



**Mount  
Vernon**  
IOWA

**Michael Beimer, City Administrator**  
**Mark Winder, Chief of Police**  
**Dan Boggs, P.E., City Engineer**

**Jim Moore, Mayor**

**Council:**

**Jamie Hampton**  
**Marianne Taylor**  
**Francesca Thompson**  
**Bill Niemi**  
**Eric Roudabush**

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Dear Mr. Mayor and Honorary Council,

Attached you will find the unfinished product of our Master Parks and Recreation Plan that the Park and Recreation Board and myself are composing. Please review the documents and we will present our current status at the Council Meeting on April 21<sup>st</sup>. It is our desire to have this document completed by September 2014.

Sincerely,

**Matt Siders**  
**Director of Parks and Recreation**

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# **City of Mt Vernon, IA Park and Recreation Department Master Plan**



## City of Mt Vernon Master Parks and Recreation Plan Outline

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The Process  
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-Population Projections  
-Trends  
-Parks and Recreation Delivery and Programming  
-Recreation Facilities (Inventory current and future needs)  
-Parks and Open Space (Inventory and are National and State Standards being met)  
The Issues / SWOT Analysis  
Action Plans, Timing, and Priorities
- Section 2: **Parks and Recreation Delivery and Programming**  
Overview  
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Overview  
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Overview  
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## **SECTION 1: Introduction**

The purpose of the City of Mount Vernon's Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to assess the community's needs and available resources in order to develop a clear set of goals, strategies and standards for the City's parks, trails, and open space system, as well as its recreation facilities (current and future) and program development for the next ten years. This planning process utilized a comprehensive approach, including a physical inventory, statistically valid public survey, benchmarking, national standards analysis, demographics, mapping and trends. This community-driven plan is intended to guide the City's Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments by establishing sustainable, prioritized recommendations in regard to facility improvements and development, recreation programming, operations and maintenance, as well as the resources and funding associated with each action. This will be the first Master Parks and Recreation Plan created for the City of Mount Vernon.

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Study Area**

The study area for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan encompasses the entire town of Mount Vernon, which is located in western Linn County in East Central Iowa. The town of Mount Vernon has a 2010 Census population of 4,506. The physical character of Mount Vernon's neighborhoods is mostly urban, with a small number of rural areas within city limits taken into consideration. It includes institutional land uses such as Cornell College, a liberal arts college, and the Mount Vernon School District. The highest concentration of residents is in and around Town Center/Downtown.

## **THE PROCESS**

### **Community Survey**

The Park and Recreation Board initiated a community survey in November 2010 with results compiled in 2011. The survey was sent out to every household (approx 1,353) that contained 11 questions and room for additional comments. A total of 297 surveys were returned and results were compiled. The results of that survey are provided in *Table 1* (attached). It is recommended that with future updates to this plan the Park and Rec Board consider hosting discussions with local community recreation groups, the MVCSD school district, Cornell College, and City staff. The Park and Rec Board will host a public hearing on TBD before recommending and adopting this document to the Mount Vernon City Council.

### **Population and Projections**

As of the census of 2010, there were 4,506 people, 1,353 households, and 894 families residing in the city. The population density was 1,291.1 inhabitants per square mile. There were 1,397 housing units at an average density of 400.3 per square mile. The racial makeup of the city was 95.0% White, 0.9% African American, 0.2% Native American, 1.7% Asian, 0.5% from other

racess, and 1.6% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 1.9% of the population. There were 1,353 households out of which 37.3% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 54.2% were married couples living together, 9.2% had a female householder with no husband present, 2.7% had a male householder with no wife present, and 33.9% were non-families. 26.5% of all households were made up of individuals and 8.9% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.54 and the average family size was 3.14.

The median age in the city was 24.4 years. 22.9% of residents were under the age of 18; 27.7% were between the ages of 18 and 24; 19.7% were from 25 to 44; 20.1% were from 45 to 64; and 9.5% were 65 years of age or older. The gender makeup of the city was 48.5% male and 51.5% female. (2006 –Fiscal Impact of Residential Development in Mount Vernon study predicts in 2015 MV could have close to 5,000 residents (on City of MV Website)...will edit more later)

### Trends

The Master Plan process included a thorough examination of local, state, and national trends affecting parks and recreation. Table 2 (attached) provides a summary of the key trends that are expected to have significant implications in the future of parks and recreation in Mount Vernon.

### Parks and Recreation Delivery and Programming

The Plan addresses the methods of recreation and parks service delivery in the City of Mount Vernon, covering such topics as relationships among the key providers, the role of the Park and Recreation Board and Recreation Department, and ways to improve coordination and communication with stakeholder groups. Existing programs and future programming needs were also assessed. This can be viewed in Table 3 (attached).

### Recreation Facilities Inventory

Surveys and interviews with participants during a 2004 Needs and Space Analysis and 2011 mail survey provided the necessary information upon which to base the projection of current and future needs for a variety of sports and community recreation facilities. Existing standards of supply and recommended provision levels were also considered in the context of future demand. The standards were then revised accordingly, taking into consideration not only current participation levels and public requests, but also recreation trends. Improvements to existing facilities are also recommended. This can be viewed in Table 4 (attached).

### National Parks and Open Space Standards

An inventory of publicly accessible parks and open space areas (including outdoor recreation facilities and amenities) was compiled and recommendations for park improvements were catalogued. The City's parks and linked open space network were also evaluated in terms of supply and demand through the application of a modified parkland hierarchy and provision standards. This can be reviewed in Table 5 (attached).

## THE ISSUES

The following are considered to be key issues and concerns arising from P&R Board and the P&R Community Survey. The issues **are not** listed in any priority order;

\*Marketing – There currently is no marketing plan in place. The creation of one would help in the efficient promotion and program awareness along with sharing proper information about parks and programs.

