HIAWATHA PARKS AND RECREATION VISION 2029

City of Hiawatha
Linn County, Iowa

Adopted: June 19th, 2019

Hiawatha!

MSA

Acknowledgments

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- Bill Bennett, Mayor
- Rob Archibald, City Council Member
- Aime Wichtendahl, City Council Member
- Dennis Norton, City Council Member
- Dick Olson, City Council Member
- Steve Dodson, City Council Member

Hiawatha Parks and Recreation Board

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Hiawatha!™

Say hello to a great place to live, work and play

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Chapter 1

Hiawatha's Parks and Recreation System

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Background

The City of Hiawatha realizes the importance and benefits of its parks and open space system. They are committed to providing the recreational needs of current and future residents. Parks and open space provide a safe and healthy place for recreation all while beautifying and protecting the natural environment of the area. In 2018 Hiawatha City officials realized that the previous park and recreation plan for the City was in need of updating. This updated document, Parks and Recreation Vision Plan for the City of Hiawatha is an extension of the old plan. It provides current insight in the existing conditions of the parks as well as concepts for a new 18 acre park in the northern part of Hiawatha, that the City acquired. The purpose of the plan is to guide the continual improvement of the City's parks and recreation areas, direct policy for parks and open space. It envisions a connected system of parks and open spaces throughout the community. All together the plan provides a framework to guide long and short term decision making and investments in the system.

The Hiawatha Parks and Recreation Vision Plan complements the directions established in the Hiawatha 2036 Comprehensive Plan, and provides detailed guidance on the development, managements and operations of the park system. The direction is also based on the community's expressed needs and desires from public engagement throughout the planning process.

Specifically the plan provides

- Information regarding demographic trends
- An inventory of existing park and recreational facilities
- An analysis of recreational needs and demands
- Implementation Strategies
- Recommendations for new park

This plan identifies concepts for park development for the acquired new park space for different types of parks, trails, natural areas and recreational facilities. In nearly every case more detailed planning, engineering, budgeting, and discussions will be necessary before decisions are made to actually construct recreational facilities.

The City is Growing

The population in Hiawatha has increased an estimated 326 people since 2010 (4.64%), and additional growth is expected, especially in the northern part of the City. As the City continues to expand, the new park area that was recently purchased will be a draw for people moving to the area, as well as an additional asset for citizens already living in Hiawatha and surrounding communities.

Demand for New Programming and Amenities Has Increased

The City's Department of Parks and Recreation is aware of community interest in more park and recreation programming and existing park updates. The community survey that was sent out described that residents are satisfied with the current conditions of the park, but had a lot of feedback in terms of improvement and suggestions for more programming.

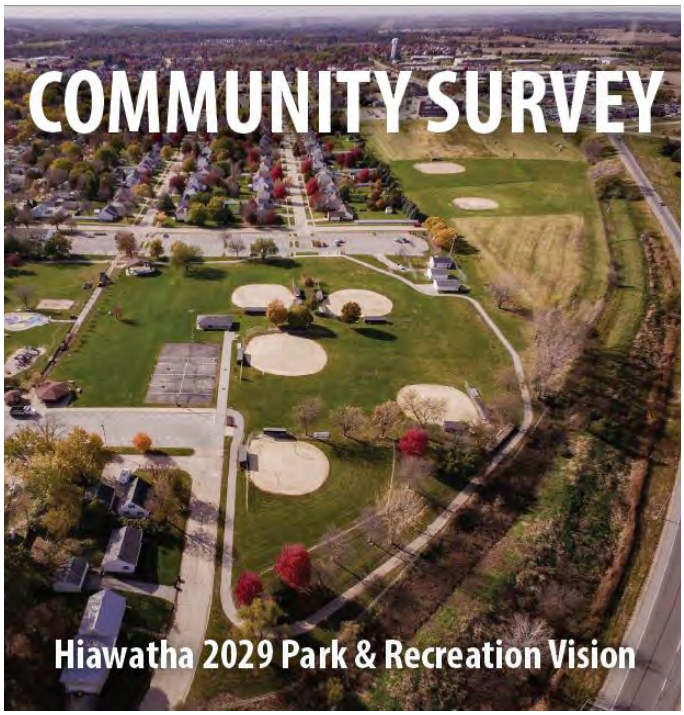
The Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan is Outdated

The recent Comprehensive Development Plan provides an updated vision for the future growth of the community including a section devoted to parks and recreation. The previous plan was adopted in 2010 and much has changed since it was written. That document has served the community but an updated vision is needed to undertake the upcoming opportunities of the next 10 years.

Maintaining Eligibility for Park and Recreation Funding

A essential reason for creating a park plan is the ability to maintain eligibility for various grant programs that offer assistance for parkland development. Grant programs from entities such as the Iowa Department of Natural Resources - Resource Enhancement and Protection Grant, award additional scoring points for projects that demonstrate a relationship to a local recreation plan. Grant programs are highly competitive and having this plan can help make an application more competitive versus others without a plan to reference.

The Planning Process



Goal - Educate and raise awareness about the importance of parks and recreation while ensuring that future investment in Hiawatha's system meets the needs of the community.

In the Summer of 2018 the City of Hiawatha requested assistance of MSA Professional Services, Inc. to complete an updated parks and recreation vision plan. The planning effort was kicked off in September of 2018, and represents input gathered from the community, stakeholders, and City staff over the following 8 months. Preparation and adoption of this plan occurred over a 6 month period. An online survey, crowd-source map application, focus group meetings, and a community meeting helped guide the development of this plan by providing valuable input. The City's Park and Recreation Director as well as the Steering Committee were tasked with overseeing this project. Meetings between the Steering Committee and the consultant provided input for the plan's content throughout the four phases of the project.

The Importance of Parks + Recreation

Parks are often the most important and highly prized components of any community. They are sources of civic pride and are essential to the physical, economic, environmental, and social health of cities and their residents. Planning is essential to the City's parks and recreation system in order to continue to meet the needs and wants of the community. It is important to always keep in mind the variety of benefits that parks and recreation add to the community.

Health

Parks and trails encourage healthy, happy, active lifestyles by providing a venue for physical activity. Whether walking or biking on the city's trails, playing a pickup baseball or softball game, participating in an organized soccer league, or snowshoeing on the trails, parks and trails provide essential places for people to exercise. When people have access to park facilities and programming, they are more likely to be active, therefore improving their physical health. Additionally, exposure to the natural areas that parks and open space provide is a proven link to improved psychological health.

Cultural and Social

In a time when social media defines the interactions of many people, parks and recreational centers are places to meet face-to-face, catch up with family members and friends, and feel like part of the larger community. As a focal point of neighborhoods, parks help develop connections between residents by providing a venue for community-building gatherings, like farmers markets, school trips, festivals, and celebrations. Significant natural features, like Cedar Valley Nature Trail, and social gathering areas, like Guthridge Park, have events for the enjoyment of both present and future community members. Variety of programing can set Hiawatha aside from its surrounding communities.

Project Milestones

- Steering Committee Meeting 1 and Kickoff
- Public Survey is Sent Out
- Focus Group Meetings
- Steering Committee Meeting 3 and Draft Review
- Final Draft Review and Public Open House

The Importance of Parks + Recreation

Property Values

Numerous studies have shown that proximity to parks, trails, and open space has a positive impact on property values. Commercial property values can also be increased with proximity to these amenities, creating potential for these sites to act as catalysts for future growth and development.

Beautification

Parkways, tree-lined streets, gardens, lush landscaped areas, views of water bodies, stately woods, and public art are all attributes of cities that are beautiful places to live, work, play, and shop. Visitors often remember a place by its access to beautiful natural areas, contributing to a positive community image. All of these attributes contribute to the livability and vitality of a city.

Nature Value and Environmental

Healthy grasslands, prairies, forests, and wetlands all inherently improve air and water quality while providing habitat and allowing ecosystems to thrive for diverse species of plants and animals. These areas also play a role in stormwater management and protecting the quality and vitality of natural areas. Sound management of natural areas can reduce the prevalence of invasive species and improve environmental outcomes for neighboring properties.

Nature Value and Environmental

Recreation programs that are offered for all ages and income levels promote lifelong learning opportunities and a supportive community atmosphere. Specific programs can provide enjoyable learning activities for youth, keep seniors active and connected, or educate all community members about the importance of active living and sustainability.

Overarching Themes

The park system provides a foundation for examining how well the current system fulfills the wants and needs of the community. As part of the inventory process, the project team visited, took notes on and photographed each of the parks, trails and recreation areas. Throughout the inventory and community engagement process overarching themes and goals emerged varying from maintenance needs, CIP considerations and accessibility for everyone.

Maintenance

Community

Accessibility

CIP Consideration

Trail Access

Park and Open Space Standards

The definitions used in this plan are modifications of definitions used by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). They are used to classify the existing recreation system and to guide plans for the future. They begin with the smallest and most intensely used and the proceed to the largest and least used. Neighborhood and community parks are normally provided by municipalities. Larger recreation areas are normally provided by larger units of government or private developers.

Classifications

Mini - Park

Typically on a small lot (1/4 acre), located within a residential neighborhood. Usually have one facility and benches.

- Desirable size - 2 acres or less
- Acres/1,000 population: .25 to .5
- Service Area: 1/8 to 1/4 mile radius

Neighborhood Playgrounds

Serves the needs of children 5-15 years old. It provides open fields, courts, shelter facilities, and play area. It should be within walking distance.

- Desirable size - 2-4 acres
- Acres/1,000 population: 0.5 - 1.5 acres
- Service Area: 1/4 to 1/3 mile radius

Neighborhood Parks

This provides open space for all ages and enhances the overall environment. A natural location is ideal for this type, and it usually has tables benches, paths, lights, and is walkable.

- Desirable size - 3-7 acres
- Acres/1,000 population: 5.0 -8.0 acres
- Service Area: 1 to 2 mile radius

Community Playfields

Serves the active needs of several neighborhoods. Includes more than a park such as a pool, community center, and fields for sporting events.

- Desirable size - 5 or more acres (15-40)
- Acres/1,000 population: 5.0 -8.0 acres
- Service Area: 1 to 2 mile radius

Park and Open Space Standards

Community Parks

Intended to serve many neighborhoods. Tends to have woods, water features, trails, and picnic areas. Should be determined by the size of the population.

