7. Parks and Recreation



Parks and Recreation are an essential public service. Just as water, sewer and public safety, parks are vitally important to establishing and maintaining a quality of life in a community. The importance of parks, trails, and open space is continually reinforced by studies, analyses, and surveys both nationally and within Minnesota and the metro. Parks provide economic value, provide health and environmental benefits and are the tangible reflection of the quality of life in a community.

The City of Apple Valley promotes diverse recreational opportunities, services, facilities and trails through the parks and recreation department. This system, along with numerous programs and collaborations with local youth sports associations, civic groups, the school districts and local non-profits greatly contribute to the quality of life for residents in the City of Apple Valley. Adapting to changing populations and parks system needs is crucial to the success of such a park system.

Parks and Recreation

The City of Apple Valley is updating its Parks Master Plan to provide a clear vision that guides decision making into the future. This plan will include recommendations regarding the development and redevelopment of existing parks, trails, and recreational opportunities.

The following guiding principles were developed in previous versions of the Comprehensive Plan and continue to be used by Apple Valley to guide development of the park system:

- Creating parks that provide people with **places to gather and play**.
- **Distributing** parks throughout the City
- **Connecting** parks and neighborhoods with sidewalks and trails
- Matching facilities with the full spectrum of ages, abilities and economic status. Creating a system that **serves all residents**.
- Providing a wide range of **indoor and outdoor** recreation facilities
- Collaborating with other parties to coordinate the delivery of services to make effective use of **financial resources.**
- Using parks as a tool to control flooding, help preserve the quality of the surface water, replenish the ground water supply, reduce air pollution and preserve **natural resources**.

Additionally, two new guiding principles were developed that reflect desires set forth by stakeholders, staff and residents:



Quarry Point Park was opened in 2010.

- Effectively providing **information** to residents and visitors that will elevate awareness of the park and recreation system and services.
- Developing a park and recreation system that is **innovative.**

Guiding principles will create a strong foundation for meeting future needs. Recommendations and strategies for achieving these principles are defined in the Frameworks Plan.

Plan and Process

The *Apple Valley Parks and Recreation Master Plan* is lead by the Park and Recreation Department, with input from the Park and Recreation Committee, the Apple Valley Planning Commission, and residents and stakeholders from the community.

The Apple Valley Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes an in-depth analysis of the park system, including: Current Park System, Changes and Trends Analysis, Community Vision, Level of Service Analysis, Program Assessment, Benchmark Analysis, and a Frameworks Plan.

The following was adapted as an Executive Summary of the *Apple Valley Parks and Recreation Master Plan*. The full plan should be reviewed to understand the breadth of work and full analysis that was completed.

Executive Summary

The City of Apple Valley has an extensive park

system with over 900 acres of parkland, 75 miles of trails and a variety of recreational facilities. The Park system provides numerous amenities for the residents of Apple Valley including:

- 13 Picnic Shelters
- 40 Ball Diamonds
- 24 Multi-Purpose Fields
- 25.5 Basketball Courts (incl. half courts)
- 30 Tennis Courts
- 10 Pickleball Courts
- 53 Playgrounds
- 21 Sand Volleyball Courts
- Johnny Cake Skate Park
- Kelley Splash Pad
- Redwood Pool
- Apple Valley Family Aquatic Center
- Sports Arena
- Hayes Park Arena
- Senior Center
- Teen Center
- Community Center
- Valleywood Golf Course

Table 1.2 - 1.3 shows the current parks and facilities in the Apple Valley Parks System.

Level of Service Recommendations

As part of the master planning process, a Level of Service Analysis was completed to provide recommendations based on current facility inventory, other providers (i.e. ISD 196, Dakota County), park and facility standards, community/stakeholder input, regional context/experience and projected population changes shown in **Table 1.1**.

The following identifies the current system and projected needs based off of the Level of Service Recommendations:

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are parks that serve approximately a half-mile radius, and are intended to be parks that the surrounding population can easily walk to. Examples are Cedar Isle or Keller Parks. They provide basic recreation, such as a playground and possibly a small practice field, picnic shelter, or similar. They may sometimes be large enough to accommodate several fields and a signature amenity, such as a small skate park or splash pad area.

A majority of Apple Valley's existing parks are in this classification with approximately 346 acres of parkland. However, given the rapid and consistent growth of Apple Valley, an additional 17 acres of neighborhood parks will be needed by 2020. This need will grow as the population grows, reaching approximately 42 additional acres by 2030.

Table 1.1 - Estimated Population

2017 Estimated Population	51,000
2020 Estimated Population	55,500
2030 Estimated Population	59,200

Community Parks

Community parks serve a large population, in the case of Apple Valley, a quarter to all of the City. These parks are often areas of intensive recreation use. They often provide several different areas of recreation, such as several ball fields, several picnic shelters, one or two playground areas, and open space areas.

Apple Valley has developed some strong community parks, and no additional development of this type of park is needed – both currently and through 2030.

