



Chapter 8

Parks & Open Space Plan

Eden Prairie's more than 5,800 acres of parks and natural areas significantly contribute to the City's character, community identity, and historic landscape. They represent recreational features as well as opportunities to connect with nature. The Parks, Open Space & Environmental Features Plan describes the community's parks and natural areas and identifies recommendations to expand, enhance, and better connect the City's park and open space system.

“[There are] expanded opportunities and activities for young families at parks.”

*Participant, Aspire Eden Prairie
2040 DIY Workshop*

Goals, Objectives & Strategies

The goals and objectives outlined below were developed based on the City's 2008 Comprehensive Plan, community engagement efforts, long-term trends, emerging recreational activities, and other applicable documents. Those, and corresponding strategies to achieve those goals and objectives regarding parks and open space are listed below.

Goal 1: *Maintain adequate facilities and active and passive open space to meet the recreational needs of residents.*

Objective 1a

Strategically identify facilities within the parks and open space system that currently need, or will need over the course of this plan, maintenance and improvements.

Strategies

1. Update the 2003 *City of Eden Prairie Parks & Open Space System Plan*.
2. Identify and secure the necessary acreage to provide storage and operational support to Parks and Recreation and Public Works Service Areas.
3. Promote tree planting on private property and in the public right-of-way to increase positive health impacts associated with increased tree canopy in developed areas, such as improved air quality.
4. Designate and offer supportive planning for safe walking and biking routes to all Eden Prairie Schools. Utilize these routes and other trails throughout the City to provide alternative transportation modes that reduce carbon emissions.
5. Identify opportunities to expand and enhance parks and facilities, and provide additional programs and opportunities for emerging recreational sports and activities, including those targeted toward seniors.
6. Support the conversion of turf grass into native planting areas and low-mow grass areas on City properties and throughout the community as stormwater mitigation areas and pollinator habitats.

Goal 2: *Invest resources in people, programs, facilities, and infrastructure to support a vital community, protect the community's natural resources and environmental assets, and preserve the community's heritage.*

Objective 2a

Utilize existing partnerships and develop new ones to promote conservation and preservation throughout Eden Prairie.

Strategies

1. Strive to protect and preserve the City's culturally significant resources, including historical and archaeological properties, when appropriate.
2. Work with the Eden Prairie Historical Society to promote and preserve the City's heritage sites and increase public awareness of their historical significance.
3. Continue to provide art education and activities at the Art Center, while also identifying opportunities to increase art in public spaces.
4. Facilitate and encourage partnerships between the City, other public environmental organizations and local schools to foster environmental stewardship among the City's youth.
5. Investigate opportunities, such as outreach and events, to increase the diversity and inclusivity of programming within parks and recreational facilities.

Social Equity & Diversity

Goal 3: *Maintain a balance between the conservation and management of natural and cultural resources, and the need for residential, commercial, industrial and other urban uses.*

Objective 3a

Analyze all available land against opportunities for conservation versus buildable development.

Strategies

1. Continue preserving watercourses and wetlands to protect sensitive ecosystems, maintain clean and healthy lakes, improve overall environmental quality, and beautify the community.
2. Coordinate with the Three Rivers Park District and regional park users to ensure that regional trails and parks within city limits are well-maintained and adequately serve the community.
3. Encourage development that provides reserves and manages natural resource amenities that are viable and sustainable.
4. Update and practice a program of resource management for public conservation and resource areas.

Storytelling Campaign

The City should create a storytelling campaign to promote the use of Eden Prairie's parks. Anecdotes about the parks' histories as well as local practice and data should be provided for the public to learn more about their recreational areas. The storytelling campaign should be a joint effort between Parks and Recreation and the Housing and Community Services Division.



