

# NORTH LIBERTY PARK PLAN

Adopted September 8, 2009 by the North Liberty City Council

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## **I: Introduction and Background**

North Liberty is a small but rapidly growing city located on Interstate 380 between the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City metro areas, roughly 7 miles from downtown Iowa City and 17 miles from downtown Cedar Rapids. A Special Census conducted in April 2004 showed a population of 7,224, or an increase of about 1,800 persons since 2000, and 2008 estimates of population are over 10,000. While many communities in Iowa experienced declines in population during the previous decade, North Liberty is among only a few that experienced the opposite — substantial growth. In 2007, RDG Planning & Design prepared a detailed examination of trends, and estimated a 2020 population projection of 20,000, representing an average annual increase of 645 people through the planning period. This mid-range projection uses the 1993-2006 average number of residential units constructed (278) multiplied by the Comprehensive Plan-projected 2020 average household size of 2.32.

Along with growth comes a concern about providing public facilities and quality-of-life features to adequately serve long-time and new residents, including parks and open spaces. For the purpose of developing a Parks Plan, location and characteristics of growth are just as important as the growth numbers themselves. We might reasonably conclude that residents with large lots, or within condominium developments with open spaces set aside for recreation are less likely to need some types of public recreation facilities than those with smaller lots or no set-asides. Also, developments likely to attract young families might reasonably require more active recreation facilities, such as skate parks and basketball courts, than developments aimed at more mature population, which may be more in need of passive facilities such as walking trails and natural areas. Of course, communities strive to provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities without targeting specific populations, but these distinctions can be of significant help when allocating scarce financial resources.

This plan is intended to document a realistic analysis of existing parks, undeveloped areas planned for park development, the need for additional space, and potential means of acquisition and development. Its intended use is to guide continuing park development in the city, and it is assumed that it may need to be updated on relatively short time frames if the pace of development continues.

### **ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN**

This plan consists of three major phases:

#### **I. Research/General Park Planning: Chapters 1 – 3.**

The first four chapters of this document represent the general park planning component of the plan, including the introduction, public input, inventory analysis, and discussion of need in new development areas.

#### **II. Master Planning: Chapter 4**

Based on the Research/General Park Planning work of Component I, this chapter creates specific facility master plans for each component of the North Liberty's Parks and Open Space systems.

#### **III. Implementation: Chapter 5**

The final component of the plan builds upon the previous components and identifies implementation policies, recommends park system improvement priorities, and suggests appropriate funding sources.

### **PUBLIC INPUT TO THE PLAN**

The park planning process included a review of existing planning documents as well as an extensive community input process to identify needs and priorities for the system. This process included a steering committee that guided the overall plan, focus group meetings and community workshops.

Several approaches were taken to identify the issues and formulate goals for the Parks Plan. This included a review of the North Liberty Comprehensive Plan and incorporation of previously adopted goals and policies.

## NORTH LIBERTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – RELATIONSHIP TO PARKS

The North Liberty Comprehensive Plan was adopted in June of 2005 and represents a relatively recent planning effort of the City. Its Goals and Policies should therefore be considered as guides for the city in preparing the Comprehensive Parks Plan. The Comprehensive Plan provides an extensive list of Goals and Policies to help guide the city as it grows. The definitions of these terms are as follows:

### Comprehensive Plan Goals

Goals are generalized end products that will ultimately result in achieving the quality of life desired. Goals are often described using the terms “maintain,” “encourage,” “ensure,” “develop,” and “establish.”

Ongoing park operations and planning occur within the environment of overall community growth, so established overall community growth goals greatly impact park planning. The overall community goals established by the Comprehensive Plan that most directly impact park planning include:

- Encourage continued but orderly growth in North Liberty.
- Enhance and improve North Liberty’s sense of community and self-identity.
- Provide a diversity of land use opportunities within the City, to ensure a wide range of employment and consumer options, as well as housing choices.
- Maintain desirable community character, public health and safety, and economic vitality by ensuring that development that takes place in North Liberty is of premium quality and blends well with the natural, rural, and urban atmosphere of the community.
- Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan, including long term and interim policies, promotes a responsible fiscal balance (revenue versus service costs) on an ongoing basis.
- Plan and design public systems such as storm drainage, water supply, and sanitary sewer along with their private extensions, as well as parks, community centers, and the like, in a comprehensive manner to utilize existing natural environmental conditions to the fullest extent so as to minimize the cost of developing public systems.

### Comprehensive Plan Policies

Policies are the definite courses of action that lead toward goal achievement. Additionally, policies are guides for helping to make present and future decisions consistent with stated goals. Policies are described by using the phrase “shall be.” This gives policy statements a definitive meaning rather than one that is implied.

The Comprehensive Plan includes an extensive list of policies regarding Park and Open Space Recreation, including the following:

- Adequate neighborhood and community recreational facilities shall be provided and maintained for the enjoyment and use of North Liberty residents.
- Within each recreation system classification, capital improvements to individual facilities (i.e., neighborhood parks) should be gauged on the basis of relative need for developed park facilities.
- Recreation open space improvements shall be planned and updated annually in accordance with capital improvement programming and location.
- The establishment of a Comprehensive Park System Plan shall be considered to facilitate park management and coordinate future park development.
- All parks should be designed and maintained with proper lighting, landscaping, shelter design, etc., to ensure a high degree of personal and property safety.
- Continual citizen participation shall be encouraged in the planning, development and operation of recreational open space.
- The provision of an appropriate balance between active, passive and cultural recreational areas and activities, tailored to the needs of the total population throughout the community, should be maintained and further encouraged.

- Usable open space suitable for recreational activities or connected to existing or proposed City or regional facilities should be provided by all types of residential developments.
- Surveys or studies may be undertaken on a periodic basis to analyze the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the community recreation program.
- Adequate pedestrian facilities, such as lighting and benches, shall be provided in parks and open space areas for both the convenience and safety of the user.
- A trail system shall be created which provides for separation of motorized and non-motorized recreational activities.
- Recreational facilities shall be provided which offer a year round program of activities suited to the varied recreational needs of all age groups within the community.
- Parks and open space shall be developed and improved to take advantage of natural community features.
- Where necessary, park and open space areas shall be screened, fenced, or buffered for the safety and protection of the user.
- Neighborhood and community scale recreational facilities shall be located to provide safe and easy access to users.
- Adequate parking shall be provided to serve major park and recreation facilities.
- Maintain cooperative agreements with the School District for provisions of recreational open space areas and services.
- Park and open space facilities are to be planned and developed in coordination with similar services of the surrounding region and the Johnson County area as a whole.
- Pedestrians and bicyclists should be afforded rights-of-way separated from motorized traffic along arterial and higher classified streets. When physically and/or economically feasible, pedestrian and bicycle traffic will be separated.
- Adequate lighting, outdoor furniture, and other necessary pedestrian appurtenances should be provided in all urbanized areas of heavy pedestrian movement.
- Continue to promote and enhance the City sidewalk system through sidewalk programs and requirements.
- Give trail development priority to the following areas:
  - Along major streets that have the most direct access to trail destinations.
  - Where they will serve the most intensely used commuter designations.
  - Within existing and proposed parks and playfields.
  - Within appropriate new park development.
  - Where they will link together separate portions of North Liberty's sidewalk and trail system and North Liberty's trail system to other communities.
- Streets designated as secondary arterials shall be designed to prevent unregulated pedestrian and bicycle crossings and protect pedestrian and bicycle movement paralleling traffic.
- When financially feasible, facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists shall be provided in conjunction with street improvement projects.
- New development shall be encouraged to respect the pedestrian/bicycle system and where possible to contribute to the rights-of-way and development costs.
- Cooperate with state, regional, and county agencies in the formulation of a comprehensive trails system and to eliminate duplication of facilities.

These, then, are the Goals and Policies that govern the preparation of a Comprehensive Parks plan for North Liberty. Because many of these statements are general in nature, it was deemed desirable during the park planning process to solicit public input to determine specific parks and recreation issues and to prioritize the many policies identified in the Comprehensive Plan. These additional efforts to identify issues and strategies are detailed in the following chapter sections.

## NORTH LIBERTY PARK AND RECREATION SURVEY RESULTS

The Parks Plan Steering Committee was one such component of the public input process. Their role in overseeing the Comprehensive Parks planning process was one means of insuring that the plan reflects the needs and issues in North Liberty. Methods to identify the key issues and concerns of the Steering Committee included a survey that was distributed to all members of the steering committee. Below is a summary of the survey results.

### Importance of Activity

Participants were asked to rate the importance of recreational activities from 5 to 1 with 5 being the highest importance and 1 being the lowest.

Average score of 4 or above:

- Bicycling
- Playgrounds
- Swimming (outdoor)
- Hiking/Walking/Jogging
- Baseball (organized)
- Aerobics
- Swimming (indoor)
- Park Area (in general)
- Open Gym Time
- Family Recreation

Rating below 2.00:

- Scuba Diving
- Ice Hockey
- Ice Skating
- In-line Hockey
- Horseshoes
- Drama/Theater (adults)
- Cultural Arts Programs

### Individual Park Facilities

The second question in the survey reviewed each of the city's parks based on four factors. These included the quality of the open space, visual appearance, quality of the facilities, and community utilization of the park. Again they were asked to rate each facility on a 5 to 1 scale (5 high to 1 low).

#### Quality of Open Space

Parks that ranked above 3.00:

- Community Center
- North Liberty Recreation Trail
- Liberty Centre Pond and Underpass
- Penn Meadows Park

Parks that ranked below 2.00:

- Parkview Neighborhood Park
- Broadmoor Pond
- Deerfield Park
- Koser Park

#### Visual Appearance

Parks that ranked 4.00 or higher:

- Community Center
- Liberty Centre Pond and Underpass
- Penn Meadows Park

Parks that ranked below a 2.50:

- Deerfield Park
- Parkview Neighborhood Park
- Broadmoor Pond
- Beaver Kreek Park
- Fox Run Pond
- Koser Park

### Quality of the Park Facilities

Facility to rate above a 4.00:

- Community Center

Parks that ranked below a 2.00:

- Deerfield Park
- Broadmoor Pond
- Parkview Neighborhood Park
- Creekside Commons Park
- Freedom Park
- Beaver Kreek Park
- Fox Run Pond

### Community Utilization of the Park

Parks that ranked above 4.00:

- Community Center
- Penn Meadows Park
- North Liberty Recreation Trail

Parks that ranked below a 2.00:

- Deerfield Park
- Parkview Neighborhood Park
- Creekside Commons Park
- Beaver Kreek Park
- Broadmoor Park
- Fox Run Pond

### **Facilities Necessary in Neighborhood Parks**

Items that were seen as necessary in neighborhood parks included:

- Benches
- Landscaping
- Slides
- Sidewalk Access
- Swings
- Shelter
- Picnic Tables
- Open Space

Additional “write in” ideas about neighborhood park necessities included:

- Lots of trees
- Outdoor grill
- Playground equipment
- Volleyball court
- Diversity in equipment from park to park

Items that were not as important:

- Sand Box Area
- Baseball Field
- Overhead Ladder
- Climber
- Soccer Field
- Wading Pool
- Fountain
- Ornamental Lights

### **Park Area Importance**

Participants were asked to rate park areas by their importance in improving the quality of life on a 5 to 1 scale (5 very important to 1 not at all important)

- 4.9: Providing play areas for our youth
- 4.7: Offering recreational facilities for adults
- 4.6: Creating areas where neighbors can get to know each other
- 4.4: Making neighborhoods more attractive places
- 4.3: Protecting open space from development
- 4.0: Preserving environmentally sensitive areas

### **Parks and Recreation Policies**

The City of North Liberty tries to provide quality services to all residents. It often has to make difficult choices on how to develop and operate parks. In order to better define these policy directions the survey tried to identify alternative scenarios or policies. The policies were organized

into groups of two and participants were asked to identify their preferred alternative for each group. Below is the percentage of respondents who voted in favor of each policy.

- 100% Spend more money developing park areas and new facilities
- 57% A few large parks
- 57% Maintain and add new facilities
- 57% Develop vacant parkland the city owns
- 57% Continue operating all park areas
- 29% More smaller parks
- 29% Fix up existing parks
- 29% Fix up existing park areas
- 29% Begin allowing citizens groups to develop, program and maintain parks
- 14% No response
- 0% Spend more money on supervised areas

### **Appearance and Maintenance of the Park System**

When asked how they would rate the overall appearance and maintenance of the city's park system, 71% rated it Good, 29% rated it Fair. No one rated the appearance and maintenance Very Good, Below Average, or Poor.

### **Success in Providing Neighborhood Park Space**

When asked to rate the City's success in providing park space for newly developing areas, 12% rated it Good, 59% rated it Fair and 29% rated it Below Average.

### **Success in Providing Green Space and Trails**

When asked to rate the City's success in providing green space and trails for newly developing areas, 29% rated it Good, 42% rated it Fair and 29% rated it Below Average.

### **Financing**

Below is a list of statements from which respondents chose the one they most strongly agreed with. Preceding each statement is the percentage of respondents that chose that statement.

- 43% Parks and recreation facilities and activities are nice and should receive funding, but public safety and streets should be given priority in planning
- 43% Parks and recreation should have the same funding priority as public safety, streets and utilities
- 0% Parks and recreation facilities and services are extra amenities that should only be funded if possible
- 14% had no response

## **STEERING COMMITTEE ISSUE IDENTIFICATION**

Key issues for the parks and recreation system were identified by the Steering Committee at their first meeting. These include:

- Provide open space connections; provide varying outdoor recreation experiences
- Connect all of North Liberty Parks
- Provide recreational and community building opportunities for senior citizens
- Provide equipment for pre-school aged children and larger sized parks with pavilions for family picnics
- Promote sensible commercial, residential and industrial development
- Encourage and receive information and input from all populations in North Liberty regarding park master planning
- Encourage community members to be active in designing their community parks
- Derive character from local people and parks
- Maintain and promote North Liberty's small town Iowa atmosphere and values
- Create a master plan that helps to unify the community

## FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

To further gain insight into the city's future park and recreation needs, a series of stakeholder interviews were held with developers, realtors, seniors, and those involved in economic development and recreation programming in the city. The following section highlights the larger themes of the interviews.

### Park Facilities

- For many years when North Liberty was a smaller town, Koser Park served the city very well. It was available to all and as the development moved west, North Liberty developed a great small park, Quail Ridge. What is lacking now in residential areas are the smaller neighborhood type parks.
- Provide more than a pocket park and detention areas for community recreational needs.
- Proper distance requirement from the ponds edge to the lot line should be controlled by the City in order to accommodate future potential improvements such as trails or walks through this area, as well as to provide a buffer between park users and property owners.
- Both Lake McBride and the Coralville Reservoir regional facilities are very important to North Liberty. North Liberty Development always gets the question: "What is here for recreation?"
- Signage would enhance visitors' choice of access to the Lake.
- County facility requests are mostly for cabins and hotels, typically for week long duration. There are 2 enclosed shelters, one a lodge and the other a beach facility.
- Penn Meadows is used for "Fun Days" in June and this venue has almost outgrown this park. It attracts people from all over the area. Penn Meadows park, with its location next the school, is good in that it can accommodate those larger events.
- North Park in Coralville is a good model – Looped walk around park allows parents and care givers to watch children as they walk around the periphery of the park. This is a great feature which provides the care givers the comfort of being able to watch kids play while they get exercise walking.
- Parks improvements important to seniors: Restrooms, benches, surveillance of park areas to ensure quality and safety, lighting, telephone access, connectivity between parks through continuous walkways, drinking fountains, and good Parks Maintenance Program
- Seniors: Concerned about increases in taxes.

### Trails

- JCCOG is the regional trail development overseer; they have been very supportive of trail systems and have worked to get a lot of trail funding into the county.
- Bicycle trails are an important recreation resource for the County. The JCCOG Johnson County Trails Plan identifies "Level One Priority" trails for funding.
- The Community Center is the magnet. One of the first things that comes up is how to get people from west side of town to the Community Center.
- Trails and sidewalks are heavily used. Currently, there is a strong north south trail system, however, now it's important to extend a trail eastward to Lake Macbride and south down along North Dubuque Street.
- Development of east west trails are important, but just as important, is to create looped trail systems... possibly two mile loops.... which present a reasonable walk length.
- Now you can go from here to Hills on trails.
- Developers: Never thought trails would be used but they are used frequently in North Liberty. Currently, developers are adding trails with developments.
- Trails need to be complete and continuous throughout town so that people can travel from one location to the next safely. Currently some of the trails end and the bicyclist is left with the question, "How do I get to where I want to go?"

### Pools

- Need another pool or water feature for expected growth. Area cannot be expanded to the east due to underground gas lines.
- Drawing residents outside of community to the pool.

### Parks Maintenance/Ponds

- North Liberty receives complaints from the public regarding pond maintenance.

