

Park and Recreation Master Plan

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Appleton last adopted a **Park and Recreation Master Plan** in 2004, updating a series of prior plans dating to 1965. The 2004 plan was meant to provide recommendations for the period from 2005 through 2009. It is the City's policy to update this plan every five years both to provide guidance concerning park and recreation facilities and operations, and to meet requirements of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for grant funding eligibility. This current update will address the years 2010 to 2014.

With the adoption of this latest update, the schedule for updates to the City's **Park and Recreation Master Plan** and **Comprehensive Plan** will coincide. This fact should help the City to better assess its needs and program for changes in the broader context of population change, land use, transportation, economic development, natural and cultural resources, utilities and community facilities, and other elements of the **Comprehensive Plan**. The interconnected nature of these elements is reflected in the analysis and recommendations within several chapters of the **Comprehensive Plan** that may have a bearing on planning for parks, open spaces, and recreational programs. These may be found in:

- Chapter 6 - Transportation
- Chapter 7 - Utilities and Community Facilities
- Chapter 8 - Agricultural, Natural, Historic, and Cultural Facilities
- Chapter 10 - Land Use
- Chapter 13 - Fox River Corridor Plan
- Chapter 14 - Downtown Plan

In addition, the public input process for the **Comprehensive Plan** yielded numerous comments concerning parks and recreation.

Background Information

A growing body of research provides evidence of the importance of parks, open space, and leisure programming to the environmental, social, and economic health of communities. The presence of sufficient parks and open spaces provides habitat for plants and animals, contributes to effective stormwater management, and can offer additional environmental benefits. Parks and open spaces have been consistently shown to enhance the value of nearby property, and special facilities such as downtown plazas or event spaces can be a significant contributor to commercial vitality. Both park facilities and programming can enhance the quality of life and social interaction of community residents, making the city a more desirable place to live.

The Appleton **Parks and Recreation Master Plan** is designed to guide the Parks and Recreation Department, city officials, advisory committees, and other partners and stakeholders as they strive to provide the best possible facilities and leisure activities for the citizens of Appleton. To do this, the Appleton Parks and Recreation Department operates with the following mission statement:

The Appleton Parks and Recreation Department is dedicated to providing leisure services, recreational facilities, and environmental management to enhance the quality of life for the community.

Prior Goals and Progress

Prior planning established several goals for the Parks and Recreation Department and its partners to accomplish. To a great extent, these have been accomplished. Some of the more prominent goals, and the progress made toward achieving them, are documented below.

Land Acquisition Recommendations

- Work with developers to acquire and prepare park lands, and especially greenways, in new residential subdivisions.

The City has acquired two new park sites on the Fox River through redevelopment projects approved in 2009. Additionally, the City and the developer of the Apple Hill Farm Subdivision have continued to discuss the location of new parks in that development.



- Provide neighborhood park facilities in the southeastern quadrant of the city, exploring facility sharing agreements with the Town of Harrison or the school district.

No new park land has been acquired.

- Review land dedication and fee-in-lieu of land dedication ordinances, and consider impact fees related to park land acquisition and development.

No changes have been made to the City's land dedication requirement or to impact fees.

Specific Facility and Facility Policy Recommendations

- Plamann Park - Work with Outagamie County to provide complementary recreational facilities within Plamann Park and nearby Appleton parks.

The City and Outagamie County frequently discuss park issues, and particularly the connection of trails in the park to those in Appleton.

- Appleton Area School District - Formalize land management agreements that draw on the strengths of each agency and reduce redundancy.

The West Pool was transferred to the school district, and the school district leases the Prospect Building in Pierce Park for the Fox River Academy Charter School. The City and school district frequently coordinate on maintenance of joint school/park sites.

- Apple Hill Farm Development - Work with the developer to establish greenway and trail connections between parks in the subdivision and surrounding neighborhoods.

Discussions continue, as the pace of development slowed.

- Fox River Locks - Investigate the potential to increase recreational opportunities on the river and the land owned by the Fox River Navigational Authority.

All four locks located in Appleton have been rehabilitated. The City and others are currently working on a water trail that will include portages on the properties owned by the Fox River Navigational Authority. These properties will be incorporated into future public greenspace along the river.

- System-Wide ADA Upgrades - Continue to upgrade facilities for universal access.

Appleton has evaluated and made ADA improvements to its park facilities, including rubberized surfaces at Derks Park, along with walkways and other improvements at various parks. The City has also developed a universal playground at Appleton Memorial Park.

- Trails - Prioritize trail connections in new subdivisions, business parks, and stormwater corridors, and conduct a comprehensive city-wide trail connection study.

The City has obtained grant funding to assist in preparing a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan that is expected to be completed in 2010. New trails include the Providence Trail (2007), funding for the Lutz Park to Vulcan segment of the Riverfront Trail, and coordination of paths in Erb Park as part of the Safe Routes to School Program.

- Additional Boat Launch - Provide a non-motorized boat launch in the vicinity of Telulah Park.

Discussions were held during the approval process for River Heath, but a suitable location could not be identified.

- Indoor Aquatic and Community Center - Track demand, monitor feasibility, and partner with others to provide these facilities, if demand warrants them.

The YMCA has actively pursued sites in north Appleton and in Greenville.

- Carrying Capacity Evaluations - Continue to apply evaluations, use policies, and caps for park facilities.

