



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following individuals are recognized for their contributions to the preparation of the Connect 2020 Parks & Recreation Master Plan for the City of El Dorado.

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LIST OF FIGURES

1. Historic bird's eye map of El Dorado, Kansas pg. 2
2. Timeline of planning process pg. 6
3. Footbridge in East Park pg. 10
4. Existing Park type, location, and extent pg. 14
5. Central Park pg. 18
6. Dog Park pg. 18
7. East Park pg. 18
8. Forest Park pg. 19
9. Gordy Park pg. 19
10. Graham Park pg. 20
11. Library Park pg. 20
12. McCollum Park pg. 20
13. North Main Park pg. 21
14. Pool at Prairie Trails pg. 21
15. Playground at Rice Park pg. 21
16. R.I.O. Park pg. 22
17. Riverview Park pg. 22
18. South Summit Park pg. 22
19. Summit Park pg. 23
20. Walnut River Sports Complex pg. 23
21. Activity Center pg. 23
22. Meetings with stakeholders and the public of El Dorado... pg. 24
23. Important Improvements to the Parks and Recreation System in the Last 10 Years pg. 26
24. Important Assets or Strengths of the Parks and Recreation Programs pg. 27
25. Common Complaints about Park Facilities and/or Recreation Programs pg. 28
26. Connect 2025 Website pg. 30
27. Survey Takers' Age pg. 30
28. Survey Takers' Housing Type pg. 31
29. Ranking Quality of Existing Park Features pg. 31
30. Pool at Forest Park pg. 32
31. Pool at Forest Park pg. 32
32. Pool at Forest Park pg. 32
33. Participation in Aquatic Programs/Classes pg. 32
34. Aquatic Center Priorities pg. 32
35. Options to Improve Aquatic Center pg. 33
36. City Program Priorities pg. 33

37. Preferred Planning Approach pg. 34
38. City Task Priorities pg. 34
39. The Cost for Parks and Recreation Operations should be paid through: pg. 35
40. Level of Support for 0.1% Sales Tax to Support Parks & Recreation pg. 35
41. Connect 2025 Poster pg. 36
42. Connect 2025 T-Shirt pg. 36
43. Basketball Court in Forest Park pg. 38
44. Parks & Recreation Department Organization pg. 41
45. Comparison to Communities in Kansas pg. 46
46. Number of Parks pg. 47
47. Number of Park Acres pg. 48
48. Acreage of Parkland per 1,000 People pg. 48
49. Mileage of Greenways and Trails pg. 48
50. Parks & Recreation Department Total Expenditure per Fiscal Year pg. 49
51. Operating Expenditures per Acre of Land Managed pg. 49
52. Revenue as a Percent of Total Operating Expense pg. 49
53. Operating Expenditures per Full Time Employee pg. 50
54. Number of Full-Time Employees pg. 50
55. Rendering - Gordy Park in summer splendor pg. 52
56. Proposed park types, location, and extent pg. 56
57. Existing and proposed trail layout through El Dorado pg. 62
58. Proposed New/Renovated Additions to Parks pg. 64
59. Master plan for American Legion Complex pg. 66
60. Plan for ball fields at American Legion Complex pg. 67
61. Plan for new aquatic center at American Legion Complex pg. 67
62. Master plan (option 1) for Central Park pg. 68
63. Master plan (option 2) for Central Park pg. 69
64. Master plan for East Park pg. 70
65. Master plan for Forest Park pg. 71
66. Master plan for Gordy Park pg. 72
67. Rendering - plan view of Gordy Park pg. 73
68. Rendering - bird's eye view of Gordy Park pg. 73
69. Master plan for Graham Park pg. 74
70. Master plan for Library Park pg. 75
71. Master plan for McCollum Park pg. 76
72. Master plan for North Main (R.I.O.) Park pg. 77

- 73. Master plan for Prairie Trails Golf Course pg. 78
- 74. Master plan for Rice park pg. 79
- 75. Master plan for Riverview Park pg. 80
- 76. Master plan for South Summit Park pg. 81
- 77. Master plan for Summit Park pg. 81
- 78. Master plan for Walnut River Sports Complex pg. 82
- 79. Master plan for West Park pg. 83
- 80. Master plan for Activity Center pg. 84
- 81. Activity Center Expansion Master Plan pg. 85
- 82. Rendering - Gordy Park as a winter wonderland pg. 86
- 83. Organizational Structure Chart pg. 95

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
LIST OF FIGURES	IV
PLANNING CONTEXT	4
INTRODUCTION	4
HISTORY AND OVERVIEW	4
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW	5
PLANNING PROCESS TIMELINE	6
PLANNING PROCESS	8
PURPOSE	9
WHAT WE HAVE	12
PARK HISTORY	12
REGIONAL PARK AND RECREATION CONTEXT	12
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	13
PARK CATEGORIES	16
EXISTING PARK INVENTORY	17
WHAT EL DORADO WANTS	26
ONLINE STAKEHOLDER SURVEY	26
PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES	36
WHAT ARE OUR NEEDS	40
PARK PROPERTY NEEDS	40
ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS	41
IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE NEEDS	43
OUR IMPROVEMENT PLAN	54
CURRENT/FUTURE PARKLAND ACQUISITION	54
EXISTING PARK RENOVATIONS	54
EXISTING AQUATIC/POOL RECOMMENDATIONS	55
SIGNAGE RECOMMENDATIONS	55
RECREATION FACILITIES/PROGRAMS	58
PARK MASTER PLANS	66
GREAT THINGS TO COME	88
ACTION PLAN	90
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	93
FUNDING STRATEGIES	99
OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE	108
MASTER PLAN UPDATES - 2025 SUNSET	110





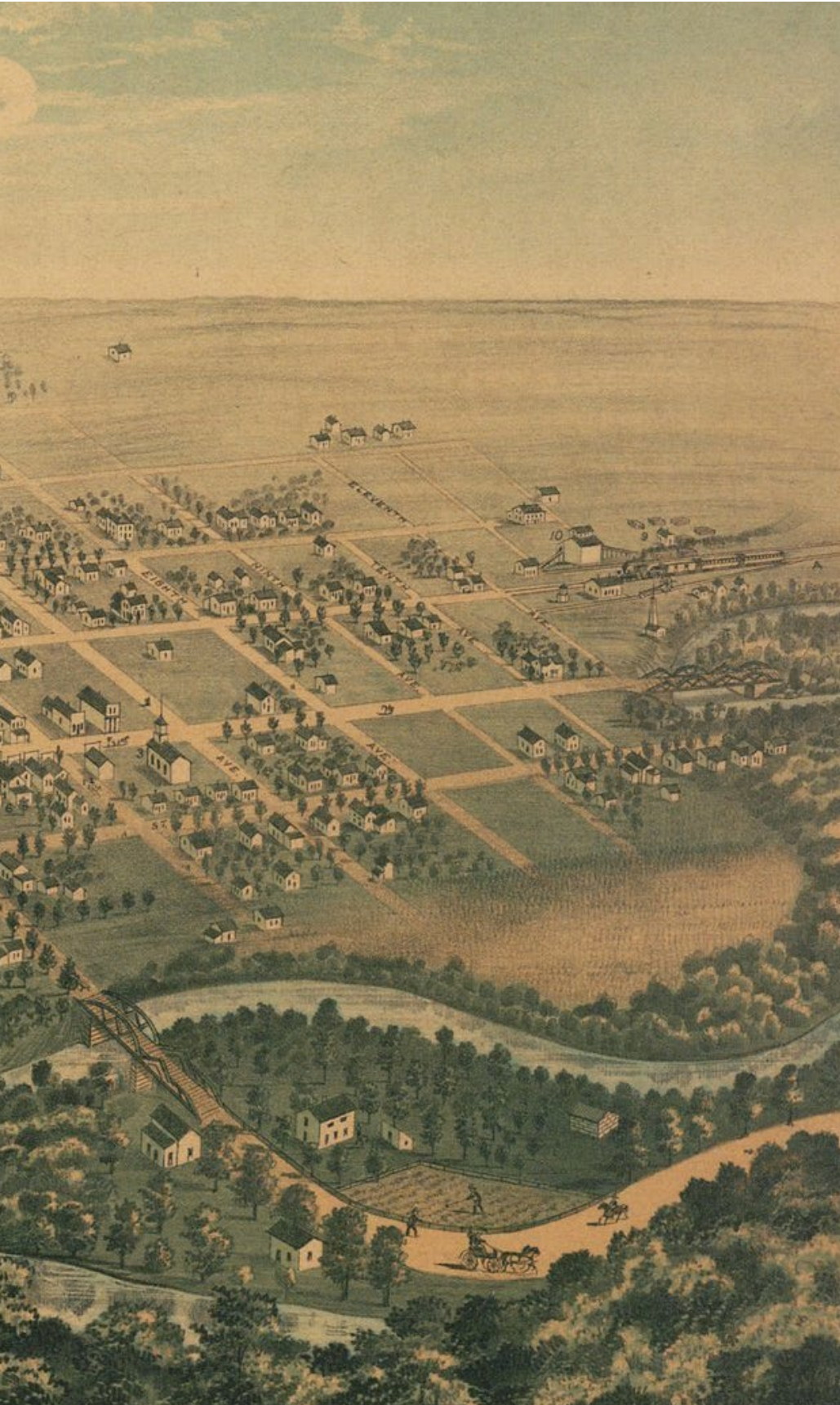


Figure 01: Historic bird's eye map of El Dorado, Kansas.

PLANNING CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

Connect 2025 is the City of El Dorado's first Parks and Recreation facilities Master Plan that addresses park properties, programs and services for the next ten years. Properly planned and implemented park and recreation services are very important to maintain and improve the quality of life for El Dorado residents.

This document begins with an overview of the planning process and a glimpse at El Dorado's history, and continues with an inventory of park conditions and findings from the survey conducted by Landworks Studio in 2014. The final three sections of this report outline the potential future for El Dorado's parks and recreation facilities.

HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

El Dorado, Kansas was founded in 1868 along the Walnut River, a tributary to the Arkansas River. El Dorado is the county seat for Butler County and is in the Metropolitan Statistical Area of Wichita, Kansas, the most populated city in the state.

El Dorado is home to one of the largest oil refineries in the region, which produces up to 135,000 barrels a day. The refinery is located along the southwest edge of the city.

In 1958, 13 people were killed when a tornado hit El Dorado. A memorial to the deceased, pictured in Figure [], stands in Graham Park.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW

The 2030 El Dorado Comprehensive Plan outlines the existing conditions and issues of the city's 15 developed parks. The plan identifies four categories of parks; regional parks, community parks, neighborhood parks, and special use parks. These categories are more thoroughly explained on page 16 of this report.

The first issue identified in the 2030 El Dorado Comprehensive Plan is funding. At the time this report was written, there was no dedicated funding source for parks projects. The survey (results beginning on page 26 of this report) conducted by Landworks Studio in 2014 revealed that many stakeholders and citizens still see funding as an issue for the parks and recreation department in El Dorado.

The Comprehensive Plan also identifies that park maintenance is an issue that is directly related to the funding issue. The plan explicitly addresses the need for improved aquatic facilities and a regional or large community park.

Accessibility to information about recreational programs in El Dorado is an issue also addressed in the 2030 El Dorado Comprehensive Plan. The cost of upkeep for recreational programs also demands a look at funding for El Dorado's parks and recreation department.

The Connect 2025 Master Plan is a direct response to a goal stated in the 2030 El Dorado Comprehensive Plan – “Develop a parks, recreation and open space master plan to determine the current and future needs of the community and identify how those needs can be met.”

PLANNING PROCESS TIMELINE

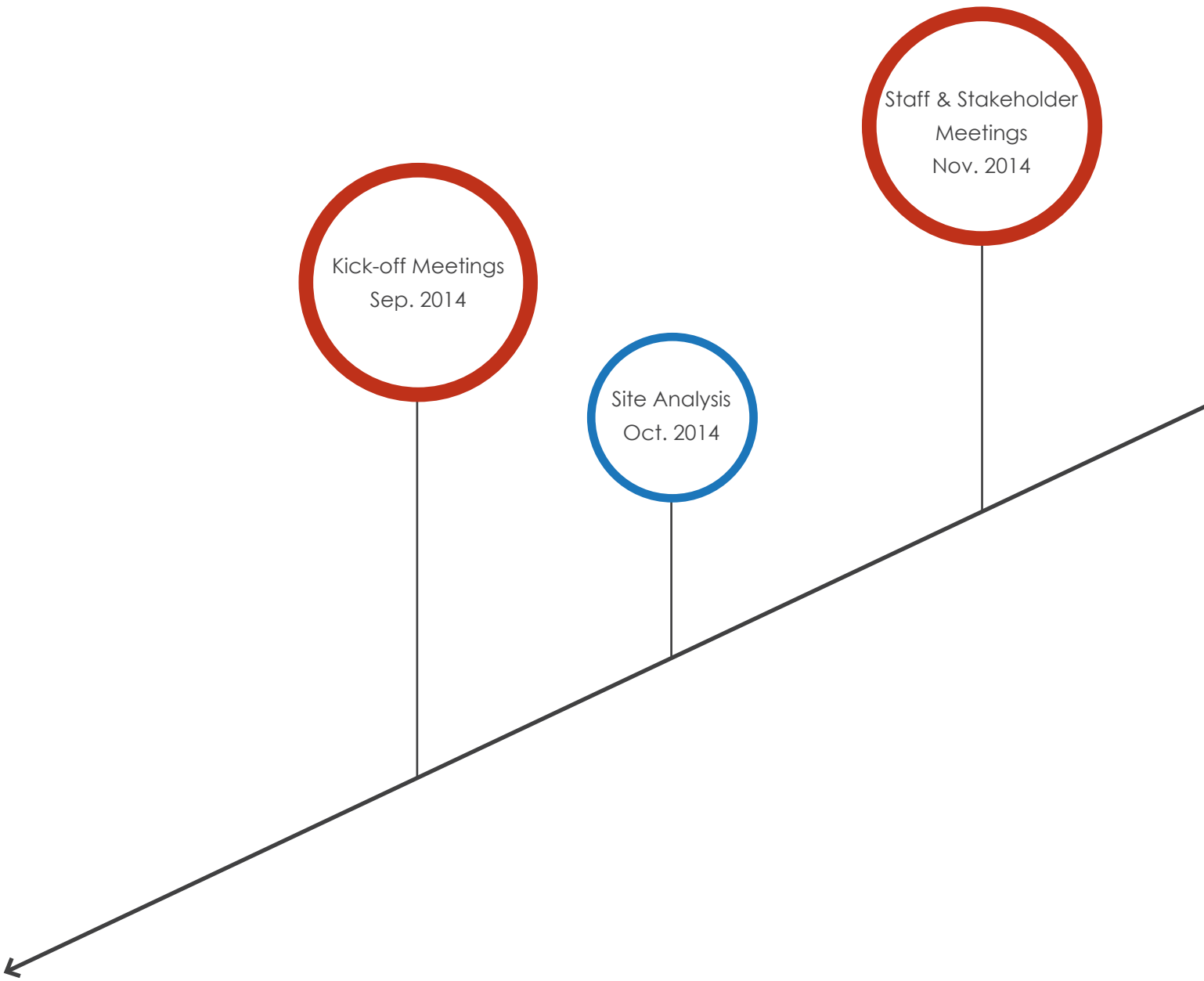
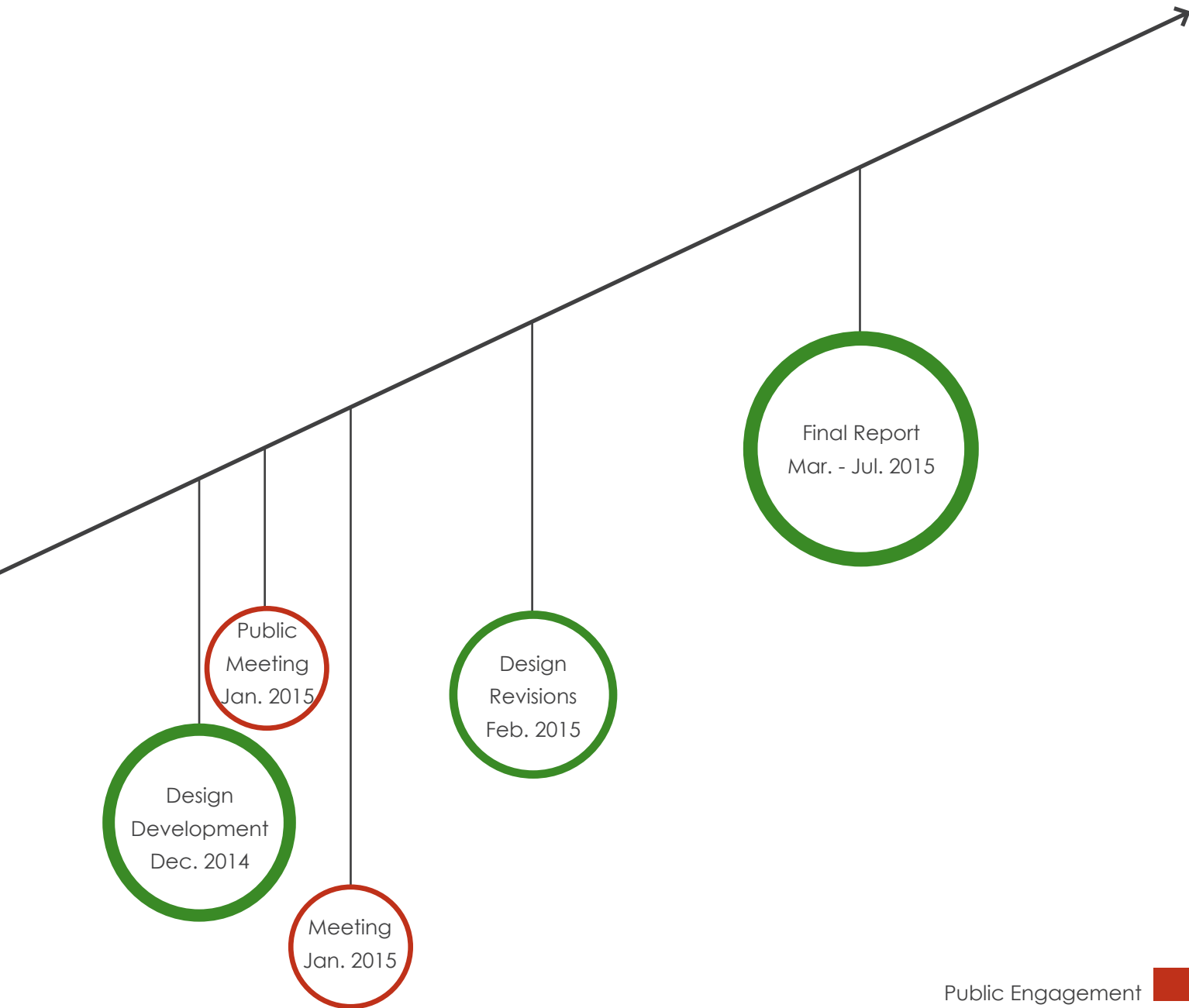


Figure 02: Timeline of planning process.



- Public Engagement ■
- Design Development ■
- Site Analysis ■

PLANNING PROCESS

TIMELINE

1. Site Inventory and Analysis (September 17)
2. Meet with Parks & Recreation Staff (September 17)
3. Preliminary Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting (September 17)
4. Surveys - Stakeholders and Public
5. PRORAGIS Analysis
6. Meet with Director of Parks & Recreation (November 20)
7. Meet with City Staff (November 20)
8. Meet with Stakeholders (November 20)
9. Develop Initial Concepts Based on Public Survey, Stakeholder Meetings & Survey, and PRORAGIS NRPA Data Comparison
10. Public Meeting to Review Concepts (January 8)
11. Meet with Stakeholders (January 21)
12. Prioritize Implementation and Revise Concepts
13. Develop Final Report

TASKS

- 01 - Park and Facility Evaluation
- 02 - Promotional Event Development for Citizens
- 03 - Needs Assessment
- 04 - Park Policy Analysis
- 05 - Public Kick-off Event - Promo #1
- 06 - Action Plan - Concept Plan Development
- 07 - Public Plan Review Event - Promo #2
- 08 - Plan Development Final; Implementation of 10-yr Plan
- 09 - Final Plan Promotion
- 10 - Final Deliverable

PURPOSE

A 2030 Comprehensive Plan Directive states:

“Develop a parks, recreation and open space master plan to determine the current and future needs of the community and identify how those needs can be met.”

The Connect 2025 process sets in motion the plan for improving the management, development, maintenance, and use of current and future parks, trails, pools, and sports facilities for the citizens of El Dorado, Kansas. The recommended strategies, policies, and actions provide clear direction to guide city staff, advisory boards, and elected officials with the following strategic goals for the next 15 years:

- *Implement priority park facility upgrades.*
- *Provide better connectivity.*
- *Foster economic development.*
- *Implement departmental enhancements to carry out these plans.*





Figure 03: Footbridge in East Park

WHAT WE HAVE

PARK HISTORY

El Dorado's first park, East Park, was established in 1889, 18 years after the town was incorporated. In 1942, Jim McDonald arrived to El Dorado and became the first director of Parks & Recreation, also serving as the high school football coach and resurrecting the high school baseball program. Now, McDonald Stadium at Central Park is named for him.

Through Jim's guidance, parks and recreation thrived in El Dorado, with peak enrollment for programs occurring in 1962. The Municipal Pool opened in 1972, and the state park reservoir was established and opened for recreational use in the summer of 1981. The trail system in El Dorado is a more recent addition to the parks & recreation system, with the first phase being completed in 2001.

