





Chapter 11

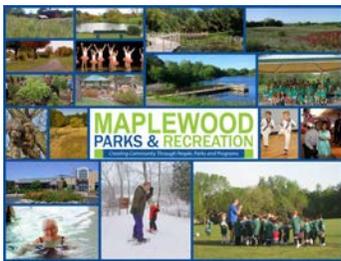
PARKS, TRAILS, & OPEN SPACE

When people talk about the places they love in a city, parks are typically at the top of the list. Parks are a source of civic identity and pride, and are also essential to the physical, economic, environmental, and social health of the City of Maplewood and its residents.

Today, the City of Maplewood has an enviable parks and recreation system. The system is known for its leadership in sustainability and diverse recreation options. Fifty parks and preserves serve as neighborhood anchors and provide places for community gathering, athletics, and respite, while the Nature Center and Community Center, operated by the YMCA, are hubs for programming.

MAPLEWOOD PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

ADOPTED BY MAPLEWOOD CITY COUNCIL, JANUARY 26, 2015



ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 2030 PLAN

- Adoption of a Parks and Recreation System Master Plan
- Implementation of System Plan Recommendations:
 - Accessible Playground at Goodrich Park
 - Tuj Lub Courts
 - Gladstone Savanna prairie restoration, trail system and playground
 - Edgerton Community Garden
 - MNC pollinator education and monitoring programs
- Partnership between MCC and YMCA
- Safe Routes to Schools
- Fish Creek site preservation, restoration and trail installation

The parks and recreation system is transitioning from a developing system into a mature system, which presents new challenges. At the core of future issues is the need for extensive park revitalization and reinvestment. System-wide replacement of aging park facilities such as playgrounds, courts, fields, shelters, and signage is needed. In addition, significant reinvestment in the Community Center, Nature Center, and park activity buildings is needed.

Taking care of the existing system is the number one community identified priority for the future.

Purpose

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan Parks, Trails, and Open Space Chapter is to guide reinvestment in and reinvigoration of the parks and recreation system for the next generation of Maplewood residents. The chapter summarizes local system components and recognizes regional parks and trails. This chapter also updates the goals and policies from the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The Parks, Trails, and Open Space Chapter, however, does not provide detailed recommendations for each component of the system. Those are provided in the 2015 Parks and Recreation System Master Plan.

The 2015 System Master Plan, available on the City website, was developed in a multi-year process with many opportunities for community input. It was guided by the Parks and Recreation Commission and ultimately adopted by the City Council. The System Master Plan is a comprehensive inventory of and vision for the future of the parks and recreation system. It includes existing conditions, contextual background information, a vision and guiding principles, and a set of recommendations for Maplewood's parks and recreation.

Trends in Recreation

Several recreation trends that are relevant to Maplewood influenced the development of parks recommendations. The following trends are described in more detail in the 2015 Park System Plan.

- » Modest population growth
- » Increasingly diverse
- » Actively aging
- » Generational differences in behavior and preferences
- » Increased interest in trails
- » Increasingly health conscious
- » Participation in emerging sports
- » Quality over quantity
- » Environmentally conscious
- » Climate change
- » Concerned about safety
- » Public art
- » Tight family finances
- » Challenged government budgets

Existing Conditions

Maplewood has a thriving parks and recreation system, and residents currently have good access to parks and paved trails. When measured against neighboring communities of similar size, Maplewood has more city and regional parks, trails, and open space, and for a city of its size, Maplewood also compares well against national standards due to its amount and variety of facilities and parkland.

Maplewood has an uncommon resource in its system of Preserves and Greenways. These features give residents additional access and exposure to natural resources, passive recreation opportunities, and sustainable landscape practices.

Overall, residents are happy with the physical condition of the system, though much of the infrastructure is aging and will need replacement.

Future improvements should focus on making parks more consistent across the system, while at the same time finding ways to make each park distinctive and reflective of the neighborhood it serves. Additionally, maintaining and replacing existing park facilities will require capital reinvestment, as a number of playgrounds, restrooms, warming houses, and picnic shelters will need replacement in the near future.

Features and Highlights

Maplewood categorizes its parks by type in order to provide an equitable amount of services and facilities to its residents. Parks are identified as Neighborhood, Community, Youth Athletic, or Community Athletic Complex. Preserves are identified as either Community or Neighborhood scale. Additionally, Special Use Parks and Facilities include recreation services that don't fit into the other categories.

Neighborhood Parks

Maplewood's network of 26 neighborhood parks provides a strong foundation of amenities for the overall system. Neighborhood parks are distributed evenly throughout the City and typically include facilities such as walking trails, playgrounds, and open play fields.

Community Parks

Parks currently categorized as community parks include Joy, City Campus, Goodrich, and Wakefield Parks. These parks are used for specialized community events and contain amenities with city-wide draw, such as lakes, group picnic facilities, athletic complexes, or historic resources.

Athletic Parks

Maplewood's athletic parks are divided into two categories; youth athletic and community athletic. Currently, there are four youth athletic parks and two community athletic parks. The community athletic parks also serve youth needs.



Hazelwood Park



Maplewood Heights Park

PARK SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

- » Over 930 acres of city-owned parks, preserves, and open space.
- » Over 1,000 acres of county, state, and agency-owned land.
- » 36 Parks and 15 Preserves
- » 18% of land within the City is park or open space
- » Approximately 130 miles of sidewalk and on- and off-road trails
- » 3 Regional parks
- » 6 County parks
- » Access to the Mississippi National River & Recreation Area

PARK SERVICE AREAS

Park Service Areas help provide equitable and convenient access to facilities that do not need to be provided at each neighborhood park but that need to be distributed throughout the community. These facilities include tennis, baseball/softball, basketball, soccer, small shelters, and hockey/pleasure skating. These areas were identified by consolidating existing neighborhoods into larger service areas, keeping in mind major transportation and natural resource barriers. Each of the five park service areas are outlined in orange.

Preserves

The City owns and manages a system of preserves set aside for the protection of natural resources, scenic areas, and landscape buffers. The preserves range in size from 5 to 46 acres and are open to passive-use activities such as hiking, bird watching, and nature study. The City has established two types of Preserves:

- » Community - integrated, multi-use areas set aside for preserving natural resources, connecting people to nature, and providing educational programming and historic interpretation. Community Preserves include Prairie Farm, Gladstone Savanna, Fish Creek, and Maplewood Nature Center.
- » Neighborhood - areas set aside for the preservation of natural resources and to connect people with nature through low-impact activities such as nature study/observation, bird/wildlife watching, walking/hiking, and meditation/spiritual reflection. Examples include the Priory, Applewood, and Spoon Lake.

Maplewood Nature Center

The Maplewood Nature Center is the epicenter of environmental education within the City. Situated on a 40-acre preserve, the facility includes a Visitor Center, pond, hiking trails, boardwalks, sustainable practice demonstration/interpretive areas, and a nature play area. Staffed by Naturalists, the center offers programming for all ages, and serves as the hub for sustainability programming and service learning for Maplewood residents.

Maplewood Community Center

Located within the City Hall Campus, the Maplewood Community Center (MCC) features two pools, a gymnasium, an indoor track, racquetball courts, an aerobics studio, fitness room, massage facilities, childcare, banquet and meeting rooms, and a performing arts theatre. Beginning in 2016 the Maplewood Community Center is operated by the YMCA through a partnership with the City of Maplewood. Open and welcome to all, visitors may purchase passes or annual memberships, and residents of Maplewood can take advantage of discounted membership rates. Special offerings and partnerships at the Center include programs for seniors, wellness classes, and theatre and arts education opportunities operated by the non-profit Ashland Productions.

Programming

The City of Maplewood offers its residents a diverse range of programs. Programs are carefully designed to appeal to people of all ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds, with a focus on community/special events, and programming at the MCC and Nature Center. The City offers programs run by City staff and in conjunction with partners such as the North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale School District, neighboring communities, and Ramsey County Parks. Neighboring communities have recreation associations that offer additional sports programming as well.

