

TABLE I.—Selected standards for local recreation areas

[Acres per 1,000 population]

Agency	Play-grounds or neighborhood parks	Playfields or district parks	Large urban parks	Total urban	County or "extra-urban"	Total local
National Recreation Association ¹	2.5	2.5	5		15	25
Indiana				10	15	25
Maryland				10	15	25
Missouri						25
New Jersey				8	12	20
New Mexico						16
Ohio ²						30
Oklahoma	2.8	3	10		20	35.8
Pennsylvania						15
Washington						30
West Virginia	4	3	10		20	37
Wisconsin				10	15	25

¹ "Outdoor Recreation Space Standards," National Recreation and Park Association, January 1966. This publication revised standards is for discussion purposes, and is not yet an "official" standard.

² Ohio is one of the few States that has a standard which varies with the year, taking into consideration increased use of outdoor recreation areas per capita. The 30 acres per 1,000 is for 1971, the 1964 standard is 24 acres per 1,000, while the 1980 standard is 35 acres. The Northern Illinois Metropolitan Planning Commission also has a variable standard increasing with the target year.

(d) Qualitative Standards

Since parks serve a wide variety of functions, there can be no single set of qualitative standards. In this sense, parks are not like roads which can be engineered to national specifications to carry given volumes of traffic. However, certain general criteria can be applied to judge park quality. A park or recreation facility can be said to be of adequate quality if it is safe, attractive, accessible, easy to maintain, and continues to meet the demands placed upon it.

The application of these criteria would depend on the judgment of the group reviewing park adequacy; and the relative weights of the criteria would vary with the purpose of the facility. In fact, there might be a disagreement over which criteria to select, since little attention has been given to quality standards. Most of the planning and professional literature is devoted to standards of quantitative adequacy, not quality.

(1) *Safety*—In considering the safety of parks, a number of factors might be noted: adequacy of lighting, visibility from the street or roads, existence of fencing where it is needed, condition of equipment and facilities, protection from major hazards, provisions for traffic safety, and separation of different age groups and incompatible functions.

(2) *Attractiveness*—Attractiveness is a subjective judgment, but an important one. The National Recreation and Park Association recommends that playgrounds be combined with parks wherever possible so that play spaces can be integrated into the neighborhood and made as attractive as possible. And obviously, a rundown or neglected park cannot serve its primary function well.

(3) *Accessibility*—Accessibility is a key element. A park which cannot be easily reached is not serving its proper function. For this reason, small parks scattered throughout the city are often more valuable, acre for acre, than larger areas which are difficult to reach. In turn, larger regional parks must have adequate access roads or trails and be developed to the point of usefulness for the particular purposes to be served.