

Rochester Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

DRAFT Recommendations DRAFT

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan has more than 30 goals across the nine categories of parks, facilities, trails, natural areas, programming, sustainability, public health, public art, and management and operations. The recommendations are organized using the following format:

Goals are broad statements that describe a desired outcome or end-state. Goals are often long-term in scope. These are identified as 1, 2, 3, etc.

Policies describe the general course of action or way in which programs and activities are conducted to achieve a stated goal. Policies speak to underlying values, context, or principles, and are often place-specific. There may be a range of specific actions or strategies that support the implementation of a given policy. These are identified as 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc.

Strategies include programs, actions, or practices that support one or more policy statement. Strategies address at a high level, the “who, what, when, where, and how” of achieving an objective. These are identified as 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, etc.

Strategies may include:

- » **Strategic directions:** Policy/regulatory change, ongoing practice, cooperation with/support of outside groups/efforts, studies/planning for non-capital projects (economic development, housing, small area plans, etc.)
- » **Programmatic investments:** Programs, initiatives, events, training, resources (toolkits, handbooks, maps, etc.)
- » **Capital investments:** Studies/planning for capital projects (infrastructure, parks, public facilities), implementation of existing plans/priority projects, operations and maintenance, discrete projects/investments
- » **Funding:** Funding streams and strategies

Parks

1. ENSURE RESIDENTS HAVE CONVENIENT ACCESS TO NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS FOR INFORMAL RECREATION AND GATHERINGS

- 1.1. Ensure neighborhoods parks are located within a ½ mile – ¾ mile (10 -15 minute walk) of all residents and are physically integrated into the neighborhoods they serve.
 - 1.1.1. Work to fill gaps identified in the Access to Neighborhood Parks Map, particularly focusing on capitalizing on opportunities as development occurs.
 - 1.1.2. Encourage parks to be a central or defining feature of a neighborhood rather than an outlot or leftover land.
 - 1.1.3. Provide adequate access by locating neighborhood parks with a least one side fronting a public street.
 - 1.1.4. Improve resident connectivity to neighborhood parks by adding trails and sidewalks that link with the greater trail network.
 - 1.1.5. Use mini parks to provide facilities and open space to meet local needs.
 - 1.1.6. Re-evaluate distribution and access on an bi-annual basis by updating (digitally or by hand) the Access to Neighborhood Parks Map.
- 1.2. Accommodate the needs of the residential populations served by neighborhood parks.
 - 1.2.1. Create and implement a process for gathering neighborhood input on park design when updating existing or planning new neighborhood parks
 - 1.2.2. Ensure every neighborhood park has at least one opportunity for informal play through an open turf area, natural play area, or playground.
 - 1.2.3. Use the Activity Delivery Guidelines to determine appropriate recreational uses within neighborhood parks.
 - 1.2.4. Design neighborhood parks to have unique features or improvements to avoid a system of 'cookie cutter' parks.
 - 1.2.5. Collaborate with local neighborhood residents and organizations to incorporate public art or develop elements that establish unique neighborhood park identity and sense of place.
 - 1.2.6. Support volunteer efforts for neighborhood gatherings at parks.
 - 1.2.7. Encourage neighborhood groups to take an active role in managing park maintenance and enhancement, using groups like Eastside Pioneers Neighborhood Association and Friends of Indian Heights as models.
 - 1.2.8. Strive for neighborhood parks that are universally accessible, incorporating necessary infrastructure such as accessible play equipment, picnic tables, and curb ramps.
 - 1.2.9. Provide basic amenities at every neighborhood park, like picnic tables, seating, shade trees, bike racks, and trash receptacles.
 - 1.2.10. Provide portable restrooms at neighborhood parks as park use and demand warrants.
 - 1.2.11. Measure success of neighborhood parks in serving neighborhood needs by surveying resident satisfaction periodically; aim for a 75% satisfaction rate.

2. PROVIDE A SYSTEM OF CONNECTED, COMMUNITY PARKS THAT EACH OFFER A DISTINCTIVE MIX OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND NATURAL AMENITIES

- 2.1. Ensure community parks are located within two miles of every resident.
 - 2.1.1. Add Community Parks as the community grows and/or opportunities arise.
 - 2.1.2. Re-evaluate distribution and access on an bi-annual basis by updating (digitally or by hand) the Access to Community Parks Map.
- 2.2. Ensure the mix of facilities across Community Parks is equitably distributed and provide for year-round use.
 - 2.2.1. Ensure at least 2-3 recreational activities are accommodated within each Community Park; see the Activity Delivery Guidelines for appropriate activities.
 - 2.2.2. Locate in every Community Park a large picnic shelter or small multi-purpose building that can be used for indoor neighborhood events, programming, and as a warming house in the winter. The type of structure should be determined by the other uses and activities located within each particular Community Park.
 - 2.2.3. At a minimum, each Community Park should include the following universally accessible facilities: picnic tables, shade trees, playground, trail loop, a naturalized amenity or feature, a picnic shelter or park building, all-season restrooms, and parking.
 - 2.2.4. Make sure there is at least one type of winter recreational opportunity in each Community Park.
 - 2.2.5. Conduct community-driven park planning processes to identify improvements and a recommended phasing plan when significant reinvestment needed.

3. PROVIDE REGIONAL PARKS THAT ARE DESTINATIONS FOR CITIZENS OF ROCHESTER AND BEYOND.

- 3.1. Build upon the existing regional park assets.
 - 3.1.1. Maintain and implement existing master plans for each regional park.
 - 3.1.2. Apply for funding through the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC) and other available funding sources to support new features, trails, and major maintenance needs such as invasive species control.
 - 3.1.3. As the community grows, evaluate the need and opportunities to add, or collaborate with other agencies like Olmsted County, to provide one or two additional regional parks.
- 3.2. Enhance the visibility of and access to regional parks
 - 3.2.1. Increase trail connections to surrounding residents and broader trail system.
 - 3.2.2. Identify additional partnerships for added programming within regional parks.
 - 3.2.3. Ensure universal accessibility to regional parks and their facilities

4. PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY SYSTEM OF ATHLETIC COMPLEXES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF ROCHESTER, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

- 4.1. Provide complexes designed to meet local and regional tournament needs for rectangular and diamond field sports.