Figure 11-1. Maplewood Park Classifications

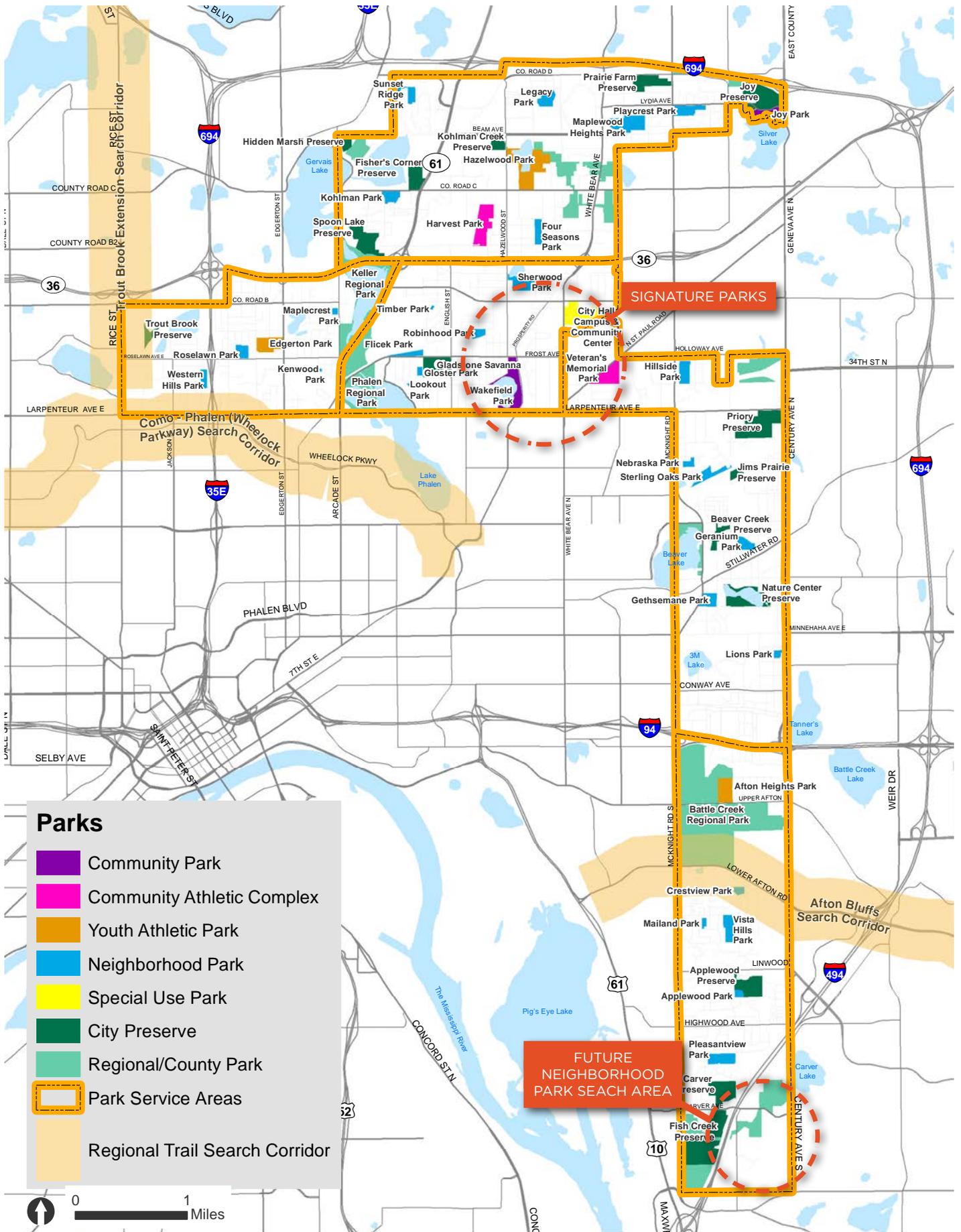


Figure 11-2. Preserve Classifications

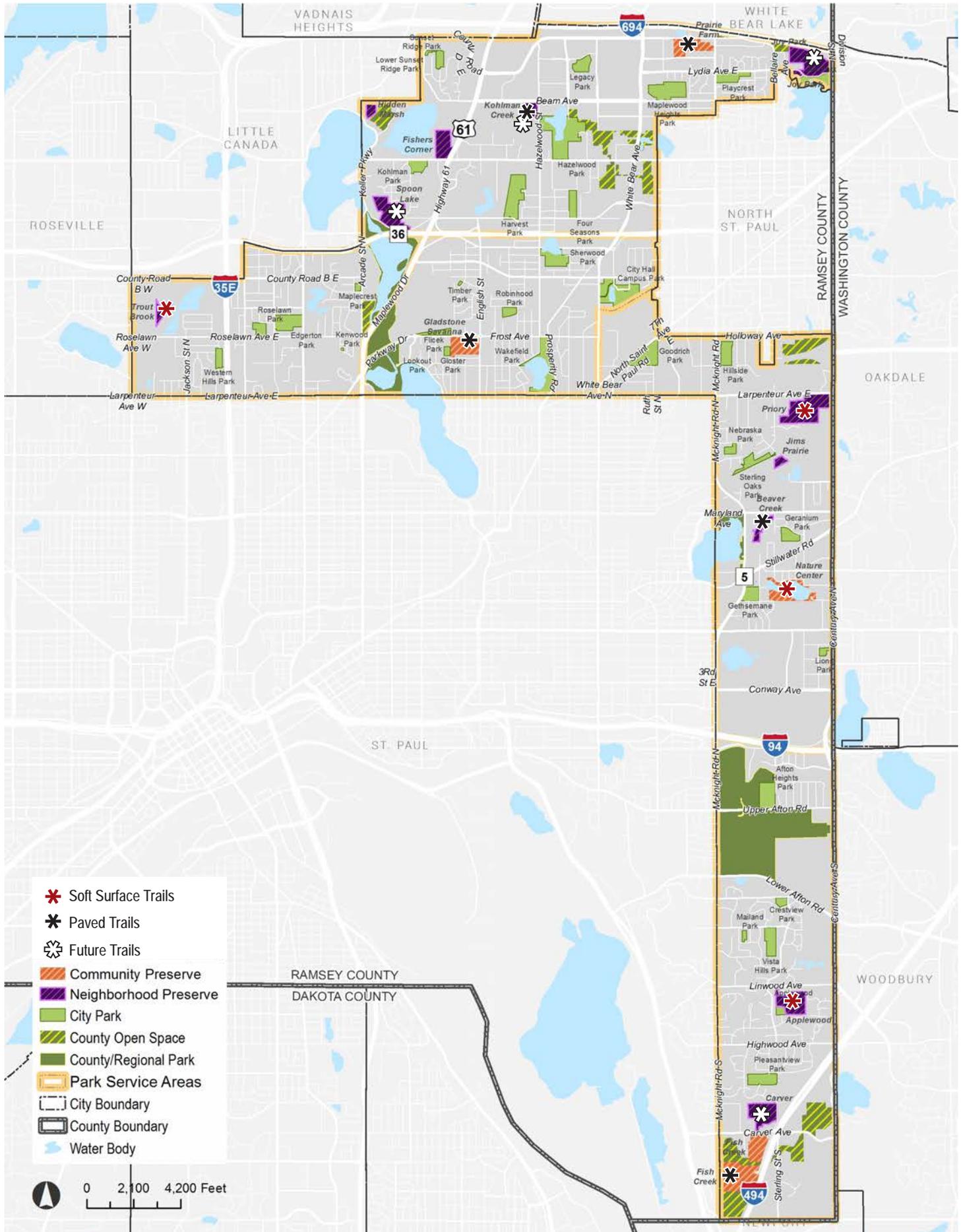
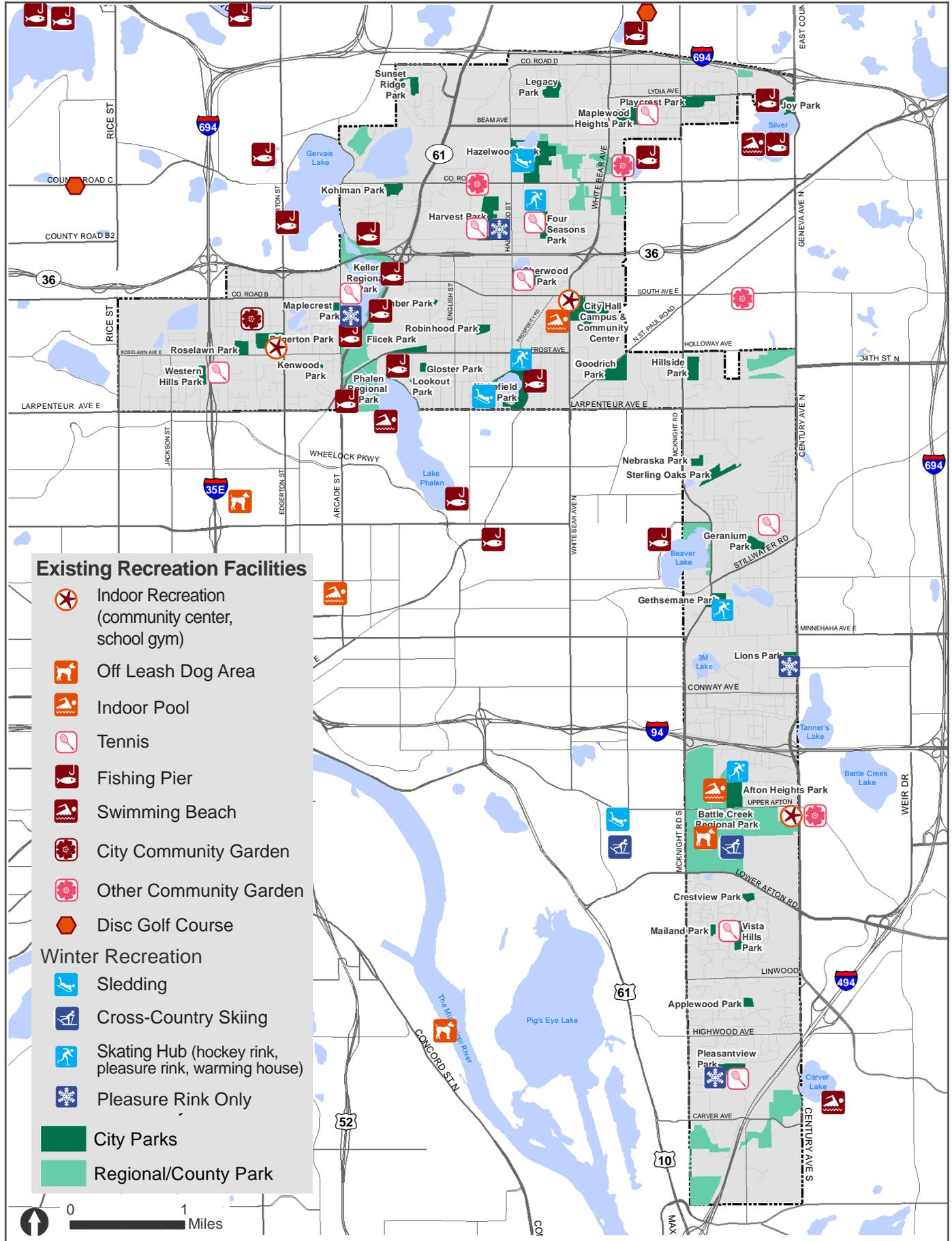


Figure 11-3. Existing Recreation Facilities



Natural Area Greenways

The Natural Area Greenway concept is a unique feature of the Maplewood system. The greenways are an overlay of the largest contiguous areas of habitat in Maplewood, encompassing both public and private lands. They were identified to support the protection, connection, and restoration of large scale ecosystems and to provide habitat for species that need large natural areas. Parks and Recreation property within the system will be managed to contribute to the health of the greenway. Additional information about the greenway system can be found in the Natural Resources Chapter.

