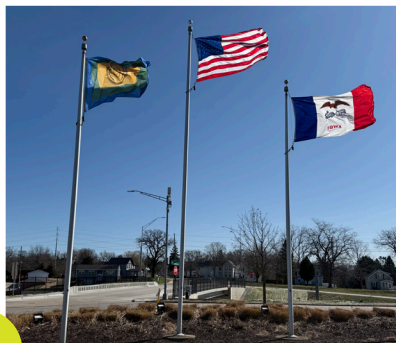
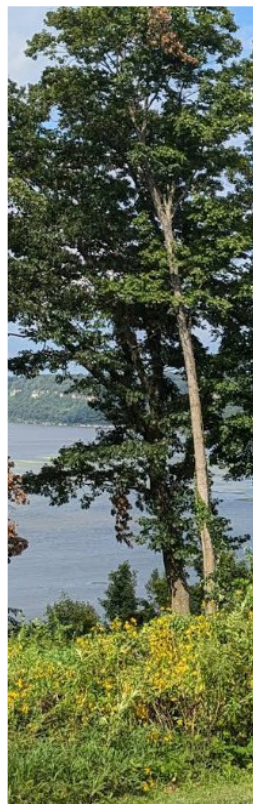


**Y(OUR) STORY**

Dubuque Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan



February 2026

# MASTER PLAN

## REPORT

THE CITY OF  
**DUBUQUE**  
*Masterpiece on the Mississippi*







Dubuque Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan was made possible through the leadership and foresight of the Mayor and City Council. During their annual goal-setting session in August 2024, the Mayor and City Council prioritized the Parks Maintenance/Refresh Action Plan for 2024-2026. In the August 2025 goal-setting session for 2025-2027, the Mayor and City Council identified the adoption and implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as a high priority and designated the Sports Complex Development as a top priority. Additionally, the Council has supported improvements to Eagle Point Park. We are deeply grateful for their commitment to Parks and Recreation, which has resulted in this plan document and will continue to guide future implementation efforts for the Department moving forward.

### Mayor and City Council

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Council Member Tyson Leyendecker  
(Ward One)

Council Member David T. Resnick (At Large)

Council Member Laura J. Roussell (Ward Two)

Council Member Danny C. Sprank (Ward Three)

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The project team would like to acknowledge the following people for their leadership and efforts during the development of the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan: Thank you to all Parks and Recreation Department staff and City departments that contributed to this plan.

The resident-appointed commissions provide invaluable thoughts, insights, and honest dialogue that assist the Council and staff by advising on matters specific to each commission. Their contributions help keep us grounded in our work and bring forward important perspectives from the community, which we then share with the City Council.

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Special thanks to all the Dubuque residents

who shared their unique perspectives on what makes Dubuque Parks and Recreation great and how it can be even better in the future. Thank you for taking the time to attend public meetings, participate in focus groups, stop by at pop-up events, complete surveys, and use the website feedback tools. Your input and passion for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan has truly helped craft Y(O)ur Story.



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## Chapter 1

### Introduction Prologue



Dubuque  
Parks and Recreation  
Comprehensive Plan





# DISCOVER DUBUQUE

PARKS & RECREATION  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



# WHAT IS THE Y(O)UR STORY DUBUQUE COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN?

The Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan is a long-range plan that offers strategies providing guidance to meet the needs of current and future City of Dubuque residents. The plan defines opportunities, challenges, and recommendations for the next 10 years and beyond. The theme of the plan, Y(O)ur Story, is based on the idea that a well-crafted master plan would tell the story of Dubuque and its residents—where it was, where it is, and where it is going.

Dubuque Parks and Recreation is dedicated to providing safe, accessible, and well-maintained parks, recreation programs, and outdoor spaces. The Department’s mission aims to foster community, promote healthy lifestyles, and preserve natural resources for future generations. The Master Plan enables the City to engage in a public process to ensure future parks and recreation priorities and goals are resident driven and meet the evolving demands of the community. To carry out this mission as it relates to Parks and Recreation, the plan has been organized around the following objectives:

-  **Creating a comprehensive and compelling vision and direction for Parks and Recreation**
-  **Identifying our community’s needs and priorities regarding our city’s facilities, programs, parks, and services**
-  **Addressing land use planning, community needs and desires, environmental management, and resource assessment**
-  **Gaining understanding of current and desired levels of service and facilities in order to demonstrate more proportional access to services and opportunities**
-  **Identifying, assessing, and prioritizing the deferred and upcoming maintenance of parks, pools, and facilities**
-  **Evaluating operations, maintenance practices, and staffing with an aim to generate long-term sustainability and resilience benefits**

## PLANNING WITH PURPOSE

Y(O)ur Story Dubuque is the Parks and Recreation Department’s first long-range comprehensive master plan in 45 years. This plan and other recent Dubuque planning efforts demonstrate the City’s commitment to planning for a successful future. The City has a track record of translating vision, engaging the residents, and planning into action and partnerships. This plan aims to align its guiding principles, goals, strategies, and recommendations in the context of the following key planning documents relating to parks and recreation.

## A CITY OF PARTNERSHIPS

*Dubuque delivers its residents exceptional amenities and experiences that exceed expectations given its size and population. This is largely due to long-standing and successful partnerships. For decades, Parks and Recreation has sought out creative ways to deliver recreation opportunities to the community utilizing their limited resources, facilities, and funding to their full extent. **To this day, the City of Dubuque and its residents have been greatly benefiting from these partnerships and solution-based decisions.***

*Parks and Recreation leverages numerous partnerships, internally and externally, that allow the City to be good stewards of the land, a good neighbor, beautify the city, host regional-scale events, and utilize indoor facilities for programs. The City has a responsibility to preserve, maintain, and advance these partnerships while also recognizing the limitations of these partnerships and, in some cases, the need for parks and recreation dedicated facilities and additional staff. Parks and Recreation continues to **build positive partnerships and seek out others with similar goals.** Residents support these existing partnerships and seeking new partnerships to improve the parks and recreation system.*

*Existing partnerships that serve the community include but are not limited to DRA operating the ImOn Arena and Amphitheater, the Miracle League of Dubuque program and complex at Veterans Memorial Park, Dubuque Main Street’s coordination of the Dubuque Farmers’ Market, City support for the Hills and Dales Senior Center, Dubuque Community School District shared facilities use, volunteer programs at the Dubuque Arboretum at Marshall Park, and the E.B. Lyons Interpretive and Nature Center at the Mines of Spain Recreation Area.*

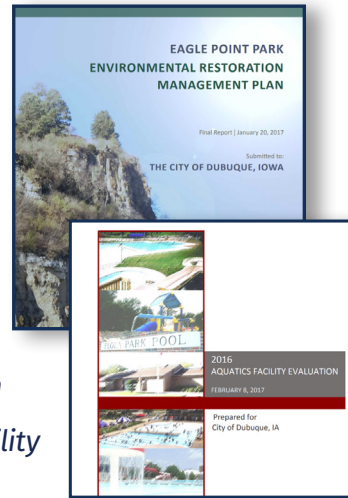


# ALIGNMENT WITH KEY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Recent planning efforts by Dubuque and its key partners demonstrate the City's commitment to planning for a successful future. This plan aims to align its values, goals, strategies, and recommendations in the context of the following key planning documents relating to parks and recreation.

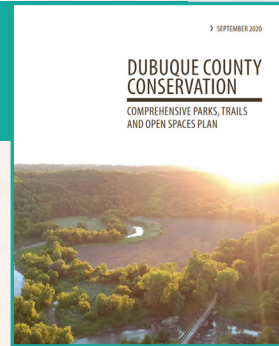
**2017 Eagle Point Park Environmental Restoration Management Plan**

**2016 Aquatics Facility Evaluation**



## 2020 Dubuque County Conservation Comprehensive Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Plan

The 2020 Dubuque County Conservation Comprehensive Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Plan aims to enhance the county's natural resources by improving parks, expanding trail networks, and preserving open spaces. The plan emphasizes sustainability, accessibility, and community involvement to ensure the recreational and conservation needs of current and future residents are met.



## 2024 Historic Millwork District Master Plan Update

The Historic Millwork District Master Plan Update focuses on revitalizing the district by preserving its historic character while promoting mixed-use development, including residential, commercial, and cultural spaces. The updated plan emphasizes environmental resilience, improved infrastructure, and community engagement to create a vibrant, walkable urban neighborhood.



## Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque Envision 2030 (In Progress)

Envision with Us!



The Envision 2030 initiative by the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque is a strategic plan aimed at creating a thriving future for the Dubuque region. It focuses on addressing key areas like education, health, economic opportunity, housing, and community engagement. The goal is to build a resilient, inclusive, and vibrant community by 2030. This initiative involves collaboration with local organizations, businesses, and residents to ensure that the region's development is comprehensive and sustainable.

2016

2017

2020

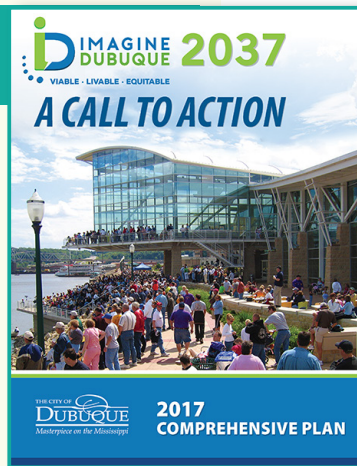
2023

2024

2030

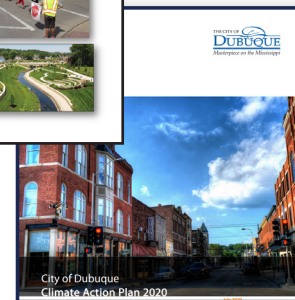
## 2017 Imagine Dubuque 2037: A Call to Action

Imagine Dubuque 2037: A Call to Action is the city's comprehensive plan focused on sustained growth and development, emphasizing community resilience, economic vitality, and environmental stewardship. The plan involved active community engagement to implement strategies that enhance quality of life, infrastructure, and cultural belonging in Dubuque by 2037.



## 2023 Dubuque Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan

## 2020 City of Dubuque Climate Action Plan



## 2024 Schmitt Island Development Plan and 2025 Schmitt Island Sports Complex Feasibility Study

The Schmitt Island Development Plan aims to transform Schmitt Island into a vibrant recreational and cultural destination by enhancing public amenities, improving sports facilities, and promoting economic growth. The plan emphasizes environmental sustainability, accessibility, and community engagement to ensure the project's long-term success and benefit to the local community.





# DUBUQUE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

## Who We Are...



### Mission Statement

Dubuque Parks and Recreation is dedicated to providing safe, accessible, and well-maintained parks, recreation programs, and outdoor spaces. We aim to foster community, promote healthy lifestyles, and preserve natural resources for all people and future generations.



### Vision

To create and maintain vibrant community spaces and memorable experiences that improve the lives of all residents through opportunity and connection.

### Guiding Principles

#### Community Belonging and Connection

Our programs, spaces, and services strengthen the bonds between neighbors through shared experiences and ensuring residents feel heard and valued.

#### Excellence in Care and Maintenance

We take pride in clean, safe, and well-maintained parks and facilities, reflecting our respect for both our system and the people who use it.

#### Lifelong Enjoyment and Discovery

We create opportunities for recreation, learning, and wellness at every age — from childhood adventures to lifelong passions.

#### Community Engagement and Ownership

We ensure our improvements are guided by active community participation and transparent processes. We empower residents to take ownership of their public spaces, ensuring our parks remain welcoming, dynamic, and responsive to community needs.

#### Viability and Innovation

We embrace sustainable and fiscally responsible practices and forward-thinking solutions to meet today's needs without compromising tomorrow's resources.

#### Active Stewardship

We protect and preserve the natural landscapes and amenities that make our city unique ensuring their beauty and vitality for generations to come.

#### Pride of Place

We foster a deep sense of local pride — where every playground, trail, and park tells the story of our region's natural heritage and resilient spirit

## What We Do...

The Parks and Recreation Department comprises a Park Division, a Recreation Division, and a Civic Facilities Division. Together, the Parks and Recreation Department maintains more than 1,200 acres of parkland. The department is responsible for multiple diverse offerings and supports the following functions:



*\*Note: Not included in the master plan effort but a part of the Parks and Recreation Department is Grand River Center, Five Flags Civic Center, and ImOn Arena.*



## PARKS DIVISION



**PARKS:** The Dubuque parks system offers a myriad of outdoor amenities and scenic landscapes. Our parks cater to the diverse needs of the community, promoting outdoor activities, leisure, and environmental education. Parks Maintenance maintains all of the City's parks, trails, and public spaces and performs routine activities to ensure the parks are clean, safe, and operational. The goal of parks maintenance is to ensure the parks serve the needs of the public.



**TRAILS:** Dubuque's well-developed trails network caters to hiking, biking, and outdoor enthusiasts. The network is connected to The Heritage Trail, a 26-mile limestone trail, traversing from Dubuque to Dyersville, offering a scenic route through wooded areas and alongside waterways. The Dubuque Water Trail provides paddlers with a marked route along the Mississippi River. Additionally, the Mines of Spain Recreation Area, a partnership that includes the City of Dubuque, features over 15 miles of trails that lead through diverse terrains such as forests, prairies, and bluffs, providing educational opportunities about the area's natural and historical significance. The City's trail system integrates with parks and natural areas, ensuring accessibility, promoting active lifestyles, and providing a means of transportation to help people get from place to place.



**OPEN SPACES AND NATURAL RESOURCES:** Dubuque's natural resources are rich in habitat diversity, including oak savannas, prairies, and bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. There are a finite number of open spaces containing Natural Resources in Dubuque. These features are unique, improve water quality, and provide ecological habitats for insects, birds, and mammals. The need to manage Dubuque's natural resources will ensure the City's long-term environmental, economic, and social well-being to improve the quality of life both for its residents but also all of the life these environments support.

E.B. Lyons Prairie and Woodland Preserve and E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center are gems of natural beauty, offering residents and visitors the opportunity to explore diverse ecosystems including prairies, woodlands, and wetlands. These opportunities educate and provide insightful information about local flora, fauna, and local conservation efforts. Activities include engaging in outdoor activities like hiking, bird-watching, and guided tours to connect with nature.



**CAMPGROUND:** Miller Riverview Park and Campground offers a scenic and convenient riverside retreat for campers and outdoor enthusiasts. The park features primitive campsites and modern campsites equipped featuring electrical hookups, water access, dump station, and nearby restroom facilities. The campground is designed to accommodate both tent and RV campers, ensuring a comfortable stay for all visitors. The park provides ample recreational opportunities such as fishing, bird watching, nearby boating, and riverside picnicking. Green spaces and walking trails within the park further contribute to this well-rounded outdoor experience in the north end of Dubuque.





# RECREATION DIVISION



**POOLS:** Dubuque’s aquatics facilities include Flora Pool and Sutton Pool, both of which feature amenities such as lap swimming lanes, diving boards, water slides, and children's play areas. These pools also offer swimming lessons, aquatic fitness classes, and seasonal activities that encourage healthy lifestyles and social engagement. The City's investment in these park pools ensures a clean, safe, and enjoyable aquatics environments for residents and visitors.



**GOLF COURSE:** Bunker Hill Golf Course features a scenic 18-hole public golf course. The course welcomes players of all ages and abilities. Bunker Hill offers a full schedule of golf events, a variety of men's and women's leagues, programs for junior golfers, private lessons, and more. Amenities include a fully-stocked pro shop, a public bar and clubhouse, putting green, an on-course beverage cart, and equipment rentals.



**MARINA:** The Port of Dubuque Marina is a 70-slip transient marina in downtown Dubuque, Iowa, located along the upper Mississippi River inside the protected Ice Harbor. Guests can spend a day, night, or a few hours enjoying the many downtown and Port of Dubuque attractions. The marina offers seasonal slip rentals including full electric and water hookups, access to private and secure shower suites, and a personal keycard for dock entry. The marina includes a full-service fuel dock and a convenience store carrying a selection of boating supplies, food, and refreshments.



**ADAPTIVE PROGRAMS AND MIRACLE LEAGUE:** The Miracle League of Dubuque is an extraordinary organization dedicated to providing children and adults with disabilities the opportunity to play baseball, actively use the playground, and enjoy programming in the center in a specialized, inclusive environment at Veterans Memorial Park. Established to ensure that everyone, regardless of their abilities, can enjoy the thrill of athletics and activities, this league uses custom-designed fields equipped with features like cushioned, rubberized surfaces to accommodate wheelchairs and other assistive devices.



**MOBILE RECREATION:** The Dubuque Rec ‘n Roll Trailer is a mobile recreation program that brings games, activities, and equipment to community parks and events across the city. Rec ‘n Roll represents an innovative approach to dynamic programming and community engagement by bringing recreational activities directly to neighborhoods and community spaces. This program is designed to increase accessibility to physical and social activities for residents of all ages by providing a variety of games, and other portable recreational equipment right to their neighborhood.



**YOUTH PROGRAMS:** The Let's Go! Programs include recreational and educational programming, including parent/caregiver and child classes, youth enrichment classes for kids of all ages, karate, after-school sports, swimming lessons, adaptive sports, adult dance classes, adult athletics, and more. The programs strive to create a fun environment for all ages to play, learn, socialize, and express their creativity. Programs are offered across the city, The Let's Go! activities guide is published three times per year: Winter/Spring, Summer, and Fall communicating offerings to residents and getting the word out about programs via marketing channels like social media.



**SPORT FIELD ALLOCATION:** Sport field allocation manages the availability and scheduling of athletic fields to meet the needs of local sports leagues, schools, and community groups. The recreation division’s oversight and organization ensures fair and efficient access to facilities such as softball and baseball diamonds, and multi-use sports fields. Allocation is based on factors like season, demand, and specific requirements of each sport or event. This programming and planning ensures that all community members have ample opportunities to engage in sports activities, enhancing the overall quality of life in Dubuque through organized and accessible recreation options.





## CIVIC FACILITIES DIVISION\*



**GRAND RIVER CENTER:** The Grand River Center is a convention and event venue situated along the picturesque Mississippi River. This facility includes flexible spaces that cater to any occasion including meeting and exhibition space, a grand ballroom, numerous meeting rooms, and a spacious exhibit hall. Its prime location, adjacent to lodging, gaming, and entertainment venues and within walking distance of historic downtown Dubuque and Historic Millwork District make it a sought-after destination for both local and regional events.



**FIVE FLAGS CIVIC CENTER:** The Five Flags Civic Center is a versatile multi-use facility that serves as a cultural and entertainment hub for the community. Comprising an arena, theater, and historic center, this venue hosts a wide range of events including concerts, sporting events, and theatrical productions.



**IMON ARENA:** The ImOn Arena is Schmitt Island's premiere ice rink and event center. Featuring a 3,200 seat, single sheet ice rink and event space that serves the City of Dubuque and surrounding communities in Iowa, as well as nearby communities in the tri-state area. The arena, a partnership with the Dubuque Racing Association (DRA), offers hockey and skating programs and clubs for all skill levels and ages.



**AMPHITHEATER:** Construction of a new city-owned outdoor concert amphitheater on Champlain Schmitt Island is currently underway and anticipated to open for the 2026 concert season. The Amphitheater is being operated in partnership with the DRA.

*\*Please note while the Civic Facilities Division is part of Dubuque Parks and Recreation, these facilities were considered in the formation of recommendations but are not included as a part of this plan.*





## HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The master planning process enables the City to assess the community's parks and recreation needs and interests and it enables decision makers to prioritize resource allocation decisions for existing and new amenities and facilities, programs, services, and overall system maintenance. The Dubuque Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan provides the following for the community:

- Evaluates the existing park system and utilizes benchmarks of regional and national standards and potential service-level improvements
- Incorporates the vision, goals, and tasks outlined in other recently adopted planning documents
- Documents priorities, trends, and demands of the current population and charts a long-range plan for accommodating anticipated population growth and demographic evolution
- Informs the community about park needs and the system's community assets
- Develops an implementation plan that outlines projects, potential funding sources, and operations and maintenance implications
- Identifies and prioritizes capital improvement projects for both existing parks and future park facilities based on community needs
- Guides critical decisions about parks and recreation facilities, infrastructure, programs, and services

This long-range plan is designed to be flexible and adapt to constantly evolving circumstances. It is intended to be a working document that will guide parks and recreation efforts, resources, and funding over the next 10-year period and beyond.

## HOW THE PLAN IS ORGANIZED

The plan is organized by major elements of the Parks and Recreation Department.

### Vision

Key themes that have emerged through stakeholder and community engagement that align with the City's vision and other City plans and policies.

### Guiding Principles

High-level ideals that support the values and outcomes the master plan aims to achieve.

### Strategies and Recommendations

Short-, mid-, and long-term actions the City may take to realize the goals and embody the vision of the plan.





# Demographic and Trends Analysis

## DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

### Summary

- The 2025 total population projection in the city (59,818) and the School District (80,095) are such that they would support a variety of parks and recreation facilities and programs. Furthermore, those population figures would support the existence of public, non-profit, and private providers in the same market.
- The median age in both the city and School District follow the rate of increase for both the state and national figures. While the median age in the city is slightly less than that of the School District, all figures are comparable to those of the state and national median. Interestingly, while the median age is comparable to that of the national figure, the city (24.1%) and School District (26.4%) both have fewer households with children compared with the state (28.75) and nation (30.2%).
- The age distribution in the City of Dubuque is unique with 20.8% of the population under 18 years of age, and 30.78% of the population over the age of 55. The age categories of 0-5 , 5-17, 18-24, and 55-64 are projected to decrease between 2020-2030. The rate of cumulative decrease of those four age categories (-40.9%) does not outpace the cumulative increase of the other four age categories (51.4%).
- The median household income in the city is lower than that of the School District. The School District is lower than the state figure, and the state figure is lower than the national figure. This highlights the need for the City to be realistic with their revenue generating expectations and pricing policy, as there is limited bandwidth to absorb discretionary spending.
- It is important to note that the rate of spending on categories of “housing” and “entertainment of recreation” follows the same pattern as that of median household income.
- The project team would characterize the city as a diverse community with more than 15% of the population being non-White. This is an important data point as it can impact the level of importance that different cultures place on parks and recreation programs and facilities. It is also important because the rate of participation amongst the Black and Hispanic communities (tracked by the National Sporting Goods Association) show some significant variances in some activities.



# DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The project team accesses demographic information from Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) who utilizes 2020 Census data and their demographers for 2025-2030 projections. In addition to demographics, ESRI also provides data on housing, recreation, and entertainment spending and adult participation in activities.

## Service Areas

The information provided highlights what the project team has come to define as key indicators of success for municipal parks and recreation departments. The project team has provided data on the City of Dubuque, Dubuque School District, and comparisons with state and national figures. Given this project is a master plan, it is assumed that the City of Dubuque is the primary service area.

A primary service area is defined as the distance people will travel on a regular basis (a minimum of once a week) to utilize recreation facilities. Use by individuals outside of this area will be much more limited and will focus more on special activities or events.

Service areas can flex or contract based upon a facility’s proximity to major thoroughfares. Other factors impacting the use as it relates to driving distances are the presence of alternative service providers in the service area. Alternative service providers can influence participation, membership, daily admissions, and the associated penetration rates for programs and services.

Service areas can vary in size with the types of components in the facility.



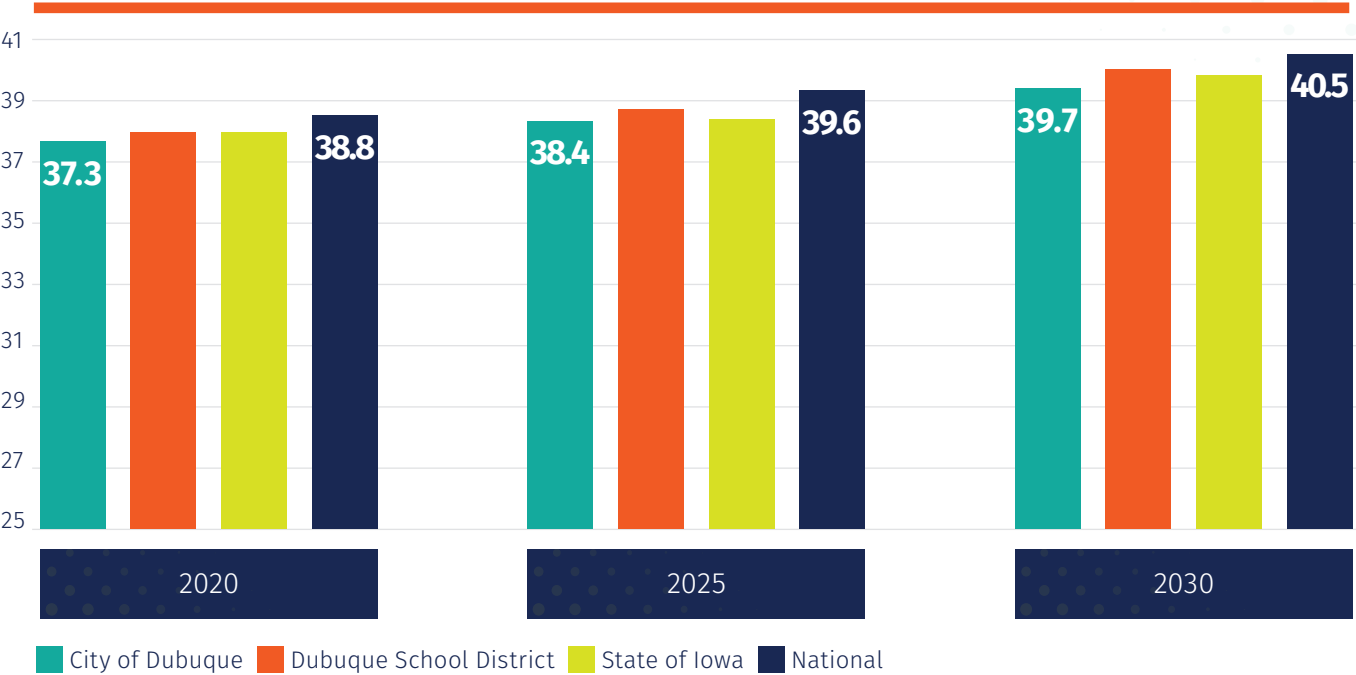
# Demographic Summary

	City of Dubuque	Dubuque School District
Population:		
2020 Census	59,710	79,840
2025 Estimate	59,818	80,095
2030 Estimate	59,983	80,354
Households:		
2020 Census	25,146	32,534
2025 Estimate	25,418	32,912
2030 Estimate	25,656	33,219
Families:		
2020 Census	13,995	19,822
2025 Estimate	13,642	19,387
2030 Estimate	13,633	19,342
Average Household Size:		
2020 Census	2.23	2.34
2025 Estimate	2.20	2.32
2030 Estimate	2.19	2.30
Ethnicity (2025 Estimate):		
Hispanic	4.2%	3.6%
White	84.1%	86.6%
Black	6.4%	5.0%
American Indian	0.4%	0.4%
Asian	1.2%	1.2%
Pacific Islander	1.8%	1.4%
Other	1.4%	1.2%
Multiple	4.8%	4.4%
Median Age:		
2020 Census	37.3	38.7
2025 Estimate	38.4	39.4
2030 Estimate	39.7	40.3
Median Income:		
2025 Estimate	\$64,472	\$71,525
2030 Estimate	\$71,189	\$77,939

Age and Income

The median age and household income levels are compared with the national number as both factors are secondary determiners of participation in recreation activities. The lower the median age, the higher the participation rates are for most activities. The level of participation also increases as the median income level goes up.

Chart A – Median Age:



The median age in the city and School District have slight differences with the city being lower. The School District, State of Iowa, and national figures are almost identical. The role of parks and recreation departments is ever evolving, but a consistent theme is that they offer a wide variety of programs and facilities that address the full age spectrum.

Table A – Median Age

	2020 Census	2025 Projection	2030 Projection
City of Dubuque	37.3	38.4	39.7
Dubuque School District	38.7	39.4	40.3
State of Iowa	38.6	39.3	40.2
National	38.8	39.6	40.5

Table B – Household with Children

	Number of Households with Children	Percentage of Households with Children
City of Dubuque	6,213	24.1%
Dubuque School District	8,788	26.4%
State of Iowa	373,466	28.7%
National	-	30.2%

The following chart provides the number of households and percentage of households in the City of Dubuque and Dubuque School District with children.

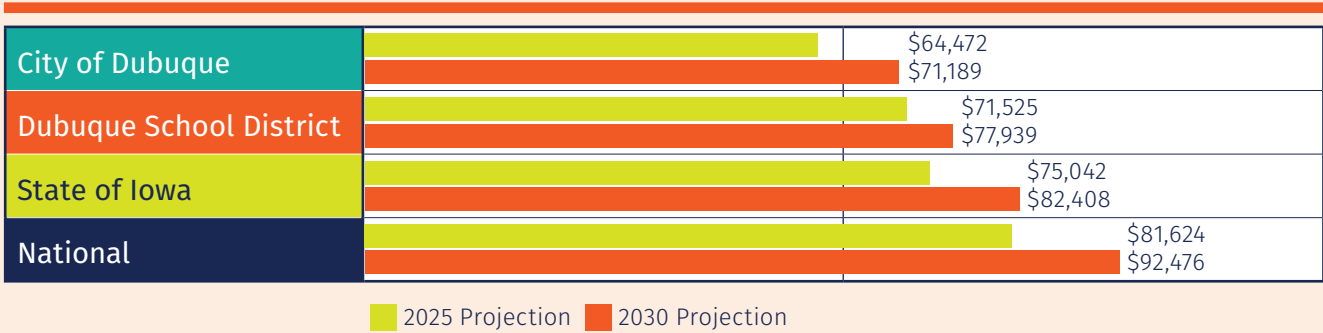
The information contained in Table B helps further outline the presence of families with children.

Table C – Multi-Generational and Unmarried Partner Households

	City of Dubuque	Dubuque School District	State of Iowa
Multi-Gen Households	1.9%	1.8%	2.0%
Unmarried Partner Households	6.9%	6.7%	6.7%
Male-Female	6.4%	6.2%	6.2%
Same-Sex	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%

The project team could not locate specific information on single-parent households for the City of Dubuque. However, as of 2023, approximately 26.1% of households with children in Dubuque County, IA are single-parent households.

Table D – Median Household Income:



Based on 2025 projections for median household income, the following narrative describes the service area:

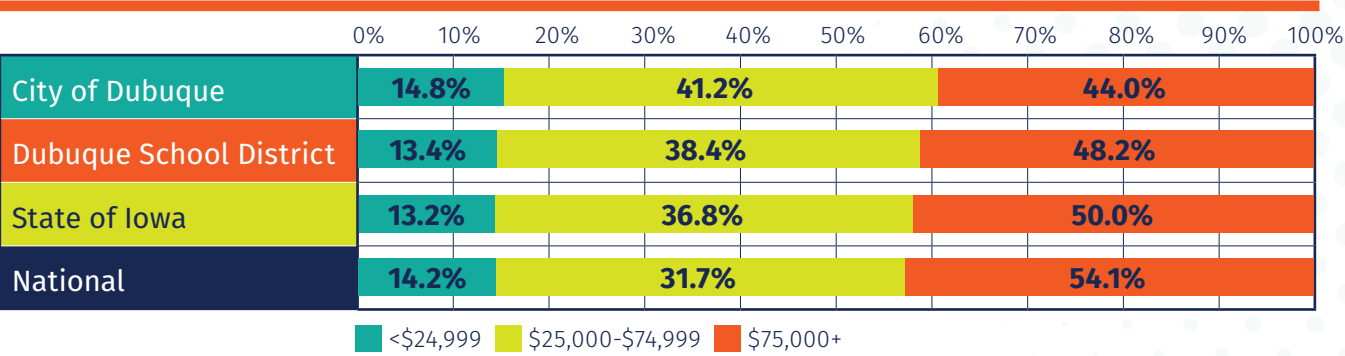
In the City of Dubuque, the percentage of households with income over \$75,000 per year is 44.0% compared to 54.1% on a national level. Furthermore, the percentage of households in the service area with median income less than \$25,000 per year is 14.8% compared to a level of 14.2% nationally.

In Dubuque School District, the percentage of households with median income over \$75,000 per year is 48.2% compared to 54.1% on a national level. Furthermore, the percentage of households in the service area with median income less than \$25,000 per year is 13.4% compared to a level of 14.2% nationally.



While there is no perfect indicator of use of recreation facilities, the percentage of households with more than \$75,000 median income is a key indicator. Therefore, those numbers are significant and balanced with the overall cost of living.

Chart D (2) – Median Household Income Distribution



In addition to looking at the Median Age and Median Income, it is important to examine Household Budget Expenditures. Reviewing housing information; shelter, utilities, fuel, and public services; along with entertainment and recreation can provide a snapshot into the cost of living and spending patterns in the services areas. The table below looks at that information and compares the service areas.

Table D – Household Budget Expenditures<sup>3</sup>

City of Dubuque	SPI	Average Amount Spent	Percent
Housing	73	\$23,728.87	32.0%
Shelter	72	\$19,140.85	25.8%
Utilities, Fuel, Public Service	77	\$4,588.02	6.2%
Entertainment and Recreation	75	\$3,091.22	4.2%

Dubuque School District	SPI	Average Amount Spent	Percent
Housing	79	\$25,841.95	31.9%
Shelter	78	\$20,869.91	25.7%
Utilities, Fuel, Public Service	84	\$4,972.04	6.1%
Entertainment and Recreation	83	\$3,389.85	4.2%

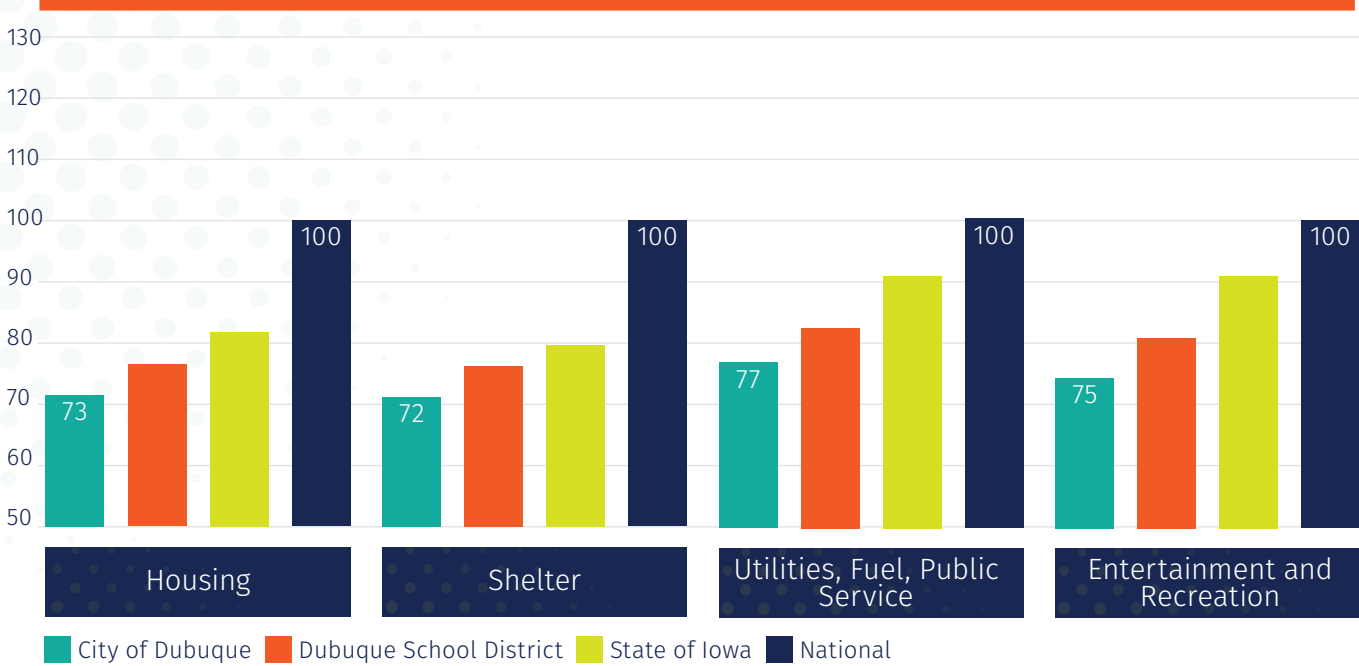
State of Iowa	SPI	Average Amount Spent	Percent
Housing	84	\$27,361.19	31.5%
Shelter	82	\$21,916.69	25.3%
Utilities, Fuel, Public Service	92	\$5,444.50	6.3%
Entertainment and Recreation	91	\$3,723.27	4.3%

**SPI:** Spending Potential Index as compared to the National number of 100.  
**Average Amount Spent:** The average amount spent per household.  
**Percent:** Percent of the total 100% of household expenditures.

Note: Shelter along with Utilities, Fuel, and Public Service are a portion of the Housing percentage.

<sup>3</sup> Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2021 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics. ESRI forecasts for 2025 and 2029.

Chart E – Household Budget Expenditures Spending Potential Index



The consistency between the median household income and the household budget expenditures is important. It is important because it illustrates that the spending patterns of the service area align with the resources available. It also points to the fact that compared to a national level the dollars available, the money being spent in the City of Dubuque and Dubuque School District is comparable to the state and less than the national level.

### Housing Inventory

The total number of housing units in the City of Dubuque is 27,194 and 92.5% are occupied, or 25,146 housing units. The total vacancy rate for the service area is 7.5%. As a comparison, the vacancy rate nationally was 10.8%.

The total number of housing units in Dubuque School District is 34,901 and 93.2% are occupied, or 32,534 housing units. The total vacancy rate for the service area is 6.8%. As a comparison, the vacancy rate nationally was 10.8%.

These statistics point to a stable housing market in both service areas.



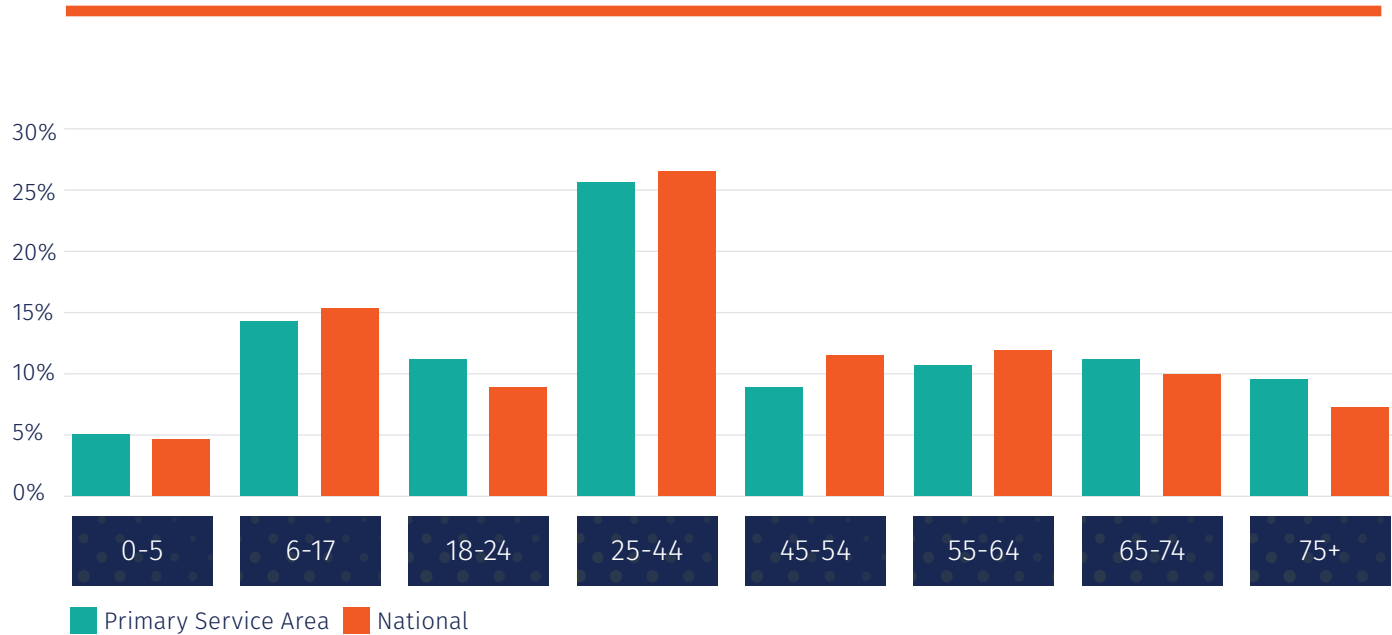
**Population Distribution by Age:** Utilizing Census information for the Primary Service Area, the following comparisons are possible.

**Table F – 2025 Primary Service Area Age Distribution**  
(ESRI estimates)

Ages	Population	% of Total	Nat. Population	Difference
0-5	3,354	5.6%	5.4%	+0.2%
6-17	8,589	14.5%	15.4%	-0.9%
18-24	6,937	11.6%	9.4%	+2.2%
25-44	15,768	26.5%	26.9%	-0.4%
45-54	5,685	9.5%	12.0%	-2.5%
55-64	6,669	11.1%	12.1%	-1.0%
65-74	6,670	11.2%	10.7%	+0.5%
75+	6,146	10.2%	8.0%	+2.2%

**Population:** 2025 Census estimates in the different age groups in the Primary Service Area.  
**% of Total:** Percentage of the Primary Service Area population in the age group.  
**National Population:** Percentage of the national population in the age group.  
**Difference:** Percentage difference between the Primary Service Area population and the national population.

**Chart F – 2025 Primary Service Area Age Group Distribution**



The demographic makeup of the Primary Service Area, when compared to the characteristics of the national population, indicates that there are some differences with a smaller population in the age groups 5-17, 25-44, 45-54, and 55-64 age groups. The greatest positive variance is in the 18-24 and 75+ with +2.2%, while the greatest negative variance is in the 45-54 age groups with -2.5%.

**Population Distribution Comparison by Age:** Utilizing Census information from the Primary Service Area, the following comparisons are possible.

**Table G – 2025 Primary Service Area Population Estimates**  
(U.S. Census Information and ESRI)

Ages	2020 Census	2025 Projection	2030 Projection	Percent Change	Percent Change National
0-5	3,471	3,354	3,287	-5.3%	+0.3%
6-17	8,779	8,589	8,300	-5.5%	-8.0%
18-24	7,428	6,937	6,921	-6.8%	+2.4%
25-44	14,956	15,768	15,476	+3.5%	+7.2%
45-54	5,875	5,685	6,264	+6.6%	+4.0%
55-64	7,555	6,669	5,791	-23.3%	-9.6%
65-74	6,228	6,670	6,719	+7.9%	+15.3%
75+	5,418	6,146	7,225	+33.4%	+46.0%

**Chart G – Primary Service Area Population Growth**

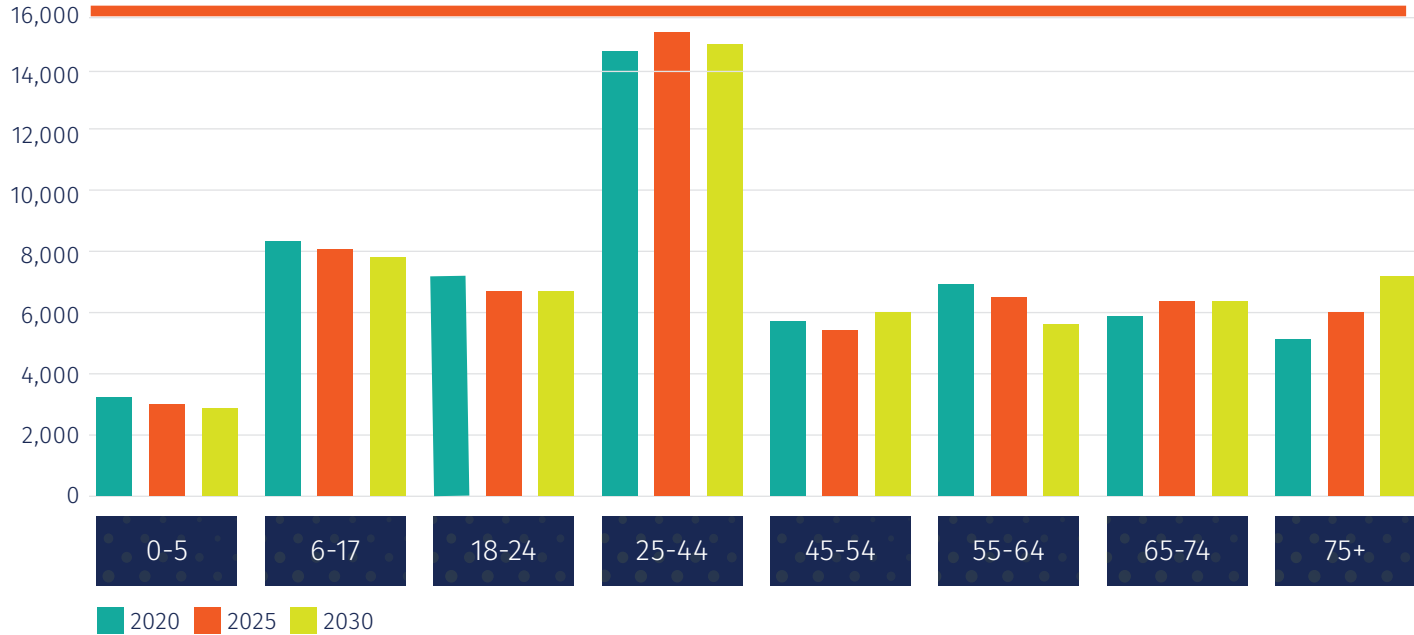




Table H illustrates the growth or decline in age group numbers from the 2020 Census until the year 2030. It is projected that the age categories 25-44, 45-54, 65-74, and 75+ will see an increase in population with all others a decrease. The population of the United States is aging, and it is not unusual to find negative growth numbers in the younger age groups and significant net gains in the 45-plus age groupings in communities which are relatively stable in their population numbers.

Below is listed the distribution of the population by race and ethnicity for the Primary Service Area for 2025 population projections. Those numbers were developed from 2020 Census data.

**Table H – Primary Service Area Ethnic Population and Median Age 2025**  
(Source – U.S. Census Bureau and ESRI)

Ethnicity	Total Population	Median Age	% of Population	% of IA Population
Hispanic	2,494	23.2	4.2%	7.6%

**Table I – Primary Service Area by Race and Median Age 2025**  
(Source – U.S. Census Bureau and ESRI)

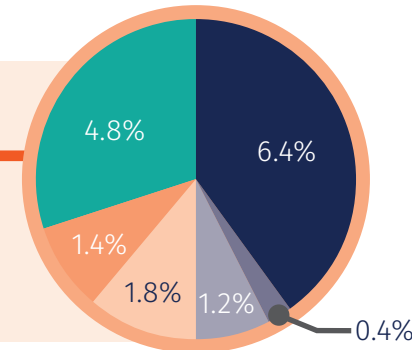
Race	Total Population	Median Age	% of Population	% of IA Population
White	50,281	42.2	84.1%	83.0%
Black	3,816	23.4	6.4%	4.5%
American Indian	262	31.6	0.4%	0.5%
Asian	711	35.0	1.2%	2.5%
Pacific Islander	1,046	24.3	1.8%	0.3%
Other	839	25.9	1.4%	3.1%
Multiple	2,863	21.1	4.8%	6.1%

**2025 Primary Service Area Total Population:** 59,818 Residents

Given Dubuque’s geographic location, having over 15% of the population non-white would make it, in the opinion of the project team, a diverse community. It is important to note that the race and ethnicity of a community can increase or decrease participation in activities. In the participation section of the report, there is a comparison between participation in the city, the national rate of participation, national Hispanic rates of participation, and national Black rates of participation.

**Chart I – 2022 Primary Service Area Population by Non-White Race**

Black  
American Indian  
Asian  
Pacific Islander  
Other  
Multiple



## REGIONAL AND NATIONAL TRENDS FOR RECREATION

### General

Public parks and recreation agencies have been tested in the last 10-20 years to alter their approach to providing parks and recreation services. This has been based on the following:

#### Increasing Demands

Ever increasing facility, program, and service demands from the public.

#### Inclusiveness

The requirement that agencies provide access to facilities, programs, and services to an ever more diverse population. This includes meeting the needs of different ethnic groups, and those with varying economic status, age, and ability.

#### Cost Effectiveness

A demand that parks and recreation agencies be more cost effective in their development and operations of services and facilities.

#### Measurable Outcomes

A strong need to be able to quantify the results and benefits of the programs and facilities that are provided. Establishing well-defined levels of service (LOS) is critical.

As a result of these factors, the following general parks and recreation best practices have been adopted.

- Parks and recreation agencies have a clear vision statement regarding their roles and responsibilities in providing services to their constituents.
- The vision statement is backed up by several pointed goals. These goals are updated on an annual basis.
- Utilizing the vision and goals, a professional and updated master plan is in place to guide future development and operations of parks and recreation facilities and programs.
- There are on-going, long-range planning efforts to position the agency for success in the future.
- There is a realization that an agency cannot effectively be all things to all people in the delivery of parks and recreation services and facilities. As a result, specific areas of focus are determined, and certain functions are left to other organizations and entities.
- Careful analysis is being done to determine which services should be provided in-house and which should be contracted to other providers.
- There is strong record keeping that allows for trends and directional analysis. This also results in the development of specific performance measures. For this to be effective, there must be full computerization of all management records. This includes program registration, point of sale, rentals, facility scheduling, time card management, maintenance, etc.
- There are well written and comprehensive policies and procedures in place that cover all aspects of an agency’s management and operation. These are updated on a regular basis.
- Virtually every aspect of an agency’s operation is evaluated, tracked, and measured on a regular basis.



# Recreation Facilities

Developing and managing a variety of recreation facilities is the main focus of public agencies in larger communities. The types of facilities that are now provided by parks and recreation departments have become more diverse and expensive to acquire, develop, and maintain. As a result, establishing a master plan is critical to determining facility development roles, timelines, and priorities.



## Recreation/Community Centers

Recreation/Community centers are usually developed on three levels:

### Clubhouse/Community Building

Smaller buildings that are designed to serve as a community room(s) for individual neighborhoods. The size is usually less than 5,000 sq. ft. and requires less than 3 acres. These amenities are usually located next to a neighborhood pool or park.

### Community Center

Larger community buildings with multiple, more passive use, spaces that serve an area of a community. These vary in size and amenities and can range from 5,000 to over 20,000 sq. ft. and require 3-5 acres. This level of center can also be combined with a comprehensive community recreation center or community aquatic center. These centers are usually part of a community park.

### Comprehensive Community Recreation Center

This is a large center that contains both active (pool, gym, fitness, etc.) and passive use elements (community rooms) and is designed to serve a substantial geographic area (30,000 or more). The facility is usually more than 40,000 sq. ft. to as much as 80,000 sq. ft. and requires 8 acres or more. These are often developed through partnerships with other organizations or other groups (YMCA, etc.). These centers are normally part of a community or regional park.

## Senior Center



A center that has a focus on senior services from recreation to education and social services. These centers can be as small as 10,000 sq. ft. to more than 50,000 sq. ft. depending on the amenities that are included. More traditional centers have a strong passive use orientation with a large multi-purpose room and a commercial kitchen that supports a daily lunch program and larger events and programs. There are also usually smaller classrooms, card rooms, game rooms, small libraries, and other amenities. More cutting-edge centers have cafes, multi-purpose rooms, and active use spaces including fitness areas, gyms, and even swimming pools.

There is also a movement away from developing standalone senior centers and integrating these into community recreation centers to provide greater opportunities for the more active senior.



## Specialized Facilities

This includes unique facilities such as aquatic centers, nature/interpretative center, amphitheater, tennis centers, and other amenities. The following is a breakdown of basic specialized facilities.



## Aquatic Centers

Aquatic centers or swimming pools are usually developed on four levels.

### Neighborhood

Smaller pools that are designed to serve specific neighborhoods. The bather load is usually less than 500. These amenities are often built next to a neighborhood park.

### Community

Larger pools that serve a community. These vary in size and amenities (competitive to recreational) and can range from a bather load of 500 to over 1,000. They are developed as part of a community park.

### Regional

These are large water parks or competitive pools that are designed to serve a significant geographic area. They usually contain an expansive recreational pool but can also have a strong competitive focus. Bather loads are 1,000 or more. These are often developed through a partnership with other organizations. They would be in a regional park or as a standalone facility.

### Splash pad

Many communities are either replacing existing neighborhood pools with splash pads or adding them to the inventory of aquatic facilities.

Most aquatic centers are in the community category and there are an increasing number of splash pads being built.



## Performing Arts Center (PAC)

A performing arts center is a regional indoor facility with a large theater. Seating can vary from 300 to more than 1,000. The center can be 30,000-70,000 sq. ft. and requires 8 acres or more. This type of center is normally developed by several organizations or large communities. They can be located as part of a larger civic campus, in conjunction with a comprehensive recreation center, or as an amenity in a regional park.

Because of their sheer size and cost, these types of facilities are not built in significant numbers in most communities (or even nationally). Many communities do have smaller PACs or utilize community center rooms (usually with flat floors) for these types of activities. Some communities that do have a PAC are at times managed and operated by other entities rather than parks and recreation.



### Fieldhouse

Steadily gaining in popularity is an indoor sports facility that features hardcourt gym space and/or turf-based fields for sports such as soccer, lacrosse, football, and even softball and baseball. These buildings support both youth and adult sports leagues, tournaments, and camps. They tend to be most popular in colder climates but are also being built in very hot regions of the country. These facilities are either built as standalone amenities or may be included in recreation centers in a regional park.

### Tennis Center

An 8-24 lighted court complex on 2-4 acres that has a stadium court, central restroom, concession, and pro-shop area. Many larger communities have a tennis center.

### Pickleball Center

Many communities are building outdoor pickleball facilities. Sometimes these facilities are located in proximity to tennis facilities because tennis courts could be stripped for pickleball. However, most are standalone facilities. The minimum number of courts at one location is 4, but some communities are building 20+ courts at a single location which allows hosting tournaments.

### Amphitheater

An amphitheater can be either a community sized amenity (under 1,000 seats, some permanent and some lawn with a small stage and storage area) or a large regional facility (1,000-3,000 seats, some permanent and some lawn with a large, covered stage, restrooms, and concessions). An amphitheater requires 2-4 acres of land with a community facility being in a community park and a regional facility in a regional park.

### Nature Center/Interpretive Center

A small indoor and outdoor space (usually under 10,000 sq. ft.) for viewing and observing nature as well as for classroom space and exhibits. A nature center is usually located in conjunction with a preserve or open space area.

### Other Recreation Facility Trends

- Many communities are now developing an indoor facility LOS standard that is between 1-2 sq. ft. per person.
- The development of capital replacement budgets for key facility amenities with an established funding source.
- Outsourcing operations and management to other organizations. This is particularly true for specialty facilities.
- Much stronger emphasis on generating revenues to offset the cost of operations.
- Moving away from smaller community buildings and neighborhood pools to more comprehensive facilities that serve a larger population base. This is less of a trend on the east coast and west coast, where there is still a desire to have smaller dedicated spaces.
- Comprehensive tracking of operations, utilization, and budget metrics to justify facilities.
- For new facilities it is common for the following to occur:
  - The completion of a feasibility study to determine need, site, amenities, and capital and operations costs.
  - Identification of specific funding sources for capital and operations.
  - Integration of the public into planning and development.

## Recreation Programs

It is important to understand the trends that have been seen nationally and regionally with recreation programming over the last 10-plus years.

### Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA)

Their 2024 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Top-Line Participation Report indicated the rate of participation by major sports activity categories over the last 5 years.

### Percentage of Participation Comparisons

	Activity Category	2018 Percentage	2023 Percentage
1.	Fitness Sports	66.0%	67.8%
2.	Outdoor Sports	50.5%	57.3%
3.	Individual Sports	45.3%	42.1%
4.	Team Sports	22.8%	25.7%
5.	Water Sports	13.7%	15.7%
6.	Racquet Sports	13.2%	18.0%
7.	Winter Sports	8.2%	9.8%

Fitness-related sports continued to be the most popular activity category, but racquet sports have shown the greatest percentage increase over the last 5 years due in large part to pickleball. Team sports, water sports, and outdoor sports have all seen an increase as well. Individual sports and winter sports have seen a decrease in participation.

