



2025-2035

MASTER PLAN

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Valley City, ND 58072



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Residents of Valley City & Barnes County

Executive Summary

Overview

The Valley City Parks and Recreation Master Plan serves as a visionary roadmap for creating a vibrant, healthy, and connected community through inclusive recreation, exceptional facilities, and impactful programs. Grounded in our mission to enhance the quality of life for people of all ages, stages, and abilities, this plan outlines strategic priorities to meet the evolving needs of our community while maintaining financial sustainability and environmental responsibility. Developed with valuable input from both community members and stakeholders, it will guide our efforts throughout 2025-2035.

Priorities and Objectives

The plan identifies key goals and initiatives that address opportunities and challenges within the district. Key initiatives include expanding seasonal and year-round programming to better engage the community, improving branding and marketing efforts to raise awareness and increase participation, and prioritizing environmental sustainability through responsible resource management and conservation efforts. To support long-term success, we also outline a commitment to fiscal responsibility, ensuring that resources are managed wisely and new funding sources are explored.

As we move forward, our focus remains on building a lasting, positive impact for Valley City's residents, supporting a connected community, and creating recreational spaces that inspire pride and enjoyment. This master plan represents a proactive approach to ensuring that Valley City Parks and Recreation continues to enhance quality of life, foster community pride, and remain an invaluable resource for all who call Valley City home.

Valley City Parks and Recreation

Valley City Parks and Recreation serves as the heart of community life in Valley City, North Dakota, dedicated to enriching the lives of residents through accessible, diverse recreational opportunities. Established to provide residents with spaces and programs that support well-being and community connection, Valley City Parks and Recreation manages a range of facilities, including the Gaukler Family Wellness Center and Bjornson Golf Course, and many parks, facilities, and green spaces. Our programs cater to individuals of all ages and abilities, offering year-round activities that promote health, wellness, and environmental stewardship.

Through careful stewardship of resources and an ongoing commitment to enhancing quality of life, Valley City Parks and Recreation strives to create spaces and experiences that reflect the spirit of our community and the value we place on connection, wellness, and belonging.

Mission & Goals

Mission Statement

To promote broad based parks and recreation opportunities in order to improve the quality of life for people of all ages, stages and abilities in a cost-effective and financially responsible manner.

Vision Statement

To create a connected, vibrant, and inclusive community where every individual can experience the benefits of accessible parks, enriching recreation, and lasting wellness for generations to come.

Core Values

Community Engagement	Create opportunities for connection by hosting events and programs that bring people together and strengthen the fabric of our community.
Inclusivity and Accessibility	Ensure that all individuals, regardless of age, ability, or background, have access to recreational opportunities and are welcomed in every aspect of our programs.
Health and Wellness	Promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being through diverse fitness and outdoor programs that support healthy lifestyles for all residents.
Sustainability	Protect and enhance our natural spaces by practicing environmental responsibility
Fiscal Responsibility	Manage resources effectively, ensuring long-term sustainability and making responsible investments that benefit the community.
Continuous Improvement	Embrace new ideas and technologies, constantly striving to improve our services and adapt to the changing needs of the community.



Priority Action Items

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- ☐ Add play and agility features to Chautauqua Park dog park.
- ☐ Promote and preserve park history through articles and website descriptions.
- ☐ Host immunization clinics at the Gaukler Family Wellness Center for easy access to vaccines.
- ☐ Establish partnership contracts / MOUs to solidify park sustainability.
- ☐ Conduct annual facility and program evaluations and make adjustments accordingly.
- ☐ Host state pickleball tournament at the new 6-court pickleball complex.
- ☐ Install security cameras in every park / facility.
- ☐ Showcase VCPS / VCSU student art within facilities and parks.
- ☐ Highlight "Park of the Month" with events, fun facts, etc.
- ☐ Establish District facility planning and design guidelines by adopting NRPA Park Classifications.
- ☐ Use relatable language in all communication materials.
- ☐ Develop program assessment and evaluation tools.

Mid-Term (3-5 years)

- ☐ Construct permanent recreation bridge to access land year-round.
- ☐ Build an additional dog park in partnership with the Sheyenne Valley Friends of Animals.
- ☐ Update park signage to maintain brand consistency.
- ☐ Remove 20% of Ash trees to remain proactive in disease control.
- ☐ Diversify tree species by 10% utilizing grants and sponsorships.
- ☐ Conduct riverbank erosion survey with the Army Corps of Engineers to reevaluate fortification efforts.
- ☐ Complete Hidden Pond Trail with entrance signs, benches, educational components, etc.
- ☐ Develop equipment replacement plans to ensure reliability, safety, and cost-effective maintenance of assets.
- ☐ 50% of staff receive CPRP certification.
- ☐ Restore / repurpose historic City Park water fountain
- ☐ Replace all failed, non-compliant, or high-risk play equipment.
- ☐ Implement a GIS-based work order system for asset management.
- ☐ Develop and apply pricing strategies to boost sales and maximize the use of programs and facilities.

