

A monarch butterfly with vibrant orange wings and black veins is perched on a cluster of small pink flowers. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. The butterfly's wings are spread, and its proboscis is visible as it feeds. The overall scene is bright and colorful, capturing a moment of nature.

# Kiester Park

Report & Concept

September 2016

## Overview

When school district athletic facilities centralized, the City of Kiester inherited 13.77 acres of what was school athletic grounds in the northwest corner of the city. Many ideas have surfaced within the city as to how the area could be improved, of which many involve a recreational component. As a result, the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) joined with the City of Kiester and the Region Nine Development Commission to gather feedback to give city decision-makers a better idea of community thoughts.



From the beginning, it was important that the project fits within the following parameters:

- Financially feasible—Leveraging outside funding sources will be important to making any projects happen at the site.
- Reflects the desires of the younger population in Kiester—Providing more things which also appeal to younger generations should be a priority if new services are established.
- Minimized duplication of other area parks—If the park is established, it should be unique to the area in order to generate visitors.

The process started when SHIP and Region Nine had a booth at Kiester Days in June 2016 to solicit input from attendees. The booth was promoted by Region Nine through Facebook advertisements and media releases. A wide array of input was received throughout the day, specifically developing a trail for recreation and exercise as well as interest in a community garden.

A full list of ideas generated from this event is incorporated into the survey responses in the Appendix.

The Kiester Active Living Team then asked community members to better define their recommendations made during Kiester Days. The additional responses included:

- Asphalt as the preferred trail surface, followed by grass as a second choice.
- Amenities to include: benches, trash receptacles, bird houses and a possible disc golf course on the perimeter.
- Landscaping to include: native grasses, wildflowers, plants, and trees. These low-maintenance options will provide a habitat to bees, butterflies and birds.

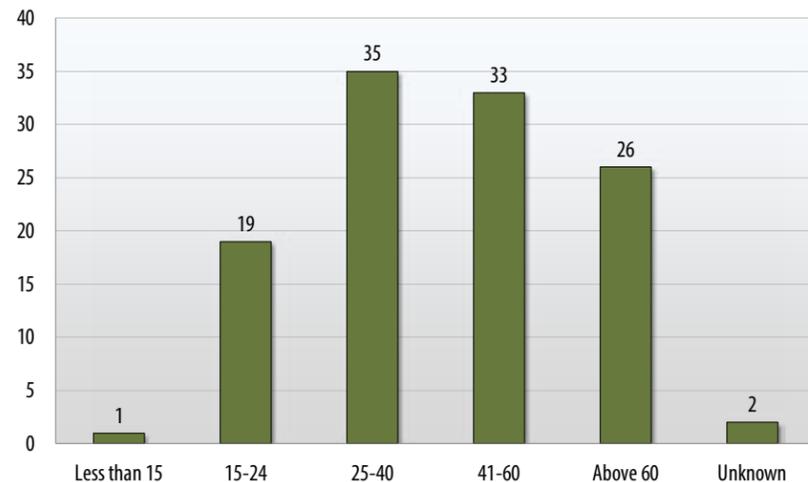
With a core idea in place, Region Nine developed an online-only survey to gather more citizen recommendations and to gauge community support for the projects identified during the Kiester Days event. The survey was promoted with advertisement on Facebook and targeted younger residents. The Kiester Courier-Sentinel also printed an announcement of the survey to generate input from their circulation base.



## Community Feedback

As age was an important consideration, the responses are broken into five different categories: less than 15, 15-24, 24-40, 41-60, and above 60. Overall, 116 responses were tallied between the Kiester Days event and the online survey, with 55 of those responses from people under the age of 40.

Community Feedback Age Range



Part of this process is identifying the potential role of the city in the park development. As the City of Kiester, like most cities, faces difficulties in addressing existing needs, the role of the city in this project will have to be carefully calculated. When asked in the September 2016 online survey, 81 percent of respondents believed some city funds should be used in developing a park at this site.

Additionally, survey-takers were asked if they would be willing to volunteer to make the park a reality, as the city will be unlikely to accomplish developing a new park alone. Two-thirds indicated that they felt this project was important enough to warrant volunteering their time.

## Recommendation Feedback

The online survey was brief to maximize participation, and therefore only evaluated the citizen recommendations that attracted the most interest during Kiester Days. The ideas gathered that day include trails, community garden and native plants.

