

CHAPTER 7: PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION

Parks and trails hold significant importance for rural communities, offering a multitude of benefits that enhance the overall quality of life for residents. In the realm of recreation and leisure, these green spaces provide residents with opportunities for outdoor activities such as walking, jogging, biking, and picnicking. The availability of such recreational outlets contributes to a healthier lifestyle and serves as a positive factor for the well-being of individuals in rural areas.

Beyond recreation, parks act as central gathering spaces that foster community connections. They become venues for various events, festivals, and celebrations, serving as catalysts for social interactions and the strengthening of local bonds. The cultural and historical significance of certain parks in rural communities adds another layer of importance, connecting residents with their heritage and attracting visitors interested in the unique cultural and historical aspects of the area.

The natural and scenic beauty of rural parks and trails contributes to residents' mental well-being by providing access to green spaces and the tranquility of nature. These areas play a role in environmental conservation, preserving natural habitats, promoting biodiversity, and contributing to the overall ecological balance in rural regions. Trails, in particular, offer opportunities for physical exercise, promoting healthier lifestyles and combating sedentary behaviors.

Parks and trails also have economic implications for rural communities. They can attract tourists from other areas, contributing to local tourism and supporting economic development by boosting local businesses such as restaurants, shops, and accommodations. In addition, these green spaces enhance property values, making the community more appealing and desirable for potential residents.

PARKS

VETERANS PARK

Veterans Park is a shining example of Green Isle's dedication to creating inclusive and engaging spaces that bring the community together. This well-designed park offers a wide range of amenities that cater to the diverse interests and needs of families, making it a popular destination for residents and visitors alike.

At the heart of Veterans Park lies a modern, accessible playground that captivates the imagination of children of all ages. The playground equipment is carefully selected to provide a safe and exciting environment where kids can explore, climb, swing, and slide, fostering their physical development and encouraging social interaction. The park's commitment to inclusivity is evident in the thoughtful design of the playground, which incorporates features that accommodate children with different abilities, ensuring that everyone can join in the fun.

For those looking to enjoy a leisurely outdoor meal or host a family gathering, Veterans Park offers an inviting collection of picnic tables strategically placed throughout the grounds. These

tables provide the perfect setting for birthday parties, family reunions, or simply a relaxing afternoon in the park. The park's well-maintained landscaping and lush green spaces create a serene and picturesque backdrop for any occasion.

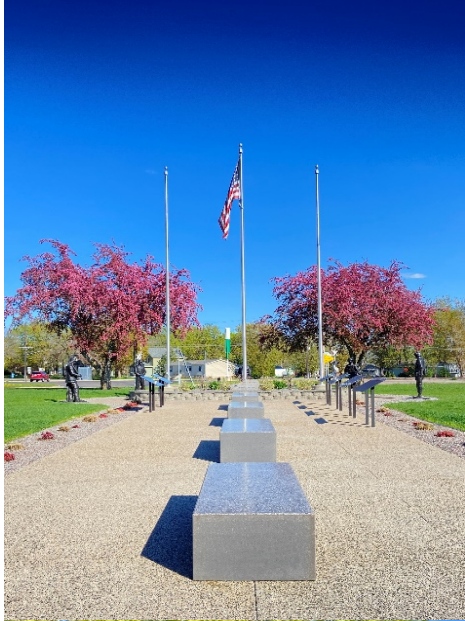
One of the unique features of Veterans Park is the presence of permanent cornhole boards, a testament to the park's dedication to providing engaging activities for all ages. These boards have become a popular spot for friendly competitions among friends and family, fostering a sense of camaraderie and community spirit. The inclusion of this classic lawn game demonstrates the park's commitment to offering a variety of recreational options that appeal to a wide range of interests.

At the center of Veterans Park stands a beautiful gazebo, serving as a focal point and gathering place for the community. This elegant structure provides a shaded retreat from the sun, making it an ideal spot for small performances, community events, or simply a place to sit and enjoy the park's tranquil atmosphere. The gazebo's architecture seamlessly blends with the park's overall aesthetic, creating a charming and inviting ambiance.