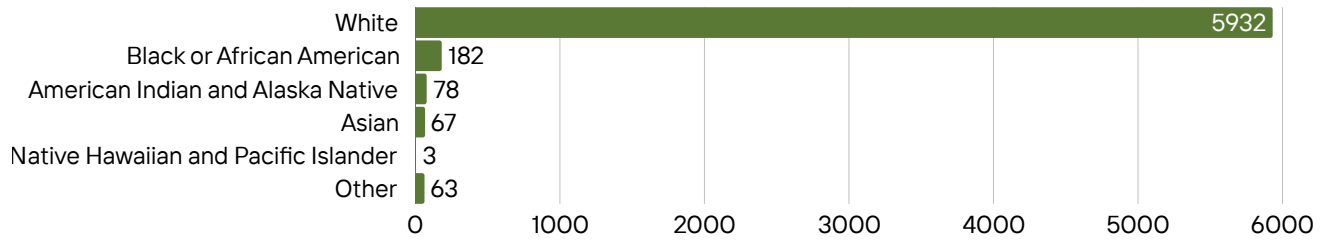
Long-Term (5-10 years)

- ☐ Add an all inclusive playground in Pioneer Park or new park location.
- ☐ Ensure the Recreation Center is fully accessible.
- ☐ Add lighting in Chautauqua Park to expand park hours.
- ☐ Build new comfort station at Tourist Park Campground.
- ☐ Pave all parking lots within the Park District.
- ☐ Construct a warming house / pavilion with restrooms at Pioneer Park.
- ☐ Establish plan for Skate Park as City of Valley City installs permanent flood protection.
- ☐ Install splash pad in Pioneer Park.
- ☐ Identify and pursue opportunities to acquire or designate open spaces for trail development.
- ☐ Collaborate with the City of Valley City to integrate green spaces, such as parks, trails, and gardens, into new developments.
- ☐ Develop a formal marketing plan.
- ☐ Add perimeter sidewalks on all sides of neighborhood parks, as applicable, and coordinate with the City of Valley City to provide sidewalks facilities in neighborhoods currently without sidewalks.
- ☐ Collaborate with partners to lead or support the development of a city-wide Active Transportation Plan.

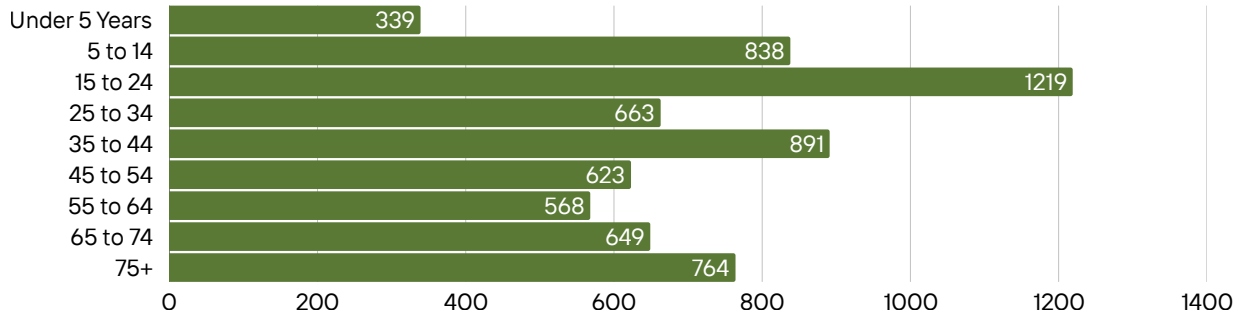


Community Demographics

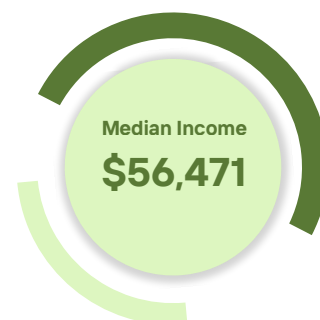
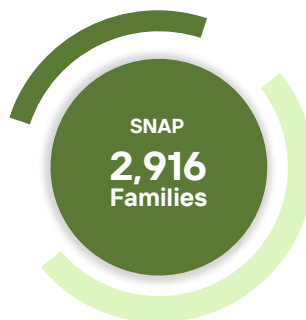
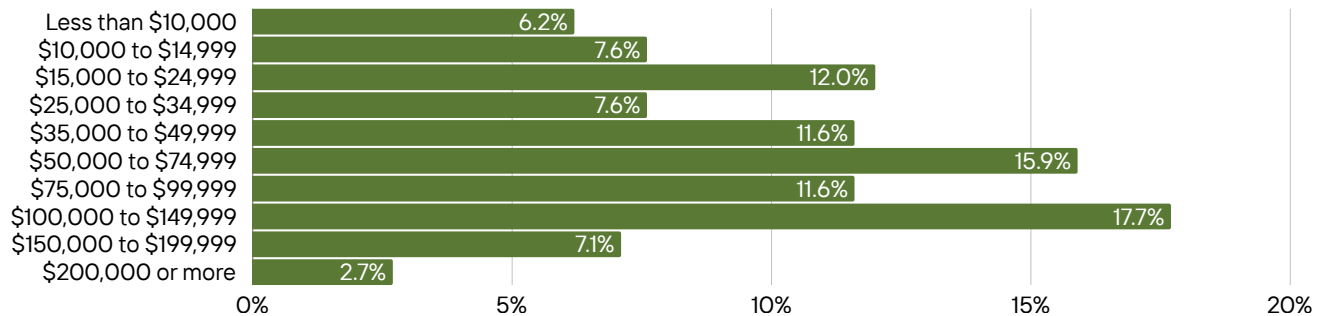
Race/Ethnicity