- Desirable size - 3-7 acres
- Acres/1,000 population: 5.0 -8.0 acres
- Service Area: 1 to 2 mile radius

Special Purpose Parks

Created to take advantage of a natural or unusual feature, or to preserve areas and provide recreation. Golf course, marinas and boat ramps could be considered this.

- Desirable size - varies on function
- Acres/1,000 population: varies on function
- Service Area: varies on function

Reservation and Preserves

Usually located outside of the urban area and include large tracts of land that have limited development. Usually provided by state, federal or county governments.

- Desirable size - varies on function
- Acres/1,000 population: varies on function
- Service Area: varies on function

Greenbelts

Almost the same characteristics as the reservation or preserve; however it may be used to shape urban development. It could connect parks within an urban area.

- Desirable size - varies on function
- Acres/1,000 population: varies on function
- Service Area: varies on function

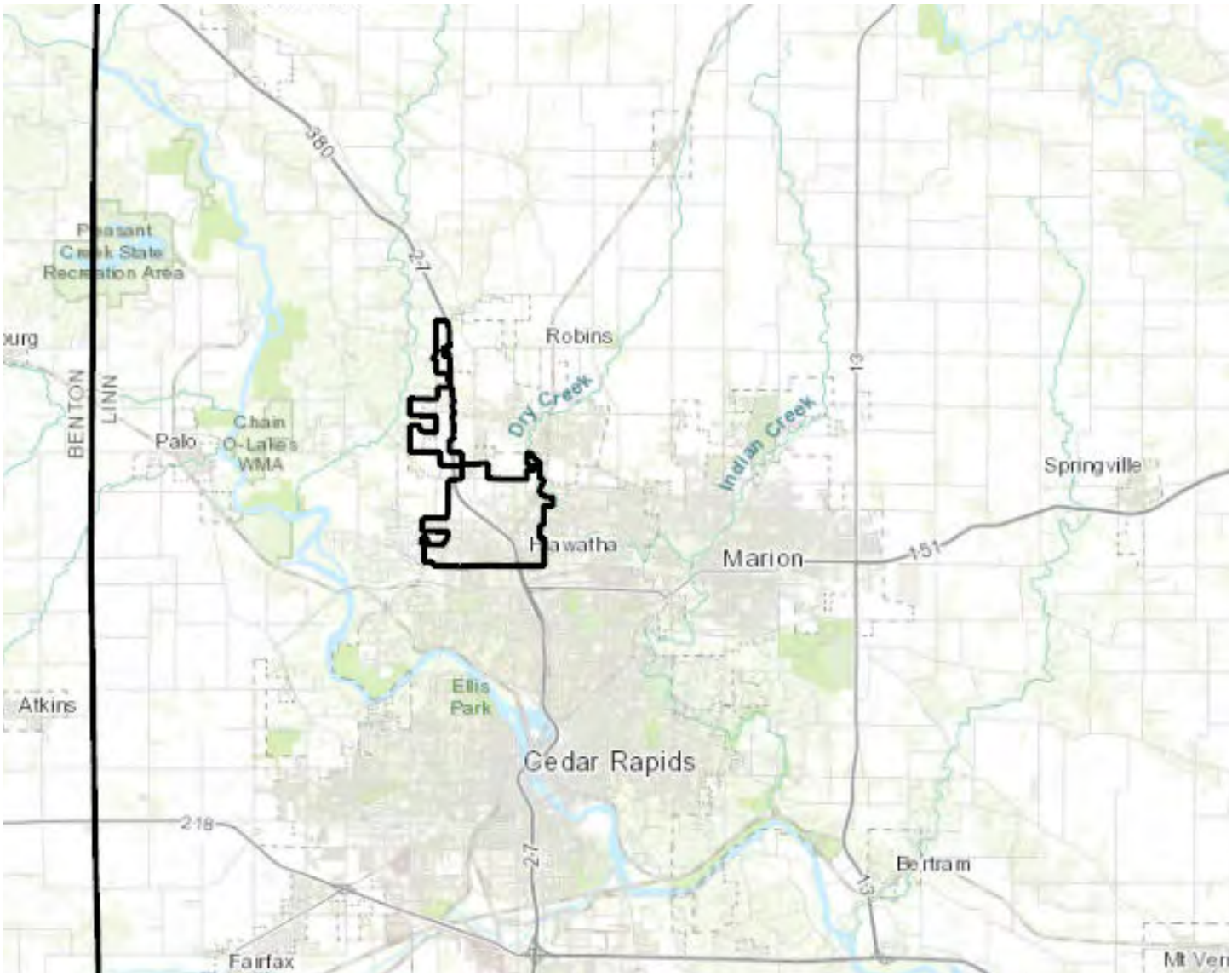
Waysides, Welcome Centers, Historic Markers

Special purpose parks designed to serve motorists. They are important to a tourist industry. Size and location depends on natural features.

- Desirable size - varies on function
- Acres/1,000 population: varies on function
- Service Area: varies on function

Regional Context + Existing Plans

The City of Hiawatha (pop. 7,262) is located in Linn County. Approximately 70 miles southwest of Dubuque Iowa, and 132 miles northeast of the capital, Des Moines Iowa. The City will celebrate its 69th anniversary in May of 2019. The City is close proximity to three other municipalities, City of Cedar Rapids, population of 132,228, the City of Marion, population of 39,400 and the City of Robins population of 3,470. Hiawatha, along with its surrounding cities have experienced growth over the past 7 years since the last 2010 census. Cedar Rapids is the Linn County seat and a large economic driver of the area. The City of Hiawatha is expected to grow in the next 10 years along with the surrounding communities in the area. The entire Cedar Rapids Metropolitan Statistical Area consists of three counties and has an estimated population of 270,293.



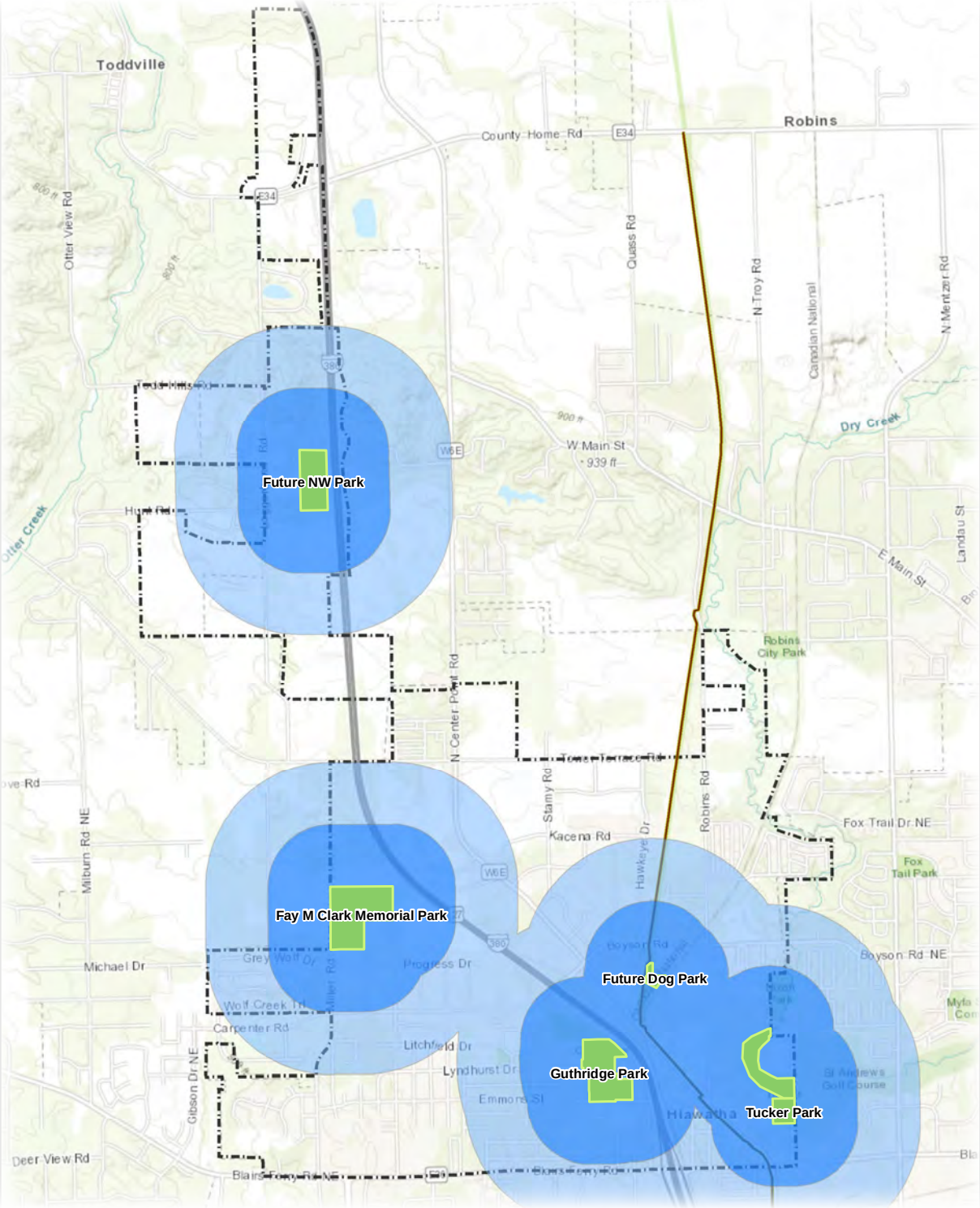
Existing Plans

The City has a comprehensive plan that was updated in 2016. The goals and priorities identified in that plan will be a guiding factor in this plan. The previous parks and recreation comprehensive plan that was completed in 2010 will also be referenced. Linn County also has a comprehensive plan with goals and guidelines that was also referenced for this plan and the planning process.

Parks + Recreation Inventory

City of Hiawatha Parks and Service Areas

The map below shows the existing Hiawatha Parks including the Future NW Park (undeveloped at the time of this planning process). The darker blue rings represent areas within a 1/4 mile distance of the park and the lighter blue rings represent areas within a 1/2 mile distance of the park. The 1/4 mile ring represents a 5 minute walk and the 1/2 mile ring represents a 10 minute walk. A recommendation of this plan is to evaluate the areas that are outside of these service areas to determine what steps can be taken to service these areas.



Parks + Recreation Inventory

The following section documents existing park and recreational facilities within the City of Hiawatha, specifically ADA features and issues. Two parks were given specific instruction from the Iowa Community Assurance Pool after an evaluation was completed. Surrounding plans should be consulted for additional information.