- 4.1.1. In addition to high quality field surfaces, provide support facilities at complexes that include electronic scoreboards, lighting, shelter with concessions and restrooms, and adequate parking.
- 4.2. Provide complexes designed to meet local play and practice needs for soccer, baseball, softball, football, and lacrosse.
 - 4.2.1. Improve efficiency and quality where appropriate by consolidating single fields into local complexes as the single fields reach their end of life
 - 4.2.2. Distribute local complexes by park zone to provide convenient access.

5. MAINTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL PARKS AS AREAS SET ASIDE FOR PRESERVING NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

- 5.1. Limit development in Environmental Parks to improvements that support passive-uses or address water quality/habitat.
- 5.2. Provide opportunities for users to connect with nature by using low impact design to add trails.
 - 5.2.1. Balance the types of trails available (paved, soft surface, mowed, etc.) on natural resource quality, topography, existing availability, and needed connections to neighborhoods.
 - 5.2.2. Improve access for people of all ability by ensuring one ADA accessible trail in each park zone.
- 5.3. Facilitate access to Environmental Parks by connecting residents via trails, bikeways, and sidewalks.
- 5.4. Seize opportunities to create additional Environmental Parks as the City grows or areas of natural value become available.
- 5.5. Identify and provide needed maintenance to control invasive species and support biodiversity in Environmental Parks.
 - 5.5.1. Develop and use park-specific management plans to guide preservation, restoration, and management of the natural resources.

6. MAXIMIZE THE FUNCTIONALITY OF LINEAR PARKS

- 6.1. Utilize linear parks to provide ecosystem services, including habitat, stormwater management for the park system, removal of particulate matter from the air, cooling, etc.
 - 6.1.1. Green linear parks by planting more trees and naturalizing where possible.
 - 6.1.2. Reduce development impacts by maintaining a buffer of 50 feet around water resources.
- 6.2. Use linear parks to make trail and natural connections in the park system.
 - 6.2.1. Establish linear parks as the community grows to establish greenway corridors.
 - 6.2.2. Design future linear parks to include trail connections.
 - 6.2.3. Coordinate development and management of linear green spaces with other City and County agencies to effectively provide connectivity and environmentally sustainable resources for the community.

7. PROVIDE SPECIAL USE FACILITIES TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC NEEDS

- 7.1. Re-evaluate special use parks annually to ensure their viability.
 - 7.1.1. Measure use and cost recovery.
 - 7.1.2. Identify and address maintenance needs.
- 7.2. Maintain and expand partnerships where possible for the programming, operations, and maintenance of special use facilities.
- 7.3. Where possible, distribute special use parks by zone when building new or relocating existing facilities.
- 7.4. Invest in Mayo Field in its current location to maintain the facility to an expected level of quality during the life of the facility.

8. INCREASE INTEGRATION OF PARKS AND RECREATION INTO THE DAILY LIVES OF RESIDENTS AND ATTRACT VISITORS

- 8.1. Increase public awareness of citizens and visitors about the system to encourage use.
 - 8.1.1. Improve existing park signage and wayfinding.
 - 8.1.2. Implement the *Passport to Parks* program.
 - 8.1.3. Expand web and social media presence.

Facilities

1. MAINTAIN QUALITY FACILITIES FOR INFORMAL AND PRACTICE USE DISTRIBUTED ACROSS THE CITY.

- 1.1. Ensure each park zone has athletic fields and courts distributed throughout to serve local needs
 - 1.1.1. Provide high-quality tennis courts by transitioning neighborhood tennis courts to groups of 2-4 courts, and provide at least one set per park zone.
 - 1.1.2. Provide convenient access to pickleball by providing at least one tennis court striped for pickleball in each park zone.
 - 1.1.3. Provide at least one location for cricket in the community at West River Park.
 - 1.1.4. Continue to provide fields for lacrosse at Faud Monsour Complex or alternate locations as opportunities arise.
 - 1.1.5. Transition full size basketball courts from neighborhood parks to community parks, locating one or two within each park zone.
 - 1.1.6. Provide at least one half-court for basketball in each park subzone.
 - 1.1.7. Provide at least one sand volleyball court located adjacent to a picnic pavilion in each park zone.
 - 1.1.8. Ensure within each park subzone that half of the neighborhood parks have open turf areas.
- 1.2. Expand outreach to all user groups or potential user groups to better serve their recreational needs.
 - 1.2.1. Engage minority/immigrant groups on a semi-annual basis to assess needs and maintain open communication.
 - 1.2.2. Solicit input from known users on future needs.
 - 1.2.3. Develop communication tools to facilitate understanding of what facilities may best serve their needs and how to reserve facilities if needed.
- 1.3. Partner with schools to provide access to athletic fields/facilities, particularly to serve recreational users.

2. PROVIDE FACILITIES TO SERVE LOCAL TOURNAMENTS AND LEAGUES

- 2.1. Consolidate and distribute athletic fields to increase convenience and the efficiency of operations and maintenance.
 - 2.1.1. Improve some existing fields for more efficient use. Improvements may include reorientation to reduce conflicts, safety fencing and netting, lighted fields to increase use, irrigation and turf enhancements, and additional parking.
 - 2.1.2. Consolidate baseball fields with two to three fields per location. Convert low-use or poor condition fields to other uses as replacement fields are available. Distribute across the city with at least one set per park zone.