Regional Parks & Recreation Facilities

Several regional parks and facilities are located in Maplewood. These parks and facilities are operated and managed by Ramsey County Parks or the City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department. Although these sites are not operated by the City of Maplewood, they are valuable resources to Maplewood residents.



Bridge to Keller Island, Keller Regional Park

Phalen-Keller Regional Park

Phalen-Keller Regional Park is a 750 acre park that is managed jointly by the City of Saint Paul Parks Department and Ramsey County Parks -- Saint Paul manages the Phalen Park portion and Ramsey County the Keller Park portion. The park attracts over one million visitors annually. The park straddles the border of Maplewood and Saint Paul and acts as a neighborhood park for the residents who live near it. In 2011, both agencies worked together to create a master plan for the combined park. Activities at the park include: picnicking, boating, swimming, biking, golf, fishing, and more.

Phalen Golf Course & Keller Golf Course

Phalen-Keller Regional Park includes two public golf courses: the Phalen Park Golf Course, managed by the City of Saint Paul, and the Keller Golf Course, managed by Ramsey County. Each golf course provides 18 holes, a driving range, practice green, restaurant and bar, and is open to the public.



Battle Creek Regional Park

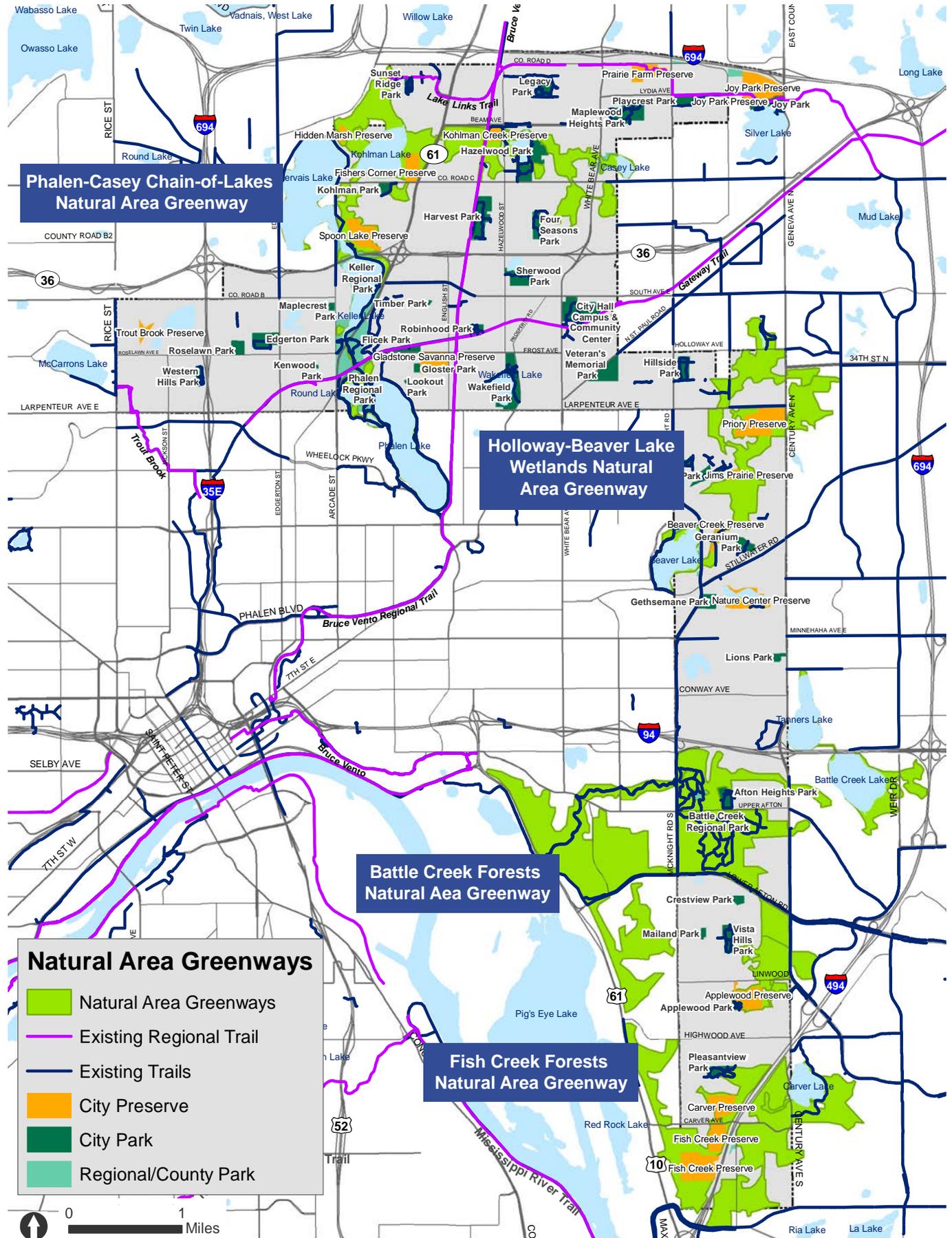
Battle Creek Regional Park

Battle Creek Regional Park encompasses park sites in the southern part of Maplewood and southeastern Saint Paul. The park is operated and managed by Ramsey County Parks. Activities include: trails and natural areas, a dog park, a family aquatic facility with pools and waterslides, mountain biking, sledding, cross-country skiing, and picnicking. The park also includes The Ponds at Battle Creek golf course, which is a nine-hole, par 35, public golf course with a driving range and putting green.

Bruce Vento Regional Trail

The Bruce Vento Regional Trail runs north and south through the central portion of Maplewood. It connects the historical Gladstone neighborhood north to White Bear Lake. North of I-694, the future alignment is planned to follow Hwy 61 to Bald Eagle Lake. South of Maplewood, the trail leads from Phalen Regional Park through the City of Saint Paul to the Bruce Vento Nature

Figure 11-4. Natural Areas and Greenways



Sanctuary south of I-94. A future portion of the trail is planned to connect to the Mississippi River.

Within Maplewood the Bruce Vento Regional Trail corridor will also be the location of the Rush Line BRT corridor. The right-of-way, owned by the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, has sufficient space to accommodate both the trail and the BRT.

Trout Brook Regional Trail

The Trout Brook Regional Trail is a Ramsey County managed and operated paved trail that connects Lake McCarrons County Park in Roseville with the Gateway State Trail in Saint Paul. Its alignment runs through the southwestern corner of Maplewood. Future plans are for the trail to connect south to the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.

State & County Facilities

Gateway State Trail

The Gateway State Trail is a converted rails to trail. It is a multi-use, paved trail managed by the Department of Natural Resources. The trail runs 18 miles from the city of Saint Paul northeast to Pine Point Regional Park, a few miles northwest of Stillwater. The corridor is generally wooded and provides adjacent natural surface horse trail. Access in Maplewood is provided at the Community Center, Robinhood Park, Keller Regional Park, and Flicek Park

Lake Links Trail

The Lake Links Trail is a jointly managed Ramsey County and Washington County paved trail that links northern Maplewood to White Bear Lake.

Beaver Lake County Park

Beaver Lake County Park is located in the southern portion of Maplewood on the border with Saint Paul. The park features picnic areas, a lake trail, fishing pier, and play area.

Holloway Marsh County Open Space

Ramsey County's Natural Resources Management Plan indicates that there are native habitats mainly in the northern portion of the open space, including a large cattail marsh with pockets of mixed woods. The wooded hill on the south parcel is mature oak with a degraded understory. The property between the two parcels is a highly disturbed MNDOT storage yard. Currently, there is no active vegetation management in this open space. The park hosts a variety of common wildlife, as well as a variety of nesting songbirds and waterfowl. The City maintains a trail within this open space.



Bruce Vento Regional Trail



Trout Brook Regional Trail



Beaver Lake County Park

FISHING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD (FIN)

Wakefield and Beaver Lake are part of the MnDNR FiN program which aims at increasing angling opportunities, public awareness and environmental stewardship. This program, developed in response to the increasing urbanization of the state's population, seeks to provide easily accessible fishing opportunities close to where people live.



