City of Humboldt

PARKS AND RECREATION
MASTER PLAN

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R²S
Recreation Research and Service
University of Northern Iowa

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City of Humboldt Parks and Recreation Master Plan

R2S Recreation Research and Service 2005
Introduction
INTRODUCTION

The City of Humboldt is in a unique position to provide public open space and recreation opportunities for residents of the region. The ability to effectively deliver recreation services requires a focused and on-going effort to acquire, develop and maintain recreation facilities, and a trail and open space system. Parks, recreation programs, cultural activities and sports programs are considered important for maintaining the quality of life in the Humboldt area (Humboldt Community Needs Recreation Survey, 2004).

The Humboldt Parks and Recreation Master Plan has five primary purposes:

- To serve as the City Park & Recreation Master Plan for communicating with the Iowa State Parks and Recreation Division, Humboldt County, and Dakota City area residents with regard to recreation and park issues and opportunities within the area.
- To be used as a guide and document for obtaining grants and assistance to develop park and recreation opportunities for the citizens of the area.
- To serve as a decision-making guide for the City of Humboldt’s Park and Recreation Board.
- To identify needs and opportunities for service delivery within the area.
- To recommend and prioritize action or implementation strategies.

This document is to be used for both short-range and long-range decision-making situations. Information provided which details program and facility needs and desires is useful for prioritizing current recreation program and service offerings. Additionally, this plan identifies important trail linkages that connect neighborhoods and recreation resources in the region.
ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Humboldt Parks & Recreation Master Plan contains six sections. Section one describes the purpose and organization of the plan. Section two identifies goals and objectives of the Recreation Department and its services. Section three describes the existing physical conditions and demographics of the community. Section four inventories the recreational resources. Section five identifies the need for recreation services and facilities. Section six makes recommendations and prioritizes action.

The following chart illustrates the process used to develop this plan. The process can be divided into three major sections – Organization, Data Collection, and Plan Development as illustrated.

Table 1. Planning process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Organize</th>
<th>2 Data Collection</th>
<th>3 Plan Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval of Master Plan Process</td>
<td>A. Needs Assessment</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Park Goals and Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering Committee</td>
<td>Facilities/Park/Trails Inventory</td>
<td>Draft Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Goals and Objectives</td>
<td>Program Inventory</td>
<td>Review of Draft Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Resource Assessment</td>
<td>Final Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soils</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Land Cover – Existing &amp; Historic Riparian &amp; Open Space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R2S UNI
Goals and Objectives
GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Historically, the City of Humboldt has experienced an exceptional level of support for community recreation resource development. Planning future development will help to extend this support.

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The City of Humboldt Park and Recreation Department strives to:

1. Provide quality programs at locations and times that are convenient for the greatest number of residents.
2. Provide programs that enhance the physical and mental health of all citizens.
3. Provide programs that facilitate the learning of pleasurable and useful skills.
4. Provide programs which offer a variety of activities to all age groups and special needs populations with a balance between physical, cultural and specialized activities.
5. Provide facilities that enhance better neighborhood identity, livability and pride.
6. Encourage better communication/coordination between federal, state, county and city leisure service organizations as well as citizens.
7. Provide programs at a cost that is reasonable and affordable to the participant with optional programs offering a discount for more than one family member, or low-income families.

OVERALL GOALS & OBJECTIVES

1. Determine optimum recreation facilities and programs for Humboldt residents
   - Determine and prioritize needs as related to:
     A. Local preferences
     B. Cost effectiveness
     C. Budget/funding constraints
     D. National, state and regional standards
     E. Projected population trends
     F. Youth and adult priorities
2. Strengthen citizen participation through the use of active advisory groups, volunteerism and surveys

- Promote participant input (evaluation of programs) through surveys and interviews
- Extend programs with resident program leadership and instruction
- Coordinate or contribute to community/regional special events
- Establish/adopt a park program

3. Encourage trail development for bicycling, walking, jogging and skating within the region to connect recreation areas and promote wellness

- Promote wellness/fitness by facilitating alternative transportation
- Provide safe pathways for all ages and populations to link recreation facilities and cross neighborhood barriers (highways and waterways)
- Coordinate the trail system with Humboldt County and regional agencies

4. Develop a marketing plan for recreation activities and public support

- Improve communications between the department and residents
- Enhance public awareness of the department and its services
- Reduce duplication of services

5. Continue a long-term commitment to planning for recreational needs within the City

- Identify and acquire parcels of land and facilities to meet future recreation needs
- Develop joint use agreements with schools districts, county and state agencies and private businesses to meet recreational needs
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

1. Encourage and promote community awareness by conducting interest surveys, meetings, distribution of publicity and other appropriate communication opportunities.

2. Assist and promote efforts for fund-raising campaigns as well as identifying and acquiring state and federal grants.

3. Prepare an annual budget and a capital improvement program.

4. Assist in the recruitment of volunteers for recreation programs and park development.

5. Encourage the maintenance of park and recreation facilities including the development of maintenance standards.

6. Advise the City of Humboldt and Humboldt County on actions potentially affecting parks, recreation facilities and programs.

7. Cooperate with other governmental agencies with regard to the advancement of park and recreation opportunities.

8. Interpret the needs of the community served.
Existing Conditions
EXISTING CONDITIONS

PHYSICAL SETTING

The City of Humboldt is located in Humboldt County in North Central Iowa. To the east and adjacent to the City of Humboldt lies Dakota City. These two towns make up the dominant urban area of the county. Originally located at the junction of two major railroads, the intersection of U.S. Highway 169 and Iowa Highway 3 now form the major transportation corridors.

Humboldt County is located within the flat, expansive, fertile farmlands of the Des Moines Lobe. The Des Moines Lobe was an extension of the Laurentide Ice Sheet during the most recent glaciation. The Des Moines Lobe of the Wisconsin Glaciation occurred over 13,000 years ago, and is the only region in Iowa that still displays landforms that result directly from glacial deposition and erosion. The Humboldt Complex is a collection of moraines, features that show stopping points in glacier recessions, during this time period. This period of time is also responsible for the mineral enriched glacial till, providing some of the most productive agricultural soils in the world.

An abundance of limestone is available in the city and county. Quarries are located on the north side of the city and many others are found throughout the west side of the county. This is a major benefit to Humboldt being within close proximity to useable building materials. Other mineral resources include multiple sand and gravel pits, natural gas, and areas of coal occurrence.

Natural springs are also a valuable resource for the city. In fact when William H. Taft founded the city it was originally named Springvale because of several springs found along the Des Moines River. This resource has been used for economic profit in bottled water and is distributed throughout the state. It also provides quality drinking water for the town and its residents.

The majority of the City of Humboldt is located within the West Des Moines River Valley. The valley provides scenic views of woodland slopes. Generally industrial growth occurs on the higher terrain of the Des Moines Lobe. The locations in the flood plain are prone to flooding during periods of intense rainfall and are taken into account during land use planning and zoning.

The Humboldt Comprehensive Plan adopted in April 2002, specifies existing and projected land use within the City of Humboldt and provides the framework for the Humboldt Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Comprehensive plan identifies an open space system that recognizes the drainage patterns of the area. Open space identified in the land use plan is a combination of private and publicly owned land that includes public park areas.
Map 1. Humboldt existing land use.
Source: City of Humboldt Comprehensive Plan, 2002
The ratio between undeveloped and developed land within the City of Humboldt is nearly even with approximately 133 acres of undeveloped land to 144 acres of developed land. This is important to assess in terms of development pressure or development likely to occur outside of the city limits. Development outside the city limits generally does not contribute to the municipal tax base yet benefits from city funded recreation services. There are existing developed areas outside of the current city boundaries and there appears to be pressure to build additional residential uses beyond city limits.
Map 3. Developed vs. undeveloped land in Humboldt.
DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of the City of Humboldt remained stable between 1990 and 2000. The population according to the 2000 U.S. Census is 4,452. This represented a population increase of less than one percent from the 1990 Census.

In the state of Iowa as a whole, population increased 5.2 percent from 1990 to 2000. According to the 2000 Census, almost all of this population increase occurred in large urban areas representative of a rural to urban population shift that has been occurring in Iowa since the 1950 census.

Figure 1. Population change in Humboldt city and Humboldt County, 1990-2000.
Source: U.S. Census data, 1990-2000
The median age in Humboldt, according to the 2000 U.S. Census is 44.1 years old. This is an increase in median age of almost one year since the 1990 Census. The trend of an aging population is consistent with most small cities in Iowa. As a community, the Humboldt population is older than the median age for the state of Iowa. The median age for Iowa in 2000 was 36.6 years old. The age grouping of 65 years and over represents 26.5 percent of the population of Humboldt or 1,181 individuals.

![Figure 2. Population Age distribution in Humboldt, 1990-2000.](source: U.S. Census data, 1990-2000)
Parks and Recreation Inventory
PARKS AND RECREATION INVENTORY

CITY PARKS AND FACILITIES

The City of Humboldt manages thirteen parks. These parks cater to a wide variety of needs and uses. Parks range in size from convenient neighborhood parks to large scale regional parks. Small parks such as Riverside Park and Iowa Park provide views of the West Des Moines River while Taft Park offers a wide variety of recreational facilities on a regional scale. Each park has its own character and benefits.

Table 2. Matrix of city parks and facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Parks</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Play Equipment</th>
<th>Courts Fields</th>
<th>Picnic Shelters</th>
<th>Grills</th>
<th>Picnic Tables</th>
<th>Restrooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mini/Neighborhood Parks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampson Hillside Park</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Park</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside Park</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy Worthington Memorial</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talisman</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicknell Park</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Beebe Park</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazebo Park</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist Park</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Brown</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Football Field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Ridge Park</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Parks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taft Park</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Heinz Sports Complex</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Grounds</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Nakomis Park</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Plant Site</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Hatchery</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Humboldt

The residents passed a bond to fund a new aquatic center in Fall 2004 which will be centrally located. Additional public and non-profit recreation services include the Humboldt Public Library, the Humboldt County Historical Museum and the Senior Citizens Center.
Map 4. Current Humboldt park and recreation areas.
REGIONAL RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

County and state managed lands provide over 700 acres for conservation and recreation purposes. Several areas have been acquired to restore native wetlands and prairie landscapes and improve wildlife habitat.

The scenic Three Rivers Trail runs 32 miles through Humboldt County starting from Bradgate to the town of Thor. This trail was constructed on top of the old railroad beds that served as the major transportation lines when Humboldt was first founded.

Table 3. Matrix of regional recreational resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Recreation &amp; Conservation Areas</th>
<th># of Acres</th>
<th>Camping</th>
<th>Boat Access</th>
<th>Electric Hook ups</th>
<th>Rest-rooms</th>
<th>Picnic Area</th>
<th>Special Facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. McKnights Point Wildlife Area</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hunting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Banwart Prairie</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hunting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lotts Creek Area</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife Habitat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Proposed Livermore Access</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife Habitat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Oakdale Park</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trap Shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Rutland Dam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Rutland Marsh</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Humboldt Izaak Walton Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fishing and Playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Joe Sheldon Park</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Scout Island</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife Habitat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Joe Reasoner Dam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Dakota City Access</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fishing and Canoeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Pioneer Prairie Potholes</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Recreation &amp; Conservation Areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Willows Wildlife Area</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Bradgate Wildlife Area</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Ottosen Marsh</td>
<td>106</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Frank A. Gotch Park</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Enclosed Shelter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Humboldt County Conservation District
Map 5. Humboldt County recreation and conservation areas.
REGIONAL TRAILS FOR HIKING, BIking, AND WALKING

**Three Rivers Trail** runs along 32 miles of the old Chicago and Northwestern Railroad right-of-way between Rolfe and Eagle Grove, with a 6 mile spur along the old Minneapolis and St. Louis line that runs from Humboldt to Gotch State Park. As the name implies the trail crosses three rivers. These rivers include the West Branch of the Des Moines River, the East Branch of the Des Moines River and the Boone River. Much of the western portion of the trail parallels the West Branch of the Des Moines River making travel very scenic. At the end of the Gotch spur, the east and the west branches of the Des Moines River come together. The trail passes through a diversity of habitats from woodland to shrubby grassland, marshy areas and open prairie. This is a regional asset which can be used for community and regional development. It is import to link this regional resource directly to the City of Humboldt.

**Cottonwood Bicycle Trail** extends from Bicknell Park to Lake Nokomis Park.

Two public golf courses and one private course are available to area residents.

PRIVATE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

**Humboldt Country Club** on Highway 3 west of Humboldt is a nine-hole course. The club holds seasonal tournaments and supports the Humboldt High Schools boys and girls golf teams.

Silver Creek Ski and Recreation Area located along the east fork of the Des Moines River, has, in addition to snow skiing from November to March, a restaurant, canoeing, horseshoes and sandpit volleyball courts. There are 12 ski runs with two T-bar lifts, and lights, which allow for night skiing. Rental equipment and a ski repair shop are located at the facility. Ski patrol is on duty and lessons are offered regularly.

**West River Recreation Center/Humboldt Health and Racquetball Club** is located on Highway 3 West in Humboldt. The club provides facilities for racquetball, basketball, walleyball, weight training and a sauna. The Parks and Recreation Department partners with the club to provide a range of youth and adult services. Classes in aerobics and karate are also available at the Club.

Other commercial recreation opportunities in the area include Roller Country in Dakota City, Humota Theater, and the Humboldt County Dragway, which attracts people from around the mid-west region.
Map 6. Local and regional golf courses.
RECREATION PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The Parks & Recreation Department works with civic and non-profit organizations and government agencies to provide special community events. A family program, Fish Iowa was offered in collaboration with Iowa State Extension Center. The municipal library offers programs for pre-school and 1st grade children including story time and craft activities.

April
- Annual Home Show held at the Humboldt County Fairgrounds.
- Racing starts at the Humboldt County Dragway every Saturday night, weather permitting.
- Annual Chamber of Commerce meeting.

May
- Humboldt County Historical Museum opens.
- Humboldt Municipal Swimming Pool opens.
- Annual Memorial Day parade travels down Sumner Avenue to Bicknell Park where a Memorial Day service is held.
- The Humboldt-Dakota City Chamber of Commerce members show their appreciation to customers by hosting Hot Dog Days.
- Annual Lake Nokomis Buckskinners Rendezvous Days held at Joe Sheldon Park.

June
- The Cedar Room's Annual Antique Tractor & Engine Show.
- The weekly Farmer's Market begins in downtown Humboldt every Saturday morning and runs through September. Farm fresh produce and other items are available on the sidewalks in front of downtown businesses.

July
- The Humboldt-Dakota City Chamber of Commerce sponsors a full day of activities on July 4, starting with a car show at the fairgrounds in the morning, followed by afternoon harness races, entertainment at the downtown gazebo prior to the parade, an evening parade which draws more than 160 entries, entertainment at the fairgrounds and fireworks display.
- Annual ABATE of Iowa Freedom Rally.
- In conjunction with the Freedom Rally, there's the All Harley Motorcycle races held at the Humboldt County Dragway over the July 4 holiday.
- The Humboldt County Fair is traditionally held the last week of July at the fairgrounds.
- Annual Humboldt Blue Grass Music Festival located at the Humboldt County Fairgrounds.
August
- The Humboldt County Fair is held in late July or early August each year. The Fair features something for everyone, including midway rides, figure 8 races, crowning of the Humboldt County Fair Queen, plus Little Miss and Little Mister, a pickup and tractor pull, livestock judging and auction, 4-H Fashion Revue, food and much more entertainment.

September
- Labor Day weekend in Humboldt marks the coming of the annual Midwest Polka Fest. It’s held at the Humboldt County Fairgrounds, with Polka bands from throughout the Midwest. This event usually draws around 3,000 people.
- The Village Arts Festival is also held in September at John Brown Park. The event features more than 50 artists, plus fun and games for all ages, entertainment, food and more.

October
- 5K & 10K Fun Walk/Run on the Three Rivers Trail sponsored by the Humboldt-Dakota City Chamber of Commerce and the Humboldt Parks and Recreation Department.

November
- Humboldt and Dakota City are traditionally transformed into the Christmas Cities. The result of a coordinated effort by the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Clubs, businesses and residents, is a town full of lights and Christmas cheer.
- Merlin Fort's now famous Hillside Spectacular draws thousands to see his 33,000 plus bulb light display each Christmas season.
- Kiwanis Christmasland, located one block south of the Law Enforcement Center (LEC), next to City Hall in downtown Humboldt, also grows in popularity each year. The animated displays change each year, but one thing remains the same . . . Santa Claus is always on hand to visit with the children.
- The Christmas Tree Walk at Faith United Methodist Church provides a wonderful viewing experience of well over 100 beautifully decorated Christmas trees.

December
- The Humboldt County Historical Museum brings back old Christmas memories with its Christmas past celebrations on December weekends, complete with hot cider and other Christmas goodies.
The Parks and Recreation Director also coordinates sports leagues and instruction in addition to special program offerings.

**Youth Sports**
- Flag football 3rd – 6th grade
- Basketball league 3rd – 6th grade
- Indoor soccer 1st – 6th grade
- Field soccer 1st – 6th grade
- Basketball Fundamentals 3rd – 6th grade
- Tennis Fundamentals

**Adult Sports**
- Coed volleyball
- Women's volleyball league
- Men's volleyball league
- Men's basketball league
Recreation Needs Assessment
RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A variety of techniques were used to assess the appropriate level of service and projected future leisure needs of residents. The needs analysis is based on:

1. Residents’ needs assessment
2. The distribution of services
3. The resource inventory of Humboldt recreational resources
4. The National Park and Recreation Association’s standards

The first section details residents’ perceptions of services needed. This was accomplished through a recreation needs survey distributed to 400 randomly selected residents. In addition a steering committee, the Park and Recreation Board and a group of middle school students participated in a planning process to identify the strengths and weaknesses of recreation services provided in the City of Humboldt. The second section analyzes the distribution of services. In a town the size of Humboldt, the geographic distribution of parks and open spaces may not appear critical. However, proximity may determine use particularly with certain populations. In addition, program offerings need to address a range of age groups and interests. The third section compares the Humboldt recreation resource inventory with the National Park and Recreation Association’s standards.

THE HUMBOLDT COMMUNITY RECREATION NEEDS SURVEY

A mail-out survey was designed to help in this assessment. A draft survey was developed and reviewed by the Parks & Recreation Director, City Administrator, and the Parks Board. The survey addressed a range of leisure issues including existing use patterns, leisure needs and future recreation resource development preferences, barriers to participation in leisure activities, marketing, facility development priorities, and programming options.

Residents were randomly selected from the City of Humboldt water billing. Those randomly selected, received a Humboldt Community Recreation Needs Assessment packet that included a cover letter describing the purpose of the questionnaire, the questionnaire and a stamped, addressed return envelope for returning the survey. A response rate of 70% was achieved for the mail-out survey.

Table 4. Survey response rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Number Surveys Out</th>
<th>of Sent</th>
<th>Number Surveys Returned</th>
<th>of Declines/Non Compliances</th>
<th>Return Rate on Survey (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>399</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R^2S UNI
RECREATION ATTITUDES AND USE PATTERNS

Humboldt residents feel that recreation programs are important to the quality of life in Humboldt. A majority of the survey respondents (65%) have participated in a community recreation program in the last year. Trail usage and golf were listed as the two of the most popular recreational activities of choice for community residents.

Generally, residents feel there are sufficient recreation resources in the community. However, over 40 percent of the survey respondents indicated a need for additional recreation facilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks/Fields/Trails</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth &amp; Adult Programs</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders/Coaches</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Resident opinions on whether there are enough of the following recreational resources.
Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI

RECREATION FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Community residents identified greater need when asked about specific types of facilities to develop in the future. The most significant support was for building a new pool. Over 95 percent of the respondents are aware of the condition of the existing swimming pool. Over 75 percent of survey respondents agree that it is important for Humboldt to build a new pool. When reviewing the following graphs, some residents would support building an indoor swimming facility but not an outdoor swimming facility.
Residents identified several features that would be important to include in the design of the new aquatic center. Over 70 percent of survey respondents agreed that exercise programs, a diving board, a water slide, and aquatic play features would be important to include in the new facility. Additionally, over 60 percent of respondents agreed that zero depth entry, shaded areas, and lap lanes would be important to include in the facility design.
Exercise Programs

Diving Board

Water Slide

Play Features

Shaded Areas

Zero Depth Entry

Concessions

Grass Play Area

Lap Lanes

Shaded Picnic Area

Sand Playground

Sand Volleyball

Figure 6. Resident attitudes toward outdoor pool features.

Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI
Three other projects were listed as a priority to build in the future. Over 50 percent of respondents agreed that a community center, riverfront park development, and recreational trail development were also future priorities. The following group of graphs shows resident attitudes, in ascending order of importance, to the development of various recreation projects.

![Graph showing resident attitudes toward building a Community Center.](image)

**Figure 7. Resident attitudes toward building a Community Center.**  
*Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI*

![Graph showing resident attitudes toward improving riverfront parks.](image)

**Figure 8. Resident attitudes toward improving riverfront parks.**  
*Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI*
Figure 9. Resident attitudes toward developing more walking, jogging and bike trails.

Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R^2S UNI

Figure 10. Resident attitudes toward improving athletic fields.

Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R^2S UNI
Figure 11. Resident attitudes toward building an ice skating facility.  
Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI

Figure 12. Resident attitudes toward building neighborhood parks.  
Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI
6.1
25
43.4
19.7
5.7
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Percentages

Figure 13. Resident attitudes toward developing facilities for the performing arts.
Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI

6.9
19.4
43.5
20.3
9.9
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
50
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Percentages

Figure 14. Resident attitudes toward acquiring land for parks and open spaces.
Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI
RECREATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Participation rates are relatively high with 65 percent of the population participating in community recreation programs in the past year. The survey asked respondents to identify their favorite recreation activity in which they most often participate. Trail usage was identified most frequently.

![Figure 15. Most common recreational activities. Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI](image)

Spending time with family and friends was a frequent activity indicated by respondents. Respondents showed an interest in a range of recreation activities including cultural, outdoor recreation, and sports activities. They also suggested a range of new activities to be offered including classes in art, painting and wood carving. Interest was also expressed in expanding active recreation offerings to include fitness programs, swimming aerobics, volleyball and cross-country skiing.

Middle school students identified a need for a wide range of activities including several risk activities such as bungee jumping and street luge; social activities including poker and having a pool hall; special interest activities such as go-kart racing, miniature golf, ice skating, fishing and chess. This population might best be served through special challenge programs rather than additional specialized facility development.
BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION PROGRAMS

Although participation rates are high, it is important to identify barriers to participation. Work and school commitments were the most common reasons given by survey respondents as to what keeps them from participating in Humboldt recreation programs. Over 57 percent of respondents agreed that these commitments were a significant barrier. The second most common barrier to participation was that the program or activity was not offered at the right time. A third barrier to participation was that survey respondents did not have any program information. Several barriers identified indicate a need for leisure education. The following table lists the response percentages for all of the participation barriers listed in the survey. Several of the barriers indicated a need for leisure education.

| Table 5. Barriers to participation in Humboldt recreation programs (percentages) |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Reason                        | Strongly Agree | Agree         | No Opinion     | Disagree       | Strongly Disagree | Mean Score*    |
| Work/school commitments       | 17.9           | 39.3          | 27             | 10.2           | 5.6             | 3.54           |
| The price of recreation/sports| 3.1            | 12.2          | 46.9           | 26             | 11.7            | 2.69           |
| No one to go with             | 5.1            | 13.3          | 42.3           | 28.1           | 11.2            | 2.73           |
| Don’t know where to participate in the activity | 2.1 | 9.9 | 47.4 | 26 | 14.6 | 2.59 |
| Costs for recreation programs are too high | 4.7 | 11.4 | 40.4 | 31.6 | 11.9 | 2.65 |
| I don’t have child care available | 1.1 | 6.9 | 45 | 25.9 | 21.2 | 2.41 |
| I don’t know where I can learn skills | 2 | 6.6 | 43.9 | 32.1 | 15.3 | 2.48 |
| I don’t have artistic or creative abilities | 1 | 9.7 | 44.6 | 29.2 | 15.4 | 2.52 |
| I don’t have the physical abilities | 2.9 | 11.7 | 42 | 26.3 | 17.1 | 2.57 |
| Programs are not interesting | 2 | 12.2 | 48.5 | 27.6 | 9.7 | 2.69 |
| Not offered on the right day or time for me | 3.1 | 26.8 | 47.9 | 13.9 | 8.2 | 3.03 |
| I don’t have any program information | 2.6 | 17.6 | 42.5 | 26.4 | 10.9 | 2.75 |
| I don’t like the instructor/coach | 1 | 2.1 | 53.6 | 28.1 | 15.1 | 2.46 |
| The program is too long of a time commitment | 1 | 9.8 | 50.3 | 25.9 | 13 | 2.60 |
| There isn’t anything for my family | 4.7 | 8.3 | 46.1 | 26.9 | 14 | 2.63 |

*Scale: 5=Strongly Agree; 4=Agree; 3=No Opinion; 2=Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree
Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI
TIME AND SEASONAL PREFERENCES FOR RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

Survey respondents indicated that the evening is the most desired time for recreational activities and programs to occur. Over 60 percent of respondents listed evening programs as their optimal choice. This was true for both adult and youth activities.

For adults, weekdays are favored in terms of the day of the week for recreational programs. For children, there is a fairly even split between weekdays, Saturdays, and no preference. Sundays were listed as the least preferred day of the week for recreational programs.

Among seasons of the year, there was not an overwhelming preference for any particular season. However, over 80 percent of survey respondents indicated that they would prefer to see recreational programs offered on a year-round basis.

Figure 16. Preferred time of day for activities to occur.
Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI
Figure 17. Preferred day of the week for activities to occur.
Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI

Figure 18. Preferred time of year for activities to occur.
Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI
MARKETING

Over 20 percent of the survey respondents indicated that they did not participate in recreation programs because they didn’t have any program information. According to survey respondents, the newspaper is the most effective marketing tool. Almost 75 percent of respondents listed it as the method by which they find out about recreational programs and activities in Humboldt. Other effective marketing tools included word of mouth, radio ads, school fliers, and local access TV. Each of these methods were listed by over 20 percent of survey respondents.

![Figure 19. Methods of marketing used by respondents.](https://example.com/figure.png)

*Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI*
AGE AND LEISURE EDUCATION

Age and health reasons were identified as barriers to participation. Several respondents indicated they did not participate in community recreation programs because they did not have any children at home or they were too old. This response indicates the public perceives community recreation programs are for youth and suggests a need to expand leisure education efforts and develop programs for an elderly population.

Over 60 percent of all respondents indicated that it is important for Humboldt to provide recreational opportunities for all age groups. Youths, teens, and seniors were indicated to be the most important age groups for recreational programs. Over 80 percent of survey respondents felt that it was important for each of these age groups to have recreational opportunities provided by the city of Humboldt.

![Figure 20. Resident opinions on whether Humboldt should provide recreation programs for the following age groups.]

*Source: Humboldt community recreation needs survey, 2004 R²S UNI*
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

To further identify the recreation resource needs in the community, a steering committee of community members was identified by the Humboldt Parks & Recreation Director to guide the development of the plan. A nominal group technique was used to gather initial data from the steering committee for the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. This technique is used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Humboldt’s Parks and Recreation System.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified through this process.

STRENGTHS
Great parks/water areas (43)
Jim Heinz baseball and softball complex (23)
High participation rates (22)
Facilities/improvements at Taft Park (16)
Great youth/adult recreation (15)
Partnership with schools (13)
Racquetball club (13)
Strong parent/volunteer support (11)
Community support for recreation department (8)
Local citizens/business support (3)
Tradition

WEAKNESSES
Outdated swimming pool (48)
Recreation center (34)
Funding from city (32)
Programs for older people lacking (12)
Spread out programs for different age groups (10)
Follow through/consensus building (8)
Funding for events (county cooperation) (7)
Utilize what we have (7)
More volunteer participation (6)
Marketing recreation (6)
Cultural programs lacking (4)
More structure with children’s events (2)
More special events involving community
Recreation with sports emphasis
More/broader things for kids (day camp)
Activities geared towards development (handicapped/disabled)
Limited areas for additional facilities
The method used to gather data collected at the Humboldt Middle School workshop held on Tuesday, May 18th, 2004 closely resembled the Nominal Group Technique. The adolescents where given markers and asked to write on large sheets of paper anything they had ever wished they could do in Humboldt. Then as a group they put various stickers with values ranging from 1-5 next to the activities they felt they would be most interested in trying (5) to being less interested in trying (1).

THE TOP TEN RATED ACTIVITIES BY MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go-Kart Racing</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool Hall</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Luge</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poker</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miniature Golf</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Skating</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunk-It</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing Derby</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungee Jumping</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chess</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICES

The community was divided into neighborhoods based on physical characteristics (i.e. barriers such as the Des Moines River and Highway 165 and Highway 3) and social determinants (middle school students’ perception of neighborhoods). Although these boundaries may shift based on changes in the physical or social structure of the community, looking at park distribution in relation to neighborhood boundaries is a useful in analyzing service provision. Map 7 delineates neighborhood boundaries in relation to existing parks and schools.
Map 7. Neighborhoods of the city of Humboldt.
Source: Humboldt middle school student survey, 2004 R²S UNI
Projecting a .25 mile to a .5 mile service radius from existing parks illustrates a fair distribution of services. However, projected future development on the southern and western edges of the existing incorporated area as identified in the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, indicates a need to expand services in these areas. Providing a recreation link across Highway 169 on the south side of Humboldt will also be needed.

The Humboldt Land Use Plan designates a majority of the flood zone and associated riparian zone as open space. However, use and regulations of the open space designation are not defined. The City would benefit from the adoption of a riparian buffer zone ordinance (See Appendix A) to complement existing subdivision, zoning, and floodplain ordinances. In addition, the city should coordinate with the county in developing a riparian buffer zone ordinance that applies to both jurisdictions.

CREATING A RIPARIAN MANAGEMENT BUFFER SYSTEM

There are several possible resources for creating a Riparian Management System of buffer zones within the community of Humboldt. The Des Moines River Watershed Project is active in both supporting and promoting riparian buffers within its watershed area. Additionally, there are federal programs that offer cost-share and volunteer help in installing riparian buffers. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) all promote the creation of riparian buffer zones to help improve water quality and reduce water pollution. Nonprofit groups, such as, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Trees Forever, and other conservation-minded groups may also be willing to help with local buffer construction.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources offers the following recommendations for various types of riparian buffer zones. These distances will maximize the effects of a buffer zone in a rural or agricultural area. However, it is worth noting that smaller distances may be more practical within cities and urban areas.

A minimum grass zone of 20-24 feet provides deep pores for water to soak into the soil, moderates flooding, and sends water into the soil instead of over it. Species in the grass zone include switchgrass, big bluestem, Indian grass, and forbs.

A minimum 12-foot zone of shrubs slows water down, dropping out sediments; absorbs nutrients; and provides food sources for wildlife. Tree species in the shrub zone include ninebark, red osier dogwood, chokecherry, gray dogwood, and nanking cherry.

Trees shade streams, absorb excess nutrients, stabilize stream banks, and provide homes for animals. A minimum of 30 feet is recommended, allowing for
four to five rows. Trees recommended nearest the stream include willow, poplar, box elder, and silver maple. Trees recommended for the middle rows or on higher ground include sycamore, green ash, white ash, silver maple, basswood, and swamp white oak. Trees recommended for the last rows (upland species) include eastern red cedar, black ash, black walnut, red oak, hackberry, hickory, and eastern white pine (Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 2003).

Overall it would be recommended that the Humboldt Parks and Recreation Department lead the effort in designating and creating riparian buffer zones in parklands and public lands within the community. A collaborative effort with a federal program, the City of Humboldt, and local volunteer organizations could help to establish Humboldt as a model community for preserving and conserving the natural environment.

COMPARISON OF INVENTORY TO NRPA STANDARDS

The National Recreation and Park Association has established a classification system and standards for parks to help communities identify and provide appropriate park and open space areas and facilities. This system identifies and describes five types of parks that typically serve a community.

**Playfield/playground mini-park:** The recommended size is 2,500 square feet to 1 acre. Recommended service radius is less than .25 miles. Recommended acreage per 1000 people is .25 to .50 acres.

**Neighborhood:** The recommended size is five to ten acres. Recommended service radius is .25 to .5 miles. The recommended acreage per 10,000 people is one to two acres.

**Community:** Recommended size is thirty to fifty acres. The recommended service radius is .5 to 3 miles. Recommended acreage per 10,000 people is five to eight acres.

**City-Wide or Large Urban:** Recommended size is fifty to seventy-five acres. The recommended service radius is the entire community.

**Regional Park:** Recommended size is 200 acres or more. The recommended acreage per 1000 people is five to ten acres.
The Humboldt Comprehensive Plan has classified park areas into four categories.

**Class I:** Neighborhood parks are those that primarily serve as play areas for children living within a short radius of a facility.

**Class II:** Urban and regional parks serve a community population by providing facilities that alter to a wider community base, but may include neighborhood play areas.

**Class III:** Major Area Parks serve a county-wide or regional population and are generally open space or special purpose.

**Class IV:** Special Use Areas are those identified with specific buildings.

Both these classification systems are general and intended to guide park development. Parks within the City of Humboldt serve neighborhood, community and regional populations. All Humboldt City parks with the exception of the power plant, correlate with NRPA neighborhood parks or mini-park size standards, however several serve regional needs. Considering the size of the population served and the distribution of parks, Humboldt currently maintains sufficient park acreage to provide for public recreation and park needs. Locating parks along the riparian buffer zones increases the potential to meet regional, community and neighborhood needs.
Parks and Recreation Recommendations
PARKS AND RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Humboldt can recognize the value of local physical and human resources through the development of their park and recreation system.

RECREATION FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

1. Develop an aquatic facility to afford many opportunities to potential users including zero depth entry, play features, water slide and diving board, shades grass areas, a concession area and rest room and dressing facilities.
2. Site and design aquatic facility to accommodate future development of additional recreation and support activities which may function as a community recreation facility.