REGIONAL PARK AND RECREATION CONTEXT

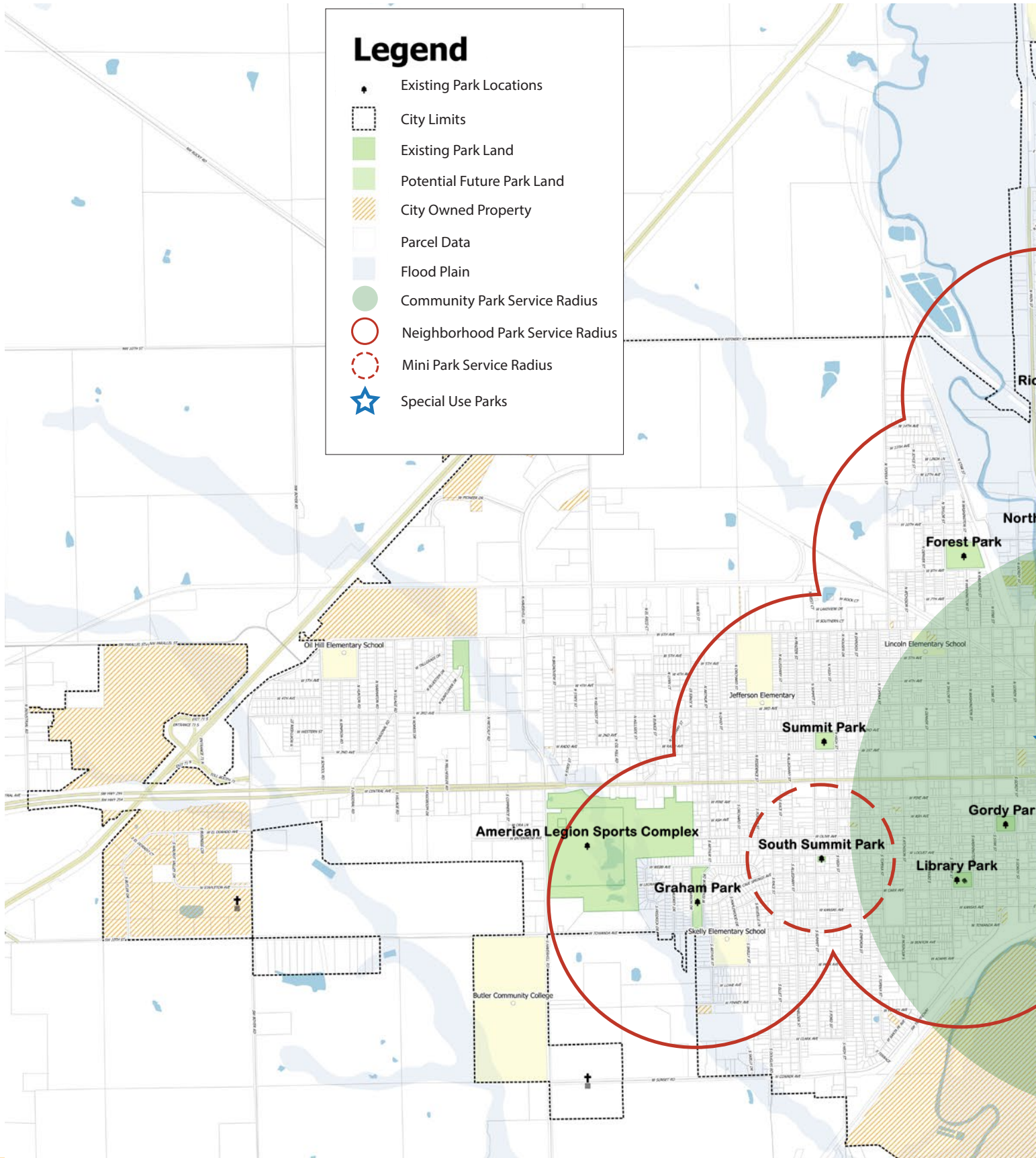
El Dorado State Park is located just outside of the El Dorado city border. The park is largely covered in water – a man-made reservoir constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1981. Aside from the lake, El Dorado State Park has park land dedicated to camping, hiking trails, and equestrian amenities. 3,500 acres of the park is dedicated wildlife area. Though El Dorado State Park is not within El Dorado city limits, it is a regional park, serving an area larger than the community and drawing many potential visitors through El Dorado.

Walnut River Sports Complex is also located just outside the El Dorado city limit, though operated by the city of El Dorado. According to the definition in the 2030 El Dorado Comprehensive Plan, Walnut River Sports Complex is a

special use park, as it serves a particular purpose for the entire community. The park is used for community and regional sports like softball and soccer.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

El Dorado's estimated population as of 2013 is 12,852. 25% of that population is under the age of 18, making that the largest age group of El Dorado citizens. Geographically, El Dorado has a total area of 8.92 square miles (5,708 acres). Approximately 1% of land in El Dorado (58 acres) is dedicated to park land.



Legend

- Existing Park Locations
- City Limits
- Existing Park Land
- Potential Future Park Land
- ▨ City Owned Property
- Parcel Data
- Flood Plain
- Community Park Service Radius
- Neighborhood Park Service Radius
- Mini Park Service Radius
- ★ Special Use Parks

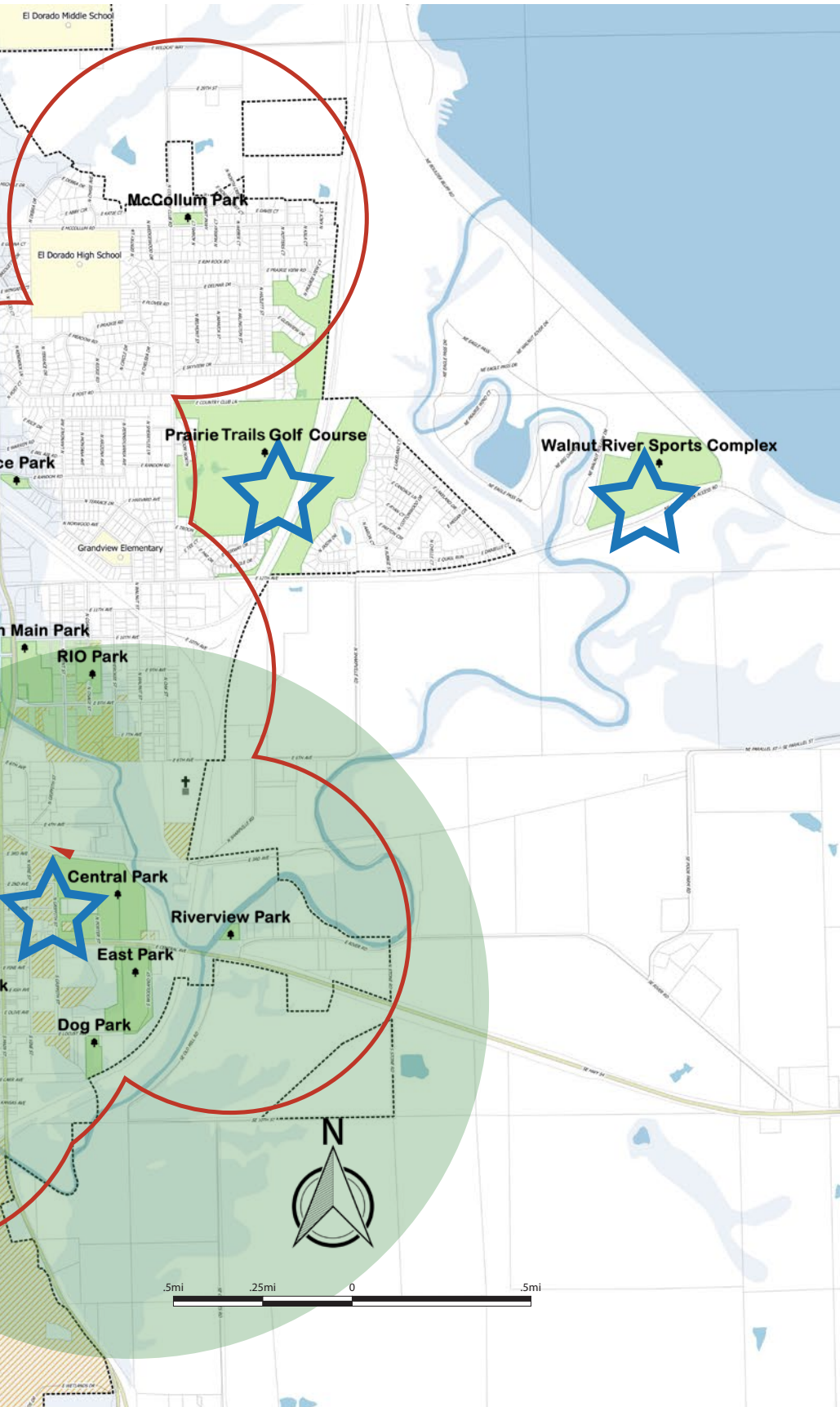


Figure 04: Existing park type, location, and extent.

PARK CATEGORIES

Mini Parks:

- *Generally less than 1 acre*
- *Addresses limited, isolated or unique needs*
- *Service area of less than 1/4 mile*
- *Due to maintenance costs, most cities discourage mini parks.*

Neighborhood Parks:

- *Generally 5 to 10 acres*
- *Provides recreational and social area for residential areas*
- *Offers informal active and passive recreation activities*
- *Typical service radius of 1/2 mile if uninterrupted by barriers*
- *Typically 1 to 2 acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 people*

Community Parks

- *Generally 10 to 50 acres, typically 30 to 50 acres*
- *Includes neighborhood park amenities, but serves a larger purpose*
- *Meets community wide recreational needs and includes special facilities*
- *May include special natural environments*
- *Often act as a major community image feature*
- *Typical service area of 1/2 to 3 miles*
- *Typically 5 to 8 acres of community parks per 1,000 people*

Special Use Parks

- *Specialty parks cover a broad range of facilities oriented towards a single use including cultural or social sites specialized facilities, and sports complexes*

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

The following park descriptions and classifications consider El Dorado's parks as they exist at the time of the study for this report (2014-2015). Figure 4 demonstrates the current distribution of park location and type, while Figure 56 shows how the proposed system of parks transforms the overall scope of park distribution in El Dorado. A thorough site analysis was conducted at each park to photo document and analyze existing conditions of each park and its various components.

The team utilized Geojot data collection software which enabled each member to capture photos and input data in the field by taking GPS photos using smartphones and tablets. These GPS photos were automatically paired with field note data to create a digital resource for the consultant team to utilize for this report and for future use by the El Dorado Parks Department. The following park inventory observations include a brief park description and summary analysis of each park existing conditions from the Geojot data analysis. The detailed Geojot report can be found in Appendix 1.



Figure 05: Central Park

CENTRAL PARK

Central Park is classified as a special use park because it accommodates a full scale baseball facility and space for outdoor community events. The random field orientation that evolved over time results in an inefficient and potentially unsafe environment. Observations include improvements needed for the following; field orientation, sidewalk improvements, spectator and dugout shade, ADA accommodations, user accommodations such as access to restrooms and site signage improvements. The stadium field was under reconditioning at the time of analysis, therefore the condition is expected to be adequate. The stadium structure overall is in good shape with some maintenance needed including replacing missing joint expansion material. The tennis court facility observations include ADA compliance, court cracking and location of facility. See Appendix 1 for more detailed observations.



Figure 06: Dog Park

DOG PARK

The existing Dog Park is technically part of East Park's extent, so it can be classified as a community park. It is a special facility to meet a community-wide need. The facility is newly constructed and essentially has only one observation, the need for a permanent park identification and rules sign.



Figure 07: East Park

EAST PARK

East Park is a community park because of its size and mix of uses, which include softball fields, play structures, picnic areas and a body of water used for a variety of activities. Observations include potential for new monument identity sign, pond siltation and water's edge erosion control, bridge decking replacement, ADA accommodations at play structures, bench replacement, shelter height / clearance, relocation of mud-volley ball area, upgrade drinking fountain at softball area and consider implementing geese control. See Appendix 1 for more detailed observations.

FOREST PARK

Forest Park, like the majority of parks in El Dorado, is a neighborhood park. It currently accommodates an amphitheater space, a small skate park, basketball court and the city's only aquatic facility. Observations on site include some ADA deficiencies, lack of play surfacing at slide, park identity sign, bench upgrades, shelter roof repair, the skate park apparatuses are inadequate, and need to address vandalism at amphitheater. The aquatic center is an aged facility needing either substantial renovation or replacement. Observations include MEP equipment replacement, need for better lighting, staff accommodations, there is no zero entry pool available, many gaps in coping, decking drains to pool at south end and some concrete repair needed. The rooms inside the building were not evaluated in this report. See Appendix 1 for more detailed observations.

GORDY PARK

Gordy Park is a classified neighborhood park in downtown El Dorado. It is the central urban park in the city that currently hosts a playground and gazebo structure and some classic park furnishing such as unique swinging benches and merry-go-round. Observations include consideration of play surfacing for merry-go-round and supplement play structure and swing area, concrete repair, warped benches, add an ADA drinking fountain, and maintenance needed at planters. See Appendix 1 for more detailed observations.



Figure 08: Forest Park



Figure 09: Gordy Park



Figure 10: Graham Park

GRAHAM PARK

Graham Park is a linear neighborhood park where several playgrounds (including a popular splash park), picnic shelters, and the El Dorado tornado monument are located. Observations for improvement include; erosion control for certain areas along the drainage channel, specifically the concrete bridge crossing, replace the drinking fountain, add play surfacing to play equipment in grass such as the swings and merry-go-round, the metal shelters are too small and need replaced with larger units, the basketball half court is cracked and is too small. As with all the parks, a new park identity and rules sign is needed. See Appendix 1 for more detailed observations.



Figure 11: Library Park

LIBRARY PARK

Library Park, named for its adjacency to the community library, is a neighborhood park with recreational and play facilities located together in a small area. Observations include Swings with no surfacing, unique water and drinking fountains enclosed in concrete pipes may not be accessible, repair stone steps, and need for improved seating options. See Appendix 1 for more detailed observations.

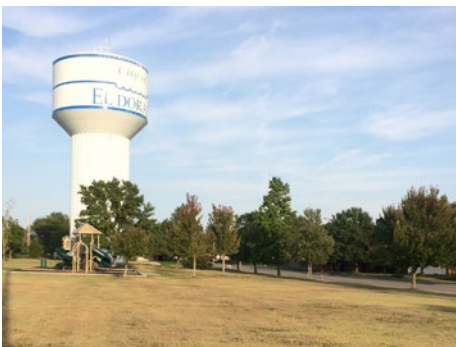


Figure 12: McCollum Park

MCCOLLUM PARK

McCollum Park is a 1.7 acre neighborhood park with a playground and open space surrounding the town's water tower. The park consists of a unique bench shelter currently in fair condition. The playground surfacing has degraded and needs additional mulch to meet fall standards. See Appendix 1 for more detailed observations.

NORTH MAIN PARK

North Main Park is currently a large neighborhood park featuring a splash park, horse shoe pits, walking path, open space, and several picnic shelters. The park is highly visible from N. Main Street, however a majority of the park and adjacent neighborhood is in the flood plain. The City is acquiring properties in the flood plain as they become available. Observations include split rail fence in poor condition, ADA parking not in compliance at north lot, a crosswalk is needed to access East and West parks across Main Street, many of the single pole benches and tables are in disrepair, the shelter at the NW property is in fair condition, play surfacing needed, new park identity and rules sign needed. See Appendix 1 for more detailed observations.

PRAIRIE TRAILS GOLF COURSE POOL

As a special use park, Prairie Trails hosts a country club venue that serves the golf course with an outdoor pool. The community uses this "park" space for a variety of special uses, which includes a wedding venue. The pool is small and has no special amenities or ADA access. The decking needs replaced, the wood gazebo is small and in fair condition, fencing needs either repair or replacement in certain areas. The pool does not have direct access to the clubhouse restrooms/lockers requiring users to go through the building to access these amenities. The space has a lot of potential if significant upgrades are implemented.

RICE PARK

Rice Park is a small neighborhood park that currently hosts a playground and shady open space with unique shelter roof and play features. The shelter is in good shape but the concrete floor needs to be replaced. The drinking fountain is missing at the restroom. Swings are functional but lack play surfacing. The park sign is in good shape but we recommend upgraded uniform signs for all parks.



Figure 13: North Main Park



Figure 14: Pool at Prairie Trails



Figure 15: Playground at Rice Park



Figure 16: R.I.O. Park

R.I.O. PARK

RIO Park, currently classified as a neighborhood park, is used primarily for unorganized recreational purposes. Observations include play equipment with no surfacing, swale crossings do not meet any standards, partially dead trees in need of removal, grills need replaced, remove the old bleachers, basketball court and fencing should be removed/replaced, lighting is inadequate, and restroom in poor condition. See Appendix 1 for more detailed observations.



Figure 17: Riverview Park

RIVERVIEW PARK

Riverview Park, while a classified neighborhood park, is an iconic bridge and fishing spot with gravel parking and playground amenities. While the gravel lot is adequate, consideration should be given to provide a structured parking lot to control traffic and parking to increase park space and accessibility. The play structure has a few issues including deck board replacement, missing components and it does not meet current ADA standards. Play surfacing is needed at the play structure and swings. The identity sign is one of the nicer park signs in the system with masonry components. A review of the culvert is necessary as it appears to be plugged.



Figure 18: South Summit Park

SOUTH SUMMIT PARK

South Summit Park is the smallest neighborhood park in El Dorado at ½ acres. It currently features a playground feature. The play equipment appears to be current however the surfacing needs to be replaced.

SUMMIT PARK

Summit Park, a typical neighborhood park, hosts the cities only ADA accessible playground surfacing, making it a unique asset to the community. The unfortunate aspect is the tile surfacing needs to be removed and replaced with a non-tile surface due to product failure. All signs need to be upgraded.



Figure 19: Summit Park

WALNUT RIVER SPORTS COMPLEX

Walnut River Sports Complex is a special use park because of its current use as a sports facility including several softball fields and soccer fields. Its location just outside of El Dorado also influences its classification as a special use park. The fields are in the best condition of the city's fields with the exception of grass invading the infield areas. Complex is well laid out and has the basic components needed for a tournament complex. Player experience and safety could be enhanced by adding warning tracks along the outfield fence, extending the foul poles higher and covering the dugouts. Bigger restrooms and ticket booths would enhance the complex tournament viability. The bleachers at the soccer fields were noted in the field survey in fair condition due to wood seats. See Appendix 1 for more detailed observations.

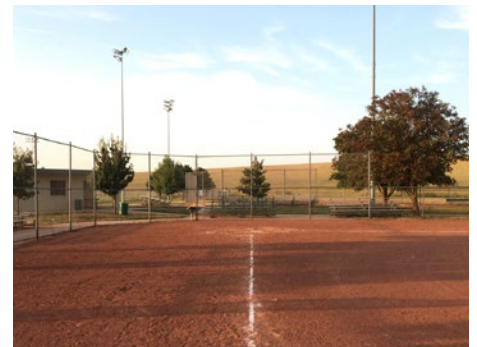


Figure 20: Walnut River Sports Complex

ACTIVITY CENTER

El Dorado's Activity Center is the only city owned and operated indoor recreational facility and is located at El Dorado High School. The condition of the inside components of the facility is very good to excellent, however more space is needed. The lacking component is a proper entryway that sets it apart from the High School and provides its own identity.

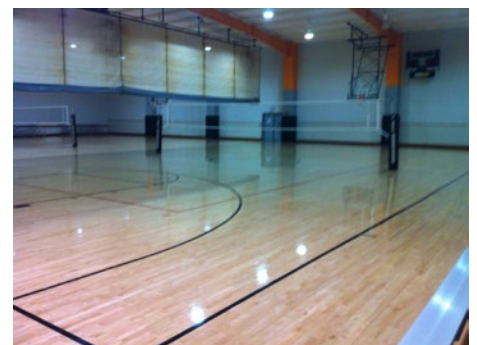


Figure 21: Activity Center

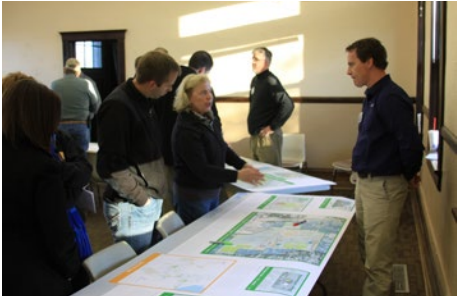




Figure 22: Meetings with stakeholders and the public of El Dorado throughout the design development process.

WHAT EL DORADO WANTS

ONLINE STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

28 community stakeholders were surveyed about the park and recreation programs in El Dorado. Stakeholders, as we define them, are members of the El Dorado community that have an invested interest or position in the development of public policy. The following figures demonstrate El Dorado stakeholders' opinions on recent improvements, important assets of the park and recreation programs, and commonly heard complaints.

Important Improvements to the Parks and Recreation System in the Last 10 Years

Improvements:	Frequency
Spray Parks	*****
Turf Fields	**
Bike Paths	*****
Aquatic Facilities	***
Shaded Bleachers	
ADA Parks/Playgrounds	*
Baseball/Softball Fields near the Lake	*****
Baseball Fields in General	****
Expansion of Sport Offerings	
Restrooms	*
Overall Maintenance	
Playground Equipment	**
Pavilions	*
Acquisition of American Legion	
Youth Sport Facilities	**
YMCA	*
REC Center	

Figure 23: Stakeholders agree that Spray Parks, the Walnut River Sports Complex, and Bike Paths are the most important improvements to the system in the last 10 years.

Important Assets or Strengths of the Parks and Recreation Programs

Assets/Strengths:	Frequency
Dedication of recreation staff.	*****
Well-maintained facilities.	**
City mill levy tax.	
Quality of park space.	****
Quantity of park space.	****
Equitable and fair programs.	*****
Bike path.	**
Quantity of sports facilities.	*
Relationship with the school district.	
Spray parks.	****
Cost to participate in programs.	
Organization of sports programs.	**
Aquatic facility.	

Figure 24: Stakeholders find that the dedication of recreation staff, quality/quantity of park space, equity and fairness of programs, and spray parks are the most important assets of the Parks and Recreation programs.

Common Complaints about Park Facilities and/or Recreation Programs

Complaints:	Frequency
Ill-repair of park facilities.	****
Lack of coaches for recreation programs.	*****
Confusement about YMCA and city programs.	**
Lack of practice facilities.	*****
Expense to reserve park shelter.	*
Lack of competitive sports programs.	*****
Lack/Quality of bathroom facilities.	*****
Small quantity of sports facilities.	***
Quality of coaching.	
Lack of parking.	***
Lack of seating at sports facilities.	
Lack of park space on the northwest side of town.	*
Lack of programs not sport-related.	
Lack of program advertisement.	*
Lack of lighting along bike paths.	
Outdated aquatic facility.	***
Size of sports fields.	
Quantity of Park and Recreation Department staff.	

