

Parks and recreation facilities are an integral part of the public infrastructure system, equaling the importance of water and wastewater systems and police and fire protection in terms of their relevance to quality of life. Foresight and preparedness is, therefore, of utmost importance to adequately plan to satisfy the needs and desires of citizens, both now and in the future. The framework of this chapter is intended to guide the City's decisions as to the enhancement of the existing parks and trails and the ongoing development of new facilities to pace future changes in population, demographics, and development.

The purpose of this Parks & Recreation chapter is to determine the community's current and future needs for improving its existing parks, and providing adequate areas and facilities to meet its short- and long-term needs. This plan element forms the policy direction of the City pertaining to the timing of park development, their placement within the City and planning area, the type and quality of facilities, and the method by which enhancements and improvements are funded. It guides the City's planning efforts for developing a "first class" public parks and recreation system while directing private contributions through provision of active recreation areas and open space to meet the requisite needs of new development. This chapter addresses the availability, quality, type, size, and location of leisure and recreation opportunities to meet the needs of Aberdeen's residents and visitors.

Parks and recreation facilities are an essential part of a healthy, quality,

and sustainable community environment. They provide necessary components in human existence for events outside of the home, after work, and beyond school activities. Whether for passive or active use, park areas and recreation facilities are an important part of everyday life. Much like streets and sidewalks, water and wastewater lines, drainage facilities, police and fire equipment, and other municipal facilities and services, parks and open space are an integral part of the municipal infrastructure. Therefore, they warrant an equal level of attention and commitment of resources to adequately acquire, construct, operate, and maintain.

A comprehensive and interrelated system of parks and recreation opportunities that respond to the needs and values of the local residents contribute to a community's quality of life and livability. Parks and recreation opportunities contribute to the health of residents, provide a variety of recreational and educational activities for all ages, and preserve

**Parks & Recreation
Planning Principles**

- ♦ All residents and visitors will have unrestricted access to public park areas and recreational facilities regardless of their age, gender, race, income, cultural background, housing environment, or handicap;
- ♦ Public recreation will be highly coordinated with other organizations and programs, including Brown County, the school district, civic clubs, athletic organizations, private entities, and others to avoid duplication and encourage cooperation;
- ♦ Public recreation will incorporate other public services such as education, health and fitness, transportation, and leisure;
- ♦ Facilities will be well planned and coordinated to ensure adequate adaptability to future needs and requirements;
- ♦ There will be an established process and procedure for acquiring land for future parks and recreational areas and facilities prior to development; and
- ♦ The design of spaces and facilities will encourage the most efficient utilization of land and will consider the needs, desires, and opinions of the intended users.



Parks planning is important because a system of parks that is planned, well-managed, and adequately funded will help the City:

- ♦ attract and sustain quality development;
- ♦ enhance real estate values;
- ♦ contribute to improved community health;
- ♦ enhance the enjoyment and quality of life of residents and visitors;
- ♦ attract new residents and tourists to the community, thereby aiding in the City's economic development;
- ♦ prevent youth mischief and crime by providing recreational opportunities and programs;
- ♦ provide a variety of active and passive recreational activities for all persons; and
- ♦ preserve and enhance the quality and integrity of the natural environment.

and enhance the quality and integrity of the natural environment. Parks and recreation opportunities are also significant in attracting visitors to the community and, thus, contribute to local tourism and economic development.

There are several reasons why this chapter is important, among them to:

- ♦ first and foremost, invest in the community's livability and quality of life, which contribute to its economic development and attractiveness as a place to live and conduct business;
- ♦ improve the quality and appearance of the community's public spaces, which help form a positive and desirable image of Aberdeen to visitors and investors;
- ♦ provide areas and facilities for the community's youth, as well as its adults and seniors, to meet their active and leisure recreation needs;
- ♦ contribute to a healthful community life by enabling citizens to utilize parks and trails for sport and exercise;
- ♦ satisfy the interests of local recreation leagues and activity groups who utilize these facilities for athletic events and social interaction;
- ♦ improve the safety and utilization of the existing parks by making necessary improvements and desired enhancements;

- ♦ form decision criteria for acquiring and developing new parks, including their type, design, location, spacing, and methods of financing;
- ♦ provide adequate areas and facilities within close proximity to all persons, including a diverse range and type of parks to meet the individual needs of citizens; and
- ♦ preserve valued open space and sensitive lands for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Key Parks & Recreation Issues

In conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), as well as the input received from over one hundred citizens who participated in the community forum, there were a number of key parks and recreation issues identified, including the following:

1. **Resource conservation and preservation** – There are areas interspersed throughout the community and the larger planning area that possess valuable natural resources warranting protection. Lands along Moccasin Creek, Foot Creek, around Lake Minnie-Eho, and within floodplain areas and wetlands offer opportunities for resource conservation and land preservation. While these areas are sensitive to urban development, they may be



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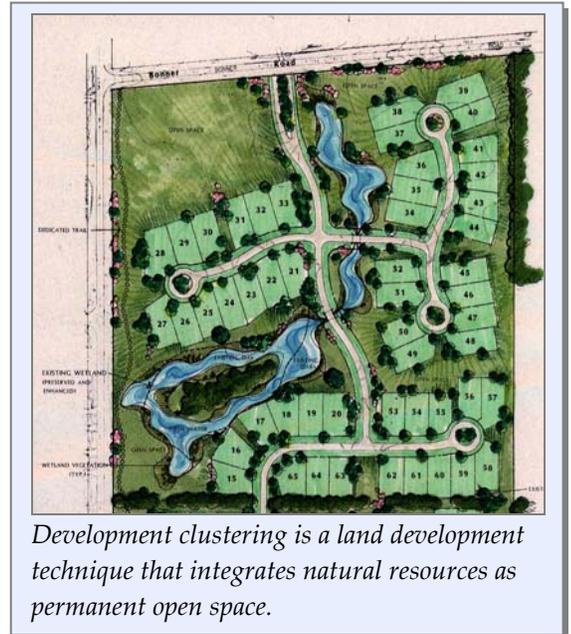
utilized to fulfill other community objectives, such as environmental protection and sound resource management.

Residents of Aberdeen are interested in creating a community that is both unique and attractive. There were numerous comments received through the key person interviews and community forum regarding the desire for more green space integrated as an amenity into development. This objective may be achieved by adopting sound environmental conservation and responsible land development practices. Sensitive areas along the creeks and within the floodplain and wetlands may be incorporated within developments as a natural amenity, while sustaining their resource function. Doing so requires a regulatory system that balances development efficiency and resource protection. Through innovative land planning, resources may be preserved and effectively integrated into development without compromising private interests.