### Unpaved Trail

One survey question, accompanied by a picture of a grass-covered path, asked each survey-taker to identify how often they would use the trail. Frequent-users responded with daily, weekly, a few times weekly; occasional users responded with a few times per month or monthly; and those that indicated a few times per year or never were grouped as rare users. If the rare-users are excluded from the count, 58 percent could be classified as potential users.



### Paved Trail

The same survey question was then asked of a paved trail, accompanied by a picture of a tree-lined surfaced trail. 65 percent indicated they would be frequent users and 10 percent occasional. The rare users accounted for 25 percent of the total. Climate likely played a role in the response, as people are more comfortable on well-drained surfaces under almost all circumstances.



### Community Garden

When asked if they would be interested in participating in a community garden, 25 percent indicated they would and 27 percent indicated they were not sure and would need to learn more about a community garden. Community gardens are usually popular in the communities after they are built, and funding can possibly be sourced entirely outside the community; therefore, a question was asked about local food access. 56 percent of respondents did not believe there was enough access to locally-grown foods in the area. Community gardens are more than providing food access, they also lend themselves to education and socializing.



## Park Concept

The park map, located on page 6, is only a concept of how the development of the park could look. If implemented, the project could be completed in small phases to accommodate fundraising, volunteers, and financial feasibility.



## Trail Concept

During the 2015 Kiester Active Living Plan process, people surveyed indicated they are generally interested in walking or bicycling in the community but had concerns about the existing sidewalks and streets. The idea of a trail at this site received interest in the context of building a healthier community. The trail was also the most popular choice identified at the Kiester Days event. Asphalt, grass and mountain biking courses were all suggested as more specific trail types.

A trail around the perimeter of the park would be approximately 0.6 mile trail and should have some improved surfacing. Asphalt would be the best surface for all users, but crushed limestone, if “smooth and stable” as specified by the Americans with Disabilities Act, could be a more cost-effective alternative. The park concept map on the following page proposes an asphalt trail in red around the rain garden and perimeter. It also accommodates other demands for natural surfacing for bicyclist or walkers seeking to change up their route. Where the track was once located is rounded back to the main trail with crushed gravel to provide a nod to the park’s heritage as an athletic field but also so that an approximate track length can be used for exercise.

Mountain biking could also be included on the outside of the perimeter track along the trees on the north and west sides, but would require regular volunteer maintenance.

Aside from the trail surface, creating an inviting place where people want to come and enjoy is crucial. This can be accomplished by planting trees to provide shade and bird habitat or, as was proposed by one survey respondent, creating interpretive signs that identify birds, trees, butterflies or wildflowers throughout the park’s trails.

## Community Garden

Similar to integrating more activity into daily lives, having a source of local produce is of increasing importance to Americans. Smaller communities, like Easton in Faribault County, have built community gardens due to the numerous benefits they offer communities. These gardens typically offer social interaction, healthy foods, and learning opportunities for people of all ages. People who enjoy gardening may opt to grow their vegetables in a community setting because of the space or sunlight opportunities.

Community gardens typically offer a water source for the gardens, but features do vary. Fencing or raised beds, while not necessary, are some additional options. The Easton community garden, with SHIP’s support, has installed raised beds to allow seniors and people with mobility restrictions to garden. School districts and clubs are often sought to provide help in constructing, or possibly growing items, but the various groups who find value in a community garden in each community is always unique.

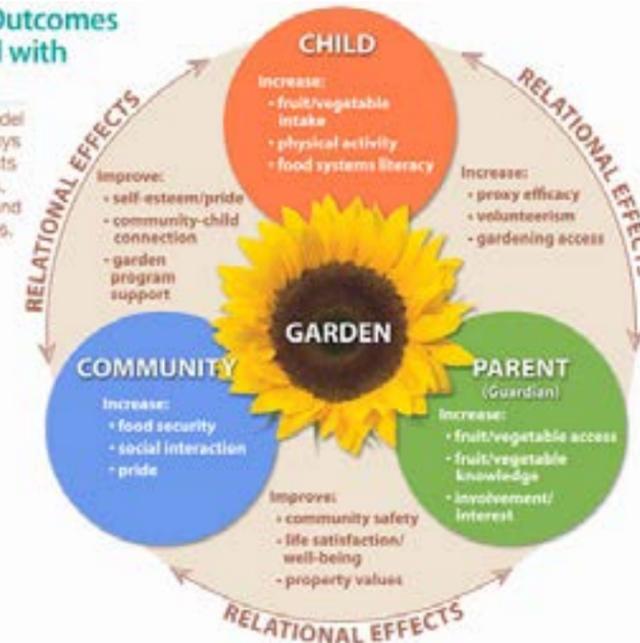
*For more information on community gardens, contact the Faribault-Martin-Watonwan SHIP Coordinator.*