- There was discussion about the idea of requesting a maintenance escrow account to cover costs associated with pond maintenance.
- North Liberty has started having all facilities departments review development plans.
- North Liberty Parks Department and DNR stocks the pond if city owned.

### **Park Development Procedures/Regulations**

- Current park dedication requirements: The developer shows the land to be dedicated on the preliminary and final plat plans.
- If a plan is in place for park land requirements, developers will know up-front what is expected of them and their involvement in development. In order for growth to be manageable, comprehensive plans need to be in place. Growth in NL has been very positive. Now it's time to develop more policies for developers. NL is a nice town and a desirable place to live and do business. Quality of Life in NL is important.
- Dedication of land for trails presents challenges: Easements must be established for trails. Funding can be an issue. Many times in North Liberty the developers pay for trail construction.
- Need to have economic balance between developments. All costs associated with the construction of the subdivision are paid for by the developer and then must be absorbed eventually by the home buyer.
- There needs to be a balance and a level playing field for developers so an equitable price is charged for housing. Developers want North Liberty to be the best community amongst all of the surrounding communities for home buyers with regard to affordability and quality of life.
- Dedication of too much park ground to the City, or undesirable park ground, may require too much maintenance on the City's part. Need balance between development and park land.
- If developer "A" owns land located at a lower elevation than developer "B" he/she has the responsibility to provide land for storm water detention/retention. Is there a way to level out the playing field so that all developers share this storm water management burden? This would help to create more equitable housing costs.

### **Partnering/Collaboration in Parks Facilities and Programming**

- Partnering between communities is important for improved efficiencies in maintenance, design, and trail connectivity.
- Both Cities (NL and Coralville) can talk about the cleanup of Muddy Creek.
- Athletic Fields: 3 soccer fields are shared with Iowa City at the "Kickers complex" (southeast of Iowa City). North Liberty has its own privately operated softball and baseball organization which surrounding communities use during the ball season.
- NL provides organized ball fields. Coralville has used NL ball diamonds. Penn Meadows is a good facility for ball park center for surrounding communities.
- Sharing with Coralville: Coralville residents come to NL for youth volley ball, youth flag football, and youth basketball.
- New Clear Creek/Amana District School plan (NE quadrant of 270<sup>th</sup> St and Kansas St): Two ball fields will be located west of the school building providing green space at the southwest corner of the 16 acre school site. The school will back up to pond, with a fence between the pond and the school. The pond will be utilized as an outdoor classroom. A park just east of school would be desirable. Playground space designated but not funded yet.
- Penn School has area that is planted with prairie grass, and a butterfly garden. Trail used by many. Penn new playground equipment provides an active play area – shared use with adjacent park.
- There are great opportunities for sharing open spaces between parks and schools. Currently the Junior High shares with the City of Coralville. No increase in vandalism to school even though park is close by.
- North Liberty Recreation Department works closely with schools and schools enjoy it.

### **Recreational Programming**

- Most popular team sports by age:
  - Youth: Baseball/softball and youth basketball
  - Adult: Co-ed volleyball, basketball
  - Seniors: Water aerobics but not exclusive for adults

- Senior programs at Community Center: Shuffle board not used. Staff likes the Bocce Ball idea. Pickle ball – a new sport is a popular senior activity (this sport is a combination of tennis and badminton).
- Greatest revenue source from recreation programs: pool, CC weight room, membership to CC (gym excluded) Special membership packages being considered.
- Considering a minimal charge for not-for-profit groups after so many hours of facility use.

### **Development in North Liberty**

- Maintain balance between commercial, industrial, residential land uses.
- The city must be friendly and hospitable towards businesses that want to become established in town.
- Now that the city’s population has likely reached 10,000, a threshold level for many businesses, the city needs to do everything they can to get them into the community.
- Developers want North Liberty to be “the choice” community for home buyers with regard to affordability and quality of life. They want North Liberty to continue to provide affordable reasonable housing choices for consumers.
- Affordable housing units may start growth. Progression from living as a student in North Liberty in affordable housing and then deciding to stay because of good quality of life and reasonably priced housing should be a goal the city continues to pursue.

## **PARK PLAN GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

As identified in the preceding paragraphs, a variety of means have been employed to solicit public input in this park planning effort, beginning with the community survey and including the Steering Committee oversight of the plan, Stakeholder Meetings, and Community Workshops. Taking all of inputs into consideration, as well as already-established city policies from the Comprehensive Plan, the following goals are established for this plan:

- Ensure that growth areas are well-served by neighborhood parks.
- Encourage the development of an interconnected system of parks and trails, and maintain a high level of service for recreational facilities as new neighborhoods emerge.
- Identify land and move toward the establishment of a community park.
- Ensure that neighborhood parks provide minimum usable open space.
- Establish a dedicated allocation within the Capital Improvement Program Budget for park enhancements and development.
- Create a linked park network of greenways that connects open spaces, neighborhoods, and activity centers.
- Provide recreational facilities to meet the needs of newly developing areas.
- Distribute active recreation use across the geographical area of the city, guarding against concentration of park resources in any single section of the city.
- Provide an equitable mechanism for establishing service standards in growth areas and financing park acquisition and development.
- Balance active and passive recreation opportunities for all North Liberty residents.
- Use parks and open space to encourage neighborhood investment and to help to reinforce North Liberty’s urban form.

## 2. Existing Parks and Facilities

This chapter summarizes North Liberty’s existing park and recreation system, including all city-owned and operated recreation areas. The adequacy of park facilities is evaluated in six ways:

- Parks by Classification. Parks are classified into different categories to determine the level and area they serve.
- Park Service Areas. The service radius of each park is analyzed to identify geographical gaps in service.
- Level of Service Analysis for Future Development. Existing parks are compared to future parkland needed for a projected 2020 population of approximately 20,000.
- Facilities in Relation to Population Service Standards. National standards for the provision of park and recreation facilities are applied to North Liberty’s present system.
- Parks Comparison to Similar Communities. North Liberty’s existing level of service is compared to similar Midwest communities.
- Inventory and Analysis of Park Facilities. Existing facilities are listed, and conditions are noted for each park.

### **PARKS BY CLASSIFICATION**

Most park plans benchmark existing parks and identify gaps in availability for residents. Since the size, configuration, intended usage, and level of development varies widely, parks are typically grouped into a number of classes recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), from small and informal to large and multi-purpose. These standards provide a good “first level,” or overview to benchmark, but should be used with caution and with substantial local-level analysis. For North Liberty, major recreation and open space areas are classified in this plan as mini parks, neighborhood parks and school grounds, community parks, and special use facilities. It is also useful to examine overall park lands without regard to categorization.

Trails, particularly separated trails, present a difficult case for classification. While not “parks” by standard definitions, trails are loved by many for providing an outdoor recreational activity opportunity much the same as parks. However, because most trails are single-use, they are more likely to fit into the “special use” category of facilities. In this plan, we acknowledge the importance of trails, not as a park facility, but as a community asset that should be used to tie neighborhoods and parks together.

#### **Mini-Parks**

Mini-parks are generally developed to remedy a specific recreation or open space need, or are sometimes taken over by cities as left-over or undesirable pieces of a larger development. These parks typically cover less than 1 acre and attract users from a very small area, no more than ¼ mile. Because of maintenance difficulties with multiple smaller sites and their small service area, most cities discourage the development of mini-parks, and North Liberty should do the same. Parkview is the only North Liberty facility that is considered a mini-park. It serves a very small area immediately around it. Old Town Park could be considered a mini-park based on size alone (0.6 acres); however, due to its function as a community landmark and its proximity to Penn Meadows Park it is included in the Penn Meadows complex.

<b>Table 1: Mini Park</b>		
<b>Park Name</b>	<b>Size in Acres</b>	<b>Features</b>
Parkview	.2	Small playground, adjacent to trail

## Neighborhood Parks and School Grounds

Neighborhood parks are considered the basic unit of North Liberty's park system, providing a recreational and social focus for residential areas. These parks provide space for informal active (playgrounds, basketball courts, soccer fields) and passive (bird watching, hiking, picnicking) recreational activities. The key feature distinguishing neighborhood parks from other facilities is the availability of play equipment of various types.

NRPA standards call for between 1 and 2 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents. Applying that ratio to estimated current and future populations yields the following:

10,000 persons estimated 2008 population / 1-2 acres per 1,000 residents = 10-20 acres.

20,000 persons estimated 2020 population / 1-2 acres per 1,000 residents = 20-40 acres.

North Liberty currently has about 84 acres of neighborhood park land, developed and undeveloped.

The typical service area for neighborhood parks is between 1/4 and 1/2 mile, or about a 15 minute walk.

Neighborhood parks adequate in size to accommodate the requisite facilities often contain at least 5 acres; between 5 and 10 acres is considered optimal.

Park Name	Size in Acres	Features
Beaver Kreek	4.0	Playgrounds, basketball, open space, creek, sidewalk
Creekside Commons	18.4	Playground, open space, hard-surface trail, timber, creek, pond of approximately .8 acres
Deerfield	3.9	Playground, open space, shelter
Fox Run	1.1	Playground, open space, basketball
Joy	2.5	UNDEVELOPED
Penn Meadows/Old Town/Meade	40.9	9 ball diamonds, concession stand, playground, open space, 3 shelters, restrooms, 4 tennis courts, rock trail, parking
Quail Ridge	13.0	Playground, open space, shelter, disk golf, ball diamond, basketball, parking

School facilities can help to meet neighborhood park needs, particularly when located in areas not served by a neighborhood park. The grounds of North Liberty's elementary schools often function as neighborhood parks, and are considered in the parkland area analysis. The schools are Penn Elementary, Van Allen Elementary/North Central Jr. High, North Bend Elementary, and a new elementary school to be constructed in 2009.

Table 3: Schools		
School Name	Size in Acres	Features
Penn Elementary	10.0	Playground, open space
Van Allen Elementary & North Central Jr. High	59.8	Playground, open space
North Bend Elementary	15.7	Playground, open space, trail access
Buford Garner Elementary	11.0	Playground, open space (planned)

### Community Parks

Community Parks typically include larger areas with diverse use subareas. They meet community-based recreation needs, may preserve significant natural areas, and often include areas suited for intense recreation facilities. Typical criteria for community parks include:

- Adequate size to accommodate activities associated with neighborhood parks, but with space for additional activity, attracting users of all ages.
- A special attraction that draws people from a larger area, such as a pond or lake, ice skating rink, trails, special environmental or cultural features, or specialized sports complexes.

Community parks generally contain between 30 and 50 acres and serve a variety of needs.

Traditional NRPA guidelines for community park areas call for 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 residents. Applying that ratio to estimated current and future populations yields the following:

10,000 persons estimated 2008 population / 5-8 acres per 1,000 residents = 50-80 acres.

20,000 persons estimated 2020 population / 5-8 acres per 1,000 residents = 100-200 acres.

The typical service radius of a community park is approximately 1/2 mile to 3 miles.

North Liberty currently has no community parks or park land, developed or undeveloped. The Penn Meadows/Old Town/Meade complex can very nearly fit this classification, lacking only a higher level of diversity, and development of the Meade Farm portion of the complex along with other relatively minor improvements may push it into this category. It should also be noted that while North Liberty currently has no park facilities that meet the definition of a Community Park, the community has extensive Special Use Facilities as documented below.

### Special Use Facilities

The special use category includes a broad range of facilities that are either oriented toward recreational usage or are very limited in focus. They are listed here because they are or could be important features for the City, but are not assigned a service area or target acreages. The City has accepted many retention areas for ongoing maintenance, and some could be reclassified as neighborhood parks with playground equipment and perhaps additional open space, depending on the site.

Special Use Facility Name	Size in Acres	Pond Acres	Features
Broadmoor Estates	6.9	2.4	Pond, open space
Community Center	11.2	-	Pools, recreation center, meeting space, library, small playground
Cornerstone Nature Area	2.5	-	Trail, open space, prairie restoration
Fox Run Pond, with planned additional area	8.0	2.6	Pond, open space
Freedom	7.1	2.3	Pond, open space
Goose Lake, with planned additional area	33.1	14.8	Pond, open space, wetlands
Koser	2.1	-	Small diamond, basketball, restroom
Liberty Center	6.9	3.9	Pond, hard-surface trail, shelter
Ransaw House Historic Site	1.9	-	Historic residence
West Lake (3 parcels)	32.5	15.9	Ponds, open space, wetlands, hard-surface trail

### Overall Park Space

Total park and open space land in the North Liberty planning area, as identified in the preceding paragraphs and tables, covers about 200 acres, much of that dedicated to large storm water retention ponds and associated wetlands.

Traditional NRPS standards suggest 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, and applying that ratio to estimated current and future populations yields the following:

10,000 persons estimated 2008 population / 10 acres per 1,000 residents = 100 acres.

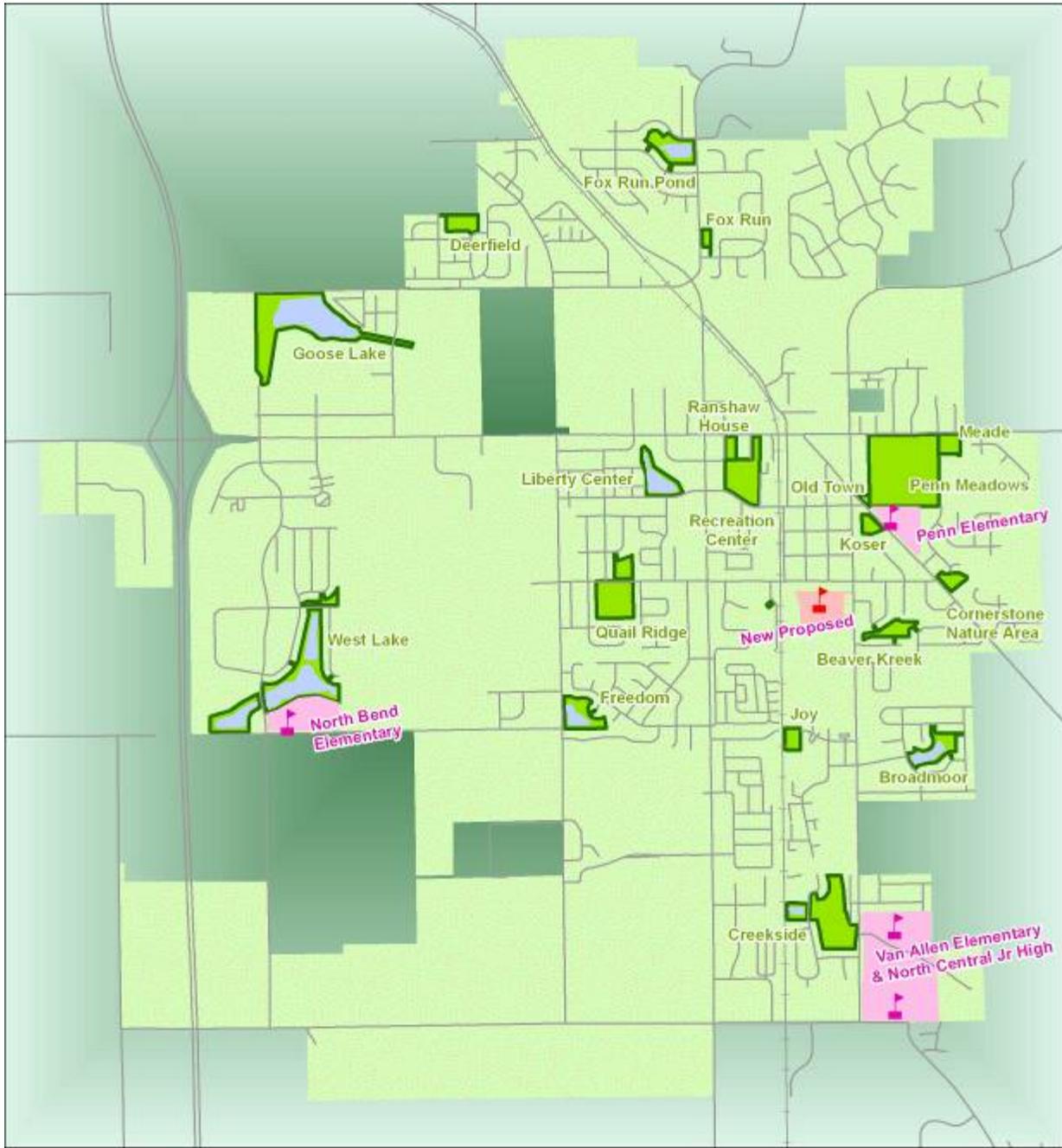
20,000 persons estimated 2020 population / 10 acres per 1,000 residents = 200 acres.

Table 10 lists other Iowa and regional communities and their levels of overall parkland and open space.