The restoration of natural areas, such as wetlands, streams, or heavily vegetated lands within parks or adjacent to “tired” areas of the community, can

serve as a catalyst for redevelopment and economic revitalization. There is a significant opportunity to improve the flow of Moccasin Creek, thereby making it a focus of neighborhoods and public areas, rather than abutting the rear lots of the adjacent development. A resource of this nature can offer a unifying theme, tying together the community’s neighborhoods, parks, schools, and areas of commerce.

2. **Balanced, convenient, and accessible parks** – The key to a successful and heavily utilized system of parks is an even distribution of recreation areas and public open spaces throughout the community. In this way, all residents may have convenient access to open spaces, thereby meeting their active and passive recreation needs. It is also important that these individual parks are located and designed to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods, provide safe and convenient access, and incorporate the



“People, even today, want to get away from the noise and confusion of daily life and want to do so on their own. It is not enough for a parks department to offer structured recreational activities. People need to have a place where they can go to stroll or lie in the grass or bicycle whenever the mood strikes them and not just when it is a scheduled activity.”

- Alexander Garvin in “Parks, Recreation, and Open Space: A Twenty-first Century Agenda”

equipment and facilities desired by its users.

A true “system” of parks offers a wide range of public spaces, including large-scale facilities intended for persons within the larger region (generally within a one-hour driving distance), facilities for use by the whole community (typically within a one-mile radius), and those that are used by one or more neighborhoods, as well as small playlots (mini-parks) for use by an individual development. The value of an adequate park system is its ability to meet the individual needs of all persons. The term “balanced” refers to a combination of indoor and

outdoor facilities, as well as an adequate assortment of different types of activities (both passive and active) to meet the recreational needs of residents year-round. Given the climate during the winter months, it is particularly important to offer indoor facilities and programs and outdoor activities that are conducive to the weather conditions.

3. **Linking parks, schools and neighborhoods** – A system of parks and recreation areas is not complete without linear linkages between facilities and connections to neighborhoods, schools, and other public use facilities. While the areas along Moccasin Creek, Foot Creek, and other natural drainage ways are subject to flooding and undesirable for development, they are ideal as pedestrian linkages and bike trails between parks and other community attractions. In addition, use of excess rights-of-way along streets, alleys, and railroads; utility and drainage easements; and wide shoulders along arterial streets and rural roadways offer the benefit of linkages between facilities. Connecting each of the public parks and green areas by expanding the current bikeways will create an interconnected system of public spaces that is



The existing trail along Moccasin Creek is an excellent example of a linear linkage providing an off-street connection between neighborhoods, parks, schools, and other community destinations.



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highly desirable in Aberdeen. An interconnected system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities serves as a form of recreation and exercise and has an added benefit as an alternative mode of transportation. Through the community meetings, residents expressed a desire to extend the current system of nature trails to include other off-street and on-street bike lanes/routes that connect the area's parks, schools, neighborhoods, and public buildings. Off-street trails and linkages allow for relatively uninterrupted pedestrian movement to and through the park system and protect users from busy development areas and associated vehicular traffic.

- 4. Coordination, collaboration, and adequate funding** – Aging infrastructure, changing demographics, and increased demand for recreational programs and facilities have strained the limited resources of Aberdeen and other public entities. Inter-governmental agreements and public-private partnerships create opportunities to use tax-dollars wisely, utilize land efficiently, and conserve precious environmental resources. Joint acquisition, development, and ongoing maintenance of public spaces leverage additional

resources. Coordination and collaboration among agencies, such as with Brown County, the school district, NSU and PC, and other local agencies and organizations, is of mutual benefit to all interests. It eases the burden on public tax dollars and enhances the quality of areas and facilities.

A collaborative approach to parks and recreation planning requires communication and coordination among all vested entities and interested parties. Through agreements created between public agencies, as well as partnerships with the private sector, the parks and recreation system benefits in its quality and affordability. Joint acquisition, construction, ongoing operation, and maintenance allow efficient use of public dollars while ensuring that facilities are coordinated and connected.

Unfortunately, the funding for parks and recreation is often a lesser priority in comparison to water, wastewater and drainage facilities, and safety sensitive services, such as fire and police protection. However, parks and public open areas are equally important forms of public infrastructure. While funding for the primary public facilities and services demand sufficient funding to avoid failing

Coordination and collaboration among agencies is of mutual benefit to all interests. It eases the burden on public tax dollars and enhances the quality of areas and facilities.



conditions, the dollars available for parks and recreation are less certain. Identifying a dedicated funding source and effectively leveraging state and federal grant funds is important to developing and sustaining an adequate parks and recreation system.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals, objectives, and action recommendations are designed to address the above issues, which were identified by citizens of the community through their participation in the key person interviews and community forum.



Wetlands provide both natural and beneficial functions and should, therefore, be maintained to sustain wildlife habitat and increase water quality and flood storage capacity.

GOAL 7.1: Conservation of natural resources through parkland acquisition, open space preservation, and environmentally sensitive planning.

Objective A: Encourage the conservation of environmentally sensitive areas, i.e. streambeds and floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitats, and areas with soil limitations and encourage conservation through development incentives, regulations, and policies.

Action 7.1.1: Seek to acquire highly sensitive lands and conservation sites, such as those within the expansive floodplain areas and adjacent to Moccasin Creek, to preserve as public open space or recreation areas.

Action 7.1.2: Develop a “land-bank” program in which owners of properties in the floodplain are encouraged to deed their land to the “bank” to ensure long-term conservation, which would be offset by incentives for increased development density or other dimensional allowances.

Action 7.1.3: Acquire conservation easements along Moccasin Creek, Foot Creek, their tributaries, and other sensitive lands to protect these valuable natural resources

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from encroaching development.

Action 7.1.4: Integrate site capacity calculations into the development ordinances to quantify the allowable density that can be accommodated on an environmentally constrained site.

Action 7.1.5: Identify the boundaries of the regulatory floodways and consider acquisition through fee-simple or conservation easement methods.

Action 7.1.6: Identify areas of repetitive structure flooding, if any, where mitigation activities may result in publicly owned open space.

Action 7.1.7: Amend the subdivision regulations to allow the use of conservation, preservation, and clustering subdivision techniques, which allow flexibility in lot size, setbacks, and other area standards to increase open space, preservation of natural areas, and set-asides for wetlands and other sensitive habitat areas.

