



PARKS, OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

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Vision

In 2040, the City of Wyoming will continue to grow as a desirable community thanks in large part to its verdant character and attractive green spaces. All residents will live within walking distance to a public park, green space, public school property, or planned unit development (PUD) park, which they can easily reach either by the City's highly connected trail network, bike paths, or tree-lined sidewalks. Wyoming's parks, green space, and recreational facilities will support healthy, active lifestyles in the community with ample opportunities for exercising, playing sports, and relaxing. Access to the City's unique natural areas will also be enhanced, including areas along Buck Creek, Plaster Creek, and the Grand River.

Goal

Ensure the preservation of parks, open spaces, water resources, and natural areas while pursuing opportunities to increase the City's park supply and connectivity between facilities.

Parks

Wyoming's parks and recreational facilities are managed by the Community Services Department. The City maintains 19 parks that range between 1.8 to 94.0 acres, along with two nature preserves (Buck Creek Nature Preserve and George Tilma Nature Preserve), and the Wyoming Senior Center. Fourteen of the parks are equipped with a playground, and the majority provide athletic, including Gezon Park Sports Complex, Lamar Park, and Pinery Park. The Wyoming Senior Center (WSC), located along DeHoop Avenue, is available to adults 55 years and older with opportunities for active engagement in recreational, social, and volunteer activities.

City of Wyoming Recreation Plan

In 2012, the City updated its Recreation Plan, which serves as a comprehensive plan for the management and improvement of the City's public parks and facilities. The plan includes an inventory of each park's existing condition and amenities and assesses ADA compliance and improvement needs. In 2017, residents of Wyoming approved a flexible funding initiative which gives the City permission to spend funds collected under the dedicated Library Maintenance millage for dedicated park capital improvement.

The Recreation Plan estimated a total of \$23 million to complete all proposed park improvements, which the new funding initiative has been helping work towards. The City should continue to regularly review and actively implement the Recreation Plan, while adopting master plans for individual parks to address their specific needs.

Improve Access to Parkland

Continue to improve access to quality parks and green space.

The City of Wyoming maintains a total of 673 acres of public parkland and natural areas, which play an essential role in the City's environmental stewardship, sustainability, and stormwater management efforts. When combined with Kent County parks (including Palmer Park and Kaufman Golf Course), school district recreational facilities, and private parks and open space within PUDs, Wyoming has a total of 1,210 acres of parks and open space.



Park Supply

The City of Wyoming has a population of 75,124 people (2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates) and provides a total of 16.1 acres of parks and open space per 1,000 residents. This supply reaches well above the National Recreation Parks Association (NRPA) standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents, which is in line with community members' expressed satisfaction with the City's parks and recreation system.

With continued population growth, the City should continue to evaluate opportunities to expand its public parks and open space inventory to maintain high levels of service. As new parks are created, the community should be actively engaged during the development of park master plans to integrate cultural aspects of the surrounding neighborhoods they serve.

Park Distribution

Together with park acreage, it is important to examine the distribution of parks to ensure all areas of the community have equitable access to recreational opportunities. The Parks, Open Space, and Environmental Features Map identifies existing parks as well as opportunities for new parks. Each public park managed by the City was given a half mile service area, which is typically recommended for neighborhood parks, representing an average walk time of 10 minutes between a home and park. Per State of Michigan standards, schools were also allocated a service area. Wyoming's existing public parks are currently dispersed throughout the community; however, underserved portions of residential neighborhoods exist.

Opportunities for new parks are identified on the Parks, Open Space, and Environmental Features Map, which would address underserved neighborhoods, adding to the total service area of Wyoming's public parks system. Potential parks include infill opportunities for new parks on vacant or underutilized parcels within established neighborhoods. In addition to the identified potential parks, opportunities for new public spaces such as plazas or green space should be identified along commercial corridors in accordance with the Land Use Plan to better serve the increasing number residents living in mixed use and multifamily developments.

Connect the Park System

Ensure Wyoming's parks system is highly connected and accessible for all residents.

Community members voiced a desire for additional trail segments that would help connect existing trail facilities and provide a more cohesive trail network to access existing parks. The City should continue to expand its trail network and bike path connections to create a comprehensive system that allows residents from any neighborhood to easily access parks by foot or bike. This includes further implementing the Wyoming Bikeways Plan as well as seeking additional trail expansion opportunities, particularly along east-west routes. For additional discussion of trails, see **Chapter 5: Transportation**.

Equity and Inclusivity **Ensuring Park Access Across All Neighborhoods**

Parks and open space have proven to have significant health benefits, including mental health and stress reduction, as well as improving quality of place. The importance of park space has become even more pronounced with the onset of COVID-19, providing outdoor spaces for refuge, mental relaxation, and recreation at a safe social distance. As Wyoming continues to grow, the City should work towards ensuring all residents are within convenient walking distance to a park by developing new park facilities in underserved areas. Access to parks across the system can also be improved by expanding the trail network and connecting facilities in different neighborhoods.

Sustainability **Environmental Sustainability through the Parks System**

In addition to providing recreational opportunities for the community, parks and open space support ecological functions and biodiversity within the urban context. They are vital for preserving natural areas for wildlife and protecting water and air quality in Wyoming. At the same time, parks and open space serve as natural systems for stormwater management, reducing runoff volumes and therefore capacity impacts on man-made stormwater infrastructure. Parks and open space should continue to be maintained and expanded to ensure environmental sustainability and effective stormwater management for the long term.



Preserve Green Space

Prioritize the preservation of green space and natural areas as growth occurs, particularly where improved access to parks is needed.

Natural environments, such as wooded areas and creek corridors, have significant community benefits, including increased air quality, beautification, and stormwater management. It is essential that as development and redevelopment occur, quality green space and natural areas are preserved. To achieve this, the City should consider the following strategies:

Nature Preserves

The City should ensure its established natural areas continue to be protected while seeking opportunities for new preservation areas. In implementing the Recreation Plan, opportunities to further enhance the Buck Creek Nature Preserve and George Tilma Nature Preserve should be explored. For example, while the Buck Creek Nature Trail boardwalk was removed in 2014 due to flood damage and was not reconstructed because of its uninsurable nature located within the floodplain, other amenities and design elements should be integrated to transform the nature preserve into an activated recreational space. The entrance to George Tilma Nature Preserve should also be enhanced to better indicate its location and to provide amenities for visitors.

Golf Course Redevelopment

Due to their prime location and size, the Pines Golf Course and Maple Hill Golf Course present long-term opportunities for redevelopment. If redeveloped, a portion of these green spaces should be preserved for public parks and open space. This would help fill in gaps in park service areas for existing and future residential areas surrounding the two golf courses. Located next to the George P Tilma Nature Preserve, if redeveloped, a portion of the Pines Golf Course area should be used to establish an enhanced southern connection into the nature preserve, which is identified as a need in the Recreation Plan. This could include a small park with parking, pathways, and a visitor area.

If redevelopment of the golf courses were to occur, it would create the opportunity to construct new recreation facilities to better serve residents in the southern half of Wyoming. This would address the community desire highlighted during the master plan's community engagement process for a sports complex or recreation center. The City would first need to evaluate the need and feasibility of establishing the facility.

Save the Trees

Protect and expand the City's tree canopy.

A tree canopy provides numerous advantages for a community, including increasing its attractiveness, cleaning the air, and cooling urban heat islands. A more complete tree canopy may also increase property values due to its direct positive effect on improving neighborhood character and desirability. Future development, however, is a threat to the City's existing tree canopy, which currently stands at 13.5 percent. As the City continues to expand, the City should consider the following strategies to preserve and grow its tree canopy:

Shift in Perspective

Community members indicated the need for a shift in how trees are viewed, such as being considered part of infrastructure with practical benefits rather than just existing greenery. The City should work with the Wyoming Tree Commission (referred to locally as "The Tree Amigos") to educate the community on the benefits of trees, including crime reduction, mental health, and stormwater management. The Commission should also continue to be supported in pursuing the City's annual designation as a Tree City USA community by the Arbor Day Foundation.

Public-Private Coordination

The City should work with private developers and property owners to ensure new development preserves the existing tree canopy when possible. The Zoning Code currently does not require developers to plant trees in new subdivisions, rather stating it is encouraged. In comparison, the City of Grandville requires at least one shade tree per lot (no closer than 50 feet from trunk to trunk) in new subdivisions, while the City of Kentwood requires one canopy for every 40 linear feet of frontage in its commercial/office, industrial, open space, and most of its residential districts. Kentwood also requires one canopy tree for every 80 feet of lot fronting along a public or private street in all residential projects. The City should strengthen its tree preservation and planting requirements by establishing specific metrics (Wyoming Code of Ordinances, Chapter 82, Article II and Chapter 74, Article II). The City's Form Based Code currently has detailed standards for tree plantings within its districts, which should be strictly enforced.

Beautification Through Trees

The City should seek opportunities to plant new trees throughout the community, particularly within older residential neighborhoods and along commercial corridors to improve their image and character. Working with The Tree Amigos, a survey of the City's existing tree canopy should be performed to identify gaps in tree coverage, which would then be targeted for new plantings. Within walkable, mixed use-areas, trees should be integrated into the right-of-way, enhanced with decorative tree grates where possible. All tree plantings should be strategically placed to prevent interference with City utilities.

Parks and Recreation

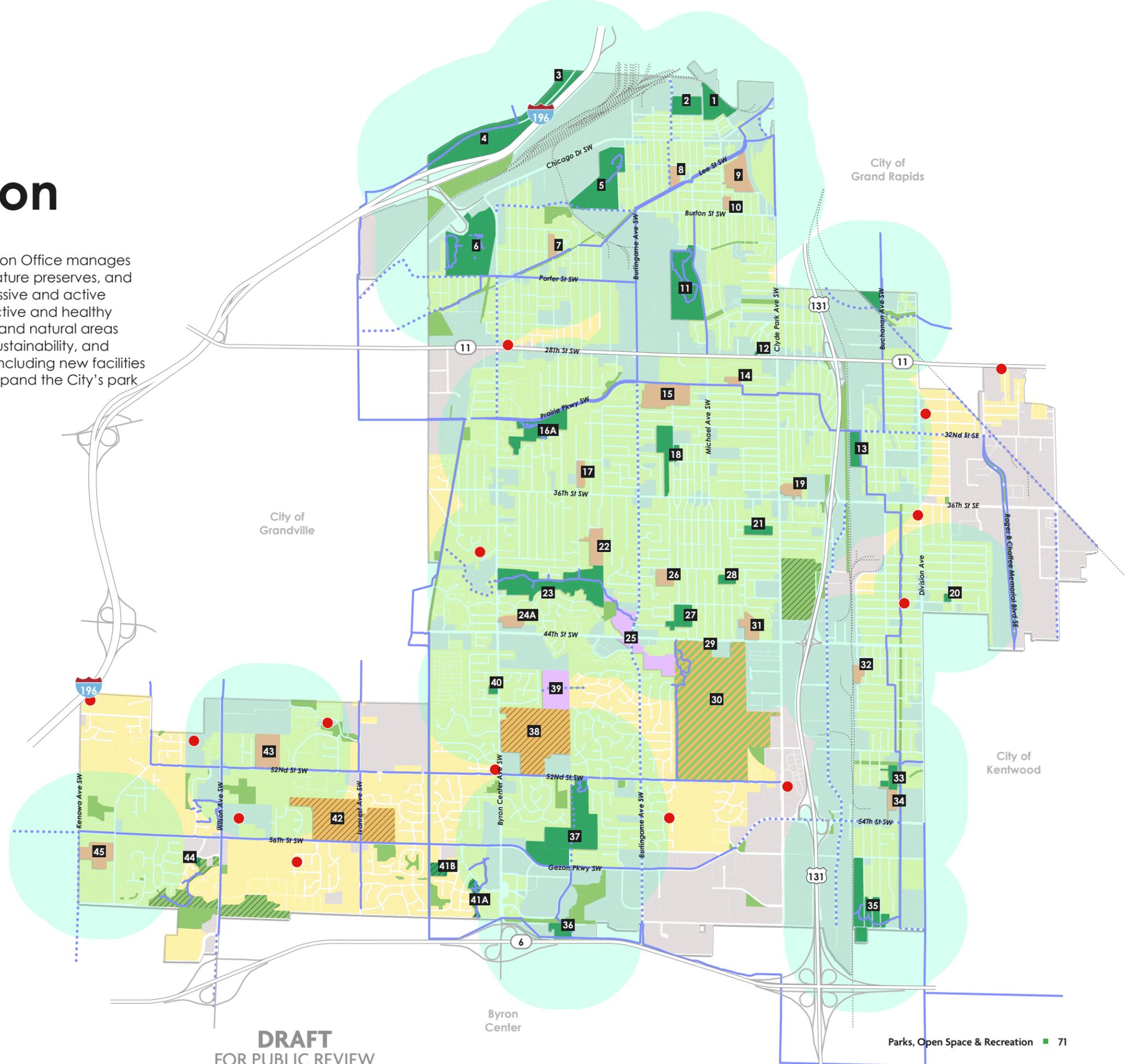
The Wyoming Community Services Department's Parks and Recreation Office manages the City's parks and recreational facilities, including 19 parks, two nature preserves, and the Wyoming Senior Center. The City's parks provide a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, supporting an active and healthy community. Wyoming's total of 673.8 acres of maintained parkland and natural areas also play an essential role in the City's environmental stewardship, sustainability, and stormwater management efforts. Opportunities for potential parks, including new facilities and infill pocket parks, are identified in the following map to help expand the City's park service areas to cover currently underserved neighborhoods.

- Potential Park
- Existing Parks
- Golf Course
- Nature Preserve
- Public School with Park Facility
- Open Space
- Existing and Proposed Residential and Mixed Use Area
- Privately Owned Facility
- School and Existing Park 0.5 Mile Service Area Buffer
- Existing Trails and Bike Route
- Proposed Trails and Bike Routes

Existing Park and School Facilities Key

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Kimble Park & Stadium | 25. Buck Nature Preserve |
| 2. Margquette Park | 26. Oriole Park School |
| 3. Millennium Park | 27. Oriole Park |
| 4. Indian Mounds | 28. 40th Street Park |
| 5. Battjes Park | 29. Palmer Park Field |
| 6. Lamar Park | 30. Linus C Palmer Park & Golf Course |
| 7. Parkview Elementary | 31. Kellogg Early Childhood Learning |
| 8. Lee Middle and High School | 32. West Kellogg Elementary |
| 9. Godfrey-Lee Early Childhood Center | 33. Kelloggville Park |
| 10. Godfrey Elementary | 34. 54th Street Academy |
| 11. Pinery Park | 35. Ideal Park |
| 12. Kingston Park* | 36. Frog Hollow Park |
| 13. Hillcroft Park | 37. Gezon Park |
| 14. Roger Lake Head Start | 38. The Pines Golf Course |
| 15. Wyoming High School | 39. George P Tilma Nature Preserve |
| 16. Prairie Park | 40. Ferrand Park |
| 17. Gladiola Elementary | 41A. Bayberry Farms Park* |
| 18. Jackson Park | 41B. Bayberry Farms Park* |
| 19. Anchor Point Christian School | 42. Maple Hill Golf Course |
| 20. Southlawn Park | 43. Grand View Elementary |
| 21. Lions Park | 44. Del Mar Community Park* |
| 22. West Elementary | 45. Century Park Learning Center |
| 23. Charles Lemery Park | |
| 24. Huntington Woods Head Start | |

**Note: These parks are privately owned and are not included within the buffer analysis.*



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