



Agenda

Minnetonka Park Board

Wednesday, April 6, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Minnetonka Community Center - Minnehaha Room

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

_____ Isabelle Stroh

_____ Korey Beyersdorf

_____ James Durbin

_____ Chris Gabler

_____ David Ingraham

_____ Ben Jacobs

_____ Katie Semersky

_____ Chris Walick

3. Reports from Staff

4. Approval of Minutes

A) March 2, 2022

5. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda

6. Special Matters

7. Business Items

A) Parks, Open Space and Trails (POST)
System Plan Approval

B) Natural Resources Division's Education and
Outreach Plan

8. Park Board Member Reports

9. Information Items

10. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

11. Adjournment

Board Vision:

A city with outstanding parks and recreational opportunities within a valued natural environment.

Board Mission:

The mission of the Minnetonka Parks & Recreation Board is to proactively advise the city council, in ways that will:

- Protect & enhance Minnetonka's natural environment
- Promote quality recreation opportunities and facilities
- Provide a forum for citizens interested in our parks, trails, athletic fields and open space.



**Minutes
Minnetonka Park Board
Wednesday, March 2, 2022**

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Park board members present: Korey Beyersdorf, James Durbin, Chris Gabler, David Ingraham, Ben Jacobs, Katie Semersky, Isabelle Stroh and Chris Walick.

Staff members in attendance: Darin Ellingson, Kathy Kline, Matt Kumka, Kelly O'Dea, Sara Woeste and Leslie Yetka.

Gabler called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

3. Reports from Staff

Recreation Director, Kelly O'Dea reported that there was an addendum.

4. Approval of Minutes

Walick moved, Jacobs seconded a motion to approve the meeting minutes of Feb. 2, 2022, as submitted. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

5. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda

There were none.

6. Special Matters

Mary Hammill represented the Friends of Meadow Park and presented on the restoration at Meadow Park. The presentation was included in the March 2, 2022, park board packet.

Diana Houston represented the Friends of Big Willow Park and presented on the restoration at Big Willow Park. The presentation was included in the March 2, 2022, park board packet.

Gabler said they bring a lot of kids from the transition plus program in the spring and fall and they spend a lot of time walking through the park. It's been a great thing for them.

Houston stressed that they would be happy to take them on a tour of any park to learn more.

Gabler thanked Hammill and Houston for their presentations. Meadow Park brings him back to many years ago when he used to be a warming house attendant there. He has seen that park change over the years as well.

7. Business Items

A. Draft POST Plan Public Comment Review

Assistant Recreation Director, Sara Woeste gave the report. She presented public feedback for each chapter, the proposed edits, and asked for feedback from the park board members. Public comment was also available for anyone calling into the meeting or in-person.

Chapter One: Introduction

Proposed edits:

- Add some language about the joint agreement with the City of Hopkins. This is to make people aware of the joint agreement right away in the introduction and give that background. It is mentioned in a chapter later on but it will also be in the introduction.
- Add ecological restoration in the introduction text. There is some text that talks about a list of areas that are identified for improvement so they would like to add ecological restoration to that list.
- Update some kind of the language on the key takeaways from existing plans. There were some comments that we agreed with and will make those changes.

Woeste said the comments that are highlighted in the table are the ones staff is suggesting to make edits to. She asked for feedback from the park board.

Stroh said someone suggested taking tennis courts that weren't being used and converting them into pickleball courts. She thought that was a really good point and it would save some space. Pickleball courts are increasing in popularity but those tennis courts are multimillion-dollar courts. She feels as though that is something that would require a lot of thought before converting several of the tennis courts into pickleball courts.

Woeste thanked Stroh for her comment. She said she will soon be addressing how we are going to put pickleball into our facility guidelines as an option in neighborhood parks.

Chapter Two: Trends

Woeste explained that there were more requests for additional pickleball courts in this chapter. There was also some support and opposition regarding the focus on climate resiliency throughout the whole packet.

Proposed edits:

- Add language in the introduction stating that the trends are in no particular order. Woeste thought that was good feedback because some people questioned if it was ordered from one through eight with one being the most important. It's not, so they will add that text in the introduction to chapter two.
- Add neighborhood park as a location option in table four. In chapter six there are guidelines saying that if they want to have an amenity like pickleball courts, what kind of park should they consider putting them in. In the original draft, only community parks were listed because staff and former park board members thought because of pickleball's popularity, it would draw big crowds and they

should only be in community parks. Staff thinks neighborhood parks can be added as an option so that in the future as we reconstruct tennis courts, if a neighborhood park is appropriate, maybe one can become a pickleball court. It wouldn't necessarily be a huge complex but as we reconstruct some of these tennis courts, if the park board agrees, we can consider that potentially in some neighborhood parks. With the facility guidelines, keep in mind that these amenities would go through a public approval process. If we decide we want a pickleball court in a neighborhood park, staff would notify the neighborhood and get feedback. By considering a neighborhood park, this is one way of showing that we think we could expand our options for more pickleball courts. Woeste asked for the park board's opinion on whether or not they agree with considering neighborhood parks for future pickleball courts that could be repurposed tennis courts.

Gabler thought it was something they should talk about. He thinks it will be interesting if all of a sudden they start talking about it and then the tennis courts become used more. Futsal is also being used on tennis courts, he questioned if that will lead to more discussions about that in neighborhood parks.

Woeste commented that this just opens up the door for having the possibility of adding it into a neighborhood park. It would have to go through an approval process to make it happen. This is just saying we would consider it in the future.

Ingraham thinks it will be interesting to hear feedback from neighbors if they start proposing to transition some of the tennis courts. This is only because he knows pickleball is extremely popular and is pretty noisy. At Lone Lake Park, the pickleball courts are much more intrusive into the environment relative to sound than the mountain bike trails. He thinks of GroTonka Park or somewhere like that where there is space for it and the courts could be converted. He is supportive of the addition of neighborhood parks but it will be interesting to hear the feedback from the neighborhoods if it comes to that.

Durbin thinks it is good to open up the possibility for pickleball in neighborhood parks. Right now with the popularity of pickleball you can put it anywhere as long as there is parking for people and they will play. Ingraham made a great comment on the public input to see if the neighbors actually want it there. Durbin also has concern of transitioning tennis courts into pickleball courts because then you are taking away something from people who are using them. That was done for the Futsal court but he doesn't know how much that court is being used. He thinks part of the calculus has to be figuring out how much these current amenities are being used before they would even consider transitioning them. For this high-level document, they should add neighborhood parks where parking is not limited so they can be considered.

Walick liked the idea of opening it up. He has no worries that staff would find a way to balance pickleball and tennis. He likes the idea of being able to repurpose things that aren't being used. If there is one tennis court being used one day a week and another tennis court two miles away that is only being used one day a week, we could combine those. That would be much cheaper than building something new and we would be using the land that is already there.

Woeste heard general support for adding that so she thinks that is an edit they will make. Keep in mind there could be multi-use courts too for tennis and pickleball. That takes a

little work using different equipment and adding different lines but it is an option. We have heard throughout this process that things should be multi-use so make sure you are thinking long-term and if things can be used for different functions.

Chapter 3: Existing Conditions

Woeste explained that this was the chapter on demographics, park classifications and public engagement. There were several comments reacting to the public engagement and different opinions on the information that was in the packet and the survey responses. In the addendum, there was concern regarding the change of classifications. There was a concern that taking away community preserve made it a down-grade, but it does not. We changed the park classifications by giving each park a status of mini park, neighborhood park or community park based on its size and its service but it may also be a preserve. For example, Purgatory Park is a community park and it is still designated as a preserve. Anything that would go into a preserve area would still have to be passive in use. It is not a downgrade, it is just a different way of consistency by giving each park a status of mini, neighborhood or community based on its size. An exception would be those that are special use such as the marina.

Proposed Edits:

- There was confusion on the classification table and map because they were called parks and open space classification table and park and open space classification map. Open space is going to be removed because what staff was referring to is city owned park property. There are open spaces within the parks but it was a little confusing.
- There was a request for a definition of what natural surface is, so staff is going to add that to the glossary. It was kind of embedded within the formal trail definition and is a natural surface trail which is crushed limestone, compacted soil or mulch. There were a few comments on that so they have added it in for clarification.

Chapter 4: Vision

Woeste explained that this is the mission and the guiding principles that were previously open to public comment and park board feedback a few months back. There was general satisfaction with this chapter.

Proposed edits:

Under the guiding principle titled “Excellence and Innovation”, staff is proposing a few changes based on the comments.

- Add wording under the third bullet to say, “Meet increasing demand and provide funding for informal and passive recreation and restoration opportunities.”
- Add an additional bullet that states, “Parks, open spaces and trails will retain their excellence through timely and ongoing maintenance.”

Staff has heard the desire for funding and the desire for maintenance throughout this entire process so she thought those were important additions.

Gabler questioned if we added “and provide funding”, are we saying it is 100 percent funding or is it funding in a private/public partnership type of thing. Does that open us up

to have people get mad if you can't fund something that year and they have to wait a couple of years?

Woeste thought just like any amenity or activity, we can't always fund everything we want to do 100 percent. This is just saying we are making an emphasis on trying to find funding for these informal and passive opportunities and there is a desire from the community.

Ingraham asked if pursue would be a better word.

Gabler liked that. He thinks Ingraham is right and thought the word "provide" sounds like the city is 100 percent responsible. He thought people would look at that.

Durbin would be happy even if it was left out completely and kept the way it was. He doesn't mind it but obviously everything costs money; nothing is free except for volunteer hours so it is just putting something in there that they already knew. The second bullet that was proposed to be added, he wants to put something in there saying that we adequately fund project maintenance costs and increases.

Gabler thinks pursue might be the happy compromise in that.

Woeste said she is hearing some mixed reactions.

Durbin responded that if we are increasing demand for informal and passive recreation and restoration opportunities, those opportunities cost money so it is kind of obvious. He doesn't know why we have to put that in there.

Ingraham agreed with Durbin. By definition, everything we do at some point requires funding.

Durbin wanted some kind of comment to match that under the maintenance one. He liked the second bullet as it is and he kind of liked the first bullet as it is.

Walick asked with this whole document being lofty goals and kind of vision if there is something near the beginning that mentions that these are not statements saying that we are going to do these items. Even the second bullet about parks retaining their excellence, somebody could get upset because they view it is not maintaining the excellence. Is there a broad statement that these are driving goals and not a specific list of things we are required to do.

Woeste said the entire plan itself is a plan and guide. You could not make a decision to fulfil every single statement in this plan. These are guides for us, so she thinks as a whole, it's a high-level planning document to help guide decision making. It is not an ordinance but it is what we heard from the public; they are the goals and initiatives that we would like to attempt to follow when making decisions.

Walick says we know that but others might not. He is just thinking of worst case scenarios.

Woeste said she is looking for a few more opinions on whether to remove or keep either pursue or provide funding.

Walick was fine with it, but said it could go.

Semersky said to drop it.

Woeste agreed once Durbin framed it as meet the increasing demand; it does imply funding as well.

Semersky said to suspect everything in that innovative guiding principle is going to require funding.

Stroh said someone will go through this whole thing and nitpick everything and then get mad if something isn't fulfilled.

Gabler agreed that somebody will.

Durbin said especially in the last section that includes the trends of all the cool things that we could do. We could spend 500 million dollars but we aren't going to.

Woeste said her plan is to remove "and provide funding" to the final, just keep it as it was.

Chapter 5: Systems Plan

Woeste said this was the goals and initiatives chapter. This was another chapter that was pretty well vetted. It was previously open to public comment and the park board saw this and gave feedback. There was appreciation for recognizing the challenge of off-leash dogs that has been a theme kind of throughout this whole process. We will talk a little more about that in chapter six. There was a request to be cautious when considering the addition for boardwalks. To consider more boardwalks and to do it cautiously if we make those decisions in the future is one thing staff can add to the systems. This would be an amenity and if it was added, it would go through a process.

Proposed Edits:

- Remove "explore options". Staff is going to keep that. As staff is looking at future projects to do, for example, when we build something like Ridgedale Commons or a new park or add amenities, staff wants to make sure that they are looking at ways to improve pedestrian safety. That is something we are doing already when constructing new trails. An example, Groveland Elementary is getting a pedestrian crossing when the trail gets added near there. That language was added because we know that we can't get to all 50 parks and improve all of the pedestrian crossings. It is really a goal to do it as we work towards future parks and amenities.

Chapter 6: Implementation

Woeste explained that this chapter had the facility guidelines table that we have already looked at. It has the priority initiatives and gives things a high, medium or low priority. In the feedback there were some specific trail segment requests. People were saying where they want to see trails and that is really a Trail Improvement Plan comment. However, these are comments that we can share internally with our trails team as we look at that plan. The Trail Improvement Plan doesn't have to be fixed, it can change overtime so there was some good feedback in there for some additional trail segments. Then in the

addendum today, there was a comment with the concern about the facility guideline table and preserves. A fear that if Purgatory Park is a community park that pickleball and active recreation could be put in there, however, it is a preserve as well. If there is a park that has the preserve classification, any activities that would go in there should fall under a passive type use. Then there is a theme again throughout this whole process of off-leash dogs with a lot of opinions on safety. Staff received some feedback today via email that is in the addendum regarding off-leash dogs. Woeste did correspond with those residents and let them know that this evening the park board was discussing a high-level plan; it was not focused on one particular park or one particular issue like off-leash dogs. She also explained that the outcome of this document does have some priorities and one of the priorities that we have in the initiatives is to study the feasibility of adding a dog park. Currently that is the only priority initiative listed around dogs. One question she has for the park board is if they feel that is sufficient as a priority initiative or if they feel like there should be further dog priorities other than studying the option to have a dog park in the future? She just wanted to get a little bit of feedback from the park board to see if there should be additional action taken regarding dogs in the future.

Durbin replied that the off-leash dog's topic has been brewing for like over 20 years in the city of Minnetonka. He almost thinks this topic is bigger than the park board. He is not opposed and he thinks doing a feasibility study for if they should put a dog park in and where is a great priority. He remembers when they did the park board tour a couple of years ago and they were in Opus, that was one suggestion made by the former city manager. He thinks putting something on the books and actually starting to tackle the problem is probably a wise decision, however, he thinks it has to be bigger than just the park board. He thinks it has different interest groups such as public safety and all sorts of concerns should be looked at as a whole to do it correctly. He personally thinks they should start addressing it.

Woeste commented that there was a conversation internally about this and they absolutely agreed that it is a very big picture item. If staff would put anything in here, they would need to have some discussions with the police department, planning department and public works director before they would say that they want to change the ordinance or something like that. Staff agrees but she just wanted to take the temperature of the park board and see if there was enough action items regarding dogs or if there was an opinion to put more in there.

Durbin thinks putting it in this plan is great but he thinks it also needs to move to the next step. He knows we are talking about this plan but he thinks this should actually be a significant goal and to start addressing it.

Gabler said you could almost put a small paragraph in an executive summary just stating that a discussion on a dog park is beyond the park board and would probably include the planning commission or anything with conditional use permits. That way people know the reason why it is not in there. Durbin is 100 percent right that it is way beyond the park board; it is probably going to bring three or four boards and commissions together to try and figure it out.

Ingraham has always been a dog owner and he thinks it has always been an issue but it is a much more significant issue today than it has been. Twenty years ago he spoke before the city council in support of off-leash dogs in Purgatory Park because back then the experience in Purgatory Park was a unique one for dog owners. One thing he thinks

is interesting in the received feedback is that there are a lot of dog owners that are upset and concerned about off-leash dogs because they've either personally been confronted by or their dogs have been attacked by and he thinks this is a big deal. To Durbin's point, it's potentially bigger than our organization because a big part of it is enforcement. He thinks Purgatory Park is kind of unique because it has a history now of having a large number of dogs and owners and to some extent Jidana Park also does. Ingraham can't remember if it was the park board or the Friends of Purgatory Park but during one of the last presentations he saw a pretty creative solution of having the northwest corner of Purgatory Park as a possible dog park location. It is now a heavily treed and buckthorn area, which would then relieve pressure on the prairie center. He thinks for a reference in this POST Plan and the Strategic Plan, addressing this issue is warranted because it's on a lot of things they have received. From his perspective, out of all the feedback they received, if you take out the passive versus active feedback, he thinks the feedback on dogs and safety was larger than he expected and more earnest. He thinks being responsive to the feedback and the residents is something they really need to look hard at.

Woeste thanked the board members for their input. She also mentioned that staff agrees that this is a really big picture issue. Staff will talk to some of our other leadership staff to see if and how we want to add some wording to this. Perhaps it is something high-level and one of the priorities is to start the conversation and work internally with public safety and other departments to address or begin to address the dog issue and come up with next steps. We'll talk internally about that and try to add some kind of language in there. She does think that the study and the feasibility of adding a dog park is still appropriate and is quite specific. It is a park board level decision but staff will come up with a way to figure out if we are going to add some text about discussions with other departments regarding the dog situation. She knows there is a desire and one of our high-priorities is master planning some parks. One of the high-level parks is Purgatory Park so she does believe that master planning Purgatory Park will come up during that process. There will also likely be some discussion around dogs and usage in that park through the process of master planning Purgatory Park in the near future.

Proposed Edits:

- Add an ongoing priority initiative to review trail and sidewalk winter maintenance priority designations as the trail and sidewalk system expands. There were several comments regarding snow removal on trails in the winter and some people want all of them done and all of them done fast. Street and Park Operations Manager, Darin Ellingson gave a presentation at one of the last park board meetings where you learned about that process and those decisions. We will just have to make sure we are reviewing the priorities as we build a lot more trails. This is saying more trails are coming over the next 10 years and we may have to look at those priorities and decide which trails are higher priority.

Appendix A

Woeste explained that this is the glossary. There were a few comments and a few minor changes.

Proposed Edits:

- Add natural areas to the definition of maintenance. The maintenance definition lists several things to maintain and we are going to add natural areas to that list.

- Add park classifications, such as the definitions of a mini park, neighborhood park, community park and a preserve. She thinks they will probably just put the park classifications in the glossary and say refer back to that table on that page. We will either do that or add all the definitions. The definitions are already in the document but we can at least call those out in the glossary and say to refer back to the table.
- Update the formal trail definition to include what a natural surface trail is (crushed limestone, compacted soil and mulch).

Durbin agrees with adding a glossary term to make the document more understandable.

Semersky thought the glossary looked good. She just wanted to take a second to recognize that Woeste really took all these comments very seriously, she could tell from the 13 pages of comments with responses to each. She appreciated her taking so much time to do that. Semersky wished they would've gotten more responses than just three to seven per section. That was a little disappointing but hopefully it's because you've given folks multiple opportunities to give input throughout the whole process. Great job really taking the comments seriously and responding to them.

Stroh asked if high and low quality parks are in the glossary. She felt like that was used a lot.

Woeste replied that it is not and that could likely be found in the Natural Resource Master Plan. That really talks about natural resources most likely in different areas. We don't have a definition for a high-quality park, we don't call any of our parks high-quality or low-quality. It might be an area of a park in the natural resources. There are a lot of maps showing that information in the Natural Resources Master Plan.

Ingraham said there were a lot of comments but not a lot of commenters. He asked what the unique views were on Minnetonka Matters. How many people looked at it?

Woeste replied that there were 260 unique views, let's try and take that as a positive. She doesn't know if we have ever done as much public engagement for other projects. People have had opportunities for the last six months or more to provide input. We heard it in our presentations from the Friends groups today; they were appreciative of the direction this was going in and thought it aligned with their goals as well. It was nice to hear that.

Durbin agreed with Woeste's assessment. He thinks this product is getting polished. It's getting to that point where they are only disagreeing over two words. That is fantastic.

Woeste appreciated all the help, guidance and feedback they have given.

Woeste explained that staff will be taking these edits and getting them implemented over the next month with a consultant. She will bring back the final plan to the park board for approval on April 6 and then it will go to council on April 25.

B. Adoption of 2022 Park Board Strategic Plan

O'Dea gave the report.

Ingraham asked what the funding special projects document is. He is in agreement with the plan but he wasn't sure what that was.

O'Dea said it is a document that we have, but it hasn't been used too much. An example is if we have somebody requesting to put in an amenity into a park system, such as platform tennis, or something they may not have heard of, there would probably be different reasons why they would say yes or no. We would want to work through that document and look at criteria and things like that as to why we would maybe accept or deny a potential project.

Walick moved, Ingraham seconded a motion to adopt the 2022 Park Board Strategic Plan as submitted. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

8. Park Board Member Reports

Durbin went to Jidana Park this weekend and accessed it via Jidana Road. It is such a cool park because it is completely different in the winter versus summer. He had an opportunity to walk on Minnehaha Creek. It is just a beautiful place to go and visit during the winter. His concern was that there was only one single trash can at the entrance and it was overflowing. It's a popular park and there were a lot of people there. He thinks people access it from different avenues so he was just hoping that we can keep the trash in the trash can. Maybe it needs to be emptied more frequently during this time of year. He just wants to keep the park looking nice right around that entrance.

Ingraham thought it was referenced at one of the POST TAC meetings that the dirt road around the southern edge of Cargill is actually on city property and is part of essentially Mooney Park. He was just curious if there has been any discussion internally with staff about what or how that might be used.

Ellingson said 99.5 percent of the trail is on city property. There are two segments that encroach on Cargill's property. We worked over the winter to get those areas surveyed and we are in the process of getting easements for those two portions so we can legally use all the trail. Last fall they started restoring the trail by grading it, cleaning it up, widening it and getting it ready for really active use by everybody. Also, they have identified the signs on city property that say "no trespassing" so they will be moving those and making some new ones to get them moved over closer to the Cargill property. They might not be right on the property line but they will be near the entrance points to the Cargill property just so people know to stay out of the Cargill area. We do have a little more work to do in a few areas, such as bringing in some new gravel where they had to remove weeds and overgrowth. There is a little bit of work to do but it should be open for everybody this spring and summer.

9. Information Items

Recreation Services 2022 Summer Brochure

O'Dea gave the report.

10. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

O'Dea gave the report.

He encouraged park board members to contact him if they had suggestions for stops on the park board tour.

11. Adjournment

Walick moved, Jacobs seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Kline

Kathy Kline
Recreation Administrative Coordinator

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 7A
Meeting of April 6, 2022**

Subject:	Parks, Open Space and Trails (POST) System Plan Approval
Park Board related goal:	To renew and maintain parks and trails
Park Board related objective:	Participate in the park & trail projects process and make recommendations to the city council.
Brief Description:	Review the revised Parks, Open Space and Trails System Plan for approval to the city council

Background:

The previous Parks, Open Space, and Trail (POST) plan was created and adopted in 2001. The 2001 plan acknowledged that the needs of individuals and families living in Minnetonka are dynamic and will change and evolve through time, especially with changes in population demographics, diversity, and recreation trends. That plan calls for regular reevaluation and assessment to recognize changes and provide a park, open space and trail system plan that reflects the needs of the community. The purpose of the POST Plan update is to provide a comprehensive, balanced, and sustainable system of parks, open spaces, trails, and programs for city residents to use and enjoy. The outcome of the POST plan update is a concise and useable document that aligns with complementary studies and planning documents, and provides a framework for implementation.

Project Process:

The POST Plan update was 14-month long project that began in February 2021. Staff collaborated with consultants from Damon Farber Landscape Architects to complete the plan update. A technical advisory committee consisting of a representative from the park board and city staff from the recreation services, public works, natural resources, planning, communications, engineering and police departments assisted throughout the process to provide input and review documents.

Steps in the process included:

- Data collection and analysis
- Review of relevant plans and studies
- Community Engagement
- Inventory and Needs Assessment
- Visioning: Mission Statement and Guiding Principles
- System Plan: goals and recommendations
- Implementation Plan: priorities, phasing, funding strategies
- Draft and Final Plan

Community engagement was a key component to the development of the plan. Initial community engagement took place from June through August, 2021 engaging over 1,000 participants and included:

- An online survey and mapping tool on Minnetonka Matters
- In-person engagement at:
 - Farmers Market
 - Shady Oak Beach
 - Park Adventures

- Senior Center
- Night to Unite
- Listening Session/Workshops

Following the initial outreach period during the summer of 2021, the Minnetonka Matters platform continued to be used throughout the remainder of the project to provide project updates and publish draft sections of the plan for public feedback as they were drafted. The following list details the information published online for public feedback as well as presented to Park Board:

- Community Engagement Summary: Sept. 1, 2021 Park Board Meeting
- Mission Statement and Guiding Principles: Oct. 6, 2021 Park Board Meeting
- Project update to date: Nov. 3, 2021 Joint Park Board and City Council Meeting
- System Plan Goals and Initiatives: Dec. 1, 2021 Park Board Meeting
- Full Draft Plan: Feb. 2, 2022 Park Board Meeting
- Draft Plan Public Comment Review: March 2, 2022 Park Board Meeting

Over the course of the project, there were 2,600 visits to the POST Plan project page on Minnetonka Matters with 1,765 participants viewing documents and surveys and 689 engaged participants participating in surveys and the online mapping tool.

Summary

The updated POST Plan provides a 15 to 20 year road map for planning and implementing park improvements, helping the park board, city council and city staff prioritize improvements and ensure that changes and investments in parks, trails, and open spaces continue to serve the needs of the entire community.

The plan generally includes:

- Industry Trends
- A demographic overview
- A system overview of current conditions, facilities and classifications
- The community engagement summary
- The mission and vision, as well as goals and objectives, for future park planning
- Priority Initiatives

While the intent of the plan is to provide guidance for future park system planning efforts, specific projects and funding would be proposed in future public processes and budget cycles for park board and council consideration.

Recommended Action:

Receive presentation and provide recommendation of approval of the Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan to the city council.

Attachment

1. Revised draft of the Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan
2. Table of comments received during the full draft comment review period with staff responses and actions taken
3. Minnetonka Matters comments received during the full draft public comment period

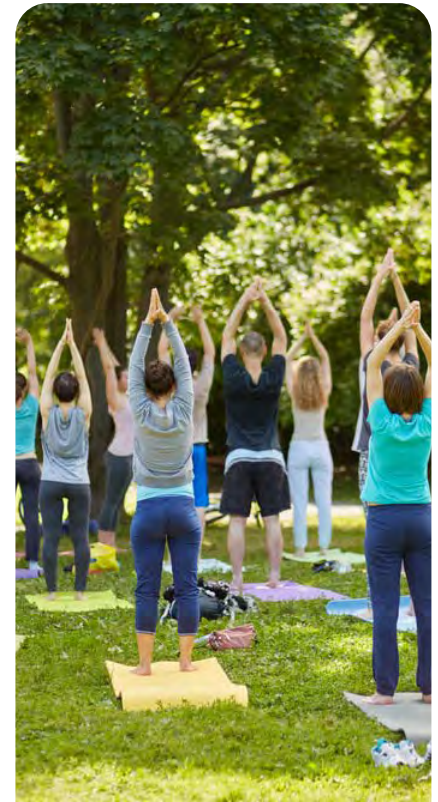
CITY OF
MINNETONKA
PARKS,
OPEN SPACE
AND TRAIL
(POST)
SYSTEM
PLAN



CITY OF
MINNETONKA

DF/ DAMON FARBER

20
22



POST System Plan



PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAIL (POST) SYSTEM PLAN

CITY OF MINNETONKA

2022

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Prepared For:

City of Minnetonka

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Assistant Recreation Director

Leslie Yetka
Natural Resources Manager

Andy Gardner
Minnetonka PD

Kelly O'Dea
Recreation Director

Darin Ellingson
Street & Park Operations Manager

Chris Walick
Minnetonka Park Board Vice Chair

Chris Long
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Andrew Wittenborg
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Dave Ingraham
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Susan Thomas
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**THANK YOU TO THE CITY OF MINNETONKA COMMUNITY WHO TOOK
THE TIME TO PROVIDE VALUABLE INPUT ON THIS PLAN!**

POST System Plan



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parks, open spaces and trails are important and cherished public amenities in the City of Minnetonka. Since 1959, when the City of Minnetonka received plans for its first park, Gro Tonka, parks have contributed to the quality of life that residents, employees and visitors enjoy. With approximately 1,300 acres of parkland,

including a significant amount of natural open space and over 100 miles of trails, the city's park system is fundamental to community building, environmental and economic sustainability, health and well-being and creating stronger connections to community destinations.

WHAT IS IT?

- 1 This Parks, Open Space and Trail (POST) System Plan provides a 15 to 20 year road map for planning and implementing park improvements.
- 2 The POST System Plan offers guiding principles, recommendations, priorities and tools to ensure the Minnetonka park system is relevant and functional into the future.
- 3 The POST System Plan aligns future investments with community needs to establish clear and realistic goals, initiatives and implementation strategies for new and improved park facilities and programs.
- 4 The POST System Plan complements goals outlined in the city's 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the Natural Resources Master Plan (NRMP) to preserve, protect and restore open space and significant natural resources in Minnetonka, and the Trail Improvement Plan (TIP) to provide opportunities for people of all abilities and access to parks and open spaces.
- 5 Recommendations in the POST System Plan are based on community input as well as analyses of demographic changes, future trends and Minnetonka's current park system.
- 6 The POST System Plan provides a framework to guide long and short-term decision making and investments for parks, open spaces and trails at a system-wide level. Specific recommendations such as improvements for individual parks will require additional detailed design.

GUIDED BY: DEVELOPMENT OF THE POST SYSTEM PLAN WAS GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING MISSION AND PRINCIPLES:

As the City of Minnetonka changes over the next two decades, the quality of its parks, natural areas, trails and programs must evolve. New opportunities will be revealed, along with new challenges. Sustaining a welcoming, comprehensive and balanced park system throughout this evolution will require a vision founded with a shared community mission statement and set of guiding principles.

The mission and guiding principles were developed based on significant community engagement efforts with the general public, key stakeholders, city leadership and others. These efforts were combined with the existing conditions analysis and the needs assessment to coalesce into a comprehensive vision for the future of Minnetonka open spaces.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Minnetonka Parks, Open Space and Trail System Plan is to be leaders in providing a welcoming, comprehensive and balanced system of high quality parks, natural areas, trails and programs for all to enjoy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Preserve, protect and restore natural resources by supporting environmental stewardship and conservation, while building long-term sustainability of the park system.



PROVIDE CONNECTIONS TO PARKS, TRAILS AND PROGRAMS

Improve accessibility to park facilities and programs by reducing physical and financial barriers.



PROMOTE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Support mental and physical health and well-being by providing a diversity of quality facilities and parks, open spaces, and trails to support life-long activity and meet the social needs of the community.



PROMOTE EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Prioritize equity throughout the parks, open space and trail system to support all users, celebrate diversity and embrace inclusiveness.



SUPPORT EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

Provide a variety of innovative, new or improved active and passive park amenities and programs that are accessible to all park users.

PLANNING PROCESS

This 12-month planning effort began in February 2021, and represents input gathered from the community, stakeholders, city staff, and city officials. Valuable community input and feedback received through online surveys, listening sessions, community pop-ups, park and open space tours, public meetings and workshops guided the development of this plan. The plan also incorporates the expertise of the consultant team, an evaluation of existing conditions by city staff and the consultant team, current and future trends and key takeaways from the Needs Assessment. The planning process was guided by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of city staff and park board members. The TAC met on a regular basis and provided review and guidance to the consultant team throughout the planning process. The Minnetonka City Council and Park Board also provided guidance and input at key stages in the plan's development.

An important goal of the planning process was to ensure recommendations would reflect the needs and aspirations of the community. The effort included community outreach to traditionally underrepresented groups including seniors, youth, BIPOC and people with disabilities to ensure the park, open space and trail system will reflect the needs and desires of the whole community.

TRENDS

To meet the demands of a growing and changing population, the city staff and decision makers need to consider current local and national trends and potential implications to future parks, open space and trail system planning. Planning for change and building flexibility into the current park system will position Minnetonka to better adapt to current trends and future demands. The trends listed are in no particular order.

TRENDS OVERVIEW

1. Increasing Demand for Informal Recreation

Demand for informal recreation such as running, hiking, bicycling and fitness programs are increasing in popularity.

2. Resiliency to Climate Change

Conservation and ecological restoration may become as important as recreation. New parks will be designed with resiliency in mind.

3. Changing Demographics

The region will grow, age and become more racially and ethnically diverse.

4. Desire to be More Connected to the Land

There is an increasing desire to unplug and get back to the land and each other. This will lead to changes in public space and community programming. There will be greater emphasis on more natural areas and balancing environment with recreational needs.

5. Changes Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic

Parks, open spaces and trails became high priority destinations as people sought out places for distanced physical activity.

6. Parks, Open Space, and Trails Support Economic Development

Parks and recreation not only improve the quality of life, but they benefit the local economic development of a region.

7. Health and Well-Being

The movement towards health and well-being has been magnified by COVID=19 but will continue well beyond the pandemic with a greater focus on meeting the physical and mental health needs of communities.

8. Specialized Facilities and Non-Traditional Sports

Dog parks are the fastest growing type of park. Pickleball is popular, especially with ages 55 and older. Lacrosse is the fastest grown team sport.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Minnetonka in Context

The City of Minnetonka is in Hennepin County, located eight miles west of Minneapolis. It encompasses 17,901 acres (28.00 square miles) of land and borders the eastern tip of Lake Minnetonka, one of the largest lakes in Minnesota. The city is bisected by interstate highways 394 and 494 which link to Minneapolis and St. Paul and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

Parks, Open Spaces and Trails Overview

The parks, open spaces and trails that connect them are what give Minnetonka its unique character. More than 20 percent of the city's land area are wetlands and lakes, with more than 268 acres of maintained parkland. Minnetonka has over 50 parks; over 100 miles of trails; and over 1,000 acres of natural public open spaces. With its parks, open space, and trail system, Minnetonka offers residents, visitors, and employees numerous active and passive recreation opportunities.

Demographics

Minnetonka's population has increased over the past 50 years, growing from 35,776 in 1970 to 53,776 in 2020. This growth is expected to continue, with 61,500 residents projected for the year 2040. One of the biggest demographic shifts affecting Minnetonka is that it is aging at a notable pace. It is predicted that the 60-74-year-old population will increase by 40 percent in the next 10 years. Demographic changes will alter the labor force and impact preferences for park needs, transportation and housing.

The majority of Minnetonka's population identified as white (82.54 percent); however, it is predicted that 92 percent of Minnetonka's population growth will be from people of color. Demographic shifts in the coming decades will result in a changing metropolitan area. The region will grow, age and become more racially and ethnically diverse. Recent data indicates these changes are well underway, especially when it comes to diversity in the region.

SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

- More than 20 percent of city's land area is city-owned parks, preserves, and open space, with more than 268 acres of maintained parkland and over 1,000 acres of natural public open space.
- The city has over 50 parks consisting of mini parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, preservers, and special use facilities.
- Over 100 miles of trails

FACILITIES

 29 playground areas	 8 canoe landings
 15 picnic shelters	 5 fishing locations
 36 picnic areas	 10 outdoor hockey rinks
 7 shelter buildings	 8 general ice skating rinks
 2 swimming beaches	 1 nordic skiing area (Three Rivers Park District)
 27 tennis courts	 1 multi-use mountain bike/snowshoeing trail
 8 pickleball courts	 1 fitness center
 16 diamond ballfields	 1 golf course (Three Rivers Park District)
 6 rectangular fields	 10 permanent restrooms (3 all year/7 seasonal)
 17 basketball courts	 2 historic sites
 1 skate park	 1 sand volleyball court
 1 community garden	 5 boardwalks
 1 boat launch	 +25 parks/open spaces with trails

Park Classification Overview

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS AND INVENTORY

Park classifications establish common terminology and an accepted benchmark standard for parks, open space and trail system planning. This categorization allows planners to understand the assets within a park system and ensure that it serves neighborhood and community needs with the appropriate geographic distribution of services.

In this POST System Plan update, the park classification system was updated from the 2001 Minnetonka POST Plan. New parks that were built since the creation of the last plan were added and classified. Minor changes to some of the classification descriptions were implemented.

Table 1 defines and clarifies each park classification with key uses, typical size and the types of facilities the park may include. *Table 2* categorizes parks and open spaces in the city. It also lists facility acreage defined by land type, the neighborhood park service area (NPSA) and ward for each park. *Figure 9* displays the geographic distribution of each park type within Minnetonka.

PARKS CLASSIFICATION OVERVIEW (TABLE 1)

Classifications	Descriptions	Size Criteria
Mini Park	Used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs, typically at the neighborhood level.	Up to one acre
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood park remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on active and passive recreation.	Typically 1 - 30 acres
Community Park	Destination park that is diverse in nature and serves a broader purpose than neighborhood parks. Focus is on meeting community needs including recreational activities (i.e. athletic complexes/amenities, playgrounds, trails, picnic areas), preserve areas, and open spaces.	Varies, typically 30 acres or more
Athletic Complex	Programmed adult and/or youth athletic fields and associated facilities strategically located within the community.	Varies
Preserve	Park land maintained as habitat, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. Also provides passive use opportunities (i.e., trails, overlooks, interpretive programs, nature-play areas, etc.).	Varies
Special Use	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use - such as historic sites, plazas, beaches, marinas, etc.	Varies

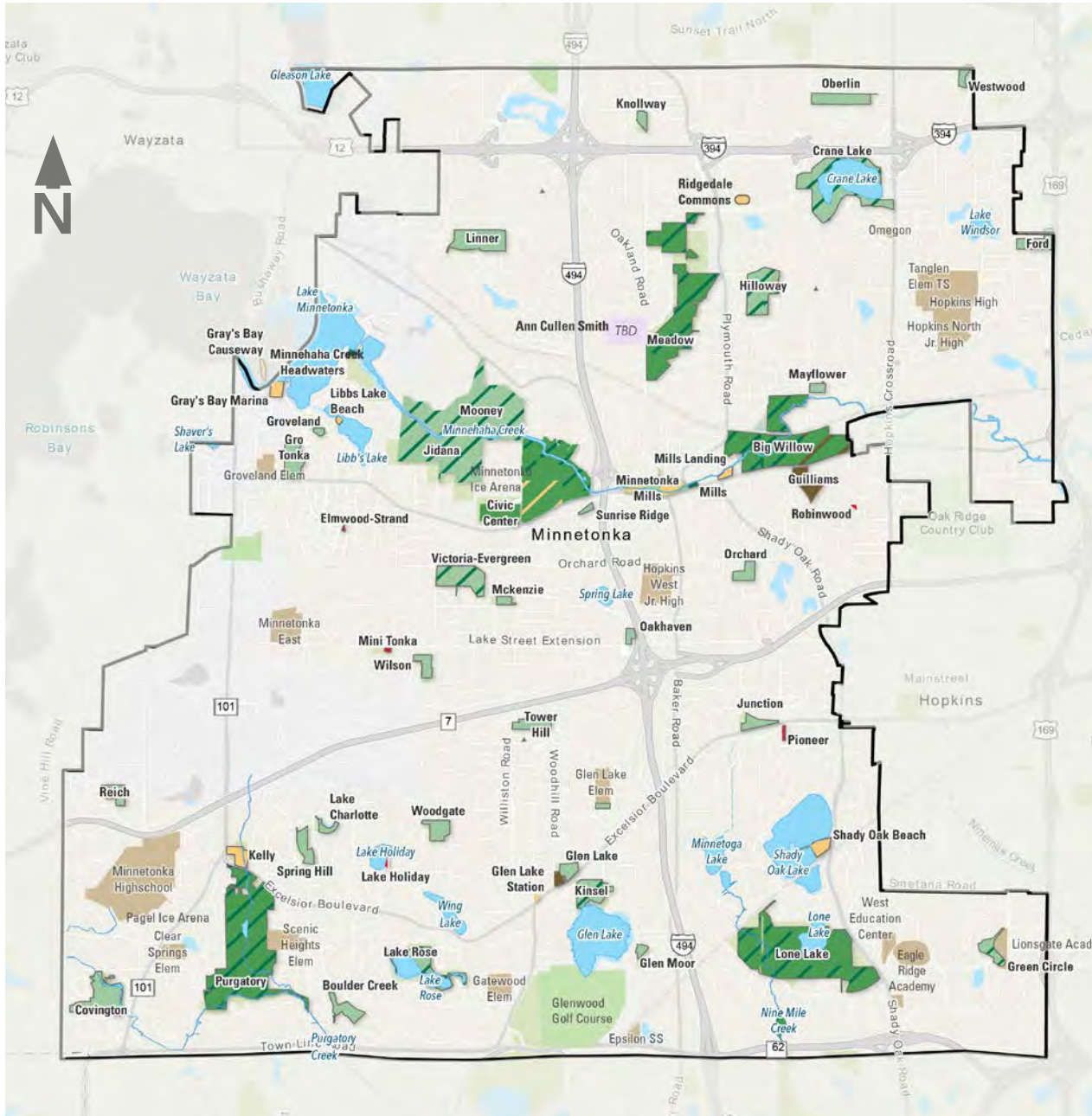
PARK CLASSIFICATIONS (TABLE 2)

	Park Name	NPSA	Ward	Size in Acres			Classification(s)
				Natural	Developed	Total	
1	Ann Cullen-Smith Property	6	2	30	0	30	TBD
2	Big Willow	11	2	56.5	45	101.5	Community Park/ Preserve/Athletic Complex
3	Boulder Creek	19	4	5.2	4.6	9.8	Neighborhood Park
4	Civic Center	9	3	73	35	108	Community Park/ Preserve/Special Use
5	Covington	15	4	20.2	8.1	28.3	Neighborhood Park
6	Crane Lake	7	2	83.1	0.9	84	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
7	Elmwood-Strand	12	3	0	0.6	0.6	Mini Park
8	Ford	8	2	8.1	3.1	11.2	Neighborhood Park
9	Glen Lake	16	4	0	8.5	8.5	Neighborhood Park/ Athletic Complex
10	Glen Lake Station	16	4	0	1.4	1.4	Special Use
11	Glen Moor	20	1	0.5	2.1	2.6	Neighborhood Park
12	Gray's Bay Causeway	9	3	0	0.9	0.9	Special Use
13	Gray's Bay Marina	9	3	0.4	4	4.4	Special Use
14	Green Circle	22	1	5.3	3.3	8.6	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
15	Gro Tonka	9	3	4.1	10.5	14.6	Neighborhood Park
16	Groveland	9	3	0.8	1	1.8	Neighborhood Park
17	Guilliams	13	1	5.9	8.7	14.6	Athletic Complex
18	Hilloway	7	2	26.3	2	28.3	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
19	Holiday Lake	16	4	0	0.76	0.76	Mini Park
20	Jidana	9	3	76	5	81	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
21	Junction	17	1	3	3.6	6.6	Neighborhood Park
22	Kelly	16	4	5	2.4	7.4	Special Use
23	Kinsel	20	1	14.5	2.5	17	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
24	Knollway	2	3	1.6	2	3.6	Neighborhood Park
25	Lake Charlotte	16	4	2.9	0.6	3.5	Neighborhood Park
26	Lake Rose	19	4	29.1	2	31.1	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve

	Park Name	NPSA	Ward	Size in Acres			Classification(s)
				Natural	Developed	Total	
27	Libbs Lake Beach	9	3	0	1	1	Special Use
28	Linner	5	3	19	6	25	Neighborhood Park
29	Lone Lake	21	1	132	14	146	Community Park/ Preserve
30	Mayflower	7	2	2.1	1.3	3.4	Neighborhood Park
31	McKenzie	12	3	0.5	2.7	3.2	Neighborhood Park
32	Meadow	6	2	94	10	104	Community Park/ Preserve
33	Mills Gazebo	11	2	0	1	1	Mini Park
34	Mills Landing	11	2	2	0.5	2.5	Special Use
35	Mini-Tonka	12	3	0	0.6	0.6	Mini Park
36	Minnehaha Creek Headwaters*	9	3	2	1.5	3.5	Special Use
37	Minnetonka Mills**	10	2	11.7	8	19.7	Neighborhood Park/ Special Use
38	Mooney	9	3	110	1	111	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
39	Oakhaven	12	3	1.7	1.2	2.9	Neighborhood Park
40	Oberlin	3	3	8.2	6.5	14.7	Neighborhood Park
41	Orchard	13	1	4.4	2.9	7.3	Neighborhood Park
42	Pioneer	18	1	0	1	1	Mini Park
43	Purgatory	19	4	131.9	24	155.9	Community Park/ Preserve
44	Reich	14	4	4.5	3.4	7.9	Neighborhood Park
45	Robinwood	13	1	0.7	0.2	0.9	Mini Park
46	Ridgedale Commons	7	2	0	2	2	Special Use
47	Shady Oak Beach	18	1	1	5	6	Special Use
48	Spring Hill	16	4	0.5	8.1	8.6	Neighborhood Park
49	Sunrise Ridge	12	3	0.6	1	1.6	Neighborhood Park
50	Tower Hill	16	4	8.9	0	8.9	Neighborhood Park
51	Victoria-Evergreen	12	3	22	3	25	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
52	Westwood	4	2	3	1	4	Neighborhood Park
53	Wilson	12	3	3	3.8	6.8	Neighborhood Park
54	Woodgate	16	4	5.8	3.5	9.3	Neighborhood Park
	Totals			1021.9	271.86	1293.76	

*Formerly named Gray's Bay Dam

**Formerly named Burwell House



MINNETONKA PARKS (FIGURE 9)

Park Classifications

- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Mini Park
- Special Use
- Preserve*
- Athletic Complex

Other

- Schools
- Privately Owned Park Space

Graphic Key

- Water Bodies
- Minnetonka Boundary

* The exact boundaries of the Preserve areas are to be defined in the future park-specific master planning processes.

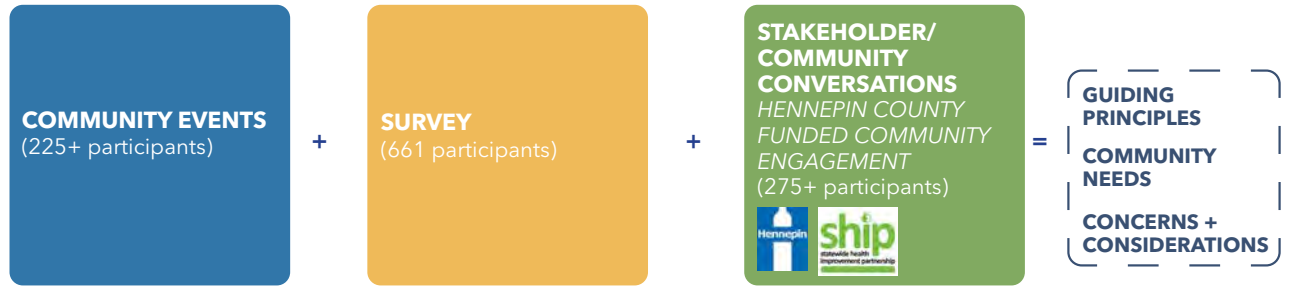
Community Engagement

PROCESS AND SUMMARY

To create a POST System Plan that will meet the community's needs, an extensive community outreach effort was conducted to help identify and understand the values, needs and preferences of the community. Special effort was made to reach out to traditionally underrepresented groups including seniors, youth, BIPOC and people with disabilities with the intention that this plan will accommodate the whole community.

This process has been completed with the support of SHIP (Statewide Health Improvement Program) and Hennepin County through an Active Living Technical Assistance grant. Engagement events and activities resulted in valuable information which will influence future development of parks to more closely meet the objectives of the community.

Public outreach methods included community pop-up events, meetings, an online community survey, listening sessions, and an online geographic mapping comment tool.



- MINNETONKA FARMER'S MARKET - JUNE 8, 2021
- PARK BOARD TOUR - SHADY OAK BEACH - JUNE 24, 2021
- SHADY OAK BEACH - JUNE 26, 2021
- NIGHT TO UNITE - AUGUST 3, 2021

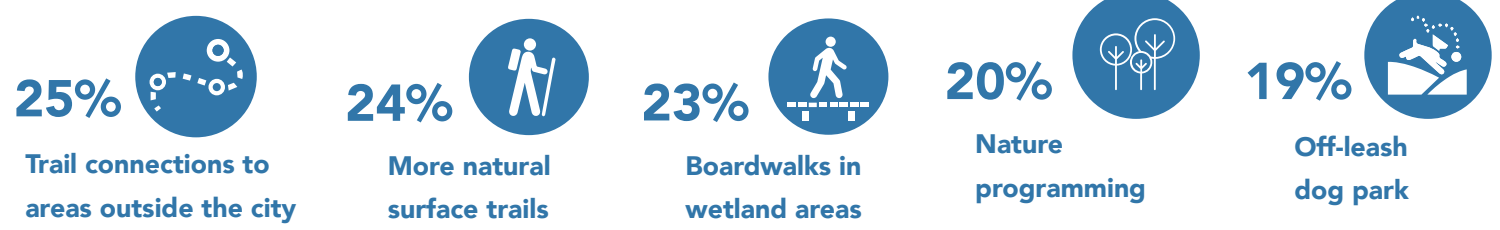
- ONLINE/PAPER SURVEY
- GEOGRAPHIC COMMENT MAPPING
- PRIORITY THEME RANKING

- BIPOC ENGAGEMENT
- SENIORS & PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ENGAGEMENT
- YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

TOP 3 PRIORITY ISSUES AND THEMES MINNETONKA SHOULD ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS IN THIS POST SYSTEM PLAN TO GUIDE FUTURE PARK, OPEN SPACE AND TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS



TOP 5 DESIRED NEW AND/OR ADDITIONAL THINGS TO DO IN MINNETONKA PARKS



SUMMARY - WHAT WE HEARD

Using the information gathered from the listening sessions, community events, completion of the survey and interactive mapping, the most common feedback was grouped into three categories:

- > Perceptions of Existing Parks, Open Spaces and Trails
- > New/Additional Things to do in Minnetonka Parks, and
- > Highest Priority Issues/Themes.

Commonly heard themes within each category influenced specific recommendations for the final POST System plan. The following represents the key findings from the engagement process from each category.

Highest priority issues/themes

- > New or improved recreational amenities
- > Rediscovering the creek
- > Connecting to nature
- > Iconic parks
- > Gathering and community building
- > High-quality natural areas
- > Environmental sustainability and resiliency
- > Connections to parks and trails

Perceptions of Existing Parks, Open Spaces and Trails

- > Natural areas for passive recreation and trail connections are very important.
- > Parks with recreational amenities are important to park users.
- > A significant number of park users enjoy the parks on a weekly basis.
- > Few park users get to the park system via public transportation.
- > Top barriers to visiting parks and open spaces include off-leash dogs and lack of information about park amenities.
- > The majority of park visitors feel safe in the parks.
- > The majority of park users feel the parks and open spaces are in good to excellent condition.
- > Park users are enjoying the parks and open spaces both for recreation and to engage with nature.
- > Park users would like to see a balance between natural resource protection and access for recreation.
- > Park users prefer quality ice rinks over the number of ice rinks. Few survey participants support ice rinks throughout the city.

New/Additional Things to do in Minnetonka Parks

- > Provide a year-round swimming facility
- > Consider rock climbing or bouldering features in the parks
- > Provide more nature programming
- > Provide nature play areas in community and neighborhood parks
- > Prioritize flexible spaces for special event programming
- > Provide a more significant/permanent skateboarding park
- > Upgrade playgrounds to make them more accessible
- > Provide a Ninja Warrior playground
- > Provide more pickleball courts
- > Provide a bicycle playground/pump track
- > Consider programming for and providing off-leash dog parks
- > Enhance trail connections to parks and open spaces from existing trail systems
- > More natural surface trails
- > Provide more boardwalks in wetland areas

System Assessment

The POST System Plan is based on the critical evaluation of the existing Minnetonka parks, open space and trail system components and their condition to meet current and future community needs. The evaluation is based on a review of existing conditions, community engagement input, comparison with national

standards and comparable peer communities, emerging trends and park system best practices. These evaluations are combined into a summary of key takeaways and recommendations that provide considerable input into developing the system recommendations and priority project identification.

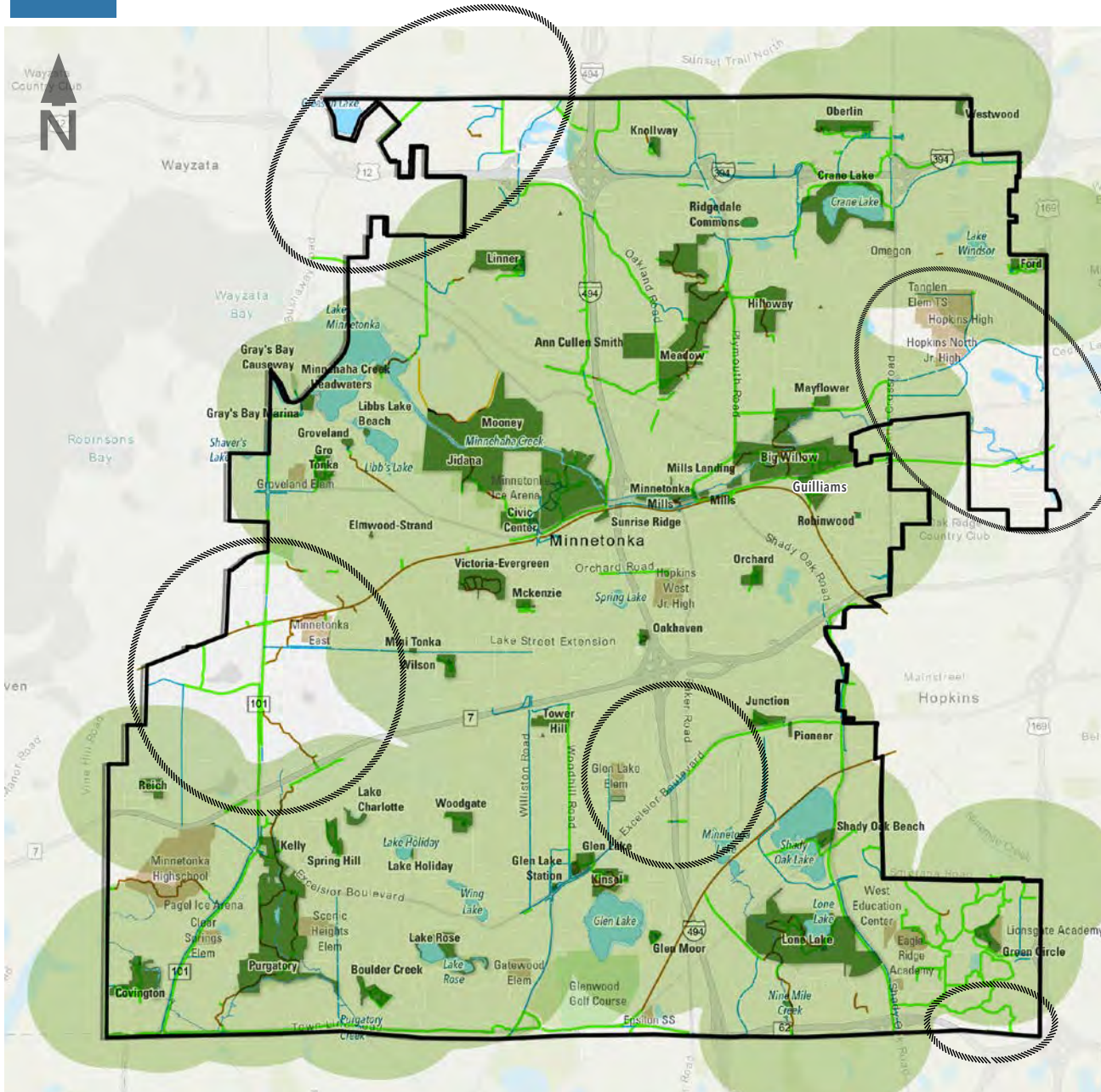
KEY TAKEAWAYS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SYSTEM ASSESSMENT

PARKS

- > The city provides 24 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, exceeding the national standard.
- > Over 70% of the population lives within a 10-minute walk of a park, compared with the national average of 55%.
- > Residential areas that are not within a 10-minute walk primarily exist on the edges of the community. The city should focus on serving areas that are outside the 10-minute walk distance to parks as well as anticipated developments with medium and high-density housing. These gaps should be addressed through partnerships with schools, adjacent communities, and other agencies.
- > At existing parks, user amenities like consistent site furnishings, lighting, wifi, accessible facilities and upgrades to permanent restrooms are suggested potential improvements.
- > Improvements to the overall park system wayfinding signage are suggested.

FACILITIES

- > The number of facilities is generally adequate for the city's current size. As the city grows, aging facilities will need to be replaced to ensure that they continue to be located within a reasonable distance of high-density areas and that they address emerging trends.
- > The addition or replacement of playgrounds should focus on underserved areas, primarily where playgrounds are not within a 10-minute walk of residential areas.
- > Expanding universal access to play areas and nature-based play areas should be considered when renovating, upgrading, or building new playgrounds.
- > The community would like more picnic shelters.
- > Traditional athletic facilities, such as diamonds and rectangular fields, and informal sports facilities, such as tennis, basketball and open playfields, are well distributed throughout the community. In the engagement process, additional pickleball and multi-use fields were requested.
- > Consolidating ice rinks should be considered due to maintenance and cost concerns as well as the effects of climate change.
- > The community requested more year-round recreation and community facilities for group gatherings and programs, as well as additional fitness facilities and classes, meeting rooms, family activity opportunities, and children's programming. Input from the community also favored more aquatic amenities, such as a community pool and an outdoor splash pad.
- > New construction and renovations should incorporate emerging trends that have the community support such as a dog park, a splash pad, a ninja course, a bouldering wall, a bicycle pump track, a skate park and/or a nature play area.



AREAS WITHIN A 10-MINUTE WALK OF CITY PARKS

- City Parks
- 10 Minute Walk from City Park
- Identified Gaps

71% OF MINNETONKA RESIDENTS LIVE WITHIN A 10 MINUTE WALK OF A PARK

55% NATIONAL AVERAGE

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SYSTEM ASSESSMENT CONTINUED

PRESERVES AND OPEN SPACE

- > Minnetonka's natural resources are unique and distinguishing. These natural resources are a highly cherished component of the city. More than 20 percent of the city's land area is classified as wetlands and lakes.
- > This POST System Plan supports and upholds the goals and objectives of the NRMP within parks and open spaces in the city.
- > Community input revealed that there is a strong desire to continue to preserve, protect and restore natural areas.

