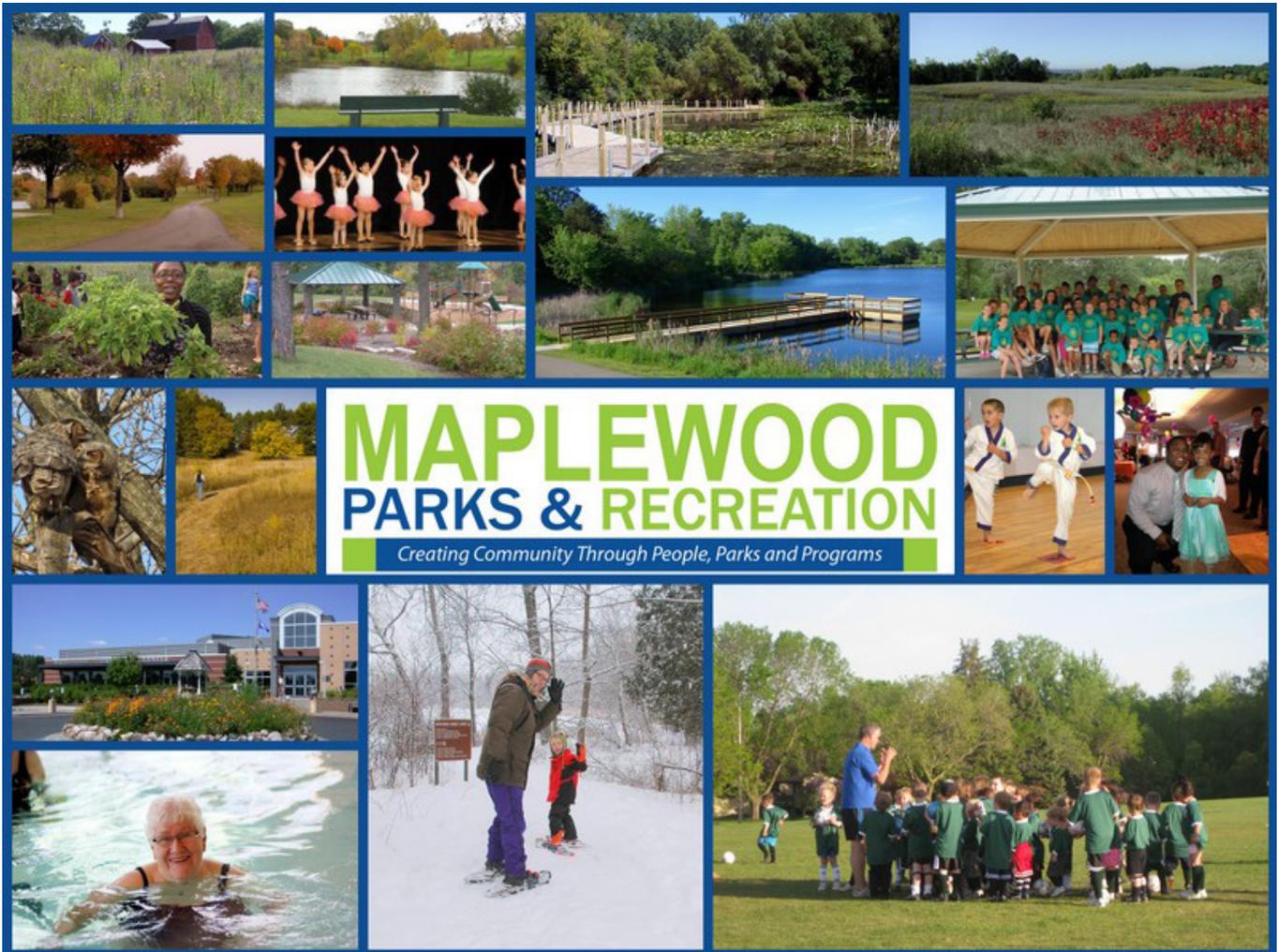


MAPLEWOOD PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

ADOPTED BY MAPLEWOOD CITY COUNCIL JANUARY 26, 2015



Acknowledgements

MAPLEWOOD CITY STAFF

DuWayne Konewko
Parks and Recreation Director

Ginny Gaynor
Natural Resources Coordinator

James Taylor
Parks Manager

Shann Finwall
Environmental Planner

Audra Robbins
Recreation Manager

Steven Love
Assistant City Engineer

As a cross departmental project, this plan incorporates consideration from the Maplewood departments of Police, Public Works, Environment, and Economic Development.

PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN TASK FORCE

Roy Adams

Peter Boulay

Mark Jenkins

Mark Nichols

Paul Arbuckle

Bob Cardinal

Marv Koppen

Scott Schaller

Margaret Behrens

Don Christianson

Jason Lamers

Dale Trippler

Al Bierbaum

Ron Cockriel

Alysyn Morris

Nikki Villavicencio

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Craig Brannon

Kim Schmidt

Rhoda Erhardt

Mike Wilde

Terri Mallet

Ron Cockriel

Matt Prom

Rick Brandon

Nikki Villavicencio

MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

Nora Slawik
Mayor

Kathleen Juenemann
Councilmember

Marvin Koppen
Councilmember

Bob Cardinal
Councilmember

Marylee Abrams
Councilmember

RESIDENTS & STAKEHOLDERS

The Parks and Recreation Department would like to thank the nearly 800 residents and stakeholders who participated in the master planning process in 2012-2014.

CONSULTANTS

Bob Bierscheid, Bierscheid Consulting



Hoisington Koegler Group inc.



TOGETHERWE CAN

For more information, please contact the Maplewood Parks and Recreation Department at 651.249.2120

CHAPTERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	E1
CHAPTER 1: Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER 2: Trends & A Changing Maplewood.....	7
CHAPTER 3: Existing Conditions & Needs.....	13
CHAPTER 4: Where We Are Going.....	35
CHAPTER 5: The Strategic Plan.....	39
CHAPTER 6: Priorities, Toolkit, & Using the Plan.....	69
APPENDIX: Benchmark Comparisons.....	91

FIGURES

FIGURE E1 Pedestrian/Bicycle Network Priority Improvements	E5
FIGURE E2 Proposed Preserve Classifications	E7
FIGURE 3.1 Existing Park and Recreation System	15
FIGURE 3.2 Access to Parks.....	23
FIGURE 3.3 Existing Recreation Facilities.....	25
FIGURE 3.4 Access to Paved Trails.....	27
FIGURE 3.5 Access to Natural Areas.....	29
FIGURE 3.6 Natural Area Greenways.....	31
FIGURE 5.1 Recommended Park Classifications.....	41
FIGURE 5.2 Park Service Areas.....	43
FIGURE 5.3 Signature Community Parks.....	45
FIGURE 5.4 Wakefield Park Concept.....	46
FIGURE 5.5 City Hall Campus Concept.....	47
FIGURE 5.6 Veteran’s Memorial Park Concept.....	48
FIGURE 5.7 Proposed Activity Facilities.....	51
FIGURE 5.8 Specialty Recreation Facilities.....	53
FIGURE 5.9 Proposed Pedestrian/Bicycle Network.....	55
FIGURE 5.10 Pedestrian/Bicycle Network Priority Improvements.....	57
FIGURE 5.11 Proposed Preserve Classifications.....	59
FIGURE 5.12 Greenway Routes.....	61
FIGURE 6.1 Project Review Process.....	78
FIGURE 6.3 Park Classification Map.....	84

TABLES

TABLE 3.1 Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities	16
TABLE 6.1 Priority Actions and Projects.....	70
TABLE 6.2 Projected Capital Costs.....	74
TABLE 6.3 Funding Sources.....	75
TABLE 6.4 General Capital and Operations & Maintenance Costs.....	80
TABLE 6.5 Park Classifications.....	83
TABLE 6.6 Activity Delivery Guidelines.....	85
TABLE 6.7 Recreation Facility Service Standards.....	86
TABLE A Community Benchmark Comparisons.....	91



Maplewood PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM PLAN Executive Summary

A great parks and recreation system contributes to a great community



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 Community Center and the Nature Center are hubs for programming.

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.

Updating recreation offerings so the system remains fresh, exciting and relevant in light of changing demographic and recreation trends is also important. Trails are currently high demand facilities that appeal to all ages; climate change and environmental awareness are making sustainability more important than ever before; a more diverse population is creating demand for culturally relevant activities; and public expectations for high quality city facilities have steadily risen over time.

It is an exciting time for Maplewood's parks and recreation system. The strong foundation of parks, the imminent need for significant revitalization, resident priority on taking care of the existing system, and changing demographic and recreation trends offers the opportunity to revitalize the community's parks system for the next generation of Maplewood residents.

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to guide reinvestment in and reinvigoration of the parks and recreation system for the next generation of Maplewood residents

The Master Plan identifies forty-seven recommendations and associated strategies. Recommendations do not include every possible action, but highlight those needed to achieve the future vision.

Plan recommendations are organized into 5 topic areas:

- parks and recreation facilities
- trails
- natural areas and greenways
- programs
- arts and culture



Vision for Parks and Recreation

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

Guiding Principles



Safe and Welcoming Parks



Connect People and Places



Encourage Health and Wellness



Promote Environmental Stewardship



Inspire Creativity and Learning



Financial Sustainability

COMMUNITY INPUT

A goal of the planning process was to ensure that the plan reflects resident's vision for parks and recreation. To that end, over 800 residents participated in the process during 2013-2014. Community input included:

- Guidance from a Parks and Recreation Task Force made up of community members and elected officials who met 16 times during the process.
- A statistically valid city-wide parks needs assessment survey.
- On-line input.
- Eleven community open houses.
- Outreach to teens.
- Focus group meetings with topics on arts and culture, environment and natural resources, and athletics.
- Business community outreach.
- Input from the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council.

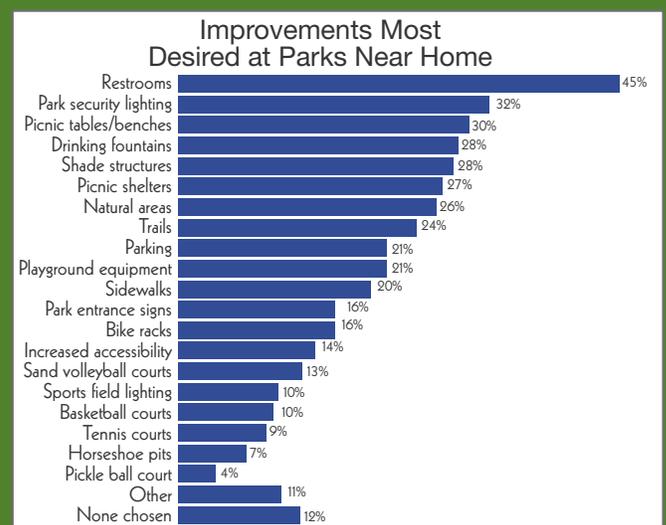


PARKS & RECREATION CITIZEN SURVEY

To inform the master plan a statistically valid survey was conducted during the winter of 2014. The survey gauged residents' attitudes towards supporting improvements to the parks and recreation system with tax dollars.

KEY FINDINGS:

- 70% of households have visited parks and preserves in the last 12 months.
- Walking, hiking and biking trails are the most used amenity (86%). 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.
- Priority for funding should be for improvements to existing parks, preserves, and trails.
- 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.



Parks and Recreation Facilities

- ✓ Taking care of the existing system is the highest community priority. This means reinvesting in and upgrading parks and facilities. Essential is creation and implementation of an asset management plan. This will allow the City to anticipate and prioritize replacement of recreation facilities at the end of their functional life-cycle.
- ✓ Improving basic amenities such as restrooms in community parks and providing shade, benches, and updated signage in all parks is important for creating welcoming parks.
- ✓ Updating the recreation facility mix to reflect community interests is of utmost importance. Community gardens, a tuj lub court, pickelball, and adding a disc golf course are all examples of newer recreation facilities desired by residents.
- ✓ Reinvestment in parks throughout the city, so that all residents have access to welcoming parks with relevant recreation activities is a high community priority.

SIGNATURE PARKS CONCEPT

Ensuring that high quality, signature parks are located throughout the city is an important goal for the future. The western and southern portions of the city are already well served by Phalen-Keller Regional Park and Battle Creek Regional Park. To provide signature recreation in the central portion of the city, the plan recommends re-investment in three centrally-located parks and one preserve and linking them with trails. Together, Wakefield Park, Veteran's Memorial Park, Gladstone Savanna Community Preserve, and the City Hall Campus will provide a range of community activities. Each park, however, will retain its own character and have unique focus. Art and sustainable design, construction, and maintenance practices will be integrated throughout.

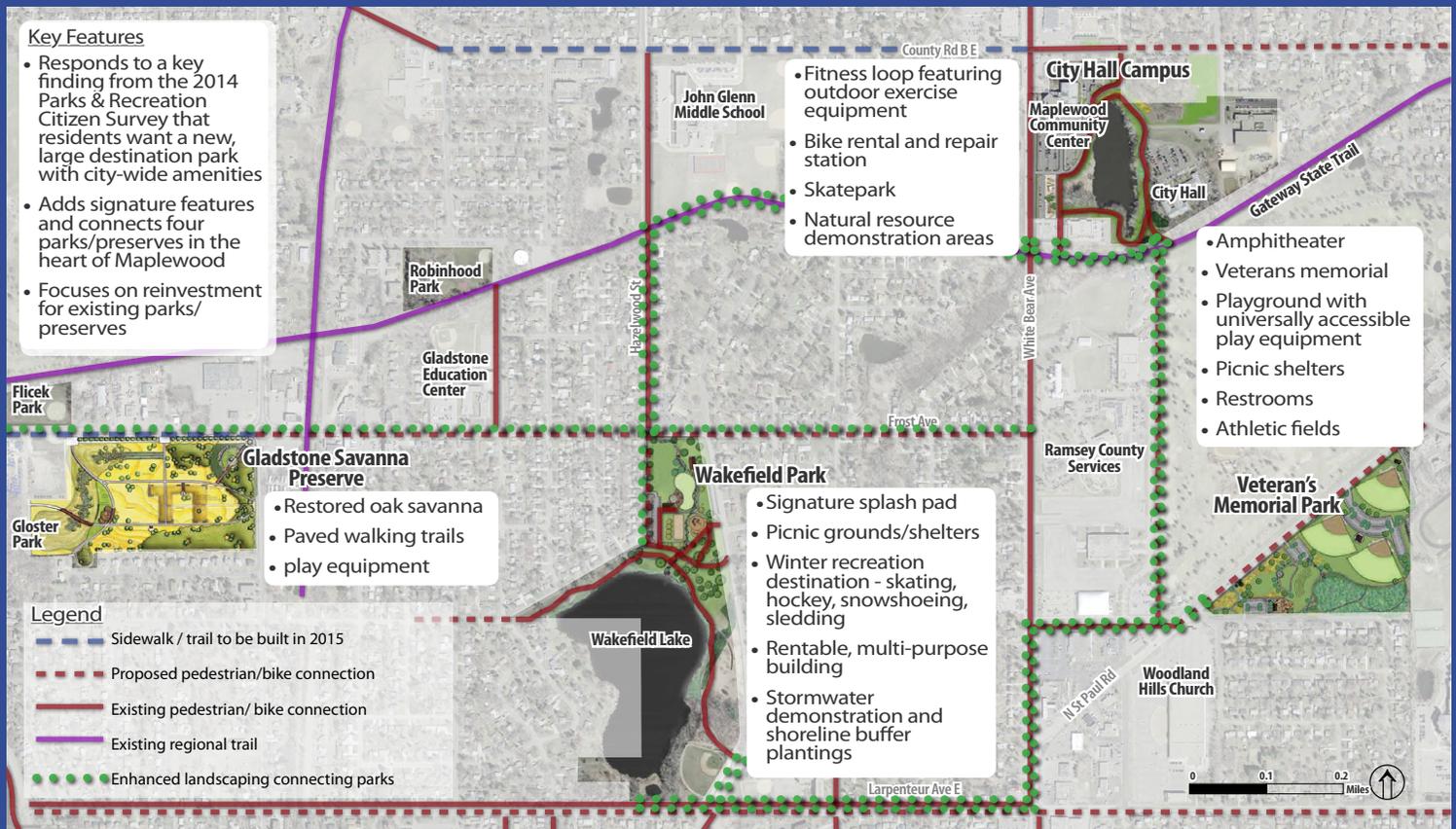
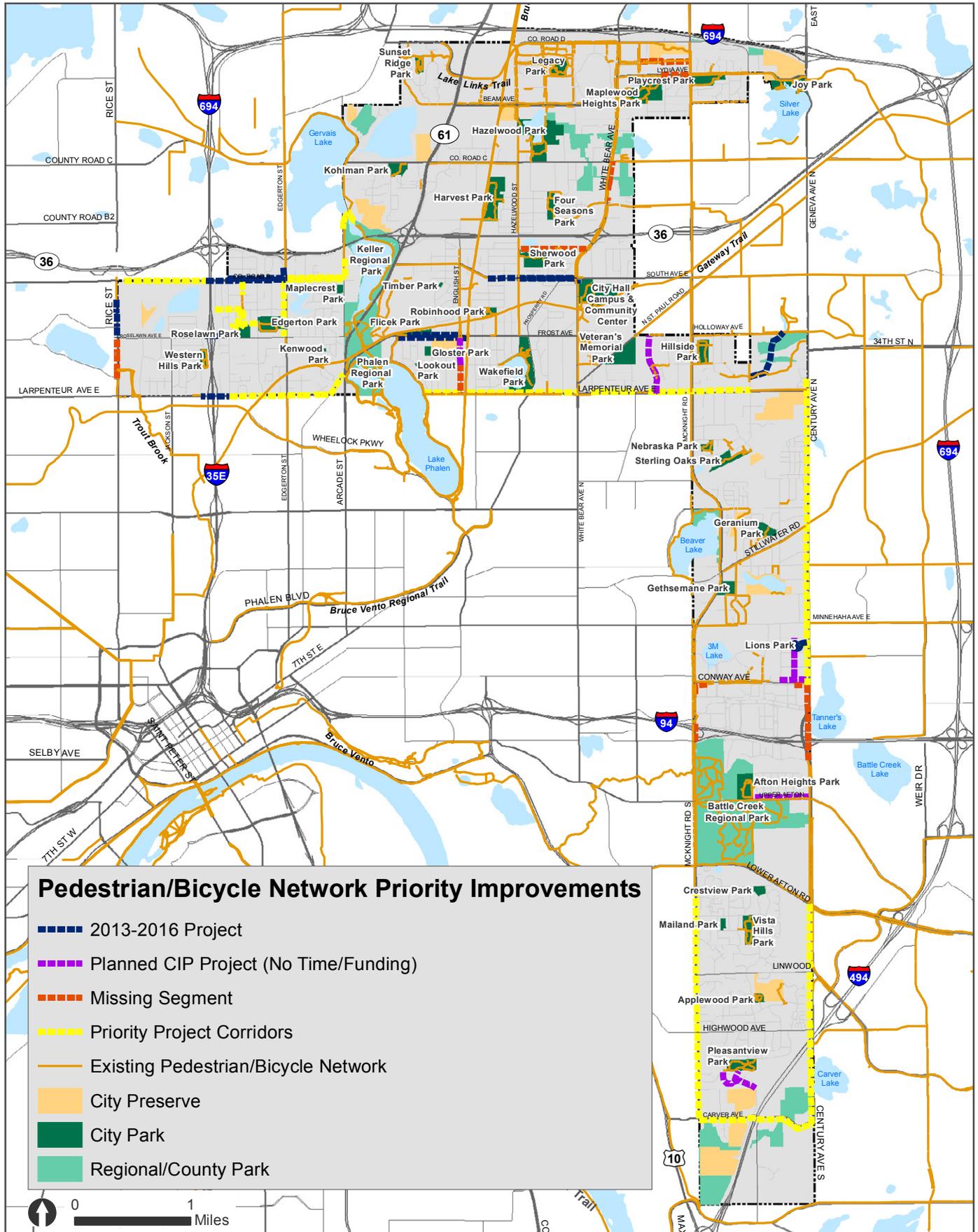
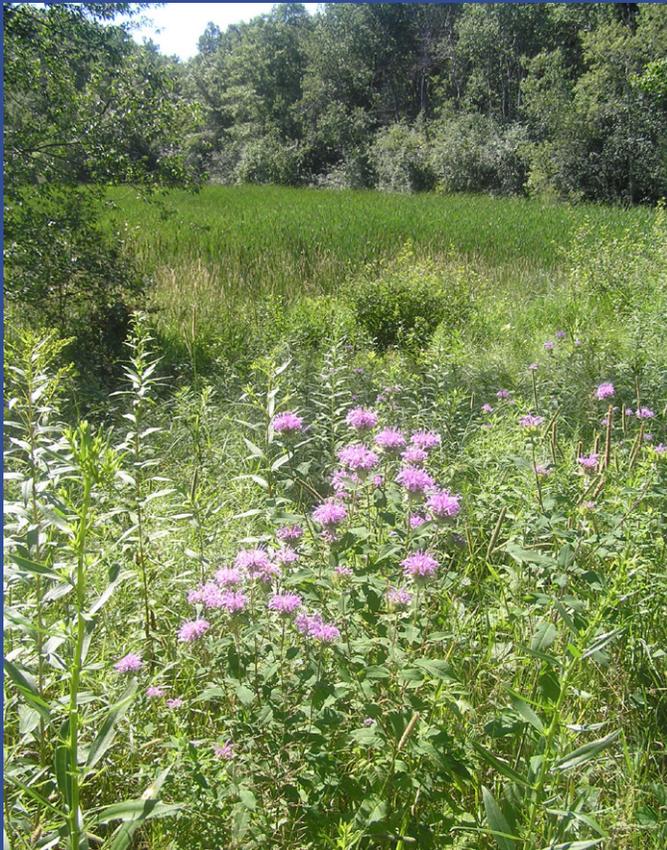


FIGURE E1 PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE NETWORK PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS



Trails

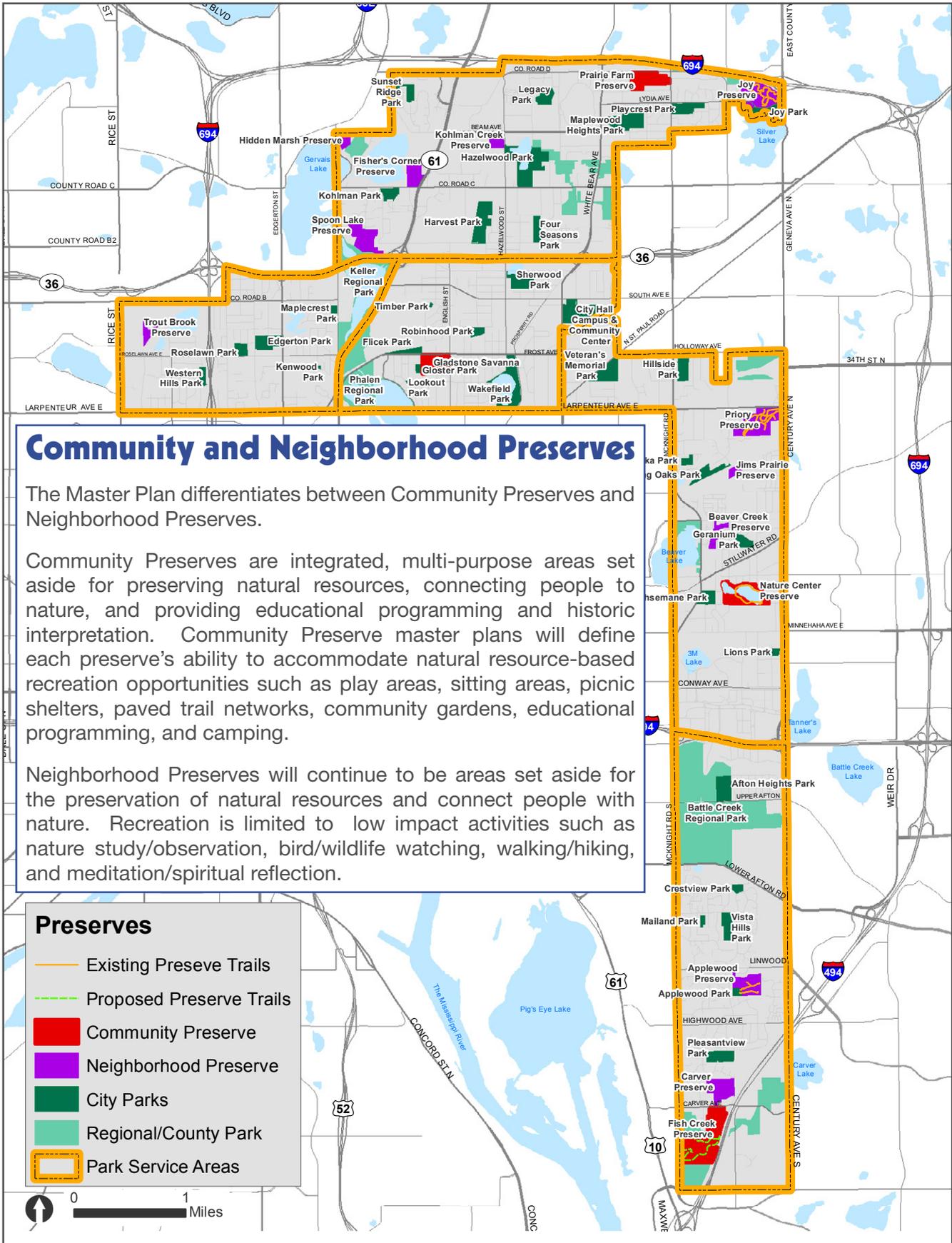
- ✓ The popularity of trail based activities such as walking and biking continues to grow. Trails bring the park system closer to every resident, offer transportation alternatives, and support a healthy, active population.
- ✓ The Master Plan recommends continuing to develop a priority network of north-south and east-west connections throughout the community as well as enhancing connections beyond Maplewood. Priority projects will make the existing system more functional by completing missing segments.



The Nature Center, Natural Areas, and Greenways

- ✓ Maplewood residents place a high value on environmental health. The Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments will continue to exemplify environmental leadership through education, demonstration, design, maintenance and operations in parks and preserves.
- ✓ The city's 15 preserves will continue to be the foundation of the protected open space network. These areas will be the focus of habitat restoration and natural resource management efforts while allowing for some passive recreation.
- ✓ The Nature Center will continue to be the community hub for environmental stewardship and nature-based programming.

FIGURE E2 PROPOSED PRESERVE CLASSIFICATIONS



Arts and Culture

- ✓ The arts enhance livability, bring diverse groups of people together, celebrate history and heritage, contribute to economic vitality, enhance learning in classrooms, raise awareness of environmental and social concerns, and bring beauty and meaning to the built environment.
- ✓ Maplewood's arts and cultural programming will grow and evolve organically over time. The City will expand partnerships to foster arts, develop arts programs, and integrate arts into infrastructure such as buildings, bridges, and picnic shelters.

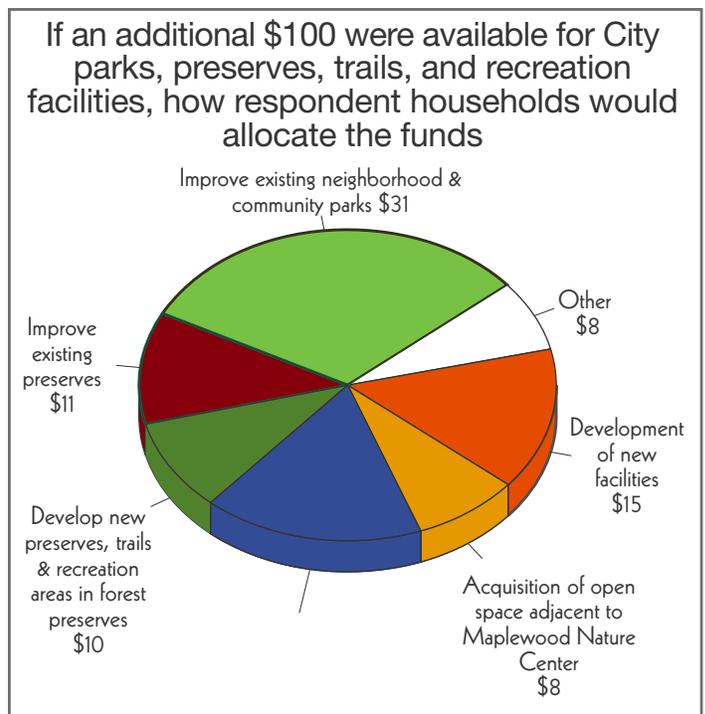


Programs

- ✓ Recreation is an essential component of a healthy, vital community. Recreation programs are pursued for enjoyment, health, skill development, enrichment, socialization, entertainment, physical fitness, and relaxation. Dynamic recreation and demographic trends mean programs need to constantly evolve.
- ✓ It is an exciting time for programs in Maplewood. Future recommendations focus on community-building events like 5K runs and concerts, updating multipurpose buildings in parks to bring more programs to neighborhoods, and emphasizing outreach to diverse population groups.

Implementation

Realizing Maplewood’s vision for parks and recreation will take time, dedication, and additional funding. The City already invests significantly in parks and recreation for both new capital projects and ongoing operations and maintenance. Funding for the system comes from a variety of sources, including allocation from the general fund, grants, partnerships, and volunteers. Adequately allocating financial resources for park system reinvestment and reinvention will be essential to realizing plan recommendations. Phasing of improvements will not occur overnight, but will be flexible and occur over time. Phasing will be dependent on priority needs, available funding, and staff time.



Source: 2014 Parks & Recreation Citizen Survey

Benefits of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

- ✓ Road map for system revitalization
- ✓ A more connected city
- ✓ Defensible rationale for decision-making
- ✓ Continued access to nature
- ✓ Strategic resource allocation (budgeting and staffing)
- ✓ More relevant programs
- ✓ Fosters strong partnerships
- ✓ Integration of the arts into the park system
- ✓ Safe and welcoming parks
- ✓ Long-term economic sustainability
- ✓ An updated recreation facility mix

For More Information

Please contact the Maplewood Parks Recreation Department

651.249.2120

JANUARY 2015

MAPLEWOOD PARKS & RECREATION



Creating Community Through People, Parks and Programs

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreation are a vital and positive component of the City of Maplewood. They contribute to neighborhood identity, environmental sustainability, resident health and well-being, and economic development. With 930 acres of City-owned parks, preserves, and open space, a 90,000 square foot Community Center, an enviable system of nature preserves, and the Maplewood Nature Center, Maplewood's parks and recreation system is a well-rounded, accessible, highly-utilized, and integral part of the City.

Parkland, preserves and open space is the second largest land use in the City, accounting for over 18% of land use in Maplewood. As a "Step Three" award-holder of the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program, Maplewood is known for its leadership in sustainability, and its programs, preserves, and nature center contribute significantly to the City's reputation. In addition, neighborhood parks, athletic facilities, and programs provide a large range of recreation opportunities for an array of interests.

Residents are largely happy with the parks and recreation system. The 2014 Citizen Parks and Recreation Survey found that eighty-three percent (83%) of respondent households rated the overall physical condition of the parks, preserves, open spaces, trails, and recreation facilities (that they have used) as being in good or excellent condition.

However, the parks and recreation system is transitioning from a developing system into a mature system, which is presenting new challenges. As recreation infrastructure such as buildings, playgrounds, fields, and trails age, system needs are shifting from development to caring for the parks that the community has worked so hard to establish over time.

Taking care of the existing system is not only needed, it is the number one community identified priority. There is a need for extensive park revitalization and reinvestment as existing recreation facilities age and reach the end of their functional life-cycle. This is system-wide and includes all facilities (playgrounds, courts, fields, shelters, signage, etc). In addition, aging facilities often require more on-going maintenance than new facilities.

Adapting the facility mix so that it is relevant to demographic and recreation trends is also needed. Trails are currently high demand facilities that appeal to all ages; climate change and environmental awareness are making sustainability more important than ever before; a more diverse population is creating demand for culturally relevant activities; and public expectations for high quality city facilities have steadily risen over time.

