



#### **IV. Planning Framework**





## IV. PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The preferences and desires of the community provide the guiding principles for the future of the park and recreation system. Based on these principles, the planning framework bridges the gap between where the City is and where it wants to be. Through system-wide goals and objectives and park development guidelines, this chapter establishes the policies and guidelines that will support the development of Sheridan's preferred parks and recreation system.

### **POLICY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Through the parks and recreation planning process, a number of goals and objectives have been identified to assist the community in achieving Sheridan's preferred park system.

### **GOALS**

A goal is a general statement describing an outcome the city wishes to provide. The *Sheridan Parks and Recreation Master Plan* goals are the primary evaluation tool for park projects. During the planning process, these goals served as the basis for identifying the recommendations contained in the following chapter. Similarly, proposed projects should be judged based on how they meet these goals and move Sheridan closer to the preferred park system. Goals typically do not change over time unless community values or economic conditions make it necessary.

The planning team has identified the following seven goals for Sheridan's parks and recreation system. Numbering does not suggest a priority for implementation:

*Goal 1: Provide a well-designed, accessible and safe system of parks, recreation facilities and natural areas throughout the Joint Planning Area.*

*Goal 2: Connect neighborhoods to parks, schools, natural areas, the downtown, and the region.*

*Goal 3: Offer a variety of recreational opportunities and build partnerships with other providers to allow enjoyment of the park system throughout the year.*

*Goal 4: Involve the public and encourage public participation.*

*Goal 5: Provide a well maintained and high quality park system.*

*Goal 6: Establish a management structure that increases the efficiency of park system operations.*

*Goal 7: Strengthen and develop park acquisition and development strategies and policies.*

## OBJECTIVES

Objectives assist in identifying and guiding projects toward the community's preferred park system. The objectives help narrow the intent of a goal, and provide more specific guidance. On the following pages, each goal is paired with a list of objectives that will assist in the creation of the preferred park system.

*Goal 1: Provide a well-designed, accessible and safe system of parks, recreation facilities, and natural areas throughout the Joint Planning Area.*

- 1.1 Implement the Plan concept and development guidelines described in Chapter IV.
- 1.2 Develop parks and facilities that are consistent with this Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
- 1.3 Provide park and recreation facilities close to City residents. Where feasible, provide a park within a half mile walking distance of residents.
- 1.4 Acquire land for new parks early, while it is still available. However, balance adding new parks and facilities with maintaining and enhancing existing park resources.
- 1.5 Preserve critical or unique natural features by protecting areas such as stream corridors, wildlife habitat, and wetlands.
- 1.6 Promote sense of place by preserving important historical areas.
- 1.7 Periodically review local park and recreation preferences, needs, and trends.

*Goal 2: Connect neighborhoods to parks, schools, natural areas, the downtown, and the region.*

- 2.1 Create safe connections for bicyclists and pedestrians between neighborhoods, parks, and community destinations.
- 2.2 Continue to implement the *Sheridan Pathways Master Plan* and increase off-street connections to the park and recreation system.
- 2.3 Provide internal pathway systems in all parks. Where feasible, connect the internal park pathways to the citywide pathways system.
- 2.4 Encourage the provision of sidewalks to enhance access to existing and proposed parks.
- 2.5 Develop and implement a comprehensive signage and way-finding program to enhance usability of the pathway system.

*Goal 3: Offer a variety of recreational opportunities and build partnerships with other providers to allow enjoyment of the park system throughout the year.*

- 3.1 Strengthen the partnership with the Sheridan County School District #2 to maximize public use of recreation facilities on school sites, especially for indoor recreation facilities and playgrounds.
- 3.2 Coordinate with the Sheridan Recreation District, YMCA, and other recreation program providers to ensure that community recreation needs are met.
- 3.3 Continue partnerships with other organizations to ensure that the needs of the community are met in the most efficient way possible.
- 3.4 Increase opportunities for new and existing types of indoor and outdoor recreation activities.
- 3.5 Incorporate interpretation of local history, culture, and the environment into the park system by providing interpretive signage, public art, and interactive play structures.
- 3.6 Monitor community demand for recreation programming and work with partners to ensure diverse recreation programs and special events at a variety of times, locations, and skill levels.