## Fruit-Bearing Plants

With much of the same intent of community gardens, fruit-bearing trees or shrubs could be planted to connect community members to local produce. Trees could be planted from seedlings as a school project and raspberries planted in the wooded areas to allow people to better experience local produce. While not intended for an individual to bulk harvest, perhaps the trees could be harvested by local organizations for the area food shelf or to be sold for fundraisers.

### Model of Outcomes Associated with a Garden

This benefits model depicts a few ways gardening impacts children, parents, the community and their relationships.



## Prairie Area

Designating a large area, that might otherwise see little use, to a low-maintenance prairie area could make the area more inviting. Tall native grasses and wildflowers provide an inviting retreat during the summer months as well as the ever-important pollinator habitat sought by butterflies, honey bees, and other native insects. Grass trails mowed through the area would increase accessibility.

A full prairie restoration can be an expensive undertaking. As an educational asset, as well as a pollinator habitat, prairie restoration has potential to receive extensive external financial support.

*For more information on native plantings, contact the Faribault County Soil & Water Conservation District.*

## Entrance Area

An entrance garden or gates placed to welcome visitors, noted in pink on the map, is an option to make the park more inviting. Rocks, flowers or other aesthetic items would enhance the entrance area.

## Events and Athletics Field

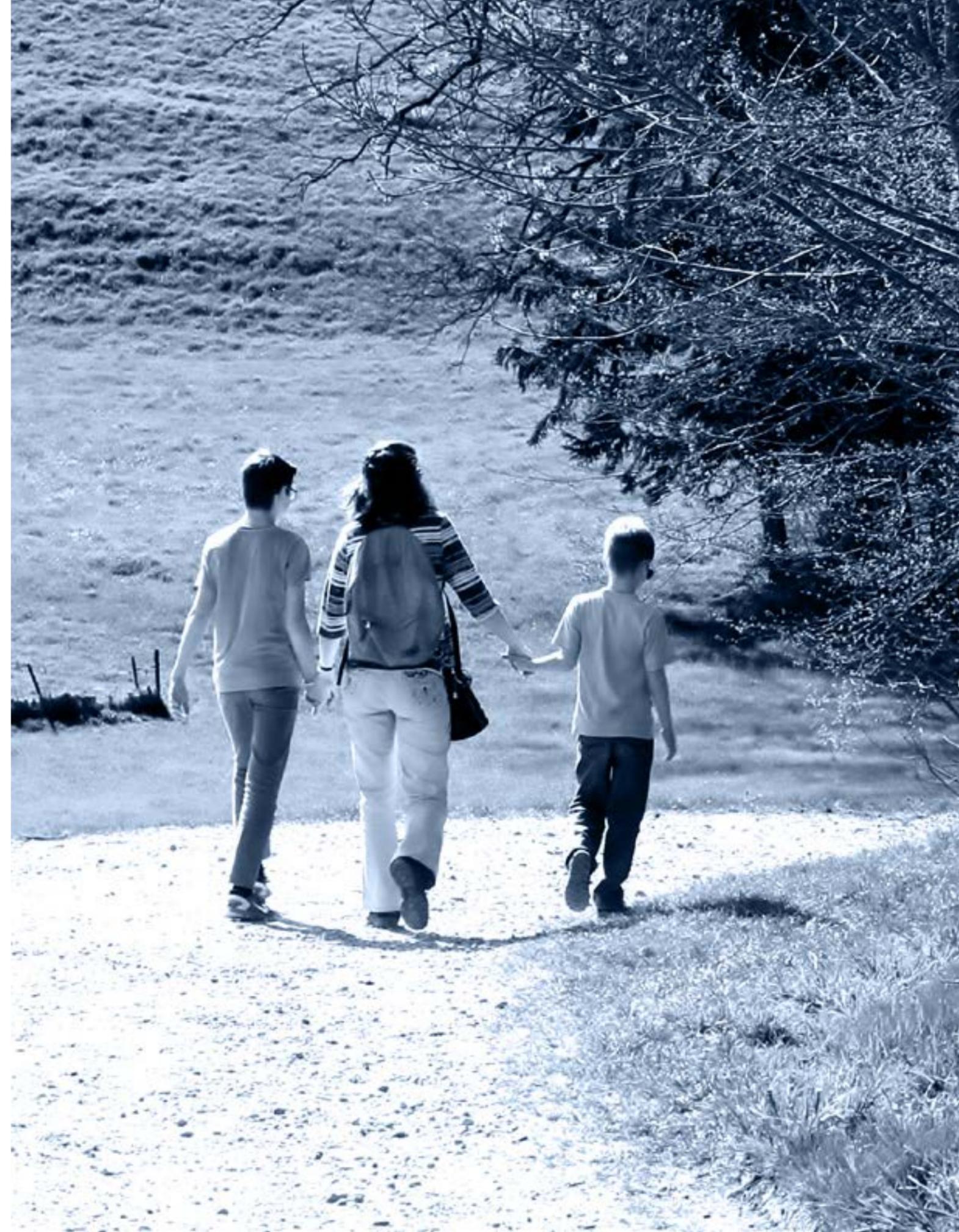
Having an open area is a community asset in that it can be used for many activities, from kite flying to carnival rides. The survey respondents proposed many different ideas of how to utilize the space. A restored softball or baseball field to accommodate tournaments was a popular request. Playground equipment, splash pad, volleyball and tennis courts, and outdoor ice rink were also proposed. Many of these proposed ideas are realistic possibilities for the space and would add value to the location.

