

Watertown Parks Commission

January 21, 2026

Agenda Item: Adopt A Park Discussion**Request for Action:** Provide Direction for Staff**Department:** Dan Tolsma, City Administrator**Discussion:**

In late 2025 the Park Commission had several discussions related to reviving the Adopt A Park Program for 2026. Below are a few more items that need to be finalized before staff can begin to promote the program:

1. Finalize promotional letter & (see Attachment 1)
2. Finalize program guidelines & application (see Attachment 2)
 - a. Brad's question specifically for the group was should we add a section where we request applicants to "Tell us about your group and why you would like to adopt the park or parks you requested."
 - b. What parks should be included on the list of available parks to adopt? For example, should the dog park be included? Should parks that are mostly open space (i.e. prairie meadows park) or with limited amenities (wifi park / Da Vinci's wing sculpture park) be included?
 - c. What should the commitment length be for adopters? Two years seemed to be the general consensus when it was discussed in November...
 - d. What should the final list of responsibilities be. Here are Brad's suggestions:
 - i. Picking up litter & debris. If there is a significant amount of litter or trash contact the Public Works department and ask them to do the clean-up.
 - ii. Sweeping / Dusting. That may be something needed at some of the pavilions.
 - iii. Spring & Fall clean up. Coordinate with the Parks & Recreation commission. It would be nice to do all the parks around the same time, as a city wide event.
 - iv. Weeding small garden areas.. If weeds are overgrown in a large part of the open spaces contact Public Works so they can evaluate the problem.
 - v. Watering flowers should be a City duty.
 - vi. Plant Flowers. Volunteer to work with the City Works department to help with planting, review the flowers or vegetation to be planted to be sure it fits the city's master plan, request the city order and pay for plantings to be sure dollars are in the budget.
 - vii. Graffiti .. Notify the Public Works Department.
 - viii. Clean out Barbecue Grills as necessary.
 - ix. General Park Observation. Notify Public Works if you see or know of broken glass, user behavior, lights, noise problems, if the playground has any obvious safety concerns, sand or mulch is needed in the designated play areas.
 - x. Refilling doggy waste bags in the boxes is a city responsibility.

- xi. As a steward of our parks, be good observers of your parks needs. When a park looks great and well maintained, reach out to Public Works and complement them on a job well done.

3. Finalize timeline for program implementation. Below is a draft timeline provided by Brad:

- a. Feb. 1st – Begin promoting the program / accepting applications.
- b. March 13th – Deadline for initial applicants.
- c. March 18th – Parks Commission first review of applicants at the March meeting.
- d. Late March / Early April – Parks Commission final review of applicants.
- e. April 15th – Probable adopters attend the April Parks Commission meeting to introduce themselves. Commission approves park assignments.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Article 1 – Adopt a park promotional letter

Attachment 2: Article 2 – Adopt a park guidelines & application



February 1, 2026

The City of Watertown is approaching you as key contact for a local community or civic organization in the Watertown area. The City has an Adopt-a-Park Program which was created in 2008 with the objective of beautifying our public spaces, decreasing the effects of vandalism, and maintaining the safety of parks and park equipment. Other benefits include increasing community pride and ownership in the park system and educating the public of the environmental and recreational benefits of a city park system. The City knows that this program cannot be successful without the dedicated citizens who donate their time in an effort to make a difference in their community. There are 20 beautiful parks in the City that are part of the adopt-a-Park program. A map is attached showing the park locations. The Parks Commission wanted to tell you about this wonderful program and encourages individuals and organizations to become involved in the care and maintenance of the City parks.

Groups and/or individuals can adopt a park area for a minimum of one year and are encouraged to adopt for a longer period. General adopt-a-park duties include picking up litter and debris, sweeping, raking leaves, weeding, planting and watering flowers, and notifying public works of other parks observations. The City will provide garbage bags, safety vests, and paint, resulting in no cost for the adoption. More details about the program are include in the attached application.

If you and your organization would like to know more or are interested in participating in the Adopt-a-Park Program, please contact City Administrator, Dan Tolsma by phone at 952-955-2681 or by email at dtolsma@watertownmn.gov.

Sincerely,

Watertown Park and Recreation Commission



Watertown Adopt-a-Park Program

The Adopt-A Park Program was created with the objective of beautifying our public spaces, decreasing the effects of vandalism, maintaining the safety of parks and park equipment, increasing community pride and ownership in the park system, educating the public of the environmental, financial, recreational and legal challenges facing the City and to assist the City's maintenance crews with clean-up activities. The City of Watertown Public Works Department acknowledges the fact that this program cannot be successful without dedicated citizens who donate their time in an effort to make a difference in their community. The City encourages individuals and organizations to become involved in the care and maintenance of our City parks. If you or your group would like to be involved with the Adopt-A-Park Program please contact City Hall at 952-955-2681.

Program Information & Policies

1. The group shall provide one individual as a contact person with the City. Groups and/or individuals will adopt a park area for a minimum of 1 year.
2. Adopt-A-Park duties shall be completed year-round. Monitoring of the park should be done on a regular basis, usually twice a month during the warm season and as weather permits in the cold season.
3. Prior authorization must be obtained before any development or maintenance project begins. Each adopting individual or group must sign an Adopt-A-Park agreement as a condition of the adoption. Participants must be physically able to perform general park maintenance and children under age 18 must be properly supervised.
4. Recycling of all waste material is encouraged. Individuals or groups may keep any and all proceeds from any material of recyclable value that is found.
5. Duties must be performed during daylight hours only and during appropriate weather conditions. Be aware of your surroundings to ensure your safety and the safety of others. Use caution while handling or collecting items such as litter and debris. Do not crush collected items as broken or jagged objects may cause injury. Do not wear headsets or engage in horseplay or other conduct which could divert your attention from your work or impair your ability to perceive hazards.
6. If participants are under the age of 18, the adopting group must have written parent / guardian permission on file prior to beginning this program.

Adopt-A- Park General Duties (Participants are encouraged to do more!)

- Picking up litter & debris



- Sweeping / Dusting
- Raking Leaves
- Spring & Fall clean up
- Weeding
- Plant / Water Flowers
- Graffiti - notify Public Works Department
- Clean out Barbecue Grills as necessary
- General Park Observation (broken glass, user behavior, lights, noise and etc.).
- Check play equipment for obvious safety concerns
- Return spilled sand to designated play areas
- Refill mailboxes with plastic bags

General Equipment Needs

The City of Watertown Public Works Department will provide adopt-a-park groups with garbage bags, safety vests & paint. The adopt-a-park group will provide rakes, shovels, work gloves, eyewear, brooms, rags (as duties require) & a first-aid kit.



Adopt-A-Park Program Application

Yes, I'd like to adopt a City of Watertown Park!

Name_____

Name of Group_____ # of Members_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Phone Number_____ Email_____

Name of Contact Person/Phone Number_____

Park you are interested in adopting (if known):

1. _____

2. _____

Thank you for your interest!

Please fax this form to 952-955-2695 or email to info@ci.watertown.mn.us or mail to:

City of Watertown
PO Box 279
Watertown, MN 55388

State of Agreement

I have read and agree to abide by the policies and regulations as designed by the City of Watertown in regard to the Adopt-a-Park Program.

Name:_____

Date:_____

Adoption Information (For Office Use Only)

Park Adopted:_____

Location:_____

Adoption Dates: From:_____ To:_____

CITY OF WATERTOWN

RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

WHEREAS, the **UNDERSIGNED** has volunteered his/her services in the City of Watertown:

The UNDERSIGNED AGREES TO THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY RELEASES, WAIVES AND DISCHARGES THE CITY OF WATERTOWN**, its council members, officers, employees, agents and independent contractors from all liability to the undersigned and/or his/her personal representatives, assigns, heirs and next of kin for any loss or damage and any claim or demands therefore on account of injury to the person or property or death of the undersigned, whether or not caused by the negligence and/or property of the City of Watertown, its council members, officers, employees, agents and independent contractors.
- 2. THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY ASSUMES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR AND RISK OF BODILY INJURY, DEATH OR PROPERTY DAMAGE** due to the negligence of the City of Watertown, its council members, officers, employees, agents and independent contractors, or otherwise while in, upon or about the premises of the City of Watertown and/or while using the premises or facilities or equipment thereon, and/or while participating in the volunteer activity whether within or outside the City.
- 3. THE UNDERSIGNED UNDERSTANDS THAT HE/SHE WILL BE VOLUNTEERING** time to work on projects and therefore will not be compensated monetarily or otherwise by the City of Watertown.

THE UNDERSIGNED HAS READ AND VOLUNTARILY SIGNS THE RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY, and further agrees that no oral representations, statements of inducements apart from the foregoing written agreement has been made. Execution of this Release and Waiver of Liability does not constitute a release and waiver by the City of Watertown of the defense of governmental immunity, or any other legal defense which may be applicable with respect to any claim which may arise against the City.