- 2.1.3. Consolidate soccer into fewer parks, maintaining at least two parks with six fields and the remaining parks with two to three fields each. Distribute across the city, ensuring at least one set per zone (except the Central Zone).
- 2.1.4. Maintain the existing multi-use, flexible rectangle fields at Soldiers, Kutzky East, and Silver Lake Parks.
- 2.1.5. Develop two new complex sites with six fields each to serve football, lacrosse, and rugby.
- 2.1.6. Add permanent rugby goal posts to one or two fields.
- 2.1.7. Plan for the replacement of the Faud Monsour sports fields onto city owned property.
- 2.2. Contribute to the facility needs of the local tennis community.
 - 2.2.1. Maintain a set of at least 6 courts at one community park.
- 2.3. Contribute to the facility needs of the local aquatics community.
 - 2.3.1. Replace the lap pool at Soldiers Field.
 - 2.3.2. Maintain the indoor aquatics facilities at the Recreation Center.
- 2.4. Provide a dedicated pickleball facility.
 - 2.4.1. Maintain a set of six dedicated pickleball court at a community park (planned for 2016).

3. PROVIDE REGIONAL TOURNAMENT QUALITY FACILITIES TO SERVE ASSOCIATIONS AND BOOST THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

- 3.1. Ensure athletic complexes and indoor facilities include a minimum level of amenities to serve tournaments, including scoreboards, concessions, restrooms, parking, etc.
- 3.2. Maintain partnerships with associations and schools to meet tournament needs.
 - 3.2.1. Collaborate with associations on design, operations, and maintenance.
 - 3.2.2. Support collaboration with the school district to meet tournament needs.
- 3.3. Provide athletic complexes and indoor facilities that attract regional tournaments while serving local needs.
 - 3.3.1. Improve Watson Sports Complex for baseball tournaments and local play. Explore the conversion of some existing rectangle fields to baseball while still maintaining neighborhood access to some rectangle fields. Include amenities and three 75-foot fields and one 90-foot field.
 - 3.3.2. Maintain McQuillan and RYFSA Fields as a softball complex. *(note in 2016 improvements will be made to RYFSA)*
 - 3.3.3. Establish a rectangle field complex with 10 to 12 fields and amenities.
 - 3.3.4. Maintain and improve Graham Arena for tournament use.
 - 3.3.5. Maintain the National Volleyball Center and Recreation Center for tournament use.

4. PROVIDE A DIVERSITY OF SPECIALIZED RECREATIONAL FACILITIES DISTRIBUTED ACROSS THE CITY

- 4.1. Support year-round recreation by improving access to outdoor winter facilities.
 - 4.1.1. Ensure each park zone has at least one outdoor hockey/pleasure skating rink.
 - 4.1.2. Designate two to three locations throughout the community for sledding.
 - 4.1.3. Provide skating opportunities on Cascade Lake, Foster Arend, and other frozen waterways as appropriate.
 - 4.1.4. Provide access to groomed cross country ski trails at Essex Park, Quarry Hill Park and Nature Center, Gamehaven Park, Parkwood Hills Park, Eastwood Golf Course, and Soldier's Field Golf Course.
 - 4.1.5. Work with partners to provide snow-making efforts at Gamehaven Regional Park for cross country skiing.
 - 4.1.6. Promote Northern Hills Golf Course and Hadley Creek Golf Course as open for snowshoeing and cross country skiing.
 - 4.1.7. Take advantage of larger natural areas to allow for un-programmed skiing, snowshoeing and hiking activities.
- 4.2. Improve access to aquatics
 - 4.2.1. Maintain the Indoor Recreation Center to provide year-round swimming opportunities.
 - 4.2.2. Maintain and improve beach facilities at Foster Arend and Cascade Lake.
 - 4.2.3. Replace existing Soldiers Field pool with lap pool, children's activity area, and pool activities like climbing wall, basketball hoop, etc.
 - 4.2.4. Add small scale interactive water features (splash pads, plaza with water) to provide free access to water play. These should be located within community parks with one location per zone where no other low-cost, outdoor aquatic features exist.
 - 4.2.5. Replace the existing splash pad at Nachriener Park.
 - 4.2.6. Consider the development of interactive water features (e.g. fountains, splash pads, etc.) as part of regional and community parks.
- 4.3. Manage the golf courses to meet demand and marketplace trends.
 - 4.3.1. Evaluate and prioritize maintenance, upgrades and replacement investments balancing usage and costs.
 - 4.3.2. Develop future golfers by providing the Hadley Creek Learning Center, offering lessons, and supporting The First Tee Organization.
 - 4.3.3. Establish and maintain communication with the golfing community to solicit feedback and discuss operational issues.
 - 4.3.4. Annually review user fees to ensure reflecting demand, costs, and changes in the marketplace.
 - 4.3.5. Maintain and routinely evaluate public/private partnerships to provide food and beverage service at Eastwood, Northern Hills, and Soldiers Field.
 - 4.3.6. Conduct facility assessments to evaluate and prioritize the long-term investments needed for each clubhouse.

- 4.3.7. Periodically review alternative and compatible uses at the golf course facilities to continue to meet the community's needs.
- 4.4. Expand and improve the existing skate park at Silver Lake Park.
- 4.5. Provide four disc golf courses distributed throughout the city.
 - 4.5.1. Maintain existing disc golf courses at East Park and Slattery Park.
 - 4.5.2. Develop disc golf course at Gamehaven as proposed in the Master Plan.
 - 4.5.3. Add another disc golf course in the Northwest Park Zone at an appropriate location based on the Activity Delivery Guidelines
- 4.6. Provide four dog parks distributed throughout the city.
 - 4.6.1. Maintain the existing dog park in the south.
 - 4.6.2. Develop a dog park in the Essex Park area.
 - 4.6.3. Develop the dog park behind the Recreation Center.
 - 4.6.4. Add a dog park in the Northwest Park Zone at an appropriate location based on the Activity Delivery Guidelines
- 4.7. Provide mountain biking at three locations distributed throughout the city.
 - 4.7.1. Maintain the existing course at Eastwood Park.
 - 4.7.2. Develop a course at Gamehaven Park as proposed in the Master Plan.
 - 4.7.3. Add a new course in the Northwest Park Zone at an appropriate location based on the Activity Delivery Guidelines or in conjunction with Olmstead County.
- 4.8. Maintain and expand two archery facilities distributed at either end of the city.
- 4.9. Maintain existing river access for canoeing, kayaking, and rowing, and expand the river access in conjunction with County initiatives and the Downtown Master Plan.
- 4.10. Provide one set of two horseshoe courts in each park zone.
 - 4.10.1. Maintain existing facilities for the remainder of their useful life.
 - 4.10.2. Focus new or replacement courts in sets of two adjacent to picnic pavilions.
 - 4.10.3. Explore opportunities to add a set of two courts in the northwest and southwest park zones.
- 4.11. Provide one public community garden in each park zone
 - 4.11.1. Add public community gardens as demands warrant.
 - 4.11.2. Support partnerships to provide additional gardens
- 4.12. Pilot facilities for new or trending sports to assess appropriateness for park system, cost, durability, and demand. (e.g. slacklining, gaga ball, human foosball, etc.)