Sustainable Resilience

Sustainable Parks Strategies

The operations costs associated with lighting and collecting trash in parks and along trails, as well as maintenance costs associated with grass cutting and landscaping, can be a large part of a parks and recreation budget. These things are also major contributors to energy consumption and pollution. Strategies to address these issues include:

- *Transitioning lights or power sources to solar or LED.*
- *Update maintenance tool inventory with latest green technologies.*
- *Utilizing water-efficient landscaping*
- *Native plants instead of turf grass to reduce the use of groundwater for irrigation.*
- *Install stormwater best management practices to reduce stormwater runoff.*
- *Continue use of smart irrigation systems for water conservation.*

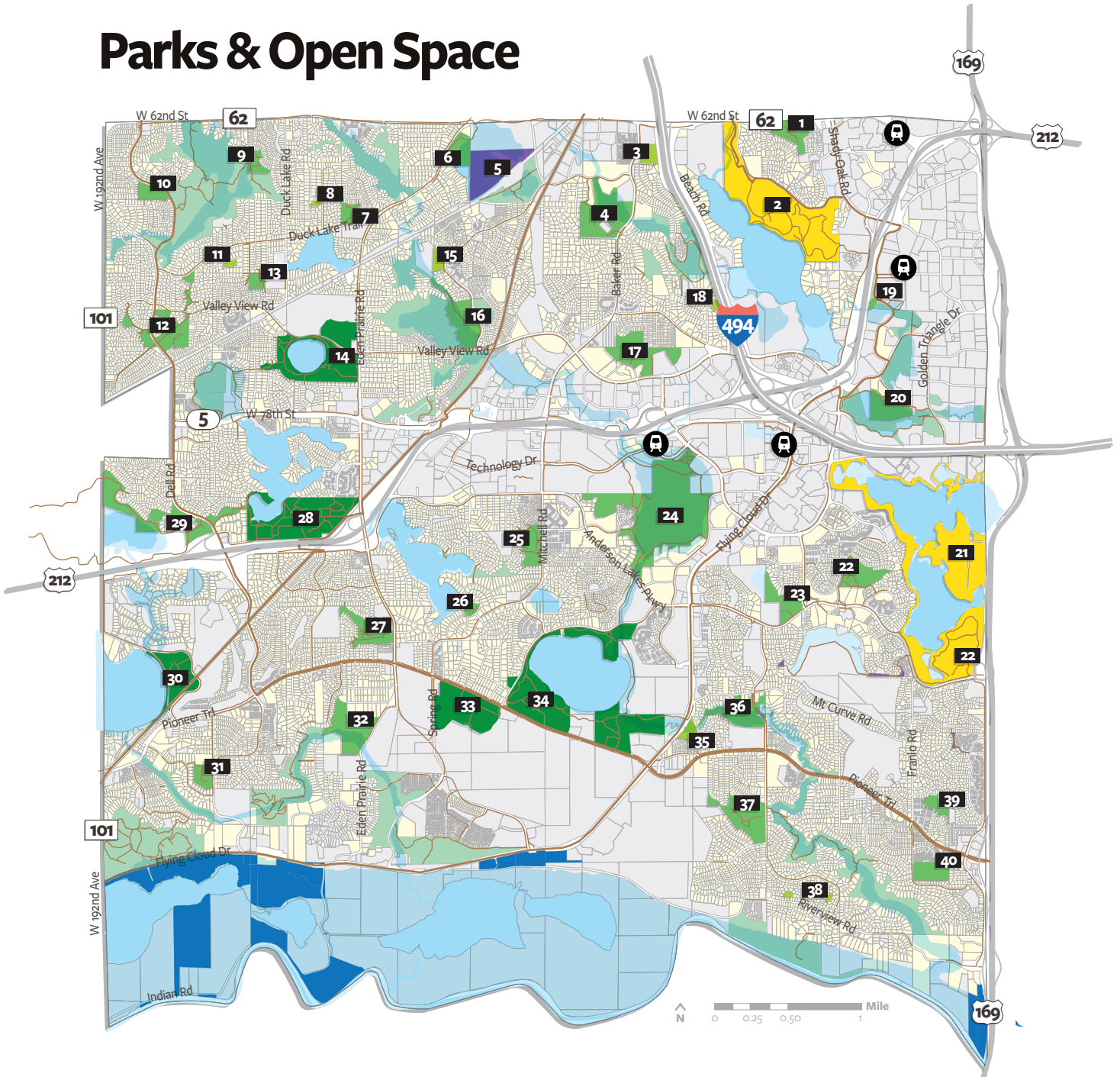


Regional Parks & Trails

Three Rivers Park District operates and maintains Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Park Reserve and Bryant Lake regional parks, these parks include such amenities as hills, wetlands, grasslands, wildlife, woodlands, golf courses, and swimming areas.

The Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional is a regional trail within the City's boundary, which is maintained by the Three Rivers Park District. This is the only regional trail in Eden Prairie with no other trails proposed or planned at this time. The City will continue to regularly coordinate communication between Three Rivers Park District and regional park and trail users to ensure that its parks and trails are adequately serving the Eden Prairie community. The City feedback can be provided via online discussion boards and comment cards within parks. In addition, the City will coordinate future trail expansions with the Three Rivers Park District to establish a complete, connected trail network throughout Eden Prairie, linking local trails to regional trails.

Parks & Open Space



Mini Parks

- 3 Holasek Hill Park
- 8 High Trail Estates Park
- 11 Sterling Field Park
- 15 Edgewood Park
- 18 Topview Park
- 35 Overlook Park
- 38 Bluffs West #1 & #2

Neighborhood Parks

- 1 Carmel Park
- 4 Forest Hills Park
- 6 Birch Island Park
- 7 Eden Valley Park
- 9 Rustic Hills Park
- 10 Wyndham Knoll Park
- 12 Hidden Ponds Park
- 13 Prairie View Park
- 16 Edenvale Park
- 17 Willow Park
- 19 Flying Cloud Drive Dog Park
- 20 Smetana Lake Park

- 22 Nesbitt Preserve Park
- 23 Eden Lake Park
- 24 Purgatory Creek Park
- 25 Pheasant Woods Park
- 26 Red Rock Lake Park
- 27 Pioneer Park
- 29 Rice Marsh Lake Park
- 31 Crestwood Park
- 32 Cedar Hills Park
- 36 Creekwood Park
- 37 Homeward Hills Park
- 39 Prairie East Park
- 40 Franlo Park

Community Parks

- 14 Round Lake Park
- 29 Miller Park
- 30 Riley Lake Park
- 33 Flying Cloud Fields
- 34 Staring Lake Park

Three Rivers Parks

- 2 Bryant Lake Park
- 21 Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes and Park Reserve

Other Parks

- 5 Camp Edenwood

- Conservation Area
- Residential Areas
- Floodplains
- Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
- Trails

Social Equity & Diversity

Adopt a Park

Programs that allow volunteers from civic organizations, social clubs, neighborhood associations, individual families, faith based organizations, and school groups should be encouraged to assist in the maintenance of parks and development of programs and events. Involving residents in the upkeep and programming of parks helps maintain the overall parks system. This helps ensure access to recreation opportunities throughout Eden Prairie.



Local Parks & Trails






Eden Prairie Parks & Recreation Department

The City's Parks & Recreation Department comprises the Community Center Division, the Parks & Natural Resources Division, and the Recreation Services Division, and provides a comprehensive parks and recreation program to Eden Prairie. This includes acquiring parkland; planning and development; maintaining parks, trails, and facilities; forestry; and recreation programming. Additionally, the Recreation Services Division maintains and operates the Art Center, Outdoor Center and the Senior Center addressed in detail in **Chapter 7: Community Facilities**.

The Parks & Recreation Department has made significant progress implementing its 2003 *Parks & Open Space System Plan*, including developing the Flying Cloud Drive Dog Park, Flying Cloud Fields, and Cedar Hills Park. Major renovations such as Riley Lake Park, Round Lake Park, and Staring Lake Park have occurred. Nevertheless, Eden Prairie has experienced changes in demographics, recreational preferences, and park needs over the past 15 years. The City will continue to assess the 2003 *Parks & Open Space System Plan* to identify new opportunities for joint ventures and formal partnerships for the acquisition, enhancement, and preservation of parks and natural areas.