Much of the participation data was affected by COVID-19 during 2020.

### Key impacts include:

- Fitness activities that require amenities typically found in fitness clubs (group exercise, stationary cycling, cross-training, aqua exercise, etc.) decreased in numbers.
- Fitness activities that require limited equipment and do not require a fitness center (running/jogging, free weights, and yoga) showed the greatest increases.
- Outdoor activities that experienced large increases were road biking, skateboarding, and surfing.
- Team sports had a mixed impact with basketball and soccer having increases (mostly attributed to pick-up play) while volleyball, swimming on a team, gymnastics, and cheerleading all had decreases.



Top Activities with Intent to Participate by Age (Ranked by Participation)

Age 6-12	Age 13-17	Age 18-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-44	Age 45-54	Age 55-64	Age 65+
Fishing	Fishing	Running/Jogging	Working out with weights	Working out with weights	Fishing	Fishing	Fishing
Running/Jogging	Running/Jogging	Working out with weights	Working out using machines	Cardio Fitness	Working out with weights	Camping	Working out using machines
Bicycling	Swimming for Fitness	Cardio Fitness	Cardio Fitness	Fishing	Camping	Working out with weights	Camping
Sledding	Working out with weights	Working out using machines	Camping	Working out using machines	Working out using machines	Working out using machines	Working out with weights
Swimming for Fitness	Camping	Bicycling	Yoga	Swimming for Fitness	Cardio Fitness	Cardio Fitness	Swimming for Fitness
Cardio Fitness	Cardio Fitness	Swimming for Fitness	Fishing	Running/Jogging	Hiking	Swimming for Fitness	Cardio Fitness
Yoga	Bicycling	Camping	Running/Jogging	Camping	Yoga	Shooting	Shooting
Camping	Working out using machines	Fishing	Hiking	Yoga	Shooting	Hiking	Yoga
Soccer	Hiking	Yoga	Swimming for Fitness	Hiking	Swimming for Fitness	Yoga	Hiking

Recreation Management Magazine

Annually the magazine prints their State of the Industry Report that examines trends in parks and recreation. Their 2024 report indicated the following as it relates to recreation programs and services.

Programming Most Commonly Offered in 2024

Activity Category		Percent of Agencies
1.	Holiday and Other Special Events	78.3%
2.	Group Exercise Programs	65.0%
3.	Educational Programs	61.8%
4.	Fitness Programs	61.5%
5.	Day Camps/Summer Camps	60.2%
6.	Youth Sports Teams	57.1%
7.	Arts and Crafts Programs	55.5%
8.	Mind-Body Balance Programs (Yoga)	54.1%
9.	Active Older Adult Programs	52.4%
10.	Sports Tournaments and Races	47.5%

Most Commonly Planned Program Additions in 2024

Activity Category		Percent of Agencies
1.	Environmental Education Programs	26.4%
2.	Educational Programs	24.1%
3.	Holiday Events and Other Special Events	23.8%
4.	Fitness Programs	22.5%
5.	Mind-Body Balance Programs	22.2%
6.	Adult Sports Teams	22.2%
7.	Teen Programming	22.2%
8.	Programs for Active Older Adults	22.2%
9.	Group Exercise Programs	20.6%
10.	Special Needs Programs	19.6%

There is a wide range of program areas that public parks and recreation agencies planned to add in 2024.

Outdoor Foundation

The 2024 Outdoor Participation Report indicates the most popular outdoor activities by rate of participation.

Activity	National Participation (% of the total population aged six and older)
1. Hiking	26.4%
2. Fishing	24.1%
3. Running	23.8%
4. Camping	22.5%
5. Biking	22.2%

Participation in outdoor recreation grew 4.1% in 2023 to 175.8 million, amounting to 57.3% of the U.S. population. 22.2 million more Americans aged six and older are participating in outdoor recreation in 2023 than were participating in 2019.



Specific Recreation Program Trends

Below are shown current recreation program trends by major program areas. However, it should be noted that each community is unique, and this has a strong bearing on individual trends and other operational factors.

Area	Specific Programs
Sports	Youth Lacrosse
	Adult Soccer
	Adult Cricket
	Youth and Adult Rugby
	Pickleball
	Youth Camps and Clinics
	Individual Sports (Fencing)
	Adventure/Non-Traditional (BMX, Mountain Biking, Disc Golf, Ultimate Frisbee)
	E-Sports Competitions and Tournaments
	Youth Sports Specific Training
Fitness/Wellness	Functional Training Classes
	Personal/Small Group Training
	Yoga
	Nutrition/Cooking
	Healthy Lifestyle Education
	Mindfulness Programs
Cultural Arts	Music Production for Youth
	Digital Media
Youth	Before- and After-School Programs at Recreation Centers, Specialty Summer Camps
Education	Camps, STEAM
Outdoor	Eco-Tourism
	Environmental Education
Seniors	Fitness/Wellness
	Sports (pickleball)
	Baby Boomer Focused Activities
Aquatics	Therapy
	Triathlon Training
General Interest	Personal Finance
	Cooking
Special Events	Community Wide Events
	Health and Wellness
Social Services	Feeding Programs, Job Training, Educational Support, Childcare
Other	Virtual Programming

Other Programming Trends

- Recreation departments now often serve as a coordinating agency and a clearinghouse for multiple recreation organizations and providers, to bring a comprehensive scope of recreation programs to a community. This has also increased the number of partnerships that are in place to deliver a broader base of programs in a more cost-effective manner.
- There is a greater emphasis on a fee for service concept, especially for more specialized programming. This is supported by a formal fee policy.
- Programming continues to emphasize the needs of youth and seniors but has also focused more on adults, and the family unit.
- Specific programming development trends include:
  - Virtual programming remains even after COVID-19.
  - Developing programs that are single day or no more than four sessions in length.
  - Developing programs for youth during non-school days, winter break, spring break, and any other extended breaks.
  - Offering a variety of summer camps with different areas of interest.
  - More Saturday programs and the introduction of some Sunday programming (especially in adult sports leagues).
  - Senior programming that occurs in the evening or on the weekends to appeal to seniors who are still in the work force.
  - Introducing programs that are oriented toward specific ethnic groups.
  - Developing a baseline of programs that appeal to the family unit.
  - Staggering the days and times of similar programs that are offered at multiple locations.
  - Drop-in pay-as-you-go fitness classes.
- Expanded senior programming to include a greater focus on the Baby Boomer generation which often means programs and services that are available in the evenings and on weekends and those that have a more active orientation.



- There has been a concerted effort to integrate conventional recreation programming with community based social service programs and education. Most of the social service programs are offered by other community-based agencies and education is often coordinated with school districts.
- Program characteristics (performance measures) are tracked including:
  - Program registration comparisons by year for each season.
  - Rates of fill (especially for fee-based programming).
  - Participation numbers and comparisons to past years/seasons.
  - Rate of program cancellations (for fee-based programming).
  - Financial performance including cost per participant.
  - Evaluations from participants.
- A lifecycle analysis is completed for all programs offered by the agency. Programs are classified in three categories and agencies strive to have program offerings distributed equally among each category.



#### New

Programs in the start-up phase that are just starting to build in popularity.



#### Established

Programs that have consistent high levels of registrations and are still growing in popularity.



#### Concluding

Programs that are seeing a decline in popularity





PARTICIPATION STATISTICS

Market Potential Index for Adult Participation: Using ESRI, the project team accessed data regarding adult participation in a variety of activities that could take place within a park and recreation system. The following data illustrates the Market Potential Index (MPI) in the primary service.

MPI measures the relative likelihood of the adults or households in the specified trade area to exhibit certain consumer behaviors or purchase patterns compared to the U.S. An MPI of 100 represents the U.S. average.

Source: The data is based upon national propensities to use various products and services, applied to local demographic composition. Usage data were collected by MRI-Simmons in a national representative survey of U.S. households, with ESRI providing forecasting.



Table A - Market Potential Index (MPI) for Participation in Sport-Like Activities

Adults Participated in:	Expected # of Adults	Percent of Population	MPI
Aerobic Exercise	3,324	6.9%	93
Baseball	1,415	3.0%	99
Basketball	2,439	5.1%	89
Bicycle (mountain)	1,364	2.9%	90
Bicycle (road)	4,567	9.5%	95
Boating (power)	2,261	4.7%	108
Boxing	689	1.4%	80
Canoe or Kayak	3,754	7.8%	109
CrossFit	749	1.6%	91
Fishing (fresh water)	5,268	11.0%	115
Football	1,390	2.9%	105
Frisbee	1,574	3.3%	114
Golf	3,857	8.1%	100
Hiking	8,452	17.7%	96
Ice Skating	1,150	2.4%	94
Jet Skiing	800	1.7%	106
Jogging or Running	4,399	9.2%	89
Kickboxing	573	1.2%	85
Marathon/Triathlon	564	1.2%	105
Martial Arts	555	1.2%	88
Paddleboarding	1,141	2.4%	92
Pickleball	1,655	3.5%	95
Pilates	1,391	2.9%	90
Ping Pong	1,839	3.8%	96
Rock Climbing	812	1.7%	95
Skateboarding	507	1.1%	85
Soccer	1,538	3.2%	86
Softball	805	1.7%	93
Spinning	713	1.5%	90
Swimming	7,804	16.3%	100
Tennis	1,482	3.1%	87
Volleyball	1,255	2.6%	99
Walking for Exercise	15,376	32.1%	99
Weightlifting	6,810	14.2%	93
Yoga	4,471	9.3%	98
Zumba	1,211	2.5%	93

**Expected # of Adults:** 18 years of age and older, participating in the activity in the Service Area.  
**Percent of Population:** Percent of the service area that participates in the activity.  
**MPI:** Market potential index as compared to the national number of 100.



This indicates that out of the 36 activities identified, the rate of adult participation is greater than the national figure of 100 in only nine activities. Of the remaining 27 activities, 19 of them have a MPI between 90-100 which is still strong participation, just not the same as the national rate.

A lack of participation can point to an inability to pay to use facilities or participate in programs, it can indicate a lack of facilities available, or it could be attributed to the activities adults do like to participate are not tracked. Active adults also point to active youth.

In addition to analyzing the demographic realities of the service areas, it is possible to project possible participation in recreation and sport activities.

Participation Numbers

On an annual basis, the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) conducts an in-depth study and survey of how Americans spend their leisure time. The data is collected in 1 year and the report is published in May of the following year. This information provides the data necessary to overlay the rate of participation onto the City of Dubuque to determine market potential.

The project team takes the national average and combines that with participation percentages of the City of Dubuque based upon age distribution, median income, region, and National number. Those four percentages are then averaged together to create a unique participation percentage for the service area. This participation percentage, when applied to the population of the City of Dubuque, then provides an idea of the market potential for a variety of recreation activities.

Table B – Participation Rates in the City of Dubuque

Typical Indoor Activities	Participation Based On:				Unique Average
	Age	Income	Region	Nation	
Aerobic Exercise	15.4%	10.6%	20.6%	15.8%	15.6%
Basketball	7.5%	5.3%	7.1%	7.7%	6.9%
Billiards/Pool	7.1%	7.3%	6.2%	7.3%	7.0%
Boxing	1.9%	2.2%	1.3%	1.9%	1.8%
Cheerleading	1.2%	0.8%	0.4%	1.3%	0.9%
Exercise with Equip	16.6%	10.1%	18.6%	16.4%	15.4%
Gymnastics	2.0%	1.7%	1.6%	2.1%	1.9%
Hockey (Ice)	1.1%	0.4%	0.7%	1.1%	0.8%
Ice/Figure Skating	2.8%	1.5%	2.8%	2.8%	2.5%
Martial Arts/MMA	2.0%	1.2%	1.1%	2.0%	1.6%
Pilates	2.6%	1.3%	2.0%	2.6%	2.1%
Table Tennis/Ping Pong	4.5%	2.9%	3.8%	4.6%	3.9%
Volleyball	3.4%	2.4%	3.2%	3.5%	3.1%
Weightlifting	12.2%	6.7%	16.0%	12.2%	11.8%
Workout at Clubs	10.1%	5.9%	8.6%	9.9%	8.6%
Wrestling	1.1%	1.6%	0.5%	1.2%	1.1%
Yoga	9.2%	6.0%	7.2%	9.3%	7.9%

Typical Outdoor Activities	Participation Based On:				Unique Average
	Age	Income	Region	Nation	
Baseball	3.2%	2.1%	3.6%	3.5%	3.1%
Bicycle Riding	12.6%	10.2%	12.2%	13.2%	12.0%
Boating (Motor/Power)	5.2%	3.2%	7.7%	5.4%	5.4%
Camping (Overnight)	12.1%	9.7%	14.6%	12.7%	12.3%
Canoeing	2.2%	1.5%	4.9%	2.4%	2.8%
Exercise Walking	34.0%	28.0%	33.8%	34.0%	32.5%
Fishing (Freshwater)	9.6%	11.3%	15.3%	9.9%	11.5%
Football (Tackle)	2.0%	2.5%	1.7%	2.1%	2.1%
Golf	7.0%	3.4%	5.7%	7.0%	5.8%
Hiking	17.1%	10.9%	17.7%	17.8%	15.9%
Kayaking	3.9%	2.1%	5.2%	4.1%	3.8%
Lacrosse	0.8%	0.5%	0.6%	0.9%	0.7%
Mountain Biking	2.0%	1.4%	1.3%	2.2%	1.7%
Pickleball	4.8%	1.8%	2.3%	5.0%	3.5%
Running/Jogging	12.7%	10.0%	10.8%	13.1%	11.7%
Skateboarding	2.2%	3.0%	1.4%	2.3%	2.2%
Soccer	4.9%	3.2%	2.9%	5.1%	4.0%
Softball	2.4%	1.7%	1.2%	2.5%	2.0%
Swimming	14.7%	9.9%	13.1%	15.2%	13.2%
Tennis	4.7%	3.0%	3.3%	4.8%	3.9%

- Age: Participation based on individuals ages 7 and up of the Service Area.
- Income: Participation based on the 2024 estimated median household income in the Service Area.
- Region: Participation based on regional statistics (West North Central).
- National: Participation based on national statistics.
- Average: Average of the four columns





Anticipated Participation Number

Utilizing the average percentage from Table B above plus the 2020 Census information and Census estimates for 2024 and 2029 (over age 7), the following comparisons are available.

Table C –Participation Growth or Decline for Activities in the City of Dubuque

Activities	Average	2020 Population	2025 Population	2030 Population	Growth/ Decline
Aerobic Exercise	15.6%	8,548	8,591	8,642	93
Basketball	6.9%	3,775	3,794	3,816	41
Billiards/Pool	7.0%	3,818	3,838	3,860	42
Boxing	1.8%	1,004	1,010	1,015	11
Cheerleading	0.9%	504	507	510	6
Exercise with Equip	15.4%	8,448	8,490	8,540	92
Gymnastics	1.9%	1,014	1,019	1,025	11
Hockey (Ice)	0.8%	446	449	451	5
Ice/Figure Skating	2.5%	1,350	1,357	1,365	15
Martial Arts/MMA	1.6%	858	862	867	9
Pilates	2.1%	1,164	1,170	1,177	13
Table Tennis/Ping Pong	3.9%	2,162	2,173	2,186	24
Volleyball	3.1%	1,713	1,722	1,732	19
Weightlifting	11.8%	6,447	6,480	6,518	70
Workout at Clubs	8.6%	4,725	4,749	4,777	52
Wrestling	1.1%	609	612	616	7
Yoga	7.9%	4,339	4,361	4,387	47

Activities	Average	2020 Population	2025 Population	2030 Population	Growth/ Decline
Baseball	3.1%	1,700	1,708	1,718	19
Bicycle Riding	12.0%	6,602	6,635	6,674	72
Boating (Motor/Power)	5.4%	2,948	2,963	2,980	32
Camping (Overnight)	12.3%	6,721	6,755	6,794	73
Canoeing	2.8%	1,509	1,517	1,525	16
Exercise Walking	32.5%	17,785	17,875	17,979	194
Fishing (Freshwater)	11.5%	6,314	6,346	6,383	69
Football (Tackle)	2.1%	1,137	1,143	1,149	12
Golf	5.8%	3,158	3,174	3,193	35
Hiking	15.9%	8,699	8,743	8,794	95
Kayaking	3.8%	2,101	2,112	2,124	23
Lacrosse	0.7%	383	385	387	4
Mountain Biking	1.7%	949	954	959	10
Pickleball	3.5%	1,910	1,920	1,931	21
Running/Jogging	11.7%	6,384	6,417	6,454	70
Skateboarding	2.2%	1,222	1,228	1,235	13
Soccer	4.0%	2,203	2,214	2,227	24
Softball	2.0%	1,072	1,077	1,084	12
Swimming	13.2%	7,242	7,278	7,321	79
Tennis	3.9%	2,158	2,169	2,182	24

Note: These figures do not necessarily translate into attendance figures for various activities or programs.

National Summary of Sports Participation:

The following chart summarizes participation for indoor activities utilizing information from the 2024 National Sporting Goods Association survey.

Table D – Sports Participation Summary

Sport	Unique Percent	Nat'l Rank <sup>1</sup>	Nat'l Participation (in millions)
Exercise Walking	32.5%	1	105.1
Hiking	15.9%	2	54.9
Exercising with Equipment	15.4%	3	50.7
Swimming	13.2%	4	46.9
Bicycle Riding	12.0%	5	40.6
Running/Jogging	11.7%	6	40.4
Camping (Overnight)	12.3%	7	39.2
Weightlifting	11.8%	8	37.6
Workout at Club	8.6%	9	30.7
Fishing (Freshwater)	11.5%	10	30.7
Yoga	7.9%	12	28.6
Basketball	6.9%	13	23.9
Billiards/Pool	7.0%	14	22.5
Golf	5.8%	16	21.6
Boating (Motor/Power)	5.4%	17	16.6
Soccer	4.0%	18	15.8
Pickleball	3.5%	19	15.4
Tennis	3.9%	20	15.0
Table Tennis/Ping Pong	3.9%	21	14.2
Kayaking	3.8%	23	12.6
Volleyball	3.1%	26	10.8
Baseball	3.1%	27	10.7
Ice/Figure Skating	2.5%	29	8.8
Pilates	2.1%	30	8.0
Softball	2.0%	31	7.9
Canoeing	2.8%	32	7.3
Skateboarding	2.2%	33	7.2
Mountain Biking	1.7%	38	6.7
Football (Tackle)	2.1%	39	6.6
Gymnastics	1.9%	40	6.5
Martial Arts/MMA	1.6%	41	6.3
Boxing	1.8%	45	6.0
Cheerleading	0.9%	50	3.7
Wrestling	1.11%	51	3.7
Hockey (Ice)	0.8%	52	3.5
Lacrosse	0.7%	56	2.6

**National Rank:** Popularity of sport based on national survey.  
**National Participation:** Population that participate in this sport on national survey.

<sup>1</sup>This rank is based upon the 58 activities reported on by NSGA in their 2024 survey instrument.



The NSGA also lists several sports activities and the percentage of growth or decline that each has experienced nationally over the last 10 years (2014-2023).

Table E – Sports Activity Participation Changes Over Time

Activities	5-Year Change	Activities	10-Year Change
Pickleball	646.5%	Pickleball	805.9%
Boxing	61.7%	Boxing	66.7%
Table Tennis/Ping Pong	43.0%	Pilates	42.9%
Cardio Fitness	36.7%	Kayaking	37.0%
Pilates	35.9%	Strength Training	35.8%
Skateboarding	35.1%	Table Tennis/Ping Pong	35.2%
Strength Training	30.1%	Cardio Fitness	35.1%
Tennis	22.7%	Hiking	30.7%
Golf	20.7%	Skateboarding	26.3%
Mountain Biking (Off Road)	18.8%	Wrestling	23.3%
Kayaking	17.8%	Mountain Biking (Off Road)	19.6%
Hiking	14.1%	Paintball Games	19.6%
Soccer	11.3%	Boating (Motor/Power)	17.7%
Wrestling	10.9%	Tennis	17.2%
Gymnastics	9.4%	Golf	16.1%
Billiards/Pool	8.7%	Ice/Figure Skating	15.8%
Bicycle Riding	7.5%	Bicycle Riding	12.8%
Boating (Motor/Power)	7.1%	Gymnastics	12.1%
Cheerleading	6.6%	Soccer	12.1%
Hockey (Ice)	6.4%	Weightlifting	8.0%
Martial Arts/MMA	4.5%	Hockey (Ice)	6.1%
Ice/Figure Skating	1.9%	Cheerleading	5.4%
Volleyball	1.7%	Billiards/Pool	4.7%
Fishing (Freshwater)	1.3%	Fishing (Freshwater)	4.1%
Weightlifting	-0.5%	Basketball	3.6%
Exercise Walking	-1.3%	Swimming	1.3%
Swimming	-2.4%	Volleyball	0.9%
Canoeing	-3.2%	Exercise Walking	-1.1%
Camping (Vacation/Overnight)	-3.7%	Canoeing	-1.4%
Basketball	-5.3%	Camping (Vacation/Overnight)	-2.2%
Lacrosse	-7.0%	Martial Arts/MMA	-4.5%
Football (Tackle)	-9.9%	Yoga	-6.8%
Yoga	-10.2%	Running/Jogging	-9.2%
Running/Jogging	-12.2%	Exercise with Equipment	-9.9%
Exercise with Equipment	-13.1%	Baseball	-10.2%
Baseball	-13.5%	Lacrosse	-10.3%
Softball	-21.5%	Football (Tackle)	-15.4%
Workout at Club	-22.5%	Workout at Club	-16.1%
		Softball	-19.4%

Over the last 10 years, key areas of program growth have occurred in fitness-related activities. Many of the declines in participation are related to traditional team sports such as baseball, football, basketball, and softball. Pickleball has not been included as it has only been tracked for the last 3 to 4 years.

Non-Sport Participation Statistics

It is important to note that participation rates in non-sport activities. While there is not an abundance of information available for participation in these types of activities as compared to sport activities, there are statistics that can be utilized to help determine the market for cultural arts activities and events.

There are many ways to measure a nation’s cultural vitality. One way is to chart the public’s involvement with arts events and other activities over time. The NEA’s Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) remains the largest periodic study of arts participation in the United States. It tracks various arts activities that Americans (aged 18 and over) report having done in a year. It also asks questions about adults’ preferences for different kinds of music, and it seeks to understand participation in non-arts leisure events such as sports and exercise, outdoor activities, and civic and social affairs.

The NEA provides insight into how Americans are spending their time with art and art-like activities. The SPPA is the nation’s largest, most representative survey of adult patterns of arts participation in the United States. The NEA completes its survey on only an occasional basis with the last 3 years being 2012, 2017, and 2022.





Table F – Non-Sports Population in Dubuque Adult Participation

Activity	Rate of Participation	Population
Attend a live music, theater, or dance performance	23.20%	15,416
Attend an Art Exhibit	20.20%	9,671
Visit historic neighborhoods, parks, or monuments	30.80%	14,746
Read novels, short stories, poetry, or plays	39.90%	19,102
Use a device to watch, listen to, or download art	55.30%	26,475
Do leatherwork, metalwork, or woodwork	6.50%	3,112
Do weaving/crocheting	9.20%	4,405
Play a musical instrument	9.60%	4,596
Perform or practice signing	7.90%	3,782
Take photographs	10.40%	4,979
Create visual art	8.10%	3,878
Do creative writing	4.90%	2,346

National Figures

Table G – Percentage of U.S. Adult Attending a Performing Arts Activity at Least Once in the Past 12 Months

Music	2012	2017	2022	Rate of Change	
				2012-2022	2017-2022
Outdoor Performing Arts Festival	20.8%	24.2%	18.7%	-2.1%	-5.5%
Jazz	8.1%	8.6%	6.3%	-1.8%	-2.3%
Classical Music	8.8%	8.6%	4.6%	-4.2%	-4.0%
Latin Music	5.1%	5.9%	3.9%	-1.2%	-2.0%
Opera	2.1%	2.2%	0.7%	-1.4%	-1.5%

Plays	2012	2017	2022	Rate of Change	
				2012-2022	2017-2022
Musical Plays	15.2%	16.5%	10.3%	-4.9%	-6.2%
Non-Musical Plays	8.3%	9.4%	4.5%	-3.8%	-4.9%

Dance	2012	2017	2022	Rate of Change	
				2012-2022	2017-2022
Ballet	5.6%	6.3%	3.3%	-2.3%	-3.0%
Other Dance	2.7%	3.1%	2.0%	-0.7%	-1.1%

- Following a minimal increase in almost all arts attendance that occurred from 2012-2017, participation rates decreased from 2017-2022.
- Changes in the U.S. demographic composition appear to have contributed to performing arts attendance. Still, various subgroups of Americans have decreased attendance rates for individual art forms. COVID-19 played its role in the decrease in participation as well. The most popular site to attend in-person arts events was an open-air facility (parks, pavilions, amphitheaters) at 17.1%. The next venue is restaurants, bars, nightclubs and coffee shops (10.3%) with the remainder fairly equal including schools, churches, community centers, and libraries.
- Those who attended learned about the event most frequently through social media (17.0%), then through friends (14.7%), with traditional media next (11.3%).

Table H – Percentage of U.S. Adults Attending Visual Arts Activities and Events

	2012	2017	2022	Rate of Change	
				2012-2022	2017-2022
Parks/Historical Buildings	22.4%	28.3%	26.0%	+3.6%	-2.3%
Art Museums/Galleries	21.0%	23.7%	17.7%	-3.3%	-6.0%
Craft/Visual Arts Festivals	23.9%	23.8%	17.1%	-6.8%	-6.7%

- Art Museums/Galleries and Parks/Historical Buildings attendance has increased from 2012 to 2017 but decreased in 2022.
- Craft/Visual Arts Festivals have seen a decline between 2012-2022.

Reading Books and Literature

Table I – Reading Activity

	2012	2017	2022	Rate of Change	
				2012-2022	2017-2022
Read any Book, Non-required	54.6%	52.7%	48.5%	-6.1%	-4.2%
Literature	47.0%	44.2%	39.6%	-7.4%	-4.6%
Novels and Short Stories	45.2%	41.8%	37.6%	-7.6%	-4.2%
Plays	2.9%	3.7%	2.4%	-0.5%	-1.3%
Poetry	6.7%	11.7%	9.2%	+2.5%	-2.5%

Table J – Percent of U.S. Adults Who Read and/or Listened to Books in 2022

	Percentage
Read Books and/or Listened to Audiobooks	51.9%
Read Books	48.5%
Listened to Audiobooks	18.5%



Table K – Percentage of U.S. Adults Who Read Literary Works and/or Listened to Them via Streaming, Broadcasts, or Recordings in 2022

	Read	Listened via Media	Read and/or Listened via Media
Novels or short stories	37.6%	17.6%	43.2%
Poetry	9.2%	4.8%	11.5%
Plays	2.4%	N/A	N/A

- Read any Book (non-required), Literature, and Novels and Short Stories have seen a decline between 2012 and 2022. In 2022, fewer than 50 percent of adults read any book (in print or electronically) in the previous 12 months. This rate is four and six points lower than in 2017 and 2012.
- Plays and Poetry saw an increase between 2012 to 2017, but decreased 2017 to 2022.

Consuming Art Through Electronic Media

Table L – Percent of U.S. Adults Who Consumed Art via Electronic or Digital Media

	2017	2022	Rate of Change
Watched or listened to other kinds of music	65.2%	63.0%	-2.2%
Watched or listened to documentaries of any kind	N/a	37.0%	N/a
Watched or listened to programs, podcasts, or other video or audio content about music, dance, or theater	N/a	18.4%	N/a
Watched or listened to jazz music	20.0%	16.3%	-3.7%
Watched or listened to Latin, Spanish, or salsa music	18.5%	16.8%	-2.7%
Watched or listened to classical music or opera	20.6%	14.3%	-6.3%
Watched or listened to programs, podcasts, or other video or audio content about books or writers	19.1%	13.6%	-5.5%
Viewed art via device	16.0%	11.1%	-5.9%
Watched or listened to theater productions	16.2%	11.0%	-5.2%
Watched or listened to dance performances	14.1%	9.9%	-4.2%
Watched or listened to programs, podcasts, or other video or audio content about the visual arts	14.0%	9.0%	-5.0%
Viewed or interacted with an art exhibit or performance via device in a museum, theater, or concert hall	16.0%	7.1%	-8.9%

- Sixty-three percent of adults used media in 2022 to listen to music other than jazz music, Latin, Spanish, or salsa music, or classical music or opera.
- In 2022, 14 percent of adults consumed programs or podcasts about books or writers in 2022.

Making and Sharing Art

Table M – Percent of U.S. Adults Who Performed or Created Art, by Selected Activities

	2017	2022	Rate of Change
Do social dancing, including dancing at weddings, clubs, or other social settings	24.0%	21.8%	-2.2%
Sing alone, in a social gathering, or in a group or choir	25.4%	20.2%	-4.2%
Take photographs as an artistic activity	13.8%	13.3%	-0.5%
Do weaving, crocheting, quilting, needlepoint, knitting, or sewing	11.7%	11.7%	--
Play a musical instrument	10.9%	11.4%	+0.5%
Create other visual art	13.4%	10.7%	-2.4%
Create leatherwork, metalwork, or woodwork	6.6%	9.0%	+2.4%
Do creative writing, such as fiction, non-fiction, poetry, or plays	6.6%	6.9%	-0.3%
Create any performance or work of visual art using a computer or mobile device	3%	4.5%	+1.5%
Create pottery, ceramics, or jewelry	4.1%	4.4%	-0.3%
Create films or videos as an artistic activity	5.2%	4.0%	-1.2%
Play a musical instrument with one or more partners, a band, orchestra, or other music group	3.9%	3.0%	-0.9%
Perform or practice dance	3.5%	2.0%	-1.5%
Design, code, or create any games, software, or tools	N/a	2.0%	--
Do acting	2.3%	1.6%	-0.7%

- The proportion of adults singing declined from 2017 to 2022, by five percentage points.
- Social dancing took the place of singing as the most popular activity across all forms of personal arts performance and creation.

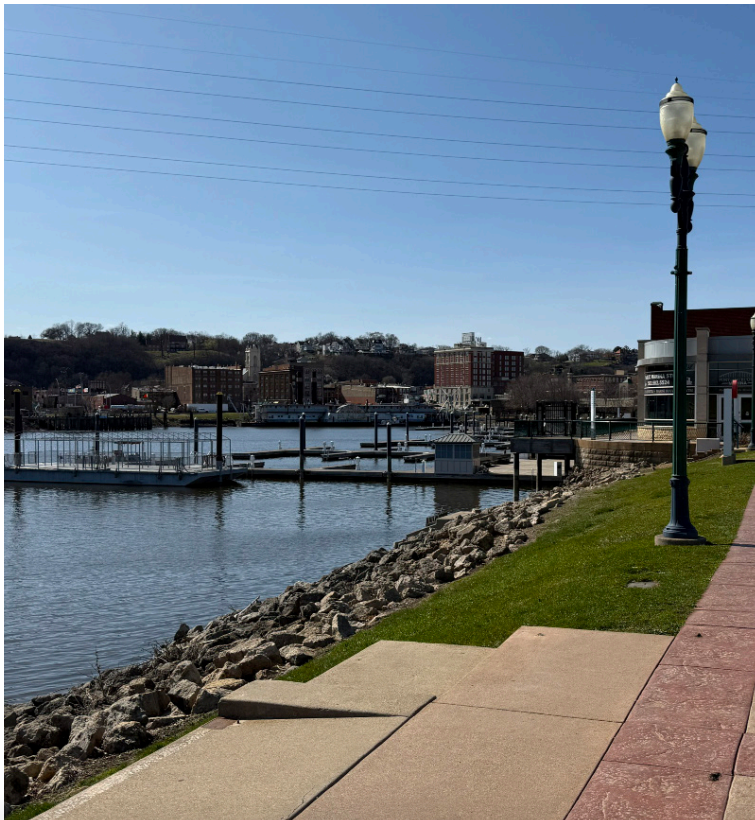


Participating in Arts Learning

Table M – Percent of U.S. Adults Who Learned an Art Form 2022

	Who Took Classes or Lessons	Who Learned by Other Means	Who Learned Either Through Class/Lesson or Other Means
Any Arts Subject	11.8%	25.5%	29.1%
Music	3.8%	12.1%	14.2%
Dance	2.1%	6.7%	8.0%
Photography or filmmaking	1.8%	6.6%	7.4%
Other visual arts	2.6%	6.4%	7.1%
Art history or art or music appreciation	2.1%	5.8%	6.9%
Creative coding, computer animation, or digital art	2.3%	4.1%	4.8%
Creative writing	1.9%	3.6%	4.7%
Acting or theater	0.8%	1.7%	2.1%

- Just under 4 percent of adults learned vocal or instrumental music through classes or lessons, while 12 percent learned through other means (e.g., through friends, as part of a family tradition, or teaching oneself).
- Six percent of adults took classes or lessons in photography, while 2 percent learned through other means.
- Whether through classes/lessons or other means, nearly 5 percent of adults learned about computer animation, creative coding, or digital art making.







## Chapter 2

### Parks

*Every Story Needs  
A Good Setting*



Dubuque  
Parks and Recreation  
Comprehensive Plan



## INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The City of Dubuque Park Division manages over 1,200 acres of parkland and over 300 facilities, from iconic outdoor areas like the Veterans Memorial Plaza at McAleece Park and Eagle Point Park to small neighborhood parks and parks and pavilions rentals. Dubuque's location along the Mississippi River at the junction of Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin, along with its rich history and cultural opportunities, give the city a unique flavor as a regional tourism destination. Whether it's a stroll along the Mississippi at Miller Riverview Park, a game of adaptive T-ball at Veteran's Memorial Park, or a wintertime skate at the outdoor ice rink, opportunities to get outside abound within Dubuque.

Assessing and inventorying the current park system's assets is a crucial phase in the development of the master plan. By conducting a thorough inventory, the Plan can identify gaps in service, areas needing improvements, and where resources are allocated effectively and are meeting the needs of the community. An in-person audit of each park was conducted between April and August 2025, which included photos, inventory, and assessment of every park asset based on location, quantity, and quality.



## FINDINGS

### ***Conditions and Maintenance***

Dubuque contains some truly stand-out parks with creative new playgrounds, boldly painted basketball courts, and access to scenic natural beauty. However, many of the established parks contain aging assets that are heading toward or are at the end of their life cycle. Some of these aging assets, such as heavily rusted benches or play equipment and lack of wood fiber chips in play areas, are becoming hazards to public safety. Ongoing issues like asphalt court cracking, turf mowing, or public pool leaks can be difficult to keep up with as new projects appear. With many parks closed to the public during winter, maintenance cycles run with the changing seasons and spring can be an incredibly busy time. A deeper dive into maintenance conditions and recommendations is contained later within this chapter.

### ***ADA Compliance***

It is advisable that the City conduct a comprehensive Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance review; this effort would involve inspecting existing facilities, performing self-evaluations and updating the transition plan necessary to adhere to ADA standards and regulations for accessible parks and facilities. Although a thorough ADA compliance review was not included in this assessment, on-site investigations revealed many potential areas for attention, particularly with parking lots, sidewalks, and playground surfacing. The vast majority of Dubuque's parks do not meet ADA compliance standards and requirements. Lack of paved circulation routes throughout parks, amenities on steep hillsides without stairs or easy access, and inaccessible seating were frequently noted.

### ***Buildings and Facilities***

Dubuque's park system contains incredible structures and buildings constructed by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s Prairie-style park architecture golden age within Eagle Point Park, historic estates at Four Mounds Estate and Ham House, and many other pavilions constructed over the last century throughout other parks. Keeping up with maintenance and preservation care on aging structures is a difficult task to fund and implement, made trickier to navigate with certain historic and cultural designations.

The 2025 Historic Structures Report examined the Alfred Caldwell-designed structures within Eagle Point Park. A full conditions assessment for structures was not conducted as part of this project; only visual inspections were performed. It is advised that the City initiate an assessment for all of its facilities that ascertains condition, averages remaining useful life expectancy, examines possible code violations and deficiencies and the impact of structure or occupancy, and outlines required maintenance, repair, costs for deficit conditions using nationally recognized estimated standards, and possible funding strategies and scheduling.



## Connectivity and Wayfinding

While parks are distributed across the city, and approximately half of the city’s land is within a ten-minute walk of a park. Trails route through the eastern and western edges of the city and connect some parks, but lack central access, greater connectivity, and an overall loop. Many parks were constructed at different times, so more uniform signage and unifying elements or plant palettes across parks will make the system as a whole feel more cohesive.

### Overall Impressions

- Dubuque has many distinct park points of pride for the community that anchor different parts of the city (such as Eagle Point, Comiskey Park, McAleece Park and Recreation Complex, and Miracle League Complex at Veterans Memorial Park).
- Park gaps occur mostly in the north and southwestern edges of the City, with much of the core of the City within a 10-minute walk of a park.
- Dubuque’s unique relationship with the Mississippi allows for iconic views and recreation opportunities in parks along the eastern edge of the city.
- Some parks could be easily perceived as being part of residential developments and not for general public use due to location, street parking only, etc.
- Some pocket parks do not have any amenities or are simply grass medians or wooded areas; opportunities exist to add benches and make them more usable space, or to reclassify them.
- Many park assets are nearing the end of their life cycles and should be replaced or removed quickly to maximize public safety.
- Lots of turf exists at each park; opportunities to revert slopes and unused areas to native prairie or woodland could cut down on mow time and irrigation costs each year, as well as provide habitat, educational, and sustainability value.
- Circulation routes throughout most parks do not exist or are not ADA compliant.
- Opportunities exist to unify signage across the parks system (monument, rules and regulations, and wayfinding).
- Neighborhood Parks in areas with redundant parks within a 10-minute walk should be considered for re-purposing to passive recreation spaces or special uses such as neighborhood dog parks.

## Inventory and Assessment Summary

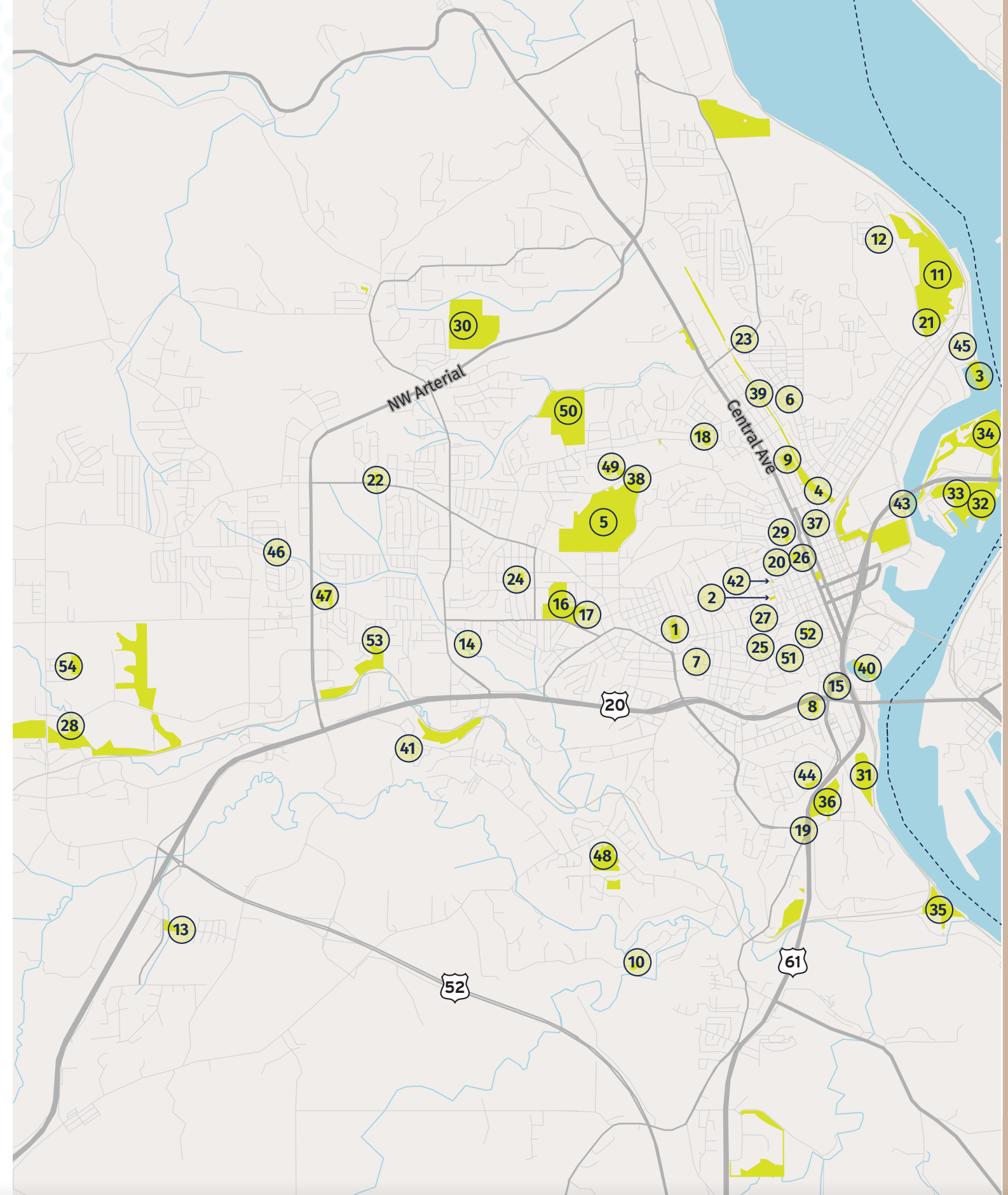
PARK	ACRES
AY McDonald Park	8.0
Bee Branch Greenway	55.0
Bee Branch Greenway	55.0
Eagle Point Park	175.0
E.B Lyons Prairie and Woodland Preserve	89.0
Flora Park	35.0
Granger Creek Nature Trail	34.0
Heritage Trail	9.6
John G Bergfeld Recreation Area	73
Marshall Park/Dubuque Arboretum and Botanical Garden	50.0
Maus Park	8.9
McAleece Park and Recreation Complex	42.0
Medical Associates Greenbelt	33.0
Miller Riverview Park	20.0
Murphy Park	80.0
Port of Dubuque Marina	5.4
Sister City International Park	0.4
Veterans' Memorial Park	73.0
Washington Park	1.0
Pet Park	2.5
Bunker Hill Golf Course	110.0
Avon Park	1.0
Burden Park	1.0
Cancer Survivor Park	0.5
Cleveland Park	4.0
Eagle Valley Park	2.25
Elmwood Green Park	0.2
Falk Park	1.0
Flat Iron Park	1.0
Grant Park	0.2
Harvest View Park	2.1
Hillcrest Park	2.0
Hilltop Park	1.0
Jackson Park	2.0

PARK	ACRES
Jefferson Park	0.5
Madison Park	3.0
Marna Ridge Children's Forest	4.0
Orange Park	0.23
Pinard Park	0.5
Riley Park	0.5
Rocco Buda Jr. Park	0.1
Southern Park	2.0
Teddy Bear Park	1.0
Waller-Cooper Park	0.5
Welu Park	0.5
Allison-Henderson Park	5.0
Comiskey Park	4.0
Creek Wood Park	1.0
English Ridge Park	4
Gay Park	9.0
Rustic Point Park	0.9
Usha Park	8.0
Valentine Park	11.0
Valley High Park	6.0
Westbrook Park	5.2
Center Grove Open Space	12.93
Grandview Green Space	0.5
Ham House Historic Site	2.7
Oakwood Park	5.0



## PARKS

- |                            |   |                                   |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Allison-Henderson Park   | 23 Heritage Trail   | 42 Rocco Buda Jr. Park            |
| 2 Avon Park                | 24 Hillcrest Park   | 43 Sister City International Park |
| 3 AY McDonald Park         | 25 Hilltop Park   | 44 Southern Park                  |
| 4 Bee Branch Greenway      | 26 Jackson Park   | 45 Sutton Pool                    |
| 5 Bunker Hill Golf Course  | 27 Jefferson Park   | 46 Teddy Bear Park                |
| 6 Burden Park              | 28 John G Bergfeld Recreation Area                        | 47 Usha Park                      |
| 7 Cancer Survivor Park     | 29 Madison Park   | 48 Valentine Park                 |
| 8 Cleveland Park           | 30 Marshall Park/Dubuque Arboretum & Botanical Garden     | 49 Valley High Park               |
| 9 Comiskey Park            | 31 Maus Park  | 50 Veterans' Memorial Park        |
| 10 Creek Wood Park         | 32 McAleece Park and Recreation Complex                   | 51 Waller-Cooper Park             |
| 11 Eagle Point Park        | 33 McAleece Park and Recreation Complex Veterans Memorial | 52 Washington Park                |
| 12 Eagle Valley Park       | 34 Miller Riverview Park                                  | 53 Welu Park                      |
| 13 English Ridge Park      | 35 Mines of Spain   | 54 Westbrook Park                 |
| 14 Falk Park               | 36 Murphy Park  |                                   |
| 15 Flat Iron Park          | 37 Orange Park  |                                   |
| 16 Flora Park              | 38 Pet Park   |                                   |
| 17 Flora Pool              | 39 Pinard Park  |                                   |
| 18 Gay Park                | 40 Port of Dubuque Marina                                 |                                   |
| 19 Grandview Green Space   | 41 Riley Park   |                                   |
| 20 Grant Park              |   |                                   |
| 21 Ham House Historic Site |   |                                   |
| 22 Harvest View Park       |   |                                   |





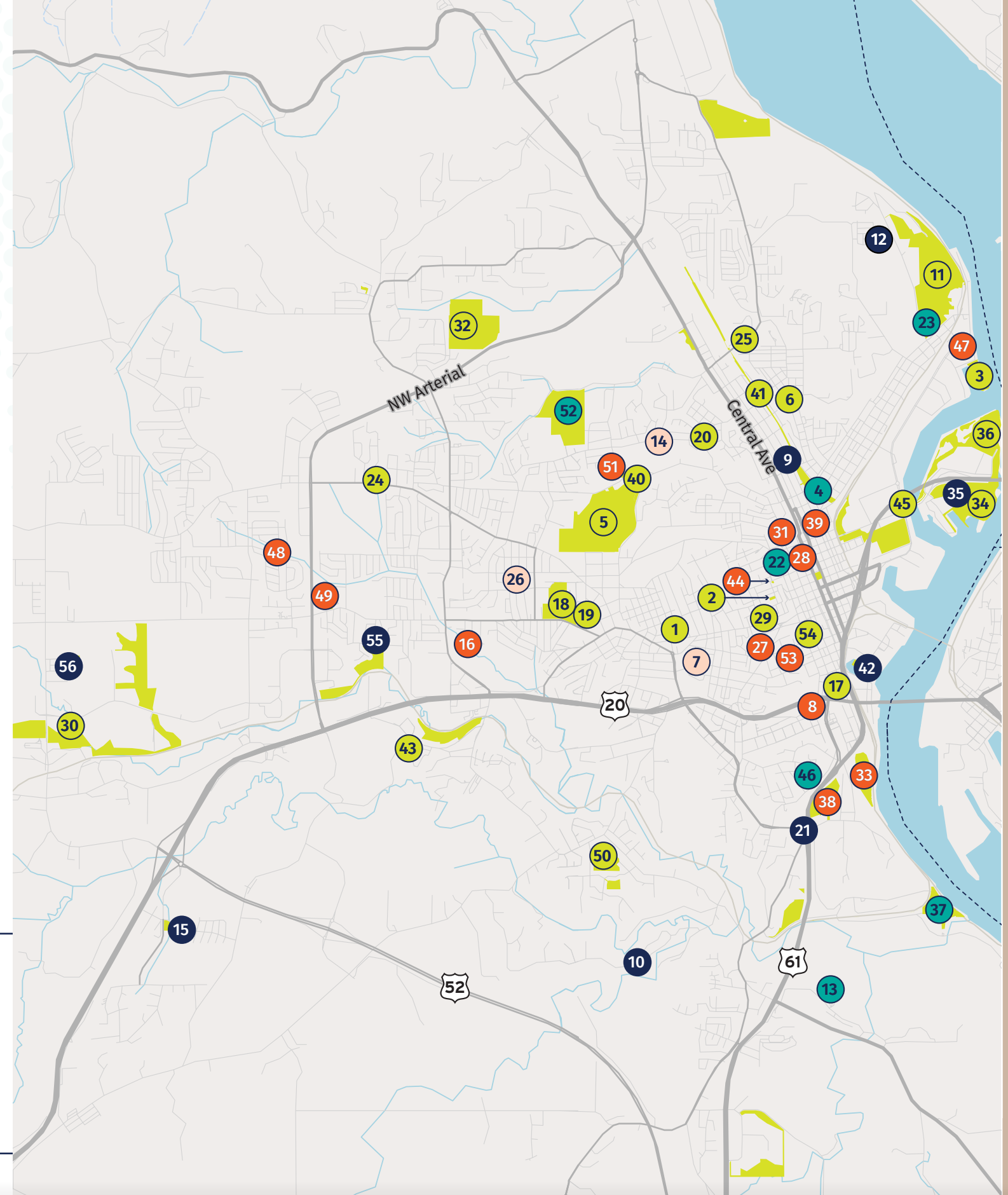
# PARKS

- 1 Allison-Henderson Park
- 2 Avon Park
- 3 AY McDonald Park
- 4 Bee Branch Greenway
- 5 Bunker Hill Golf Course
- 6 Burden Park
- 7 Cancer Survivor Park
- 8 Cleveland Park
- 9 Comiskey Park
- 10 Creek Wood Park
- 11 Eagle Point Park
- 12 Eagle Valley Park
- 13 EB Lyons Nature Preserve
- 14 Elmwood Green Park
- 15 English Ridge Park
- 16 Falk Park
- 17 Flat Iron Park
- 18 Flora Park
- 19 Flora Pool
- 20 Gay Park
- 21 Grandview Green Space
- 22 Grant Park
- 23 Ham House Historic Site
- 24 Harvest View Park
- 25 Heritage Trail
- 26 Hillcrest Park
- 27 Hilltop Park
- 28 Jackson Park
- 29 Jefferson Park
- 30 John G Bergfeld Recreation Area
- 31 Madison Park
- 32 Marshall Park/Dubuque Arboretum & Botanical Garden
- 33 Maus Park
- 34 McAleece Park and Recreation Complex
- 35 McAleece Park and Recreation Complex Veterans Memorial
- 36 Miller Riverview Park
- 37 Mines of Spain
- 38 Murphy Park
- 39 Orange Park
- 40 Pet Park
- 41 Pinard Park
- 42 Port of Dubuque Marina

- 43 Riley Park
- 44 Rocco Buda Jr. Park
- 45 Sister City International Park
- 46 Southern Park
- 47 Sutton Pool
- 48 Teddy Bear Park
- 49 Usha Park
- 50 Valentine Park
- 51 Valley High Park
- 52 Veterans' Memorial Park
- 53 Waller-Cooper Park
- 54 Washington Park
- 55 Welu Park
- 56 Westbrook Park

## Legend:

- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 3
- Level 4
- Level 5





Evaluation Methodology

The quality of each asset within the overall City system is an important factor when evaluating the current level of service (LOS) provided. Parks that are not properly maintained, have exceeded their lifecycle, and/or do not provide a certain quality of experience to the user will not attract park visitors. By examining how each park compares to one another, department management and staff can evaluate and prioritize park improvement projects and identify gaps in coverage across the entire City system. The quality of each asset was assessed as a part of the on-site review and inventory, including quantity of each asset within each park as well as condition and quality.

For each asset, a grading standard has been assigned to the observed amenities within it. These scores are qualitative in nature and are determined based on the observations of the personnel conducting the field inventory. These categories were evaluated based on the individual asset's condition as opposed to the overall system during the inventory. If the amenity and/or facility was noted to exist in a condition well below that of similar equipment within other parks, then it was noted within the matrix as such. The number values then were used to provide a numerical score for the park based on the number of opportunities and quality of opportunities offered.



Grading Standard 1: Currently Critical

Conditions in this category require immediate action to:

- Correct a safety hazard
- Stop accelerated deterioration
- Return a facility/system to operational status

Grading Standard 2: Potentially Critical

Conditions in this category, if not corrected expeditiously, will become critical soon.

Situations within this category include:

- Potential for a critical safety hazard
- Potential for accelerated deterioration that would cause need for immediate action in the near future
- The need to replace or return a facility/system to operational status soon

Grading Standard 3: Necessary, but Not Yet Critical

Conditions in this category require appropriate attention to preclude predictable deterioration and associated damage or higher costs if deferred further.

Grading Standard 4: Recommended

Conditions in this category include items that represent a sensible improvement to existing conditions, include finishes that have deteriorated and are required to maintain the required aesthetic standards. These are not required for the most basic functioning of the facility.