\*Park Maintenance- NEED TO EXPAND

\*Organizational Structure of the Park and Recreation Department / One Person - NEED TO EXPAND

\*Age of Outdoor Pool - NEED TO EXPAND

\*Community input / participation with P&R Board - NEED TO EXPAND

\*Lack of Indoor Facilities – City Owned - NEED TO EXPAND

\*Adult Programming - NEED TO EXPAND

## ACTION PLANS, TIMING, AND PRIORITIES

Action plans (recommendations) have been divided into the following sections;

- ▶ Section 2: Leisure Delivery System and Programming
- ▶ Section 3: Existing Parks and Open Space
- ▶ Section 4: New Recreation Facilities and Parks
- ▶ Section 5: Implementation

Each action has been assigned a recommended timing and priority. The ranking of action plans is based on high, medium, and low priorities. The priority rankings are largely based on the degree of need and safety concerns. Despite the priority ranking system, all action plans are deemed important and, when implemented, would benefit the park and recreation services of Mount Vernon.

The proposed timing of the action plans has also been referenced based on short, medium, and long term timeframes. Some recommendations do not include specific timeframes due to the fact that priorities may shift due to budgeting issues and other circumstances unforeseen. The timeframes are defined as follows;

- ▶ Short Term (2014-2016)
- ▶ Medium Term (2017-2019)
- ▶ Long Term (2020-2022)

It should be noted that the priorities and timing indicated for the action plans are based on ideal circumstances. Budget pressures, changes in participation, availability of volunteer resources, land acquisition and retraction, and other factors may impact upon the implementation of the proposed action plans. The action plans are based on upon what is

needed and not necessarily on what is financially achievable by Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon should compare the action plans with its financial capacity and focus on the highest priority items. It is recommended that Mount Vernon regularly monitor and update the Master Parks and Recreation Plan and its action plans.

## **SECTION 2: Parks and Recreation Delivery and Programming**

### **OVERVIEW**

The delivery system is the way that recreation services are delivered to the public. The City of Mount Vernon is the primary provider of public recreation facilities and parks and also administers a large amount of community programs and services for all ages.

In addition to the City of Mount Vernon, there other public and private sector organizations that have played a role in the recreation delivery system, including Mount Vernon Community Schools, First Street Community Center, Kernoustie Golf Club, and others.

There is also a collection of community organizations and volunteers within the City of Mount Vernon. These organizations, which include competitive sports teams, special interests groups, and individual volunteers, have traditionally played a large role in the delivery of recreation programs and have a strong track record of active participation in the provision of leisure activities, fundraising, and sponsorship. There are a few formal relationships or procedures among community organizations and the City of Mount Vernon.

Recreation programming deficiencies and needs were examined, resulting in recommendations to improve the scope of program opportunities. For the most part, however, the public has indicated that the recreational opportunities in Mount Vernon are quite good. The results of a 2011 P&R survey indicate that participation in Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation is quite high with 68% having participated in one or more of the programs offered by Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation.

**Action Plans go here.....**

## **SECTION 3: Existing Parks and Open Spaces**

### **OVERVIEW**

This section provides an analysis of existing parks and open space in Mount Vernon. Public open space and parks contribute to the quality of life of Mount Vernon residents by not only providing the land base for recreation activities and facilities, but also by contributing to the ecological health of the municipality and enhancing the aesthetic quality of the community.

There are # public and quasi-public parks within Mount Vernon totaling # acres (see Table #). Each park was evaluated during the Master Plan process for its ability to meet the current and future needs of Mount Vernon residents. Each park was compared to the National Park Standards per the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA). Action plans are proposed on a park-specific basis, detailing necessary improvements.

Mount Vernon also has an extensive network of paved bicycle and pedestrian paths (framework for) and has plans to upgrade existing trails and develop new paths over the coming years. Trails are a valuable asset to the community as they assist not only in alleviating traffic congestion, but also in providing space for a variety of unstructured, low-impact recreational paths. The continued development of both nature trails and paved trails received a great deal of support from the public through the household P&R survey.

### **ACTION PLANS**

The action plans regarding existing parks and open space areas are below. Recommendations have been numbered for ease of reference and are not listed in order of priority.

**Action Plans go here.....**

## **SECTION 4: New Recreation Facilities and Parks**

### **OVERVIEW**

The Master Plan process involved an extensive and comprehensive assessment of the demand for recreation facilities and additional parkland within Mount Vernon. By comparing requirements and national standards (demand) to the inventory of existing recreation opportunities (supply), the need for a variety of additional indoor and outdoor facilities, as well as parkland, was identified.

*What national standards say/state about Mount Vernon will go here... ..*

A combination of market-driven and population standards, as well as public opinion was used to assess and estimate community demand and need for recreation facilities in Mount Vernon. The use of standards is felt to be the most accurate, rational, and scientific approach to determining facility needs. Other contributing factors, such as demographic trends, public opinions, and survey comments have also been incorporated in order to provide an overall estimation of need.

The table on the following page contains a summary of the facility and parkland standards recommended in the Plan. Standard levels are the recommended measures for the supply of recreation areas and facilities in Mount Vernon. They are based on a combination of accepted industry/municipal standards, market-driven factors (demand, trends, demographics, etc), and the past and present circumstances within Mount Vernon.

### ***Recommended Standards by Facility Type go here....***

Recreation Centers / CC

Ice Pads

Indoor / Outdoor Pools

Spray Pads

Soccer Fields

Football Fields

Ball Diamonds

Tennis Courts

Outdoor Basketball Courts

Play Structures

Trails

Parks Hierarchy (4.25 acres of Neighborhood and Community parkland per 1,000

-3 tier hierarchy

-Neighborhood Parks (0.75 acres/population)

-Community Parks (3.5 acres / 1,000 population)

-Passive Parks

Recommendations for new recreation facilities to be developed are below. It is important to understand that not all of these projects may be financially feasible for Mount Vernon to undertake during the proposed timeframe.

