

# CHAPTER 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES



**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
CITY OF EDINA**

2018

# EDINA Comprehensive Plan



## 6. Parks, Open Space, and Natural Resources

### Chapter Highlights

The following six points guided the development programs, goals and policies presented in this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

1. Edina has committed to a minimum of 15 percent of its land area to be used as parks and green space. (As of the most recent census, we are right at this threshold.) Future standards will need consider “hardscape” environments as represented in the Greater Southdale District Plan.
2. All Community and Special Use parks will have an updated Master Plan to guide use, growth and future development. Every Park MP will include an approach to best maintain, improve and promote its natural resources.
3. Connecting our neighborhoods via a Grand Rounds concept and in coordination with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.
4. Be intentional on the use of benchmarking to assess progress against strategic objectives.
5. Explore alternative funding models to support future growth and accomplishment of our Mission.
6. Establish a goal to have park facilities within a maximum distance of one mile from each Edina resident

### The Major Challenge

Like many communities, Edina is witnessing demographic changes. Changes that occurred between 2008, when the last comprehensive plan was written, and now are only a glimpse of what is expected to occur over the next 10 years. In order to ensure that the City’s park system will continue to meet the needs of residents, the City will need to continually provide sensitive and appropriate responses to changes in social, demographic, technological, economic, political and environmental trends. The magnitude of these changes will demand flexibility in planning practices to appropriately respond to rapidly changing needs.

### Introduction

The City of Edina operates one of the most well-regarded parks and recreation systems in the metropolitan Twin Cities. Edina is a fully developed first ring suburb of Minneapolis with a park system that continues to be improved with targeted additions and innovative operations. The park system, comprising the City’s physical park lands, recreation areas, and trails, along with numerous programs and collaborations with local youth sports associations, greatly contribute to a high quality of life.

The Vision of the Edina Park and Recreation Department (EPRD) is “To strive for excellence in our parks, recreation and trails system to provide Edina a high quality of life by nurturing the health and well-being of our people, our community, our environment and our economy.” In fulfillment of that vision, the EPRD’s Mission Statement is “To create parks, facilities, and programs to foster a healthy and inclusive community. We accomplish this through creative leadership, collaborations, environmentally sustainable practices and the responsible use of available resources.”



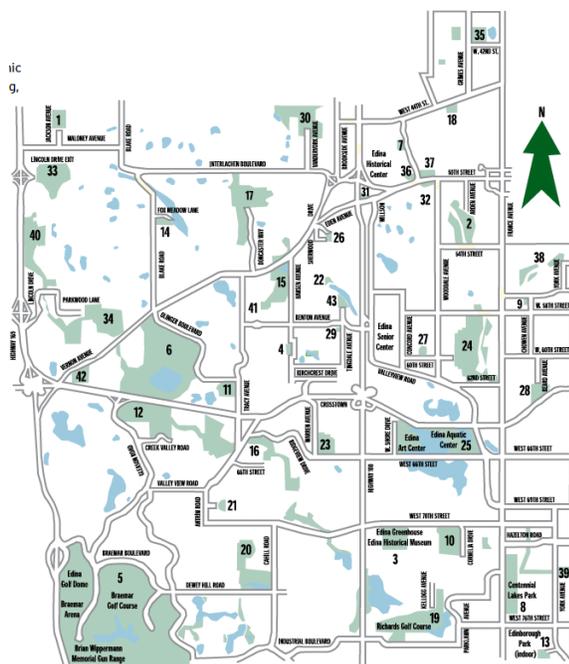
## Inventory and Current Conditions

The National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) periodically publishes “Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines” for municipal park and recreation agencies to assist in comprehensive planning. The NRPA suggests that the “national standards” be used only as a benchmark guideline, because each community has its own unique profile in regards to demographics, total acreage, terrain, climate and a host of other affecting factors. Nonetheless,

Edina currently exceeds the national standard guideline for acres per 1,000 residents.

