

# ***LA VISTA PARK AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN***

## **5. POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

*WHAT SHOULD WE DO?*

The information and insight gained during the inventory, analysis, and needs assessment phases were used to develop the Master Plan policies, which in-turn guide the future of La Vista's park and recreation system.

### **PLANNING PROCESS**

The Steering Committee held a series of meetings during the summer of 2002 to review and discuss background information and develop policies to guide the direction and focus of the *La Vista Park and Recreation Master Plan* policies. The key background information considered by the committee included demographic and inventory information, needs assessment, and related planning activities and policies. Many of the meetings focused on addressing specific planning policy issues, which were organized according to five basic categories:

1. Where should parks be built?
2. What do you want to do in the parks?
3. How do you want to get to the parks?
4. How should parks be maintained and patrolled?
5. How should we pay for the system?

The Steering Committee discussed each of the policy questions and determined policy recommendations for particular issues. (A copy of the policy matrix, with policy questions, discussion issues, and recommendations, can be found in *Appendix 5-A: Steering Committee Policy Matrix*.)

Through a series of reviews and refinements, the following policies are recommended.

### **MASTER PLAN POLICIES**

#### **1. Where Should Parks Be Built?**

- 1.1 Parks should be distributed geographically, so all residents have reasonable access to a park and recreation facility.
- 1.2 The City should incorporate the existing subdivision parklands into the public system.
- 1.3 The City should incorporate the existing subdivision trails into the public system.
- 1.4 The City should enter into joint use agreements with the school districts in the incorporated area, the ETJ,



*Existing Subdivision Park Area*

and the future growth area to incorporate school sites into the park and recreation system, where appropriate. Other public facilities and private facilities should be considered for inclusion with recognition of their limited access and use.

- 1.5 The City should strive for an intergovernmental agreement(s) that allows the City to incorporate the existing, proposed, and future school district park-type properties into the system. Regular communication between the City and school facility planning shall be established.
- 1.6 Natural sites and areas shall have a higher priority for acquisition over other acceptable sites where those assets do not exist. These natural sites and areas shall be protected and preserved as much as possible, possibly by locating the active portions of the park next to or close by (but not in) the natural areas.
- 1.7 Parks need to provide a sense of openness to promote a public, safe, and secure feeling. Parks need to provide distinguishable entrances that promote easy access into the park. Entrances shall be enhanced with signage and/or landscaping and/or public art that is inviting to the public. Parks should not be "hidden" from the street behind residential property with only a narrow opening to adjacent streets. Directional signage along streets shall be used to locate parks.
- 1.8 The trails plan, which will follow established design guidelines and standards, shall clearly locate trail corridors and be clearly defined in the *La Vista Park and Recreation Master Plan*. Trails shall connect with the park and recreation system, schools, residential areas, and commercial/business areas and also provide access to natural areas. The hierarchy of preference for trail types is 1. Greenways, 2. Railroad right-of-way (including active and abandoned lines), and 3. Road right-of-way (including on-street, wide sidewalk, paved shoulder). Support and technical assistance can be found through the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission State Trails Coordinator and the Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy ([www.trailsandgreenways.org](http://www.trailsandgreenways.org)).
- 1.9 Periodic assessment by the City of community needs and wants through public input/involvement will provide opportunities to respond to residents' desires.

## **2. What Do You Want To Do In The Parks?**

- 2.1 The City should have sufficient park classifications to satisfy the different recreational needs of the community. The following nine classifications should be adopted for the types of park and recreation facilities to be managed by the City: Mini-Park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Large Urban Park, School-Park, Special Use Facility, Natural Resource Area, Sports Complex, and Greenway/Trails.
- 2.2 See *Table 5-1*. Park and recreation facilities shall follow a designated list of attributes as described in *Table 5-1: Park and Recreation Facility Attributes*.
- 2.3 See *Table 5-2*. New activities and facilities shall be accommodated by the Department as they are warranted and as funds are available by the community. Recreation facilities that are a basic requirement, optional component, or not appropriate for each park and recreation facility type are listed in *Table 5-2: Park and Recreation Facilities*.

- 2.4 See *Table 5-3*. Support facilities shall be provided within the nine park classifications according to the designations described in *Table 5-3: Park and Recreation Support Facilities*.
- 2.5 See *Table 5-4*. Support services shall be provided within the nine park classification according to the designations described in *Table 5-4: Park and Recreation Support Services*.
- 2.6 Existing park facilities should be improved to meet the recommendations, if financially possible. Existing parks should be "grandfathered" in where such improvements are not feasible. New parks should meet the recommendations.
- 2.7 Park and recreation facilities should be ADA-compliant.
- 2.8 All parks shall have a similar level of opportunity, while taking into consideration the specific site and users.
- 2.9 Active and passive uses shall be suited to the park classification and structure of the particular park.
- 2.10 Uniqueness of each park shall be encouraged, while also providing a sense of community throughout the system. The identity and uniqueness of the park should be based on the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the site. The uniqueness could be exhibited through art, design, and/or facilities of the park.
- 2.11 When opportunities are available, natural areas should be provided that protect and preserve the resources. Activities should not disturb or degrade the resources, but should allow people access to the site. Natural areas should incorporate educational aspects, through the use of signs, markers, and programs. The City shall work with the schools and conservation/nature groups/organizations to determine locations and the specifics of outdoor classrooms and learning opportunities. Construction in these areas shall use low impact techniques.
- 2.12 The residents of La Vista shall be kept informed of new developments in the park and recreation system, recreation activities/programs, and new projects through available forums, including direct mail, City newsletter, recreation newsletter, information through the schools, and newspaper. Information could also be distributed by providing brochures through public outlets, notices in the library and community center, TV announcements/Triad TV, radio announcements, bulletin boards in businesses and churches, and the City's website.
- 2.13 The staff shall be encouraged to develop programs that respond to the community and current trends.
- 2.14 The City shall stay attuned to the changing demographics of the community through citizen input and involvement, and respond to these changes through the programs and facilities that are offered.



*Community Input Meeting*

INSERT TABLE 5-1

*Table 5-1: Park and Recreation Facility Attributes*

INSERT TABLE 5-2

*Table 5-2: Park and Recreation Facilities*

INSERT TABLE 5-3

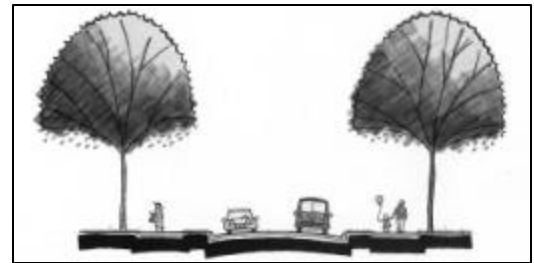
*Table 5-3: Park and Recreation Support Facilities*