The Parks and Recreation Department has continued to assess the carrying capacity of its facilities and manage them so as to not cause undue stress. Policies for the reservation and scheduling of athletic facilities have been revised and updated to include mechanisms to schedule facilities in a manner consistent with the facility's availability.



- Focus on Ecological Sustainability and Stewardship - Provide leadership in the development of green infrastructure.

The Parks and Recreation Department has coordinated with the Stormwater Utility on the development of ponds and stormwater facilities as open space, has monitored invasive species, and has implemented action plans to address invasive species in the urban forest.

Community Input

The **Park and Recreation Master Plan** was prepared with considerable public input beginning with the visioning process for the **Comprehensive Plan**, which began in 2006. It continued through input received in several meetings or workshops held during the planning process, and through two workshops and a survey conducted specifically for parks and recreation. Chapter 3 of the Comprehensive Plan documents the results of the visioning process. General comments from the park workshops and survey are summarized here.

- The Fox River Corridor is a high priority location for acquiring and developing additional parks, open spaces, and trails, as well as making more general environmental quality enhancements.
- The area bordered by Richmond Street, Mason Street, and College Avenue is not served by any parks.
- There is considerable support for expanding trail systems, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and other improvements to facilitate non-motorized transportation for both recreation and commuting. Priorities should include linking parks through greenways, and providing safe connections from neighborhoods to schools and business areas, with particular attention to crossing Highway 41 and on busy streets such as County Highway JJ. (It should be noted that bicycle and pedestrian issues are also addressed in Chapter 6, Transportation, in the **Comprehensive Plan**. Not all of the streets identified by residents as needing bicycle and pedestrian improvements are located within the city limits or are under City of Appleton jurisdiction.)
- Trails within Appleton should tie into regional trail systems outside of the city.
- Neighborhood parks should have open fields (multi-purpose) that allow non-organized play. Pick-up soccer and other activities happen nightly and on weekends. If all of the park space is dedicated to single-purpose fields, there will not be space left for these activities.
- Parks should be designed and programmed for four-season use.
- The City should explore opportunities to partner with other area communities to avoid duplication of services and better use limited resources.
- Partnerships with private and non-profit organizations (YMCA, Thompson Community Center, Appleton Children's Museum, Boys and Girls Club, Appleton Yacht Club, Lawrence University, and others) are productive and need to continue.
- Additional space should be provided for community gardens.

Comments related to specific parks or activities include the following:

- Soldier's Square and Houdini Plaza are in need of rehabilitation.
- Arbutus Park needs to have additional programming to create visitation that discourages undesirable activity. Some of the concerns may be addressed through design.
- Highview Park may be a good location to provide an additional ice skating rink that would serve the northern part of the community.
- Summit Park needs restroom facilities.
- Opportunities should be provided for expanded boating, such as the proposed water trail on the Fox River.
- Collaboration is needed to better promote disc golf courses in several of the area communities.
- Demand for softball has leveled off while lacrosse, rugby, volleyball, and ice skating/hockey appear to be increasing in demand.
- Cultural programming is needed for Appleton's ethnic minorities, such as the Hmong.



Park Facilities and Recreational Programs Inventory

Appleton maintains a diverse assortment of parks, open spaces, and other recreational facilities. This section of the plan is intended to define key terms and identify the existing system resources. The City's park and recreation inventory is discussed in the context of objective standards adopted by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Definitions and Park Classifications

■ Active Recreation Site

A park designed primarily for active recreation of one or more age groups. This type of design may have as its primary feature playfields, playground apparatus, ball fields, ball courts, or a combination thereof.

■ Bicycle or Pedestrian Trail or Path

A path designed for use by non-motorized means of transportation, and specifically for bicycles and/or pedestrians, although roller blades, skateboards, and other devices may be allowed on some facilities. Unlike on-street bicycle lanes, trails and paths are separated from driving lanes when located adjacent to roadways.

■ Community Garden

Community gardens are small plots of land made available to residents of the community to grow plants either for ornamental purposes or for food. Areas for vegetable gardens are typically located in parks or greenway corridors. They may also be located on other community-owned land or on land made available by other property owners such as utility right-of-way. Ornamental or flower gardens may also be located in parks, or on key sites within neighborhoods where they can contribute to creating a sense of community. Examples may include boulevard medians or neighborhood gateways.

■ Open Space or Passive Recreation Site

A park primarily designed for picnicking, walking, and other non-organized recreation interests. This type of facility often emphasizes natural settings and de-emphasizes active recreation areas. It may also include stormwater facilities or undeveloped natural areas where no uses have been identified.

■ Play Structure

A play system which incorporates a variety of functions such as slides, climbing bars, suspended platforms and railings interconnected in one unit. Structures are usually sized for preschool and elementary users with structure height and apparatus complexity being the determining criteria.

■ Single/Special Purpose Park Facilities

These facilities are unique to the community. Examples include zoos, marinas, fairgrounds, and historical features. Due to the varying characteristics of these resources, the user age group is often widespread. The service area may include the entire community or entire region. No average park size or service area exists.

■ Water Trail

A water trail is a route planned for non-motorized boat travel. Typical improvements for this type of park feature may include launching facilities, portages, and signage to mark the route.

Park Categories

The following park classifications have been utilized in preparing this update. These classifications reflect the diversity of Appleton's parks and the unique nature of some of its facilities

■ Pocket Parks or Mini Parks

These are small parks that tend to meet a specific need. Pocket parks provide greenery, a place to sit outdoors, and sometimes a children's playground. They may be created around a monument, historic marker



or art project. They are often created on a single urban lot or remnant parcel where larger land assembly is not warranted, or difficult to accomplish.

■ Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are designed to provide both active and passive short-term recreation activities. The primary users range from 5-15 years of age. However, informal recreation opportunities cater to groups of all ages. Neighborhood parks should provide play apparatus for both preschoolers and school age children. Other facilities include shelters, open play lawn areas, multi-use paved court areas, areas for field games with possible limited seating, wading pools, horseshoe pits, outdoor ice rinks, and some off-street parking. Passive areas of neighborhood parks are wooded, scenic, and well landscaped. Facilities in the passive areas are limited but should include picnic areas (complete with tables and grills), drinking fountains, and pathways.

The service area for a neighborhood park should include the entire adjoining neighborhood. If the park contains some unique features, such as a wading pool, the service area may be slightly larger. The average neighborhood park serves from 500 to 2,500 people. Neighborhood parks commonly range from 5-10 acres in size with a service area radius between 0.25 and 0.5 miles.

■ Community Parks

This type of park is designed to serve several neighborhoods while minimizing park travel distance. Though community parks are designed to accommodate all age groups, most activities cater to the active recreation needs of junior and senior high school students and adults. Although size is not always a sound criterion for classifying parks, it is generally recognized that community parks are more spacious than neighborhood parks or playgrounds. Community parks provide a combination of intensive and non-intensive development ranging from play apparatus to trail systems. In addition to the kinds of facilities provided at neighborhood parks, community parks may provide facilities such as swimming pools, picnic areas, elaborate playfields, game courts, ice skating, shelters, sanitary facilities, and ample off-street parking.

Community parks have an effective service area of one to two miles (or sometimes more) and can serve from 2,500 to 20,000 people. Most community parks have an average size of between 20 and 35 acres.

■ Greenspace or Open Space Parks

In addition to providing numerous recreational experiences, these types of parks provide environmental quality and act as land use buffers. Additional attributes help break up development congestion and provide aesthetic quality. Most urban greenspace or open space parks contain natural areas such as woodlands, floodplains, wetlands, rock outcroppings and scenic views. Common recreational developments include biking, hiking, jogging, bridle paths and cross country ski trail systems. Some active recreation facilities are provided where land is conducive to that type of development, however, it is preferred that these areas stay in a predominantly passive state if possible.

Parks where trail systems are developed serve the entire community. Though no set standard exists, several communities use a ratio of one acre for every 1,000 residents as a basis to project community demand.