TRAILS

- > The POST System Plan supports and upholds the goals and priorities outlined in the City of Minnetonka Trail Improvement Plan (TIP). The TIP builds upon the existing trail infrastructure already in place within the city to create a comprehensive system of trails that provide recreational value as well as pedestrian and bicycle linkages throughout the city.
- > Community input found that respondents strongly support trails within the city. There is a desire for more natural surface trails and boardwalks to connect with nature within the parks and trail connections to neighboring communities.
- > The existing conditions analysis found that there are areas where trail surfaces are in poor condition and lack ADA compliance. Additionally, there are gaps that could be filled to provide more complete connectivity. Trail priorities and reducing gaps in trail linkages are addressed in the TIP.

PROGRAMMING

- > Recreational opportunities for youth and adults are available in Minnetonka's park system year-round, including programmed and non-programmed and activities.
- > Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation Services is responsible for providing recreation programming for residents of Hopkins and Minnetonka.
- > Ongoing goals and priorities of the Recreation Services include:
 - > Continuing to provide recreation programs that serve community needs.
 - > Working effectively with local associations and school districts to provide a full palette of recreational opportunities for residents.
 - > Maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of facility use given the limited opportunity and cost to develop new facilities.
- > Program development and evaluation should continue to identify participant needs not currently addressed in programming. For example, community input indicates the desire for more nature-based programming.
- > Community input indicates a desire to expand community event offerings.
- > Community input also requested increased advertising and communication about parks and recreation programming, especially in under-served areas and areas of higher population density.

ACCESSIBILITY

- > To meet the needs of existing and future users, Minnetonka must continue to prioritize and expand accessibility.
- > An analysis of existing conditions revealed that improved accessibility is needed for many of the city's play areas, trails, and other park facilities.
- > To ensure that everyone has equal access to parks, open spaces, trails, facilities and programs, the city is committed to increasing the accessibility of its park system.

AREAS OF NEED

- > Existing conditions analysis identified potential areas of need within the city's park system. The evaluation process began by identifying and mapping the following characteristics:
 - > Areas of higher density housing
 - > Areas of high minority populations
 - > Areas that are greater than a 10-minute walk to a city park or open space within Minnetonka
- > Potential areas of need were identified in places where two to three of the characteristics are present (see Figure 45: Areas of Need). School districts, facilities owned or operated by private associations, and relationships with neighboring communities can provide access to parks, facilities and programs to meet some of these needs and gaps within the park system. However, in light of the city's projected population growth, future studies should consider these areas for their potential needs.

SYSTEM PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The POST System Plan recommendations were prepared based on key takeaways from community input, needs assessment, review of the comprehensive plan and other related documents and policies, technical advisory committee discussions and input received from the park board. The recommendations are organized into goals and initiatives intended to support the mission and guiding principles.

Goals and Initiatives are organized by the topic areas of **Environmental Sustainability and Resiliency, Connections to Parks and Trails, Community Health and Wellness, Equity and Inclusion,** and **Excellence and Innovation.**

Goals are high-level statements that describe the desired outcomes necessary for implementation of the guiding principles over the next 15 to 20 years. **Initiatives** describe the general course of action that will guide city decision making to achieve stipulated goals. The following pages contains a summary of these goals by topic area.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Environmental sustainability and resiliency in the POST system focuses on the preservation and protection of natural resources. It supports environmental stewardship and conservation while building long-term sustainability of the park system. The goals and initiatives presented here are in support of the goals outlined in the City of Minnetonka Natural Resources Master Plan (NRMP) and the Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP).

Goal 1: Promote sustainable design practices and build environmental resiliency into the park system to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Goal 2: Reduce negative impacts to Minnetonka's waterways and natural resources.

Goal 3: Balance the preservation of Minnetonka's natural resources with recreational programs and facilities.

Goal 4: Promote sustainable maintenance practices.

CONNECTIONS TO PARKS AND TRAILS

Access to parks, natural areas and outdoor recreation is vital to the long-term sustainability and livability of a community. Providing better access to parks and trails will contribute to a higher quality of life for park users. The recommendations provided here offer a guide for not only enhancing connections to parks and trails, but also ways for community members to better connect with each other and with nature.

Goal 1: Ensure all park users have safe and convenient access to parks, open spaces and trails.

Goal 2: Expand opportunities for social gathering through park facilities and programming.

Goal 3: Provide opportunities for people to connect with nature.

Goal 4: Improve access to neighboring communities of Minnetonka.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Parks, open spaces and trails help keep park users fit and healthy. Parks provide measurable health benefits, from providing direct contact with nature and a cleaner environment, to opportunities for physical activity and social interaction. The following goals are recommended to ensure that all park users have access to park facilities and programs essential to community vitality, health equity, improved individual and community health and enhanced quality of life.

Goal 1: Ensure that park programs and facilities support public health and wellness for all park users.

Goal 2: Provide for a healthy park experience that is accessible, enjoyable and relatable to all park users.

Goal 3: Promote health and wellness through education and park programming.

Goal 4: Strengthen relationships with partners to improve overall health outcomes.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Parks and recreation facilities and programs help to build diverse, equitable and inclusive communities where everyone can come together to learn, experience, interact and to grow. The goal of this plan is to create a park system that provides quality parks and connections to green space, recreation facilities and programs that are safe, inclusive, culturally relevant and welcoming.

Goal 1: Develop park programs and facilities that fit the needs of the community through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Goal 2: Encourage recreation participation by all park users regardless of race, age, gender, or ability.

Goal 3: Expand access to parks and build and repair parks in underserved communities.

Goal 4: Engage community members meaningfully in the design and planning of parks to ensure that parks and park programming reflect community values and priorities.

EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

This plan provides a guide for opportunities to provide excellence in the park system and incorporate current trends in park planning and design. Innovative, forward-thinking solutions to park design and maintenance that incorporate best practices should be encouraged in order to achieve those goals.

Goal 1: Explore and prioritize a variety of new or improved active and nature-based passive park facilities and programs that reflect community values and desires.

Goal 2: Support year-round recreation by improving access to outdoor winter facilities and programs.

Goal 3: Strengthen collaboration with neighborhoods, associations, agencies, schools, community groups and volunteers.

Goal 4: Expand marketing and awareness of park facilities, programs and natural amenities.

Goal 5: Model sustainable practices in park construction, maintenance and operations.

Goal 6: Create new park master plans as the need for new parks and park improvements arise.

IMPLEMENTATION

The POST System Plan, coupled with the Trail Improvements Plan, provides direction for the City Council, the Park Board, and city staff to guide decision making that will impact future park, open space and trail improvements. To achieve the vision set forth, priorities and initiatives were identified for future park system improvements that support the overall system vision and guiding principles. Guidance was also provided for park facilities, identifying costs related to priorities, potential funding sources, and establishes the need for measuring progress.

The priorities are organized into five categories: facilities, plans and studies, programming and events, communications and marketing, and operations and maintenance. Prioritization was based on public interest, availability of resources (funding, staff, land, etc.), alignment with the Natural Resource Master Plan and Trail Improvement Plan, and City Council and Park Board priorities. The following pages contains a summary of the priorities by topic area.

SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES

FACILITIES

- > Implement trail recommendations provided in the city's Trail Improvement Plan
- > Improve trail connections to parks, open spaces, and public transportation facilities
- > Provide accessible features in play areas
- > Incorporate new picnic facilities and park shelters in parks
- > Incorporate multi-generational park facilities into parks
- > Explore options for additional park land in the Opus area
- > Provide more boardwalks in wetland areas
- > Expand the number of formal trails in parks
- > Provide facilities that support year-long activities and recreational opportunities
- > Provide additional winter recreational opportunities in Community Parks (i.e. snowshoe trails, cross-country ski trails)

PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

- > Collaborate with cultural groups and community groups
- > Incorporate multi-generational park programs
- > Expand opportunities for more nature-based programs and facilities
- > Continue to partner with neighboring communities to share parks and facilities
- > Provide activities that contribute to physical and mental health, and social wellbeing
- > Partner with health sector organizations to fund, program, and facilitate events
- > Celebrate diversity, equity and inclusion through community event programming
- > Expand programming that serves low-income communities and communities of color

SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES CONTINUED

PLANS AND STUDIES

- > Incorporate park resilience strategies in the city's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
- > Conduct study to improve pedestrian crossing safety at roadway intersections adjacent to Community Parks
- > Conduct an ADA accessibility audit to identify and address compliance issues
- > Evaluate park safety in order to create safe and inviting spaces
- > Conduct plan to add community gardens to the park system
- > Conduct plan to incorporate public art in the park system
- > Study the feasibility of adding a year-round swimming facility
- > Update guidelines for requests to park board for special projects
- > Conduct a study to expand or add a skate park
- > Study the feasibility of adding a dog park
- > Conduct master plan study for Community Parks: Big Willow, Civic Center, Lone Lake, Meadow, Purgatory
- > Conduct master plan for: the Cullen Smith property, Jidana Park, Victoria Evergreen Park
- > Study the feasibility of condensing ice skating rinks
- > Incorporate an initiative to establish a process for decision making for project review

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

- > Increase awareness and expanded trail use through signs, maps and trail wayfinding
- > Promote and advertise park programs and events in diverse communities
- > Provide interpretive and educational features in parks
- > Expand volunteerism and educational programs
- > Promote the benefits of parks on health and wellbeing
- > Explore using multi-lingual text and/or universal symbols in marketing and on park signage
- > Create a consistent, branded strategy and standards for park features, materials, signage, etc.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

- > Incorporate stormwater and green infrastructure best practices in park and facility design
- > Utilize native plant materials to reduce maintenance and irrigation needs
- > Offer recycling programs and facilities
- > Utilize integrated pest management strategies
- > Explore options to implement a turf conversion program
- > Recruit, hire, and retain a diverse park system workforce
- > Incorporate sustainable best practices in the operations and maintenance of park facilities
- > Review trail and sidewalk winter maintenance priority designations as the trail and sidewalk system expands

FUNDING

Implementing the vision and key initiatives for the parks, open space and trails system will require additional funding to support new park features and programs, revitalization efforts, maintenance and operations, park planning and outreach, etc. Significant investment is needed for Minnetonka to provide for, maintain and operate the type of parks, open space and trails system identified in this plan. The POST System Plan provides a list of potential funding sources and partners the city should consider when planning for future investments in the park system.

MEASURING PROGRESS

The POST System Plan success must be measured not only by assessing community needs and satisfaction, but also by responding to park users' wants and needs. Park use and recreation trends are dynamic and constantly changing. Demographic changes in the community, new recreation activities, equipment changes, and other forces may cause the need to adapt and update this plan from time to time as the city continues to evolve.

A periodic review of this plan to make sure that priorities and recommendations are still relevant, and that progress is regularly tracked is essential. Regular assessment of the parks, open space and trail system is particularly useful when requesting funds for new or updated park facilities, staff needs and volunteer efforts. It is also important to communicate the benefits parks, open spaces and trails provide to the community to ensure elected officials, decision makers and the public have a clear understanding of system benefits and how their dollars are being used to improve the park, open space and trail system. Regular evaluations can also better identify which improvements would better serve park system users and achieve the vision and guiding principles outlined in this plan.

POST System Plan



This Parks, Open Space and Trail (POST) System Plan provides a 15 to 20 year road map for planning and implementing park improvements. It offers guiding principles, recommendations, priorities and tools to ensure the Minnetonka park system is relevant and functional into the future.

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CHAPTER

01

INTRODUCTION

01

CHAPTER 1 | INTRODUCTION

Parks, open spaces and trails are important and cherished public amenities in the City of Minnetonka. Since 1959, when the City of Minnetonka received plans for its first park, Gro Tonka, parks have contributed to the quality of life that residents, employees and visitors enjoy. With approximately 1,300 acres of parkland, including a significant amount of natural open space and over 100 miles of trails, the city's park system is fundamental to community building, environmental and economic sustainability, health and well-being and creating stronger connections to community destinations. The City of Minnetonka has a joint recreation agreement with the City of Hopkins that has been in place for over 50 years. The joint program offers activities at Hopkins city facilities, and parks.

Community input gathered during the planning process indicated that residents greatly value the existing park, open space and trail system, but improvements could be implemented to meet the needs of current users. Over 80 percent of participants in the online survey conducted in

the summer of 2021 gave the system a positive satisfaction rating. The majority of survey participants expressed satisfaction with the overall condition, appearance and maintenance of natural areas, park features and facilities. Areas identified for improvement include recreational amenities; ecological restoration; accessible playgrounds; expanded and enhanced trail connections, particularly to destinations outside the city; more natural surface trails; boardwalks in wetland areas; nature programming; and a year-round swimming facility, among other things.

Improving the park, open space and trail system will require continued big-picture thinking, creativity, commitment, resources and the ability to adapt and change over time. The planning process demonstrated that the existing park, open space and trail system has a broad, diverse base of park users, partners and supporters; each with its own set of values, needs and desires. The ability to adequately address those diverse needs and desires will be the challenge for future park planners and decision makers.

This Parks, Open Space and Trail (POST) System Plan provides a 15 to 20 year road map for planning and implementing park improvements, helping the park board, city council and city staff prioritize park improvements and ensure that changes and investments to parks, trails and open spaces continue to serve the needs of the entire community. It offers guiding principles, recommendations, priorities and tools to help the city, its residents and partner organizations keep Minnetonka's Parks, Open Space and Trail System relevant and functional into the future.

The POST System Plan aligns future investments with community needs to establish clear and realistic goals, initiatives and implementation strategies for new and improved park facilities and programs. It complements goals outlined in the city's 2040 Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 4 - Parks, Trails and Open Space), the Natural Resources Master Plan (NRMP) to preserve, protect and restore open space and significant natural resources in Minnetonka, and the Trail Improvement Plan (TIP) to provide opportunities

IMPORTANCE OF PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND TRAILS

for people of all abilities and access to parks and open spaces. Recommendations in the POST System Plan are based on community input as well as analyses of demographic changes, future trends and Minnetonka's current park system. The POST System Plan provides a framework to guide long and short-term decision making and investments for parks, open spaces and trails at a system-wide level. Specific recommendations such as improvements for individual parks will require additional detailed design.



Civic Center Park

Minnetonka's parks, open spaces and trails are integral to community identity and character and are vital to the physical, social, economic and environmental health of the city and its residents. According to the National Recreation and Park Association "Parks and recreation services are often cited as one of the most important factors of how livable communities are. Parks provide important community gathering places, improve community health objectives and contribute to the economic and environmental well-being of the community."

Community Building

Parks and open spaces provide important gathering places for community members. They provide a sense of community identity and are a major factor in the perception of quality of life. Community surveys point out that the character of Minnetonka is closely tied to the quality of its parks and open spaces. High quality natural areas, well maintained parks and recreation facilities, connections to creeks, lakes, wetlands, forests, historical and cultural facilities and play areas are all attributes of Minnetonka that contribute to its community character. Parks also provide places for community building activities, such as festivals and celebrations, farmers markets, concerts, theatrical performances and nature-based programs.

Health and Well-Being

Healthy and active lifestyles are encouraged by easy access to parks, open spaces and trails. Access to high quality natural areas that parks and open spaces offer provides opportunities

to improve physical health, mental well-being and psychological health. Recreation facilities and programs which are offered for a variety of ages and income levels promote lifelong learning opportunities, community health and emphasizes the importance of active living.

Environmental Sustainability

Parks and open spaces provide numerous environmental benefits to communities. High quality natural areas improve air and water quality while providing habitat for diverse plant and animal communities. Parks and open spaces also play a key role in managing stormwater runoff and protecting the quality and vitality of important natural areas. Well managed natural areas reduce the presence of invasive plant species and improve environmental health in the community.

Economic Benefits

Several studies have shown that proximity to parks, open spaces and trails can enhance property values and tax revenues. The real estate market consistently demonstrates that many people are willing to pay more for property located close to parks, open spaces, and trails. Quality outdoor public spaces can also impact decisions for locating businesses, reduce municipal costs related to stormwater treatment and generate revenue from fees, vendors and special events.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

Minnetonka's Parks, Open Space, and Trail (POST) System Plan is organized into six chapters (see *Figure 1*) and provides a 15 to 20 year road map for planning and implementing park improvements. It offers the park board, city council and city staff a framework to guide future decision making and investments. It is anticipated that this plan will continue to transform as the community adapts to future trends, demographic changes, needs and opportunities.

FIGURE 1: POST SYSTEM PLAN OUTLINE

Chapter 1: Introduction

- > Introduction to the POST System Plan

Chapter 2: Trends

- > Addresses trends that impact current and future park, open space, and trail use and development

Chapter 3: Existing Conditions

- > Overview of existing park, open space, and trail system in Minnetonka
- > Community Engagement overview

Chapter 4: Vision

- > Future vision and guiding principals for Minnetonka's parks, open space, and trail system

Chapter 5: Systems Plan

- > Establishes goals and initiatives recommended to achieve the vision and guiding principles.

Chapter 6: Implementation

- > Provides implementation tools, including priorities, phasing strategies, and potential funding sources.

Appendix A: Glossary

- > Provides a definition of terms used in the POST System Plan

PLANNING PROCESS

The 12-month planning effort began in February 2021 and represents input gathered from the community, stakeholders, city staff and city officials. Valuable community input and feedback received through online surveys, listening sessions, community pop-ups, park and open space tours, public meetings and workshops guided the development of this plan. The plan also incorporates the expertise of the consultant team, an evaluation of existing conditions by city staff and the consultant team, current and future trends and key takeaways from the Needs Assessment.

The planning process was guided by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of city staff and park board members. The TAC met on a



Youth engagement - Park Adventures - July 2021



Night to Unite pop-up event

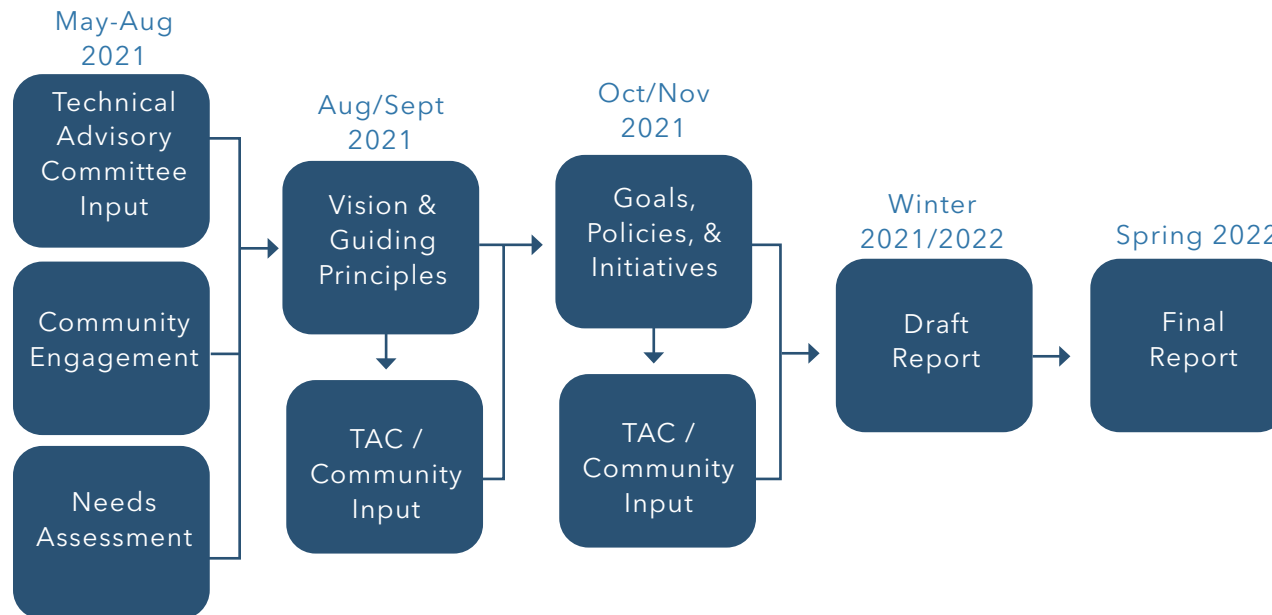
regular basis and provided review and guidance to the consultant team throughout the planning process. The Minnetonka City Council and Park Board also provided guidance and input at key stages in the plan's development.

An important goal of the planning process was to ensure recommendations would reflect the needs and aspirations of the community. To help identify and understand the values, needs and preferences of the community and create a plan that meets their needs, input was gathered through community engagement events. The effort included community outreach to traditionally underrepresented groups including seniors, youth, BIPOC and people with disabilities to ensure the park, open space and trail system

will reflect the needs and desires of the whole community.

The engagement process was led by the consultant team and city staff with the support of SHIP (Statewide Health Improvement Program) and Hennepin County through an Active Living Technical Assistance grant. Stakeholder engagement events and activities included:

- > *Technical Advisory Committee Meetings*
 - > Six TAC meetings spread throughout the year-long planning process
- > *Community Events*
 - > Minnetonka Farmers Market - June 8th
 - > Park Board Tour at Shady Oak Beach - June 24th
 - > Pop-Up at Shady Oak Beach - June 26th
 - > Night to Unite - August 3rd
 - > 225+ participants
- > *Community Surveys*
 - > Online/Paper Survey
 - > Geographic Comment/Mapping
 - > Priority/Theme Ranking
 - > 661 participants
- > *Stakeholder Community Conversations*
 - > BIPOC Engagement (Listening Sessions)
 - > Seniors and People with Disabilities Engagement (Listening Sessions)
 - > Youth Engagement (Pop-Ups and Listening Sessions)
 - > 275+ participants



EXISTING PLANS

Analysis included the review and synthesis of several existing plans and reports and findings from community engagement efforts. Key plans, reports and surveys that helped guide the development of this plan include:

- > 2001 Minnetonka Parks, Open Space and Trail System (POST) Plan
- > Imagine Minnetonka
- > 2018 Community Facility and Programming Space Study
- > 2019 Community Surveys
- > 2020 Minnetonka Trail Improvement Plan
- > 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- > Opus Placemaking and Urban Design Report

FIGURE 2: KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM EXISTING PLANS

- * Maintain, preserve and enhance the parks, open spaces and trails that give Minnetonka its unique character
- * Provide equitable park facilities and programs that match the desires, needs and abilities of all residents and visitors as Minnetonka grows, ages and becomes more racially and ethnically diverse
- * Continue to develop a walkable/ bikeable Minnetonka that will safely and comfortably connect people to parks, open space and village centers and build a culture of active living
- * Protect and preserve the outstanding quality of life currently enjoyed in Minnetonka and ensure the same quality of life is available for future generations
- * Identify opportunities for new parks and open spaces
- * Foster resiliency of parks and open space to be resistant to and recover from and adapt to climate change and extreme events
- * Develop a safe interlinking looped trail system network throughout the city and provide connections to neighborhoods and individual parks
- * Protect and enhance the health of the ecosystems in Minnetonka
- * Improve the biological diversity of its native habitats
- * Provide an appropriate balance between resource preservation, recreational use and community growth
- * Establish partnerships and stakeholder involvement with a variety of agencies and citizens in the community to perpetuate sustainable resources in Minnetonka and surrounding areas
- * Strategically upgrade neighborhood and community parks
- * Maintain and enhance open space, even with new development and increasing density in the city
- * Expand best practices for green infrastructure
- * Connect all Minnetonka residents to woodlands and wetlands
- * Provide more gymnasium space, swimming pool and fitness facilities

RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

The following related planning efforts were recently completed and/or underway simultaneously with the development of the Parks, Open Space and Trail System (POST) Plan. Each of these plans complement the POST Plan and provide more specific recommendations for trails and natural resources, elements that were covered in more detail in the 2001 POST Plan.

2020 Minnetonka Trail Improvement Plan (TIP)

The City of Minnetonka Trail Improvement Plan (TIP), completed in 2020, provides a guide for future trail improvements and investments in the city. The plan prioritizes high use trail segments that are easy to construct above those trail segments that may have less users and/or those that are more invasive to construct. The high priority trail segments all utilize existing rights of way in the city and are intended to complete gaps in the current trail system and better connect people to community destinations and transit facilities.

2021 Minnetonka Natural Resources Master Plan (NRMP)

The City of Minnetonka Natural Resources Master Plan (NRMP) was being updated in correlation with the POST System Plan update. The last update to the NRMP was completed in the late 1990's/early 2000's. The new plan focuses on ecological restoration and habitat quality, particularly along the creeks and in the preserve areas. The NRMP provides park restoration and protection recommendations and priorities for 12 parks in the city's system. The NRMP also provides guidance for how to engage residents in stewardship and natural resource protection.



2020 Trail Improvement Plan cover



2021 Minnetonka Natural Resources Master Plan cover

POST System Plan



Chapter 2 explores current trends and potential implications to future parks, open space and trail system planning. Planning for change and building flexibility into the current park system will position Minnetonka to better adapt to current trends and future demands.

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TRENDS

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CHAPTER 2 | TRENDS

The demands of a growing and changing population in the City of Minnetonka will require city staff and decision makers to consider how the dynamic nature of demographics, technologies, trends and activities will affect park and recreation facility and programming needs. The following chapter explores current trends and potential implications to future parks, open space and trail system planning. Planning for change and building flexibility into the city's parks, open space and trail facilities will position Minnetonka to better adapt to current trends and future demands. The trends listed are in no particular order.

FIGURE 3: TRENDS OVERVIEW

1. Increasing Demand for Informal Recreation
2. Resiliency to Climate Change
3. Changing Demographics
4. Desire to be More Connected to the Land
5. Changes Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic
6. Parks, Open Space, and Trails Support Economic Development
7. Health and Well-Being
8. Specialized Facilities and Non-Traditional Sports

TREND 1 | Increasing Demand for Informal Recreation

- Participation in softball leagues in Minnesota is half of what it was in the mid-1990's.
- Basketball participation has seen a 75 percent decrease since the mid-1990's.
- The City of Minnetonka and surrounding communities' recreation departments have seen a decline in the number of teams registering for softball, basketball and football leagues.
- At the same time, the demand for informal recreation such as running, hiking, bicycling and fitness programs are increasing in popularity.



Trend 1 - Imagery of informal recreation

TREND 2 | Resiliency to Climate Change

- Conservation and ecological restoration may become as important as recreation. As climate change begins to impact wildlife and landscapes more directly, parks and protected natural areas are becoming increasingly important in mitigating the negative impacts of climate change.
- New parks will be designed with resiliency in mind. Parks will increasingly provide multi-beneficial landscapes that protect against flooding, clean and filter stormwater, produce shade and reduce heat island effects, use more native plantings and promote environmental and social resiliency.



Trend 2 - Adapting to Climate Change

TREND 3 | Changing Demographics

- The Met Council projects that Minnetonka will add 10,000 residents and 5,500 households by 2040.
- As of 2020, Minnetonka's population includes 11.5% foreign born people and people of color, an increase of 3,680 people in the past 20 years
- In the three largest schools in Minnetonka, there are between 40 and 42 languages spoken.
- Our region will grow, age and become more racially and ethnically diverse.
- The widest age bands are those aged 55 and above. It is predicted that Minnetonka will follow other affluent suburban areas and as residents age, the 60-74-year-old cohort will increase by 40 percent in the next 10 years.
- It is important to acknowledge the different needs of user groups to ensure Minnetonka's parks reflect the needs of all residents and are welcoming, inclusive places.



Trend 3 - Changing Demographics

TREND 4 | Desire to Be More Connected to the Land

- There is an increasing desire to un-plug and get back to the land and each other. Examples include community supported agriculture (CSAs) and farmer's markets, buy local/eat local movements, nature watching, national night out events and support for pollinator and community gardens.
- This will lead to changes in public space and community programming and will impact both the design and management of outdoor space. There will be greater emphasis on more natural areas and balancing environment with recreational needs.



Trend 4 - Desire to be more connected to the land

TREND 5 | Changes Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic

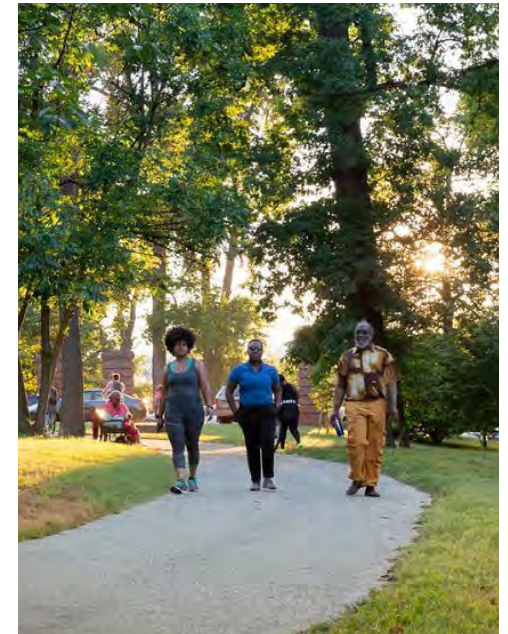
- The pandemic caused communities across the nation to shut down, yet parks and open spaces became ever more popular. As people sought out places for distanced physical activity, Parks, Open Spaces and Trails became high-priority destinations.
- The expansion of pedestrian spaces and outdoor dining on urban streets; the conversion of streets to bike lanes and trails; and the installation of parklets in parking spaces have increased the possibilities for new types of urban parks.



Trend 5 - Changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

TREND 6 | Parks, Open Space, and Trails Support Economic Development

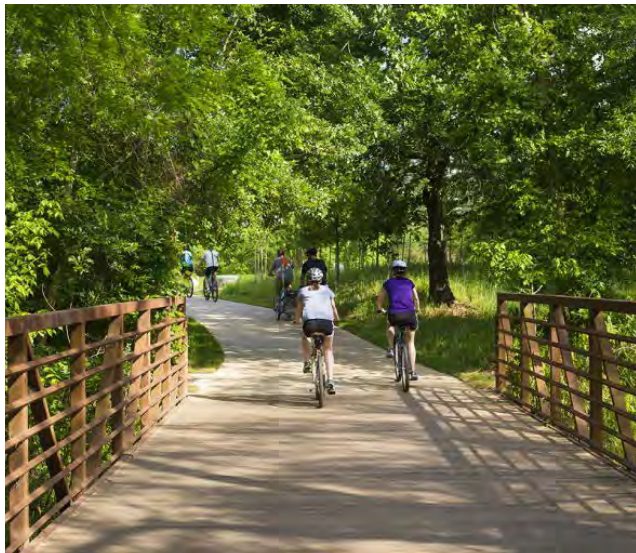
- Parks and recreation not only improve the quality of life, but they benefit the local economic development of a region.
- A high-quality park, open space and trail system can support tourism in the regional economy.
- Homes and properties located near parkland tend to have higher values and generate more in tax revenues than those farther away.
- People seek high-quality park and recreation amenities when they are choosing a place to live and work.



Trend 6 - Parks, open space, and trails support economic development

TREND 7 | Health and Well-Being

- The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) states one of the strongest emerging trends in 2021 is the focus on health and health equity. This movement toward health and well-being has been magnified by COVID-19 but will continue well beyond the pandemic with a greater focus on meeting the social needs of communities.
- “Parks and recreation will play a greater role in supporting mental health and well-being, amplifying recent efforts to address trauma and substance use disorders” says Allison Colman, NRPA’s director of health.
- Implications for parks and recreation support active living, more walking, running and biking trails, social gathering spaces and spaces designed for reflection and meditation.



Trend 7 - Health and well-being

TREND 8 | Specialized Facilities and Non-Traditional Sports

- According to the NRPA, dog parks are currently the fastest growing type of park, which is not surprising since 39 percent of US households own at least one dog.
- Pickleball has become an alternative to tennis and is particularly popular among people ages 55 and older.
- Lacrosse is the fastest growing team sport in the US.
- There is growing demand for flexible multi-sport fields to accommodate a greater variety of recreational activities.



Trend 8 - Specialized facilities and non-traditional sports

SOURCES

- » *Metropolitan Council*
- » *Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board*
- » *Minnesota Recreation and Park Association*
- » *National Recreation and Park Association*

POST System Plan



This chapter combines the system audit with demographic data, a gap and distribution analysis, the results of the community engagement process, and comparisons to peer communities and national standards to establish how well the city is currently serving the needs of the community, as well as how well it is positioned to meet any future needs that may arise.

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CHAPTER

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EXISTING CONDITIONS

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CHAPTER 3 | EXISTING CONDITIONS

Introduction

Assessing the existing conditions of the community is one of the fundamental steps of park system planning. An inventory conducted at the beginning of this planning process involved identifying and mapping the City of Minnetonka's current parks and facilities, followed by tours to assess and audit current conditions. To establish how successfully the city is meeting the needs of the community, the audit was studied with demographic data, facility distribution mapping analysis, community engagement results, national standards and comparisons with peer communities. This comprehensive analysis is indicative of how effectively Minnetonka will meet future park user needs.



Music in the Park - Civic Center Park



Minnetonka Farmers Market - Civic Center Park



Meadow Park trail



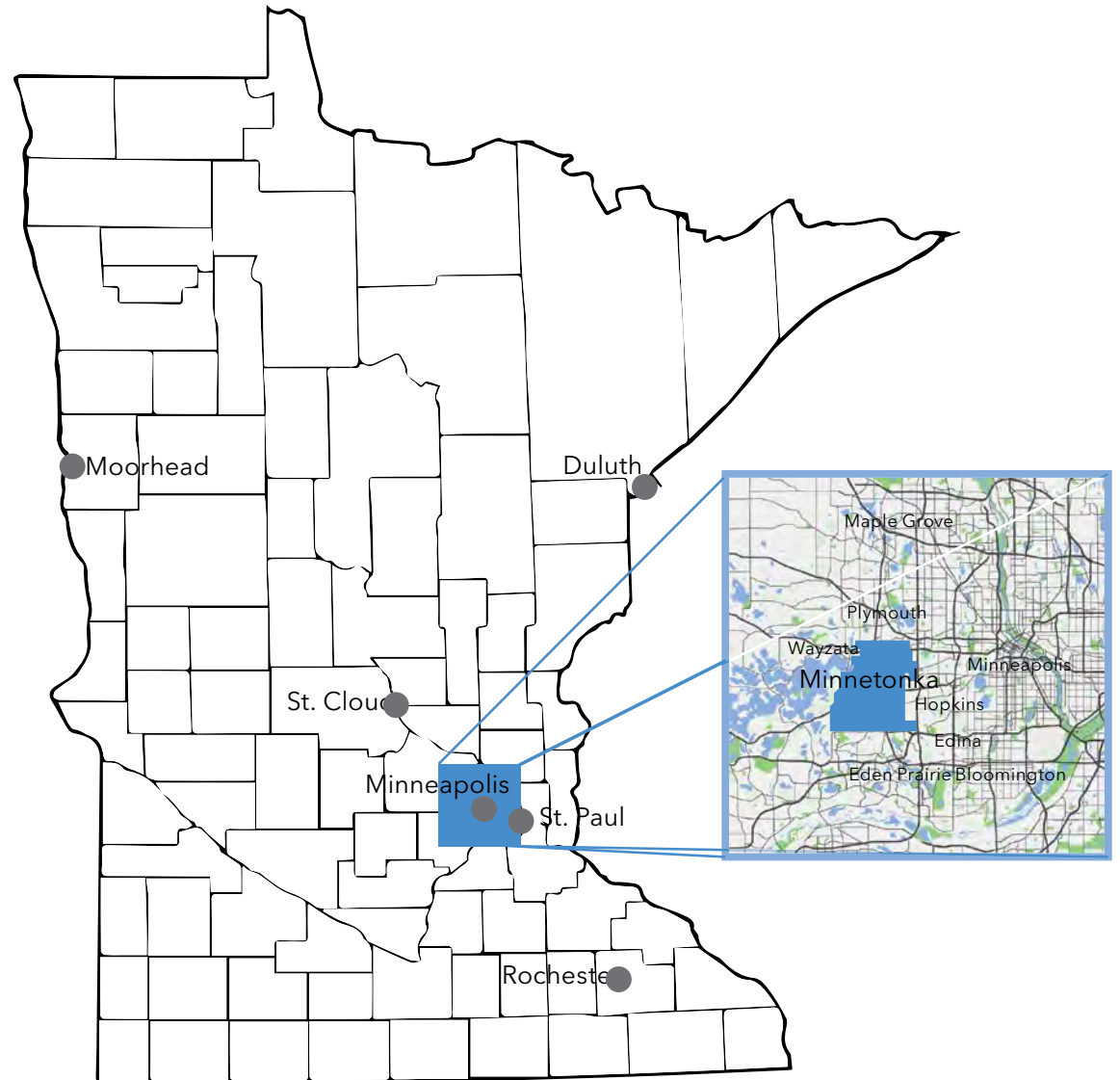
Playground at Lone Lake Park

MINNETONKA IN CONTEXT

The City of Minnetonka is in Hennepin County, located eight miles west of Minneapolis. It encompasses 17,901 acres (28.00 square miles) of land and borders the eastern tip of Lake Minnetonka, one of the largest lakes in Minnesota. The city is bisected by interstate highways 394 and 494 which link to Minneapolis and St. Paul and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

Minnetonka's natural resources define the community's distinct character including the headwaters of Minnehaha Creek and numerous wetlands, prairies, and forested areas. The city's strong connection to its natural resources and open spaces, strong public school system, wide range of housing options, and a thriving mix of businesses make Minnetonka a desirable place to live, work, and play.

Minnetonka's joint recreation agreement with Hopkins offers recreation programming and activities to one of the most racially and socio-economically diverse communities in the Twin Cities. Almost 40 percent of the Hopkins community is made up of people of color and over 40 different languages are spoken throughout the city. While demographics in this chapter reflect those living within Minnetonka, goals and policies of this plan extend to the programming and services offered to residents of Hopkins.



Community Context Map

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Population

Minnetonka's population has increased over the past 50 years, growing from 35,776 in 1970 to 53,776 in 2020. According to the Metropolitan Council, this growth is expected to continue, with 61,500 residents projected for the year 2040; nearly 8,000 more residents than reported in the 2020 census (see *Figure 4*).

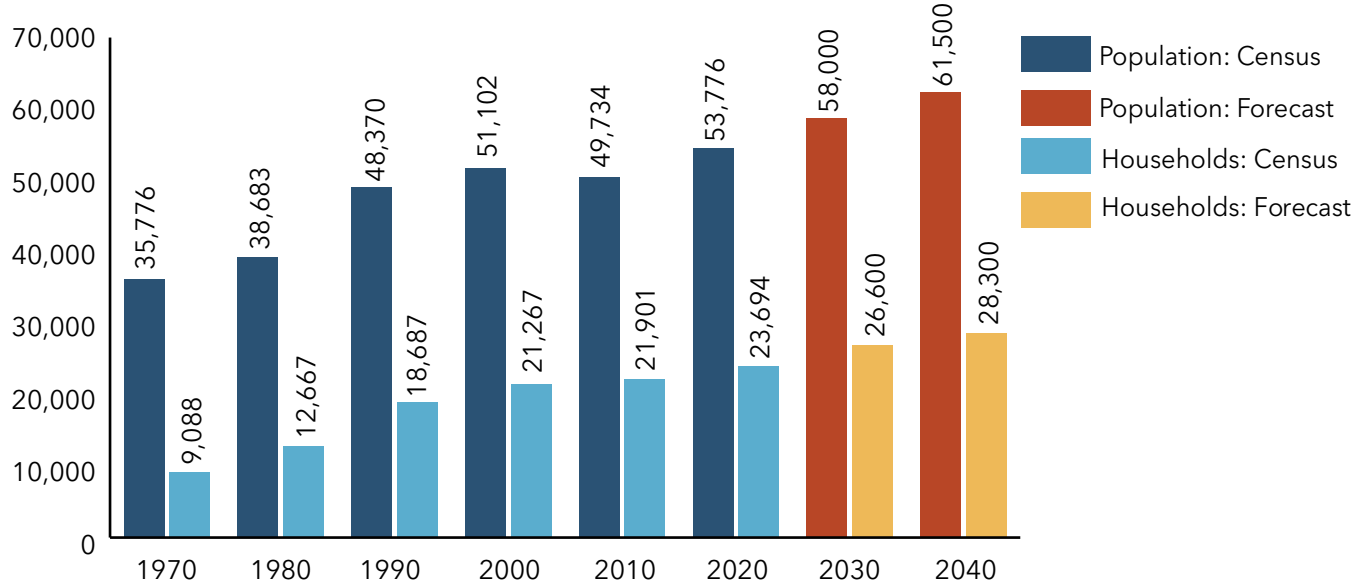
Age

One of the biggest demographic shifts affecting Minnetonka is the aging of the resident base defined as adult households aged 55-64. The widest age bands are those aged 55 and above. It is predicted that Minnetonka will follow other affluent suburban areas and as residents age, the 60-74-year-old cohort will increase by 40 percent in the next 10 years. Demographic changes will alter the labor force and impact preferences for park needs, transportation and housing (see *Figure 6*).

Race and Ethnicity

According to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau, the majority of Minnetonka's population identified as white (82.54 percent). Of the remaining almost 19 percent, 4.61 percent identified as Asian, 4.53 percent as Black or African American, and 3.62 percent as Hispanic or Latinx. Less than 1 percent identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

FIGURE 4: POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS IN MINNETONKA - CENSUS AND FORECAST



Source: US Census Bureau and Met Council

In the past 20 years, Minnetonka has attracted 3,680 foreign born people and people of color. In school districts serving Minnetonka there are 42 languages spoken. Approximately 29 percent of East Africans in the US are in the greater Minneapolis metropolitan area. This is on par with the Minnetonka 2040 Comprehensive plan which predicts that 92 percent of population growth will be from people of color. Demographic shifts in the coming decades will result in a changing metropolitan area. The region will grow, age and become more racially and ethnically diverse. Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates

these changes are well underway, especially when it comes to diversity in the region (see *Figure 5*).

Households

The total number of households in Minnetonka has increased by over 10,000 units since 1980. While most households in the city are occupied by families (60 percent), the number of family households with children decreased by 4 percent and the amount of non-family households increased by 4 percent between 2000 and 2010. These statistics are representative of a larger

trend towards smaller households, resulting in an increase in the total number of households; an increase in the percentage of married couples with no children households; and an increase in the percentage of households with individuals over 65.

Minnetonka has an aging population and there is a strong desire by many residents to age in place and remain active in their community. It is important to consider changing demographics to ensure Minnetonka's parks reflect the needs of all park users and are welcoming, inclusive places, regardless of age, gender, race or ethnicity.

Income

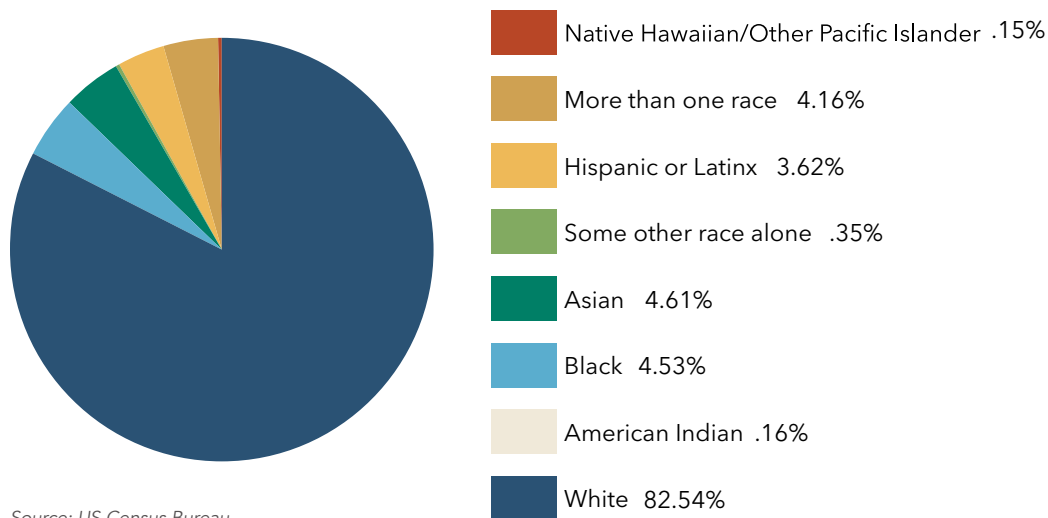
Minnetonka is an affluent city, with a median household income of \$95,600 in 2019 according to the American Community Survey. Household incomes have increased by over \$45,000 since 1990. In comparison, both the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area median household income (\$80,400) and the average median household income of Hennepin County (\$78,200) were lower than that of Minnetonka in 2019.

While the city's 4.1 percent poverty rate in 2019 is below the national poverty rate of 15.4 percent, consideration of how well the parks and recreation system is serving those with limited incomes is important, particularly by providing access to park facilities within convenient walking or biking distance.

Education

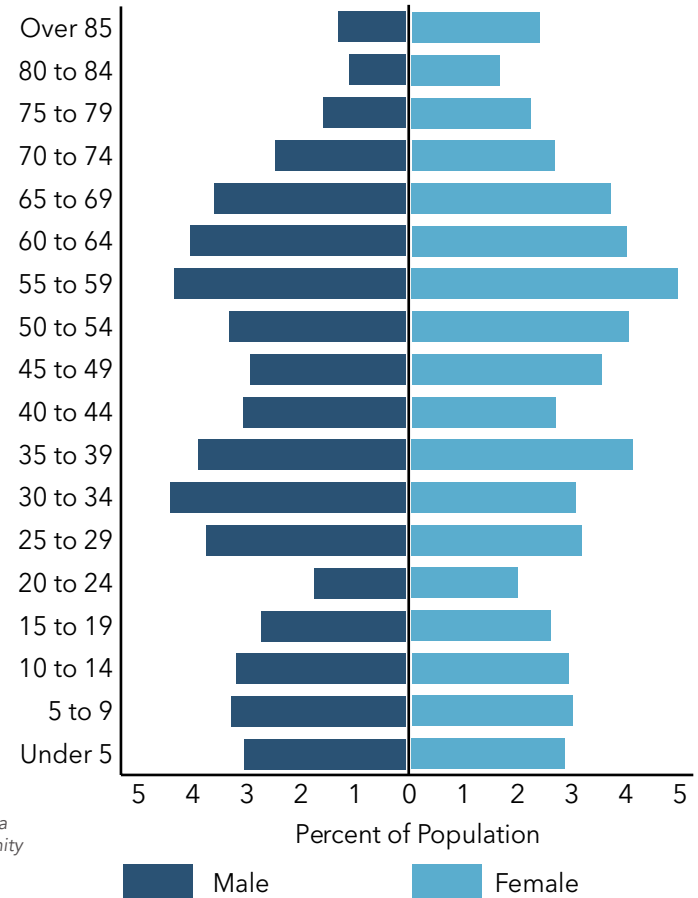
In 2019, 97 percent of Minnetonka residents 25 and older have a high school diploma or higher; 60 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher; and over 23 percent a Graduate or Professional degree. The percentage of residents with bachelor's degrees or higher has increased from 51 percent in 2000. These numbers are comparable to those of surrounding communities.

FIGURE 5: POPULATION BY RACE AND ETHNICITY IN MINNETONKA (2019)



Source: US Census Bureau

FIGURE 6: POPULATION BY AGE AND GENDER IN MINNETONKA (2019)



Source: Met Council via the American Community Survey

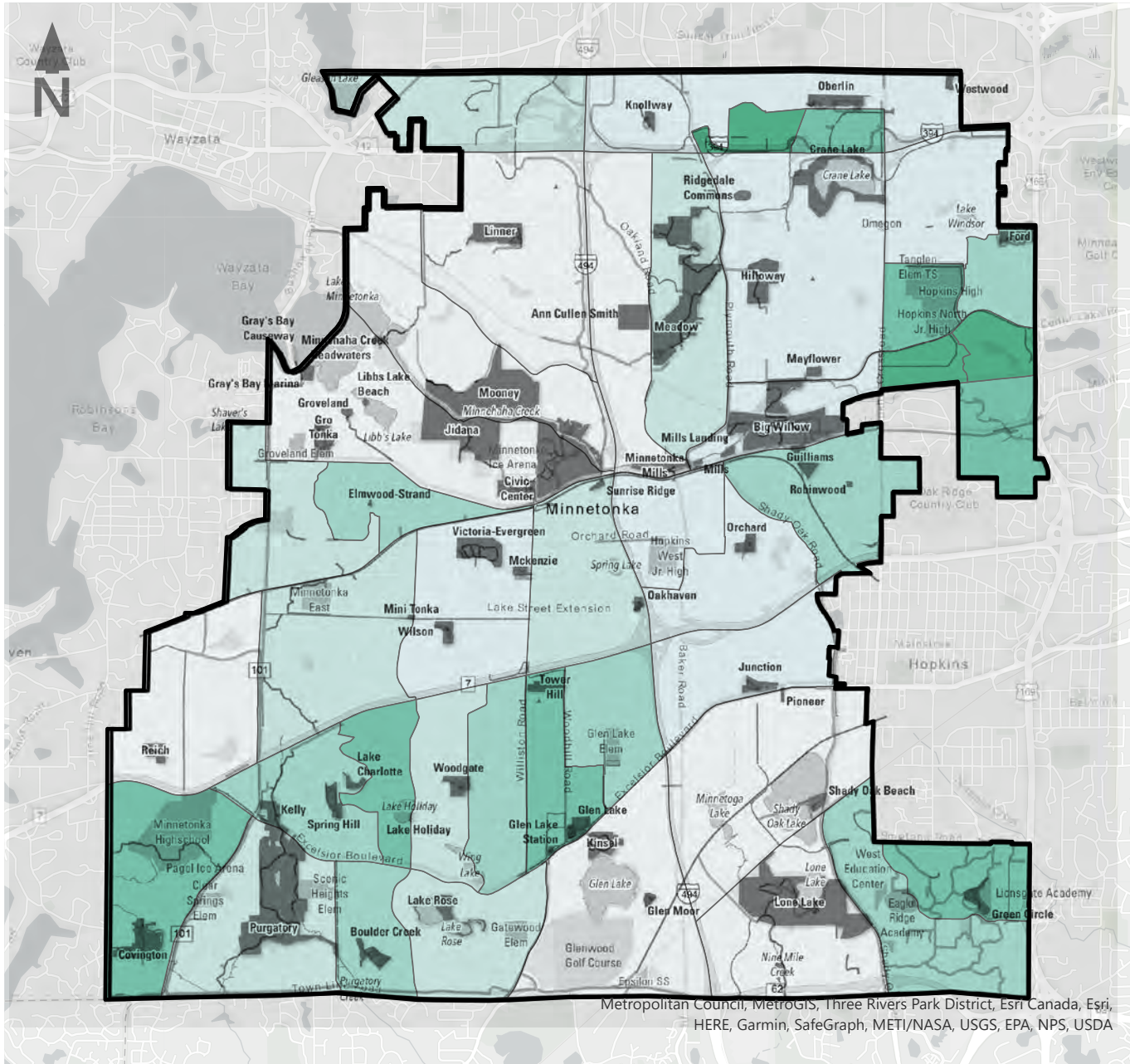
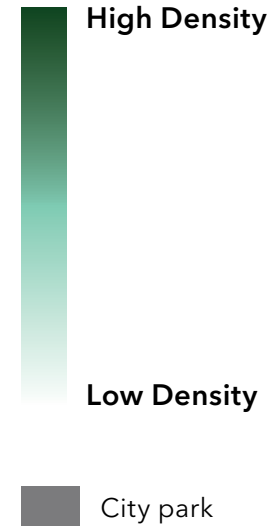


FIGURE 7: TOTAL POPULATION/
TRACT AREA



Metropolitan Council, MetroGIS, Three Rivers Park District, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/INASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA

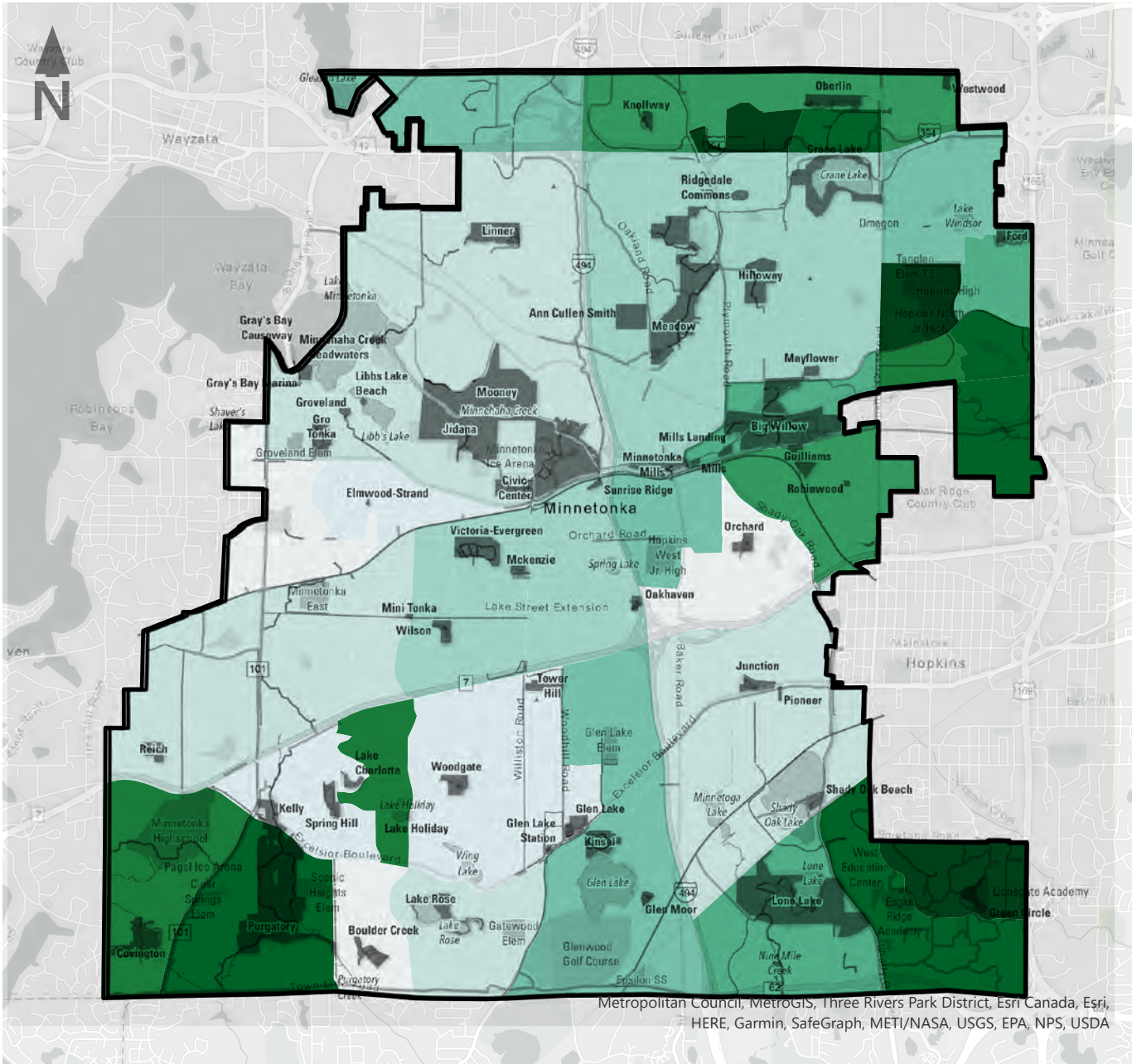
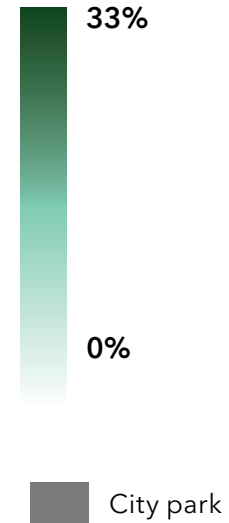


FIGURE 8: NON-WHITE PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BY TRACT AREA



SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

The parks, open spaces and trails that connect them are what give Minnetonka its unique character. More than 20 percent of the city's land area are wetlands and lakes, with more than 268 acres of maintained parkland. Minnetonka has over 50 parks; over 100 miles of trails; and over 1,000 acres of natural public open spaces.

With its parks, open space, and trail system, Minnetonka offers residents, visitors, and employees numerous active and passive recreation opportunities. Consequently, the community experiences the physical and psychological benefits of an active population.

SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

- More than 20 percent of city's land area is city-owned parks, preserves, and open space, with more than 268 acres of maintained parkland and over 1,000 acres of natural public open space.
- The city has over 50 parks consisting of mini parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, preservers, and special use facilities.
- Over 100 miles of trails

FACILITIES

 29 playground areas	 8 canoe landings
 15 picnic shelters	 5 fishing locations
 36 picnic areas	 10 outdoor hockey rinks
 7 shelter buildings	 8 general ice skating rinks
 2 swimming beaches	 1 nordic skiing area (Three Rivers Park District)
 27 tennis courts	 1 multi-use mountain bike/snowshoeing trail
 8 pickleball courts	 1 fitness center
 16 diamond ballfields	 1 golf course (Three Rivers Park District)
 6 rectangular fields	 10 permanent restrooms (3 all year/7 seasonal)
 17 basketball courts	 2 historic sites
 1 skate park	 1 sand volleyball court
 1 community garden	 5 boardwalks
 1 boat launch	 +25 parks/open spaces with trails

Park Classification Overview

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS AND INVENTORY

Park classifications establish common terminology and an accepted benchmark standard for parks, open space and trail system planning. This categorization allows planners to understand the assets within a park system and ensure that it serves neighborhood and community needs with the appropriate geographic distribution of services.

In this POST System Plan update, the park classification system was updated from the 2001 Minnetonka POST Plan. New parks that were built since the creation of the last plan were added and classified. Minor changes to some of the classification descriptions were implemented.

Table 1 defines and clarifies each park classification with key uses, typical size and the types of facilities the park may include. *Table 2* categorizes parks and open spaces in the city. It also lists facility acreage defined by land type, the neighborhood park service area (NPSA) and ward for each park. *Figure 9* displays the geographic distribution of each park type within Minnetonka.