INSERT TABLE 5-4

*Table 5-4: Park and Recreation Support Services*

### 3. How Do You Want To Get To The Parks?

- 3.1 Provide safe access to all parks, through the use of crosswalks, signals, and/or traffic calming devices. Where possible, connect all parks and make them accessible through the use of trails and greenways. If trails and greenbelts are not possible, tie parks together through the use of sidewalks. Provide auto access (including off-street parking) to all parks except mini-parks, natural resource areas, and greenways.
- 3.2 Pedestrian access shall be provided from the surrounding area to the park. The park entrances shall be open to ensure appropriate visibility.
- 3.3 Access barriers that restrict the park service area should be removed wherever economically feasible for the City.
- 3.4 To provide a unified and complete system, green streets should be provided. Green streets are public thoroughfares flanked by widened sidewalks, lined with rows of trees, and lacking overhead utility wires that interfere with tree growth. Green street design should adhere to the City's current right-of-way policy. Green streets can serve as links between parks, schools, and other public facilities. Green streets can be identified prior to development in new areas and retrofitted into already developed areas.
- 3.5 Wherever possible, off-street bicycle and pedestrian connections (through greenways, trails, green streets) should provide access between the parks and schools. Green streets should be designated to provide connections between parks and the greenway/trail system. Greenways, trails, and green streets may include signage, maps, rest areas, benches, nodes, and landscaping.
- 3.6 Safety on multi-use trails shall be increased through the use of signage, education/safety programs, and appropriate trail widths and site distances.
- 3.7 The La Vista trail system shall be coordinated with surrounding entities to ensure a complete surrounding trail network in the area.
- 3.8 Green streets, stream/creek corridors, greenways, and pedestrian corridors within publicly owned land or acquired with an easement, should be considered components of the overall park and recreation system.



*Green Street Sketch*

### 4. How Should Parks Be Maintained and Patrolled?

- 4.1 Parks shall be maintained at a level appropriate to the use, site, and management. The level of maintenance will vary from state of the art maintenance to minimum maintenance techniques. State of the art maintenance should be applied to high quality diverse landscapes that are usually associated with well-developed parks with high visitation levels. Minimum maintenance should be applied to low visitation natural areas or undeveloped parks. Specific guidelines for each maintenance level shall be determined for turf areas/mowing, fertilization, irrigation, litter control, pruning, disease/insect control, snow removal, lighting, surfaces, repairs, inspections, floral plantings, restrooms, and special features.



- 4.2 Personnel who have background experience and knowledge in horticulture, forestry, and landscape architecture should be utilized for initial implementation and upkeep of the design, planting, and maintenance. The "Tree Plan" included in the 2002 *La Vista Park and Recreation Master Plan* should be consulted.
- 4.3 Keeping up with the growth of the City and sustaining a high level of maintenance should be accomplished by providing the appropriate staffing, equipment, and facilities. The City shall pursue every opportunity to reduce maintenance costs. Volunteers should be encouraged to assist with general maintenance and upkeep of the parks (weeding, picking up litter, etc.).
- 4.4 As the park and recreation system grows, additional maintenance facilities shall be provided in areas that best serve the system.
- 4.5 The possibility of expanding the neighborhood watch program for the parks should be explored. The on-going need for such a program should be monitored. The need for additional security should be investigated in critical areas.
- 4.6 Safety along trails shall be achieved through appropriate use of access points, surface conditions, street crossings, width, signage, security/bike patrol, and emergency call boxes.
- 4.7 In park property, all animals must be under the control of a person competent to restrain and control the animal by leash, cord, chain, or other similar restraint. The owner or person in charge of an animal shall clean up and/or remove as soon as possible any droppings deposited by the animal on park property.



*Ardmore Park*

## **5. How Should We Pay For The System?**

- 5.1 The City should pursue all possible sources of revenue (public/private funding, general fund, general obligation bonds, corporate support, new or higher user fees, park impact fees, local improvement districts, and grants). The City shall search for additional sources that may evolve.
- 5.2 Several criteria shall be used in determining the park acquisition and development priorities. Priority shall be given to the higher population density of the service area, the lowest percentage of vacant land, and/or the area having the least available open space sites with public access. Although there will be a planned, systematic acquisition program, it should not take precedence over opportunity purchases. Opportunity purchases should take advantage of timely situations when land becomes available at an appropriate cost.
- 5.3 Before major improvements are pursued, staffing, maintenance, and upkeep requirements should be evaluated.
- 5.4 General cooperation between government agencies and departments should be encouraged to support the park and recreation system. Funding priorities between agencies should be proportional to the benefits.

5.5 Recreational opportunities (such as softball, Little League, soccer, golf driving ranges, etc.) offered by the private sector should be encouraged and facilitated by the City whenever possible. However, private and public opportunities should not compete.

5.6 The City should accept land donations when the parcel being donated meets the park needs as shown on the *La Vista Park and Recreation Master Plan*. Land not identified for inclusion in the



*La Vista Soccer Complex*

Master Plan may also be accepted when the subject parcel can be sold or exchanged. Such land should be resold with the proceeds of the sale being used for parkland acquisition, development, rehabilitation, and maintenance or exchanged for other suitable parkland or in such cases the City Council deems appropriate.

5.7 The City has the responsibility to deliver efficient park services to all residents by acquiring, developing, and maintaining facilities in order to serve the park and recreation needs of its residents. Subsequent reductions in operations and maintenance expenses shall be executed on a system-wide basis where possible and not as a result of a site- or region-specific impact.

## **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS**

Implementation programs are designed to provide equitable service across the City, recognizing geographic as well as population density needs. To do that, La Vista needs to:

- Ensure acquisition and/or development of park and recreation facilities normally not included under levels of service are responsive to the community's needs and are obtainable
- Renovate and upgrade existing mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks and acquire and develop new parks to reach equity
- Acquire and/or develop mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks to serve new homes within the extra-territorial jurisdiction and the future growth and development area
- Provide financial strategies to address capital funding requirements

Results of work activities conducted as part of the park system planning process described in the preceding sections of this report provide the basis for the recommended implementation program. The background information provides the foundation of the plan policies that in turn set the direction of the implementation program.

The La Vista Park and Recreation Advisory Board will continue to be responsible for making recommendations to the City Council regarding the City's park and recreation system. The primary role of the Board will be to:

- Guide new park development as contemplated in the *Park and Recreation Master Plan*.

- Provide recommendations to the City Council regarding provisions for mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, school-parks, greenways/trails, special use facilities, large urban parks, sports complexes, and natural resource areas that are components of the *Park and Recreation Master Plan*.
- Research and provide input to the City Council regarding alternate sources of revenue to finance park facilities.
- Provide an annual review of the park programs and the City's progress in implementing the *Park and Recreation Master Plan* to the City Council.
- Provide five-year updates of the *Park and Recreation Master Plan* to the City Council to account for progress made and to amend the plan in response to changing circumstances.

The implementation program for the *Park and Recreation Master Plan* is a two-part implementation strategy. It is built upon background information gathered during previous phases of the project.

**Part 1: Park and Recreation Facilities** evaluates existing facilities, present and future park and recreation needs, and access requirements to address the first four policy categories:

1. Where should parks be built?
2. What do you want to do in the parks?
3. How do you want to get to the parks?
4. How should parks be maintained and patrolled?