Fay M. Clark Park

This community park is the largest in the City of Hiawatha at 31.5 acres. It is located at the north end of 18th Avenue in the northwest side of town. Clark Park offers a variety of different activities thanks to its size. Clark Park did not have any suggestions for improvements according to the assessment completed by the Iowa Community Assurance Pool.

The park facilities include:

- An 18-hole disc golf course
- A 0.7 paved trail
- A pavilion (seating for 80 people)
- Restrooms (attached to the pavilion)
- A playground
- Free WiFi

Safety Concerns

•Area of drainage along trail that ponds and freezes.
•Pedestrian/Bike Access to the park.

Parks + Recreation Inventory

Tucker Park

This park is tucked away in a quiet neighborhood and shares a border with the golf course. The 8.1-acre neighborhood park is located along B Avenue in the southeast side of town. It features a splash pad, two play sets, shelters, a trail and there is plenty of field/grass space. According to an assessment done by the Iowa Community Assurance Pool, Tucker Park is in need of some updates for ADA and safety concerns. Playground equipment and use zone conditions should be improved at Tucker Park so they are in compliance with the Public Playground Safety Standards.

The park facilities include:

- Two picnic shelters (seating for 65 and 50 people)
- Restrooms (attached to the yellow pavilion)
- A playground
- A splash pad
- A 0.3-mile paved walking trail
- Lawn area for field games
- Free WiFi

Safety Concerns

•Need for more trail lighting.
•Merry-go-round should have fall protection brought up to code as to protect a child from getting entrapped or entangled under the equipment.
•All S hooks and C hooks should be closed. A hook is considered closed if there is no gap or a space no greater than 0.04 inches which is about the thickness of a dime.
•Bolt ends should be cut down to ensure there is no more than 2 threads showing.
•Spring rockers should be bolted down correctly and adjusted so they are not leaning.
•The metal slide in the pre-school play area should be replaced with an age appropriate slide.

Parks + Recreation Inventory

Guthridge Park

This community park is the second largest in the City at approximately 19.5 acres, but has the most activities of any of the parks. It is located on Emmons Street between N 7th and N 10th Avenue across from Hiawatha Elementary School.
According to an assessment done by the Iowa Community Assurance Pool, Guthridge Park is in need of some updates for ADA and safety concerns. Playground equipment and use zone conditions should be improved at Guthridge Park so they are in compliance with the Public Playground Safety Standards. The parking lot is very accessible.

The park facilities include:

- Three pavilions (seating for 50 and 80 people)
- Seasonal Bandshell
- A splash pad
- Five ball diamonds
- Two lighted basketball courts
- Two sand volleyball courts
- Two lighted tennis courts
- Free WiFi
- Several playground areas
- A concession stand (open during baseball games)
- An outdoor learning classroom (seating for 70 people)
- A 0.8-mile paved walking trail
- Two horseshoe pits

Safety Concerns

•Merry-go-round should have fall protection brought up to code as to protect a child from getting entrapped or entangled under the equipment.
•Lower playground should have equipment spacing measured to ensure there is at least 6' in between equipment without overlap.
•Upper playground should be re-evaluated and labeled as 5-12 yrs. instead of 2-12 yrs.
•Climbing dome fall protection should be improved to extend out 6'.
•All S hooks and C hooks should be closed. A hook is considered closed if there is no gap or a space no greater than 0.04 inches which is about the thickness of a dime.
•Bolt ends should be cut down to ensure there is no more than 2 threads showing

Parks + Recreation Inventory

The Community Center

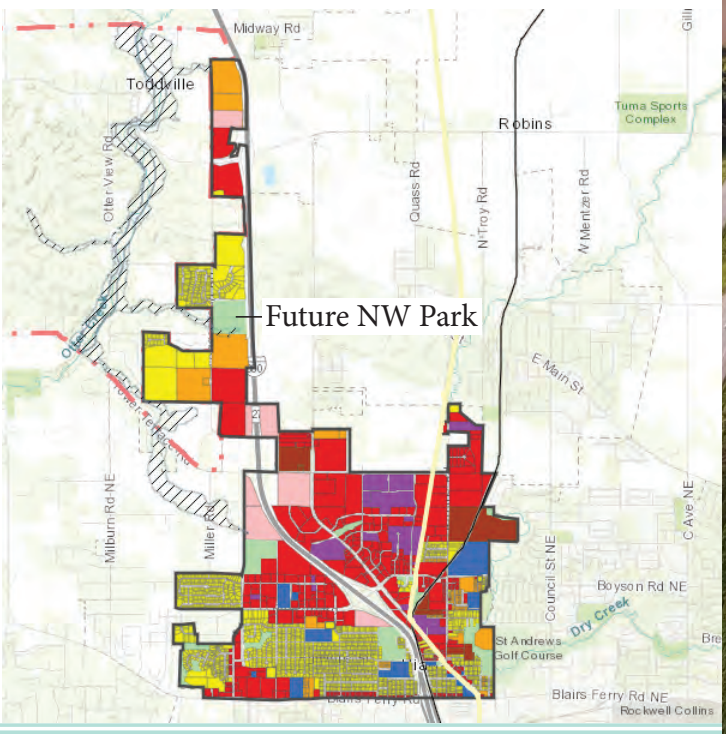
The Center is located within the City Hall (101 Emmons Street) and is approximately 2,200 square feet. The space holds between 170-250 people and can be reserved based on time slots for a nominal fee (plus a deposit). The amenities within this facility include a stove, microwave, refrigerator, chairs, and tables. Audio and video equipment is also available for rent.

The City Gazebo

The City maintains a public gazebo at the corner of Litchfield Dr. and N. 12th Ave. The majority of the parcel serves as a stormwater detention facility with 0.4 acres designated for the gazebo space. It is classified as a mini-park.

Future NW Park

The City of Hiawatha acquired new land in the north west area of Hiawatha. This land is 18 acres and is to be a new park or recreation area. Part of the purpose of this plan update was to help the City determine the best use of the land through various methods of public engagement. In chapter 3 of this plan you will see more detail of vision created for this park through these processes.



Parks + Recreation Inventory

Parks Department Evaluation

The "NRPA(National Recreation and Park Association) Park Metrics are the most comprehensive source of data standards and insights for park and recreation agencies." These metrics are used to help evaluate Hiawatha's Parks Department operations. This evaluation compares the City of Hiawatha with other reporting communities of similar size. The summary below compared the Hiawatha Parks & Recreation Department with other parks departments that reported with populations between 7,000 - 11,000 across the nation.

Agency Summary Effectiveness Ratios	Reporting Communities	Communities 7k-11k in pop.	
	#	Median	Hiawatha
Operating expenditures per capita	33	$111	$42.00
Revenue per capita	28	$21	$17.14
Total revenue to total operating expenditures	28	20.10%	40.82%
Operating expenditures per acre of parkland	23	$10,708	$3,935.75
Operating expenditures per FTE	28	$82,534	$76,255.35
FTE's per 10,000 population	28	10.1	5.51
Acres of parks per 1,000 residents	23	12.4	10.67
Number of residents per park	26	1,075.20	1,452.40
Number of acres per park	23	12.5	15.5
Hiawatha Parks Department Benchmarks			
Hiawatha Pop. (2017 ACS)	7262		
Hiawatha Total Parkland Acres	77.5		
Hiawatha Total FTE	4		
Hiawatha Annual Revenue	$124,500		
Hiawatha Operating Expenditures	$305,021.38		

Department Evaluation Findings
The recommendations below are based on the findings from the NRPA Park Metrics community comparison:

- The NRPA Park Metrics comparison shows that the Hiawatha Parks and Rec Department Operating expenditures per acre of parkland are well below the national median.
- The City of Hiawatha's revenue to operating costs (cost recovery) is well above the national median.
- Revenue per capita could be adjusted to meet the national median and generate more annual revenue.
- Hiawatha operates more acres per park than the national median, but with fewer FTE's (Full Time Equivalent Employees) and less resources.
- Hiawatha is slightly under the national median for acres per 1,000 residents and could look to adding more park space in the future based on the National Parks and Recreation Association NRPA standard of 12 acres per 1,000 residents

Parks + Recreation Inventory

Hiawatha Park Inventory

		Acres	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Ball Fields	Open Field	Rental Shelter	Restroom Facilities	Frisbee Golf	Playground Equipment	Trail	Splash Pad	Sand Volleyball	Horseshoe Pits
City Parks														
Guthridge Park	704 Emmons St.	19.5	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Tucker Park	101 B Avenue	8.1				x	x	x		x	x	x		
Fay M. Clark Memorial Park	1200 N 18th Ave	31.5				x	x	x	x	x	x			
Future NW Park	North Side of Town	18												
Total		77.5	1	1	1	3	3	3	1	3	3	2	1	1
		Acres	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Ball Fields	Open Field	Rental Shelter	Restroom Facilities	Frisbee Golf	Playground Equipment	Trail	Splash Pad	Sand Volleyball	Horseshoe Pits
Additional Facilities not City Owned														
Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish	1385 Lyndhurst Drive	3			x					x			x	
Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints	4150 Blue Jay Drive NE	3			x					x				
Hiawatha Elementary School	603 Emmons Street	5	x		x	x				x				
Nixon Elementary	200 Nixon Drive	6.2	x		x	x				x				
Viola Gibson Elementary	6101 Gibson Drive	2.5			x	x				x				
Total		19.8												

