

# Parks, Trails & Open Space

*If people are going to use trails then they need attractive, safe, accessible, convenient to use, paths and walkways in their neighborhoods. Whether it's a tree-lined sidewalk in Manhattan or an open space network in suburban Denver, trails need to be a part of everyone's daily lives. No one should be more than a 5-minute walk from a trail.*

— Robert Searns, founding owner of Urban Edges, Inc., 2001

The Parks & Trails chapter provides an overview of the park, trail and open space network in Marshalltown. This includes the existing City park and trail system, designated and planned bike routes, County park facilities near Marshalltown, school sites, and other open spaces in the City. One of the main themes to emerge from discussions in the Comprehensive Plan is healthy, active living in Marshalltown and an integrated park, trail and open space system is an important step in achieving that goal.

## *Guiding Principles:*

**Marshalltown will focus on redevelopment of selected places and neighborhoods in Marshalltown and connect them with sidewalks, trails and open space to create a vibrant, active city.**



## Goals

Among the larger set of goals and policies adopted for the whole city are the following that relate to parks and & trails. Beyond parks and trails, the provision of sidewalk connections throughout the City is important as well, to create a walkable, healthy, active City. This issue is discussed in the Land Use & Community Design chapter of this Plan, in the section on Walk Score and other areas.

### Immediate Goals and Policies:

**Immediate Goal 1:** Promote optimal health for all Marshalltown residents and look for ways to improve health and well-being for the entire community.

**Rationale:** An overall focus and mission of this Comprehensive Plan is to improve the life and health of the community and to look for ways to incorporate healthy, active living into Marshalltown's goals, policies and programs. In all the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, the City will seek ways to foster this goal.

**Goal 2:** Promote a well-planned community with balanced land uses including residential, commercial, recreation and open space, and industrial areas.

**Rationale:** A carefully created Comprehensive Plan will ensure the community's ability to grow in a rational and responsible manner, preclude decision-making processes that overlook long-range land use implications, and help ensure fulfillment of residents' desires for a well-planned community and preservation of their quality of life.

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**Policy 5:** Protect the sensitive natural features that make Marshalltown unique such as the river, creeks, high quality wetlands, natural open space and local parks through appropriate regulatory mechanisms.

## General Goals and Policies

**Goal 1:** Maximize the potential of the community of Marshalltown as a thriving center for business and healthy recreation, while maintaining and enhancing its livability as a residential community.

**Rationale:** Marshalltown has a high quality of life with opportunities through its increasing diversity. Emphasis on planning to create new growth and increased tax base that can provide greater enhancement to its residents.

**Policy 1:** Promote the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Plan that effectively and efficiently plans for land use, community facilities, transportation, housing, economic development, recreation and natural spaces, and technological advancement for the Marshalltown area.

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**Goal 5:** Enhance community and neighborhood, health, safety and livability.

**Rationale:** A sense of security and livability is important to the quality of a neighborhood and maintaining property values, and attracting employees to live and work in our community.

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**Policy 5** Require the creation of parks, trails and green space within new developments to ensure that residential neighborhoods have adequate access to park and recreation facilities, green space and community amenities.

## Land Use – Commercial

**Goal 1:** Expand and diversify the City's tax base by supporting existing businesses and the redevelopment of existing commercial properties and encouraging new commercial development to enable Marshalltown to fulfill its role as a regional trade and service center.

**Rationale:** Support for existing businesses and continued growth of commercial businesses through redevelopment supports the City's residential population with jobs and services, provides an increased tax base, and attracts new residents and businesses.

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**Policy 7:** Promote pedestrian walkways and green spaces with commercial zones.

**Goal 2:** Encourage the redevelopment of commercial sites that display building deterioration, obsolete site design, land use compatibility issues and a high level of vacancies.

**Rationale:** Aged retail areas offer a great opportunity for redevelopment that not only provides for new goods and services for residents to enjoy, but increased tax base utilizing existing infrastructure.