- Short Term (2014-2016)
  - Community Center
- Medium Term (2017-2019)
- Long Term (2020-2022)

**SECTION 5: Implementation**

**OVERVIEW**

The Master Parks and Recreation Plan is a long-range, strategic planning document intended to guide decision-making for the City for the next 10 years. With any document that utilizes a long term planning outlook it becomes difficult to ensure accuracy. As a result, there is a need for the action plans to be periodically updated and reviewed to ensure that the Plan remains reflective of the current realities and responsive to the changing needs of the community. It is recommended that the Park and Rec Board review the Plan on an annual basis and make changes as desired. It is also imperative that the Master Plan be linked to the City’s budget process and CIP plans and that the action plans be reconciled with the City’s fiscal capacity.

**ACTION PLANS**

The Action Plans regarding the implementation of the Master Plan are contained in Table 8. Recommendations have been numbered for ease of reference and are not listed in priority.

Action Plans will go here.....

*Table 1*

**City of Mt Vernon, IA  
Park and Recreation Department  
Community Survey Results  
Survey issued Nov 2010**



Question City Survey - Parks and Rec Question Description

#	
1	Anyone in your household use parks in MV
2	If yes, which facilities (frequency also)
3	What additional facilities like us to provide (choices)
4	Anyone in your household participate in or attend City sponsored activities
5	If yes, which activities (choices)
6	Any additional programs you would like provided (choices)
7	How did you learn about programs (marketing)
8	Rate maintenance of parks (scale 1-5 with 1 being poor)
9	If answered 1,2,3 on scale for Ques #8 which parks in need of maint
10	Prioritize following groups (choices) scale 1-6 (1 highest priority)
11	Additional Comments

Total Surveys Returned
297

**Question #1**

Anyone in your household use parks in MV		Did Not Answer
YES	NO	
245	30	22

Question #2	If yes to Question
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#1, which facilities  
are used  
(frequency)

	Used or Visited	1-5 Times	6-10 Times	More than 10
Davis Park	104	78	36	88
Memorial Park	83	86	43	50
Bryant Park	67	61	35	37
Elliott Athletic Complex	63	46	32	67
Nature Park	76	66	26	44
Swimming Pool	87	50	31	87
Skate Park	25	29	7	15
Walking Path from EAC to Main Street	73	42	38	90
First Street Community Center Gym	42	32	23	24
Elementary School Playground	61	44	24	74
Cornell Disc Golf Course	24	21	6	11

**Comments:**

What about an over 60 afternoon swim or exercise class? It would help for swimsuit shy seniors.  
 I didn't know the first street community center gym existed - what is the cost?  
 ...Could it be low cost for seniors and out of work? Low income?  
 Walking path from EAC to Main Street needs repair  
 Used Bryant Park more than 300 times  
 Would love to see a senior badmitten league offered during the winter months at First Street Community Center Gym

Question #3

Check any of the following additional facilities you'd like to see the P&R Dept provide

Additional Facility	Check Mark
Soccer Fields	32
Baseball / Softball Diamonds	42
Football / Soccer Fields	35
Sculpture Garden	50
Open / Green Space	69
Walking / Jogging Paths	197
Pavilions	38
Picnic Shelters	60
Playground Equipment	54
Splash Pad	104

**Comments:**

Mt Vernon has no good or safe walking places for children. Sidewalks are crappy and just end walking areas suck!  
 Volleyball Courts / Horseshoe Pits - maybe Ellotts  
 Get rid of old football field  
 Bicycling Paths (especially to the Palisades)  
 Dog Park / Bike paths  
 Biking  
 Question #3 continued

Bike Paths

Dog Park

Basketball Courts

New Tennis Courts

Bike Paths

Dog Park

Handicap Access Playground

Biking path to CR down Bryant Road

more bike paths

more at skate park. Thank you for what you did do!

put splash pad on top of center ramp at skate park

playground equipment in memorial park

Could older adults "bike" on the walking/jogging paths?

Indoor pool?

NO MORE soccer fields - would like football fields

Bike path!!

We have enough soccer fields, baseball/softball diamonds, football/soccer fields, open/green space; want walking/jogging paths to connect entire community and trails to Solon/Cedar Rapids

The K/1st are too big to play on the small soccer fields 5 on 5.

Would like to see the city accept the lot at the corner of 7th St. SW in Stonebrook. There are so many kids in that neighborhood who utilize the lot.

A new heated pool!

Indoor pool! Would use it 2x a week or more!

**Question #4**

**Anyone in your household participate in or**

attend City sponsored activities

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YES	NO	DNA
200	71	26

Other-Explain \_\_\_\_\_

- Not currently but in the past have participated in all athletic recreation activities
- work concession stands
- Band concerts (municipal band)
- Arts fest and most downtown events
- We are empty nest. We support providing children's activities.
- Band concerts
- Football, basketball, camps
- Retired and gone a lot
- Elementary age sports
- Football / Soccer
- Soccer, Flag Football, T-ball, Swimming Lessons for our kids
- When my grandchildren visit and if any special events are occurring we go - Heritage Days
- Little League teams all sports
- Farmers Market
- Attend Chocolate Fest not sure who sponsored
- Water Exercise
- Heritage Days
- MVYF
- Chalk the Walk
- I play tennis 3 times a week at Cornell. Parks and Rec should buy a new tennis net yearly.
- Kid activities
- Heritage Days
- Chalk the Walk
- Chill Kick Off - more of these would be nice

**Question #4 continued:**

Softball, baseball, Chalk the Walk, Art Festival, Heritage Days  
Volleyball, Softball, soccer, 4th of July, Chalk the Walk, Farmer's Market, Safety Fair

Soccer

Yes - swim team events, youth softball, chalk the walk

Yes - swimming lessons

Yes - soccer

Yes - grandson's soccer

Yes - chili cook off, chalk the walk, holiday magic  
night, heritage days, uptown music nights

although I would like to move it to a no.)

Yes - parks and recreation sports leagues for Kids

Yes - Heritage Days and other events like that. I  
wish there was an adult softball league

although I would like to move it to a no.)

