

**City of Ramsey**  
**Agenda**  
**Environmental Policy Board (EPB)**  
Monday, April 17, 2017  
**6:30 pm**  
**The Lake Itasca Room, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Citizen Input**
- 3. Approve Agenda**
- 4. Approve Minutes**
  1. Approve Meeting Minutes Dated March 20, 2017
- 5. Policy Board Business**
  1. Consider Oak Wilt Management Plan for Brookfield 8th Addition
  2. Consider Landcape Plan for Riverstone Addition
  3. Recommend Revisions to the Draft Master Plan Amendment - Mississippi West Regional Park
- 6. Board/Staff Input**
  1. Comprehensive Plan Update Workshop
- 7. Adjournment**

**Environmental Policy Board (EPB)**

**4. 1.**

**Meeting Date:** 04/17/2017

**By:** Chris Anderson, Community  
Development

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**Information**

**Title:**

Approve Meeting Minutes Dated March 20, 2017

**Action:**

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**Attachments**

Meeting Minutes Dated March 20, 2017

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**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Tim Gladhill

Form Started By: Chris Anderson

Final Approval Date: 04/13/2017

**Reviewed By**

Tim Gladhill

**Date**

04/13/2017 10:52 AM

Started On: 04/10/2017 05:31 PM

**ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY BOARD  
CITY OF RAMSEY  
ANOKA COUNTY  
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

On Monday, March 20, 2017, the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) met in the Lake Itasca Room at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive N.W., Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present:     Chairperson Thomas Stodola  
                          Board Member Colleen Anderson  
                          Board Member Reid Bernard  
                          Board Member Jane Covart  
                          Board Member Lucas Trossen  
                          Board Member Michael Valentine

Members Absent:     Board Member Michael Hiatt

Also Present:        City Planner Chris Anderson  
                          City Councilmember John LeTourneau

**1.     CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Stodola called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**2.     CITIZEN INPUT**

None.

**3.     APPROVE AGENDA**

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Board Member Trossen to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Stodola, Board Member Valentine, Trossen, Anderson, Bernard, and Covart. Voting No: None. Absent: Board Member Hiatt.

**4.     APPROVE MINUTES**

**4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated February 22, 2017**

Motion by Board Member Covart and seconded by Board Member Anderson to approve the regular meeting minutes dated February 22, 2017.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Stodola, Board Member Covart, Anderson, Bernard, Trossen, and Valentine. Voting No: None. Absent: Board Member Hiatt.

**5.     POLICY BOARD BUSINESS**

### **5.01: Consider Natural Resources Elements of Homestead Road Subdivision**

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He reported that the City has received an application for a three-lot subdivision known as Homestead Road. He stated that the application includes review of a Preliminary Plat and a Variance to lot depth. He noted that no new roads are proposed with the development and the site already has municipal utilities stubbed in as a result of a previous road improvement project. He stated that the development site is located at 7131 166<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW and noted that a significant portion of the subject property is encumbered with wetland and floodway. He recommended approval of the Tree Preservation Plan and the Variance request contingent upon compliance with the Staff Review Letter.

Chairperson Stodola commented that the staff report was well thought out and informative.

City Councilmember LeTourneau asked if rain gardens are used widely throughout the City in this purpose.

City Planner Anderson stated that the City is not commonly using them throughout the City. He stated that a few of the multi-family townhome developments have used rain gardens as part of their stormwater management but he was not aware of a single-family home development that currently uses that method. He provided additional details on rain gardens. He stated that rain gardens are becoming more popular throughout the metro area and noted that there are other opportunities in the City where rain gardens could be used.

Board Member Valentine stated that rain gardens are becoming more popular in single family home settings. He stated that he created three rain gardens on one of his properties which work very well and are very efficient. He was confident that the rain gardens would be a good fit but noted that the long-term maintenance would need to be identified to ensure peak performance.

City Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he does love the idea but just wanted to learn more information on the topic to ensure that it would be a good fit.

Board Member Valentine noted that the rain garden would need to be designed to the right size to ensure it would work correctly.

City Planner Anderson stated that the engineering staff will review the plans to ensure the rates and volumes are met. He stated that education is a part of the long-term maintenance to ensure those conducting the maintenance know which items remain and which need to be removed. He explained that water is intended to filter through the rain garden and not hold water for long periods of time.

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Chairperson Stodola to recommend approval of the Tree Preservation Plan and the Variance request contingent upon compliance with the Staff Review Letter.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Stodola, Board Member Valentine, Anderson, Bernard, Covart, and Trossen. Voting No: None. Absent: Board Member Hiatt.

### **5.02: Receive Update on Covenant Meadows and Consider Environmental Review Options (Project #17-102): Case of Eric Thomson**

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that the purpose of the case is to review an application for a rezoning of the subject property from R-1 Rural Developing to Planned Unit Development (PUD) and Preliminary Plat. He stated that the site is generally located south of Trott Brook and west of Germanium Street. He stated that the applicant has proposed to subdivide the approximately 38-acre subject property into 12 single family homes that would be serviced by individual private utilities. The Preliminary Plat proposes deeding approximately 15 of 38 acres to the City as the public benefit in relation to the PUD application. He stated that the proposed 15 acres straddles Trott Brook, has steep slopes, and is also considered to be high quality natural open space. He noted that this is simply an update and formal action is not required.

City Councilmember LeTourneau stated that there was a proposal for some trail right-of-way but that does not seem appropriate because of the slope.

City Planner Anderson stated that staff believes that it still has merit to look at a trail corridor from the edge of the cul-de-sac to the land that would be deeded to the City. He stated that a trail to the brook would not be provided because of the steep slope. He provided additional details on possible locations for a walking trail through that area.

Board Member Valentine asked how likely it would be to require or request an EAW.

City Planner Anderson explained the triggers for an EAW, noting that the mandatory threshold is 250 units, while this proposed development is only 12 units. He stated that staff believes that 12 additional units will not have an impact on the aquifer that these homes would draw from and provided additional details.

### **5.03: Consider Draft 2017-2018 Work Plan**

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that the purpose of this case is to consider the Draft 2017-2018 Work Plan for the Environmental Policy Board. He stated that the EPB had identified four elements in February for inclusion in a Work Plan and those items were presented to the City Council at a joint meeting in February. He stated that the Draft Work Plan has been formatted to mirror that of the City Council's Strategic Plan as well as the Work Plan of the Planning Commission.

Board Member Valentine stated that City Planner Anderson did a great job compiling the information.

Chairperson Stodola stated that he also likes this format for the Work Plan.

City Planner Anderson stated that this is the template used by the City Council.

City Councilmember LeTourneau stated that the previous year the Board created the Statement of Purpose and thought the development of the Work Plan was a great logical next step. He noted the staff time that is shown and asked if this list of items might be too big of a commitment for staff to accomplish in the next year.

City Planner Anderson noted that there are members of staff that could work on the items on the list and advised that there may also be interns coming on board soon that could assist with some of the items. He stated that this Work Plan is designed for 2017 and 2018 and rather than remove items, he would prefer for the Board to prioritize the items on the Work Plan. He noted that the items on the Work Plan are not in any particular order and therefore could be prioritized.

Chairperson Stodola asked if the Work Plan could be for the next two years, noting that some items would be ongoing.

City Planner Anderson noted that the Work Plan can be designed for multiple years. He stated that the City Council works off a three-year Strategic Plan and the Planning Commission recently developed a three-year Work Plan. He recognized that there are challenges with the limited number of times a Board or Commission meets and the regular business items the groups must also consider.

Board Member Anderson commented that the items on the Work Plan do not appear to be things that can be accomplished quickly. The example was given that even if an organics recycling program is developed, there would still need to be follow-up to ensure that the program is working and to review the results.

City Planner Anderson stated that the Work Plan can be 2017-2019 with the intention that the document can be revisited and amended as time goes on.

City Councilmember LeTourneau appreciated the comments made tonight and noted that he will share the discussion with the City Council when the Council reviews the Work Plan. He stated that he likes the focus of having only four items and the idea that this is a living document with items that will take time to accomplish, rather than a hard start and stop date over the course of one year.

Motion by Chairperson Stodola and seconded by Board Member Anderson to recommend forwarding the Draft Work Plan to the City Council for approval, changing the date of the Work Plan from 2017-2018 to 2017-2019.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Stodola, Board Member Anderson, Bernard, Covart, Trossen, and Valentine. Voting No: None. Absent: Board Member Hiatt.

City Planner Anderson stated that he will inform the Board when this item is scheduled to appear before the City Council. He encouraged Board Members to attend.

City Councilmember LeTourneau asked if the Board would review the plan annually even though it is marked for 2017-2019.

City Planner Anderson stated that the Board will review the document at least one time per year and could make changes to the document as necessary.

## **6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT**

- **Comprehensive Plan Update Workshop on Natural Resources Chapter – June 12, 2017**

City Planner Anderson stated that there will be a workshop on June 12<sup>th</sup> for the Comprehensive Plan update which will focus on natural resources and strongly encouraged the Board Members to be present and participate in the discussions.

City Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he attended the first workshop and there were a lot of residents that came to participate. He stated that he finds it helpful to listen at those meetings to ensure that the work he is doing on the Council is in line with the desires of the community at large. He stated that it would also be helpful for the EPB to be present to listen to the input from residents on natural resources. He stated that the people attending the meetings are very open minded and it is refreshing to hear the different opinions and that those same people can also listen and appreciate the other opinions.

Chairperson Stodola stated that Board Member Covart's term on the Board was expiring and the Council recently reappointed her to the Board.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Board Member Covart to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chris Anderson  
City Planner

ATTEST:

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JoAnn Shaw  
Community Development Secretary

Drafted by Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*

**Meeting Date:** 04/17/2017

**By:** Chris Anderson, Community  
Development

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**Information**

**Title:**

Consider Oak Wilt Management Plan for Brookfield 8th Addition

**Purpose/Background:**

Capstone Homes/Brookfield Land LLC, the "Applicant", has applied for Final Plat approval of Brookfield 8th Addition, a twenty-five (25) lot, single family residential development. In September of 2016, the Board reviewed multiple aspects of this project, including the Tree Preservation and Landscaping Plans for Brookfield 8th Addition (along with a variance request to the lot depth standard and a variance to cul-de-sac length). The Applicant revised plans based on recommendations from the EPB and actions by the Planning Commission and the Final Plat was considered by the City Council one February 28, 2017. The project is still awaiting action by the Metropolitan Council regarding a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to re-guide a portion of the project area to Low Density Residential so that the two lots at the end of the cul-de-sac can be serviced with municipal sewer and water. Due to this contingency, along with discussion about a cost-share agreement to extend the watermain south to 166th Ave, the City Council tabled action until these two items were resolved. As a result, construction timelines have been revised and now will coincide with the high-risk time period for Oak Wilt.

**Observations/Alternatives:**

Based on the current timeline for anticipated action on the Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Final Plat, it appears that construction activity will likely commence around May 1st. Due to the concerns with oak wilt, the Applicant has submitted an Oak Wilt Management Plan that outlines the precautions they will take to address the potential introduction of and/or spread of oak wilt to other adjacent properties.

The Applicant is proposing to install a double trenched line around the perimeter of the tree-save areas. This serves to mechanically disrupt/severe any grafted root systems to prevent the transmission of the fungus through connected roots. All removed trees will be chipped or mulched onsite and removed in enclosed containers. At all times that tree clearing work is occurring, a second individual will be available to address any unintended wounds with wound sealant. This will aid in minimizing the potential for above ground transmission of the fungus by insects to trees that are intended to be preserved. A mechanical tree feller will be used to remove the trees. This will minimize potential damage/wounding of other trees in the area.

The proposed management strategy is reasonable. There is an active oak wilt pocket onsite and this proactive approach should benefit both the existing trees slated to be preserved as well as help protect trees within the Conservation Easement and on adjacent, neighboring properties. Additionally, City Staff will also be on site observing this work to verify that the contractor is operating in accordance with the Oak Wilt Management Plan.

Staff finds the proposed management plan to be reasonable and should be effective at controlling the already present pocket of oak wilt. While it is always ideal to avoid working within oak stands during the high risk period for oak wilt transmission, because there is an active oak wilt pocket on site, this work will provide a much greater level of protection than simply waiting until the risk level is downgraded to low (typically sometime in July) and therefore, Staff supports this approach and recommends approval of the Oak Wilt Management Plan.

**Funding Source:**

All costs associated with this request are the responsibility of the Applicant.

**Action:**

Motion to recommend approval of the Oak Wilt Management Plan for Brookfield 8th Addition.

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**Attachments**

Site Location Map

Proposed Final Plat

Tree Preservation Plan

Oak Wilt Management Plan

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**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Tim Gladhill

Form Started By: Chris Anderson

Final Approval Date: 04/13/2017

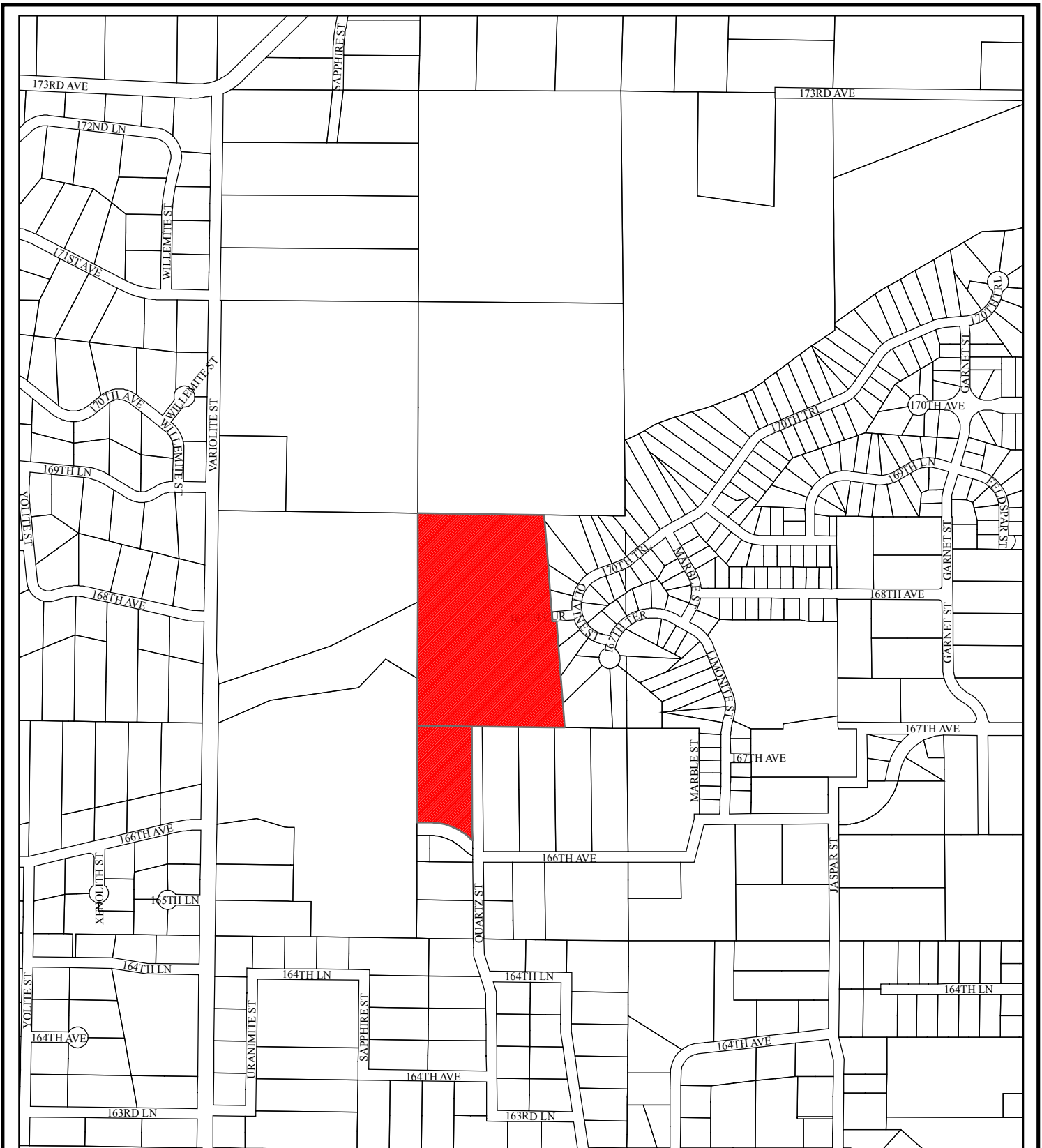
**Reviewed By**

Tim Gladhill

**Date**

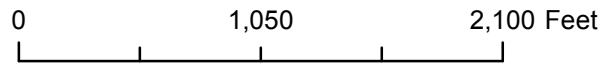
04/13/2017 10:52 AM

Started On: 04/10/2017 09:45 AM



### Brookfield 8th Addition

- Legend**
- Site
  - Parcels



# BROOKFIELD EIGHTH ADDITION

KNOW ALL PERSONS BY THESE PRESENTS: That Brookfield Land, LLC, a Minnesota limited liability company, owner, and Tradition Capital Bank, a Minnesota corporation, mortgagee, of the following described property:

Outlot A, BROOKFIELD SECOND ADDITION, Anoka County, Minnesota.

AND

**TRACT A:**

That part of the North 200 feet of the South 677.6 feet (as measured along the West line) of the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 9, Township 32, Range 25, lying West of the East 933 feet (as measured along the North line) of the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter thereof, Anoka County, Minnesota.

AND

That part of the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 9, Township 32, Range 25, Anoka County, Minnesota, lying West of the East 933 feet (as measured along the North line of said Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter) thereof and lying North of the South 677.6 feet, as measured along the West line of said Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter, thereof.

EXCEPT THE FOLLOWING THREE PARCELS:

EXCEPTION 1: The east 33.00 feet of Tract A

EXCEPTION 2: An 80.00 foot strip of land over, under and across Tract A. The center line of said strip of land is described as follows: Commencing at the southwest corner of said Tract A; thence North 00 degrees 25 minutes 01 seconds East, assumed bearing, along the west line of said Tract A, a distance of 203.11 feet to the point of beginning of said center line; thence South 89 degrees 01 minutes 26 seconds East a distance of 87.41 feet; thence southeasterly a distance of 222.37 feet along a tangential curve concave to the southwest having a central angle of 39 degrees 48 minutes 52 seconds and a radius of 320.00 feet; thence South 49 degrees 12 minutes 34 seconds East, tangent to last described curve, a distance of 30.56 feet; thence southeasterly a distance of 40.03 feet along a tangential curve concave to the northeast having a central angle of 07 degrees 10 minutes 01 seconds and a radius of 320.00 feet to the west line of the east 33.00 feet of said Tract A and there terminating.

The side lines of said strip of land are prolonged or shortened to terminate on said west line of Tract A and said west line of the east 33.00 feet of Tract A.

EXCEPTION 3: That part of Tract A lying southerly of the southerly boundary of Exception 2.

Have caused the same to be surveyed and platted as BROOKFIELD EIGHTH ADDITION and do hereby dedicate to the public for public use the public way and the drainage and utility easements as shown on this plat.

In witness whereof said Brookfield Land, LLC, a Minnesota limited liability company, has caused these presents to be signed by its proper officer this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

BROOKFIELD LAND, LLC

Barry B. Onufrock, Chief Manager

STATE OF MINNESOTA

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

This instrument was acknowledged before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ by Barry B. Onufrock, Chief Manager of Brookfield Land, LLC a Minnesota limited liability company.

Notary Public, \_\_\_\_\_ County, Minnesota  
My Commission Expires \_\_\_\_\_

In witness whereof said Tradition Capital Bank, a Minnesota corporation, has caused these presents to be signed by its proper officer this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

TRADITION CAPITAL BANK

Thomas M. Grotbo, Vice President

STATE OF MINNESOTA

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

This instrument was acknowledged before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ by Thomas M. Grotbo, Vice President of Tradition Capital Bank, a Minnesota corporation, on behalf of the corporation.

Notary Public, \_\_\_\_\_ County, Minnesota  
My Commission Expires \_\_\_\_\_

I, Jason E. Rud do hereby certify that this plat was prepared by me or under my direct supervision; that I am a duly Licensed Land Surveyor in the State of Minnesota; that this plat is a correct representation of the boundary survey; that all mathematical data and labels are correctly designated on this plat; that all monuments depicted on this plat have been, or will be correctly set within one year; that all water boundaries and wet lands, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, Section 505.01, Subd. 3, as of the date of this certificate are shown and labeled on this plat; and all public ways are shown and labeled on this plat.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

Jason E. Rud, Licensed Land Surveyor  
Minnesota License No. 41578

STATE OF MINNESOTA

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

This instrument was acknowledged before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ by Jason E. Rud.

Notary Public, \_\_\_\_\_ County, Minnesota  
My Commission Expires \_\_\_\_\_

City Council, City of Ramsey, Minnesota

This plat of BROOKFIELD EIGHTH ADDITION was approved and accepted by the City Council of the City of Ramsey, Minnesota at a regular meeting thereof held this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_, and said plat is in compliance with the provisions of Minnesota Statutes, Section 505.03, Subd. 2.

City Council, City of Ramsey, Minnesota

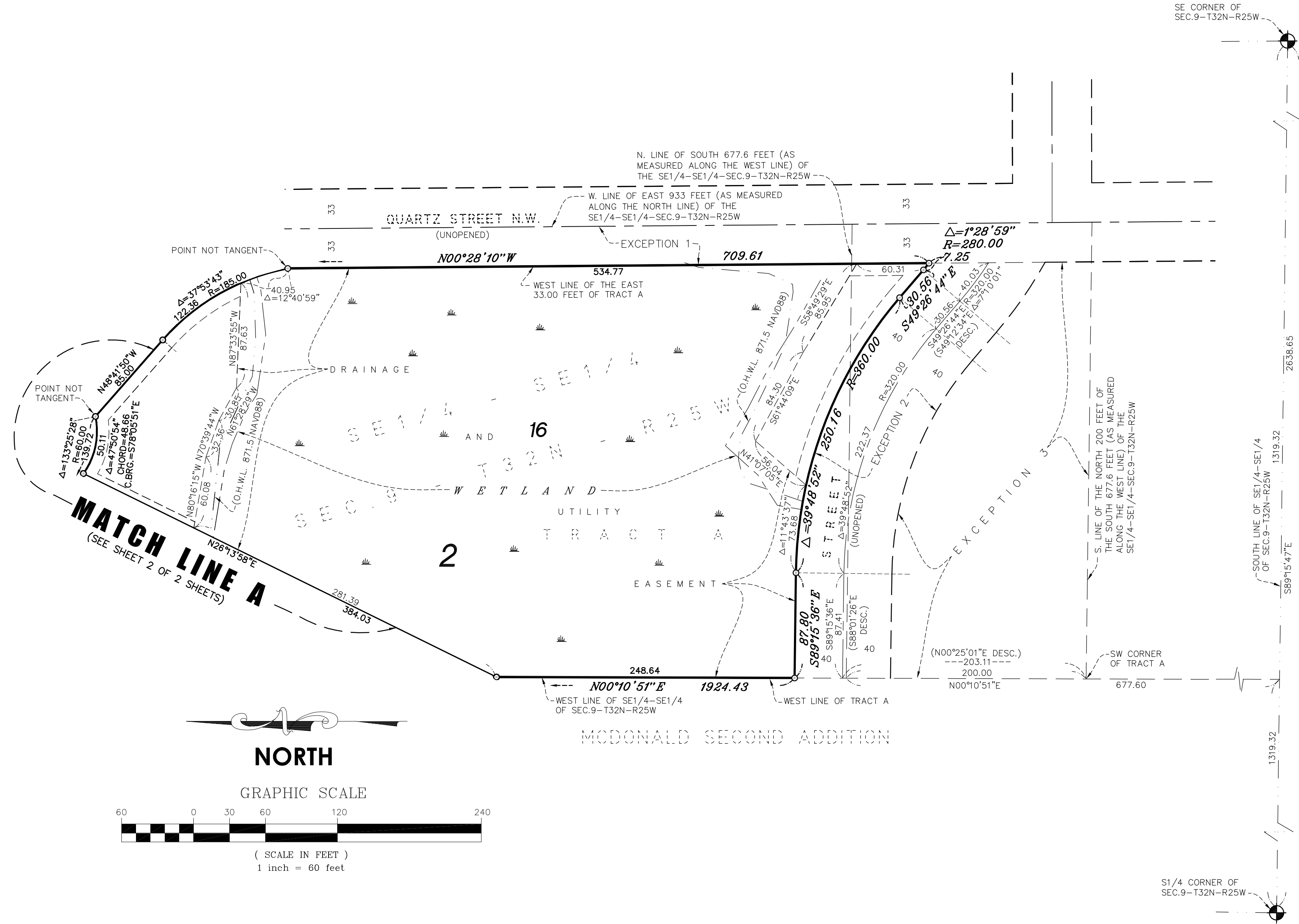
By \_\_\_\_\_ Mayor

By \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk

County Surveyor

I hereby certify that in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Section 505.021, Subd. 11, this plat has been reviewed and approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

Larry D. Hoiom  
Anoka County Surveyor



NORTH

GRAPHIC SCALE



(SCALE IN FEET)  
1 inch = 60 feet

County Auditor/Treasurer

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 505.021, Subd. 9, taxes payable in the year 20\_\_ on the land hereinbefore described have been paid. Also, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 272.12, there are no delinquent taxes and transfer entered this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

Property Tax Administrator

By \_\_\_\_\_ Deputy

County Recorder/Registrar of Titles

County of Anoka, State of Minnesota

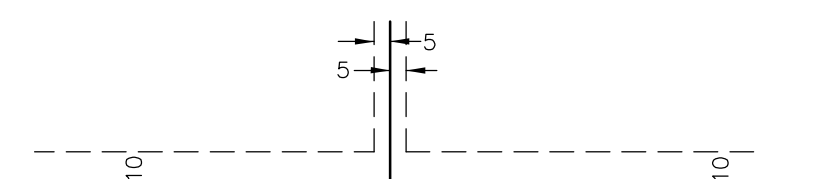
I hereby certify that this plat of BROOKFIELD EIGHTH ADDITION was filed in the office of the County Recorder/Registrar of Titles for public record on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_M. and was duly recorded in Book \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_, as Document Number \_\_\_\_\_.

County Recorder/Registrar of Titles

By \_\_\_\_\_ Deputy

- DENOTES 1/2 INCH BY 14 INCH IRON PIPE MARKED BY RLS NO. 41578.
- DENOTES FOUND IRON MONUMENT
- ⊕ DENOTES ANOKA COUNTY CAST IRON MONUMENT
- (DESC.) REFERS TO LEGAL DESCRIPTION

DRAINAGE AND UTILITY EASEMENTS ARE SHOWN THUS:



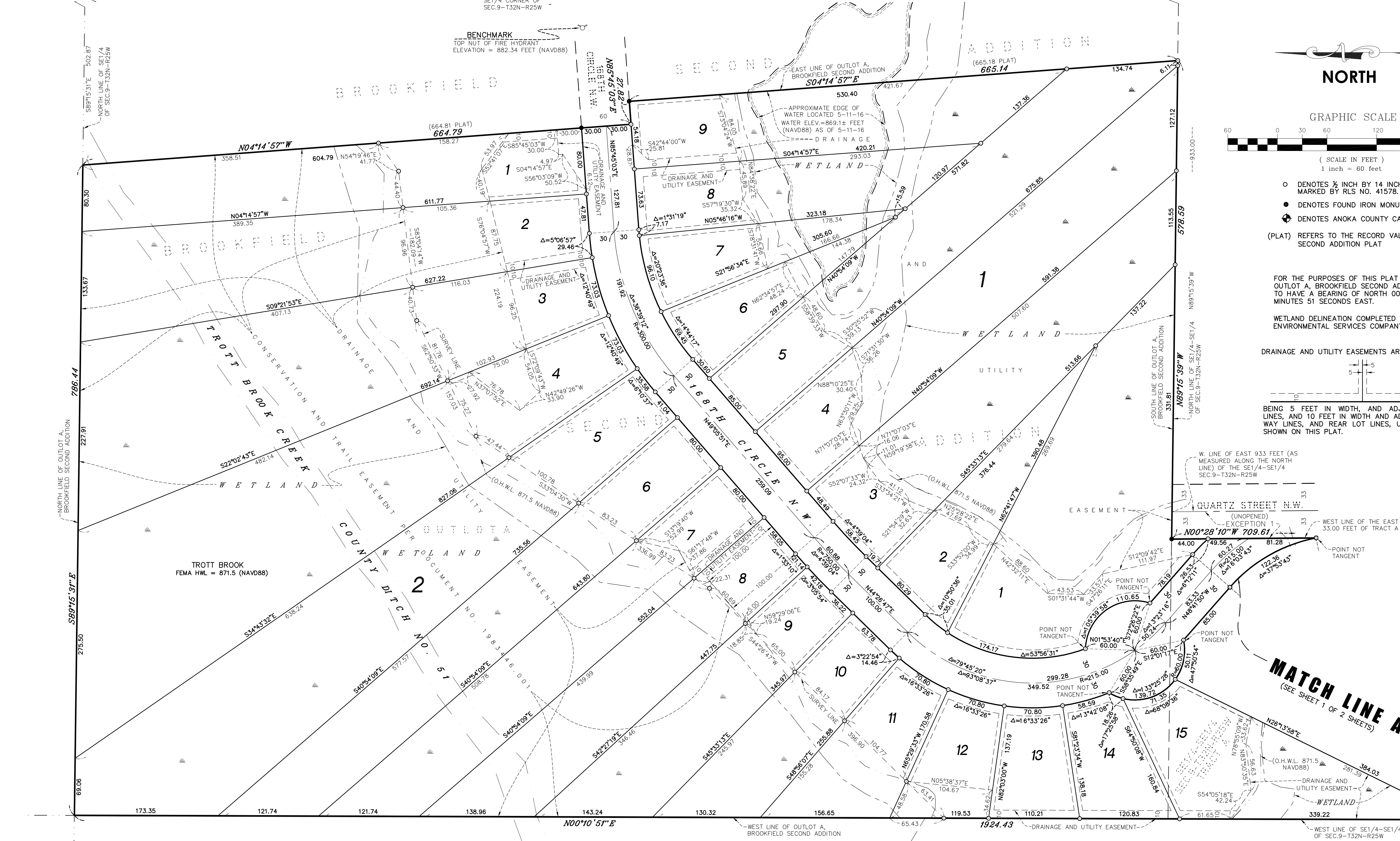
FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS PLAT THE WEST LINE OF OUTLOT A, BROOKFIELD SECOND ADDITION IS ASSUMED TO HAVE A BEARING OF NORTH 00 DEGREES 10 MINUTES 51 SECONDS EAST.

WETLAND DELINEATION COMPLETED BY KJOLHAUG ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMPANY IN 2016.



# BROOKFIELD EIGHTH ADDITION

E1/4 CORNER OF SEC. 9-T32N-R25W 500°28'10"E 1322.75 2645.50 1322.75 SE CORNER OF SEC. 9-T32N-R25W



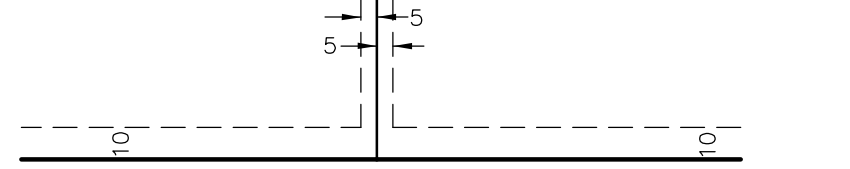
(SCALE IN FEET)  
1 inch = 60 feet

- DENOTES 1/2 INCH IRON PIPE MARKED BY RLS NO. 41578.
- DENOTES FOUND IRON MONUMENT
- ⊕ DENOTES ANOKA COUNTY CAST IRON MONUMENT
- (PLAT) REFERS TO THE RECORD VALUE OF BROOKFIELD SECOND ADDITION PLAT

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS PLAT THE WEST LINE OF OUTLOT A, BROOKFIELD SECOND ADDITION IS ASSUMED TO HAVE A BEARING OF NORTH 00 DEGREES 10 MINUTES 51 SECONDS EAST.

WETLAND DELINEATION COMPLETED BY KJOLHAUG ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMPANY IN 2016.

DRAINAGE AND UTILITY EASEMENTS ARE SHOWN THUS:



BEING 5 FEET IN WIDTH, AND ADJOINING SIDE LOT LINES, AND 10 FEET IN WIDTH AND ADJOINING RIGHT OF WAY LINES, AND REAR LOT LINES, UNLESS OTHERWISE SHOWN ON THIS PLAT.

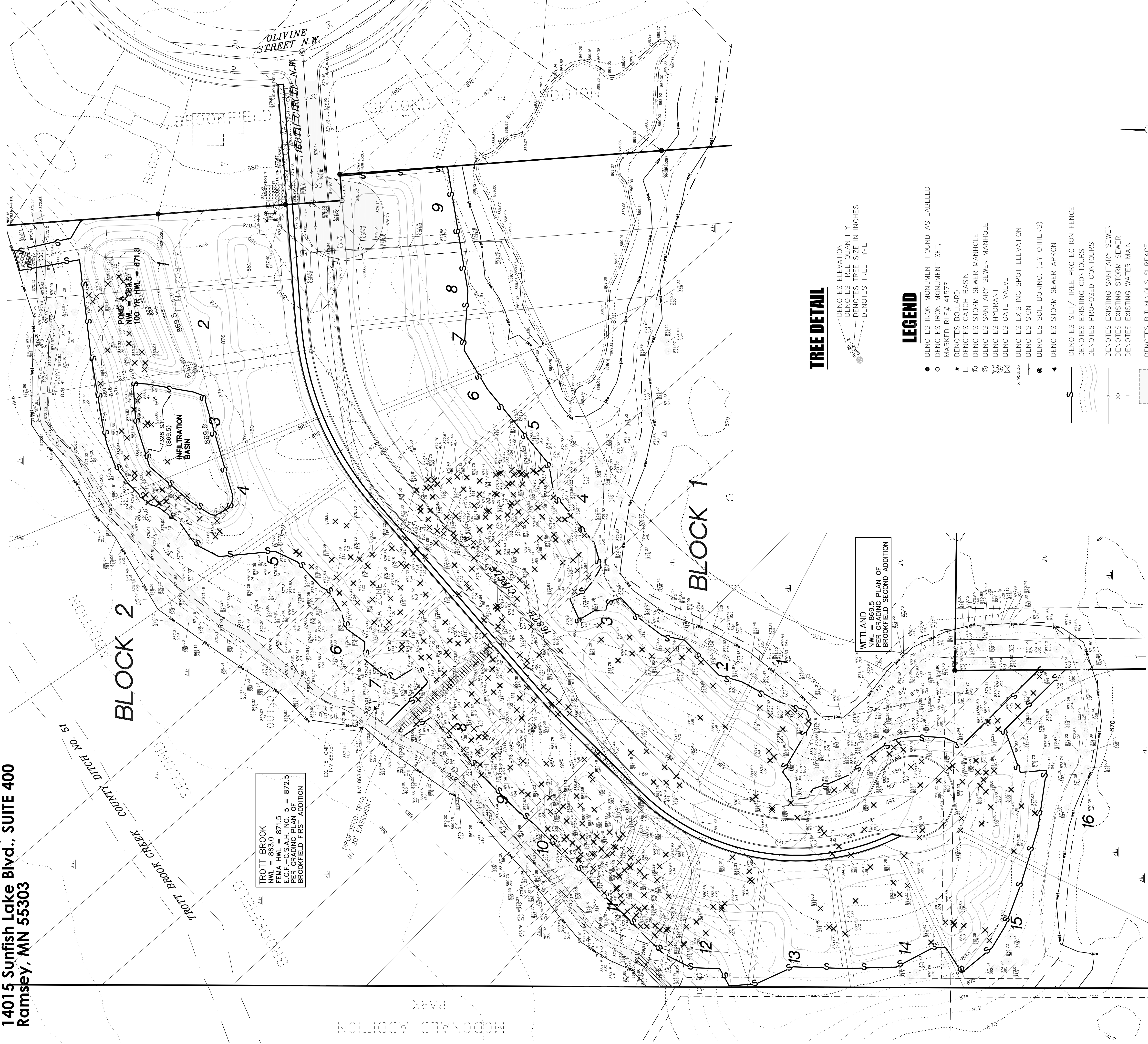
W. LINE OF EAST 933 FEET (AS MEASURED ALONG THE NORTH LINE) OF THE SE1/4-SE1/4 SEC. 9-T32N-R25W

QUARTZ STREET N.W. (UNOPENED) EXCEPTION 1 N00°28'10"W 709.61 WEST LINE OF THE EAST 33.00 FEET OF TRACT A

**MATCH LINE A**  
(SEE SHEET 1 OF 2 SHEETS)

# TREE INVENTORY AND TREE PROTECTION PLAN

~of~ BROOKFIELD  
EIGHTH ADDITION  
~for~ BROOKFIELD LAND, LLC  
14015 Sunfish Lake Blvd., SUITE 400  
Ramsey, MN 55303



TROTT BROOK  
NWL = 863.0  
FEMA HWL = 871.5  
E.O.P. -CSA# - NO. 5 = 872.5  
BROOKFIELD FIRST ADDITION

WETLAND  
AREAS  
PER CS-AP# PLAN OF  
BROOKFIELD SECOND ADDITION

**TREE DETAIL**  
 DENOTES ELEVATION  
 DENOTES TREE QUANTITY  
 DENOTES TREE SIZE IN INCHES  
 DENOTES TREE TYPE

- LEGEND**
- DENOTES IRON MONUMENT FOUND AS LABELED
  - MARKED RLS# 41578
  - DENOTES BOLLARD
  - ⊠ DENOTES CATCH BASIN
  - ⊙ DENOTES STORM SEWER MANHOLE
  - ⊗ DENOTES SANITARY SEWER MANHOLE
  - ⊘ DENOTES HYDRANT
  - ⊙ DENOTES GATE VALVE
  - ⊙ DENOTES EXISTING SPOT ELEVATION
  - ⊙ DENOTES SIGN
  - ⊙ DENOTES SOIL BORING. (BY OTHERS)
  - ⊙ DENOTES STORM SEWER APRON
  - DENOTES SILT / TREE PROTECTION FENCE
  - DENOTES EXISTING CONTOURS
  - DENOTES PROPOSED CONTOURS
  - DENOTES EXISTING SANITARY SEWER
  - DENOTES EXISTING STORM SEWER
  - DENOTES EXISTING WATER MAIN
  - DENOTES BITUMINOUS SURFACE
  - DENOTES GRAVEL SURFACE
  - X DENOTES TREE TO BE REMOVED

**TREE REMOVAL/PLANTING SUMMARY**

- TOTAL ON-SITE SIGNIFICANT TREE CALIPER INCHES = 7,726.6 DBH
- TOTAL TREE REMOVAL = 4,265.5 DBH
- PROPOSED LANDSCAPE TREE PLANTING = 71 DBH

**TREE PROTECTION NOTES**

- TREE PROTECTION LIMITS TO BE MARKED IN FIELD AND APPROVED BY THE CITY PRIOR TO INSTALLATION OF TREE PROTECTION / SILT FENCE OR TREE CLEARING ACTIVITY.
- SILT FENCE TO BE TAKEN DOWN AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY TO BE STOPPED IMMEDIATELY WITHIN THE DRIP LINE OF TREES IN THE TREE PROTECTION ZONE.
- FIELD DECISIONS WILL BE MADE ON LOCATION OF TREE PROTECTION LIMITS TO PRESERVE SOME TREES AND DEAD FALL ARE TO BE CLEARED. THIS MAY BE DONE PRIOR TO INSTALLATION OF SILT / TREE PROTECTION FENCE. GRUBBING OF STUMPS WILL OCCUR AFTER END OF CLEARING ACTIVITIES TO OCCUR PRIOR TO APRIL 15TH OR AFTER JULY 15 TO MINIMIZE THE POTENTIAL INTRODUCTION OF OAK WILT TO THE SITE.

**NOTES**

- Bearings shown are on the Anoka County Coordinate System.
- Contours shown are from MNGEO LIDAR topography, supplemented by ground survey.
- Surveyed premises shown on this survey map is in Flood Zone X (Areas determined to be outside the 0.2% annual chance flood plain). Flood Zone AE (Base Flood Elevations determined).
- Areas of encroachment into the 1% annual chance flood plain plus any adjacent flood plain areas that must be kept free of encroachment so that the 1% annual chance flood can be carried without substantial increases in flood heights. (7/20/81 Panel 0165 Suffix E. Map Number 27003C0165E by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, effective date December 16, 2006).
- See City Engineering Department for Storm Sewer Rims, Inverts, and Sizes.
- See City Engineering Department for Sanitary Sewer Rims, Inverts, and Sizes.
- Tree Inventory by Kibbha Environmental Services Company, ISA Certified Arborist Steve Nicholson, (MN-4305A).
- Wetland Lines and Trees location by E.G. Rud and Sons, Inc. August, 2016.

**TREE PRESERVATION NOTES**

- TOTAL ON-SITE SIGNIFICANT TREE CALIPER INCHES = 7,726.6 DBH
- TOTAL SIGNIFICANT TREE CALIPER INCHES OUTSIDE PROPOSED POND, STREETS, AND WALKS = 6,205.1 DBH
- SIGNIFICANT TREES TO BE REMOVED FOR PONDS, STREETS AND WALKS = 1,589.0 DBH
- SIGNIFICANT TREE CALIPER INCHES REMOVED FOR HOUSE PADS AND YARDS = 2,686.5 DBH
- PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CALIPER INCHES REMAINING FOR HOUSE PADS AND YARDS = 34.9%
- TREES REMOVED OUTSIDE OF POND, STREET AND WALK AREAS = 43.5%
- THIS TREE INVENTORY DID NOT INCLUDE SEVERAL ACRES OF WOODED WETLAND AND ISOLATED WOODED UPLAND AREAS.

I hereby certify that this survey, plan or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Registered Land Surveyor under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

JACON E. RUD  
Date: 02/24/2017 License No. 41578

TREE INVENTORY BY  
Steve Nicholson  
ISA Certification (MN-4305A)

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY
1	11/22/16	ISS SET	MMD
2	01/27/17	CITY COMMENTS	MMD
3	02/24/17	CITY COMMENTS	MMD

**BENCHMARK**  
 BENCHMARK - Anoka County Benchmark # 2087  
 Elevation = 868.595 (NAVD88)

**E.G. RUD & SONS, INC.**  
 Professional Land Surveyors  
 6776 Lake Drive NE, Suite 110  
 Lino Lakes, MN 55014  
 Tel. (651) 361-8200 Fax (651) 361-8701  
 www.egrud.com

16343PP  
SHEET 3



**Comprehensive Oak Wilt Management Plan  
Brookfield 8<sup>th</sup>  
April 7, 2017**

Capstone Homes has developed a comprehensive Oak Wilt Management Plan in conjunction with a certified Arborist from Precision Tree and Landscaping that will greatly reduce the chance for the disease to spread during our tree clearing process at Brookfield 8<sup>th</sup>. Currently, we expect to begin tree clearing May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, pending approval of Final Plat by the Ramsey City Council.

After an inspection of the property, our arborist encountered sporadic examples of Oak Wilt infected trees within the center of the larger parcel. In the South West of this parcel and the adjacent North part of the smaller parcel, there is an Oak wilt infection center. Here, mortality at the center was almost complete.

Our Management Plan includes sanitizing/purging the site of the diseased trees within the silt fence line and processes to limit it's spread. Given the fact that the disease is already on the site and surrounding parcels, expectations for remediation of future infected trees seems unreasonable and therefore is not included in this plan. Every effort will be made to prevent introducing further infection to the area.

The process we recommend is as follows:

- 1) Before any ground clearing is started, Precision Tree and Landscaping will double trench at least 54" deep within the silt fence line identified in the Landscape Plan {Sheet 6 (2-24-17)}. Included in this plan is a copy of the sheet with a green line. This line will be incorporated into the full set of engineering plans upon approval of this Oak Wilt Management Plan. The double trench will break the common root grafts to stop the underground transmission of the pathogen. As identified in the Landscape Plan, all trees will be removed inside the silt fence. There will be no tree removal outside the silt fence on the remaining property.
- 2) All material removed material will be processed into chips or mulch on site and removed in enclosed containers.
- 3) During the clearing phase of the operation, we will have at the ready, an arborist or technician who could seal any wound that might occur. A mechanical felling machine will be utilized for this project. A mechanical felling machine will be utilized to cut, lift, and remove trees with minimal (or no) damage to the remaining trees.



**Meeting Date:** 04/17/2017

**By:** Chris Anderson, Community  
Development

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**Information**

**Title:**

Consider Landcape Plan for Riverstone Addition

**Purpose/Background:**

The purpose of this case is to consider the Landscape Plan for Riverstone Addition, a 293 lot, residential subdivision. The proposed development project includes a Zoning Amendment to rezone the property to a Planned Unit Development (PUD). The proposed housing is primarily smaller lot single family residential along with some attached townhome buildings as well. The project does include a small neighborhood park (to be maintained by a Home Owner's Association, HOA) as well as trails and other open space.

**Observations/Alternatives:**

The City's Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) identifies a small, non-native plant community in the northern portion of the site. Beyond that, there are no other significant natural areas on the property (it is essentially agricultural land currently). The Landscape Plan includes boulevard trees throughout the proposed development as well as a landscaped berm along the railroad tracks to the south and plantings along the proposed trails and neighborhood park as well.

The overall number of plantings exceeds the minimum requirements outlined in City Code. All species are acceptable as is the size of trees. Staff has discussed with the Developer options of ground cover for the proposed berm. Staff has suggested that the berm be finished with a native seed mix that is not only more pollinator friendly, but also is an ideal opportunity to reduce maintenance costs (mowing and watering) for the HOA. The Developer was amenable to that suggestion and Staff has added that comment to the Staff Review Letter.

The Landscaping Plan is generally acceptable with revisions as outlined in the Staff Review Letter.

The site is generally devoid of any significant tree cover with the exception of the northwest corner of the property. That area will be developed with a later addition. At this time, a Tree Inventory is not critical as that area will not be impacted by improvements made with the first addition of the development. It is Staff's opinion that this can be addressed with a future addition of the overall development.

**Funding Source:**

All costs associated with processing the Application are the responsibility of the Developer.

**Action:**

Motion to recommend approval of the proposed Landscape Plan, contingent upon compliance of the Staff Review Letter.