Action 7.1.8: Preserve the environmental quality of Moccasin Creek, Foot Creek, and their tributaries, as well as area lakes and water bodies, by protecting valuable open space and habitats, improving drainage and water quality,

and providing sensitive eco-recreational facilities.

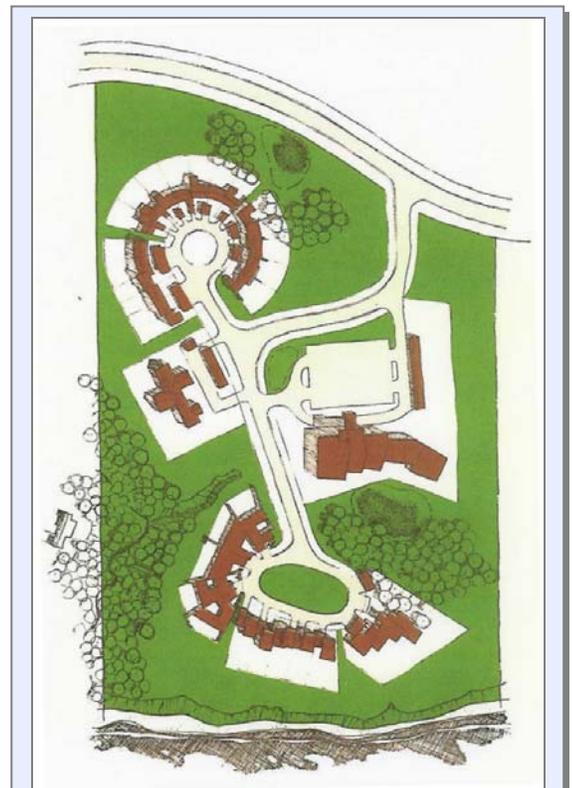
Action 7.1.9: Enforce sound floodplain management practices to maintain the water carrying capacity of drainage ways, channels, and floodplain areas.

GOAL 7.2: A balanced and wide variety of public parks, recreational areas, and open space in near proximity to all residents.

Objective A: Accommodate the current and future needs of residents by providing a system of playlots, neighborhood play areas, and large community parks.

Action 7.2.1:
Develop an even distribution of parks and recreation facilities throughout the planning area – consistent with [Figure 7.3, Parks and Recreation System Plan](#) - that will provide equitable opportunities and convenient access for all citizens.

Action 7.2.2:
Acquire 40 acres



Preservation development preserves 80 percent or more open space, which may be used to conserve resources and preserve open space.

The Mission of the National Recreation and Parks Association is "To advance parks, recreation and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people."

NRPA's Values - We believe that parks and recreation:

- ◆ Enhance the human potential by providing facilities, services and programs that meet the emotional, social and physical needs of communities.
- ◆ Articulate environmental values through ecologically responsible management and environmental education programs.
- ◆ Promote individual and community wellness that enhances the quality of life for all citizens.
- ◆ Utilize holistic approaches to promote cultural understanding, economic development, family public health and safety, by working in coalitions and partnerships with allied organizations.
- ◆ Facilitate and promote the development of grassroots, self-help initiatives in communities across the country.

for the development of neighborhood parks within the areas that are either currently deficient or expected to develop as residential use to meet the current and future parks and recreation demands.

Action 7.2.3: Acquire 8 acres for the development or expansion of a community park within the areas that are either currently deficient or expected to develop as residential use to meet the current and future parks and recreation demands.

Action 7.2.4: Meet the projected future demands and acquire and develop 73 acres of land for parks and recreation purposes, consistent with [Figure 7.3, Parks and Recreation System Plan](#).

Action 7.2.5: By the Year 2020, aim to comply with the maximum standards of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) for each classification of park.

Action 7.2.6: Acquire lands within the future growth areas (refer to [Chapter 9, Growth Capacity Policies](#)) for parks and recreation facilities, public open space, and conservation areas in advance of ensuing development.

Action 7.2.7: Amend the current park dedication requirements to tie the amount of dedicated

acreage or fee in lieu of dedication to a specified number of dwelling units, which establishes a rational nexus between the demand being placed on the system and the required acreage or fee to be dedicated for public purposes.

Action 7.2.8: Establish a series of park zones for which fees in lieu of land for development within an individual zone may be used to acquire land, expand or improve existing parks, or construct new parks.

Action 7.2.9: Establish additional provisions within the parkland dedication requirements pertaining to the location and usefulness of dedicated lands, i.e. counting ponds and lakes, detention areas, golf courses, and other site amenities toward the required acreage.

Action 7.2.10: Pursuant to the *Community Attitude & Interest Citizen Survey*, annually install more restrooms, drinking fountains, walking trails, benches/picnic tables, and other priority improvements in each of the parks.

Objective B: Encourage the preservation of open space to enhance the community's livability, aesthetic quality, and natural beauty.



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Action 7.2.11: Establish development incentives, such as reduced street widths and increased density, to encourage dedication of open space easements adjacent to collector and arterial street rights-of-way, along creeks and drainage ways, and within major developments.

Action 7.2.12: Incorporate open space at each of the community entrances and in other unique areas and acquire land for permanent open space along U.S. Highways 12 and 281 to visually enhance those corridors and promote regional recognition.

Action 7.2.13: Acquire excess rights-of-way, vacated alleys and easements, areas beneath overhead power lines, irregularly-shaped parcels, and other non-developable parcels for utilization as playlots and public open space.

Objective C: Sustain and improve the quality condition and attractive appearance of public areas and facilities with an aggressive maintenance program.

Action 7.2.14: Conduct annual physical condition assessments of the existing parks and recreation grounds and facilities to identify necessary improvements and to determine the level of

financial commitment required to make improvements.

Action 7.2.15: Develop an operation and management plan for development of facilities and delivery of parks and recreation services, including a continuous maintenance plan with scheduling and personnel tracking.

Action 7.2.16: Provide adequate funding and resources to perform ongoing maintenance and repairs and to construct needed improvements at existing and future parks and recreation facilities.

Action 7.2.17: Establish a "Friends-of-the-Park" program to solicit neighborhood involvement in maintaining and policing public parks.

Action 7.2.18: Perform regular safety inspections to identify potentially harmful or dangerous conditions and create an itemized list of repairs and improvements.

Action 7.2.19: Add overhead and walkway bollard lighting in each of the neighborhood and community parks to enhance late afternoon and early morning/evening use and to promote park safety.

Action 7.2.20: Improve accessibility for disabled and handicapped users by adding



sidewalk curb cuts and ramps, wheelchair accessible sidewalks and trails, and providing other accessible facilities and equipment.