Trails



-  Existing Regional Trail*
-  Regional Trail Search Corridor
-  Local Trail
-  Parks & Open Space
-  Residential Areas

*This is the only regional trail in Edin Prairie, existing or planned.

Social Equity & Diversity

Connect Parks

With more than 1,000 acres of parks and open space, Eden Prairie offers residents many recreation and sports opportunities. The City plans for connectivity to and from all parks for users of all ages and abilities via the pedestrian and transit systems. By prioritizing connectivity to parks, the City makes parks and open spaces available to those who do not have access to a car.



The intent of the *Park System Master Plan Update* is to align with the updated Comprehensive Plan, recognize recent updates to the park system, incorporate and enhance recreation programming sections and to document and anticipate the emerging needs and interests of the changing community.

Many of the plans prescribed in the 2003 *Park Master Plan* were based on the demographics, use patterns, and known trends at that time. City staff recognizes the many improvements that have been made over the last fifteen years and that many use patterns and interests have also changed. In addition, the updated Comprehensive Plan provides up-to-date community information, demographics and land use projections to serve as a foundation for the Park Master Plan Update. The methodology for the update will include community engagement through surveys, focus groups, trend analysis, and expert staff recommendations. The CIP Matrix on pages 262-263 outlines short-term budgeted actions related to parks and open space.

Parks & Open Space Access

Eden Prairie maintains and operates 36 parks, 13 conservation areas, and 12 special facilities and historic sites. Over 200 miles of paths and trails for cycling, hiking, and walking are maintained. The 2003 *Parks & Open Space System Plan* states that mini parks have a service area of a quarter mile while community parks have a service area of a half mile. The goal of the plan was to have every resident served by either a mini or community park, which has been met. The *Metropolitan Council 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* recommends that one community park exists for every three to five neighborhoods. Based on the City's adopted parks standards and current population of 63,914, the City exceeds in providing its desired supply of neighborhood parks, which comprise a large portion of Eden Prairie's parkland and athletic fields. Since the locations and numbers of parks have been established, the City will continue to ensure that it meets the community's recreational preferences and needs related to park space, proximity, access, and associated facilities. It is important to consider emerging desires during renovations of existing parks and facilities.

The City will use the following strategies to ensure community members are able to access and enjoy Eden Prairie's parks and open space:

- Communicate with community members from various underrepresented groups to ensure that parks are welcoming and adequately serving them.
- Elicit resident feedback to identify improvements to park access, safety, and programming that will increase resident use of local parks.
- Work with the Three Rivers Park District to connect all parks with local and regional trails.
- Ensure that all lakes are clean and safe for swimming and other water recreational activities.
- Continue progress of additional trail segments that focus on connections to parks and amenities.

Trail Access & Connectivity

Eden Prairie contains an extensive trail system, with access distributed throughout the City. Although most neighborhoods have adequate trail access, areas that may benefit from trail expansions include the neighborhoods in the northeast corner of the City and areas within the MCA. The 2015 Eden Prairie Parks & Recreation Annual Report noted that 90 percent of the City's total planned off-road trail system has been completed. The City will continue to expand and connect its trail network, locating pedestrian trail access within a quarter mile and bicycle trail access within one mile of residential and commercial destinations, aligning with the Minnesota Department of Health recommendations.

As Eden Prairie continues to acquire land for conservation, such as the floodplain within the Minnesota River Valley, the City will promote the creation of additional trails to connect with existing trails in the area. Where possible, local and regional trails should link neighborhoods with other local and regional trails and parks, as well as with schools, libraries, and commercial areas, as identified in the Metropolitan Council's *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. Local and regional trails should also connect with the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network, as identified in the Metropolitan Council's *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*. The City will maintain close communication with adjacent communities, such as Bloomington and Chanhassen, when planning for local trails that may cross jurisdictional boundaries.