Age



Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2023 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars- estimated)



All statistics are from the United States Census Bureau (www.data.census.gov)

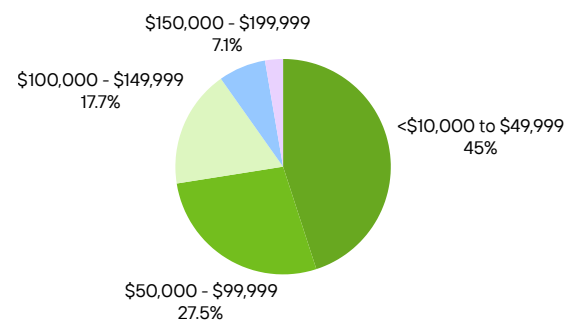
Demographic Profile

Population and Households

Valley City's population has remained stable over the past decade, with small growth expected in the future. This growth will largely depend on ongoing city developments, as well as the availability of diverse employment and housing options. The presence of Valley City State University and key local industries, such as agriculture, healthcare, and education, supports the city's stability and appeal. As new housing projects and employment opportunities emerge, the city is well-positioned for some growth while maintaining its reputation as a family-friendly community with a high quality of life.

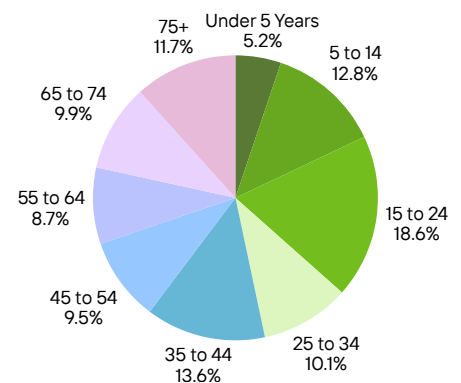
Income

Overall, the bulk of the population, 45%, earns within the <\$10,000 to \$50,000 range, highlighting the moderate-income nature of the community. The income data reflects a community with a diverse economic range, from those earning modest to middle-class incomes to a smaller percentage of higher-income households. For Valley City Parks and Recreation, these figures offer several opportunities and considerations like program accessibility and affordability.



Age

Valley City's age distribution reflects a well-balanced community with a notable concentration of younger residents, particularly in the 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 age ranges, totaling 1,219 individuals. These age groups are typically associated with active lifestyles and may require targeted programming like youth sports, educational initiatives, and recreational activities that cater to their interests. Additionally, the community has a significant number of middle-aged residents (30 to 54 years) and a growing senior population (65 years and older), which suggests a need for a wide range of programs. These could include family-oriented activities, fitness classes for adults, and senior-friendly services like walking groups or low-impact exercise programs.



Ethnicity

Valley City's population is predominantly White, making up the majority of residents at 5,932 individuals. However, the community also includes smaller populations of Black or African American (182), American Indian and Alaska Native (78), Asian (67), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (3) residents. Given this diversity, Valley City Parks and Recreation can enhance its services by promoting inclusivity and offering programs that celebrate and engage the various cultural groups within the community. This could include events, festivals, or community outreach efforts that reflect the different backgrounds and traditions of all residents.

Environmental Scan & Community Needs

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong community involvement and support• Successful collaborations with local organizations• Diverse facilities and programs• Central hub for many Valley City events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependence on a small team leading to challenges with managing multiple large projects, events, and facility upkeep• Some facilities may not be fully utilized
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner further with local businesses, schools, and community organizations to provide resources• Promote sustainability projects like tree planting and trail development• Seek additional grants, sponsorships, and community fundraising initiatives to support projects and initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintenance and upgrade costs for older facilities may strain resources, especially as usage demands increase• Harsh winter weather limits outdoor programming and facility access• A stagnant population limits new participants, restricting growth in program engagement

Benchmarking

By comparing our programs, facilities, operations, and customer satisfaction to those of other park districts, we gain valuable insights into best practices, emerging trends, and areas for improvement. Key benchmarking metrics include: program participation rates, facility usage, budget allocation, community satisfaction, staffing levels. Other benchmarking includes evaluating our operations with NDRPA and NRPA standards and practices. Regularly incorporating benchmarking data into our planning cycle enables Valley City Parks and Recreation to stay aligned with leading practices and continuously enhance the quality of our recreation offerings.