Grading Standard 5: Early in Lifecycle

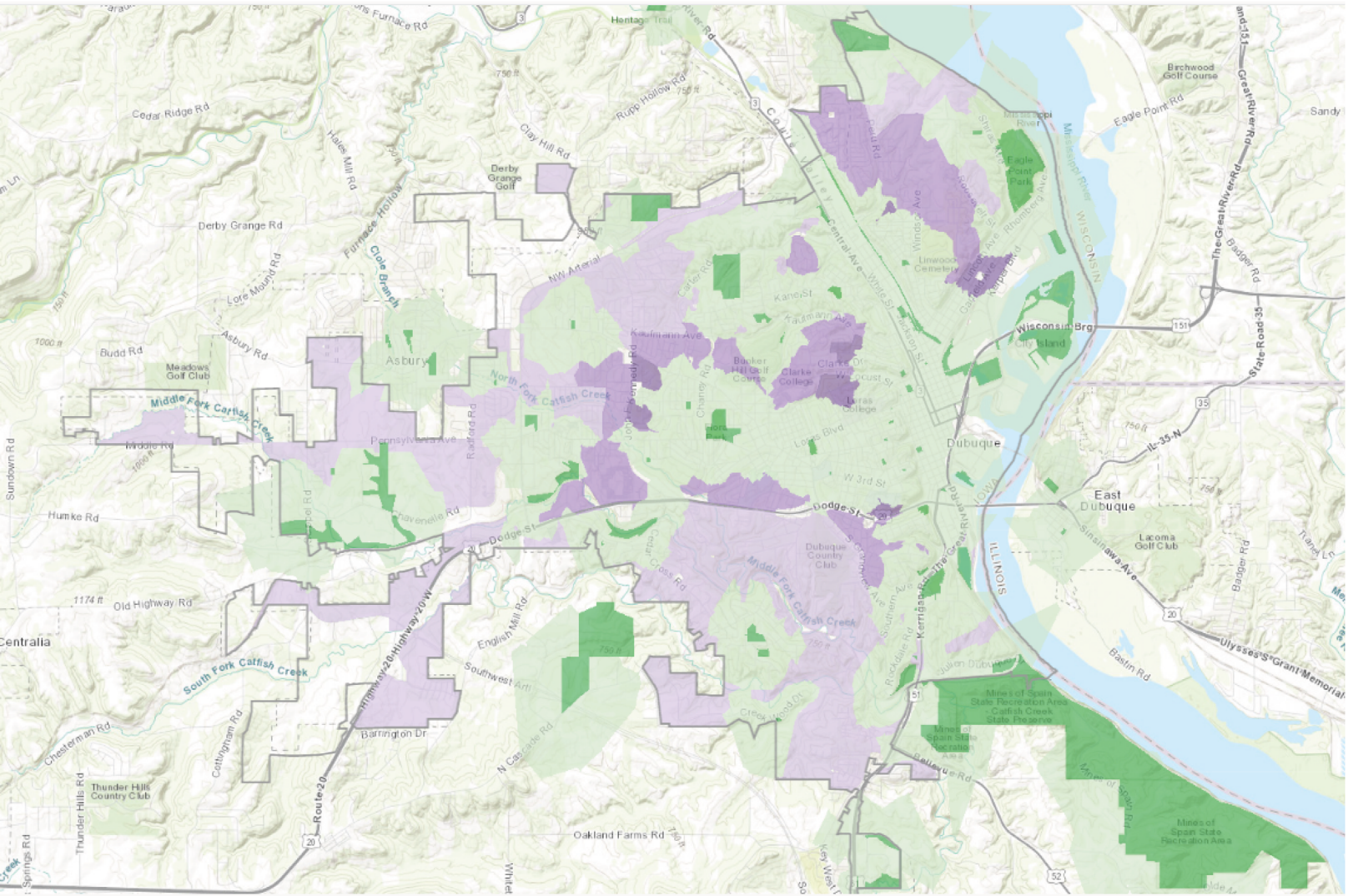
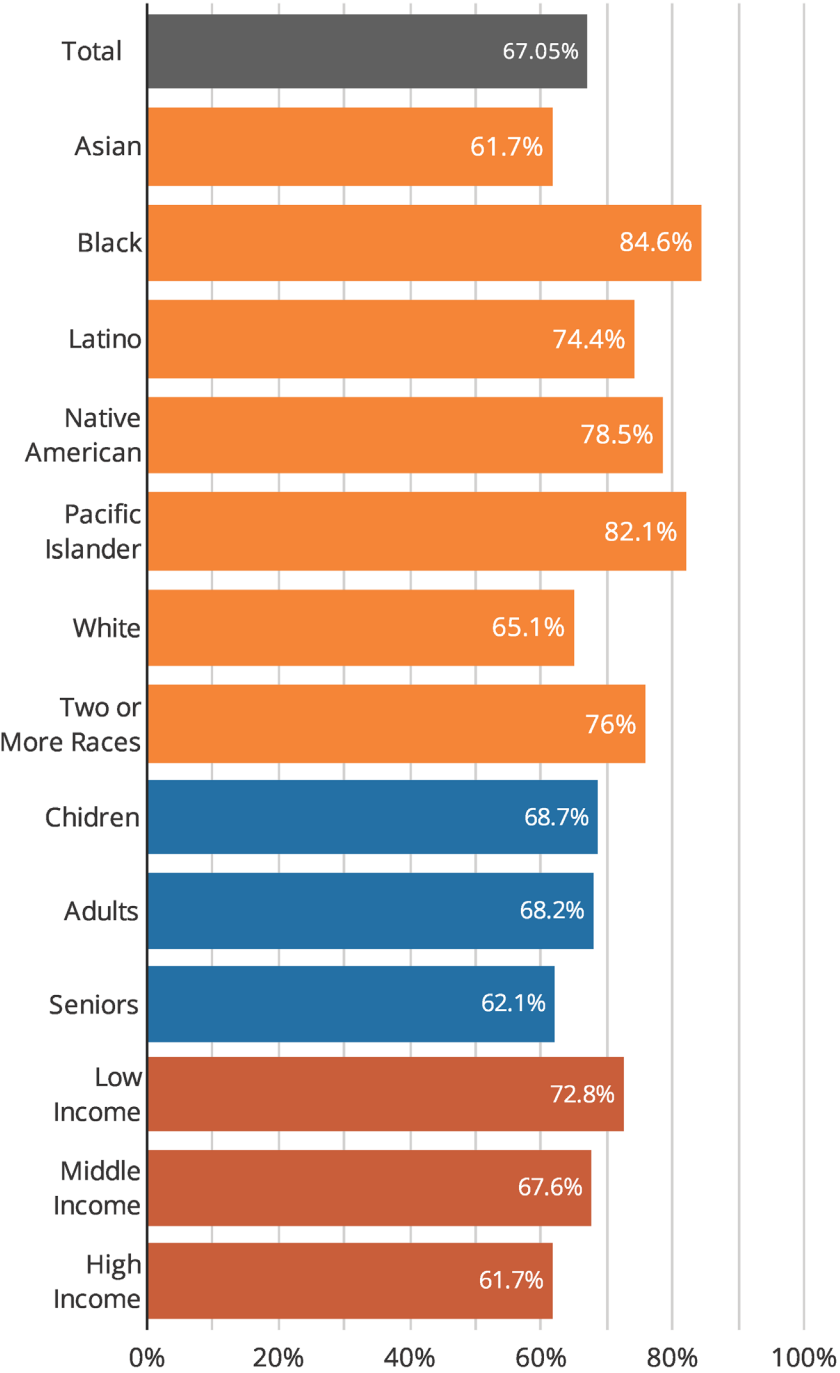
Conditions in this category function properly and are early enough in their lifecycle that improvements are not currently needed. Quality and function seem to be a “like new” condition.

**For full inventory and assessment information, please reference Appendix A.**



# Percent of Population within 10-Minute Walk of a Park, 2021

City of Dubuque



- City Boundary
- Parks
- Service Areas

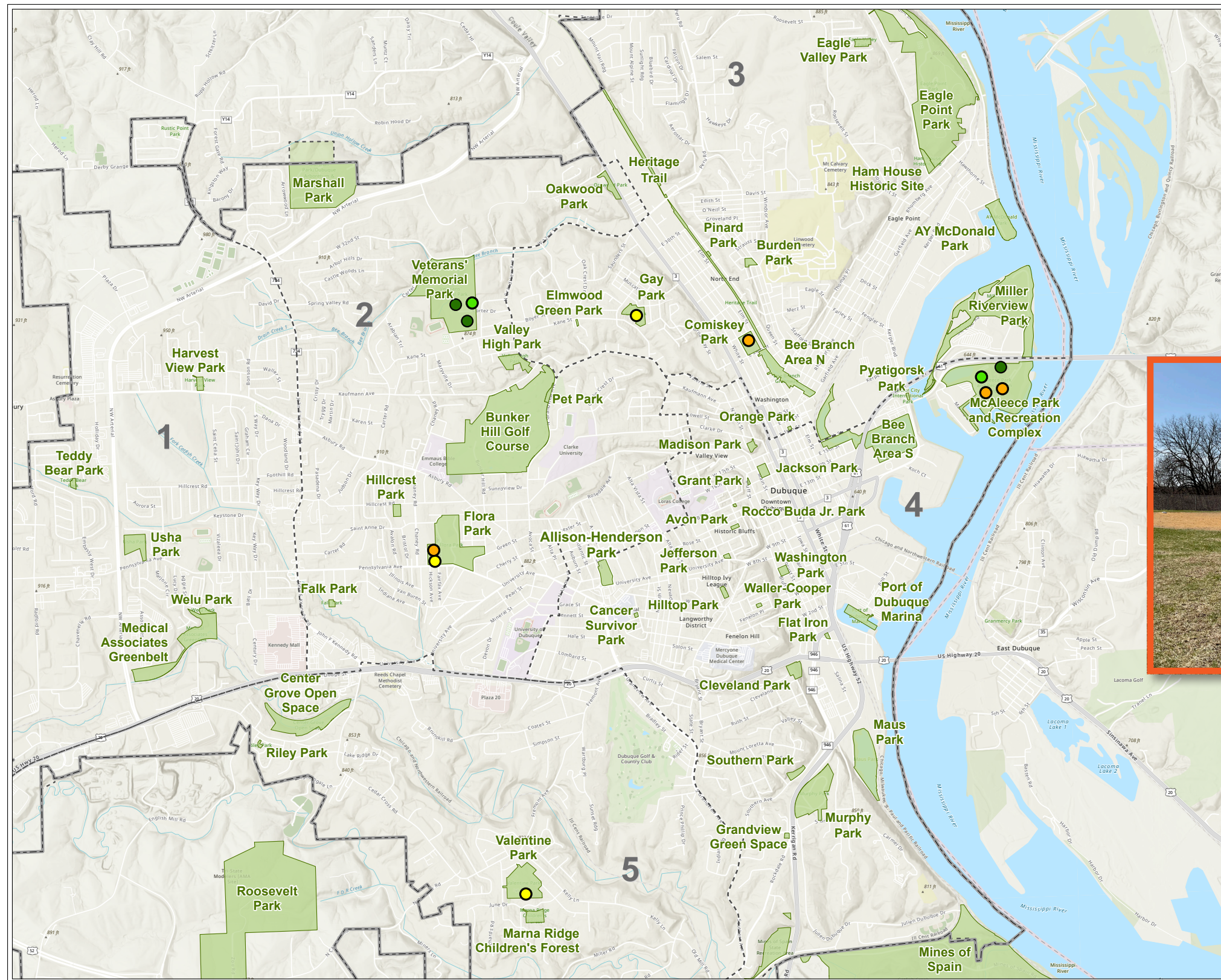
- Priority areas for new parks
- Very high priority
  - High priority
  - Moderate priority



Source: Trust for Public Land, Accessed Through ParkServe Mapping Tool, 2021  
Map is taken from ParkServe Mapping Tool. "Service Areas" refers to areas with access to a park within 10-minutes walking distance. Priority area for new parks refers to those areas without walking services to a park.



# BALL FIELDS CONDITION ASSESSMENT MAP



## City of Dubuque

Condition Map (Ball Fields)

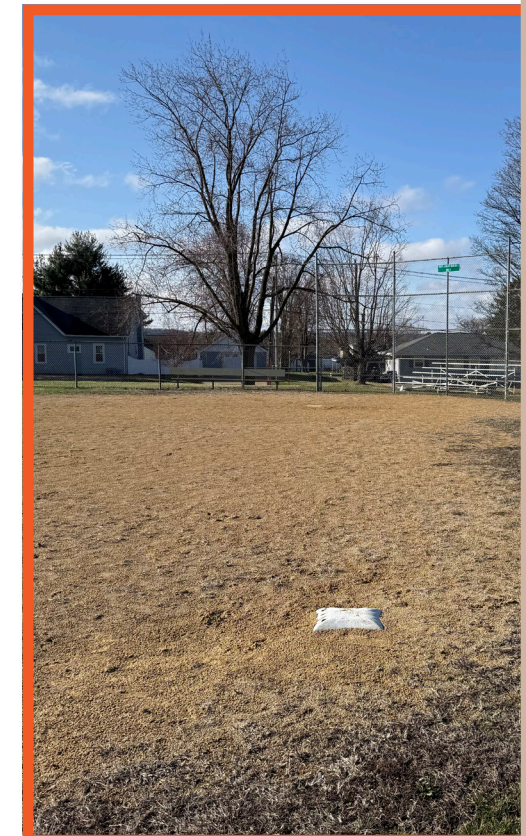
- City Limits
- Ward Boundary
- City Park



### Condition

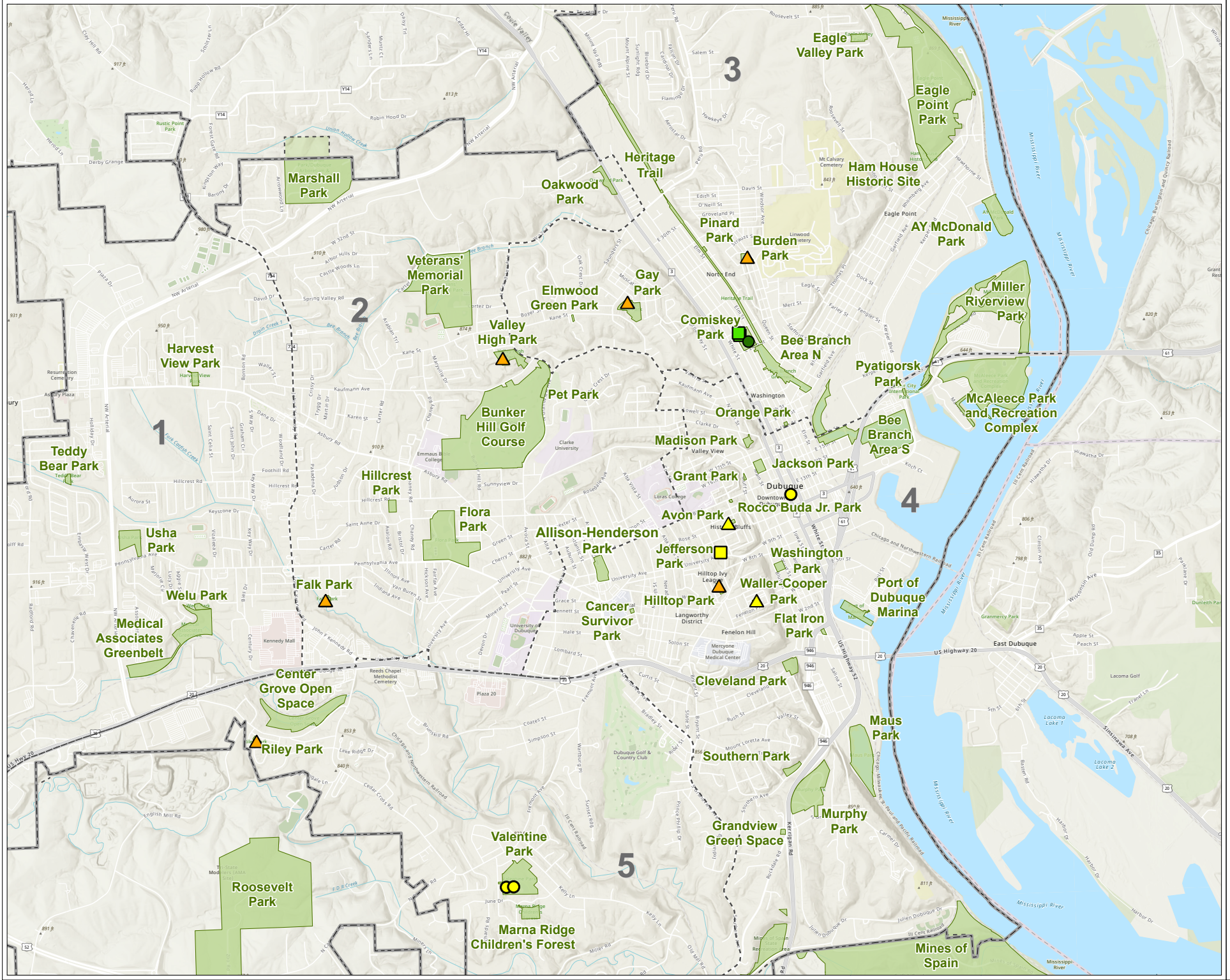
#### Ball Fields

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Fair
- Poor





# BASKETBALL COURT CONDITION ASSESSMENT MAP



City of Dubuque  
Condition Map (Basketball Court)

- City Limits

Ward Boundary

City Park
- Condition
- Basketball Court (Full Court)

Excellent

Good

Average

Fair

Poor
- Basketball Court (Half Court)

Excellent

Good

Average

Fair

Poor
- Basketball Court (< Half Court)

Excellent

Good

Average

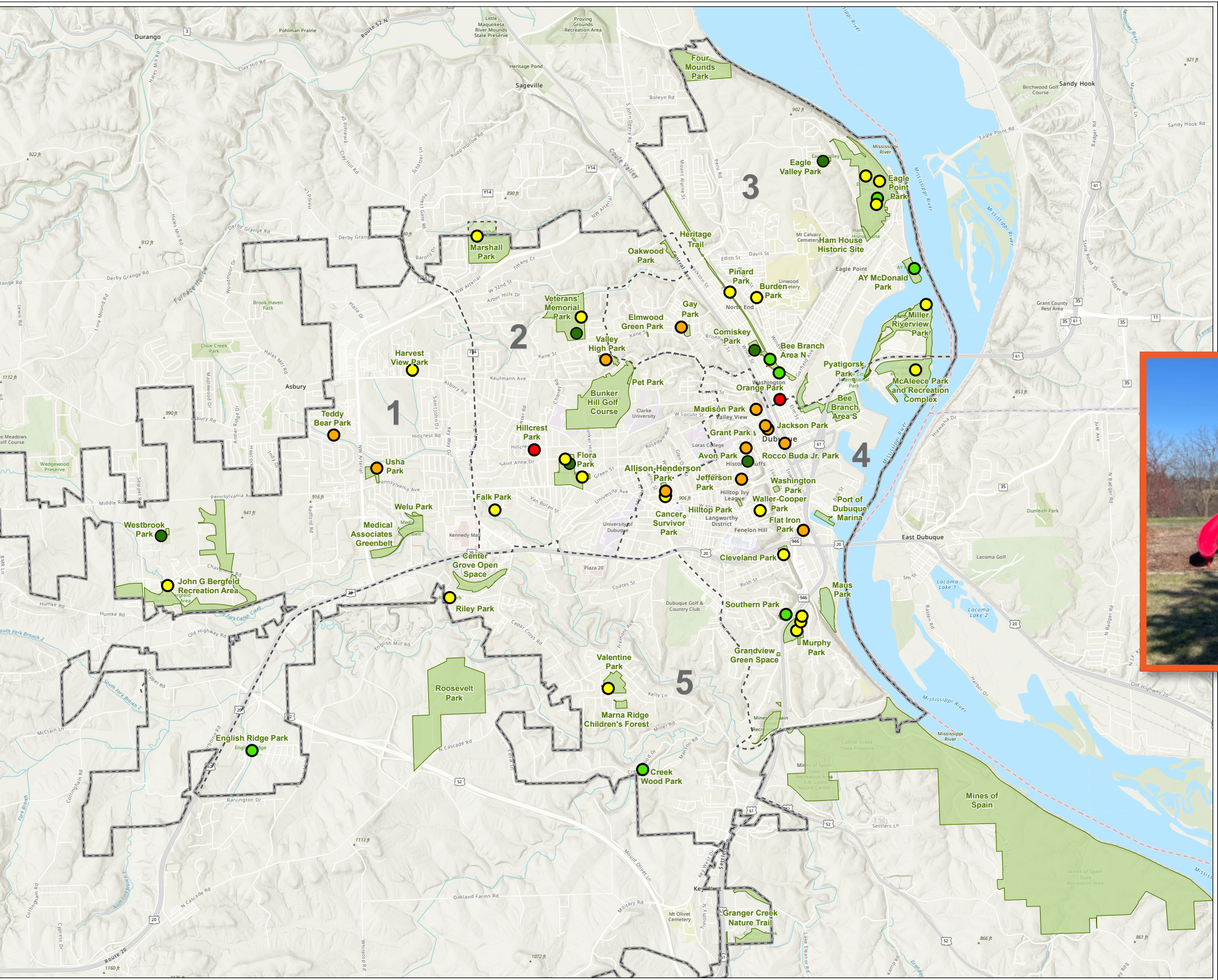
Fair

Poor





# PLAYGROUND CONDITION ASSESSMENT MAP



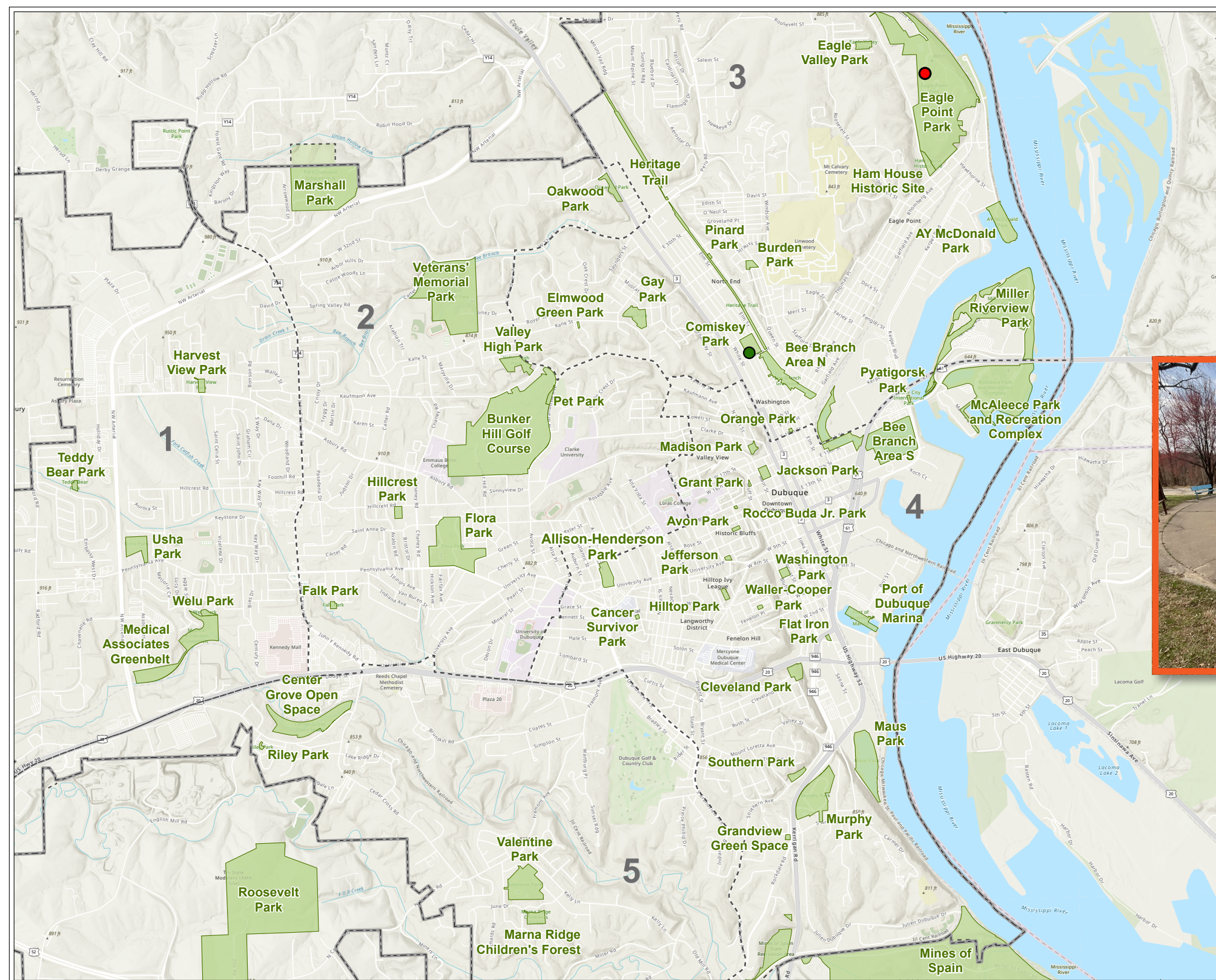
City of Dubuque  
Condition Map (Playground)

- City Limits
- Ward Boundary
- City Park
- Condition**
- Playground**
- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Fair
- Poor













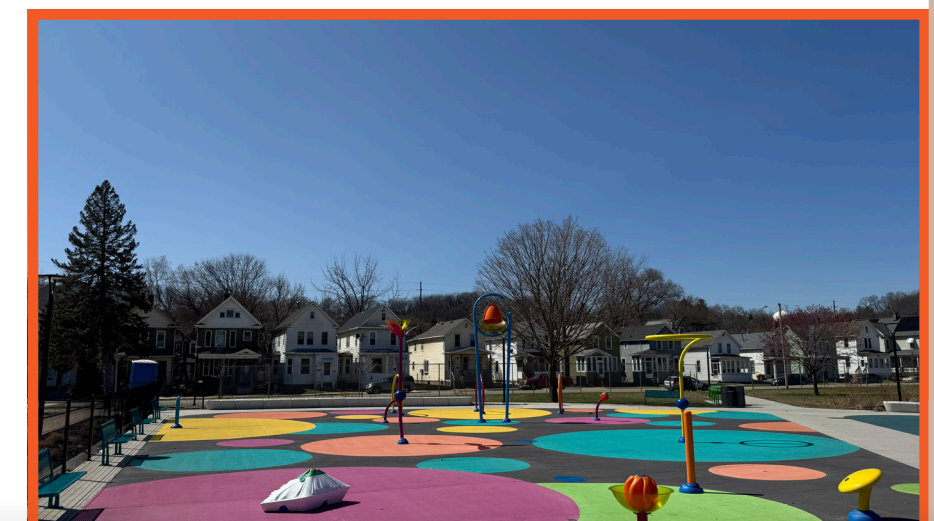
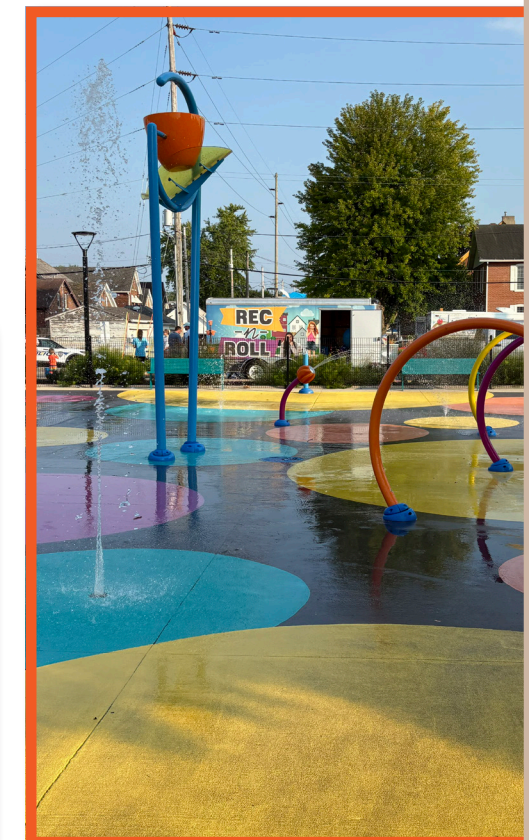
## SPLASH PAD CONDITION ASSESSMENT MAP



City of Dubuque  
Condition Map (Splash Pad)

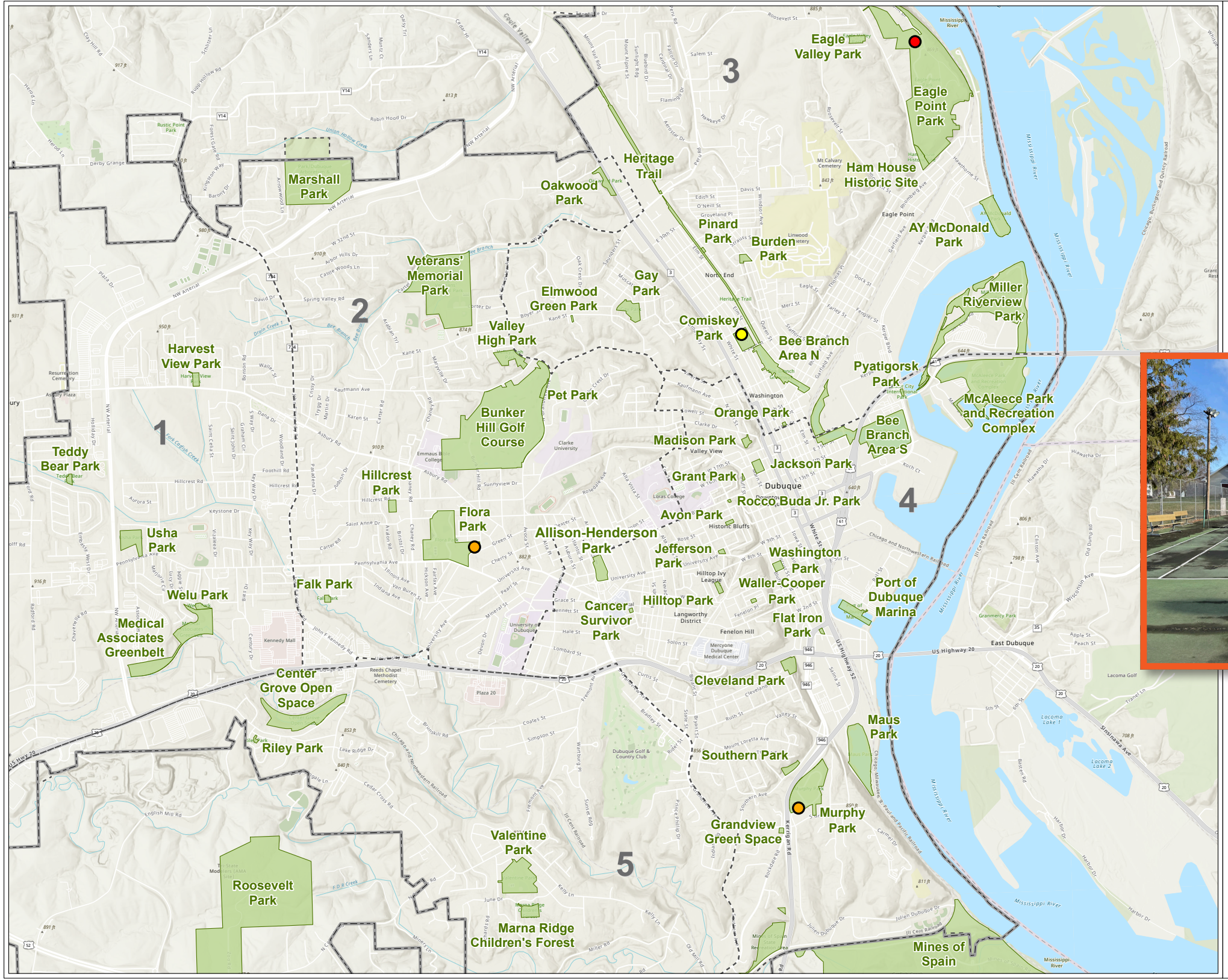


-  City Limits  
 Ward Boundary  
 City Park  
Condition  
*Splash Pad*  
 Excellent  
 Good  
 Average  
 Fair  
 Poor





# TENNIS COURT CONDITION ASSESSMENT MAP



City of Dubuque  
Condition Map (Tennis Court)

- City Limits
- Ward Boundary
- City Park
- Condition**
- Tennis Court**
- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Fair
- Poor





# Park Classifications

A well-rounded parks system offers diverse park and facility types to provide varied parks and recreation experiences to Dubuque residents and visitors. Each park and facility within the system has a set of objectives. A successful classification system categorizes these park types to achieve and maintain the desired objectives for the system overall. The park classification system defines multiple park types with the recognition that individual parks and their offerings may vary. Future park improvements will be guided by these classification descriptions, but ultimately be derived from the needs of the community through a public participation process. The following park classification descriptions are not meant to provide strict rules on what amenities are to be provided but should be used as a guide to ensure the City's parks are activated, accessible, inclusive, and meet the needs of the intended service areas.





**NEIGHBORHOOD PARK:** Neighborhood parks provide primary recreation services and facilities that are easily accessible and available to local residents; serve a single neighborhood or several neighborhoods, depending on location; are preferably located with or next to elementary schools, neighborhood centers, or other gathering places; and are accessed primarily via pedestrians and bicycles.

Other features include:

- **Amenities:** One signature amenity; may include one non-programmed sports field; playgrounds for ages 2-5 and 5-12 with shaded elements; no reservable shelters; loop trails; one type of sport court; benches, small picnic shelters next to play areas.
- **Land usage:** 85 percent active/15 percent passive
- **Programming:** Typically none, but a signature amenity may be included which is programmed

## Neighborhood Parks

Dubuque's neighborhood parks are more compact spaces than community parks and serve smaller, more immediate populations within the city, typically containing amenities like playgrounds, sport courts, and passive recreation spaces. These parks can anchor neighborhoods and provide spaces for residents to gather and enjoy day-to-day recreational activities.

Neighborhood parks within Dubuque vary from urban green spaces like Sister City International Park which focus more on seating and walking loops, to parks tucked within residential neighborhoods like Valentine Park that contain play spaces and sports fields. Some of these more residential parks could easily be mistaken for HOA parks; many do not have dedicated parking nearby and/or are so deep within communities they cause confusion (such as Avon Park, Eagle Valley Park, Harvest View Park, or Falk Park). Others are pockets of vegetated space and have no amenities at all, such as Grant Park. Some parks, originally constructed by residential developers and later transferred to the City, occupy challenging parcels, lack parking, and may present long-term maintenance burdens for Dubuque.

Most of the major safety issues tied to aging assets were noted within neighborhood parks, whose large number and wide distribution across the city complicates maintenance scheduling. Consolidating amenity installation and replacement within highly-trafficked neighborhood parks and community parks could help alleviate budget, staffing, and maintenance issues. In areas of the city with clusters of neighborhood parks exist, consider a conversion from typical neighborhood park amenities to open space and passive recreation and the creation of neighborhood dog parks.





**COMMUNITY PARK:** Community parks centralize a full range of recreational activities for major parts of the city; have the capacity to accommodate large groups; generally feature a community center building designed to meet multi-generational recreation needs, as well as lighted recreation amenities and sport fields/courts; serve several neighborhoods; are preferably located central to a group of neighborhoods and often next to elementary, middle, or high schools; and are accessed primarily by pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles.

Other features include:

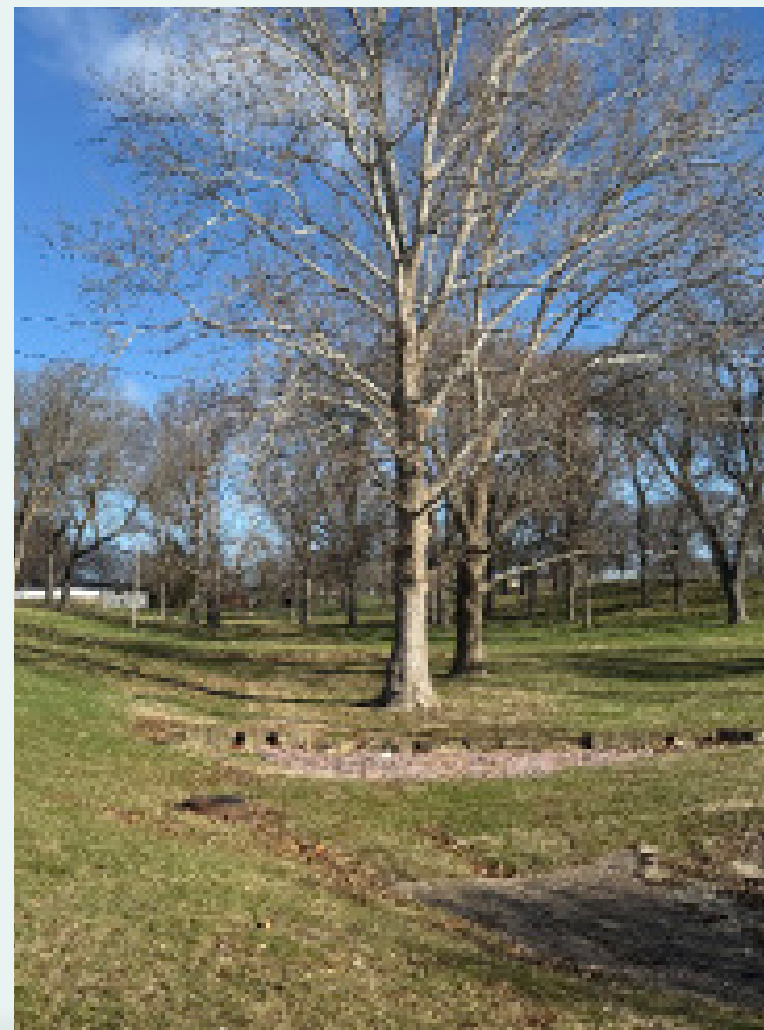
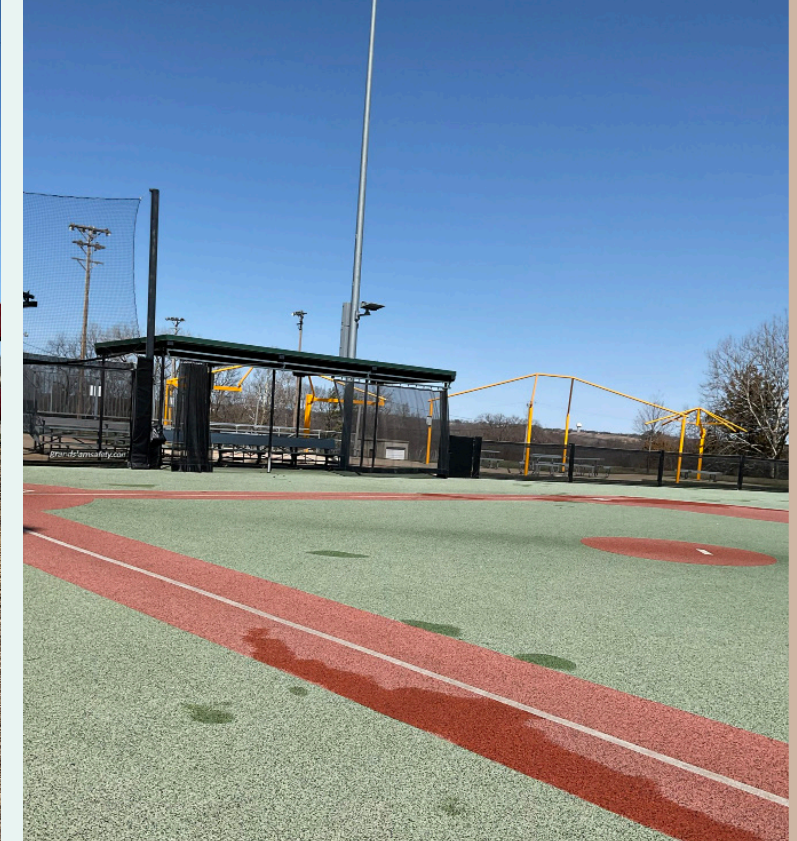
- **Amenities:** Four signature amenities at a minimum; public restrooms with drinking fountains, ample parking, and security lighting. Amenities are ADA compliant. Sport Fields and Sport Complexes are typical at this park.
- **Land usage:** 65 percent active and 35 percent passive
- **Programming:** Minimum of four essential program services

## Community Parks

Dubuque's larger community parks meet diverse needs of the city, and include a range of amenities like sport courts, playgrounds and splash pads, disc golf, passive recreation and fishing areas, pavilions, hockey rink, and skate parks. Community parks serve broader populations and act as hubs for community events, sports leagues, festivals, and civic engagement. These parks provide broad, versatile spaces and uses, and anchor whole portions of the city.

Dubuque's destination community parks include A.Y. McDonald Park, Bee Branch Creek Greenway, Bergfeld Recreation Area, Comiskey Park, Eagle Point Park, Marshall Park & Arboretum and Botanical Garden, Veterans Memorial Plaza & McAleece Park and Recreation Complex, Veterans Memorial Park and Miracle League, and Washington Park. Other community parks include Allison-Henderson Park, Louis Murphy Park, and Flora Krey Wahlert Park.

Community parks within Dubuque vary in condition, mostly due to age. Some older parks contain aging amenities that need repair or replacement, while other newer parks with excellent assets have different challenges such as security and vandalism.





**REGIONAL PARK:** Regional Parks are typically larger than 100 acres in size and serve a very broad range of people throughout the entire city or region. These parks offer large-scale recreational opportunities and frequently offer some passive recreation such as fishing, nature education, or exploration. These large park areas can offer unique recreational opportunities suited to larger areas such as disc golf and bicycle routes while still offering more traditional recreational opportunities like playgrounds, play lawns, athletic complexes, or sport courts. Regional parks may also feature large multi-generational or aquatics facilities to meet year-round indoor recreation needs.

Other features include:

- **Amenities:** 8-12 amenities to create a signature facility; public restrooms with drinking fountains, ample parking, special event site. Sport Fields and Sport Complexes can be part of this park.
- **Revenue facilities:** More than two; park designed to produce some revenue and attract tourism
- **Land usage:** Up to 50 percent active/50 percent passive
- **Programming:** More than four recreation experiences per age segment with at least four core programs provided



## Eagle Point Park

Eagle Point Park is a city jewel overlooking the Mississippi River with views of three different states from its 175 acres. The land was originally purchased in 1908, with 17 additional parcels donated or purchased since. The park today contains ponds, an amphitheater, multiple playground elements, tennis courts, walking paths and overlooks, a log cabin, memorials, pavilions, restrooms, BBQ and gathering areas, and other recreational opportunities.

Existing pavilions within the park were built as far back as 1910. Many of the structures were constructed during the 1930s with grants from the Works Progress Administration. These buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and are part of the Eagle Point Park Historic District.

During the Plan’s public outreach process, many comments praised the park while expressing a desire to restore it to its former, more pristine condition. A great deal of city pride and connection revolves around Eagle Point Park. Beyond ongoing maintenance and restoration, as well as historic preservation projects, a few overall improvement projects should be considered:

**Signage, Mapping, and Visitor Experience:** Eagle Point Park has potential to be even more of a regional destination and major landmark. Implementing more maps, educational and wayfinding signage including historical and habitat information, improving site fencing from chain-link to typical view fencing height and design, and overall theming could make the space easier to navigate for visitors and tourists.

**Erosion, Invasive Species, and Reforesting:** Areas where water/runoff has eroded hardscape and landscape features, where invasive species like oriental bittersweet have overgrown and could be replaced with diverse native plants, and locations suitable for reforestation and native prairie restoration should continue to be explored.

**Circulation and Accessibility:** While many walking paths exist through the park, circulation routes (especially ADA-compliant ones) to amenities themselves are limited. Many amenities are built on steep grassy slopes without sidewalks or flat zones with seating; ramps at key areas would improve accessibility for all. Opportunities also exist to expand circulation routes through undeveloped portions of the park.







**CONSERVATION PARKS:** Conservation parks are sites that preserve natural, cultural, and historic resources. These areas provide a tranquil setting for experiences in the outdoors.

Other features include:

- **Amenities:** Zero to one signature amenity; no reservable shelters; loop trails; benches, small picnic shelters
- **Land usage:** 100 percent passive
- **Programming:** Typically none, may include nature education programs









PARK	EXISTING CLASSIFICATION	PROPOSED CLASSIFICATION
Allison-Henderson Park	Community	Community
Avon Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
AY McDonald Park	Community	Community
Bee Branch Greenway	Community	Linear Park/Greenway
Bee Branch Greenway	Community	Linear Park/Greenway
Bunker Hill Golf Course	Golf	Specialty
Burden Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Cancer Survivor Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Center Grove Open Space	Other	Conservation Area
Cleveland Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Comiskey Park	Neighborhood	Community
Creek Wood Park	Neighborhood	Neighborhood
Eagle Point Park	Community	Regional
Eagle Valley Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Elmwood Green Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
English Ridge Park	Neighborhood	Neighborhood
Falk Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Flat Iron Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Flora Park	Community	Community
Four Mounds Park	Other	Conservation Area
Gay Park	Neighborhood	Neighborhood
Grandview Green Space	Other	Specialty
Granger Creek Nature Trail	Community	Linear Park/Greenway
Grant Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Ham House Historic Site	Other	Specialty
Harvest View Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Heritage Trail	Community	Linear Park/Greenway
Hillcrest Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Hilltop Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Jackson Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Jefferson Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood

PARK	EXISTING CLASSIFICATION	PROPOSED CLASSIFICATION
John G Bergfeld Recreation Area	Community	Specialty
Madison Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Marna Ridge Children's Forest	Mini-Park	Conservation Area
Marshall Park/Dubuque Arboretum and Botanical Garden	Community	Specialty
Maus Park	Community	Conservation Area
McAleece Park and Recreation Complex	Community	Community
Medical Associates Greenbelt	Community	Conservation Area
Miller Riverview Park	Community	Specialty
Murphy Park	Community	Community
Oakwood Park	Other	Conservation Area
Orange Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Pet Park	Other	Specialty
Pinard Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Port of Dubuque Marina	Community	Specialty
Riley Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Rocco Buda Jr. Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Rustic Point Park	Neighborhood	Neighborhood
Sister City International Park	Community	Specialty
Southern Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Sutton Pool	Community	Specialty
Teddy Bear Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Usha Park	Neighborhood	Neighborhood
Valentine Park	Neighborhood	Neighborhood
Valley High Park	Neighborhood	Neighborhood
Veterans' Memorial Park	Community	Community
Waller-Cooper Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Washington Park	Community	Specialty
Welu Park	Mini-Park	Neighborhood
Westbrook Park	Neighborhood	Neighborhood



## PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
<b>Parks</b>	
<b>System Wide</b>	
Introduce prairie in strategic areas throughout the parks system where native	Short
Partner with City Police to implement proactive measures and safety infrastructure to increase park safety	Short
Provide interpretive signage with all prairie establishment within parks to educate users on the natural environment	Short
Conduct a systemwide parks and recreation lighting assessment to strategically prioritize LED lighting replacement	Short
Conduct a systemwide parks and recreation signage master plan and begin implementing updated signage as part of asset management replacement plan	Short
Explore opportunities to co-steward public lands with tribes who at one time called Dubuque home	Short
Provide more fishing opportunities and accessible fishing areas	Mid
Improve accessibility of the greenhouse to open it to the public for educational purposes	Long
Generally focus investment on planning and further amenitizing regional and community parks. Based on site conditions like topography, some neighborhood parks may evolve to offer only passive recreation opportunities.	Long
<b>Eagle Point Park</b>	
Create a dedicated "Friends of Eagle Point Park" group to assist in park advocacy, volunteer coordination, and fundraising	Short
Create a site-specific master plan for Eagle Point Park	Short
Reclassify Eagle Point Park to a regional Park	Short
Create a dedicated funding source for Eagle Point Regional Park improvements	Mid
Explore partnerships for concessionaire at Eagle Point Park	Mid
Study Feasibility of Winter Holiday Experience Event at Eagle Point Park	Mid
Create trail loops within Eagle Point Park	Mid
Create a bike and surrey rental program at Eagle Point Park	Mid
Introduce camping event opportunities at Eagle Point Park	Mid

PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
<b>Allison-Henderson Park</b>	
Repair cracked sidewalks	Short
Add edging around sand playground pit and ensure ADA access to playground	Short
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short
Replace worn/rusted playground equipment that is becoming safety hazard	Short
Re-stripe rink surface	Short
Add sidewalk routes to playground elements and hockey rink (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Add concrete pads at benches, picnic tables, BBQs, and other areas that would benefit from being accessible	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Avon Park</b>	
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, and picnic tables where necessary	Mid
Repair basketball court asphalt surface and re-stripe	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>A.Y. McDonald Park</b>	
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, and picnic tables where necessary	Short
Connect walkways to amenities and assets, including benches and picnic tables (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground equipment	Long
<b>Bee Branch Greenway</b>	
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, and picnic tables where necessary	Short



PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
<b>Bunker Hill Golf Course</b>	
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, and picnic tables where necessary	Short
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Short
Refinish/repair parking lot (cracking, potholes)	Mid
Refinish/repair asphalt cart path (cracking, erosion)	Mid
<b>Burden Park</b>	
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, and picnic tables where necessary	Short
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Cancer Survivor Park</b>	
Fix rusting lighting	Short
Add edger around playground and ensure proper wood fiber play surfacing depth for safety	Short
Create accessible route to pavilion and make necessary updates to aging structure	Mid
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities (ADA compliant wherever possible) and ensure ADA access at playground	Mid
Add level pads under picnic tables to make them accessible	Mid
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Center Grove Open Space</b>	
Consider adding parking and an entrance with signage and information. Many people would not assume that this was accessible land by the public	Short
Add amenities such as seating, pathways, and trash cans	Short
Add trails that would connect to Medical Associates Greenbelt and Welu Park for a more complete trails network/walking loop	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Cleveland Park</b>	
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short

PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
Repair and replace rusted/damaged assets	Short
Repair or replace rusted playground elements that could become a safety hazard	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Ensure ADA access at playground	Mid
Add concrete pad around BBQ and picnic table for accessibility	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Comiskey Park</b>	
Create ongoing maintenance and ranger/visitation schedule to improve safety and cut down on vandalism	Short
Fix parking lot cracking	Short
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Creek Wood Park</b>	
Add signage with parking instructions	Short
<b>Eagle Point Park</b>	
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, BBQs, drinking fountains, and picnic tables where necessary	Short
Repair/replace rusted play equipment and swings that could become a hazard	Short
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short
Add edging around sand playground area	Short
Repair sidewalk cracking and trip hazards where needed	Short
Continue prairie restoration and reforestation efforts throughout park, as well as eradication of invasive species	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Add concrete pad around key BBQs and picnic table for accessibility	Mid
Ensure ADA access at playgrounds	Mid
Repair/resurface parking areas where needed (cracking, potholes)	Mid
Add educational signage about history, ecological restoration, and habitat	Mid



PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
Add mapping and wayfinding signage throughout park	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Refinish tennis courts	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Update chain link fencing to more aesthetic, lower-height safety view fencing at overlook areas	Long
Continue high-level preservation efforts, including funding and maintenance planning	Long
Examine and implement green infrastructure techniques where feasible to positively impact effects of flow and infiltration of water	Long
Create more dynamic splash pad	Long
Modernize lighting throughout	Long
<b>Eagle Valley Park</b>	
Add signage with parking instructions	Short
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Elmwood Green Park</b>	
No signage, amenities, or parking exist here; examine whether to re-classify this space or add seating and other assets	Short
<b>English Ridge Park</b>	
Add signage with parking information	Short
<b>Falk Park</b>	
Repair/replace rusted play equipment and swings that could become a hazard	Short
Add signage with parking information	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Modernize lighting	Long

PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
<b>Flat Iron Park</b>	
Repair/replace rusted play equipment that could become a hazard	Short
Add signage with parking information	Short
Ensure ADA access to playground area	Mid
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Flora Park</b>	
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, BBQs, drinking fountains, and picnic tables where necessary	Short
Repair skate park cracking	Short
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short
Repair/replace rusted play equipment that could become a hazard	Short
Add handrails where needed at stairs/steps	Short
Address asphalt potholes, cracking, etc. within parking lot and interior drives	Mid
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible) and create walking loops	Mid
Re-grade and resurface tennis courts	Mid
Resurface baseball/softball fields	Mid
Ensure ADA access to playground and improve sand/playground mulch separation	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Modernize lighting throughout	Long
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add new maintenance yard, building, and restroom	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Consider adding dog park	Long
<b>Four Mounds Park</b>	
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Gay Park</b>	
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short
Repair/replace rusted play equipment that could become a hazard	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Ensure ADA access to playground	Mid
Resurface ball field	Mid



PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
Repair/replace playground equipment with wear	Mid
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Grandview Green Space</b>	
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Grant Park</b>	
No signage, amenities, or parking exist here; examine whether to re-classify this space or add seating and other assets	Short
<b>Granger Creek Nature Trail</b>	
Consider adding parking and an entrance with signage and information. Many people would not assume that this was accessible land by the public	Mid
Add amenities such as seating, pathways, and trash cans	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Ham House Historic Site</b>	
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Continue historic preservation efforts including funding and maintenance	Long
<b>Harvest View Park</b>	
Add playground edging/curbing and ensure ADA access into playground	Short
Add sign with parking information	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Repair/replace playground platforms that are beginning to peel/rust	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long

PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
<b>Hillcrest Park</b>	
Repair/replace rusted play equipment and swings that are becoming a hazard	Short
Add edging around playground areas	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Resurface/restripe parking lot	Mid
Add concrete pad with BBQ and picnic table for accessibility	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Hilltop Park</b>	
Add signage with parking information	Short
Add edging around playground areas	Short
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short
Repair/replace rusted playground equipment and swings that are becoming a hazard	Short
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Add level concrete pads at BBQ, benches, and picnic tables for accessibility	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Jackson Park</b>	
Repair/replace rusted playground equipment and swings that are becoming a hazard	Short
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, BBQs, drinking fountains, and picnic tables where necessary	Short
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid
Replace faded/scratched playground equipment	Mid
Connect all assets and amenities to sidewalks (bench, picnic table, and BBQ pads, etc.)	Mid



PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
Community garden beds mostly empty; consider an alternate plan for these or make more of a feature (and accessible)	Mid
Repair fountain or make it a planter/other feature	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Jefferson Park</b>	
Repair/replace rusted playground equipment and swings that are becoming a hazard	Short
Add signage with parking information	Short
Create border between play fiber and sand play areas and around whole playground, and ensure ADA access into playground	Short
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short
Ensure ADA access to park	Mid
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>John G Bergfeld Recreation Area</b>	
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short
Repair sidewalk cracking	Short
Paint/repair wood that is chipping/flaking on pavilion	Short
Repair asphalt cracking and spalling in parking lot	Mid
Replace/repair play elements that are starting to rust	Mid
Replace rusting/warping amenities/assets over time	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Investigate flow of water that is moving through area with benches	Long
<b>Madison Park</b>	
Repair/replace rusted playground equipment that are becoming a hazard	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Repair/paint aesthetically damaged play equipment	Mid

PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Restore and repair pavilion, including stairs, posts, and roof	Long
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Marna Ridge Children's Forest</b>	
Consider adding a clear entrance with signage and parking information. Many people would not assume that this was accessible land by the public	Short
Add amenities such as seating, pathways, and trash cans	Short
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Marshall Park/Dubuque Arboretum and Botanical Garden</b>	
Add playground rules/safety signage	Short
Install header curb around playgrounds and keep sand and fiber separate. Ensure ADA access into playgrounds	Short
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short
Add shade over playground areas	Long
<b>Maus Park</b>	
Master plan how to make this park more friendly to the public. For example, it needs parking, clear signage, lighting, seating, and other amenities to make it into a usable park that feels safe.	Short
<b>McAleece Park and Recreation Complex</b>	
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, BBQs, fencing, drinking fountains, and other assets where necessary	Short
Fix or replace netting to protect spectators from foul balls	Short
Replace rusted playground equipment that could become a hazard	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible), including all benches and bleachers	Mid
Fix cracking, spalling, erosion, and potholes in asphalt driveways and walkways	Mid
Resurface areas around baseball complex to fix water ponding, uneven surfaces, cracking, and accessibility issues	Mid
Add edging around playground area and ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Mid
Replace worn amenities and assets	Mid
Make sure the concessions building is ADA accessible	Mid



PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Medical Associates Greenbelt</b>	
Consider adding parking and an entrance with signage and information. Many people would not assume that this was accessible land by the public	Short
Add amenities such as seating, pathways, and trash cans	Short
Add trails that would connect to Welu Park and Center Grove Open Space for a more complete trails network/walking loop	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Miller Riverview Park</b>	
Repair/replace rusted playground equipment and swings that are becoming a hazard	Short
Add edging around playground areas and ensure ADA access into playground	Short
When listing pavilions as accessible, make sure picnic tables are ADA friendly	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Create/modify sites to include more ADA-compliant camping spots	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Modernize lighting	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Murphy Park</b>	
Replace edging around playground area	Short
Replace rusted BBQ grills, benches, trash cans, and picnic tables that are becoming safety hazards	Short
Replace rusted play equipment that is becoming a hazard	Short
Repair tennis court lighting	Short
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Add accessible routes to buildings and pavilions	Mid

PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
Ensure ADA access into playgrounds	Mid
Repair/refinish tennis courts	Mid
Add accessible concrete pads under picnic tables, benches, and BBQs	Mid
Repair cracking/spalling on interior drives	Mid
Replace aging/faded playground equipment	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Modernize lighting	Long
Update restroom building	Long
<b>Oakwood Park</b>	
No signage, amenities, or parking exist here; examine whether to re-classify this space or add seating and other assets	Short
<b>Orange Park</b>	
Replace rusting benches that are a hazard	Short
Ensure wood fiber surfacing in playgrounds meets safe depth requirements; current levels are inadequate, and edging may need to be raised.	Short
Replace rusting play equipment that is becoming a hazard	Short
Ensure ADA access into playground	Short
Connect pathways to bench pads, drinking fountain pads, etc. so that they are accessible	Mid
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Replace worn play equipment	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Pet Park</b>	
Add concrete pads beneath picnic tables and benches so that they are accessible	Mid
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Pinard Park</b>	
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short



PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
Ensure ADA access into playground	Short
Repair/replace rusting play surfaces that could become a hazard	Short
Add signage with parking information	Short
Replace worn playground equipment	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Riley Park</b>	
Add signage with parking information	Short
Replace rusted caps on fencing	Short
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short
Replace rusted playground equipment that could become a hazard	Short
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Replace worn playground equipment	Mid
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Rocco Buda Jr. Park</b>	
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short
Replace rusted playground equipment that could become a hazard	Short
Add signage with parking information	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid
Add concrete pads under benches to make them accessible	Mid
Replace worn playground equipment	Mid
Revitalize pavilion	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long

PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
<b>Rustic Point Park</b>	
This park was still in development/construction during the time of site visits and evaluation	Short
<b>Sister City International Park</b>	
Connect bench pads to walkway for accessibility	Mid
Replace benches that are rusting and will become a hazard	Mid
Replace rusting trash cans and signage posts	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Southern Park</b>	
Add playground edging	Short
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid
Add a bench/seating	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Teddy Bear Park</b>	
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground and remove turf growing within it	Short
Replace rusting playground equipment that is becoming a hazard	Short
Add edging around sand play area and remove grass growing within it	Short
Ensure ADA access into playgrounds	Short
Add signage with parking information	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid
Replace worn/faded playground equipment	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Usha Park</b>	
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short



PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
Replace playground equipment that is rusted or damaged, impacting safety and usability	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid
Replace worn/faded playground equipment	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Add bleachers to make cricket field more of a destination	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Valentine Park</b>	
Resurface asphalt walking trail	Short
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short
Replace rusted playground elements that could become a hazard	Short
Fix tipping/damaged fencing at baseball field that is a hazard	Short
Remove turf growing into baseball dugouts and diamond	Short
Fix dugout benches sinking into earth; consider a concrete pad	Short
Fix upheaving/tipping basketball hoops	Short
Resurface parking lot	Mid
Resurface basketball courts	Mid
Connect playground to sidewalk for accessibility, and ensure ADA ramp access into it	Mid
Add seating around basketball courts and playground areas	Mid
Replace worn/damaged playground elements	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Consider baseball field improvements: refreshed diamond surfacing, new pitcher's mound, paved dugouts, foul poles, distance markers, yellow capping on fencing, new benches and bat holders, etc.	Long
Further develop community garden	Long
<b>Valley High Park</b>	
Add edging around playground areas	Short

PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
Replace rusted play equipment that is becoming a hazard	Short
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid
Replace worn/faded playground equipment	Mid
Add concrete pads at benches for accessibility	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Veterans' Memorial Park</b>	
Replace ripped safety netting at Miracle League Field	Short
Replace missing edging around playground areas	Short
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short
Replace rusted playground equipment that is becoming a hazard and broken pieces	Short
Repair parking lot potholes	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Replace faded/worn playground equipment	Mid
Add pads under picnic tables and benches to make them accessible	Mid
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Waller-Cooper Park</b>	
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short
Fix tipping bench	Short
Replaced damaged playground equipment	Short
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid
Replace faded/worn playground equipment	Mid



PARK/RECOMMENDATION	TERM
Add pads under picnic tables, BBQs, and benches to make them accessible	Mid
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Washington Park</b>	
Replace rusting benches and trash cans that could become a hazard	Short
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Welu Park</b>	
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
<b>Westbrook Park</b>	
Add shade over playground elements	Long





## Chapter 3

### Recreation *The Call of Adventure*



Dubuque  
Parks and Recreation  
Comprehensive Plan



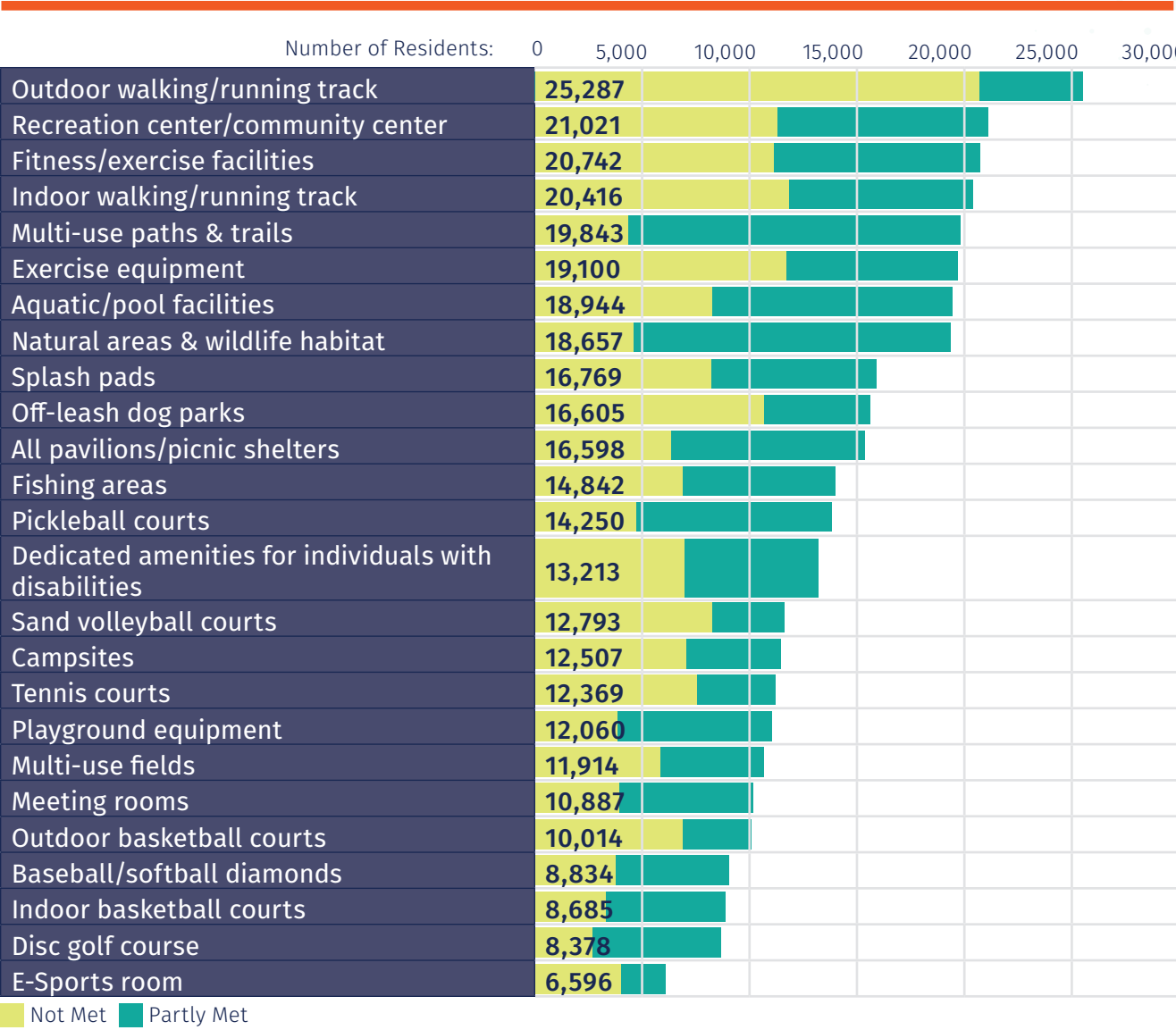
# WHAT WE HEARD OVERVIEW

As part of the master planning process, it is important to understand what the community desires in terms of facilities and programs. ETC Institute completed a statistically valid survey to measure the needs and priorities of the residents. See Appendix # for full survey details. The project team is taking that information and correlating it back to participation trends, and the ability of the City and Department to offer those programs with their existing inventory of amenities.