TABLE 1: PARK CLASSIFICATIONS OVERVIEW

Classifications	Descriptions	Size Criteria
Mini Park	Used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs, typically at the neighborhood level.	Up to one acre
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood park remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on active and passive recreation.	Typically 1 - 30 acres
Community Park	Destination park that is diverse in nature and serves a broader purpose than neighborhood parks. Focus is on meeting community needs including recreational activities (i.e. athletic complexes/amenities, playgrounds, trails, picnic areas), preserve areas, and open spaces.	Varies, typically 30 acres or more
Athletic Complex	Programmed adult and/or youth athletic fields and associated facilities strategically located within the community.	Varies
Preserve	Park land maintained as habitat, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. Also provides passive use opportunities (i.e., trails, overlooks, interpretive programs, nature-play areas, etc.).	Varies
Special Use	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use - such as historic sites, plazas, beaches, marinas, etc.	Varies

Glossary

Neighborhood Park Service Area

There are 23 identified neighborhood park service areas (NPSAs) within the City of Minnetonka. The NPSAs are primarily defined by infrastructure barriers that make it difficult for residents and users to access other existing parks. In general, the mini and neighborhood parks in one NPSA function together to service the localized needs for that NPSA. See *Figure 10* for a map of the NPSA boundaries.

Ward

Minnetonka is divided into four wards based on population, with a city council member dedicated to serve each ward.

TABLE 2: PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

	Park Name	NPSA	Ward	Size in Acres			Classification(s)
				Natural	Developed	Total	
1	Ann Cullen-Smith Property	6	2	30	0	30	TBD
2	Big Willow	11	2	56.5	45	101.5	Community Park/ Preserve/Athletic Complex
3	Boulder Creek	19	4	5.2	4.6	9.8	Neighborhood Park
4	Civic Center	9	3	73	35	108	Community Park/ Preserve/Special Use
5	Covington	15	4	20.2	8.1	28.3	Neighborhood Park
6	Crane Lake	7	2	83.1	0.9	84	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
7	Elmwood-Strand	12	3	0	0.6	0.6	Mini Park
8	Ford	8	2	8.1	3.1	11.2	Neighborhood Park
9	Glen Lake	16	4	0	8.5	8.5	Neighborhood Park/ Athletic Complex
10	Glen Lake Station	16	4	0	1.4	1.4	Special Use
11	Glen Moor	20	1	0.5	2.1	2.6	Neighborhood Park
12	Gray's Bay Causeway	9	3	0	0.9	0.9	Special Use
13	Gray's Bay Marina	9	3	0.4	4	4.4	Special Use
14	Green Circle	22	1	5.3	3.3	8.6	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
15	Gro Tonka	9	3	4.1	10.5	14.6	Neighborhood Park
16	Groveland	9	3	0.8	1	1.8	Neighborhood Park
17	Guilliams	13	1	5.9	8.7	14.6	Athletic Complex
18	Hilloway	7	2	26.3	2	28.3	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
19	Holiday Lake	16	4	0	0.76	0.76	Mini Park
20	Jidana	9	3	76	5	81	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
21	Junction	17	1	3	3.6	6.6	Neighborhood Park
22	Kelly	16	4	5	2.4	7.4	Special Use
23	Kinsel	20	1	14.5	2.5	17	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
24	Knollway	2	3	1.6	2	3.6	Neighborhood Park
25	Lake Charlotte	16	4	2.9	0.6	3.5	Neighborhood Park
26	Lake Rose	19	4	29.1	2	31.1	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve

	Park Name	NPSA	Ward	Size in Acres			Classification(s)
				Natural	Developed	Total	
27	Libbs Lake Beach	9	3	0	1	1	Special Use
28	Linner	5	3	19	6	25	Neighborhood Park
29	Lone Lake	21	1	132	14	146	Community Park/ Preserve
30	Mayflower	7	2	2.1	1.3	3.4	Neighborhood Park
31	McKenzie	12	3	0.5	2.7	3.2	Neighborhood Park
32	Meadow	6	2	94	10	104	Community Park/ Preserve
33	Mills Gazebo	11	2	0	1	1	Mini Park
34	Mills Landing	11	2	2	0.5	2.5	Special Use
35	Mini-Tonka	12	3	0	0.6	0.6	Mini Park
36	Minnehaha Creek Headwaters*	9	3	2	1.5	3.5	Special Use
37	Minnetonka Mills**	10	2	11.7	8	19.7	Neighborhood Park/ Special Use
38	Mooney	9	3	110	1	111	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
39	Oakhaven	12	3	1.7	1.2	2.9	Neighborhood Park
40	Oberlin	3	3	8.2	6.5	14.7	Neighborhood Park
41	Orchard	13	1	4.4	2.9	7.3	Neighborhood Park
42	Pioneer	18	1	0	1	1	Mini Park
43	Purgatory	19	4	131.9	24	155.9	Community Park/ Preserve
44	Reich	14	4	4.5	3.4	7.9	Neighborhood Park
45	Robinwood	13	1	0.7	0.2	0.9	Mini Park
46	Ridgedale Commons	7	2	0	2	2	Special Use
47	Shady Oak Beach	18	1	1	5	6	Special Use
48	Spring Hill	16	4	0.5	8.1	8.6	Neighborhood Park
49	Sunrise Ridge	12	3	0.6	1	1.6	Neighborhood Park
50	Tower Hill	16	4	8.9	0	8.9	Neighborhood Park
51	Victoria-Evergreen	12	3	22	3	25	Neighborhood Park/ Preserve
52	Westwood	4	2	3	1	4	Neighborhood Park
53	Wilson	12	3	3	3.8	6.8	Neighborhood Park
54	Woodgate	16	4	5.8	3.5	9.3	Neighborhood Park
	Totals			1021.9	271.86	1293.76	

*Formally named Gray's Bay Dam

**Formally named Burwell House

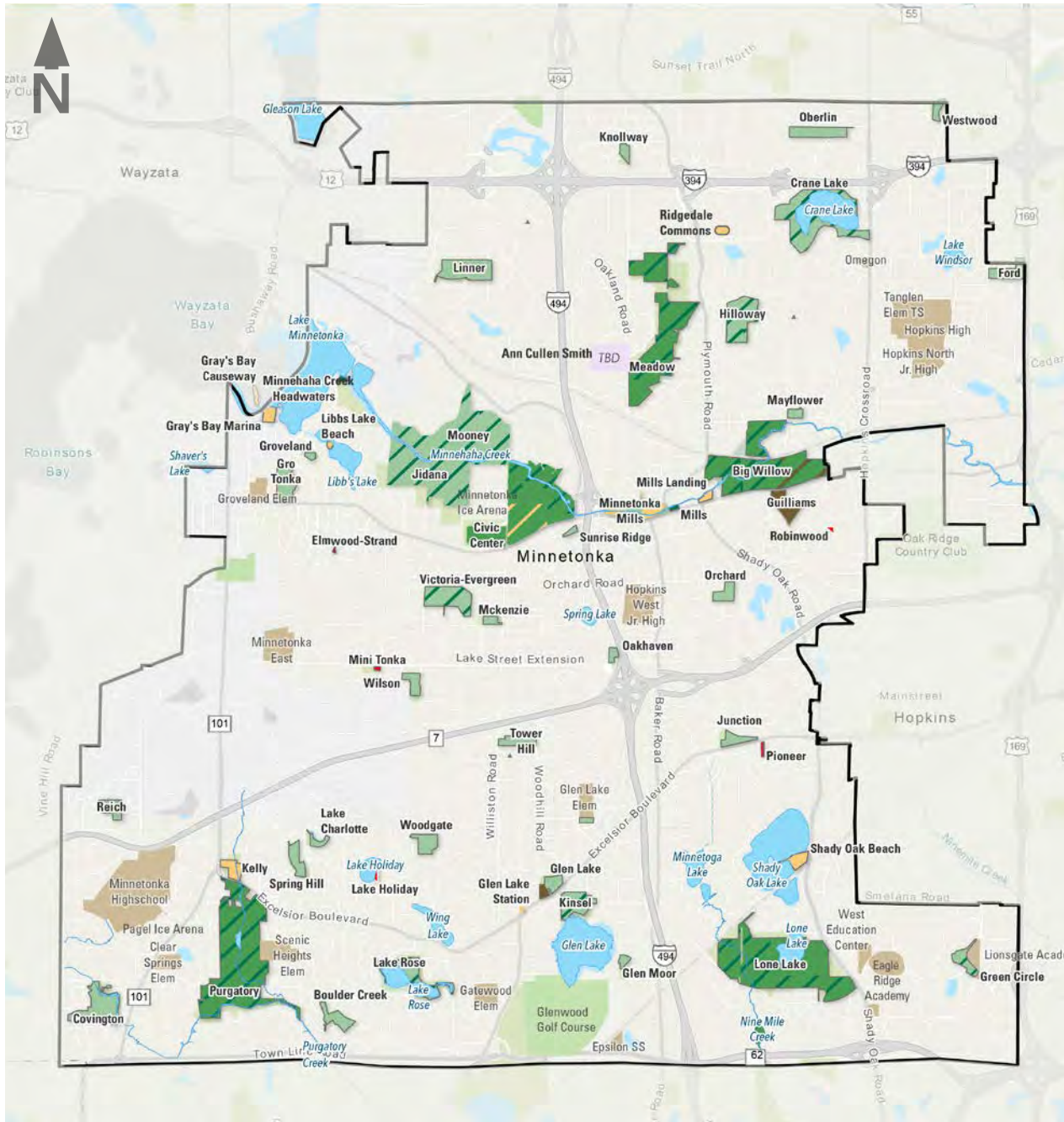


FIGURE 9: MINNETONKA PARKS

Park Classifications

- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Mini Park
- Special Use
- Preserve*
- Athletic Complex

Other

- Schools
- Privately Owned Park Space

Graphic Key

- Water Bodies
- Minnetonka Boundary

* The exact boundaries of the Preserve areas are to be defined in the future park-specific master planning processes.

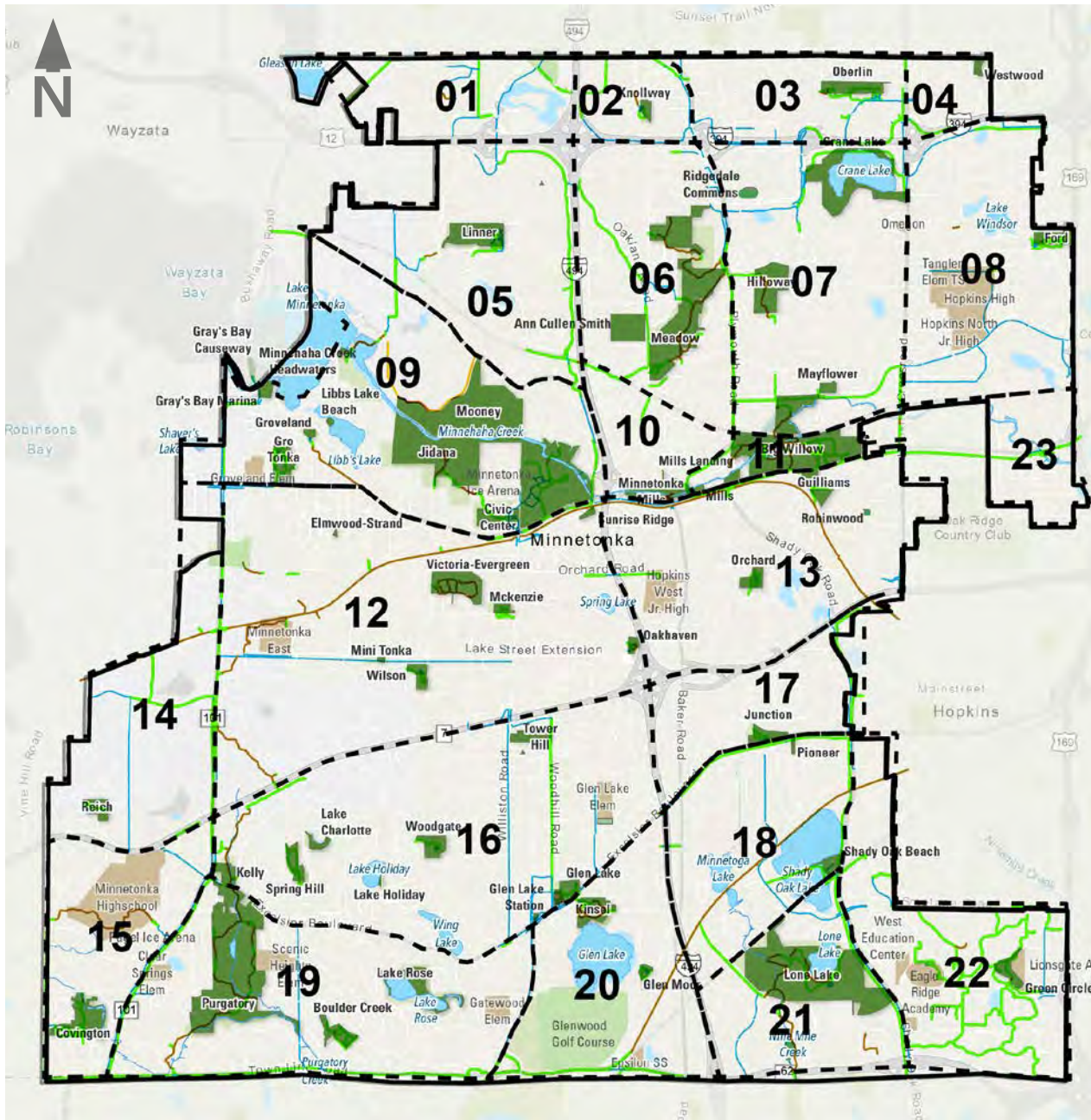


FIGURE 10: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SERVICE AREA BOUNDARIES

- 00 Neighborhood Park Service Area
- City Park
- Schools
- Privately Owned Park Space
- Water Bodies
- Minnetonka Boundary

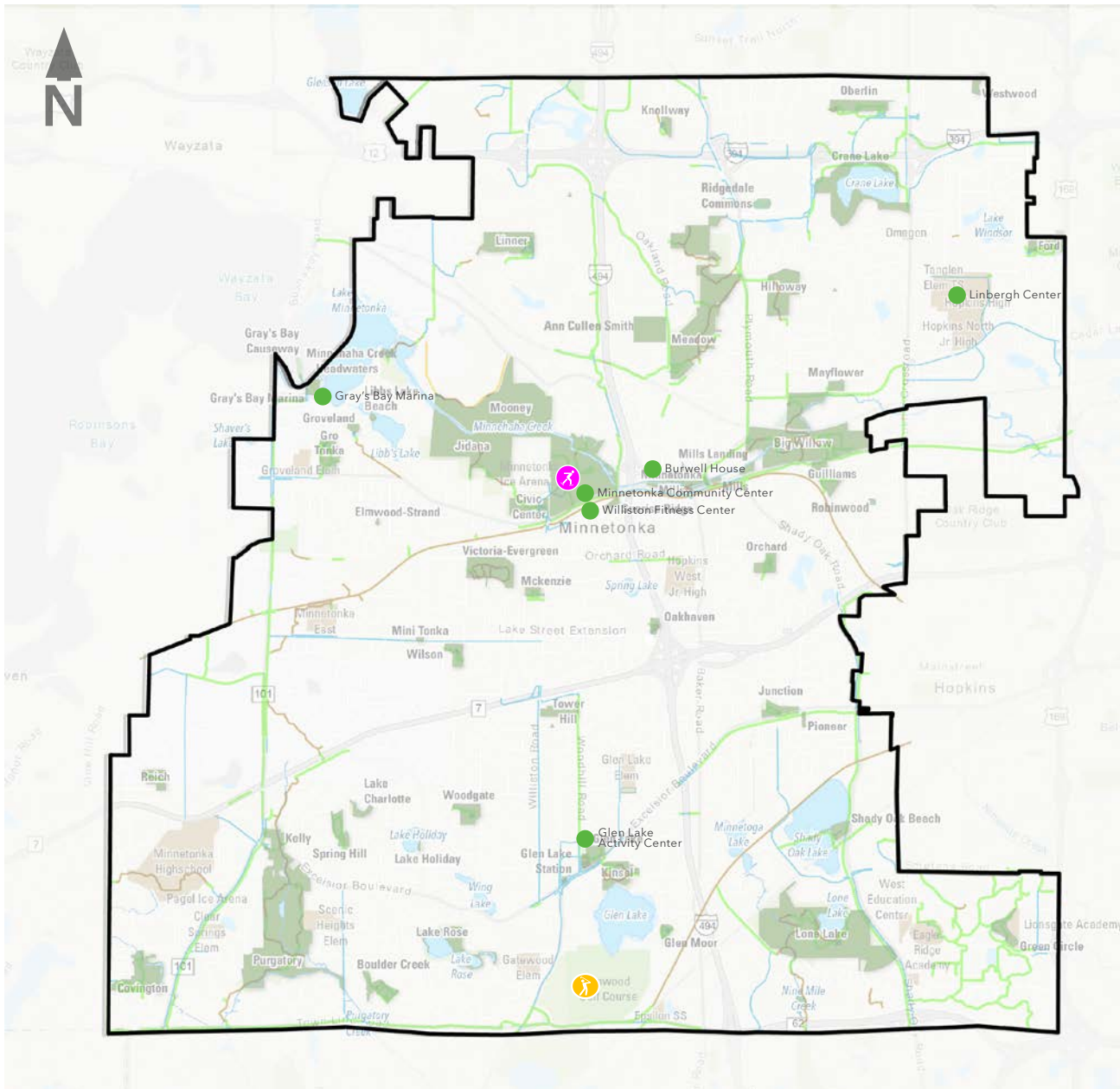


FIGURE 11: NOTABLE FACILITIES

FIGURE 12: COMMUNITY PARKS

Big Willow Park

The 101-acre Big Willow Park is located between Minnetonka Boulevard and Cedar Lake Road, just west of Minnetonka's Public Works facility. It is the city's smallest community park. Big Willow offers views of Minnehaha Creek, extensive trails, community athletic fields, a play area, and a canoe launch. It is also classified as a preserve and an athletic complex.



Big Willow Park



Civic Center Park

Within the Civic Center Park's 108 acres, just north of Minnetonka City Hall, there are soccer fields, play equipment, trails, a canoe launch on Minnehaha Creek, and an outdoor amphitheater. The park hosts a number of community events, including Summer Fest, the Minnetonka Farmer's Market, and movies and live music. Providing non-structured recreation facilities, this park is a social center for the community and provides open space for informal play. It is also classified as special use and a preserve.



Civic Center Park



Meadow Park

Meadow Park is a large 104-acre community park located in north-central Minnetonka, with the majority of its land devoted to natural areas. In terms of classification, Meadow Park falls into the category of a community park and preserve as it serves both community recreational park needs and protects natural open spaces. Trails weave through the park's natural areas and wetlands. There are many amenities at the park, including a tot lot and play equipment, tennis and basketball courts, and two all-season hockey rinks.



Meadow Park



Lone Lake Park

This 146-acre community park is located in southeast Minnetonka. It has a large natural area as well as community park amenities like soccer fields, tennis, pickleball, and basketball courts, a play area, a picnic shelter, open picnic areas, a dock, and trails. The park has two key functions: to provide community park facilities and natural open space within a developed area of the city. Lone Lake Park is also classified as a preserve and offers a large natural area with trails for hiking, mountain biking, and snowshoeing.

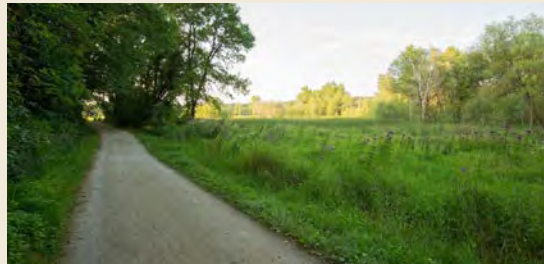


Lone Lake Park



Purgatory Park

With 155 acres, Purgatory Park is the largest of Minnetonka's community parks and is also classified as a preserve. The park offers views of Purgatory Creek, open spaces, and trails. Starting from the parking lot, a 1.2-mile trail loop provides scenic views of the park's various ecological areas, which include wetlands, woodlands, and prairies.



Purgatory Park



FIGURE 13: SPECIAL USE AND NOTABLE CITY FACILITIES

Burwell House

Charles H. Burwell House, located at 13209 East McGinty Road in Minnetonka, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is owned and operated by the City of Minnetonka. It is part of the Minnetonka park system, offering a picturesque setting for weekday picnics, painting, drawing, or photography, or for small family gatherings.



Burwell House

Glen Lake Activity Center

The Glen Lake Activity Center has meeting space for up to 50 people. It can also be divided into two smaller and equal size rooms by using a collapsible divider wall. There are restroom facilities, and the building is available for rent.

Gray's Bay Marina

The City of Minnetonka worked closely with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Hennepin County, the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and the Gray's Bay Task Force to acquire the Gray's Bay Public Access property. The DNR and the city have entered into an agreement to allow the city to operate the site as a public boat launch. It has a general parking area for cars and trailers. In addition, Minnetonka owns and operates 29 permanent boat slips, as well as an office, vending machines, public restrooms, and storage.



Gray's Bay Marina



Glen Lake Activity Center

Royals Athletic Center

The City of Minnetonka and the Hopkins School District jointly own and operate the Royals Athletic Center (formerly the Lindbergh Center). The facility is connected to Hopkins High School.

Amenities:

- > Five regulation basketball courts, two of which include adjustable height baskets for all levels of play
- > Seven regulation volleyball courts
- > 200-meter competitive running track
- > 300-meter walking/jogging track
- > Exercise and conditioning room with specialized machines, free weights and cardiovascular equipment
- > Additional amenities available for track, baseball, softball, wrestling, aerobics, badminton and golf



Royals Athletic Center

Minnetonka Ice Area

City programs, such as public skating, lessons, and adult hockey, are available at Minnetonka Ice Arena, which also houses the Lake Minnetonka Figure Skating Club, the Hopkins Youth Hockey Association, and the Minnetonka Youth Hockey Association. The facility is also used by high school hockey programs from Minnetonka, Hopkins, and St. Louis Park. Over 260,000 people use the facility annually.



Minnetonka Ice Arena

Minnetonka Community Center

The Minnetonka Community Center is available to residents and local organizations for a variety of meeting and banquet needs.

Shady Oak Beach

The Shady Oak Beach facility is owned by the City of Hopkins, and operated by the City of Minnetonka's Recreation Department. The 85-acre recreational area includes 76 feet of sandy beach shoreline and clear spring-fed waters, as well as a multi-age playground area, lifeguards, swimming, a high dive, concessions, a changing area, rentals for canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddle boards, as well as sand volleyball.



Shady Oak Beach



Minnetonka Community Center

Williston Fitness Center

The Williston Fitness Center is owned and operated by the City of Minnetonka. Features and services include:

- > 25-yard swimming pool and splash pad
- > Five indoor tennis courts
- > Aerobics studio
- > Baseball/softball cages & training
- > Basketball court
- > Fitness equipment
- > Equipment orientations
- > Kid's Corner child care
- > Land and water aerobics, run club, cycle classes
- > Meeting/party room
- > Personal training
- > Wellness and nutrition coaching
- > Indoor playground (TreeHouse)
- > Whirlpool and saunas.



Williston Fitness Center

MINNETONKA TRAIL SYSTEM

The Minnetonka trail system provides a comprehensive system of trails that offer recreational value and pedestrian connections throughout the city (see *Figure 14*). The trail system connects Minnetonka's cultural and commercial activity centers and similar destinations in adjoining communities. It also directly connects to several regional amenities including transit facilities, Bryant Lake Regional Park, and the Three Rivers Park District's combined 27-mile Lake Minnetonka and Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Trails. Trails are located off the road wherever possible and follow the city's three major creek corridors: Minnehaha, Nine Mile and Purgatory. These existing trails wind through many city parks and natural open space areas, providing access to wetlands, lakes, marshes and woodlands. A five-mile mountain bike trail was added to the trail system in 2021. Users of the trail system experience much of the natural environment characteristics of Minnetonka. Throughout the height of the season, trails are patrolled regularly by Minnetonka Police Department personnel on bicycles and in special police vehicles. In addition, Three Rivers Park District rangers patrol the Three Rivers LRT Trails from April through November.

Minnetonka's Trail Improvement Plan (TIP) is a list and map of multi-use trail corridors for future expansion. These multi-use trails differ from the

original trail plan in that they follow the street corridors and serve transportation as well as recreational use. They are prioritized by high use segments and degree of difficulty to construct. These trails often involve multiple agency stakeholders such as MnDOT and Hennepin County as well as individual property owners along the corridor for right of way.

Trail Facilities

Restrooms and drinking fountains are available at each of the five community parks.

Terrain and Traffic

Trails are typically eight to ten feet wide and designed to accommodate two-way bike & pedestrian traffic. Surfaces are either compacted crushed limestone or asphalt, depending on the area and terrain. At some uncontrolled intersections with major roadways, the trail will cross the road via a pedestrian underpass or overpass to minimize conflicts with traffic.

Trail Maintenance

Much of the trail system is plowed during the winter months, making it usable throughout the year. Cross-country skiing and snowmobiling are not allowed on trails.



Trail example within Minnetonka parks.



Trail at Shady Oak Beach.

For details regarding trails, including trail regulations and existing and proposed trail improvements, visit the City of Minnetonka's 2020 Trail Improvement Plan (TIP).

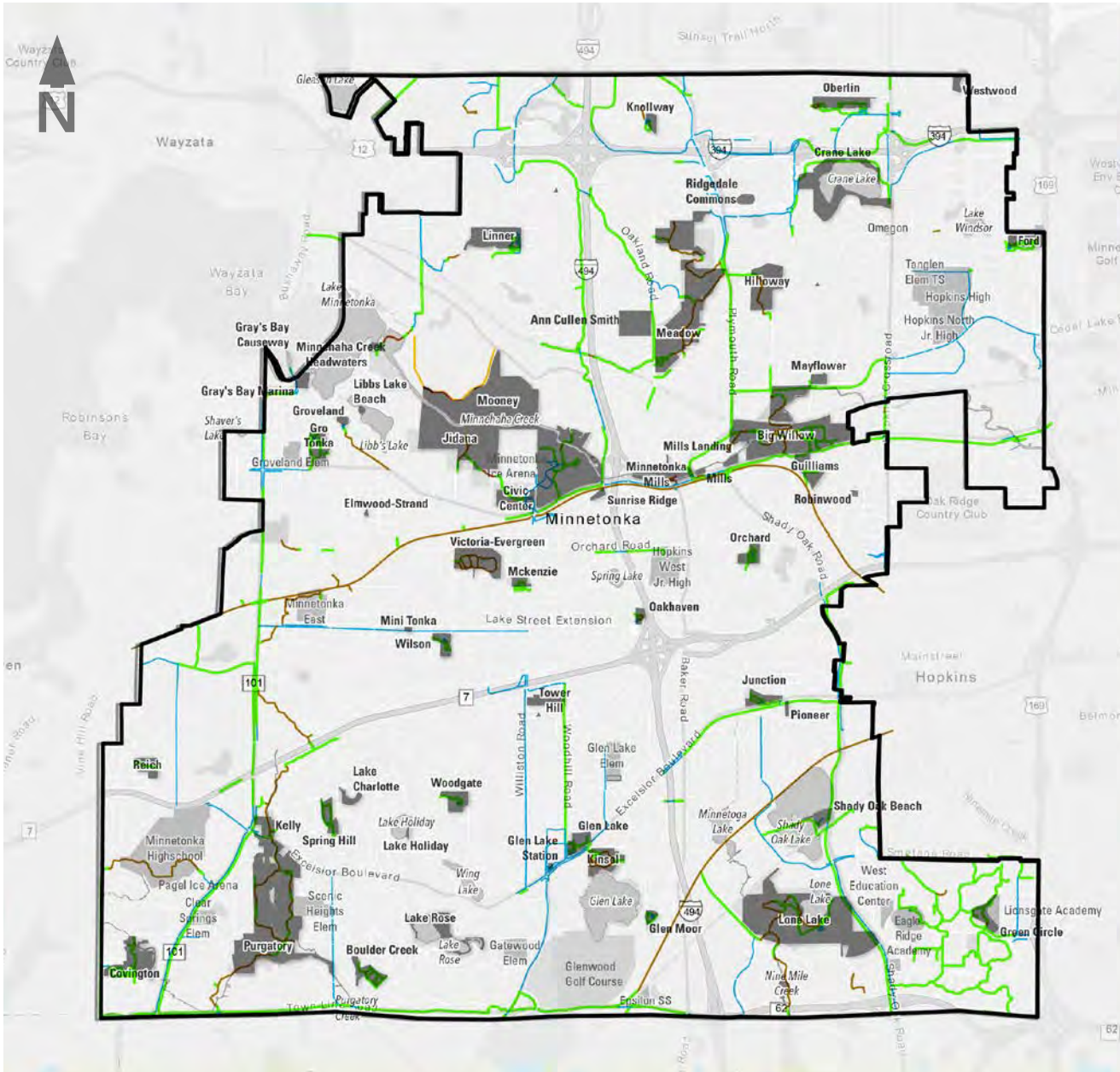


FIGURE 14: TRAILS

- Trails (Asphalt)
- Trails (Unpaved)
- Sidewalks
- City park

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Introduction

A needs assessment was conducted as part of this planning process to understand the state of Minnetonka's park, open space and trail system, including its facilities, programming and operations. The assessment included evaluating existing conditions, an extensive community outreach effort, alignment with national standards, comparison to peer communities, and evaluation of national and local trends (see Chapter 2). This analysis identified current and future system needs and desires, forming the vision and guiding principles of this POST System Plan (see Chapter 4). The needs assessment process included:

- > Engaging the community (events, surveys, and stakeholder conversations) to gather input on existing conditions and proposed improvements
- > Evaluation of the park, open space and trail system including the programs, operations and facilities
- > Meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Park Board, City Council and City Staff
- > Existing and forecasted demographic analysis
- > Evaluation of current park classifications
- > Identification of issues and opportunities at a system-wide level, including identifying areas of need
- > Comparison of existing parks and facilities with national standards and peer communities
- > Evaluation of national and local park and recreation trends



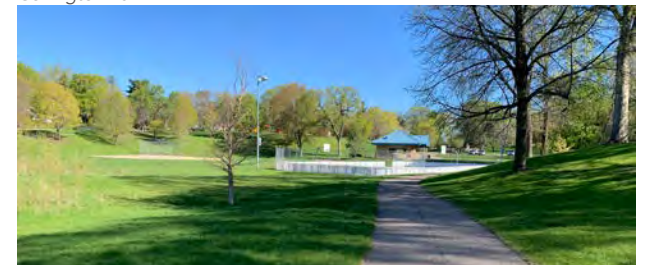
Glen Lake Skate Park



Boulder Creek Park



Covington Park



Gro Tonka Park

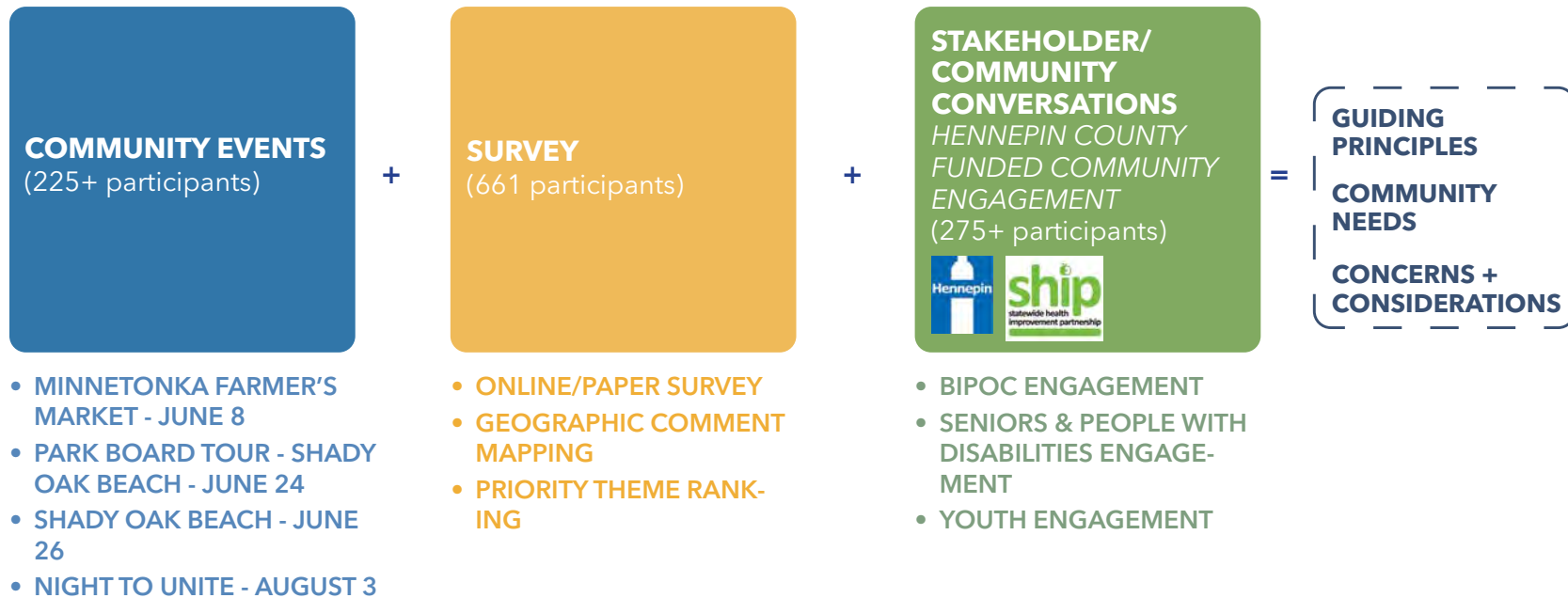
Community Input

PROCESS AND SUMMARY

To create a POST System Plan that will meet the community's needs, an extensive community outreach effort was conducted to help identify and understand the values, needs and preferences of the community. Special effort was made to reach out to traditionally underrepresented groups including seniors, youth, BIPOC and people with disabilities with the intention that this plan will accommodate the whole community.

This process has been completed with the support of SHIP (Statewide Health Improvement Program) and Hennepin County through an Active Living Technical Assistance grant. Engagement events and activities are shown in the timeline and have resulted in valuable information which will influence future development of parks which more closely meet the objectives of the community.

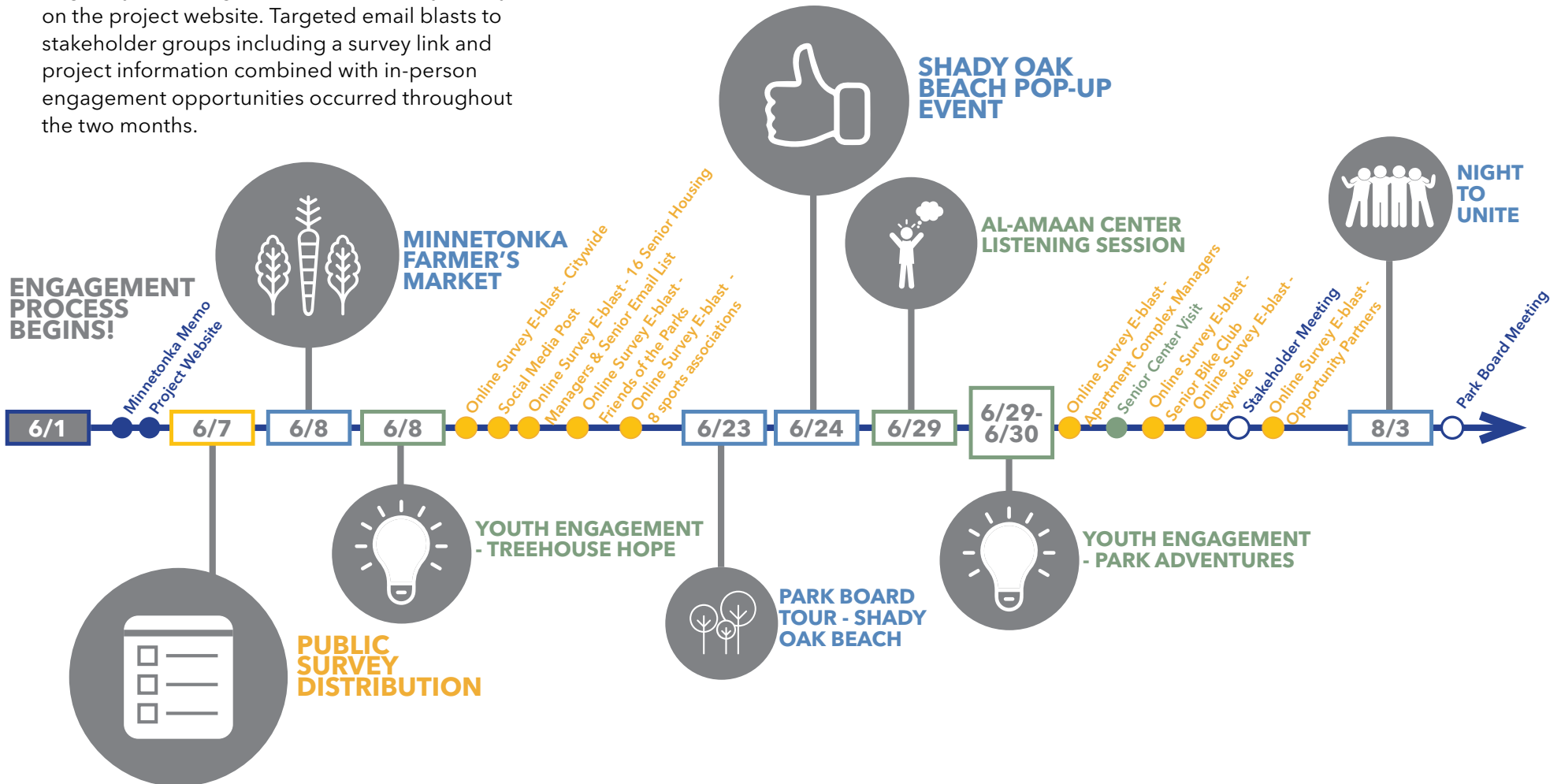
Public outreach methods included community pop-up events, meetings, an online community survey, listening sessions, and an online geographic mapping comment tool.



Summary of Community Engagement Efforts

ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

Community engagement efforts spanned two months in June and August 2021. The process began by launching an online community survey on the project website. Targeted email blasts to stakeholder groups including a survey link and project information combined with in-person engagement opportunities occurred throughout the two months.



Timeline of Community Engagement

EVENTS WHERE USED

AMOUNT OF INPUT



Night to Unite Neighborhood Pop-Up

August 3, 2021
109 votes cast



Minnetonka Farmer's Market Event

June 8, 2021
174 votes cast



Shady Oak Beach Pop-Up Event

June 24, 2021
222 votes cast



Dot Voting Takeaways

Figures 16 and 17 show the voting results from the board that asked participants: "What new and/or additional things would you like to do in Minnetonka parks?"

Skateboarding and having a bicycle playground/pump track were the most selected responses.

The next most selected new/additional things to do were:

- > Rock climbing or bouldering ,
- > Special events,
- > Nature play areas,
- > Year-round swimming facility, and
- > Pickleball courts.

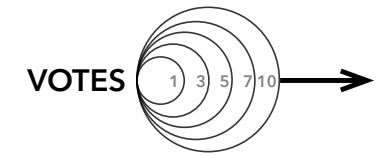


FIGURE 16: DOT VOTING RESULTS - WHAT NEW AND/OR ADDITIONAL THINGS WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN MINNETONKA PARKS? (IMAGERY RESPONSE #1-#15)

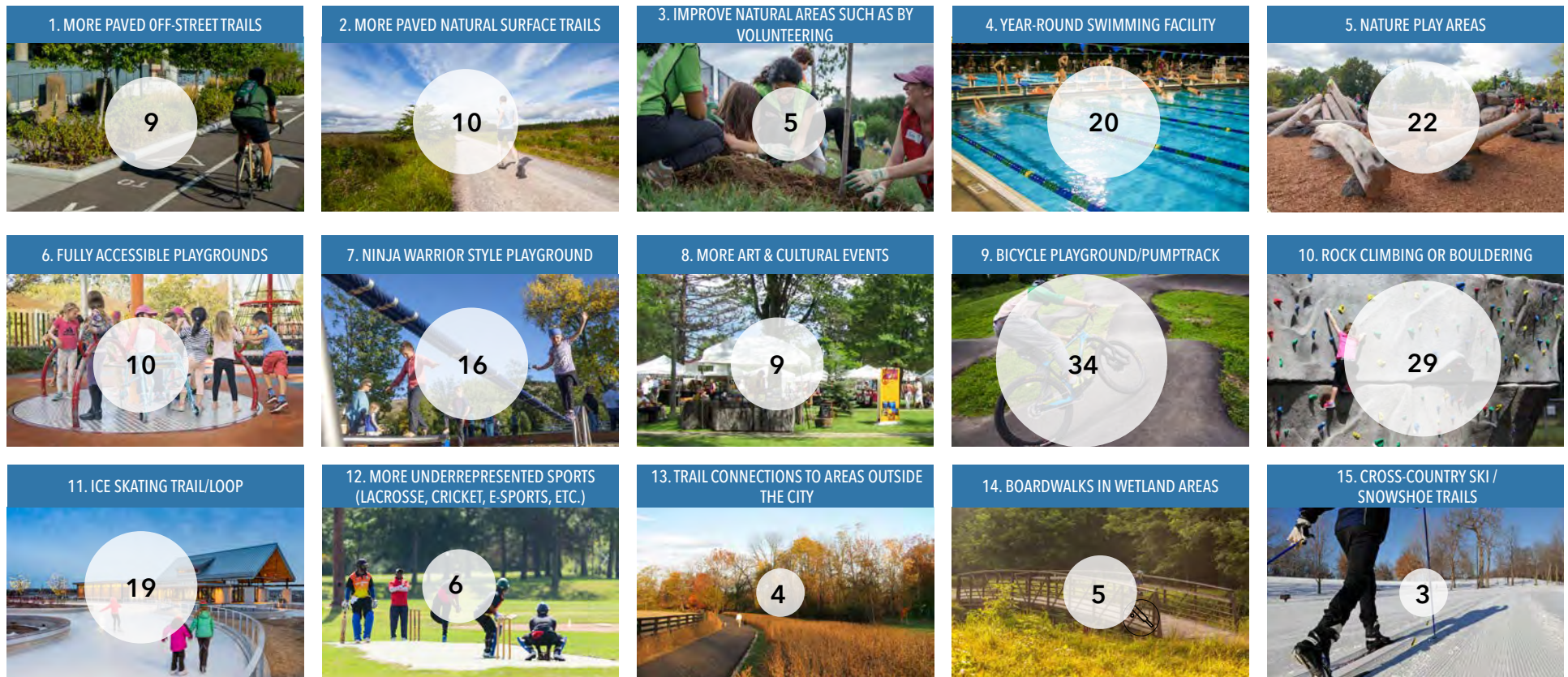
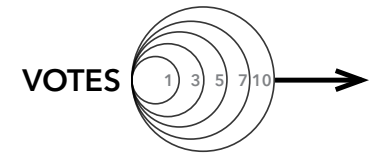


FIGURE 17: DOT VOTING RESULTS - WHAT NEW AND/OR ADDITIONAL THINGS WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN MINNETONKA PARKS? (IMAGERY RESPONSE #16-#26)



16. NATURE PROGRAMMING (PLANT ID WALKS, BIRD ID/WATCHING, CANOEING/KAYAKING)



17. FITNESS CLASSES



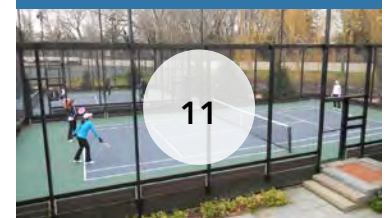
18. SPECIAL EVENTS (CONCERTS IN THE PARK, FESTIVALS, MOVIES, ETC.)



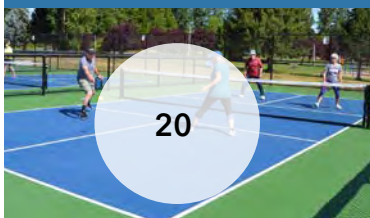
19. OFF-LEASH DOG PARK



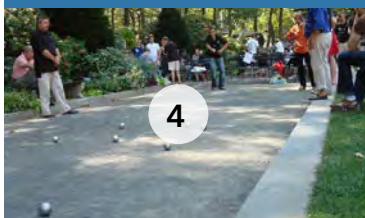
20. PLATFORM TENNIS



21. PICKLEBALL COURTS



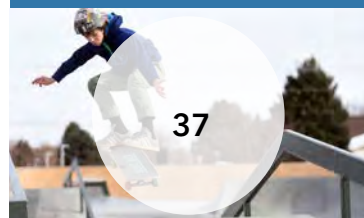
22. BOCCE



23. SAND VOLLEYBALL



24. SKATEBOARDING



25. GARDENING



26. MORE WINTER TRAILS



COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

A 30-question public survey was developed to collect feedback between June and August of 2021. The survey was publicized through email, social media, and at community events. Respondents were able to participate online, or in person with printed versions available at the Minnetonka Senior Advisory Committee meetings, the Minnetonka Community Center, community events, and stakeholder engagement/listening sessions.

In total, **661** people responded to the survey. The following section summarizes the results of the survey.

Minnetonka Matters - Hub for Online Engagement

Minnetonka Matters was the hub for the online engagement and provided communications, information about the existing park system, and provided two main ways to engage with the POST System Plan:

- Survey - 30 questions
- Geographic Comment Mapping
- Community engagement took place for 3 months

<https://www.minnetonkamatters.com/plan-your-park-system>



Minnetonka Matters website

FIGURE 18: COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONDENTS



FIGURE 19: TOP 3 PRIORITY ISSUES AND THEMES MINNETONKA SHOULD ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS IN THIS POST SYSTEM PLAN TO GUIDE FUTURE PARK, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS.

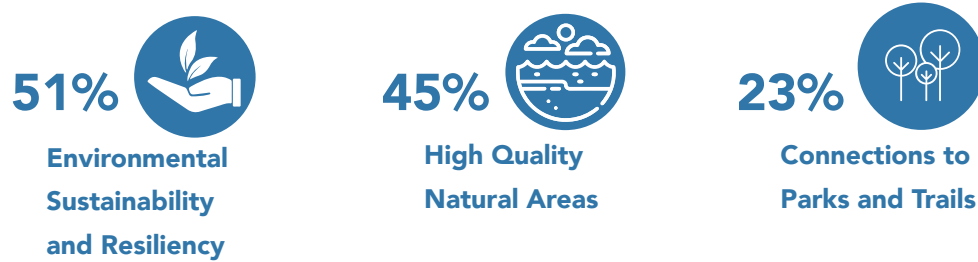


FIGURE 20: FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO MINNETONKA PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS BY RESPONDENTS

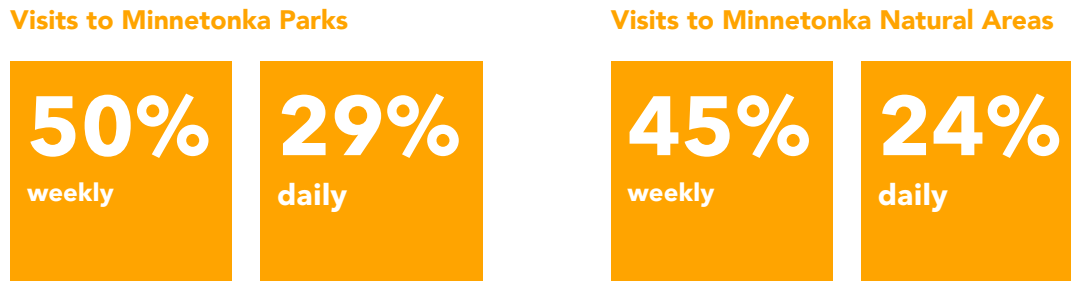


FIGURE 21: DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

OVER 92% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS WERE MINNETONKA RESIDENTS.

OVER 60% HAD LIVED IN MINNETONKA FOR 11+ YEARS.

THE SURVEY MAINLY REACHED PEOPLE AGES 31 AND OLDER.

ALMOST 60% OF RESPONDENTS WERE WOMEN.

FIGURE 22: HOW DO YOU INTERACT WITH MINNETONKA'S NATURAL AREAS?

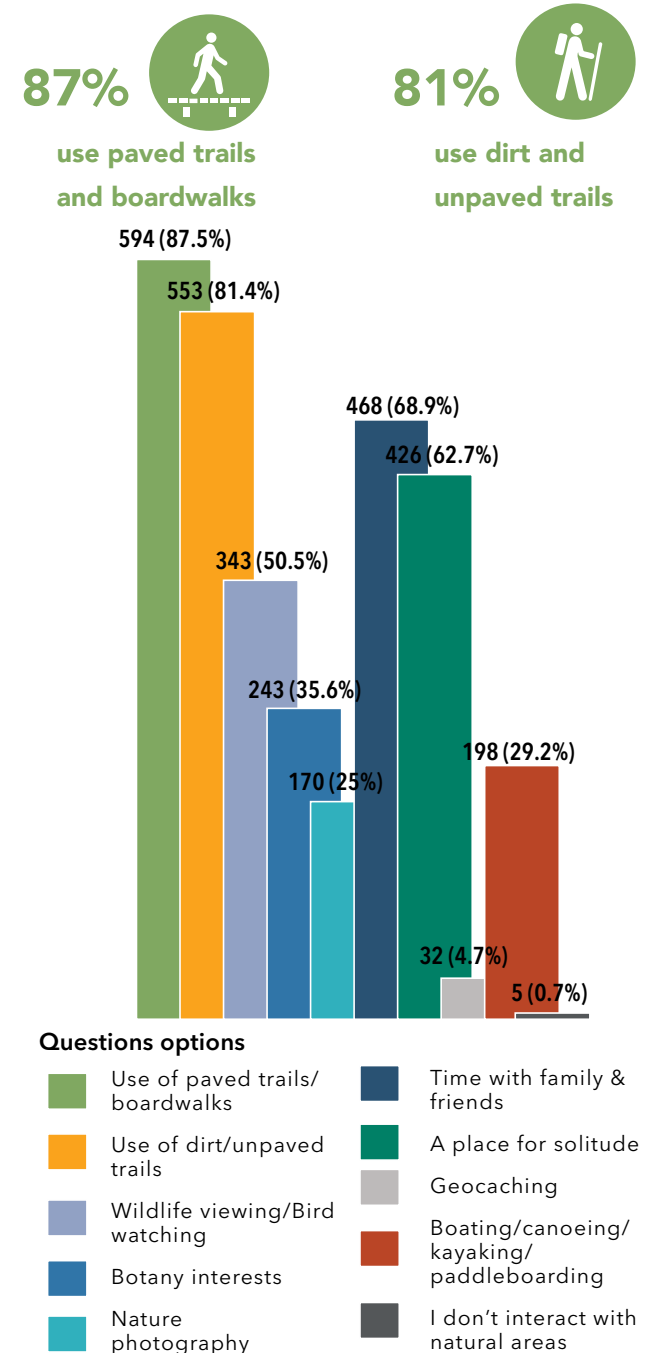
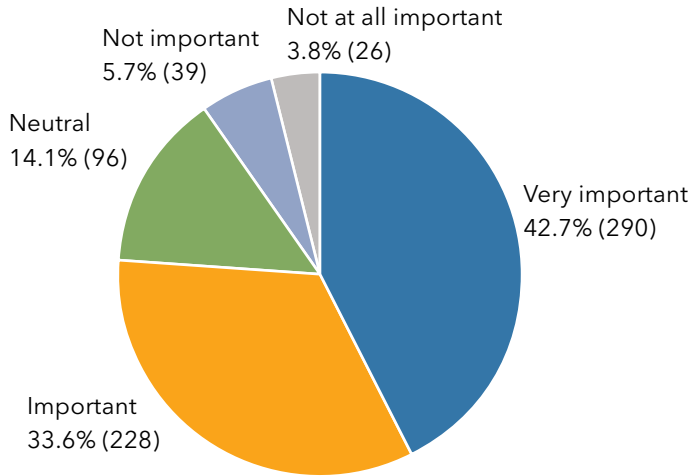
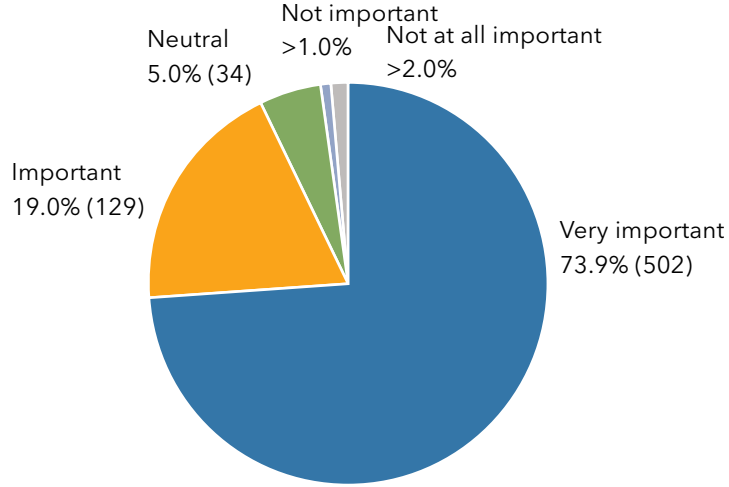


FIGURE 23: HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING TO THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE IN MINNETONKA?

Parks with recreational amenities



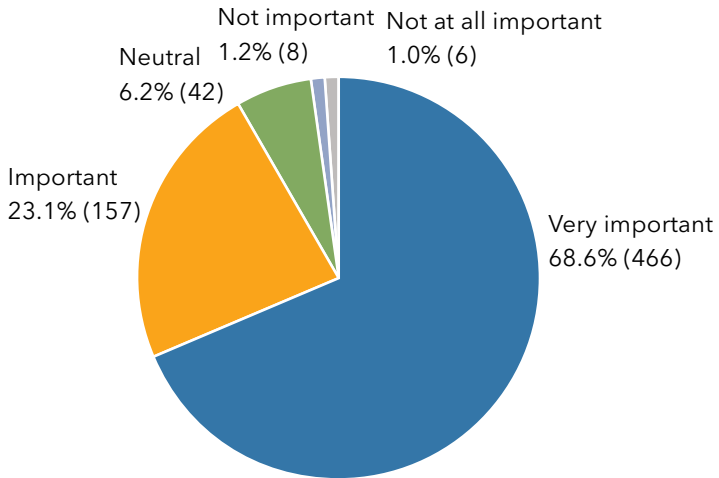
Trails and trail connections



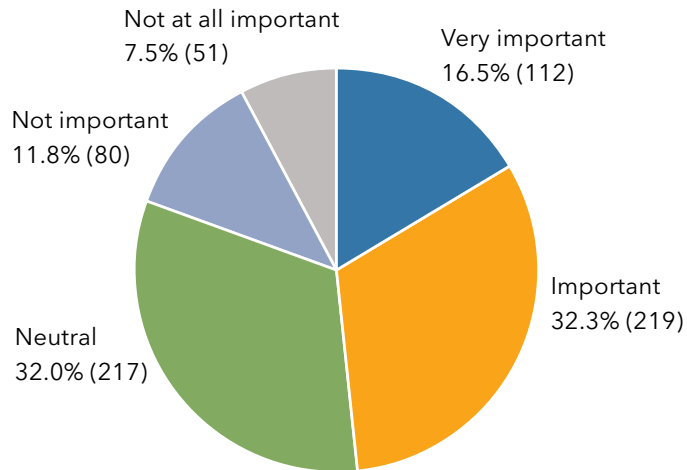
Questions options

- Very important
- Important
- Neutral
- Not important
- Not at all important

Natural areas for passive recreation

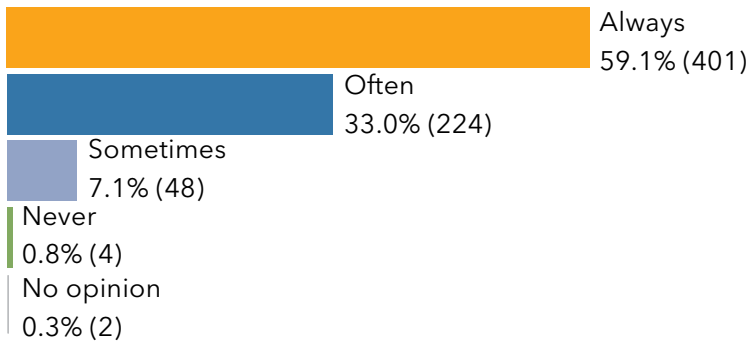


Recreation programming



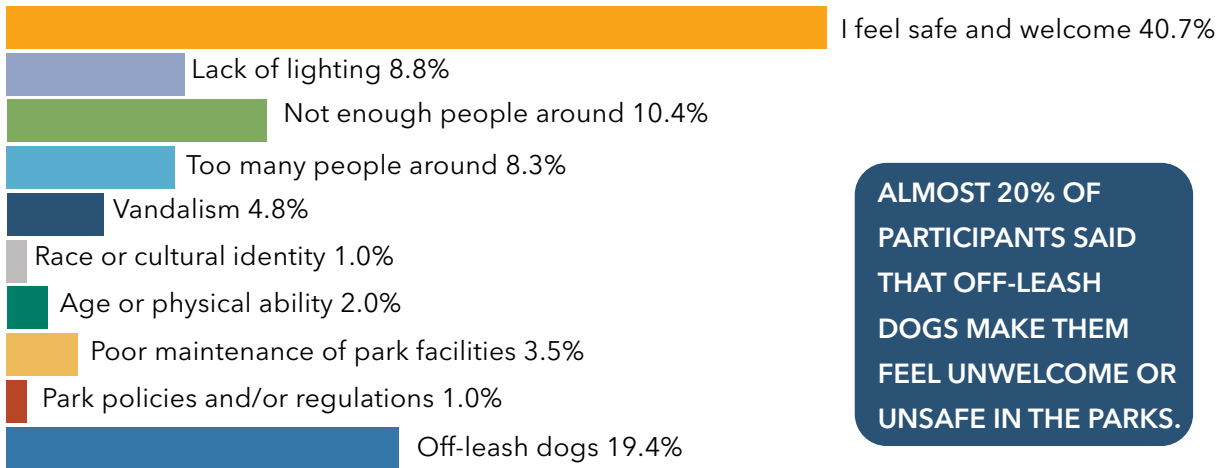
TRAILS AND TRAIL CONNECTIONS and NATURAL AREAS FOR PASSIVE RECREATION are very important to over 73% and 68% of respondents, respectively.