## Other Citizen Recommendations

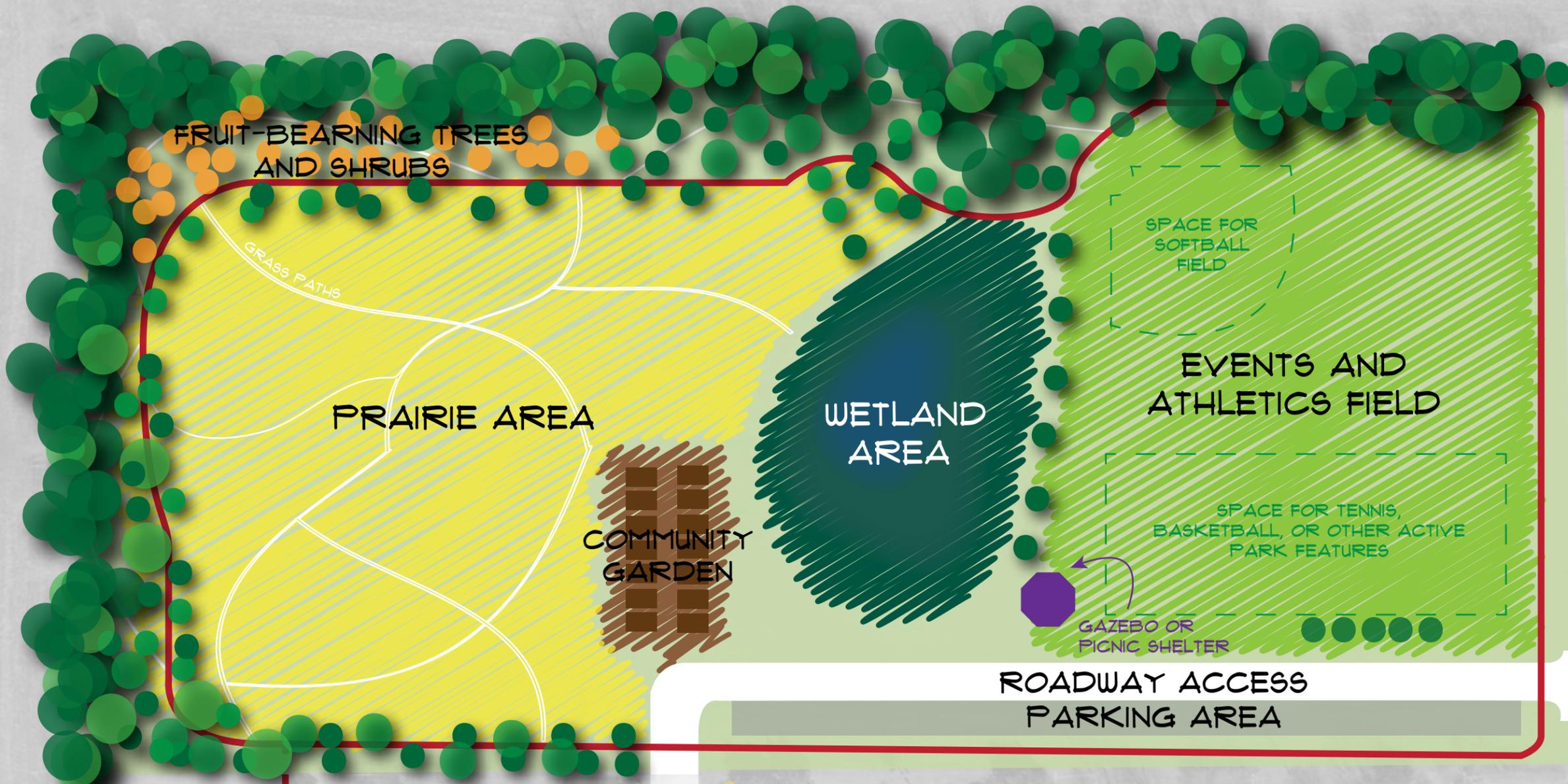
Finding a balance between activities hosted at the City Park, as well as nearby communities, will be important as ideas emerge. For example, a pool was identified by many as a good resource for families; however, with a pool located in Bricelyn and other nearby communities there may not be a need for one in Kiester. A pool also has significant building and operating costs. Splash pads, on the other hand, could be a less expensive alternative.

Dog parks are also an increasingly popular item cities are pursuing. Dog owners are often willing to travel from nearby areas for their dog to be social and exercise. Licensing or access in order to use the dog park could be a potential revenue generator.

Another opportunity to enhance the parks amenities would be the inclusion of a disc golf course. Disc golf courses require concrete pads and at least nine “holes”. This affordable activity can be enjoyed by all age ranges and could be a popular attraction.



# KIESTER PARK CONCEPT MAP



TRAIL CONNECTION TO MAIN STREET

TRAIL CONNECTION TO N. 8TH STREET

W. 11TH STREET

W. 5TH STREET

W. RINGER STREET

W. NORTH STREET

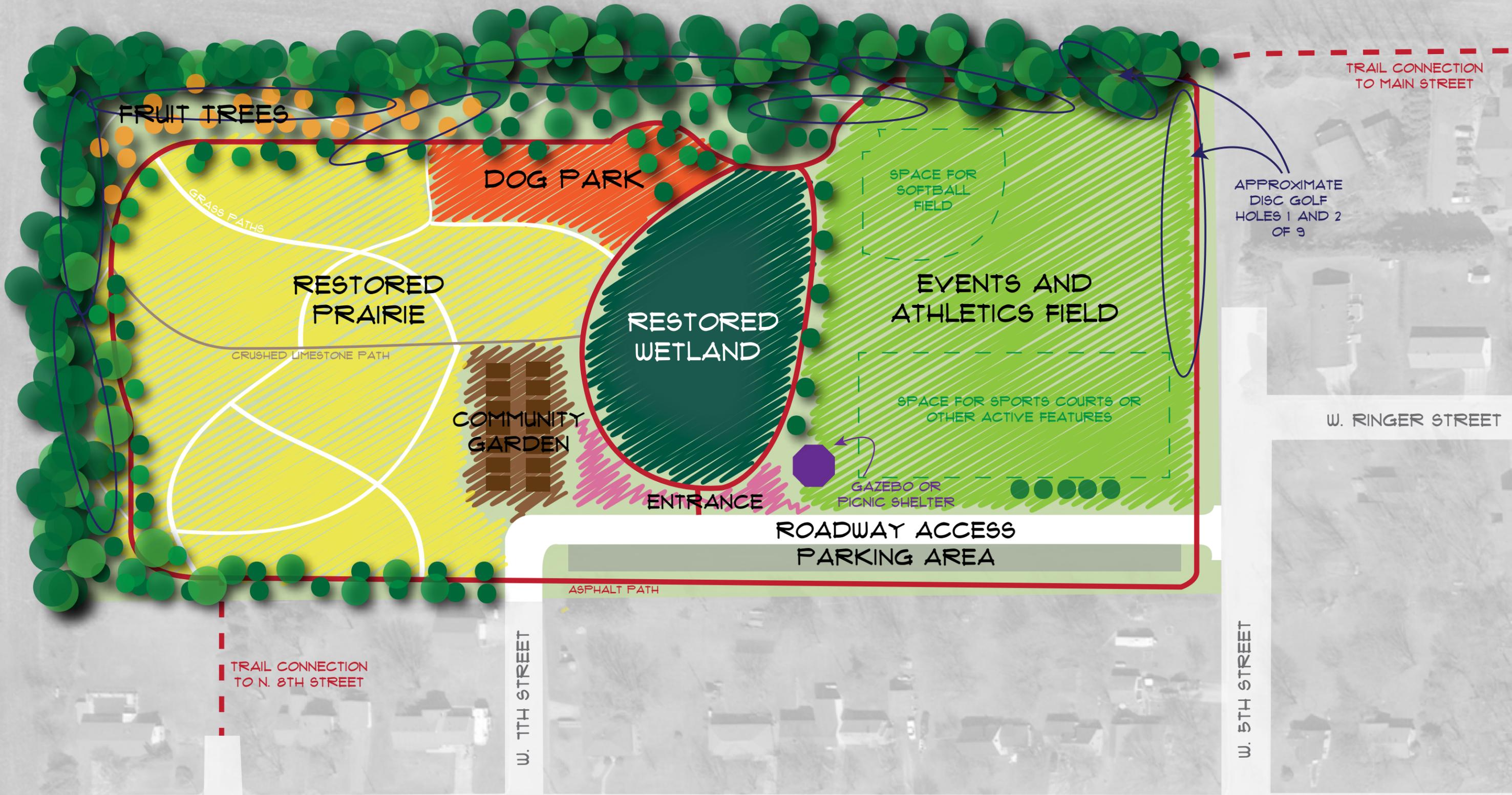
200 feet

9

10



# KIESTER PARK EXTENDED CONCEPT MAP



200 feet

11

12



## Appendix

## Complete Survey Responses

### Q1. What is your age range?

Age Range	Responses
Less than 15	1
15-24	19
25-40	35
41-60	33
Above 60	26
Unknown	2

### Q2. What is your sex?

Female	72
Male	40

### Q3. How often would you use a paved trail for exercise or recreation?

Age Range	Responses						
	Daily	A few times per week	Weekly	A few times per month	Monthly	A few times per year	Never
Less than 15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15-24	4	1	1	2	0	4	2
25-40	6	9	2	1	0	0	3
41-60	3	9	4	4	1	0	4
Above 60	3	2	3	0	0	2	3
Unknown	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>

### Q4. How often would you use a unpaved trail for exercise or recreation?

Age Range	Responses						
	Daily	A few times per week	Weekly	A few times per month	Monthly	A few times per year	Never
Less than 15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15-24	3	0	0	2	1	4	4
25-40	2	4	6	2	1	5	3
41-60	2	5	3	5	2	3	5
Above 60	0	1	3	3	0	2	4
Unknown	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>

Q5. Would you be interested in having a garden plot as part of a community garden?

Age Range	Responses		
	Yes	No	Not sure
Less than 15	0	0	0
15-24	6	5	2
25-40	6	8	9
41-60	6	15	5
Above 60	2	8	3
Unknown	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>19</b>

Q5. Aside from trails, community garden, nature area(s), and open lawn, what else would you like to see provided in this park?

Age Range	Responses
Less than 15	Walking trails*
15-24	Seating
	Water park
	Something that is going to generate the city of kiester income, not cost the city money that it doesn't have!
	A nice playground for the kids. That way if I'm walking I can still see them.
	Allow a portion of it to return to a prarie landscape.
	Shade trees, picnic tables, camping sites
	Definitely any kind of extra activities that even adults could enjoy.
	equipment and activities
	Dono
	Bike Trail*
	Walking Trail*
	Something Natural*
	Something Natural*
	Community Garden

\*Collected during Kiester Days

Q5. Aside from trails, community garden, nature area(s), and open lawn, what else would you like to see provided in this park? (con't)

Age Range	Responses
25-40	Dog park
	dog park
	Exercise classes, movies in the park, music in th park, community events like a fall harvest fair, places to sit along the trail, waste receptacles
	seating, picnic area
	Sell it let the city bring in more tax dollars instead of more expenses
	Baseball or softball field
	Maintained athletic facility and playground
	bench, trees, bird houses, bird feeders, flowers to attract butterflies,
	Pond with walking trail
	A kids play area
	Pool, exercise facility, game courts
	Maybe family picnic area
	Off road race track
	Splash pad for kids
	Places to sit & think
	Equipment/activities for children
	Activities for children
	Something for the older kids to do in town
	bike park, skate park, ice rink, bench or picnic are, place to relax.
	I believe this space should have an updated baseball field and community garden
	Volleyball court, horse shoe court etc
	A water park play area
	Pool*
	Something for Kids*
	Walking and Biking Trail*
	Walking and Biking Trail*
	Walking Track*
	Walking Trail*
	Community Garden*
	Walking and Biking Trail*

