

# City of Wyoming Parks, Open Space and Trails System Plan

The City of Wyoming Parks, Open Space and Trails System Plan will guide acquiring land for municipal parks, the protecting public and private open space and reserving corridors for multiple-use paths.

## Parks, Open Space and Trails Objectives

1. **Additional Public Parks:** Acquire land for public parks that provide options for active sports and passive recreation. The park system may also be a component of an integrated effort to conserve significant natural resources.
2. **Ecology and the Environment:** Plan and design parks and greenways to protect environmentally sensitive features, reduce negative environmental effects and serve as models of land stewardship.
3. **Bicycling and Walking:** Work with Chisago County to build a system consisting of off-road paths, paved shoulders, striped on-street bicycling lanes street and municipal sidewalks.
4. **Role of Parks in Community Design:** Locate and design parks and greenways to enhance the quality of residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, reflect Wyoming's cultural heritage and honor civic life.
5. **Greenways:** Create linear patterns of private and/or public open space that are interconnected, preserve upland and wetland habitat, aid wildlife movement and may include paved paths.

## Parks System

### 1. A Network of Green Spaces

Wyoming will continue to build a system of green open spaces for recreation, community beauty and natural protection that are linked by linear parks (greenways), off-road paths and on-street bicycle lanes, and generously landscaped roads.

### 2. Park Classification

Wyoming will create the following types of parks:

- **Neighborhood playground:** Approximately five to ten acres in size and serving a ½- to ¾-mile radius. Facilities may include play apparatus, multi-purpose athletic field, outdoor hockey or skating rink, picnic shelter, and quiet or passive areas.
- **Community athletic field:** Ten to twenty-five acres in size and serving the entire community. Oriented toward organized athletics with lighted fields and off-street parking. This site would have to be acquired through purchase.
- **Special area:** Potentially oriented toward preserving and providing public access to a significant natural resource such as a major woods.



### 3. New Neighborhood Playground Locations

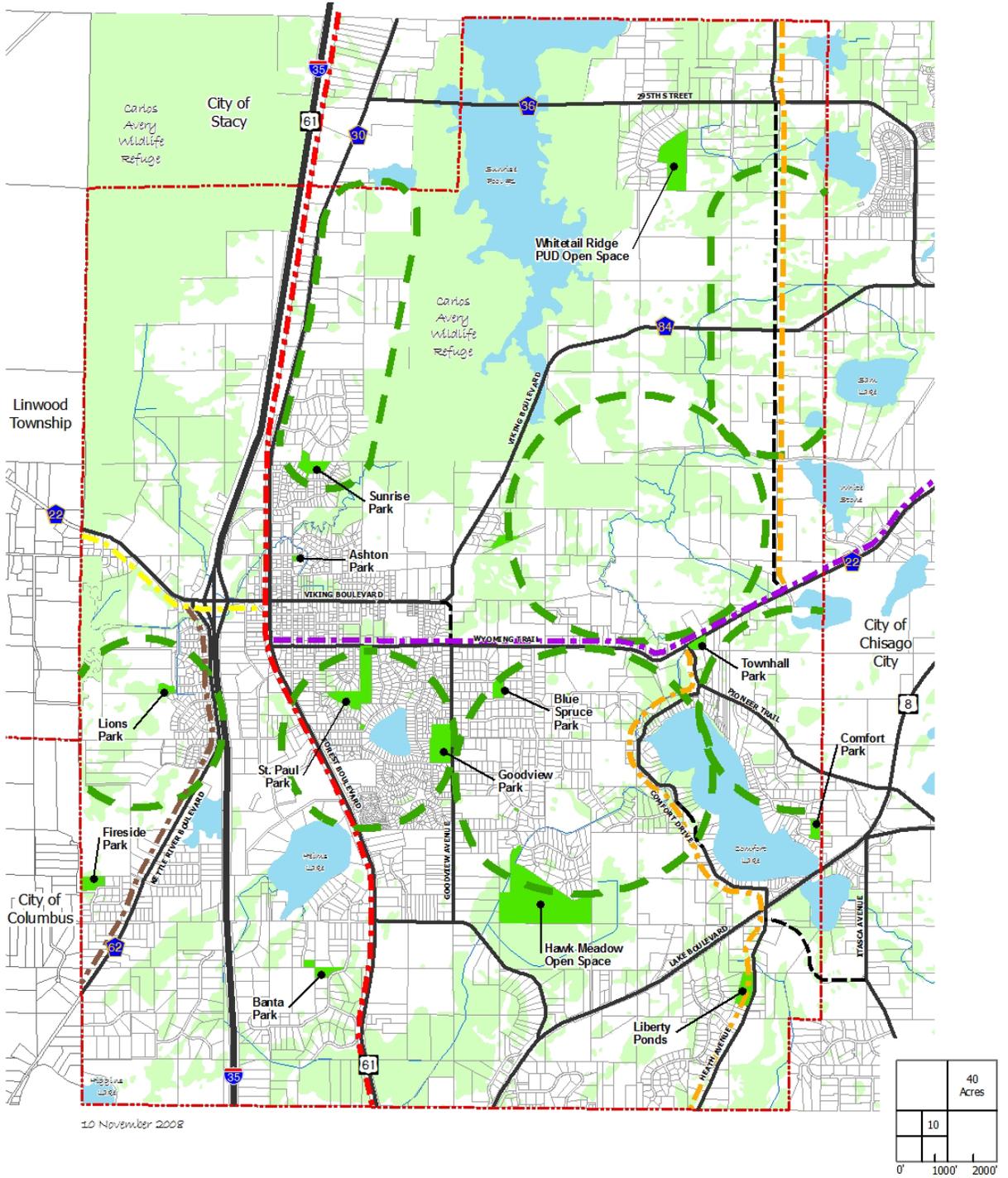
Figure P-1, Parks System Plan, illustrates the approximate boundaries of Park Service Areas, those districts that are demarcated by major roads or water features and may grow to sufficient population to warrant a municipal park.