Kohlman Creek

Kohlman Creek & Marsh County Open Spaces

- » The vegetation in Kohlman Creek open space is a variety of degraded wetlands and mixed woods with no active vegetation management. The park hosts a variety of common wildlife, including a variety of nesting songbirds and waterfowl. There is no active wildlife management or trails in this open space.
- » North Kohlman Marsh is a mixture of box elder and ash woods with areas of open wetlands. This is no active wildlife management or trails on this site.



Goodrich Golf Course

Ramsey County, Goodrich Golf Course, Aldrich Arena, and Horseshoe Courts

Goodrich Golf course is a challenging 18-hole, par-70 course with gently rolling hills. Course features: water on five holes, large practice putting green featuring a tiered sand bunker, and a full bar with 65-seat banquet room.

Aldrich Arena is a multi-purpose arena managed by Ramsey County. It hosts multiple high school hockey games, but is also used for events, conventions, assemblies, sport events, and expos.

Ramsey County maintains a designate horseshoe court at 2030 White Bear Avenue. In addition to being open for the public, the 20 lighted courts are home to the Saint Paul-Ramsey County Horeshoe Club.



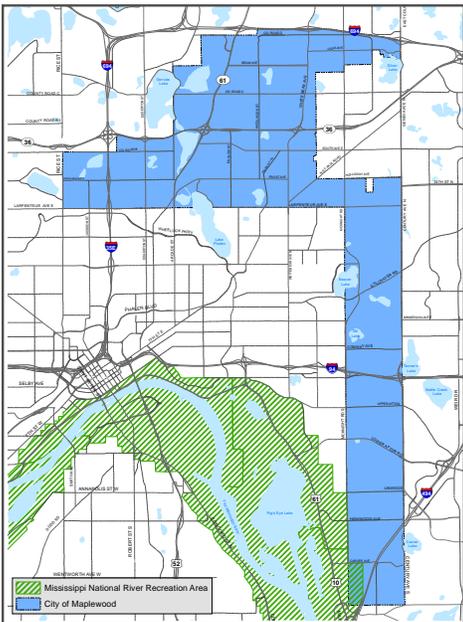
View Toward the Mississippi River from Fish Creek Preserve

Hillcrest Golf Course

Hillcrest Golf Course is located in Saint Paul, east of the McKnight Road border with Maplewood. The golf course is set to close in the future.

Mississippi National River & Recreation Area

A small portion of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area touches the southern portion of Maplewood. This area encompasses 72 miles of the Mississippi River corridor from north of the Twin Cities down to Hastings. The area is a partnership between the National Park Service and local governments including only 67 acres of nationally owned land, while city parks, regional parks, state park, national wildlife refuge, state scientific and natural areas, and privately owned land make up the rest of the 54,000 acres. The purpose of the designation is to protect and promote use of the river for fishing, boating, canoeing, birdwatching, hiking, and learning about the river and its ecosystem.



A portion of the Mississippi National River Recreation Area is in Maplewood.

“ WHAT WE HEARD

Existing Assets to Retain

- » Trails – Fish Creek, Bruce Vento, Gateway, Preserves, Open Spaces
- » Facilities such as the Nature Center, Community Center, Hazelwood Park, Joy Park boat launch, Edgerton baseball field, off-leash dog areas, community gardens
- » Neighborhood playgrounds that have equipment for a range of ages
- » Neighborhood parks such as Applewood, Pleasantview, Afton Heights, Maplewood Heights
- » Variety of activities offered throughout the summer

Opportunities & Needs

- » Use of golf courses for walking, hiking, or skiing
- » Replacement of aging playgrounds, such as at Hazelwood, Pleasantview, and Sunset Parks
- » Ballfield improvements, such as Geranium and Lion’s Parks
- » Amenities like shade and seasonal restrooms, such as at Playcrest
- » Improved neighborhood access to parks, such as Goodrich
- » Add pickleball in dedicated courts and co-located with tennis
- » Reevaluate park offerings where there is space, such as a volleyball court at Pleasantview or a small dog parklet at Western Hills
- » Explore use of rubber chips instead of sand in playgrounds
- » Trail resurfacing



Issues and Opportunities

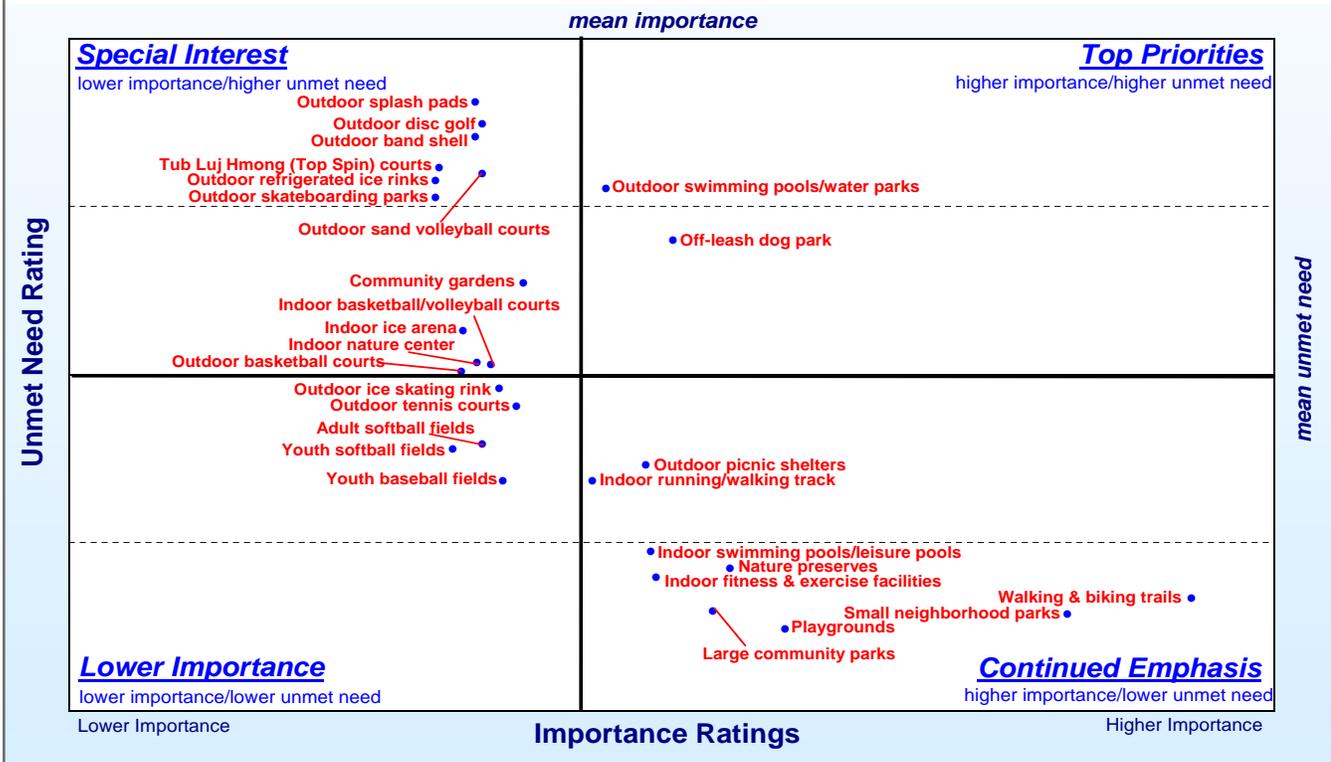
During the 2014-2015 park system planning process, a needs assessment was completed that included a peer community comparison, analysis of existing conditions, and extensive community engagement. The findings from that needs assessment were considered along with the recent community input highlighted to the right to develop the following list of issues and opportunities:

The Good News

- » Excellent access to parks and natural areas
- » Well loved neighborhood parks
- » High number of trail miles, most residents are in close proximity to trails
- » Leader in natural area protection, sustainable development, and maintenance practices
- » The Maplewood Community Center is the most used facility
- » Diverse programs
- » Invigorated, professional staff that is taking a proactive role
- » Existing plans for key parks to build on

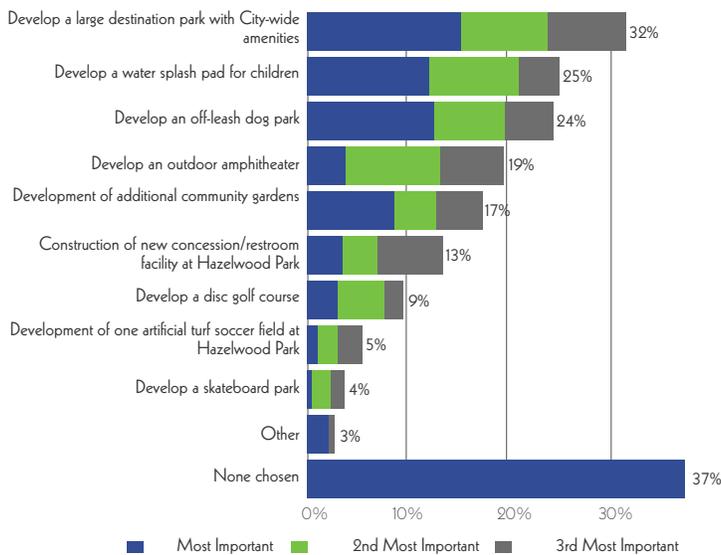


Importance-Unmet Needs Assessment Matrix- Facilities



Major new parks, preserves, and recreation facility improvements that are the most important to respondent households

by percentage of respondents based on top three choices (excluding 'non chosen')



Needs

- After trails, neighborhood parks are the most needed (61%).
- Residents have unmet needs for a wide variety of parks, facilities, and activities.
- Developing a new large destination park with city-wide amenities is the most important major addition to the system.

Funding & Priorities

- Most of any additional funding should go to improvements to existing parks, preserves, and trails.
- 24% of respondent households would not be willing to pay any amount of a monthly tax to fund their priority projects. 8% of respondents would be willing to pay \$12-15 per month for their priorities, which is the maximum reported.
- 34% of respondents would vote in favor of a tax to fund the types of projects most important to their household over the next 10 years.

Some of the key findings from the 2014 City-Wide Parks Needs Assessment Survey. Additional survey results can be found in the System Plan on pages 21-23.

The Needs

- » Renovation of older parks: replace facilities, add support amenities, and improve accessibility
- » Trail and sidewalk system connectivity
- » Park standardization across the system (signage, benches, design standards, asset management)
- » More unique parks through attention to aesthetics, arts, history, and culture
- » Places and programs for community gathering (at all scales).
- » Continued leadership in natural area preservation, restoration, sustainability, and education
- » Financial stability
- » Specialized facilities that respond to demographic and recreation trends
- » Reinvest and replace over time with the availability of funding.



VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The parks and recreation system vision and supporting guiding principles are aspirational and describe where the parks and recreation system wants to go over the next 20 years. The vision and principles are based on community and stakeholder input, current plans, and a detailed evaluation of the opportunities and challenges facing the system in Maplewood.

The Vision for Parks and Recreation is:

“To help create a vibrant community that embraces diversity, celebrates arts and culture, values health and wellness, and promotes stewardship of the environment.”

The vision recognizes four critical elements of the parks and recreation system: diversity, arts and culture, health and wellness, and environmental stewardship. Together, these elements contribute to a vibrant community. The recommendations and strategies in the following chapter use six underlying guiding principles that will help realize the vision.

- » Safe & Welcoming
- » Connect People & Places
- » Encourage Health & Wellness
- » Promote Environmental Stewardship
- » Inspire Creativity & Learning
- » Financially Sustainable

Figure 11-6. Proposed Specialty Recreation Facilities

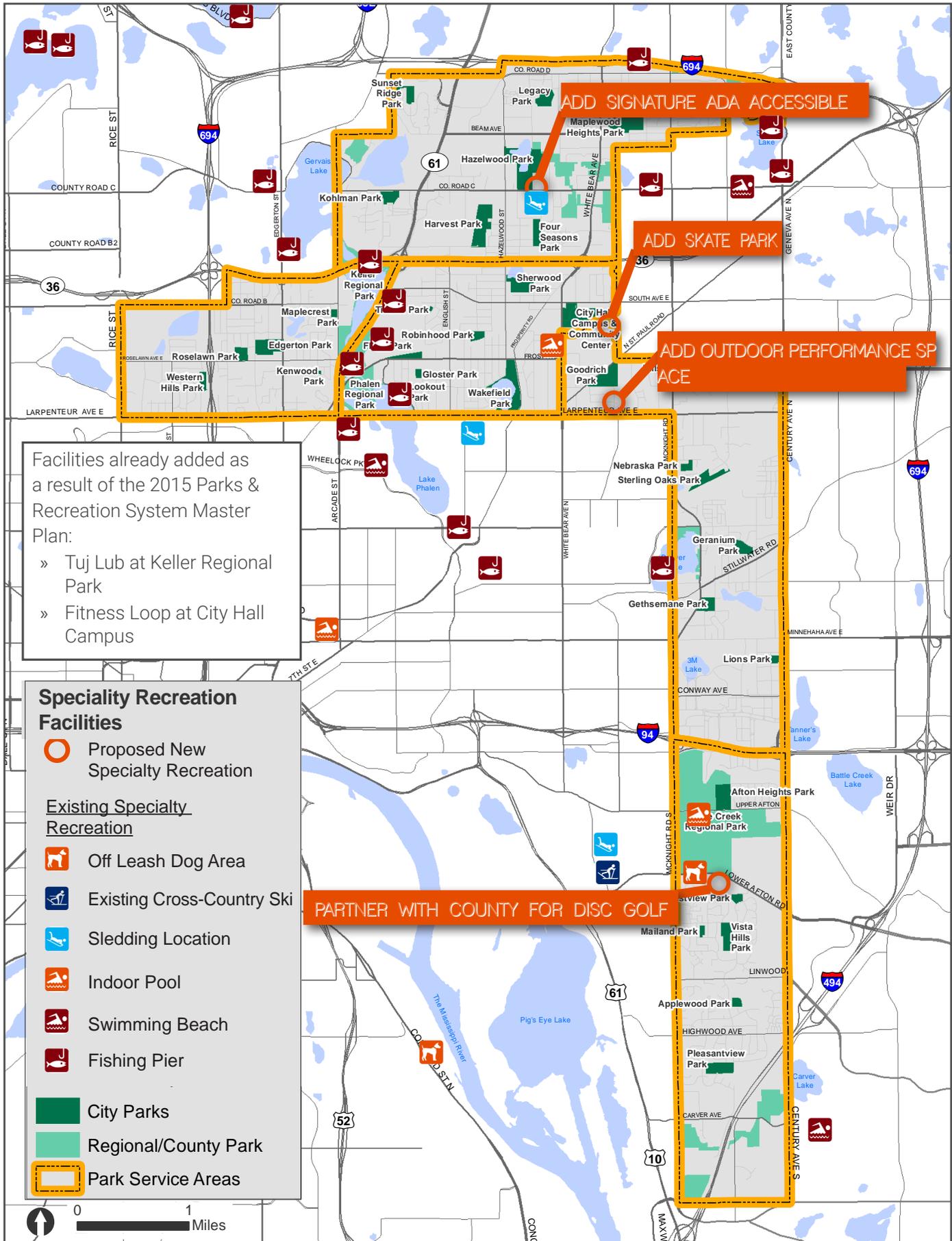
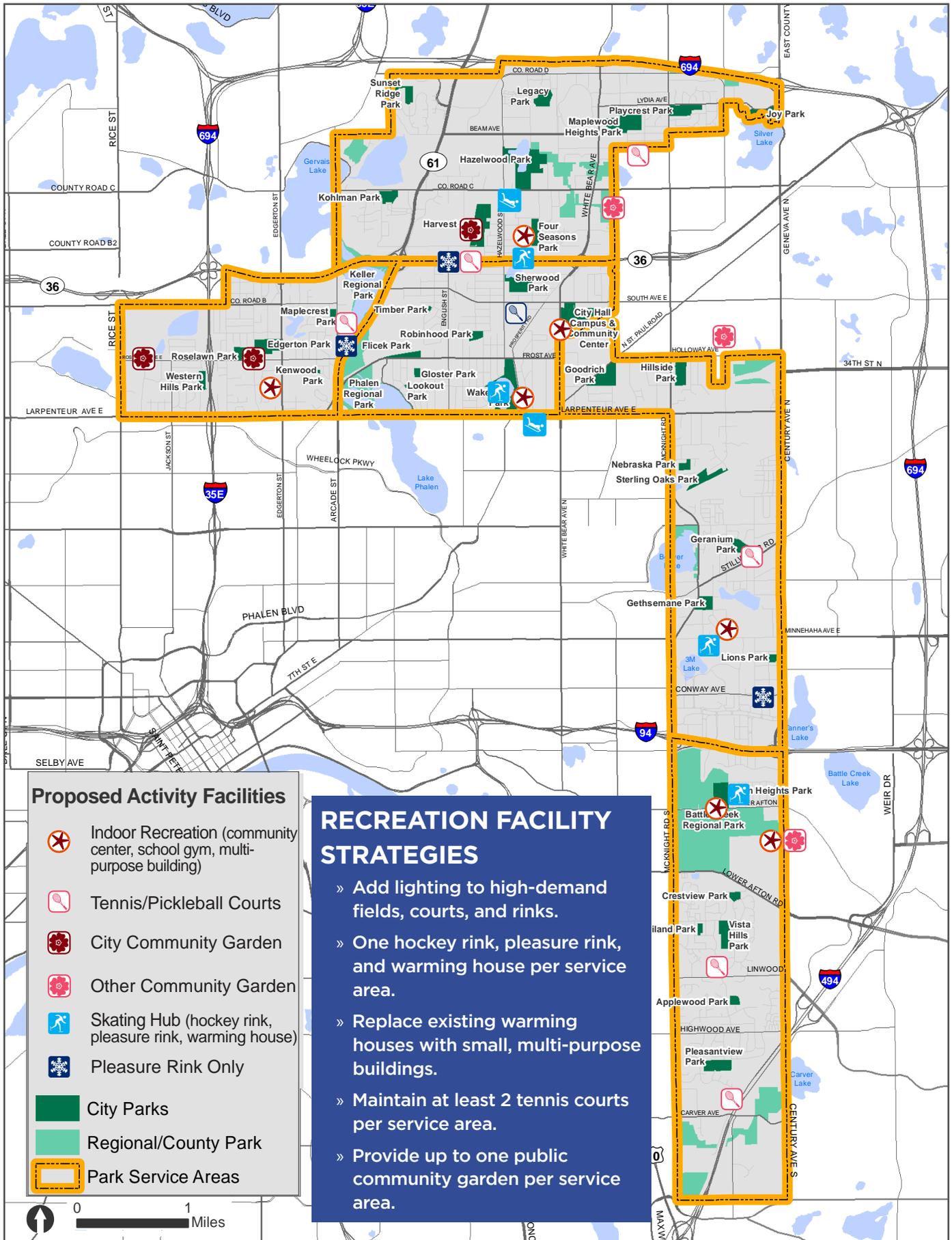


Figure 11-7. Proposed Activity Facilities





Wakefield is one of the parks where the community gathers.



HEALTH



RESILIENCE



EQUITY



AGE-FRIENDLINESS

The icons above are used to reference the guiding principles, which describe community values that are intended to be achieved through the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

See Chapter 3: Guiding Principles for further description of each.

Implementation

The goals and policies identified in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan represent a synthesis and update of the goals and objectives included in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan and the policies from the set of recommendations identified in the 2015 Parks and Recreation System Master Plan. These goals and policies are intended to guide the City Council, Parks and Recreation Commission, and City Staff in their decision-making for the system.

Goals and Policies



1. Provide a comprehensive and connected parks and recreation system that serves active and passive needs to provide a high quality of life for all residents.

- 1.1 Provide access to a neighborhood park for all residents within a ½ mile radius (10 minute walk).
- 1.2 Distribute neighborhood scale recreation facilities across park service areas.
 - 1.2.1 Focus neighborhood park activities on playgrounds, informal gathering, and informal turf play.



2. Maintain athletic fields for practice or youth games in neighborhood parks.

- 2.1 Explore opportunities to add needed recreation facilities, including tennis, basketball, youth fields, hockey/skating rinks, and community gardens so there is at least one facility per park service area.
- 2.2 Provide places for neighborhood and community gatherings.
 - 2.2.1 Ensure each park service area has a small picnic shelter.
 - 2.2.2 Ensure each park service area has a small, multi-purpose building that can be used for indoor neighborhood events, programming, and as a warming house in the winter.

2.3 Provide community parks and community athletic parks in strategic, convenient locations (Note: this recommendation applies to Joy, Wakefield, Goodrich, Harvest, and Hazelwood Parks).

2.3.1 These parks should support community gathering, access to nature, and active recreation.

2.3.2 Ensure each community park and community athletic park provides user amenities including restrooms, water fountains, bike racks, and lighting in key use areas.

2.3.3 Assess parking adequacy annually to ensure use is not adversely affecting surrounding neighborhoods.

2.4 Ensure the cleanliness of parks and park facilities through regular maintenance, including: regular garbage and recycling collection; regular cleaning of buildings, picnic shelters and restrooms; removal of graffiti and repair of vandalism, as required; and respond to complaints and problems in a timely manner, as established by policy.



Fish Creek Preserve in southern Maplewood



3. Maintain, enhance, and provide access to natural resources within the parks and recreation system.

3.1 Establish Community Preserves as integrated, multi-purpose areas set aside for preserving natural resources, connecting people to nature, and providing educational programming and historic interpretation.

3.1.1 Use natural resource management plans to guide the preservation, management, and restoration of natural resources.

3.1.2 Use individual master plans for each Community Preserve to define each preserve's ability to accommodate natural resource-based recreation opportunities such as play areas, sitting areas, picnic shelters, paved trail networks, community gardens, educational programming, and camping.

3.1.3 Provide historic interpretation to share the history of the site.

3.2 Maintain and actively manage Neighborhood Preserves as areas set aside for the preservation of natural resources and to connect people with nature.

3.2.1 Limit activities in neighborhood preserves to low impact activities such as nature study/observation, bird/wildlife watching, walking/hiking, and meditation/spiritual reflection.

3.2.2 Use management plans to guide preservation, restoration, and management of the natural resources in individual neighborhood preserves.



The Nature Center is the hub of environmental education for the City.

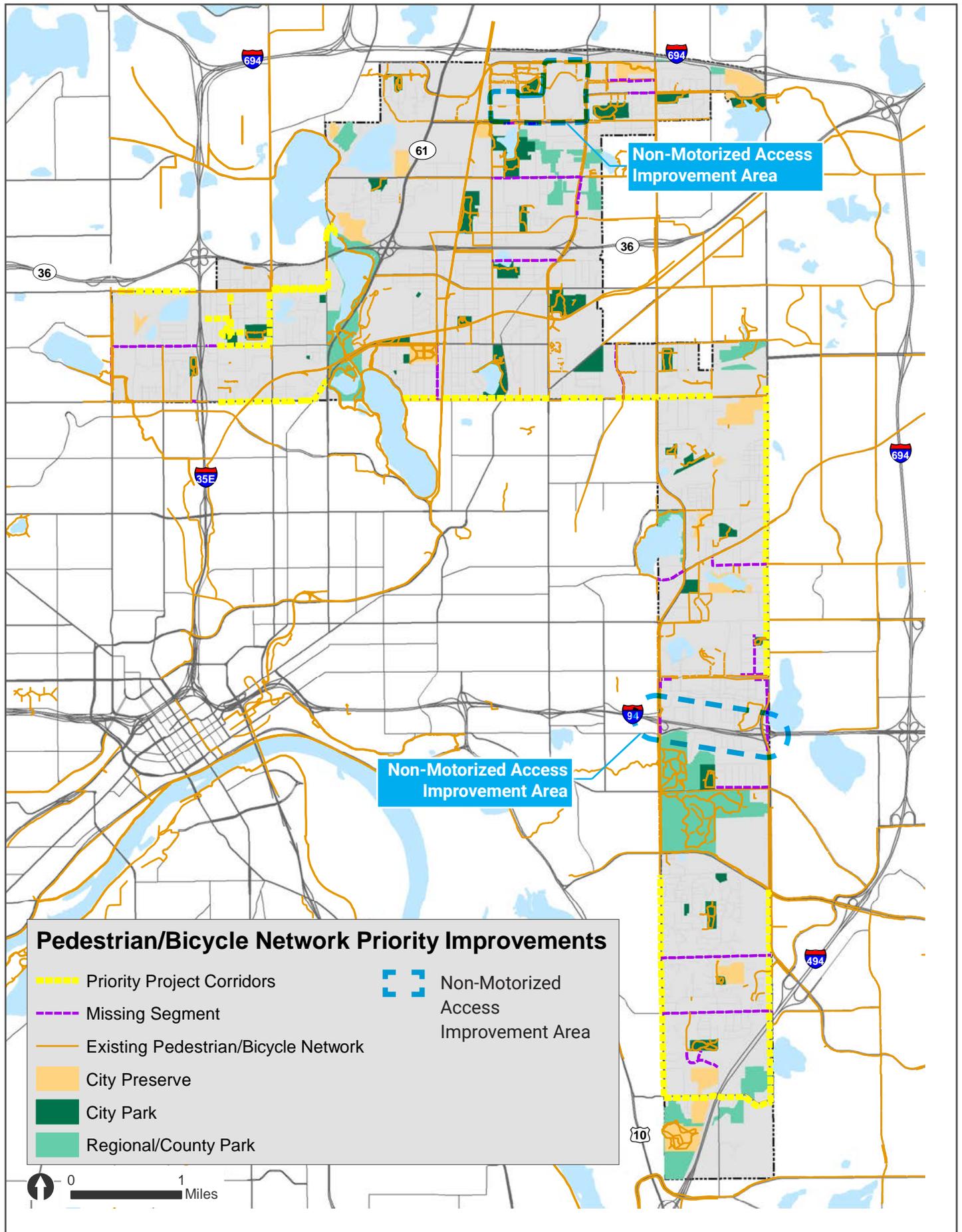
- 3.2.3 Use low impact design to add trails to preserves where appropriate. Balance the types of trails available in individual preserves (paved, soft surface, mowed, etc.) based on trail availability within a park service area, greenway designation, connection to existing trails, topography, natural resource quality, and environmental protection.
- 3.2.4 No-net loss Policy: The City shall retain a minimum of 295 acres in the system of preserves.
- 3.2.5 Improve access to nature for people of all abilities by ensuring one ADA neighborhood preserve trail in each of the park service areas.
- 3.3 Integrate Natural Resource Management into Parks and Preserves.
 - 3.3.1 Integrate food production in City parks and preserves—edibles, foraging, permaculture, community gardens, etc.
 - 3.3.2 Create and follow management plans (e.g. Beaver Creek Corridor Management Plan).
 - 3.3.3 Minimize monocultures and establish biodiversity goals to support wildlife habitat.
 - 3.3.4 Consider ecotype distribution across the system (diversity of forest, prairie, savanna, wetland, lacustrine environments) when exploring natural resources restoration.
 - 3.3.5 Identify and manage for target species (e.g. threatened or special concern species) as possible tools for educating and engaging the community.
- 3.4 Connect people with nature, including land, water, and wildlife resources, and empower them to be stewards of the environment.
 - 3.4.1 Reconnect with schools to provide outdoor nature experiences and education in a variety of locations, including schools, parks, preserves, rain gardens, and at the Nature Center.
 - 3.4.2 Provide volunteer opportunities for all ages to participate in hands-on citizen science monitoring programs such as frog monitoring, monarch tagging, open space monitors, etc.
 - 3.4.3 Use technology and mobile delivery methods like a nature center van to bring nature based education to participants.



4. Acquire, develop, and maintain an interconnected trail system for transportation, recreation, and educational purposes.