FIGURE 24: DO YOU FEEL WELCOME AND SAFE IN MINNETONKA PARKS?



THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS FELT SAFE 'ALWAYS' (59%) OR 'OFTEN' (33%) IN THE PARKS.

FIGURE 25: IF NOT, WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL UNWELCOME OR UNSAFE IN THE PARKS?



ALMOST 20% OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THAT OFF-LEASH DOGS MAKE THEM FEEL UNWELCOME OR UNSAFE IN THE PARKS.

FIGURE 26: TOP 5 DESIRED NEW AND/OR ADDITIONAL THINGS TO DO IN MINNETONKA PARKS

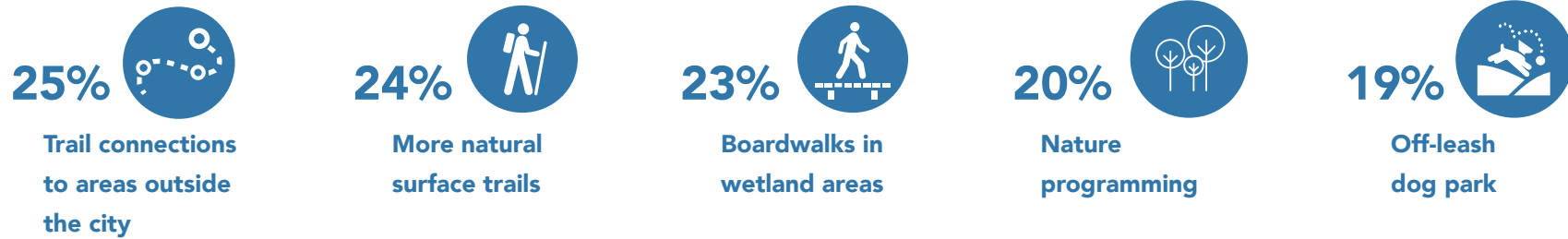


FIGURE 27: HOW SHOULD MINNETONKA PARKS BALANCE NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION WITH HUMAN USE AND ACCESS FOR RECREATION?

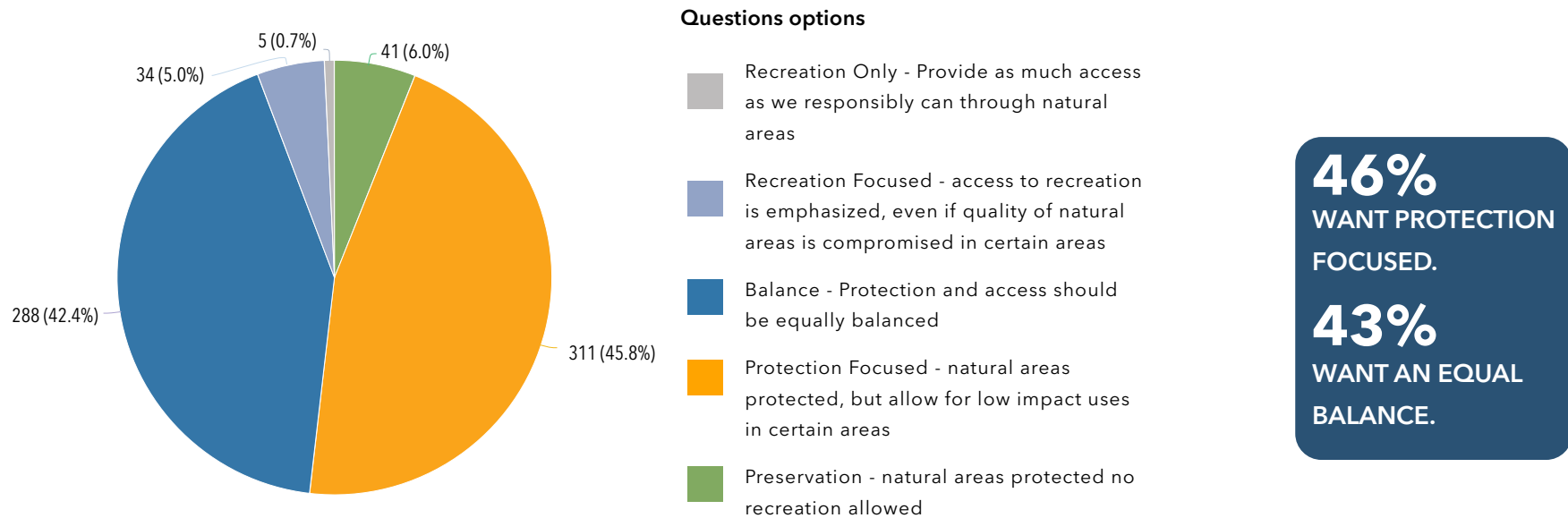
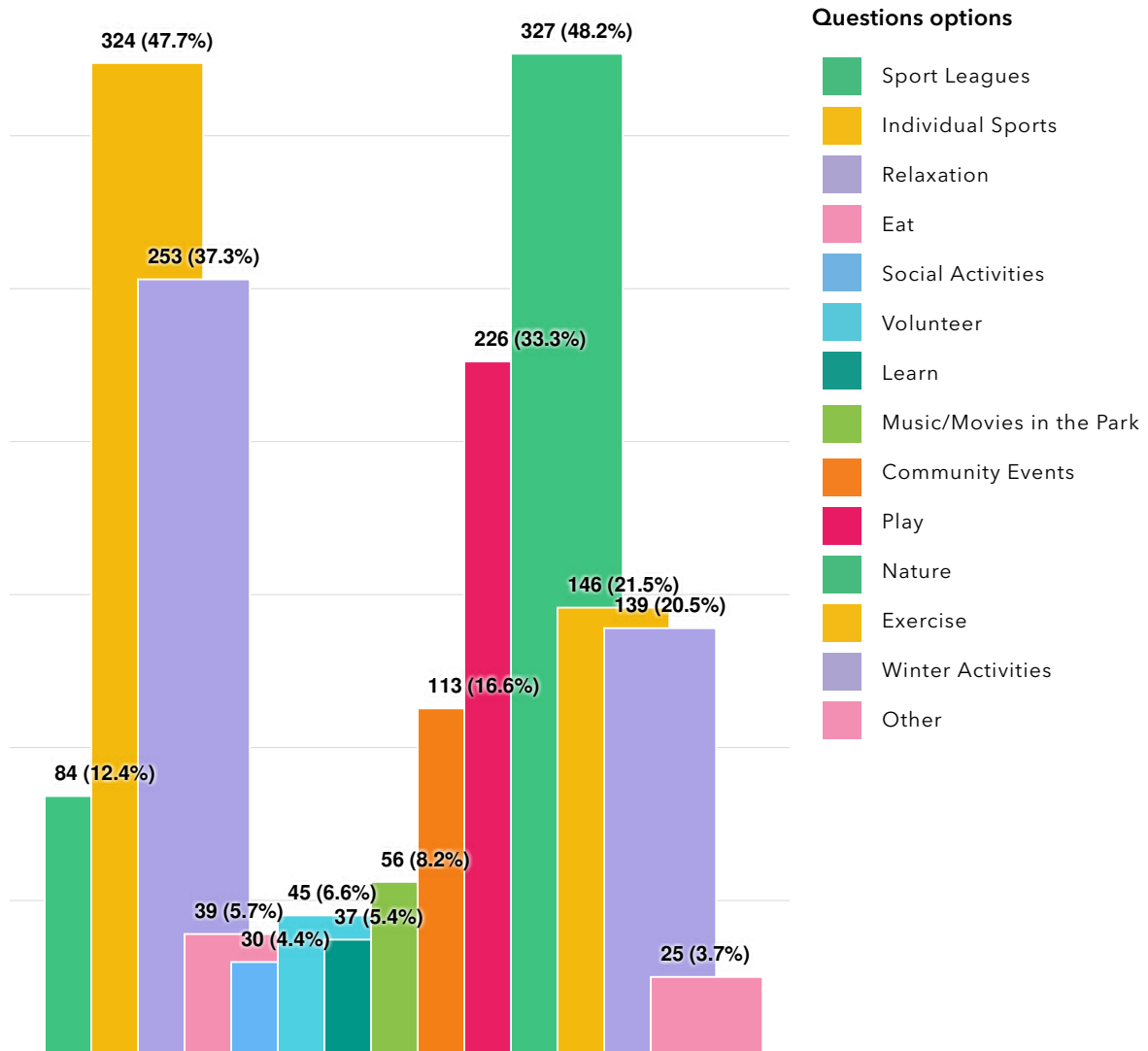
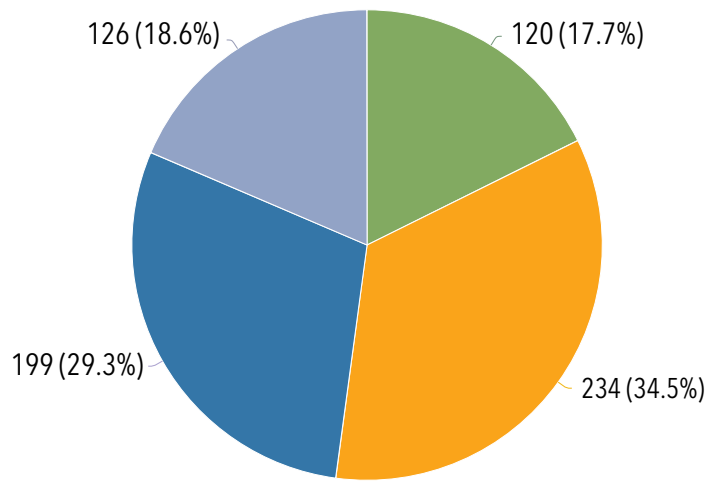


FIGURE 28: WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY ENJOY MOST AT MINNETONKA PARKS?



47%
of respondents enjoy individual sports such as mountain biking, trail running, hiking, walking.

FIGURE 29: CLIMATE CHANGE AND SHIFTING TRENDS HAVE CREATED CHALLENGES FOR PROVIDING OUTDOOR ICE SKATING. WHICH APPROACH DO YOU THINK MINNETONKA SHOULD USE TO ADAPT TO THESE CHALLENGES?



Questions options

- Close to Home - There should continue to be outdoor rinks throughout the city, even if quality is less consistent
- Quality over Quantity - Concentrate on fewer outdoor facilities with higher quality ice that might not be a close to my home
- None - I'm not likely to use city-provided outdoor ice skating facilities
- Destination - Create one high quality outdoor ice skating facility (ice trail, holiday skating rink, etc.)

LESS THAN 19% OF PARTICIPANTS FEEL THAT THE CITY SHOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUTDOOR RINKS THROUGHOUT THE CITY, INSTEAD PREFERRED QUALITY OVER QUANTITY, NONE, OR A DESTINATION RINK.


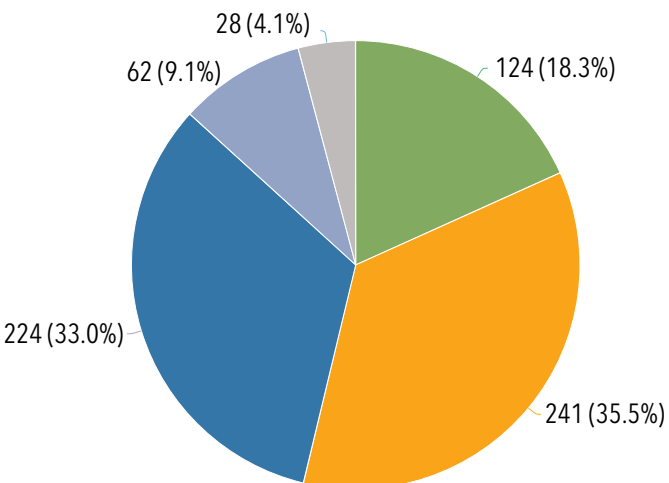


FIGURE 30: NATURAL, UNMAINTAINED AREAS OF THE CITY HAVE TRADITIONALLY ALLOWED FOR DOGS OFF-LEASH UNDER VOICE COMMAND, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN ISSUES WITH DOG/PEOPLE INTERACTIONS. WHICH APPROACH SHOULD THE CITY USE TO ADAPT TO CHALLENGES?



Questions options







- Include a dog park in a future new park space
- Ban dogs from being off-leash in parks Do not create an off-leash dog park.
- Create fenced off-leash dog park(s)
- Identify specific parks and areas with those parks where dogs are allowed to be off-leash under voice control
- Keep as is - dogs should be allowed off leash under voice command in natural, unmaintained areas

ABOUT 18% OF PARTICIPANTS WOULD LIKE TO KEEP THE POLICY AS IS. 33% PREFER TO CREATE AN OFF-LEASHED DOG PARK. ABOUT 36% WOULD LIKE TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC PARKS WHERE DOGS ARE ALLOWED TO BE OFF-LEASH.



GEOGRAPHIC MAPPING COMMENT SUMMARY

As part of the survey, respondents were asked to place 'pins' on an interactive map and add notes to share more information. A tool allowed respondents to zoom in on specific park, trail, and open space areas. There were six categories for comments:

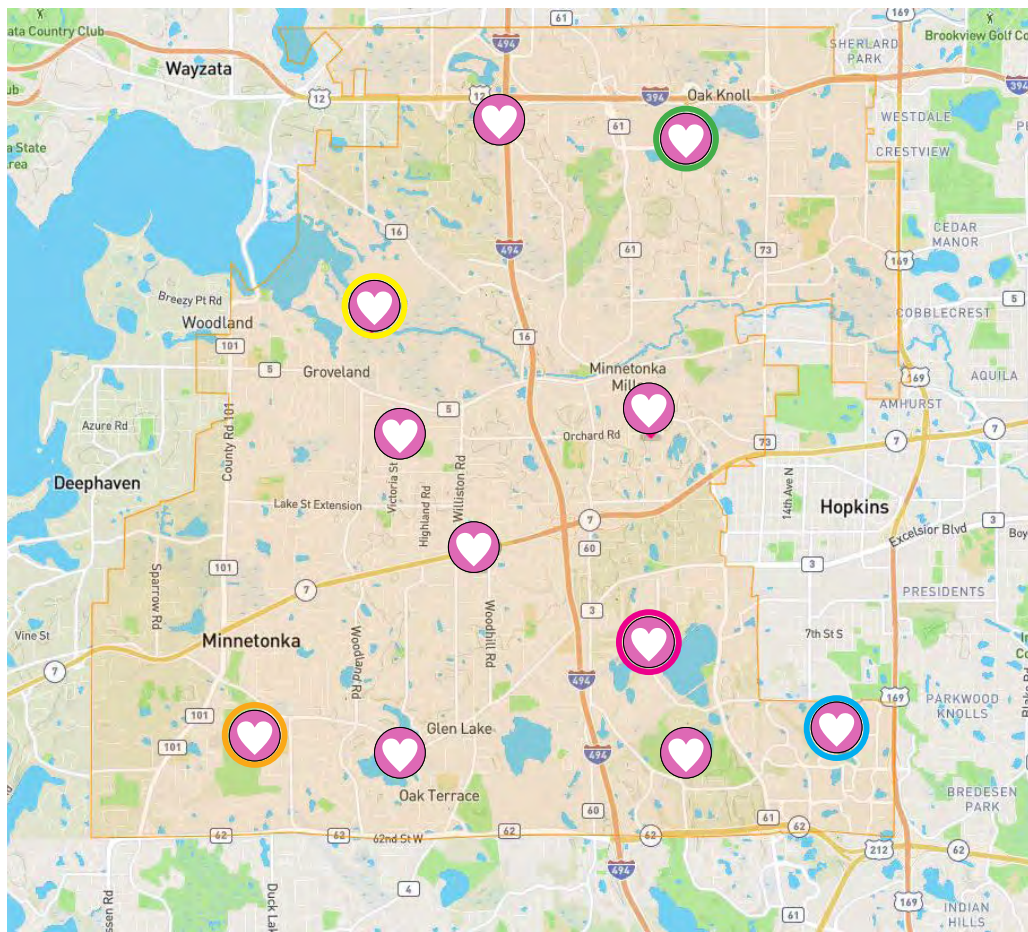
-  What do you love?
-  What are your ideas?
-  What needs work?
-  Where are there gaps in the system? (i.e. facilities, trail connections, open space preserves, etc.)
-  What bike/pedestrian issues have you observed?
-  Where are there opportunities to improve the system or add new parks, open spaces, or trails?

There were 149 comments made with the interactive mapping tool. The following pages provides a summary of comments for each category.

149
MAP COMMENTS



What do you love?



Note: This is a summary of comments for each category.

Location: 31XX Fairchild Avenue, Minnetonka
This is THE BEST winter outdoor space!

Location: 19XX Dwight Lane, Minnetonka
I love this little connection here from the neighborhood to Ridgedale and the YMCA. We need more connections like this that makes Minnetonka more walkable!

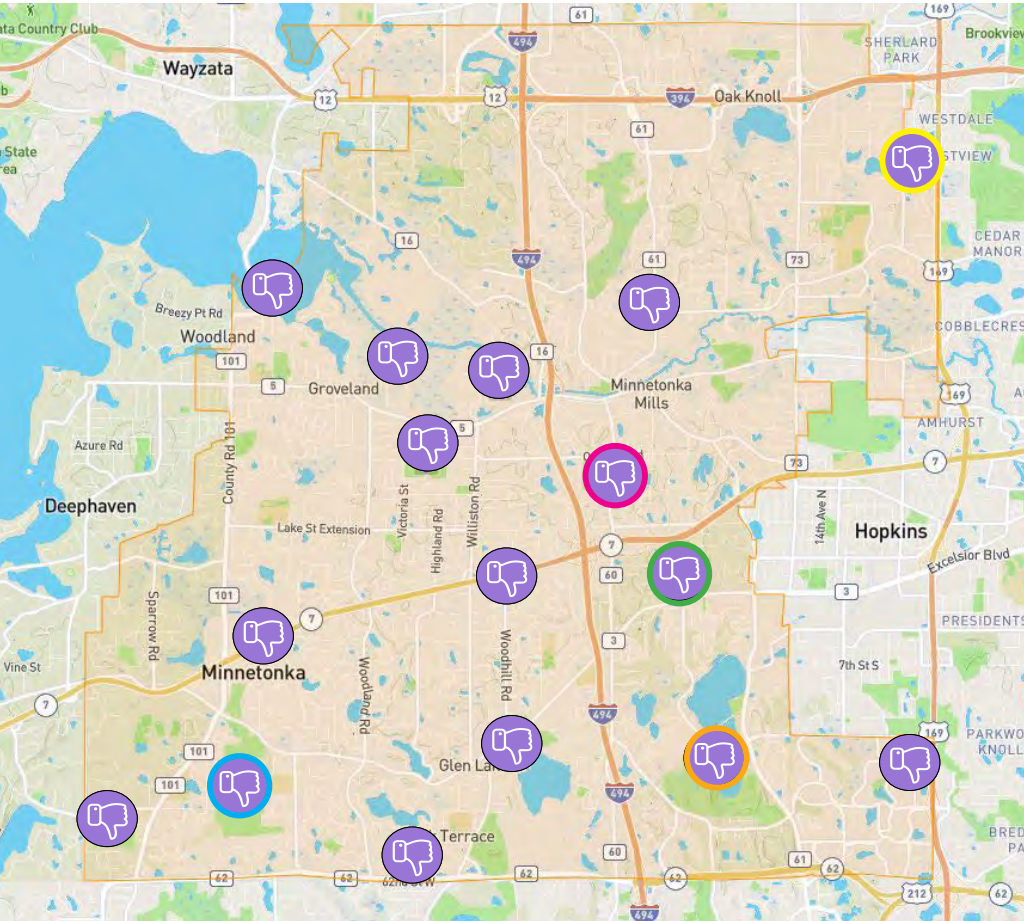
Location: Purgatory Park
Comment 1: Awesome park! We love the natural area and walking trails. Would love additional parks like this one!
Comment 2: The restored prairie is a beautiful amenity in this park. It is in need of further restoration and management (increase number of flowering plants).

Location: 52XX Dominick Drive, Minnetonka
I love how this has been kept mostly open and prairie right now. The frogs, turtles, and fireflies love this area.

Location: Green Circle Park
Love the pollinator habitat here. Please add more in Minnetonka Parks!



What needs work?



Location: Ford Park
Play equipment is old, tired, and some items don't operate as intended

Location: Junction Park
The tennis courts are in terrible shape. Pickleball courts are very busy in the evening at other parks. Restore the tennis courts with pickleball lines so families can play in the evening.

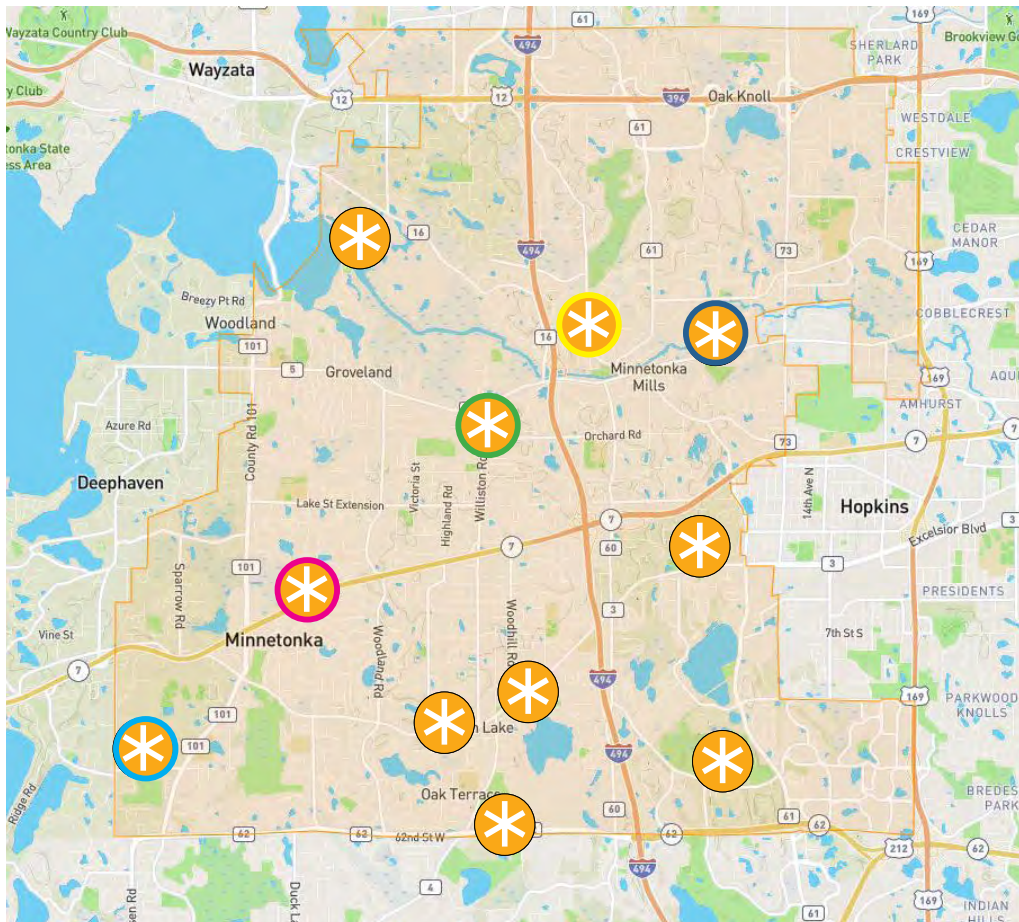
Location: Shady Oak Park
This path is often under water due to the lack of water outlet for Shady Oak. Also there is a lot of erosion here from the hill above that could be fixed fairly easily.

Location: Meadow Park
The rocks that form the border around the play set is quite sharp and is a risk to kids who run (and fall).

Location: Purgatory Park
I am a dog lover and understand the value of walking a dog off leash. The problem in this park is that the areas used for off leash walking are managed/maintained areas. The city leash ordinance states dogs can be off leash in unmaintained areas. The city has invested significant time and resources restoring this park and it is being significantly degraded by the overuse. Please find an unmaintained area for people to walk their dogs off leash or build a dedicated dog park.

Note: This is a summary of comments for each category.

What bike/pedestrian issues have you observed?



Note: This is a summary of comments for each category.

Location: 13XXX McGinty Road East, Minnetonka

This area is heavily used by walkers, runners, and bikers and is very dangerous because there is no path and cars go very fast. A path needs to be added to connect the walking path that ends at Surry Lane to Plymouth Road (61).

Location: 18XXX Covington Road, Minnetonka

This path that leads to a blind stop sign on a steep slope. Cars drive too fast and there needs to be speed bumps or a path clearly labeled on the road for peds to access the park path.

Location: 11XXX Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka

When biking from the LRT trail through Guilliams Park to get to Big Willow Park, there is no connection here even though the trails are so close. You have to unsafely ride along Minnetonka Blvd to get down to the Big Willow entrance. I'd like to see a connection here to the Minnetonka Loop Trail

Location: 16XXX Minnesota State Highway 7, Minnetonka

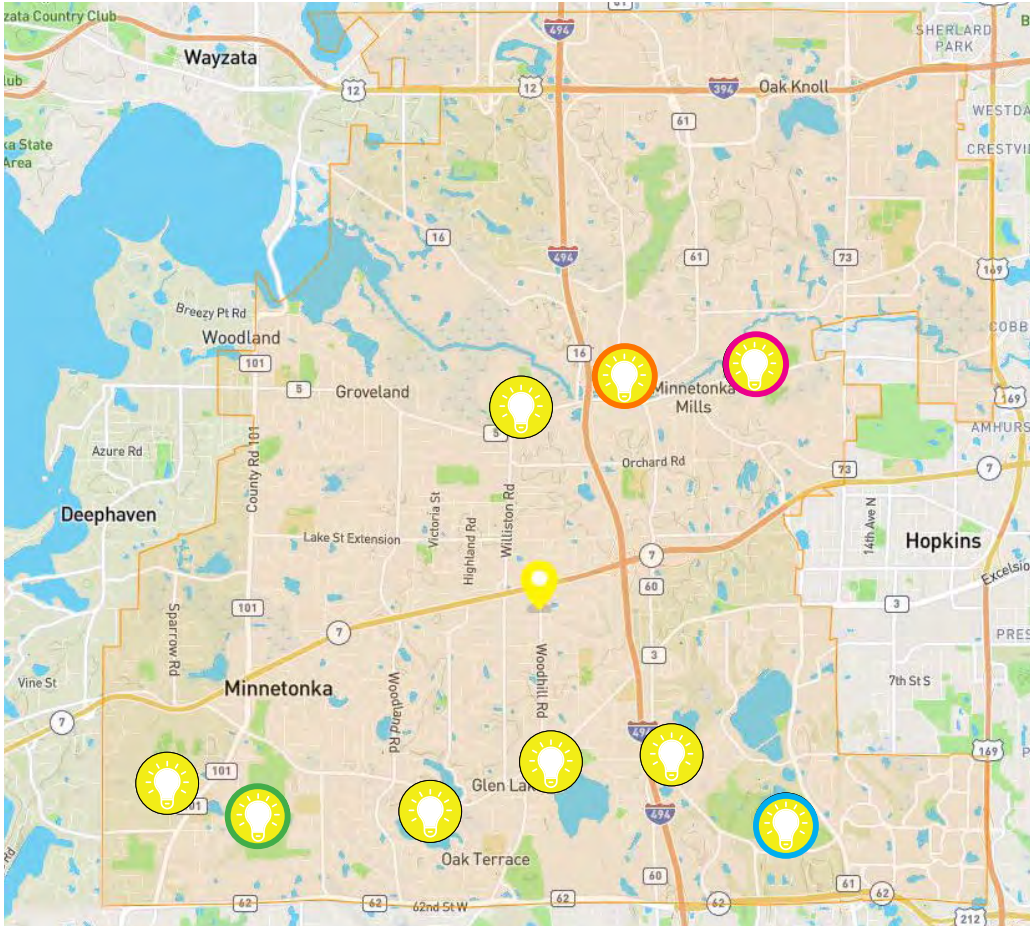
The black tarmac path here is in quite rough shape, and oddly has no fence between it and the highway.

Location: 3XXX Williston Road, Minnetonka

I've observed (and been a participant) of the bike/foot traffic that uses Williston to hook up with the Mtka LRT. Would love to see a dedicated path or protective barriers for the ped lane since it's a decent hill and cars come flying down. Also since it's a common road to head into City Hall where the farmers market and other community events are held - big need for a pedestrian path for safer travel.



What are your ideas?



Note: This is a summary of comments for each category.

Location: 13508 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka
 This would be a great spot for a narrow natural surface bike / walk trail making a better connection from Burwell to the west than the narrow, slanted, often uncleared in winter sidewalk.

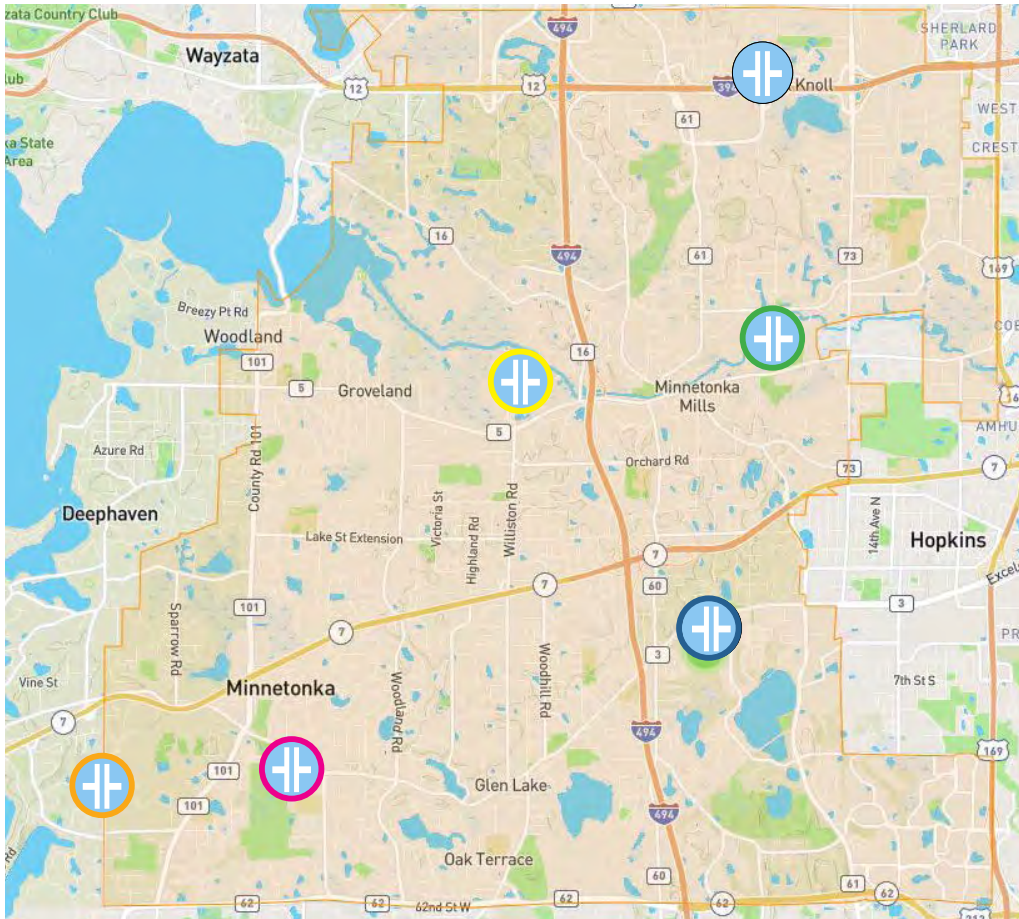
Location: Lone Lake Park
 Comment 1: When the city re develops the signage for the park it needs to provide some history on the indigenous people (before settlers) who lived here plus the distinctive natural elements of the park including the vistas, lake, creek, remnants of big woods, etc. Kind of a cultural and physical history.
 Comment 2: No one uses this large area of turf. Why not create a pollinator meadow?

Location: Minnetonka Loop Trail Systems, 12523 Creek Rd W, Minnetonka
 Big Willow would be a great place to add a short (likely VERY short) beginner level single-track loop.

Location: Purgatory Park
 Comment 1: When the city re develops the signage for the park it needs to provide some history on the indigenous people (before settlers) who lived here plus the distinctive natural elements of the park including the vistas, lake, creek, remnants of big woods, etc. Kind of a cultural and physical history.
 Comment 2: Connect Purgatory Park to Covington Park through a pededstrian path or have better signs to direct people from one park to another



**Where are there gaps in the system?
(i.e. facilities, trail connections, open space preserves, etc.)**



Note: This is a summary of comments for each category.

Location: Civic Center Campus

A more general comment - please update City statutes / ordinances to allow people on bicycles to access the "unmaintained" trails in Minnetonka parks.

Location: 55XX Vine Hill Road, Minnetonka

Minnetonka should extend the path from Vine Hill to connect to the trail system behind the Minnetonka High School going into the Tamarack neighborhood. This is a very dangerous trek, especially when walking with children, to get to the path.

Location: Junction Park

Two tennis courts are in terrible shape. Would love to see both courts resurfaced with one court kept at tennis and the second court turned into two pickleball courts. The courts now are currently frequently used as off leash dog runs.

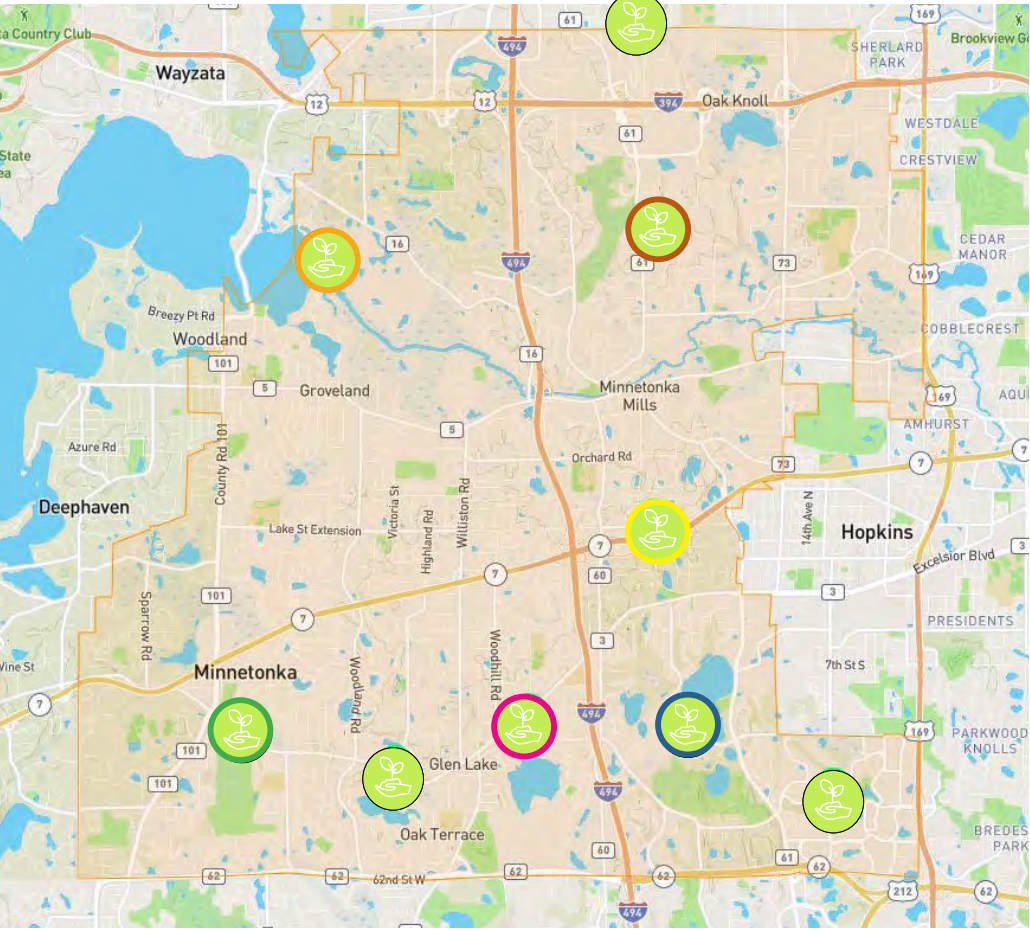
Location: Purgatory Park

The park appears to be saturated with memorial benches at this point. I would think we should stop this program going forward and initiate a new dedication program if desired. Perhaps an arched pagoda over by the entrance in the lawn area or by the barn.

Location: Big Willow Park

It would be great if there were nets around the outfield fences on all Big Willow baseball fields, but particularly the back two. The only parking available for people playing sports (soccer and softball) is right beyond the outfield fences. Everyone tries to park as far away as possible and crosses their fingers that they won't come back to a smashed windshield. I've seen a number of dented cars and smashed windshields from Softball players hitting home runs.

Where are there opportunities to improve the system or add new parks, open spaces, or trails?



Location: 43XX Briarwood Drive, Minnetonka
This would be a great place for a pedestrian/bike overpass of Hwy 7. These two neighborhoods are completely disconnected right now due to Hwy 7.

Location: 16XXX Grays Bay Boulevard, Minnetonka
Provide better access to Lake Minnetonka and Minnehaha Creek for non motor boat users.

Location: 12XXX Hilloway Road West, Minnetonka
Would absolutely love some kind of playground feature the Sherwood Forest neighborhood could walk to safely.

Location: Shady Oak Access
It would be nice if the city made the informal path that starts here and accesses the trail in Lone Lake Park official. It has been here a long time and right now we need some ground rules for it.

Location: Kinsel Park
Would like to see Kinsel park preserve be better maintained. Trails need work, picnic tables inaccessible, and maintain it in winter for winter walks, snowshoeing, X-skiing would be great.

Location: Purgatory Park
The city recently replaced a pipe draining polluted parking lot water and water from Excelsior Blvd to flow directly into the creek. This could have been an innovative project that showcased best management practices. Please consider a watershed partnership to fix this antiquated storm sewer system of dumping directly into water bodies.

Note: This is a summary of comments for each category.

STAKEHOLDER/COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS SUMMARY

STAKEHOLDER/ COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

HENNEPIN COUNTY FUNDED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

(275+)

PROJECT SUPPORT

The city received project support from Hennepin County Active Living funded through the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP), Minnesota Department of Health, to deepen community outreach and engagement. This support supplemented the planned engagement activities by adding additional resources to specifically engage underrepresented communities, including BIPOC, seniors, youth, and persons with disabilities.



STAKEHOLDER/COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

BIPOC

City staff from the city's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Group determined appropriate forums, methods and/or events to facilitate engagement with BIPOC communities. It was determined that conducting Listening Sessions was a good way to reach out to BIPOC communities. A listening session was conducted at the Al-Amaan Center on June 19th.

Apartment complexes were identified as places to reach out to the BIPOC community. An online survey e-blast to 37 apartment complex managers was sent out in June. In addition, at Night to Unite, pop-up events were held at various neighborhood gatherings at apartment complexes.

Youth

- Engagement with Treehouse Hope youth group - June 8th (~18 participants)
- Pop-up event at Shady Oak Beach to engage with youth - June 26th (~60 participants)
- Six visits to the Park Adventures camps in Minnetonka - June 29th/30th (60)

People with Disabilities

- An online survey e-blast was sent to Opportunity Partners, a nonprofit organization that works alongside people with disabilities to provide job training, employment and residential support for people to live more independently.

Seniors

- City staff met with the city's Senior Advisory Board to review online survey questions/topics to gain better insight and make adjustments to the survey. As a result, more natural resources questions were added to the survey as well as more questions regarding senior programming.
- City staff/project team provided hard copy surveys to senior groups/facilities to complete. Results were transferred to the online survey and the results tallied with the other online surveys.
- Outreach happened at city locations to reach out to seniors and people with disabilities, including multiple visits to the Community Center/Senior Services.
- An online survey e-blast was sent to the Senior Bike Club in June.

SELECT GENERAL COMMENTS FROM LISTENING SESSIONS

FIGURE 31: HOW DO YOU CURRENTLY USE MINNETONKA'S PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND TRAILS?



FIGURE 32: WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT MINNETONKA'S SYSTEM OF PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND TRAILS?



Treehouse Hope Youth Group Engagement Session

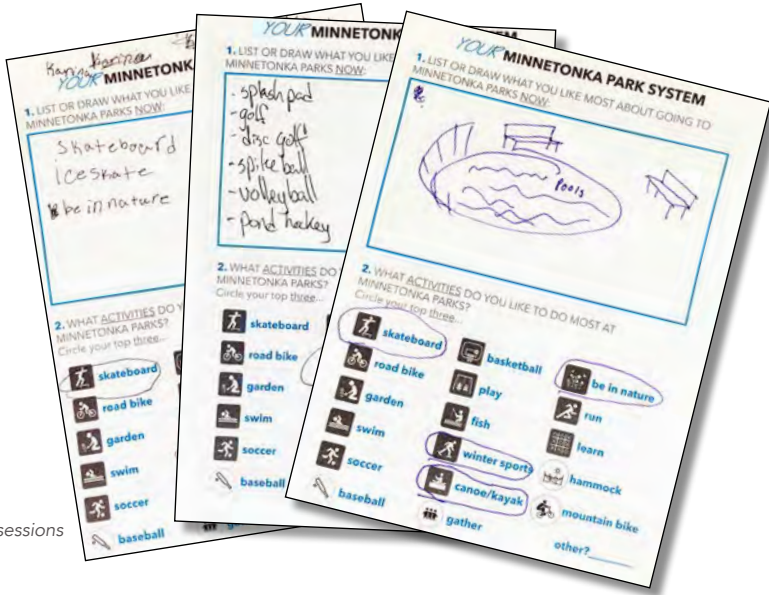


FIGURE 33: WHAT IS MISSING IN THE EXPERIENCE OF VISITING THE CITY'S SYSTEM OF PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND TRAILS?

What improvements could be made?

Are there other activities, features, facilities and/or programs that you would like to see offered?

- More shade
- More water parks
- More running tracks and fields
- More flexible/multi-use park space
- Indoor soccer facilities
- Climbing walls
- Youth Center
- Places to pray (indoor)
- Places for large gathering (200-300 people) w/kitchen & dining areas
- More picnic facilities with shade
- Grilling facilities



Visual surveys at stakeholder engagement sessions

FIGURE 34: DOES ANYTHING MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO VISIT MINNETONKA'S PARKS OR TRAILS, OR PARTICIPATE IN RECREATION PROGRAMS?

- Parks should be more accessible – ability to walk safely to parks
- City should advertise parks and park events better – with park images and in multiple languages
- Advertise through schools and direct mailers/fliers to multi-family housing units/apartments, particularly to under-served communities
- Include more multi-lingual park signage
- Create more opportunities for people to feel a sense of belonging and ownership of the parks

FIGURE 35: DO YOU FEEL SAFE AND WELCOME IN THE CITY'S PARKS AND TRAILS?

- WE FEEL SAFE AND WELCOME IN PARKS
- CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO FEEL A SENSE OF BELONGING AND OWNERSHIP OF THE PARKS

Summary - What We Heard

Using the information gathered from the listening sessions, community events, completion of the survey and interactive mapping, the most common feedback was grouped into three categories:

- > Perceptions of Existing Parks, Open Spaces and Trails
- > New/Additional Things to do in Minnetonka Parks, and
- > Highest Priority Issues/Themes.

Commonly heard themes within each category influenced specific recommendations for the final POST System plan.

PERCEPTIONS OF EXISTING PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND TRAILS

What We Heard

The following represents key findings from the engagement process focused on perceptions of existing parks, open spaces and trails:

- > Natural areas for passive recreation and trail connections are very important.
- > Parks with recreational amenities are important to park users.
- > A significant number of park users enjoy the parks on a weekly basis.
- > Few park users get to the park system via public transportation.
- > Top barriers to visiting parks and open spaces include off-leash dogs and lack of information about park amenities.
- > The majority of park visitors feel safe in the parks.
- > The majority of park users feel the parks and open spaces are in good to excellent condition.
- > Park users are enjoying the parks and open spaces both for recreation and to engage with nature.
- > Park users would like to see a balance between natural resource protection and access for recreation.
- > Park users prefer quality ice rinks over the number of ice rinks. Few survey participants support ice rinks throughout the city.



NEW/ADDITIONAL THINGS TO DO IN MINNETONKA PARKS

What We Heard

The following represents key findings from the desired future park, open space and trail programs and facilities:

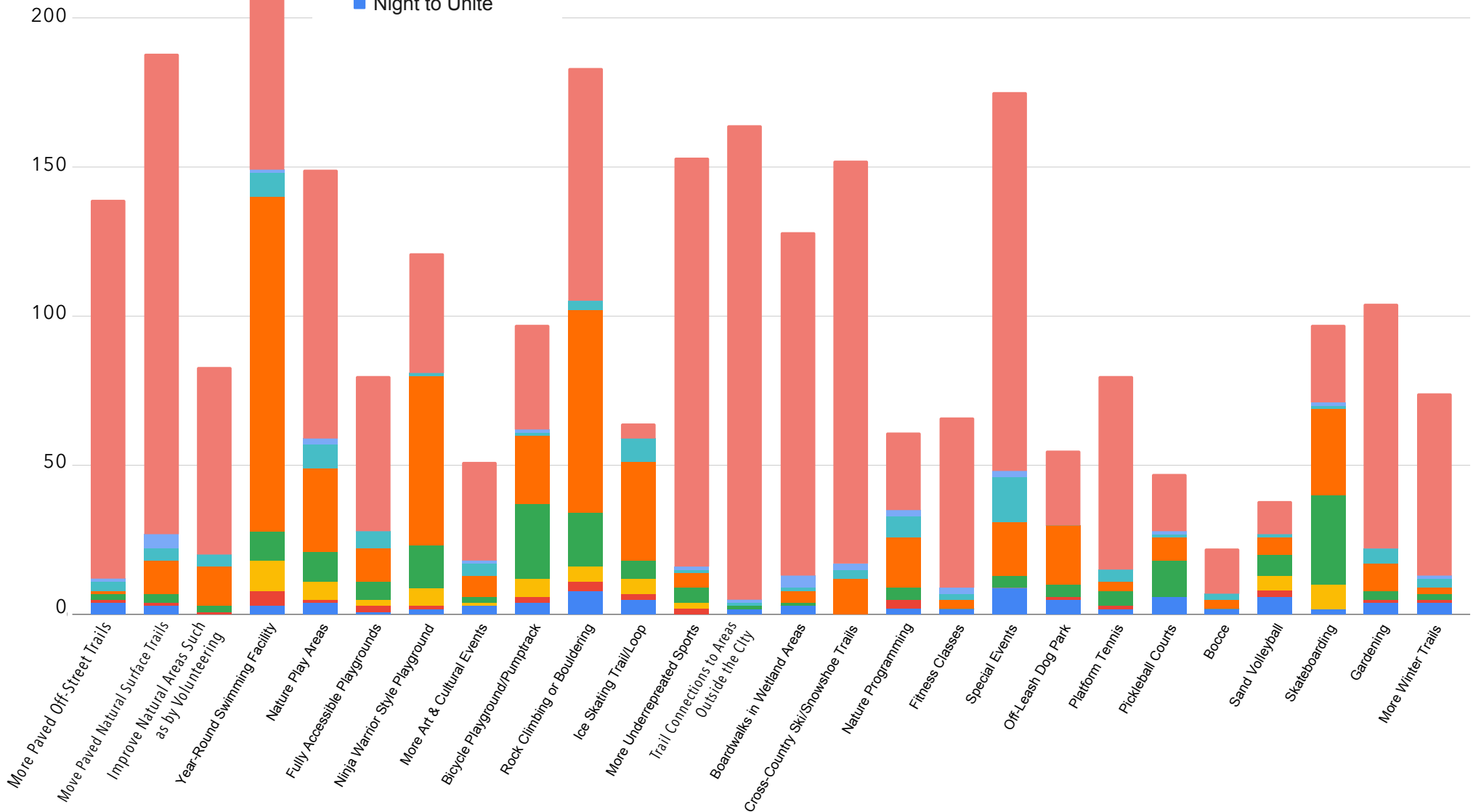
- > Provide a year-round swimming facility
- > Consider rock climbing or bouldering features in the parks
- > Provide more nature programming
- > Provide nature play areas in community and neighborhood parks
- > Prioritize flexible spaces for special event programming
- > Provide a more significant/permanent skateboarding park
- > Upgrade playgrounds to make them more accessible
- > Provide a Ninja Warrior playground
- > Provide more pickleball courts
- > Provide a bicycle playground/pump track
- > Consider programming for and providing off-leash dog parks
- > Enhance trail connections to parks and open spaces from existing trail systems
- > More natural surface trails
- > Provide more boardwalks in wetland areas.



- Survey
- Senior Center
- Farmers Market
- Park Adventures
- Shady Oak
- Treehouse Hope
- Al-Amaan Center
- Night to Unite

FIGURE 36: VOTING SUMMARY OF NEW/ADDITIONAL THINGS TO DO IN MINNETONKA PARKS FROM ALL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OUTREACH

This is a summary of voting from all the community engagement for new/additional things to do in the Minnetonka park system. These numbers include all of the community events, survey, and stakeholder/community conversations.



HIGHEST PRIORITY ISSUES/THEMES

What We Heard

The following represents key findings from the engagement process specific to the highest priorities and themes to consider in the POST System Plan:

- > New or improved recreational amenities
- > Rediscovering the creek
- > Connecting to nature
- > Iconic parks
- > Gathering and community building
- > High-quality natural areas
- > Environmental sustainability and resiliency
- > Connections to parks and trails



System Components and Condition

SYSTEM CONDITION OVERVIEW

The POST System Plan is based on the critical evaluation of the existing Minnetonka parks, open space and trail system components and their condition to meet current and future community needs. The evaluation is based on the following analysis: a review of existing conditions, community engagement input, comparison with national standards and comparable peer communities, emerging trends (see Chapter 2: Trends) and park system best practices. These evaluations are combined into a summary in this system components and condition section.

PARKS

The city has over 50 parks, composed of 1,293 acres (269 maintained and 1,024 natural), providing about 24 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This acreage exceeds the national standard of 14 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents (see Figure 37).

When compared with peer communities of similar-sized populations, Minnetonka has a comparable number of parks and acres of parkland. An analysis of neighborhood and community parks found that the city has succeeded in ensuring most residents are within a reasonable walking distance of a park. Over 70 percent of the population

lives within a 10-minute walk of a park, compared with the national average of 55 percent. Residential areas that are not within a 10-minute walk primarily exist on the edges of the community (see Figure 39). These identified gaps could be addressed through partnerships with schools, adjacent communities, and other agencies, or utilization of vacant city-owned property.

With the expected population growth within Minnetonka (a projected increase of almost 10,000 residents by 2040), the city should focus on serving areas that are outside a 10-minute walking distance to parks as well as anticipated developments with medium and high-density housing. In 2040, with the projected population increase, if the acres of parks and open space remain the same within the city (1,293 acres), the acres of parkland per 1,000 residents would lower from the current quantity of 24 acres per 1,000 residents to 20 acres per 1,000 residents (see Figure 38). This projection still exceeds the national average of 14 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

At existing parks, user amenities like consistent site furnishings, lighting, wifi, accessible facilities and upgrades to permanent restrooms are suggested potential improvements. Currently, there is no

FIGURE 37: ACRES OF PARKS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS IN MINNETONKA

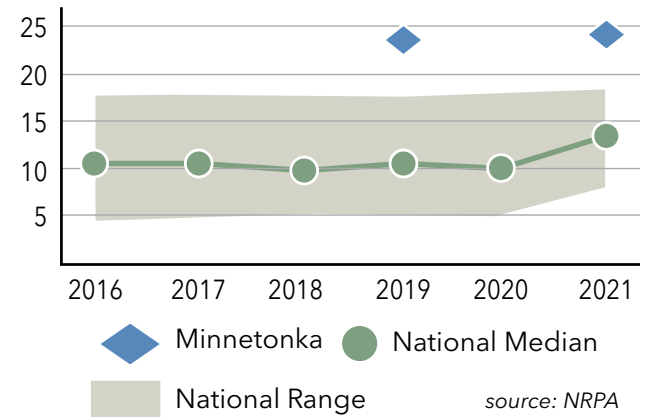


FIGURE 38: IMPACT OF EXPECTED POPULATION GROWTH ON ACRES OF PARKS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS PROJECTION

	Total acres of city	Total park acres within city limits	Acres of parks per 1,000 residents
Census population 2020 53,776	18,061	1,293	24
Forecasted population 2040 61,500	18,061*	1,293*	20
			National median 14

*Projection calculations for 2040 uses the same park acreage within city limits as existing conditions in 2020 as an exercise to demonstrate that acres per 1,000 residents would still be above national median with the projected population increase. This number of park acres within city limits may potentially change in the future.

consistent style of site furnishings including benches, tables, bicycle parking and light fixtures. Standard, system wide furnishings and lighting will enhance branding, create cohesiveness and improve the efficiency of operations and maintenance within the parks.

Improvements to the overall park system wayfinding signage are suggested. Currently, wayfinding and identity signage are minimal and dated at most of the city's parks and open spaces. Recommendations for signage include new, uniform and branded park entrance signs, increased interpretation signage, and increased wayfinding signage throughout the park, open space and trail system.



Park signage example - Covington Park



Bench example - Gro Tonka Park



Table at Ford Park



Mountain bike trail signage at Lone Lake Park



Warming house and restroom at Covington Park



Trash receptacle at Ford Park



Entrance sign at Green Circle Park



Informational sign about dog waste at Kinsel Park



Benches at Meadow Park

71% OF MINNETONKA RESIDENTS LIVE WITHIN A
10 MINUTE WALK OF A PARK
55% NATIONAL AVERAGE

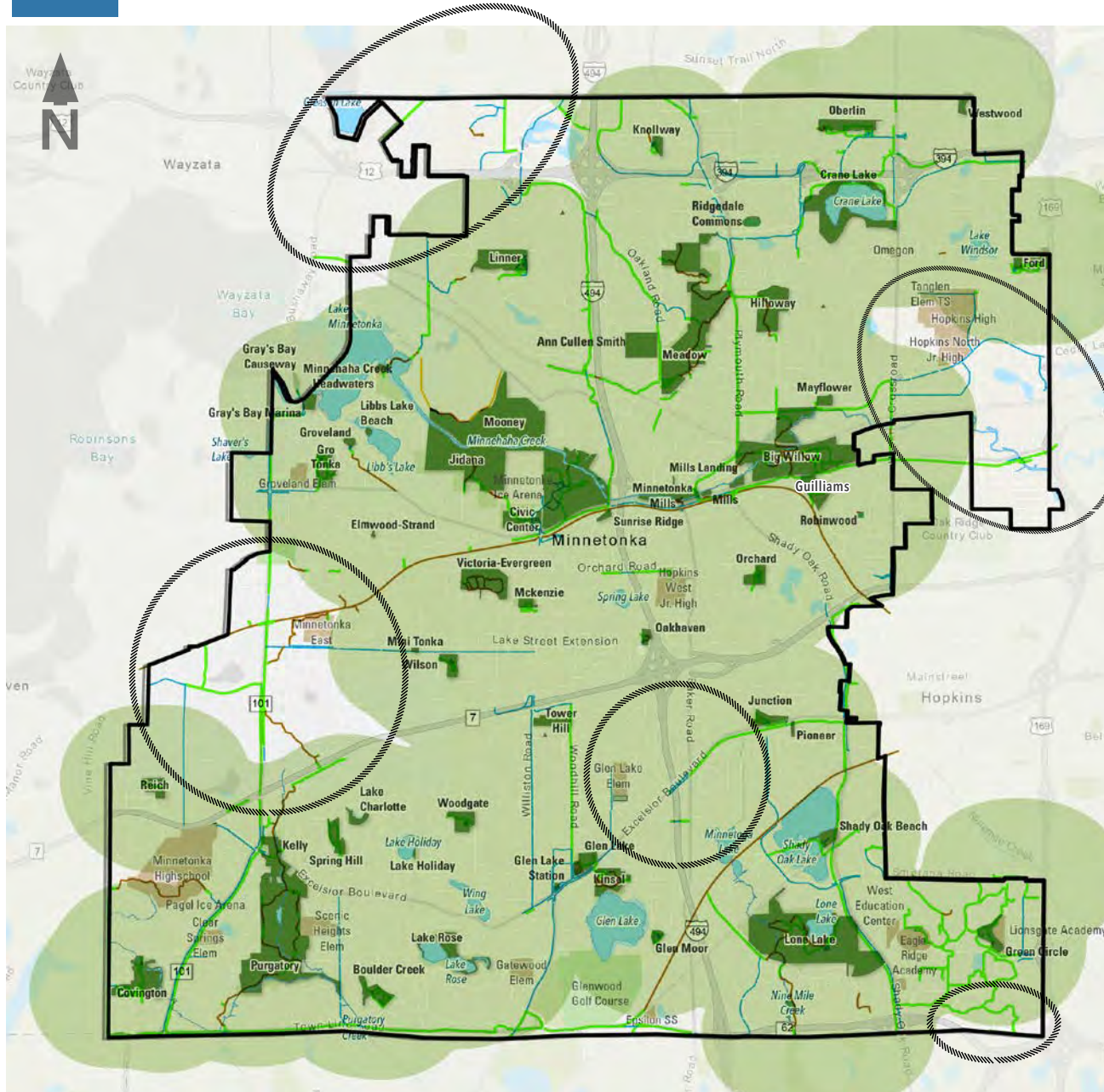


FIGURE 39: AREAS WITHIN 10-MINUTE WALK OF CITY PARKS

- City Parks
- 10 Minute Walk from City Park
- Identified Gaps

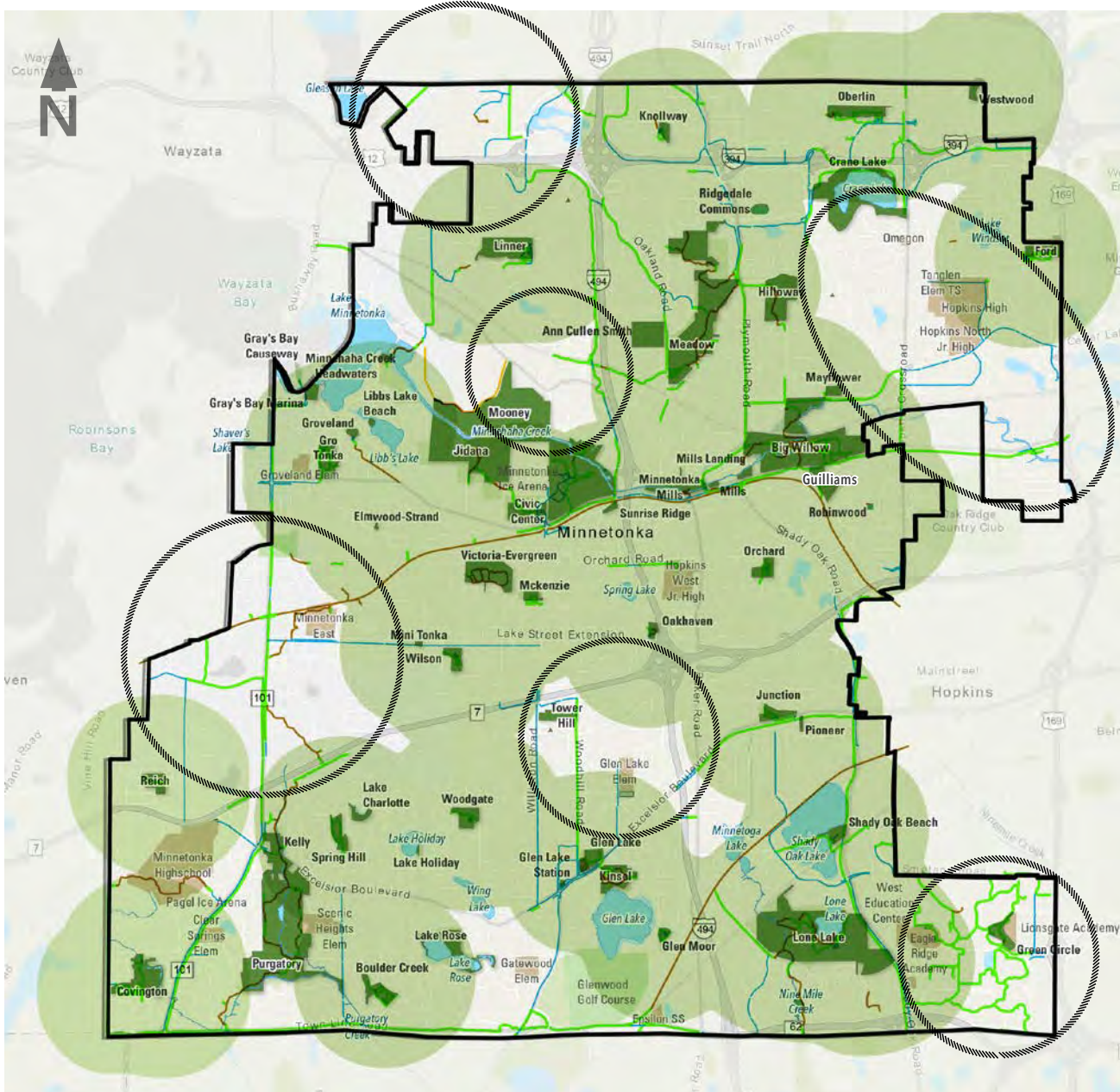





FIGURE 40: AREAS WITHIN 10-MINUTE WALK OF CITY PARKS WITH PLAYGROUNDS

-  City Parks
-  10 Minute Walk from City Park with Playground
-  Identified Gaps

FACILITIES

Minnetonka provides a wide range of facilities throughout its system. According to national standards and peer community comparisons, the number of facilities is generally adequate for the city's current size. As the city grows, aging facilities will need to be replaced to ensure that they continue to be located within a reasonable distance of high-density areas and that they address emerging trends.