\*Collected during Kiester Days

**Q5. Aside from trails, community garden, nature area(s), and open lawn, what else would you like to see provided in this park? (con't)**

Age Range	Responses
41-60	Some place for kids to play
	Nice benches for sitting on for relaxing, visiting & reading.
	since this area was a slew before it was an athletic field, how about a pond?
	Pool
	Make the fields usable again for kids to play and practice on.
	Benches, places to relax.
	frisbee golf course
	Butterfly garden
	Something for children to do
	Like to see them remodel the fields for kids to use and practice on. Be nice to have soft-ball and baseball field back. Also be good for Kiester days to have softball tournament back in the town!
	benches
	pond
	I believe that there should be a ball field put back in there somewhere.
	Park benches
	Maybe some exercise equipment that a lot of parks have along the trails
	ice skating rink with a warming house
	Housing and outdoor adult exercise machines
	My daughter and I play ball here daily
	Camping
	If there are wildflowers and native grasses, maybe have signs to identify them.
	Fruit bearing trees.
	Community Garden*
	Community Garden*
Walking and Biking Trail*	
Walking and Biking Trail*	
Walking and Biking Trail*	
Walking Trail*	

\*Collected during Kiester Days

**Q5. Aside from trails, community garden, nature area(s), and open lawn, what else would you like to see provided in this park? (con't)**

Age Range	Responses
Above 60	maybe a gazebo or some place to sit and maybe have a picnic or a get together.
	Walking paths!
	A park for young children or rebuild the baseball fields that were there when I was growing up.
	picnic area
	How will this be maintained? The city can't financially maintain what it has now for parks. This development is an idea that I feel is in its infancy. Much more planning and communications needs to be done by all parties involved in this project.
	Agriculture, turn it into cropland.
	Activities. Ball field
	fenced dog park
	Dog park
	Pool*
	Walking and Biking Trail*
	Wild Flowers*
	Bike Trail*
	Skate Park*
	Skateboard Park*
	Trap Shooting*
	Updated Baseball Field*
	Walking and Biking Trail*
	Walking and Biking Trail*
	Pool*
	Pool*
	Bike Trail*
	Assisted Living*
Hiking Trail*	
Low, upkeep design*	
Native plants and trees*	
Unknown	I would like the baseball field better maintained, I have used it myself with my kids to try and play a little baseball but the grass was to long and the bugs were way bad

\*Collected during Kiester Days

**Q6. Would you be willing to volunteer some time to developing the park?**

Age Range	Responses	
	Yes	No
Less than 15	0	0
15-24	8	6
25-40	19	4
41-60	17	10
Above 60	7	6
Unknown	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>26</b>

**Q7. Do you think there is enough access to locally-grown foods?**

Age Range	Responses	
	Yes	No
Less than 15	0	0
15-24	6	7
25-40	8	15
41-60	13	13
Above 60	6	7
Unknown	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>43</b>

**Q8. Do you support using city funds to build this park?**

Age Range	Responses	
	Yes	No
Less than 15	0	0
15-24	10	3
25-40	20	3
41-60	20	6
Above 60	10	3
Unknown	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>15</b>

**Q9. Please leave any additional comments here.**

Age Range	Responses
Less than 15	grass
15-24	If we got a pool it could help the town continue to generate money.
	Think something like this could bring people to the small town and help the small local businesses grow
	Trails would be super beneficial in my opinion. Maybe even an area where people can run their dogs, some people do it anyway there but there is a leash law
	dirt
	dirt
	paved with flowers with flowers
25-40	We need the USC School district more involved with the Kiester Community.
	I would like to see this area turn into something that families with children could use. There is not a whole lot in kiester or close towns that provide something to keep kids busy.
	I don't think they should put garden or water back there.. Gonna cause bugs. Rebuild the fields and bring kids to practice and more people back for Kiester days
	Sell the property for city income
	The way that this project has gone through has not had a very good community response. Redevelopment of current facilities needs to be done before the development of something new that once again won't be maintained.
	Need more things for kids to do around town
	I do not support using city funds unless it is a butterfly garden too
	Think it would be great to do something with the area. I have a lot of good memories of a kid playing down there and would like future kids to have the same
	Something needs to happen soon
	We need to unplug all the drains on the street before this concrete with benches and drinking fountains