Special Use Parks

Special use parks provide a specialized or single use recreational amenity, such as golf, nature centers, and aquatic centers. Examples for Apple Valley include Valleywood Golf Course and Apple Valley Family Aquatic Center.

While no additional special use parks are needed currently, an additional 20 acres will be needed in 2020 and 57 acres will be needed by 2030.

Total Developed Park Acreage Needed

There is additional park acreage needed for both Neighborhood Parks and Special Use Parks. Park acreages are calculated based on the assumption that standards are met each year. In addition, some park types can function as others, so the total is not a simple sum of all park acreage needs. Total park acreage needed by year is shown **Figure 1.3**.

Figure 1.1 - Apple Valley Parks



Apple Valley Parks

1. Alimagnet Lake Park
2. Apple Grove Park
3. Apple Ponds Park
4. Apple Valley East Park
5. Belmont Park
6. Bridge Oaks Park
7. Carrington Park
8. Carrollwood Park
9. Cedar Isle Park
10. Delaney Park
11. Diamond Path Park
12. Duchess Park
13. Faith Park
14. Farquar Park
15. Findlay park
16. Fred J Largen Park
17. Galaxie Park
18. Green Leaf Park
19. Greening Park
20. Hagemeister Park
21. Hayes Arena
22. Heritage Park
23. Huntington Park
24. Johnny Cake Ridge Park East
25. Johnny Cake Ridge Park West
26. Kelley Park
27. Lac Lavon Park
28. Lebanon Cemetery
29. Long Lake Park
30. Longridge Park
31. Moeller Park
32. Newell Park
33. Nordic Park
34. Palomino Park
35. Pennock Park
36. Quarry Point Park
37. Redwood Park
38. Regatta Park
39. Scott Park
40. Summerfield Park
41. Tintah Park
42. Valley Middle Park
43. Valleywood Golf Course
44. Wallace Park
45. Wildwood Park

