

## Section 5

# POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Information gathered during the inventory phase and insight gained during needs assessment phase were used to develop the following policy recommendations, which in-turn helped guide development of the Parks and Trails Master Plan presented in Section 6 of this report. Used together, the policy recommendations and Master Plan are intended to help Grinnell improve and maintain its park and recreation system well into the future.

Six categories of park policies are presented:

- Park Uses and Amenities, including location, facilities, and access
- Park Acquisition
- Open Spaces and Natural Areas
- Land Stewardship
- Maintenance Guidelines
- Park Development Costs

## PARK USES AND AMENITIES POLICIES

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### Park Location

- 1.1 Parks should be distributed geographically, so all residents have reasonable access to a park and recreation facility.
- 1.2 Parks need to provide a sense of openness and accessibility to present a public, safe, and secure impression.
- 1.3 Parks should not be "hidden" from the street behind residential or other property with only a narrow opening to adjacent streets. Neighborhood parks should have full frontage on at least one street; community parks and sports complexes should have full frontage on at least two streets. All parks should be accessible from more than one side.
- 1.4 Trails should connect parks, natural areas, schools, other civic buildings, and residential areas. Off-street trails are preferred to on-street trails.
- 1.5 When selecting locations for new parks, sites with natural, unique, or unusual features should have a higher priority for acquisition over other acceptable sites where those assets do no exist.
- 1.6 The City should enter into joint use agreements with the school district to use school sites to fill in gaps in existing and future neighborhood park service areas
- 1.7 The City should enter into joint use agreements with the school district and Grinnell College to allow general public access to recreation fields and courts when not in use by those entities.

### Park Facilities

- 2.1 The City should have sufficient park classifications to satisfy the different recreational needs of the community. The following classifications should be adopted for the types of park and recreation facilities to be managed by the City: Neighborhood Park,

Community Park, Special Use Facility, Natural Resource Area, Sports Complex, and Greenway/Trails.

2.2 Park and recreation facilities should follow a designated list of attributes as described in *Figure 5-1: Table of Park and Recreation Facility Attributes*, taken from the National Recreation and Park Association's *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*, p. 94.

Classification	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria	Level of Service: Acres per 1000
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	Basic unit of park system. Serves as recreational and social focus of neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	¼ to ½ mile distance. Uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	5 acres minimum. 5-10 acres optimal.	1.0 to 2.0 acres
<b>Community Park</b>	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by quality and suitability of site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods & ½ to 3 mi. distance.	Usually 30 to 50 acres.	5.0 to 8.0 acres
<b>Natural Resource Area</b>	Lands set aside to preserve significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual/ aesthetic buffering.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.	No NRPA Standard
<b>Greenway/ Trail</b>	Uses corridors such as waterways, railroads, utility, and parkways to tie parks together to form a cohesive system. Greenways can serve as locations for recreation trails.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable	No NRPA Standard
<b>Sports Complex</b>	Consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and support facilities to larger & fewer sites strategically located throughout community.	Strategically located community-wide facilities.	Usually minimum of 25 acres; 40 to 80 acres optimal	No NRPA Standard
<b>Special Use</b>	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use.	Variable -- dependent on specific use.	Variable	No NRPA Standard
<b>Private Park/ Recreation Facility</b>	Privately owned park and rec facilities that contribute to public park and rec system.	Variable -- dependent on specific use.	Variable	No NRPA Standard

Figure 5.1: Table of NRPA Park and Recreation Facility Attributes

2.3 Recreation facilities that are a basic requirement, optional component, or not appropriate for each park and recreation facility type are listed in *Figure 5-2: Table of Park and Recreation Facility Components*.

	Neighborhood Park	Community Park	Special Use Facility	Natural Resource Area	Sports Complex	Greenway/Trail
<b>Park and Recreation Facilities</b>						
Play Equipment	R	R	O	O	O	O
Open Play Area	R	R	O	O	O	O
Soccer Fields	O	O	O	NA	O	NA
Softball Fields	O	O	O	NA	O	NA
Baseball Fields	O	O	O	NA	O	NA
Paved Multi-Use Areas	R	R	O	NA	O	NA
Tennis Courts	O	O	O	NA	O	NA
Basketball Courts	O	O	O	NA	O	NA
Volleyball Courts	O	O	O	NA	O	NA
Multi-Purpose Trails	R	R	O	O	O	O
Picnic Facilities (shelters)	R	R	O	O	O	O
Special/Unique Features	R	R	O	R	R	O
Natural Areas	O	O	O	R	O	O
Trees/Shaded Areas	R	R	O	R	R	R
Special Use Facilities	O	O	R	O	O	O
Swimming Pool	NA	O	O	NA	O	NA
Aquatic Center	NA	O	O	NA	O	NA
Wading Pool	O	O	O	NA	NA	NA
Ice Skating Rink	O	O	O	NA	NA	NA
Amphitheater/Outdoor Gathering Area	O	O	O	NA	NA	O
Arboretum/Botanical Gardens	NA	O	O	O	O	O
Fine Arts Facility/Public Art Displays	NA	O	O	O	NA	O
Dog Park	NA	O	O	NA	NA	O
Horseshoes	O	O	O	NA	O	NA
Shuffleboard	O	O	O	NA	O	NA
Lawn Bowling	O	O	O	NA	O	NA
Disc/Frisbee Golf	O	O	O	O	O	O
Lacrosse/Football/Rugby Field	NA	O	O	NA	O	NA
Outdoor Exercise Circuit	O	O	O	NA	O	O
Skating Facility (in-line/skateboard)	O	O	O	NA	O	O
High-Risk Area	NA	O	O	NA	O	NA
Winter Park Facility	O	O	O	O	O	O
Golf Course	NA	O	O	NA	O	O
Youth Sports Complex	NA	O	O	NA	O	NA
Competitive Sports Facility	NA	O	O	NA	O	NA

Figure 5.2: Table of Park and Recreation Facility Components

- 2.4 New activities and facilities should be accommodated by the Department as they are warranted and as funds are available by the community.
- 2.5 Park support facilities should be provided according to the designations described in *Figure 5.3: Table of Park Support Facilities and Services*.