I HAVE READ THIS RELEASE:

Volunteer - Print Name

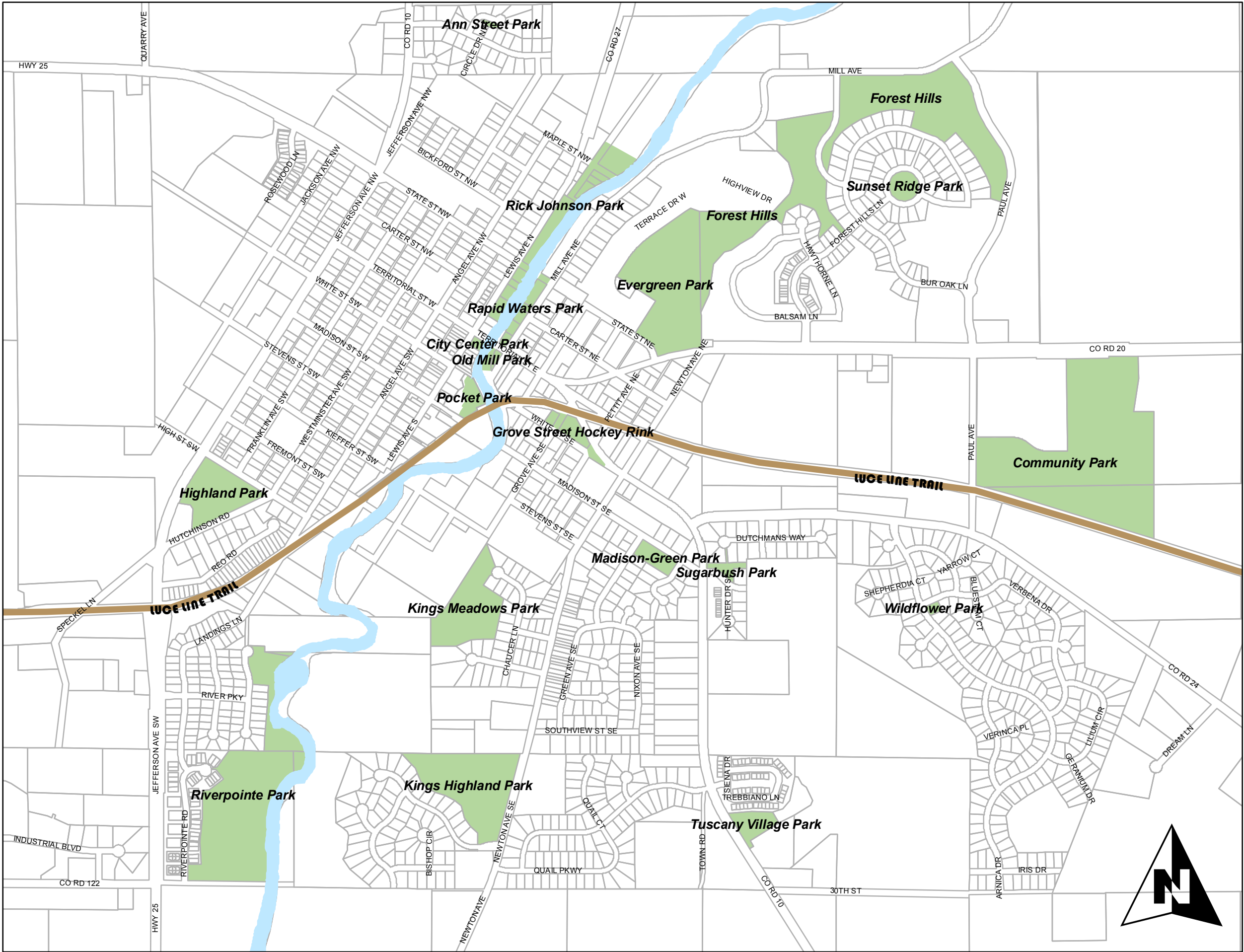
Volunteer's Signature

Parent's Name - Print Name
(Only required if Volunteer is a minor)

Parent's Signature
(Only required if Volunteer is a minor)

Date

Email Address



City of Watertown



CITY PARKS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1. Ann Street Park | 0.2 acre |
| 2. City Center Park | 1 acre |
| 3. Community Park | 40 acres |
| 4. Evergreen Park | 16 acres |
| 5. Grove Street Hockey Rink | 1 acre |
| 6. Highland Park | 7 acres |
| 7. Kings Highland Park | 12 acres |
| 8. Kings Meadows Park | 8 acres |
| 9. Madison-Green Park | 2 acres |
| 10. Old Mill Park | 1 acre |
| 11. Pocket Park | 2 acres |
| 12. Rapid Waters Park | 2 acres |
| 13. Rick Johnson Park | 4 acres |
| 14. Riverpointe Park | 27 acres |
| 15. Sugarbush Park | 1 acre |
| 16. Sunset Ridge Park | 1 acre |
| 17. Wildflower Park | 0.3 acre |