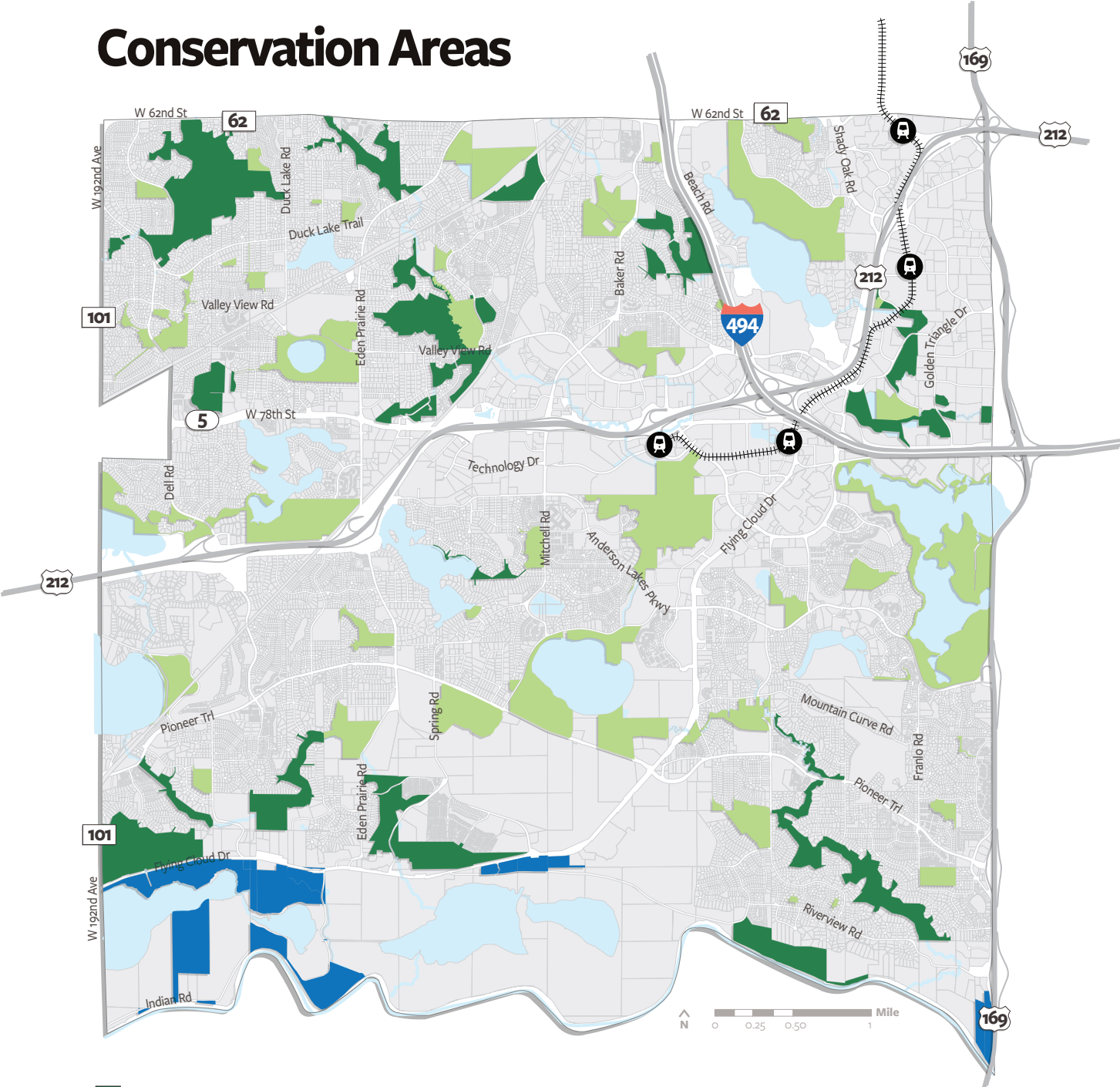
Trail Search Corridors

Eden Prairie's 2015 System Statement expressed the goal to include the proposed regional trails of *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* which would connect Regional Parks System facilities where trail alignments currently do not exist. Two regional trail search corridors identified within the policy plan are Highway 101 and Bryant Lake Regional Trail. Stretching nine miles, the Highway 101 Regional Trail Search Corridor connects Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, Twin Cities & Western Regional Trail Search Corridor, and Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail. Similarly, the 20-mile Bryant Lake Regional Trail Search Corridor connects Medicine Lake Regional Trail, French Regional Park, Luce Line Regional Trail, Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail, Bryant Lake Regional Park, and County Road 61 Regional Trail Search Corridor in Chanhassen. In order to receive Regional Parks system funding for construction, the alignments of these trails must be first approved by the Metropolitan Council as part of a master plan.

Conservation Areas

Eden Prairie has over 1,400 acres of conservation areas and open space, which provide the community with recreation, high-quality natural resources, and opportunities to connect with nature. The City's largest conservation areas include the Edenbrook Conservation Area and Purgatory Creek Park, which together comprise more than 420 acres of land. As Eden Prairie continues to grow and develop, the City will continue to acquire environmentally sensitive areas, such as slopes, wetlands, and floodplains, for conservation as appropriate. The City has acquired areas around the Riley Creek floodplain and the Lower Purgatory Creek floodplain, but opportunities to acquire land along floodplains still exist. The City will continue working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire the floodplain within the Minnesota River Valley to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. This will help accomplish additional goals in the *2003 Parks & Open Space System Plan* as well as establish protected habitat for the various ecosystems within the floodplain. The City also encourages the preservation of permanent open space on wooded slopes of creek valleys through scenic easements or public ownership. The continued efforts to restore, enhance, and protect natural areas should remain a priority.

Conservation Areas



- Conservation Areas
- Parks & Open Space
- Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Community Health