**Part 2: Financing Strategies** provides numerous methods and sources for upgrading and rehabilitating existing facilities and acquiring and developing new projects. This part addresses the last policy category:

5. How should we pay for the system?

## **PART 1: PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

Part 1 is divided into three main topics. The first is Park Development, encompassing park facility categories, park size guidelines, land acquisition, park street frontage, pedestrian accommodations, intergovernmental coordination, and maintenance. The second is Park Facility Needs and Locations, discussing the primary components of the park and recreation system and improvements to meet the existing and future demands of the park and recreation system. The third discusses the Service Area and Level of Service.

### **I. Park Development**

**Park Facility Categories.** The City should determine park distribution geographically, so all residents are within walking distance of a park and recreation facility. Nine park classifications are established for the comprehensive parks system.

- Mini-Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Special use Facilities
- Sports Complexes
- School-Parks
- Large Urban Parks
- Natural Resource Areas
- Greenways/Trails

Some parks have been reclassified from what they were identified as during the inventory phase into a different classification to better serve the needs of La Vista residents. A detailed breakdown of recommendations according to proposed classifications of all existing and proposed parks is provided in Section 6: Recommendations. *Table 5-5: Existing and Proposed Park Facilities* below shows both park facility categories/classifications and acreages for existing and proposed mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, special use facilities, sport complexes, and large urban parks. (Although greenways, trails, and green streets are proposed, they are not included in the following table.)

*Table 5-5: Existing and Proposed Park Facilities*

<b>Existing Mini-Parks</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Apollo Park	2.20
Ardmore Park	1.50
Camenzind Park	2.20
Central Park (mini-park)	1.90
Champion Park	2.50
City Park (north mini-park)	1.20
City Park (east mini-park)	0.30
Memorial Children's Park	1.00
<b>Proposed Mini-Parks</b>	
	<b>Acreage</b>
Stoneybrook South Park (existing subdivision park)	2.12
Giles Corner Park (proposed subdivision park)	1.67
<b>Mini-Park Total</b>	
	<b>16.59</b>
<b>Existing Neighborhood Parks</b>	
	<b>Acreage</b>
Jaycee Park	2.60
Mavor's Park/G. Stanley Hall Elementary School-Park	7.59
<b>Proposed Neighborhood Parks</b>	
	<b>Acreage</b>
La Vista West Elementary School-Park (existing school-site)	5.23
La Vista Jr. High School-Park (existing school-site)	20.56
Portal Elementary School-Park (new school under development)	9.45
Southwind Park (existing subdivision park)	3.25
100 <sup>th</sup> Street Park (proposed new park)	7.50
Centennial Park (proposed new park)	8.60
Harrison Hills Park (proposed new park)	2.00
East Park (existing subdivision park)	10.00
West Park/Southridge Meadows Park (existing subdivision park)	13.30
Meadows Park and Swimming Pool (existing subdivision park)	13.90
Willow Creek Park (proposed new park)	7.73
152 <sup>nd</sup> Street Park (proposed new park)	5.00
Millard Neighborhood Park (existing subdivision park)	7.50
Springhill Park (proposed new park)	7.50
<b>Neighborhood Park Total</b>	
	<b>131.71</b>

Table 5-5: Existing and Proposed Park Facilities (continued)

<b>Existing Community Park</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Central Park	19.50
<b>Proposed Community Park</b>	
Millard Community Park (existing subdivision park)	62.10
<b>Community Park Total</b>	<b>81.60</b>
<b>Existing Sports Complexes</b>	
City Park	12.80
Kelly McMahon Field	6.00
La Vista Soccer Complex	34.00
La Vista Sports Complex	28.00
<b>Proposed Sports Complexes</b>	
La Vista Sports Complex North Expansion (proposed new park)	17.20
La Vista Sports Complex South Expansion (proposed new park)	11.78
<b>Sports Complexes Total</b>	<b>109.78</b>
<b>Existing Special Use Facilities</b>	
La Vista Falls Golf Course	30.00
Municipal Pool	1.85
La Vista Community Center	8.00
Eberle/Walden Park/Access	0.06
Hollis Park	0.50
<b>Special Use Facilities Total</b>	<b>40.41</b>
<b>Proposed Large Urban Park</b>	
La Vista Commons (proposed new park)	168.38
<b>Large Urban Parks Total</b>	<b>168.38</b>
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>548.47</b>

**Park Size Guidelines.** The Master Plan policies include guidelines for park size so the nine park classifications can provide suitable recreational opportunities to La Vista residents. The Master Plan policies were based on community input, the existing park and recreation system, and National Recreation and Park Association guidelines. Specific size guidelines were developed for mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, sports complexes, school-parks, and large urban parks.

- Mini-parks – 2,500 square feet to 1 acre
- Neighborhood parks - 5 to 10 acres
- Community parks - 30 to 50 acres
- Sports complexes – greater than 25 acres
- School-parks – 5 to 20 acres (variable)
- Large urban parks – greater than 50 acres

Park sites may serve multiple park classification roles (i.e., both a neighborhood park and special use facility) by virtue of having sufficient size and the variety of improvements to fulfill both functions. Size guidelines were not developed for special use facilities, natural resource areas, and greenways/trails because of their unique character.



*Memorial Children's Park*

**Land Preservation.** Some of the recommendations in the *Park and Recreation Master Plan* will require the City to preserve additional land. While it may not be feasible for the City to acquire all the recommended parkland, the City should, at the least, examine ways to preserve these lands for public use. Preservation may take place through public and private partnerships, Sanitary Improvement Districts, Natural Resource Districts, donations, and easements, along with other means. Policies and procedures need to be adopted to ensure the City preserves only land actually needed for park and recreation purposes. The City should:

- Establish a strategy to preserve land in areas where the need exists or will exist in the future through purchase, lease purchase options, shared use agreements, gifts, easement, private ownership, or other means. The strategy should include sale of excess land to fund new acquisitions.
- Develop criteria to guide decisions on acquisition and disposal of parkland. Criteria should include acquisition of areas contiguous to existing park properties that will be beneficial to the park and the City, preservation of unique areas, suitability for specific use and community needs, the ability to provide public access, and suitability for development of parkland.
- Establish criteria for land to be dedicated so the City is not burdened with leftover parcels or areas unsuitable for development as parks. Require that zoning and pre-application meetings deal specifically with plans and needs for the area being platted, and that subdivision plans adhere to them.

**Park Street Frontage.** Ideally, all parks should have some amount of street frontage. For future park planning, a general guideline would be one full street frontage for mini-parks, one full street frontage for neighborhood parks, and two full street frontages for a community park. The goal shall be to make parks visible to residents and passer-bys, instead of hidden behind houses and other developments.

**Pedestrian Accommodations.** To make the ¼ mile service area for mini-parks and the ½ mile service area for neighborhood parks and neighborhood school-parks effective, accommodations need to be provided for pedestrians to safely travel to and from parks. Pedestrian accommodations include pedestrian activated signals and signage. Pedestrian activated signals should be provided in conjunction with the trail and/or street system. Signage notifies both pedestrians and drivers of safe access routes to the park. The necessary accommodations are determined individually for each park and trail facility. Pedestrian accommodations within the service area of each park should be provided to allow safe access to and from the park.