Action 7.2.21: Replace or construct new park signs that are uniform in appearance with maintenance-free landscaping or xeriscape plant materials around the base.

GOAL 7.3: An interconnected system of trails and bikeways providing community connectivity.

Objective A: Provide an interconnected system of paths, trails, lanes, and routes that are multipurpose, accessible, convenient, and connect to residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, workplaces, major open spaces, and other destinations.

Action 7.3.1: Utilize rights-of-way, easements, natural drainage courses, Moccasin Creek, and Foot Creek for nature trails to link the City's parks and recreation areas.

Action 7.3.2: Pursuant to the Recreational Trails Master Plan, extend the existing trail segments along Moccasin Creek, Milwaukee Avenue, Roosevelt Street South, Melgaard Road Southeast, 5th Street South, and Dakota Street North and the Wylie Park trail to form a complete network connecting each of

the parks with neighborhoods, schools, and activity areas, such as downtown and the county fairgrounds.

Action 7.3.3: Adopt a policy for the conversion and use of floodways and drainage channels, abandoned railroad corridors, vacated alleys, and other rights-of-way and easements as trails and connections.

Action 7.3.4: Regularly submit applications for federal grants through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and other available programs to leverage funds for bikeway and trail planning and development.

Action 7.3.5: Establish incentives and standards for developments adjacent to any of the future trail segments, or along other viable connections, to dedicate recreation easements for public use.

Action 7.3.6: Require sidewalk and trail locations to be shown on preliminary plats to allow pre-development review and post-construction inspection of plan conformance.

Action 7.3.7: Prepare a sidewalk improvement program to repair, replace, or install new sidewalks in high pedestrian use areas, thereby providing



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safe walking connections to segments of the community trail system.

Action 7.3.8: Amend the subdivision regulations to require access easements when adjacent to any existing or proposed future segment of the community trail network or when along any potential linear linkage that may provide access between the neighborhood and an activity area.

Action 7.3.9: Coordinate with Brown County and/or the South Dakota Department of Transportation to install shared right-of-way signage and adequate shoulders along rural roadways to accommodate avid distance cyclists.

GOAL 7.4: Cooperative agreements and coordinated efforts with other governmental jurisdictions, educational bodies, and private sector entities.

Objective A: Form mutually beneficial partnerships with and among the public and private sectors to expand and improve the provision of services and facilities.

Action 7.4.1: Develop an agreement between the City of Aberdeen, Brown County, the Aberdeen School District, NSU, and PC to include joint



Public easements providing access to adjacent community parks and trails are an integral element of park and trail system development.

acquisition of land and effective use of school and municipal buildings and facilities.

Action 7.4.2: Establish programs for lease/purchase, tax incentives, and public maintenance to entice private sector participation in park system development.

Action 7.4.3: Establish cooperative agreements with developers and landowners outside the City limits to develop parkland in new rural residential areas, which may include the dedication of parkland that would be maintained by the City.

Action 7.4.4: Encourage private sector participation in the provision of parks and recreation opportunities by

permitting innovative land development practices and creating incentives that will result in an efficient utilization of land and provide greater opportunities for the enjoyment of open space and preservation of the natural environment.

Action 7.4.5: Encourage educational institutions, such as NSU, PC, and non-profit organizations, to acquire, manage, and operate parks and open space conservation areas.

Action 7.4.6: Involve local sports associations in the provision of adequate facilities for practices and games.

Action 7.4.7: Establish alliances with local churches and other institutions for use of their facilities, as available, in exchange for contributions and improvements.

Action 7.4.8: Establish lines of communication with citizens to assist in the planning, design, and development of parks within their respective neighborhoods.

Objective B: Provide for an adequate, "first class" parks and recreation system by providing adequate resources, funding, and attention.

Action 7.4.9: Identify all potential funding sources, including Federal, State, County, City, and School District programs

and budgets, donated and volunteer resources, and revenue sources, such as user fees, exactions, fee-in-lieu of land, etc.

Action 7.4.10: Develop a capital improvement program for parks and recreation areas and facilities in the City and its planning area and identify a five-year plan of priority improvements and sources of funds.

Action 7.4.11: Annually prepare nominations and applications to qualify for grant assistance or other funding arrangements to finance annual capital improvements.

Action 7.4.12: Consider establishing a recreation district, which has the authority to levy a tax to generate revenue toward the development and improvement of areas and facilities.

Facility Inventory

The foundation for establishing an adequate, "first-class" parks and recreation system begins with the availability, location, and condition of the existing City-owned parks and recreation areas. In determining the need for additional parkland, recreational facilities, and park-related improvements, the first step is to assess the level of sufficiency of the existing parks in meeting the

Available Funding Techniques:

- ◆ Current revenue
- ◆ Reserve funds
- ◆ Enterprise and revenue funds
- ◆ General obligation bonds
- ◆ Lease-purchase
- ◆ Eminent domain
- ◆ Authorities and special districts
- ◆ Sales tax
- ◆ User fees
- ◆ In-kind services and volunteer participation
- ◆ State and federal assistance
- ◆ Land donation
- ◆ Trust fund
- ◆ Private financing
- ◆ Land dedication
- ◆ Fee-in-lieu of development
- ◆ Tax deferral
- ◆ Tax reductions



Sunshine), accounting for 17 acres; one open space (Kuhnert Arboretum), adding 19 acres; and three playlots (Aberdeen Recreation and Cultural Center, and Nicollet) with four acres.

Shown in [Table 7.1, Facility Inventory](#), is a detailed listing of each park, its size, and a description of each recreational facility. The inventory ranges from items, such as an amphitheater to athletic fields and courts, restroom facilities, and buildings. The inventory helps to identify the facilities that are common in each park, but perhaps more importantly, those that are not available, yet desired. The items that are the most common include basketball courts, food concession stands, horseshoe courts, nature areas, open play fields, picnic facilities, play equipment, restrooms, and softball fields.

Park Classification

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published the Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines to establish nationally applicable criteria for the provision of parks and recreation facilities and open space. These standards serve as a guide for parks and recreation planning, but do not replace reasonable judgment or specific local needs. The needs and desires of the citizens of Aberdeen justify

continued development of parks, recreation, and open space to meet the specific needs and requirements of the community.

While national standards are useful, it is important to ensure they are reasonable for the community given considerations such as participation trends, user characteristics, demographics, socioeconomics, climate, natural environment and other considerations. Leisure and recreation values are unique to each municipality; therefore, it is important that the standards represent the interests and desires of the community.