The quantity of playgrounds is consistent with that of peer communities; however, based on an analysis of how play areas are distributed throughout the city, there are gaps in coverage, found primarily at city boundaries (see *Figure 40*). In these gaps, playgrounds are not within a 10-minute walk of residential areas. In some of these locations, schools and other private facilities offer playgrounds that

meet community needs; however, as the city population is projected to grow, the addition or replacement of playgrounds should focus on these underserved areas.

A strong desire identified in the community input was for the inclusion of nature-based play areas. Additionally, compromised accessibility was identified as an issue at many of the city's playgrounds. When renovating, upgrading, or building new playgrounds, the addition of nature-based play areas as well as expanding universal access to play areas should be considered. These strategies will help diversify playground experiences in the community and enhance equitable access.

During the community engagement process, a strong desire was expressed for more picnic shelters. The current distribution of picnic

Glossary: Facility

A built feature in a park or preserve that adds, supports or enhances a recreation activity.

shelters leaves a gap in coverage in the core of the city between Minnetonka Boulevard and Highway 7.

An examination of traditional athletic facilities, such as diamonds and rectangular fields indicates they are well distributed throughout the city. Community needs are enhanced by a number of private association and public school fields and athletic complexes.

Informal sports facilities, such as tennis, basketball and open playfields, are well distributed through the community (see *Figure 43-44*). When compared with peer communities, Minnetonka provides more than the average numbers of facilities including basketball, pickleball and multi-use courts. In the engagement process, additional pickleball courts and multi-use fields were



Playground example - Gro Tonka Park



Example of a natural play area



Picnic shelter at Meadow Park

requested. These requests should be considered as renovations, upgrades or new construction occurs.

Currently, the number of outdoor ice rink facilities exceeds peer communities. Consolidating ice rinks should be considered due to maintenance and cost concerns as well as the effects of climate change. Feedback from the community survey was supportive of this idea (see *Figure 29*).

The community requested more year-round recreation and community facilities for group gatherings and programs, as well as additional fitness facilities and classes, meeting rooms, family activity opportunities, and children’s programming. Input from the community also favored more aquatic amenities, such as a community pool and an outdoor splash pad.

Maintenance and replacement of aging parks and support facilities should be a priority over the next 20 years to meet both current needs and those expected as population increases, ages and diversifies. New construction and renovations should incorporate emerging trends that have the community support such as a dog park, a splash pad, a ninja course, a bouldering wall, a bicycle pump track, a skate park and/or a nature play area. Many of these amenities will require major capital investment and require further study.



Baseball and softball fields at Big Willow Park



Pickleball courts at Lone Lake Park



Outdoor ice rinks in Minnetonka

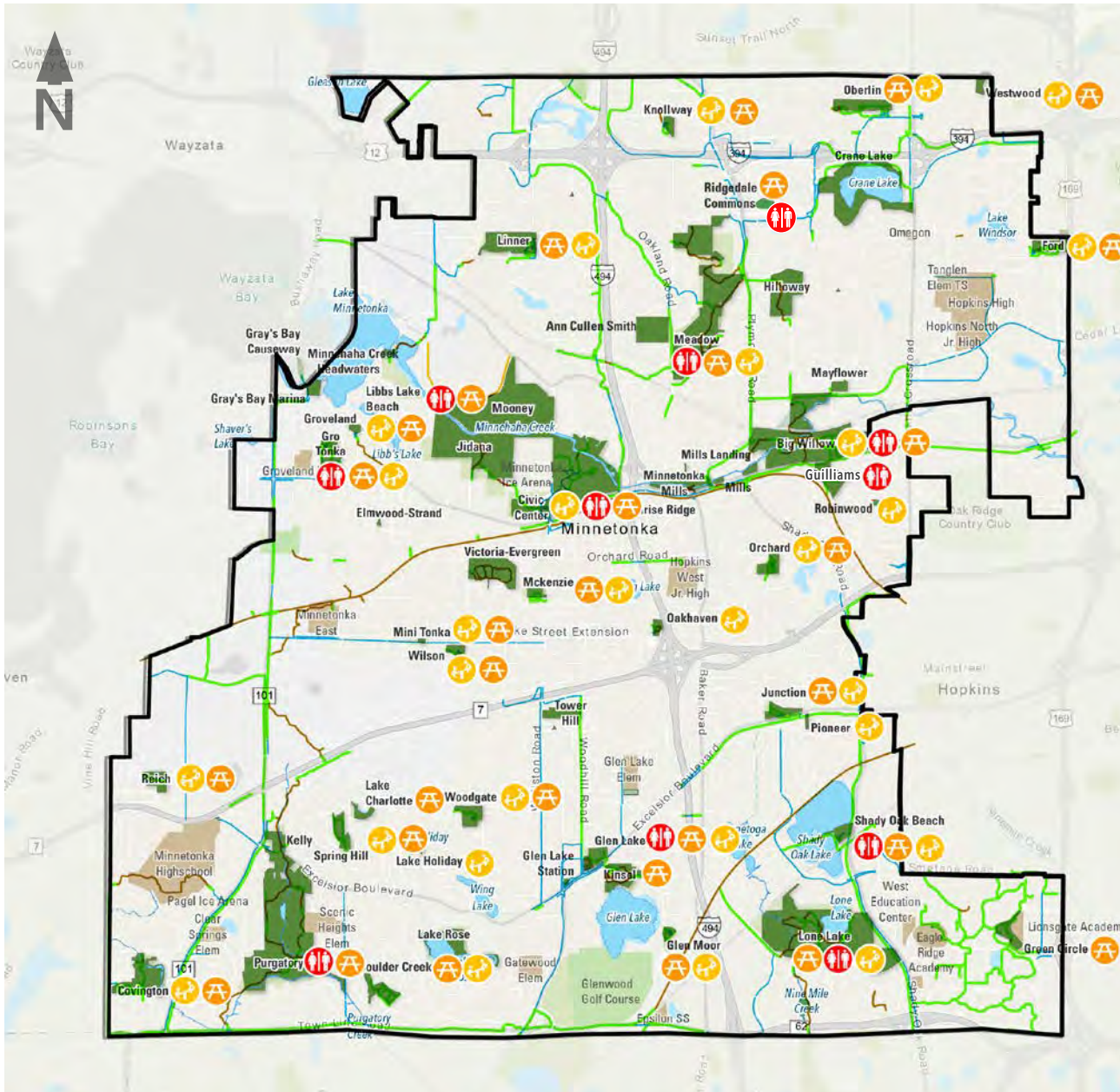





FIGURE 41: FAMILY FACILITIES

-  PERMANENT RESTROOM
-  PICNIC AREA
-  PLAY EQUIPMENT
-  CITY PARK

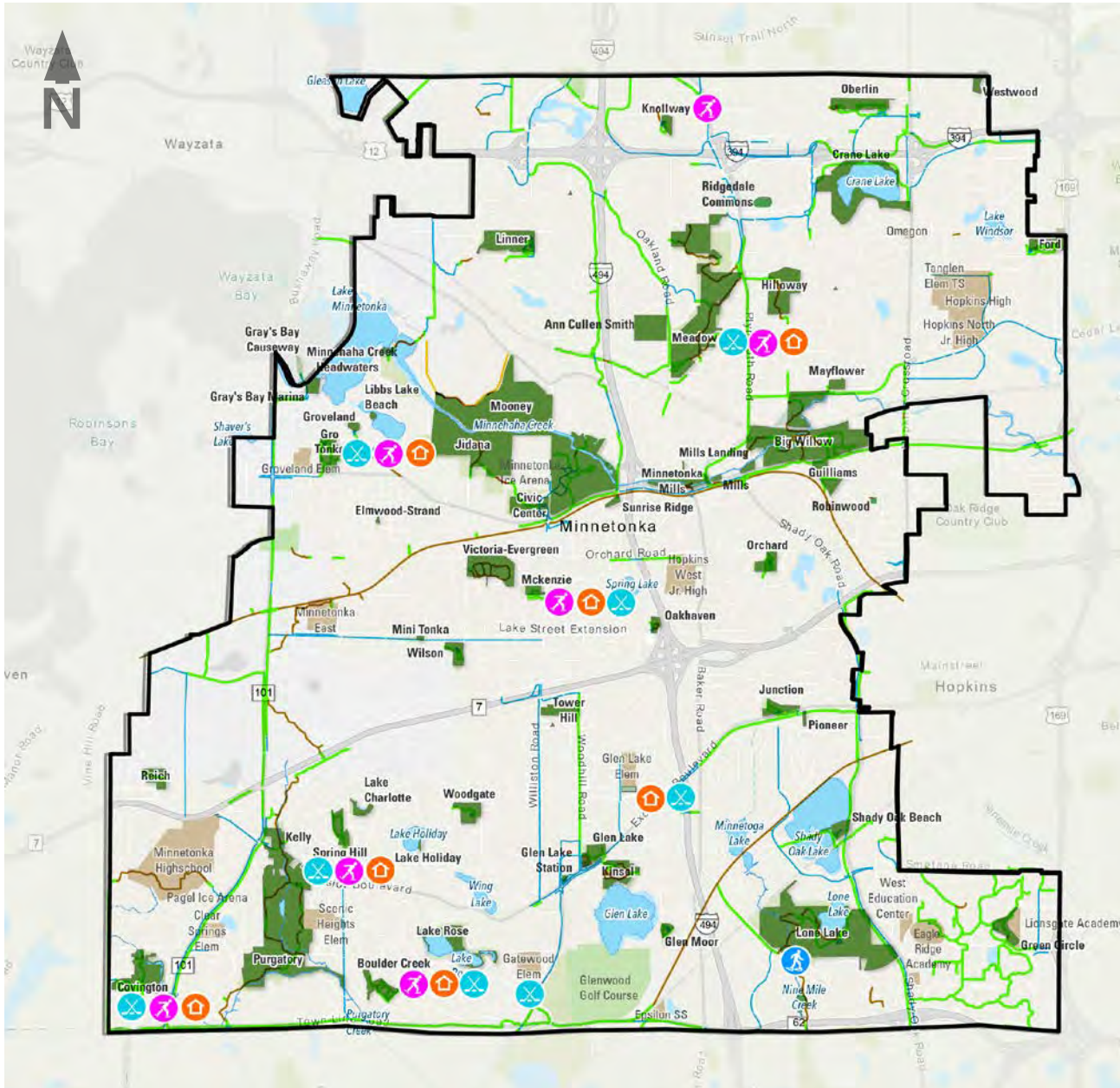


FIGURE 42: WINTER OUTDOOR FACILITIES

-  OUTDOOR HOCKEY
-  SNOWSHOEING
-  GENERAL SKATING
-  WARMING HOUSE
-  CITY PARK

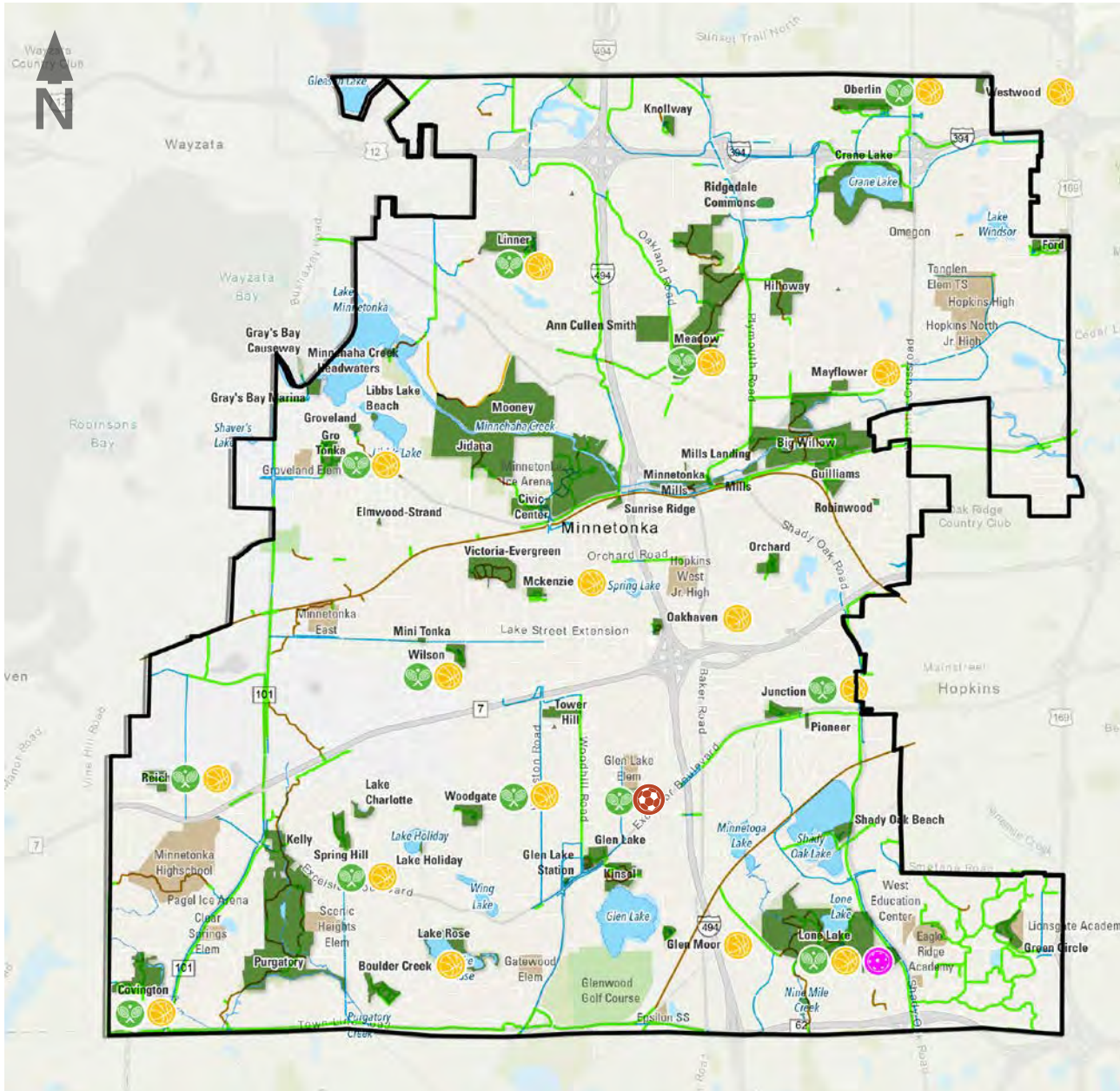







FIGURE 43: HARDCOURT FACILITIES

-  BASKETBALL
-  TENNIS
-  PICKLEBALL
-  FUTSAL
-  CITY PARK

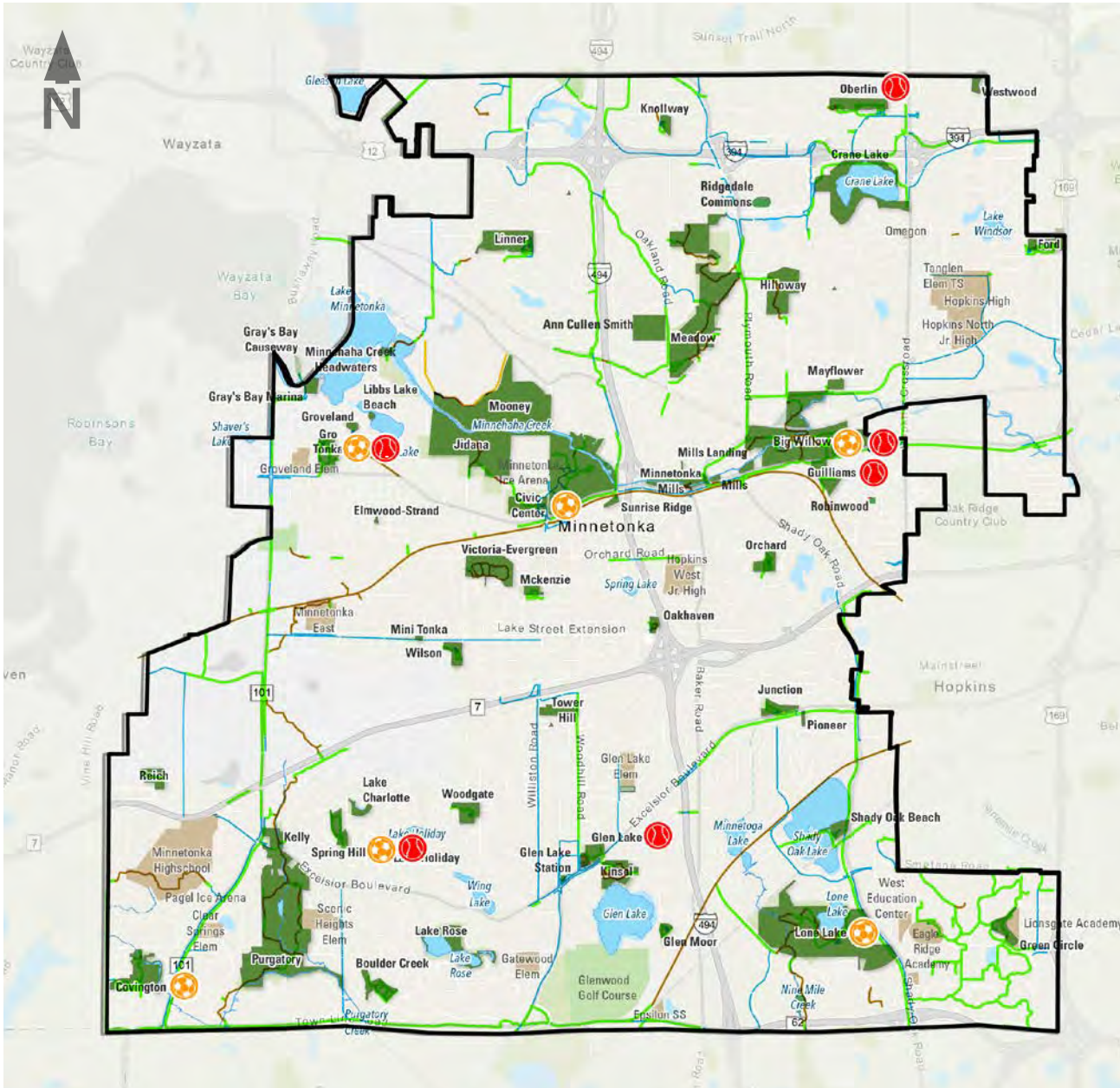





FIGURE 44: CITY-OWNED ATHLETIC FIELDS

-  BASEBALL/SOFTBALL
-  SOCCER/FOOTBALL
-  CITY PARK

PRESERVES AND OPEN SPACE

Minnetonka's natural resources are unique and distinguishing. These natural resources are a highly cherished component of the city. More than 20 percent of the city's land area is classified as wetlands and lakes. The city has more than 1,000 acres of natural public open spaces, including many preserves (see *Figure 9*).

In 2021, the city developed and implemented an updated Natural Resources Master Plan (NRMP), a high-level guiding document focused on three main goals: improving habitat, protecting Minnetonka's community forests and engaging the public in those efforts. This POST System Plan supports and upholds the goals and objectives of the NRMP within parks and open spaces in the city. The guidelines, goals and initiatives within the POST System Plan include advancing environmental sustainability and resiliency and focusing on the preservation and protection of natural resources. General goals of this philosophy include:

- » Preserve, protect and restore natural resources by supporting environmental stewardship and conservation and focus on the long-term sustainability of the park system.

- » Promote environmental resilience throughout the park system to address the effects of climate change.
- » Engage and support volunteers to expand capabilities and environmental stewardship.
- » Balance the preservation of Minnetonka's natural resources with recreational opportunities that build stewardship for users to preserve, restore and educate.
- » Foster environmental, social and economic sustainability that protects Minnetonka's water and natural resources.

Community input revealed that there is a strong desire to continue to preserve, protect and restore natural areas. High-quality natural areas were selected as one of the top priorities to include in the POST System Plan. There was also a communicated need for more natural surface trails within parks and the opportunity to connect with nature.



Purgatory Park



Kinsel Park

TRAILS

The city's more than 100 miles of trails are an asset to the park system and larger community. Trails are an essential component of an accessible recreation system. The trails are managed by the city's Public Works Department.

This POST System Plan supports and upholds the goals and priorities outlined in the City of Minnetonka Trail Improvement Plan (TIP). The TIP builds upon the existing trail infrastructure already in place within the city to create a comprehensive system of trails that provide recreational value as well as pedestrian and bicycle linkages throughout the city. The TIP includes a ranking system to prioritize unfunded trail segments for proposed trails within Minnetonka. The proposed future trail segments include areas of identified gaps in the system and connections to adjacent cities and regional trails. Prioritization ranking is calculated based on: degree of difficulty, cost-effectiveness, nature of use and community access. The overriding goals of the city trail system is to"

- » Develop an interlinking, looped trail system throughout the city and interconnect with other local, state and regional trail systems

- » Provide reasonable trail access to the natural resource amenities within the community without unduly compromising their integrity and natural qualities.
- » Provide trail linkages from the looped system to neighborhoods and, where feasible, individual parks.

Community input found that respondents strongly support trails within the city. There is a desire for more natural surface trails and boardwalks to connect with nature within the parks and trail connections to neighboring communities.

The existing conditions analysis found that there are areas where trail surfaces are in poor condition and lack ADA compliance. Additionally, there are gaps that could be filled to provide more complete connectivity. Trail priorities and reducing gaps in trail linkages are addressed in the TIP.



City of Minnetonka Trail Improvement Plan (TIP)



Trail in Purgatory Park

PROGRAMMING

Recreational opportunities for youth and adults are available in Minnetonka's park system year-round, including programmed and non-programmed and activities. The Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation Services program provides recreational services to Minnetonka and Hopkins residents through a joint agreement, dedicated to developing, promoting and providing programs and facilities that respond directly to the recreational needs and interests in the community.

The department is divided into a number of areas of responsibility, which include:

- » Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation – responsible for providing recreation programming for residents of Hopkins and Minnetonka.
- » Ice Arena Management – responsibilities include scheduling, maintenance and supervision of the City's two ice arenas.
- » Facility Management – responsible for the scheduling and supervision of events at the Minnetonka Community Center and Glen Lake Activity Center.
- » Williston Center – responsible for the operation of the Williston Center starting in 1995.

- » Additional departmental responsibilities include: organization of the Minnetonka Summer Fest, scheduling of city-owned athletic fields, interaction with Park Board activities, and distribution of program brochures.

Through Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation Services, a wide variety of programs are offered for all ages and abilities. Coupled with the offerings of the local athletic associations and community education, residents have a vast array of recreation programs in which to participate. *Table 3* includes a list of the types of programs offered throughout the year.

Ongoing goals and priorities of the Recreation Services include:

- » Continuing to provide recreation programs that serve community needs.
- » Working effectively with local associations and school districts to provide a full palette of recreational opportunities for residents.
- » Maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of facility use given the limited opportunity and cost to develop new facilities.

Program development and evaluation should continue to identify participant needs not currently addressed in programming. For example, community input indicates the desire for more nature-based programming.

Community events such as the Summer Fest and Kids' Fest as well as the seasonal weekly farmers' market are very popular. Community input indicates a desire to expand these community event offerings.

Community input also requested increased advertising and communication about parks and recreation programming, especially in under-served areas and areas of higher population density.

TABLE 3: HOPKINS-MINNETONKA RECREATION SERVICES PROGRAMS

Preschool & Youth Programs

- > Arts and Crafts
- > Camps
 - Skyhawks
 - Baseball
 - Skateboard
 - Lacrosse
 - Jidana Day Camp
 - Basketball
 - Soccer
 - Cheerleading
 - Music
 - Chess
 - Safety
 - Rugby
- > Dance
- > Hop-Kids
 - Flag Football
 - T-Ball
 - Golf
 - Soccer
 - Sports Medley
 - Fishing
 - Sports Sampler
 - Bowling
 - Dance
 - Amazing Athletes
 - Wrestling
- > Kids Corner
- > Martial Arts
- > Music
- > Swimming Lessons
- > Sports
 - Tennis
 - Lessons
 - Clinics
 - Basketball League
 - Soccer League
- > Technology

Teen Programs

- > Paintball
- > Canoeing
- > Horseback Riding
- > Log Rolling
- > Kayaking
- > Zipline
- > iFly

Adult Programs

- > Badminton
- > Fitness
 - TRX Training
 - Boot Camp
 - Run Club
 - Yoga
 - Pilates
 - Cycling
 - Personal Training
- > Martial Arts
- > Paddleboarding
- > Pickleball clinics
- > Yoga
- > Tennis
 - Leagues
 - Lessons
 - Clinics
 - Camps
- > Sports Leagues
 - Basketball
 - Broomball
 - Kickball
 - Soccer
 - Softball
 - Volleyball

Senior Programs

- > Arts & Crafts
 - > Bird Club
 - > Bridge
 - > Canoe Trips
 - > Day Trips
 - > Education
 - History
 - Astronomy
 - Presentations
 - Computer
 - Nature
 - > Fitness
 - Yoga
 - T'ai Chi
 - Line Dance
 - Over 50 and fit
 - Meditation
 - Bike Club
 - Golf League
 - Softball
 - > Hikes
 - > Lunch and a movie
 - > Mahjonn
 - > Memory Café
 - > Dementia Friends
 - > Monthly parties
 - > Travel Showcases
- #### Special Events
- > Night to Unite Dance
 - > Kids' Fest
 - > Parking Lot Bingo
 - > Spring Eggstravaganza
 - > Summer Fest
 - > Burwell Spooktacular



Minnetonka Kids' Fest



Minnetonka Summer Fest



Senior programming by Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation Services

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

The city's Public Works Department is an all-encompassing department responsible for the operations and maintenance of the city's infrastructure including parks, open spaces and trails. Routine functions of the Public Works Department relative to parks, open spaces and trails include:

- > Turf Management
- > Park and Trail Routine Maintenance
- > Playground Safety Inspections
- > General Park Inspections
- > Snow Removal
- > Park and Trail Upgrades
- > Natural Resources Stewardship Program
- > Hockey / Skating Rink Maintenance
- > Park and Recreation Buildings/Special Facilities Maintenance
- > Recreational Facilities Coordination and Setup
- > Coordinate Volunteer Programs
- > Urban Forest Management
- > Reforestation Program
- > Natural Resources Education, Outreach and Volunteer Program

The responsibilities of the Public Works department and the effort to stay within established operating budgets is an ongoing challenge. Establishing priorities is fundamental to meeting the needs of the

community in a fiscally responsible way. Expectations of performance must be aligned with overall budgets and available resources.

To reduce costs, the city has partnered with various associations, organized user groups and volunteers for making improvements to and maintaining park facilities throughout the city.

ACCESSIBILITY

To meet the needs of existing and future users, Minnetonka must continue to prioritize and expand accessibility. An analysis of existing conditions revealed that improved accessibility is needed for many of the city's play areas, trails, and other park facilities. To ensure that everyone has equal access to parks, open spaces, trails, facilities and programs, the city is committed to increasing the accessibility of its park system. These steps include:

- > Modifications to improve the accessibility of existing trails where feasible and appropriate.
- > All new trails and sidewalks will be built to ADA standards whenever possible.
- > Engage advocates for people with disabilities during planning for parks, open spaces and trails.

- > Make adjustments to the height and placement of signs to be ADA compatible where feasible.
- > Play areas and other facilities should have ramps, guardrails, and accessible pathways where possible and appropriate.
- > Improve parking areas to facilitate increased accessibility.
- > Create accessible maps and informational materials.
- > Provide and expand adaptive recreation programming and partnerships with organizations.
- > ADA compatible play equipment should be included in community and neighborhood parks dispersed throughout the city as part of any replacement, renovation, or new playground construction projects



Play area at Covington Park

FIGURE 45: AREAS OF NEED

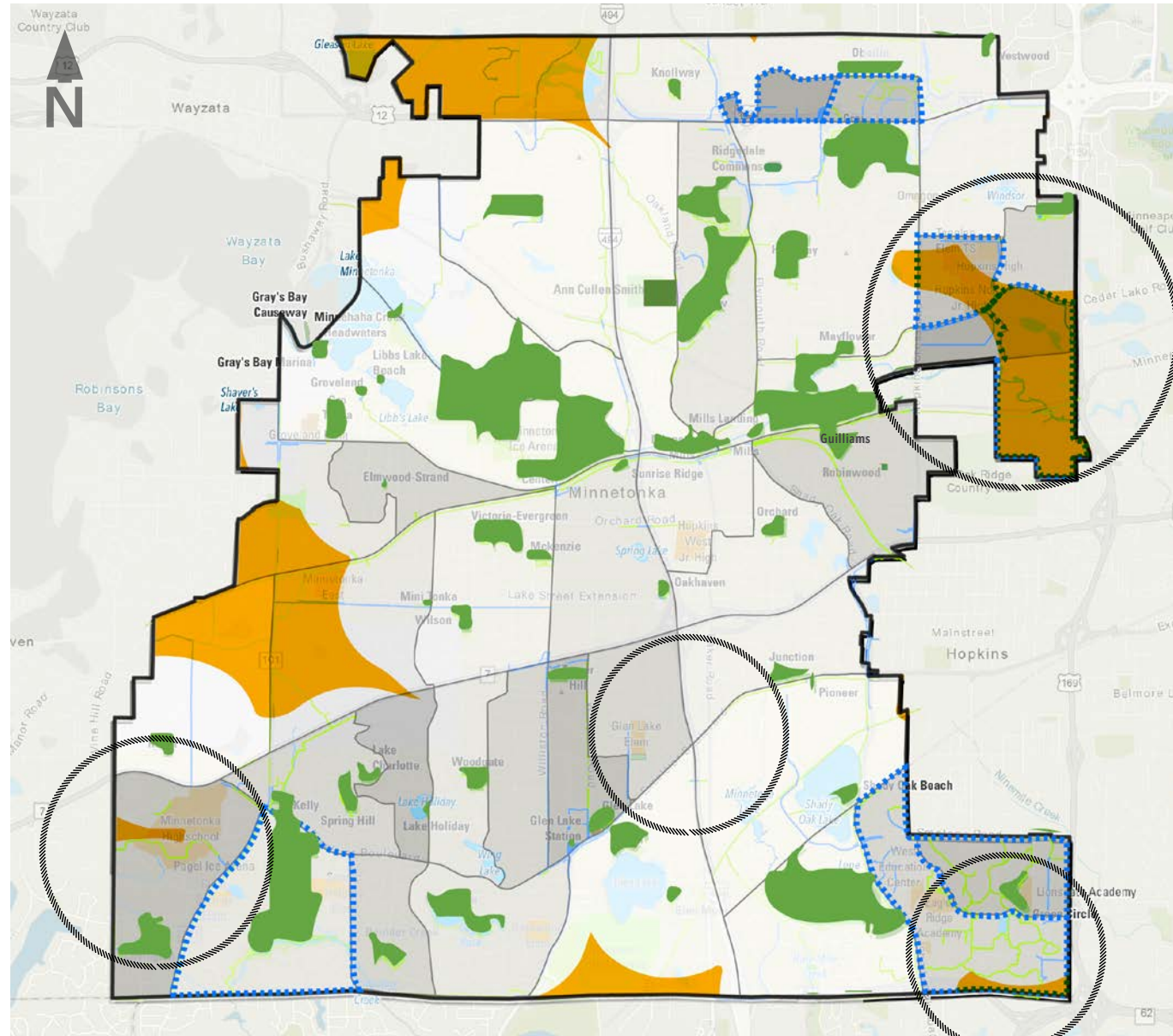


AREAS OF NEED

Existing conditions analysis identified potential areas of need within the city’s park system. The evaluation process began by identifying and mapping the following characteristics:

- > Areas of higher density housing
- > Areas of high minority populations
- > Areas that are greater than a 10-minute walk to a city park or open space within Minnetonka

Figure 45: Areas of Need shows an overlay of these characteristics on a map. Potential areas of need were identified in places where two to three of the characteristics are present. Potential gaps for areas outside of a 10-minute walk of parks and playgrounds can also be found in Figures 39 and 40, respectively. School districts, facilities owned or operated by private associations, and relationships with neighboring communities can provide access to parks, facilities and programs to meet some of these needs and gaps within the park system. However, in light of the city’s projected population growth, future studies should consider these areas for their potential needs.



An aerial rendering of a park plaza. In the center, there is a green food truck with a white awning. To its right, several white tables are arranged in a grid pattern. People are scattered throughout the plaza, some walking and some standing. In the background, there is a large, curved building with a glass facade. To the right, there are wooden bleachers. The entire scene is surrounded by trees and greenery.

POST System Plan



Chapter 4 describes the vision for the future of the park system and states the mission statement and guiding principals which will influence it's continued evolution.

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CHAPTER 4 | VISION

UPDATED MISSION

As the City of Minnetonka changes over the next two decades, the quality of its parks, natural areas, trails and programs must evolve. New opportunities will be revealed, along with new challenges. Sustaining a welcoming, comprehensive and balanced park system throughout this evolution will require a vision founded with a shared community mission statement and set of guiding principles.

The mission and guiding principles included here were developed based on significant community engagement efforts with the general public, key stakeholders, city leadership and others. These efforts were combined with the existing conditions analysis and the needs assessment outlined in Chapter 3 to coalesce into a comprehensive vision for the future of Minnetonka open spaces.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Minnetonka Parks, Open Space and Trail System Plan is to be leaders in providing a welcoming, comprehensive and balanced system of high quality parks, natural areas, trails and programs for all to enjoy.



Theater in the Park - Civic Center Park



Burwell House



Shady Oak Beach

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles will shape the implementation of the POST System Plan within the Minnetonka parks and recreation system.



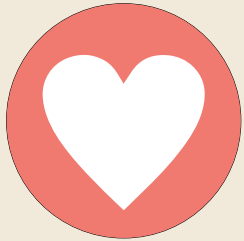
ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

- Preserve, protect and restore natural resources by supporting environmental stewardship and conservation, while building long-term sustainability of the park system.
- Promote environmental resilience throughout the park system to address the effects of climate change.
- Engage and support volunteers to expand capabilities and environmental stewardship.
- Balance the preservation of Minnetonka’s natural resources with recreational opportunities that build stewardship for users to preserve, restore and educate.
- Foster environmental, social and economic sustainability that protects Minnetonka’s water and natural resources.
- Support and uphold the goals, practices and policies of the City of Minnetonka’s Natural Resources Master Plan.



PROVIDE CONNECTIONS TO PARKS, TRAILS AND PROGRAMS

- Improve accessibility to park facilities and programs by reducing physical and financial barriers.
- Ensure parks and open spaces are safe, accessible, bike and pedestrian friendly for both active and passive recreation.
- Provide safe connections to parks, open spaces, and trails.
- Increase connectivity to neighboring communities of Minnetonka.
- Expand opportunities for social gathering through park facilities and programming.
- Link the community together through quality parks, trails, recreation facilities and programs.
- Promote and advertise park programs and events within neighborhoods and diverse communities.
- Service youth and adult athletics by providing high quality facilities strategically located throughout the city.



PROMOTE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- Support mental and physical health and well-being by providing a diversity of quality facilities and parks, open spaces, and trails to support life-long activity and meet the social needs of the community.
- Support healthy living by providing a well-connected pedestrian and bicycling network throughout the community.
- Offer facilities, programming and education to support healthy lifestyle choices.
- Support the desire and ability to stay healthy, active and engaged in the community.



PROMOTE EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- Ensure equitable distribution of parks, facilities and open spaces throughout the community.
- Prioritize equity throughout the parks, open space and trail system to support all users, celebrate diversity and embrace inclusiveness.
- Expand community engagement in current and future park planning to traditionally underrepresented groups including seniors, youth, BIPOC and people with disabilities to ensure the park system will be an asset for the whole community.
- Create a multi-generational park system that builds community, attracts young families, and supports aging in place.
- Prioritize and address accessibility issues throughout the park system to minimize physical, financial, and social barriers.



SUPPORT EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

- Provide a variety of innovative, new or improved active and passive park amenities and programs that are accessible to all park users.
- Create parks with amenities and programming for all seasons.
- Meet increasing demand for informal and passive recreation opportunities.
- Maintain park system quality, condition and safety.
- Strengthen collaboration with neighborhoods, associations, agencies, schools and volunteers.
- Explore opportunities for partnerships to fund parks, open spaces and trails, restore natural areas and maintain facilities, programs and events.
- Maintain flexibility to re-purpose parks facilities to address changing trends and park user needs.
- Parks, open spaces and trails will retain their excellence through timely and ongoing maintenance.

POST System Plan



The system plan recommendations are intended to support the vision and guiding principles expressed in Chapter 4. The recommendations describe the desired outcomes for the park system's guiding principles to be achieved over the next 15 to 20 years.

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CHAPTER 5 | SYSTEM PLAN

The POST System Plan recommendations were prepared based on key takeaways from community input, needs assessment, review of the comprehensive plan and other related documents and policies, technical advisory committee discussions and input received from the park board. The recommendations are organized into goals and initiatives intended to support the vision and guiding principles expressed in Chapter 4. **Goals** are high-level statements that describe the desired outcomes necessary for implementation of the guiding principles over the next 15 to 20 years. **Initiatives** describe the general course of action that will guide city decision making to achieve stipulated goals.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Environmental sustainability and resiliency in the POST system focuses on the preservation and protection of natural resources. It supports environmental stewardship and conservation while building long-term sustainability of the park system. This includes a wide range of activities aimed at reducing consumption of natural resources, minimizing impacts to waterways and natural areas, promoting sustainable management of resources and building stewardship through the practice of preservation, restoration and education. With approximately 1,300 acres of parkland including a majority of natural open spaces and over 100 miles of trails, there are many opportunities to positively impact the City's ecosystem and be a model for sustainability and resiliency. The goals and initiatives presented here are in support of the goals outlined in the City of Minnetonka Natural Resources Master Plan (NRMP) and the Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP).

> Highlighted initiatives can also be found in the city's Natural Resources Master Plan (NRMP).

Goal 1: Promote sustainable design practices and build environmental resiliency into the park system to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Initiatives:

- > Increase biodiversity in parks and open spaces and utilize native plant species more adaptable to climate change.
- > Explore ways to integrate green infrastructure into parks to manage stormwater runoff generated from rainfall.
- > Consider ways to create multi-functional park spaces that incorporate environmental benefits including habitat, stormwater management, air quality, thermal heat island, etc.
- > Develop sustainability education campaigns to educate residents on the benefits of minimizing chemical use and reduced park maintenance in

strategic areas that may have significant environmental value.

- > Improve bicycle and pedestrian access to parks to encourage alternative modes of transportation to parks, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality and promoting healthy lifestyle choices.
- > Use sustainable building practices when developing, expanding, or renovating park facilities.
- > Improve energy efficiency when renovating or constructing new facilities.
- > Showcase sustainability best practices in the parks such as water and energy conservation practices, green infrastructure, native and pollinator plantings, etc. in highly visible locations accessible to the public.
- > Raise awareness about sustainability and best practices through social media, educational programs, interpretive elements and marketing information.
- > Develop a park resilience action plan as part of any city-wide efforts to efficiently adapt to climate change effects.
- > Continue to engage and support

volunteers and community groups to expand capabilities and encourage environmental stewardship.

Goal 2: Reduce negative impacts to Minnetonka's waterways and natural resources.

Initiatives:

- > Incorporate stormwater best practices (rain gardens, bio-swales, water retention, native landscaping and permeable paving) in park and facility design.
- > Explore the use of permeable surfaces in the future design of parks and park facilities.
- > Establish native vegetation buffers around wetlands, creeks, ponds and lakes on park land to filter stormwater runoff.
- > Incorporate natural streambank erosion control methods.
- > Continue to manage the use of chemical herbicides and pesticides to control weed and insect problems.
- > Protect, preserve and restore high quality waterways and natural resources.



Example of incorporating stormwater best practices



Example utilization of native plant species

Goal 3: Balance the preservation of Minnetonka's natural resources with recreational programs and facilities.

Initiatives:

- > Create an equitable balance between the preservation of Minnetonka's natural resources with the development of recreational programs and facilities.
 - > Limit development in park preserves to improvements that support passive uses or address water quality and habitat.
 - > Prioritize the development of recreational programs and facilities in already developed areas of parks or low-quality natural areas.
 - > Balance natural resource protection with human use and access for recreation.
 - > Continue to protect, preserve and restore sensitive lands within the city's park preserves.
- > Continue to minimize the application of chemicals to turf to reduce leaching of chemicals into ground and surface water.
 - > Offer recycling programs/facilities in neighborhood, community, athletic and special use parks.
 - > Utilize integrated pest management strategies to control nuisance plants, weeds, insects, rodents, etc.
 - > Explore options to implement a turf conversion program to transition underutilized turf areas to forest or other native ground cover.
 - > Continue to implement vegetation management practices to protect water quality.
 - > Design future parks and park improvements to include low maintenance, durable and recycled materials as much as possible.

Goal 4: Promote sustainable maintenance practices.

Initiatives:

- > Utilize native plant materials to reduce maintenance and irrigation needs.



Explore options to implement a turf conversion program to forest or other native ground cover



Limit development in park preserves to improvements that support passive uses or address water quality and habitat.



Offer recycling programs/facilities in neighborhood, community, athletic, and special use parks

CONNECTIONS TO PARKS AND TRAILS

Access to parks, natural areas and outdoor recreation is vital to the long-term sustainability and livability of a community. Parks, open spaces and trails enhance property values, provide community gathering places, provide environmental benefits and opportunities for people to connect with nature. They contribute to more active lifestyles throughout the community and reduce the need for automobile transportation. Providing better access to parks and trails will contribute to a higher quality of life for park users. The recommendations provided here offer a guide for not only enhancing connections to parks and trails, but also ways for community members to better connect with each other and with nature.

Goal 1: Ensure all park users have safe and convenient access to parks, open spaces and trails.

Initiatives:

- > Implement trail recommendations provided in the City's Trail Improvement Plan and explore options to accelerate funding for trail improvements.
 - > Prioritize the elimination of gaps in the city's trail, bikeway and sidewalk system to better connect park users to parks, open spaces and trails.
- > Enhance trail connections to parks and open spaces from existing trail systems.
 - > Explore options to improve pedestrian crossing safety at roadway intersections that connect people to parks, open spaces and trails (i.e. traffic calming, traffic signals, marked crossings, signage, lighting, etc.) with future projects.
 - > Emphasize safety, convenience and comfort when designing new trails or rebuilding those that already exist.
 - > Improve connections to public transportation facilities near parks and trails.
 - > Increase awareness and expanded trail use through maps and trail wayfinding to help identify locations, destinations and distances.
 - > Reduce financial and physical barriers to access parks, facilities and programs.
 - > Improve access for people of all ages and abilities by ensuring ADA access to parks and trails.
 - > Support trail accessibility through the identification of easily accessible routes that do not have steep slopes, gaps, or challenging transitions.



Explore options to improve pedestrian crossing safety at roadway intersections that connect people to parks, open spaces, and trails.



Increase awareness and expanded trail use through maps and wayfinding signs.

- > Provide accessible play areas and park facilities where feasible in neighborhood and community parks.
- > Improve the trail user experience through improved maintenance, wayfinding and trail amenities (i.e. seating, signage, public art, bike parking and repair facilities, etc.).
- > Consider grade-separated crossings to better connect trails across busy transportation corridors/barriers.
- > Preserve abandoned or vacated rights of way for future trail expansion.

Goal 2: Expand opportunities for social gathering through park facilities and programming.

Initiatives:

- > Continue to program events, festivals and community gathering opportunities in Minnetonka's parks.
- > Collaborate with cultural groups and community groups to provide community events in the parks.
- > Promote and advertise park programs and events within neighborhoods and diverse communities.
- > Incorporate additional picnic facilities and park shelters in neighborhood and

community parks to encourage community gathering in parks.

- > Incorporate multi-generational park facilities and programs into parks.
- > Provide flexible spaces for special event programming.
- > Ensure parks are accessible, safe and welcoming to all residents, visitors and employees in the community.
- > Consider opportunities to create new park spaces intended to accommodate community gatherings.
- > Continue to provide volunteer opportunities and events.

Goal 3: Provide opportunities for people to connect with nature.

Initiatives:

- > Expand opportunities for more nature-based programs and facilities, such as bird watching, canoing, hiking or interpretive trails in Minnetonka's natural areas and waterways.
- > Provide more boardwalks in wetland areas.
- > Expand the number of formal trails in parks.



Expand opportunities for more nature-based programs and facilities, such as bird watching, canoing, hiking or interpretive trails.

- > Create more opportunities for people to access and recreate on Minnehaha Creek, Lake Minnetonka and other water bodies in the park system.
- > Improve access for people of all abilities by incorporating accessible trails in parks and preserves where feasible.
- > Incorporate interpretive features in parks and preserves to provide information about the environment, history, or culture of natural places.
- > Build stewardship for the natural environment through volunteerism and educational programs.
- > Encourage interaction with natural areas by providing signage, wayfinding and maps to

guide people to natural areas.

Goal 4: Improve access to neighboring communities of Minnetonka.

Initiatives:

- > Enhance trail connections to surrounding communities and the broader regional trail system.
- > Continue partnering with surrounding communities, regional park organizations and schools to program recreational opportunities on joint-use facilities.
- > Explore opportunities to partner with neighboring communities to share parks and park facilities for similar programming.
- > Uphold the joint recreation agreement with the City of Hopkins and explore ways to increase programming and events in Hopkins parks.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Parks, open spaces, and trails help keep park users fit and healthy. All people need physical activity to maintain fitness and health. Physical activity increases strength, flexibility and endurance; relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety; improves mood; and enhances

psychological well-being. Parks provide measurable health benefits, from providing direct contact with nature and a cleaner environment, to opportunities for physical activity and social interaction. Park and recreation facilities support good health for people of all abilities, ages, socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnicities. They foster community health and wellness in the following ways:

- > Help reduce obesity, diabetes and chronic disease by providing opportunities for physical activity
- > Provide connections to nature which can relieve stress, build relationships and improve mental health
- > Provide access to nutritious food
- > Foster overall wellness and healthy lifestyle habits

The following goals and policies are recommended to ensure that all park users have access to park facilities and programs essential to community vitality, health equity, improved individual and community health and enhanced quality of life.

Goal 1: Ensure that park programs and facilities support public health and wellness



Create more opportunities for people to access and recreate on Minnehaha Creek, Lake Minnetonka, and other water bodies in the park system.



Enhance trail connections to surrounding communities and the broader regional trail system.

for all park users

Initiatives:

- > Provide activities that contribute to physical, mental and spiritual health and social wellbeing.
- > Support healthy living by providing a well-connected park, open space and trail system.
- > Provide facilities and programs that support year-long activities and recreational opportunities.
- > Enhance access to healthy foods by incorporating additional community gardens in the park system.
- > Incorporate facilities and programs that reflect the diverse health and wellness needs of multi-cultural communities in Minnetonka.
- > Provide multi-generational facilities and programs to attract park users of all ages and abilities to enjoy the health benefits of outdoor activity and recreation.
- > Offer increased opportunities for health enhancing recreational activities.
- > Improve and maintain existing and new park facilities, programs and environments

to optimize health benefits.

Goal 2: Provide for a healthy park experience that is accessible, enjoyable and reliable to all park users.

Initiatives:

- > Provide a well-connected pedestrian and bicycle trail network throughout the community.
- > Enhance public transportation connections to parks, open spaces and trails.
- > Provide accessible, safe and convenient connections to parks, open spaces and trails.
- > Enhance opportunities for community gatherings at parks through event planning and programming.
- > Provide programs and facilities that meet the needs of the surrounding neighborhood by engaging with neighborhood stakeholders during the park planning and design process.

Goal 3: Promote health and wellness through education and park programming.

Initiatives:

- > Increase awareness and understanding

of how parks and trails can contribute to health and wellness through educational campaigns and park programs.

- > Promote health and wellness as an



Enhance access to healthy foods by incorporating additional community gardens in the park system.



Enhance opportunities for community gatherings at parks through event planning and programming, such as Minnetonka Summer Fest.

interrelated system linking physical and mental health to physical activity, social interaction and connection to nature.

- > Provide interpretation and educational features in parks that communicate the health benefits of parks and natural environments.

Goal 4: Strengthen relationships with partners to improve overall health outcomes.

Initiatives:

- > Explore opportunities to share resources and expertise with the health sector to pursue common health education goals.
- > Partner with health sector organizations to fund, program and facilitate events and recreational opportunities.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Parks and recreation facilities and programs help to build diverse, equitable and inclusive communities where people from all walks of life can come together to learn, experience, interact and to grow. The goal of this plan is to create a park system that provides quality parks and connections to green space, recreation facilities and programs that are safe, inclusive, culturally

relevant and welcoming. Just and fair access to high-quality parks creates healthier, cohesive and stronger communities. Minnetonka is an aging community with a lower concentration of households with children. It's also becoming more culturally diverse, attracting thousands of residents of color in the past 20 years. As the community becomes more ethnically diverse and ages, it is important to acknowledge the different needs of these user groups to ensure Minnetonka's parks reflect the needs of all residents and are welcoming, inclusive places.

Goal 1: Develop park programs and facilities that fit the needs of the community through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Initiatives:

- > Identify opportunities to address and promote diversity, equity and inclusion in park programs and facilities.
- > Provide opportunities for the community to communicate their needs and concerns regarding diversity, equity and inclusion.
- > Coordinate with the other entities within Minnetonka to promote and celebrate diversity, equity and inclusion.



Increase awareness and understanding of how parks and trails can contribute to health and wellness.



Engage diverse community groups and all potentially impacted stakeholders in setting balanced priorities for park-related matters. Image: Night to Unite Engagement - August 2021

Goal 2: Encourage recreation participation by all park users regardless of race, age, gender, or ability.

Initiatives:

- > Provide park facilities and recreation programs that reflect a multi-cultural, aging demographic that is representative of the community.
- > Engage diverse community groups and all potentially impacted stakeholders in setting balanced priorities for park-related matters.
- > Minimize physical, financial and social barriers to accessing parks, facilities and programs.
- > Improve access for people of all ages and abilities by ensuring ADA access to parks and trails.
- > Provide accessible play areas and park facilities where feasible in neighborhood and community parks.
- > Provide parks, facilities and programs that are well-distributed throughout the community.
- > Provide multi-generational park facilities and programs to provide opportunities for recreating for all ages and abilities.

- > Celebrate diversity, equity and inclusion through community event programming and historical and cultural interpretation.
- > Incorporate public art and interpretative features in the park system.
- > Explore using multi-lingual text in marketing and on park signage.
- > Provide a variety of free and low-cost programs and events.

Goal 3: Expand access to parks and build and repair parks in underserved communities.

Initiatives:

- > Prioritize funding projects that increase park access for low-income communities and communities of color in terms of proximity and the quantity of park space available per person.
- > Invest in creating, improving and expanding programming that serves low-income communities and communities of color.
- > Explore the use of transportation and public safety funding to address mobility



Provide multi-generational park facilities and programs to provide opportunities for recreating for all ages and abilities.



Provide accessible play areas and park facilities where feasible in neighborhood and community parks.

and safety concerns that limit accessibility and usability of parks by low-income communities and communities of color.

Goal 4: Engage community members meaningfully in the design and planning of parks to ensure that parks and park programming reflect community values and priorities.

Initiatives:

- > Create park planning processes that provide meaningful opportunities for community residents to shape decisions about future park system planning and investments.
- > Recruit, hire and retain a diverse park system workforce that is representative of the community to ensure parks are inclusive environments and are better equipped to meet the needs of the diverse communities they serve.
- > Partner with schools, neighborhood groups, service providers, faith-based institutions and other community-based organizations to connect to underserved residents and engage them in decision-making processes.
- > Seek funding sources to deepen inclusion and cultural relevance across the park

system.

- > Engage in marketing campaigns that promote parks as safe and inviting places for all members of the community to recreate and enjoy the outdoors.

EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

The Minnetonka parks, open space and trail system must strive to meet the range of recreational needs and expectations for all park users. This plan provides a guide for opportunities to provide excellence in the park system and incorporate current trends in park planning and design. Change is inevitable and park facilities and programs should be adaptable to variations in community demographics, user needs and desires. Future park improvements should be resilient and flexible enough to address the economic, social and environmental impacts of climate change. Innovative, forward-thinking solutions to park design and maintenance that incorporate best practices should be encouraged in order to achieve those goals.

Goal 1: Explore and prioritize a variety of new or improved active and nature-based passive park facilities and programs that reflect community values and desires.

Initiatives:

- > Meet an increasing demand for more informal, passive and nature-based recreation opportunities.
- > Study the feasibility of adding a year-round swimming facility to the park system.
- > Consider the following improvements in future park planning:
 - > Rock climbing or bouldering features in the parks
 - > Nature play areas and more nature-based programs in community and neighborhood parks
 - > A more significant and permanent skateboarding park
 - > Accessible playgrounds
 - > Ninja warrior playground in one of the community parks
 - > Additional pickleball courts
 - > Bicycle playground/pump track
 - > Off-leash dog parks
 - > Community gardens
 - > More natural surface trails
 - > More boardwalks in wetland areas

Goal 2: Support year-round recreation by improving access to outdoor winter facilities and programs.

Initiatives:

- > Provide at least one type of winter recreational opportunity in each Community Park.
- > Increase winter trails for hiking and snowshoeing. Explore a cross-country ski trail in the park system.
- > Provide warming facilities for winter activities such as ice skating, hockey and cross-country skiing to encourage winter recreation.
- > Provide winter trail signage.
- > Provide community gathering opportunities through winter event planning and programming.
- > Consider fewer neighborhood ice rinks to focus on higher quality ice rinks in the community.

Goal 3: Strengthen collaboration with neighborhoods, associations, agencies, schools, community groups and volunteers.**Initiatives:**

- > Establish and enhance partnerships and

stakeholder involvement with a variety of agencies and members of the community.

- > Create opportunities for people to feel a greater sense of ownership/volunteerism.
- > Support volunteer engagement and participation to enhance stewardship, programming, social cohesion and ownership.