Figure 1.2 - Apple Valley Trails & Sidewalks

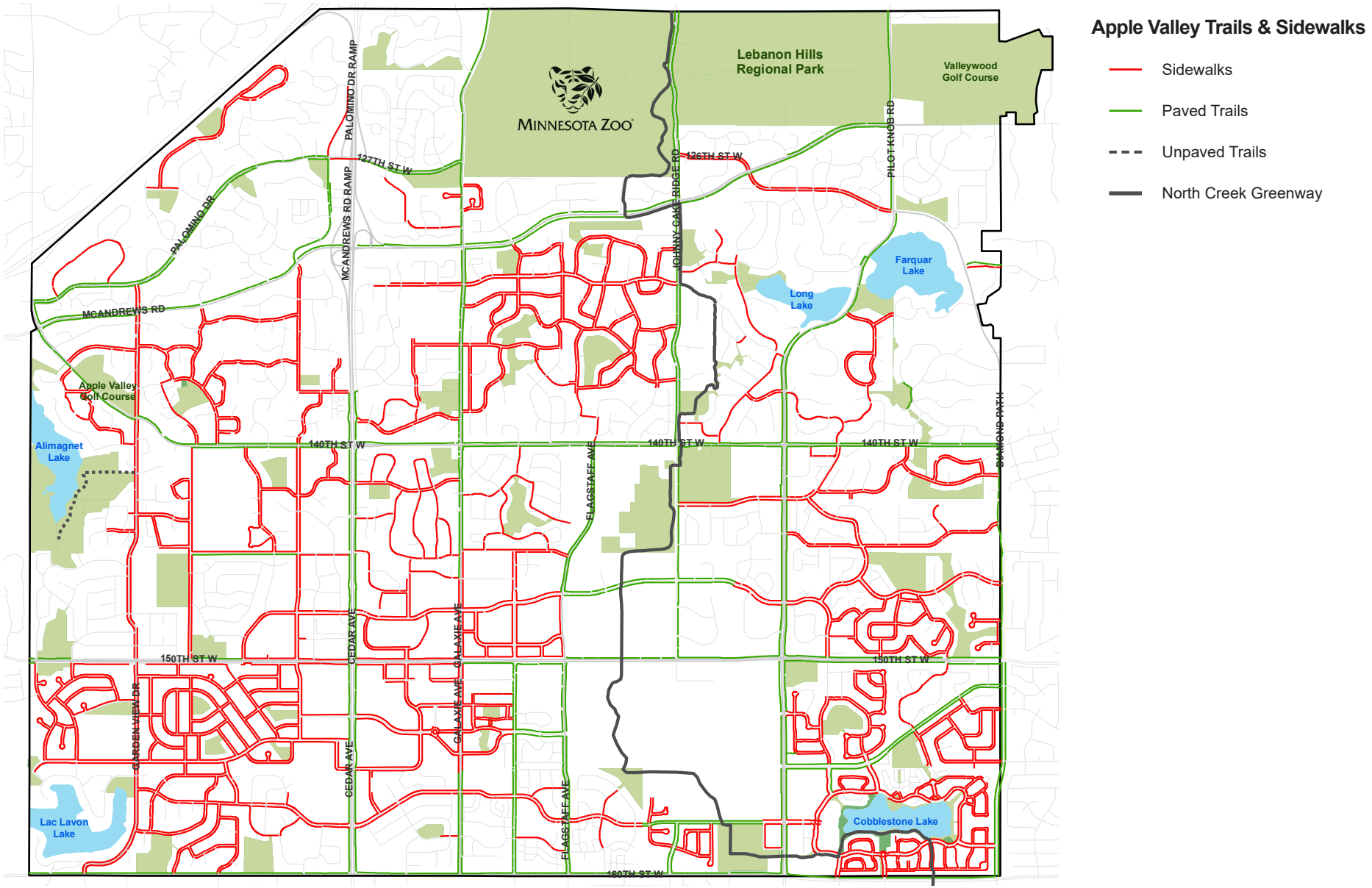


Table 1.2 - Current Inventory (1/2)

	Size (acres)	Paved Trails (miles)	Unpaved Trails (miles)	Picnic Shelters	Ball Diamonds	Mutli-Purpose Field	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Pickleball Courts	Playgrounds	Sand Volleyball	Skate Parks	Splash Pad	Outdoor Pools	Fishing Dock/Pier	Canoe Launch	Horseshoe Pitch	Hockey Rinks	Skating Rinks	Park Building	Other
Community Parks	**370.40**																				
Alimagnet Park	85.00	0.12		1						2	1					1	1			2	Disc golf, nature environment
Cobblestone Lake Park	25.80	3.19		1			0.5			2					1	1					Adult fitness equipment
Farquar Lake Park	11.00	0.38		3		1		2		1	1				1	1	1		1	1	
Kelley Park	5.60	0.11		2						1			1			1				1	Covered Stage
Redwood Park	12.00	0.76		2	2		2	2		3	2						2			1	Community Center, outdoor pool, off-street parking, flower gardens
Johnny Cake Ridge Park (East)	42.00	0.30		1	6	3				1	2						2			1	Additonal acres at neighboring Scott Highland Elementary School
Johnny Cake Ridge Park (West)	125.00	1.10		1	9	10	2	8		1		1						2	1	1	Football, Softball & Baseball, Off-Street Parking, Teen Center, Family Aquatic Center
Quarry Point Athletic Complex	32.00	0.47		1	4	4				1										1	
Valley Middle Park	7.00	0.12			5	2		4										1	1	1	40 Additional acres owned by school district; off-street parking and track
Community Ctr/Hayes	25.00	0.28			6	4	4	2	6	1	6							2	1	1	
Neighborhood Parks	**330.90**																				
Apple Grove Park	11.60	0.24								1											
Apple Ponds Park	11.00	0.02			1	1	0.5			1	1										
Apple Valley East Park	11.60	0.31			1		0.5			1	1							1	1	1	Sledding Hill
Belmont Park	3.40	0.15			1	1		1		1											
Briar Oaks Park	16.40	0.34			1					1	1								1		
Carrollwood Park	5.10	0.18								1											
Cedar Isles Park	8.50	0.32					0.5			1	1										
Cedar Knolls Park	10.30	0.09						2		1											
Chaparral Park	9.70	0.14								1											Natural area
Cortland	11.90						1			1							1				
Delaney Pak	7.90	0.44			1	3	0.5	2		1								1	1	1	
Diamond Path Park	20.30	1.92									1										
Duchess Park	3.00				1		0.5			1											
Robert L. Erickson	4.00																				
Faith Park	11.00	0.48			1		0.5			2											
Findlay Park	3.60	0.15								1											
Galaxie Park	12.60	0.13			1		0.5			1								1	1	1	
Greening Park	3.40	0.03			1		1			1											
Greenleaf Park	15.00	0.95			1		1	2		2											2 Half Courts
Hagemeister Park	8.70	0.24			1		1	2	2	1								1	1	1	2 Half Courts
Heritage Park	3.60							1		1	1								1		
Huntington Park	10.30	0.31			1	1				1	1							1	1	1	
Keller Park	3.00	0.03								1						1					
Lac Lavon Park	5.50	0.27		1						1					1	1					
Largen Park	7.00	0.14				1	0.5			1											
Long Lake Park	5.40	0.62								1						1					
Longridge Park	15.00	0.09			1	2				1											
Moeller Park	12.60	1.32			1	1	0.5			1											
Newell	1.50									1											
Nordic Park	7.20	0.16								1											
Palomino Park	4.60	0.34					1			2											

Table 1.3 - Current Inventory (2/2)

	Size (acres)	Paved Trails (miles)	Unpaved Trails (miles)	Picnic Shelters	Ball Diamonds	Mutli-Purpose Field	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Pickleball Courts	Playgrounds	Sand Volleyball	Skate Parks	Splash Pad	Outdoor Pools	Fishing Dock/Pier	Canoe Launch	Horseshoe Pitch	Hockey Rinks	Skating Rinks	Park Building	Other
Pennock Park	3.20	0.18					1		2	1											
Regatta Park	9.70				1	1	0.5			1											
Scott Park	8.00							2		1											Archery
Summerfield Park	7.10	0.31								1	1										
Sunset Park	5.10	0.21								1											
Tintah Park	21.40	0.79			1	4	0.5			1									1		
Wallace Park	3.50	0.09					0.5			1											
Wildwood Park	8.20	0.25			2			2		1	1										
Special Use Parks & Facilities	**190.00**																				
Community Center (49,354 sf)							4														Indoor gym space, arts and crafts, preschool room, exercise room, game room
Senior Center (20,003 sf)																					
Family Aquatic Center										1				1							lazy river, slides, zero depth entry
Teen Center (4,160 sf)																					At Johnny Cake Ridge Park (West)
Hayes Field & Arena (30,377 sf)																					Indoor ice arena and sports field
Indoor Sports Arena (32,000 sf)																					Indoor ice arena
Redwood Center & Pool (5,176 sf)														1							Outdoor pool and wading pool
Valleywood Municipal Golf Course (16,000 sf)	190.00										2									1	18 hole course
City Trails		56.68	4.10																		
Sub Total - City	**891.30**	**74.75**	**4.10**	**13**	**50**	**39**	**25**	**32**	**10**	**54**	**23**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**7**	**7**	**10**	**12**	**16**	
Other Providers																					
Apple Valley High School (ISD 196)	75.60				4	2		2													Track
Cedar Park Elementary School (ISD 196)	15.40									1											
Dakota Ridge School (ISD 196)	7.70																				
Diamond Path School (ISD 196)	3.40				2					1											
Falcon Ridge Middle School (ISD 196)	28.80				3																Track and off-street parking
Greenleaf Elementary School (ISD 196)	30.00				1					1											
Scott Highlands Middle School (ISD 196)	35.60				3	2		6													Track and off-street parking
Valley Middle School (ISD 196)	31.20				7																Track and off-street parking
Westview Elementary School (ISD 196)					2	2															
Sub Total - ISD 196	**227.70**				**###**	**6.00**		**8.00**		**3.00**											
Lebanon Hills Regional Park (Dakota County)	**320.00**	**31.50**	**3.32**																		Trails, mountain biking, camping, swimming beach, visitor's center, natural areas
North Creek Greenway		**5.00**																			
Total	**1439.00**	**111.25**	**7.42**	**13**	**72**	**45**	**25**	**40**	**10**	**57**	**23**	**1**	**1**	**2**							

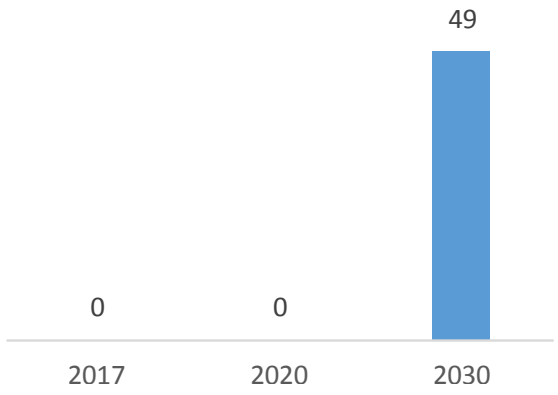
Information shown for Other Providers is based off of information available to the City at the time of this report, and is not regarded as final.

Trails and Connections

Trails and sidewalks are vital in parts of the community. They serve as a means of transportation, and are an important recreational component. These facilities:

- Allow people to move safely throughout Apple Valley without a car.
- Connect neighborhoods with parks, schools and other community facilities.
- Promote healthy and active lifestyles.
- Encourage sustainability by facilitating non-vehicular travel.
- Serve a wide range of individual and household needs.
- Contribute to the social fabric and character of Apple Valley.
- Provide youth with the means for independent travel and exploration.

Figure 1.3 - Additional Acreage Needed



Sidewalks

Sidewalks are intended to support pedestrians in residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. Sidewalks allow people to move by foot (walk, jog) within neighborhoods and to other parts of the community – parks, schools, public facilities and shopping. Sidewalks provide a place for children to safely travel by bicycle or scooter. The design of sidewalks (narrower width, individual concrete sections) make them poorly suited to adult bicycle use.

As the population ages, sidewalks may receive greater use by motorized and non-motorized wheelchairs and similar devices. Sidewalks also serve social and recreational functions. They promote social interaction in neighborhoods and provide a safe place for young children to play near their home.

Paved Trails

Paved trails can include both asphalt (bituminous) surface, or wide, concrete sidewalks. These trails are often ADA accessible and usually can accommodate a range of activities, from pedestrians and joggers to bicyclists and roller bladers. These trails may be plowed or groomed in winter, depending on the designated use. There are two types of paved trails in Apple Valley.

Park trails are bituminous trails in parks and open spaces. These trails connect the parks adjacent streets and neighborhoods. Park trails also allow for movement through parks and open spaces.

Street trails are 8-foot bituminous trails built along collector streets and county roads. It will continue to be the City's policy to construct bituminous trails on both sides of all county roads and community collector streets, where the terrain and topography permit. Both park and street trails are multi-use and intended to accommodate both pedestrians and bicycles.

The extensive trail system in Apple Valley and the surrounding region is one of the best in the nation.

Apple Valley and its surrounding communities have a strong, connected trail system. The region is a leader in trails nationwide, and no additional paved trail mileage is needed to meet the standard, which is already higher than most of the United States, through 2030.

Unpaved Trails

Unpaved, or natural surface trails are usually dedicated to pedestrian, mountain biking, or horse trail use during the summer months. In winter, these trails can be designated for winter hiking, snowshoeing, or cross-country skiing, depending on their characteristics and grooming schedule.

Within the city limits of Apple Valley, there is currently a deficit of 5 miles of unpaved trail, which will increase to 7 miles by 2030.

Outdoor Facilities

Outdoor Facilities include ball fields, courts, play equipment, and other park infrastructure that is geared toward a particular sport or activity. **Table 1.4** shows the need for each amenity by year.

Apple Valley has adequate outdoor facilities and amenities in most areas. The one focal point for additions should be in picnic shelters and pavilions. This trends along with the need for additional Neighborhood Parks, which often incorporate this type of amenity. Pickleball is another area where Apple Valley currently excels, but with the aging population, increasing popularity of the sport, and influx of non-residents using Apple Valley's facilities, this is an area for additional capacity in the coming years.

While all standards are adequate in terms of quantity, care should be given to the maintenance of current amenities to ensure the quality of these amenities remain. In addition, while Apple Valley currently exceeds the standard for outdoor pools, it is recommended that a study of the operational cost of the Redwood Pool be completed to determine its cost versus benefit to the community

Table 1.4 - Outdoor Facility Needs

OUTDOOR FACILITY	2017	2020	2030
Picnic Shelter/Pavilion	6	8	10
Ball Fields	--	--	--
Multi-Purpose Fields	--	--	--
Basketball Courts	--	--	--
Tennis Courts	--	--	--
Pickleball Courts	--	1	2
Playgrounds	--	--	--
Sand Volleyball	--	--	--
Skate Parks	--	--	--
Splash Pads	1	2	2
Outdoor Pool	--	--	--

Indoor Facilities

Indoor facility space includes the Community Center, Teen Center, Redwood, and Senior Center, along with small areas of indoor space within the larger community parks. Currently, Apple Valley has over 135,000 square feet of indoor space, and this exceeds the standard by about a third. No additional indoor space is recommended. However, improvements and updates to current spaces, including the Community Center, are needed. Consideration for winter amenities, such as an indoor playground, and the development of a multi-generational, family-based community center, rather than dedicated centers to certain age groups, is also recommended. A feasibility study and business plan for the renovation of the current Hayes Complex should be conducted to determine the best future use of those facilities.

Program Analysis

As part of the master planning process, a Recreation Program Assessment was completed. The assessment offers an in-depth perspective of program and service offerings and helps identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities regard-

ing programming. The assessment also assists in identifying core programs, program gaps within the community, key system-wide issues, areas of improvement, and future programs and services for residents.

The analysis can be reviewed in full in the *Apple Valley Parks and Recreation Master Plan*.

Benchmark Analysis

The City of Apple Valley identified operating metrics to benchmark against comparable park and recreation systems. The goal of the analysis is to evaluate how Apple Valley is positioned among peer agencies as it applies to efficiency and effectiveness practices. The benchmark assessment is organized into specific categories and questions to obtain data that offers an encompassing view of each system's operating metrics in comparison to the City of Apple Valley.

The City parks system compares favorably against benchmark communities and best practices.

The benchmark agencies include: Burnsville, Eagan, Lakeville, Plymouth and West Des Moines. Information gathered includes: overview (population, density, etc), park acreage, trail mileage, staffing levels, operating budgets, non-tax revenues, operational cost recovery, capital budget, program participation, indoor space. The following are key findings pertaining to the City of Apple Valley that were highlighted in the benchmark analysis:

- Apple Valley has the lowest total park acres owned or managed among peer agencies, but has the second highest percentage of developed acreage.
- In terms of staffing, Apple Valley has significantly larger workforce than all other benchmark communities when compared to the population served, with 20 FTEs per 10,000 residents. This can be partially attributed to the Department running a much higher volume operation than its peers and offering unique facilities, such as the aquatic center, that are more labor-intensive.
- At approximately $148 of operational expense per resident, the City expends more than all other agencies participating in the benchmark median and nearly double the national median.
- Assessing revenue generation, Apple Valley is also leading the benchmark by generating $66 of non-tax revenue per resident, which is also well above the NRPA median.
- Due to its strong level of revenue generation, Apple Valley ranks first among benchmark agencies with a cost recovery level of 45%. This is well above best practice nationwide and speaks highly of the overall sustainability of the Department.
- Apple Valley is reporting a 3-year capital investment average that ranks last among peer agencies. Although it is investing at a much lower level, the annual capital budget is experiencing an increasing trend more recently.
- On average, residents in Apple Valley are participating at a higher rate than all other benchmark communities, as each resident participates nearly six times per year in programs offered through the Department.
- The City is providing the third highest amount of square feet of indoor community / recreation center space per resident (1.47). This level of service is in line with best practice levels nationwide, which is around 1.5 sq. ft. per resident, nationally.