Parks + Recreation Inventory

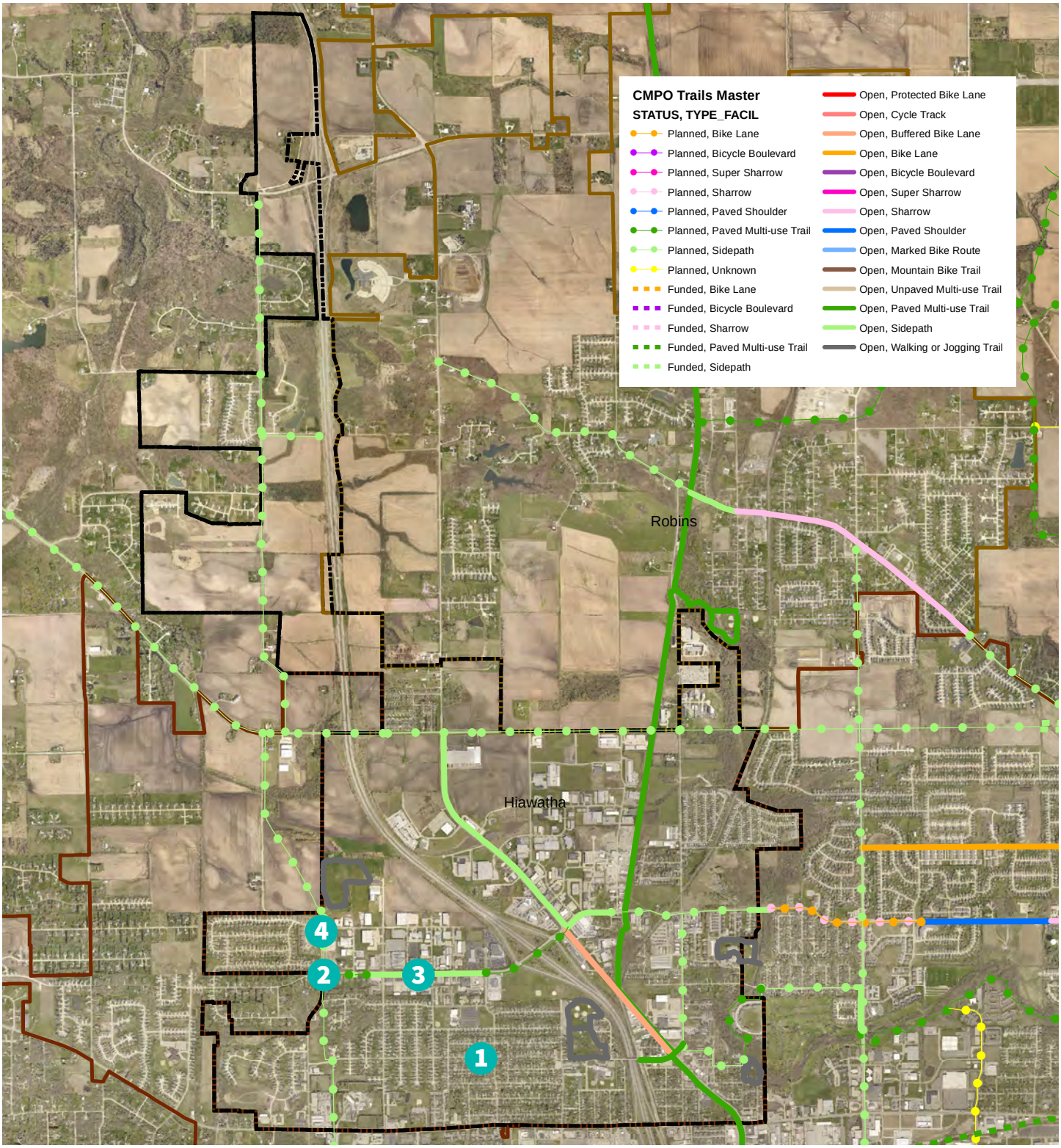
Private & Regional Facilities

Private & Regional Facilities	Location	Size	Water Activities	Tennis Court	Ball Fields	Open Field	Rental Shelter	Restroom Facilities	Frisbee Golf	Playground Equipment	Trail	Pool	Sand Volleyball	Golf Course
Cedar River Trail	Extends from Cedar Valley Nature Trai	10.8 Miles									x			
Twin Rivers Golf Course	3800 42nd Street, Cedar Rapids	18 Hole												x
Ellis Park and Golf Course	1401 Zika Ave NW, Cedar Rapids	18 Hole												x
Noelridge Park	4900 Council Street, Cedar Rapids			x	x					x	x			
Noelridge Aquatic Center	1248 42nd Street, Cedar Rapids											x		
Pierce Park	4228 Wenig Road NE, Cedar Rapids			x	x									
Pleasant Creek State Recreation Are	4530 McClintock Rd, Palo		x				x	x			x			
Hanging Bog State Reserve	2380 Ross Rd, Palo	16 Acre				x								
Cedar Valley Nature Trail	Linn County	52 Miles						x			x			
Grand Wood Trail	305 62nd Street, Marion	10 Mile									x			
Rock Island Botanical Preserve	450 Preserve Ln, Cedar Rapids	100 Acres									x			
Otter Creek Nature Area	2283 Park Rd, Toledo	37 Acres									x			
Chain Lakes Nature Area	4247 Chain Bridge Rd, Palo	373 Acres				x	x	x						
Wickiup Hill Nature Area	10260 Morris Hill Rd, Cedar Rapids	730 Acres				x	x							
Squaw Creek Park and Golf Course	5101 Golf Course, Rd Marion	692 Acres						x			x			x
Palo Marsh Natural Area	2935 Palo Marsh Rd, Palo	144 Acres				x	x			x	x			
Morgan Creek Park	7515 Worcester Rd, Palo	230 Acres				x	x	x		x	x			

Parks + Recreation Inventory

Hiawatha Trails Master Plan

The Hiawatha Trails Master Plan illustrates current and future trail plans across the community. There are four connection projects that were planned at the time of this plan. The projects on the following page are aimed at addressing some of the access issues that were discussed in other areas of this plan.



Parks + Recreation Inventory

Planned Access Improvements

1

Cedar River Trail Access
Emmons St from Miller Rd to Center Point Rd.
Install Share the Road signs and pavement markings

2

Clark Park Access
Miller Rd and Boyson Rd.
Move Boyson Rd stop bar east, paint crosswalk, install curb ramp and sidewalk on south side.
Sidewalk north of intersection is not yet completed because of vacant lot.

3

Clark Park Access
Boyson Rd by 1770 Boyson Rd, Kirkwood Campus.
Install RRFB(Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon) system at existing crossing.

4

Clark Park Access
Edgewood Rd/Progress Dr/Grey Wolf
Install RRFB, paint crosswalks at this intersection

Overview of Recreation Programming

The City of Hiawatha Park and Recreation Department offers a variety of recreational programs for citizens of all ages.

Programs include:

- Start Smart Soccer (ages 3-5)
- Blastball (ages 3-5)
- Tennis lessons (ages 4-6, 7-10, 11-13)
- High School Sand Volleyball
- T-ball/Baseball/Softball Leagues (K-8th grade)
- Yoga Classes
- Hiawatha Adventure Camp (K-5th)
- Flag Football
- Dance Clinics
- Craft Classes
- Fitness Classes

In addition to these various programs the City also sponsors several events throughout the year, such as:

- Concerts in the Park
- Farmers Market
- Hiawatha Easter Egg Hunt
- Hiawatha City-wide Garage Sale
- Live Healthy Iowa 5K
- Lil' Cougar Dance Clinic (at the Community Center)
- Hiawatha Fire Department Chili Supper
- Live Healthy Iowa Kids Track Meet
- Variety of Senior Programs
- Fall Festival
- Hiawatha Fun Fest
- Reindeer Run
- Disc Golf Tournament
- Touch a Truck
- HiBRAI (Hiawatha's Bike Ride Around Iowa)
- Lids for Kids Helmet Giveaway
- Teal Trunk or Treat

Chapter 2

Community Input

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Overview of the Process

Park planning and visioning is done for cities so that its recreation needs can be identified and improved. This allows the city to better serve the pubic. Inclusive, innovative and engaging community outreach was a foundation to this planning process. The project team incorporated different opportunities for engaging the community members of Hiawatha, with flexible options for engagement. We understand that not everyone has the time to attend city meetings or is comfortable voicing their opinion in front of others in a public setting. Providing different strategies and tools for receiving input allows everyone a chance to become actively involved in the discussion.

Project Kickoff and Brain Storming

The project kick off event was held on October 23rd at Hiawatha City Hall. This consisted of the project team, Parks and Recreation Director, the City Administrator and the Parks and Recreation Steering Committee. The steering committee consisted of people with a variety of backgrounds and interests valuable to the planning process and necessary guidance needed for the plan. This meeting allowed us to introduce the project to them and determine next steps in the process based on their guidance. Following the meeting a SWOT analysis was sent out to the members of the committee, those results are analyzed later in this plan.

Community Survey

A community-wide survey was created in coordination with the project team and the steering committee. This was available online through Survey Monkey and was advertised on the City website, social media pages and a postcard that was mailed out to all Hiawatha residents. A QR code was on the advertising material so that residents could easily scan their smart phone directly to the survey. Hard copies of the survey were also made available and could be picked up at the Hiawatha Parks and Recreation Office in City Hall. Between all of these options we had over 180 responses.

Use a QR Scanner application on your smartphone to go straight to the survey by scanning this image!

Crowdsource Map Application

This application allows people to geographically point their thoughts about the parks on a map. This is an easy to use application that allows the project team to visualize the feed back. The link to this application was provided at the top of the community survey.

Focus Group Interviews

With the assistance of the Parks and Recreation Department, key stakeholders were identified and the project team spent an afternoon discussing the parks and recreation system of Hiawatha with them. This was valuable feedback that allowed for a more in depth view on specific matters.

Community Open House

On April 1st a public open house was held at the Hiawatha Community Center. This event was open to the public and it featured the work that had been completed on the plan so far. This included informational posters on public engagement process and methods, and the outcome and data summarized for attendees.

Feedback from the Committee

A SWOT analysis was sent out to the steering committee after our first kick off meeting. This was essential to the planning process because it allowed the project team to get a baseline idea of the main concerns of the community. Once these results were analyzed, the community survey was shaped around the main priorities established. The SWOT analysis results are below.