Goal 4: Expand marketing and awareness of park facilities, programs and natural amenities.**Initiatives:**

- > Create marketing strategies and branding materials intended to create a greater sense of identity and awareness of park facilities, programs and natural amenities.
- > Design and implement consistent and branded park amenities (benches, bike racks, shelters, trash receptacles, lighting, etc.) and wayfinding signage.
- > Promote and advertise community events, park programs and recreation opportunities within neighborhoods and diverse communities.
- > Send email reminders, social media



Provide at least one type of winter recreational opportunity in each Community Park.



Create opportunities for people to feel a greater sense of ownership/volunteerism.

notifications and newsletters about upcoming events.

- > Encourage diverse communities to register for events and recreation opportunities.

Goal 5: Model sustainable practices in park construction, maintenance and operations.

Initiatives:

- > Incorporate sustainable best practices in the operations and maintenance of park facilities.
- > Continue to manage invasive plant species in parks and open spaces as guided by the City of Minnetonka Natural Resources Master Plan.
- > Incorporate maintenance strategies that are flexible and adaptable enough to accommodate changes due to climate, community demographics, user needs and desires.
- > Account for seasonality and climate resiliency in the design, maintenance and programming of park and recreation facilities to maximize activity throughout the year.
- > Improve safety in existing and future parks through design, maintenance and

programming.

- > Use data driven evaluation of park facilities to develop a maintenance and replacement schedule and plan for future budget needs.

Goal 6: Create new park master plans as the need for new parks and park improvements arise.

Initiatives:

- > Engage community members in the planning and design for new parks and park improvements.
- > Incorporate park programs and facilities that reflect community needs and desires.
- > Incorporate best practices in the planning and design of new parks.
- > Incorporate multi-functional park spaces that provide environmental, social, economic and health benefits.
- > Ensure that new parks and park improvements incorporate as many of the above-mentioned goals and objectives as is possible.



Buckthorn removal. Continue to manage invasive plant species in the city's parks and open spaces guided by the Natural Resources Master Plan.



Create new park master plans as the need for new parks and park improvements arise, such as Ridgedale Commons shown in the image, currently under construction in Minnetonka.

POST System Plan



The POST System Plan will guide decision-making for the City of Minnetonka over the next 15 to 20 years. The Implementation Chapter is intended to provide a framework for decision-making and public investment by identifying priority actions and improvements, associated costs, and potential funding sources.

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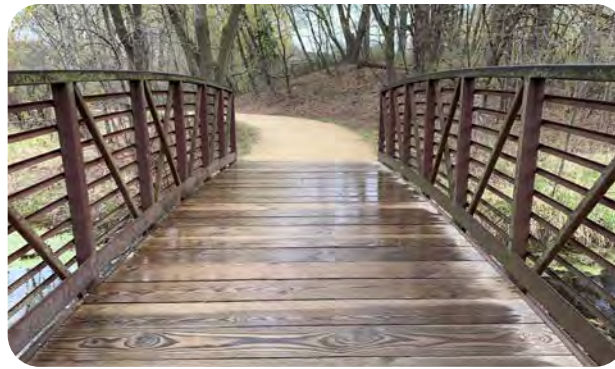
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IMPLEMENTATION

06

CHAPTER 6 | IMPLEMENTATION

The POST System Plan, coupled with the Trail Improvements Plan, provides direction for the City Council, the Park Board, and city staff to guide decision making that will impact future park, open space and trail improvements. The purpose of this Implementation Chapter is to identify priorities and initiatives for future park system improvements that support the overall system vision and guiding principles. The Implementation Chapter also provides guidance for park facilities, identifies costs related to priorities, potential funding sources, and establishes the need for measuring progress.



Trail at Meadow Park



Lone Lake Park



Burwell House



Shady Oak Beach

TABLE 4: FACILITY DELIVERY GUIDELINES

Facility	Class of park that may provide this facility
Provide within each Neighborhood Park Service Area (NPSA)	
Playground every 1/2 mile	Mini Park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park
Open Play Field	Mini Park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park
Basketball - one half court or full size court	Neighborhood Park, Community Park
Diamond Field (baseball/softball)	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Athletic Complex
Nature Area (1 acre+)	Mini Park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Preserve
Rectangular Field (soccer/football/lacrosse)	Neighborhood Park, Community Park
Tennis (set of 1 to 4 courts)	Neighborhood Park, Community Park
Provide within the Community	
Community Garden	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Special Use
Hockey/Pleasure Skating	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Special Use
Interactive Water Feature	Community Park, Special Use
Pickleball Courts	Neighborhood Park, Community Park
Sand Volleyball	Neighborhood Park, Community Park
Aquatics (pool)	Community Park, Special Use
Swimming beach	Community Park, Special Use
Archery	Community Park
Cross-country skiing	Community Park, Special Use, Neighborhood Park
Golf	Special Use
Indoor Athletic Facility	Community Park, Special Use
Indoor Multi-Purpose Facility	Community Park, Special Use
Mountain Biking	Community Park
Nature Center	Community Park
Skate Park	Community Park, Special Use
Sports Complex (outside)	Community Park, Athletic Complex
Nature play area	Neighborhood Park, Community Park
Off-leash dog park	Community Park, Special Use
Ninja Warrior Playground	Community Park
Bicycle Playground/Pump Track	Community Park, Special Use
Rock climbing/Bouldering Feature	Community Park
Trails	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Preserve
Boardwalks	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Preserve

FACILITY GUIDELINES

Table 4: Facility Delivery Guidelines provides a list of park and trail facilities and the class of park that may provide each facility. The delivery levels range from city to neighborhood scale and define the expectations for the quantity and general location of a particular facility. Providing equitable and convenient access to recreation facilities is important. This should be factored into the allocation of facilities across the city.

Several of the park facilities listed should be seen as baseline level park facilities and located within each Neighborhood Park Service Area (NPSA). Other park facilities may be available throughout the community. Some of these facilities already exist within the system, others were identified through the community engagement/input process. It is important to protect the city's natural resources by concentrating recreation facilities out of community preserves and other protected open spaces. These are general facility guidelines. Any significant new or modified facilities/amenities would go through an approval process before implementation. Accordingly, the park classification guidelines in *Table 1* reflect these considerations.

PRIORITIES

Recommendations identified in Chapter 5 have informed these implementation priorities. The priorities are organized into five categories: facilities, plans and studies, programming and events, communications and marketing, and operations and maintenance. Prioritization was based on public interest, availability of resources (funding, staff, land, etc.), alignment with the Natural Resource Master Plan and Trail Improvement Plan, and City Council and Park Board priorities.

The city's ability to implement these priorities will depend on staff resources, funding, and need. Some initiatives may involve more staff time or require more funding for a one-time improvement. Other initiatives may require less staff time or funding but present a long-term commitment to implement. Funding and/or partnership opportunities may also influence the timing of certain initiatives. Implementation of new park spaces may occur as opportunities arise (i.e. Opus)

Implementation phasing should be flexible and dependent on regular project prioritization based on needs, funding availability, and partnership opportunities. Funding availability may cause the need to consider phasing of larger capital improvement projects. While phasing large

projects may not be ideal, extending the implementation time-frame and potentially adding cost to the project, this strategy could allow the city to implement multiple capital improvements at the same time.

Table 5 provides a prioritized list of capital improvements or actions and estimated costs for each category. Many of the initiatives are aspirational and difficult to estimate potential costs without further study. All costs provided are in 2022 dollars and are planning level cost estimates that will need to be confirmed with further planning and design. In some cases, the estimates do not reflect soft costs, such as planning, engineering, design, construction administration, and staff time. Additional costs for these professional services may add another 20 to 30 percent to project costs.



Lone Lake Park



Shady Oak Beach

TABLE 5: PRIORITY INITIATIVES

	Priority				Notes	Cost
	High	Medium	Low	Ongoing		
FACILITIES						
Implement trail recommendations provided in the City's Trail Improvement Plan	X			X	Refer to TIP for priorities and cost information	Cost to be determined per project
Improve trail connections to parks, open spaces, and public transportation facilities		X		X	Conduct study to identify gaps in system	\$50/LF - \$125/LF
Provide accessible features in play areas	X			X	Provide ADA-compatible play equipment, access to play features, and surfacing where feasible in replacement, renovation, or new playground construction	Cost to be determined per project
Incorporate new picnic facilities and park shelters in parks			X		Identify through park master planning	\$250K-\$750K/park
Explore options for additional park land in the Opus area		X				Cost to be determined
Incorporate multi-generational park facilities into parks				X	Identify through park master planning	\$50K-\$200K/park
Provide more boardwalks in wetland areas				X	Identify through park master planning	\$500/LF-\$2,000/LF
Expand the number of formal trails in parks				X	Identify through park master planning	\$50/LF - \$125/LF
Provide facilities that support year-long activities and recreational opportunities				X	Identify through park master planning	Cost to be determined per project
Provide additional winter recreational opportunities in Community Parks (i.e. snowshoe trails, cross-country ski trails)		X			Conduct study focused on winter recreation opportunities in parks	Cost to be determined per project
PLANS AND STUDIES						
Incorporate park resilience strategies in the city's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan		X			Identify opportunities through park master planning	Cost to be determined per project
Conduct study to improve pedestrian crossing safety at roadway intersections adjacent to Community Parks				X	Identify through park master planning	Included with master plan
Conduct an ADA accessibility audit to identify and address compliance issues		X			Study should include all parks, trails, and access to parks and trails	\$30,000-\$60,000
Evaluate park safety in order to create safe and inviting spaces		X		X	Coordinate study with public safety staff	\$30,000-\$60,000
Conduct plan to add community gardens to the park system		X			Identify through park master planning	\$10,000-\$30,000
Conduct plan to incorporate public art in the park system			X			Staff time

	Priority				Notes	Cost
	High	Medium	Low	Ongoing		
Study the feasibility of adding a year-round swimming facility		X			Feasibility study	\$30,000-\$60,000
Update guidelines for requests to park board for special projects	X					\$15,000-\$30,000
Conduct a study to expand or add a skate park	X				Feasibility study	\$20,000-\$40,000
Study the feasibility of adding a dog park	X					Staff time
Conduct master plan study for Community Parks:						
Big Willow	X				Master plan	\$40,000-\$80,000
Civic Center			X		Master plan	\$40,000-\$80,000
Lone Lake		X			Master plan	\$40,000-\$80,000
Meadow		X			Master plan	\$30,000-\$50,000
Purgatory	X				Master plan	\$40,000-\$80,000
Conduct master plan for the Cullen Smith property	X				Master plan	\$20,000-\$40,000
Conduct master plan for Jidana Park		X			Master plan	\$30,000-\$50,000
Conduct master plan for Victoria Evergreen Park			X		Master plan	\$20,000-\$40,000
Study the feasibility of condensing ice skating rinks		X				Staff time
Incorporate an initiative to establish a process for decision making for project review		X				Staff time
PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS						
Collaborate with cultural groups and community groups				X	Ongoing initiative	Cost to be determined per project
Incorporate multi-generational park programs				X	Ongoing initiative	Cost to be determined per project
Expand opportunities for more nature-based programs and facilities	X			X	Ongoing initiative	Cost to be determined per project
Continue to partner with neighboring communities to share parks and facilities				X	Ongoing initiative	Cost to be determined per project
Provide activities that contribute to physical and mental health, and social wellbeing				X	Ongoing initiative	Cost to be determined per project
Partner with health sector organizations to fund, program, and facilitate events		X		X	Ongoing initiative	Cost to be determined per project

	Priority				Notes	Cost
	High	Medium	Low	Ongoing		
Celebrate diversity, equity and inclusion through community event programming	X			X	Ongoing initiative	Cost to be determined per project
Expand programming that serves low-income communities and communities of color	X			X	Ongoing initiative	Cost to be determined per project
COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING						
Increase awareness and expanded trail use through signs, maps and trail wayfinding	X				Conduct wayfinding and signage master plan	Cost to be determined
Promote and advertise park programs and events in diverse communities	X			X	Ongoing initiative	Cost to be determined per project
Provide interpretive and educational features in parks		X			Identify through park master planning	Cost per project
Expand volunteerism and educational programs	X			X	Ongoing initiative	Staff time
Promote the benefits of parks on health and wellbeing				X	Ongoing initiative	TBD
Explore using multi-lingual text and/or universal symbols in marketing and on park signage		X				Staff time
Create a consistent, branded strategy and standards for park features, materials, signage, etc.		X		X	Conduct park system branding strategy	Staff time
OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE						
Incorporate stormwater and green infrastructure best practices in park and facility design				X	Determine opportunities through park master planning/ongoing initiative	Cost to be determined per project
Utilize native plant materials to reduce maintenance and irrigation needs				X	Ongoing initiative	Cost to be determined per project
Offer recycling programs and facilities	X			X	Ongoing initiative	TBD
Utilize integrated pest management strategies				X	Ongoing initiative	TBD
Explore options to implement a turf conversion program				X	As opportunities arise	Cost per project
Recruit, hire, and retain a diverse park system workforce	X			X	Ongoing initiative	TBD
Incorporate sustainable best practices in the operations and maintenance of park facilities	X			X	Determine opportunities through park master planning/ongoing initiative	Cost to be determined per project
Review trail and sidewalk winter maintenance priority designations as the trail and sidewalk system expands.				X		

FUNDING SOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Implementing the vision and key initiatives for the parks, open space and trails system will require additional funding to support new park features and programs, revitalization efforts, maintenance and operations, park planning and outreach, etc. Significant investment is needed for Minnetonka to provide for, maintain and operate the type of parks, open space and trails system identified in this plan. The following provides a list of potential funding sources and partners the city should consider when planning for future investments in the park system.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

General Funds

General funds are typically used to maintain and improve the parks, open space and trail system. General funds are also the primary funding source for on-going maintenance, operations, and amenities.

Dedicated Tax Levy

The city can hold a referendum for a dedicated tax levy with funds directed toward parks and recreation. This levy can be used for capital projects as well as operations and maintenance. Funds generated through

the tax levy may be used in place of general funds or be supplemented by general funds.

Bonding

General Obligation Bonds, Annual Appropriation Bonds, Tax Abatement Bonds, and Revenue Bonds can be used to provide additional sources of implementation funding for new park facilities, as well as repairs and/or upgrades to existing facilities.

Local Sales Tax Option

Minnesota Statute 297A.99 provides the authority to levy a local sales tax with special legislation of a dedicated tax. The statute requires that a resolution also be passed by the jurisdiction including, at minimum, information on the proposed tax rate, how the revenues will be used, the total revenue that will be raised before the tax expires and the estimated length of time the tax will be in effect. Once legal authority has been granted, an election must be held prior to a jurisdiction actually levying the sales tax. The election will permit the use of the sales tax for specific capital improvements.

State Aid Funds

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

streets. This funding source is useful when street construction or re-construction projects are being funded. Minnetonka should consider this option for funding needed trail and sidewalk improvements as part of the Trails Improvements Plan.

Park and Trail Dedication

Cash payments received must be used only for the acquisition and development or improvement of parks, recreational facilities, playgrounds, trails, wetlands, or open space based on the approved park systems plan. Cash payments must not be used for ongoing operation or maintenance of parks, recreational facilities, playgrounds, trails, wetlands, or open space.

School Districts

The city partners with the Minnetonka and Hopkins School Districts, particularly in the use of athletic fields. The continued collaboration between the city and the School Districts is important in ensuring adequate access to athletic facilities and minimizing overlap in programs. Communication should occur on at least an annual basis about planned projects and additional opportunities to jointly develop open space and public facilities.

Partnerships

Partnerships with public and private organizations are important opportunities to fund park facilities and programming. Partner funding can also provide assistance with design, community engagement and maintenance.

Donations

Private donations are another potential funding source. These may be financial donations from individuals or private corporations.

Volunteers

Volunteer efforts of labor from volunteer groups and associations have been very successful in Minnetonka to help raise awareness and defer costs of maintenance of parks, trails and open spaces.

Grants

Grants are another great opportunity to supplement funding for park facilities and programs. Below are some examples of grant opportunities that may be available to assist with funding of park improvements and programming:

» ***Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)***

The DNR provides state funding for parks and trails, offering a variety of grant programs and technical assistance. Grant programs provide assistance for nordic skiing trails, mountain biking trails and recreational trails. Some programs also offer assistance for the development of park or for trail amenities such as shelters, restrooms, lighting, and seating.

» ***Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)***

MnDOT offers funding for trail or bikeway improvement projects. These may utilize a portion of federal dollars. Federal highway funding reauthorization may include funding for trail or sidewalk improvement projects under programs such as Safe Routes to School or the Regional Solicitation managed by the Metropolitan Council Transportation Advisory Board.

» ***Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment***

In 2008, Minnesota's voters passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment (Legacy Amendment) to the Minnesota Constitution to: protect drinking water sources; to protect, enhance, and restore wetlands, prairies,

forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat; to preserve arts and cultural heritage; to support parks and trails; and to protect, enhance, and restore lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater.

The Legacy Amendment increases the state sales tax by three-eighths of one percent. The program began in 2009 and continues until 2034. The additional sales tax revenue is used to fund clean water, outdoor heritage, arts and cultural heritage, and parks and trails.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

In 1988, Minnesota's voters approved a constitutional amendment establishing the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (Trust Fund). The purpose of the Trust Fund is to provide a long-term, consistent, and stable source of funding for activities that protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources for the benefit of current citizens and future generations.

Foundations and Non-Profits

Several foundations and non-profits support local projects such as park and trail improvements. The Minnesota Council of Foundations is a good place to identify foundations for potential funding of parks and trails in Minnetonka.

MEASURING PROGRESS

The POST System Plan success must be measured not only by assessing community needs and satisfaction, but also by responding to park users' wants and needs. Park use and recreation trends are dynamic and constantly changing. Demographic changes in the community, new recreation activities, equipment changes, and other forces may cause the need to adapt and update this plan from time to time as the city continues to evolve.

A periodic review of this plan to make sure that priorities and recommendations are still relevant, and that progress is regularly tracked is essential. Regular assessment of the parks, open space and trail system is particularly useful when requesting funds for new or updated park facilities, staff needs and volunteer efforts. It is also important to communicate the benefits parks, open spaces and trails provide to the community to ensure elected officials, decision makers

and the public have a clear understanding of system benefits and how their dollars are being used to improve the park, open space and trail system. Regular evaluations can also better identify which improvements would better serve park system users and achieve the vision and guiding principles outlined in this plan.

The assessment process should include an analysis of progress toward achieving the goals and initiatives recommended in this plan. The following provides examples of the kind of information and data that should be gathered and reviewed as part of a comprehensive assessment process:

- » Number of recreation activities and participants
- » Number of events, facility users and participants
- » Number of volunteer participants

- » Number of people using parks, open spaces, and trails
- » Number of park master plans completed
- » Miles of trail improvements completed
- » Park and trail safety - number of accidents, incidents, and crime reports
- » Continue annual city-wide survey and track park and recreation input
- » Survey park users to learn more about park use, facilities, programs, and events
- » Evaluate progress on marketing and communication efforts
- » Evaluate progress on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion goals
- » Evaluate progress on accessibility goals
- » Document community engagement processes utilized in planning efforts and lessons learned



Playground at Lone Lake Park



Trail at Big Willow Park

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— PLAN YOUR PARK SYSTEM —

WHAT NEW/ADDITIONAL THINGS WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN MINNETONKA PARKS?

POST System Plan



Chapter Contents

Glossary of Terms

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APPENDIX

A

GLOSSARY



APPENDIX A | GLOSSARY

Access (egress/ingress)

The ability to enter a site (ingress) from a roadway or trail and exit a site (egress) onto a roadway or trail by vehicle, bike, walking, etc.

Accessible Playground

An accessible playground allows children with or without disabilities to access and use a variety of playground equipment. It also invites parents, caregivers, or older siblings with disabilities into the play area to supervise children or play on the equipment too.

Active recreation means a leisure activity, usually of an organized nature, often performed with others and sometimes requiring equipment, taking place at a prescribed place, site, or field including, but not limited to baseball, football, soccer, tennis, hockey, pickleball and skateboarding.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

For purposes of park planning, a federal law that generally requires that parks, park facilities, open spaces and trails be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Athletic fields

The combination of ball fields and multi-use fields.

Ball fields

Baseball or softball fields of all size. Ball fields include a backstop and can include foul line fencing, spectator/player seating, skinned or grass infields, lights, scoreboards and supporting amenities.

Best Practices

A best practice is a method or technique that has been generally accepted as superior to any alternatives because it produces results that are superior to those achieved by other means, or because it has become a standard way of doing things.

Capital Costs

Fixed, one-time expenses for parks, recreational facilities, and equipment.

Climate Change

Climate change refers to significant changes in global temperature, precipitation, wind patterns and other measures of climate that occur over several decades or longer.

Conservation

The preservation or efficient use of natural resources.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is a term used to describe policies and programs that promote the representation and participation of different groups of individuals, including people of different ages, races and ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, genders, religions, cultures and sexual orientations.

Dog park/off leash dog exercise area

A specifically designated recreational facility where dogs are allowed to be off-leash while still under voice control by their handlers.

Facility

A built feature in a park or preserve that adds, supports or enhances a recreation activity.

Formal Trail

A city-approved purposefully built trail maintained by the city that can be asphalt, natural surface (crushed limestone, compacted soil, mulched), or boardwalks.

Habitat

The environment suitable for a particular animal or plant in which to live, grow or reproduce.

Informal Trail

A path or trail of disturbance created by park users through a park or natural area that is not city-approved. Informal trails are not maintained by the city.

Interpretation

A communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource. The term is used to describe communication activities designed to improve understanding at parks, nature areas, historic sites, and other community destinations.

Interpretive activities

Hikes, talks, tours, or demonstrations that provide the participants with information and inspiration on a given natural or cultural resource. Participants learn and discover new ideas or concepts about the subject.

Interpretive exhibits

Exhibits that are planned, designed, and fabricated to provide an educational and interpretive message to the visitor. Can be based on natural or cultural resources within the park or open space. Interpretive exhibits contain themes, interpretive goals, interpretive objectives, appropriate media, and are accessible to persons with disabilities. The purpose of the interpretive exhibit is to educate and inspire the visitor.

Invasive Species

A species that is non-native to the ecosystem and whose introduction/perpetuation causes or is likely to cause environmental harm such as a loss of biodiversity.

Kiosk

A structure frequently found at the entrance or exit of a park facility to control access/ egress of park users, collect fees, provide information, first-aid and public safety, etc, usually located at a key access point. For example, educational brochures and maps are found at many park kiosks.

Landscaping

Plantings including trees, shrubs, and ground covers suitably designed, selected, installed, and maintained to enhance a site, the surroundings of a structure, or the sides or medians of a roadway. Landscaping may also refer to structural improvements like retaining walls, structures, walkways, drainage, and lighting.

Maintenance

The regular tasks that keep parks, natural areas, recreational facilities, and trails clean and safe to use. For example, trash collection, safety inspections, replacement of broken parts on equipment, care of fields, etc.

Multi-generational park facilities

Multi-generational park facilities are park and recreation facilities designed to encourage use among children, parents, and grandparents. These spaces are designed to include people of all abilities and ages, so that everyone may find enjoyment, recreation, and entertainment at their neighborhood or community park.

Multi-use fields

Flat rectangular fields for soccer, football and other sports and activities. These fields can include goals, spectator/player seating, scoreboards, lights and supporting amenities.

Native plants

Species of plants that occur naturally in a particular area; plants that have not been introduced to the area by humans, either accidentally or intentionally.

Natural areas

Natural areas are lands managed in a natural state. Their size and shape is determined by the natural resources contained in these sites.

Nature-based play area

Typically, a play area designed to stimulate the creativity, physical ability, and imagination of children to connect with nature. It frequently includes tools and materials so children can construct things of their own design or experiment with earth, water, sand, wood, and other materials. Most often nature play areas are constructed of natural materials such as logs, boulders, rope, etc.

Neighborhood

One section of a community, often centered around a school and/or park that tends to have cohesive forces holding it together as a unit.

Neighborhood Park Service Area (NPSA)

There are twenty-three identified neighborhood park service areas (NPSAs) within the City of Minnetonka. The NPSAs are primarily defined by infrastructure barriers that make it difficult for residents and users to access other existing parks. In general, the mini and neighborhood parks in one NPSA function together to service the localized needs for that NPSA.

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

The nation's largest independent non-profit public service organization advocating quality recreation and parks for the American people. The Association provides services to recreation and park professionals and the general public, including the provision of recommended park and open space standards and maintenance standards.

Open space

Land that has been acquired to be maintained in its natural state for its intrinsic and/or open space value (buffer, habitat preservation, heritage tree stands, park and recreation, conservation of natural resources for historic or scenic purposes).

Park

Land area developed for neighborhood or community gathering and/or recreation use.

Park Classifications

See Table 1, page 51 for definitions of Mini Park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Athletic Complex, Preserve and Special Use.

Park programming

The classes, activities, sports, and special events that are provided by the City of Minnetonka and other providers within and around Minnetonka.

Parklet

A small seating area or green space created as a public amenity on or alongside a sidewalk, especially in a former roadside parking space.

Parks, open space, and trails system

The combined total of city-owned park lands, the features and facilities that support recreation opportunities, and protect natural and historic resources. Recognizing that other public and private entities provide additional land and recreation facilities in Minnetonka, this plan refers to the system as including the city-owned, public parks, recreational facilities, open spaces, and trails.

Passive recreation means recreational activities that are commonly unorganized and noncompetitive, including, but not limited to, picnicking, wildlife viewing, bicycling, and walking. May also be referred to as informal recreation.

Preservation

The protection and maintenance of native lands and habitats.

Public access

A trailhead, trail or road that allows the public to reach or use public parks, lands, or assets. Sometimes the access may cross private lands to reach public lands.

Recreation

A pastime, diversion, exercise, or other resource affording relaxation and enjoyment.

Recreation facilities

The built features within parks that create opportunities to engage in specific games and activities. These can range from single courts or small play areas to larger recreation facilities, such as Big Willow Park, which supports a wide variety of self-directed and programmed recreation.

Recreation needs

Refers to existing and future demand by citizens and visitors for recreations areas, facilities, and opportunities.

Resiliency

Resiliency in park planning and design is the ability of parks and open spaces to recover more quickly from extreme events such as drought, fire, flooding, biodiversity loss, etc.

Restoration

The repair to a condition similar to that which existed at a defined period in history.

Skatepark

A skatepark consists of a diverse arrangement of structures constructed to accommodate skate boarding. Skateparks have delineated edges so that it's clear where the skatepark begins. In addition to trash cans, water and seating, neighborhood skateparks benefit from nearby parking, though most users will skate to the park.

Special Use Area

Public recreation lands that are specialized or single purpose in nature. Examples are dog parks, skate parks, golf courses, display gardens, recreation centers, and a wide range of other activities and facilities.

Splash pad

An aquatic feature that provides water play (splashing, spraying, dumping) with no standing water, eliminating the need for supervisory and lifeguard staffing. Splash pads are typically not programmed, free to access and operate seasonally.

Stewardship

The demonstration of care for something, i.e. the environment.

Stormwater

Precipitation that accumulates in natural and/or constructed storage and conveyance systems during and immediately following a storm event.

Stormwater management

Functions associated with planning, designing, constructing, maintaining, financing, and regulating the facilities (both constructed and natural) that collect, store, control, and/or convey stormwater.

Sustainability

The broad definition of sustainability is the integration of environmental health, social equity and economic vitality in order to create thriving, healthy, diverse and resilient communities for this generation and generations to come. In the context of this document, sustainability focuses on using methods, systems and materials that won't deplete resources or harm natural cycles.

Trails






This system includes pathways within parks, off-street greenways and multi-use paths, and on-street connections (sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.) that provide both a transportation route and opportunities for walking, running, bicycling and other activities.



Ward

Minnetonka is divided into four wards based on population, with a city council member dedicated to serve each ward.

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Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
<p><i>Please note that the page numbers referenced in the public comments corresponded with the first full draft of the plan and not the revised plan.</i></p>			
Chapter 1: Introduction	Looks as if a great deal of work has gone into this plan, could a part be added to make sure the City dedicate future efforts to make the parks and open space sensitive to the needs and wishes of all, not just those who have time and access to surveys.	The community engagment for this project included visiting participants in the parks, attending events, conducting workshops with diverse groups, visiting the senior center and participating in Nite to Unite in order to reach those without access to online surveys.	
Chapter 1: Introduction	The City of Minnetonka is the recreation provider for the City of Hopkins. Please note this as part of the background/history for this plan.	Statement added regarding the joint recreation agreement with Hopkins to introduction. The joint agreement is also referenced in other chapters.	
Chapter 1: Introduction	The sentence that says that the majority of survey participants think the parks are in good shape is misleading as most residents do not have the training needed to assess the status of the parks especially the nature areas. This has been pointed out by staff, city officials and residents for years. The sentence should be deleted.	The sentence states that "The majority of survey participants expressed satisfaction with the overall condition, appearance and maintenance of natural areas, park features and facilities." This statement reflects resident's satisfaction.	
Chapter 1: Introduction	More PickelBall courts. Glen More Parks mini Basketball court needs to be replaces. Why not Putin a few pickleball courts. <i>This comment by the same respondent was repeated for every chapter, but is only being shown once in this table.</i>	"Neighborhood Park" as a location option in "Table 4: Facility Delivery Guidelines" for Pickleball Courts.	
Chapter 1: Introduction	{Page 3} In Economic Benefits, please edit "Several studies have shown that proximity to parks, open spaces and trails can enhance property values and tax revenues" to read "Several studies have shown that proximity AND EASE OF ACCESS to parks, open spaces and trails can enhance property values and tax revenues". It's awesome to be close, but if you can't easily get there, are you truly close? And, ease of access is referenced in other sections (Health & Wellbeing, etc).	This information was taken from studies. Ease of access is an important aspect of future planning efforts.	
Chapter 1: Introduction	In Key Takeaways section, - third bullet (Continue to develop a walkable / bikeable Minnetonka) - please change to "Accelerate development of a walkable / bikeable Minnetonka". I know trails cost money, but planning to have a walkable / bikeable Minnetonka in 20 years when it is needed NOW means we can't just continue along the path we're on.	In accordance with the Trail Improvement Plan(TIP), trails are being planned and constructed annually.	
Chapter 1: Introduction	{Page 6} -sixth bullet (Foster resiliency of parks and open space to recover and adapt to climate change and extreme weather events) - please edit to read "Foster resiliency of parks and open space to BE RESISTANT TO and recover FROM and adapt to climate change and extreme weather events". An ounce of prevention, right?	Changed to "Foster resiliency of parks and open space to be resistant to and recover from and adapt to climate change and extreme events.	
Chapter 1: Introduction	-seventh bullet (Develop an interlinking, looped trail system throughout the city and provide connections to neighborhoods and individual parks) - please edit to read "Develop an interlinking, EASY AND SAFE TO NAVIGATE, looped trail system NETWORK throughout the city and provide connections to RELEVANT DESTINATIONS, neighborhoods, and individual parks AND OPEN SPACES"	Changed to "Develop a safe interlinking looped trail system network throughout the city and provide connections to neighborhoods and individual parks."	
Chapter 1: Introduction	-thirteenth bullet (Maintain open space, even with new development and increasing density in the city) - please edit to read "Maintain AND ENHANCE open space, even with new development and increasing density in the city"	Changed to "Maintain and enhance open space, even with new development and increasing density in the city"	

Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 1: Introduction	{Page 7} This is likely outside the scope of the POST Plan, but please re-prioritize the Trail Improvement Plan to focus on number of users served and environmental benefit before cost to build. Specific case in point - number of users (and potential) users of the Delton segment (currently prioritized as #12 in the TIP, which suggests an earliest possible construction date of 2032) and resulting potential for reduction in VMT are significantly higher benefit than any of the segments currently prioritized above this segment.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 1: Introduction	The key take-aways at the end seem accurate. The list of Areas Identified for Improvement seems skewed to built recreation and downgrades the majority community interest in improvement of natural areas. It's unclear what "natural surface trails" refer to. If it's for mountain biking that's a problem. We already have a mountain bike course built at significant expense and community discord. Members of the community were told the built course would reduce the occurrence of mountain biking on rogue trails.	Natural surface trails are crushed limestone, compacted soil and mulched. This language was added to the definition of Formal Trail to be defined as "A city-approved purposefully built trail maintained by the city that can be asphalt, natural surface (crushed limestone, compacted soil, mulched), or boardwalks."	
Chapter 1: Introduction	Areas identified for improvement (second paragraph) fails to mention the need for funding the ecological restoration of the park system (and its current degraded state as identified in the NRMP). Park improvements and future investments should refer to new and the revamping of existing amenities, in addition to ecological restoration. The language mentions a wholistic planning approach and this is a welcome change to randomly putting new amenities with no master planning process and multiple variables. There are no 'unmaintained areas' in the community parks so use and ordinances such as the leash law should be reviewed for compliance. Provide an appropriate balance between resource preservation, recreational use and community growth. Balance is an absolutely nebulous term unless it is clearly defined how balance will occur. If 5 acres of high quality natural resources are lost with the addition of a new amenity, balance would imply mitigation and restoration of 5 acres elsewhere (not chipping away at the remaining natural resources in our park systems). Replace what is lost, one for one = balance.	Add "ecological restoration" in paragraph two on page 11 in the list of areas of identified improvement.	
Chapter 2: Trends	Whole report was well written. I was interested in the "trends" section to see what challenges were anticipated. The growing senior population and the need for passive activity, connecting to nature and other trails were right on. This need seems to reflect a basic human need in general and not just because of recent COVID isolation.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 2: Trends	is there planning on how to track changing needs?	It is stated that this plan will continue to transform as the community adapts to future trends, demographic changes, needs and opportunities. Community engagement will be part of future park master planning and any significant park amenity changes or additions.	
Chapter 2: Trends	Trend 1 add "There is an increasing desire for preservation of unique natural features in our parks and open spaces and coordinated nature programming such as nature education, bird watching and citizen research."	The trends listed are from the listed sources.	
Chapter 2: Trends	Not only is pickleball the fastest growing sport in America and it has over-taken tennis, the open-play culture of the sport in Minnetonka parks is very community building. It is the one sport that adults can just show up and spontaneously interact and socialize with their neighbors. It is also very inter generational. Seniors can play with children. Teens can play with parents.	Pickleball is noted in Trend 8. Added "Neighborhood Park" as a location option in "Table 4: Facility Delivery Guidelines" for Pickleball Courts.	
Chapter 2: Trends	The fact that climate change is at the top of this section makes me wonder if the correct factors are being emphasized in this planning process. If it were me, I'd stick to parks.	Comment received. Thank you.	

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Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 2: Trends	{Page 2} Given that the first bullet prominently features "Informal Recreation", please include a clearer / more readily findable definition of that term (currently somewhat buried under / as "Passive Recreation").	Informal recreation is included in the Passive Recreation definition.	
Chapter 2: Trends	General question - are the Trends in any sort of order? ie, Trend 1 most important / relevant, Trend 8 least? Please clarify.	Trends are not in a particular order. Added a statement to the cover page of Chapter 2 explaining this.	
Chapter 2: Trends	{Page 4} Resiliency - certainly laudable, but can parks & open spaces really be resilient? If climate changes such that species X of plant can't survive in parks and open spaces here, is there anything that can really be done to resolve that other than plant some other species? Or is this intended to apply primarily (exclusively) to built structures? Either way, it seems prevention has to be a prominent part of this effort? To that point - how will this Plan result in reduction of GHG emissions? How will this plan support demonstration and encouragement of changes necessary to PREVENT / REDUCE climate change rather than just adapt to whatever may come?	The goal is to incorporate climate resilience where possible in future projects.	
Chapter 2: Trends	{Page 6} Second bullet ("changes in public space") - PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE make large reductions in the amount of turf grass in neighborhood parks and replace with native / pollinator-friendly, low-maintenance species!!! Add wood chip or stepping stone paths through the new areas. Example - most of the area above the playground in Linner Park could be this way (leave part of it open for sledding in the winter?). Reductions in mowing would be of both financial and environmental benefit.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 2: Trends	Community gardens - not too sure how well these work, but the lower portion of Linner Park seems to have sufficient space to do this (maybe no water source there though)? Or, maybe lease the land to local growers and let them offer CSAs?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 2: Trends	{Page 7} Completely agree! However: Second bullet (The expansion of pedestrian spaces and outdoor dining on urban streets; the conversion of streets to bike lanes and trails; and the installation of parklets in parking spaces have increased the possibilities for new types of urban parks.) - Did any of these happen in Minnetonka? Are there plans for them to take place? Is there or will there be a Parklet Improvement Plan prioritizing where parklets can be created? Or a Street Reclamation and Conversion Plan? I sure hope so!!! If not, I'm uncertain why this bullet is included since it doesn't deal with existing parks or open spaces and doesn't have a way forward for new parks. Or is it just a general statement of need for quality parks (and open spaces)	This is a high level planning document. The suggested plans by the commenter should be considered as parks are improved and new park spaces are planned.	
Chapter 2: Trends	{Page 8} Same comment as above - is this just a general statement of need for quality parks and open spaces? {Page 9} Parks provide benefits. However, so do Open Spaces. Make more reference to the abundant open spaces available in Minnetonka (like the area between Mooney Park proper and Minnehaha Creek, or the open space between Jidana Park and Minnehaha Creek Headwaters Park)?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 2: Trends	{Page 10} Isn't mountain biking still one of the fastest growing sports in the US? It seems warranted to include it on this page.	The trends are based on the sources cited.	

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Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 2: Trends	<p>Planning for change and building flexibility into the city's parks, open space and trail facilities will position Minnetonka to better adapt to current trends and future demands. Example: convert existing underutilized tennis courts or ice rinks into pickleball rather than building new pickleball courts where a community picnic area and gathering space is eliminated, a space that was frequently used by residents of color. How does the new park at Ridgedale build in resiliency to climate change? How much energy use is predicted for that park or the large developed complex proposed in Opus. These 'new' parks don't seem to be planned or constructed with climate resiliency or low energy use in mind. Add native plants to a largely hardscaped park doesn't count! There will be greater emphasis on more natural areas and balancing environment with recreational needs. Please stop using the word balance in the context of natural resources unless this is clearly defined. This is antiquated terminology.</p>	<p>Comment received. Thank you.</p>	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	<p>Park classifications. Preserves should be preserved for passive activities. If by nature play areas you mean Ninja courses or mountain biking please delete nature play areas</p>	<p>The preserve definition does state "provide passive use opportunities" within the current definition. Nature Play areas consist of elements and textures from the earth instead of traditional steel and composite playground structures.</p>	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	<p>{Page 9} Are each of these definitions included in the Glossary?</p>	<p>Added "Park Classifications" to the glossary stating to see Table 1, page 51</p>	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	<p>{Page 10} Other than the Ann Cullen Smith property, this table does not seem to include any Open Spaces? For instance, the area along the west side of 494 or the area between Sheridan Hills Road and Sheridan Terrace (Hennepin County Parcel ID 0911722210028) or the area west of Robinwood Lane (Hennepin County Parcel 1411722140038), etc, etc, etc... Nor does it make reference to any lakes?</p>	<p>Changed the title of Table 2 to "Park Classifications Table"</p>	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	<p>{Page 11} Same comment - no (or only very few) Open Spaces shown?</p>	<p>Changed the title of Figure 9 to "Minnetonka Parks"</p>	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	<p>{Page 13} "Notable" Facilities seems rooted in or continuing in a more traditional view/mindset of parks / recreation? I agree with the need to show where Facilities are without having the map get too crowded with parks etc, but?</p>	<p>Comment received. Thank you.</p>	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	<p>{Page 14} A more general comment - shouldn't "city's" be capitalized throughout this Plan?</p>	<p>"city's" is correct.</p>	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	<p>{Page 18} I disagree that the trail system is "comprehensive". For instance, there is a trail in McKenzie Park, but no trail TO McKenzie Park (I note that Google Maps shows Williston as a "bike-friendly road" and I use Williston for biking quite frequently, but I'm pretty sure very few people would consider that a trail connection). There is a trail IN Victoria-Evergreen Park, but only an "informal" trail TO McKenzie Park.</p>	<p>Comment received. Thank you.</p>	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	<p>Trail Facilities - is there a Trail Facilities map, and/or Plan? Something easily accessible that shows where (and when) drinking fountains and restrooms are available in parks and open spaces? Or a Plan that shows when new such facilities will be added to the system?</p>	<p>This is a high level planning document not intended to provide such detail. One of the priority initiatives of the plan does include 'increased awareness and expanded trail use through signs, maps and trail wayfinding'</p>	

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Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	Trail Maintenance (Much of the trail system is plowed during the winter months, making it usable throughout the year.) Please go into more detail as to what constitutes "usable". Experience shows that definition currently effectively excludes bicyclists (other than those who can afford fat bikes), wheelchair or mobility scooter users, and other than confident pedestrians. It also adds constraints such as gripping devices since many of the trails become icy (I know, we live in Minnesota, it gets icy.), but maybe don't consider a trail to be "cleared" unless it is usable by all. Or, quantify the "clearing". Also - there are indications of cross country skiing on and along trails even though that is one of the prohibited uses. Would it make sense to change the prohibition, or at least to recognize it as an unspoken "trend" / user request?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 25} Were participants of any of the public outreach limited in their choices (ie, could they select only three items)? If so, please include that in the description of the methodology as it could indicate more support for more activities. {Page 27} Same comment - describe limitations in methodology.	There were no limitations on voting.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 28} General comment - the stacked / staggered vertical bar charts look pretty, but they maybe don't convey results as clearly as would be nice?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 29} Very Important Trails and Trail Connections (73.9%) seems to strongly suggest the need for accelerated trail construction and better trail maintenance. Please identify additional funding sources to meet this need.	The Trail Improvement Plan (TIP) has a funding source with the Electric Franchise Fees enacted in 2019 which greatly accelerated the TIP from previous levels. Additional park staff was recently added to address the new trails and increased maintenance.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	Very Important Natural Areas for Passive Recreation (68.6%) seems to support a point/request made elsewhere in the Plan to allow bicyclists on all trails in Minnetonka.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 30} People scared of off-leash dogs seems to strongly suggest the off-leash / voice command option currently allowed in certain places in Minnetonka Parks / Open Spaces be reconsidered or done away with. I recently very much enjoyed meeting two off-leash not under voice command Great Danes at Jidana Park, but I can see where others would not consider that a pleasant experience. I've also had to defend my dog numerous times from other dogs who were offleash and not under voice command, both in parks and open spaces and on sidewalks.	The priority initiatives include evaluating park safety and studying the feasibility of adding a dog park.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 31} The question options here are somewhat skewed in that many so-called "natural areas" are strongly impacted / "recovered" areas that were previously cleared (Lone Lake Park is one great example - raspberry farm, ski area, junk dump but now a "Big Woods remnant"?). Or the areas along Minnehaha Creek - pristine natural wetland or hotbed of invasive cattails? Prime creek banks or overlooked stormwater path? As such, are they really natural areas to protect from any/all other uses? It's further complicated by the fact that some new uses don't actually impact the "natural areas" - the "natural area" is essentially unaffected (from its current state) by the new use. Additionally, "low impact uses" is really vague.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 32} Was a similar question asked about Open Spaces?	Comment received. Thank you.	

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Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 33} Skating rinks - I'm fortunate to have a skateable wetland in my back yard. So I never use City rinks. That said, I think the City needs to continue with as widely distributed a set of rinks as possible if for no other reason than to minimize automobile travel to a destination rink. The options provided seem to gloss over this likely outcome of providing only a destination rink.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	Off-leash dogs - see previous comments above.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 35} Dwight Lane comment - agree 100%! There are numerous other locations similar to this (Oak Lea to Minnehaha Place is just one example). Can these somehow be formalized? It seems like it would do just as much to make Minnetonka more walkable / bikeable as the current TIP. And it would do it now rather than in 20 years.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	Will there be a complete list of all responses included in the final plan? And to an extent - why wasn't a complete list of all responses provided in this draft Plan? It's way easier to be collaborative if you can see everyone's input rather than just a curated subset...	Additional community survey engagement summary results can be found on the project page and all raw data survey results are available upon request. One major goal of the final document was for it to be concise.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 36} It seems some park users aren't fully aware of the capital costs of playground equipment?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 37} Agree with all the listed comments! Would like to see the rest of the comments, too!	Additional community survey engagement summary results can be found on the project page and all raw data survey results are available upon request. One major goal of the final document was for it to be concise.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 38} Again, agree with all these comments (especially the natural surface trail from Burwell west and the singletrack loop in Big Willow!)! Would love to see all these comments.	Additional community survey engagement summary results can be found on the project page and all raw data survey results are available upon request. One major goal of the final document was for it to be concise.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 39} Full support for changing City ordinance to allow bicyclists on "informal" trails. Why can't city residents use them on bikes when (supposedly) other city residents made them without City approval? And now City essentially supports excluding residents from a tacitly approved open space. Also fully support advancing construction of the trail system around Minnetonka High School - the potential environmental and health benefits outweigh the right of way and utility costs.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 40} Full support for enhanced access to MHS (Briarwood comment) - sensing a theme here... Also agree about the Shady Oak Access comment - informal trails are trails whether approved or not. All residents should be allowed to use them. And again - would love to see ALL the comments, not just a subset.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 44} "Few park users get to parks via public transportation". Not a surprise given the almost complete lack of public transportation in Minnetonka. Given this, it seems even more important to facilitate park access by other methods - walking, biking, etc.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 45} Here and in other places - please better define "natural surface" trails. Are you talking about limestone like Lake Minnetonka Regional or literally natural surface like Lone Lake Singletrack?	Changed the definition of Formal Trail to "A city-approved, purposefully built trail maintained by the city that can be asphalt, natural surface (crushed limestone, compacted soil, mulched), or boardwalks.	

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Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 47} Are these in any sort of order? Or all the same priority?	All are high priority issues listed in no particular order.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 49} Strongly agree about wayfinding signage, especially along roads and trails. Not so much IN the parks themselves.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 50} Far northwestern area - there are parks in Plymouth immediately north of this area (Parkers Lake, Circle Park) and the Big Woods Preserve in Wayzata. How do those factor in to the 10 minute walking distance to a park? I understand they are not Minnetonka parks, but... Somewhat the same for the eastern area near Hopkins / St Louis Park - Aquila Park is pretty close. It could maybe be made closer by making it possible to access the W 36th St bridge from Minnetonka (quick and easy easement?). Somewhat the same for the far western location (Trail & 101) - Thorpe Park, MME, easy access to the trail, ... And for the southwest location - great big open space in NE quadrant of 7 & 101, Deehaven Elementary, ... It seems these areas were identified by buffering out from existing parks in Minnetonka and may not reflect actual walking distances though?	The map is showing walkability just within the city of Minnetonka.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 51} Same comments as for Page 50	The map is showing walkability just within the city of Minnetonka.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 54} Are the permanent restrooms open year-round? If not, please indicate that important feature. Also - are there temporary restrooms? It would be most helpful to have those on the map. For instance, the (recently removed) temporary restroom at the McKenzie Park neighborhood ice rink...	This is a high level planning document and specific hours of operation are not included.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 58} IF (and I'm asking, not saying, if) preservation of parks and open spaces is covered by the NRMP, it seems some of the parts of the POST Plan should move away from a similar focus? Or at very least, recognize the double focus and subsequent seeming weighting of surveyed preferences? I know there's only one page here at the end, but preservation seemed baked in to several portions of this Plan.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 59} A search in the TIP for the words maintain or maintenance returns no results, so I question whether maintenance of trails is addressed there as is asserted on this page (Trail maintenance priorities ... are addressed in the TIP.) . Perhaps if "maintenance" is intended to reflect reconstruction? Third bullet - it seems that trail connections to ALL Parks should be a primary goal, rather than saying "where feasible". I understand trails cost money, but...	Removed the word "maintenance" in last sentence of page 101.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 62} This page seems to make a pretty clear case for Public Works not having enough budget to meet its expected duties. How can we make it so they can do so?	Any requests for future budget increases will be reviewed by Park Board and City Council during annual budget and CIP review process.	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	{Page 63} Are the needs here as high as indicated, given the locations of parks in neighboring cities / communities mentioned above? If so, please update this page. Same statement if the "10 minute walking distance" was only a buffer of x feet from existing Minnetonka Parks and not an accurate reflection of actual walking distance / time.	The map is showing walkability just within the city of Minnetonka.	

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Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	<p>The plan talks about "minor changes to some of the classifications" yet some of the parks have been downgraded from Community Preserve to Community Park. I consider this a major change and don't know where the impetus for this came from. I observed changes to classification already occurring on the website during the past year. This is concerning. The survey seems fairly accurate. The Imagery Boards were clearly skewed to built recreation. Balance of our preserved nature with every new flavor of built recreational will be a huge challenge. Our parks that were once preserves will end up looking like amusement parks. The nature of a Preserve is to preserve not to accommodate every special interest. By downgrading the status of community preserves you eke away at years of restoration efforts and expense.</p>	<p>All of the parks have now been given a Mini Park, Neighborhood Park or Community Park designation based on size and service. The preserve areas in the Community Parks have not changed and additional preserves were added to the park system.</p>	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	<p>Pg 37: In this POST System Plan update, the park classification system was updated from the 2001 Minnetonka POST Plan. New parks that were built since the creation of the last plan were added and classified. Minor changes to some of the classification descriptions were implemented. Please provide the specific data that prompted the change in the park classifications. What community feedback was received to downgrade preserves to community parks? This does not meet the mission of 'balancing' recreation and the preservation of natural resources. Our natural resources have been mismanaged and allowed to degrade for twenty years. That is not a reason to downgrade the parks. Nature play areas don't belong in high quality preserves. Any addition of an amenity will degrade the natural resources. This does not follow wholistic planning mentioned in the other parts of the plan. Put new amenities in low quality sites. Park name is incorrect - Cullen Nature Preserve (not Ann Cullen-Smith Property. Same for maps pp. 82-85. p. 39 map is the same as the downgraded map published by staff pre POST plan community feedback process. The downgrading of the park designations is baked. For what reason? How does that benefit the community to have fewer areas where natural resources are preserved? This is counter to the survey results on p. 56. The dot preference poster with new additional amenities is 'leading' at best. How is this statistically significant serving up options to residents that they didn't come up with on their own accord? Same comment for p. 73 summary.</p>	<p>All of the parks have now been given a Mini Park, Neighborhood Park or Community Park designation based on size and service. The preserve areas in the Community Parks have not changed and additional preserve designations were added to the to the park system. The Cullen Smith property has not been formally named. It is considered a preserve area and will be formally named during the master planning process.</p>	
Chapter 3: Existing Conditions	<p>I find it disturbing that 20% of the people who filled out the park survey do not feel safe in the park due to loose dogs. Purgatory Park is partially bad. People still refuse to follow the rules at Purgatory Park with the signage in place. I think it's time to require all dogs in the city parks to be on a leash in both maintained and unmaintained areas. Those who wish to have their dog off leash should go to a designated enclosed dog park.</p>	<p>The priority initiatives includes "Study the feasibility of adding a dog park" as a high priority.</p>	
Chapter 4: Vision	<p>Please add to excellence and innovation "Ensure equity in funding between active recreational activities and passive uses and restoration."</p>	<p>Comment received. Thank you.</p>	
Chapter 4: Vision	<p>Parks and "equity". What is going on. Are we building parks or trying to get on CNN?</p>	<p>Comment received. Thank you.</p>	

Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 4: Vision	<p>{Page 2} Mission - at the risk of descending into semantic wordsmithing: - Isn't it the sole responsibility of Minnetonka to provide parks, open space, & trails? If so, can they be a leader in that effort if there is no one else providing those services / features? Perhaps remove the "be leaders in" phrase? - prioritization - shouldn't comprehensiveness be more important than welcoming? Instead of "welcoming, comprehensive and balanced" perhaps "comprehensive, balanced, and welcoming"? And - doesn't "for all to enjoy" somewhat redundantly get at the welcoming piece? - prioritization, part 2 - given the need to address climate change, shouldn't having trails to all parks be the highest priority? Instead of "high quality parks, natural areas, trails and programs", perhaps "high quality trails, parks, natural areas / open spaces, and programs"? Note - I really do like this part of teh Mission though - it gets right to the core components of Parks Department (Parks, Open Space, Trails, Programming). - last - can a Plan have a Mission? Or is a Mission something a group of people work toward?</p>	<p>Comment received. Thank you.</p>	
Chapter 4: Vision	<p>{Page 3} Section 1, Bullet 2 - Agree about reactively adapting (resilience) to climate change (as if we'll have a choice?), but shouldn't this Plan also include steps / efforts to proactively REDUCE the causes of climate change? Section 1, Bullet 4 - If there is to be balance, shouldn't there be use in addition to preservation / restoration? This bullet seems skewed toward preservation and does not acknowledge that some new uses do not have preservation downsides. Especially when residents are free to do what they will (to an extent) with Parks and Open Spaces. Section 1, Bullet 6 - if the NRMP is part of this Plan, shouldn't the TIP be listed here as well? Section 1 General comment - Is it the intent to address all my comments above in Section 2? Section 2 Bullets 3 & 4 should be moved to become Bullets 1 & 2. Section 2 Bullet 2 should prioritize accessibility over safety - gotta get there first! Section 2 Bullet 3 - please change to read "Provide easy and safe connections to parks, open spaces, and trails for bicyclists and pedestrians". It's already safe for people in cars. Section 2 Bullet 6 - should Open Space be included in this bullet?</p>	<p>Comment received. Thank you.</p>	
Chapter 4: Vision	<p>{Page 4} Section 1 Bullet 2 - Love this, especially the "network" part! Perhaps reword "Support healthier living by providing a well-connected, safe, and easy to use pedestrian and bicycling network throughout the community." Section 2 Bullet 3 - are seniors really underrepresented? Not trying to point fingers or place blame, but several things seem to have additional components FOR seniors (the Senior Center, the strong focus of the Minnetonka Memo on senior activities) or constraints placed to FAVOR seniors' perceptions (no bicycles on informal paths, parks unsafe because of offleash dogs, etc). Obviously just my perception...</p>	<p>Comment received. Thank you.</p>	
Chapter 4: Vision	<p>{Page 5} Bullet 1 - I love this bullet! An idea for a new facility comes to mind after reading it - why not have a skating rink / skating loop / XC skiing loop / fatbike loop on Grays Bay? There's already a building there to support the marina / boat launch. Just add a hot cocoa vending machine (or lease out a space for a vendor to provide hot drinks & pastries, maybe even Mom & Dad beverages)? And, maybe even partner with Wayzata downtown to extend the loops / trails to there? Bullet 2 - please don't limit this to just Parks? There should be (within environmentally sustainable limits) all season uses for Open Spaces and Trails too. Bullet 3 - Yes, please! Make sure "informal" isn't seen as different from "passive" and that everyone is using the same definition of "passive". New Bullet - please add a bullet stating that "Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails will retain their excellence through timely and ongoing maintenance."</p>	<p>Add bullet "Parks, open spaces, and trails will retain their excellence through timely and ongoing maintenance." to page 111 under Suport Excellence and Innovation.</p>	

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Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 4: Vision	It's a good idea to engage volunteers but part of engagement is a sense of collaboration. Volunteers want to feel a part of the process not just dictated to or asked to jump through excessive hoops. Restoration volunteers want to see the results of their work. They don't want to be part of a process that isn't based on restoration science and that perpetuates the invasive species cycle.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	This report identified and responded to those needs with the problem of off leash dogs, more passive access to our marsh areas in a non-destructive manner, more trail signage to show planned connecting trails. Report was well written for general public with graphs and headliners. Kudos-well done.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	This is an ambitious plan, it would be nice to see percentage weights given to each part given the unknowable future of funding. I do not see any plans to pursue cooperative plans with the city as a whole, it seems sidewalks and connections to commerce fit into a healthful plan. It would be good to see a commitment to follow up measurements on projects use to determine if the are spent equitably.	Priority initiatives were ranked high, medium, low or ongoing instead of being weighted. Sidewalkd and connections to commerce are part of the Trail Improvement Plan (TIP) which is a complementary document to the POST plan. Future trail and sidewalk segments are ranked in the TIP with 40% of their priority scores alocted to community access (connections to village centers, businesses, etc.).	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Excellence and Innovation Goal 1. This section still has a strong bias in favor of active recreational amenities as evidenced by the number listed in comparison to the limited number of more passive use options. FoMP sent a list of nature-based passive programming amenities that should be included here to show a better ballance of options.	The list identified in the plan came directly from the public engagement effort. Nature-based programming is listed as an improvement. Specific nature-based programming will be determined at the time of implementation.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Please proceed cautiously on the plan to "Provide more boardwalks in wetland areas." We need to preserve natural habitats! My neighborhood borders on the northern end of Meadow Park and a resident recently cut her own off-leash dog trail through an area of the wetlands that had been undisturbed for at least 35 years -- in a matter of weeks, the owl families that have been here for several years left the area.	Any added boardwalks would be proposed cautiously and approved through a public process.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Holy smokes but there is a lot of great stuff here! So many Initiatives... {Page 2} Goal 1, Bullet 1 - what about animals? Are they considered part of biodiversity? Can parks and open spaces continue to be recognized as the animal "reservoirs" they are and animal-specific preservation actions taken, both in parks and perhaps more importantly on roads adjacent to parks?	Biodiversity applies to plants, insects and wildlife. City resources are typically focused on restoring vegetative habitat, which in turns attracts and supports native wildlife. For example, restoring native flowering plants attracts and supports the needs of native pollinators within the ecosystem.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 1, Bullet 4 - does chemical use include salt in the winter?	Education and outreach materials distributed by the city encourage residents and businesses to reduce both chemical and salt use. The city does not use any deicing chemicals on trails or sidewalks, so this is already being done.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	{Page 3} Goal 1, Bullet 5 (improve bike & ped access) - YES, please!	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 2 - this seems like a drop in the bucket compared to all the damage done to waterways from areas external to parks. Every little bit helps, but?	Comment received. Thank you.	