Figure 25: The most common complaints about the park facilities and/or recreation programs that stakeholders hear are about the lack of coaches, practice facilities, competitive sports programs, and bathroom facilities.

ONLINE CITIZEN SURVEY



Figure 26: Connect 2025 Website

162 El Dorado citizens responded to a survey administered by Landworks Studio. General demographics of those surveyed are illustrated in Figures 27 and 28. The online citizen survey asked citizens to list their priorities for improvements to several aspects of El Dorado's park and recreation programs, to identify a preferred planning approach, and to rank the quality of existing park features. The following figures demonstrate trends and findings from the survey.

Survey Takers' Age

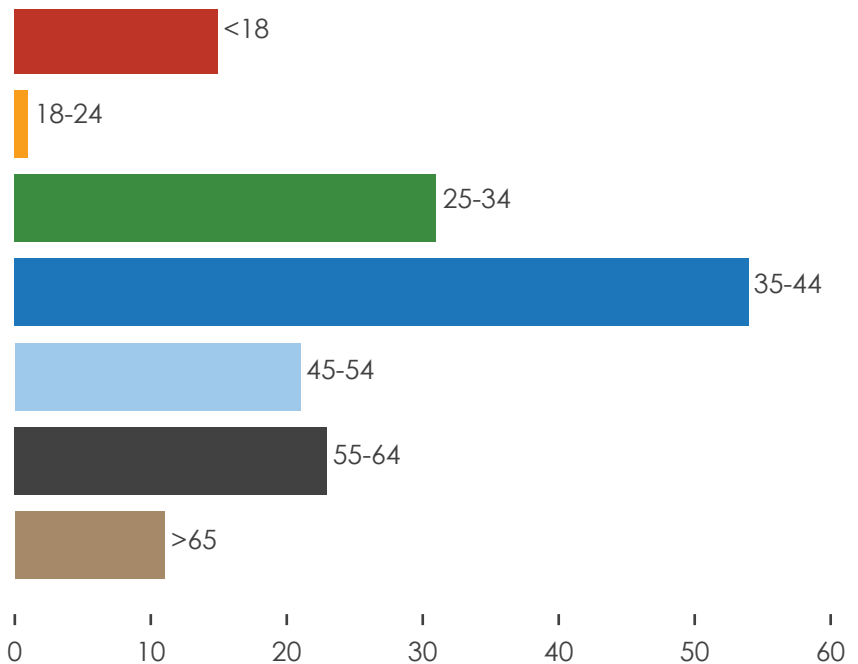


Figure 27: Over 50 El Dorado citizens aged 35-44 took the online survey, making it the largest age group to contribute.

Survey Takers' Housing Type

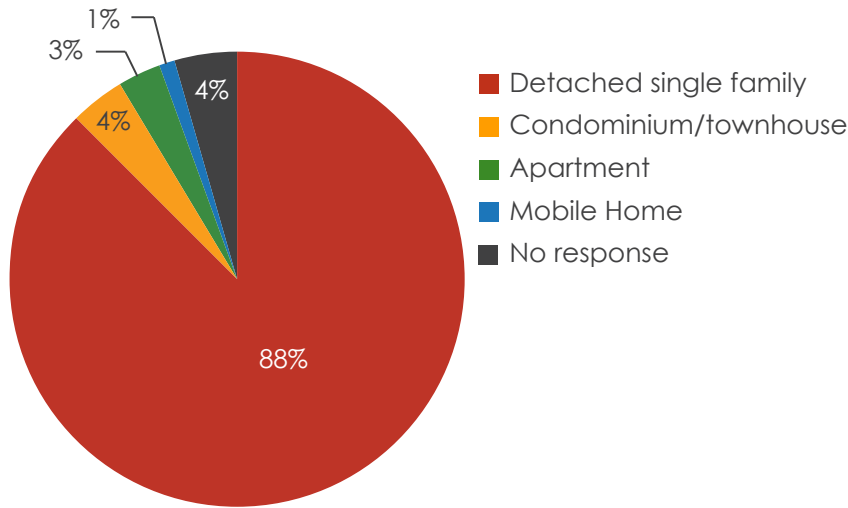


Figure 28: 88% of survey takers reside in a detached single family home.

Ranking Quality of Existing Park Features

Features:	Rating	Rank
Open Space and Natural Areas	2.1	7
Trails	2.0	9
Neighborhood and Community Parks	2.1	7
Historical and Cultural Sites	2.7	2
Playgrounds	2.3	5
Outdoor Sport Courts	3.0	1
Outdoor Sport Fields	2.4	4
City Recreation Buildings/Centers/Museums	2.3	5
City Owned Aquatic Centers and Splash Pads	2.6	3

Figure 29: El Dorado citizens rank historical and cultural sites, outdoor sport courts, and city owned aquatic centers and splash pads among the highest quality of park features.



Figure 30: Pool at Forest Park



Figure 31: Pool at Forest Park



Figure 32: Pool at Forest Park

Participation in Aquatic Programs/Classes

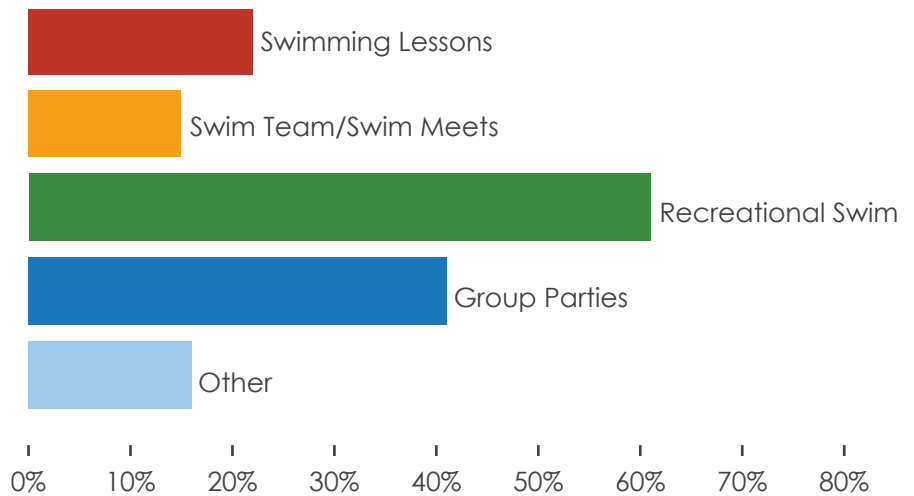


Figure 33: Over 60% of survey takers participated in recreational swimming at a city owned aquatic facility in the last year, making it the most popular aquatic activity.

Aquatic Center Priorities

Feature:	Rating	Rank
Diving Pool	5.8	8
Lap Pool	5.4	6
Leisure Pool	4.1	1
Zero Depth Entry Areas	5.1	3
Lazy River	5.4	6
Water Slides	4.7	2
Water Play Features and Spray Zones	5.3	4
Sun and Shade Patios	5.3	4
Concession Areas	6.9	9
Locker and Party Rooms	7.0	10

Figure 34: Survey takers prioritize improving or adding leisure pools, zero depth entry areas, and water slides to aquatic centers in El Dorado.

Options to Improve Aquatic Center

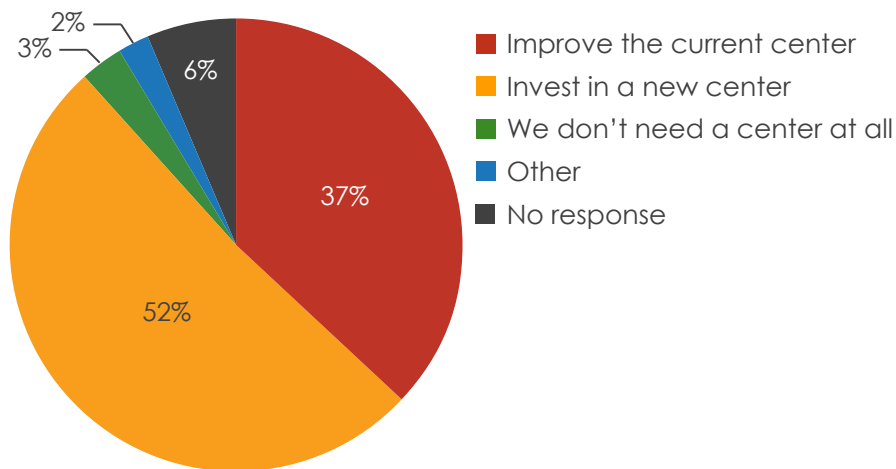


Figure 35: Of the options listed, 52% of survey takers would choose to invest in a new aquatic center.

City Program Priorities

Programs:	Rating	Rank
Children Recreation and Sports Programs	1.6	1
Youth Recreation and Sports Programs	1.8	2
Adult Recreation and Sports Programs	2.3	5
Older Adult Recreation and Sports Programs	2.4	6
Programs for People with Special Needs	2.0	3
Programs for Low Income Households	2.0	3
Cultural and Natural History Interpretive Programs	2.7	9
Environmental Education and Exploration	2.4	6
Community Center Programs	2.4	6

Figure 36: El Dorado citizens prioritize children recreation and sports programs, youth recreation and sports programs, programs for people with special needs, and programs for low income households over other city programs.

Preferred Planning Approach

Approaches:	Rating	Rank
Spread out Maintenance Evenly across all Parks & Facilities	5.5%	5
Work First on Existing Parks & Facilities in most Need of Maintenance	45.6%	1
Work First on Existing Parks & Facilities that Receive the most Use	24.6%	2
Work First on Existing Underused Parks & Facilities so they will Attract more People	5.5%	5
Work First on Existing Parks & Facilities in the Downtown Area	0%	7
Work First on Existing Neighborhood Parks & Facilities	11.7%	3
No Response	6.7%	4

Figure 37: Of the options listed, most survey takers would prefer to work first on existing parks and facilities in most need of maintenance.

City Task Priorities

Task:	Rating	Rank
Connect Existing Trails	2.3	1
Improve the Maintenance and Care of Trails	2.4	2
Pave or Widen Existing Trails	3.1	7
Provide more Facilities Along Trails/at Trailheads	2.5	5
Provide New Trails and Paths	2.6	6
Provide more Accessible Walkway Loops	2.4	2
Introduce New and Upcoming Outdoor Activities	2.4	2

Figure 38: Survey takers prioritize connecting existing trails, improving the maintenance and care of trails, providing more accessible walkway loops, and introducing new and upcoming outdoor activities over other city tasks.

The Cost for Parks and Recreation Operations should be paid through:

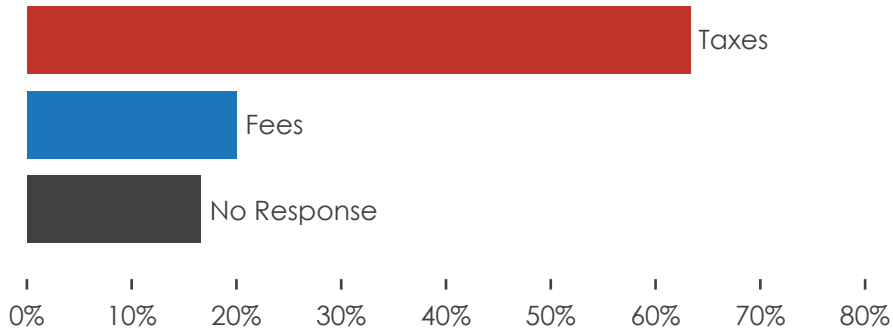


Figure 39: Over 60% of El Dorado citizens agree that the cost for parks and recreation operations should be paid through taxes.

Level of Support for 0.1% Sales Tax to Support Parks & Recreation

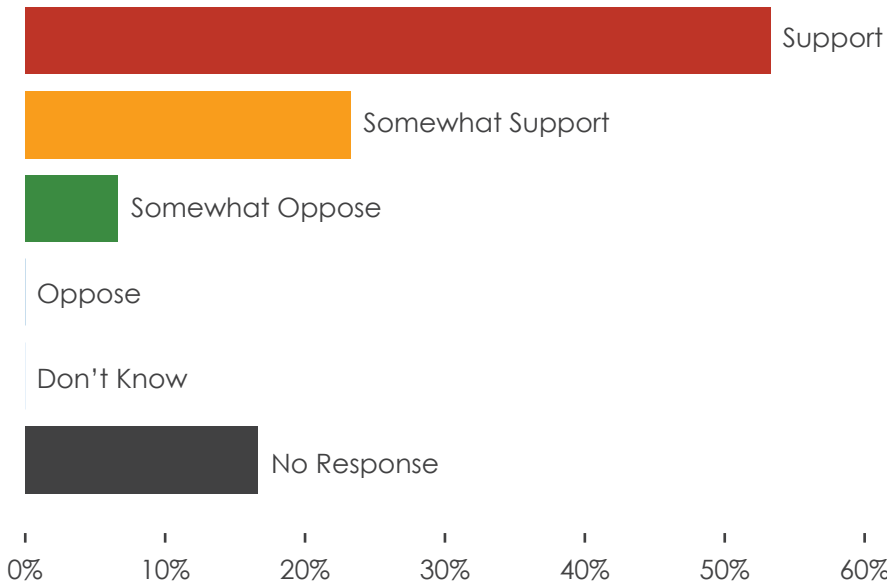


Figure 40: Over 50% of survey takers would support a 0.1% sales tax to support parks and recreation in El Dorado.



Figure 41: Connect 2025 Poster



Figure 42: Connect 2025 T-Shirt

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

On January 8, 2015, a Connect Event was held at the Historic El Dorado Depot. Members of the consulting team were stationed around the room to explain various aspects of the master plan. Survey results and comparisons to other cities were explained. The existing trail system and future expansions were explored. A computer station was set up to explain the project web site and actively sign up interested people. Park improvement concepts were presented and on display for event participants to make comments and provide additional suggestions.

The public open house was well attended by El Dorado residents. Park concepts were developed based on input from citizen and stakeholder surveys while considering city needs. Park concepts were discussed individually, encouraging citizen comments and suggestions. Those comments were later reviewed with stakeholders and city staff to establish the revised park plans shown in this report.





Figure 43: Basketball Court in Forest Park

WHAT ARE OUR NEEDS

Needs and wants are two very different things. To this point, the master plan content has been focused on describing the data and information gathered about the existing physical components of the parks and recreation system, past plan and policy directions, and community desires related to the delivery of Parks and Recreation services in El Dorado.

In this section of the master plan, a number of key needs are identified to understand the context for the recommendations and projects found later in the plan.

PARK PROPERTY NEEDS

A park framework has been established, providing coverage evenly throughout the city, however there are some neighborhood and community park needs. The neighborhood park property located at the end of Sunflower Drive south of 6th Avenue needs to be developed to serve the western portion of town. There is also a lack of neighborhood park service south of Towanda Avenue.

Community parks have developed and are proposed along major corridors, centrally located to residential areas throughout the city. Converting the American Legion Property to a community park fills park services for the western side of town, as well as the entire community.

North Main Park is master planned to expand as a community park through property acquisition and merging with R.I.O. Park. The city has already acquired several properties as they became available. Properties in the area are located within the Walnut River West Branch floodplain and require costly flood insurance if developed. As park property, the area can remain more natural and provide community park needs to the city.

ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS

PARKS & REC. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

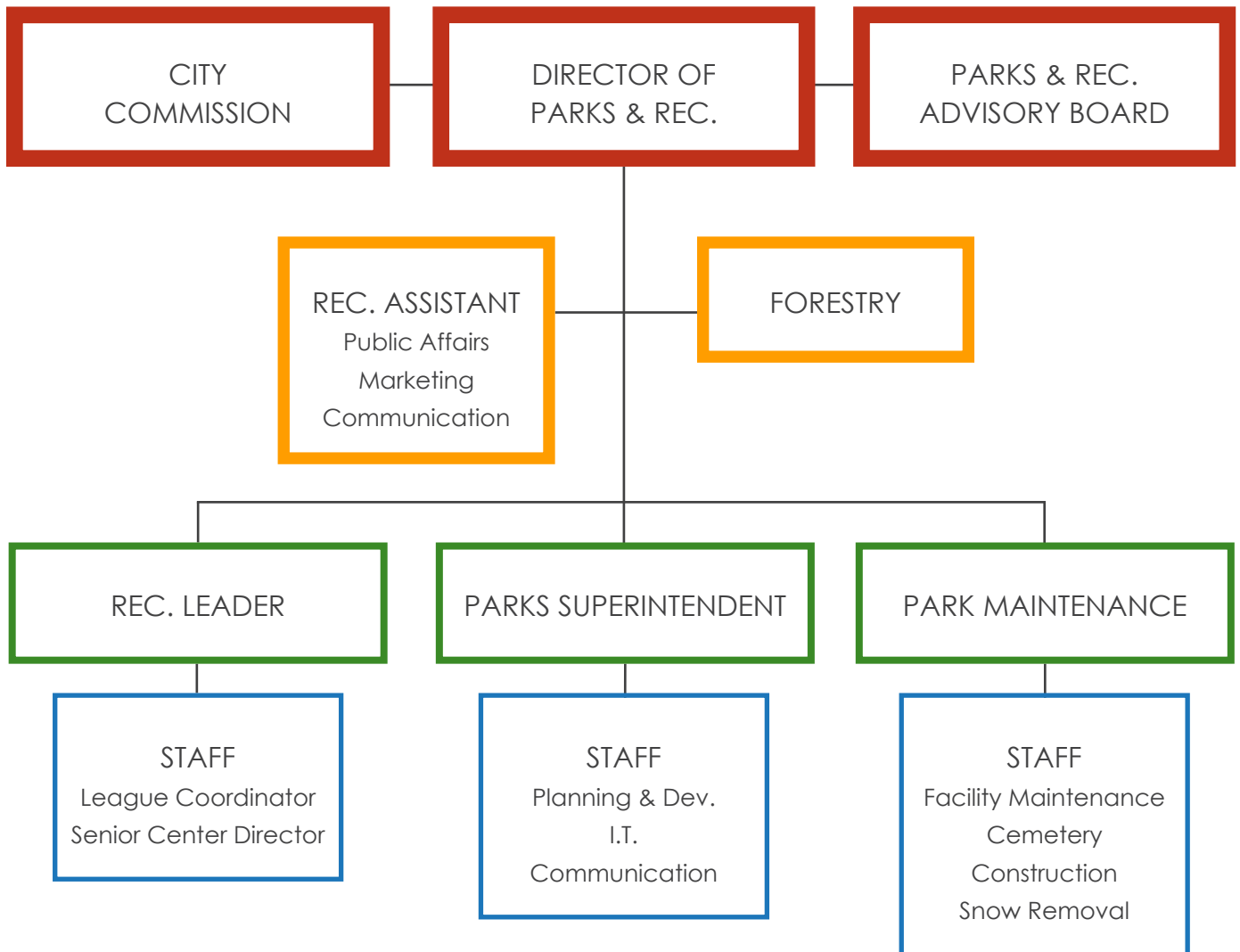


Figure 44: Parks & Recreation Department Organization

The existing organizational structure of the El Dorado Parks and Recreation Department, as represented by the organization chart, is typical of many small Midwestern communities. Generally, the department operates in a responsive or reactive mode to the desires of the citizens, the City Commission, and the Recreation Advisory Board, while executing the daily operational tasks associated with the delivery of traditional recreation, parks, and open space services.

While it is important to maximize the use of limited monetary and staff resources by expecting staff to serve in multiple roles, the current organizational structure creates a variety of issues as management may find themselves operating as a referee or umpire instead of focusing on acquiring grants to fund programs or facility improvements. Additionally, some staff may find themselves dealing with delivery issues related to areas outside their expertise or volunteer management issues.

Four primary needs must be effectively addressed through the organizational structure of the Parks and Recreation Department in the future:

1. Ensure that there is proper assignment of responsibilities and accountability on a daily or routine basis - having the right positions assigned and trained appropriately is critical within a smaller organization. Multiple task assignments only work when staff is trained appropriately and clear task priorities are set before them.
2. Purposefully and strategically build redundancy (effective cross-training) into the organizational structure so that immediate tasks can be accomplished when short-handed or under

circumstances dictated by weather conditions or other items beyond the control of the organization.

3. Dedicated time and resources to and place a priority on proactive forward thinking activities such as grant writing, long-term capital planning, evaluating delivery of services, and making plans for future implementation of efforts.
4. Formalize the use of volunteers and partnerships in a manner that clearly states expectations upfront and holds parties accountable for meeting/exceeding the expectations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE NEEDS

The creation and adoption of this master plan formalizes a foundation for future action and pursuit of a vision through future implementation efforts. Prior to this plan, the comprehensive plan provided general guidance related to future provision of parks and recreation facilities and services. The comprehensive plan calls for the development of this master plan.

The Parks and Recreation goal in the 2009 comprehensive plan is as follows:

Provide El Dorado with park and recreation facilities and programs that meet or surpass the on-going recreation and leisure needs of the community.

The goal is supported by two objectives and seven strategies focused upon the need for further study, evaluation, funding, and programming. The contents of the comprehensive plan fail to provide a vision that entices

people to pursue facilities that will benefit the community; and to have the aspiration of continuous improvement.

This failure combined with the current organizational structure places into motion a mission that tries to meet day-to-day needs, wants and desires, and views being adequate as a success. El Dorado has the potential to achieve much more than adequacy. The unique combination of natural resources, educational opportunities, and economic components provides a backdrop for exploring opportunities and executing activities that other communities of this size can only dream of.

To accomplish such dreams it becomes critical that the vision for parks and recreation system delivery be based on key factors:

1. Proactively seek new and sustainable revenue sources to supplement existing and traditional sources.
2. Establish policies that take advantage of economic and development growth in a responsible manner to ensure the system can expand accordingly with the community as a whole.
3. Utilize an asset-based approach to planning and providing activities and facilities that appeal to residents, visitors, and business development interests.