5. MAINTAIN QUALITY, UP-TO-DATE INDOOR FACILITIES TO PROVIDE RECREATIONAL, CULTURAL, AND COMMUNITY GATHERING ACTIVITIES

- 5.1. Maintain and expand existing indoor facilities to address changing recreational needs
 - 5.1.1. Assess facility needs on an annual basis as part of budgeting and capital improvement planning.

- 5.1.2. Maintain the Rochester Recreation Center as the hub for indoor recreation and programs, including indoor aquatics, ice rinks, gyms, meeting rooms and senior services.
- 5.1.3. Maintain the National Volleyball Center as the hub for indoor gym recreation and programming
- 5.1.4. Maintain and improve the Graham Arena to meet the needs of a variety of users (hockey, figure skating, trade shows, festivals, etc.)
- 5.2. Develop and implement a facility and operations plan for the renovation and long-term use of the former Fire Station #2 for public recreation programs and other users as identified.
- 5.3. Maintain the historic integrity and functionality of the Plummer House and grounds for community gathering.
- 5.4. Provide one small, multi-purpose building per zone that can serve a variety of needs including locations for neighborhood-based classes and programming, private rentals, winter warming house, and restrooms.
 - 5.4.1. Develop and implement facility plans to upgrade the Soldiers Field Pool or Club House and Silver Lake Pool buildings for year-round use.
 - 5.4.2. Design the planned structures for Cascade Lake and Gamehaven parks to provide year-round, multi-functional use.
 - 5.4.3. Add a new year-round facility at Lincolnshire Park.
 - 5.4.4. Add buildings as needed for community and regional parks to support the goals of the park system.

6. CONTINUALLY STRIVE TO EVALUATE AND IMPROVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FACILITY USER GROUPS

- 6.1. Work with clubs, associations, and other groups to regularly assess needs
 - 6.1.1. Maintain a database of existing organizations and contacts to facilitate communication.
 - 6.1.2. Ensure, at minimum, annual communications with existing organizations.
 - 6.1.3. Implement an annual feedback mechanism, such as a survey, to measure satisfaction with organizations and groups.

Trails

1. PROVIDE A MULTI-PURPOSE TRAIL SYSTEM THAT ENCOURAGES RECREATION

- 1.1. Expand the system and eliminate gaps to create an interconnected and comprehensive system of multi-purpose trails.
 - 1.1.1. Establish cross-city trails to interconnect the Park Zones.
 - 1.1.2. Collaborate with Olmsted County and surrounding communities on establishing regional trail connections.
 - 1.1.3. Ensure there is at least one major trail loop (greater than 3 miles) in each zone.
 - 1.1.4. Eliminate system gaps giving consideration to the following priorities:
 - 1) Access to regional parks, community parks, athletic complexes and special use facilities
 - 2) Elimination of cross city trail gaps
 - 3) Elimination of gaps or interim routes for existing trail loops
 - 4) Extension of cross city trails
 - 5) Development of new trail loops
 - 6) Development of new regional trails
 - 1.1.5. Link Reservoirs to the trail system
 - 1.1.6. Evaluate in trail routing the potential aesthetic benefits of alignments along system water resources like stormwater facilities, infiltration basins, etc.
 - 1.1.7. Ensure there is at least one ADA accessible trail in each zone within a natural area 10 acres or larger.
- 1.2. Diversify available trails to serve specific recreational purposes.
 - 1.2.1. Develop a system of natural surface trails to provide hiking opportunities by:
 - Creating a GIS inventory of the existing natural surface trails.
 - Developing and providing maps of natural surface trails to the public.
 - Determining the current level of access and distribution.
 - Identifying a goal for access and distribution.
 - Identifying and prioritizing gaps to address.
 - 1.2.2. Look for opportunities to expand mountain biking in new locations
 - 1.2.3. Expand cross-country skiing opportunities by:
 - Communicating the availability of community park, regional parks, and golf courses for ungroomed cross-country skiing
 - Groom additional cross-country ski trails
 - 1.2.4. Expand trails in off-leash dog parks

2. SUPPORT USE OF TRAILS FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION TO DAILY DESTINATIONS

- 2.1. Facilitate implementation of the Rochester Area Bicycle Master Plan in the park and recreation system.
 - 2.1.1. Recognize the corridor classifications of Regional Bikeway, Major City Bikeway, Local Area Bikeway, and Express Bikeway as set forth in the plan as they pertain to trails under the jurisdiction of Parks and Recreation.
 - 2.1.2. Work with other agencies and departments to aid in the implementation of the goals set forth in the plan.
 - 2.1.3. Sign on-street bike lanes and right of way paths/sidewalks when utilized to supplement the trail system, transitioning these to off-road facilities where and when possible.
 - 2.1.4. Support the connection of the bikeways and trail system with public transit, providing flexibility and choice for travel options.
 - 2.1.5. Support efforts to close safe routes to school gaps.
- 2.2. Make biking the easy and safe choice
 - 2.2.1. Provide bike racks, water fountains, changing facilities, and restrooms at select facilities to support bicycle commuting.
 - 2.2.2. Identify changes in highly-utilized destinations and re-evaluate maintenance and winter plowing policies as needed.
 - 2.2.3. Install bike racks at all regional parks, community parks, athletic complexes, and special use facilities.