Community Profile

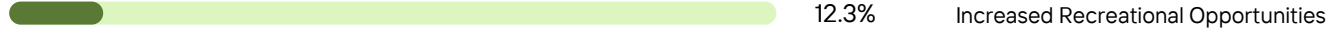
Valley City is a community that deeply values its parks and recreational opportunities, with residents of all ages actively participating in outdoor activities and local programs. From families enjoying the city's parks to students from Valley City State University engaging in fitness and wellness initiatives, there is a strong emphasis on maintaining an active, healthy lifestyle. The community is supportive of recreational events and works together to enhance public spaces. This collective investment in parks and recreation helps foster a sense of belonging, strengthens community ties, and ensures that residents have access to quality recreational facilities and programs year-round.



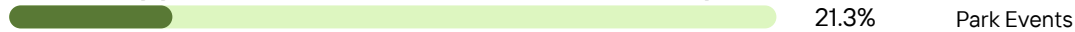
Community Needs Assessment

Based on a community survey done at the Longest Table Event in 2021, results revealed a strong community interest in expanding outdoor recreation options and park events, with particular demand for more winter activities to ensure year-round engagement. The following statistics were key findings discovered about Parks and Recreation:

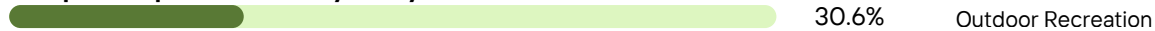
One area to build community/improve the future of Valley City:



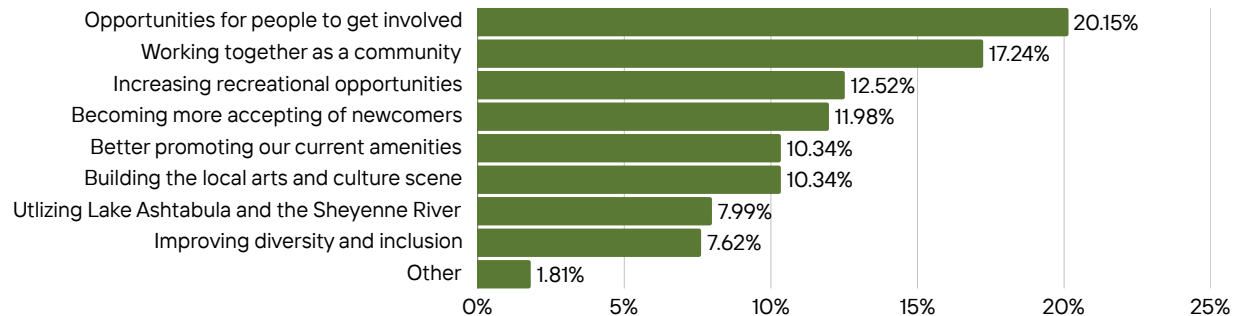
One activity you would like to see more of in our community:



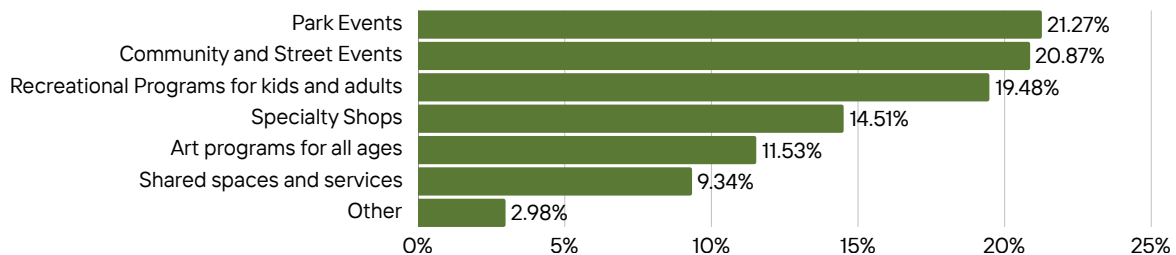
One public space or amenity that you would like to see more of:



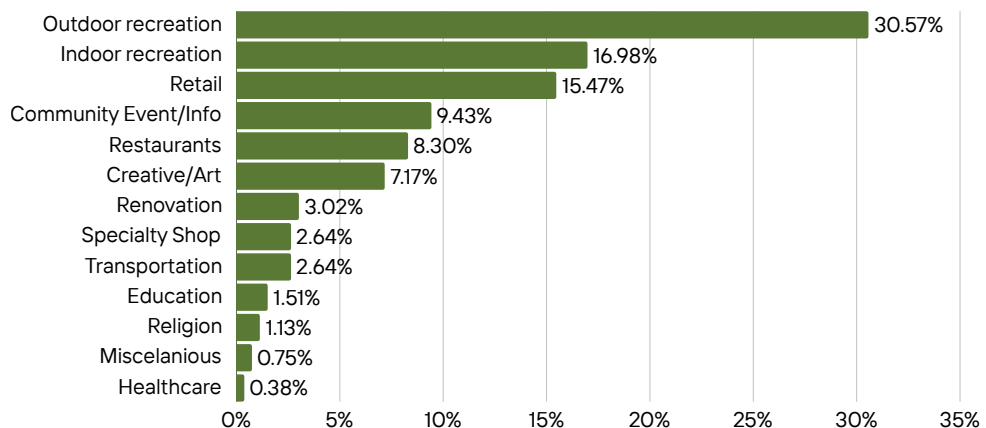
In your opinion, what are top 3 areas that build community and improve the future of Valley City?