It is an exciting time for Maplewood's parks and recreation system. The strong foundation of parks, the imminent need for significant revitalization, the community priority for taking care of what is already in place, and changing demographics and recreation trends provide the opportunity to reinvest in the existing parks and recreation system to meet the needs of the next generation of Maplewood residents.



Maplewood Parks & Recreation Day Camp participants

This Master Plan, built by Maplewood residents, sets the stage for future reinvestment and is a long term guide for the next 20 years. It offers the vision, guiding principles, recommendations, strategies, priorities, and tools to help the City, its citizens, and partner organizations to keep Maplewood's park and recreation system healthy and relevant well into the future.

The Master Plan is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction and context for the Master Plan. Chapters 2 and 3 establish needs and identify key challenges for the future. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are future-oriented. Chapter 4 discusses the park system's mission, vision, and guiding principles. Chapter 5 outlines the purpose of parks and recreation and organizes goals and objectives for the future into five focus areas:

- Parks & facilities
- Trails
- Natural areas
- Programs
- Arts and culture

Chapter 6 provides implementation tools, including priorities, costs, funding sources, and tools to assist with future decision making.

The recommendations and strategies contained within this plan do not constitute all possible Parks and Recreation actions. Instead, this plan highlights items needed to maintain and improve the current system.



Light It Up Maplewood is hosted at Hazelwood Park on 4th of July

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

When people talk about the places they love in the city or neighborhood, parks are typically at the top of the list. They are sources of civic identity and pride, and parks and recreation are also essential to the physical, economic, environmental, and social health of cities and their residents. Quality parks, along with schools and access to transportation, are typically the top three criteria people consider when choosing a place to live.

A healthy recreation and park system equals healthy residents. Simply put, people who engage in regular physical activity are healthier and happier. When people have access to parks, trails, and recreation, they exercise more. In addition, increased exposure to natural areas has been linked to improved physical and psychological health.

Parks and open space increase property values. Numerous studies show that proximity to parks, trails, and open spaces increases residential property values. Parks and open space can also positively affect commercial property and can be catalysts for redevelopment.

Parks contribute to aesthetics. Parkways, tree-lined streets, gardens, lush landscaped areas, views of rivers and lakes, stately woods, and public art are all things that make a city a beautiful place to live, work, play, and shop. They make essential contributions to a city's livability and vitality.

Parks and open space provide environmental benefits. Trees and vegetation found in parks, preserves, and open spaces improve air and water quality. These areas also play a role in managing stormwater runoff and protecting natural areas.

Parks preserve natural and cultural heritage. Significant natural features, such as the Phalen-Casey Chain of Lakes, and historical and cultural sites like Bruentrup Heritage Farm are preserved for today's residents as well as for future generations.

Parks have important social benefits. Parks are often the focal points of neighborhoods. As places for neighborhood activities, celebrations, and informal interaction they provide places for community members to come together.

Recreation programs contribute to community health. Recreation programs offered for all ages (families, youth, adults, and seniors) promote life-long learning and a supportive community atmosphere. Specific programs can help accomplish other community goals, such as education about sustainability or youth development.

Recreation and Parks encourage play. Parks are often cited as people’s favorite places. They are the places people go to have fun, relax, and play. Whether it’s a place to play a game of soccer, garden with neighbors, take a quiet walk through the woods or go on a vigorous run with the dog, a balanced park and recreation system has something for everyone.

PLAN PROCESS

In February of 2013, Maplewood’s City Council authorized the beginning of an update to the Maplewood Parks and Recreation Master Plan based on recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. The Council appointed a citizens task force comprised of sixteen members, which began meeting monthly in April 2013. Bob Bierscheid of Bierscheid Consultants, was hired to guide this process and helped facilitate the task force.

The first phase of the update included a thorough engagement of residents, businesses, and parks and recreation users to elicit their comments on issues, needs, updates, trends, and improvements that could influence the Master Plan Update.

During the second phase of the planning process a consultant team was used to provide benchmarking data, conduct a system wide-evaluation, and compare Maplewood’s current system against standards from the National Parks and Recreation Association and best practices from other communities.

Task force efforts throughout the process included:

- Guiding the master planning project over a two year period in 2013-2014. The group met 11 times in 2013 during Phase I, and five times with the consultants in 2014 during Phase 2.
- Creating an Inventory of the existing system and identification of core issues and needs.
- Identifying CAPRA accreditation as a goal (see callout box below).
- Creating benchmark comparisons of Maplewood to four other metro communities.
- Spearheading a statistically valid City-Wide Parks Needs Assessment Survey completed in early 2014 by ETC.
- Selecting and overseeing the work of park planning consultants HKGi and Forecast Public Art throughout the process.

CAPRA ACCREDITATION

The Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) is authorized by The National Recreation and Parks Association to offer accreditation to agencies that meet best practice standards of operation, management, and service to the community. Accreditation serves two fundamental purposes; to assure quality and improvement. Benefits of accreditation include:

- Services administered in accordance with approved professional practices
- Potential for external financial support and cost savings
- Increased efficiency and accountability
- Identifies areas for improvement by comparing an agency against national standards of best practice
- Results in regular review of operations, policies, and procedures
- Requires written documentation of policies and procedures

A goal of the planning process was to educate and raise awareness about the importance of parks and recreation in Maplewood, and to ensure that future investment in the system meets the needs of the community. As such, this plan represents input from 627 households in Phase 1 (participants in the City-Wide Parks Needs Assessment Survey), and 152 participants in Phase 2. Public input throughout the process included:

- Phase 1 Community Meetings:
 - › June 12, 2013, 7pm at the Maplewood Community Center.
 - › July 10, 2013, 7 pm at Carver Community Gym.
 - › July 11, 2013 business outreach meeting, 7:30 am at the Maplewood Community Center.
 - › July 24, 2013, 7pm at Gladstone Fire Station.
 - › August 7, 2013, 7pm at Gladstone Fire Station.
 - › August 15, 2013, 5pm, Hmong Outreach meeting at the Hmong American Alliance Church.
 - › September 5, 2014, 5pm, Hmong Outreach meeting at the Maplewood Community Center.
- City-Wide Parks Needs Assessment Survey, conducted in the winter of 2014.

- Phase 2 Public input:
 - › Focus group meetings on June 11th, 2014.
 - *Public Arts & Culture (8 attendees)
 - *Environment & Natural Resources (6 attendees)
 - *Athletic associations (8 attendees)
 - › Booth at 4th of July Community Event, Light It Up Maplewood.
 - › Two online questionnaires from July 29 thru August 15, 2014 (52 responses) and Sept. 5 thru Oct. 15, 2014 (45 responses).
 - › Community Open Houses:
 - *September 3, 2014 at Gladstone Fire Station (12 attendees)
 - *September 10, 2014 at Maplewood Community Center (37 attendees)
 - *September 24, 2014 at Londin Lane Fire Station (43 attendees).
 - › Booth at the Maplewood Community Center 5k Run Event, September 27th, 2014.
 - › Business stakeholder meeting on October 9th, 2014.





Booth at 4th of July Community Event, Light It Up Maplewood.



September 3rd Open House at Gladstone Fire Station



Booth at the Maplewood Community Center 5k Run Event



September 10 Open House at the Maplewood Community Center

EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES

The analysis of existing conditions included the review and synthesis of existing reports and efforts by various groups and departments in Maplewood, including:

- The Maplewood 2030 Comprehensive Plan.
- Maplewood’s Living Streets Policy.
- Sustainable Maplewood 2050: Neighborhood/ Mini Parks, a University of Minnesota Master of Landscape Architecture student capstone project.
- Existing master/management plans and reports for:
 - › *Veteran’s Memorial Park (Goodrich Park)*
 - › *Joy Park and Preserve*
 - › *Fish Creek Preserve*
 - › *Beaver Creek Corridor*
 - › *Priory Preserve*
 - › *Gladstone Savanna*
 - › *Fisher’s Corner Neighborhood Preserve*
 - › *Flicek Park*
 - › *The Natural Area Greenways*



Chapter 2: TRENDS & A CHANGING MAPLEWOOD

*If we don't change,
we don't grow. If we
don't grow,
we aren't really living.*

-Gail Sheehy

Because recreational needs and expectations are changing along with the city's demographics, understanding the dynamic environment is important for anticipating trends and planning for the future. The following chapter outlines key trends influencing recreation and parks in Maplewood.

Recreation is constantly evolving, particularly as new technologies, trends, cultures, and activities bring changing facility and program needs. By building flexibility into recreation and park facilities, Maplewood will be able to adapt quickly and efficiently in its efforts to meet these new needs.



Modest Population Growth

- Maplewood's total population is estimated to grow by 7.5% between 2010 and 2040, adding 3,000 residents over 30 years.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Overall program participation and park utilization rates can be expected to increase.
- Need for additional parkland will be limited.



Increasingly Diverse

- The U.S. is the only major industrial country with an expanding population fueled primarily by immigrants.
- In 2012 Maplewood's non-white population was 28% compared to 12% in 2000.
- As population continues to increase, diversity will increase as well.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Increased demand for varying park and recreation services from different cultures.
- Increased interest in international sports.
- More places for special community events and larger extended family gatherings (picnic shelters paired with unprogrammed areas).
- Increased outreach and education for recent immigrants.



Actively Aging

- In the U.S. the 65 and older population is expected to grow by 40% from 2010-2050. As baby boomers reach retirement age they are staying more active than previous generations.
- Many in the aging population seek changes in lifestyle to reflect their lack of child-care responsibilities and expanded recreational, educational, and cultural interests.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- More senior fitness options and mid-day programming related to walking, gardening, culture, etc.
- Desire for volunteer opportunities.
- More adaptable, multi-faceted systems to respond to changing recreation demands.



Millennials Behave Differently

- Less reliant on personal automobiles and more reliant on public transit, biking, and other forms of transportation.
- Preference for a walkable lifestyle.
- Greatest users of social media and other digital technologies.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Integration of the parks and recreation systems with multiple modes of transportation.
- Greater integration of live/work/play/shop.
- Need for increased digital presence and web communications for municipalities, associations, and other organizations.



Increased Interest in Trails

- 72% of respondents to the City-Wide Parks Needs Assessment Survey reported a need for walking and biking trails, and 44% ranked them as the most important facility to their household.
- Trails can be used by people of all ages and abilities.
- Trails are relatively inexpensive and can be used at all times of day.
- Trails meet multiple needs: health, transportation, and environment.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Increase in walking, running, and biking trail miles.
- Increased desire for a connected, looping system.
- Improved trail maintenance.

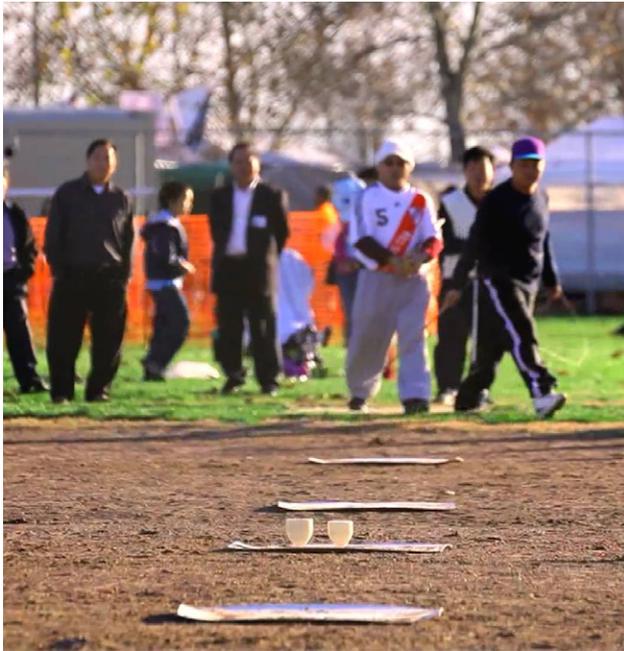


Increasingly Health Conscious

- The percentage of obese youth in the U.S has tripled in the past 2 decades.
- Awareness of the health and economic benefits of an active lifestyle and preventative care is growing.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Increase in walking, running, and biking trails.
- Increased interest in mind/body fitness options.
- Increased interest in wellness programming.
- Increased demand for infrastructure that supports active living.



Participation in Non-traditional Sports

- Increase in newer sports (cricket, pickleball, ultimate frisbee, lacrosse, disc golf, mountain biking, etc).
- Decreased participation in softball, basketball, and tennis.
- Decrease in adult league participation (competition for more flexible, fitness-focused sports such as jogging, cycling, and yoga).
- Increase in the number of children involved in free-time physical activity rather than organized sports.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Need for more specialized facilities.
- Need for more flexible field and court space.
- Demand for more drop-in, flexible programming.



Quality over Quantity

- Youth involved in organized sports are increasingly dedicated to a single, year-round sport.
- Willingness to travel further for high quality facilities.
- Competition for high quality indoor facilities (hockey and indoor soccer).
- Reluctance to share facilities.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Demand for artificial turf, lights, and facilities with accessory amenities such as concessions and restrooms.
- Need for cooperation and communication between associations, clubs, organizations, schools, and municipalities to provide facilities.

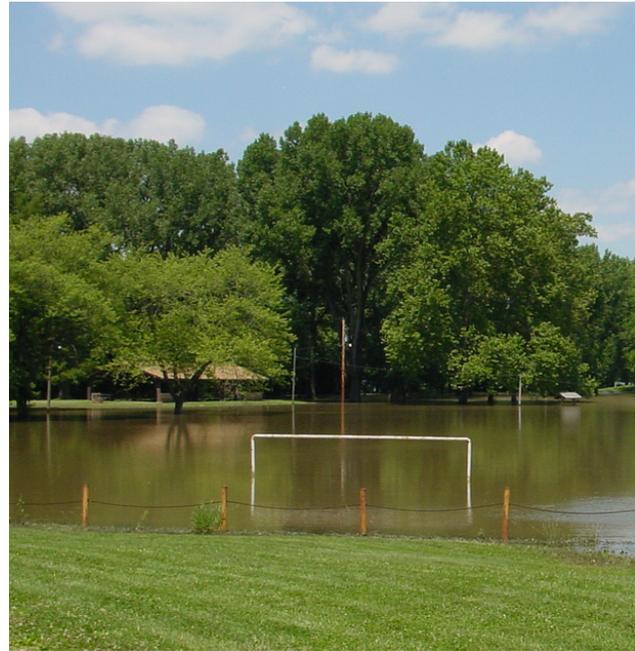


Environmentally Conscious

- Increased understanding of and concern for environmental issues.
- Greater appreciation of the benefits of a healthy, functioning ecosystem.
- Increased understanding of the benefits of time spent in natural areas.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Interest in sustainable practices.
- Desire for natural areas/passive open spaces.
- More demand for educational/interpretive programs related to natural resources and sustainability.



Climate Change

- Less predictable climate, variable precipitation rates, and inconsistent winter conditions have negatively affected sports like ice skating, hockey, and cross-country skiing.
- Increase in seasonal flooding.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Need for more indoor facility options for hockey.
- Reconsideration of certain park uses such as skating and cross-country skiing.
- Demand for turf and/or indoor facilities for early spring field sports.
- Increased irrigation needs.
- Increased need to manage stormwater

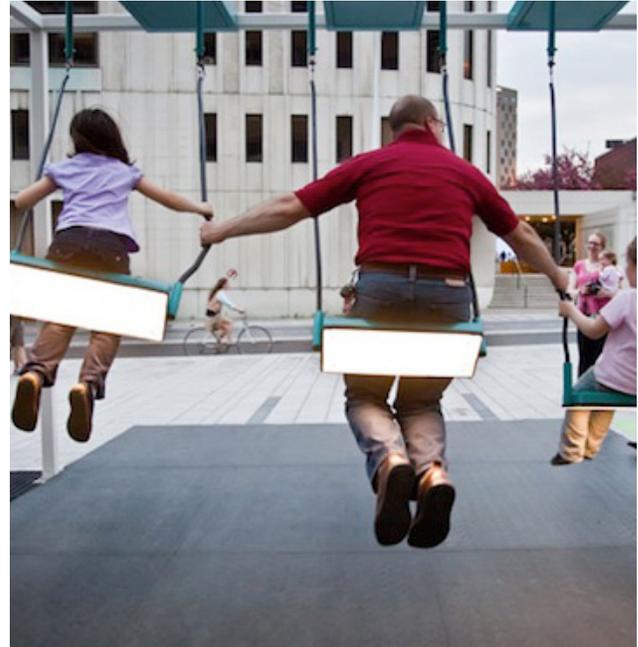


Concerned about Safety

- In Ramsey County, 34% of city residents and 25% of suburban residents think it is unsafe for children to walk to school in their neighborhood.
- Diverse population groups are more likely to have safety concerns and feel less welcomed by staff and other users.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Demand for safer parks and trails.
- Increased need for better lighting.
- Increased demand for neighborhood facilities.
- Increased need for education, outreach, and collaboration with police.



Public Art

- Public art is extending beyond fixed objects and building enhancements to include festivals, artists-in-residence, temporary installations, and projects associated with environmental stewardship, education, or social service endeavors.
- Trend to incorporate public art—as well as arts and cultural programming —into urban and suburban parks.
- Growing interest among artists and arts organizations to reach audiences outside of traditional venues and increase access to the arts by all people.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Need to include support for program management staff, volunteer committees to select art and adopt guidelines, and ongoing maintenance of works and program management.
- Funding strategies to broaden the types of projects that can be supported.
- Seek opportunities for the design of infrastructure that incorporates public art.



Tight Family Finances

- Stagnant wages and increased costs of living have resulted in less expendable income.
- Increased division between the affluent and poor.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Need for a broad spectrum of program offerings at various price points.
- Increased demand for low-cost recreation opportunities, scholarships, and mobile recreation options.
- More demand for after school programming/open hours.



Challenged Government Budgets

- Rising health care costs, increasing fuel and materials costs, anti-tax sentiments, and reduced financial support from state and regional sources has led to declining resources for parks and recreation.
- Schools are making cuts in athletic programs and physical education classes in response to budget constraints.
- Travel costs are rising for school and club teams.

Implications for Parks & Recreation:

- Pressure for increased program and team participation fees.
- Decreased funds for maintenance and capital replacements.
- Increased reliance on partnerships.
- Need to balance new facilities/programming with maintenance of existing.

Chapter 3: EXISTING CONDITIONS & NEEDS

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 Neighborhood Preserves and Natural Area 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.



Hazelwood Park



Maplewood Heights Park

EXISTING PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM

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.

Features and Highlights

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.

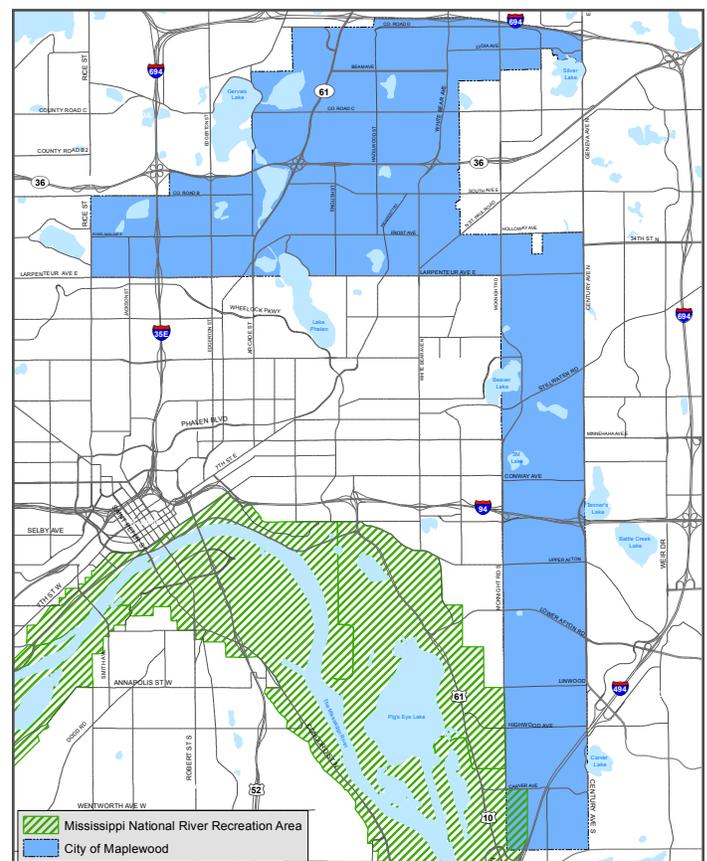
Community Parks Parks currently categorized as community parks include Joy, City Campus, Veteran’s Memorial, and Wakefield Parks. These parks are used for specialized community events and contain amenities with city-wide draw, such as group picnic facilities, historic resources, and gardens.

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.

Neighborhood 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.

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 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. Open and welcome to all, visitors may purchase passes or annual memberships, and residents of Maplewood and North St. Paul 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.



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

FIGURE 3.1 Existing Park and Recreation System

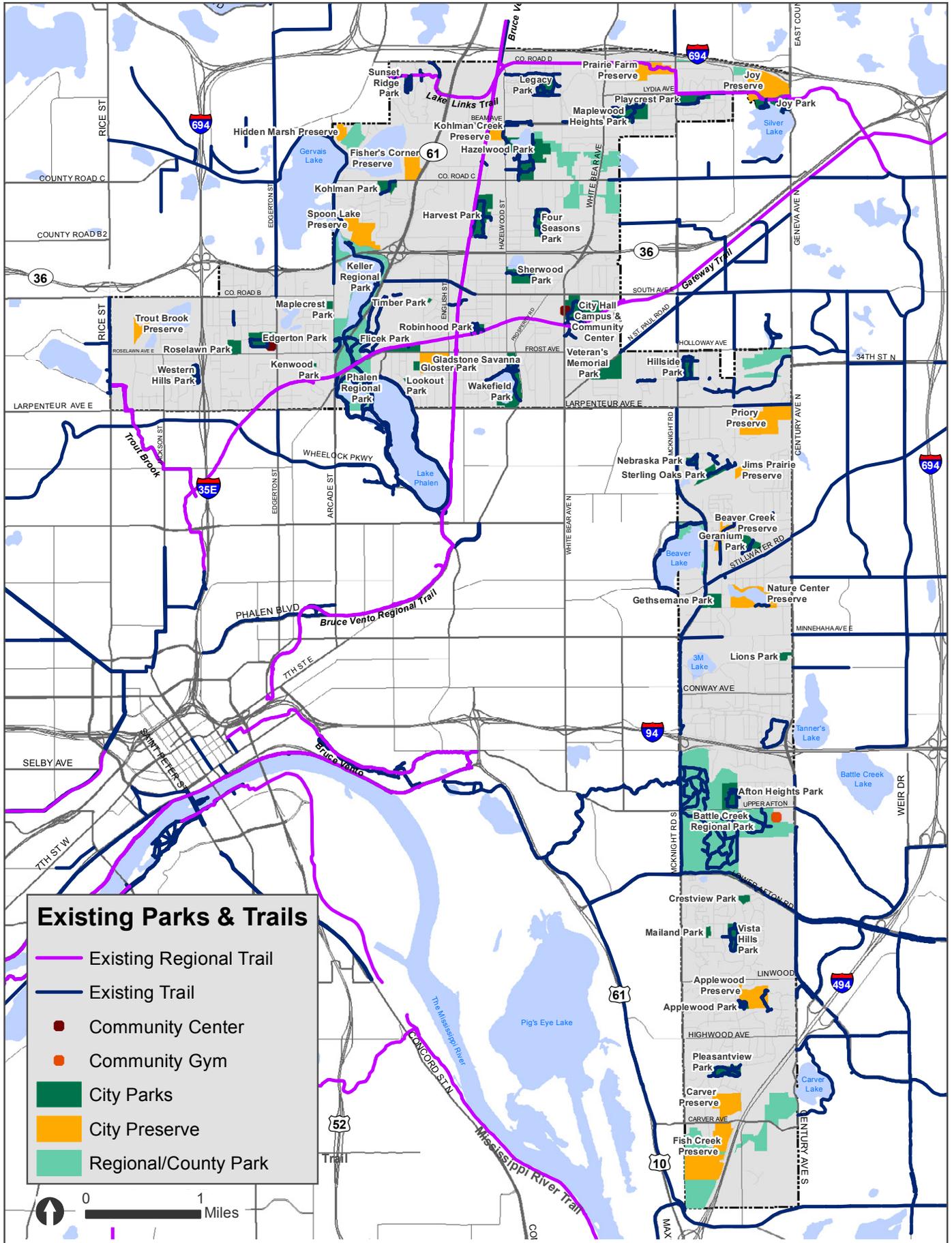


TABLE 3.1 Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

PARK - LOCATION	Park Type	Park Acres	Trails	Playground	Play Fields	Basketball Courts	Baseball Fields	Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Volleyball Courts	Tennis Courts	Hockey Rinks	Pleasure Rink	Warm House	Picnic Shelter	Picnic/Grills	Restrooms	Electricity
Northern Park Service Area																		
Four Seasons - 1685 Gervais	NP	10	X	X	X	H					2	X	X	X			X	X
Harvest - 2561 Barclay	CA	25	X	X	X	F	3	2	X		2		X					
Hazelwood - 1663 Co. Rd. C	CA	50	X	X	X				6						X	X		X
Joy - 2615 Joy Rd.	CP	21	X													X		
Kohlman - 1000 County Rd. C	NP	7	X	X	X	H		X										
Legacy - Legacy Parkway E	NP	10	X															
Legacy Pines - Kennard Street	NP		X	X	X													
Maplewood Heights - 2078 Beam Ave.	NP	25	X	X		F					2				X	X		
Playcrest - 2390 Lydia	NP	16		X	X	F		X	X		2							
Sunset Ridge - 3020 Frank St.	NP	7	X	X	X													
Western Park Service Area																		
Edgerton - 1929 Edgerton	YA	10	X	X	X	H	2	2										
Kenwood - 1864 W. Kenwood Dr.	MP	0.5																
Maplecrest - 2101 Arcade	NP	2	X	X							2		X					
Mississippi Playground-Mississippi St.	NP	.9		X														
Roselawn - 393 Roselawn	NP	5																
Western Hills - 1750 Adolphus	NP	6	X	X	X	F					X							
Central West Park Service Area																		
Flicek - 1141 Frost	YA	4	X		X		X	X										
Gloster - 1839 Frank	YA	6	X	X	X				X									
Lookout - Ripley Ave. & Phalen Dr.	NP	0.2																
Robinhood - 2039 Manton	NP	4	X	X	X	H		X										
Sherwood - 2237 Kennard	NP	15		X	X			X	X		2							
Timber - 2133 Atlantic	NP	0.5	X	X	X	H				1					X	X		
Wakefield - 1590 Frost	CP	41	X	X	X			2				X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Central East Park Service Area																		
Geranium - 2568 Geranium	NP	9		X	X	F			X		X							
Gethsemane - 2401 E. 7th St.	NP	9.41		X	X		X	X	2			X	X	X			X	X
Hillside - 1879 Myrtle St.	NP	11	X															
Lions - 618 Farrell	NP	3		X	X	H		X					X		X	X		
Nebraska - 2332 Nebraska Ave.	NP	2	X	X	X	H												
Sterling Oaks - 1440 Sterling St. N.	NP	5		X														
Veteran's Memorial - 1980 No. St. Paul Rd.	CA	24		X	X			3									X	X
South Park Service Area																		
Afton Heights - 63 N. Sterling	YA	12	X	X	X		3		X			X	X	X			X	X
Applewood - 822 Sterling St. S.	NP	8	X	X											X	X		
Crestview - 2540 Londin Ln.	NP	2																
Mailand - 2367 Teakwood Dr.	NP	2																

TABLE 3.1 Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities, continued

PARK - LOCATION	Park Type	Park Acres	Trails	Playground	Play Fields	Basketball Courts	Baseball Fields	Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Volleyball Courts	Tennis Courts	Hockey Rinks	Pleasure Rink	Warm House	Picnic Shelter	Picnic/Grills	Restrooms	Electricity
Pleasantview - 1100 Marnie	NP	14	X	X	X	F		X		1	2		X		X			
Vista Hills - 2480 Mailand	NP	14	X	X	X	F		X			2				X			
Special Use																		
City Campus - 1830 County Road B E.	SU	36																
Maplewood Nature Ctr. - 2656 E. 7th St.	SU	40																

PRESERVE - LOCATION	Classification	Acres
Applewood - E of Sterling, S of Linwood, W of Century	NPR	16
Beaver Creek - SW corner of Maryland and Sterling	NPR	9
Carver - NW corner Sterling & Carver	NPR	27
Fish Creek - Near Carver Avenue and Henry Lane	NPR	70
Fisher's Corner - NW corner Hwy 61 and Cty C	NPR	18
Gladstone Savanna - SW corner Frost & English	NPR	23
Hidden Marsh - N of Keller, E of Arcade, near 2870 Arcade	NPR	6
Jim's Prairie - Ivy Avenue, North of Pondview Apartments	NPR	5
Joy Park - NW corner Century & Joy Road	NPR	39
Kohlman Creek - SW corner Hazelwood & Beam	NPR	10
Maplewood Nature Ctr. - 2656 E. 7th St.	NPR/SU	40
Prairie Farm - W of McKnight, between Woodlyn & Cty D	NPR/SU	23
Priory - SW corner Century & Larpenteur	NPR	46
Spoon Lake - NE of Spoon Lake, S of Brooks & Forest	NPR	39
Trout Brook - E of Rice, S of Cty B, SW of Tri-District School	NPR	7

KEY

CP	Community Park
NP	Neighborhood Park

NPR	Neighborhood Preserve
YA	Youth Athletic

CA	Community Athletic
SU	Special Use

COUNTY AND REGIONAL ASSETS

Maplewood residents benefit from a number of regional assets that lie within city limits. These amenities round out the local facility mix. County and regional parks, trails and facilities in Maplewood include:

- Phalen Regional Park & Golf Course
- Keller Regional Park & Golf Course
- Battle Creek Regional Park
- Bruce Vento Regional Trail
- Trout Brook Regional Trail
- Gateway State Trail
- Lake Links Trail
- Beaver Lake County Park
- Holloway Marsh County Open Space
- Kohlman Creek & Marsh County Open Spaces
- Ramsey County horseshoe courts, Goodrich Golf Course, and Aldrich Arena
- Hillcrest Golf Course
- Mississippi National River & Recreation Area

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

A critical evaluation of Maplewood's Parks and Recreation System forms the basis of this Master Plan. This evaluation was an essential step in making recommendations and establishing priorities. The evaluation process included:

- A review of existing work and plans;
 - › *The Maplewood 2030 Comprehensive Plan.*
 - › *Past work of the Maplewood Parks and Recreation System Master Plan Task Force.*
 - › *Existing management and master plans for neighborhood preserves, parks, and open spaces.*
- Meetings with City staff and Task Force Members.
- Meetings with the Parks & Recreation Commission
- A tour and analysis of existing parks and facilities.
- A distribution analysis of access to existing parks, trails, and natural areas.
- Demographic analysis.
- Community benchmark comparisons between Maplewood and four neighboring communities of similar size and demographic character.
- Comparison to national recreation facility standards.
- Input from the Maplewood City Council.

Community Input

The ultimate goal of this plan is to improve the delivery of Parks and Recreation services to the residents of Maplewood. As such, community input is a critical component of the plan and its process. A number of methods were used to gather information from residents, resulting in fundamental feedback that helped shape the plan.

Events geared towards gathering community input during the needs assessment process included;

- A Statistically Valid Parks and Recreation Citizen Survey Findings Report (referred to throughout this plan as the 'City-Wide Parks

HOW THE SYSTEM MATCHES UP

Compared to Cottage Grove, New Brighton, Roseville, and Inver Grove Heights, Maplewood has:

- More parks.
- More trails.
- A Community Center.
- A system of Preserves and Natural Area Greenways.
- More Regional Parks.
- More County Parks & Open Space.
- Roseville is the only community with a higher operating budget.

Complete community benchmark data can be found in the Appendix on page 96.

Needs Assessment Survey') completed by ETC Institute/Leisure Vision in the spring of 2014.

