

LA VISTA PARK AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *La Vista Park and Recreation Master Plan* is a policy document to assist current and future City Council members, Park and Recreation Advisory Board members, and City staff in making decisions about park and recreation issues. The purpose of the *La Vista Park and Recreation Master Plan* is to assist the City of La Vista in its efforts to ensure that current and future residents have the opportunity to participate in an acceptable range of park and recreation activities in a safe, convenient, and aesthetically pleasing environment.

The planning process for *La Vista Park and Recreation Master* was conducted in four phases, with each addressing a basic question about the La Vista park and recreation system.

- **Phase One – What do we know?** An inventory of background information was conducted including community demographics and existing park and recreation facilities.
- **Phase Two – What do we want?** A needs assessment phase was performed giving an up-to-date picture of community attitudes and desires for the park and recreation system. Public input workshops and surveys were conducted to gather this information. (The results presented in this report are qualitative, not quantitative. The information provides input from community members who were interested enough in the park and recreation system to attend a meeting or forum and complete a survey.)
- **Phase Three – What should we do?** A policy development phase was conducted with the Steering Committee to establish a clear direction for the City's future park and recreation system. Specific policies were determined, with detailed information regarding park development, park facility needs and locations, service areas and levels of service, and financing strategies.
- **Phase Four – How do we get there?** The plan describes the types, locations, and number of proposed parks, greenways, trails, and green streets and methods for improving the park and recreation system. An action plan organizes and sets priorities for the recommended improvements and expansions.

Figure 1-1: Existing and Proposed Facilities illustrates the existing and proposed parks, greenways, trails, and green streets. *Figure 1-2: Existing and Proposed Service Areas* illustrates these same facilities, along with service areas for neighborhood parks, school-parks, and community parks. *Figure 1-1* and *Figure 1-2* are located at the end of the Executive Summary. Locations of the proposed parks, greenways, and trails as shown on the plan are approximate. The locations show the general area where the facilities may be located. Specific locations will be determined as planning and development occurs.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

The City of La Vista, according to the 2000 Census, has a population of 11,699 persons. The projected full build-out for 2015, including the entire study area, is 37,821 persons. This projection assists in determining the amount of additional parkland, recreation facilities, and recreation programs needed for the community in the year 2015.

The City of La Vista has nineteen existing park facilities, for a total of approximately 149 acres of parkland. Park facilities range in size from Eberle/Walden Park, which is 0.06 acres, to La Vista Soccer Complex, which is 34 acres.

During the inventory and analysis phase, each park was rated according to its condition and capacity. The condition of the park is a subjective analysis of the landscape and physical components of the park. The capacity of the park reflects the ability of the park facility to receive or absorb users to the quantitative and qualitative extent intended by its classification. Overall, the majority of parks rated in “good” condition and “under” capacity.



Trail in Mayor's Park

The existing park and recreation system was analyzed by examining the existing park sizes, service areas, and levels of service. Existing mini-parks range in size from 0.06 acres to 2.5 acres, with the average size being 1.33 acres. Existing sports complexes range in size from 6 acres to 34 acres, with the average size being 20.20 acres. Existing special use facilities range in size from 1.85 acres to 30 acres, with the average size being 15.93 acres. In the existing system, there is only one neighborhood park, at 2.6 acres, and one community park, at 19.5 acres. The existing service area for mini-parks is a ¼ mile radius, for neighborhood parks is a ½ mile radius, and for community parks is a 2 mile radius. The existing level of service for mini-parks is 1.25 acres per 1,000 residents, for neighborhood parks is 0.22 acres per 1,000 residents, and for community parks is 1.67 acres per 1,000 residents. If sports complexes are included with community parks, the level of service is 8.57 acres per 1,000 residents. According to the National Recreation and Park Association guidelines, La Vista has a surplus number of acres dedicated to mini-parks, a deficit number of acres for neighborhood parks, and a deficit number of acres for community parks. When sports complexes are included with community parks, there is a surplus number of acres.

In terms of recreation facility surpluses and shortages, community input was the gauge of how the NRPA national standards/guidelines fit the local community. In La Vista, some facilities found to be “short” according to these guidelines were not identified as such in the workshops or community survey responses, while the reverse was true in other instances. Current facility shortages include badminton courts, formal baseball diamond, 9-hole par 3 golf course, 18-hole golf course, golf driving range, handball/racquetball court, horseshoe courts, ice hockey rink, shuffleboard, swimming pool/aquatic center, hard surfaced multi-use trails, low impact surfaced hiking trails, wading/splash pool, playfields, restrooms, shelters, and picnic tables.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

WHAT DO WE WANT?