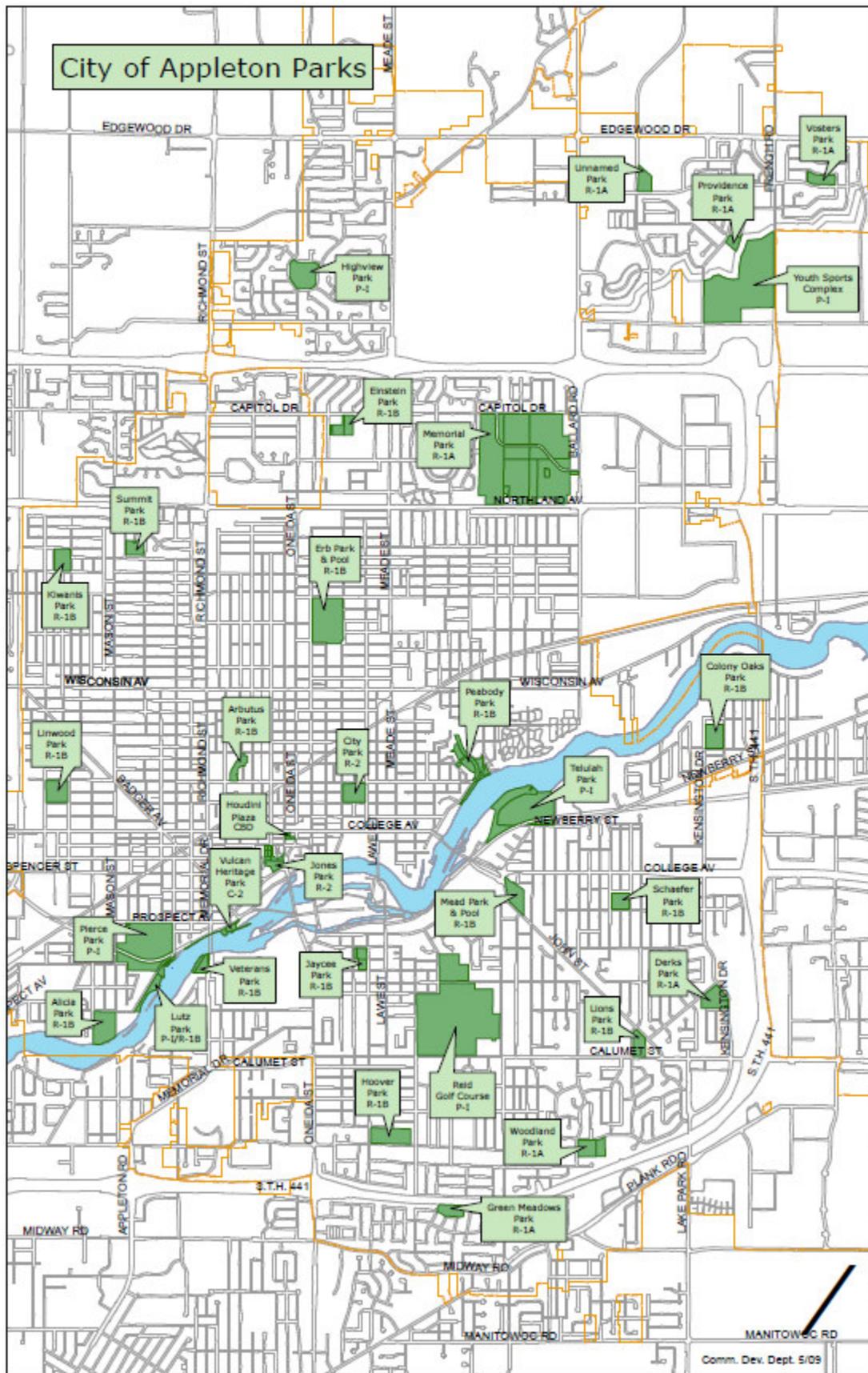
■ Greenway Corridors

Greenways tend to be linear features that may wind through neighborhoods, often connecting larger park sites. These may be comprised of wetlands, floodplains, and other environmental features, or include stormwater management facilities. Greenways may be undeveloped, or often contain minimal improvements such as paths.

■ Urban Plazas

Urban plazas are places for people to gather together and host events and other functions that contribute to civic life. These spaces can be used for a range of formal and informal community activities, such as farmers markets, concerts, art shows, and other community activities. They are located within the more densely-developed and commercial parts of the community, and unlike other parks, tend to be predominantly developed with impervious surfaces and structure. Houdini Plaza and Soldier's Square are urban plazas within Appleton.





■ Special Recreation Areas

This "catch-all" term is used to describe a wide variety of other park and recreation facilities. Examples include Reid Golf Course, Union Springs, and the Appleton Family Ice Center.

National Recreation Facility Standards

The National Parks and Recreation Association has established standards for the provision of some park facilities. These standards are presented as a basis for evaluating the existing park and open space resources of the Village. Specifically, the National Parks and Recreation Association recommends the following standards:

- provision of two acres of neighborhood park land per 1,000 community residents; and
- provision of eight acres of community park land per 1,000 community residents.

These standards result in a target of 10 acres of neighborhood and community park land per 1,000 residents. Appleton's population is estimated by the Wisconsin Department of Administration to be 72,400 residents as of January 1, 2009, and will grow to 78,237 by the year 2015. These numbers result in a current need for about 720 acres of park land, growing to 780 acres by 2015. The following table presents a summary of the acreage of existing neighborhood and community parks in Appleton.

Area of Existing Park Land in the City of Appleton					
Neighborhood Parks		Community Parks		Other Parks	
Alicia	12.0	Appleton Memorial	139.0	Houdini Plaza	1.0
Arbutus	3.4	Erb	27.8	Reid Golf Course	107.5
City	8.0	Pierce	36.2	Union Springs	0.1
Colony Oaks	7.9	Telulah	38.3	Vulcan Heritage	2.1
Derks	9.1	Youth Sports Complex	80.0		
Einstein	6.6			Apple Creek Trail	10.4
Green Meadow	5.6	Fox River Sites	5.0	Newberry Trail	10.7
Highview	12.6	(former water plant, other sites)		Highview Trail	2.4
Hoover	11.6			North Island Trail	1.4
Jaycee	4.0			Providence Trail	4.6
Jones	5.8				
Kiwanis	7.8				
Linwood	9.5				
Lions	4.4				
Lutz	2.7				
Mead	8.5				
Peabody	16.2				
Providence	3.3				
Schaefer	6.5				
Unnamed	5.2				
Veterans	2.0				
Voster	5.0				
Woodland	8.7				
Total Acreage	166.4	Total Acreage	326.3	Total	140.2
Target Acreage (2009)	144.8	Target Acreage (2009)	579.2		
Target Acreage (2015)	156.5	Target Acreage (2015)	625.9		

Source: City of Appleton and Place Dynamics



A second set of standards is related to the distribution of parks within a community. The goal is to provide relatively easy access to park facilities for all residents of the community. In addition to the distance standards here, access should consider whether there are significant barriers that may prevent some residents from conveniently accessing parks. Busy streets, for instance, may prohibit small children from walking or riding a bike to a park, at least without adult supervision. The following standards are recommended.

- a distribution of neighborhood parks so that at least one is located within $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of every residence; and
- a distribution of community parks so that one is located within two miles of every residence.

As the table shows, the City of Appleton meets adopted standards for the provision of neighborhood parks, but lacks sufficient community parks. This is ameliorated to an extent by the presence of Plamann Park at the City's north side. The 257-acre park is owned and maintained by Outagamie County and features many of the amenities expected within a community park, such as ball fields, shelters, a swimming beach, and trails. With Plamann Park included, Appleton has 583 acres of community parks, meeting the current need, but leaving a deficit of 43 acres by 2015. Including the 140 acres of other park and recreation areas, Appleton's Park and Recreation Department maintains a total of 633 acres. This equates to 8.74 acres per thousand residents.

The map on the following page depicts the service territories of all of the parks in Appleton, including Plamann Park. As the map shows, most of the existing city and its future growth area is adequately covered by the distribution of community parks. The exception to this is the far southeastern part of the service area. This includes the Southpoint Commerce Park along with areas that are planned for future residential use.