- Focus group meetings on June 11th, 2014.
 - › *Public Arts & Culture (8 attendees).*
 - › *Environment & Natural Resources (6 attendees).*
 - › *Athletic associations (8 attendees).*
- A project booth at the July 4th, 2014 Community Event, 'Light it Up Maplewood'.
- Community input gathered from July thru September, 2014 (for additional information regarding the community engagement process, see page 4 in Chapter 1).

Input gathered during the needs assessment process will be highlighted throughout this chapter in special callout boxes titled 'The Local Word'.

City-Wide Parks Needs Assessment Survey

To inform this master plan and provide the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan Task Force, commissions, and council with meaningful data regarding Maplewood’s parks, trails, and open spaces, a statically valid survey was conducted during the winter of 2014. Survey questions addressed a full range of strategically important issues as identified by the Task Force. The survey gauged residents’ attitudes towards supporting improvements to the parks and recreation system with tax dollars.

The survey consisted of seven pages of questions mailed to a random sample of 2,400 Maplewood households, followed by an automated message encouraging recipients to complete the survey. Leisure Vision followed up with phone calls to recipients two weeks after the initial mailing and offered recipients who reported not returning the survey the option to complete it over the phone. The resulting random sample of 627 completed surveys translated to a 95% confidence level with a +/-4% precision rate.

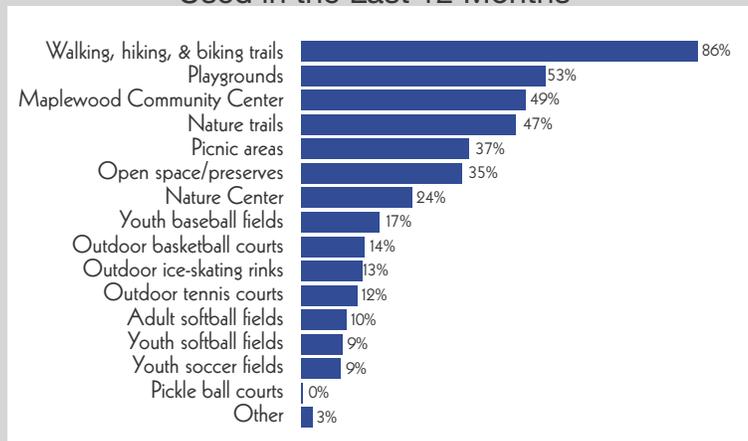
The following pages summarize key survey findings.

KEY FINDINGS: 2014 CITY-WIDE PARKS NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY by ETC/Leisure Vision

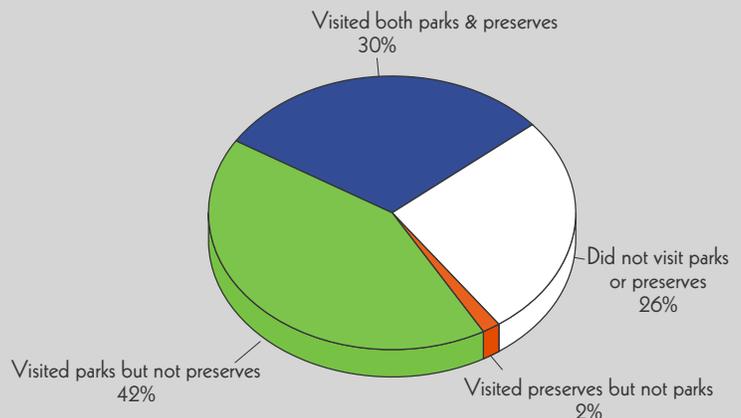
Current System Use

- 83% of households rate the physical condition of the current park systems as excellent or good.
- 70% of households have visited parks and preserves in the last 12 months.
- 61% of households have visited the Maplewood Community Center in the past 12 months.
- Walking, hiking and biking trails are the most used amenity (86%).

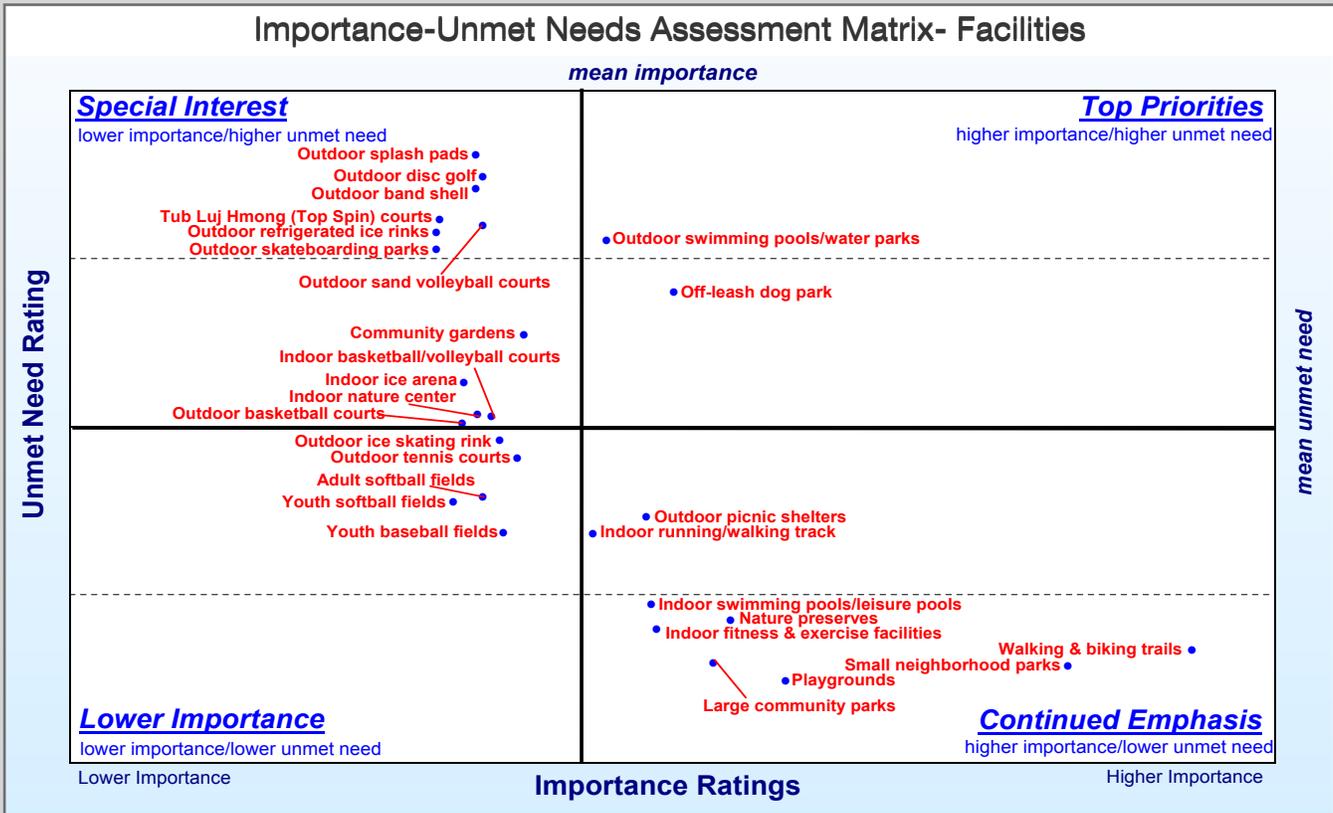
Facilities Households Have Used in the Last 12 Months



Statement that best describes respondent household usage of the City of Maplewood parks and preserves over the past 12 months



KEY FINDINGS: 2014 CITY-WIDE PARKS NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY by ETC/Leisure Vision

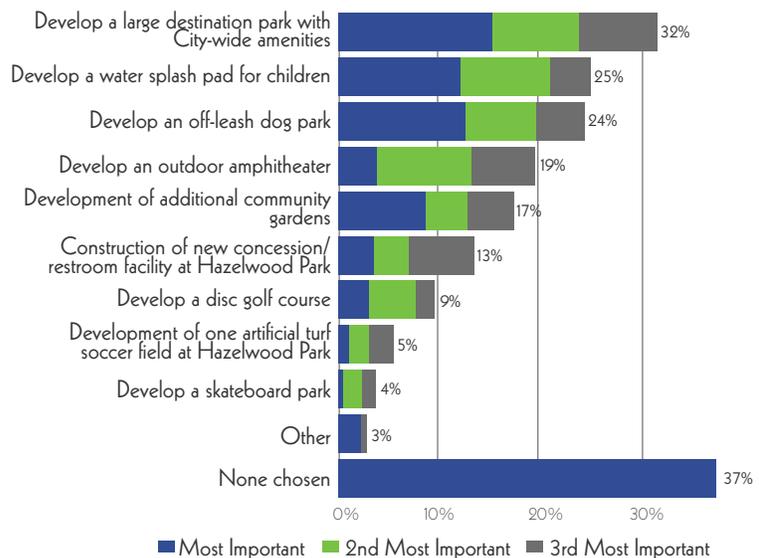


Funding & Priorities

- 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.

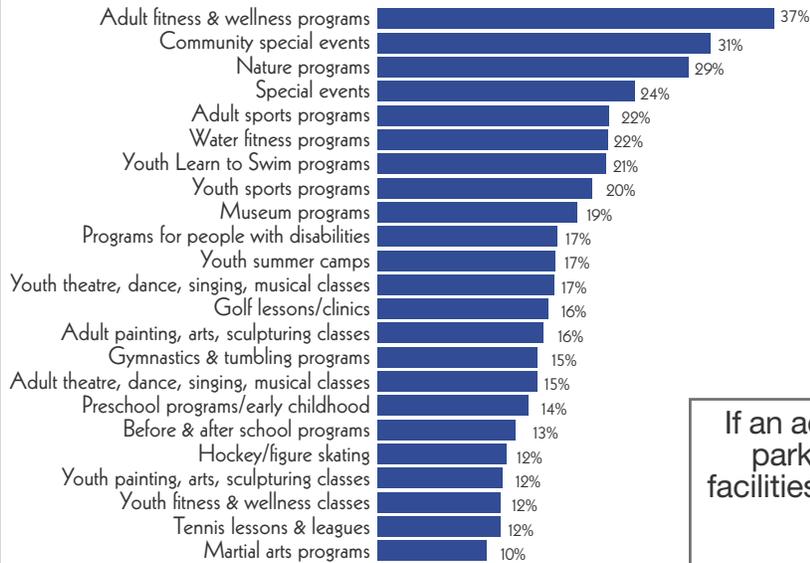
Major new parks, preserves, and recreation facility improvements that are the most important to respondent households

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



KEY FINDINGS: 2014 CITY-WIDE PARKS NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY by ETC/Leisure Vision

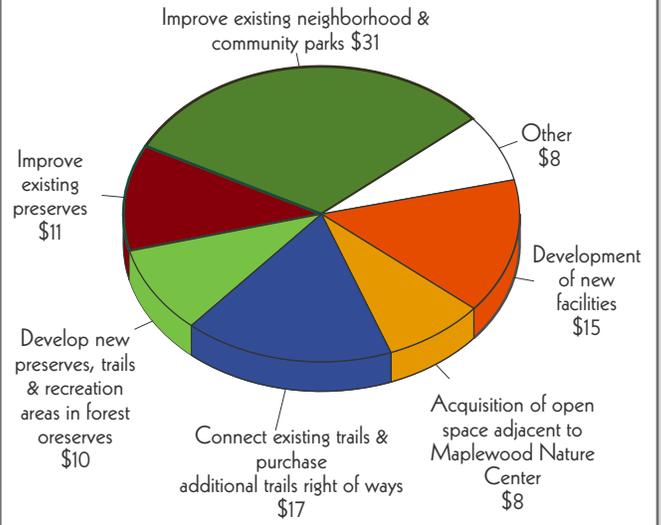
Needed Recreation Programs



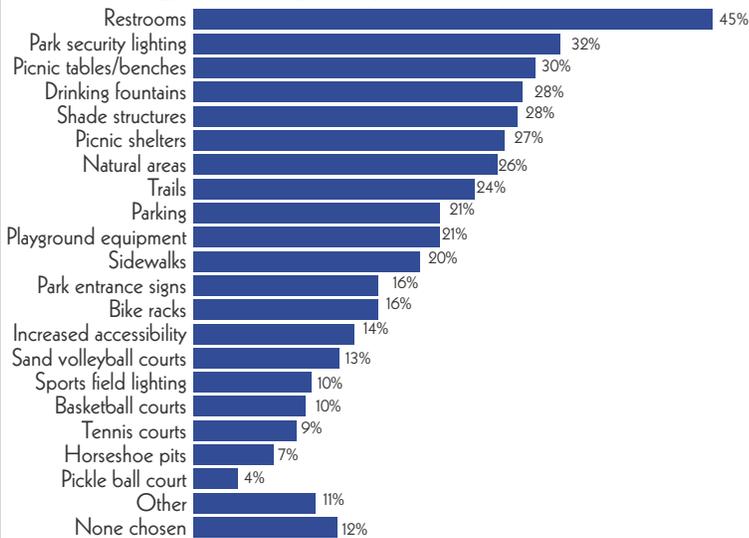
Needs

- 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.

If an additional \$100 were available for City parks, preserves, trails, and recreation facilities, how respondent households would allocate the funds



Improvements Most Desired at Parks Near Home



PARKS

Maplewood park system is well-positioned to serve the City into the future. Residents have good access to parks. As established in the current Comprehensive Plan, goals for park access state that:

- All residents should live within 1/2 mile of a park (city, county, or regional).
- For every 1,000 residents there should be 5 acres of park land.

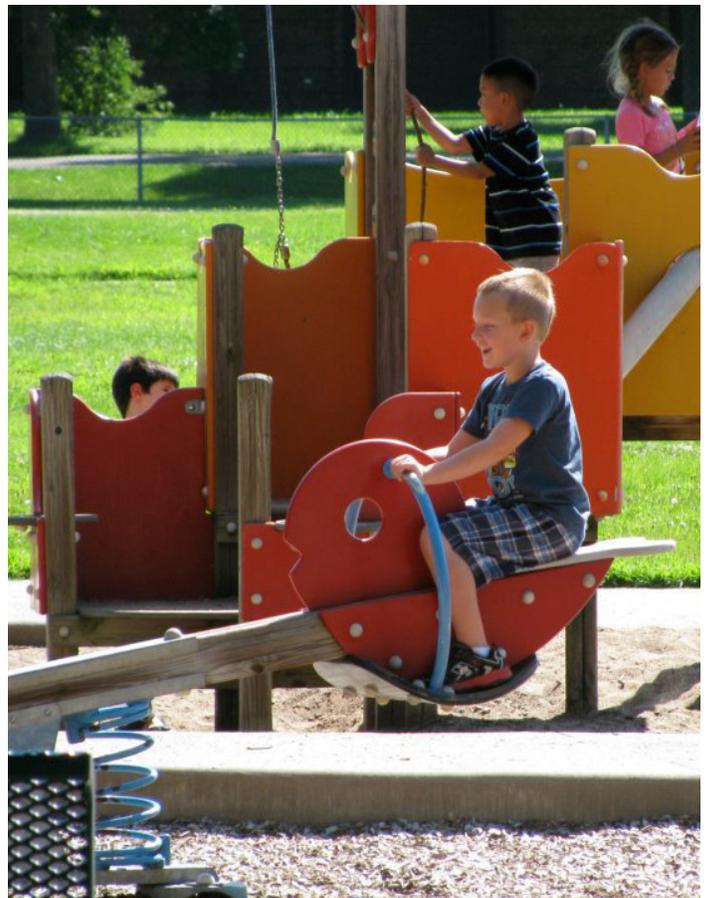
Today, there are just over 10 acres of City-owned active park land for every 1,000 residents, and the vast majority of residents live within 1/2 mile of an active park space. Figure 3.2 shows a 1/2 mile radius around parks in Maplewood in relation to residential area. The greatest need for an additional park is in the southern portion of the City (once that area develops).

Overall, resident satisfaction with parks is relatively high. However, identified needs include:

- Improvements and updates to existing parks.
- Continued emphasis on neighborhood parks and their amenities, including:
 - › *Picnic facilities.*
 - › *Playgrounds.*
 - › *Natural areas.*
 - › *Trails and sidewalks.*
- Additional support facilities, including:
 - › *Lighting.*
 - › *Shade.*
 - › *Running water.*
 - › *Parking.*
- A central location for special community events featuring an outdoor amphitheater.
- More restroom facilities at higher use parks.

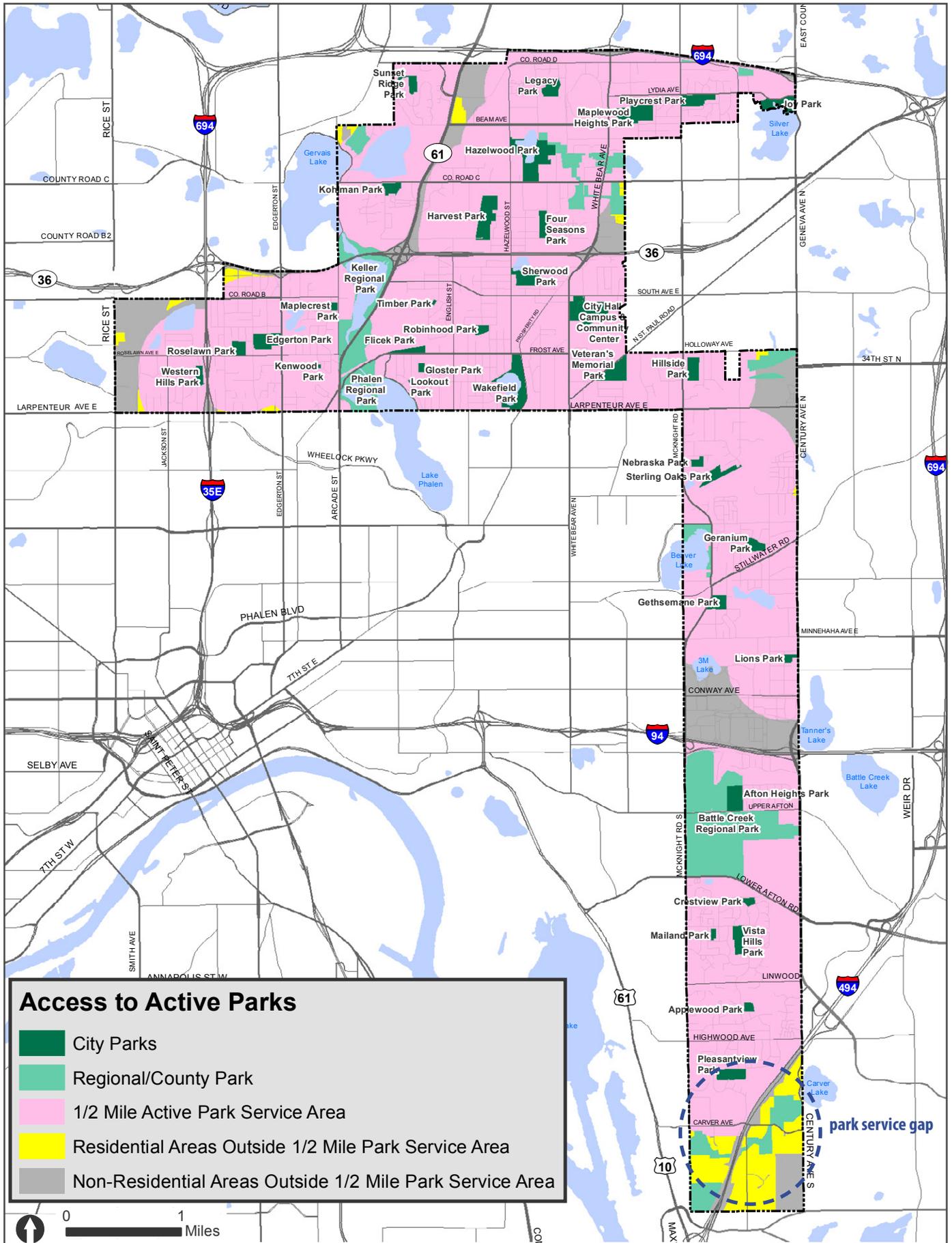
THE LOCAL WORD: *Parks*

- Facilities needed at City parks include:
 - › Restrooms.
 - › Water fountains.
 - › Bike racks.
 - › Additional lighting.
- A signature gathering spot would benefit the community.
- Add an outdoor stage or amphitheater.
- Ensure the cleanliness of parks through regular maintenance.
- Link parks with pedestrian and bicycle connections.



Parks & Recreation Day Campers enjoy Veteran's Memorial Park

FIGURE 3.2 Access to Active Parks



SYSTEM CONDITION

Maplewood parks range from new and high-quality to older and in need of reinvestment. In regards to the system condition, the needs assessment process revealed that:

- By and large, residents are happy with physical conditions of the system.
- There is a desire for parks to be more consistent in things such as signage, bike racks, benches, trash receptacles, lighting, etc.
- At the same time, there is a desire for parks to be more unique, reflecting neighborhood history and cultural diversity, and to have more art integrated throughout.
- There is a need for a proactive asset management plan that includes:
 - › *A complete system inventory.*
 - › *Condition assessments.*
 - › *Replacement strategies.*
- There is a need for improved ADA accessibility.

An asset management plan is needed specifically to address the aging infrastructure in the system, including:

- Playground equipment.
- Warming houses/shelters.
- Storage buildings.
- Park signage.
- Park and field lighting.

THE LOCAL WORD: *Condition & Facilities*

- Maintain quality, up-to-date indoor facilities.
- Plan for all-season facilities.
- Add speciality recreation facilities, including:
 - › Splash pad.
 - › Skate park.
 - › All-inclusive ADA playground.
 - › Disc golf course.
 - › Tuj Lub.
 - › Off-leash dog area.

RECREATION FACILITIES

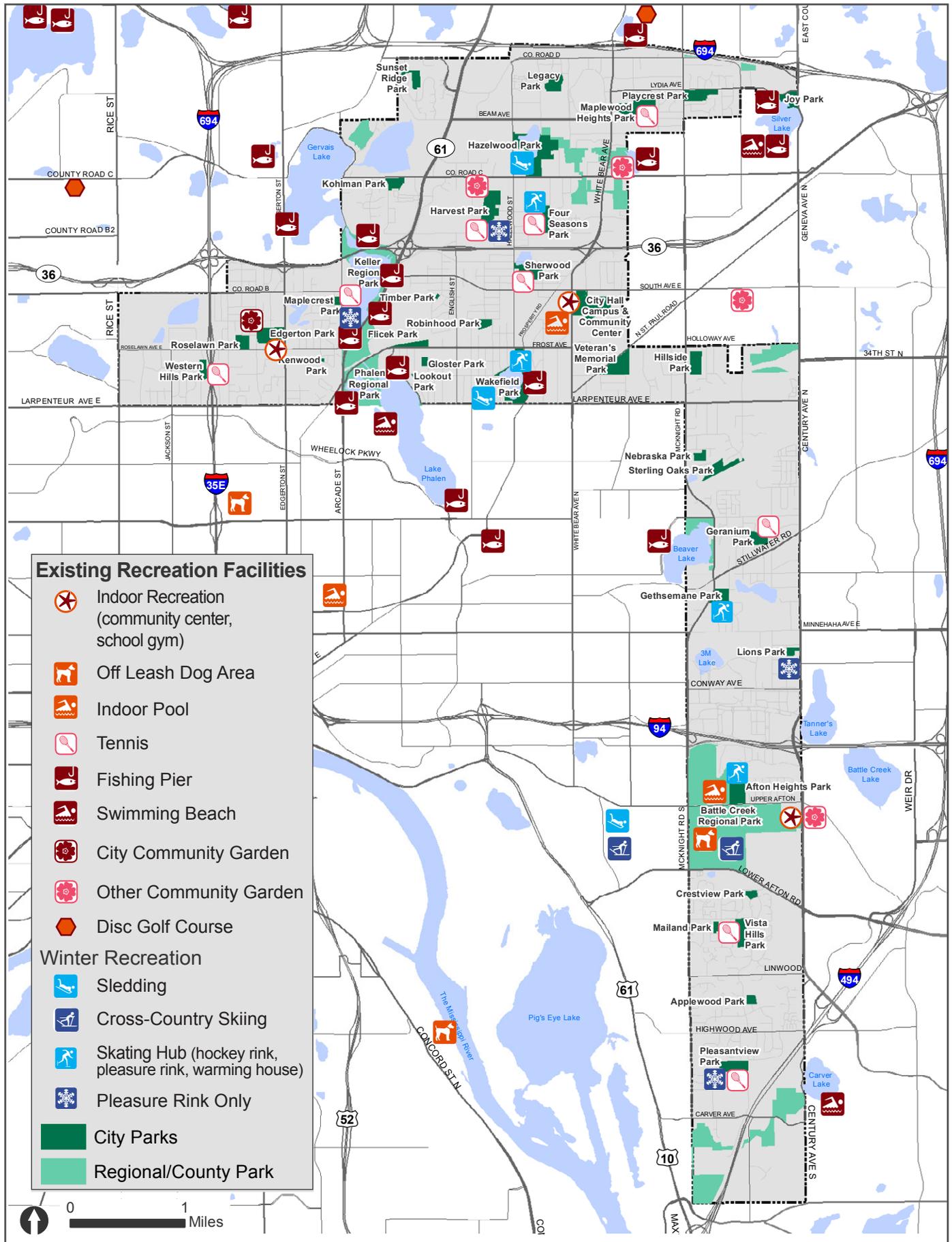
Overall, the mix of facilities in Maplewood is well balanced, and residents are satisfied with the variety of amenities provided. Key considerations include:

- Field/court space is adequate for softball, baseball, tennis, and soccer.
- Winter sport accommodation is good (hockey, pleasure skating, and sledding).
- Maplewood has fewer outdoor basketball courts compared to recreation facility standards. There is a potential need for additional outdoor courts.
- Demand is increasing for facilities that support specialty activities, including:
 - › *Skateboarding.*
 - › *Disc golf.*
 - › *Tuj Lub (Top Spin).*
 - › *Pickleball.*
 - › *An off-leash dog area.*



Existing conditions at Wakefield Park

FIGURE 3.3 Existing Recreation Facilities



SIDEWALKS & TRAILS

Maplewood has the foundation for a great pedestrian and bicycle system, and efforts continue to be made to extend north-south and east-west connections across the City. Overall, the system:

- Provides good access to trails; most residents live within a half mile of a paved trail.
- Contains gaps that, once filled, will improve continuity and connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Is a priority for residents, who would like to see it expanded and maintained.

Three regional trails have segments within Maplewood. These trails make important connections to the Mississippi River, Washington County, and downtown Saint Paul and provide Maplewood residents with additional access to amenities outside City limits. Regional trails in Maplewood include:

- The Bruce Vento Regional Trail.
- The Gateway State Trail.
- The Trout Brook Regional Trail.
- Lake Links Regional Trail.

Maplewood's Living Streets Policy, adopted in 2013, establishes standards for street design that include infrastructure for multiple modes of transportation, such as travel by foot or bicycle. As the City implements this policy with road reconstruction projects, the bicycle and pedestrian system will continue to expand and be improved.

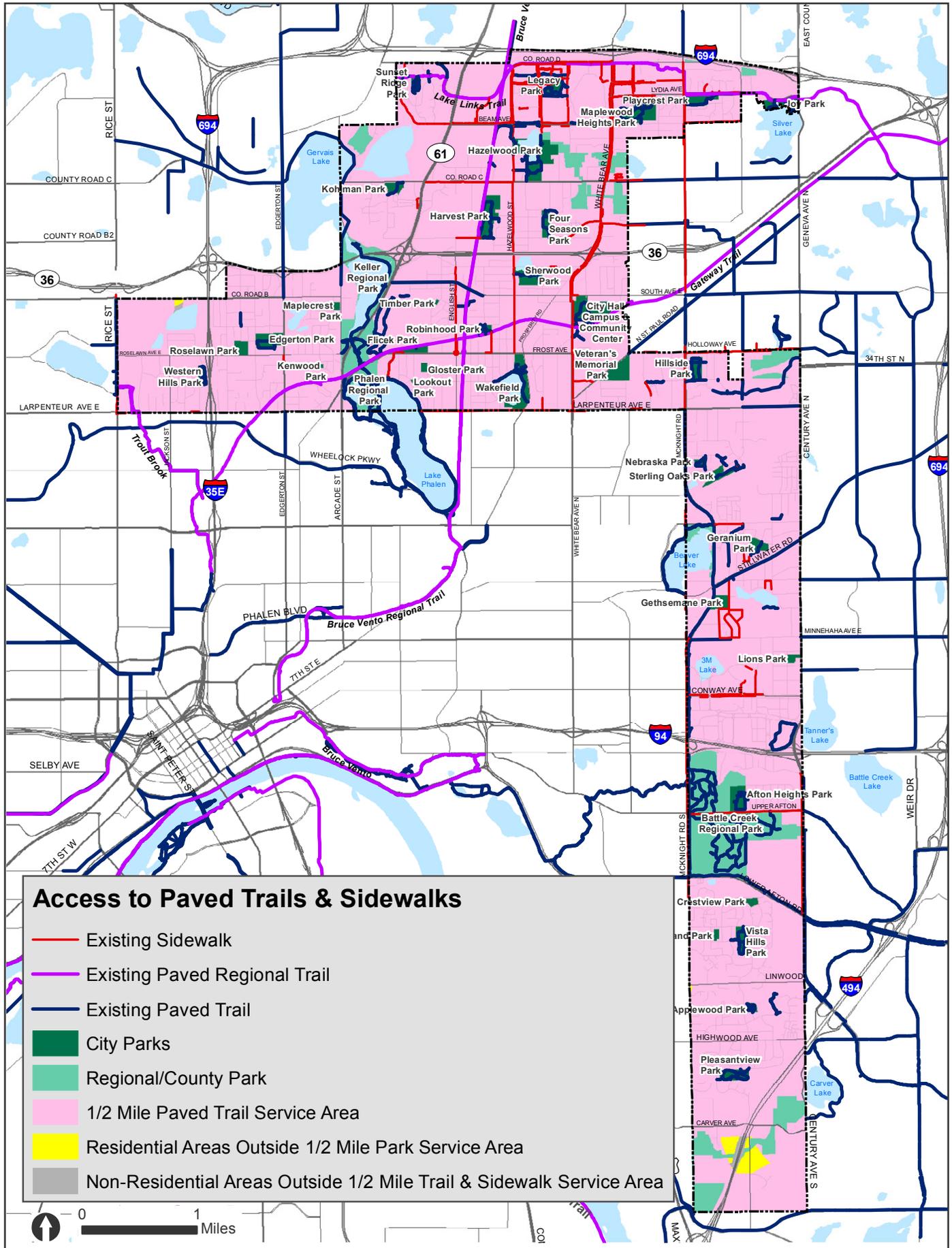
THE LOCAL WORD: *Sidewalks & Trails*

- Trails were the most supported amenity in the City-wide Parks Needs Assessment Survey.
- Expand the trail network in parks and preserves.
- Create a safe, multi-purpose, all-season system throughout the City.
- Residents want expanded winter maintenance/plowing of trails.
- Fill trail gaps.



