

APPENDIX C

Park Development Guidelines



DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

INTENT

These guidelines provide direction for the development and modification of City of Missoula parks and conservation lands.

The intent of the guidelines is to:

- Protect and enhance the City’s quality of life and community identity;
- Provide consistency with Our Missoula Growth Plan and align with adopted Long Range Transportation Plan, and Missoula County Community Health Improvement Plan;
- Encourage functional, safe and economically feasible yo maintain and compatible with the surrounding environment; and
- Ensure the distribution of park facilities and experiences are consistent with the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Plan.

The Parks & Recreation Department recognizes that park development must comply with local, state and federal regulations. These guidelines are not intended to supersede existing regulatory requirements. In addition, some parks and facilities that are currently owned and managed by the City may not meet these new design guidelines. Parks and facilities that do not meet these guidelines have been classified based on their intended function.

ORGANIZATION

The guidelines are organized as follows:

- Guidelines for All Parks
- Guidelines by Classification
- High Use Area Overlay Guidelines
- Guidelines for Infrastructure in Parks

GUIDELINES FOR ALL PARKS

Each park and conservation land in the system should be identifiable as part of the City of Missoula park system and have the following recommended facilities.

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES, AMENITY, FURNISHINGS, IMPROVEMENTS, OR FEATURES

All parks should be developed to a base level that supports desired activities and corresponds with the park classification.

- Park identification sign and rules or alternative identification such as a park gateway.
- Site furnishings (e.g, picnic tables, benches, seating, waste receptacles, and lighting, if applicable) appropriate for the scale of use and character of the park and following Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- Bicycle parking, located at arrival and use points. At heavily used locations, options such as bicycle lockers and covered bike storage should be considered in addition to racks.
- Trees, appropriate for landscape shade in Developed Parks and Trails or on Conservation Lands, unless incompatible with natural resource management goals for the site.
- Waste management plan, with waste facilities as outlined in the master plan, site design or management plan for the site.

- Grading to support the desired activity and to support maintenance, appropriate soils to support desired vegetation, Irrigation as needed to support desired vegetation.
- Pedestrian circulation and connections, Internal recreational loop trails and connections should be included where appropriate, and should connect to the broader multi-modal transportation network (sidewalk or trail).

GUIDELINES BY CLASSIFICATION

In this section, guidelines are provided for each park classification and for conservation lands. For each classification, there are five topics or factors considered:

- **Definition:** The definition of the classification, describing its function within the park system.
- **Size and Characteristics:** The size and characteristics of a park, particularly the developable area and site access, determine the type of parklands or public lands and uses possible at the site. Access addresses the frontages, preferred modes of transportation and entrances to the site.
- **Recommended Facilities:** This is a typical set of facilities to meet the desired function of the park, drawn from park agency norms and community feedback. These facilities are intended to be the standard baseline for the given park classification.
- **Potential Additional Facilities:** The facilities listed under this sub-heading are compatible for the classification. These may be considered if site size, conditions, neighborhood interest and available funding allows.
- **Incompatible Facilities:** In some cases, there are park resources that conflict with the purpose and character of a particular classification.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

DEFINITION

Neighborhood parks provide close-to-home public spaces that meet recreation and social needs for nearby residents to walk, play, exercise and be outdoors. Park users typically live within walking and bicycling distance. Some neighborhood parks incorporate natural areas, such as wooded areas, adding to their overall size. Neighborhood parks are typically surrounded by public streets or trails.

COMPLETE PARK EXPERIENCE

Every neighborhood park should include elements that provide a complete park experience, which means each park should include at least one amenity that supports recreation opportunities in each of the following categories:

- Social/cultural
- Active recreation
- Play experience
- Nature

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

- **Size:** Desired size is 5 acres. In the highest density residential areas, at least 2 developable acres should be provided in order to provide enough space for a complete park experience.
- **Location:** Site should be centrally located in the neighborhood it serves.

Where possible, the park should be located adjacent to a public school.

- **Access:** Since visitors are intended to arrive on foot or by bike, the site should be accessed by a local street. At least 50% of the park should be adjacent to a public street to provide easy public access, visual surveillance and opportunities for on-street parking. Connection to the off-street trail system is desirable.
- **Configuration:** At least 50% of the site should be generally flat to support facility development. Large existing trees should be preserved as feasible, and geologic features should be incorporated into the site design.
- **Service Distance:** ½-mile in medium density residential areas and ¼-mile in the highest density residential areas.

