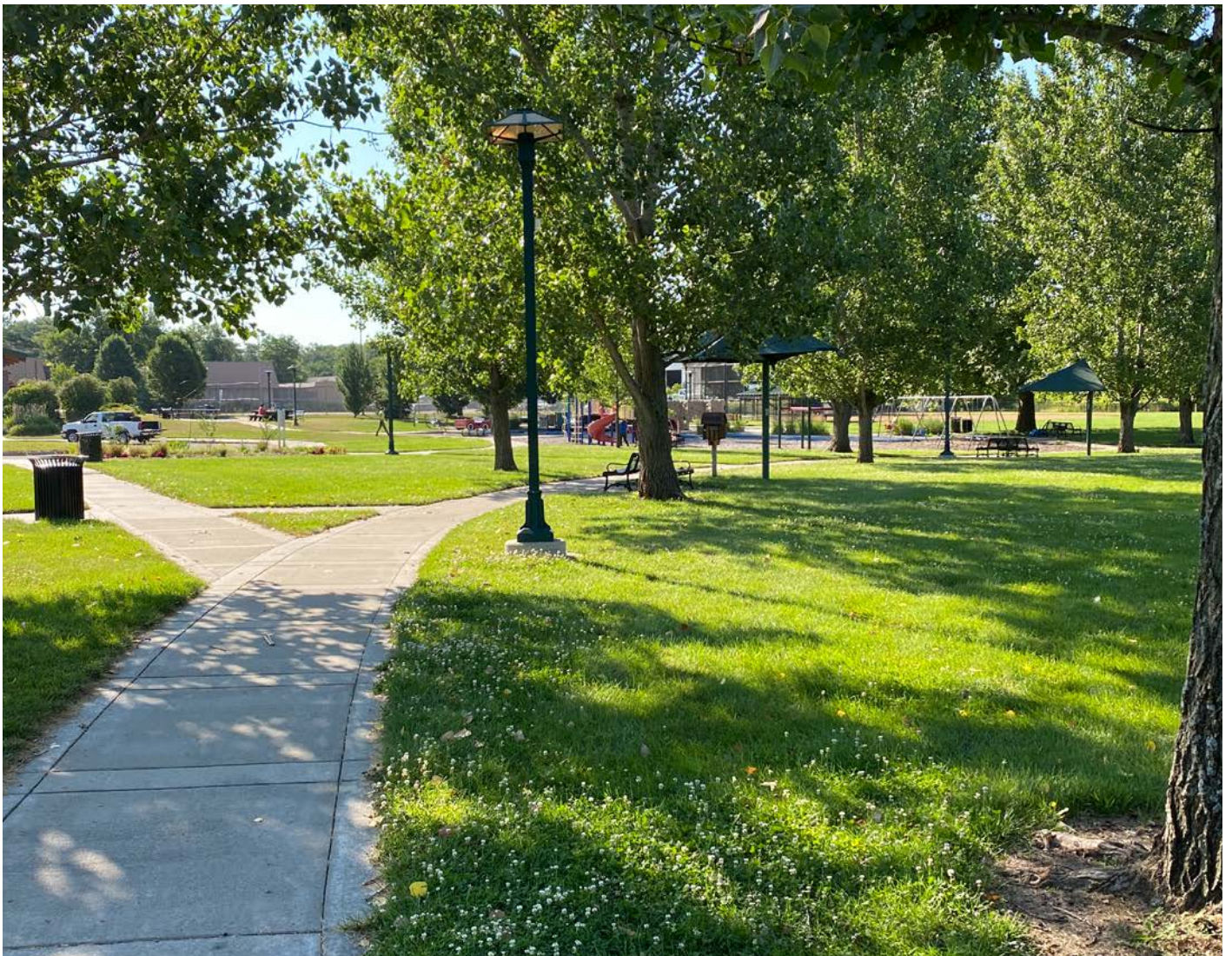


# PARK MASTER PLAN



WINDSOR  
HEIGHTS  
the heart of it all



September 2020

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## IN COLLABORATION WITH:

The City of Windsor Heights Public Works Department.

## WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The Windsor Heights Foundation and community participants who provided feedback to help define the final recommendations for this document.

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# Introduction & Vision | 01





# INTRODUCTION

## COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

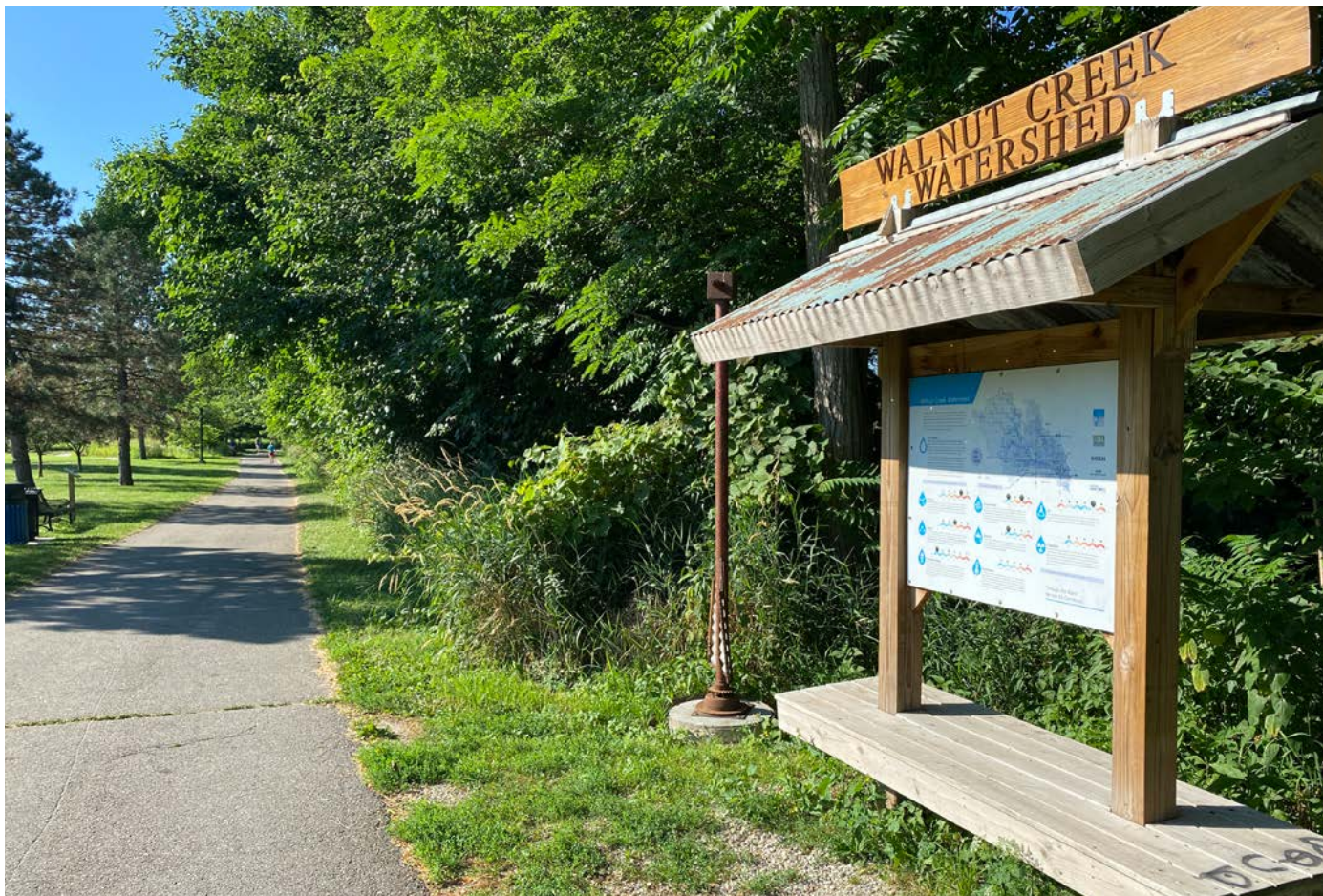
Located in Polk County, as a neighboring Des Moines suburb, Windsor Heights is “In the Heart of it All”. Windsor Heights is an entirely land-locked community spanning just 1.41 square miles, with a population of 4,898 (according to 2018 estimates by Census.gov).

The city of Windsor Heights’ mission statement is *“to provide our residents, businesses, and visitors a safe and exceptional city services through a team-oriented and fiscally responsible approach, in order to create a unique, sustainable and vibrant community”*.

Windsor Heights is surrounded by Urbandale on the north, Clive to the west, West Des Moines to the south, and Des Moines to the east. Close proximity to Interstate 235 running through the southern portion of the community, as well as other metro arterials including University Ave and Hickman Road, make for quick connections to local amenities and a quick commute to downtown Des Moines.

Windsor Heights residents are served by two school districts, West Des Moines Community School District and Des Moines Independent Community School District. Clive Learning Academy (WDMCS), Windsor Heights Elementary (DMPS), and Cowles Motessori (DMPS) are the main elementary schools in Windsor Heights, and there are two high schools close to the area: Roosevelt High School and Dowling Catholic High School. North Walnut Creek and Walnut Creek run through the west and south side of community. These two waterways provide both a great recreational and ecological amenity to the community but also contribute to seasonal flood risk for a portion of the community.

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*Educational kiosk along Walnut Creek at Colby Park.*



PARK SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Parks, trails, open space and recreational activities provide communities abundant value and contribute greatly to the health and wellbeing of the community. Access to outdoor recreation amenities is critical to the success of smaller communities, particularly in urban areas, as they offer a reprieve from the developed landscape and offer a change of pace from the typical setting of the urban community.

Due in part by its small footprint in the middle of the Des Moines Metro, Windsor Heights does not have an abundance of park and open space



Monument column in Colby Park.

offerings. The community’s three community parks include:

Colby Park (8.6 acres)

The “hub” of the community, home to many social events throughout the year including concerts and community festivals. Colby park is a bustling space spring through fall, with an active playground, tennis courts, a ballfield and indoor community center and outdoor pavilion. Close proximity to the Walnut Creek Trail provides easy access to the park from surrounding neighborhoods and communities. Many of the current park amenities were updated/installed during an improvement project which started in 2007 and finished with the completion of the Community Center in 2010.

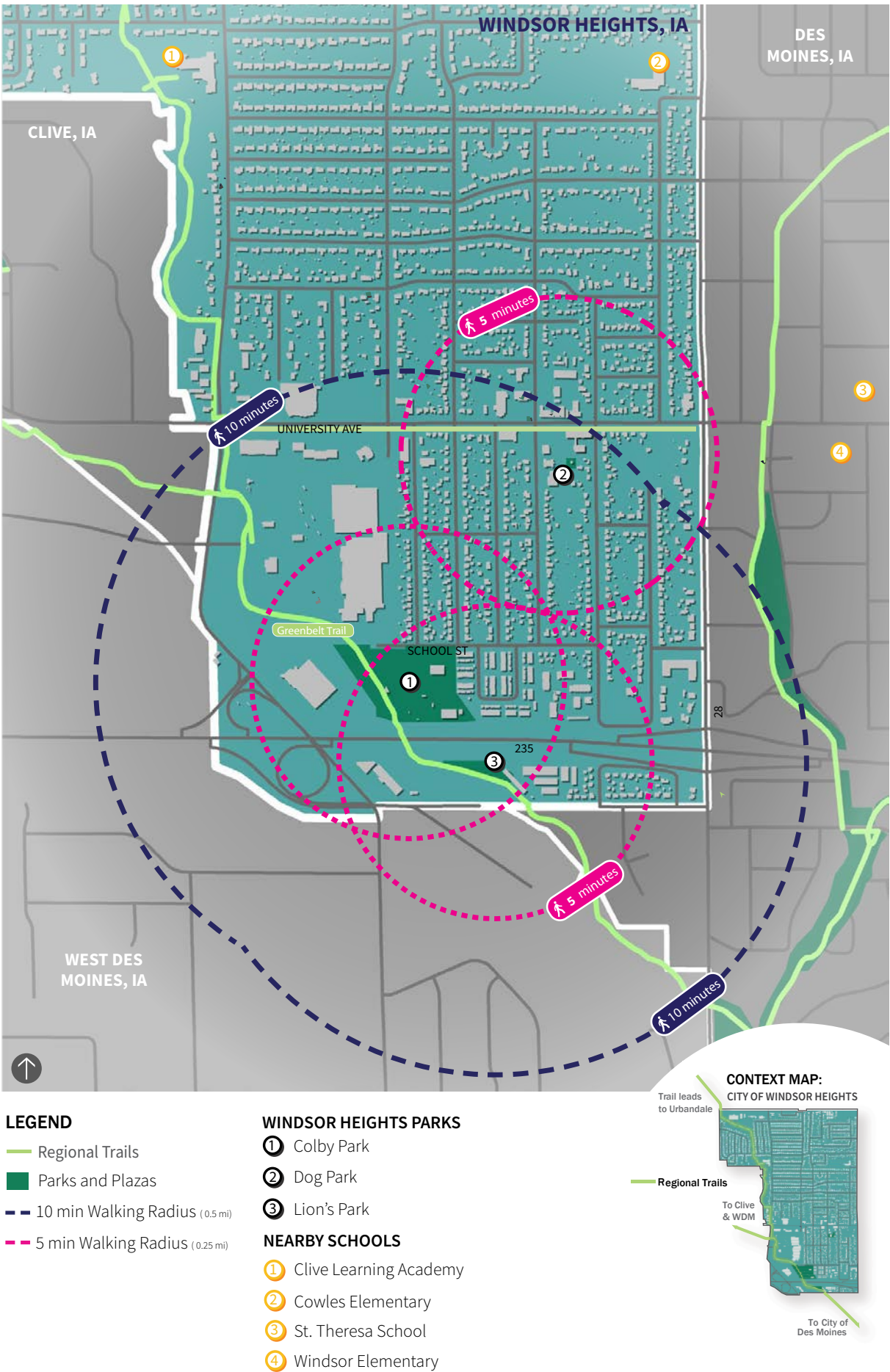
Historic flood events over the past 10+ years have had significant impacts on the park amenities, most notably the ballfield and the playground. Heavy sediment loading during major flood events has compromised some of the on-site stormwater management practices, including a bio-retention cell which handles the majority of the parking lot runoff.