RIVERFRONT PARK IMPROVEMENTS AND TRAIL EXTENSIONS

1. Apply for State funding (Department of Natural Resources REAP funds and Department of Transportation funds) to develop existing trails and extend the trail system to link the community with the regional trail network and cross neighborhood barriers (highways and waterways).
2. Develop a corporate gifts catalog which details items that can be donated to improve riverfront parks.
3. Adopt a riparian ordinance to address future development along riparian corridors.
4. Coordinate with Humboldt County to address future development along riparian corridors.
5. Identify opportunities to purchase easements along riparian corridors.
6. Identify opportunities to integrate the power plant and dam within the development of the riverfront park.
Map 8. City of Humboldt park and recreation Master Plan.
RECREATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Develop recreation programs to address all age groups within the community.

1. Use marketing efforts to expand leisure education directed to an elderly population.
2. Work in coordination with the senior center to expand services to the older population.
3. Develop a volunteer program through elder participation.
4. Coordinate with the school district to develop a challenge program for middle school students which provides both challenge activities and social opportunities.
5. Coordinate with the library to extend pre-school activities.
6. Develop an on-going internship program with a university leisure services program which is tied to a high school mentoring program.
7. Strengthen citizen participation through the use of active advisory groups, volunteerism and surveys.

Develop recreation programs which address a wide range of interests.

1. Identify resources to offer instruction in the arts i.e. painting, wood carving.
2. Program aquatic center for adult fitness activities.
3. Develop a festival around the trail system which brings visitors to Humboldt.
Appendix
APPENDIX 1

MODEL RIPARIAN BUFFER ORDINANCE


This is a sample riparian buffer ordinance, using a fixed width, written as an amendment to an existing zoning ordinance. It creates a new buffer overlay zone along all perennial and intermittent streams. A variable-width buffer ordinance is also available.

This ordinance is appropriate for adoption by a county or municipal government and should be considered by both levels of government.

ARTICLE [X] RIPARIAN BUFFER ZONE

1. INTENT AND PURPOSE.
The quality of the groundwater that is used for drinking, agricultural and industrial purposes in the City of Humboldt is connected with the quality of the surface water in the streams and rivers of the City of Humboldt. Furthermore, the people of Humboldt use the surface waters for fishing, canoeing, and other recreational and economic purposes. The Humboldt City Council finds that the protection of the streams and rivers of Humboldt is vital to the health, safety and economic welfare of its citizens. It is therefore the intent of this ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinances of Humboldt to establish a new riparian buffer zone of restricted development and limited land use adjacent to all perennial streams and rivers in Humboldt. The purposes of the riparian buffer zone are: to protect public and private water supplies, to trap sediment and other pollutants in surface runoff, to promote bank stabilization, to protect riparian wetlands, to minimize the impact of floods, to prevent decreases in base flow, to protect wildlife habitat, and to generally maintain water quality. The standards and regulations set forth in this ordinance are created under the authority of the Humboldt’s Home Rule and zoning powers defined in the Georgia Constitution (Article IX, Section 2). In the event of a conflict between or among any provisions of this ordinance, or any other ordinances of the City of Humboldt, the requirement that is most restrictive and protective of water quality shall apply.

2. TITLE.
This Ordinance shall be known as “The Riparian Buffer Zone Requirements of the City of Humboldt” and may be referred to generally as “Riparian Buffer Requirements.”
3. DEFINITIONS.

“Existing land use” means a land use which, prior to the effective date of this ordinance, is either:

(1) completed; or
(2) ongoing, as in the case of agricultural activity; or
(3) under construction; or
(4) fully approved by the governing authority; or
(5) the subject of a fully completed application, with all necessary supporting documentation, which has been submitted for approval to the governing authority or the appropriate government official, for any construction-related permit.

“Impervious surface” means any paved, hardened or structural surface which does not allow for complete on-site infiltration of precipitation. Such surfaces include but are not limited to buildings, driveways, streets, parking lots, swimming pools, dams, tennis courts, and any other structures that meet the above definitions.

“Land-disturbing activity” means any grading, scraping, excavating or filling of land, clearing of vegetation and any construction, rebuilding, or significant alteration of a structure.

“Protected area” means any land and vegetation that lies within the riparian buffer zone, as defined herein.

“Riparian Buffer Zone” or “RBZ” is an overlay zone that encompasses all land within 100 feet [or other fixed width, but never less than 50 feet] on either side of all streams in the City of Humboldt, measured as a line extending perpendicularly from the stream bank.

“Second order stream or higher” means any stream that is formed by the confluence of two or more other streams, as indicated by solid or dashed blue lines on the United States Geological Survey 7.5 minute quadrangle maps, of the most recent edition.

“Stream” or “River” means all of the following:

(a) any perennial stream or river (or portion thereof) that is portrayed as a solid line on a United States Department of Agriculture Soil Survey Map of the most recent edition; and

(b) any intermittent stream or river (or portion thereof) that is portrayed as a dashed line on a United States Department of Agriculture Soil Survey Map of the most recent edition; and

(c) any lake or impoundment that does not lie entirely within a single parcel of land; and

(d) any other stream as may be identified by the City of Humboldt.
4. DISTRICT USE AND REGULATIONS.
4.1. The Riparian Buffer Zone District (RBZ) is an overlay zone that encompasses all land within 100 feet [or width defined above] on either side of all streams in the City of Humboldt measured as a line extending from the stream bank. The RBZ must be maintained in a naturally vegetated state. Any property or portion thereof that lies within the RBZ is subject to the restrictions of the RBZ as well as any and all zoning restrictions that apply to the tax parcel as a whole.

4.2. The following land uses are prohibited within the protected area:
   (a) any land-disturbing activity;
   (b) septic tanks and septic tank drain fields;
   (c) buildings, accessory structures, and all types of impervious surfaces;
   (d) hazardous or sanitary waste landfills;
   (e) receiving areas for toxic or hazardous waste or other contaminants;
   (f) mining;
   (g) storm water retention and detention facilities, except those built as constructed wetlands that meet the approval of the City of Humboldt.

