
Section 9 Guiding Policies and Strategies

A community's comprehensive plan for parks, open space, recreational facilities and recreational programs should be diverse. The comprehensive plan is the community's guiding document that identifies key issues and contemplates the resolution of the key issues identified. The guiding policies that are developed should be based on a combination of appointed advisory commission members, elected council members, City staff, consultant and community input during the information gathering stage in the development of the comprehensive plan. This input should be the impetus for the initiatives that are undertaken in the next 20 or more years in the acquisition of parks and open space/natural areas, construction of recreational facilities, recreational program implementation and construction of trails.

Guiding policies and strategies that have been created were based on previous studies, community surveys, and public planning sessions that the City had initiated. While these guiding policies and strategies are meant to provide priorities for the direction that the City of Farmington should take with regards to Parks and Recreation, it is important to remember that issues and priorities can change with time. The 2030 Master Plan will be mandated for an update 10 years from now by the Metropolitan Council and so the City will continue to have opportunities in the future to assess the direction that it wants to go with Parks and Recreation.

9.1 Guiding Policies and Strategies

1. Develop a park and open space system that includes active and athletic spaces.

Strategies:

- a. *Acquire land according to the long range plan for future parks that is flat or contains very little grade change and is unencumbered by utility easements during the development process.*
- b. *Include resident and local youth sports organization input when master planning parks in order to address active and athletic spaces.*
- c. *Maintain a ratio of a minimum of 20 acres of active park land per 1,000 people.*
- d. *Complete master plans for remaining parks that could include active and athletic spaces.*
- e. *Construct a youth outdoor athletic complex that consists of baseball, soccer and lacrosse fields.*
- f. *Construct an adult softball complex that consists of at least four regulation size fields.*
- g. *Add facilities and amenities to parks in order to meet minimum standards identified by the National Recreation and Park Association.*
- h. *Complete deferred improvements that have not been completed due to funding shortfalls.*
- i. *Explore the development of a cross-country ski trail system.*
- j. *Explore the construction of a mountain bike trail.*
- k. *Explore the construction of a dog park.*

- l. Explore the construction of a disc golf course.*
 - m. Explore the construction of an archery range.*
 - n. Explore opportunities to add art work in parks.*
 - o. Identify preferred site for future Veteran’s Memorial.*
- 2. Develop a park and open space system that includes natural areas and environmentally sensitive areas for passive and un-programmed spaces.**

Strategies:

- a. Encourage developers to donate land to the City during the development process that cannot be developed due to steep slopes, encumbered with utility easements, wetland(s) and/or floodplain.*
 - b. In order to create a balance of active and passive land in the City’s park and open space system, a ratio establishing a minimum of 20 acres of open space and/or natural area per 1,000 residents should be adopted.*
 - c. Protect and preserve stream, river and waterway for wildlife, trail and greenway corridors.*
 - d. Identify and acquire scenic land in the community that should be protected from development.*
 - e. Identify areas where trails can be constructed through or adjacent to natural areas.*
 - f. Complete master plans for remaining parks that could include passive and un-programmed spaces.*
 - g. Include resident and community organization input when master planning parks in order to address passive and un-programmed spaces.*
 - h. Acquire land along the Vermillion River and its tributaries either through the development process or through acquisition from existing property owner in order to preserve the open space for all to enjoy and a greenway system that provides connections to schools, parks, neighborhoods, commercial areas and surrounding communities.*
 - i. Develop a budget for the removal of invasive species and restoration of native vegetation along streams and rivers that provides suitable habitat for wildlife.*
- 3. Expand the city’s trail and sidewalk system to include trails that are safe, provide connections between schools, parks, neighborhoods, commercial areas, open space/natural areas, other communities and regional parks are interesting and include future regional trails.**

Strategies:

- 1. Meet with adjacent communities to discuss trail development, trail connections and the creation of a possible joint trails committee.*
- 2. Meet with Dakota County to discuss regional trail development and implementation.*

3. *Require trails to be constructed during new development that closely match the City's future trail plan and connect to exiting trails so that trails do not dead-end.*
4. *When possible and financially feasible, construct pedestrian tunnels under or pedestrian bridges over local streets, railroads, county highways or state highways in order to create safe crossings for users.*
5. *Whenever possible construct trails to comply with the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). If compliance with the ADA is not possible, provide alternative routes that allow individuals who are physically challenged to still traverse the trail system if they so desire.*
6. *The City should create various lengths of looped trails that accommodate users who have varying levels of skills, health and methods of transportation.*
7. *Provide support facilities such as a restroom, benches, bike rack, drinking water source, parking and rest areas along the trail system.*
8. *Work with developers to construct trails that lead to commercial and industrial areas from residential areas.*
9. *Work with the Farmington School District to construct trails that safely connect from neighborhoods and parks to school building sites when possible by using controlled intersections such as at a four-way stop or at signal lights or utilize natural greenways and/or man made greenways that minimize the number of street crossings..*
10. *Provide adequate and visible trail crossing signs for motorists to see.*
11. *In older neighborhoods that lack trails and/or sidewalks and when space is possible, off-street trails and/or sidewalks should be constructed in boulevards when infrastructure replacement projects occur.*
12. *If there is not space to construct off-street trails in the boulevard or it is financially not feasible, an eight (8) foot bike lane should be striped on the shoulder of at least one side of the street with a preference for striping eight (8) foot bike lanes on both sides of the street if there is adequate space to do so, in order to provide a connection to the City's off-street trail system.*
13. *Signs designating certain streets as a bike route should be installed when striping a bike lane or lanes is not possible.*
14. *Be cognizant of the environmentally sensitive areas and use good environmental planning that limits the encroachment of the trails on the waterways by constructing the trails on the outer edges of the greenway.*
15. *Trails constructed in greenways should be built at a minimum of 10 feet in width with a preferred width of 12 feet or wider due to anticipated heavy use.*
16. *Construct a limited number of narrow aggregate or wood chip hiking paths from paved trails to the interiors of the greenway so that users have a limited number of access connections into natural areas of the greenway.*
17. *Develop interpretive trails when possible that educates the public about the natural environment.*