Lions Park (.2 acre)

Tucked behind the Windsor Heights Public Safety building, Lions Park is a pocket park that was renovated in 2008 following a substantial commercial development to its north along University Ave. The current park space includes a short meandering path with numerous perennial gardens and a seating area. A gazebo had resided in the park until 2017 when it was removed due to deteriorating condition and annual upkeep.

The current condition of the park is declining, with overgrown and weedy landscape beds. Steep onsite topography and poor access contribute to some of the challenges facing this unique park space, however, the proximity to University Ave may create opportunities for reimagining this space as a more user-friendly community amenity.

FIGURE 1: PARK SERVICE AREAS





***Dog Park (2.2 acres)***

One of a handful of dog parks in the Des Moines Metro, the Windsor Heights Dog Park is located immediately off the Walnut Creek trail, nestled into the southwest corner of the community. Entirely in the floodplain and prone to seasonal flooding, the park space is limited in programming and amenities but as a dog park, functions well. Nearby and onsite trees provide ample shade in summer months and the proximity of the trail, provides easy access for trail users and neighboring residents.

Limited on-street parking continues to be a source of debate for this park and has raised concern amongst neighboring residents who have seen increased traffic and congestion along nearby Center Street.

Amenities in the park are limited to a handful of obstacles, perimeter fencing and some seating for park users.

***Walnut Creek Trail System (2.2 miles)***

The Walnut Creek Trail runs along the western edge of the community for just over two miles, extending from Hickman Road at the north, and Center Street on the south end. This segment of trail provides access to over 80 miles of the regional trail system, connecting numerous regional amenities and several metro communities.

Improvements to the University Avenue Corridor (2021 completion) through Windsor Heights will include a twelve-foot-wide multi use trail. Completion of that project will provide trail users direct connection to many retail businesses, restaurants, and other commercial offerings along University, as well, as provide connection to other residential neighborhoods.

**VISION**

**PURPOSE OF THE PLAN**

The purpose of the Park Master Plan is to guide the City of Windsor Heights in maintaining and enhancing existing parks and recreation resources while also promoting new possibilities and amenities for the community to experience and enjoy. This report provides an in-depth analysis of the existing facilities and their current condition while also presenting community outreach and feedback which should guide the implementation of future amenities.

The information provided throughout the report was developed and collected through public outreach from both the residents of Windsor Heights, City Council and City Staff. The recommendations described herein were influenced by responses collected during the outreach process and are representative of what participating Windsor Heights residents' value in park and recreation activities and how they seek to improve their community parks and open space.

At the onset of this planning process, the City sought solutions for providing the greatest community benefit, with knowingly limited park and recreation opportunities. Limited park acres require a comprehensive improvement approach to understand not only what amenities reside within Windsor Heights but may be on the periphery of the community as well. Specific subjects that are explored in detail in this report include:

- ***Flood resiliency evaluation to lower annual maintenance input from season flood events at Colby Park***
- ***Inventory and analysis of existing park and recreation amenities***
- ***Level of service analysis of current park and recreation offerings***
- ***Community needs assessment, grounded in feedback from the community and stakeholders***
- ***Recommendations for specific improvements, accompanied by realistic cost expectations***

The completion of this plan provides the City an updated record of their current park facilities, as well as, recommendations for implementing park and recreation improvements that respond to the needs expressed by community members that participated during the process.



*Native perennial landscape beds in Colby Park. Photo courtesy of City of Windsor Heights.*



PROCESS

In collaboration with the City of Windsor Heights, the design team executed a comprehensive planning process centered around determining what the community wants and needs pertaining to their park system and recreation amenities. Key elements of this planning process included:

- 1. Information Gathering** | Inventory of existing Windsor Heights park amenities and assessment of current conditions and site features. Nearby neighborhood parks, as well as, larger community parks were also reviewed to determine what additional park amenities reside on the outskirts of Windsor Heights.
- 2. Public Outreach** | Members of the community completed an online community input survey which received over 200 responses. A separate online survey was distributed to City Council members and City staff, to compare and contrast responses.
- 3. Accessibility Review** | ADA compliance was evaluated at each city park to determine where accessibility issues exist.
- 4. Analysis** | Thorough review of existing conditions, concurrent planning studies, National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) metrics, and public input was performed to prepare a needs assessment and preliminary improvement strategies.
- 5. Improvement Recommendations** | Improvement recommendations for community-wide and park specific improvements are accompanied by budget cost estimates for CIP planning and implementation.



# Inventory & Analysis

# 02





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# PARK INVENTORY

## OVERVIEW

Evaluating how well Windsor Heights is meeting the recreational needs of the community, starts by understanding what amenities currently exist within the park system and what condition each element is in. Park features and recreation equipment generally take a lot of abuse from users and from exposure to the elements. And like most things, there is a shelf life with this equipment. At some point the condition reaches a point where it is either not meeting the needs of the user, isn't functioning properly or is unsafe for continued use.

By conducting a thorough inventory of all Windsor Heights park equipment and amenities, the City can better track the condition of the equipment and implement a plan and timeline for continued maintenance or replacement.



Storm water information sign identifying existing storm water Best Management Practices at Colby Park.



FIGURE 2: PARK INVENTORY

		Acres	Distance (mi) to Windsor Heights (City Hall)	Basketball hoops/court
City of Windsor Heights Parks				
Location				
The Windsor Heights Dog Park	6601 Center St., Windsor Heights	1.8	1.2	
Colby Park	6900 School St., Windsor Heights	8.6	0.4	
Lion's Park	1133 66th St., Windsor Heights	0.2	0	
Walnut Creek Trail System	6900 School St., Windsor Heights			
Total		10.6		0
Nearby School Parks / Playgrounds				
Location				
Cowles Elementary	6401 College Ave, Des Moines	9.2	1	1
Windsor Elementary	5912 University Ave, Des Moines	4.3	0.7	1
Dowling Catholic High School	1400 Buffalo Rd, West Des Moines	60.8	1.1	
Clive Learning Academy	1600 73rd St, Windsor Heights	8.3	1.3	1
Hillis Elementary School	2401 56th St, Des Moines	8.0	2.1	1
St. Theresa School	5801 Cara Carpenter Ave. Des Moines	7.7	0.8	
Neighboring Community Parks				
City				
George Lundberg Park	Clive	2.0	1.2	1
Gray's Lake	Des Moines	167.0	5.9	
Holiday Park	West Des Moines	62.2	3.9	
Legion Park	West Des Moines	9.9	2.1	1
Linnan Park	Clive	34.0	1.9	1
Pearson Park	West Des Moines	8.5	2	1
Raccoon River Park	West Des Moines	631.6	5.2	
Riley Park	Urbandale	2.8	2.5	
Rocklyn Park	Urbandale	3.9	1.7	
South Karen Acres	Urbandale	7.0	2.6	1
Walker Johnston	Urbandale	70.5	3.7	
Water Works Park	Des Moines	1500.0	6.1	
Waveland Tennis Complex	Des Moines	2.2	1.9	
Wilson Park	West Des Moines	3.8	2.8	1
Total (including schools)		2603.7		10

The figure above is an inventory of various park amenities and recreational activities typically found in city parks, identifying which amenities exist in Windsor Heights parks. Understanding that Windsor Heights residents visit many of the parks just outside of the Windsor Heights city limits, the same inventory was performed for areas parks that residents indicated they visit on a regular basis.

FIGURE 2: CONT. FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Tennis courts	Pickleball courts (striped for)	Splash pad	Backstop/softball/baseball	Open field/football/soccer	Shelter (enclosed)	Open air shelters	Toilet facilities	Dog Park	Playground Equipment	Bike/walk Trail	Volleyball court	Parking	Skate Park
								1	1				
2	2		1		1	5	1		1	1		1	
												1	
2	2	0	1	0	1	5	1	1	1	2	0	2	0
				1					1			1	
				1					1			1	
6			2	4								1	
				1					1			1	
				1					1			1	
			1						2			1	
						1			1	1		1	
					1		2		1	1		1	
		1	16		1		2					1	
1		1	1			1	1		2			1	
3		1	1			1	1		1			1	
						1	1		1	1		1	
			5	1	2	4	4	1	2	1		1	
				1		2						1	
						1			1			1	
2	2		1				1		1	1			
8	4		4	1	1	3	1		2	1		1	1
			9	1		4	4			1		1	
12							1					1	
1			1			1				1		1	
33	6	3	41	12	5	19	18	1	18	8	0	19	1

PROXIMITY MAPPING

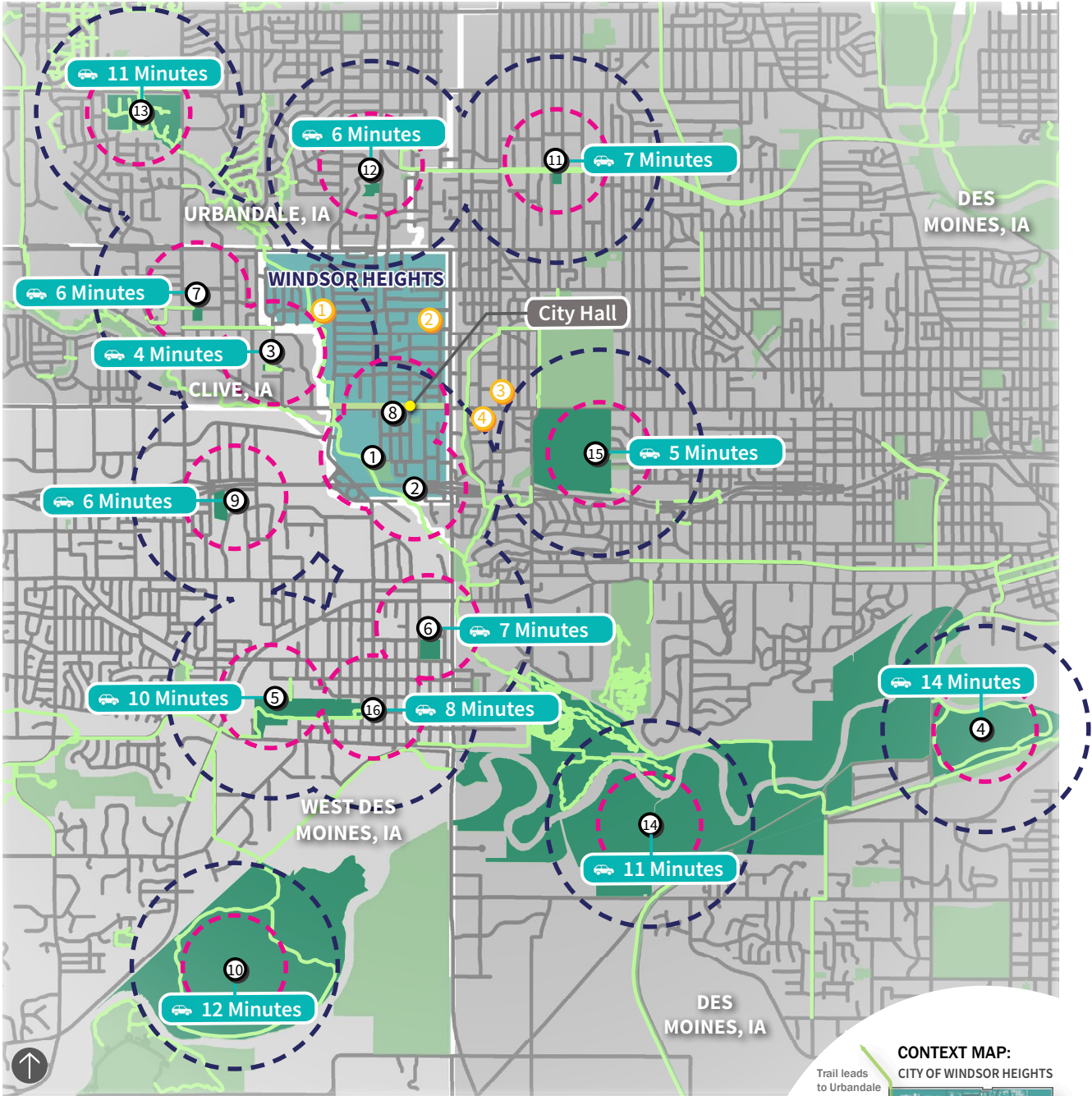
During the public input phase of the project, community participants indicated that they would like the City to keep and improve the existing tennis facility, consider adding a basketball court and add a splash pad to the community amenities.

While evaluating the need for these facilities a series of proximity maps were created to determine where similar facilities exist in and/or around Windsor Heights. Included in that mapping exercise, 1/4 mile and 1/2 mile walking radii are indicated, which also equal an approximately 5 minute or 10 minute walk. In general, these are the distances that are considered as the service areas for neighborhood parks. Larger scale, regional parks and/or regional attractions have larger services areas with the understanding that people will travel further for those destinations.

Proximity maps for tennis / pickleball facilities, outdoor basketball courts / hoops, and outdoor splash pad / wading pools are shown on the following pages.



FIGURE 3: LOCAL PARK PROXIMITY



LEGEND

- Regional Trails
- Regional Parks
- 10 min Walking Radius (0.5 mi)
- 5 min Walking Radius (0.25 mi)

AREA PARKS

- 1 Colby Park (0.4 mi)
- 2 Dog Park (1.2 mi)
- 3 George Lundberg Park (1.2 mi)
- 4 Gray's Lake (5.9 mi)
- 5 Holiday Park (3.9 mi)
- 6 Legion Park (2.1 mi)
- 7 Linnan Park (1.9 mi)
- 8 Lion's Park (0.2 mi)
- 9 Pearson Park (2 mi)
- 10 Raccoon River Park (5.2 mi)
- 11 Riley Park (2.5 mi)
- 12 Rocklyn Park (1.7 mi)
- 13 Walker Johnston Park (3.7 mi)
- 14 Water Works Park (6.1 mi)

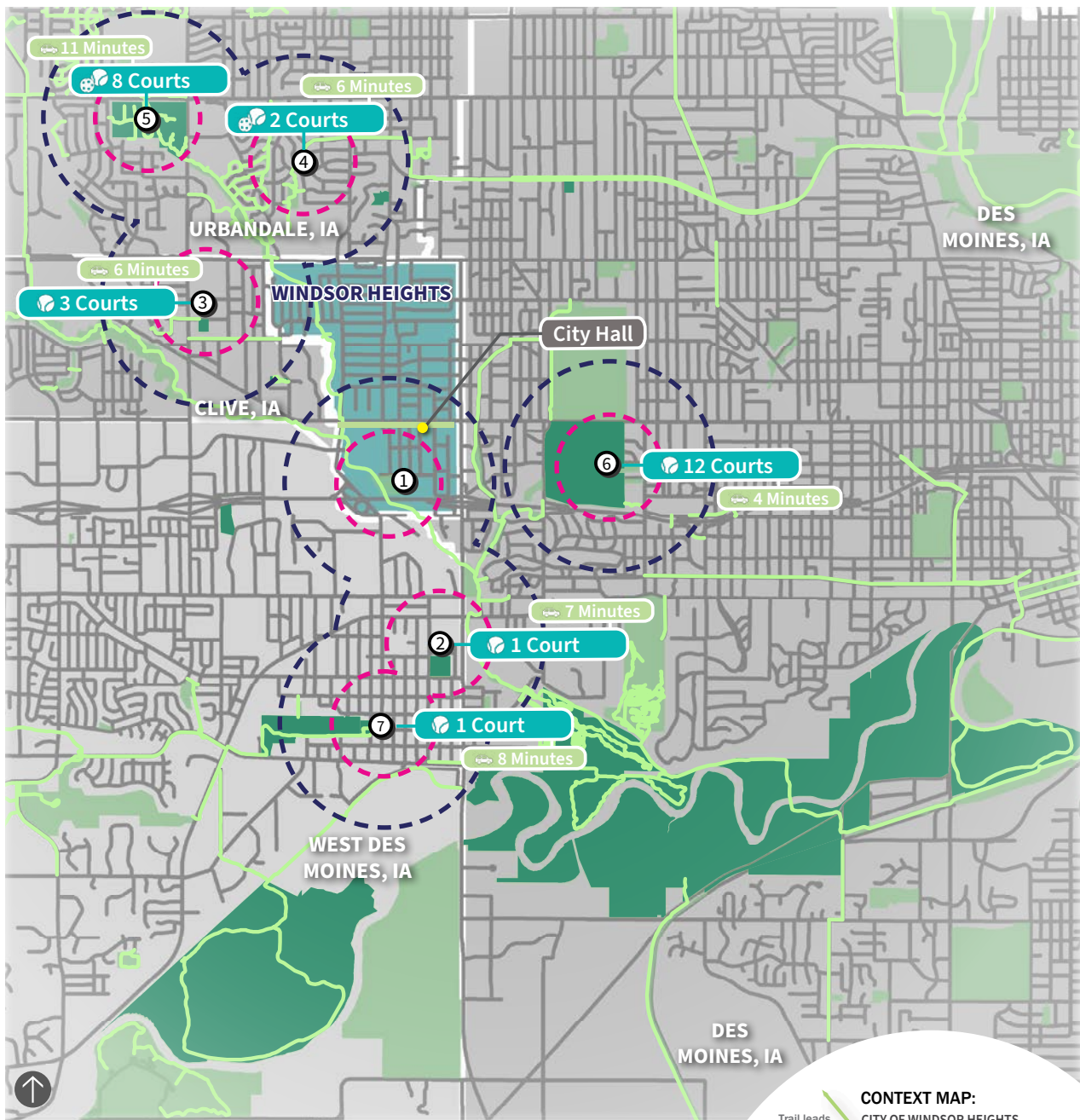
- 15 Waveland Tennis Complex (1.9 mi)
- 16 Wilson Park (2.8 mi)

NEARBY SCHOOLS

- 1 Clive Learning Academy (1.3 mi)
- 2 Cowles Elementary (1.0 mi)
- 3 St. Theresa School (0.8 mi)
- 4 Windsor Elementary (0.7 mi)



FIGURE 4: LOCAL TENNIS & PICKLEBALL FACILITY PROXIMITY



LEGEND

- Regional Trails
- Regional Parks
- 10 min Walking Radius (0.5 mi)
- 5 min Walking Radius (0.25 mi)
- Tennis Court
- Pickleball Court

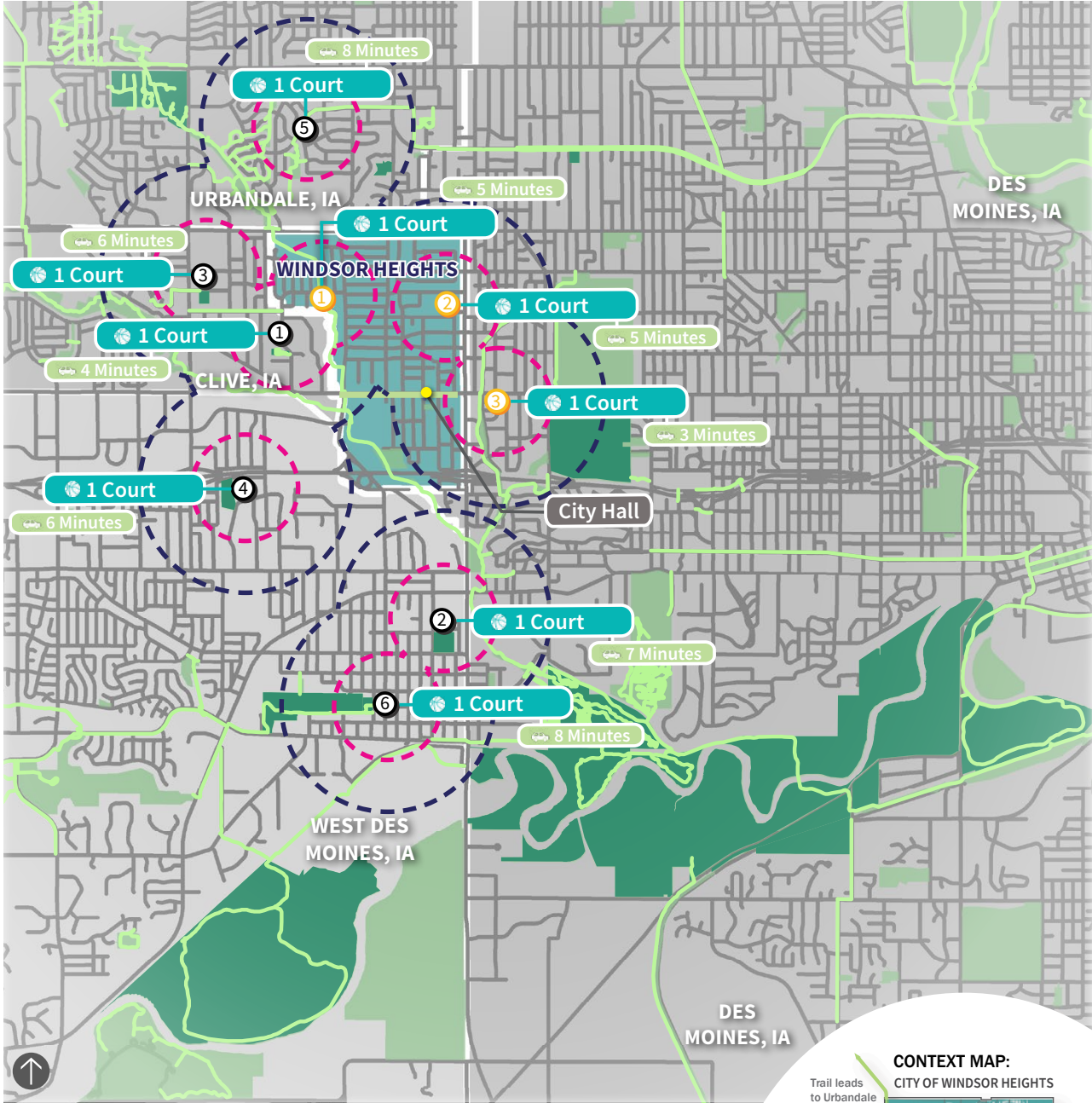
AREA PARKS

- 1 Colby Park (0.4 mi)
- 2 Legion Park (2.1 mi)
- 3 Linnan Park (1.9 mi)
- 4 South Karen Acres (2.6 mi)
- 5 Walker Johnston Park (3.7 mi)
- 6 Waveland Tennis Complex (1.9 mi)
- 7 Wilson Park (2.8 mi)





FIGURE 5: LOCAL BASKETBALL COURT PROXIMITY



LEGEND

- Regional Trails
- Regional Parks
- 10 min Walking Radius (0.5 mi)
- 5 min Walking Radius (0.25 mi)
- Basketball Court

AREA PARKS

- ① George Lundberg Park (1.2 mi)
- ② Legion Park (2.1 mi)
- ③ Linnan Park (1.9 mi)
- ④ Pearson Park (2 mi)
- ⑤ South Karen Acres (2.6 mi)
- ⑥ Wilson Park (2.8 mi)

NEARBY SCHOOLS

- ① Clive Learning Academy (1.3 mi)
- ② Cowles Elementary (1.0 mi)
- ③ Windsor Elementary (0.7 mi)

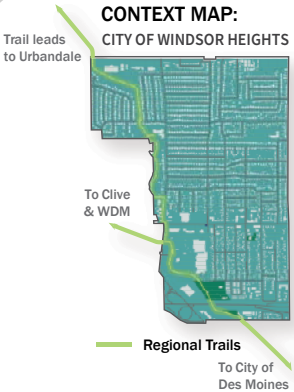
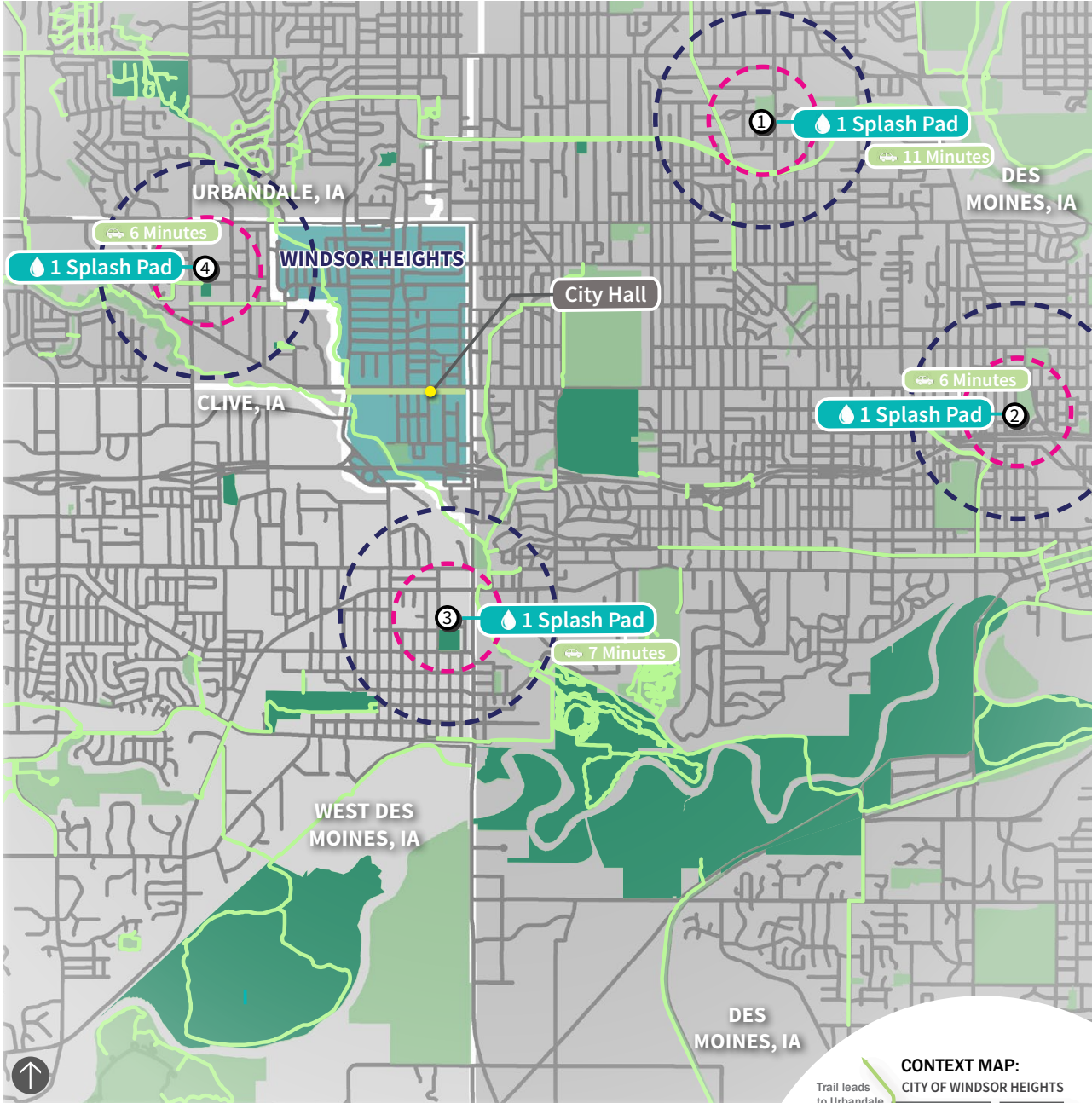


FIGURE 6: LOCAL SPLASH PAD PROXIMITY

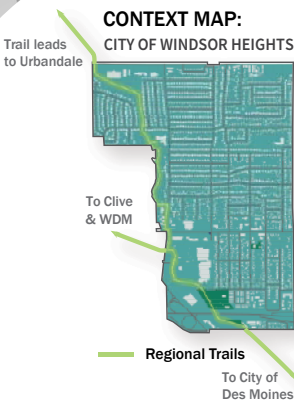


LEGEND

- Regional Trails
- Regional Parks
- 10 min Walking Radius (0.5 mi)
- 5 min Walking Radius (0.25 mi)
- Splash Pad

AREA PARKS

- ① Ashby Park (3.9 mi)
- ② Good Park (4.8 mi)
- ③ Legion Park (2.1 mi)
- ④ Linnan Park (1.9 mi)





INDIVIDUAL PARK ASSESSMENTS

An inventory assessment was performed at each Windsor Heights park to prepare an individual inventory of each facility but also conduct an objective analysis of the condition of the park features. The following figures include the inventory worksheets for Lions Park, Colby Park and the Dog Park.

FIGURE 7: LIONS PARK INVENTORY

<b>1133 66th S.</b>		
Overall Size = 0.2 AC		
PARK AMENITIES	YES/NO	DESCRIPTION
Playgrounds	NO	N/A
Play Equipment	NO	N/A
Ball Fields	NO	N/A
Courts	NO	N/A
Athletic Fields	NO	N/A
Shelter	NO	N/A
Restroom Facilities	NO	N/A
Drinking Fountain	NO	N/A
On-Site Parking	YES	There is parking available, but no ADA stalls. City owned parking is behind Public Safety building.
<b>NOTABLE SITE FEATURES</b>		
Seating is available, picnic tables (1) and chairs (4). There are 3 lights surrounding the site and various planting beds. A winding trail with an ADA ramp to the top and stairs that create a central space.		
<b>ADDITIONAL NOTES</b>		
The site is in poor condition, overgrown with weeds. There are many planting beds, but they are all overgrown, there is limited seating and no shade. The site itself is hard to find due to its location being behind the Windsor Heights City Hall. The site is underutilized and due to the steep grade change and limited space, opportunities for recreational amenities will be challenging.		

FIGURE 8: COLBY PARK INVENTORY

<b>6900 School St.</b>		
Overall Size = 8.6 AC		
PARK AMENITIES	YES/NO	DESCRIPTION
Playgrounds	YES	Multiple play areas with close proximity.
Play Equipment	YES	Three playground areas. Area no. 1 (age range 2-5): play structure (older condition), seated spring toys (2). Area no. 2 (age range 2-12): Adult swings (4), infant swings (2), swing with harness (1). Area no. 3 (age range 5-12): small play structure, large slide with steps (1), rock wall (1), digging seats (2), interactive tik tac toe (1), harmony musical play elements (new condition).
Ball Fields	YES	There is a field available for rent, bleachers (1), dugouts (2), and an exterior fence (damage by the dugouts).
Courts	YES	Tennis courts (2), poor condition with large cracks and damaged nets, pickleball striping (newer/good condition) on east court with portable pickleball net. Lights surrounding the court.
Athletic Fields	NO	N/A
Shelter	YES	One enclosed shelter, 1 open air structure (bandshell), and shade structures along path. Community Center (200 capacity), available for rent with a kitchen, heat and ac, restrooms, and 2 exterior grills. Parking is available. Bandshell, electrical outlets and lighting, sidewalk access with ADA ramp.
Restroom Facilities	YES	Restroom facilities are available in the Community Center. Both private restrooms indoors and exterior public restrooms.
Drinking Fountain	YES	Drinking fountains are available on the southern exterior wall of the Community Center.
On-Site Parking	YES	On site parking available to the west of the Community Center with a circle drive drop off area. ADA ramp available to and from the Community Center and connected to the drop off area.
<b>NOTABLE SITE FEATURES</b>		
Community Center, bandshell, benches (24), picnic tables (9), ecological practices such as bioretention cell, rain garden, and native prairie, annual planting beds around community center, welcome sign, ADA accessibility to community center, bandshell, and accessible parking.		
<b>ADDITIONAL NOTES</b>		
Tennis courts are in poor condition and public interest in updating the courts is prevalent. All of the ecological practices are good in concept but trap a lot of sediment and trash. Playground surfacing is in poor/failing condition. Play equipment is largely outdated. Circulation between play areas could be improved. Accessibility issues exist around main park amenities with numerous compliance issues from ADA parking to building and to park amenities.		



FIGURE 9: DOG PARK INVENTORY

6601 Center St.

Overall Size = 1.76 AC

PARK AMENITIES	YES/NO	DESCRIPTION
Playgrounds	NO	N/A
Play Equipment	NO	Dog play equipment: concrete tube/pipe, small hurdles (3), hill obstacle (1). All of these are on the "large dog" side of the park.
Ball Fields	NO	N/A
Courts	NO	N/A
Athletic Fields	NO	N/A
Shelter	NO	N/A
Restroom Facilities	NO	N/A
Drinking Fountain	NO	N/A
On-Site Parking	NO	Only on-street parking on Center Street.

NOTABLE SITE FEATURES

The site is split into 2 separate dog parks, one being suitable for smaller dogs and one being for larger dogs. There are 3 stations that provided the guests with doggie bags. The site hasbenches (7), picnic tables (5), trash receptacles (3).

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Some of the seating is in poor conditions. Along the fence there is a lot of buildup debris. No food or drink is allowed in the park. The park can be difficult to find without knowledge of the area.

Improvement Strategies

03





# COMMUNITY DRIVEN IMPROVEMENTS

## COMMUNITY-WIDE STRATEGIES

A multitude of parks, trails and recreational amenities are vital to the well-being of our communities. Having a diverse offering of amenities and resources, caters to the ever-changing recreation trends and diversity that continues to build in the Des Moines metro. Amenities should be accessible to all residents and appeal to users of different age groups and abilities. This section of the Park Master Plan outlines the objectives and opportunities available to preserve, restore and improve the park and recreation resources within Windsor Heights.

While understanding that there are specific improvements to be made at individual parks, there are also community-wide strategies that were evident in both the analysis stage and as identified by the community input survey (refer to Section 4 – Input Gathering).

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Summer concert series in the Colby Park event lawn. Photo courtesy of City of Windsor Heights.



Better Distribution of Amenities Throughout the Community

One of the recommendations of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan includes finding opportunities for additional park space in the northern portion of the community (north of University Avenue). As illustrated on the Park Service Area Map (Figure 1 on page 9), Windsor Heights parks’ reside in the southern one-third of the community, both the majority of residents are in the northern half of the community. Although parks in neighboring communities help serve residents in Windsor Heights, it is important that the City not rely on other communities to provide resources to it’s residents.

Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan recommendations, pursuing opportunities to acquire vacant lots, partnering with West Des Moines or Des Moines School Districts or with private developers, may open an opportunity to create additional park space for the Community.

Increase Diversity of Amenities

Colby Park is an incredible community amenity, but it doesn’t need to be the only place in the community to add new amenities. By potentially expanding the available acreage of the Windsor Heights park system, the City should consider adding amenities that are not already offered at other community parks and may not be available at parks on the periphery of the community. Specific amenities that should be considered include:

- **Open Air Shelter** – This could be a space that also functions as an outdoor classroom if the City could partner with one of the local schools.
- **Nature Playscape or Specialty Playground** – Could be a great trailside amenity.
- **Outdoor Fitness Circuit** – Consider placing stations along the trail or at multiple locations in the community.

Improve Accessibility and ADA Compliance

Attention should be given to providing accessible amenities and maintaining ADA compliance to and around all public facilities, this includes city parks. Review of ADA compliance at Colby Park, Lions Park and the Dog Park, identified numerous non-compliance issues that are not only a liability to the City, but limit access for those who are mobility impaired. Specific access issues include:

- **Seating areas** – Should allow wheelchair access and include ADA designed/designated tables.
- **Accessible walkways** – Should connect main sidewalks/circulation routes with park amenities (bleacher area at Colby Park, playground, seating areas, tennis court, etc.). Recommend six foot wide accessible walkway (five foot minimum). Specific areas will justify the need for wider paths.
- **Provide Accessible Play Equipment** – Review playground/play area design for ADA compliance and provide the appropriate amount of accessible play features.
- **Maintain Accessible Play Surfacing** – Replace existing play surfacing with an accessible material. If the existing surfacing is not replaced, provide compliant ramps into the play area and maintain the wood fiber surfacing to ensure an accessible route to the play equipment.

CONCURRENT STUDIES

Several metro-wide planning initiatives will have a positive impact on the outdoor recreation amenities in the area. From establishing a better network of inter-connected trails to connect to the regional trail systems, to establishing water trails and river access, most metro communities are making strides in improving and expanding outdoor recreation amenities for their residents. In Windsor Heights, specific concurrent studies/ projects include:

University Avenue Corridor Reconstruction:

Once complete (anticipated completion of Fall 2021), the University Avenue Corridor through Windsor Heights will include a multi-use trail, increased pedestrian accommodations and a safer trail connection at 73rd Street.

Walnut Creek Water Trails Engineering Study:

The Capital Crossroads Water Trails Incubator has recommended a water trail access point for Walnut Creek in Windsor Heights. Their recommended improvements “are aimed at providing a connection to the creek for park and trail users, and features a stream restoration demonstration project, public art, interpretive signage, soft trails, natural play features near the creek, respite areas, and a limestone stair access. The proposed improvements benefit numerous user groups including: park visitors, paddlers, waders, birders, and anglers.”

More information about this study can be found on the MPO’s website:

https://dmampo.org/water-trails/

Walnut Creek Pedestrian Bridge and Bike Hub Engineering Study:

The City of Windsor Heights has partnered with the City of West Des Moines to do a feasibility study on a pedestrian bridge over Walnut Creek. There are three locations being studied to determine feasibility and estimated cost. All three locations are between Center Street and Interstate 235.

The City has been approached by a developer about building a public/private bike hub facility on the north side of the Center Street ROW somewhere on the west side of Walnut Creek. The bridge study will determine where the bridge serving this facility would be built. The intent is for the bike hub and bridge to be located adjacent to each other. The proposed bridge would more efficiently and safely connect the Des Moines, West Des Moines, Windsor Heights, and western suburb trail systems.



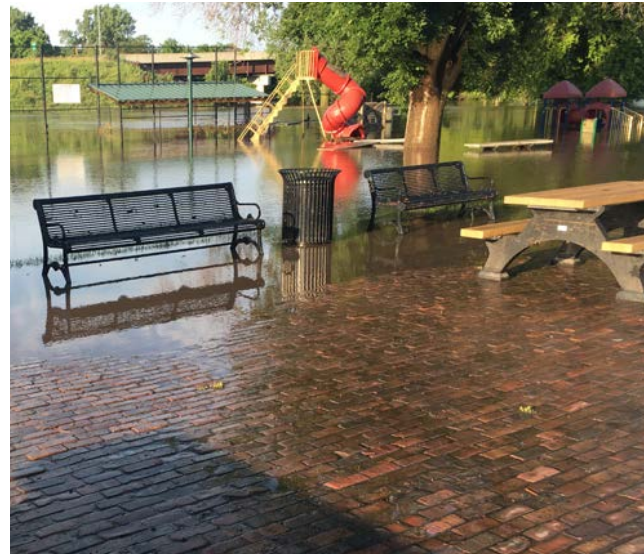
## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT & FLOOD RESILIENCY

Colby Park sits alongside Walnut Creek. The overall Walnut Creek watershed comprises 83 square miles across Polk and Dallas counties. Approximately half of the watershed is developed currently; with continual growth expected as residential and commercial development spreads outward from the Des Moines metro. For more information, refer to the Walnut Creek Watershed Master Plan (2016) [http://www.watershediowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/wma\\_masterplan\\_june-2016\\_final\\_lores.pdf](http://www.watershediowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/wma_masterplan_june-2016_final_lores.pdf).

The proximity and access to Walnut Creek serve as a great resource for the park, adding natural beauty and unique recreational opportunities. However, the benefits of the creek are not without consequence. Walnut Creek is prone to flash flooding, capable of swallowing Colby Park in a few feet of water with little to no notice before leaving behind a layer of debris and sediment. This phenomenon is unlikely to improve as further upstream development potentially increases peak flows in the stream. More stringent development standards for stormwater management will help to plateau the impacts, however.



**Walnut Creek flooding, July 2018. Photo courtesy of City of Windsor Heights.**



**Flood prone area in Colby Park, July 2018. Photo courtesy of City of Windsor Heights.**

As such, the flood risk in Colby Park will remain and the community must continually confront these challenges. To help mitigate the impacts of potential flooding, park enhancements should be incorporated which are resilient to flooding and which are conducive to post-flood clean up and maintenance. Park materials, such as playground equipment, should be properly anchored to resist buoyant forces and should be made of materials which are not susceptible to damage from colliding debris. Further, vegetated surfaces should be promoted where possible; where artificial surfaces are necessary, consideration should be given to the potential of that material to wash away during a flood and the costs of replacing it and or cleaning it.

One of the most significant features of Colby Park is the Community Center. This facility serves several community functions such as hosting community events and public meetings, as well as a rental facility for private events. Unfortunately, the community center sits approximately one-and-a-half feet below the 100-year base flood elevation. Potential flood damages to the facility could be costly. It is recommended that the City consider obtaining flood insurance for the building. Further, the costs and benefits of flood-proofing the building should be evaluated and considered.

## WALNUT CREEK TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

With approx. 2 miles of multi-use trail and more currently in planning and construction phases, community members have access to many miles of regional trails in the metro.

As indicated during the community input phase of the project, keeping up on the maintenance of the trail to ensure the longevity of the pavement and provide a positive user experience is among the top concerns from community members. Also among that list is expanding trail-side amenities for trail users and improving the connection of Colby Park to the Dog Park.

The following is a list of specific improvement strategies for creating a more user-friendly and safer trail experience:

### Trail Lighting

It is not encouraged to provide lighting along the entirety of the trail system, nor is it cost effective, but one area that continues to be an area of concern is the connection of Colby Park to Center Street.

Included in this section is the Interstate 235 bridge, which is at many times quite dark and is often perceived as an unsafe space. Extending lighting from Colby Park through this segment and terminating at Center Street, provides a safer space in low-light conditions but also provides a stronger connection of the Dog Park to the rest of the community.



**Existing trailside lighting in Colby Park.**



**Walnut Creek Trail beneath the Interstate 235 bridge between Colby Park and Center Street.**



### Trailside Amenities

While Colby Park provides great access to the trail system, there are few amenities that cater to trail users. Specific amenities that should be considered include:

- ***Bike Racks***
- ***Fix-It Station***
- ***Drinking Fountain/Bottle Filler***

### Annual Maintenance Budget

One concern that was repeatedly expressed by the community, included addressing areas of the trail that are in disrepair. Cracked pavement, ruts and/or heaving pavement and ponding issues are common maintenance issues with most trails and do occur in several areas along the trail in Windsor Heights.

To stay ahead of trail maintenance and to prevent larger problems from developing in the future, it is recommended that the City establish an annual maintenance budget specifically dedicated to addressing trail repairs.

While resurfacing of the trail or patching of the pavement may be short-term solutions to certain issues, the City should also look at what is causing these issues and take a more comprehensive approach to pursuing long-term solutions.

Clearing of vegetation and keeping large trees an adequate distance from the trail edge, will reduce the tendency for tree roots to heave the pavement. Addressing drainage issues and erosion will reduce ponding on the trail surface and/or from effecting the trail subsurface conditions.

Dedicating funding to making strategic trail improvements over a period of 3-5 years will allow staff to stay on top of trail maintenance and will likely promote less spending on trail repairs long-term.

Appendix B.1 provides a budget estimate for the proposed trail improvements described herein.

## PARK SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS

### OVERVIEW

The following pages identify and describe improvement strategies that are specific to Colby Park, Lions Park and the Dog Park. These recommendations were derived by examining each site and developing an understanding of the challenges and opportunities at each location. Input from community members, City Council and City staff, informed this process and validate the community desire and need for each recommendation. Estimated preliminary budget costs accompany each recommendation. For a more detailed cost estimate, refer to **Appendix B.1 - Preliminary Cost Estimates**.



*Perennial landscape beds at the entry to Colby Park.*



*Open-air performance pavilion is venue to many community events.*



*Historic paver patio outside the Community Center.*



FIGURE 10: COLBY PARK IMPROVEMENTS



**1 UPDATE PLAYGROUND AREA: BUDGET EST. = \$480K**

Most of the existing play equipment is outdated and showing increased signs of wear. Existing rubberized play surfacing is deteriorating and the wood fiber is often displaced.

**Opportunity.**

Replace play equipment and consolidate play areas by utilizing play structures that can accommodate more uses, with higher play value and less footprint. Use poured-in-place surfacing in areas of higher use and minimize the use of wood fiber surfacing. Incorporate shade canopies into the play structures where feasible. Contain the play areas with accessible pavements and thickened concrete edging to tie into playground subbase. Provide adequate subsurface drainage beneath play surfacing with subdrain cleanouts.

**2 RESURFACE TENNIS COURTS: BUDGET EST. = \$250K**

Reconstruct existing tennis court pavement or repair surfacing and cover with sport court tiles.

**Opportunity.**

While reconstructing or replacing existing court surface, accomodate pickleball striping on one of the two courts and add a basketball hoop on one end of the courts. Add free-throw line and three point arc.

An Improved tennis facility provides the community a better user experience and presents an opportunity to provide additional amenities with efficient use of the current space.

**3 INSTALL SPLASH PAD: BUDGET EST. = \$400K**

Among the top requests of the community input survey participants, is the addition of a splash pad at Colby Park.

**Opportunity.**

Currently, the City of Windsor Heights does not have any aquatic resources. Adding a splash pad would diversify the recreational resources of the community, provide an aquatic amenity and is an activity that can be enjoyed by users of different age groups and abilities.

Siting a splash pad in close proximity to the Community Center could reduce infrastructure costs with access to existing utilities and would help reduce cleanup needs associated with seasonal flooding along Walnut Creek.



Existing tennis court facility.



Playground surfacing and edge conditions.



Native prairie restoration adjacent Walnut Creek.



#### 4 PARKING LOT BIO-CELL: BUDGET EST. = \$100K

The existing bioretention cell (bio-cell) is no longer functioning as intended. The subsurface filter material and storage material has become clogged with sediment and the vegetation has become overgrown. The practice is beyond the point in which simple care and maintenance can remedy it. Instead, it is recommended that the biocell be replaced and reconstructed.

##### **Opportunity.**

Replacing the biocell will allow the City to rebuild it according to current design standards, while also beginning a proactive maintenance program to ensure long-term success. The practice can be designed to store and treat all runoff from the first 1.25" inches of rain, helping to improve water quality and reduce runoff from the site.



*Existing condition of parking lot bio-cell.*

#### 5 B-CYCLE: BUDGET EST. = \$40K

Bike sharing programs provide access to bicycles and an opportunity to experience trails, while reducing the need to rely on other forms of vehicular transportation. In the Des Moines Metro, the network of B-Cycle station continues to grow and provide access to this great mode of alternative transportation.

##### **Opportunity.**

Adding a B-Cycle station at Colby Park takes advantage of the close proximity to the Walnut Creek Trail and the available on-site parking. High visibility and increased foot traffic will promote increased use of the bike sharing facility. To better promote a successful bike share program, the City should partner with other western suburb communities to develop a stronger network of B-Cycle stations along Walnut Creek / Clive Greenbelt trail and potentially out to the Raccoon River Valley Trail.

Consideration while siting the B-Cycle station should take into account flood prone areas to minimize the need to relocate equipment during flood events.

#### 6 ACCESSIBILITY: BUDGET EST. = \$135K

While some improvements have already been made with the addition of an accessible walk to the Community Center entrance, ADA non-compliance issues still exist on walks and connections from the designated accessible parking spaces to the Community Center and other site amenities. Specific areas include: walks from the parking area and circle drive to the sidewalk from the tennis courts and Community Center.

##### **Opportunity.**

Establish accessible connections from the parking area to the Community Center and



*B-Cycle station in downtown Des Moines.*



*Existing accessible parking accommodations at Colby Park.*

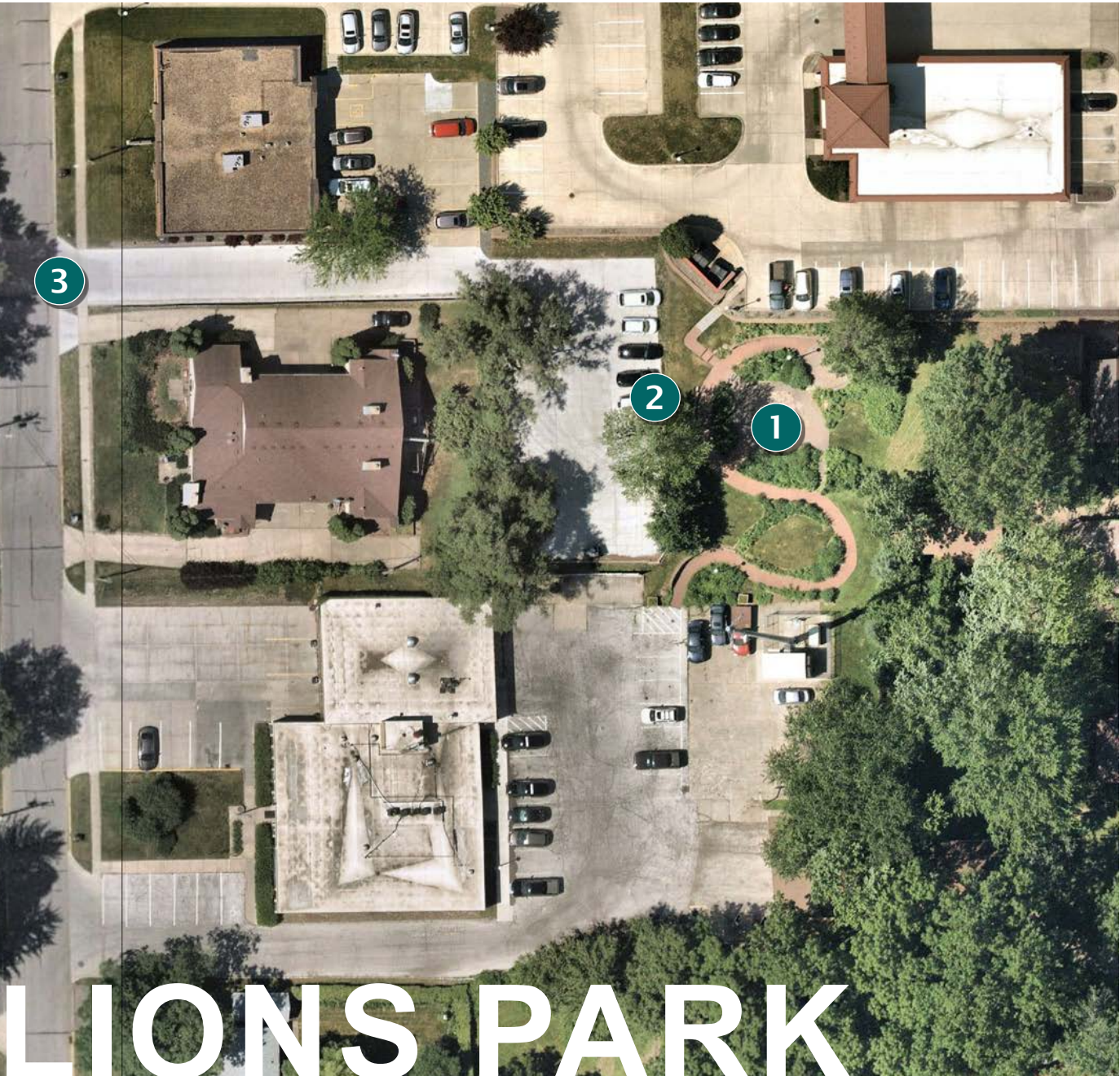
to the entire park from the current designated accessible parking area. The City can also consider adding additional ADA parking spaces at the back of the Community Center along with providing an accessible path. Ensure ADA compliance on all walkways to seating areas, ballfield bleachers and the playground.

Completion of an ADA Transition Plan should be considered to provide a more in-depth evaluation of all City owned facilities and formulate a replacement plan to bring the City into ADA compliance.

Refer to **Appendix C.1 - ADA Compliance Issues Map** for an exhibit indicating a preliminary study identifying ADA non-compliance issues at Colby Park.



FIGURE 11: LIONS PARK IMPROVEMENTS



**1 INCREASE AMENITIES AND FUNCTIONAL USE OF SPACE:**  
*BUDGET EST. = \$450K*

When asked about what should be improved at Lions Park, many community participants responded that they had never been to this park or didn't know it existed.

**Opportunity.**

Create a more functional space by providing amenities that the community is missing, such as an open-air shelter or additional 2-5 age play area. Utilize the sites' unique topography to incorporate slides or climbing structures that may not be possible in an otherwise flat park space.

**2 PROVIDE DEDICATED PARKING:** *BUDGET TBD*

Parking for Lions Park is available but finding it is confusing. Existing signage does not clearly indicate what spaces are provided for the park.

**Opportunity.**

Provide and sign dedicated parking for park visitors. Provide an accessible walkway from the parking areas into the park space.

**3 WAYFINDING SIGNAGE:**  
*BUDGET EST. = \$10K*

One of the factors limiting the use and exposure of Lions Park is the understated and lack of adequate signage to direct community members into the space.

**Opportunity.**

Provide signage that is consistent with City of Windsor Heights branding to promote Lions Park and direct community members and visitors to the park.



*Parking sign for Lions Park visitors.*



*Park walkways, seating area and landscape beds.*



*Plant debris and build up along retaining walls.*



FIGURE 12: DOG PARK IMPROVEMENTS



**1 ADDRESS PARKING CONCERNS:**  
*BUDGET TBD*

Many park users park on Center Street, which contributes to congestion on the street and takes up on-street parking which would otherwise be used for residents on that street.

**Opportunity.**

Consider head-in parking along Center Street or a public/private agreement with Storage Mart to utilize their parking area or expand it for public use.

**2 UPDATE PARK EQUIPMENT:**  
*BUDGET EST. = \$10K*

There are few park obstacles and the existing amenities are showing increasing wear.

**Opportunity.**

Provide additional and replace existing park equipment / obstacles. More equipment would accomodate more users and better facilitate the needs of the park visitors.

**3 REPLACE FENCING:**  
*BUDGET EST. = \$75K*

Fencing along the Walnut Creek Trail has multiple damaged areas and is unsightly, casting a negative image on the City's amenities.

**Opportunity.**

Replace fencing to match the fencing along the north side of the park, with more substantial posts and heavier gauge chain-link.

Replacing the fencing will improve the appearance of the park, provides a safer space for pets and will reduce annual upkeep and repairs.

**4 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM:**  
*BUDGET TBD*

This is the only dog park in the metro that does not require a membership and that poses some risks to the City from a liability stand-point and to other park users.

**Opportunity.**

To offset the maintenance costs and to be able to provide new equipment, the City should consider an annual membership program for Dog Park users. Most communities with dog parks, have a membership program and charge annual dues. This helps to not only fund the park and maintenance needs but also provides a level of accountability for park users to follow the City's ordinances and rules for the facility.