Outdoor Fitness

Eden Prairie parks offer a wide array of sports facilities and outdoor programming that serve all ages. The City will continue to monitor programming trends to ensure residents of all ages and abilities are adequately served.



Public Education

The City is committed to providing the community with educational resources, programs, and engagement opportunities that foster environmental stewardship. For example, the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District provides education and outreach programs that focus on chloride reduction efforts. Educational programming, such as the Edible Hike and Buckthorn Removal Workshop, is frequently offered at Discovery Point, the District's office and educational facilities. Additional programs, such as Dragonflies 101, are offered at other locations around Eden Prairie. The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District also provides several resources and volunteer opportunities that educate the community about environmental protection and enhancement such as a plant selection guide for installing rain gardens.

The City will continue coordinating with all watershed districts, environmental commissions, and local environmental organizations to further provide environmental education opportunities. The City will also continue to facilitate and encourage environmental organizations to partner with Eden Prairie Schools to foster environmental stewardship among the City's youth. This type of partnership would encourage hands-on education through field trips and field courses. Eden Prairie Schools should also be encouraged to utilize public parks and open space for educational purposes.

The recent efforts to offer Edible Gardens and orchard plantings at several parks should continue. The partnerships surrounding these programs not only benefit the volunteers, but benefit local food shelves and create awareness of locally grown food.

Sustainable Resilience

Integrating Artwork with Parks & Trails

Integrating artwork with parks and trails will create an enhanced recreational experience for residents and visitors alike. The Art Center, managed by the Recreation Services Division, hosts the annual Arts in the Park art fair at Purgatory Creek Park. In 2016, about 1,000 people attended Arts in the Park where they enjoyed live music, children’s entertainment, family yoga, and 28 art vendors. Partnerships and grants through the National Endowment of the Arts should continue in order to provide additional sculpture and display of local artist’s work.