3. PROVIDE A WELCOMING AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL TRAIL USERS

- 3.1. Increase public awareness of the trail system through marketing, signage, print, and electronic navigation tools.
 - 3.1.1. Improve system navigation by implementing the existing wayfinding plan and expanding its reach to areas outside of the Central Zone.
 - 3.1.2. Reinforce the economic and health benefit of trails.
 - 3.1.3. Promote the trail system as an integral part of the quality of life in Rochester and the community's ability to attract economic development.
- 3.2. Improve the trail user experience.
 - 3.2.1. Ensure public awareness of proper trail use, seasonal trail closures, and trail etiquette.
 - 3.2.2. Implement a vegetation management program to maintain/trim/thin vegetation back from trails to improve safety.
 - 3.2.3. Update the winter trail maintenance policy on an annual basis, re-evaluating and amending it based on factors like historical maintenance, commuting routes, safe routes to school, and requests from residents.
 - 3.2.4. Expand lighting on select routes to increase safety.
 - 3.2.5. Add call boxes along key, highly traveled routes to enhance the perception of safety for students, visitors, and commuters.
 - 3.2.6. Provide potable water sources along the heavily-used portions of the trail.

4. INTEGRATE TRAILS IN PLANNING AND DESIGN PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

- 4.1. Ensure trails are addressed in the development process.
 - 4.1.1. Proactively acquire and preserve land, right-of-way, or easements for trails identified in this Plan.
 - 4.1.2. During the development design review process, provide clear direction on creating an integrated trail system that provides connections to key locations and ability for users to complete walking/biking loops.
- 4.2. Make trail planning part of internal processes.
 - 4.2.1. Include bike and trail facilities as appropriate in *all* new/reconstruction street projects and public infrastructure projects.
 - 4.2.2. Evaluate opportunities for the continuation or establishment of trail connections when roads are redesigned, abandoned or closed.
 - 4.2.3. Annually review missing segments and priority segments as part of the City Capital Improvement Plan processes.
 - 4.2.4. Meet with Public Works and other agencies to discuss trails on a semi-annual basis to coordinate/collaborate on upcoming projects.
 - 4.2.5. Initiate planning on priority segments to position projects for grant funding. This could include preparing preliminary plans/layouts, evaluating right of way needs, environmental documentation, review of historic resources.
- 4.3. Take innovative steps towards supporting bicycle infrastructure
 - 4.3.1. Support the installation of bike lockers in key locations around downtown.
 - 4.3.2. Support a cost-share program to encourage existing businesses to install bike racks.
 - 4.3.3. Support a recreational and commuter bike share program
 - 4.3.4. Support the development of an ordinance requiring enhanced or secure bicycle parking and shower facilities for certain types/sizes of new construction.

Natural Areas

1. IMPROVE ACCESS TO NATURAL AREAS AND NATURE-BASED PLAY

- 1.1. Define natural areas as an outdoor space that is 1 acre or larger where native or naturalized vegetation is the dominant feature, human activity is limited, and is open to the public.
- 1.2. Ensure residents have access to natural areas 1 acre or larger within $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 mile of their homes.
 - 1.2.1. Look for opportunities to provide natural areas in the four gaps identified in the 'Access to Natural Areas' map.
 - 1.2.2. Encourage interaction with natural areas by providing signage, wayfinding, and maps to guide people to natural areas.
 - 1.2.3. Identify and strategize for the acquisition of areas of natural value or open space in growth areas outside of the City to ensure access to natural areas within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile for new residential areas.
- 1.3. Ensure residents have access to large natural areas with an ADA accessible trail within a long bike ride or short car ride from their home.
 - 1.3.1. Expand naturalized areas in the Central Zone around South Fork of the Zumbro River, Cascade Creek, or Bear Creek in the Central Zone, and ensure an ADA accessible trail loop in this area.
 - 1.3.2. Maintain at least one 20 acre or larger natural area in each of the Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast Zones.
 - 1.3.3. Expand trails in one of the 20 acre or larger natural areas in the NW zone to make an ADA Accessible loop
- 1.4. Expand opportunities for children to experience nature-based play within the City.
 - 1.4.1. Provide at least one nature play area within each Subzone, or nature play components if the Subzone cannot support its own full nature play area.

2. PRESERVE AREAS OF NATURAL VALUE

- 2.1. Support Biodiversity
 - 2.1.1. Create a Natural Resources Inventory that identifies, designates, and categorizes natural areas managed by Parks & Recreation by size and quality.
 - 2.1.2. Use the Natural Resources Inventory to develop Natural Resource Management Plans for designated areas (regional parks, environmental parks, reservoirs, etc.).
 - 2.1.3. Establish technical expertise in natural area establishment and maintenance through hiring, professional development, and contracting.
- 2.2. Identify and prioritize the protection of natural areas that provide trail corridors/linkages between parks and other destinations.
 - 2.2.1. Utilize land trusts, conservation easements, and partnerships to protect land proposed as greenway corridors.
- 2.3. Coordinate with Rochester - Olmsted County Planning Department for the development of plans that outline preservation of natural areas in future private development areas.

2.4. Measure the success of efforts to preserve areas of natural value by setting goals and reviewing them annually.

2.4.1. Ensure no net-loss of natural areas in the park system on an annual basis, utilizing the natural resources inventory to track changes in the system.

3. EXPAND NATURE-BASED PROGRAMMING AND OUTREACH AND EDUCATION ABOUT NATURAL AREAS

3.1. Provide interpretive information about natural resources/habitat in environmental and regional parks, as well as at key features in other park components (i.e. Silver Lake).

3.2. Improve education/marketing of the value of natural areas.

3.2.1. Collaborate with existing partners to provide one annual environmental education event per zone in a natural area.