Within the ETC survey, respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 25 facilities/amenities and to rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community with the greatest “unmet” need for various facilities/amenities.

## Estimated number of residents whose facility and amenity needs are only “partly met” or “not met”

BY NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WITH NEED BASED ON AN ESTIMATED 59,667 RESIDENTS



# Top Amenities with an Unmet Need

Based on the table at left, these are the top amenities/facilities with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need.

## Walking/Running Track

The school district has an outdoor track that is available for public use. However, the challenge for both the outdoor track and the indoor spaces offered by the school district is that availability is limited. In addition to the outdoor track the school district offers, the YMCA also has an indoor walk/jog track for their members.

As has already been mentioned, exercise walking is the #1 most participated in activity according to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) and running/jogging is #6.

## Recreation Center/Community Center

There is a YMCA in the community that serves as a recreation center option. Additionally, in many communities the local library serves in a community center-like capacity. However, those types of facilities operated by the City are not currently available in Dubuque.

## Fitness/Exercise Facilities

There is a plethora of smaller, in some cases singularly focused, privately owned and operated fitness and wellness providers in the city. There is also a non-profit provider in the YMCA. Based on the work the project team has done across the country, there is evidence that publicly operated recreation centers, with fitness components, facilitate increased participation with private providers. At the same time, some cities choose not to get into the business of offering fitness.

## Multi-Use Paths and Trails

The City offers approximately 45 miles of on-/off- street trails for the community. However as previously referenced, exercise walking, running/jogging, and hiking are multi-generational activities with high rates of participation.

## Exercise Equipment

This equipment is typically within a recreation center or fitness facility. The use of exercise equipment is a multi-generational activity with a high rate of participation along with the ability to generate revenue via daily use or membership fees.

## Aquatic/Pool Facilities

The City operates two seasonal outdoor pools, and the YMCA operates an indoor pool. Swimming as an activity is in the top 5 of activities reported on by the NSGA and it also may be the most multi-generational of all activities.



**Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat**

The City offers this in a way with access to the river and the areas along the river.

**Splash Pads**

The City currently has one splash pad, but should consider offering additional. Operation of a splash pad can be intensive depending on the type of system (flow through v. recirculation). The benefit of this amenity is that they can extend the summer (water) season in both May and September. They are also typically free and an easy way for residents to cool off.

**Off-Leash Dog Parks**

The City offers a pet park, but these are growing in popularity. They can be labor intensive, and some communities are assigning a usage or membership fee to help offset costs.

**Pavilions/Picnic Shelters**

The City offers more than 30 shelter opportunities throughout the system.

**Fishing Areas**

The City has four accessible fishing piers, and they operate the marina. In terms of popularity, freshwater fishing ranks #10 amongst the 56 activities the NSGA collected data on.

**Pickleball Courts**

This is the fastest growing sport in the country, and the City has nine dedicated pickleball courts and six combination volleyball/pickleball courts. The activity is becoming more multi-generational and ranks #19 amongst the NSGA activities.

**Dedicated Amenities for Individuals with Disabilities**

The City operates one all-inclusive baseball field, and while a significant asset, it serves a small population. They also have accessible piers for fishing and are working to make more of their playgrounds and play equipment accessible to all abilities. Currently, there are approximately 4,000 households in the city with an individual that has some level of disability.

**Sand Volleyball Courts**

This is something that is gaining popularity and, while the NSGA does not distinguish between volleyball and sand volleyball, it ranks #26 amongst the NSGA activities. This is not an amenity the City currently supports.

**Campsites**

Camping (vacation/overnight) ranks #7 amongst the NSGA activities. The city currently offers camping at Miller Riverview Park. The city should consider offering additional camping areas.

**Tennis Courts**

The City currently operates and maintains 15 tennis courts in their system. As an activity, tennis ranks #20 amongst the NSGA activities, and has increased with popularity, possibly as an offshoot to pickleball or vice versa.

**Playground Equipment**

The City has over 285 units of play equipment in their inventory, and as a comparison from the NRPA, 94% of agencies offer playgrounds to their residents.

**Multi-Use Fields**

The City does not have an inventory of multi-use fields or, as what the consulting team would refer to as, rectangles. These amenities typically accommodate football, soccer, lacrosse, and other activities. They are heavily used by youth sports, which continue to grow in popularity and increase demand and use of public facilities.

**Meeting Rooms**

The City does offer meeting rooms at a variety of locations.

**Basketball Courts**

The City has seven full-size and eight half basketball courts. As an activity, basketball ranks #13 amongst the NSGA activities but has not shown major increases or decreases.

**Baseball/Softball Diamonds**

The City offers 10 softball fields, one baseball field, and one all-inclusive baseball field. Baseball ranks #27 and softball ranks #31 amongst the NSGA activities. Both activities have experienced a decrease in participation over the past 10 years.

**Disc Golf Course**

The City offers one disc golf course and, according to the NRPA, 35% of member agencies offer this amenity.

**eSports Room**

This is something that the City offers through the Dubuque Esports League. According to the NRPA, approximately 27% of member agencies offer this type of programming, which does not always necessitate a dedicated facility.



Top Amenity and Facility Priorities

1

Aquatic/Pool Facilities

It is not uncommon for pools and/or aquatic facilities to be in the top five amenities, or of things people want to see. With the City already operating two outdoor pools, it may mean it is time to re-invest in the facility with new amenities, or an entirely new facility.

Some municipalities supplement their outdoor pool offerings by strategically placing splash pads in the community, which are cheaper to build and maintain. With the City already having one splashpad at Comiskey Park that may be a continued future direction.

This could also mean that residents are looking for the City to develop an indoor aquatic center. The project team would not recommend constructing a stand-alone aquatic facility. The operational costs are just too high, and the best the City could hope for would be a 50-75% cost recovery rate. Most aquatic facilities being built today are either in conjunction with a school district, or as part of a larger community recreation center.

2

Multi-Use Paths and Trails

Like pools, it is not uncommon to see trails or walking/jogging paths in the top five amenities or things people want to see in their community. The important thing to consider, if the City is to invest in more trails and pathways, is connectivity and safety. Determining how to make the community walkable and bikeable is an important step, quickly followed by how to do that exact same thing safely.

The benefit of multi-use paths and trails, is that they are relatively low maintenance, depending on the surface the City chooses. They also present opportunities for partnerships with connections and maintenance.

3

Walking/Running Track

Again, this amenity is available to the community as an outdoor option. However, given its prominence in the survey, the reality is residents are likely looking for an indoor option. These amenities are typically in association with a recreation or community center and are elevated around indoor court space. As an amenity they are low maintenance, while receiving high use. As a standalone amenity, it would not drive a membership, but combined with other amenities it would enhance the membership experience.

4

Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat

This is an interesting topic because the City can approach it from several different ways.

One option, and maybe the most financially practical, is to make existing nature areas and habitats more accessible to residents. It is not uncommon for a city to have these opportunities; residents simply do not know about them.

Another option is for the City to invest in a nature center with specific programs and rental opportunities focused on nature. This requires a significant financial investment, and an ongoing investment in staff and operations, with some revenue potential.

The City currently owns EB Lyons Nature Center that is in a state park, Mines of Spain. The City owns the building, the State maintains the building, and programming is provided through a partnership with the Iowa DNR and Dubuque County Conservation.

5

Fitness/Exercise Facilities

The demand for these facilities fluctuates from location to location. It is not as common to see this amenity in the top five that survey respondents want, but it is consistent in that the City does not have a recreation center.

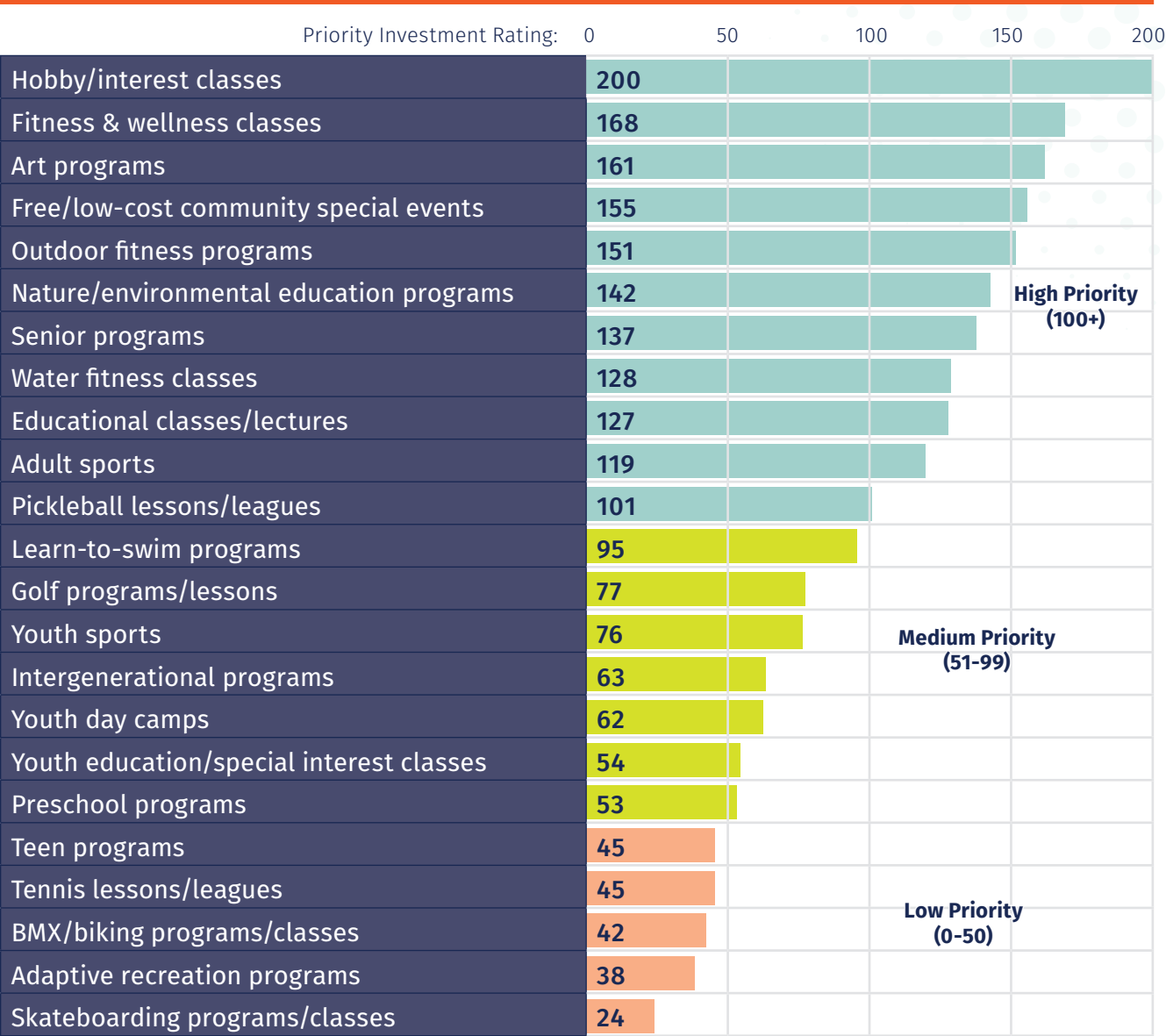
As with pools, most municipalities are not building standalone fitness/exercise facilities. They are typically part of, usually less than 10% of total square footage, of community center or recreation center. The amenities that are paired with fitness often include gymnasium, walk/jog track, indoor aquatics, meetings rooms, classrooms, etc.



Top Program Priorities

The following chart highlights the top priorities for investment to deliver parks and recreation programming.

Top Priorities for Investment for Parks and Recreation Programs Based on Priority Investment Rating





*There is a total of 11 activities that fall into the high priority category. Of those 11 activities, the following eight would typically require, or facilitate the need for, an indoor space:*

**Hobby/Interest Classes**

**Senior Programs**

**Fitness and Wellness Classes**

**Water Fitness Classes**

**Art Programs**

**Educational Classes/Lectures**

**Nature/Environmental Education Programs**

**Adult Sports**

Again, as previously mentioned in the report, the Department has very limited indoor space opportunities. Those that they do have are programmed to the point where they are at capacity.

If the City were to invest in a community center, there is a strong possibility that many of the programs on that list could be addressed. A community center that is non-membership-based could include:

**Entry Way**

**Elevated Walk/Jog Track**

**Administrative Offices**

**Group Exercise/Dance Studio**

**Classrooms**

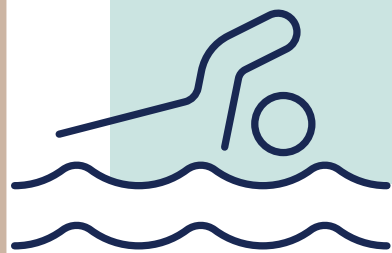
*Three to four of varying size and finish*

**Fitness Area**

*Weights/cardio with the potential of contract management*

**Gymnasiums**

*Two full courts, preference of three*



*The biggest level of investment would be an indoor pool, and if that investment was made it would move the facility from the community center category to that of a recreation center.*

Many of the programs that are listed in the medium to low priorities are programs that the Department already touches on some level.

## RECREATION PROGRAMMING ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department currently offers a wide range of programs to the community. Their program seasons are broken into Fall, Winter, and Summer. While there is no perfect allocation of seasons, the one the Department is using is the preference of the consulting team.

The Department also tracks participation on an annual basis. The following summarizes participation from 2021-2024.

YEAR	PROGRAMS	PARTICIPANTS	AVERAGE PARTICIPANTS
2021	448	2,563	5.72
2022	467	5,383	11.52
2023	610	5,048	8.28
2024	604	5,256	8.70

*Participants equate to registered individuals for programs in our registration system.*

The participation data does not reflect drop-in programs like playgrounds, special events, campers, park visitors, swimming pool attendance, etc. nor do they include team activity program participants (adult sports).

Based on discussions with staff, the rate of running programs is in the 80-90% range. Of the programs that are offered to the community, 80-90% run and only 10-20% are canceled. This is a high rate of running programs, but a contributing factor is the Department's required minimum and maximum participation. Because the Department does not have cost recovery policy in place for programs, they do not put minimums in place and are able to run some programs with minimal participation, that otherwise might be canceled.

The Department uses RecTrac as their registration software platform and they do allow online registration. That practice should continue and maximize participation through ease of registration.

The Department does have a family scholarship program in place and that also should continue.

The primary locations for programs offered by the department are the Allison Henderson, Dubuque School District, and Comiskey Park. They also offer programs using city parks and in the city pools. Some of the programs are offered through program partners and in some instances that means programs are offered at that partners facility (i.e. Dubuque Karate Club and others).



The following is a list of program partners for the Department:

- Adaptive Sports
- Advocacy Respect Knowledge Advocates
- Black Mens Coalition
- Boys & Girls Club
- Clarke University
- Community Foundation
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Downtown Neighborhood
- Dream Center
- Dubuque County Conservation
- Dubuque County Extension
- Dubuque Karate Club
- Dubuque Montessori
- Dubuque Pony
- Dubuque Soccer club
- Four Mounds
- Iowa State University Extension
- Loras College
- Matter Creative
- My Brothers Keeper
- Multi-Cultural Family Center
- Mines of Spain
- Mystique Ice Center
- School District
- St. Mark Youth Enrichment
- Steeple Square
- University of Dubuque

The Department should continue to offer programs through the three primary methods:

- 1
- Staff Run
- 2
- Contract
- 3
- Rental Basis

is static, meaning it is not tailored to the population of the City of Dubuque. This data is reflective of the number of agencies submitting information to the NRPA that offer these types of programs.

PROGRAM CATEGORIES (NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE)	PERCENT OF AGENCIES
Themed Special Events	91.0%
Social Recreation Events	88.0%
Team Sports	86.0%
Health and Wellness Education	82.0%
Fitness Enhancement Classes	82.0%
Individual Sports	76.0%
Racquet Sports	76.0%
Safety Training	71.0%
Natural/Cultural History Activities	70.0%
Aquatics	68.0%
Cultural Crafts	67.0%
Visual Arts	65.0%
Performing Arts	64.0%
Trips and Tours	63.0%
Martial Arts	57.0%
Running/Cycling Races	55.0%
Golf	50.0%
E-Sports/E-Gaming	27.0%

The median number of programs offered by similar sized agencies submitting information to the NRPA is 409 programs annually. The City exceeded that number in 2024, offering 605 programs.

The percentage of programs that are fee based according to similar sized agencies submitting information to the NRPA is 84.0%.

The information in the following table highlights the type of program offered to either children, older

adults, or those with disabilities followed by the % of agencies that offer those nationally, followed by the percentage of agencies in the 50,000-99,999-population category.

PROGRAMS	PERCENT OF AGENCIES	50,000 TO 99,999
Summer Camp	83.0%	72.0%
Specific Senior Programs	77.0%	67.0%
Specific Teen Programs	68.0%	54.0%
Programs for People with Disabilities	67.0%	47.0%
STEM Programs	60.0%	43.0%
After-School Programs	54.0%	46.0%
Preschool	33.0%	30.0%
Before-School Programs	18.0%	16.0%
Full Daycare	8.0%	6.0%
Summer Camp	83.0%	72.0%

Future Direction

From a programming perspective there are two big things that the City needs to consider modernizing within their existing operation.

1

Cost Recovery Philosophy. The Department needs to adopt a cost recovery philosophy and apply that to programs and rentals that are offered to the community. The project team is not making a recommendation as to the cost recovery level—that should be a separate study or done internally. However, the Department needs to put this in place.

2

Development of an Indoor Facility. For the Recreation Department to expand their programming and become less reliant on the school district for indoor space, strong consideration needs to be given to an indoor facility.



# Need for Flexible Program Space

The city has an acute lack of flexible indoor program space available to them for programming purposes.

The relationship between the City and School District is positive. The City is first in line to use the school district facilities. For existing programs finding space is not a challenge. However, for new programs using school district facilities there can be challenges, i.e. lack of space availability. The other “challenge” is that City programs can be displaced, some time with minimal notice, for school programs.

As has been referenced earlier, a community the size of Dubuque can support a recreation center or a community center, strictly from a population perspective and using NRPA metrics.

If the project team were asked to make a recommendation for a facility program, that would allow recreation to:

- Provide drop-in participation opportunities for activities like basketball, volleyball, pickleball, and indoor walking/jogging.
- Provide program opportunities for youth and adult sports.
- Provide opportunities for groups to rent gymnasium space or rooms that they currently are challenged to access with the school district.
- Expand their enrichment programming to the community (i.e., arts, crafts, pottery, painting, etc.).
- Expand their ability to offer educational programming for adults.
- Expand their ability to offer senior-age focused programs.

When looking at the following square footage recommendations it is important to note that the project team has experience construction costs of \$400-\$600 per square foot for “dry” spaces, and \$600-\$800 per square foot for “wet” spaces. It is also important to note that if one were to apply these costs to total square footage recommendations it would give the construction cost, not the full project cost.

The following are typical square footage needs for an indoor recreation facility. Please note, neither indoor aquatics nor weight/cardio training spatial allocations are included. See the following page for these potential inclusions.

SPACE	APPROXIMATE SQUARE FOOTAGE
Lobby (small)	1,500
Control Desk	250
Admin	1,446
Instructional Kitchen	750
Adjacent Storage	100
Community/Classroom (50 people – 1)	750
Community Room-Dividable (120 people – 1)	2,000
Storage	300
Dance/Aerobic Studio-Small	1,200
Dance/Aerobic Studio-Medium	1,750
Storage	500
Gymnasium (7,280 each for two)	14,560
Storage	500
Elevated Walk/Jog Track	3,000
Public Restrooms (250 each for two)	500
Public Universal (80 each for one)	80
Support (Mechanical, IT, Electrical, etc.)	3,790
Sub-Total	32,976
Gross-Up (15%)	4,946
Total	37,922

For a facility of this type, without aquatics or weight/cardio training space, a membership structure would not be recommended. A daily fee structure associated with drop-in participation in gym activities is recommended.

Rooms would be programmed by the recreation department. When these rooms are not being programmed, they would be available for rental.

Hours of Operation:	Advantages of this facility program are:
8:00am-9:00pm Monday-Friday	Staff requirements are less than those of a full-service recreation center.
8:00am-6:00pm Saturday	Hours of operation are flexible by season.
12:00pm-6:00pm Sunday	Would likely require a subsidy, but less than other models.
	Would allow for a wide variety of programs that would build on existing core services, and allow introduction of new core services.



If the City did want to get into the business of offering indoor aquatics and weight/cardio training space, then a “right-sized” building would potentially look like the following:

SPACE	APPROXIMATE SQUARE FOOTAGE
Lobby (small)	2,500
Control Desk	350
Admin	1,446
Instructional Kitchen	750
Adjacent Storage	100
Community/Classroom (50 people – 1)	750
Community Room-Dividable (120 people – 1)	2,000
Storage	300
Dance/Aerobic Studio-Small	1,200
Dance/Aerobic Studio-Medium	1,750
Storage	500
Gymnasium (7,280 each for two)	14,560
Storage	500
Elevated Walk/Jog Track	3,000
Public Restrooms (250 each for two)	500
Public Universal (80 each for 1)	80
Support (Mechanical, IT, Electrical, etc.)	3,790
Men's Locker Room	1,000
Women's Locker Room	1,200
Wet Change (4 at 100 each)	400
Dry Change (4 at 50 each)	200
Fitness (weight and cardio)	5,000
Natatorium (leisure with 3 lap lanes)	15,000
Pool Mechanical	750
Pool Manager/Lifeguard Suite	750
Sub-Total	58,376
Gross-Up (15%)	8,756
Total	67,132

For a facility of this type, the project team would recommend a membership structure but also have a variety of options to pay to enter. There would be spaces, meeting rooms in particular that would be before the control desk. And people would not have to be members to participate in programs.

Hours of Operation:	Advantages of this facility program are:
5:30am-9:00pm Monday-Friday	Allows for a wide variety of programs that would build on existing core services and allow introduction of new core services.
7:00am-7:00pm Saturday	Allows the City to touch on all the areas highlighted as needs/ wants through the survey.
11:00am-7:00pm Sunday	

AQUATICS

The City offers two outdoor pool options:

Flora Pool	Sutton Pool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Large zero depth entry that transitions to a lap area.</li><li>Eight 25-yard lap lanes that transitions to a deep end.</li><li>Deep end with one 1-meter and one 3-meter diving board.</li><li>Two water slides with independent catch pool.</li><li>Shallow water play pool with in-water play structure.</li><li>The area around the pools is a large, fenced grass area that includes a playground.</li><li>The pool house includes admissions, filtration systems, locker rooms.</li><li>Separate building for concessions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Large zero depth entry that transitions to a lap area.</li><li>Six 25-yard lap lanes that transitions to a deep end.</li><li>Deep End with one 1-meter and one 3-meter Diving Board</li><li>One water slide that runs out near the lap lanes.</li><li>Shallow water play pool with in-water play structure.</li><li>The site is very compact and does not have the green space that Flora Pool has.</li><li>The pool house includes admissions, filtration systems, and concessions.</li><li>Sparse and outdated shade structures.</li></ul>

2025 Fee Structure

DAILY ADMISSION	FEE	MEMBERSHIP	RESIDENT	NON-RESIDENT
Children Under 3	Free	Youth (4-17)	\$42	\$50
Youth (4-17)	\$3.00	Adults (18 and over)	\$74	\$89
Adults (18 and over)	\$5.00	Seniors (55 and over)	\$53	\$63
Seniors (55 and over)	\$3.00			

Membership will allow the membership holder to access both aquatic facilities.

Programs Offered

Group Swim Lessons	Adapted Swim Lessons	Private Swim Lessons	Water Walking	Parent/ Tot
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Both Flora and Sutton Pools are available for private rentals from 5:00-7:00pm only on the weekends.

\$495 – Flora Pool (up to 300 people)
\$367 – Sutton Pool (up to 300 people)



## Future Realities

Both pools are aging and getting closer to the end of their useful lifecycle, although the Parks staff have done a very good job of maintaining the facilities. Because of geographic location, there is a strong possibility that the pools serve a regional population that extends beyond the city.

From a statistics-only perspective and using information from the NSGA, the data would suggest that the community would support 1.2 outdoor municipal pools. As such, the City may want to consider consolidating from two to one outdoor pool.

If consolidation is considered, it will be important to make an investment at the location where the pool is removed. Often those neighborhoods that have an amenity removed feel they are forgotten.

If consolidation is considered, the remaining location should be completely redeveloped and have more of a regional, waterpark-like set of amenities and appeal. This facility should be in a park setting with green space inside the fence/boundaries of the pool facility.

If consolidation is not considered and the City chooses to continue to maintain the two locations, consideration should be given to enhancing the amenities that are there. A focus should be placed on amenities that keep individuals and families there for an extended portion of the day, which should translate to increased concession sales.

### Programming

- The City should continue with the programming that they offer.
- They may consider expanding dedicated morning water walking times.
- They may consider offering some in-water group exercise classes.
- They may want to consider offering some aquatic specific special events (i.e., dive-in movies, theme days, etc.)

### Hours of Operation

Currently it appears that both facilities close in the early evening, approximately 5:00pm. For households with adults that work, that may be before they arrive home for the evening. The current hours could be negatively impacting daily admissions and/or passes. The project team would recommend adjusting the hours a few days a week to be open longer into the evening. Another option would be to close the pools at 4:00pm on a Friday and open back up from 6:00-9:00pm (if the facility has lights) for family night. The biggest obstacle the City faces making the facility available later is that they need to have in water lights, which they currently do not have. The underlying point is that there should be some consideration for adjustment of hours. The City has experimented with this in offering early evening lessons to accommodate working families, which has been well received.

### Indoor Aquatics

- The project team would not recommend the development of a standalone aquatic center.
- From a statistics-only perspective and using information from the NSGA, the data suggests that the community would support 0.9 competitive swimming pools, 0.9 leisure pools, and 0.9 therapy pools.
- Aquatic facilities, when paired with other amenities, can perform better than standalone aquatic facilities.

## McAleece Park & Recreation Complex

### Park Features

- Three lighted softball diamonds with 280' outfield fences.
- John Petrakis field is a lighted regulation baseball field.
- Scoreboards on all fields.
- Bleacher seating for more than 1,700 spectators.
- Concession stand.
- Playground equipment.
- Picnic tables.
- Skate park.
  - Half pipe area – 20' x 40'.
  - Ramp area – 85' x 105'.
- BMX biking.

### Facility Suggestions

- Updated lighting.
- Include shade around spectator areas.
- Expanded batting cages.
- Expanded or enhanced playground.
- Consideration of artificial turf infields and outfields, with infield being the priority.
- Consideration of temporary fencing with baseball field, to mirror outfield of softball fields (tournament purposes only).
- Consideration of portable pitching mounds for the three softball fields so that they can accommodate youth baseball as well as softball.
- Consideration of multiple base path lengths in all fields.

### Program Suggestions

- Adult softball league participation continues to decrease on a national level, while in Dubuque it is showing slow growth over the past three years; however, weekend travel tournament play is still on the increase and brings with it a positive economic impact. Consider working with a tournament director to bring tournaments to the location which should be advantageous given location in the city and geographically.
- Work with the youth baseball and softball groups to ensure time is maximized on the fields.
- The City currently works with the local high school and/or college to provide premier baseball fields for games.
- The City already allows beer sales at this location, which is not uncommon.



# Bunker Hill Golf Course

Bunker Hill Golf Course (BHGC) is an 18-hole golf course with a club house.

GREEN FEE TYPES	FEE
18 Holes – Weekend	\$27
9 Holes – Weekend	\$18
18 Holes – Weekday	\$23
9 Holes – Weekday	\$16
9 Holes – League	\$16
Senior, Restricted Hours	\$18
Junior, Restricted Hours	\$12

GOLF CART RENTAL	FEE
18 Holes	\$18 per player
9 Holes	\$12 per player
Season Cart Pass	\$650 per player
Season Cart Pass	\$1,050 per couple
20 Punch – 18 Hole	\$260
20 Punch – 9 Hole	\$160

TYPES OF PASSES	SEASON RATE
Junior	\$275
College	\$350
Individual, Weekday Only	\$650
Individual	\$750
Couple, Weekday Only	\$840
Couple	\$940
Family, Weekday Only	\$940
Family	\$1,030

In addition to this fee structure and playability BHGC also offers:

- Leagues (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday Evenings, Sunday Mornings)
- Sunday Night Couples Golf
- Bunker Hill Women’s Golf Association
- They also offer events at the course and clubhouse rentals.

The financial goal for BHGC was 100% cost recovery. Because of the facility consistently achieving this goal, it has become an expectation. To continue to achieve that financial goal, the following should be considered:

- Continue to evaluate green fees, golf cart rental, and passes on an annual basis. Consideration should be given to adjusting fees on a bi-annual basis, unless there are incredible changes in the market that would necessitate annual changes.
- The golf course is without a driving range. While this amenity would require some reconfiguration of the course, and it would require additional staff hours and maintenance, it would be a revenue-generating amenity from a drop-in, personal instruction, and small group instruction perspective.
- The clubhouse is inadequate for the number of rounds played annually and is reaching the end of its useful lifecycle. The City will need to make a choice between significant reinvestment in the existing structure, including expansion, and contrast that will new construction.
- At the time of evaluation of the clubhouse, the maintenance garage and cart storage facilities should be evaluated to see if they should be incorporated into a new and expanded facility.
- The other consideration that seems intuitive, but needs to be mentioned, is that the marketing and advertising of BHGC should be evaluated and tweaked on an annual basis to ensure maximum exposure.
- BHGC might be an area where the city wants to consider the use of a service like PlacerAI (cell phone data tracking) to determine where golfers are coming from prior to playing a round and where they are going to afterwards. That data could then be integrated into an overall marketing and advertising strategy.
- There needs to be a high priority placed on completing irrigation of the full course. Currently only 9-holes are irrigated.

# Port of Dubuque Marina

The operation currently receives a subsidy and was completed in 2013. At the time of completion, there was a Request for Proposal (RFP) issued for management services. There were no responses to that RFP, subsequently the Parks and Recreation Department took over the management of the space and absorbed that with existing staffing levels. There is also a convenience store at the marina that Parks and Recreation operates.

Pre-Post Season Hours:

Closed Monday-Tuesday

11:00am-5:00pm Wednesday-Sunday

Slip Rental Fees (overnight dockage):

\$45 per night – 30’ slips for boats 32’ and under

\$55 per night – 40’ slips for boats 32’ and over

\$65 per night – 50’ slips for boats 42’ and over

\$70 per night – 70’ slips for boats 70’ and over

\$80 per night – 100’ slips for boats 100’ and over

Includes water, electricity, access to private restrooms, showers, laundry facilities, and secure docking behind the gate. Ability to reserve online.

Hourly Dockage:

\$10 for 3 hours (ability to reserve online)

Seasonal Boat Slip Rentals – 32’ slips only

\$1,960 – Full Season

Dockage is prorated as the season progresses: 20% off per month.

Other Fees:

\$10 – Pump Out (\$5 with fuel purchase)

\$1 – Laundry Self Service (wash and dry)

There are a variety of tour boats that leave from the Port. At one time, pre-pandemic there were lighted boat parades.

## Future Direction

- The fee structure should continue to be evaluated on an annual basis to ensure that the fees being charged are competitive with similar marinas on the Mississippi River. In determining price point, the project team would recommend being at the midpoint to the upper third.
- The City may want to consider issuing another RFP for management services to determine if there is a potential operator interested. At a minimum, when fees are being evaluated and compared against other marinas, find out how many are managed “in-house” as opposed to contracted.



## Miracle League of Dubuque at Veterans Memorial Park

### Park Features

- An all-inclusive playground and baseball field.
  - Cushioned, rubberized surface to prevent injuries.
  - Wheelchair accessible play equipment for baseball field for users of all abilities and age groups.
  - Accessible bleacher seating.
- Restrooms.
- Changing Rooms.
- Benches.
- Swings.
- Covered Pavilions.
- Picnic Tables.
- Two Softball Fields (1, 200’ outfield and 1, 290’ outfield).
  - One batting cage.
  - Both fields have lights.
- Nine pickleball courts.
- One inclusive playground.
- Two Class Rooms and a Sensory Room.

### Facility Suggestions

- Updated lighting for the diamonds and the pickleball courts.
- Include shade around spectator areas for the two softball fields.
- Expanded batting cages (add one).
- Remove playground behind pickleball courts.
- Consideration of portable pitching mounds for the two softball fields so that they can accommodate youth baseball as well as softball.
- Consideration of multiple base path lengths in all fields.
- Better signage and wayfinding. When the project team was on site, school was in session and the park entrance was lost in the school parking lot.

## Schoolhouse – Flora Park (Dubuque Montessori School)

The building has some barn-like architectural characteristics, and using Google and other tools, appears to be approximately 50’ x 30’ and is a 2 two-story structure , leading the project team to believe the facility is 3,000-4,000 total square feet. It is also likely comprises a series of rooms of various sizes, and there is likely a warming kitchen in the facility. Adjacent to the building is a fenced playground that was paid for by the Montessori School and that they have exclusive use of.

The Montessori School is nearing the end of their lease, and the City could take over the facility which would allow them to have a dedicated indoor space for programs.

The project team would offer the following opinions and recommendations concerning this indoor space.

- While it is true that the City taking over the space would provide a dedicated indoor facility in a park where they could offer programs, the size of the space is woefully inadequate.
- The indoor space will require some remodeling to ensure that it meets the needs of the programs the City wants to run.
- The HVAC system will need evaluated to ensure that it meets the needs of the City.
- The sprinkler system will need to continue to be inspected and potentially updated (it is inspected on a regular schedule currently).

### The types of programs that this facility would support (referring to the list from the ETC survey instrument):

Hobby/Interest Classes

Arts Programs

Senior Programs

Educational Classes/Lectures

Nature/Environmental Education Programs (limited)



## RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION	TERM
<b>Recreation</b>	
<b>Aquatics</b>	
Master Plan for new recreation facility and aquatics facility	Short
Repair water slide issues	Short
Repair leaks/rusting equipment/surface cracking	Short
Provide further screening at Flora and Sutton Pools via screen wall and/or landscape buffer	Short
Repair rusted pool equipment and lighting	Short
Repair pool surfacing and deeper cracks	Short
Repair water slide hazards	Short
Develop a plan to add shade to the pool decks at Flora and Sutton Pools. Existing shade is sparse and in pool condition	Mid
Create a new recreation facility	Long
Revitalize or create a new outdoor aquatic facility	Long
Modernize restroom/shower facilities	Long
Resurface parking lot	Long
Modernize lighting throughout	Long
Add shade over playground elements	Long
Modernize concessions building and changing/shower rooms at pool	Long
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long
<b>Golf Course</b>	
Conduct a business plan to further develop F&B program	Short
Expand program offerings at Bunker Hill Golf Course	Short
Develop a driving range at Bunker Hill Golf Course	Long
Partner with user groups to create a classroom building and hitting bay at driving range	Long
<b>Marina</b>	
Create website with ordering mechanism for marina convenience store	Short
Host one annual event at the marina	Short
Marketing campaign for marina and available seasonal slip spaces	Short

RECOMMENDATION	TERM
Patrol restrooms/lock restroom after hours to ensure safety and positive user experience	Short
Create dedicated branding and a website for the marina with a dedicated reservations system	Short
Partner with restaurant to put on a regular summer event series	Short
Work with Public Safety to evaluate feasibility of boat ramp near marina	Mid
Further activate the marina by adding a boat ramp	Mid
Reconfigure existing parking to support boat ramp parking	Mid
Partner with Travel Dubuque to create welcome center hub at store for cruiseline visitors	Mid
Amenitize seasonal slips with options like covers and boat lifts	Mid
Enhance connection between marina store and Riverfront Path	Mid
As agreement allows, make maximum slips available for seasonal rental	Mid
Create dedicated areas for accessible fishing	Mid
Create program for marina boating in-and-out service	Long
<b>Programming</b>	
Explore partnerships with County and US Fish and Wildlife options for increased environmental education opportunities	Short
Expand program offerings to include more youth sports league offerings	Short
Provide additional recreation programming at Veterans Memorial Park multi-use rooms	Short
Conduct a fee study to determine competitive and accessible program fees	Short
The clubhouse is inadequate for the number of rounds played annually and is reaching the end of its useful lifecycle. The City will need to make a choice between significant reinvestment in the existing structure, including expansion, and contrast that will new construction.	Short
Expand program offerings to include more special interest classes	Mid
Provide additional recreation programming at the existing Flora Schoolhouse site	Mid
Expand adaptive recreation programs for all ages	Mid
Partner with senior services providers to further expand senior program offerings	Mid
Expand upon current senior programming partnership with Hills & Dales Lifetime Center	Mid
Start a formal special events program	Mid
Create dedicated indoor space to support increased programming	Long
Discuss with youth soccer groups the possibility of using outfields as small soccer fields for introductory programs, specifically in the fall.	Long





## Chapter 4

# Trails and Connectivity

*Every Journey Is A Story*



Dubuque  
Parks and Recreation  
Comprehensive Plan



# INTRODUCTION

The City of Dubuque's Parks and Recreation Department oversees a comprehensive network of trails, enhancing recreational opportunities and natural exploration for the community. Key trails include the Dubuque Jaycees Trail, Heritage Trail, Mississippi Riverwalk, Northwest Arterial Trail, Southern Levee Trail, and those within Bergfeld Recreation Area. Additionally, the City manages the Granger Creek Nature Trail and the Trolley Line Trail in Eagle Point Park. The Department also maintains the Bee Branch Creek Greenway and various paths in parks like Valentine Park and Miller Riverview Park. The City's trails not only provide recreation and physical activity opportunities they also add to the community's active transportation system that provides safe ways for all to access unique destinations and the entire community.

In addition to its conventional land trail network, the city boasts a unique recreational amenity with the Dubuque Water Trail. This 11-mile, state-designated water trail along the picturesque Mississippi River and Catfish Creek offers a vibrant blend of natural beauty, rich history, and active river commerce. Developed in partnership with the Friends of the Mines of Spain, the Dubuque County Conservation Board, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the trail caters to both novice and experienced paddlers. It features routes along the main channel's shoreline, tranquil backwaters, and Dubuque's redeveloped riverfront. Situated within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, the trail provides abundant wildlife viewing opportunities. With five access points available, paddlers can easily enter and exit the river, exploring various on-land recreational activities and historic landmarks throughout the city.

# WHAT WE HEARD

The project utilized a robust community and stakeholder engagement process which included an online website as well as statistically valid survey to ensure the community, user groups, and stakeholders were all heard. Below are some highlights from what we heard about trails, pathways, and connectivity.

Multi-use paths and trails were identified as the second highest priorities for investment behind aquatics.

Multi-use paths and trails were identified as the highest need for facilities and amenities at 74% and by 44,392 out of 59,667 residents.

We heard from focus groups on the need for a connected park system, utilizing the existing trail network to create loop trails and provide community connections.

# TRAIL SYSTEM FEATURES, STANDARD SECTIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

## Trail System Features

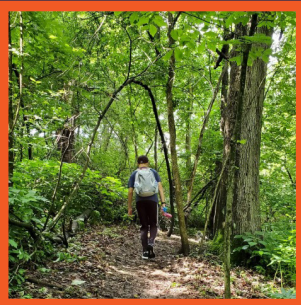
### Paved Trails

The trail system includes several miles of asphalt and concrete paved trails, ideal for walking, running, and biking. These trails offer an all-weather surface that is accessible for users of all ages and abilities.



### Unpaved Trails

For those seeking a more rustic hiking experience, Dubuque's trail system features unpaved trails suited for hiking and mountain biking. These trails vary from gravel surfaces to compacted dirt paths. Key unpaved trails include segments in the Mines of Spain Recreation Area and EB Lyons Prairie and Woodland Preserve, which feature rugged terrain and breathtaking views of the local bluffs and forests.





Water Trail

The city also provides a unique experience for recreational enthusiasts with the Dubuque Water Trail. A water trail is a marked route along a waterway—such as a river, canal, or reservoir—featuring signs, maps, and access points. Designed for canoeists and kayakers, it offers a safe and enjoyable way to explore the water, providing scenic and educational experiences that highlight natural beauty, historical significance, and cultural landmarks. Water trails typically include multiple launch and landing sites, rest areas, and points of interest, making them accessible for users of all skill levels for both short and extended trips.



Scenic Overlooks and Rest Areas

Throughout the trail system, strategically placed benches, rest areas, and scenic overlooks provide opportunities for users to rest and enjoy the picturesque views. Well-designed kiosks and wayfinding signage help navigate the trail network and provide information about local flora and fauna.

Trailheads and Parking

Numerous trailheads with access to parking, restrooms, and informational signage are spread across the system, offering convenient starting points for trail enthusiasts. Popular trailheads include within the Dubuque park system include:

Bee Branch Greenway Trailhead



Bergfeld Recreation Area Trailhead at Pennsylvania Avenue



Trail Classifications

Off-Street Trails

The off-street trail classification includes detached multi-use pathways that deviate from the roadway network. Designed for a variety of activities including walking and biking, these trails typically feature wider paths (8-12 feet) to accommodate multiple users and minimize conflicts. The majority of the multi-use pathway trails are 10 feet wide utilizing asphalt surfacing.

On-Street Trails

These trails utilize detached and attached sidewalks within the roadway corridor. They are focused on providing accessibility for all users, including those with disabilities. These trails meet ADA guidelines with specific gradients, surfacing, and amenities that ensure ease of access and use. Other on-street bicycle networks that are not specifically trails are examined within other documents, such as the Dubuque Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan, Dubuque's Alternative Transportation Action Plan, and Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study, among others.

Recreation Trails

Primarily utilized for hiking and mountain biking, these trails maintain a natural surface consisting of dirt, grass, or crushed stone. They often feature varying terrain and elevation changes.





# Standard Trail Sections

## Standard Trail Sections

### Paved Multi-Use Trail Section

- **Width:** Ranges between 8-12 feet.
- **Surface:** Asphalt or concrete.
- **Shoulder:** 2- to 3-foot clear zone on each side of pathway at 2 percent cross slope with 6:1 minimum side slope transition from shoulder to existing grade.
- **Signing and Markings:** Trail traffic signage and striping as per the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

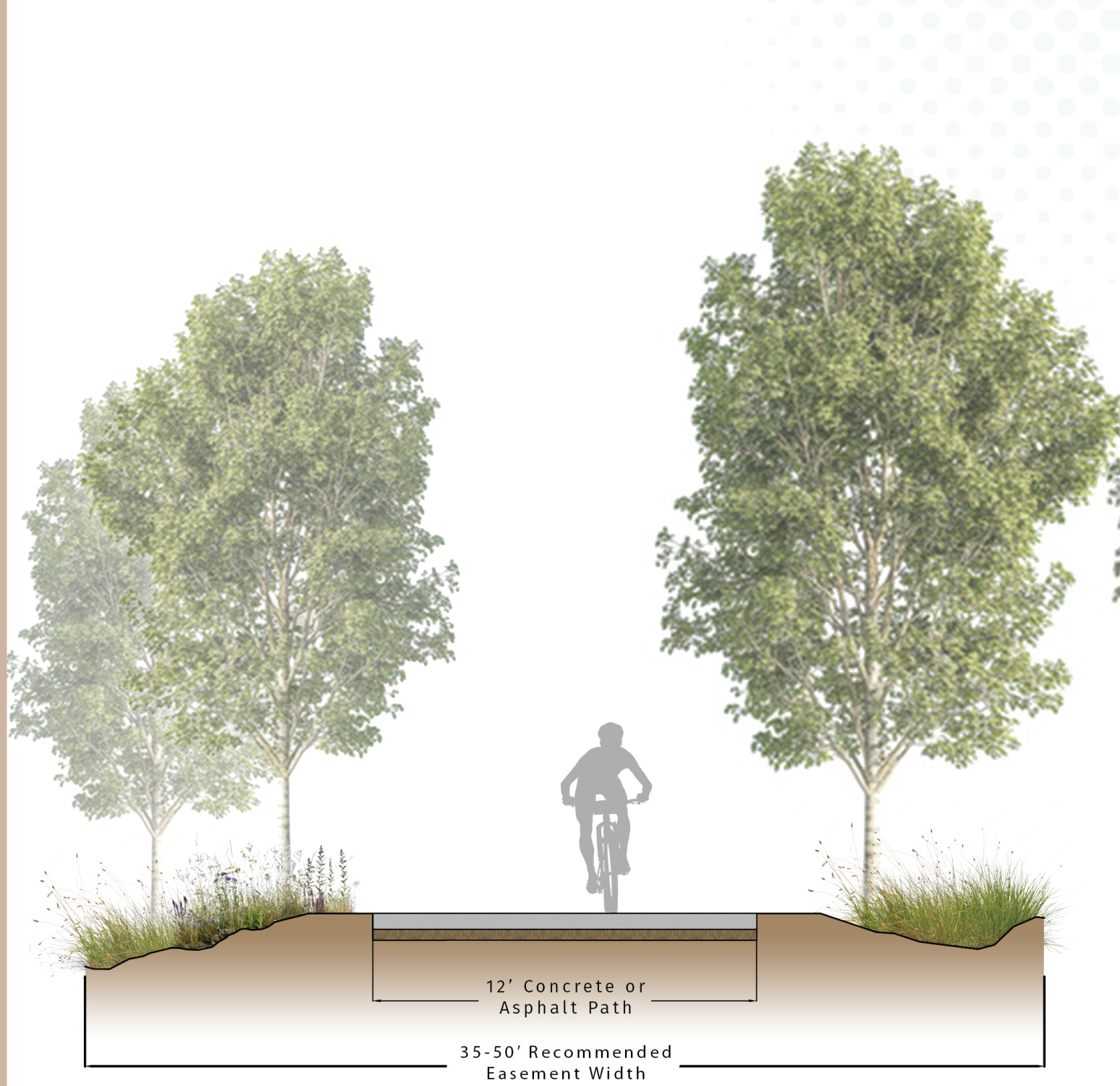
### Unpaved Trail Section

- **Width:** Range from 3-6 feet.
- **Surface:** Compacted dirt, grass, or crushed stone.