It will be the practice of the City of Wyoming to acquire land by dedication during the platting process in order to assemble parks of sufficient size. Alternatively, cash may be required instead of (or in combination with) land to either buy park land in appropriate locations and/or to improve a park in that neighborhood.

City staff will negotiate with landowners and developers to specify the location and configuration of each park with the aim of acquiring the appropriate amount of land needed to accommodate the planned facilities. Street access, the length of public street abutting each park and the relationship to adjacent buildings will also be negotiated in that process.

The City will study and possibly amend its ordinance for the dedication of park land and/or cash during the platting process.





**City of Wyoming Comprehensive Plan**

**Figure P-1  
Parks & Open Space Plan**

- Park Service Area
- Existing Parks
- Conservation & Open Space
- Sunrise Prairie Trail
- Comfort Lake Route
- County Road 22 Route
- Swedish Immigrant Trail
- Kettle River Route

#### 4. Coordination with the School District

The City will seek to co-locate City parks with schools and to use existing school gymnasiums or pools to meet City recreational program needs.

#### 5. Role of Parks in Community Design

Parks are a major and highly visible public investment that can have a significant positive effect on the appearance of a community and its quality of life. The City will seek to design parks and greenways as visual assets that enhance the level of private investment in nearby housing and create lasting value in neighborhoods. Each park should:

- Be open to the neighborhood on at least half of its perimeter
- Include generous landscaping to soften and direct views
- Provide both active spaces and quiet, natural areas
- Use civic buildings such as a gazebo or picnic shelter as a focal point
- In a school-park situation, be designed in coordination with the facilities provided by the school.
- Include off-street parking designed in careful relation to the topography, plantings and views so as to minimize its visual effect. No more off-street parking should be provided than is reasonable in addition to on-street parking.

At the same time, the City should strive to ensure that development that occurs next to parks is compatible with these open space areas.

#### 6. Ecology and Environment

Parks can and should provide benefits in addition to outdoor recreation such as protecting environmentally sensitive areas and connecting people to nature on a daily basis.

The City will identify, preserve and enhance existing valuable natural areas such as wetlands, major wooded areas, hilltops, and native prairies (if any) and provide for appropriate public use. Identify such lands prior to the neighborhood development process.

Drainage swales and creeks are important for their ability to provide wildlife habitat and movement paths, cost-effectively manage stormwater, reduce flooding and serve as visual amenities. Drainageways in parks should be identified and maintained in a natural state. Mowing should be discouraged, and environmentally sensitive methods of bank protection should be used rather than engineering approaches.

The City will also try to incorporate neighborhood detention ponds into parks for the sake of park aesthetics, water quality and land efficiency. This should be done without losing the amount of land needed for active park uses, however.



The City will work to judiciously reduce the amount of park area devoted to mowed turf and introduce in its place plant species that require less maintenance, provide habitat for birds, small animals and insects, and that improve the quality of water runoff. Invasive, non-native plant species should be controlled.



Major intact natural areas should be linked by corridors of native woods and grasses for the sake of wildlife habitat and movement, and urban aesthetics. Landscape elements that can be used for such links include streams and stream edges, fencerows and hedgerows, drainage swales, roadside ditches with natural vegetation, floodplains and wetlands. Keep a few wooded or other natural areas in the park system at a very low level of management in order to provide places for people to explore on their own and experience a rudimentary bit of wildness.

## 7. Comprehensive Park System Plan

The City of Wyoming will prepare a comprehensive park and recreation plan that is more detailed than the preliminary guidance in this chapter of the comprehensive plan.

It will be particularly important in that plan to identify potential locations for neighborhoods playgrounds so that the site can be acquired during the neighborhood platting process, and to find candidate locations for a community athletic complex so a suitable site may be purchased.

The plan should also identify specific recreation needs, consult with leaders of organized athletic leagues in the community, assess the quality and quantity of existing facilities, and include a capital improvements program for improving facilities to meet identified needs over time.

The City will seek to recognize and accommodate the diverse recreational needs of the community when preparing the parks and recreation system plan.

## 8. Private Parks



The City will acknowledge the presence of jointly owned private open space while ensuring that adequate park land is provided for the larger community.

## Open Space Network

Land owned and managed for its natural features will be an important feature of the future City of Wyoming. It is anticipated that Wyoming will be at least 43 percent public open space when fully developed. There may be additional private property held in a natural condition to supplement the public lands in a conservation state. Figure 2 illustrates the extensive network of lands to be preserved as public conservation open space.

1. **Wetlands and Floodplains:** The City will continue to protect wetlands and floodplains through its own zoning regulations and through cooperation with Chisago County and the Comfort Lake–Forest Lake Watershed District.
2. **Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area:** The City will adopt a land use plan and zoning regulations that respect the natural resource functions of the Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area.
3. **Greenways:** The City will strive to reduce the loss of wooded uplands as residential neighborhoods are created. Woods may be protected by first retaining a professional forester to conduct a city-wide survey of the quality of the community’s forests. Later, as neighborhood development sketch plans are brought forward, the City will apply the provisions of its subdivision regulations to encourage or require a design that limits the loss of the best forest and creates a linked network of woods, prairie, wetlands and lakes.



## Trails System

1. **County Trails:** The City of Wyoming will cooperate with Chisago County to create three regional paths for bicycling, skating, walking and running. Descriptions of the three regional trails are provided below.
2. **Local Trails:** The City will create a north-south route for bicycling along the alignment of Innsbrook Avenue, Comfort Drive and Heath Avenue. That facility, named the Comfort Lake Route, is described below.
3. **Sidewalks:** The City will adopt subdivision regulations (or reference its public facility design manual) that requires a five-foot concrete sidewalk along at least one side of each future Local or Collector residential street in the areas planned as Suburban Neighborhoods. Those locations are expected to have streets with curb-and-gutter and public utilities. Sidewalks are an important element of any non-motorized circulation network.



### Sunrise Prairie Trail – Chisago County

Sunrise Prairie Trail in Chisago County and Hardwood Creek Trail in Washington County follow the former Burlington Northern Railroad right-of-way between North Branch and Hugo. Bridges cross Hardwood Creek and the south and west branches of the Sunrise River.



The trail features a ten-foot-wide paved surface for hikers, bicyclists and inline skaters during spring, summer and fall. The parallel unpaved portion is open to non-studded snowmobiles when there is sufficient snow and to horseback riders at all other times. Snowmobiles and horses are not allowed on the paved portion of the trail at any time.

Parking areas and information kiosks are located adjacent to the trail at North Branch, Stacy and Wyoming. Parking is also available at the start of the trail in Hugo as well as in downtown Forest Lake.

The Sunrise Prairie Trail was built by Chisago County in coordination with Washington County and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The long-term goal is to build a paved off-road path all the way from St. Paul to Duluth.

### Swedish Immigrant Trail – Chisago County

The goal of the Swedish Immigrant Trail Project is to build and maintain a 20 mile, multi-use, hard surface trail that provides a safe route for recreation and alternative transportation while interpreting and celebrating the Swedish immigrant history of Chisago County

This trail will connect Wyoming to Taylors Falls via Chisago City, Lindstrom, Center City and Shafer using an abandoned railway corridor that parallels Highway 8.

A major regional link, the trail will connect to the Sunrise Prairie and Hardwood Creek Trails, the existing 24 mile trail system from North Branch to Hugo, and the Gandy Dancer Trail in Wisconsin. Future planned connections include Duluth and the Twin Cities.



The Swedish Immigrant will be open to bicyclists and pedestrians, and some portions may be open to horses and snowmobiles.

Presently a short portion of the path exists near in the City of Lindstrom on a former railroad right-of-way that served as the transportation spine of the Wyoming to Taylors Falls corridor. Unfortunately, most other segments of that railroad corridor have been turned back to adjacent landowners, as is the case along most of its route through Wyoming. The County is attempting to negotiate easements across private properties that were formerly the route of the railroad in cities to the east.

Therefore, unless the County is able to acquire easements across private properties in Wyoming along the former railroad route, the path connection is proposed to be along County Road 22, Wyoming Trail. Wyoming Trail west of Goodview Avenue will be rebuilt in 2009 with a physically-separated asphalt bicycling path. There is sufficient right-of-way to continue that path to the east in the future.



The objective will be to provide a safe and recognizable bicycling route between the Sunrise Prairie Trail and the route as it may exist east of Wyoming.

### **Kettle River Boulevard – Chisago and Anoka Counties**

Chisago and Anoka Counties may collaborate to build a bicycling route along Kettle River Boulevard. A feasibility study will have to be conducted to determine whether this facility will be a separate asphalt path or wide, paved road shoulders .

### **Comfort Lake Route – City of Wyoming**

The Comfort Lake Trail is proposed by this plan as a municipal route for bicycling between the northern and southern sides of Wyoming with a link to the Swedish Immigrant Trail at County Road 22.

This route could consist of a combination of off-road paths, paved road shoulders and a signed-only route as conditions and funding allow. Along the extension of Innsbrook Avenue (the road planned between County Roads 36 and 22), it would be feasible to build either an off-road path or paved shoulders. Along Comfort Drive, lower traffic volumes may allow use of either a striped shoulder or signs. Along Heath Avenue, paved shoulders or an off-road path may be feasible.



Off-road paths provide the highest level of comfort and safety for all levels of riders if the intersections at roads are properly designed. Retrofitting an off-road path into the right-of-way of a road that presently has rural ditches would usually involve either land acquisition or using storm sewer pipes for drainage.

Striped on-road lanes (five-feet wide) are usually considered the second level of accommodation and can sometimes be fit into existing streets without disrupting adjacent properties or losing on-street parking.

Route signs provide the lowest level of user safety and route recognition but are sometimes acceptable on roads with low traffic volumes and speeds.