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05 PARKS AND TRAILS

Introduction

A thriving community is defined not only by its economic vitality and infrastructure but also by the quality of its public spaces. In the City of Ada, parks, trails, and open spaces are foundational assets that directly shape the community's identity, health, and long-term resilience.

Far from being mere aesthetic amenities or passive patches of green, parks and trails have the potential to function as high performance public spaces that deliver significant environmental, social, and economic benefits. However, achieving this high standard requires deliberate foresight in municipal planning. Without intentional design and proactive maintenance, recreational spaces risk becoming underutilized liabilities rather than community assets.

While municipal parks historically suffer from underfunding and deferred maintenance across many regions, the City of Ada has established a long standing tradition of prioritizing its public spaces. Ada has consistently taken a proactive approach to park and trail development, leveraging funding tools such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and the Penny for Our City sales tax program to continually upgrade and sustain its recreational network. Today, Ada boasts an above average number of parks for a city of its size, featuring a diverse spectrum of spaces ranging from small downtown pocket parks to major regional hubs like Wintersmith Park.

This sustained commitment directly supports the city's economic vitality. Today's businesses increasingly seek to invest in communities that prioritize public wellness and offer an exceptional quality of life for prospective employees. Ada's diverse recreational options make it an increasingly attractive place to live, work, and invest.

To protect and maximize these public investments, the city continues to evaluate the reciprocal impacts between new developments and existing parklands from the very beginning of the planning process. When new private or commercial developments occur near a park, planners should consider questions like: Will this development impact the park's integrity, access, or surrounding environment, and if so how? By seamlessly weaving operations, maintenance, and spatial planning into Ada's broader growth framework, the city ensures its public spaces remain high performing assets that enhance the overall quality of life for all residents.

This chapter will cover:

- **Benefits of Parks**
- **Park and Trail Inventory**
- **Needs Assessment**
- **Resource Based Assessment**
- **Chapter Actions**

Park Investments and Legacy Assets

Ada has a long-standing history of prioritizing its parks and recreational infrastructure. Through strategic local funding mechanisms, including the voter-approved Penny For Our City sales tax program, and federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), along with other funding tools the city has consistently transformed its public places into attractive community assets. This proactive approach is clearly demonstrated through ongoing investments, historic restorations, and major expansions across three of Ada's primary park and recreation hubs: Wintersmith Park, Glenwood Park, and the Ada Sports Complex.

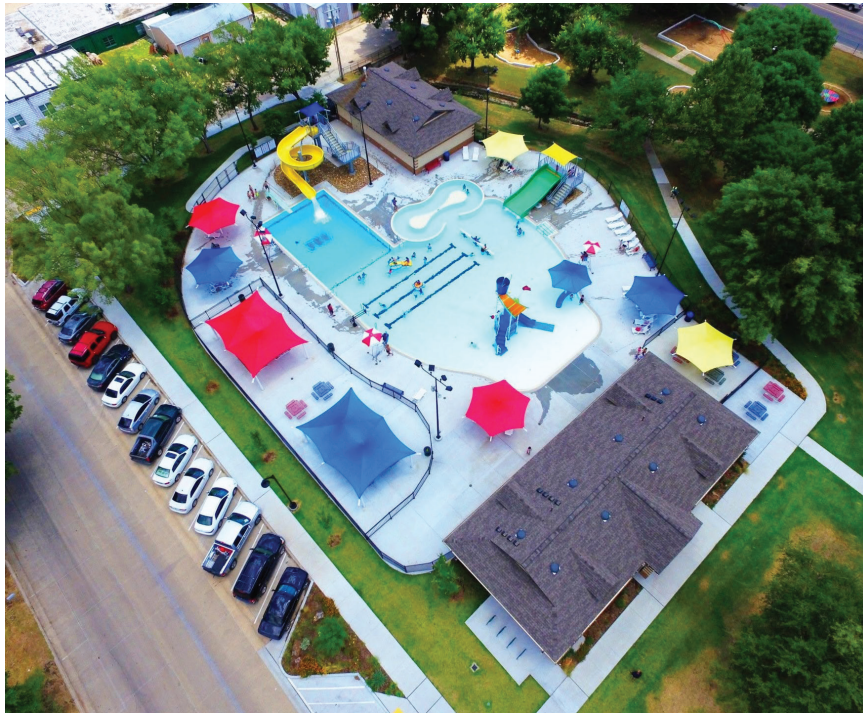
Wintersmith Park

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places due to its historic significance, Wintersmith Park stands as a centerpiece of Ada's recreational system. Originally constructed between 1933 and 1934 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the New Deal, the park established foundational features like Wintersmith Lake, stone bridges, a stone lodge, an amphitheater, walking trails, and picnic areas.

Over the decades, the city has continuously invested in maintaining and updating this flagship asset. Completed infrastructure upgrades include a major dam and spillway rehabilitation in 2014 alongside a new restroom facility built on the northeast side of the park in 2015. Later, with the Penny for our City Sales Tax Extension (Penny 2, 2016–2023), the modern Wintersmith Aquatic Center replaced the aging public swimming pool, while walking trail engineering and construction were completed with CDBG assistance. Other additions over the years include a dedicated dog park, a new train and tracks, playground upgrades, and the routine upkeep of historic structures and landscaping.

Under the current voter-approved Penny 3 Sales Tax Extension (2024–2039), Wintersmith Park remains one of the city's highest priorities. Ongoing restoration efforts focus heavily on Wintersmith Lake and the amphitheater. Wintersmith Lake will undergo a dredging project valued at \$1.7 million that will kick off in the Spring of 2027. Additionally, a major amphitheater rehabilitation project is moving forward, incorporating historic seating repairs, drainage improvements, new ADA-accessible sidewalks and parking, electrical upgrades, and a prefabricated restroom facility. Family-focused amenities are also expanding with the planned construction of an 18-hole miniature golf course, new horseshoe pits, new pedestrian bridges, and new playground equipment that will revitalize the north side of Wintersmith Park.





Glenwood Park

Glenwood Park has served as a primary neighborhood anchor in central Ada for decades, benefiting from steady municipal investment. One of its largest recent transformations occurred during the Penny 2 program (2016–2023) with the completion of the Glenwood Aquatic Center, which replaced an outdated pool with modern water facilities for local families. Alongside continuous upkeep of open green spaces, landscaping, picnic areas, the skate park, splash pad, and playground equipment, Glenwood Park remains a central focus of current revitalization efforts. Through a combination of Penny 3 funding and targeted CDBG grant approvals, construction activities beginning in 2025 include a park pavilion, updated playground equipment, a new fence along the south side of the park along Main Street, and improved sidewalks to enhance neighborhood accessibility and safety.

Ada Sports Complex - “The Hill”

Located at 1020 Egypt Road, the existing Ada Sports Complex currently features four softball fields, covered spectator seating, playground amenities, concession facilities, and dedicated spaces for youth leagues and tournaments. To significantly expand local recreation options and establish Ada as a regional sports destination, the city is currently constructing a massive expansion across the 65-acre complex as a centerpiece project of the Penny 3 Sales Tax Extension (2024–2039). The focal point of this expansion is a 65,000-square-foot multi-purpose indoor facility equipped with three multi-use courts for basketball and pickleball, an indoor walking and jogging track, sports simulators, exercise and fitness rooms, meeting and classroom spaces, concessions, public restrooms, and expanded parking. Outdoors, the complex will add outdoor pickleball courts, a basketball court, a regulation turf soccer field, youth soccer and flag football fields, walking and hiking trails, a new playground, and open recreation areas. This comprehensive expansion is designed to host regional youth tournaments, offer year-round indoor recreation regardless of weather, reduce the need for local families to travel out of town for sports, and attract visitor spending that directly supports Ada’s local hotels, restaurants, and businesses.