**Intergovernmental Coordination.** The City should seek intergovernmental agreements to incorporate existing and proposed school district “park type” properties into the *Park and Recreation Master Plan* and embrace opportunities to expand future cooperation for mutual benefit. The City should also coordinate with communities and counties in the region to plan and develop metropolitan and regional trail connections.

**Maintenance Plan.** The *La Vista Park and Recreation Master Plan* proposes numerous improvements to existing parks and the addition of many more parks, greenways, and trails. One result of providing such a diverse park and recreation system are the extensive maintenance requirements.

The *Park Maintenance Standards*, a National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) publication, has developed a maintenance system involving six maintenance modes. The varying levels of maintenance fit the different types of parkland. These maintenance modes are used to determine maintenance guidelines for the La Vista park and recreation system. Each mode is described with a general definition and a detailed description regarding fourteen maintenance elements. Each of the six modes is described below.

**Mode I:** State of art maintenance applied to a high quality diverse landscape. Usually associated with high traffic urban areas such as public squares, malls, governmental grounds, or high visitation parks.

1. Turf Care: Grass height maintained according to species and variety of grass. Mowed at least once every five working days. Aeration as required, not less than four times per year. Reseeding or sodding as needed. Weed control should be practiced so that no more than one percent of the surface has weeds present.
2. Fertilizer: Adequate fertilization applied to plant species according to their optimum requirements. Turf species should follow recommendations in *Park Maintenance Standards* (page 14). Application rates and times should ensure an even supply of nutrients for the entire year. Nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium percentages should follow local recommendations from the County Extension Service. Trees, shrubs, and flowers should be fertilized according to their individual requirements of nutrients for optimum growth. Unusually long or short growing seasons may modify the requirements slightly.
3. Irrigation: Sprinkler irrigated. Electric automatic commonly used. Some manual systems could be considered adequate under plentiful rainfall circumstances and adequate staffing. Frequency of use follows rainfall, temperature, seasonal length, and demands of plant material.
4. Litter Control: Minimum of once per day, seven days per week. Extremely high visitation may increase the frequency. Receptacles should be plentiful enough to hold all trash generated between servicing without normally overflowing.
5. Pruning: Frequency dictated primarily by species and variety of trees and shrubs. Length of growing season and design concept also a controlling factor as are clipped hedges versus natural style. Timing usually scheduled to coincide with low demand periods or to take advantage of special growing characteristics such as pruning after flowering.
6. Disease and Insect Control: Control program may use any of these philosophies: 1) Preventative - a scheduled chemical or cultural program

designed to prevent significant damage. 2) Corrective - application of chemical or mechanical controls designed to eliminate observed problems. 3) Integrated pest management - withholding any controls until such time as pests demonstrate damage to plant materials or become a demonstrated irritant in the case of flies, mosquitoes, gnats, etc. At this maintenance level the controlling objective is to not have the public notice any problems. It is anticipated at Mode I that problems will either be prevented or observed at a very early stage and corrected immediately.

7. Snow Removal: Starts the same day as accumulations of two inches are present. Follow same guidelines as other community buildings, based on seasonal variations.
8. Lighting: Maintenance should preserve the original design. Damaged systems should be repaired as quickly as they are discovered. Bulb replacement should be done during the first working day after the outage reported.
9. Surfaces: Sweeping, cleaning, and washing of surfaces needs to be done so that at no time does an accumulation of sand, dirt, and leaves distract from the looks or safety of the area. Repainting or restaining of structures should occur when weather or wear deteriorate the appearance of the covering. Wood surfaces requiring oiling should be done a minimum of four times per year. Stains to surfaces should be taken off within five working days. Graffiti should be washed off or painted over the next working day after application.
10. Repairs: Repairs to all elements of the design should be done immediately upon discovery provided replacement parts and technicians are available to accomplish the job. When disruption to the public might be major and the repair not critical, repairs may be postponed to a time period which is least disruptive.
11. Inspection: Inspections of this area should be done daily by a member of staff.
12. Floral Plantings: Normally extensive unusual floral plantings are part of the design. These may include ground level beds, planters, or hanging baskets. Often multiple plantings are scheduled, usually at least two blooming cycles per year. Some designs may call for a more frequent rotation of bloom. Maximum care of watering, fertilizing, disease control, disbudding, and weeding is necessary. Weeding flowers and shrubs is done a minimum of once per week. The desired standard is essentially weed free.
13. Rest Rooms: Not always a part of the design but where required will normally receive no less than once per day servicing. Especially high traffic areas may require multiple servicings or a person assigned as attendant.
14. Special Features: Features such as fountains, drinking fountains, sculpture, speaker systems, structural art, flagpoles, or parking and crowd control devices may be part of the integral design. Maintenance requirements can vary drastically but for this mode it should be of the highest possible order.



**Mode II:** High level maintenance – associated with well developed park areas with reasonably high visitation.

1. Turf Care: Grass cut once every five working days. Aeration as required but not less than two times per year. Reseeding or sodding when bare spots are present. Weed control practiced when weeds present visible problem or when weeds represent five percent of the turf surface. Some pre-emergent products may be utilized at this level.
2. Fertilizer: Adequate fertilizer level to ensure that all plant materials are healthy and growing vigorously. Amounts depend on species, length of growing season, soils, and rainfall. Rates should correspond to the lowest recommended rates shown in the chart on page 14 of *Park Maintenance Standards*. Distribution should ensure an even supply of nutrients for the entire year. Nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium percentages should follow local recommendations from the County Extension Service. Trees, shrubs, and flowers should receive fertilizer levels to ensure optimum growth.
3. Irrigation: Some type of irrigation system available. Frequency of use follows rainfall, temperature, seasonal length, and demands of plant material.
4. Litter Control: Minimum of once per day, five days a week. Off-site movement of trash dependant on size of containers and use by the public. High use may dictate once per day cleaning or more. Containers are serviced.
5. Pruning: Usually done at least once per season unless species planted dictate more frequent attention. Sculptured hedges or high growth species may dictate a more frequent requirement than most trees and shrubs in natural growth style plantings.
6. Disease and Insect Control: Usually done when disease or insects are inflicting noticeable damage, reducing vigor of plant materials, or could be considered a bother to the public. Some preventative measures may be utilized such as systemic chemical treatments. Cultural prevention of disease problems can reduce time spent in this category. Some minor problems may be tolerated at this level.
7. Snow Removal: None except where major access ways or active parking areas dictate the need for removal.
8. Lighting: Replacement or repair of fixtures when observed or reported as not working.
9. Surfaces: Should be cleaned, repaired, repainted, or replaced when appearance has noticeably deteriorated.
10. Repairs: Should be done whenever safety, function, or bad appearance is in question.
11. Inspection: Inspection by staff member at least once a day when regular staff is scheduled.



*"Help Keep La Vista Clean"*

12. Floral Plantings: Some sort of floral planting present. Normally no more complex than two rotations of bloom per year. Care cycle usually at least once per week except watering may be more frequent. Health and vigor dictate cycle of fertilization and disease control. Beds essentially kept weed free.
13. Rest Rooms: When present should be maintained at least once per day as long as they are open to public use. High use may dictate two servicings or more per day. Servicing period should ensure an adequate supply of paper and that rest rooms are reasonably clean and free from bad odors.
14. Special Features: Should be maintained for safety, function, and high quality appearance as per established design.