Dog Park entrance sign.



Parallel parking on Center Street.



Existing fence conditions.



# IMPLEMENTATION

## OVERVIEW

Collectively, the recommended improvement strategies are a comprehensive approach to preserving, restoring and enhancing the parks and open space in Windsor Heights, but the implementation will require time. It is anticipated that these improvements will be implemented in phases, as funding is available and opportunities for public and private partnerships are fostered.

As it is with many communities, funding needs for parks and open space typically exceeds the capabilities of the City’s budget and often take a back seat to other infrastructure improvements that residents rely on daily. As a result, it is important that the City explore opportunities for both public and private funding. The completion of this plan, accompanied by construction cost estimates, will allow the City to plan for and pursue additional funding to implement specific projects.

It should be understood that each project will require additional exploration and design, which will refine project extents and cost expectations. The information provided herein is intended for planning and budgeting purposes only.

Each improvement recommendation identified herein is described with a planning level budget cost. For a more detailed breakdown of the estimated costs associated with the major components of each project refer to **Appendix B.1 - Preliminary Cost Estimates**.

# Input Gathering 04





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# COMMUNITY INPUT SURVEY

## OVERVIEW

A community input survey was prepared and available for public access for a period of six weeks. The online survey was advertised weekly on the City’s website and social media outlets, as well, as in the community newsletter. Overall, there were 204 responses to the community input survey.

In order to better understand the participants, the survey started by asking a series of introductory questions relating to participant demographics. Then followed by questions pertaining to how community members value parks and open space, as they relate to the overall quality of life in the community. In general, participants put considerable value on parks and open space amenities and feel that these resources are very important to the quality of life in Windsor Heights. The majority age group of participants were in the 30-40 age range, which may be suggestive of an increase of active, younger families residing in the community. The remainder of the survey asked participants to describe what specific amenities, activities, and improvements they would like to see added or changed at each City owned park.

In addition to the community-wide input survey, a separate survey was developed for completion by City Council members and City staff. While this survey asked some of the same questions as the community survey, council and staff were asked to also evaluate proposed recommendations of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan.

By conducting a separate survey, a comparison could be made to determine how the community needs align with city leadership expectations. While community members often sought new and improved amenities, staff and council members generally advised to fix issues with the City’s current amenities and find long-term solutions to reduce maintenance, upkeep, and lower life-cycle costs. In addition, staff and council understand the shortage of park acres and are in favor of pursuing additional opportunities for expanding park and open space opportunities in the community.

The recommendations described in Section 3 – Improvement Strategies, strike a balance between expanding amenities and **“fixing what we already have”** by providing long-term solutions to on-going issues / maintenance concerns.

The following provides a summary of the community input received from the community survey and input from City Council and staff. A full report of results from both surveys can be found in the appendix documents of this plan.

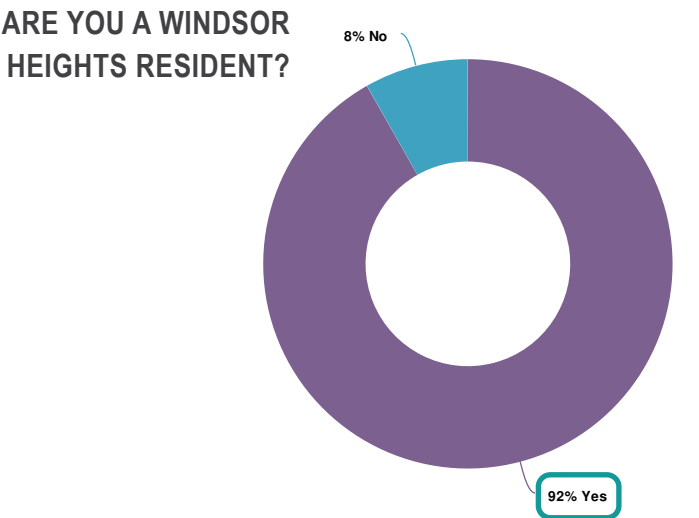
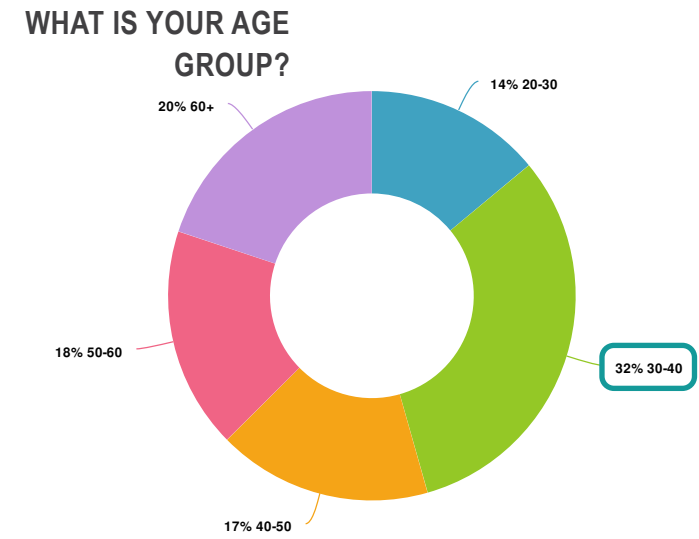


SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

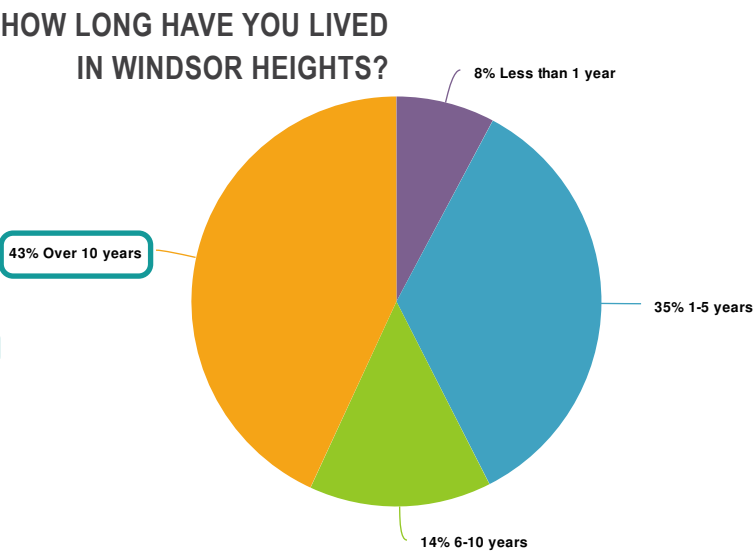
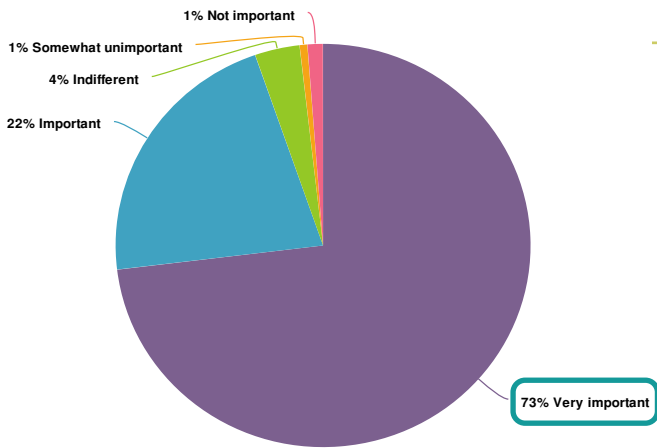
32% of participants were in the 30-40 age group, which may suggest a increase of active, younger families.

43% of participants have lived in Windsor Heights for 10+ years, which illustrates strong community involvement and longevity.

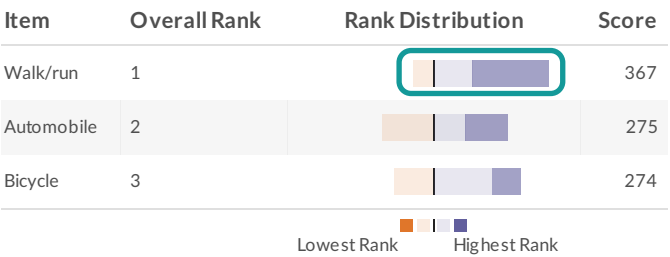
An overwhelming majority say parks, trails and open spaces are very important to the overall quality of life in their community, which supports the importance of maintaining and enhancing these amenities to continue supporting the needs of the community.



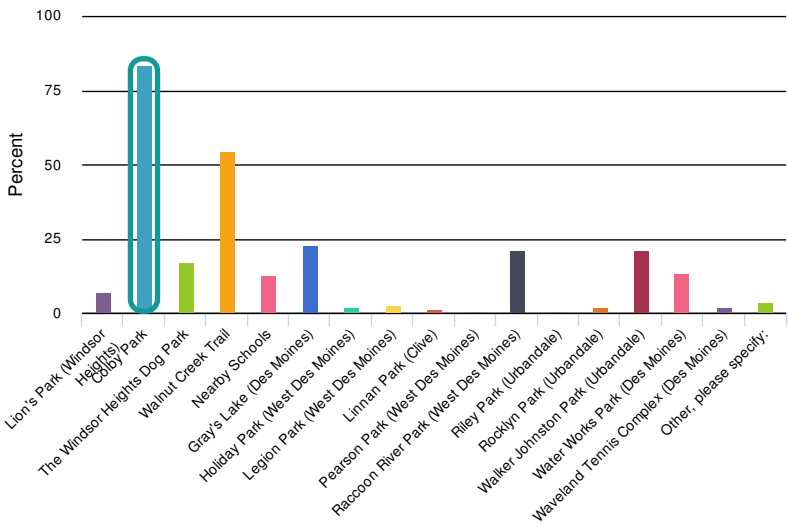
HOW IMPORTANT ARE PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACES TO THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE IN WINDSOR HEIGHTS?



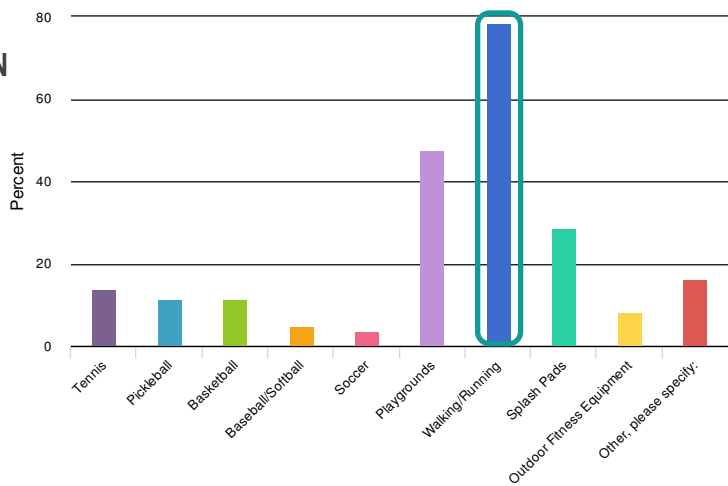
IF YOU ARE GOING TO VISIT A PARK OR TRAIL, HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY GET THERE?



IF YOU ARE GOING TO VISIT AN AREA PARK, WHICH PARK DO YOU VISIT MOST OFTEN?

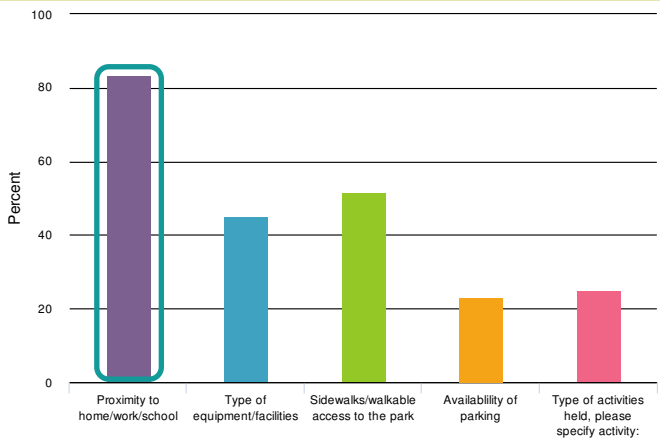


WHEN YOU VISIT A PARK OR OPEN SPACE, WHAT ACTIVITY DO YOU AND/OR YOUR FAMILY LIKE TO DO OR PARTICIPATE IN MOST OFTEN?



These results express the importance of providing close proximity and accessibility to recreational amenities do to the high percentage of people walking/running to access city parks.

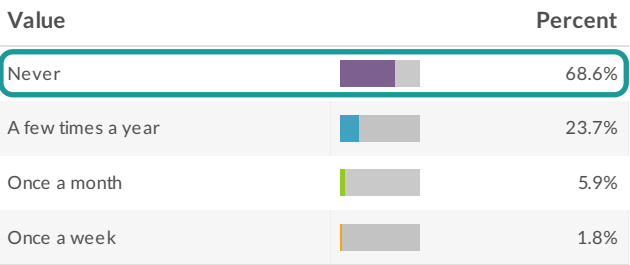
WHY DO YOU VISIT CERTAIN PARKS MORE OFTEN THAN OTHERS?





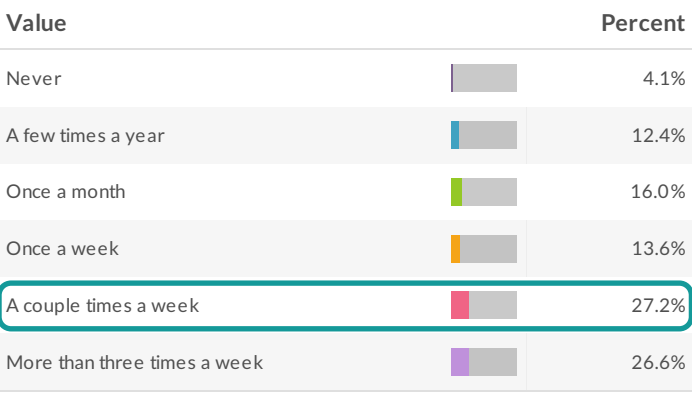
HOW OFTEN DO YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD TYPICALLY VISIT LION’S PARK?

This illustrates a need for promoting this park and putting emphasis on utilizing this community space.



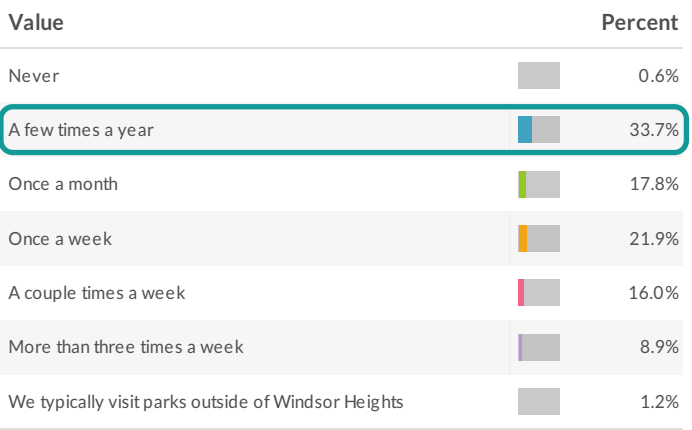
HOW OFTEN DO YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD TYPICALLY USE THE TRAIL SYSTEM?

Efficient and accessible connections to the trail system are important to the community, continuing to invest in improving sidewalks, trail access and pedestrian safety is critical to supporting the needs of the community.



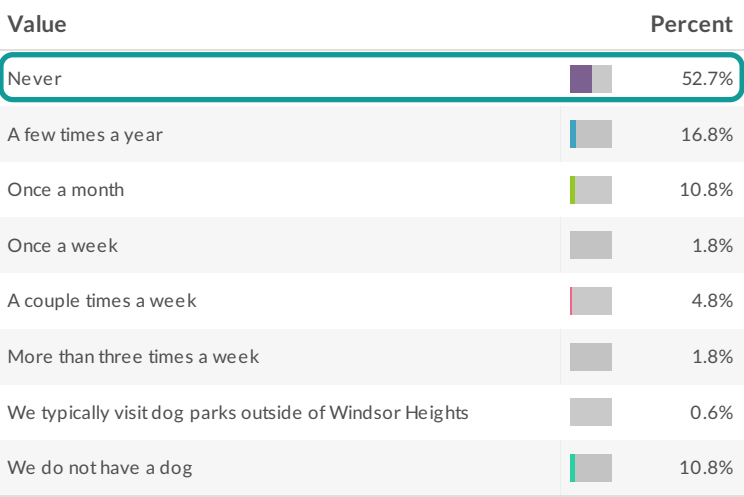
HOW OFTEN DO YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD TYPICALLY VISIT COLBY PARK?

Most participants indicate they would like to see more activities in the park. More outdoor concerts and community events, coupled with improving park amenities may promote more park usage.



HOW OFTEN DO YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD TYPICALLY USE THE WINDSOR HEIGHTS DOG PARK?

The dog park is appealing to dog owners and while it may not appeal to the broader community, it does get a lot of use, likely by a combination of Windsor Heights residents and residents in neighboring communities.



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CHANGED/ ADDED/IMPROVED AT COLBY PARK?

Top Recurring Responses:

Community-Wide

- 1. Splash Pad
- 2. More events (food trucks, exercise classes, live music, etc.)
- 3. More shade and seating
- 4. Updated playground equipment

Other items for consideration:

- Pickleball striping and tennis court updates
- Basketball court
- More water fountains

Top Recurring Responses:

Staff / Council

- 1. Repairs to existing amenities
- 2. Updated playground equipment
- 3. Tennis court repaired or resurfaced

Other items for consideration:

- Splash pad
- More community events

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CHANGED/ ADDED/IMPROVED AT LIONS PARK?

Top Recurring Responses:

Community-Wide

- 1. Unaware of location, advertise park more with signage
- 2. Better upkeep and more greenery
- 3. More shade

Other items for consideration:

- More seating
- A notable feature that will bring people to the park

Top Recurring Responses:

Staff / Council

- 1. Remove or replace with something different
- 2. Better upkeep and replace landscaping

Other items for consideration:

- More seating
- Potential for replacing the park with a splash pad or more parking

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CHANGED/ ADDED/IMPROVED AT THE DOG PARK?

Top Recurring Responses:

Community-Wide

- 1. Water source (for both people and animals)
- 2. Better parking options
- 3. Updated course equipment
- 4. Maintenance to the property

Other items for consideration:

- Updating rules of the park to ensure that dogs entering the park are vaccinated

Top Recurring Responses:

Staff / Council

- 1. Better and more parking options
- 2. Repairs to the property specifically the fencing
- 3. Updated course equipment

Other items for consideration:

- More trash cans



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CHANGED/  
ADDED/IMPROVED ON THE TRAILS?

Top Recurring Responses:

Community-Wide

1. Better and safer trail transition from 73rd Street and University
2. Water stations
3. More signage along the trails
4. Better drainage along the trails

Other items for consideration:

- More lighting
- More trash cans

WITH LIMITED AVAILABLE PARK/RECREATION SPACE, THE CITY SEEKS TO OFFER UNIQUE RECREATION AMENITIES NOT AVAILABLE AT OTHER NEARBY PARKS. WITH THAT IN MIND, WHAT RECREATION AMENITY WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ADDED AT COLBY PARK?

Top Recurring Responses:

1. Splash Pad
2. Outdoor Fitness Equipment
3. Pickleball

Other items for consideration:

- Basketball court
- Volleyball court

WHICH OF THE ITEMS BELOW DO YOU FEEL IS A PRIORITY FOR THE CITY TO INVEST IN OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS ? (rank in order of preference)

Community-Wide:

1. Additional / New Park Amenities
2. Colby Park Stormwater Management
3. Addition of Outdoor Fitness Equipment
4. Colby Park Playground / Play Equipment
5. Accessibility / ADA Improvements
6. Improving Park Aesthetics

Top Recurring Responses:

Staff / Council

1. Better and safer trail transition from 73rd Street and University
2. Better drainage along the trails
3. More lighting

Staff / Council:

1. Colby Park Stormwater Management
2. Colby Park Playground / Play Equipment
3. Accessibility / ADA Improvements
4. Additional / New Park Amenities
5. Improving Park Aesthetics
6. Addition of Outdoor Fitness Equipment

# Needs Assessment 05





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# RECREATION NEEDS & LEVEL OF SERVICE

## OVERVIEW

According to the Iowa Department of Public Health, obesity is Iowa’s #1 health threat. As identified by the 2018 Physical Activity Guideline Advisory Committee Scientific Report, only 1 in 5 adults in Iowa meets the performance guidelines for physical activity.

Among adults in Iowa:

- *Ages 35-44 have the highest percentage of obesity*
- *45-older have the highest percentage in overweight classifications*

Understanding that unhealthy habits are formed at early ages, this problem plagues younger Iowans as well.

Percent of Students in Grades 9-12 Who Have Obesity:

- *9th grade: 15%*
- *10th grade: 13%*
- *11th grade: 12%*
- *12th grade: 14%*

One strategy for improving these statistics is for communities to offer quality outdoor recreation amenities and provide access to these resources at every age group and ability level. One of the top two reasons that Iowans don’t participate in outdoor recreation activities is not having enough opportunities for the activity. The other is lack of time. By improving access to recreation and promoting the available resources and opportunities that exist, community members will be more prone to participating in outdoor recreation activities.



Little Free Library in Colby Park.



Donor recognition for Harmony Park features at Colby Park.



FIGURE 13: METRO COMMUNITY POPULATION COMPARISON

Community	Population
Windsor Heights	4,900
Bondurant	6,646
Pleasant Hill	10,064
Grimes	13,562
Clive	17,100
Altoona	18,844
Johnston	22,040
Waukee	24,089
Urbandale	45,077
Ankeny	65,284
West Des Moines	66,641
Des Moines	216,853

Windsor Heights is the smallest Des Moines Metro community in terms of area and population and as previously described, is completely land locked. This presents a challenge with expanding park and open space, as land is scarce and expensive. Evaluating community needs is critical to the conversation of improving and expanding parks and open space in Windsor Heights, to allow the City to make informed decisions that utilize space and opportunities efficiently and fulfill some of the voids that currently exist in the City’s park and open space system.

To assess the community’s needs for park and recreation amenities, a combination of resources were evaluated:

- **Community feedback**
- **Existing park inventory and analysis**
- **2017 Comprehensive Plan**
- **2018 – 2023 Iowa DNR Outdoor Recreation in Iowa Plan**
- **2020 NRPA Agency Performance Review – Park Metrics**

OUTDOOR RECREATION IN IOWA PLAN

The Outdoor Recreation in Iowa Plan “provides a framework for outdoor recreation priorities and plans that will enhance Iowa’s natural resources while contributing to the well-being and enjoyment of all Iowans”. The plan evaluates outdoor recreation activities specifically in Iowa and provides recommendations for how communities can connect people to the outdoors and interact with the natural resources in our state. A copy of the report can be found at: <https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Grants-Other-Funding/State-Conservation-and-Outdoor-Recreation-Plan>.

Many of the recommendations of the IDNR Plan are applicable to Windsor Heights. Specific priorities for outdoor recreation identified in the Plan include:

- **Increasing access for natural water-based recreation opportunities**, such as swimming, boating, fishing, and wildlife viewing: 48% of people say this is a high priority
- **Acquiring open space**, such as greenbelts and buffers to urban development, for outdoor recreation activities: 47% of people say this is a high priority
- **Building park and recreation facilities such as playgrounds and ballfields** for activities like basketball, soccer, football, and baseball: 46% of people say this is high priority
- **Acquiring natural areas for outdoor recreation activities**, that is, areas that have few manmade features: 45% of people say high priority, 42% say medium priority
- **Acquiring wetland areas**: 37% of people say high priority, 38% say medium priority

NRPA PARK METRICS AND LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

Every year, the NRPA performs a comprehensive evaluation of participating agencies across the United States to develop a series of metrics of the recreation offerings in our communities. This data is a useful tool for comparing how the park and recreation amenities in Windsor Heights compare to other communities at a national level.

Review of the NRPA Park Metrics identified that Windsor Heights is underserved by the current availability of City owned park acres (Figure 15). While the number of residents per park (Figure 14) is not that out of line with the national trend, this evaluation includes the Dog Park which only caters to a very specific user, as well as Lions Park, which in its current condition is not well utilized. These two metrics further support the need to expand City owned park acres, as well as, improve the amenities and functionality of Lions Park and the Dog Park.

The following Park Service Area maps (Figure 16 and Figure 17) indicate the locations of City owned parks in Windsor Heights and the service areas associated with each park. As previously described in this plan, the majority of the community north of University Avenue is underserved by City parks. When neighboring community parks are included in the evaluation, this greatly improves but the City of Windsor Heights has no control on those facilities and should not solely rely on the recreation amenities outside of their control to support their citizens.

FIGURE 14: RESIDENTS PER PARK

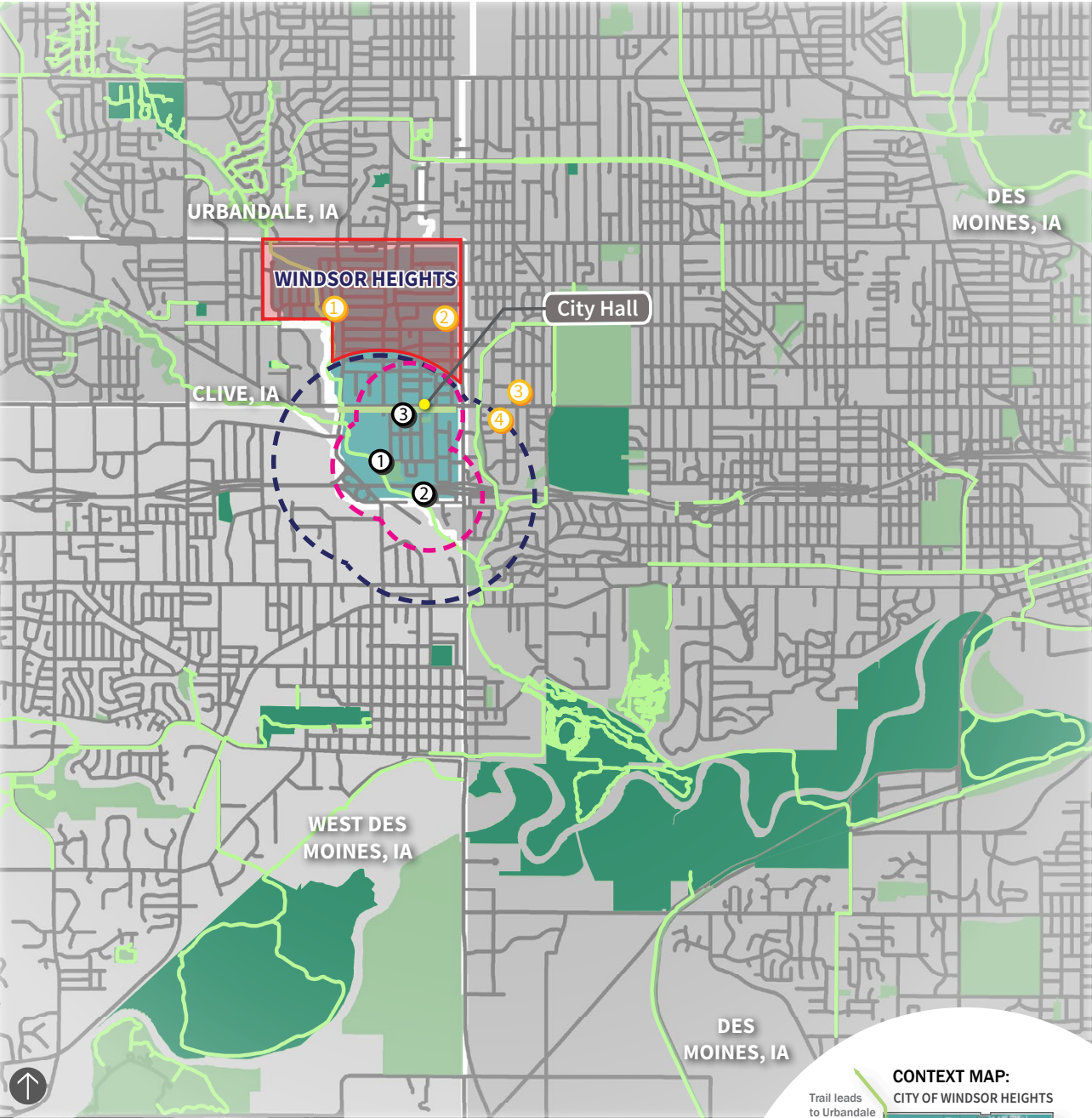
	All Agencies	Less Than 20,000	Windsor Heights
Median	2,381	1,300	1,633
Lower Quartile	1,316	908	
Upper Quartile	4,140	3,140	