Benefits of Parks

To justify long-term municipal investments, Ada's park and trail network must be viewed through its compounding returns. When properly designed and managed, these spaces deliver critical economic, environmental, physical, and social benefits that reinforce community-wide sustainability and resilience.

Public parks and trails are dynamic economic drivers rather than drains on municipal resources. Their financial contributions are split into three primary tiers: direct effects (immediate revenue from tournament registrations, facility rentals, programming fees, and concessions), indirect effects (increased business-to-business transactions at local retail, dining, and hospitality venues), and induced effects (the recirculated spending power of employees supported by the park system). Critical broader impacts include improved property values and enhanced corporate site selection, making Ada competitive to prospective employers.

Beyond fiscal returns, parks function as foundational civic infrastructure that actively improves quality of life:

- **Multi-Modal Connectivity:** Integrating trails alongside Ada's traditional transportation infrastructure establishes a dynamic network for pedestrian and bicycle accessibility, lessening community dependence on constant automobile travel.
- **Public Health and Wellness:** High-quality green spaces provide accessible environments that naturally influence active movement, reducing chronic illness while fostering a healthier population mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally.
- **Social Hubs:** When built with amenities that cater to all possible users, parks provide vibrant public spaces for events and activities, fostering vital social connections and community pride.



Social and environmental health are closely linked to community resilience. Strategic landscaping choices extend far beyond basic aesthetics and beautification. Purposeful design that includes elements like utilizing native flora, and expanding the urban tree canopy, creates essential ecological infrastructure that manages stormwater, mitigates urban heat, and improves air quality. Clean, well-shaded public spaces directly influence community use and activity, leveraging environmental health to enhance individual and social well-being across the City of Ada.

Park and Trail Inventory

An effective, high-quality park system relies on a diverse, well-balanced network of spaces that serve distinct functions—from intimate neighborhood gathering spots to large-scale athletic complexes. To properly manage, evaluate, and expand Ada’s recreational assets, it is necessary to establish a clear definitional framework of park types and uses.

This section categorizes recreational spaces by their scale, intended service area, and primary function. By establishing these classifications, the City can accurately measure its current level of service, identify gaps in connectivity, and ensure future developments provide an equitable mix of active, passive, and specialized recreational opportunities across all neighborhoods.



Park Classifications

A robust recreational network is built from a much wider spectrum of public spaces. The following classifications provide a general overview of how different types of parks are categorized based on their scale, intended service area, and primary function. Outlining these possibilities helps planners, stakeholders, and community members move beyond the generic park model to envision specialized spaces tailored to specific needs.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are the largest in a community’s system, often encompassing hundreds of acres. Because of their size and specialized amenities, they attract visitors from across the entire city and surrounding regions. They are frequently developed around significant natural resources, such as lakes, large forests, or major topographical features. Regional parks offer expansive recreational opportunities that cannot be accommodated in smaller parks, such as the Wintersmith Aquatic Center pool and water slides, Wintersmith Lake for fishing, the historic stone amphitheater, and a disc golf course. Wintersmith Park stands as the benchmark example of this classification, acting as the historic, high impact anchor that sets the operational baseline for the entire municipal park system. A more recent regional centerpiece addition is the Ada Sports Complex - “The Hill” which currently includes 4 softball fields that provide league and tournament facilities for youth leagues, a playground, concession facilities, and covered spectator seating, with major expansion already funded and under construction.

Community Parks

Community parks are significantly larger than neighborhood parks, typically ranging from about five to twenty acres, and are designed to serve multiple neighborhoods or a large geographic section of the city. They offer a wide range of intensive recreational opportunities for all age groups. Amenities

often include large athletic field complexes, trail networks, large pavilion shelters, swimming pools, or specialized fitness equipment. In addition to active recreation, community parks frequently help preserve natural resources like creeks, wooded areas, or floodplain greenspaces. Glenwood Park acts as a clear community park anchor as the original city park in Ada, balancing active play areas with open space for broader neighborhood quadrants. Through proactive city improvements, Glenwood Park remains a top destination for recreation.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks serve as the foundational building blocks of a city's recreational network. Typically ranging from about two to ten acres, these parks are designed to meet the daily recreational needs of residents living within a half mile walking or biking distance. They provide a balanced mix of active and passive recreation, often featuring playgrounds, open practice fields, basketball or tennis courts, picnic shelters, and short walking loops. Because they are nestled directly within residential areas, safe pedestrian access and neighborhood connectivity are essential. Southwest Mini Park functions as a key example of this classification, providing accessible neighborhood scale green space for surrounding residents.

Linear Parks

Linear parks are long, continuous corridors of public land often developed along natural features or man-made features. Rather than traditional park amenities, they primarily feature trails for walking, jogging, and bicycling. Linear parks serve a critical function by providing safe, off street alternative transportation routes that connect residential neighborhoods to other parks, schools, and commercial districts while also preserving greenbelts and managing stormwater. The Centennial Trail serves as Ada's primary linear park corridor, providing a dedicated pathway for community physical activity and non motorized connectivity.

Pocket Parks

Also known as mini parks, pocket parks are the smallest classification in the system, typically ranging from a fraction of an acre up to two acres. Because of their small footprint, they are often tucked into densely populated residential areas, downtown districts, or commercial centers. Pocket parks are designed to serve the immediate surrounding blocks, usually within a quarter mile radius, and provide passive, small scale amenities such as benches, gazebos, small playgrounds, or public art displays. While pocket parks are typically permanent fixtures, this classification framework can also accommodate temporary 'pop-up' parks. These short-term urban interventions allow the City to temporarily activate vacant downtown spaces or unused lots with mobile seating and landscaping to test community demand before making permanent park investments. Central Park serves as a local example of an urban pocket park providing green space within a tight downtown footprint.

Special Use Parks

Unlike traditional parks that provide a variety of multi purpose recreational options, special use parks are designed to accommodate one specific primary use or amenity. Because they are highly specialized, their size and service area vary drastically based on the facility. Examples of special use parks include standalone aquatic centers, dog parks, skate parks, municipal golf courses, heavily programmed sports tournament complexes, or historical cultural sites.

In Ada's system, certain properties serve a dual function by acting as both a neighborhood park and a special use park. An illustrative case is standalone amenities like the Ada Tennis & Pickle Ball Center, even though classified as a Community Park, it functions primarily as a specialized, single purpose recreation space embedded within the community.

Recreation Classifications

It is necessary to define the spectrum of recreational uses and activities that a high-quality parks and trails system must support. These Recreation Classifications shift the focus to the human experience within the park network, ranging from high-energy group activities to quiet solitude and water-based leisure. Establishing these definitions ensures that planning efforts consider the full breadth of community needs, fostering an equitable mix of active, passive, and water-related opportunities for all residents.

