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SECTION 2

VISION AND POLICY PLAN



A COMMON VISION

The common vision for the community has remained unchanged since 2007 and a key underpinning of the vision is fostering a high quality of life through the provision of parks, open spaces, athletic facilities, and trails within the context of responsible land stewardship, long-term sustainability, and economic viability.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement is an outgrowth of the common vision and reflects the City's commitment to its desired lifestyle and providing a balanced overall park and trail system.

"Promote a high quality of life in Rogers by providing a balanced and sustainable system of parks, natural open spaces, athletic facilities, and trails consistent with the sense of place in the community."

QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE

Quality design and amenities are vital to maintaining high levels of use of local parks and trails. With the many other recreational choices available to people, participation studies clearly indicate that residents will not use parks or trails if they do not have a quality experience. Attention to details, amenities, design, materials, and surroundings are incredibly important for user experience and cannot be overlooked when improving existing parks and developing additions to a park's system. According to a survey conducted by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in 2016, the number two reason Americans do not engage with parks more often is the lack of quality facilities nearby. The quality of residents' experience has become increasingly more important when determining which parks to use and how frequently parks are used in the community.

In order to take Rogers' parks and trails to the next level the city must budget and prioritize these elements of quality within the parks system. The same NRPA survey found that eighty-five percent of Americans consider high-quality park and recreation amenities an appealing feature when they are choosing a new place to call home.

CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS

The Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Plan (System Plan) is intended to be consistent with and complementary to the vision, goals, and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The forthcoming goals are broad statements that chart the course for achieving the stated mission. They define desired future conditions and outcomes. Accompanying objectives qualify specific goals. Policy statements articulate strategies or actions necessary to achieve specific objectives.

Note that policies are not ordinances and thus allow for some discretion by the Park and Recreation Advisory Board and City Council as to their application.

SHARED GOALS WITH SCHOOL DISTRICT

The City and School District have an established, mutually beneficial relationship in serving local residents' recreational needs, especially as it relates to athletic facilities. Where applicable, the following goals and policies are intended to be consistent with and complementary to those of the School District.



PARKS, ATHLETIC FACILITIES, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS SYSTEM PLAN

GOAL STATEMENT

To implement the system plan.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To routinely evaluate and update the system plan and recreational needs of the community to ensure adequate parks, athletic facilities, open space, and trails are provided
- ✓ To use the plan for the purpose of guiding implementation

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. The plan shall be used to guide park, athletic facility, and trail development within Rogers.
2. All development shall be consistent with the system plan, unless approved otherwise by Park And Recreation Advisory Commission and City Council action.
3. Review and updating of the plan shall be undertaken as warranted; revisions should be made based on documented changes in community needs, unique conditions, or unforeseen circumstances/opportunities.
4. The plan shall be adopted by the City Council and referenced in the Comprehensive Plan.
5. Residents shall be given an opportunity to participate in the planning process (i.e., through needs assessment studies, neighborhood meetings, etc.) to ensure that their needs are understood and acted upon.
6. Copies of the plan shall be made available to residents upon request.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. The City shall reserve the right to acquire land within all development areas for park, natural open space, and trail purposes.
2. Parkland dedication policies and ordinances shall be used by the City to require each developer (of all land use categories) to dedicate land or, at the discretion of the City, an equivalent cash value contribution for parks and open space acquisition and development.
3. Parks, natural resource areas, and related recreation facilities shall be acquired and developed by the City in accordance with the system plan.
4. Alternatives to direct acquisition of property shall be used where appropriate to set aside land for park and open space purposes; this includes conservation easements and other means as defined by the system plan.
5. Acquisition of specific parcels of land for park uses shall be based on the quality of the land and natural resource, its suitability for the desired uses, and its location as defined in the system plan (or accepted alternative); undesirable land parcels with limited park and natural resource value shall not be accepted.
6. A reasonable effort shall be made to eliminate physical barriers that deter individuals from using parks and recreation facilities; barrier-free design principles shall be applied in accordance with accepted guidelines and laws.
7. Design and maintenance procedures shall be consistent with industry standards; design and maintenance of all parks and recreation facilities shall emphasize high quality and user safety.
8. The Park And Recreation Advisory Commission and city staff shall review all development plans that impact parkland, natural open space and trail corridor dedication, acquisition, and development.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

GOAL STATEMENT

To provide residents with an interconnected trail system for recreation and transportation and as a means to tie parks and open spaces together.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To enhance the quality of life within the city by providing adequate parkland and natural areas to fulfill the present and future needs of residents
- ✓ To use the parks, natural areas, and interconnecting trail corridors as a major factor in shaping development
- ✓ To maintain and enhance the natural character and aesthetic qualities of the community by providing parks and natural areas
- ✓ To encourage sequential growth within the city in harmony with the natural environment