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**Attachments**

Site Location Map

Landscape Plan

Staff Review Letter

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## Form Review

**Inbox**

Tim Gladhill

Form Started By: Chris Anderson

Final Approval Date: 04/13/2017

**Reviewed By**

Tim Gladhill

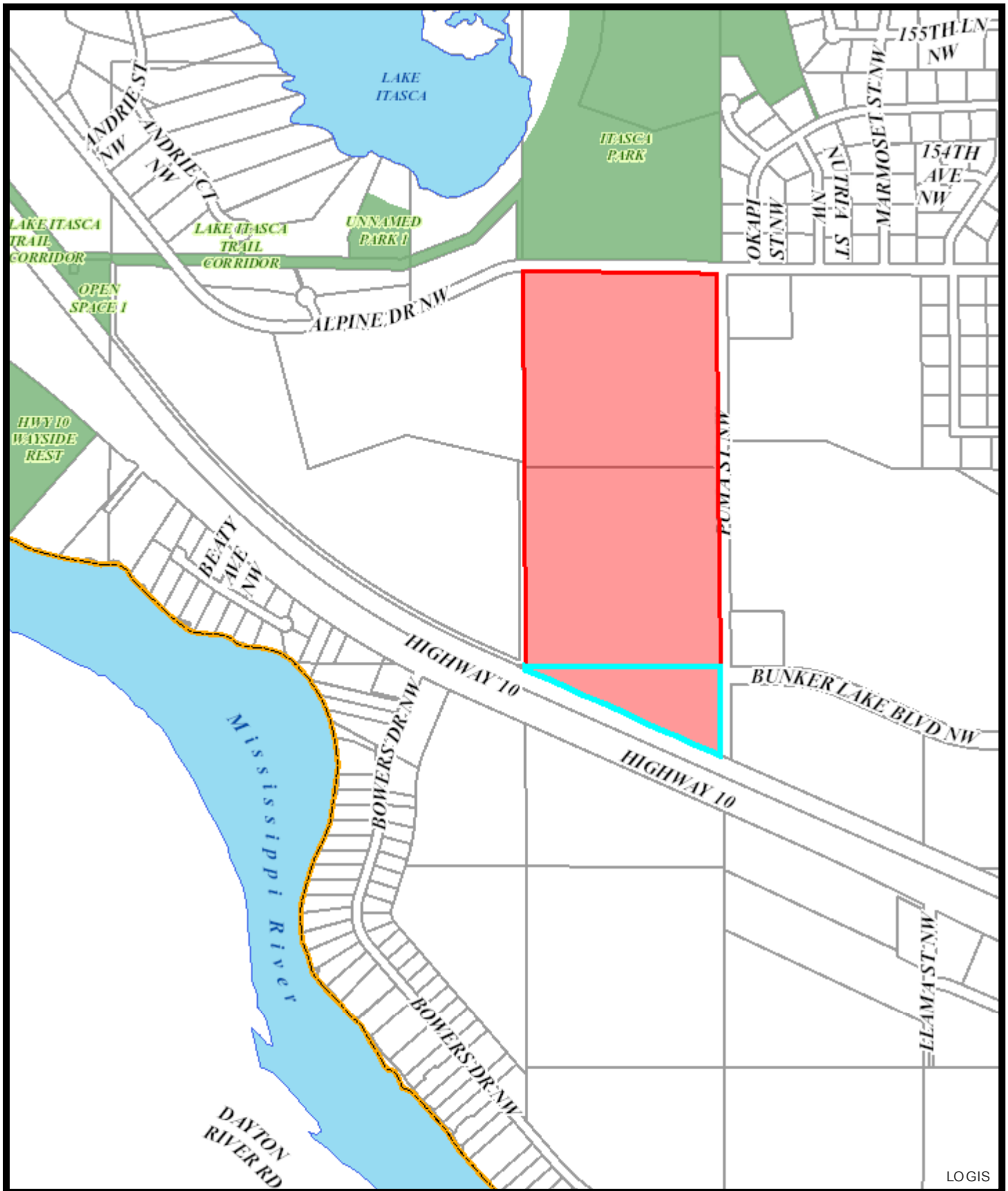
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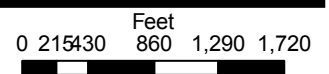
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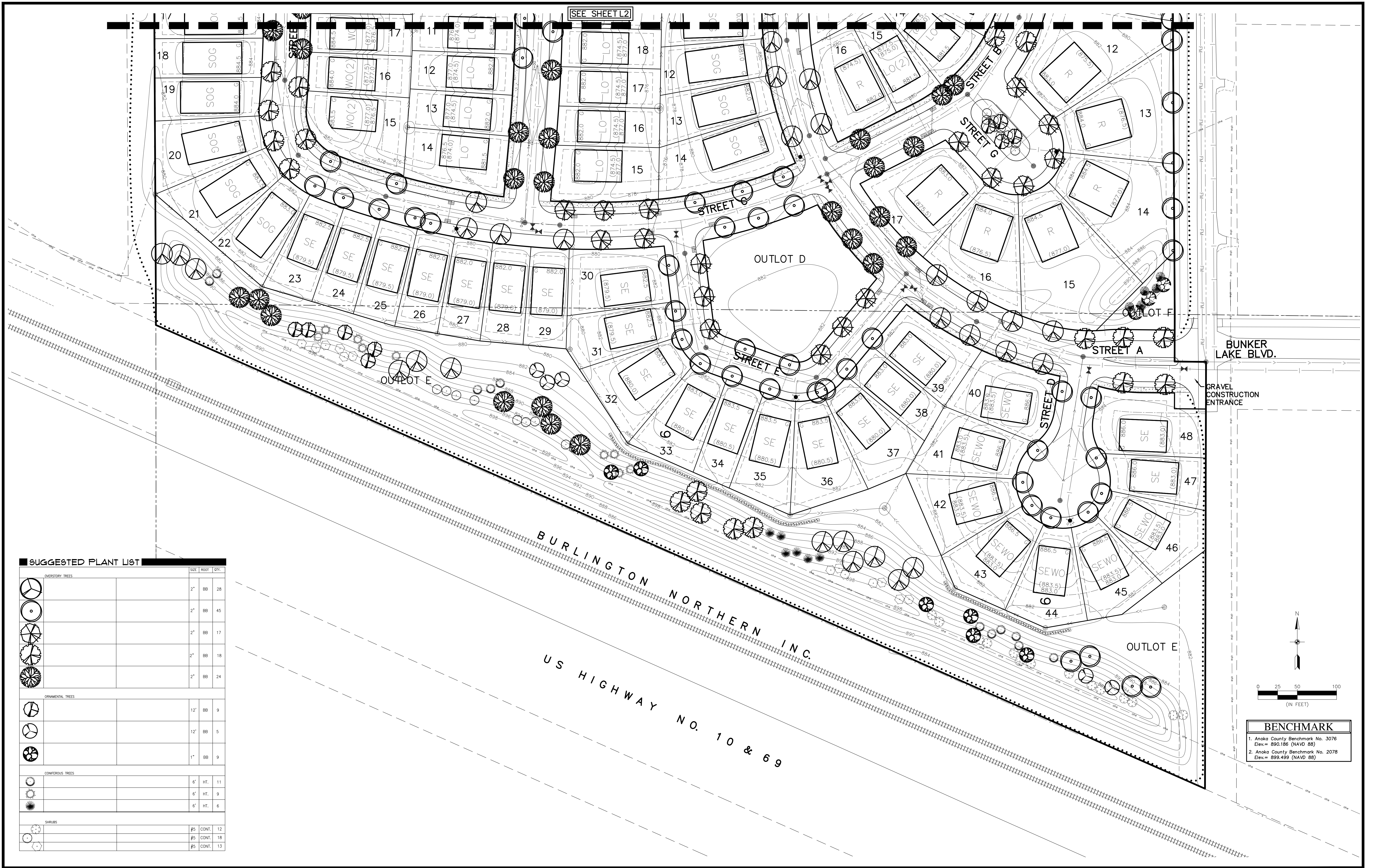
# Site Location Map

Riverstone



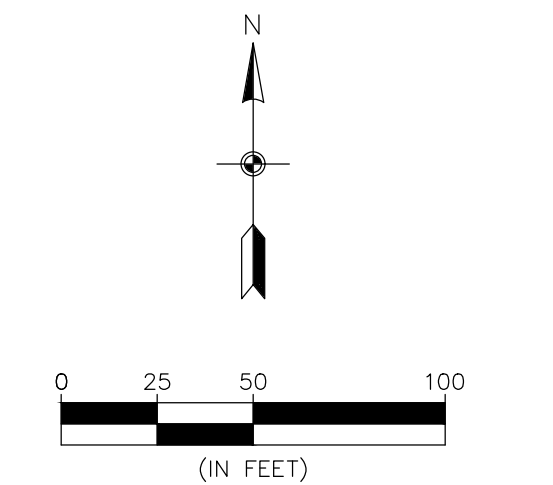
LOGIS





**SUGGESTED PLANT LIST**

OVERSTORY TREES	SIZE	ROOT	QTY.
	2"	BB	28
	2"	BB	45
	2"	BB	17
	2"	BB	18
	2"	BB	24
ORNAMENTAL TREES	SIZE	ROOT	QTY.
	12"	BB	9
	12"	BB	5
	1"	BB	9
CONIFEROUS TREES	SIZE	ROOT	QTY.
	6"	HT.	11
	6"	HT.	9
	6"	HT.	6
SHRUBS	SIZE	ROOT	QTY.
	#5	CONT.	12
	#5	CONT.	18
	#5	CONT.	13



**BENCHMARK**

- Anoka County Benchmark No. 3076  
Elev.= 890.186 (NAVD 88)
- Anoka County Benchmark No. 2078  
Elev.= 899.499 (NAVD 88)

**Carlson McCain**  
 • environmental  
 • engineering  
 • surveying  
 3890 Pheasant Ridge Drive NE,  
 Suite 100  
 Blaine, MN 55449  
 Phone: (763) 489-7900  
 Fax: (763) 489-7959  
 www.carlsonmccain.com

I hereby certify that this plan, specification or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Landscape Architect under the laws of the State of Minnesota  
 Signature:   
 Date: 3/08/17 License #: 40647

Drawn: SDB  
 Designed: SDB  
 Date: 3/08/17

Revisions:  
 1. 04/12/17 Per Owner

**RIVERSTONE DEVELOPMENT, LLC.**  
 14015 Sunfish Lake B, Suite 400  
 Ramsey, MN 55303

**RIVERSTONE**  
 Ramsey, MN

**PRELIMINARY  
 LANDSCAPE PLAN**

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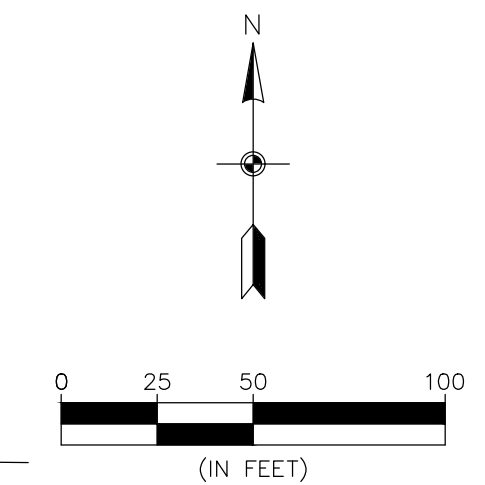
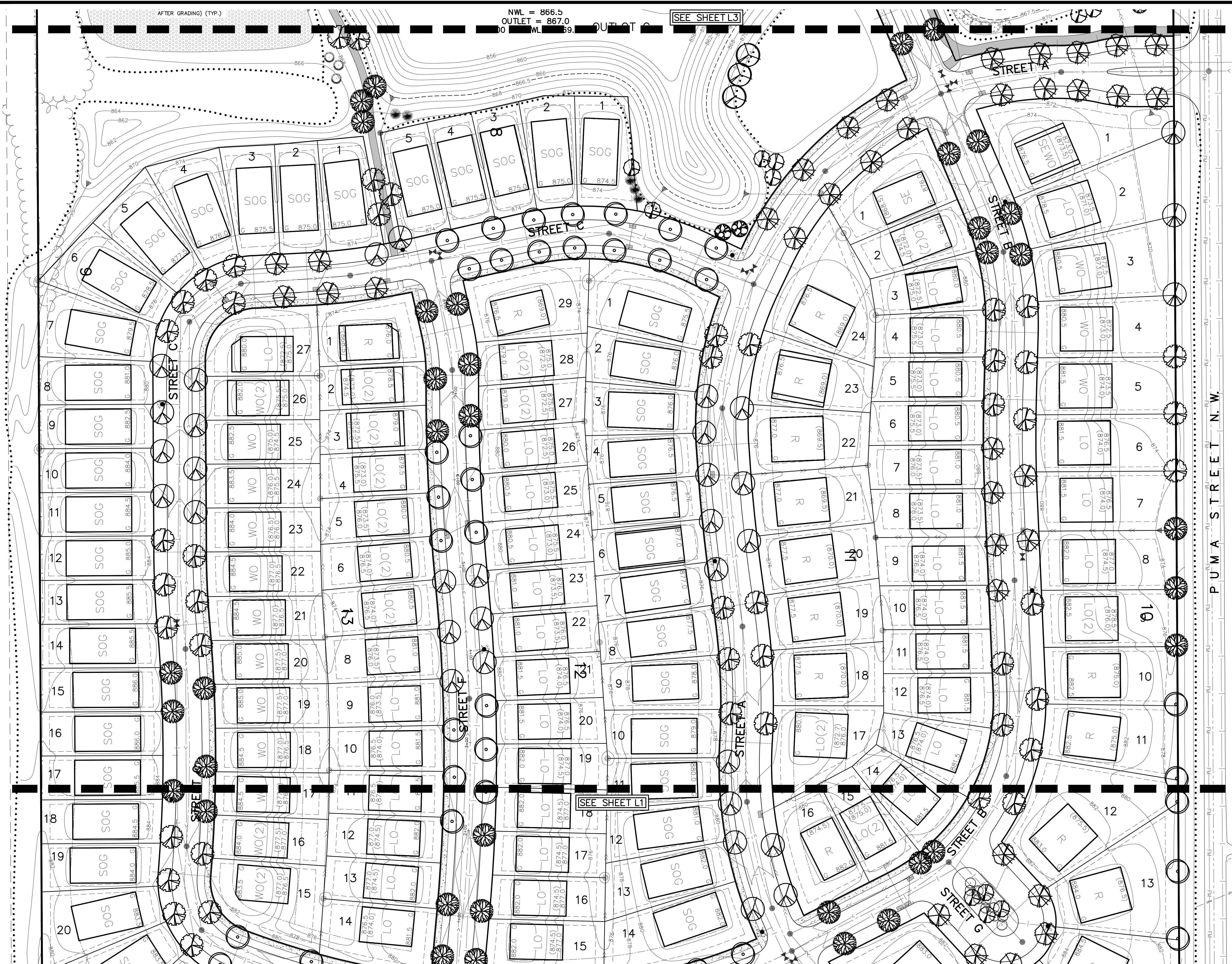
AFTER GRADING (TYP.)

NWL = 866.5  
OUTLET = 867.0  
00 NWL = 859.0

SEE SHEET L3

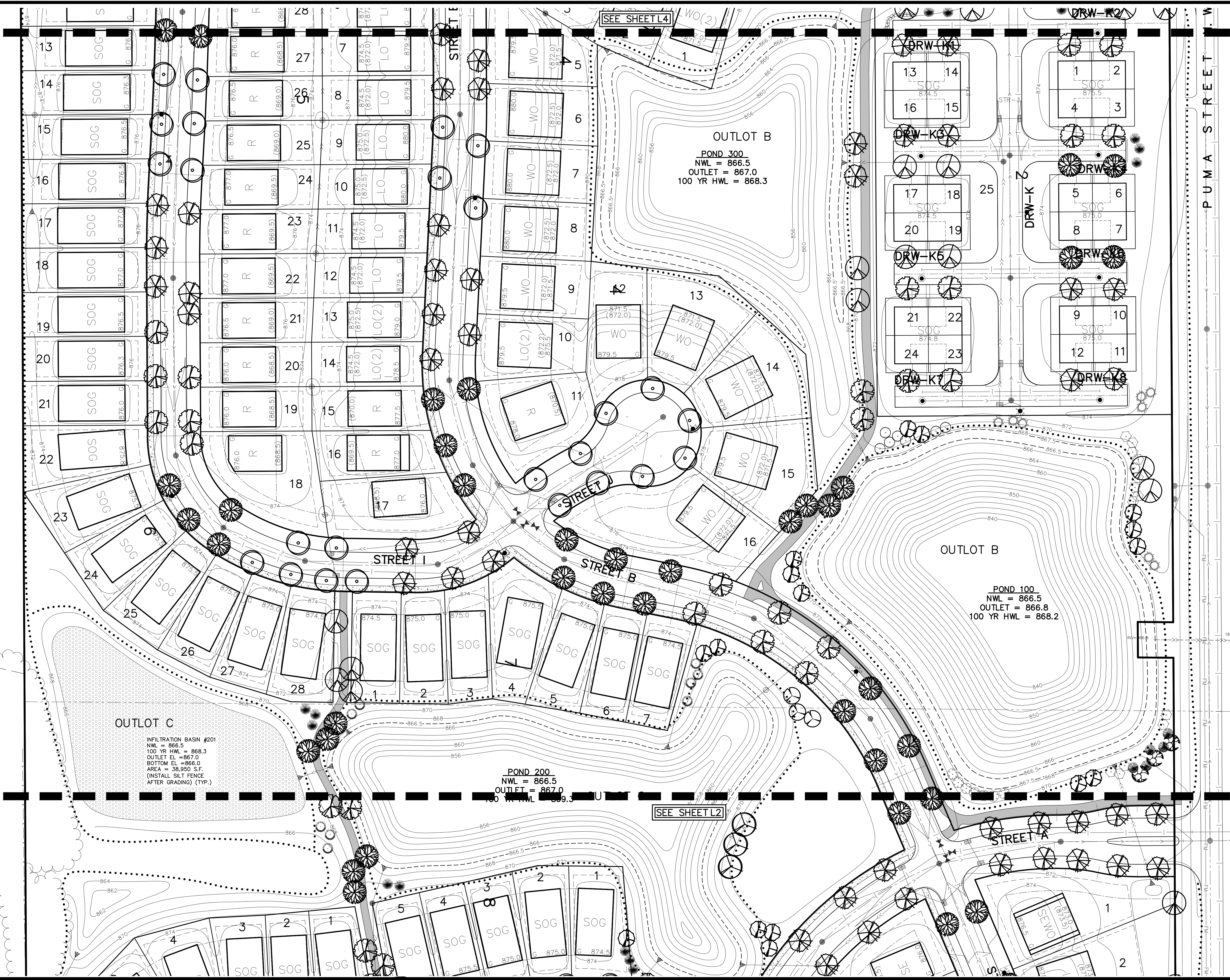
LANDSCAPE SCHEDULE

KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE	ROOT	QTY.
<b>DECIDUOUS TREES</b>					
	Quercus bicolor	SWAMP WHITE OAK	2"	BB	31
	Acer-X-freemontii-'Jeffersred'	AUTUMN BLAZE MAPLE	2"	BB	24
	Tilia americana 'Boulevard'	BOULEVARD LINDEN	2"	BB	29
	Celtis occidentalis	HACKBERRY	2"	BB	39
	Gleditsia tricanthos var. inermis 'Skycole'	HONEYLOCUST	2"	BB	24
<b>ORNAMENTAL TREES</b>					
	Amelanchier	SERVICEBERRY multi stem	12'	BB	5
	Betula nigra	RIVER BIRCH multi stem	12'	BB	-
	Malus 'Red Jewel'	RED JEWEL CRAB multi stem	8'	BB	2
<b>CONIFEROUS TREES</b>					
	Picea glauca densata	BLACK HILLS SPRUCE	6'	HT.	3
	Pinus nigra	AUSTRIAN PINE	6'	HT.	-
	Pinus sylvestris	SCOTCH PINE	6'	HT.	5
<b>SHRUBS</b>					
	Viburnum lentago	NANNYBERRY VIBURNUM	#5	CONT.	-
	Cornus sericea 'Cardinal'	CARDINAL DOGWOOD	#5	CONT.	-
	Syringa vulgaris	COMMON PURPLE LILAC	#5	CONT.	-

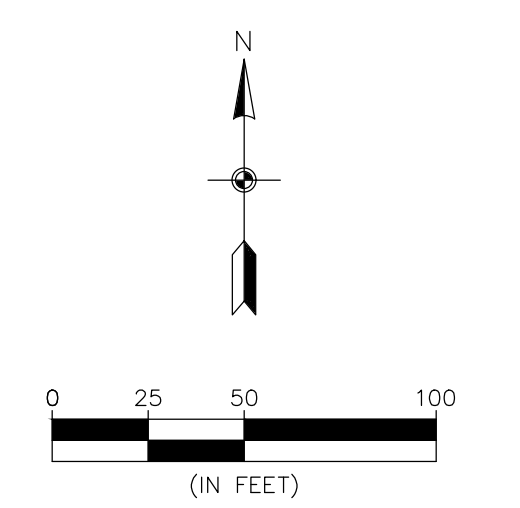


**BENCHMARK**  
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 Elev. = 890.186 (NAVD 88)  
 2. Anoka County Benchmark No. 2078  
 Elev. = 899.499 (NAVD 88)

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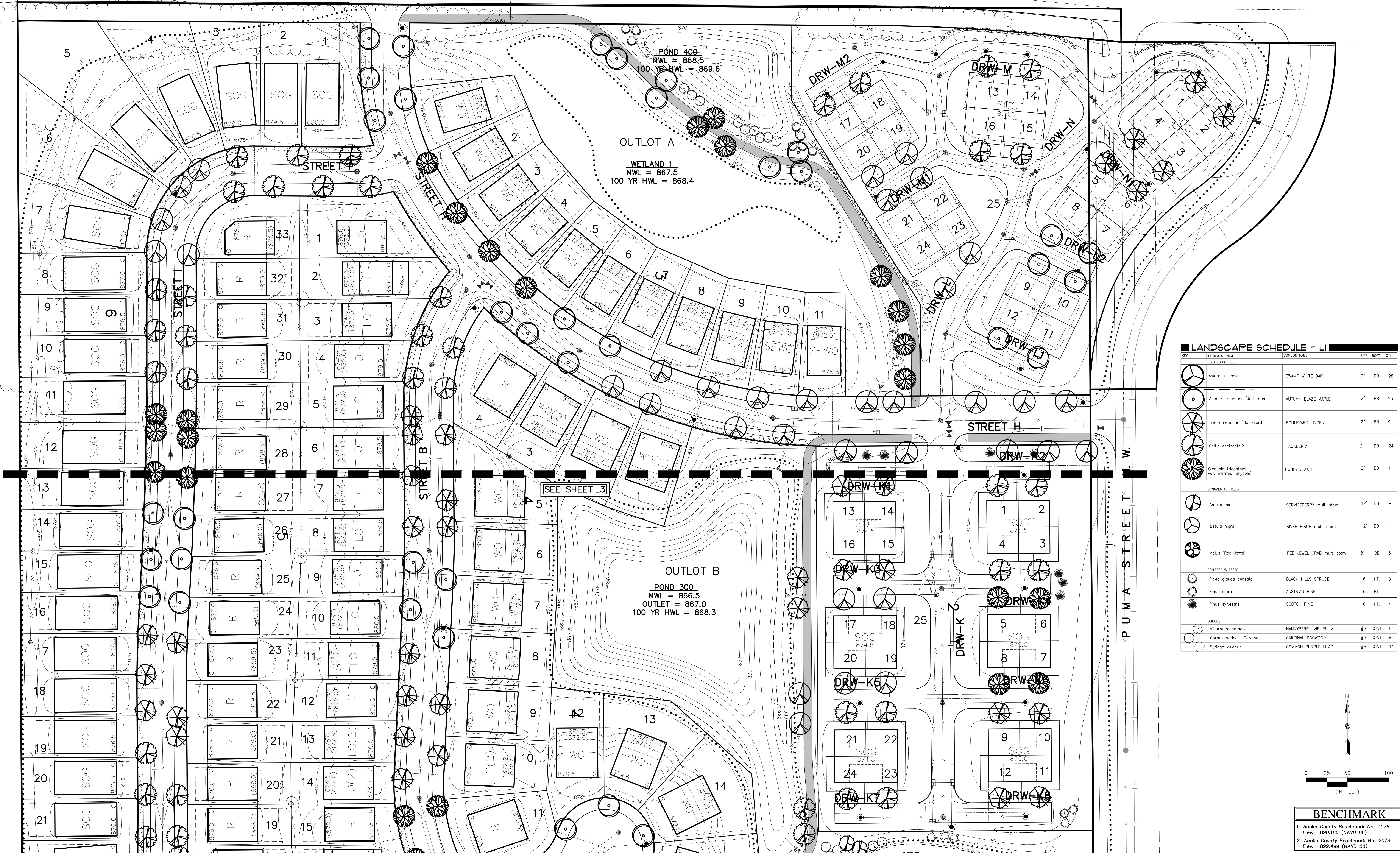
LANDSCAPE SCHEDULE - LI					
KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE	ROOT	QTY.
<b>DECIDUOUS TREES</b>					
	<i>Quercus bicolor</i>	SWAMP WHITE OAK	2"	BB	12
	<i>Acer X freemanii 'Jefferson'</i>	AUTUMN BLAZE MAPLE	2"	BB	25
	<i>Tilia americana 'Boulevard'</i>	BOULEVARD LINDEN	2"	BB	31
	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	HACKBERRY	2"	BB	22
	<i>Gleditsia tricanthos var. inermis 'Skycole'</i>	HONEYLOCUST	2"	BB	30
<b>ORNAMENTAL TREES</b>					
	<i>Amelanchier</i>	SERVICEBERRY multi stem	12'	BB	12
	<i>Betula nigra</i>	RIVER BIRCH multi stem	12'	BB	3
	<i>Malus 'Red Jewel'</i>	RED JEWEL CRAB multi stem	8'	BB	3
<b>CONIFEROUS TREES</b>					
	<i>Picea glauca densata</i>	BLACK HILLS SPRUCE	6'	HT.	6
	<i>Pinus nigra</i>	AUSTRIAN PINE	6'	HT.	8
	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	SCOTCH PINE	6'	HT.	11
<b>SHRUBS</b>					
	<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	NANNYBERRY VIBURNUM	#5	CONT.	7
	<i>Cornus sericea 'Cardinal'</i>	CARDINAL DOGWOOD	#5	CONT.	7
	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	COMMON PURPLE LILAC	#5	CONT.	14



**BENCHMARK**  
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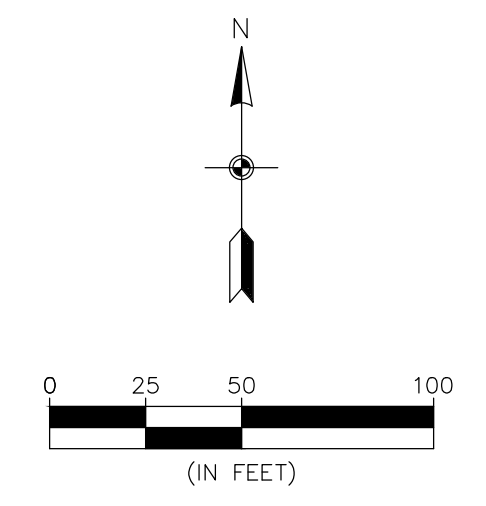
ALPINE DRIVE N. W.

ALPINE DRIVE N. W.



**LANDSCAPE SCHEDULE - LI**

KEY	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE	HOOD	QTY
<b>DECIDUOUS TREES</b>					
	<i>Quercus bicolor</i>	SWAMP WHITE OAK	2"	BB	28
	<i>Acer X freemanii 'Jeffersred'</i>	AUTUMN BLAZE MAPLE	2"	BB	23
	<i>Tilia americana 'Boulevard'</i>	BOULEVARD LINDEN	2"	BB	9
	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	HACKBERRY	2"	BB	24
	<i>Gleditsia tricanthos var. inermis 'Skycole'</i>	HONEYLOCUST	2"	BB	11
<b>ORNAMENTAL TREES</b>					
	<i>Amelanchier</i>	SERVICEBERRY multi stem	12'	BB	-
	<i>Betula nigra</i>	RIVER BIRCH multi stem	12'	BB	-
	<i>Morus 'Red Jewel'</i>	RED JEWEL CRAB multi stem	8'	BB	3
<b>CONIFEROUS TREES</b>					
	<i>Picea glauca densata</i>	BLACK HILLS SPRUCE	6'	HT.	8
	<i>Pinus nigra</i>	AUSTRIAN PINE	6'	HT.	-
	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	SCOTCH PINE	6'	HT.	4
<b>SHRUBS</b>					
	<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	NANNYBERRY VIBURNUM	#5	CONT.	8
	<i>Cornus sericea 'Cardinal'</i>	CARDINAL DOGWOOD	#5	CONT.	9
	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	COMMON PURPLE LILAC	#5	CONT.	14



**BENCHMARK**

1. Anoka County Benchmark No. 3076  
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**LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS**

2 TREES PER LOT                      2 X 291 = 594 TREES  
 TOTAL TREES TO BE PLANTED                      = 1,003 TREES

**OVERALL LANDSCAPE SCHEDULE**

KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE	ROOT	QTY.
DECIDUOUS TREES					
	Quercus bicolor	SWAMP WHITE OAK	2"	BB	99
	Acer X freemanii 'Jeffersred'	AUTUMN BLAZE MAPLE	2"	BB	117
	Tilia americana 'Boulevard'	BOULEVARD LINDEN	2"	BB	86
	Celtis occidentalis	HACKBERRY	2"	BB	103
	Gleditsia tricanthos var. inermis 'Skycole'	HONEYLOCUST	2"	BB	89

KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE	ROOT	QTY.
DECIDUOUS TREES					
	Amelanchier x grandiflora 'Autumn Brilliance'	AUTUMN BRILLIANCE SERVICEBERRY multi stem	12'	BB	30
	Betula nigra	RIVER BIRCH multi stem	12'	BB	13
	Malus 'Red Jewel'	RED JEWEL CRAB multi stem	8'	BB	25

KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE	ROOT	QTY.
CONIFEROUS TREES					
	Picea glauca densata	BLACK HILLS SPRUCE	6'	HT.	28
	Pinus nigra	AUSTRIAN PINE	6'	HT.	20
	Pinus sylvestris	SCOTCH PINE	6'	HT.	26
ORNAMENTAL TREES					
SHRUBS					
	Viburnum lentago	NANNYBERRY VIBURNUM	#5	CONT.	27
	Cornus sericea 'Cardinal'	CARDINAL DOGWOOD	#5	CONT.	34
	Syringa vulgaris	COMMON PURPLE LILAC	#5	CONT.	41

**GENERAL NOTES:**

- LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR TO VERIFY ALL UTILITY LOCATIONS ON THE PROPERTY WITH THE GENERAL CONTRACTOR AND BY GOPHER STATE ONE CALL PRIOR TO STAKING PLANT LOCATIONS.
- COORDINATE THE PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION AND PLANTING INSTALLATION WITH OTHER CONTRACTORS WORKING ON THE SITE.
- WHERE EXISTING TREES AND/OR SIGNIFICANT SHRUB MASSINGS ARE FOUND ON THE SITE WHETHER SHOWN ON THE DRAWINGS OR NOT, THEY SHALL BE PROTECTED AND SAVED UNLESS NOTED TO BE REMOVED AND/OR ARE WITHIN THE GRADING LIMITS. ANY QUESTION REGARDING WHETHER PLANT MATERIAL SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT REMAIN SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT PRIOR TO REMOVAL.
- ALL EXISTING TREES TO REMAIN SHALL BE FERTILIZED AND PRUNED TO REMOVE DEAD WOOD AND DAMAGED OR RUBBING BRANCHES.
- BB TREES AND SHRUBS ARE BALLED AND BURLAPPED.
- NO PLANT MATERIAL SUBSTITUTIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNLESS APPROVAL IS REQUESTED OF THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT BY THE LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR PRIOR TO SUBMISSION OF BID AND/OR QUOTATION.
- ALL PLANT MATERIAL SHALL COMPLY WITH THE LATEST ADDITION OF THE AMERICAN STANDARD FOR NURSERY STOCK, AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF NURSERYMEN.
- THE CONTRACTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ON-GOING MAINTENANCE OF ALL NEWLY INSTALLED MATERIALS UNTIL TIME OF OWNER ACCEPTANCE. ANY ACTS OF VANDALISM OR DAMAGE WHICH MAY OCCUR PRIOR TO OWNER ACCEPTANCE SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CONTRACTOR.
- CONTRACTOR SHALL PROVIDE A WRITTEN REQUEST FOR THE OWNER ACCEPTANCE INSPECTION.
- WARRANTY FOR THE LANDSCAPE MATERIALS SHALL BEGIN ON THE DATE OF ACCEPTANCE BY THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT AFTER THE COMPLETION OF PLANTING ALL LANDSCAPE MATERIALS. NO PARTIAL ACCEPTANCE WILL BE CONSIDERED.
- CONTRACTOR SHALL GUARANTEE NEW PLANT MATERIAL THROUGH ONE CALENDAR YEAR FROM THE DATE OF OWNER ACCEPTANCE WITH ALL REPLACEMENTS TO BE PROVIDED AT NO ADDITIONAL COST TO THE OWNER.

**PLANTING SPECIFICATIONS:**

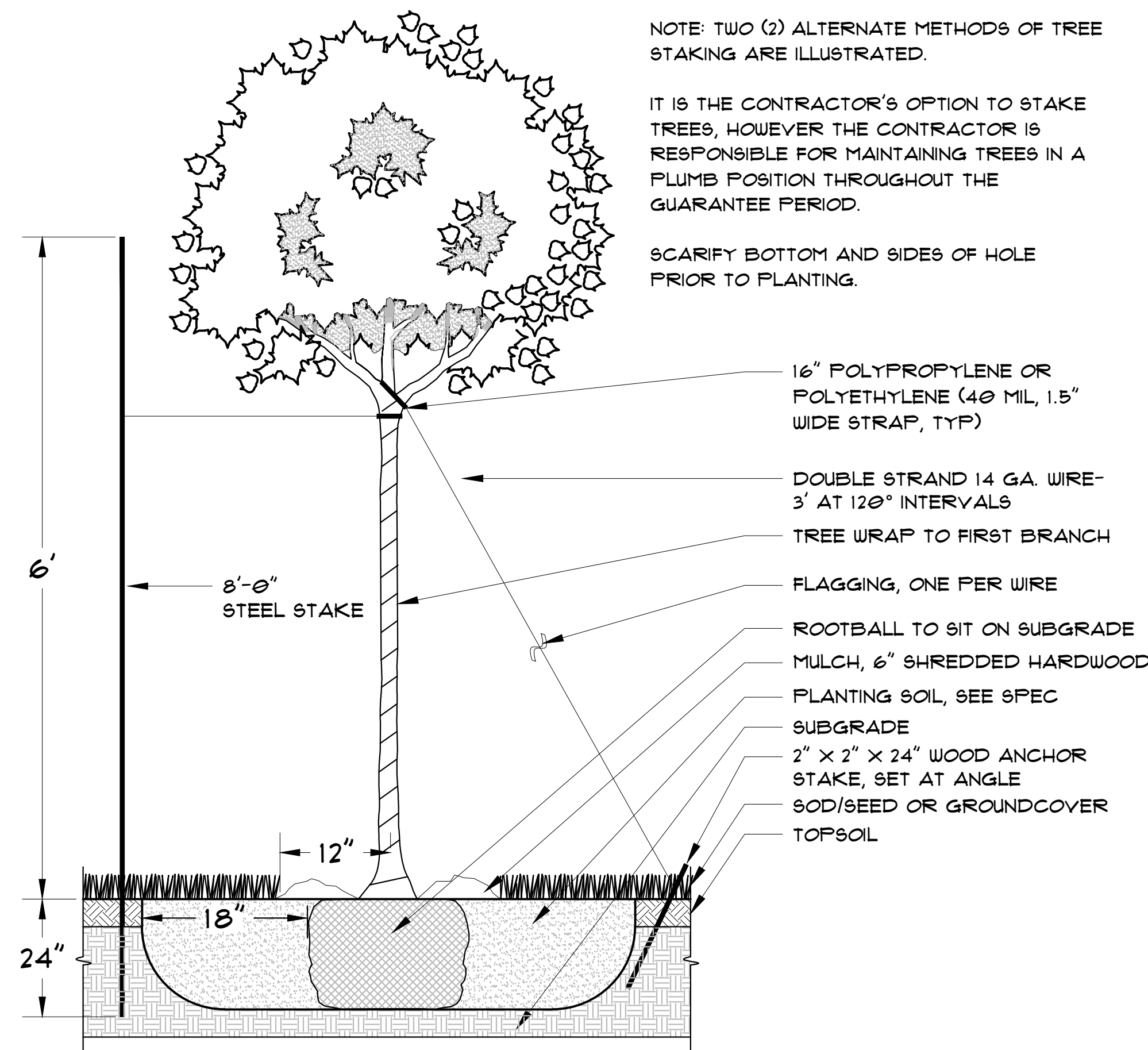
- PLANTING BED PREPARATION: ALL MASS PLANTING BEDS SHALL BE TILLED TO A MINIMUM DEPTH OF 10". AMENDMENTS SHALL BE APPLIED AFTER CULTIVATION.
- BACKFILL SOIL: USE SOIL EXCAVATED FROM PLANTING HOLES & PROVIDE AMENDMENTS. REMOVE ALL DEBRIS AND ROCKS LARGER THAN 3" IN DIA.
- FERTILIZATION: IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT NEWLY PLANTED TREES AND SHRUBS SHOULD NOT BE FERTILIZED THE FIRST YEAR. IF NECESSARY, BEGIN FERTILIZING TREES AND SHRUBS THE SECOND YEAR AFTER ESTABLISHMENT AT A RATIO AND RATE BASED ON A SOIL TEST.
- MULCH MATERIAL: AS SPECIFIED ON LANDSCAPE PLANS. MASS MULCH ALL PLANTING BEDS TO 3" DEPTH OVER FIBER MAT WEED BARRIER. ALL PERENNIAL PLANTING BEDS TO RECEIVE 3" DEEP SHREDDED HARDWOOD MULCH WITH NO FIBER WEED MAT BARRIER. ALL DECIDUOUS AND EVERGREEN TREES TO RECEIVE 6" DEEP SHREDDED HARDWOOD MULCH WITH NO MULCH IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH TREE TRUNK.
- TREE STAKING: IT SHALL BE THE CONTRACTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO STAKE AND/OR GUY THE TREES ACCORDING TO THE DETAILS. IT IS THE CONTRACTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE EVERY STEP NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE TREES AND SHRUBS ON AN UPRIGHT AND PLUMB CONDITION AT ALL TIMES UNTIL THE END OF THE PLANT GUARANTEE PERIOD, ESPECIALLY WHERE VANDALISM, SOIL OR WIND CONDITIONS ARE A PROBLEM.
- TREE WRAPPING: WRAPPING MATERIAL SHALL BE QUALITY, HEAVY WATERPROOF CREPE PAPER MANUFACTURED FOR THIS PURPOSE. WRAP ALL DECIDUOUS TREES IN THE FALL PRIOR TO 12-1 AND REMOVE ALL WRAPPING BY 5-1.
- RODENT PROTECTION: PROVIDE ON ALL TREES, EXCEPT SPRUCE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
- PLANTING PLAN: ALL PROPOSED PLANTS SHALL BE LOCATED CAREFULLY AS SHOWN ON THE PLANS. THE PLAN TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER THE NOTES. RESPECT STATED DIMENSIONS. DO NOT SCALE DRAWINGS.
- EDGING: EDGING SHALL BE 4" P.V.C COMMERCIAL GRADE EDGING WITH THREE (3) METAL ANCHOR STAKES PER 20 FOOT SECTION, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED ON THE PLAN. ALL MASS PLANTING BEDS SHALL HAVE EDGING PLACED BETWEEN MULCH AND ANY ADJACENT TURF AREAS.

**PLANTING NOTES:**

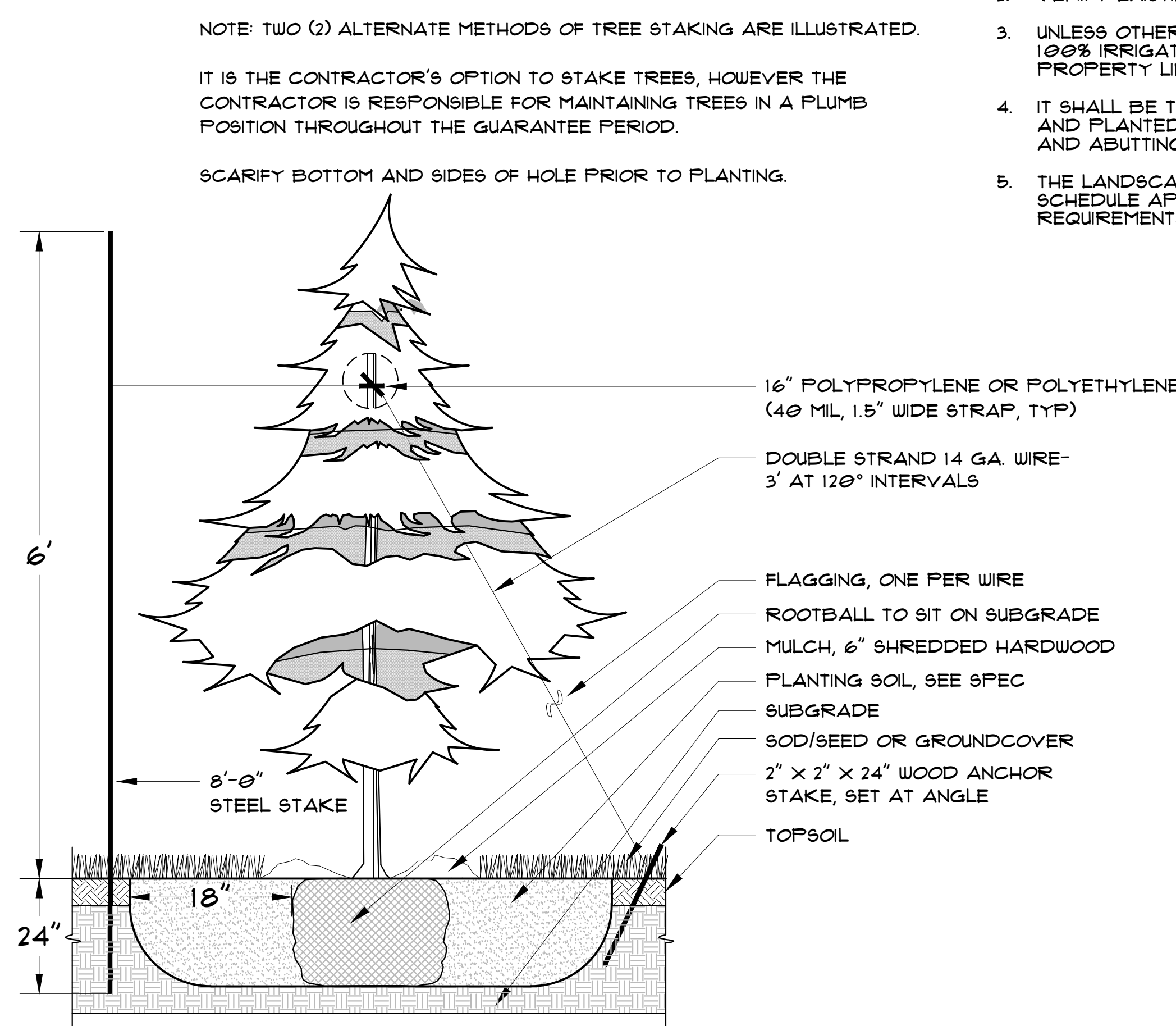
- NO PLANTING TO BE INSTALLED UNTIL GRADING AND CONSTRUCTION HAS BEEN COMPLETED IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA.
- ALL PLANT MATERIAL LOCATIONS MUST BE REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT PRIOR TO ANY AND ALL DIGGING.
- IF THE LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR PERCEIVES ANY DEFICIENCIES IN THE PLANT SELECTIONS, SOIL CONDITIONS, OR ANY OTHER SITE CONDITION WHICH MIGHT NEGATIVELY AFFECT PLANT MATERIAL ESTABLISHMENT, SURVIVAL OR GUARANTEE, THEY SHALL BRING THESE DEFICIENCIES TO THE ATTENTION OF THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT PRIOR TO INSTALLATION.
- ADJUSTMENTS IN THE LOCATION OF PROPOSED PLANT MATERIAL MAY BE NEEDED IN THE FIELD. SHOULD AN ADJUSTMENT BE ADVISED, THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT MUST BE NOTIFIED.
- ALL PLANTS TO BE INSTALLED PER PLANTING DETAILS.
- ONE SHRUB PER TYPE AND SIZE IN EACH PLANTING BED AND EVERY TREE SHOULD BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED (COMMON OR LATIN NOMENCLATURE) WITH A PLASTIC TAG WHICH SHALL NOT BE REMOVED PRIOR TO OWNER ACCEPTANCE.
- WHERE SOD/SEED ABUTS PAVED SURFACES, FINISHED GRADE OF SEED/SOD SHALL BE HELD 1" BELOW SURFACE ELEVATION OF TRAIL, SLAB, CURB, ETC.
- SOD SHALL BE LAID PARALLEL TO THE CONTOURS AND SHALL HAVE STAGGERED JOINTS. ON SLOPES STEEPER THAN 3 : 1 OR IN DRAINAGE SWALES, THE SOD SHALL BE STAKED TO THE GROUND.
- SEED ALL AREAS DISTURBED DUE TO GRADING OTHER THAN THOSE TO RECEIVE SOD.
- REPAIR ALL DAMAGE TO PROPERTY FROM PLANTING OPERATORS AT NO COST TO THE OWNER.

**IRRIGATION NOTES:**

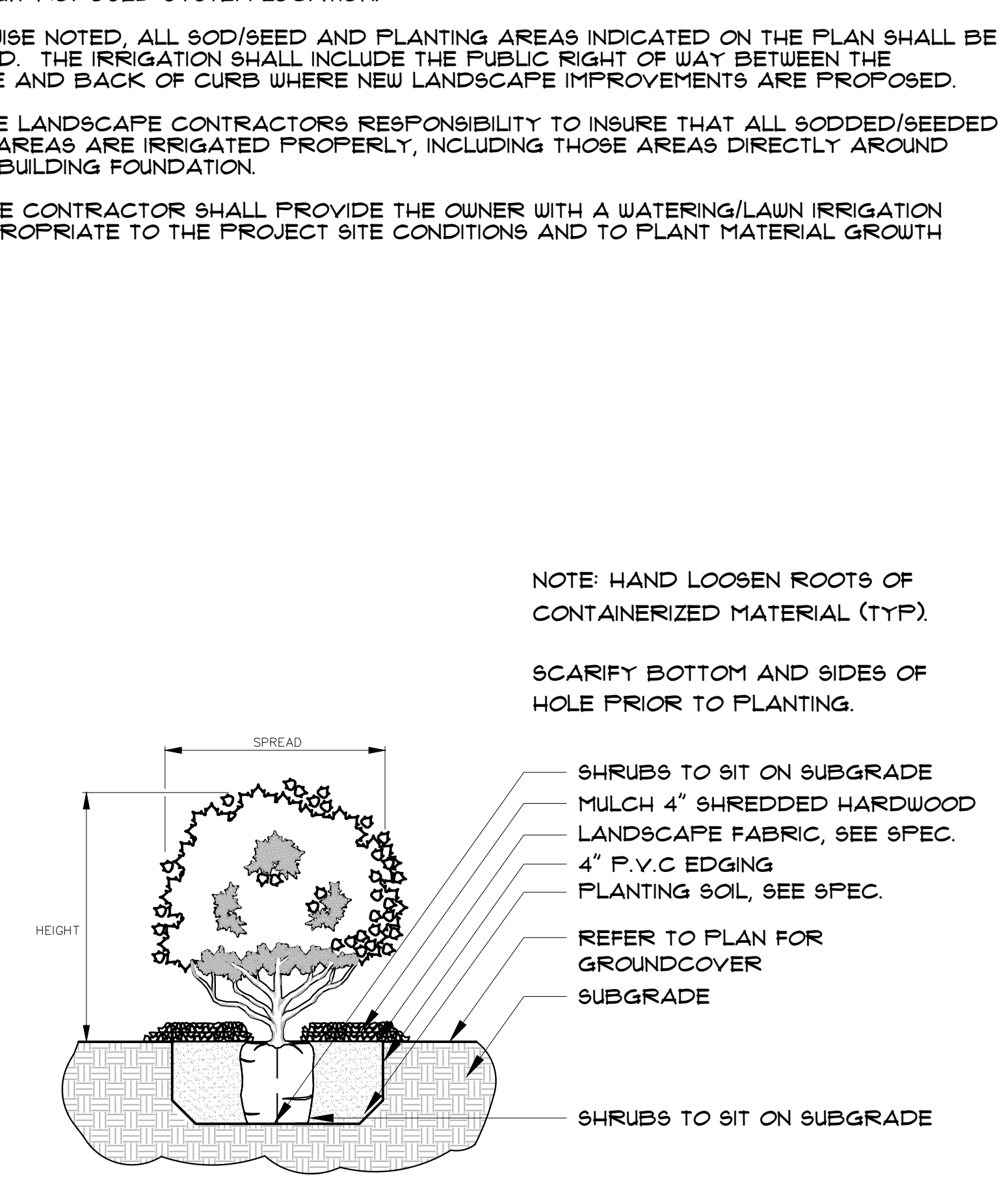
- LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SHOP DRAWINGS ILLUSTRATING IRRIGATION PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS AS PART OF THE SCOPE OF WORK WHEN BIDDING. THESE SHALL BE APPROVED BY THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT PRIOR TO ORDER.
- VERIFY EXISTING/PROPOSED SYSTEM LOCATION.
- UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL SOD/SEED AND PLANTING AREAS INDICATED ON THE PLAN SHALL BE 100% IRRIGATED. THE IRRIGATION SHALL INCLUDE THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY BETWEEN THE PROPERTY LINE AND BACK OF CURB WHERE NEW LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS ARE PROPOSED.
- IT SHALL BE THE LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO INSURE THAT ALL SODDED/SEEDED AND PLANTED AREAS ARE IRRIGATED PROPERLY, INCLUDING THOSE AREAS DIRECTLY AROUND AND ABUTTING BUILDING FOUNDATION.
- THE LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR SHALL PROVIDE THE OWNER WITH A WATERING/LAWN IRRIGATION SCHEDULE APPROPRIATE TO THE PROJECT SITE CONDITIONS AND TO PLANT MATERIAL GROWTH REQUIREMENTS.



**1** L2 DECIDUOUS TREE LEVEL SITE



**2** L2 CONIFEROUS TREE LEVEL SITE



**3** L2 SHRUB LEVEL SITE

**CITY OF RAMSEY LAND USE APPLICATION**  
**TECHNICAL REVIEW FILE**

<b>DATE</b>	APRIL 14, 2017	<b>PROJECT ADDRESS</b>	TBD
<b>PROJECT. TITLE</b>	RIVERSTONE ADDITION		
<b>ESCROW #</b>	115626		
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Community Development: Planning Division (Landscape Plan & Environmental Resources)		
<b>TECHNICAL REVIEWER:</b>	Name: Chris Anderson, City Planner Phone: 763-433-9817 Email: <a href="mailto:canderson@cityoframsey.com">canderson@cityoframsey.com</a>		

We offer the following comments regarding the Landscape Plan, prepared by Carlson McCain and dated March 8, 2017:

The City’s Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) does not identify any natural areas over the roughly ninety (90) acres other than a small segment of an altered/non-native plant community. Furthermore, there is essentially no tree cover on the property other than a small portion in the northwest corner, which will be developed in a later phase of the overall project. Generally speaking, this project would convert agricultural cropland into residential homes and townhomes.



The project is being proposed as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) and includes smaller lot single family homes and townhomes. Traditionally, single family residential lots require two (2) trees per lot. While not every lot has two (2) trees, overall, the project is proposed landscaping in excess of that required by City Code. However, there appears to be a discrepancy in terms of the total number of trees proposed. Sheet L5 notes that 1,003 trees will be planted; however, when adding up quantities in the Overall Landscape Schedule, that totals 758 trees. This needs to be clarified.

The Landscape Plan does include plantings along a berm separating the homes from the railroad tracks, along some of the trails, and within a proposed small, neighborhood park. The Landscape Plan also is providing boulevard trees along all public streets, including Puma St, which is along the rear yard of many lots.

While not shown on the plans, City Staff and the Developer spoke about how the berm would be landscaped with ground cover. Staff has suggested that the berm be finished with a native seed mixture that is pollinator friendly and, in the long term, would require less intensive maintenance than if traditional turf grass were established. The Developer was open to this suggestion.

As proposed, the project includes landscaped medians. While Staff believes that this adds overall value to the project and enhances the streetscape, it will be critical to have Home Owners Association documents clearly specifying maintenance responsibilities. These documents will need to be reviewed and approved by the City.

Note that the proposed landscaping for the berm, along the trails and neighborhood park, as well as in some of the outlots (and even possibly some of the boulevard plantings) will need to be installed as a Stage I Improvement as they are not directly adjacent to a lot. Furthermore, these trees will be subject to a Maintenance Guarantee to ensure their survival for two (2) years after acceptance by the City.

It is anticipated that this overall subdivision will be phased in over a number of years. A greater review of landscaping for the subsequent additions will be conducted when those additions come forward. Similarly, the only tree cover existing is in the northwest corner of the site. At this time, a Tree Inventory is not critical but will need to be provided eventually. Finally, a phasing plan for the development as a whole, along with the landscaping, should be prepared so that there is no misunderstanding as to what landscaping is being installed with each addition of the project.

The Landscaping Plan is generally acceptable with the following required revisions:

### **Required Sheet Revisions**

#### **Sheet L1**

- Suggested Plant List needs to be updated with species names.
- Identify proposed vegetation (ground cover) for the berm.
- Add note that no trees shall be planted within the Vision Clearance Triangle as defined in City Code Section 117-348 (g).
- Update label of US Highway NO. 10 & 169 (references 69).

#### **Sheet L2**

- Add note/label identifying all trees in center islands/medians and in outlots are to be privately maintained.
- Add note that no trees shall be planted within the Vision Clearance Triangle as defined in City Code Section 117-348 (g).

#### **Sheet L3**

- Add note/label identifying all trees in center islands/medians and in outlots are to be privately maintained.
- Add note that no trees shall be planted within the Vision Clearance Triangle as defined in City Code Section 117-348 (g).

#### **Sheet L4**

- Add note/label identifying all trees in center islands/medians and in outlots are to be privately maintained.
- Add note that no trees shall be planted within the Vision Clearance Triangle as defined in City Code Section 117-348 (g).

#### **Sheet L5**

- Add note/label identifying all trees in center islands/medians and in outlots are to be privately maintained.
- Add note that no trees shall be planted within the Vision Clearance Triangle as defined in City Code Section 117-348 (g).
- Revise Planting Detail to specify that the first set of primary roots shall be at finished grade and to only prune out dead/broken branches at time of planting.
- Topsoil meeting the City's specification shall be required for each lot. Copies of the load tickets shall be provided to the City. A topsoil inspection shall be requested and completed prior to installation of sod.
- No topsoil (or other fill) shall be placed within any wetland or wetland setback area.
- Reconcile the number of trees to be planted with the quantities shown in the Overall Planting Schedule.
- Advisory comment: irrigation system should include some sort of water efficient technology (e.g. soil moisture sensors, ET sensors, smart controller, etc.).

**Environmental Policy Board (EPB)**

**5.3.**

**Meeting Date:** 04/17/2017

**By:** Mark Riverblood, Engineering/Public Works

**Information**

**Title:**

Recommend Revisions to the Draft Master Plan Amendment - Mississippi West Regional Park

**Purpose/Background:**

Discuss adding to City comment about incorporating finds from the Mississippi Shoreline Inventory.