Active Recreation

Active recreation refers to activities and pursuits that involve significant physical exertion and energy expenditure. These recreation types often require specialized, high-use facilities such as athletic fields, courts, splash pads, and designated trailheads. Because of the infrastructure required, they are often located in larger Community or Regional Parks and can serve a wide geographic user base. Active recreation includes both structured group sports and high-intensity individual exercise, often requiring designated space, scheduling, and regular facility maintenance to support high participation levels.

Passive Recreation

Passive recreation encompasses lower-energy activities focused on relaxation, quiet contemplation, and a connection with the natural environment. These uses require minimal infrastructure or specialized development, making them suitable for parks of all scales, particularly Pocket, Linear, and Neighborhood spaces. Common passive amenities include benches, shade structures, nature trails, open greenspaces for unstructured play, and quiet gardens. This classification prioritizes tranquility and non-disruptive, informal use, allowing multiple residents to enjoy a space simultaneously with minimal impact on its natural character.

Water Recreation

Water recreation encompasses activities tied directly to natural aquatic environments, such as lakes, rivers, and creeks. (Note: Man made facilities like community pools and splash pads are classified under Active Recreation). This resource based classification relies entirely on proximity to natural water bodies and includes activities like boating, kayaking, paddleboarding, and fishing. Because of the environmental setting, water recreation requires deliberate access points, such as boat ramps or fishing docks, and careful management to balance public enjoyment with ecological preservation.



Needs Assessment

A comprehensive assessment is vital for measuring whether a city’s public spaces adequately support its population and identifying what the needs of the community are. By evaluating both the existing recreational facilities and established Levels of Service (LOS), this analysis provides a baseline of what exists compared to what the community requires. Using this analysis alongside community input informs the City on how and what to prioritize when making future plans and investment decisions.

Ultimately, this process allows the City to discover gaps, identify underserved areas, and anticipate the demands of future growth. Providing this guiding information to city officials and community members helps to strategically allocate funding, protect public investments, and prioritize park improvements where they will yield the greatest impact on community health and connectivity.

Existing Park Inventory

An inventory of existing parks and recreational facilities establishes a baseline understanding of the city’s current assets, distribution, and overall acreage footprint. Classifying these public spaces allows the City to evaluate how effectively different types of parks serve the community, ensuring that planning efforts look at both small, neighborhood-scale walk-to amenities and large regional drive-to destinations.

Ada’s municipal park system currently encompasses 18 distinct sites accounting for approximately 240.5 total acres of parkland. When analyzing this inventory, the acreage is heavily concentrated within a few major regional hubs, which shoulder the majority of the city’s active and passive recreational demands. Conversely, a diverse network of smaller neighborhood, community, linear, and pocket parks are distributed throughout the city to provide close-to-home green spaces and urban connectivity.

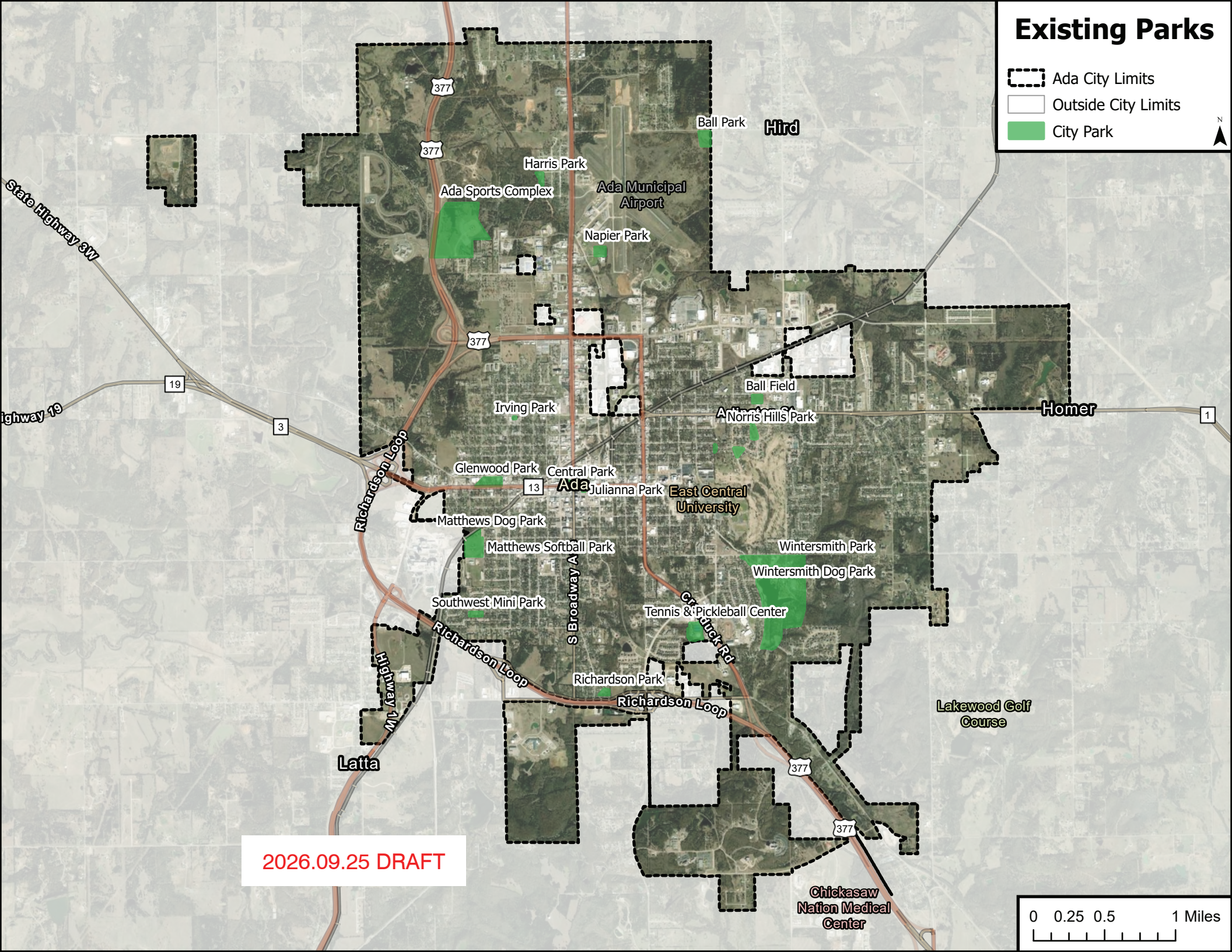
Evaluating this baseline layout is critical for identifying service gaps, determining where localized park infrastructure is lacking, and understanding where existing assets can be enhanced. To properly analyze how these spaces function, each of the 18 properties is categorized into a specific tier based on its size, service area, and primary amenities.