TRAIL CORRIDORS ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

GOAL STATEMENT

To provide residents with an interconnected trail system for recreation and transportation and as a means to tie parks and open spaces together.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To provide a trail system that emphasizes harmony with the natural environment
- ✓ To allow for relatively uninterrupted pleasure hiking, biking, and other uses to and through the City's park and open space system and developed areas
- ✓ To effectively tie the various parks together into a interconnected, high quality system; and to effectively tie the city trail system with those of adjacent cities and the regional park and trail system
- ✓ To safely protect users from developmental encroachment and associated vehicular traffic

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Trail easement policies and ordinances shall be used to require developers to dedicate land for the core system of trails and provide access from new subdivisions to those trails.
2. Trail corridors shall be developed in conjunction with and integral to future developments, parks, greenways, and roadway projects as defined by the system plan.
3. The trail system shall be developed to minimize conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.
4. Trail types, development standards, and general location shall be in accordance with the system plan and accommodate a range of activities (i.e., walking, hiking, bicycling, and in-line skating).
5. Trail support facilities should be provided as warranted (including trail signage and striping, benches, picnic tables, bridges, restrooms, parking, shelters, etc.).
6. Trail design shall be sensitive to the natural environment and character of the area
7. Trails shall be designed to be accessible wherever feasible given the specific setting .
8. Trails shall be constructed to require minimal maintenance and limit vandalism.
9. Screening and buffering shall be provided where necessary along trail corridors to provide a physical and psychological separation between the trail and adjacent uses.
10. Motorized vehicles shall be prohibited on trails unless required for maintenance and safety.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. In cooperation with other program providers, standards shall be established that apply uniformly to all programs, sites, and facilities and shall include: a) identification of the recreational program objectives and related facility needs for specific activities; b) ensuring that adequate support of local recreation providers is in place for program viability and success; and c) undertaking a seasonal review of the effectiveness of City support for each recreational program that uses local public facilities.
2. In concert with program providers, leadership and conduct guidelines for each activity and program shall be developed defining acceptable and appropriate actions and behavior of individuals responsible for overseeing specific programs and activities that use city parks and facilities.
3. An ongoing communication strategy shall be established between the City and program providers to encourage across-the-board collaboration among providers, broaden recreation interests, and track demand/recreation trends affecting the city.
4. The City shall encourage all program providers to provide an equal opportunity to participate in recreation.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

GOAL STATEMENT

Working with local recreational program providers, the City will strive to provide residents with the opportunity to participate in recreation activities and programs through well-designed, effective, and interesting recreation programs.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To support local recreational providers efforts to meet local recreation needs, including those of children, teens, adults, elderly, and the disabled
- ✓ To support and encourage a wide diversity of recreation interests within the community
- ✓ To work with program providers to provide adequate facilities for programmed use on a fair and equitable basis to ensure that all individuals and groups receive reasonable access to facilities

NATURAL RESOURCES STEWARDSHIP

GOAL STATEMENT

To provide for the preservation and conservation of ecological systems and natural resources within the city.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To preserve significant natural resources as open space and a highly valued aspect of the overall open space system
- ✓ To maintain and enhance the character or appeal of the community through interconnected natural open spaces
- ✓ To encourage orderly and sequential growth within the community and in harmony with the natural environment
- ✓ To ensure sustainable and desirable natural resource areas and ecological systems are protected and managed within the city

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. A well-defined natural resources stewardship plan shall be implemented for the purpose of enhancing and protecting the natural resources and ecological systems within the city.
2. Residents shall be educated and informed about ecological issues so that they better understand the importance of restoration and management programs and their role in protecting the natural resources of the community.
3. Natural resource areas may, at the discretion of the City, be set aside (through direct purchase, developer's agreements, conservation easements, or by other means) to preserve the natural character of the community; these areas shall be considered as desirable additions to, rather than substitutes for, other types of parkland.
4. Natural resource areas shall be defined to include all lands that are considered by the City to be natural amenities and/or of ecological significance; land areas exhibiting steep slopes and other non-buildable features may, at the City's discretion, be set aside as natural resource areas and included as part of the park, greenway, and trail system.
5. Policies and ordinances protecting natural resources and ecological systems within the city shall be reviewed, including the review of wetland and shoreland management policies to ensure that they are consistent with accepted statewide standards and requirements; the City's water quality management plan shall also continue to be updated consistent with current trends, and MS4 and Met Council requirements.
6. Property owners and local business community shall be encouraged to preserve the natural character of their properties.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Information sharing and education programs shall be used as needed to enhance participants and residents knowledge of the existing programs and facilities (e.g. community newspaper, activities brochure, etc.).
Community participation and interaction shall be promoted to determine the needs and desires of the residents; periodically scheduled public meetings, needs assessment surveys, neighborhood meetings, focus groups, interviews, etc., shall be used as tools to assess the needs of the community.
2. The formation of athletic, youth, civic groups, and associations shall be promoted to assist in the continued development of recreation programs and facilities.
3. Residents and Park And Recreation Advisory Commission shall work together to define park facilities and programs that are needed, can be provided, and what residents can do to assist (e.g. Adopt-A-Park).
4. Volunteerism shall be promoted through the development of various volunteer programs (e.g. Adopt-A Park).

