

EDINA Comprehensive Plan



6. Parks, Open Space, and Natural Resources

Chapter Highlights

The following six points guided the development programs, goals and policies presented in this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

1. Edina has committed to a minimum of 15 percent of its land area to be used as parks and green space. (As of the most recent census, we are right at this threshold.) Future standards will need consider “hardscape” environments as represented in the Greater Southdale District Plan.
2. All Community and Special Use parks will have an updated Master Plan to guide use, growth and future development. Every Park MP will include an approach to best maintain, improve and promote its natural resources.
3. Connecting our neighborhoods via a Grand Rounds concept and in coordination with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.
4. Be intentional on the use of benchmarking to assess progress against strategic objectives.
5. Explore alternative funding models to support future growth and accomplishment of our Mission.
6. Establish a goal to have park facilities within a maximum distance of one mile from each Edina resident

The Major Challenge

Like many communities, Edina is witnessing demographic changes. Changes that occurred between 2008, when the last comprehensive plan was written, and now are only a glimpse of what is expected to occur over the next 10 years. In order to ensure that the City’s park system will continue to meet the needs of residents, the City will need to continually provide sensitive and appropriate responses to changes in social, demographic, technological, economic, political and environmental trends. The magnitude of these changes will demand flexibility in planning practices to appropriately respond to rapidly changing needs.

Edina Parks and Recreation Department Vision and Mission

The Parks and Recreation Department’s vision and mission are stated in the 2015 Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. This policy plan document can be accessed by clicking on the hyperlink below.

<https://www.edinamn.gov/315/Park-System-Strategic-Plan>



Introduction

The City of Edina operates one of the most well-regarded parks and recreation systems in the metropolitan Twin Cities. Edina is a fully developed first ring suburb of Minneapolis with a park system that continues to be improved with targeted additions and innovative operations. The park system, comprising the City’s physical park lands, recreation areas, and trails, along with numerous programs and collaborations with local youth sports associations, greatly contribute to a high quality of life.

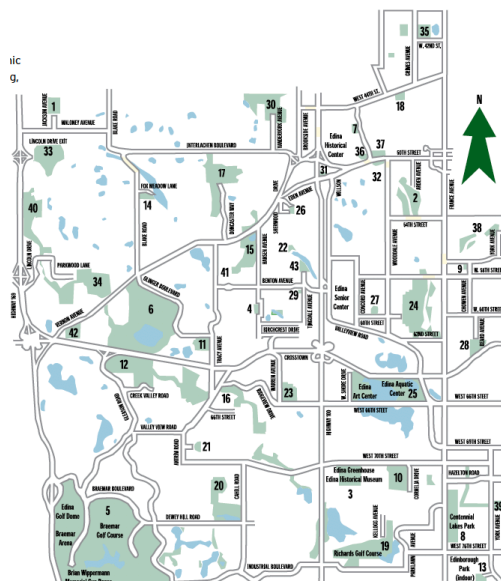
The Vision of the Edina Park and Recreation Department (EPRD) is “To strive for excellence in our parks, recreation and trails system to provide Edina a high quality of life by nurturing the health and well-being of our people, our community, our environment and our economy.” In fulfillment of that vision, the EPRD’s Mission Statement is “To create parks, facilities, and programs to foster a healthy and inclusive community. We accomplish this through creative leadership, collaborations, environmentally sustainable practices and the responsible use of available resources.”

Inventory and Current Conditions

The National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) periodically publishes “Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines” for municipal park and recreation agencies to assist in comprehensive planning. The NRPA suggests that the “national standards” be used only as a benchmark guideline, because each community has its own unique profile in regards to demographics, total acreage, terrain, climate and a host of other affecting factors. Nonetheless, Edina currently exceeds the national standard guideline for acres per 1,000 residents.