To respond to community needs and desires, La Vista residents were involved throughout the development of the *La Vista Park and Recreation Master Plan*. Input from La Vista park users and citizens was gathered through public input meetings, forums, and presentations, and through surveys.

The public input meetings, forums, and presentations involved individuals and organizations from throughout La Vista and the surrounding area. Some of the major strengths of the existing park and recreation system identified by participants included: the quality and



Focus Meeting

number of existing facilities, variety in programs and facilities, well-organized leadership and operations, and generous community support. Some of the major weakness of the existing system included: facility shortages, limitations of support, meeting current needs, and meeting future needs.

Additional information from community members was gathered through surveys. The majority of survey participants were satisfied

with the number, quality, and maintenance of park and recreation facilities in La Vista. The majority of survey participants were also satisfied with the number and variety and quality of park and recreation programs in La Vista. Approximately 52% stated La Vista does not have enough park space, 48% stated there was just the right amount of park space, and 3% stated there is too much park space.

Things that participants liked best about the pool included good staff and operations, the pool size and depth, a safe place to visit, and it's clean and well-maintained. Things that participants would like changed about the pool included having a deeper and bigger pool, more pool activities, and more diving boards.

The public input process validates the planning process by gathering input from a diverse cross-section of park and recreation users and community members. By continually involving the public, the *La Vista Park and Recreation Master Plan* responded to the needs and desires of the public and is supported by the residents.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Based on community input and knowledge of local conditions, the Steering Committee and consultants developed a series of policies pertaining to the La Vista park and recreation system. The main topics of these policies included where to build park, what users can do in the parks, how users can get to the parks, how to maintain and patrol the parks, and how to pay for the system. A summary of the main policies is provided below.

Where to Build Parks

- Parks should be distributed geographically, so all residents have reasonable access to a park and recreation facility.
- The City should incorporate existing subdivision parklands and trails into the public system.
- Parks need to provide a sense of openness to promote a public, safe, and secure feeling. Parks need to provide distinguishable entrances that promote easy access into the park.
- Periodic assessment by the City of community needs and wants through public input/involvement will provide opportunities to respond to residents' desires.

What Users Can Do in the Parks

- The City should have sufficient park classifications (including mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, large urban parks, school-parks, special use facilities, sports complexes, natural areas, and greenways/trails) to satisfy the different recreational needs of the community.
- Park and recreation facilities should be ADA-compliant.
- Active and passive uses shall be suited to the park classification and structure of the particular park.
- Uniqueness of each park shall be encouraged, while also providing a sense of community throughout the system.

How Users Can Get to the Parks

- Provide safe access to all parks, through the use of crosswalks, signals, and/or traffic calming devices. Where possible, connect all parks and make them accessible through the use of trails and greenways.
- To provide a unified and complete system, green streets should be provided.
- Safety on multi-use trails shall be increased through the use of signage, education/safety programs, and appropriate trail widths and site distances.
- The La Vista trail system shall be coordinated with surrounding entities to ensure a complete surrounding trail network in the area.



Ardmore Park

How to Maintain and Patrol the Parks

- Parks shall be maintained at a level appropriate to the use, site, and management.
- Personnel who have background experience and knowledge in horticulture, forestry, and landscape architecture should be utilized for initial implementation and upkeep of the design, planting, and maintenance.
- The possibility of expanding the neighborhood watch program for the parks should be explored.
- In park property, all animals must be under the control of a person competent to restrain and control the animal by leash, cord, chain, or other similar restraint.

How to Pay for the System

- The City shall pursue all possible sources of revenue, including public/private funding, general fund, general obligation bonds, corporate support, new or higher user fees, and grants.
- Before major improvements are pursued, staffing, maintenance, and upkeep requirements should be evaluated.
- General cooperation between government agencies and departments should be encouraged to support the park and recreation system.
- Recreational opportunities offered by the private sector should be encouraged and facilitated by the City whenever possible.

Based on background information and research, implementation guidelines for future park planning development were established. Mini-parks should be 2,500 square feet to 1 acre, have a service area of a ¼ mile radius, and a level of service between 0.25 and 0.5 acres per 1,000 residents. Neighborhood parks should be 5 to 10 acres, have a service area of a ½ mile radius, and a level of service between 1 to 2 acres per 1,000 residents. Community parks should be between 30 and 50 acres, have a maximum service area of a 3 mile radius, and a level of service between 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 residents. Sports complexes should be greater than 25 acres, school-parks should typically range in size from 5 to 20 acres, and large urban parks should be greater than 50 acres. Service area and level of service guidelines were not established for sports complexes, school-parks, or large urban parks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Recommendations for the park and recreation system consist of four main topics.