COMPARISON TO LIKE COMMUNITIES

The consulting team for Connect 2025 worked with staff members to compare El Dorado's Parks and Recreation Department with those in communities of a similar geography and size using two methods. The most direct comparison relates to current operations from specific cities in Kansas. Also available is a tool from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) called PRORAGIS. PRORAGIS (the Parks and Recreation Operating Ratio and GIS) uses GIS information and data provided by individual parks and recreation departments to allow agencies to compare their expenditures, staff numbers, and scope of typical park and recreation amenities.

KANSAS COMPARISONS

While national indicators and comparisons are important, the information provided tends to be skewed through the aggregation of data and information on a broad scale. Regional and local differences in community attitudes, available methods of funding, and other factors are not revealed through such comparisons.

For that reason, the consultant team looked at several peer communities in Kansas in regard to key items such as park acreage, staff level, and budget. It is important to note that these comparisons are not necessarily apples-to-apples comparisons, but they are valuable for an initial understanding of the investment other communities are placing into delivery of parks and recreation services.

Comparison To Communities in Kansas

City:	Population	# of Staff	# of Parks	Gen. Fund Budget
El Dorado	13,021	5	14	\$1,406,187
Newton	19,132	13	18	\$1,408,847
Great Bend	15,995	8	10	\$1,709,042
McPherson	13,155	6	14	\$406,838
Ottawa	12,649	5	7	\$402,285
Arkansas City	12,415	12.25	18	\$1,291,162
Winfield	12,301	6	15	\$849,314

*Gen. Fund Budget Note: Does not include supplementary funds from other sources

Figure 45: Comparison of El Dorado's population, parks & recreation staff, park quantity, and parks & recreation budget to those of similarly sized communities in Kansas.

The information provided below was the latest information available. It should be noted that the responsibilities and budget for each of these community's parks and recreation departments are split differently. While PRORAGIS data provides an interesting outlook on how El Dorado compares to cities both regionally and nationally, it is helpful to make as direct a comparison as possible to communities that are familiar to El Dorado.

These comparisons indicate that El Dorado is either in line, or below average with other communities of like size in Kansas. But it should also be noted that it appears that all the communities have a similar philosophical approach to the provision of parks and recreation services and facilities. That is to generally maintain what they provide at an acceptable level, while making improvements when needed or demanded.

PRORAGIS

Using PRORAGIS, the consulting team for Connect 2025 found many extreme differences between the El Dorado Parks and Recreation Department and departments in similar communities. The following figures offer insight that, while it should be taken with a grain of salt, demonstrate that El Dorado is taking a positive step by developing this parks and recreation master plan.

Number of Parks

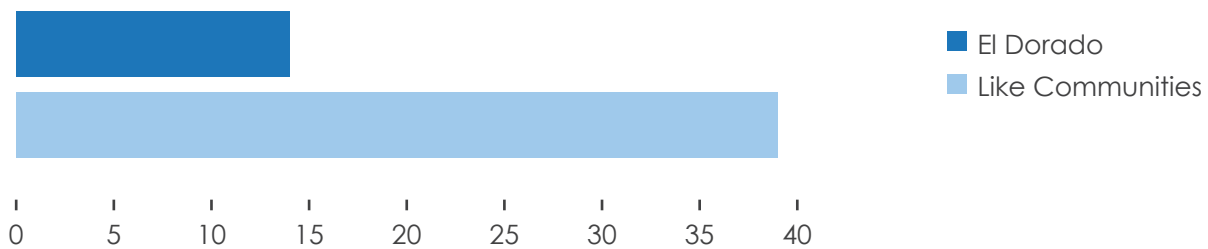


Figure 46: El Dorado has ~25 less parks than similar communities.

Study note: The following Park Acre comparison reveals a significant reduction in the number of acres of park land per 1,000 people. What this comparison does not take into affect is the over 2,000 acres of park land available at El Dorado State Park and Lake located adjacent to the City of El Dorado.

Number of Park Acres

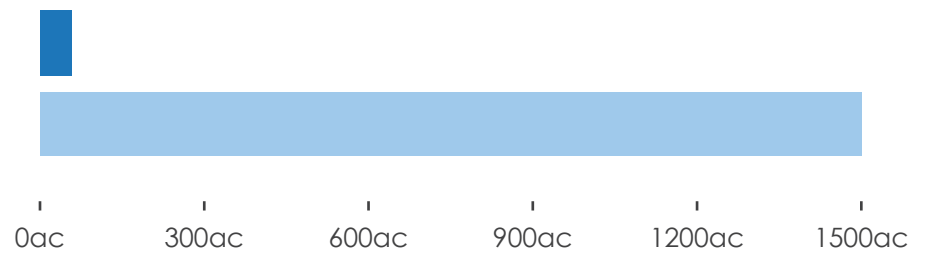


Figure 47: El Dorado has ~1000 less acres parkland than similar communities.

Acreage of Parkland per 1,000 People

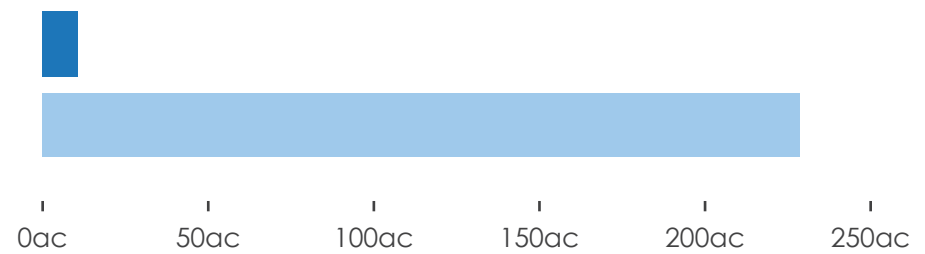


Figure 48: El Dorado has ~200 less acres of parkland per 1,000 people than similar communities.

Mileage of Greenways and Trails

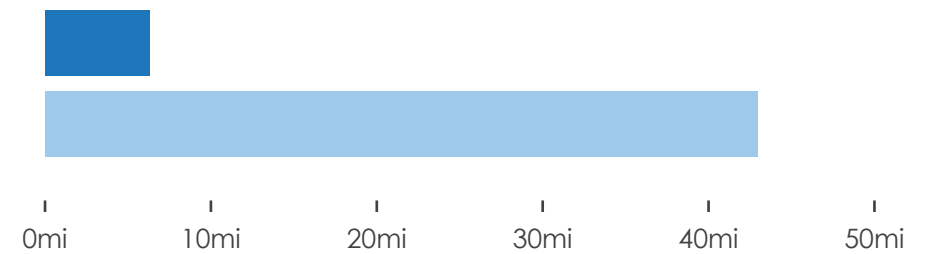


Figure 49: El Dorado has ~40 miles less of greenways and trails than similar communities.

Parks & Recreation Department Total Expenditure per Fiscal Year

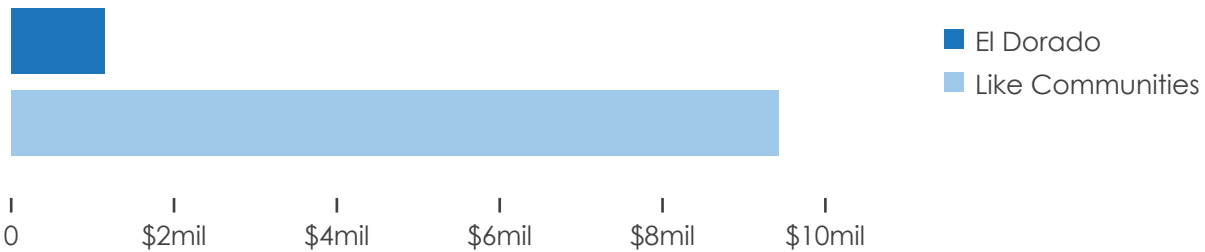


Figure 50: The El Dorado Parks & Recreation Department spends ~\$8 million less per fiscal year than similar communities.

Operating Expenditures per Acre of Land Managed

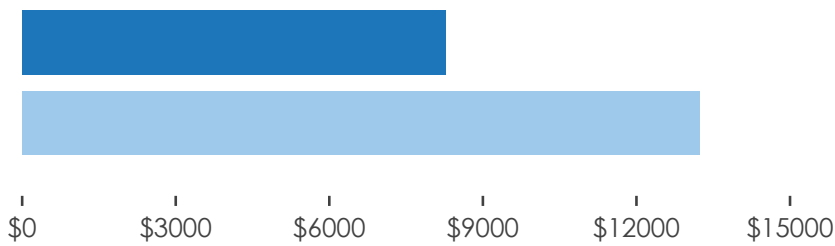


Figure 51: The El Dorado Parks & Recreation Department spends ~\$5,000 less per acres of land managed each fiscal year than similar communities.

Revenue as a Percent of Total Operating Expense

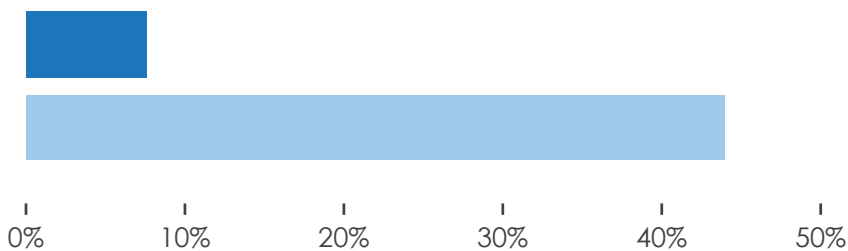


Figure 52: El Dorado's revenue as a percent of total operating expense is ~8%, compared to ~45% in similar communities.

Operating Expenditures per Full Time Employee

- El Dorado
- Like Communities

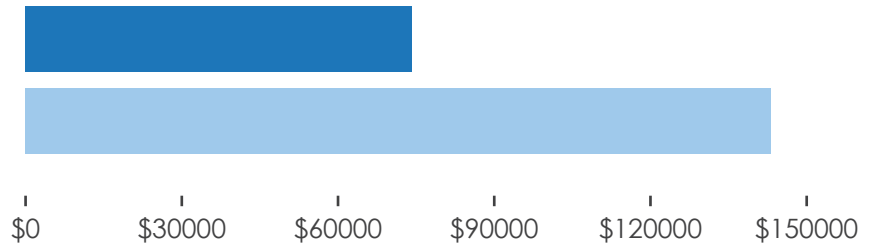


Figure 53: El Dorado spends ~\$70,000 less per full time employee than similar communities.

Number of Full-Time Employees

- Executive
- Administrative
- Operations
- Programs
- Maintenance
- Planning
- Other

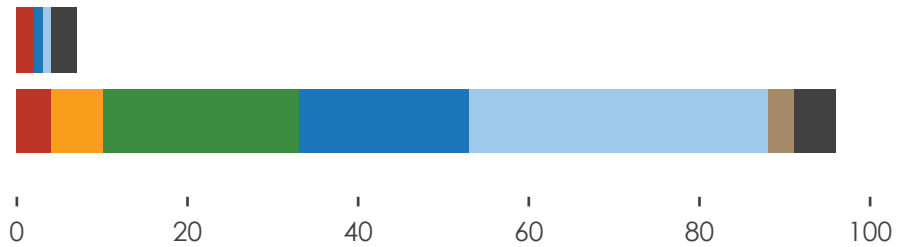


Figure 54: Overall, the El Dorado Parks & Recreation Department has ~90 less employees than similar communities. The difference specific to divisions of a typical parks & recreation department are also listed.





Figure 55: Rendering - Gordy Park in summer splendor.

OUR IMPROVEMENT PLAN

CURRENT/FUTURE PARKLAND ACQUISITION

The Connect 2025 master plan proposes significant changes at two distinctly different areas located within the City of El Dorado for park land acquisition over the next ten years. The North Main and R.I.O park area incorporates direction provided by city officials to consider assisting individuals who own properties within the flood plan by acquiring their property that otherwise would have no value to future home owners due to their floodplain status. The objective of eventually consolidating the properties over time into a single regional park and open space for the northern part of the city will provide a unique asset for the north end of the city. El Dorado will continue to work with individual property owners located within the floodplain and make phased improvements as property becomes available.

Another property considered for park expansion would actually not be an acquisition of property but a long term lease of the current American Legion property's old golf course. The planning team developed a viable concept for utilization of this strategically located property on the west-central side of town and recommends the city perform due diligence that would move toward signing a long term lease with the American Legion. The master plan can be reviewed in the map section of this report

EXISTING PARK RENOVATIONS

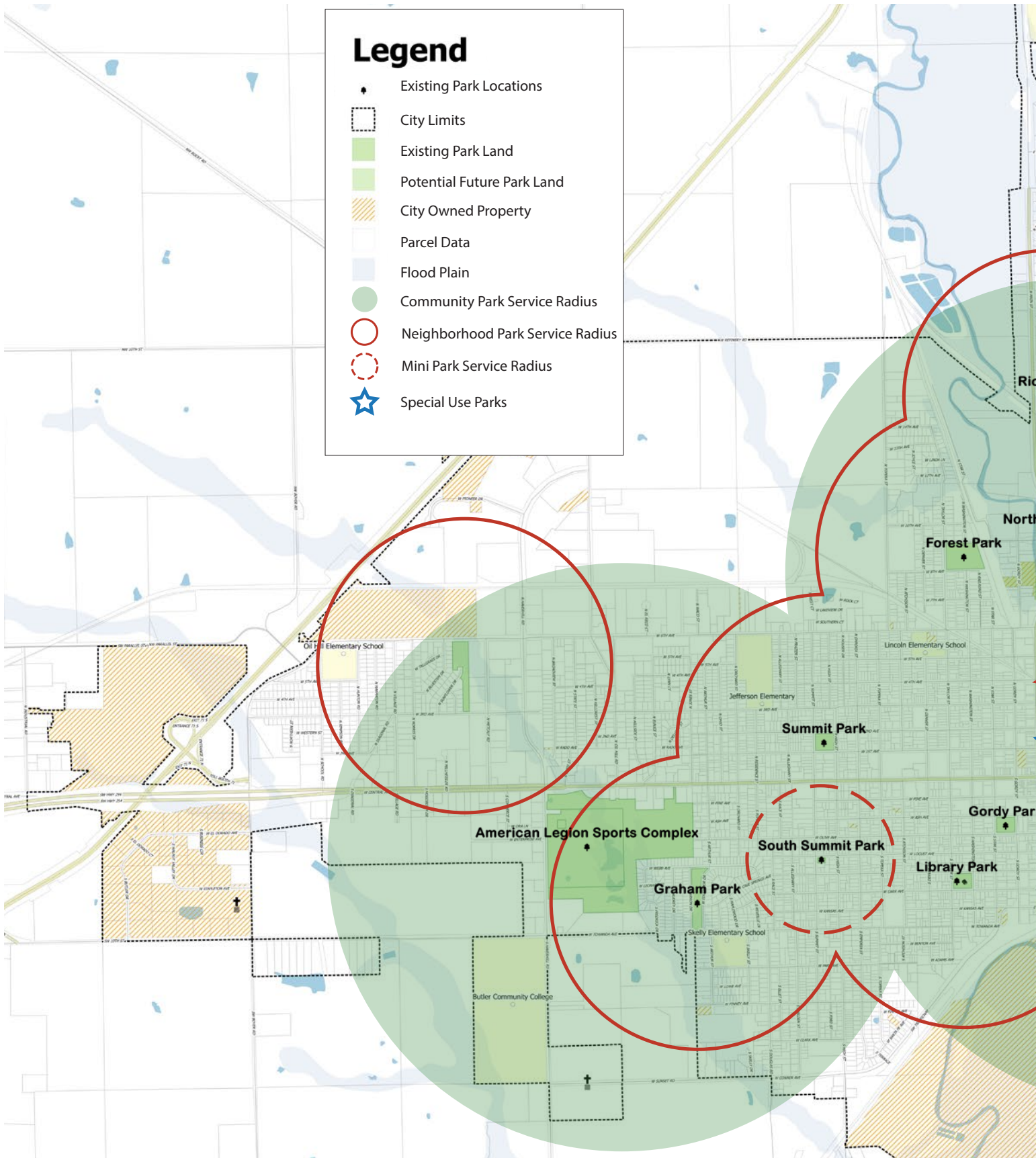
At the time of this report, the Parks and Recreation staff was taking steps toward implementing play surface improvements at South Summit Park and Summit Park. Additional planned improvements include creating play field space at Walnut River Sports Complex and Rio Park.

EXISTING AQUATIC/POOL RECOMMENDATIONS

The park and facilities analysis and assessment and results from the citizen and stakeholder surveys all concluded that the existing pool facility at Forest Park needs to either undergo extensive renovations or a new aquatic facility needs to be added within the city limits. After consideration of all options, the planning team recommended a new aquatic facility be constructed at the American Legion property.

SIGNAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

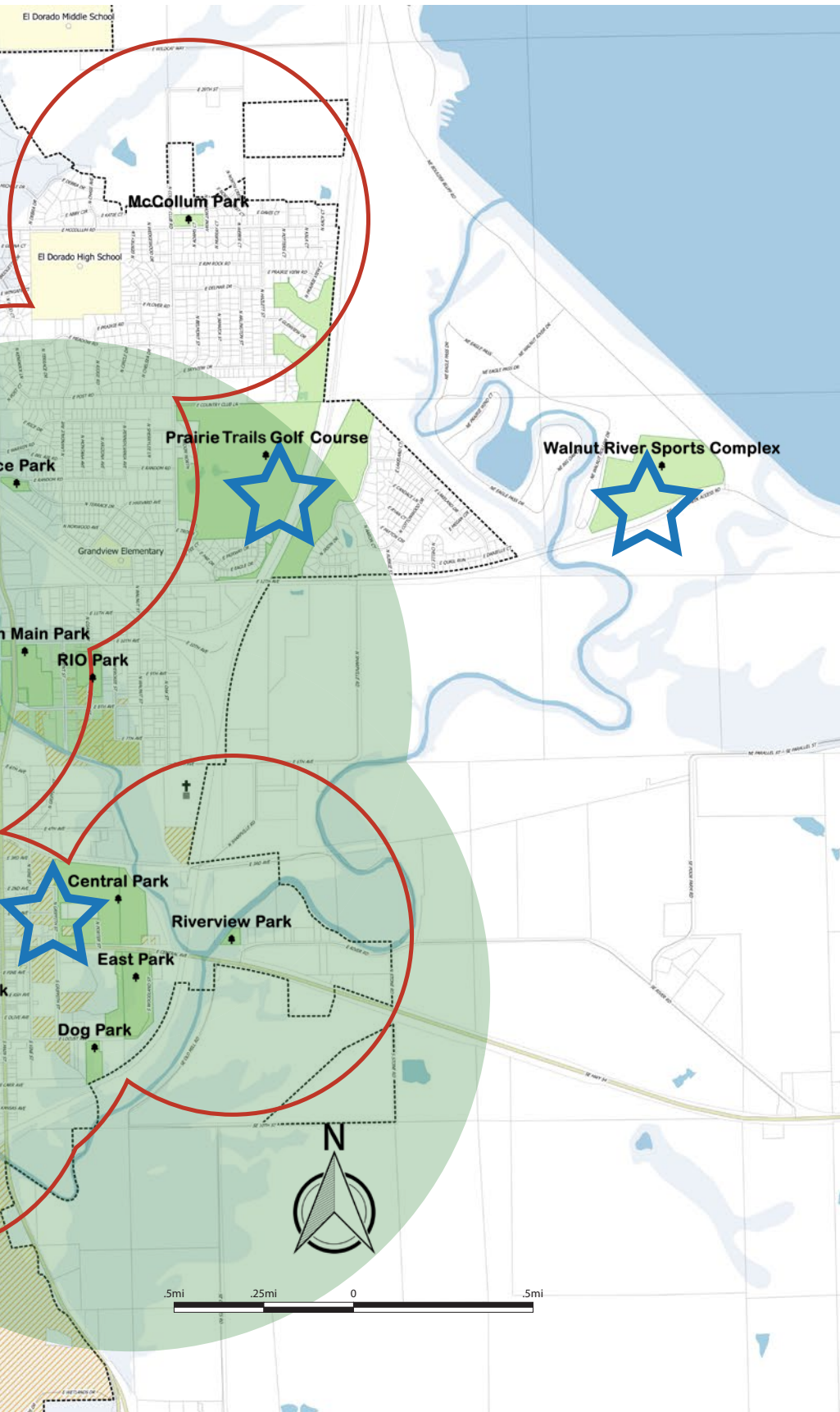
Signage is an important element in any community. In addition to being a valuable communication tool for municipalities, properly designed signs can provide identity for public properties and instill community pride. Modern municipal signs today are also made of durable materials and moderately or highly stylized. The City of El Dorado's existing park signs vary in character, but all are typically simple signs made of wood. Because they vary and are made of a non-durable material, they lack a unique community identification style. A comprehensive city-wide park and public property signage design project is highly recommended and should be included in near future C.I.P. budgeting before any signs are updated or constructed.



Legend

- Existing Park Locations
- City Limits
- Existing Park Land
- Potential Future Park Land
- ▨ City Owned Property
- Parcel Data
- Flood Plain
- Community Park Service Radius
- Neighborhood Park Service Radius
- Mini Park Service Radius
- ★ Special Use Parks

Figure 56: Proposed park types, location, and extent.



RECREATION FACILITIES/PROGRAMS

Competitive and recreational programs are typically reflective of community demand and available facilities. El Dorado's Parks & Recreation department offers competitive and recreational leagues for adults and recreational leagues for youth sports. The adult programs currently offered include coed soccer; men's, women's, and coed volleyball; men's flag football; men's and coed softball; and men's basketball. The youth programs include boys and girls basketball (K-6th grade), volleyball (2nd-6th grade), boys and girls soccer (K-8th grade), boys and girls flag football (1st-6th grade). Baseball and softball for ages 5-15, swim lessons, and occasional skill clinics and tournaments are offered throughout the year. Occasional offerings include pickleball and programs and special events offered by the Senior Center.

INDOOR

Demand for indoor recreational facilities is evident based on survey results and scheduling demand for recreation programs at the Activity Center. Figure 75 illustrates a possible expansion to the Activity Center that would accommodate the demand for modern recreation activity offerings. The expansion includes; 3 new basketball courts (or 6 volleyball courts), a running track, racquetball, climbing wall, aerobic room, restrooms/lockers/concession/kitchen, party rental room, child care area, and outdoor children's play area.