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

- Play area. May include structured elements, manufactured equipment or natural play elements, or a combination of these.
- At least one social space, which could be a picnic shelter, community garden or off-leash dog area, or similar facility that provides space for social interaction.
- At least one neighborhood-scale active recreation facility (e.g, sports court, exercise stations, skate park, multi-use playing field, climbing wall, recreational trails).
- Internal pathway system.

- Lawn area suitable for gathering or informal games.

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Exercise stations
- Small-footprint games (e.g, ping pong tables, cornhole, horseshoes, etc.)
- Splashpad/water play area
- Community garden
- Dog park
- Dedicated ADA parking if site or facilities demand
- Sport courts: basketball court or half court, multi-use sports court, pickleball (pair), etc.
- Sports fields: rectangular or diamond, unlighted. Sized for practice and informal play
- Picnic area or shelter, medium (capacity approximately 25 people)
- River Access
- Natural areas
- Restrooms, permanent or temporary
- Pedestrian-scale lighting, Dark Sky compliant
- Drinking water fountain including standard and ADA stations, water bottle filling station, and dog bowl filling
- Electrical utilities to support small neighborhood and family events
- Small bicycke skill features such as pump track

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

- Destination facilities or facilities with community wide draw
- Sport field lighting
- Sport field complexes
- Full-service recreation centers
- Swimming pools (indoor or outdoor)
- Display gardens such as rose gardens or botanical gardens
- Off-street parking

POCKET PARKS

DEFINITION

Pocket parks, sometimes called mini-parks, are small parks that may serve a portion of the surrounding neighborhood. Pocket parks may function as small neighborhood parks or simply provide urban green space. Pocket parks can be essential in serving densely populated portions of the city where neighborhood park level of service cannot be met due to lack of available lands.

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

If a small neighborhood is not possible, Missoula may acquire additional pocket parks. These should meet the location, access, and service distance guidelines for neighborhood parks.

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

Since pocket parks are intended to serve the neighborhood park function, each pocket park or cluster of pocket parks should provide complete park experience. See neighborhood park guidelines for recommended and additional facilities, which should be selected to consider the small size of pocket parks.

Existing pocket parks may be renovated to use less resources by modifying turf type to ecolawn or no-mow lawns to be more drought resistant.

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

All of the facilities incompatible with neighborhood parks are also incompatible with pocket parks. In addition, pocket parks should be designed to minimize maintenance requirements.

COMMUNITY PARKS

DEFINITION

Community parks are designed to serve multiple neighborhoods, drawing visitors from several neighborhoods or across Missoula for their features, facilities or programs. These parks serve a broad range of activities and users, support group gatherings, provide space for programs and events and often include specialized recreation facilities. Community parks are generally designed to also serve as neighborhood parks for those living nearby.

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

- **Size:** Desired minimum size is 25 acres, with at least 50% developable.
- **Location:** Site should be located to support access by all modes. When feasible, natural areas should be included in the community park.
- **Access:** There should be access from a higher order public street on at least one side for the main park entry, which should front a street with a bicycle route and a transit route when possible. Connection to the off-street trail system is desirable.
- **Configuration:** Community and Regional parks are intended to support a variety of uses, including both self-directed activities and organized programs. Therefore, no more than 50% of the site should be dedicated to sports facilities or indoor recreation facilities. Large existing trees should be preserved as feasible, and geologic

- features should be incorporated into the site design.
- **Service Distance:** Every area of Missoula should have a community park within 1½ mile. Regional Parks serve as community parks for those within 1½ miles.

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

- Each community park should have a distinct theme based on the site’s characteristics and mix of amenities. Features and facilities within the park should support the park’s identity and character.
- Medium to large play area. May include structured elements, manufactured equipment or natural play elements, or a combination of these. A custom-designed destination play area may be provided.
 - At least one medium-sized picnic area with shade structure (approximately 25-person capacity)
 - Measured distance looped walking path and/or trailhead access to Missoula’s trail network.
 - At least three community-scale amenities (e.g., multiple sports fields, multiple sports courts, indoor facility, environmental education facility, ropes course, skate park, specialty garden, disc golf course, large picnic shelter (25+ capacity), historic structure, large off-leash area, Missoula Currents Center for Recreation and Creativity). Lighting may be provided.
 - Permanent restrooms.

- Lawn area suitable for gathering or informal games.
- Internal pathway system.
- Natural area or habitat patch.