**Mode III:** Moderate level of maintenance – associated with locations with moderate to low levels of development, moderate to low levels of visitation or with agencies that because of budget restrictions can't afford a higher intensity of maintenance.

1. Turf Care: Cut once every 10 working days. Normally not aerated unless turf quality indicates a need or in anticipation of an application of fertilizer. Reseeding or resodding done only when major bare spots appear. Weed control measures normally used when fifty percent of small areas is weed infested or general turf quality low in fifteen percent or more of the surface area.
2. Fertilizer: Applied only when turf vigor seems to be low. Low level application done on a once per year basis. Rate suggested is one-half the level recommended on the chart on page 14 in *Park Maintenance Standards* for species and variety.
3. Irrigation: Dependent on climate. Rainfall locations above twenty-five inches per year usually rely on natural rainfall with the possible addition of portable irrigation during periods of drought. Dry climates below twenty-five inches normally have some form of supplement irrigation. When irrigation is automatic a demand schedule is programmed. Where manual servicing is required two to three times per week operation would be the norm.
4. Litter Control: Minimum service of two to three times per week. High use may dictate higher level during warm season.
5. Pruning: When required for health or reasonable appearance. With most tree and shrub species this would not be more frequent than once every two or three years.
6. Disease and Insect Control: Done only on epidemic or serious complaint basis. Control measures may be put into effect when the health or survival of the plant material is threatened or where public's comfort is concerned.
7. Snow Removal: None except where major access ways or active parking areas dictate the need for removal.
8. Lighting: Replacement or repair of fixtures when report filed or when noticed by employees.
9. Surfaces: Cleaned on complaint basis. Repaired or replaced as budget allows.
10. Repairs: Should be done whenever safety or function is in question.
11. Inspection: Once per week.
12. Floral Plantings: Only perennials or flowering trees or shrubs.

13. Rest Rooms: When present, serviced a minimum of five times per week. Seldom more than once each day.
14. Special Features: Minimum allowable maintenance for features present with function and safety in mind.

**Mode IV:** Moderately low level – usually associated with low level of development, low visitation, undeveloped areas, or remote parks.

1. Turf Care: Low frequency mowing schedule based on species. Low growing grasses may not be mowed. High grasses may receive periodic mowing to aid public use or reduce fire danger. Weed control limited to legal requirements of noxious weeds.
2. Fertilizer: Not fertilized.
3. Irrigation: Not irrigated.
4. Litter Control: Once per week or less. Complaint may increase level above one servicing.
5. Pruning: No regular trimming. Safety or damage from weather may dictate actual work schedule.
6. Disease and Insect Control: None except where epidemic and epidemic condition threatens resource or public.
7. Snow Removal: None except where major access ways or active parking areas dictate the need for removal.
8. Lighting: Replacement on complaint or employee discovery.
9. Surfaces: Replaced or repaired when safety is a concern and when budget is available.
10. Repairs: Should be done when safety or function is in question.
11. Inspection: Once per month.
12. Floral Plantings: None, may have wildflowers, perennials, flowering trees or shrubs in place.
13. Rest Rooms: When present, five times per week.
14. Special Features: Minimum maintenance to allow safe use.



*Turf Area at Camenzind Park*

**Mode V:** High visitation natural areas – usually associated with large urban parks. Size and user frequency may dictate resident maintenance staff. Road, pathway, or trail systems relatively well developed. Other facilities at strategic locations such as entries, trail heads, building complexes, and parking lots.

1. Turf Care: Normally not mowed but grassed parking lots, approaches to buildings, or road shoulders may be cut to reduce fire danger. Weed control on noxious weeds.
2. Fertilizer: None.
3. Irrigation: None.
4. Litter Control: Based on visitation, may be more than once per day if crowds dictate that level.
5. Pruning: Only done for safety.
6. Disease and Insect Control: Done only to ensure safety or when problem seriously discourages public use.

7. Snow Removal: None except where major access ways or active parking areas dictate the need for removal.
8. Lighting: Replaced on complaint or when noticed by employees.
9. Surfaces: Cleaned on complaint. Repaired or replaced when budget will permit.
10. Repairs: Done when safety or function impaired. Should have same year service on poor appearance.
11. Inspection: Once per day when staff is available.
12. Floral Plantings: None introduced except at special locations such as interpretive buildings, headquarters, etc. Once per week service on these designs. Flowering trees, shrubs, and wildflowers present but demand no regular maintenance.
13. Rest Rooms: Frequency geared to visitor level. Once a day is the common routine but for some locations and reasons frequency may be more often.
14. Special Features: Repaired whenever safety or function are a concern. Appearance corrected in the current budget year.

**Mode VI:** Minimum maintenance level – low visitation natural area or large urban parks that are undeveloped.

1. Turf Care: Not mowed. Weed control only if legal requirements demand it.
2. Fertilizer: Not fertilized.
3. Irrigation: No irrigation.
4. Litter Control: On demand or complaint basis.
5. Pruning: No pruning unless safety is involved.
6. Disease and Insect Control: No control except in epidemic or safety situations.
7. Snow Removal: None except where major access ways or active parking areas dictate the need for removal.
8. Lighting: Replacement on complaint basis.
9. Surfaces: Serviced when safety is a consideration.
10. Repairs: Should be done when safety or function is in question.
11. Inspection: Once per month.
12. Floral Plantings: None.
13. Rest Rooms: Service based on need.
14. Special Features: Service based on lowest acceptable frequency for feature. Safety and function interruption a concern when either seems significant.

(Source: *Park Maintenance Standards*, a cooperative project of the American Park and Recreation Society and the National Society for Park Resources - professional branches of the National Recreation and Park Association, published by NRPA, 2775 South Quincy Street, Suite 300, Arlington, Virginia, 22206-2204, 1986.)

The table on the following pages presents the recommended maintenance mode for each existing and proposed park, greenway, trail, and green street. The recommended maintenance mode should be the goal once the park is developed.