	Neighborhood Parks	Community Parks	Special Use Facilities	Natural Resource Areas	Sports Complexes	Greenways/ Trails
<b>Park and Recreation Support Facilities</b>						
Security Lighting	R	R	R	O	R	O/R*
Activity Lighting	O	R	O	O	R	NA
Public Telephones	O	R	R	O	R	O
Parking (off-street)	R	R	R	O	R	O/R*
Bike Racks	R	R	R	R	R	O/R*
Restrooms	R	R	O	O	R	O/R*
Drinking Fountains	R	R	R	O	R	O/R*
Benches	R	R	R	O	R	R
Picnic Tables	R	R	O	O	R	O
Signage (throughout system, continuity, at entrances)	R	R	R	R	R	R
Kiosks/Information Booths	NA	NA	O	O	O	O
Rental Facilities	NA	O	O	NA	O	O
ADA Accessibility	R	R	R	R	R	R
<b>Park and Recreation Support Services</b>						
Security **	R	R	R	R	R	R
Emergency Telephone Service	O	O	O	O	O	O
Reservations for Facility Use (shelters, group picnics, sports leagues, for-profit use)	R	R	R	R	R	NA
Activities/Facilities for Groups, Companies, Teams	NA	R	O	NA	R	O
Special Events (programs, concerts, fairs)	O	O	O	O	O	O
Facilities and Grounds Maintenance	R	R	R	R	R	R
<p>R - Required Facility/Service  O - Optional Facility/Service  NA - Not Appropriate  * Optional for Greenway, Required for Trail.  ** May include, but not limited to, police patrols, private security, neighborhood watches, park design to eliminate hidden places, and/or location markers on trail. The principles of CPTED, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, could also be explored. CPTED is defined by the National Crime Prevention Institute as "the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of a crime and an improved quality of life."  Note: This does not preclude the addition of other unlisted facilities and services as optional.</p>						

Figure 5.3: Table of Park Support Facilities and Services

- 2.6 Park support services should be provided according to the designations described in *Figure 5.3: Table of Park Support Facilities and Services*.
- 2.7 Existing park facilities should be improved to meet the recommendations wherever feasible. Existing parks should be "grandfathered" in where such improvements are not feasible. New parks should meet the recommendations.
- 2.8 Parks need to provide distinguishable entrances that promote easy access into the park. Entrances shall be enhanced with signage and/or landscaping and/or public art that is inviting to the public.

- 2.9 Park and recreation facilities must be ADA-compliant.
- 2.10 All parks should have a similar level of opportunity, while taking into consideration the specific site and users.
- 2.11 Active and passive uses should be suited to the park classification and structure of the particular park.
- 2.12 Uniqueness of each park shall be encouraged, while also providing a sense of community throughout the system. The identity and uniqueness of the park should be based on the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the site. The uniqueness could be exhibited through art, design, and/or facilities of the park.
- 2.13 When opportunities are available, natural areas should be provided that protect and preserve the resources. Activities should not disturb or degrade the resources, but should allow people access to the site. Natural areas should incorporate educational aspects, through the use of signs, markers, and programs. The City shall work with the schools and conservation/nature groups/organizations to determine locations and the specifics of outdoor classrooms and learning opportunities. Construction in these areas shall use low impact techniques.
- 2.14 Natural, unique, or unusual features or areas should be protected and preserved in existing parks and new sites acquired for park use.

### **Park Access**

- 3.1 Where possible, connect all parks and make them accessible to the entire community through the use of trails and greenways. In places where trails and greenways are not possible, tie parks together through the use of sidewalks.
- 3.2 Provide safe access to all parks through the use of crosswalks, signals, and/or traffic calming devices, where needed to cross busy streets.
- 3.3 Provide auto access (including off-street parking) to all parks except greenways.
- 3.4 Park entrances shall be open to ensure appropriate visibility.
- 3.5 Use directional signage along streets to show locations of parks.
- 3.6 Where barriers such as railroad rights-of-way and heavily traveled streets restrict park service areas and recreation trail access, safe crossings should be installed wherever economically feasible for the City.
- 3.7 To provide a unified and complete park and recreation system, a municipal “Green Streets” policy should be adopted. Green streets are public thoroughfares flanked by sidewalks widened to double as recreation trails, lined with rows of trees, and without overhead utility wires that interfere with tree growth. Green streets can be identified prior to development in new areas and retrofitted into already developed areas.
- 3.8 Green streets should be designated to provide connections between parks and the greenway/trail system.
- 3.9 Wherever possible, off-street bicycle and pedestrian connections (through greenways, trails, green streets) should provide access between the parks and schools.
- 3.10 Green streets, stream/creek corridors, greenways, and pedestrian corridors within publicly owned land or acquired with an easement, should be considered components of the overall park and recreation system.

Greenways, trails, and green streets may include signage, maps, rest areas, benches, nodes, and landscaping.

- 3.11 Safety on multi-use trails shall be increased through the use of signage, education/safety programs, and appropriate trail widths and sight distances.

## **PARK ACQUISITION**

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- 4.1 The City should make certain that formal arrangements with the Ahrens Foundation are in place to acquire Ahrens Park should the foundation decide to sell or dispose of the property.
- 4.2 When selecting locations for new parks, sites with natural, unique, or unusual features should have a higher priority for acquisition over other acceptable sites where those assets do not exist.
- 4.3 The City should establish strategies to preserve land in areas where the need for parks exists or will exist in the future, through purchase, lease purchase options, shared use agreements, gifts, easement, private ownership, or other means. The strategy should include sale of excess land to fund new acquisitions.
- 4.4 The City should develop criteria to guide decisions on acquisition and disposal of parkland. Criteria should include acquisition of areas contiguous to existing park properties that will be beneficial to the park and the City, preservation of unique areas, suitability for specific use and community needs, the ability to provide public access, and suitability for development of parkland.
- 4.5 The City should establish criteria for land to be dedicated to the City for park use, to ensure that the City is not burdened with leftover parcels or areas unsuitable for development as parks. Require that zoning and pre-application meetings deal specifically with plans and needs for the area being platted, and that subdivision plans adhere to them.
- 4.6 Upon adoption of the *Grinnell Master Parks Improvement Plan*, the City should establish rezoning and subdivision procedures formulated to ensure that land acquired for park use in as-yet undeveloped areas generally meets the location criteria for new parks established in this report.