The NRPA suggests a national standards guideline of 25 acres per 1,000 residents. This standard would include all local, county, and state-owned property within the community. There are currently no county, state or federal park lands in Edina. All 1,565 acres of park land and open space are owned and maintained by the City of Edina. The City’s 1,565 total park and open space acreage computes to 30.2 acres per 1,000 residents (based on the 2016 Census population of 51,804). Currently, the EPRD oversees 43 parks and open spaces totaling more than 1,565 acres and operates nine facilities, which include:



- Edina Aquatic Center
- Edina Art Center
- Braemar Ice Arena and Sports Dome
- Braemar Golf Courses
- Braemar Golf Dome
- Centennial Lakes Park
- Edinborough Park
- Arneson Acres Park
- Edina Senior Center

Figure 6.1: City of Edina Parks and Facilities Map



Park amenities at these facilities include baseball and soft ball diamonds; football, soccer, and lacrosse fields; basketball, tennis, pickleball and bocce ball courts; outdoor skating rinks; playground equipment for young children, including an adaptive playground; a community garden; and both winter warming houses and summer picnic shelters. The Department also maintains over eight miles of scenic pathways for bicycling, walking, jogging, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and mountain biking.

Regional Parks and Trails and the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

As stated in the Goals and Policies and section of this chapter, it is a goal to make connections to parks and trails to ensure that Edina residents have convenient access to recreational facilities and services. These include regional park and trail facilities both outside and within the City.

The 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan adopted by the Metropolitan Council in February 2015 is the metropolitan system plan for regional recreation open space, and there are regional public parks and facilities in the Twin Cities area that serve Edina residents. For example, Three Rivers Park District owns and maintains regional parks and trails throughout suburban Hennepin County, such as the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail in addition to seven park reserves, 12 regional parks, five special recreation features, and 15 other regional trails. The Minneapolis Park Board's Grand Rounds trail system (including the Chain of Lakes Trail) and the Three Rivers Park District's Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail are regional facilities that are outside the City of Edina but can be accessed by Edina residents. These regional parks offer a variety of recreation opportunities. For example, Three Rivers Park District parks offer snowmobiling, horseback riding, boating, archery, camping, canoeing, downhill skiing, nature centers and historic farm facilities.

The 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan does not identify regional park and recreation facilities directly in the City of Edina, with the following two exceptions:

Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail – Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail is a 15-mile multi-use trail that spans the Cities of Hopkins, Minnetonka, Edina, Richfield, and Bloomington. It also connects to the Lake Minnetonka LRT, Minnesota River Bluffs LRT, Cedar Lake LRT, North Cedar Lake, and Nokomis-Minnesota River Regional Trails as well as the planned Minnesota River State Trail, Dakota County Big Rivers Regional Trail, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Bloomington Visitor Center, and Fort Snelling State Park. Much of the trail was completed and opened for use in 2017. The Edina segment of the trail was completed in spring 2018.

From the west, it currently enters the City of Edina from Hopkins over the Bren Road/Londonderry Road Bridge Interchange at TH-169. From the east, it enters the City from Richfield at the cul-de-sac of Xerxes Avenue just south behind Fire Station 2. In 2020 the Park District anticipates it will construct a safer and more direct connection under TH-169 that will pass



Figure 6.2: Alternative Alignments for the CP Rail Regional Trail
Source: Three Rivers Park District



through the Nine Mile Creek watershed.

Canadian Pacific Rail Regional Trail (CP Rail Regional Trail) – This proposed regional trail was first identified in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan (adopted in June 2005 as the Southwest Hennepin Regional Trail West). The regional trail generally follows the existing north/south, Canadian Pacific Railroad alignment in the City of Edina. Once constructed, it will link the Hyland-Bush-Anderson Park Reserve in Bloomington to the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail in Edina. From Edina, the future trail will connect regional trails in Hopkins, St. Louis Park, Golden Valley, and Crystal.

In 2019, Three Rivers Park District completed a regional trail study and master plan for the south Edina portion of the CP Rail Regional Trail. Figure 6-2, on the previous page, shows the preferred alignment through this area along Bush Lake Road, Dewey Hill Road, and Cahill Road.

City Park Inventory

The following are individual park locations and acreage totals.

Mini-Parks - 12 Parks – 21.12 Acres

A Mini park is characterized by a size of approximately 2 acres or less and is designed to serve primarily the needs of pre-school age children, although it may provide facilities designed to serve the recreation needs of other age groups. Edina’s Mini-Parks typically do not have scheduled athletic facilities. Mini parks are typically used to address limited or isolated recreational needs. Service Area - ¼ Square Mile.

Table 6.1: Mini Parks			
Park	Address	Size	Quadrant
Birchcrest	6016 Hansen Road	1.61 Acres	NW
Browndale	4510 Browndale Avenue	.82 Acre	NE
Chowen	5700 Chowen Avenue	.93 Acre	NE
Grandview Square	5213 Grandview Square	.60 Acre	NW
Kojetin	4201 W. 44th Street	2.69 Acres	NE
Lake Edina	4400 Parklawn Avenue	3.10 Acres	SE
McGuire	W. 69th & McGuire Road	2.00 Acres	SW
Melody Lake	5501 Melody Lake Drive	4.18 Acres	NW
Sherwood	Sherwood Rd. & Edenmoor	1.53 Acres	NW
St. Johns	W. 60th & St.Johns Avenue	.94 Acre	NE
Tingdale	W. 59th & Tingdale Avenue	.67 Acre	NW
York Park	5448 York Avenue	2.05 Acres	NE

Neighborhood Parks - 12 Parks - 112.85 Acres

Neighborhood parks are designed to serve primarily the needs of children six to fourteen years of age. Tennis courts, softball diamonds, basketball and ice skating facilities are commonly provided in neighborhood parks. Some of Edina’s neighborhood parks have one or more scheduled athletic facilities, such as outdoor hockey rinks and/or fields for soccer, football, baseball, and softball. Neighborhood parks typically range in size from approximately two acres to twenty acres. Service Area = 1 Square Mile.



Table 6.2: Neighborhood Parks

Park	Address	Size	Quadrant
Alden	6750 Belmore Lane	5.12 Acres	NW
Arden	5230 Minnehaha Boulevard	17.75 Acres	NE
Cornelia School	7124 Cornelia Drive	10.75 Acres	SE
Countryside	6240 Tracy Avenue	9.01 Acres	NW
Fox Meadow	Blake Rd. & Fox Meadow Lane	3.84 Acres	NW
Heights	5520 W. 66th Street	4.00 Acres	SW
Normandale	6501 Warren Avenue	10.06 Acres	SW
Strachauer	6200 Beard Avenue	4.50 Acres	NE
Utley	50th & Wooddale Avenue	5.73 Acres	NE
Wooddale	W. 50th & Wooddale Avenue	4.70 Acres	NE
Yorktown	W. 73rd & York Avenue	3.42 Acres	SE
Todd Park	4429 Vandervork Avenue	33.97 Acres	NW

Community Playfields – 8 Parks - 253.68 Acres

Community playfields typically range in size from approximately 20 to 60 acres. These parks are designed to provide facilities for diverse recreational activities for young people and adults, although a section is also typically set aside for smaller neighborhood children. All of Edina’s Community Playfields have one or more scheduled athletic facilities, such as outdoor hockey rinks and fields for soccer, football, baseball and softball. Service area - 9-16 square miles.

Table 6.3: Community Playfields

Park	Address	Size	Quadrant
Creek Valley	W. 64th & Gleason Road	10.00 Acres	SW
Garden	5520 Hansen Road	18.74 Acres	NW
Highlands	5200 Doncaster Way	44.05 Acres	NW
Lewis	Dewey Hill & Cahill Road	21.04 Acres	SW
Pamela	5900 Park Place	62.00 Acres	NE
Van Valkenburg	4935 Lincoln Drive	41.76 Acres	NW
Walnut Ridge	5801 Londonderry Road	44.24 Acres	NW
Weber	4115 Grimes Avenue	11.85 Acres	NE



Community Parks - 4 Parks - 549.05 Acres

The community park is usually a large park of more than 100 acres, or a smaller park containing special community facilities.