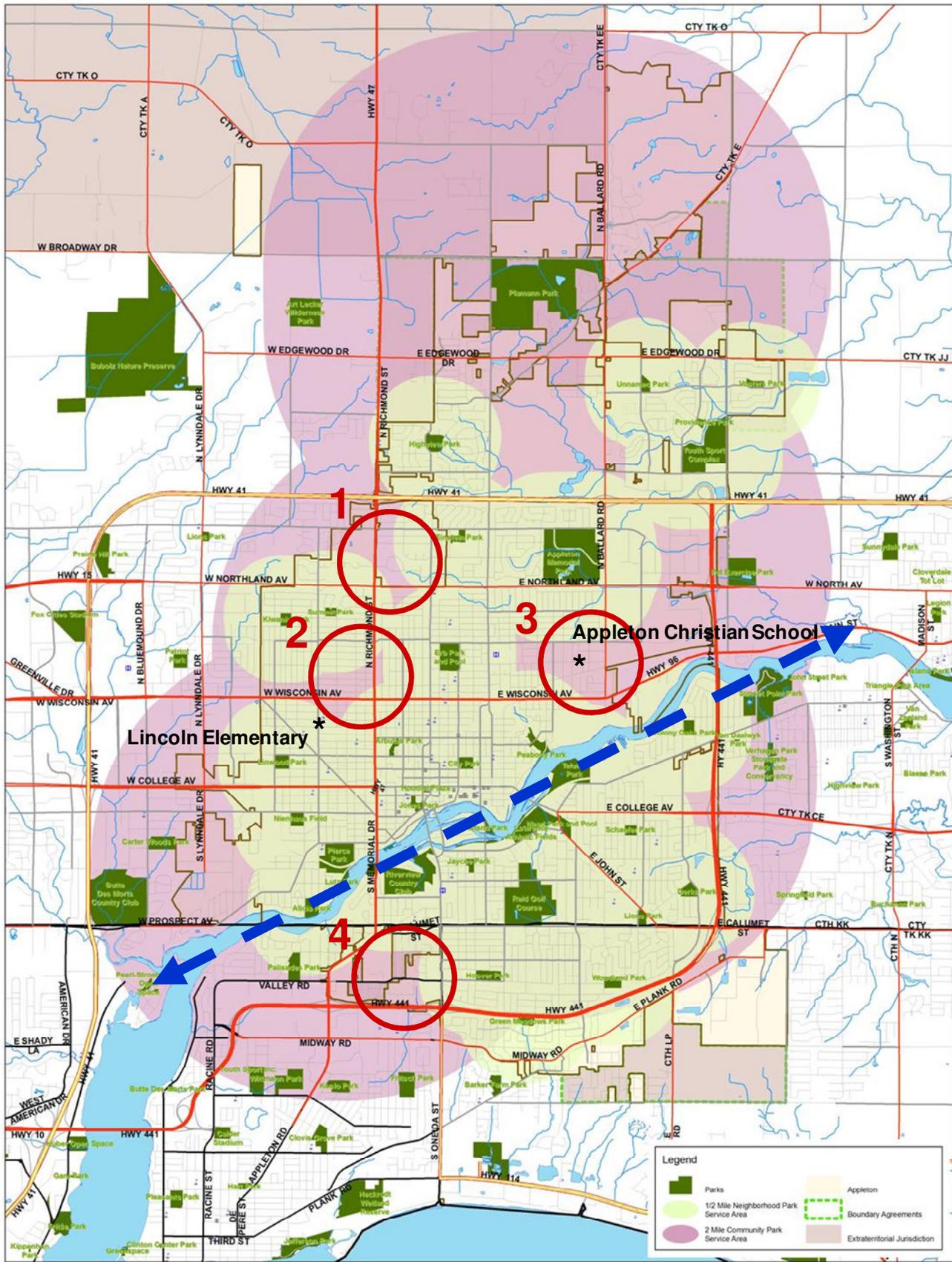
Service area coverage for neighborhood parks is not as consistent. Several parts of the community are not served by neighborhood parks within the desired $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile radius. While the lack of coverage is not a concern over parts of the community that are dedicated to business or industrial parks, there are four areas within the developed part of the community in which coverage may be considered to be inadequate. These are identified on the map:

- The area northwest of the intersection of Northland Avenue and Richmond Street (1) is a primarily residential neighborhood that is currently within the Town of Grand Chute. Although beyond $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, residents of this area may travel to Einstein Park without having to cross any major streets.
- The second area of concern lies north of Wisconsin Avenue and west of Richmond Street (2). This is a densely-developed residential neighborhood providing no obvious sites for a new park. Residents may travel north to Kiwanis Park or Summit Park without significant obstacles. South of Wisconsin Avenue, the City may partner with Lincoln Elementary School to help meet service needs.
- North of Wisconsin Avenue, between Meade Street and Ballard Street, there is another neighborhood area (3) that does not have adequate park facilities. These three streets have heavy traffic that can deter residents from traveling to parks outside of the neighborhood. Opportunities to provide park facilities in the area may include collaboration with the Appleton Christian School.
- The final area of concern (4) lies north of Highway 441, south of Prospect Avenue, west of Oneida Street, and east of Memorial Drive. Portions of this area lie within Appleton and the Town of Menasha. It is planned for predominantly commercial and multi-family residential uses. There is vacant land located within this area, and as it develops, the City of Appleton should pursue park dedication. It may be necessary to collaborate with the Town of Menasha to jointly identify, acquire, and develop desired park land.