1. **Parks and Facilities** – Recommendations for existing and proposed mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, special use facilities, sports complexes, school-parks, and large urban parks
2. **Greenways, Trails, and Linkages** – Recommendations for corridors for greenways, trails along greenways, and trails along streets
3. **Tree Plan** – Recommendations for green streets, trees within parks, species to plant, and planting guidelines
4. **Recreation Activity Plan** – Recommendations for improving and enhancing the recreation system

Parks and Facilities

Mini-Parks. Mini-parks address limited, isolated, or specialized recreational needs at small sites in heavily developed areas and at sites with unique recreational opportunities.

In addition to the existing mini-parks of Apollo Park, Ardmore Park, Camenzind Park, Central Park – Mini-Park, Champion Park, City Park – North Mini-Park, City Park – East Mini-Park, and Memorial Children’s Park, two mini-parks are proposed. Stoneybrook South Park is an existing/developed subdivision park that should be incorporated into the public system. Giles Corner Park is to be located in a subdivision that is currently being planned.

Neighborhood Parks. Neighborhood parks serve as the recreational focus of the neighborhood, offer a balance of active and passive recreation activities to neighborhood residents, and provide facilities within walking distance of their homes.

There are sixteen neighborhood parks in the proposed plan. Of these parks, one is an existing neighborhood park, another is an existing mini-park that will be combined with



Jaycee Park

school facilities to create a neighborhood school-park, and the remaining fourteen parks are either new parks or existing subdivision parks that are not currently in the public system. Of these fourteen parks, La Vista West Elementary School-Park, La Vista Jr. High School-Park, and Portal Elementary School-Park are new parks proposed in conjunction with a school facility. Existing subdivision parks that should be incorporated into the public system include Southwind Park, East Park, West Park/Southridge Meadows Park, Meadows Park and Swimming Pool, and Millard Neighborhood Park. New

parks include 100th Street Park, Centennial Park, Harrison Hills Park, Willow Creek Park, and 152nd Street Park.

Community Parks. Community parks provide for active and passive recreational needs of several neighborhoods that are easily accessible by automobile or public transit. This category allows for group activities and other recreational opportunities not feasible at the neighborhood park level.

There are two community parks in the proposed plan. Central Park is an existing community park located in the eastern part of the community. Millard Community Park is an existing subdivision park that should be incorporated into the public system. This park is located in the western part of the community.

Special Use Facilities. Special use facilities provide for recreational, cultural, and/or educational activity focused on a single purpose use and are easily accessed from anywhere in the community.

Special use facilities in the proposed plan include La Vista Falls Golf Course, Municipal Pool, La Vista Community Center, Eberle/Walden Park/Access, and Hollis Park. These are all existing facilities. Eberle/Walden Park/Access and Hollis Park were classified as mini-parks during the inventory phase. Due to their uniqueness and proposed recommendations for each site, they have been reclassified as special use facilities.

Sports Complexes. Sports complexes consolidate heavily programmed athletic facilities and associated fields at larger and fewer sites strategically located throughout the community.

According to the proposed plan, there are six sports complexes. Of these, City Park, Kelly McMahon Field, La Vista Soccer Complex, and La Vista Sports Complex are existing facilities. The La Vista Sports Complex North Expansion and La Vista Sports Complex South Expansion are proposed facilities.

School-Parks. School-parks provide for efficient and cost effective park and recreation facilities by combining school district and municipal resources at a single site so both public agencies benefit by sharing the use of land and facilities.

The proposed plan identifies four proposed school-parks, including Mayor's Park/G. Stanley Hall Elementary School-Park, Portal Elementary School-Park, La Vista West Elementary School-Park, and La Vista Jr. High School-Park. All of these parks are proposed to be neighborhood parks in conjunction with a school district facility.