OUTDOOR

Existing outdoor recreational facilities include Central Park (including McDonald Stadium) baseball/softball and the Binter Tennis courts, East Park softball, Walnut

River baseball/softball/soccer, and the Municipal Pool. The section of this report called “Existing Park Inventory” provides more detailed information about field quantities and conditions. Demand for additional sports fields, especially for recreational and tournament use, is evident through an understanding of national demand and local needs.

The best approach to meeting El Dorado’s outdoor recreational and competitive needs can be accomplished by implementing the American Legion master plan, which provides a state of the art aquatic center and tournament level softball/baseball facilities. Due to its strategic location in the central part of town, the proposed design not only accommodates local needs but has the potential to achieve multi-level economic benefits for local businesses along west Central Avenue by attracting national tournaments. The inevitable synergy that would occur between the businesses and the proposed park improvements from construction through facility use is unmatched in most communities who do not have the density of established businesses adjacent to a tournament facility and aquatic center. Figure 59 illustrates the proposed uses.

TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS

El Dorado's current trail system is expansive for a community of its size, mostly because of trail systems within the El Dorado State Park. However, the existing trails do not provide a level of connection and accessibility that would make them ideal for use throughout the entire community. The citizen survey conducted for Connect 2025 found that El Dorado citizens agree that El Dorado has a well-maintained trail system, and that more walkway loops and trail connections would improve the system.

Future trails should be paved at a width of 10-12 feet to accommodate a variety of uses and allow maintenance vehicles access when necessary. Paving or widening existing trails is less of a priority than adding more trail connections throughout El Dorado.

Most of El Dorado's existing trails are located in the northern half and outer edges of the city. The city should prioritize adding new trails of connecting existing trails in the southern half of El Dorado, which will provide recreational access to community members living in the more urban areas of town. Subsequently, stretches of future trails that connect existing trails around the edge of the city should be implemented. Consult Figure [] for a representation of El Dorado's current and future trail system.

Existing trails both in El Dorado and just outside the city limits in the El Dorado State Park provide access for a variety of uses, including equestrian trails, hiking/nature trails, and trails for biking or walking. Future trails should continue this pattern by increasing access to the natural parts of El Dorado while also providing access to recreation within the urban fabric.

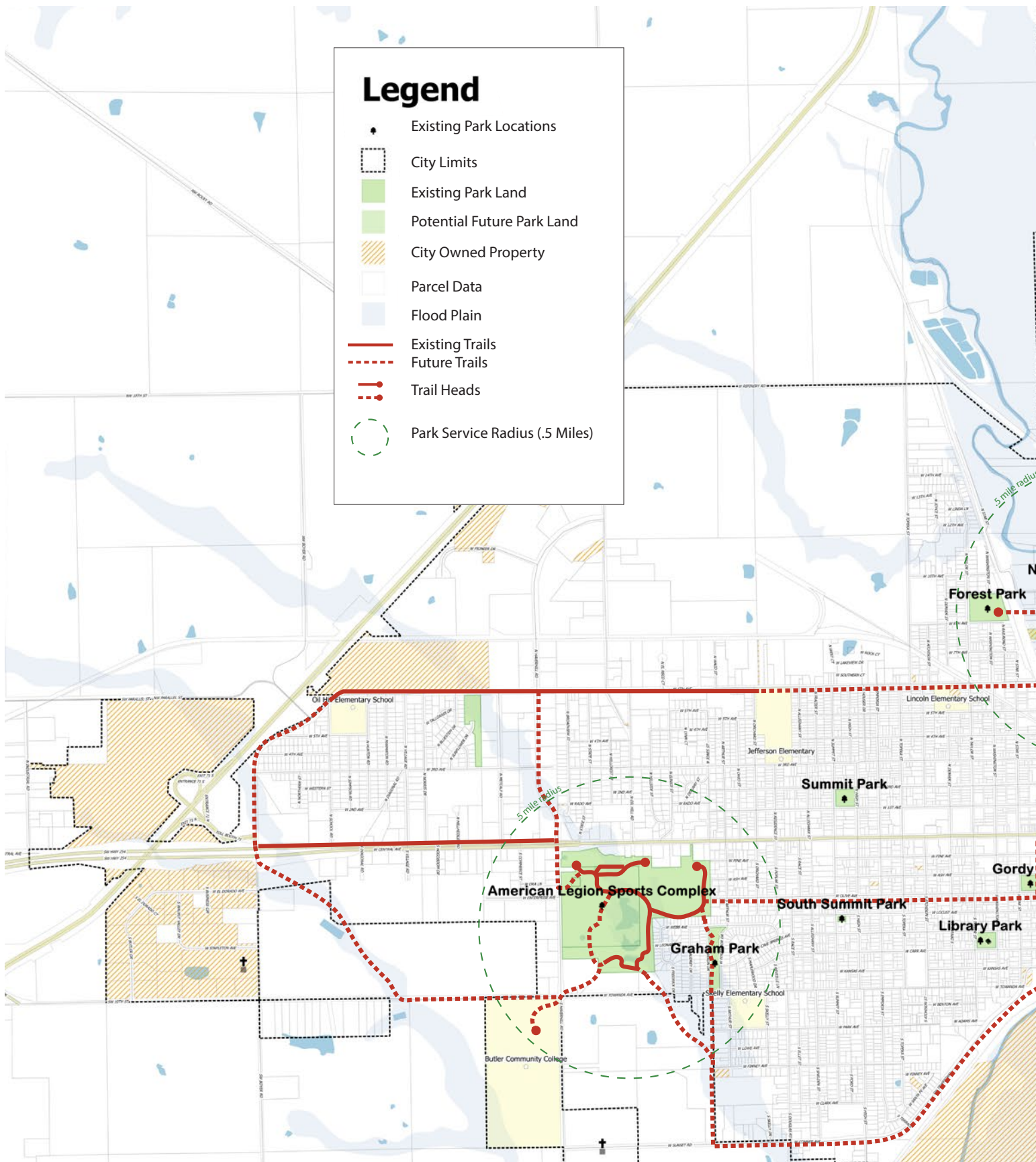
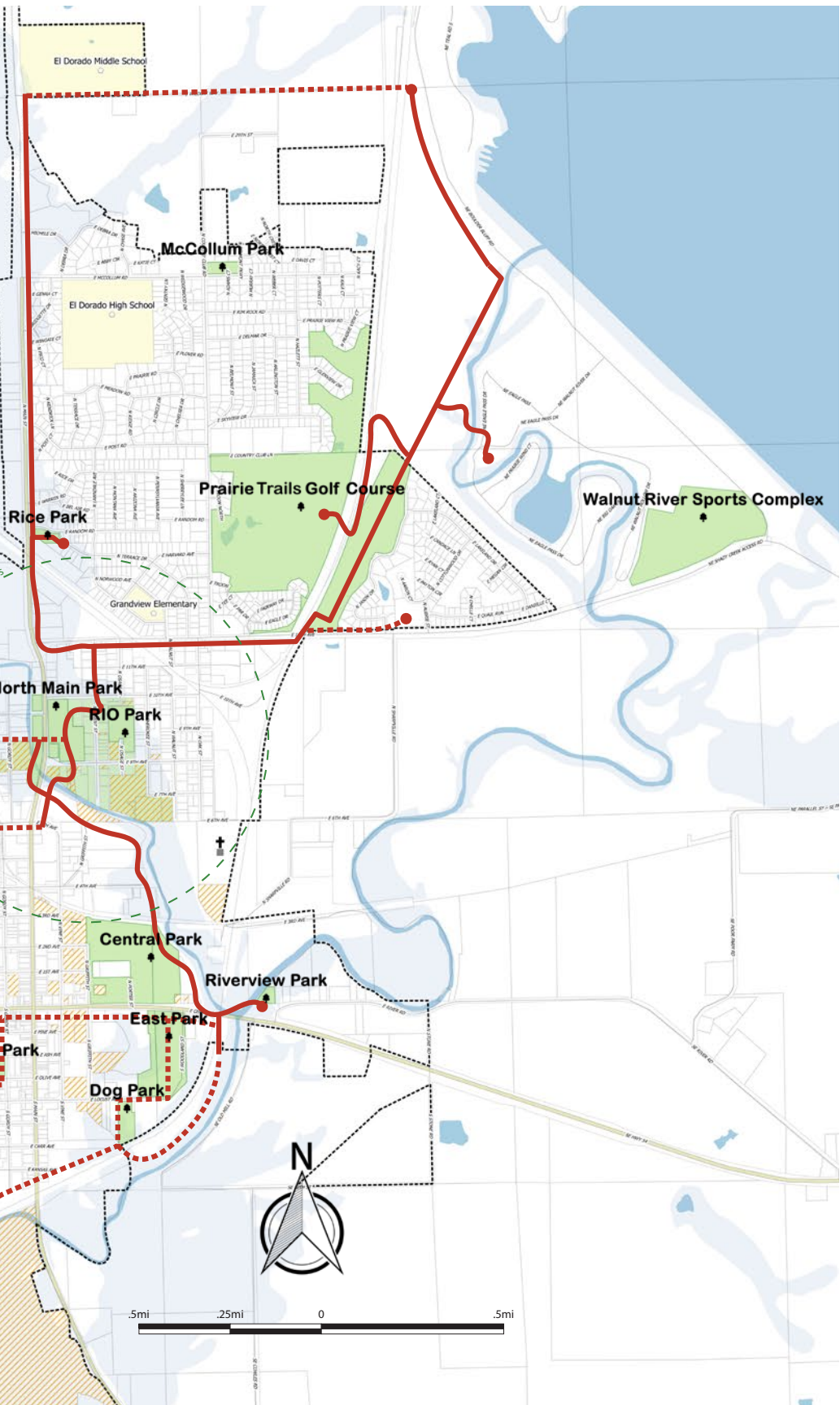


Figure 57: Existing and proposed trail layout through El Dorado.



Park Name	Proposed New/Renovated Additions to Parks					
	Shelter Structure		Sports Field		Sports Court	
	New	Renovated	New	Renovated	New	Renovated
American Legion Complex	■		■			
Central Park Concept 1		■		■		
Central Park Concept 2	■			■		
East Park	■				■	
Forest Park	■		■		■	
Gordy Park	■					
Graham Park	■	■			■	
Library Park	■				■	
McCollum Park	■		■			
North Main (R.I.O.) Park	■	■	■			
Prairie Trails Golf Course	■				■	
Rice Park	■					
Riverview Park	■					
South Summit Park						
Summit Park	■		■			
Walnut River Sports Complex	■	■	■	■		
West Park	■				■	
Activity Center						

Figure 58: Matrix identifying whether the park proposals indicate new or renovated core elements, which include shelter structures, sports fields, sports courts, play structures, aquatic facilities, parking, and trails.

	<i>Play Structure</i>		<i>Aquatic Facility</i>		<i>Parking</i>		<i>Trail</i>	
	New	Renovated	New	Renovated	New	Renovated	New	Renovated
			█		█		█	█
					█	█		
				█	█	█	█	
			█		█		█	
		█					█	
	█				█	█		
	█			█			█	
		█				█		
		█			█		█	
	█		█		█	█	█	█

1

AMERICAN LEGION COMPLEX

As a new community park, a variety of unique and diverse activities are proposed to fill the natural preservation and recreational needs of the city and surrounding area. Adjacency to the local businesses promotes convenience to park goers and stimulates the economic development.

- Baseball Fields & Facilities
- New Pavement or Trail
- New Plant Material
- Shelter or Similar Structure
- Disc Golf

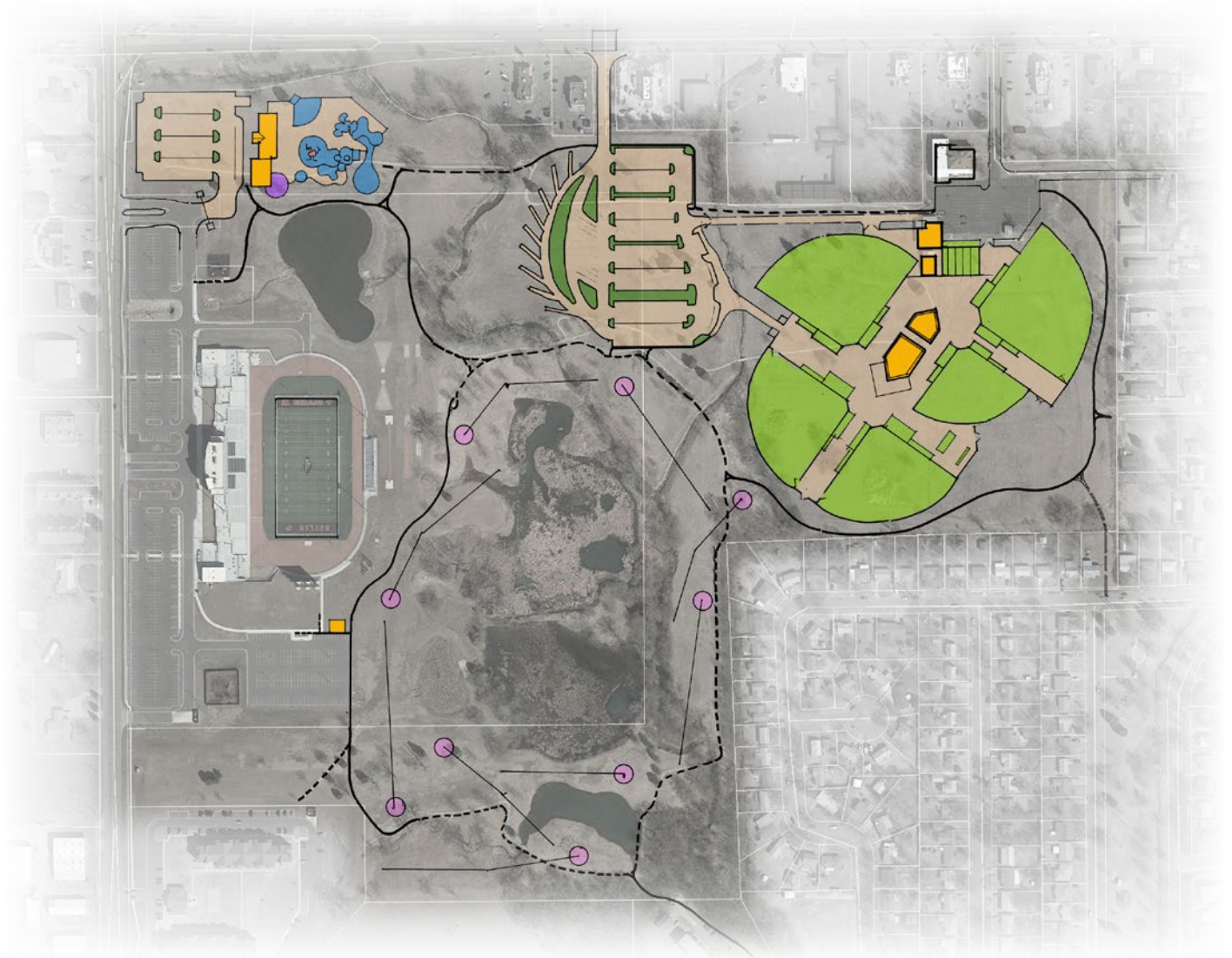


Figure 59: Master plan for American Legion Complex.



Figure 60: Plan for ball fields at American Legion Complex.

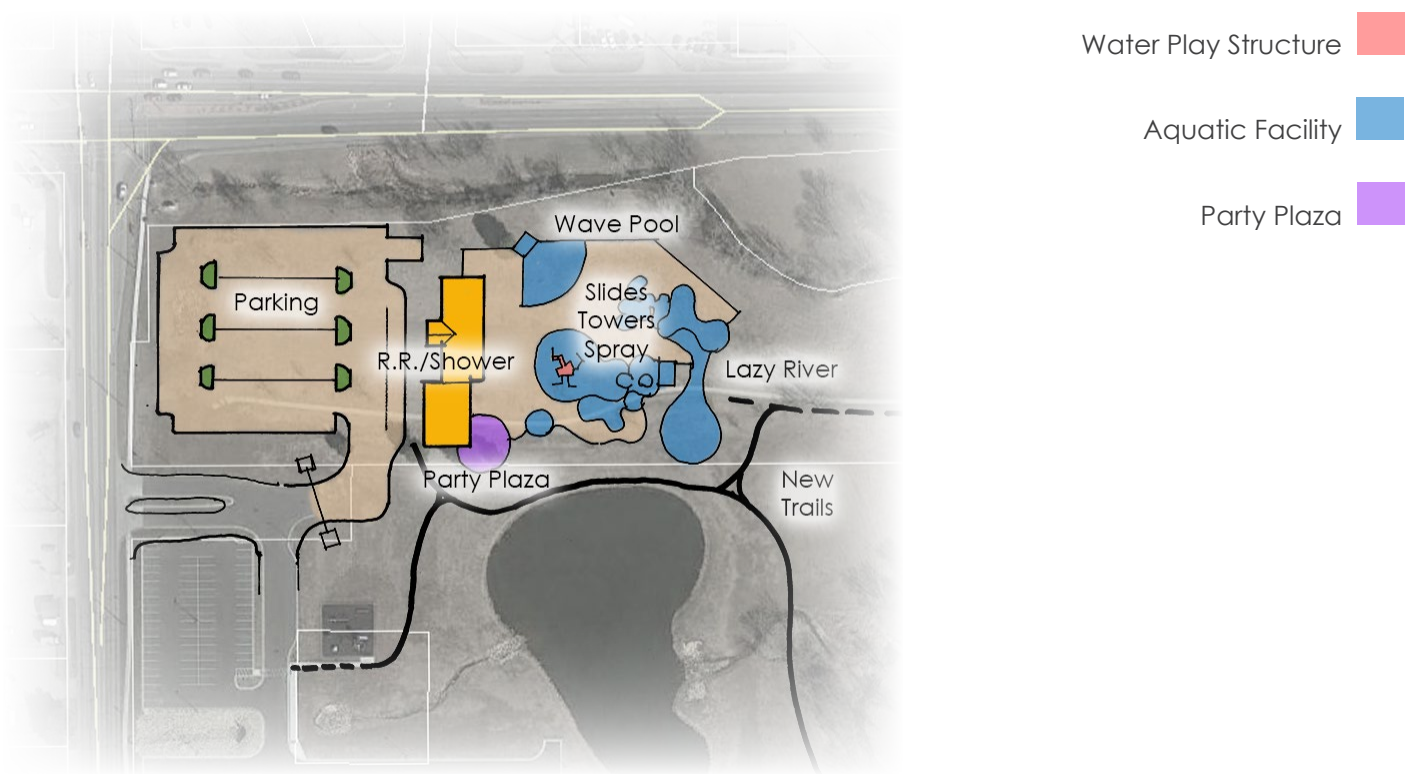


Figure 61: Plan for new aquatic center at American Legion Complex.

2

CENTRAL PARK

Special-use park that primarily serves baseball and tennis. Proposed is a concept that focuses on baseball with flexible open space to function for other events as well. The park maintenance facility and parking also show improvements.

- New Plant Material
- Shelter or Similar Structure
- New Pavement or Trail
- Maintenance Screening
- Baseball Fields & Facilities



Figure 62: Master plan (option 1) for Central Park.

CENTRAL PARK (CONCEPT 2)

An additional concept has been developed to establish a more centralized baseball complex. This traditional layout provides a central area for spectator convenience and safety while able to control access.

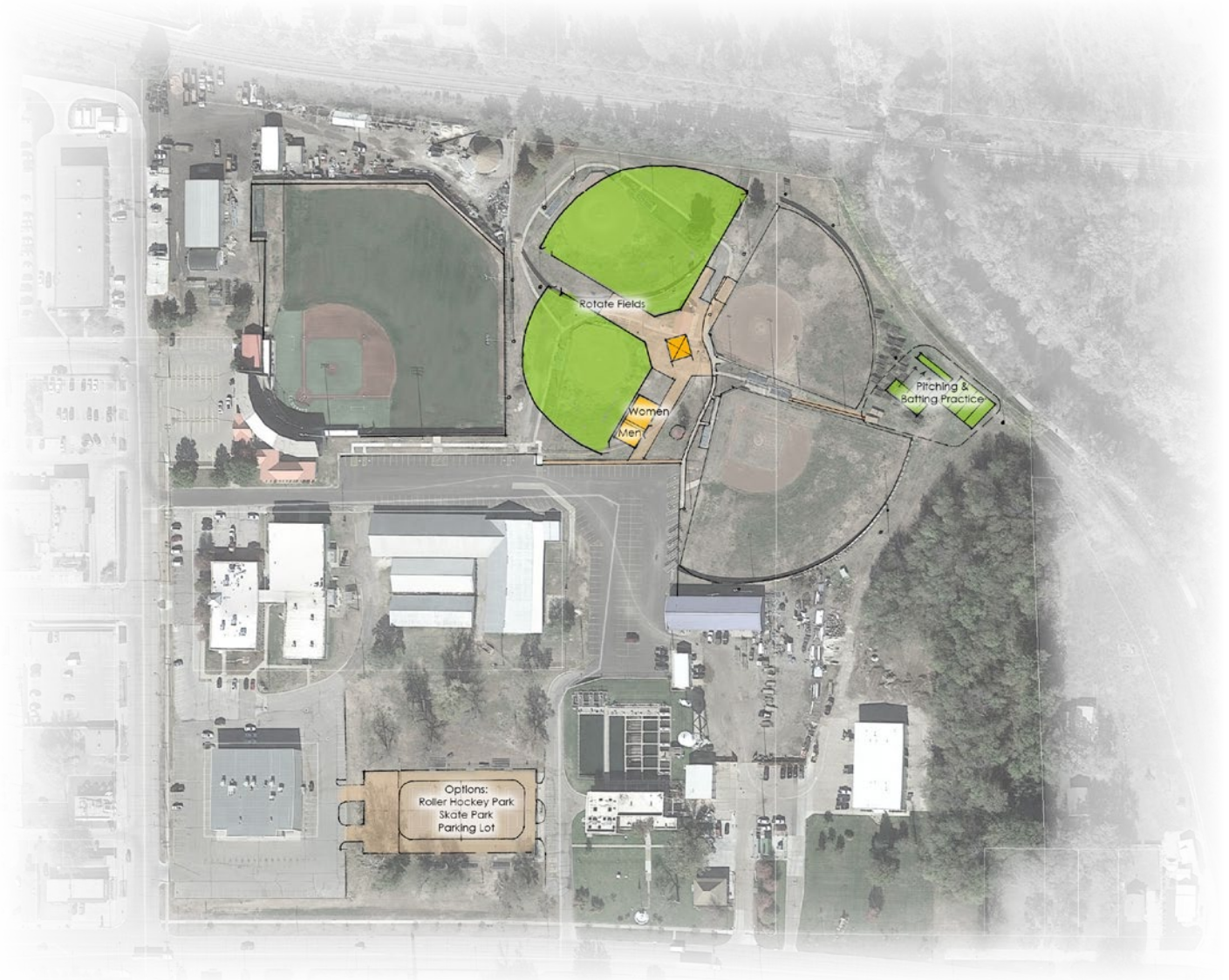


Figure 63: Master plan (option 2) for Central Park.

