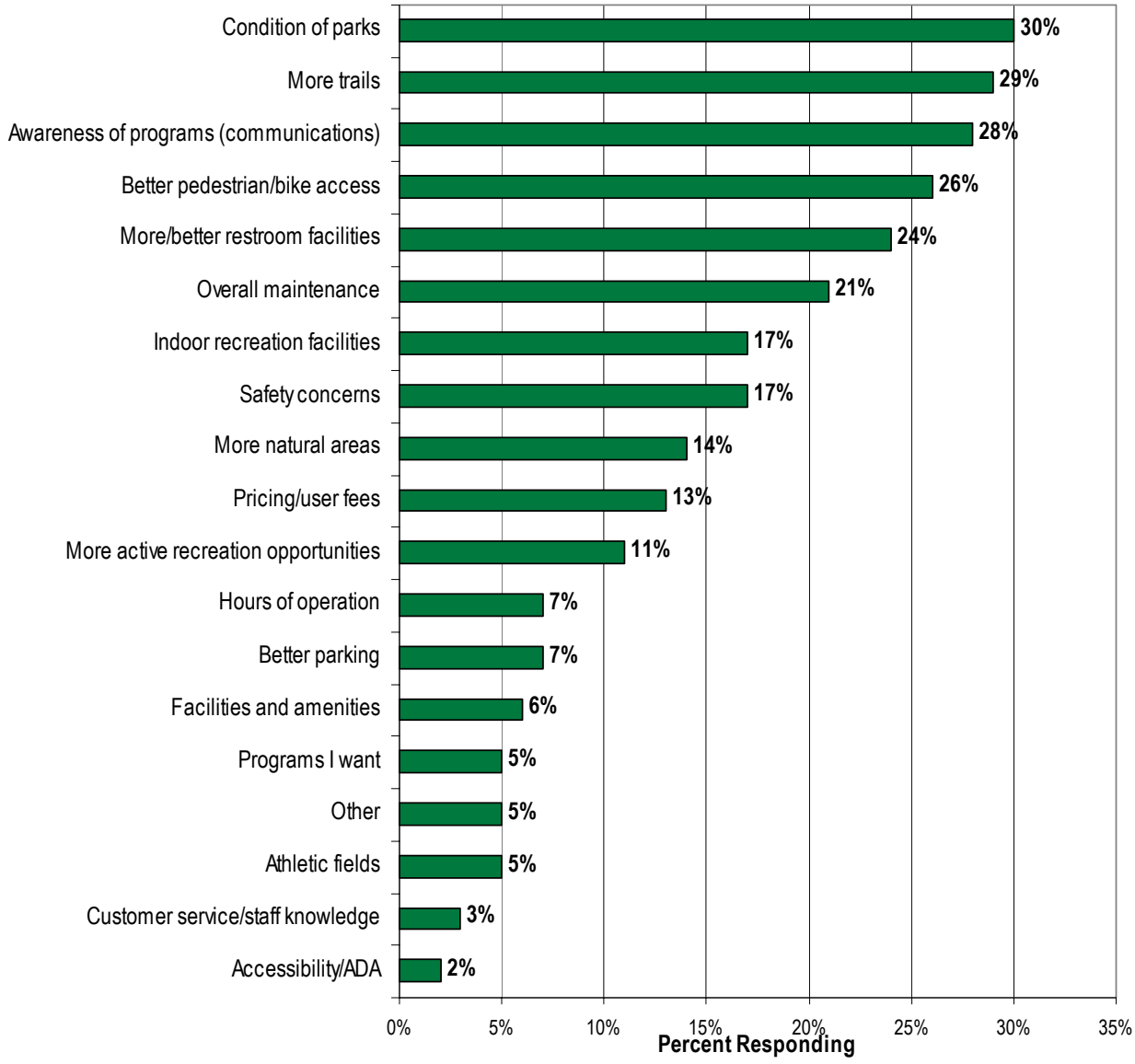
Transportation. Respondents rated their ability to walk and bike around Cedar Rapids relatively low overall (average ratings of 2.9 and 2.6 on a 1 to 5 scale, respectively) and indicated that a "safe and enjoyable route" most influences their decision to walk or bike to parks and recreation facilities (indicated by 52 percent of respondents).

Communication. The majority of respondents (62 percent) currently get information on recreation services and programs in the Cedar Rapids area from the Gazette. Other sources of information include recreation program catalogs (PLAY) (42 percent of respondents), Penny Saver (35 percent), local radio stations (34 percent), flyers (32 percent), Parks and Recreation Department website (22 percent), Public Access Channel (6 percent), and e-mail newsletters (5 percent).

When asked how the City can best communicate with them, the Gazette was again mentioned the most (by 24 percent of respondents), followed by e-mail newsletters (20 percent), and recreation program catalogs (18 percent). The significant difference in the proportion of residents who currently get their information from e-mail newsletters and the proportion that would like to get their information through e-mail is notable, and poses a potential opportunity for the City to explore in future communications.

What are the three most important concerns for the City of Cedar Rapids to address that would increase your utilization of Cedar Rapids parks and recreation facilities? The top priorities indicated by respondents include condition of parks (indicated by 30 percent of respondents), more trails (29 percent), awareness of programs/communications (28 percent), better pedestrian/bike access (26 percent), more/better restroom facilities (24 percent), and overall maintenance (21 percent). (See Figure 17 for the full list of priorities)

Figure 17
Three most important concerns for the City to address that would increase your utilization of Cedar Rapids parks and recreation facilities



In summary, residents tend to be more supportive of an increase in user fees to help offset operating expenses than they are of a tax increase to build or renovate facilities. This general attitude is also born out in the desire of residents to focus attention on improving existing parks more so than embarking on building new projects and facilities. Among new facilities, trails are clearly a top priority.

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Appendix 2 - Benchmarking

Limits of Comparative Data and Analysis

Benchmarking is an important tool that allows the comparison of certain attributes of the City's management of public spaces (parks, recreation, aquatics, and related services) with other similar communities. For this Plan, benchmarking data was collected from comparable agencies including: Rockford Park District, IL; Sioux City, IA; Sioux Falls, SD; St. Cloud, MN; La Crosse, WI; Lincoln, NE; and Grand Rapids, MI.

It is very difficult to find exact comparable communities because each has its own unique identity, its own way of conducting business, and differences in what populations they serve. It is important to keep in mind that while many park and recreation departments primarily serve their residents, others serve a large portion of non-residents.

Additionally, organizations do not typically break down the expenditures of parks, trails, facilities, and maintenance the same way. Agencies also vary in terms of how they organize their budget information, and it is sometimes difficult to assess whether or not the past year's expenses are typical for the community. Thus, the benchmarking information presented here should be used as a catalyst for the Cedar Rapids, IA to continue to research best practices for more specific areas when they are needed.

Benchmarking Data Sought

The communities were chosen primarily due to the perceived similarities to the City of Cedar Rapids. Requested benchmarking data includes:

- Population.
- Median household income.
- Current budget, prior year actual expenses, and prior year revenues for the entire department.
- Current budget, prior year actual expenses, and prior year revenues for the parks and recreation divisions.
- Number and square footage of recreation centers.
- Total acres of open space and developed land.
- Number of indoor and outdoor pools.
- Number and type of athletic fields.
- Total maintenance, recreation, and parks full time employees (FTEs).

Additionally, benchmarking data looks to weigh pertinent data along with comparing against a "per thousand" population calculation in some cases. For this analysis, data was analyzed on a "per one thousand residents" for categories including: total square footage of recreation centers, total recreation FTEs, total parks FTEs, total maintenance FTEs, total acreage, miles of trails, and total department budget. Population and median household income estimates were provided by ESRI Business Information Solutions unless otherwise noted.

Analysis of Benchmarking

General

The population of Cedar Rapids falls in the middle of the population range of the respondent communities. The median household income for Cedar Rapids is the highest of the respondent communities ($55,965); the lowest median household income of the respondent communities is La Crosse, WI ($39,059).

City	Population	Median Household Income
Cedar Rapids, IA	126,396*	$55,965
Rockford, IL	208,000*	$46,385
Sioux City, IA	84,054	$48,469
Sioux Falls, SD	144,946	$55,301
St. Cloud, MN	65,779	$48,605
La Crosse, WI	51,289	$39,059
Lincoln, NE	243,824	$51,160
Grand Rapids, MI	202,236	$46,138

** Source: 2007 US Census*

Financial

City	2007 Total Parks and Recreation Budget	Budget per 1,000 Persons	2007 Recreation Expenses	2007 Recreation Revenues	2007 Recreation Cost Recovery
Cedar Rapids, IA	$6,865,518	$54,318	$3,499,946	$1,953,461	55%
Rockford, IL	$29,404,390	$141,367	$3,715,490	$825,373	22%
Sioux City, IA	$3,286,075	$39,095	$1,166,156	$437,045	37%
Sioux Falls, SD	$12,037,645	$83,049	$1,988,523	$592,602*	29%
St. Cloud, MN	$3,320,053	$50,473	$1,313,078	$428,994	32%
La Crosse, WI	$2,800,000	$54,593	$1,500,000	$385,000	25%
Lincoln, NE	$11,282,920	$46,275	$4,296,418	$1,599,985	37%
Grand Rapids, MI	$6,886,184	$34,050	$2,706,029**	$1,668,933	61%

The Rockford Park District has the highest budget per 1,000 residents served ($141,367), and Grand Rapids has the lowest ($34,050). Cedar Rapids falls in the middle with the fourth highest budget per 1,000 residents. Grand Rapids has the highest recreation cost recovery of the respondent communities (61%), followed by Cedar Rapids (55%). The Rockford Park District has the lowest recreation cost recovery (22%).

Parks

City	Total Acres	Acres per 1,000 Persons	Open Space Acres	Developed Park Acres	Developed Park Acres per 1,000 Persons
Cedar Rapids, IA	3,360	26.58	2,385	975	7.71
Rockford, IL	4,162	20.00	1,897	2,265	10.89
Sioux City, IA	1,300	15.46	300	1,000	11.90
Sioux Falls, SD	3,930	27.11	1,688	2,242	15.47
St. Cloud, MN	1,482	22.52	967.27	515.08	7.83
La Crosse, WI	1,700	33.14	900	800	15.60
Lincoln, NE	5,168	21.19	2,790	2,069	8.49
Grand Rapids, MI	1,500	7.41	106	1,394	6.89

La Crosse has the highest acres per 1,000 (33.14,) and Grand Rapids has the lowest (7.41). Cedar Rapids has the third highest total acres per 1,000 at 23.36 acres per 1,000 and the second lowest developed acres per 1,000 (7.71).

Parks

City	Total Park Maintenance FTEs	Acres per Maintenance FTE	Total Miles of Agency Maintained Trails	Miles of Trails per 1,000 persons
Cedar Rapids, IA	55.43	60.61	26	0.21
Rockford, IL	59.52	69.93	40.79	0.19
Sioux City, IA	24.75	52.52	19	0.22
Sioux Falls, SD	116.96	33.60	50	0.34
St. Cloud, MN	36.77	40.30	20	0.30
La Crosse, WI	17.09	99.47	15	0.29
Lincoln, NE	97.36	53.08	128	0.52
Grand Rapids, MI	39.23	38.23	7	0.03

Cedar Rapids has the third lowest miles of trails per 1,000. Grand Rapids has only seven miles of trails in total, and 0.03 miles per 1,000 residents. Cedar Rapids has the third highest acres per maintenance FTE.

Recreation

City	Number of Recreation Centers	Total Square Footage of Centers	Square Footage per 1,000 Persons	Total Recreation FTEs	Total Recreation FTEs per 1,000 Persons
Cedar Rapids, IA	2	30,930	245	81.21	0.64
Rockford, IL	3	104,233	501	72.3	0.34
Sioux City, IA	1	36,000	428	10.95	0.13
Sioux Falls, SD	5	95,136	656	65.29	0.45
St. Cloud, MN	2	42,052	639	28.92	0.43
La Crosse, WI	1	3,500	68	6.87	0.13
Lincoln, NE	8	137,046	562.06	138.6	0.56
Grand Rapids, MI	N/A	N/A	N/A	38.69	0.19

Cedar Rapids has the second lowest square footage of recreation centers per 1,000 residents served (245 sq. ft.). La Crosse has the lowest square footage (68 sq. ft.), and Lincoln has the highest (562.06 sq. ft.). Grand Rapids does not have any recreation centers open and operating currently due to budget cuts. The City is primarily using school spaces for programming. Cedar Rapids has the highest recreation FTEs per 1,000 residents served (0.64). Sioux City has the lowest number of recreation FTEs per 1,000 (0.13).

Appendix 3 – Maps and GRASP® Level of Service Perspectives

Map A:	**Regional Context**
Map B:	**System**
Map C:	**FEMA Floodplains**
Map D:	**NWI Wetland Inventories**
Map E:	**Mowing Areas**
Perspective A:	**Neighborhood Access to All Components – Post Flood**
Perspective B:	**Walkable Access to All Components – Post Flood**
Perspective C:	**Walkable Access to Components in Parks Larger than One-Acre – Post Flood**
Perspective D:	**Neighborhood Access to Trails – Post Flood**
Perspective E:	**Access to Outdoor Aquatics**

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RESOURCE MAP A: REGIONAL CONTEXT

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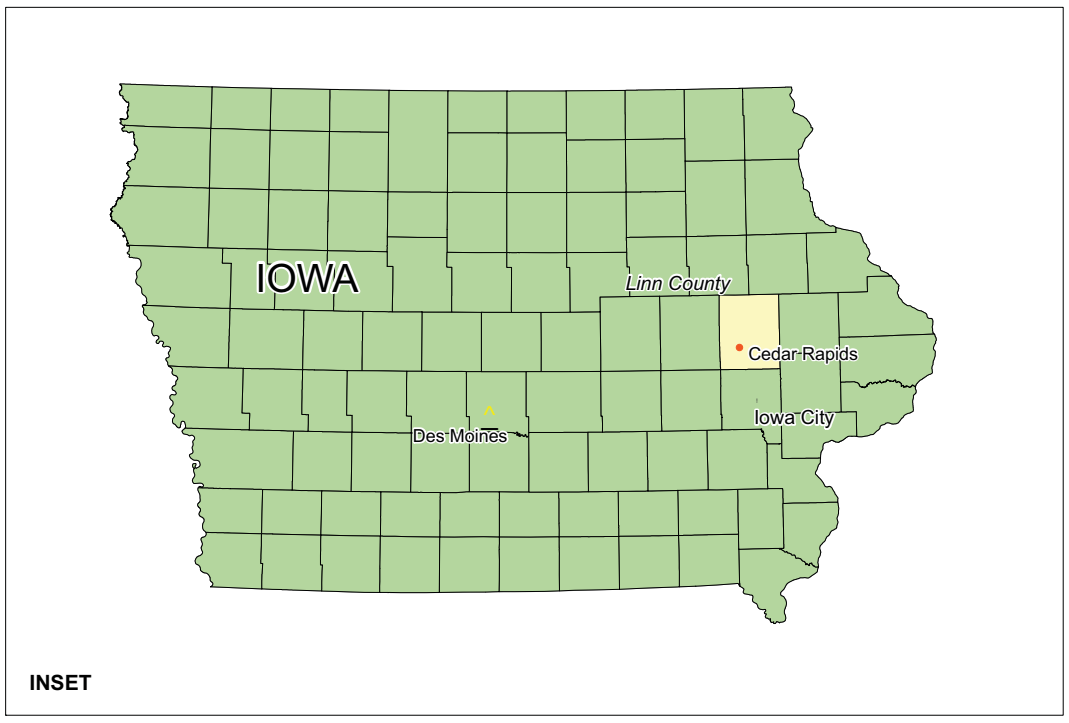
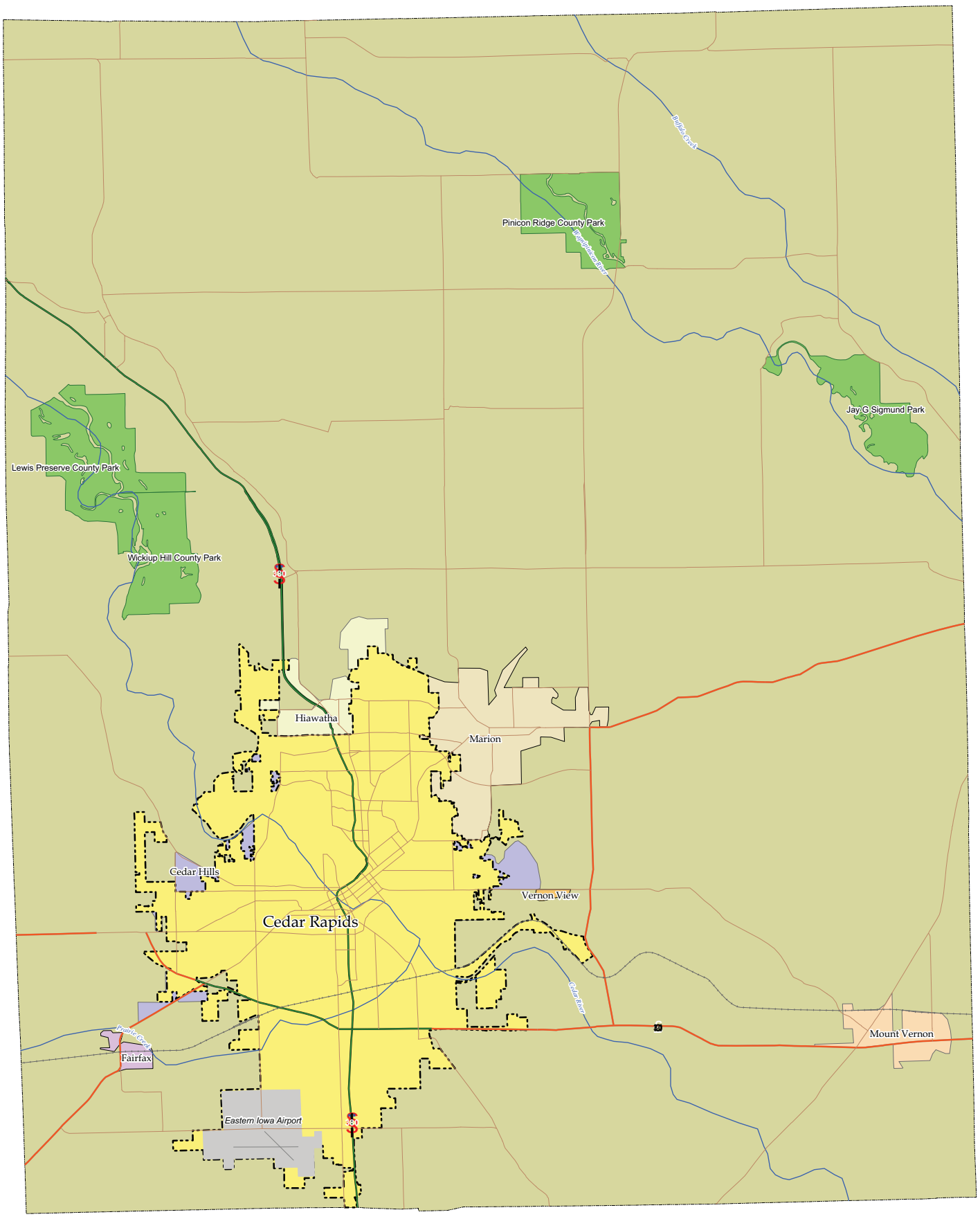


LEGEND

- Cedar Rapids
- Airport
- County Park
- Rivers and Streams
- Railroad



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Map Scale In Miles

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CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS - IOWA
PARKS MASTER PLAN