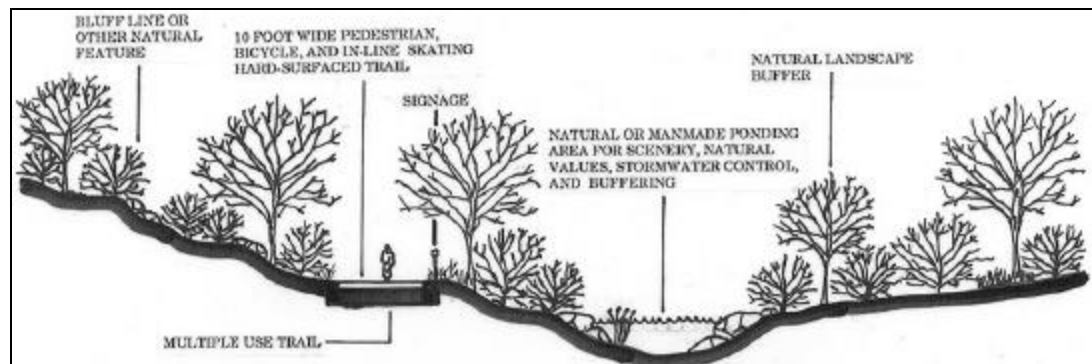
Large Urban Parks. Large urban parks provide for active and passive recreational needs of the entire community by preserving large open spaces that can accommodate recreation activities not feasible within smaller park classifications and are easily accessible by automobile or public transit.

One large urban park is proposed, La Vista Commons. This park is to be located in the center of La Vista, on a large triangular tract. The parkland is bounded by Giles Road on the south, West Papillion Creek/abandoned Union Pacific Railroad on the east, and 120th Street on the west.

Natural Resource Areas. Natural resource areas provide for the preservation and utilization of significant natural resources and/or land formations for trails and other passive recreational uses and educational benefits. Although natural resource areas are not proposed at this time, Chalco Hill Recreation Area, owned and operated by Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District, serves the community of La Vista.

Greenways, Trails, and Linkages

Greenways and trails link the park and recreation system together to create a unified system. The layout of La Vista makes it feasible to use natural drainage systems and transportation systems to establish greenway and trail system networks. A greenway serves as a natural connection along a creek, drainageway, and/or vegetated corridor. Trails are proposed along greenways and streets. These provide safe pedestrian and/or bicycle travel between parks and facilities throughout the community.



Typical Trail Cross-Section Along a Greenway

Proposed greenways include Big Papillion Creek Greenway, Thompson Creek Greenway, Portal Greenway, West Papillion Creek Greenway, Hell Creek Greenway, South Papillion Creek Greenway, Chalco Greenway, and Springhill Greenway.

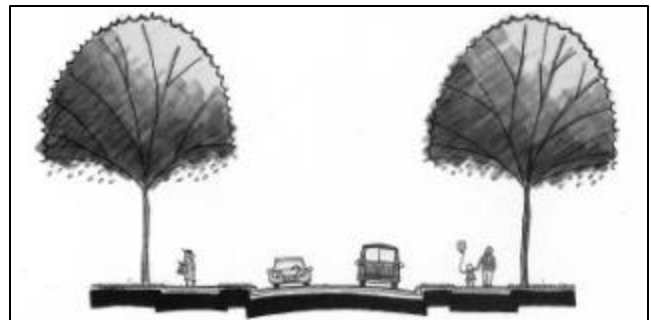
Proposed trails include:

- La Vista Soccer Complex to Big Papillion Creek
- Eberle/Walden Park/Access to La Vista Sports Complex
- Mayor's Park to La Vista Sports Complex
- 84th Street to Central Park
- Kelly McMahon Field/Municipal Pool to 84th Street
- 100th Street Park at Harrison to RR Underpass to Giles Road
- Giles Road south to West Papillion Creek regional trail
- Centennial Road extension west to greenway
- Harrison Hills Park at Harrison to West Papillion Creek regional trail at La Vista Commons Community Park
- West Papillion Creek regional trail from Giles to Harrison
- South Papillion Creek Greenway 132nd - 144th
- South Papillion Creek Greenway 144th - 156th
- Willow Creek Park to South Papillion Creek Greenway trail
- South Papillion Creek Greenway to Giles Road
- 152nd Street Park to South Papillion Creek Greenway trail
- Springhill Park to Millard Park
- SW greenway trail to Chalco Hills trail connection
- 156th at South Papillion Creek to Millard Park trail connection

Tree Plan

The Tree Plan provides recommendations for green streets, trees within parks, recommended species, planting guidelines, and right-of-way information/ordinance. Green streets are through streets designed to extend a park-like appearance through the City and serve to create an interconnected network of parks, recreation areas, schools, and other civic facilities. The typical green streets should be designed or redesigned over time to have one or more of the following elements:

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



Green Street Sketch

Green streets may include signage, maps, rest areas, benches, nodes, and landscaping. Two types of green streets are recommended for La Vista – Neighborhood Green Streets and Primary Green Streets.