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Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 2, Bullet 3 - could this be expanded to areas outside parks that border on Open Space? Like encouraging / supporting homeowners to add / increase buffers on their property that abuts wetlands / open spaces?	This plan is specific city-owned parks, open spaces and trails.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	{Page 4} Goal 3, Bullet 2 - are Preserve areas clearly defined somewhere? Should it be included in this Plan? I do like that this bullet expressly allows addition of low impact features / facilities to Preserve areas as long as they are passive.	Preserves are defined in Table 3, Chapter 3.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 3, Bullet 5 - is there a map of sensitive areas within or adjacent to parks, open space, and trails? And how is "Sensitive" different from "Preserve"?	Refer to the Natural Resources Master Plan, Table 2.15 for high quality habitat, which would be considered a sensitive area. Other sensitive areas could include steep slopes, wetlands, streams, or lakes that can be negatively impacted by land use.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 4, Bullet 4 - "pest management"? I hope this doesn't include deer culls?	Integrated pest management is an approach to addressing pests or nuisance wildlife that focuses first on preventing the problem, then sequenes to a type of management that has the least amount of impact. It is typcial focused on weeds and insect or rodent pests. For more information on deer issues, see the Natural Resources Master Plan, item 3.7.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 4, Bullet 4 - could this be modified / expanded to include ideas like ways to use invasive / pest species of plants? Like making pesto from garlic mustard?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	{Page 5} YES, YES, YES!!! More trails please!	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 1, Bullet 1 - add another bullet that details how additional trails NOT identified in the TIP can be identified, planned, and built.	That is a function of the TIP and could be an item added to the TIP, but not a component of the POST plan.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 1 Bullet 4 - rather than "explore options", how about just make them safer?	Changed to "Explore options to improve pedestrian crossing safety at roadway intersections that connect people to parks, open spaces and trails (i.e. traffic calming, traffic signals, marked crossings, signage, lighting, etc.) with future projects."	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 1 Bullet 5 - add "maintainability" as a criteria here. Also include planning to make the trails still usable when demand increases so we don't have t come back and redo work. Also include "conflict prevention" as a criteria (namely (but not only) making trails wider (10' instead of 8') so walkers & bikers don't feel squeezed by two way traffic.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 1, Bullet 6 - doesn't it say elsewhere in this Plan that public transportation is not really a significant method of access for parks? If it isn't, should this bullet be included? Or, if the plan is to improve public transport to increase numbers of people accessing parks that way, speak to that effort?	The goal is to improve access to increase usage.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 1 Bullet 7 - LOVE this! "Grocery store - 2.2 miles -->" or "Taco restaurant 0.5 miles <--". "Connection to Lake Mtka Regional LRT Trail (or Luce Line, or Dakota Rail, etc) 1 mile -->" Will there be sponsors?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 1 Bullet 10 - maybe reword this so that trail "obstacles" (steeper slopes, etc) are acknowledged rather than trying to come up with a way that avoids them? Let people decide which way to go?	Comment received. Thank you.	

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Chapter 5: Systems Plan	{Page 6} Goal 1, Bullet 11 - "improved maintenance" - year-round, please! Also, some of the older bituminous trails are in need of updating but that doesn't seem to be addressed in the TIP?	Improved trail maintenance is included in Goal 1, bullet 12 of this section.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 1, Bullet 11 - bike parking - excellent! No wheelbender racks, please - just the good kinds (single loop wave racks, bike hitch, hoop racks, etc). And at multiple locations (for example, at the entrance to Jidana Park and also at the launch site in Jidana Park).	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 1 Bullet 12 (grade separation) - awesome! Safe for trail users, doesn't "inconvenience" road users, ...	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 2 - add new programming types - bike rodeos, cyclocross races, kayak races, ...	The list identified in the plan came directly from the public engagement effort.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 3 Bullet 3 - it seems this could be done by acknowledging the existing "informal" trails and opening access to those "informal" trails to all users?	The opening of and formalizing of informal trails could be considered as part of park master planning efforts.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 3, Bullet 4 - especially in winter! Groom some classic & skate XC ski trails along the creek and on Grays Bay! The trails on the lakes in Minneapolis see a TON of use. Oh, and please make them wide enough for ice skaters and fatbikers!	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 3, Bullet 4 - also do this in Open Spaces (the vast cattail area in Meadow Park, for example - add a winter-only trail through the cattails. Since it is winter-only, no damage to the environment).	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	{Page 7} Goal 4, Bullet 1 - for example - connect to the Cedar Lake Road trail that St Louis Park is planning (not sure of implementation date?) all the way out to 169. Also, work with Hopkins & SLP to allow access from Minnetonka (some sort of easement through the apartment property?) to the 36th St crossing over 169.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	{Page 8} Goal 1, Bullet 3 - yes, year-round please! Not being able to bike to the grocery store because the trail has 4 inches of snow on it (or 2 inches of refrozen footprinted snow) kind of sucks.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 1, Bullet 2.5 - add a bullet describing how trails are important for transportation and even that counts as physical activity. Too many people only consider sport or recreational activities for improving health when transportation activities can do double duty - improving health AND getting you somewhere (groceries, school, work, etc)!	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 1, Bullet 7 - same comment - address health benefits of transportation, not just recreation.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 2, Bullet 1 - YES! LOVE! Maybe add "safe and easy to navigate"?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 3 - same comment - include transportation as health benefit, not just recreation. Bullet 2 kind of gets at this, but it could be more explicit / clearer.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	{Page 9} Goal 4 (Partnerships) - are there other entities besides health organizations that could be partnered with to provide Open Space / trails? Cargill (trail along their border with Mooney Park. singletrack trail on their research property, etc), MnDOT (space along 494 / 7 / 62 for expanded trails), Hennepin County (space along county roads), others?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Page 11} Goal 1, Bullet 3 - add "natural surface bike / running trails", "XC ski trails" as options in the list of new things	The list identified in the plan came directly from the public engagement effort.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 2, Bullet 1 - XC skiing / fatbiking would be nice through the cattails in Meadow Park!	Comment received. Thank you.	


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Chapter 5: Systems Plan	{Page 12} Goal 2, Bullet 2 - For sure IN parks (next to maintained trails in Jidana & Purgatory), but also not just in parks? How about XC skiing / fatbiking in Open Space (area along 494, along trail in area north of the cattlepass that goes under Hwy 7 east of 101, etc)?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 2, Bullet 6 - could this open up the previously used hockey rinks for use as pickleball courts?	This is a possibility and was done at Meadow Park prior to the courts being constructed at Lone Lake Park.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 4, Bullet 4 - add a subscription option for various topics of interest. For instance, if I wanted to be aware of ALL bike-related information (new trail, completion of a project, open house, whatever - everything), please make it so I can subscribe to that Topic and get the info pushed to me. Kind of like is done now for specific Projects via text or email?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	You talk about "limiting development in park preserves" yet since this document recommends downgrading current Community Preserves it's hard to tell which areas are considered preserves. There is ambiguity that will lead to contention. You emphasize "native plant materials" which is good. The city needs to be vigilant that it not introducing non native and invasive species into our parks. For example, it seems like each year the city tree sale has had less native species available and more cultivars or non native species, Unclaimed trees are often planted in city parks. This is not a good practice.	All of the parks have now been given a Mini Park, Neighborhood Park or Community Park designation based on size and service. The preserve areas in the Community Parks have not changed and additional preserve designations were added to the to the park system.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	"Limit development in park preserves to improvements that support passive uses or address water quality and habitat." How will you balance recreation and natural resources by developing park preserves? Park Preserves need restoration investment, not more development. Twenty years of degradation and mismanagement reinforces the urgency for swift intervention, adaptive management, and funding.	Please refer to the newly adoption Natural Resources Master Plan, located at https://www.minnetonkamn.gov/our-city/natural-resources/resources-and-information for more information that addressess priorities for habitat restoration in parks, including adaptive management strategies and restoring funding.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 3: Provide opportunities for people to connect with nature. This needs to be combined with well-defined use and guidance or the high quality natural areas will continue to be degraded by misuse and overuse.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 3: Strengthen collaboration with neighborhoods, associations, agencies, schools, community groups and volunteers. This needs serious work and attention by staff. Community members are ready to collaborate but staff need to be willing to provide a welcoming environment and experience that maintains volunteers.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	Goal 5: Model sustainable practices in park construction, maintenance and operations. Initiatives: > Incorporate sustainable best practices in the operations and maintenance of park facilities. Develop a smart salting training session. The overuse of salt on roadways and in park parking lots is aggregious.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	> Continue to manage invasive plant species in parks and open spaces as guided by the City of Minnetonka Natural Resources Master Plan. Rephrase: restore ecological plant communities using best management practices, current science, and adaptive management.	It is important to cross-reference the Natural Resources Master Plan in the POST plan. The NRMP addresses ecological restoration using current science and adaptive management.	


Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 5: Systems Plan	<p>The comments below reflect the views of 5 residents as they relate to Goal 3 for Lake Rose Park. We felt the Goals and Initiatives language might be too broad to be applied to this unmaintained, undeveloped city park and wanted to clarify why.: Since Lake Rose Park was dedicated to the city in 1974 by the developer of Lake Rose Estates, it has not been maintained by the City (other than mowing the grass at the Randall Lane park access). As a result, for over 30 years two long-time park-adjacent residents volunteered to maintain the park's packed dirt trail. Keeping it presentable and passable by mowing and raking it periodically, especially to protect the neighborhood children using it as a short-cut to Gatewood Elementary. This arrangement was agreed upon at an informal outdoor neighborhood meeting coordinated by and with the blessing of Public Works management. If the city were to maintain the park trail, they said they would have to install an 8-foot-wide asphalt trail that could accommodate their maintenance equipment. Neither the neighborhood nor the city wanted anything to do with that. Lake Rose Park has never been developed either; it remains identical to how it was in 1974, except for the very successful natural resources restoration which has greatly enhanced the park preserve. We believe there must have been reasons this small, almost landlocked preserve was never on the city's radar as a candidate for providing enough benefit to the community at large. Recently, there's been much talk by volunteers and residents about developing the park by expanding the trail, adding a boardwalk, introducing more formalized access for uses like skating, canoeing, skiing, fishing, etc. Many of these are activities that residents readily enjoyed years ago, before the invasive weeds started choking the north side of the lake and shoreline. None of us are opposed to exploring if and how passive human use activities might be considered for LRP, but we respectfully request that the city conduct a feasibility study for what makes sense for both the preserve and for the neighborhood before any action is taken. Some pertinent questions to ask for this unmaintained park: Who would expand the trail and how, using what materials, specifications or keep a packed-dirt path integral to the character of the park? Is a boardwalk appropriate in this setting? Who would build and install it and where would it be placed to minimize negatives to adjacent property owners? Who will maintain expanded trail and/or other passive use development infrastructure, if any? Recently, there have been several instances of attempts by residents to alter their own "piece of the park" to fit personal needs/desires, possibly without considering how it might affect the lake, the park or other neighbors. Because the park isn't maintained, some may believe it's OK to</p>	<p>Thank you for the comments regarding Lake Rose Park. The POST Plan is a high level planning document for entire the park and trail system. Staff will continue to work with interested residents regarding specific concerns and interests for Lake Rose Park.</p>	

Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
	<p>do this. We've been encouraged by the new "application" process that Leslie and Sara shared with us whereby no development or alterations to the park will be authorized without neighborhood involvement in the planning process. If possible to do here, we'll attach the 2001 POST Plan Primary Program Focus document for Lake Rose Park, where the City / Park Board outlined the characteristics, ecological issues and types of development, if any, should be considered. Because Lake Rose Park hasn't changed since 1974 or 2001, we think this document is still relevant for guiding any future development efforts. Notable comments from the 2001 POST Plan document which we'd like to preserve for future reference in planning: "The primary function of Lake Rose Park is to preserve the natural character of the lake and the surrounding shoreline and open space in a developed part of the city." "Lake Rose works in concert with Purgatory Park to provide open space in this NPSA. With Boulder Creek relatively close, active uses in this park are not needed nor perhaps appropriate." "Lake Rose Park is an appealing natural area, with the lake and adjacent shoreline being the primary features...there is no development in the park...views from this area across the lake are very scenic, as are the views from many of the adjacent properties." "Protection of the ecological values of the lake and shoreline are of high concern and warrant close review. Managing stormwater runoff into the lake and working with adjacent property owners on maintaining buffer zones and managing the use of fertilizers top the list of issues." "As a nature preserve, maintenance activity will be focused on stewardship of the resource itself...programmed use of the park is not expected." "While Lake Rose Park is set aside for preservation, a few potential improvements are worth considering. Expanding the trail along the lake where feasible and developing a sitting area/lake overlook are simple additions that would be appealing to the nearby residents, yet not take away from the character of the site. Given the adjacency of the residential properties, neighborhood involvement in developing a master plan for the park is critical." PS: We think both the 2020 POST System Plan and Natural Resources Master Plan are impressive!</p>		
Chapter 6: Implementation	I did not see a budget line for review of completed projects success in serving the public, ideally a cost per use and a public satisfaction outcome will be available.	Many of the implentation priority projects include projects that could not be measured per use, however new programs and facilities will be evaluated for success through user surveys, useage tracking and program registration.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	As an overall statement include that "Every park should have a multi-year, comprehensive plan that covers both natural amenities preservation and restoration and active recreational amenities maintenance and repurposing." Without comprehensive, multi-year plans actions are merely one off activities with limited value to our city.	The priority initiatives designate future master park planning.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	Do we really need to provide more boardwalks in wetland areas? Those areas should be preserved, especially if they area part of a woodland preservation area!! It may sound appealing but in reality it could be unnecessarily disruptive to the wildlife habitat. Please please carefully weigh the pros and cons -- choose limited areas and do it very thoughtfully. Thank you	Any added boardwalks would be proposed cautiously and approved through a public process.	

Full Draft POST Plan - Public comments received between Jan. 28 - Feb. 28, 2022

Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 6: Implementation	Go over to Gro Tonka. The steps and other infrastructure is falling apart. The amount of time and money researching and talking about equity in a park could fix an actual park like Gro Tonka	The steps in Gro Tonka were scheduled to be replaced in the last two years, but due to COVID, the project has been delayed. They are scheduled to be replaced in the near future.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	A. Pickleball courts: 1. Strongly recommend several additional pickleball courts in the NW area of Minnetonka, as currently beautiful Lone Lake courts are often full plus located in far SE section of Minnetonka. Pickleball is currently fastest growing sport and will continue to grow as Minnetonka residents age plus younger generation is beginning to join in the sport. 2. Linner Park would be one location for conversion to pickleball courts (current tennis courts are in disrepair crumbling surface) or tennis ' pickleball combination.	Added "Neighborhood Park" as a location option in "Table 4: Facility Delivery Guidelines" for Pickleball Courts.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	B. Improved safety for bikers and pedestrians: 1. McGinty Road is quite heavily utilized by bikers, walkers and runners, as well as fast vehicular traffic. Bike shoulders vary in width, often too narrow for safety. Please consider off road bike trail for McGinty, especially towards Wayzata to connect with Dakota Trail etc. 2. Linner Road is EXTREMELY dangerous for the very frequent bikers, roller bladers, toddlers in strollers and pedestrians. This road is a MAJOR entrance for many neighborhoods, heavily traveled by vehicles right off 494 / 394 interstates, plus the narrow hilly curvy road makes pedestrian / bike travelers at high risk. Please consider sidewalk at least on one side of the road, plus permanent no parking signs along road. Thank you for the current stretch of sidewalk along Linner Park and up the hill of Summer Oaks. You listened to the story of our son falling off his bike up that hill (20 years ago) and responded with the wonderful sidewalk for that stretch!	A future trail segment is planned along McGinty road in the city's Trail Improvement Plan(TIP). A Linner Rd. trail segment will be discussed by the city's internal trails team for consideration of inclusion in the TIP.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	C. Boat launch access improvements for non motorized kayaks, canoes, stand up paddles at Grays Bay Park would be greatly appreciated. We used to launch off the docks towards Minnehaha Creek, although the weed growth makes the paddling difficult there now. Improved access toward Grays Bay (currently rocky and unstable entrance) would help! Thank you for our absolutely FABULOUS Minnetonka Parks and trails (POST). We are truly blessed to live here! Diane Meier MD and Reed Wahlberg 2100 Morton Rd Minnetonka, MN. 55391	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	{Page 3} Table 4-1 - couldn't several of the facilities listed also be available in Open Spaces in addition to (possibly) in Parks of different sizes? Thinking specifically of cross country skiing, mountain biking (or more accurately, singletrack), nature play area, off-leash dog park, trails, and boardwalks?	The table is intended to show options for city-owned park land.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	{Page 5} Facilities Item "Improve trail connections to parks, open spaces, and public transportation facilities" would seem to be better prioritized as a High priority in conjunction with the TIP segments.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	Facilities Item "Provide more boardwalks in wetlands" - please make boardwalks wider. Existing boardwalks make two way traffic difficult for both bikes and pedestrians.	Comment received. Thank you.	



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Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 6: Implementation	Facilities Item "Provide facilities that support year-long activities and recreational opportunities" - modify to read "Provide facilities that support year-long access, activities, and recreational opportunities" in order to reflect keeping trails cleared year-round.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	Facilities Item "Provide additional winter recreational opportunities in Community Parks (i.e. snowshoe trails, cross-country ski trails)" - these could be provided in Open Spaces as well, right? For example, couldn't XC ski trails be provided on lakes or open areas of wetlands throughout the City by having a grooming machine that could go to different locations, typically operated by volunteers?	The focus of the POST plan is parks and open spaces in parks, but this doesn't preclude conducting an activity on an open space on a lake or other city property if an opportunity was considered.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	Plans and Studies Item "Incorporate park resilience strategies in the city's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan" - Are trails included in the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan as a climate change prevention solution?	This comment has been communicated to the sustainability staff for consideration in the Climate Action Plan which is being created.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	Plans and Studies Item "Conduct study to improve pedestrian crossing safety at roadway intersections adjacent to Community Parks" - this should include roadways at trail crossing locations.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	{Page 6} Plans and Studies Items - Please add item "Conduct a study to expand or add one or more bike parks" at a Medium priority	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	Plans and Studies Item "Study the feasibility of condensing ice skating rinks" - modify to include feasibility of providing skating rink and trail at Grays Bay Marina.	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	{Page 7} Communications and Marketing Items - add Item "Provide clear and timely communication across all channels (Minnetonka Memo, email, text, social media, and through Topic subscription) of ALL Project review opportunities and open houses; Study, Plan, Master Plan, or Feasibility Plan listening sessions, input/feedback opportunities (including surveys), open houses, and reviews; and presentations to boards or Council" as a Critical (High) Priority.	This comment will be shared with our communications staff as it pertains to all city projects and not just the POST Plan.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	Communications and Marketing Items - add Item "Provide interactive GIS map showing all Projects, Plan Reviews, and feedback opportunities (regardless of whether currently scheduled/funded or unscheduled/unfunded) with an option for map to provide automated notification of new or changed items across one, multiple, or all categories and Topics"	This comment will be shared with our communications staff as it pertains to all city projects and not just the POST Plan.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	Operations and Maintenance Items - please add Item "Improve trail clearing so that all high-priority trails and trails with a transportation focus are cleared within 1 day of weather events year-round"	Trails in the city are divided into 3 priorities for snow removal, balancing access to schools, business centers, and senior housing along with transportation uses. Transportation uses are not necessarily put ahead of other uses. First Priority areas are designated to be cleared within 1 day of a 2" or greater snowfall event. Added an ongoing priority initiative "Review trail and sidewalk winter maintenance priority designations as the trail and sidewalk system expands."	
Chapter 6: Implementation	{Page 10} Metrics for Plan Performance Please add an item "Average time to foot AND bike navigable status for trails"	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	Item "Park and trail safety – number of accidents, incidents, and crime reports" - modify to include complaints (unless that is already covered by incidents?) and kudos (positive feedback)	Complaints would be covered under incidents or crime reports.	

Full Draft POST Plan - Public comments received between Jan. 28 - Feb. 28, 2022

Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Chapter 6: Implementation	{Page 5} Facilities Item - Add Item "Recognize informal trails as trails" - Ongoing, \$0	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	Facilities Item - Add Item "Revise City ordinances regarding passive use of all trails" - Ongoing, Staff Time / \$0	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	{Page 7} Operations and Maintenance Item - Add Item "Maintain all trails" - Ongoing, \$0	Comment received. Thank you.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	The Facility Guidelines Table shows that anything goes at what are currently Community Preserves. How was the decision made to downgrade our Community Preserves and allow for any type of built development? Did the community ask for this? What supports this decision? This is not a "minor change to some of the classifications" as you say early in the plan. It is a major change. The community needs to weigh in on such a major change.	The definition of a Preserve can be found in Table 1 and states that preserves provide passive use opportunities. Any added amenities/facilities to preserve areas would go through a public approval process.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	p. 118 - Cullen Nature Preserve (not Cullen Smith property)	The Cullen Smith property has not been formally named. It is considered a preserve area and will be formally named during the master planning process.	
Chapter 6: Implementation	Park and Trail Dedication - currently used for development only. Reallocate funds for general maintenance and natural resources restoration.	Park and Trail Dedication fees are governed by state statute 462.358 Subd. 2b. (g). The definition in the glossary will be updated to the statute language of "Cash payments received must be used only for the acquisition and development or improvement of parks, recreational facilities, playgrounds, trails, wetlands, or open space based on the approved park systems plan. Cash payments must not be used for ongoing operation or maintenance of parks, recreational facilities, playgrounds, trails, wetlands, or open space."	
Appendix A: Glossary	Two additions. 1. Natural amenities are the unique nature spaces and biodiversity of our parks such as remnants of the big woods and other plant communities, steep slopes and vistas, lakes, streams, wetlands and ponds and other elements including birds, bees, etc. that are of value to our community and distinguish us from other communities.	Refer to 'Natural Area' definition	
Appendix A: Glossary	2. Passive, nature based activity definition needs to be included to clarify the difference between active and passive. Passive generally means non-mechanical use and little if no ecological disturbance or harm to the nature space and biodiversity as a result of the activity.	Refer to the 'Passive Recreation definition	
Appendix A: Glossary	{Page 2} Should Active Recreation include singletrack since it takes place at a prescribed place? Or is that more mountain biking and singletrack doesn't necessarily require a prescribed place?	The activities listed are common examples and is not an all encompassing list.	
Appendix A: Glossary	Climate Change should refer to "significant changes in global AND LOCAL temperature".	Global refers to global weather patterns that impact local temperature and precipitation.	
Appendix A: Glossary	Conservation should reference "non-depleting" use in place of efficient use? Kind of like how it is included in "Sustainability" on page 6?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Appendix A: Glossary	Given the definition of Skate Park on page 6, please include a definition for Bike Park here.	A skate park is referenced in the plan, therefore included in the glossary.	
Appendix A: Glossary	{Page 3} Does DEI include different viewpoints? For example, people who think bicycling is dangerous?	Comment received. Thank you.	

Full Draft POST Plan - Public comments received between Jan. 28 - Feb. 28, 2022

Chapter	Comment	Staff Response/Clarification	Plan Ammended (If Needed)
Appendix A: Glossary	Voice Control of dogs is problematic at best and seems a highly unenforceable standard. Which leads one to ask if it is included only for after-the-fact enforcement / punishment	Comment received. Thank you.	
Appendix A: Glossary	Informal Trail - questioning the inclusion of the words "of disturbance" in this definition. Shouldn't those words be included in the Formal Trail definition as well? Also, even though they are not City-approved, it should clarify whether they are City-proscribed / forbidden. Tough issue, I know, but...	Comment received. Thank you.	
Appendix A: Glossary	Invasive Species - I understand narrow-leaved cattails are invasive? Does the City maintain a list of invasive species that could be referenced here?	Refer to the Natural Resources Master Plan	
Appendix A: Glossary	{Page 4} Maintenance - should this definition be expanded to cover the references made to maintaining parks in other definitions? For example, Landscaping includes "maintaining" in a way that doesn't seem to be included in the definition of Maintenance. Additionally, it seems that some reference to maintenance should be included in the Restoration definition since restoring an area to prior conditions will not be sustainable without significant ongoing maintenance (given how buckthorn, garlic mustard, etc can rapidly take over such an area). Last - there should be some reference to both the seasonality and prioritization of maintenance. Not all City facilities are maintained year-round, and for those that are there is often an appreciable lag time where said facilities are essentially unmaintained / unusable.	Added "natural areas" to the definition of Maintenance in the glossary to read: "The regular tasks that keep parks, natural areas, recreational facilities, and trails clean and safe to use. For example, trash collection, safety inspections, replacement of broken parts on equipment, care of fields, etc."	
Appendix A: Glossary	Natural Areas - this seems to be a circular definition? Should there be reference to human-made facilities?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Appendix A: Glossary	Neighborhood - "centered around a school or park" - please add "or centered on or bounded by natural or artificial features". I know that makes it more similar to NPSA, but... The Crosby neighborhood doesn't really have a park, I think?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Appendix A: Glossary	{Page 5} Open Space / Park - there seems to be significant overlap here. For example - the strip of land along the west side of 494 is owned by the City and has a trail but is not a park (and isn't listed as Open Space?). However, a "Park" is "land area"... "for neighborhood"... "recreation". Are Parks a subset of Open Space?	Open space can be part of parks or a separate area. This plan generally focuses on open space within the park and trail system.	
Appendix A: Glossary	Park Programming - should this be Park Department Programming?	No, because this could be programming lead by recreation services, parks or natural resources.	
Appendix A: Glossary	Preserve - should this be defined here (in the Park Preserve sense)? Or at least included here, if defined elsewhere?	Added "Park Classifications" to the glossary stating to see Table 1, page 51	
Appendix A: Glossary	Resiliency - Is this intended to be largely applicable to artificial structures? There seems to be relatively little if anything that we can do to return a park or open space to its prior condition after flood or fire except wait for it to regrow?	Comment received. Thank you.	
Appendix A: Glossary	{Page 6} Stewardship - should also include a reference to action? Caring about something is great, but doesn't seem to rise to the level of stewardship without also doing something about it.	Demonstration of care implies action.	
Appendix A: Glossary	Where did these definitions come from? Please provide citations.	Multiple sources were used.	

Chapter 1: Introduction

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

28 January 2022 - 28 February 2022

PROJECT NAME:

Plan Your Park System



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 | What are your comments for Chapter 1: Introduction?

Anonymous

2/02/2022 07:11 AM

Looks as if a great deal of work has gone into this plan, could a part be added to make sure the City dedicate future efforts to make the parks and open space sensitive to the needs and wishes of all, not just those who have time and access to surveys.

Anonymous

2/04/2022 12:30 PM

The City of Minnetonka is the recreation provider for the City of Hopkins. Please note this as part of the background/history for this plan.

Anonymous

2/05/2022 06:23 AM

The sentence that says that the majority of survey participants think the parks are in good shape is misleading as most residents do not have the training needed to assess the status of the parks especially the nature areas. This has been pointed out by staff, city officials and residents for years. The sentence should be deleted.

Anonymous

2/09/2022 08:48 PM

More PickelBall courts. Glen More Parks mini Basketball court needs to be replaces. Why not Putin a few pickleball courts.

Anonymous

2/19/2022 08:53 AM

{Page 3} In Economic Benefits, please edit "Several studies have shown that proximity to parks, open spaces and trails can enhance property values and tax revenues" to read "Several studies have shown that proximity AND EASE OF ACCESS to parks, open spaces and trails can enhance property values and tax revenues". It's awesome to be close, but if you can't easily get there, are you truly close? And, ease of access is referenced in other sections (Health & Wellbeing, etc). {Page 6} In Key Takeaways section, - third bullet (Continue to develop a walkable / bikeable Minnetonka) - please change to "Accelerate development of a walkable / bikeable Minnetonka". I know trails cost money, but planning to have a walkable / bikeable Minnetonka in 20 years when it is needed NOW means we can't just continue along the path we're on. -sixth bullet (Foster resiliency of parks and open space to recover and adapt to climate change and extreme weather events) - please edit to read "Foster resiliency of parks and open space to BE RESISTANT TO and recover FROM and adapt to climate change and extreme weather events". An ounce of prevention, right? -seventh bullet (Develop an interlinking, looped trail system throughout the city and provide connections to neighborhoods and individual parks) - please edit to read "Develop an interlinking, EASY AND SAFE TO NAVIGATE, looped trail system NETWORK throughout the city and

provide connections to RELEVANT DESTINATIONS, neighborhoods, and individual parks AND OPEN SPACES" -thirteenth bullet (Maintain open space, even with new development and increasing density in the city) - please edit to read "Maintain AND ENHANCE open space, even with new development and increasing density in the city" {Page 7} This is likely outside the scope of the POST Plan, but please re-prioritize the Trail Improvement Plan to focus on number of users served and environmental benefit before cost to build. Specific case in point - number of users (and potential) users of the Delton segment (currently prioritized as #12 in the TIP, which suggests an earliest possible construction date of 2032) and resulting potential for reduction in VMT are significantly higher benefit than any of the segments currently prioritized above this segment.

Anonymous

2/28/2022 11:31 AM

The key take-aways at the end seem accurate. The list of Areas Identified for Improvement seems skewed to built recreation and downgrades the majority community interest in improvement of natural areas. It's unclear what "natural surface trails" refer to. If it's for mountain biking that's a problem. We already have a mountain bike course built at significant expense and community discord. Members of the community were told the built course would reduce the occurrence of mountain biking on rogue trails.

Anonymous

2/28/2022 01:58 PM

Areas identified for improvement (second paragraph) fails to mention the need for funding the ecological restoration of the park system (and its current degraded state as identified in the NRMP). Park improvements and future investments should refer to new and the revamping of existing amenities, in addition to ecological restoration. The language mentions a wholistic planning approach and this is a welcome change to randomly putting new amenities with no master planning process and multiple variables. There are no 'unmaintained areas' in the community parks so use and ordinances such as the leash law should be reviewed for compliance. Provide an appropriate balance between resource preservation, recreational use and community growth. Balance is an absolutely nebulous term unless it is clearly defined how balance will occur. If 5 acres of high quality natural resources are lost with the addition of a new amenity, balance would imply mitigation and restoration of 5 acres elsewhere (not chipping away at the remaining natural resources in our park systems). Replace what is lost, one for one = balance.

Optional question (7 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Chapter 2: Trends

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

28 January 2022 - 28 February 2022

PROJECT NAME:

Plan Your Park System



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 What are your comments for Chapter 2: Trends?

Anonymous

1/28/2022 04:24 PM

Whole report was well written. I was interested in the "trends" section to see what challenges were anticipated. The growing senior population and the need for passive activity, connecting to nature and other trails were right on. This need seems to reflect a basic human need in general and not just because of recent COVID isolation.

Anonymous

2/02/2022 07:20 AM

is there planning on how to track changing needs?

Anonymous

2/05/2022 06:27 AM

Trend 1 add "There is an increasing desire for preservation of unique natural features in our parks and open spaces and coordinated nature programming such as nature education, bird watching and citizen research."

Anonymous

2/08/2022 07:57 PM

Not only is pickleball the fastest growing sport in America and it has over-taken tennis, the open-play culture of the sport in Minnetonka parks is very community building. It is the one sport that adults can just show up and spontaneously interact and socialize with their neighbors. It is also very inter generational. Seniors can play with children. Teens can play with parents.

Anonymous

2/09/2022 08:48 PM

More PickelBall courts. Glen More Parks mini Basketball court needs to be replaces. Why not Putin a few pickleball courts.

Anonymous

2/10/2022 06:02 PM

The fact that climate change is at the top of this section makes me wonder if the correct factors are being emphasized in this planning process. If it were me, I'd stick to parks.

Anonymous

2/19/2022 09:36 AM

{Page 2} Given that the first bullet prominently features "Informal Recreation", please include a clearer / more readily findable definition of that term (currently somewhat buried under / as "Passive Recreation"). General question - are the Trends in any sort of order? ie, Trend 1 most important / relevant, Trend 8 least? Please clarify. {Page 4} Resiliency - certainly laudable, but can parks & open spaces really be resilient? If climate changes such that species X of plant can't survive in parks and open spaces here, is there anything that can really be done to resolve that other than plant some other species? Or is this intended to apply primarily (exclusively) to built structures? Either way, it seems prevention has to be a prominent

part of this effort? To that point - how will this Plan result in reduction of GHG emissions? How will this plan support demonstration and encouragement of changes necessary to PREVENT / REDUCE climate change rather than just adapt to whatever may come? {Page 6} Second bullet ("changes in public space") - PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE make large reductions in the amount of turf grass in neighborhood parks and replace with native / pollinator-friendly, low-maintenance species!!! Add wood chip or stepping stone paths through the new areas. Example - most of the area above the playground in Linner Park could be this way (leave part of it open for sledding in the winter?). Reductions in mowing would be of both financial and environmental benefit. Community gardens - not too sure how well these work, but the lower portion of Linner Park seems to have sufficient space to do this (maybe no water source there though)? Or, maybe lease the land to local growers and let them offer CSAs? {Page 7} Completely agree! However: Second bullet (The expansion of pedestrian spaces and outdoor dining on urban streets; the conversion of streets to bike lanes and trails; and the installation of parklets in parking spaces have increased the possibilities for new types of urban parks.) - Did any of these happen in Minnetonka? Are there plans for them to take place? Is there or will there be a Parklet Improvement Plan prioritizing where parklets can be created? Or a Street Reclamation and Conversion Plan? I sure hope so!!! If not, I'm uncertain why this bullet is included since it doesn't deal with existing parks or open spaces and doesn't have a way forward for new parks. Or is it just a general statement of need for quality parks (and open spaces) {Page 8} Same comment as above - is this just a general statement of need for quality parks and open spaces? {Page 9} Parks provide benefits. However, so do Open Spaces. Make more reference to the abundant open spaces available in Minnetonka (like the area between Mooney Park proper and Minnehaha Creek, or the open space between Jidana Park and Minnehaha Creek Headwaters Park)? {Page 10} Isn't mountain biking still one of the fastest growing sports in the US? It seems warranted to include it on this page.

Anonymous

2/28/2022 02:05 PM

Planning for change and building flexibility into the city's parks, open space and trail facilities will position Minnetonka to better adapt to current trends and future demands. Example: convert existing underutilized tennis courts or ice rinks into pickleball rather than building new pickleball courts where a community picnic area and gathering space is eliminated, a space that was frequently used by residents of color. How does the new park at Ridgedale build in resiliency to climate change? How much energy use is predicted for that park or the large developed complex proposed in Opus. These 'new' parks don't seem to be planned or constructed with climate resiliency or low energy use in mind. Add native plants to a largely

hardscaped park doesn't count! There will be greater emphasis on more natural areas and balancing environment with recreational needs. Please stop using the word balance in the context of natural resources unless this is clearly defined. This is antiquated terminology.

Optional question (8 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Chapter 3: Existing Conditions

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

28 January 2022 - 28 February 2022

PROJECT NAME:

Plan Your Park System



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 | What are your comments for Chapter 3: Existing Conditions?

Anonymous

2/05/2022 06:31 AM

Park classifications. Preserves should be preserved for passive activities. If by nature play areas you mean Ninja courses or mountain biking please delete nature play areas.

Anonymous

2/09/2022 08:49 PM

More PickleBall courts. Glen More Parks mini Basketball court needs to be replaces. Why not Putin a few pickleball courts.

Anonymous

2/19/2022 11:56 AM

{Page 9} Are each of these definitions included in the Glossary?
{Page 10} Other than the Ann Cullen Smith property, this table does not seem to include any Open Spaces? For instance, the area along the west side of 494 or the area between Sheridan Hills Road and Sheridan Terrace (Hennepin County Parcel ID 0911722210028) or the area west of Robinwood Lane (Hennepin County Parcel 1411722140038), etc, etc, etc... Nor does it make reference to any lakes? {Page 11} Same comment - no (or only very few) Open Spaces shown? {Page 13} "Notable" Facilities seems rooted in or continuing in a more traditional view/mindset of parks / recreation? I agree with the need to show where Facilities are without having the map get too crowded with parks etc, but? {Page 14} A more general comment - shouldn't "city's" be capitalized throughout this Plan? {Page 18} I disagree that the trail system is "comprehensive". For instance, there is a trail in McKenzie Park, but no trail TO McKenzie Park (I note that Google Maps shows Williston as a "bike-friendly road" and I use Williston for biking quite frequently, but I'm pretty sure very few people would consider that a trail connection). There is a trail IN Victoria-Evergreen Park, but only an "informal" trail TO McKenzie Park. Trail Facilities - is there a Trail Facilities map, and/or Plan? Something easily accessible that shows where (and when) drinking fountains and restrooms are available in parks and open spaces? Or a Plan that shows when new such facilities will be added to the system? Trail Maintenance (Much of the trail system is plowed during the winter months, making it usable throughout the year.) Please go into more detail as to what constitutes "usable". Experience shows that definition currently effectively excludes bicyclists (other than those who can afford fat bikes), wheelchair or mobility scooter users, and other than confident pedestrians. It also adds constraints such as gripping devices since may of the trails become icy (I know, we live in Minnesota, it gets icy.), but maybe don't consider a trail to be "cleared" unless it is usable by all. Or, quantify the "clearing". Also - there are indications of cross country skiing on and along trails even though that is one of the prohibited uses. Would it make sense to change the prohibition, or at least to recognize it as an unspoken

"trend" / user request? {Page 25} Were participants of any of the public outreach limited in their choices (ie, could they select only three items)? If so, please include that in the description of the methodology as it could indicate more support for more activities. {Page 27} Same comment - describe limitations in methodology. {Page 28} General comment - the stacked / staggered vertical bar charts look pretty, but they maybe don't convey results as clearly as would be nice? {Page 29} Very Important Trails and Trail Connections (73.9%) seems to strongly suggest the need for accelerated trail construction and better trail maintenance. Please identify additional funding sources to meet this need. Very Important Natural Areas for Passive Recreation (68.6%) seems to support a point/request made elsewhere in the Plan to allow bicyclists on all trails in Minnetonka. {Page 30} People scared of off-leash dogs seems to strongly suggest the off-leash / voice command option currently allowed in certain places in Minnetonka Parks / Open Spaces be reconsidered or done away with. I recently very much enjoyed meeting two off-leash not under voice command Great Danes at Jidana Park, but I can see where others would not consider that a pleasant experience. I've also had to defend my dog numerous times from other dogs who were offleash and not under voice command, both in parks and open spaces and on sidewalks. {Page 31} The question options here are somewhat skewed in that many so-called "natural areas" are strongly impacted / "recovered" areas that were previously cleared (Lone Lake Park is one great example - raspberry farm, ski area, junk dump but now a "Big Woods remnant"?). Or the areas along Minnehaha Creek - pristine natural wetland or hotbed of invasive cattails? Prime creek banks or overlooked stormwater path? As such, are they really natural areas to protect from any/all other uses? It's further complicated by the fact that some new uses don't actually impact the "natural areas" - the "natural area" is essentially unaffected (from its current state) by the new use. Additionally, "low impact uses" is really vague. {Page 32} Was a similar question asked about Open Spaces? {Page 33} Skating rinks - I'm fortunate to have a skateable wetland in my back yard. So I never use City rinks. That said, I think the City needs to continue with as widely distributed a set of rinks as possible if for no other reason than to minimize automobile travel to a destination rink. The options provided seem to gloss over this likely outcome of providing only a destination rink. Off-leash dogs - see previous comments above. {Page 35} Dwight Lane comment - agree 100%! There are numerous other locations similar to this (Oak Lea to Minnehaha Place is just one example). Can these somehow be formalized? It seems like it would do just as much to make Minnetonka more walkable / bikeable as the current TIP. And it would do it now rather than in 20 years. Will there be a complete list of all responses included in the final plan? And to an extent - why wasn't a complete list of all responses provided in this draft Plan? It's way easier to be collaborative if you can see everyone's input rather than

just a curated subset... {Page 36} It seems some park users aren't fully aware of the capital costs of playground equipment? {Page 37} Agree with all the listed comments! Would like to see the rest of the comments, too! {Page 38} Again, agree with all these comments (especially the natural surface trail from Burwell west and the singletrack loop in Big Willow!)! Would love to see all these comments. {Page 39} Full support for changing City ordinance to allow bicyclists on "informal" trails. Why can't city residents use them on bikes when (supposedly) other city residents made them without City approval? And now City essentially supports excluding residents from a tacitly approved open space. Also fully support advancing construction of the trail system around Minnetonka High School - the potential environmental and health benefits outweigh the right of way and utility costs. {Page 40} Full support for enhanced access to MHS (Briarwood comment) - sensing a theme here... Also agree about the Shady Oak Access comment - informal trails are trails whether approved or not. All residents should be allowed to use them. And again - would love to see ALL the comments, not just a subset. {Page 44} "Few park users get to parks via public transportation". Not a surprise given the almost complete lack of public transportation in Minnetonka. Given this, it seems even more important to facilitate park access by other methods - walking, biking, etc. {Page 45} Here and in other places - please better define "natural surface" trails. Are you talking about limestone like Lake Minnetonka Regional or literally natural surface like Lone Lake Singletrack? {Page 47} Are these in any sort of order? Or all the same priority? {Page 49} Strongly agree about wayfinding signage, especially along roads and trails. Not so much IN the parks themselves. {Page 50} Far northwestern area - there are parks in Plymouth immediately north of this area (Parkers Lake, Circle Park) and the Big Woods Preserve in Wayzata. How do those factor in to the 10 minute walking distance to a park? I understand they are not Minnetonka parks, but... Somewhat the same for the eastern area near Hopkins / St Louis Park - Aquila Park is pretty close. It could maybe be made closer by making it possible to access the W 36th St bridge from Minnetonka (quick and easy easement?). Somewhat the same for the far western location (Trail & 101) - Thorpe Park, MME, easy access to the trail, ... And for the southwest location - great big open space in NE quadrant of 7 & 101, Deephaven Elementary, ... It seems these areas were identified by buffering out from existing parks in Minnetonka and may not reflect actual walking distances though? {Page 51} Same comments as for Page 50 {Page 54} Are the permanent restrooms open year-round? If not, please indicate that important feature. Also - are there temporary restrooms? It would be most helpful to have those on the map. For instance, the (recently removed) temporary restroom at the McKenzie Park neighborhood ice rink... {Page 58} IF (and I'm asking, not saying, if) preservation of parks and open spaces is covered by the NRMP, it seems some of the parts of the POST Plan should move

away from a similar focus? Or at very least, recognize the double focus and subsequent seeming weighting of surveyed preferences? I know there's only one page here at the end, but preservation seemed baked in to several portions of this Plan. {Page 59} A search in the TIP for the words maintain or maintenance returns no results, so I question whether maintenance of trails is addressed there as is asserted on this page (Trail maintenance priorities ... are addressed in the TIP.). Perhaps if "maintenance" is intended to reflect reconstruction? Third bullet - it seems that trail connections to ALL Parks should be a primary goal, rather than saying "where feasible". I understand trails cost money, but... {Page 62} This page seems to make a pretty clear case for Public Works not having enough budget to meet its expected duties. How can we make it so they can do so? {Page 63} Are the needs here as high as indicated, given the locations of parks in neighboring cities / communities mentioned above? If so, please update this page. Same statement if the "10 minute walking distance" was only a buffer of x feet from existing Minnetonka Parks and not an accurate reflection of actual walking distance / time.

Anonymous

2/28/2022 12:12 PM

The plan talks about "minor changes to some of the classifications" yet some of the parks have been downgraded from Community Preserve to Community Park. I consider this a major change and don't know where the impetus for this came from. I observed changes to classification already occurring on the website during the past year. This is concerning. The survey seems fairly accurate. The Imagery Boards were clearly skewed to built recreation. Balance of our preserved nature with every new flavor of built recreational will be a huge challenge. Our parks that were once preserves will end up looking like amusement parks. The nature of a Preserve is to preserve not to accommodate every special interest. By downgrading the status of community preserves you eke away at years of restoration efforts and expense.

Anonymous

2/28/2022 02:19 PM

Pg 37: In this POST System Plan update, the park classification system was updated from the 2001 Minnetonka POST Plan. New parks that were built since the creation of the last plan were added and classified. Minor changes to some of the classification descriptions were implemented. Please provide the specific data that prompted the change in the park classifications. What community feedback was received to downgrade preserves to community parks? This does not meet the mission of 'balancing' recreation and the preservation of natural resources. Our natural resources have been mismanaged and allowed to degrade for twenty years. That is not a reason to downgrade the parks. Nature play areas don't belong in high quality preserves. Any addition of an amenity will degrade the

natural resources. This does not follow wholistic planning mentioned in the other parts of the plan. Put new amenities in low quality sites. Park name is incorrect - Cullen Nature Preserve (not Ann Cullen-Smith Property. Same for maps pp. 82-85. p. 39 map is the same as the downgraded map published by staff pre POST plan community feedback process. The downgrading of the park designations is baked. For what reason? How does that benefit the community to have fewer areas where natural resources are preserved? This is counter to the survey results on p. 56. The dot preference poster with new additional amenities is 'leading' at best. How is this statistically significant serving up options to residents that they didn't come up with on their own accord? Same comment for p. 73 summary.

Optional question (5 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Chapter 4: Vision

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

28 January 2022 - 28 February 2022

PROJECT NAME:

Plan Your Park System



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 | What are your comments for Chapter 4: Vision? Please note that this chapter was previously available for public comment, reviewed by the Park Board and edited based on feedback.

Anonymous

2/05/2022 06:36 AM

Please add to excellence and innovation "Ensure equity in funding between active recreational activities and passive uses and restoration."

Anonymous

2/09/2022 08:49 PM

More PickelBall courts. Glen More Parks mini Basketball court needs to be replaces. Why not Putin a few pickleball courts.

Anonymous

2/10/2022 06:04 PM

Parks and "equity". What is going on. Are we building parks or trying to get on CNN?

Anonymous

2/20/2022 07:39 AM

{Page 2} Mission - at the risk of descending into semantic wordsmithing: - Isn't it the sole responsibility of Minnetonka to provide parks, open space, & trails? If so, can they be a leader in that effort if there is no one else providing those services / features? Perhaps remove the "be leaders in" phrase? - prioritization - shouldn't comprehensiveness be more important than welcoming? Instead of "welcoming, comprehensive and balanced" perhaps "comprehensive, balanced, and welcoming"? And - doesn't "for all to enjoy" somewhat redundantly get at the welcoming piece? - prioritization, part 2 - given the need to address climate change, shouldn't having trails to all parks be the highest priority? Instead of "high quality parks, natural areas, trails and programs", perhaps "high quality trails, parks, natural areas / open spaces, and programs"? Note - I really do like this part of teh Mission though - it gets right to the core components of Parks Department (Parks, Open Space, Trails, Programming). - last - can a Plan have a Mission? Or is a Mission something a group of people work toward? {Page 3} Section 1, Bullet 2 - Agree about reactively adapting (resilience) to climate change (as if we'll have a choice?), but shouldn't this Plan also include steps / efforts to proactively REDUCE the causes of climate change? Section 1, Bullet 4 - If there is to be balance, shouldn't there be use in addition to preservation / restoration? This bullet seems skewed toward preservation and does not acknowledge that some new uses do not have preservation downsides. Especially when residents are free to do what they will (to an extent) with Parks and Open Spaces. Section 1, Bullet 6 - if the NRMP is part of this Plan, shouldn't the TIP be listed here as well? Section 1 General comment - Is it the intent to address all my comments above in Section 2? Section 2 Bullets 3 & 4 should be moved to become Bullets 1 & 2. Section 2 Bullet 2 should prioritize

accessibility over safety - gotta get there first! Section 2 Bullet 3 - please change to read "Provide easy and safe connections to parks, open spaces, and trails for bicyclists and pedestrians". It's already safe for people in cars. Section 2 Bullet 6 - should Open Space be included in this bullet? {Page 4} Section 1 Bullet 2 - Love this, especially the "network" part! Perhaps reword "Support healthier living by providing a well-connected, safe, and easy to use pedestrian and bicycling network throughout the community." Section 2 Bullet 3 - are seniors really underrepresented? Not trying to point fingers or place blame, but several things seem to have additional components FOR seniors (the Senior Center, the strong focus of the Minnetonka Memo on senior activities) or constraints placed to FAVOR seniors' perceptions (no bicycles on informal paths, parks unsafe because of offleash dogs, etc). Obviously just my perception... {Page 5} Bullet 1 - I love this bullet! An idea for a new facility comes to mind after reading it - why not have a skating rink / skating loop / XC skiing loop / fatbike loop on Grays Bay? There's already a building there to support the marina / boat launch. Just add a hot cocoa vending machine (or lease out a space for a vendor to provide hot drinks & pastries, maybe even Mom & Dad beverages)? And, maybe even partner with Wayzata downtown to extend the loops / trails to there? Bullet 2 - please don't limit this to just Parks? There should be (within environmentally sustainable limits) all season uses for Open Spaces and Trails too. Bullet 3 - Yes, please! Make sure "informal" isn't seen as different from "passive" and that everyone is using the same definition of "passive". New Bullet - please add a bullet stating that "Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails will retain their excellence through timely and ongoing maintenance."

Anonymous

2/28/2022 12:58 PM

It's a good idea to engage volunteers but part of engagement is a sense of collaboration. Volunteers want to feel a part of the process not just dictated to or asked to jump through excessive hoops. Restoration volunteers want to see the results of their work. They don't want to be part of a process that isn't based on restoration science and that perpetuates the invasive species cycle.

Optional question (5 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Chapter 5: Systems Plan

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

28 January 2022 - 28 February 2022

PROJECT NAME:

Plan Your Park System



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 | What are your comments for Chapter 5: Systems Plan? Please note that this chapter was previously available for public comment, reviewed by the Park Board, and edited based on feedback.

Anonymous

1/28/2022 04:29 PM

This report identified and responded to those needs with the problem of off leash dogs, more passive access to our marsh areas in a non-destructive manner, more trail signage to show planned connecting trails. Report was well written for general public with graphs and headliners. Kudos-well done.

Anonymous

2/02/2022 09:16 AM

This is an ambitious plan, it would be nice to see percentage weights given to each part given the unknowable future of funding. I do not see any plans to pursue cooperative plans with the city as a whole, it seems sidewalks and connections to commerce fit into a healthful plan. It would be good to see a commitment to follow up measurements on projects use to determine if the are spent equitably.

Anonymous

2/05/2022 06:45 AM

Excellence and Innovation Goal 1. This section still has a strong bias in favor of active recreational amenities as evidenced by the number listed in comparison to the limited number of more passive use options. FoMP sent a list of nature-based passive programming amenities that should be included here to show a better ballance of options.

Anonymous

2/09/2022 08:49 PM

More PickelBall courts. Glen More Parks mini Basketball court needs to be replaces. Why not Putin a few pickleball courts.

Anonymous

2/10/2022 05:51 PM

Please proceed cautiously on the plan to "Provide more boardwalks in wetland areas." We need to preserve natural habitats! My neighborhood borders on the northern end of Meadow Park and a resident recently cut her own off-leash dog trail through an area of the wetlands that had been undisturbed for at least 35 years -- in a matter of weeks, the owl families that have been here for several years left the area.

Anonymous

2/23/2022 07:04 PM

Holy smokes but there is a lot of great stuff here! So many Initiatives... {Page 2} Goal 1, Bullet 1 - what about animals? Are they considered part of biodiversity? Can parks and open spaces continue to be recognized as the animal "reservoirs" they are and animal-specific preservation actions taken, both in parks and perhaps more

importantly on roads adjacent to parks? Goal 1, Bullet 4 - does chemical use include salt in the winter? {Page 3} Goal 1, Bullet 5 (improve bike & ped access) - YES, please! Goal 2 - this seems like a drop in the bucket compared to all the damage done to waterways from areas external to parks. Every little bit helps, but? Goal 2, Bullet 3 - could this be expanded to areas outside parks that border on Open Space? Like encouraging / supporting homeowners to add / increase buffers on their property that abuts wetlands / open spaces? {Page 4} Goal 3, Bullet 2 - are Preserve areas clearly defined somewhere? Should it be included in this Plan? I do like that this bullet expressly allows addition of low impact features / facilities to Preserve areas as long as they are passive. Goal 3, Bullet 5 - is there a map of sensitive areas within or adjacent to parks, open space, and trails? And how is "Sensitive" different from "Preserve"? Goal 4, Bullet 4 - "pest management"? I hope this doesn't include deer culls? Goal 4, Bullet 4 - could this be modified / expanded to include ideas like ways to use invasive / pest species of plants? Like making pesto from garlic mustard? {Page 5} YES, YES, YES!!! More trails please! Goal 1, Bullet 1 - add another bullet that details how additional trails NOT identified in the TIP can be identified, planned, and built. Goal 1 Bullet 4 - rather than "explore options", how about just make them safer? Goal 1 Bullet 5 - add "maintainability" as a criteria here. Also include planning to make the trails still usable when demand increases so we don't have to come back and redo work. Also include "conflict prevention" as a criteria (namely (but not only) making trails wider (10' instead of 8') so walkers & bikers don't feel squeezed by two way traffic. Goal 1, Bullet 6 - doesn't it say elsewhere in this Plan that public transportation is not really a significant method of access for parks? If it isn't, should this bullet be included? Or, if the plan is to improve public transport to increase numbers of people accessing parks that way, speak to that effort? Goal 1 Bullet 7 - LOVE this! "Grocery store - 2.2 miles -->" or "Taco restaurant 0.5 miles <--". "Connection to Lake Mtna Regional LRT Trail (or Luce Line, or Dakota Rail, etc) 1 mile -->" Will there be sponsors? Goal 1 Bullet 10 - maybe reword this so that trail "obstacles" (steeper slopes, etc) are acknowledged rather than trying to come up with a way that avoids them? Let people decide which way to go? {Page 6} Goal 1, Bullet 11 - "improved maintenance" - year-round, please! Also, some of the older bituminous trails are in need of updating but that doesn't seem to be addressed in the TIP? Goal 1, Bullet 11 - bike parking - excellent! No wheelbender racks, please - just the good kinds (single loop wave racks, bike hitch, hoop racks, etc). And at multiple locations (for example, at the entrance to Jidana Park and also at the launch site in Jidana Park). Goal 1 Bullet 12 (grade separation) - awesome! Safe for trail users, doesn't "inconvenience" road users, ... Goal 2 - add new programming types - bike rodeos, cyclocross races, kayak races, ... Goal 3 Bullet 3 - it seems this could be done by acknowledging the existing "informal" trails and opening access to

those "informal" trails to all users? Goal 3, Bullet 4 - especially in winter! Groom some classic & skate XC ski trails along the creek and on Grays Bay! The trails on the lakes in Minneapolis see a TON of use. Oh, and please make them wide enough for ice skaters and fatbikers! Goal 3, Bullet 4 - also do this in Open Spaces (the vast cattail area in Meadow Park, for example - add a winter-only trail through the cattails. Since it is winter-only, no damage to the environment). {Page 7} Goal 4, Bullet 1 - for example - connect to the Cedar Lake Road trail that St Louis Park is planning (not sure of implementation date?) all the way out to 169. Also, work with Hopkins & SLP to allow access from Minnetonka (some sort of easement through the apartment property?) to the 36th St crossing over 169. {Page 8} Goal 1, Bullet 3 - yes, year-round please! Not being able to bike to the grocery store because the trail has 4 inches of snow on it (or 2 inches of refrozen footprinted snow) kind of sucks. Goal 1, Bullet 2.5 - add a bullet describing how trails are important for transportation and even that counts as physical activity. Too many people only consider sport or recreational activities for improving health when transportation activities can do double duty - improving health AND getting you somewhere (groceries, school, work, etc)! Goal 1, Bullet 7 - same comment - address health benefits of transportation, not just recreation. Goal 2, Bullet 1 - YES! LOVE! Maybe add "safe and easy to navigate"? Goal 3 - same comment - include transportation as health benefit, not just recreation. Bullet 2 kind of gets at this, but it could be more explicit / clearer. {Page 9} Goal 4 (Partnerships) - are there other entities besides health organizations that could be partnered with to provide Open Space / trails? Cargill (trail along their border with Mooney Park. singletrack trail on their research property, etc), MnDOT (space along 494 / 7 / 62 for expanded trails), Hennepin County (space along county roads), others? {Page 11} Goal 1, Bullet 3 - add "natural surface bike / running trails", "XC ski trails" as options in the list of new things Goal 2, Bullet 1 - XC skiing / fatbiking would be nice through the cattails in Meadow Park! {Page 12} Goal 2, Bullet 2 - For sure IN parks (next to maintained trails in Jidana & Purgatory), but also not just in parks? How about XC skiing / fatbiking in Open Space (area along 494, along trail in area north of the cattlepass that goes under Hwy 7 east of 101, etc)? Goal 2, Bullet 6 - could this open up the previously used hockey rinks for use as pickleball courts? Goal 4, Bullet 4 - add a subscription option for various topics of interest. For instance, if I wanted to be aware of ALL bike-related information (new trail, completion of a project, open house, whatever - everything), please make it so I can subscribe to that Topic and get the info pushed to me. Kind of like is done now for specific Projects via text or email?

Anonymous

2/28/2022 01:15 PM

You talk about "limiting development in park preserves" yet since this document recommends downgrading current Community Preserves

it's hard to tell which areas are considered preserves. There is ambiguity that will lead to contention. You emphasize "native plant materials" which is good. The city needs to be vigilant that it not introducing non native and invasive species into our parks. For example, it seems like each year the city tree sale has had less native species available and more cultivars or non native species, Unclaimed trees are often planted in city parks. This is not a good practice.

Anonymous

2/28/2022 02:30 PM

"Limit development in park preserves to improvements that support passive uses or address water quality and habitat." How will you balance recreation and natural resources by developing park preserves? Park Preserves need restoration investment, not more development. Twenty years of degradation and mismanagement reinforces the urgency for swift intervention, adaptive management, and funding. Goal 3: Provide opportunities for people to connect with nature. This needs to be combined with well-defined use and guidance or the high quality natural areas will continue to be degraded by misuse and overuse. Goal 3: Strengthen collaboration with neighborhoods, associations, agencies, schools, community groups and volunteers. This needs serious work and attention by staff. Community members are ready to collaborate but staff need to be willing to provide a welcoming environment and experience that maintains volunteers. Goal 5: Model sustainable practices in park construction, maintenance and operations. Initiatives: > Incorporate sustainable best practices in the operations and maintenance of park facilities. Develop a smart salting training session. The overuse of salt on roadways and in park parking lots is aggrecious. > Continue to manage invasive plant species in parks and open spaces as guided by the City of Minnetonka Natural Resources Master Plan. Rephrase: restore ecological plant communities using best management practices, current science, and adaptive management.