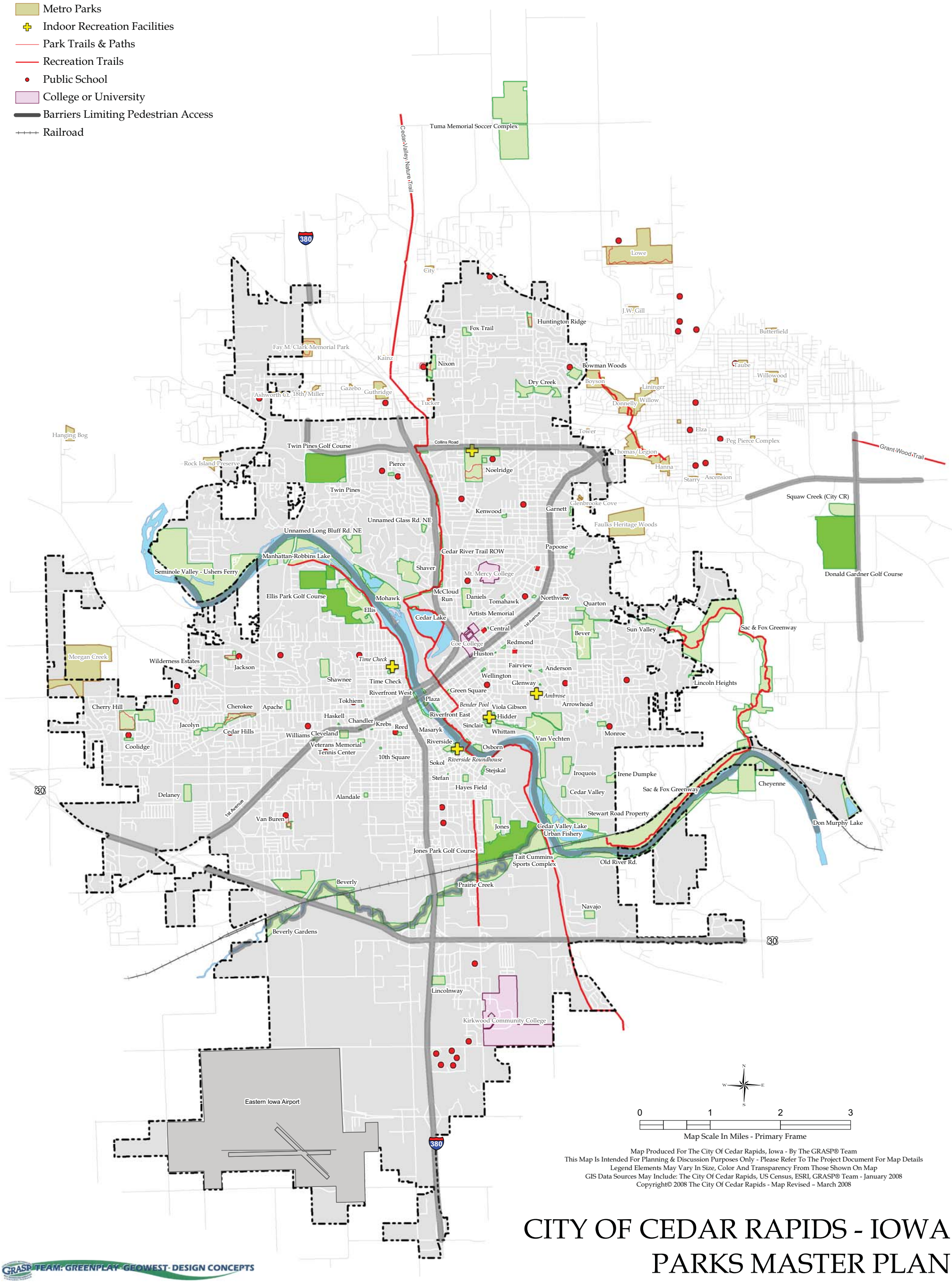
RESOURCE MAP B: SYSTEM

LEGEND

- Boundary - Corporate

Recreation Locations

- Cedar Rapids Parks
- Golf Course
- Metro Parks
- Indoor Recreation Facilities
- Park Trails & Paths
- Recreation Trails
- Public School
- College or University
- Barriers Limiting Pedestrian Access
- Railroad



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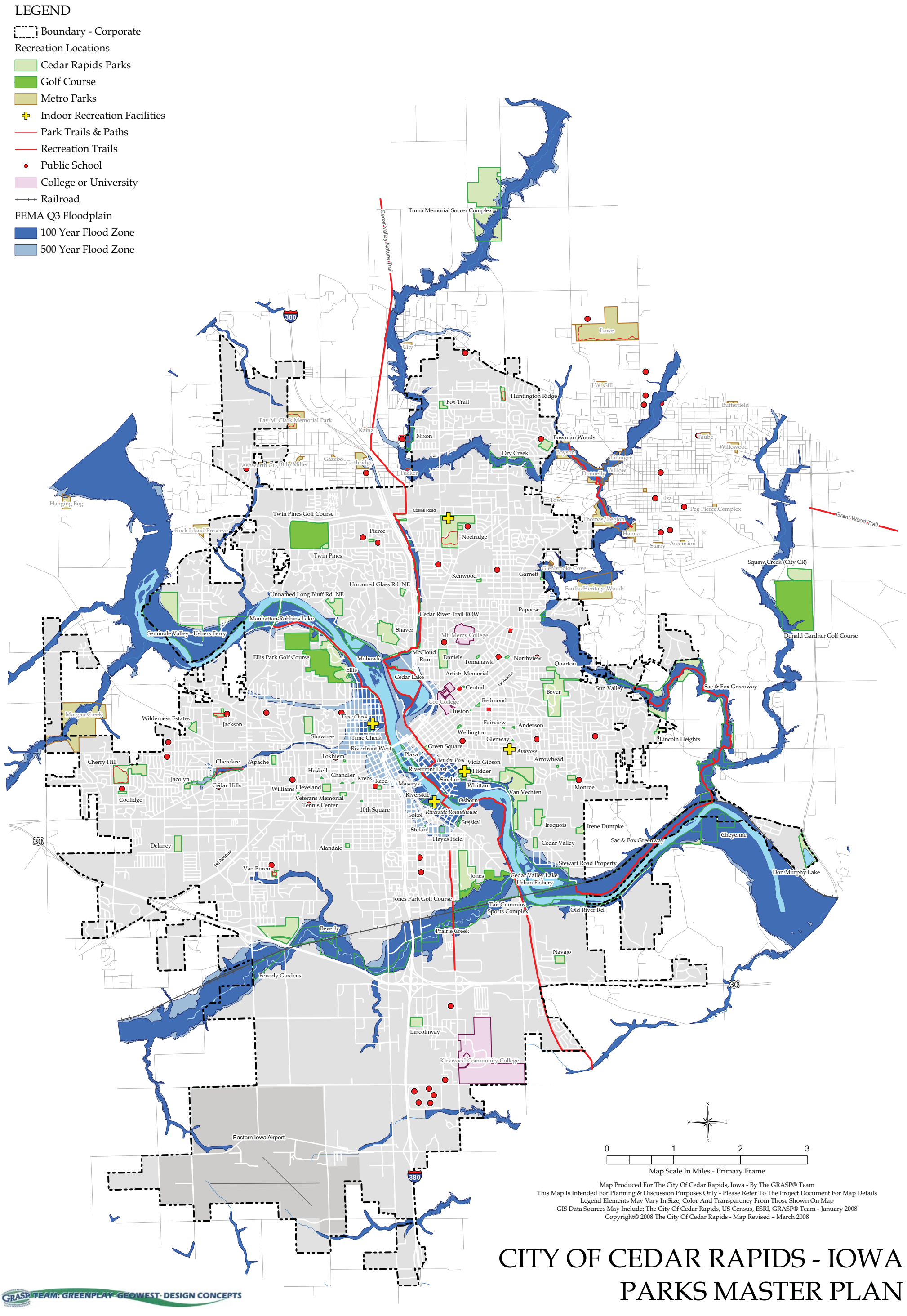
PARKS MASTER PLAN

GRASP TEAM: GREENPLAY - GEOWEST - DESIGN CONCEPTS

RESOURCE MAP C: FEMA FLOODPLAIN



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CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS - IOWA
PARKS MASTER PLAN

GRASP TEAM: GREENPLAY - GEOWEST - DESIGN CONCEPTS

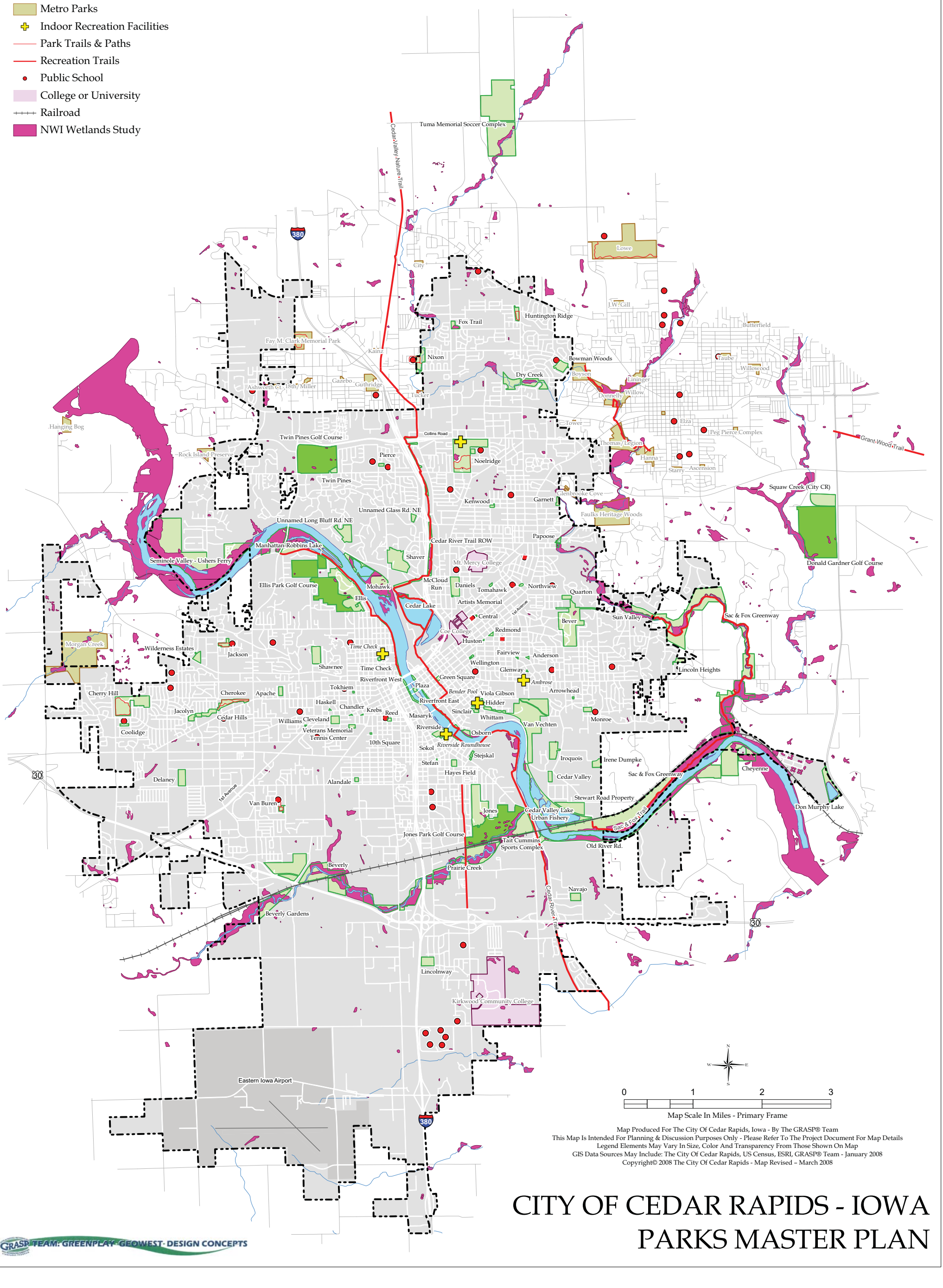
RESOURCE MAP D: NWI WETLANDS

LEGEND

- Boundary - Corporate

Recreation Locations

- Cedar Rapids Parks
- Golf Course
- Metro Parks
- Indoor Recreation Facilities
- Park Trails & Paths
- Recreation Trails
- Public School
- College or University
- Railroad
- NWI Wetlands Study



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CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS - IOWA
PARKS MASTER PLAN

GRASP TEAM: GREENPLAY - GEOWEST - DESIGN CONCEPTS

RESOURCE MAP E: PARKS MOWING AREAS

LEGEND

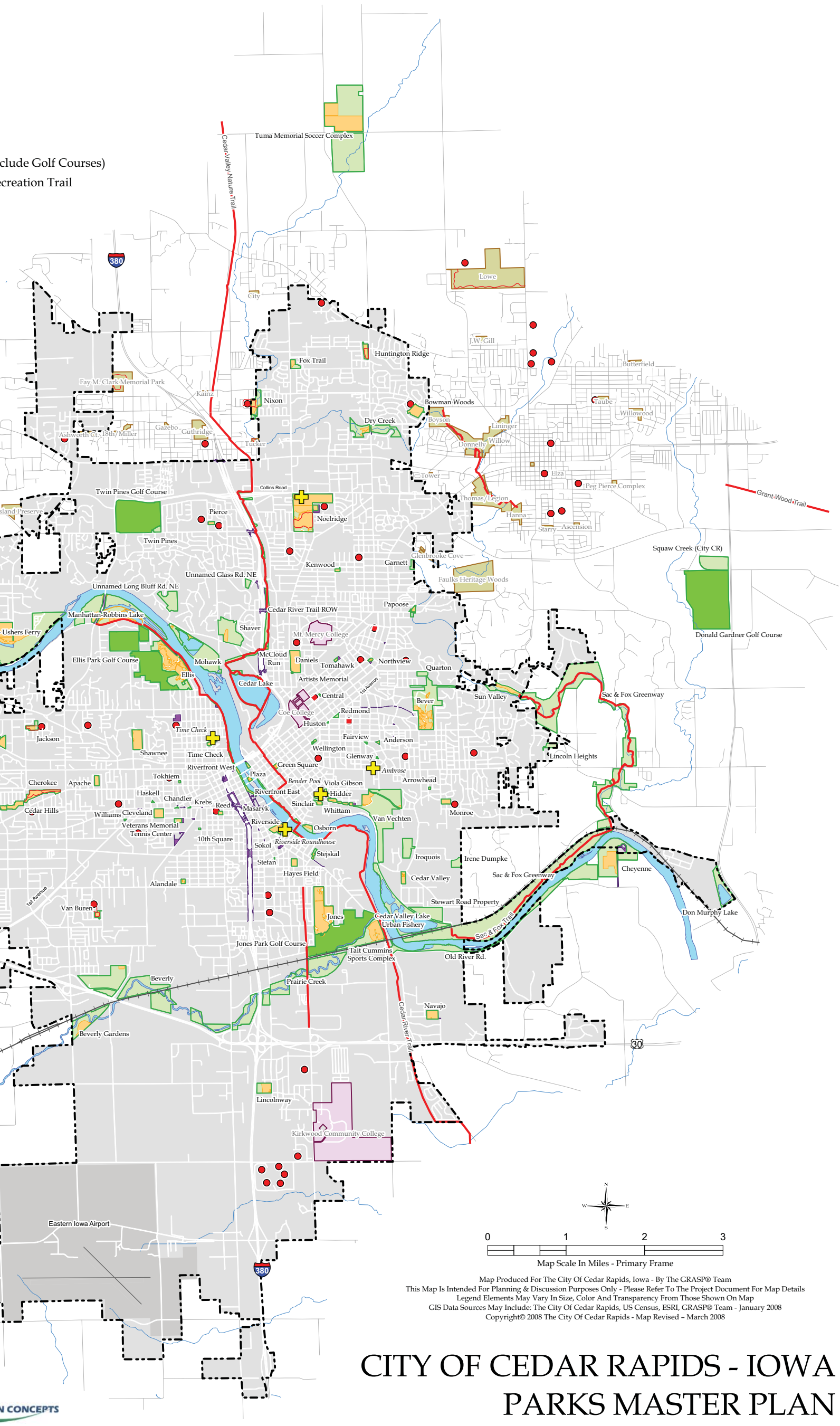
- Boundary - Corporate

Recreation Locations

- Cedar Rapids Parks
- Golf Course
- Metro Parks
- Indoor Recreation Facilities
- Park Trails & Paths
- Recreation Trails
- Public School
- College or University
- Railroad

Mowing Area

- Occurs Within Park (Does Not Include Golf Courses)
- Occurs Outside Park or Along Recreation Trail



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PARKS MASTER PLAN

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PERSPECTIVE A: NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS TO ALL COMPONENTS POST-FLOOD

LEGEND

- Boundary - Corporate

Recreation Locations

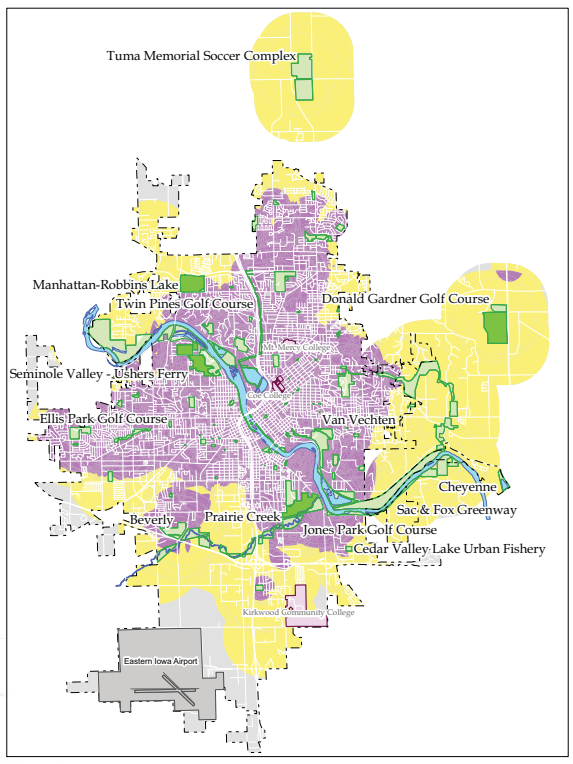
- Cedar Rapids Parks
- Golf Course
- Metro Parks
- Indoor Recreation Facilities

Recreation Trail Alignments - Post 2008 Flood Conditions

- Trail Currently In Use
- Trail Currently Not Accessible
- Other Park Trails & Paths
- Public School
- College or University
- Barriers Limiting Pedestrian Access
- Railroad