Trail and native plantings at Maplewood City Hall

FIGURE 3.4 Access to Paved Trails & Sidewalks

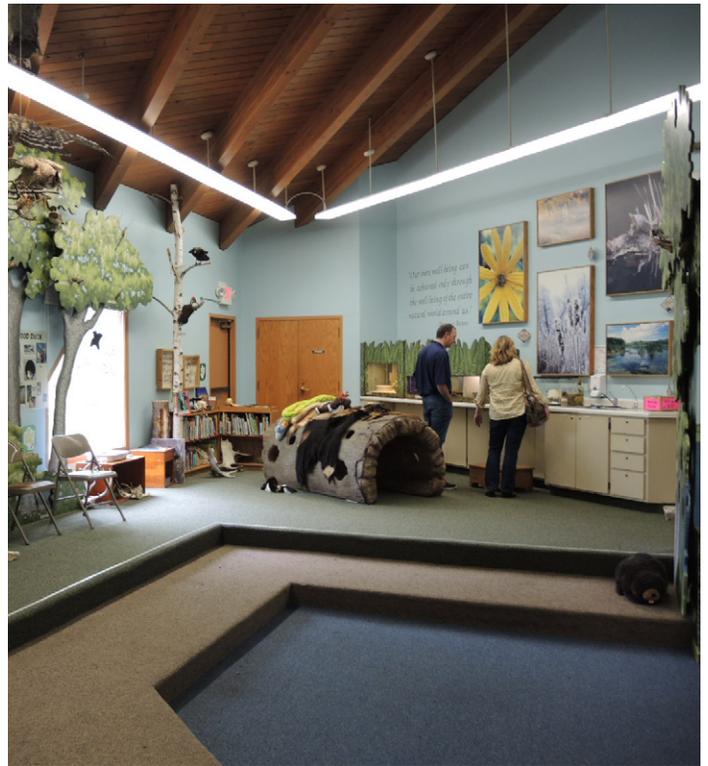


NATURE CENTER & NATURAL AREAS

Maplewood residents have exceptional access to natural areas. The Maplewood Nature Center and the Neighborhood Preserve system are the backbone of preserve system. Additional open space sites that are not part of the park's preserve system provide environmental services but limited access. In addition, most of the City's parks have some areas of naturalized vegetation.

In response to changing demands and pressures on natural areas and preserves, there is a need for updating policies and goals regarding recreation and access within natural areas. For example, some preserves may be suitable locations for paved, ADA accessible trails, and other, due to highly sensitive habitats of high quality plant populations, may not be suitable for any trails.

The Maplewood Nature Center includes a visitor center built in the late 1970's, indoor and outdoor exhibits, a nature play area, and trails on a 40-acre preserve. The center was designed to accommodate groups of up to 30 people. To meet the needs of today's programming, the center needs to accommodate groups of 60. There have also been issues with water seeping into the building. To maintain the functionality of the Nature Center, which is a priority for Maplewood residents, these issues need to be addressed.



The Nature Center is a highly utilized City facility

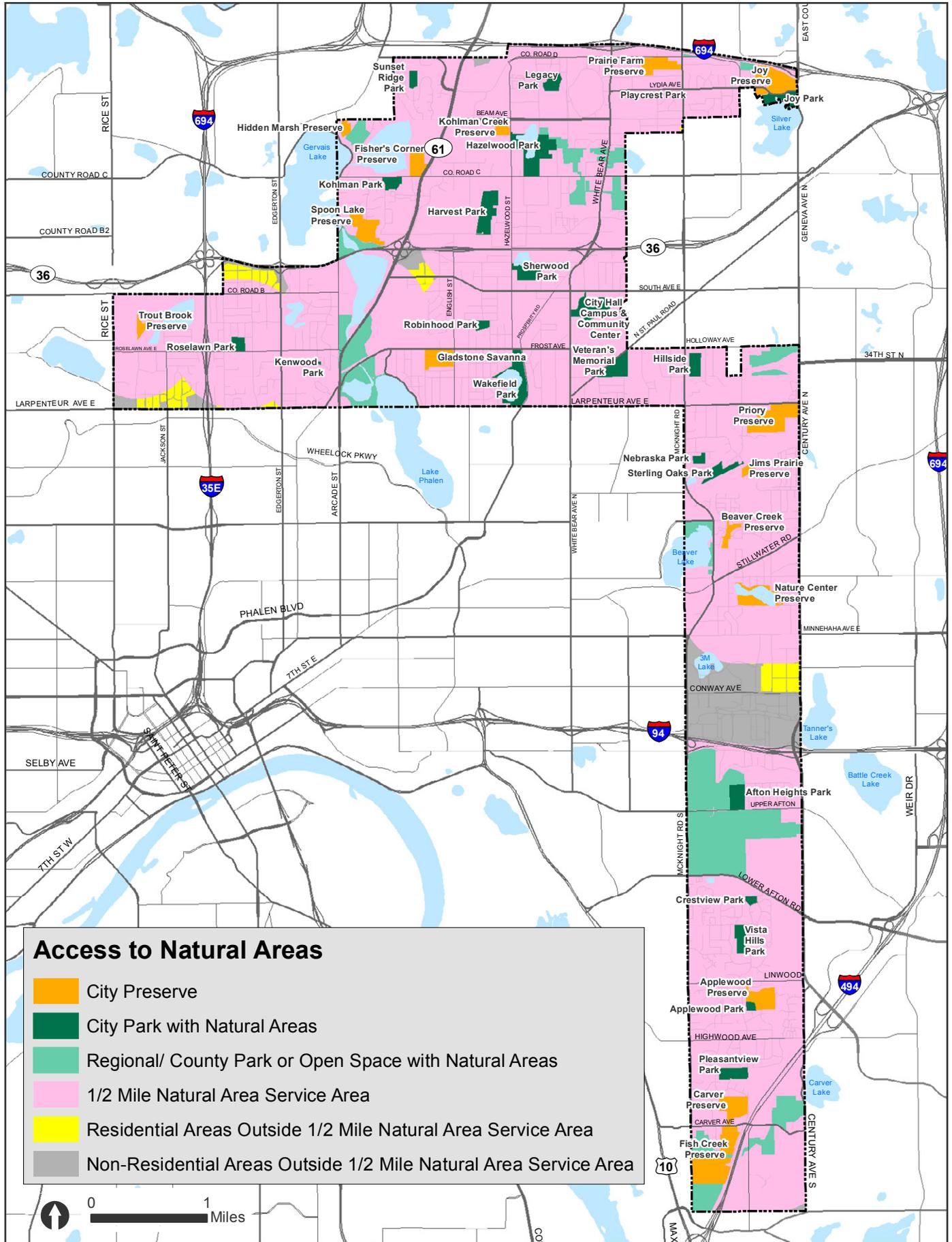


The Priory Preserve

THE LOCAL WORD: *Nature Center & Natural Areas*

- High quality natural areas should be preserved.
- Some natural areas with high habitat value should be preserved for the benefit of wildlife.
- Maintain the Nature Center.
- Active natural resource management is a priority.
- Signage and interpretation is important to inform and educate residents about natural areas and their ecology.
- There is support for the creation of a Protected Ecological Area Overlay for the highest quality natural areas.

FIGURE 3.5 Access to Natural Areas



NATURAL AREA GREENWAYS

The Natural Area Greenway concept is a unique feature of the Maplewood system. The greenways are a map overlay of the largest contiguous areas of habitat in Maplewood, encompassing both public and private lands. They are wildlife corridors and because they are large areas they provide greater ecosystem services than single sites. Public lands within the greenways are open to public use, and offer opportunities for recreation. Private lands in the greenways are not open to public use. Each greenway is unique in its habitat and recreational opportunities.

The greenways were mapped in 2008 and the boundaries will shift over time as some private lands are developed and as some landowners convert manicured areas to native vegetation. Figure 3.6 shows a map of the Natural Area Greenways.

The Greenways could benefit from:

- Marketing to better inform and engage residents about greenway benefits, stewardship efforts, and recreational use.
- Further integration of greenway policy with natural areas management prioritization and community service learning opportunities.
- Partnerships with adjacent cities that share the greenways.

SUSTAINABILITY

Maplewood is known for its progressive sustainability efforts. Specific attributes that distinguish Maplewood's sustainability initiatives in the parks and recreation system include:

- GreenStep City designation that encompasses:
 - › *Low maintenance turf management.*
 - › *Native landscaping.*
 - › *Recycling/compostables collection.*
 - › *Innovative stormwater management.*
- The Maplewood Nature Center, featuring:
 - › *Demonstration Gardens.*
 - › *Outdoor education programs.*
 - › *Environmental service learning opportunities.*

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan also clearly addresses sustainability by stating that 'Maplewood's 2030 Comprehensive Plan as a whole will encourage sustainable practices through the use of land, management of water, and protection of our remaining natural resources. These practices and policies will ensure that the residents, businesses, and property owners live and function in a way that considers the livelihood of future generations and of other living beings on this planet.'

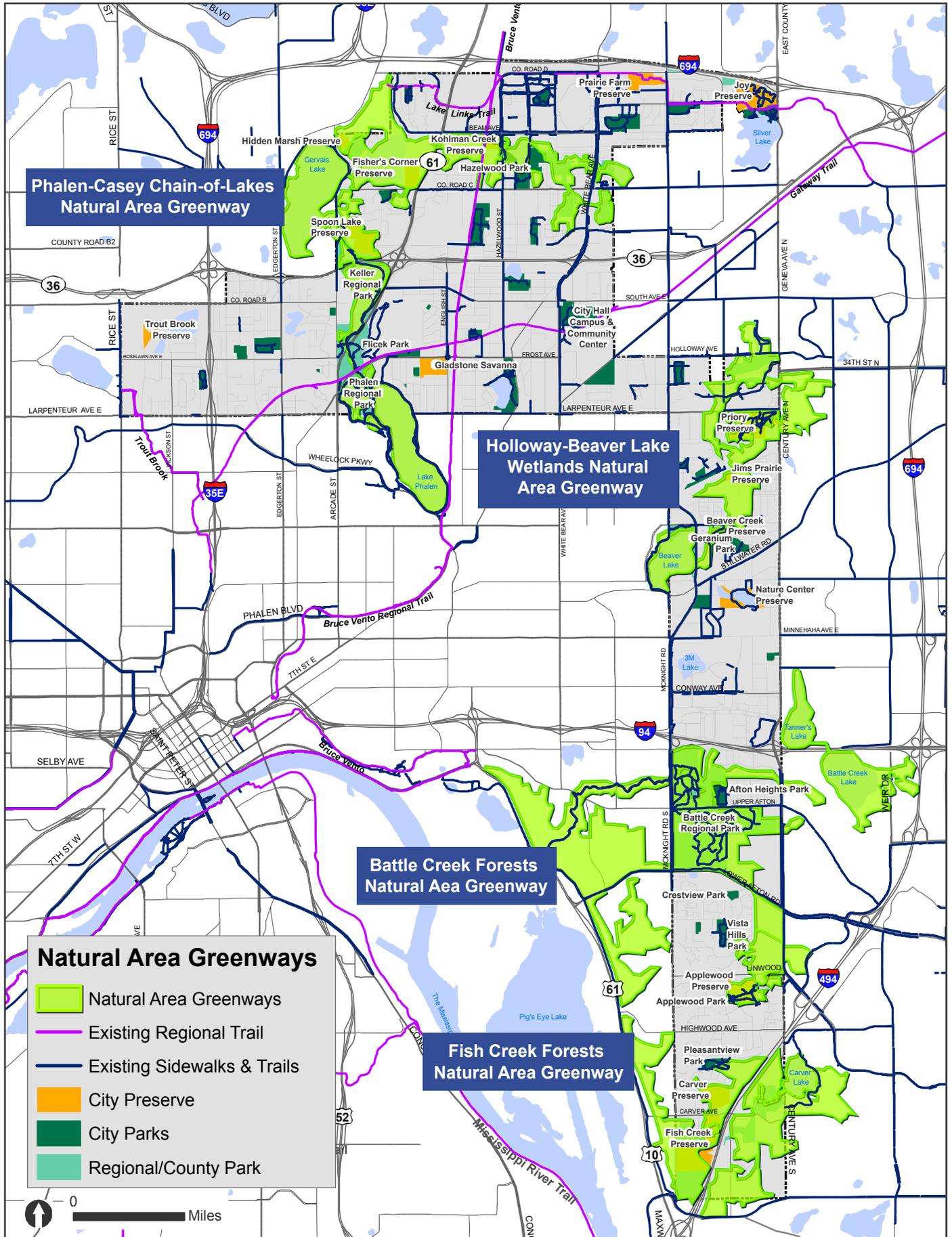
THE LOCAL WORD: *Natural Area Greenways & Sustainability*

- Continue to support and expand current recycling efforts.
- Maintain the Nature Center.
- Support for the utilization of existing trails and sidewalks to interpret and promote the natural area greenways.
- Support for the use of sustainable design practices.
- Support for the continued conversion of underutilized turf grass areas to more diverse plantings.
- Desire to control buckthorn in trail corridors, parks, and preserves.

NEW & NOTABLE: CITY-WIDE SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS THAT IMPACT PARKS AND RECREATION:

- Park & Environmental & Natural Resources Commissions.
- Sustainable Operation Initiatives (The Green Team, organics collection at MCC, etc.).
- Maplewood's Green Building Code.
- Renewable Energy Ordinance and the Small Wind Turbine Neighborhood Consent Form.
- Solar panels at Nature Center, City Hall, and Community Center.
- Maplewood's Living Streets Policy.
- Friends of Maplewood Nature Board.
- Sustainable Turf Management Plan.

FIGURE 3.6 Natural Area Greenways



ARTS & CULTURE

Current arts and culture efforts focus on event programming at the Maplewood Performing Arts Theatre at the Maplewood Community Center (MCC) on White Bear Avenue. The City built the theatre as part of the MCC and currently leases it to Ashland Productions, a non-profit organization that provides family friendly theatre productions and community arts education. Residents can enjoy a seasonal theatre series featuring plays, dance performances and concerts. More recently, Bruentrup Heritage Farm has been the site of community concerts and an arts festival. Residents also have access to performing and visual arts classes through City offerings, and the City sponsors an annual fireworks display at Hazelwood Park.

Recent art installations at Maplewood Mall and upcoming arts amenities at Joy Park are examples of the art that is beginning to appear in Maplewood. The City could benefit from more formalized programs and partnerships that further integrate art across the City.

Integrating arts into park design and programming in Maplewood could help parks establish unique identities, interpret history and culture, add to park aesthetics, and arts-related events could help foster community gathering.

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. Local recreation associations offer leagues for youth and adult sports such as volleyball, hockey, softball, and soccer.

Changing community trends are resulting in additional needs for program offerings and amenities, and include:

- Better integration of youth programs, including fitness, crime prevention, and neighborhood engagement.
- Stronger core programming for youth athletics.
- Additional indoor classroom/ facility space more evenly dispersed across the City.
- Forming additional partnerships.
- Further use of technology, social media, etc.

THE LOCAL WORD: *Arts & Culture*

- Modernize/improve historical interpretation.
- Incorporate the work of local and regional artists throughout the city where appropriate.
- Consider newer populations in the design and implementation of cultural assets.
- Partner with other local groups to support arts and culture.
- Research potential partnerships with artists and arts organizations in neighboring communities.
- Partnering with businesses and stakeholders.

THE LOCAL WORD: *Programming*

- Strong desire for more mind/body group fitness options.
- Continue nature-based programming that connects residents with the outdoors.
- Community and neighborhood events are important for creating opportunities for gathering (i.e. movies in the park, community concerts).
- Residents would benefit from a one-stop shop for program offerings-including links to other clubs and associations.

FUNDING

Currently a gap exists between the needs for park reinvestments and the financial resources available to address them. To support the parks and recreation system, additional funding will be needed to:

- Take care of current facilities - replacement of aging infrastructure (park buildings, playgrounds, fencing, courts).
- Make system improvements (capital and ongoing operations and maintenance).
- Implement additional sustainability efforts.
- Integrate arts into the park system.
- Offer new programs and events.
- Maintain appropriate levels of staff to meet system goals.
- Add specialty recreation facilities.
- Improve accessibility and inclusion.

Evaluation and prioritization needs include:

- Identifying additional funding strategies.
- Reducing ongoing maintenance costs.
- Lowering capital costs



The Maplewood Community Center is home base for Day Camp



The 2013 Daddy Daughter Dance at the MCC was well attended

THE LOCAL WORD: *Funding*

- Prioritize maintenance of the current system.
- Residents expressed a willingness to pay for improvements that include:
 - » An outdoor performance space.
 - » New trails.
 - » Winter trail clearance.
- If additional funding is available:
 - » Regularly maintain parks and facilities.
 - » Install restrooms and running water at higher use parks.
 - » Host movie nights in the park.

SUMMARY

Clearly the City of Maplewood has a rich history of supporting public parks and open space. Over time, the City has steadily acquired the parks and facilities it has needed to provide for neighborhood recreation and athletics. The City has also developed signature features such as the Community Center, the Nature Center, and the system of preserves. A \$5 million referendum passed by Maplewood residents in 1993 funded the acquisition of the preserves. Keller, Phalen, and Battle Creek Regional Parks, and Bruentrup Farm add to the recreation amenities available to residents.

Three quarters of Maplewood's residential neighborhoods were developed over 25 years ago. As neighborhoods age, so do park facilities. In the coming years many basic recreation facilities - playgrounds, courts, picnic shelters, signage, benches, fields - will reach the end of their life-cycle and need to be replaced. While this pressing need for reinvestment will present challenges, it is an exciting opportunity to reinvest in the system to make it more relevant for residents today and into the future.

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.

THE NEEDS

- Renovation of older parks: replace facilities, add support amenities, and improve accessibility.
- Trail 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 and sustainability.
- Financial stability.
- Specialized facilities that respond to demographic and recreation trends.
- Reinvest and replace over time with the availability of funding.

Chapter 4: WHERE WE ARE GOING

PARKS & RECREATION MISSION

The Parks and Recreation Department's mission is to provide diverse recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities, enhance and preserve its parks, facilities, and open spaces while promoting environmental stewardship through education and outreach. The mission defines the department's purpose and direction.

PARKS & RECREATION VISION

The vision for the parks and recreation system and the supporting guiding principles outlined in this plan 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 such as the Maplewood Comprehensive Plan, and a detailed

evaluation of the opportunities and challenges facing parks and recreation 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.”

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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.



Information booths at the 1st annual Maplewood Red Run 5k drew crowds



Parks & Recreation Day Campers enjoy a variety of activities

Safe & Welcoming



Inherent to any vibrant community are safe, clean, and welcoming parks. Many Maplewood parks are faced with infrastructure nearing the end of its life. Maintenance and reinvestment in park infrastructure is fundamentally important for user safety and satisfaction and to maximize the benefits of public investment in facilities. The Parks and Recreation Department will:

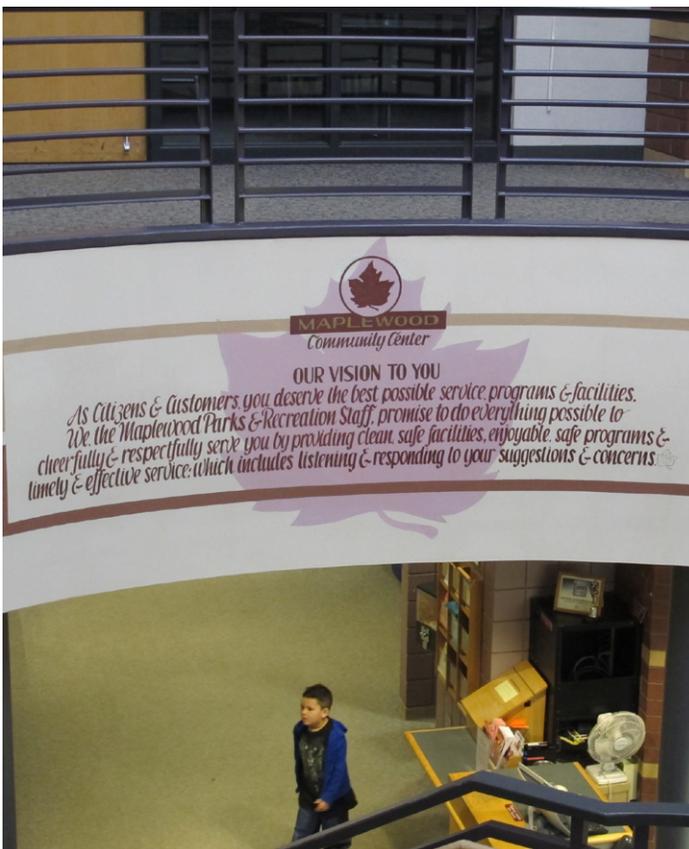
- Maintain cleanliness and overall quality.
- Design and maintain safe facilities.
- Make facilities and programming welcoming to all.

Connect People & Places



When asked about a favorite community place, people often describe a park or open space. Connecting people to places is one of the things Maplewood's parks and recreation system can do best by building connections between bikeways and trails and sidewalks and by building connections between residents by providing places and events for community gathering. The Parks and Recreation Department will:

- Construct a network of trails and sidewalks that connect within Maplewood and to surrounding communities.
- Create community and neighborhood gathering places.
- Preserve areas of historic value.
- Connect parks and natural areas.
- Establish effective and accessible communication.
- Ensure accessibility for all ages and abilities.



The Community Center is highly valued by Maplewood citizens



Biking the trail at Beaver Creek Preserve

Encourage Health & Wellness



The link between health and an active lifestyle is well established. Increased computer use, sedentary jobs, and increased driving has led to less active lifestyles with troubling health implications such as increased obesity levels, heart disease, and diabetes. Recreational options that are relevant to people's lives can establish a lifelong habit of physical activity and advance the overall health of the community. The Parks and Recreation Department will:

- Provide a mixture of culturally relevant recreational activities throughout the City.
- Provide a variety of indoor and outdoor recreational programming.
- Offer recreational facilities and programming at the Maplewood Community Center that meet current needs.
- Expand partnerships to provide additional recreational options.

Promote Environmental Stewardship



Maplewood is known for leadership in environmental stewardship. Continued education, demonstration, and access to high quality natural areas will continue to be a defining feature of the City and underpin all Parks and Recreation decision making. The Parks and Recreation Department will:

- Preserve quality natural resources.
- Provide access to natural resources so residents can enjoy and learn about nature.
- Increase native plant diversity to create healthy habitats.
- Encourage sustainable design and maintenance on public and private property.



Community Center visitors enjoy state-of-the-art cardio equipment



Shoreline buffer planting at Maplewood City Hall

Inspire Creativity & Learning



Inspiring creativity and furthering learning are hallmarks of a vibrant community. Programs focused on environmental stewardship, history, culture, and the benefits of parks and recreation are also beneficial. The Parks and Recreation Department will:

- Integrate public art throughout the system.
- Collaborate with organizations and individuals to provide artistic and cultural activities.
- Teach about nature and promote environmental stewardship.
- Create places that foster creativity.
- Encourage and support volunteerism.
- Continue scholarship programs to promote participation.
- Educate residents about the quality of life benefits of parks and recreation.

Financially Sustainable



Realizing the community vision for parks and recreation will take additional resources. Appropriate funding and re-investment is needed to extend the benefits of the park system, assure continued resident satisfaction, and achieve many of the new initiatives outlined in this plan. This includes planning for park reinvestment over time, building public support for additional funding, and looking creatively and comprehensively at new funding sources, partnerships, and volunteer efforts. The Parks and Recreation Department will:

- Ensure stable and sufficient funding to meet system goals.
- Build partnerships within and outside of the City.
- Maintain appropriate staff to achieve its mission and vision.
- Use volunteers to extend capabilities.
- Plan annually for the maintenance and replacement of facilities.



The Parks & Recreation fall dance recital is held at the MCC



City Campus is home to Maplewood City Hall

Chapter 5: THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Parks and Recreation’s goal is to provide for play of many types to many people. This chapter offers specific detail on how to accomplish that goal. The chapter is organized into five topic areas that will drive ongoing improvements. The five topic areas are:

- Parks & Recreation Facilities
- Trails
- Natural Areas & Greenways
- Programs
- Arts & Culture

Recommendations and strategies are identified for each of the topic areas.

Underlying Values

This chapter’s recommendations across all the topics listed above are built on the foundation of two underlying goals for Maplewood’s park and recreation system: providing a safe and welcoming environment, and environmental sustainability.

Providing a safe and welcoming environment for parks and recreation programs is fundamental. Such an environment encompasses:

- Conducting ongoing maintenance like regular mowing and trash pick-up.
- Replacing equipment at the end of its life cycle or which no longer meets safety standards.
- Adding basic amenities such as ADA accessibility, shade, restrooms, and water.
- Providing activities that meet the needs and interests of Maplewood’s increasingly diverse population.
- Ensuring that recreation opportunities are financially accessible.

- Integrating art into the park system.

The City of Maplewood already exemplifies environmental leadership through design, maintenance, and operations. Recommendations and strategies in all of the topic areas assume continued sustainability practices, which include:

- Preserving natural open spaces.
- Managing natural resources.
- Innovating construction practices and materials selection.
- Integrating natural areas into more active parks.
- Supporting walking and biking as alternatives to automobile use.
- Educating through demonstration, art, programs, and service learning.

ICONS IN THIS CHAPTER

Icons at the beginning of each topic area represent the guiding principles (Chapter 4) that support recommendations for the topic area.

PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES



When people think of a parks and recreation system, they tend to think about the physical places: the Community Center, the neighborhood playground, the local soccer field. As a nearly developed community, most of the City's parks and recreation facilities are already defined and developed. Over the next 20 years needed replacement of infrastructure will present exciting opportunities to reinvent portions of the system and adapt to changing recreation interests and community demographics.

Future recommendations focus on:

- Creating safe and welcoming parks.
- Reinvesting in older parks to make them more unique and representative of the community.
- Developing an updated and standardized package of basic amenities such as signage, benches, and waste receptacles.

IMPORTANCE OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

According to the 2014 Citizen Parks and Recreation Survey over two-thirds of households with young children rate neighborhood parks as one of their top 4 facilities.

Neighborhood parks have developed along with residential development, and parks in older neighborhoods are in need of reinvestment. Important to attracting new families to the City will be updating these parks as infrastructure reaches the end of its life-cycle.

Recommended improvements to neighborhood parks include replacing or adding amenities such as updated signage, shade, benches, safe playgrounds, and flexible field space for informal play.

- Creating new, high quality community destinations in the center of the City.
- Updating the facility mix based on changing demographics and recreation trends.
- Continued leadership in environmental sustainability.
- Improving accessibility and ADA facilities.

Recommendations

- 1. Provide access to a neighborhood park for all residents within a 1/2 mile radius (10 min. walk) and distribute neighborhood scale recreation facilities across park service areas.**

Strategies

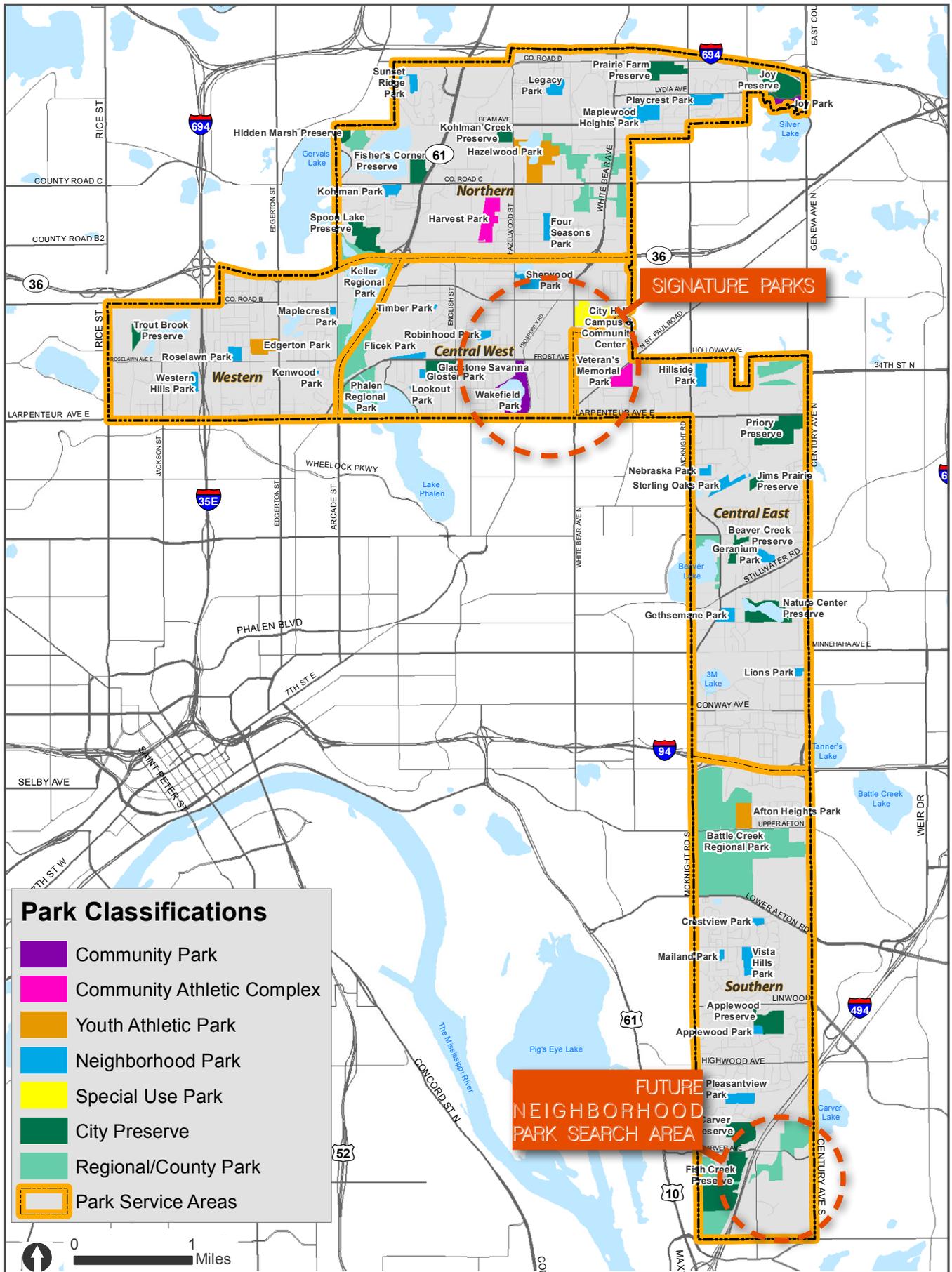
- a. Focus neighborhood park activities on playgrounds, informal gathering, and informal turf play.
- b. Maintain athletic fields for practice or youth games in neighborhood parks.
- c. Add user amenities such as shade, benches, and bike racks based on the asset management plan, funding availability, and community input.
- d. Improve resident connectivity to neighborhood parks by adding trails and sidewalks.
- e. Develop a new neighborhood park in the south end of the City when that area develops.
- f. 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. Establish places for neighborhood and community gathering.**

Strategies

- a. Ensure each park service area has a small picnic shelter.
- b. 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.
- c. Construct an outdoor performing arts space in the City with Veteran's Memorial Park and Hazelwood Park the top options.

FIGURE 5.1 Recommended Park Classifications



3. Provide community parks and community athletic parks in strategic, convenient locations (Note: this recommendation applies to Joy, Wakefield, Veteran's Memorial, Harvest, and Hazelwood Parks).

Strategies

- a. These parks should support community gathering, access to nature, and active recreation.
- b. Ensure each community park and community athletic park provides user amenities including restrooms, water fountains, bike racks, and lighting in key use areas.
- c. Assess parking adequacy annually to ensure use is not adversely affecting surrounding neighborhoods.

4. Create parks that reflect community interests by using community-driven park planning processes to prioritize capital improvements.

Strategies

- a. Conduct community-driven park planning processes for any significant planned improvement over \$50,000, or at least 20 years after original construction.
- b. Phase improvements based on replacement needs and available funding.

5. Design parks to be welcoming.

Strategies

- a. Ensure visible and legible signage at park entrances.
- b. Use recognizable branding to indicate that parks are open to all people.
- c. Provide entrances on public streets.
- d. Utilize vegetation that does not obscure views into and through the parks.
- e. Provide support facilities such as restrooms, lighting, shade, and water based on the type of park.
- f. Include signage kiosks at community and community athletic parks that invite users to use the parks for activities like volleyball, bocce ball, etc.

6. Improve the perception of public safety.

Strategies

- a. Cluster compatible activities to avoid conflicts and increase social observation.
- b. Create additional neighborhood watch groups.
- c. Locate parking lots and facilities near streets so they are easily observable at night.
- d. Locate restrooms and playgrounds in areas that are easily observable.
- e. Provide lighting for areas intended to be used at night.
- f. Increase park patrols.
- g. Use volunteer park liaisons to educate youth about appropriate behavior in parks.
- h. Increase neighborhood involvement in park design and operations.
- i. Use the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in the design of parks.