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Sport courts: basketball court (at least a full court, tennis court (at least a pair), pickleball (at least a pair), etc.
- Sports fields: rectangular or diamond. If fields are included, there should be multiple fields to support league play. Sports complexes may be included in community parks. Fields may be lighted and may include concessions facilities.
- Other sports or exercise facilities (bike skills course, disc golf course, pump track, skatepark, climbing wall, ropes course, etc)
- Community-scale indoor facilities (e.g., full-service recreation center, community center, nature center, field house)
- Swimming pools (indoor or outdoor)
- Community gardens or urban farm
- Dog park (large)
- Exercise stations
- Small-footprint games (e.g, ping pong tables, cornhole, horseshoes, etc.)
- Splashpad/ water play area
- Outdoor performance space (e.g, amphitheater, bandstand, outdoor stage)
- River access

- Display gardens
- Public art
- Natural areas
- Pedestrian-scale lighting, Dark Sky compliant
- Water fountain
- Electrical utility service sized for community-scale events and City programming
- Off-street parking
- Trailheads
- Maintenance facility

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

Facilities that would detract from the community park’s identity or do not support PROST Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals or are better suited for regional parks.

REGIONAL PARKS

DEFINITION

Regional parks are unique large parks that provide regional attractions or protect cultural, historic, or natural resources of regional significance. These parks serve the greatest geographical area, attracting visitors from across the city and the greater region who tend to visit for longer durations. Regional parks typically include a variety of specialized facilities and large group gathering areas.

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

- **Size:** Desired minimum size is 100 acres, with 200+ preferable.
- **Location:** If the park contains regional attractions, site should be located to support the market study for the facility. Location may also be based on the presence of cultural, historic, or natural resources.
- **Access:** There should be direct access from an arterial public street on at least one side for the main park entry. Additional entry points should be provided for nearby residents. Connection to the off-street trail system is desirable.
- **Configuration:** Site should include level areas for development of recreational facilities. Large existing trees should be preserved as feasible, and geologic features should be incorporated into the site design.
- **Service Distance:** City to Regional

Service District

- **Multiple Services Need:** Regional parks may serve as community parks for those within 1 ½ miles. They may also serve as neighborhood parks for those living nearby, if the regional park is designed to locate neighborhood park amenities near residential areas and provide walkable access.

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

- Each regional park should have a unique identity based on the site’s characteristics and the regional facilities at the park. Features and facilities within the park should support the park’s identity and character.
- The park should include multiple regional-scale or top tier facilities (e.g., indoor/outdoor sports complex, event pavilion, amphitheater/concert venue, other types of revenue-generating facility, large group picnic area).
- The park should have supporting facilities for casual or self-directed use, such as playgrounds, seating areas, dog parks, open lawn areas, games such as ping pong or bocce, etc.
- Permanent restrooms, and likely multiple facilities, located near each use area.
- The park should have a looped internal pathway system that can be used for exercise and recreational walking, in addition to site circulation.
- The park should include natural areas and features.

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Sport courts: complexes or for drop-in and rental/tournament use. If a court complex, the number of courts should be determined by the market study or business and operations plan and may include concessions facilities. If for drop-in use: basketball court (at least a full court, tennis court (at least a pair), pickleball (at least a pair), etc.
- Sports fields: rectangular and/or diamond. These should include multiple fields and be designed for competition and tournaments. Fields may be lighted and may include concessions facilities.
- Other sports or exercise facilities (bike skills course, disc golf course, pump track, skatepark, climbing wall, ropes course, etc)
- Play area, and usually multiple play areas. May include structured elements, manufactured equipment or natural play elements, or a combination of these. A custom-designed destination play area may be provided.
- Regional or community-scale indoor facilities
- Aquatic center/swimming pools (indoor or outdoor)
- Community gardens or urban farm
- Off-leash dog area (large)
- Exercise stations
- Small-footprint games (e.g. ping pong tables, cornhole, horseshoes, etc.)

- Splashpad
- Multiple picnic areas or shelter, medium (capacity approximately 25 people)
- Large group picnic area (capacity 100+)
- Large open lawn for events, sitting, and informal play
- Outdoor performance space (e.g, amphitheater, bandstand, outdoor stage)
- Boat ramp or water access
- Display gardens
- Public art
- Natural areas
- Restrooms, permanent
- Pedestrian-scale lighting, Dark Sky compliant
- Water fountain
- Electrical utility service sized for regional-scale events and City programming
- Off-street parking
- Transit or shuttle stops
- Trailheads
- Satellite maintenance facility

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

Facilities that would detract from the community park’s identity or do not support PROST Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals.