**Notification:**

**Observations/Alternatives:**

**Funding Source:**

n/a

**Recommendation:**

**Action:**

**Attachments**

[Draft Master Plan Amendment](#)

[Staff Recommendations for Draft Amendment](#)

[2010 Master Plan, Miss West](#)

[Exec Summary Ped Bridge](#)

[Met Council 2040 Plan](#)

**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Tim Gladhill

Grant Riemer

Form Started By: JoAnn Shaw

Final Approval Date: 04/13/2017

**Reviewed By**

JoAnn Shaw

JoAnn Shaw

**Date**

04/13/2017 02:30 PM

04/13/2017 02:30 PM

Started On: 04/13/2017 02:24 PM



MARCH 6, 2017



# MISSISSIPPI WEST REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT



**Anoka County**  
PARKS & RECREATION

ANOKA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION  
550 BUNKER LAKE BLVD NW, ANDOVER, MN 55304

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Crystal Passi, Landscape Planner

Andy Soltvedt, Marketing and Visitor Services Manager

Nicole Greenwell, Communication Specialist

# MISSISSIPPI WEST REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

## BACKGROUND

Mississippi West Regional Park is a 273-acre park located within the City of Ramsey adjacent to the Mississippi River and Trunk Highway 10. Refer to Figure 1 for the park's location in the county. Figure 2 shows that the main portion of the park consists of approximately 183 acres of upland along the river and two islands within the river of



FIGURE 1

approximately 90 acres. Since the main portion of the park has 1-1/2 miles of shoreline along the Mississippi River, it offers a unique setting to provide recreational and educational opportunities in the area and it is part of the Mississippi River Critical Corridor Area and the Mississippi National River Recreation Area. In 1996, a concept master plan was approved by the Metropolitan Council and the park was incorporated into the metropolitan regional park system. Since then it has been updated with the Anoka County 20/20 Parks and Recreation Vision Plan and then again in 2006, when Anoka County adopted a new Parks and Recreation Comprehensive System Plan. Moving forward from the 2006 comprehensive system plan, an amendment to the existing Mississippi West Regional Park master plan was developed and approved by the Met Council in 2011. This master plan outlined a five phase park development plan. Since that time, the County has reassessed the conceptual plan from 2006 based on the existing conditions, the natural resource restoration within the park and the proposed recreational and educational facilities. The County, with this master plan amendment, is proposing to change the vehicular access of the park, adjust the park boundary to accommodate the City of Ramsey's Riverdale Drive frontage road extension, add a few canoe camping sites on the islands and reprioritize the current phasing of the development plans. Development costs

approximately 90 acres. Since the main portion of the park has 1-1/2 miles of shoreline along the Mississippi River, it offers a unique setting to provide recreational and educational opportunities in the area and it is part of the Mississippi River Critical Corridor Area and the Mississippi National River Recreation Area.

In 1996, a concept master plan was approved by the Metropolitan Council and the park was incorporated into the metropolitan regional park system. Since then it has been updated with the Anoka County 20/20 Parks and Recreation Vision Plan and then again in 2006, when Anoka County adopted a new Parks and Recreation Comprehensive System Plan.

Moving forward from the 2006 comprehensive system plan, an amendment to the existing Mississippi West Regional Park master plan was developed and



FIGURE 2

associated with this amendment are approximately \$1,163,000 and are anticipated to be completed within the next five to ten years.

### BOUNDARIES

The current park boundary contains 273 acres and approximately 3 -1/2 miles of shoreline, including the islands of Foster and Cloquet, as shown in Figure 2.

A future City of Ramsey Riverdale Drive frontage road extension project is anticipated to impact the park boundary adjacent to Highway 10. It is anticipated that this project will impact approximately five acres of the park in a linear fashion between Ramsey Boulevard and Traprock Street. See Figure 3 for proposed layout plan of the

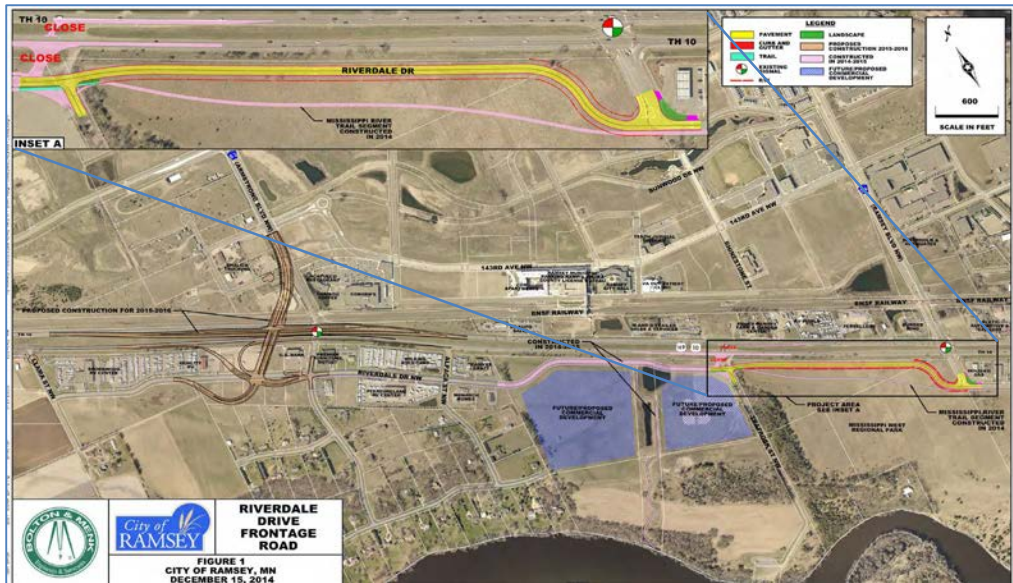


FIGURE 3

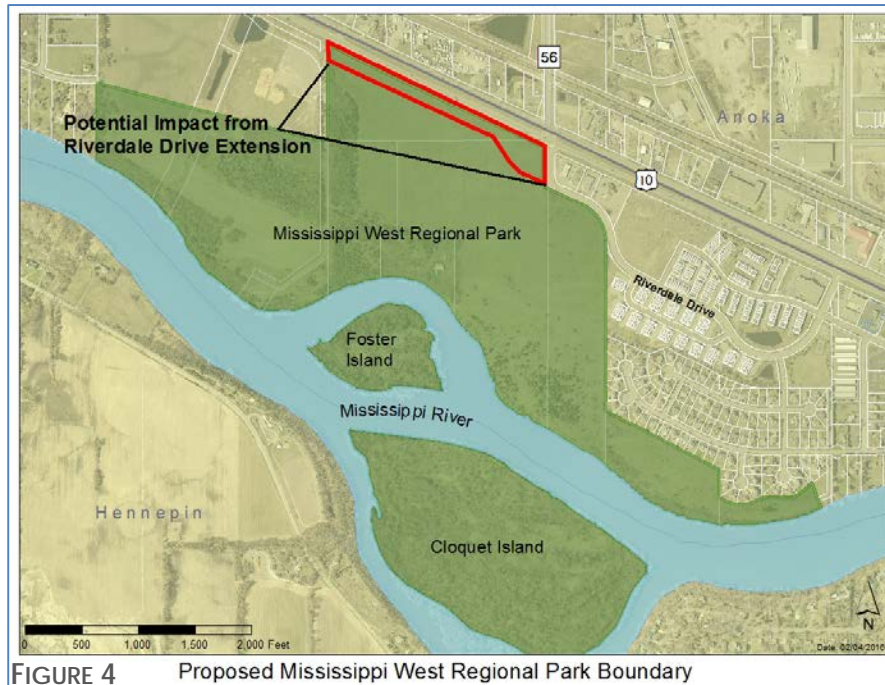


FIGURE 4 Proposed Mississippi West Regional Park Boundary

project and Figure 4 for the approximate impact to the park. It is anticipated that the City of Ramsey will provide the market value of \$200,000 for the parkland impact to the County, which will be used for equally valuable facility improvements within the park. Some of these improvements include constructing a paved entrance road, constructing a parking lot and/or constructing additional trails within the park. Refer to the Development Concept and Exhibit 1 & 2 in the Appendix for more information on the City of Ramsey project.

There are no parcels that need to be acquired for this boundary adjustment, therefore no acquisition costs associated with this amendment are to be incurred and there are no other anticipated special assessments or other conditions that would affect park development.

### STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Future management and stewardship of the park will continue as regional recreation open space in the regional system. Since this park is only partially developed as far as amenities and recreational opportunities go, the stewardship plan for the park thus far has focused on natural resource management and restoration. The County has conducted several restoration projects to restore the previously fallow farm fields to native prairie and grasslands. Future restoration projects are proposed within the riparian area along the river and to the riverbank itself, as well as planting a diverse variety of trees and shrubs to increase the biodiversity in the park.

Since the park is relatively undeveloped, the majority of the current operational and maintenance expenses relate to the on-going management of the native prairie and grassland restorations. Funds for those expenses have been offset by the parks general operating budget, the Metropolitan Council's Operations and Maintenance grant program and the Lottery in Lieu of program. Future development of the park will increase the operations and maintenance requirements within the park, but those expenses are anticipated to be offset by an increase in revenues related to the sale of daily and annual park passes, rental fees and special use permit fees as well as an increase in the operating budget.

There are no non-recreational uses planned for in the development of this park.

### DEMAND FORECAST

Regional parks and trails have been increasing in popularity and as the population grows the need for additional recreation resources and amenities grow as well. The population in the City of Ramsey is anticipated to grow, as is Anoka County. The table below shows the Thrive 2040 MSP – Forecasts as of July 8, 2015.

Population Forecast<sup>1</sup>

YEAR	RAMSEY	ANOKA COUNTY
<b>2010</b>	23,668	330,844
<b>2040</b>	34,700	438,820

According to the Metropolitan Council Regional Forecast to 2040, the metro regional area is anticipated to grow by 22% between 2010 and 2040. By 2040, seniors are expected to comprise 20% of the population and people of color will comprise 40%. As the population increases, diversifies, and ages, demand for easily accessible outdoor recreation opportunities and open space increases.

The outdoor recreational use patterns in the metropolitan area have also been growing steadily. Recreational visits to Anoka County regional parks and trails have increased from approximately 2.7 million visits in 2005 to over 3.4 million in 2015.<sup>2</sup> Visitation to Mississippi West Regional Park increased from 158,800 in 2012 to almost 200,000 in 2015 after the construction of the boat launch.<sup>3</sup> The additional development within the park, is anticipated to meet the future demands of the public.

The community engagement process revealed the importance of trails, as hiking and biking were two of the top three preferred uses in the parks as shown by the survey results in Figure 5.

Based on the 2014 Met Council’s “Regional Park Use Among Select Communities of Color”, it is anticipated that future proposed development within

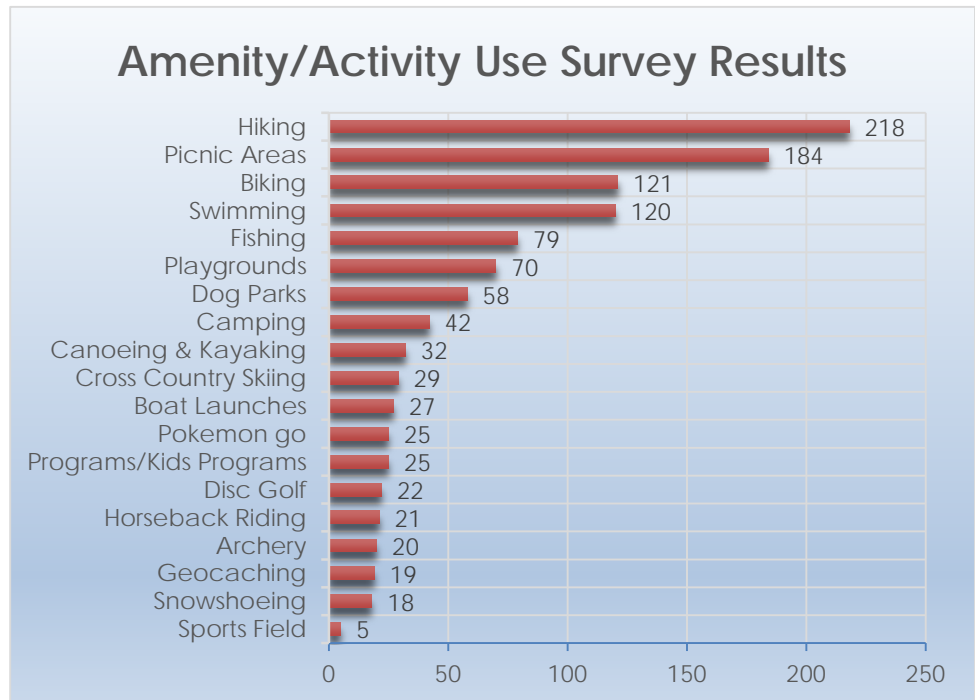


FIGURE 5

<sup>1</sup> Metropolitan Council, Thrive MSP 2040 Forecasts, Adopted May 28, 2014 and revised July 8, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Annual Use Estimate of the Metropolitan Regional Parks System for 2005 & 2015, Metropolitan Council

<sup>3</sup> Annual Use Estimate of the Metropolitan Regional Parks System for 2012 & 2015, Metropolitan Council

the park, i.e., picnic pavilions and trails will appeal to currently underserved populations who noted picnicking, walking/biking and gathering with family as their preferred outdoor activity. In addition, based on the park location on the river, it is anticipated that the fishing opportunities provided within the park will generally appeal to Asian Immigrant and Asian American populations as their preferred outdoor activities were noted as walking, fishing and rest or relaxation.

## DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The development concept for the park was laid out in the 2010 Master Plan Amendment and illustrated in Figure 6. The amendment included the construction of a boat launch, infrastructure development, park facility development, visitor center development and a pedestrian crossing.



FIGURE 6

Since that time, some development has occurred and the current existing conditions, as shown in Figure 7, include a gravel roadway, a boat launch, a paved parking lot for the launch, some trails, two observation points, and the existing homestead site. The existing homestead site consists of a house and several outbuildings which is planned to be removed in 2017, prior to the construction of the Mississippi River Regional Trail through the park.



**FIGURE 7**

This master plan amendment proposes to change the vehicular entrance proposed in the 2010 master plan amendment. Per the 2010 master plan amendment, the vehicular entrance was proposed to be located off of Ramsey Boulevard and Riverdale Drive. To eliminate disturbance and reduce fragmentation in the park, yet still provide easy access to the park, the County is proposing to utilize Traprock Street for access into and out of the park. The road would need to be reconstructed and widened to a minimum of 24 feet to allow safe two-way traffic. In addition, a small parking lot and additional trails are proposed. Refer to Figure 8 for proposed projects. The cost estimate for this work is approximately \$753,000. Some of these development costs are anticipated to be offset through the funding for the equally valuable facility exchange for the 5 acres needed for the City of Ramsey's frontage road project.

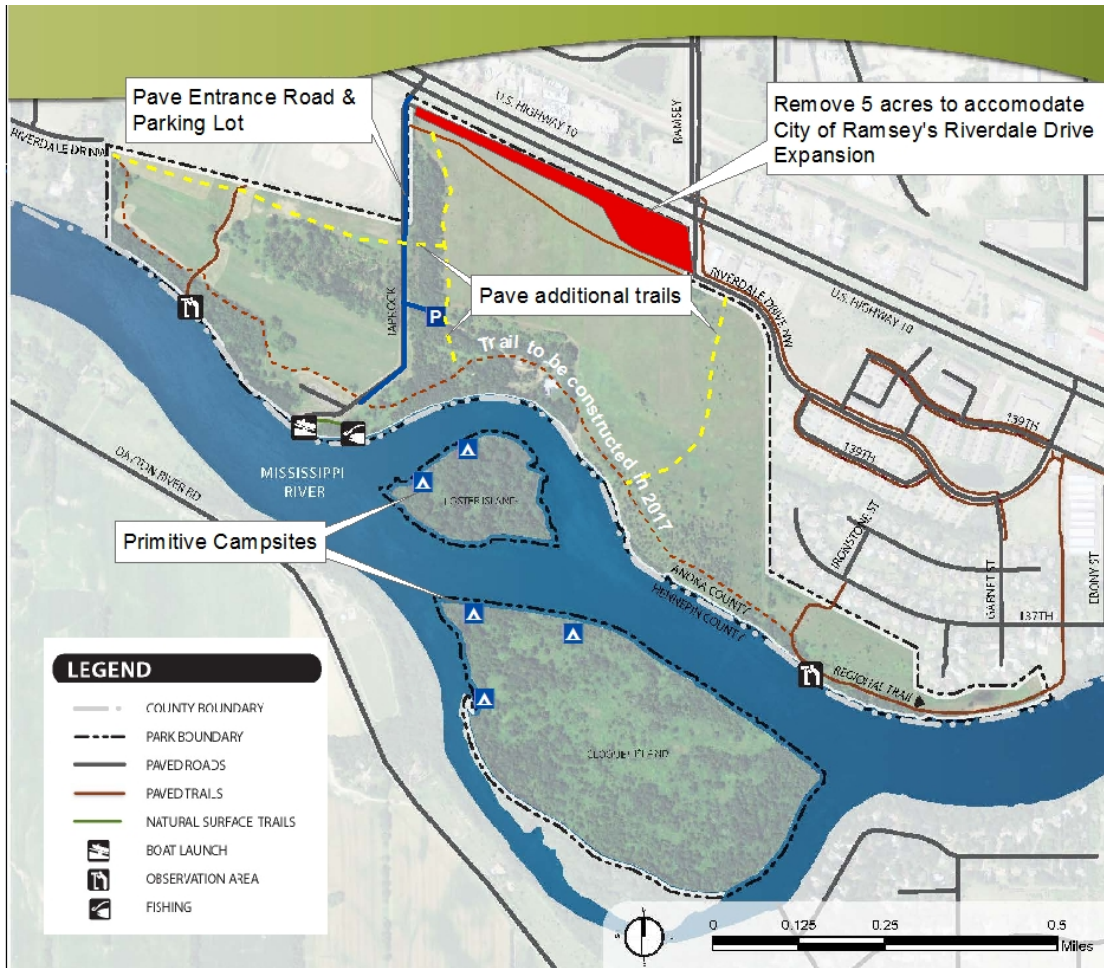


FIGURE 8

In addition, the County is proposing to add 3 to 5 canoe camp sites on Foster and Cloquet Islands. These would be primitive type sites with latrines. Total cost for this project is anticipated to be \$10,000. The remaining development plans outlined in the 2010 master plan are still being planned for, but the phasing has been adjusted. The County is now proposing to construct the majority of the infrastructure (roads, additional parking lots, trails), one to two picnic shelters, a restroom, a playground and other smaller amenities within the next 5 to 10 years. A maintenance facility would also be part of that development. The remaining picnic shelters, restrooms, visitor center, and remaining infrastructure as outlined in the 2010 master plan will be implemented within the next 15-20 years as funding allows. Figure 9 illustrates all the projects proposed for the Mississippi West Regional Park Master Plan.



FIGURE 3

Wayfinding within the park includes several different types of signs. A monument entrance sign will be located near the vehicular entrance to the park, as illustrated in Figure 10. Vehicular scaled directional signs will be placed along roadways for visitors to quickly find their way within the park. Trailhead signs and directional signs are placed at trailheads to provide an overview of the parks and help users orient themselves to the park. An example of a trailhead sign is shown in Figure 11. Directional and map signs will also be located at decision-making points along the trails. The estimated cost for signs throughout the park is approximately \$50,000.



FIGURE 10



FIGURE 11

While there is a well for water on the site, there is not drinking water available at the park. Future plans include hooking into the city water and sewer services during the restroom and shelter phase of development. A sanitary sewer hook-up location is currently located along the existing Riverdale Drive. Water service locations will be completed as part of the frontage road extension project. The cost to hook into these services is estimated to be about \$350,000.

## CONFLICTS

Conflicts related to park development will be kept to a minimum through the proper planning and community engagement. See additional information regarding engagement in the Public Engagement and Participation section of this document.

The park is adjacent to Highway 10 to the north and the Mississippi River to the south. The highway and proposed frontage road will create experiential conflicts for users. Therefore, additional vegetated screening and buffering will be used to enhance the safety, aesthetics and quality of the park experience.

It is anticipated that the proposed City of Ramsey Riverdale Drive Extension project will impact about 5 acres of the park along the northern boundary. This impact is anticipated to be mitigated through an equally valuable facility exchange as illustrated in Figure 8.

It is anticipated that development will impact some of the native prairie and grassland restorations established within the park. The County anticipates temporary impacts to those areas will be restored. In areas where impacts are unavoidable, the County will mitigate those impacts by restoring other non-native areas within the park.

Conflicts between pedestrians and vehicular traffic will be kept to a minimum by reducing the number of trail and road crossings within the park and by working with the City of Ramsey to ensure safe crossings at city road intersections. Treatments for these areas may include signing, striping and signalized pedestrian crossings. In addition, signs within the parks will alert users of potential conflict areas, i.e. street crossings, driveway crossings, pedestrian cross-traffic, etc., and will provide way-finding and interpretive information.

## PUBLIC SERVICES

Since this park is mostly undeveloped, currently there are no public services available within the park. As discussed in the development concept, future development will include hooking into city services for water and sanitary. Current city sanitary service is located near the northeast of the park and proposed city water service will be made available as part of the city's Riverdale Drive extension project. When restroom and pavilion development occurs, these services will be included as part of those development plans.

## OPERATIONS

Anoka County Ordinance #2012-01, which will be updated in 2017, regulates the parks and trails under the jurisdiction of Anoka County and is enforced by the local police departments as well as the Anoka County Sheriff's Department. Park Service Specialists (formerly known as Park Rangers) provide education to the public regarding ordinances and other park information.

Current annual operations and maintenance costs for the park are estimated to be about \$23,000. This includes staff time for on-going daily and general routine maintenance within the park, such as cleaning, mowing, sweeping, plowing, debris removal, and sign maintenance, as well as equipment expenses, repairs, service contracts and supplies and utility expenses. Once fully developed the operations and maintenance costs are anticipated to be around \$150,000 annually. Expenses are typically offset by revenue generated through daily and annual park pass sales, picnic pavilion rentals, programs, special events and the parks operating budget. Additional supplementary funding is provided through the Regional Park Operations and Maintenance Grant Program.

Anoka County currently employs a remote building automation system that saves the department \$5,000-10,000 annually compared to traditional energy systems by realizing energy reductions in heating, cooling, lighting, and domestic water during unoccupied and off-peak periods. The program enables staff to monitor, adjust, and troubleshoot building mechanical systems at all of the wide-spread park facilities from a single location, aiding in prompt management and repair. The County has recently undertaken a project to convert lighting in key facilities to LED technology, in an effort to reduce energy demands. The Maintenance and Parks Services Units utility vehicle fleets include a growing number of electric powered vehicles. Turf irrigation systems employ "rain sensor" technology to avoid using valuable water during periods of precipitation. The County has encouraged employees to go "digital" to reduce the amount of paper in the workplace, by utilizing smaller more portable laptop computers and tablets. The county also recently consolidated its contract filing system so as to reduce the amount of paper files, as well as digital files.

The County, through the Recycle & Resource Solutions Department employs a refuse and recycling program that requires recycling of paper, plastics, etc. Refuse that cannot be reused or recycled is collected and disposed of consistent to applicable laws.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

### INTRODUCTION

The public engagement and participation plan identifies local cities, population groups and organizations that are specifically targeted to enable the County to engage the public in an inclusive, accessible and results oriented manner in developing the Mississippi West Regional Park Master Plan Amendment.

It also describes the approaches and methods used for engagement.

Stakeholders targeted for inclusion in community engagement activities included:

- Diverse population groups not currently represented
- Children and young people
- Elderly people
- Residents in the local and regional area's
- Government Officials/City and County Staff

Outcomes anticipated by the engagement process associated with the development of this master plan are as follows:

- Build positive relationships with local communities/residents.
- Build awareness of the County's regional park and trail system.
- Build community ownership of and understanding of the park and the County's planning process.
- Identify community priorities and expectations for the future of the park.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The County developed a "Plan Your Parks" marketing strategy to share the master plan amendment projects with community members, local cities, staff and other governmental agencies for feedback and input. Multi-lingual postings, e-mail blasts, social media, and pop-up events were included within the strategy and different methods of engagement were employed to understand what works best for different community groups.

#### Plan Your Parks - Voting

The County placed static picture boards on easels at different locations throughout the county, i.e. Driver's License Center, Library, etc., to share the proposed projects and allow the public to share their preferred park amenities, preferred trail surfacing, ways of accessing the parks and park safety. Refer to Figure 12. This method was considered successful in the amount of responses received, but unsuccessful in that this method could not track actual number of respondents or if underserved populations were participating.



FIGURE 12

### Plan Your Parks - Social Media

The County shared a “Plan Your Parks” advertisement on social media and the County Parks home page. Refer to Figure 13. The post on social media specifically targeted



FIGURE 4

underserved minority populations within a 20-mile radius and reached almost 8000 people. The post included a short anonymous survey in English, Spanish and Somali that asked for input on access to parks, transportation to parks, preferred amenities and activities, preferred trail surfacing, park cleanliness, city respondent was from, age, sex and ethnicity. There were 100 survey respondents and most were regular park users. The majority of respondents were female, Caucasian, between 25-64 years of age and from Anoka County. Other respondents were between 15-24 years of age, were American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic or Latino or of another ethnicity not specified. Some respondents were from Hennepin and Sherburne counties.

### Plan Your Parks - Public Events

The County conducted two public events to reach non-park users and underserved populations. One event has held at a local mall during a busy shopping season and the other was held at the County’s Blaine Service Center. Refer to Figures 14 and 15 for images of the events. At both events, staff attempted to track age, ethnicity and gender of each individual engaged. The mall event engaged approximately 75 people. Of those 75 people, approximately half were considered part of the underserved population. About half the people were estimated to be between 25-64, while the others were split between the over 65 years of age range or under 25 years of age range. This event is considered a success in that half of those engaged were part of the targeted underserved population.



FIGURE 14



FIGURE 5

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

There was an estimated total of 400 people engaged during the public participation process. Of the total number engaged, 132 people were actively engaged by providing feedback through one on one discussions at the pop-up events. The others participated through anonymous online surveys and/or “sticky dot” surveys conducted at a variety of locations throughout the County.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographics of those 132 people actively engaged were tracked to ensure the Department was actively engaging the underserved population. While the majority of those engaged were part of the existing service population, 40% engaged were part of the underserved populations. Figure 16 illustrates the difference.

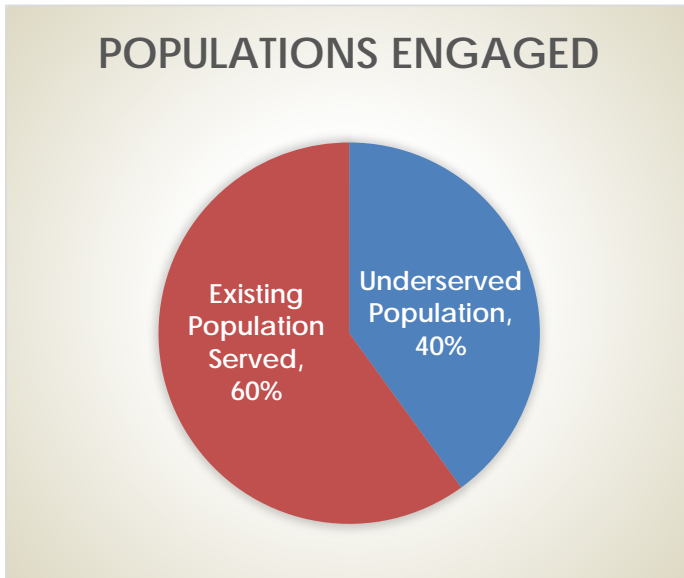


FIGURE 6

Of those engaged, 62% were female and 38% male as shown in Figure 17. Ages categories are shown in Figure 18 and generalized ethnicities are shown in Figure 19.

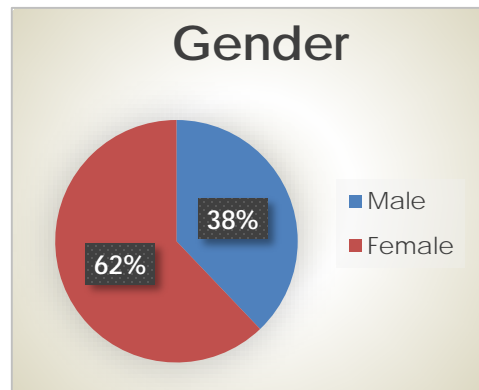


FIGURE 7

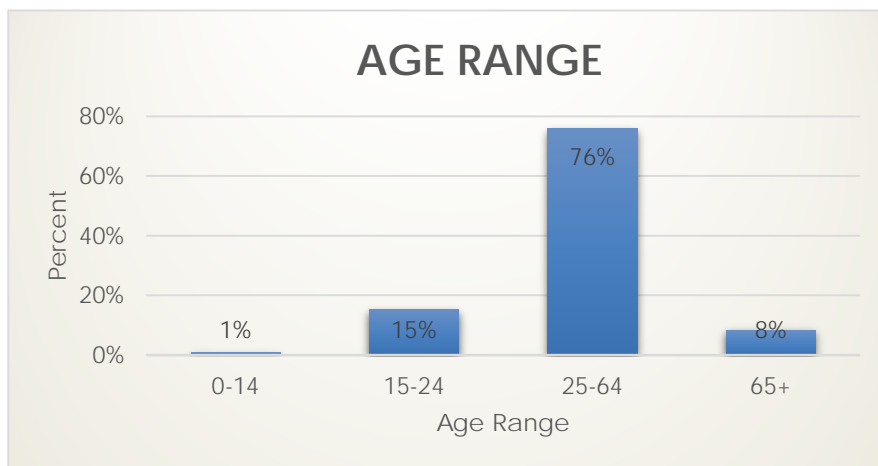


FIGURE 8

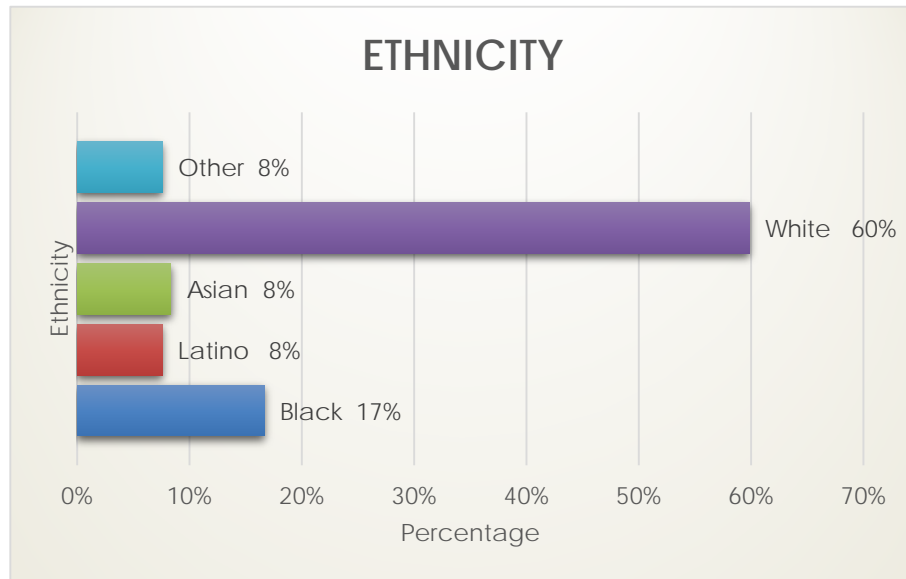


FIGURE 9

### SURVEY RESULTS

Throughout the engagement process park amenity use was surveyed. Results are shown in Figure 20. The survey results show that the top three activities for parks and trails were hiking, biking and picnicking, followed closely by swimming, fishing and use of playgrounds. These results for the hiking, biking and picnic areas, provide support for the projects outlined in this master plan amendment. As does the preferred trail surfacing results as shown in Figure 21. In addition, when asked how users typically access the parks, the majority said drive, but 41% said walk or bike, as shown in Figure 22. Figure 23, shows the preferred method of accessing a park. 62% would prefer to walk or bike to a park as opposed to having to drive. Again, this shows support for the trail projects outlined in the amendments and shows the importance of connectivity throughout the local and regional trail systems.

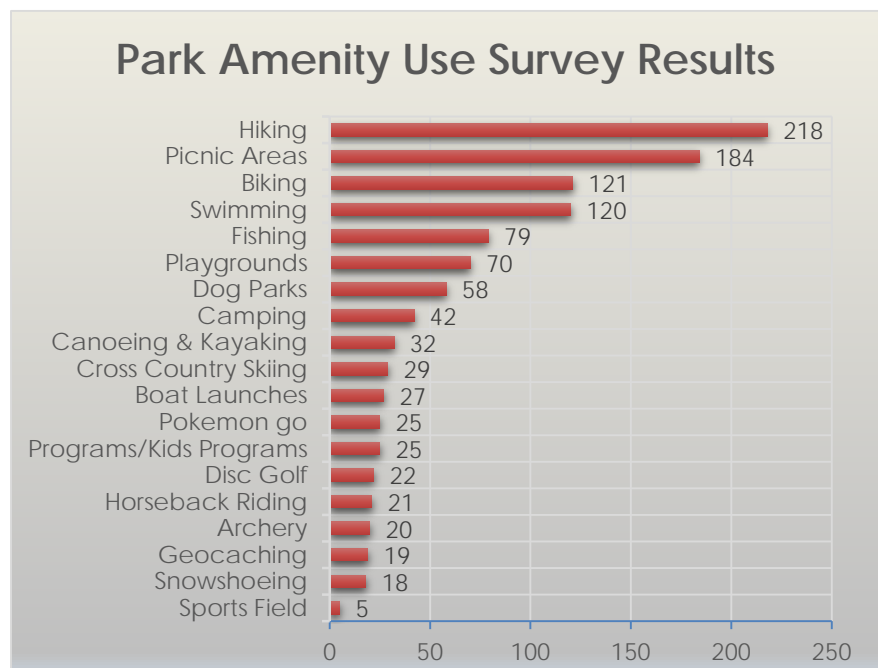


FIGURE 10

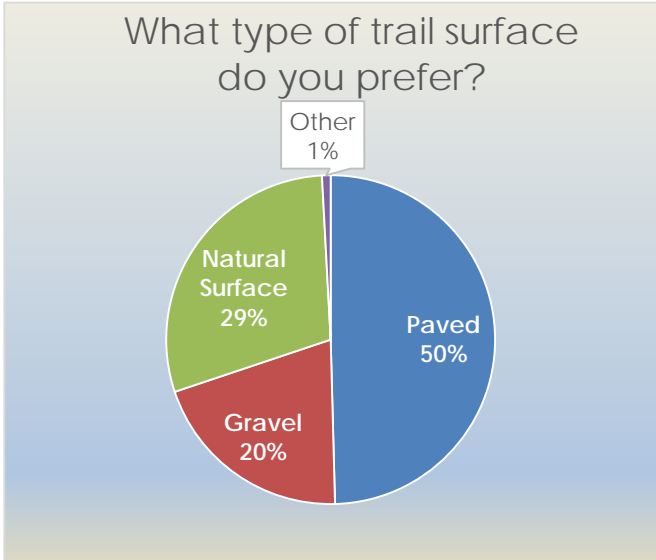


FIGURE 11

This survey information also shows a lack of public transportation options that provide stops and/or service to regional parks and trails systems. Going forward, the Parks and Recreation Department will work closely with the County Transit Department, the County's Transportation Management Organization and the Metropolitan Council to find solutions to increase transit access to the regional parks and trails.

The Department also surveyed participants about safety in the parks and whether they feel safe when they are in the parks. Resoundingly, 91%

said yes, they feel safe. Refer to Figure 24. While the County strives to create safe and welcoming spaces, future engagement events should delve deeper into that 9% that did not feel safe in the parks to determine what could be done to ensure everyone feels welcome and safe.

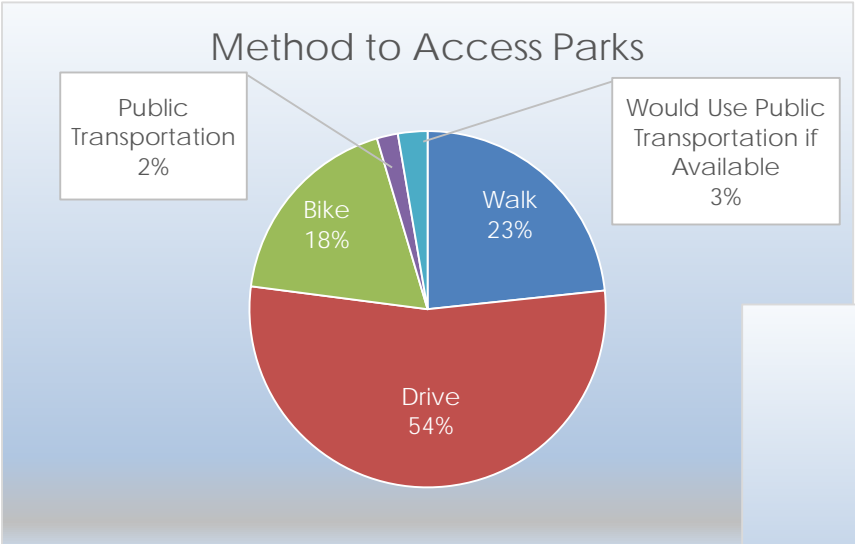


FIGURE 22

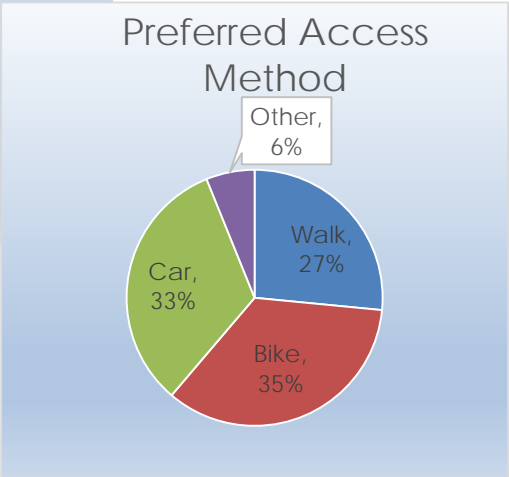


FIGURE 23

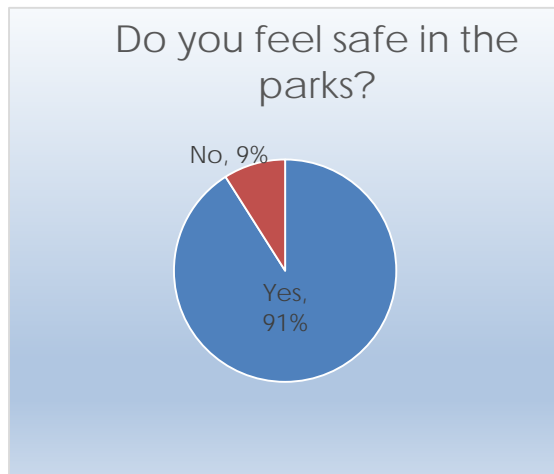


FIGURE 12

### ENGAGEMENT GOING FORWARD

Since engaging the public for these master plan amendments, there are a few a few items that stood out and should be explored in more detail.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

The Department should continue to reach out to the underserved populations, establish connections and build relationships. The pop-up events worked great for reaching underserved populations, but didn't provide for in-depth discussions. The Department should continue to explore other locations that will be more inviting and welcoming to underserved populations and implementing listening sessions for more in-depth conversations. Due to the majority of respondents being between 25-64, the Department should look at targeting the youngest and oldest age groups for input in the future.

#### AMENITIES

While hiking, biking and picnicking are the Department's bread and butter and those are the most demanded amenities, the lower participant numbers for some of the other amenities should be explored to see what could be done to increase participation.

#### ACCESS

Since the majority of participants end up driving the parks and trails, the Department should work with County's Transportation Division, local cities and the Metropolitan Council to ensure multiple modes of transportation options exist for access to the system and that future trail provide the needed connections between the residential areas surrounding the park.

#### SAFETY

While the majority of participant's felt safe in the parks, it is advisable to explore why some people might not feel safe or welcome in the parks and evaluate solutions.

#### AWARENESS

While participants were not specifically asked whether they were aware of the Anoka County Parks and Recreation System, anecdotally, many participants were unaware

of all the regional parks and trails within the system. They may be familiar with a park they live near, but they aren't aware of all the other parks and amenities the County has to offer. Therefore, any future engagement events should help to create awareness about the overall system.

While some of the above issues are not specific to the proposed projects in this amendment, they do show larger scale issues that need to be addressed. The lack of knowledge of the park system show the need for additional marketing, programming and engagement efforts. The lack of participation in some amenities will need to be further analyzed to determine why people don't participate and why they do not feel safe in parks and the County will need to work with the Anoka County Transportation Division and the Metropolitan Council's Transit Department to provide better public transportation access to the parks.

The Parks and Recreation Department will request input from the City of Ramsey, other County staff, and other jurisdictional government agencies for input on the amendment for their input.

Finally, the County will keep the public informed by continuing engagement beyond the planning process, by providing the public with information regarding the plans progress and future opportunities for engagement and input via websites, social media and local and County governmental meetings.

The resulting approved plan will be posted online for the public to access easily.

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

Public awareness is an important component to regional park and trail systems. The County will provide public education efforts through the Metropolitan Council's regional-wide awareness program, as well as, public information maps, websites



and brochures provided by Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department and Commute Solutions, the County's Transportation Management Organization. In addition, any future public engagement events that occur will include information on the system to increase awareness and



promote the park amenities and recreational opportunities throughout the County. Since the park is located in the Mississippi National River Recreation Area, Anoka County will also work with National Park Service staff to engage the public and provide information regarding the park through their website, social media, publications and brochures.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Anoka County continually strives to provide equal access to all residents of Anoka County and the region. Park and trail use is open to any and all citizens. A few of the regional parks have a nominal \$5.00 daily entrance fee, which is used to help offset the operations and maintenance for the parks. This fee is not anticipated to be collected until the park fully developed, which is not expected to occur for 10 to 15 years.

Figure 25 illustrates existing transit access near the park. Currently transit is limited to Bus Route 887 and Northstar Route 888 with no direct stops at the park, although the park can be reached via trail. The future City of Ramsey pedestrian bridge across Highway 10 is proposed to provide a safe crossing over Highway 10 and provide access to the park via the city's trail system.

In addition, the Anoka County Traveler Transit Link and Metro Transit's Mobility Link provide dial-a-ride services for a minimal fee. Transit Link will pick up and drop off passengers anywhere there is an address. The address for the park is 13935 Traprock Street. Currently all of the vehicles are equipped with bike racks so passengers wishing to bike on the trail could use Transit Link to preschedule a drop-off and return trip.

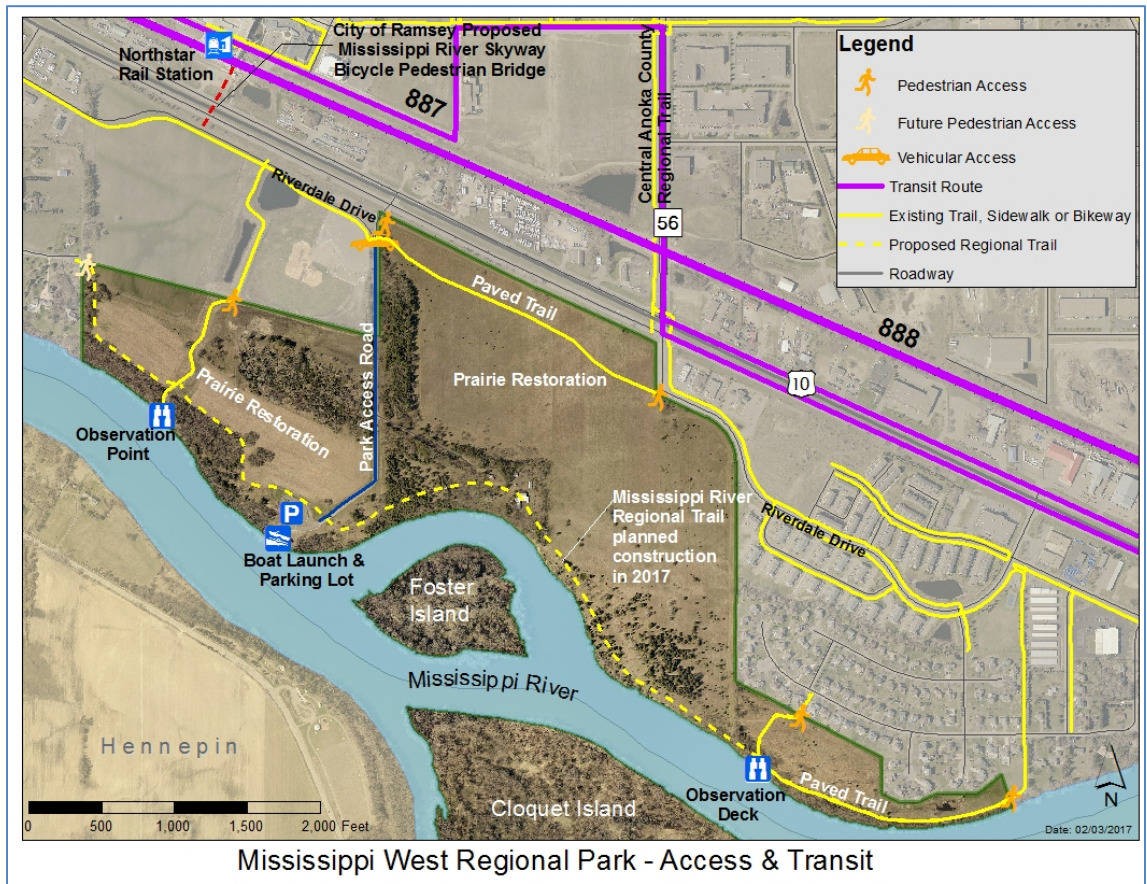


FIGURE 13

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Anoka County has maintained a strong commitment to preserving and restoring natural resources within its park, trails and open space system. The expansive 11,000-acre park system contains a diverse system of wildlife species and natural areas including upland forests, deciduous woodlands, upland prairies, forested wetlands, shrub wetlands and open wetlands. To manage the natural resources and maintain parks and trails identity and natural connection to the river, Anoka County will provide for:

- The protection, restoration and enhancement of native plant and animal habitats throughout the park and along the trail corridor;
- Protection and improvement of water and soil resources;
- Increase public awareness regarding the diverse natural resources in the area;
- Sustainable practices related to park development, operations and maintenance.

General natural resources management strategies include identifying and assessing remnant plant and animal communities, monitoring rare species, controlling invasive species, ecologically restoring native plant and animal habitat, controlling detrimental

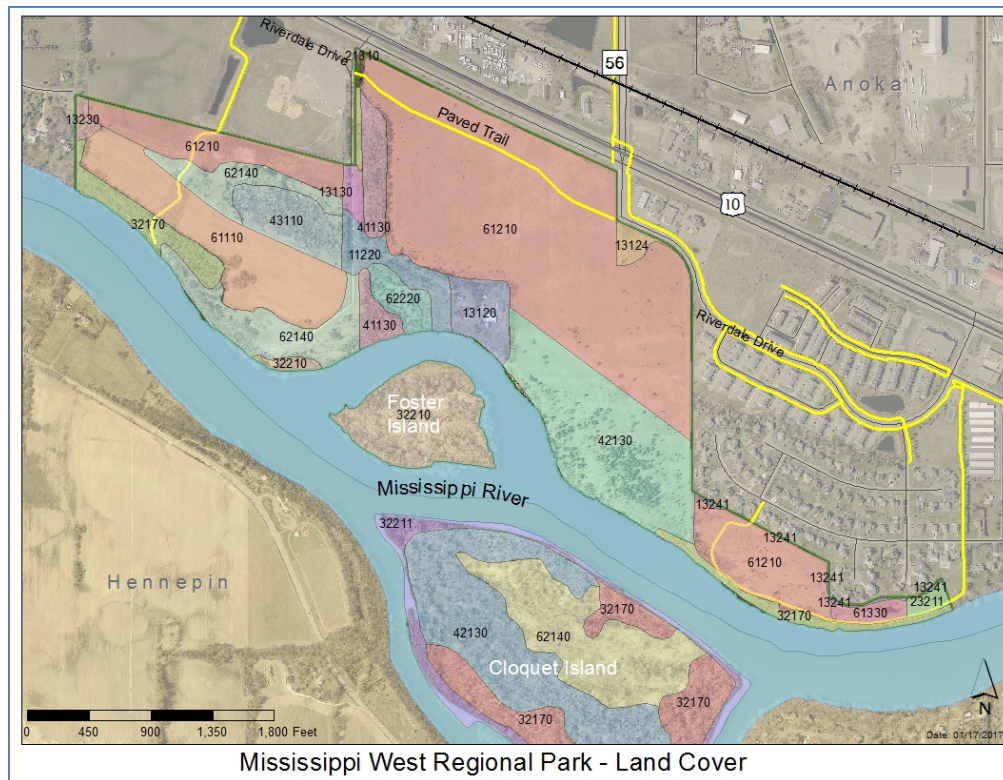


FIGURE 26

insects and disease, wildlife management, enhancing water quality, erosion control and cooperative land stewardship.

A sustainable development framework is utilized in all new park and trail development and redevelopment to ensure ecologically sound land stewardship with an emphasis on maintaining the longevity of the facilities for public benefit.

Figure 26 shows the existing land cover in the park, based on the Minnesota Land Cover Classification. The legend can be found in the Appendix as Exhibit 3.

Based on the land cover and restoration projects that have occurred within the park, the following natural resource management components are an integral part of Anoka County's planning efforts associated with the development of Mississippi West Regional Park:

- Anoka County's Natural Resources Unit will be directly involved with the design, construction and monitoring of the proposed park redevelopment. A concerted emphasis will be placed on avoiding and minimizing any adverse impacts to the plant and animal habitat, as well as to the river. In addition, Anoka County will focus on incorporating local native seed and plant material that will compliment the ecology and function of the surrounding native plant communities.
- Protection of surface water resources will be a top priority for this project. Anoka County will work very closely with the City of Ramsey, the local Watershed Management Organization, the National Park Service's Mississippi National River Recreation Area, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and the Metropolitan Council to ensure that the standards and requirements for resource protection are met. The MPCA's best management practice guidance document recommendations will be followed in the design and incorporation of stormwater pollutant and runoff flow reduction measures constructed in conjunction with Park upgrades.

The MPCA best management practices guidance documents can be found at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/stormwater/index.html>.

The overall vegetation management goal for Anoka County is to identify restoration needs and to define and implement adaptive management strategies that will sustain the biological diversity, production, and function of native plant communities. Vegetation management within the park will focus on preserving native plants, introducing local native plants, eradicating invasive species, maintaining water quality within the watershed and providing for linear plant and wildlife corridor connections. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reference "*Guidelines for Managing and Restoring Natural Plant Communities Along Trails and Waterways*" will be used as part of the long term management plan for this park.

Considering that ecosystems are dynamic and continually changing over time and space, an adaptive management approach and framework fits very well with the County's practice of ecological restoration and stewardship. In the context of ecological restoration, the following adaptive management principles will guide the stewardship plan the Rice Creek West Regional Trail Corridor:

**Problem Assessment:**

Define the scope of degradation to the site, synthesize the existing knowledge about it, and explore the potential outcomes of alternative restoration actions.

**Design:**

Design a restoration plan and monitoring program that will provide reliable feedback and information about the effectiveness of restoration methods.

**Implementation:**

Effective restoration is usually a multi-step process, requiring not only installation, but many years of maintenance and monitoring.

**Monitoring:**

Biological indicators are monitored to determine how effective the restoration methods are in meeting the project objectives.

**Evaluation:**

The actual outcomes are compared to the anticipated outcomes. In addition, the reasons for the underlying differences are interpreted.

**Adjustment:**

Practices, objectives, and models used during the restoration process may lead to reassessment of the problem, new questions, and new options to try in a continual cycle of improvement for a given project.

Management and stewardship practices for maintenance in the park will include periodic mowing, prescriptive fire management, invasive species surveys, hazard tree assessments, seed collection and propagation, invasive species removal, turf management, brush and tree maintenance, erosion control, forest health assessments and maintenance, wildlife surveys and management as needed, and interpretive signage. Maintenance and stewardship practices also include regular trimming of trees and vegetation along roadways, trail corridors, park facilities and structures.

The two highest priority projects for natural resources would be:

- 1) Removal of invasive species throughout the park through the use of bio-control agents.
- 2) Planting of native trees throughout the park as replacement for anticipated losses due to disease or storm damage.

A review of the Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) revealed that there is known occurrences of rare features within the park. Rare features that *may* be adversely affected by the proposed project include:

- The Black Sandshell (*Ligumia recta*), a state-listed special concern mussel, has been documented in the Mississippi River near the park.

- Blanding's turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*), a state-listed threatened species, have been reported within a one-mile search radius of the park and could very well be encountered on site.

The area is an important migratory stop for waterfowl, waterbirds, raptors and neotropical migrants and as such is designated as part of the North Metro Mississippi River Important Bird Area. In the past, Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and colonial waterbirds have been known to nest on Cloquet and Foster Islands. Therefore, the County had a survey conducted to locate any nests near the project area. The only nest found was a Bald Eagle's nest, which is currently located across the river from the park and is greater than 660' from any proposed disturbance. Therefore, no further action should be required to comply with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, but prior to each phase of development, a new survey shall be conducted to verify nesting locations and ensure compliance with Protection Act.

The County is confident it can avoid disturbance to the listed species during the development of the park using recommendations and best management practices as outlined by the Department of Natural Resources and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

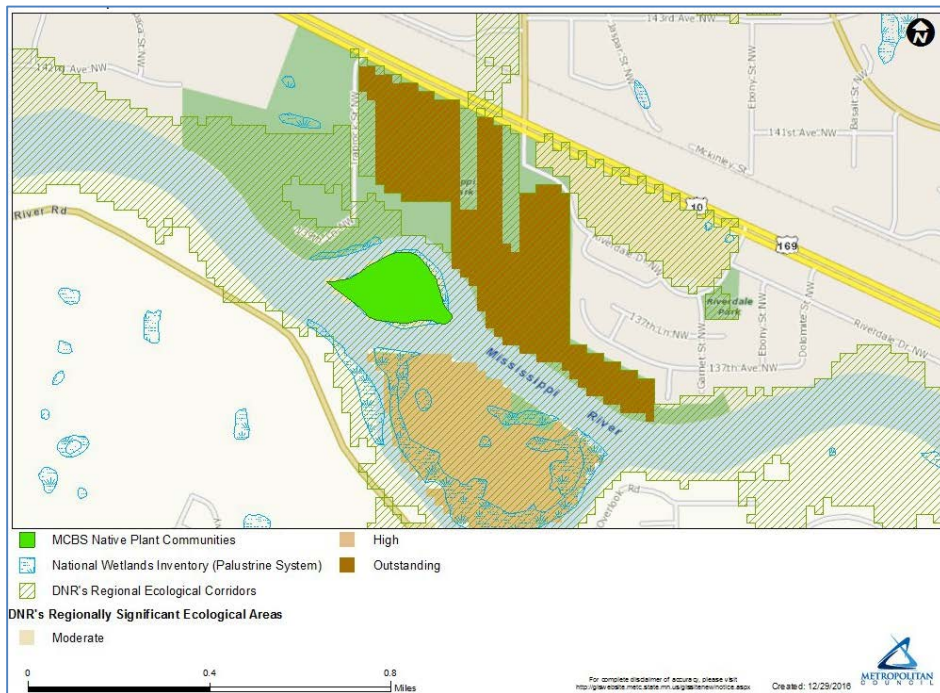
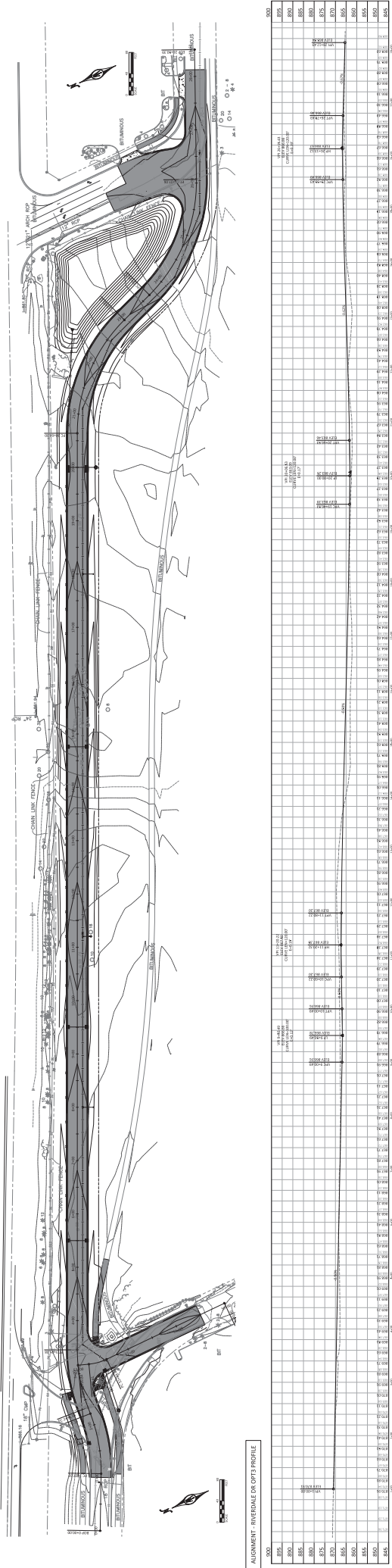


FIGURE 27

As shown in Figure 27, Areas within the park and Foster and Cloquet Islands are listed as sites with High or Outstanding biodiversity significance, therefore any proposed development strive to enhance the biodiversity within the park and not negatively impact it.

Care will be taken during the planning and design phase of development to ensure minimal impacts and maximize diversity.

APPENDIX



ALIGNMENT - REVERSE SIDE OF DFTS PROFILE

**PROPOSED DESCRIPTION**

Those parts of Lots 5 and 6, AUDITOR'S SUBDIVISION NO. 34, according to the recorded plat thereof, Anoka County, Minnesota and that part of Government Lot 3, Section 33, Township 32, Range 25, said Anoka County, which lies southerly of U.S. Highway No. 10 & 169 per Minnesota Department of Transportation Monumentation Plat 02-05, lies easterly of Traprock Street North West, and northerly of the following described line:

Commencing at the southwest corner of the southeast quarter of Section 28, said Township 32; thence North 89 degrees 36 minutes 56 seconds West, assumed bearing along the southerly line of said Section 28, a distance of 660.00 feet; thence North 00 degrees 01 minutes 17 seconds East, a distance of 774.37 feet to the point of beginning of the line to be described; thence South 64 degrees 32 minutes 38 seconds East, a distance of 1764.99 feet; thence southeasterly, a distance of 204.71 feet, along a tangential curve concave to the southwest, having a radius of 260.00 feet, and a central angle of 45 degrees 06 minutes 38 seconds; thence South 19 degrees 26 minutes 00 seconds East, tangent to the last described curve, a distance of 66.33 feet; thence southeasterly, a distance of 272.99 feet, along a tangential curve concave to the northeast, having a radius of 340.00 feet, and a central angle of 46 degrees 00 minutes 09 seconds; thence South 65 degrees 20 minutes 53 seconds East, tangent to the last described curve, a distance of 100.00 feet and said line there terminating.

EXCEPTING therefrom that part lying within Ramsey Boulevard (formerly known as Riverdale Drive) as delineated and dedicated on the plat of RIVENWICK THIRD ADDITION, according to the recorded plat thereof, Anoka County, Minnesota.



**SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this survey was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly licensed land surveyor under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

*Nathaniel T. Stadler*  
 Nathaniel T. Stadler  
 License Number 43934

02/08/2016  
 Date

**RIGHT OF WAY TO BE ACQUIRED EXHIBIT**

RAMSEY, ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA

**BOLTON & MENK, INC.**  
 Consulting Engineers & Surveyors

7533 SUNWOOD DR NW, SUITE 206  
 RAMSEY, MINNESOTA 55303  
 (763)-433-2851

LOTS 5 & 6 AUDITOR'S SUBDIVISION,  
 ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
 GOVERNMENT LOT 3, SECTION 33,  
 TOWNSHIP 32, RANGE 25

FOR: CITY OF RAMSEY

PROPOSED RIGHT OF WAY TO BE  
 ACQUIRED CONTAINING 231,394 SQ. FT.

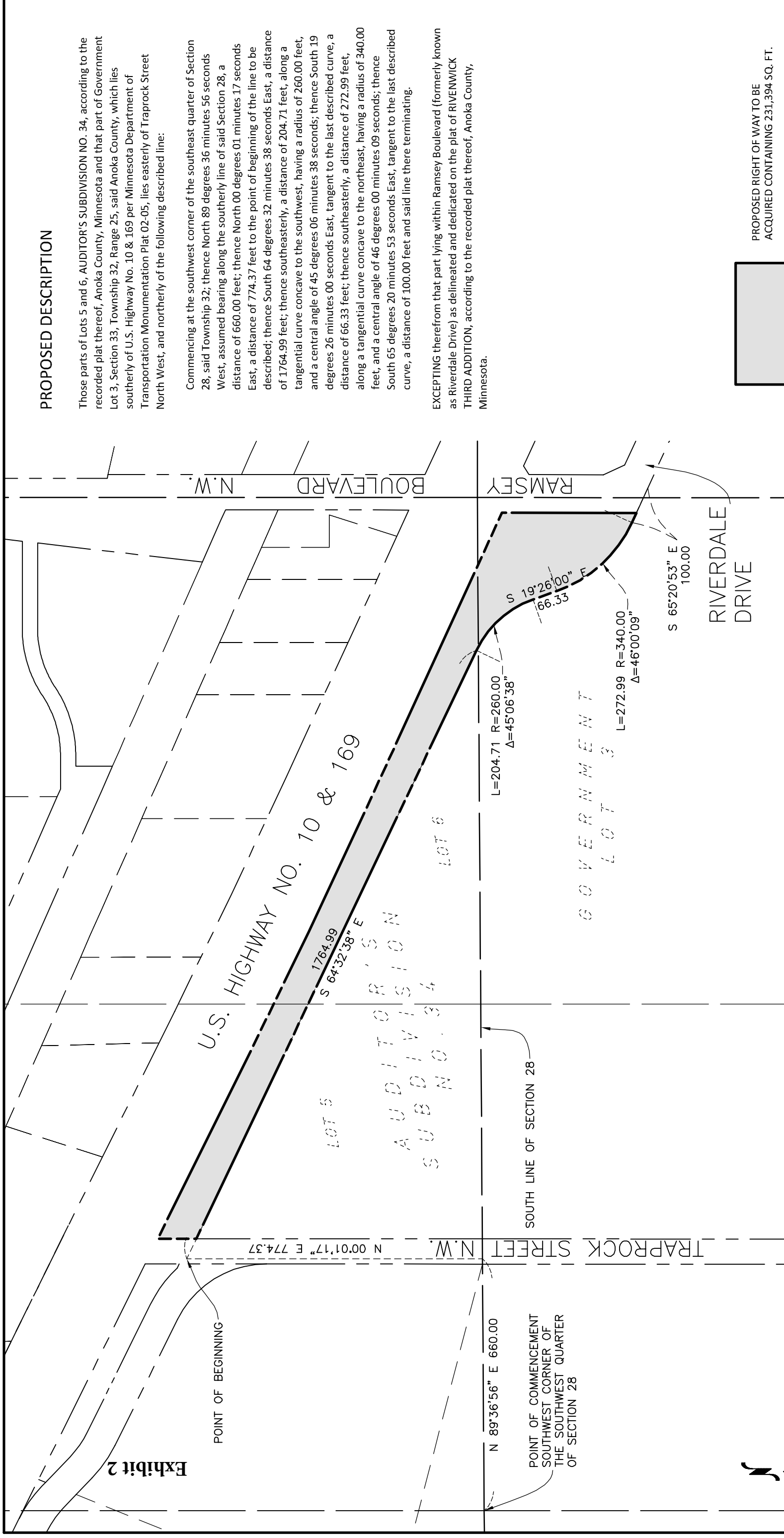
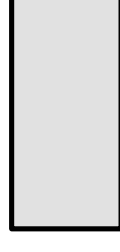




























Exhibit 2

# Legend

## Land Cover

-  11220, 11% to 25% impervious cover with deciduous trees
-  11230, 26% to 50% impervious cover with deciduous trees
-  13120, 11% to 25% impervious cover with perennial grasses and sparse trees
-  13124, Short grasses and mixed trees with 11-25% impervious cover
-  13130, 26% to 50% impervious cover with perennial grasses and sparse trees
-  13211, Short grasses with 4-10% impervious cover
-  13230, 26% to 50% impervious cover with perennial grasses
-  13241, Short grasses with 51-75% impervious cover
-  23211, Short grasses on upland soils
-  32170, Altered/non-native deciduous forest
-  32210, Floodplain forest
-  41130, Eastern Red Cedar woodland
-  42130, Altered/non-native deciduous woodland
-  43110, Altered/non-native mixed woodland
-  61110, Mesic Prairie
-  61210, Dry Praire
-  61330, Temporarily flooded altered/non-native dominated grassland
-  62140, Grassland with sparse deciduous trees - altered/non-native dominated vegetation
-  62220, Grassland with sparse conifer or mixed deciduous/coniferous trees - altered/non-native dominated
-  32170, Altered/non-native deciduous forest
-  32211, Floodplain forest silver maple subtype
-  42130, Altered/non-native deciduous woodland
-  62140, Grassland with sparse deciduous trees - altered/non-native dominated vegetation
-  RAILROAD
-  ROAD
-  Existing Trail, Sidewalk or Bikeway
-  WATER

To: Anoka County Parks  
Fm: City of Ramsey Staff  
Re: Draft Master Plan Amendment for Mississippi West Regional Park

## Overview

The City of Ramsey is in receipt of the March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Draft Master Plan Amendment for Mississippi West Regional Park, (hereafter referred to as the 'Draft Amendment'). We understand that Anoka County Staff has requested City Staff's comments, and further understand that the 60 day comment period is applicable here too, which will allow enough time for review by the Park and Recreation Commission, Environmental Policy Board and City Council.

Foremost Staff appreciates Anoka County's willingness to accommodate the Riverdale Drive frontage road project, which is the impetus for the developing and submitting to Metropolitan Council the Master Plan Amendment for approval. The request for early comment is valuable as well, to ensure that the **Public's best interests** are carried forward within the original Master Plan, or improved upon within the Draft Amendment.

## Requested Revisions

The City requests the following revisions to the Master Plan Amendment:

1. Clearly name the proposed pedestrian bridge as a future Phased Improvement of the regional park, thereby to be found in conformance with the *Thrive 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, and the approved Master Plan.
2. Identify within the Draft Master Plan Amendment a schedule for a negotiated cost-share agreement for completion of the skyway and pedestrian bridge—in a timeframe that allows for a joint application in 2018 for Transportation Advisory Board solicitation for funding (and potentially other sources).
3. Add a narrative and exhibit to the Draft Master Plan Amendment that shows the realignment of the Central Anoka County Regional Trail to a safe alignment for bicyclists and pedestrians (to the location of the pedestrian overpass when complete), which also will connect the regional park directly to the Metropolitan Transit system, and thereby to come into conformance with both the *Thrive 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan as well as the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan* relating to directives for regional parks.

Further, that the City be afforded the full 60 Day Review Period in order to review the Master Plan Amendment with our Parks and Recreation Commission, Environmental Policy Board, and City Council.

Ensuring that the pedestrian bridge remain a named, phased element of the park's development is essential in calling attention to its significance as a Regional facility – as this is strategically important to securing grant funding.

## Conformance with Anoka County Policies and Plans



Evidence of the importance and relevance for continued collaboration and cooperation in securing funding for completion of the skyway and pedestrian bridge is noted on page 17 of the Draft Amendment. It cites survey results from the 2016 'Plan Your Parks' – Public Events: *“62% would prefer to walk or bike to a park as opposed to having to drive. Again, this shows support for the trail projects outlined in the amendments and shows the importance of connectivity throughout the local and regional trail system.”*

Further evidence that the pedestrian crossing with direct connection to the Northstar rail station and the 887 Bus Route stop, should remain a priority is cited on page 20 of the Draft Amendment:

*“Since the majority of participants end up driving to the parks and trails, the Department should work with County’s Transportation Division, local cities and the Metropolitan Council to ensure multiple modes of transportation options exist for access to the system and that future trails provide the needed connections between the residential areas surrounding the park.”*



## Compliance with Regional Policies and Plans

Like the City of Ramsey, Anoka County is also in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. Pursuant to Minn. Statute 473.864, the County’s park plans must be consistent with both the Metropolitan Council’s *Thrive 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* as well as the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*. Both the City and County’s comprehensive plans are reviewed by the Metropolitan Council based on three primary criteria:

- Conformance with metropolitan system plans
- Consistency with Metropolitan Council policies
- Compatibility with adjacent and affected governmental units.

When a plan meets these criteria, the Metropolitan Council authorizes comprehensive plans, and park plans to be put into effect. If a plan does not meet the review standards,

the Council can require the jurisdiction to modify its plan to conform to the Council's system plans. The City of Ramsey believes that the policies of the *Thrive 2040* system plans will be better advanced when it fully acknowledges and includes the Mississippi Skyway as a critical connection to regional systems; including transit, the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) and its important role in accessing the regional park.

*Thrive MSP 2040* also provides specific Directives for parks' implementing agencies, most notably: "Promote expanded multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails, and the transit network, where appropriate." Advocating for completion of the skyway across U.S. Highways #10 & #169 as part of the planning for Mississippi West Regional Park will advance this Directive.

Ramsey believes that removal of this existing planned improvement from the existing Master Plan presents a conflict with regional policies. *ThriveMSP 2040* outlines several outcomes: "*Thrive's regional vision includes five desired outcomes: stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. While each outcome is described below, it is important to note that the five outcomes reinforce and support one another to produce greater benefits than any single outcome alone. The outcomes provide policy direction for this 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.*"

The current/approved Metropolitan Council's approved master plan for Mississippi West Regional Park, shows an elevated pedestrian crossing of U.S. Highways #10 & #169 as one of the Phased improvements to the Mississippi West Regional Park. Ramsey believes it important for this improvement to remain in the Master Plan. The improvement would connect the following existing regional systems.

1. Mississippi West Regional Park Boat Landing
2. Northstar Commuter Rail - Ramsey Station
3. US Highway 10/169 (A Major Arterial)
4. Central Anoka County Regional Trail
5. Anoka County Mississippi River Regional Trail
6. Tier 1 Priority Regional Bicycle Transportation Corridor

The exhibit below shows the proposed, realigned trail corridor in a red dashed line, as proposed by the City of Ramsey.



Figure 1: COR Master Plan/Suggested Realignment of Central Anoka County Regional Trail

Considerable investments in regional improvements converge in this location, including the \$13 million dollar rail station, with \$1.1 million dollar pedestrian skyway over Veteran’s Drive, \$8 million dollar covered transit and parking facility, as well as approximately one half million in boat landing and river access improvements. Additionally, the Mississippi River Regional Trail has been completed and in use from the City of Anoka, through the City of Ramsey and into the park (portions depicted below). The trail together with two bridges on the 80-acre King’s Island represents over one million dollars in bike facilities that are also a key component of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. The Final Plans and Specifications for the Mississippi Skyway are being prepared today, and funded by a \$490,000 grant from the National Park Service.

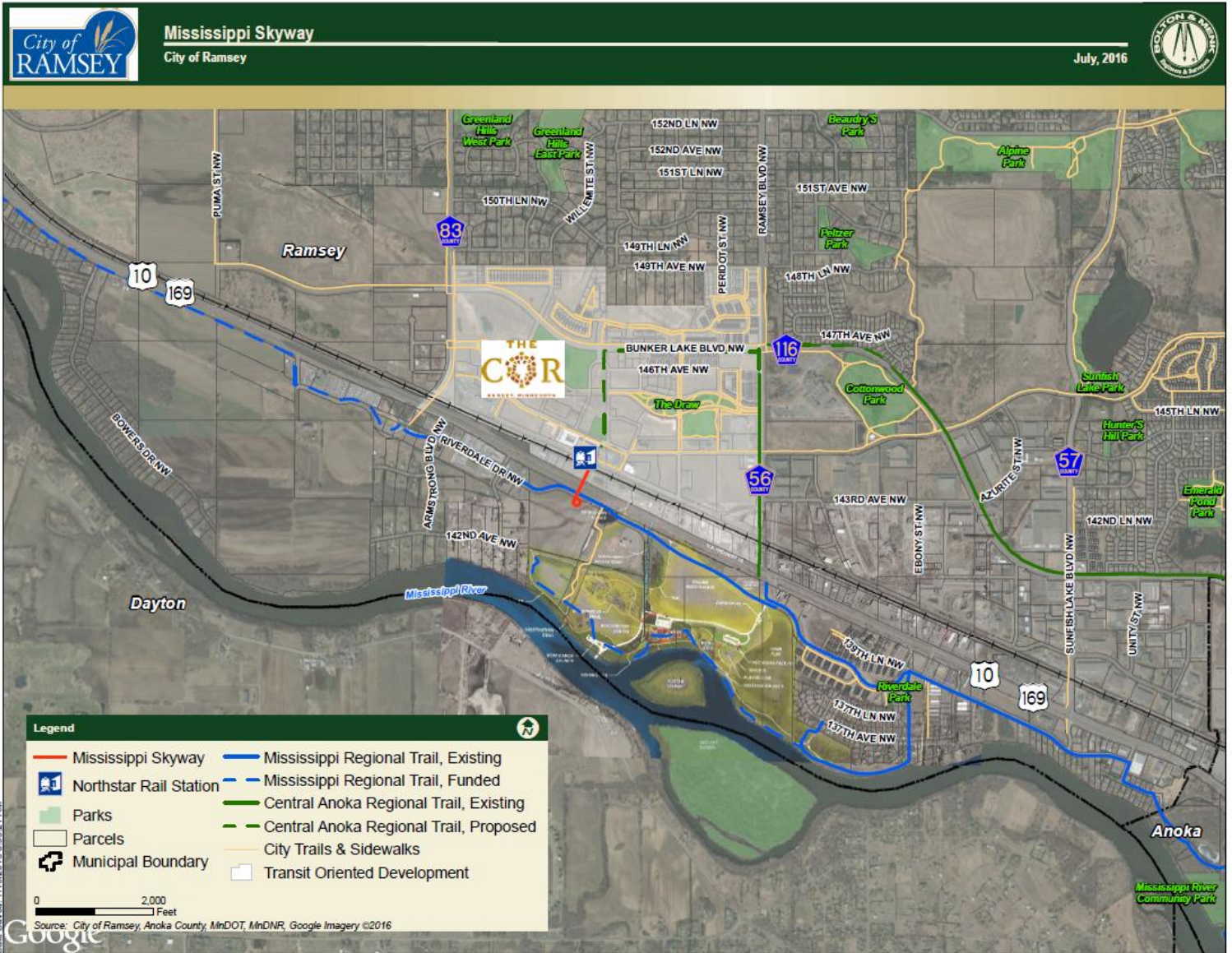


Figure 2: Regional Intersections of Mississippi Skyway

It is this inter-jurisdictional trail with multi-modal connections and host of retail services that will make this pedestrian bridge the nexus of regional systems and destinations, and merits the concurrent alignment of the Central Anoka County Trail at such time the elevated highway crossing is in place. The realigned Regional Trail should also be discussed within the completed Master Plan Amendment.



## Advancing ThriveMSP 2040 Outcomes

The following highlights anticipated *Thrive Outcomes* relating to the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan of an aligned regional trail with a grade-separated pedestrian crossing of Hwy's #10 & #169 and connection to the MRT.



*Mississippi River at the regional park*



*Workforce Housing in The COR, completed in 2013*



*Rail and bus service can provide access to the natural-resource based Mississippi West Regional Park from the urban cities*

### Stewardship

Mississippi West Regional Park possesses a bounty of natural resources, including woodland habitats, restored native prairie, and a segment of the Nation's most prominent river with Wild and Scenic designation. Advancing multi-modal connections to the park for the region's residents and visitors is a strategic investment that makes available these rich natural assets for those who choose not to travel by automobile. Broadening access to these regional amenities exposes people to the intrinsic beauty of the park and river, and thus builds support for on-going stewardship of natural resources and the environment.

### Prosperity

Investment in the pedestrian overpass will make the commercial and retail areas on both sides of Hwy's #10 & #169 more attractive to quality business that are concerned with quality of life for their employees in terms of the ability to walk during break periods to and from the park. In addition, improved connection to the trail systems the bridge will provide for, allows a greater proportion of the workforce to commute without an automobile and expands transit access – both of which enhance economic competitiveness.

## Equity



Increasingly, people are using the Northstar Commuter Rail to expand recreational access to the region's parks and trails

The transit-oriented development known as The COR includes a mix of residential housing choices for people of all incomes. Providing a 'means' to access Mississippi West Regional Park sans an automobile also means creating real choices in where residents may live, travel and recreate. The grade-separated pedestrian crossing of the highway and rail line creates the nexus between housing, transportation and recreation, and thus leverages multiple investments to build a more equitable region.

## Livability

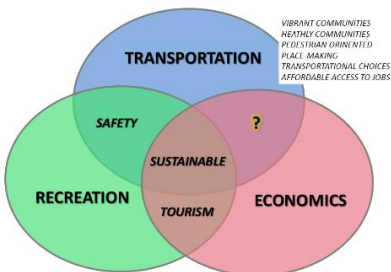


U.S. Hwy's #10 & #169 can be a barrier to accessing Nature associated with the regional park and trail on the south side of the highway. Livability is enhanced by *one* connecting piece of infrastructure - the pedestrian crossing and bicycle facility. This will provide transportation choices, and access to Nature and outdoor experiences for a range of the region's demographic and economic make-up. The COR is by design, pedestrian-oriented as well as transit-oriented. Aligning resources (the pedestrian bridge), supports walkable places and promotes healthy communities and active living.



## Sustainability

The Mississippi Skyway exemplifies sustainability as bicycles will always be an efficient means of short trips - made more effective especially with the proposed bridge's physical connection to the commuter rail station. With a 100-plus year lifespan, the facility will help to ensure regional vitality for generations to come. This also adds and preserves capacity for all the public and private investments it connects to, thereby quite literally investing in the future.



## Integration



The pedestrian facility will be the embodiment of the intentional combining of related activities and infrastructure to achieve more effective results in coordinating the way people travel, commute, work and play. The bike and ped bridge will be an example of the County, City and Council effectively working with all partners and stakeholders throughout the region to secure funding for a project that will have multiple benefits.

## Collaboration



The Mississippi Skyway, with its direct connection to the National Mississippi River Trail and U.S. Bikeway #45 - when completed with a realigned Central Anoka County Trail, will be an unequaled example of collaboration in advancing the region most effectively towards shared outcomes. The pedestrian bridge is an expensive facility, no single entity has the capacity to fund it alone, and therefore a *shared* strategy is truly in the region's interest. Indeed, it is the Metropolitan Council's mission to foster these partnerships and reciprocal relationships to address regional opportunities and solutions – therefore maintaining the pedestrian bridge as a named Phased improvement within the Master Plan for the park is essential.

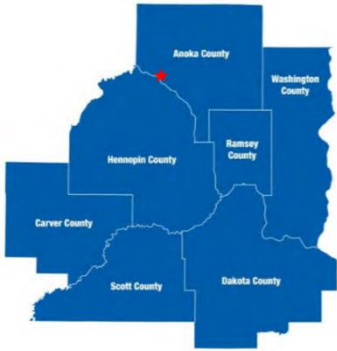
## Accountability and Additional Directives



*Ramsey Station, October 2014:  
People use the rail and bus service for commuting, efficient access to the airport, as well a connection to the region's trail systems*

Identifying the proposed pedestrian bridge over U.S. Hwy's #10 & #169 as a priority for the regional partners to secure Federal funding; will fulfill the Council's mission of an equitable return on investments across the geographic region. This positions the Council, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, regional park agencies, municipalities, the National Park Service, and state partners to effectively collaborate on:

~ Expanding the Regional Parks System to conserve, maintain, and connect natural resources identified as being of high quality or having regional importance, as identified in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan



~ Provides a comprehensive regional park and trail system that preserves high quality natural resources, increases climate resiliency, fosters healthy outcomes, connects communities, and enhances quality of life in the region

~ Promotes expanded multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, and the transit network, and as such, strengthens equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all our region's residents - across age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin, and abilities

## Advancing 2040 Regional Transportation Policy Plan



Following the abstract on pedestrian bridge's relevance as a regional improvement directly associated with the park, is a summary of *Thrive's* 2040 Transportation Policy Plan's *objectives* (in quotes) and why it is imperative that the completion of the skyway over Hwy #10 and Riverdale Drive remain a named Phased Improvement within the Master Plan for Mississippi West Regional Park – and for the Master Plan Amendment to be consistent with the Transportation Policy Plan's goals, objectives and strategies.

### Project Abstract

The Mississippi Skyway is a pedestrian bridge extension of the existing skyway over Veterans Drive from the 800-stall public parking ramp to the Northstar Ramsey Rail Station. The extension will continue over U.S. Highways #10 & #169 to the Regional Park and Trail on the south side of the highway and frontage road.

This section of Highways #10 & #169 is a barrier to pedestrian and bicycle movements at the Ramsey Station. It is a 4-lane divided highway that is a primary east-west route in Anoka County, serving as a commuter corridor to the Minneapolis/Saint Paul Metropolitan Area with annual average daily traffic of 39,000 vehicles per day in the immediate project area. BNSF freight rail line runs parallel to the highway, and there has been a nearly 40 percent increase in freight traffic since 2012, with 71 trains per day each day at present. This rail line also serves as the Northstar Commuter Rail Corridor.



~ "Overcome physical barriers and eliminate critical systems gaps."

The proposed extension of the bicycle and pedestrian bridge both addresses gaps and barriers within the regional systems, and at the same time will improve convenience and continuity for bicyclists and ADA accessibility.

~ "Facilitate safe and continuous trips to regional destinations."

Developing the proposed multiuse trail and bicycle facility (skyway extension) within the Tier One **Regional Bicycle Transportation Network** will improve the convenience and safety of bicycling and ADA accessibility along, and connecting to, existing facilities - including the Mississippi River Trail and the regional park.

~ "Integrate and/or supplement existing and planned infrastructure."

The Mississippi Skyway provides the connection between regional amenities creating an effective nexus between housing, transportation, employment and recreation. The Mississippi Skyway will **link existing and future public investments with a single project, enhancing the value of each.**

~ "Provide improved opportunities to increase the share of trips made by bicycle."

The dramatically improved, safe connections the skyway extension will accomplish - together with access to transit will increase the likelihood of choosing bicycling for transportation over other travel modes – and especially for Metropolitan area residents beyond the City of Ramsey.

FIGURE 9 - Injury and Fatal Crashes (2003-2012)



HIGHWAY 10 ACCESS PLANNING STUDY

22

Excerpt from the Hwy 10 Study - Injury and fatal crash locations along Hwy 10 in Ramsey, 2003-12

The Draft Amendment cites on page 11: *"Conflicts between pedestrians and vehicular traffic will be kept to a minimum by reducing the number of trail and road crossings within the park and by working with the City of Ramsey to ensure safe crossings at city road intersections. Treatments for these areas may include signing, striping and signalized pedestrian crossings."*

The above strategy to mitigate conflicts may be effective immediately adjacent to the park, but would be deficient with respect to bicyclists and pedestrians utilizing the Central Anoka County Trail as it exists today. The intersection of Ramsey Boulevard and Highways #10 & #169 (below) has traffic speeds of 60 MPH and is more than 220' feet across – and including turn lanes, has 32 points of conflict to negotiate.



As evidenced by the above image of existing conditions, MnDOT and Anoka County Highway have not maintained the crosswalk striping. This should be addressed, as the 8' foot sidewalk (presently serving as the Central Anoka County Trail) connects to the intersection at the northwest, and an 8' bituminous trail is also at the southeast. Both are considered elements of the MRT and US Bikeway #45.



The proposed realignment of the Central Anoka County Regional Trail concurrent with the proposed pedestrian bridge discussed above, should be shown within the completed Master Plan Amendment, as it will provide demonstrable safe pedestrian and bicyclist's benefits for accessing the park from north of U.S. Highways #10 & #169.



Wayfinding is discussed on page 10 of the Draft Amendment. The City of Ramsey supports the signing plan outlined in the document. The final Master Plan should note that adjacent to the touch-down point of the proposed pedestrian bridge there is large wayfinding sign with maps of the local parks and trails – with the other side showing the entire National Park Service area from Ramsey to Hastings. This sign is within a plaza with seating along the MRT and across from the trail leading to the river in Mississippi West Regional Park.



Skyway location

MnDOT double sided Interpretive Kiosk

Public Engagement and Participation is discussed within the Draft Amendment on pages 12 through 21. However, **it appears there was no community engagement specific to Mississippi West Regional Park**, nor was the City of Ramsey informed or invited to host public input on the plans for the park. As with most regional parks, the primary users are those nearest the park. The COR will have more than 2,000 residential units directly to the north of the park, with many more adjacent to this pedestrian oriented development – thousands of Ramsey residents are within walking and biking distance of the park today. In terms of Origins (residential units) and Destinations (the Regional Park), there exists the highway and rail line barrier discussed above. To the east of Ramsey in the City of Anoka, a similar situation of Origins and Destinations exist, and fatalities have occurred when pedestrians have crossed this same highway. Recently, hundreds's of thousands in public monies have been expended in constructing physical barriers in an attempt to save lives. It is imperative that Anoka County Parks and the City of Ramsey develop a cost-share plan for the ultimate construction of the remaining portion of the Mississippi Skyway, considering other Regional partners – and seek funding for grant monies that are uniquely available for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. This will be prudent planning and cooperation, in stark contrast to the potential future action of expending public monies on barriers.

In conclusion, the City of Ramsey unequivocally recommends that the Draft Master Plan Amendment be revised to:

- Clearly name the proposed pedestrian bridge as a future Phased Improvement of the regional park, thereby to be found in conformance with the *Thrive 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, and the approved Master Plan.
- Identify within the Draft Master Plan Amendment a schedule for a negotiated cost-share agreement for completion of the skyway and pedestrian bridge – in a timeframe that allows for a joint application in 2018 for Transportation Advisory Board solicitation for funding (and potentially other sources).
- Add a narrative and exhibit to the Draft Master Plan Amendment that shows the realignment of the Central Anoka County Regional Trail to a safe alignment for bicyclists and pedestrians (to the location of the pedestrian overpass when complete), which also will connect the regional park directly to the Metropolitan Transit system, and thereby to come into conformance with both the *Thrive 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan as well as the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan* relating to directives for regional parks.

Respectfully,

The City of Ramsey

**C** Community Development Committee  
For the Metropolitan Council meeting of March 30, 2011

Item: 2011-70

**Date** March 22, 2011  
**Prepared:**  
**Subject:** Mississippi West Regional Park Master Plan, Anoka County

**Proposed Action:**

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Mississippi West Regional Park Master Plan (Referral No. 50004-1).
2. Require that Anoka County submit a negotiated cost sharing agreement related to the development of the pedestrian overpass described in Phase 5 of the master plan to the Metropolitan Council prior to seeking regional parks funding for the project, in order for the Council to determine the eligible costs for regional funding.
3. Advise Anoka County to work with the City of Ramsey to ensure that the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area and Wild and Scenic River programs and standards are implemented during the park development phases.

**Summary of Committee Discussion / Questions:**

Chair Cunningham inquired about the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area designation. Jan Youngquist, Planning Analyst, described that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) oversees the Mississippi River Critical Area Program. The Critical Area Corridor follows the Mississippi River and stretches from the City of Ramsey in Anoka County past Hastings in Dakota County. The DNR establishes rules for protecting the river, similar to zoning code requirements, which are implemented by local municipalities.

The Community Development Committee unanimously approved the recommendation.

# MISSISSIPPI WEST REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN



ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
December 2010  
Approved by Met Council April 2011

Prepared by:  
Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department  
550 Bunker Lake Boulevard NW  
Andover, MN 55304



# SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ANOKA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

John VonDeLinde, Director

Karen Blaska, Park Planner

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## APPENDIX

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mississippi West Regional Park is a 273 acre park located within the City of Ramsey between the Mississippi River and Trunk Highway 10. The park has 1-1/2 miles of shoreline along the Mississippi River and offers a unique setting to provide recreational and educational opportunities in the area. It is part of the Mississippi River Critical Corridor Area and the Mississippi National River Recreation Area.

In 1996, a concept master plan was approved by the Metropolitan Council and the park was incorporated into the metropolitan regional park system. Since then it has been updated with the Anoka County 20/20 Parks and Recreation Vision Plan and then again in 2006, when Anoka County adopted a new Parks and Recreation Comprehensive System Plan. Input for the system plan was obtained through a variety of stakeholders, including a 20 member citizen advisory group and all local units of government in Anoka County. The system plan addresses current and future system needs, including an updated concept plan for Mississippi West Regional Park.

This master plan was developed based on the conceptual plan from 1996, the history of the land, the existing conditions, nature resources in the area, sustainability, demand for additional recreational and educational facilities and accessibility.



Prepared by:  
Hemming and Associates, Inc. Consulting Landscape Architects  
687 Woodland Drive Shoreview MN 55126 (612) 483-6731

The proposed development concept for Mississippi West Regional Park includes many recreational amenities typically found in the regional parks; picnic areas, restroom buildings, trails, roads and parking lots. The central feature proposed for Mississippi West Regional Park is an interpretive or visitor center that would serve as a “living laboratory” that incorporates best management practices in sustainability and natural resource restoration, i.e. minimizing impervious surfaces and using native plant species. Interpretive information regarding best management practices will educate visitors regarding restoration of disturbed sites in ways that enhance the natural resources and promote long term conservation. In addition, an arboretum style garden will educate visitors on the differences between native and non-native plant species in the area and the required maintenance for each type. Facilities of this type require a supporting maintenance facility that would be included in the park development.

Development is proposed to occur in phases. The first phase of development is the design, engineering and construction of a temporary road, boat launch and fishing pier on the river. The next phase will be the construction of the necessary infrastructure such as roadways, trails, parking lots, utilities, and lighting. Following that, construction of new picnic facilities, restroom buildings, a gatehouse, additional trails, and a play structure will occur. The fourth phase of development will include an interpretive and/or visitor center with additional parking, trails and interpretive features, an arboretum style garden, as well as natural resource restoration.

As proposed by the City of Ramsey, there could be an additional phase that would include a pedestrian overpass for Truck Highway 10 that would connect the park with Ramsey Town Center. This phase could occur earlier depending on available funding.

Estimated costs for each phase are as follows:

<b>Concept Development Estimate</b>	
Item	Total Cost
Phase I - Boat Launch Construction	\$ 400,000
Phase 2 - Infrastructure Development	\$ 2,290,000
Phase 3 - Park Facility Development	\$ 1,570,000
Phase 4 - Visitor Center Development	\$ 1,780,000
Phase 5 - Pedestrian Crossing Development	\$ 2,585,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 8,625,000</b>

Annual operations and maintenance costs for the park are estimated to be about \$140,000.

Anoka County will be responsible to provide the on-going daily and general routine maintenance of the park. Anoka County will inspect the park and trails regularly and will provide any capital improvements the park requires, such as bituminous overlays, reroofing, etc. Park signs will be provided and maintained by the county.

Revenue for the operation and maintenance of the park will come from the Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department's annual operations and maintenance budget, which includes revenues from picnic shelter rentals, room rentals, programs, and park entrance fees. Supplementary funding is provided through the Regional Park Operations and Maintenance Grant Program.

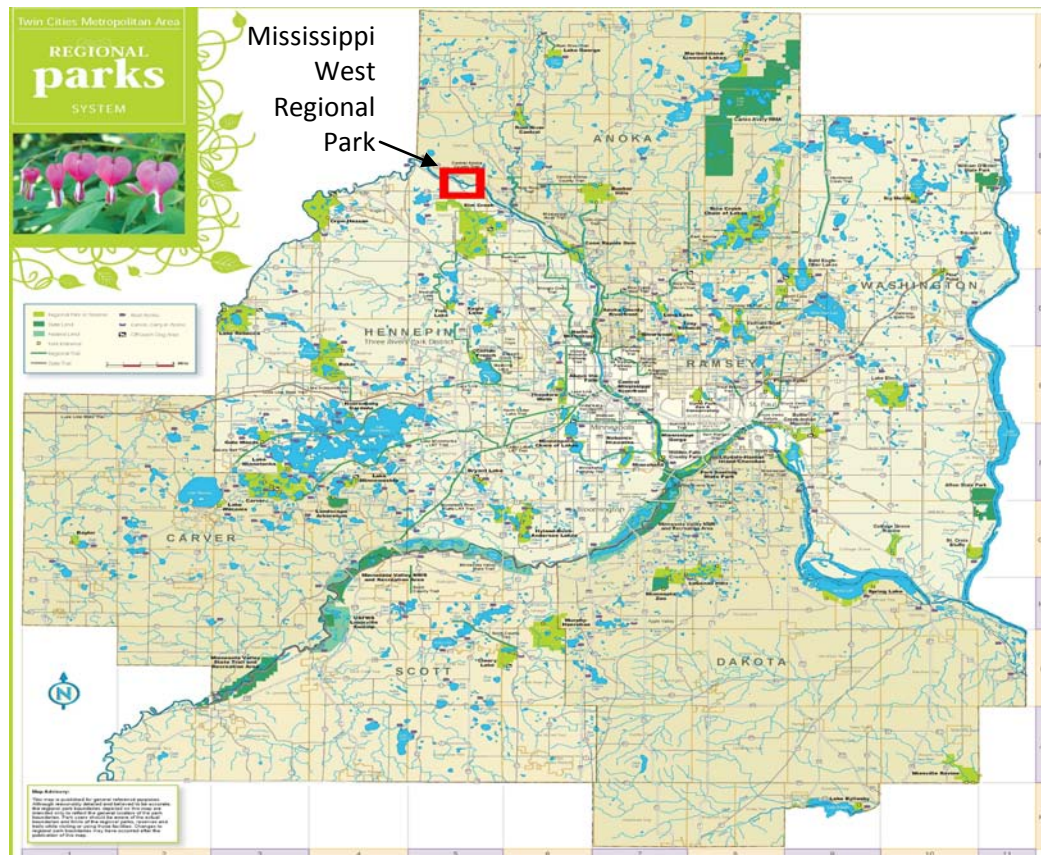


Master Plan for Mississippi West Regional Park

## II. BACKGROUND

### A. Park History

Mississippi West Regional Park was incorporated into the metropolitan regional park system in 1996. Since then, little recreation development has occurred due to a life estate within the park, which ended in 2007. The County has restored 49.9 acres of fallow fields to native prairie habitat and continues to restore the remaining fields as funding allows. In 2008, the County partnered with the City of Ramsey on a storm water outlet project related to the development of the Ramsey Town Center. This project ultimately provided a bituminous trail on top of a storm water outlet to the Mississippi River providing easy access to the river. Outside of this trail and a few fire breaks which serve as natural surface walking trails, there are no other recreational amenities in the park currently.



B. Existing Conditions



Aerial view of Mississippi West Regional Park

First and foremost, the park has approximately 1-1/2 miles of river frontage along the Mississippi River, which provides several extraordinary scenic vistas of the river. Foster and Cloquet Islands have remained relatively undisturbed.



View of Mississippi River from the park



Elevation contours in park

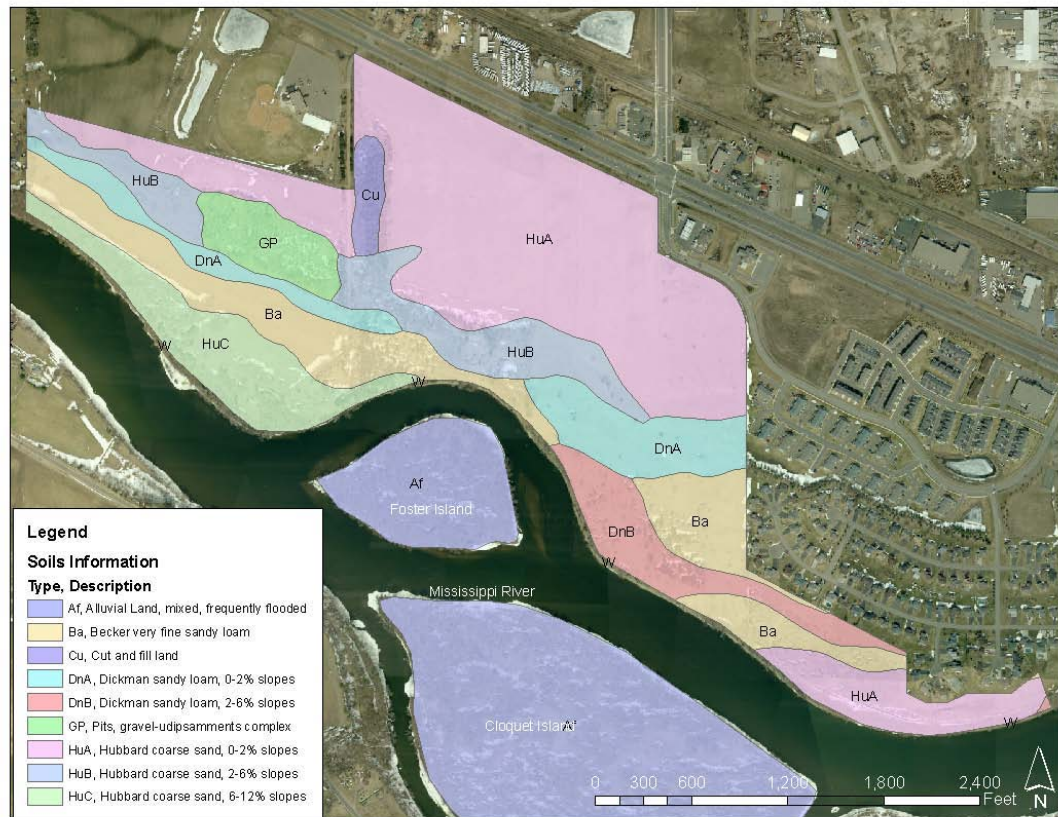
The park contains fairly level topography with the majority of relief located at an old gravel pit and along the river. Due to the relief in those areas and erosion that has occurred, sections of the banks should be repaired to reduce and avoid further sediment loading into the river.



Mississippi River bank erosion

The majority of the soil types within the park are Hubbard course sand with 0-12% slopes. The remaining soils are Becker, very fine sandy loam and Dickman sandy loam with 0-6 % slopes. There are a few small areas that have been cut and filled along the existing road. Therefore, overall the soils in the park are very suitable for development.

The soils of Foster and Cloquet Islands are an alluvial mix that floods frequently, therefore no development is proposed for the islands, although some natural resource restoration may occur.

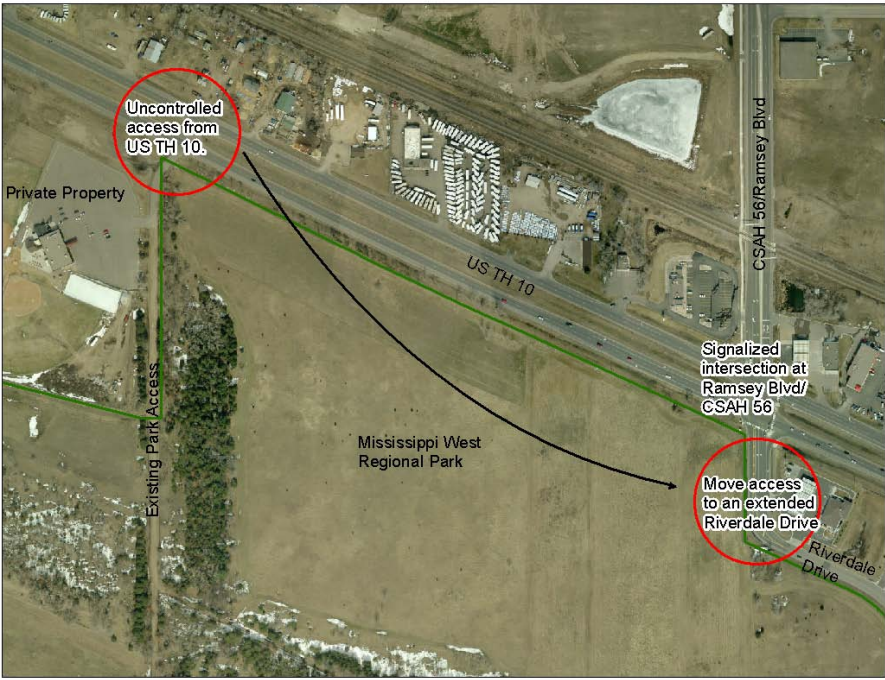


Soil Types

A wetland review was performed in September 2010. Anoka County Soil Survey and the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) were referenced as well as conducting an onsite review. There were no hydric soils and no wetlands as inventoried by the NWI except for those directly associated with the river. See Appendix.

Other existing natural resources include previously disturbed woodland and grassland areas, riparian edges and river bluffs, which contain several invasive species that will need to be eliminated and restored with native species. Native prairie has been restored in some areas of the park and the remaining fields are scheduled to be restored to a native grassland/prairie sometime in the future.

Current access to the park is through an uncontrolled intersection off Trunk Highway 10 and follows a gravel road (Traprock Street) back into the park. Long-term plans will provide access off of Riverdale Drive through a signaled intersection at CSAH 56/Ramsey Blvd.



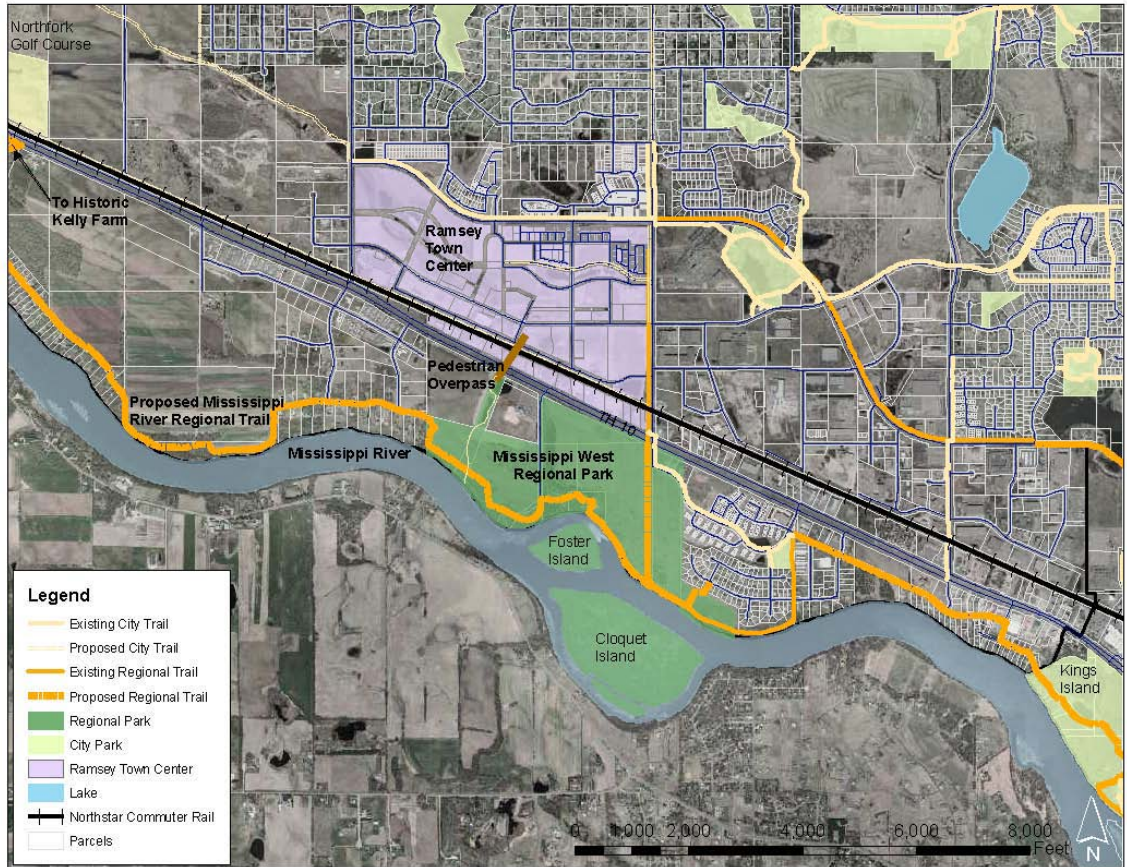
Move Park Access

Currently, there are a few existing structures in the park: one habitable house, one uninhabitable house, a few garage buildings and several outbuildings. Most structures, other than the habitable house, are in a state of disrepair and pose liability issues. The structures are proposed to be demolished and removed.