Clark Park

Opportunities	Issues
- Skating Rink - Incorporate more native species and pollinators - With Edgewood Road completion add pavilion or more playground (III) - Install bridge and utilize north 1.5 acres currently not accessible - New trail option - Addition of water feature such as a pond	- Parking (III) - In a commercial area - Isolated, basically one dimensional - Limited equipment - No water feature

Guthridge Park

Opportunities	Issues
- Add toddler equipment - Grow farmers market and other events at the park - Large area with potential for new amenities (pickleball courts, lighted trails) - Small upgrades as the park is already used a lot - Potential location for new recreation/community center	- Parking (III) especially with the farmers market - Needs inclusive park and adjustable basketball hoops - The learning center is a waste of space and could be utilized better. - If something were to be added, something would have to be taken away as the park is already full

Tucker Park

Opportunities	Issues
- Connect trail to Cedar Valley Trail and Robins - Connect trail to Cedar Rapids - Basketball and Soccer fields - Upgrade equipment (III) - City pool could be here	- Equipment in poor condition (III) - Very limited parking - Need better lighting - Vandalism (IIII) - Flooding - Accessibility

Future NW Park

Opportunities	Issues
- Pool/water feature (III) - Event/ Rec Center (III - Mile Trail (III) - Soccer and Ball Fields (II) - Anything to draw new development and visitors - Lighted ball fields	- Too far away (II) - Access (II) - Current infrastructure is limited - Deciding the purpose of the park - Park must be unique in order to attract people to travel that far to a park

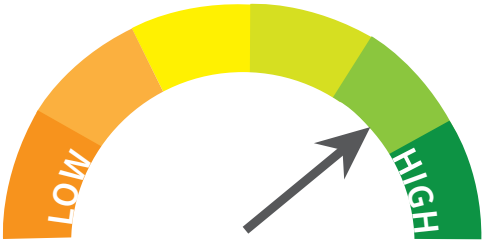
Feedback from the Survey

Overview

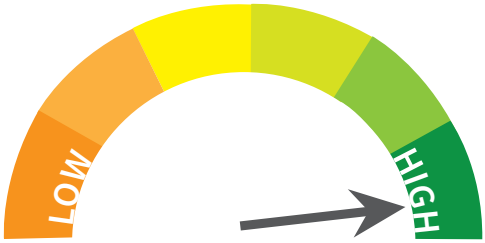
The overall findings gathered from the survey provide guidelines and a framework for how parks and recreation amenities should be allocated to best serve the communities needs and interests. This input is essential to help the City determine the next steps for the future of the parks system as Hiawatha grows and the new park location is developed.

Key Takeaways and Priorities

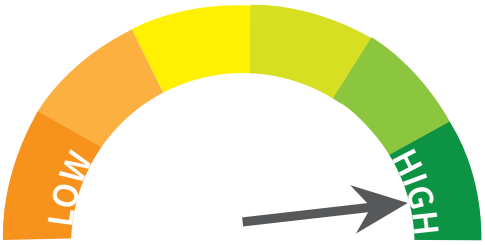
Recreation Center



Trail Connections



Improve Accessibility



Year Round Swimming Facility

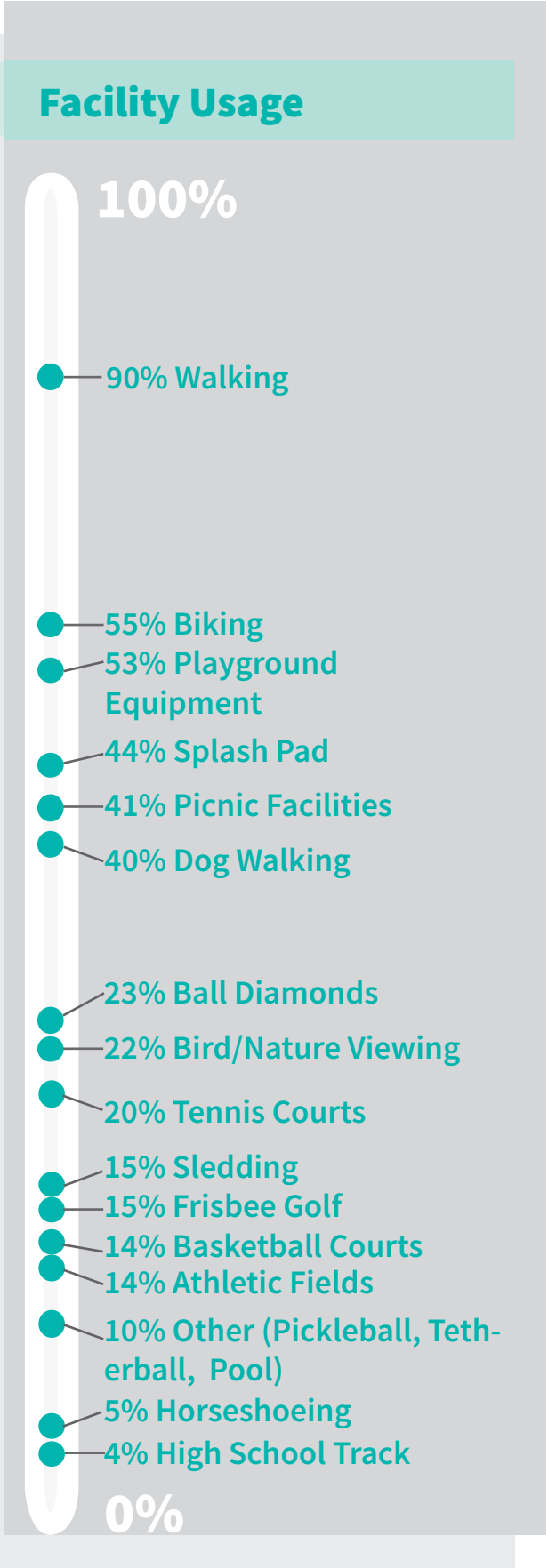
Sport Complex

More Recreation Programming

The community survey was posted online after the first steering committee meeting. It was advertised on various forms of social media. The majority of those who took the survey lived within the City limits of Hiawatha, and a little less than half did not have children living at home. In the following pages we highlight the main points and have the full survey results in the appendix.

Feedback from the Survey

Facility Usage



Desired Amenities and Improvements

Feedback from the Survey

Participation in Hiawatha Recreation Programs

23% Have

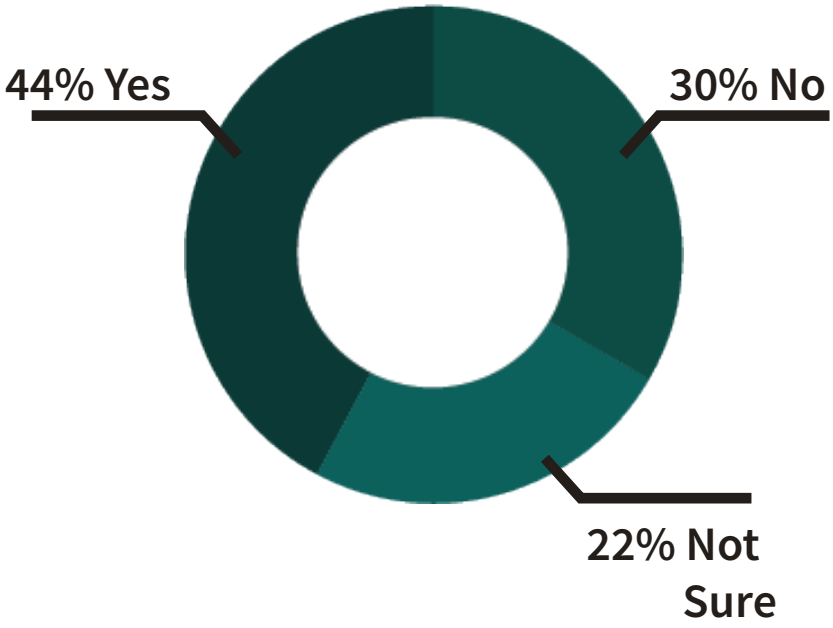
77% Have Not

Participation in Surrounding Area Recreation Programs

12% Have

88% Have Not

Hiawatha's Current Recreation Programs Meet Citizen Needs



Wants for Rec Programming

- Want more programs for 50+ ages
- Better times for programs
- Activities for children under 4
- Activities for young singles
- Events during the day
- Ballet/Dance classes

Feedback from the Survey

Favorite Park and Why

Guthridge

55%

Pavilion
Playground Splashpad
Trails Location Trees
Variety of Activities Big Open Space
Summer Concerts

Clark

19%

Picnic Pavilion Playground
Restrooms Paved Trails Peaceful
Frisbee Gold Course Less Crowded

Tucker

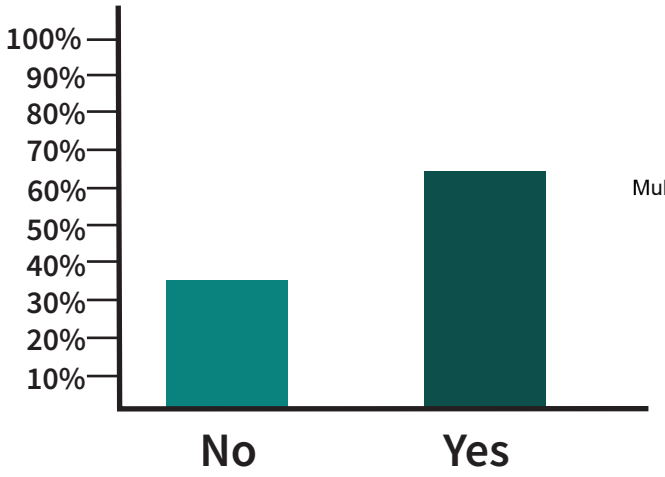
.5%

Well Maintained
Trees Quiet Shade
Playground Restrooms
Splashpad

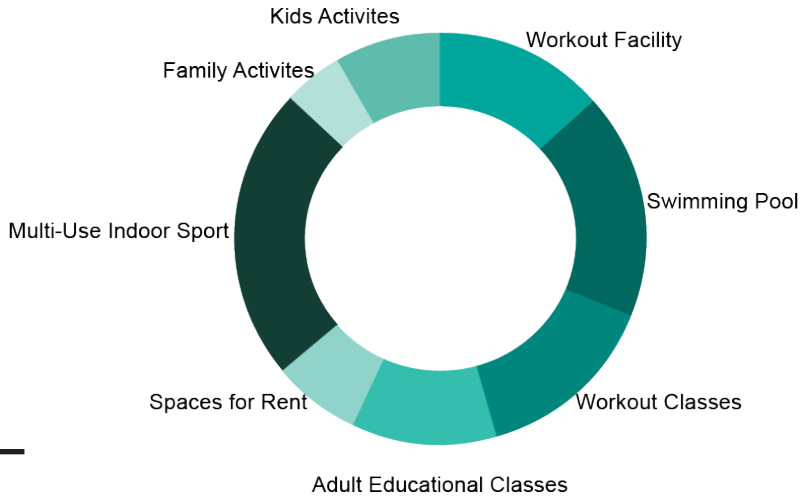
Other

Cherry Hill - Pool, Playground, Greenspace, Pavilion
Thomas Park - Walking, Kids Activities, View
Wickiup
Beaver - Walking
Squaw Creek - Facility, Climbing
East Knoll
Ding Darling
Ellis

