

Best Practice Action 18.8

GreenStep Cities Best Practices: Environmental Management
Parks & Trails No.18

Increase active lifestyles and property values by enhancing the city's green infrastructure

Best Practice Action 8

Develop a program to involve community members in hands-on land restoration, invasive species management, and stewardship projects.

Implementation Tools

- See St. Paul-based [Great River Greening](#) for assistance in working with volunteers, and [Sentencing to Service](#) for a court alternative that puts carefully selected, nonviolent offenders to work on community improvement projects.
- 'Friends of the Parks' civic groups help deliver, among other benefits, cost savings to a city from the use of volunteers.
- Community volunteers often help a city in managing terrestrial and aquatic invasive species; guidance and funding for [invasives' management](#) is available from MN DNR and a number of other organizations.
- Promote or coordinate a citizen science program. Use the [SciStarter](#) project finder to find an activity that will help your community.
- Clean up and utilize unused public land for seasonal needs such as event space, parks, art installations, and community gardens - see [BPA 27.3](#).

Star Level Examples

1 star Create an annual event (can be in cooperation with other organizations) or ongoing 'adopt a park' effort for volunteer trash cleanup of open space, buckthorn removal, etc. for parks or selected public open space areas; educate community members about invasive species. Report gardens plots in city parks under BP 27.3

2 star In addition to cleanup and removal of exotics (1 Star), engage community members in annual restoration of natural areas (replanting shoreland buffers, restoring prairie, etc.).

3 star Create and fund an annual city-wide event for cleanup and restoration, engaging residents in most neighborhoods and creating a public promotion around the event; coordinate the use of unused public land for seasonal community use (pop-up parks, gardens, art, etc.).

Best yard trees for our changing climate

Metro area:

American elm
Basswood
Black oak
Black walnut
Bur oak
Cottonwood
Hackberry
Shagbark hickory
Silver maple
White oak

Invasive terrestrial plants (MN DNR)

Flowering plants

Birdsfoot trefoil
Brown, diffuse, and meadow knapweeds*
Bull thistle
Butter and eggs
Canada thistle
Common tansy
Common teasel*
Cow vetch and hairy vetch
Creeping Charlie
Crown vetch or axseed
Cut-leaved teasel*
Dalmatian toadflax*
Erect hedgeparsley
Garlic mustard
Giant hogweed*
Grecian foxglove*
Hoary alyssum
Leafy spurge
Musk or nodding thistle
Narrowleaf bittercress*
Orange hawkweed
Oxeye daisy
Poison hemlock
Queen Anne's lace
Spotted knapweed
White and yellow sweet clover
Wild parsnip
Yellow starthistle*

Grasses

Amur silver grass
Reed canary grass
Smooth brome grass

Trees and shrubs

Amur cork tree
Amur maple
Autumn olive
Black locust
Buckthorn
Japanese barberry
Multiflora rose
Non-native bush honeysuckles
Non-native knotweeds
Norway maple
Russian olive
Siberian elm
Siberian peashrub
Tree of heaven*
Winged burning bush

Vines

Black swallow-wort*
Japanese hops*
Oriental bittersweet*

CPTED: Keeping Community Parks Safe

- Kristin Caborn

Parks are the heart of our communities and our quality of life—where neighbors, friends, and family can interact freely.

Every time I'm involved with public outreach relating to parks and recreation, community residents tell me about the importance of safety. Perhaps their concern is partially a sign of our times, but assuming that the most meaningful connection residents have with their government is generally through parks and recreation, it is of the utmost importance that residents feel safe using their local parks.

Parks Increase Home Property Values

Property values are higher based on a home's proximity to a park. The National Association of Realtors reports that 57% of voters would choose a home closer to parks and open space over one that was not. In addition, the survey found that 50% of voters are willing to pay 10% more for a house located near a park or open space. The National Association of Homebuilders found that 65% of home buyers felt parks would seriously influence their decision to move to a community. In fact, it is very common for realtors to market properties based on their proximity to parks, and if that tendency continues, it is extremely important that our neighborhood parks are clean and safe.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, or CPTED (pronounced SEP-TED), is a unique way to synthesize good planning and design standards with crime prevention programs in communities. A park's design can have a direct impact on the public's perception of safety and their ultimate willingness to use the park. Utilizing a comprehensive approach, a CPTED practitioner can evaluate parks and make recommendations on their compliance with accepted CPTED strategies, such as natural surveillance, natural access control, and territorial reinforcement.

- Natural Surveillance—Designing areas where people and their activities can be regularly observed, and law enforcement and the “normal user” can easily have eyes on the park space.
- Natural Access Control—Controlling access to a site by clearly defining park entranceways and exits. For example, a “celebrated entry” as a primary means of ingress and egress helps staff and users know where people should come and go.
- Territorial Reinforcement—Creating areas that promote a sense of ownership—branding public spaces so the user knows they are in their local park (e.g., implementing a common amenity package throughout a system, such as signage, benches, and trash receptacles).

Among the numerous benefits to parks, CPTED can help increase patronage, reduce maintenance costs, and give the community greater satisfaction and safety—ultimately creating better places to live, work, and play.