A variety of types and sizes of parks and recreation facilities and activities are recommended to satisfy the diverse interests of the population, to ensure adequate and equal opportunity for all persons, and, ultimately, to encourage use by all population groups. The classifications of parks needed to meet the diverse needs of the community are as follows:

Playlots are intended for active recreational use of immediate property owners, such as within apartment complexes and planned communities. There are no specific criteria to guide development of playlots, although they should have facilities and improvements available to meet the identified needs of the immediate



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development. User input should be a primary determinant for developing playlots. Recommended facilities and improvements include:

- ◆ picnic tables with covers
- ◆ perimeter sidewalks
- ◆ shade trees and native landscaping
- ◆ drinking fountain
- ◆ security lighting
- ◆ a multipurpose open play area
- ◆ playground equipment (up to 15 children)
- ◆ perimeter fencing or landscaping
- ◆ benches
- ◆ on-street parking
- ◆ trash receptacles
- ◆ curb cuts and crosswalks

Neighborhood parks should have facilities and improvements to accommodate use by neighborhoods within one-quarter to one-half mile of the park. Ease of access from surrounding neighborhoods, central location, and pedestrian/bicycle linkages are key considerations when developing neighborhood parks. They should be designed to accommodate the needs of all ages and therefore, should have a blend of passive and active facilities. It is highly desirable to include neighborhood residents in the park design process to ensure it is compatible and accounts for the desires of its intended users. Recommended facilities and improvements include:



A typical neighborhood park includes a variety of passive and active facilities for nearby users.



Community parks are intended for community-wide use, generally within a one-mile service area.

Source: *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, NRPA*

- ◆ picnic tables with covers
- ◆ barbeque pits
- ◆ sidewalks and or a natural walking trail
- ◆ shade trees and native landscaping
- ◆ drinking fountain(s)
- ◆ security lighting
- ◆ a multipurpose open play area
- ◆ multipurpose play courts
- ◆ playground equipment and/or a playscape (up to 25 children)
- ◆ perimeter fencing or landscaping
- ◆ benches
- ◆ restrooms
- ◆ on- or off-street parking
- ◆ trash receptacles
- ◆ curb cuts and crosswalks
- ◆ shade trees and native landscaping
- ◆ drinking fountains
- ◆ security lighting
- ◆ multipurpose open play areas
- ◆ multipurpose courts
- ◆ playground equipment and playscape (up to 50 children)
- ◆ bicycle racks
- ◆ perimeter fencing or landscaping
- ◆ street signs indicating "children at play"
- ◆ benches
- ◆ trash receptacles and enclosures
- ◆ curb cuts and crosswalks
- ◆ tennis courts
- ◆ basketball courts
- ◆ softball and little league fields with bleachers
- ◆ soccer/football fields with goals and goal posts
- ◆ sand volleyball courts
- ◆ swimming pool
- ◆ covered pavilions
- ◆ performance stage (optional)
- ◆ restrooms
- ◆ fencing for ball fields and athletic courts
- ◆ a concrete surface for a general play area
- ◆ off-street parking

Community parks are to provide active and passive recreation for citizens generally within one mile. The facilities and improvements must be planned and designed for heavy use by persons of all ages. Where feasible, community parks should be located adjacent to a greenway to provide an off-street linear linkage from other areas. Neighborhood and community input should be a primary determinant of the development program for a community park. Recommended facilities and improvements include:

- ◆ picnic tables with covers
- ◆ barbeque pits
- ◆ sidewalks and/or a natural walking trail
- ◆ mountain biking trails
- ◆ exercise stations (optional)

Open space areas include reserved public lands dedicated as permanent open space. These lands are generally owned by the local government or dedicated through private instrument as a development reserve. They are typically undeveloped and used for informal activities. They may also serve as



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flood collection areas during major storm events. Other examples of open space areas include easements for drainage basins, excess rights-of-way, greenways, and street esplanades.

Regional parks are typically in an area of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation, such as viewing and studying nature, bird watching, wildlife habitat, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping, and trail uses. Regional parks typically include active play areas, such as athletic fields. Recommended facilities and improvements include:

- ◆ picnic tables with covers
- ◆ barbeque pits
- ◆ natural walking trails
- ◆ mountain biking trails
- ◆ camp sites with and without utilities
- ◆ nature preserve or wildlife habitat
- ◆ shade trees and native landscaping
- ◆ drinking fountains
- ◆ security lighting
- ◆ multipurpose open play areas
- ◆ multipurpose courts
- ◆ playground equipment and/or playscape (up to 50+ children)
- ◆ bicycle racks
- ◆ benches
- ◆ trash receptacles and enclosures
- ◆ tennis courts
- ◆ basketball courts
- ◆ softball and little league fields
- ◆ soccer/football fields with goals and goal posts
- ◆ sand volleyball courts
- ◆ swimming pool or beach
- ◆ covered pavilions

- ◆ restrooms
- ◆ off-street parking

Facility Standards

As parks and recreation sites are evaluated for acquisition and development, it is important for the City to have a standardized list of facilities and equipment desired for each type of park to assess the development feasibility of each site. There are important considerations in developing parks including the size, shape and orientation of the site; pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access and parking; adjoining land use; development constraints, such as grades, poor drainage and flooding; environmental impacts; and the anticipated use of the park. In assessing the feasibility of a site, each of these considerations is important.

Displayed in **Table 7.2 – Facility Development Standards**, are the standards for each type of park, which may be used to determine the locations, size, and other characteristics of future parks. Provided in **Table 7.3, Facility Development Guidelines**, is guidelines for developing park facilities and improvements, which identify the requisite space and dimensional requirements, orientation, and the applicable service radius and required units per 1000 persons.