## **OPEN SPACES AND NATURAL AREAS**

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Green Streets and Greenways are two types of open spaces and natural areas proposed in the *Grinnell Master Parks Improvement Plan*. Two ongoing projects in Grinnell, the *Grinnell Parks Tree Inventory* and the *Arbor Lake Watershed Visioning Plan*, also deal with open spaces and natural areas.

### **Green Streets**

Green Streets are defined in this document as through streets designed to extend a park-like appearance through the City to create an interconnected network of parks, recreation areas, schools, and other civic facilities. The typical Green Streets should be designed or redesigned over time to have the following elements:

- One or more rows of trees along each side of the roadway (within City right-of-way or on private property)
- Wide sidewalks or off-street trails on one or both sides of the roadway
- No overhead utility wires that interfere with the growth of overstory trees

Green Streets may also include signage, maps, rest areas, benches, nodes, and landscaping. Existing street right-of-way widths would dictate specific design on a street-by-street basis.

The two types of Green Streets recommended in Grinnell are Arterial Green Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets, Iowa Hwy 146 (West Street) is the only Arterial Green Street proposed (see Figure 5.4). Streets designated as collectors in the 2004 Grinnell Comprehensive Plan are the proposed Neighborhood Green Streets (see figure 5.5). The complete Green Street network proposed for Grinnell is shown on Figure 6.3: Grinnell Parks Master Plan – Existing & Proposed Park and Rec Facilities.

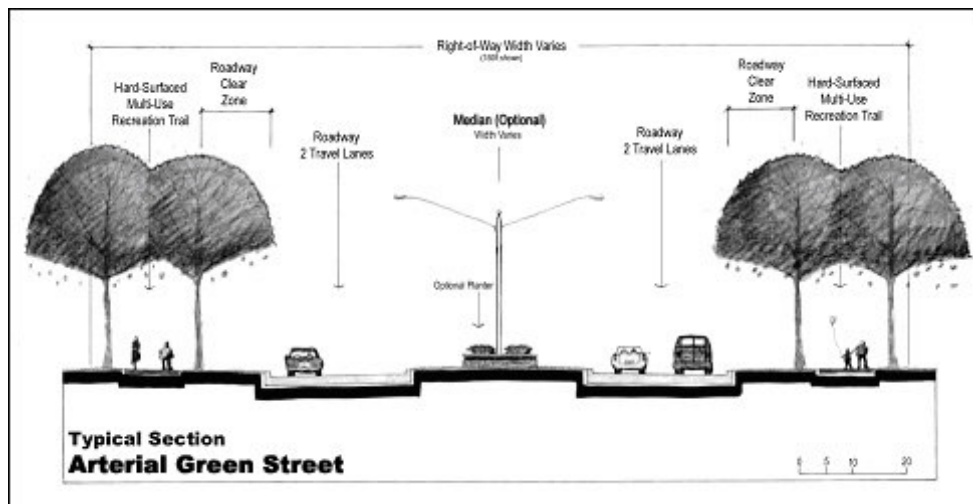


Figure 5.4: Arterial Green Street Cross-Section

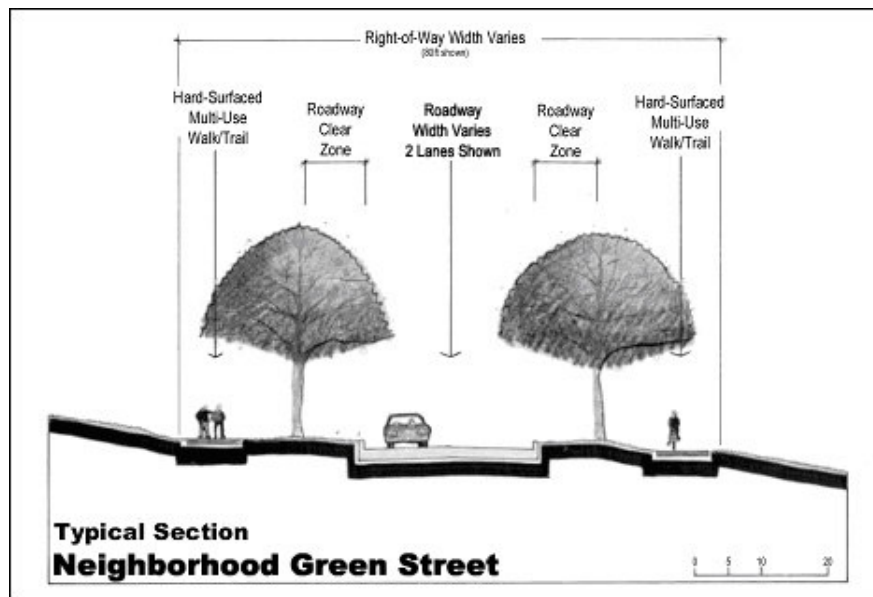


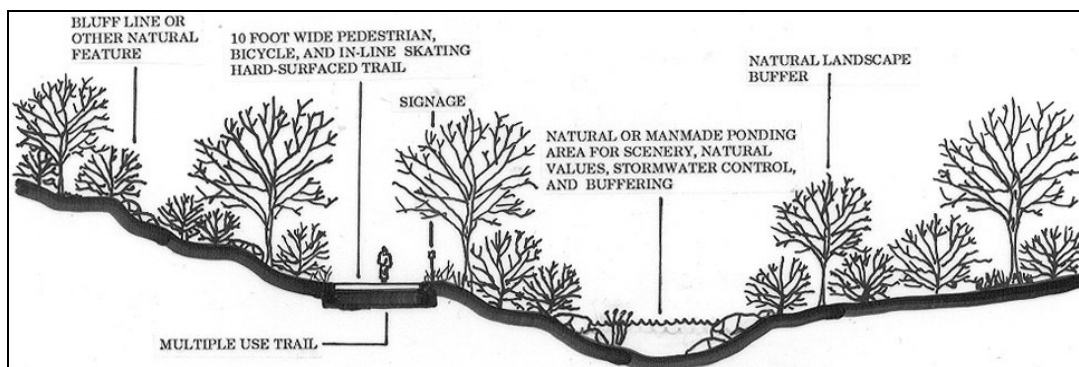
Figure 5.5: Neighborhood Green Street Cross-Section

To ensure that Green Streets become an integral part of Grinnell's park system the City should:

- 5.1 Develop and adopt a Green Street Plan that examines in greater detail the recommendations in this report.
- 5.2 Based on recommendations in the Green Street Plan, establish a municipal Green Streets ordinance that describes Green Streets attributes, identifies streets to be designated as Green Streets, and establishes guidelines for retrofitting existing streets and designing new streets as Green Streets. (One topic that could be addressed, for example, in the guidelines is revising tree planting locations in parking strips to be closer to the street in order to allow wider sidewalks that can double as off-street trails. This would be done over time as older, diseased, or damaged trees die and are replaced.)
- 5.3 Add provisions to the City of Grinnell municipal ordinance to require that future plats and subdivisions allocate adequate space, as defined in the ordinance, for any Green Street identified in the City's Green Street Plan that passes through the plat or subdivision.