In addition to population growth, anticipated development patterns may create a need to evaluate the adequacy of existing park and recreation facilities. In particular, the City has established goals to encourage mixed-use and residential redevelopment or infill in specific parts of the urban core, including the downtown, the industrial flats, and the Richmond Street and Wisconsin Avenue Corridors.

Residential densities in these redevelopment areas are anticipated to be higher than elsewhere in Appleton, increasing the potential number of users for existing parks within the area. At the same time, residents moving into these new developments are likely to have a demographic profile different than that of the community as a whole. Urban mixed-use and multi-family development tends to attract a higher proportion of singles and childless couples. This suggests that future needs may be less focused on play structures and other amenities for school-age children, and more on adult-oriented active and passive uses. Multi-purpose trails, pocket parks, community gardens, and urban plazas are examples of the kinds of facilities to consider. The **Downtown Plan** and **Fox River Corridor Plan** contain suggestions of specific sites to consider.





The Hadzi sculpture site, new park land acquired along the Fox River, remnant parcels bordering the Wisconsin Central (Canadian National) Railroad, and privately-owned and maintained facilities within development projects can be considered to meet future park needs.

The Appleton Park and Recreation Department's Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan identifies numerous improvement planned between 2010 and 2015. While these are summarized here, it should be recognized that these are likely to change based upon the availability of funding, grant cycles, evolving needs, future prioritization of projects, or other factors.

2010 Scheduled Improvements

- renovation of walkways to pavilion in Appleton Memorial Park south of the drainage corridor
- renovations to Houdini Plaza
- security lighting at Peabody Park
- demolish the former wastewater treatment plant on the Fox Riverfront
- development of a new southeast park in cooperation with the Town of Harrison
- enhance road and trail connections in Telulah Park

2011 Scheduled Improvements

- upgrades to the west restroom/concession building, walkways, lighting, and other elements in Appleton Memorial Park
- addition of tennis courts in Colony Oaks Park
- conduct a pool feasibility study for Erb Park
- construct open air shelter at Lutz Park
- phase one of Fox Riverfront development
- development of a new southeast park in cooperation with the Town of Harrison
- development of Vulcan Heritage Park

2012 Scheduled Improvements

- upgrades to the Park and Recreation Department office and operations facility
- construction of a parking lot and walkways in Erb Park
- land acquisition for Prospect Street Park
- phase two of Fox Riverfront development
- construct Trestle Trail from Fox Riverfront to the industrial flats
- develop river level improvements to Telulah Park

2013 Scheduled Improvements

- parking lot construction and landscaping in Appleton Memorial Park
- construction of the Apple Hills Trail from Ballard Road to French Road
- site upgrades to Einstein Park (coordinated with Appleton Area School District)
- restroom and pavilion upgrades in Erb Park
- Erb park pool renovations
- park and trail development on the Foremost Dairy redevelopment site
- pavilion renovations at Lions Park



- initial development and playground structure at the unnamed north side park
- renovate stage and pavilion roof at Pierce Park
- upgrade pavilion in Schaefer Park

2014 Scheduled Improvements

- construction of the Holland Pond loop on the Apple Creek Trail
- Erb park pool renovations
- renovations to the pavilion in Peabody Park
- phase three of Fox Riverfront development
- construct restroom and pavilion in Summit Park

2015 Scheduled Improvements

- renovation of facilities in Appleton Memorial Park south of the drainage corridor, pavilion, and restrooms
- construction of a pedestrian bridge from the Apple Creek Trail to the Providence Trail
- develop the Clearwater Creek Trail in the Clearwater Creek Subdivision
- Erb park pool renovations
- construct walkways and central plaza at Highview Park
- pavilion renovations at Linwood Park
- develop a trail and bridge over the railroad tracks at Pierce Park
- construct Trestle Trail east of Lawe Street
- construct pavilion and restrooms in Vosters Park
- develop trail along the WE Energies utility corridor on the south side of Appleton

In addition to these specifically-identified improvements, the Parks and Recreation Department has budgeted between \$75,000 and \$90,000 per year to purchase or replace playground equipment as needed throughout the park system.

Recreational Programs

The Parks and Recreation Department offers an extensive array of sports, socialization, and educational programs using both the City's facilities and other venues, such as school district pools and gymnasiums. Activities are provided for all age groups. Classes are grouped in categories including early childhood, youth, adult, and healthy lifestyles. Registration is available by mail, in the office, or via the internet.



Recreational Programs Offered by the City of Appleton for Selected Age Groups

Young Children	Youth Programs	Teen Programs	Adult Programs	Older Adults
Baseball	Baseball	Belly Dance	Belly Dance	Special Events Classes
T-Ball	T-Ball	Canoe Instruction	Canoe Instruction	
Softball	Softball	Cardio Kickboxing	Cardio Kickboxing	
Ballet	Bicycling Basics	Dance	Dance	
Friday Fun	Camp APRD	Disc Golf	Disc Golf	
Jazz	Canoe Instruction	In-Line Skating	Open Gym	
Junior Clubhouse	Dance	Open Gym	Recreational	
Karate Fun	Disc Golf	Recreational	Rowing	
Kids on Bikes	In-Line Skating	Rowing	Tennis	
Let's Move	Theater	Tennis	Total Body Burn	
Little Hitters Tennis	Karate Fun	Total Body Burn	Yoga	
Safety Town	Kids on Bikes	Yoga	Flag Football	
Soccer	Open Gym		Softball	
Teacher and Me	Pilates			
Tiny Tappers	Playground Program			
Tot Time	Soccer			
Tumbling	Synergy			
Wiggle, Giggle, and Shake	Tennis			
Yoga - Parent and Child	Wrestling			
	Yoga			
	Basketball			
	Flag Football			
	Lacrosse			