The Elizabeth Fries Ellet Interpretive Trail, located in the Richard T. Anderson Conservation Area, includes “interpretive” signs that identify what likely represented the landscapes that Ellet described in her book, *Summer Rambles in the West*. These interpretive signs include photos, documents, letters, journals, newspaper articles, and paintings, providing park users with an enhanced recreational experience. Public outreach identified additional park locations for artwork, such as Round Lake, Purgatory Creek, and the Purgatory Creek and Staring Lake Loop Trail. For example, public input noted that participants would like to see interactive artwork installed in the play areas at Round Lake and an art walk installed on the Purgatory Creek and Staring Lake Trail. The City will continue promoting the use of art in public spaces by coordinating efforts of the Art Center, Parks and Recreation Department, Historical Society, and local artists, as well as through development and redevelopment proposals.

Connected Parks

Eden Prairie’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan identifies the need to further connect bicycle and pedestrian routes with public parks and outlines strategies to complete these connections. Collaboration with local transit authorities to develop a transit route optimization plan that focuses on connecting bus routes with parks would improve accessibility to parks while reducing the need to drive. Key areas of focus in the development of such a plan are:

- *Service frequency*
- *Service operation*
- *Coordination between routes to create an interconnected system*
- *User feedback for future planning*



Social Equity & Diversity

Passport to Fun

Community assets such as gyms, pools, recreation centers, and all the programming that these facilities offer are essential to cultivating a sense of community and encouraging healthy lifestyles. Eden Prairie offers its residents countless recreation and sports activities through the Community Center. Through the Passport to Fun program, the City offers fee assistance to income eligible residents. The continuation of this program is essential to providing equal access to all Eden Prairie residents.

Heritage Preservation

Eden Prairie has a number of open space and other sites owned by the City which are or may be historically significant cultural landscapes. The City will work with the Heritage Preservation Commission and the Eden Prairie Historical Society to further determine the historic and cultural integrity of the open spaces, and other sites that are not currently designated. Subsequently, the City will consider developing a plan to convert or establish those sites as public parks to better control their preservation, maintenance, and designation if deemed appropriate.

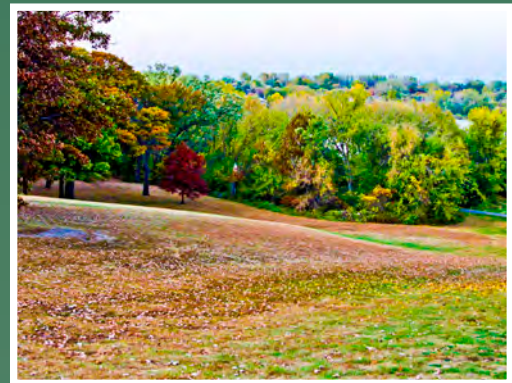
Sustainable Resilience

There are eight common industry factors that should be considered when determining whether a site is a culturally significant landscape.

- **Change and Continuity** - examines the distinctive characteristics retained in a landscape over time.
- **Relative Significance to History** - denotes historical significance such as if the site is the work of an important landscape architect or designer, reflects cultural traditions, the location of an important event, or has other patterns of settlement or land use.
- **Geographical Context** - considers the surroundings of a cultural landscape.
- **Use** - determines whether the current and proposed uses of a cultural landscape affect its historical integrity.
- **Archeological Resources** - identifies the presence of prehistoric and/or historic archeological resources worth preserving.
- **Natural Systems** - examines geology, hydrology, plant and animal habitats, and climate.
- **Management and Maintenance** - creates a long-term and comprehensive plan that can include day-to-day, seasonal, or cyclical tasks.
- **Interpretation** - demonstrates how the landscape will be treated and how it is culturally significant. Useful tools include guided walks, self-guided brochures, computer aided tours, exhibits, and wayside stations.

Reduce Pesticide Use

Pesticides are strategically used in parks, landscapes, and open spaces to control insects, weeds, and other pests as part of an integrated pest management program. Management practices include: proper mowing heights and times, use of smart irrigation systems and a strategic fertilization program help to reduce the need to solely rely on pesticides to control weeds. The City has adopted a Pollinator Friendly Resolution and should continue to promote the smart use of pesticides.





EDEN PRAIRIE



LIVE BETTER DREAM BIGGER