**Table 7.2
Facility Development Standards**

Classification	Use	Service Area	Desirable Size	Acres/1,000 Population	Desirable Site Characteristics
Playlot	Small areas intended primarily for the use of children (toddlers - age 9) containing play equipment, swings, slides, sandboxes and benches.	Less than 1/4 mile radius.	1,000 square feet - 1 acre	0.1 - 0.3 acres	Within neighborhoods and close to apartments, townhouses, or housing for the elderly.
Open Space	Passive areas in landscaped or natural state in or near urban areas. May provide bicycle, hiking, and nature trails as a feature or as part of a larger system.	No applicable standard.	Variable	.75 - 1.0 acres	Natural lands, watershed and waterfront, forests, landscaped borders, parkways, and boulevards, corner parks, medians, downtown aesthetic parks, plazas, malls.
Neighborhood Park	Landscaped natural park of limited size primarily for passive recreational needs of all ages but with designated active areas. Provides scenic and aesthetic value including open lawn space, shrubbery, small picnic areas, nature walks and areas for court games if not provided nearby.	1/4 to 1/2 mile radius (Serves one or more neighborhoods).	2 - 9 acres	1 acre	Should be located in the center of a single larger or several smaller neighborhoods.
Community Park	A large natural and /or landscaped area to provide urban dwellers an escape from City congestion without traveling a large distance. Provides both intensive and passive uses. Typical facilities include swimming pool, picnic areas, paths, game courts, gardens, natural areas, pavilion, ample parking, and restrooms.	1 to 2 miles (serves large segments of the population)	10+ acres	5 acres	Designed to accommodate a large number of people and a wide variety of activities.
Regional Park	A large-scale park facility to serve the recreation needs of a regional population. These areas typically include natural features.	Within one-hour driving distance	50+ acres	8 acres	Planned to accommodate large numbers of visitors including regional special events.

Source: Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines. National Recreation and Parks Association, 1995.



Aberdeen Comprehensive Plan

Parks & Recreation

Table 7.3
Facility Development Guidelines

Activity/ Facility	Space Requirements	Size and Dimensions	Orientation	Units per Population	Service Radius	Location Notes
Basketball 1. Youth 2. High School 3. Collegiate	2,400 - 3,036 sq. ft. 5,040 - 7,280 sq. ft. 5,600 - 7,980 sq. ft.	46' - 50' x 84' 50' x 84' 50' x 84'	Long axis north-south	1 per 10,000 persons	¼ - ½ mile	Outdoor courts in neighborhood and community parks, plus active recreation areas in other park settings.
Soccer	1.7 - 2.1 Ac.	195' to 225' x 330' to 360' with a minimum clearance of 10' on all sides.	Fall season – long axis northwest to southeast. For longer periods, north to south.	1 per 10,000 persons	1 - 2 miles	Number of units depends on popularity. Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to schools or neighborhood parks.
Tennis	Minimum of 7,200 sq. ft. for a single court. (2 acres for a complex)	36' x 78' Twelve foot clearance on both sides; 21' clearance on both ends.	Long axis north-south.	1 court per 2,000 persons	¼ - ½ mile	Best in batteries of 2-4. Located in neighborhood/ community park or adjacent to a school site.
Volleyball	Minimum 4,000 sq. ft	30' x 60'. Minimum 6' clearance on all sides.	Long axis north-south	1 court per 5,000 persons	¼ - ½ mile	Same as other court activities (e.g. badminton, basketball, etc.)
Football	Minimum 1.5 Ac.	160' x 360' with a minimum of 6' clearance on all sides	Fall season–long axis northwest to southeast. For longer periods, north to south.	1 per 20,000 persons	15 - 30 minutes travel time.	Usually part of baseball, football, soccer complex in community park or adjacent to high school
Multiple-Use Recreation Court (basketball, volleyball, tennis)	9,840 sq. ft.	120' x 80'	Long axis of courts with primary use is north-south.	1 per 10,000 persons	1 - 2 miles.	In neighborhood or community parks.
Open Space	Minimum of 40 percent undeveloped per park	N/A	N/A	5 acres per 1,000 persons	30 minute travel time.	Within neighborhood and community parks or stand alone.

Source: *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, National Recreation and Parks Association, 1995.*



**Table 7.3 (Continued)
Facility Development Guidelines**

Activity/ Facility	Space Requirements	Size and Dimensions	Orientation	Units per Population	Service Radius	Location Notes
1/4 Mile Running Track	4.3 acres	Overall width - 276' Length - 600.02'. Track width for 8, 4' lanes is 32'	Long axis in sector from north to south to northwest to southeast with finish line at northerly end.	1 per 20,000 persons	15 - 30 minute travel time.	Usually part of high school or in community park complex in combination with baseball, soccer, etc.
Baseball 1. Official	3.0 - 3.85 acres minimum.	Baselines – 90' Pitching distance – 60-1/2' Foul lines - 320' min. Center field – 400'+	Locate home plate so pitcher throwing across sun and batter is not facing it. Line from home plate through pitcher's mound runs east northeast.	1 per 5,000 persons	¼ - ½ mile.	Part of neighborhood complex. Lighted fields should be part of a community park or sports complex.
2. Little League	1.2 acres minimum.	Baselines – 60' Pitching distance – 46' Foul lines – 200' Center field – 200'-250'		Lighted – 1 per 30,000 persons.		
Softball	1.5 - 2.0 acres.	Baselines – 60' Pitching distance – 46' min. 40' – women Fast pitch field radius from plate – 225' between foul lines slow pitch – 275' (men) 250' (women).	Same as baseball.	1 per 5,000 persons (if also used for youth baseball)	¼ - ½ mile.	Slight difference in dimensions for 16" slow pitch. May also be used for youth baseball.
Trails	N/A	Maximum 10' width, maximum average grade 5% not to exceed 15%. Capacity: Rural trails – 40 hikers/day/mile Urban trails – 90 hikers/day/mile.	N/A	1 system per region	N/A	Located in greenways, natural areas and parks, and along drainage ways, levees and utility easements. Their purpose is to accommodate walkers, joggers, and bicyclists away from traffic.
Golf Course 18-hole (standard)	Minimum 150 acres.	Average length – 6,500 yards.	Site specific.	1 public course per 50,000 persons.	½ to 1 hour travel time.	Located in community park, but should not be over 20 miles from a population center.
Golf- Driving Range	13.5 acres for minimum of 25 tees.	900' x 690' wide. Add 12' width for each additional tee.	Long axis southwest - northeast with golfer driving toward northeast.	1 per 50,000 persons.	30 minute travel time.	Part of golf course complex or privately operated.