*Goal 4: Involve the public and encourage public participation.*

- 4.1 Design parks and park facilities to reflect the desires of the community and surrounding neighborhoods by involving citizens in the design process.
- 4.2 Establish a process for residents and recreation partner organizations to propose park improvement projects.
- 4.3 Consider establishing a parks advisory board or commission to advise the City Council and the Planning Commission on park and recreation matters.
- 4.4 Enhance communication and outreach to inform citizens of the recreational opportunities available in local neighborhoods and city-wide, as well as the opportunities offered by other organizations.
- 4.5 Encourage citizen involvement and participation in maintaining and restoring the quality of parks, such as adopt-a-park programs, and sports group partnerships.

*Goal 5: Provide a well maintained and high quality park system.*

- 5.1 Maintain park and recreation facilities in a manner to make them safe, attractive, and a positive part of the neighborhood, and city.
- 5.2 Upgrade and maintain playgrounds and recreational facilities to current safety and accessibility standards.
- 5.3 Develop maintenance frequency protocols that maximize the life of the City's parks and recreation assets.
- 5.4 Consider the maintenance costs and staffing levels associated with acquisition, development, or renovation of parks or natural areas, and adjust the annual operating budget accordingly for adequate maintenance funding of the system.

*Goal 6: Establish a management structure that increases the efficiency of park system operations.*

- 6.1 Reorganize parks and recreation organizational structure to improve system-wide oversight and coordination.
- 6.2 Improve accountability by establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities between the City and the Recreation District.
- 6.3 Maximize operational efficiency and reduce overlap of duties among service providers to provide the greatest public benefit for the resources expended.
- 6.4 Provide better tracking of the costs of maintaining City-owned parks and facilities, including public buildings, infrastructure, parks and natural areas, right-of-way landscaping, and the cemetery.
- 6.5 Tailor services and operating hours to community needs, so that policies, work schedules, and administrative direction support use of parks and services.
- 6.6 Encourage staff development by encouraging participation in professional organizations, educational classes, and training seminars.

*Goal 7: Strengthen and develop park acquisition and development strategies and policies that are useful and effective.*

- 7.1 Maintain a park land level of service of 10 acres<sup>1</sup> per 1,000 residents based on the park land needs identified in the *Recreation Needs Assessment Summary Report*.
- 7.2 Revise the park land dedication formula to relate cost of land to the adopted park land level of service. Periodically review land prices to reflect the most current cost of land per acre.
- 7.3 Revise park dedication standards to prescribe minimum park siting requirements, developable acres, and improvements. Dedication standards should follow the development guidelines of this Plan, and should include a provision for fees in lieu of land dedication.
- 7.4 Secure adequate park land that is reasonably related to new development to serve future residents, in accordance with this Plan.
- 7.5 Seek alternative park funding and acquisition mechanisms such as special taxing districts, land banking, grant programs, and private donations and endowments.

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<sup>1</sup> This figure includes neighborhood, community, and mini parks, as well as natural areas and excludes the golf course.

## PARK DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The strength of a successful park system is that it provides a variety of park types and recreation opportunities throughout the community. Site selection, park design, and development should support the function and purpose of each park type to ensure that diverse recreation opportunities are provided and community recreation needs are met. These development guidelines outline specific features and amenities for the following types of parks: community parks, neighborhood parks, special use areas, and natural areas. Because each site is unique, these guidelines are not intended to override citizen preference, and site-specific concerns or judgments.



Guidelines for the development of Sheridan parks include:

- **Definition:** A definition of the park classification, as noted in Chapter II of this Plan.
- **Site Selection:** Criteria to consider when acquiring and developing new parks (Existing parks may be smaller or larger than the recommended maximum and minimum park size).
- **Minimum Park Amenities:** The minimum amenities that should be provided.
- **Additional Amenities to Consider:** Amenities that are appropriate and may be considered during the planning and design process for each park.
- **Park Amenities to Avoid:** Elements that are not compatible and should be avoided.

## COMMUNITY PARKS

**Definition:** Community parks provide active and structured recreation opportunities, as well as passive and non-organized opportunities for individual and family activities. Community parks generally include facilities that attract people from a large geographic area and require support facilities, such as parking and restrooms. Community parks often have sport fields or similar facilities as the central focus of the park. Size ranges from 10 acres to 20+ acres, with an optimal size of at least 15 acres.