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**Policy 4:** Create and enforce city ordinances for all commercial areas including building and signage design guidelines, streetscaping, and the inclusion of green space, trails and sidewalks that connect commercial areas to neighborhoods.

## Land Use - Commercial

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**Goal 3:** Improve and enhance Downtown Marshalltown in its role as the hub of the City.

**Rationale:** Downtown is an important historical and commercial core of the City that provides a unique setting and community identity.

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**Policy 3:** Inventory and coordinate the planning of all parking facilities within the downtown, including consideration for safe and attractive pedestrian and biking routes.

## Community Facilities/Recreation

**Goal 1:** Promote the creation and use of community facilities for all Marshalltown residents.

**Rationale:** Facilities serving a variety of legitimate public needs are a hallmark of successful communities and will serve to enhance Marshalltown's quality of life.

**Policy 1:** Promote the use of all existing athletic and community facilities in a manner that distinguishes them as gathering places for Marshalltown residents and visitors.

**Policy 2:** Explore and support opportunities for public art and related artist activities within the park system and entire community.

**Policy 3:** Examine existing facilities for multi-use functions in order to provide facilities for residents changing active lifestyles and cultural needs.

**Policy 4:** Explore funding for new facilities and the maintenance of existing facilities using creative approaches including public-private partnerships.

**Policy 5:** Involve the residents of the community in determining the types of youth recreational programs and facilities most needed.



**Goal 2:** Preserve and promote a park system and green spaces that enhance the well-being of all residents of the City.

**Rationale:** Areas for active and passive recreation and green space enjoyment is essential to the quality of life for residents of Marshalltown.

**Policy 1:** Ensure that there is an equitable distribution of parks, green spaces, and trails with a balance of active and passive recreational facilities throughout the City.

**Policy 2:** Identify areas necessary for addition, expansion or connection of the pedestrian and bike trail network between neighborhoods, schools and community facilities.



**Policy 3:** Update and replace park equipment and facilities to assure safety and accessibility and to attract users to Marshalltown's park system.

**Policy 4:** Explore and support funding for implementation of the Linn Creek Riverwalk plan.

**Policy 5:** Develop Riverview Park with additional recreational amenities, and in the process beautify the north entrance to the community.

**Policy 6:** Partner with as many community groups and organizations as possible to enhance limited resources and to facilitate a wide array of programs that would not be possible exclusively by the City.

**Goal 3:** Promote an active and healthy community.

**Rationale:** Community planning and incorporating healthy community design can have effective benefits to resident's physical and mental health and enhance attractiveness of our workforce.

**Policy 1:** Continue the development of pedestrian trails and bikeways that meet the recreational needs of citizens, and facilitate biking and walking as a means of transportation.

**Policy 2:** Continue healthy living initiatives including Pioneering Healthier Communities, Blue Zone Coalition and Project and others aimed at local efforts towards community wellness and health.

**Policy 3:** Provide convenient access to healthy food for all residents by allowing and encouraging farmers' markets and urban agriculture owned properties such as schoolyards, recreation centers and neighborhood parks.

**Policy 4:** Explore implementation of sustainability planning efforts through updates to the city ordinances and administrative policies and procedures.

## **Transportation**

**Goal 1:** Develop and maintain a transportation and pedestrian system that accommodates the safe and efficient movement of people and goods by motorized vehicles, bicycles, or walking.

**Rationale:** Because Marshalltown has the potential for new growth, policy makers will face decisions that will affect the existing and future transportation facilities.

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**Policy 2:** Integrate pedestrian and bicycle trails into the design of roadway facilities throughout the community.

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**Policy 4:** Review financing policies for street, sidewalk, and trail construction, replacement and maintenance.

**Policy 5:** Investigate new financing opportunities for pedestrian and biking enhancements to the transportation network.

## Background

### PARKS AND RECREATION

The Parks and Recreation Department operates at 10 W. State Street. The Recreation Department provides a wide variety of recreational activities for youth (such as volleyball, basketball, tiny tot sports, art classes, golf and tennis lessons, tumbling, and various sport camps); adults (organized leagues such as slowpitch, kickball, basketball, flag football and tennis leagues). The department is in charge of renting park facilities, the Coliseum and the Aquatic Center and also oversees the renting of Riverview Park Campground.

### EXISTING PARK AND TRAIL SYSTEM

Existing parks and trails in the city are shown on the map, Figure XX, Existing Parks and Trails. The Parks Division is responsible for maintenance of all parks (24 parks and recreational facilities) and park buildings, softball complex, playgrounds, campground, the Aquatic Center, bike trail, tennis courts and Veterans Memorial Coliseum. The department is also responsible for inspection and removal of terrace trees and maintenance of the levee system. During winter months they are responsible for snow removal on city sidewalk areas and bridges. During the spring-fall months they mow city-lawns and perform litter removal in various areas of the city.

### BIKE ROUTES

Figure XX shows the existing bike routes in the city in various categories, depending on whether they are dedicated bike trail, on-street with parking, or on-street without parking. Bicycle trails operate best within a coordinate system connecting parks, schools and other destinations, so that maximum advantage can be taken for those who want to accomplish various trips on bike.

There are a number of connections in the bike route system that are proposed on the map to complete gaps in the network, some on existing roads, some on future proposed roads.

## Park Plan

### PARK, TRAILS & OPEN SPACE PLAN SYSTEM SERVICE AREA

Figure YY, is a composite map showing the network available for Marshalltown residents to use for recreational uses of various kinds and the connections between them. The map shows:

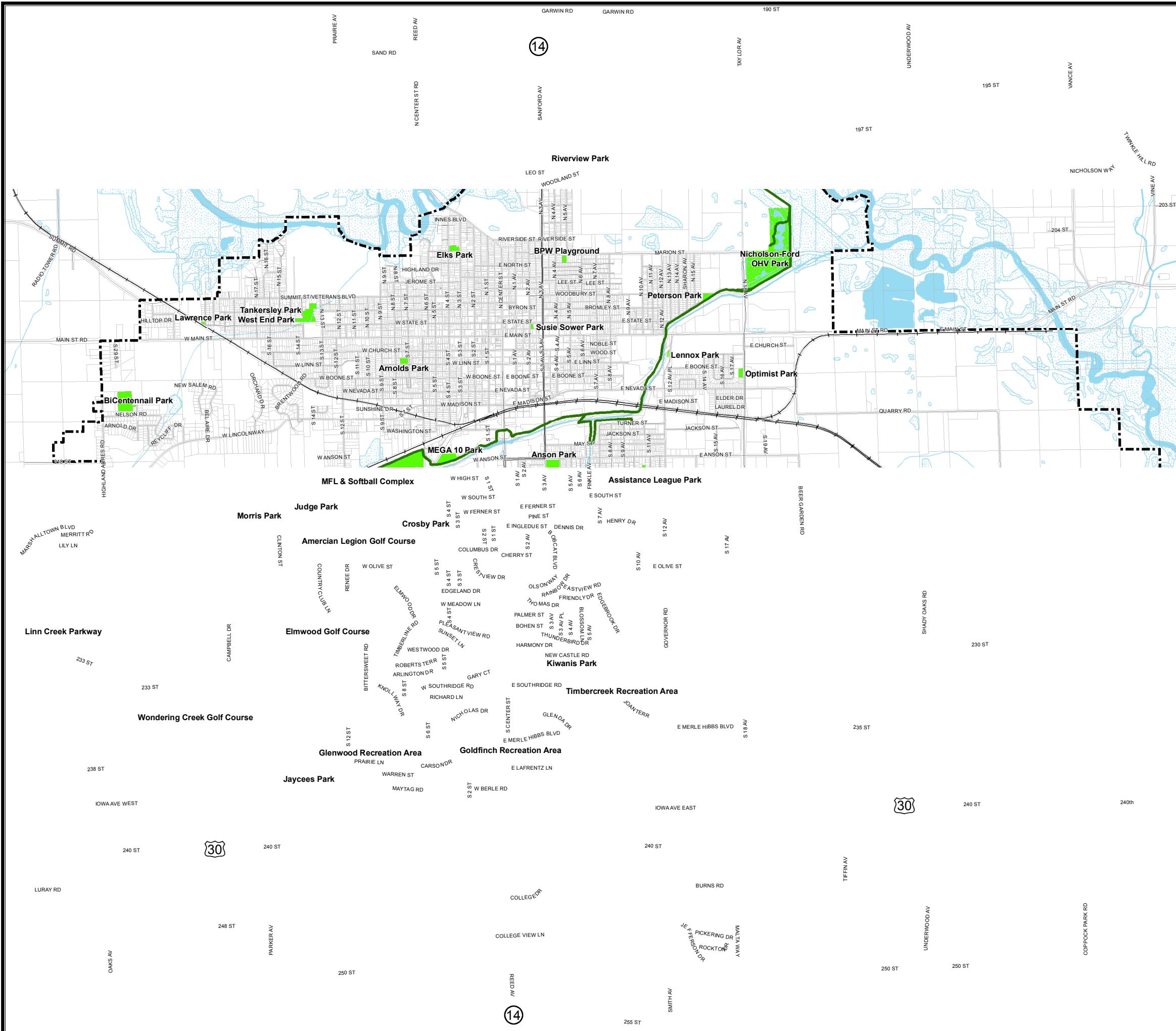
- Existing parks and trails;
- Existing and potential bike routes;
- Other open spaces in the city that are frequented by Marshalltown residents for recreation. These include Iowa Veterans Home, Riverside Cemetery, Courthouse Square, Sand Lake Recreation Area, and the Central Iowa Fairgrounds;
- Schools, including public and private K-12 schools and Marshalltown Community College;
- An overlay showing a 1/4-mile service area around each park or open space destination and around the Linn Creek Parkway and Iowa River Parkway. One quarter mile is an approximate

five-minute walk and the overlay indicates the areas of the City within easy access of the core park, trail and open space system. Not all bike routes are shown as open spaces – only the parkway along Linn Creek and the Iowa River, since these function as open spaces, whereas a typical street does not. Outside this park service area the residential land uses are shown.

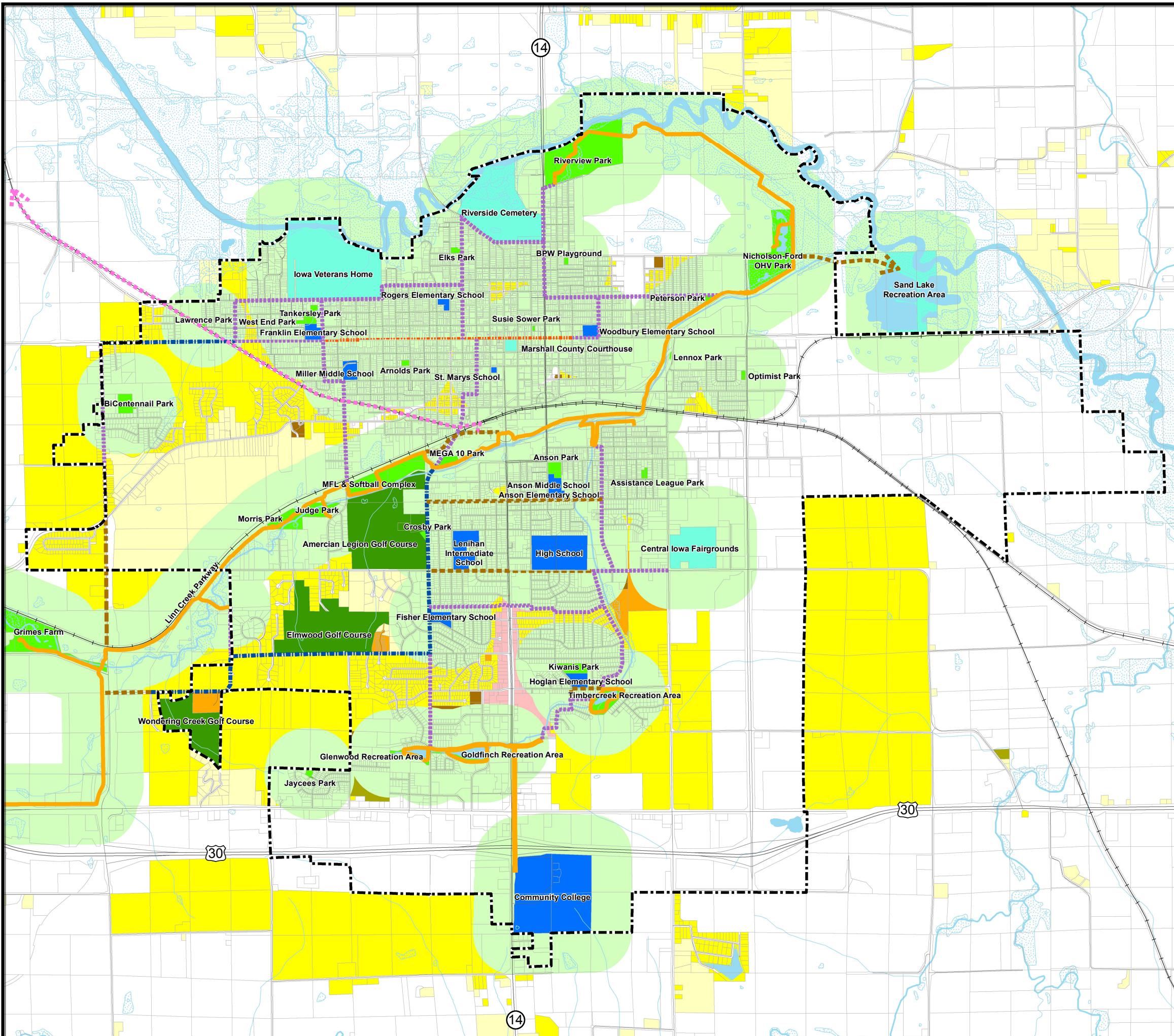
- Golf courses are shown on the map, but are not shown with a service area around them since they are typically not open for local residents to walk in. They provide the significant benefit of views to open space, but not the daily opportunity for casual recreation (if one is not a golfer).

Figure ZZ shows the Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan but also indicates the future land use in those areas outside park service areas. Where the map shows yellow, orange and brown Residential land use colors (different densities) these are neighborhoods that are underserved by parks and open space using this quarter-mile criterion. These areas might be areas to consider additional park or trail opportunities so that all Marshalltown residents have easy access to open space nearby.

In the Introduction to this Plan, Immediate Goal 1 sets forth the overall goal of the Comprehensive Plan to improve the health and well-being of the Marshalltown community. The Parks, Trails and Open Space element of the Plan is one of the key components to achieving this goal, and continued efforts to develop and maintain the system are in the long-term interests of the entire community.

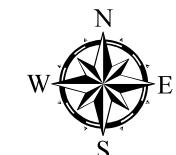






## Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan (with Future Land Use)

2012 Comprehensive Plan



0.6 Miles

- City Limit
- Bike Path
- Bike Lane along Parking
- Bike Lane, No Parking
- Designated Bike Route
- Potential Rails-to-Trails Corridor
- Potential Bike Route Connection
- Railroad
- Highway
- Local Street
- Golf Courses
- Parks & Recreation Areas
- Other Open Space Designations
- Schools
- Open Water
- NWI Wetland
- Service Area

**Planned Future Land Use:**

- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- Mixed Use

September 11, 2012