Community Vision

A critical element of the Parks & Recreation System Master Plan Update is gathering input from the community on issues and ideas that will help develop Apple Valley Parks to respond to local needs and desires. A community engagement process was undertaken that focused on local intercepts at Freedom Days, stakeholder meetings, and an online public survey which was made available through the City's website, email subscriber lists, social media pages, and distributed to Eastview and Apple Valley High Schools. This plan is the result of over five months of community participation.

The following ideas seem to carry high public value pertaining to the City of Apple Valley and reflected in the Community Vision:

- **Youth Athletics** - the park system is widely used for athletics according to 82.4% of survey respondents that selected "athletics" as the top reason for park use. Additionally, stakeholders and survey respondents supported higher-quality and better maintained sports facilities including fields, baseball and softball facilities, indoor and outdoor ice facilities, and gym space.
- **Free Play** - the second highest reason for park use was "free play" as selected by survey respondents. Additionally, stakeholders and survey respondents supported including a fully accessible playground, nature play, adventure/ropes course, climbing walls, general playground updates/maintenance and more "open gym" time.
- **Multi-generational Health and Wellness Initiatives** - "Health and Wellness" is the third highest reason for park use according to the public respondents. Additionally, stakeholders and survey respondents emphasized the importance of multi-generation connections. There was public support for an expanded trail network with adequate wayfinding and creature comforts (benches), indoor and outdoor fitness equipment, and a connected Senior Center Community Center space.
- **Community Gathering Space** - "Group Gatherings" are not currently a big reason for park use, but there were a lot of stakeholders and survey respondents who placed value on these kinds of spaces. Support for flexible outdoor space for City-held or community held events, large family gatherings and picnicking, was expressed during community visioning.
- **Enhanced Connections Between Parks and Neighborhoods** - Particular emphasis should be given to address that there are adequate sidewalk or trail connections to Parks and neighborhoods. This guiding principle was ranked lowest as being met by survey respondents expectations.
- **Communication** - is a top priority for the City and residents. Apple Valley can increase communication and marketing efforts to raise awareness about current programs, facilities and offerings which may change public perception and lead to a new or different community vision.

The *Apple Valley Parks and Recreation Master Plan* should be referred to for a complete understanding of the Community Vision.







Frameworks Plan

The Frameworks Plan defines the recommended improvement strategies that will serve as a practical tool to guide the park system's future development and redevelopment efforts. The Plan will help the City prioritize programs and projects as future decisions are made.

The following Frameworks Plan outlines strategies for improvements that are organized around the Department's current and newly developed guiding principles.

Creating parks that provide people with places to gather and play.

Strategies:

- Provide flexible spaces to accommodate changing trends in demand for park and open space programming.
- Create destinations for large group/family gathering (i.e. large or clustered picnic shelters)
- Provide a destination park that can accommodate community events (i.e. food truck festivals, Oktoberfest, outdoor concerts, graduations, art fairs, race finish line festivities, etc.) Keep in mind opportunities that will be attractive to Millennials and young families with improvements to night life (i.e. concerts in the park, beer dabblers, etc.). Suggestions: Johnny Cake East - Field A, Augustana Care south property.

Distributing parks throughout the City.

Strategies:

- Continue maintaining existing parks throughout the City.
- Establish parkland in areas with a gap in service including the areas presently being mined for sand and gravel, and in the area south of County Road #42 that is undeveloped.
- Establish, retain and maintain parks or open space along and adjacent to lakes, ponds and wetlands for public access.
- Search areas for neighborhood parks:
    1. South of Augustana Care (lease/rental agreement)
    2. Near Spirit of Life Church
    3. Fischer Sand and Aggregate Mine
    4. Hope Church - a wooded triangle that can possibly accommodate an unpaved trail or nature play
    5. Flagstaff open area - could support community gardens

Connecting parks and neighborhoods with sidewalks and trails.