### Greenways

As defined by the NRPA, Greenways are corridors such as natural waterways, railroad rights-of-way, utility easements, and parkways used to tie parks together to form a cohesive system. Within Grinnell's corporate boundaries and on land adjacent to the city are several natural waterway systems that can and should be used to establish greenway and trail system networks. The City may not necessarily own a passive greenway (most of the drainageways in and near Grinnell are in private ownership) but the area should be protected by ordinance as a natural area. Active greenways may include unpaved paths or paved trails and would typically be owned by the City. A cross-section of a greenway and trail is shown in *Figure 5.6: Typical Cross-Section of Greenway with Trail*.



*Figure 5.6: Typical Cross-Section of Greenway with Trail*

The proposed greenway and off-street trail systems follow guidelines established in the Master Plan policies. These proposed systems provide important connections to parks, recreation areas, schools, civic facilities and residential neighborhoods. Most of the proposed greenways include recreation trails. The proposed greenway/trail system will also provide connections to existing and proposed trails in the Grinnell vicinity

The guidelines for greenways and trails are established in *Figure 5.2: Table of Park and Recreation Facility Components*. It should be the goal of the City to provide the required facilities and services where possible for greenways and trails by adopting the following policies:

- 6.1 Establish working relationships with Poweshiek County Conservation Board and other public entities to develop regional greenway and trail systems on land outside current corporate boundaries.
- 6.2 Develop and adopt a Greenway Plan for the City of Grinnell and surrounding environs.
- 6.3 Based on Greenway Plan recommendations, establish a municipal greenway ordinance to define greenways; designate greenways along waterways and other areas; develop greenway guidelines; determine methods of protection through easements, property acquisition, or other means; and provide equitable compensation to private landowners.
- 6.4 Add provisions to the City of Grinnell municipal ordinance to require that future plats and subdivisions must allocate adequate space, as defined in the ordinance, for any greenway identified in the City's Greenway Plan that passes through the plat or subdivision.
- 6.5 Utilize the state's "two-mile" provisions regarding subdivision and development outside current corporate boundaries to require preservation of land along existing waterways for use as greenways.

**Grinnell Parks Tree Inventory**

The Grinnell Parks Tree Inventory is an ongoing voluntary effort on the part of three Grinnell residents to collect information about species, location, size, condition and maintenance for each tree in each Grinnell park, except for natural areas of Arbor Lake Park. Analysis of the data gathered is presented in Section 3 of this document.

The tree inventory can be a valuable park maintenance management tool if it is updated at regular intervals. The City should ensure that periodic inventory updates take place, using either local volunteers, park employees, or paid consultants.

**Arbor Lake Watershed Visioning Plan**

The *Arbor Lake Watershed Visioning Plan* project was undertaken in 2000 to improve water quality in Arbor Lake by making improvements throughout its watershed. The City should ensure that project results are reviewed periodically to see if further improvements are needed.

**LAND STEWARDSHIP**

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**Proposed LAND STEWARDSHIP POLICY**

City of Grinnell

WHEREAS, the Grinnell Parks and Recreation Department\* serves as the public's land steward by managing park and other public property in a manner that ensures these properties will exist as a community resource for the benefit of future generations; and,

WHEREAS, a policy has been designed and developed which will assist the department in fulfilling its role which enhances the park system and other municipal properties by maintaining each individual property according to a plan that seeks to maximize the value of natural, cultural and recreational resources present; and,

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\* See Section 6 for recommendation to create a municipal Parks and Recreation Department.

WHEREAS, this policy shall serve to contribute towards a proactive approach to protect important elements of Grinnell's vanishing open space resources and serve to provide additional open space as the urban and rural communities of the region continue to grow; and,

WHEREAS, the following policy has been established for implementation as a beneficial resource for preserving open space in Grinnell and shall include:

- Section 1 - STEWARDSHIP: A DEFINITION
- Section 2 - GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS POLICY
- Section 3 - CREATE, ENHANCE, RESTORE AND MAINTAIN THE BALANCE OF RESOURCES AND DIVERSITY OF ECOSYSTEMS
- Section 4 - LANDSCAPE INVENTORY
- Section 5 - NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLANNING
- Section 6 - ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS (ERP)
  - 1) GENERAL CATEGORIES FOR APPLYING THE ERP
  - 2) GENERAL STEPS IN THE ERP
- Section 7 - OPEN SPACE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
- Section 8 - PARK AND NATURAL AREA LANDSCAPE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES
- Section 9 - PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL
  - 1) MANAGING PARK PROPERTIES
  - 2) DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY
  - 3) ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY
- Section 10 - MODIFICATION OF THIS POLICY
- Section 11 - GLOSSARY

FURTHER, be it resolved that above referenced policy has been established for implementation as the LAND STEWARDSHIP POLICY.

# **GRINNELL PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT STEWARDSHIP POLICY**

## SECTION 1

### **STEWARDSHIP: A DEFINITION**

A steward is one charged by another with the safekeeping and sound management of property. The Grinnell Parks and Recreation Department\* serves as the public's land steward by managing park and other municipal property in a manner that ensures these properties will exist as a community resource for the benefit of future generations. In fulfilling its role the department enhances the park system by maintaining each individual property according to a plan that seeks to maximize the value of natural, cultural and recreational resources present. A proactive approach to protecting important elements of Grinnell's open space resources serves to provide additional open space as the urban and rural communities of the region continue to grow. Working closely with other public conservation agencies and private protection efforts, the department works to integrate its efforts into a greater plan for protecting the resource base of central Iowa and provide recreational opportunities that are compatible with the environment.