FIGURE 15: PARK ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

	All Agencies	Less Than 20,000	Windsor Heights
Median	9.9	12.0	2.2
Lower Quartile	5.1	5.2	
Upper Quartile	17.1	20.8	



FIGURE 16: PARK SERVICE AREA GAPS



LEGEND

- Regional Trails
- Regional Parks
- 10 min Walking Radius (0.5 mi)
- 5 min Walking Radius (0.25 mi)

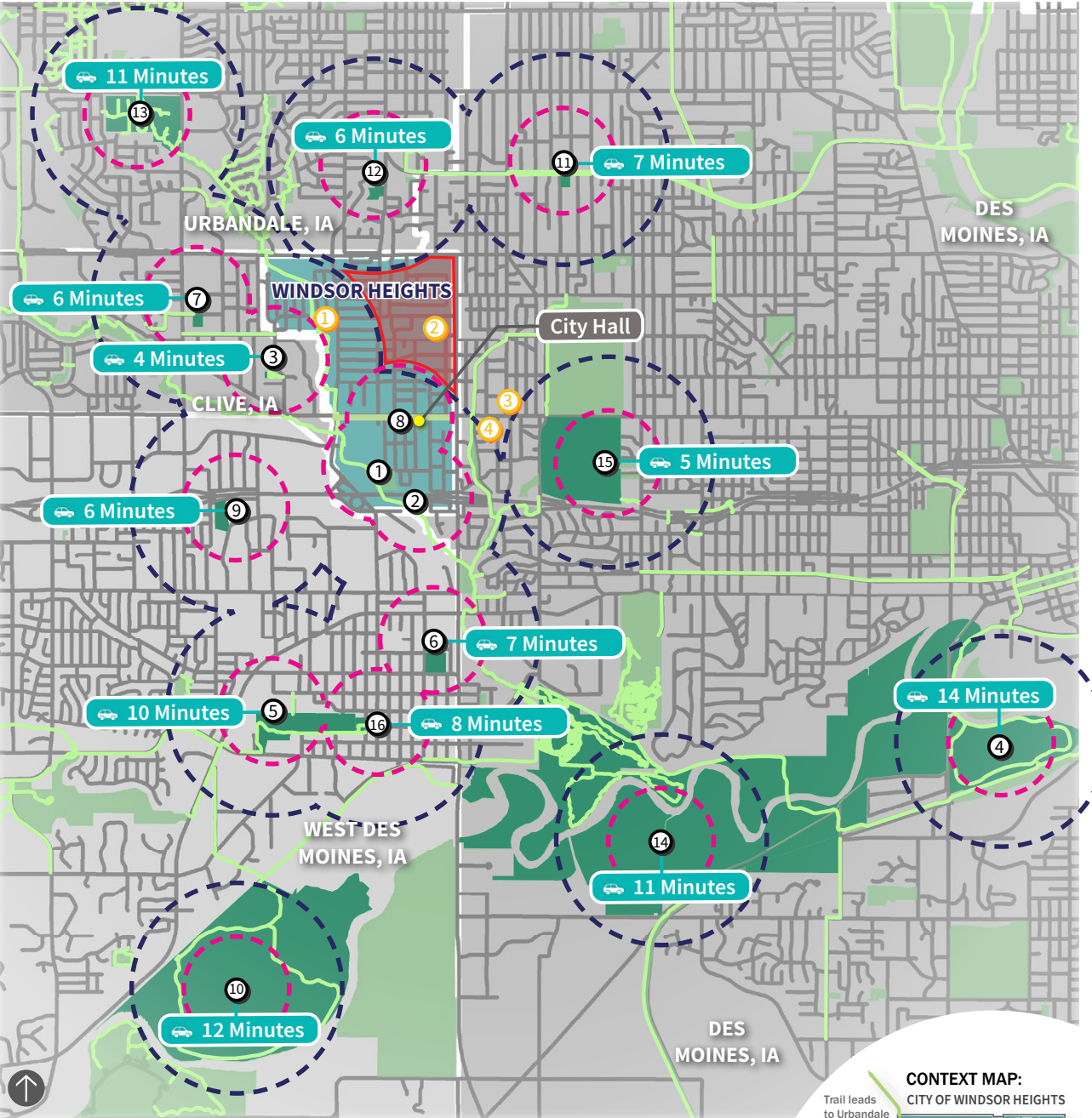
WINDSOR HEIGHTS PARKS

- 1 Colby Park
- 2 Dog Park
- 3 Lion's Park

NEARBY SCHOOLS

- 1 Clive Learning Academy
- 2 Cowles Elementary
- 3 St. Theresa School
- 4 Windsor Elementary

FIGURE 17: PARK SERVICE AREA GAPS W/ NEIGHBORING FACILITIES



LEGEND

- Regional Trails
- Regional Parks
- 10 min Walking Radius (0.5 mi)
- 5 min Walking Radius (0.25 mi)

AREA PARKS

- 1 Colby Park (0.4 mi)
- 2 Dog Park (1.2 mi)
- 3 George Lundberg Park (1.2 mi)
- 4 Gray's Lake (5.9 mi)
- 5 Holiday Park (3.9 mi)

- 6 Legion Park (2.1 mi)
- 7 Linnan Park (1.9 mi)
- 8 Lion's Park (0.2 mi)
- 9 Pearson Park (2 mi)
- 10 Raccoon River Park (5.2 mi)
- 11 Riley Park (2.5 mi)
- 12 Rocklyn Park (1.7 mi)
- 13 Walker Johnston Park (3.7 mi)
- 14 Water Works Park (6.1 mi)

- 15 Waveland Tennis Complex (1.9 mi)
  - 16 Wilson Park (2.8 mi)
- NEARBY SCHOOLS
- 1 Clive Learning Academy (1.3 mi)
  - 2 Cowles Elementary (1.0 mi)
  - 3 St. Theresa School (0.8 mi)
  - 4 Windsor Elementary (0.7 mi)



The question of “how many tennis courts should we have?” or “how many playgrounds do we need in our community?” are common in community planning. To help communities better evaluate the level of service of their parks, the NRPA collects data on the quantity of park facilities that exist in participating communities. By comparing the number and type of park and recreation facilities in Windsor Heights to the NRPA metrics (Figure 18), some of the common shortages in facilities are primarily athletic / ballfields. While there is a lack of City owned ballfields (primarily for adults) and multi-use athletic fields, these resources do exist at some of the schools in and near Windsor Heights.

FIGURE 18: PARK & REC FACILITIES PER POPULATION

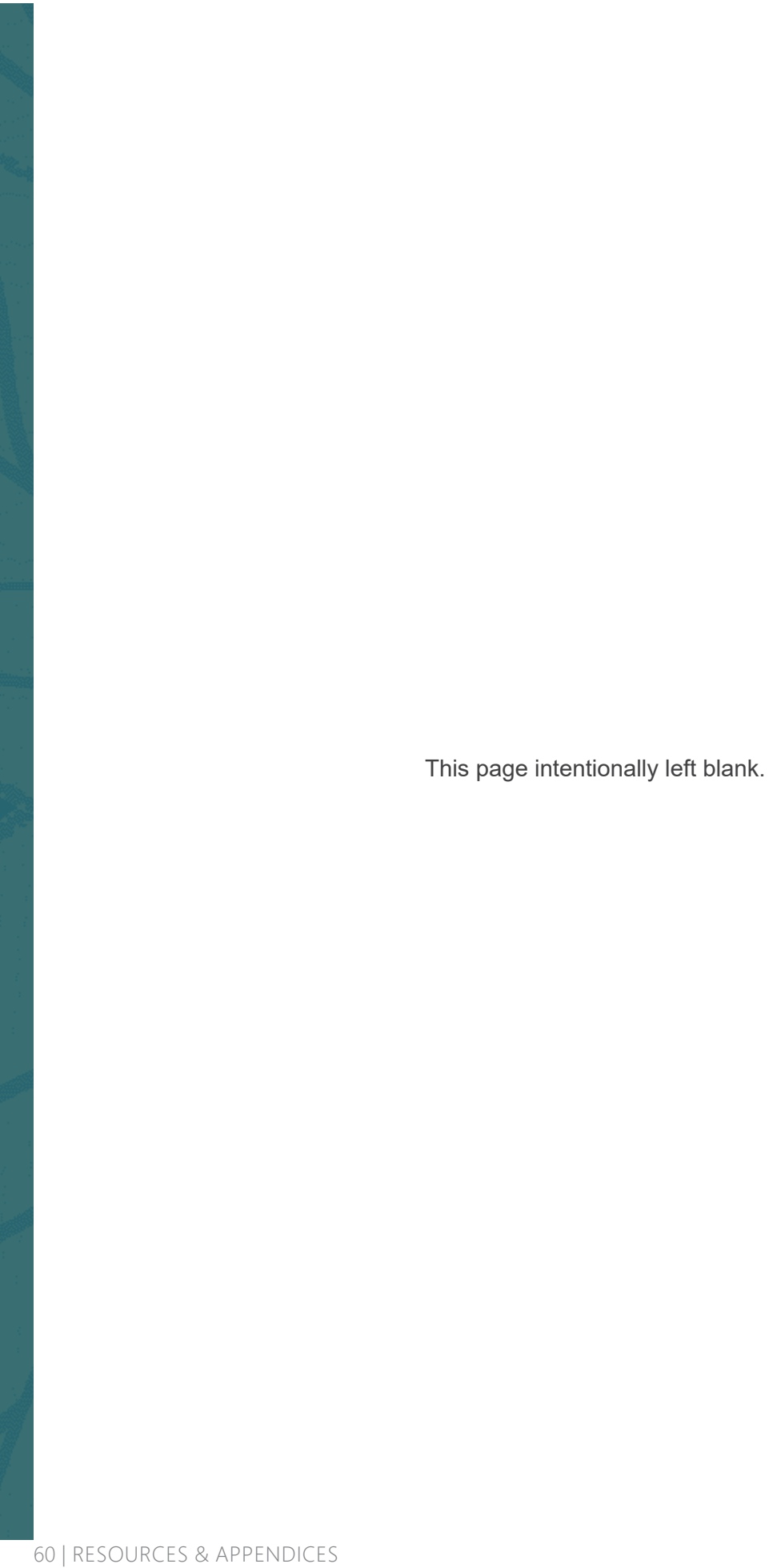
Type of Facility	Median Number of Residents Per Facility		Windsor Heights	
	All Agencies	Less Than 20,000	# of Facilities Needed to Meet NRPA Metrics	# of Existing Facilities
Playgrounds	3,750	2,523	1.9	1
Basketball Courts	7,400	4,090	1.2	0
Tennis Courts (outdoor only)	5,004	2,922	1.7	2
Baseball Fields - Youth	6,779	3,396	1.4	1
Softball Fields - Adult	13,510	5,072	1.0	0
Multi-Purpose Fields	8,150	4,683	1.0	0
Dog Parks	45,899	10,000	0.5	1
Softball Fields - Youth	11,511	5,691	0.7	0
Baseball Fields - Adult	19,518	7,804	0.6	0
Outdoor Swimming Pool	35,837	8,023	0.6	0
Tot Lots	11,173	6,998	0.7	1
Community Gardens	29,273	7,914	0.6	0
Soccer Field - Youth	7,325	3,294	1.5	0
Multi-Purpose Synthetic Field	49,493	8,530	0.6	0
Outdoor Ice Rink	18,526	9,860	0.5	0
Windsor Heights Population = 4,900				

Resources & Appendices

06







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# SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The review and analysis of additional resources was used for the preparation of this plan. Each of the following resources provide information that is impactful to the recommendations for park and recreation planning in Windsor Heights. The following is a list of additional information that contributed to the completion of the Windsor Heights Park Master Plan:

- 2017 City of Windsor Heights Comprehensive Plan: <https://www.windsorheights.org/188/Comprehensive-Plan>
- Des Moines MPO Water Trails Engineering Study: <https://dmampo.org/water-trails-engineering-study/>
- 2018 - 2023 Iowa DNR Outdoor Recreation in Iowa Plan: <https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Grants-Other-Funding/State-Conservation-and-Outdoor-Recreation-Plan>
- 2020 NRPA Agency Performance Review: <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/>

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## PLAN APPENDICES

A complete report of the Community Input Survey Results and City Staff / Council Survey Results are included as attachments to this plan.

[Appendix A.1](#) - Community Input Survey Report

[Appendix A.2](#) - City Staff / Council Input Survey Report

[Appendix B.1](#) - Preliminary Cost Estimates

[Appendix C.1](#) - ADA Compliance Issues Map