Select the top 3 types of activities you would like to see more of in our community:



List 3 public spaces or amenities that you would like to have that are not currently available:



Marketing and Communications Strategy

Goals and Objectives

Objective 1: Increase community awareness about parks, programs, and events to increase participation and memberships.

Objective 2: Develop and maintain branding for the Park District and any of its sub-brands (Gaukler Family Wellness Center, Bjornson Golf Course)

Objective 3: Utilize diverse communication channels to effectively reach multiple target markets.

Objective 4: Enhance engagement with stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and local organizations to develop, maintain, and enhance relationships

Target Audiences

Primary Audiences: Valley City residents of all ages, including families, seniors, young adults, and children.

Secondary Audiences: Visitors to Valley City, tourists, potential residents, and prospective sponsors.

Key Stakeholders: Local schools, Valley City State University (VCSU), City of Valley City government, businesses, and partner organizations.

Branding and Identity

Ensure brand consistency across all marketing channels by standardizing the use of logos, colors, fonts, voice, and messaging. This will build strong brand recognition and reinforce our identity at every touchpoint.

Marketing Channels and Media

Social Media	Use platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to reach various demographics. Develop a content calendar for posting updates, success stories, behind-the-scenes content, and event highlights.
Website	Regularly update the Valley City Parks and Recreation website with information on programs, events, registration, and seasonal offerings while also highlighting projects and special stories through our <i>Articles</i> section on the website.
Other Media	Other media includes newspaper and online press releases, TV advertisements in the GFWC, posters on community boards, and attending community events and programs on behalf of VCPR

Funding Strategy

Valley City Parks and Recreation is committed to maintaining and expanding recreational opportunities without placing undue reliance on property taxes. A diversified funding strategy is essential to ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the park district while keeping services affordable for the community.

Sources

Grants

Actively pursuing state, federal, and private foundation grants to fund specific projects such as park development, facility upgrades, and program expansion. Grants offer a substantial opportunity to support large capital projects and specialized programs.

General Obligation (GO) Bonds

When necessary, issuing GO bonds can provide a financing option for significant infrastructure projects like new park developments, wellness facilities, or sports complexes, spreading the costs over time while ensuring projects meet long-term needs.

Sponsorships

Partnering with local businesses and corporations to sponsor events, programs, and facilities. Sponsorships not only provide financial support but also strengthen community relationships and foster local investment in park projects.

Partnerships

Collaborating with other public agencies, schools, non-profit organizations, and private entities to share resources and reduce costs. These partnerships can help enhance programming, expand facilities, and address specific community needs.

Donations

Encouraging individual and corporate donations to support capital campaigns, new facility developments, and improvements.

- *VCPR Foundation*
- *Sheyenne Valley Community Foundation*

Advertising Revenue

Generating income through the sale of advertising on banners placed throughout the parks. This can include ads on amenities such as trash cans, trail markers, tee boxes, dasher boards, scorecards, and restrooms. Advertising revenue offers a unique way to support park programs while also fostering local business engagement and visibility.

Recreation Revenue

Utilizing income from programs and services such as leagues, memberships, and concessions to offset operational costs. For example, fees collected from golf course usage, Gaukler Family Wellness Center memberships, adult leagues, and concession sales provide a sustainable revenue stream to help maintain the park district's facilities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Measuring Progress

We will utilize a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to track our progress, including regular community surveys, participation metrics for programs and events, facility usage statistics, and financial performance reviews. These data points will allow us to evaluate success across key areas, such as resident satisfaction, program growth, and fiscal health. Additionally, ongoing benchmarking against similar districts will help us stay informed of industry best practices, while feedback sessions with staff and stakeholders will provide valuable insights for continuous improvement. Regularly reviewing these measurements allows us to adapt our strategies proactively, address emerging needs, and refine our goals to ensure we remain relevant and impactful. By setting clear, measurable goals and tracking outcomes, we can ensure that Valley City Parks and Recreation continues to deliver high-quality, meaningful recreational experiences for the community.

Review Schedule

Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gather data on program participation, facility usage, event attendance, and financial performance for the quarter.• Collect feedback from community surveys
Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold a meeting with key team members to review quarterly findings, discuss challenges, and propose adjustments.• Identify any immediate actions or quick wins to stay aligned with goals.
Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess if the strategic goals remain relevant and make any needed adjustments for the coming year based on feedback and performance.• Publish annual report for stakeholders.