Table 5-6: Recommended Maintenance Mode

	Acreage	Maintenance Mode					
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
<b>Existing Mini-Parks</b>	<b>12.80</b>	-	3.50	9.30	-	-	-
Apollo Park	2.20			2.20			
Ardmore Park	1.50			1.50			
Camenzind Park	2.20			2.20			
Central Park (mini-park)	1.90			1.90			
Champion Park	2.50		2.50				
City Park (north mini-park)	1.20			1.20			
City Park (east mini-park)	0.30			0.30			
Memorial Children's Park	1.00		1.00				
<b>Proposed Mini-Parks</b>	<b>3.79</b>	-	-	3.79	-	-	-
Stoneybrook South Park*	2.12			2.12			
Giles Corner Park	1.67			1.67			
<b>Existing Neighborhood Parks</b>	<b>10.19</b>	-	-	10.19	-	-	-
Jaycee Park	2.60			2.60			
Mayor's Park/G. Stanley Hall Elementary School-Park	7.59			7.59			
<b>Proposed Neighborhood Parks</b>	<b>121.52</b>	-	21.40	100.12	-	-	-
La Vista West Elementary School- Park	5.23			5.23			
La Vista Jr. High School-Park	20.56			20.56			
Portal Elementary School-Park	9.45			9.45			
Southwind Park	3.25			3.25			
100 <sup>th</sup> Street Park	7.50			7.50			
Centennial Park	8.60			8.60			
Harrison Hills Park	2.00			2.00			
East Park*	10.00			10.00			
West Park/Southridge Meadows Park*	13.30			13.30			
Meadows Park and Swimming Pool*	13.90		13.90				
Willow Creek Park	7.73			7.73			
152 <sup>nd</sup> Street Park	5.00			5.00			
Millard Neighborhood Park*	7.50		7.50				
Springhill Park	7.50			7.50			
<b>Existing Community Park</b>	<b>19.50</b>	-	19.50	-	-	-	-
Central Park	19.50		19.50				
<b>Proposed Community Park</b>	<b>62.10</b>	-	62.10	-	-	-	-
Millard Community Park*	62.10		62.10				

\* Existing subdivision parks not within current corporate limits.

Table 5-6: Recommended Maintenance Mode (continued)

		Maintenance Mode					
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
<b>Existing Sports Complexes</b>	<b>80.80</b>	-	<b>74.80</b>	<b>6.00</b>	-	-	-
City Park	12.80		12.80				
Kelly McMahon Field	6.00			6.00			
La Vista Soccer Complex	34.00		34.00				
La Vista Sports Complex	28.00		28.00				
<b>Proposed Sports Complexes</b>	<b>28.98</b>	-	<b>28.98</b>	-	-	-	-
La Vista Sports Complex North Expansion	17.20		17.20				
La Vista Sports Complex South Expansion	11.78		11.78				
<b>Existing Special Use Facilities</b>	<b>40.41</b>	<b>39.85</b>	<b>0.56</b>	-	-	-	-
La Vista Falls Golf Course	30.00	30.00					
Municipal Pool	1.85	1.85					
La Vista Community Center	8.00	8.00					
Eberle/Walden Park/Access	0.06		0.06				
Hollis Park	0.50		0.50				
<b>Proposed Large Urban Park</b>	<b>168.38</b>	-	-	<b>168.38</b>	-	-	-
La Vista Commons	168.38			168.38			
<b>Total Mini, Neighborhood, Community, Sports Complex, Special Use Facility, and Large Urban Park Acreage</b>	<b>548.47</b>	<b>39.85</b>	<b>210.84</b>	<b>297.78</b>	-	-	-
<b>Proposed Greenways</b>							
Same maintenance mode for all greenways							X
<b>Proposed Trails</b>							
Same maintenance mode for all trails			X				
<b>Proposed Green Streets</b>							
Same maintenance mode for all green streets	X						

## II. Park Facility Needs and Locations

The City's park and recreation system is made up of a series of facilities that have been grouped into nine classifications, including mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, large urban parks, school-parks, special use facilities, natural resource areas, sports complexes, and greenways/trails (see *Table 5-1: Park and Recreation Facility Attributes*). The primary components of the system are the mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks that together satisfy the majority of residential park and recreation needs.

Current and future park needs are outlined in the Master Plan policies that have been adopted as part of this park planning process (see *Tables 5-1 through 5-4*). Meeting these needs will require:

- **Improvements to existing parks.** This will involve replacement or renovation of obsolete or run-down facilities in some parks. In addition, access barriers between residents and existing parks should be removed wherever possible to enable convenient access to parks from surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Additional public parks in already developed neighborhoods.** Establishing new public parks as well as school-parks at existing school sites is proposed to meet the needs of areas not currently served by the City's park and recreation system. Removal of access barriers between the proposed sites and adjoining neighborhoods wherever feasible will also help.
- **Land acquisition.** New parks will be needed to serve areas of recent and future growth and development.

The proposed plan in Section 6: Recommendations shows existing park facilities and proposed locations of new mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, special use facilities, sports complexes, school-parks, and greenways/trails. These new parks are needed, in addition to existing parks and undeveloped parks, to accommodate recent and future growth and serve existing residential areas outside current park service areas.

The proposed "ideal" locations for new parks were chosen based on the Master Plan policies. In particular, proposed new park locations are intended to satisfy policies 1.1 through 1.9 as well as the level of service and service area standards established in policy 2.2. These "ideal" park locations represent feasible park sites where they are shown. They indicate where the City should begin its search for a new park site, and if nothing is available, the search should expand from the "ideal" location until a suitable site is found. It is important to note the "ideal" location could move. Locations of mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, special use facilities, natural resource areas, and greenways/trails were chosen for the natural and cultural resources located in the area.

**Special Use Facilities, Sports Complexes, School-Parks, Large Urban Parks, Natural Resources Areas.** In addition to mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks, there are other recreation facilities that should accommodate the needs of residents. These include special use facilities, sports complexes, school-parks, large urban parks, and natural resource areas. They are complementary to the successful functioning of the City's mini, neighborhood, and community parks. The policy section of the Master Plan (*Table 5-1*) does not establish level



*La Vista Falls Golf Course*

of service standards for special use facilities, sports complexes, school-parks, large urban parks, and natural resource areas.

**Greenways/Trails.** Greenways and trails can serve transportation and recreation functions. The greenway and trail system follows the guidance as established in the Master Plan policies. The system provides connections between existing and proposed parks. The proposed system is conceptual and the City should look for additional opportunities to make connections with greenways and trails, as well as with sidewalks.

### **III. Service Area and Level of Service**

The key elements for determining the location, type, and amount of park facilities described in the implementation program are service area and level of service guidelines. Service area and level of service guidelines were based on community input, the existing park and recreation system, and the National Recreation and Park Association guidelines.

The service area and level of service standards are used to evaluate adequacy of the present park system and to plan for future park system needs. These standards also represent a firm commitment by the City to provide a specified level of basic recreation opportunities to all residents and neighborhoods in the City. Without service area and level of service guidelines, the City would be unable to plan rationally for or finance future improvements to the park and recreation system.

**Service Area.** Mini-parks have a proposed service area of a maximum ¼ mile radius, neighborhood parks have a proposed service area of a maximum ½ mile radius, and community parks have a proposed service area of a maximum 3 mile radius, but typically have a 1 to 2 mile radius. School-parks that function as a neighborhood park also have a proposed service area of a maximum ½ mile radius.

The service area for mini-parks allows residents within that service area to be within short walking distance of the park. La Vista's need for additional mini-parks is low since each residential lot can, in effect, serve as a mini-park for its occupants. Neighborhood parks are meant to serve a slightly larger area than mini-parks. The ½ mile radius for neighborhood parks is within convenient walking distance for those within the service area. To accommodate both walking and driving, neighborhood parks require restroom facilities and off-street parking. Mini-parks and neighborhood parks should be accessible to people in their neighborhoods wanting to use them. This means park users within the park service area should not be separated from the park by major streets unless pedestrian accommodations are provided and sidewalks or trails are available to and from the park.