4. Develop a long-term financial plan for the development of parks, open space and trails.

Strategies:

- 1. Research alternative methods of financing the construction and maintenance of trails.*
- 2. Research and pursue possible grant programs for funding park and trail construction.*
- 3. Create, when possible, financial partnerships with other agencies to assist with funding trail construction.*
- 4. Create a pavement management plan for the maintenance and future reconstruction of trails.*
- 5. Encourage and foster volunteers through the City's Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Trail programs that currently exist in order to keep litter picked up along trails.*
- 6. Create a maintenance program that identifies costs and ensures that trails are crack filled and overlaid at appropriate and specified intervals.*

5. Re-develop Rambling River Park.

Strategies:

- 1. Through a public input process develop a master plan for the park.*
- 2. Develop a cost estimate to construct the improvements identified in the master plan for the park.*
- 3. Create a financial plan that identifies the funding source(s) that covers the cost to completely construct the improvements identified or covers the cost through a phasing plan.*
- 4. Identify a construction schedule to complete improvements identified in the approved master plan.*
- 5. Construct the improvements utilizing the schedule and funding source(s) identified.*

6. Develop maintenance standards for parks.

Strategies:

- a. Identify City parks that are highly visible and have high visitor rates.*
- b. Identify City parks that have less visibility and have lower visitor rates.*
- c. Identify maintenance tasks and the frequency that they should be performed and are appropriate for parks with high visibility and have high visitor rates.*
- d. Identify maintenance tasks and the frequency that they should be performed and are appropriate for parks that are less visible and have low visitor rates.*

- e. *Implement the maintenance standards.*

7. Develop maintenance standards for recreational facilities.

Strategies:

- a. *Identify routine maintenance tasks associated with the interior of recreational facilities and the frequency that maintenance should be performed.*
- b. *Identify routine maintenance tasks associated with the exterior of recreational facilities and the frequency that maintenance should be performed.*
- c. *Identify routine maintenance tasks associated with the recreational facilities equipment and the frequency that maintenance should be performed.*
- d. *Identify routine maintenance tasks associated with each recreational facility and identify whether staff should perform the maintenance or if it should be completed by a contractor.*
- e. *Develop an appropriate budget that allows the maintenance tasks to be performed either by staff or a contractor at the intervals identified.*
- f. *Implement the maintenance standards.*

8. Increase marketing of parks and recreation (recreational programs, parks, open space, trails and recreational facilities) to the community.

Strategies:

1. *Create a colored map that shows the location of parks, trails, open space, greenways and recreational facilities and can be distributed to the community.*
2. *Expand the use of technology to notify participants about the Department offerings.*
3. *Install kiosks or information boards with rules, information and trail maps at trail head and rest area locations to provide helpful and useful information to users.*
4. *Continue to provide new signage in parks.*
5. *Create and provide trail signage that is attractive with large enough lettering that creates information that allows successful use of trails and promotes the trail system.*
6. *In locations where there is a narrow park entrance with a trail that leads from a street or sidewalk and runs between homes, a sign with the park name should be installed along the edge of the trail and be visible from the street indicating that the trail is a public entrance point to the park.*
7. *The City should continue to provide an updated snow removal map that identifies trails that are cleaned during the winter.*

9. Complete the development of master plans for remaining city parks.

Strategies:

- a. *Identify the remaining parks to be master planned.*

- b. Identify a schedule for completing the master plans for each park.*
- c. Identify whether staff or a consultant will develop a master plan for each remaining park.*
- d. Using the public input process, develop a master plan for each remaining park.*
- e. Create/show both active and passive spaces in the master plans that are developed.*
- f. Include/show amenities in the remaining park master plans that address meeting the minimum NRPA standards.*

10. Construct new indoor recreational facilities when it may not be financially feasible or structurally possible to make improvements to existing recreational facilities such as the Schmitz-Maki Arena, Outdoor Pool and the Rambling River Center.

Strategies:

- a. Identify which facilities can be improved and which facilities cannot be improved and need to be replaced.*
- b. Identify a cost estimate for improving or replacing the recreational facilities.*
- c. Explore any possible funding and operational public or private partnerships.*

11. Acquire land in a manner that maximizes the size of parks when possible.

Strategies:

- a. Look for opportunities to acquire park land adjacent to*
- b. Create park areas adjacent to storm water detention ponds and/or infiltration ponds.*
- c. Acquire park land adjacent to wetlands.*
- d. Acquire park land adjacent to stream, river and/or waterway corridors.*
- e. Acquire park land on the edge of developments so that when adjacent land is developed, park land can be acquired in the new development that abuts the previously acquired park land.*
- f. Acquire park land adjacent to steep slopes.*
- g. Acquire park land adjacent to wooded areas.*
- h. Work with land owners to place conservation easements on their property that abuts park land.*

12. Explore opportunities to expand youth, teen, adaptive, adult and senior programs.

Strategies:

- a. Expand recreation programs to make them more inclusive.*
- b. Explore programming partnerships with private and public organizations that currently provide programs for different populations.*
- c. Explore programming partnerships with adjacent communities and townships in order to provide adaptive recreation program opportunities.*

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