## SECTION 2

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS POLICY**

The following sections of this policy serve to define the stewardship decision-making process in specific stages of the ongoing management function. Generally they refer to the procedures used in rendering sound management decisions when particular issues of development, public use or staff programming of a property holds the potential of negatively impacting significant resources. This section serves to establish guiding principles regarding resource stewardship on all properties managed by the Grinnell Park and Recreation Department.

The Grinnell Park and Recreation Department believes:

1. The health and well-being of people and their cultures; of other species; and of natural ecosystems are interconnected, vulnerable and dependent on each other.
2. Future generations have a right to an environment with at least the same qualities and quantities of environmental assets as present generations.
3. Long-term economic progress and the need for environmental protection must be seen as mutually interdependent.
4. Development must maintain environmental and cultural integrity.
5. Restoration of highly disturbed areas shall be actively pursued.
6. Sustainable design and management practices shall be fully considered and implemented on all facilities, grounds and lands. This shall include:
  - a. Site protection must be considered an integral aspect of every project.
  - b. Project construction must be of the highest quality possible.
  - c. Waste emissions and resource extraction must be minimized.
  - d. Improved efficiency of energy and water use must be pursued.
  - e. Materials and products that are non-toxic must be actively pursued.
7. Native plant species shall be preferred in all plantings.
8. It is vital to enhance Grinnell's watersheds by managing all natural areas in a way that preserves the highest natural ecological value both upstream and downstream from parkland.

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\* See Section 6 for recommendation to create a municipal Parks and Recreation Department.

### SECTION 3

#### **CREATE, ENHANCE, RESTORE AND MAINTAIN THE BALANCE OF RESOURCES AND DIVERSITY OF ECOSYSTEMS**

Grinnell Park and Recreation provides a system of active recreation facilities, cultural arts programming and unique natural areas. To create a park system that incorporates these services in a balanced fashion, resource inventories, management plans and an environmental review process will continually assess the status of park properties. Based on this process the department will create a diversity of ecosystems representative of central Iowa's natural history and integral to providing wildlife habitat, environmental education opportunities and safer, healthier neighborhoods.

### SECTION 4

#### **LANDSCAPE INVENTORY**

Grinnell Park and Recreation will conduct inventories of existing natural resources on its land holdings to develop an understanding of the assets present at each site. Cultural resources and historic sites will also be recognized in this process so they may be incorporated into management plans. These inventories will comprise the basis of all natural resources management planning efforts. An inventory process will address but not be limited to the following objectives:

1. Land cover mapping to reflect the true composition of vegetation, water resources, and the built environment on the property.
2. Locations of unique or state-listed species detailing sites where these plants and animals exist on the property.
3. Property ownership status detailing the parcel information, deed restrictions, acquisition history and location of all past and present structures.
4. Archaeological and historic sites inventory detailing all known sites that could possibly be interpreted or left undisturbed.
5. Species composition of plants and animal communities inhabiting the property including mapping their location and crucial habitats.
6. Soils mapping of the entire property utilizing existing maps.
7. Inventory of invasive species showing where problem species are established on the property.
8. Hazardous materials and dump site inventory showing where these problems exist on or abutting the property.
9. Identification and protection of significant viewshed areas.
10. Identification and placement of property with respect to its watershed.

Where useful, data will be entered into a GIS database except for sensitive areas. This inventory is the essential first step in the natural resource management planning process for any property managed by the Grinnell Park and Recreation Department and will be conducted before major changes in programming, facility management or land uses impacting the natural resource base are undertaken.

### SECTION 5

#### **NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

The Grinnell Park and Recreation Department will develop and implement management plans to enhance and protect the diversity of native ecosystems within the department's land management responsibilities. Each management plan will address but not be limited to the following objectives:

1. Recommending low impact sustainable methods of natural areas restoration, habitat management, facility development and resource recovery as a means of conserving financial resources in the development and management of park property.
2. Minimize high maintenance vegetation.
3. Recommending development sites that indicate where, and to what level, facility development may take place.
4. Protecting the region's water resources by establishing buffer zones and runoff management strategies for agricultural areas, developed sites, rivers, streams and other bodies of water within and outside park properties.
5. Maintaining sufficient transitional (edge) vegetation between meadow and forest areas.
6. Assuring adequate meadow habitat and managed open areas for continuing meadow ecology.
7. Manage habitats such as prairie, old field, thickets, wetlands, forest and habitats of special value for the park system or for state listed or endangered plant or animal species using best management practices for the system diversity.
8. Managing existing stands of forested areas.
9. Removing, correcting or containing hazardous waste and dump according to Federal and State laws.
10. Providing objective data to the Environmental Review Process for evaluating the impact of construction projects or amenity improvements on park property.

The above objectives shall be pursued utilizing the most appropriate means available. These objectives shall guide land management practices on property controlled by the Grinnell Park and Recreation Department. Additionally, they shall serve as a standard for assessing land management practices on property abutting, or having significant impact on, the sound management of park lands.

## SECTION 6

### **THE CITY'S ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS (ERP)**

To ensure that facilities are developed with due consideration to existing natural resources, all developments will be subject to an environmental review. As natural resource inventories and management plans serve to provide baseline data and land management recommendations respectively, the ERP will provide specific site recommendations on given projects.

This process will ensure that resources present on a site are considered before a proposed development is implemented. The results of this process will be considered public information available to any person at the cost of reproduction. Composite reviews and recommendations will be incorporated into the public input process at all stages.

#### **I. GENERAL CATEGORIES FOR APPLYING THE ERP**

- A. On requests by other agencies to conduct improvements on park property, the ERP will be used to review proposed actions to determine if they should be permitted, denied or modified to comply with the goals of the Grinnell Park and Recreation Department under this policy.
- B. On new projects initiated by the Grinnell Park and Recreation Department, the ERP will be used to site facilities when natural resources are involved.
- C. On land acquisitions, the ERP will assess the contributions acquisitions could make on the department's efforts.

- D. On accessibility issues, the ERP will guide facility and program development to meet ADA standards.
- E. On hazardous materials and dump sites, the ERP will involve appropriate city/county departments in developing removal or containment plans that will effectively resolve the problem.

## **2. GENERAL STEPS IN THE ERP**

- A. The Park and Recreation Department will coordinate a review from a natural resource and environmental impact perspective using Best Management Practices as guidelines. The Department will call upon other public agencies, academic institutions and the Urban Conservation Advisory Committee as a resource when conducting the review.

All review statements will be compiled into a composite statement and recommendations will be forwarded to the Director and the Park and Recreation Board.

### SECTION 7

#### **OPEN SPACE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

An ongoing study of the existing open space will be conducted to assess where protection is needed. This open space comprehensive planning effort will be done according to but not limited by the following parameters:

1. Identification of resources such as forested lands, wetlands, stream and river corridors, critical wildlife habitats, state threatened and endangered species and cultural resources.
2. Inventories of existing open spaces managed by the federal government, the state of Iowa, Poweshiek County, the Grinnell Park and Recreation Department, quasi-public entities (such as not-for-profit land trusts), and private entities (such as membership clubs).
3. Identification of greenway opportunities where they exist for watershed protection, non-motorized transportation, waterway protection and passive recreation use.
4. Gauging public need through surveys, public meetings, advisory boards and user groups.

The open space comprehensive plan will be used to guide the Grinnell Park and Recreation Department's efforts at providing open space opportunities, protecting valuable open space where it is threatened and creating linkages and greenways where they are needed.

### SECTION 8

#### **PARK AND NATURAL AREA LANDSCAPE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

Vegetation on park and other public property under the jurisdiction of the Grinnell Department of Parks and Recreation constitute a valued and significant resource that improves the quality of life of all residents and visitors to our city. The General Specifications are as follows:

- A. Maintenance standards will be followed to promote public safety and long term vegetative health and must be followed by persons, companies or city personnel when doing vegetative management located within parks and other public places.
- B. Native species of vegetation will be used in the landscape based upon site conditions and availability of plants using local sources of seed to the extent possible.
- C. Existing vegetation shall be managed in such a manner as to promote their general health by providing the necessary cultural practices.
- D. Authorized work on or with public vegetation shall be preformed properly and safely by competent personnel in a manner as to cause the least possible interference with or annoyance to others.

- E. No vegetation shall be removed from public property unless it constitutes a hazard to life or property, a public nuisance, is an exotic and has become invasive, or because removal is part of an overall management plan approved by the Director.
- F. **VEGETATION TYPES AND STANDARDS.** Grinnell Park and Recreation Department personnel will refer to the City of Grinnell Park and Recreation Department Vegetation Management Standards when evaluating vegetation planting and maintenance.

## SECTION 9

### **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL**

In the interest of managing all its property in a manner consistent with this policy, the following strategies will be used for managing, disposing of and acquiring property. Such actions will be considered on a case-by-case basis with full attention to present and planned future uses established in accordance with the subsections of this policy.

#### **1. MANAGING PARK PROPERTIES**

- A. Consolidating parcels where contiguous park properties are an amalgamation of multiple parcels, Grinnell Park and Recreation will seek to consolidate these parcels onto new parcels that more correctly define the land management needs of the department.
- B. Promoting restricting deeds in perpetuity on lands of high natural resource value (endangered plants and animals, watershed protection, flood control, historic sites, irreplaceable recreation amenities, etc.) through the use of conservation easements, nature preserve designations and other appropriate instruments.
- C. Splitting out lots where unwanted property can be disposed of at maximized return.
- D. Describing multiple use parcels where city departments have either expressed present need or can demonstrate planned future needs that do not negatively impact Grinnell Park and Recreation's mission.
- E. Granting easements to other organizations such as utilities, other city departments, private citizens and corporations on a case-by-case basis and keeping the interests of Grinnell Park and Recreation in mind at all times.
- F. Land identified as possessing marginal natural resource value may be designated as sites for potential development.

#### **2. DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY**

- A. Negotiating exchange or joint management of lands with other city/county departments.
- B. Sale or trade of lands by Grinnell Park and Recreation to other public agencies that can demonstrate a need for the property in providing improved services to the public.
- C. Sale at auction of land possessing marginal natural resource value and residential or commercial properties that do not serve to further the mission of the Grinnell Park and Recreation Department.

#### **3. ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY**

- A. Fee simple acquisition of open space will be used as a last resort when condemnation is the only other recourse to acquire lands essential to Grinnell Park and Recreation's mission.
- B. Acquisition through grants and sponsorships by foundations, federal agencies and corporations will be pursued.
- C. Donations by landowners and developers wishing to take advantage of tax incentives under Federal Conservation Purposes tax law will be encouraged.

- D. Condemnation of property essential to Grinnell Park and Recreation's mission will be used when no other recourse exists and community need for the property is clearly demonstrated through the public input process.

## SECTION 10

### **MODIFICATION OF THIS POLICY**

This policy shall become effective upon its adoption by the Grinnell Park and Recreation Board. As with all other official policies, staff shall endeavor to incorporate the letter and spirit of this policy into the ongoing functions of the department. This policy serves to support, through planned program implementation, the mission of the Grinnell Park and Recreation Department. All future modifications of this policy shall reflect this support by enhancing the department's ability to protect open space and to improve the environmental quality of Grinnell for the benefit of future generations.

## SECTION 11

### **GLOSSARY**

Cultural Assets - These refer to the customs, traditions, and indigenous knowledge that are specific to the community. Language is a cultural asset, as is indigenous intellectual property. Cultural assets are often "intangible" elements that underpin a community. However, the material expressions of culture can generate income and other assets.

Environmental Assets - source of environmental services in the possession of local residents.

Exotic species - a species that did not originally occur in the areas in which it is now found, but that arrived as a direct or indirect result of human activity.

Greenway - A linear open space; a corridor composed of natural vegetation. Greenways can be used to create connected networks of open space that include traditional parks and natural areas.

Invasive Species - means an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Native - indigenous to Poweshiek County at the time of settlement.

Open Space - Undeveloped land or common areas in a planned community reserved for parks, walking paths or other natural uses.

State Listed Species - Endangered or Threatened Species, which are any species of fish, plant life or wildlife which is in danger of extinction, or likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future, throughout all or a significant part of its range.