C. Surrounding Amenities

A few of the surrounding amenities include the proposed Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRT), which runs adjacent to the river from Elk River to Minneapolis and traverses through Mississippi West Regional Park.



Amenities around Mississippi West Regional Park

Ramsey Town Center (RTC) is a 369.5 acre development north of Highway 10 and the park. RTC was planned to include 2400 residential units and 1.65 million square feet of commercial, industrial, and institutional space. In addition, the City of Ramsey proposes a Northstar Commuter Station and a pedestrian overpass over Trunk Highway 10.

Approximately one mile west of the Anoka County/ Sherburne County line is the historic Oliver Kelley Farm. This farm is owned by the Minnesota Historical Society and is used as an interpretive center and working example of an 1860's Farm.



D. Historical/Cultural Background Information

At this time, the County is unaware of any known or suspected archaeological resources in the area that will be affected by this project. The State Historical Preservation Office will be consulted for further information as park development occurs.

III. BOUNDARIES AND ACQUISITION COSTS

All parcels within the park boundary are currently under County ownership. Therefore, there will be no boundary changes or acquisition costs related to the proposed master plan development. To address potential park impacts due to a proposed interchange at CSAH 56/TH 10, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the Metropolitan Council, MN Department of Transportation, MN Department of Natural Resources and Anoka County. See Appendix.



Park Boundary

IV. STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Management and stewardship of the park thus far has entailed natural resource restoration throughout the park. Approximately 50 acres of fallow agricultural fields have been restored to a native grassland prairie mix and current plans are to restore another 23

acres. Future plans include woodland restoration, bluff/riparian edge restoration and completing the remaining grassland prairie restoration.

Currently, there is a Parks and Recreation staff member who lives in the existing house and serves as caretaker for the park. This staff member has been able to notify the Department of any maintenance or operations issues that arise, allowing quick resolution.

Future park development would require balancing the impacts of recreational development with the restored natural resources in the park and sustainable development.

## V. DEMAND FORECAST

Regional parks and trails have been increasing in popularity and as the population grows, the need for additional recreation sources and amenities grows as well. The population in Anoka County has been growing steadily and is predicted to grow 38% in the next 25 years. The City of Ramsey is predicted to grow approximately 32% from the year 2010 to the year 2030. This will create a very high demand for recreational opportunities.

### Population Forecast\*

	<u>City of Ramsey</u>
2010	30,000
2020	43,000
2030	44,000

\*Metropolitan Council 2030 Regional Development Framework – System Statement

The outdoor recreational use patterns in the metropolitan area have been growing steadily. From 1995 to 2009, recreational visits to Anoka County regional parks and trails increased by almost 70% and is currently over 3.0 million visits per year.

According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources 2004 Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey of Minnesotans, nearly 82% indicated that outdoor recreation is “very important” or “moderately important” in their lives. Popular trail related activities are walking, hiking, biking, running, jogging or inline skating.

In addition, the Statewide Health Initiative Program (SHIP) is promoting living longer, healthier lives through the reduction in obesity and increased physical activity. Currently, Anoka County has received a SHIP grant to increase access to parks and trails and increase education regarding health, wellness and outdoor recreation.

With the population growth expected, the increase in recreational visits to regional parks and trails, and the increased concern for health and wellness, the demand for additional recreational facilities will increase.

## VI. DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The proposed development concept for Mississippi West Regional Park includes many recreational amenities typically found in the regional parks: picnicking areas, restroom buildings, trails, roads and parking lots. The central feature proposed for Mississippi West Regional Park is an interpretive or visitor center that would serve as a “living laboratory” that incorporates best management practices in sustainability and natural resource restoration. In addition, an arboretum style garden will education visitors between the differences of native and non-native plant species in the area and the required maintenance for each type. Best management practices will educate visitors about restoring disturbed sites in ways that enhance the natural resources, promote long term conservation, and use less costly alternative energy sources. In addition, a supporting maintenance facility will be included in the development.



Master Plan for Mississippi West Regional Park

Development would occur in phases. The first phase of development is the design, engineering and construction of a temporary road, boat/canoe launch and fishing pier providing access to the river.



Phase 1 Development at Mississippi West Regional Park

<b>Phase 1: Boat Launch Development Estimate</b>	
Item	Total Cost (2010)
Design/Engineering (in-kind)	\$ -
Boat Launch Road/Parking Lot	\$ 190,000
Boat Launch	\$ 40,000
Temporary Access Road	\$ 50,000
Fishing Pier	\$ 40,000
Signs	\$ 5,000
Topographic Survey / Construction Staking	\$ 10,000
Removal/Demolition of House and Hazard Material Abatement	\$ 40,000
Permits (City, Watershed, DNR, COE, NPS)	\$ 5,000
Subtotal	\$ 380,000
Contingency and Fees	\$ 20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 400,000</b>

The next phase of development will be the design, engineering and construction of the main infrastructure for the park. This would include construction of roadways, parking lots, trails, utilities, installation of city water or a well, installation of city sanitary lines or a septic system and a maintenance facility. In addition, there would be some natural resource restoration and the installation of an observation deck or two. Lighting, signing and site furnishings for the roadway, parking lots and trails would be included in this phase as well. Existing structures would be torn down and removed.



Phase 2 Development at Mississippi West Regional Park

Phase 2: Infrastructure Development Estimate	
Item	Total Cost (2010)
Design & Engineering	\$ 170,000
Roadways / Parking Lots	\$ 950,000
Regional and Park Trails	\$ 250,000
Maintenance Facility	\$ 300,000
Utilities - Water/Sanitary/Electric/Fiber	\$ 150,000
Observation decks	\$ 100,000
Natural Resource Restoration	\$ 25,000
Lighting/Signage and Site Furnishings	\$ 25,000
Geotechnical Survey/Wetland Delineation and Assessment	\$ 25,000
Survey/Construction Staking	\$ 25,000
Material Abatement	\$ 60,000
Permits (City, Watershed, DNR, COE, NPS)	\$ 10,000
Subtotal	\$ 2,090,000
Fees and Contingency	\$ 200,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,290,000</b>

After the infrastructure is in place, the next phase of development would include the construction of a few new facilities, such as three picnic shelters, one to two restroom buildings, a gatehouse, additional trails, a play structure, utilities, lighting and site furnishings as well as some additional natural resource restoration.



Phase 3 Development at Mississippi West Regional Park

<b>Phase 3: Park Facility Development Estimate</b>	
Item	Total Cost (2010)
Design - Architectural & Engineering Services	\$ 120,000
Picnic Shelters (3)	\$ 600,000
Restroom Building (2)	\$ 200,000
Entrance Gate/POC station	\$ 100,000
Connector Trails	\$ 150,000
Play Structure	\$ 100,000
Utilities	\$ 50,000
Natural Resource Restoration	\$ 25,000
Lighting, Signage and Site Furnishings	\$ 25,000
Geotechnical Survey/Wetland Delineation and Assessment	\$ 25,000
Survey/Construction Staking	\$ 25,000
Permits (City, Watershed, DNR, COE, NPS)	\$ 10,000
Subtotal	\$ 1,430,000
Fees and Contingency	\$ 140,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,570,000</b>

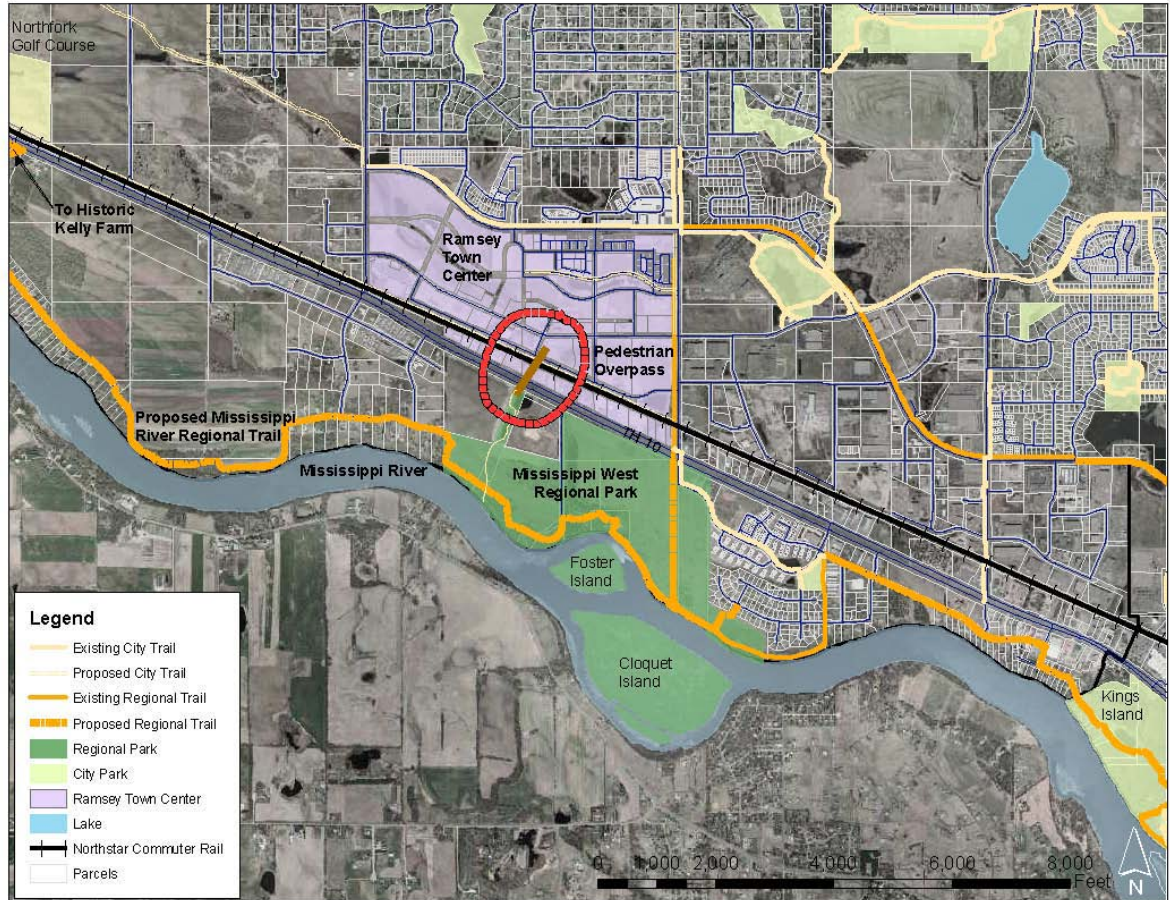
The fourth phase of development would include an interpretive and/or visitor center with additional parking, trails and interpretive features, as well as natural resource restoration and maintenance.



Phase 4 Development at Mississippi West Regional Park

<b>Phase 4: Visitor Center Development Estimate</b>	
Item	Total Cost (2010)
Design - Architectural & Engineering Services	\$ 120,000
Interpretive / Visitor Center	\$ 800,000
Site Work and Parking Lot	\$ 300,000
Trails and Interpretive features	\$ 150,000
Natural Resource Restoration	\$ 40,000
Utilities	\$ 100,000
Lighting, Signage and Site Furnishings	\$ 50,000
Geotechnical Survey/Wetland Delineation and Assessment	\$ 25,000
Survey/Construction Staking	\$ 25,000
Permits (City, Watershed, DNR, COE, NPS)	\$ 10,000
Subtotal	\$ 1,620,000
Fees and Contingency	\$ 160,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,780,000</b>

The final phase of development would include a pedestrian overpass for Trunk Highway 10 that would connect the park with Ramsey Town Center. Estimated costs for the overpass would mostly likely shared between the MN Department of Transportation, Anoka County and the City of Ramsey.



Phase 5 Development at Mississippi West Regional Park

<b>Phase 5: Pedestrian Connection Estimate</b>	
Item	Total Cost (2010)
Design & Engineering Services	\$ 200,000
Pedestrian Bridge	\$ 2,000,000
Lighting, Signage & Site Furnishings	\$ 75,000
Survey/Construction Staking	\$ 50,000
Geotechnical Survey/Wetland Delineation and Assessment	\$ 50,000
Permits (City, Watershed, DNR, COE, NPS)	\$ 10,000
Subtotal	\$ 2,385,000
Fees and Contingency	\$ 200,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,585,000</b>

## **VII. CONFLICTS**

Conflicts related to park development will be kept to a minimum through proper planning and community involvement. With any new development in an existing residential area, there are common concerns among the area residents that are adjacent to the park or trail.

One of these concerns is the effect the increased usage of the park will have on their safety, security and privacy. Generally, regional parks in the metropolitan area do not have a high number of criminal activities related to park use. Privacy is always a concern and Anoka County will work with the affected residents to minimize perceived impacts. Various methods will be used, such as vegetated buffer or shifting a trail when possible, with the best methods being determined by Anoka County.

Conflicts between pedestrians and vehicular traffic will be kept to a minimum by creating an entrance road at the signalized intersection of TH 10 and CSAH 56.

There are plans to construct an interchange at Trunk Highway 10 and CSAH 56/Ramsey Blvd. This will impact the park by requiring approximately eight (8) acres of parkland be converted to highway uses for the project. To minimize the impacts to the park in the future, current plans avoid any development in the potentially impacted area and replacement land has been tentatively identified. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the Metropolitan Council, MN Department of Transportation, MN Department of Natural Resources and Anoka County that addresses with issue. See Appendix.

Where the park is in close proximity to Highway 10, additional screening and buffering will be utilized to enhance the safety, aesthetics and quality of the park.

In addition, signage within the park will alert users of potential conflict areas, i.e. street crossings, driveway crossings, pedestrian cross-traffic, etc., and provide wayfinding and interpretive information.

## **VIII. PUBLIC SERVICES**

As outlined in the Development Concept, the planned public services and facilities for the park will occur in phases, but initial development will provide a temporary access road, a boat/canoe launch and parking lot for access to the river. Portable toilets will be provided until a restroom building can be constructed.

## **IX. OPERATIONS**

Anoka County Ordinance #2007-1 regulates the parks and trails under the jurisdiction of Anoka County and will be enforced by the local police departments and the Anoka County Sheriff's Department.

Anoka County will be responsible to provide the on-going daily and general routine maintenance of the park. This will include such maintenance as mowing, sweeping, plowing, clearing, debris removal, etc. Solid waste will be collected from trash and recycling receptacles located at high use areas and at regular intervals along the park trails. Anoka County will inspect the park and trails regularly and will provide any capital improvements the park requires, such as bituminous overlays, reroofing, etc. Park signs will be provided and maintained by the County.

Annual operations and maintenance costs for the park are estimated to be about \$140,000.

Revenue for the operation and maintenance of the park will come from the Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department's annual operations and maintenance budget, which includes revenues from picnic shelter rentals, room rentals, programs, parks entrance fees and the County general fund. Supplementary funding is provided through the Regional Park Operations and Maintenance Grant Program.

The County will research the most energy efficient models in sustainable construction methods when developing the park. Currently, Anoka County employs remote building automation systems that save the department \$5,000-\$10,000 per year compared to traditional energy monitoring systems. New building construction would include alternate heating and cooling methods, such as geo-thermal heating and cooling.

Anoka County through the Environmental Services Department has a refuse and recycling policy that requires recycling of paper, plastics, etc. In the past, Anoka County has typically used recycled materials as much as possible for buildings and furnishing for the low maintenance these materials require.

## **X. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

Anoka County works with regulatory agencies and local units of government in the master planning process. The Mississippi National River Recreation Area, a part of the National Park System, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources was allowed the opportunity to comment on this Master Plan. City of Ramsey staff and City Council members were invited to comment on the plan as well.

In addition, an open house was held on October 20, 2010. A notice was published in the local weekly newspaper and on the Anoka County website a few weeks prior to the meeting. In addition, post card invitations were mailed out to nearby residents and local city and county officials.

A total of 18 citizens attended the open house. Virtually all attendees were in support of the proposed plan. Residents were particularly appreciative of the current and planned protection and restoration of natural resources in the park and the minimized impact to adjoining residences through careful design and setbacks of any planned development.

Some additional comments and suggestions were:

- Allow for pontoon use of the boat launch;
- Post a sign to advise boaters of shallow waters or low water conditions;
- Restrict launch use to non-motorized boats because of shallow waters;
- No buildings near residential areas;
- Excited for the trails and connectivity between Ramsey and Anoka through the Mississippi River Trail.

Comments specific to the boat launch will be addressed and incorporated into the design phase of that project.

Refer to Appendix for the public notices.

## **XI. PUBLIC AWARENESS**

Public awareness is an important component to regional park and trail systems.

As development occurs, the County will provide public education efforts through the Metropolitan Council's regional-wide awareness program, as well as, public information maps, websites, publications and brochures provided by Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department. Since the park is located in the Mississippi National River Recreation Area, Anoka County will also work with National Park Service staff to provide information regarding the park.

## **XII. ACCESSIBILITY**

Anoka County continually strives to provide equal access to all residents of Anoka County. Park and trail use is open to any and all citizens. There is a nominal \$5.00 vehicle entrance fee to help offset maintenance and operations costs, but if visitors use public transportation, walk or bicycle to the park, entry is free, which minimizes economic barriers for park visitors. In addition, to public transportation, the Anoka County "Traveler" provides transportation services to the citizens of Anoka County for a minimal fee. This service offers rides to specific locations and is available to those in need.

The facilities and amenities within the park, as well as, access points will conform to the standards mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## **XIII. NATURAL RESOURCES**

Anoka County has maintained a strong commitment to preserving and restoring natural resources within its parks and open space system. The expansive 10,500 acre park system contains a diverse system of wildlife species and natural areas including upland forests, deciduous woodlands, upland prairies, forested wetlands, shrub wetlands and open wetlands. To manage the natural resources and maintain the parks identity and natural connection to the river, Anoka County will provide for:

- The protection, restoration and enhancement of native plant and animal habitats throughout the park;
- Protection and improvement of water and soil resources;
- Increase public awareness regarding the diverse natural resources in the area; and
- Sustainable practices related to park development, operations and maintenance.

General natural resources management strategies include identifying and assessing remnant plant and animal communities, monitoring rare species, controlling invasive species, ecologically restoring native plant and animal habitat, controlling detrimental insects and disease, wildlife management, enhancing water quality, erosion control and cooperative land stewardship.

A sustainable development framework is utilized in all new park and trail development and redevelopment to ensure ecologically sound land stewardship with an emphasis on maintaining the longevity of the facilities for public benefit.

The following natural resource management components are an integral part of Anoka County's planning efforts associated with the development of Mississippi West Regional Park:

1. Anoka County's Natural Resources Unit will be directly involved with the design, construction and monitoring of the proposed park development. A concerted emphasis will be placed on avoiding and minimizing any adverse impacts to the plant and animal habitat, as well as to the overall watershed. In addition, Anoka County will focus on incorporating local native seed and plant material that will compliment the ecology and function of the surrounding native plant communities.
2. Protection of surface water and ground water resources will be a top priority for this project. Anoka County will work very closely with the Cities of Ramsey and Anoka, the Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization, the National Park Service's Mississippi National River Recreation Area, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Council to ensure the standards and requirements for resource protection are consistent with the Council's model ordinance for storm water management.
3. The overall vegetation management goal for Anoka County is to identify restoration needs and to define and implement adaptive management strategies that will sustain the biological diversity, production, and function of native plant communities. Vegetation management within Mississippi West Regional Park will focus on preserving native plants, introducing local native plants, maintaining water quality within the watershed and providing for linear plant and wildlife corridor connections. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reference

“Guidelines for Managing and Restoring Natural Plant Communities Along Trails and Waterways” will be used as part of the long term management plan for this park.

Considering that ecosystems are dynamic and continually changing over time and space, an adaptive management approach and framework fits very well with the County’s practice of ecological restoration and stewardship. In the context of ecological restoration, the following adaptive management principles will guide the stewardship plan for Mississippi West Regional Park;

1. **Problem Assessment:**  
Define the scope of degradation to the site, synthesize the existing knowledge about it, and explore the potential outcomes of alternative restoration actions.
2. **Design:**  
Design a restoration plan and monitoring program that will provide reliable feedback and information about the effectiveness of restoration methods.
3. **Implementation:**  
Effective restoration is usually a multi-step process, requiring not only installation, but many years of maintenance and monitoring. Anoka County’s Natural Resources Unit has begun restoring natural plant communities within Mississippi West Regional Park. At the time of acquisition, 121 acres of the property consisted of agricultural fields and pasture land. Since acquisition, Anoka County’s Natural Resources Unit has restored 49.9 acres to native prairie with another 23.3 acres scheduled for restoration in 2011. The objective of the Natural Resources Unit is to restore the remaining acreage as funding becomes available.
4. **Monitoring:**  
Biological indicators are monitored to determine how effective the restoration methods are in meeting the project objectives.
5. **Evaluation:**  
The actual outcomes are compared to the anticipated outcomes. In addition, the reasons for the underlying differences are interpreted.
6. **Adjustment:**  
Practices, objectives, and models used during the restoration process may lead to reassessment of the problem, new questions, and new options to try in a continual cycle of improvement for a given project.

Management and stewardship practices for maintenance in the park will include periodic mowing, prescribed fire management, invasive species surveys, hazard tree assessments, seed collection and propagation, invasive species removal, turf management, brush and tree maintenance, erosion control, forest health assessments and maintenance, wildlife surveys and management as needed, and interpretive signage. Maintenance and stewardship practices also include regular trimming of trees and vegetation along roadways, trail corridors, park facilities and structures.

# Appendix

**List of Appendices:**

County Context Map

Mississippi West Regional Park Master Plan

Portions of Park Development Chapter of the Anoka County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive System Plan

Portions of the 20/20 Vision Plan for the Anoka County Parks and Recreation System

Hakanson Anderson wetland review information

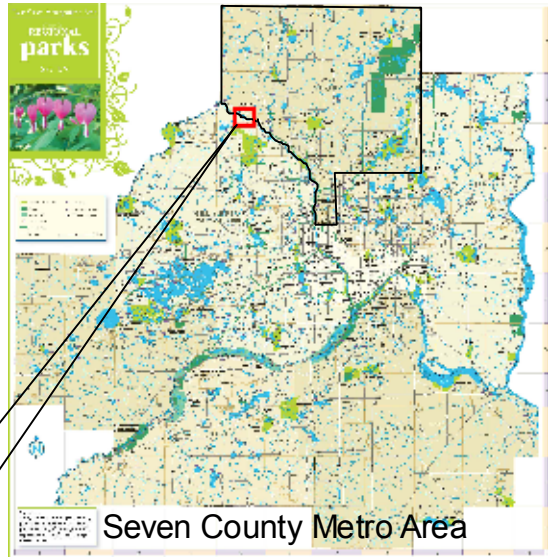
Memorandum of Understanding between MNDNR, MNDOT, Metropolitan Council and Anoka County

Minnesota Land Cover Classification System information

Anoka County Resolution

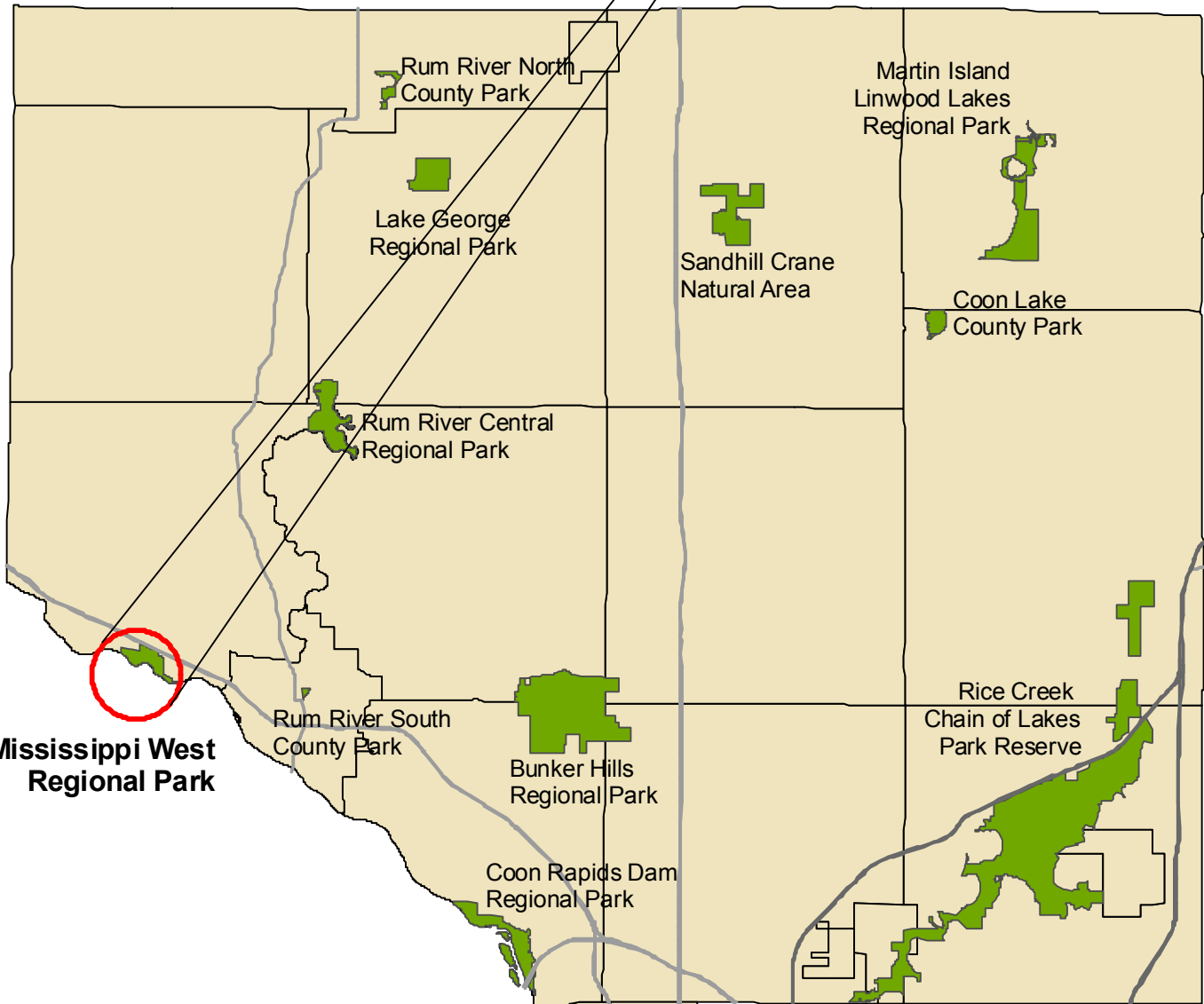
Review request letters to City of Ramsey, National Park Service and MN Department of Natural Resources

Public Meeting Notice



# Anoka County Park System

Seven County Metro Area



**Mississippi West Regional Park**

Rum River North County Park

Lake George Regional Park

Rum River Central Regional Park

Rum River South County Park

Bunker Hills Regional Park

Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park

Manomin County Park

Islands of Peace

Anoka County Riverfront Regional Park

Martin Island Linwood Lakes Regional Park

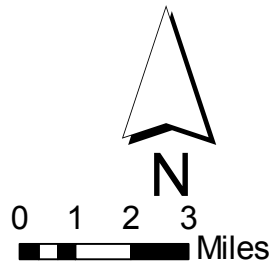
Sandhill Crane Natural Area

Coon Lake County Park

Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve

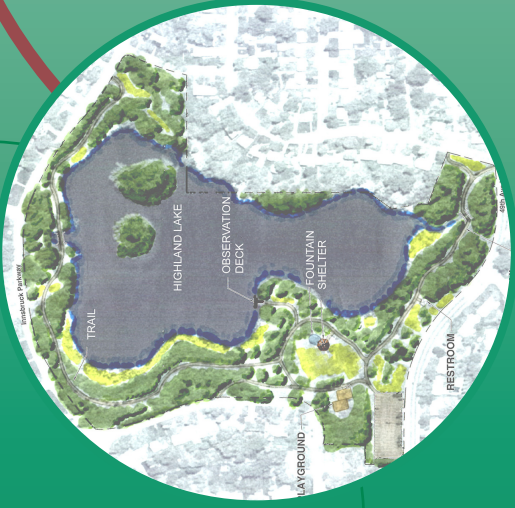
Rice Creek West Regional Trail / Locke

Kordiak County Park





**MISSISSIPPI WEST REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN**  
 Conceptual Design  
 (10.01.2010)

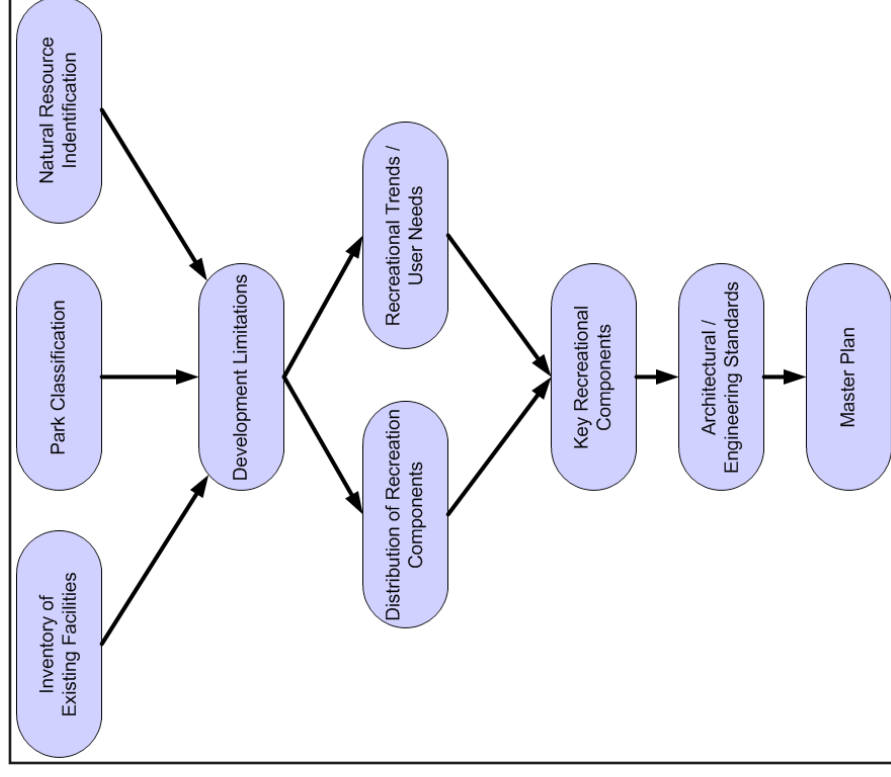


## PARK MASTER PLANS

### Introduction

Since the mid-1990's, Anoka County has invested in the renovation, upgrading and expansion of recreation and support facilities within the park system. Approximately \$28 million, mostly from outside funding sources, has been spent on improvements. This effort was guided by the 2020 Vision Plan and has led to substantial enhancements to the park system. Facility enhancements have provided many dividends to our customer base, which is evident by the response from users and the increasing popularity of the park system. Today, the parks are much more appealing, usable and safe.

Because of the increased popularity and satisfaction from users, the same principles that guided the development through the 2020 Vision Plan, are again used to plan, design and develop the park system from this point forward. A review of the recreation trends, survey of users, understanding the natural resource base and its limitations, modern design standards and increased accessibility, are all components that enable proper recreational development. In addition, existing facilities and desired future development was reviewed by a multi-disciplinary team of individuals ensuring a wide variety of perspectives. This planning process will create park development that is of high quality, efficient, accessible and aesthetic to all users.



### Planning Process

The master planning process for each park included a review and analysis of several different categories. These were inventory of existing facilities; review of park classification; identification of natural resource and ecosystems; review of development limitations; identification of key recreational components; distribution of recreational facilities; identifying recreation trends and user needs; and review of architectural and engineering standards. In addition, a complete inventory of land parcel ownership and boundary alignment was conducted in detail. A review of each category follows.

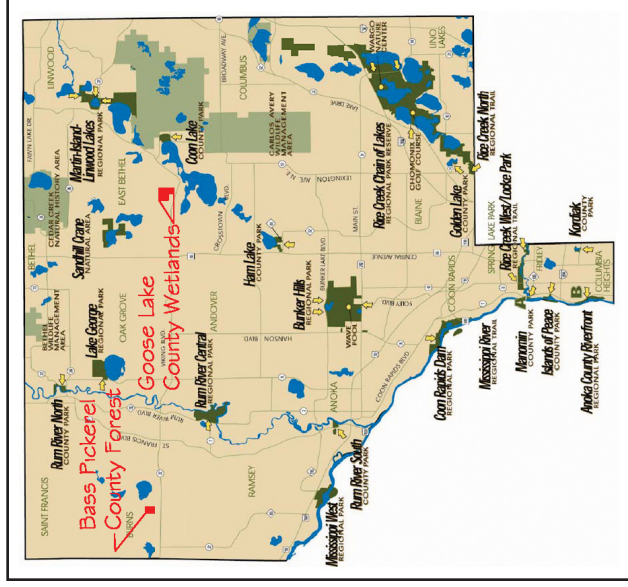
**Inventory of Existing Facilities**

An overview of the existing facilities in each park was made. This included quantitative aspects of trails, recreational and interpretive facilities, support facilities, special use facilities and other amenities. A qualitative assessment was made as well, including the accessibility, aesthetic functionality and condition of existing facilities. Understanding the existing structure of the park enables planners to better identify future redevelopment needs and costs. The inventory also codifies all facilities throughout the county for future reference.

**Park Classification**

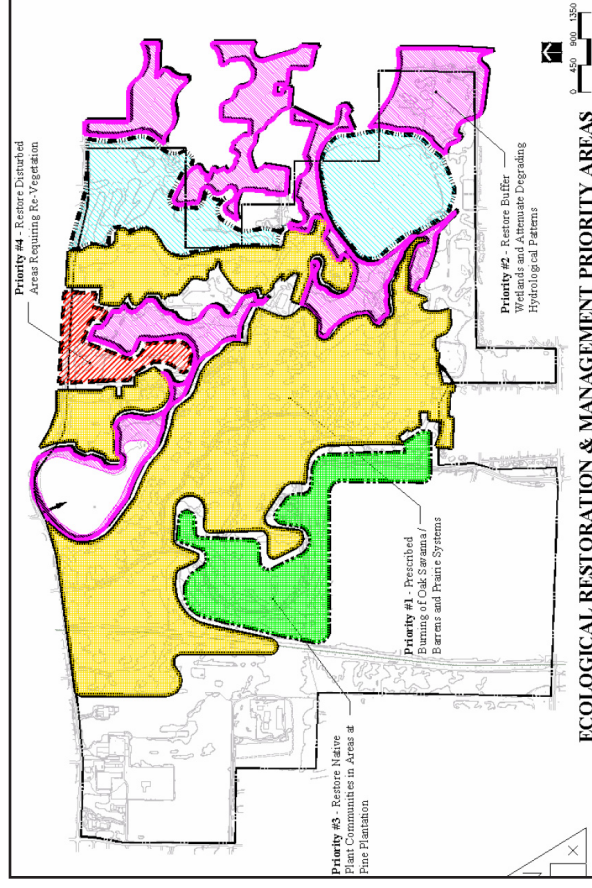
A review of the each park’s classification was made, being either regional or county, to determine the current appropriateness of its classification. This review assists in determining the best value and direction to take to meet the future needs of the citizens. Parks that have experienced substantially increased use, in light of population expansion, were analyzed to see if reclassification would assist in future development. Regional designation would allow

a park to receive additional dollars, in terms of both development funding and operations and maintenance funding. On the other hand, parks that receive very little regional use could be identified as potential transfers to local jurisdictions.



**Natural Resource Identification**

An overview of the existing natural resources was taken to determine the areas of significant resource value and the suitability for development. Identifying the high-quality natural ecosystems, and areas for potential restoration, will ensure continued preservation of our natural resources. High quality resources also enhance the park user’s experience. Planned park development should not cause excessive impact to quality resources. Designs should reflect limited impact and limited fragmentation of existing natural communities. Through these efforts, forests, prairies and water resources will be improved.



**Development Limitations**

A review of existing site characteristics, including soils, vegetation, hydrology and topography is incorporated into the master planning process. This type of information enables park designers to minimize impacts to the landscape, as well as, reduce development and long-term maintenance costs by designing appropriate facilities within the existing site conditions framework.

**Key Recreational Components**

Unique features within each park, either natural or man-made, can provide a contextual framework for the design of the Master Plan. Creating a common theme will provide uniformity and a “sense of place.” In addition, points of interests or unique landscapes can be incorporated into the design to enhance the educational or recreational experience.

**Distribution of Recreational Components**

A review of existing facilities was conducted throughout the park system to establish a quantifiable measure of recreational opportunities. It is important to ensure that different types of recreation offerings are distributed “evenly” throughout all areas of the county so that all citizens will have relatively “equal” access to the types of recreation provided by the county. The county has a strong history of locating parks in a well dispersed fashion, thus recreational opportunities should be available throughout as well.

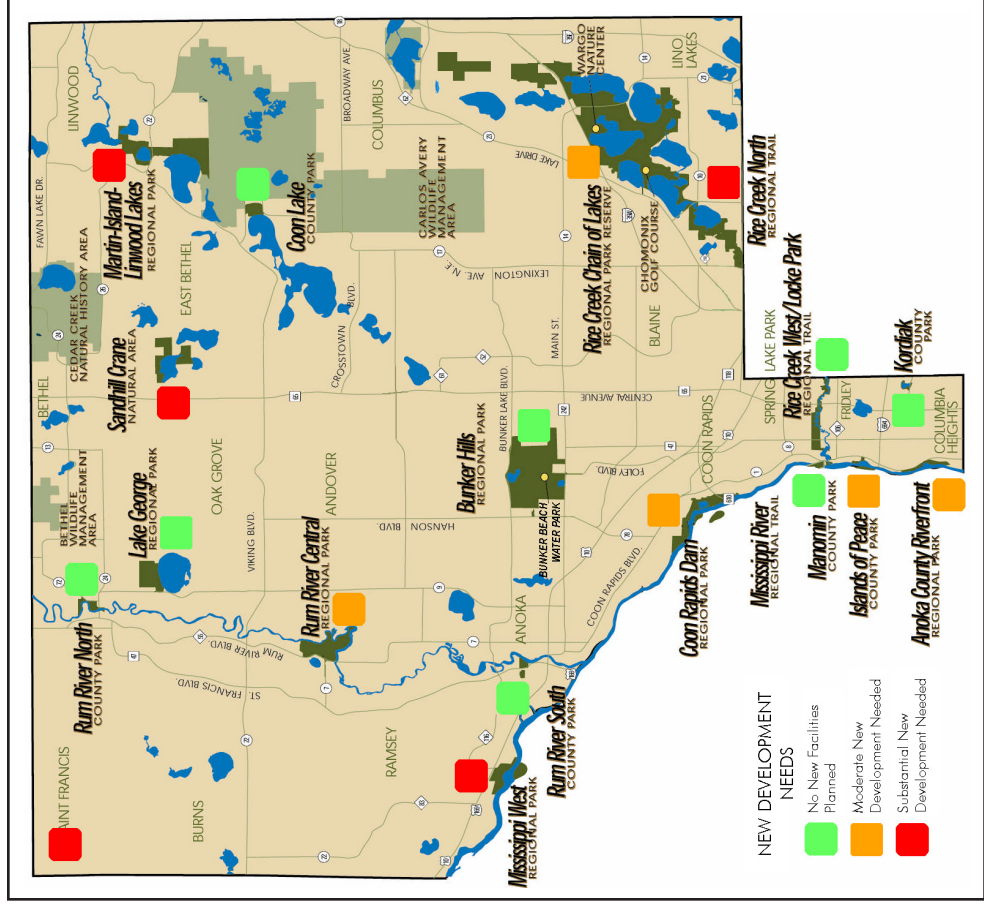
**Recreational Trends and User Needs**

While there are ‘tried and true’ recreational uses that the regional park system offers, the county should anticipate recreational trends and needs of the future park users. The increase in fitness and health awareness, for example, is just one of the many changing demands that will play an important role in the use and design of the park system. In the past, the county has been attentive to the demographic groups that utilize the park system and the Master Plans will remain flexible and evolve through user input and discussion.



**Architectural/Engineering Standards**

With recent technological advances and increased ecological understanding of our environment, it is imperative that the county incorporate modern utility and function in park and facility design. The county will follow state and local energy and environment codes and perform ‘best practices’ in a structured planning process in order to offer park visitors with the high-quality, environmentally sensitive, and long-lasting recreational facilities. In addition, the design process will incorporate standards of: Universal Design, ADA Accessibility, Public Safety,



Cost Efficiency, and Uniformity. Underlying these standards is the goal of creating a design that is visually and aesthetic pleasing that will attract continued use of the park system.

**Park Master Plans**

Each regional and county park has a master plan incorporating the above elements. Each park master plan has a written description that gives a brief synopsis of the park, its natural features and existing facilities, a planning concept and key elements of the master plan. Future facilities, acquisition and development are identified along with estimated costs. Selective areas or recreational features are highlighted on some parks.

Acquisition and development of the Anoka County park system began in the 1960's and was based on the goal of providing outdoor, natural resource-based recreation. Connected with this goal was the objective of protecting the county's natural landscapes and resources. Since the unfolding of the 2020 Vision plan, many of these goals were maintained and expanded upon. The goals and objectives developed in this plan will assist in the continued development and stewardship of the county's parks and open spaces.

As is shown in each Master Plan, future development will focus primarily on upgrading existing facilities to meet current growing demand of outdoor recreation and adding new facilities that provide additional passive or unstructured recreational opportunities. Projects will be planned and designed that will result in facilities and use patterns that are compatible with the surrounding landscape. Design objectives have been established to maximize recreational value, while maintaining natural resources.

**System Development Costs**

The table below lists the total anticipated amount for all acquisition, development and redevelopment. While the total is fairly sizable, it should be noted that for the past eight years since the establishment of the 2020 Vision plan, over \$20 million has been spent on developing and redeveloping the park system. This equates to expenditures of approximately \$2.5 million per year. Following this same average of financial commitment, the proposed park development efforts outlined in this chapter would extend out over the next ten years.

In the past, the county has been aggressive in securing financial support for development and redevelopment projects. This effort will continue. Funding sources, such as, the Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service, and others will be pursued for financial commitments. The county has established an excellent track record working with these agencies in fulfilling commitments through various grant agreements. Grants have been direct support, as well as, matching grants through financial or force-account sources. These agreements will continue to benefit the county through the next phase of development.

<b>Regional Parks</b>	
Anoka County Riverfront/Islands of Peace	\$1,825,000
Bunker Hills	7,125,000
Coon Rapids Dam	1,910,000
Lake George	1,370,000
Martin-Island-Linwood	5,680,000
Mississippi West	6,000,000
Rice Creek Chain-of-Lakes	5,470,000
Rum River Central	2,730,000
Sugar Hills	15,600,000
<b>County Parks</b>	
Coon Lake	\$1,290,000
Kordiak	330,000
Locke	280,000
Manomin	355,000
Rum River North	375,000
Rum River South	355,000
<b>Special Units</b>	
Sandhill Crane	\$605,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$51,300,000</b>

## Mississippi West Regional Park

Mississippi West Regional Park is located in the city of Ramsey between the Mississippi River and Highway 10. With over a mile of shoreline, two islands and 273 acres, the park offers a unique setting to provide recreation and education within this scenic and fast developing area.

### Features:

- 273 Acres
- Mississippi River
- Old Farmstead
- Oak Forest
- Flood Plain Islands
- Prairie Restoration Area



### Existing Facilities:

- None

### Master Plan:

The Master Plan for Mississippi West Regional Park proposes the development of a Center for the Sustainable Landscape. It could include an educational/interpretive center to serve as a “learning laboratory” and best management practices to utilize sustainable design and “green architecture” for implementation and construction of the park. Recreational facilities will include roadways and parking lots, picnic facilities, restrooms, hike and bike trails, interpretive facilities, regional trail access and prairie restoration areas. In addition, observation and scenic overlooks along with fishing platforms would be built along the river. Canoe camping is proposed for Foster and Cloquet islands.



Site Plan for Landscape Center

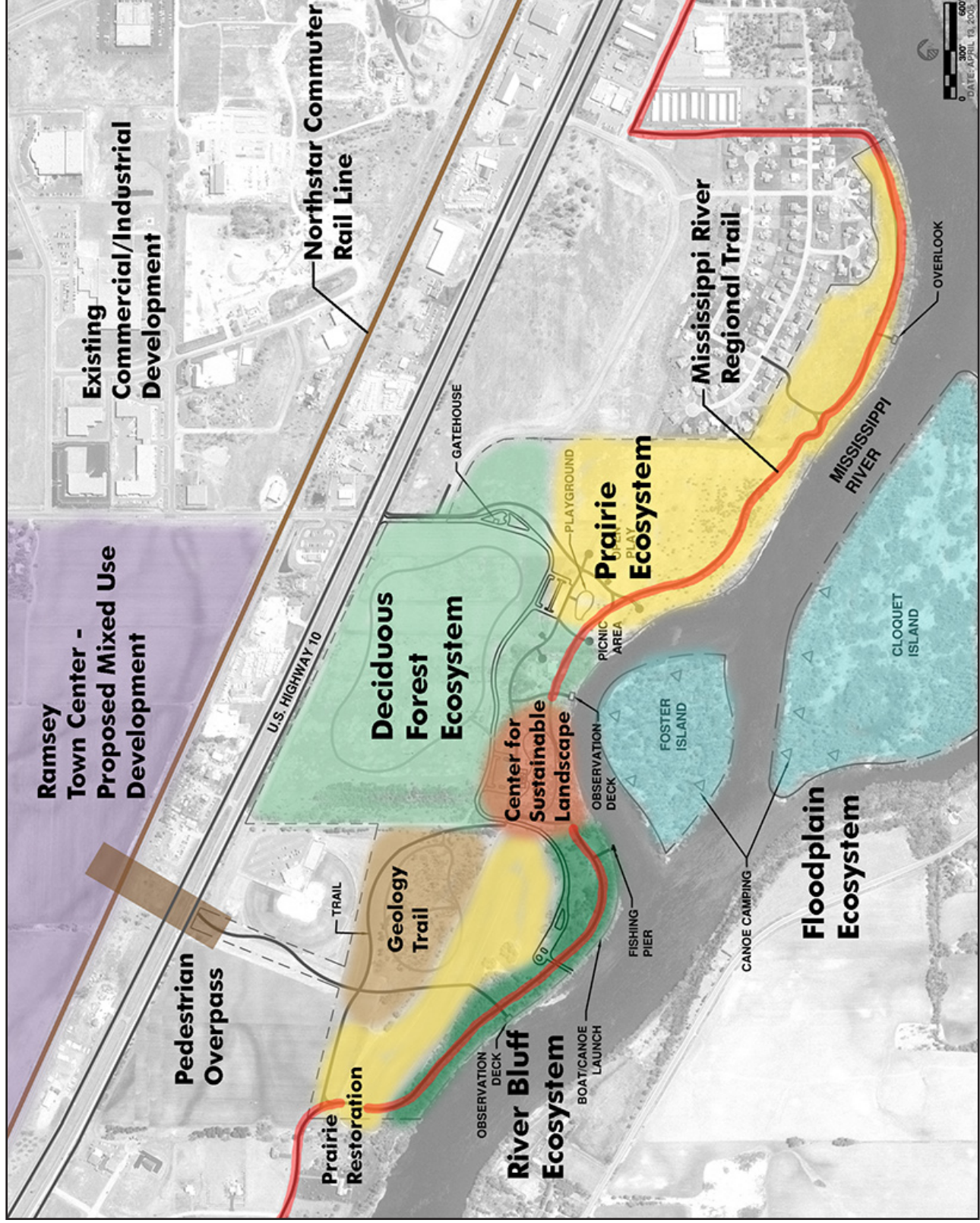
### Planning Context:

As a regional entity, the park will incorporate facilities to accommodate a large and growing population. The park should take advantage of the river’s wild and scenic qualities, while creating visual or physical buffers from the busy highway traffic. The park will incorporate the Mississippi River Regional Trail Corridor and plans for a connection to the future Ramsey Town Center are proposed. As a regional entity, serving a large user base, planning and design should incorporate the growing trends of the general population and governmental agencies to restore and protect natural resources and the environment.

### Future Needs / Development:

- Picnic / Restroom Facilities \$1,000,000
- Roadways, Parking lots, Utilities 800,000
- Sustainable landscapes / gardens 400,000
- Trails and interpretive features 200,000
- Recreational amenities 500,000
- Boat / Canoe Launch 400,000
- Regional Trail 200,000
- Gardens and Landscape Restoration 400,000
- Outdoor exhibits and displays 200,000
- Connection to multi-modal node / town center 400,000
- Interpretive / Educational Facility 1,500,000

**Total Projected Future Cost: \$6,000,000**



Mississippi West Regional Park Master Plan

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**CHAPTER 12 - PARK DEVELOPMENT AND  
LAND STEWARDSHIP**

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**ANOKA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM PLAN**

# CHAPTER 12

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## PARK DEVELOPMENT AND LAND STEWARDSHIP

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*Complete version*

### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

Many of the recreation facilities in the Anoka County Park System are in need of upgrading as a result of heavy use, changing safety and design standards, growing recreation demand and changes in leisure time interests. The Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department will pursue redevelopment of existing facilities, development of new facilities and expansion of park lands in its effort to continue to provide a high quality recreation service to the county residents.

The 2020 Vision planning process has shown that county residents have a strong interest in outdoor recreation activities. The high percentage of family households, the influx of new home buyers and the large population of aging baby boomers suggests that recreation facilities must appeal to a broad cross-section of age groups. There is a need to serve children with an interest in activities such as swimming and active play; teenagers and young adults with interests such as roller blading and volleyball and older adults with interests such as hiking and picnicking.

The planning process also has shown that residents are interested in natural resource based recreation activities such as hiking in natural areas and bird watching and that they support the protection and enhancement of natural areas in the park system. The mission statement prepared during the planning process expresses this clearly by saying: The purpose of the Anoka County Park and Recreation Department is to provide parks, open space and leisure services for the public. Our primary mission encompasses the protection, preservation, and restoration of a natural, resource-based park system.

The Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department is pursuing improvements to recreation facilities throughout the various park types in the system. The park system is comprised of the following park classifications:

#### **Regional Park Reserve**

Park land classified as a regional park reserve serves a multi-county area and is characterized, by the Metropolitan Council, as an area of natural or ornamental quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, boating, camping and trail uses. A park reserve is over 1,000 acres in size and of sufficient area to encompass the resource envisioned for preservation. It has a diversity of unique resources, such as topography, lakes, streams and marshes. The Metropolitan Council requires that no more than 20% of the land area be developed with

any type of constructed improvements including buildings, outdoor recreation facilities, roads, paths and the like.

#### **Regional Park**

Park land classified as a regional park serves a multi-county area and is characterized, by the Metropolitan Council, as an area of natural or ornamental quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping and trail uses. A regional park is typically 200-1000 acres with a natural setting contiguous to water bodies or water courses.

#### **County Park**

Land classified as a county park is an area of natural or ornamental quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as limited primitive camping, picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming and trail uses. Although the service areas are intended to be county-wide, in many cases the county parks are used primarily by the communities that surround them or are nearby. The park sites can be 10 to 200 acres in size and the settings are generally contiguous to water bodies or water courses.