3.2.2. Evaluate the success/value of new programming and efforts related to natural areas by:

- Tracking program participation and seeking feedback from program participants
- Implementing user surveys
- Establish a user count program at popular natural area destinations

3.3. Support Quarry Hill Nature Center as the community hub for environmental education, nature-based programming, and natural area stewardship

3.3.1. Work with the Friends of Quarry Hill to implement the development and natural resource recommendations from the 2015 Quarry Hill Master Plan and their strategic plan.

3.3.2. Explore/support nature-based programming provided by the center at satellite locations across the city.

Programming

1. EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY GATHERING AND EDUCATION

- 1.1. Program and support partners' events to draw residents to parks and recreation facilities.
 - 1.1.1. Scale events appropriately to the type of park, such as concerts in community parks and picnics in neighborhood parks.
 - 1.1.2. Ensure there are winter sports and opportunities for social connections (sledding, skating, snowshoeing)
 - 1.1.3. Collaborate with cultural groups to provide community events in the parks.
 - 1.1.4. Establish and promote informal or self-directed recreation.
 - 1.1.5. Support open street festivals or public art forums that highlight interesting things about Rochester.
 - 1.1.6. Partner with the schools and other organizations to provide community education in the parks.
 - 1.1.7. Explore opportunities with partner organization to share space for similar programming.
- 1.2. Encourage a sense of community at the neighborhood level
 - 1.2.1. Partner with RNeighbors to host events, block parties, and neighborhood "nights out" at parks and park facilities to help strengthen relationships and the overall health of the community
 - 1.2.2. Add posting boards in neighborhood parks to encourage communication and informal meetings in parks

2. ENCOURAGE RECREATION PARTICIPATION BY ALL ROCHESTER RESIDENTS, REGARDLESS OF AGE OR ABILITY

- 2.1. Maintain and expand the Adaptive Recreation program as needed to meet needs
 - 2.1.1. Annually analyze participation rates, requests, and user evaluations to determine the programs to offer.
 - 2.1.2. Explore partnerships with local organizations to diversify and expand offerings.
- 2.2. Expand opportunities for affordable or low-cost recreation within Rochester parks and recreation facilities
 - 2.2.1. Ensure tiered pricing structure reflects the benefit of the programs to the community versus the individual.
 - 2.2.2. Provide grants and scholarships to eliminate financial barriers to City sponsored events and programs.
 - 2.2.3. Encourage associations that are supported by Parks and Recreation to provide grants and scholarships to eliminated financial barriers to participation.
 - 2.2.4. Organize informal winter sledding, snowshoeing, ice skating, and other events
 - 2.2.5. Collaborate with partner groups to offer free and low-cost summer youth programming

- 2.2.6. Reduce transportation barriers by locating programming throughout the community. For example, distributing tennis lessons throughout the system rather than at one particular park.
- 2.2.7. Analyze subsidization of programs on an annual basis, and use this information to amend as necessary.
- 2.3. Activate the downtown parks and open spaces with more destinations and activities year-round, 7 days a week, daytime and nighttime
 - 2.3.1. Partner with local organizations and businesses to offer small events to activate downtown parks and open spaces
 - 2.3.2. Establish a clear, criteria-based permitting system for vendors to operate in parks
 - 2.3.3. Partner with local restaurants and food trucks to offer refreshments and snacks in parks and open spaces utilizing a concessionaire fee system.
- 2.4. Encourage, partner with, and support existing recreational clubs and associations in the city to fill programming gaps that the City cannot fill
 - 2.4.1. Annually evaluate and review the programs offered by the city and private organizations to determine gaps
 - 2.4.2. Seek input from schools and residents to find overlaps in program offerings
 - 2.4.3. Form a working group made up of city staff, community recreation leaders, and school representatives to meet quarterly to discuss programming needs
 - 2.4.4. Work with partners to modify programming to meet the needs of diverse populations, such as offering times for female only fitness or swimming

3. EXPAND MARKETING AND AWARENESS OF FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

- 3.1. Encourage use of park and recreational facilities for events, tournaments, and programming
 - 3.1.1. Ensure the process for reserving and using facilities is easy by monitoring user satisfaction.
 - 3.1.2. Collaborate with Rochester Amateur Sports Commission, athletic organizations, and other partners to promote parks and facilities, using a clear, criteria-based process for doing so.
 - 3.1.3. Support community events and festivals to bring people into the parks (e.g. Rochesterfest, 4th of July).
 - 3.1.4. Ensure recognition of Parks and Recreation as a sponsoring partner by providing and requesting the use of Parks and Recreation logo on promotional materials and signage.
- 3.2. Ensure consistent communication between City staff, schools, and recreation organizations
 - 3.2.1. Establish a regularly meeting working group of City staff, School representatives, recreation association representatives, and other members as necessary
 - Discuss status of recreational facilities used by organizations—cost, maintenance, updates needed
 - Manage expectations of the city and of the organizations
 - Discuss opportunities to work together to meet shared goals

- 3.2.2. Evaluate city staffing and duties to ensure sufficient capacity for coordinating and managing use of city facilities by recreation associations, volunteers, and city programs
- 3.3. Use the parks website, local media, and other technology for promotion of recreation opportunities
 - 3.3.1. Develop process and standards for publicizing community events using park and recreation facilities
 - 3.3.2. Publicize partner organizations' opportunities on the front page or other easily accessible area
 - 3.3.3. Expand parks and recreation outreach using social media and local media (paper/radio).

Sustainability

1. INNOVATE IN PARKS WITH SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PRACTICES

- 1.1 Reduce impacts on waterways and ground water by incorporating stormwater best practices in park and facility design.
 - 1.1.1. Incorporate rain gardens, bio-swales, water retention, and permeable paving when feasible.
 - 1.1.2. Reduce impervious surfaces in the design of parks and facilities.
 - 1.1.3. Use cisterns and other water-saving methods to reduce water consumption.
 - 1.1.4. Establish 50 foot vegetation buffers around wetlands, rivers, ponds, reservoirs, and lakes on appropriate public land and parks.
- 1.2. Be 100% renewable energy-fueled by 2031.
 - 1.2.1. Use solar, wind, and geothermal where and when feasible for lighting, heating, and cooling.
 - 1.2.2. Improve energy efficiency of facilities when renovating and constructing new.
 - 1.2.3. Use native trees/shrubs planted in appropriate locations to conserve energy.