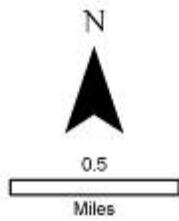
Table 5: Existing City Park Land Summary

<u>Park</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Features</u>
<b>Mini Park</b>	.2	
Parkview Neighborhood Park	.2	
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	<b>83.8</b>	
Beaver Kreek	4.0	Playgrounds, basketball, hard-surface sidewalk, timber, open space, creek
Creekside Commons (2 parts)	18.4	Playground, open space, hard-surface trail, timber, creek, pond of approximately .8 acres
Deerfield	3.9	Playground, open space, shelter
Fox Run	1.1	Playground, open space, basketball
Joy (undeveloped)	2.5	NA
Penn Meadows/Old Town/Meade	40.9	9 ball diamonds, concession stand, playground, open space, 3 shelters, restrooms, 4 tennis courts, rock trail, parking
Quail Ridge (includes open field)	13.0	Playground, open space, baseball, basketball, parking, shelter, restrooms
<b>Community Parks</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Special Use Facilities</b>	<b>112.2</b>	
Broadmoor Estates	6.9	Open space, pond of approximately 2.4 acres
Community Center	11.2	Pools, recreation center, meeting space, library, small playground
Cornerstone Nature Area	2.5	Trail, open space, prairie restoration
Fox Run Pond, with planned addition	8.0	Open space, pond of approximately 2.6 acres
Freedom	7.1	Open space, pond of approximately 2.3 acres
Goose Lake Pond, with planned addition	33.1	Wetlands, open space, pond of approximately 14.8 acres
Koser	2.1	Small diamond, basketball, restroom
Liberty Center Pond and Underpass	6.9	Trail, pond, fountain, benches, shelter
Ransaw House Historic Site	1.9	Historic residence
West Lake (3 parcels)	32.5	Wetlands, open space, trail, ponds of approximately 15.9 acres
<b>Total Area, including ponds</b>	<b>196.2</b>	

Map I: Existing Park and School Locations, North Liberty



School Properties	
	Planned School
	Existing Schools
City Parks	
	City Parks
	August 2008 City Area



## PARK SERVICE AREAS

The area of service, or expected area from which the various park types are expected to attract residents, can be evaluated using the NRPA standard of a minimum ¼ mile and maximum ½ mile for neighborhood parks and ½ mile minimum to 3 miles maximum for community parks. As previously mentioned, school playgrounds may also function as neighborhood parks and are therefore included in the analysis. The park service area analysis identifies any service gaps for developed parkland, allowing conclusions to be drawn regarding existing, near future (5-10 years), and long-term (10+ years) gaps in park availability. The time frames are chosen based on the assumption that if no new parks were added to the system it would be about 10 years for all currently dedicated parks to be fully developed.

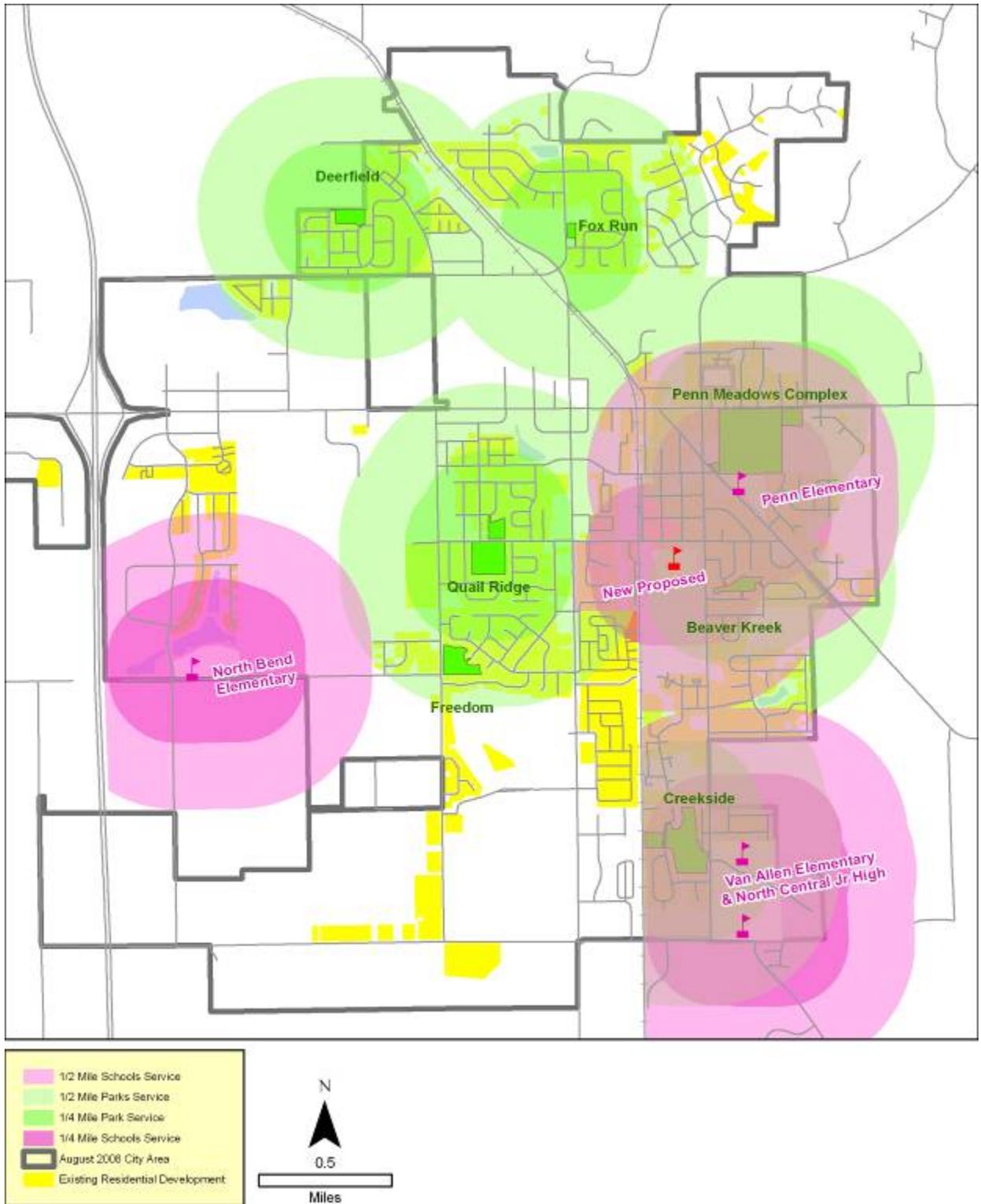
### Neighborhood Parks

Map 2 illustrates ¼ and ½ mile service areas for developed neighborhood parks and schools, as well as those areas identified for existing and future residential development in the City's Land Use Plan. When preparing a service area analysis such as this, it is important to consider physical limitations such as high volume street crossings, lack of reasonable access, and other factors that may decrease the likelihood of use, and that is the reason some of the service areas on the map are irregular.

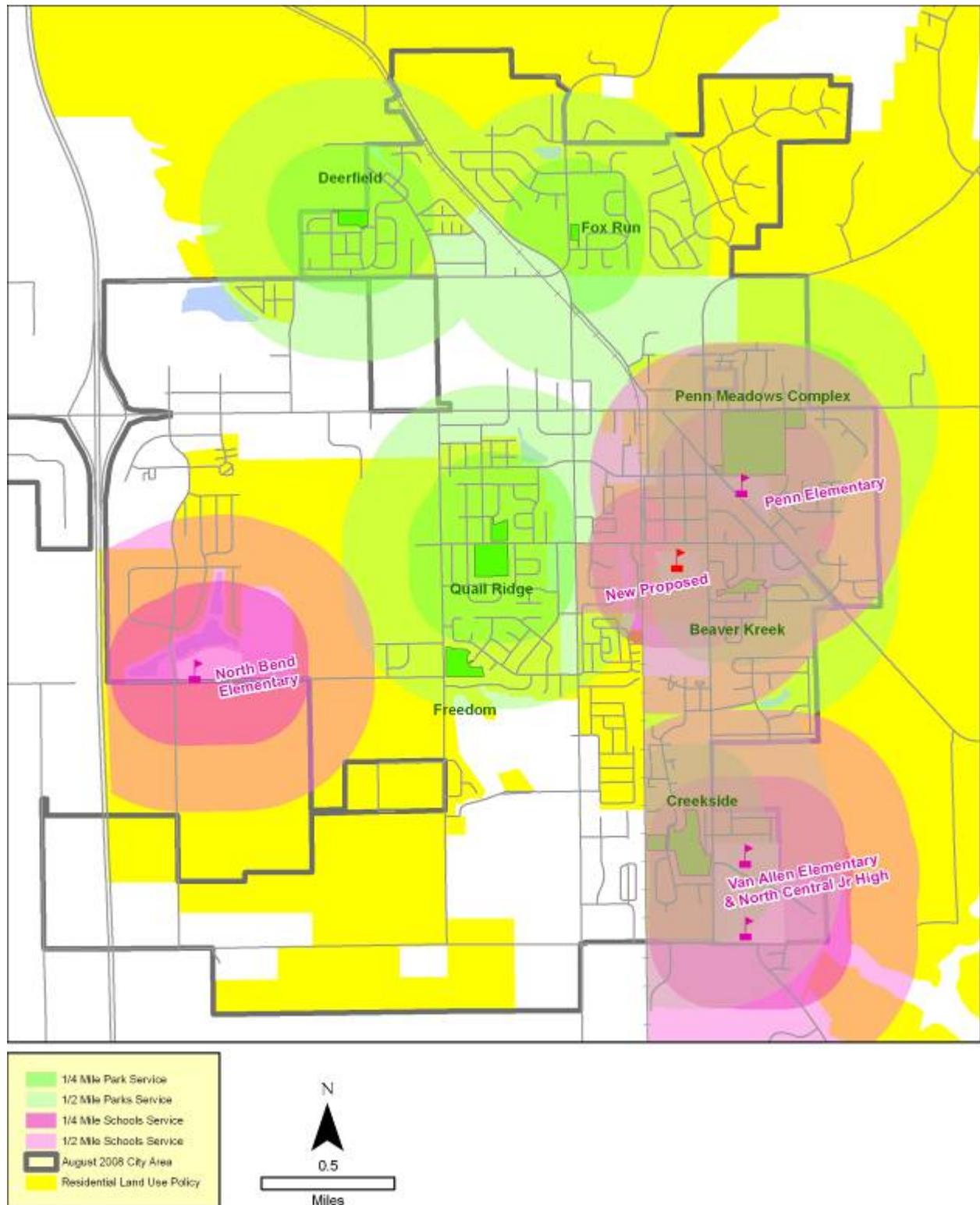
Immediately apparent on the map is the cluster of facilities on the east and southeast parts of North Liberty, and the decreasing density of opportunities toward the west and north. More specifically, the major areas of North Liberty that stand out in lacking access to neighborhood and school parkland include:

- Most of the Cedar Springs development area in the northeast part of North Liberty; however, this neighborhood will be difficult to service because of its remoteness, and there is access to federal recreational land at the far northeast corner of the development.
- The area generally bounded by Interstate 380, Jones Boulevard, Penn Street, and Forevergreen Road. Neighborhood park opportunities for this developing part of the city will need to be addressed before new construction seriously limits new potential park locations. A recent development concept plan for the area includes designation of a 40 acre tract for city park land purchase, but is estimated to cost over \$1 million for acquisition alone. In an area of this size, planned for residential development, at least 2 neighborhood parks are warranted.
- The two manufactured housing developments south of Zeller Street, between Highway 965 and the CRANDIC railroad.
- A smaller area generally consisting of the northern portion of the Fox Run neighborhood and the developing Aspen Ridge neighborhood, both west of Mehaffey Bridge Road and northeast of Highway 965 in the northernmost extension of North Liberty.

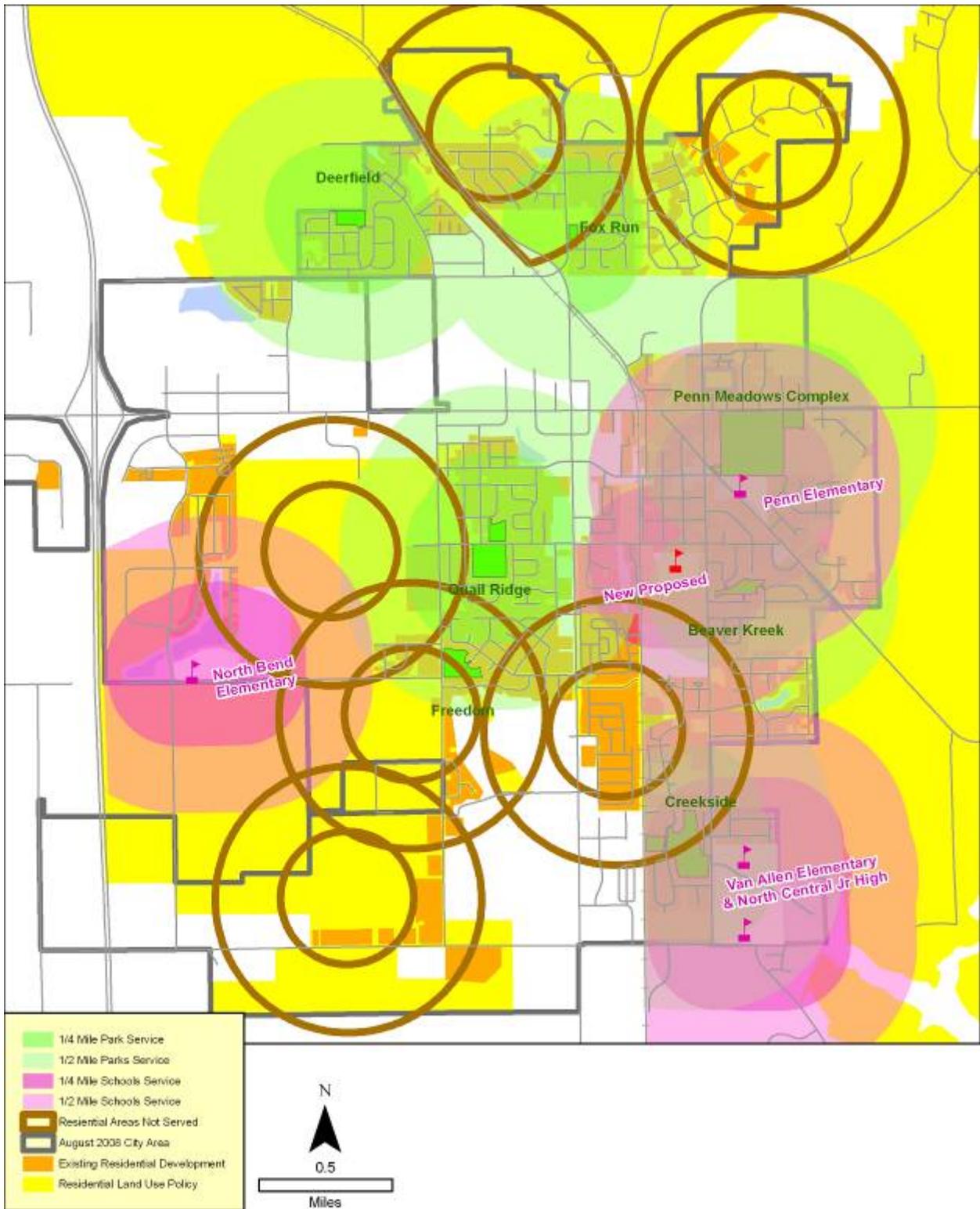
MAP 2: Service Areas for Developed Neighborhood Parks and Schools, and Residential Areas.



MAP 3: Service Areas for Developed Neighborhood Parks and Schools, and Areas Designated for Residential Development in the North Liberty Comprehensive Plan.



MAP 4: Areas Lacking Neighborhood Park Service.