7. Ensure the cleanliness of parks and park facilities through regular maintenance.

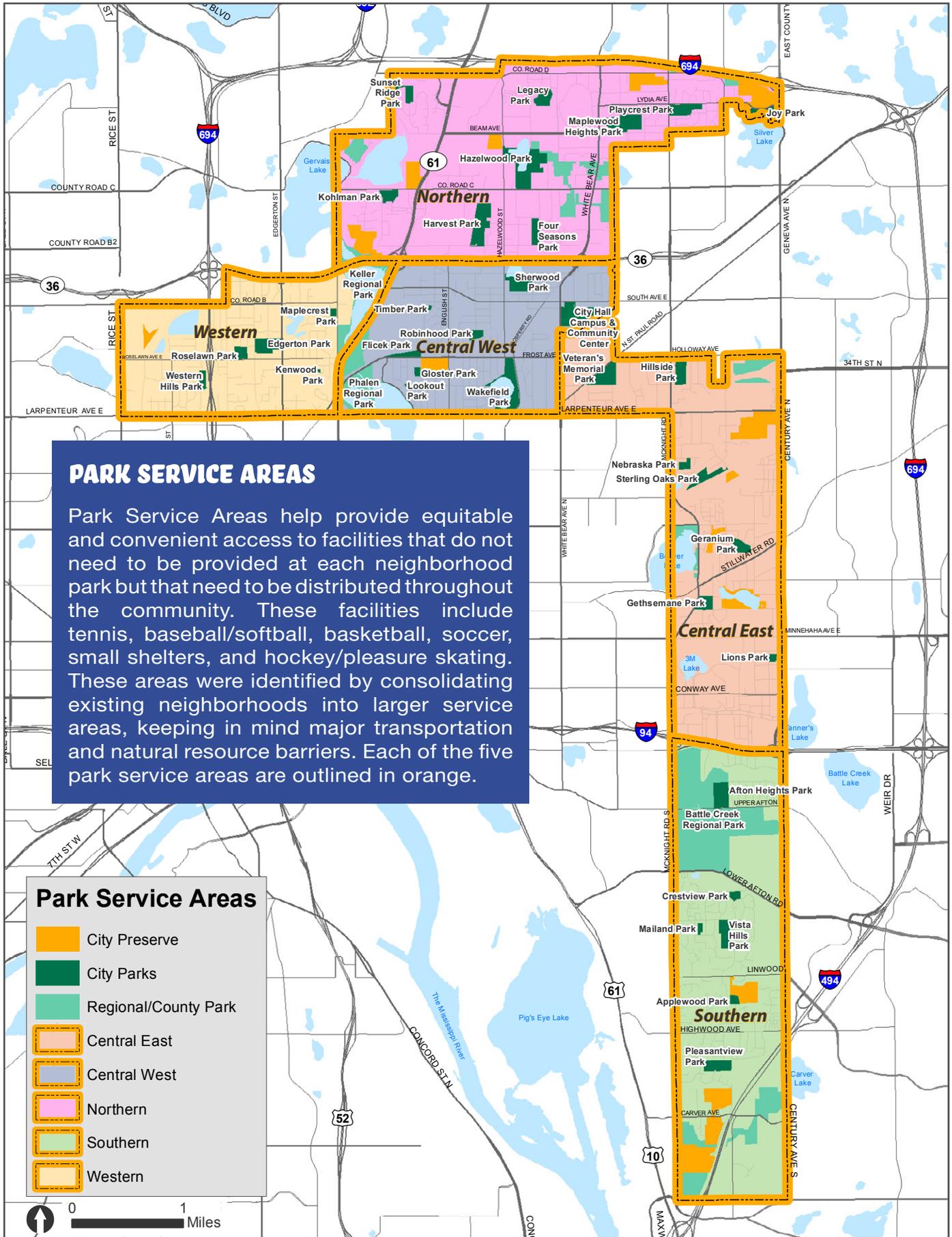
Strategies

- a. Regular garbage and recycling collection.
- b. Regular cleaning of buildings, picnic shelters and restrooms.
- c. Removal of graffiti and repair of vandalism, as required.
- d. Respond to complaints and problems in a timely manner, as established by policy.



Applewood Park features new play equipment and nature-inspired elements

FIGURE 5.2 Park Service Areas



PARK REINVESTMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

In a growing community, park dedication is a primary source of revenue and is used to build a park system. As a community becomes fully developed, park dedication revenue declines and park infrastructure ages. As facilities reach the end of their life cycle (typically 10-20 years), a community must commit a higher level of funding for timely renovation and replacement of park facilities. Replacement of aging and unsafe equipment is essential to maintaining safe and welcoming parks.

An asset management program is an essential tool to help the Parks and Recreation Department plan for facility reinvestment costs. Asset management involves:

- Assessment of recreation facilities based on age, condition, safety, and standards.
- Regular inspection of facilities.
- Prioritization of assets in need of replacement.
- Integration of park reinvestment needs into the annual 5-year Capital Improvement Plan for park facilities.



Hazelwood Park is a community athletic park

8. Establish Veteran's Memorial Park, Wakefield Park, Gladstone Savanna Preserve, and the City Campus area as the premier recreation and community gathering area for the City.

Strategies

- 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, splash pad, large playground, and other winter facilities.
- c. Complete the Veteran's Memorial Park Master Plan and add an inclusive playground and performing arts space.
- d. Add a skate park, a fitness loop, and environmental demonstration areas around the pond at the City Hall Campus.
- e. Implement the Gladstone Savanna Preserve Master Plan

9. Ensure safety through regular maintenance and equipment upgrades.

Strategies

- a. Conduct annual inspections of parks, buildings, restrooms, shelters, ball fields, play courts, skatepark, outdoor ice rinks, parking lots, trails, and nature areas.
- b. Establish an Asset Management Plan and implement the annual 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for park facilities.
- c. Use tiered maintenance level standards for routine maintenance to guide the level of maintenance from most intensive to least intensive.
- d. Reduce ongoing maintenance costs over time by replacing outdated park elements with high quality materials and outdated maintenance equipment with higher efficiency models.
- e. Establish a winter maintenance plan that increases the facilities maintained for winter activities like walking, skating, sledding, cross-country skiing, etc.

SIGNATURE COMMUNITY PARKS CONCEPT

Signature parks help define their cities, embody the ‘brand’ of a city, generate substantial civic value, and attract visitors. The 2014 Citizen Parks and Recreation Survey identified a large, destination park as one of the most important additions to Maplewood’s Park and Recreation System.

To fill the need for a destination park, re-investment in four centrally-located parks and connecting them with trails is recommended. Together, Wakefield Park, Veteran’s Memorial Park, Gladstone Savanna Community Preserve, and the City Hall Campus will provide a wide range of destination activities and be hubs for community gathering. Each park/preserve, however, will retain its own character and focus. Art and sustainable design, construction, and maintenance practices will be integrated into all four parks/preserves.

This approach:

- Builds on two of the most visited destinations in the City - the Community Center and the Gateway Trail.
- Locates destination recreation throughout the City through this signature parks corridor and in conjunction with Phalen-Keller and Battle Creek Regional Parks, which are already regional destinations.
- Reinvests in existing parks.
- Provides needed speciality facilities: outdoor performance space, high quality ball fields, skate park, splash pad, signature ADA playground, reservation picnicking, and winter recreation hub.
- Strengthens trail connections between the parks.

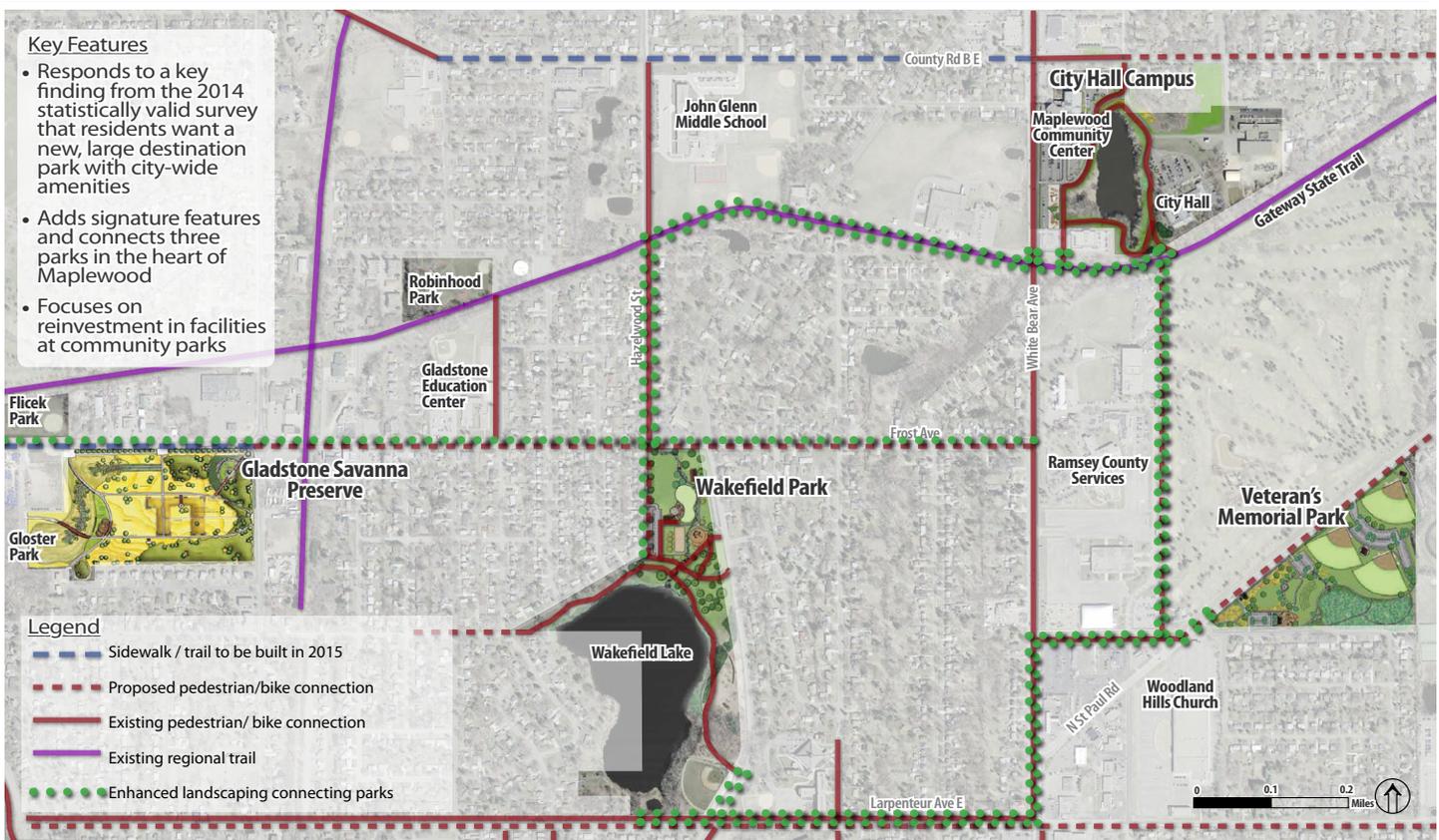


FIGURE 5.4 Wakefield Park Concept

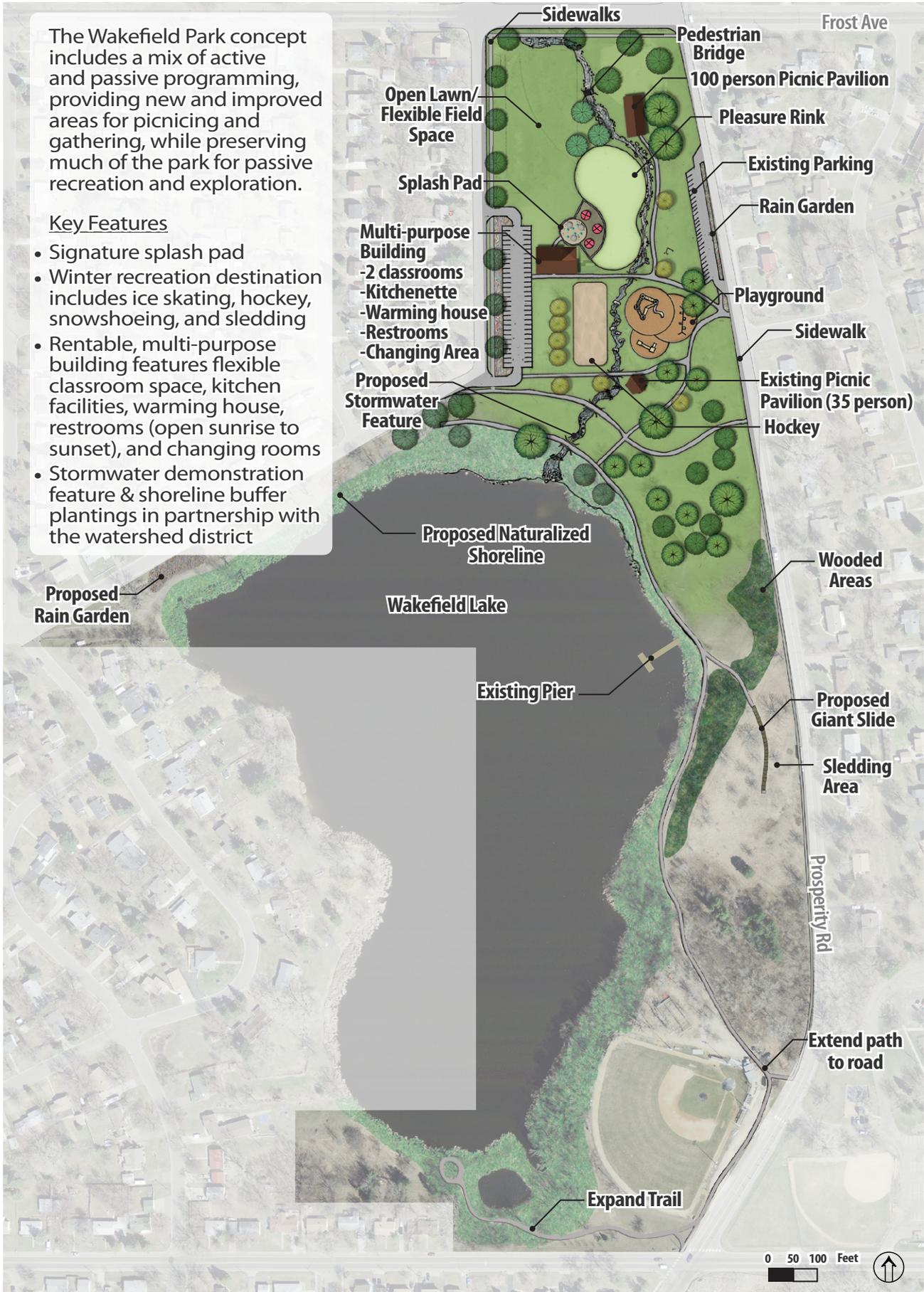


FIGURE 5.5 City Hall Campus Concept

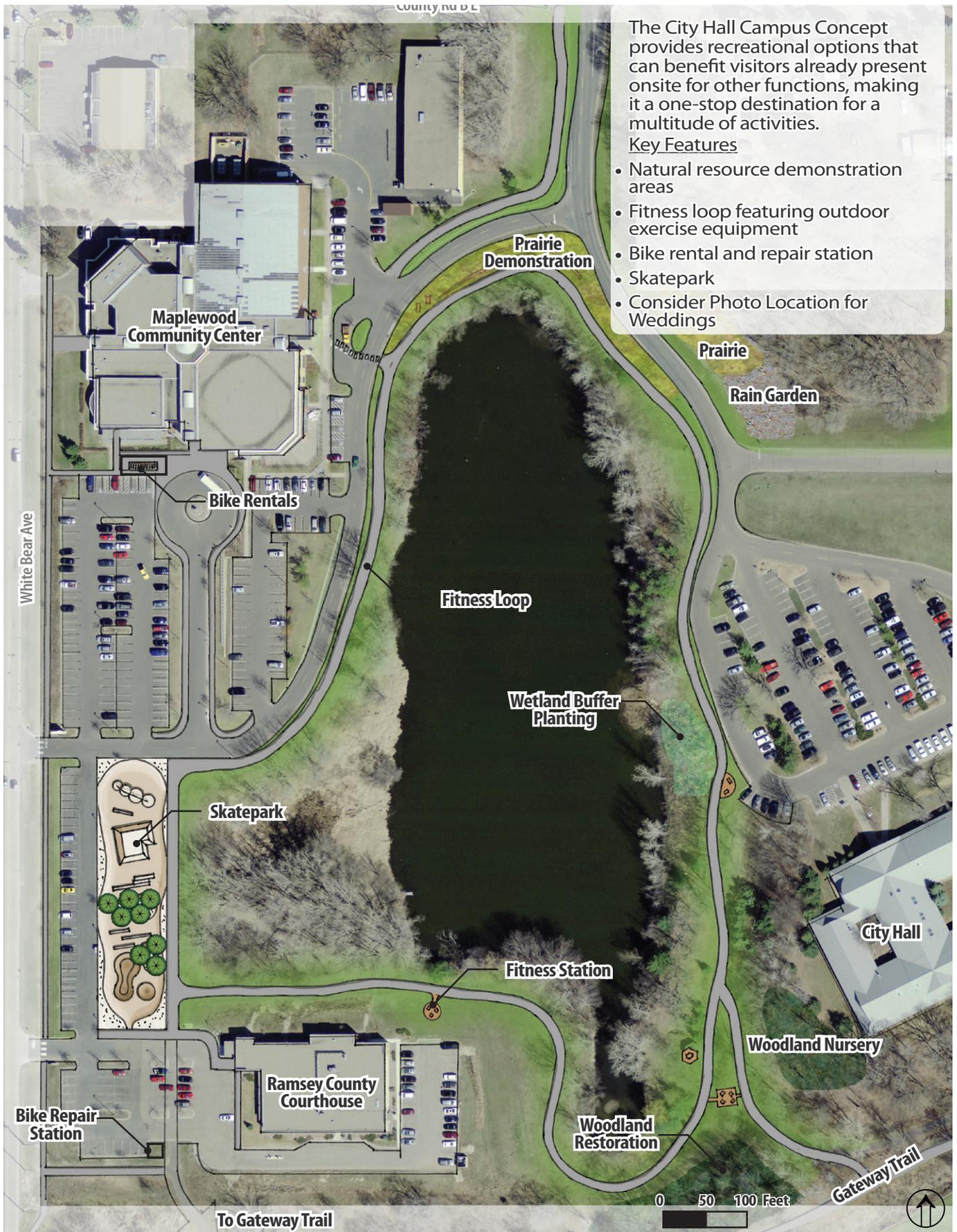


FIGURE 5.6 Veteran's Memorial Park Concept



10. Use Sustainable Design Practices.

Strategies

- a. Use renewable energy where possible (solar, wind, geothermal, biomass).
 - › Solar lights for trails.
 - › Solar power at athletic facilities.
 - › Wind turbines where appropriate.
- b. Follow Maplewood's existing Green Building Code for new facilities.
- c. 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.

11. Develop Sustainability Pilot Programs.

Strategies

- 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).

12. Implement Sustainable Maintenance Practices in Parks and Preserves.

Strategies

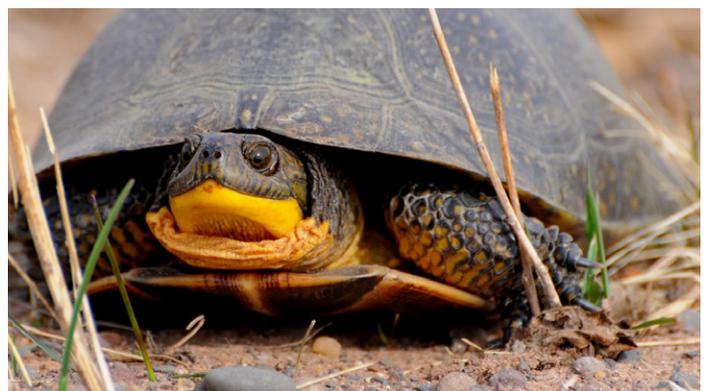
- a. Continue and expand turf maintenance program, especially in parks within greenways.
- b. Continue and expand integrated waste management practices.
 - › Recycle in all parks and at all events.
 - › Organics composting at appropriate parks/facilities.
- c. Follow integrated pest management strategies to control nuisance plants, weeds, insects, rodents, etc.



An artful example of solar arrays



White clover is drought tolerant and supplies nitrogen to other plants



Wetlands provide habitat for Blanding's turtles, and are sensitive to pesticide run-off from lawns and streets

13. Extend the use of the park system into the fall, winter, and spring.

Strategies

- a. Add lighting to high-demand recreational facilities such as key baseball/softball fields, high-quality tennis courts, and hockey rinks to allow use into night-time.
- b. Ensure each park service area has at least one City-maintained pleasure skating rink, one hockey rink, and a warming house.
- c. Partner with neighborhood associations and community groups to provide additional winter skating and hockey opportunities in additional neighborhood parks if partner groups are willing to maintain the facilities.
- d. Explore additional cross country skiing opportunities.
- e. Identify and publicize suitable locations for sledding such as Hazelwood and Wakefield Parks.

14. Maintain quality, up-to-date indoor facilities to provide recreational, cultural, arts, and community gathering activities.

Strategies

- a. Continue to operate the Community Center as the hub for indoor recreation and programs. Explore partnerships to support operations and expand programs.
- b. Prepare and implement a Master Plan to guide maintenance and investment in the Maplewood Community Center.
- c. Maintain partnerships with the school district to provide community gyms in neighborhood locations.
- d. Replace existing warming houses with small, multi-purpose buildings that can serve a variety of needs including locations for neighborhood based classes & programming, private rentals, winter warming house, and restrooms.

15. Respond to recreation trends and community needs by updating the mix of facilities offered.

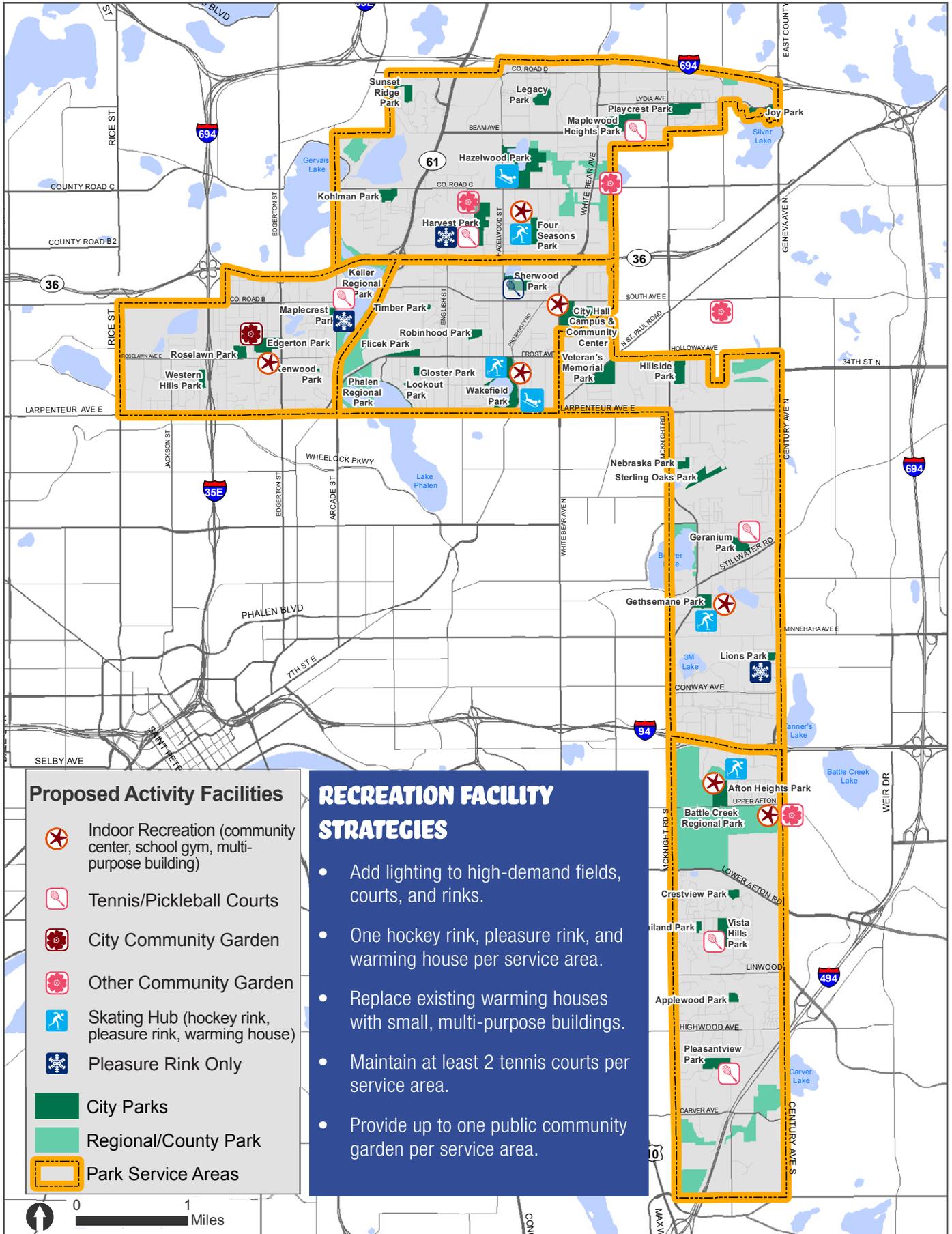
Strategies

- a. Convert low-use facilities to other uses as determined by a park master planning process.
 - › Provide high quality tennis courts by transitioning neighborhood tennis courts to a larger bank (4 or more) of high quality, lighted courts, at Maplewood Heights.
 - › Maintain at least two courts in each park service area.
 - › Convert courts at Four Seasons, Playcrest and Western Hills to other uses once the existing facilities have reached the end of their life.
 - › All tennis courts will be multi-use and shared with pickleball.
- b. Support participation in pickleball by striping all tennis courts.
- c. Provide public community gardens as demand warrants, up to one per park service area.
 - › Priority on park service areas where other semi public (operated by a school, church or other organization) gardens do not exist.
 - › Support partnerships to provide additional gardens. For example, allow the use of City land for a neighborhood group to operate and manage a community garden.



Pickleball is a lifetime sport that is growing in popularity

FIGURE 5.7 Proposed Activity Facilities



TUJ LUB

The need for a Tuj Lub court in the eastern metro is an example of evolving recreation needs as a result of demographic changes.

Tuj Lub (pronounced too-loo) is a traditional Hmong sport that immigrants brought with them when they resettled in the United States.

It is a game played outdoors that incorporates spinning of a top with a line and stick and is played in an area approximately the size of a tennis court.

The City of Maplewood is currently partnering with Ramsey County to locate a Tuj Lub court in Keller Regional Park.



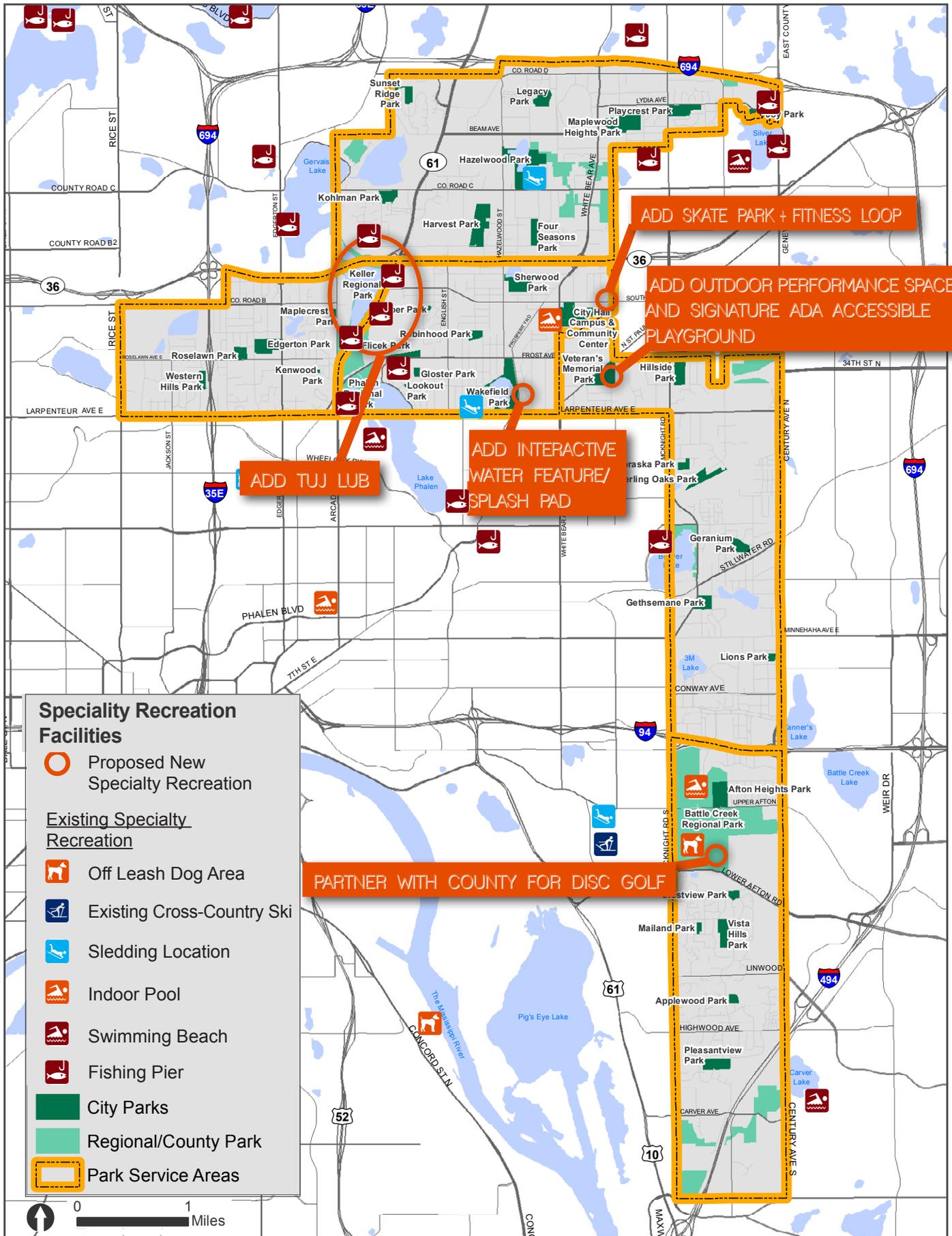
Tuj Lub is a traditional Hmong sport

16. Respond to recreation trends by adding specialty recreation facilities.

Strategies

- a. Construct a splash pad.
- b. Add an all-inclusive playground at Veteran's Memorial Park.
- c. Develop a skate park.
- d. Create a disc golf course in Battle Creek Regional Park.
- e. Construct a Tuj Lub (Top Spin) court.
- f. Ensure sufficient space for outdoor volleyball events by having a park with room for at least 6 volleyball courts and signage.
- g. As demand warrants, develop an off-leash dog area in the northern part of Maplewood.

FIGURE 5.8 Proposed Specialty Recreation Facilities



TRAILS



Trails are one of the most desired and economical park amenities. They bring the park system closer to every resident, offer transportation alternatives, and support a healthy, active population. Trails are essential components in an accessible recreation system, particularly for those who cannot or choose not to drive, including low income households, children, and the elderly. Investment in trails pays for itself in health care savings, reduced emissions, and reduced reliance on automobiles.

Recommendations

1. Create a safe, multi-purpose, all-season, non-motorized trail system throughout the City.

Strategies

- a. Provide safe road crossings.
- b. Sign paved shoulders when utilized to supplement the non-motorized system, transitioning to off-road facilities or bike lanes where and when possible.
- c. Add lighting in key locations.
- d. Add system wayfinding and signage at key locations.
- e. Consider options for hiking, biking, walking, skating, and cross-country skiing.
- f. Update the Snow and Ice Control Policy on an annual basis to ensure the appropriate prioritization of the network.

2. Create a Priority Network that makes North-South and East-West connections for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Strategies

- a. Connect to regional and community parks, preserves, facilities, schools, commercial areas, and transit routes.
- b. Provide bicycle routes every half to one-mile throughout the City.
- c. Connect to destinations and pedestrian/bicycle facilities in neighboring communities.

3. Establish a system of routes that highlight the Natural Area Greenways.

Strategies

- a. Incorporate existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- b. Identify the gaps and work to connect trail segments on public land.
- c. Partner with adjacent cities to connect Greenway trails to trails in their communities.

4. Expand the trail network in Parks and Preserves

Strategies

- a. Continue to add trail loops of 1/2 mile or greater in parks.
- b. Add trails featuring low-impact design to preserves, where appropriate.
- c. Add an ADA trail in one preserve per park service area.
- d. Balance access to natural areas with environmental protection.

5. Continue coordination between the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Department on the expansion of the non-motorized transportation system.

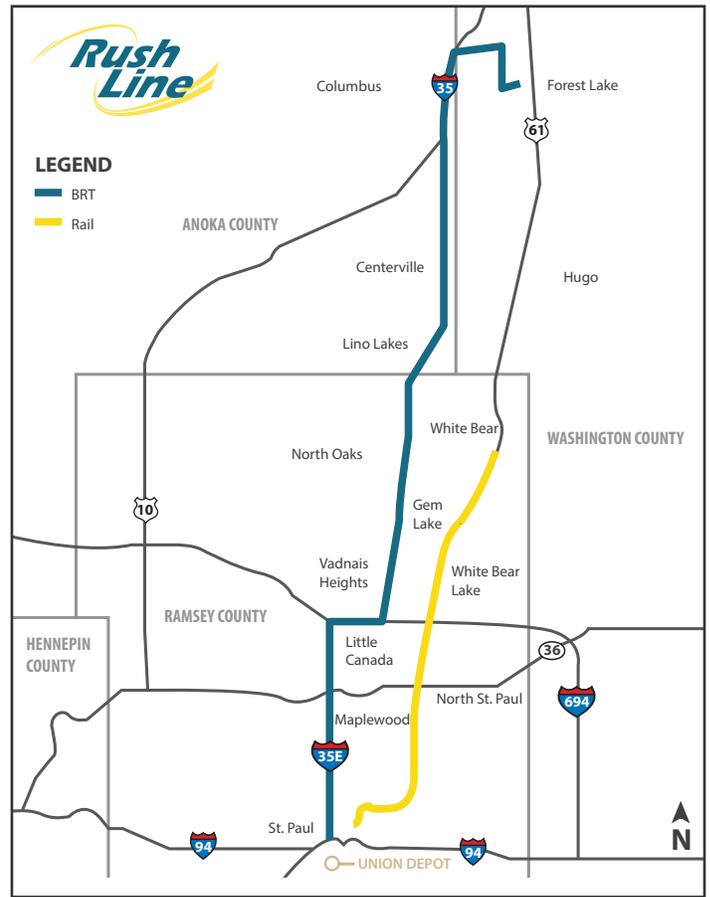
Strategies

- a. Use neighborhood context, the Living Streets Policy, and the 2030 Comprehensive Plan to guide the design of trail and sidewalk projects.
- b. Annually review missing segments and priority corridors as part of the Capital Improvement Plan process. Coordinate trail and sidewalk construction with road construction projects.

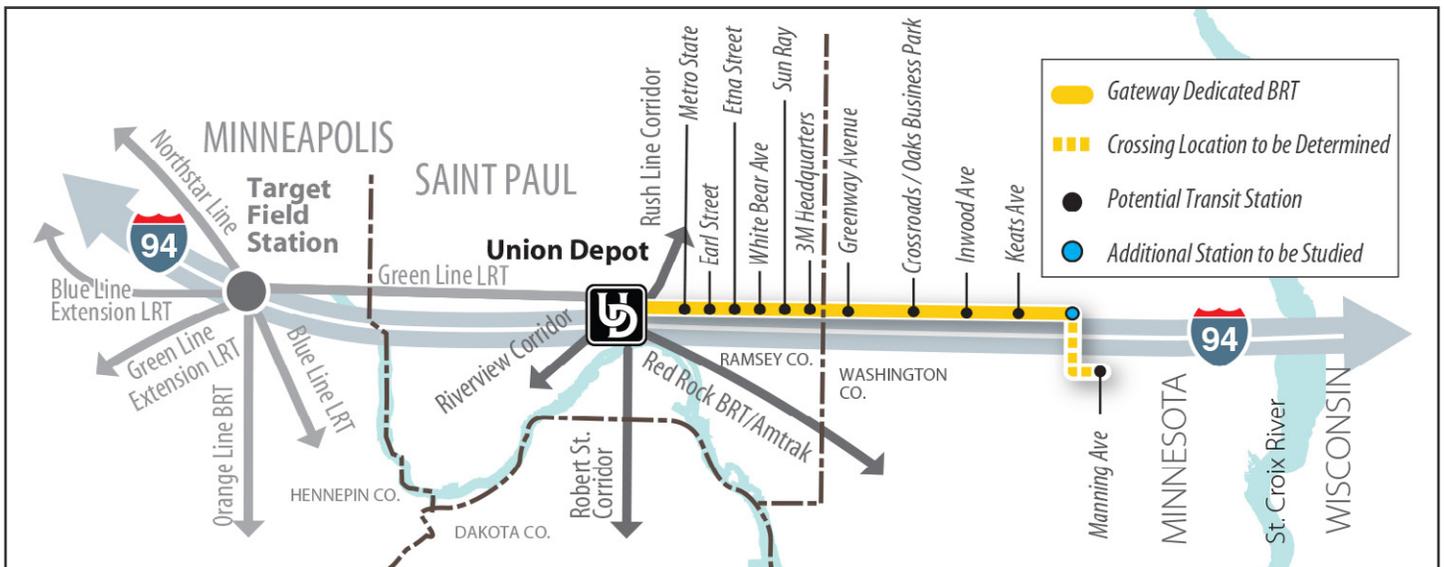
- c. Initiate planning on priority segments to position projects for grant funding. This task could include preparing preliminary plans/layouts, evaluating right of way needs, environmental documentation, review of historic resources impact, or building of partnerships.
- d. Ensure Maplewood's non-motorized transportation needs are incorporated in planning and construction processes by other jurisdictions, including MnDOT and Ramsey County.
- e. Continue to implement Maplewood's Living Streets Policy in areas adjacent to parks and trails.

6. Support multi-modal transportation.

- a. Ensure safe walking/biking options to system components.
- b. Introduce a bike rental program at the MCC.
- c. Provide bike racks, water fountains, and restrooms at facilities as appropriate based on facility class.
- d. Focus transit connections to community and athletic parks (safe routes from transit stops, marketing of easy transit connections).
- e. 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.



The Rush Line Corridor (image source: www.rushline.org)



The Gateway Corridor (image source: www.thegatewaycorridor.com)

FIGURE 5.9 Proposed Pedestrian/Bicycle Network

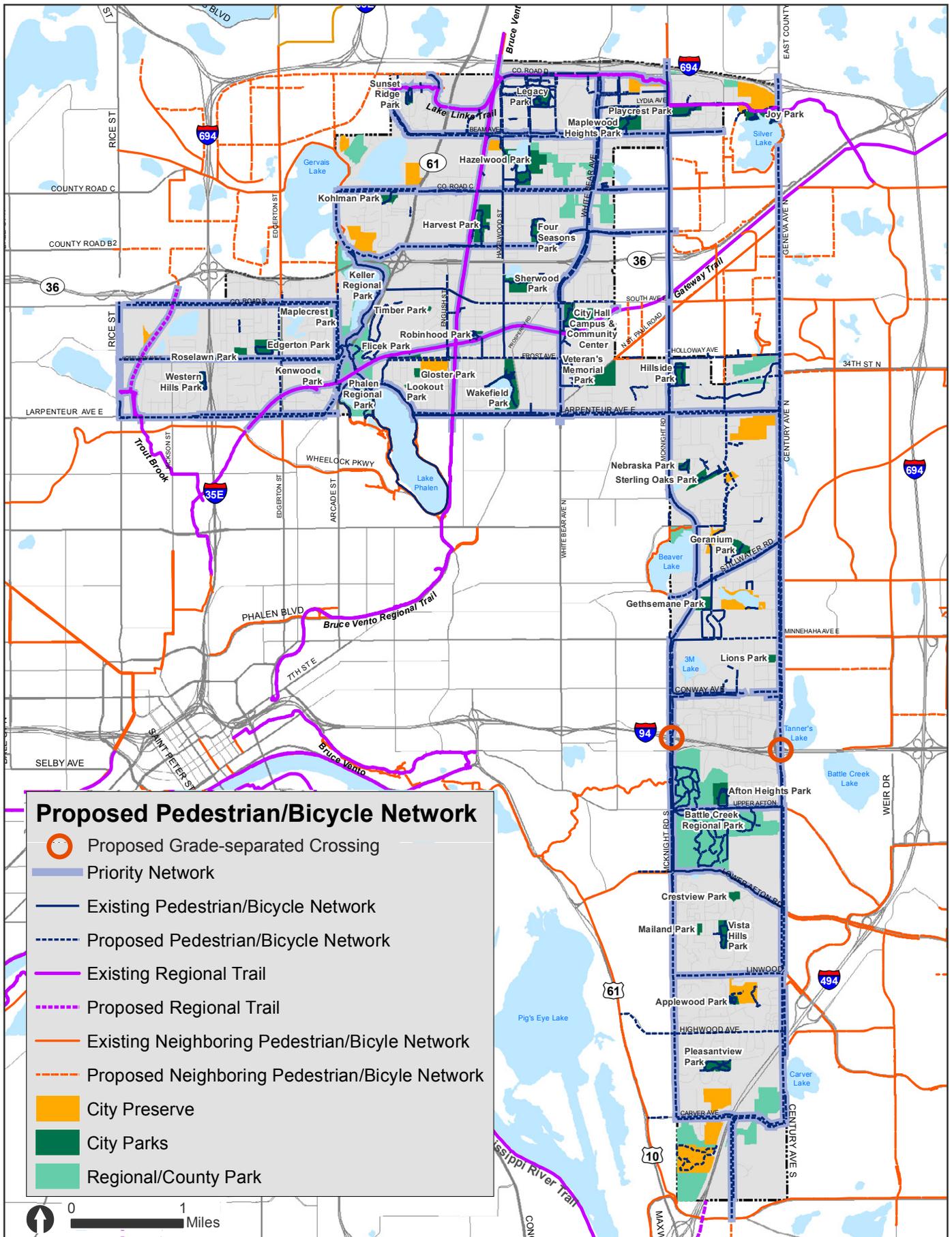
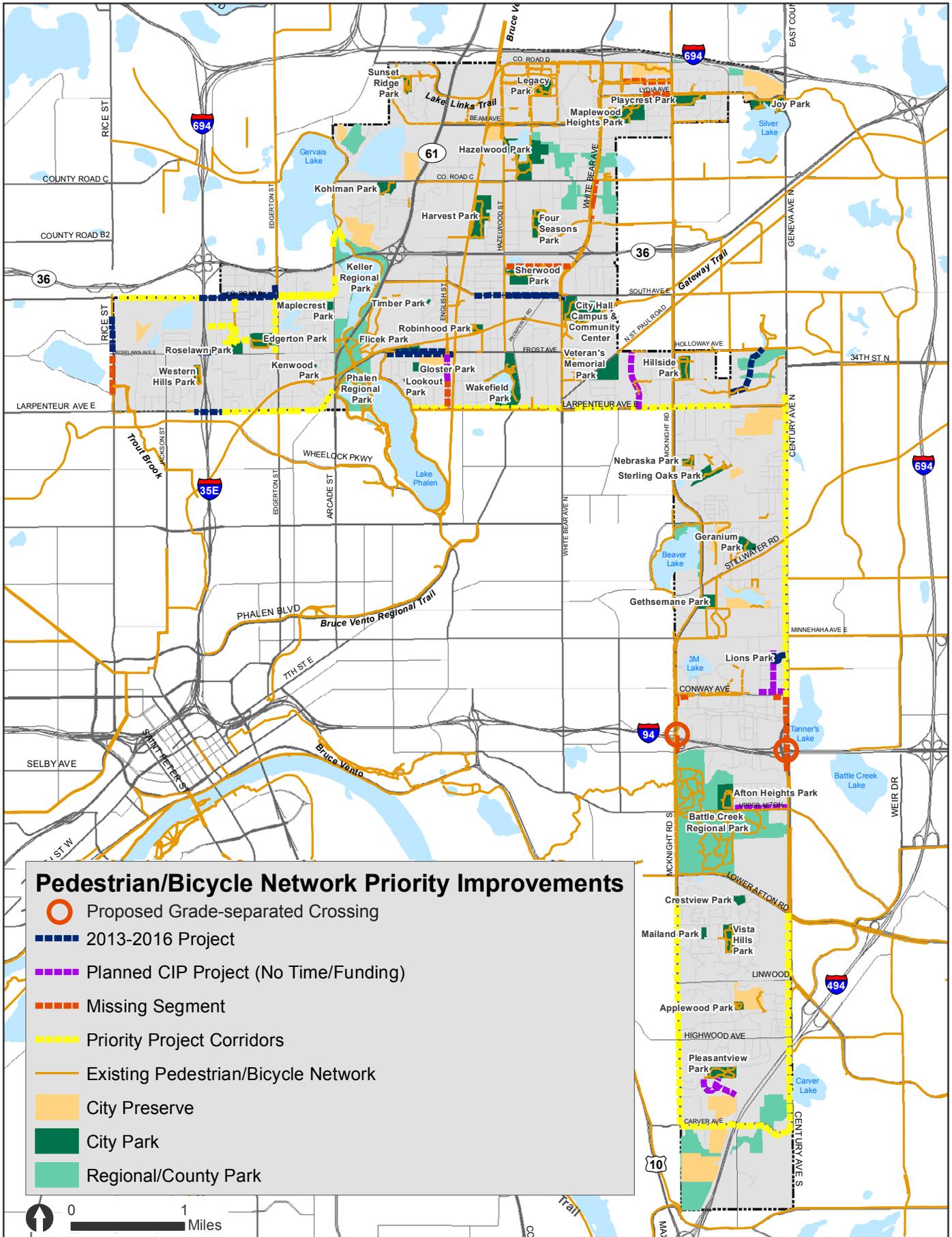


FIGURE 5.10 Pedestrian/Bicycle Network Priority Improvements



NATURAL AREAS & GREENWAYS



Maplewood residents place a high value on environmental health, preserving natural open spaces, and linking open spaces throughout the City. The Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments are in position to exemplify environmental leadership through education, demonstration, design, maintenance and operations. Continued investment in natural areas will help keep Maplewood's environment healthy.

Recommendations

- 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.**

Strategies

- a. Categorize Maplewood Nature Center, Prairie Farm, Gladstone Savanna, and Fish Creek as Community Preserves.
- b. Use natural resource management plans to guide the preservation, management, and restoration of natural resources.
- c. 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.
- d. Provide historic interpretation to share the history of the site.

- 2. Maintain Neighborhood Preserves as areas set aside for the preservation of natural resources and to connect people with nature.**

Strategies

- a. Limit activities in neighborhood preserves to low impact activities such as nature study/

observation, bird/wildlife watching, walking/hiking, and meditation/spiritual reflection.

- b. Use management plans to guide preservation, restoration, and management of the natural resources in individual neighborhood preserves.
- c. 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.
- d. Improve access to nature for people of all abilities by ensuring one ADA neighborhood preserve trail in each of the park service areas.

- 3. Retain scenic areas, landscape buffers, and drainageways as other open space areas that are minimally maintained and have no maintained, public trails.**

- 4. Create a Protected Ecological Area overlay that identifies areas within parks, preserves, and open spaces that have high-quality plant communities and wildlife habitat. Actively preserve, restore, and manage these areas.**

Strategies

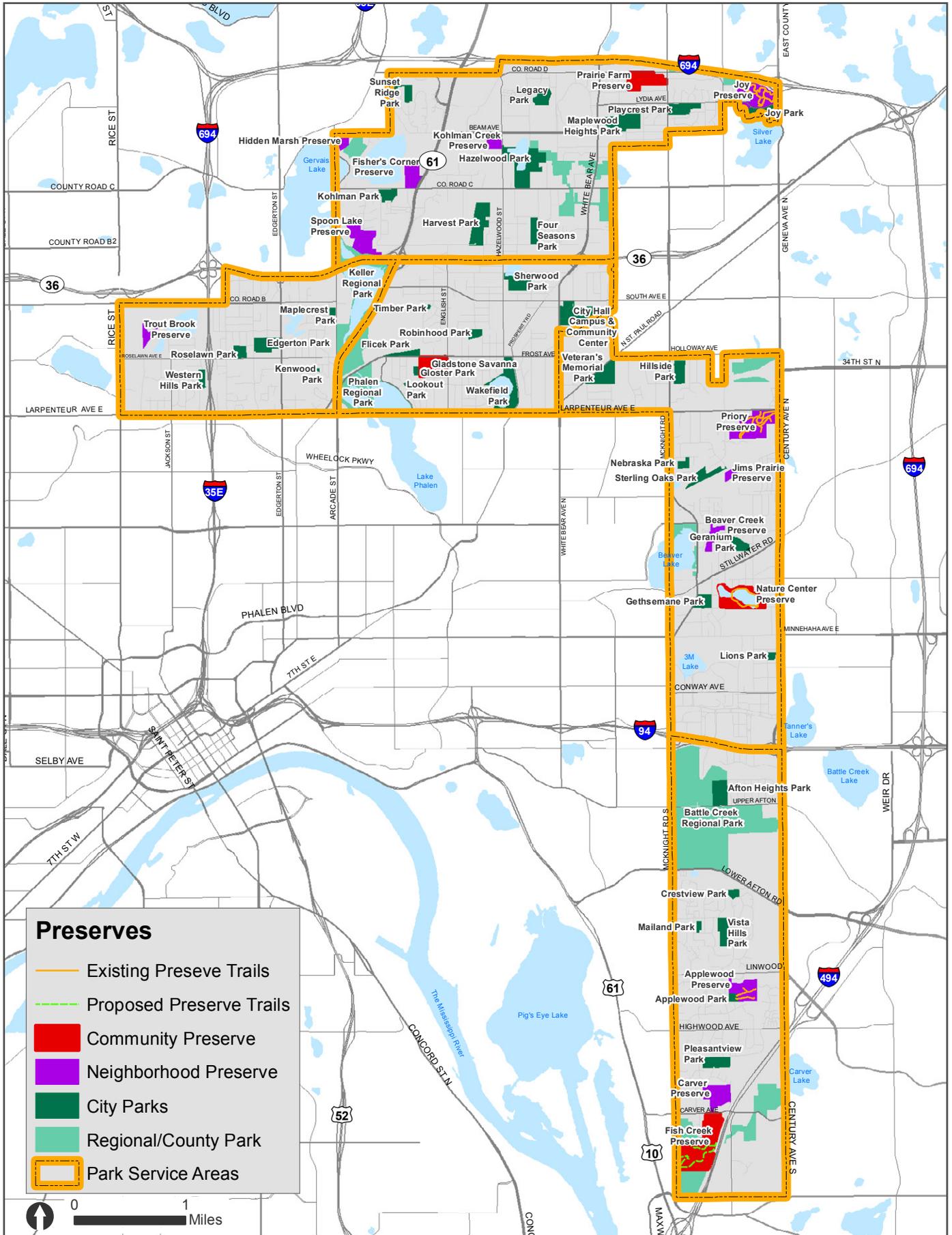
- a. Identify the location of the community's highest quality plant communities and wildlife habitat on public property.
- b. Establish a policy regarding public access and activities allowed in these areas.
- c. Create or update natural resource management plans for these areas.

- 5. Maintain the Nature Center as the community hub for environmental stewardship and nature-based programming.**

Strategies

- a. Undertake a Master Plan to assess the condition of the existing facility, determine future needs and appropriate location, and establish a long-term vision.
- b. Explore opportunities to create satellite locations for nature-based programming in select neighborhood preserves.

FIGURE 5.11 Proposed Preserve Classifications



TRAIL MARKERS AND WAYFINDING

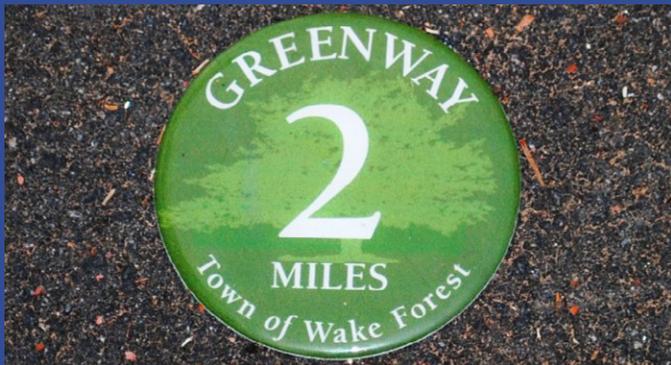
Identification of special trails, such as routes in the greenways, can be identified in ways that range from easily implementable and more temporary, to embedded and permanent. Route markers should be context sensitive, reflecting the feel of the surrounding area.



Pavement paint is a low cost wayfinding option



Trail markers can be subtle and unobtrusive



More permanent options include pavement-embedded mile markers



Canoeing the Chain-of-Lakes Greenway

6. Promote the Natural Area Greenways by establishing routes through Maplewood's four greenways.

Strategies

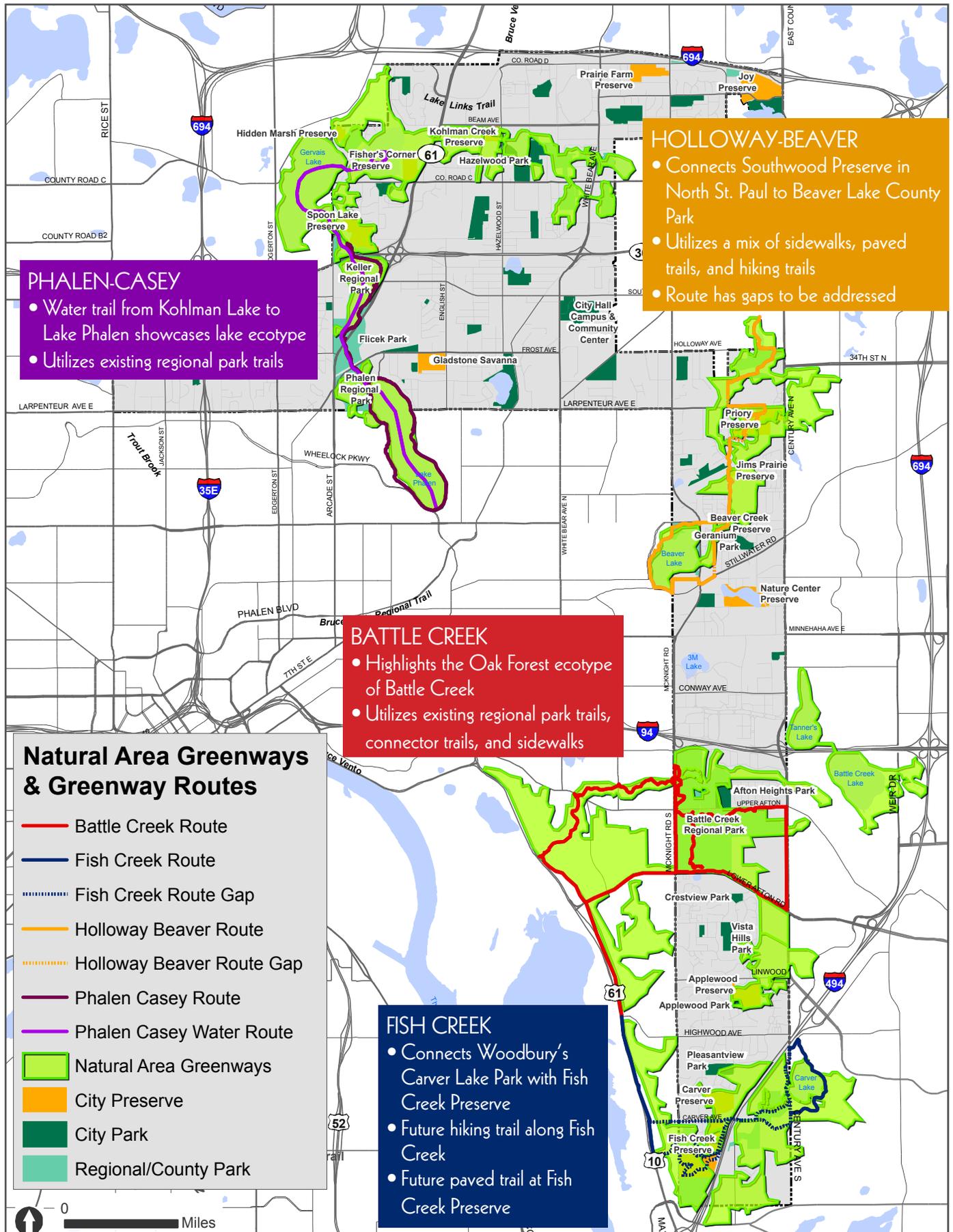
- Connect Preserves, Parks, and Open Spaces across jurisdictional boundaries within the Greenways.
- Use existing and proposed trails, sidewalks, bike routes, and water bodies to make connections.
- Use these routes to prioritize paved, off-road trail construction where appropriate.
- Develop artful, context-sensitive trail markers and wayfinding signage to identify greenway routes.
- Improve and expand Greenway routes with future projects and partnerships where appropriate.
- Promote the distinct identities, features, and modes of travel within each Greenway.
- Interpret historic and natural assets along the Greenway Routes where appropriate.

7. Integrate Natural Resource Management into Parks and Preserves.

Strategies

- Integrate food production in City parks and preserves—edibles, foraging, permaculture, community gardens, etc.
- Create and follow management plans (e.g. Beaver Creek Corridor Management Plan).
 - Identify and classify natural areas/plant communities/restoration areas.
 - Prioritize restoration/management strategies within sites and across the system.
- Minimize monocultures and establish biodiversity goals to support wildlife habitat.
- Consider ecotype distribution across the system (diversity of forest, prairie, savanna, wetland, lacustrine environments) when exploring natural resources restoration.
- Identify and manage for target species (e.g. threatened or special concern species) as possible tools for educating and engaging the community.

FIGURE 5.12 Greenway Routes



ARTS & CULTURE



The City is uniquely poised to grow a sustainable arts and culture program over the next 20 years, building on its strong cultural and transportation history, extensive parks and recreation system, potential for future development, and a growing minority population that is rich with cultural traditions. Maplewood is also situated close to a booming Twin Cities arts community that offers an enormous talent pool and experienced support services.

A thriving arts and culture component is considered vital to creating healthy and sustainable communities. The arts enhance livability, bring diverse groups of people together, celebrate history and heritage, contribute to economic vitality, enhance learning in classrooms, raise awareness of environmental and social concerns, and bring beauty and meaning to the built environment.

Most of America's large cities have art departments and public art programs. For many smaller cities with limited resources, arts development is overseen via public-private partnerships. Some cities partner with a local non-profit or a volunteer "Friends of the Arts" group. Some cities combine efforts with neighboring regions to share the workload and increase opportunities.

Maplewood's arts and cultural programming will grow and evolve organically over time. The City should build on its successful relationships and partnerships to foster arts in the City. Moving forward, the City will need to expand partnerships with nearby communities and their arts resources. A useful strategy is to create a Friends group, which could serve as a community advisory committee, encourage citizen involvement and participation, and evolve into a nonprofit agency to meet the City's growing demand.

Recommendations

1. Establish funding to support a sustainable public art program for Maplewood Parks.

Strategies

- Establish a separate funding source for programs.
- Recruit Community Advisory Committee or Friends group to aid in planning and artist selection.
- Develop additional support systems, funding sources, gifts, and private partnerships.

2. Establish a public art commissioning plan for priority parks, trails, and public facilities.

Strategies

- Create a public art overlay map for each project, indicating locations, types, and budget allocations.
- Develop criteria and objectives for each project and prepare RFQs for artists.
- Implement review and selection of artists, followed by contracting and monitoring of work performed by artists (from design through installation).
- Establish maintenance policies and procedures, including training for parks maintenance staff, periodic inspection, and maintaining database per project.

3. Incorporate art into the park system.

Strategies

- Commission artists to produce unique park amenities such as benches, railings, picnic shelters, wayfinding, trail-side exercise stations, etc.
- Create a fixed outdoor performance art space at Veteran's Memorial Park and a mobile stage for temporary set up at neighborhood events.

4. Support cultural programming by diverse cultural groups seeking to use parks.

Strategies

- Establish a community multicultural advisory committee to provide guidance and planning input.

- b. Create infrastructure and provide venues to accommodate programming.
- c. Conduct assessment to determine effectiveness of programming, and make adjustments to future investments accordingly.
- d. Document and promote programming to encourage increased participation.

5. Respond to needs for educational programming that integrates arts with the promotion of environmental stewardship and the history of Maplewood.

Strategies

- a. Establish an education advisory group with representatives from arts and environmental groups, schools, historical societies, watershed district, etc.
- b. Support efforts to incorporate art into rain gardens, GreenStep Cities initiatives, recycling, composting, renewable energy, and stewardship programs.
- c. Support participation by broader community to engage with artists in the planning and implementation of programming.
- d. Continue/increase art programming in locations such as MCC, Bruentrup Farm, and the Nature Center.

6. Build awareness and appreciation for the community’s history.

Strategies

- a. Identify, preserve, and interpret any significant historic resources at parks and preserves.
- b. Provide historic interpretation where possible in parks and preserves and along trails and greenway routes.
- c. Partner with groups such as Maplewood Area Historical Society on history programming, and support the community-wide initiatives of the Bruentrup Heritage Farm.



Artful fencing is an example of art integrated with infrastructure



Seating provides an opportunity for public art



The Bruentrup Heritage Farm is homebase for Maplewood Area Historical Society

PROGRAMS



The need for recreation is an essential element of human biology and psychology and a component of a healthy, vital community. Recreation programs are typically pursued for enjoyment, health, skill development, enrichment, socialization, entertainment, physical fitness, and relaxation. Dynamic recreation and demographic trends mean programs need to constantly evolve. It is an exciting time for programs in Maplewood with future recommendations focused on community-building events like 5K runs and concerts, updating multipurpose buildings in parks to bring more programs to neighborhoods, and emphasizing outreach to diverse population groups.

Recommendations

1. Program for community and neighborhood gathering.

Strategies

- a. 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.
- b. Encourage the use of neighborhood shelters and warming houses for neighborhood events through special permits and marketing assistance.
- c. Explore opportunities to have a public community garden in each of the park service areas.
- d. Use mobile/pop-up delivery methods to offer similar programs in each of the park service areas.
- e. Use demographic data and neighborhood surveys to tailor programs to an area.

2. Maintain and improve high quality, diverse program offerings for all ages (children, teens, adults, and seniors).

Strategies

- a. Provide early childhood programming to build long-term relationships with families.
- b. Develop intergenerational programming.
- c. Explore programs that a variety of family members can enjoy within the same location.
- d. Provide multi-age programs so siblings can attend programs at the same location and time.
- e. Offer wellness education such as nutrition education.
- f. Provide informal or drop-in activities for people of all ages.
- g. Develop programming to address gaps not served by other agencies and organizations.
- h. Assist adults in forming their own groups based on interests.
- i. Expand youth programming by engaging youth in program design to ensure the programming is relevant, well-attended, and high quality.
- j. Explore new programming opportunities made available through technology.