Existing Park Inventory

Park Name	Classification	Acreage
Wintersmith Park	Regional	108.6
Ada Sports Complex	Regional	71.8
Centennial Trail	Linear	14.0
Matthews Softball Park	Regional	9.6
Tennis & Pickleball Center	Community	7.1
Glenwood Park & Skate Park	Community	5.6
Norris Hills Park	Community	4.9
Ball Park - E Beverly St & Susan Ave	Community	4.7
Napier Park	Neighborhood	2.9
Dog Park - Wintersmith	Neighborhood	2.6
Ball Field - Tower Rd	Neighborhood	2.3
Southwest Mini Park	Neighborhood	1.6
Harris Park	Neighborhood	1.5
Richardson Park	Neighborhood	1.3
Matthews's Dog Park	Neighborhood	1.3
Julianna Park	Pocket	0.3
Irving Center Park	Pocket	0.2
Central Park	Pocket	0.2
Total Parks Acreage		240.5

Existing Parks

-  Ada City Limits
-  Outside City Limits
-  City Park



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Levels of Service Analysis

A Level of Service (LOS) analysis evaluates how effectively a city's park system serves its population by measuring local assets against established benchmarks, such as the 2026 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Agency Performance Review. To provide a complete picture of park and trail availability, this evaluation is broken into separate metrics that analyze total parkland acreage, spatial distribution, and available recreational facilities. Together, these assessment tiers help the City identify service gaps, anticipate future growth demands, and prioritize park and trail investments where they will have the greatest community impact.

Acreage Level of Service

An acreage LOS analysis measures the total volume of parkland available to residents against national benchmarks for communities under 20,000 people. The NRPA sets the median target for this category at 12.3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Based on Ada population estimates, this metric establishes an overall system target of about 209 total acres.

When evaluated against Ada's existing inventory of 240.5 acres, the city's current acreage LOS stands at approximately 14.2 acres per 1,000 residents. This indicates that Ada successfully meets and exceeds the national baseline by nearly 31.5 total acres. While this surplus reflects a healthy total amount of public land, the data is heavily weighted by large regional hubs. Consequently, this acreage LOS calculation serves as the foundation for the upcoming spatial and facility analyses to determine if this land is equitably distributed across all neighborhoods.

Spatial Level of Service

A spatial level of service analysis measures the geographic reach and physical accessibility of parkland across the community. By

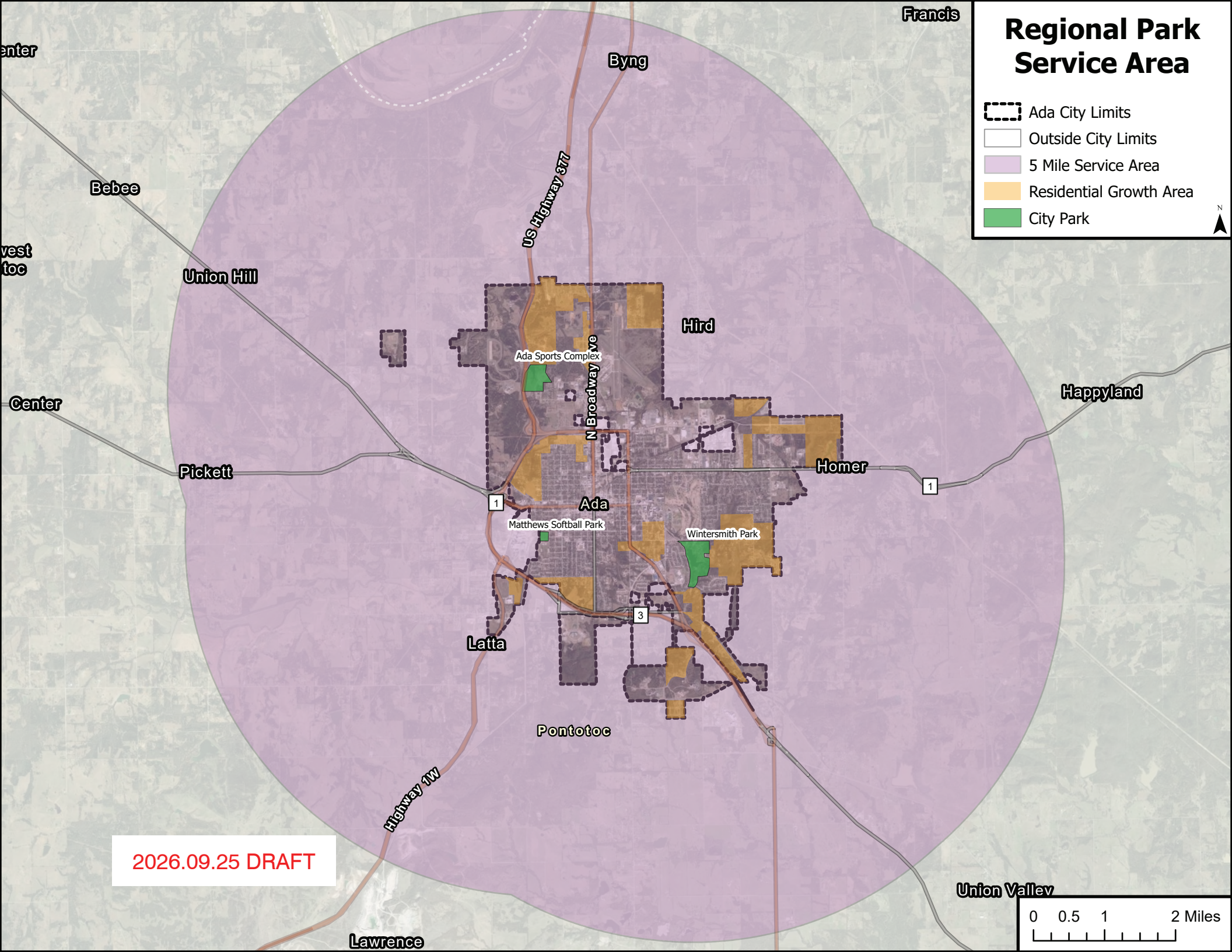
mapping service buffers around different park types, the city can pinpoint underserved areas, target future investments where gaps exist, and identify specific park classifications needed to diversify the local inventory.

To visualize this coverage, the plan analyzes three service buffers: a 5 mile service area for regional parks, a 1 mile buffer for community parks, and a half mile walkable radius for neighborhood parks. While smaller pocket parks do not have a dedicated buffer map, they serve a vital spatial role by providing immediate, highly localized recreational access that introduces essential green space to denser urban environments.

Facility Level of Service

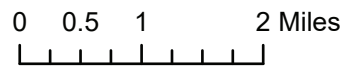
A facility level of service analysis evaluates the specific recreational assets inside Ada's parks to ensure built amenities meet community needs. Based on estimated population metrics, Ada already meets or exceeds standard 2026 NRPA guidelines for core amenities such as basketball courts, dog parks, playgrounds, and sports fields. Because the community features a relative saturated inventory of these major assets, constructing entirely new park facilities is not necessary to satisfy current general population demands.

Rather than expanding the existing system, the City can aim to invest in upgrading current amenities. Immediate implementation can focus on activating existing spaces by integrating upgrades like trailside wellness equipment, standardizing multi modal trail junctions, and requiring direct trail connectivity in future park expansions. Securing these improvements maximizes current public assets while positioning Ada to deliberately scale its network as community growth eventually demands new park development.



Regional Park Service Area

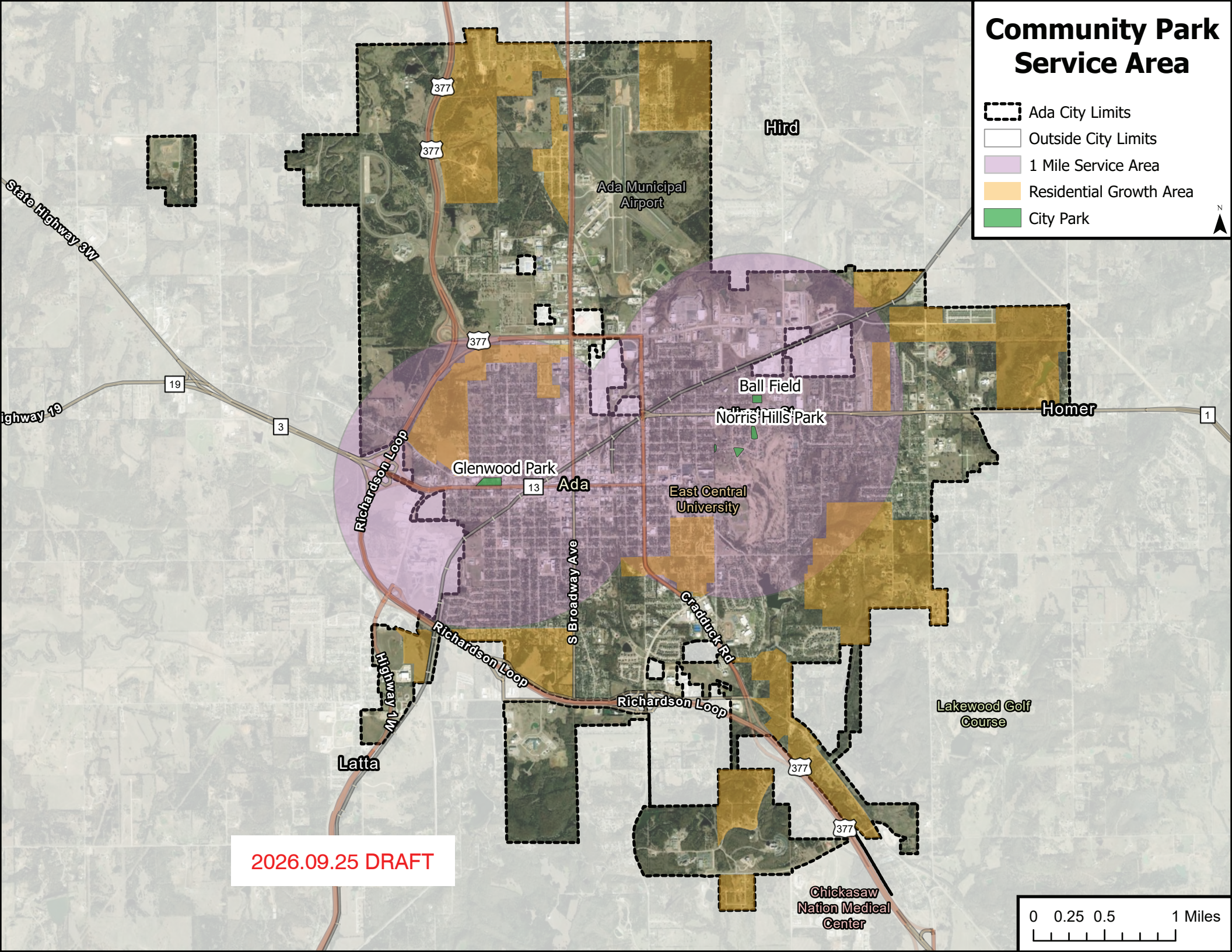
- [- - -] Ada City Limits
- [] Outside City Limits
- [Purple] 5 Mile Service Area
- [Orange] Residential Growth Area
- [Green] City Park



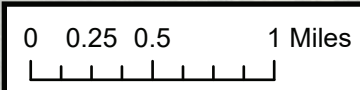
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Community Park Service Area

-  Ada City Limits
-  Outside City Limits
-  1 Mile Service Area
-  Residential Growth Area
-  City Park

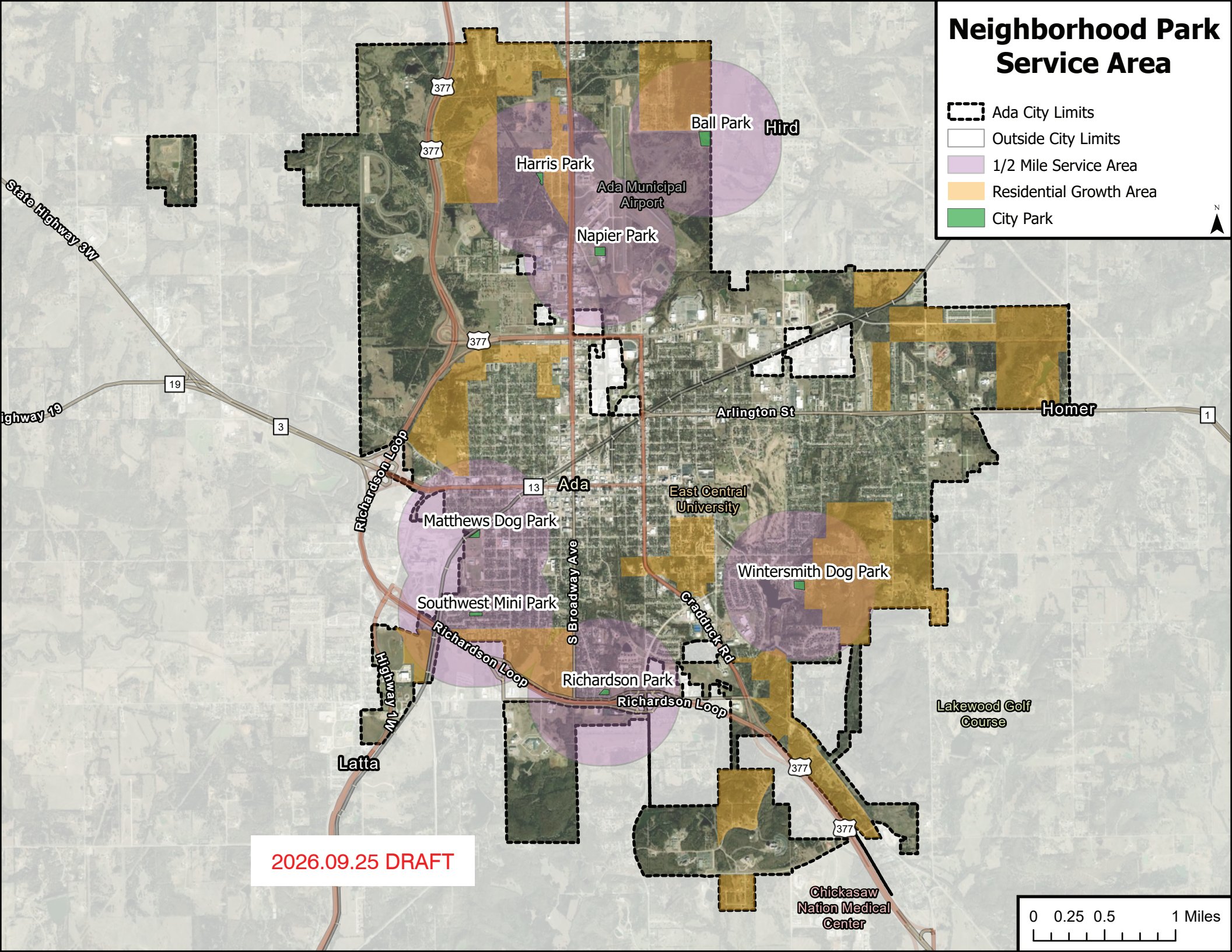


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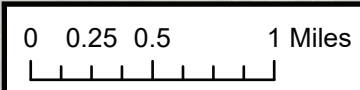


Neighborhood Park Service Area

-  Ada City Limits
-  Outside City Limits
-  1/2 Mile Service Area
-  Residential Growth Area
-  City Park



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Resource Based Assessment

A resource based assessment is used to understand the natural conditions, existing water bodies, and community partnerships that shape a city's recreational network. This analysis looks at the unique environmental opportunities and collaborative relationships that Ada has available that can expand or limit recreational development. By evaluating local floodplains and natural features alongside key partnerships, this process informs the City on how to leverage local strengths and coordinate regional efforts. Because parks and trails are public spaces, coordinating with major partners helps achieve goals that benefit everyone in the community while allowing stakeholders to collaboratively create and maintain excellent public spaces.