SPECIAL USE PARKS

DEFINITION

Special use parks are typically focused on a specific recreation facility or use, though they may include supporting features and amenities. Examples are urban plazas, gardens or arboreta, bike parks, stand-alone indoor facilities, stand-alone boat ramps, or community scaled event space.

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

- **Size:** Depends on the special use. Site should be adequate to accommodate the desired special use and associated support facilities.
- **Location:** Depends on the special use. If a feasibility or market study is conducted for the special use facility, the study may provide additional locational criteria.
- **Access:** There should be direct access from a public street on at least one side for the main park entry. Connection to the off-street trail system is desirable.
- **Configuration:** Large existing trees should be preserved as feasible, and geologic features should be incorporated into the site design as feasible.
- **Service Distance:** Citywide

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

- At least one special use facility.
- Internal pathway system

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Regional or community-scale indoor facilities
- River access
- Natural areas
- Restrooms, permanent or temporary
- Pedestrian-scale lighting, Dark Sky compliant
- Water fountain
- Electrical utility service sized for community-scale events
- Any neighborhood park or community park facilities may be added to the special use site.

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

Any facility that would conflict with the intended special use of the site.

LINEAR PARKS

DEFINITION

Linear parks are longer than they are wide and typically include trails. These parks may follow linear corridors such as creeks, rail lines and utility corridors or they may simply provide connections between parks or to other destinations. Linear parks may be developed or natural in character, depending on the corridor. If the corridor is wide enough, linear parks may include park amenities and recreation facilities.

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

- **Size:** Varies, depends on corridor type, as well as width and available length.
- **Location:** Follows a linear corridor.
- **Access:** There should be direct access from a public street or public park on at least one side, and preferably at least two direct accesses. For longer linear parks, additional access points from public streets or parks are desired.
- **Configuration:** Large existing trees should be preserved as feasible, and geologic features should be incorporated into the site design.
- **Service Distance:** Citywide

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

- Trail (typically Regional or Community)

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Trailhead
- Parking
- Natural areas – riparian, river, arboretum, orchard
- Restrooms, permanent or temporary
- Picnic shelter
- Pedestrian-scale lighting, Dark Sky compliant
- Water fountain
- Any neighborhood park facilities may be located in the linear park, but should be sited near a public access point.

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

Any facility that would conflict with the intended linkage.

CONSERVATION LANDS

DEFINITIONS

Conservation Lands protect land with natural habitats and ecosystems and significant visual, historic, cultural or archaeological resources. They provide opportunities for interaction with nature and may include recreation facilities such as trails and picnic areas. Conservation lands are further classified as Park Preserves, Community Natural Areas and Neighborhood Natural Areas. All or a portion of conservation lands of all types may be closed to public access seasonally or year round depending on resource protection needs. In addition, a High Use Outdoor Site overlay identifies areas within conservation lands of various types that are developed to support public access to outdoor recreation.

Park Preserves are generally greater than 100 acres. These properties protect large areas with natural resource values of community-wide or regional significance. They may provide opportunities for nature-oriented outdoor recreation. Management priority is on preserving and improving native habitats and achieving an appropriate balance between resource protection and public use. Preserves typically have natural surface trails with associated signage. Some preserves also have single-lane dirt road systems established prior to City’s acquisition of the property. Areas are largely undeveloped except in designated High Use Outdoor Site areas or at lower use access points where user amenities (e.g., trash receptacles, parking, signage, vault toilets) may exist.

Community Natural Areas are usually no less than 10 acres in size. These properties serve to protect natural values and ecosystem functions. These properties may include areas of significant vegetation, important habitats, scenic areas, or areas that contribute to the urban shaping and buffering goals of the community. They provide storm water management or wildland urban interface buffer. They provide opportunities for nature oriented outdoor recreation. Management emphasis is on resource protection with appropriate public access provided. Level of development is commensurate with level of public use so long as resource values are preserved.

Neighborhood Natural Areas are smaller sites that provide habitat patches, protect natural resources or provide ecosystem functions. Level of development is generally low since the sites are small.

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

	Park Preserve	Community Natural Area	Neighborhood Natural Area
Size	100+ acres	10+ acres	Varies, typically less than 10 acres
Location	Resource dependent	Resource dependent	Resource dependent
Access	Resource dependent	Typically provided	Typically provided
Configuration	Resource dependent	Resource dependent	Resource dependent
Service Distance	Citywide/Regional	1-mile	¼-½ mile

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

- Trail (typically Recreational, may be shared use or single use)

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Viewing blinds
- Trailhead
- Parking
- Picnic shelter
- High use outdoor site facilities
- Naturalized storm water facilities
- Interpretation
- Fishing or birding ponds

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

- Any facility that would conflict with the natural resource values of the site.
- Lighting, except at trailhead parking
- If available, refer to the relevant management plan for the site for additional guidance on the appropriate character and uses.

HIGH USE SITE OVERLAY GUIDELINES

DEFINITION

The High Use Outdoor Site Overlay identifies areas within conservation lands that are developed to support public access to outdoor recreation and may include appropriate recreational facilities. These areas are located outside of sensitive resource zones. High use areas may be closed seasonally for management reasons.

POTENTIAL FACILITIES

- Regional, community, recreational, neighborhood or connector trail
- Nature or interpretive center
- Outdoor classroom
- Wildlife viewing blinds
- Boat launch
- Fishing pier
- Restrooms, permanent or temporary
- Picnic shelter
- Large group picnic area
- Indoor event space
- Warming hut
- Bike skills course (pump track, BMX course, etc.)
- Mountain bike park
- Disc golf course
- Archery range

- Climbing or bouldering wall
- Equipment rental facilities
- Temporary facilities to support events (e.g., races, walks, nature festivals)

GUIDELINES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

The desired result is reducing the amount of land reserved for the exclusive use of infrastructure and maximizing recreational value by combining community benefits of infrastructure investment with the recreational benefits of park land.

DEFINITIONS

Grey Infrastructure: Grey infrastructure refers to engineered systems and structures that support urban development. Including: streets, sidewalks, utilities, and traditional stormwater infrastructure such as pipes, sumps, and retention basins.

Green (Stormwater) Infrastructure: Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) is the term for stormwater management features that use permeable pavement or natural materials like plants and soil to remove pollutants, allow stormwater to soak back into the ground, prevent flooding, and reduce the amount of polluted water that reaches water bodies.

Renewable Energy Infrastructure: Renewable energy infrastructure includes solar and wind energy production infrastructure and associated facilities.

INFRASTRUCTURE IN PARKS

The following considerations are critical to understanding how infrastructure can be integrated into park sites and conservation lands:

- Infrastructure designed and scaled to serve the park’s on site stormwater management needs should be allowed. Green stormwater infrastructure is the preferred solution.
- Consider green infrastructure that substitutes for standard elements (such as previous paving or alternatives to traditional paving for traditional parking lot paving).
- In general, infrastructure to manage stormwater from offsite should not be included in the park unless designed as an amenity to the park (i.e bancroft ponds)
- Renewable energy infrastructure may be located in developed parks of all types and may produce more energy than is required for the site’s operation (e.g., solar panels covering a parking area).
- Scenic impacts of renewable energy infrastructure should be considered particularly if such infrastructure is considered for inclusion in conservation lands. Habitat also, particularly in Park Preserves.
- Incorporate any additional maintenance requirements for infrastructure, to be paid for by the appropriate utility fund, into the project budget impacts.

If facilities such as pump stations are included, they should be designed to

add to the park experience (such as by incorporating public art or interpretation) or by including needed features such as shade structures.

In conservation lands, consult the relevant management plan, if any, for more specifics about compatible infrastructure uses.

Avoid any infrastructure that interferes with the primary purpose or character of a park site.

Carefully locate vaults, towers or other structures that could impact park user safety, impact view sheds, displace existing park amenities (unless adequately replaced) or interfere with planned expansion of a park.

**PARK FACILITIES IN
INFRASTRUCTURE SITES**

Recreation and natural features can be added to existing and new sites that are primarily intended for infrastructure. If there is adequate developable area meeting the appropriate design guidelines, infrastructure sites can serve as neighborhood or community parks. Infrastructure sites of any size can be considered natural area parks if they contribute to protecting a natural resource or provide an opportunity to interact with nature:

- New utility and stormwater infrastructure should be designed to incorporate nature (such as wildlife habitat and appropriate vegetation) and/or recreational uses where possible
- Re-design of existing infrastructure

sites (such as detention basins) or utility easements to create recreational opportunities, habitat patches or trail connections should be explored in areas where access to parks or nature is below level of service standard.

- Where possible, especially in areas below park level of service standards consider building underground stormwater storage and infiltration facilities that are designed to accommodate active recreation, and other park uses on the surface.