- 4.1 Create a safe, multi-purpose, and all-season trail system
 - 4.1.1 Sign paved shoulders when utilized to supplement the non-motorized system, transitioning to off-road facilities or bike lanes where and when possible.
 - 4.1.2 Add system wayfinding and signage at key locations.
 - 4.1.3 Consider options for hiking, biking, walking, skating, and cross-country skiing.

Figure 11-8. Pedestrian/Bicycle Network Priority Improvements





Programming should offer opportunities for all ages and a variety of interests

CONNECTED RAMSEY COMMUNITIES NETWORK

Maplewood supports the Ramsey County-Wide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan and the Connected Ramsey Communities Network. The Connected Ramsey Communities Network, a regional vision established in collaboration with Ramsey County municipalities, is a network of existing and future bikeways designed to serve as a countywide backbone connecting local communities and the region. This network is built from local facilities and, when fully developed, will connect people with desirable destinations throughout the city and county with high-quality, long-distance, and connector routes. These efforts, coupled with the City's own planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities, strive to ensure people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can safely and comfortably walk and bike in their daily lives.

- 4.1.4 Update the Snow and Ice Control Policy on an annual basis to ensure the appropriate prioritization of the network.
- 4.2 Create a Priority Network that makes North-South and East-West connections for pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - 4.2.1 Connect to regional and community parks, preserves, facilities, schools, commercial areas, and transit routes.
 - 4.2.2 Provide bicycle routes every half to one-mile throughout the City.
 - 4.2.3 Connect to destinations and pedestrian/bicycle facilities in neighboring communities.
- 4.3 Establish a system of routes that highlight the Natural Area Greenways.
 - 4.3.1 Identify the gaps and work to connect trail segments on public land.
 - 4.3.2 Partner with adjacent cities to connect Greenway trails to trails in their communities.
- 4.4 Continue coordination between the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Department on the expansion of the non-motorized transportation system.
 - 4.4.1 Use neighborhood context and the Living Streets Policy to guide the design of trail and sidewalk projects.
 - 4.4.2 Annually review missing segments and priority corridors as part of the Capital Improvement Plan process. Coordinate trail and sidewalk construction with road construction projects. Use asset management system to track system status, needs, and priorities.
 - 4.4.3 Initiate planning on priority segments to position projects for grant funding.
 - 4.4.4 Ensure Maplewood's non-motorized transportation needs are incorporated in planning and construction processes by other jurisdictions, including MnDOT and Ramsey County.
 - 4.4.5 Continue to implement Maplewood's Living Streets Policy in areas adjacent to parks and trails.
 - 4.4.6 Work with other Ramsey County communities, Ramsey County, and Active Living Ramsey Communities on the Connected Ramsey Communities Network.
- 4.5 Support multi-modal transportation.
 - 4.5.1 Ensure safe walking/biking options to system components.
 - 4.5.2 Provide bike racks, water fountains, and restrooms at facilities as appropriate based on facility class.
 - 4.5.3 Focus transit connections to community and athletic parks (safe routes from transit stops, marketing of easy transit connections).

- 4.5.4 Continue to work with regional planning authorities to make bicycle and pedestrian connections to, and safe crossings of, the future Gateway and Rush Line transit corridors.



5. Provide the opportunity for all community residents to participate in recreation, education, and arts activities through partnerships and the implementation of programs that are well-designed, cost effective, and meet the evolving needs and interests of the community.

- 5.1 Program for community and neighborhood gathering.
 - 5.1.1 Program events to draw residents to the park and recreation facilities. Scale events appropriately to the type of park, such as concerts at community parks and neighborhood picnics in neighborhood parks.
 - 5.1.2 Encourage the use of neighborhood shelters and warming houses for neighborhood events through special permits and marketing assistance.
 - 5.1.3 Use mobile/pop-up delivery methods to offer similar programs in each of the park service areas.
 - 5.1.4 Use demographic data and neighborhood surveys to tailor programs to an area.
- 5.2 Maintain and improve high quality, diverse program offerings for all ages (children, teens, adults, and seniors).
 - 5.2.1 Provide early childhood programming to build long-term relationships with families.
 - 5.2.2 Provide multi-age programs so siblings can attend programs at the same location and time.
 - 5.2.3 Provide informal or drop-in activities for people of all ages.
 - 5.2.4 Assist adults in forming their own groups based on interests.
 - 5.2.5 Expand youth programming by engaging youth in program design to ensure the programming is relevant, well-attended, and high quality.
- 5.3 Ensure equitable access to programs.
 - 5.3.1 Offer programming and facility space for partner organizations to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.
 - 5.3.2 Provide grants and scholarships to eliminate financial barriers.
 - 5.3.3 Provide a diverse range of programming formats, ranging from classes to events to specialized clubs.
- 5.4 Promote performance arts and cultural events in parks and at recreation facilities.
- 5.5 Respond to changing recreation trends and ensure quality programming.



Explore opportunities for performance arts and cultural activities



One of the most recent trails constructed provides access into the Fish Creek Preserve

- 5.5.1 Use participant feedback, recreation trends and demand to adjust program mix and keep programs and activities fresh and appealing.
- 5.5.2 Benchmark programs annually to determine effectiveness. Evaluate and retool programs not achieving benchmark targets.
- 5.5.3 Use pilot programs to determine effectiveness and increase efficiency.
- 5.5.4 Coordinate with associations, schools, neighborhood governmental agencies, businesses, and local organizations on programming to provide maximum coverage, avoid overlap and cross-market activities.
- 5.6 Use volunteers and service learning programs to support recreational, arts, cultural, and natural resource management programming.
- 5.7 Strengthen the Maplewood Community Center as the indoor recreational, cultural, and arts hub for the community.
 - 5.7.1 Continue to expand special and cultural events
- 5.8 Provide opportunities for community involvement in the design, development, and implementation of parks and recreation.
 - 5.8.1 Use focus groups to test new ideas.
 - 5.8.2 Continue to engage the community and neighborhood in the park design process.



6. Provide a welcoming and safe parks and recreation system.

- 6.1 Use park design to make them welcoming.
 - 6.1.1 Ensure visible and legible signage at park entrances.
 - 6.1.2 Use recognizable branding to indicate that parks are open to all people.
 - 6.1.3 Provide entrances on public streets.
 - 6.1.4 Utilize vegetation that does not obscure views into and through the parks.
- 6.2 Improve the perception of public safety
 - 6.2.1 Cluster compatible activities to avoid conflicts and increase social observation.
 - 6.2.2 Locate parking lots and facilities near streets so they are easily observable at night.
 - 6.2.3 Locate restrooms and playgrounds in areas that are easily observable.
 - 6.2.4 Use the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in the design of parks.



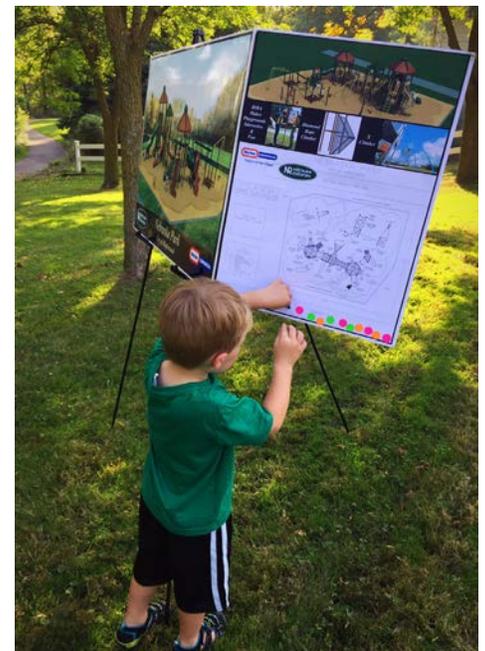
Celebrate the opening of new facilities like the Tuj Lub Court

- 6.3 Ensure safety through regular maintenance and equipment upgrades.
 - 6.3.1 Conduct annual inspections of parks, buildings, restrooms, shelters, ball fields, play courts, skatepark, outdoor ice rinks, parking lots, trails, and nature areas. Input annual inspections into asset management system and use system to analyze and prioritize system investments.
 - 6.3.2 Use tiered maintenance level standards for routine maintenance to guide the level of maintenance from most intensive to least intensive.
 - 6.3.3 Reduce ongoing maintenance costs over time by replacing outdated park elements with high quality materials and outdated maintenance equipment with higher efficiency models.



7. Engage the entire community.

- 7.1 Improve outreach to diverse populations and minority groups.
 - 7.1.1 Strengthen relationships with existing organized groups that serve diverse populations.
 - 7.1.2 Use universal symbols and translations in signage.
 - 7.1.3 Engage diverse communities to participate in Parks & Recreation programs, use recreation facilities, and provide feedback on program evaluations and development.
- 7.2 Become the “go to” parks and recreation clearinghouse
 - 7.2.1 Continue to utilize diverse methods of communication, including social and digital media.
 - 7.2.2 Highlight youth, families, mentors, volunteers in City newsletter and recreation activities brochure.
 - 7.2.3 Celebrate the opening of every new or renovated facility or program.
 - 7.2.4 Provide information on the City’s website and in outside publications about parks, facilities, and programming that is accessible to people with disabilities.
 - 7.2.5 Highlight the quality of life benefits of parks, trails, recreation, and open space.
 - 7.2.6 Recognize sponsors, donors, and advocates.
- 7.3 Make Sustainability Education/Outreach a Priority.
 - 7.3.1 Market and interpret sustainable practices and pilot programs.
 - 7.3.2 Continue and expand volunteer recruitment and training programs to supplement service projects, outreach, and events.



Use community driven park planning processes



8. Proactively plan for an efficient, high quality parks and recreation system that responds to community needs.

- 8.1 Create parks that reflect community interest by using community-driven park planning processes to prioritize capital improvements by conducting community driven park planning processes for any significant planned improvement over \$500,000 or at least 20 years after original construction.
- 8.2 Phase improvements based on replacement needs and available funding. Manage system investments through analysis of data from asset management system.
- 8.3 Use Sustainable Design Practices.
 - 8.3.1 Use renewable energy where possible (solar, wind, geothermal, biomass).
 - › Solar lights for trails.
 - › Solar power at athletic facilities.
 - › Wind turbines where appropriate.
 - 8.3.2 Follow Maplewood's existing Green Building Code for new facilities.
 - 8.3.3 Conserve Water Resources.
 - › Follow water quality requirements in Maplewood's Green Building Code when making improvements.
 - › Use cisterns and other water harvesting/recycling techniques where feasible.
- 8.4 Implement Sustainable Maintenance Practices in Parks and Preserves.
 - 8.4.1 Continue and expand sustainable turf maintenance program, especially in parks within greenways.
 - 8.4.2 Continue and expand integrated waste management practices.
 - › Recycle in all parks and at all events.
 - › Organics composting at appropriate parks/facilities.
 - 8.4.3 Follow integrated pest management strategies to control nuisance plants, weeds, insects, rodents, etc.



9. Secure the necessary funding and resources to accomplish the goals of the parks and recreation system.

- 9.1 Evaluate on-going operational and life cycle costs when making facility capital decisions.
- 9.2 Ensure adequate funding to meet system goals.
 - 9.2.1 Update park, trail and open space dedication requirements on a biannual basis. (PAC funds)
 - 9.2.2 Seek grants.
 - 9.2.3 Hold fee based events.
 - 9.2.4 Encourage business involvement, sponsorship, and naming rights of parks, recreation facilities and events.
- 9.3 Support the creation of a non-profit parks and recreation foundation for the promotion and fundraising for system needs.
- 9.4 Build partnerships.
 - 9.4.1 Continue to work with the Public Works and Planning Departments on environmental stewardship and trail and bikeway projects.
 - 9.4.2 Implement park projects that will stimulate private investment and strengthen residential neighborhoods.
 - 9.4.3 Improve relationship with school districts, including their community education departments.
 - 9.4.4 Partner with existing arts organizations for arts related programming and events.
 - 9.4.5 Maximize use of volunteers.
 - 9.4.6 Partner with private organizations for outreach to ethnic populations.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

While the 2015 Parks and Recreation System Master Plan established the direction for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Parks, Trails, and Open Space Chapter, a task of the current planning process included reviewing and addressing the community input received. In general, the needs identified in the 2040 comprehensive planning process reinforced the recommendations of the System Master Plan, including the need for park maintenance and reinvestment, the evaluation of park offerings, the addition of user amenities, and the elimination of trail/sidewalk gaps. As the City works to implement the specific priority actions from the System Master Plan, the detailed input from the comprehensive planning process will be referenced.

The City annually updates its capital improvement plan (CIP) using the direction established in the 2015 Parks and Recreation System Plan, as well as current information about needs and partnerships. The following are the current areas anticipated to be addressed over the next 5 years:

- » Park maintenance, updates, replacements, and amenities
- » Investments in multiple Community Parks to address current needs
- » Nature Center planning and improvements
- » Open space improvement, including restoration projects and trails

PRIORITIZATION

The order of the priority actions and capital improvement projects were identified by the Parks and Recreation Commission as part of the system planning process. The implementation of the actions and capital improvement projects may occur in that order or may occur in a different order due to partnerships, funding availability, or changing community priorities.

Actions

The System Master Plan was developed with a series of recommendations categorized into the areas of parks and recreation facilities, trails, natural areas and greenways, programs, arts and culture, and funding. These recommendations built on the 2030 Comprehensive Plan goals and included both policies and actions. The recommendations can be found on pages 42 to 72 of the System Master Plan.

Through the park and recreation system planning process, the Parks and Recreation Commission developed a list of priorities that was confirmed by the City Council through the adoption of the plan. The priorities were organized into two charts on pages 74 to 77 of the Park and Recreation System Master Plan. The following is a list of the actions and capital improvements identified. Additional detail on responsibility, timing, resources, and cost where appropriate can be found in the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan.

Priority Actions

Funding

1. Expand funding for regular park maintenance and equipment replacement
2. Continued community education regarding park system funding needs

Parks and Recreation Facilities

3. Develop Asset Management Plan
4. Expand the amount of no-mow areas
5. Seek opportunities for sustainability pilot programs
6. Improve system wayfinding

Trails

7. Update Snow and Ice Control Policy
8. Initiate planning on priority segments to position for grant funding
9. Pavement Management

Natural Areas and Greenways

10. Develop management plans for each of the City's Preserves
11. Identify and evaluate protected ecological areas
12. Revise preserve policy to differentiate between community and neighborhood preserves
13. Formalize greenway routes
14. Nature Center Master Plan & Building Evaluation



Arts and Culture

- 15. Seek grant funding for arts-related programs
- 16. Look for opportunities to include art and culture into design elements on City projects
- 17. Partner with historic society for historic interpretation & programs
- 18. Build the Arts Program



Programming

- 19. Continue to expand neighborhood and community events
- 20. Expand Nature Center Programs



Priority Capital Improvement Projects

Highest Priority

- 1. Maintenance and Reinvestment

Ongoing (listed in order by highest cost)

- 2. Construct prioritized projects to eliminate gaps in the pedestrian-bicycle network
- 3. Add amenities to Neighborhood Parks
- 4. Actively manage high quality natural resources
- 5. Add amenities to Community and Athletic Parks
- 6. Update park signs



Other Priority Projects (listed in order by priority)

- 7. Add restrooms to Community and Athletic Parks
- 8. Improvements to Wakefield Park
- 9. Improve system wayfinding
- 10. Continue/expand community gardens
- 11. Improvements to Preserves and Open Spaces
- 12. Improvements to Goodrich Park
- 13. Modify field mix
- 14. Add off-leash dog park
- 15. Improvements to City Hall Campus
- 16. Replace/Refurbish Nature Center
- 17. Expand facility mix in Western Park Service Area
- 18. Implement new policy regarding tennis court distribution
- 19. Add mobile stage
- 20. Add new neighborhood park in South Park Service Area



Other Actions (Non-Priority)

The following list includes action items that were listed in the 2015 Park System Plan but were not prioritized. These actions may be combined or included as part of the priority actions, or they may be completed as opportunities arise that make them feasible.



1. Create additional neighborhood watch groups.
2. Add user amenities such as shade, benches, and bike racks based on the asset management plan, funding availability, and community input.
3. Improve resident connectivity to neighborhood parks by adding trails and sidewalks.
4. Construct an outdoor performing arts space in the City with Goodrich Park and Hazelwood Park the top options.
5. Provide lighting for areas intended to be used at night.
6. Increase park patrols.
7. Use volunteer park liaisons to educate youth about appropriate behavior in parks.



8. Increase neighborhood involvement in park design and operations.
9. Provide support facilities such as restrooms, lighting, shade, and water based on the type of park.
10. Include signage kiosks at community and community athletic parks that invite users to use the parks for activities like volleyball, bocce ball, etc.



11. Establish Goodrich Park, Wakefield Park, Gladstone Savanna Preserve, and the City Campus area as the premier recreation and community gathering area for the City.
 - a. Establish trail and sidewalk connections between the three parks and one preserve.
 - b. Develop Wakefield as a family gathering destination with a multi-purpose building/warming house, picnic shelters, large playground, and other winter facilities.
 - c. Complete the Goodrich Park Master Plan.
 - d. Add a skate park and environmental demonstration areas around the pond at the City Hall Campus.
 - e. Implement the Gladstone Savanna Preserve Master Plan



12. Establish an Asset Management Plan and implement the annual 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for park facilities.
13. Establish a winter maintenance plan that increases the facilities maintained for winter activities like walking, skating, sledding, cross-country skiing, etc.



14. Develop Sustainability Pilot Programs.
 - a. Solar garden.
 - b. Wind turbine.
 - c. Solar powered trash compactor.
 - d. Organics composting in a signature park.
 - e. Composting toilet.
 - f. Passive solar or net-zero energy park facility.
 - g. Pesticide-free park.
 - h. Bee Lawn (includes clover etc. for pollinators).
15. Increase Parks and Recreation share of current levy.
16. Explore use of a franchise fee to fund maintenance or specific programs.
17. Explore funding options dedicated to health improvement.
18. Establish an Infrastructure Replacement Reserve Fund to cover major capital repairs and replacements.
19. Create a Fees and Charges Policy that identifies services that meet the needs of the basic community and are 100% tax supported and services that have mostly individual or special interest benefit where fees and charges will offset costs.
20. Consider a bond referendum.
 - a. Conduct a study to determine the appropriate bond referendum amount, package of improvements, and appropriate timing.
 - b. Develop a bond referendum strategy that identifies key partners to assist the City to market and champion the referendum.
 - c. Develop ambassadors to promote and champion investments in the park system.