Strategies:

- Continue to maintain trails throughout parks and the City as a means for transportation and recreation. Look for connections East-West and develop a "Grand Rounds" full system connection.
- Prioritize trails that connect neighborhoods to already established regional trails and connections, transit hubs, and destinations.
- Connect to Lebanon Hills Regional Park
- When possible, create linear parks or "green" corridors. Use trees and other vegetation to buffer users from traffic and other development. (Suggestions: Pilot Knob Road, Johnny Cake Ridge Road, 140th Street W, 150th Street W., 160th Street W.)
- Provide strategic areas for rest. Areas surrounding downtown and areas surrounding senior care facilities may require more frequent seating.
- Encourage users with distance markings, wayfinding signage and identification of destinations and City landmarks along trails (i.e. Cobblestone Lake).
- Partner with Dakota County Art Display Program to provide an Art Corridor (i.e. Edina Promenade). (Suggestions: Downtown Apple Valley, or at a possible new development at the Quarry)
- Develop loop trails within existing parks for recreation and circulation. (Suggestions: Johnny Cake East, Cortland)

Matching facilities with the full spectrum of ages, abilities and economic status. Creating a system that serves all residents.

Strategies:

- Address ADA accessibility system-wide with any new or redeveloped park projects.
- Resurface playgrounds with an ADA-accessible surfacing (i.e. poured in place/synthetic surface, compacted wood fiber, etc.) and include minimum standards for accessibility.
- Dedicate at least one City Playground to be fully accessible and address both cognitive and physical impairments. (Suggestions: Quarry Point Park)
- Add benches along trails and in parks, especially near aging population centers (i.e. senior care/housing facilities).
- Provide programming to meet the needs of more residents with additional evening and weekend programs.
- Provide additional programming including programming for passive adults (i.e. art, cooking, crafts), young adult/teens, and small children.
- Continue the FREE summer playground program. Analyze the program for improvements to reinvent/revitalize it.
- Provide coordinated, yet age appropriate, programming to allow for siblings of varying ages to participate at the same time, at the same place.
- Improve membership incentives at the Senior Center. (Suggestion: re-brand to *Active Lifestyle Center* and connect to the Community Center).





Top: Trail distance markings can be directly applied to the trail surface (shown) or shown with a separate sign; Bottom: All-ages enjoying the annual Frozen Apple Concert.

Providing a wide range of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities.

Strategies:

- Combine Senior Center and Community Center Facilities with a central shared space (Active Lifestyle Center). Keep senior focused programming at the Senior Center weekday mornings and afternoons, and utilize space for additional community needs weekday evening and weekend.
- Provide additional indoor gym space. Conduct a cost assessment for additional gym space.
- Update and maintain warming houses and Park shelters to be multi-use. Consider eliminating warming houses with the elimination of rinks.
- Diversify play equipment including nature play. Place nature play playgrounds at parks that offer other nature programming or trails. (Suggestion: Alimagnet or Farquar Park)



Siblings enjoying open gym.

- Diversify play equipment including climbing/adventure play. Climbing/adventure play will include playground features like bouldering walls and ropes for climbing. Place at parks near middle schools or areas where older kids/teens look for more challenging play.
- Provide turf fields at select parks for more consistent field conditions and longer playing seasons. The addition of turf fields into the system will help relieve pressure off non-turf fields and allow for proper field rest.
- Consider permanent or temporary field house / sports dome turf facility. Include an indoor walking track for additional winter recreation opportunities.
- Monitor the use of newly implemented outdoor fitness stations (i.e. Cobblestone). Add more as necessary.
- Improve visitor and player experience at Hayes Arena by continuing to make updates and improvements to the facility.
- Add picnic shelters and pavilions. With a level of service recommendation of 11 additional shelters by 2030, the department should assess appropriate locations. (Suggestions: Kelley Park, Moeller, Heritage, Diamond Path, Cobblestone, Alimagnet, and any new neighborhood parks.)
- Make improvements to the Pickleball facilities at the Community Center to keep Apple Valley as a top Pickleball provider for the South Metro. (Suggestions: sound attenuation, expanded shade structure over picnic tables, removal of the windscreen around picnic area, rules and regulations signage)
- Complete an operational cost assessment of the Redwood Pool to determine its cost versus benefit to the community. The Family Aquatic Center and aquatic programming and services that ISD 196 provides at the middle schools may address community needs.
- Follow trends in recreation and provide new uses as needed to accommodate demand.





Top: The shaded area at the Community Center Pickleball facilities; Bottom: Shelter at Redwood

Collaborating with other parties to coordinate the delivery of services to make effective use of financial resources.

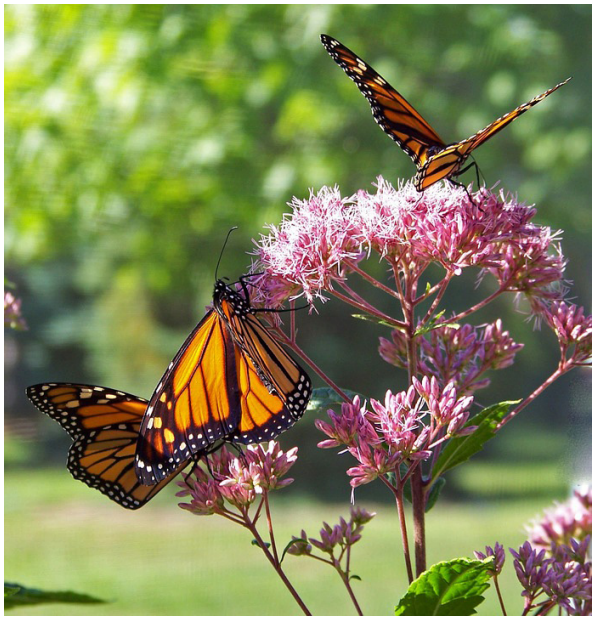
Strategies:

- Ensure park dedication or a park dedication fee is collected for all new development where possible.
- Continue to track volunteers, volunteer hours, and track partners . Ensure that the database that tracks all volunteers and volunteer hours also tracks partners, and partner resources leveraged (dollar value of partnering, if possible). Assign volunteer and partner tracking responsibility to one staff person; include this in the job description.
- Establish formal partnership policies and agreements. Following the best practice listed in the previous section, establish partner policies and agreements that are tailored to the different types of partnerships the City encounters. Assign management of the policies and agreements to one staff person and include this in his or her job description.
- Continue to support the City/ISD196 partnership and to coordinate park use with educational programs.
- Continue and encourage partnerships with athletic organizations (i.e. EVAA, VAA) to collaborate on park improvements on a shared-use basis.
- Continue to enhance park and trail opportunities for the City with partnerships with other governmental agencies including Dakota County and surrounding cities.
- Collaborate with the Arts foundation to deliver and promote arts and cultural events in parks.

Using parks as a tool to control flooding, help preserve the quality of the surface water, replenish the ground water supply, reduce air pollution and preserve natural resources.

Strategies:

- Establish, retain and maintain parks or open space along and adjacent to lakes, ponds and wetlands for stormwater detention, and resource protection.
- Dedicate areas to restore as native vegetation or pollinator habitats where appropriate, eliminating maintenance-intensive turf grass.
- Incorporate rain gardens, natural vegetative buffers, and other stormwater management techniques best suited to that park area, where appropriate.
- Make habitat modifications and improvements that will benefit fish, wildlife, and native plantings within the City's park and open space areas. Using Best Management Practices (BMP's), buffer lakes, ponds, wetlands and streams with native grasses and other ecologically appropriate plant species.
- Develop a natural resource plan that will enhance the park system and provide the City with specific initiatives to manage natural resources (i.e. Buckthorn removal.)





Top: Butterflies and other pollinators attracted to native flora. Bottom: Natural areas are an important community asset that should be explored.

Effectively providing information to residents and visitors that will elevate awareness of the park and recreation system and services.

Communication is essential to the success of programs and park system use. This guiding principle was developed because of the lack of awareness by residents, visitors and stakeholders of park and recreation system and services.

Strategies:

- Educate the community on the recreational and educational opportunities that currently exist in the parks system.
- Update the City website, using mobile phone and tablet friendly web templates. Include an events calendar (i.e. City of St. Louis Park).
- Keep communication strong through social media outlets. Have a dedicated staff person in charge of regular updates.
- Advertise and promote events by partnering with local media, businesses and partners.
- Continue to develop and enhance printed materials including the Parks and Recreation newsletter/brochure.
- Continue the Medallion Search and consider implementing additional Parks Contest to promote and highlight use of the parks. (Suggestions: Photo Contest, Park "Passports", ParkRX partnership)
- Allow for facility rental information to be displayed on the City website.

Developing a park and recreation system that is innovative.

Strategies:

- Continue updating and enhancing the Apple Valley Aquatic Center. The Apple Valley Aquatic Center is an important community resource and provides many jobs for some of Apple Valley's younger residents.
- Explore resident/non-resident membership/season pass options for the Aquatic Center in place of, or in addition to, a punch card.
- Outdoor Ice usage attendance has dropped 34% from 2014-2016, however the dates that ice was available to residents has decreased over the years and the average daily attendance is actually higher. With warming temperatures, outdoor ice conditions are feasible over shorter spans and can be more costly to maintain. Consider eliminating some less popular rinks and add a refrigerated ice rink that can be used for a longer period of time and throughout changing weather patterns.
- The Community preferred the addition of a Adventure Play/Ropes course. This type of facility is typically not seen at parks in the metro area. Due to the popularity of this new facility, ideal locations include highly accessible community parks such as Johnny Cake Ridge Park East/West, Hayes, Quarry Point Park, or Redwood. Explore partnerships with the MN Zoo, or private/public partnerships (i.e. operated privately with use on park land)
- Explore locations for an amphitheater/bandshell. Look for a central location with ample parking.
- Provide spaces for unique activities in parks. (i.e. Bocce Courts for league use, hammock groves, etc.)
- Provide food and beverage services (i.e. Biergarden, cafe, food trucks, etc.). This type of service could be run by an outside partner.
- Determine need for additional staff to manage and take on projects outlined in the plan.



Ropes courses can be of varying degrees of difficulty.