Unique Species - those species found in just a few localities in central Iowa or those species that are both native and conservative (meaning indicative of relatively undisturbed native habitat).

Viewshed - A viewshed is an area of land, water, and other environmental elements that is visible from a fixed vantage point.

Watershed - A watershed is a region of land that is crisscrossed by smaller waterways that drain into a larger body of water.

Waterway - a natural or man-made place for water to run through (such as river, stream, creek, or channel)

# MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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## PRELIMINARY MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES GRINNELL PARKS IMPROVEMENT PLAN November 14, 2006

### Establishing a Maintenance Mode

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Establishing a maintenance mode can be a difficult task when one takes into consideration the wide variety of park categories in Grinnell. The approach taken to maintenance is often as individual as each park itself. In fact, the intensity of maintenance may vary within one park. The following classification system does not seek to make a perfect match, but rather to offer a wide set of options so a general match-up can be made. The maintenance modes developed by The American Park and Recreation Society and National Recreation and Park Association listed below can be thought of as "the way of" maintenance and range from the most intensive approaches to the least intensive programs.

- Mode I**                      State of the art maintenance -- applied to a high quality diverse landscape. Usually associated with high traffic urban areas such as public squares, malls, governmental grounds, or high visitation parks.
- Mode II**                      High level maintenance -- associated with well-developed park areas with reasonably high visitation.
- Mode III**                      Moderate level maintenance -- associated with locations with moderate to low levels of development or with agencies that because of budget restrictions cannot afford a higher intensity of maintenance.
- Mode IV**                      Moderately low level maintenance -- usually associated with low level of development, low visitation, undeveloped areas, or remote parks.
- Mode V:**                      High visitation natural areas -- usually associated with large urban or regional parks. Size and user frequency may dictate resident maintenance staff. Road, pathway or trail systems relatively well developed. Other facilities at strategic locations such as entries, trail heads, building complexes, and parking lots.
- Mode VI:**                      Minimum maintenance level -- low visitation natural areas or large urban parks that are undeveloped.

## Mode I

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<b>Turf Care.</b>	Grass height maintained according to species and variety of grass. Mowed at least once every five working days but may be as often as once every three working days. Aeration as required, not less than four times per year. Reseeding or sodding, as needed. Weed control should be practiced so that no more than one percent of the surface has weeds present.
<b>Fertilizer.</b>	Adequate fertilization applied to plant species according to their optimum requirements. Trees, shrubs and flowers should be fertilized according to their individual requirements for optimum growth.
<b>Irrigation.</b>	Sprinkler irrigated. Electric automatic commonly used. Some manual systems could be considered adequate under plentiful rainfall circumstances and adequate staffing. Frequency of use follows rainfall, temperature, seasonal length and demands of plant material.
<b>Litter Control.</b>	Minimum of once per day, seven days a week. Extremely high visitation may increase the frequency. Receptacles should be plentiful enough to hold all trash generated between servicing without normally overflowing.
<b>Pruning.</b>	Frequency dictated primarily by species and variety of trees and shrubs. Length of growing season and design concept also a controlling factor as are clipped hedges versus natural style. Timing usually scheduled to coincide with low demand periods or to take advantage of special growing characteristics such as pruning after flowering.
<b>Disease &amp; Insect Control.</b>	Control program may use any of three philosophies: 1) Preventative; a scheduled chemical or cultural program designed to prevent significant damage. 2) Corrective; application of chemical or mechanical controls designed to eliminate observed problems. 3) Integrated pest management; withholding any controls until such time as pests demonstrate damage to plant material or become a demonstrated irritant. At this maintenance level the controlling object is to not have the public notice any problems. It is anticipated at Mode I that problems will either be prevented or observed at a very early stage and corrected immediately.
<b>Snow Removal.</b>	Snow removal starts the same day as accumulations of 1/2 inch are present. At no time will snow be permitted to cover transportation or parking surfaces longer than noon of the day after the snow stops. Applications of snow melting compound and/or gravel are appropriate to reduce the danger of injury due to falls.
<b>Lighting.</b>	Maintenance should preserve the original design. Damaged systems should be repaired as quickly as they are discovered. Bulb replacement should be done during the first working day after the outage is reported.

<b>Surfaces.</b>	Sweeping, cleaning and washing of surfaces needs to be done so that at no time does any accumulation of sand, dirt and leaves distract from the looks or safety of the area. Repainting or restaining of structures should occur when weather or wear deteriorate the appearance of the covering. Wood surfaces requiring oiling should be done a minimum of four times per year. Stains to surfaces should be taken off within five working days. Graffiti should be washed off or painted over the next working day after application.
<b>Repairs.</b>	Repairs to all elements of the design should be done immediately upon discovery provided replacement parts and technicians are available to accomplish the job. When disruption to the public might be major and the repair not critical, repairs may be postponed to a time period that is least disruptive.
<b>Inspection.</b>	Inspection of this area should be done daily by a staff member.
<b>Floral Plantings.</b>	Normally extensive or unusual floral plantings are part of the design. These may include ground level beds, planters or hanging baskets. Often multiple plantings are scheduled, usually at least two blooming cycles per year. Some designs may call for a more frequent rotation of bloom. Maximum care of watering, fertilizing, disease control, disbudding and weeding is necessary. Weeding flowers and shrubs is done a minimum of once per week. The desired standard is essentially weed free.
<b>Restrooms.</b>	Not always a part of the design but where required will normally receive no less than once per day servicing. Especially high traffic areas may require multiple servicing or a person assigned as attendant.
<b>Special Features.</b>	Features such as fountains, drinking fountains, sculptures, speaker systems, structural art, flag poles or parking and crowd control devices may be part of the integral design. Maintenance requirements can vary drastically but for this mode it should be of the highest possible order.

## **Mode II**

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<b>Turf Care.</b>	Grass cut once every five working days. Aeration as required but not less than two times per year. Reseeding or sodding when bare spots are present. Weed control practiced when weeds present a visible problem or when weeds represent 5 percent of the turf surface. Some pre-emergent products may be utilized at this level.
<b>Fertilizer.</b>	Adequate fertilizer level to ensure that all plant materials are healthy and growing vigorously. Amounts depend on species, length of growing season, soils and rainfall. Distribution should ensure an even supply of nutrients for the entire year. Trees, shrubs and flowers should receive fertilizer levels to ensure optimum growth.