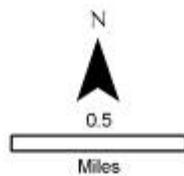
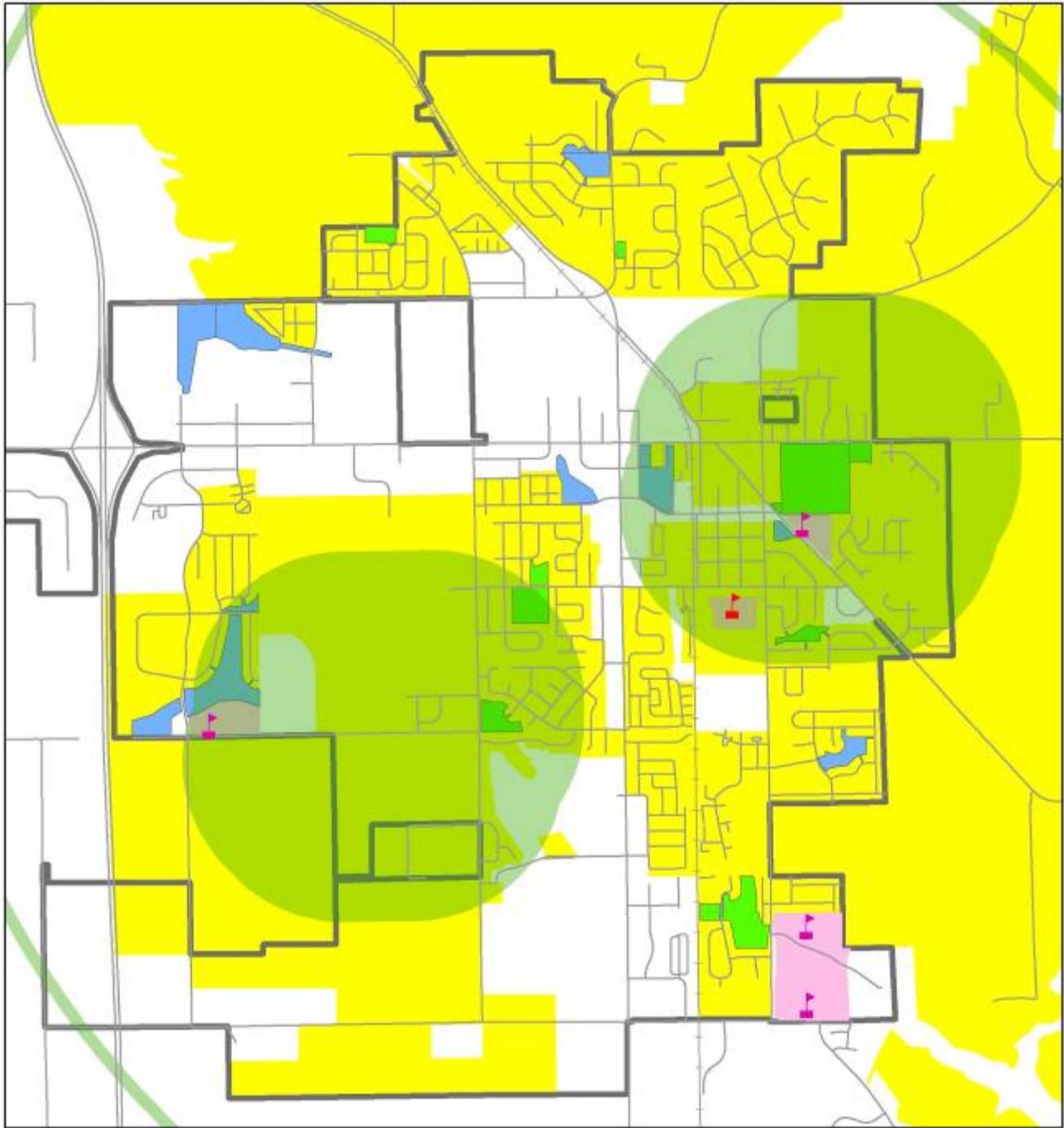


## Community Parks

As stated earlier in this document, there is no park in North Liberty that would qualify to be categorized as a Community Park. The Penn Meadows complex that includes Old Town and Meade property is large and contains a number of fine recreational opportunities, but is largely focused on the baseball/softball complex of 9 diamonds. Eventual improvement of the Meade property and perhaps several enhancements at Penn Meadows could result in a true community park destination.

There is an obvious lack of both neighborhood and community park facilities generally west of Jones Boulevard. With this very large area planned for residential development, locating a community park should be a high priority. Due to the large service area associated with community parks, specifying an exact location is not necessary, but a central major park would provide the greatest utility of service.

MAP 5: Potential Community Park Locations



## LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Another means of measuring park adequacy for current and future residents, in addition to the service area approach in the previous paragraphs, is to compare total number of acres available to national suggested standards. Tables 6 and 7 identify those gross area figures for the current and forecasted population.

Park Type	Developed Acreage	Acres Needed based on NRPA Current Pop	Deficit in Acres Current Pop
Total Community Parks	0.0	50-80	50-80
Total Neighborhood Parks	81.3	20-40	0
Total Park and Recreation Area (does not include mini-parks or trails)	193.7	100	0
Total Park and Recreation Area Without Pond Areas (does not include mini-parks or trails)	151.7	100	0

Park Type	Total Current Acres Developed and Undeveloped	Acres Needed based on NRPA 2020 Pop	Deficit in Acres 2020 Pop
Total Community Parks	0.0	100-200	100-200
Total Neighborhood Parks	83.8	40-80	0.0
Total Park and Recreation Area (does not include mini-parks or trails)	196.2	200	3.8
Total Park and Recreation Area Without Pond Areas (does not include mini-parks or trails)	154.2	200	45.8

North Liberty's current neighborhood park level of service is significantly above the NRPA benchmark of 1 to 2 acres per 1,000 residents. As indicated in Table 7, only an insignificant number of additional acres would be necessary to satisfy standards for the forecasted 2020 population.

As previously indicated, North Liberty's currently has no park classified as a "community park," so any community park standard is not met. As indicated in Tables 6 and 7, if North Liberty were to establish community parks at the acreage rate recommended by the NRPA, there is a need for approximately 50-80 acres today and 100-200 acres by the year 2020. It is important to note that Lake McBride, a 2,180 acre State Park, is less than 5 miles East of North Liberty and serves many of the recreational needs of North Liberty that community parks would normally provide. Also, the Penn Meadows/Old Town/Meade complex, although classified as a Special Use Facility, meets many of the needs of a community park. While it could

be argued that these two facilities compensate for the lack of a community park in North Liberty, substantial growth in the city's population over the planning period will require consideration of establishing a community park to help serve an anticipated growing demand for park and recreation facilities.

Examining total park land in North Liberty, it can be seen in table 6 that the current acreage is more than adequate, even if the water area of the ponds is discounted; however, by the year 2020 that same acreage falls just short when including pond acreage and well short if the pond areas are subtracted.

### FACILITIES IN RELATIONS TO POPULATION SERVICE STANDARDS

An evaluation of North Liberty's recreational facilities based on quantitative national standards and the city's existing standards are summarized in Table 8. Projections for future demand are also presented, based on a 2020 population of 20,000. Future demand for each type of facility is shown as a range that is based on present levels of service in North Liberty and the NRPA standard.

Often the city's existing level of service is a more realistic standard for a community, reflecting the current demand for facilities, but providing a range allows a community to better determine how it wants to address current and future needs.

Table 8: Current Facility Needs					
Facility Type	NRPA Standard	Existing Quantity	Existing Standard	Present Need NRPA Standard	Present Surplus or (Deficit)
Baseball Fields	1 per 3,000	10	1 per 722	2	8
Basketball Courts	1 per 5,000	5	1 per 1,445	2	4
Golf Courses	1 18-hole standard per 50,000	.5	1 per 14,448	0	0
Picnic Shelter	1 per 2,000	4	1 per 1,806	4	0
Playgrounds	1 per 2,000	7	1 per 1,032	4	3
Soccer Fields	1 per 10,000	2	1 per 3,612	1	1
Tennis Courts	1 per 2,000	4	1 per 1,806	4	0
<i>Source: RDG Planning &amp; Design</i>					

Table 9: Forecasted Facility Needs				
Facility Type	NRPA Standard	Future Need Existing Standard	Future Need NRPA Standard	Additional Facilities Needed (Existing Standard)
Baseball Fields	1 per 3,000	27	7	17
Basketball Courts	1 per 5,000	14	4	9
Golf Courses	1 18-hole standard per 50,000	1.5	0	1
Picnic Shelter	1 per 2,000	11	10	7
Playgrounds	1 per 2,000	19	10	12
Soccer Fields	1 per 10,000	5	2	3
Tennis Courts	1 per 2,000	11	10	7
<i>Source: RDG Planning &amp; Design</i>				

Major findings of this analysis include the following:

- North Liberty’s current service levels for tennis courts meet NRPA standards and will need an additional 6-7 courts to continue this level of service into 2020.
- National standards for soccer fields often fall short of community demand; however, North Liberty surpasses the national standard and may not have a need for additional soccer fields by 2020. Due to the increasing popularity of the sport, North Liberty may choose to add additional fields depending on future community demand. Based on current service levels the city will need to develop 2 additional fields to serve a population of 20,000.
- Picnic shelters and playgrounds are standard neighborhood park facilities and should be included in all additional neighborhood and community parks, which should address futures demands for these facilities.
- North Liberty’s current service level for baseball fields greatly exceeds NRPA standards. North Liberty’s Penn Meadows baseball fields serve the entire region. If the current level of service were to continue into the future the city would need to add approximately 17 fields by the year 2020; however, this is not likely to occur and if the popularity of baseball continues into the future, other baseball facilities would likely be built to meet regional needs.

**PARKS COMPARISON TO SIMILAR COMMUNITIES**

In addition to using the NRPA standards to evaluate levels of service in a community, current park planning literature suggests conducting a comparison between the study community (North Liberty) and similar communities. Because this technique is intended for general comparison purposes, communities were chosen based solely on population, rather than other factors such as employment base, income, or housing cost. Iowa City was included in the analysis because of the close proximity to North Liberty.

Table 10 displays the existing parkland level of service for North Liberty and 11 Midwest cities. For methodological consistency 2005 Census estimates were used to calculate acres per 1,000 residents. In regard to level of service per 1,000 residents, North Liberty is most similar to LeMars, IA; Alliance, NE;

Waseca, MN; and Pella, IA. With 14 acres per 1,000 residents, North Liberty’s level of service is about mid-range.

TABLE 10: Parkland and Service Level Comparison, North Liberty and Similar Communities				
City	State	Total Parkland (Acres)	20005 Population (Census Estimate)	Acres Per 1,000 Residents
Mendota Heights	Minnesota	242	11,338	21
Festus	Missouri	218	10,905	20
Iowa City	Iowa	1,133	62,887	18
Pella	Iowa	170	10,291	17
LeMars	Iowa	150	9,349	16
North Liberty	Iowa	123	8,808	17
Alliance	Nebraska	109	8331	13
Waseca	Minnesota	108	9,445	11
Arden Hills	Minnesota	102	9,780	10
Merriam	Kansas	108	10,769	10
Republic	Missouri	92	10,637	9
Waukee	Iowa	74	9,213	8
<i>Source: RDG Planning &amp; Design and all communities listed.</i>				

## SUMMARY OF ANALYSES

### Service Area Summary:

**Neighborhood Parks.** Analysis shows good neighborhood park coverage for most existing residential development, especially assuming a ½ mile walk to be an appropriate measure of accessibility. Improvement of Joy Park to neighborhood park status and extension of Golfview Drive across the CRANDIC Railroad would address a service gap in the vicinity of the two manufactured housing developments generally south of Golfview Avenue. New development that is expected to occur generally west of Jones Boulevard will fall outside of current service areas, and additional parks should be considered.

**Community Parks.** With only a few additions at the Penn Meadows/Old Town/Meade complex, it could be considered a community park with a service area extending for most if not all of the city; however, it is reasonable to assume that a second community park is both practical and appropriate. Some gaps in neighborhood park service noted above can be satisfied with strategic placement of a

community park, and while Penn Meadows/Old Town/Meade can serve many needs, the opportunity to develop a true multi-use large park for community use should be strongly considered. Accordingly, a new neighborhood/community park site should be actively pursued for the large area generally between Jones Boulevard and Interstate 380, from Penn Street to south of Forevergreen Road. The recommended acreage of 50-80 acres may be difficult to achieve, but an area close to that should be pursued.

**Level of Service Summary:**

This analysis reinforces the adequacy of current neighborhood parks for current development, and the need to plan for additional park land, especially community park land, as the population continues to grow.

**Facilities Per Capita Summary:**

This analysis illustrates the need to be proactive and plan for additional park acquisition and development as the population grows. Specific anticipated needs such as picnic facilities, shelters, and tennis courts are the sorts of facilities commonly found in expansive community parks.

**Parks Comparison Summary:**

In total acreage, North Liberty compares well with its contemporaries in population; however, the exhibit illustrates that if little or no additional land is acquired as the population grows, the city could rank near the bottom of this peer group.

### **3. Park Needs for New Development Areas**

While previous sections of this plan have outlined park needs and recommended actions to address those needs, large questions remain regarding funding for and timing of acquisition, development, and ongoing maintenance – or, put more simply – when and where is development appropriate and how should it be paid for? Growth of the city will be influenced by many rapidly-changing factors, including land availability, price, and suitability; utility availability; and developer interest. Many cities establish requirements for parkland dedication during development, or payment of an offsetting fee, but fail to fully appreciate and plan for the impact of developing and maintaining new park facilities. For example, neighborhood park-scale playground equipment set can cost at least \$60,000, and while existing maintenance staff may be stretched to mow and care for *some* additional land, at some point that incremental addition drives the need for additional staff. Considerations for park land acquisition and development during new development should include the following:

- Finding the best location to provide accessible service to as many residents as possible.
- Establishing the correct proportion of cost between new residents and businesses resulting from the subdivision, and current residents. Then, identifying the budget means to fund the city portion.
- Planning for the funding of park development, including possibly grading, planting, and purchase and installation of equipment and furnishings.
- Analyzing current and anticipated city Parks Department staff time, possibly measured in units such as acres, and the impact any additional land or units will have on that time.

## 4. Planning Specific Parks

This section provides a very detailed examination of potentials for each park property in the city's system. An analysis of each site's potentials is presented, followed by a specific concept plan for improvements and estimates of costs for those improvements. This information should be a useful tool in the annual determination of park improvement priorities. These designs also represent a "starting point" for discussions with neighborhood residents on improvements to their neighborhood parks and other facilities. For example, while the design of neighborhood parks represents an application of the park "facility standards" determined through the planning process to be the highest priority for inclusion in improved parks, modifications should be made to meet more specific neighborhood priorities. This analysis will provide community leaders, city staff and North Liberty residents with conceptual park facility designs and associated costs.

At the end of the chapter is a section on site furnishing, indicating several options for typical park equipment, including play structures, trash receptacles, benches, shelters, materials, bike racks, public art and drinking fountains. These alternatives can be used by staff in working with neighborhoods to determine preferences and improvement costs.

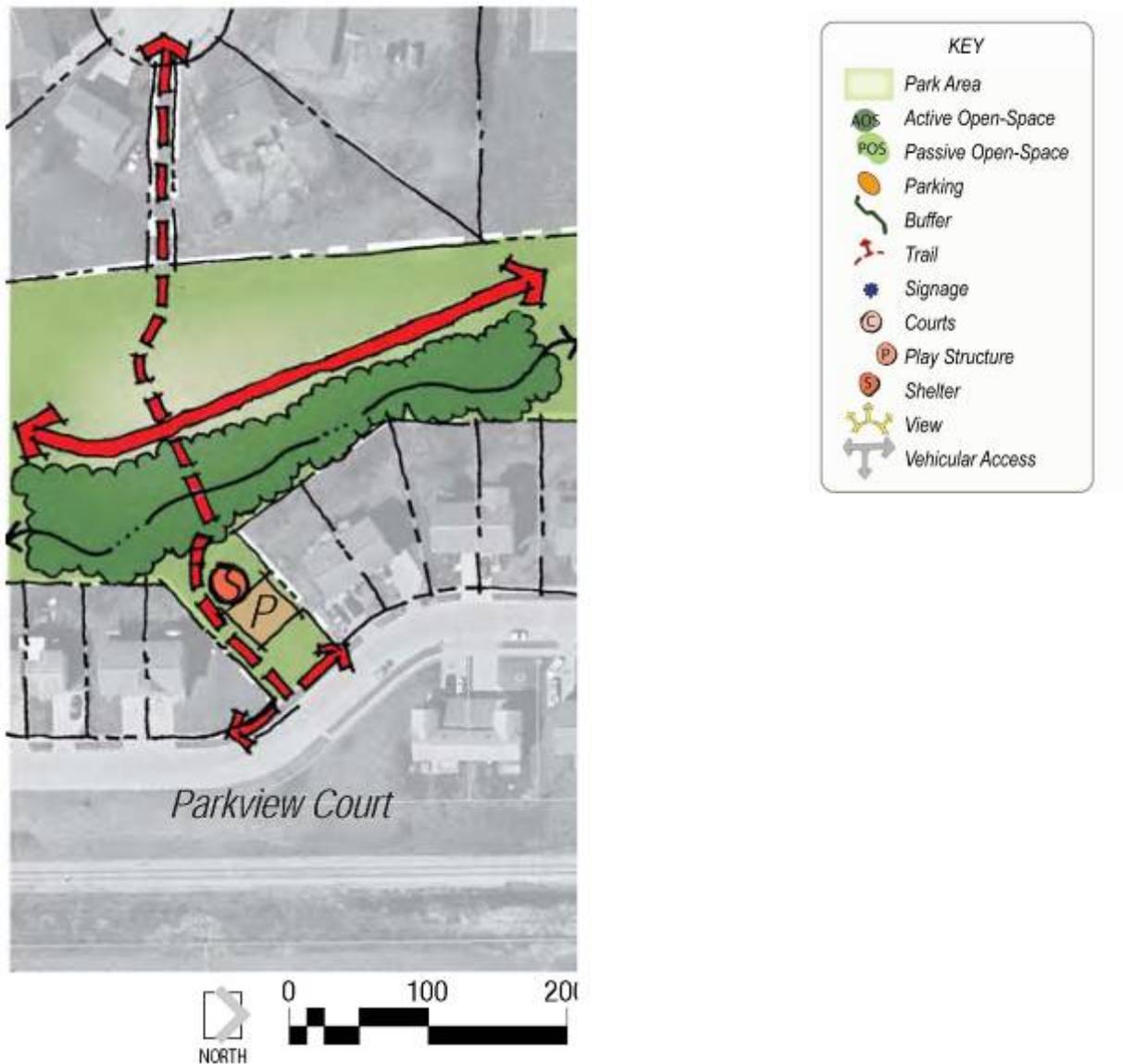
### **INDIVIDUAL PARK FACILITY DESIGNS**

The park designs represent the recommended completed park facility concept plan. While the following chapter recommends park improvement, they are of course recommendations only and are intended to be used as a tool in the annual determination of park improvement funding.