5. EXCEPTIONS.
5.1. The following land uses are excepted from the provisions of Section 4:

   (a) Existing land uses, except as follows:
       (1) When the existing land use, or any building or structure involved in that use, is enlarged, increased, or extended to occupy a greater area of land; or
       (2) When the existing land use, or any building or structure involved in that use, is moved (in whole or in part) to any other portion of the property; or
       (3) When the existing land use ceases for a period of more than one year.

   (b) Agricultural production, provided that it is consistent with all state and federal laws, regulations promulgated by the Iowa Department of Agriculture, and best management practices established by the Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

   (c) Selective logging, except within 50 feet [or other distance, but never less than 25 feet] of a stream and provided that logging practices comply with the best management practices.

   (d) Crossings by transportation facilities and utility lines. However, issuance of permits for such uses or activities is contingent upon the completion of a feasibility study that identifies alternative routing strategies that do not violate the RBZ, as well as a mitigation plan to minimize impacts on the RBZ.
(e) Temporary stream, stream bank, and vegetation restoration projects, the goal of which is to restore the stream or riparian zone to an ecologically healthy state.

(f) Structures which, by their nature, cannot be located anywhere except within the riparian buffer zone. These include docks, boat launches, public water supply intake structures, facilities for natural water quality treatment and purification, and public wastewater treatment plant sewer lines and outfalls.

(g) Wildlife and fisheries management activities consistent with the purposes of Iowa Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division.

(h) Construction of a single family residence, including the usual appurtenances, provided that:
   1. Based on the size, shape or topography of the property, as of the effective date of this ordinance, it is not reasonably possible to construct a single-family dwelling without encroaching upon the Riparian Buffer Zone; and
   2. The dwelling conforms with all other zoning regulations; and
   3. The dwelling is located on a tract of land containing at least two acres. For purposes of these standards, the size of the tract of land shall not include any area that lies within the protected river or stream; and
   4. There shall be only one such dwelling on each two-acre or larger tract of land; and
   5. Septic tank drain fields shall not be located within the buffer area, although a septic tank or tanks serving such a dwelling may be located within the RBZ.

(i) Other uses permitted by the Iowa DNR or under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

5.2 Notwithstanding the above, all excepted uses, structures or activities shall comply with the requirements of the Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975 and all applicable best management practices and shall not diminish water quality as defined by the Clean Water Act. All excepted uses shall be located as far from the stream bank as reasonably possible.

6. MINOR VARIANCES.
6.1 A minor variance is a reduction in buffer width over a portion of a property in exchange for an increase in buffer width elsewhere on the same property such that the average buffer width remains 100 feet [or width specified above]. No minor variance can decrease buffer width to less than 75 feet [or 25 feet less than the buffer width]. A property owner may request a minor variance from the
requirements of the RBZ by preparing the appropriate application with the City of Humboldt.

6.2. Each applicant for a minor variance must submit documentation that issuance of the variance will not result in a reduction in water quality. All minor variances shall adhere to the following criteria:
   (a) the width of the RBZ shall be reduced by the minimum amount possible, and never to less than 75 feet [or 25 feet less than the buffer width] at any point; and
   (b) reductions in the width of the RBZ shall be balanced by corresponding increases in the RBZ elsewhere on the same property, such that the total area included in the RBZ is the same as if it were 100 feet [or width specified above] wide; and
   (c) land-disturbing activities must comply with the requirements of the Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975 and all applicable best management practices.

7. MAJOR VARIANCES.
7.1. A major variance is a reduction in RBZ width that is not balanced by a corresponding increase in buffer width elsewhere on the same property, or else a reduction in buffer width to less than 75 feet [or as specified Series above]. A property owner may request a major variance from the requirements of the RBZ by preparing the appropriate application with the City of Humboldt. Such requests shall be granted or denied by application of the criteria set forth below in section 24.7.3 and will be subject to the conditions set forth below in section 24.7.4. Under no circumstances may an exception be granted which would reduce the buffer to a width less than the minimum standards established by state or federal law.

7.2. Each applicant for a major variance must provide documentation that describes:
   (a) existing site conditions, including the status of the protected area; and
   (b) the needs and purpose for the proposed project; and
   (c) justification for seeking the variance, including how buffer encroachment will be minimized to the greatest extent possible; and
   (d) a proposed mitigation plan that offsets the effects of the proposed encroachment during site preparation, construction, and post-construction phases.

7.3. No major variance shall be issued unless the City of Humboldt City Council determines that:
   (a) the requirements of the RBZ represent an extreme hardship for the landowner such that little or no reasonable economic use of the land is available without reducing the width of the RBZ; or
(b) the size, shape, or topography of the property, as of the effective date of this ordinance, is such that it is not possible to construct a single family dwelling without encroaching upon the Riparian Buffer Zone.

7.4. Any major variance issued by the City of Humboldt City Council will meet the following conditions:
   (a) the width of the RBZ is reduced only by the minimum extent necessary to provide relief; and
   (b) land-disturbing activities must comply with the requirements of the Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975 and all applicable best management practices. Such activities shall not impair water quality, as defined by the federal Clean Water Act and the rules of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division; and
   (c) as an additional condition of issuing the variance, the City of Humboldt City Council may require water quality monitoring downstream from the site of land-disturbing activities to ensure that water quality is not impaired.

8. REPEAL CLAUSE.
The provisions of any ordinances or resolutions or parts thereof in conflict herewith are repealed, save and except such ordinances or resolutions or parts thereof which provide stricter standards than those provided herein.

9. SEVERABILITY.
Should any section, subsection, clause, or provision of this Article be declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of this Article in whole or any part thereof other than the part so declared to be invalid.

10. AMENDMENT.
This Article may be amended from time to time by resolution of the City Council of the City of Humboldt. Such amendments shall be effective as specified in the adopting resolution.

11. EFFECTIVE DATE.
This article shall become effective upon its adoption.