<b>Irrigation.</b>	Some type of irrigation system available. Frequency of use follows rainfall, temperature, seasonal length and demands of plant material.
<b>Litter Control.</b>	Minimum of once per day, five days a week. Off-site movement of trash dependent on size of containers and use by the public. High use may dictate once per day cleaning or more. Containers are serviced.
<b>Pruning.</b>	Usually done at least once per season unless species planted dictate more frequent attention. Sculptured hedges or high growth species may dictate a more frequent requirement than most trees and shrubs in natural growth style plantings.
<b>Diseases and Insect Control.</b>	Usually done when disease or insects are inflicting noticeable damage, reducing vigor of plant materials or could be considered a bother to the public. Some preventative measures may be utilized such as systematic chemical treatments. Cultural prevention of disease problems can reduce time spent in this category. Some minor problems may be tolerated at this level.
<b>Snow Removal.</b>	Snow removed by noon the day following snowfall. Gravel or snow melt may be utilized to reduce ice accumulation.
<b>Lighting.</b>	Replacement or repair of fixtures when observed or reported as not working.
<b>Surfaces.</b>	Should be cleaned, repaired, repainted or replaced when appearance has noticeably deteriorated.
<b>Repairs.</b>	Should be done whenever safety, function or bad appearance is in question.
<b>Inspection.</b>	Inspection by a staff member at least once a day when regular staff is scheduled.
<b>Floral Planting.</b>	Some sort of floral plantings present. Normally no more complex than two rotations of bloom per year. Care cycle usually at least once per week except watering may be more frequent. Health and vigor dictate cycle of fertilization and disease control. Beds essentially kept weed free.
<b>Restrooms.</b>	When present should be maintained at least once per day as long as they are open to public use. High use may dictated two servicings or more per day. Servicing period should ensure and adequate supply of paper and that the rest rooms are reasonably clean and free from bad odors.
<b>Special Features.</b>	Should be maintained for safety, function and high quality.

### Mode III

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<b>Turf Care.</b>	Cut once every 10 working days. Normally not aerated unless turf quality indicates a need or in anticipation of an application of fertilizer. Reseeding or resodding done only when major bare spots appear. Weed control measures normally used when 50 percent of small areas is weed infested or general turf quality low in 15 percent or more of the surface area.
<b>Fertilizer.</b>	Applied only when turf vigor seems to be low. Low level application done on a once per year basis.
<b>Irrigation.</b>	Dependent on climate. Rainfall locations above 25 inches a year usually rely on natural rainfall with the possible addition of portable irrigation during periods of drought. Dry climates below 25 inches normally have some form of supplemental irrigation. When irrigation is automatic a demand schedule is programmed. Where manual servicing is required two to three times per week operation would be the norm.
<b>Litter Control.</b>	Minimum service of two to three times per week. High use may dictate higher levels during warm season.
<b>Pruning.</b>	When required for health or reasonable appearance. With most tree and shrub species this would not be more frequent than once every two or three years.
<b>Disease and Insect Control.</b>	Done only on epidemic or serious complaint basis. Control measures may be put into effect when the health or survival of the plant material is threatened or where the public's comfort is concerned.
<b>Snow Removal.</b>	Snow removal done based on local law requirements but generally accomplished by the day following snowfall. Some crosswalks or surfaces may not be cleared at all.
<b>Lighting.</b>	Replacement or repair of fixtures when report filed or when noticed by employees.
<b>Surfaces.</b>	Cleaned on complaint basis. Repaired or replaced as budget allows.
<b>Repairs.</b>	Should be done whenever safety or function is in question.
<b>Inspections.</b>	Once per week.
<b>Floral Planting.</b>	Only perennials or flowering trees or shrubs.
<b>Restrooms.</b>	When present, serviced a minimum of five times per week. Seldom more than once each day.
<b>Special Features.</b>	Minimum allowable maintenance for features present with function and safety in mind.

## Mode IV

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

## Mode V

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<b>Turf Care.</b>	Normally not mowed but grassed parking lots, approaches to buildings or road shoulders, may be cut to reduce fire danger. Weed control on noxious weeds.
<b>Fertilizer.</b>	None.
<b>Irrigation.</b>	None.
<b>Litter Control.</b>	Based on visitation, may be more than once per day if crowds dictate that level.
<b>Pruning.</b>	Only done for safety.
<b>Disease and Insect Control.</b>	Done only to ensure safety or when problem seriously discourages public use.
<b>Snow Removal.</b>	One day service on roads and parking areas.

<b>Lighting.</b>	Replaced on complaint or when noticed by employees.
<b>Surfaces.</b>	Cleaned on complaint. Repaired or replaced when budget will permit.
<b>Repairs.</b>	Done when safety or function impaired. Should have same year service on poor appearance.
<b>Inspection.</b>	Once per day when staff is available.
<b>Floral Planting.</b>	None introduced except at special locations such as interpretive buildings, headquarters, etc. Once per week service on these designs. Flowering trees and shrubs, wildflowers present but demand no regular maintenance.
<b>Rest Rooms.</b>	Frequency geared to visitor level. Once a day is the common routine but for some locations and reasons frequency may increase.
<b>Special Features.</b>	Repaired whenever safety or function are a concern. Appearance corrected in the budget year.

#### **Mode VI**

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<b>Turf Areas.</b>	Not mowed. Weed control only if legal requirements demand it.
<b>Fertilizer.</b>	Not fertilized.
<b>Irrigation.</b>	No irrigation.
<b>Litter Control.</b>	On demand or complaint basis.
<b>Pruning.</b>	No pruning unless safety is involved.
<b>Disease and Insect Control.</b>	No control except in epidemic or safety situations.
<b>Snow Removal.</b>	Snow removal only on strategic roads and parking lots. Accomplished within two days after snow stops.
<b>Lighting.</b>	Replacement on complaint basis.
<b>Surfaces.</b>	Serviced when safety is consideration.
<b>Repairs.</b>	Should be done when safety or function is in question.
<b>Inspection.</b>	Once per month.
<b>Floral Plantings.</b>	None.
<b>Rest Rooms.</b>	Service based on need.
<b>Special Features.</b>	Service based on lowest acceptable frequency for feature. Safety and function interpretation are a concern when either seems significant.

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