**Q9. Please leave any additional comments here. (con't)**

Age Range	Responses
41-60	Steinberg park in Blue Earth is something I cansee here, but with water feature and possibly a ropes course, or work out stations on the trail. Frisbee golf course also would be awesome
	We need more family activites
	a family place with something of all ages to enjoy
	We need to have something that the children can do or put something there that is a draw for other people to come to keister.
	Winter time the area would be used the least..but I think 3 other seasons would be good!
	As new residents to Kiester we feel this would be a great idea!
	I would like to see us bring in more people and businesses. It is such a nice town and a bike trails or walking trails from here to Bricelyn would be nice also
	The city of kiester cannot afford anything else it's going to cost it money we don't have enough money the way it is. And we have streets and other issues that need to be taken care of first. If there were grants or anything else out there that was not going to cost the city any money at all or any upkeep in the future it might be a good thing. If anything goes in this area it should be something that's going to help generate income for the city of kiester and benefit the community members. I'm very against what they're trying to do right now unless it's going to generate income for the city.
	The Lie community if not very kid friendly. I also think the community forgets that people work during the day and have school activities some evenings
	Kiester needs something to not only bring people in, but keep people from leaving.
Above 60	Trails would be great for walking my dog!
	This is an exciting opportunity!
	Although I would support city funds used for this project, I know the city will not move forward without grants for much of the cost. Due to the number of older (over 80) residents in town we need work done on street access also for wheelchair accessibility. We may be able to get private or business support for things like trees, benches, etc..
	Great idea to utilize this space
	with flowers and benches*
	pavement*
	surfaced trail around outside edge*
pavement with benches*	

**Resources**

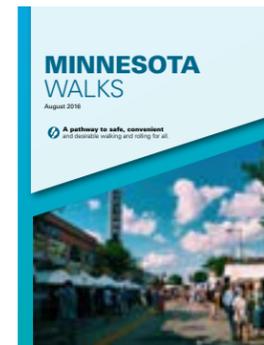
**Costs for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Infrastructure Improvements**

This document (and associated database) is intended to provide meaningful estimates of infrastructure costs by collecting up-to-date cost information for pedestrian and bicycle treatments from states and cities across the country.  
[pedbikeinfo.org/cms/downloads/Counter measure%20Costs\\_Report\\_Nov2013.pdf](http://pedbikeinfo.org/cms/downloads/Counter%20measure%20Costs_Report_Nov2013.pdf)



**Minnesota Walks**

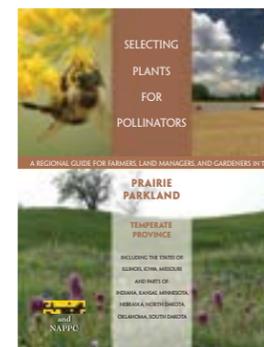
The Minnesota Walks plan is intended to guide how to make walking a more viable form of transportation across the state. Featuring specific improvement strategies to encourage a walking culture in communities, this plan can be a great resource. It was developed through a collaborative effort between MnDOT and the Minnesota Department of Health.



<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/peds/plan/>

**Selecting Plants for Pollinators**

A regional guide for farmers, land managers and gardeners.  
<http://www.pollinator.org/PDFs/Guides/PrairieParklandrx12FINAL.pdf>



**Image Sources**

Page 4, Image 1: Steve's Landscape Service, Online, [http://steveslandserve.com/native\\_grasses/native\\_grasses.html](http://steveslandserve.com/native_grasses/native_grasses.html)

Page 4, Image 2: Wilmington College, Online, <http://www.growfoodgrowhope.com/2010/07/last-summer-meeting-at-community.html>

Page 4, Image 3: Shutterstock, Online, <http://il3.picdn.net/shutterstock/videos/6553379/thumb/1.jpg>

Page 6, Image 1: Online, <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/21/37/15/2137156ec31cab12448f9ec6301deeb6.jpg>

Page 13, Image 1: Carex: Garden Design by Carolyn Mullet, Online, <http://carex.tumblr.com/image/139454183378>



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