Would You Want To See A Recreation Center In Hiawatha

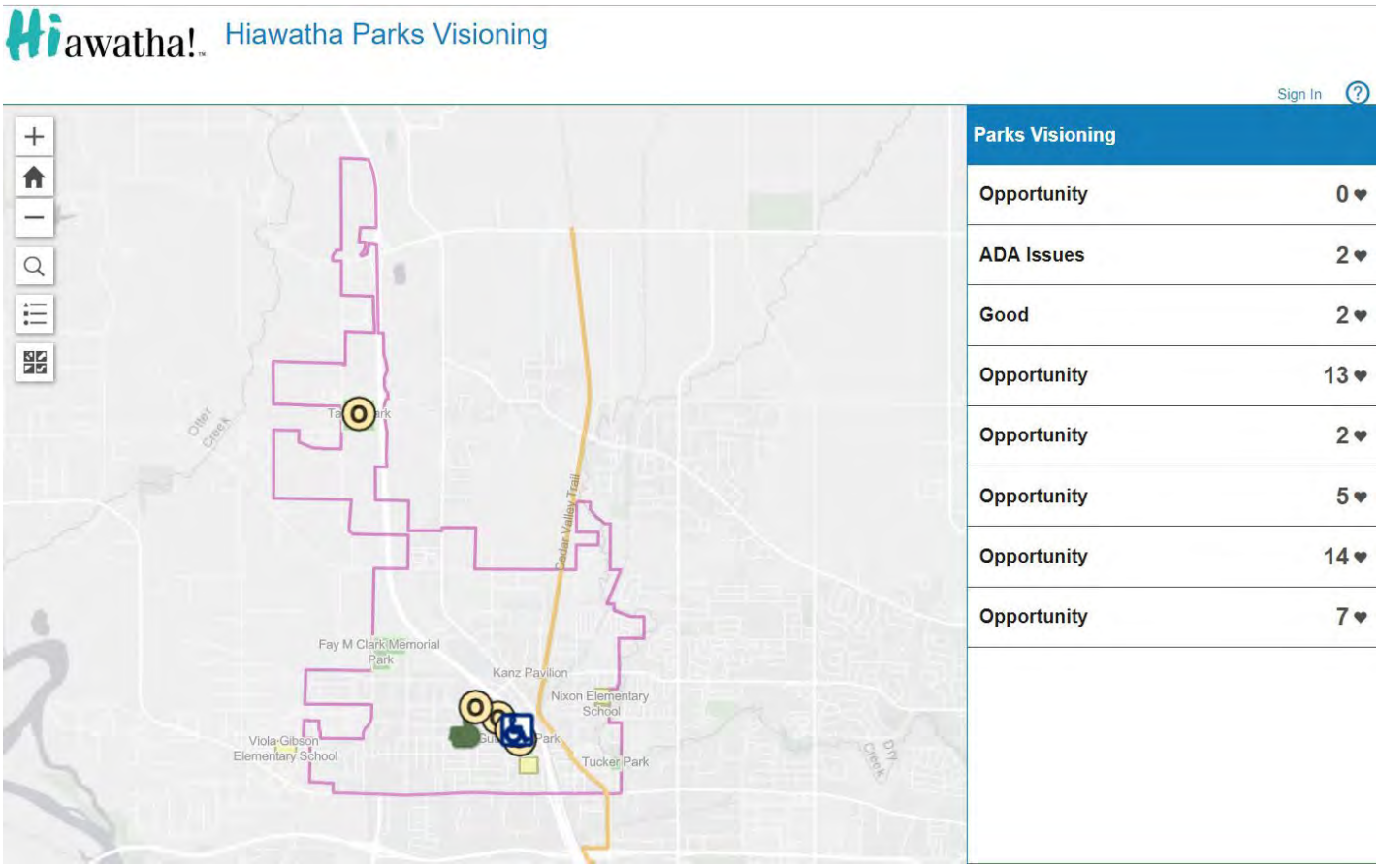


What Activities Would You Like to See



Crowdsource Map Feedback

The crowdsource map application was linked at the beginning of the online community survey. The link was also provided at the beginning of the paper copies of the survey. The Crowdsource Map did not get as many responses as the survey.



Trail Connection

Comment

- Opportunity - Trail/sidewalk connecting Fay and Guthridge parks. Continue wide walk-way in front of Mercy Urgent Care, run trail/walkway the perimeter of this open field
- 0 Likes

Guthridge

Comments

- Opportunity - Pool
  - 13 Likes
- Opportunity - Rec Center in Place of Ball Fields
  - 5 Likes
- Opportunity - Accessible Playground For All
  - 14 Likes

City Gazebo

Comment

- Nice Area
- 2 Likes

NW Park

Comments

- Opportunity - Nature Playscape
  - 7 Likes

Focus Group Feedback

The project team took an afternoon and met with a variety of focus groups that had opinions and ideas for the parks visioning. We met at City Hall for 20-30 minutes with each group and met with a total of 15. The groups varied in demographics such as age, gender background, residency and relationship to the Parks and Recreation System. We sent those who were not able to meet in person, the list of questions and they emailed their responses back to us. This portion of the public engagement process is essential because of the insight it provided to specific park related issues, from people who utilize them on a consistent basis. Those interviewed see parks and recreation as a value to the community and believe in improving and investing in them.

Key Question Responses

Park Accessibility: On the whole, positive responses.

- Clark needs better crosswalks for those walking/biking to the park.
- Baseball diamonds are not clearly marked. Signage would be helpful, especially for tournaments.
- Accessibility from parking lot to baseball diamonds is also a challenge.
- Perhaps better traffic control with Farmer's Market.

Safety Concerns:

- Tucker Park flooding
- Lighting in Clark
- Some "lurkers" in places.
- Drainage at the NE end of the trail around Guthridge

Describe Hiawatha Parks to a visitor:

- Lots of amenities:
    - Welcoming and hospitable, a reflection of our community.
    - Inclusive
    - Trails
    - Dog Park
    - Activities, many of which are free
    - Well maintained
    - Comfortable
    - Large and small
    - City and Country, best of both worlds
    - Open space
    - Fantastic parks that my family uses everyday.

How stakeholders can help:

- Trash/litter pickup
- Volunteer and outreach / advertising events
- Volunteering for programing
- Being a City Partner
- Promotion
- Coaching
- Help with new park concept

Focus Group Feedback

What Amenities Should be Included in the New Park?

- Indoor/outdoor pool concept
- More winter activities
- Social equity
- Connection to nature and environmental stewardship
- Recreation Center
- Football Fields (multi-purpose playing fields)
- Grandstand
- Splash pad
- Foster Community "Feel"
- Walking Labyrinth
- Small putting/chipping range
- Secure hammocks
- Keep as many trees as possible
- Giant jenga or other fun game

What amenities do we not have that we should?

- Yoga
- Monarch Butterfly initiative
- Recreation Center
- Pool

Would you like to see a recreation center in Hiawatha?

a. If so, how would you like to use it?
b. If so, are you willing to have your taxes increased to help pay for it?
c. Do you see the need for an outdoor pool?

The majority were in agreement that a recreation center would benefit the community and paying for it through a reasonable tax increase was okay. Although some suggested partnering with other communities to meet this goal.

City's Trail Connections:

- Need to make connections from neighborhoods to trails.
- North Center Point Road can be hard to cross
- Boyson Road is congested
- Designated bike lane on Emmons
- Continue Edgewood Road lanes northerly
- Generally prefer trails over bike lanes

Focus Group Feedback

How would you spend $10,000 on Hiawatha?

- Guthridge maintenance
- Reduce trail flooding
- Update park equipment
- Trail marking/crosswalk maintenance
- Natural resource restoration
- Gardens
- Secure hammocks
- Beef up landscaping and beautification

How would you spend $1 Million?

- Indoor facility / recreation center
- Soccer/baseball complex
- Naturescape park
- Indoor/outdoor pool
- Bike lanes and trail connections
- Predominant area with restaurants and a place to go for entertainment

Other Comments:

- Love the Farmer's Market
- Continue to plant variety of trees to replace Ash
- Need to sell high quality of life in Hiawatha
- Need a connection plan for missing sidewalks
- Recreation Center could also be a wedding/events venue
- Don't overgrow the parks system, don't have to have everything
- More, smaller green spaces throughout neighborhoods.
- Continue to make things accessible.
- Extend bike trail to north park of Hiawatha
- Swimming pool with lap lanes
- Baseball and softball complex for regional tournaments.
- Green belt through incentives for development
- Parks and recreation is essential to a healthy life style. It also promotes togetherness and a sense of place.
- Add a pickleball tournament to Fun Fest
- As a young family, would love to see a rec center and or community pool—even though it is no small task.

Public Open House

On April 1st a public open house was held at the Hiawatha Community Center. This event was open to the public and it featured the work that had been completed on the plan so far. This included informational posters on public engagement process and methods, and the outcome and data summarized for attendees. There was also a poster for feedback so that attendees had a chance to provide final input on what was presented to them at the meeting. People of all ages attended the meeting and the feedback poster allowed everyone to give there input which was very beneficial to the process. The primary feedback from that poster were other amenities that they would like to see that were not mentioned in the survey. Many people also expressed that they would like to focus on what Hiawatha already has to offer rather than expansion of the new park until a more concrete plan and idea can be presented.

The other posters that were on display for feedback and comment at the meeting were the concept designs for the new NW Park as well as a community center footprint at the three different park locations, Clark, Guthridge, and NW Park. Substantial feedback on where people would like to see the community center as well as what they would like done with the new NW Park was gathered at the meeting. Some people would like to see a recreation center in a more centralized location of Hiawatha rather than the NW Park and others expressed there want for it in the NW Park as the city continues to grow that direction. All together the turn out for the event was great and the feedback gathered was invaluable.

Key Concerns and Outcomes

Concerns

ADA Regulations and Accessibility
- Improving accessibility for all is a primary goal. Although Hiawatha has made improvements to sidewalk and trail conditions as well as invested in newer playground equipment, there should be specific improvements geared towards providing access and accessible parks and recreation amenities

Safety
- Updating Hiawatha parks to be safe for everyone of all ages is a key priority for the city. Lighting is a concern as well as flooding that leads to ice on the trails in the winter.

Opportunities

Future NW Park
- This 18 acre park space is a blank canvas for the city. Public input comes back positive for a recreation center, but Future NW Park may not be the best location for it. There are a lot of other great options for the space at a lower cost. The City budget and CIP must be considered in the decision along with the capacity of the parks and recreation department to take on more land. The use and future of this park is essential as Hiawatha is projected to grow another 3,000 people in the next 20 years. The City's total park space is low when compared to the standard and other communities its size. This space must be utilized to its full potential.

Recreation Programs
- According to the community feedback many people would be interested in more recreation programing through the Hiawatha Parks and Recreation Department. Many participate in recreation programming in surrounding areas, but would prefer to do so in Hiawatha.

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Chapter 3

Vision, Goals, Concepts, and Action Plan

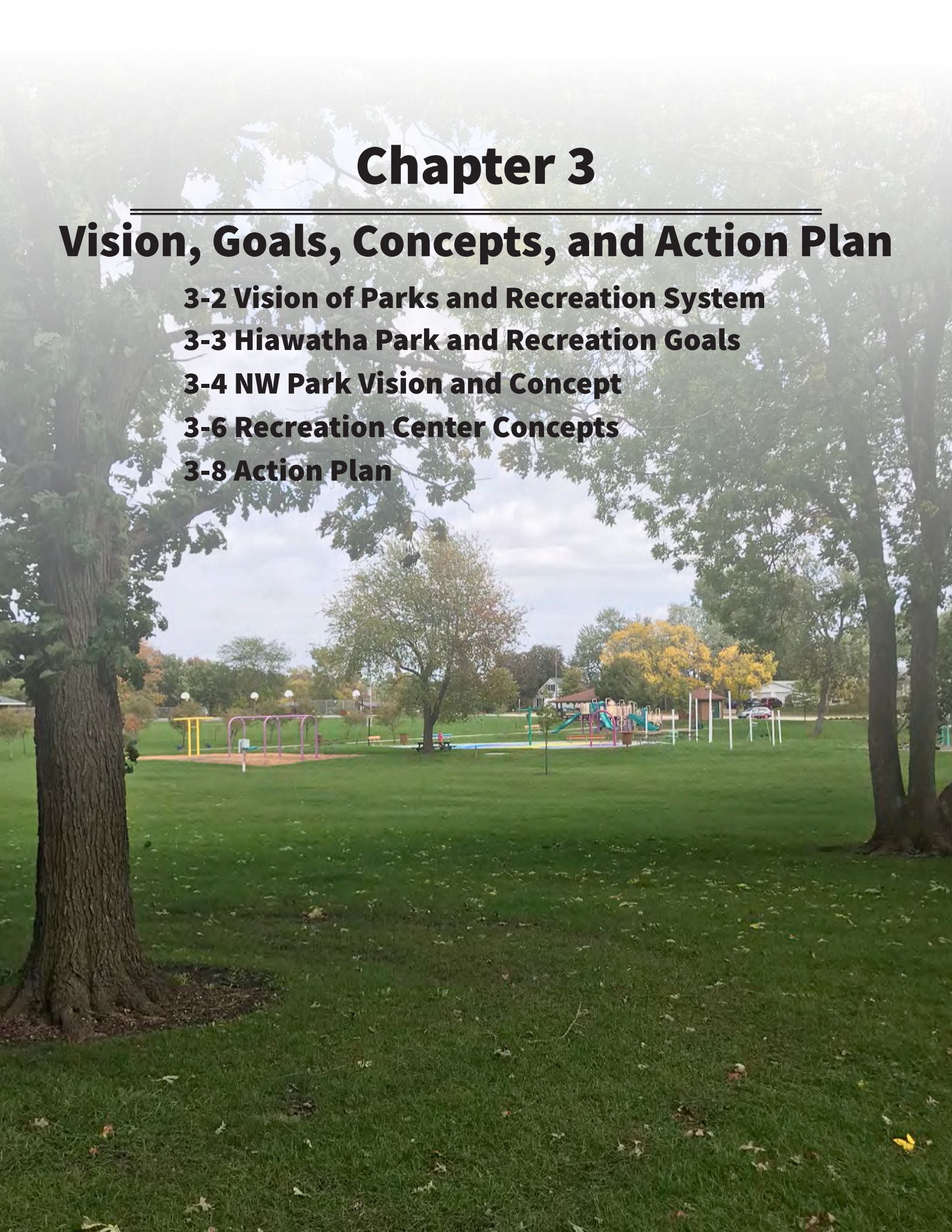
3-2 Vision of Parks and Recreation System

3-3 Hiawatha Park and Recreation Goals

3-4 NW Park Vision and Concept

3-6 Recreation Center Concepts

3-8 Action Plan



Vision of Parks and Recreation System

Overview

The City identified a need to reinvigorate its parks and recreation offerings for current and future residents. Part of this was the purchase of 18 acres of greenfield to be developed into park on the north side of Hiawatha where current residential growth is occurring. Successful implementation of this plan is attained when recommendations are attainable and align with the capacity of the Parks and Recreation Department as well as other effected city departments. This is to be a collaborative process involving city staff, stakeholders, and community members.

Plan Objective

Develop a comprehensive, usable, living document which outlines the current assets and improvements of the park system. Through this analysis and process Hiawatha will be able to create a concept for "North West Park". This plan was created with the objective of analyzing the existing conditions of the parks to better develop an equitable and usable concept for the new park area for visitors and current and future residents.

Hiawatha Park and Recreation Vision

The City of Hiawatha will offer activities and programs for citizens of all ages and abilities, while diversifying recreation amenities and improving those that already exist to meet growing needs of the community.

Hiawatha Park and Recreation Goals

Plan Goals

A goal is a long-term target that states what the community wants to accomplish. Written in general terms, the statement offers a desired condition. Below are four overarching goals that will help guide future decisions as the Hiawatha Park and Recreation Department grows with the community while continuing to maintain a high level of service.

1 Develop master plans for new park land.

2 Provide new opportunities to increase and broaden park users.

3 Improve inclusiveness of equipment within Hiawatha parks and their amenities.

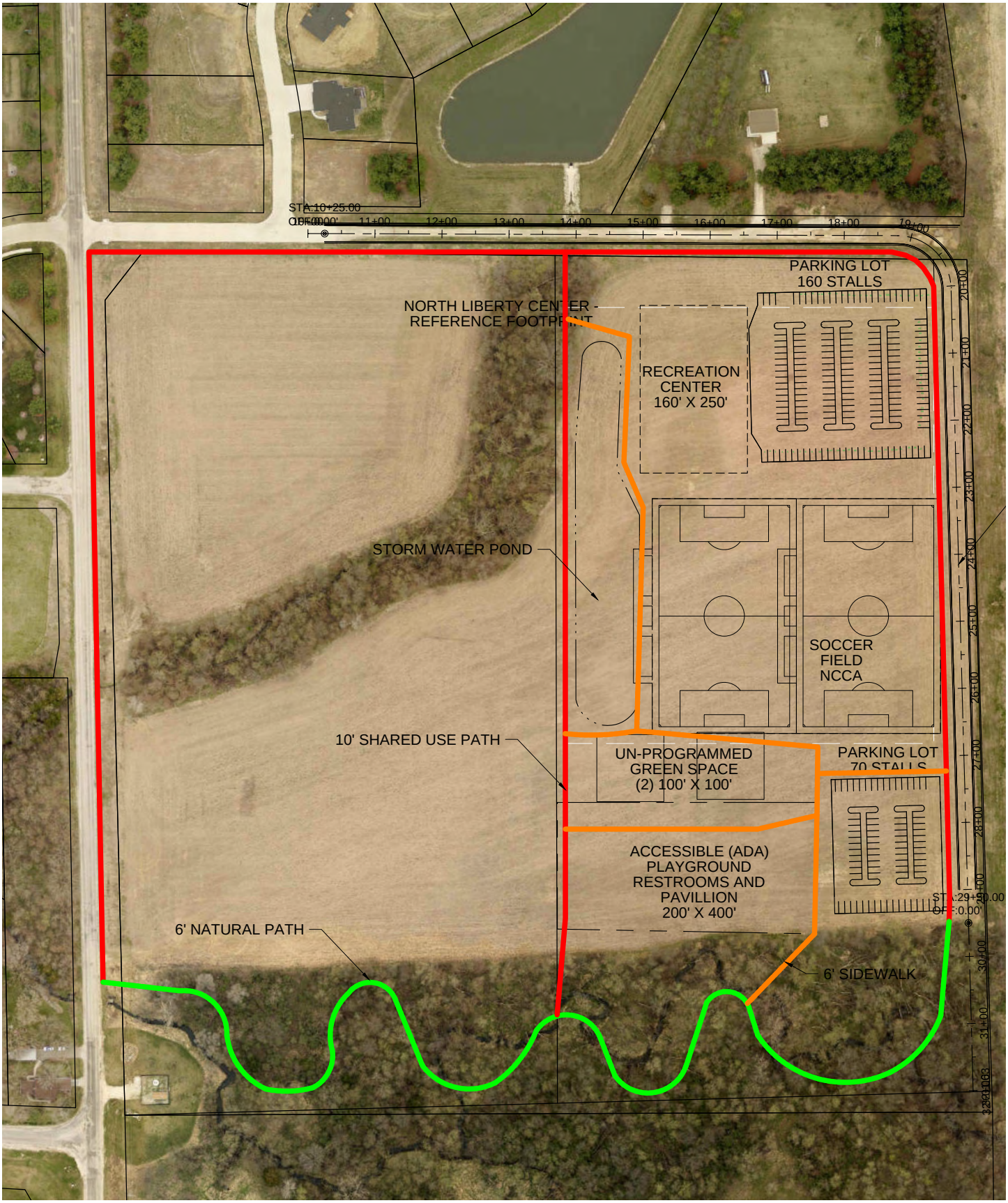
4 Provide a framework for short, mid, and long-term improvements and growth opportunities for existing and future parks, open space and trails.