#### **Linear Park/Greenway**

Land classified as a linear park/greenway is developed for one or more varying modes of recreation travel such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, canoeing and driving or is intended to protect a sensitive, linearly occurring natural resource such as a wetland or upland native plant community. The service area may be local or regional in scale. The linear park/greenway must be of sufficient width and length to provide maximum protection of resource or maximum use as a trail corridor. Trail routes may utilize man-made or naturally occurring resources such as utility corridors, road rights-of-way, drainage ways, bluff lines, vegetation patterns, etc.

#### **Special Feature**

A special feature is a specialized or single-purpose recreation facility such as golf course, nature center, marina, arboretum and sites of historic or archaeological significance. The service area may be county-wide or regional. The size of the site matches standards for a specific facility (e.g. golf course) or is determined by the area occupied by the featured item (e.g. historic building).

The special features included in the Anoka County Park System include 4-H Camp Salie in Martin Island Linwood Lakes Regional Park, Chomonix Golf Course in Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park Reserve (RCCL), Wargo Nature Center in RCCL, Banfill House in Manomin County

Park, Riedel Farm Estate in Riverfront Regional Park, and Coon Rapids Dam in Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park and the Wave Pool in Bunker Hills Regional Park. Discussion of each feature in this chapter is included in the section devoted to the park in which the feature is located.

#### Conservancy Lands

“Conservancy lands” are areas of unique quality such as watercourses and wetlands that are preserved for environmental or aesthetic benefits to the community and/or because of the negative environmental or economic effects of development in them. The service area may be a municipality, township or county. The site should be sized adequately to protect the resource.

The Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department will utilize the 2020 Vision plan and individual park master plans as tools for identifying appropriate improvements or expansion for each park in the system. Cooperative efforts with municipalities and with other local, regional and state agencies are also key to effective development and maintenance of recreation facilities in the county.

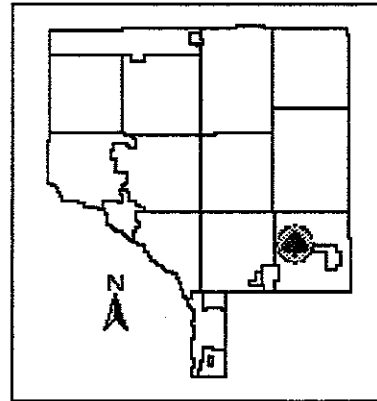
This chapter includes:

- a. Discussion of development, redevelopment, natural resource management and expansion of Anoka County Parks;
- b. Recommendations for possible disposition of several existing parks that are classified as “county parks”;
- c. Recommendations concerning the possible disposition of parks that are classified as “conservancy lands”;
- d. Recommendations concerning sale of non-park property currently owned by the parks and recreation department.
- e. Discussion concerning the protection of natural areas that are currently in private ownership.

## 12.2 REGIONAL PARK RESERVES

“Park reserves” are typically the largest of the park types in a county park and recreation system. They are managed to provide recreation opportunities but are also intended to protect major natural resource areas. Because of their large size, the parks provide opportunities to preserve regionally significant plant communities and wildlife habitat areas. Refer to Chapter 11 - System Standards for more information on the role that a regional park reserve plays in the Anoka County Park and Recreation System.

### Park: RICE CREEK CHAIN OF LAKES REGIONAL PARK RESERVE



Size: 2,550 acres  
Estimated visitors in 1996: 178,300

### OVERVIEW

Rice Creek Chain of Lakes is the only “Regional Park Reserve” in Anoka County. It is expected that it will become a major focal point in the Twin Cities regional park system. The park currently attracts visitors from throughout the metro area and offers a wide array of educational opportunities with its broad scope of natural history, cultural and archaeological resources. In addition, the Wargo Nature Center, Chomonix Golf Course, camping facilities, water based activities and future trails make it an attractive destination similar to Morris T. Baker Park Reserve in Hennepin County or Lake Elmo Park Reserve in Washington County.

The Wargo Nature Center and Chomonix Golf Course are classified as two of the park system’s “special features” (see Chapter 11). Wargo is an outdoor learning center designed to be used by the community. The 10,000 square foot center is nestled on a beautiful peninsula overlooking George Watch Lake. Environmental education classes for school children of all ages are held both at the Wargo Nature Center and the Coon Rapids Dam Visitor Center. They are designed to assist educators in meeting the state’s environmental education learner outcomes and to provide children with a better understanding of the natural world. Over 10,000 students participated in environmental education programming during the 1996-97 school year. Programming is developed to promote positive environmental values and is available for persons of all ages and abilities. Public programs are held at various locations around the county. Program content changes with the seasons and includes topics such as maple syruping, pond studies, apple cidering and snowshoeing. With financial support from Anoka Electric Cooperative, the Wargo Nature Center has been able to develop and implement the Wildlife Outreach Program; an environmental education program for grades 1-6 which

takes place in the schools. It is made available to schools in Anoka/Hennepin School District 11 at no cost. These programs have been tremendously successful with over 40,000 students participating each year.

Chomonix Golf Course is an 18-hole, par 72 championship facility. The focus of Chomonix is to provide a positive and pleasurable golf experience to all players at a reasonable cost. The golf course hosts corporate and general public golf tournaments, golf leagues, junior golf programs and lessons during the summer months. Winter activities include cross-country skiing. The facility has about 6.5 miles of groomed, double tracked trails. A special winter event is the annual "Ski by the Light of the Moon". In 1997, the facility hosted 41,664 golfers and countless numbers of walkers, joggers and cross country skiers. The course is one of Anoka County's Enterprise Funds with operating expenses of \$500,000 to \$600,000 per year. Revenues generated are \$800,000 - \$1 million per year.

Future development and redevelopment in the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes will focus on upgrading the quality and accessibility of existing facilities and increasing their carrying capacity. The extensive system of lakes and waterways in the park offer extraordinary, but largely undiscovered, opportunities for canoeing that make it unique in the Twin Cities area.

Rice Creek Chain of Lakes is surrounded by municipalities (Lino Lakes, Blaine, Centerville and Circle Pines) and is also close to population centers located in Ramsey County. Because it is located within a short of distance of a large population base and completely within the 2020 Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA), it will be developed to a higher level in the near term than parks in rural areas. Its "park reserve" status limits development to 20% of the total land area, but carefully managed facility development and programs can greatly expand its carrying capacity without undue threats to its natural and archaeological resources.

## RECREATION FACILITIES

### Proposed Development:

Playground; thirty new campsites at existing campground; courtesy docks at boat launch; campground amphitheater

### Proposed Redevelopment:

Upgrade sand blanket and reduce slope at Centerville beach and construct beach playground.

## TRAILS

### Proposed Development:

Three trail bridges over Rice Creek, 8 miles of bituminous trail, 12 miles of soft surface trail; boardwalks in wetland areas

## SPECIAL FEATURES

### Proposed Development:

Construct building to enclose archeological dig at Heritage Lab Site

## INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES

### Proposed Development:

Archeological dig site including displays and active dig site; interpretive displays on Native American culture; interpretive prairie shelter; boardwalks

## BUILDINGS AND SHELTERS

### Proposed Development:

Multi-use building including trail head, equipment rental, gathering space, concessions, toilets; picnic pavilion and restrooms at Centerville Beach; screened pavilion and restrooms at existing campground; large event pavilion at Chomonix Golf Course; contact station

### Proposed Redevelopment:

Maintenance shop and club house renovations at Chomonix Golf Course; upgrade four existing restroom facilities at scattered park sites

## ROADS AND PARKING

### Proposed Development:

Parking lot at boat launch; security lighting at campground parking lots

### Proposed Redevelopment:

Pave all main roads and parking lots and roads at Heritage Lab site and campground; new signage at campground

## LANDSCAPING AND AMENITIES

Planting at existing campground to define spaces, provide shade and improve appearance

## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Continue to protect heron rookery and maintain nesting data base; conduct white-tailed deer population density study; Wargo Nature Center to continue focus on forest resource and prairie management.

## ACQUISITION, EASEMENTS AND LAND TRUSTS

A land swap is currently underway in which the county will receive land located south of Centerville Lake in exchange for property located to the east of the I-35W interchange near the northwest corner of the park.

The county and the MNDNR are exploring the possibility of acquiring and protecting wetlands adjoining Rice Creek

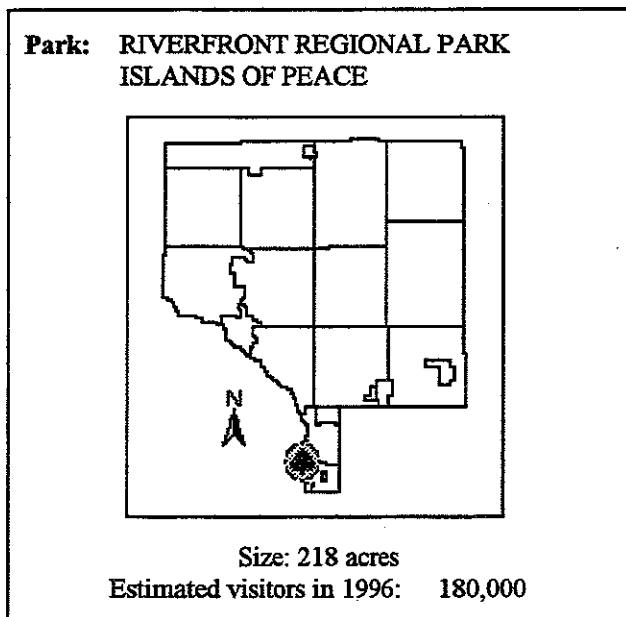
and extending from I-35W at the north end of the park to Howard Lake. The area currently appears as a possible greenway corridor on the MNDNR's draft map titled Potential Greenways & Natural Areas for the Metro Region. This would link Rice Creek Chain of Lakes to Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area and Coon Lake Park.

### ESTIMATED COST OF FULL DEVELOPMENT

\$4,419,000.00 in 1997 dollars for projects not including Chomonix Golf Course-related improvements; \$1,521,000.00 for Chomonix Golf Course improvements (refer to Chapter 17 for information on development priorities).

### 12.3 REGIONAL PARKS

A "regional park" is generally 200 to 1,000 acres in size and provides a variety of natural resource-based recreation opportunities but also preserves and protects significant natural areas. There are seven "regional parks" in Anoka County including Bunker Hills, Coon Rapids Dam, Lake George, Martin Island/Linwood Lakes, Riverfront, Rum River Central and Mississippi West Regional Parks. Because of their size and regional significance, these parks, along with Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park Reserve, form the core of the Anoka County Park System. Refer to Chapter 11 - System Standards for more information on the role of regional parks in the Anoka County Park and Recreation System.



### OVERVIEW

Riverfront Regional Park is considered to be the gateway to the Anoka County Park System at the south end of the county. The park is in a densely populated area within the

current MUSA boundary and is surrounded by industrial uses. It is located on the bank of the Mississippi River and adjacent to major vehicular and bike routes. Because the park is highly visible, it makes a bold statement that reflects on the image of the park system as whole.

Future development and redevelopment in the park will focus on enhancing its esthetic character to project a strong and positive image. Designs will emphasize the river setting and the historic character established by the Riedel Farm Estate and the Banfill House in nearby Manomin Park. There will be continuity in the design of site elements such as lighting, signage and landscaping in Riverfront/Islands of Peace and Manomin Parks to help clarify that they are both part of the county parks system.

Recreation facilities at Riverfront Park will continue to be passive or unstructured in nature with an emphasis on providing for social gatherings, picnicking and hiking. In addition to these activities, regional trail use at Riverfront is a focus as a result of the park's relationship to the Mississippi River Regional Trail that follows East River Road adjacent to the site.

The historic Riedel Farm Estate is classified as one of the park system's "special features" (see Chapter 11) and offers unique opportunities for special programming. The farmstead was built in the 1880's by Albin Riedel and was purchased from F.M.C. by the Parks and Recreation Department in the 1980's. The house is currently available to the community for special events and is commonly used for groom's dinners, wedding receptions, business meetings and corporate retreats. Some additional programs to be considered in the future include use of the house as an extension of the Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts and use as a day conference center. A renovation plan has been completed recently to guide future improvements to the house and site.

The Islands of Peace building facility will continue to accommodate social activities of the surrounding neighborhoods by serving as a meeting and gathering place. This area of the park is also a possible mooring place for boaters enjoying upper reaches of the Mississippi River south of the Coon Rapids Dam. In addition, Islands of Peace is an important node along the Mississippi River Regional Trail serving as a trail head and rest stop.

Riverfront/Islands of Peace is about one mile from the Minneapolis City limits and is closer to the core of the current Metropolitan Urban Service Area than any other regional park in Anoka County. This urban context creates high demand for the recreation opportunities that the park has to offer. For this reason, park development and redevelopment projects will be scheduled at a somewhat faster rate than parks in rural areas.

## INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES

### Proposed Development:

Information kiosk; trail interpretive signs

## BUILDINGS AND SHELTERS

### Proposed Development:

Three picnic pavilions; interpretive/multi-use building; restrooms; visitor contact station

## ROADS AND PARKING

### Proposed Development:

Bituminous parking lot at new boat ramp; security lighting

### Proposed Redevelopment:

Bituminous access road and parking lot upgrades

## ACQUISITION, EASEMENTS AND LAND TRUSTS

The county will consider acquiring three residential properties located on County Highway 7 on the west side of the park (see figure 12.3). All three properties are surrounded on three sides by park land. The total acreage of the three parcels is approximately 9 acres.

The county proposes to partner with the City of Andover in purchasing land (none specified at this time) on the east side of the river and providing vehicle parking and pedestrian access to the park, by bridge, from the east.

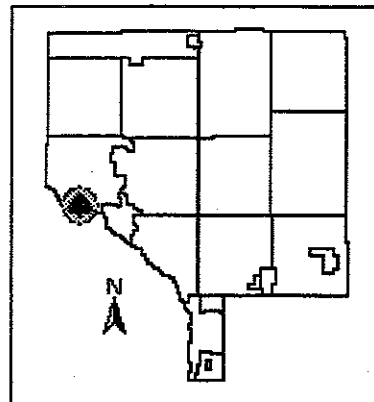
## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Riverbank stabilization; oak savanna restoration; conduct butternut regeneration study

## ESTIMATED COST OF FULL DEVELOPMENT

\$2,605,000.00 in 1997 dollars not including Phase I improvements which are currently underway (refer to Chapter 17 for information on development priorities)

### Park: MISSISSIPPI WEST REGIONAL PARK



Size: 273 acres

## OVERVIEW

Mississippi West Regional Park is located on the Mississippi River and is the newest addition to the Anoka County Park system. It was incorporated into the Metropolitan regional System in 1996. The park is located on a State Highway 10 within the MUSA boundary and in a rapidly developing urban area. The land is currently undeveloped and is comprised of woodland habitat and cultivated fields. The property was donated to the county but the benefactor maintains a residence there along with another homestead having a life estate. No development will be scheduled until the property is vacated and can be arranged through the Metropolitan Council.

Mississippi West's location along the river and on the Mississippi River Regional Trail corridor, creates strong ties to Anoka's Peninsula Point Park, Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park, Manomin County Park and Riverfront/Islands of Peace Regional Park. The river binds the five parks together, but each is different in character and displays a unique, natural and cultural history. The relationship creates excellent opportunities for development of a variety of water and land-based facilities and interpretation of the river environment and the history of the sites and surrounding areas. Site elements such as signs, furniture, lighting and landscaping will be designed to create continuity in the image and appearance of the parks and to identify them with the "Mississippi River System of Parks".

Mississippi West will provide access to the Mississippi River and to the regional trail system. The topography at the river and the shoreline condition provide a good opportunity for boat and canoe access. In addition, the location of the park near the west end of the Mississippi River Regional Trail in Anoka County makes it attractive for location of a major trail head.

Other development in the park will focus on passive, unstructured activities such as hiking, picnicking, education and cultural and historic interpretation. Development of an arboretum will also be considered for the site. A master plan has been completed for the park that defines proposed improvements for the park more completely.

### **TRAILS**

**Proposed Development:**  
Mississippi River Regional Trail head; hiking and biking trails throughout the park

### **BUILDINGS AND SHELTERS**

**Proposed Development:**  
Picnic pavilions; restrooms; interpretive building facility; visitor contact station; retreat center (existing Anderson residence); picnic furnishings

### **ROADS AND PARKING**

**Proposed Development:**  
Paved roadways and parking lots to serve all areas of the park

### **LANDSCAPING AND AMENITIES**

Arboretum development; picnic furnishings, benches, signs, lighting, etc. having designs consistent with Parks and Recreation Department standards

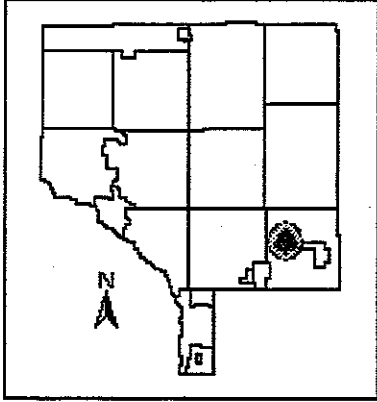
### **NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Prairie restoration

#### **12.5 LINEAR PARKS**

“Linear parks” or trails provide important connections between regional parks in the county park system and between parks and population centers in the county. There are three existing linear parks in Anoka County including Rice Creek North Regional Trail, Rice Creek West Regional Trail and Mississippi River Regional Trail. Refer to Chapter 11 - System Standards for more information on the role of linear parks in the Anoka County Park System.

**Park: RICE CREEK NORTH REGIONAL TRAIL**



**Size: 389 acres - 3.8 mile developed trail length**  
**Estimated visits in 1996: 49,000**

### **OVERVIEW**

Rice Creek North Regional Trail is a greenway/trail connection between Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park Reserve and a trail length in Ramsey County that is planned to extend through Shoreview and the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant site. Heading west, the trail will then link with Rice Creek West Regional Trail in Fridley. The greenway/trail is a valuable regional trail link that protects sensitive wetland and creek habitat areas and provides attractive undeveloped open space. In addition, the trail links to several local parks and trail systems. There is also a Native American burial mound in the park that will be protected.

Improvements planned for the park focus on development of trails and support facilities and on interpretation of the Native American heritage represented by the burial site located there.

### **TRAILS**

**Development:**  
Two foot bridges; boardwalk; bituminous trail expansion; trail connection into Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park; trail directional signage

### **INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES**

**Development:**  
Native American interpretive plaque

### **ROADS AND PARKING**

**Development:**  
Bituminous parking lot including security lighting

September 22, 2010

Scott Yonke  
Anoka County Parks and Recreation  
550 Bunker Lake Boulevard NW  
Andover, MN 55304

Re: Wetland Review for Mississippi West Regional Park, Ramsey, MN

Dear Mr. Yonke:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the wetlands for this site. It has been a pleasure to work with you.

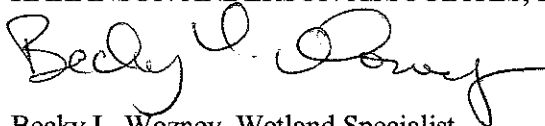
I reviewed the Anoka County Soil Survey and the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) as well as an onsite review along the location of the access road (shown as 139<sup>th</sup> Lane on soils map) and proposed boat/canoe launch areas. There were no hydric soils per the soil survey and no wetlands as inventoried by the NWI except for those directly associated with the river. Also, no jurisdictional wetlands were identified using the Routine Determination methodology described in the Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual (Waterways Experiment Station, 1987) and the appropriate regional supplement as required by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act. I did not review any other proposed trails or facilities as shown in the Master Plan dated 5/25/2010.

There may be wetlands associated with the Mississippi River below the Ordinary High Water level. Please contact Kate Drewry at 651/259-5753 in regards to this and the MNRRA program.

The Corps of Engineers could also require a permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Please contact Tim Fell at 651/290-5360.

If you have questions or need additional information please call me at 763/427-5860.

Sincerely,  
HAKANSON ANDERSON ASSOCIATES, INC.

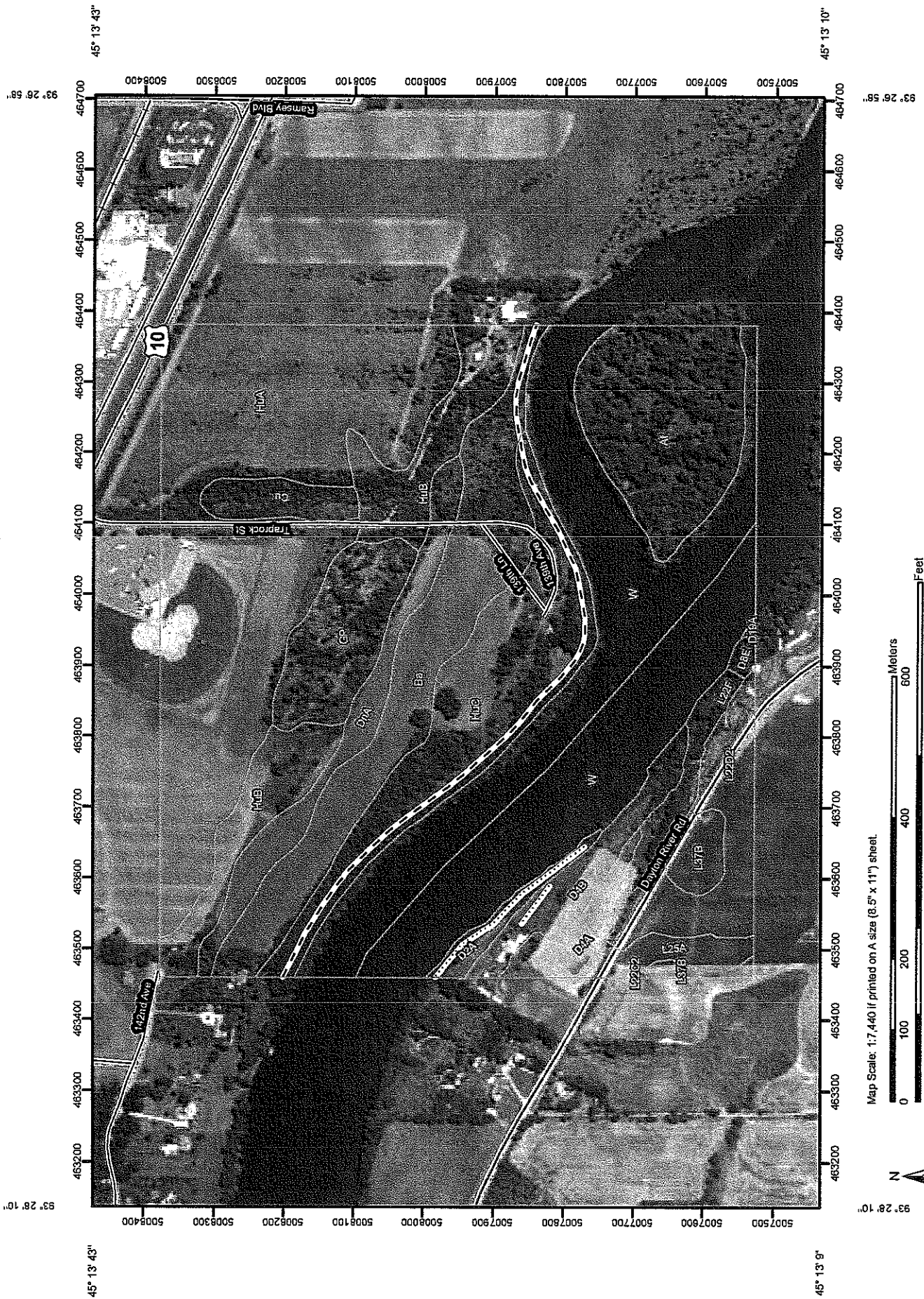


Becky L. Wozney, Wetland Specialist  
Certified Wetland Delineator

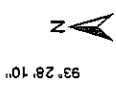
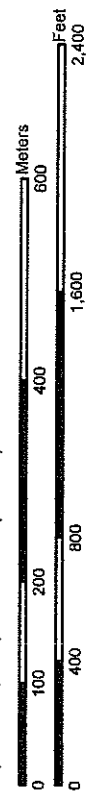
Cc: Steve Jankowski, Lower Rum River WMO  
Karen Blaska, Anoka County Parks and Recreation  
Dennis Rodacker, Anoka Conservation District  
Lynda Peterson, Board of Water and Soil Resources

Att: Anoka County Soil Survey  
National Wetland Inventory  
Master Plan

Soil Map—Anoka County, Minnesota, and Hennepin County, Minnesota  
(Mississippi West Regional Park)



Map Scale: 1:7,440 if printed on A size (8.5" x 11") sheet.



## Map Unit Legend

Anoka County, Minnesota (MN003)			
Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Af	Alluvial land, mixed, frequently flooded	14.6	7.5%
Ba	Becker very fine sandy loam	17.7	9.1%
Cu	Cut and fill land	2.9	1.5%
DnA	Dickman sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	6.7	3.5%
GP	Pits, gravel-Udipsamments complex	7.8	4.0%
HuA	Hubbard coarse sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	43.9	22.6%
HuB	Hubbard coarse sand, 2 to 6 percent slopes	12.7	6.6%
HuC	Hubbard coarse sand, 6 to 12 percent slopes	17.4	9.0%
W	Water	25.4	13.1%
<b>Subtotals for Soil Survey Area</b>		<b>149.2</b>	<b>77.0%</b>
<b>Totals for Area of Interest</b>		<b>193.9</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Hennepin County, Minnesota (MN053)			
Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
D2A	Elkriver fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, rarely flooded	1.7	0.9%
D4A	Dorset sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	2.8	1.5%
D4B	Dorset sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	4.9	2.6%
D8E	Sandberg loamy coarse sand, 18 to 35 percent slopes	0.4	0.2%
D19A	Fordum-Winterfield complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded	0.1	0.0%
L22C2	Lester loam, morainic, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	0.1	0.1%
L22D2	Lester loam, morainic, 12 to 18 percent slopes, eroded	7.6	3.9%
L22F	Lester loam, morainic, 25 to 35 percent slopes	2.9	1.5%
L25A	Le Sueur loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	2.4	1.2%
L37B	Angus loam, morainic, 2 to 5 percent slopes	2.7	1.4%
W	Water	18.9	9.8%
<b>Subtotals for Soil Survey Area</b>		<b>44.7</b>	<b>23.1%</b>
<b>Totals for Area of Interest</b>		<b>193.9</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service









# National Wetlands Inventory

## Mississippi West Regional Park

Sep 22, 2010



### Wetlands

-  Freshwater Emergent
-  Freshwater Forested/Shrub
-  Estuarine and Marine Deepwater
-  Estuarine and Marine
-  Freshwater Pond
-  Lake
-  Riverine
-  Other



This map is for general reference only. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is not responsible for the accuracy of the Base data shown on this map. All wetlands related data should be used in accordance with the layer metadata found on the Wetlands Mapper web site.

User Remarks:



Minnesota Department of Transportation

**Memo**

**Metro Program Delivery**  
Waters Edge  
1500 West County Road B2  
Roseville, Minnesota 55113


Rd No.  
File:

TH 10  
02-596-10  
Environmental  
Section 4(E)

Office Tel: 651.234.7722  
Fax: 651.234.7609

May 28, 2009

To: Distribution

From: Mark J. Lindeberg   
North Area Engineer

Subject: MOU for Park taking  
TH 10 in Ramsey  
SP 0202-90

RECEIVED

MAY 28 2009

ANOKA COUNTY  
HIGHWAY DEPT

Enclosed is a fully executed copy of the MOU that addresses the mitigation of the taking of Park land for the future construction of an interchange at TH 10 and Ramsey Boulevard (CSAH 56). We have all been involved in the development of this MOU and our respective agencies have signed the MOU. Please retain this file for your agencies future use.

Please contact me with any questions that you may have.

Distribution:

Marybeth Block  
Department of Natural Resources  
DNR Central Regional Headquarters  
1200 Warner Rd.  
St. Paul, MN 55106

Jan Youngquist  
Metropolitan Council  
Parks Department  
390 Robert St. N.  
St. Paul, MN 55101

Jack Corkle  
Anoka County Highway Department  
1440 Bunker Lake Blvd NW  
Andover, MN 55304

Rick Dalton  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
1500 West County Road B-2  
Roseville, MN 55113

 COPY  
Orig. at CAO

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

PURSUANT TO SECTION 4(f) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 1966 AMONG THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MN/DOT), THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, (MNDNR), THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL, AND THE COUNTY OF ANOKA REGARDING TRUNK HIGHWAY 10 PRELIMINARY INTERCHANGE DESIGN (S.P. 199-010-09 AND S.P. 02-596-10)

CITY OF RAMSEY, COUNTY OF ANOKA, MINNESOTA

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), the County of Anoka and the City of Ramsey in partnership are preparing preliminary engineering and environmental documentation in support of right of way preservation for a future project to convert the segment of Trunk Highway (TH) 10 in Ramsey from an expressway to a freeway, including construction of grade-separated interchanges at County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 56 (Ramsey Boulevard) and CSAH 57 (Sunfish Lake Boulevard) and replacement of direct access to TH 10 with access from frontage/backage roads (Project); and

WHEREAS Mississippi West Regional Park (Park) (Figure 1 attached) is located in the Project area vicinity; and

WHEREAS, the Project includes the extension of Riverdale Drive west of realigned Ramsey Boulevard, in order to restore access to properties that will lose direct access to TH 10 through its conversion from expressway to freeway; and

WHEREAS, the proposed extension of Riverdale Drive severs the corner of land within the Park that is located in the southwest quadrant of the proposed TH 10/Ramsey Boulevard interchange from the remainder of the Park; and

WHEREAS the Park is (1) owned by the County of Anoka, (2) part of the regional park system which is the responsibility of the Metropolitan Council, and (3) the site of a native prairie restoration funded by a Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR) grant administered by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR); and

WHEREAS, in anticipation of federal funding, the Project is being reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as a Class III Action (Environmental Assessment) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Statute 42 USC 4321 et seq.); and

WHEREAS Section 4(f) legislation as established under the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 USC 303, 23 USC 138) (Section 4[f]) provides protection for publicly owned parks from conversion to a transportation use.

NOW THEREFORE Mn/DOT, County of Anoka, Metropolitan Council, and MnDNR (Signatory Agencies) agree as follows:

1. Before takings for the Project, the Park parcel contains approximately 274 acres. Based on preliminary engineering conducted for the current study, the right of way needed for the Project plus the severed parcel totals 8.0 acres of Park land, (Parcel A depicted in Figure 1 attached), the acquisition of which constitutes a use under Section 4(f). Parcel A is also part of the LCMR-funded native prairie restoration area within the Park.
2. Minimization of impacts through the removal of the extension of Riverdale Drive west of Ramsey Boulevard from the Project will not be part of this Project because this extension, which is consistent with the City of Ramsey's transportation plan, is needed to restore access to properties on the south side of TH 10.
3. Mitigation of the Project's Park land acquisition impact is subject to approval by the Metropolitan Council in accordance with the requirements for conversion of regional parks system lands to other uses as outlined in the Regional Parks Policy Plan. Lands within the regional park system can only be converted to other uses if approved by the Metropolitan Council through an equally valuable land or facility exchange.

Mitigation of the Project's Park land acquisition impact will occur through one of the following methods:

- a. Acquisition of replacement land of reasonably comparable to the value to Parcel A. Replacement land will be adjacent to the Park or another regional park within the County of Anoka.
- b. Financial compensation to Anoka County Parks, in an amount equal to the value of the acquired Park land, for the purpose of Park development.
- c. A combination of the two methods above in amounts that together are reasonably comparable to the value of Parcel A.

The Metropolitan Council makes the final decision on whether or not there is an equally valuable land or facility exchange.

4. Mitigation of the Project's impact to the native prairie planting on Parcel A will involve native prairie restoration (with local ecotypes) of an area, like in size, elsewhere in the Park, the location and details of which will be subject to MnDNR review and approval.
5. Mitigation of Park impacts may occur in advance of Project construction if opportunities arise. Mitigation details and agreements will be finalized among the Signatory Agencies prior to implementation of mitigation or prior to Project construction, whichever occurs first.
6. In consideration of the above-referenced Project impacts and mitigation provisions the Signatory Agencies with jurisdiction over the Park resource agree that the Project does not adversely affect the activities, features or attributes of the Park.

7. The Park impact, proposed mitigation, and a proposed Section 4(f) *de minimis* finding will be reported in the Environmental Assessment (EA) that is being prepared for the Project. This EA will be published and a public hearing held to provide the opportunity for public comment on the features, activities and attributes of the Park. The final determination of Section 4(f) *de minimis* applicability will be made by FHWA following a review of any public comments received.
8. This Memorandum of Understanding will be re-evaluated and amended, if required, upon any of the following conditions:
  - a. Proposal by any of the Signatory Agencies to implement specific Section 4(f) impact mitigation measures; and, as specific mitigation is defined, documenting the terms of agreement between Mn/DOT and the County of Anoka regarding the proportion of mitigation costs to be paid by each agency.
  - b. Re-evaluation of the Project under NEPA.
  - c. Request by any of the Signatory Agencies.

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (Mn/DOT)

By: [Signature] 4/27/09  
DATE

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (MnDNR)

By: [Signature] 3/26/09  
DATE

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

By: [Signature] 3-19-09  
DATE  
P. Hees

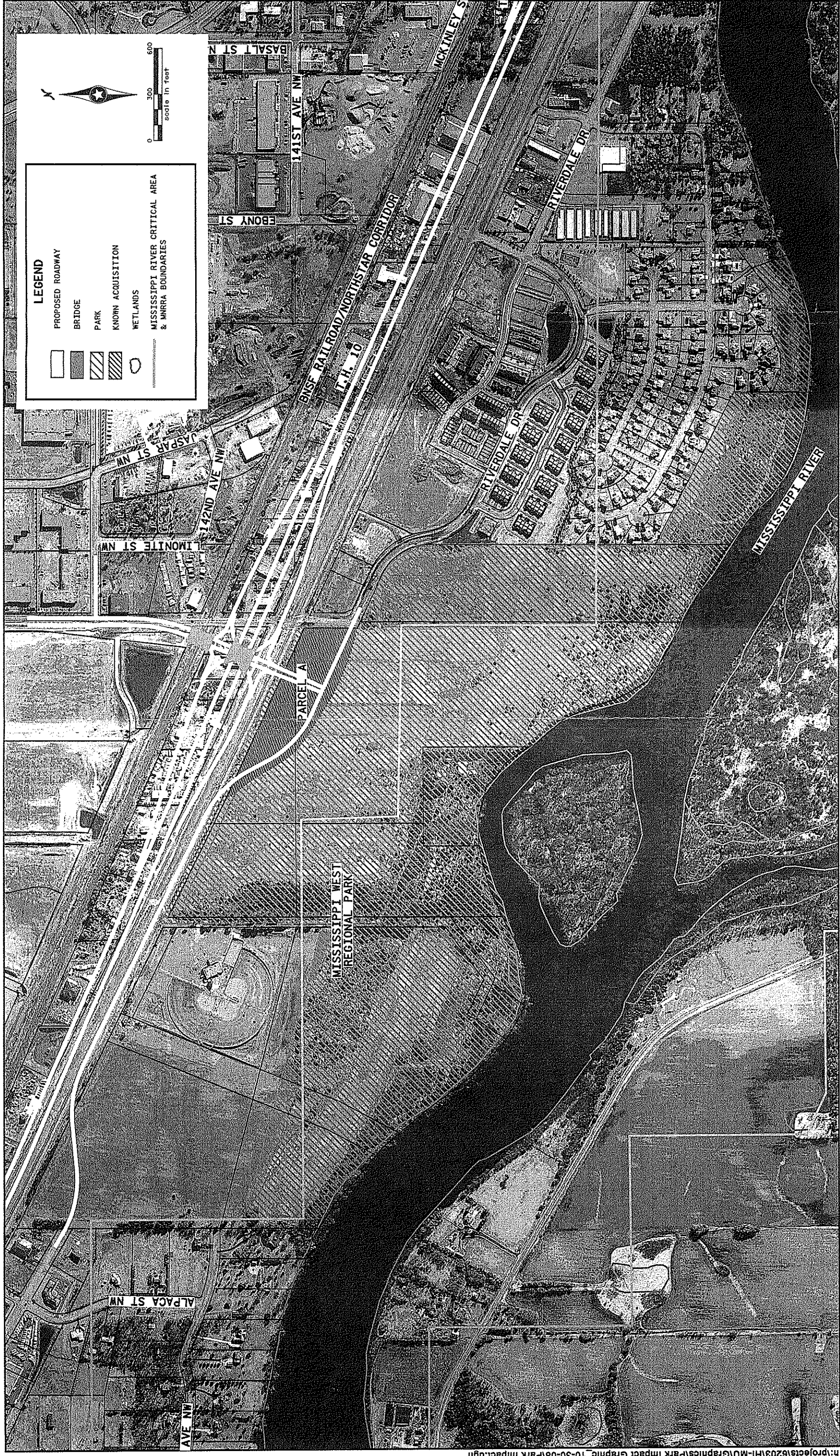
COUNTY OF ANOKA

By: [Signature] 2/27/09  
DATE  
Dennis D. Berg, County Board Chair

Attest  
By: [Signature] 2/27/09  
DATE  
Terry L. Johnson, County Administrator

Approved By  
By: [Signature] February 13, 2009  
DATE  
John VonDeLinde, Director of Parks and Recreation.

Approved as to Form  
By: [Signature] 3-3-09  
DATE  
Robert M. A. Johnson, County Attorney



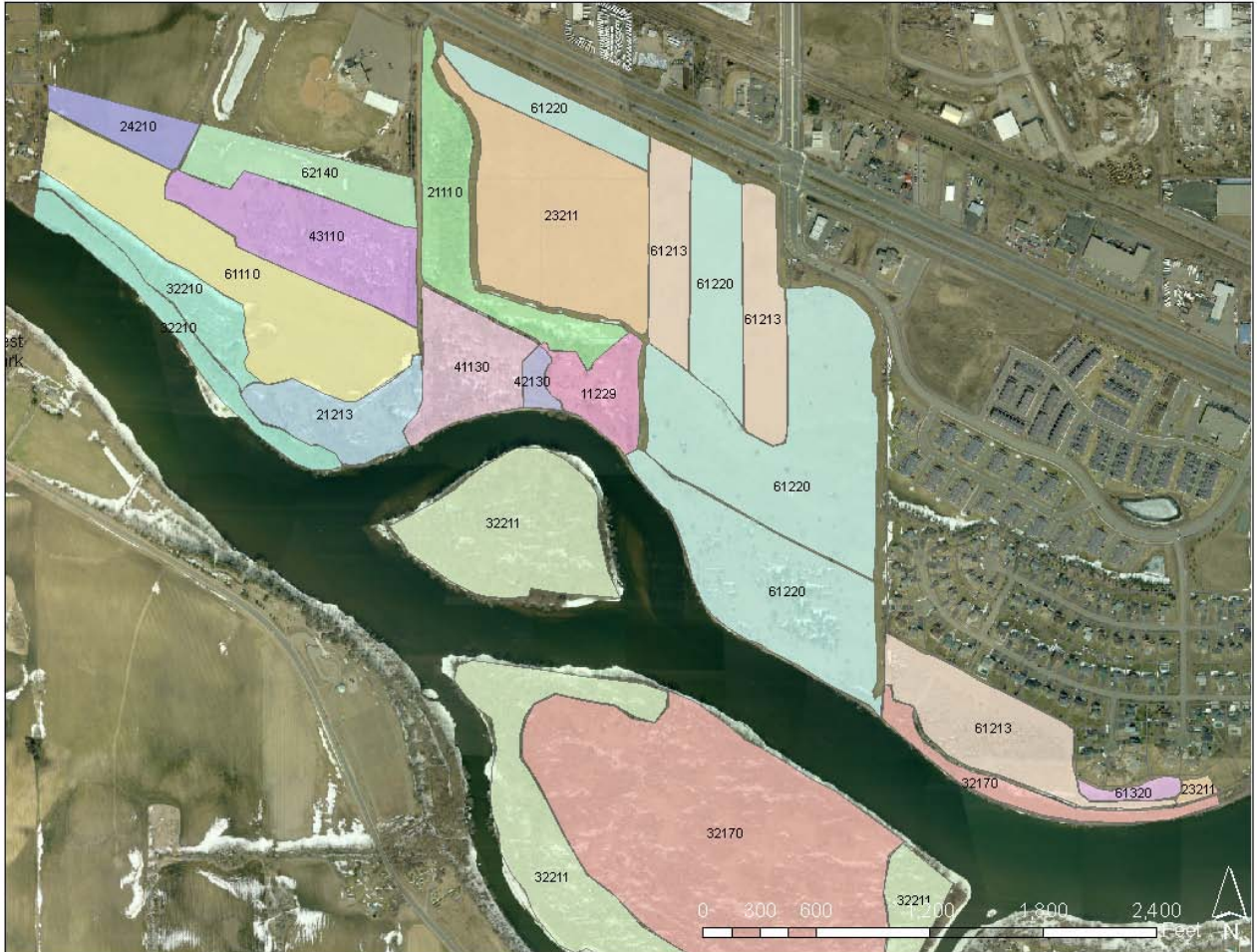
**Section 4(f) Park Impact**

TH 10 in Ramsey  
 S.P. 199-010-09, S.P. 02-596-10, HPPH MN196(002)  
 Anoka County, City of Ramsey, Mn/DOT  
 Job: 6203  
 10/30/2008

**Figure 1**

## Minnesota Land Cover Classification System

A natural resource inventory of land cover types was conducted using the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS). Anoka County conducted a ground survey of Mississippi West Regional Park in September, 2010. The following community types were identified and classified as:



MN Land Cover Classification

MLCC Legend for Mississippi West Regional Park:

11229	Artificial surfaces with deciduous trees...other deciduous trees (4.6 acres)
21110	Upland soils with planted, maintained or cultivated coniferous trees (9.6 acres)
21213	Planted, maintained or cultivated deciduous trees...other deciduous trees (6.5 acres)
23211	Planted or maintained grasses...short grasses (4.1 acres)
24210	Upland soils with cultivated close grown cropland (3.7 acres)
32170	Upland deciduous trees...altered/non-native deciduous forest (54.7 acres)
32210	Upland deciduous forest...floodplain forest (5.2 acres)
32211	Upland deciduous forest...floodplain forest, silver maple subtype (46.5 acres)
41130	Upland coniferous woodland...eastern red cedar woodland (7.4 acres)
42130	Upland deciduous woodland...altered/non-native deciduous woodland (1 acre)
43110	Mixed coniferous – deciduous woodland...altered/non-native woodland (11.7 acres)
61110	Tall upland herbaceous vegetation...mesic prairie (19.7 acres)
61213	Medium-tall upland herbaceous...dry prairie, sand-gravel subtype (13.9 acres)
61220	Medium-tall upland herbaceous...medium-tall non-native dominated herbaceous vegetation (72.2 acres)
61320	Tall upland herbaceous vegetation...wet-meadow-temporarily flooded (1 acre)
62140	Grasslands with sparse deciduous trees...non-native dominated herbaceous vegetation with sparse deciduous trees (6.6 acres)

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

*Anoka County, Minnesota*

DATE: December 14, 2010

RESOLUTION #2010-168

OFFERED BY COMMISSIONERS: Lang and LeDoux

**RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE  
APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI WEST REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, it is necessary and in the public interest for the County of Anoka to provide open space recreational facilities within the County; and,

WHEREAS, the County of Anoka has worked with the City of Ramsey and other regulating agencies in a cooperative effort to locate and develop a regional park in the city; and,

WHEREAS, the County of Anoka and the Metropolitan Council have designated Mississippi West a regional park; and,

WHEREAS, the County of Anoka has through studies and evaluations developed a park development program for Mississippi West, which is required to be approved by the Metropolitan Council; and,

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council requires a Mississippi West Master Plan for this regional park; and,

WHEREAS, the local city representatives have reviewed and commented on the plan:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anoka County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts the Mississippi West Regional Park Master Plan which is dated December 2010, a copy of which is on file in the office of Anoka County administrator, 2100 3rd Ave., Anoka, MN 55303, and authorizes its submission to the Metropolitan Council for its approval so that park development will be eligible for future Metropolitan Council grant funding.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution and Master Plan be forwarded to the Metropolitan Council, Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department, and the City of Ramsey.

STATE OF MINNESOTA)  
COUNTY OF ANOKA ) <sup>ss</sup>

I, Terry L. Johnson, County Administrator, Anoka County, Minnesota, hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of the resolution of the county board of said county with the original record thereof on file in the Administration Office, Anoka County, Minnesota, as stated in the minutes of the proceedings of said board at a meeting duly held on December 14, 2010, and that the same is a true and correct copy of said original record and of the whole thereof, and that said resolution was duly passed by said board at said meeting.

Witness my hand and seal this 14th day of December 2010.

  
TERRY L. JOHNSON  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
DISTRICT #1 – BERG	X	
DISTRICT #2 – LANG	X	
DISTRICT #3 – WEST	X	
DISTRICT #4 – KORDIAK	X	
DISTRICT #5 – LEDOUX	X	
DISTRICT #6 – SIVARAJAH	X	
DISTRICT #7 – ERHART	X	



Anoka County Parks and Recreation

550 Bunker Lake Boulevard NW, Andover, MN 55304

October 20, 2010

Susan Overson  
National Park Service  
Mississippi National River Recreation Area  
111 E. Kellogg Blvd. Suite 105  
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: Draft Master Plan for Mississippi West Regional Park

Dear Susan:

Enclosed please find a draft master plan for Mississippi West Regional Park located in Ramsey, MN.

As you know, the park is located within the Mississippi National River Recreation Area and is located along the Mississippi River Trail. When complete, the development of the park will provide a convenient stopping point along the MNRRA corridor either by boat or by bicycle.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to review and comment on the plan at your earliest convenience.

I look forward to working with you on the development of this park. If you have any questions, you can contact me at 763-767-2865 or via e-mail at [karen.blaska@co.anoka.mn.us](mailto:karen.blaska@co.anoka.mn.us).

Thank you and regards,

Karen Blaska  
Park Planner

OPEN SPACES IN NEARBY PLACES



Anoka County Parks and Recreation

550 Bunker Lake Boulevard NW, Andover, MN 55304

October 20, 2010

Molly Shodeen  
Department of Natural Resources  
1200 Warner Road  
St. Paul, MN 55106

Re: Draft Master Plan for Mississippi West Regional Park

Dear Molly:

Enclosed please find a draft master plan for Mississippi West Regional Park located in Ramsey, MN. As you know, the park is located along the Mississippi River and provides great access to the river.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to review and comment on the plan at your earliest convenience.

I look forward to working with you on the development of this park. If you have any questions, you can contact me at 763-767-2865 or via e-mail at [karen.blaska@co.anoka.mn.us](mailto:karen.blaska@co.anoka.mn.us).

Thank you and regards,

Karen Blaska  
Park Planner

OPEN SPACES IN NEARBY PLACES



Anoka County Parks and Recreation

550 Bunker Lake Boulevard NW, Andover, MN 55304

October 11, 2010

Amber Miller  
Planning Manager  
City of Ramsey  
7550 Sunwood Drive NW  
Ramsey, MN 55303

Re: Draft Master Plan for Mississippi West Regional Park

Dear Amber:

Enclosed please find a draft master plan for Mississippi West Regional Park located in Ramsey, MN. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to review and comment on the plan at your earliest convenience.

The Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department is holding a public meeting on October 20th, 2010 from 4:00pm to 7:00pm at Ramsey Municipal Center, to obtain public comment on the plan.

If you have any questions, you can contact me at 763-767-2865 or via e-mail at [karen.blaska@co.anoka.mn.us](mailto:karen.blaska@co.anoka.mn.us).

Thank you and regards,

Karen Blaska  
Park Planner


OPEN SPACES IN NEARBY PLACES

## Public Meeting Notice

### Mississippi West Regional Park Master Plan

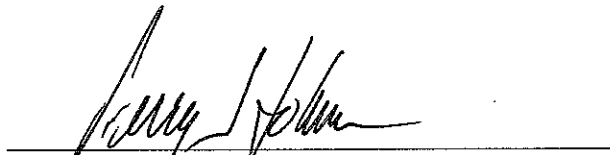
The Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department will hold a public meeting on October 20, 2010 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Dr NW, Ramsey, MN 55303 to obtain public comment on the master plan for Mississippi West Regional Park located in Ramsey, MN. Proposed plans include picnic facilities, restroom buildings, trails, interpretive center, boat launch, fishing pier, observations decks, natural resource restoration, roadways and parking lots.

Anyone interested in learning more about the master plan or wanting to offer comments is invited to attend the meeting. Those who have questions, but are unable to attend, may contact Karen Blaska, Park Planner at 763-767-2865.



---

Kathryn Timm  
Assistant County Attorney



---

Terry L. Johnson  
County Administrator

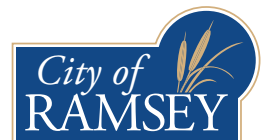
Publish In:  
Anoka County Union: October 8 and October 15, 2010

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## Mississippi Skyway Preliminary Engineering Report

CITY OF RAMSEY, MINNESOTA  
DECEMBER 2014



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Project Need and Intent

The Mississippi Skyway pedestrian bridge will provide a critical direct pedestrian and bicycle connection between the City of Ramsey's 400-acre pedestrian-oriented 'COR' development, the Ramsey Northstar Station, Ramsey Park & Ride and the resources associated with the Mississippi River and attendant regional amenities. Currently, Trunk Highway 10 (TH 10) and the parallel BNSF Railway Company and Metro Transit Northstar Commuter Rail railroad corridor are barriers to safe pedestrian and bicycle access between The COR and the river.

At its heart, the project is about overcoming boundaries to safe bicycle and pedestrian circulation while expanding and enhancing multi-modal transportation, economic development and recreational options to promote a livable, vibrant region and community.

## Regional Amenities and Connections

The Mississippi Skyway provides the connection between regional amenities creating an effective nexus between housing, transportation, employment and recreation. The Mississippi Skyway will link existing and future public investments with a single project, enhancing the value of each.

### *Mississippi River*

The Mississippi River, known as America's Treasure, is a vital ecological feature on a global, national, and regional scale. The stretch of river from Ramsey and Dayton down through the Twin Cities area to Hastings is designated as a National Park entitled the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA). The river within Ramsey is also a part of the State's Wild and Scenic River system. A prominent part of the MNRRA is the 273-acre Mississippi West Regional Park in Ramsey, which includes an existing trail from the river to the touchdown point of the proposed skyway. The master plan for the park forecasts an interpretive center to compliment the native plant community restorations and recreational river access.

### *Regional Trail Connections*

The Mississippi River Regional Trail from Mississippi West Regional Park to Anoka will be complete in the Spring of 2015. This trail is also designated US Bikeway #45 with attendant trail connections to the entire Metropolitan Park and Trail system.

The Mississippi Skyway will also allow the Central Anoka County Trail to be re-aligned through Ramsey's COR to the Mississippi River Trail and Mississippi West Regional Park.