Each park facility design provides the following information:

- Aerial of existing facility showing surrounding land uses.
- Park analysis, including map notes and listing of "Challenges and Opportunities."
- Park Development Concept, showing recommended facility design.
- Preliminary cost estimates.
- Text describing park status, design concepts and park expansion needs.

## Parkview Mini Park Analysis



Park View is a mini park located in a residential neighborhood south of Zeller Street on Parkview Court. Limited in size and facilities, enhancement opportunities could include playground, shelter, landscape, signage, and a pedestrian bridge to provide a connection to the main north-south trail on the west side of the creek.

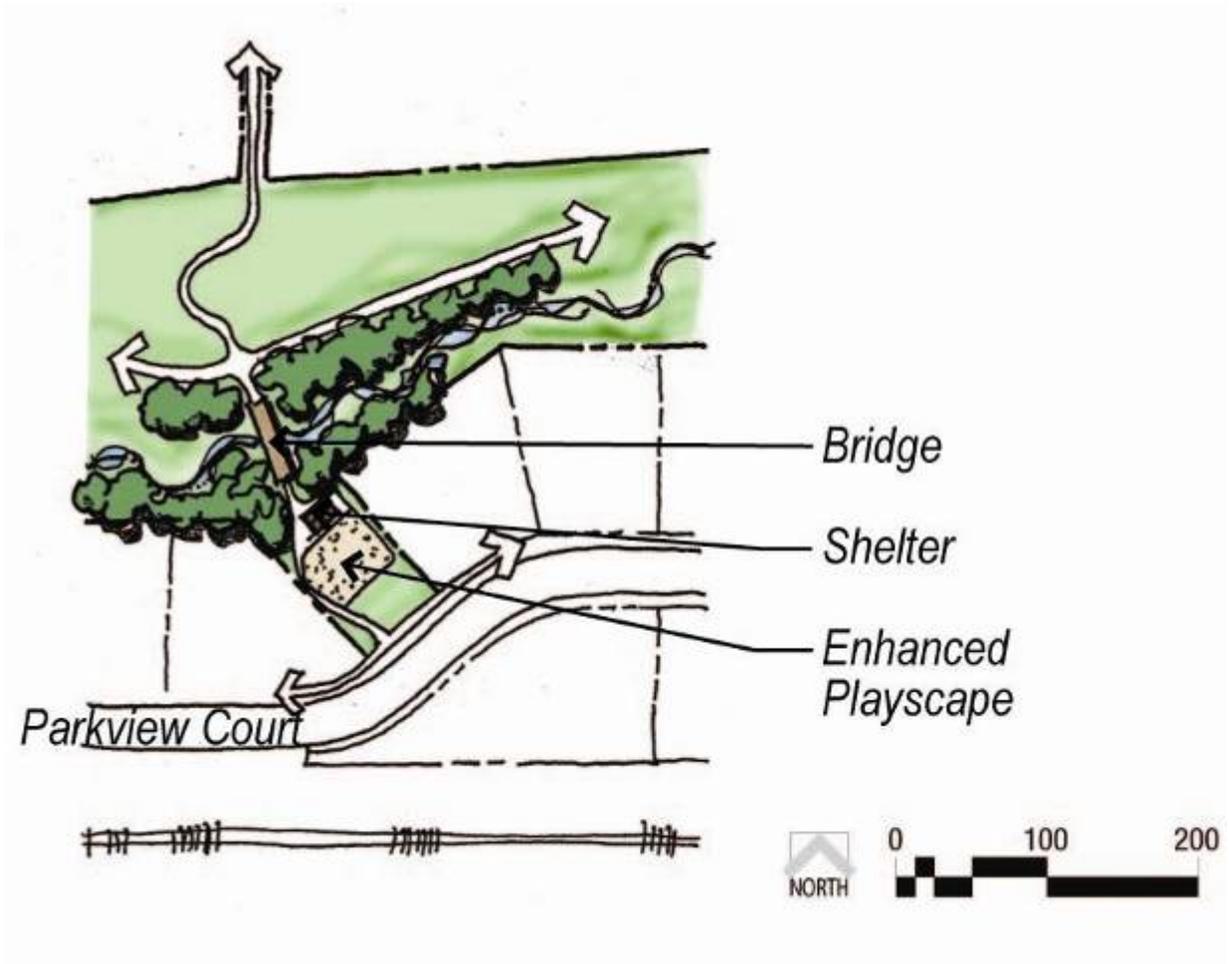
**Challenges:** Small size, Isolated location

**Opportunities:** Trail Connection, Multi generational

**Priorities:**

1. Playground Enhancements
2. Trail Access/Bridge
3. Shelter & Furnishings

Parkview Mini Park Plan



ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Age 2-5 Playground	\$10,000
Pavement: Trail	\$12,000
Bridge	\$62,000
Small Shelter	\$25,000
Site Furnishings	\$7,500
Signage	\$3,000
Landscaping	\$3,000

## Beaver Creek Neighborhood Park Analysis



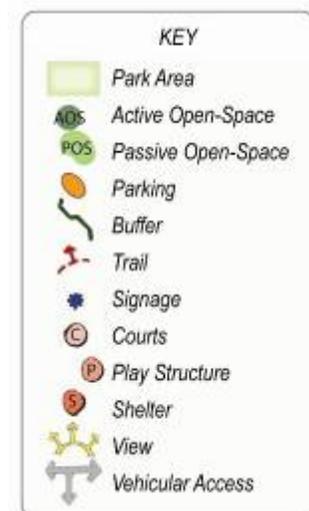
Beaver Creek Park is unique within the North Liberty park system, as it is located generally in a drainageway area and surrounded by residential development. Limited in size and street frontage, it provides playground and greenspace amenities to the surrounding neighborhood. This plan calls for the enhancement of the playground area, trail development, removal of the full court basketball court and preservation of open space. The stream could also be enhanced substantially with bank line stabilization and native plantings. This park would benefit greatly with appropriate park signage, and security lighting would be appropriate because of its limited visibility from public areas.

**Challenges:** Isolated locations, Shoreline restoration

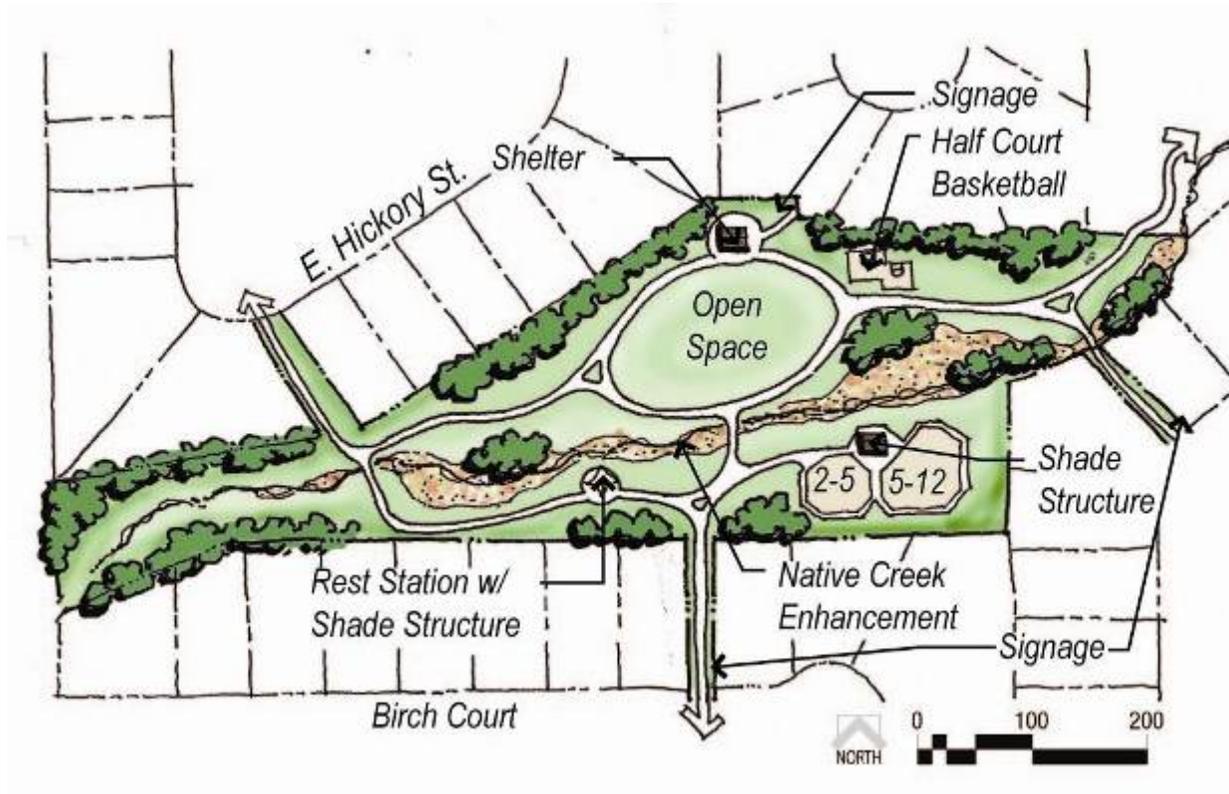
**Opportunities:** Trail connection, Multi generational, Enhanced drainage corridor, Open space creation, Habitat restoration

**Priorities:**

1. Playground Upgrades
2. Trail Access
3. Picnic Area with Furnishings
4. Shelter with Furnishings



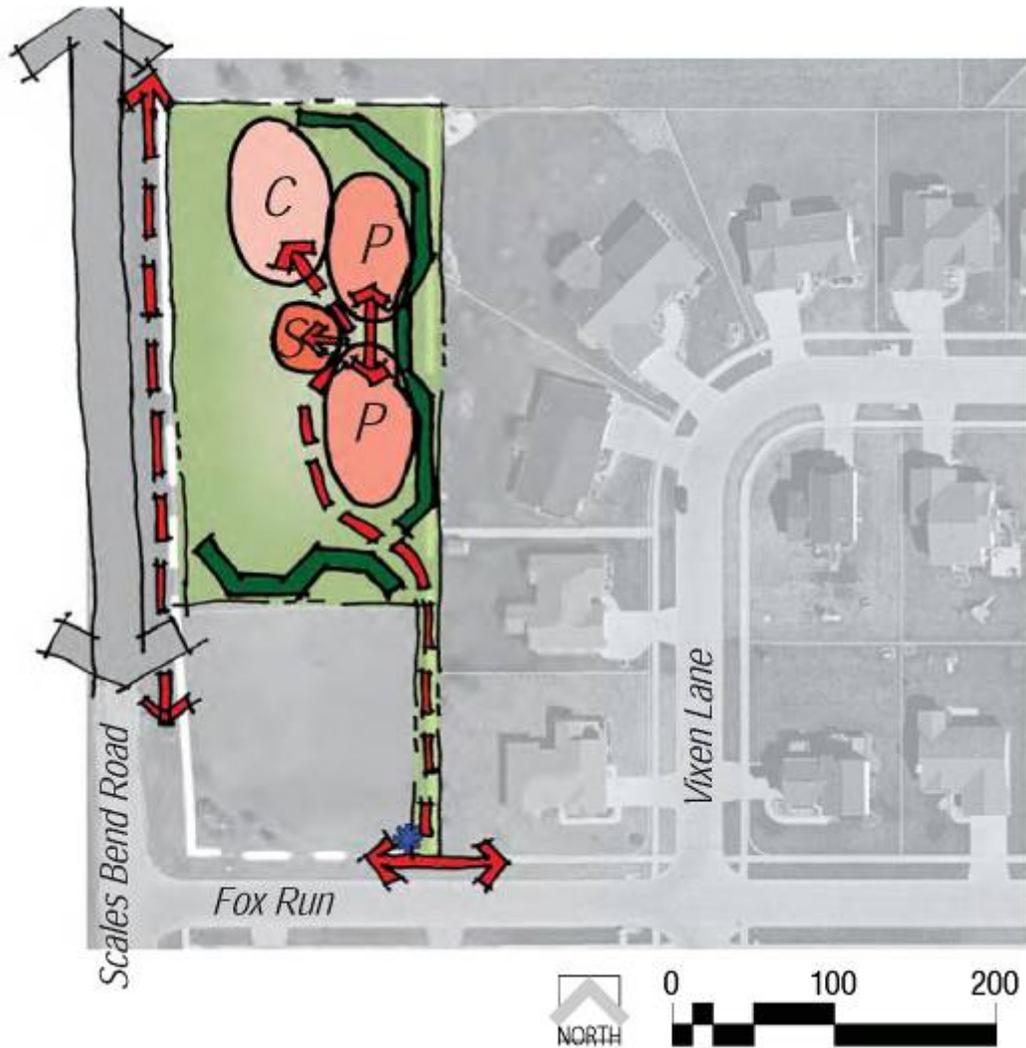
Beaver Creek Neighborhood Park Plan



ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Pavement: Trail	\$47,000
Playground	
Age 2-5	\$20,000
Age 6-12	\$60,000
Courts: ½ Basketball	\$10,000 x 2= \$20,000
Small Shelter	\$25,000 x 2 = \$50,000
Site Furnishings	\$7,500
Signage	\$7,000
Landscaping	\$5,000
Lighting	\$15,000

## Fox Run Neighborhood Park Analysis



Fox Run Park is relatively small, but features can be maximized because of its rectangular size and flat terrain. This plan calls for the enhancement of the playground, development of a shelter, sidewalk access, connection to the Scales Bend Road trail, park signage and landscaping.