Source: *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, National Recreation and Parks Association, 1995.*



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Table 7.3 (Continued)
Facility Development Guidelines

Activity/ Facility	Space Requirements	Size and Dimensions	Orientation	Units per Population	Service Radius	Location Notes
Archery Range	Minimum 0.65 acre.	300' length x minimum 10' between targets. Roped, clear areas on side of range minimum 30', clear space behind targets minimum of 90' x 45' with bunker.	Archer facing north ($\pm 45^\circ$).	1 per 50,000 persons.	30 minute travel time.	Part of a regional/ metro park complex.
Handball (3 - 4 wall)	800 sq. ft. for 4 - wall, 1,000 sq. ft. for 3 - wall.	20' x 40' - Minimum of 10' to rear of 3 - wall court. Minimum 20' overhead clearance.	Long axis north-south. Front wall at north end.	1 per 20,000 persons.	15 - 30 minute travel time.	4-wall usually indoors as part of multi-purpose facility. 3 - wall usually outdoors in park or school setting.
Badminton	1,620 sq. ft.	Singles - 17' X 44' Doubles - 20' X 44' with 5' unobstructed area on all sides.	Long axis north-south.	1 per 5,000 persons.	¼ - ½ mile.	Usually in school, recreation center, or church facility. Safe walking or bike access.
Field Hockey	Minimum 1.5 acre.	180' x 300' with a minimum of 10' clearance on all sides.	Fall season - long axis northwest to southeast. For longer periods, north to south.	1 per 20,000 persons.	15 - 30 minute travel time.	Usually part of baseball, football, soccer complex in community park or adjacent to high school.
Ice Skating and Hockey	22,000 sq. ft. including support area.	Rink 85' x 200' (minimum 85' x 185") additional 5,000 sq. ft. support area.	Long axis north-south if outdoors.	Indoor - 1 per 100,000 persons. Outdoor depends on climate.	½ - 1 hour travel time.	Depends on community interest.
Swimming Pools	Varies on size of pool and amenities. Usually ½ to 2 acre site.	Teaching - min. of 25 yards x 45' even depth of 3 to 4 feet. Competitive - min. of 25m x 16m. Minimum of 27 square feet of water surface per swimmer.	None - although care must be taken in siting of lifeguard stations in relation to afternoon sun.	1 per 20,000 persons.	15 to 30 minute travel time.	Pools for general community use should be planned for teaching, competitive, and recreational purposes with enough depth (3.4m) to accommodate 1m and 3m diving boards. Located in community park or school site.

Source: *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, National Recreation and Parks Association, 1995.*



Needs Assessment

To assess the adequacy of the existing parks and recreation supply, it is necessary to look at existing population, the supply of parks provided by existing facilities, and relate them to planning standards for desirable levels of service. In addition, it is necessary to consider forecasts in population to determine future needs and to identify deficiencies of the system.

The assessment of need for neighborhood and community parks varies according to the purpose and use of the facilities. Community parks are intended to function on a large-scale basis, serving the parks and recreation needs of an entire community, which may be within an urban area or a developed rural

area. They are typically larger in size (10+ acres) and include facilities and improvements for area-wide activities and assembly events, such as picnic areas, walking/jogging trails, ball fields, and other larger scale activities. Ensuring adequate and equitable recreation and leisure opportunity for all citizens is the objective of community parks.

The use of neighborhood parks is intended for the residents of adjacent and nearby neighborhoods. Having service areas that encompass the entire planning area is not as important for neighborhood parks. Rather, the focus is on the residential neighborhoods within a reasonable walking distance. Complete service area coverage is not necessary for neighborhood parks; rather, it is more important to have a well-distributed system to serve the parks and recreation needs of nearby residents. An acceptable walking distance to neighborhood parks is 4 to 8 blocks.

In addition to neighborhood and community parks are those of a regional scale, which serve the needs beyond a single community to encompass an area generally within a one-hour driving distance. The purpose of regional facilities is to complement the urban facilities by providing recreation and open space areas to rural residents and persons within the larger region.



Melgaard Park offers an example of an attractive and well-utilized community park that provides an assortment of recreation activities.

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Resources vs. Needs

A combination of a standard-based and demand-based approach was utilized to assess the need for additional parks and recreation areas and facilities within Aberdeen. The demand-based approach entailed input from the key person interviews and community forum, as well as the results of the *Community Attitude & Interest Citizen Survey*. Utilizing NRPA standards, the acreage of parks and recreation areas needed in the community is displayed in **Table 7.4 - Recommended Area Standards**. The need for additional parks and recreation acreage is determined by applying the recommended standards to the existing and projected future population of the planning area.

Current Needs - As shown in **Table 7.4, Recommended Area Standards** the standards range in size per 1,000 persons. Based upon a 2000 Census population of 24,658 persons, the total acreage needed ranges from 268 to approximately 427 acres of playlots, open spaces, and neighborhood,

community, and regional parks. Currently, the City maintains 356 acres of parks and recreation areas, plus an additional 241 acres devoted to facilities such as Fossum Field, Kuhnert Arboretum, Lee Park Golf Course, and Players Field. These facilities are different from the other parks in that they are used for special purposes by certain segments of the population. Since they are not typically utilized by all persons on a daily basis, they are not included in the total parks and recreational acreage for the purpose of this analysis. According to national standards, Aberdeen currently exceeds the recommended acreage by nine acres.

Table 7.4
Recommended Area Standards

Classification	Standard	Low	High	Recommended
Playlot	0.1 to 0.3 acre/1,000 persons	2.5	7.5	5.0
Open Space	0.75 to 1.0 acre/1,000 persons	18.5	25.0	21.8
Neighborhood Park	1 to 3 acres/1,000 persons	25.0	74.0	49.5
Community Park	3 to 5 acres/1,000 persons	74.0	123.0	98.5
Regional Park	6 to 8 acres/1,000 persons	148.0	197.0	172.5
Total		268.0	426.5	347.3

Note: Based upon a Year 2000 population of 24,658 persons

Table 7.5
Existing Acreage vs. Future Demand

Classification	Existing Supply	Acres Needed		(Surplus)/Deficiency	
		Current	Year 2025	Current	Year 2025
Playlot	6	5	5	(1)	(1)
Open Space	19	22	24	3	5
Neighborhood Park	17	50	55	33	38
Community Park	102	99	110	(4)	8
Regional Park	212	173	192	(40)	(20)
Total	356	347	385	(9)	29

Source: Lane Kendig, inc.



Future Demands - Displayed in **Table 7.5 – Existing Acreage vs. Future Demand**, is a tabulation of the recommended supply necessary to support the projected future population of 27,387 persons (refer to **Chapter 2, Community Profile**). The needed acreage by the Year 2025 is 29 acres.

Park Service Areas

Evaluating service areas is an effective means of identifying geographic areas that have sufficient park areas available, but, more importantly, to identify those in need of additional parks and recreation areas and facilities. The existing inventory of playlots, neighborhood parks, community parks, and schools is shown in

Figure 7.1 – Existing Parks and Recreation Inventory.

Community parks have a primary service area of one mile, meaning that a majority of persons utilizing these area wide parks generally reside within this area. The secondary service area extends two miles from the park to account for user patterns associated with the types of activities and facilities available in the community parks, such as little league athletic fields that draw participation from throughout the community.