The Central Anoka County Trail will provide several direct regional connections to:

- » *Bunker Hills Regional Park*
- » *Coon Creek Regional Trail*
- » *Cities of Anoka, Blaine and Coon Rapids park and trail systems*
- » *City of Ramsey's 50 miles of trails*
- » *Rum River Central Regional Park*

### *City of Ramsey, or the Center of Ramsey referred to as The COR*

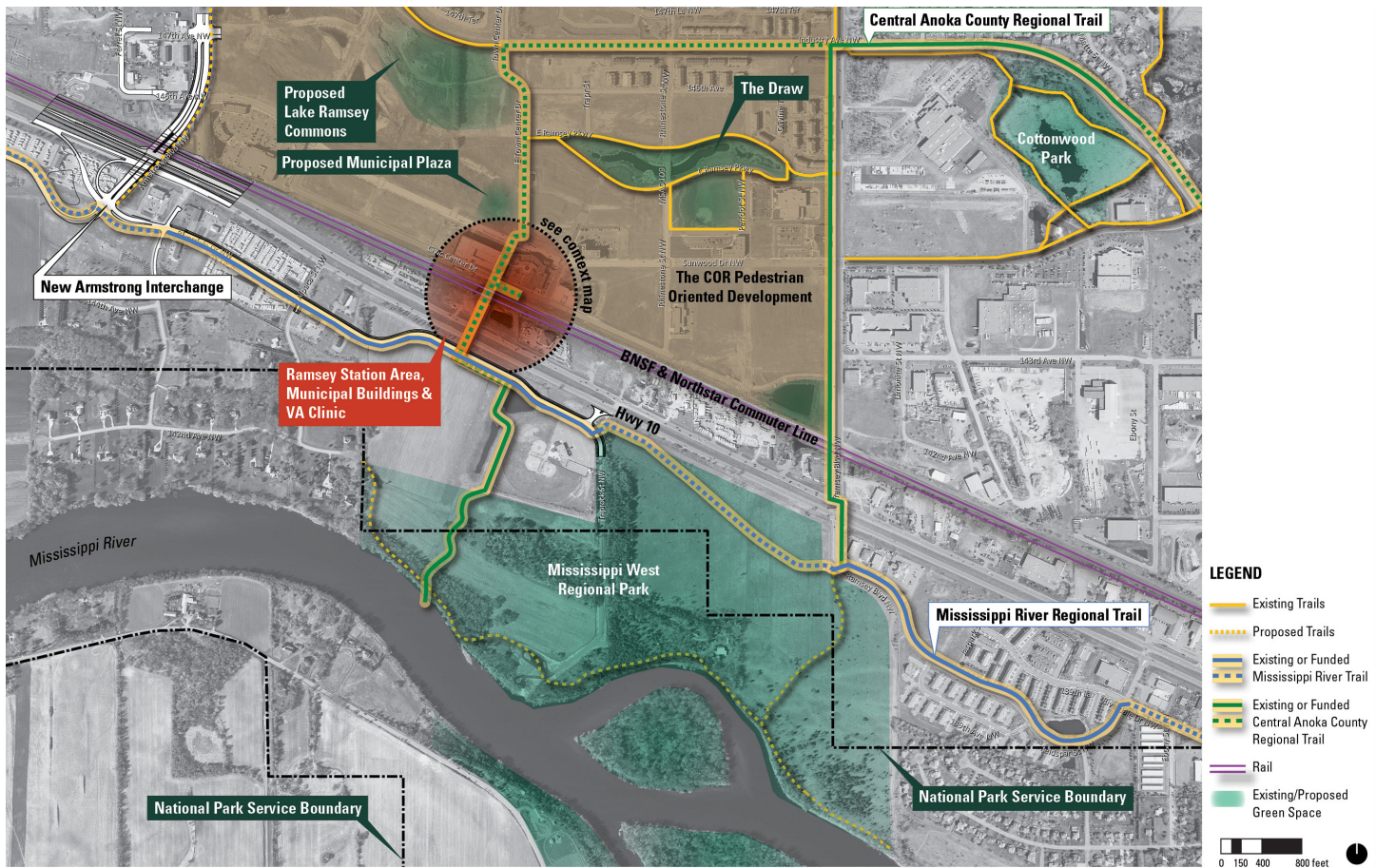
The City of Ramsey, with the Metropolitan Council, has envisioned a multi-modal town center entitled The COR with access via commuter rail, car, bicycle, and on foot. The 'COR' development is a planned 400 acre mixed-use and transit-oriented development site located north of TH 10 between CSAH 83 and CSAH 56. In the next years, the site is projected to add 6,550 people and 2,830 jobs. The COR includes a mix of residential housing choices for people of all incomes.

Establishing parks and creating quality recreational and open space opportunities remains a high priority for the City. The CITY OF RAMSEY 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE identifies the need to "Create vehicular and non-vehicular linkages to neighboring communities and between city neighborhoods, trails, recreation, work and shopping" as a component of their future planning checklist. This project serves to continue to develop non-vehicular modes of transportation, and link all of the area's transportation systems in the spirit of that goal.

### *Ramsey Northstar Commuter Rail Station and Park & Ride*

The Ramsey Northstar Commuter Rail Station and Park & Ride facility, equipped with publicly available Electric Vehicle charging stations, provide accessible, affordable and quick transit access to the larger metro region. The station is adjacent to The COR and would be directly connected to the Mississippi Skyway pedestrian bridge, enhancing ridership and accessibility.

Opened in November 2012, the Northstar Station provides a 35-minute ride to the region's largest job center, downtown Minneapolis. Furthermore, at the Northstar's terminus at Target Field Station in downtown Minneapolis, Blue Line light rail transit connections are available to the airport, Mall of America, and scattered employment sites in Minneapolis neighborhoods. The Green Line provides additional access to the University of Minnesota, Downtown Saint Paul, and many Saint Paul neighborhoods. The Mississippi Skyway will expand access to these publicly funded investments.



Appendix E, Figure 1 – Project Location and Trail Map

## Alternatives and Barriers to Safe Pedestrian Movement

The Mississippi Skyway would provide a safe grade-separated pedestrian and bicycle connection between The COR and the Mississippi River and across the existing barrier of the TH 10 corridor and rail line.

TH 10 is a 4-lane divided highway that is a primary east-west route in Anoka County, serving as a commuter corridor to the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area with annual average daily traffic of 43,500 vehicles per day in the project area.

BNSF runs parallel to TH 10. There has been a nearly 40 percent increase in freight traffic since 2012, when approximately 48 freight trains passed through each day. In addition to freight trains, these tracks also facilitate the Northstar Commuter Rail system.

In the Fall of 2014, the City of Ramsey constructed an extension of Riverdale Drive from Alpaca Street NW to Traprock Street NW at the regional park. This roadway extension is parallel to and

immediately to the south of the existing Minnesota Department of Transportation's ROW occupied by TH 10.

The closest alternate pedestrian and bicycle crossing of TH 10 is at Armstrong Boulevard when the new interchange design is constructed. A user traveling from the Ramsey Northstar Station to the proposed south touch-down point of the Mississippi Skyway by way of Armstrong Boulevard would travel an additional 1.7 miles or an estimated 35 minutes of walking time. Such an extensive non-direct route would be prohibitive from a user's standpoint, and will continue to invite illegal pedestrian crossings as has been problematic throughout the highway and railroad corridors.

Absent a pedestrian overpass, TH 10, the railroad corridor and the parallel Riverdale Drive will continue to act as a physical barrier between Ramsey's mixed-use development, commuter rail station, and regional investments on both sides of the highway and the amenities along the Mississippi River which could hinder sustainable development potential and economic growth in the region.

# Mississippi Skyway Preliminary Engineering Report

SRF Consulting Group, Inc. was engaged to assess the feasibility of constructing a grade separated crossing over TH10 and Riverdale Drive. The study included the following objectives:

- » *Identify potential locations for a new pedestrian bridge crossing of TH 10 and Riverdale Drive.*
- » *Conduct preliminary analysis of alignments and profiles for further consideration in future design phases.*
- » *Identify impacts to adjacent private and public lands for possible Right-of-Way (ROW) easements and acquisitions.*
- » *Identify impacts to existing utilities.*
- » *Outline potential structure types and aesthetic options for consideration.*
- » *Provide an outline of future tasks to continue to move the project forward in compliance with anticipated funding requirements.*
- » *Review possible additional site development options for the surrounding site to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle connections to the approach areas.*

Throughout the process, multiple alignments were considered (see Appendix B & Appendix J). With assistance from the City, the preferred alignment selected was a straight alignment from the Ramsey Northstar Station over TH 10 and Riverdale Drive with a circular helix approach ramp on the south side of Riverdale Drive.

Wayfinding and bridge aesthetics were also taken into consideration. The proposed bridge aesthetics take their cue from the surrounding civic architecture including City Hall, the municipal parking ramp, and the Northstar Ramsey Station. Undoubtedly, MnDOT, local stakeholders and the greater community will have an interest in the visual quality of the structure. Further input from stakeholders will help ensure that the bridge will be an attractive and distinctive civic landmark that reflects community values.

## Preferred Pedestrian Bridge Concept D

Seven different structure types were considered as feasible options for the pedestrian bridge. The City has identified Bridge Concept D in Appendix E as the preferred option, which includes dual bowstring truss center spans with concrete girder side spans. Preferred Bridge Concept D is described as follows:

- » *Visual emphasis is at the center of the bridge at the arcing trusses.*
- » *The new bridge will be distinct from the existing enclosed skyway but will complement its appearance.*
- » *Center trusses and vertical piers are the dominant architectural features.*
- » *A center pier is required in the TH10 median. Decorative railing enclosure creates an "open" experience on the deck without a roof.*

## Estimated Project Costs and Funding Sources

A preliminary estimate of project costs has been developed based on the proposed pedestrian bridge options presented in this report. The preferred bridge concept costs are estimated at \$5.1 million to \$5.6 million. These costs are based on 2015 dollars and include a 10% contingency and an estimated 20% for engineering and construction administration cost.

In 2014, the National Parks Service (NPS) awarded the City a grant for construction related activity for the Mississippi Skyway pedestrian bridge. The "MISSISSIPPI RIVER SKYWAY BRIDGE - MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL RIVER AND RECREATION AREA (MISS)" grant provides total program funding of \$490,000 with a grant availability sun-set date in 2017.

The City is considering multiple additional funding options and partners for the final design considerations, construction, and maintenance of the proposed pedestrian bridge facility.

This report has conservatively assumed the use of typical Federal funding sources for purposes of estimating total project costs. Note that multiple Federal funding sources are available, and each may present a different set of specific project criteria.

## Next Steps

The Mississippi Skyway pedestrian bridge project will likely require a Cooperative Construction Agreement between the City and MnDOT.

An Environmental Review Summary has been prepared (see Appendix H) to identify existing resources within the vicinity of the Mississippi Skyway project. An environmental review document will be needed to meet requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. The type of document will be determined when funding is identified based on coordination with funding partners and federal agencies. The construction of the bridge is anticipated to be a Categorical Exclusion (Type II document; no significant environmental impacts are anticipated.)

Right-of-Way: Easements and land acquisitions can be negotiated at this time and should be prepared to satisfy Federal real estate acquisition statutes and regulations.

Utility coordination may begin with impacted utilities so that utility owners can begin to determine the extent of the impact and the preliminary resolution, whether it be modification or relocation.

MnDOT coordination may continue. A MnDOT State/Federal Aid project coordinator will need to be assigned for determining the State/Federal processes to be followed and for review of preliminary and final construction documents.

The draft preliminary bridge plans included in the report may be advanced to a complete preliminary plan for review and approval by the MnDOT Bridge Office Preliminary Plan Review Unit. Upon approval of the preliminary plan, the final design and plans may be prepared and reviewed per the Cooperative Construction Agreement Process.

Preparation of funding applications and requests for letters of support may begin at this time while other steps outlined above are on-going.



Appendix E, Figure 20 – Preferred Concept D View from TH 10



Appendix E, Figure 19 – Preferred Concept D View of helix structure from the south



Appendix E, Figure 18 – Preferred Concept D Bird's eye view

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# 2040 REGIONAL PARKS POLICY PLAN



February 2015

# The Council's mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region

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## Metropolitan Council Members

Susan Haigh	Chair	Edward Reynoso	District 9
Katie Rodriguez	District 1	Marie McCarthy	District 10
Lona Schreiber	District 2	Sandy Rummel	District 11
Jennifer Munt	District 3	Harry Melander	District 12
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Steve Elkins	District 5	Jon Commers	District 14
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Gary L. Cunningham	District 7	Wendy Wulff	District 16
Adam Duinck	District 8		



The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Council operates the regional bus and rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans and helps fund regional parks, and administers federal funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The 17-member Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

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## Chapter One: Planning for the Twin Cities Region

### *Thrive MSP 2040*

Our region is anchored by three great rivers, dotted by hundreds of lakes, and endowed with wide expanses of green space, giving our residents beautiful landscapes that inspire and renew. Its largest river – the Mississippi – gave birth to two frontier settlements – Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Since then, our region has grown and prospered, and is now well-known for its high quality of life, its strong, resilient economy, and many other assets:

- Vibrant arts, music and theatre communities and professional sports teams
- Rich cultural diversity
- Abundant parks, recreational trails, conserved open space, fertile agricultural land, and natural resources
- A civic tradition of shared action.

Today, the Twin Cities metropolitan area – the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council – is a thriving region of nearly three million people living in 186 communities across the seven counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington. The region has emerged as a world-class metropolitan area – a great place to live, work, play and do business.

As we plan for our next 30 years, key challenges lie ahead – constrained fiscal resources, new demands stemming from demographic shifts, emerging environmental challenges, new regional planning priorities, and the increasing necessity of regional economic cooperation.

Under state law, the Metropolitan Council is responsible for preparing a comprehensive development guide for the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Council's *Thrive MSP 2040*, adopted in May 2014, provides a framework for a shared vision for the future of the region over the next 30 years. *Thrive* establishes the policy foundation used by the Council to develop its regional systems and policy plans, as well as development policies and implementation strategies. Taken together, these constitute the comprehensive development guide that guides the orderly and economical development of the region. State statute specifies three metropolitan systems plans:

- Transportation Policy Plan (including Aviation)
- Water Resources Policy Plan
- Regional Parks Policy Plan

In addition to the three statutory metropolitan systems plans, the Council is developing a Housing Policy Plan. The Housing Policy Plan will provide an expanded policy framework to inform the Council's review of the housing elements and housing implementation programs of local comprehensive plans required in statute.

*Thrive* is the result of extensive engagement with the region's residents, civic, nonprofit and business leaders, and governmental officials. As a regional plan, *Thrive* addresses issues greater than any one neighborhood, city, or single county can tackle alone to build and maintain a thriving metropolitan region. Using an outcomes-based approach, *Thrive* puts forward five outcomes and three principles as the foundation of a prosperous, equitable, and livable region for today and generations to come.

## Thrive Outcomes

*Thrive's* regional vision includes five desired outcomes: stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability. While each outcome is described below, it is important to note that the five outcomes reinforce and support one another to produce greater benefits than any single outcome alone. The outcomes provide policy direction for this *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

### Stewardship

Stewardship advances the Council's longstanding mission of orderly and economical development by responsibly managing the region's natural and financial resources, and making strategic investments in our region's future. The region enjoys a bounty of natural resources including three major rivers, over 900 lakes, extensive wetlands, native prairie, woodland habitats, and an abundant groundwater system. The rich natural assets are a part of our regional identity, enhancing our quality of life and supporting a strong economy. However, challenges to the quality and extent of natural resources abound.

### Prosperity

Prosperity is fostered by investments in infrastructure and amenities that make our region competitive in attracting and retaining successful businesses, a talented workforce, and strong economic opportunities. Regional economic competitiveness results from our strategic, long-term public and private decisions that build on and grow our region's economic strengths relative to other regions. Advancing prosperity includes:

- Fostering conditions for shared economic vitality by balancing major investments across the region,
- Protecting natural resources that are the foundation of prosperity,
- Planning for and investing in infrastructure, amenities, and quality of life needed for economic competitiveness, and
- Encouraging redevelopment and infill development.

### Equity

Equity means connecting all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. Promoting equity includes:

- Using the Council's influence and investments to build a more equitable region
- Creating real choices in where we live, how we travel, and where we recreate for all residents, across race, ethnicity, economic means, and ability
- Investing in a mix of housing affordability along the region's transit corridors, and
- Engaging a full cross-section of the community in decision-making.

## Livability

Livability focuses on the quality of our residents' lives and experiences in the region, and how places and infrastructure create and enhance the quality of life that makes our region a great place to live.

Enhancing livability means:

- Increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation through regional parks and trails
- Providing transportation choices for a range of demographic characteristics and economic means
- Supporting bicycle facilities to promote bicycling for transportation, recreation, and healthy lifestyles
- Aligning resources to support transit-oriented development and walkable places, and
- Promoting healthy communities and active living through land use, planning, and investments.

## Sustainability

Sustainability seeks to protect our regional vitality for generations to come by preserving our capacity to maintain and support our region's well-being and productivity over the long term. The region's investments in prosperity, equity, and livability will fall short over the long term if the region exhausts its resources without investing in the future.

## *Thrive Principles*

*Thrive* identifies the principles of integration, collaboration, and accountability to carry out the Council's work. The three principles reflect the Council's efforts to integrate policy areas, support local governments and regional partners, and promote and implement the *Thrive* regional vision. Each principle is explained below.

## Integration

Integration is the intentional combining of related activities to achieve more effective results, using multiple policy tools to address complex regional challenges and opportunities. The *Thrive* outcomes described above are lofty ideals that cut across the Council's functions and responsibilities, thereby requiring the Council to use its full range of authorities and activities in more coordinated ways. Achieving integration involves moving beyond organizational silos and coordinating effectively with partners and stakeholders throughout the region.

## Collaboration

Collaboration recognizes that shared efforts advance our region most effectively toward shared outcomes. Addressing the region's issues requires collaboration because no single entity has the capacity or authority to do the work alone. For the Council, acting collaboratively means fostering shared strategies, supportive partnerships, and reciprocal relationships. It also represents convening the region's best thinkers, experts, and stakeholders to address complex regional issues beyond the

capacity or authority of any single jurisdiction or institution. Additionally, it involves providing technical assistance and enhanced information to support local planning and decision-making.

## Accountability

For the Council, accountability includes a commitment to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our policies and practices toward achieving shared outcomes and a willingness to adjust course to improve performance. Acting accountably means: a) adopting a data-driven approach to measure progress, b) creating and learning from *Thrive* indicators, c) providing clear, easily accessible information, and d) fulfilling the Council's mission.

## *Thrive's Additional Directives for the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*

*Thrive* articulates a long-range vision for the region. The vision aims to foster and contribute to the five desired outcomes through the use of the three principles described in the previous section. While the focus in *Thrive* is on the overarching vision for the region, *Thrive* provides directives for the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. *Thrive* specifies that the Council will collaborate with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, regional park agencies, and state partners to:

- Expand the Regional Parks System to conserve, maintain, and connect natural resources identified as being of high quality or having regional importance, as identified in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*
- Provide a comprehensive regional park and trail system that preserves high-quality natural resources, increases climate resiliency, fosters healthy outcomes, connects communities, and enhances quality of life in the region
- Promote expanded multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails, and the transit network, where appropriate
- Strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all our region's residents, such as across age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin, and ability

## *Regional Growth and Demographics*

By 2040, our region is projected to be home to almost 3.7 million people, a gain of 824,000 residents from 2010. Such robust growth is a sign of the region's economic health and vitality. With this growth will come new jobs, greater racial and ethnic diversity, expanded economic opportunities and increased tax revenues. Accommodating growth poses challenges, however, as the increasing public concern about traffic congestion demonstrates. Although there is still open space and available land in some parts of the region, the additional population and the systems that will serve it will make expanding or even preserving space for parks and trails more challenging.

	2000	2010	2040
Population	2,642,062	2,849,567	3,673,660
Households	1,021,456	1,117,749	1,509,170
Employment	1,606,263	1,543,872	2,094,380

In addition, our population is changing in ways that will influence how we develop and redevelop:

- Our region is aging rapidly. More than one in five residents will be age 65 and older in 2040, compared to one in nine in 2010.
- The region will gain 391,000 new households by 2040.
- By 2040, 40% of the population will be people of color, compared to 24% in 2010. The share of people of color increases among younger age groups; 54% of residents under age 18 will be people of color in 2040.

While the rich and growing racial and ethnic diversity is an asset to our continued economic vitality, our region has some of the largest disparities by race and ethnicity of any large metropolitan area in the nation. Importantly, these disparities and shifting demographics have implications for nature-based outdoor recreation providers. Broad based trends consistently indicate that recreation participation is far greater for white and/or non-Hispanic populations within the state and the nation than for people of color. [see Minnesota’s State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), 2014]. In addition, SCORP cites several studies showing that involvement in nature-based outdoor recreation among young adults and their children has decreased since the 1990s. The relative participation of different segments of the population in nature-based outdoor recreation, together with their respective population growth rates, create significant challenges ahead in terms of park and trail utilization, as well as maintaining broad-based public support for park and trail investments. To this end, the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* incorporates specific aims to strengthen equitable usage of our regional parks and trails by all our region’s residents.

### *Community Designations*

The seven-county region contains a wide range of communities, from agricultural townships to densely developed downtown neighborhoods. Recognizing that one size does not fit all, the Council uses community designations to group communities with similar characteristics in order to implement regional policy at the local level through comprehensive plans (See Figure 1-1). Community designations fall within two main categories, the Metropolitan Urban Service Area and the Rural Service Area.

### **Metropolitan Urban Service Area**

The Metropolitan Urban Service Area constitutes about half of the land in the region, but accounts for more than 90% of the region’s population. The Council supports the Metropolitan Urban Service Area

through investments such as regional wastewater services, regional highways, transit service, the Regional Parks System, and programs that support redevelopment. Some of the region's most popular regional parks are located in the Metropolitan Urban Service Area, including Como Regional Park, Zoo and Conservatory; Minnehaha Regional Park; and Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Park Reserve. Trails including the Bruce Vento and North Cedar Lake Regional Trails; connect people to regional parks and local amenities. The Metropolitan Urban Service Area is divided into five community designations:

- Urban Center
- Urban
- Suburban
- Suburban Edge
- Emerging Suburban Edge

*Thrive* forecasts project that over the next 30 years growth and redevelopment will occur throughout the region. Not only will growth occur in the suburban communities; the urban communities will continue to redevelop. Forces driving this change are our aging population, new residential preferences among younger households, and increasing interest in sustainable lifestyles. Demographic changes, emerging preferences, and shifting development patterns will increase our need to expand multimodal access to our regional parks, regional trails and transit system.

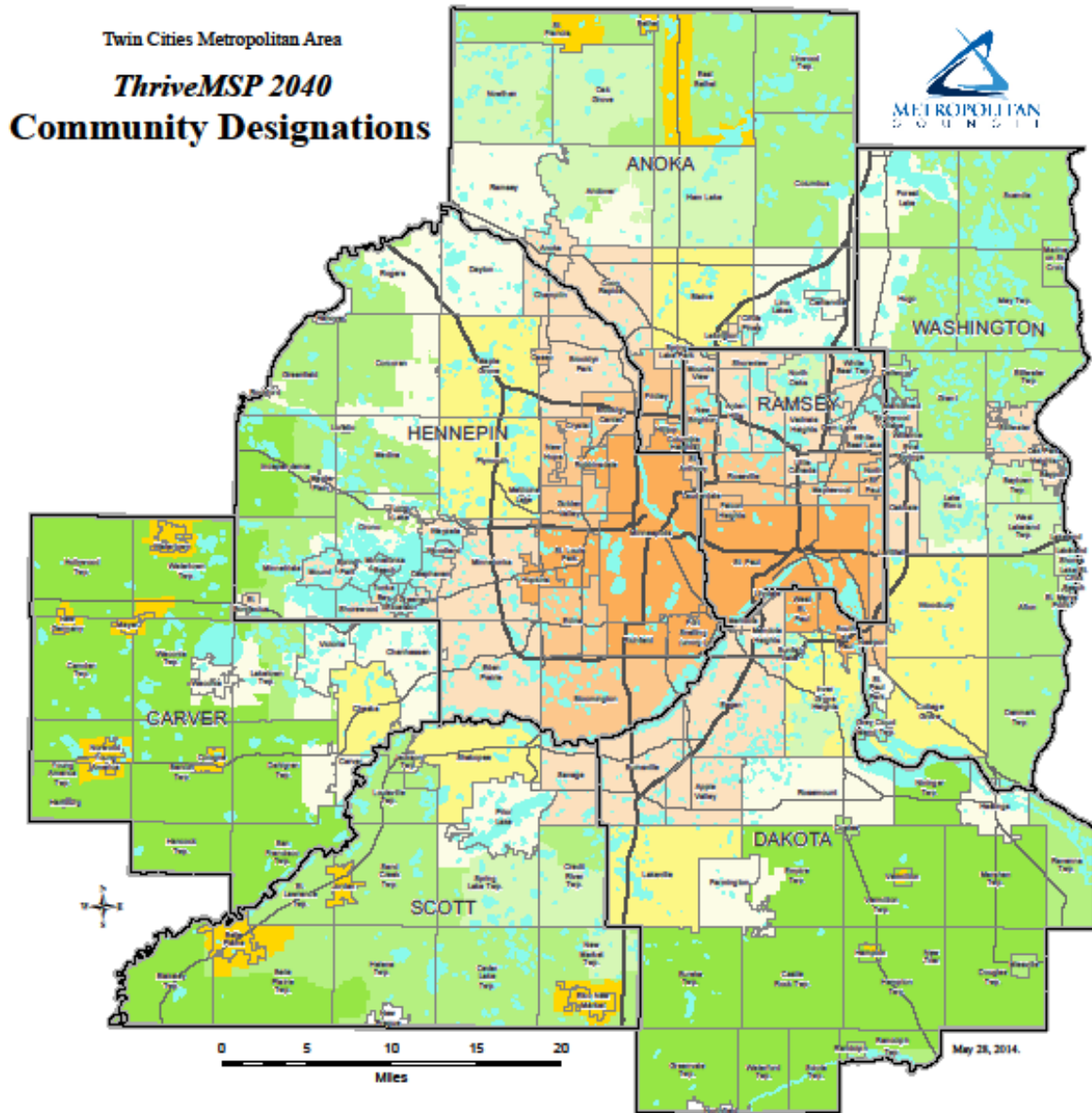
## Rural Service Area

About half of the land in the Twin Cities region is located in the Rural Service Area. This area includes a range of land uses, including cultivated farmland, vineyards, hobby farms, gravel mines, woodlands, small towns, scattered and clustered housing, open spaces, and significant expanses of the region's natural resources. Aside from the Regional Parks System, investments in regional service and infrastructure are limited in the Rural Service Area. The Rural Service Area is divided into four community designations:

- Rural Center
- Rural Residential
- Diversified Rural
- Agricultural

The Rural Service Area contains some of the Regional Parks System's large park reserves, including Crow Hassan and Big Marine Park Reserves. In addition to providing passive recreation opportunities, the park reserves also preserve, maintain, and connect high quality or regionally important natural resources.

Figure 1-1. Thrive MSP 2040 Community Designations



**Community Designations**

**Urban Service Areas**

- Urban Center
- Urban
- Suburban
- Suburban Edge
- Emerging Suburban Edge

**Rural Service Areas**

- Rural Center
- Diversified Rural
- Rural Residential
- Agricultural

**Highways**

- Interstate Highways
- State, US Highways and County Roads
- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- Lakes and Rivers

Hanover, New Prague, Northfield, and Rockford are outside the Council's planning authority.

## Local Comprehensive Plans

The policy direction from *Thrive* and the Council's systems and policy plans – including this *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* – provides guidance to local governments in developing their comprehensive plans. Under state law, each county, city and township in the seven-county metropolitan area must review and, if necessary, amend its local comprehensive plan at least every 10 years to ensure that the local plan – and local fiscal devices and official controls – conforms with the Council's metropolitan system plans (Minn. Stats. 473.864).

Following the adoption of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and once the Council issues system statements, as required under the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, local communities have three years to update their local comprehensive plan. If the Council issues system statements based on a future amendment to the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, local communities have nine months to amend their comprehensive plans.

Local comprehensive plans are reviewed by the Council based on three primary criteria:

- Conformance with metropolitan system plans
- Consistency with Council policies
- Compatibility with adjacent and affected governmental units.

When a plan meets these criteria, the Council authorizes it to be put into effect. If a plan does not meet the review standards, the Council can require the jurisdiction to modify its plan to conform to the Council's system plans.

### Conformance

A local comprehensive plan will conform to the metropolitan system plans if the local plan:

1. Accurately reflects the components of the metropolitan system plans
2. Integrates public facilities plan components
3. Addresses land use policies, plans for forecasted growth, meets density standards and maximizes the efficiency and effectiveness of the regional systems

In their local comprehensive plans, communities need to acknowledge and plan for the Regional Parks System facilities in their jurisdiction as identified in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. The Council will review local plans to ensure they will not cause detrimental impacts to Regional Parks System facilities and that the plans do not preclude or substantially limit the future acquisition of lands officially identified for the Regional Parks System in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

### Consistency

Consistency is generally achieved if the local plan:

1. Addresses the community role for the land use policies contained in *Thrive*, including:

Natural Resource Protection: Conserve, restore, and protect the region's natural resources to ensure their ongoing availability, to support public health, and to maintain a high quality of life.

Access, Mobility and Transportation Choice: Sustain and improve a multimodal transportation system to support regional growth, maintain regional economic competitiveness and provide choices and reliability for the system's users. To help meet this policy, local communities are encouraged to plan and develop local trail connections to regional trails as identified in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan and to plan for and connect to the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network as identified in the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, where appropriate.

2. Addresses the linkage of local land uses to local parks and open space as well as the Regional Parks System.
3. Includes an implementation plan describing public programs, fiscal devices and other specific actions (sequencing and staging activities) that implement the comprehensive plan and ensure conformance with regional system plans.
4. Addresses official controls and includes a capital improvement program (sewers, parks, transportation, water supply and open space) that accommodates planned growth and development.

## Compatibility

Compatibility with adjacent and affected governmental units is generally achieved if the local plan adequately documents that it has addressed the concern(s) of all adjacent and affected jurisdictions, based on comments or concerns from these entities.

As local communities update their comprehensive plans, the Council encourages them to identify locally important natural areas for protection through acquisition, conservation easements, and conservation-sensitive development practices. In addition to planning for the recreational needs of its residents, the Council encourages communities to plan local trail connections to the Regional Parks System. Together, the region, the regional park implementing agencies, local communities, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector can preserve natural areas and enhance multimodal access to regional parks and trails.

## Chapter Two: Overview of the Regional Parks System and the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

### *Introduction*

The benefits of parks have been extensively documented<sup>1</sup>. Parks and open green space positively contribute to human health and well-being. Benefits to physical well-being include increased physical activity, reduced risk of various chronic illnesses, as well as obesity. Benefits to psychological well-being include stress reduction, attention restoration, and improved cognitive functioning. Social well-being benefits include increased social capital, family bonding, and social integration. Parks and open green space also contribute many environmental benefits including biodiversity conservation, air and water purification, erosion control, climate regulation, carbon dioxide sequestration, among other ecosystem services.<sup>2</sup>

Benefits afforded by the Regional Parks System, such those illustrated above, help to keep our region at the top of national livability rankings. The Twin Cities area's 62 regional parks, park reserves, and special recreation features, plus more than 340 miles of regional trails, showcase the unique landscapes of the region and provide year-round recreation. Our residents have consistently singled out the region's parks, trails and natural environment as the most attractive feature of the region.<sup>1</sup> Drawing over 47 million annual visits in 2013, the Regional Parks System provides access to natural space that contributes to physical and emotional well-being. Many of our region's most well-known and iconic sites are part of the Regional Parks System – the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, Como Zoo and Conservatory, Lebanon Hills Regional Park, Bunker Hills Regional Park, Elm Creek Park Reserve, and Lake Elmo Park Reserve.

The 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan advances the Thrive MSP 2040 outcomes of Stewardship, Prosperity, Equity, Livability, and Sustainability by striving to:

- Expand the Regional Parks System to conserve, maintain, and connect natural resources identified as being of high quality or having regional importance, as identified in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*
- Provide a comprehensive regional park and trail system that preserves high-quality natural resources, increases climate resiliency, fosters healthy outcomes, connects communities, and enhances quality of life in the region
- Promote expanded multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails, and the transit network, where appropriate

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<sup>1</sup> Dinnie, E., Brown, K.M., Morris, S. (2013). Negotiating the social well-being benefits of urban green space. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 112, 1-9.

Wolch, J.R., Byrne, J., & Newell, J.P. (2014). Urban green space, public health, and environmental justice: The challenge of making cities 'just green enough'. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 125, 234-244.

<sup>2</sup> Gómez-Baggethun, E. & Gren, A. (2013). Urban ecosystem services. In T. Elmqvist et al. (eds.), *Urbanization, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: Challenges and Opportunities: A Global Assessment*, pp. 175-251.

- Strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all our region’s residents, such as across age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin, and ability

The Regional Parks System plays a key role in providing parks and open space for the metropolitan area. But by itself, it cannot and was never intended to provide all of the metropolitan area’s recreational opportunities. The Regional Parks System is one component of the greater recreation and open space system for the metropolitan area that includes local, state, and federal parks and open space areas, as well as private sector facilities. All these other facilities and services complement those of the Regional Parks System.

This chapter provides an overview of the Regional Parks System and the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan. These concepts are explored in more detail in subsequent chapters of this plan.

## *The Regional Parks System*

The Regional Parks System, supported by the Council in partnership with cities, counties and special park districts, was established in 1974. At that time, the Legislature found that:

*“The pressure of urbanization and development threatens the most valuable remaining large recreational open spaces in the metropolitan area at the same time as the need for such areas is increased. Immediate action is therefore necessary to provide funds to acquire, preserve, protect and develop regional recreational open space for public use.”*  
(Minn. Stat. 473.302)

In response to state legislation, about 31,000 acres of existing parks were designated as “regional recreation open space.” The newly designated regional parks had about five million visits in 1975. Over the past 40 years, the Council has invested state and regional funds to help local park agencies develop those first designated regional parks, as well as to acquire and develop new parks and trails for the growing metropolitan population. The Regional Parks System strives to build upon the world class system of interconnected parks and natural areas first established in Minneapolis by such visionaries as Horace Cleveland and Theodore Wirth, and extend that model throughout the region.

### **As of 2014, the Regional Parks System includes:**

- 54,286 acres open for public use
- 54 regional parks and park reserves
- Eight special recreation features, such as the zoo and conservatory at Como Regional Park
- 40 regional trails, with 340 miles currently open to the public
- Over 47 million visits each year
- An investment of more than \$658 million in state and regional dollars since inception, with an additional \$163 million of state funds to partially finance operations and maintenance of the regional park system

Regional parks contain significant regional natural resources such as lakeshore, wetlands, hardwood forests, native prairies and groundwater recharging areas. If you were to visit one regional park, park reserve or special recreation feature each weekend – not even counting the trails, it would take you more than a year to get to them all. It’s an amazing system, one that has few rivals anywhere in the

world. It demonstrates the importance of natural spaces and outdoor recreation to Minnesotans, including those living in the metropolitan area. The Regional Parks System is comprised of four main components: regional parks, park reserves, regional trails, and special recreation features.

## Regional Parks

Regional parks most notably contain a diversity of nature-based resources, either naturally occurring or human-built, and are typically 200-500 acres in size. Regional parks accommodate a variety of outdoor recreation activities. In 2014, a total of 42 regional parks were open to the public. Examples of regional parks include:

- Battle Creek-Indian Mounds Regional Park (City of St. Paul and Ramsey County)
- Lake Waconia Regional Park (Carver County)
- Lebanon Hills Regional Park (Dakota County)
- Theodore Wirth Regional Park (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board)
- Spring Lake Regional Park (Scott County)

## Park Reserves

Park reserves, like regional parks, provide for a diversity of outdoor recreation activities. One major feature that distinguishes the park reserve from a regional park is its size. The minimum size for a park reserve is 1,000 acres. An additional characteristic of park reserves is that they are required to manage at least 80% of the park reserve as natural lands that protect the ecological functions of the native landscape. As of 2014, a total of 12 park reserves were open to the public. Examples of park reserves include:

- Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Park Reserve (City of Bloomington and Three Rivers Park District)
- Lake Elmo Park Reserve (Washington County)
- Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve (Anoka County)

The Council's 2008 Regional Park System Visitor Survey found the most popular activities in regional parks and park reserves included: 1) walking, 2) swimming, 3) biking, 4) picnicking, and 5) playground use.

## Regional Trails

The Council has defined two major types of trails to serve the region: 1) destination or greenway trails and 2) linking trails. Destination or greenway trails typically follow along routes with high-quality natural resources that make the trail itself a destination. Examples of destination or greenway trails include:

- Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board)
- Rush Creek Regional Trail (Three Rivers Park District)

Linking trails, on the other hand, are predominately intended to provide connections between various Regional Parks System units, most notably regional parks or park reserves. Examples of linking trails include:

- East Anoka County Trail (Anoka County)
- Highway 96 Regional Trail (Ramsey County)

As of 2014, 40 regional trails totaling approximately 340 miles were open for public use.

### **Special Recreation Features**

Special recreation features are defined as Regional Parks System opportunities not generally found in the regional parks, park reserves or trail corridors. Special recreation features often require a unique managing or programming effort. As of 2014, there were eight special recreation features open to the public. Examples of special recreation features include:

- Como Zoo (City of St. Paul)
- Gale Woods Farm (Three Rivers Park District)
- Square Lake (Washington County)

Additional information on Regional Parks System facilities is provided in Chapter 3.

### *Regional Parks System Management Structure*

The organizational structure of the Regional Parks System is unique. It is built upon a strong partnership among the Council and several governmental agencies, including cities, counties, and special park districts. While each agency has a role in the Regional Parks System, collaboration is the cornerstone and the strength of the Regional Parks System.

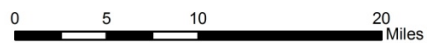
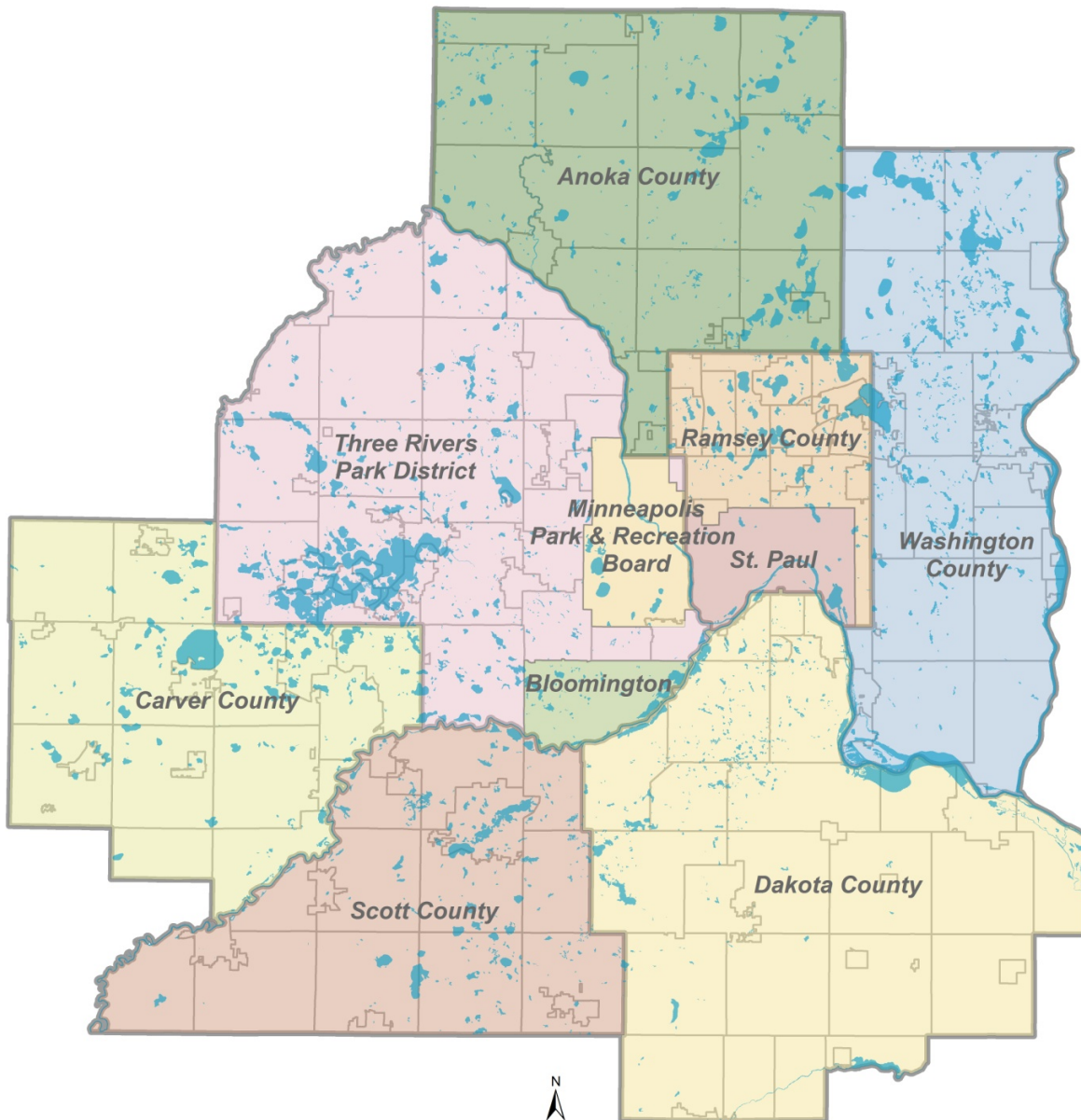
### **Regional Park Implementing Agencies Role**

Cities, counties, and special park districts own and operate regional parks and trails – the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes’ facilities, paths and activities are the responsibility of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, for example – but once a park becomes part of the Regional Parks System, the Council supports it with planning, funding, information, marketing, and advocacy. The agency partners that own and operate the Regional Parks System are called regional park implementing agencies. A map of the regional park implementing agency areas is shown in Figure 2-1.

The regional park implementing agencies are:

- Anoka County
- City of Bloomington
- Carver County
- Dakota County
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- Ramsey County
- City of Saint Paul
- Scott County
- Three Rivers Park District
- Washington County

Figure 2-1. Regional Park Implementing Agencies



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## **Metropolitan Council Role**

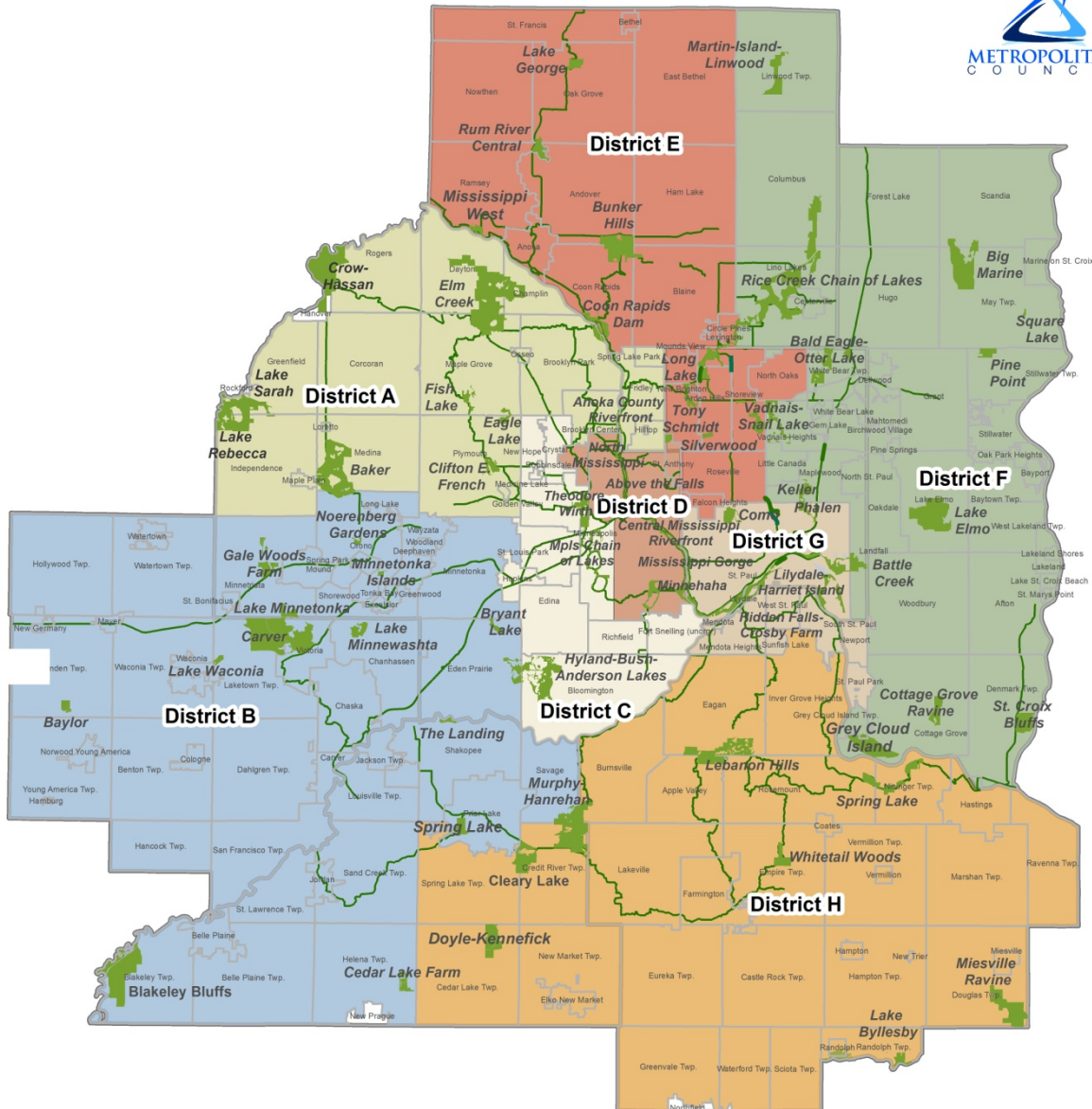
Regional Parks System legislation directs the Council to take the leading role in providing for a Regional Parks System that will complement the recreational open space opportunities provided in the area by the federal, state and local units of government. State law gives the Council the authority to determine which parks and trails in the seven-county area are included in the Regional Parks System and to generally identify areas that should be acquired for the Regional Parks System. The Council is charged with determining whether these lands are regionally important and would collectively provide a balanced system of outdoor recreation for the region. See page 24 for an overview of key Minnesota legislation.

As described shortly, the Council also contributes and administers funding to the regional park implementing agencies to acquire, develop and operate the Regional Parks System.

## **Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Role**

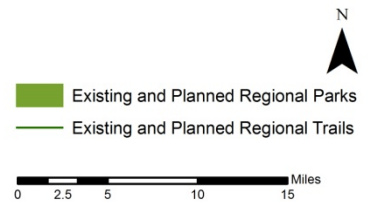
The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, appointed by the Council, uses its expertise to advise the Council on the review of regional park and trail master plans, grants for land acquisition and capital improvements. It also provides recommendations on updates and amendments to the Regional Parks Policy Plan. The commission consists of eight volunteer members, who represent specific districts throughout the region and a chair who is appointed at large. A map of the districts is shown in Figure 2-2.

Figure 2-2. Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Districts



Chair: Appointed at Large

District A	District E
District B	District F
District C	District G
District D	District H



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## *Regional Parks System Funding*

As previously noted, the Council contributes and administers funding to the regional park implementing agencies. Funding for the Regional Parks System funding currently consists of four main grant programs. Each grant program is intended for different purposes and is comprised of various funding sources. Only regional park implementing agencies, listed above, qualify for the grant programs. Each grant program is highlighted briefly below. Additional detailed information can be found in Chapter 5.

### **Capital Improvement Program**

The Council's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is intended for Regional Park System acquisition, development, and redevelopment projects. The fund is financed by state (60%) and Council (40%) bonds. The amount of funds each regional park implementing agency receives is based on a formula specified in Chapter 5.

### **Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Program**

The Parks and Trails Legacy Fund program was created after the statewide passage of the Minnesota's Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment in 2008. Along with state and Greater Minnesota regional parks and trails, the Council receives a portion of the Parks and Trails Legacy appropriations for the Regional Parks System.

The Council administers the Parks and Trails Legacy funds to regional park implementing agencies. The Parks and Trails Legacy Plan, which is described in Chapter 5, was developed to guide the use of the funds. Each regional park implementing agency's share of the funds is based on a formula specified in state statute (Minn. Stat. 85.53, subd 3). Also stipulated in state statute is the requirement that 10% of the total Parks and Trails Legacy appropriations be set aside for land acquisition. Appropriations from the Parks and Trails Legacy funds for acquisition are made available to regional park implementing agencies through the Council's Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Program, described below.

### **Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Program**

The Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant program is organized into two separate programs, corresponding to different funding sources. The two programs are the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund (PTLF) and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF). As noted above, 10% of the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriations are set aside for land acquisition, which are used for the PTLF acquisition opportunity grant program. The ENRTF acquisition opportunity grant fund is comprised of appropriations received by Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) for land acquisition. The Council matches every \$3 of PTLF or ENRTF appropriations with \$2 of Council bonds. Both programs in the Council's Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant program are non-competitive and awarded based on funding availability among other considerations detailed in subsequent chapters.

### **Operations and Maintenance**

The Council administers pass-through funds from the state to regional park implementing agencies to pay for a portion of their operations and maintenance costs. The share each regional park implementing agency receives is based on a formula specified in state statute (Minn. Stat. 423.351).

In addition to the four grant programs highlighted above, the Council also provides additional funds and administers other investments. For example, the Council administers pass-through grants from the state to regional park implementing agencies. These dollars are legislatively earmarked for a particular regional park implementing agency or park and trail unit. Additionally, the Council provides other funding investments not included above. For example, legislation created a special fund for North Mississippi Regional Park. In another example, Council bonds have been issued to pay for acquisitions without state matching funds. In sum, the total investment the state and Council have made toward the Regional Parks System between 1974 and 2014 totals \$821 million (Table 2-1).

*Table 2-1. 40-year Regional Park System State and Regional Funding Investments, 1974-2014*

Capital Improvement Program  (State and Council Funds)	Parks and Trails Legacy Fund  (State Funds)	Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Program  (State and Council Funds)		Operations and Maintenance  (State Funds)	Pass-Through Grants  (State Funds)	Other Investments  (State and Council Funds)
		ENRTF <sup>1</sup>	PTLF <sup>2</sup>			
\$414.1 M	\$84.1M	\$15.1 M	\$15.6 M	\$163.0 M	\$104.7M	\$25.1 M

<sup>1</sup> Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund acquisition account

<sup>2</sup> Parks and Trails Legacy Fund acquisition account

About eight /tenths of a percent (0.82%) of the total state and local taxes paid by a household in the region go to support the Regional Parks System. For the owner of a \$250,000 home in the seven-county metropolitan area, the average annual cost of the Regional Park System is \$67 – including \$26 in state income and sales taxes and \$41 in regional and local property taxes.

The investments and funding sources described above are not the only funding sources for the Regional Park System. Each regional park implementing agency provides their own mix of funding for their respective regional parks and trails. Other funding sources also exist, including federal grants, public-private partnerships, and private donations. In addition to the four grant programs highlighted above, the Council is committed to creating a set-side competitive grant program that is specifically targeted to enhance equitable usage of regional parks and trails. This grant program, tentatively called the Park Equity grant program, will be created using Council bonds and funded on an annual basis. Because of existing constraints on Council bonds, the grant program will provide funding only for acquisition, development, or redevelopment projects in the Regional Park System. Additional details of the new grant program are described in Chapter 4.

## *Regional Parks Policy Plan*

Managing a Regional Parks System that involves a number of different local entities, in addition to the Council, requires coordinated policies and strategies. The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* lays out the goals for the development of the Regional Parks System and the strategies designed to meet these goals.

Over the past 40 years, the Regional Parks System has made significant strides toward achieving the *Thrive* outcomes of stewardship, prosperity, livability, and sustainability. By protecting high quality natural resources and providing a world-class system of recreational opportunities, the Regional Parks System has strongly contributed to the high quality of life in the region. The policies laid out in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* reflect the Council's commitment to support and protect the Regional Parks System.

The equity outcome as described in *Thrive* is a new direction for the Council. The regional park implementing agencies have various programs and practices to help reach and serve their diverse base of users. The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* strives to build upon the good work that the regional park implementing agencies have been doing to advance equity. The Council seeks to strengthen equitable usage of the Regional Parks System, which is a key theme of this plan.