The NRPA suggests a national standards guideline of 25 acres per 1,000 residents. This standard would include all local, county, and state-owned property within the community. There are currently no county, state or federal park lands in Edina. All 1,565 acres of park land and open space are owned and maintained by the City of Edina. The City’s 1,565 total park and open space acreage computes to 30.2 acres per 1,000 residents (based on the 2016 Census population of 51,804). Currently, the EPRD oversees 43 parks and open spaces totaling more than 1,565 acres and operates nine facilities, which include:

- Edina Aquatic Center
- Edina ArtCenter
- Braemar Ice Arena and Sports Dome
- Braemar Golf Courses
- Braemar Golf Dome
- Centennial Lakes Park
- EdinboroughPark
- ArnesonAcresPark
- EdinaSenior Center



Park amenities at these facilities include baseball and softball diamonds; football, soccer and lacrosse fields; basketball, tennis, pickleball and bocce ball courts; outdoor skating rinks; playground equipment for young children, including an adaptive playground; a community garden; and both winter warming houses and summer picnic shelters. The Department also maintains over eight miles of scenic pathways for bicycling, walking, jogging, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and soon mountain biking.

### Regional Parks and Trails and the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

As stated in the Goals and Policies and section of this chapter, it is a goal to make connections to parks and trails to ensure that Edina residents have convenient access to recreational facilities and services. These include regional park and trail facilities both outside and within the City.

Figure 6.1: City of Edina Parks and Facilities Map



The 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan adopted by the Metropolitan Council in February 2015 is the metropolitan system plan for regional recreation open space, and there are regional public parks and facilities in the Twin Cities area that serve Edina residents. For example, Three Rivers Park District owns and maintains regional parks such as the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail, Bryant Lake Regional Park in Eden Prairie, Hyland Lake Park Reserve in Bloomington and 16 other regional parks within the Three Rivers Park District. Minneapolis Park Board’s Grand Rounds trail system (including the Chain of Lakes Trail) and the Three Rivers Park District’s Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail are regional facilities that are outside the City of Edina but can be accessed by Edina residents. These regional parks offer a variety of recreation opportunities. For example, Three Rivers Park District parks offer snowmobiling, horseback riding, boating, archery, camping, canoeing, downhill skiing, nature centers and historic farm facilities.

The 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan does not identify regional park and recreation facilities directly in the City of Edina, with the following two exceptions:  
**Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail** – Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail, when completed, will be a 15 mile bike trail that will span the Cities of Hopkins, Minnetonka, Edina, Richfield, and Bloomington. It will also connect to the Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, and Cedar Lake LRT regional Trails and North Cedar Lake and Nokomis-Minnesota River Regional Trails, as well as the planned Minnesota River State Trail, Dakota County Big Rivers Regional Trail, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Bloomington Visitor Center, and Fort Snelling State Park. Much of the trail was completed and opened for use in 2017. The Edina segment of the trail was completed in spring 2018. From the west, it enters the City of Edina from Hopkins over the Bren Rd/Londonderry Road Bridge. From the east, it enters the City from Richfield at the cul-de-sac of Xerxes Avenue just south behind Fire Station 2. The regional trail is a shared use facility and is available for walkers, runners, dog walkers, cyclists, inline skaters, and other non-motorized traffic.

**South Hennepin Regional Trail-West** – This is a proposed regional trail, first identified in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan (adopted in June 2005)



that would follow an existing north-south railroad grade owned by Canadian Pacific Railroad in the City of Edina. It would extend between Hyland-Bush-Anderson Park Reserve (in Bloomington) on the south and the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail (in St. Louis Park and Minneapolis) to the north. It is proposed to connect to the Nine Mile Creek Trail in the City of Edina.

Alignment alternatives are under study by the Three Rivers Regional Park District. Two alignment alternatives that have been advanced are shown to the right. As shown, Alternative A (blue line) goes west along West 70th

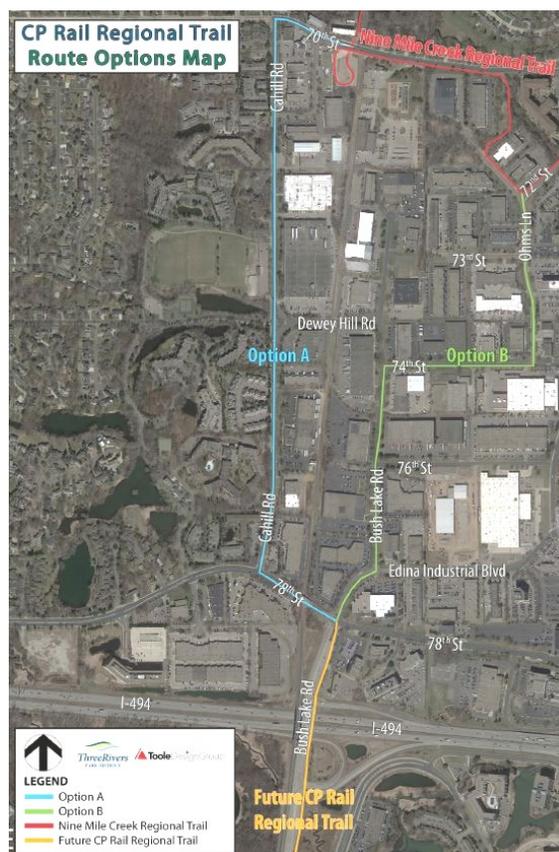


Figure 6.2: Alternative Alignments for the Nine Mile Creek Trail



Street and would use Cahill Road to travel south to 78th Street. Following 78th Street, it would then access Bush Lake Road, which crosses over I-494 en route to Hyland Park in Bloomington. Alternative B (green line) would go east along West 70th Street to access an existing trail that circulates through the business/industrial park south and east of the study area. The trail would then intersect Bush Lake Road before crossing I-494 on the existing overpass.

**City Park Inventory**

The following are individual park locations and acreage totals.

*Mini-Parks - 12 Parks – 21.12 Acres*

A Mini park is characterized by a size of approximately 2 acres or less and is designed to serve primarily the needs of pre-school age children, although it may provide facilities designed to serve the recreation needs of other age groups. Edina’s Mini-Parks typically do not have scheduled athletic facilities. Mini parks are typically used to address limited or isolated recreational needs. Service Area - ¼ Square Mile.

<b>Table 6.1: Mini Parks</b>			
<b>Park</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Quadrant</b>
Birchcrest	6016 Hansen Rd.	1.61 Acres	NW
Browndale	4510 Browndale Ave.	.82 Acre	NE
Chowen	5700 Chowen Ave.	.93 Acre	NE
Grandview Square	5213 Grandview Square	.60 Acre	NW
Kojetin	4201 W. 44th Street	2.69 Acres	NE
Lake Edina	4400 Parklawn Ave.	3.10 Acres	SE
McGuire	W. 69th & McGuire Rd.	2.00 Acres	SW
Melody Lake	5501 Melody Lake Dr.	4.18 Acres	NW
Sherwood	Sherwood Rd. & Edenmoor	1.53 Acres	NW
St. Johns	W. 60th & St.Johns Ave.	.94 Acre	NE
Tingdale	W. 59th & Tingdale Ave.	.67 Acre	NW
York Park	5448 York Ave.	2.05 Acres	NE

*Neighborhood Parks - 12 Parks - 112.85 Acres*

Neighborhood parks are designed to serve primarily the needs of children six to fourteen years of age. Tennis courts, softball diamonds, basketball and ice skating facilities are commonly provided in neighborhood parks. Some of Edina’s neighborhood parks have one or more scheduled athletic facilities, such as outdoor hockey rinks and/or fields for soccer, football, baseball and softball. Neighborhood parks typically range in size from approximately two acres to twenty acres. Service Area = 1 Square Mile.





Table 6.2: Neighborhood Parks			
Park	Address	Size	Quadrant
Alden	6750 Belmore Lane	5.12 Acres	NW
Arden	5230 Minnehaha Blvd.	17.75 Acres	NE
Cornelia School	7124 Cornelia Drive	10.75 Acres	SE
Countryside	6240 Tracy Ave.	9.01 Acres	NW
Fox Meadow	Blake Rd. & Fox Meadow Ln.	3.84 Acres	NW
Heights	5520 W. 66th Street	4.00 Acres	SW
Normandale	6501 Warren Ave.	10.06 Acres	SW
Strachauer	6200 Beard Ave.	4.50 Acres	NE
Utley	50th & Wooddale Ave.	5.73 Acres	NE
Wooddale	W. 50th & Wooddale Ave.	4.70 Acres	NE
Yorktown	W. 73rd & York Ave.	3.42 Acres	SE
Todd Park	4429 Vandervork Ave.	33.97 Acres	NW

*Community Playfields – 8 Parks - 253.68 Acres*

Community playfields typically range in size from approximately 20 to 60 acres. These parks are designed to provide facilities for diverse recreational activities for young people and adults, although a section is also typically set aside for smaller neighborhood children. All of Edina’s Community Playfields have one or more scheduled athletic facilities, such as outdoor hockey rinks and fields for soccer, football, baseball and softball. Service area - 9-16 square miles.

Table 6.3: Community Playfields			
Park	Address	Size	Quadrant
Creek Valley	W. 64th & Gleason Road	10.00 Acres	SW
Garden	5520 Hansen Road	18.74 Acres	NW
Highlands	5200 Doncaster Way	44.05 Acres	NW
Lewis	Dewey Hill & Cahill Road	21.04 Acres	SW
Pamela	5900 Park Place	62.00 Acres	NE
Van Valkenburg	4935 Lincoln Drive	41.76 Acres	NW
Walnut Ridge	5801 Londonderry Road	44.24 Acres	NW
Weber	4115 Grimes Ave.	11.85 Acres	NE

*Community Parks - 4 Parks - 549.05 Acres*

The community park is usually a large park of more than 100 acres, or a smaller park containing special community facilities.

Table 6.4: Community Parks			
Park	Address	Size	Quadrant
Braemar	SW Corner of Edina	500.00 Acres	SW
Centennial Lakes	7495 France Avenue	25.00 Acres	SE
Kenneth Rosland	4300 West 66th Street	22.05 Acres	SE
Edinburgh	7700 York Avenue South	2.00 Acres	SE



*Special Purpose Parks - 7 Parks - 277.11 Acres*

The special purpose park provides a single or specific form of recreation. Service Area is citywide.

<b>Table 6.5: Special Purpose Parks</b>			
<b>Park</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Quadrant</b>
Arneson Acres	4711 West 70th street	15.00 Acres	SE
Bredesen	Vernon Ave. & Olinger Blvd.	206.00 Acres	NW
Richards Golf Course	7640 Parklawn Ave.	39.65 Acres	SE
Southdale Gateway	SE Corner of Edina	9.97 Acres	SE
Tupa	4918 Eden Avenue	1.00 Acre	NE
Williams	West 50th & Browndale	.34 Acre	NE
Grandview Square/ Senior Citizen Center	5280 Grandview Square	5.15 Acres	NW

*Summary of Parks and Natural Resource Parks - 7 Parks – 1,565.94 Acres*

<b>Table 6.6: Park Summary</b>	
<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Natural Resource Areas (19 areas)	352.13
Mini-Parks (12)	21.12
Neighborhood Parks ( 12)	112.85
Community Playfields ( 8)	253.68
Community Parks (4)	549.05
Special Purpose Parks (7)	<u>277.11</u>
Total Parklands & Natural Resource Areas	1,565.94

*Other Maintained Grass Areas*

Plazas, Triangles, and circles	5.00
Storm Water and Drainage Areas	60.00
Parklands and Natural Resource Areas	<u>1,565.94</u>
Total Parks, Natural Resource & Other Areas	1,630.94

The following are parkland acreage totals per park classification.



**Table 6.7: Total Acreage by Number of Park Facilities**

Component	Character	SVC Area	# of Parks	Total Acreage
Natural Resource Areas	Vary in size	Varies	19	352.13
Mini-Parks	Less than 2 acres	¼ sq.mi.	12	21.12
Neighborhood Parks	Serve children ages 6-14	1 sq.mi.	11	78.88
Community Playfields	Serve recreational needs of young people and adults	9-16 sq.mi.	9	287.65
Community Parks	Large parks in excess 100 acres. Serve pre-school-adult active and passive recreational pursuits	4-16 sq.mi.	4	549.05
Special Purpose Parks	Provide a special form of recreation	City Wide	7	277.11
<b>Total Parkland &amp; Natural Resource Areas</b>			<b>62</b>	<b>1,565.94</b>

**Natural Resource Open Space Areas**

The NRPA defines Natural Resource Areas as lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. These lands consist of:

- Individual sites exhibiting natural resources.
- Land that is unsuitable for development but offers natural resource potential. (Examples include parcels with steep slopes, and natural vegetation, drainage-ways and ravines, surface water management areas (man-made pond areas, and utility easements).
- Protected lands, such as wetlands/lowlands and shorelines along waterways, lakes, and ponds.

All natural resource open space areas were inventoried and categorized as follows. The City’s quadrants were determined by the two dividing highways in Edina: TH 62 and TH 100. Table 6.8, below, presents results of the inventory.



<b>Table 6.8: Natural Resource Open Space Areas</b>	
<b>Northwest Quadrant</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Nine Mile Creek Right of Way	148.15
Lincoln Drive Floodplain	17.16
Division Street Storm Water Drainage	18.14
Moore Property (Melody Lake)	4.96
Normandale Rd. (NW Benton & Hwy 100)	2.14
Garden Park Addition	6.70
Glenbrae & Ayrshire	4.30
Krahl Hill	7.75
Pine Grove Rd. (S and E of dead-end)	4.39
<b>Northeast Quadrant</b>	
<b>Northeast Quadrant</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Littel & Lynn Avenue	.46
W. 41st Street and Lynn Avenue	3.10
Minnehaha Creek Right of Way	22.88
Townes Road	1.00
<b>Southwest Quadrant</b>	
<b>Southwest Quadrant</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Nine Mile Creek Right of Way	9.75
Cahill School Backlot	11.05
NE of High School & S of Crosstown	37.29
Dewey Hill Ponds	48.00
Limerick Dr. (dead end W of RR)	3.90
<b>Southeast Quadrant</b>	
<b>Southeast Quadrant</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Bristol & Mavelle	1.01
<b>Total Natural Resource Acres</b>	<b>352.13</b>

**Edina: A Community of Learning.** Edina has a prized education system of high-quality public schools. The Parks, Open Space, and Natural Resources chapter of the Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of extending the benefits of education to the entire community through parks-related policies and programming and building on both obvious and not so obvious linkages between the City’s parks, public schools, Public Works projects, heritage resources, arts and culture, community health, etc.

For example, the parks can be used as classrooms by the public schools to expose students (and their parents) to the importance of pollinator gardens and rain gardens. Moreover, informational kiosks can be installed in the City’s parks that explain how recreational trails and paths are constructed and how stormwater is filtered in retention ponds.



## Trends and Challenges

There are numbers of trends that should be considered in the park and recreation planning process. In this post-industrial age of rapid change, constant monitoring will be required to ensure awareness of trends that have a bearing on park programming, utilization, and sustainability. In the case of Edina, the City will need to continually provide sensitive and appropriate responses to changes in social, demographic, technological, economic, political and environmental trends. The magnitude of these changes will demand flexibility in planning practices to appropriately respond to rapidly changing needs.

In 2015, the EPR completed a Strategic Plan to guide decision-making, priorities, and plans over the next 10+ years. This chapter of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan is structured around five “Key Development Areas” that were identified and discussed in the 2015 Strategic Plan. With the “Key Development Area” as a foundation, content in the Comprehensive Plan has been structured as goals, policy statements, and action items applicable to policies.

## Goals and Policies

The Goals and Policies section is organized around five sections: 1) Parks, Open Space, and Trails; 2) Natural Resources and Sustainable Parks; 3) Recreational Facilities; 4) Recreational Programs; and 5) Finance and Management.

### *Parks, Open Spaces and Trails*

**Goal 1:** Ensure that parks, recreational facilities, and trails are a source of community pride by providing a balance of well connected, active and passive spaces that reflect high quality design principles and maintenance standards and appreciation of the arts; that allow residents to engage in healthy activities and engage in enriching experiences.

Policy I-A: The City will devote a minimum of 15 percent of Edina’s land area to parkland and open spaces.

Policy I-B: The City will work to meet NRPA guidelines i indicating a need for 15-20 miles of additional trails in Edina.

Policy I-C: The City, on a case by case basis, consider the sale, swap, or disposal of park property, as deemed in the best interest of the City.



**Goal 2:** Encourage and support active lifestyles through use of City Parks and participation in City sponsored recreational programs.

Policy 2: The City will, through the EPRD, develop promotional and educational materials about the benefits of an active lifestyle and the relationship between health and parks and recreation.



**Goal 3:** Develop plans based on research and analysis of current trends, input from community members, input from City departments and Commissions, state-of-the art approaches, and best practices to ensure: a) that parks, recreation, and trail needs are documented, b) plans are developed with broad participation from the community, and c) capital expenditures for future investments in parks and recreational facilities and services are justifiable.

**Policy 3-A:** The City will follow recommendations outlined in Vision Edina 2015 and the 2017/2018 Big Idea Workshops as one of its guides for investments in parks, recreational facilities and trails.

**Policy 3-B:** The City will update its Parks Master Plan every ten years (or less) to guide use, growth, improvements, developments, and capital expenditures for all Community and Special Use parks, recreational facilities, and trails.

**Policy 3-C:** The City of Edina has utilized Small Area Plans to provide long-range vision for land use and development in specific areas of the city. The ERPD and PARC will support the successful development and execution of these plans through a proactive engagement process in planning how parks and green spaces fit in these development plans

***Natural Resources and Sustainable Parks***

**Goal 1:** Protect, enhance, engage, and restore our urban forests, natural areas, and water resources to sustain a healthy, diverse, and balanced natural environment for all to enjoy and understand.

**Policy 1-A:** The City will include a section on how to best promote, improve, or maintain our natural resources in each new Master Park Plan.

**Policy 1-B:** The City will exhibit leadership in the area of sustainability in our park system to support the health of our parks and open spaces.

**Policy 1-C:** The City will develop a wild life management program to reduce wild life migration away from their primary habitat.

***Recreation Facilities***

**Goal 1:** Provide safe, clean, and reliable facilities and program spaces that provide users the highest level of value, which supports their health and wellness, while supporting financial sustainability for the City in the future.

**Policy 1-A:** The City, through EPRD, will maximize the use of enterprise facilities primarily, but not exclusively, for Edina residents.

**Policy 1-B:** The City will manage enterprise assets as fee-based revenue generating facilities that support programs and collectively cover all expenses including capital investments, land purchases, and all operating expenses.

**Policy 1-C:** The City will exhibit leadership in matching facility space and utilization with the future needs of our community.



**Recreation Programs**

**Goal 1:** Develop, provide, and manage recreation programs to support the community’s need for health and wellness, individual skill development, and community connectivity in a safe and enjoyable environment.

- Policy I-A: The City will develop recreation programs that emphasize Edina as a learning community.
- Policy I-B: The City will develop recreation programs that exhibit a balance of inclusion across generations, skills, economic conditions and seasons.
- Policy I-C: The City will develop recreation programs will include aspects of art, culture, health, sustainability and also support unstructured recreation.
- Policy I-D: The City will prioritize program development that focuses on enhancing health and activity for all ages, while providing special consideration for our youth population.

**Finance and Management**

**Goal 1:** Provide and encourage use of parks, trails, facilities, and programs that deliver on the community’s expectations for a safe and enjoyable experience while keeping the infrastructure of the system in a quality state.

- Policy I-A: The City, through EPRD, will provide a high level of park maintenance to achieve all aspects of our EPRD vision.
- Policy I-B: The City, through EPRD, will form partnerships when appropriate to provide new services or facilities to Edina residents.
- Policy I-C: The City will remain open to unique ideas and opportunities to enhance financial leverage to capitalize and operate the park system.
- Policy I-D: The City, through EPRD, will demonstrate its commitment to inclusion and diversity across a broad range of the Edina community.
- Policy I-E: When planning and making improvements, EPRD will consider impact to the brands of both the City of Edina and its park system.
- Policy I-F: EPRD will build strong connections with established neighborhood organizations to best understand and serve specific needs in those areas (nodes).
- Policy I-G: To ensure transparency, accountability and sustainability of Edina assets, EPRD staff will work with the City Manager to renew long term business plans for the park system’s our Enterprise facilities every third year. The structure, content, and oversight of these plans will be at the sole direction of the City Council in coordination with the Edina City Manager.
- Policy I-H: The EPRD will use benchmarking to assess progress against our Vision.
- Policy I-I: EPRD will maintain a focus on its Comprehensive Plan by including a 2018 Comp Plan self-audit in its work plan every third year.



## **1995 Revised Inventory Guidance**

In 1995, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the Academy of Park and Recreation Administration (APRA) revised the suggested classifications for parks, recreation areas and open spaces. The key changes were the inclusion of park-school sites, athletic fields, private park/recreation facilities, natural resource areas/preserves and greenway classifications. This new classification system states that there are essentially two types of park and recreation land:

- Privately owned land that contributes to the public's park and recreation system.
- Publicly owned land.

Examples of privately owned land that contribute to the public's park and recreation system would include:

- Edina Country Club
- Interlachen Country Club
- Church-owned properties
- Southdale YMCA
- The meadows in White Oaks neighborhood
- Power line easements
- Other miscellaneous privately owned vacant space

These privately-owned spaces and facilities provide the public with valued park and recreation services and benefits.