Yes - Parks and Rec, Chalk the Walk, Etc.

Supply plants, help with plantings, volunteer time to  
groom parks

No - children participated in several sports until recently

No - my son is now too old for parks and rec, he  
used it through Fall 2010

We attend most activities Uptown.

Community Band

youth sports

painting lessons by mark benesh

swim nights - 5K race

We're old, with health issues. When our grandchildren visit we think of parks.

Farmer's market

What about opening up the downtown on Halloween (like Lisbon does with their business?)

Question #5 \_\_\_\_\_ if yes to #4, which activities participated in (choices) \_\_\_\_\_

Soccer	Tball	Baseball	Softball	Coach-Pitch	Swimming Lessons
93	76	60	36	43	81
Flag Football	Swim Team	Chalk the Walk	Basketball	Water Exercise	Cookie Decorating
49	23	176	48	16	68

**Comments:**

**Lap Swim**

Years ago we did it all...in the child rearing years.  
Baseball, football basketball as club teams needing practice space.  
It would be great to have an over 60 water exercise program.  
Water exercise is great, but I do adult swim which is the same time.  
We really need an indoor aquatics center for lap swimming. My husband uses the pool 5 days a week at YMCA in CR and I use the pool 3-5 days a week at the Sleep Inn Hotel in MVI

Question #6	additional programs provided (choices)	
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Adult Soccer	Adult Basketball	Adult Volleyball	Adult Softball	Adult Arts & Enrichment
16	23	84	49	94
Family Game Night	Adult Flag Football	Adult Swimming Lessons	Movies In the Park	Youth Arts & Enrichment
45	22	25	119	93

**Comments:**

Organized safe routes to and from 1) school to encourage walking or biking  
 ...2) Bike racks uptown locations 3) lap swim indoors  
 Bridge Club or lessons - I would be interested in teaching an introductory bridge class (Mark Weldon 895-6689)  
 We need more walking trails and better sidewalks  
 Quilting, Cooking, Photography, Calligraphy, Scrapbooking  
 Child and Adult Tennis  
 Breads, Soups, Pies  
 Horseshoe Pits and Tennis Courts - may accommodate teens through adults  
 Mt Vernon could sure use a good dog park... both for the fun and socialization of pets and owners  
 Support Municipal Band  
 Adult swimming lessons other than summer  
 Activities that individuals can participate in vs sign up as a team  
 Keep the costs down to minimize or negate anymore TAX increases.  
 Toddler activities  
 Ice Fishing tournament / Nature Park  
 Affordable Adult Yoga  
 Kid gymnastics - must go out of town to attend gymnastics

Question #6 continued:

Morning lap swim hours at pool (atleast 2x during M-F)  
Soccer programs for youth in the spring

Bike trail to Cedar Rapids  
More lap swim times

Indoor Pool

More Adult Swim hours

Bike rides through and around towns of MT V and L

Indoor Pool

Good idea to have more Adult rec opportunities  
always enjoyed June band concerts

Tennis

Sorry..we do not use any of these facilities

Lap Swim and other aquatic activities during fall / winter / spring

One daily walker in this house

Cycling

What about a refresher course for senior adults - adult swimming lessons?

A first aid course by age groups or a low cost CPR course or refresher and certify both. This would be a big advantage for our town - maybe a competition to certify as many as possible and compete with/by age groups or another town? Lets get our seniors proud of doing something important and vital to our community and help us "give back!"

Theater

Add a bathing/pitching facility - let folks pay for their use - coin-op

Parks and recreation is for sports and other outdoor activities. Leave the "arts" to the arts council. One agency can only be so much to so many people

Sponsor half/full marathon - would draw lots of people to our town

Swimming programming AND add heater to pool. The 900 person town I am from in NW Iowa built a new pool 4 years ago and added a heater this year. MV has no excuse not to heat - would increase participation all around!

ICE SKATING! A warming house and ice skating are part of growing up in the upper mid west!

Senior (age 55+) programming, volleyball, aerobics, walking groups, more bicycle trails!!

Lap swim during winter months; family rec time at pool during winter months; indoor pool needed

Most events in town seem to be Sat. Could a few be Sunday?

I just do not see anyone doing these things. People will sign up but not show up.

Question #6 continued:

These are all basically good ideas - can you name enough people who could make up a baseball team?

Movies in the park is a conflict with the theater in town.

There are plenty of activities available now - more might be acceptable if there were an effective, creative parks director. A crew,

a budget, and most importantly use our specially trained and informed horticulturist and arborist. Of course we are referring to M. Wehde.

His skills are not being used. He is expected to do special projects, work for the maintenance department, and every other job not in

his field of expertise. Give him the job, a working budget, a crew, and a RAISE. Find a part time person to do rec. It is truly a part time job.

I like the idea of game night family or singles, but please NO BINGO. Games of chance don't do much for the brain.

Cake decorating or photography

Continue support of theater and band

More arts & crafts!

Make parks more inviting. A visit to NYC showed us people using parks: toys available for toddlers, fenced playground area to help caregivers monitor toddlers & kids, permanent chess/checker tables, benches along pathways, water fountains, bike rentals, aesthetic features to view such as small ponds & interesting plantings & sculptures for climbing. Here we tend to call a green spot with a few trees a park. Grump. Grump. It takes money and a switch in priorities for small towns to create a version of a city park which draws people to it.

Music in the park - evenings of music in the park or on the Cornell campus outdoors. P&R could provide a variety of music/bands.

Allowing people to bring food/drink would make a wonderful evening event.

Indoor lap pool. Bike trail to Pallasades/CR Nature Trail. I think these are 2 huge perks for MV. We don't have extensive safe biking areas. Connecting to CR would support our local economy. If I had to prioritize, I would place bike trail #1 and indoor pool an equal or close second.