**Challenges:** Flat and featureless site, Small size

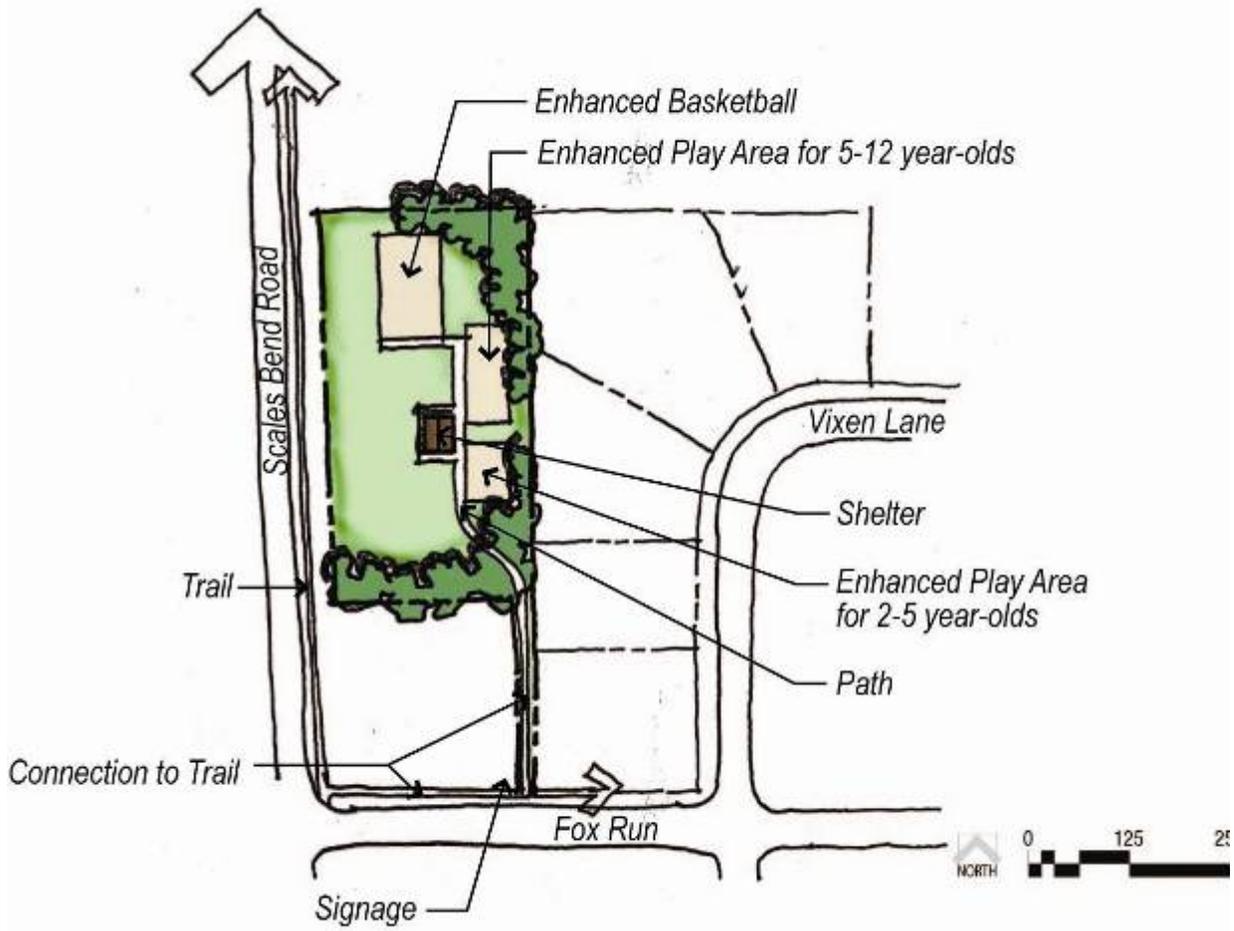
**Opportunities:** Trail connection, Multi generational, Access to large adjacent neighborhood

**Priorities:**

1. Trail Development & Connection
2. Shelter & Furnishings
3. Landscape
4. Signage
5. Playground and Court Enhancements

KEY	
	Park Area
	Active Open-Space
	Passive Open-Space
	Parking
	Buffer
	Trail
	Signage
	Courts
	Play Structure
	Shelter
	View
	Vehicular Access

# Fox Run Neighborhood Park Plan



## ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Pavement: Trail	\$12,000
Playground	
Age 2-5 Enhancement	\$10,000
Age 6-12 Enhancement	\$10,000
Courts: Full Basketball	\$500
Small Shelter	\$25,000
Site Furnishings	\$7,500
Signage	\$7,000
Landscape	\$5,000
Art	\$5,000

## Quail Ridge Park Analysis



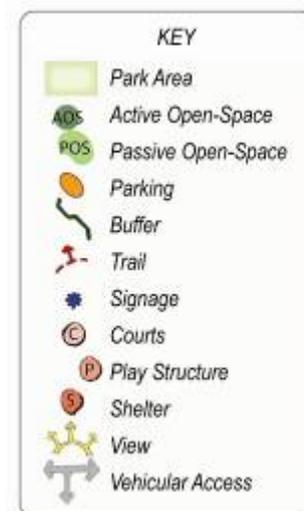
Quail Ridge Park is a perfect neighborhood park example. This park, roughly 10 acres in size, provides a large open space with great visual and physical access to Zeller Street. Well connected to Cory Court and other adjacent streets, this park provides great access and connections to the adjacent neighborhood. This plan recommends that the current playground be relocated closer to the shelter and parking area, because the current location limits the large flexible open space and would better serve the park in the recommended location. With the large frontage, available parking and current demands on the existing aquatic facility, this park would be excellent for the development of a splash pad to supplement the pool at the recreation center. Additional open space directly across Zeller Street, a “dry bottom” stormwater detention area, has potential to be programmed for field sports.

**Challenges:** Relocate playground, Relocate ball field

**Opportunities:** Trail connection, Multi generational

**Priorities:**

1. Playground Enhancements
2. Trail Development and connection
3. Shelter enhancements
4. Wet Rest Rooms
5. Landscaping
6. Additional Parking



# Quail Ridge Park Plan



## ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Pavement: Sidewalk/Trail/Parking	\$100,000
Playground	
Age 2-5 Relocate/Enhance	\$40,000
Age 6-12	\$60,000
Large Shelter	\$100,000
Extended Canopy	\$20,000
Site Furnishings	\$7,500
Signage	\$7,000
Landscaping	\$15,000
Art	\$10,000
Specialty items: Splash Pad	\$150,000
Restrooms	\$10,000

## Deerfield Park Analysis



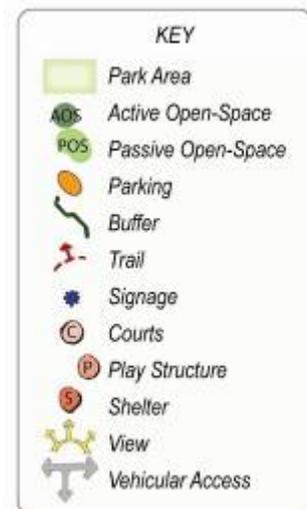
This park has excellent opportunity to develop as one of North Liberty's best neighborhood parks. Potentially surrounded by residential development, this park will serve the adjacent community well. This plan recommends that an additional four to six acres of land to the north be acquired for future development, and that frontage be provided with this newly dedicated parcel. This additional land would provide excellent visual access, vehicular access and connection to both sidewalks and trails.

**Challenges:** Flat and featureless site, Somewhat limited space

**Opportunities:** Trail connection, Multi generational, Enlarge park to north, Neighborhood park development, Close to existing & future neighborhoods

### Priorities

1. Land Acquisition To The North
2. Playground
3. Trail Development
4. Picnic Area With Furnishings
5. Shelter With Furnishings
6. Parking Lot



# Deerfield Park Plan



## ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Pavement: Trail/Trail/Parking	\$100,000
Playground Age 2-5	\$40,000
Age 6-12	\$60,000
Full Basketball Courts	\$18,000
Large Shelter	\$100,000
Site Furnishings	\$7,500
Signage	\$7,000
Landscaping	\$15,000
Art	\$10,000
Backstop	\$5,000
Land Cost Estimate	\$80 - \$100,000

## Creekside Commons Park Analysis



Creekside Commons Park, much like Beaver Kreek Park, is a facility associated with a natural drainage way. This park, however, provides much more opportunity for development and provides the City of North Liberty with a great variety of amenities. The creek that runs through this park provides scenic, wildlife and natural habitat for bird enthusiasts and community educators alike. Trails have been developed on the east and west side of the creek, and continued trail development of both paved and unpaved trails and paths would well serve this park and community. This plan also recommends preserving a large open space on the west side of the property. The development of a small outdoor theater could serve small concerts or educational classroom opportunities, and outdoor classrooms could be developed along the entire creek, providing opportunities for the nearby schools.

**Challenges:** Creek/Drainage area, Grade

**Opportunities:** Trail connection, Multi generational, Wildlife habitat, Education

**Priorities:**

1. Playground
2. Trail Access
3. Picnic Area with Furnishings
4. Shelter with Furnishings
5. Rest room - Wet or Dry

# Creekside Commons Park Plan



## ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Pavement: Trail	\$10,000
Playground	
Age 2-5	\$40,000
Age 6-12	\$60,000
Large Shelter	\$100,000
Site Furnishings	\$7,500
Signage	\$7,000
Landscaping	\$10,000
Art - Education	\$25,000
Specialty items	
Lighting	\$15,000
Outdoor Theater	\$140,000
Outdoor Education	\$15,000

## Penn Meadows/Old Town/Meade Park Analysis



This park complex, while dominated by the sports fields, is large in area and offers a good variety of activities that currently meet the needs of many North Liberty residents. It is well groomed and expansive, with open areas and compacted trails providing connectivity. With some upgrades to the playground equipment, paving of at least the major trail sections, and imaginative development of the Meade Park area in the northeast corner of the site, this complex could become even more of a community highlight. In addition, a major portion of the paved trail connecting South Dubuque Street to Mehaffey Bridge Road could extend through the western portion of this park.

**Challenges:** Lack of existing unique features, substantial gravel area

**Opportunities:** Increased variety of uses, refinement/upgrading of facilities, new and unique use on Meade property

**Priorities:**

1. Development of Meade property
2. Dust-proofing gravel surfaces
3. Paving major internal trail connections, and major trail system connector.

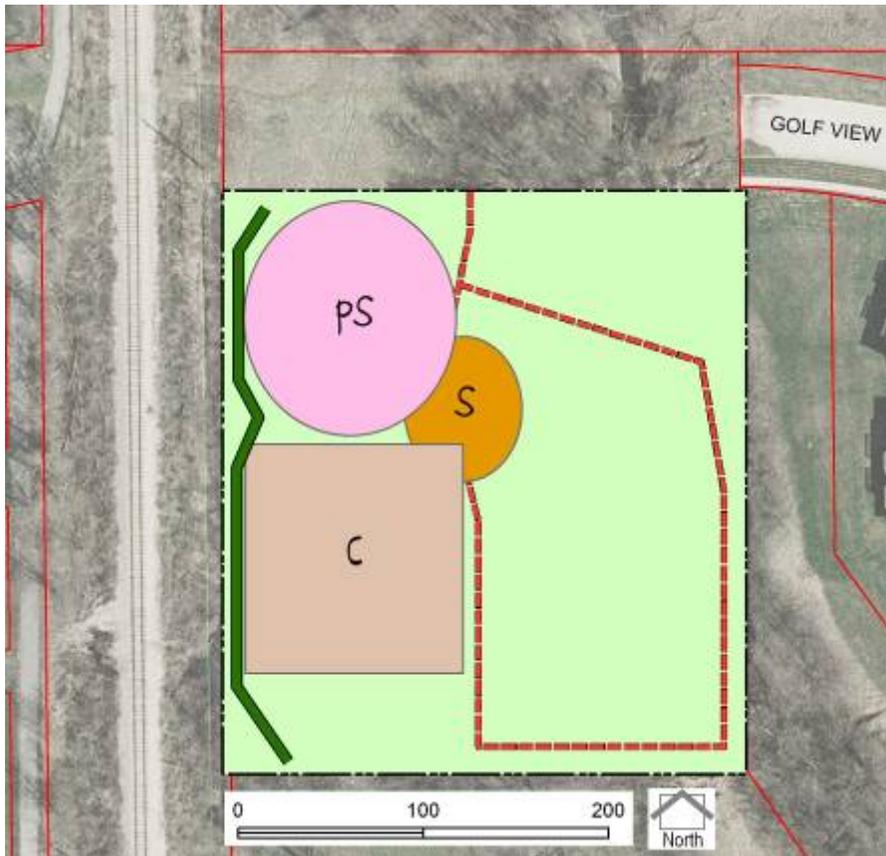
Penn Meadows/Old Town/Meade Park Plan



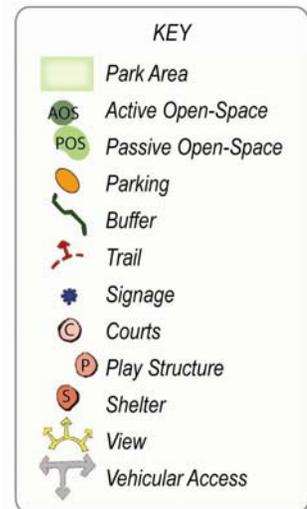
ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Electric service to shelters	\$35,000
Trail paving	\$150,000
Large Shelter	\$100,000
Site Furnishings	\$7,500
Signage	\$7,000
Landscaping	\$10,000
Art	\$10,000

## Joy Park Analysis



This small park can fill a vital need for neighborhood park facilities in the immediate vicinity of the two large manufactured housing complexes in the city once Golf View Drive is connected across the adjacent CRANDIC railroad property and the northern portion of this site. Currently undeveloped, Joy Park has a large relatively high, flat area along its west side, which will be the logical location for development of a playground area, basketball court, and small open shelter. The rest of the site is timbered and sloping, includes a drainageway running generally northwest to southeast, and should be preserved for a nature trail area.



Joy Park Plan



ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Pavement: Sidewalk/Trail/Parking	\$100,000
Playground, Age 6-12	\$60,000
Large Shelter	\$100,000
Site Furnishings	\$7,500
Court: Full Basketball	\$18,000
Signage	\$7,000
Landscaping	\$10,000
Art	\$5,000

## Fox Run Pond Analysis



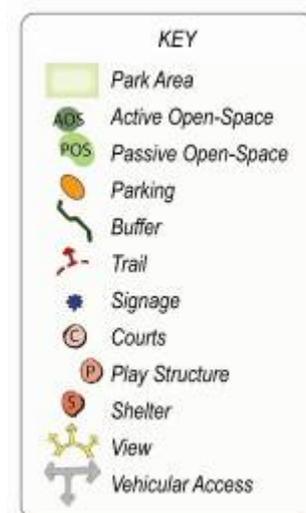
Fox Run Pond and Park is an example of a storm water management facility that can provide park amenities for the community. In addition to storm water management, this park provides excellent trail and wildlife development opportunities. The recently added northern portion will provide needed open space and shelter development opportunity. Due to the close proximity of Fox Run Park and the playground amenities at that location, it is recommended that play structures not be located in the Fox Run Pond area. This plan does recommend that trail development, fishing stations, shelter, landscaping and pond enhancements be part of the overall development concept.

**Challenges:** Undeveloped, Provides required stormwater management, Limited open space,

**Opportunities:** Trail connection, Multi generational, Urban fisheries

**Priorities:**

1. Trail Development & Connection
2. Shelter with Furnishings
3. Fishing Stations
4. Landscape
5. Shoreline Enhancements



# Fox Run Pond Plan



## ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Trail	\$64,000
Large Shelter	\$100,000
Site Furnishings	\$7,500
Signage	\$7,000
Landscaping	\$10,000
Art	\$5,000
Fishing Stations	
Type One	\$25,000 x 2 = \$50,000
Type Two	\$100,000

## Cornerstone Nature Area and Wetlands Plan



In 2008 the city accepted a gift of this property, consisting mainly of a large wetland with some additional upland previously-tilled areas, and prepared a development plan that stressed prairie and wetland preservation and restoration. Also included is a system of walking trails that ties in to existing trails and sidewalks in surrounding properties. This park will be good resource for elementary students, an amenity for surrounding neighbors, and a welcoming landmark for resident and others using Dubuque Street.

**Challenges:** Undeveloped, Existing wetland

**Opportunities:** Trail connections, Multi generational,

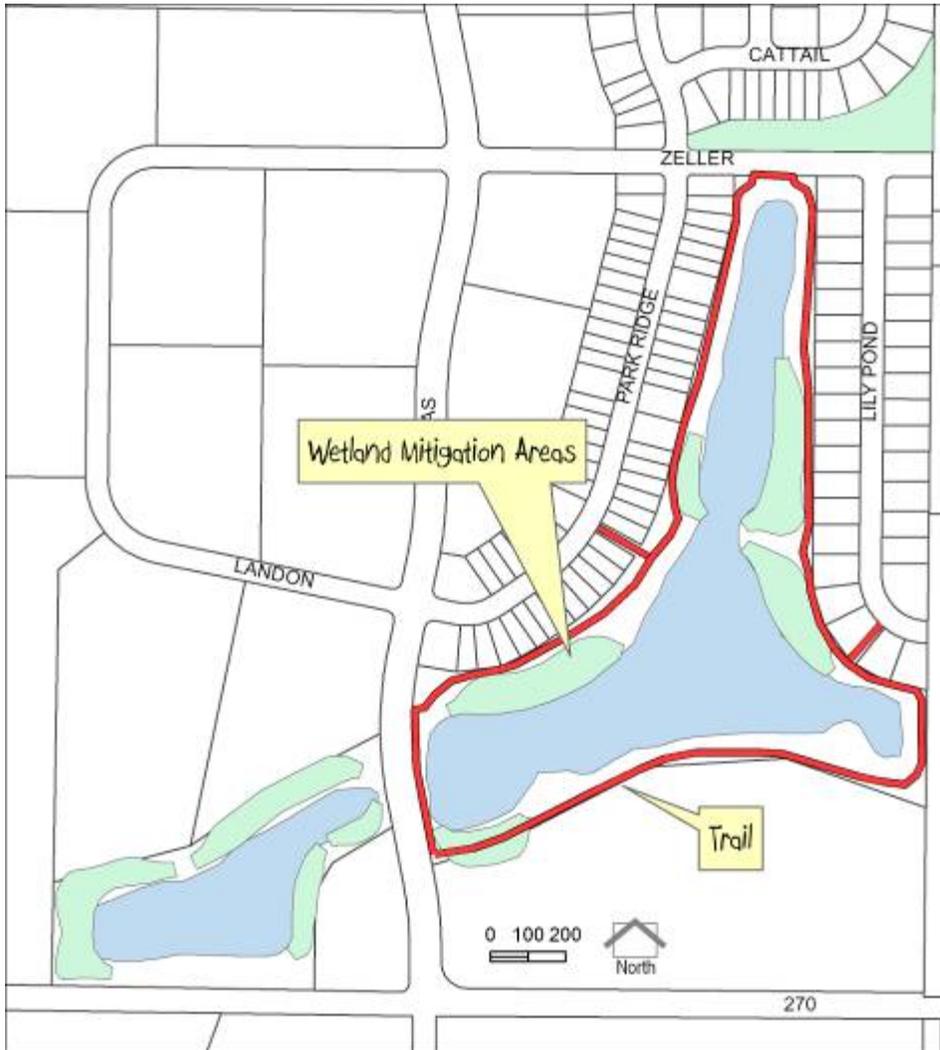
**Priorities:**

1. Trail Development & Connection
2. Prairie Establishment
3. Minor Wetland Area Cleanup
4. Municipal Welcome Sign

### ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Pervious Concrete Trails – 6'	\$27,025
Pedestrian Bridge	\$62,000
Prairie Establishment	\$4,800
Culverts	\$2,400
Pedestrian Lighting	\$15,000
Erosion Control	\$1,500
Welcome Sign	\$4,000
Art	\$5,000

## West Lakes Nature Area and Wetlands



The large West Lake pond and wetland area was established to manage storm water runoff for the West Lake development. Large portions of the public property are wetland mitigation areas that are not groomed, but a paved trail extends through the area, with connections to adjacent neighborhoods. This park will be good resource for elementary students at the adjacent school, an amenity for surrounding neighbors, and an important part of the city's storm water management control system.