### Site Selection:

- ✓ Community parks should be a minimum of 15 to 20 developable acres.
- ✓ The site should be accessible by walking, bicycling, or driving. Connections to the community trail network should be provided, where possible, to facilitate walking and bicycling. Sidewalks should be provided.
- ✓ The site should have good visibility from surrounding streets and have a minimum of 200' of street frontage.

### Minimum Park Amenities to Include:

- ✓ Playground equipment with separate areas appropriate for different age groups.
- ✓ Sports fields for baseball, softball, or soccer (artificial turf and field lighting subject to site conditions), fields may be in complexes within the park.
- ✓ Paved athletic courts (basketball or tennis depending on need).
- ✓ Picnic area with shelter.
- ✓ Open lawn area, minimum 75' x 100'.
- ✓ Interior ADA accessible path (paved route connecting all site elements).
- ✓ Restrooms (permanent structures).
- ✓ Site furnishings (benches, picnic tables, bicycle racks, trash/recycling receptacles, signs, etc.).
- ✓ Water fountain(s).
- ✓ Off-street parking.

### Additional Park Amenities to Consider:

- ✓ Skate park or skate facilities.
- ✓ Multi-use field.
- ✓ Sand or grass volleyball courts.
- ✓ Other sporting facilities (horseshoes, bocce, lawn bowling, etc.).
- ✓ Water playground.
- ✓ Off-leash dog area.
- ✓ Historical site or natural area interpretation (if features are present on the site).
- ✓ Performance space, such as a stage area or band shell.
- ✓ Other features in keeping with the function of community parks.
- ✓ Concessions.

**Park Amenities to Avoid:** Features that detract from or conflict with the community park uses.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

**Definition:** Neighborhood parks are a combination playground and park, designed primarily for non-supervised, non-organized recreation activities. They are intended to serve nearby residents within a ½-mile service area who mainly arrive by foot or bicycle. Typically, facilities found in a neighborhood park include a children's playground, picnic areas, pathways, open grass areas for passive use, outdoor basketball courts, and multi-use sport fields for soccer, softball, and baseball. Size generally ranges between 5 and 10 acres, with an optimal size of at least seven acres.

### Site Selection:

- ✓ Neighborhood park sites should be 5 to 10 developable acres in size. The minimum size for neighborhood parks is 3 acres when land constraints do not allow a larger site.
- ✓ At least 50% of a neighborhood park site should be suitable for active uses.
- ✓ The site should have good visibility from surrounding streets and have a minimum of 200' of street frontage.
- ✓ The site should be relatively central to the area it is intended to serve (within about ½ mile of the intended users).
- ✓ The site should be accessible by walking, bicycling, or driving and include sidewalks. Connections to the community trail network should be provided, where possible.
- ✓ The site should be contained as a contiguous unit and not separated into pieces or divided by roadways.
- ✓ The site should be free from easements or encumbrances that may interfere with the public use of the land.

### Minimum Park Amenities to Include:

- ✓ Playground equipment.
- ✓ Picnic area with shelter.
- ✓ Open lawn area, minimum 75' x 100'.
- ✓ Multi-use field.
- ✓ Paved athletic court (basketball or tennis depending on need).
- ✓ Interior ADA accessible path (paved route connecting all site elements).
- ✓ Water fountain.
- ✓ Site furnishings (benches, picnic tables, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, signs, etc.).
- ✓ Restrooms (permanent structure).

### Additional Park Amenities to Consider:

- ✓ Other sporting facilities (horseshoes, bocce, lawn bowling, etc.).
- ✓ Water playground.
- ✓ Historical site or natural area interpretation (if features are present on the site).
- ✓ Other features in keeping with the function of neighborhood parks.

**Park Amenities to Avoid:** Regional scale features, off-street parking and features that detract from or conflict with the neighborhood park uses should be avoided.

**SPECIAL USE AREAS**

**Definition:** Special use areas are miscellaneous park lands or stand-alone recreation sites designed to support a specific, specialized use. Some of the facilities in this classification can include sports field complexes, community centers, community gardens, aquatic centers, or sites occupied by buildings.