Perhaps the most poignant and meaningful feature of Veterans Park is the veteran's memorial. This dignified monument stands as a tribute to the brave men and women who have served our country, reminding us of their sacrifices and dedication. The memorial provides a space for quiet reflection and gratitude, where visitors can pay their respects and learn about the history of our nation's heroes. The presence of this memorial underscores the park's role in fostering a strong sense of community pride and patriotism.

Veterans Park is more than just a collection of amenities; it is a vibrant gathering place that brings together people of all ages and backgrounds, strengthening the social fabric of Green Isle. The park's thoughtful design, diverse features, and commitment to inclusivity make it a true gem within the community, providing endless opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and connection. As Green Isle continues to grow and evolve, Veterans Park will undoubtedly remain a cherished destination, symbolizing the city's unwavering commitment to the well-being and happiness of its residents.





LIONS PARK

Lions Park, situated in the heart of Green Isle, is a vibrant and versatile community hub that offers an extensive array of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. This centrally located park boasts an impressive collection of amenities designed to cater to a wide range of interests and age groups, making it a popular destination for families, sports enthusiasts, and those seeking a place to gather and enjoy the great outdoors.

One of the main attractions of Lions Park is its well-equipped playground, which provides a safe and exciting environment for children to explore, learn, and play. The playground features a variety of modern, age-appropriate equipment that promotes physical activity, imagination, and social interaction among young park-goers. From swings and slides to climbing structures and interactive play elements, the playground is designed to keep children engaged and entertained for hours on end.

For sports enthusiasts, Lions Park offers a full-size basketball court where players of all skill levels can enjoy friendly games or intense competitions. The well-maintained court is a popular spot for pick-up games, organized tournaments, and individual practice sessions, fostering a sense of camaraderie and sportsmanship within the community. Adjacent to the basketball court, a tetherball pole stands ready for spirited matches, providing an additional opportunity for fun and friendly rivalry.

The park's expansive ball diamond is a hub of activity during the spring and summer months, hosting local baseball and softball games, as well as community events and tournaments. The well-manicured field, complete with a backstop and bleachers, provides an excellent venue for players and spectators alike, creating a lively atmosphere filled with the sounds of cheering fans and the crack of the bat.

For those seeking a unique and challenging recreational experience, Lions Park features an archery range where archery enthusiasts can hone their skills and enjoy the thrill of the sport. The range is designed with safety in mind, offering a controlled environment for both novice and experienced archers to practice and compete. The inclusion of this distinctive amenity demonstrates the park's commitment to providing diverse recreational opportunities that cater to a broad range of interests.

At the heart of Lions Park lies a spacious picnic shelter, perfect for hosting community events, family gatherings, and celebrations. The shelter provides ample seating and shade, creating a comfortable and inviting space for park-goers to relax, socialize, and enjoy a meal together. The shelter's central location within the park makes it easily accessible and convenient for those utilizing the various amenities nearby.

The expansive grounds of Lions Park offer ample room for a variety of activities, from impromptu games of frisbee and tag to organized events and festivals. The park's open spaces and lush green lawns create a serene and picturesque setting, encouraging visitors to spread out and enjoy the beauty of nature. Whether hosting a community-wide celebration, a family picnic, or simply enjoying a quiet afternoon outdoors, Lions Park provides the perfect backdrop for creating lasting memories.

As a centrally located and well-maintained community asset, Lions Park plays a crucial role in promoting health, wellness, and social interaction among Green Isle residents. The park's diverse array of amenities and ample space for activities make it a true gem within the city, offering something for everyone to enjoy. As Green Isle continues to grow and evolve, Lions Park will undoubtedly remain a cherished destination, serving as a testament to the city's commitment to providing exceptional recreational opportunities and fostering a strong sense of community.



IRISH YARD



The Irish Yard is a vibrant and lively community park that offers a fantastic array of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages. The centerpiece of this park is its expansive playground, which features multiple state-of-the-art play structures designed to captivate the imagination and encourage active play.

The playground at the Irish Yard is a true wonderland for children, offering a wide variety of equipment that caters to different age groups and abilities. From towering climbing structures and thrilling slides to swings, spinners, and interactive play panels, the playground provides endless opportunities for adventure and exploration. The play structures are carefully designed to promote physical activity,

balance, coordination, and social interaction, ensuring that children can develop essential skills while having a blast.