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL STATEMENT

To establish an effective, ongoing means of communicating and interacting with residents about issues related to parks and recreation facilities, programs, and future development. To provide residents with the opportunity to participate in recreational activities and programs through the City and various civic and volunteer organizations.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To promote active and ongoing interaction between the City and its constituents to ensure effective recreational programming and facility development
- ✓ To promote ongoing communication between the Park And Recreation Advisory Board and residents
- ✓ To promote ongoing volunteer programs and civic and athletic/youth organizations to encourage residents and community organizations to assist in park improvements, maintenance, and providing recreation programs

PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL STATEMENT

To maximize the park and recreational opportunities available to residents through the development of fair and equitable working partnerships between the City and the local recreational program providers, local school district, adjacent cities, county, churches, and civic organizations.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To fairly and equitably integrate the City of Rogers parks and facilities with those of the other partners
- ✓ To fairly and equitably integrate the City of Rogers programs with those of the other partners

FUNDING

GOAL STATEMENT

To secure the funding necessary to carry out the mission of the Rogers Parks, Natural Open Space/Greenways, and Trail System Plan.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To define the funding options available for implementation of the system plan, and to maximize the use of each source
- ✓ To prepare an implementation plan that defines the relative timing and extent of acquisition and development of system components

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. A cooperative effort shall be undertaken between all partners to encourage the optimal use of limited resources and minimize duplication of park sites, facilities, and services.
2. All agreements - although intended to be fair and equitable to all partners - shall be made in the best interest of the City of Rogers.
3. Clearly defined joint-use agreements and policies shall be formally adopted between all partners.
4. Where feasible, new facilities shall be planned in consideration of the needs of other partners.
5. Where feasible, new facilities shall be located adjacent to property owned by other partners to facilitate shared use and programming.
6. Ongoing information sharing, communication, and interaction between all partners shall be undertaken to promote each one's system and programs.
7. The City shall appoint a staff person to be responsible for coordinating facility use and program development; each partner shall be encouraged to do the same.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. All forms of funding for implementing the system plan shall be pursued on an ongoing basis and in a time frame consistent with community need and development.
2. The use of public-private partnerships shall be maximized to help fund or defer costs to implement the system plan, with specific emphasis on the use of conservation development approaches to planning to maximize public values.
3. A complete analysis of financing mechanisms available to the City for implementation of the system plan shall be undertaken and updated on a periodic basis.
4. A review of the park and trail dedication formula and program fees (resident and non-resident) shall be undertaken on an annual basis.
5. A priority ranking system and an implementation plan shall be prepared prioritizing future improvements where future costs can be reasonably projected.
6. Shared-cost and joint-use agreements between the City and any partners shall be reviewed on an annual basis to determine if they are equitable, cost effective, and address exposures for each other.

ACHIEVING THE COMMON VISION

Achieving the common vision will require the use of conventional and non-conventional approaches to planning, development, and funding. Successful implementation of the plan will also require a steadfast commitment to collaborating with the development community for a couple of key reasons:

- The nuances of integrating open spaces, parks, and trails into new developments requires a high level of collaboration and flexibility to achieve the highest public values
- The cost of implementing the system plan to its fullest potential is likely to be well beyond the City's means using conventional funding mechanisms, park dedication policies, and past approaches to acquisition and development

By combining standard regulatory controls with alternative approaches to the development process (such as conservation development), achieving the vision and goals set forth in this and other city plans becomes more realistic. Lacking that, realizing the full potential of the system plan becomes significantly more of a challenge, and perhaps even unlikely.

Achieving the common vision will also require expanding on the cooperative relationship between the City and School District as defined in various sections of this plan.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A number of guiding principles support the vision and mission statements. These include:

- ✓ Implement a balanced system plan offering multiple community values
- ✓ Allow for some flexibility in implementing the plan to adjust to realistic financial limitations and unforeseen events
- ✓ Maintain a high and consistent standard of quality throughout the system
- ✓ Plan and design parks for their entire lifecycle (i.e., 15 to 20 years for play equipment, 20 to 25 years for most other features)
- ✓ Adhere to a standardized planning and design process for individual parks to ensure consistency in public involvement and outcomes