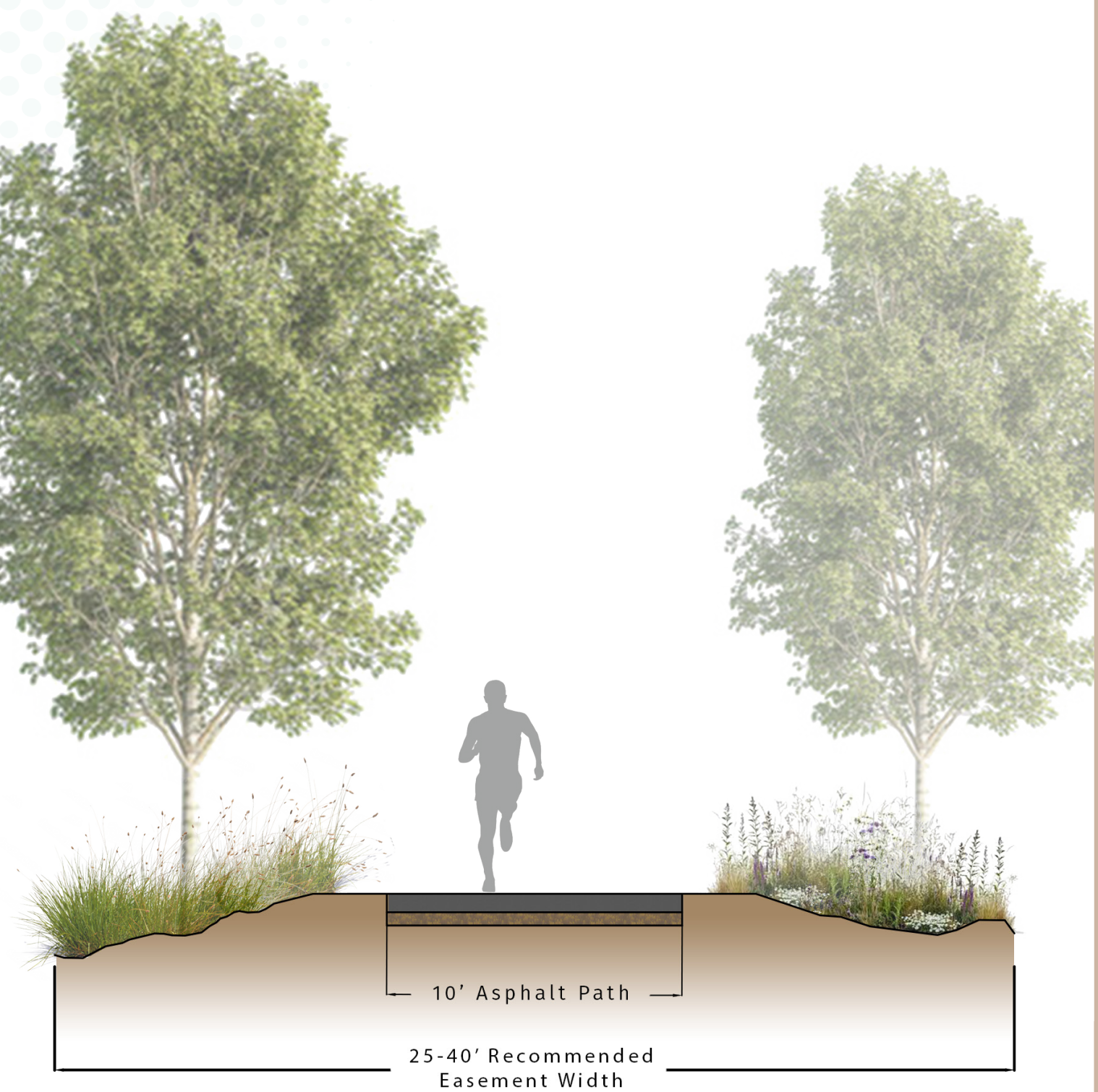
	Path/Trail Name	Path/Trail Width	Surface	Recommended Easement Width
1	Primary Path	12 Feet	Concrete or Asphalt	35 Feet - 50 Feet
2	Secondary Path	10 Feet	Asphalt	25 Feet - 40 Feet
3	Primary Trail	4-6 Feet	Natural Surface	35 Feet - 50 Feet
4	Secondary Trail	3 Feet	Natural Surface	25 Feet - 40 Feet



## 1 Primary Path



## 2 Secondary Path

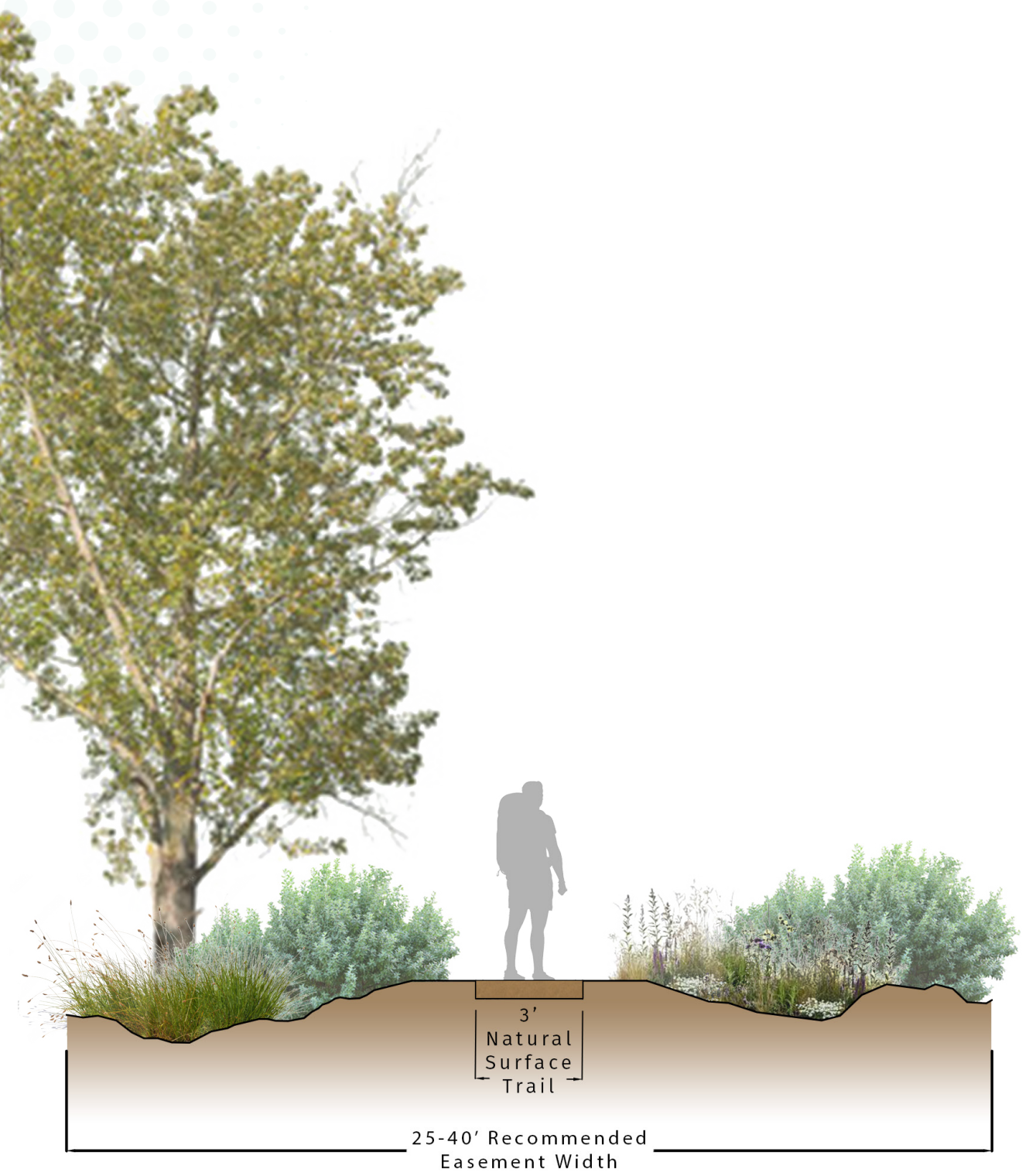




### 3 Primary Trail



### 4 Secondary Trail





# Dubuque Water Trail

## Dubuque Water Trail

### Overview

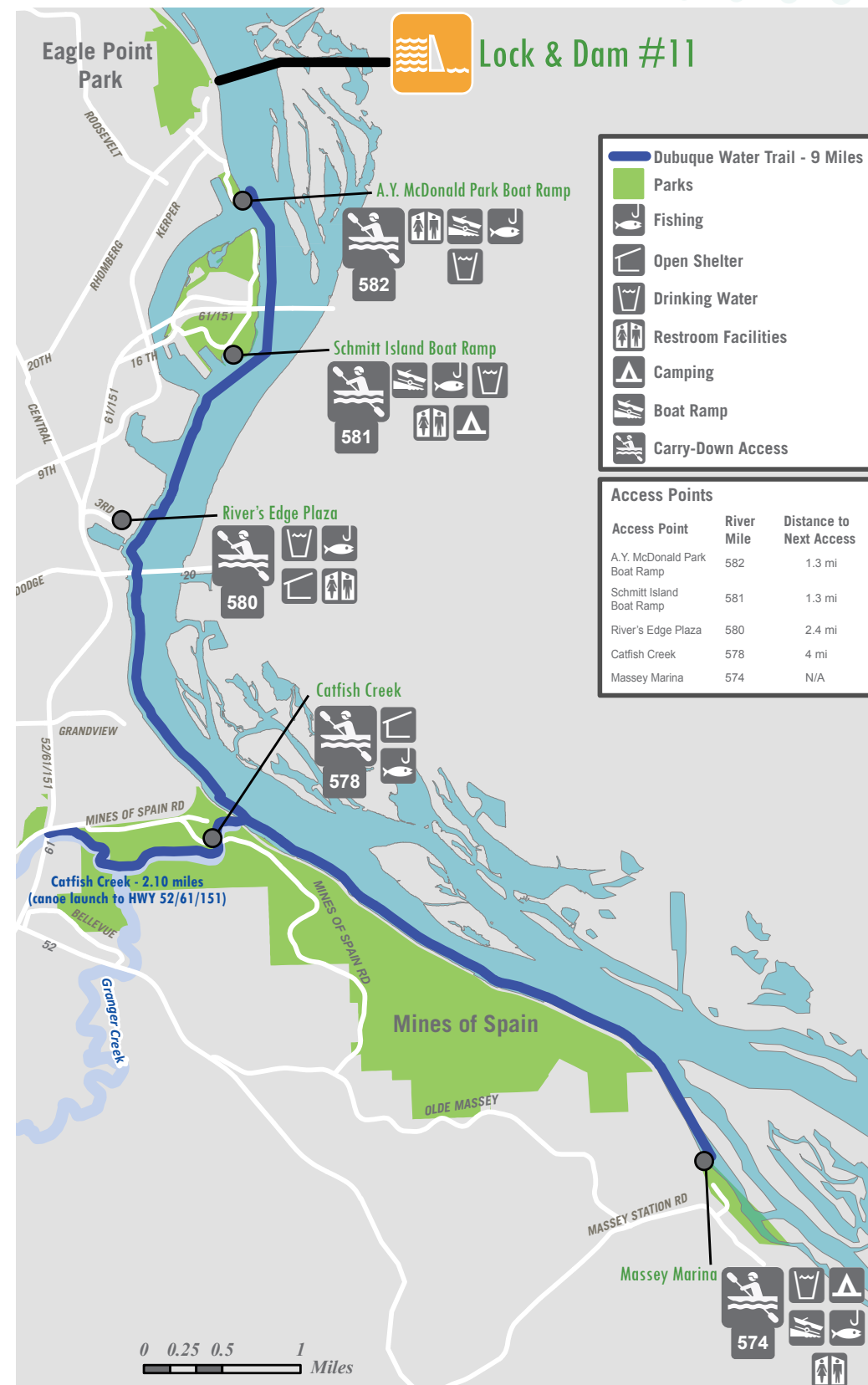
The Dubuque Water Trail is an 11-mile, state-designated water trail along the Mississippi River and Catfish Creek, developed through a partnership between the City of Dubuque, the Friends of the Mines of Spain, the Dubuque County Conservation Board, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. This trail offers an exceptional experience for canoeists and kayakers, blending natural beauty, rich history, and active river commerce.

The Dubuque Water Trail provides an exceptional blend of natural beauty and recreational opportunities. As you paddle along the main channel's shoreline or meander through tranquil backwaters, you'll encounter a diverse array of wildlife, lush vegetation, and breathtaking scenery.

This trail is more than just a paddling route; it's a place where history, nature, commerce, and recreation converge, providing a unique and enriching experience. You'll paddle through areas steeped in historical significance while enjoying the serene and untouched beauty of the refuge.







## Paddling Experience

Catering to paddlers of all skill levels, the trail begins just south of Lock and Dam #11 and travels downstream, offering varied paddling experiences:

- **Main Channel Shoreline:** Paddlers can hug the shoreline, observing river traffic while enjoying views of the city and limestone bluffs.
- **Backwater Excursions:** The trail provides access to serene backwater areas, particularly around the Mines of Spain State Recreation Area. A popular five-mile loop on Catfish Creek offers a more secluded, natural experience.
- **Urban Interface:** The trail passes through Dubuque's redeveloped riverfront, offering unique perspectives of the city's downtown, historic Shot Tower, and the Port of Dubuque area.

## Nature and Wildlife

Located within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and the Catfish Creek Watershed, the trail is a hot-spot for wildlife viewing:

- **Ecosystems:** Paddle through a mix of wetlands, forests, and river environments, home to diverse flora and fauna.
- **Wildlife:** As a designated "Watchable Wildlife Area," visitors may spot bald eagles, songbirds, white-tailed deer, and various small mammals.

## Historical Significance

The trail is steeped in the region's early settlement and industrial history:

- **Julien Dubuque Monument:** Pass by the bluff where Julien Dubuque, the area's first European settler and a figure with strong ties to the Meskwaki tribe, is buried under a 25-foot tall limestone monument.
- **Shot Tower:** This historic industrial landmark, used since the 1860s to make lead shot, is visible from the water near downtown Dubuque.
- **Mines of Spain:** The southern trail borders the historic Mines of Spain area, an early lead mining site that significantly shaped the region's economy.



Access Points

The Dubuque Water Trail is flexible, suitable for full-day exploration or shorter trips. It features five access points:

- 1. **Lock and Dam #11** (Starting Point)
- 2. **A.Y. McDonald Park:** 8 acre park located off the north end of Kerper Boulevard at Hawthorne Street and Volunteer Drive. Amenities include boat ramp, drinking water, restrooms, playground, picnic tables, fishing piers, walking/biking path.
- 3. **Schmitt Island:** Chaplain Schmitt Island is located off Highway 151/61 on Dubuque’s North End. Also located on the Island are Miller Riverview Park & Campground and McAleece Park & Recreation Complex. Amenities include boat ramp, drinking water, restrooms, playground, skate park, picnic tables, camping.
- 4. **American Trust River’s Edge Plaza:** The River’s Edge Plaza is located on the south end of the Mississippi Riverwalk. The Plaza also serves as a docking site for large excursion vessels. Restaurants, lodging, and entertainment venues are within a short walking distance. Amenities include ramp, drinking water, restrooms.
- 5. **Catfish Creek Access:** Located in the back waters of the Mississippi River, as part of the Mines of Spain. The 1,380 acres which make up the Mines of Spain State Recreation Area were designated as one of Iowa's "Watchable Wildlife Areas." Rare species, including the bobcat, red-shouldered hawk, flying squirrel, and bald eagle have all been in the area. In addition, the area is home to a large variety of songbirds, white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and numerous small mammals. With wetlands, creeks, forests, prairies, cropland, meadows, and the Mississippi River, the Mines of Spain offers a wide variety of Iowa's natural world for those who take the time to look and listen. The park is open year-round, with park hours of 4 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Amenities include access to 12 miles of maintained hiking trails, picnicking, and interpretive opportunities.
- 6. **Massey Marina Park:** The concession building offers food and drinks as well as accessible restroom/shower facilities, and bait. Picnic grounds and campsites include accessible playground units. A two-lane boat ramp and daytime parking for vehicles and boat trailers are located on the north side of the park. Excellent backwater paddling opportunities are near the park. Amenities include boat ramp, restrooms, drinking water, camping, playground, picnic tables, concessions, and bait.

These access points provide convenient entry and exit spots, allowing paddlers to tailor their journey based on personal preferences and time constraints. They also offer opportunities for on-land recreational activities like hiking, picnicking, and birdwatching.

A Unique Experience

The Dubuque Water Trail offers a gateway to experiencing the Mississippi River's rich tapestry of natural and cultural wonders. Whether seeking solitude in nature, an adventurous paddle, or learning about the area’s historical importance, this trail provides a memorable experience for every paddler.

Existing Path and Trail System

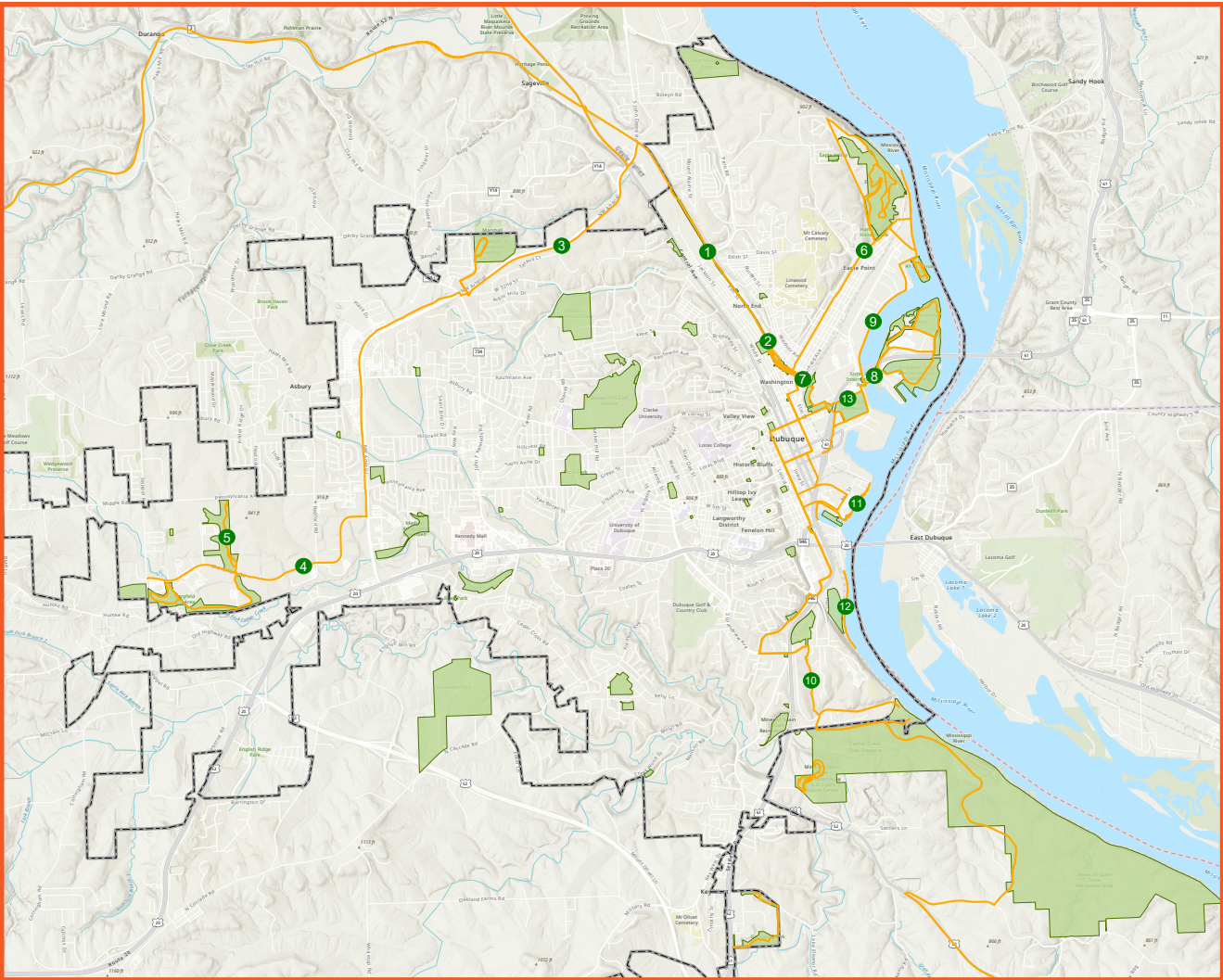




# EXISTING PATH AND TRAIL SYSTEM

The City of Dubuque's Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for maintaining an extensive network of trails. These include:

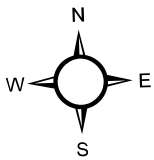
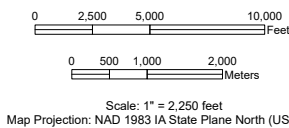
- Dubuque Jaycees Trail**  
 A recreational trail offering a great outdoor experience.
- Mississippi Riverwalk**  
 A picturesque pathway along the Mississippi River, ideal for a leisurely stroll.
- Heritage Trail**  
 A scenic route built on a former railroad, perfect for history and nature enthusiasts.
- Bee Branch Creek Greenway**  
 A managed greenway that promotes environmental sustainability.
- Northwest Arterial Trail**  
 Located near the NW Arterial, providing convenient access for residents.
- Southern Levee Trail**  
 Follows the southern levee, offering unique views and experiences.
- Bergfeld Recreation Area Trails**  
 Beautiful trails within this dedicated recreation area.
- Granger Creek Nature Trail**  
 A serene nature trail as part of the City's park system.
- Trolley Line Trail in Eagle Point Park**  
 Enjoyable for both walking and exploring within Eagle Point Park.
- Miller Riverview Park Trails**  
 Well-maintained paths for residents and visitors to enjoy.



## Key Note Legend

- Heritage Trail
- Northend Neighborhood Trail
- Northwest Arterial
- Chavenelle Trail
- Bergfeld Recreation Trail
- Trolley Line Trail
- Bee Branch Trail
- Peosta Channel Trail
- Dubuque Jaycees Trail
- Alliant Powerline Trail
- Mississippi Riverwalk Trail
- Southern Levee Trail
- Bee Branch Trail South

- Existing Recreation Trails
- City Limits
- City Park



The following tables provide a current inventory of the existing trail system divided into the Off-Street Trail, On-Street Trail, and Recreation Trail classifications.



Existing Off-Street Trail Network

No.	Name	Classification	Pathway Material	Pathway Width	Pathway Length (Miles)	Pathway Start		Pathway Finish	Comments
1	Northend Neighborhood Trail	Off-Street Trail	Asphalt	Varies 8'-10' wide	1	22nd Street		32nd Street	Same alignment as Heritage Trail. Starts at Comiskey Park and ends at 32nd tying in with Heritage Trail north of 32nd Street
2	Northwest Arterial (Iowa 32 Trail)	Off-Street Trail	Asphalt	10' wide	4.7	Heritage Trail (Tanzanite Drive & S. John Deere Road)		NW Arterial & Chavenelle Road	This trail provides a key north/south connector from Heritage Trail to the Chavenelle Trail which continues to the Bergfeld Recreation Area
3	Chavenelle Trail	Off-Street Trail	Asphalt	10' wide	2.4	NW Arterial & Chavenelle Road		Chavenelle Road & Seippel Road	Detached Multi-use Pathway throughout the Industrial Tech Center
4	Bergfeld Recreation Trail	Off-Street Trail	Asphalt	8' wide	1.7	Pennsylvania Avenue		Bergfeld Recreation Area	
5	Trolley Line Trail	Off-Street Trail	Asphalt	8' wide	0.5	Historic Ham House		Eagle Point Park Turnaround	Historic Trolley Route to Eagle Point
6	Bee Branch Trail	Off-Street Trail	Asphalt	Varies 10'-12' wide	2.6	22nd Street		16th Street & Sycamore Street	Greenbelt for stormwater conveyance developed into a linear park providing pathways and connections from Schmidt Island to Heritage Trail
7	Peosta Channel Trail	Off-Street Trail	Asphalt	10' wide	0.8	Jaycees Trail		16th Street & Kerper Blvd	Connects Bee Branch Trail to Schmitt Island
8	Dubuque Jaycees Trail	Off-Street Trail	Asphalt	10' wide	1.28	16th Street & Kerper Blvd		Shiras Avenue Extension	Provides connection from Bee Branch to A.Y. McDonald Park and Eagle Point
9	Alliant Powerline Trail	Off-Street Trail	Asphalt	8' wide	0.67	Grandview Avenue		Julien Dubuque Drive	Provides trail connector from Julien Dubuque to Murphy Park
10	Mississippi Riverwalk Trail	Off-Street Trail	Asphalt/Concrete	10' wide	0.95	Ice Harbor		Star Brewery	The Dubuque section of the Mississippi River Trail runs along the city's eastern edge, offering stunning river views. This paved, multi-use trail welcomes walkers, joggers, cyclists, and nature lovers, making it popular among locals and visitors.
11	Southern Levy Trail	Off-Street Trail	Asphalt	8' wide	0.71	Terminal Street		End of Levy	Opportunity to expand and connect this existing pathway from Port of Dubuque Marina to Mines of Spain Recreation Area
12	Bee Branch Trail South	Off-Street Trail	Asphalt	10' wide	0.51	16th Street & Sycamore Street		Sister City International Park	This provides connection of Heritage Trail through Bee Branch Greenway east to Sister City International Park and to A.Y. McDonald Park.
Existing Off-Street Trail Total					26.42 Miles				



Existing On-Street Trails Network

No.	Name	Classification	Pathway Material	Pathway Width	Pathway Length (Miles)	Pathway Start		Pathway Finish	Comments
1	Mississippi River Trail South Route	On-Street Trail	Asphalt/Concrete	12' wide	21	Mississippi River South Route		Julien Dubuque Route	Scenic Roadway Corridor Route
2	Julien Dubuque Route	On-Street Trail	Asphalt/Concrete	8' wide	0.75	Mississippi River South Route		Southern Avenue Route	Roadway/Sidewalk - Part of the Heritage Trail Extension connecting Powerline Trail to Bee Branch
3	Southern Avenue Route	On-Street Trail	Asphalt/Concrete	8' wide	0.73	Julien Dubuque Route		Railroad Route	Roadway/Sidewalk - Part of the Heritage Trail Extension connecting Powerline Trail to Bee Branch
4	Railroad Route	On-Street Trail	Asphalt/Concrete	8' wide	0.48	Southern Avenue Route		Main Street	Roadway/Sidewalk - Part of the Heritage Trail Extension connecting Powerline Trail to Bee Branch
5	Main Street Route	On-Street Trail	Asphalt/Concrete	8' wide	1.54	15th Street/Main Street		Salina Street/Main Street	Roadway/Sidewalk - Part of the Heritage Trail Extension connecting Powerline Trail to Bee Branch
6	Millwork District	On-Street Trail	Asphalt/Concrete	8' wide	0.57	Main Street/10th Street		15th Street/Washington Street	Roadway/Sidewalk
7	Millwork District South End Trail	On-Street Trail	Concrete	8' wide	0.32	10th & Jackson Street		5th Street & White Street	Roadway/Sidewalk Connection to Port of Dubuque Route
8	Eagle Point Park Route	On-Street Trail	Asphalt/Concrete	Varies 8'-10' wide	5	Kneist Street/Lincoln Avenue		Eagle Point Park/Lock & Dam	Roadway/Sidewalk
9	Port of Dubuque Route	On-Street Trail	Asphalt/Concrete	Varies 8'-10' wide	0.97	5th Street Main - Bell		5th Street Main - Bell	Roadway/Sidewalk
10	Schmitt Island Route	On-Street Trail	Concrete	8' wide	1.49	16th Street/Admiral Sheehy Dr.		16th Street/Greyhound Park Road	Roadway/Sidewalk
Existing On-Street Trail Total					32.85 Miles				



Existing Recreational Trails Network

No.	Name	Classification	Pathway Material	Pathway Width	Pathway Length (Miles)	Pathway Start		Pathway Finish	Comments
1	A.Y. McDonald Park Trail	Recreation Trail	Asphalt	12' wide	0.5	Harbor Street		Harbor Street	Looped Trail at A.Y. McDonald Park
2	Heron Pond Trail	Recreation Trail	Asphalt	10' wide	0.9	Riverview Park Road		Riverview Park Road	Looped Trail around Heron Pond at Riverview Park
3	Bergfeld Pond Trail	Recreation Trail	Asphalt	8' wide	1	Bergfeld Recreation Area		Bergfeld Recreation Area	Looped trail around the Bergfeld Pond within the Bergfeld Recreation Area. Includes pedestrian bridge with benches and ramadas
4	Julien Dubuque Trail	Recreation Trail	Gravel	4' wide	0.7	Mines of Spain Road Parking Area West of Catfish Creek		Julien Dubuque Monument	Gravel trail to the Julien Dubuque Monument within the Mines of Spain Recreation Area
5	EB Lyons Paved Trail	Recreation Trail	Concrete	10' wide	0.38	EB Lyons Visitor Center		Mines of Spain	Concrete Trail to Overlook within the Mines of Spain Recreation Area
6	Granger Creek Nature Trail	Recreation Trail	Grass	Varies	1	Lake Eleanor Road		Digital Drive	The Granger Creek Nature Trail offers an easy and short loop ideal for walking and hiking. Known for its well-maintained grassy paths, the trail provides excellent birdwatching opportunities. Nestled within the city's technology park, this trail offers a serene natural escape in the heart of an urban area.
7	Catfish Creek Trail	Recreation Trail	Gravel/ Paved	Varies 6'-8' wide	1.6	Mines of Spain Road Parking Area south of Julien Dubuque Trail		Looped pathway	The trail offers wildlife viewing, fishing, picnic spots, and connects to the Mines of Spain Recreation Area. It's a cherished spot for nature enthusiasts and outdoor adventurers.
Existing Recreational Trail Total					6.08 Miles				

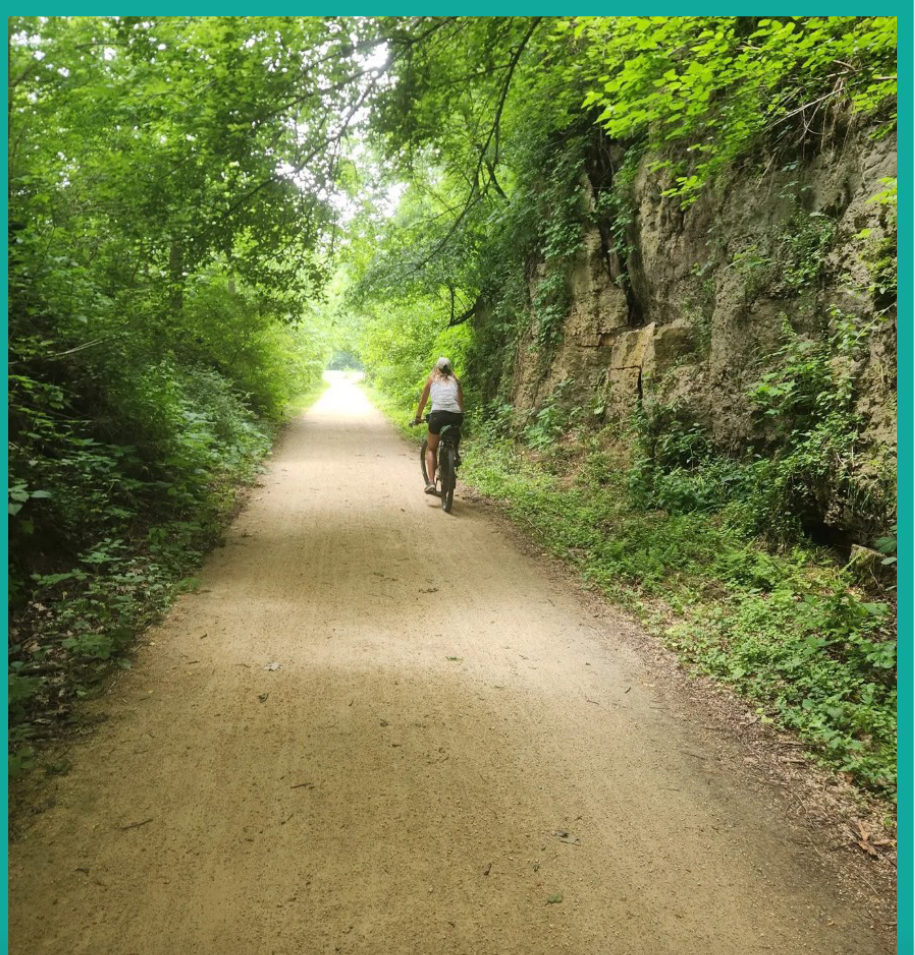


Heritage Trail

The Heritage Trail section within city limits spans approximately 8.6 miles and offers a delightful mix of urban and natural landscapes. Starting near the Mississippi River, this portion of the trail takes you through historic neighborhoods, lush parks, and scenic wooded areas. Along the way, you'll encounter interpretive signs that provide insights into the local history and natural surroundings. The Heritage Trail offers an immersive experience rich with amenities and natural beauty. The city section connects with the Dubuque County Conservation section of the Heritage Trail. The Dubuque County Heritage Trail stretch includes a grade-separated underpass at S. John Deere Road and a pedestrian bridge crossing of Highway 3, ensuring safe and convenient access for trail users. Additionally, the trail features six pedestrian bridge crossing points over the Little Maquoketa River, adding scenic waterway views to the corridor. Heritage Trail continue westward through Dubuque County ending in Dyersville.

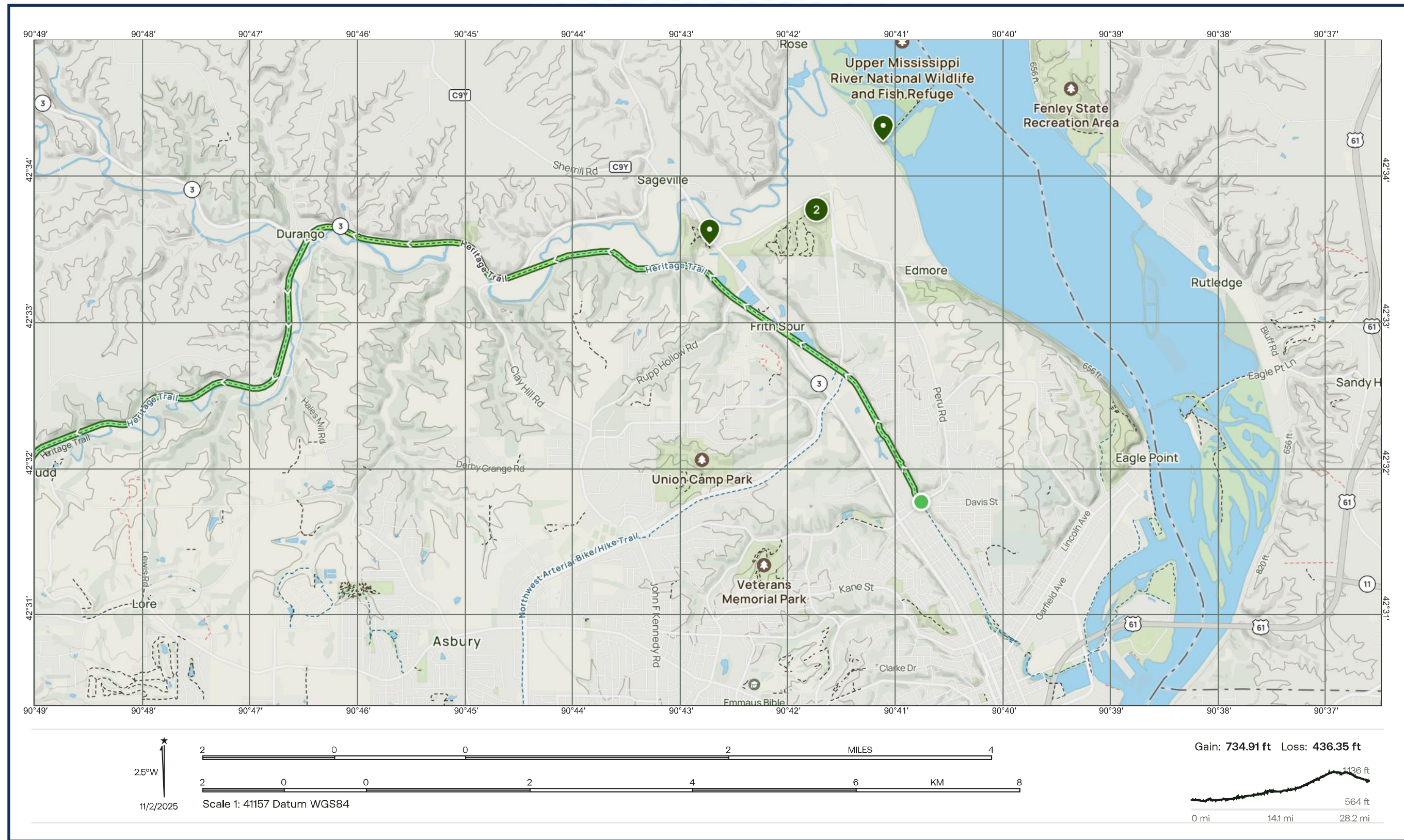
For trailhead amenities, Dubuque County Conservation maintains a trailhead at John Deere Road and Gardners Lane which provides 14 parking spaces and covered kiosk. Dubuque County Conservation has a 50-car parking area at Heritage Pond, complete with a vault toilet. Heritage Pond also offers a smaller 10-space parking area with a paddle boat launch and dock, ideal for those looking to enjoy some time on the water. Further along the trail, a kiosk information station with a vault toilet is conveniently located west of Asbury Road, providing useful information and facilities for travelers.

The trail is well-maintained and accessible, making it a popular destination for walkers, joggers, cyclists, and nature enthusiasts.





# HERITAGE TRAIL





## North End Neighborhood Trail

The North End Neighborhood Trail is nestled in the heart of one of the city's historically rich neighborhoods, this trail offers residents and visitors alike a scenic route to explore the charm and history of Dubuque's north end. Beginning at Comiskey Park and ending at 32nd Street, the trail's strategic placement ensures easy access from major neighborhood hubs.

## Bee Branch Trail System

The Bee Branch Trail system is a vital link connecting the nearly thirty-mile Heritage Trail with the Mississippi River and Schmitt Island. This provides easy access to the river, parks, and various recreational amenities for both trail users and local residents. Pedestrian tunnels beneath the railroad tracks enhance safety, connecting the Bee Branch Creek Greenway with the Lower Bee Branch Trail.

### Bee Branch Creek Greenway

Daylighted in 2017, Bee Branch Creek has been restored to aid flood control while creating a scenic park at the end of the Heritage Trail. This linear park features an amphitheater, kids' play area, urban orchard, boardwalk, seating, and two concrete trail loops. It's open 24/7, with lighting, emergency phones, and cameras along the route. Green infrastructure, including rain gardens and permeable pavement, promotes water infiltration. This section of trail begins at Comiskey Park and extends to Garfield Ave where it goes under the railroad tracks to connect with the Lower Bee Branch Trail.

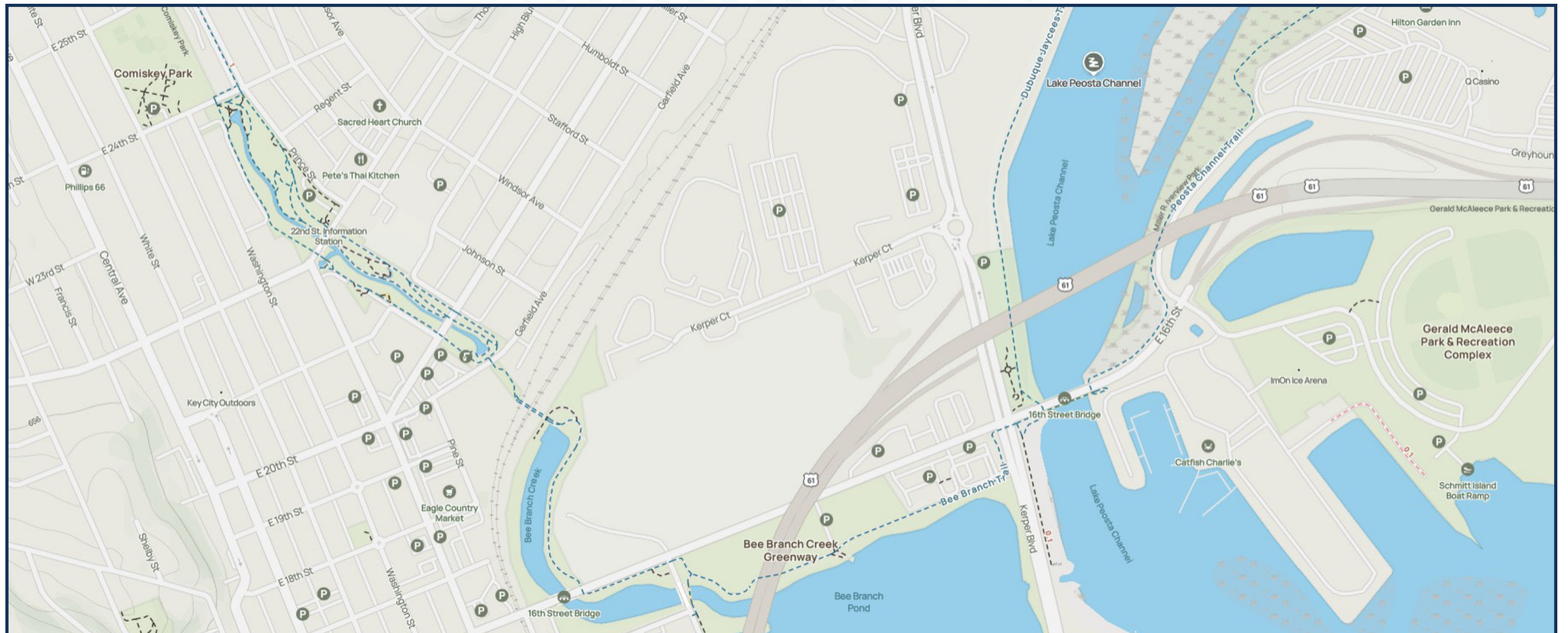
### Lower Bee Branch Trail

Users can take a narrow bridge path to the Peosta Channel Trail on Schmitt Island which offers a variety of trails, green spaces, and recreational activities. This section begins near the railroad tracks and crosses 16th Street. The trail splits at Sycamore Street towards 12th Street or continues along 16th street to connect with the Dubuque Jaycees Trail. Users can also take a narrow bridge path to the Peosta Channel Trail on Chaplain Shcmitt island which offers a variety of trails, greens spaces, and recreational activities.





# BEE BRANCH TRAIL SYSTEM





# Northwest Arterial Trail

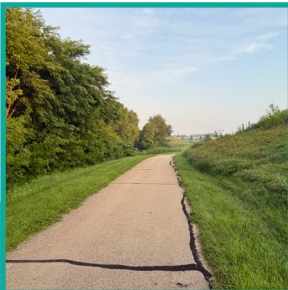
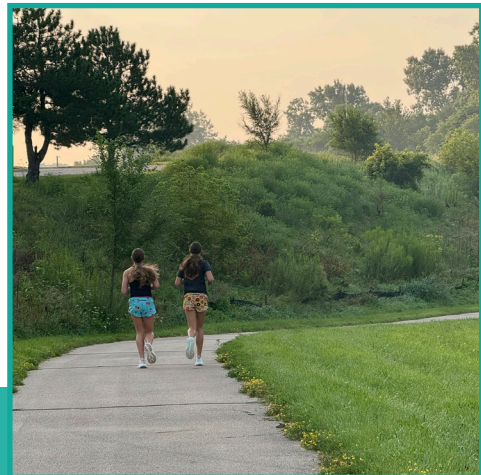
Spanning over 4.5 miles of smooth asphalt, the Northwest Arterial Trail offers an ideal route for both commuting and recreation in Dubuque's western suburbs. It also connects seamlessly with the well-known Heritage Trail to the north. Also known as the Iowa 32 Trail, this path traces the former state highway of the same name along its entire length. While shade is sparse along the trail, strategically placed benches provide opportunities to rest, and the trail offers scenic views of eastern Iowa's rolling hills.

The trail begins in the north, just past the intersection of NW Arterial/Iowa 32 and Central Avenue, where it connects with the nearly 30-mile-long Heritage Trail. As the trail heads south through open fields, it gradually enters more developed areas, with homes and businesses appearing alongside the road.

At John F Kennedy Road, the trail crosses to the opposite side of the road. Just north of this section, the Dubuque Arboretum & Botanical Gardens offers a beautiful spot to explore if you need a break. Farther south, the trail intersects Pennsylvania Avenue, conveniently located a short block from a local high school, making it a valuable route for students walking or biking to school. The trail connects to the Chavenelle Trail which connects with the nearby Bergfeld Recreation Trail.

# Chavenelle Trail

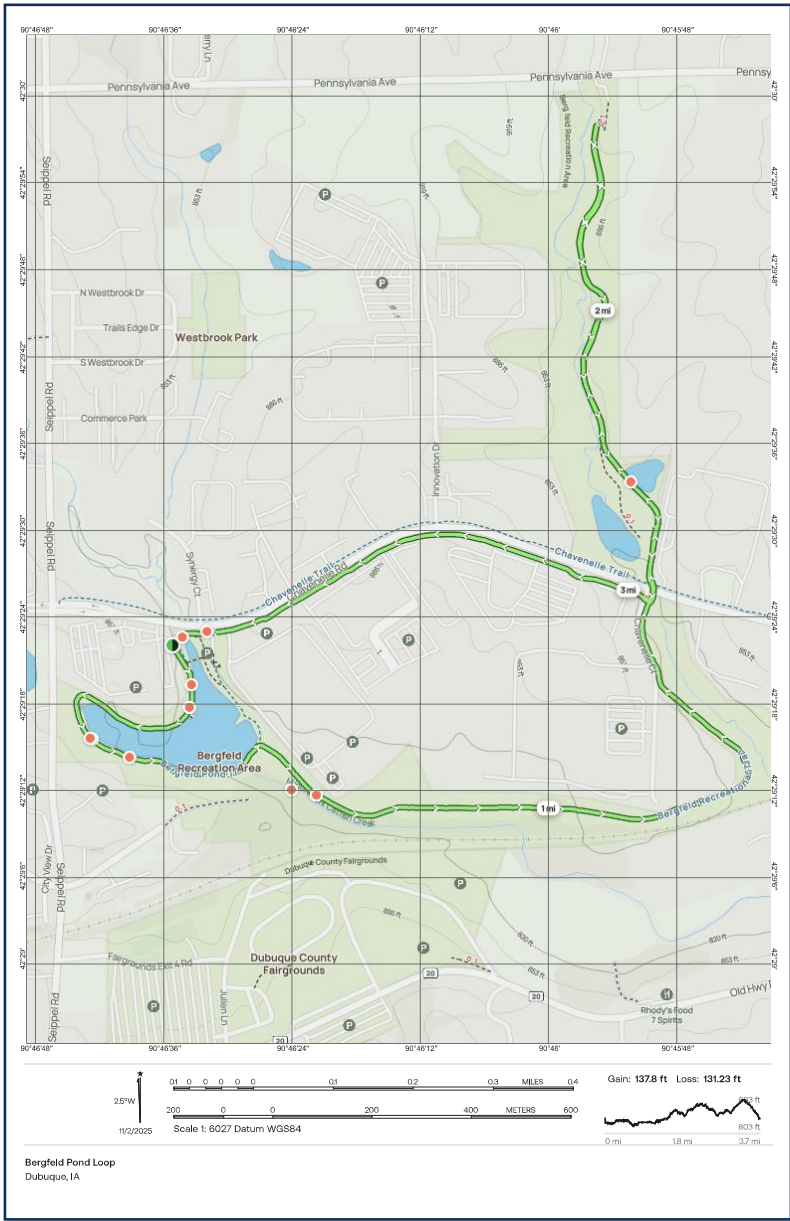
Chavenelle Trail serves as a vital link, providing a seamless connection from the Northwest Arterial Trail to the Bergfeld Recreation Area Trail, thereby creating an extensive network for outdoor enthusiasts. Stretching for several miles, the trail offers a scenic route through diverse landscapes, including open fields and shaded wooded areas, making it perfect for both exercise and leisurely strolls. Notably, it features a detached multi-use pathway throughout the Dubuque Industrial Center West, enhancing connectivity and accessibility within the community. Accessible to people of all ages and abilities, the trail also features amenities like benches, water fountains, and informational signage, enhancing the user experience.



# Bergfeld Recreation Trail

The Bergfeld Recreation Trail is a popular outdoor attraction offering a scenic and accessible route for walkers, joggers, and cyclists. The trail runs along and connects to the Bergfeld Recreation Area which spans 30 acres, offering a variety of recreational opportunities. This charming park features playgrounds, serene fishing spots at Bergfeld Pond, and almost 2 miles of the Bergfeld Recreation Trail—a paved asphalt path perfect for both walking and short bike rides. Additionally, a shorter walking trail loops around the pond, inviting visitors to enjoy leisurely strolls, exercise, or spot local wildlife and waterfowl.

The trail begins at the parking lot and play area off Chavenelle Road, extending east and north up to Pennsylvania Avenue, where another convenient parking lot awaits. Along its route, the trail meanders past a branch of Catfish Creek, offering scenic views and a smooth, mostly flat path through open fields, creating an escape from the nearby suburban industrial surroundings. Moreover, the Bergfeld Recreation Area Trail connects seamlessly with the Northwest Arterial Trail, which links to the expansive Heritage Trail that leads into central Dubuque.





## Eagle Point Trolley Line Trail

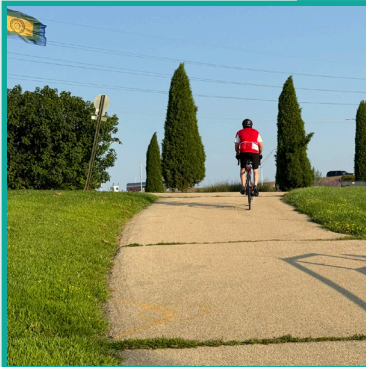
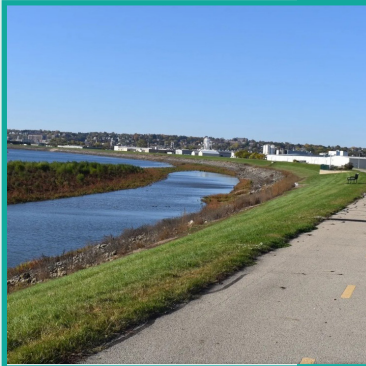
Once the path of a streetcar ferrying passengers to the stunning overlooks of Eagle Point Park, the half-mile Trolley Line Trail now offers a convenient and scenic route to this beloved park. Winding through a densely wooded area, the trail climbs towards limestone bluffs, providing breathtaking views of the Mississippi River above a historic lock and dam.

Starting at the southern end, the trail begins at the Mathias Ham Historic Site, a grand Victorian-era mansion offering guided tours that delve into the rich history of Dubuque and the steamboat era. At its northern terminus, the trail leads into Eagle Point Park, a sprawling 175-acre expanse featuring numerous outdoor recreational activities, including picnicking and tennis, as well as spectacular river views from various lookout towers and observation points.

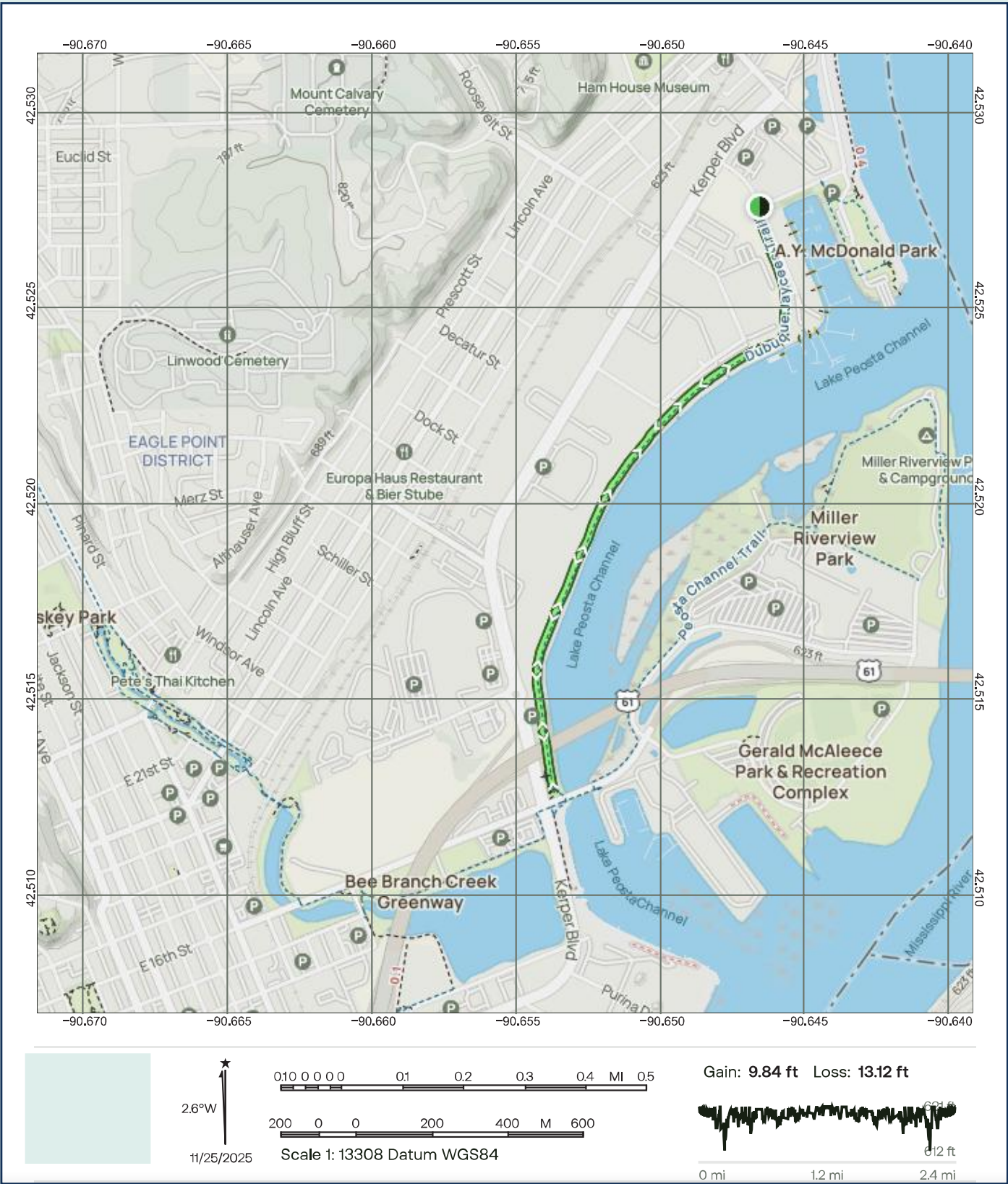
The Trolley Line Trail seamlessly connects these two family-friendly attractions, making it a popular choice for both locals and visitors seeking a blend of natural beauty and historical charm.

## Dubuque Jaycees Trail

The trail stretches just over a mile from Sister City International Park to the 8-acre A.Y. McDonald Park, a favored spot for fishing and boat launches where the Lake Peosta Channel rejoins the Mississippi River. While the trail winds through a more industrial part of northern Dubuque, tucked behind shops, businesses, a rail yard, and harbors, it remains pleasantly secluded from the bustling surroundings by following the channel's path. At its southern end, the trail connects to the Bee Branch Trail, leading towards the northern end of Dubuque's downtown. It also links to the Peosta Channel Trail, allowing access across the channel to Schmitt Island and its various attractions and parks.



## DUBUQUE JAYCEES TRAIL





# Alliant Powerline Trail

The trail serves as a crucial north-south connector, running from South Grandview Avenue to the area near the Julien Dubuque Trail. The trail generally follows an electric transmission line corridor. This scenic trail is popular for recreation, offering a route for walkers, runners, and cyclists through the natural beauty of the area. It connects to the longer Mines of Spain trail system, which features wooded trails and impressive vistas of the Mississippi River from the bluffs.

# Regional Connectivity

## Heritage Trail

The Heritage Trail is a notable rail-trail in eastern Iowa, extending from the bustling city of Dubuque to the quaint town of Dyersville. Covering an approximate distance of 26 miles, this trail artfully combines Iowa’s rich history and natural beauty, making it a prime destination for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers.

The Heritage Trail in Dubuque, Iowa, offers a scenic and historical glimpse into the region's natural beauty and rich history. Spanning a portion of the larger trail network, the segment within the City limits provides a convenient and enjoyable experience for residents and visitors alike.

The trail traces the historic route of the Chicago Great Western Railroad, constructed in the 1880s to connect Chicago, Minneapolis, Omaha, and Kansas City. After merging with the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad in 1968, the line was eventually deemed unsafe for railroad traffic due to the deteriorating condition of its 32 bridges and trestles, leading to its abandonment in 1981. The Dubuque County Conservation Board subsequently acquired the railbed and transformed it into a picturesque crushed-limestone trail in the mid-1980s. Over the years, several of the original bridges have been replaced following severe floods, preserving the trail's accessibility and historic charm.

Starting from the eastern end of the trail in Dubuque, you will begin your journey a few miles north of the historic riverfront, home to an excursion riverboat and the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium. The trail heads north, traversing a mix of older residential and commercial areas before reaching a greenway that leads you to the Heritage Pond trailhead and interpretive site in Sageville.

At this point, the trail transitions to crushed limestone and continues about 2 miles south of the Little Maquoketa River Mounds State Preserve, on its way to Durango. Here, canoeists often launch for trips down the river to the Mississippi. The area's history of lead mining is evident in landmarks named “furnace,” referring to former lead smelters.

The trail meanders for nearly 8 miles through river drainage areas until reaching the town of Graf. Fossil enthusiasts are drawn here to explore the limestone cliffs and old railroad cuts for fossil remains.

As the trail gently ascends from the river bottoms toward Epworth and Farley, both towns located less than 2 miles south of the trail provide cafés and other traveler amenities. The Centennial Ballpark north of Epworth is equipped with restrooms and drinking water.

The final 6 miles to Dyersville take you through serene farmland, where it is easy to imagine old-time baseball players emerging from the cornfields. This area is famous for being the filming location of the movie "Field of Dreams," with the iconic farm situated 3.5 miles northeast of the Dyersville trailhead, now a popular tourist attraction.







## Mississippi River Trail

The Mississippi River Trail is a key component of the extensive trail system that tracks the Mississippi River from Minnesota to Louisiana. In Dubuque, the trail highlights the natural beauty and historical significance of this river city, offering residents and visitors alike an exceptional recreational experience. The Mississippi River Trail passes through notable areas such as the Port of Dubuque, home to attractions like the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium and the historic Star Brewery. It also connects to the Mines of Spain Recreation Area, just south of downtown. Additionally, the Mississippi River Trail intersects with the Heritage Trail, a 26-mile path that extends from Dubuque to Dyersville, enhancing regional connectivity. Dubuque's proactive approach to bicycle-friendly infrastructure ensures that the Mississippi River Trail integrates seamlessly with local routes, fostering both interstate tourism and community health. The trail supports local tourism, promotes physical wellness, and boosts community engagement by linking green spaces, historical sites, and neighboring regions.

## PROPOSED PATH AND TRAIL CONNECTIONS

The plan also included reviews of the Dubuque County Conservation Comprehensive Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan, the East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Network plan, and the Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study for connectivity opportunities and plan alignment. Based on our community outreach, focus group meetings, stakeholder engagement and site analysis, the following proposed trail connections aim to create an extensive and interconnected network that enhances recreational opportunities and accessibility within the city.

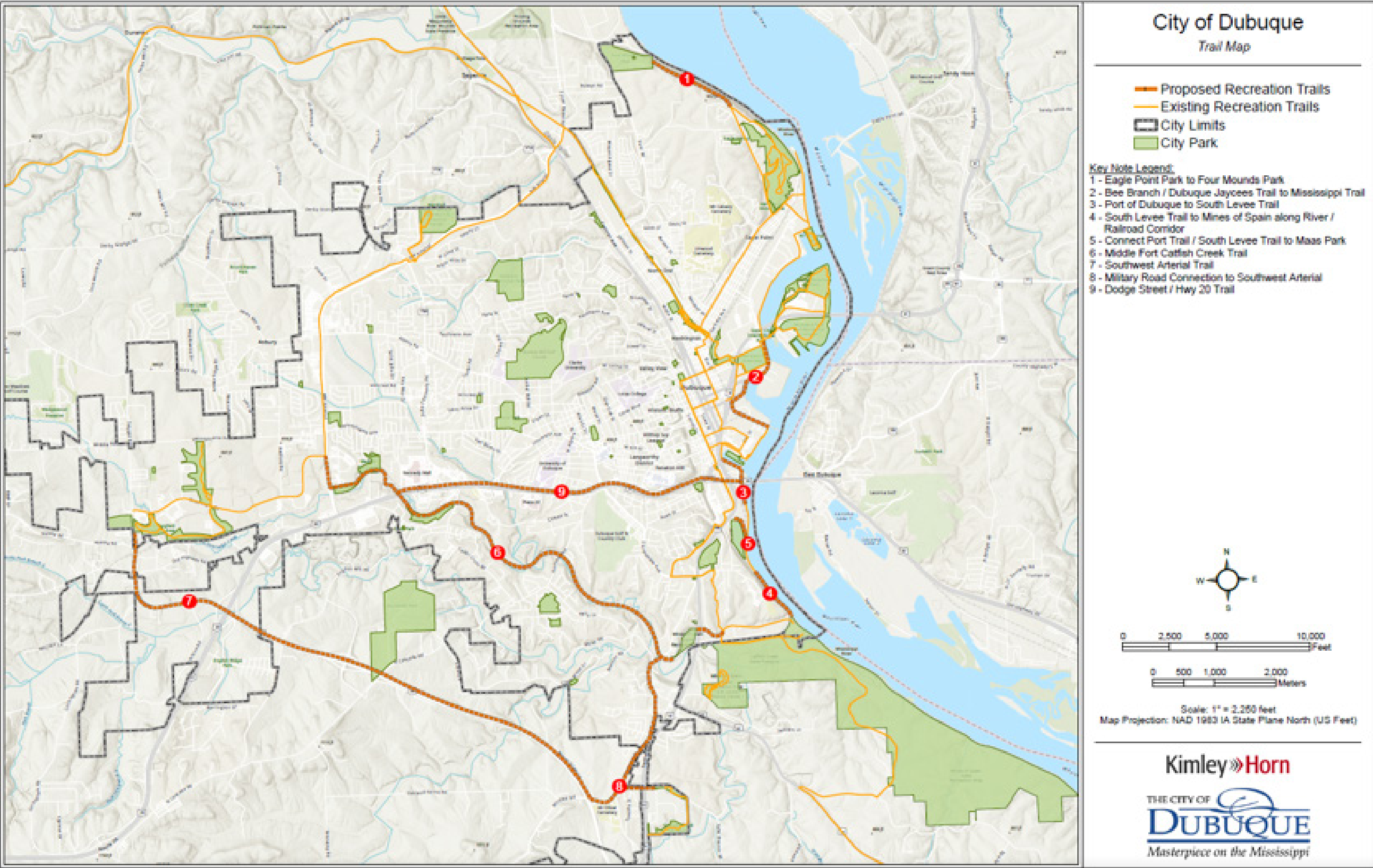
### Proposed Trail Connections

No.	Trail Connection	Length (Miles)	Description
1	Port of Dubuque to South Levee Trail	0.75	Provide Port of Dubuque trail connection/access to the existing South Levee Trail.
2	South Levee Trail to Mines of Spain along River/Railroad Corridor	0.85	Extend the South Levee Trail south along the River/Railroad Corridor to provide connection to the Mines of Spain Recreation Area. This would create a mini 8 mile loop with connections to Port of Dubuque, Murphy Park, and Mines of Spain Recreation Area.
3	Connect Port Trail /South Levee Trail to Maus Park	1	Re-route Port Trail to provide connection to Maus Park. Look at adding a connection from Mass Park to South Levee Bank.
4	Bee Branch/ Dubuque Jaycees Trail to Mississippi Riverwalk Trail	1.3	This connection would allow users a closed route from the Mississippi Riverwalk Trail to the Bee Branch. Providing access and connection to the Heritage Trail and Schmitt Island.
5	Eagle Point Park to Four Mounds Park	1.3	This river corridor alignment provides connection to Eagle Point Park and the Four Mounds Park.
6	Military Road Connection to Southwest Arterial	2.5	Provide trail alignment along the existing Military/Key West Drive/ Rockdale Road roadway alignment.
7	Dodge Street/Hwy 20 Trail	4	Provide an east/west trail connector to create a perimeter loop trail closing the existing trail loop including Heritage Trail, Bee Branch and NW Arterial Trails. The proposed trail would utilize the Dodge Street/Hwy 20 alignment to connect Port of Dubuque to NW/Arterial.
8	Middle Fort Catfish Creek Trail	5.5	This Proposed alignment would provide an east/west connection to provide a closed circular perimeter looped trail connecting Heritage Trail, Bee Branch, Mines of Spain Recreation Area, Port of Dubuque and Bergfeld Recreation Area. The proposed alignment would utilize the existing Middle Fork Catfish Creek Alignment/ Railroad corridor to connect with the Medical Associates Greenbelt up to NW Arterial and Chavenelle Trail.
9	Southwest Arterial Trail	6	This alignment would provide a south connection from Bergfeld Recreation Area to Military Road

**Proposed Trail Improvements: 23.2 Miles**



PROPOSED TRAILS





Staffing Recommendation

As the system expands, the need for additional staff becomes increasingly critical to ensure proper maintenance and upkeep. Comparative trail network systems utilize a staffing formula of one dedicated full-time equivalent (FTE) for every 5 miles of trails. With the ongoing development and extension of the trail network, it is essential that the city increases the workforce proportionately. Adding skilled personnel will help manage and preserve the quality of the trails, ensuring safety and enhancing the experience for all users. Effective staffing is paramount to maintaining the integrity and sustainability of our growing trails system. The city does not currently have dedicated trail maintenance staff. The City should develop a citywide trails plan to further evaluate dedicated staffing and maintenance needs, identify trail grant funding as well as a dedicated funding source for trail grant matching.



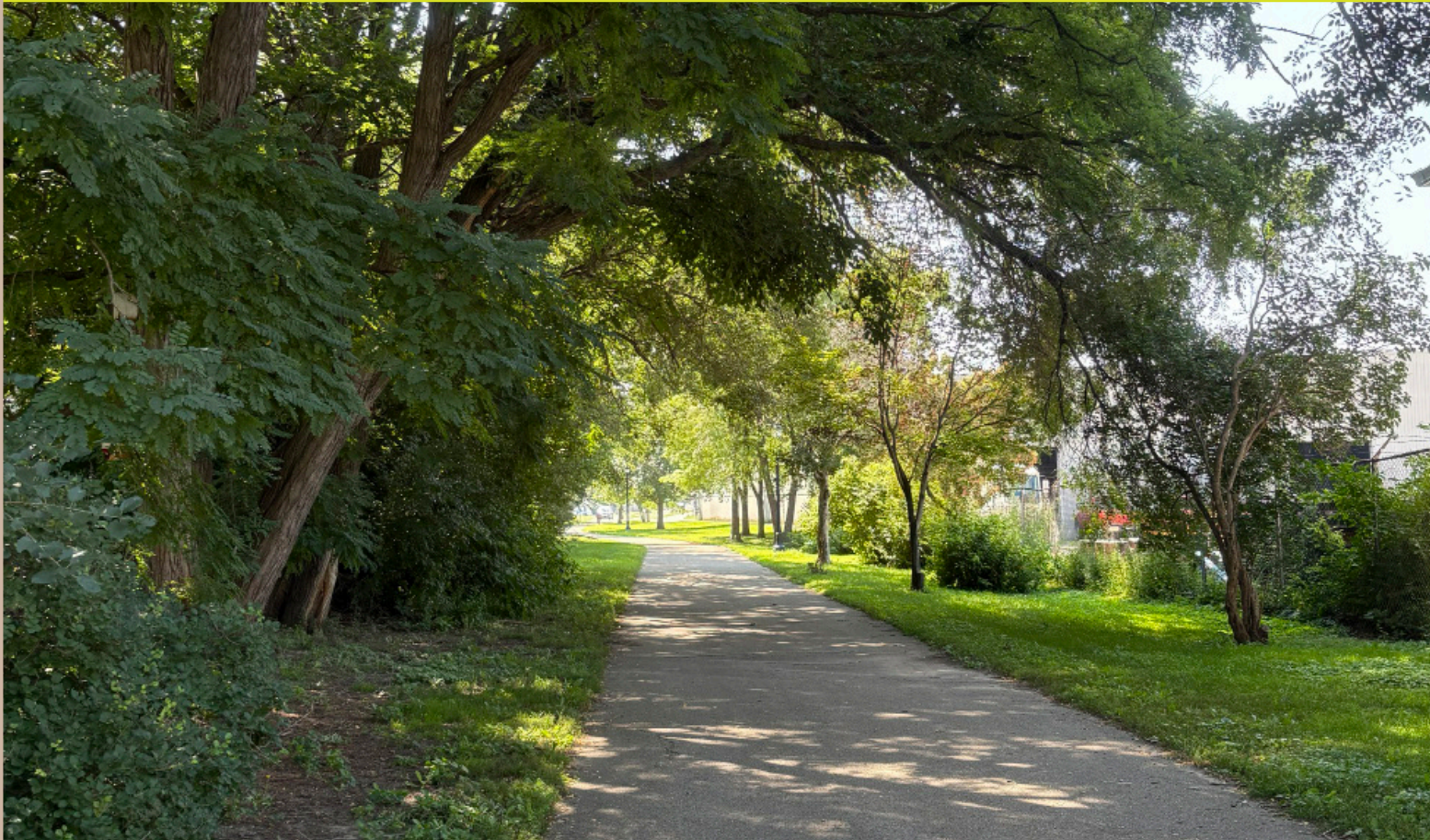
TRAIL AND CONNECTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the identified trail connector project, the following is a list of recommendations to be considered for the development of a connected trail and park system.

Recommendation	Term
Trails and Connectivity	
Extend Heritage Trail connectivity	Short
Add exercise stations along urban trails	Short
Develop a comprehensive citywide trails master plan to further evaluate trail connections and gaps, maintenance standards, and identification of grant opportunities with a dedicated matching funding source in order to develop a connected trail network.	Short
As part of the master plan, evaluate existing trail conditions for all trails, including surface conditions, signage locations and quality, and existing amenities.	Short
Develop an asset management platform utilizing the City's robust GIS database.	Short
Add trees and landscape beautification along the NW Arterial Trail.	Short
Develop/update a trail map that can be used by residents and visitors alike and has paper and digital versions.	Short
Implement urgent maintenance solutions needed at Southern Levee Trail and Miller Riverview Trail to improve usability.	Short
Perform a signage inventory and analysis (including places like Bergfeld Trail parking lot and Granger Creek Trail that currently don't have signage, but need it) and create a plan for consistent sign types, sizes, and messaging.	Short
Construct a trail extension south from Bee Branch at the solar field (funding already exists).	Short
Include interactive features such as educational interpretive signage, fitness stations and art installations along the trail network.	Mid
Update the existing trailhead map kiosks at all locations around the community (15 signs).	Mid
Establish a trail connection between Eagle Point Park and Four Mounds	Mid
Further riverwalk connections	Mid
Link new trails to existing trails to fill in gaps within the existing trail system and develop a comprehensive trail and pathway network.	Mid
Link the multi-use trail network to key access points utilizing the existing bicycle lanes, road diets and proposed multi-modal network improvements as developed in the Dubuque Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan.	Mid
Connect residents and tourists to points of interests throughout the city.	Mid



Recommendation	Term
Replace existing bike route signs with MUTCD standard bike route signs.	Mid
Conduct a citywide ADA assessment to ensure trail access points and points of connection are ADA compliant.	Mid
Conduct an alignment study update for a Catfish Creek multi-use path	Long
Build a multi-use path along Catfish Creek	Long
Develop a connected park system through multi-use trail network. A connected park system includes developing a looped pathway system that provide multi-modal/walkable access to the city's park system.	Long
Develop a looped trail that closes the southeast and west gaps between the Heritage Trail, Bee Branch, Northwest Arterial and Bergfeld Trail.	Long
Continue to evaluate trail crossings with surface streets to develop safe at grade crossings as per the ECIA's Dubuque Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan.	Long
Develop rest areas/trailheads with seating, shade and water fountains.	Long
Design for universal access (pedestrians, hikers, and biker users).	On-Going
Continue to maintain the City's robust park and trail GIS database and mapping.	On-Going







# Chapter 5

## Open Space and Natural Resources *Worlds to Explore*



Dubuque  
Parks and Recreation  
Comprehensive Plan



## INTRODUCTION, REGION, AND CLIMATE

The parks and open space network within Dubuque reflects the City's commitment to environmental stewardship. The City's parks provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, as well as playing a vital role in preserving local ecosystems and protecting wildlife habitat. These open spaces are an integral piece of making the City more resilient and sustainable. The features within are unique, help clean water of pollutants, and provide ecological habitats for insects, birds, and mammals. The importance of natural resources is paramount to improving Dubuque's ecological habitats, providing ecosystems free of invasives to act as insect pollinator and migratory bird habitat, and taking care for the current and future generations of Dubuque residents.

The City monitors parks, trails, natural resources, a port, a campground, and landscaped streetscapes through the hard work of the dedicated park division staff including the horticulture and forestry teams. Dubuque manages tree care including planting, removal, stump grinding, ash tree treatments, and pruning and trimming. During winter months, the team handles snow removal. The City even grows its own plants in the greenhouse, along with tackling other evolving landscape challenges. Many parks have extensive landscaping. This maintenance is essential, especially in areas where there have been significant capital investments from the community for past improvement projects. By maintaining these areas, staff are being stewards of the land and are making the city more resilient to changes in environmental patterns aligning with Dubuque 2040 goals.

Many existing landscapes have reached the ends of their life spans; some areas are large installations that would require significant amounts of money to complete. Proper management of Dubuque's natural resources will ensure the City's long-term environmental, economic, and social well-being. Focused approaches to future and ongoing tasks involving water and soil quality, erosion, biodiversity of both native plants and animals, outdoor recreational opportunities and industry, and environmental resiliency, is critical to the health of the City.

**Open Space and Natural Resources addresses the preservation, enhancement, and expansion opportunities associated with open spaces, community needs and desires, and environmental management and resources assessment as well as wildlife habitat.**



## Environmental Context

Dubuque lies in a unique broader eco-region called the "Driftless Area" that is generally described as hilly uplands with minor glacial drift impact. This area consists of deeply dissected, loess-capped, bedrock-dominated plateaus, and is strikingly different from the rest of Iowa. With steep slopes, bluffs, sedimentary rock outcroppings, dense deciduous forests, and the Mississippi River Basin, this mixed landscape defines Dubuque's physiography. The Mississippi River is Dubuque's natural artery, and this flyway is a primary corridor for bird migration for over 300 species. Dubuque's geographical diversity of rolling hills, woodlands, wetlands, prairies, and waterways support a wide variety of plants and animal species, making Dubuque an emerald gem in the Midwest.

## Climate

Dubuque sits within the United States Department of Agriculture Hardiness Zone of 5A, with an average annual extreme minimum temperature between -20 and -15 degrees Fahrenheit. Changes in regional weather patterns have created more flood events along the Mississippi River over time, resulting in greater stormwater flooding affecting local watersheds (such as along Bee Branch or Catfish Creek, and causing more frequent closures at Miller Riverview Campground).

The City of Dubuque published the 50% by 2030 Community Climate Action and Resiliency Plan with strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make the City more climate resilient. Such strategies go hand in hand with the Parks and Recreation's Departments scope with increasing the urban tree canopy, greenspaces, impervious ground covers, parks, and ecosystems that rely on the natural resources. All of these strategies align with the Parks and Recreation's Natural Resource Management Plan and reinforce the common goals of enhancing Dubuque's green infrastructure including parks, wetlands, riparian areas, wildlife corridors, natural drainage-ways, and other sustainable developments.





# OPEN SPACE IN DUBUQUE

*Dubuque’s staff maintains different types of open space within greenbelts, roadways, and other properties.*

## Naturalized Areas in Dubuque’s Open Spaces (Including Parks, Greenways, etc.)

Dubuque’s Natural Resources and Sustainable Practices Specialist maintain the natural areas and stormwater features that are the sustainable sponges of the city (including critical spaces such as Upper and Lower Bee Branch, Eagle Point Park, etc.). This specialist manages a diverse range of plant material, including that specific to prairie areas, mesic (wet) to dry side slopes of basins, emergent wet plantings including on floating islands, and oak savannahs within forest areas. This diversity is key in being able to maintain and provide native plants and habitats for birds, insects, animals, and aquatic species. Prairies and other natural areas established may have a greater up-front cost to maintain them until they are self sufficient but this cost is much less over time from reduction in labor hours and inputs required such as mowing, fertilizer, irrigation, and other maintenance intensive items etc.

Landscaping also exists along key trail segments within Dubuque. This provides habitats or waystations between fragmented areas, improve sensory experiences, and create more aesthetically pleasing areas. Enhanced landscape along trails improves experiences for users and benefits the greater ecosystem when implemented properly.



## Mowed Turf Areas in Dubuque’s Open Space (Including Parks, Greenways, etc.)

Turf grass is a non-native plant that should be reserved for active recreational uses, large gathering areas, and open spaces. Mowing of the turf grass requires weekly or biweekly maintenance efforts, attributes to fertilizer/pesticide runoff, and adds to Dubuque’s carbon footprint. Excessive mowing contributes to a decreased area of wildlife habitat, removal of successional native tree growth, and can cause lawn mower damage to plants/trees when mowed too closely to plant trunks. Many of Dubuque’s parks contain excessive non-usable turf (such as on slopes), putting a strain on maintenance and staffing schedules.

Dubuque’s Parks and Recreation Department should strive to balance recreational needs of the community and reducing mowed areas in underutilized public spaces and to increase additional natural habitats. Momentum from the “Mowing to Monarchs” program and community interest is growing and should be capitalized; it is important to engage with citizens to become advocates for the natural spaces within their parks and communities.

## Ornamental Landscapes in Dubuque’s Open Space (Including Parks, Greenways, etc.)

Groomed landscapes of shrubs, flowering plants, and grasses within Dubuque’s open space provide scenic beauty, theming and identity throughout different parks, and greater habitat value. Special pollinator garden zones such as ones found in AY McDonald Park are beautiful, educational, sustainable, and functional. By spacing plants out appropriately, using native plant material, and aiming to decrease future maintenance efforts through thoughtful design, further strain on the finite staff could be alleviated in the future.

## Urban Landscapes in Dubuque’s Open Space

The Horticulture team in Dubuque also manages landscapes at key civil properties, such as City Hall, and along streetscapes and highways. These areas are named and examined in greater detail within the Urban Open Spaces portion of the Key Parks and Open Spaces Recommendations section later this chapter.

Dubuque development standards contain recommended appropriate species choice for different applications (new Street Tree List being published in 2026). These lists are intended to be ever-evolving and maintained annually by City’s Urban Forester so that this list remains up to date with changes in the environment, diseases, pests, and development of more resilient varieties or cultivars resistant to diseases that should be used with best interest of the future generations of the community’s urban forest(s) in mind.



Greenhouse

Dubuque’s greenhouse is a unique resource and a literal breath of fresh air, especially during the colder dormant months. Built in 1929 below Eagle Point Park and approximately 250’ by 50’, the greenhouse provides all of the wonderful plant color and seasonal blossoming plants found throughout the city. The Parks and Recreation Department utilizes the greenhouse to beautify public spaces and provide additional greenery for the community to enjoy. The greenhouse’s value is tremendous in the amount of flowering plant material provided to the community.

However, the greenhouse is well seasoned; replacing the glass panels that are at risk of breaking or falling with poly carbonate is recommended. The concrete legs of the greenhouse growing benches are deteriorating and should also be replaced or repaired. Additionally, pruning back or removing the bank of trees that casts shade over the greenhouse as well as automating the louvres to maintain optimal temperatures within the greenhouse, are recommended. The City should consider making the greenhouse have an ADA accessible path to be able to provide opportunity to educate students on field trips and to accommodate universal access to this wonderful building.



Native and Invasive Plants

Biodiversity is critical for successful habitats, human health, and ecological equity. Developing highly biodiverse natural areas throughout Dubuque, as well as planning for potential climate changes, will make the city more resilient. Part of critical biodiversity goals is utilizing native species and controlling invasive ones.

Native Plants

Dubuque contains a variety of native plant species and flora. Utilizing natives can reduce water use, improve plant lifespans, provide habitat value for local fauna, and tend to be more functional and sustainable choices than non-native plants. Keystone species within Dubuque include:

Limestone Hills:

- Big Bluestem (Andorpogon provincialis)
- Small Bluestem (Andropogon scoparius)
- Switch Gass (Panicum virgatum)
- Bur Oak (Quercus macrocarpa)
- White Oak (Quercus alba)
- Red Oak (Quercus rubra)
- Chestnut Oak (Quercus acuminata)
- Black Oak (Quercus velutina)
- Pin Oak (Quercus ellipsoidalis)

Rolling Hills:

- White Ash (Fraxinus americana)
- Black Cherry (Prunus serotina)
- Chokeberry (Prunus virginiana)
- American Plum (Prunus Americana)

Mississippi River Bottoms:

- Sycamore (Platanus occidentalis)
- Honeylocust (Gleditsia triacanthos)
- Kentucky Coffee Tree (Gymnocladus dioica)
- Sugar Maple (Acer saccharinum)
- Cottonwood (Populos deltoideas)
- Hackberry (Celtis occidentalis)
- Pawpaw (Asimina triloba)
- Willows (Salix ssp.)

Invasive Plants

Invasive species are non-native and cause harm to the local environment, often out-competing and displacing native species. Invasives cause economic damage and financial loss to agricultural production, loss of the public’s natural recreation spaces reducing the quality of experience in these areas, and incurs costs for removal and eradication including ongoing maintenance to make sure the invasives do not come back.

A trait of many of the invasives is their aggressive growth habitats but they are often some of the first plants to leaf out and last plants to lose their leaves. This results in prohibiting native seeds or other plants from being able to filter stormwater or get established. This can cause perpetual ecological damage if the aggressive invasives are not managed to avoid competition with less aggressive native vegetation. Additionally, many of these invasive species produce berries that are attractants to many birds that migrate through Dubuque. As part of the removal process, reestablishment of native plant material that is suitable as a food source for the varying birds is encouraged. Many of these invasives are not host plants to native insects and can weaken ecosystems or provide undesirable habitat for pollination and insect reproduction. Removing invasive plants that have been established and preventing their spread into areas already eradicated is essential to Dubuque’s natural resources.

Invasive species such as buckthorn and honeysuckle have historically been throughout Dubuque’s natural resource open spaces and can significantly alter Dubuque’s native landscape, damaging its natural history. Many of the invasives plant species impacting Dubuque’s natural areas have escaped from ornamental landscapes via the landscape nursery industry. Much of the landscape movements historically have been influenced purely by aesthetics over ecological value.



## EXISTING FORESTRY & HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENT INFORMATION AND STAFFING

The Urban Forestry team oversees all of Dubuque's trees located within Dubuque's parks but also along every right-of-way and roadway within the city. Statistically, the scope of work performed by this team is one of the most dangerous in the workforce. Many trees receiving care from this team requires tentative attention to remove hazards safely and to react to downed trees from storms and other natural events.

The Horticulture staff grows the city's own plants within the greenhouse; plans, installs, and cares for flower beds and plantings across Dubuque; prune, weed, water, and provide pest control; and are responsible for efforts that promote environmental sustainability.

### **Forestry/Horticulture and Staffing Principles**

#### **Create Balanced Teams**

Forestry and horticulture teams that contain multiple roles such as urban foresters, arborists, horticulturists, landscape architects/designers, master gardeners, tree crew(s), GIS specialists, and administrative/outreach support have the range and depth to tackle tricky projects and plan for the future. Teams that contain a certified or degreed forester and horticulturalist, trained staff capable of plant/tree care and removal, members skilled in mapping and inventorying, staff to handle permits, and communication coordinator(s) are well-rounded.

#### **Prioritize Training and Development**

Encouraging and supporting continuous professional development through certifications, workshops, and conferences keeps teams updated with the latest practices and technologies in horticulture and urban forestry. Collaborating with other departments such as public works and city planning ensure cohesive and comprehensive management.

#### **Safety is Key**

Basic and ongoing safety training should be prioritized for all forestry and horticulture staff, especially those involved in field work. All staff should be well-versed in using protective equipment and following safety protocols.

#### **Work with the Public**

Staff to coordinate volunteers through structured programs allows citizens to actively participate in planting, care, and clean-up activities that also extend education efforts. Staff to manage volunteers, educate the public, and create opportunities for new initiatives can bring tremendous value.



## **General Implementation Principles**

### **Foster Public Responsibility and Interest**

Dubuque's Parks and Recreation Department shall act responsibly with the public's best interest in mind in managing the community's land and natural resources. There shall be active stewardship and concern for the inherent value of the natural resources in all of Dubuque's Parks and Recreation Department's plans, actions, and programs.

### **Encapsulate a Diversity of Users**

Dubuque is a city with a wide range of diverse heritages, neighborhoods, cultures, nationalities, religions, languages, traditions, abilities, activities, and accessibilities. These diverse qualities need to be considered in all of the natural resource planning and implementation, wherever feasible.

### **Encourage Biodiversity with Existing Plants, Habitats, Insects, Animal Species/Fish Species, and Park Users**

Ecological health is critical to consider in the management of Dubuque's natural resources. This web of natural resources should promote and support the biodiversity of plants, habitats, insects, birds, and animals. It, however, should balance ecology with both passive recreation, active recreation, safety, and other factors to improve the quality of the natural resources and quality of life in the community.

### **Spark Public Involvement and Accessibility**

As stewards of Dubuque's natural resources, the Parks and Recreation Department will often have to make educated decisions that may change how certain natural resources have been managed over time as long-standing practices. Wherever applicable, the Parks and Recreation Department will seek community input and involvement with other partners and stakeholders in the review process. Dubuque's Parks and Recreation Department will strive to make information accessible and to the public and to help educate the community on how to improve the management of their natural resources.

### **Value Education and Stewardship**

Educational talks and nature walks, signage along trails and naturalized areas, children's programming, and other educational avenues help teach the public about ecosystem establishment, habitat restoration efforts, benefits of sustainable initiatives. Education will increase understanding of why natural areas may look more "messy" while being maintained. Awareness goes hand in hand with stewardship of these delicate landscapes, so marketing these efforts can help spur greater volunteer engagement and public involvement in key initiatives.

### **Prioritize Sustainability**

The City's 2040 Dubuque Vision Statement reads, "Dubuque 2040 is a sustainable and resilient city, an inclusive and equitable community where ALL are welcome. Dubuque 2040 has preserved our Masterpiece on the Mississippi, has a strong, diverse economy, and expanding connectivity. Our residents experience healthy living and active lifestyles; have choices of quality, affordable, livable neighborhoods; have an abundance of diverse, fun things to do; and are successfully and actively engaged in the community." Sustainable actions implemented now lay the building blocks for future management of the community's natural resources.



# KEY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

Many open spaces within Dubuque’s open space system have potential to implement sustainable interventions and contribute even further to the local ecosystems. Key parks and urban spaces are highlighted below with suggested initiatives to implement.

## Regional Spaces

### Mines of Spain

Mines of Spain Recreation Area features bluffs, woodlands, and prairies tucked along the Mississippi River. The area is managed through a partnership with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Dubuque County Conservation, and the Friends of the Mines of Spain. These organizations manage volunteer efforts for maintenance and improvement projects, provide financial support through fundraising efforts, and host educational natural resource programs. The City is not responsible for maintenance of the State Park property, but would be responsible for capital repairs of the EB Lyons Interpretive and Nature Center.



## Parks

### Eagle Point Park and Ham House Historic Site

Eagle Point Park’s natural resources and views are what make the park beautiful. The uniqueness of this park must be embraced and protected per the Eagle Point Park Environmental Restoration Management Plan report (2017). This plan extensively outlines the recommendations for natural resource improvements.

The City should strategically partner with the Dubuque County Conservation to assist with any future maintenance of the woodlands including with prescribed burns. Invasive woody plant removal scope includes the eradication of oriental bittersweet, buckthorn, honeysuckle, and tree of heaven that are prevalent in the woodlands of the park. Strategically clearing scenic vistas or view sight lines from key locations along the natural bluff will recreate the original intent of providing views of the Mississippi River. The ledge gardens and fishpond are ongoing challenging spaces requiring significant maintenance investment, and the historic bridge building complex constructed nearly a century ago is aging and in need of refurbishment. Funding these zones should be prioritized.

Erosion within Eagle Point Park appeared worst where curbs and gutters concentrated flows to problematic washouts. Providing a 2’-4’ crushed locally sources aggregate bench along the pavement to intercept sheet flow seemed to assist in slowing down the stormwater velocity, and acting as a spreader to deconcentrate sheet flow where curb and gutter did not exist. Continuing to implement stormwater improvements where feasible to spread out and deconcentrate sheet flows of water should be considered as a functional and sustainable action item.

Ham House is a historic building with continuing refurbishment needs. Caring for the landscape around it containing site elements with delicate structures and a lack of ADA access presents other challenges.



Support is needed to re-work this area and better serve the public wanting to visit a historic slice of Dubuque.

Education is essential in keeping the public informed of natural area restoration work and it should provide additional education signs with content about efforts to control erosion, use of native plant material, culturally significant history, and the intent of recreating an “oak savannah” through the use of no-mow vegetation implemented.

### Maus Park

Maus Park is a hidden gem in the rough. From the pond being a holding area for lumber production to fisheries, this area has seen an influx of varying uses. The natural areas at this park include a riparian wooded area along the perimeter of the pond, a nature walking path around a portion of the pond, and the actual body of water itself with fish, turtles, and migratory birds, among others.

Increased clean up of debris/garbage, removing invasive vegetation along the shoreline, improving framed views of the pond and the Mississippi River, improving fishing access, and ensuring ADA accessibility would improve public access to natural resources. Additionally, providing trash cans, educational and regulatory signage, and enhancing the natural areas of this park would all improve the perception and ecological habitats of this park and foster greater public ownership over its value.

Creating supplemental shallow areas/ecological islands within the pond if future dredging activities were to ever occur would improve habitat value. While close to the mighty Mississippi and the existing Riverwalk Trail, its connections are fragmented with Huff Street being the only way to access this park. A looped path or future connection to the Riverwalk trail would improve access to and connect this park to already established pedestrian paths.



### Harvest View Park

Harvest View Park implements a unique green stormwater solution: adding vegetation to a drainage area to increase natural beauty and habitat value in a functional space that helps filter pollutants and absorb stormwater effectively. This is a great example of modifying an underutilized turf area that is also a maintenance challenge, and turning it into a space with multiple benefits for the park’s ecology.



### Port of Dubuque

With Dubuque’s port acting as a threshold for the City as a whole, serving as a docking area for river cruises and therefore a main hub of local tourism, special care should be taken of the area’s landscape. Improving the pavilion along the floodwall, removing existing shrubs now listed as invasives, and planting a new inviting and native landscape should be prioritized.





Urban Open Spaces

City Hall

City Hall and its surrounding grounds is consistently one of the City’s highest profile areas for landscape maintenance. Besides being a hub for local government, City Hall’s parking lot is the location for the City’s Farmer’s Market, so visitation is high. Poor plant choices in the past have led to a nearly complete removal of this area’s planting. Funding a redesign and implementation project to vegetate the grounds is a highly visible win for the community.

Iowa Street Boulevard

Another highly traveled space within the City, Iowa Street Boulevard would benefit from a boost in improved landscaping. The road is currently all mulch, with minimal plant material remaining. Redesigning and revegetating the natural spaces along Iowa Street Boulevard is highly encouraged.

Highway 20 and 61

Highway 20 is the primary east-west route in the City and runs up the main hill connecting the growing areas near the west end of the city with Dubuque’s vibrant downtown and the Mississippi Basin. Traveling along this corridor is experienced at 45 miles per hour and perception of the landscape is relatively quick with not enough time to provide detailed attention to minor landscape elements. The landscape along this thoroughfare is highly visible and viewed by thousands of vehicles, both residents and visitors every day and is a very important landscape for the community to enjoy.

The US route 20 and US Route 61 Connector is a main corridor connector and can be perceived as gateway into Dubuque’s downtown, and is a high priority space for landscape redesign. Past intensive planting and management practices have created an un-maintainable landscape in the present, and unsafe zones exist that makes maintaining current plants difficult and dangerous. Redesign and revegetation of this space should be examined.

Highway 20 itself needs a major overhaul. With approximately six acres of mulch along the corridor, maintenance efforts of mulching, performing herbicide treatments, manual removal where herbicides aren’t possible, and trash removal are unsustainable and unsafe for staff. Many existing plants have died off due to poor plant choices and damage. Minimizing maintenance within hazardous areas will be critical during the landscape redesign process. Seasonal plant cut-down and removal, natives that would not require burn to maintain, and would not attract wildlife that could cause other issues (such as migrating monarch butterflies being killed by cars) are all tricky factors at play through these zones.

It is recommended to revegetate these spaces with low-maintenance, native, large masses of shrub and/or native grasses as well as additional rockscapes/boulders and trees. The intent is to decrease maintenance and match the scale of landscape perception when driving.

Kerper Boulevard

The Kerper Boulevard roundabouts appeared full of flowering, drought tolerant, and pollinator plant material. These roundabouts are a prime example of relatively low maintenance and intensive landscape areas that should be emulated elsewhere throughout the city. However, issues along the streetscape remain: many trees are reaching the ends of their life cycles, there are areas with monoculture and site visibility issues, and power line restrictions with plant material that will need to be replaced.

Grandview Boulevard

The maintained open space extends approximately for 1.5 miles along Grand View Boulevard and is maintained by Parks and Recreation staff. The landscape along this boulevard includes thousands of existing peonies, mowed turf areas, annuals, ornamental grasses, ornamental trees, and shade trees. This boulevard is unique, historic, and is a remnant of a part of Dubuque’s Peony Trail history with deep community involvement. A scoring system has been implemented by the staff to monitor which peony beds are in need of supplementation and maintenance. The neighborhood focus group has expressed desire in creating a volunteer group to help with these efforts.

Local neighborhood groups, height restrictions along the boulevard, and maintenance challenges make other planting design along this stretch tricky, and may need a mix of community input and design to fully resolve for the future. The corners of Highway 20 and Freemont Street, as well as near the Junior High School, are key areas for enhancement that experience high visibility from the public and could provide educational opportunities.





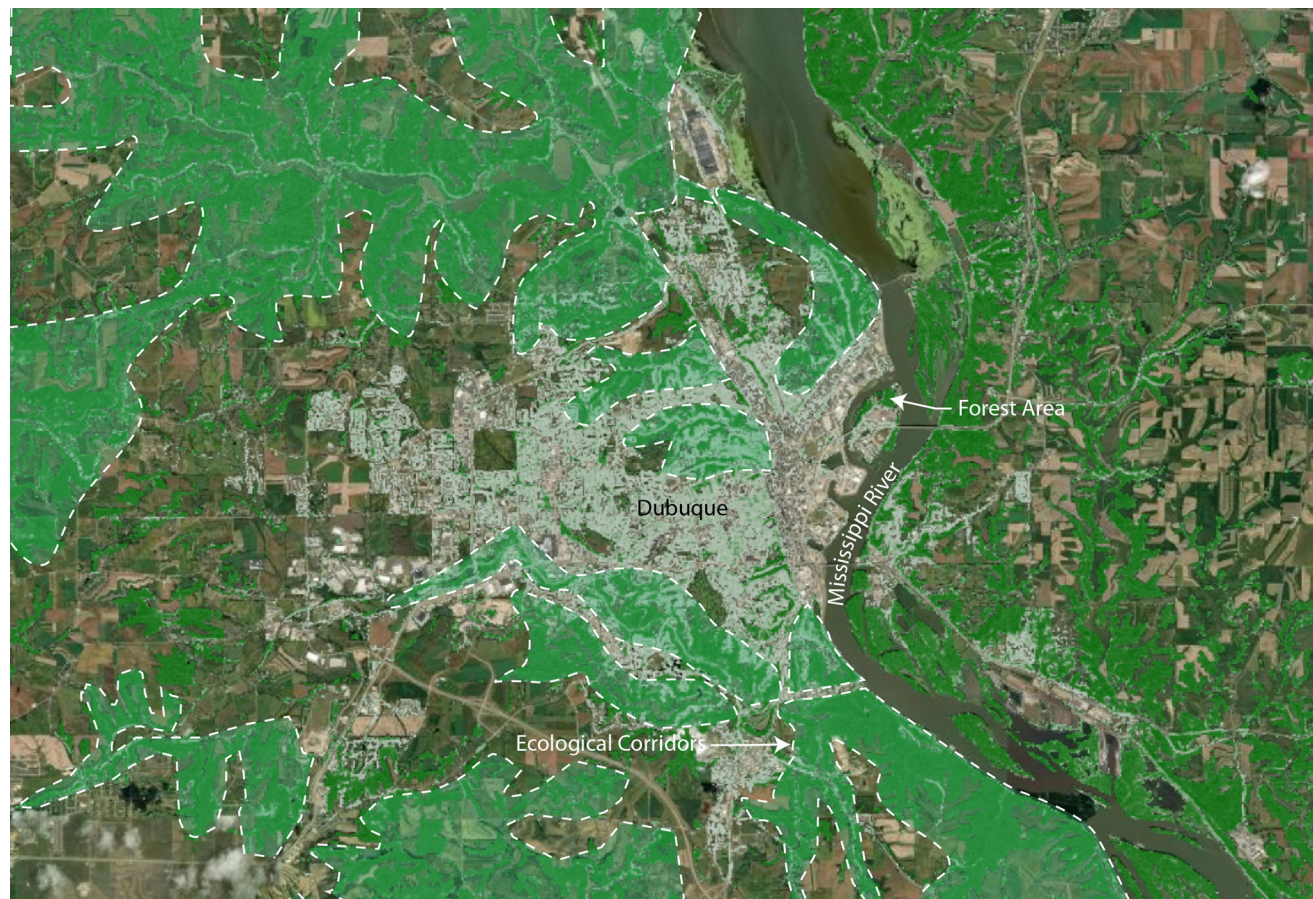
## ECOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES AND MANAGEMENT

### Protect and Utilize Native Species and Conservation Corridors

Plants, trees, and other vegetation that existed in Dubuque prior to European settlement are what should be considered native plants. Native plants have adapted specifically to flourish in Dubuque's growing conditions and the native host plants are the links for the terrestrial food web. Prioritizing native species for new and replacement plant material is the smartest economical, environmental, and sustainable choice.

Conservation corridors are strategic connections for fragmented portions of habitat. Tree canopy coverage data provided by the United States Forest Service can provide ecological corridor definition. Within Dubuque, these corridors appear along the Middle Catfish Creek, Bee Branch, Eagle Point Park, Dubuque Arboretum, and Kaufman Avenue, among other places. Most notably, there is a strong tree canopy and ecological corridor along the riparian areas adjacent to the Mississippi River and along the southeast corner of Dubuque with ecological connections between Chipman Island, the River Walk, Maus Park, and greater area of the Mines of Spain. Additionally, there are strong ecological connections with Dubuque County Conservation Areas.

These corridors provide opportunities for wildlife interconnections. Dubuque's Parks and Recreation Department should strive to support and protect these vital areas by utilizing these strategies, partnering with the community, and working with other agencies to create and maintain these critical habitat connections.



US Forest Service Forested Area Map with Ecological Corridors and Connections

### Retain Microhabitats

Microhabitats are areas of land that are relatively small and support varying life forms. Often, these microhabitats are vital resources and means to support wildlife development and new growth that otherwise would not thrive. These microhabitats provide food sources for insects, fungi, nesting sites for birds and mammals including bats, and roosting spots for woodpeckers and other birds. Such microhabitat examples include dead and downed trees, rocky bluffs, no-mow and low-mow areas, wetlands, floating islands, and riparian environments.

#### Dead and Downed Trees

Dead and downed trees are integral to forest ecosystems. They serve as habitat for wildlife, promote nutrient cycling, increase soil stability, contribute to a healthy soil system, and make space in the forest canopy to allow new regenerative successional tree growth. The City of Dubuque's Urban Forestry team should strive to leave standing and fallen trunks in place wherever possible, particularly in ecologically sensitive sites such as wooded areas within Eagle Point Park.

#### No-Mow and Low Mow-Areas

Strategies for creating additional microhabitats can include creating additional no- and low-mow areas. No mow areas are left to natural succession but require maintenance periods to eradicate invasives and to be setup for success. Low-mow areas are areas that also require maintenance to establish but are also mowed occasionally, up to twice a year to maintain the microhabitat by eliminating invasives, trees, and other undesirable plantings. The timing of the mowing should be optimized to not let invasives mature enough to reseed or produce offspring and at times that will minimize the impact on flowering plants and beneficial insects. An example site for an opportunity for additional no-mow/naturalization could be in Flora Park in between the gabions to help with erosion and intent to slow down stormwater.

Dubuque's Parks and Recreation staff do an excellent job of maintaining the Upper and Lower Bee Branch as an example of these types of microhabitats. These areas provide many ecological benefits, increase wildlife habitat, and provide food, shelter, nectar, and pollen for beneficial insects and pollinators. Moreover, these microhabitats buffer erosion, are natural filters, improve water quality, deconcentrate stormwater runoff, reduce maintenance inputs, and are a carbon sink storing carbon deep in the plant roots.

Passive areas not actively used by the public, lowland/wet areas, unutilized areas, and other non-pedestrian areas can provide a perfect opportunity to increase this microhabitat while reducing emissions and aligning with Dubuque's 2040 sustainability initiatives.



Minimize Invasive Species

Invasive species such as buckthorn and honeysuckle, fungus that causes Dutch Elm Disease, Oak Wilt, and Root Rot, and insects like the Emerald Ash Borer, Spotted Lanternfly, and Spongy Moth have been introduced historically through the Dubuque area, and can cause significant negative impacts on landscape. To limit the risk of oak wilt transmission, generally it is recommended and best practice to prune oaks in the dormant season. See Table A below for risk level of oak wilt spore transmission from carrying beetles. Other prevalent invasive species are noted within Appendix F.

Table A - Risk Level of Oak Wilt Spore Transmission

	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Time Frame	November 1 – March 14					March 15 – August 1					August 2 – October 31	
Risk Level	Recommended					High Risk					Low Risk	

If Oak Wilt is suspected, the City should collaborate with Iowa State University for testing and to follow recommendations for the United States Forest Service and Iowa Department of Natural Resources to prevent and control the spread of Oak Wilt in Dubuque’s Urban Forests.

Forest pests can reduce biodiversity, degrade ecological ecosystems, and can burden staff by having to treat host trees of invasive insects. Currently, the Emerald Ash Borer is prevalent throughout Dubuque and the existing Ash trees in public spaces are maintained to try to protect the urban forest from decline. Proactive recommendations should be considered particularly for Miller Riverview Park and Campground to furnish their own locally sourced firewood for sale. To protect Dubuque’s urban forests and ecological corridors, firewood movement to campgrounds or other facilities should be restricted and follow the Iowa DNR recommendations to protect Dubuque’s forests.

The State of Iowa’s Department of Natural Resources has developed and maintains a list of species that are considered invasive to Iowa. The Dubuque Parks and Recreation Department should strive to prevent further introduction of these invasive species and prioritize the eradication of invasives plant species in Dubuque’s parks and public lands. Eradicating invasives throughout woodlands removes competition for native tree growth to occur. The city’s naturalized areas already plagued with invasive species are overwhelming and the scope required to get these areas under control is more extensive where it requires a substantial amount of additional staffing, hours, equipment, and specialized training.

It is recommended that the City consider contracting with an external environmental contractor to perform annual eradication of invasives in a rotational pattern throughout Dubuque’s woodlands and natural areas too intensive for current staff’s capabilities. The heavy lifting of invasive removals is done by others and provides the groundwork for Parks and Recreation natural area maintenance staff to keep any invasives out from resprouting in these areas.

It is recommended for the Dubuque Parks and Recreation Department and its contractors to follow Iowa Department of Natural Resources Forestry Invasive Species Guide for recommended plant removal strategies:

<https://www.iowadnr.gov/programs-services/forestry-resources/forest-tree-health/invasive-plants>

Additionally, the Dubuque Parks and Recreation Department should collaborate with Dubuque County Conservation to educate Park staff on invasives, work together to improve natural areas including through prescribed burns, leverage each other’s skills and strengths, and to provide additional community engagement education opportunities. The Dubuque Parks and Recreation Department should also continue to collaborate further with Dubuque Trees Forever to partner with their volunteers to help with improving Dubuque’s natural resources and woodlands. Lastly, if there is civic pride in a neighborhood to improve a park space, park by park stewardship volunteer groups could be considered as a strategy to receive community support in improving the condition and connections they have to the parks they love to enjoy.

Perform Quality Tree Management

All plantings and maintenance of public trees shall conform to the American National Standards (ANSI) A-300 “Standards for Tree Care Operations,” (as well as ANSI Z133 “Safety Standard for Arboricultural Operations”). All tree and plant selection and landscape design should also follow Dubuque’s Tree and Landscaping Policy, published in 2015. Any person, contractor, or City department performing construction near any public tree(s) shall consult with the City’s Urban Forester to employ appropriate measures to protect the public’s tree(s) in accordance with the Best Management Practices from the ANSI A-300 “Managing Trees During Construction,” latest edition published by the International Society of Arboriculture.

Life-cycle strategy of successional tree growth should be strongly considered and supported by Dubuque’s Parks and Recreation staff. Additionally, tree growth life-cycle strategies should be considered throughout forested areas with mowed turf. Within these areas, the mature trees are left to continue to grow but the natural cycle of successional new tree growth to replace the mature trees over time is not occurring due to the turf grass maintenance.

The Parks and Recreation Department should consider a strategy of planting successional saplings with opaque tree protection tubes to protect them from mowers, herbivores, and to provide supplemental watering from dew collection. In areas where new forests are desired in underused turf grass areas, the strategy of creating new “microforests” by intentional seeding native acorns in these area or by planting a high density of young tree saplings to recreate a new growth forest that could be implemented to reestablish natural areas.

Maintenance at key times of year is important, and may require additional seasonal staffing. For example, the best time for pruning trees (especially oaks) is during their dormant season—often this critical maintenance is not able to be completed. Structural pruning of trees planted over the previous decade are also important at these times.





## Implement and Manage Natural Prairie

Returning manicured open spaces to prairie provides critical and valuable habitat areas to local flora and fauna, and helps restore natural functions. Prairies and other natural areas established may have a greater up-front cost to maintain them until they are self sufficient, but this cost is much less over time from reduction in labor hours and inputs required such as mowing, fertilizer, irrigation, and other maintenance intensive items. The most successful establishment of prairies, stormwater basins, naturalized areas, and wetlands requires intensive landscape stewardship and maintenance of these areas.

Having the seed/plug installer maintain these naturalized area(s) for a minimum of three growing seasons post installation is recommended. The time scale of establishing prairies and natural areas can be described as; Year 1 is “Sleep”, Year 2 is “Creep, and Year 3 is “Leap”. These stages correlate with the cold stratification, seed germination, and root establishment that occurs in Year 1; further root establishment, seed reproduction, and additional vegetative growth in Year 2; and prolific growth after the roots are well established including an abundance of flowers in Year 3. This minimum time requirement is to get a naturalized area self-established and self-sufficient to out-compete weeds and decrease maintenance requirements on the Parks and Recreation staff already spread thin maintaining the existing established naturalized areas.

Additionally, controlled burns are an effective management strategy to maintain naturalized areas to both remove invasives but to also clear the understory of fuel to reduce substantial wildfires. It is recommended for the Parks and Recreation naturalized area maintenance staff to become certified through fire school, to collaborate extensively with Dubuque County Conservation, and with any interested volunteers from the Fire Department.



## FORESTRY AND HORTICULTURE STAFFING AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

### Prioritize Safety

It is critical for staff to maintain monthly or quarterly safety trainings on every piece of equipment used, have all staff members become cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certified, automated external defibrillator (AED) certified, go through fire extinguishing training, practice aerial rescues, and train with first aid kits specific to trauma/tree work. Additionally, the staff should consider getting involved with the Iowa Arborist Association to provide staff with opportunities to gain experience and improve their knowledge about safety including attending and trainings such as the ISU Shade Tree Short Course to continuously refine their skills with the latest safety equipment.

### Utilize Technology

The team should consider surveying all of the city's trees within the rights-of-way and park properties utilizing ESRI GIS on staff's mobile laptops, computers, and other forms of technology with cellular data access. The collection of this information provides the data to comprehensively be able to understand the existing assets being maintained, their condition, and provide the information required to plan out work and reforestation strategies in the future. Moreover, this data can be used to monitor the urban forest's changes over time and is a strategic tool to prioritize dead or hazardous trees within strike distances of targets. Additionally, the information collected from this effort would identify gaps in canopy coverage, ensure resiliency in the diversity of the tree species within the community's forests, be able to understand the history of each tree being worked on, and can be used to pursue grant funding opportunities.

Since tree maintenance is currently reactive, and with a small staff that can be stretched thin, assessments are typically performed on a needs basis. However, data collection, cataloging, and

mapping City-managed natural areas to create a baseline collection of current projects (that can then be expanded as open spaces grow and projects area added) is strongly advised. Exporting this task to a contracting team or consultant may be needed. Having a data base of trees and landscape areas with information on type of planting area, plant names, size and location, and irrigation mapping is strongly advised for implementation.

### Manage Staffing

Similar to maintenance staff, forestry and horticultural staff are currently overloaded and therefore often forced to operate mostly in a reactionary way, rather than agile enough to be more proactive about tree care and preventative maintenance. More qualified staff members (especially at key times of year where extra maintenance is needed), in tandem with more streamlined processes of prioritizing projects and managing tasks, will help with timely care and maintenance, hazard mitigation, outreach opportunities, and long-term planning and policy implementation. Working with the natural areas and parks department staff can allow for sharing of large-scale projects, and help share staffing when necessary. Expanding, diversifying, and training staff is critical.

### Create an Action Plan

A separate Urban Forest and Horticulture Management Plan is needed. A more comprehensive look at forestry, horticulture, and maintenance practices outside the lens of Parks and Recreation is highly recommended, and would go hand-in-hand with the recommended GIS comprehensive tree and open space inventory. This document would examine current conditions of landscapes in parks and across Dubuque as well as the greenhouse, staffing, and management at a deeper level, and make recommendations and an action plan for the future.



Recommendation	Term
<b>Open Space and Natural Resources</b>	
Adopt and regularly update a comprehensive tree program that invests heavily in new tree plantings and existing tree maintenance and addresses invasive plant species	Short
Hold monthly or bi-monthly safety trainings on operations best practices and equipment regularly used	Short
Urban Forestry staff to take part in the Iowa Arborist Association to provide staff with opportunities for continuing education and safety trainings	Short
Adopt and regularly update a comprehensive tree program that invests heavily in new tree plantings and existing tree maintenance and addresses invasive plant species	Short
Improve Maus Park for wildlife habitat and low-impact uses	Mid
Educate and assist citizens in order to establish more Mowing to Monarchs pocket prairies within the City	Mid
Improve Maus Park for wildlife habitat and low-impact uses	Mid
Educate and assist citizens in order to establish more Mowing to Monarchs pocket prairies within the City	Mid
Have all or strategic staff members become cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certified	Mid
Partner with public safety on a plan for aerial rescues	
Survey all existing trees within city-maintained areas for a thorough inventory of assets along with a lifecycle replacement program	Mid
Create and implement a preventative maintenance schedule for all city-maintained open spaces	
Create and implement a workload tracker that allows maintenance staff, forestry staff, and staff with related skill sets to balance work and intentionally implement large scale projects.	Mid
Create and implement a regular communication plan to help staff execute workload balancing and intentionally broaden on-the-job training opportunities and skill set development.	Mid

Estimate of Maintenance Costs per Acre			
Existing Forest/Woodland Invasive Removal, Enhancement, and 3-Year Stewardship	\$12,500	Acre	More Intensive
Existing Forest Invasive Removal and Enhancement and 3-Year Stewardship	\$7,500	Acre	Less Intensive
Woodland with Turf Convert to Native Prairie	\$10,000	Acre	
Native Prairie and Basin and 3-Year Stewardship	\$12,000	Acre	
Ornamental Plant Bed Care	\$9,500	Acre	
Turf Grass Mowing	\$1,000	Acre	





## Chapter 6

### Community Needs The Main Characters



Dubuque  
Parks and Recreation  
Comprehensive Plan



# CRAFTING THE STORY

The Y(O)ur Story Dubuque Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan included a robust community engagement strategy that resulted in thousands of community inputs. The values, goals, and recommendations put forward by this plan have truly been shaped by the community. It is clear the City of Dubuque residents value and recognize the importance of parks and recreation. Dubuque’s strong parks and recreation system, ample opportunities to connect with nature, topography, and riverfront location, set it apart from neighboring cities and provide the opportunity for Dubuque to be known as a great parks and recreation city. This plan's purpose is to lay the groundwork to reinvigorate the parks system and recreation offerings, continue a legacy of great parks, open spaces, and recreation, and utilize those as a catalyst for growth and economic development.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The Y(O)ur Story Dubuque Parks and Recreation Master Plan utilized a comprehensive and widespread process to engage the community, understand needs, and analyze results of community feedback. The Master Plan’s robust outreach process gathered input from staff, stakeholders, user groups, and thousands of residents to obtain diverse and well-rounded feedback on Dubuque Parks and Recreation currently and what opportunities exist for the future. A second phase of community feedback included sharing a draft of the master plan with the community for feedback prior to its final review and adoption. This second phase of community feedback received over 360 responses.

### Focus Groups and User Groups

In addition to touch points with the public via pop-up events, social media, public meetings, website visits, and intercept feedback, groups that provided input include, but are not limited to, the following:

Audubon Society	Dubuque Zoo Boosters
Black Men Coalition	Friends of the Mines of Spain
City Departments	Greater Dubuque Development Corporation
Dream Center	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Dubuque Arboretum Board	Montessori School
Dubuque Area Land and Water Legacy	Multicultural Family Center
Dubuque Community School District	NAACP
Dubuque County Conservation	Neighborhood Groups
Dubuque Girls Independent League	Program Partners
Dubuque Main Street	Sierra Club
Dubuque Pony League	Tri-State Trail Vision
Dubuque Trees Forever	Youth Sports Groups

\*These are not all groups, but represent a cross-section of those who were contacted and participated.

## Community Outreach

The community engagement process prioritized meeting residents where they are and ensuring multiple ways to participate and provide feedback for the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The total number of inputs represents the number of touches with the community through website comments, business cards, survey responses, dotocracy votes, and other engagements. The estimated number of participants that provided feedback is 12,598.

Total  
Inputs  
**35,384**

Estimated Participants: 12,598



Please reference Appendix B for social media input breakdown.