Ultimately, this assessment allows the City to identify opportunities for outdoor recreation, protect sensitive natural habitats, and find new avenues for funding and programming. Providing this guiding information ensures that the City can blend environmental stewardship with development, using natural resources and community partnerships to build a more resilient and connected park system and increase to overall quality of life.



Natural Resources

This component serves as a high level inventory of major natural areas to keep in consideration during future planning efforts. By identifying these natural spaces, the City can ensure that future development respects the existing landscape while finding opportunities to integrate natural environments into the broader community network.

Floodplains

Floodplains represent low-lying areas adjacent to rivers, creeks, and streams that are susceptible to seasonal flooding. Because permanent, high-cost structures cannot safely be built in these zones, they offer strategic opportunities for park development, particularly for linear trails, greenways, and passive open spaces. Inventorying these areas allows the City to identify where land can serve a dual purpose through acting as vital stormwater management infrastructure while simultaneously expanding the community's connected trail and recreation network.

Wintersmith Lake

Wintersmith Lake serves as a primary regional destination within the municipal recreational inventory. Unlike smaller neighborhood or community parks, this major natural asset provides the unique geographic footprint required to support specialized, resource-based outdoor recreation like disc golf, miniature golf, fishing, hiking trails, and waterfront gathering spaces. Tracking this resource ensures that future planning efforts focus on improving regional access, expanding shoreline amenities, and balancing public recreation with environmental preservation.

Partnerships

This component serves as a high level inventory of major local organizations and entities to keep in consideration during future planning efforts. By identifying these potential collaborators, the City can ensure that future development aligns with shared institutional goals while finding opportunities to integrate community and private partners into the broader public space network.

Chickasaw Nation

The Chickasaw Nation represents a foundational and enduring governance partnership in Ada, which serves as the official headquarters for the Nation. This relationship has evolved into a primary driver of regional health, tourism, and community infrastructure. Because public parks, trails, and open spaces directly impact community wellness, collaborating with the Chickasaw Nation allows the City to align recreational development with tribal health and economic initiatives. This ongoing coordination ensures that major investments benefit both tribal citizens and the broader public, combining shared efforts to build, enhance, and maintain excellent public spaces that celebrate local cultural heritage.

East Central University

East Central University (ECU) provides an institutional partnership that bridges the gap between campus life and the broader community network. Originally established in 1909, the university acts as an anchor for Ada and projects a substantial student enrollment increase by 2030. Because student populations are often underrepresented in standard demographic metrics, joint planning becomes essential.

Aligning the City's recreational plans with the ECU Strategic Plan allows both entities to maximize shared-use opportunities, specifically coordinating pedestrian pathways, trail networks,

and campus entrances to create a seamless transition into the downtown district. Additionally, ECU has recently invested in new pickleball, basketball, and tennis courts adjacent to the Kerr Activities Center (Kerr Dome), expanding the overall recreational assets available to the broader community. This collaborative relationship ensures that public recreational spaces support a growing student workforce while concurrently enhancing the overall quality of life for all Ada residents.



Funding Opportunities

A lack of sustainable funding is the primary reason public parks and trails decline over time. Because park systems are vulnerable to budget cuts, a sustainable network requires a diversified strategy balancing municipal resources with external capital. Because public recreation is a key priority of the City, Ada remains proactive in developing and maintaining its recreational spaces, with a history of utilizing funding mechanisms like voter-approved sales taxes, grants, and civic partnerships. Continuing to evaluate and leverage a variety of mechanisms ensures the City can support daily maintenance and execute capital improvements without overextending a single revenue source. Ultimately, building a resilient system depends on funding both initial creation and lifelong operations. This section highlights some of key mechanisms available for parks and trails, and is not meant to be an exhaustive list.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The Recreational Trails Program, administered by the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD), is a federal aid program that provides matching funds to local governments for the development and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized recreational trails. Operating on an 80/20 reimbursement match, this program is a primary tool for land acquisition, trail construction, corridor restoration, and the development of trailside amenities like trailheads and rest areas.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LCWF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a competitive federal grant program assisting states and local communities in acquiring and developing public outdoor recreation spaces. Requiring a 50/50 local match, this program places a permanent federal protection covenant on the property, ensuring funded land remains dedicated strictly to public outdoor recreation

in perpetuity. It is ideal for major land acquisitions, new park development, or complete site renovations.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

CDBG funds are federal grants distributed through the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to support community development initiatives. While versatile, these funds can be applied toward park and playground improvements provided the project is located within an eligible, low to moderate income neighborhood. This grant allows the City to directly revitalize neighborhood public spaces and enhance community equity without pulling resources away from other systemic park improvements.

TSET Built Environment Grant

Administered by the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust, this state grant program funds infrastructure projects that directly promote physical activity and active living. For municipal park systems, these grants can be utilized to build or improve community parks, trail corridors, pedestrian pathways, and ADA compliant playgrounds. By aligning park design with public health outcomes, the City can secure non tax funding to create environments that support healthier lifestyles for residents.

ODOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant

Administered by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the TAP grant provides an 80/20 matching fund source specifically targeting active transportation infrastructure. This program is highly effective for funding multi use trails, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and safe routes to school infrastructure. By focusing on non motorized connectivity, the City can build regional trail spines connecting residential areas to employment centers, commercial hubs, and schools.

Dedicated Sales Tax

A dedicated sales tax allocates a portion of local sales tax revenue directly to a designated fund, such as capital improvements or park development. Whether established as a permanent revenue source or a temporary voter-approved tax, this mechanism provides a predictable stream of funding that allows park departments to strategically plan, phase, and execute multi-year park upgrades with financial certainty.

Park Revolving Fund

A park revolving fund is a dedicated, self-sustaining municipal account where revenues generated by the park system are deposited directly back into the department budget rather than the general fund. By legally isolating these funds, money generated by parks remains in parks. This setup creates a direct incentive for efficiency, allowing the department to carry over unused funds to save for targeted equipment replacements, emergency repairs, or unexpected operational needs.

Park Programming Specific Fees

Programming fees are direct charges collected from participants for organized recreational activities, such as youth sports league registrations, swimming pool admissions, fitness classes, or instructional clinics. Designed on a cost-recovery basis, these structured fees ensure that users who benefit from a specialized program help offset program expenses including instructor pay, equipment, and direct facility utility costs keeping specialized programming financially independent without drawing from general tax dollars.