3

EAST PARK

Expanded to a larger community park with specialized elements. Property acquisition or agreements with the railroad allow for additional parking for park events and festivals. Sand volleyball and an expanded water body with trail connections are new signature amenities to the park.







- | | | |
|--|--|---|
|  Shelter or Similar Structure |  New Plant Material |  Baseball Facilities |
|  Expanded Stream |  Sand Volleyball Courts |  New Pavement or Trail |



Figure 64: Master plan for East Park.

4

FOREST PARK

Enhancements to the Historic amphitheater improve event access and experiences. Relocating the aquatic facility allows new basketball courts, an enhanced skate park, or open space for practice fields. Other locations are recommended for the city aquatic facility.



Figure 65: Master plan for Forest Park.

5

GORDY PARK

Enhanced to be a civic park ideal for special events and unique amenities. Wide sidewalks at parking are ideal for expanding the Farmer's Market and hosting booths while defined access points allows this park to be reserved. All seasons are addressed with the central plaza serving as a summer formal splash park as well as a winter ice rink.

- New Plant Material
- Splash Park
- Performance Space
- Shelter or Similar Structure
- Pedestal & Shade Structure
- New Pavement or Trail

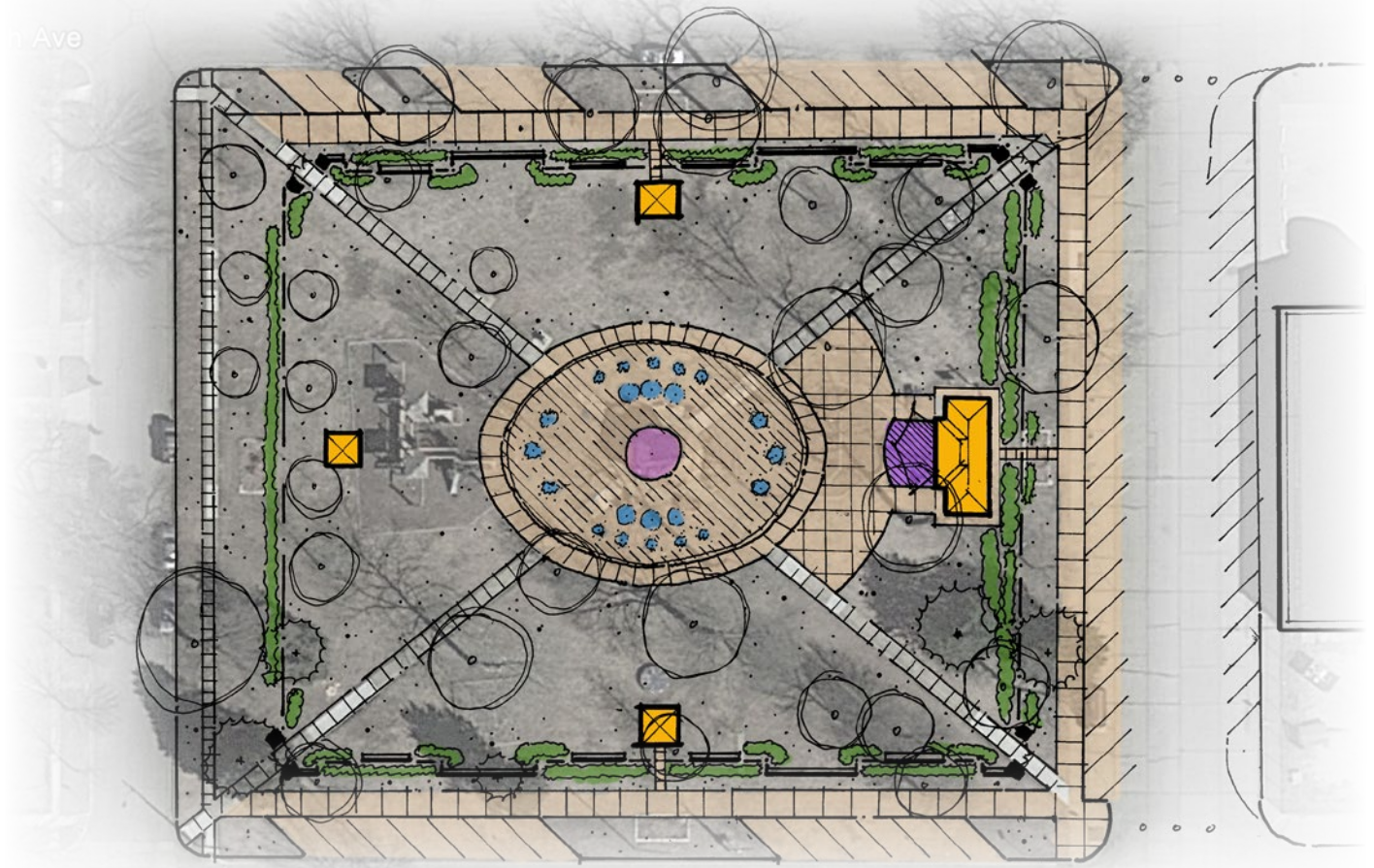


Figure 66: Master plan for Gordy Park.



Figure 67: Rendering - plan view of Gordy Park.



Figure 68: Rendering - bird's eye view of Gordy Park.

6

GRAHAM PARK

The city-wide trail system and sidewalks provide connectivity through this linear park. Playground elements are clustered to a fenced area near the spray park for enhanced safety, while preserving open space around the memorial. Site drainage is enhanced with native plantings improving the natural biological system, and flora and fauna diversity.

-  Shelter or Similar Structure
-  Basketball Courts - 10' Goals
-  Playground
-  New Plant Material
-  New Pavement or Trail

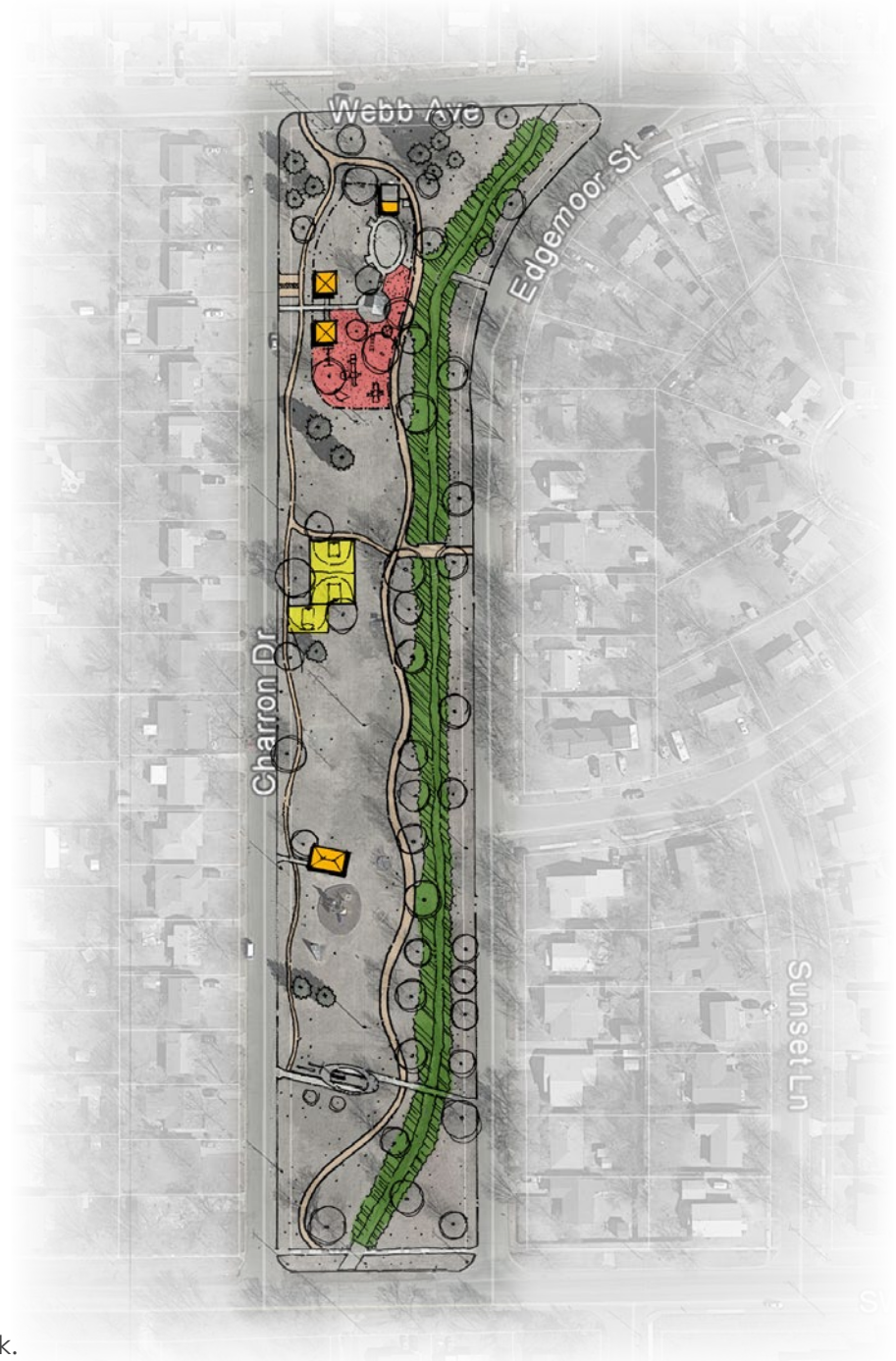








Figure 69: Master plan for Graham Park.

7

LIBRARY PARK

Creative design of walkways and landscaping contribute to the civic nature of the park. Basketball courts are relocated here from Gordy Park, providing a more central location to the neighborhood.

- Shelter or Similar Structure 
- New Plant Material 
- Basketball Courts - 9' Goals 
- Playground 
- Benches 
- New Pavement or Trail 

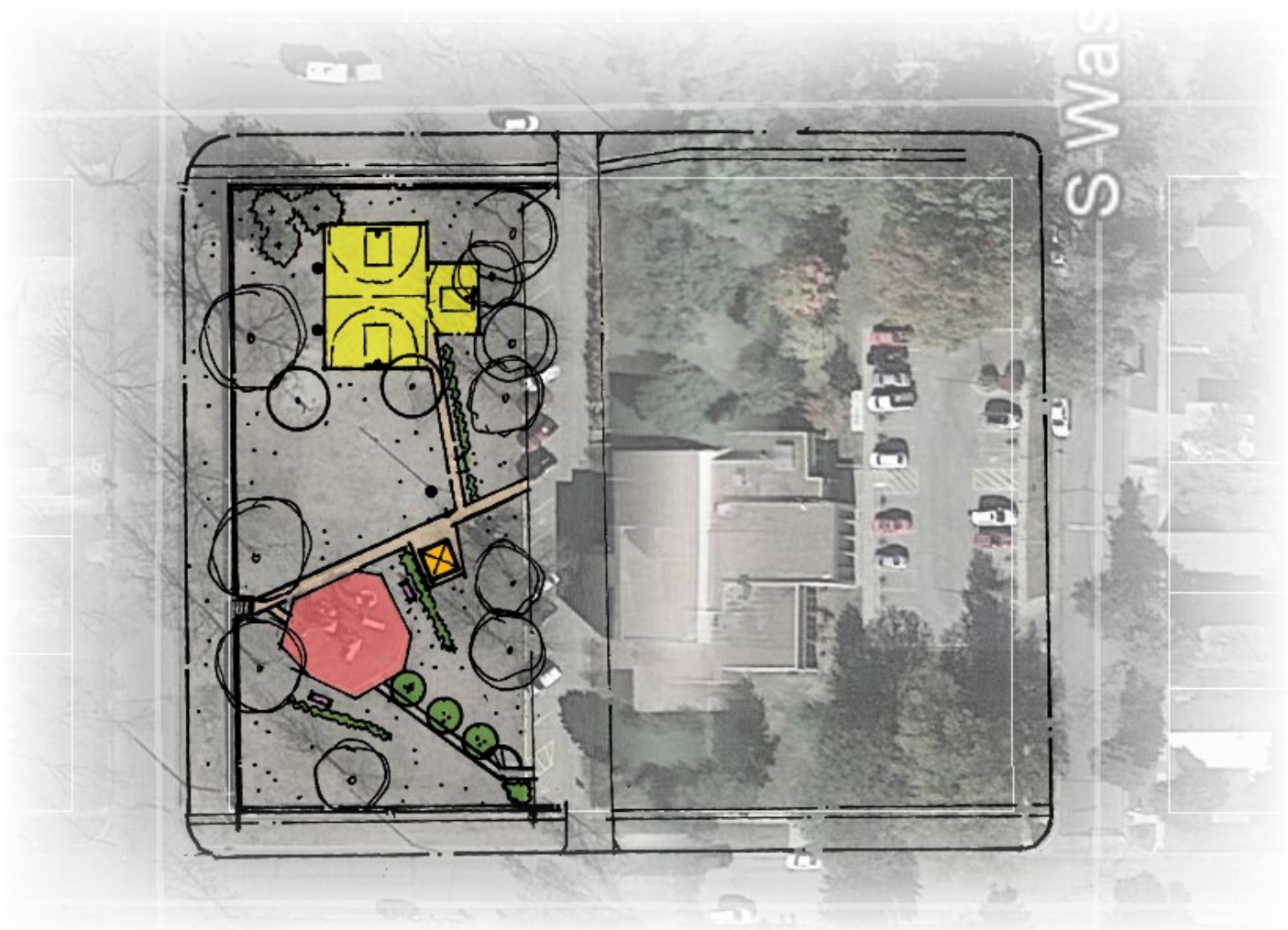




Figure 70: Master plan for Library Park.

8

MCCOLLUM PARK

A few additions to this park improves its usability. A small shelter allows picnicking, and a simple backstop provides structure to define open space use.

-  Shelter or Similar Structure
-  Practice Field

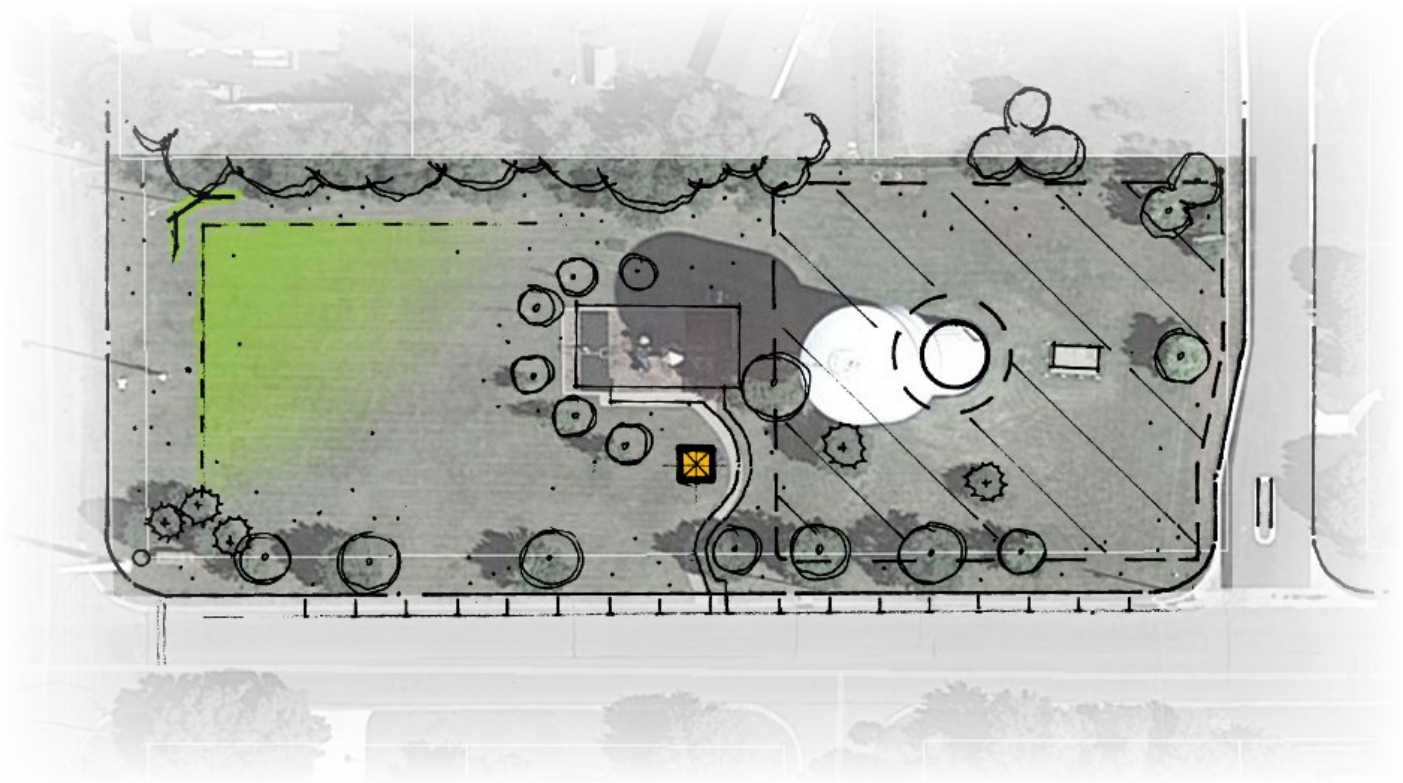


Figure 71: Master plan for McCollum Park.

NORTH MAIN (R.I.O.) PARK

Land acquisition and merging both parks allows North Main Park to convert to a larger community park with a variety of amenities, all located within the floodplain. Phasing allows needed improvements to begin with full build-out providing the linkages and amenities while preserving natural features of the property.

9

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| BMX Trails | | Disc Golf Course | | Shelter or Similar Structure | |
| New Pavement or Trail | | Playground | | New Plant Material | |
| Fields | | Dog Park | | Courts | |



Figure 72: Master plan for North Main (R.I.O.) Park.

10

PRAIRIE TRAILS GOLF COURSE

Tennis and golf function well together, and are proposed to be paired at Prairie Trails Golf Course. Covered courts allow 4-season play. Parking improvements allow better function for daily traffic and events. Improved poolside space encouraging event reservation.

-  Shelter or Similar Structure
-  Tennis Courts
-  New Plant Material
-  Pool
-  New Pavement or Trail






Figure 73: Master plan for Prairie Trails Golf Course.

11

RICE PARK

Walk connections allow a loop trail in the park. New playground equipment to be clustered with the existing shelter and restrooms preserving the open space as a view shed near the highway.

- Shelter or Similar Structure 
- Playground 
- New Pavement or Trail 

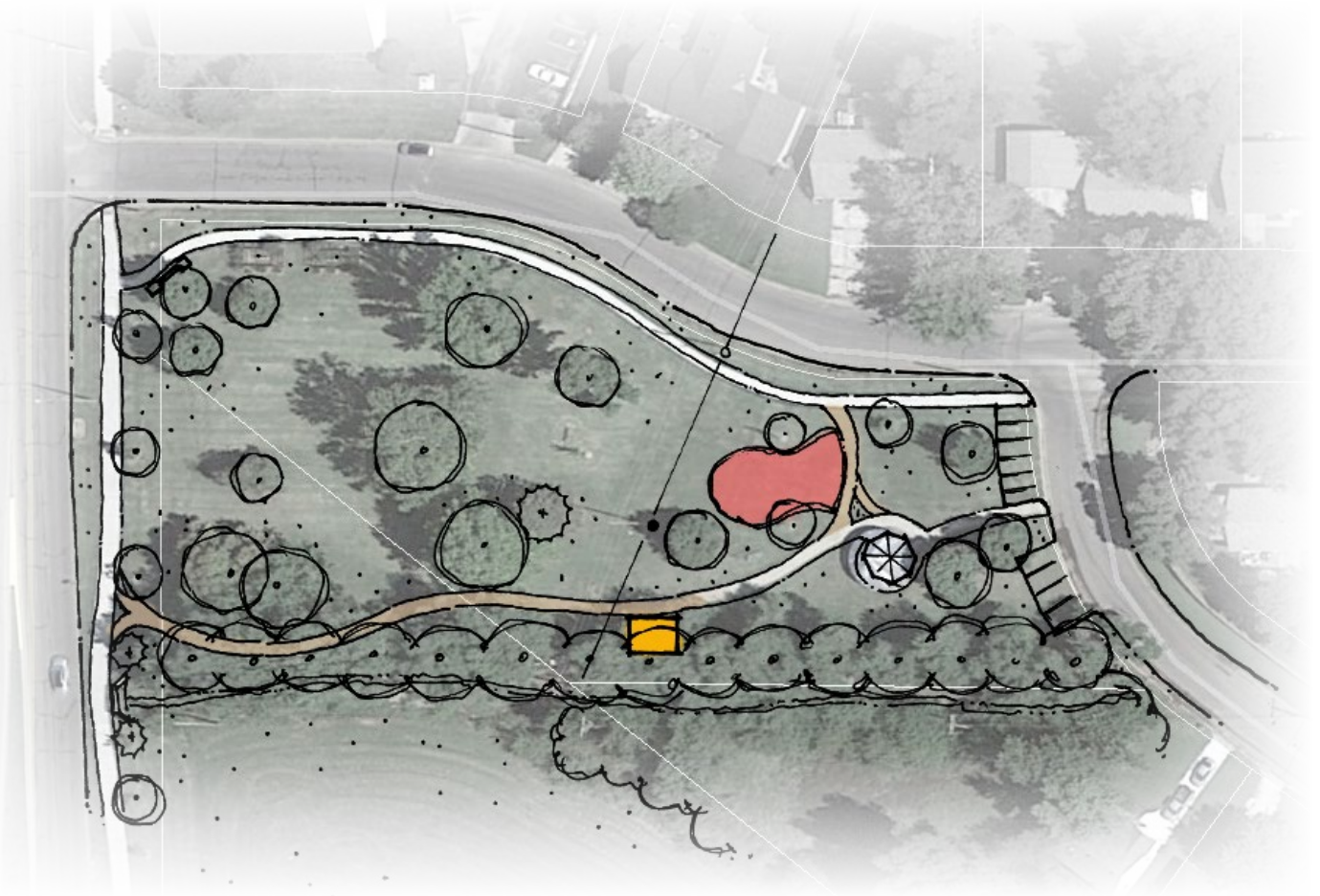


Figure 74: Master plan for Rice Park.