Question #7	How did you learn about programs	
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City Mailer / Newsletter	City Website	The Sun	Friday Folders
135	32	221	101

Other - Please Explain

- word of mouth
- live here for 60 years
- friends
- never heard of Friday Folders
- word of mouth
- Sunlite
- Children involved in past
- Kalley Yock
- TV 18
- word of mouth
- Mt Vernon Arts Council
- Mt Vernon Historic Preservation Commission
- The city website does not have useful information for Parks and Rec
- Need email lists for adults
- word of mouth
- visitmyl.com
- mostly word of mouth
- word of mouth usually too late
- Friends
- Fan of Chalk the Walk Facebook
- My son is very involved.
- Word of mouth
- tv coverage
- city hall signs

Question #7 continued:

Word of mouth  
Word of mouth/friends

How about a flyer letting us know about our parks - where they are and what's there?

The city website is so outdated it is a waste.

Friends who work for the city.

Word of mouth

I actually live right outside the city. Live in the county, but feel passionate about parks, natural areas, and trails.

Word of mouth

Word of mouth

This is only the second time I've gotten notice of what goes on by city mailer/newsletter.

We need flyers sent to our seniors in this area -

may are limited (or very) income people. Many don't have cable and very few can afford a PC (or the internet)

Question #8      Rate maintenance of parks (Scale is 1-5 with 1 being poor)

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
4	7	63	128	81

Comments:

New baby swings at Davis park, please or at least cleaned.

Also, horses are kind of wiggly.

Question #9 If answered 1,2,3 to #8 identify parks in need of maintenance

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Parks in Need of Maintenance - Please Explain

Comments:

- Maintenance of Gardens & Memorial Park/ Visitors Center
- Nature Park trail needs trimming & what is the purpose of new land purchased, it's a mess
- Concrete on trail from skate park to first street needs immediate repair
- Mostly shelters and picnic tables
- Bathroom at Davis Park Ball Field and bathrooms / lockers at swim pool -rusty mirrors, doors, lockers
- Memorial - sidewalk leading down around play area
- Neutral- no good or bad experiences
- Cracked paths / sidewalks
- What few flower gardens there are they are full of weeds and need much desperately
- Bathrooms, Bryant Park had broken toys last time I was there.
- Nature Park is often dirty and littered. Bathrooms @ EAC only open /working part of time.
- Memorial Park is most visible to local and out of towners.
- Lovely plants were put in place but now they are full of weeds and not pretty!!
- Nature Park
- Memorial, small garden coming in from Mt Vernon Rd
- None specific - overall appearance
- EAC Softball Fields
- Too much time (city) spent on this = a small percent use these
- 8th Grade Baseball needs work
- Nature Park / South Park
- Davis, Nature, Elliott
- Davis Park basketball courts (hoops need new nets and court needs to be swept)
- Cracks in Paths
- Nature Park
- Restrooms
- brand new path all broke up already - poorly poured concrete?

### Question #9 continued

Walking Path needs fixed

All... I would like to see better maintenance of grounds, planting areas, weeding, mulch, etc

All that have baseall, softball

Elliott's and Bryant

skate park a lot of litter

Elem School Playground

Davis basketball court, landscape around pool

perhaps the quarry park could be beautified better

I think they do a good job for the amount of parks we have

Ball diamonds are marginally maintained

Clean Davis Park playground equipment more often

Nature Park in bad shape

Nature Park paths are overgrown and Dock needs improvement

Need drinking fountains, especially at Davis Park

Memorial, walking path (creek), surface

Elliott Athletic Complex concession stand - make usable; the path

around the nature park quarry is dangerous - in need of railing or cables

All of them - there are not enough workers, no schedule of need, no leader

Drinking fountains do not work well

General upkeep of mowing and facilities - need to make concessions at EAC functional

Elliott complex - fields are rough, poorly groomed with many dips etc....

we cancelled or changed locations of games this year more than once we actually played on these fields. Very frustrating.

I don't frequent them enough to really know, but generally when I drive by they look as if they are maintained well?

The trail around nature park (quarry) needs attention - fallen and cut limbs

need to be removed from trail. Please spray for the killing off of

poison ivy on trail (side next to prairie) plus widen path on north side

where the two benches overlook the quarry. My husband and I pick up

trash every time we're there. We often find the bathroom locked.

Do other park bathroom facilities have this problem?

Walking trail behind old middle school is dangerous on a bike because of disrepair.

### Question #9 continued

Turf on all fields, dugouts should be built on all EAC fields, brutal hot during softball season for players.

Maintain ice at Davis and announce when it is frozen.

All parks - Weeds, poorly designed landscaping, broken sidewalks.

Ball diamonds need grass eliminated on diamond and around fences.

Lincoln Way Park needs to have grass kept out of brick all the time.

EAC - fields typically look bad. Lots of weeds. Even in the infields. Diamond are only maintained if P&R plans a game

From the little I've seen, Mourt Vernon can be proud.

Memorial Park needs cleaned up & fixed earlier

Swimming Pool and Nature Park

Litter pick up

sidewalk from skate park to first street. nature park.

Memorial. Very limited access from 2nd street. Steps not regularly cleared of snow, broken

(cont.) sections of sidewalk, patches of weeds. Need access to full-time bathroom facilities -

(cont.) many young children need quick use.

branches fallen, trees trim, trash, new trees, cracked sidewalks

Maintenance seems to be mostly just mowing grass.

Walking path needs fixed

Davis Park, Memorial Park (general upkeep - new flower beds look great) :)

Cracks in parks

Question #10	<p>prioritize following groups (choices) 1-6 (1 highest priority)</p>	
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Pre-School Children	Elementary	Middle School	High School	Adults 18-65	Adults Age 66 and older
420 / 121 = 3.47	385 / 130=2.96	382 / 122=3.13	451 / 114=3.96	339 / 115=2.94	440 / 124=3.54



Pre-School Children	Elementary	Middle School	High School	Adults 18-65	Adults Age 66 and older
402 / 118=3.41	377 / 122=3.09	399 / 117=3.41	466 / 117=3.98	336 / 122=2.75	430 / 121=3.55

Tally on left is total score of all entries added together  
Tally on right is # answered /responded  
Average = 3

- Comments:**
- Equal priority placed on all age groups for facilities. 1 facility could meet all needs - swimming pool!
  - Need gym space for current programs
  - Tai chi? A senior afternoon game day? Cards, table games, a movie?