2. BECOME A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

- 2.1. Offer recycling options in community, athletic, and regional parks.
- 2.2. Manage the use of pesticides in parks consistent with the current plan.
 - 2.2.1. Utilize integrated pest management strategies to control nuisance plants, weeds, insects, rodents, etc.
 - 2.2.2. Implement a turf conversion program to transition underutilized turf areas to forest or other native cover.
 - 2.2.3. Look for opportunities to convert existing landscape areas (non-native/introduced species) into native plantings.
- 2.3. Use vegetation management to protect water quality.
 - 2.3.1. Use natural stream bank erosion control methods.
 - 2.3.2. Minimize the application of chemicals on turf that will run into water.
- 2.4. Experiment with sustainability pilot programs.
 - 2.4.1. Test out a pesticide-free park.
 - 2.4.2. Create a pollinator-friendly lawn that incorporates flowering perennials such as white clover, fescue grass, and self-heal.
- 2.5. Raise public awareness about sustainability.
 - 2.5.1. Publicize sustainability efforts undertaken by the City via social media, interpretation, and other marketing information.
 - 2.5.2. Publicize sustainability efforts that should be undertaken by the City via social media, interpretation, and other marketing information.
- 2.6. Measure the and share the impact of sustainability efforts

- 2.6.1. Organize volunteers to do species counts of insects, birds, and other animals before and after turf conversions or other efforts to support biodiversity.
- 2.6.2. Quantify and share the annual volume of pesticides applied by Parks and Recreation from year to year.
- 2.6.3. Measure and compare water quality in surface waters on an annual basis, working with partners to assess temperature, turbidity, pH, dissolved oxygen, etc.

3. CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT PROGRESSIVE URBAN FORESTRY PRACTICES

- 3.1. In continued recognition of the importance of a healthy urban forest to the health of the community, support and encourage the planting of trees and the care of trees in the community.
 - 3.1.1. Continue to follow and implement the Urban Forest Management Plan.
 - 3.1.2. Continue to follow and implement the Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan.
 - 3.1.3. Continue to follow and enforce Rochester City Ordinance 47 - Tree Management.
 - 3.1.4. Continue to follow and enforce the Boulevard Tree Planting requirements found in the Land Development Manual.

Public Health

1. LEVERAGE PARKS AND RECREATION TO IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- 1.1. Encourage active living.
 - 1.1.1. Work with Public Works to support implementation of trail recommendations to promote healthy lifestyles.
 - 1.1.2. Support the introduction of a bike share system in Rochester.
 - 1.1.3. Add outdoor exercise equipment adjacent to playgrounds to support adult activity while children are playing.
 - 1.1.4. Increase exposure to the array of recreational opportunities by providing low-cost and low commitment trial programs targeted towards children, seniors, and immigrants.
 - 1.1.5. Create an annual winter program to address seasonal affective disorder by providing a day for free or reduced equipment rental rates (cross country skis, fat tire bikes, etc) and instruction for outdoor activities.
 - 1.1.6. Evaluate and address safety in the parks and along trails during design, development, redevelopment, and vegetation management.
- 1.2. Seek and support potential partners in addressing public health.
 - 1.2.1. Support private entrepreneurs who may want to provide programming in the parks by developing vendor selection criteria and a permitting process.
 - 1.2.2. Seek collaborations with health care providers and local higher education institutions to implement programming/events/outreach/research opportunities.
 - 1.2.3. Work with local arborists/ecologists/horticulturists to communicate the benefits of trees, forests, and habitat on air quality, water quality, and human health.

2. LEVERAGE PARKS AND RECREATION TO BUILD ON ROCHESTER'S HEALTHY CITY IMAGE

- 2.1. Create a 'Find Your Healthy Place' campaign in the park system.
 - 2.1.1. Bring health specialists to park events to provide information to park visitors.
 - 2.1.2. Use social media to promote the campaign and events.
 - 2.1.3. Establish a permitting policy to support the planting, maintaining, harvesting, and distribution of edible vegetation in parks.
 - 2.1.4. Seek partners to co-host gardening and cooking demonstrations at existing garden plots.
 - 2.1.5. Initiate activities in the parks, such as a 'Count your Steps in the Park' day.
 - 2.1.6. Work with individual artists and arts groups to create interactive installations that address the correlation between parks/natural area visits and mental/physical health.
 - 2.1.7. Collaborate with local schools to encourage the use of parks as outdoor classroom space.

- 2.2. Explore and communicate the health benefits of being outdoors and interacting with nature.
 - 2.2.1. Develop and maintain a public service campaign to market the benefits of unstructured nature play for childhood development, as well as mental and physical health benefits to teens, adults, and seniors.

DRAFT

Public Art

1. INCORPORATE PERMANENT PUBLIC ART INTO THE FABRIC OF PARKS AND TRAILS

- 1.1. Seek opportunities to use artist-designed park features rather than standard catalog pieces when repairing, replacing, and developing new amenities in neighborhood and community parks
 - 1.1.1. Involve artists in park and trail design teams at the beginning of projects to ensure the exploration and inclusion of interactive art features within new development and construction.
 - 1.1.2. Include permanent artistic furnishings within parks and along trails where appropriate, such as artist-designed benches, picnic tables, lighting, signage, bike racks, fencing, and trash receptacles. Ensure maintenance and replacement costs for public art are incorporated into department budgets and capital improvement plans.
 - 1.1.3. Explore the creation of a themed park that has multiple, theme related public art pieces.
- 1.2. Use public art to support and interpret the existing natural, cultural, health, and recreational themes in Rochester
 - 1.2.1. Develop nature-themed public art within the environmental parks and natural areas in and around Rochester.
 - 1.2.2. Find partners within the community to develop public art that emphasizes and promotes healthy lifestyles to residents and visitors of Rochester.
 - 1.2.3. Reach out to cultural groups in the development of public art that can highlight the community's diversity.

