

Adopt-A-Park Program

Background and Purpose

On April 22, 2008 the City Council of the City of Shakopee adopted Resolution No. 6756, A Resolution of the City of Shakopee, Minnesota, Adopting a Program Called "Adopt-A-Park".

In the past several years, many new parks and facilities have been developed in the City. This creates a strain on Public Works to keep up with all of the new tasks. New parks often require extra maintenance as plants are still establishing. Public Works has added staff, but tasks such as weeding or picking up trash are laborious and difficult to devote enough time to. This is the type of work that service groups or individuals can assist the City to complete.

Encouraging a sense of ownership in parks is a great way to promote pride in the City. Allowing volunteers to participate in park cleaning and enhancements not only provides additional labor to assist with park maintenance, it offers residents a chance to feel pride in contributing to their City. When residents feel a sense of ownership for a park, they are more likely to watch over it. This can contribute to less vandalism and a reduction of other undesirable activity, according to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) research.

The purpose of the Shakopee Adopt-A-Park program is to offer residents and local groups who are interested in performing community service, a defined opportunity to assist the City in the maintenance and enhancement of public parks and open spaces. In recognition of this service, they will receive staff support to do their tasks as needed. They will also receive recognition with a sign placed in their designated park.

Program Guidelines

This program is directed at groups of individuals looking for a regular service activity. Groups will help with seasonal clean-ups and other enhancements to the park. The Adopt-A-Park program requires an agreement /application and the signed waiver form to be completed by all members of the group. All individuals must sign the waiver prior to volunteering (more information on the application is listed below).

Examples of service activities that groups or individuals will take part in as part of the Adopt-A-Park program include, but are not limited to, park clean-ups (trash pickup, sand raking, reporting graffiti) several times a year, adding features to the parks by donating a bench, tree, or other materials as approved by staff and promoting the park by hosting special events.

Groups are required to:

- Make a minimum 2 year commitment, with encouragement to renew if the group fulfills their responsibilities.
- Pick up litter once in April or May, once in June or July and once in August or September. Totalling three times per year. Additional park clean ups are welcome.
- Provide current contact information and provide all participants names.
- Have all participants sign the City's waiver attached to the application form.
- Coordinate dates and tasks with City staff at least one week in advance.
- Obtain written approval from City staff at least 45 days prior to making any changes or enhancements to the park.

- Provide their own transportation to the site and to pick up materials from the City if needed.
- Coordinate publicity events with the City of Shakopee.

City staff will provide the following support on a staff availability basis:

- Coordinate the agreement and assign parks to be adopted with specific tasks to be completed.
- Provide materials for tasks (garbage bags) if requested.
- Provide additional follow up support (garbage pick-up, assist in prep of planting areas or install of equipment, review of plans and materials, observation of work, marking of work locations, GSOC utility verification, etc.).
- Creating and installing signage naming the adoptee near the park entry. The sign will be made of reflective metal, produced by the public works sign shop. The wording on the sign would be approved by staff.

Application

The application form will list specific tasks and times per season the tasks will be completed. The tasks would be selected based on the area to be adopted and the interests/capabilities of the volunteers. An application must be filled out and signed by the individual or group leader for every site. In addition, every participant must sign the part of the application that includes the City's waiver. The applications will be filed for easy coordination and tracking of work hours completed (some volunteers require a record of their hours in order to satisfy work, school, or other service requirements). There will not be a formal City employment application and no background checks will be made.

Existing Groups

Existing groups who already have associations or who have informal arrangements with the City to enhance specific parks are offered the first chance to adopt the park they have been involved with. The program will preserve the ongoing relationship with the groups by keeping contact information current and available to staff and by documenting and coordinating the projects.

This program will require staff support from the coordinator of the program (Parks, Recreation & Natural Resources Department) as well as the Public Works Department. Assistance from the Public Works Department will be requested with as much flexibility and lead time as possible. Volunteers will be informed that the City reserves the right to postpone or reschedule any staff support it needs to for any reason. The number and location of Adopt-A-Park sites available may need to be prioritized with Public Works prior to beginning the season.