Additional Comments

We are not knowledgeable of the programs, unless you are referring to the recreational activities for all ages.

A comprehensive trail system linking the parks and looping the city should be a top priority

Really miss the summer enrichment programs -art, science, cooking, language arts, dramatics, tennis

Consider financial constraints for participation in programs.

We need a Youth Center for after school activities and post-athletic event dances for high school students

There are no good walking areas for people w/ small children. Speed laws need to be obeyed better! Sidewalks need to be redone!

Keep the library open, just because Cornell is on break doesn't mean there isn't people you need to use!

We do not need more parks in the city

MS and HS kids need out of school activities. My boys use skatepark almost daily.

Word of note- my son was injured at skate park and had no cell phone. He walked uptown and after trying several businesses, only Video Village would let him in to use the phone. I know skateboarding causes problems downtown, and I don't know how to control the issue, but not

all the kids who skateboard are hoods -they just need an outlet other than sports.

Swimming during spring, fall and winter

We use Nature Park weekly during the summer. Those in our group love going there and have no complaints.

Thanks for serving, Scott!

We would support building a year round swimming pool

This town is full of artistic talent. The P&R needs to tap into this more than once a year art festival

We have lived here for a short time and we are older. So not as active, but MV offers a wealth of recreational resources and activities for it's citizens. WE hope to explore more of the cities parks soon.

Walking and Biking Trails!!!

Suggest offering free or reduced fee coaching (head coach) for Pre-K through 6th sportss. Might get more interest if coaches got a token something for their time.

Middle school, non athletic activities, or a safe place to hang out

Question #11 continued:

It would be nice to have a bathroom at Memorial Park - Visitor Center is often closed and City Hall is longways for a 3 YO to walk who has to go potty.

I've just moved to Mt Vernon and haven't been to a lot of the areas or facilities yet.

More bike trails!!! Safe to Lisbon

Movies in the Park is a great ideal

Need early morning lap swim (evening is hard time for adults w/ family obligation) at least 2x a week M-F for 35-40 minutes

We appreciate the work done by Parks and Rec

In the past the P&R department has not been flexible sharing facility time with other organizations.

We moved here from CR 2 yrs ago and love it here - Great community and Great Town!

Thanks for the opportunity

Pets are left out. A dog park would be great.

As far as I am concerned things are ok

Please provide an indoor lap pool w/ my tax dollars

Summer arts programs for kids are needed. Parks with gardens are nice to view. This adds to the aesthetics of the community.

Can not evaluate - not involved in all age groups

Thank you for making Mt Vernon a great place to live!

MS and HS students would benefit from a place to congregare, hangout and eat, plus wifi

We do not use any of the facilities or programs and I don't believe I have the knowledge to rank them.

Elementary programs are currently serving needs just fine - not necessary to have additional programs

Dog Park would be another great thing for MV to offer.

More opportunities for post-college unmarried adults are definitely lacking

No new parks needed. Maintain what we have

Growth is important and expected - Good Luck!

We would like to see a bike trail/ walking path developed on the old inter-urban rail toward and eventually to CR.

(cont) Safer than old 30. We used park and rec programs when we had children. I would also like to see Mt Vernon have

(cont) community gardens. This would be through Parks and Rec- as it was in CR.

Indoor Pool is needed

Overall the parks are great - be sure bathrooms are accesible and clean, trash picked up, etc

Places for youth when middle school age - too young to drive anywhere and too old to "play" at parks.

Indoor skating, chinese restaurants, storm shelter, volleyball areas-year round, horseshoe areas, badminton areas

(cont) Indoor swimming area (larger than motel), place to rent go carts or mini golf, bowling leagues for 6th grade and up

Question #11 continued:

(cont) tetherball at parks, nail salon. Our taxes went up this year and we don't see as to why. Seems like for middle (cont) school age we have things. Maybe 1 time a week take a bus and charge like \$2 / kid and take to skate rink in CR for 4 hrs (cont) and back home. Things like that would be nice. Sewing classes, knitting classes in winter months

More handicap accessible playgrounds

Fairfield, IA has a wonderful walking path system for reference. And gravel/unpaved paths are preferred for those of us with joint pain

Groups of all ages need facilities and programs

We are old; we recreate by walking. How about some smooth, wide, sidewalks so we don't have to use the streets?

Have you checked out Williamsburg's Community Center?

Indoor pool for citizens year-round.

Too much money spent on maintenance. Nature Park was mowed 4 times in one week in August.

Love the Toddler Time ..think Lisbon organizes this.

Only lived there a short time - maybe some way to access events or programs regularly through email or website perhaps?

I can't open microsoft and publisher files from your site...use pdf's

Trail around Nature Park could be better maintained

More elaborate playground other than elementary school which is difficult to use for preschool during school.

Would like more focus on trails, green space, and new "Nature park" on west side

I would love to see a YMCA open in the community.

Would be nice to have a trail or bike section of road that exposes the old RR bridge and goes over current RR overpass near P&P then continues at the side of MV road -- too narrow for safe walk/bike. An indoor pool for laps would be great. Or a bike shoulder to Springville Rd would be nice. I think we have a very nice set of pool, parks, path to Lisbon. Thanks.

I would rather see us do well with the programs we have rather than add more. Somehow over the years, things have changed so that we have created a climate of us and them in our community. Those who play parks and rec and those who play tournament leagues. It is dividing

our children making some feel excluded but worse some are feeling superior and making it very well known to their peers. I would like to see programs where we all participate together. The gifted athlete with the not so gifted athlete and everyone improves from where they are and everyone learns to encourage the other person. In the end it benefits Mount Vernon. We have improved the skill of many instead of a few Which increases our numbers which makes for better middle school and high school teams and makes for a better "team" or "community" attitude.