Special Event Fees

Special event fees are revenues generated through the temporary rental and commercial activation of public park spaces. This includes fees collected from pavilion reservations, private tournament rentals for sports complexes, vendor permits for

festivals, and amphitheater bookings. Charging reasonable market rates for exclusive use ensures high-impact events generate revenue to fix extra wear and tear, turning popular community events into a tool that supports overall park maintenance.

Land Dedications

Land dedications involve provisions within municipal subdivision regulations requiring developers to set aside a specified percentage of land for public park use or open space during development. This mechanism ensures that as new residential neighborhoods grow, localized park demand is met directly by the development driving that growth. When on-site parks are impractical, regulations typically allow for a fee in lieu option, letting developers pay an equivalent cash amount dedicated entirely to acquiring or improving parks within that specific service area.

Civic Organization Donations

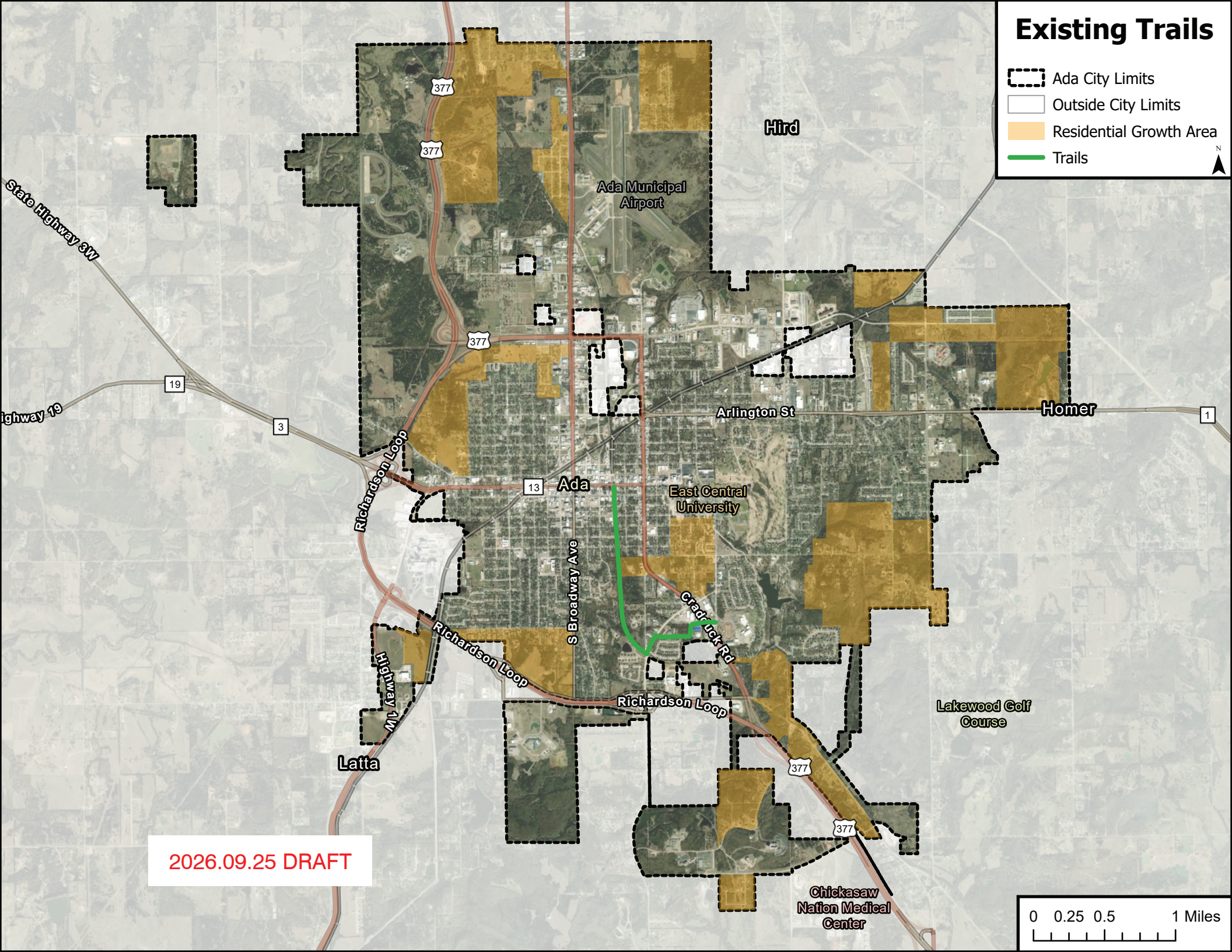
Local civic clubs, such as the Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions Clubs of Ada, frequently look to fund community service projects that leave a lasting local impact. By maintaining communication with these groups, the City can identify specific capital needs such as park benches, shade structures, trees, or standalone playground pieces that align with a club's philanthropic mission, securing fully funded enhancements for public spaces.

Adopt-A-Trail / Adopt-A-Park Program

These volunteer driven programs allow civic organizations, local clubs, neighborhoods, and small businesses to take hands on stewardship of a specific trail segment or neighborhood park. Rather than requiring large financial contributions, these programs lower municipal operational expenses by transferring routine maintenance tasks like litter removal, minor landscaping, and safety monitoring to committed community groups, fostering civic pride while protecting public investments.