12

RIVERVIEW PARK

A defined parking area opens up space along the stream for picnic tables and a shelter, provides space for a vegetated buffer and stream bank, and organizes parking for a more efficient parking area. Preserve large Planetree as a significant feature of this park.

- Shelter or Similar Structure
- Playground Surfacing
- New Pavement or Trail
- Picnic Areas

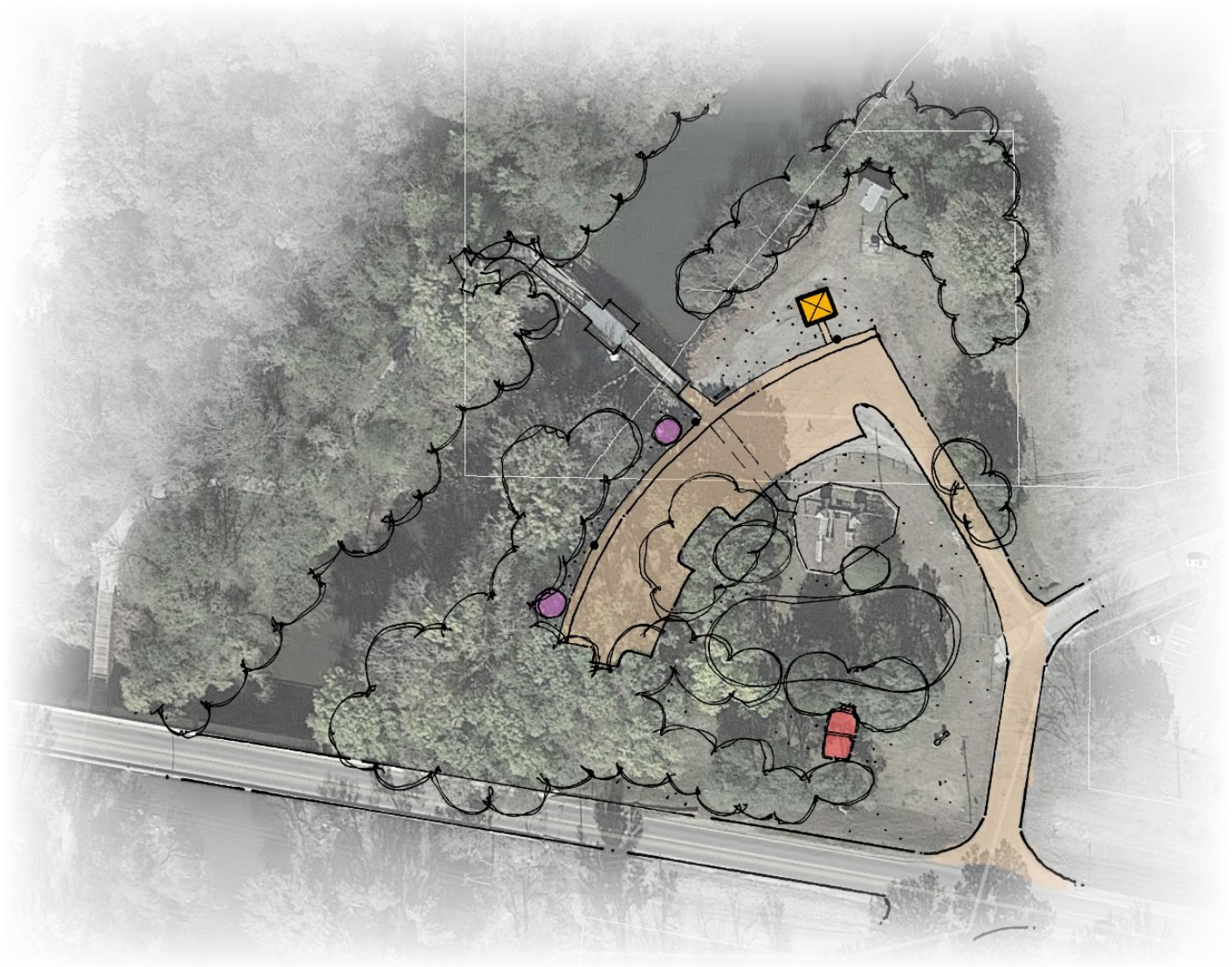
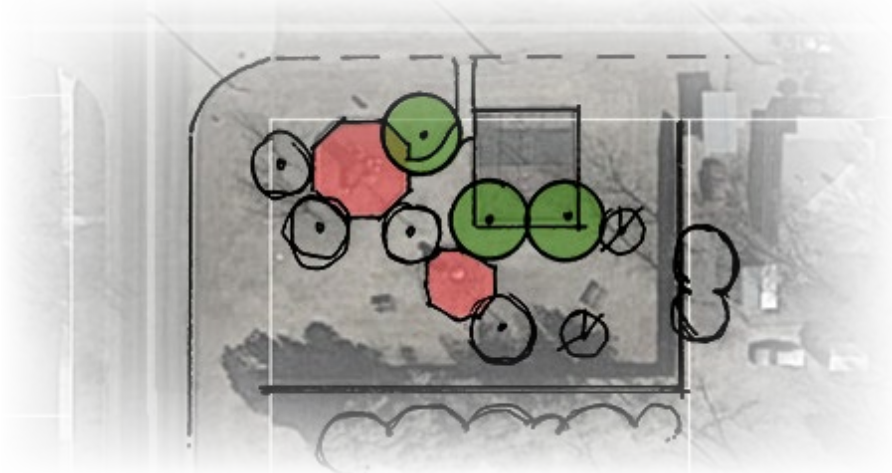


Figure 75: Master plan for Riverview Park.

13

SOUTH SUMMIT PARK

This mini-park serves as a playground and picnic area for the local neighborhood. Additional trees would provide much needed shade for the playground elements.



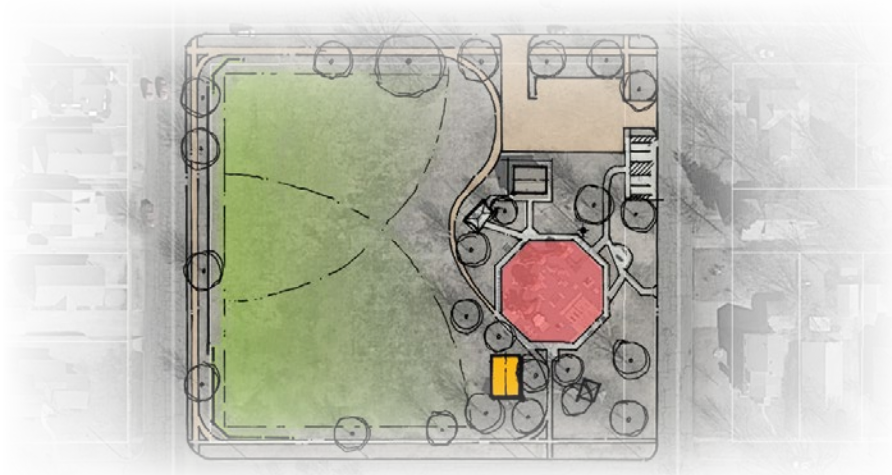
Playground 

Figure 76: Master plan for South Summit Park

14

SUMMIT PARK

Off street parking enhances the safety of park attendees. A large shelter for parties is recommended due to the popularity of the accessible park playground. Sidewalks and a loop trail provide pedestrian access and exercise.







Playground 
Shelter or Similar Structure 
New Pavement or Trail 
Fields 

Figure 77: Master plan for Summit Park

15

WALNUT RIVER SPORTS COMPLEX DESIGN

The proposed design allows flexibility of the expansion of the sports complex. Two ball fields and a soccer field can be built first, with user demand determining if additional fields are for softball or soccer. The trail system connects through the state park, and parking is expanded.

- Baseball & Soccer Fields
- Shelter or Similar Structure
- New Pavement or Trail



Figure 78: Master plan for Walnut River Sports Complex.

16

WEST PARK

This new neighborhood park serves the western part of town. A trail connections over the stream is proposed with future connections to the south. The park would contain a playground, splash park, basketball court and small restroom/shelter with parking available at the cul-de-sac.



- Shelter or Similar Structure ■
- Half Basketball Court ■
- Playground ■
- New Plant Material ■
- Splash Park ■
- New Pavement or Trail ■

Figure 79: Master plan for West Park

17

ACTIVITY CENTER

The Activity Center renovations can be phased to provide a variety of new services. The south can expand with additional courts (6 volleyball/3 basketball) as well as several other amenities. The north entry can expand with an entry vestibule at grade with the revised parking and drop-off with the grade transition happening indoors.

- New Plant Material
- Building Additions
- Playground
- New Pavement or Trail

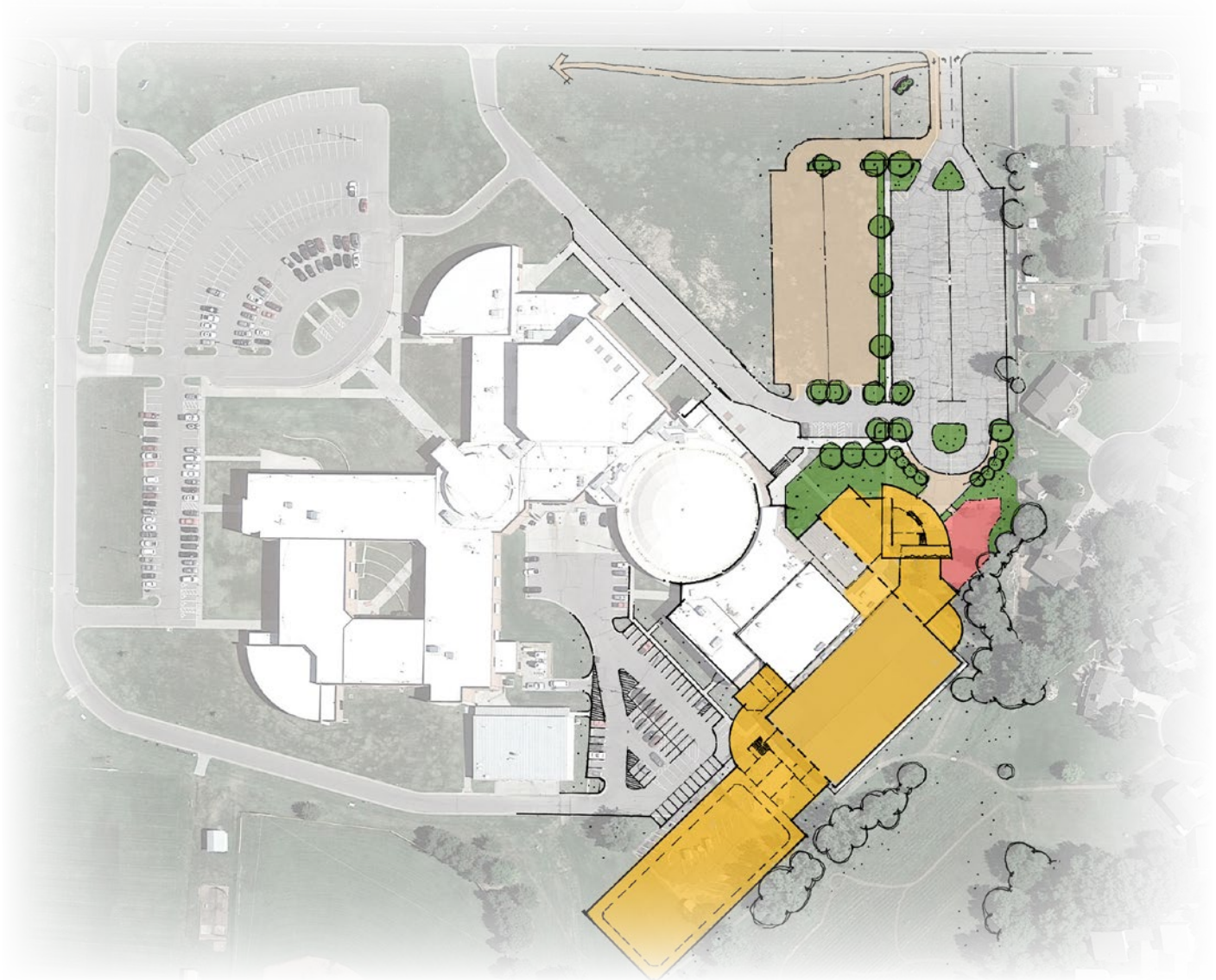


Figure 80: Master plan for Activity Center.

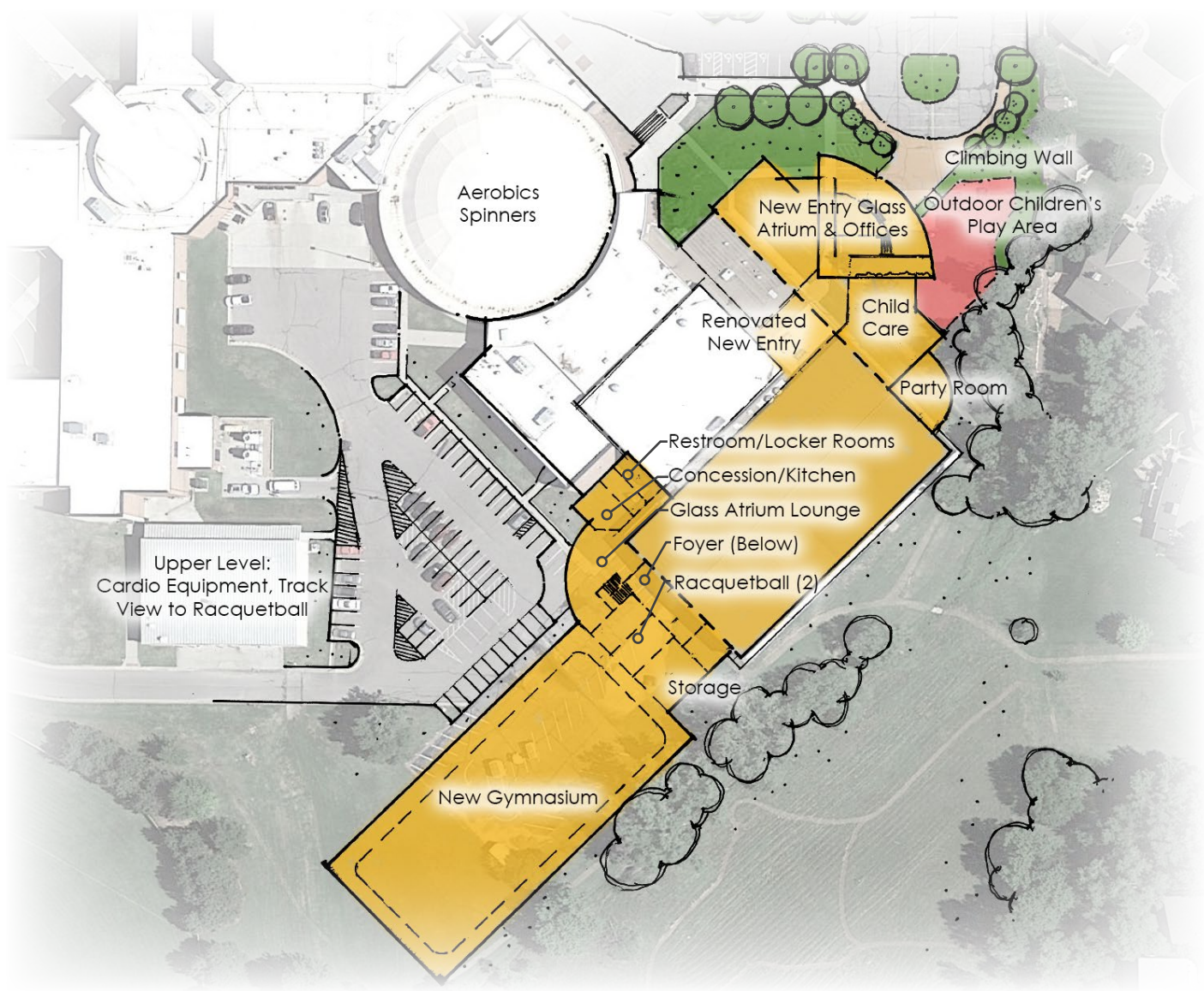


Figure 81: Activity Center Expansion Master Plan.





Figure 82: Rendering - Gordy Park as a winter wonderland.

GREAT THINGS TO COME

In order to achieve great things a concerted and strategic investment needs to occur. Such an investment is not just necessary from the City of El Dorado, but also from the citizens and businesses of El Dorado. The community must value and embrace park and recreation activity as more than a public function or service. There must be a sense of pride and ownership that results from the vision of the recommended improvements of this plan.

A mission needs to be established that is both aspirational and inspirational. From a facility standpoint the previous section of this plan has identified a number of physical improvements that can raise the bar in regard to park and recreation provision in El Dorado in the future.

But, what is the mission that can drive people to routinely leave their homes in order to participate in formal or informal activities, to improve their health and wellness, to volunteer to assist in the delivery of programs or opportunities to the youth of the community?

The El Dorado slogan speaks of “*The Fine Art of Living Well.*” The El Dorado Comprehensive Plan states that:

*We value our **abundant recreational opportunities** and assets. We have committed **significant resources** to the development of an **extensive park system** and **excellent recreational programs.***

Well, the fine art of living well and the investment of significant resources in things we value is not a one-time commitment or simply lip service. It is an on-going commitment to make continuous improvements and investments at the community, business and individual level in a manner that moves the community forward to be better than other communities. The vision for parks and recreation in El Dorado is to:

Enhance daily life; Improve health and well-being;
Expand the economy; Secure the future of our
community through our involvement and investment!

Four components of this statement lend strategic guidance to the Parks and Recreation mission in El Dorado:

1. Enhance daily life - Does the program or facility or investment improve the physical character of the community and quality of life experienced in the community?
2. Improve health and well-being - Does the program or facility of investment improve the health and well-being of citizens through the promotion of physical activity and positive social interaction?
3. Expand the economy - Does the program or facility or investment leverage unique assets within our community in a manner that contributes to positive economic growth?
4. Secure the future of our community - Does the program, facility, or investment assist in attracting new community growth and sustaining the community through the promotion of cooperative involvement and investment?

ACTION PLAN

To accomplish the mission outlined above there must be a set of initial actions or next steps that set the foundation for moving forward. Below are a number of key next steps that need to be accomplished to support the improvements identified previously and to pursue the mission statement in an effective manner.

- Develop a capital improvements plan based on the improvement recommendations outlined in the Our Improvement Plan section of this document.
 - Utilize a ten-year timeline for improvements.
 - Prioritize projects based on the number of mission statement components the project addressed and funding availability.
 - Identify and pursue funding sources for each project.
- Develop a partnership with Susan B. Allen Hospital to create community programs aimed at El Dorado citizens that encourage healthy activity through participation in routine recreation and education activities and events.
 - Create a community health and wellness committee that can work to create, develop, promote and execute activities and events which provide opportunities to enhance physical, social, and spiritual well being.
 - Develop a corporate/business and non-profit sponsorship program through the committee that can provide monetary resources to promote and sponsor activities and events.

- Create a “Friends of El Dorado Parks and Recreation” as a non-profit organization to supplement the activities and functions of the department.
 - Investigate the use of crowd source funding of various projects and activities sponsored by the “Friends” group.
 - Utilize the Friends group to recruit, organize and train volunteers through a “Friends Academy.”
 - Develop and adopt an area or park facility program so that service organizations can supplement routine city maintenance and restoration efforts.

- Utilize an asset-based approach to promote economic development through parks and outdoor recreation activities and events.
 - Create a competitive sports committee to imagine, plan, and execute both unique and traditional sports oriented tournaments that utilize man-made and natural settings in the area as future sports venues to host events and activities.
 - Take advantage of natural settings - water and topography - to host events that draw participants and visitors from the region and beyond (e.g. triathlons, cycling, runs, gun/archery related sports, hunting/fishing, etc.).
 - Work with El Dorado Inc. to recruit new business (commercial and industrial) into El Dorado by leveraging events and activities focused on utilizing outdoor gear, hunting/fishing gear, etc.).
 - Coordinate events and activities with the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce to help with promotion, marketing, and sponsoring of events and activities.

- Seek to cross-pollenate strong segments of the economy via specialized activities and events, such as utilizing the strong medical base of Susan B. Allen Hospital and the institutional base of Butler County Community College to create an institute for paralympic athletic training and equipment research/development.
- Build strong relationships with other entities in the community that have specialized needs for facilities and programs, or offer specialized expertise in order to formulate unique partnerships to fund, operate, and maintain facilities or plan and execute programs.
 - Work to build jointly funded and utilized sports practice, intramural, and competition facilities with the El Dorado School District and Butler County Community College.
 - Utilize the partnership with the YMCA and additional non-profit or community service groups (e.g. American Legion, Lions, or Rotary) to not only create indoor community oriented recreation facilities, but to also develop and offer low-cost indoor and outdoor recreation oriented programs and activities for all citizens, including citizens with special needs.
 - Identify and leverage corporate expertise (e.g. Oz Endurance, etc.) or needs (e.g. petroleum industry employers, etc.) into the formulation of targeted and unique recreation offerings for visitors or employees.