Table 6.4: Community Parks			
Park	Address	Size	Quadrant
Braemar	SW Corner of Edina	500.00 Acres	SW
Centennial Lakes	7495 France Avenue	25.00 Acres	SE
Kenneth Rosland	4300 West 66th Street	22.05 Acres	SE
Edinburgh	7700 York Avenue South	2.00 Acres	SE

Special Purpose Parks - 7 Parks - 287.11 Acres

The special purpose park provides a single or specific form of recreation. Service Area is citywide.

Table 6.5: Special Purpose Parks			
Park	Address	Size	Quadrant
Arneson Acres	4711 West 70th Street	15.00 Acres	SE
Bredesen	Vernon Ave. & Olinger Boulevard	206.00 Acres	NW
Richards	7640 Parklawn Avenue	39.65 Acres	SE
Southdale Gateway	SE Corner of Edina	9.97 Acres	SE
Tupa	4918 Eden Avenue	1.00 Acre	NE
Williams	West 50th & Browndale	.34 Acre	NE
Grandview Square/ Senior Citizen Center	5280 Grandview Square	5.15 Acres	NW
Weber Woods	40th Street & France	10.0 Acres	NE

Summary of Parks and Natural Resource Parks - 7 Parks – 1,575.94 Acres

Table 6.6: Park Summary	
Park Type	Acres
Natural Resource Areas (19 areas)	352.13
Mini-Parks (12)	21.12
Neighborhood Parks (12)	112.85
Community Playfields (8)	253.68
Community Parks (4)	549.05
Special Purpose Parks (7)	<u>287.11</u>
Total Parklands & Natural Resource Areas	1,575.94



The following are parkland acreage totals per park classification.

Table 6.7: Total Acreage by Number of Park Facilities				
Component	Character	SVC Area	# of Parks	Total Acreage
Natural Resource Areas	Vary in size	Varies	19	352.13
Mini-Parks	Less than 2 acres	¼ sq.mi.	12	21.12
Neighborhood Parks	Serve children (ages 6 to 14)	1 sq.mi.	11	78.88
Community Playfields	Serve recreational needs of young people and adults	9-16 sq.mi.	9	287.65
Community Parks	Large parks in excess 100 acres. Serve pre-school-adult active and passive recreational pursuits	4-16 sq.mi.	4	549.05
Special Purpose Parks	Provide a special form of recreation	City Wide	7	287.11
Total Parkland & Natural Resource Areas			62	1,575.94

Natural Resource Open Space Areas

The NRPA defines Natural Resource Areas as lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. These lands consist of:

- Individual sites exhibiting natural resources.
- Land that is unsuitable for development but offers natural resource potential. (Examples include parcels with steep slopes, and natural vegetation, drainage-ways and ravines, surface water management areas (man-made pond areas, and utility easements).
- Protected lands, such as wetlands/lowlands and shorelines along waterways, lakes, and ponds.

All natural resource open space areas were inventoried and categorized as follows. The City’s quadrants were determined by the two dividing highways in Edina: TH 62 and TH 100. Table 6.8, below, presents results of the inventory.



Table 6.8: Natural Resource Open Space Areas	
Northwest Quadrant	Acreage
Nine Mile Creek Right of Way	148.15
Lincoln Drive Floodplain	17.16
Division Street Storm Water Drainage	18.14
Moore Property (Melody Lake)	4.96
Normandale Rd. (NW Benton & Hwy 100)	2.14
Garden Park Addition	6.70
Glenbrae & Ayrshire	4.30
Krahl Hill	7.75
Pine Grove Road (S and E of dead-end)	4.39
Northeast Quadrant	
Northeast Quadrant	Acreage
Littel & Lynn Avenue	.46
W. 41st Street and Lynn Avenue	3.10
Minnehaha Creek Right of Way	22.88
Townes Road	1.00
Southwest Quadrant	
Southwest Quadrant	Acreage
Nine Mile Creek Right of Way	9.75
Cahill School Backlot	11.05
NE of High School & S of Crosstown	37.29
Dewey Hill Ponds	48.00
Limerick Dr. (dead end W of RR)	3.90
Southeast Quadrant	
Southeast Quadrant	Acreage
Bristol & Mavelle	1.01
Total Natural Resource Acres	352.13