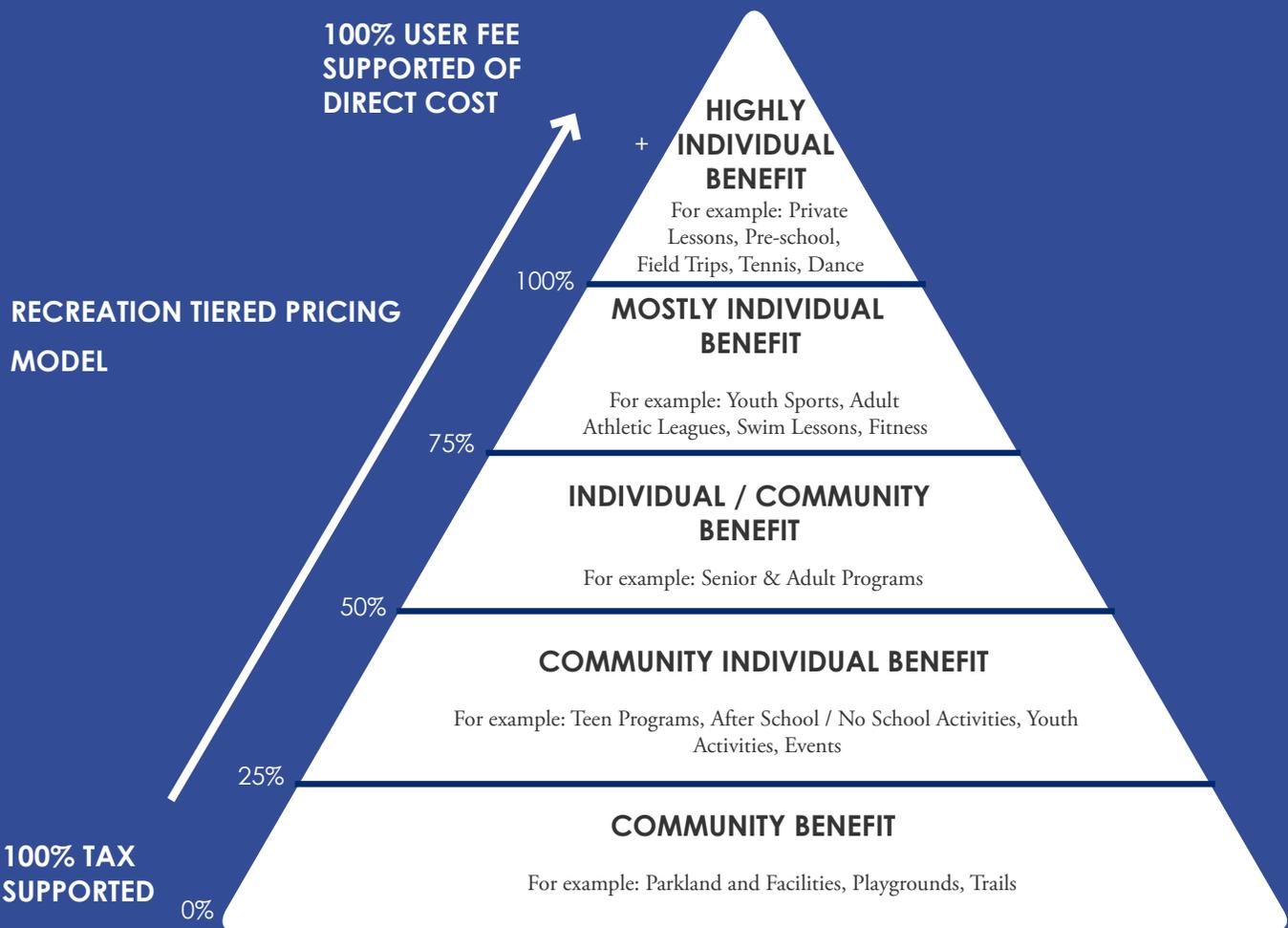
3. Ensure equitable access to programs.

Strategies

- a. Offer programming and facility space for partner organizations to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- b. Create tiered pricing to reflect the benefit of the programs to the community.
- c. Provide grants and scholarships to eliminate financial barriers.
- d. Provide a diverse range of programming formats, ranging from classes to events to specialized clubs.
- e. Explore off-peak programming, with programs offered over the noon hour, later hours and on weekends, to meet the needs of those with non-traditional work schedules.
- f. Work with partners to modify programming to meet the needs of diverse populations, such as offering times for female only swimming.
- g. Explore opportunities to offer programming in neighborhoods at community gyms and in parks.

ECONOMIC INFLUENCES ON PROGRAM DELIVERY

The Parks and Recreation Department can price its programs according to a tiered pricing model. In this model, programs that benefit the entire community, are equally available to everyone, and are self-directed are supported by revenue from the general tax fund. For programs where both the community and the individual benefit, user fees, grants, or sponsorships make up anywhere from 25% to 100% of the direct costs. These are programs like senior programs and after school programs, that require instructors, clean-up and prep time. For programs that have a highly individual benefit, such as fitness facilities, user fees pay for 100% or more of the direct costs. To assure equal opportunity for low-income users, the Parks and Recreation department offers scholarships for fee-based program.



4. Promote performance arts and cultural events in parks and at recreation facilities.

Strategies

- a. Develop a concert/performance art series.
- b. Explore an artist-in-residence program.
- c. Show movies in the park on a rotating schedule, providing a movie in each park service area during the year.
- d. Develop events that showcase the diverse culture of the community.

5. Connect people with nature, including land, water, and wildlife resources, and empower them to be stewards of the environment.

Strategies

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. Use mobile delivery methods to bring nature based education to participants.

6. Respond to changing recreation trends and ensure quality programming.

Strategies

- a. Use participant feedback, recreation trends and demand to adjust program mix and keep programs and activities fresh and appealing.
- b. Benchmark programs annually to determine effectiveness. Evaluate and retool programs not achieving benchmark targets.
- c. Use pilot programs to determine effectiveness and increase efficiency.
- d. Coordinate with associations, schools, neighborhood governmental agencies, businesses, and local organizations on programming to provide maximum coverage, avoid overlap and cross-market activities.

7. Use volunteers and service learning programs to support recreational, arts, cultural, and natural resource management programming.

8. Strengthen the Maplewood Community Center as the indoor recreational, cultural, and arts hub for the community.

Strategies

- a. Regularly evaluate recreational trends and participant feedback to ensure Maplewood Community Center programming is meeting current needs.
- b. Continue to expand special and cultural events
- c. Explore additional partnerships with local organizations to expand programming options.



The Maplewood Nature Center offers a variety of program options

9. Improve outreach to diverse populations and minority groups.

Strategies

- a. Strengthen relationships with existing organized groups that serve diverse populations.
- b. Publicize parks and recreation information in varied, effective ways such as foreign language newspapers, radio stations, church bulletin boards, etc.
- c. Collaborate to host cultural events.
- d. Reduce language barriers by offering translation services, translating written materials into multiple languages.
- e. Use universal symbols and translations in signage.
- f. Strive to have Parks & Recreation programs and facilities reflect the diversity in the community.

10. Become the “go to” parks and recreation clearinghouse

Strategies

- a. Continue to utilize diverse methods of communication, including social and digital media.
- b. Publicize testimonials from customers through a variety of media outlets.
- c. Highlight youth, families, mentors, volunteers in City newsletter and recreation activities brochure.
- d. Post videos after events.
- e. Explore the use of blog to allow networking between program participants.
- f. Celebrate the opening of every new or renovated facility or program.
- g. Regularly tell the sustainability story to inspire private action and demonstrate cost savings.
- h. Provide information on the City’s website and in outside publications about parks, facilities, and programming that is accessible to people with disabilities.
- i. Highlight the quality of life benefits of parks, trails, recreation, and open space.
- j. Recognize sponsors, donors, and advocates.

11. Provide opportunities for community involvement in the design, development, and implementation of parks and recreation.

Strategies

- a. Create a teen advisory board/council to advise and market events and facility development.
- b. Use focus groups to test new ideas.
- c. Continue to engage the community and neighborhood in the park design process.

12. Make Sustainability Education/Outreach a Priority.

Strategies

- a. Market and interpret sustainable practices and pilot programs.
- b. Offer sustainable living classes/workshops/ community events tied to sustainable efforts in the parks and preserves.
- c. Continue and expand volunteer recruitment and training programs to supplement service projects, outreach, and events.



Interpretation at Wakefield Park provides visitors with information about natural resources and sustainable practices



Chapter 6: PRIORITIES, TOOLKIT & USING THE PLAN

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is intended to guide the big picture decision making by City Officials, staff, partners, and the public. The purpose of Chapter 6 is threefold. First the section identifies recommendations regarding funding, the priorities for the future, estimated costs, and potential funding sources.

The second part is the Toolkit. The tools are a guide to evaluating new initiatives and projects. The toolkit should assist with decision-making system wide and on a case by case basis. The toolkit includes:

- New Program and Project Review.
- Park Classification.
- Activity Delivery Guidelines.
- Recreation Facility Service Standards.

The third and final section is a users guide addressing the process for capital improvements, measuring progress, and master plan update.



Views from Applewood Preserve

Funding Recommendations

1. Identify funding needs and plan for maintaining the system.

Strategies

- a. Develop asset management program.
- b. Evaluate on-going operational and life cycle costs when making facility capital decisions.

2. Ensure adequate funding to meet system goals.

Strategies

- a. Increase Parks and Recreation share of current levy.
- b. Explore use of a franchise fee to fund maintenance or specific programs.
- c. Update park, trail and open space dedication requirements on a biannual basis. (PAC funds)
- d. Seek grants.
- e. Explore funding options dedicated to health improvement.
- f. Hold fee based events.
- g. Establish an Infrastructure Replacement Reserve Fund to cover major capital repairs and replacements.
- h. 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.
- i. Encourage business involvement, sponsorship, naming rights of parks, recreation facilities and events.

3. Consider a bond referendum.

Strategies

- 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.

4. Support the creation of a non-profit parks and recreation foundation for the promotion and fundraising for system needs.

5. Build partnerships.

Strategies

- a. Continue to work with the Public Works and Planning Departments on environmental stewardship and trail and bikeway projects.
- b. Implement park projects that will stimulate private investment and strengthen residential neighborhoods.
- c. Improve relationship with school districts, including their community education departments.
- d. Partner with existing arts organizations for arts related programming and events.
- e. Maximize use of volunteers.
- f. Partner with private organizations for outreach to ethnic populations.
- g. Develop ambassadors to promote and champion investments in the park system.



PRIORITIES

Priorities are drawn from the recommendations listed in Chapter 5 and are organized in two charts on the following pages: Table 6.1 Priority Actions and Table 6.2 Priority Capital Improvement Projects. While this master plan is a visionary document that looks out 20 years, the priorities identified primarily focus on those key initiatives that should be the City’s focus in the next 10 years. The ability of the City to achieve its priorities will be a function primarily of staff time and funding. While some initiatives will require a significant investment of either time or funding for a one-time improvement, others will involve a minimal amount of time on an ongoing basis.

Priority Actions

The priority actions in Table 6.1 have been organized using the categories of funding, parks and recreation facilities, trails, natural resources and greenways, arts and culture, and programs. In addition to providing a description and timeframe for each priority, the chart identifies who is responsible for championing the effort and the types of resources needed for its implementation.



TABLE 6.1 Priority Actions

Action	Description	Responsibility	Timing	Resources
Funding				
Expand funding for regular park maintenance and equipment replacement			Near	Staff time and information for policy change
Continued community education regarding park system funding needs	Continued education is need to set the foundation for discussions about additional funding, such as through increased general funds, a referendum and/or utility franchise fee. If a referendum is explored, it is recommended that it have a clear focus and not involve all capital projects– for example, maintenance/capital replacement, trails, Nature Center, etc. In support of its funding efforts, the City should partner with a ‘friends of parks’ group, city volunteer network, and other partners on public outreach	Parks & Recreation Dept.	Near-Mid	Staff time and information for referendum
Parks and Recreation Facilities				
Develop Asset Management Plan	Prepare and implement asset management plan. Tie replacements and management actions to annual budget and Capital Improvement Plan. This involves annual inspections and condition rating of parks and equipment	Parks & Recreation Dept., Public Works, Parks & Recreation Dept.	Near	Staff Time
Expand the amount of no-mow areas	Identify and transition additional no-mow areas	Parks & Recreation Dept., Public Works	Ongoing	Staff time
Seek opportunities for sustainability pilot programs	Implement small-scale pilot programs such as a pesticide-free park, a bee-lawn, etc.	Parks & Recreation Dept., Environment & Natural Resources, Public Works	Ongoing	Staff time
Funding				
Expand funding for regular park maintenance and equipment replacement			Near	Staff time and information for policy change
Continued community education regarding park system funding needs	Continued education is need to set the foundation for discussions about additional funding, such as through increased general funds, a referendum and/or utility franchise fee. If a referendum is explored, it is recommended that it have a clear focus and not involve all capital projects– for example, maintenance/capital replacement, trails, Nature Center, etc. In support of its funding efforts, the City should partner with a ‘friends of parks’ group, city volunteer network, and other partners on public outreach	Parks & Recreation Dept.	Near-Mid	Staff time and information for referendum
Parks and Recreation Facilities				
Develop Asset Management Plan	Prepare and implement asset management plan. Tie replacements and management actions to annual budget and Capital Improvement Plan. This involves annual inspections and condition rating of parks and equipment	Parks & Recreation Dept., Public Works, Parks & Recreation Dept.	Near	Staff Time
Expand the amount of no-mow areas	Identify and transition additional no-mow areas	Parks & Recreation Dept., Public Works	Ongoing	Staff time
Seek opportunities for sustainability pilot programs	Implement small-scale pilot programs such as a pesticide-free park, a bee-lawn, etc.	Parks & Recreation Dept., Environment & Natural Resources, Public Works	Ongoing	Staff time
Improve system wayfinding	Update the master plan map, updating individual park maps, improving wayfinding/signage in the system; and developing an online, interactive park map (or work with GoRamsey website)	Parks & Recreation Dept., Public Works	Ongoing	Staff time

TABLE 6.1 Priority Actions and Projects, continued

Action	Description	Responsibility	Timing	Resources
Trails				
Update Snow and Ice Control Policy	Review and update policy as needed to ensure that non-motorized network prioritized as appropriate	Parks & Recreation Dept., Engineering, Public Works	Near	Staff time
Initiate planning on priority segments to position for grant funding	Identify type of infrastructure, right-of-way needs, preliminary design, and cost estimates	Parks & Recreation Dept., Engineering, Public Works	Near	Staff time
Pavement Management	Implement a framework for analyzing and maintaining paved trail surfaces	Parks & Recreation Dept., Engineering, Public Works	Ongoing	Staff time
Natural Areas and Greenways				
Identify and evaluate protected ecological areas	Create overlay maps/policies that establish and protect high value ecological areas	Parks & Recreation Dept., Environment & Natural Resources	Near	Staff time
Revise preserve policy to differentiate between community and neighborhood preserves	Assign community or neighborhood status to nature preserves	Parks & Recreation Dept., Environment & Natural Resources	Near	Staff time
Formalize greenway routes	Map routes within the Natural Area Greenways and begin planning to address gaps and interpretation needs	Parks & Recreation Dept., Environment & Natural Resources	Near	Staff time
Nature Center MP & Building Evaluation	Prepare a 20 year Master Plan for the Nature Center	Parks & Recreation Dept., Public Works, Environment & Natural Resources	Near	Staff time and planning/architectural consultant
Arts and Culture				
Seek grant funding for arts-related programs	Pursue and implement grants that will improve public art throughout Maplewood	Parks & Recreation Dept., Consultant	Ongoing	Staff time, grant-writing consultant
Look for opportunities to include art and culture into design elements on City projects	Integration of arts and culture into design elements should occur throughout the master planning, feasibility, and design phases of projects. Seek low maintenance design elements that have minimal risk to vandalism	Parks & Recreation Dept., Public Works, Consultant	Ongoing	Staff time, partnerships
Partner with historic society for historic interpretation & programs	Seek opportunities for collaboration with local historical societies/ organizations to implement interpretation and special programming	Parks & Recreation Dept., partner organizations	Ongoing	Staff time, historical/ interpretation consultants
Build the Arts Program	Expand program offerings in visual, dramatic, and music arts. Recruit Friends group and advisors to help guide planning and artist selection.	Parks & Recreation Dept.,	Ongoing	Staff time
Programming				
Continue to expand neighborhood and community events	Build on existing event programming in neighborhood and community parks, Bruentrup Farm, and other special events. Consider a mobile stage or permanent outdoor event venue	Parks & Recreation Dept.	Ongoing	Staff time
Expand Nature Center Programs	Expand program offerings at the Nature Center, particularly volunteer and service learning opportunities	Parks & Recreation Dept., Environment & Natural Resources	Ongoing	Staff time

Priority Capital Improvement Projects

The Maplewood Parks and Recreation System Master Plan identifies approximately \$26 million of capital improvement projects geographically distributed in parks throughout the community. While significant, this equates to \$1 to \$2 million per year over the next 20 years. Planning for and funding these capital improvement projects will continue to be challenging, particularly as the community is now focused on maintenance and reinvestment rather than expansion. During the expansion phase of a parks and recreation system, funding can be secured from park dedication and grants to supplement general funds. Now that the community is in a maintenance and reinvestment phase, using these sources is more difficult, and they are likely to provide a smaller percentage of overall

funding. The City will need to expand its general funding allocation or explore new revenue streams, such as a referendum or utility fee, to support the identified capital projects.

Phasing will be flexible and dependent on regular project prioritization this is based on needs, funding availability, and partnership opportunities. Depending on funding availability, the City may also need to explore the phasing of larger capital improvements, such the signature park improvements. While not ideal because it is generally more expensive and extends the time period when a park is out of service, phasing does ensure there is funding available for other capital improvement projects at the same time. Table 6.2 identifies the priority capital improvement projects in order of their priority.

TABLE 6.2 Priority Capital Improvement Projects

Action	Description	Notes	Estimated Cost
Highest Priority			
Maintenance and Reinvestment	Playgrounds, Buildings, Trails Overlay, Fencing, Tennis Courts, Parking Lots, Nature Center Upkeep		\$7,000,000
Ongoing (listed in order by highest cost)			
Construct prioritized projects to eliminate gaps in the pedestrian-bicycle network	Annual prioritization and construction based on funding	Additional projects may occur as part of road construction projects or through implementation of Living Streets Policy.	\$6,000,000
Add amenities to Neighborhood Parks	Shade structures, benches, bike racks, and waste receptacles	Phase improvements based on upcoming projects and geographic distribution. Focus on larger neighborhood parks first.	\$700,000
Actively manage high quality natural resources	Prepare and implement natural resource management plans for areas of high quality habitat/high ecological value	Projects in Fish Creek, Priory, Gladstone Savanna, Prairie Farm Preserve, Jim's Prairie, Beaver Creek, Applewood, Joy Park, Carver, and Kohlman Creek.	\$600,000
Add amenities to Community and Athletic Parks	Water fountains, shade structures, benches, bike racks, and waste receptacles	Phase improvements based on upcoming projects and geographic distribution. Include all Community, Community Athletic, and Youth Athletic Parks.	\$400,000
Update park signs	Make system-wide, standard improvements to park signs that incorporate art		\$125,000
Other Priority Projects (listed in order of priority)			
Add restrooms to Community and Athletic Parks	Restrooms for Harvest, Hazelwood, and Joy as other parks will get restrooms through other projects.	Phase improvements based on upcoming projects and geographic distribution. Plan for restrooms to be open during park hours.	\$300,000
Improvements to Wakefield Park	Replacements and improvements based on new Master Plan*		\$2,000,000
Improve system wayfinding	Add signage and kiosks to trails and parks system		\$300,000
Continue/expand community gardens	Continue and add additional public community gardens at rate of one per park service area	One community garden in Central West Service Area	\$7,500
Improvements to Preserves and Open Spaces	Add improvements based on individual preserve needs	Includes amenities such as trails, shelters, interpretation, parking, and community gardens.	\$800,000
Improvements to Veterans Memorial Park	Replacements and improvements based on revised Master Plan*		\$2,500,000

*Note: costs based on concepts and recommendations in this system-wide master plan. Additional future community based master planning process may be needed.

TABLE 6.2 Priority Capital Improvement Projects, continued

Action	Description	Notes	Estimated Cost
Modify field mix	Harvest Park Improvements based on new Master Plan*	Field improvement and reconfiguration	\$1,000,000
Add off-leash dog park	Locate in northern part of City		\$100,000
Improvements to City Hall Campus	Replacements and improvements based on new Master Plan*		\$1,000,000
Replace/Refurbish Nature Center	Prepare and implement Nature Center Master Plan		\$2,500,000
Expand facility mix in Western Park Service Area	Add small picnic shelter and outdoor skating rink with warming house	Recommended to meet goal of geographic distribution of facilities throughout park service areas	\$500,000
Implement new policy regarding tennis court distribution	Add one double court at Maplewood Heights Park		\$150,000
Add mobile stage			\$100,000
Add new neighborhood park in South Park Service Area	New park as development occurs	Park dedication fees may contribute to this development. Timing is dependent on development.	\$275,000

*Note: costs based on concepts and recommendations in this system-wide master plan. Additional future community based master planning process may be needed.

FUNDING SOURCES

The following table identifies the potential funding sources for each of the priorities. Sources are identified as possible, likely, best depending on how well the action and funding source are matched.

TABLE 6.3 Funding Sources

Priorities	General Funds	Utility Fee	Park Bond Referendum	State Aid Funds	Park/Trail Dedication	Grants	Partnerships	Donations
System Planning (Asset Management Plan, Park/Facility Master Planning, Natural Resource Planning, Trail Planning)	●					◐	◐	
Revitalize Existing Parks (replacement and maintenance)	●	◐	●				◐	◐
Park Improvements (park improvements and amenities)	○		●		●	○	○	◐
Expand Park Facility Mix (tennis courts, Tuj lub, disc golf, community garden etc.)	○		●		●	○	○	◐
Improve System Wayfinding	●					◐	◐	◐
Expand Pedestrian-Bicycle Network	○	○	●	○	●	○	◐	
Actively Manage Natural Resources	○	◐	●		◐	○	◐	◐
Greenway Route Development	○		●		◐	○	◐	
Nature Center Improvements	●	◐	●		◐	○	◐	◐
Sustainability Initiatives	○					●	○	◐
Programming	●					○	○	◐
Neighborhood and Community Events	●					◐	◐	◐
Create Arts Program	○					●	○	◐
Arts and Cultural Design Elements	○					○	◐	◐
Historic Interpretation/Programs	○					●	○	◐

Key

Best Funding Source	Likely Funding Source	Possible Funding Source
●	○	◐

FUNDING SOURCES

Achieving the vision and mission for the park and recreation system will take additional funding, not only for big, exciting new facilities like a splash pad or outdoor performance space but for neighborhood park revitalization, new programs, and outreach, etc. It is anticipated that the City use multiple methods to fund the system. The following sections provide additional information about the types of funding sources identified in Table 6-3.

GENERAL FUNDS

General funds can and should be used to develop and maintain the parks and recreation system. General funds are the primary funding source for on-going maintenance, operations, and amenities. Most grants also have a matching requirement, which is often fulfilled with general funds.

DEDICATED TAX LEVY

A city can hold a referendum for a dedicated tax levy with proceeds directed specifically for parks and recreation. This levy can be used for capital projects as well as operations and maintenance. The proceeds may be in place of general funds or be supplemented by general funds. The advantage of a dedicated tax levy is that parks and recreation receives a more stable source of funding and does not have to compete with other city priorities for funding on an annual basis.

BONDING

General Obligation Bonds and Revenue Bonds provide another source of implementation funding for new public facilities, as well as repairs and/or upgrades to existing facilities.

GENERAL PARK BOND ISSUE

Residents can decide to raise revenue through a permanent or temporary tax increase dedicated for specific purposes such as park, trail, and bikeway improvements and maintenance. These funds are usually provided through bonds approved as part of a voter referendum.

STATE AID FUNDS

State aid funds are available for pedestrian and bicycle improvements on state aid

streets. This funding source is particularly useful at the time of street construction or re-construction. Maplewood should have a process for evaluating needed trail and sidewalk improvements as part of capital improvement projects.

PARK AND TRAIL DEDICATION

Minnesota Statutes allow local governments to require dedication of land or cash in-lieu of land for parks and trails from new subdivisions. The dedication must be reasonable and rationally related to the recreation demand created by the development. Cities can also require dedication of right-of-way or easements for sidewalks or trails. Maplewood collects parkland dedication fees on a pre-determined schedule for all newly created lots.

FRANCHISE FEES

Franchise fees are a charge listed on the monthly bill that customers receive from a utility, such as natural gas, electricity or cable. This can be a flat amount each month or a percentage of the monthly bill. A franchise fee can be implemented with an ordinance which must be approved by the City Council. The City of Edina recently started collecting a franchise fee for gas and electricity customers. The fee is a small flat fee (\$1.45 per month) which the city will use to build and maintain its pedestrian and bicycle network.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The City partners with the local school districts, particularly in the operation of the community gyms. The continued collaboration between the City and the school districts are important in maintaining open communication. Communication should occur on at least an annual basis about planned projects and additional opportunities to jointly develop open space and public facilities as appropriate.

PARTNERSHIPS

Maplewood has partnerships with both public and private organizations. These relationships have historically led to improvements to City parks and other public facilities. Partnerships will be important for both facilities and

programming. Organizations with partner funding can also provide assistance with design, outreach and maintenance. Partnerships and relationships with private businesses can also result in easements and use agreements for trails across private land.

DONATIONS

Private donations are another potential funding source. These may be financial donations from individuals or area corporations or donations of labor from recreation clubs or use agreements. Programs such as “adopt-a-trail” or “adopt-a-park” by an organization, business, or individuals have been used in many communities to help with maintenance tasks and raise awareness.

GRANTS

Grants are a way to make Maplewood’s dollars go further. The City has been successful in securing grant funding. Below is a sample of some grant opportunities that may be available along with websites to visit for more information.

MINNESOTA DNR

Website: www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/index.html

The Minnesota DNR is one of the most comprehensive resources when it comes to state funding for park and trail programs. They offer a variety of grant programs and technical assistance. Current programs provide assistance for cross country skiing trails, mountain biking trails, horseback riding trails, and recreational trails. Some programs also offer assistance for the development of parks or for trail amenities such as restrooms, lightning, benches, etc. Each of the Minnesota DNR grant programs is unique. The DNR should be consulted before pursuing a grant to clarify funding availability and qualifications.

MINNESOTA DOT

Website: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/grants/>

A portion of most trail or bikeway improvement projects funded through Minnesota DOT is from federal dollars. Since June 9, 1998 there have been three federal bills (TEA-

21, ISTEPA & SAFETEA-LU) enacted to fund transportation improvements. Examples of programs typically funding trail or sidewalk improvement projects include Safe Routes to School or the Regional Solicitation managed by the Metropolitan Council Transportation Advisory Board. Given the size of these grants the City should begin preparing in advance for future applications by identifying the type of improvement, the right-of-way needs, preliminary layout, and cost estimates.

CLEAN WATER, LAND AND LEGACY AMENDMENT

On Nov. 4 2008, Minnesota voters approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the Minnesota State Constitution which increased the general sales and use tax rate by three-eighths of one percentage point (0.375%) to 6.875% and dedicated the additional proceeds for the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, the Outdoor Heritage Fund, Clean Water Fund, and Parks and Trails Fund.

Funding from the Legacy Amendment is administered by a variety of agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources, Pollution Control Agency, Department of Health, Historical Society, Minnesota State Arts Board and regional art councils. A number of new grant programs were created. Information about grant opportunities can be found on individual state department and organization websites.

FOUNDATIONS & NON-PROFITS

There are foundations and non-profits that are interested in fulfilling their missions by supporting local projects. There are a number of on-line tools that can assist with the process of identifying additional foundations that may financially support park, trail, and bikeway improvements. The Minnesota Council of Foundations is a great starting point for identifying foundations. Another good starting point is to consider the businesses within Maplewood and using their websites to see if they have a foundation or charitable giving department. In addition to retailers and manufacturers, be sure to consider businesses such as the railroad, energy providers and communications companies.

TOOLKIT

Park and Recreation plans are not static documents. The Parks and Recreation Department will be faced with on-going decision making on issues not specifically guided by this document.

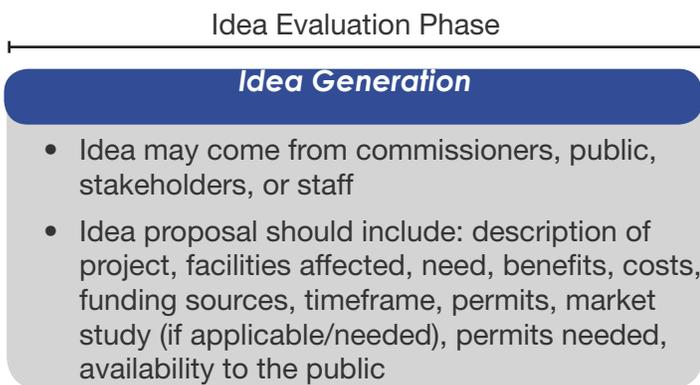
The toolkit contains processes, standards, and guidelines to assist with the evaluation of new projects and initiatives, whether they are system-wide or on a case by case basis. The toolkit includes:

- New Program and Project Review Process
- Park Classifications
- Activity Delivery Guidelines
- Recreation Facility Service Standards
- General Recreation and Parks Capital and Operations and Maintenance Costs

PROGRAM AND PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS

One of the most challenging things for a parks and recreation department is knowing when to say ‘yes’ to a new project and when to say ‘no.’ The program and project review process provides a sample outline for a systematic review process for new requests. Systematic review ensures that new projects are in-line with system-wide goals and can be adequately funded, staffed, and maintained prior to implementation.

FIGURE 6.1 Project Review Process



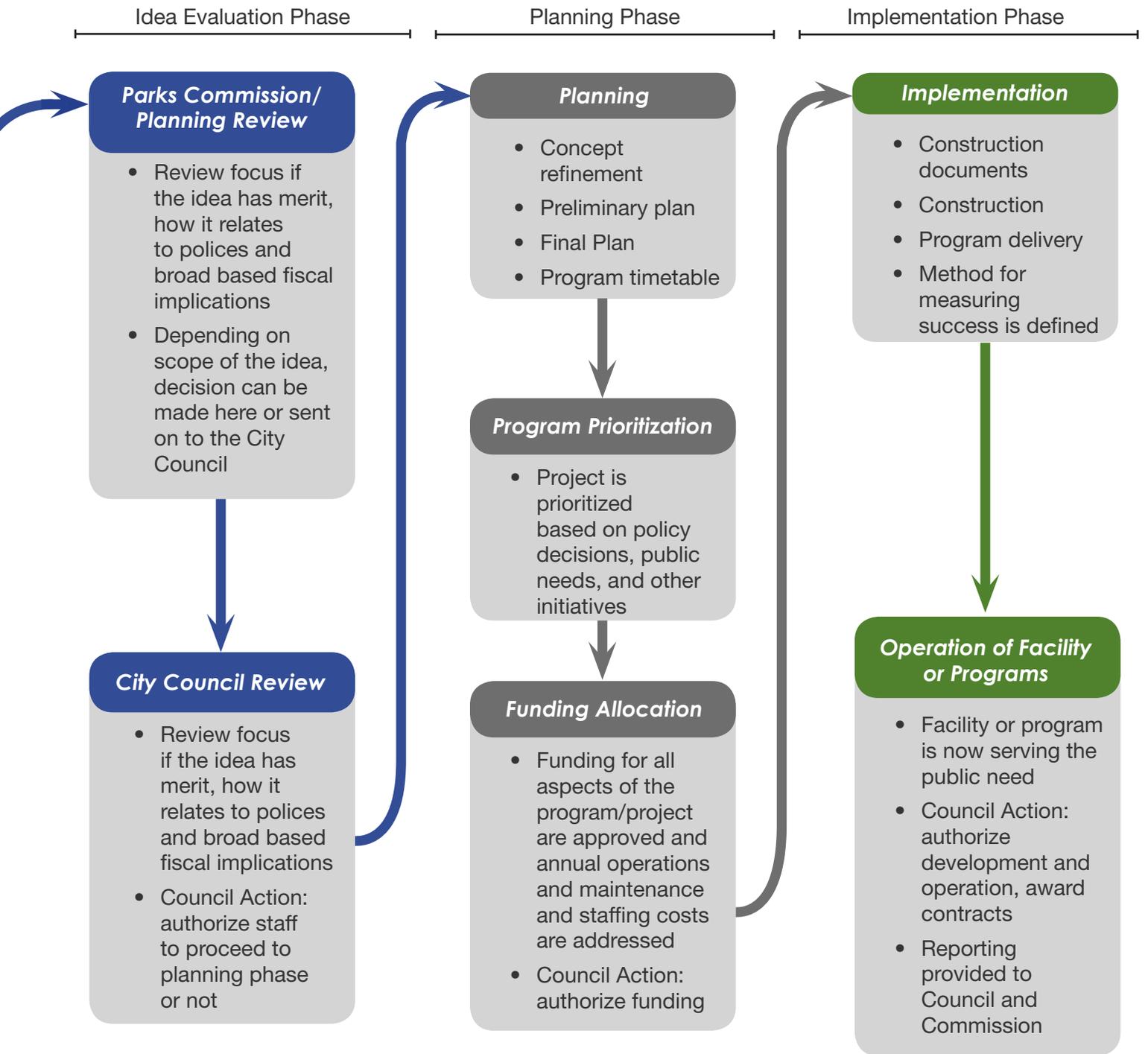
Idea Evaluation Phase

Baseline Evaluation by Staff

- Test idea against master plan recommendations and decision principles
- Depending on the scope of the idea, decision can be made by staff or introduced to the Recreation and Parks Commission and Planning Commission

DECISION PRINCIPLES CHECKLIST

- Is the action economically and environmentally sustainable in the short and long term?
- Will the action help engage and connect people, parks, trails and open spaces?
- Does the action support a city-wide system of recreational facilities and parks?
- Will the action encourage community gathering?
- Will the action build community awareness and advocacy for recreation and parks?
- Does the action increase awareness of history, culture, and art?
- Have life cycle and operational costs been adequately addressed?
- Does the action reflect different needs for different neighborhoods?
- Does the action serve an unmet need?
- Does the action create new recreation opportunities?
- Does the action inspire community pride?
- Have all facility and partnership options been evaluated before deciding to add infrastructure or programs?