Existing Trails

-  Ada City Limits
-  Outside City Limits
-  Residential Growth Area
-  Trails

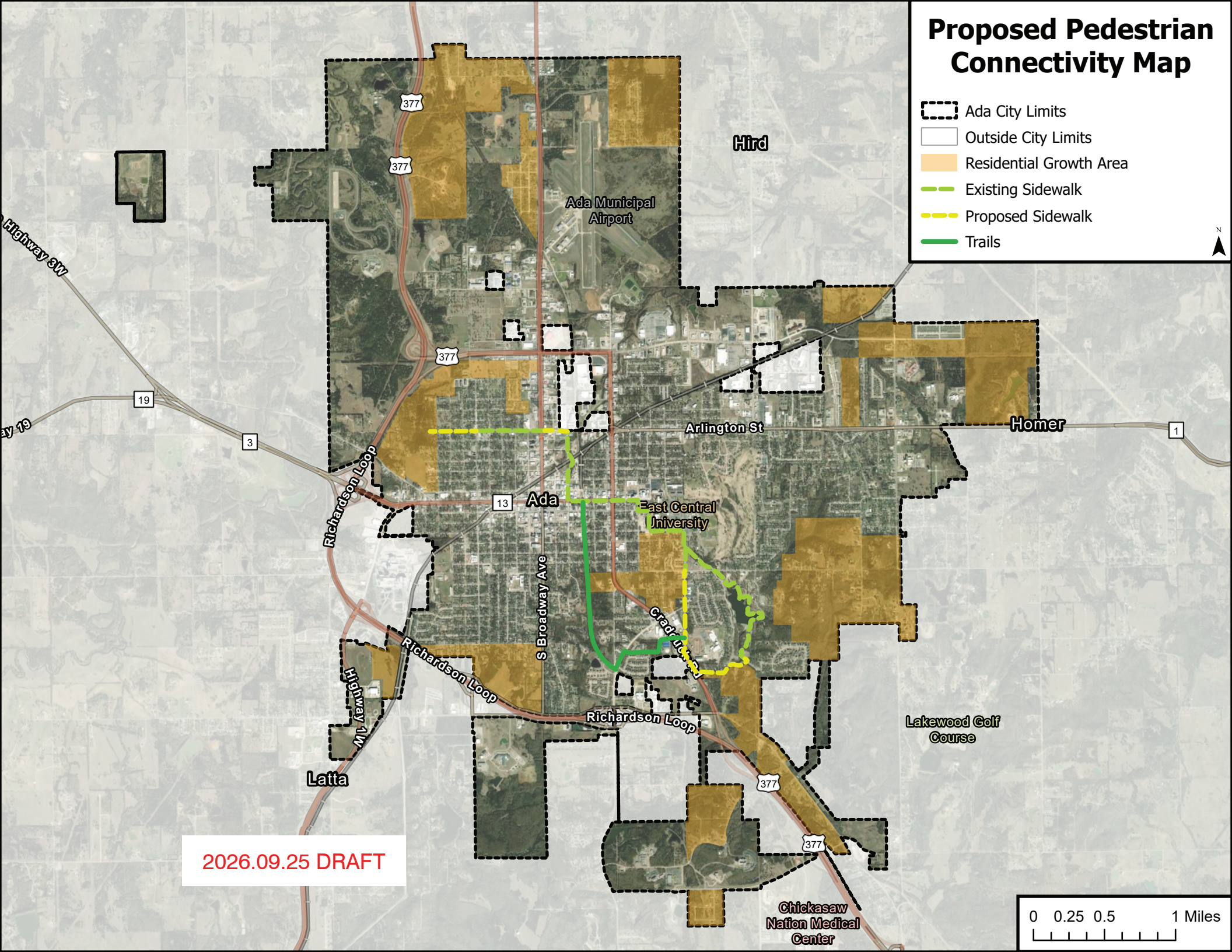


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Proposed Pedestrian Connectivity Map

- Ada City Limits
- Outside City Limits
- Residential Growth Area
- Existing Sidewalk
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Trails



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Centennial Trail Extension

Active transportation networks serve as a critical bridge between public health, multi-modal mobility, and economic vitality. While Ada's current trail system provides an essential north-south spine connecting the southern trailhead near the high school upward into the downtown Main Street district, it operates primarily as a linear asset rather than a fully integrated network. To prepare the community for long-term growth and enhance neighborhood accessibility, ongoing municipal efforts focus on transforming Ada's existing segments into a continuous, highly connected community system.

Demonstrating strong municipal commitment to this active transportation vision, Ada voters approved the 15-year Penny for Our City Sales Tax Extension (Penny 3), establishing dedicated long-term funding with a portion dedicated to expand walking and biking trails citywide. This initiative focuses on improving connectivity between residential neighborhoods, local schools, and primary community destinations, including Wintersmith Park, Glenwood Park, and the Ada Sports Complex. Initial work kicks off with Phase 1, the Stadium Trail along Stadium Drive, which is a multi-modal trail project designed to directly extend the current system near Ada High School and the athletic fields where the existing walking trail terminates. Building on this voter-backed momentum, future expansion efforts systematically build upon existing city assets.

Expanding the trail system from the existing baseline allows the city to strategically leverage surrounding municipal infrastructure and public rights-of-way. By prioritizing connections along corridors that already feature established sidewalks or paths, the city can create critical linkages through cost-effective improvements such as signage, striping, and localized crosswalk enhancements. Where gap closures require dedicated infrastructure, targeted investments in grading, right-of-way acquisition, or separated path construction will safely unite existing trail segments into a cohesive system.

Strategically, expanding outward from the existing trail spine aligns with Ada's primary civic, institutional, and economic priorities:

- **University Core & Downtown Linkage:** Expanding trail access creates explicit, safe connections between East Central University, surrounding residential areas, and the downtown core, allowing students, residents, and visitors to travel between campus and the city center without relying exclusively on a vehicle.
- **Park and Recreation Anchors:** Trail expansion plans focus on tying together Ada's premier recreational spaces, directly linking the existing trailhead near Ada High School with major hubs like Wintersmith Park, Glenwood Park, and the Ada Sports Complex.
- **Neighborhood and Growth Connections:** Linking active transportation corridors with residential neighborhoods ensures that growth areas and housing nodes are seamlessly integrated into a diverse citywide mobility network.

By evolving from a single linear trail into a comprehensive, multi-modal system, this framework ensures that emerging residential developments, commercial corridors, and the central civic core are unified under an accessible network that supports community health, commercial vitality, and daily mobility.

Realizing this expanded system offers an excellent opportunity for collaborative partnerships and creative financial strategies. Intergovernmental coordination with the Chickasaw Nation presents a significant opportunity for dual investment, as a unified trail network serves the shared regional population by promoting wellness and overall quality of life.

Chapter Actions

Centennial Trail Extension	
1	Extend Centennial Trail: Implement the targeted Centennial Trail Extension concept by securing diverse grant funding and utilizing tribal and institutional partnerships to fund gaps in the trail network.
2	Integrate Multi-Modal Trail Infrastructure: Standardize the installation of multi-use trail amenities, including bicycle lanes, designated trailheads, and pedestrian safety features at major crossings.
3	Deploy Active Trailside Amenities: Identify strategic nodes along the trail to install specialized outdoor recreation and wellness equipment, such as public workout stations and rest areas.
4	New Park Connectivity to the Trail Network: Integrate a formal review process into future development frameworks ensuring that new development does not neglect opportunities to connect to the trail system. This process should guide design teams to evaluate and incorporate direct linkages to the primary trail system where feasible.

Financing and Funding	
1	Launch an Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Trail Program: Create a structured sponsorship framework allowing local corporations, civic organizations, and private businesses to sponsor specific trail segments, parks, or park amenities to assist with capital costs and operational management.
2	Maximize Diverse Federal and State Grant Funding: Continue to actively pursue capital programs like the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), CDBG grants, TSET Built Environment Grants, and ODOT TAP Grants to fund park acquisitions and expansions.
3	Implement Local Municipal Financing Tools: Continue to leverage voter approved dedicated sales taxes and the Park Revolving Fund to establish steady, predictable funding streams for long term maintenance and major capital overhauls.
4	Position the Parks and Trails Chapter as a Local Master Plan: Utilize the formally adopted Parks and Trails chapter to support grant applications through the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD). While a standalone master plan is not a strict prerequisite for application eligibility, referencing an officially adopted municipal framework substantiates documented community need and long-term strategic vision, maximizing scoring criteria and enhancing the City's competitiveness during state evaluations.

Intergovernmental and Institutional Partnerships	
1	Align Planning Efforts with East Central University: Jointly coordinate pedestrian pathways, trail networks, and campus entrances with the ECU Strategic Plan to support a growing student workforce and create a seamless transition into the downtown district.
2	Coordinate Regional Investments with the Chickasaw Nation: Maintain regular communication and joint planning with the Chickasaw Nation to align park and trail development with tribal health initiatives, maximizing dual investments that benefit the greater regional population.

Parks Management and Assessments	
1	Establish an Asset Maintenance First Policy: Continue to prioritize funding toward repairing, upgrading, and renovating existing park facilities and equipment before committing municipal resources to construct new additional amenities.
2	Monitor Population Growth Thresholds: Track community expansion and residential development patterns to identify when, and where, additional park facilities must be built to alleviate service burdens on existing parks.