Community parks are meant to serve more than one neighborhood and therefore have a larger service area. The proposed service area has a maximum radius of 3 miles, but typically a radius of 1 to 2 miles. Community parks should be accessible by both pedestrian and vehicular modes.

Large urban parks, special use facilities, natural resource areas, sports complexes, and greenways/trails should serve the entire community.

**Level of Service.** Level of service guidelines were determined by evaluating the existing conditions of the park and recreation system and the guidelines established by the National Recreation and Park Association.



While the existing levels of service could be determined for all park classifications, guidelines for future park planning were only developed for mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks/sports complexes. Level of service guidelines were not developed for large urban parks, special use facilities, and greenways/trails for the following reasons:

- Their unique nature and special locational requirements make it very difficult to develop rational standards.
- Setting level of service standards would commit the City to significant additional funding needs if these facilities were required.
- Their facility needs are best addressed on a case-by-case basis and funded by special funding measures.

The desired level of service is graphically portrayed in the proposed plan in Section 6: Recommendations and as discussed in the recommendations. The proposed plan and recommendations were discussed, reviewed, and revised until a suitable plan was developed. The following table shows the desired levels of service for mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks/sports complexes as the community continues to grow. (Sports complexes have been included with community parks due to their similar function as the community parks.)

*Table 5-7: Level of Service according to Proposed Plan*

<b>Park Classification</b>	<b>Total Acreage in Proposed Plan<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Proposed Plan LOS</b> <i>(Using 2015 Population Projection)</i> <b>(Acres/1000 residents)</b>
		(proposed acres/37,821)*1,000 residents
Mini-Parks	16.95	0.45
Neighborhood Parks	131.71	3.48
Community Parks and Sports Complexes <sup>2</sup>	191.38	5.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>340.04</b>	<b>8.99</b>
<sup>1</sup> Existing and proposed park acreage is described completely in Table 5-5 and in Section 6. Acreage was determined for mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks where possible. If the facility is identified <sup>2</sup> Due to the nature of the sports complexes in La Vista, they have been included with the community parks. Many of the sports complexes serve similar functions as the community parks.		

According to the Master Plan policies (Table 5-1) and the National Recreation and Park Association guidelines, the proposed plan does create a deficit of mini-park, neighborhood park, or community park/sports complex acreage. The policies and guidelines recommend mini-parks have a level of service between 0.25 and 0.5 acres per 1,000 residents. The proposed plan falls within this range. The policies and guidelines recommend neighborhood parks have a level of service between 1.0 and 2.0 acres per 1,000 residents. The proposed plan is slightly above this range and this is due to the long and narrow layout of La Vista. The policies and guidelines recommend community parks have a level of service between 5.0 and 8.0 acres per 1,000 residents. The level of service in the proposed plan for community parks and sports complexes is within this range.

The following table gives more specific information regarding the number of surplus and/or deficit acres for mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks/sports complexes.

*Table 5-8: Surplus/Deficit Acreage according to Proposed Plan*

Park Classification/  <i>Guidelines (in italics)</i>	Proposed Plan Acreage	Proposed Acres per 1,000 population	Year and Population			
			2000		2015	
			11,699		37,821	
			NRPA Need	Surplus/ (Deficit)	NRPA Need	Surplus/ (Deficit)
<b>Mini-Parks</b>	16.95 acres	1.45	2.9 a.	14.0 a.	9.5 a.	7.5 a.
<i>@ 0.25 to 0.5 acres per 1,000 population</i>			to	to	to	to
			5.8 a.	11.1 a.	18.9 a.	(2.0) a.
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	131.71 acres	11.26	11.7 a.	120.0 a.	37.8 a.	93.9 a.
<i>@ 1.0 to 2.0 acres per 1,000 population</i>			to	to	to	to
			23.4 a.	108.3 a.	75.6 a.	56.1 a.
<b>Community Parks/Sports Complexes</b>	191.38 acres	16.36	58.5 a.	132.9 a.	189.1 a.	2.3 a.
<i>@ 5.0 to 8.0 acres per 1,000 population</i>			to	to	to	to
			93.6 a.	97.8 a.	302.6 a.	(111.2) a.

The proposed plan meets the recommendations established in the Master Plan policies and by the National Recreation and Park Association. It is the goal of the City of La Vista to remain within these guidelines.

## **PART 2: FINANCING STRATEGIES**

Upgrading and renovating existing facilities and acquiring and developing new projects has a cost. Numerous methods and sources are available to ease the burden on the City's budget and spread costs over time and a wider base. Just as each project is different in terms of type and scale of opportunity provided, so are the methods and sources of available and appropriate financing. The following is a list of methods and sources that can be used as a starting point, but must be updated at the time a particular project needs funding.

### **Methods**

**City Funding.** General city operating funds and general obligation bond revenues can be used to fund acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of park and recreation facilities. This method's advantage is its simple and straightforward approach, and is appropriate for operations and maintenances of existing programs and facilities. Its disadvantages include the uncertainty of the outcome of bond elections and tying up the city's bonding capacity for parkland acquisition when other means of financing are available. It is possible to issue bonds for park development without an election, except for acquisition.

**Park Land Dedication, Fees in lieu, and Park Fees.** Many communities require developers of new subdivisions to donate a certain amount of land per lot, a percentage of the new development, or a designated amount of money per lot in new developments for parks or open space. The requirement is usually part of the subdivision ordinance.

Less common is the practice of requiring a fee per new housing unit paid into a parkland trust fund at the time of building permit or occupancy permit application.

Another type uses a cost recovery system requiring new development to buy into the equity of existing or a scheduled new community facility that all households have the potential to use. The City calculates the value of the new community facility and estimates how many new housing units will be built during the planning period. The City then pays the portion for current residents and passes the costs for the balance to new residences.

Although much of La Vista is developed or currently being platted, park land dedication, fees in lieu, and park fees could be adopted to help offset the costs of new parkland.

**Third Party Partners.** Non-profit organizations such as The Nature Conservancy or "Friends of the Parks" groups often are involved as third-party acquisition partners to facilitate the process of acquiring new parkland. This is one of the primary functions of these organizations. They have funds dedicated to this purpose and can usually acquire land more quickly than public agencies.

**Sales Tax Levies.** Cities and counties can levy a local option sales tax upon majority approval at a general election and requires specifying how the projected revenues will be used. One possibility would be to use all or a portion of the revenues to fund parkland acquisition and development costs.

**Tax Increment Financing (TIF).** Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a method of capturing, for a time, all or a portion of the increased tax revenues in a designated district. Use of increased revenues may include purchase of real estate for private or public development, or to provide necessary physical improvements where it is in the best interests of the City to do so.

The rationale behind TIF is that public investment generates private investment. The investment increases the taxable value of the district, and over time strengthens the tax base. The increased tax base is the long-term pay back for the public investment.

TIF begins with a finding that redevelopment is necessary in the public interest, determination of a district boundary, and the preparation of a publicly approved plan by the municipality or its redevelopment agency. At that point the existing tax base is noted as the "base year," which serves as a point of reference for determining future tax increments. When the value of the property inside the special district increases due to new construction or revaluation, the difference between the frozen base and the new property values is called the increment. New tax dollars from the increment are paid into a special fund to retire the debt that may have been issued by the City to help finance the project. After the debt is repaid, local governments collect and utilize all tax revenue from the district.

**Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement Districts (SSMID).** SSMIDs are districts the city designates to generate property taxes to be spent on improvements to the districts. SSMIDs may be created in any area of a city zoned for commercial or industrial use, or in designated historic districts. No taxes may be levied against residential property, except in designated historic districts.

To establish a SSMID, a petition must be submitted by 25% of the landowners in the potential district, who must also represent ownership of property with an assessed value of at

least 25% of the total assessed value of property in the district. The city planning commission must first approve a potential SSMID before submitting it to city council for a public hearing and adoption as an ordinance.

The ordinance establishes an annual property tax levy for property in the SSMID, not to exceed the limit set by the petition. Taxes collected may be used for operations, capital improvements, and debt service.

**User Fees.** User fees for recreational programs and facilities are generally thought to be reasonable. Where private facilities provide similar services in addition to (and in competition with) public facilities (e.g., golf courses and aquatic centers) fees should be comparable for levels of service. Deciding the level of fees is a question for public discussion and debate.



*Municipal Pool*

Fee discounts for off-hour use and for specific populations such as youth and senior citizens are appropriate. Fee increases for shelter rental and similar activities should be studied. Another possibility might be to increase fees for non-residents. Also, voluntary user donations may be an effective means of obtaining additional revenue for a trail system.

## **Sources**

**US Department of the Interior: Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).** Designed to renew natural resources by reinvesting revenues from their depletion, the LWCF has historically been funded primarily from offshore oil and gas receipts. The LWCF's state component helps combat suburban and urban sprawl, providing matching grants to state for acquisition and development of land for conservation, open space, and recreation. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to ball fields, soccer fields, picnicking facilities, playgrounds, park acquisition and development, shelter houses, trails, and related support facilities. The program provides reimbursable matching grants for 50% of project costs. Contact Neal Bedlan, Land and Water Conservation Fund Program, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, P. O. Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503, 402/471-5424, nbedlan@ngpc.state.ne.us.

**US Department of the Interior: Rails to Trails Program.** Through this program communities can change abandoned rail corridors into public recreation trails. The Nebraska Department of Roads administers the program. Grant applications are made to the Department of the Interior and are coordinated through the NDOR.

**US Department of Transportation/Nebraska Department of Roads: Transportation Enhancement Program.** The program funds enhancements or preservation activities in three categories of transportation-related projects: trails and bikeways, historic preservation and/or restoration and archaeological planning, and scenic and natural resources. Public agencies, private non-profit organizations, and/or individuals are eligible to sponsor projects.

Projects must fit one or more of ten specific categories:

- Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles
- Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites
- Scenic or historic highway programs
- Landscaping and other scenic beautification
- Historic preservation
- Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including railroads and canals)
- Preservation of abandoned railway corridors, including their conversion and use for pedestrian or bicycle trails
- Control and removal of outdoor advertising
- Archaeological planning and research
- Mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff

To be eligible for funding, the project must fit within the eligibility activities; the applicant must provide at least a 20% non-federal cash match of total project costs; and the government entity must commit to provide future maintenance of the project. Contact R. James Pearson, Transportation Enhancement Administrator, Nebraska Department of Roads, P. O. Box 94759, Lincoln, NE 68509-4759, 402/479-4881.

**National Recreational Trails Program.** RTP is a grant program through the Federal Highway Administration that reimburses communities for 80% of project costs for trail acquisition, development, and support facilities. Applications for the grants need to be submitted to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Information is available by contacting Michelle Stryker, Nebraska Game and Parks at 402/471-5425 or [mstryker@ngpc.state.ne.us](mailto:mstryker@ngpc.state.ne.us).

**Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund.** The Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund is funded through the Nebraska Lottery. The Trust Fund will assist in the preservation and restoration of wetlands and other areas critical to rare or endangered species; protection of lakes and streams from deterioration due to pollution; fostering of good management practices and actions to preserve ground water from degradation, and clean-up of soils and ground water; and strategies to manage carbon in the atmosphere, and sequester carbon in the soil. For more information, contact Mary Harding, Executive Director, Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund, 2200 N. 33rd St., P.O. Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503-0370, 402/471-5409.

**Green Space Stewardship Initiative.** Funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust has enabled the creation of the Nebraska Green Space Stewardship Initiative (GSI). The initiative offers communities information, technical assistance, and funding to renew, renovate, or develop community green spaces based on environmentally-sound design and management practices. Eligible projects include parks, schoolyards, fairgrounds, campuses of post-secondary schools, and the grounds of libraries, courthouses, and other public buildings. Projects must demonstrate sustainable landscape practices. Projects must benefit and be accessible to the general public. Grant funds can be used for plant material, installation, site preparation, design, and appropriate hardscaping. Contact Justin Evertson at 402/472-5045 for more information.

**Community Enhancement Program.** The Nebraska Community Enhancement Program (CEP) is a cooperative effort of the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR), the UNL-NFS, and NSA. This program makes available federal transportation funds to assist communities and other public entities in Nebraska with the implementation of landscaping projects that improve the state's transportation corridors. Typical projects include trail and street tree plantings, highway corridor improvements, and landscape enhancements to community entryways. Funding is subject to congressional funding and NDOR. Projects must enhance transportation corridors such as public streets, highways, and major trails. Projects must be located on public land (federal, state, or local government owned). Funds can only be used for plant material, installation, project design, initial maintenance, appropriate hardscaping, and other associated costs of necessary materials. The 20% matching funds must be in cash or have cash value. Contact either Kate Schumacher at 402/472-2212 or Dave Mooter at 402/444-7804 for more information.

**Tree Recovery Program.** The primary purpose of the Nebraska Tree Recovery Program (TRP) is to provide technical and financial assistance to state and local units of government for the removal and replacement of weather- and disease-damaged trees and assist with general tree planting activities on public property. Funding availability is subject to state legislature approval. Grant money can only be used to remove and/or plant trees on publicly owned land. Grant funds are awarded on a 50/50 matching basis. Local labor and materials may be considered as in-kind participation in calculating the amount of the applicant's matching funds. Availability of grant funds is contingent upon refunding of the program by the Nebraska Legislature. If TRP is funded, applications will be available in early summer and funds will be allocated in the fall. Contact either Dave Mooter at 402/444-7804 or Kate Schumacher at 402/472-2212 for more information.

**Trail Development Assistance Fund.** TDA provides assistance to communities to purchase, develop, or maintain recreational trails. These funds are disbursed as a lump-sum grant for no more than 50% of estimated project costs. Applications for the grants need to be submitted to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Information is available by contacting Michelle Stryker, Nebraska Game and Parks at 402/471-5425 or [mstryker@ngpc.state.ne.us](mailto:mstryker@ngpc.state.ne.us).

**Friends of the Park(s).** Establishment of a local Friends of the Parks or Parks Foundation non-profit organization will facilitate advance land acquisition for parks. Such organizations enable flexibility for new parkland acquisition and management.