Illustrated in **Figure 7.2 – Neighborhood and Community Park Service Areas**, are the service areas of the six community parks, including Anderson Park, the Holgate Complex, Manor Park, Melgaard Park, the Moccasin Creek Complex, and Prairie Veterans Memorial Park. These six facilities contribute 102 acres to the current inventory of areas and facilities. As exhibited, a majority of the most populated areas is within the service areas of the community parks. The western, northwestern and northeastern areas of the City are currently deficient in the availability of community parks. Since there are no community parks outside the corporate limits, there will be significant needs for these facilities concurrent with future development.



Playlots (mini-parks) such as Nicollet Park provide open space and contribute to the character of the community.

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Neighborhood parks are intended to provide residents with ample opportunity for both passive and semi-active recreation activity within close proximity to their neighborhoods. The method of determining the need for neighborhood parks is quite different from an assessment of need for community parks. Whereas community parks are designed for large-scale, area-wide events and activities, neighborhood parks are intended to meet the daily recreation needs of nearby residents. The level of activity is limited as a result of the size and location of these parks and the equipment and facilities available. Neighborhood parks should be within a short walking distance (typically one-half mile or less) for the residents of one or more neighborhoods, thereby encouraging use and promoting convenience, ease of access, and walking safety for neighborhood children.

The size of neighborhood parks varies according to the availability of property, method and timing of acquisition, and intended use. One or two vacant lots or several acres may both adequately serve the needs of a neighborhood if there is an even distribution of parks and sufficient facilities and equipment available. National standards recommend a minimum neighborhood park size of 5 acres, assuming an adequate and even distribution. Although a 10-acre

park may accommodate ball fields and larger recreation and open space areas, two parks that are five acres in size may equally and, perhaps, better serve the need while providing a broader distribution of neighborhood parks.

Illustrated in [Figure 7.2, Neighborhood and Community Park Service Areas](#), is the effective service areas of the seven neighborhood parks, including Aldrich Park, Browne Park, Easton Park, Frontier Park, Garfield Park, Sunshine Park, and the Lincoln Recreation Area. These seven parks provide 17 acres for use by area residents. In addition to the neighborhood parks, also shown are the service areas of the community parks because they serve as



A variety of activities, such as the skate park in Melgaard Park, help to fulfill the recreational demands of all age groups.

Site Selection Factors:

Topography:

- ◆ Minimum 50 percent of site should have a maximum gradient of 4 percent with runoff drained from developed areas
- ◆ Desirable views should be preserved and protected

Soils:

- ◆ Natural topsoil should be suitable for turf grasses and trees
- ◆ Area should be protected from soil erosion

Vegetation:

- ◆ Natural or landscaped vegetation should include grass and trees, with hardy, low-maintenance species
- ◆ Significant individual specimens or unique wildlife habitats are desirable
- ◆ Irrigation systems should be provided for intensively utilized areas

Access and Location:

- ◆ Should be readily accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles
- ◆ Should have collector street frontage
- ◆ Access to linear linkages are highly desirable
- ◆ Should be centrally located
- ◆ Neighborhood park/school sites are highly desirable, as long as the public usage does not interfere with school activities

neighborhood parks for the adjacent residents.

The service area for neighborhood parks is divided into primary and secondary areas. The primary service area is one-quarter mile and the secondary service area is one-half mile. As displayed in [Figure 7.2, Neighborhood and Community Park Service Areas](#), the one-quarter mile service area coverage of the existing neighborhood parks is distributed throughout the most densely populated areas in central Aberdeen. However, there are several neighborhood areas, particularly north of 8th Avenue, west of Main Street, and east of Lawson Street that are not within acceptable proximity to a neighborhood park.

Achieving a system of neighborhood and community parks that is uniformly distributed may be accomplished in several ways, including pre-development acquisition by the City, dedication requirements concurrent with subdivision approval, public/private partnerships, and other strategies. While the provision of community parks is generally agreed to be the responsibility of the government entity, there is much less certainty about the responsibility of the entity to provide parks for private development. Requiring the dedication of parkland concurrent with a final plat or a development

site plan is a sound method to assure adequate park areas consistent with the demand and impact placed on the public parks system by new development.

Regional parks are intended for large areas covering a 50- to 60-mile radius and encompassing several smaller communities. In Aberdeen, Wylie Park and Storybook Land serve as a regional park. Wylie Park is a regional facility due, in part, to its size (212 acres), but also as a result of Storybook Land as a statewide (and multi-state) attraction and facilities such as the waterslide, zoo, fishing, miniature golf, and campground. The size of Wylie Park meets both the current and future regional park needs of the community.

Joint Use of School Facilities

School playgrounds and athletic fields and courts provide additional park and recreation areas and, if accessible to the public, will enhance the number and availability of neighborhood parks within the City. A reciprocal agreement has been in place for some time, primarily for the use of gym and pool facilities. However, a reciprocal agreement should address joint purchase, use, and maintenance of school grounds and equipment, which would be mutually beneficial to the School District and City. The sharing of these public resources enables



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greater efficiency and minimizes duplication.

As displayed in [Figure 7.2, Neighborhood and Community Park Service Areas](#), the school sites contribute to the service area coverage of the neighborhood parks. While there is some degree of overlap with the neighborhood park facilities, they serve some areas that are not well served by existing neighborhood park facilities. If joint use agreements can be reached between the City and School District, the coverage of park facilities can be expanded to better serve the area neighborhoods. Joint use of facilities and inter-jurisdictional agreements reap benefits for all parties and may result in the establishment of park and recreation facilities in unincorporated areas.

[Parks & Recreation System Plan](#)

The general plan for future development of Aberdeen's parks and recreation system was developed through evaluation of existing conditions, planned improvements, and projected future needs based upon anticipated development and increases in population. A future plan for the development of parks and recreation areas is shown in [Figure 7.3 – Parks and Recreation System Plan](#). The plan shows the generalized location of proposed neighborhood and community parks.

To develop a system of neighborhood and community parks that will adequately serve the existing and projected future parks and recreational needs of the community, the City needs to acquire and develop parks within the identified need areas, as shown on the System Plan. These parks will help to achieve full service area coverage of community parks and an even distribution of neighborhood parks.

The master plan is a valuable resource that should be used on a continuous basis in guiding the parks and recreation development program. The goals, objectives, and recommended actions of this chapter should be referenced in other planning studies and development proposal reports to ensure consideration of existing and planned public parks and recreation areas and open space. As new residential subdivisions are platted and developed, there should be allowances for sufficient land capable of being developed for public park and recreation uses.