**Challenges:** Area limited due to wetlands

**Opportunities:** Multi generational, Fishing

**Priorities:**

1. Landscaping for shade and aesthetics
2. Pedestrian lighting for security and night use

### ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Landscaping	\$10,000
Pedestrian Lighting	\$15,000
Signage	\$7,000
Art	\$5,000

## Goose Lake Nature Area and Wetlands



The large Goose Lake pond and wetland area was established to manage storm water runoff for the Progress Park development. Large portions of the public property are wetland mitigation areas and not groomed. This park will be good resource for elementary students, an amenity for surrounding neighbors, and an important part of the city's storm water management control system.

**Challenges:** Area limited due to wetlands

**Opportunities:** Multi generational, Fishing

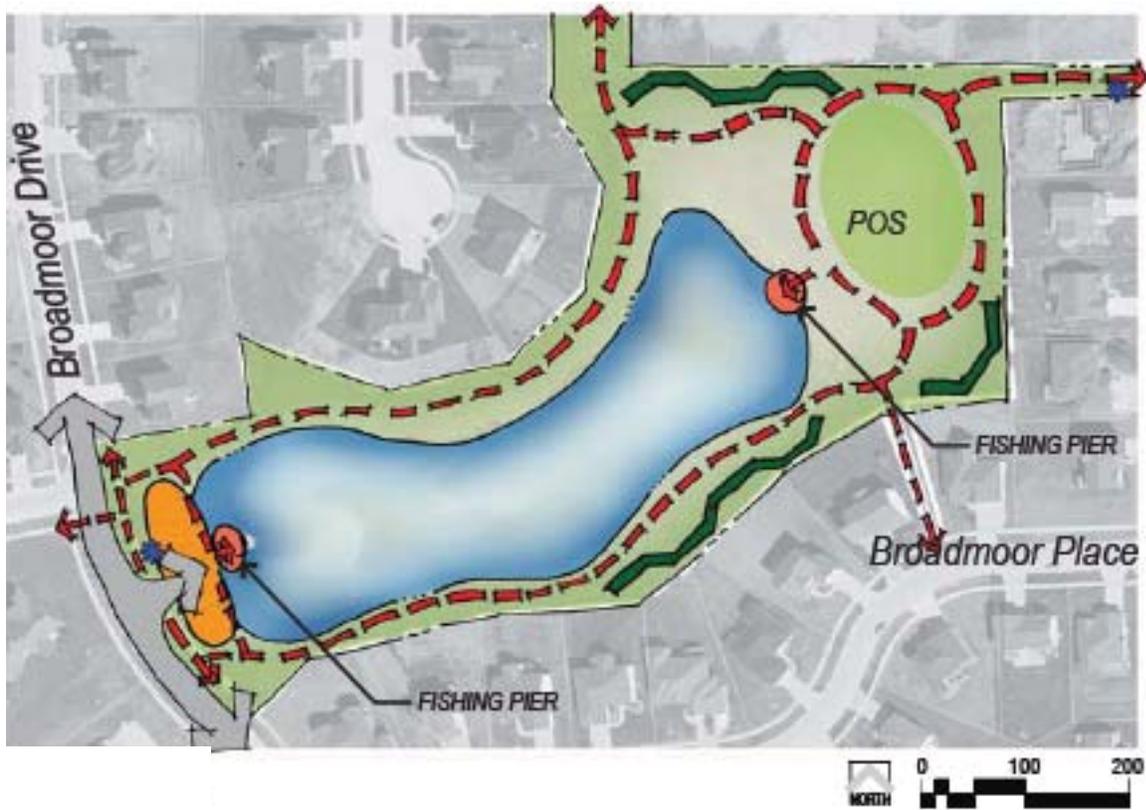
**Priorities:**

1. Landscaping for shade and aesthetics

### ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Pedestrian Lighting	\$11,000
Signage	\$7,000
Landscape	\$10,000

## Broadmoor Estates Pond Area Analysis



This property, while not large enough to be considered a neighborhood park, is a very valuable park property providing trail, shelter and urban fishery development opportunities, in addition to providing storm water management infrastructure for the Broadmoor neighborhood. This plan recommends that two fishing stations and a trail network be developed. The City and the Iowa DNR could work together to develop an excellent urban fishery program at this site.

**Challenges:** Small open space

**Opportunities:** Multi generational, Fishing and open space

**Priorities:**

1. Trail Development
2. Shelter Development & Furnishings
3. Fishing Station
4. Parking
5. Shoreline Enhancements

KEY	
	Park Area
	Active Open-Space
	Passive Open-Space
	Parking
	Buffer
	Trail
	Signage
	Courts
	Play Structure
	Shelter
	View
	Vehicular Access

# Broadmoor Estates Pond Area Plan



## ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Pavement: Trail/Parking	\$100,000
Shelter	
Small	\$25,000
Large	\$100,000
Site Furnishings	\$7,500
Signage	\$7,000
Landscaping	\$10,000
Art	\$5,000
Fishing Stations	
Type One	\$25,000
Type Two	\$100,000

## Liberty Center Pond



Liberty Center Park is a special place in North Liberty. This park is an attractive facility with unique amenities, including a pavilion, trail, pond, and other park furnishings with a high degree of finish and attendant high maintenance. This park will be the visual identity for North Liberty in years to come. As Highway 965 continues to develop with both commercial and residential uses, this park will be the most attractive and recognizable landmark in the City.

No proposed improvements are recommended at this time, but continuing to maintain the park at its current high level will require a special ongoing commitment.

**Challenges:** High maintenance

**Opportunities:** Fishing, Weddings on Pier, Coordination with surrounding development for some maintenance and ongoing trash control.

# Freedom Park Analysis and Plan



Freedom Park provides great wildlife habitat and fishing opportunities for neighborhood residents, and could be improved with the addition of a trail and fishing pier.

**Challenges:** Limited area, Stormwater management function

**Opportunities:** Trail connection, Urban fishery

**Priorities:**

1. Trail Development
2. Fishing Pier
3. Landscaping/Screening

## ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

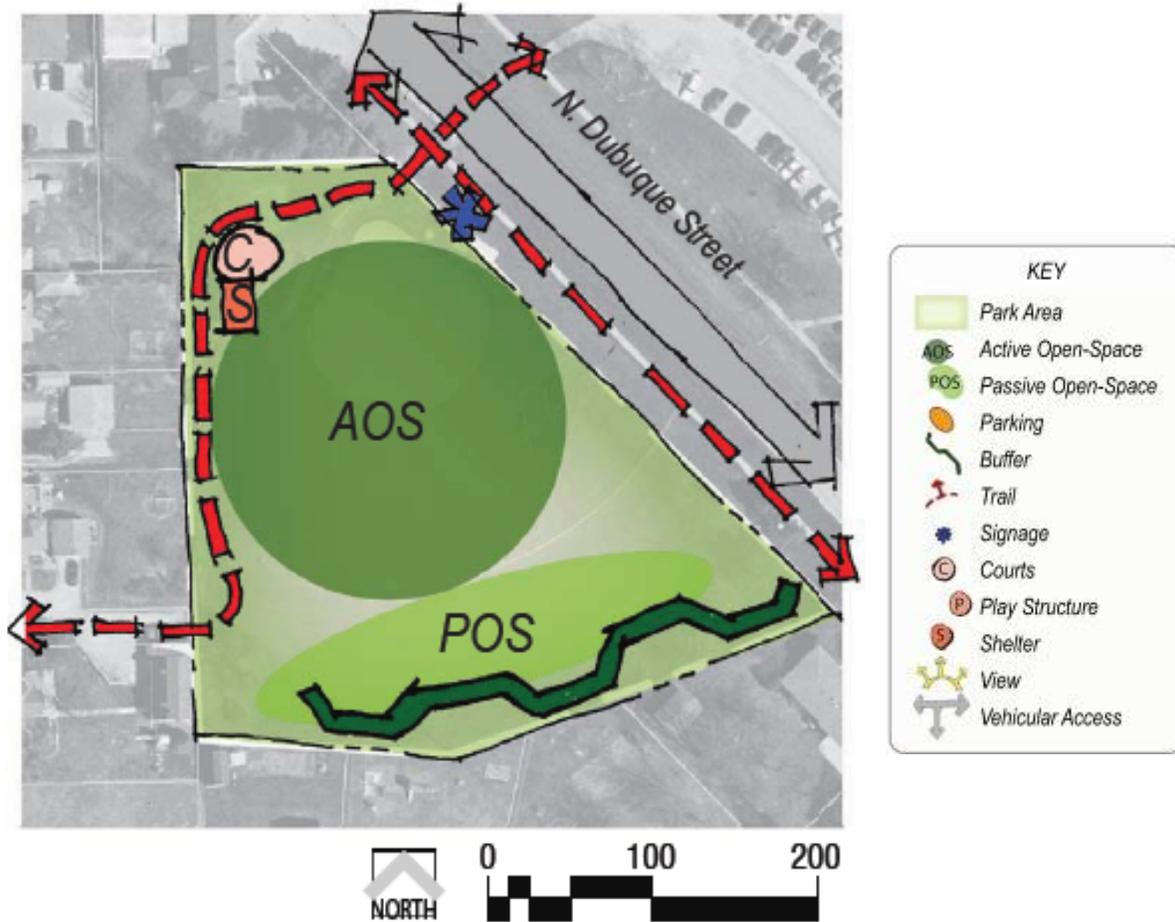
Pavement: Trail	\$50,000
Shelter/Pier	\$100,000
Site Furnishings	\$7,500
Signage	\$7,000
Landscaping	\$10,000
Art	\$5,000

## Community Center/Ransaw House Historic Site



The community center is an excellent city-owned amenity that will help bring residents to North Liberty. The site is well-developed with very limited opportunities for changes or new features; however, the Ransaw House historic site is in need of restoration, estimated to cost over \$200,000, if it is to survive and serve as a welcome center or some other community function. The North Liberty main paved trail extends along the eastern edge of the property, providing excellent connectivity for recreational trail users. No recommendations are made for this facility, except to replace the artwork on the Cherry Street frontage.

## Koser Park Analysis



Koser Park, a baseball/softball diamond across Dubuque Street from Penn Elementary School, is a special place to the residents of North Liberty. This plan recommends providing Dubuque Street cross markings and signage to make pedestrian crossings for parking safer. Additional improvements identified are the preservation of the open space beyond the outfield fence, enhanced storage, and outdoor basketball court. The ball field could be updated by adding enhanced bleaches, dugouts, fencing, and warm up areas.

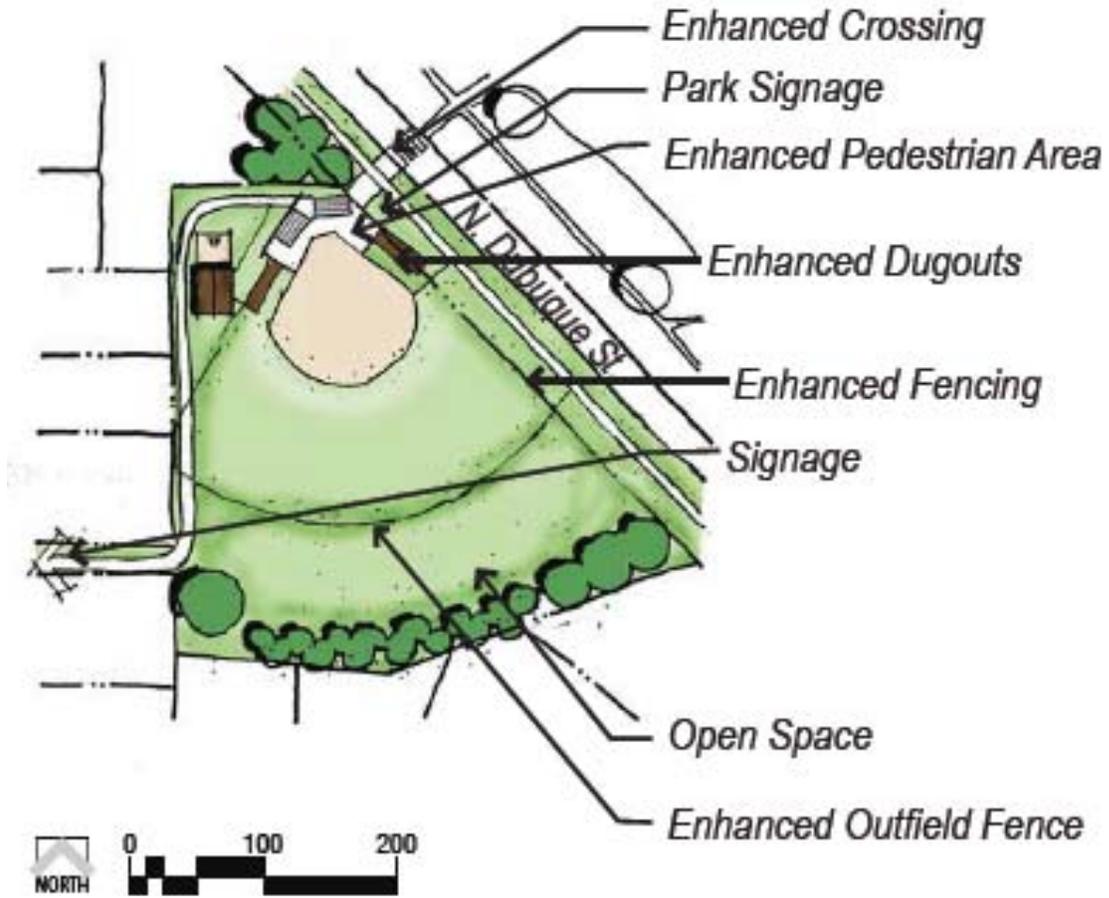
**Challenges:** Lack of parking

**Opportunities:** Trail connection, Enhanced site amenities

**Priorities:**

1. Fence Enhancements
2. Bleacher Enhancements
3. Trail Connection, Including Enhanced Crossing at North Dubuque Street
4. Dugout Enhancements
5. Storage Enhancements

# Koser Park Plan



## ENHANCEMENT COST CONSIDERATIONS

Trail	\$16,000
Small Shelter	\$25,000
Site Furnishings	\$7,500
Signage	\$7,000
Landscaping	\$5,000
Art	\$5,000