Proposed Neighborhood Green Streets include:

<i>Along</i>	<i>Between</i>
• 66 th Street & Giles Road	72 nd - Harrison
• Josephine Street	69 th - 72 nd
• Josephine Street	72 nd - 78 th
• 78 th Street	Harrison - Park View
• Park View Boulevard	72 nd - 84 th
• Edgewood Boulevard	Park View - Giles
• Park View Boulevard	84 th - 88 th
• Granville Parkway & 92 nd Street	Brentwood (east)-Brentwood Circle (west)
• Brentwood Drive	84 th - 92 nd
• Brentwood Drive	92 nd - 96 th
• Wood Lane Drive	Glenview - Park View
• Valley View Drive	Granville - 93 rd
• Brentwood Drive	84 th - Giles
• Centennial Road	84 th - 100 th (extend west in future subdivision)
• Highland Boulevard	Harrison – S. of Chandler
• Lillian Street	132 nd east to cul-de-sac
• Gertrude Street & 137 th Street	132 nd - Frederick
• 135 th Street	Harrison - Gertrude
• Joseph & Josephine Streets	137 th - 144 th
• Meadows Parkway	Cornhusker - Giles
• Echo Hills Drive/146 th Street/Willow Creek Drive	144 th - 156 th

Proposed Primary Green Streets include:

<i>Along</i>	<i>Between</i>
• Harrison Street	Big Papio Creek - 168 th
• Giles Road	72 nd - 108 th
• Giles Road	108 th - 126 th
• Giles Road	126 th - 168 th
• 72 nd Street	Harrison - Giles
• 84 th Street	Harrison - Giles
• 96 th Street	Harrison - Giles
• 96 th Street	South of Giles
• 108 th Street	Harrison - Giles
• 126 th Street	Harrison - Giles
• 132 nd Street	Harrison - Cornhusker
• 144 th Street	Harrison - Cornhusker
• 156 th Street	Harrison - Giles

Just as green streets can help provide a unified and cohesive system throughout the community, so can the trees located with the parks. Park trees can provide numerous benefits to the park, including add value to the property, help keep the area cool, break cold winds, provide food and protection for wildlife, separate different uses, provide a screen between the park and nearby residents, and provide a buffer between the park and heavily used streets or undesirable uses. Choosing the right tree for the right location is important. Although the same few species of trees are planted again and again, there are actually many types of trees that will grow and thrive in eastern Nebraska. It is important to plant trees that

have been known to survive in this area. By choosing the correct species of trees and implementing appropriate planting techniques, the trees will provide a beautiful and functional landscape for the City of La Vista.

Recreation Activity Recommendations

Rapid residential development within La Vista's current corporate limits, and the potential annexation of the equally rapidly developing area west to 168th Street are projected to more than triple the City's current population by 2015. This growth will have significant impact on the need to supply recreational facilities, programs, and activities for its current and future residents. Current program facility, equipment, and staffing requirements will likely triple, for example, if no additional programming is added. And it is likely that the City's residents will begin to expect that more programming be locally available, resulting in even greater requirements for facilities, programs, equipment, and staff.

The City should perform periodic surveys to assess current recreation needs and plan for future programming. To enhance community perceptions about park and recreation facilities, programs, and activities, improved and expanded communication efforts through local media consultants, web site, public service announcements, and local radio should take place.

The Community Center currently offers indoor recreation space; additional space could be used at elementary and junior high school gyms, art rooms, classrooms, and other school facilities by establishing joint use agreements. Outdoor recreation facilities that will need to be enhanced or provided over time include badminton courts, basketball courts, field hockey, ice hockey rinks, shuffleboard, swimming pool/aquatic center, trails, volleyball courts, and wading/splash pools. Additional recreation programs and activities, including cultural activities, special interest activities, senior/older adult activities, youth activities, outdoor winter activities, individual athletic activities, and team athletic activities will also need to be enhance or provided.

ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan is derived from the policy and facility recommendations. It presents an orderly sequence to plan and implement improvements to existing facilities and provide for new facilities. The plan should be reviewed periodically and revised to meet the changing needs and accommodate new growth and development patterns.

INSERT Figure 1-1: Existing and Proposed Facilities

INSERT Figure 1-2: Existing and Proposed Service Areas