GRASP® Perspective - All Values

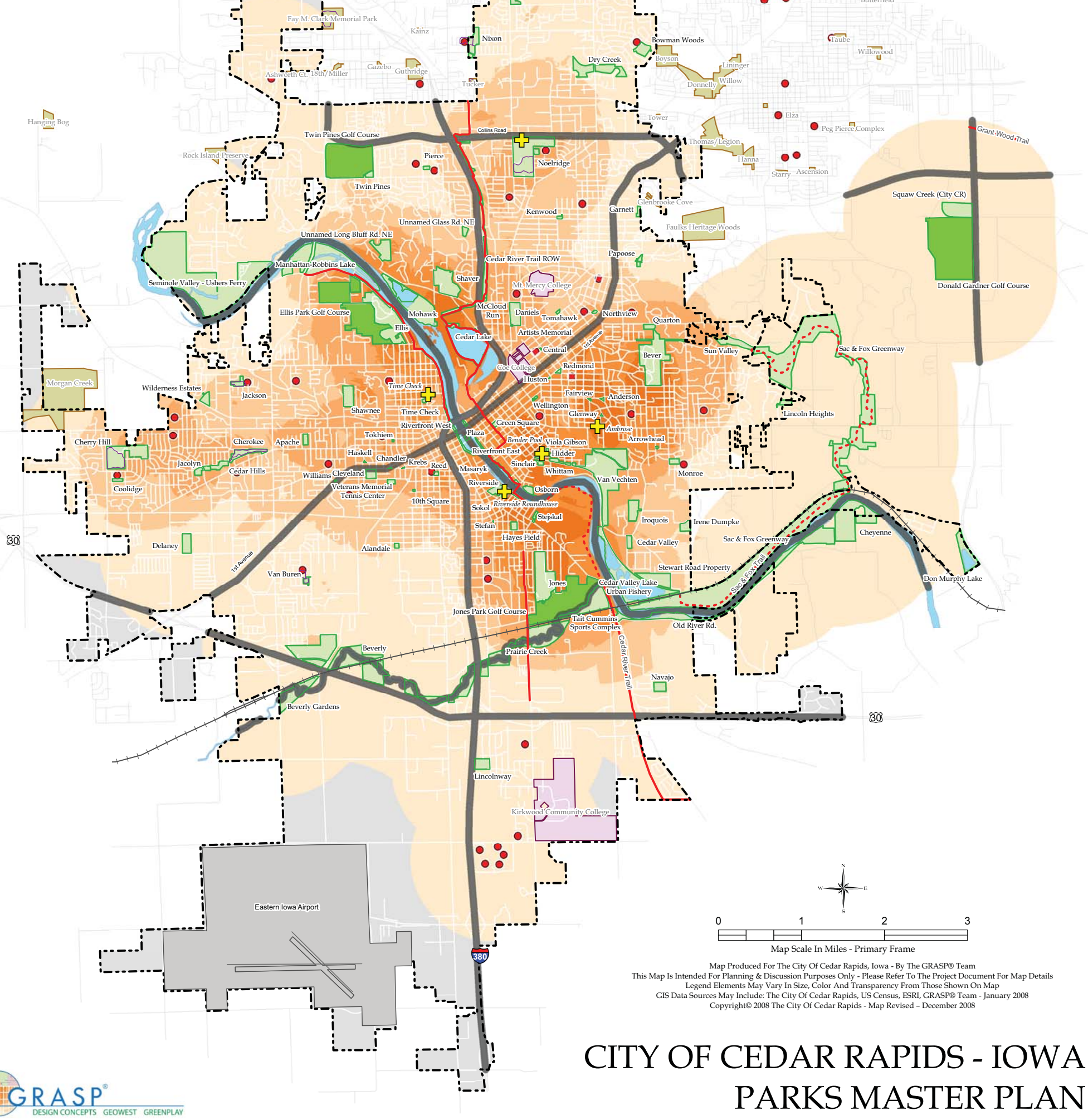
- Less Access
- Greater Access
- No Service



LEGEND

GRASP® Perspective - Target Values

- Below Target Minimum
- At or Above Target Minimum
- No Service



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Map Scale In Miles - Primary Frame

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CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS - IOWA PARKS MASTER PLAN

GRASP® DESIGN CONCEPTS GEOWEST GREENPLAY

PERSPECTIVE B: WALKABLE ACCESS TO ALL COMPONENTS POST-FLOOD

LEGEND

- Boundary - Corporate

Recreation Locations

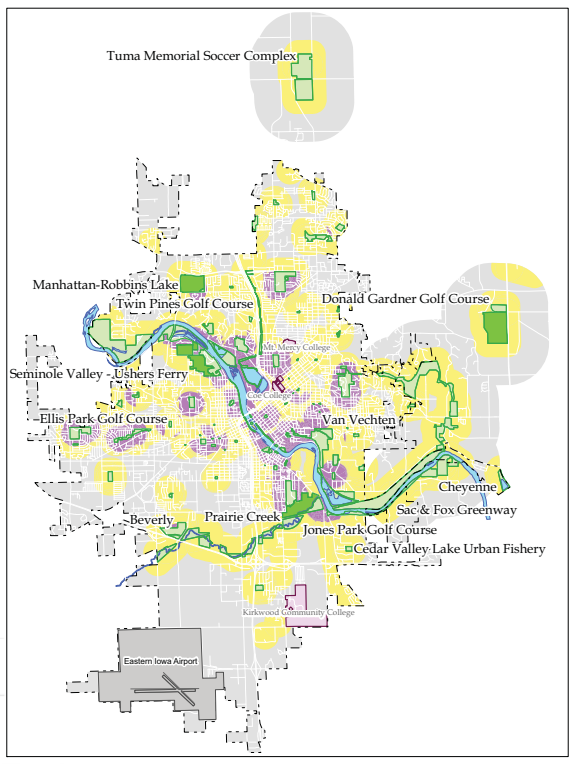
- Cedar Rapids Parks
- Golf Course
- Metro Parks
- Indoor Recreation Facilities

Recreation Trail Alignments - Post 2008 Flood Conditions

- Trail Currently In Use
- Trail Currently Not Accessible
- Other Park Trails & Paths
- Public School
- College or University
- Barriers Limiting Pedestrian Access
- Railroad

GRASP® Perspective - All Values

- Less Access
- Greater Access
- No Service



LEGEND

GRASP® Perspective - Target Values

- Below Target Minimum
- At or Above Target Minimum
- No Service

0 1 2 3

Map Scale In Miles - Primary Frame

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CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS - IOWA PARKS MASTER PLAN

GRASP® DESIGN CONCEPTS GEOWEST GREENPLAY

PERSPECTIVE C: WALKABLE ACCESS TO PARKS LARGER THAN ONE ACRE - POST-FLOOD

LEGEND

- Boundary - Corporate

Recreation Locations

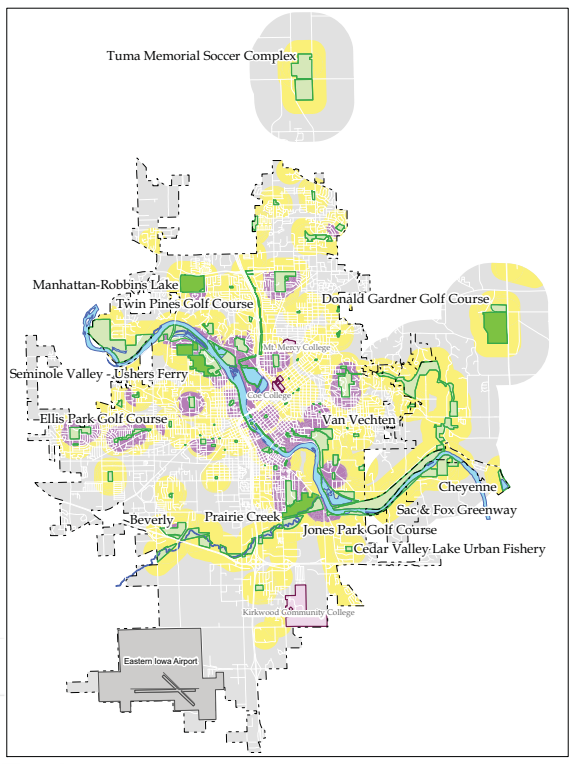
- Cedar Rapids Parks
- Golf Course
- Metro Parks
- Indoor Recreation Facilities

Recreation Trail Alignments - Post 2008 Flood Conditions

- Trail Currently In Use
- Trail Currently Not Accessible
- Other Park Trails & Paths
- Public School
- College or University
- Barriers Limiting Pedestrian Access
- Railroad

GRASP® Perspective - All Values

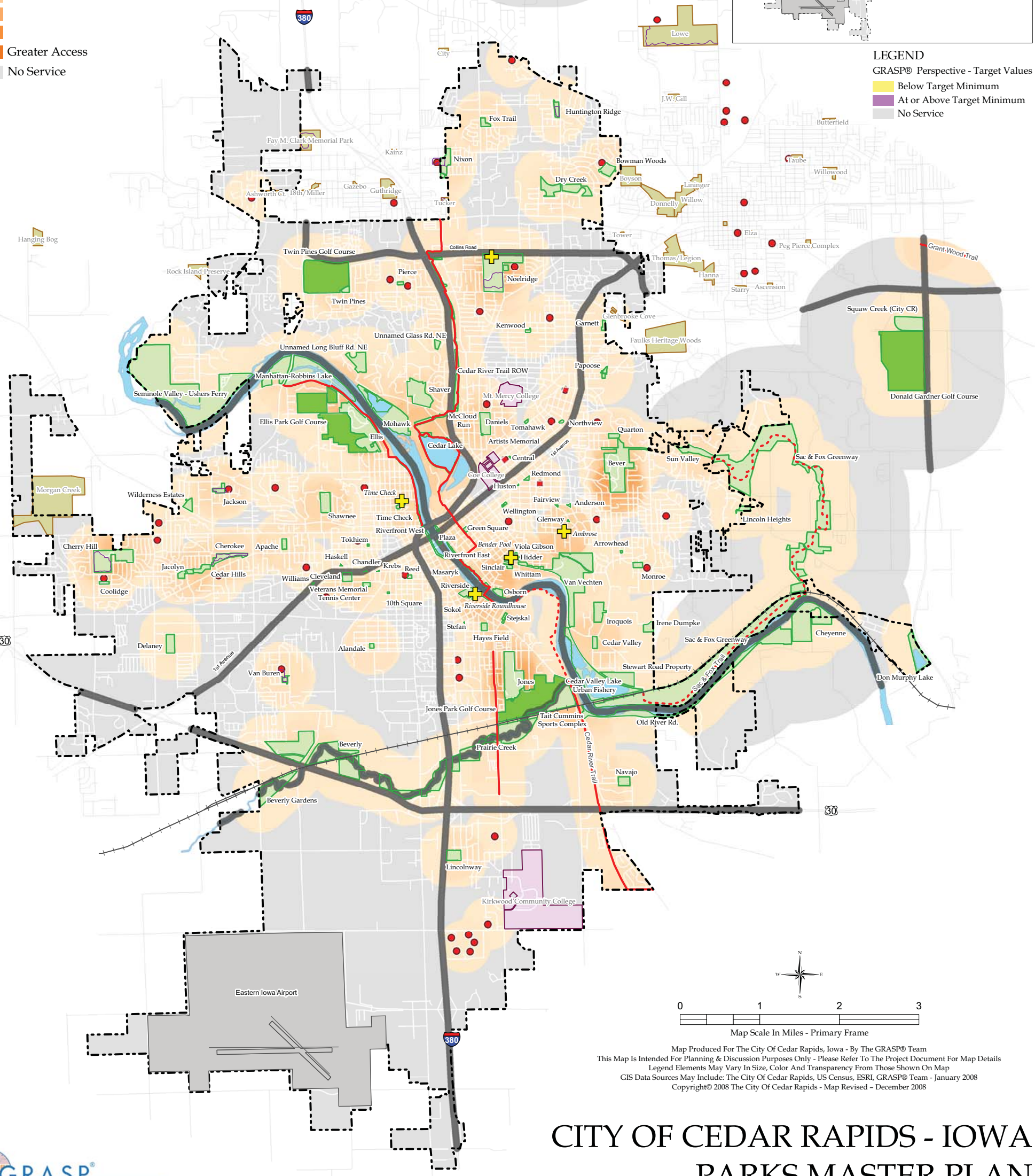
- Less Access
- Greater Access
- No Service



LEGEND

GRASP® Perspective - Target Values

- Below Target Minimum
- At or Above Target Minimum
- No Service



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Map Scale In Miles - Primary Frame

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GRASP®
DESIGN CONCEPTS GEOWEST GREENPLAY

CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS - IOWA PARKS MASTER PLAN

PERSPECTIVE D: NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS TO TRAILS - POST-FLOOD

LEGEND

- Boundary - Corporate

Recreation Locations

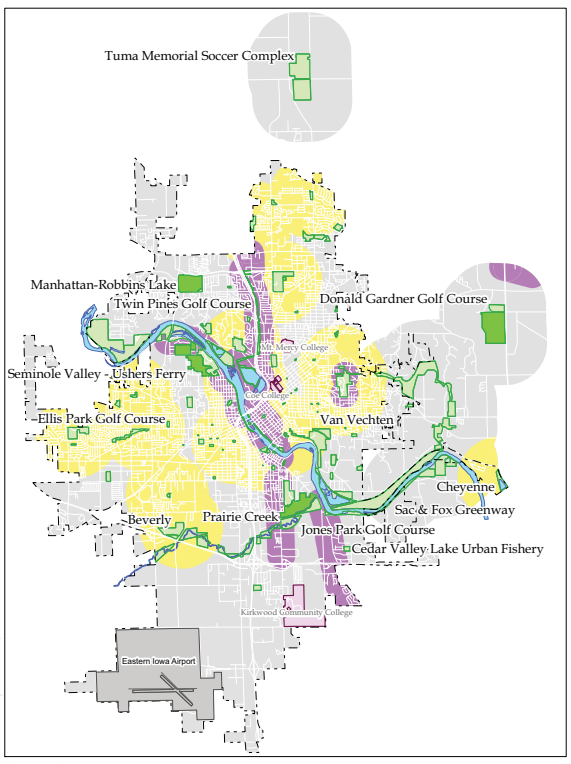
- Cedar Rapids Parks
- Golf Course
- Metro Parks
- Indoor Recreation Facilities

Recreation Trail Alignments - Post 2008 Flood Conditions

- Trail Currently In Use
- Trail Currently Not Accessible
- Other Park Trails & Paths
- Public School
- College or University
- Barriers Limiting Pedestrian Access
- Railroad

GRASP® Perspective - All Values

- Less Access
- Greater Access
- No Service



LEGEND

GRASP® Perspective - Target Values

- Below Target Minimum
- At or Above Target Minimum
- No Service

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Map Scale In Miles - Primary Frame

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CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS - IOWA
PARKS MASTER PLAN

GRASP® DESIGN CONCEPTS GEOWEST GREENPLAY

PERSPECTIVE E: ACCESS TO OUTDOOR AQUATICS

LEGEND

- Boundary - Corporate

Recreation Locations

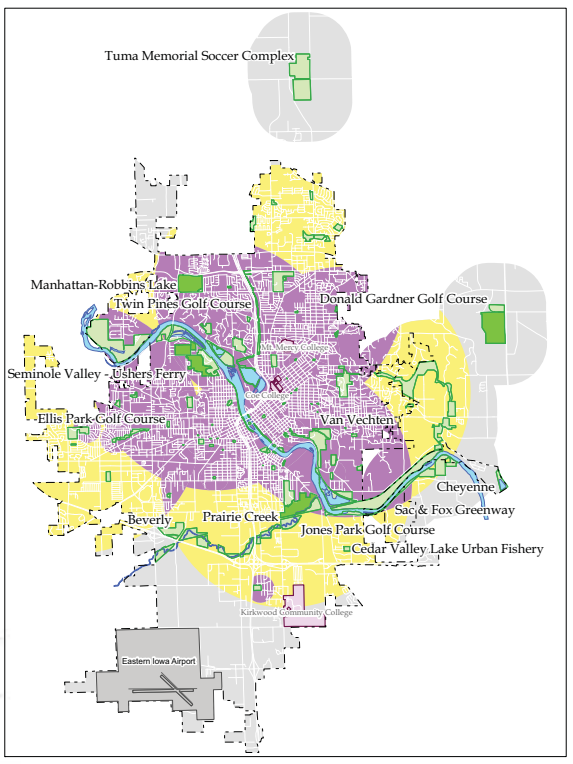
- Cedar Rapids Parks
- Golf Course
- Metro Parks
- Indoor Recreation Facilities

Outdoor Aquatics

- Aqua Feature, Spray
- Aqua Feature, Complex
- One Third Mile Buffer - Spray Pad
- Park Trails & Paths
- Recreation Trails
- Public School
- College or University
- Barriers Limiting Pedestrian Access
- Railroad

GRASP® Perspective - All Values

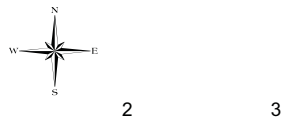
- Less Access
- Greater Access
- No Service



LEGEND

GRASP® Perspective - Target Values

- Below Target Minimum
- At or Above Target Minimum
- No Service



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Map Scale In Miles - Primary Frame

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CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS - IOWA
PARKS MASTER PLAN

GRASP® TEAM: GREENPLAY - GEOWEST - DESIGN CONCEPTS

Appendix 4 – Inventory and Level of Service Analysis

A. Inventory

One essential part of the City of Cedar Rapids *Parks &Recreation Master Plan* was to establish a complete and accurate database of parks and recreation amenities provided by the Parks and Recreation Department.

A complete inventory was conducted in January of 2008, and an inventory of flood affected properties was conducted in August of 2008. This was accomplished by visiting each property and facility, talking with appropriate personnel, and recording the quantity and functionality of the each component. For the purposes of this master plan, the inventory focused only on components at sites that are maintained for public use by the City of Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation Department. It is recognized that other providers exist, and that the facilities they provide are part of the overall level of service enjoyed by area residents. However, the purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of the Parks and Recreation Department-provided services and to create a complete inventory of those facilities.

Each component was located, counted, and assessed for the functionality of its primary intended use. A GRASP® score was assigned to the component as a measure of its functionality as follows:

- **Below Expectations (BE)** – The component does not meet the expectations of its intended primary function. Factors leading to this may include size, age, accessibility, or others. Each such component was given a score of **1** in the inventory.
- **Meeting Expectations (ME)** – The component meets expectations for its intended function. Such components were given scores of **2.**
- **Exceeding Expectations (EE) –** The component exceeds expectations, due to size, configuration, or unique qualities. Such components were given scores of **3.**
- If the feature exists but is not useable because it is unsafe, obsolete, or dysfunctional, it may be listed in the feature description, and assigned a **score of zero (0).**

Components were evaluated according to this scale from two perspectives: first, the value of the component in serving the immediate neighborhood, and second, its value to the entire community.

Next, amenities that relate to and enhance the use of the component were evaluated. Each **park site** or **indoor facility** was given a set of scores to rate its comfort and convenience to the user. This includes such things as the availability of restrooms, drinking water, shade, scenery, etc.

Lastly, the overall design and ambiance of the facility or park was recorded as a part of the inventory. Characteristics such as overall layout, attention to design, and functionality inform the design and ambiance score.

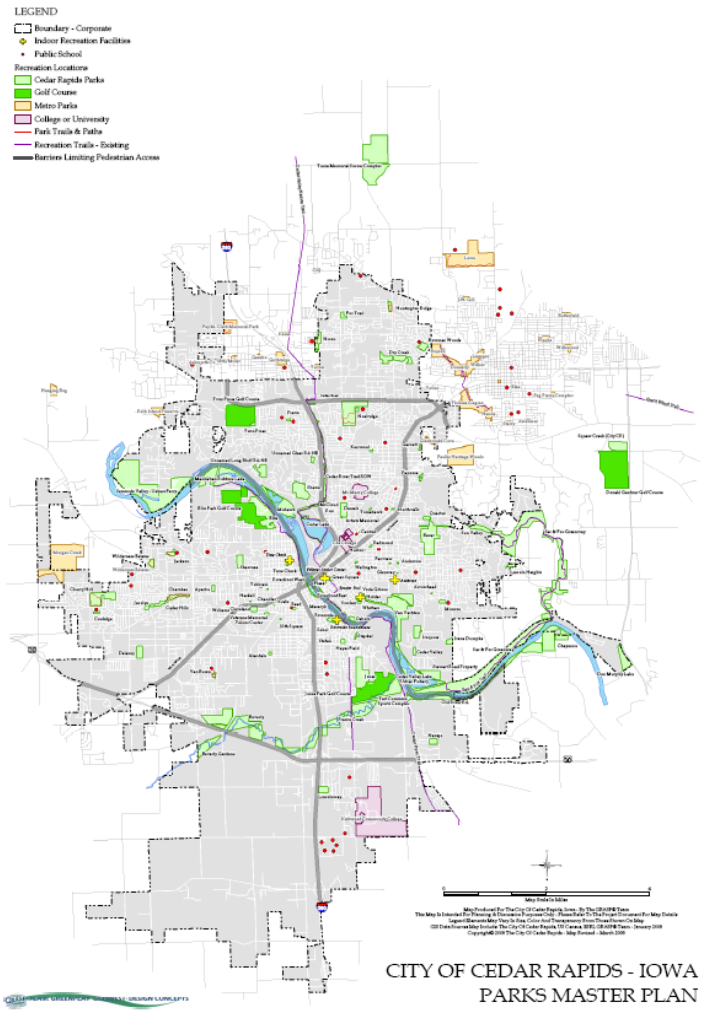
The assessment findings from each location were entered into a master inventory database/spreadsheet. The database serves as a record of the inventory and was also used to perform the GRASP® analysis that follows.

Inventory Description

Existing Infrastructure

The City of Cedar Rapids has a variety of park lands, trails, and indoor facilities that form a network of properties that cover the City. Facilities provide a variety of options including opportunities for sports, picnics, nature study, water recreation, and quiet contemplation.

In June of 2008, Cedar Rapids experienced the largest flood in its history. Flood waters reached a crest 11 feet higher than the previous record set in 1851. This flood affected many parts of the community, including many of the parks, trails, and greenways. **Because the flood occurred after the initial inventory was completed, a second assessment of the park properties was conducted in August of 2008.** This inventory included only the properties that experienced negative effects from the presence of the flood waters. Aside from the parks that were included in the second inventory, several parks were flooded to some extent, but water in these properties receded quickly and caused no lasting damage. The original inventory is used to reflect the condition of these properties that were not affected by the flood.



The 2008 Flood

Map B: Inventory

This map shows where the existing parks, trails, and open spaces are located. In addition, schools, landmarks, and barriers to pedestrian access are shown for reference. (Larger maps and **GRASP®** Perspectives can be found in ***Appendix 3***.) In Cedar Rapids, the major barriers to pedestrian access include: the Cedar River, Collins Road, Interstate-380, 1st Avenue, and Highway 30.

In total the City of Cedar Rapids has 105 park parcels and 4,166 acres of land. These properties can be grouped in four main categories: large urban parks; small developed parks; streetscapes; and natural areas, greenways, and trails.

Of the City's park properties, 46 were affected in some way and are noted in the charts below with an (*). **Thirteen (13) properties were affected enough to require repair or renovation**. These parks are shown with a (**). In the aftermath of the flood, the thirteen of the 105 parks required significant cleaning and repairs. Some of the items that sustained major damages include the Cheyenne Dog Park, Time Check Community Center, the Roundhouse in Riverside Park, the Sac and Fox Trail, Seminole Valley, Ushers Ferry Historic Village, Ellis Boat Harbor, Ellis Shakespeare Garden, and the Ellis Swimming Pool. The other parks affected during the flood required initial clean-up and repairs that were completed by the end of 2008.

Large Developed Parks

Table 1 shows four types of park land that make up the category of large, developed parks.

In this category, the City has five large parks that are strategically located to serve each quadrant of the City as well as the central core. These parks include Noelridge, Bever, Jones, Cherry Hill, and Ellis Parks. While all of these parks have outdoor swimming pools, shelters, and playgrounds, they are quite different in character. Each park has a specific identity within the community and is valued for its unique components.

In addition to these five parks, the City also has several large sports facilities and special use parks that offer activities that are attractive to the community and region as a whole. Of particular note are several facilities that are unique to Cedar Rapids. The Ellis Boat Harbor provides both slips for visiting and permanent boat houses. Ushers Ferry Historic Village is a 10-acre, 1800's historical village set in Seminole Park, and Old McDonald's Farm (also referred to as the Children's Zoo) in Bever Park includes free farm and waterfowl exhibits. Other special parks and features include Seminole Valley Historical Farmstead (currently managed by a non-profit organization), the Greenhouses at Noelridge Park, Cheyenne Park Dog Park, and the Tuma and Tait-Cummins Sports Parks. In total there are 22 parks that meet this description of large developed parks totaling 2365 acres comprising 57 percent of the City's park acreage and 21 percent of the total number of parks.

Table 1: Large Developed Parks

Large Developed Parks			
Park	*GIS classification*	*Acres*	*Quantity*
Daniels	Community Park	22.1	1
Delaney	Community Park	15.8	1
Shaver	Community Park	46.2	1
Shawnee	Community Park	19.6	1
	Subtotal	**103.7**	**4**
Donald Gardner Golf Course*	Golf Course	242.1	1
Ellis Park Golf Course*	Golf Course	164.5	1
Jones Park Golf Course*	Golf Course	149.1	1
Twin Pines Golf Course	Golf Course	139.2	1
	Subtotal	**694.9**	**4**
Bever	Large Urban Park	94.9	1
Cedar Valley Lake Urban Fishery**	Large Urban Park	134.3	1
Cherry Hill	Large Urban Park	61.4	1
Ellis**	Large Urban Park	93.2	1
Jones	Large Urban Park	69.5	1
Noelridge	Large Urban Park	95.9	1
Seminole Valley - Ushers Ferry*	Large Urban Park	387.6	1
Van Vechten*	Large Urban Park	135.9	1
	Subtotal	**1072.7**	**8**
Cherokee*	Special Use Park	17.3	1
Cheyenne**	Special Use Park	138.5	1
Hayes Field*	Special Use Park	4.5	1
Tait Cummins Sports Complex*	Special Use Park	48.7	1
Tuma Memorial Soccer Complex*	Special Use Park	281.5	1
Veterans Memorial Tennis Center	Special Use Park	2.9	1
	Subtotal	**493.4**	**6**
	Grand Total	**2364.7**	**22**

* Flood affected properties

Flood affected properties requiring **require repair or renovation.

Small Developed Parks

In addition to these large developed parks, the City provides many smaller parks that are located and designed to serve the immediate neighborhood in which they are located. These smaller parks often have a shelter, open turf area, mature trees, and a playground. Included in this category are School-Park properties that are owned by the City but adjoining and shared with school properties. The City has 53 parks that fall into this group, totaling 190 acres. This group makes up four percent of the park acreage, but 50 percent of the number of parks.

Table 2: Small Developed Parks

Small Developed Parks			
Park	*GIS classification*	*Acres*	*Quantity*
10th Square	Mini Park	0.4	1
Alandale	Mini Park	2	1
Apache	Mini Park	4.7	1
Arrowhead	Mini Park	0.4	1
Artists Memorial	Mini Park	0.2	1
Cedar Lake*	Mini Park	1	1
Central	Mini Park	0.2	1
Chandler	Mini Park	0.2	1
Green Square*	Mini Park	2.1	1
Hidder*	Mini Park	1.7	1
Kenwood	Mini Park	1.6	1
Masaryk*	Mini Park	1.7	1
McCloud Run*	Mini Park	0.9	1
Northview	Mini Park	1.1	1
Papoose*	Mini Park	3.7	1
Pierce	Mini Park	1.9	1
Plaza*	Mini Park	1.7	1
Redmond	Mini Park	1.3	1
Sinclair*	Mini Park	2.5	1
Sokol*	Mini Park	1.7	1
Stejskal*	Mini Park	2.3	1
Tokhiem	Mini Park	0.5	1
Tomahawk	Mini Park	0.9	1
Twin Pines	Mini Park	3.8	1
Wellington	Mini Park	0.9	1
Williams	Mini Park	0.3	1
	Subtotal	**41.6**	**33**
Cedar Valley*	Neighborhood Park	5.6	1
Cleveland	Neighborhood Park	8.7	1
Fox Trail	Neighborhood Park	5.8	1
Huntington Ridge	Neighborhood Park	7.2	1
Jacolyn*	Neighborhood Park	7.5	1
Lincolnway	Neighborhood Park	14.7	1
Navajo	Neighborhood Park	10	1
Osborn**	Neighborhood Park	5.7	1
Riverside**	Neighborhood Park	11.8	1
Time Check**	Neighborhood Park	5.9	1
Whittam	Neighborhood Park	5.8	1
Wilderness Estates	Neighborhood Park	7.6	1
	Subtotal	**96.3**	**12**
Bowman Woods	School - Park	13.2	1

Coolidge	School - Park	2.5	1
Jackson	School - Park	6.7	1
Monroe	School - Park	4.8	1
Nixon*	School - Park	18.9	1
Reed*	School - Park	1.6	1
Van Buren	School - Park	3.3	1
Viola Gibson	School - Park	1.1	1
	Subtotal	**52.1**	**8**
	Grand Total	**190.0**	**53**

* Flood affected properties
Flood affected properties requiring **require repair or renovation.

Streetscapes
In the City of Cedar Rapids, the Parks Division maintains some streetscape properties that, while providing little in the way of recreational opportunities, do add to the aesthetic value of the neighborhood. These parcels shown in ***Table 3*** are generally small areas that are surrounded by streets and planted only with grass and trees. Many of these areas are located in the central core of the City.

Table 3: Streetscapes

Streetscapes			
Park	*GIS classification*	*Acres*	*Quantity*
Glenway	Mini Park	0.2	1
Anderson	Mini Park	0.6	1
Fairview	Mini Park	0.3	1
Haskell	Mini Park	0.3	1
Huston	Mini Park	0.2	1
Krebs	Mini Park	0.2	1
Stefan*	Mini Park	0.1	1
	Grand Total	**1.9**	**7**

* Flood affected properties

Natural Areas, Greenways, and Trails
Throughout the City, careful attention has been paid to the acquisition of properties that are to remain undeveloped and provide many of the benefits associated with open spaces. These benefits include the following.

- Opportunity for interaction with the natural environment
- A break in the urban fabric
- Watershed protection
- Flood control
- Wildlife corridors
- Access to water recreational opportunities
- Recreational trail corridors

Many of these parcels are located in the floodways of Cedar Rapids' major rivers and drainages and other parcels protect parts of the smaller drainages within the City. These parcels contain representative wooded and riparian ecosystems. However, native prairies are under-represented as a group in the City's natural areas.

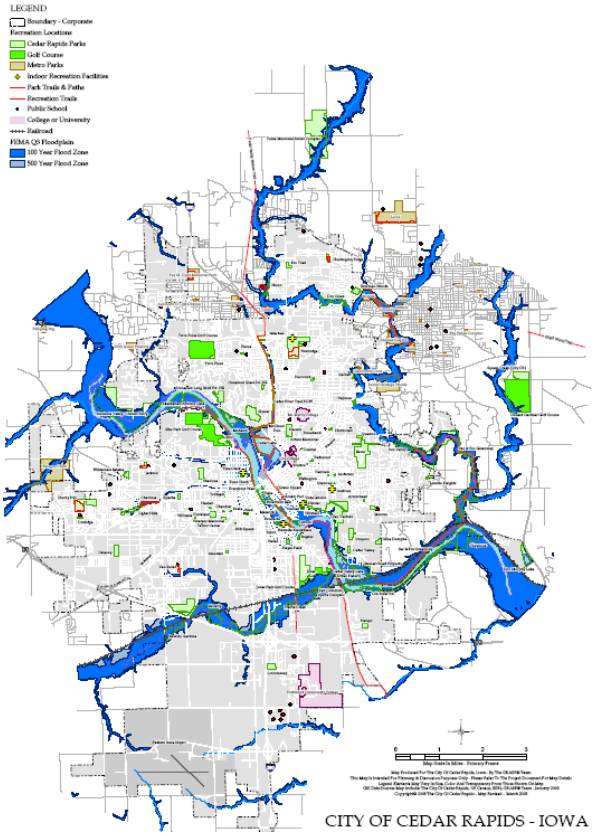
Table 4 shows the 23 parcels that are considered part of this group totaling 1,610 acres. These properties make up 39 percent of the City's park land and 22 percent of the total number of parks.

Table 4: Natural Areas, Greenways, and Trails

Natural Areas, Greenways, and Trails			
Park	*GIS classification*	*Acres*	*Quantity*
Beverly*	Natural Resources Area	136.9	1
Cedar River Trail ROW*	Natural Resources Area	39.1	1
Don Murphy Lake**	Natural Resources Area	35.5	1
Garnett*	Natural Resources Area	3.3	1
Irene Dumpke	Natural Resources Area	8.5	1
Iroquois	Natural Resources Area	18.2	1
Lincoln Heights	Natural Resources Area	5.4	1
Manhattan-Robbins Lake**	Natural Resources Area	157.8	1
Mohawk**	Natural Resources Area	71.3	1
Old River Rd.*	Natural Resources Area	61.6	1
Quarton	Natural Resources Area	5	1
Riverfront East*	Natural Resources Area	7.8	1
Riverfront West*	Natural Resources Area	13.2	1
Squaw Creek (City CR)	Natural Resources Area	37.5	1
Unnamed Glass Rd. NE	Natural Resources Area	3.8	1
Unnamed Long Bluff Rd. NE	Natural Resources Area	24.8	1
	Subtotal	**629.7**	**16**
Dry Creek*	Greenway	41	1
Prairie Creek*	Greenway	217.3	1
Sac & Fox Greenway**	Greenway	620	1
	Subtotal	**878.3**	**3**
Beverly Gardens**	Open Lands	43.2	1
Cedar Hills *	Open Lands	8.2	1
Stewart Road Property*	Open Lands	30.9	1
Sun Valley*	Open Lands	19.2	1
	Subtotal	**101.5**	**4**
	Grand Total	**1609.5**	**23**

* Flood affected properties

**Flood affected properties requiring require repair or renovation.



Natural Resources and Environmental Mapping

A large part of Cedar Rapids' park system has environmental significance as floodplains and wetlands. Two Resource Maps (See ***Appendix 3***) illustrate the importance of these landscape characteristics. *Map C* shows the areas that have been identified as the 500 and 100 year floodplains by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). *Map D* shows wetlands as noted in the National Wetland Inventory (NWI.) It should be noted that the information shown here is for insight into the general nature of parkland in Cedar Rapids and not as an effort to show regulated land types.

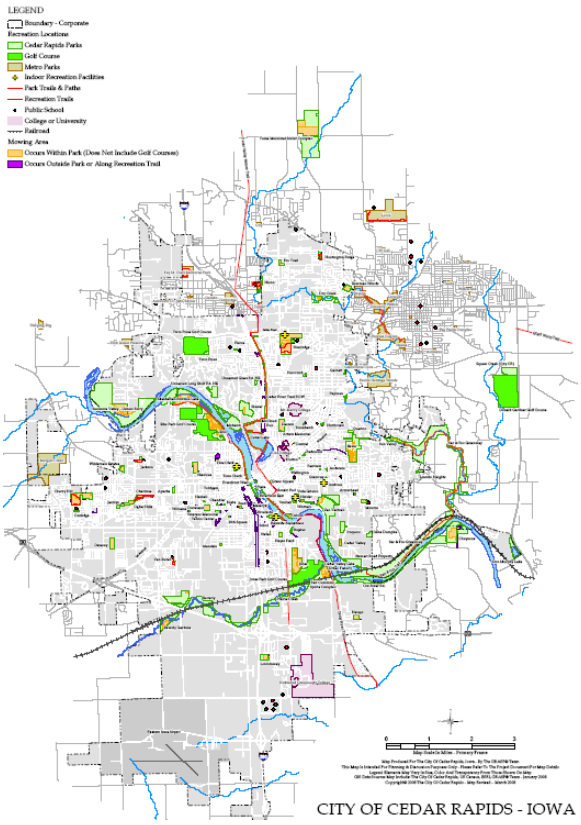
The significance of these maps is seen when overlapping land types are broken down into percentages – over 43 percent of the floodplain existing in the corporate limit (including both 100 year and 500 year flood levels) are protected as park land. This is a very large number and demonstrates Cedar Rapids' proactive approach toward land conservation, compared to many other communities.

The riparian corridors present an excellent opportunity for natural areas conservation. When these areas are preserved and naturally vegetated, they maintain biological diversity, improve water quality, provide wildlife travel corridors, and provide recreation opportunities. The foresight of City leaders in protecting these corridors has allowed the City to boast that it is protecting almost half of the existing riparian areas within city limits. As the public responds to efforts to be "green" and to increase environmental awareness, it is likely that there will be a higher level of interest in preservation of natural areas and native ecosystems. The community survey results demonstrate this point: 81 percent of respondents indicated that they would like a mix of parks that incorporate both native and manicured parks.

The existing inventory of riparian areas in Cedar Rapids opens the door to protecting acquiring or improving more properties to be sanctuaries of biodiversity and native ecosystems. *In this case it would be a logical step to also offer undeveloped woodlands and prairies to the residents as a part of the parks system.*

When looked at from the parks perspective, **48 percent of City-owned park land is within the FEMA 100 and 500 year floodplain**. This accounts for the high amount of park acres per 1000 population as referenced in ***Table 5*** on page 89. Cedar Rapids has 29 acres per 1000 where a commonly referenced ratio is 10 acres per 1000. Appropriately, of the park land that is in the floodplain, 80 percent of it is a natural area, greenway or open land.

Strategies included in plans for the redevelopment of the flood affected areas of the City include the addition of more floodplain to the park system which will increase the area of total floodplain that is under the protection of the City.



Mowing

A large part of the City's inventory contains some portion of grass that requires mowing on a regular basis. As the City faces budget cutbacks and changes in departmental structure, operating efficiently is paramount. Currently, the Parks Division spends significant time and money on mowing park land and City property. The map below (enlarged map in ***Appendix 3***) shows which areas are currently being mowed. In total, the Parks Division is responsible for mowing 843 acres, 96 of which are not park lands, and 5.8 of which are spread out between 17 small parks.

In looking at increasing efficiencies, the City should consider alternatives to mowing areas that are not park properties or small acreages without recreational value. Contracting out mowing duties in these inefficient areas could be a way for the City to save time and resources.

B. Level of Service

As part of this Cedar Rapids *Parks & Recreation Master Plan*, a Levels of Service (LOS) analysis was conducted. This tool allows for analysis of the inventory, quantity, location, distribution, and access to recreation components. Levels of Service (LOS) are typically defined in parks and recreation plans as the capacity of the system's components to meet the needs of the public.

Two methods were used in this analysis. One method uses a traditional capacities approach that compares quantity to population. The other analysis uses the Geo-Referenced Amenities Standard Process (**GRASP®**) **method** which records quantity, quality, and location information about the components and displays it in chart and map form. A more detailed description of the history of GRASP® methodology and its relationship to NRPA standards has been provided to staff.

The GRASP® Analysis

GRASP® methodology is a unique way of looking at LOS because it considers not only the quantity and distribution of parks and facilities but also quality, comfort and convenience, and overall design and ambiance. It is also unique in that it applies to individual recreation *components* to create a component-based model for evaluating LOS.

After scoring each component as outlined in the inventory description, GIS software was used to create graphic representations that allow for easy visual and numerical analysis of the recreation system. Some of the representations show raw data collected through the inventory process or received from other sources. These are referred to as ***Resource Maps***. Other representations emerge from the processing of data within the GIS using composite values analysis. These analyses can look at both general and specific aspects of the system. Each of these representations is called a ***GRASP® Perspective***. The following maps and Perspectives were prepared for this report and can be found in ***Appendix 3*****. These maps reflect the post-flood conditions of the parks and recreation inventory (as of August 2008).**

Map A: Regional Context
Map B: System
Map C: FEMA Floodplains Showing 2008 Extents
Map D: NWI Wetlands
Map E: Parks Mowing Areas
Perspective A: Neighborhood Access to All Components – Post-Flood
Perspective B: Walkable Access to All Components – Post-Flood
Perspective C: Walkable Access to Components in Parks larger than One Acre – Post-Flood
Perspective D: Neighborhood Access to Trails – Post-Flood
Perspective E: Access to Outdoor Aquatics – Post-Flood

For every **GRASP® Perspective**, each inventoried component shows its GRASP® score based on a radius from the component. The Neighborhood Perspective applies the components' qualitative score to both one mile and one-third mile buffers. One mile buffers represent a distance from which convenient access to the component can be achieved by driving or bicycling. The one-third mile buffer shows the distance that a resident can reasonably walk in 10 minutes. Scores are doubled within the one-third mile buffer to reflect the added accessibility of walking, since almost anyone can reach the location on their own by walking, even if they don't drive or ride a bicycle.

When buffers with associated scores are plotted on a map, a picture emerges that represents the cumulative LOS. Where buffers for multiple components overlap, a darker shade results and indicates locations that are "served" by a combination of more components and/or higher quality ones. In other words, **where there are darker shades, the level of service is higher** for that particular Perspective. It is important to note that the shade overlaying any given point on the map represents the cumulative value offered by the surrounding park system to an individual situated in that specific location, rather than the service being provided by components at that location to the areas around it.

GRASP® Target Scores Analysis

Within the GRASP® Perspectives, the buffers and associated scores are presented in two ways – with infinite tone ranges (orange) and in two tones based on **target values** (purple and yellow).

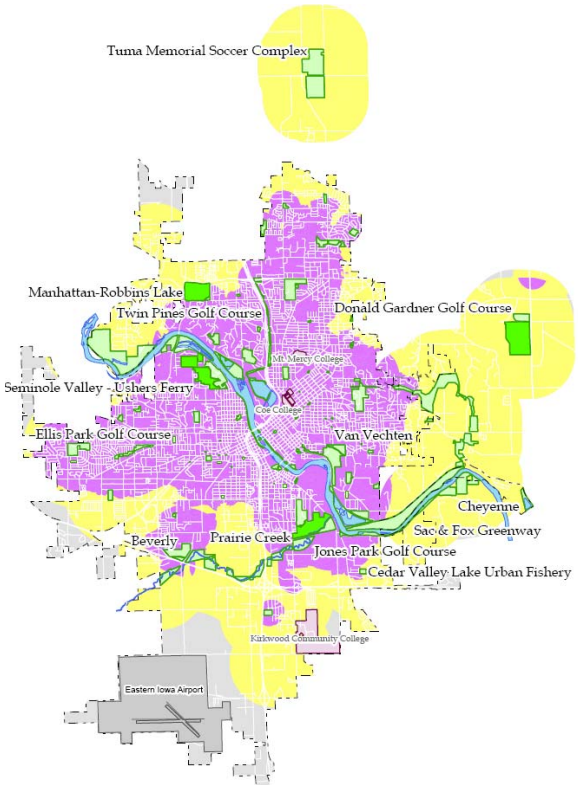
The **larger scale map** in each of the Perspectives shows the **GRASP®** buffers with an infinite tone range that portrays the nuances of service that is being provided to the community. At this scale it is easier to see the differences in services provided by parks and individual components. The complete Perspective series is set to the same tone scale so the different Perspectives can be compared side-by-side.

The **inset map** shows the **GRASP®** score ranges grouped into categories that represent the following service: Below Target Minimum Score or At or Above Target Minimum Score. In the inset, you can clearly see what areas fall into each of the categories for a simplified look at the service that is being provided. Different score breaks were used on the inset maps so that each set of components is being evaluated based on what the target minimum score is for each Perspective. For this reason, these maps cannot be compared but are specific to each Perspective.

The section below reviews the Perspectives and highlights where higher and lower levels of service are being provided from a given set of components.

Maps and Perspectives for Cedar Rapids' Parks System

Thumbnails of the target scores inset and excerpts from some of the maps and perspectives are shown here for convenience only – the reader should refer to the full maps in ***Appendix 3*** for complete information and clarity. **These maps show the service that is being provided by the park facilities as inventoried in August 2008, after the flood.** An analysis of how the flood affected LOS is included later in this section.



Perspective A: Neighborhood Access to All Components

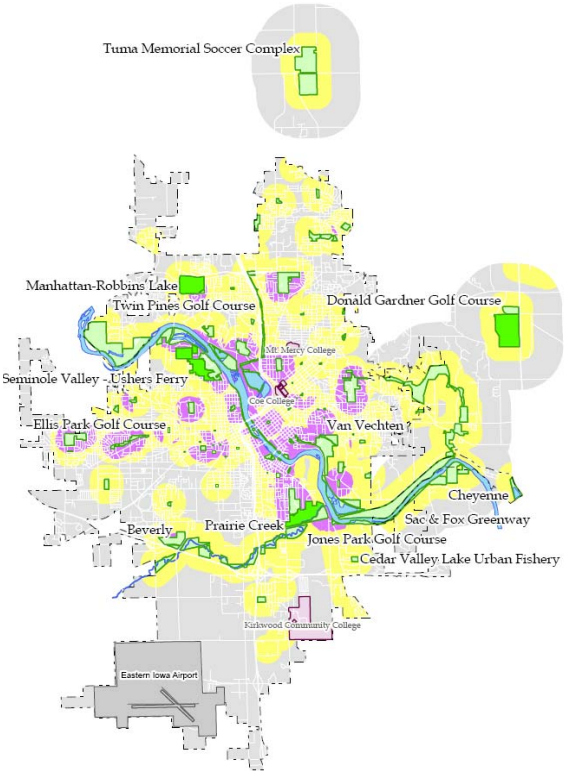
This Perspective shows the Level of Service (LOS) being provided at a neighborhood level by all components within the park system. One and one-third mile buffers have been applied to each component to show the LOS that is easily accessible to residents by either a 10 minute walk (one-third mile from home) or long walk or short bike ride (one mile from home). As described above, the large map (in ***Appendix 3***) with orange buffers shows the complete picture of LOS within the community. In this view of the system, the most prominent concentrations in service are shown by the darkest colors and appear near Ellis Park, around Cedar Lake in the neighborhood between Jones Park and the Cedar River, and in the neighborhood surrounding Bever Park. Conversely, areas of Cedar Rapids that do not have access to recreation at a neighborhood level include the far southern and far northern areas of the corporate limit. In this case the areas that do not have services are of low concern because generally they are agricultural and industrial lands (such as the airport) and do not require access to recreational components at this level.

The inset map shown above and in ***Appendix 2*** summarizes the more detailed orange map. It shows LOS as areas that have the quantity and quality of service to meet set targets for residential areas. In this Perspective the **target is to provide every residence with access to** the score equivalent of **at least one park with four components and one trail**. Areas that meet this target are colored in purple. Areas that do not have access to these things at adequate levels are shown in yellow, and areas that do not have any neighborhood access at this level are shown in gray. For the City of Cedar Rapids, the inset analysis depicts a picture of a community that is providing service whose growth of services is directly proportional to the growth patterns of the City. The established core of the community has service that is meeting target levels, where new growth is occurring has access to some service, and the very periphery of the corporate limit has no neighborhood access to service where there are few residences to require it.

While the GRASP® numerical scoring system is used to create the analytical maps or Perspectives, these numbers can also be used to demonstrate residential access to parks and facilities. ***Table 5*** shows that the area within the corporate limit which has access to neighborhood service is 85 percent, and the average LOS score is much higher than the score needed to exceed the target service levels for a residential neighborhood. In addition, of the area that has service, 62 percent is meeting or exceeding target levels. Please note that this chart only includes the service within the corporate limits of Cedar Rapids. The park system does include several properties that lie outside of the corporate limit (e.g. the Tuma Sports Complex and the Sac and Fox Greenway) which have not been included here except as the service buffers overlap into the City limits.

Table 5: Perspective A- Neighborhood Access to All Components, Overall Statistics

	Total Acres	Percent of Area With LOS	Average LOS Per Acre Served	Percent LOS Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Above Target Minimum Score
Cedar Rapids	44,916	84.8%	141.3	38.0%	62%



Perspective B: Walkable Access to All Components
This Perspective shows the level of service provided to the community at a walkable level. All components are shown and each has only a one-third mile buffer representing about a 10 minute walk. These buffers have been truncated at the primary barriers to pedestrian access (major roadways and waterways). Scores within the buffers are equal to the base score for the components and doubled to reflect the walkable access, as was done on Perspective A. In a sense, this is Perspective A with the one-mile buffers removed.

When compared to Perspective A, service is not nearly as complete. Gaps appear throughout the community and include areas that are older and have higher densities as well as newer lower density neighborhoods. Increasing residents' ability to walk to parks and recreation services is important in goals as established in the 1999 *Cedar Rapids Comprehensive Plan* and as identified in the community survey as an important factor in increasing use of City services.

As the City looks to increase service to areas that have no or low walkable service, it has several options. Schools, as mentioned in the *Comprehensive Plan,* can play a large role in providing service to underserved areas. The City can partner with the School District to improve school grounds and increase the community appeal at these sites. Another option is to increase development at some of the very small parks located in higher density areas. As seen when comparing Perspectives B and C, found in ***Appendix 3*****,** these parcels that are less than one acre in size provide valuable service to these areas. Also mentioned in the *Comprehensive Plan*, it is possible to increase the LOS provided by the properties by partnering with neighborhood groups to help with maintenance and beautification projects.

In areas outside of the dense core of Cedar Rapids, walkable service can be improved by acquiring land, improving trail connections, and increasing the overall quality of walking routes to existing parks and recreation facilities. Again, this Perspective B supports the 1999 *Comprehensive Plan* by suggesting that a required land dedication ordinance would be helpful in acquiring appropriate land in developing parts of the community.

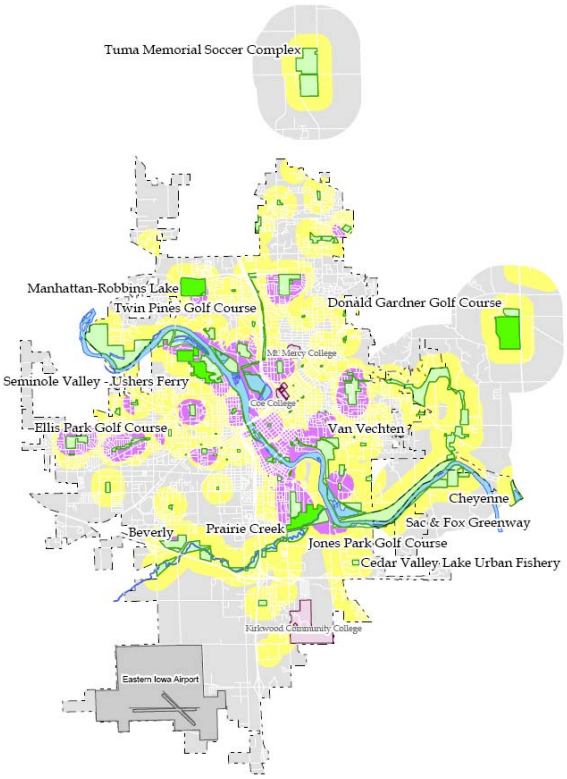
Overall, the City does have gaps in service to residents that would like to walk from their homes to parks. Approximately 57 percent of the corporate area has walkable access to some service. When undeveloped and industrial areas are considered, the gaps are reduced significantly. ***Table 6*** shows the detail of service that is being provided at a walkable level.

Table 6: Perspective B - Walkable Access to All Components, Overall Statistics

Zone	Total Acres	Percent of Area With LOS	Average LOS Per Acre Served	Percent LOS Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Above Target Minimum Score
Cedar Rapids	44916	57.4%	50.3	77%	23%

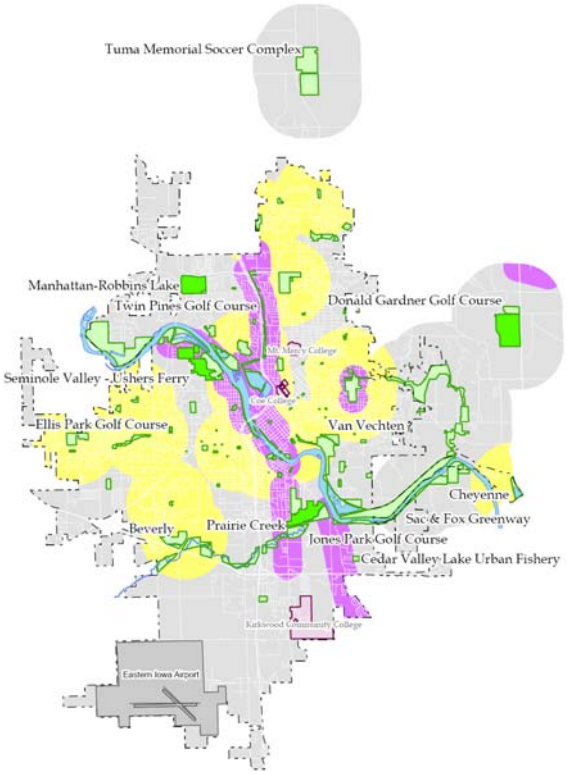
Perspective C: Walkable Access to Parks Larger than One Acre

This Perspective shows walkable access to parks that are larger than one acre. Because Cedar Rapids has a large amount of small parks that function mainly as streetscapes, this analysis tests the recreational value of these properties so that plans can be made for their efficient use and maintenance.



Like Perspective B, similar patterns in service appear and although service is not dramatically affected by removing the small parks, it does remove the few islands of service that exist in the downtown residential areas.

Without the small parks, service overall is decreased 0.8 percent, and the average overall LOS score is reduced by 1.7. While this is not a huge amount, service loss is concentrated in the downtown residential areas that are lacking in services initially. This points to the need to increase service in these areas by either adding parks or facilities in these neighborhoods.



Cedar Rapids takes advantage of its greenways and riparian corridors to provide residents with two extensive trails that follow the Cedar River and the Sac and Fox Greenway. By expanding the trail system to follow other drainages and include more east-west routes, the value of these trails would increase dramatically. An expanded trail system would provide links to other services and increase the overall walkability of the system. ***Table 7*** provides a detailed look at how the City is being served by trails.

Perspective D: Neighborhood Access to Trails

In the Trails Perspective there are several types of trails that are shown:

- Multi-use trails that accommodate multiple user types and extend outside of individual parks to create a community-wide network
- Trails within parks that are geared toward multi-modal use or provide specific access to natural areas
- Loop walks within parks that may not accommodate multiple user types and are used primarily for circuit walking

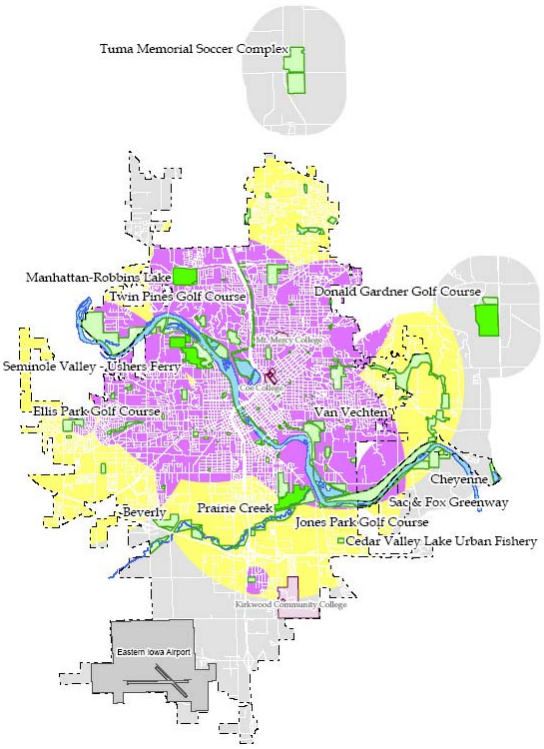
In this Perspective, sidewalks that provide access to components and do not form a loop appropriate for circuit walking are not included.

Flood Impacts to Trails

The Sac and Fox trail, which is primarily soft surface, was rendered impassable by the June 2008 floods. The Cedar River Trail also sustained damage but not to the extent of the Sac and Fox Greenway. After the City restores both trails to pre-flood condition, the LOS in the areas immediately surrounding the trails will be greatly increased. As seen in the walkability Perspective B, residents that live near the Cedar River Trail have a much higher LOS than those who do not. Once repairs are completed, these two main corridors will provide exceptional recreational value to the community and to the region; however, as transportation corridors, they lack connectivity.

Table 7: Perspective D – Neighborhood Access to Trails, Overall Statistics

	Total Acres	Percent of Area With LOS	Average LOS Per Acre Served	Percent LOS Area Below Target Minimum Score	Percent LOS Area Above Target Minimum Score
Cedar Rapids	44916	47.4%	17.6	73.6%	26.4%



Perspective E: Access to Outdoor Aquatics

Like trails, outdoor aquatic centers rank very highly among residents in usage. The City has made a large effort to provide quality outdoor aquatic opportunities for its residents. These opportunities include both large aquatic centers and small splash pads. As the City continues to add opportunities for water play, it will be important to locate them in areas that expand service as much as possible. For this Perspective, large aquatic centers with pools were given a three mile radius (10 min. drive) and the small splash pads were given a one-third mile radius (10 min. walk). Areas that are meeting or exceeding target scores (expectations) have access to two aquatic components.

The resulting analysis shows that it is primarily the developing part of Cedar Rapids that could benefit from additional outdoor aquatic facilities. Of particular note is the far northern part of the City between Marion and Hiawatha as well as the southwestern area of the City.

Before and After: A Look at Changes in LOS Due to the June 2008 Flood

In this analysis, Level of Service is analyzed based on the effects of the June 2008 flood. As shown in the inventory analysis above, 46 of the City's parks and recreation properties were affected by the flood to some degree. Of those affected, some sustained significant damage.

The flood waters affected the LOS within the core of the community as well as the LOS in the City as a whole. GRASP® Perspectives that are described above were created for both pre-flood and post-flood conditions, although shown above for post-flood conditions only. Comparing the two sets of maps give a picture of how the LOS has changed community-wide due to the flood. Since the post-flood condition maps represent current conditions, for the purposes of this analysis, only post-flood condition maps and Perspectives are provided in ***Appendix 3***. A comparison of the changes between pre-flood perspectives and post-flood perspectives can be found below.

Perspective A: Neighborhood Access to All Components
In this comparison the overall coverage of LOS does not change but a shift in quality and quantity of service does occur as there is a four percent loss in service that is meeting expectations. Additionally the average GRASP® score drops by six points.

Perspective B: Walkable Access to All Components
Due to the flood damage, there was a small loss in LOS coverage community-wide. Additionally the average GRASP® score dropped by four points and the areas that had service that was meeting expectations dropped one percent.

Perspective C: Walkable Access to Parks Larger than One Acre
Similar drops in LOS occurred in this Perspective as was seen in Perspective B. Overall, the average GRASP® score fell four points, overall coverage dropped 19 acres, and areas that have LOS that is meeting expectations fell by one percent.

Perspective D: Neighborhood Access to Trails
This Perspective was affected the most due to the flood. Most of the service changes are due to the complete loss of the Sac and Fox Greenway. Additionally, wash outs of small sections of the Cedar River trail also created a loss in service for the City. Coverage was decreased overall by nine percent, the average GRASP® score went down by one point, and the loss of LOS that meets expectations went down by six percent.

Overall, the parks and recreation LOS within the City of Cedar Rapids declined due to the flood. However, the loss was comparatively minor when compared to the loss of homes and private property. The high acreage of floodplain contained within the park system as mentioned above, served the City well to mitigate the affects of the waters on the community. Of the park properties that were affected by the flood, many of them were low-maintenance, natural areas that were able to take flood waters with little or no change to recreational value. In many ways, the Cedar Rapids park system functioned well for the City by accommodating the flood waters with limited impact to developed recreation.

Other Tools for Measuring Level of Service (LOS)

Besides the GRASP® Perspectives and associated LOS numbers, this plan also uses capacities based analysis tools. One tool determines capacity by comparing GRASP® scoring to population, and the other tool models traditional methods of determining LOS by comparing quantity of park components per population.

Communitywide LOS

Table 8 shows the numerical indices for LOS that accounts for both quantity and quality of components in Cedar Rapids. The table shows the community **GRASP®** Index for each component, as well as the number of **GRASP®** points needed to maintain the current indices as the population grows.