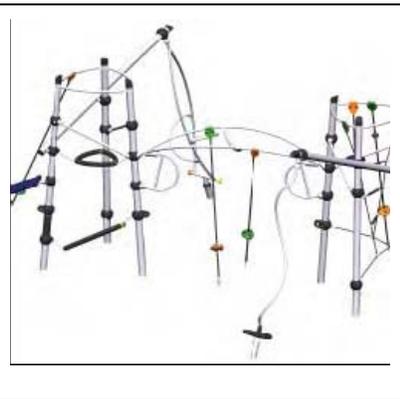
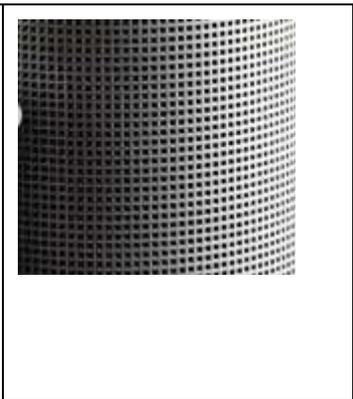
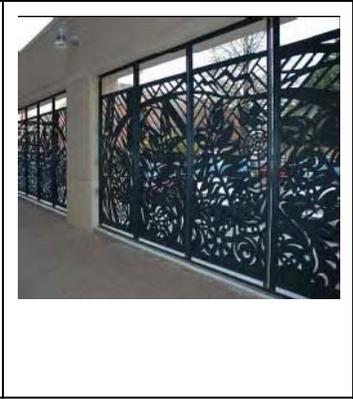
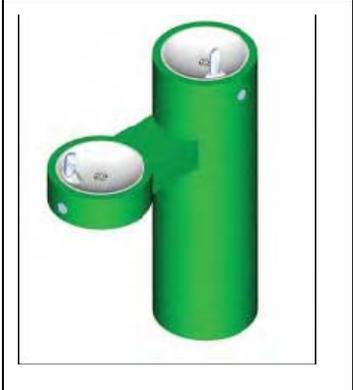
Package One:  
Natural Furnishings

	<p>Play Equipment: Custom Made</p>		<p>Materials: Natural Stone Limestone</p>
	<p>Trash Recepticals: Landscape Forms Model: Plainwellr3_ original</p>		<p>Bike Racks: Creative Pipe</p>
	<p>Benches: Landscape Forms Model: Orig Balustrade Bench 1</p>		<p>Public Art: Custom Made</p>
	<p>Shelters: Custom Made</p>		<p>Drinking Fountains: Acorn Aqua Model: ABE29008</p>

Package Two:  
Traditional Furnishings

	<p>Play Equipment: Gametime Model: 500</p>		<p>Materials: Brick</p>
	<p>Trash Receptacles: Victor Stanley Model: T-Series</p>		<p>Bike Racks: Victor Stanley Prairie Sites Series Model: BK3</p>
	<p>Benches: Landscape Forms Model: main Plainwell Bench</p>		<p>Public Art: Custom Made Pavers</p>
	<p>Shelters: Poligon Model: HXE 20MR with custom copula and columns</p>		<p>Drinking Fountains: Acorn Aqua Model: ABE29008</p>

Package Three:  
Contemporary Furnishings

	<p>Play Equipment: Kompan</p>		<p>Materials: Metal</p>
	<p>Trash Receptical: Landscape Forms Model: Pitch 6</p>		<p>Bike Racks: Cora Model: Steel</p>
	<p>Benches: Landscape Forms Model: Austin Bench</p>		<p>Public Art: Custom Made</p>
	<p>Shelters: Custom Park and Leisure</p>		<p>Drinking Fountains: Acorn Aqua Model: ABC2500B[1]</p>

## **5: Implementation and Phasing**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The North Liberty Parks Facility Master Plan is a tool for park staff and community leaders, intended to help focus planning efforts for park system growth. More importantly, this document identifies and promotes a “Quality of Life” that North Liberty residents are proud of and look forward to expanding. Identifying proper park service standards and planning for growth will help to ensure that this “Quality of Life” is extended to future generations of park users. This document provides a flexible road map for staff and community leaders to make informed decisions for the short-term future. The high rate of growth in North Liberty dictates that the plan’s implementation section be revisited and updated regularly.

### **PROJECT TYPES**

The components of the North Liberty Parks Master Plan can be categorized into various project types. Each project type in turn has funding mechanisms that are particularly appropriate. These general project types include:

- **ENHANCEMENT:** Existing park, open space and trail improvements and upgrades, ranging from rehabilitation of existing facilities to major expansion and park improvement projects.
- **DEVELOPMENT:** New park, open space and trail development, including development of new park ground.
- **ACQUISITION:** Land obtained for park purposes that is not available through park land dedication.
- **MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS:** Resources required to support the staff that maintain the park system.

These four areas of implementation help organize resource allocation. Prioritizing the implementation strategy is based on public input received from the Steering Committee, stakeholder interviews, and public workshops, and on priorities based on funding strategies and availability of resources.

Meeting the recreational needs of the public will take a dedicated commitment on multiple fronts. Close cooperation between community leaders, city staff, members of the public, and park enthusiasts will be key to long-term success. A balanced approach to providing a wide range of park and recreation facilities is critical in satisfying the needs of a growing population.

### **GENERAL PRIORITIES AND PHASING**

In addition to categorizing projects by type for the purpose of financing strategies, the plan must also assess the phasing of the projects over time. Tables in this section categorize the projects by both project type and priority grouping. Priority categories correspond to four to five year phases that can form the basis of successive bond issues or grant application cycles. While the city may change the sequence of projects, the concept of dividing the overall program into distinct, short-term “packages” is an important implementation tool. Some large projects, such as trail development and community park acquisition and development, are multi-year efforts that fall across several priority categories. Other projects may change in sequence given changing circumstances - a high degree of community interest or demand for a specific facility, or the emergence of an opportunity, may cause changes. This discipline of maintaining a long-term program divided into short-term “implementation packages” is more important than the specific order of projects identified below. Priority groups identify the timing or grouping of the individual park improvement packages, and are clustered as follows:

Priority Group 1: 2009-2011

Priority Group 2: 2011-2016

Priority Group 3: 2016-2020

Priority Group 4: 2020-2025

## INCREASED STAFFING NEEDS

A major challenge for this quickly growing park system will be to maintain existing and future facilities at the high level of current maintenance. As North Liberty grows, each component of the park system will grow, creating a significant need to add staff and to enhance park maintenance facilities. If the population doubles as forecasted, and if new facilities are brought online to serve that population, the park maintenance staff will likely need to roughly double in size. The maintenance facilities will need to grow as well, as planned for in the Comprehensive Facility Master Plan.

## FINANCING STRATEGIES

Enhancement, development, acquisition and maintenance/operations are all investments that will be required to strengthen and grow the park system. To address these financial obligations, a variety of financing opportunities will need to be relied upon, as follows:

- Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The Capital Improvement Plan assesses capital facility needs against overall city goals and objectives using a multi-year planning horizon. North Liberty Park and Recreation receives annually no dedicated allocation for land acquisition and no dedicated allocation for park enhancements and development. It is recommended that the city begin a per-year allocation of \$25,000 for land acquisition and \$25,000 for enhancements and development, not as a ceiling but as a baseline to work from.
- Transportation Enhancements (TE). TE Funds are federal moneys programmed through the Johnson County Council of Governments for trails, corridor beautification, and many other transportation-related enhancements.
- Grants. Funding sources through federal or state agencies.
- Recreation Service Fees. Dedicated user fees, established by the department.
- Private Foundations and Contributions. Foundations and private donors can be significant contributors to park and development, especially for unique facilities or for major community quality of life features.
- General Obligation (GO) Bonds. GO bonds allow cities to borrow funds to be repaid over time by general tax revenues. Issuance of GO bonds requires voter approval, and typically forms the core of park non-operational financing mechanisms.
- Storm Water Utility (SWU). The City currently maintains a storm water utility fund, which may be accessed for several existing parks that include dedicated storm water management facilities to maintain these storm water facility portions of community parks.
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF). This tool allows municipalities to promote economic development by earmarking property tax revenue from increases in assessed values within a designated TIF district.
- Advertising Sales. There may be some potential to sell advertising within a park system if done in an appropriate manner.
- Agreements with Private Concessions. A contractual relationship with a private business to operate concessions at a municipal facility.
- Rental. Renting equipment or facilities.
- Land Trust. Generally, non-profit corporations which protect conservation resources. Land is held by the trust with prohibitions against development.
- Licensing Rights. This revenue source allows the department to license its name on all resale items that private or public vendors use when they sell clothing or other items containing the name.
- Life Estates. This source is available when a person wants to leave his or her property to the city in exchange for living on the property until his or her death.
- Special Fund-Raisers. Special event to cover specific programs and capital projects.

## PARKS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

There are 2 major specific issues related to the implementation of the Park Plan identified during the planning process, as summarized in the following paragraphs.

**Issue #1:** The need to ensure that land is dedicated to the City for neighborhood park purposes as the community grows. While North Liberty has accepted as park land several subdivision tracts that include storm water retention ponds, the city has generally not done a good job of ensuring that dedicated park land includes usable play areas. Currently, the city lacks specific ordinance standards governing park land dedication, and as a result has relied on case-by-case negotiation with developers. A North Liberty parkland dedication ordinance should be considered, including language requiring dedication of usable open space that meets neighborhood park requirements. There are several options as to how this parkland dedication ordinance can be set up, including those outlined here.

### Approach 1: Establish Parkland per Person Standards

Step 1: Determine persons per household averages, by dwelling type, using most recent U.S. Census data.

Step 2: Establish City standard for parkland acres per 1,000 residents.

Alternate A: Count actual lots in proposed subdivision or development; determine total population, and multiply by parkland acres/1,000 population standard to determine required dedication land area. Examples of Alternate A are West Des Moines, Johnston, and Clive.

Alternate B: Use minimum lot size in zoning district; reduce total project area to net development area; determine total dwelling unity by type and project total population; multiply by parkland acres/1,000 population standard to determine required dedication land area. An example of Alternate B is Iowa City.

### Approach 2: Establish required parkland dedication as a percentage of total development area

The Ankeny dedication ordinance establishes the amount of parkland as a percentage of the total development area, varying the percentage in accordance with the minimum lot area per unit, as follows:

Residential Uses Minimum Lot Area	Percentage of Total Land Area for Parks
25,000 – 40,000 sf or greater	3%
8,000 – 24,999 sf	5%
2,499 -7,999 sf	10%

There are additional issues related to establishing a parkland dedication ordinance that should be considered and included within the scope of the ordinance:

**Payment in Lieu of Dedication.** There is some difference of opinion as to whether the city should allow payment of cash in lieu of dedication of land. It is clear that the city cannot mandate a payment in lieu of dedication. Ankeny, Johnston and Iowa City all have provisions in their dedication ordinance for payment of cash in lieu of dedication. West Des Moines and Clive ordinances prohibit such payments.

**Usability of Dedicated Parkland.** Most ordinances require land to be usable for active recreation. Most allow wet lands/storm water management facilities to be included in dedicated land, but not count towards required acreage.

In negotiating with developers for parkland the city should require a minimum of at least 1 ½ acres of relatively flat land that is usable for open play activities. Also, the city should attempt to incorporate storm water management facilities into park areas as amenities. Recently, Ankeny has developed a “5 to 1” rule whereby it will allow storm water facilities to count toward parkland dedication requirements at a ratio of one acre of storm water facility to every 5 acres of non-stormwater facility parkland. This approach of allowing stormwater facilities to count towards a part of the parkland dedication requirement seems reasonable.

Location of Parkland. The best ordinances require parkland to be located so as to reasonably serve the neighborhood. Also, small parcel dedications should be located at a boundary with adjacent vacant land to allow agglomeration of parcels into a reasonably-sized park.

Access. The best ordinances require minimum access to parkland from greenway/trails and from public streets. This is a critical point and as a goal, a minimum of 25% of the perimeter frontage of a neighborhood park should be along an open public street. Quail Ridge Park is an excellent example of a neighborhood park that fully meets this requirement.

Site Preparation. The best ordinances require the developer to grade and seed the dedicated site, as well as install any required utilities and sidewalks along adjacent street segments. The specific ordinance language should require that the prepared site have the turf established and stabilized.

Master Agreement. Some ordinances make provisions for development agreements whereby establishment of parks under a master plan for a larger area can supersede the parkland dedication procedure for an individual plat within the master-planned area.

Establishment of Land Value for Payments in Lieu of Dedication. If payment is allowed, the ordinance should include provisions for establishing land value. Alternatives include: (1) establish value based upon a specific appraisal of the property in question, or (2) establish an “average community vacant land value” each year (Ankeny).

Minimum Total Size of Dedicated Parcel. Several ordinances require a minimum 10,000 sq. ft. dedicated land area.

**Issue #2:** Use of the Storm Water Utility Fee as a means to pay for the increasing maintenance and operating costs of publicly dedicated subregional storm water management facilities. It is appropriate that the city accept and maintain subregional stormwater management facilities typically constructed with single-family subdivisions. The alternative to city acceptance and maintenance is for the facilities to remain under the ownership and responsibility of homeowners’ associations consisting of those property owners whose parcels drain into or through the facility. This alternative has proven to be not workable in single-family subdivisions, as these facilities under private ownership are typically not maintained and over time cause serious drainage and even health and safety problems. The recommended approach to dealing with stormwater management is not on an individual subdivision basis, but rather on a drainage region or subregional scale. This approach would indicate that the City should hire a civil engineering firm to conduct a storm water management study for the area west of Jones Blvd. to I-380 and recommend regional facilities to manage drainage throughout that watershed. Then, as individual developments come forward, they should be required to either construct facilities from that plan that happen to be located on the subject ground, or contribute financially their “fair-share” of the regional stormwater facilities that serve their project. These regional facilities would be owned and maintained by the City.

The City of North Liberty’s Storm Water Utility fee makes contemplation of a regional approach to storm water management practical. This fee, currently established at \$2.00 per month, has generated funds that currently provide for a surplus over expenditures; however, this surplus is largely because the storm water facilities owned by the city are relatively new. As they age, maintenance costs will increase. The City should monitor the status of its storm water utility account balance and incorporate reasonable cost-of-living increases as appropriate.

These storm water management facilities, typically retention ponds, can be well integrated within a system of neighborhood parks. As discussed under the “Financing Strategies” section above, Storm Water Utility funding of maintenance costs for storm water management facilities in parks should be coordinated with other funding sources in an overall park maintenance budget.

<b>Table 11: Park Prioritization, Priority 1 - 2009-2011</b>			
<b>Project</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Project Cost</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Community Park	Acquisition	\$820,000	Financed over several years
Trail Development	Development	\$50,000 to \$150,000/year	Work with Public Works
Maintenance Facility	Development	\$500,000-\$650,000	
Deerfield Park	Dedication	Land Dedication	Work with developers
Deerfield Park	Development	\$200,000	Complete in Phase 2
Future Neighborhood Park	Acq/Dedication	\$100,000	Continued Effort
Fox Run Pond & Park	Development	\$150,000	Complete in Phase 2
<b>Subtotal Priority 1</b>		<b>Estimate \$2,070,000</b>	3 Year Period

<b>Table 12: Park Prioritization, Priority 2 - 2011-2016</b>			
<b>Project</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Project Cost</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Community Park	Acquisition	See Phase 1	Continued Effort
Trail Development	Development	\$50,000 to \$150,000/year	Work with Public Works
Maintenance Facility	Development	\$100,000	Complete Project
Fox Run Pond & Park	Development	\$150,000	Complete Project from Phase 1
Deerfield Park	Development	\$200,000	Complete Project from Phase 1
Future Neighborhood Park	Dedication	\$100,000	Continued Effort
Quail Ridge Park	Enhancement	\$500,000	
Penn Meadows/Old Town/Meade Park	Enhancement	\$319,500	
Joy Park	Development	\$307,500	
<b>Subtotal Priority 2</b>		<b>Estimate \$1,827,000</b>	5 Year Period

<b>Table 13: Park Prioritization, Priority 3 - 2016-2020</b>			
<b>Project</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Project Cost</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Community Park	Development	\$500,000	Development of a multi-phased process
Trail Development	Development	\$50,000 to \$150,000/year	Work with Public Works
Future Neighborhood Park	Dedication	\$100,000	New Park Development
Creekside Commons Park	Enhancement	\$200,000	Complete in Phase 4
Koser Park	Enhancement	\$65,500	
Freedom	Enhancement	\$179,500	
Broadmoor Park	Development	\$375,000	
Beaver Kreek Park	Enhancement	\$100,000	Complete in Phase 4
Goose Lake	Enhancement	\$28,000	
West Lake	Enhancement	\$37,000	
<b>Subtotal Priority 3</b>		<b>Estimate \$1,735,000</b>	5 Year Period

<b>Table 14: Park Prioritization, Priority 4 - 2020-2025</b>			
<b>Project</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Project Cost</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Community Park	Development	\$1,000,000	Continued Effort
Trail Development	Development	\$50,000 to \$150,000/year	Coordinate with Public Works
Future Neighborhood Park	Development	\$100,000	Continued Effort
Fox Run Park	Enhancement	\$82,000	
Parkview	Enhancement	\$74,000	Trail/Bridge Component
Creekside Commons Park	Development	\$200,000	Complete Project
Beaver Kreek Park	Enhancement	\$130,000	Complete Project
<b>Subtotal Priority 4</b>		<b>Estimate \$1,736,000</b>	5 Year Period