GENERAL CAPITAL AND OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

The following table is a tool that the City can use to initially evaluate and budget for new improvements and quickly grasp the general cost for new improvements. Equally important to the initial capital cost for a project are the ongoing operations and maintenance (O&M) costs. Adequately budgeting operations and maintenance ensures that facilities last their expected life and that parks remain safe and welcoming.

TABLE 6.4 General Capital and Operations & Maintenance Costs

Park Element	Capital Cost	Annual O&M Cost	Estimated Life (Years)	Notes
New Park Development				
Neighborhood Park	\$90,000/Acre	\$550/Acre	25-50	
Community Park	No new parks anticipated	\$550/Acre	25-50	
Community/Youth Athletic Park	No new parks anticipated	\$3,400/Acre	25-50	
General Grounds & Landscaping				
Mowed Turf Grass (Irrigated)	\$60,000/Acre New Sod \$34,000/Acre New Seed	\$1,000/Acre	15-30	Includes mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating & overseeding.
Mowed Turf Grass (Non Irrigated)	\$30,000/Acre New Sod \$2,000/Acre New Seed	\$800/Acre	15-30	Does not assume hydroseed. Includes mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating & overseeding.
Irrigation	\$25,000/Acre	\$1,300/Acre	25	
Contractual Landscape Maintenance (Street Medians & Natural Prairie Plantings)	\$6.50 Sq. Ft. (\$282,600/Acre)	\$.25 Sq. Ft. (\$9,250/Acre)	20	
Prairie Restoration	\$5,000/Acre	\$300/Acre	-	
Naturalized Shoreline	\$100/LF	\$400/Acre	-	
Rain Garden	\$10/Sq. Ft.	\$300/Acre	-	Low end - high end could be up to \$20/Sq Ft
Woodland Restoration	\$4,000/Acre	\$400/Acre	-	Assumes restoration of existing wooded area. \$20,000/Acre if new tree planting required
Stormwater Features	\$25/Sq. Ft.	\$900/Acre	-	
Park Building & Shelters				
Buildings with Restrooms	\$300-\$400/Sq. Ft.	\$11,000/Bldg./Yr.	40	Includes all buildings
Picnic Shelters	\$150-\$200/Sq. Ft.	\$3,800/Bldg./Yr.	40	Includes all shelters
Trails & Surfaces				
Trails (10 Ft. Wide Asphalt)	\$50/LF	\$5,280 Per Mile	30	
Parking Lots (Asphalt)	\$2,500-\$3,000/Stall	\$20-\$25 Per Stall	40	
Sidewalks (Concrete)	\$30/LF			Assumes 6 foot wide sidewalk
Natural Surface Trails	\$30/LF if limestone ADA or \$5/LF if rustic footpath	\$500/Mile	-	

TABLE 6.4 General Capital and Operations & Maintenance Costs, continued

Park Element	Capital Cost	Annual O&M Cost	Estimated Life (Years)	Notes
Park Amenities				
Tennis Courts with Lighting	\$150,000	\$1,000/Court	25	Assumes 12,500 Sq. Ft Double Court.
Tennis Courts	\$100,000	\$1,000/Court	25	Assumes 12,500 Sq. Ft. Double Court. Resurfacing includes striping of both tennis and pickleball cost of \$10,000 per court
Basketball Courts (Concrete)	\$30,000/Court	\$400/Court	50	Assumes 4,680 Sq. Ft.
Basketball Courts (Asphalt)	\$25,000/Court	\$600/Court	25	
Playgrounds	\$100,000 - \$300,000	\$3,000/Site/Yr.	20	
ADA Playground	\$200,000 - \$600,000	\$3,000/Site/Yr.	20	
Natural Play Areas	\$50,000-\$100,000	\$1,000/Site/Yr.	20	Assumes 1 to 2 signature features and remainder natural materials
Skate Parks	\$35/Sq. Ft.	\$3,000/Site/Yr.	10-15	
Outdoor Hockey Rinks	\$80,000-\$100,000/Hockey Rink	\$9,000/Rink	20	
Community Gardens	\$10,000-\$20,000/Acre	\$800 Acre	-	
Off-Leash Dog Park	\$10,000-\$50,000 Acre	\$800 Acre	15-20	
Splash Pad	\$600,000	\$5,000	15-20	
Amphitheater	\$800,000		50	Assumes open stage and seating for 200+
Mobile Stage	\$80,000 to \$120,000			
Fitness Loop	\$5,000 to \$7,500/station	\$500/station	20	Assumes trail already constructed.
Giant Slide	\$5,000	\$500	20	
Disc Golf Course				
Tuj Lub Field				
Neighborhood Park Amenity Package	\$35,000/park	Included in general park costs	20	Assumes 1-\$25,000 shade structure; 2- \$2,000 benches with concrete pad, 2- \$2,000 bike racks with concrete pad, 2-\$1,000 waste receptacles
Community Park Amenity Package	\$55,000/park	Included in general park costs	20	Assumes 1-\$25,000 shade structure; 2- \$2,000 benches with concrete pad, 2- \$2,000 bike racks with concrete pad, 2-\$1,000 waste receptacles
Athletic Fields				
Highly Maintained (Irrigated) Large Soccer/Football Field (1.5 Acres)	*\$65,000/Field New Sod \$30,000/Field New Seed TURF ONLY	\$4,200/Field	15	Includes lining, mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating, irrigation & overseeding.
Highly Maintained (Irrigated) Medium Size Soccer/Football Field (.83 Acres)	*\$35,500/Field New Sod \$16,000/Field New Seed TURF ONLY	\$2,300/Field	15	Includes lining, mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating, irrigation & overseeding.
Highly Maintained (Irrigated) Small Size Soccer/Football Field (.54 Acres)	*\$23,500/Field New Sod \$10,500/Field New Seed TURF ONLY	\$1,500/Field	15	Includes lining, mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating, irrigation & overseeding.

TABLE 6.4 General Capital and Operations & Maintenance Costs, continued

Park Element	Capital Cost	Annual O&M Cost	Estimated Life (Years)	Notes
Average Maintained (Non Irrigated) Large Soccer/Football Field (1.5 Acres)	*\$37,500/Field New Sod \$2,250/Field New Seed TURF ONLY	\$2,000/Field	7	Includes lining, mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating, irrigation & overseeding.
Least Maintained (Non Irrigated) Practice Soccer/Football Field (1 Acre)	*\$25,000/Acre New Sod \$1,500/Acre New Seed	\$800/Acre	7	Includes lining, mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating, irrigation & overseeding.
Highly Maintained (Irrigated) Baseball/Softball Field (1 Acre)	*\$50,000/Acre New Sod \$27,000/Acre New Seed & Aglime	\$4,200/Field(Includes: lining, dragging, mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating, irrigation & overseeding)	7	Includes lining, mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating, irrigation & overseeding.
Average Maintained (Non Irrigated) Baseball/Softball Field (1 Acre)	*\$25,000/Acre New Sod \$1,500/Acre New Seed & Aglime	\$2,300/Field(Includes: lining, grading, mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating, irrigation & overseeding)	7	Includes lining, mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating, irrigation & overseeding.
Least Maintained (Non Irrigated) Practice Baseball/Softball Field (1 Acre)	*\$25,000/Acre New Sod \$1,500/Acre New Seed	\$800/Acre (Includes: mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating & overseeding)	7	Includes lining, mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weed control, aerating, irrigation & overseeding.
Field Lighting	100,000/field			
* Costs are for turf/field/irrigation only no additional amenities				
All costs are planning level estimates in 2014 dollars				

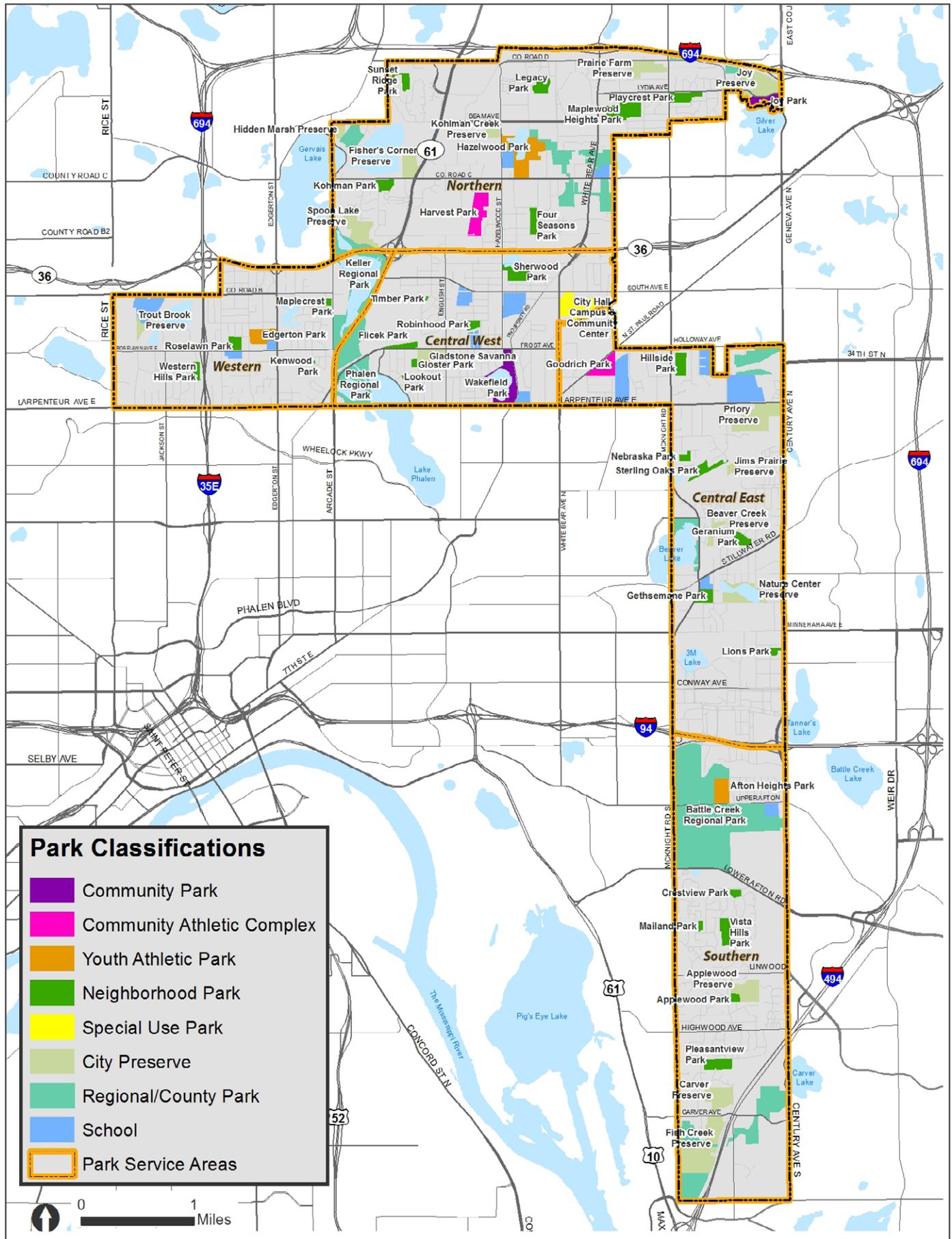
PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

The park classifications define and clarify the intended use of each park type and clarify the area served, the size, and ideal site locations. This table is particularly useful when planning for new parks within the community or when contemplating park needs for major redevelopment projects. Classifications will help guide facility and use plans.

TABLE 6.5 Park Classifications

CLASSIFICATION	USE	SERVICE AREA	SIZE (TYPICAL)	LOCATION
City Facilities				
Neighborhood Parks	Primary recreation facility to meet the day-to-day needs of neighborhoods. Provides active recreation and informal gathering spaces for families and groups of neighbors. Fields are sized for practice/youth games.	1/2 mile radius, free of major barriers such as highways or waterways	3 to 14 acres	Easily accessible to neighborhood residents with safe walking and biking access.
Community Parks	Provides facilities serving the community with access to natural areas and programmed, active recreation areas. May serve regional visitors, although not as primary function.	Community Wide in strategic, consolidated locations at a few sites	25-50+ acres	Sited to be accessible to community and take advantage of natural amenities. Accessible by foot, bike, auto, and bus.
Youth Athletic	Provides youth athletic fields and associated facilities. May include neighborhood-park functions.	Community Wide in strategic, consolidated locations at a few sites	10 to 20 acres	Connected to trails and sidewalks. Automobile parking provided.
Community Athletic Complex	Focused on organized athletic recreation with regulation sized fields and associated facilities. May include neighborhood-park functions.	Community Wide in strategic, consolidated locations at a few sites	10 to 25+acres	Connected to trails and sidewalks. Automobile parking provided.
Special Use	Areas serving a single-use activity such as golf, fitness, indoor ice-skating, nature education.	Community & Regional Draw	Varies	Site specific.
Natural Areas	Areas focused on the provision of natural environments, passive recreation, and ecological education.	Community & Regional Draw	Varies	Centered around natural resources and amenities.
Non-City Facilities				
Regional Parks	Parks that are designated part of Regional Park System. Uses vary widely, but focus is on outdoor and natural resource based recreation and learning.	Community and Regional Draw	Varies	Varies widely, often centered around natural features.
Schools	Provides recreational facilities that can be used by surrounding neighborhoods.	Adjacent Neighborhoods	Varies	Easily accessible to neighborhood residents with safe walking and biking access

FIGURE 6.3 Park Classification Map



ACTIVITY DELIVERY GUIDELINES

The following guidelines provide direction regarding the public and geographic access to recreation activities in an effort to provide equitable and convenient access to facilities. The delivery levels range from city scale to neighborhood scale and define the expectations for the quantity and general location of a particular facility. For example, disc golf and indoor ice arenas are specialized facilities that are used by residents from across the City, while children’s play equipment and open grass play space should be accessible at a neighborhood level.

The first consideration should always be the need, appropriateness, and current availability. The infrastructure needed (field, court, etc.) for the activity to occur is the second consideration. The physical facilities and programs needed for the activity may be best delivered, modified or created by the City; or by service providers alone or in partnership with the City.

TABLE 6.6 Activity Delivery Guidelines

Delivery Level	Recreation Focus	Facility Examples	Places	Service Area
Within a neighborhood	Children, youth, and seniors	Playgrounds, informal turf play spaces, informal picnicking, athletic fields for practice/youth games	Mini-parks & neighborhood parks	Walkable distance no more than 1/2 mile
Within a park service area	Family, adult & group recreation	Tennis, hockey/pleasure skating rinks, basketball courts, youth fields (soccer, football, lacrosse, baseball, softball), community gardens, volleyball courts, small picnic shelter, indoor recreation/multi-purpose buildings	Neighborhood Parks, Youth Athletic Parks, Community Parks	Within a park service area
Within the City	Family, adult & group recreation	Community centers, indoor gym space, performance space, indoor ice arenas, aquatics - splash pad/beaches, off-leash dog areas, golf courses, archery, disc golf, skate park, adult regulation athletic fields, large picnic rental pavilion/building	Community Parks, Athletic Complexes, Special Use Facilities, Regional Parks	City-wide
Mobile Delivery	Flexible and mobile delivery of recreation activities	Goes where services are needed city-wide, including parks, schools, and apartment complexes		

RECREATION FACILITY SERVICE STANDARDS

The Recreation Facility Service Standards identify a minimum level of service for recreation facilities, such as ball fields, courts, etc. to assure convenient access to recreation. The Standards list the desired minimum number of facilities, the existing number, and note any excess or deficiencies. The recommendations/notes section relates to the recommendations outlined in the objectives in Chapter 5.

Recreation trends vary and flexibility is needed to respond to changing needs and new activities/uses. Consideration should be given to public access to other non-city facilities when infrastructure decisions are made. Surplus or deficit does not automatically mean the need to add or remove facilities. However, it does indicate the potential to re-position the facility mix within the park system to better meet needs. Numbers alone do not tell the whole story as facility usability is affected by quality, size, access, durability, etc. The guidelines are intended to give the City flexibility in replacing unused or poor quality facilities with facilities for popular activities at any given time.

TABLE 6.7 Recreation Facility Service Standards

Facility	Service Area	Minimum Number per Population	Standard Range	Current Number	Excess / Deficit	Recommendations / Notes
Indoor Gyms (full size)	10-15 minute travel time	1 gym per 20,000	2 gyms	3	1	2 City gyms at the Maplewood Community Center (1 currently used for exercise equipment) 2 shared school gyms at Carver and Edgerton Schools
Swimming Pools / Aquatics	15-30 minute travel time	1 per 20,000 to 40,000 (pools should accommodate 3-5% of total population at a time)	1-2 facilities	1	0	City facility at Maplewood Community Center. Additional opportunities at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silver Lake Beach (N. St. Paul) • Phalen Regional Park (Saint Paul) • Mahtomedi Beach (White Bear Lake) • YMCA (St. Paul Eastside & White Bear Area) • Battle Creek Aquatic Center Add interactive water feature/splash pad for city-wide use.
Playgrounds	Half-mile	N/A	36	32 city playgrounds 5 school playgrounds	0	Focus playgrounds in neighborhood parks. Develop a large all-inclusive playground at Wakefield. Add a signature playground at Veteran's Memorial Park.
Ice Hockey	10-15 minute travel time	Outdoor: 1 per 5,000-10,000 (Indoor rinks influence demand for outdoor rinks)	3-7	5 outdoor rinks 1 indoor rink at Ramsey County's Aldrich Arena	0	Ensure each park service area has at least one city-maintained hockey rink and warming house. Partner with neighborhood associations and community groups to provide hockey in additional neighborhood parks if they are willing to maintain the facilities. Add lighting to high-demand rinks.

TABLE 6.7 Recreation Facility Service Standards, continued

Facility	Service Area	Minimum Number per Population	Standard Range	Current Number	Excess / Deficit	Recommendations / Notes
Pleasure ice skating rinks	1-2 miles	NA	NA	8 outdoor 1 indoor rink at Ramsey County's Aldrich Arena	0	Ensure each park service area has at least one city-maintained pleasure rink. Partner with neighborhood associations and community groups to provide additional skating opportunities in neighborhood parks if partner groups are willing to maintain the facilities.
Baseball	Adult: 10-15 minutes travel time Youth: 1-2 miles	1 per city plus 1 per 5,000 - 10,000 plus lighted: 1 per 15,000-30,000 Adult: 1 per 5,000 to 10,000 fields Youth: 1 per 2,500-5,000	4-8 adult fields 1-2 lighted fields 8-15 youth fields	5 Full Size 0 lighted	-2 lighted	Consider adding lighting to baseball fields as demand warrants
Softball	Adult: 1-2 miles Youth: 1 mile	1 per city plus 1 per 5,000 - 10,000 plus lighted: 1 per 15,000-30,000 Adult: 1 per 5,000 to 10,000 fields Youth: 1 per 2,500-5,000	4-8 adult fields 1-2 lighted fields 8-15 youth fields	20 full size 3 lighted	+1 lighted	
Outdoor basketball	1/2 to 1 mile	Full Court: 1 per 5,000 Half Court: 1 per 3,000	8 full courts 13 half courts	9 full 2 half	+1 full -11 half court	Explore opportunities to add basketball courts so there is at least one facility per park service area, with full courts at community parks and half courts at neighborhood parks.
Volleyball	2 miles	1 per 7,500-15,000	3-5 Courts	9 Indoor 2 outdoor	+6	Include signage kiosks at community and community athletic parks that invite visitors to use park space for volleyball
Tennis	1 mile	1 per 2,000-4,000	9-19 courts	19	0	Provide high quality tennis courts by transitioning neighborhood courts to larger banks (4 or more) of high quality, lighted courts at Maplewood Heights. Maintain at least two courts in each park service area. Convert courts at Four Seasons, Playcrest and Western Hills to other uses once the courts have reached their end of life. Support participation in pickleball by striping all tennis courts.

TABLE 6.7 Recreation Facility service Standards, continued

Facilities	Service Area	Minimum Number per Population	Range	Current Number	Excess / Deficit	Recommendations / Notes
Full size multi-use fields (Soccer, football, lacrosse)	1-2 miles	1 per 4,000	9 fields	9	0	Monitor demand and add high quality multi-purpose (soccer/ lacrosse/ football/ rugby/ cricket) fields in community parks and athletic complexes to meet need. Partner with schools to provide access to athletic fields/facilities. Continue with planned improvements and field monitoring, making adjustments as needed.
Archery	Entire city	NA	NA	12 lanes	-	Current facilities in Ramsey County's Keller Archery Range
Sledding hills	Neighborhood & Community Parks	NA	NA	6 informal sites throughout City, including Wakefield and Hazelwood Parks	-	Establish a winter maintenance plan that increases the facilities for sledding. Identify and publicize suitable locations for sledding such as Hazelwood Park.
Horseshoe courts	Entire city	NA	NA	20 lighted courts	-	Current facilities at Ramsey County Horseshoe Courts on White Bear Ave
Community gardens	As demand warrants- up to one per neighborhood	NA	NA	1 city garden 3 others	-	Additional community gardens include 2 school district gardens and Harvest Garden organized by the First Evangelical Free Church. As demand warrants, explore opportunities to add up to 4 additional public community gardens - up to one per park service area.
Off-leash dog exercise areas	10-15 minute travel time	N/A	NA	1 county area at Battle Creek Regional Park	-	As demand warrants, consider locating an off-leash dog area in the northern part of Maplewood.
Alternative sport facilities	Entire city	NA	NA	-	-	Partner with the City of Saint Paul to establish Tuj Lub facilities at Keller Regional Park; Partner with Ramsey County to establish disc golf facilities at Battle Creek Regional Park; Add skate park near the Community Center
Golf courses	Entire city	NA	NA	3	0	Current facilities include Ramsey County's The Ponds at Battle Creek, Goodrich, and Keller Golf Courses

USERS GUIDE

This section addresses processes that will help ensure that the work of City officials, staff, partners and the public will support Maplewood’s Park and Recreation System Master Plan.

Recreation is dynamic and evolves rapidly. Park and recreation facilities as well as recreation programs and activities must be responsive to changing recreation, demographic, and community needs. A high performing recreation system regularly assesses community needs, measures satisfaction, and responds to meet those needs. Inherently this means flexible and adaptive facilities and programs. It also means regular community feedback with plan refinement.

Recreation ten, or even five years, from now will be different it is today. New recreation activities and equipment emerge (in-line skates, the mountain bike, etc) and recreation trends ebb and flow, which means Parks and Recreation Master Plans should regularly be reviewed and refined based on community feedback. Annual or bi-annual review of this plan to ensure that priorities and recommendations are still relevant and that progress updates occur is essential to building and maintaining a great parks and recreation system.

Capital Improvement Plans

Systematic planning and budgeting for capital improvements is a key governmental function. Logical and efficient capital planning is based on a shared vision and a common understanding of needs and priorities. The City of Maplewood’s Capital Improvement Plan is a key component of this process. The annual process for capital improvement planning should be expanded to include findings and to regularly review the Asset Management Plan to ensure that maintenance and replacement needs are also addressed.

MEASURING PROGRESS

Routine evaluation of the park and recreation system is valuable, particularly when justifying requests for funds, facilities, staff time, and volunteers. Regular evaluation helps demonstrate that master planning efforts and strategic initiatives are progressing. Communicating system benefits is important to ensure that elected officials, the public, and other decision makers have a thorough understanding of the magnitude benefits the system provides to park and recreation users. Regular evaluations also have the potential for pinpointing which improvements would better serve system users and identifying benchmarks for excellence.

The City of Maplewood already conducts some evaluation of its services, including counts of recreation program participants and users of its fee based services. The City’s annual parks and recreation report/presentation should communicate this information to elected officials, partners, and the public. It also should include information about facilities’ conditions, maintenance status, rehabilitation/replacement needs and efficiency, as well as discuss the system’s successes and challenges.

Comprehensive evaluations of park and recreation systems should include both qualitative and quantitative components. Qualitative tools, such as surveys, are relatively easy to conduct and are important in gauging satisfactions, trends, and need. Surveys, though, do not tell the entire picture. Quantitative methods, such as counts, are important in capturing the who, what, where, and when of park and recreation use. Counts are the most beneficial in demonstrating the magnitude of usage.

Quantitative Data

- Number of recreation activities and participants tracked through registrations.
- Number of events, facility users, and participants tracked through reservations, permitting, and in requests of associations.
- Number of volunteer participants.
- Number of individuals and dollar value of those using the scholarship program.

- Number of people using parks, trails, and other non-fee based facilities through a user count program. This data might be collected by counting cars in the parking lot, creating a neighborhood park count volunteer program, or installing new technology to count trail users.
- Number of park master plans completed and how many citizens participated in each process.
- Miles of the pedestrian-bicycle network completed.
- Park and trail safety – number of accidents, incidents, and crime.
- Evaluate whether perceptions of safety have improved and compare to actual statistics of incidents.
- Identify challenges and what steps have been taken to address them.

Qualitative Data

- City-wide survey on a regular basis used to evaluate trends over time.
- Conduct satisfaction surveys of recreation activity participants.
- Evaluate perceptions of safety in use of parks and trails.
- Create evaluation for associations and other groups which regularly use facilities.
- Interview park users to find out how they got there, why they came, how long they stayed, and the importance of the park's different attributes and facilities. If done regularly this can be informative in terms of trends.
- Conduct focus groups to gather information about park use habits and desires for future park system directions.

System Analysis

- Identify improvements implemented based on individual park master plans.
- Analyze whether demographic mix of park, trail and program users is reflective of the City's demographic composition (age, income, race/ethnicity).
- Outline steps taken toward implementing System Plan recommendations and priorities.
- Evaluate the ability to fund the desired system.
- Summarize the amount of outside funding (partnerships, grants, etc.) secured.

Appendix: BENCHMARK COMPARISONS

TABLE A Community Benchmark Comparisons

CITY NAME	Maplewood	Cottage Grove	New Brighton	Roseville	Inver Grove Heights
City area in square miles	18	37	7	14	30
Total City population (2010 Census)	38,472	35,052	22,206	34,058	34,175
Acreage of City parks & open space per 1000 population	24.17	20.65	7.79	19.97	17
City Parks/parkland acreage	930	724	173	680	581
Number of parks	36	30	15	30	26
Number of parks per 10,000 people	9.4	8.5	6.8	8.8	7.6
Number of community parks	2	5	0	3	1
Number of youth athletic parks	4	0	0	4	5
Number of community athletic parks	2	1	0	2	1
Number of neighborhood parks	25	23	13	16	12
Number of tot lot or mini-parks	1	1	2	2	0

TABLE A Community Benchmark Comparisons, continued

CITY NAME	Maplewood	Cottage Grove	New Brighton	Roseville	Inver Grove Heights
School athletic fields (under agreement with City)	1 Baseball Field and 2 Community Gyms				
Special use facilities acreage (golf courses, ice arenas, community centers, etc.)	2 (Prairie Farm and Nature Center)	0	0	3	5
Ice Arenas	0	0	0	1 (+OVAL)	1
Active City parks space acreage	552	1229	173	547	581
City Open Space Acreage	308	10	0	133	-
Total City parks & open space acreage (Owned or maintained by City & with public access)	860	1239	173	680	581
Total non-City parks & open space acreage (State, Regional, Private with public access)	1,175	1	1	90	-
Full time staff	13.6	6	9FT 7PT	17 FT	6
Maintenance Staff	7	7	3.5 (and 2@ 180 days)	7	7
Operations Budget	3,881,300	1,789,000	2,963,100	4,500,000	2,295,300
Capital Budget	Parks: 100,000	-	Fleet: 610,000 Non-fleet: 4,219,539	started a 500,000 Renewal program	200,000
Neighborhood Preserves	14	0	0	3	5

TABLE A Community Benchmark Comparisons, continued

CITY NAME	Maplewood	Cottage Grove	New Brighton	Roseville	Inver Grove Heights
County Open Space acreage	1,175	1	1	90	
Agency Open Spaces	-	1	0	-	-
Community Centers	1	0	1	0	1
Golf Courses	3 (Ramsey County)	0	1	1	1
County Parks	6	1	1	3	-
Trails (Park, Connector, and on-street bike way)	81.1 miles (trail, sidewalk, and on-street bikeway) 47.35 connector trail miles	50 trail miles 0 connector trails miles	6.58 trail miles 0 connector trails miles	25 trail miles 45 connector trail miles 30 miles on-street bike way	26 miles
Key Regional and Community Park & Recreation Facilities:	Lake Phalen Regional Park, Keller Regional Park, Beaver Lake County Park, Battle Creek Regional Park, Veteran's Memorial Park, Joy Park, Harvest Park, Wakefield Park	Ravine Regional Park, Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific and Natural Area, Highlands Park	Long Lake Regional Park, Hansen Park	Lake Josephine County Park, Harriet Alexander Nature Center, Muriel Sahlin Arboretum, Central Park	Inver Grove Heights Community Center, Rich Valley Athletics Complex, Valley Park
Indoor Recreation Facilities (list):	Maplewood Community Center, Edgerton School Gym, Carver School Gym	Highlands Park, Cottage Grove Ice Arena	New Brighton Community Center	Roseville Skating Center, Central Park Community Gym, Brimhall School Gym	Inver Grove Heights Community Center
Community Pools / Water Parks:	Maplewood Community Center	Highlands Park	New Brighton Community Center	Fairview Community Center, Parkview Pool	Inver Grove Heights Community Center
Park Trails	81.1 miles	50 miles	6.58 miles	25 miles	26 miles
Connector Trails	47.35	0	0	45	-

TABLE A Community Benchmark Comparisons, continued

CITY NAME	Maplewood	Cottage Grove	New Brighton	Roseville	Inver Grove Heights
On-street Bike Way	81.1	0	yes	30	-
Key Regional and Community Park & Recreation Facilities:	Lake Phalen Regional Park, Keller Regional Park, Beaver Lake County Park, Battle Creek Regional Park, Veteran's Memorial Park, Joy Park, Harvest Park, Wakefield Park	Ravine Regional Park, Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific and Natural Area, Highlands Park	Long Lake Regional Park, Hansen Park	Lake Josephine County Park, Harriet Alexander Nature Center, Muriel Sahlin Arboretum, Central Park	Inver Grove Heights Community Center, Rich Valley Athletics Complex, Valley Park
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MAPLEWOOD PARKS & RECREATION



Creating Community Through People, Parks and Programs