Table 8: Community GRASP® Index

Community Components GRASP® Scores and Population Ratios

	Current Population (2008)	128,056	Projected Population (2015)	137,293
	Total GRASP® Community Score per component type	GRASP® score per 1000 population (GRASP© Index)	Total GRASP® score needed at projected population	Additional GRASP® score needed
Aqua Feat, Complex	41.4	0.32	44	3.0
Aqua Feat, Spray	71.5	0.56	77	5.2
Ballfield	222.6	1.74	239	16.1
Basketball	63.9	0.50	69	4.6
Disk Golf	12	0.09	13	0.9
Dog Park	7.2	0.06	8	0.5
Garden, Community	17.7	0.14	19	1.3
Golf	19.2	0.15	21	1.4
Loop Walk	120.1	0.94	129	8.7
MP Field, all sizes	361.4	2.82	387	26.1
Open Turf	316.7	2.47	340	22.8
Playground, all sizes	241.5	1.89	259	17.4
Shelter, Group (with and without restrooms)	157	1.23	168	11.3
Tennis	137	1.07	147	9.9
TOTAL	**1789.20**	**4.49**	**617.12**	**41.52**

Table 8 shows that in order to keep up with projected population growth over the next seven years, the City should concentrate on improving or expanding the LOS as provided by ballfields, multi-purpose fields, open turf, and playgrounds. This is based on keeping up with the current LOS that is being provided today. When comparing this information to the community survey results, the need for athletic fields is low, indicating that much of the need is being satisfied with current facilities. That indicates that the City could move other improvements above athletic fields on the list of priorities or take lower cost measures to increase the GRASP® score such as improving existing fields. Other efforts to increase community-wide access to components should be concentrated on increasing and improving open turf areas, playgrounds, and (as shown in the survey) picnic shelters.

This information can be used to plan for future improvements to the parks and recreation infrastructure to accommodate growth. Because **GRASP®** scores are a blend of quantity and quality, it is possible to increase them by either adding components or improving the quality of existing ones. In most cases, a combination of the two will be recommended. Used in conjunction with the **Capacities LOS Table**, the best combination of quantity and quality can be determined for planning purposes. The **GRASP®** Indices also allow the community to benchmark its combined LOS for quality and quantity of service over time and measure its progress.

Capacities Level of Service

For some components, the quantity needed is proportional to the population that will be served by that component. This is a fairly easy calculation when components are programmed for use. The programming determines how many people will be using the facilities over a period of time. Sports fields and courts fall into this category. For other components, the ratio of components to the population may vary, depending upon the size or capacity of the component and the participation levels within the community for the activity served by the component. Skate parks and group picnic facilities fall into this category.

Table 9 represents the current level of service and projected needs for community components for Cedar Rapids. This table closely resembles a traditional LOS analysis and shows how the quantities of certain park and recreation components compare to population. For each component, the table shows the current quantity of that component on a “per-1000 persons” basis (referred to as the Capacity LOS) and the pro-rata number of persons in the community represented by each component. This kind of analysis can be used to show the capacity of the current inventory – in other words, how many people are potentially being served by park components.

Table 9: Capacities Level of Service for Outdoor Components

		Acres	Aqua Feat, Complex	Aqua Feat, Spray	Ballfield	Basketball	Disk Golf	Dog Park	Garden, Community	Golf	Loop Walk	MP Field, all sizes	Open Turf	Playground, all sizes	Shelter, Group (with and without restrooms)	Tennis	Recreational Trails (in miles) Primitive and Multi-use.
INVENTORY																	
Components		4,171	5	19	41	14	2	1	3	4	19	56	71	54	29	23	25
CURRENT RATIO PER POPULATION																	
CURRENT POPULATION 2008	**128,056**																
Current Ratio per 1000 Population		32.57	0.04	0.15	0.32	0.11	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.15	0.44	0.55	0.42	0.23	0.18	0.20
Population per component		31	25,611	6,740	3,123	9,147	64,028	128,056	42,685	32,014	6,740	2,287	1,804	2,371	4,416	5,568	5,122
Commonly Referenced " Standards"		10	20,000*		5,000	5,000						10,000				2,000	
PROJECTED POPULATION - YEAR 2015	**137,293**																
Total # needed to maintain current ratio of all existing facilities at projected population		**4472**	**5**	**20**	**44**	**15**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**	**20**	**60**	**76**	**58**	**31**	**25**	**27**
Number that should be added to achieve current ratio at projected population		*301*	*0*	*1*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*2*	*2*	*2*

Note: This table includes outdoor parks and recreation components. It should be noted that the indoor Bender Pool is not included in this table.

When looking at the City's facilities from a conventional LOS perspective, Cedar Rapids is providing a much higher level of service for ballfields and multi-purpose fields, while providing a lower LOS for basketball and tennis which may be appropriate for Cedar Rapids. The survey results showed a lower importance on adding tennis, basketball, and soccer facilities, where a higher (although still somewhat low) importance was placed on improving ballfields.

It is important to note that this table is simply one tool that is used to make final recommendations and set priorities. The numbers of facilities shown on this table may differ from the final recommendations due to availability of land, ability to upgrade existing facilities, and the possibility of partnerships. In addition, changing recreation trends and interests also impact future planning for parks and recreation facilities.

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Appendix 5 – Tuma Complex Ballfield Concept Plan

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TUMA Site Enhancements
Cedar Rapids, IA

February 2010

JJR

Appendix 6 – Neighborhood Open Space Requirements

Following are recommended neighborhood open space or parkland dedication requirements to guide planning efforts by staff to refine these into a formal City Ordinance for adoption by City Council.

Neighborhood Open Space Requirements - DRAFT

PURPOSE

The Neighborhood Open Space Requirements provide adequate open space availability to residents of new developments at a rate that is consistent with the current Level of Service present in Cedar Rapids. The provisions of this requirement mandate that development, which creates increased need for neighborhood open space, contribute toward the public open space/parkland required to ensure continued level of service. Useable neighborhood open space includes: parkland, greenways, and trails. This requirement is meant to provide service at a neighborhood level and is not intended to provide large community parks, sports complexes or other large community-scaled facilities.

APPLICABILITY

The Neighborhood Open Space Requirements apply to all new residential developments, including infill development, commercial developments containing residential uses, and planned developments.

Dedication of Land:

A. Amount of Land to be Dedicated

The amount of land to be dedicated is determined based on the existing level of service of neighborhood open space that is currently being provided to the residents of Cedar Rapids. Not included in this equation are special use parks, open lands and natural areas, regional greenways, or streetscapes. (See ***Attachment A*** for a list of specific properties that are and are not included in this level of service determination.) Alternatively developers can choose to provide recreational amenities at a walkable level to each residence to meet the City's comprehensive plan goals of walkability.

1. Five acres of neighborhood open space is required at a rate of five acres per 1000 people.

-OR-

2. Access to at least four public recreational components (from walkability list below) within 1/3 mile from every proposed residence.

-AND-

Access to connecting trail easement or dedication of trail segments as specified in the City Comprehensive Trails Master Plan

B. Nature of Land to be Dedicated

Except as otherwise required by the City, all dedications of land shall meet the following criteria:

Connectivity

Open space shall connect to one or more of the following land uses located within or adjacent to the development:

Public parks or greenways
School sites
Other open space
Local and regional trails
Shopping and activity centers
Employment centers
Other land uses as determined by the City.

Usability

At least 90 percent of the land to be dedicated shall be outside of significant resources such as: wetlands, floodplains, storm water management facilities, areas with slope greater than 15 percent, lakes, streams, riparian corridors, or other area the City deems inappropriate for neighborhood open space such as topography, flooding potential or contamination.

At the City's discretion, the City may consider the dedication of lakes, ponds, creeks, other water bodies, wetlands falling under the jurisdiction of State or Federal agencies and other sensitive areas including woodland areas, both as 10 percent of and in addition to the dedicated land required by this Article, if sufficient abutting land is dedicated as a usable, public recreation area or park.

Dedicated parkland must be one acre in size or provide the minimum walkablility access unless otherwise approved by the City.

Useful Configuration

Park and open space land shall be regularly shaped on at least four sides and contiguous.

The size of the parcel should be appropriate to the needed amenities in that location. Linear dedications should be wide enough to accommodate trails and adjacent greenways including sufficient width to protect the greenway and allow for an additional 20' right-of-way for trail alignment.

Access

Preferred access to open space shall be street frontage along one side of the parcel, with no more than one side abutting private residences Otherwise access of a minimum of sixty feet wide is required. Whenever possible, neighborhood open space should be accessible by trails and greenways. Grades in the access point should be such that provides reasonable pedestrian access.

Existing Character
The existing character of the property should be preserved when possible.
Existing (non-invasive) trees and vegetation shall be preserved wherever practicable.

Protection of Unique or Significant Resources for up to 10 percent of the Dedicated Area such as:
Wetlands
Floodplains
Lakes, rivers, stream corridors, and riparian areas
Wildlife habitat and migration corridors
Steep slope areas
Significant stands of mature trees and existing vegetation
Ridgelines
Geologic hazard areas (e.g., expansive soils, rockfalls, faulting)
Significant views, visible from public rights-of-way (including greenways) and public parks

C. Responsibility for Site Preparation

The City may require the subdivider or developer to grade and seed those portions of the dedicated land to be improved prior to dedication of the property and prior to City's acceptance of the dedication. Where the dedicated land is located adjacent to a street, the subdivider or developer shall remain responsible for the installation of utilities, sidewalks, and other improvements required along that street segment. Prior to dedication, the subdivider or developer shall be responsible for restoring satisfactory ground cover and controlling erosion on land to be dedicated that has been disrupted as a result of development activities by the subdivider or developer.

D. Procedure and Timing for Dedication of Land

Land dedications should be reviewed at the time of preliminary plat or the site development plan. At that submittal, any variances or fees in lieu incorporated as a part of the project shall be described and submitted as a letter. The Designated Parks and Recreation Department personnel shall review and revise the dedication as submitted.

Once the final subdivision plat or final planned development is approved and any public improvements required to be installed by the subdivider or developer within the land to be dedicated have been installed, approved, and accepted by the City, and the subdivider or developer has completed site preparation pursuant to paragraph B-C, above, the subdivider or developer shall provide required documentation conveying the dedicated land to the City within 2 years of final plat approval (or final planned development approval) or by the time the City issues 50 percent of the certificates of occupancy for the subdivision, at the discretion of the City, or as otherwise specified in the subdivider's or developer agreement.

The City shall formally accept the dedication of land for open space, parkland or greenways/trails by resolution.

PAYMENT OF FEES IN LIEU OF LAND DEDICATION

A. At the discretion of the City, developers may propose to pay a fee in lieu of part or all of land dedication requirements. This request must be made at the time of preliminary plat or site development plan and approved by all reviewing agencies.

B. Fees in lieu will be based on fair market value determined by an agreed upon qualified real estate appraiser. Appraiser costs will be shared by the City and the Developer.

C. The City may, at its discretion, require the payment of fees in lieu of the subdivider dedicating land, if the City finds that all or part of the land required for dedication is not suitable for public recreation and open space purposes, or upon a finding that the recreational needs of the proposed subdivision can be met by other park, greenway, or recreational facilities planned or constructed by the City within reasonable proximity to the subdivision. The City shall consider the following factors in making its determination:

1. *Recreational and open space elements of the City Plans, and the relation of the subdivision to the proposed open space and recreational areas;*
2. *Topographic and geologic conditions of the land available for dedication;*
3. *Size, shape, location of and access to the land available for dedication;*
4. *The character and recreational needs of the neighborhood where the subdivision is located;*
5. *The costs of developing open space and recreational areas in the subdivision;*
6. *The actual or potential development of open space and recreational areas on land adjacent to the subdivision which will serve the needs of the subdivision;*
7. *Recommendations of staff, the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission; and*
8. *Any other relevant information.*

USE OF SMALL PARCELS TO MEET NEIGHBORHOOD OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS

At the discretion of the City, developers may be allowed to develop parcels smaller than one acre to count toward the neighborhood open space requirement. The total of these parcels must still meet the acres per thousand or the walkability requirements and must be developed to include components approved by the City. The ownership of these small parcels will not be transferred to the city but remain in the ownership of the developer or homeowners association who will be responsible for all maintenance of the parcels. The developer shall grant a full public easement to all neighborhood open space parcels meeting these criteria.

Note: Italicized text identifies language taken from the Iowa City ordinance.

Walkability List

Park Components that count towards walkability goal

1. Group picnic shelter (min. size 500 sf and 3 tables)
2. Open turf area (min. size 3,000 sf., max size 10,000 sf)
3. Natural area (min. size 10,000 sf)
1. Amphitheater to seat 50
2. Basketball (one full court) or (1/2 court depending upon park size at discretion of parks & recreation department)
3. Bocce ball
4. Disc golf course (min. nine baskets)
5. Fitness course
6. Handball or racquetball
7. Horseshoe pits
8. Loop walk (min. length 2000 lf.)
9. Natural area with pedestrian access
10. Open turf
11. Playground
12. Practice backstop (with turf size adequate for min. 200 ft. foul lines – may be on required turf area)
13. Splash pad
14. Tennis
15. Volleyball

Or may include at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Staff

1. Community Center
2. Fishing facilities
3. In-line hockey rink
4. Outdoor pool
5. Skate Park
6. Other specialty components may be added as approved by the Parks & Recreation Department if a need is demonstrated

Appendix 6 - Attachment A

Existing Parks that Count Toward Neighborhood Open Space Level of Service

Park	*Acres*
Daniels	22.1
Delaney	15.8
Shaver	46.2
Shawnee	19.6
Bever	94.9
Cherry Hill	61.4
Ellis	93.2
Jones	69.5
Noelridge	95.9
10th Square	0.4
Alandale	2
Apache	4.7
Arrowhead	0.4
Artists Memorial	0.2
Cedar Lake	1
Central	0.2
Chandler	0.2
Green Square	2.1
Hidder	1.7
Kenwood	1.6
Masaryk	1.7
McCloud Run	0.9
Northview	1.1
Papoose	3.7
Pierce	1.9
Plaza	1.7
Redmond	1.3
Sinclair	2.5
Sokol	1.7
Stejskal	2.3
Tokhiem	0.5
Tomahawk	0.9
Twin Pines	3.8
Wellington	0.9
Williams	0.3
Cedar Valley	5.6

Cleveland	8.7
Fox Trail	5.8
Huntington Ridge	7.2
Jacolyn	7.5
Lincolnway	14.7
Navajo	10
Osborn	5.7
Riverside	11.8
Time Check	5.9
Whittam	5.8
Wilderness Estates	7.6
Cedar River Trail ROW	39.1
Riverfront East	7.8
Riverfront West	13.2
GRAND TOTAL	**714.7**

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Appendix 7 – Trail System Connectivity

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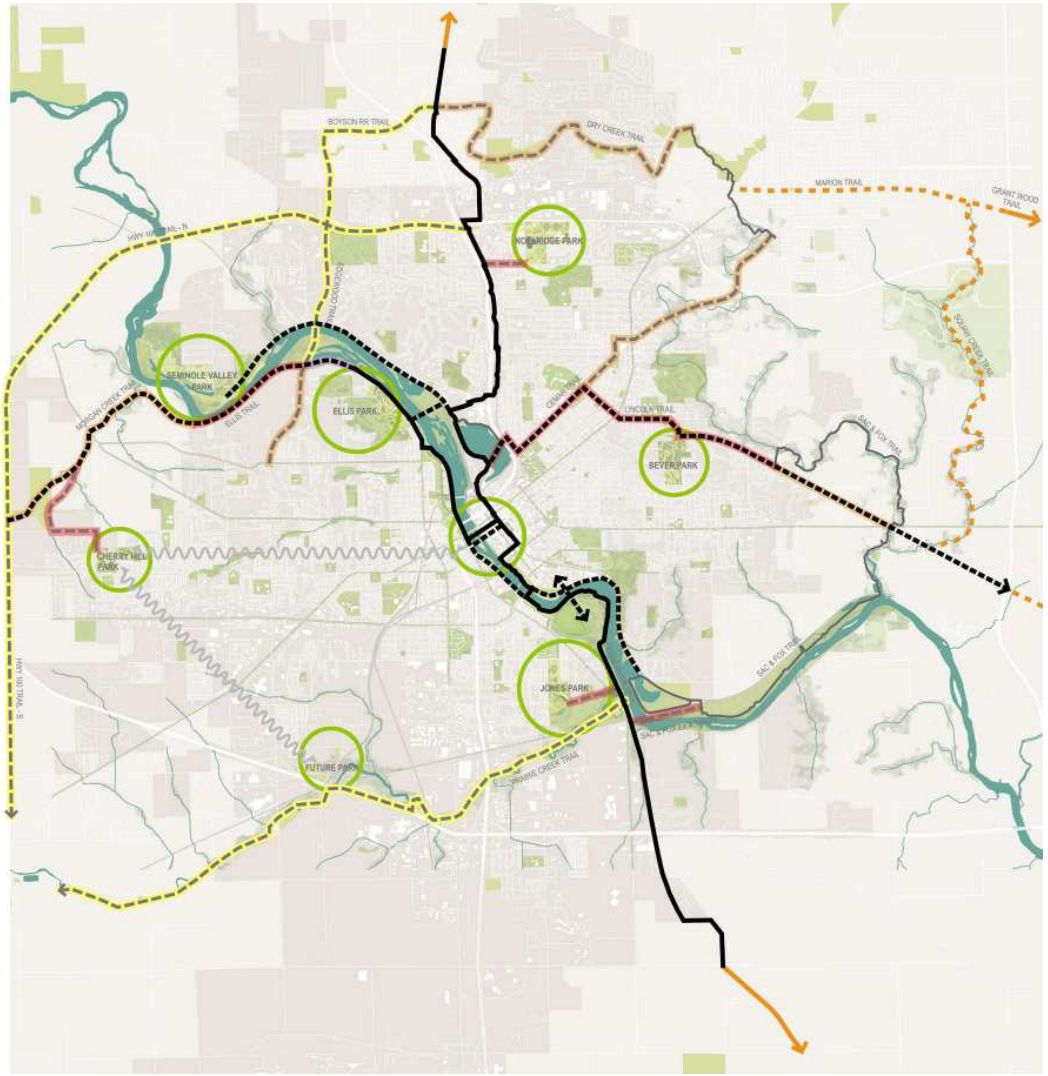
Increase Connectivity: Trail System



Develops trails that **link regional systems and neighborhoods** to the Riverfront, the Greenway, and the Downtown core, while also **connecting signature parks** for local, recreational opportunities.

TRAILS

- EXISTING SPINE TRAIL
- PROPOSED SPINE TRAIL
- EXISTING CONNECTOR TRAIL
- PROPOSED CONNECTOR TRAIL
- EXISTING REGIONAL TRAIL
- PROPOSED REGIONAL TRAIL

PHASING

- FUNDED
- 1ST PHASE
- 2ND PHASE
- 3RD PHASE
- 4TH PHASE - ALIGNMENT T.B.D.

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Appendix 8 – Guidelines for Converting Turf Areas to Native Plantings

Parkland areas that should be considered for conversion to native plantings include those that:

- Are adjacent to existing woodlands or other native areas.
- Have existing turf that is in poor health due to inappropriate amounts of water, sun, etc.
- Are difficult to mow and maintain.
- Have slopes steeper that 5:1.
- Have low pedestrian use.
- Have high visibility and thus high educational potential.
- Are primarily only one type of planting (turf) where biodiversity would increase the use and value of the property.
- Are difficult to maintain due to distance to infrastructure such as roads, water, etc.
- Would provide wildlife habitat value.

Parcels that are generally not good choices for conversion to natural plantings include areas that:

- Receive high amounts of foot traffic off of assigned paths.
- Require low plantings for safety.
- Are small parcels in dense neighborhoods.
- Are popular for free play such as Frisbee, sunbathing, etc.
- Are sports fields or are used for programmed recreation.

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Appendix 9 – Subsidy Allocation Pyramid Methodology

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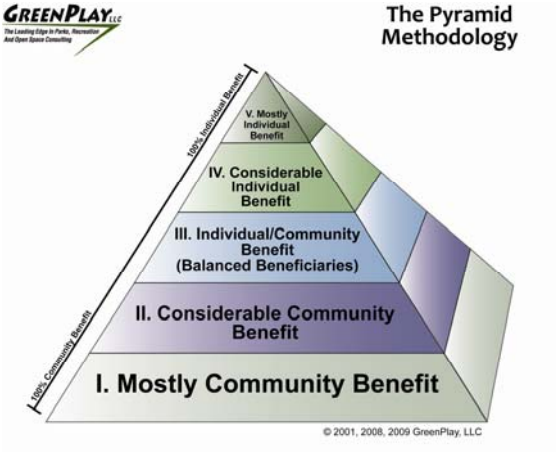
THE PYRAMID METHODOLOGY: COST RECOVERY AND SUBSIDY ALLOCATION PHILOSOPHY

The creation of a cost recovery and subsidy allocation philosophy and policy is a key component to maintaining an agency's financial control, equitably pricing offerings, and helping to identify core services including programs and facilities.

Critical to this philosophical undertaking is the support and buy-in of elected officials and advisory boards, staff, and ultimately, citizens. Whether or not significant changes are called for, the organization should be certain that it philosophically aligns with its constituents. The development of a financial resource allocation philosophy and policy is built upon a very logical foundation, based upon the theory that those who benefit from parks and recreation services ultimately pay for services.



The development of a financial resource allocation philosophy can be separated into the following steps:

Step 1 – Building on Your Organization's Values, Vision, and Mission

The premise of this process is to align agency services with organizational values, vision, and mission. It is important that organizational values are reflected in the vision and mission. Oftentimes, mission statements are a starting point and further work needs to occur to create a more detailed common understanding of the interpretation of the mission and a vision for the future. This is accomplished by engaging staff and community members in a discussion about a variety of Filters.

Step 2 – Understanding the Pyramid Methodology, the Benefits Filter, and Secondary Filters

Filters are a series of continuums covering different ways of viewing service provision. **Filters** influence the final positioning of services as they relate to each other and are summarized below. The **Benefits Filter**, however; forms the **foundation** of the **Pyramid Model** and is used in this discussion to illustrate a cost recovery philosophy and policies for parks and recreation organizations.

Filter	Definition
Benefit	Who receives the benefit of the service? (Skill development, education, physical health, mental health, safety)
Access/Type of Service	Is the service available to everyone equally? Is participation or eligibility restricted by diversity factors (i.e., age, ability, skill, financial)?
Organizational Responsibility	Is it the organization's responsibility or obligation to provide the service based upon mission, legal mandate, or other obligation or requirement?
Historical Expectations	What have we always done that we cannot change?
Anticipated Impacts	What is the anticipated impact of the service on existing resources? On other users? On the environment? What is the anticipated impact of not providing the service?
Social Value	What is the perceived social value of the service by constituents, city staff and leadership, and policy makers? Is it a community builder?

THE BENEFITS FILTER

The principal foundation of the Pyramid is the **Benefits Filter.** Conceptually, the base level of the pyramid represents the mainstay of a public parks and recreation system. Services appropriate to higher levels of the pyramid should only be offered when the preceding levels below are comprehensive enough to provide a foundation for the next level. This foundation and upward progression is intended to represent public parks and recreation's core mission, while also reflecting the growth and maturity of an organization as it enhances its service offerings.

It is often easier to integrate the values of the organization with its mission if they can be visualized. An ideal philosophical model for this purpose is the pyramid. In addition to a physical structure, *pyramid* is defined by Webster's Dictionary as "an immaterial structure built on a broad supporting base and narrowing gradually to an apex." Parks and recreation programs are built with a broad supporting base of core services, enhanced with more specialized services as resources allow. Envision a pyramid sectioned horizontally into five levels.

MOSTLY COMMUNITY Benefit

The foundational level of the Pyramid is the largest, and includes those services including programs and facilities which **MOSTLY** benefit the **COMMUNITY** as a whole. These services may increase property values, provide safety, address social needs, and enhance quality of life for residents. The community generally pays for these basic services via tax support. These services are generally offered to residents at a minimal charge or with no fee. A large percentage of the agency's tax support would fund this level of the Pyramid.

Examples of these services could include: the existence of the community parks and recreation system; the ability for youngsters to visit facilities on an informal basis; low-income or scholarship programs; park and facility planning and design; park maintenance; or others.

NOTE: All examples above are generic – individual agencies vary in their determination of which services belong in the foundation level of the Pyramid based upon agency values, vision, mission, demographics, goals, etc.

CONSIDERABLE COMMUNITY Benefit

The second and smaller level of the Pyramid represents services which promote individual physical and mental well-being, and may begin to provide skill development. They are generally traditionally expected services and/or beginner instructional levels. These services are typically assigned fees based upon a specified percentage of direct (and may also include indirect) costs. These costs are partially offset by both a tax subsidy to account for **CONSIDERABLE COMMUNITY** benefit and participant fees to account for the **Individual** benefit received from the service.

Examples of these services could include: the capacity for teens and adults to visit facilities on an informal basis;, ranger led interpretive programs;, beginning level instructional programs and classes; etc.

BALANCED INIDIVIDUAL/COMMUNITY Benefit

The third and even smaller level of the Pyramid represents services that promote individual physical and mental well-being, and provide an intermediate level of skill development. This level provides balanced **INDIVIDUAL** and **COMMUNITY** benefit and should be priced accordingly. The individual fee is set to recover a higher percentage of cost than those services that fall within lower Pyramid levels.

Examples of these services could include: summer recreational day camp; summer sports leagues; year-round swim team; etc.

CONSIDERABLE INDIVIDUAL Benefit

The fourth and still smaller Pyramid level represents specialized services generally for specific groups, and those which may have a competitive focus. Services in this level may be priced to recover full cost, including all direct and indirect expenses.

Examples of these services could include: specialty classes; golf; and outdoor adventure programs

MOSTLY INDIVIDUAL Benefit

At the top of the Pyramid, the fifth and smallest level represents services which have profit center potential, may be in an enterprise fund, may be in the same market space as the private sector, or may fall outside the core mission of the agency. In this level, services should be priced to recover full cost in addition to a designated profit percentage

Examples of these activities could include: elite diving teams; golf lessons; foc rentals; and other facility rentals such as for weddings or other services.

Step 3 – Developing the Organization's Categories of Service

In order to avoid trying to determine cost recovery or subsidy allocation levels for each individual agency service including every program, facility or property, it is advantageous to categorize agency services into like categories. This step also includes the development of category definitions that detail and define each category; and service inventory "checks and balance" to insure that all agency services belong within a developed category. Examples of Categories of Service could include: Beginner instructional classes; Special events; and Concessions/Vending.

Step 4 – Sorting the Categories Services of Service onto the Pyramid

It is critical that this sorting step be done with staff, governing body and citizen representatives involved. This is where ownership is created for the philosophy, while participants discover the current and possibly varied operating histories, cultures, and organizational values, vision and mission. It is the time to develop consensus and get everyone on the same page, the page that is written together. Remember, this effort must reflect the community and must align with the thinking of policy makers.

Sample Policy Development Language:

XXX community brought together staff from across the department, agency leadership, and citizens to sort existing programs into each level of the Pyramid. The process was facilitated by an objective and impartial facilitator in order to hear all viewpoints. It generated discussion and debate as participants discovered what different people had to say about serving culturally and economically varied segments of the community; about historic versus active-use parks; about the importance of adult versus youth versus senior activities; and other philosophical and values-based discussions. This process gets at both the "what" and "why" with the intention of identifying common ground and consensus.

Step 5 – Determining (or Confirming) Current Subsidy/Cost Recovery Levels

This step establishes the expectation that the agency will confirm or determine current cost recovery and subsidy allocation levels by service area. This will include consideration of revenues sources and services costs or expenses. Typically, staff may not be cost accounting consistently, and these inconsistencies will become apparent. Results of this step will identify whether staff members know what it costs to provide services to the community; whether staff have the capacity or resources necessary to account for and track costs; Whether accurate cost recovery levels can be identified; and whether cost centers or general ledger line items align with how the agency may want to track these costs in the future.

Step 6 – Defining Direct and Indirect Costs

The definition of direct and indirect costs can vary from agency to agency. What's important is that all costs associated with directly running a program or providing a service are identified and consistently applied across the system. Direct costs typically include all the specific, identifiable expenses (fixed and variable) associated with providing a service. These expenses would not exist without the service and may be variable costs. Defining direct costs, along with examples and relative formulas is necessary during this step.

Indirect costs typically encompass overhead (fixed and variable) including the administrative costs of the agency. These costs would exist without any specific service but may also be attributed to a specific agency operation (in which case they are direct expenses of that operation). If desired, all or a portion of indirect costs can be allocated, in which case they become a direct cost allocation.

Step 7 – Establishing Cost Recovery/Subsidy Goals

Subsidy and cost recovery are complementary. If a program is subsidized at 75%, it has a 25% cost recovery, and vice-versa. It is more powerful to work through this exercise thinking about where the tax subsidy is used rather than what is the cost recovery. When it is complete, you can reverse thinking to articulate the cost recovery philosophy, as necessary.

The overall subsidy/cost recovery level is comprised of the average of everything in all of the levels together as a whole. This step identifies what the current subsidy level is for the programs sorted into each level. There may be quite a range within each level, and some programs could overlap with other levels of the pyramid. This will be rectified in the final steps.

This step must reflect your community and must align with the thinking of policy makers regarding the broad picture financial goals and objectives.

Examples

Categories in the bottom level of the Pyramid may be completely or mostly subsidized, with the agency having established limited cost recovery to convey the value of the experience to the user. An established 90-100% subsidy articulates the significant community benefit resulting from these categories.

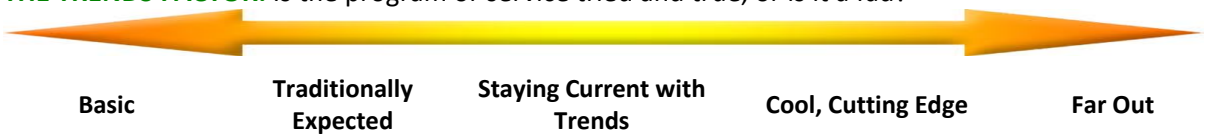
The top level of the Pyramid may range from 0% subsidy to 50% excess revenues above all costs, or more. Or, the agency may not have any Categories of Service in the top level.

Step 8 – Understanding and Preparing for Influential Factors and Considerations

Inherent to sorting programs onto the Pyramid model using the Benefits and other filters is the realization that other factors come into play. This can result in decisions to place services in other levels than might first be thought. These factors also follow a continuum; however, do not necessarily follow the five levels like the Benefits Filter. In other words, a specific continuum may fall completely within the first two levels of the Pyramid. These factors can aid in determining core versus ancillary services. These factors represent a layering effect and should be used to make adjustments to an initial placement on the Pyramid.

THE COMMITMENT FACTOR: What is the intensity of the program, what is the commitment of the participant?

THE TRENDS FACTOR: Is the program or service tried and true, or is it a fad?



THE POLITICAL FILTER: What is out of our control?

This filter does not operate on a continuum, but is a reality, and will dictate from time to time where certain programs fit in the pyramid

THE MARKETING FACTOR: What is the effect of the program in attracting customers?

THE RELATIVE COST TO PROVIDE FACTOR: What is the cost per participant?

THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS FACTOR: What are the financial realities of the community?

Low Ability to Pay **Pay to Play**

FINANCIAL GOALS FACTOR: Are we targeting a financial goal such as increasing sustainability, decreasing subsidy reliance?

100% Subsidized **Generates Excess Revenue over Direct Expenditures**

Step 9 – Implementation

Across the country, ranges in overall cost recovery levels can vary from less than 10% to over 100%. The agency sets their goals based upon values, vision, mission, stakeholder input, funding, and/or other criteria. This process may have been completed to determine present cost recovery levels, or, the agency may have needed to increase cost recovery levels in order to meet budget targets. Sometimes, simply implementing a policy to develop equity is enough without a concerted effort to increase revenues. Upon completion of steps 1-8, the agency is positioned to illustrate and articulate where it has been and where it is heading from a financial perspective.

Step 8-10 – Evaluation

The results of this process may be used to:

- articulate and illustrate a comprehensive cost recovery and subsidy allocation philosophy
- train staff at all levels as to why and how things are priced the way they are
- shift subsidy to where is it most appropriately needed
- benchmark future financial performance
- enhance financial sustainability
- recommend service reductions to meet budget subsidy targets, or show how revenues can be increased as an alternative
- justifiably price new services

*This **Cost Recovery/Subsidy Allocation Philosophy: The Pyramid Methodology** Outline is provided by:*

GREENPLAY LLC
The Leading Edge In Parks, Recreation And Open Space Consulting

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Appendix 10 – Iowa Grant Resources

Parks, Recreation, & Trails

The Hall-Perrine Foundation
http://www.hallperrine.org/
Mission: The Hall-Perrine Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life for people of Linn county, Iowa, by responding to changing social economic and cultural needs.

Grants are confined to nonprofit tax-exempt organizations, to be used for charitable purposes. Grants must be for programs and projects for the benefit of the Linn county community.

Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation
http://www.gcrcf.org
For more information, contact Cali Beals at 319-462-6944.

The Community Fund

The Community Fund provides time limited grants within a range of $4,000 - $10,000. Typically, these awards are made to newer projects or programs. Though not common, two-year grants may be funded. Contact the Director of Programs at GCRCF to discuss this prior to submitting your proposal.

The Community Fund seeks applications in all of the traditional categories – Arts & Culture, Community Development, the Environment, Education and Health & Human Service.

The Momentum Fund
The Momentum Fund makes grants to existing programs that have demonstrated successful outcomes. Projects must have been in existence for two years or a length of time sufficient to demonstrate that the program is successfully achieving its stated outcome goals. The Momentum Fund seeks applications in all of the traditional categories – Arts & Culture, Community Development, the Environment, Education, and Health & Human Service.

All grant awards will be given for a two-year period. Grants will be made in a small grant category up to $5,000 per year for two years and grants will be made in the larger grant category up to $25,000 per year for two years.

Though technically not ineligible, projects which received funding from the Community Fund in the previous spring funding cycle will not be as competitive.

The Linn County Endowment Fund
The Linn County Endowment Fund gives priority to enhancing quality of life and community development outside the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area.

The Linn County Endowment Fund was created by the Iowa Legislature. It is funded by state legislation that distributes half of one-percent of the state's gambling revenues to non-gambling counties. Every year since 2006, the Linn County Endowment Fund has received a distribution from the state legislature. Seventy-five percent of those funds will be distributed to charitable projects within Linn County. The remaining twenty-five percent will be placed in a permanent endowment fund at The Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation and used to benefit Linn County nonprofits in perpetuity.

Grant applications will be reviewed by the Linn County Endowment Fund committee, which was appointed by The Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation after consultation with the Linn County Supervisors. The grant committee will be supported by the staff of The Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation.

Federal Recreational Trails
Iowa Department of Transportation
Project Planning-Administration
Phone: (515) 239-1621
Web site: www.dot.state.ia.us/

This program will help fund the design, acquisition, construction and maintenance of a recreational trail, both motorized and non-motorized. The deadline for grants is October 1.

Land and Water Conservation Fund
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Wallace State Office Building
502 East Ninth Street
Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: (515) 281-3013
Web site: www.iowadnr.com/grants/landwater.html

This program will assist communities to promote outdoor recreational opportunities. Funds can be used for land acquisition and construction of facilities. A 50 percent local match is required. If funds are available, the application deadline will be in early spring.

Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP)
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Wallace State Office Building
502 East Ninth Street
Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: (515) 281-5973
Web site: www.iowadnr.com/reap/

This project will help projects such as trails, shelter houses, parks, preserves and city forests. Grant amounts are based on the population of the city. The limits for how much a city can receive in any one-year range from $50,000 for small cities to $300,000 for large cities. Check web site for program availability.

State Recreational Trails
Iowa Department of Transportation
Project Planning-Administration
Phone: (515) 239-1621
Web site: www.dot.state.ia.us/

This program will help fund the design, acquisition, and construction of a recreational trail in Iowa, whether it is for bicycles or scenic purposes. Projects must have statewide impact.

Water Recreation Access Cost-Share Program
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Wallace State Office Building
502 E. 9th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: (515) 281-6281
Web site: www.state.ia.us/parks
Through a program funded by the state marine fuel tax, public agencies can apply for funding for the acquisition or development of public recreational boating access to Iowa waters. This includes projects such as boat ramps, docks, boat slips, shoreline protection, parking lots and fencing. Approximately $200,000 is available each year. The local entity is typically required to provide 25 percent to the state's 75 percent of funding.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation
One Michigan Avenue East
Battle Creek, MI 49017
Phone: (269) 968-1611
Web site: wkkf.org

This program supports comprehensive approaches that integrate resources and foster cooperation at the family, neighborhood, community, and policy levels. Program applicants need to link economic and social resources for community development projects. Applications will be accepted on a continual basis.

Mission
The W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports children, families, and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society.

Tourism, Heritage, & Culture

Historical Resource Develop Program (HRDP)
REAP-funded program helps Iowans preserve historical resources
Contact: Jeff Morgan, Jeff.Morgan@iowa.gov, (515) 281-3858, or
HRDP applications must be received by 4:30 p.m., May 15, 2008 in the SHSI offices at 600 E. Locust Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. More information is available at www.iowahistory.org or by calling 515-281-4228.

HRDP is funded by the Resource Enhancement and Protection Act (REAP), passed by the Iowa General Assembly in 1989. Through REAP, local government units, various organizations and private individuals can receive funding for eligible projects. REAP/HRDP provides grants to preserve, conserve, interpret and educate the public about historical resources in categories related to historic preservation of the built environment, museum collections and documentary materials such as diaries, letters, photographs and newspapers.

Projects are evaluated based on the significance of the historical resource; the proposed scope of work; the project's impact on the local community; and the degree to which the budget is reasonable, appropriate to the project, complete and mathematically correct. Last year, the State Historical Society of Iowa awarded $504,895 in REAP/HRDP grants to 30 organizations across the state for historic preservation, museum and documentary collections projects.

Iowa Historical Foundation
Applications for the 2009-2010, Iowa Community Cultural Grant, (ICCG program) are available at www.culturalaffairs.org. For more information about this grant program, contact Riki Saltzman at 515-242-6195 or Riki.Saltzman@iowa.gov

The Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs has primary responsibility for development of the state's interest in the areas of the arts, history, and other cultural matters.
The department is responsible for:

- Developing a comprehensive, coordinated, and efficient policy to preserve, research, interpret, and promote to the public an awareness and understanding of local, state, and regional history.
- Stimulating and encouraging throughout the state the study and presentation of the performing and fine arts and public interest and participation in them.
- Implementing tourism-related art and history projects as directed by the general assembly.
- Designing a comprehensive, statewide, long-range plan (Imagine Iowa 2010) with the assistance of the Iowa Arts Council to develop the arts in Iowa. The department is designated as the state agency for carrying out the plan.
- Encouraging the use of volunteers throughout its divisions, especially for purposes of restoring books and manuscripts

Iowa Tourism Region Grant Programs
Iowa Department of Economic Development
Division of Tourism
200 East Grand
Des Moines, IA 50309
(515) 242-4727
traveliowa.com

Iowa is broken into three regions for the purpose of this grant, Western, Central, and Eastern. Each region has $38,000 available. This grant is for projects tied to an overall tourism plan. Projects funded include brochures, advertising, and speaker fees.

Main Street Community Program
Iowa Department of Economic Development
200 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 242-4756
mainstreet@ided.state.ia.us
iowalifechanging.com

Communities can apply for designation as a Main Street Community. With a Main Street Community designation, a community will receive technical assistance and promotional assistance. These will help your community use historic preservation to develop a downtown area and to attract new investments. The Main Street Program is for cities between 5,000 and 50,000 in population. The Rural Main Street Program is for cities with a population below 5,000.

Community Attraction and Tourism Development Program
Iowa Department of Economic Development
200 East Grand
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 242-4827
iowalifechanging.com

Application*:* available upon request from IDED, 200 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309; telephone (515)242–4770.

The Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Program supports smaller projects and promotes Iowa tourism. There is no minimum or maximum award amount. Funding for the CAT program is through an appropriation by the Iowa legislature. The CAT program receives $12 million annually through fiscal year 2010.

Purpose: The community attraction and tourism development program is designed to assist communities in the development and creation of multiple–purpose attraction and tourism facilities.

Eligible projects include those which are related to a community or tourism attraction, and which would position a community to take advantage of economic development opportunities in tourism and strengthen a community's competitiveness as a place to work and live. Eligible projects include building construction or reconstruction, rehabilitation, conversion, acquisition, demolition for the purpose of clearing lots for development, site improvement, equipment purchases, and other projects as may be deemed appropriate by the vision Iowa board.

Program Components: There are two direct components to the community attraction and tourism development program. The first component relates to community attraction, tourism, or leisure projects that are sponsored by political subdivisions, public organizations, and school districts in cooperation with a city or county. This component is referred to as the community attraction component. The second component provides community attraction and tourism development funds for interim financing for eligible projects under the community attraction component. This component is referred to as the interim financing component.

Historic Sites Preservation
Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
State Historical Society of Iowa
New Historical Building
600 East Locust Street
Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: (515) 281-8754
Web site: www.culturalaffairs.org/

This program involves a one-time application for items such as capital development, storage collections, or preservation of historic buildings, strictly bricks and mortar projects. The deadline for grant applications typically falls in mid-September.

Iowa Community Cultural Grants (ICCG)
Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
600 East Locust Street
Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: (515) 281-6195
Web site: www.culturalaffairs.org/

This program will assist communities to fund projects such as festivals, historic preservation projects, walking tours, and art and historical exhibitions. All projects must create jobs for Iowans. There are two deadlines per year for funds under this program, in the spring and fall.

Vision Iowa
Iowa Department of Economic Development
200 East Grand
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 242-4827
iowalifechanging.com

Applications are received by the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) on an ongoing basis and reviewed at least quarterly by the Vision Iowa board.

visioniowa.org or, Alaina Santizo, Vision Iowa Program Manager at (515) 242-4827 or visioniowa@iowalifechanging.com.

The Vision Iowa Program is available to assist in funding of major tourism attractions ($20 million minimum project cost).

Purpose: The Vision Iowa program is designed to assist communities in the development and creation of major tourism facilities (minimum $20 million in scope) for permanent cultural, recreational, entertainment and educational attractions available to the general public. These attractions would position a community to take advantage of economic development opportunities in tourism, and strengthen a community's competitiveness as a place to work and live.

Eligible Applicants:

Eligible applicants include a city, county, or public organization, or combination of these entities forming a 28E agreement pursuant to Iowa Code; or a school district in cooperation with a city or county. A "public organization" is a nonprofit economic development group or other nonprofit organization that sponsors or supports community or tourism attractions and activities. When a school is a joint applicant, the application must show both applicants intend to use the facility upon completion. Schools funded through this program are ineligible for funding from the Vision Iowa School Infrastructure program administered by the Iowa Department of Education.

The applicant should be the entity intending to contract with the Vision Iowa board to receive Vision Iowa program funds and undertake the funded activity. Any sub recipient (a private organization or other entity operating under an agreement or contract with a recipient to carry out a funded Vision Iowa activity) must be listed in the application.

Grant Resources

The following are a list of websites used to compile the above referenced funding sources.
http://iowaleague.org/
http://www.culturalaffairs.org/
http://www.iarcog.com/FindCOG.htm
http://www.iowacounciloffoundations.org/functions.htm
http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/funding-info/foundation/ia-foundations
http://www.communityfoundationneiowa.com/foundationprograms.asp
http://www.iowacommunityfoundations.org/
http://iagems.gov/index.php?get=iowa-opp
http://www.gcrcf.org/page22830.cfm

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Appendix 11 – Ushers Ferry Institutional Assessment Report

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Ushers Ferry Historic Village

An Institutional Assessment Report conducted under the
Museum Assessment Program (MAP) of the
American Association of Museums

by

David J. Maurer, PhD

August 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The focus of this assessment is on how Ushers Ferry may overcome the effects of the disastrous flood of 2008 and move beyond the original mission to interpret life in a small Iowa town and become an historic venue for a wide variety of community and cultural events at the turn of the 20th century.

The Staff has begun the process to evaluate the condition of its facilities and has undertaken the structures (some of the work has been done and FEMA has indicated support for additional work). Some thought of an expansion of the site's mission has begum prior to the flood and, after the flood, it became apparent that survival of the site depends upon increased community support. The increased costs will have to be met by resources beyond the city treasury.

Staff, Ushers Ferry Friends and the Parks and Recreation Department first must develop a comprehensive plan regarding which buildings will be restored where they are presently located or moved to higher ground or removed. Also, plans have to be devised to protect the site from high water damage (although only the Corps of Engineers can devise ways to protect from truly catastrophic floods). These plans also have to consider possible structural additions necessary if the mission is expanded.

At the same time, a way must be developed to secure sponsors for the various projects (structural and events). New ways to generate revenue at the site, from the community, and special events must be found. Plans should be forthcoming regarding the care of objects in the collection and collection acquisition. Efforts must be undertaken to acquire additional staff, provide professional development opportunities for staff and a larger volunteer corps.

Finally, a long-range plan is needed that addresses program development, marketing, endowment creation and periodic evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

This report is based upon a careful review of the 17 page MAP application, the 48 page Institutional Information and Signature Page, the 9 pages of replies to questions (7/11/09) raised by the Surveyor, and the 3 page evaluation of reaction to the 1988 MAP review and an Ushers Ferry (UF) Notebook of approximately 200 pages that provides an overview of the site's history since 1988 along with documents bearing on current operations. The report is also based on an on-site visit by the Surveyor on August 6, 7, and 8, 2009. While on the visit, I met with staff: Teresa White, UF Program Supervisor; M. Ann Cejka, Program Coordinator; Darrin Crow, Education Coordinator; and Cathy Scanlon, Interpreter a number of times. I also spoke with members of the Ushers Ferry MAP Assessment Team, which included the Cedar Rapids City Treasurer, Sue Vavrock, and Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Betty Stewart, who with the staff, prepared the "Institutional Information" document. I met with Jim Stewart of the UF Theatre Company and Scott L. Dryzycimski, Community Relations Manager of Alliant Energy and the head of the recently organized Friends of Ushers Ferry.

I spent some time in the company of Ms. White and Ms. Cejka touring the site and investigating the condition of many of the buildings on the site.

Everyone I was with was very hospitable and forthcoming. I was very impressed with the commitment all had to the preservation and growth of the site. On my own, I spoke with two friends from Cedar Rapids and a few complete strangers and without hesitation; they all had nothing but good will toward Ushers Ferry.

BRIEF INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

Ushers Ferry Historic Village is a component of the Parks and Recreation Department, the City of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Its precursor was the Ushers Ferry Pioneer Village, established in 1975. Presently, Ushers Ferry is a recreation of a small Iowa town set at the turn of the 20th century and has 35 restored and recreated buildings on a 10 acre site. In addition to the buildings, the site has a collection of objects most appropriate to interpret the site's time period. The site is open to the public approximately 6 months a year, although the effects of the flood have curtailed access. In addition, Ushers Ferry hosts special and often on-and-off site events, especially since the flood.

The city has provided maintenance support augmented by volunteer efforts. The staff has provided support for special events (while I was there, the local realtors had a large picnic and, on another evening, there was a Folk Music Festival).

The site has implemented some of the recommendations made in the 1988 MAP Institutional report, but limited staff and city reorganization has delayed the necessary implementation of key recommendations in regard to funding and staffing.

"A Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation Commission acts as an advisory commission to the city and makes recommendations for the enhancement and promotion of recreational activities, facilities, and programs within the city of Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation Department." This is in the early stages of implementation, but has to be very involved if goals are to be achieved.

MISSION AND PLANNING

The current Mission Statement is very broad and will have to be revised to reflect the plans that result from a major review. Staff, the Commission and Ushers Ferry Friends has indicated their enthusiasm for this effort.

Recommendation:

It would be useful to have contact with special interest groups, potential sponsors, neighborhood associations, and open meetings to gather the community's perception and interests for the site. If the Iowa State Historical Society or the Iowa Humanities Council have staff available to provide consultation they should be brought in.

The Staff, Commission and Ushers Ferry Friends must identify the resources that will be needed to implement their plans.

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

Ushers Ferry staff seem to have a fair idea of their audience, but may need to fine tune evaluation procedures in order to acquire special volunteers with skills that will buttress the expansion of the site's mission. School and summer programs, if expanded, would generate favorable publicity and revenue. A number of the on-site demonstrations and events illustrating the time period seem to be very popular.

The Parlour Theatre program attracts and audience that is special. Its proposed expansion into the Ushers Ferry Theatre Company would generate a larger Ushers Ferry clientele and some revenue.

Although some training has been available to volunteers, efforts in this direction would have been sporadic, and if the proposed expansion takes place, more effort will need to take place than has been expended in the past.

Recommendation:

Staff and Ushers Ferry Friends must make a concerted effort to undertake initiatives in this area to attract a wider audience.

COLLECTIONS STEWARDSHIP

Staff is aware of the shortcomings of collections care and acquisition and had been making some progress in dealing with the problems, but the flood and its aftermath halted that progress to a great extent. In fact, the flood aggravated the situation.

Inventory work has to continue. Refinement of the Collections Policy is necessary in the area: Ethics Statement, Conservation/Care, Storage, Risk Management, and Monitoring.

Staff needs volunteers to help with accessioning, cataloging and collections care. Perhaps an aggressive effort to acquire and train volunteers who have an interest in specific object categories would help overcome the shortcomings. Would the History Center, the Masonic Museum, the Czech Museum and the Afro-American Museum have volunteers in this area that would be willing to spend some time doing the same at Ushers Ferry? Are there antique groups or service groups in the community or educational institutions that would like to take on a project?

Recommendation:

Efforts must be made in this area to provide in the near future people who would be able for these tasks and an all-effort must be undertaken to further expand this group in two or three years.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

Financial support from the City of Cedar Rapids will probably not increase in the near future because of the need of the flood-ravaged community to deal with higher priority concerns. In the distant future increase support, if forthcoming, will probably not be substantial and, if new city problems arise, there could even be a decrease or at least the increase would not take into account inflation. It is apparent that new ways have to be found that will increase financial backing to accomplish near term goals of restoration and implementing expansion of the interpretive mission of the site. Additionally, ways have to be found that will create an endowment, with elements that allow unrestricted and restricted operation. The increase in financial resources are necessary if additional staff is acquired to implement the expanding mission and sustain current buildings, grounds, collections, interpretation, and special event programming.

Recommendation:

1. Staff and Ushers Ferry Friends must identify sponsors for specific buildings and programs. For example, the local Bar Association could sponsor the work necessary on the "lawyer's house" and programming that illustrates the role of the lawyer in the late 19th century Cedar Rapids. The local medical association could deal with the "doctor's house." The local ministerial group might sponsor the church and parsonage or since the church has Methodist and Pentecostal connections, those are possibilities. Would Quaker Oats sponsor the feed store and the importance agriculture has to Cedar Rapids in the time period? They could plan an important part of the development of the Seminole Valley Farm if that site is incorporated into Ushers Ferry in a couple of years. Maybe the local Farm Bureau or a major farm implement dealer would be interested. What about Coe College, Mt. Mercy College and Cornell College buying

into the educational programming and school structures? Also, the local educational association and/or teachers union could play a role. Possibly Rockwell Collins could play a large role in the industrial story of Cedar Rapids at the turn of the century and also be responsible for the Tolkeim story. Perhaps the large grocery operators and large pharmacy operators could back those structures and programming. This Surveyor is not privy to all the potential stakeholders that staff and Ushers Ferry Friends might identify but the above suggestions are meant to show possible avenues that should be explored. Ushers Ferry Friends, particularly the Board, should step up to the plate and make a sizeable annual donation. Membership in a larger Friends organization should have family, individual and corporate donation categories. The proposed Usher Ferry Theatre Company price structure seems reasonable, indeed a bargain. Effort should be made to establish an Ushers Ferry gift shop on site. Perhaps food service could be contracted out and Ushers Ferry could get a "cut" of the take.

2. If sponsors/stakeholders have the resources to only support the current operation, additional stakeholders must be acquired to establish restricted endowments to ensure continued operation.
3. Efforts must be undertaken to establish unrestricted endowment to support new initiatives—programs, staff, revenue producing ventures, etc. Grants from private foundations, bequests must be vigorously pursued.
4. An all-purpose building would be a tremendous help in attracting sizeable groups and generating revenue and good will.

GOVERNANCE

It seems to this Surveyor that the governing authority is committed to the value of the site but I wonder if they realize that it could be the “crown jewel” of the Parks and Recreation Department. Ushers Ferry is, to a great extent, related to the interests of all groups, every economic class, every physical ability and every educational interest.

The governing authority has shown that staffing the site necessitates persons with the requisite skills and education and this will have to continue if the expanding mission and the effects of the flood are to be realized. The current small staff has many qualifications, but because of the size of the site, current mission and the effects of the flood are overwhelmed. Their strengths in management, programming, and education need to be augmented by staff that is able to acquire, train, and manage a large volunteer staff, raise additional revenue, and office staff to ease the professional staff’s burdens.

Finally, the governing authority should accept the fact that for Ushers Ferry to be most successful, it has to have a degree of autonomy with substantial oversight lodged in the Parks and Recreation Commission with the understanding that final and legal oversight rests with the City Council.

SUMMARY

Ushers Ferry Historic Village is in the process of becoming more than a quaint collection of buildings and stereotypical interpretation. The current mission is restrictive and limits the site from becoming a unique site that would illustrate all the changes that industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and migration that affected life in central Iowa, and indeed in much of the Midwest, West and East.

How the expanding of mission is achieved depends upon increased financial resources to support expansion of staff, programming, object preservation and acquisition, and a few more structures.

This Surveyor believes financial resources are available but substantial effort will have to be made to identify and secure them. A nucleus of staff and Friends, if given the support of the Parks and Recreation Commission, would get the process underway.

The site has initiated programs that have reached out beyond the site itself, in part because of the effects of the flood, but they have illustrated the value of a wider venue. Also, in spite of the flood, the site is still seen by the community as an attractive venue for many events.

Staff has excellent qualifications, but the limited number makes an expanding mission very difficult. Lack of a large, well-trained and managed volunteer component also limits the effort.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Friends of Ushers Ferry Village must take an active role in the expanding mission of the site. Their board needs to identify and secure major financial support, and carry the message of the site to the Cedar Rapids community and surrounding region. If the Friends group is enlarged, members could be a core that would provide volunteers for the site and others could carry the message to neighborhood associations, service organizations, retirement villages, etc. Another benefit could lead to the identification of programs that meet the mission of the site.

The Staff must acquire volunteers who are able to deal with collections and interpretation concerns. Even with additional staff, the work load of the site necessitates many willing and capable hands to provide programming that accompanies a major venue that Ushers Ferry can be.

It is imperative for the site to acquire sponsors/stakeholders both for the expanding mission in the near future and for the long haul.

RESOURCES

Publications from the American Association of Museums listed below may be had from their Bookstore (see the AAM.org web site) or on loan from your fellow museums, inter-library load, the collections of the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, Coe College, the Iowa State Museum Association, etc.

Generating and Sustaining Nonprofit Earned Income: A Guide to Successful Enterprise Strategies
Edited by S.M. Oster, C.W. Massarsky, and S.L. Beinhacker
Jossey-Bass, 2004

Gifts of Property: A Guide for Donors and Museums, 2nd edition
American Association of Museums, 1986 with 2002 update

Membership Development: An Action Plan for Results
Patricia Rich and Dana Hines
Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2006

Slaying the Financial Dragon: Strategies for Museums
AAM Professional Education Series
American Association of Museums, 2003

Membership Development: An Action Plan for Results
Patricia Rich and Dana Hines
Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2006

Adult Museum Programs: Designing Meaningful Experiences
Bonnie Sachatello-Sawyer *et al.*
AltaMira Press/American Association for State and Local history, 2002

Collecting Community History: A Training Handbook for Educators
Edited by Wendy Edelstein
Oakland Museum of California, 2003

Great Tours! Thematic Tours and Guide Training for Historic Sites
Barbara Abramoff Levy, Sandra Mackenzie Lloyd and Susan Porter Schreiber
AltaMira press/American Association for State and Local History, 2001

Hot Tips for Facilitators: Strategies to Make life Easier for Anyone Who Leads, Guides, Teaches or Trains Groups
Rob Abernathy and Mark Reardon
Zephyr Press, 2003

The Interpreters Training Manual for Museums
Mary Kay Cunningham
American Association of Museums, 2004

Interpreting Historic House Museums
Edited by Jessica Foy Donnelly
AltaMira Press/American Association for State and Local History, 2002

Managing Historic Sites and Buildings: Balancing Presentation and Preservation
Edited by Gill Chitty and David Baker
Routledge, 1999

Museum Theatre: Communicating with Visitors through Drama
Catherine Hughes
Heinemann Publishers, 1998

Exploring Museum Theatre
Tessa Bridal
AltaMira Press/American Association for State and Local history, 2004

On Doing Local History, 2nd edition
Carol Kammen
AltaMira Press/American Association for state and Local History, 2003

Brand Aid: An Easy Reference Guide to Solving Your Toughest Branding Problems and Strengthening your Market Position
B. VanAuken
AMACOM, 2003

Board's Role in Public Relations and Communications
Joyce L. Fitzpatrick
National Center for Nonprofit Boards, June 1994

A Handbook for Museum Trustees
Harold and Susan Skramstad
American Association of Museums/Museum Trustee Association, 2003

Marketing and Public Relations Handbook for Museums, Galleries and Heritage Attractions
Sue Runyard and Ylva French
AltaMira Press/Stationary Office, 1999

Marketing the Museum
Fiona McLean
Routledge, 1997

Museum Branding: How to Create and Maintain Image, Loyalty and Support
Margot A. Wallace
AltaMira Press, 2006

Publicity for Nonprofits: Generating Media Exposure That Leads to Awareness, Growth, and Contributions
S.L. Beckwith

Creating and Implementing Your Strategic Plan: A Workbook for Public and Nonprofit Organizations
John M. Bryson and Farnum K. Alston
Jossey-Bass, 2004

Manual of Museum Management, 2nd edition
Barry Lord and Gail Dexter
AltaMira Press, 1997

Museum Basics, 2nd edition
Timothy Ambrose and Crispin Pain
Routledge, 2006

The Complete Guide to Foodservice in Cultural Institutions: Keys to Success in Restaurants, Catering, and Special Events
Arthur M. Manask and Mitchell E. Schechter
Arthur M. Manask Associations/John Wiley and Sons, 2001

The Museum Shop Workbook
Mary Virtue and Jane Delgado
African American and Latino Art Museum Working Group, 1995

Museum Store Management, 2nd edition
Mary Miley Theobald
AltaMira Press/American Association for State and Local History, 2000

The Aldrich Student Docent Program Development Kit (DVD)
The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum
Nina Carlson and Laura Kaufman
Order Form: http://www.aldrichart.org/Aldrich%20Web%20Images/Education/KitOrderForm.pdf

Boomer Volunteer Engagement: Collaborate Today, Thrive Tomorrow
Jill Friedman Fixler, Sandie Eichberg, and Gail Lorenz
ArthurHouse, 2008

Leadership Skills: Developing Volunteers for Organizational Success
Emily Kittle Morrison
Fisher Books, 1994

Transforming Museums Volunteering: A Practical Guide for Engaging 21st Century Volunteers
Ellen Hirzy
American Association for Museum Volunteers, 2007

The Volunteer Recruitment (and Membership Development) Book, 3rd edition
Susan J. Ellis
Energize, 2002

In addition, the regular publications of

- American Association of Museums (http://www.aam-us.org/)
- American Association of State and Local History (http://www.aaslh.org/)
- Midwest Open-Air Museums Coordinating Council (http://www.momcc.org/)
- The Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums (http://www.alhfam.org/)

ALFAM contain articles that are very helpful in all aspects of historic site concerns. Also, I suggest that a grant application be made to the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) for the "Connecting to Collector's Bookshelf" (http://www.imls.gov/collections/) would provide, if the grant is awarded to Ushers Ferry, a very valuable on-site resource for years to come.