**Site Selection:**

- ✓ Site size should be adequate to support the proposed specialized use, as well as necessary supporting facilities, including parking.
- ✓ Site selection criteria will be dependent on the specific specialized use proposed, and may include criteria determined through an economic feasibility study.
- ✓ The site should be accessible from the community-wide trail system.
- ✓ Prior to the addition of any special use areas, the city should prepare a detailed cost/benefit analysis and maintenance impact statement for each proposed site being considered.

**Minimum Park Amenities to Include:**

- ✓ Specialized use facility (indoor or outdoor).
- ✓ Site furnishings (benches, picnic tables, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, signs, etc.) appropriate for the intended scale and use of the park.
- ✓ Restrooms (permanent structure).
- ✓ Parking, on or off-street.

**Additional Park Amenities to Consider:**

- ✓ Playground equipment.
- ✓ Open lawn area.
- ✓ Picnic area with shelter.
- ✓ Multi-use fields.
- ✓ Sports fields for baseball, softball, or soccer.
- ✓ Skate park or skate facilities.
- ✓ Sand or grass volleyball courts.
- ✓ Other sporting facilities (horseshoes, bocce, lawn bowling, etc.).
- ✓ Water playground.
- ✓ Community gardens.
- ✓ Off-leash dog area.
- ✓ Historical site or natural area interpretation (if features are present on the site).
- ✓ Concessions, vendor, or lease space.

**Park Amenities to Avoid:** Features that detract from or conflict with the site’s specialized use should be avoided.

**NATURAL AREAS**

**Definition:** Natural areas are sites primarily left in a natural state and intended for nature-oriented leisure activities. They are usually owned or managed by a governmental agency and may or may not have public access. This type of land often includes environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, steep hillsides, wildlife habitats, stream and creek corridors, or lands containing unique and/or endangered plant species. Natural areas may serve as trail corridors, and generally support only passive recreation. Active recreation is usually a secondary use.

**Site Selection:**

- ✓ Site size should be based on natural resource and connectivity needs.
- ✓ Public use of natural open space sites should be encouraged through trails, viewpoints, and other features, but environmentally sensitive areas should be protected by fencing and landscaping.
- ✓ The site should have access to a public street, to public land, or contribute to the planned open space network.
- ✓ Features in natural open space areas should be limited to those appropriate for the numbers and types of visitors the area can accommodate, while retaining its resource value, natural character, and the intended level of solitude.

**Minimum Park Amenities to Include:**

- ✓ Trails.
- ✓ Site furnishings (benches, picnic tables, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, signs, etc.) appropriate for the intended scale and use of the open space area.

**Additional Park Amenities to Consider:**

- ✓ Trailhead or entry kiosk.
- ✓ Interpretive signage or exhibits.
- ✓ Viewpoints.
- ✓ Parking, on or off-street.
- ✓ Restrooms (permanent or seasonal).
- ✓ Picnic area with shelter.
- ✓ Outdoor classroom/gathering space.
- ✓ Interpretive center or building.
- ✓ Environmental restoration areas.

**Park Amenities to Avoid:** Features that conflict with or detract from the site’s natural resources, such as turf, ornamental and non-native plantings, and active uses such as sports fields should all be avoided.

## HISTORICAL AREAS

**Definition:** Historical areas serve multiple purposes and help to preserve a community’s history and cultural identity. Many historic sites also provide places for passive recreation opportunities, such as walking, bird watching, and nature study. In addition, historical areas can attract visitors and tourists, further enhancing the local economy.

<p><b>Site Selection:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Site location and size should be based on the historical preservation, context or purpose of the site.</li> <li>✓ Public use of site should be dependent on historical significance of site</li> <li>✓ The site should have access to a public street, or to adjacent park land.</li> <li>✓ The site should be accessible from the community-wide trail system if feasible.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Minimum Park Amenities to Include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Monuments or markers.</li> <li>✓ Interpretive signage or exhibits.</li> <li>✓ Site furnishings (benches, picnic tables, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, signs, etc.) appropriate for the intended scale and use of the site.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Additional Park Amenities to Consider:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Off-street parking.</li> <li>✓ Restrooms (permanent or seasonal).</li> <li>✓ Picnic area with shelter.</li> <li>✓ Outdoor classroom/gathering space.</li> <li>✓ Interpretive center or building.</li> <li>✓ Trails.</li> </ul>

**Park Amenities to Avoid:** Features that conflict with or detract from the site’s historical significance and maintenance intensive landscaping should be avoided.