NW Park Vision and Concept

Concept

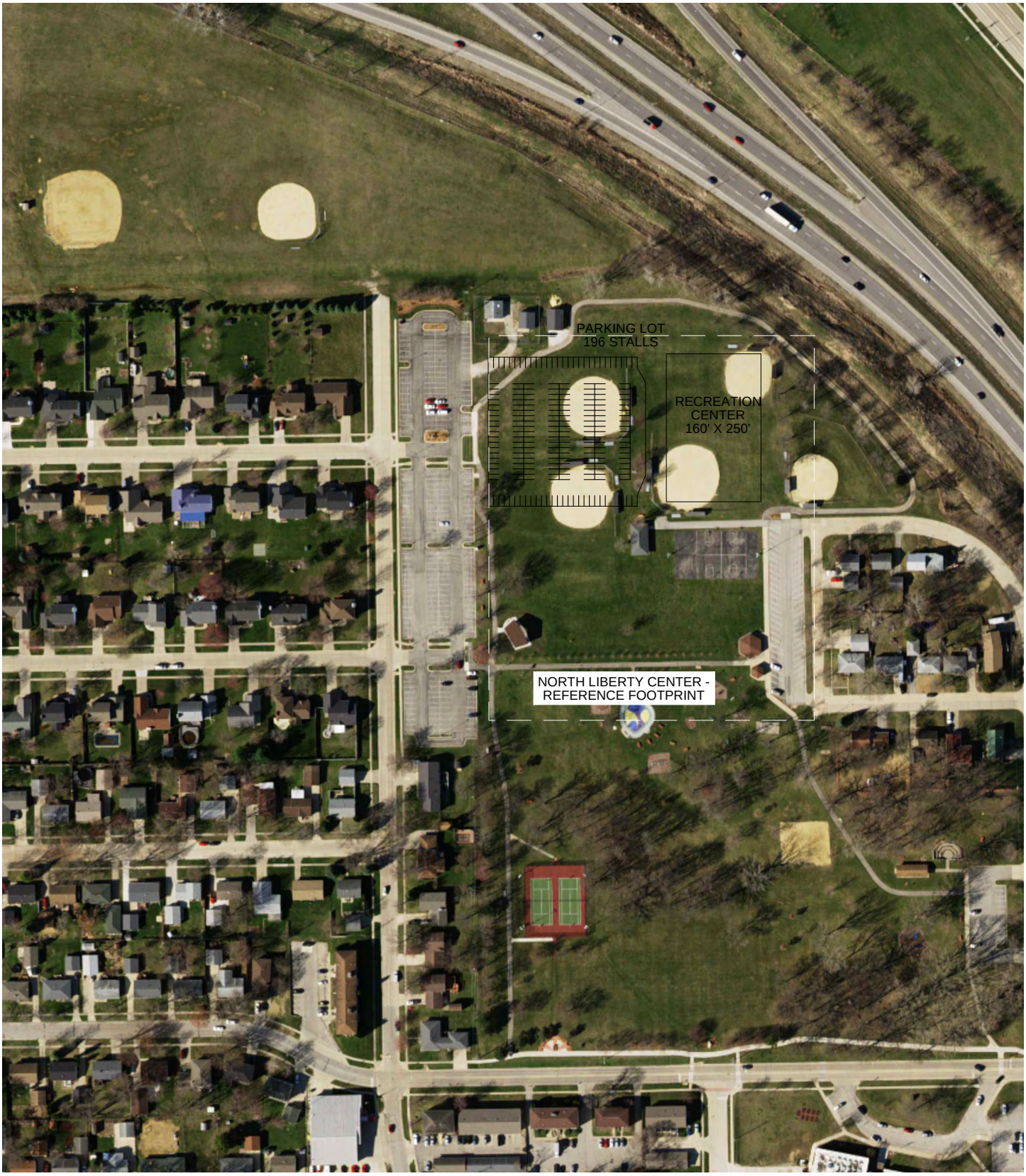
A new conceptual plan will be developed to accommodate desired improvements and additions to the new North West Park area. The work shall be consistent with current land use concepts, current recreation trends and adjacent properties. Amenities prioritized through the planning process and public feedback will be set on the site in a manner that will attempt to maximize key functionality elements such as accessibility and diverse recreational needs while minimizing the perceived impact to adjacent properties with an eye toward cost implications.

NW Park Vision and Concept



Clark Park Recreation Center Concept

Guthridge Park Recreation Center Concept



Action Plan

The Action Plan is designed as a guide to help the Hiawatha Parks and Recreation Department, along with City officials and community leaders prioritize opportunities and address issues within the City of Hiawatha and the surrounding area as it relates to parks and recreation. The desired vision for Hiawatha cannot be created over night. However, by incrementally implementing the recommendations within this plan, Hiawatha can achieve the desired outcomes set forth in this comprehensive plan.

Potential Funding Sources

There are five broad funding sources available to help offset costs to complete the projects listed in this Plan, as described below.

- **General Municipal Funding** – It is assumed that some general municipal funds/borrowing will be required to assist with the completion of projects or as a matching source for state or federal grants (e.g. wayfinding, signage, or park land acquisition).
- **Special Assessments** – Particular projects that benefit individual properties (e.g. sidewalk/trail installations) could be funded through special assessments whereby the City recoups initial design and construction costs through increased real estate taxes on those properties for a set period of time.
- **Private Donations** – Some of the wayfinding projects could be partially or fully funded through private donations or public fundraising.
- **State and Federal Grants** – There are many different state or federal grants that may be able to offset the costs of some of the identified projects. Only those programs most likely to award funding to Hiawatha are listed.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** – Tax increment financing (TIF) is a program where the additional taxes generated from development in a TIF district would go towards specified public improvements in a community. This program helps waylay the impacts of new development on a community while improving the attractiveness of the City. Hiawatha has designated areas of the town as an Urban Renewal Area and created a TIF District.

Funding

The table below is not an exhaustive list of programs and resources available on any given project but it can be used as a reference for potential funding for projects. The key is also a reference for the acronyms in the Action Plan. Not every resource and funding source is used in the Action Plan but the key can be a reference for future projects as new opportunities are added.

Funding and Other Resources Key

CAT - Community Attraction and Tourism Program (ECIA)
City - General Fund, Special Funds, TIF or Assessments
CMPO - Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization
ECICOG - East Central Iowa Council of Governments
HC - Hired Consultant
HEDCO - Hiawatha Economic Development Corporation
IACPG - Iowa Arts Council Project Grant
IFMA - Iowa Farmers Market Association
ILRTF - Iowa Living Roadways Trust Fund
KIB - Keep Iowa Beautiful Community Beatification Grant Program
LWCF - Land and Water Conservation Fund
PCRC - Pedestrian Curb Ramp Construction
PIB - Paint Iowa Beautiful
REAP - Resource Enhancement and Protection City Parks and Open Spaces
TAP - Transportation Alternative Program
TFK - Trees for Kids and Trees for Teens
THF - Tony Hawk Foundation
TIF - Tax Increment Finance
TP! - Trees Please! (MidAmerican Energy)
TSIP - Traffic Safety Improvement Program

This table is for the acronyms in the Action Plan below.

		Action
Parks	1.a	Begin Design Phase of Future NW Park.
	1.b	Consider additional lighting around the trails at Fay M. Clark Park.
	1.c	Continue to plant native prairie grass along the trail and between fairways at Fay M. Clark Park.
	1.d	Improve visibility of baseball diamonds from parking lot at Guthridge Park. Consider interpretive signage at entrance.
	1.e	Evaluate any need to address flooding at Tucker Park.
	1.f	Continue to implement dog park plan.
	1.g	Consider an all-inclusive playground when planning new play equipment/areas.
	1.h	Assess the need/want for a skate board park in Hiawatha.
	1.i	Evaluate low lit areas of Tucker Park and determine lighting needs to improve safety.
	1.j	Continue to utilize Master Plans for new parks.
Trails and Access	2.a	Consider bike trials along Boyson Road.
	2.b	Improve crosswalks for walking and biking to Fay M. Clark Park. Consider passive speed control.
	2.c	Improve accessibility from parking lot to baseball diamonds at Guthridge Park. Currently a difficult surface for those with disabilities and seniors.
	2.d	Improve trail drainage issue at the NE end of the trail around Guthridge Park.
	2.e	Consider on-road bike paths for avid bikers on a case by case basis.
	2.f	Consider designated trails for recreational users that prefer vehicle/pedestrian separation.
	2.g	Address trail/sidewalk access to Fay M. Clark and Guthridge Parks.
	2.h	

	Priority			Potential Non-city Funding	Other Resources
	2019-2021	2022-2029	On Going		
				LWCF, REAP	HC
					HC
				ILRTF	
				REAP	HC
					HC
				THF, LWCF	
					HC, MidAmerican, Alliant Energy
					HC
				TAP	HC
				TAP	
					HC
				TAP	HC
					HC
				TAP	HC

		Action
Parks and Recreation Department	3.a	Hiawatha will strive for more festivals/recreation activities to attract both residents and visitors out into the community
	3.b	Evaluate the need for more park space as the city grows based on the National Parks and Recreation Association NRPA standard of 12 acres per 1,000 residents
	3.c	Consider acquiring additional staff based on the Department Evaluation on page 1-18 of this plan
	3.d	Consider the strategies to capture more revenue to maintain high level of service and offerings based on the Department Evaluation on page 1-18 of this plan
	3.e	Evaluate the need to increase operational budget to meet the needs and high level of service base on the Department Evaluation on page 1-18 of this plan
	3.f	Develop a cohesive way-finding signage in coordination with City to direct residents and visitors in the community to park and recreation facilities and attractions
	3.g	Work with City to update CIP with costs for the Future NW Park Concept from this planning process
	3.h	Review existing activities and programming to determine the need for additional opportunities for all ages, especially seniors and educational/learning activities (guitar lessons, painting, etc.) based community feedback
	3.i	Promote awareness of local resources. Consider a marketing campaign to help communicate Hiawatha Parks and Recreation Department events, activities and announcements.
	3.j	
Facilities	4.a	Consider a pool assessment to determine costs of a year-round swimming facility
	4.b	Consider a recreation center assessment to determine costs and next steps to move plans forward through the release of an SOQ/RFP
	4.c	Evaluate the connections from neighborhoods to trails. See map page 1-15 for referenced areas.
	4.d	Evaluate the need to improve crossing at North Center Point Road.
	4.e	Consider a designated bike lane on Emmons.
	4.f	
	4.g	
	4.h	
	4.i	
	4.j	

Priority			Potential Non-city Funding	Other Resources
2019-2021	2022-2029	On Going		
			REAP	
				HC
				HC
				HC
				HC
				HC
				HC