Other Maintained Grass Areas

Table 6.9: Maintained Grass Areas	
Park Type	Acres
Plazas, Triangles, and Circles	5.00
Storm Water and Drainage Areas	60.00
Total Maintained Grass Areas	65.00



Edina: A Community of Learning. Edina has a prized education system of high-quality public schools. The Parks, Open Space, and Natural Resources chapter of the Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of extending the benefits of education to the entire community through parks-related policies and programming and building on both obvious and not so obvious linkages between the City’s parks, public schools, Public Works projects, heritage resources, arts and culture, community health, etc.

For example, the parks can be used as classrooms by the public schools to expose students (and their parents) to the importance of pollinator gardens and rain gardens. Moreover, informational kiosks can be installed in the City’s parks that explain how recreational trails and paths are constructed and how stormwater is filtered in retention ponds.

Trends and Challenges

There are numbers of trends that should be considered in the park and recreation planning process. In this post-industrial age of rapid change, constant monitoring will be required to ensure awareness of trends that have a bearing on park programming, utilization, and sustainability. In the case of Edina, the City will need to continually provide sensitive and appropriate responses to changes in social, demographic, technological, economic, political and environmental trends. The magnitude of these changes will demand flexibility in planning practices to appropriately respond to rapidly changing needs.

In 2015, the EPR completed a Strategic Plan to guide decision-making, priorities, and plans over the next 10+ years. This chapter of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan is structured around five “Key Development Areas” that were identified and discussed in the 2015 Strategic Plan. With the “Key Development Area” as a foundation, content in the Comprehensive Plan has been structured as goals, policy statements, and action items applicable to policies.

Goals and Policies

The Goals and Policies section is organized around five sections: 1) Parks, Open Space, and Trails; 2) Natural Resources and Sustainable Parks; 3) Recreational Facilities; 4) Recreational Programs; and 5) Finance and Management.

Parks, Open Spaces and Trails

Goal 1: Ensure that parks, recreational facilities, and trails are a source of community pride by providing a balance of well connected, active and passive spaces that reflect high quality design principles and maintenance standards and appreciation of the arts; that allow residents to engage in healthy activities and engage in enriching experiences.

Policy I-A: The City will devote a minimum of 15 percent of Edina’s land area to parkland and open spaces.

Policy I-B: The City will work to meet NRPA guidelines indicating a need for 15-20 miles of additional trails in Edina.





Policy 1-C: It is the intent of the City to maintain and, when feasible, increase its current park and open space property. The City, on a case by case basis, will consider the sale, swap, or disposal of park property, as deemed in the best interest of the City.

Goal 2: Encourage and support active lifestyles through use of City Parks and participation in City sponsored recreational programs.

Policy 2: The City will, through the EPRD, develop promotional and educational materials about the benefits of an active lifestyle and the relationship between health and parks and recreation.

Goal 3: Develop plans based on research and analysis of current trends, input from community members, input from City departments and Commissions, state-of-the art approaches, and best practices to ensure: a) that parks, recreation, and trail needs are documented, b) plans are developed with broad participation from the community, and c) capital expenditures for future investments in parks and recreational facilities and services are justifiable.

Policy 3-A: The City will follow recommendations outlined in the 2015 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, Vision Edina 2015 and the 2017/2018 Big Idea Workshops as one of its guides for investments in parks, recreational facilities and trails.

Policy 3-B: The City will update its Parks Master Plan every ten years (or less) to guide use, growth, improvements, developments, and capital expenditures for all Community and Special Use parks, recreational facilities, and trails.

Policy 3-C: The City of Edina has utilized Small Area Plans to provide long-range vision for land use and development in specific areas of the city. The ERPD and PARC will support the successful development and execution of these plans through a proactive engagement process in planning how parks and green spaces fit in these development plans.

Natural Resources and Sustainable Parks

Goal 1: Protect, enhance, engage, and restore our urban forests, natural areas, and water resources to sustain a healthy, diverse, and balanced natural environment for all to enjoy and understand. Wildlife will be nurtured and protected. Animal and bird populations that are considered a threat to public health or safety, or may be considered hazardous to the environment or infrastructure within Edina, will be proactively managed.

Policy 1-A: The City will include a section on how to best promote, improve, or maintain our natural resources in each new Master Park Plan.

Policy 1-B: The City will exhibit leadership in the area of sustainability in our park system to support the health of our parks and open spaces.

Policy 1-C: The City will develop a wild life management program to reduce wild life migration away from their primary habitat.

Recreation Facilities

Goal 1: Provide safe, clean, and reliable facilities and program spaces that provide users the highest level of value, which supports their health and wellness, while supporting financial sustainability for the



City in the future.

Policy I-A: The City, through EPRD, will maximize the use of enterprise facilities primarily, but not exclusively, for Edina residents.

Policy I-B: The City will manage enterprise assets as fee-based revenue generating facilities that support programs and collectively cover all expenses including capital investments, land purchases, and all operating expenses.

Policy I-C: The City will exhibit leadership in matching facility space and utilization with the future needs of our community.

Recreation Programs

Goal I: Develop, provide, and manage recreation programs to support the community’s need for health and wellness, individual skill development, and community connectivity in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Policy I-A: The City will develop recreation programs that emphasize Edina as a learning community.

Policy I-B: The City will develop recreation programs that exhibit a balance of inclusion across generations, skills, economic conditions and seasons.

Policy I-C: The City will develop recreation programs will include aspects of art, culture, health, sustainability and also support unstructured recreation.

Policy I-D: The City will prioritize program development that focuses on enhancing health and activity for all ages, while providing special consideration for our youth population.

Finance and Management

Goal I: Provide and encourage use of parks, trails, facilities, and programs that deliver on the community’s expectations for a safe and enjoyable experience while keeping the infrastructure of the system in a quality state.

Policy I-A: The City, through EPRD, will provide a high level of park maintenance to achieve all aspects of our EPRD vision.

Policy I-B: The City, through EPRD, will form partnerships when appropriate to provide new services or facilities to Edina residents.

Policy I-C: The City will remain open to unique ideas and opportunities to enhance financial leverage to capitalize and operate the park system.

Policy I-D: The City, through EPRD, will demonstrate its commitment to inclusion and diversity across a broad range of the Edina community.

Policy I-E: When planning and making improvements, EPRD will consider impact to the brands of both the City of Edina and its park system.

Policy I-F: EPRD will build strong connections with established neighborhood organizations to best understand and serve specific needs in those areas (nodes).



Policy I-G: To ensure transparency, accountability and sustainability of Edina assets, ERPD staff will work with the City Manager to renew long term business plans for the park system's our Enterprise facilities every third year. The structure, content, and oversight of these plans will be at the sole direction of the City Council in coordination with the Edina City Manager.

Policy I-H: The ERPD will use benchmarking to assess progress against our Vision.

Policy I-I: ERPD will maintain a focus on its Comprehensive Plan by including a 2018 Comp Plan self-audit in its work plan every third year.

1995 Revised Inventory Guidance

In 1995, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the Academy of Park and Recreation Administration (APRA) revised the suggested classifications for parks, recreation areas and open spaces. The key changes were the inclusion of park-school sites, athletic fields, private park/recreation facilities, natural resource areas/preserves and greenway classifications. This new classification system states that there are essentially two types of park and recreation land:

- Privately owned land that contributes to the public's park and recreation system.
- Publicly owned land.

Examples of privately owned land that contribute to the public's park and recreation system would include:

- Edina Country Club
- Interlachen Country Club
- Church-owned properties
- Southdale YMCA
- The meadows in White Oaks neighborhood
- Power line easements
- Other miscellaneous privately owned vacant space

These privately-owned spaces and facilities provide the public with valued park and recreation services and benefits.