Rec activities are a bit unorganized and not much notice in advance. It makes it very difficult to schedule other things.

Also, football and soccer need their own times. Not same season. Many kids want to do both at young age and it is difficult to work with two

Question #11 continued:

at once. We love the parks and rec programs and will continue to use them. It does seem a bit unorganized and there is not much advance notice at all regarding game and practice schedules. Also soccer and football need to be at different times - different months. I know many kids at a young age are still trying both out and having both at the same time is a lot - 2 practices / 2 games each week. It seems the fields sit empty a lot when we could split those up. We seem to start a lot later in the fall than needed

An indoor pool should be the city's highest recreational priority. It could serve all age groups and many needs year round.

The middle age group should be separate programming. A 20 year old can do more than a 50 year old. And their interests are different. Thanks for getting the communities opinions, this is a big plus in moving forward.

Preschool should have highest priority for funding.

We need a walking/biking trail from MV to Palisades. No new green space or parks needed. Add splash pad at Bryant!

I feel Davis Park could use more benches and shade trees near the playground equipment. Once these huge old cottonwood trees fall there won't be any shade in our increasingly hot summers. The trees by the pavilion are very nice. Love that hadel Nature Park is a real gem. I counted 19 people walking, fishing, kayaking in 1.5 hours on a Sunday afternoon this fall. It was a joy to see so many children with their fishing poles along with their parents enjoying the outdoors. Please keep nature park natural. The clearing near the road on newly acquired property has eliminated the story and a half tall wall of bittersweet vines. What a shame!!

Swim team is a great option for kids. Swimming pool programming is lacking. Need expanded lessons AFTER 4:30 pm and better student/instructor ratios. Adjust pool hours. MV is losing people to Anamosa, Coe College, and North Liberty. Pool should host theme or family nights with reduced admission.

We need more bike trails in and to Mount Vernon/Lisbon especially between the towns.

Spend less money acquiring new land and take care of what you've got. Infrastructure should take

(cont.) priority over parks!!

Good programs and facilities.

Think about the older people - what do they have in Mt. Vernon?

A dog park would be nice. Would like to see more green spaces for walking. Nature Park is nice (cont.) but difficult to walk around.

Benches needed for "grandparent" use as they watch kids at play on the equipment.

We need to step back, be BOLD and work together with Lisbon in combining all programs &

(cont.) facilities. Plus, bike trail to Cedar Rapids.

Why do we have special made trash bins uptown with the name Mt. Vernon & then put black

(cont.) trash bags in them so no one sees the designs? I think there are many things available

(cont.) if people are just willing to stay informed.

more non-sports offerings - such as arts, crafts, etc.

Question #11 continued:

People, especially children, are organized & programmed too much in every way. We all need more places & spaces to do what individuals want to do without the group mentality, without the stress of group dynamics.

No new parks needed. Maintain what we have.

More opportunities for post-college, unmarried adults are definitely lacking.

Parks & Rec fall sports have been rather unorganized and disappointing. Perhaps offering flag football in the fall (boys & girls) and soccer in the spring could be considered. Trying to participate in both is too much for younger children. One idea...instead of getting a shirt for every sport children participate in, have each child purchase a reversible maroon & white jersey similar to the basketball jerseys many boys & girls have used in the past. Then the same shirt can be used and the team is either maroon or white.

We need a community center like YMCA with indoor track pool, weight room - a place where young and old can interact. A nice outdoor ice rink that is maintained. Paved bike/jogging trail to Cedar Rapids.

Where can kids go to shoot baskets in winter? HS \* MS gyms are locked up or in use. Need open gyms. Pool needs attention from adults - manager is disorganized and immature. She spends way too much time talking. Very unprofessional - life guards do not listen to or respect her. Safety is a concern. Former parks and recreation director took vacation in middle of summer - busiest time of year. This should not be allowed.

I believe parks and recreation needs to leverage partnerships with the schools and Cornell to provide more programs and increase utilization of under used spaces throughout the community.

Parking is a major issue at Bryant and Elliott; actually all areas. Facilities are very good, parking is abominable.

Partner idea with YMCA sounds fabulous! Check out the partnership YMCA in Maquoketa - awesome facility.

Indoor pool facilities would be great!

There are facilities and programs for high school and down. We have to/must get something going for 60 and up at low or no cost.

TABLE 2

<b>TRENDS</b>	
	<b>Description</b>
Trails and Bike Paths	More money being spent and more communities are creating long-range plans
Inclusiveness	Programming, Parks Systems, Delivery
Multigenerational	Making Parks and Facilities inclusive and multigenerational friendly
Technology	Online, Interactive, Upgrades to existing
Key Benefits of P&R Are Getting Recognized	Physical, Mental, Social, Youth Development, Environmental, Economic Impact
Smaller Budgets	As money gets tighter, Departments being asked to do more with less





Table 5

**Recreation Facilities**

Facility	Area Needed	Units per Population	Service Area
Basketball Court	7,280 sq ft	1 per 5,000	1/4 - 1/2 mi
Tennis Court	7,200 sq ft (1crt)	1 per 2,000	1/4 - 1/2 mi
Volleyball	4,000 sq ft	1 per 5,000	1/4 - 1/2 mi
Baseball (Youth)	1.2 acres min.	1 per 5,000	1/4 - 1/2 mi
Football	1.5 acres	1 per 20,000	15-20 minutes travel time
Soccer	1.7-2.1 acres	1 per 10,000	Depends on popularity
Softball	1.5-2 acres	1 per 5,000	1/4 - 1/2 mi
Multi-Use Court	9,840 sq ft	1 per 10,000	1/4 - 1/2 mi
Swimming Pool	2 acres minimum	1 per 20,000	15 -30 minutes travel time
Trails	1 trail system per region		

*Table 6*

PROGRAM DELIVERY - ACTION PLANS					
#	Topic Area	Action Plan	Priority	Timing	Comments
1	Getting Park and Rec Info to New Residents	Marketing -- CDG Welcome Wagon idea	High	Short	
2	Marketing	Marketing Plan (email, facebook, guest column in newspaper)	High	Short	
3	Departmental Structure-One Man Show	Consider hiring additional staff to take tasks for P&R Director	Medium	Medium	
4	Departmental Structure-One Man Show	Have P&R Board assigned tasks to complete for P&R Director	High	Short	
5	Community Input and Participation in P&R Board	Consistent and effective marketing - Facebook, Playbook, P&R Board communicate with residents	High	Short	
6	Community Input and Participation in P&R Board	Distribute the P&R Board minutes to groups of interest	High	Short	
7	Lack of Adult Programming	Soliciting input /feedback on programming	Medium	Medium	Facebook, email, marketing plan
8	Lack of Adult Programming	More subcommittee involvement	Medium	Short	
9	Online Facility Scheduling	Utilize Cogran Online	High	Short	

Table 17

EXISTING PARK AND OPEN SPACE AREAS - ACTION PLANS					
#	Topic Area	Action Plan	Priority	Timing	Comments
1	Age of Outdoor Pool	Hire consultant to review and evaluate current pool mechanics, basin, etc	High	Short	
2	Lack of Indoor Facilities	Build city-owned facility	Medium	On-going	Wellness Center
3	No Park Maintenance Budget	Park Board present budget proposal to Council	High	Short	Staff and maintenance proposal
4	Departmental Structure	Re-align current Organizational Chart to show park staff report to P&R Director	High	Short	
5	Memorial Park	Add / increase trash cans in Memorial Park	High	Short	
6	Memorial Park	Sidewalk repair near 5th Ave NW and 1st St	High	Short	DONE
7	Memorial Park	Gazebo needs paint, new shingles, and one spindle is broken	High	Short	
8	Memorial Park	Lower Playground - Triangle Monkey Bars need repair	High	Short	
9	Memorial Park	Lower Playground - Retaining wall bricks are unstable	High	Short	

10	Memorial Park	Bench and Picnic Tables need paint	Medium	On-going	
11	Davis Park	Infant Swings cracked and worn	High	Short	
12	Davis Park	Benches need paint or replacement	Medium	On-going	
13	Davis Park	Repaint basketball courts	High	Short	
14	Davis Park	Repaint basketball hoops	Low	Short	
15	Davis Park	Repaint bleachers	Medium	Medium	
16	Davis Park	Repaint Concession stand	Medium	Short	
17	Davis Park	Plant Trees between basketball courts and playground as well as along pool fence line	High	Short	
18	Davis Park	Remove and replace old bench by Merry-Go-Round	High	Short	
19	Davis Park	Repaint Merry-Go-Round	Medium	Medium	

20	Davis Park	repair picnic tables	Medium	Medium	
21	Davis Park	Add hopscotch paint lines to long cement path	High	Short	
22	Davis Park	Landscaping around new park sign	High	Short	
23	Davis Park	remove three unused utility poles	Low	Long	
24	Davis Park	Fix water fountain at exterior of pool	Medium	Short	
25	Davis Park	add a bike rack on south side of park	Medium	Short	
26	Davis Park	add sign to southwest parking lot	High	Medium	
27	Bryant Park	White paint around top of shelter	L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	
28	Bryant Park	Retaining wall around shelter needs fixed	L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	
29	Bryant Park	Maple tree and locust tree -dead branches removed / trimming	L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	

30	Bryant Park	Rubber coating coming off steps and edges of steps on playground equipment exposing rusted metal	L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	
31	Bryant Park	Add BBQ grill	L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	
32	Elliott Park	Dugouts fo ballfields need paint	L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	
33	Elliott Park	Sign directing traffic to Field E	L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	
34	Elliott Park	Need for additional water source/fountain at Field E	L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	
35	Nature Park	??	L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	
36	Nature Park	??	L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	
			L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	
			L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	
			L-M-H	S-M-L-ON	

**TABLE 8  
IMPLEMENTATION - ACTION PLANS**

#	Topic Area	Action Plan	Priority	Timing	Comments
1	Monitoring the Master Plan	The City implement a system for regular monitoring of the Master Parks and Recreation Plan.	L-M-H	S-M-L- ON	
2	Updating the Master Plan	The City implement a system for regular review and updating of the Master Parks and Recreation Plan. The City establish a process to link the Implementation Strategy to the CIP / Budget process in an effort to reconcile needs with the fiscal capacity of the City	L-M-H	S-M-L- ON	
3	Implementation - General		L-M-H	S-M-L- ON	

**P&R SWOT Analysis**  
7.16.2013

<p align="center"><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sports</li> <li>● Programs             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Number</li> <li>○ Variety</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Pool</li> <li>● Trails</li> <li>● Parks             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Location</li> <li>○ Number</li> </ul> </li> <li>● P&amp;R Director</li> <li>● P&amp;R Board (full and active)</li> <li>● Communication</li> <li>● Online Registration</li> <li>● Number of Ball and Soccer fields</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of indoor facilities</li> <li>● Adult Programming</li> <li>● No park maintenance budget</li> <li>● Getting info to new residents</li> <li>● One Man Show (P&amp;R Director)</li> <li>● Age of outdoor pool</li> <li>● Park Maintenance does not report to P&amp;R Director</li> <li>● Community input/participation in P&amp;R Board</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Volunteerism</li> <li>● Increasing population</li> <li>● Supportive Council</li> <li>● Cornell</li> <li>● Schools</li> <li>● Lisbon</li> <li>● Future Development</li> <li>● Grants</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lisbon Fundraising</li> <li>● Travel/Competitive Programs</li> <li>● Budget</li> <li>● Turn over at P&amp;R Director position</li> <li>● Park Maintenance expectations</li> <li>● Wellness Center</li> <li>● Indoor facilities not city owned</li> </ul>