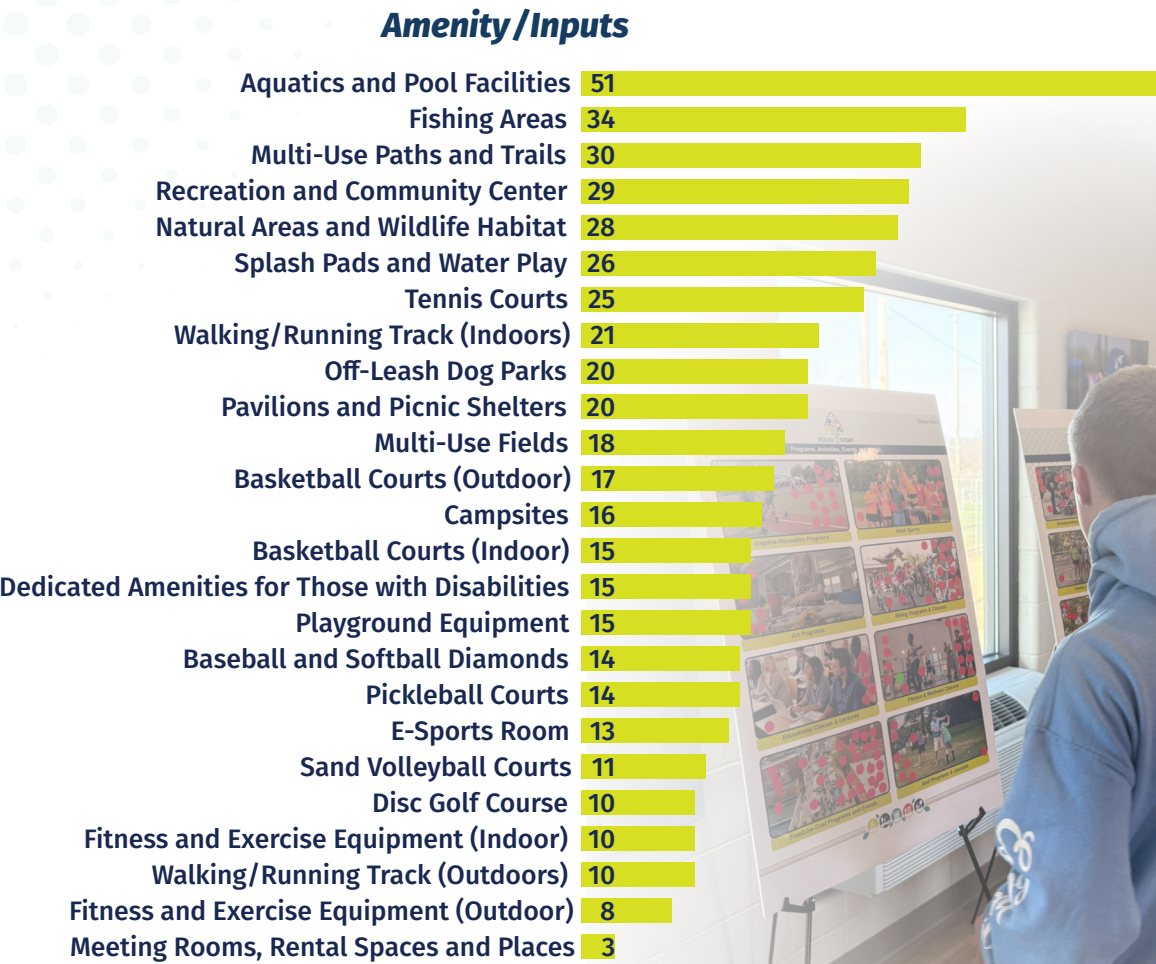
# Dubuque Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

## Workshop #1 Summary

Community Workshops #1A and #1B were held on two separate dates and in two separate locations on different sides of the city. The workshops offered an overview of the project, including project goals, process, and future outreach opportunities. The workshops were in a drop-in format which allowed for greater opportunities for the community to provide input regarding amenities and facilities as well as programs, activities, and events for the comprehensive parks and recreation master plan. In addition to the dotocracy exercise where participants provided quantitative feedback, they were also able to provide qualitative feedback in the form of post-it comments. Participants shared their favorite parks and recreation stories, things they like best about Dubuque Parks and Recreation, changes they would like to see, and their big ideas for parks and recreation with an eye to the future!

# Dotocracy Results:

## Facilities and Amenities Needs



## Meeting Information:

### Workshop #1a:

April 1, 2025 | 5:00pm-8:00pm | Multicultural Family Center

### Workshop #1b:

April 3, 2025 | 5:00pm-8:00pm | Veterans Memorial Park

## Total Number of Participants:





# Dotocracy Results:

## Programming, Activities, and Events Needs

### Amenity/Inputs

Free/Low-Cost Programs and Events	34
Youth Sports	31
Biking Programs and Classes	25
Learn to Swim Programs	24
Nature/Environmental Education Programs	23
Outdoor Fitness Programs	23
Teen Programs	22
Fitness and Wellness Classes	21
Senior Programs	21
Youth Day Camps	20
Adaptive Recreation Programs	19
Golf Programs and Lessons	18
Pickleball Lessons/Leagues	18
Hobby/Interest Classes	17
Skateboarding Programs and Classes	17
Preschool Programs	16
Art Programs	15
Active Adult Fitness Programs	13
Adult Sports	13
Youth Education and Special Interest Classes	13
Water Fitness Classes	12
Intergenerational Programs	9
Educational Classes and Lectures	7
Tennis Lessons and Leagues	7

# Share Your Big Idea!

- More coordination of the City with the schools. Like they do in small towns
- Adaptive trails and adaptive play areas in more areas
- Neighborhood park(s) on the North end of Dubuque
- Community garden
- More libraries and community parks

- Community center
- Driving range
- Connect Eagle Point Parks to Four Mounds
- A big community garden
- A catfish bike/hike trails
- Completely renovating Flora and Murphy tennis courts
- Sign boards for prairie plan education—better perception/value of prairies to the public
- Football field
- Another skate park

- Updated outdoor ice rink
- Biking/walking overpass at NW Arterial + Asbury intersection
- Urban trail path connectivity
- Safe bike paths
- Nice and lit tennis courts
- We need state-of-the-art facilities that attract young families and keep them here
- Bike lanes on the Northwest arterial
- There should be parks reserved for humans only
- Ice rink/roller blade

- Community garden/ garden containers
- Interactive games
- A big, tall tree house/ playground
- Add more pickleball courts at Veterans Memorial Park
- Open markets in parks
- Places for more unique activities/sports
- Biodome greenhouse park

- Indoor sports facility
- A shared community garden
- Keep up the good work
- Help save tennis (outdoor) in Dubuque, please
- Sharable community garden

- Big community garden (food sovereignty, local food, learn from experienced gardeners, sustainable, seed saving integration)
- Fishing access for all
- Develop Maus Park for accessible fishing
- Prairie expansion in parks and along trails with informational signage
- Add a recreation center! We like the one at Peosta



## “Share Your Story With Us!” Comments

### What is your best memory in a Dubuque park or recreation program?

- Jochum family fish frys
- Easter sunrise service at eagle point park
- Field days in the park
- Football games
- My sister’s baptism at bee branch
- Teaching my kids to play tennis at flora park
- Swimming at flora pool

- A smooth rollerblading circuit
- Time at the football field
- Relying on children’s programs so i could take time to learn new interests
- Go-kart track
- Time at the splash pad

- Eagle point park is a treasure
- Jack black at the Dubuque Orchestra
- Ice rink
- Rollerblading
- Playing softball at the parks
- I loved the park programs that always happened in the summer
- Jujitsu classes with dubuque jujitsu

### What do you like best about Dubuque Parks and Recreation?

- The community
- Children’s programs
- Eagle Point park
- Ice skating
- Adult leagues
- All of the parks

### What changes would you like to see made in Dubuque Parks and Recreation?

- More fishing opportunities
- More trees planted along downtown streets
- Scheduled food sources during events
- Better restrooms throughout the city
- A smooth rollerblade circuit
- Resurface tennis courts at flora park and eagle point park

- Mark tennis courts for pickleball also
- Weekly or bi-weekly inspections of park equipment along with repair/signs with email address for who to contact for repairs
- Updated boat ramps and more parking spaces for trailers and vehicles

- No dogs in parks
- Fix tennis courts lights
- More benches in parks
- We need better locations for our baseball and softball little league
- Pave southwest arterial trail and add connector to key west at Military rd.
- More bike/walking trails and walking-friendly streets and sidewalks
- Extend south port trail from Maus Park to Riprow Valley at Mines of Spain along river
- Expand the Bee Branch and north end with more walking paths





# INDEPENDENCE DAY EVENTS

## July 4th | Mathias Ham Historic Site

The Independence Day Celebration took place at Mathias Ham Historic Site. On the Forth of July, the 61st Annual Audrey Hammer Fourth of July Ice Cream Social included picnic opportunities, games, and historical demonstrations.

Facilities, Amenities, and Needs	Votes
Aquatics and Pool Facilities	23
Free/Low-Cost Programs And Events	19
Splash Pads And Water Play	18
Multi-Use Paths and Trails	11
Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat	11
Learn To Swim Programs	11
Art Programs	11
Golf Programs and Lessons	9
Civilians and Picnic Shelters	8
Multi-Use Fields	7
Fishing Areas	7
Off-Leash Dog Park	7
Dedicated Amenities For Those With Disabilities	7
Hobby/Interest Classes	6
Nature/Environmental Education Programs	6
Outdoor Fitness Programs	6
Campsites	6
Playground Equipment	6
Recreation And Community	6
Pickleball Court	5
Intergenerational Programs	5
Senior Programs	5
Baseball and Softball Diamonds	5
Biking Programs and Classes	5
Preschool Programs	4
Adaptive Recreation Programs	4
Educational Classes and Lectures	4
Walking/Running Track (Indoors)	4

240  
INPUTS

40  
PARTICIPANTS



Facilities, Amenities, and Needs Continued	Votes
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Outdoors)	3
Fitness and Wellness Classes	3
Pickleball Lessons/Leagues	3
E-Sports Room	2
Meeting Rooms/Rental Spaces And Places	2
Adult Sports	2
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Indoors)	1
Basketball Courts (Indoor)	1
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	1
Tennis Courts	1
Walking/Running Track (Outdoors)	1
Disc Golf Course	0
Sand Volleyball Courts	0





# FARMERS MARKET

Saturday, May 10, 2025 | 7 am - 12 pm | Downtown Dubuque - Iowa Street

The Dubuque Farmers' Market is an event the City contracts with Dubuque Main Street. As Iowa's oldest open air market, the Farmers' Market is a popular event every Saturday morning (seasonally) in the heart of downtown Dubuque. The project team attended the event to gather input from the community. Activities included a dotocracy exercise, inviting participants to place dots on the six park amenities/facilities and the six programs/activities they were most interested in seeing Dubuque Parks and Recreation provide in the future. Participants were also given bookmarks with a QR code to the project's interactive website where they could learn more about the project, take the survey, and share their big idea for parks and recreation.



Facilities, Amenities, and Needs	Votes
Splash Pads and Water Play	32
Dedicated Amenities for Those With Disabilities	30
Playground Equipment	29
Pavilions and Picnic Shelters	28
Recreation Center/Community Center	22
Sand Volleyball Courts	20
Walking/Running Track (Indoor)	17
Tennis Courts	12
Walking/Running Track (Outdoor)	5



Programs, Activities, Events, and Needs	Votes
Free/Low-Cost Programs and Events	54
Nature/Environmental Educational Programs	33
Learn-to-Swim Programs	32
Youth Day Camps	31
Preschool Programs	27
Adaptive Recreation Programs	26
Hobby/Interest Classes	23
Pickleball Lessons/League	23
Art Programs	23
Outdoor Fitness Programs	22
Adult Sports	22
Teen Programs	22
Tennis Lessons and Leagues	20
Biking Programs and Classes	19
Youth Sports	19
Youth Education/Special Interest Classes	19
Senior Programs	17
Golf Programs and Lessons	13
Active Adult Fitness Programs	12
Intergenerational Programs	11
Fitness and Wellness Classes	11
Water Fitness Classes	11
Skateboarding Programs and Classes	10
Educational Classes and Lectures	6



# JUNETEENTH PICNIC IN THE PARK EVENT

Saturday, June 14, 2025 | 11 am - 4 pm | Jackson Park

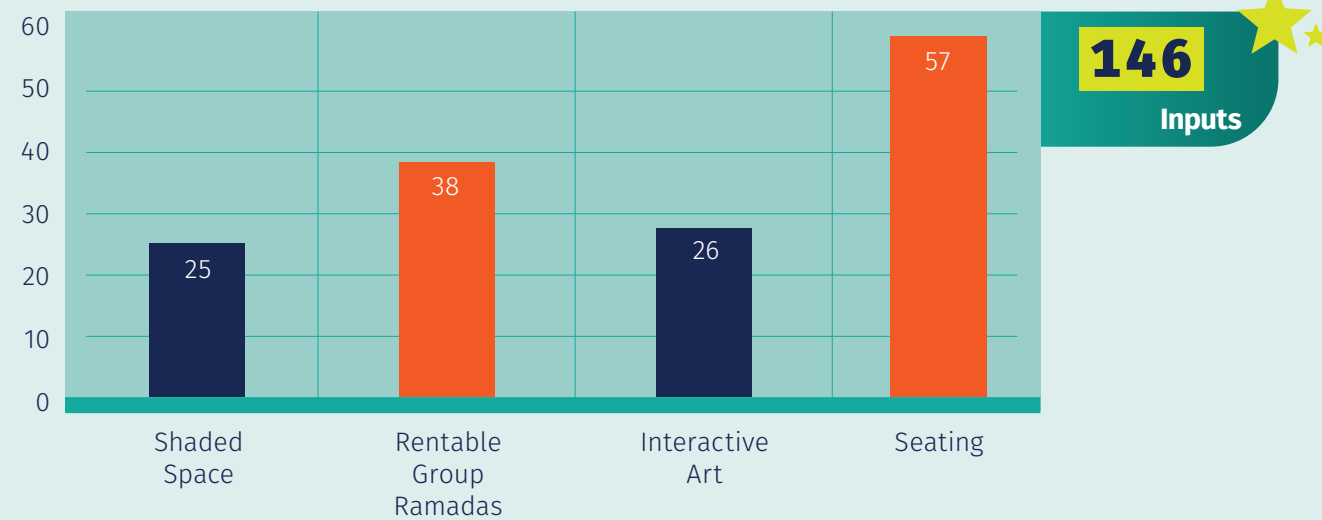
The project team attended the Juneteenth Celebration at Jackson Park. The Picnic in the Park was one of three Juneteenth celebrations in Dubuque and included a talent show, raffles, a bounce house, games, food, and prizes. The team invited attendees to participate in dotocracy exercises, providing feedback on the amenities/facilities and programs/activities they were most interested in. The team also raised project awareness and passed out bookmarks to direct participants to the website to provide additional feedback utilizing the interactive outreach tools available.

1,006  
INPUTS

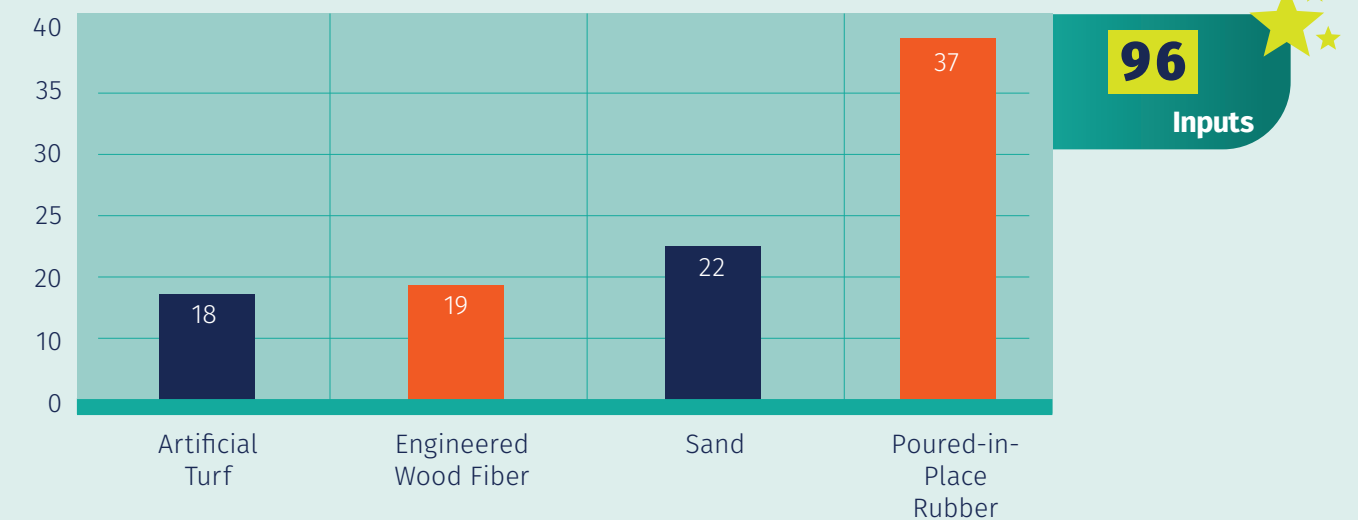
97  
PARTICIPANTS



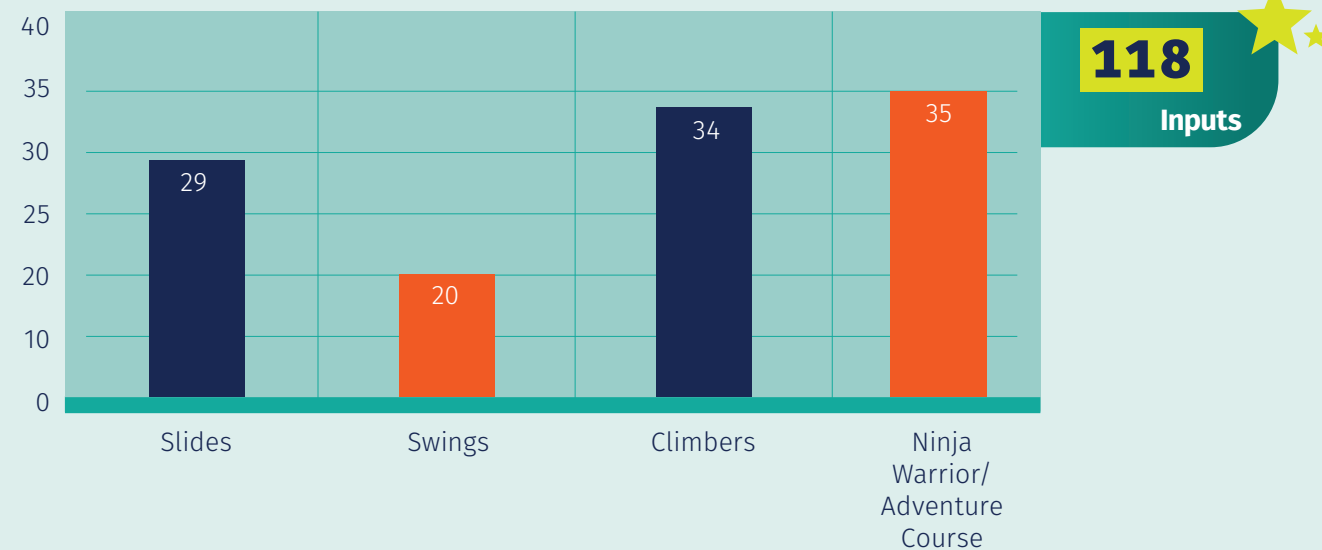
## Playground Support Amenities



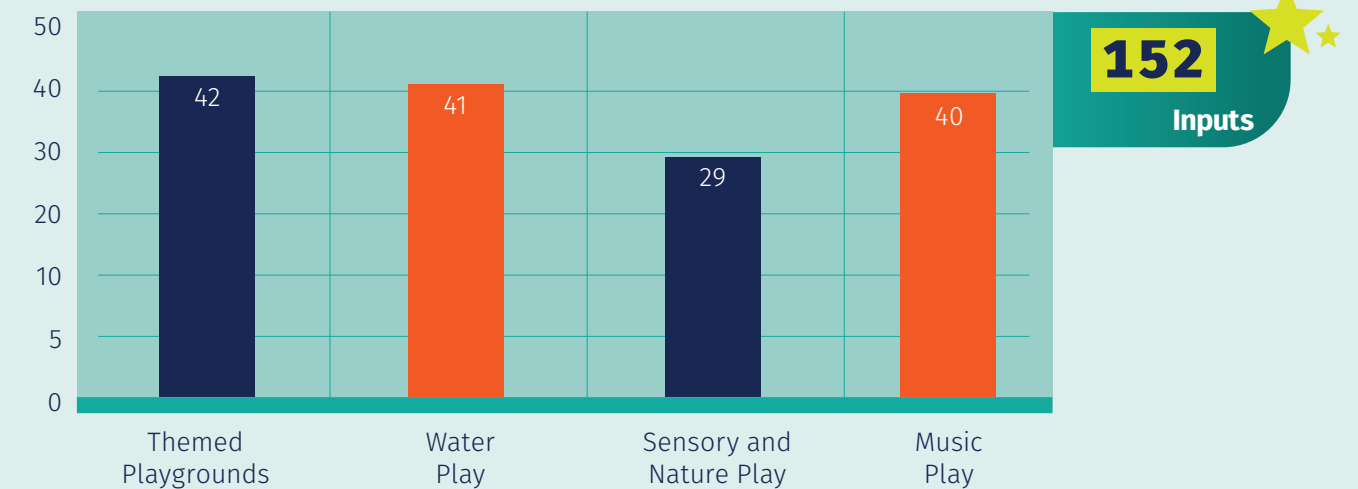
## Playground Surfacing



## Playground Types and Equipment



## Playground Types and Equipment





# JUNETEENTH PICNIC IN THE PARK EVENT CONTINUED

Saturday, June 14, 2025 | 11 am - 4 pm | Jackson Park

## Programs, Activities, Events, and Needs

Free/Low-Cost Programs and Events	35
Nature/Environmental Education Programs	27
Youth Sports	21
Youth Educational/Special Interest Classes	19
Teen Programs	17
Learn-to-Swim Programs	17
Youth Day Camps	15
Adaptive Recreation Programs	14
Art Programs	14
Pickleball Lessons/Leagues	13
Intergenerational Programs	12
Biking Programs and Classes	12
Hobby/Interest Classes	11
Senior Programs	10
Fitness and Wellness Classes	10
Active Adult Fitness Programs	9
Outdoor Fitness Programs	9
Preschool Programs	9
Adult Sports	8
Water Fitness Classes	7
Educational Classes and Lectures	7
Skateboarding Programs and Classes	6
Golf Programs and Lessons	5
Tennis Lessons and Leagues	2



## Facilities, Amenities, and Needs

Aquatics and Pool Facilities	36
Splash Pad and Water Play	27
Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat	25
Multi-Use Fields	22
Multi-Use Paths and Trails	22
Off-leash Dog Parks	19
Campsites	19
Recreation and Community Center	18
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Outdoors)	18
Dedicated Amenities for Those with Disabilities	16
Pavilions and Picnic Shelters	12
Basketball Courts (Indoors)	11
Sand Volleyball Courts	10
Walking/Running Track (Indoors)	10
Playground Equipment	9
Pickleball Courts	9
Disc Golf Courses	9
Walking/Running Track (Outdoors)	8
Fishing Areas	8
Baseball and Softball Diamonds	8
E-Sports Room	8
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Indoors)	7
Basketball Courts (Outdoors)	4
Tennis Courts	2
Meeting Rooms/Rental Spaces and Places	0





# KIDS TO PARKS DAY "KITE TALES" EVENT

Saturday | May 17, 2025 | 11 am - 1 pm | Usha Park

Kids to Parks Day is a national initiative encouraging families to explore the outdoors and connect with public lands. Dubuque's Kite Tales event encouraged creativity through a Create Your Own Kite activity station, kite flying demonstrations, and giant show kites. The project team attended this community event to raise awareness and collect input on the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan. Participants learned about the plan, provided input on amenities/facilities and programs/activities via dotocracy exercises, a project survey, and through the interactive project-dedicated website.

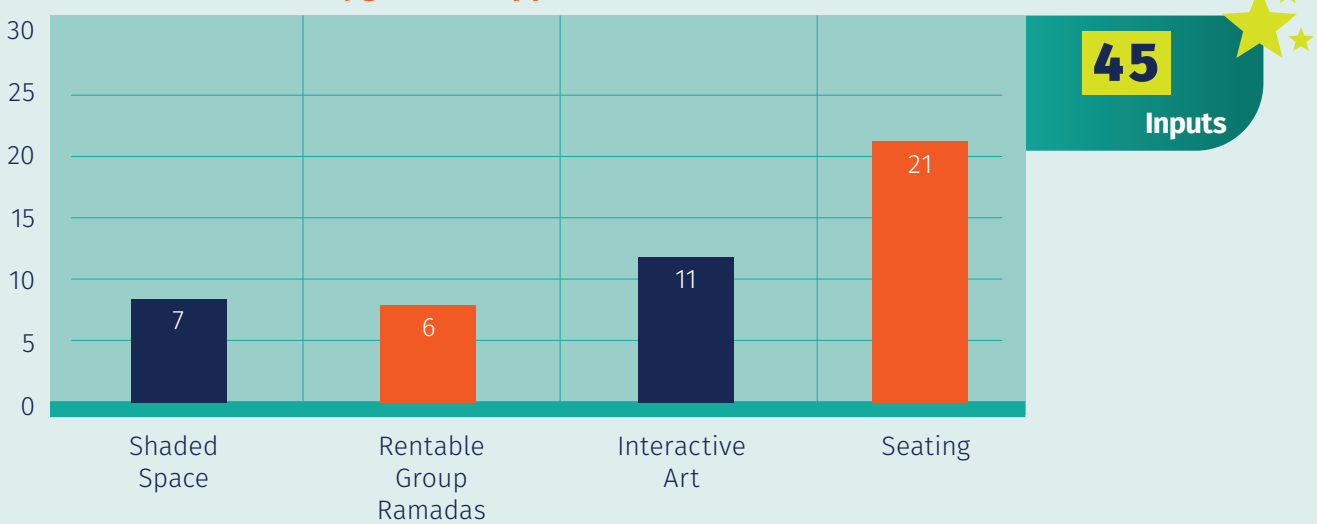
672  
INPUTS

56  
PARTICIPANTS

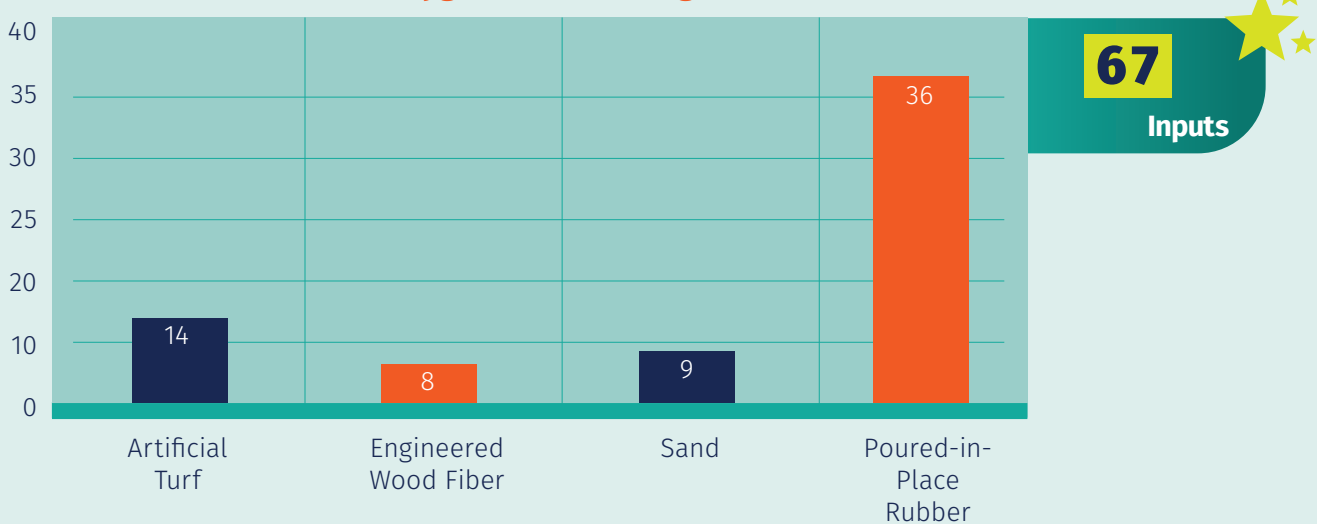




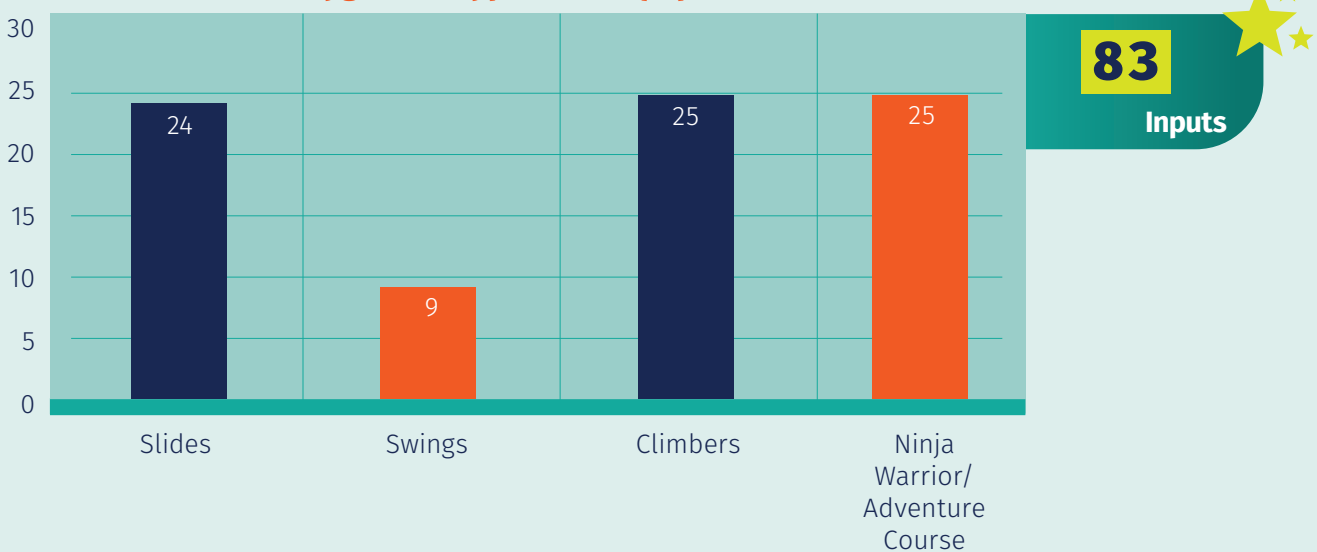
Playground Support Amenities



Playground Surfacing



Playground Types and Equipment





# KIDS TO PARKS DAY "KITE TALES" EVENT CONTINUED

Saturday | May 17, 2025 | 11 am - 1 pm | Usha Park



## Programs, Activities, Events, and Needs

Free/Low-Cost Programs and Events	24
Nature/Environmental Education Programs	21
Adaptive Recreation Programs	20
Youth Sports	13
Learn-to-Swim Programs	13
Art Programs	13
Preschool Programs	11
Pickleball Lessons/Leagues	11
Adult Sports	11
Biking Programs and Classes	11
Youth Day Camps	9
Youth Educational/Special Interest Classes	9
Golf Programs and Lessons	9
Intergenerational Programs	8
Outdoor Fitness Programs	6
Senior Programs	6
Skateboarding Programs and Classes	5
Tennis Lessons and Leagues	5
Water Fitness Classes	4
Hobby/Interest Classes	4
Fitness and Wellness Classes	4
Teen Programs	2
Active Adult Fitness Programs	2
Educational Classes and Lectures	0

## Facilities, Amenities, and Needs

Aquatics and Pool Facilities	23
Splash Pad and Water Play	19
Multi-Use Paths and Trails	19
Off-Leash Dog Parks	19
Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat	18
Playground Equipment	16
Campsites	16
Fishing Areas	15
E-Sports Room	15
Dedicated Amenities for Those with Disabilities	14
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Outdoors)	10
Sand Volleyball Courts	9
Walking/Running Track (Indoors)	8
Disc Golf Courses	8
Pickleball Courts	7
Baseball and Softball Diamonds	7
Recreation and Community Center	6
Walking/Running Track (Outdoors)	6
Multi-Use Fields	6
Basketball Courts (Outdoors)	6
Pavilions and Picnic Shelters	3
Basketball Courts (Indoors)	3
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Indoors)	2
Tennis Courts	1
Meeting Rooms/Rental Spaces and Places	0



# MOTHER'S DAY PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Sunday | May 11, 2025 | Eagle Point Park

The project team attended the popular annual Order of the Arrow Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast. The project team raised awareness about the plan, invited participants to visit the project website to provide feedback, and hosted a dotocracy exercise where participants placed six dots on the amenities/facilities and six dots on the programs/activities they most wanted to see in the future of Dubuque Parks and Recreation.

1,503  
INPUTS

126  
PARTICIPANTS



## Facilities, Amenities, and Needs

Aquatics/Pool Facilities	69
Campsites	65
Off-Leash Dog Parks	63
Splash Pads and Water Play	52
Multi-Use Paths and Fields	52
Fishing Area	51
Pickleball Courts	50
Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat	46
Playground Equipment	40
Baseball/Softball Fields	38
Pavilions and Picnic Shelters	38
Multi-Use Fields	37
Dedicated Amenities for Those With Disabilities	32
Recreation Center/Community Center	32
E-Sports Rooms	30
Sand Volleyball Courts	29
Tennis Courts	28
Walking/Running Track (Outdoor)	19
Disc Golf Courses	17
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Outdoor)	15
Walking/Running Track (Indoor)	15
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	12
Basketball Courts (Indoor)	9
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Indoors)	4
Meeting Rooms	3

## Programs, Activities, Events, and Needs

Free/Low-Cost Programs and Events	70
Learn-to-Swim Programs	46
Youth Sports	44
Nature/Environmental Educational Programs	38
Senior Programs	38
Pickleball Lessons/League	34
Art Programs	34
Youth Day Camps	34
Water Fitness Classes	29
Teen Programs	28
Hobby/Interest Classes	25
Outdoor Fitness Programs	25
Golf Programs and Lessons	25
Preschool Programs	23
Adaptive Recreation Programs	22
Biking Programs and Classes	22
Active Adult Fitness Programs	18
Skateboarding Programs and Classes	17
Youth Education/Special Interest Classes	17
Intergenerational Programs	15
Adult Sports	15
Fitness and Wellness Classes	15
Tennis Lessons and Leagues	14
Educational Classes and Lectures	9



# NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Tuesday | August 5, 2025 | 6 pm - 8 pm | Comiskey Park

The Master plan team and the Dubuque Parks and Recreation team staged a pop-up event at Comiskey Park during the Dubuque National Night Out celebration. The team provided all attendees with bookmarks containing a link to the project website to learn more about the project, take the survey, and utilize the outreach tools provided. The pop-up event featured a dotocracy activity that allowed participants to place 12 dots on images of what physical features they valued most within parks and what programs or activities most interested them.

367

INPUTS

31

PARTICIPANTS



## Facilities, Amenities, and Needs

Votes

Off Leash Dog Parks	22
Aquatics/Pool Facilities	19
Splash Pads and Water Play	15
Dedicated Amenities for those with Disabilities	15
Fishing Area	14
Campsites	13
E-Sports Rooms	9
Walking/Running Track (Indoor)	9
Pavilions and Picnic Shelters	8
Walking/Running Track (Outdoor)	8
Multi-Use Paths and Fields	7
Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat	7
Playground Equipment	7
Basketball Courts (Indoor)	6
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Outdoor)	5
Multi-Use Fields	5
Pickleball Courts	5
Recreation Center/Community Center	5
Sand Volleyball Courts	5
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	4
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Indoors)	4
Baseball/Softball Fields	3
Disc Golf Courses	3
Tennis Courts	2
Meeting Rooms	0
Multi-Athletic Court Gym	0

## Programs, Activities, Events, and Needs

Votes

Art Programs	15
Free/Low Cost Programs and Events	15
Learn to Swim Programs	15
Youth Sports	13
Youth Education/Special Interest Classes	12
Biking Programs and Classes	10
Skateboarding Programs and Classes	10
Nature/Environmental Educational Programs	8
Water Fitness Classes	8
Fitness and Wellness Classes	7
Golf Programs and Lessons	7
Youth Day Camps	7
Adaptive Recreation Programs	6
Preschool Programs	6
Adult Sports	5
Outdoor Fitness Programs	5
Senior Programs	5
Hobby/Interest Classes	4
Teen Programs	4
Active Adult Fitness	3
Intergenerational Programs	3
Pickleball Lessons/League	2
Education Classes and Lectures	1
Tennis Lessons and Leagues	1



WORKSHOP #3

Wednesday | August 6, 2025 | 6 pm - 8 pm | Dubuque Montessori School

The Master plan team and the Dubuque Parks and Recreation team staged a pop-up event at Dubuque Montessori School. The team provided all attendees with bookmarks containing a link to the project website to learn more about the project, take the survey, and utilize the outreach tools provided. The pop-up event featured a dotocracy activity that allowed participants to place 12 dots on images of what physical features they valued most within parks and what programs or activities most interested them.

59  
INPUTS

5  
PARTICIPANTS



Facilities, Amenities, and Needs

Votes

Campsites	3
Multi-Use Paths and Fields	3
Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat	3
Pavilions and Picnic Shelters	3
Dedicated Amenities for those with Disabilities	2
Sand Volleyball Courts	2
Aquatics/Pool Facilities	1
Basketball Courts (Indoor)	1
Fishing Area	1
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Indoors)	1
Meeting Rooms	1
Multi-Use Fields	1
Off Leash Dog parks	1
Pickleball Courts	1
Recreation Center/Community Center	1
Tennis Courts	1
Walking/Running Track (Indoor)	1
Baseball/Softball Fields	0
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	0
Disc Golf Courses	0
E-Sports Rooms	0
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Outdoor)	0
Multi-Athletic Court Gym	0
Playground Equipment	0
Splash Pads and Water Play	0
Walking/Running Track (Outdoor)	0

Programs, Activities, Events, and Needs

Votes

Adult Sports	4
Free/Low Cost Programs and Events	4
Nature/Environmental Educational Programs	4
Active Adult Fitness Programs	3
Pickleball Lessons/League	2
Senior Programs	2
Teen Programs	2
Adaptive Recreation Programs	1
Art Programs	1
Biking Programs and Classes	1
Education Classes and Lectures	1
Fitness and Wellness Classes	1
Hobby/Interest Classes	1
Intergenerational Programs	1
Outdoor Fitness Programs	1
Tennis Lessons and Leagues	1
Water Fitness Classes	1
Youth Sports	1
Learn to Swim Programs	0
Preschool Programs	0
Golf Programs and Lessons	0
Skateboarding Programs and Classes	0
Youth Day Camps	0
Youth Education/Special Interest Classes	0





# FLORA POOL POP-UP EVENT

Wednesday | August 6, 2025 | 12 pm - 3 pm | Flora Pool

The Master plan team and the Dubuque Parks and Recreation team staged a pop-up event at Flora Pool. The team provided all attendees with bookmarks containing a link to the project website to learn more about the project, take the survey, and utilize the outreach tools provided. The pop-up event featured a dotocracy activity that allowed participants to place 12 dots on images of what physical features they valued most within parks and what programs or activities most interested them.

513

INPUTS

43

PARTICIPANTS



## Facilities, Amenities, and Needs

## Votes

Campsites	57
Aquatics/Pool Facilities	40
Fishing Area	30
E-Sports Rooms	20
Multi-Use Fields	18
Baseball/Softball Fields	17
Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat	16
Sand Volleyball Courts	16
Walking/Running Track (Indoor)	14
Dedicated Amenities for those with Disabilities	12
Disc Golf Courses	12
Pickleball Courts	11
Basketball Courts (Indoor)	10
Multi-Use Paths and Fields	10
Off Leash Dog Parks	10
Playground Equipment	10
Recreation Center/Community Center	9
Splash Pads and Water Play	9
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	8
Walking/Running Track (Outdoor)	6
Tennis Courts	5
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Outdoor)	4
Pavilions and Picnic Shelters	2
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Indoors)	1
Multi-Athletic Court Gym	0
Meeting Rooms	0

## Programs, Activities, Events, and Needs

## Votes

Youth Sports	21
Pickleball Lessons/League	14
Youth Education/Special Interest Classes	14
Golf Programs and Lessons	13
Learn to Swim Programs	12
Senior Programs	9
Youth Day Camps	9
Art Programs	8
Biking Programs and Classes	8
Free/Low Cost Programs and Events	8
Water Fitness Classes	8
Preschool Programs	6
Tennis Lessons and Leagues	6
Hobby/Interest Classes	5
Nature/Environmental Education Programs	5
Skateboarding Programs and Classes	4
Teen Programs	4
Active Adult Fitness Programs	3
Intergenerational Programs	3
Fitness and Wellness Classes	2
Outdoor Fitness Programs	2
Adult Sports	1
Education Classes and Lectures	1
Adaptive Recreation Programs	0



# SUTTON POOL POP-UP EVENT

Thursday | August 7, 2025 | Sutton Pool

The Master plan team and the Dubuque Parks and Recreation team staged a pop-up event at Sutton Pool. The team provided all attendees with bookmarks containing a link to the project website to learn more about the project, take the survey, and utilize the outreach tools provided. The pop-up event featured a dotocracy activity that allowed participants to place 12 dots on images of what physical features they valued most within parks and what programs or activities most interested them.

368

INPUTS

32

PARTICIPANTS



## Facilities, Amenities, and Needs

Aquatics/Pool Facilities	33
Playground Equipment	14
Off Leash Dog Parks	13
Multi-Use Paths and Fields	12
Splash Pads and Water Play	12
Campsites	10
Walking/Running Track (Indoor)	9
Baseball/Softball Fields	8
Fishing Area	8
Pickleball Courts	8
Dedicated Amenities for those with Disabilities	7
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Indoors)	7
Fitness and Exercise Equipment (Outdoor)	7
Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat	7
E-Sports Rooms	6
Basketball Courts (Indoor)	5
Recreation Center/Community Center	5
Pavilions and Picnic Shelters	4
Disc golf Courses	3
Sand Volleyball Courts	3
Walking/Running Track (Outdoor)	3
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	2
Meeting Rooms	2
Multi-Athletic Court Gym	2
Multi-Use Fields	2
Tennis Courts	0

## Programs, Activities, Events, and Needs

Learn to Swim Programs	18
Free/Low Cost Programs and Events	16
Youth Sports	13
Water Fitness Classes	13
Senior Programs	10
Art Programs	9
Biking Programs and Classes	9
Hobby/Interest Classes	9
Teen Programs	9
Youth Education/Special Interest Classes	9
Intergenerational Programs	7
Pickleball Lessons/League	7
Active Adult Fitness Programs	6
Adaptive Recreation Programs	6
Fitness and Wellness Classes	6
Nature/Environmental Education Programs	6
Adult Sports	5
Outdoor Fitness Programs	5
Youth Day Camps	5
Preschool Programs	3
Skateboarding Programs and Classes	3
Education Classes and Lectures	2
Golf Programs and Lessons	2
Tennis Lessons and Leagues	0





Project Dedicated Website

The interactive, project-dedicated website is [yourstorydubuque.com](http://yourstorydubuque.com). The website provides updates on the project, events where community members can provide input, and interactive tools that allowed for one or multiple methods of participation. Visitors were encouraged to provide input utilizing the following website tools:

- An electronic survey
- Interactive mapping tool
- Share your big idea on a public forum
- Help determine priorities with an interactive budgeting tool
- Submit general comments or inquiries

### Help Us Write the Story

The City of Dubuque is planning the future of its Parks and Recreation system over the next 10 years. Thank you to everyone who provided input on the Comprehensive Master Plan. The participation tools are now closed for comment.

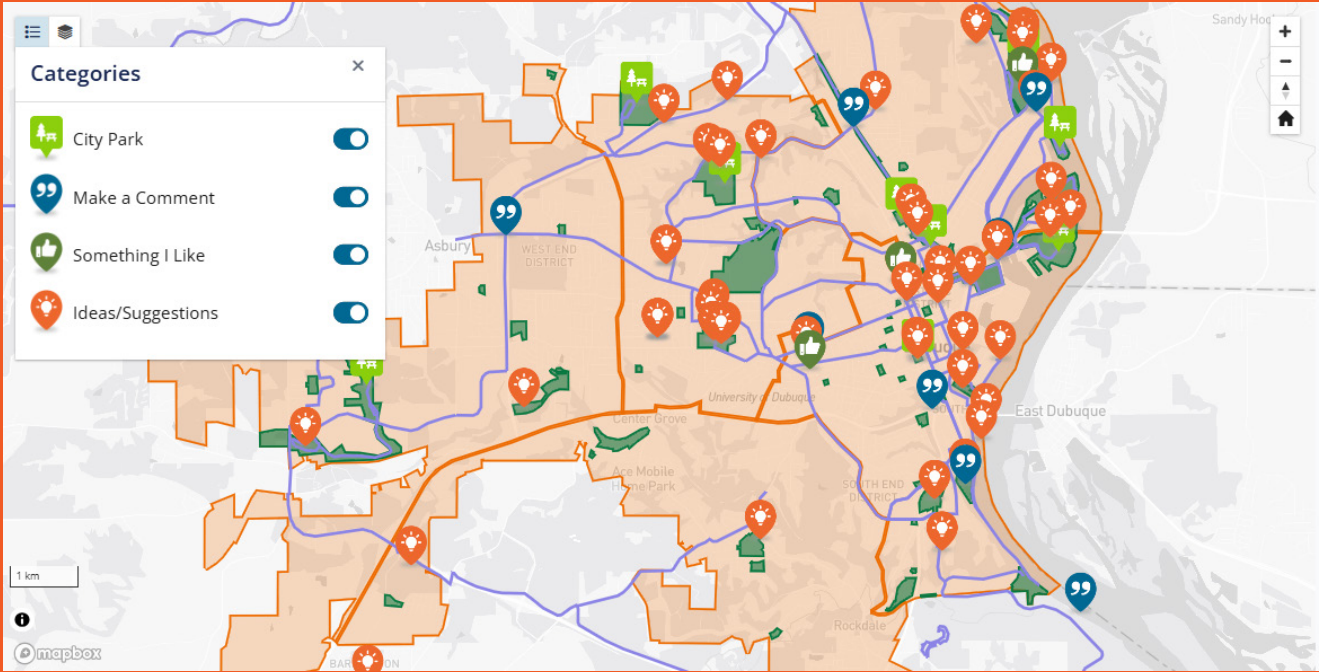
Thank You For Your Participation

Feedback

Interactive Map

Your Big Idea

Park Priorities





Top 10 Capital Needs Based on Website and Intercept Surveys



Note: Please reference Appendix B for full website survey and feedback



**Top 10 Program Needs Based on Website and Intercept Surveys**

**1** Free/Low-Cost Special Events



**2** Nature/Environmental Education



**3** Learn-to-Swim Programs



**4** Youth Sports



**5** Art Programs



**6** Outdoor Fitness Programs



**7** Pickleball Lessons/Leagues



**8** Youth Day Camps



**9** Adaptive Recreation Programs



**10** Adult Sports



*Note: Please reference Appendix B for full website survey and feedback*



**Top 10 Capital Needs Based on Statistically-Valid Survey**



Note: Please reference Appendix C for full statistically-valid survey report



**Top 10 Program Needs Based on Statistically-Valid Survey**



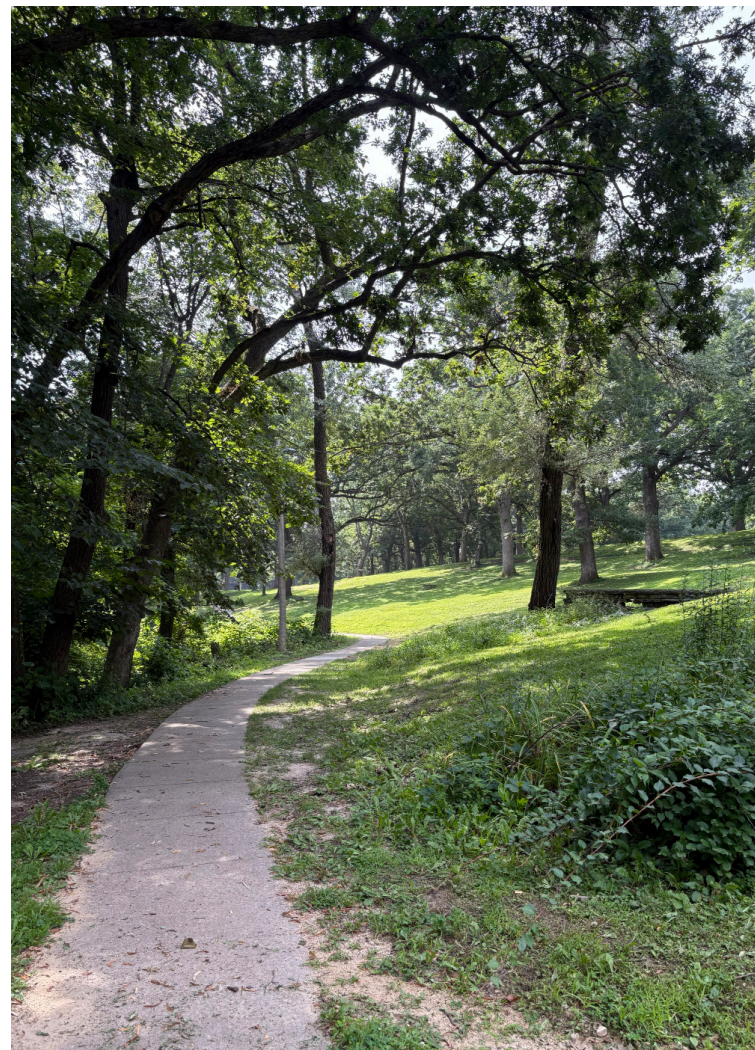
*Note: Please reference Appendix C for full statistically-valid survey report*





## Chapter 7

### Implementation Plan *Putting Y(O)ur Story Into Action*



Dubuque  
Parks and Recreation  
Comprehensive Plan



## Organizational and Management Planning

To become more efficient and effective in the delivery of parks and recreation services, there is greater emphasis on organizational and management planning. The following information outlines organizational and management planning trends for consideration.

### Organizational Structure

- Organizational structures have become more streamlined with direct lines of responsibility established. There are now fewer mid-management positions. This should not be to the detriment of handling administrative processes.
- While most agencies still include both parks and recreation functions, there continues to be a trend of placing parks functions within public works. This is particularly true for smaller cities.
- A number of cities have preserves, open space, and greenway divisions, some of which are separate departments within the organization.
- Facilities and recreation programming that can generate strong revenues are often placed outside the normal organizational structure as enterprise funds.
- Most organizational structures tend to be functionally based, but in larger communities there can also be a geographic structure as well. This can be based on areas or regions of a community where there are multiple facilities or parks that need to be managed or maintained.
- Hiring and retaining both full-time and part-time staff has become much more difficult and has resulted in significant increases in part-time pay rates as well as some increases in full-time salaries.
- There is a stronger focus on full-time staff to reduce the dependence on part-time staff. The level of movement to full-time staffing reflects the levels of service that have been established, any seasonal operations, and the budget requirements of the department.
- There is a formal communications protocol in place. Staff meetings for all segments of the organization are held on a regular basis and the minutes and actions are documented.
- There is greater emphasis on having strong leadership at the administrative level that is supported by an overall team concept. Mid-managers (or supervisors) have the primary responsibility for directly managing line staff and facilities.
- There are conduct standards in place for all.
- There is a formal, annual, staff training program with adequate levels of funding.
- To minimize the reliance on paid staff, establishing a strong volunteer program is often in place. To effectively make use of volunteers, there must be a staff person who is responsible for managing and recruiting volunteers. If the program becomes large enough, then a full-time volunteer coordinator position is often necessary.





Staffing Philosophy

- Agencies have a well-defined staffing philosophy that clearly defines the role and responsibilities for all staff.
- A determination of key positions that need to be full-time and those that are appropriate for part-time status is made to ensure a strong staffing plan.
- Job descriptions for all full-time and part-time staff are in place that accurately describe the job requirements and skills that are necessary for the position.
- There are basic staffing standards for common facilities such as community and recreation centers as well as aquatic centers and other facilities (senior centers, etc.).
- The role of contract positions is growing, especially for program instructors and specialized services.
- Union issues often dictate staffing plans, schedules, and management practices.
- Staff is empowered and expected to make important management and supervisory decisions but are also held accountable for the performance of their areas. Supervisory staff have budget responsibilities as well.
- Levels of service are established based on the number of full-time employees (FTEs) per thousand of population, acreage maintained, and facilities operated.
- Full-time staff are cross trained to handle most operational or supervisory responsibilities for a variety of program areas and facilities.
- The staffing philosophy is backed up by a comprehensive staff manual that is updated regularly to guide staffing standards and regulations.
- Background checks are completed on all new hires, including volunteers, especially those that have direct contact with youth.
- Agencies have developed succession plans to ensure staffing knowledge is not compromised when they leave employment or retirement.

Performance Evaluation

- Full-time staff have an annual performance review completed that clearly indicates areas of excellence, areas of compliance and where improvements should be made. Detailed and specific annual work plans are developed for each full-time and major part-time staff member, and these are monitored by their direct supervisor on a regular basis. The work plans cover issues such as budget development, financial transactions, programming, marketing, community outreach, and staff interaction and communication. It is important to have measurable benchmarks and outputs for each plan. Staff are then held accountable to meet these goals.
- There is a strong staff training and education program in place to provide opportunities for staff growth and improvement. The staff training program focuses on financial transactions, customer service, program development, budgeting, revenue growth, and maintenance functions, emergency procedures, safety concerns, and facility operations. A specific training program for new hires, including part-time and seasonal staff, is also in place.

Maintenance of Parks and Recreation Facilities

Over the last 10-15 years there have been significant changes in how maintenance of parks and recreation facilities is accomplished. Some of the more significant trends include:

- The responsibility for maintenance and custodial services now varies considerably by agency. As has been noted, many municipalities have moved parks maintenance functions to public works departments and recreation facilities maintenance and custodial services to a separate facilities maintenance department or a division within public works.

Specialized facility maintenance (athletic fields, aquatic centers, etc.) still often remain the responsibility of parks and recreation departments or even the recreation division.

On the other hand, functions such as right-of-way maintenance are now being moved from public works to parks operations.

- The development of a comprehensive maintenance management plan for parks, open space, trails, and recreation facilities is now considered essential. This document must not only deal with an overall plan for the parks and recreation agency but also specific plans for each park or facility. This plan should include:
  - Classification of outdoor parks preserves and open space into six levels of maintenance standards (see Chapter 3: Parks).
  - A listing of specific maintenance tasks that need to be performed, their frequency and the quality level that is expected.
  - A schedule of daily or weekly documented inspections of parks, facilities, and equipment.
  - A determination of manpower, equipment and operating supplies that are required to complete the tasks.
  - Tracking of maintenance tasks, overall performance, and costs by location.
  - The establishment of a preventative maintenance plan.

Creative Staffing Solutions

Dubuque’s in-house mechanic staff member takes care of all equipment within the parks and forestry realms. With 28 vehicles, 200 pieces of equipment, and 60-80 small line trimmers and other items owned by the City, keeping up with repairs is a major effort. As a dedicated and self-sustaining arm of the Park and Recreation department, the mechanic is a critical piece of Dubuque’s management staff; their dedication has been instrumental to the department, and has ultimately allowed for beneficial regular maintenance and resulting extensions of life of major equipment.



- The maintenance division develops specific levels of service for each facility that is under their responsibility utilizing the NRPA’s maintenance standards (or other LOS standards that may have been developed) that divides outdoor park maintenance into 6 different levels. These include:

Level 1	High-visibility areas that require the highest level of maintenance.
Level 2	Is the normal standard and what an individual expects to see on a regular basis.
Level 3 and 4	These two levels are just below the norm and include reductions in frequency of maintenance with a focus on safety. These levels are often utilized when there are budget and manpower reductions.
Level 5	This level is one step above allowing the land to return to its original state.
Level 6	This level allows the land to return to its original natural state or open space that is already in its natural condition.