Community Input

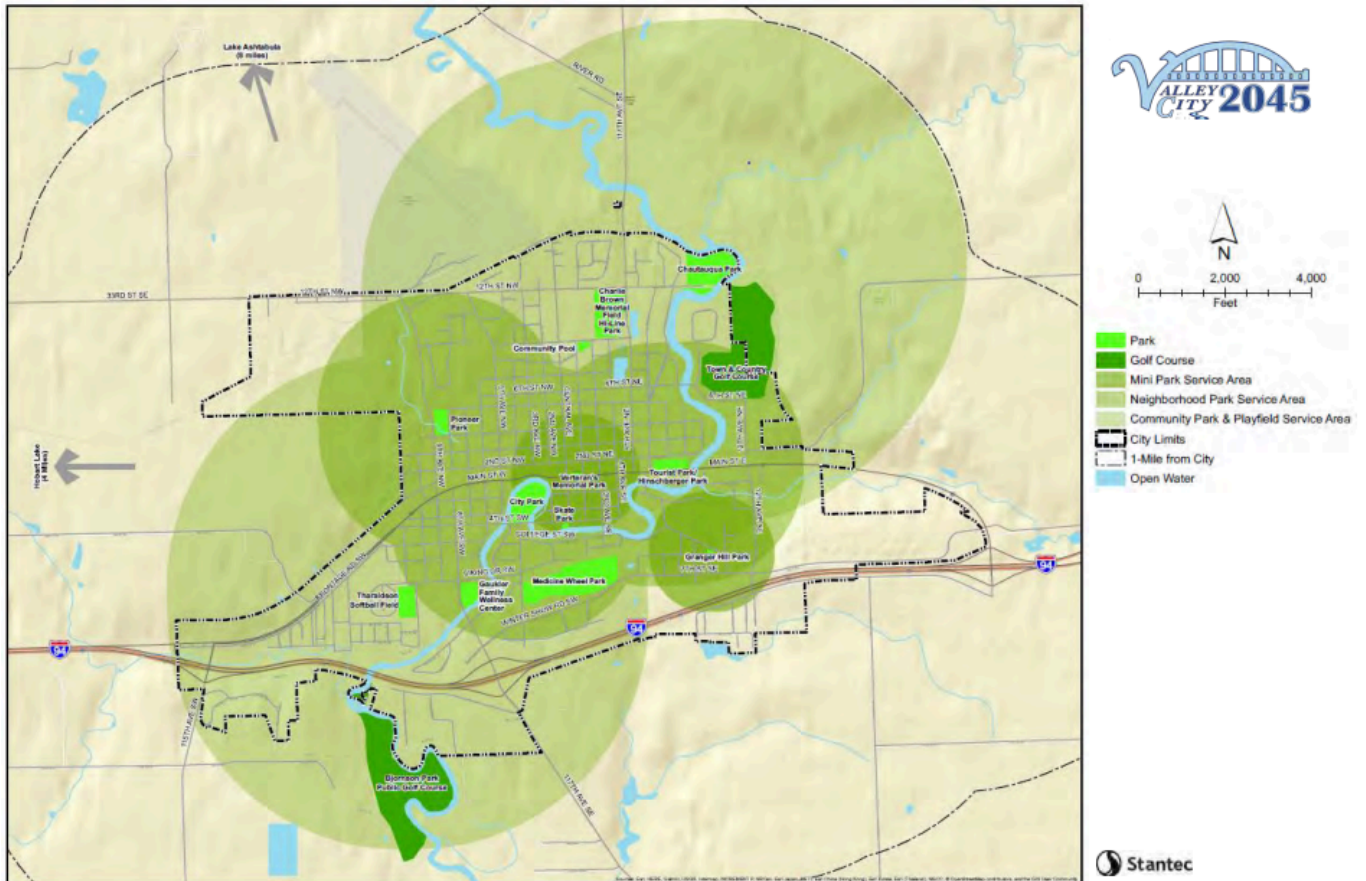
We actively seek feedback through regular surveys, event evaluations, social media engagement, and open forums, ensuring that community voices are heard and valued. By involving residents in our planning processes, we gain insight into their needs, preferences, and ideas for new programs and improvements. This ongoing dialogue helps us shape programming, refine facilities, and develop initiatives that align with what residents truly want.

Park District Maps

VALLEY CITY 2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 2-37 Park Service Coverage by Park Type

For a larger
scale image
see Map Atlas



Stantec

Table 2-9

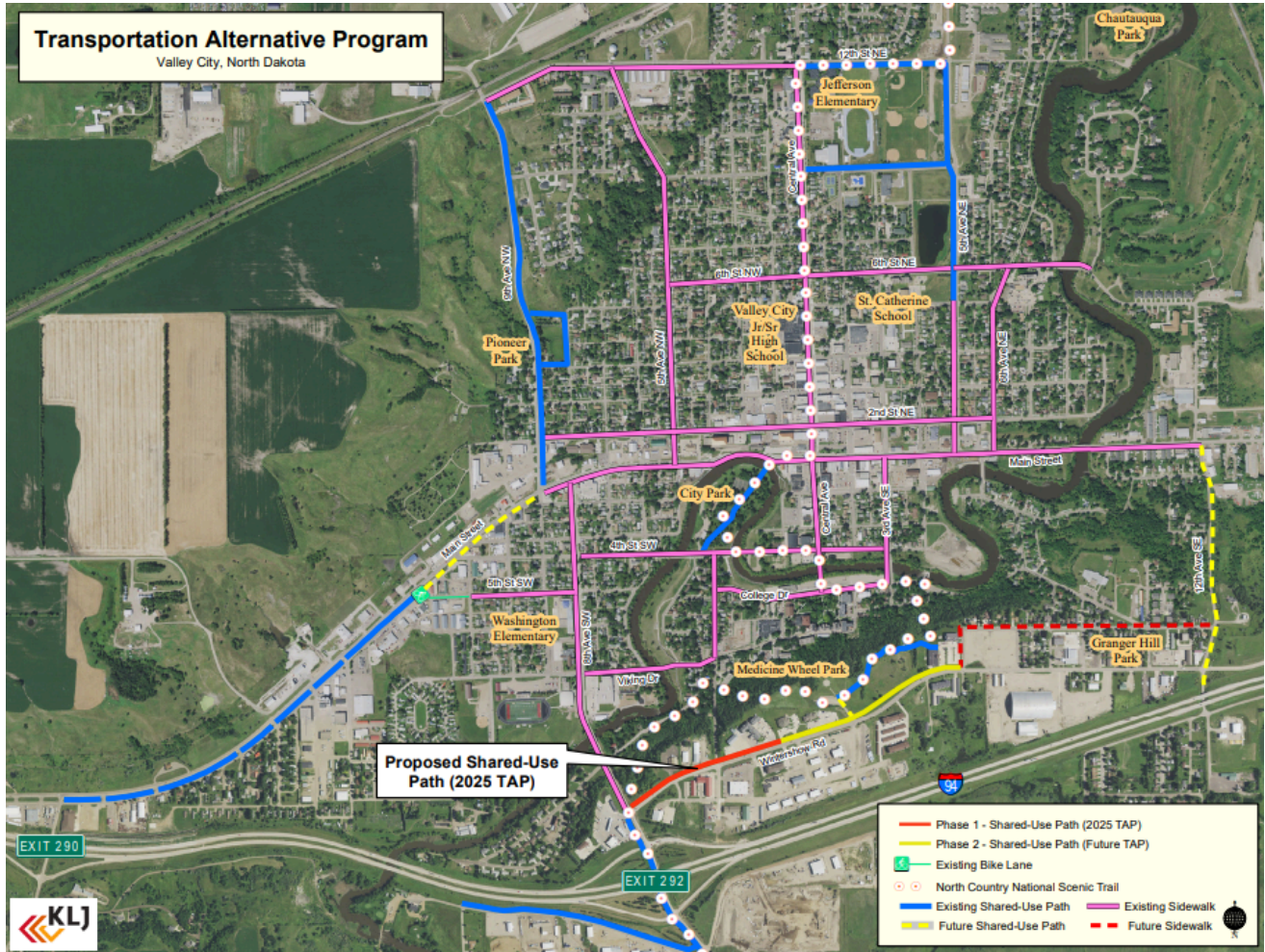
LEVEL OF SERVICE

Classification (see Table 2-7 for details)	Valley City Acreage (total)	NRPA (Recommended acreage)	NRPA LOS (acres/ 1,000 population)	Acreage deficiency/ surplus (acre)
Mini	0.66	3.28	0.50	-2.64
Neighborhood	14.46	49.25	7.50	-35.24
Community Park	38.1	49.25	7.50	-11.60
Special Use	37.23	n/a		
Total Based on NRPA Level of Service for Each Park Classification	90.45		101.78	-11.33
Total Based on NRPA Overall Level of Service	90.45	65.66	10	+24.15

*Acreage is based on an existing population of 6,626, excludes the golf course acreage and Medicine Wheel Park
Source: Stantec Consulting

Park District Maps

Trails and Paths



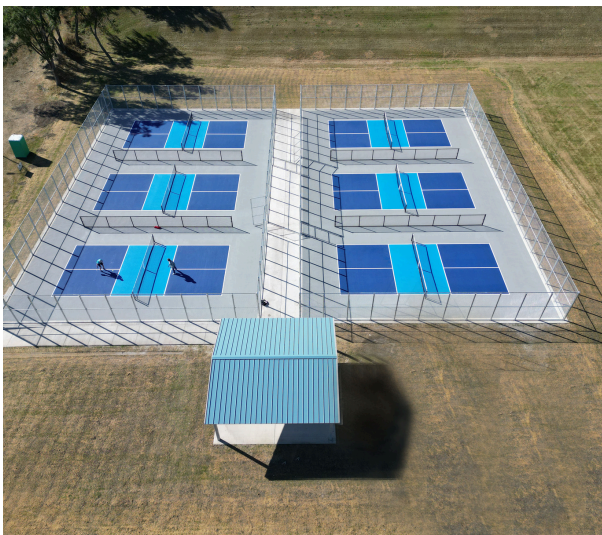
Parks & Facilities



Gaukler Family Wellness Center

Amenities: 65,000 sq. ft., weights, fitness center, pool, walking track, hot tub, basketball/volleyball/pickleball lines, fitness classrooms, VCSU classrooms, smoothie bar, showers/locker rooms

Projects & Updates: Expand recreation opportunities to south green space



Pickleball Complex

Amenities: 6 pickleball-exclusive courts, picnic shelter, benches, picnic tables

Projects & Updates: Add trees and landscaping to enhance the visual appeal and provide necessary shade and greenery to the sports complex.



Charlie Brown Memorial Field

Amenities: Bleachers, concessions stand, press box, bathrooms, locker room/clubhouse, batting cages

Projects & Updates: LED efficiency lighting

Parks & Facilities



City Park Band Shell

Amenities: Stage, storage, concessions building, bathrooms

Projects & Updates: Repaint the façade, replace the fencing along the bottom of the stage, repair cracks, and collaborate with the Historical Society to maintain the site's historical integrity



City Rec Center

Amenities: Sport courts (volleyball, basketball, pickleball), roller skating, bathrooms, locker rooms, concessions, offices, classrooms, automatic lighting, unutilized basement space

Projects & Updates: Make accessible with ramps and elevators, utilize basement area, WWII Heritage City interpretive panels



Community Outdoor Pool

Amenities: Bathrooms, locker rooms, play feature, water slide, concessions stand

Projects & Updates: Refinish building flooring, replace bathroom stall structures, replace shade

Parks & Facilities



City Park

Amenities: Disc golf, playgrounds (ages 2-5, ages 5-12), historic bandshell amphitheater, tennis/pickleball courts, recreation trail (North Country Trail), lighting, restrooms

Projects & Updates: Update bandshell, repaint tennis courts, add art and sculpture installations



Bjornson Park Public Golf Course

Amenities: Pro shop, bathrooms, 9 holes, putting green, chipping green, driving range, concessions, club rentals

Projects & Updates: Permanent recreation bridge, add cross-country skiing and snowshoeing (off-season)



Tourist Park Campground

Amenities: Comfort station, electric hookups, sewer hookups, water hookups, sewer dumping station, WIFI

Projects & Updates: Rebuild comfort station, make pull-through campsites, expand to city flood-buyout land at the completion of permanent flood protection

Parks & Facilities



City Park Tennis Complex

Amenities: 3 tennis courts with pickleball blended lines, lighting, benches, bleachers

Projects & Updates: Resurface



North Tennis Courts

Amenities: 3 tennis courts, bleachers, picnic benches, storage shed

Projects & Updates: Add lighting



Pioneer Park

Amenities: Playground, ice skating rink, historic warming house, creek, amphitheater, paved walking path

Projects & Updates: Add new warming house / pavilion with bathrooms, paved parking lot, add trail head for Hidden Pond Trail

Included on National Register of Historic Places

Parks & Facilities



Dacotah Pavilion

Amenities: Indoor and outdoor bathrooms, full kitchen, tables and chairs, fully accessible, dining space

Projects & Updates:



Veterans Park

Amenities: Historic and cultural monuments and displays, picnic shelter, sidewalks

Projects & Updates: WWII Heritage City Interpretive Panel, floral arrangements



College Softball Complex

Amenities: 3 softball diamonds, press box, play equipment, bathrooms

Projects & Updates:



Tharaldson Softball Field

Amenities: 1 softball diamond, bleachers, dugouts

Projects & Updates:



Skate Park

Amenities: 9 features including ramps, rails, and other skating surfaces, parking lot

Projects & Updates: Replace park sign



Hi-Line Baseball Fields

Amenities: 3 diamonds (2024), bathrooms, locker rooms, concession stand, storage building, bleachers, soccer field lines

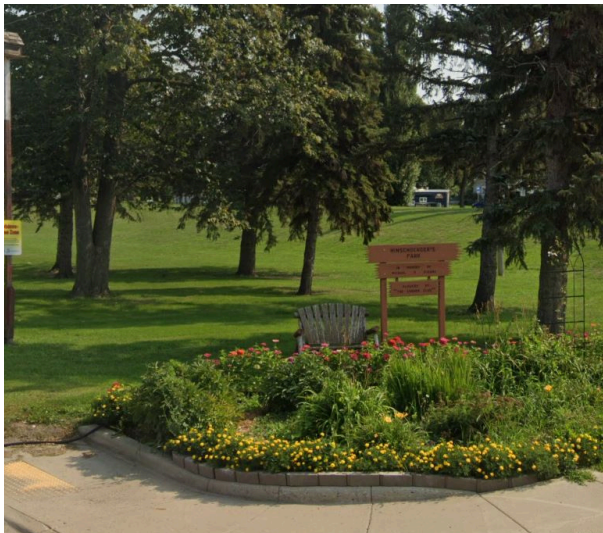
Projects & Updates: Pickleball Courts on SW corner diamond (completed fall of 2024), add trees and other landscaping, update fencing



Granger Hill Park

Amenities: Playground, basketball court, garbage receptacles, swings

Projects & Updates: New sand



Hinchberger Park

Amenities: Benches, birdhouses, garden, green space

Projects & Updates:



Park Shop

Amenities: Restrooms

Projects & Updates:



Chautauqua Park

Amenities: Dog park, fishing dock, boat launch, benches, picnic shelters, 3 sand volleyball courts, Hi-Line bridge lookout, Bridge tour interpretive panel, cornhole boards, playgrounds

Projects & Updates: Light posts for expanded hours, dog park play features, WWII Heritage City interpretive panel



Hidden Pond Trail

Amenities:

Projects & Updates: Trail resurfacing, Buckthorn removal, benches, garbage receptacles, picnic shelter, pond clean-up, birdhouses, wildflower/prairie grass area, trail head sign, parking