Anonymous

2/28/2022 09:43 PM

The comments below reflect the views of 5 residents as they relate to Goal 3 for Lake Rose Park. We felt the Goals and Initiatives language might be too broad to be applied to this unmaintained, undeveloped city park and wanted to clarify why.: Since Lake Rose Park was dedicated to the city in 1974 by the developer of Lake Rose Estates, it has not been maintained by the City (other than mowing the grass at the Randall Lane park access). As a result, for over 30 years two long-time park-adjacent residents volunteered to maintain the park's packed dirt trail. Keeping it presentable and passable by mowing and raking it periodically, especially to protect the neighborhood children using it as a short-cut to Gatewood Elementary. This arrangement was agreed upon at an informal outdoor neighborhood meeting coordinated by and with the blessing of Public Works management. If

the city were to maintain the park trail, they said they would have to install an 8-foot-wide asphalt trail that could accommodate their maintenance equipment. Neither the neighborhood nor the city wanted anything to do with that. Lake Rose Park has never been developed either; it remains identical to how it was in 1974, except for the very successful natural resources restoration which has greatly enhanced the park preserve. We believe there must have been reasons this small, almost landlocked preserve was never on the city's radar as a candidate for providing enough benefit to the community at large. Recently, there's been much talk by volunteers and residents about developing the park by expanding the trail, adding a boardwalk, introducing more formalized access for uses like skating, canoeing, skiing, fishing, etc. Many of these are activities that residents readily enjoyed years ago, before the invasive weeds started choking the north side of the lake and shoreline. None of us are opposed to exploring if and how passive human use activities might be considered for LRP, but we respectfully request that the city conduct a feasibility study for what makes sense for both the preserve and for the neighborhood before any action is taken. Some pertinent questions to ask for this unmaintained park: Who would expand the trail and how, using what materials, specifications or keep a packed-dirt path integral to the character of the park? Is a boardwalk appropriate in this setting? Who would build and install it and where would it be placed to minimize negatives to adjacent property owners? Who will maintain expanded trail and/or other passive use development infrastructure, if any? Recently, there have been several instances of attempts by residents to alter their own "piece of the park" to fit personal needs/desires, possibly without considering how it might affect the lake, the park or other neighbors. Because the park isn't maintained, some may believe it's OK to do this. We've been encouraged by the new "application" process that Leslie and Sara shared with us whereby no development or alterations to the park will be authorized without neighborhood involvement in the planning process. If possible to do here, we'll attach the 2001 POST Plan Primary Program Focus document for Lake Rose Park, where the City / Park Board outlined the characteristics, ecological issues and types of development, if any, should be considered. Because Lake Rose Park hasn't changed since 1974 or 2001, we think this document is still relevant for guiding any future development efforts. Notable comments from the 2001 POST Plan document which we'd like to preserve for future reference in planning: "The primary function of Lake Rose Park is to preserve the natural character of the lake and the surrounding shoreline and open space in a developed part of the city." "Lake Rose works in concert with Purgatory Park to provide open space in this NPSA. With Boulder Creek relatively close, active uses in this park are not needed nor perhaps appropriate." "Lake Rose Park is an appealing natural area, with the lake and adjacent shoreline being the primary

features...there is no development in the park...views from this area across the lake are very scenic, as are the views from many of the adjacent properties." "Protection of the ecological values of the lake and shoreline are of high concern and warrant close review. Managing stormwater runoff into the lake and working with adjacent property owners on maintaining buffer zones and managing the use of fertilizers top the list of issues." "As a nature preserve, maintenance activity will be focused on stewardship of the resource itself...programmed use of the park is not expected." "While Lake Rose Park is set aside for preservation, a few potential improvements are worth considering. Expanding the trail along the lake where feasible and developing a sitting area/lake overlook are simple additions that would be appealing to the nearby residents, yet not take away from the character of the site. Given the adjacency of the residential properties, neighborhood involvement in developing a master plan for the park is critical." PS: We think both the 2020 POST System Plan and Natural Resources Master Plan are impressive!

Optional question (9 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Chapter 6: Implementation

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

28 January 2022 - 28 February 2022

PROJECT NAME:

Plan Your Park System



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 | What are your comments for Chapter 6: Implementation?

Anonymous

2/02/2022 09:31 AM

I did not see a budget line for review of completed projects success in serving the public, ideally a cost per use and a public satisfaction outcome will be available.

Anonymous

2/05/2022 06:56 AM

As an overall statement include that "Every park should have a multi-year, comprehensive plan that covers both natural amenities preservation and restoration and active recreational amenities maintenance and repurposing." Without comprehensive, multi-year plans actions are merely one off activities with limited value to our city.

Anonymous

2/09/2022 08:49 PM

More PickelBall courts. Glen More Parks mini Basketball court needs to be replaces. Why not Putin a few pickleball courts.

Anonymous

2/10/2022 05:54 PM

Do we really need to provide more boardwalks in wetland areas? Those areas should be preserved, especially if they area part of a woodland preservation area!! It may sound appealing but in reality it could be unnecessarily disruptive to the wildlife habitat. Please please carefully weigh the pros and cons -- choose limited areas and do it very thoughtfully. Thank you

Anonymous

2/10/2022 06:07 PM

Go over to Gro Tonka. The steps and other infrastructure is falling apart. The amount of time and money researching and talking about equity in a park could fix an actual park like Gro Tonka

Anonymous

2/11/2022 01:43 PM

A. Pickleball courts: 1. Strongly recommend several additional pickleball courts in the NW area of Minnetonka, as currently beautiful Lone Lake courts are often full plus located in far SE section of Minnetonka. Pickleball is currently fastest growing sport and will continue to grow as Minnetonka residents age plus younger generation is beginning to join in the sport. 2. Linner Park would be one location for conversion to pickleball courts (current tennis courts are in disrepair crumbling surface) or tennis + pickleball combination. B. Improved safety for bikers and pedestrians: 1. McGinty Road is quite heavily utilized by bikers, walkers and runners, as well as fast vehicular traffic. Bike shoulders vary in width, often too narrow for safety. Please consider off road bike trail for McGinty, especially towards Wayzata to connect with Dakota Trail etc. 2. Linner Road is EXTREMELY dangerous for the very frequent bikers, roller bladers,

toddlers in strollers and pedestrians. This road is a MAJOR entrance for many neighborhoods, heavily traveled by vehicles right off 494 / 394 interstates, plus the narrow hilly curvy road makes pedestrian / bike travelers at high risk. Please consider sidewalk at least on one side of the road, plus permanent no parking signs along road. Thank you for the current stretch of sidewalk along Linner Park and up the hill of Summer Oaks. You listened to the story of our son falling off his bike up that hill (20 years ago) and responded with the wonderful sidewalk for that stretch! C. Boat launch access improvements for non motorized kayaks, canoes, stand up paddles at Grays Bay Park would be greatly appreciated. We used to launch off the docks towards Minnehaha Creek, although the weed growth makes the paddling difficult there now. Improved access toward Grays Bay (currently rocky and unstable entrance) would help! Thank you for our absolutely FABULOUS Minnetonka Parks and trails (POST). We are truly blessed to live here! Diane Meier MD and Reed Wahlberg 2100 Morton Rd Minnetonka, MN. 55391

Anonymous

2/24/2022 06:33 PM

{Page 3} Table 4-1 - couldn't several of the facilities listed also be available in Open Spaces in addition to (possibly) in Parks of different sizes? Thinking specifically of cross country skiing, mountain biking (or more accurately, singletrack), nature play area, off-leash dog park, trails, and boardwalks? {Page 5} Facilities Item "Improve trail connections to parks, open spaces, and public transportation facilities" would seem to be better prioritized as a High priority in conjunction with the TIP segments. Facilities Item "Provide more boardwalks in wetlands" - please make boardwalks wider. Existing boardwalks make two way traffic difficult for both bikes and pedestrians. Facilities Item "Provide facilities that support year-long activities and recreational opportunities" - modify to read "Provide facilities that support year-long access, activities, and recreational opportunities" in order to reflect keeping trails cleared year-round. Facilities Item "Provide additional winter recreational opportunities in Community Parks (i.e. snowshoe trails, cross-country ski trails)" - these could be provided in Open Spaces as well, right? For example, couldn't XC ski trails be provided on lakes or open areas of wetlands throughout the City by having a grooming machine that could go to different locations, typically operated by volunteers? Plans and Studies Item "Incorporate park resilience strategies in the city's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan" - Are trails included in the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan as a climate change prevention solution? Plans and Studies Item "Conduct study to improve pedestrian crossing safety at roadway intersections adjacent to Community Parks" - this should include roadways at trail crossing locations. {Page 6} Plans and Studies Items - Please add item "Conduct a study to expand or add one or more bike parks" at a Medium priority Plans and Studies Item "Study the feasibility of

condensing ice skating rinks" - modify to include feasibility of providing skating rink and trail at Grays Bay Marina. {Page 7}
Communications and Marketing Items - add Item "Provide clear and timely communication across all channels (Minnetonka Memo, email, text, social media, and through Topic subscription) of ALL Project review opportunities and open houses; Study, Plan, Master Plan, or Feasibility Plan listening sessions, input/feedback opportunities (including surveys), open houses, and reviews; and presentations to boards or Council" as a Critical (High) Priority. Communications and Marketing Items - add Item "Provide interactive GIS map showing all Projects, Plan Reviews, and feedback opportunities (regardless of whether currently scheduled/funded or unscheduled/unfunded) with an option for map to provide automated notification of new or changed items across one, multiple, or all categories and Topics"
Operations and Maintenance Items - please add Item "Improve trail clearing so that all high-priority trails and trails with a transportation focus are cleared within 1 day of weather events year-round" {Page 10}
Metrics for Plan Performance Please add an item "Average time to foot AND bike navigable status for trails" Item "Park and trail safety – number of accidents, incidents, and crime reports" - modify to include complaints (unless that is already covered by incidents?) and kudos (positive feedback)

Anonymous

2/26/2022 05:12 AM

{Page 5} Facilities Item - Add Item "Recognize informal trails as trails" - Ongoing, \$0
Facilities Item - Add Item "Revise City ordinances regarding passive use of all trails" - Ongoing, Staff Time / \$0 {Page 7}
Operations and Maintenance Item - Add Item "Maintain all trails" - Ongoing, \$0

Anonymous

2/28/2022 01:42 PM

The Facility Guidelines Table shows that anything goes at what are currently Community Preserves. How was the decision made to downgrade our Community Preserves and allow for any type of built development? Did the community ask for this? What supports this decision? This is not a "minor change to some of the classifications" as you say early in the plan. It is a major change. The community needs to weigh in on such a major change.

Anonymous

2/28/2022 02:34 PM

p. 118 - Cullen Nature Preserve (not Cullen Smith property) Park and Trail Dedication - currently used for development only. Reallocate funds for general maintenance and natural resources restoration.

Optional question (10 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Appendix A: Glossary

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

28 January 2022 - 28 February 2022

PROJECT NAME:

Plan Your Park System



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 | What are your comments for the Appendix: Glossary?

Anonymous

2/05/2022 07:09 AM

Two additions. 1. Natural amenities are the unique nature spaces and biodiversity of our parks such as remnants of the big woods and other plant communities, steep slopes and vistas, lakes, streams, wetlands and ponds and other elements including birds, bees, etc. that are of value to our community and distinguish us from other communities. 2. Passive, nature based activity definition needs to be included to clarify the difference between active and passive. Passive generally means non-mechanical use and little if no ecological disturbance or harm to the nature space and biodiversity as a result of the activity.

Anonymous

2/19/2022 08:15 AM

{Page 2} Should Active Recreation include singletrack since it takes place at a prescribed place? Or is that more mountain biking and singletrack doesn't necessarily require a prescribed place? Climate Change should refer to "significant changes in global AND LOCAL temperature". Conservation should reference "non-depleting" use in place of efficient use? Kind of like how it is included in "Sustainability" on page 6? Given the definition of Skate Park on page 6, please include a definition for Bike Park here. {Page 3} Does DEI include different viewpoints? For example, people who think bicycling is dangerous? Voice Control of dogs is problematic at best and seems a highly unenforceable standard. Which leads one to ask if it is included only for after-the-fact enforcement / punishment. Informal Trail - questioning the inclusion of the words "of disturbance" in this definition. Shouldn't those words be included in the Formal Trail definition as well? Also, even though they are not City-approved, it should clarify whether they are City-proscribed / forbidden. Tough issue, I know, but... Invasive Species - I understand narrow-leaved cattails are invasive? Does the City maintain a list of invasive species that could be referenced here? {Page 4} Maintenance - should this definition be expanded to cover the references made to maintaining parks in other definitions? For example, Landscaping includes "maintaining" in a way that doesn't seem to be included in the definition of Maintenance. Additionally, it seems that some reference to maintenance should be included in the Restoration definition since restoring an area to prior conditions will not be sustainable without significant ongoing maintenance (given how buckthorn, garlic mustard, etc can rapidly take over such an area). Last - there should be some reference to both the seasonality and prioritization of maintenance. Not all City facilities are maintained year-round, and for those that are there is often an appreciable lag time where said facilities are essentially unmaintained / unusable. Natural Areas - this seems to be a circular definition? Should there be reference to human-made facilities? Neighborhood - "centered around a school or

park" - please add "or centered on or bounded by natural or artificial features". I know that makes it more similar to NPSA, but... The Crosby neighborhood doesn't really have a park, I think? {Page 5}

Open Space / Park - there seems to be significant overlap here. For example - the strip of land along the west side of 494 is owned by the City and has a trail but is not a park (and isn't listed as Open Space?). However, a "Park" is "land area"... "for neighborhood"..."recreation". Are Parks a subset of Open Space? Park Programming - should this be Park Department Programming? Preserve - should this be defined here (in the Park Preserve sense)? Or at least included here, if defined elsewhere? Resiliency - Is this intended to be largely applicable to artificial structures? There seems to be relatively little if anything that we can do to return a park or open space to its prior condition after flood or fire except wait for it to regrow? {Page 6}

Stewardship - should also include a reference to action? Caring about something is great, but doesn't seem to rise to the level of stewardship without also doing something about it.

Anonymous

2/28/2022 02:36 PM

Where did these definitions come from? Please provide citations.

Optional question (3 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 7B
Meeting of April 6, 2022**

Subject:	Natural Resources Division's Education and Outreach Plan
Park Board related goal:	To Protect Natural Resources and Open Spaces
Brief Description:	Review the Natural Resources Division's education and outreach work plan

Background

The Minnetonka Park Board has adopted goals and objectives that pertain to natural resources. These include creating awareness of our natural environment and supporting educational strategies.

The Park Board reviews topics and approves projects related to natural resources. These include the stewardship plan and restoration activities undertaken in the park system, updates on volunteer activities, emerald ash borer preparedness and reforestation of public land, water resource monitoring and protection initiatives on public land and review of outreach and education programs relating to natural resources.

Summary

Attached is a review of natural resources outreach in 2021 and plans for 2022. It describes ongoing and new education, outreach and engagement efforts, such as publications, multimedia offerings, trainings and initiatives (many conducted with partner organizations), and technical assistance.

Staff use the *Minnetonka Memo* and electronic newsletter system as primary outreach tools. The e-newsletter currently reaches more than 3,000 subscribers – an increase of at least 600 subscribers in 2021. The “open rate” of this publication is consistently high (more than 30 percent of recipients engaged). Social media is used to promote events and engage residents on seasonal themes. Highway billboards inform passing motorists about broad goals for natural resource protection.

New interpretive panels will be completed and installed at three city parks in 2022 (Lone Lake, Westwood and Glen Lake). Staff are creating more storymaps and other multimedia offerings for public engagement. Workshops and trainings have been increased; many use hybrid formats that appeal to participants and some include technical assistance. Outreach and engagement of youth and other new or underrepresented audiences are also a priority.

Recommended Park Board Action

Provide feedback to staff regarding the programmed items included in this report.

Attachments:

1. Natural Resources Education and Outreach Plan for 2022
2. Natural Resources Outreach Examples



NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION

Education and Outreach Plan, 2022

The Natural Resources division works to inform and engage residents and other stakeholders about key environmental issues, increase their connection to the natural world, and empower them to take action.

PRIORITIES & THEMES

- **Community resilience**
Strategies that increase our individual and collective ability to prepare for, recover from and thrive after challenges posed by climate change and other sources of environmental stress
- **Stormwater management and water quality protection**
Reducing runoff by limiting irrigation and employing best practices to increase infiltration, recapture and reuse; mitigate the impacts of illicit discharges (road salt, pet waste, sediment, organic waste and more) on surface water and ground water; and prevent runoff where possible
- **Water efficiency**
Mindful use of water, primarily outdoors through technology and behaviors but also indoors and from indirect sources such as food production and manufacturing
- **Tree diversity, planting and protection**
Emphasizing the many benefits of trees—ecological, environmental, economic and aesthetic—and how to preserve those values on public and private property
- **Planting for pollinators**
Using diverse, native and resilient wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, trees and edible plants (often in place of turf or invasive species) that provide food and habitat for beneficial insects that pollinate plants, control pests, and provide a crucial food source for songbirds and other wildlife
- **Soil health and condition**
Revealing the intersections between soil and water quality, plant health and diversity, and other aspects of a highly functional home landscape and natural environment
- **Invasive species awareness and control**
Early identification and control of non-native plants and other species that become invasive, causing environmental and economic damage and sometimes impacting human health
- **Diversity, equity and inclusion**
Working to provide all Minnetonkans access to the information, resources, strategies and opportunities they need to build resilience and enjoy our natural areas

AUDIENCES & PARTNERS

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| ● Residents | ● Watershed districts | Building relationships with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Youth and educators● Underrepresented populations |
| ● Visitors | ● Clean Water MN | |
| ● Businesses and employees | ● State and county agencies | |
| ● City staff | ● Green Step Cities | |
| ● Partner organizations | ● MetroBlooms & Blue Thumb | |
| | | |

STRATEGIES & PRODUCTS

• Publications & other outreach

- ***Minnetonka Memo***—monthly articles, event notices, annual four-page pullout section
- ***Thrive***—occasional articles with a business focus
- ***E-newsletters***—monthly Natural Resources e-blast with 3,000+ subscribers and ~30 percent engagement rate; occasional articles or cross-postings in business, sustainability and recreation e-newsletters
- ***Handouts***—series of one- to two-page fliers addressing common resident concerns and questions
- ***Social media***—used for promotion of NR events, programs and seasonal themes
- ***Highway billboards***—15 seasonal messages run on eight billboards citywide

• Education and engagement

◦ ***Video and multimedia***

2021: Created five videos for Monarch and Pollinator Awareness Month and three storymaps (Tree Trek, Monarchs in Minnetonka, What's So Special About Shallow Lakes?).

2022: Storymap about stormwater runoff (and possible second storymap about Cullen Nature Preserve); plan a series of training videos about controlling invasive species, for use by the general public and volunteers

◦ ***Interpretive signage***

2022: Signage sets being designed for installation at Lone Lake Park (11 panels), Westwood Park (3 panels) and Glen Lake Park (2 panels)

◦ ***Initiatives, campaigns, programs and events***

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) outreach, education and public engagement related to stormwater reduction, pollution prevention and water efficiency. Includes:

- Workshops such as Resilient Yards, Turf Alternatives, Rain Garden Maintenance, and Wise Use of Water in Your Yard
- Publications focused on awareness of specific illicit discharges, best practices and behavior change, and the stacked benefits of reducing stormwater runoff
- Initiatives: The city's pet waste reduction campaign; partner programs including Adopt-a-Drain and Citizen Salt Watch (with watershed districts and Clean Water MN), Smart Salting training for contractors and property managers (through Minnesota Pollution Control Agency), elementary school stormwater education (delivered by Bolton & Menck)

Increasing resilient and pollinator-friendly habitat on private property

- Workshops, publications and multimedia that educate and empower residents to take action on their property and in the community
- Technical assistance, including site consultations and rebate funding for plant purchases
- Annual online native plant sale with discount for Minnetonka residents
- Mayors' Monarch Pledge (ongoing since 2017), including Monarch and Pollinator Awareness Month (July); "Miles for Monarchs and Minnetonka" health initiative for residents and staff; a community art project; review of the city's median and right-of-way planting practices; and more

Education Collaborative—sharing resources, identifying shared goals and offering resources or expertise to Hopkins Public School District and Hopkins Community Education

◦ ***Volunteer program***

2022: Expansion of NR's existing program to create new opportunities, identify and engage underrepresented groups, and formalize management of the program to include onboarding and orientation, training, tracking, program evaluation and acknowledgement.

WORK SAMPLE: 4-page April pullout in the Minnetonka Memo



LIVING LANDSCAPES

**Next time you're outside,
take a few minutes to stroll
around your property.**

Imagine all the ways you use your yard throughout the year. Perhaps you use it for family time, dining, gardening or maybe just a place to relax in the shade.

Beyond all these cultural uses, your property can become a haven for wildlife and pollinators - a living landscape that makes our environment healthier and more resilient. The benefits are amazing!

- Native wildflowers and plants provide a variety of colors, scents, shapes and textures throughout the year.
- Lush plant cover can reduce noise, absorb air pollutants, help stormwater soak into the soil and buffer some of summer's heat.
- Spend less time and money spent on mowing, water fertilizers and pesticides, with fewer environmental impacts.
- Healthier soil and less erosion.
- Greater resilience to climate impacts, such as extreme heat, drought or flooding.
- Habitat that attracts and supports a wonderful variety of native pollinators and wildlife.

City of Minnetonka



Photo by Pramod Kusuma

Trees are for everyone

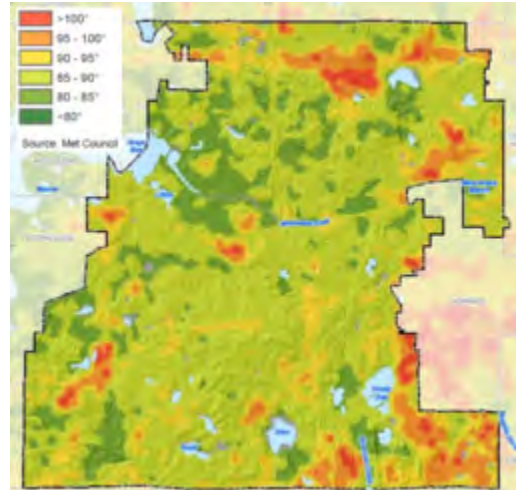
Here in Minnetonka, we're fortunate to have a robust community forest with hundreds of thousands of trees on public and private property. Trees give our city a pleasant aesthetic and increase property values. Equally important are the ecological and environmental services provided by a healthy, well-distributed community forest. Trees block wind, absorb stormwater, reduce erosion and create wildlife habitat. And perhaps most significantly, good tree cover provides relief from summertime heat.

Unfortunately, all people don't have equal access to trees and the many benefits they provide. Neighborhoods with fewer trees experience higher rates of asthma, heart disease, stress and other health conditions. People who live and work in areas with sparse tree cover are also at greater risk of heat-related illness or even death. Those disparities will be increasingly problematic in the coming decades, as climate change continues to impact our region.

Hot, hot, hot

On July 22, 2016, the air temperature in Minnetonka soared to a high of 96 degrees. You can probably imagine the oppressive heat of such a day.

The map at right shows land surface temperatures (rather than air temperature) measured that day by satellite. That's useful information, because the land surface – including roads, parking lots, yards and natural areas – either buffers summer's heat or worsens it.



Across much of the city, land surface temperatures remained 10 to 20 degrees cooler than air temperature. But numerous spots (shown in red and orange) experienced land surface temperatures even higher than 96 degrees.

These localized differences – as you might have guessed – are closely linked to the number of trees in a neighborhood.

Getting to the root of things

Tree equity is a nationwide effort to identify how tree cover relates to income, employment, race, age and health risks – and to address those disparities so everyone can enjoy greater health and comfort.

Minnetonka has a lush community forest – but there are spots with very little tree cover at all. “Because so much of our city is wooded, the message of tree equity can get lost,” says Hannibal Hayes, Minnetonka’s city forester. “But city staff are aware of the challenges, and we continue to work on new ways to solve them.”

Many of Minnetonka’s highest-risk areas are commercial or industrial sites and neighborhoods with higher-density housing. This year, the City will encourage business owners, property managers and homeowners’ associations to participate in a special tree sale, which can begin to increase tree cover in these areas. Watch the February *Minnetonka Memo* newsletter for details.

To learn more, visit the [Tree Equity Score website](#) from American Forests.

Upcoming Events

Annual Tree Sale

Interested in adding a tree or two on your property this year? Check out the city's annual tree sale for terrific tree diversity at great prices! Read the January and February [Minnetonka Memo](#) newsletters for important dates and details.

You can also attend the forester's preview event – Thursday, Jan. 27 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at the Community Center. [RSVP is required](#) and space is limited. (Attendees will be notified if this in-person event is changed to a virtual format.)

Water Efficiency Rebate Program – now expanded!

To promote and improve water efficiency, the City of Minnetonka is offering rebates to residents and businesses that install WaterSense® certified irrigation equipment or ENERGY STAR® labeled clothes washers and toilets in 2021-22.

[Click here](#) to learn more and apply for a Water Efficiency Program rebate.



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Winter 2022

A business publication from the City of Minnetonka to help businesses start, grow and thrive.

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WORK SAMPLE: education for businesses

Smart Salting

Winter presents a particular challenge to keeping parking lots and sidewalks safe for customers, clients and staff.

But using too much road salt creates problems, too. Over time, salt cracks sidewalks and parking lots. It corrodes buildings and vehicles, damages soils and roadside plants, and contaminates water bodies.

That's why the City of Minnetonka promotes Smart Salting certification for businesses, property managers and others who manage snow and ice. This training covers:

- Best practices
- Tools and technology
- Alternative deicers
- Safe disposal of road salt and other deicers

If you use a contractor for snow and ice management, ask whether they implement smart-salting strategies to save money, time and the environment.

Pledge to be salt smart



1. Shovel

Clear walkways before snow turns to ice. Apply salt only if needed.



2. Select

Salt doesn't melt ice below 15°F. Use sand for traction when it's too cold or a different de-icer.



3. Scatter

Use salt only where critical. Aim for three inches of space between salt granules.



4. Sweep

Clean up leftover salt, sand and de-icer to save and reuse as needed.

Learn more and find upcoming trainings at pca.state.mn.us/water/salt-applicators.

Graphics courtesy cleanwater.mn.org

WORK SAMPLE: handouts



Managing mosquitoes



Aedes vexans

Mosquitoes can carry diseases that impact humans, pets and wildlife. But eradicating all mosquitoes isn't the best way to manage mosquito-borne disease. Hundreds of animal species—from songbirds and bats to frogs, fish and dragonflies—include mosquitoes in their diet. Mosquito-control measures can preserve this important natural food web while reducing harm to human health and the environment.

Did you know?

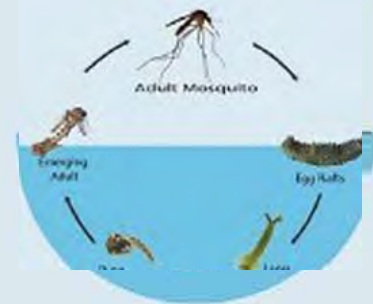
- Only female mosquitoes bite for blood.
- Male mosquitoes are pollinators. They specialize on plants in the aster, orchid and rose families.
- About 50 mosquito species occur in Minnesota, but only a few species carry diseases.

Treatment

The Metropolitan Mosquito Control District takes a two-step approach to manage mosquito populations on public land in the Twin Cities.

1. Identify problem breeding areas and treat larvae by hand or by helicopter. This is done with Bti (a naturally occurring type of bacteria) or methoprene (a hormone that keeps larvae from maturing).
2. Sample water where hatches are likely or people gather. As needed, spray pyrethroids (similar to chemicals produced by chrysanthemums) on dense vegetation where mosquitoes rest by day.

This strategy limits the use of potentially harmful chemicals and, on average, reduces mosquito populations by 75 percent.



Prevention

Mosquito control products are sold in stores and applied by professionals. But rather than applying chemicals in your yard, try these natural solutions to reduce mosquito populations:

- Mosquitoes need very little water to breed. Identify spots that trap rainwater—such as plant saucers, wheelbarrows, tires, rain gutters and low spots in the lawn—and remove or regularly clean them. If no standing water is available, mosquitoes will go elsewhere to breed.
- Replace water in pet bowls and bird baths daily.
- Add herbs such as basil, rosemary and mint around your outdoor spaces. These plants produce essential oils that deter mosquitoes.
- Create and protect natural habitat to support mosquito predators.

Prevention

Minnesotans love to be outdoors, which means finding a way to live with mosquitoes. Reduce your risk by staying indoors at dawn and dusk, when these insects are most active. When you go out, wear light-colored clothing that loosely covers your skin.



WORK SAMPLE: billboards and social media

Protect our lakes and rivers—
adopt a storm drain.

Sign up! adopt-a-drain.org



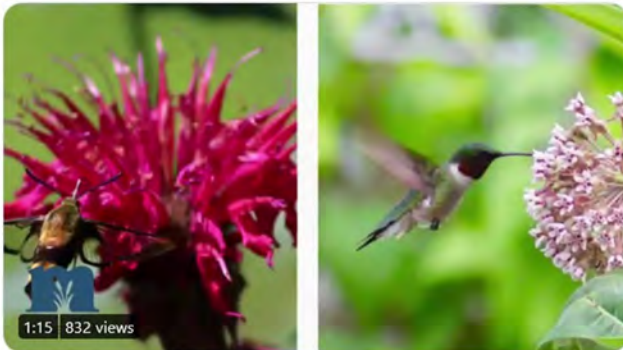
MINNETONKAMN
Posts



Liked by [robbiepetersen4](#) and others

minnetonkamn Join us April 20th for the Planting for Pollinators workshop and learn practices that benefit pollinators and the environment. We'll show you how you can help them by installing pocket plantings, trees and shrubs, bee lawns, pollinator meadows, and more!

City of Minnetonka @MinnetonkaMN · 22h
Most of the flowering plants on Earth need the help of animal pollinators to reproduce. Head over to minnetonkamatters.com all this month to learn more about pollinators and how you can help them thrive! #pollinators #monarchs



8 13

City of Minnetonka - Local Government
May 28 at 9 06 AM

After a wet couple of days, here's a great opportunity to learn more about the benefits of rain gardens. They help to replenish groundwater supplies, reduce soil erosion, and prevent pollutants from reaching local lakes, streams or wetlands.



THU JUN 3 AT 6 30 PM CDT

Raingarden Maintenance Workshop
Online Event

WORK SAMPLE: rebates and cost-share programs

The screenshot shows the City of Minnetonka website's navigation menu with categories: Services, Our City, Government, Business, and I Want To... The left sidebar lists various services, with 'Water Efficiency Rebate Program' highlighted under the 'Water' category. The main content area is titled 'Water Efficiency Rebate Program' and includes a breadcrumb trail 'Services » Utilities »'. It features a 'WaterSense Meets EPA Criteria' logo and text explaining the program's purpose and eligibility criteria. At the bottom, there are two links: 'To apply' and 'Improve your water efficiency', both with right-pointing arrows.

Services » Utilities »

Water Efficiency Rebate Program

Font Size: [Share & Bookmark](#) [Feedback](#) [Print](#)

To promote and improve water efficiency, the City of Minnetonka is offering rebates to residents and businesses that install more efficient irrigation equipment, clothes washers and toilets in 2021-22.

Property owners who install **WaterSense® certified** smart controllers and sprinkler heads can apply to receive a rebate for 75 percent of the purchase cost up to \$200 for each item. If you install both a WaterSense® certified smart controller and sprinkler heads, you can apply for the rebate for both items.

Toilets with the WaterSense certification are eligible for a rebate of \$50 per unit. [WaterSense®](#) products are EPA-certified, high-performing products that use at least 20 percent less water than older products.

Additionally, property owners who install high-efficiency clothes washers with the certified **ENERGY STAR®** label can apply for a rebate of \$200 per machine. [ENERGY STAR®](#) partners with the EPA and manufacturers to provide information to consumers and businesses about high-efficiency products.

[To apply](#) >

[Improve your water efficiency](#) >

The flyer features the City of Minnetonka logo in the top right corner. The main heading is 'PLANTING FOR POLLINATORS Pilot Program 2021 Cost Share Grant'. The text explains that pollinator species are declining globally due to habitat loss, pesticides, and climate change. It highlights that over three-quarters of flowering plants require pollinators to reproduce. A key message states: 'But there is good news: Your yard is a great place to create pollinator habitat!'. Below this, it details that property owners are eligible for a cost-share grant that reimburses 75% of eligible costs, up to \$200 per household. These funds can be used to supplement other grants, such as 'Lawns to Legumes' or watershed district grants. The flyer lists five project types that may be included: Pocket plantings, Raingardens, Pollinator meadows, Buffers and native shorelines, and Trees and shrubs.

PLANTING FOR POLLINATORS

Pilot Program 2021 Cost Share Grant



Pollinator species are declining globally due to loss of habitat, increased use of pesticides and other chemicals, climate change and more. That loss affects all of us, because more than three-quarters of all flowering plants (including many that provide our food) require pollinators to reproduce.

But there is good news: Your yard is a great place to create pollinator habitat!

Minnetonka property owners are eligible for cost-share grant funding that reimburses 75 percent of eligible costs related to planting for pollinators, up to \$200 per household. These funds may be used to supplement other grant funding (e.g., the participant's portion of Lawns to Legumes, or a watershed district grant).

Project types may include:

- Pocket plantings
- Raingardens
- Pollinator meadows
- Buffers and native shorelines
- Trees and shrubs
- Pollinator lawns

[Home](#) » [Monarch & Pollinator Awareness](#)

Monarch & Pollinator Awareness



Thank you for taking part in programs connected to Minnetonka's Monarch and Pollinator Awareness month. Watch for future events hosted by our Natural Resources division.

You might have noticed a lot of buzz lately about pollinators. What's the story?

Pollinators are animals that visit flowers to feed on nectar, pollen or both. They're just looking for a nutritious meal and a quick source of energy. But along the way, pollinators provide an essential service – they transport pollen from one flower to another, helping plants to reproduce. Thanks to these plant-pollinator relationships, our planet has a tremendous variety of resources that can support humans and other living things.

Native plants and pollinators have evolved together, and they thrive best in partnership. Certain native plants are **superfoods**, providing especially high-nutrition pollen and/or nectar that appeals to monarch butterflies, rusty-patched bumblebees and diverse other pollinators. Others are **host plants**, providing food for caterpillars and other pollinating insects during their early life stages.

But pollinators and native plants are in trouble due to habitat loss, pesticide use, climate change, invasive species and other pressures from human activity. We'll have to work together to protect and restore these species.



Check out these resources and activities:

- o Participate in the city's [online native plant sale](#), open through Sept. 10, 2021.
- o Watch our five-part video series (archived in the Videos tab on this page).
- o Use interactive story maps to learn about pollinators and explore their habitat in Minnetonka parks:
 - [Monarchs in Minnetonka](#)
 - [Tree Trek](#)
- o Scroll down to the Stories section for information about the essential role pollinators play in providing our food.
- o Visit the Important Links section of this page for:
 - lists of animal-pollinated foods
 - updates on Minnetonka's work as a Monarch Champion city for the Mayors' Monarch Pledge
 - information about Lawns to Legumes, Minnesota's state program that provides cost-share funding and resources for residents to create pollinator habitat on private property
 - more links and resources to help you appreciate pollinators and create or protect habitat.

WORK SAMPLE: community engagement initiatives

[REGISTER](#)

to show your support for pollinators!

Who's Listening

Christine Petersen

Natural Resources Program and Outreach Coordinator

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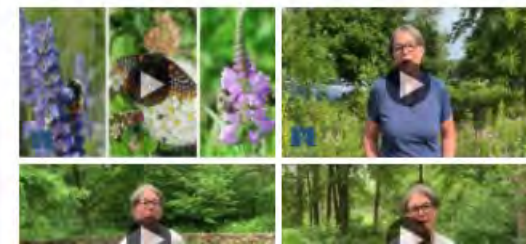


Important Links

- [Online Native Plant Sale](#)
- [Monarchs in Minnetonka story map](#)
- [Tree Trek story map](#)
- [A partial list of foods brought to you by pollinators \(see the Create Pollinator Habitat tab\)](#)
- [Mayors' Monarch Pledge - City of Minnetonka Community Profile](#)

[More...](#)

Videos



WORK SAMPLE:
storymaps and other multimedia

What's so special about SHALLOW LAKES?

Natural Resources - City of Minnetonka

August 26, 2021



**Minnetonka Park Board Item 9
Meeting of April 6, 2022**

Subject:	Information Items
Park Board related goal:	N/A
Park Board related objective:	N/A
Brief Description:	The following are informational items and developments that have occurred since the last park board meeting.

Summer Registration

Registration for summer recreation programs began March 8. 4,811 registrations were processed online, over the phone and in person over the first three weeks of registration. Some of the popular programs included: Jidana Day Camp, senior golf league, swim lessons, tennis clinics and the Park Adventures program (playgrounds). Staff introduced a number of new programs for the summer including: pickleball clinics & lessons, all about dogs, family fishing, youth yoga in the park and bike mechanic camps.

Cullen Smith Property Update

Working closely with the Friends of Cullen Nature Preserve and Bird Sanctuary, City staff coordinated the kick-off of a significant restoration project at the Cullen Nature Preserve. After procuring grant funding from Hennepin County, the City contracted with Landbridge Ecological Inc. to remove invasive species and undesirable trees, perform site management, and install native seedings through 2022 and 2023. The intention of the project is to convert approximately half the site into a highly diverse oak savanna and mixed woodland habitat in order to support native birds and insects as well as serve as an educational and demonstration site.

Upon agreement with the Minnesota Land Trust, who holds a conservation easement on the site, the contractor began the clearing of woody vegetation to open the ground plane for native vegetation to thrive and to protect existing legacy white and bur oaks on site. For several weeks the crews of Landbridge and their subcontractors cut and stacked woody material which was then picked up and hauled to the Public Works brush pile site by City staff. The process went very smoothly and the initial changes are impressive.

The Friends of Cullen Nature Preserve and Bird Sanctuary will be hosted a series of garlic mustard pulling events in the coming weeks. The contractor will be performing additional invasive species control measures throughout this year in advance of a potential prescribed burn this fall. Native seed mixes will be installed late in 2022 and site maintenance will continue until the contract expires at the end of 2023.

Additional information can be found on both the City's website and The Friends site at:

www.cullennature.org

<https://www.minnetonkamn.gov/services/projects/park-and-trail-projects/cullen-preserve>



Natural Resources Annual Update – 2021 Activities

The Natural Resources Division of Public Works is responsible for activities related to:

- Habitat restoration and management
- Water resource protection
- Natural resource ordinance compliance during private development
- Community forestry programs
- Natural resource outreach, education and engagement

The following annual update highlights staff accomplishments for 2021:

Habitat Restoration Activities

Over 310 acres of city land in parks and natural areas are actively being managed, with the goal of developing healthy ecosystems. Notable items include:

- The Natural Resources Master Plan was adopted in December 2021 to guide habitat restoration and management priorities. Work will begin on developing park restoration and maintenance plans for individual parks in 2022.
- Annual buckthorn, garlic mustard and weed control continues in highest value restoration areas by contractors, ICW crew, staff and volunteers.
- Volunteer coordination: Volunteer opportunities were held in the spring and fall to control invasive species, including buckthorn and garlic mustard.
 - Local groups continue to provide the greatest benefit. Groups that were standouts are Friends groups from various parks, Minnetonka Mountain Bike Trail Advocates, geocache groups, and scouting groups
 - Adopt-a-Spot volunteers collectively contribute hundreds of hours annually working independently. Standout work has been done for more than a decade by long-term volunteers at Kinsel and Lake Rose Parks bringing restoration to an invasive-free quality not achievable without them.
- Restoration activities continued around the Lone Lake Park pickle ball courts including:
 - Rain garden improvements
 - 608 wildflowers planted to benefit pollinators (including Rusty Patch Bumble Bee super-foods) and monarch butterfly favorites
 - 256 prairie grasses planted
 - Preparation for conversion to prairie in no-mow areas was completed by contractors, staff and volunteers. Conversion will take several years.
- 2021 was the fifth year of partial habitat restoration at the Cullen Nature Preserve, in collaboration with the Friends of Cullen Nature Preserve.
 - Plant survey and list of existing species completed for “before-restoration” history

- Photo-documented extensive herbivory by deer
 - Grants received for expedited restoration would not have been possible without extensive work by and collaboration with the Friends of Cullen Nature Preserve
 - Hennepin Co. Good Steward Grant (\$25,000)
 - MN DNR Conservation Partners Legacy grant (\$45,000)
 - Restoration contractor removed 8.8 acres of buckthorn along the east and north sections and the ICW crew continued work along the sewer line.
- Between July and October, restoration staff responded to noxious weed complaints and worked to control many problem species including thistle, poison ivy and Japanese knotweed.

Water Resource Protection

- The city applied for and received the new state municipal stormwater (MS4) permit. Compliance with the permit will continue to improve stormwater management and water quality of community ponds, lakes, and creeks. The permit requires the city to take actions in the areas of:
 - Education and outreach
 - Public involvement
 - Illicit discharge detection and elimination (IDDE)
 - Development and construction oversight
 - Post-construction stormwater management
 - Operations good housekeeping practices
- Annual release of insects for biological control of wetland invasive species purple loosestrife has occurred since 2006. Beetle populations fluctuate with environmental conditions and release sites adjust accordingly. Thirteen sites have been photo documented for the past seven years, including in 2021.
- The city continues to monitor the health of Minnetonka’s wetlands using volunteers in Hennepin County’s Wetland Health Evaluation Program. Having monitored 34 sites to date. Due to pandemic-imposed restrictions, the county has temporarily stopped this program, and appears likely that the program will not resume until summer of 2023.
- The city obtained a grant through the Metropolitan Council to develop a rebate program for smart irrigation controllers. The intent is to conserve groundwater resources by reducing outdoor irrigation during summer months when demand is high. Staff reached out to numerous homeowners’ associations to offer irrigation audits. One association participated. Numerous households applied for rebates to install WaterSense-certified smart controllers and/or sprinkler heads. In 2022, the rebate program is expanding to indoor water efficient devices.

Development Review, Inspection and Compliance

- Staff reviewed 369 permits including 44 new homes, 27 pools, 6 grading permits, and 9 commercial permits (Mntka High School Trades addition; 801 Carlson Parkway – The Pointe; Wayzata Blvd Taco Bell; Hwy 7 Culvers; 5959 Shady Oak Road-Doran Apartments;

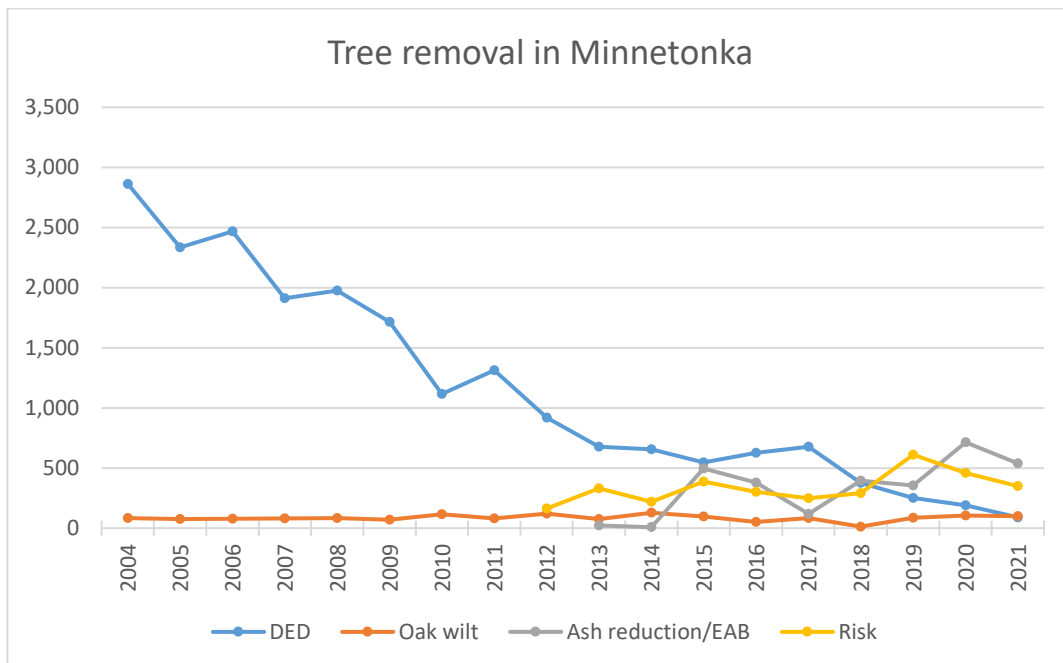
Ridgedale Commons Park; Island Oaks; 10901 Red Circle Drive- Wellington Apartments; Dick's Sporting Goods [building only]).

- Conservation easements were acquired over wetland buffer and tree preservation areas on 4 sites, totaling approximately 10.3 acres.
- Staff reviewed 17 wetland delineations and had around 275 responses to requests for information about wetlands.

Forestry Activities

- Minnetonka's annual tree sale has sold about 18,000 young trees since 2007, increasing the diversity and resilience of the community forest. In 2021, 476 buyers purchased 901 trees and shrubs of 15 different species.
- In 2021, 197 young trees of 19 different species were planted in Minnetonka's parks to improve species diversity of our community forest and increase resilience to climate change.
- Forestry staff submitted and was awarded another Healthy Canopy grant through Hennepin County, to replant trees in Westwood Park. These trees will offset the loss of ash trees due to emerald ash borer (EAB) and will increase the biodiversity and climate resiliency of the forest in this neighborhood. Planting will take place in the fall of 2022 and will be completed with volunteers from the Minnesota chapter of the Society of American Foresters.
- In May, the city officially kicked off its wood utilization program with the arrival of a portable sawmill. Logs that would otherwise be chipped for mulch are salvaged from the city's brush site for milling. The lumber from these logs will be used in city projects such as the upcoming Community Center remodel project and construction of a gravel bed nursery.
- The city's first Community Forestry Corp member completed their work term; this is a program administered through Ameri Corp. This member completed tree surveys and inventories, as well as assisted staff in developing management strategies for Hilloway Park and a series of outlots along interstate 494. This work could not have been accomplished without their expertise and determination. The first phase of the plan developed for Hilloway Park was implemented at the end of December. In the red pine tree plantation on the north side of the park, a contractor felled 33 of these trees. Logs from the trees were then milled with a bandsaw mill on site by the contractor; the city's mill was not in operation at this time. The lumber's intended use is for signage in the park.
- Forestry has teamed up with Rainbow Tree Care, a local contractor, to begin experimental treatments for the disease bur oak blight (BOB). This is a disease that has spread in Minnetonka parks and could become more of an issue with climate change. This is designed as a long term field trial; we will report our findings in the coming years.

- 100 hybrid willow trees were planted with the intention to be sustainably harvested on an annual cycle to supply the city with pure willow mulch. Researchers have found in their initial studies that using this as a mulch have shown to boost a tree’s resistance to disease infection. Staff intent to use this mulch for bur oaks, crab apples and potentially ash trees. More to report in the coming years.
- For the fourth year in a row, staff conducted tree pruning in city parks. Proper tree pruning extends the life of trees by many years. In conjunction with this, staff completed the third year of the city’s conservation arboriculture study. The goal of this project is to study advanced pruning techniques used to preserve older trees that provide critical habitat in our community forest.
- Staff completed the tree inventory of the Lone Lake Park mountain bike trail. This data will be used as a tree health base line to compare any future tree related issues in regards to the trail.
- The rate of Dutch elm disease in Minnetonka continues to drop but we unfortunately did see a slight increase in oak wilt disease. Without the consistent implementation of the shade tree disease control ordinance which requires proper sanitation of diseased trees and wood, these numbers would be much higher. In regards to the city’s emerald ash borer infestation, we saw an increase in infested trees, which we anticipate these numbers to grow exponentially in the next couple of years. The city continued to pre-emptively remove ash trees in the right of way. Overall, tree removal in 2021 consisted of:



Trees	# removed	Location		
		Public	Right of way	Private
Elm	90	36	9	43
Oak	100	9	3	74
Ash	540	251	269	20
Risk	349	205	144	0
Total	1079	501	425	137

Outreach, Education and Engagement Activities

- Minnetonka continued its pollinator protection efforts through habitat restoration and protection, multifaceted public outreach efforts and events, partnership with other agencies, and long-range planning for sustainable practices on city properties. As part of participating in the Mayor’s Monarch Pledge (MMP) in 2021:
 - After addressing 24 of the program’s action steps, Minnetonka became the ninth city in North America to reach Monarch Champion status.
 - Educational articles, videos, activities and resources were posted to the city’s engagement platform, Minnetonka Matters, for the fifth-annual Monarch and Pollinator Awareness Month. Related social media posts reached up to 6,000 people.

- Staff provided numerous education and engagement opportunities, including:
 - Promoted the MN Pollution Control Agency’s smart-salting training to businesses, associations and other groups
 - Offered a soil health workshop to members of the GreenStep Cities program
 - Developed a rain garden maintenance workshop with watershed districts
 - Facilitated elementary-school stormwater education through a contractor
 - Sponsored two workshops through Blue Thumb – Planting for Pollinators, and Turf Alternatives – to help residents add habitat and resilience on private property
 - In collaboration with Recreation, hosted a slow-roll bike ride to celebrate monarchs
 - Tabled and hosted in-person events for Earth Day and Farmers Market, covering pet waste reduction, EAB prevention, stormwater-related issues, and chloride reduction.

- Annual garlic mustard and buckthorn control workshops continue to draw on average 50-75 new residents who wish to learn best techniques and restore habitat on their private property. Additionally, a video of the garlic mustard workshop (posted to the city’s YouTube channel in 2020) had more than 160 views in 2021.

- The city continued its partnership with Hamline University and local watershed districts to promote Adopt-a-Drain, which encourages residents to clean local storm drains to reduce pollutants in runoff. Since 2019, 124 participants have adopted 284 storm drains across Minnetonka’s four watershed districts. These volunteers collected 1,615 pounds of organic waste, sediment and other debris in 2021.

- A plan for new interpretive signage at Lone Lake Park was developed, with 11 panels to be installed in 2022.
- Outreach covered topics related to stormwater reduction and surface water protection, soil health, water efficiency, tree diversity and preservation, planning for EAB and other pests and diseases, habitat restoration, invasive species management, pollinator and wildlife protection, community resilience, NR events, and more:
 - Monthly articles in the Minnetonka Memo newsletter
 - Monthly e-blasts reaching more than 3,000 readers, with an average of 31 percent engagement
 - Electronic highway billboards that changed approximately bimonthly
 - Social media promoting events and seasonal themes

Winter Farmer’s Market Summary

Background: The Minnetonka Farmers Market opened as a summer market in 2009, adding a winter market season for the first time in the winter of 2017. This winter was our fifth season holding winter farmers markets at the Minnetonka Community Center. Last winter (Nov 2020-March 2021) we ran our winter market as a limited outdoor, drive-through market.

The 2021-22 winter farmers market season started out strong on Saturday, November 13th, and finished on Saturday, March 12th. Five markets were scheduled for this season, however the January market was cancelled due to the local pandemic conditions at the time.

Vendors & Products

47 individual vendors participated in the winter market season, with a range of 23-35 scheduled vendors at each market. Products offered included a wide range of seasonal local foods, natural home and self-care items, and handcrafted gifts.



Vendor products included:

Proteins	meats: beef, pork, lamb, goat, duck, goose, rabbit, quail; eggs (chicken, duck, quail); and cheeses.
Baked Goods	sourdough bread, alfajores, milhojas, chilenitos, Christmas cake, apple pie, pecan pie, decorated sugar cookies, paint-your-own sugar cookies, macarons, British scones, tarts, tray bakes, jumbo muffins, cupcakes, cake pops, shortbread, cookies, granola bars, no bake treats, cinnamon rolls
Produce	fresh organic gourmet mushrooms, many varieties of microgreens, fresh garlic, frozen currants
Ready-to-eat	hot coffee, empanadas, Thai food (egg rolls, Pad Thai, curries, etc.) & bulgogi kimbap
Pantry/Value-Added	jams, jellies, applesauce, apple butter, caramel popcorn, pickles, salsa, maple syrup, honey, popcorn kernels, granola, coffee beans, hot cocoa bombs, flavored mixing syrups, elderberry jam, cordial & syrup, kimchi
Refrigerated	fresh salsas, frozen smoothies
Natural Home & Self-Care	bar and liquid soaps, goat milk soap, lip balms, lip oil, lip scrub lotions, hand cream, body butter, eye cream, face cream, face serum, cleansing oil, pain balm, salve, aromatherapy and incense items, chakra and smudge sprays, sage and smudge kits, natural perfume, foot & bath soak, massage and body oils, salt scrub, sugar scrub, aloe spray, clay face mask
Handcrafted Gifts	wooden toys, charcuterie stones, cutting boards, charcuterie boards, cribbage boards, wood turned: bowls, pens, and bottle stoppers, and kitchen items; fabric bowls, candles, Native American dream catchers, photography prints, birdhouses, decorative signs, jewelry, fused-glass art, apparel, stickers, pins, buttons, keychains, bumper stickers, photo cards, pop-up greeting cards, and a wide variety of crafts from The Landing Shop.

Attendance varied from market to market. Our best attended market was the final market of the season on March 12th, closely followed by the December market. We met several first-time shoppers at the March winter market who were excited to hear about our upcoming summer market season.

November 12 th	228
December 4 th	386
January 8 th	cancelled
February 12 th	287
March 12 th	391



December 4th, 2021



March 12th, 2022

Free activities included a kid’s craft station with coloring packets and seasonal crafts-like cheerio bird feeders, beaded stretchy bracelets, and pipe cleaner caterpillars-plus some special craft activities at the Rec Box booth, including “snow slime”. Market staff noted that people of all ages enjoyed sitting to watch the musicians while making the crafts.

Live music was provided by local musicians, including the Licorice Stix clarinet choir, Matt Jennings, Light of the Moon Duo, Jackson Peters Trio, Rosewood, & Brad Cattadoris. The music was well received across the board.

At our December market, we also had a scheduled visit from Santa, who roamed throughout the market from 9-11am, and was available for photos with customers and vendors.



Community Booths included The Landing Shop, Natural Resources, Williston Fitness Center, Rec Box, the ICA Food Shelf, and the Sustainability Commission, who were especially popular due to their free LED light bulbs.



Looking ahead, what's next:

- **Summer 2022**
 - Our next market will be held on Tuesday, June 7th, from 3-7pm, and will kick off our summer market season. The regular season will run through the end of September, and will be held in the Ice Arena B parking lot on the civic center campus.
 - In October 2022, we will tentatively hold a one day pop-up farmers market at the newly completed Ridgedale Commons.
- **Winter 2022-23**
 - The 6th season of the Minnetonka Winter Market is scheduled to be held at the Minnetonka Community Center, the second Saturday of each month, from November 2022 through March 2023.
- **Summer 2023**
 - The Minnetonka Farmers Market is moving!
 - Ridgedale Commons will be the new home of the Minnetonka Farmers Market, starting summer of 2023.

Winter Rinks Summary

The 2021/22 warming house and skating season provided exceptional weather for ice making and, despite the cold, ample skating opportunity for the public. After a late start in December, rinks were able to stay open the majority of the season. They were even extended for an additional week following President’s Day.

Minnetonka Warming House Usage:

Year	Boulder	Covington	Glen Lake	Gro Tonka	Meadow	McKenzie	Spring Hill	ALL MTKA
21/22	697	305	1157	1657	1050	1037	607	6,510
20/21	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
19/20	593	184	608	901	559	645	580	4,070
18/19	223	211	567	857	539	528	530	3,455
17/18	395	261	818	936	780	738	587	4,515

Hopkins Warming House Usage:

Year	Valley	Interlachen	Central	Burnes	Oakes	Harley	All Hopkins
21/22	1,164	1,396	-	303	304	686	3,853
20/21	n/a	n/a	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
19/20	1,057	1,720	-	489	326	778	4,370
18/19	773	1,758	-	387	297	508	3,871
17/18	610	1,018	748	255	281	508	3,420

Days Open

Year	MTKA	Hopkins
21/22	Open 57 of 67	Open 60 of 67
20/21	n/a	n/a
19/20	47	53
18/19	40	45
17/18	60	60

Notables for the 2021/22 Season:

- Despite an increase in hourly wages, staffing was a challenge. We hired a total of 16 staff for the season, compared to 26 in 2019/20. Staffing continues to present challenges and space to improvise and adapt. Late season staff shortages further restricted our hours of operation and resulted in a reduction of days open at Burnes and Oakes parks in Hopkins, two of our less utilized facilities.
- Staffing Saturdays continues to be a challenge (open noon-9:45pm). Saturday’s hours of operation currently require twice as many shifts as other days of the week, which equates to the need for twice as many staff.
- Many of the parks and warming houses continue to see significant use by people sledding. Warming houses are not just for skaters.
- Staff continues to explore outdoor curling opportunities.

Minnetonka:

- All locks have been changed to card access and, if needed, able to be on a timer.

Hopkins:

- The slight decrease in annual usage, especially compared to Minnetonka, is likely a result in the reduction of tracking at Interlachen and late season weekday closures at Burnes and Oakes.
- The new pleasure rink configurations at Burnes and Oakes looked outstanding. For those not looking for a traditional hockey skating experience, this could be a game changer.

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 10
Meeting of April 6, 2022**

Upcoming 6-Month Meeting Schedule				
Day	Date	Meeting Type	Agenda Business Items	Special Notes
Wed	5/11/22	Regular	•	Park Board Tour (5:30 pm)
Wed	6/1/22	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Plan • E-bike usage – Lone Lake Park Multi-use Mountain Bike Trail 	
Wed	7/6/22	Regular	• No meeting	Holiday
Wed	8/3/22	Regular	•	
Wed	9/7/22	Regular	•	
Wed	10/5/22	Regular	•	

Other meetings and activities to note:

Day	Date	Description	Special Notes
Sat	4/16/22	Spring Eggstravaganza	Minnetonka Community Center
Thur-Sat	4/28-4/30/22	Ice Show	Minnetonka Ice Arena
Sat	6/25/22	Summer Festival	

Items to be scheduled: