



Chapter Seven

***Special Use Facilities,
Support Facilities,
Historic Sites and
Golf Course Needs***

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GOLF COURSE NEEDS**

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CHAPTER 7 SPECIAL USE FACILITIES, SUPPORT FACILITIES, HISTORIC SITES AND GOLF COURSE NEEDS

OVERVIEW

Eden Prairie’s park and open space system has a wide diversity of functions and facilities. The nature of these facilities, which represents the diversity of interests and needs for both existing and future residents’ demand. This chapter highlights the facility needs and planning considerations for complementary facilities.

SPECIAL USE FACILITY NEEDS

Any area providing specialized or single purpose recreation activities, such as boat ramps, marinas, community gardens and other special use activities, is classified as a “special use facility”. The activity may be the primary or only use of that site. Special use activities, which require less land, are equally important but may be found in a park classified for neighborhood or community use, such as archery targets in a community park. Since special use activities vary from community to community, special attention should be given to selection of those activities that are most important for the City of Eden Prairie. Current special use facilities include Edenwood Center, the Community Center, Flying Cloud Ballfields, the Outdoor Center, Fredrick-Miller Spring, and the Senior Center.

These minor special use facilities will generally be provided in neighborhood or community parks and are supplemental to other recreation facilities typically associated with neighborhood and community parks:

1. Community Gardens

The City of Eden Prairie has offered community garden sites for several years at Pioneer Park and land rented from the Metropolitan Airports Commission. Community gardens receive a great deal of use by a broad sector of the public and should be continued within the park system. Community gardens should be considered as a park use, especially in areas adjacent to high-density residential and other multiple housing projects. Locations for these plots should be determined on the basis of site and soil conditions, as well as proximity to the general public. Support services that are required adjacent to garden plots are parking areas, water availability, plot marking and trash receptacles. The City Parks Division has also provided plowing, disking and dragging of garden plots in the spring and fall of the year.

2. Ornamental Gardens

Ornamental gardens for showy plants that could also include fountains and a plaza are desirable for local pride and education. These could be funded and established through a horticultural club, garden club or civic group looking for a yearly public project. Currently,

Round Lake, Miller Park, Staring Lake Park and Pioneer Park have ornamental gardens. Other sites that should be considered for ornamental gardens are Riley Lake Park and the entry to the Purgatory Creek Recreation Area.

3. Nature Interpretative Areas

Bird watching was one of the activities the 1995 SCORP projected to have the highest increase in participation during the next 10 to 15 years. The Edenbrook Conservation Area, Edenvale Park, and the Purgatory Creek Recreation Area, located within the Purgatory Creek Corridor, offer prime sites for development of nature trails and blinds for wildlife observation. The development of these sites could also be very good community services group projects.

Nature study areas have been developed adjacent to Forest Hills Park and Eden Lake Elementary Schools. These areas are used and maintained by the students and teachers for science/nature study curriculum. These facilities complement the natural resource analysis described in Chapter 3.

4. Fishing Piers

Fishing piers have been provided at Mitchell Lake, Lake Riley, Round Lake, Staring Lake and Smetana Lake. Fishing piers could also be considered on Red Rock Lake and other lakes or ponds within the community that are able to provide a reasonable recreational fishing experience.

5. Boat Ramp Sites

Public access is provided at six lakes within the City. The City has worked together with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to cooperatively install several of the boat ramp facilities. The lakes, which have public boat ramps, are Red Rock, Mitchell, Smetana, Staring, Round and Riley. A “carry on” site has been developed on Duck Lake, and a controlled access is provided on Bryant Lake by the Three Rivers Park District.

With the development of the public access sites, these seven lakes offer a variety of recreation activities to the public.

Aeration systems have been received and installed on three lakes as a result of CORE Grants from the DNR. These systems are operated to prevent winter fish kill on Round Lake, Red Rock Lake and Mitchell Lake.

6. Sliding Hills

The sliding hill at Staring Lake Park is the only designated sliding hill developed within the existing park system. Sliding hills must be groomed and maintained and hay bales should be installed early in the season to protect participants from any potential collision with trees, light standards, and other fixed objects.

7. Horseshoe Pits/Bocce Courts

Competition horseshoe and bocce courts have been developed at Staring Lake Park. These facilities offer recreation opportunities for a wide age span. Horseshoe pits are planned for all community parks. City staff should monitor horseshoe pit use to determine additional needs.

8. Picnic Shelters

The City presently has eight facilities that are available for group reservation use. These facilities are continuously booked from mid-May through the first of October every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. A large park shelter available for reservation use should be developed at Miller Park. Small sun shelters should be added to neighborhood parks for family outings if sufficient shade does not exist.

9. Canoeing

Eden Prairie has many lakes that offer excellent water bodies for canoeing. Birch Island, part of Edenwood Center, Round Lake, Smetana Lake, Staring Lake, Mitchell Lake, Lake Riley, Duck Lake and Red Rock Lake presently have canoe access points.

Canoes can be rented at the Round Lake marina facility. Canoe rack rental is available at Staring and Round Lake for individuals who want to store personal canoes at these two lakes.

10. Amphitheatre

The recreation division presently offers concerts three nights per week through the summer months. These concerts are held at the amphitheatre in Staring Lake Park. The interest is high for these programs. To improve program quality and facility features, an amphitheater was constructed in Staring Lake Park. The facility opened in late 1989, increasing audience capacity and technical capabilities. Adjacent lake and park environments contribute to the event's appeal.

11. Marina

A marina has been operated at Round Lake for several years. This marina offers rental of canoes, paddleboats and sailboats. Canoe and sailing lessons are also offered at this site.

12. Archery Range

Land rented from MAC at Flying Cloud Airport offers the only archery range in the park system. The existing range has two targets. An expanded range is planned for construction at Staring Lake Park.

13. Outdoor Center

An outdoor recreation and education center is located within Staring Lake Park on the north shore of the lake. The facility is the focal point for teaching outdoor recreation activities, such as bike touring, camping, fishing, hunting, bird watching, gardening, winter camping, cross-country skiing and other outdoor recreation pursuits. This facility can be rented for group and company picnics and seminars. (Refer to Needs Analysis chapter for additional information.)

14. Disc Golf

A nine-hole disc golf course was developed in Staring Lake Park in 1998. Three Rivers Park District developed a course in Bryant Lake Park in 2000. The Staring Lake course should be monitored for the amount of use prior to determining if this course should be expanded or an additional course developed within the park system.

15. Off-leash Dog Area

An off-leash dog area should be developed within the City to provide a place where dog owners can train and exercise their pets off leash.

16. Skate Park

A Tier I skate park was developed in Round Lake Park in 2001. The City plans on expanding that park in 2003 and should consider a Tier I park in the southwestern and southeastern quadrants of the City. Eventually, a Tier II park (ramps over 36 inches in height) should be developed somewhere in the community.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic sites are the location of an historical event, occupation, or activity that has historical, cultural, or archaeological value. Historic sites are preserved because members of the community find value in them as a tangible link to the past.

Historic resources are scarce and they are non-renewable. It is likely that future citizens of Eden Prairie will want to know more about the past, not less, so preservation today becomes a responsible municipal undertaking in the public interest. However, not everything that is old is worth saving.

To be efficient, preservation measures need to focus on significant resources. Properties must be considered for preservation only after review against established criteria. Before properties can be evaluated, they must first be identified through community survey. As this illustrates, a wide range of activities bear upon the preservation, protection and use of historic properties.

The 1989 Comprehensive Park and Open Space Plan identified the need to organize preservation activities. In 1990, the passage of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance established the process and polices required to bring preservation efforts together as the Historic Preservation Program. This is part of the larger National Preservation Program, which operates by authority of the National Historic Preservation Act and other statutes.

The City Historic Preservation Program has seven basic elements or service areas:

- Historic preservation planning
- Identification of historic resources
- Evaluation of historic properties
- Registration of heritage preservation sites
- Design review
- Education and outreach
- Historic sites

The following paragraphs briefly present the main focus of each service area.

Planning

Planning is fundamental to all aspects of historic preservation. Planning activities include the development of historic contexts, cultural resource inventories, and evaluation of properties for local or National Register designation.

Historic contexts for the City were completed in 1992, preparing the way for a systematic survey of the City's historic resources.

Identification

Before any building or site can be preserved, it must first be identified and documented. The City conducts ongoing historic resources surveys to identify and gather data on buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts. Identification results are compiled in the historic resources inventory files.

Since 1992, over 200 historic resources have been identified through background research and field survey (the physical search for and recording of historic resources).

Evaluation

To be considered worthy of preservation, a property must possess historical significance and integrity. Significance may be found in a property's association with historical events or persons, its distinctive architecture or other physical characteristics, or in its potential to provide important information.

In addition to its historical significance, a property eligible for local designation must be at least 50 years old and retain the physical characteristics that existed during its period of significance. In historic preservation planning, this quality is known as historical integrity and is assessed through location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Historic property evaluation is guided by historic contexts. Properties are evaluated within the context of prehistory or history, with more focused thematic contexts developed for the City or broad statewide contexts developed by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Registration

Only those properties retaining historical significance and retaining historical integrity are eligible for registration. Properties meeting established criteria for significance are registered for preservation purposes by listing as a local Heritage Preservation Site or by listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Heritage Preservation Sites may be any area, place, building, landmark, structure, lands, districts or objects, which meet requirements for registration. Since 1990, six properties have been registered as Heritage Preservation Sites. Thirteen properties are pending local registration. Eden Prairie also has one National Register Site and one National Register District. A third National Register Site is pending.

Design Review

By ordinance, the City is required to consider the effects of projects requiring City permits on designated Heritage Preservation Sites. This review is intended to ensure that any changes are in keeping with the historic character of the property. Any proposed work to be done in, on, or to a Heritage Preservation Site requires a Site Alteration Permit.

The City has adopted the Secretary of Interior's standards for historic preservation projects as the authoritative basis for design review decisions.

Education and Outreach

An important function of the City Historic Preservation Program is education. Historic buildings and sites offer a valuable learning experience, and through their use and interpretation become effective tools for fostering good citizenship and civic pride.

The City's Heritage Preservation Commission provides annual educational programs and events for the benefit of the community. The Commission sponsors events, which feature local heritage resources, participates in event planning as co-sponsors with others when needed, and provides interpretation at historic sites for public use and benefit.

The Commission's context studies, site inventory files, and other records and reports are maintained as open files and remain available to the public for educational purposes.

Historic Sites

This area of the historic preservation program deals specifically with the protection, treatment and use of historic properties. Historic site planning is generally concerned with City owned sites, but it is not limited to them.

Protection is accomplished through designation and planned maintenance. Treatment is determined following close inspection and use analysis, and specifies an approach to work, via one of four recommended procedures found in the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Treatment procedures include:

- *Preservation:* The least invasive process used to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property.
- *Rehabilitation:* The only treatment that makes possible a compatible use for a property. Alterations and additions are acceptable while preserving important features.
- *Restoration:* The process used to accurately recover the original form, features and character of the property.
- *Reconstruction:* This involves new construction as a means of duplicating an original non-surviving building or site.

The treatment approach is often linked directly with the significance and intended use of the historic property, which makes a careful analysis essential. Incompatible use and treatment approach result in wasted time and resources, and often the outcome is destructive.

Policy Recommendations

The City's Historic Preservation Program should continue to emphasize the core areas of planning, identification, and evaluation of heritage resources.

The mission statement, purpose and goals of the Eden Prairie Heritage Preservation Commission are core principles that should continue to guide efforts at incorporating and maintaining historic sites as elements of the parks and recreation system. The full text of this statement, purpose and goals can be obtained from the Eden Prairie City Hall.

The City and Heritage Preservation Commission should complete, as soon as possible, the following:

- Complete the Historic Preservation Element for the City's Updated Guide Plan.
- Complete registration of the City's most significant historic properties.
- Develop and implement a public interpretation program for selected historic sites.
- Complete Preservation Master Plan for Smith-Douglas-More House.

- Complete Preservation Master Plan for Fredrick-Miller Spring, now in process.
- Complete archaeological reconnaissance of all Native American earthworks in the City limits.
- Complete a National Register of Historic Places nomination for Lookout Park. This park is in the runway protection zone of Flying Cloud Airport.

SUPPORT FACILITIES

Locations that serve as operations and a base for maintenance activity are an essential element of continued investment in the parks and open space system. A Park Maintenance Center and a landscape nursery are examples of such facilities.

GOLF COURSE FEASIBILITY

There is significant community interest in the development of a public golf course. The 2000 Community Forum indicated a priority among 59 percent of participants for development of an 18-hole public golf course as a special use facility in the City. It is clear that there are extremely limited locations for such development in Eden Prairie, and the most likely candidate, the former BFI landfill, will not be available for public use until the methane gas operation is closed, which could be in 15 to 20 years. The opportunity to develop a publicly owned, operated and maintained golf course in Eden Prairie is dependent upon a number of factors. National trends, community interest, competing facilities, required land acquisition and related development costs all contribute to this assessment. Prior to investing public funds in a golf course, the City should closely evaluate each of these factors.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The City's special use facilities serve a diverse range of specialized or single purpose recreation activities. Typically, special use activities require less land and are often found in a park facility classified for neighborhood or community use.

- Current special use facilities include Edenwood Center, the Community Center, Flying Cloud Ballfields, the Outdoor Center, Frederick-Miller Spring and the Senior Center. These facilities are anticipated to maintain their role and prominence in the City's park and recreation system.
- Minor special use facilities supplement other recreation facilities, and include community gardens, ornamental gardens, nature interpretative areas, fishing piers, boat ramp sites, sliding hills, horseshoe pits and bocce courts, picnic shelters, canoeing, amphitheatre, marina, archery range, Outdoor Center and disc golf. While most of these facilities are provided by City departments within existing City budgets, the responsibility for other facilities is occasionally shared with other public agencies, such as boat ramp sites constructed with the Minnesota DNR.
- Historic facilities located in the community are another type of special use facility with unique standing in the City's parks and recreation system. The City's historic preservation program encompasses six efforts, including planning, identification, evaluation, registration, design review and education or outreach. The recommendations from this program that directly affect the parks system are a) to develop and implement a public interpretation for selected historic sites, to complete preservation master plans for properties such as J.R. Cummins Homestead, the Smith-Douglas-More House, the Riley-Jacques Farm, and the Fredrick-Miller Spring. Other initiatives include archaeological reconnaissance of all Native American earthworks within the City's boundaries, and a National Register of Historic Places nomination for Lookout Park.
- Support facilities such as a park maintenance center and a landscape nursery are needed to ensure maintenance and quality of park facilities. Typically, these operations are supported by general funds and capital programming. As the parks and open space system ages, the proportion of resources spent on maintenance will increase, in order to maintain quality and meet resident expectations of the parks system.
- There is significant community interest in the development of a public golf course. There are extremely limited locations for such development in Eden Prairie and the most likely candidate, the former BFI landfill, will not be available for approximately 15 to 20 years. Prior to investing public funds in a golf course, the City should closely evaluate such factors as national trends, community interest, competing facilities, required land acquisition and related development costs.