2. INCLUDE TEMPORARY AND SEASONAL ART IN ROCHESTER PARKS

- 2.1. Develop partnerships with local artists and other private arts organizations to create temporary public art installations in parks around the city
 - 2.1.1. Create a public art working group made up of city staff, a representative of the Greater Rochester Arts and Cultural Trust, local artists, and citizen representatives that meets 2-4 times per year to discuss opportunities for public art displays.
 - 2.1.2. Aim for one temporary art display per season, such as winter ice sculptures downtown, paddling and rowing related art along the river in the summer, and harvest/local food art in the fall.
 - 2.1.3. Partner with school groups to develop public art in local parks.
- 2.2. Encourage the use of parks for performance art
 - 2.2.1. Identify, develop, and maintain a set of outdoor performance spaces distributed throughout the City. These spaces should range in size and formality.
 - 2.2.2. Partner with school groups and the Greater Rochester Arts and Cultural Trust to offer theatrical and musical performances in city parks.
 - 2.2.3. Collaborate with cultural groups to offer performances in local parks.
- 2.3. public art initiatives into existing and future events and festivals in Rochester

- 2.3.1. Work with event planners to incorporate and suggest opportunities for art displays and interactive art as part of all future events
- 2.3.2. Partner with surrounding communities and arts organizations to promote local and regional art to Rochester residents and visitors

DRAFT

Management and Operations

1. IMPROVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES AND CAPABILITIES

- 1.1. Disperse/decentralize maintenance facilities to reduce travel time across the city to provide routine maintenance of parks and facilities.
 - 1.1.1. Relocate the existing maintenance facility adjacent to Mayo Field to a more functional location and ensure the new facility is sufficient in size and configuration to efficiently meet the department's operational needs.
 - 1.1.2. Continue to implement the Essex Park maintenance facility as a north operations satellite facility.
 - 1.1.3. Regularly evaluate maintenance needs and operational efficiencies as the community grows.
- 1.2. Ensure Park and Recreation's ability to efficiently and effectively achieve its mission when responding to requests to address other departments' needs.
- 1.3. Explore options to maximize the utilization of volunteers to support park operations and programming.
 - 1.3.1. Expand partnerships with local neighborhood groups to support improvements and activities in their neighborhood park.
 - 1.3.2. Collaborate with local groups that can oversee volunteers for specific activities (i.e. buckthorn removal, community event, etc.)

2. EFFICIENTLY MAINTAIN ASSETS AT A HIGH LEVEL.

- 2.1. Design parks and facilities with maintenance in mind and implement a life-cycle approach.
 - 2.1.1. In developing new assets prepare a feasibility study that includes the following as appropriate: a needs assessment, projected user/participate analysis, development funding method, and lifecycle cost analysis.
 - 2.1.2. Ensure adequate access for maintenance vehicles.
 - 2.1.3. Incorporate strategies for turf maintenance including field rotation, irrigation, etc.
- 2.2. Develop and formalize maintenance priorities.
 - 2.2.1. Develop tiered maintenance level standards for routine maintenance to guide the most intensive maintenance to the least intensive maintenance.
 - 2.2.2. Write maintenance policies and schedules as part of the parks maintenance manual.
 - 2.2.3. Prioritize snow removal in areas which become dangerous without immediate attention.
 - 2.2.4. Update the winter trail maintenance policy on an annual basis, re-evaluating and amending it based on factors like historical maintenance, commuting routes, safe routes to school, and requests from residents.
 - 2.2.5. Standardize athletic field maintenance and construction standards.
- 2.3. Annually inspect all facilities and amenities.

- 2.3.1. Develop an asset management system that tracks asset condition, critical systems maintenance, and repair and rehabilitation requirements to inform park and facility investment decisions.
- 2.3.2. Prioritize safety upgrades.
- 2.3.3. Replace outdated park equipment and materials with high-efficiency models and high-quality, low maintenance materials.
- 2.3.4. Annually prepare a five-year Capital Improvement Plan.

3. CONDUCT HIGHLY-RESPONSIVE AND ENGAGING COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC

- 3.1. Improve the department's web presence
 - 3.1.1. Encourage interaction by allowing users the ability to send in or post their pictures from special events or programs.
 - 3.1.2. Leverage the website to obtain feedback on programs, events, parks and facilities, and customer service.
 - 3.1.3. Explore enhancements like Google Translate to allow users to translate pages into language of choice.
 - 3.1.4. Conduct an annual communications strategy workshop with staff to identify website and social media improvements.
 - 3.1.5. Develop an app that provides parks and facilities information, events, trails, hours of operation, contact information, etc.
- 3.2. Expand the current marketing message
 - 3.2.1. Dedicate staff time to marketing and communications.
 - 3.2.2. Communicate collaborations and active partnerships by developing, updating, and share on an annual basis a master list of partnerships.
 - 3.2.3. Communicate the true cost of offering services to the users to ensure they are educated and knowledgeable about what they pay versus what the offerings cost.

4. ENSURE ENGAGING AND WELL-UTILIZED PROGRAMS

- 4.1. Create ongoing feedback loops to track for trends in program and event performance
 - 4.1.1. Intercept surveys, online surveys and APP for real-time customer feedback.
 - 4.1.2. Use Customer Feedback to enhance services
 - 4.1.3. Conduct post-program evaluations
 - 4.1.4. Periodic user surveys to identify needs, changing trends, and gaps to address.
- 4.2. Formalize program and event development
 - 4.2.1. Conduct pilot programs/events with follow up surveys or focus groups
 - 4.2.2. Continue program innovation by eliminating and repositioning programs with declining participation in favor of new trends or those better aligned with community needs