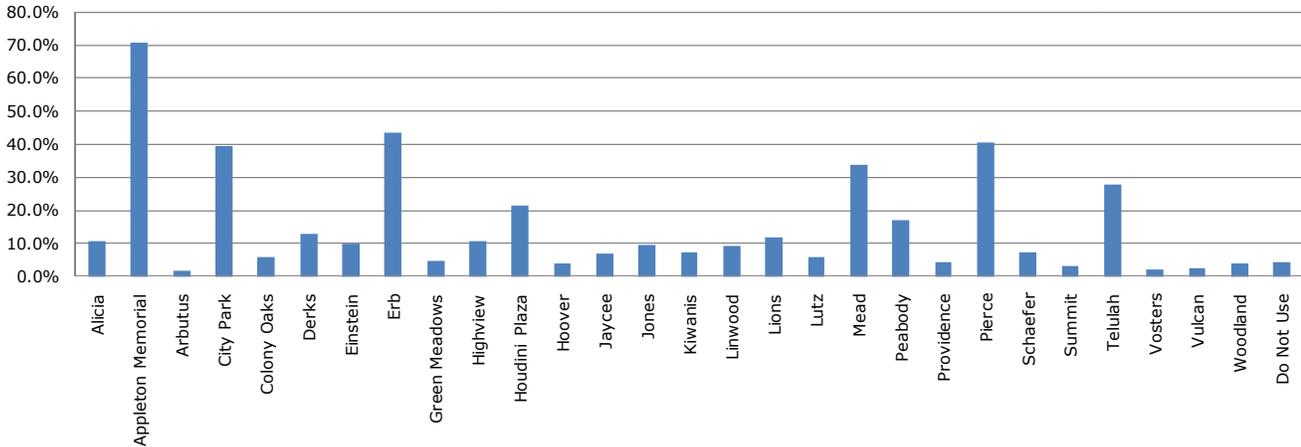
User Survey Results

During the update process the City of Appleton conducted a survey of park users. This provided input in addition to the public comment opportunities available through two workshops and other meetings of the Park and Recreation Committee. A total of 253 responses were received. Some of the more significant survey results included the following:

- Appleton Memorial Park received the most use. Other community parks and a couple neighborhood parks also saw significant use. These included Erb Park, Pierce Park, City Park, Mead Park, and Telulah Park. Three-quarters of respondents visited a park at least once per month, and 40 percent visited a park at least every other week.
- About two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they used the City's trails (Highview, Apple Creek, Providence, CE, Newberry, or North Island).
- About 72 percent of respondents made use of the City's pools, with Mead Pool and Erb Pool receiving the highest use. (These numbers may reflect the fact that the survey was conducted during the summer.)
- Of the City's recreational programs, the ones receiving the most use included swimming lessons, softball and baseball, soccer, tennis, and dance. Ice skating and hockey were mentioned in written comments, as was interest in a dog park.



Identify the Park Facilities Used by Your Family



- Favorite park activities included swimming, sports, playground programs, and park pavilion rental. Dog walking, walking in general, archery, geo-caching, disc golf, ice skating or hockey, and enjoying nature were some of the specific activities listed.
- There was overall satisfaction with the City's park and recreation facilities and programming, in terms of quantity, quality, diversity, and cost.
- Some of the needs that were identified include a skate park, more areas in which to take dogs, more trails, a community meeting room, a pool or water park on the north side of the City, mountain biking trails (Plamann Park), an indoor playground, ice skating rinks, more amenities such as restrooms and drinking fountains in parks and along trails, more natural areas, and more pocket parks.
- More than half of the responses favored adding new trails and continuing to improve the riverfront. Support for an indoor aquatics center was also strong.
- The greatest number of responses did not favor adding new programs. Ballroom dance and salsa lessons were the highest-scoring of the potential new programs.
- Three out of five persons responding to the survey indicated that they would be willing to pay more for additional facilities or programs.

Recommendations

The following recommendations should guide the City of Appleton and the Parks and Recreation Department in the provision of parks and recreation facilities.

Park and Open Space Acquisition

- Identify land for acquisition, or opportunities to share facilities, to provide adequate access to parks in developed parts of Appleton where there are no existing parks.

As noted above, there are areas within the developed part of Appleton and parts of adjoining towns that may someday come into Appleton, that are not adequately served by existing parks. The City should seek to provide desired facilities within these areas in partnership with other stakeholders. Priorities may include the following.

- Partner with the Appleton School District (Lincoln Elementary School) and the Appleton Christian School to provide public access and recreational facilities for residents in the neighborhoods surrounding these schools

- Acquire additional park areas in neighborhoods where residential density is expected to increase through redevelopment activities. These may include remnant parcels along the railroad track north of downtown, sites along the Fox River, and publicly- or privately-owned pocket parks and plazas on individual redevelopment sites.

- Work with land developers to acquire new park land through dedication or other means, as new development occurs.