The playground's safety is a top priority, with soft, shock-absorbing surfaces installed throughout to minimize the risk of injuries. The equipment is regularly inspected and maintained to ensure that it remains in excellent condition, providing a secure and enjoyable environment for children to play.

Beyond the playground, the Irish Yard offers ample space for visitors to walk, jog, or simply enjoy a leisurely stroll. The park features well-maintained walking paths that wind through beautifully landscaped grounds, offering a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Whether seeking a quiet moment of reflection or a refreshing outdoor exercise, the Irish Yard provides the perfect setting.

For sports enthusiasts, the Irish Yard is home to a fantastic baseball field where the local Irish baseball team showcases their skills. Catching an Irish baseball game is a beloved community tradition, drawing fans of all ages to cheer on their favorite players. The well-manicured field, complete with a grandstand and dugouts, creates an authentic baseball experience that captures the spirit of America's favorite pastime.

The baseball field is not only a venue for exciting games but also serves as a gathering place for the community. During the season, the Irish Yard buzzes with energy as families, friends, and neighbors come together to support their team, fostering a strong sense of camaraderie and pride. The park's amenities, including restrooms and concession stands, ensure that spectators can enjoy the games in comfort and convenience.

In addition to its recreational offerings, the Irish Yard is also a popular destination for community events and celebrations. The park's spacious grounds and picturesque setting make it an ideal location for picnics, festivals, and other gatherings that bring the community together. From lively summer concerts to festive holiday celebrations, the Irish Yard serves as a hub of activity and a place where memories are made.

The Irish Yard is more than just a park; it is a testament to Green Isle's commitment to providing exceptional recreational opportunities and fostering a strong sense of community. With its impressive playground, inviting walking paths, and thrilling baseball games, the Irish Yard offers something for everyone to enjoy. As Green Isle continues to grow and thrive, the Irish Yard will undoubtedly remain a cherished destination, serving as a symbol of the city's vibrant spirit and dedication to the well-being of its residents.



TRAILS

Trails are covered in appendix A. Green Isle City Wide Trails Plan

RECREATION

At the May 21, 2024 Comprehensive Planning Group meeting, the participants engaged in a thoughtful discussion regarding the need to expand recreational opportunities for youth and young adults in Green Isle. The group recognized that providing a diverse range of activities is essential for promoting active lifestyles, fostering community engagement, and ensuring that the town remains an attractive place for families to live and grow.

One of the key ideas that emerged from the discussion was the potential development of an ice-skating rink in Green Isle. The group noted that an ice-skating rink would provide a valuable winter recreational activity for residents of all ages, but particularly for young people who may have limited options during the colder months. The addition of an ice-skating rink could create a vibrant community gathering space, encouraging social interaction and physical activity during a time when many people tend to remain indoors.

The Comprehensive Planning Group discussed various aspects of developing an ice-skating rink, including potential locations, desired features and amenities, and the need for community input in the planning process. They emphasized the importance of conducting a thorough site analysis to identify suitable locations that offer accessibility, adequate parking, and proximity to other community amenities. The group also highlighted the value of engaging the community through

public meetings, surveys, and outreach efforts to gather feedback on the design and features of the proposed ice-skating rink.

Furthermore, the discussion touched upon the financial considerations associated with constructing and maintaining an ice-skating rink. The group acknowledged the need to develop a comprehensive cost estimate and explore various funding options, such as partnerships with local businesses, sponsorships, and grants. They also recognized the importance of collaborating with local schools, youth organizations, and sports clubs to develop programming and events that would maximize the use of the ice-skating rink and promote youth participation.

Throughout the discussion, the Comprehensive Planning Group emphasized the importance of designing and maintaining the ice-skating rink to meet safety standards and ensure accessibility for users of all ages and abilities. They recognized that creating an inclusive and welcoming environment is crucial for the success of the project and the overall well-being of the community.

The group's discussion on the need for an ice-skating rink in Green Isle reflects a larger commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all residents, particularly young people, by providing diverse recreational opportunities. By exploring the development of an ice-skating rink and other youth-focused amenities, the Comprehensive Planning Group aims to create a vibrant and engaging community that supports the growth and well-being of its youngest members.

PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goal: Provide a diverse range of high-quality parks, trails, and recreational opportunities that promote healthy lifestyles, foster community engagement, and preserve the natural beauty of Green Isle.

Objective 1: Maintain and enhance existing parks to meet the community's needs and expectations.

- Policy 1.1: Regularly assess the condition of park facilities and equipment, and prioritize necessary improvements and repairs. Ø Policy 1.2: Engage the community in the planning and design process for park upgrades and renovations to ensure that parks meet the needs and preferences of residents.
- Policy 1.3: Allocate sufficient funding for park maintenance and improvements through the city's annual budget and explore additional funding sources, such as grants and partnerships.

Objective 2: Expand and improve the city's trail network to provide safe and accessible opportunities for walking, biking, and outdoor recreation.

- Policy 2.1: Develop a comprehensive trail master plan that identifies opportunities for new trail connections and improvements to existing trails.
- Policy 2.2: Prioritize the development of trails that connect parks, neighborhoods, and community destinations, such as schools and shopping areas.
- Policy 2.3: Collaborate with neighboring communities and regional partners to explore opportunities for trail connections beyond the city limits.
- Policy 2.4: Ensure that trails are designed and maintained to be accessible for users of all ages and abilities, following ADA guidelines and best practices.

Objective 3: Provide a diverse range of recreational programs and events that cater to the interests and needs of all community members.

- Policy 3.1: Conduct regular surveys and community outreach to identify the recreational interests and needs of residents.
- Policy 3.2: Develop and implement a variety of recreational programs for different age groups, including youth, adults, and seniors.
- Policy 3.3: Partner with local organizations, schools, and businesses to offer unique and innovative recreational opportunities, such as outdoor fitness classes, nature education programs, and community events.
- Policy 3.4: Ensure that recreational programs are affordable and accessible to all residents, regardless of income or ability.

Objective 4: Preserve and enhance the natural resources and open spaces within the city's parks and trails.

- Policy 4.1: Identify and prioritize the protection of sensitive natural areas, such as wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife habitats, within the city's parks and trails.
- Policy 4.2: Develop and implement natural resource management plans for each park to guide the preservation and enhancement of natural features.
- Policy 4.3: Encourage the use of native plant species in park landscaping and restore degraded natural areas to improve biodiversity and ecological function.
- Policy 4.4: Provide educational opportunities and interpretive signage to help park and trail users understand and appreciate the natural resources within the city.

Objective 5: Foster community engagement and stewardship in the care and improvement of the city's parks and trails.

- Policy 5.1: Establish a "Friends of Green Isle Parks" volunteer program to encourage community members to participate in park maintenance, improvement projects, and events.
- Policy 5.2: Develop partnerships with local schools, scout groups, and community organizations to involve youth in park and trail stewardship activities.
- Policy 5.3: Recognize and celebrate the contributions of volunteers and community partners through annual awards, events, and public acknowledgments.
- Policy 5.4: Provide opportunities for community members to provide input and feedback on park and trail management through regular public meetings, surveys, and online platforms.

Objective 6: Expand recreational opportunities for youth and young adults in Green Isle to promote active lifestyles and community engagement.

- Policy 6.1: Explore the feasibility of developing an ice-skating rink in Green Isle to provide a winter recreational activity for residents of all ages.
 - Conduct a site analysis to identify potential locations for an ice-skating rink, considering factors such as accessibility, parking, and proximity to other community amenities.

- Engage the community in the planning process through public meetings, surveys, and outreach to gather input on the desired features and amenities for the ice-skating rink.
- Develop a cost estimate and funding plan for the construction and ongoing maintenance of the ice-skating rink, exploring opportunities for partnerships, sponsorships, and grants.
- Collaborate with local schools, youth organizations, and sports clubs to develop programming and events that utilize the ice-skating rink and promote youth participation.
- Ensure that the ice-skating rink is designed and maintained to meet safety standards and is accessible to users of all ages and abilities.

By implementing this policy, Green Isle can address the need for additional recreational activities for young people, as identified by the Comprehensive Planning Group, and create a new community asset that promotes active lifestyles and community engagement.