Some agencies have reduced the levels to only 3 or 4 to make maintenance more streamlined and easier to understand.

- When assigning levels of maintenance to a park, it is acceptable to have varying levels within different areas of the same park. Highly developed areas often have a higher level assigned while less developed areas have a lower level.

For indoor facilities, there is usually a similar three level classification for building maintenance functions. Each existing indoor facility would then be classified in the same manner as parks.

- More parks maintenance functions are now being contracted. As a result, agencies are developing specific guidelines to determine which maintenance functions or activities could possibly be considered for contract service. A primary aspect of this plan is a cost/benefit assessment of providing a function in house vs. contracting for the service. General guidelines often include:
  - Basic maintenance functions that occur on a regular basis usually are not contracted if they occur in highly visible locations or for facilities where there is a very strong level of public use. However, other basic functions such as trash removal and mowing are often contracted regardless of the location.
  - Specialized functions that require special training or equipment are inherently dangerous, or do not occur on a regular basis could be considered for contract service. This could include functions such as tree trimming, fertilization, and chemical applications.
  - Basic maintenance functions that occur in remote or low use areas could be considered for contract.
  - Very small parks (under 2 acres) that require the allocation of a high level of time and resources are often considered for contract.
  - Remote locations that take significant travel time to maintain could also be considered for contract.

- Many parks and recreation agencies are contracting for custodial services for indoor facilities as well as restrooms and other amenities in parks.
- Developing strong contracts that detail specific tasks to be completed, the frequency and expected quality of service is essential. Contracts must have specific performance standards to ensure that recreation facilities are adequately cleaned. Contract maintenance also must be supervised, managed, and evaluated on a regular basis.
- Parks maintenance (and even facilities maintenance) either have their own maintenance centers or yards or share with public works. For larger communities which cover significant geographic areas, there is often the need to develop smaller satellite maintenance yards to reduce travel time and the trailering of equipment.
- A maintenance cost assignment system is developed that tracks costs by major parks or recreation facilities so that the true costs of maintaining these facilities are known. This system is also valuable in estimating future costs for any new or renovated parks or facilities. Cost assignments are also done by task (mowing, sweeping, fertilization, etc.) to develop costs per function or for determining a cost per acre or mile.
- Agencies are establishing lifecycle cost estimates (capital replacement) for major capital assets associated with parks and recreation facilities and equipment. An asset inventory is established for all major equipment as well.
- For each new proposed park or recreation facility, a detailed projection of the cost of maintaining the amenity on an annual basis is completed. This usually includes not only additional manpower requirements but also equipment, operating supplies, and necessary contractual services. An on-going system with specific procedures is often in place to accomplish such estimates in a consistent and organized fashion.
- Maintenance supervisors and administrative staff are becoming more actively involved in the design review process for all new planned facilities. The review process often focuses on materials and surfaces/finishes being specified, maintenance equipment required to maintain the amenity, access for maintenance equipment, and brand of materials for continuity.
- Many parks and recreation agencies develop an energy management plan for all buildings and structures, which attempts to not only control energy costs but promotes energy conservation and attempts to utilize alternative forms of energy. Agencies in the western area of the country are also developing water management plans to reduce water usage in parks and facilities.
- Most agencies have a risk management plan that deals with safety, security, and an emergency action plan. This responsibility is usually in parks or agency administration.
- Agencies have multiple Certified Playground Safety Inspectors (CPSI) on staff. For aquatic centers, in addition to the aquatic staff, at least one maintenance person is a Certified Pool Operator (CPO).
- Maintenance tasks, schedules and costs are managed by a maintenance management software system. This includes work order management and preventative maintenance tracking.



# DEPARTMENT BY THE NUMBERS

The following pages highlight information about the Department (budget, staffing, facilities, etc.). In addition to those data points, when available, comparative data from the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) is included.

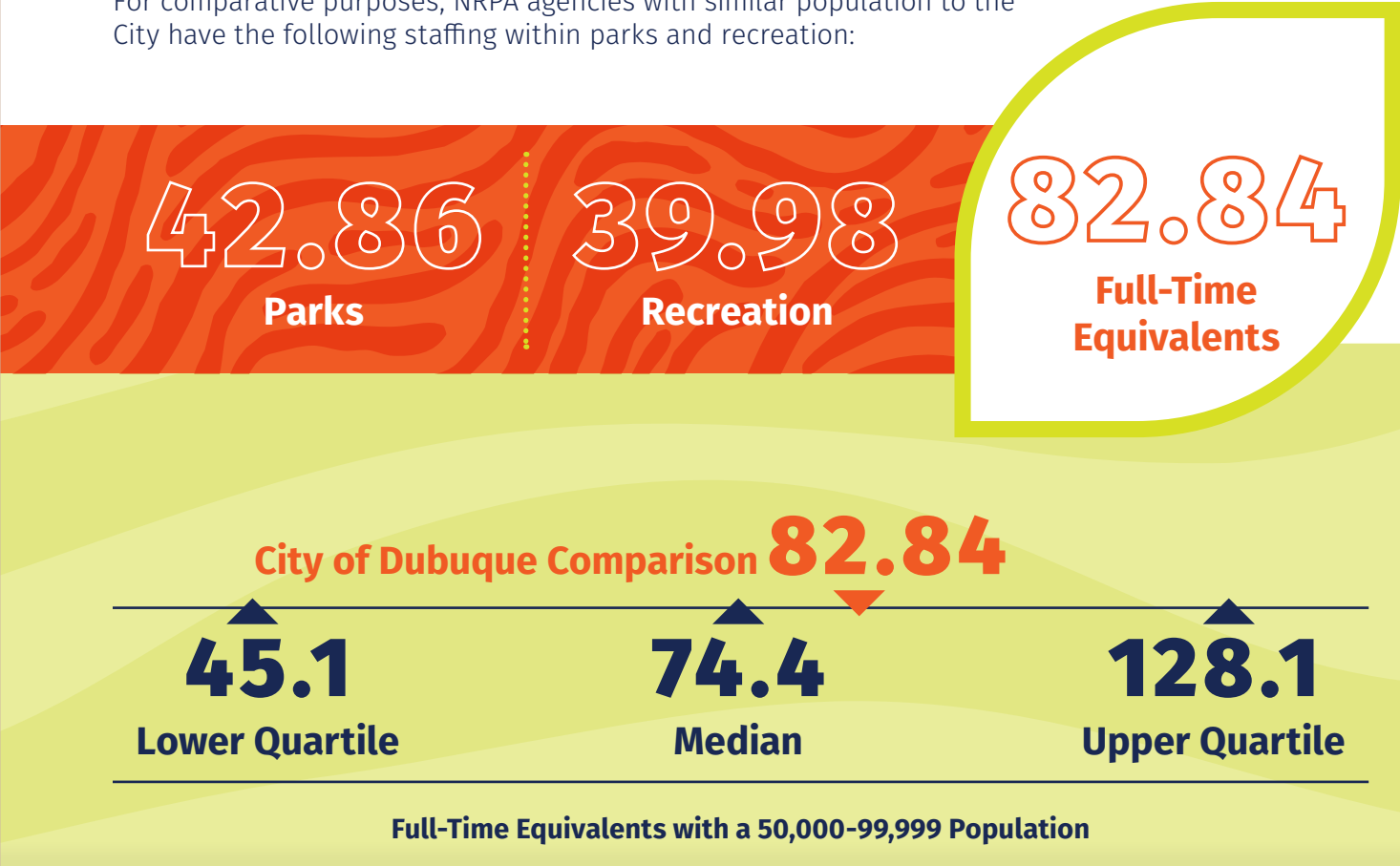
## The following is the organizational chart for the Department per budget documents:

In addition to the organizational chart, from conversations with staff and referencing budget documents, the following is the breakdown of full-time equivalents for the Department.

### Parks and Recreation Department



For comparative purposes, NRPA agencies with similar population to the City have the following staffing within parks and recreation:



Category	FT Benefited	FT Temporary	Total Full-Time Equivalents
Parks	27.35	12.63	39.98
Recreation	9.93	32.93	42.86

**Interpretation:** This data would suggest that the City is above the median but below the upper quartile for FTE positions. The reality is that part-time and temporary positions are becoming more challenging to fill. As such, the City may want to look at transitioning some of those positions, specifically in Parks to full-time, year around, benefited positions.

**For the City to continue to maintain the current system they will need to consider a combination of the following:**

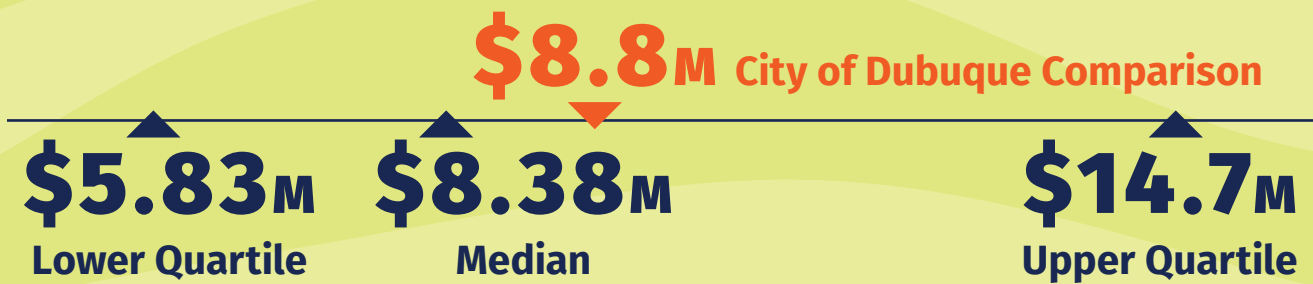


It is important to note that the suggested adjustments are for the existing system, and do not account for any potential future expansion. The total operating budget for the department (FY2026) can be broken down in the following way.

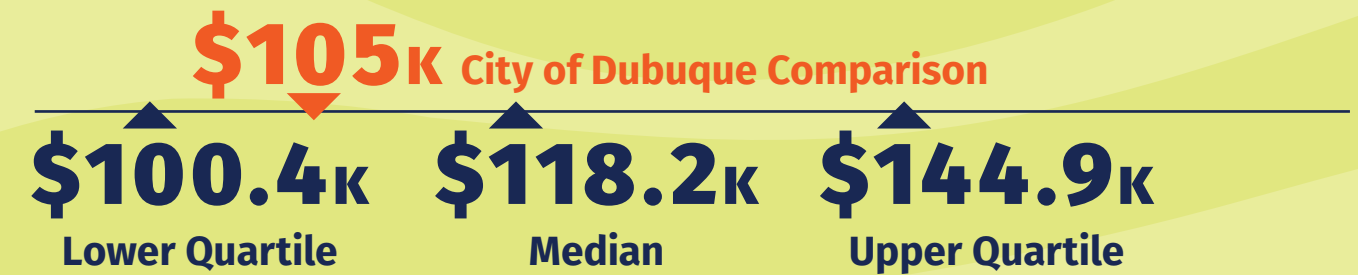
Category	Total	Percentage
Parks	\$4,726,519	\$814,381
Recreation	\$4,044,637	\$2,018,030
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,771,156</b>	<b>\$2,832,411</b>

The budget number used for comparison is \$8,771,156. That figure can be compared in the following ways to the most recent NRPA data set.

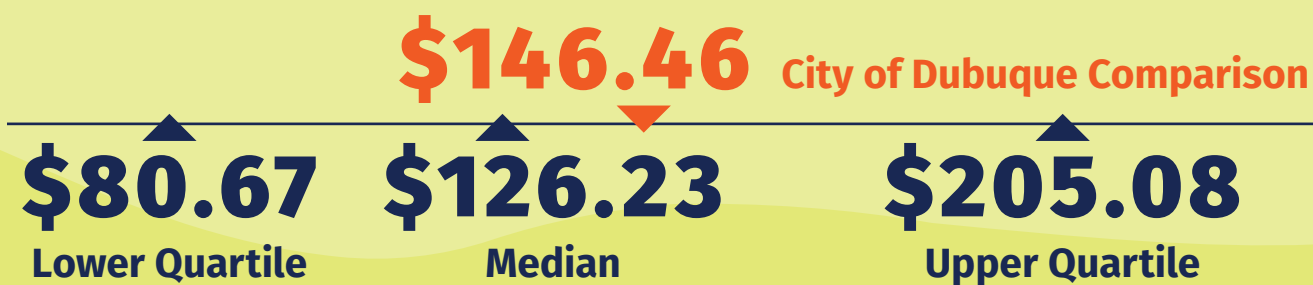




Annual Operating Budget with a 50,000-99,999 Population



Annual Operating Budget Comparison with a 82.84 FTE and \$8,771,156 Operating Expenditure



Per Capita Operating Budget with a 50,000-99,999 Population

That figure can be compared in the following ways to the most recent NRPA data set.

**Interpretation:** This data would suggest that the City is well above the median in terms of annual operating budget, but short of the upper quartile.

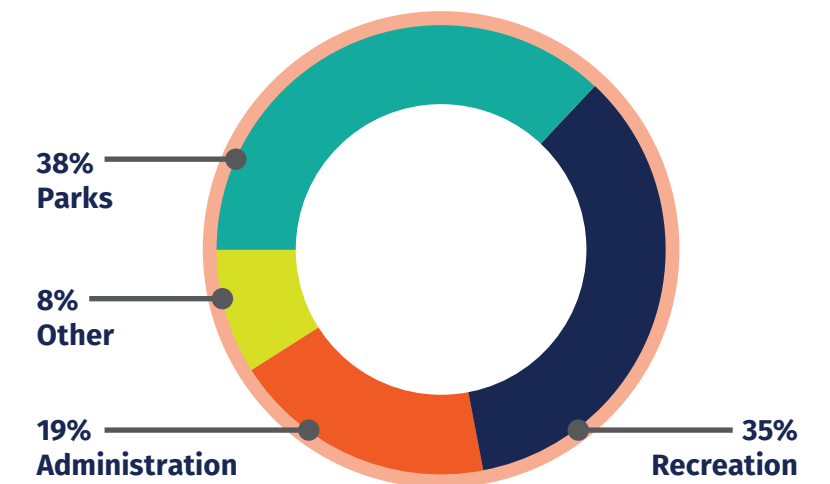
The consulting team would suggest that this speaks to the inventory of amenities that they offer to residents. It also begins to emphasize the idea that the City is more of a regional provider of parks and recreation. And while their operating budget is significant, it is likely insufficient for the inventory they currently manage.

If one uses the 82.84 FTE for parks and recreation and the operating expenditure of \$8,771,156 the following comparison is possible.

If one uses the 82.84 FTE for parks and recreation and the operating expenditure of \$8,771,156 the following comparison is possible.

**Interpretation:** While this would appear to be a positive figure, it again points to the need for more full-time staffing.

The following pie chart outlines the average distribution of operating expenditures of NRPA member agencies.



Currently, within the department parks accounts for 25.3% of the total budget and recreation accounts for 28.6% of the total budget.

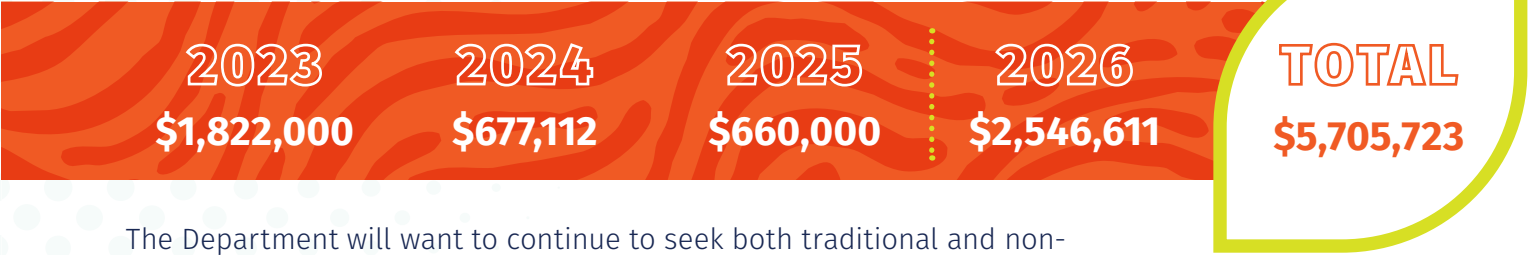
Sources of Operating Expenditures (average distribution)	NRPA Average
General Fund/Appropriations	63%
Earned Revenue	20%
Special Taxes/Levies (voter approved)	8%
Special Taxes/Levies (non-voter approved)	4%
Other	3%
Operating Grants from Public Agency	2%
Sponsors, In-Kind Donations, Private Operations Grants/Donate	1%



The City reports the following levels of self supporting by revenue-generating area (2025 Actuals):

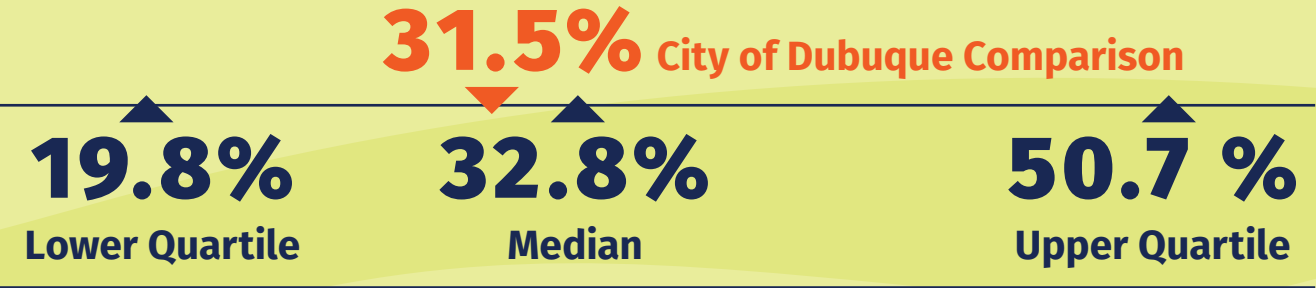
Category	Expense	Revenue	Cost Recovery
Parks	\$4,726,519	\$814,381	17.3%
Recreation	\$4,034,637	\$1,946,559	48.3%
Total	\$8,761,156	\$2,760,940	31.5%

The City has a Capital Improvement Plan and requests are made annually as part of the budget process.  
The following are their department-specific fiscal allocations:



The Department will want to continue to seek both traditional and non-traditional avenues and likely increase the dollars that are spent annually.

As a point of comparison, the NPRA offers the following department-wide revenue as a percentage of operating expenditure.

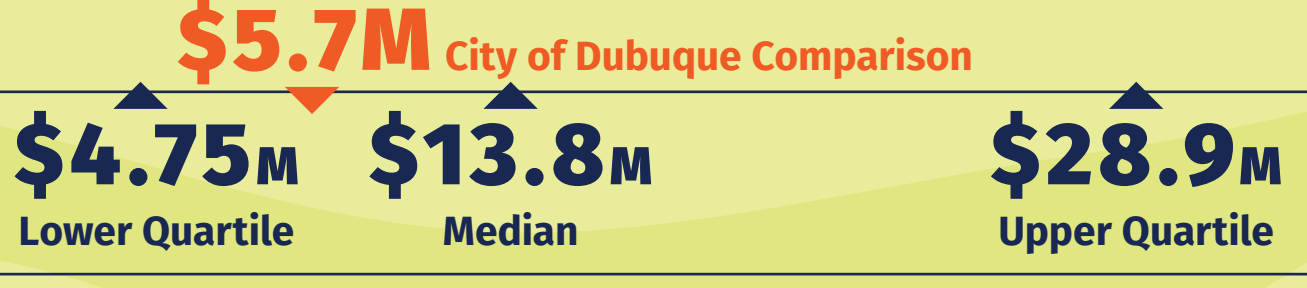


Department-Wide Revenue Percentage of Operating Expenditure with a 50,000-99,999 Population

**Interpretation:** This indicates that the cost recovery for the City is slightly above the lower quartile. Given the median income level in the City, it is not surprising that there is a lower cost recovery level.

The Department currently does not have a cost recovery goal or policy. The project team would strongly recommend that the Department formalize their cost recovery goals by program category, and further develop some processes for developing new programs, and eliminate under-performing programs.

As a point of comparison, the NPRA offers the following 5-year capital budget spending for similar sized agencies.



5-Year Capital Budget Spending for a 50,000-99,999 Population

The chart above suggests what the City should be spending on a 5-year average based on the size of their community.



# Level of Service

The Department currently manages the following inventory:

53	Parks (1,246 acres)
31	Park Shelters
22	Restroom Buildings
4	Accessible Fishing Piers
13,000	Street Trees
45	Miles of On-/Off-Street Trails
1,000	Picnic Tables
15	Tennis Courts
9	Pickleball Courts
6	Volleyball/Pickleball Overlay Courts
3	Skate Parks
1	Pet Park
288	Units of Play Equipment
1	Disc Golf Course
1	In-Line Hockey Rink
10	Softball Fields
1	All-Inclusive Baseball Field
1	Baseball Field
7	Basketball Courts
8	Half Basketball Courts
1	Splash Pad
2	Amphitheaters
17	Horseshoe Pits



The following page uses data from the NRPA and provides an estimate of the number of amenities needed based on the city’s population.

Outdoor Parks and Recreation Facilities	% of Agencies	50,000 to 99,999	City of Dubuque
Playgrounds	94.0%	3,643	16.4
Basketball Courts - Standalone	85.0%	8,447	7.1
Diamond Fields	80.0%	4,560	13.1
Rectangular Fields	77.0%	4,659	12.8
Tennis Courts - Standalone	74.0%	5,818	10.3
Dog Park	70.0%	55,250	1.1
Community Garden Plots	54.0%	56,367	1.1
Swimming Pools	49.0%	48,064	1.2
Skate Parks	47.0%	61,384	1.0
Pickleball Courts - Standalone	45.0%	8,592	7.0
Volleyball Courts - Standalone	51.0%	29,214	2.0
Fitness Zones	39.0%	32,500	1.8
Multi-Use Courts	38.0%	25,512	2.3
Splash Pads	38.0%	51,000	1.2
Multi-Use Racquet Courts	38.0%	13,339	4.5
Walking/Running Tracks	36.0%	19,700	3.0
Disc Golf Courses	35.0%	56,150	1.1
Driving Range Stations	31.0%	7,774	7.7
18-Hole Golf Courses	31.0%	62,756	1.0
Synthetic Fields	17.0%	33,799	1.8
Ice Rinks	17.0%	28,500	2.1
9-Hole Golf Courses	16.0%	64,937	0.9
Overlay Fields	15.0%	25,500	2.3
Water Parks	12.0%	64,304	0.9
Racquetball/Handball/Squash Courts	9.0%	70,796	0.8

**Sample Interpretation:** 38.0% of agencies submitting data to the NRPA offer splash pads to their communities and it is estimated that in communities with a population of 50,000 to 99,999, one splash pad serves the needs of 51,000 individuals. Subsequently, Dubuque, with its 2025 estimated population of 59,818 would support 1.2 splash pads.

The Department does not currently operate any of the standalone indoor facilities outlined in the following chart.

Indoor Parks and Recreation Facilities	% of Agencies	50,000 to 99,999	City of Dubuque
Multi-Use Courts	29.0%	24,000	2.5
Competitive Swimming Pools	23.0%	64,000	0.9
Basketball Courts - Single Sport	21.0%	25,598	2.3
Leisure Pools	20.0%	63,418	0.9
Walking/Running Tracks	18.0%	63,671	0.9
Pickleball Courts - Single Sport	17.0%	14,818	4.0
Multi-Use Racquet Courts	15.0%	15,015	4.0
Therapeutic Pools	13.0%	63,610	0.9
Racquetball/Handball/Squash Courts	10.0%	40,708	1.5
Tennis Courts - Single Sport	5.0%	10,428	5.7

The City does have permanent restrooms, amphitheaters, and an ice rink (managed via contract).

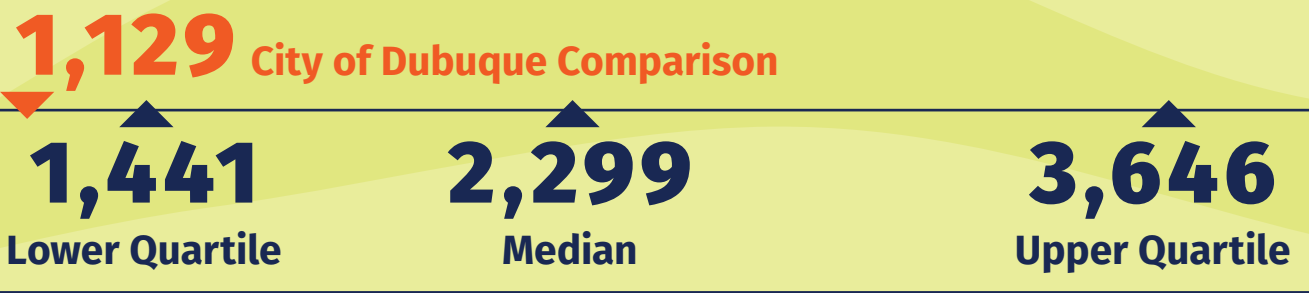
Indoor Parks and Recreation Facilities and Amenities	% of Agencies	50,000 to 99,999	City of Dubuque
Recreation Centers (including gyms)	63.0%	31,805	1.9
Community Centers	60.0%	50,284	1.2
Permanent & Semipermanent Restrooms	52.0%	5,521	10.8
Performance Amphitheaters	43.0%	60,594	1.0
Senior Centers	41.0%	64,937	0.9
Nature Centers	35.0%	64,672	0.9
Aquatic Centers	30.0%	60,770	1.0
Facilities with Restrooms Available Free to Use to Public Not Included Above	27.0%	14,282	4.2
Stadiums	19.0%	62,575	1.0
Indoor Ice Rinks	12.0%	51,896	1.2
Teen Centers	11.0%	59,694	1.0
Arenas	9.0%	59,630	1.0

While there is a YMCA in the community, the data would suggest that the City could support an indoor facility that could fall into the categories of recreation center, community center, or fieldhouse. The reality is that without an indoor facility of that nature, it will be very difficult for the Department to expand their program offerings.





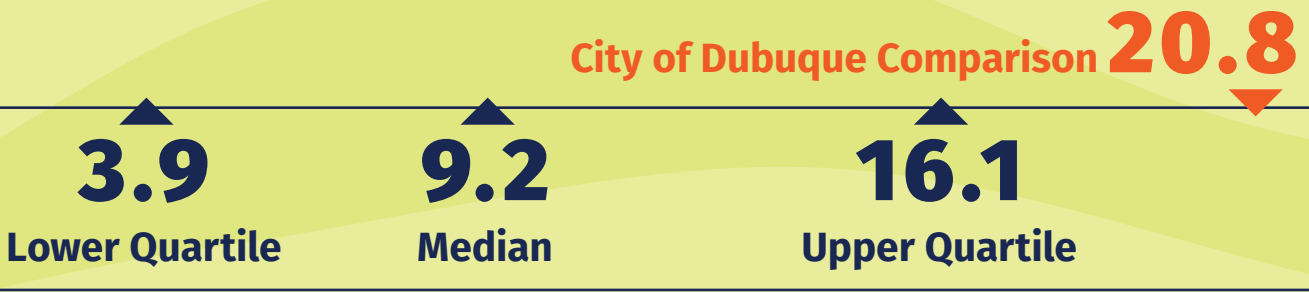
Using the total of 53 parks, and a projected 2025 population of 59,818, the following comparison can be made.



Resident per Park Comparison with a 50,000-99,999 Population

**Interpretation:** The number of City parks and subsequent population per park places the City below the median and the lower quartile. However, this interpretation can be deceiving as a lower number is a positive attribute in this case, meaning that there is an abundance of park land in comparison to the population.

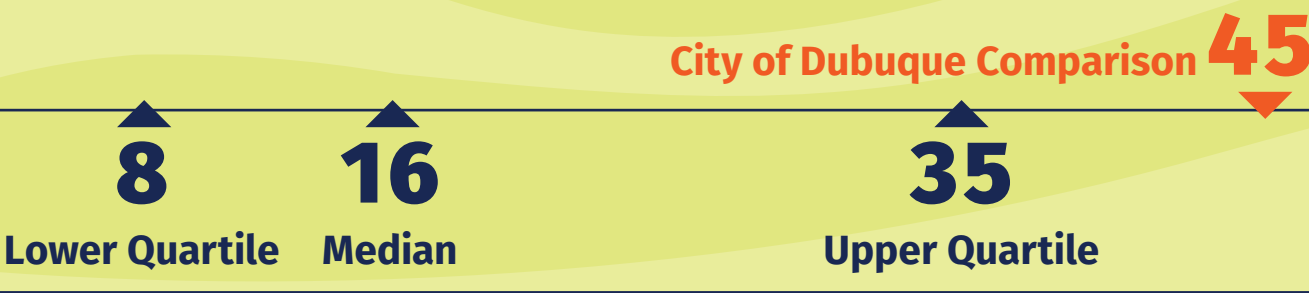
Using a total of 1,246 acres and a projected 2025 population of 59,818, the following comparison can be made.



Acres of Parkland Comparison with a 50,000-99,999 Population

**Interpretation:** This would indicate that City is well above the median and the upper quartile.

Using a total of 45 miles of trails and a projected 2025 population of 59,818, the following comparison can be made.



Miles of Trails Comparison with a 50,000-99,999 Population

**Interpretation:** This data would suggest that the City is well above the median and the upper quartile in terms of miles of trails in their inventory.

This would indicate to the consulting team that funding associated with maintenance of this amenity should also be higher than most.

The following table reports responsibilities of park and recreation agencies based on data from the NRPA. This information can be compared to what the City currently does.

Amenity	Percent of Agencies	Amenity	Percent of Agencies
Park Sites	98.0%	Tourism Attractions	40.0%
Recreation Programming and Services	93.0%	Golf Course	38.0%
Indoor Facilities	93.0%	Large Performance Outdoor Amphitheaters	35.0%
Trails, Greenways, and/or Blueways	88.0%	Indoor Swim Facilities/Water Parks	32.0%
Jurisdiction-Wide Special Events	82.0%	Beaches (all waterbody types)	27.0%
Racquet Sport Activities/Courts/Facilities	80.0%	Farmers Markets	22.0%
Special Purpose Parks and Open Spaces	76.0%	Campgrounds	22.0%
Non-Park Sites	70.0%	Tournament/Event-Quality Indoor Sports Complexes	21.0%
Outdoor Swim Facilities/Water Parks	67.0%	Indoor Performing Arts Centers	19.0%
Tournament/Event-Quality Outdoor Sports Complexes	56.0%	Marinas	13.0%
Community Gardens	50.0%	Professional or College-Type Stadium/Arena/Racetrack	10.0%
		Fairgrounds	6.0%



## Plan Recommendations





Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
<b>Parks</b>								
<b>System Wide</b>			<b>System Wide</b>					
Introduce prairie in strategic areas throughout the parks system where native	Short							
Partner with City Police to implement proactive measures and safety infrastructure to increase park safety	Short							
Provide interpretive signage with all prairie establishment within parks to educate users on the natural environment	Short							
Conduct a systemwide parks and recreation lighting assessment to strategically prioritize LED lighting replacement	Short							
Explore opportunities to co-steward public lands with tribes who at one time called Dubuque home	Short							
Conduct a systemwide parks and recreation signage master plan and begin implementing updated signage as part of asset management replacement plan	Short							
Provide more fishing opportunities and accessible fishing areas	Mid							
Improve accessibility of the greenhouse to open it to the public for educational purposes	Long							
Generally focus investment on planning and further amenitizing regional and community parks. Based on site conditions like topography, some neighborhood parks may evolve to offer only passive recreation opportunities.	Long							
<b>Eagle Point Park</b>			<b>Eagle Point Park</b>					
Create a site-specific master plan for Eagle Point Park	Short							
Reclassify Eagle Point Park to a regional Park	Short							
Create a dedicated "Friends of Eagle Point Park" group to assist in park advocacy, volunteer coordination, and fundraising	Short							
Create a dedicated funding source for Eagle Point Regional Park improvements	Mid							
Explore partnerships for concessionaire at Eagle Point Park	Mid							
Study Feasibility of Winter Holiday Experience Event at Eagle Point Park	Mid							
Create trail loops within Eagle Point Park	Mid							
Create a bike and surrey rental program at Eagle Point Park	Mid							
Introduce camping event opportunities at Eagle Point Park	Mid							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
<b>Allison-Henderson Park</b>			<b>Allison-Henderson Park</b>					
Repair cracked sidewalks	Short							
Add edging around sand playground pit and ensure ADA access to playground	Short							
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short							
Replace worn/rusted playground equipment that is becoming safety hazard	Short							
Re-stripe rink surface	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to playground elements and hockey rink (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Add concrete pads at benches, picnic tables, BBQs, and other areas that would benefit from being accessible	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
<b>Avon Park</b>			<b>Avon Park</b>					
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, and picnic tables where necessary	Mid							
Repair basketball court asphalt surface and re-stripe	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
<b>A.Y. McDonald Park</b>			<b>A.Y. McDonald Park</b>					
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, and picnic tables where necessary	Short							
Connect walkways to amenities and assets, including benches and picnic tables (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground equipment	Long							
<b>Bee Branch Greenway</b>			<b>Bee Branch Greenway</b>					
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, and picnic tables where necessary	Short							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Burden Park			Burden Park					
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, and picnic tables where necessary	Short							
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Cancer Survivor Park			Cancer Survivor Park					
Fix rusting lighting	Short							
Add edger around playground and ensure proper wood fiber play surfacing depth for safety	Short							
Create accessible route to pavilion and make necessary updates to aging structure	Mid							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities (ADA compliant wherever possible) and ensure ADA access at playground	Mid							
Add level pads under picnic tables to make them accessible	Mid							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Center Grove Open Space			Center Grove Open Space					
Consider adding parking and an entrance with signage and information. Many people would not assume that this was accessible land by the public	Short							
Add amenities such as seating, pathways, and trash cans	Short							
Add trails that would connect to Medical Associates Greenbelt and Welu Park for a more complete trails network/walking loop	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Cleveland Park			Cleveland Park					
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short							
Repair and replace rusted/damaged assets	Short							
Repair or replace rusted playground elements that could become a safety hazard	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Ensure ADA access at playground	Mid							
Add concrete pad around BBQ and picnic table for accessibility	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Comiskey Park			Comiskey Park					
Create ongoing maintenance and ranger/visitation schedule to improve safety and cut down on vandalism	Short							
Fix parking lot cracking	Short							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Creek Wood Park			Creek Wood Park					
Add signage with parking instructions	Short							
Eagle Point Park			Eagle Point Park					
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, BBQs, drinking fountains, and picnic tables where necessary	Short							
Repair/replace rusted play equipment and swings that could become a hazard	Short							
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short							
Add edging around sand playground area	Short							
Repair sidewalk cracking and trip hazards where needed	Short							
Continue prairie restoration and reforestation efforts throughout park, as well as eradication of invasive species	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Add concrete pad around key BBQs and picnic table for accessibility	Mid							
Ensure ADA access at playgrounds	Mid							
Repair/resurface parking areas where needed (cracking, potholes)	Mid							
Add educational signage about history, ecological restoration, and habitat	Mid							
Add mapping and wayfinding signage throughout park	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Refinish tennis courts	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Update chain link fencing to more aesthetic, lower-height safety view fencing at overlook areas	Long							
Continue high-level preservation efforts, including funding and maintenance planning	Long							
Examine and implement green infrastructure techniques where feasible to positively impact effects of flow and infiltration of water	Long							
Create more dynamic splash pad	Long							
Modernize lighting throughout	Long							
<b>Eagle Valley Park</b>			<b>Eagle Valley Park</b>					
Add signage with parking instructions	Short							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
<b>Elmwood Green Park</b>			<b>Elmwood Green Park</b>					
No signage, amenities, or parking exist here; examine whether to re-classify this space or add seating and other assets	Short							
<b>English Ridge Park</b>			<b>English Ridge Park</b>					
Add signage with parking information	Short							
<b>Falk Park</b>			<b>Falk Park</b>					
Repair/replace rusted play equipment and swings that could become a hazard	Short							
Add signage with parking information	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Modernize lighting	Long							
<b>Flat Iron Park</b>			<b>Flat Iron Park</b>					
Repair/replace rusted play equipment that could become a hazard	Short							
Add signage with parking information	Short							
Ensure ADA access to playground area	Mid							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Flora Park			Flora Park					
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, BBQs, drinking fountains, and picnic tables where necessary	Short							
Repair skate park cracking	Short							
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short							
Repair/replace rusted play equipment that could become a hazard	Short							
Add handrails where needed at stairs/steps	Short							
Address asphalt potholes, cracking, etc. within parking lot and interior drives	Mid							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible) and create walking loops	Mid							
Re-grade and resurface tennis courts	Mid							
Resurface baseball/softball fields	Mid							
Ensure ADA access to playground and improve sand/playground mulch separation	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Modernize lighting throughout	Long							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add new maintenance yard, building, and restroom	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Consider adding dog park	Long							
Four Mounds Park			Four Mounds Park					
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Gay Park			Gay Park					
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short							
Repair/replace rusted play equipment that could become a hazard	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Ensure ADA access to playground	Mid							
Resurface ball field	Mid							
Repair/replace playground equipment with wear	Mid							
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Grandview Green Space			Grandview Green Space					
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Grant Park			Grant Park					
No signage, amenities, or parking exist here; examine whether to re-classify this space or add seating and other assets	Short							
Granger Creek Nature Trail			Granger Creek Nature Trail					
Consider adding parking and an entrance with signage and information. Many people would not assume that this was accessible land by the public	Mid							
Add amenities such as seating, pathways, and trash cans	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Ham House Historic Site			Ham House Historic Site					
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Continue historic preservation efforts including funding and maintenance	Long							
Harvest View Park			Harvest View Park					
Add playground edging/curbing and ensure ADA access into playground	Short							
Add sign with parking information	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Repair/replace playground platforms that are beginning to peel/rust	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Hillcrest Park			Hillcrest Park					
Repair/replace rusted play equipment and swings that are becoming a hazard	Short							
Add edging around playground areas	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Resurface/re-stripe parking lot	Mid							
Add concrete pad with BBQ and picnic table for accessibility	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
<b>Hilltop Park</b>			<b>Hilltop Park</b>					
Add signage with parking information	Short							
Add edging around playground areas	Short							
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short							
Repair/replace rusted playground equipment and swings that are becoming a hazard	Short							
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Add level concrete pads at BBQ, benches, and picnic tables for accessibility	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
<b>Jackson Park</b>			<b>Jackson Park</b>					
Repair/replace rusted playground equipment and swings that are becoming a hazard	Short							
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short							
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, BBQs, drinking fountains, and picnic tables where necessary	Short							
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid							
Replace faded/scratched playground equipment	Mid							
Connect all assets and amenities to sidewalks (bench, picnic table, and BBQ pads, etc.)	Mid							
Community garden beds mostly empty; consider an alternate plan for these or make more of a feature (and accessible)	Mid							
Repair fountain or make it a planter/other feature	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
<b>Jefferson Park</b>			<b>Jefferson Park</b>					
Repair/replace rusted playground equipment and swings that are becoming a hazard	Short							
Add signage with parking information	Short							
Create border between play fiber and sand play areas and around whole playground, and ensure ADA access into playground	Short							
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Ensure ADA access to park	Mid							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
John G Bergfeld Recreation Area			John G Bergfeld Recreation Area					
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short							
Repair sidewalk cracking	Short							
Paint/repair wood that is chipping/flaking on pavilion	Short							
Repair asphalt cracking and spalling in parking lot	Mid							
Replace/repair play elements that are starting to rust	Mid							
Replace rusting/warping amenities/assets over time	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Investigate flow of water that is moving through area with benches	Long							
Madison Park			Madison Park					
Repair/replace rusted playground equipment that are becoming a hazard	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Repair/paint aesthetically damaged play equipment	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Restore and repair pavilion, including stairs, posts, and roof	Long							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Marna Ridge Children's Forest			Marna Ridge Children's Forest					
Consider adding a clear entrance with signage and parking information. Many people would not assume that this was accessible land by the public	Short							
Add amenities such as seating, pathways, and trash cans	Short							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Marshall Park/Dubuque Arboretum and Botanical Garden			Marshall Park/Dubuque Arboretum and Botanical Garden					
Add playground rules/safety signage	Short							
Install header curb around playgrounds and keep sand and fiber separate. Ensure ADA access into playgrounds	Short							
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short							
Add shade over playground areas	Long							
Maus Park			Maus Park					
Master plan how to make this park more friendly to the public. For example, it needs parking, clear signage, lighting, seating, and other amenities to make it into a usable park that feels safe.	Short							
McAleece Park and Recreation Complex			McAleece Park and Recreation Complex					
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, BBQs, fencing, drinking fountains, and other assets where necessary	Short							
Fix or replace netting to protect spectators from foul balls	Short							
Replace rusted playground equipment that could become a hazard	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible), including all benches and bleachers	Mid							
Fix cracking, spalling, erosion, and potholes in asphalt driveways and walkways	Mid							
Resurface areas around baseball complex to fix water ponding, uneven surfaces, cracking, and accessibility issues	Mid							
Add edging around playground area and ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Mid							
Replace worn amenities and assets	Mid							
Make sure the concessions building is ADA accessible	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Medical Associates Greenbelt			Medical Associates Greenbelt					
Consider adding parking and an entrance with signage and information. Many people would not assume that this was accessible land by the public	Short							
Add amenities such as seating, pathways, and trash cans	Short							
Add trails that would connect to Welu Park and Center Grove Open Space for a more complete trails network/walking loop	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Miller Riverview Park			Miller Riverview Park					
Repair/replace rusted playground equipment and swings that are becoming a hazard	Short							
Add edging around playground areas and ensure ADA access into playground	Short							
When listing pavilions as accessible, make sure picnic tables are ADA friendly	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Create/modify sites to include more ADA-compliant camping spots	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Modernize lighting	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Murphy Park			Murphy Park					
Replace edging around playground area	Short							
Replace rusted BBQ grills, benches, trash cans, and picnic tables that are becoming safety hazards	Short							
Replace rusted play equipment that is becoming a hazard	Short							
Repair tennis court lighting	Short							
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Add accessible routes to buildings and pavilions	Mid							
Ensure ADA access into playgrounds	Mid							
Repair/refinish tennis courts	Mid							
Add accessible concrete pads under picnic tables, benches, and BBQs	Mid							
Repair cracking/spalling on interior drives	Mid							
Replace aging/faded playground equipment	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Modernize lighting	Long							
Update restroom building near tennis courts	Long							
Oakwood Park			Oakwood Park					
No signage, amenities, or parking exist here; examine whether to re-classify this space or add seating and other assets	Short							
Orange Park			Orange Park					
Replace rusting benches that are a hazard	Short							
Ensure wood fiber surfacing in playgrounds meets safe depth requirements; current levels are inadequate, and edging may need to be raised.	Short							
Replace rusting play equipment that is becoming a hazard	Short							
Ensure ADA access into playground	Short							
Connect pathways to bench pads, drinking fountain pads, etc. so that they are accessible	Mid							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Replace worn play equipment	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Pet Park			Pet Park					
Add concrete pads beneath picnic tables and benches so that they are accessible	Mid							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Pinard Park			Pinard Park					
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short							
Ensure ADA access into playground	Short							
Repair/replace rusting play surfaces that could become a hazard	Short							
Add signage with parking information	Short							
Replace worn playground equipment	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Riley Park			Riley Park					
Add signage with parking information	Short							
Replace rusted caps on fencing	Short							
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short							
Replace rusted playground equipment that could become a hazard	Short							
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Replace worn playground equipment	Mid							
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Rocco Buda Jr. Park			Rocco Buda Jr. Park					
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short							
Replace rusted playground equipment that could become a hazard	Short							
Add signage with parking information	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid							
Add concrete pads under benches to make them accessible	Mid							
Replace worn playground equipment	Mid							
Revitalize pavilion	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Rustic Point Park			Rustic Point Park					
This park was still in development/construction during the time of site visits and evaluation	Short							
Sister City International Park			Sister City International Park					
Connect bench pads to walkway for accessibility	Mid							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Replace benches that are rusting and will become a hazard	Mid							
Replace rusting trash cans and signage posts	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Southern Park			Southern Park					
Add playground edging	Short							
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid							
Add a bench/seating	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Teddy Bear Park			Teddy Bear Park					
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground and remove turf growing within it	Short							
Replace rusting playground equipment that is becoming a hazard	Short							
Add edging around sand play area and remove grass growing within it	Short							
Ensure ADA access into playgrounds	Short							
Add signage with parking information	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid							
Replace worn/faded playground equipment	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Usha Park			Usha Park					
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short							
Replace playground equipment that is rusted or damaged, impacting safety and usability	Short							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid							
Replace worn/faded playground equipment	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Add bleachers to make cricket field more of a destination	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Valentine Park			Valentine Park					
Resurface asphalt walking trail	Short							
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playground	Short							
Replace rusted playground elements that could become a hazard	Short							
Fix tipping/damaged fencing at baseball field that is a hazard	Short							
Remove turf growing into baseball dugouts and diamond	Short							
Fix dugout benches sinking into earth; consider a concrete pad	Short							
Fix upheaving/tipping basketball hoops	Short							
Resurface parking lot	Mid							
Resurface basketball courts	Mid							
Connect playground to sidewalk for accessibility, and ensure ADA ramp access into it	Mid							
Add seating around basketball courts and playground areas	Mid							
Replace worn/damaged playground elements	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Consider baseball field improvements: refreshed diamond surfacing, new pitcher's mound, paved dugouts, foul poles, distance markers, yellow capping on fencing, new benches and bat holders, etc.	Long							
Further develop community garden	Long							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
<b>Valley High Park</b>			<b>Valley High Park</b>					
Add edging around playground areas	Short							
Replace rusted play equipment that is becoming a hazard	Short							
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid							
Replace worn/faded playground equipment	Mid							
Add concrete pads at benches for accessibility	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
<b>Veterans' Memorial Park</b>			<b>Veterans' Memorial Park</b>					
Replace ripped safety netting at Miracle League Field	Short							
Replace missing edging around playground areas	Short							
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short							
Replace rusted playground equipment that is becoming a hazard and broken pieces	Short							
Repair parking lot potholes	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Replace faded/worn playground equipment	Mid							
Add pads under picnic tables and benches to make them accessible	Mid							
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
<b>Waller-Cooper Park</b>			<b>Waller-Cooper Park</b>					
Ensure proper depth of wood fiber safety surfacing in playgrounds	Short							
Fix tipping bench	Short							
Add sidewalk routes to all amenities and assets (ADA compliant wherever possible)	Mid							
Replace faded/worn playground equipment	Mid							



Park/Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Add pads under picnic tables, BBQs, and benches to make them accessible	Mid							
Ensure ADA access into playground	Mid							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Mid							
Update basketball court to true half-court dimensions with smooth surface and striping	Mid							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Washington Park			Washington Park					
Replace rusting benches and trash cans that could become a hazard	Short							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Welu Park			Welu Park					
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Westbrook Park			Westbrook Park					
Add shade over playground elements	Long							



Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
<b>Recreation</b>								
<b>Aquatics</b>			<b>Aquatics</b>					
Master Plan for new recreation facility and aquatics facility	Short							
Repair rusted pool equipment and lighting	Short							
Repair pool surfacing and deeper cracks	Short							
Repair water slide hazards	Short							
Provide further screening at Flora and Sutton Pools via screen wall and/or landscape buffer	Short							
Repair water slide issues	Short							
Repair leaks/rusting equipment/surface cracking	Short							
Master Plan for new recreation facility and aquatics facility	Short							
Provide further screening at Flora and Sutton Pools via screen wall and/or landscape buffer	Short							
Develop a plan to add shade to the pool decks at Flora and Sutton Pools. Existing shade is sparse and in pool condition	Mid							
Modernize restroom/shower facilities	Long							
Resurface parking lot	Long							
Modernize lighting throughout	Long							
Add shade over playground elements	Long							
Create a new recreation facility	Long							
Revitalize or create a new outdoor aquatic facility	Long							
Modernize concessions building and changing/shower rooms at pool	Long							
Create a new recreation facility	Long							
Revitalize or create a new outdoor aquatic facility	Long							
Implement standard signage at all parks	Long							
<b>Golf Course</b>			<b>Golf Course</b>					
Replace rusted bike racks, trash receptacles, and picnic tables where necessary	Short							
Examine opportunities to remove turf and restore/re-vegetate with native plants	Short							
Conduct a business plan to further develop F&B program	Short							
Expand program offerings at Bunker Hill Golf Course	Short							



Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Refinish/repair parking lot (cracking, potholes)	Mid							
Refinish/repair asphalt cart path (cracking, erosion)	Mid							
Develop a driving range at Bunker Hill Golf Course	Long							
Partner with user groups to create a classroom building and hitting bay at driving range	Long							
<b>Marina</b>			<b>Marina</b>					
Create website with ordering mechanism for marina convenience store	Short							
Paint floodwall to advertise marina/gas/store	Short							
Host one annual event at the marina	Short							
Marketing campaign for marina and available seasonal slip spaces	Short							
Patrol restrooms/lock restroom after hours to ensure safety and positive user experience	Short							
Create dedicated branding and a website for the marina with a dedicated reservations system	Short							
Partner with restaurant to put on a regular summer event series	Short							
Work with Public Safety to evaluate feasibility of boat ramp near marina	Mid							
Further activate the marina by adding a boat ramp	Mid							
Reconfigure existing parking to support boat ramp parking	Mid							
Partner with Travel Dubuque to create welcome center hub at store for cruiseline visitors	Mid							
Amenitize seasonal slips with options like covers and boat lifts	Mid							
Enhance connection between marina store and Riverfront Path	Mid							
As agreement allows, make maximum slips available for seasonal rental	Mid							
Create dedicated areas for accessible fishing	Mid							
Create program for marina boating in-and-out service	Long							
<b>Programming</b>			<b>Programming</b>					
Explore partnerships with County and US Fish and Wildlife options for increased environmental education opportunities	Short							
Expand program offerings to include more youth sports league offerings	Short							
Conduct a fee study to determine competitive and accessible program fees	Short							
Discuss with youth soccer groups the possibility of using outfields as small soccer fields for introductory programs, specifically in the fall.	Short							



Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
The clubhouse is inadequate for the number of rounds played annually and is reaching the end of its useful lifecycle. The City will need to make a choice between significant reinvestment in the existing structure, including expansion, and contrast that will new construction.	Short							
Expand program offerings to include more special interest classes	Mid							
Provide additional recreation programming at the existing Flora Schoolhouse site	Mid							
Expand adaptive recreation programs for all ages	Mid							
Partner with senior services providers to expand senior program offerings	Mid							
Start a formal special events program	Mid							
Expand upon current senior programming partnership with Hills & Dales Lifetime Center	Mid							
Create dedicated indoor space to support increased programming	Long							
Discuss with youth soccer groups the possibility of using outfields as small soccer fields for introductory programs, specifically in the fall.	Long							
<b>Trails and Connectivity</b>								
Extend Heritage Trail connectivity	Short							
Add exercise stations along urban trails	Short							
As part of the master plan, evaluate existing trail conditions for all trails, including surface conditions, signage locations and quality, and existing amenities.	Short							
Construct a trail extension south from Bee Branch at the solar field (funding already exists).	Short							
Develop a comprehensive citywide trails master plan to further evaluate trail connections and gaps, maintenance standards, and identification of grant opportunities with a dedicated matching funding source in order to develop a connected trail network.	Short							
Develop an asset management platform utilizing the City's robust GIS database.	Short							
Add trees and landscape beautification along the NW Arterial Trail.	Short							
Develop/update a trail map that can be used by residents and visitors alike and has paper and digital versions.	Short							
Implement urgent maintenance solutions needed at Southern Levee Trail and Miller Riverview Trail to improve usability.	Short							
Perform a signage inventory and analysis (including places like Bergfeld Trail parking lot and Granger Creek Trail that currently don't have signage, but need it) and create a plan for consistent sign types, sizes, and messaging.	Short							
Establish a trail connection between Eagle Point Park and Four Mounds	Mid							
Further riverwalk connections	Mid							



Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Link new trails to existing trails to fill in gaps within the existing trail system and develop a comprehensive trail and pathway network.	Mid							
Create a trail connection from city to landmarks like Mines of Spain	Mid							
Link the multi-use trail network to key access points utilizing the existing bicycle lanes, road diets and proposed multi-modal network improvements as developed in the Dubuque Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan.	Mid							
Connect residents and tourists to points of interests throughout the city.	Mid							
Include interactive features such as educational interpretive signage, fitness stations and art installations along the trail network.	Mid							
Conduct a citywide ADA assessment to ensure trail access points and points of connection are ADA compliant.	Mid							
Update the existing trailhead map kiosks at all locations around the community (15 signs).	Mid							
Replace existing bike route signs with MUTCD standard bike route signs.	Mid							
Conduct an alignment study update for a Catfish Creek multi-use path	Long							
Build a multi-use path along Catfish Creek	Long							
Develop a connected park system through multi-use trail network. A connected park system includes developing a looped pathway system that provide multi-modal/ walkable access to the city's park system.	Long							
Develop a looped trail that closes the southeast and west gaps between the Heritage Trail, Bee Branch, Northwest Arterial and Bergfeld Trail.	Long							
Continue to evaluate trail crossings with surface streets to develop safe at grade crossings as per the ECIA's Dubuque Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan.	Long							
Develop rest areas/trailheads with seating, shade and water fountains.	Long							
Design for universal access (pedestrians, hikers, and biker users).	On-Going							
Continue to maintain the City's robust park and trail GIS database and mapping.	On-Going							
<b>Open Space and Natural Resources</b>								
Adopt and regularly update a comprehensive tree program that invests heavily in new tree plantings and existing tree maintenance and addresses invasive plant species	Short							
Urban Forestry staff to take part in the Iowa Arborist Association to provide staff with opportunities for continuing education and safety trainings	Short							
Hold monthly or bi-monthly safety trainings on operations best practices and equipment regularly used	Short							
Improve Maus Park for wildlife habitat and low-impact uses	Mid							



Recommendation	Term		City of Dubuque Task Lead(s)	City of Dubuque Departments Involved	External Partners/ Stakeholders	Start Date	End Date	Project Status/ Notes
Educate and assist citizens in order to establish more Mowing to Monarchs pocket prairies within the City	Mid							
Have all or strategic staff members become cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certified	Mid							
Partner with public safety on a plan for aerial rescues	Mid							
Survey all existing trees within city-maintained areas for a thorough inventory of assets along with a lifecycle replacement program	Mid							
Create and implement a preventative maintenance schedule for all city-maintained open spaces								
Create and implement a workload tracker that allows maintenance staff, forestry staff, and staff with related skill sets to balance work and intentionally implement large scale projects.	Mid							
Create and implement a regular communication plan to help staff execute workload balancing and intentionally broaden on-the-job training opportunities and skill set development.	Mid							
<b>Implementation</b>								
Create and maintain a parks infrastructure asset replacement plan	Short							
Implement a formal volunteer program	Short							
Partner with ImOn Arena to study feasibility of second sheet of ice to better accommodate programming demand.	Short							
Dedicate resources to coordinate volunteer programs	Short							
Dedicate resources to a parks and recreation-dedicated communications professional that will assist in marketing parks events, programs, and venues	Short							
Communicate the importance of strong partnerships that exist within the city and provide funding for diverse recreation opportunities	Short							
Further partnership with Travel Dubuque and tourism agencies to educate visitors on parks and recreation offerings	Short							
Identify dedicated staffing to support partnerships and third-party operated civic centers	Short							
Implement a formal park ranger program	Mid							
Identify partnerships to begin a "Friends of" parks group to assist in park advocacy, volunteer coordination, and fundraising	Mid							
Dedicate resources to coordinate special events	Mid							
Track ecosystem asset mapping as part of GIS mapping maintenance in key parks and open spaces	Long							





THE CITY OF  
**DUBUQUE**  
*Masterpiece on the Mississippi*