The City has a park land dedication, or fee-in-lieu-of land dedication requirement for all new residential development. Additional land should be required for new development in the north, far southeast, and southwest parts of Appleton and its future growth area. Where development may occur in adjacent towns, the City should work with the town to identify suitable locations, require dedication, and develop parks facilities to meet the needs of current and potential future Appleton residents.

- Develop the City's park system as an interconnected network of sites linked by greenways and trails.

In addition to the acreage and distribution standards established for the City's park system, the opportunity to create linkages between parks should be a consideration in park land acquisition and facility development. To the extent possible, the goal will be to have the City's parks arranged as nodes connected by recreational or environmental corridors. Stormwater drainageways, floodplains and wetland areas, utility corridors, railroad corridors, and other greenways may serve this purpose.

Park and Recreation Facilities Development

- Adopt practices to cluster or consolidate dedicated athletic fields in order to reduce maintenance costs and to provide greater flexibility for the use of neighborhood parks.

Neighborhood parks are typically small facilities. Installation of large athletic fields intended for a single, or small number of uses, can eliminate the potential for other activities to occur. Additionally, having these dedicated athletic fields scattered throughout the city can increase maintenance and operational costs. The intent of this recommendation is to preserve the maximum flexibility for use of neighborhood parks while simultaneously reducing costs by concentrating similar dedicated-purpose fields in a limited number of central locations.

- Investigate and implement technologies that reduce maintenance costs or allow more intensive use of park facilities.

Communities have increasingly turned to alternative approaches that may help to mitigate the impacts of park use, or reduce maintenance costs. For example, artificial turf can bear more intensive use than a conventional grass playing field with less maintenance, but has a higher installation and replacement cost, and may contribute to stormwater runoff. The use of naturalized plantings can reduce mowing requirements and have environmental benefits, but may not be an aesthetic accepted by all members of the community. The benefits and drawbacks to practices such as these should be weighed when contemplating alternatives.

- Monitor and assess the demand for new facilities related to specific emerging or growing recreational pursuits.

The public participation process for the Park and Recreation Master Plan produced comments concerning the growing popularity of sports including rugby, lacrosse, skate boarding, roller blading, baseball for learning and physically challenged, and volleyball, as well as non-competitive activities. Appleton should continue to monitor trends and the desires of community residents to determine what programming or facilities should be provided.

Continue partnership with community groups to design and develop a Miracle League baseball field and skate park facilities.

- Design and construct a water trail for non-motorized boats on the Fox River.

The Fox River has been recognized as one of the region's most significant natural resources. There is a concerted effort by many stakeholders to improve the environmental quality of the river and provide greater access to it. One component of this effort is a desire to facilitate use by non-motorized watercraft



such as canoes and kayaks. The major components of providing a water trail will consist of boat landings, portages around the locks, signage, and marketing efforts to promote the trail.

- Work with the Friends of Appleton Skate Park to identify an appropriate site for a skate park

This is a need that was recognized through the park survey. The City is in the process of searching for the most appropriate location for a skate park.

- Collaborate with neighboring communities to site and develop a dog park.

Dogs are not allowed in City of Appleton parks, although they are allowed on the trail systems. Neighboring communities have similar regulations. The need for a dog park is a regional one and should be addressed in collaboration with other communities and county government.

- Implement the Capital Improvement Plan for development of specific parks and facilities.

The Parks and Recreation Department prepares a Five-Year Capital Improvements Program that is updated on an annual basis. This is an effective planning and budgeting tool that should continue to be used for future park system enhancements.

Recreational Programs

- Develop partnerships with other communities and organizations to provide both existing and new recreational programming.

Several private and non-profit organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA, offer programming and facilities that are complimentary to those offered by the Park and Recreation Department. In these instances, it may be beneficial to both organizations to collaborate to create operational and cost efficiencies, rather than offer competing programs and facilities. The same possibilities may exist with other area communities.

- Continue to promote programs in areas of community health, non-competitive recreation, lifetime leisure pursuits, social programs, and special events.

The Parks and Recreation Department has focused for several years on offering a greater variety and number of programs that go beyond competitive sports. As the population ages, this will become even more important to the community.

- Increase programming directed to minority and cultural interests, and for persons who are physically or mentally challenged.

Appleton will continue to program activities of cultural interest, as well as provide facilities and activities that are universally accessible.

Management and Operations

- Conduct a periodic review of Appleton's park land dedication ordinance as well as impact fees for development of park facilities.

Appleton will monitor changes to the enabling statute and make appropriate changes. The City will evaluate impact fees as a means of funding park capital costs.

- Continue the Park and Recreation Department's practice of evaluating the carrying capacity of park facilities and establishing standards or use limits that protect them from damage caused by over-use.

This policy mitigates damage to facilities that would incur costs to repair and deprive residents of the use of the facility while repairs were made.

- Expand the Park and Recreation Departments commitment to, and implementation of "best practices" for sustainable park development and operations.



Appleton is making a growing commitment to sustainability through the practices of its local government. Within the Park and Recreation Department, there are a number of actions that may be taken to enhance sustainability. These may include:

- acquisition of land for parks as well as the preservation of natural features;
- development of paths and trails that facilitate non-motorized transportation modes;
- specification of local, recycled content, or other products that minimize processing impacts to the environment;
- improvements in energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources;
- adoption of design elements that enhance the environment and reduce maintenance costs;
- utilization of low-maintenance and native planting materials; and
- reduction or elimination of chemical and fertilizer use in park facilities.