These actions or next steps will not be easy. They require a commitment of resources primarily in the form of time and effort. They require the building of trust as the ownership of certain activities, events, programs, and venues are spread among a variety of entities. They will require that responsibilities are taken seriously, expectations are met routinely and accountability is accepted by all involved.

In smaller communities, seeking excellence requires that the community not just be served, but that the community also stands up to serve. A single entity can not be expected to provide everything for everyone. Nor can many entities be expected to provide for many people when they are heading in many directions individually without a sense of mission or purpose.

*Enhance daily life; Improve health and well-being;
Expand the economy; Secure the future of our
community through our involvement and investment!*

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

To carry out the action plan it is necessary to identify a change in the manner in which parks and recreation is viewed within the community. It was previously noted that El Dorado did not compare well to national statistics, but was somewhat similar to other like communities in Kansas with the following caveat:

...it should also be noted that it appears that all the communities have a similar philosophical approach to the provision of parks and recreation services and facilities. That is to generally maintain what they provide at an acceptable level, while making improvements when needed or demanded.

With the adoption of this master plan and its vision/mission it now becomes critical to not just maintain what is in place or make enhancements in an opportunistic manner. Instead it becomes critical that an aggressive/proactive approach be taken toward addressing the following foundational tasks:

1. Proactively seek new and sustainable revenue sources to supplement existing and traditional sources.
2. Establish policies that take advantage of economic and development growth in a responsible manner to ensure the system can expand accordingly with the community as a whole.
3. Utilize an asset-based approach to planning and providing activities and facilities that appeal to residents, visitors, and business development interests.

To do this and carry out the action plan requires the expansion of the organizational structure in El Dorado. The new structure depicted in the organization chart reflects the addition of four groups and five staff as follows.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE CHART

Solid lines reflect a direct reporting/supervisory relationship. Dashed lines reflect a support or close working relationship.

 Administrative

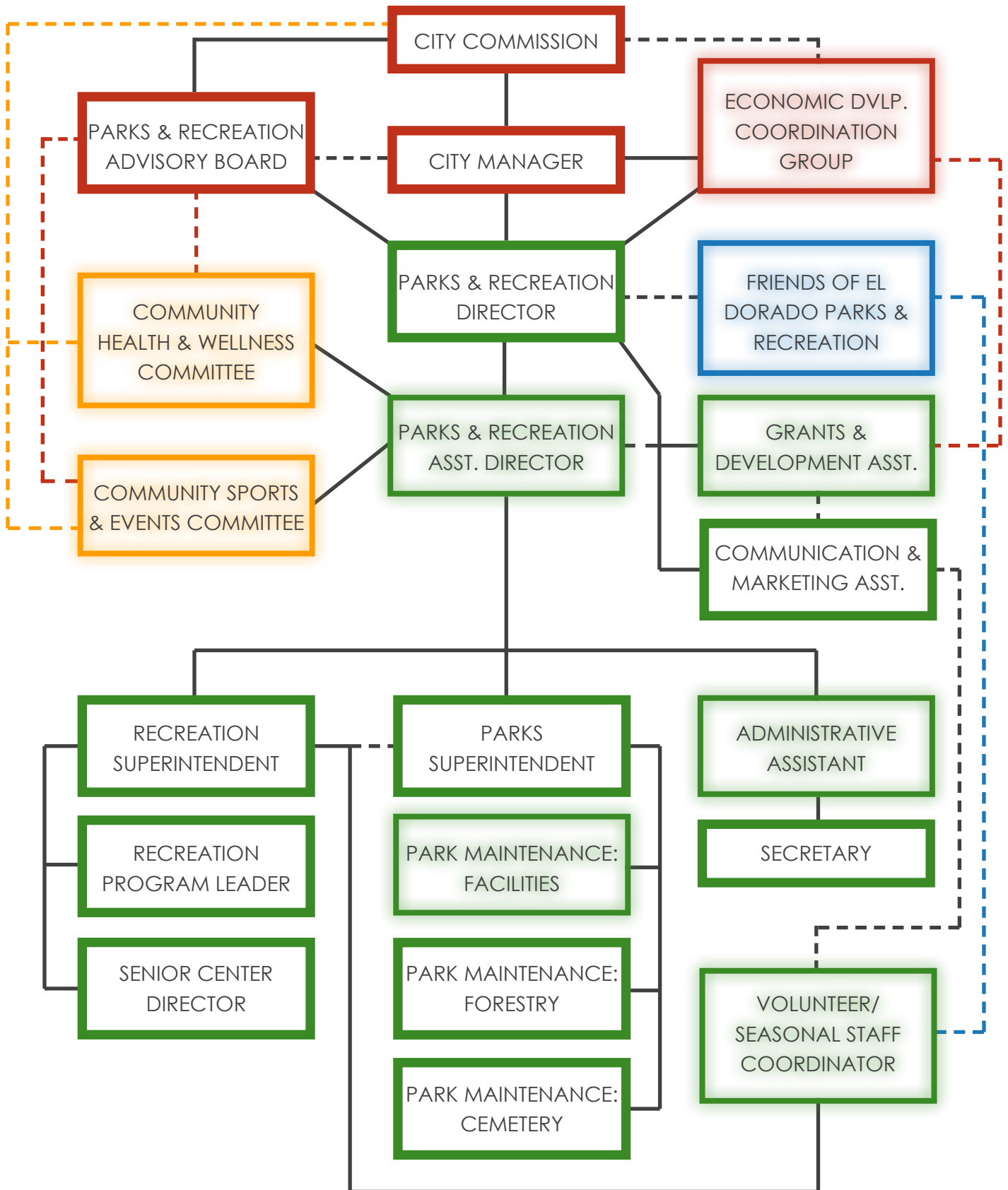
 Parks & Rec. Associated Committees

 Independent Non-Profit

 Department Staff

“Glowing” boxes reflect new groups or staff positions.

Figure 83 (following page): Organizational Structure for the Parks & Recreation Department and consulting/coinciding departments and groups.



Community Health & Wellness Committee - Core membership should include representatives of the medical, corporate/business, and spiritual community that can conceptualize and provide direction regarding health and wellness activities throughout the community; this can also assist in the execution of efforts through publicity, sponsorship, educational leadership and implementation. This committee would also include Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and staff representation, as well as City Commission representation.

Community Sports & Events Committee - Focused on planning and executing sports and other recreation oriented events drawing visitors and competitors to El Dorado, the core of this committee should be made up of representatives from the local school district, Butler County Community College, YMCA, various established sports oriented leagues, premier/traveling clubs or associations and corporate or business interests that focus on sports and recreation activities. Additionally, the City Commission and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board should be represented, as well as the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the El Dorado Chamber of Commerce and staff from the Parks and Recreation Department. Finally, this committee may also include operators of various service businesses such as hotels and restaurants.

Economic Development Coordination Group - This group would be a cross agency group focused on the utilization of parks, recreation, and outdoor assets to promote and expand the local economy in the form of visitor and business attraction and development. This focus would go beyond the traditional role of expanding the service sector, into the role of strategically targeting recreation oriented manufacturers and gear providers. These can include both mass produced and customized products based on water and land activities.

The group could include the Mayor, the City Manager, and the Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Public Utilities department heads, along with El Dorado, Inc., the Kansas Department of Parks and Wildlife, Army Corps of Engineers, and Butler County. Additionally, key corporate and community leaders or land owners may become part of discussions related to specific locations or types of business/industry.

Friends of El Dorado Parks and Recreation - This autonomous non-profit group of citizens would be focused on raising funds and donations from the community to support and supplement park and recreation improvement activities; engaging community service organizations to donate time to take on tasks; and recruiting/training a network of citizen volunteers for a variety of volunteer/seasonal jobs. Projects could include small-scale capital projects at neighborhood parks; incorporation of public art or landscape projects in parks; routine maintenance activity through an adopt-a-spot program; and the development of a Volunteer Training Academy.

In regard to staff organization five new positions are expected as the department becomes both more proactive and focused on the future, and as momentum is gained through successful implementation of the action plan. As the proposed organizational chart indicates these additional positions are a reflection of an expanding system and renewal of community involvement.

With the creation of additional citizen oriented committees and groups, and the effort to leverage park, recreation, and open space assets as part of a coordinated economic development effort an Assistant Director position becomes increasingly important. This allows the Director to focus on community interface/leadership, long-range strategic

vision/planning, and organization/system building and department leadership activities. While the Assistant Director position focuses on day-to-day management and execution of program activities, and is mentored to become a future director.

The Grants & Development Assistant position works closely with the Department Director and is focused upon writing grant applications, researching and developing revenue enhancement strategy; developing capital improvement plans; and securing grants and other sources of revenue. This position could become a valuable position for not only the department, but also the city organization in support of the Economic Development Coordination Group.

Carrying out the department program has always relied upon a number of volunteers and seasonal staff for a variety of functional tasks. The Volunteer and Seasonal Staff Coordinator would be responsible for continuous recruitment, development, and management of the people serving in such roles. This position would work closely with the “Friends” group to carry out the tasks of recruitment and development, as well as with the Recreation and Parks Superintendents. The creation of a Training Academy could include coaches and referee clinics, as well as other organized instructional and educational classes that may be required to be “qualified” as a volunteer or seasonal employee for certain functions.

As the department and the system grow additional assistance becomes necessary in the administrative and maintenance functions of the department, thus two additional positions are identified. It should be noted that there is a need for additional staffing currently to help alleviate the burden of day-to-day operational items and allow time for pursuing mission critical activities that can

advance the delivery of parks and recreation functions in the community.

FUNDING STRATEGIES

Too many communities rely on a short list of traditional revenue streams for funding without looking at how a variety of funding tools can work together to produce a sustainable stream of funding that serves a variety of purposes. Usually, this occurs because the internal staff does not have time to adequately research and develop a revenue or funding strategy aimed at accomplishing a long-term vision or mission.

This master plan outlines a series of projects and improvements as part of its vision for the future. It also outlines the general mission for parks and recreation system delivery:

*Enhance daily life; Improve health and well-being;
Expand the economy; Secure the future of our
community through our involvement and investment!*

When it comes to maximizing funding opportunities it is important to remember several rules of thumb:

1. *Different types of groups and agencies have different types of resources available to them. A "Friends" non-profit group may be better suited to solicit and accept monetary or land donations through crowd-sourcing options, working to set up a land preservation trust, due to the tax benefits provided to the donor.*

2. *An improvement or enhancement to the system that serves multiple functions can access different types of revenue.* The refurbishment of a streetscape, small park in downtown or a landscape or garden area in a park may qualify for grants or funds from different sources outside of parks and recreation because they are planned and designed as a storm water BMP (Best Management Practice); a public art space; or some additional function beyond parks and recreation.
3. *Identification and timing of multiple funding tools requires upfront strategizing.* Having a clearly defined project or program to fund is one thing, but understanding how various funding sources can contribute to the project or program, and the timing for application, distribution, and expiration of such funds can make a big difference in regard to leveraging funds to meet matching requirements, etc.
4. *Building trust with the people providing the funding is critical.* An effort should be made to work closely with the people that may provide the potential funding prior to pursuing the funding. And, it is important to follow through by completing the project or program in a manner that clearly meets or exceeds the expectations of those providing the funding.
5. *Always have a plan B, and sometimes a plan C...* There is not a guarantee that you will receive the funding you are seeking (especially the first time around). So, alternative plans need to be prepared just in case - plan B may be delaying a project until the next round of funding or identifying alternative funding pursuits in advance, etc.

Below is a brief discussion of a variety of potential funding tools/sources, and in the case of grants a number of traditional and non-traditional sources are identified as an example of what is possible (this is not an exhaustive list by any means).

GENERAL FUND/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

Most budgetary revenue comes from the general fund of the city, which is primarily generated by property and sales tax. The combination of general funds allotted to the department along with the funds dedicated through the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) determines much of the annual and short-term program for department activities.

It is important that these funding sources provides a sound foundation for adequate staffing, routine maintenance, and continual incremental improvements that are necessary to carry out a successful parks and recreation program. There should be a commitment to continuous improvement shown through the provision of general fund and capital improvement resources annually with an emphasis on moving forward in meeting the vision/mission of the department, the city, and the community.

DEDICATED/SPECIFIED TAXES

Raising property and other taxes is not a popular pursuit. But, generating additional revenue streams that can be used for enhancing bonding capacity and/or leverage additional funding to make specific improvements or execute specific programs can be successful.

Dedicated sales tax on all goods or select goods or taxes aimed at visitors (i.e. hotel/motel, rental car; etc.) can be set-up with a sunset clause or retained to support targeted events/improvements. It is important that the appropriate research is done in regard to the amount (needed and generated), timing, and program for use of the funds. Also,

that advanced and concerted public education takes place prior, during, and after seeking such revenue sources through project completion.

IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

The use of a Community Improvement District (CID) can be very helpful for promoting and paying for public improvements such as parks, plazas, streetscapes, and art. In Kansas the CID is gaining popularity with communities, developers, and business associations. This type of tool allows for the creation of a district in which additional sales and/or property tax can be imposed on the property by those in the district to help pay for improvements and maintenance within the district.

This tool is focused primarily upon commercial areas - new development or redevelopment - and can assist in providing and maintaining amenities in downtown or other commercial areas. The improvement may address both private and/or public enhancements within the district. The use of CID's should be discussed further as a community/economic development tool for a number of areas in El Dorado, as well as future new commercial development.

IMPACT FEES

While there is no specific state statute regarding the use and implementation of impact fees, municipalities in Kansas can and have adopted impact fee ordinances for parks and recreation, as well as other items, under home rule provisions. Andover is a near-by example of a community that has implemented a park impact fee.

Such a fee is based on the premise that new development will create demand for the acquisition or expansion of parks and the construction of park improvements. The fee is applied to new development only and is placed in a

fund with designated use such as acquisition of park land and/or making capital improvements to the park system.

This tool is usually associated with new residential development as a fee per lot or dwelling unit. The City of El Dorado should research and develop a reasonable park impact fee to provide a source of revenue for future expansion and improvement of park land and facilities.

GRANTS

There are a large variety of non-profit and private grant and funding resources, as well as state and federal sources. Many are targeted at parks and recreation activities, programs, and facilities, but many more are targeted at specific causes, topics, and functions.

Sustainability features, stormwater Best Management Practices, health and well being, interpretative education, art, physical activity(ies) and sports, transportation, economic development... the list of possibilities is endless, but many communities do not invest enough time and effort into researching potential grants and other funding sources beyond the traditional "go to" offerings.

Additionally, many communities miss out on the opportunity to access multiple sources of funds. Through proper research and pursuit multiple grants may be leveraged for one project and possibly serve as matching funds to access other funding sources for that same project.

Below is a list of federal, state, and non-profit/private sources. It is just a sample of the variety of funds available, and is not an exhaustive list of potential resources.

FEDERAL FUNDS

Environmental Education Grants

Environmental Protection Agency:

Office of Environmental Education

<http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html>

Environmental education projects that enhance public awareness, knowledge, and skills to make informed decisions affecting environmental quality.

Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

512 SE 25th Ave. Pratt, KS 67124

<http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/State-Parks/Grants>

Acquisition of land and development of facilities (e.g. ball fields; boating and fishing facilities; basketball, volleyball, tennis courts; playgrounds and picnic areas; trails, and pools) for public use.

Our Town

National Endowment for the Arts

arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/introduction

Creative place-making projects that contribute to livability and promote lively, beautiful, and sustainable places through the arts.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program

Kansas Division of Emergency Management

<http://www.kansastag.gov>

Cost-effective mitigation projects that reduce risk to people and property, and minimize the cost of disaster recovery.

Preserve America Grant

Historic Preservation Grants - National Park Service

Preservation_Grants_Info@nps.gov

Planning, development, and implementation of innovative heritage tourism activities and programs.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

<http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/State-Parks/Grants>

Acquisition and/or long-term lease of land or construction of trails and trail facilities, as well as development of new facilities or renovation of existing facilities.

TIGER Discretionary Grant Program

United States Department of Transportation

<http://www.dot.gov/tiger>

Improving the condition and safety of existing transportation facilities and systems; Contributing to the economic competitiveness; Fostering livable communities through place-based policies and investments that increase transportation choices and access; Improving energy efficiency, reducing dependence on oil, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

U.S. Soccer Foundation Grants

U.S. Soccer Foundation

[http://www.ussoccerfoundation.org/uploads/US Soccer Foundation Guide to Grants 2014-2015 updated May 2015.pdf](http://www.ussoccerfoundation.org/uploads/US_Soccer_Foundation_Guide_to_Grants_2014-2015_updated_May_2015.pdf)

Coaches, facility rental, field development, player equipment, referees, registration costs, travel costs, training for players, and uniforms are some of the costs covered through this program for children in need.

STATE FUNDS

Arts Integration Program

Kansas Arts Commission

<http://www.kansascommerce.com/index.aspx?nid=666>

Development of new and expanded local arts activities, cultural activities and life, and enhance cultural development.

Attraction Development Grant Program

Kansas Department of Wildlife

Parks & Tourism, Travel, and Tourism Division

<http://www.travelksindustry.com>

Strategic economic assistance to develop tourism attractions.

Heritage Trust Fund

Kansas Historical Society

<http://www.kshs.org>

Reimburses expenses for projects that preserve or restore historic properties.

Historic Preservation Fund

Kansas Historical Society

<http://www.kshs.org>

Preservation activities that contribute to the preservation of the built environment and archaeological resources through planning activities.

Renewable Energy Incentives Grant Program

Kansas State Energy Office

<http://www.kcc.ks.gov>

Develop, implement, and install renewable energy projects (e.g. solar energy, wind energy, geothermal energy, biomass, or hydropower).

Safe Routes to School Program

Kansas Department of Transportation

<http://www.ksdot.org/>

Activities and projects that make walking and bicycling to school safe, enjoyable, and routine.

Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)

Kansas Department of Transportation

<http://www.ksdot.org/>

Transportation projects related to surface transportation including designated enhancement activities (e.g. Historic, Scenic and Environmental, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Facilities).

NON-PROFIT & PRIVATE FUNDS

American Academy of Dermatology Grants

American Academy of Dermatology

<http://www.aad.com>

Shade structure for youth and seniors in public use areas.

Lowe's Neighborhood Grants

Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse Stores/Local Stores

<http://www.lowes.com>

Neighborhood beautification projects, educational programs, and community resources including parks.

NFL Grassroots Field Grant Program

NFL Grassroots Program

http://www.nflyff.org/grant_programs/grassroots

Financial and technical assistance for neighborhood-based organizations, non-profit groups and high schools to improve the football fields in underserved areas of NFL markets.

Tony Hawk Foundation

<http://www.tonyhawkfoundation.org/>

Design, development, construction, and operation of quality skateboard facilities/park, in low-income locations.

USTA Public Facilities Grant

United States Tennis Association

<http://www.usta.com>

Development and renovation of tennis facilities (e.g. court construction, renovation, resurfacing, support facilities) in under-served areas.

GRANT LIST RESOURCES

A variety of on-line resources also exist that warehouse information about numerous grant opportunities. Two such resources include:

Play and Play Structure website

<http://playandpark.com/funding/grant-opportunities/>

TheGrantHelpers.com

<http://www.thegranthelpers.com/municipal-grants/parks--recreation-grants/>

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Park lifecycles and maintenance practices are an important aspect of any city park system. El Dorado has many parks of approximately the same age that are reaching a point where replacement or re-purposing is needed for certain structures or amenities. This report has helped identify and prioritize what items are either in good condition, needing replacement, not available or deemed timeless landmarks to remain. This section will address what maintenance and operations need to change to improve park lifecycles.

MAINTENANCE

One method to start prioritizing improvements in a consistent manner is by identifying the existing components that scored low on the inventory and determine what of the following “R” assessed actions are needed; Repair, Replace, Re-purpose, Remove or Remain. Each individual component in the inventory that scored low or is not functioning should contemplate the following questions to determine why it is performing poorly;

- *is it sized properly,*
- *does it meet ADA standards,*
- *is it no longer needed,*
- *is it configured poorly,*
- *have the needs of the users or neighborhood changed,*
- *is it outdated,*
- *has it been damaged,*
- *is it unsafe,*
- *has a new need been identified as a better priority,*
- *does it meet public expectations,*
- *is the ability to maintain it not achievable given current resources?*

Once these answers are addressed, a confident and qualified strategy and priority can be determined for addressing each deficit component.

STAFFING STANDARDS

Desired staffing levels relate to acreage of maintained active park space (1 Full Time Equivalent for 15 acres) and athletic fields (1 Full Time Equivalent for 10 acres). El Dorado currently has 3.5 FTE for 61 acres of maintained active park space and 1.5 FTE for 30 acres of athletic fields. This does not include the other properties maintained by these divisions. A higher number of FTE staff is necessary to maintain a higher quality experience of the park system and amenities.

MASTER PLAN UPDATES - 2025 SUNSET

El Dorado's Park system has a strong framework of existing park facilities that have been established over time and requires only minimal need for acquisition of more park land. The adjacent recreational opportunities outside the city limits only enhance the city's potential as a recreation destination. The key deficiencies that apply to El Dorado are found in physical condition/age of facilities, lack of a competitive regional tournament facility with expected amenities, understaffed & underfunded operations, and inconsistent recreation programming and coaching.

With the successful implementation of the Connect 2025 Master Plan, the El Dorado Parks & Recreation department should be able to look back in 2025 at the last 10 years and count numerous successes that have improved the quality of life and economic stimulus for the city's residents.

Those successes will include new and renovated park and trail amenities, increased funding and staff levels through alternate funding sources and possible voter approved tax support, stabilized and increased enrollment in recreation programs, and increased economic stimulus through implementation of key park project investments and resources to attract visitors to El Dorado. Public and private expenditures for parks are extremely worthwhile investments. When comparing park improvements to the costs of infrastructure improvements, the costs are typically lower and yet have a potentially greater impact on the city's image and quality of life. With the proper investments and planning, El Dorado can establish a reputation for having a high quality of life and a desirable place to live and visit.

After celebrating the success of Connect 2025, what is next for El Dorado Parks & Recreation?