## **Planning for 2040**

The metropolitan area has historically made a substantial investment in conserving green spaces by establishing regional parks, park reserves and trails. Federal, state, and local governments have invested in parks, natural areas, and wildlife refuges that provide additional habitat and recreational activities. Local communities have invested millions of dollars in community and neighborhood parks and recreation areas.

Protecting remaining high quality natural resource lands in the metropolitan area builds on past investments and offers an excellent opportunity for further investment in the Regional Parks System as the region grows by 824,000 more people in the next 25 years. To that end, the vision for the Regional Parks System includes expanding it to nearly 70,000 acres and tripling the trail system from 340 miles today to more than 1,100 miles by 2040. New regional trails and greenway corridors will link regional parks and park reserves. Also proposed are two additional regional parks in Carver County and a regional park in the northwest corner of Anoka County – an area that has been identified as a potential park since 1974. These planned regional parks and trails will enable residents to enjoy a variety of new park experiences throughout the region.

In the 1880s, Horace Cleveland, a founding father of the Minneapolis parks system, said:

*“Look forward for a century, to the time when the city has a population of a million, and think what will be their wants. They will have wealth enough to purchase all that money can buy, but all their wealth cannot purchase a lost opportunity, or restore natural features of grandeur and beauty, which would then possess priceless value...”*

This sentiment still rings true. Preserving natural areas with an eye toward the future is critical to our region’s livability, sustainability, stewardship, and prosperity. The Regional Parks System represents a major, well-established conservation effort for land and water resources. The area’s growing population will need additional large-scale park and open space lands with interconnected trails in the future. The region needs to identify natural areas that could be added to the Regional Parks System and make plans for their acquisition before the opportunity is lost.

### **Key Minnesota Legislation for the Regional Parks System**

<p><b><i>Regional Recreation Open Space System (Minn. Stat. 473.302)</i></b></p> <p>“The legislature finds that the pressure of urbanization and development threatens valuable recreational open space areas in the metropolitan area at the same time as the need for such areas is increased. Immediate action is therefore necessary to provide funds to acquire, preserve, protect and develop regional recreational open space for public use.”</p>
<p><b><i>Regional Recreation Open Space (Minn. Stat. 473.121, subd. 14)</i></b></p> <p>“Regional recreation open space’ means land and water areas, or interests therein, and facilities determined by the Metropolitan Council to be of regional importance in providing for a balanced system of public outdoor recreation for the metropolitan area, including but not limited to park reserves, major linear parks and trails, large recreation parks, and conservatories, zoos, and other special use facilities.”</p>
<p><b><i>Regional Recreation Open Space System Policy Plan (Minn. Stat. 473.147, subd. 1)</i></b></p> <p>“The policy plan shall identify generally the areas which should be acquired by a public agency to provide a system of regional recreation open space comprising park district, county and municipal facilities which, together with state facilities, reasonably will meet the outdoor recreation needs of the people of the metropolitan area and shall establish priorities for acquisition and development.”</p> <p>“The policy plan shall include a five-year capital improvement program, which shall be revised periodically, and shall establish criteria and priorities for the allocation of funds for such acquisition and development.”</p>
<p><b><i>Grants for Recreation Open Space (Minn. Stat. 473.315, subd. 1)</i></b></p> <p>“The Metropolitan Council with the advice of the commission may make grants, from any funds available to it for recreation open space purposes, to any implementing agency, as defined in section <u>473.351</u>, to cover the cost, or any portion of the cost, of acquiring or developing regional recreation open space in accordance with the policy plan; and all such agencies may enter into contracts for this purpose or rights or interests therein.”</p>
<p><b><i>Metropolitan Area Regional Parks Funding (Minn. Stat. 473.351, subd. 1a.)</i></b></p> <p>“Implementing agency’ means the counties of Anoka, Washington, Ramsey, Scott, Carver, Dakota, the city of St. Paul, the city of Bloomington, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and the Three Rivers Park District.”</p>
<p><b><i>Park and Trails Fund (Minn. Stat. 85.53)</i></b></p> <p>“Grants funded by the parks and trails fund must be implemented according to section <u>16B.98</u>”</p>
<p><b><i>Grant Management Process (Minn. Stat. 16B.98, subd.6)</i></b></p> <p>Grant administration. “A granting agency shall diligently administer and monitor any grant it has entered into.”</p>
<p>Session law also provides important directives. For instance, the Omnibus Legacy Bill, updated biennially, provides additional guidance and requirements related to Parks and Trails Legacy spending.</p>

## *Applicable Funding Formulas*

### ***Parks and Trails Fund (Minn. Stat. 85.53, subd. 3):***

“(1) 45 percent of the money must be disbursed according to the allocation formula in section 473.351, subdivision 3, to each implementing agency; (2) 31.5% of the money must be distributed based on each implementing agency’s relative share of the most recent estimate of the population of the metropolitan area; (3) 13.5 percent of the money must be distributed based on each implementing agency’s relative share of nonlocal visits based on the most recent user visitation survey conducted by the Metropolitan Council; and (4) ten percent of the money must be distributed as grants to implementing agencies for land acquisition within Metropolitan Council approved regional parks and trails master plan boundaries under the council’s park acquisition opportunity grant program.”

### ***Operations and Maintenance Funds (Minn. Stat. 473.351, subd. 3)***

“The Metropolitan Council shall distribute the operations and maintenance money as follows: (1) 40 percent based on the use that each implementing agency’s regional recreation open space system has in proportion to the total use of the metropolitan regional recreation open space system; (2) 40 percent based on the operation and maintenance expenditures made in the previous year by each implementing agency in proportion to the total operation and maintenance expenditures of all the implementing agencies; and (3) 20 percent based on the acreage that each implementing agency’s regional recreation open space system has in proportion to the total acreage of the metropolitan regional recreation open space system.”

## Chapter Three: System Plan

### *Introduction*

The overarching outdoor recreation system in the region consists of lands owned or managed by federal, state, and local governments, as well as lands privately owned by nonprofit or for-profit agencies. All play an important role in supporting and protecting the outdoor recreation system. The system is designed to meet the recreational needs and the natural resources protection goals of the region. The outdoor recreation system consists of a wide range of facilities, from state parks to regional trails to neighborhood playgrounds to private nature centers. The Regional Parks System is one part of this well-rounded system of outdoor recreation.

The Regional Parks System primarily consists of lands located in a high-quality natural resources setting that are contiguous to lakes, rivers, or other water bodies. Natural resource restoration and protection is a key objective in the Regional Parks System. Regional parks and park reserves include large areas of land or water that often extend into multiple political jurisdictions. Regional trails may traverse several communities and provide connections between regional parks, park reserves, and the greater regional trail network. Regional parks and trails draw visitors from across the region and beyond.

Recreational parks and open space provided by the federal and state government generally serve similar recreational demands as the Regional Parks System. Local recreational open space facilities provide facilities for active recreation, such as playgrounds, athletic fields, courts, and aquatic centers. Private operations also make substantial contributions to the development of facilities and the provision of services and include golf courses, riding facilities, marinas, day camps and downhill ski areas.

### **National Parks and Federal Lands**

Our region includes the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge as well as two national parks--the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

#### *Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge*

The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge is a corridor of land and water along the Minnesota River that stretches from Bloomington to Henderson and is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The refuge was established in 1976 to provide habitat for a large number of migratory waterfowl, fish, and other wildlife species threatened by commercial and industrial development, and to provide environmental education, wildlife recreational opportunities, and interpretive programming for Twin Cities residents.

#### *Mississippi National River and Recreation Area*

The 54,000-acre Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) was established in 1988 and is a unit of the National Park Service. The National Park Service owns very little land within its borders but partners with local governments, state agencies, and organizations to protect the significant resources along the 72-mile stretch of river running through the region. Several regional parks and trails, which are owned and operated by regional park implementing agencies, are located within the MNRRA corridor.

### *St. Croix National Scenic Riverway*

A portion of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is located in the region. The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is a unit of the National Park Service located on the St. Croix River and the Namekagon River in Wisconsin. The National Riverway includes the two rivers and their riparian areas and occupies the boundary between Wisconsin and Minnesota. The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is maintained and managed by the National Park Service and the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources.

### **State Parks, Lands, and Trails**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages state parks, lands and trails in the region, including Afton, Fort Snelling, and William O'Brien State Parks; the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area; and the Brown's Creek, Gateway, Luce Line, and Minnesota Valley State Trails. The DNR also provides wildlife management areas for hunting, trapping, fishing, wildlife viewing and other compatible recreational uses. Scientific and natural areas are open to the public for nature observation and education, but are not meant for intensive recreational activities.

There are six state water trails and their attendant system of boat and canoe launches that travel through the metropolitan area along the Cannon, Crow, Minnesota, Mississippi, St. Croix, and Rum rivers. The DNR and its local unit of government partners actively manage the state water trails for canoeing, kayaking, boating and camping. Additionally, 72 miles of the Mississippi River and four miles of the Minnesota River have been designated as the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Water Trail, a national water trail.

Federal and state agencies are encouraged, but not required, to submit master plans for recreational open space units within the seven-county region to the Council for its review. To the extent these master plans indicate that facilities will fulfill regional recreation open space objectives and are consistent with the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, the Council will provide these lands protection under the Metropolitan Significance Review regulations and the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, as described in the System Protection Policy found in Chapter 4. However, the Council does not grant regional funds to state or federal agencies for capital improvements or for operations and maintenance of these facilities. Figure 3-1 depicts the national, federal and state recreation lands and corridors in the region.

### **Local Parks**

Local recreational open space facilities provide for a very large number and variety of recreational activities that occur in the metropolitan area. Local parks are often more intensely developed than regional parks and provide facilities for active recreation, such as playgrounds, athletic fields, courts, and aquatic centers. Local parks are designed to serve a neighborhood or community and are frequently located in residential areas.

Local parks are usually much smaller than regional parks and are located and designed to serve the local population, rather than primarily based on natural resource amenities. Local trails typically provide connections between community destinations, such as schools, libraries, and community centers. Although local recreational open space areas are not covered by this plan, the facilities and services

they offer are taken into consideration when master plans of the regional system are prepared and reviewed.

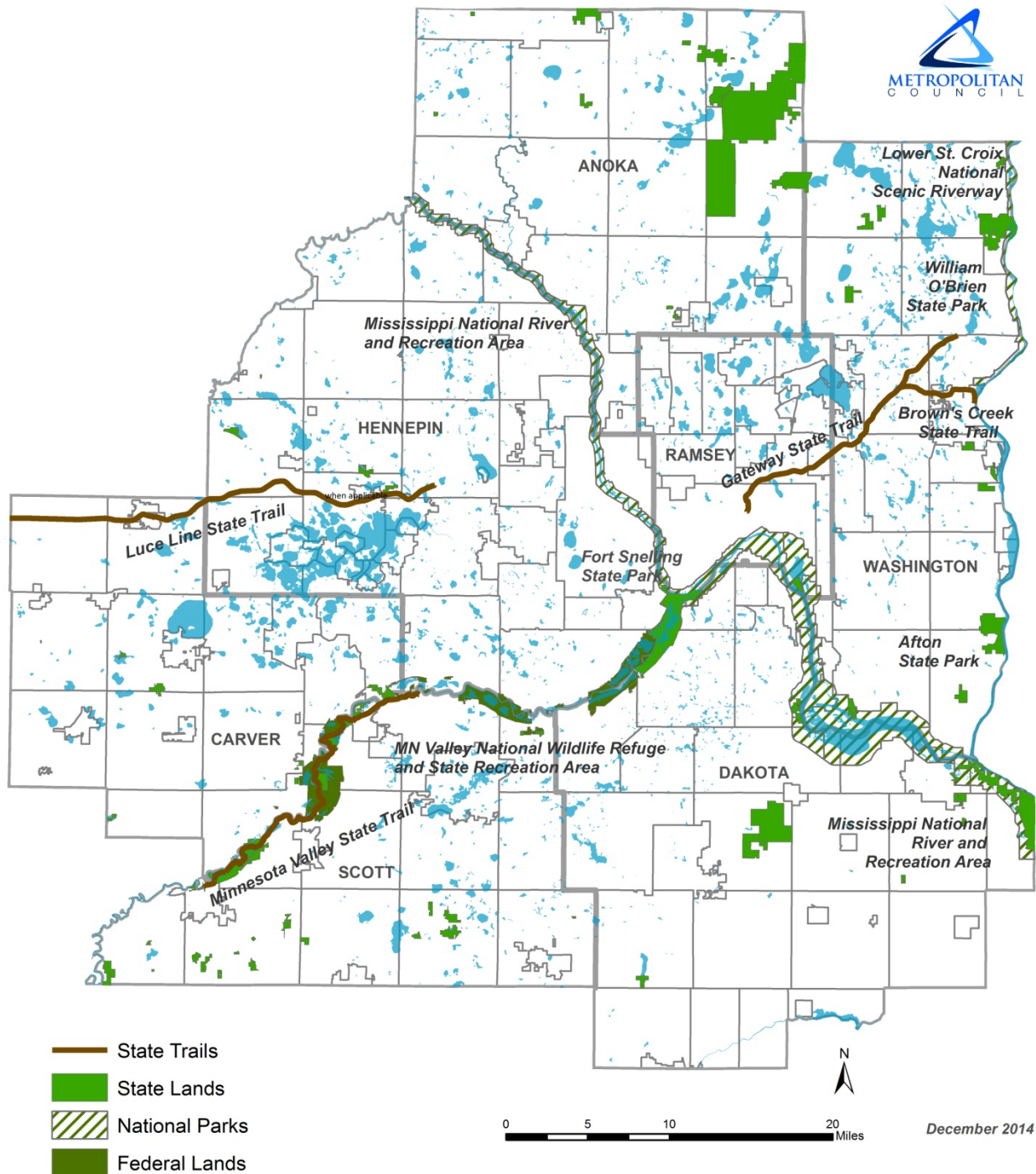
## **Private Recreation**

Public recreational open space facilities do not meet all the demands for such recreation required by the area's residents. Private operations also make substantial contributions to the development of facilities and the provision of services. The most prominent facilities provided by the private sector are golf courses, riding facilities, gun clubs, marinas, day camps, and downhill ski areas. There are also multiple recreational open space areas owned and operated by corporations, employees' associations, benevolent associations, and nonprofit social agencies. These private facilities reduce the burden on the public sector, provide additional opportunities, and help to preserve thousands of acres of land in open space. They complement activities and experiences offered by the public sector.

## **Nonprofit Partners**

Nonprofit organizations, such as the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota, the Trust for Public Land and the Nature Conservancy, have a long history of supporting the outdoor recreation system in the region by protecting and restoring natural areas and wetlands, helping acquire park land, and advocating for the importance of recreation and open space.

**Figure 3-1. National, Federal, and State Recreation Lands in the Region**



### Components of the Regional Parks System

Not all recreation facilities warrant regional status. Table 3-1 provides a classification system for local and regional facilities.

**Table 3-1. Classification System for Local and Regional Park Facilities**

Classification System for Local and Regional Facilities					
Component	Use	Service Area	Size	Site Attributes	Site Location
<b>Local Facilities</b>					
Mini-park	Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens	Less than 1/4 mile radius	< 1 acre		May be publicly or privately owned and/or incorporated into a development site, such as apartment, townhouse, or condominium complexes, or commercial centers.
Neighborhood park/playground	Area for intense recreational activities such as field games, court games, crafts, apparatus area, skating, and neighborhood centers.	¼ to ½ mile radius to serve a population of 4,000 – 5,000 (one neighborhood)	< 25 acres	Physical geography suited for intense development.	Proximity to elementary schools or residential neighborhoods.
Community playfield	Area for intense recreational facilities such as athletic fields and swimming pools; could include a neighborhood use.	3 - 5 neighborhoods or one community	25 - 50 acres	Physical geography suited for intense development.	Proximity to secondary schools and other public facilities.
Community park	Area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking; could have some field and court games.	3 - 5 neighborhoods or one community	25 - 100 acres	Affords natural features with varied physical geographic interest.	Proximity to community facilities and resources.
County park	Area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking; could have some field and court games.	County	25 - 100 acres	Affords natural features with varied physical geographic interest.	Proximity to community facilities and resources and/or where resource occurs.

## Classification System for Local Facilities

Component	Use	Service Area	Size	Site Attributes	Site Location
<b>Local Facilities</b>					
Conservancy lands	Area of natural quality such as watercourses and wetlands that are preserved for environmental or aesthetic benefits to the community and/or because of the negative environmental or economic effects of development in them.	Municipality, township, county	Variable, based on extent of resources	Natural resources that merit preservation and that would be negatively affected by development.	Where resource occurs.
Local linear parks, trail, corridors and parkways	Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, canoeing and driving.	A neighborhood or several neighborhoods in a city or township	Contained within one city or township. Width and length minimums vary by locality.	On or off-road trails that may or may not traverse scenic areas while assuring the trail treadway has no adverse effect on the natural resource base.	Where needed to link neighborhoods to components of the local or regional recreation system and/or community facilities such as schools, libraries, commercial areas and to link to adjacent municipalities.
County linear parks, trail, corridors and parkways	Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, canoeing and driving.	Several cities and/or townships in a county.	Traverses one or more municipalities. Width and length minimums vary by county.	On or off-road trails that may or may not traverse scenic areas while assuring the trail treadway has no adverse effect on the natural resource base.	Often found adjacent to major roadways within the county. Other locations where needed to link cities to components of the local or regional recreation system and/or community facilities such as schools, libraries, commercial areas and to link to adjacent counties.

## Classification System for Regional Facilities

Component	Use	Service Area	Size	Site Attributes	Site Location
<b>Regional Facilities</b>					
Regional park	Area of natural or ornamental quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping and trail uses.	3 - 5 communities	200 - 500 acres (100 minimum)	Complete natural setting contiguous to water bodies or watercourses where possible.	Where natural resource occurs--particularly water.
Regional park reserve	Area of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, boating, camping and trail uses.	County, multi-county area	1000 + acres; sufficient area to encompass the resource envisioned for preservation.	Diversity of unique resources, such as topography, lakes, streams, marshes, flora, fauna.	Where natural resource occurs.
Regional destination trail	Area developed for one or more varying modes of nonmotorized recreational travel such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and canoeing.	The entire metropolitan region	Sufficient corridor width to protect natural resources and can safely accommodate trail use. Sufficient length to be a destination itself, or to serve as a link between regional parks system units.	When feasible, off-road trails that utilize human made and/or natural linear resources such as utility corridors, railroad and highway rights of way, stream / river valleys, or at the edges of forest or prairie. On-road trails are acceptable when off-road trails are not feasible.	Preferably adjacent to high quality natural areas. The trail treadway should be placed where it has no adverse impact on the natural resource base.

## Classification System for Regional Facilities

Component	Use	Service Area	Size	Site Attributes	Site Location
<b>Regional Facilities</b>					
Regional linking trail	Area developed for one or more varying modes of nonmotorized recreational travel such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and canoeing.	The entire metropolitan region	Sufficient corridor width to protect natural resources and can safely accommodate trail use. Sufficient length to link regional parks system units.	When feasible, off-road trails that utilize human made and/or natural linear resources such as utility corridors, railroad and highway rights of way, stream / river valleys, or at the edges of forest or prairie. On-road trails are acceptable when off-road trails are not feasible.	Linkages between components of the regional parks system. When feasible, linking trails should attempt to connect to population, economic and social centers along its route. The trail treadway should be placed where it has no adverse impact on the natural resource base.
Special recreation feature	Area that preserves, maintains, and provides specialized or single-purpose recreational activities, such as nature center, marina, zoo, conservatory, arboretum, display gardens, hunter training education facilities, downhill ski area, sites of historic or archeological significance, and bridging facilities. Bridging facilities are specialized or single-purpose facilities that are intended to attract and introduce new outdoor recreation users to the Regional Parks System.	Regional- (metropolitan area)	Specific standard applicable to desired feature.	Appropriate to particular special recreation feature.	Where most advantageous for the special recreation feature and the overall park system.

Components of the Regional Parks System are categorized into four major components. These four components are regional parks, park reserves, regional trails, and special recreation features.

## Regional Parks

Areas selected for regional parks should contain a diversity of nature-based resources, either naturally occurring or human-built. The recreational quality of a regional park is measured by the presence or absence of outstanding natural resources and the ability to provide adequately for a wide range of natural resource-related recreational opportunities. Access to water bodies suitable for recreation – such as swimming, boating and fishing – is particularly important and most of the regional parks are focused on lakes, rivers or streams.

A regional park should be large enough to accommodate a variety of activities, preserve a pleasant natural aspect, and buffer activity areas from each other and from surrounding areas. This is interpreted as requiring 200 to 500 acres of land. Occasionally, because of the quality of the resource, an exception may be made and a regional park may be as small as 100 acres. Experience has shown this to be the minimum size acceptable for the range and type of activities expected to be accommodated.

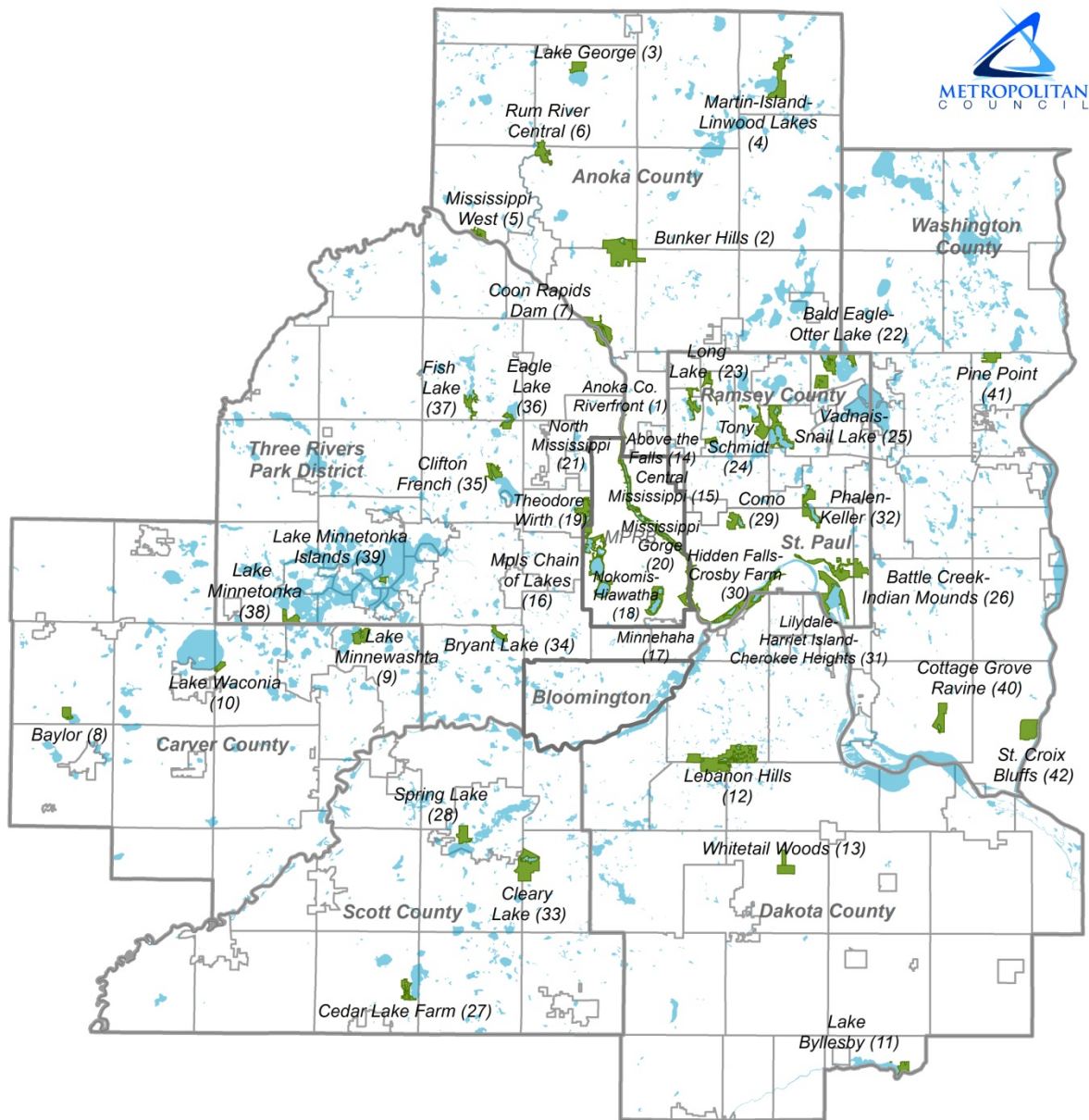
As of 2014, there are 42 regional parks developed and open to the public. These regional parks are listed in Table 3-2 and shown on Figure 3-2.

*Table 3-2. Regional Parks Open to the Public (2014)*

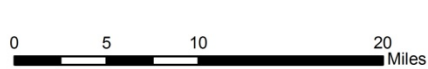
<u>Regional Parks</u>	<u>Regional Park Implementing Agency</u>
1 Anoka County Riverfront Regional Park	Anoka County
2 Bunker Hills Regional Park	Anoka County
3 Lake George Regional Park	Anoka County
4 Martin-Island-Linwood Lakes Regional Park	Anoka County
5 Mississippi West Regional Park	Anoka County
6 Rum River Central Regional Park	Anoka County
7 Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park	Anoka County/Three Rivers
8 Baylor Regional Park	Carver County
9 Lake Minnewashta Regional Park	Carver County
10 Lake Waconia Regional Park	Carver County
11 Lake Byllesby Regional Park	Dakota County
12 Lebanon Hills Regional Park	Dakota County
13 Whitetail Woods Regional Park	Dakota County
14 Above the Falls Regional Park	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
15 Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
16 Minneapolis Chain-of-Lakes Regional Park	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
17 Minnehaha Regional Park	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
18 Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
19 Theodore Wirth Regional Park	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
20 Mississippi Gorge Regional Park	Minneapolis/Saint Paul

21	North Mississippi Regional Park	Minneapolis/Three Rivers
22	Bald Eagle-Otter Lake Regional Park	Ramsey County
23	Long Lake Regional Park	Ramsey County
24	Tony Schmidt Regional Park	Ramsey County
25	Vadnais-Snail Lake Regional Park	Ramsey County
26	Battle Creek & Indian Mounds Regional Park	Ramsey County/St. Paul
27	Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park	Scott County
28	Spring Lake Regional Park	Scott County
29	Como Regional Park	Saint Paul
30	Hidden Falls-Crosby Farm Regional Park	Saint Paul
31	Lilydale-Harriet Island & Cherokee Heights Regional Park	Saint Paul
32	Phalen-Keller Regional Park	Saint Paul/Ramsey County
33	Cleary Lake Regional Park	Three Rivers (Scott County)
34	Bryant Lake Regional Park	Three Rivers Park District
35	Clifton E. French Regional Park	Three Rivers Park District
36	Eagle Lake Regional Park	Three Rivers Park District
37	Fish Lake Regional Park	Three Rivers Park District
38	Lake Minnetonka Regional Park	Three Rivers Park District
39	Lake Minnetonka Islands Regional Park	Three Rivers Park District
40	Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park	Washington County
41	Pine Point Regional Park	Washington County
42	St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park	Washington County

Figure 3-2. Regional Parks Open to the Public (2014)



Numbers correspond to the regional parks listed in Table 3-2



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## Park Reserves

Park reserves, like regional parks, are expected to provide for a diversity of outdoor recreational activities. The major feature that distinguishes the park reserve from a regional park is that the park reserve is also intended to provide, protect, and manage representative areas of the original major landscape types in the metropolitan area and enable appreciation and enjoyment of the natural resources that influenced the region's development.

Park reserves are substantially larger than regional parks because they are to contain a diversity of natural resources with adequate space to protect and manage natural resources and provide for the compatible outdoor activities. The minimum size for a park reserve is 1,000 acres, but larger park reserves are desirable. To establish and maintain an uncompromised sense of nature and protect high-quality natural resources, at least 80% of each park reserve should be managed as wild lands that protect the ecological functions of the native landscape. This would permit up to 20% of a park reserve to be developed for compatible recreational activities.

**The eight regional landscape types that have been used in selecting areas for park reserves are:**

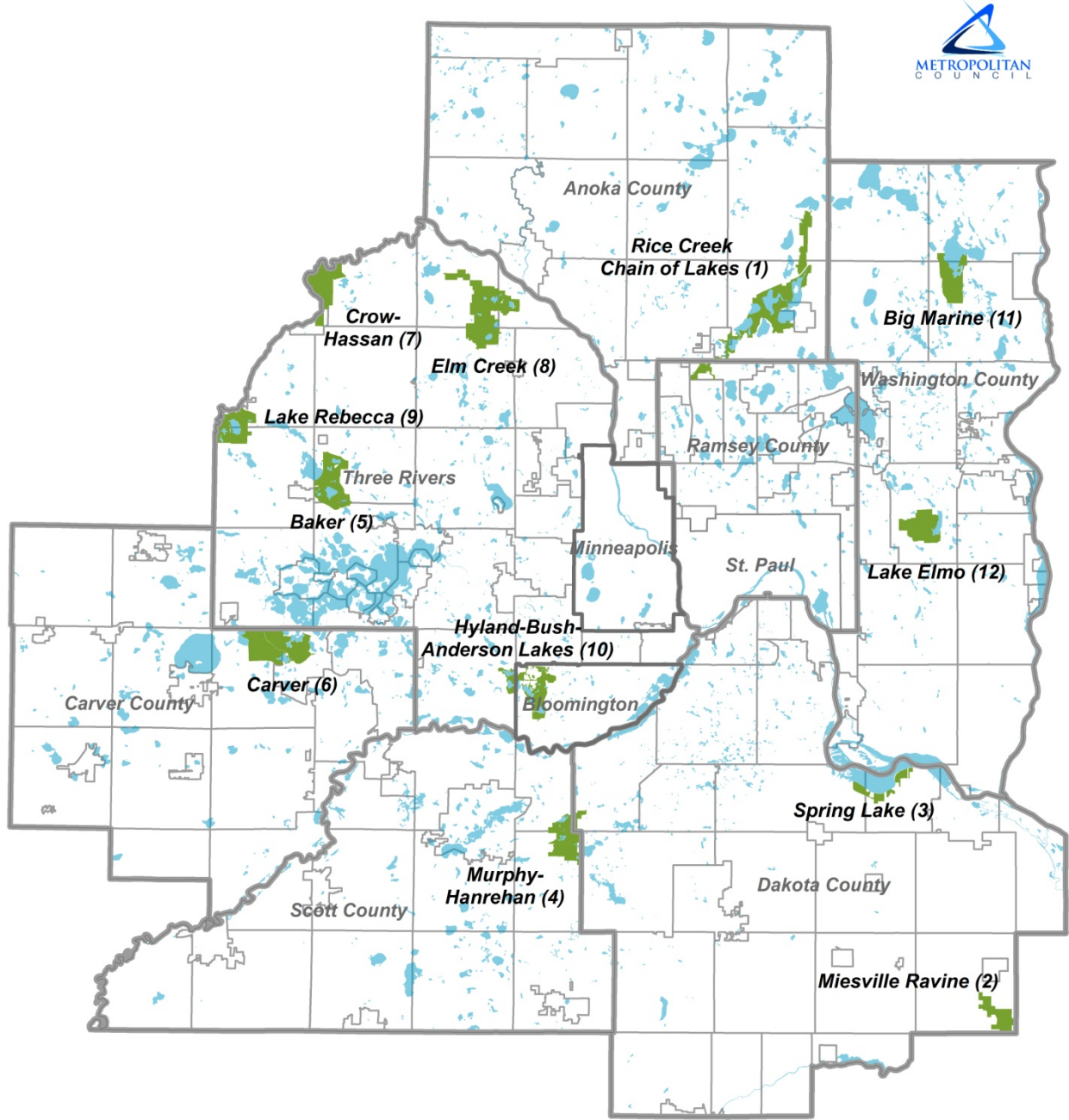
Sand plains	Lightly glaciated area
St. Croix ground moraine	Mississippi River Valley
Des Moines ground moraine	Minnesota River Valley
Terminal moraine	St. Croix River Valley

As of 2014, the Regional Parks System included 12 park reserves developed and open to the public, which are listed in Table 3-3 and shown in Figure 3-3.

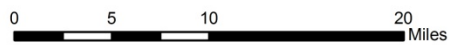
*Table 3-3. Park Reserves Open to the Public (2014)*

<b><u>Park Reserves</u></b>	<b><u>Park Agency</u></b>
1 Rice Creek Chain-of-Lakes Park Reserve	Anoka County
2 Miesville Ravine Park Reserve	Dakota County
3 Spring Lake Park Reserve	Dakota County
4 Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve	Three Rivers (Scott County)
5 Baker Park Reserve	Three Rivers Park District
6 Carver Park Reserve	Three Rivers Park District
7 Crow-Hassan Park Reserve	Three Rivers Park District
8 Elm Creek Park Reserve	Three Rivers Park District
9 Lake Rebecca Park Reserve	Three Rivers Park District
10 Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Park Reserve	Three Rivers/Bloomington
11 Big Marine Park Reserve	Washington County
12 Lake Elmo Park Reserve	Washington County

Figure 3-3. Park Reserves Open to the Public (2014)



Numbers correspond to the park reserves listed in Table 3-3



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## Regional Trails

Regional trail corridors are intended to provide for recreational travel along linear pathways throughout the metropolitan area. Ideally, they are selected to follow natural or linear features that traverse areas of scenic appeal and/or historical, architectural and developmental interest while assuring that the trail treadway will have no adverse effect on the natural resource base. The regional trails are selected to pass through or provide connections between components in the Regional Parks System. The regional parks and park reserves perform the important function of providing places for parking, comfort facilities and safe water supplies.

Trails also are selected for their ability to intersect with local trail networks, with the regional trails functioning much like regional highways that interconnect with more local arterials and local streets. The regional trail network, especially in the urban areas, serves as commuting routes for bicyclists in addition to serving recreational purposes. As the regional trail and transit systems expand, opportunities to provide connections between these forms of travel should be explored. People can ride the bus or light rail to access a regional trail, and conversely, people can use regional trails to access transit.

Regional trails can also be developed as greenways, or linear parks, where the trail itself is a destination. These greenways typically include wide corridors that provide opportunities for improving wildlife habitat, protecting natural resources, and providing recreational opportunities. People tend to prefer trails that are relatively close to where they live. Surveys conducted by the Metropolitan Council show that more than 75% of trail visitors live within 3 miles of the trails they used. However, trail users are traveling from one city or county to another. It is this inter-jurisdictional trail length that makes these trails regionally significant.

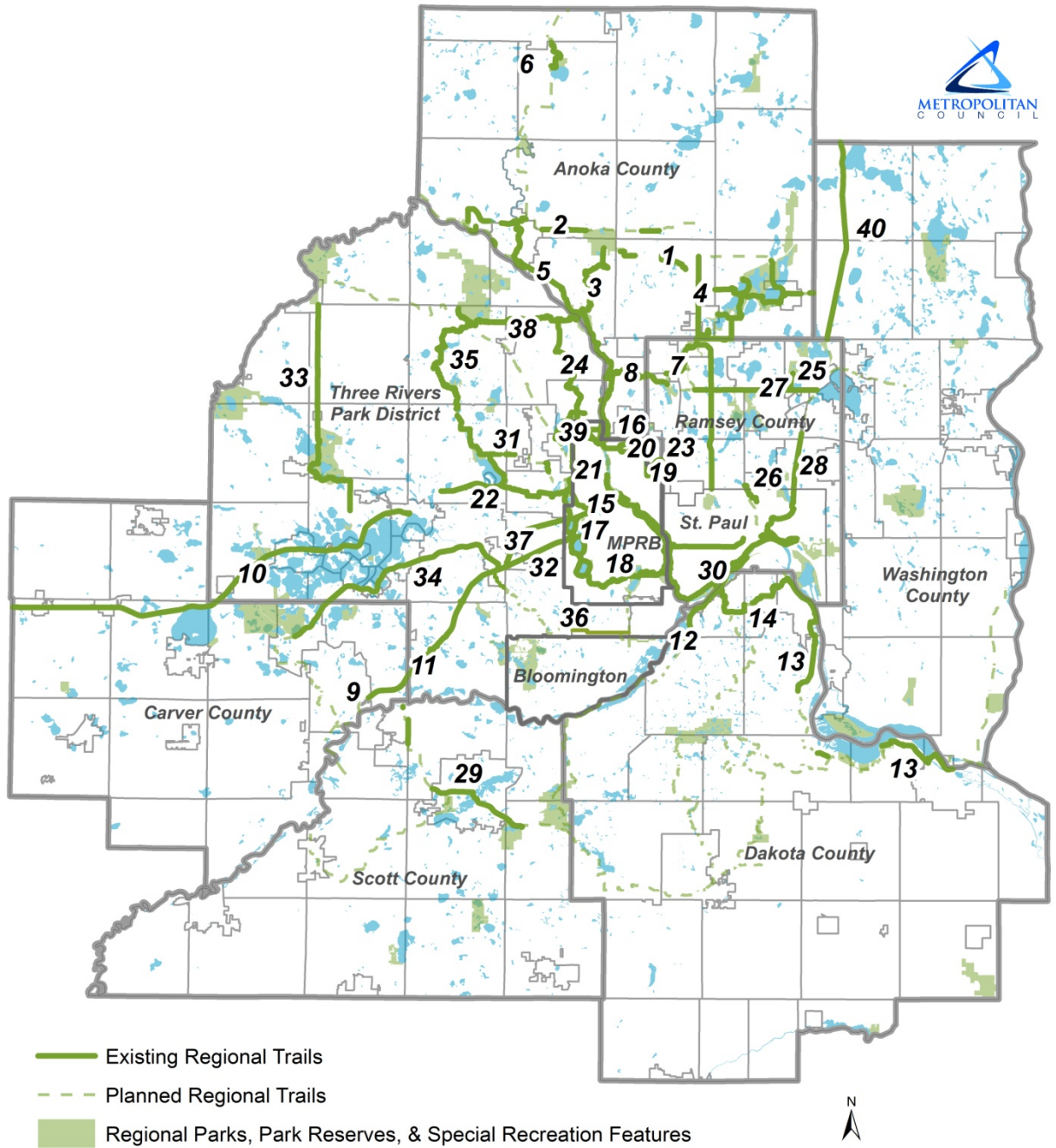
As of 2014, there were 40 regional trail corridors, with a total of 340 miles open to the public, listed in Table 3-4 and Figure 3-4. Many trails are constructed in phases, some as part of roadway improvement projects or local development. Therefore, although a trail is listed as being open, some portions of the trail corridor may be developed in the future and are not yet open to the public.

*Table 3-4. Regional Trails Open to the Public (2014)*

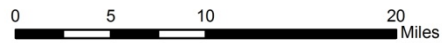
<b><u>Regional Trails</u></b>	<b><u>Park Agency</u></b>
1 Bunker Hills-Chain of Lakes Regional Trail	Anoka County
2 Central Anoka Regional Trail	Anoka County
3 Coon Creek Regional Trail	Anoka County
4 East Anoka County Regional Trail	Anoka County
5 Mississippi River Regional Trail (Anoka Co)	Anoka County
6 Rum River Regional Trail	Anoka County
7 Rice Creek North Regional Trail	Anoka County/Ramsey County
8 Rice Creek West Regional Trail	Anoka County/Ramsey County
9 Southwest Regional Trail	Carver County
10 Dakota Rail Regional Trail	Carver County/Three Rivers
11 Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail	Carver County/Three Rivers

12	Big Rivers Regional Trail	Dakota County
13	Mississippi River Regional Trail (Dakota Co)	Dakota County
14	North Urban Regional Trail	Dakota County
15	Cedar Lake Regional Trail	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
16	Columbia Parkway Regional Trail	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
17	Kenilworth Regional Trail	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
18	Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
19	Ridgway Parkway Regional Trail	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
20	St. Anthony Parkway Regional Trail	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
21	Victory Memorial Parkway Regional Trail	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
22	Luce Line Regional Trail	Minneapolis/Three Rivers
23	Northeast Diagonal Regional Trail	Minneapolis/Three Rivers
24	Shingle Creek Regional Trail	Minneapolis/Three Rivers
25	Birch Lake Regional Trail	Ramsey County
26	Trout Brook Regional Trail	Ramsey County
27	Highway 96 Regional Trail	Ramsey County
28	Bruce Vento Regional Trail	Ramsey County/St. Paul
29	Scott County Regional Trail	Scott County
30	Samuel Morgan Regional Trail	Saint Paul
31	Bassett Creek Regional Trail	Three Rivers Park District
32	Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail	Three Rivers Park District
33	Lake Independence Regional Trail	Three Rivers Park District
34	Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail	Three Rivers Park District
35	Medicine Lake Regional Trail	Three Rivers Park District
36	Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail	Three Rivers Park District
37	North Cedar Lake Regional Trail	Three Rivers Park District
38	Rush Creek Regional Trail	Three Rivers Park District
39	Twin Lakes Regional Trail	Three Rivers Park District
40	Hardwood Creek Regional Trail	Washington County

Figure 3-4. Regional Trails Open to the Public (2014)



Numbers correspond to the regional trails listed in Table 3-4



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## Special Recreation Features

Special recreation features, which are called for in state legislation (Minn. Stat. 473.121, subd. 14), are defined as Regional Parks System opportunities not generally found in the parks, the park reserves or the trail corridors. Special recreational features often require a unique managing or programming effort on the part of the regional park implementing agency.

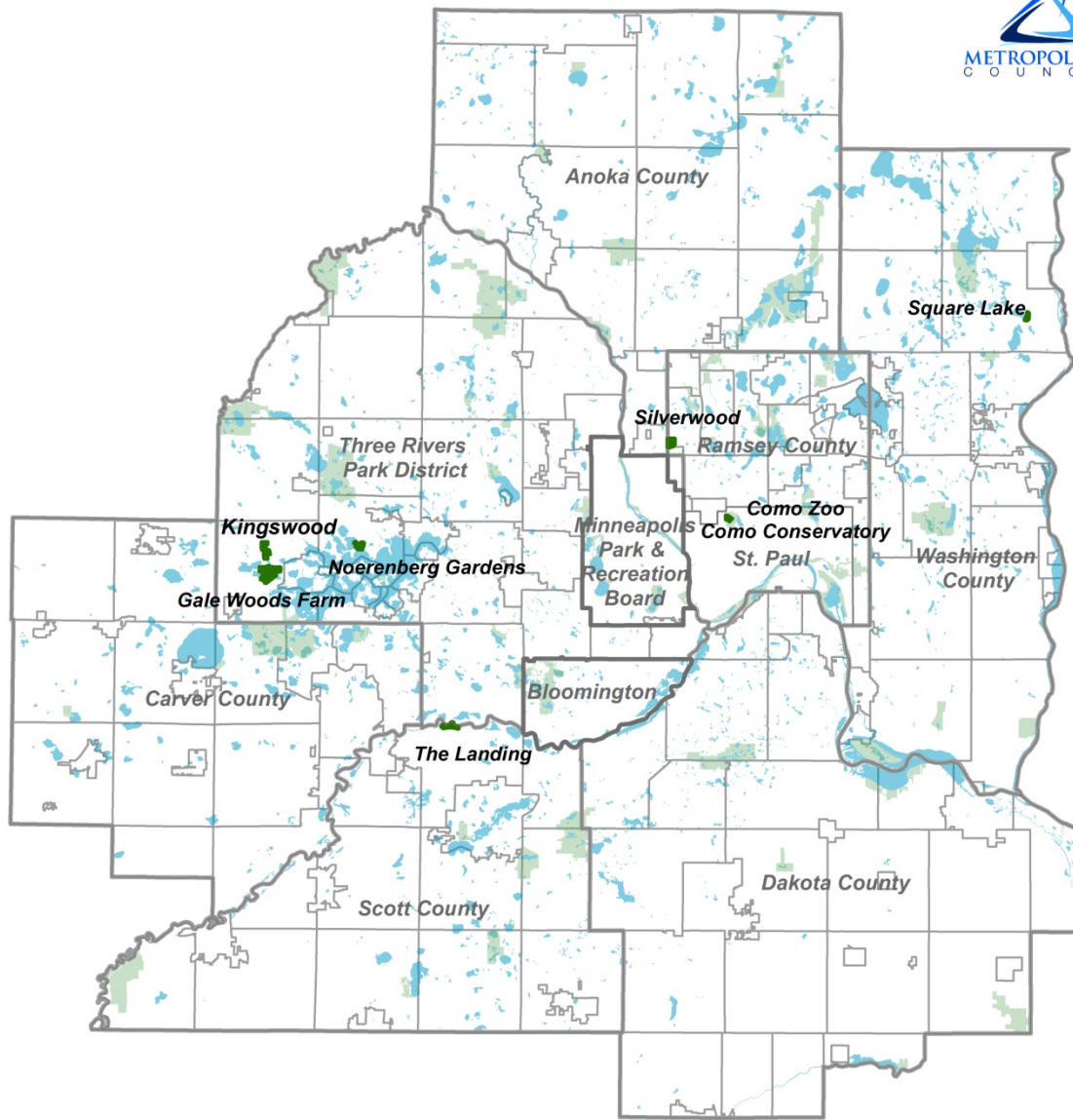
**As of 2014, there are eight special recreation features developed and open to the public:**

- Como Park Zoo at Como Regional Park in Saint Paul
- Marjorie McNeely Conservatory at Como Regional Park, in Saint Paul
- Gale Woods Farm on the shore of Whaletail Lake in Minnetrista
- Kingswood, on the shore of Little Long Lake in Minnetrista
- The Landing, along the Minnesota River in Shakopee
- Noerenberg Gardens on the northwest side of Lake Minnetonka
- Silverwood on the shore of Silver Lake in the City of St. Anthony
- Square Lake in Washington County.

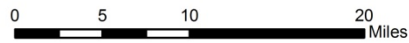
The Como Zoo and Marjorie McNeely Conservatory are managed within Como Regional Park. Gale Woods Farm provides opportunities for visitors to learn about agriculture, food production, and land stewardship. Kingswood provides nature-based service learning programs to preserve the unique and significant natural resources of the site. The Landing provides a historical representation of life in a river town in the 1800s. Noerenberg Gardens was given to Three Rivers Park District with the understanding that it was a unique and regional-level attraction with stunning floral gardens. Silverwood integrates arts, environmental education, and gardens to serve as a center for arts and the environment. Square Lake provides beach and boat access to one of the clearest lakes in the metropolitan area and attracts scuba divers from across the region.

New special recreation features need to be complementary to the rest of the Regional Parks System and not be a financial burden to the system. Special recreation features are highlighted in Figure 3-5.

Figure 3-5. Special Recreation Features Open to the Public (2014)



- Special Recreation Features
- Regional Parks and Park Reserves



December 2014

## *Regional Parks System Plan*

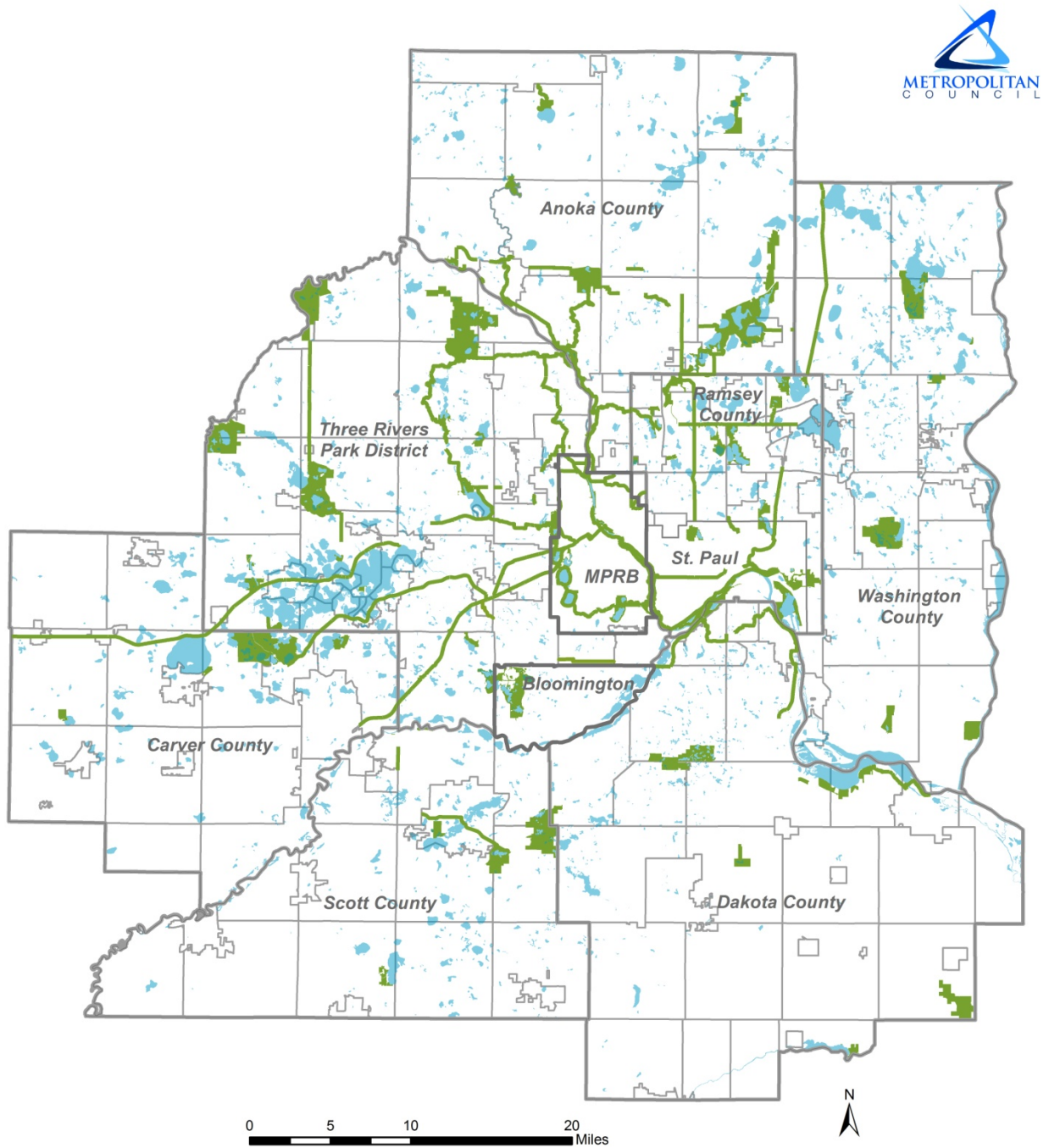
There are six components that make up the System Plan, which all together comprise the vision for the Regional Parks System in 2040:

- Existing Regional Parks System facilities
- Planned Regional Parks System facilities that are not yet open to the public
- Regional Parks System Boundary Adjustments
- Regional Park Search Areas
- Regional Trail Search Corridors
- 2040 System Additions

### **Existing Regional Parks System Facilities**

As described in the previous section, the Regional Parks System as of 2014 includes 42 regional parks, 12 park reserves, 40 regional trails, and 8 special recreation features that are open for public use. These Regional Parks System facilities have a total land area of about 54,286 acres that have been acquired by the regional park implementing agencies, with 4,789 acres of inholdings within the boundaries of these parks and trails that have not yet been acquired. Figure 3-6 shows the Regional Parks System facilities that are open to the public as of 2014.

Figure 3-6. Regional Parks System Facilities Open to the Public (2014)



June 2014

## Planned Regional Parks System Facilities

In addition to the facilities that are open to the public, there are three regional parks and one park reserve that have Council-approved master plans, but have not yet been developed. These facilities are listed in Table 3-5 and shown in Figure 3-7. Approximately 1,353 acres have been acquired for these four planned Regional Parks System facilities, with an additional 3,767 acres to be acquired in the future.

*Table 3-5. Planned Regional Parks Not Open to the Public*

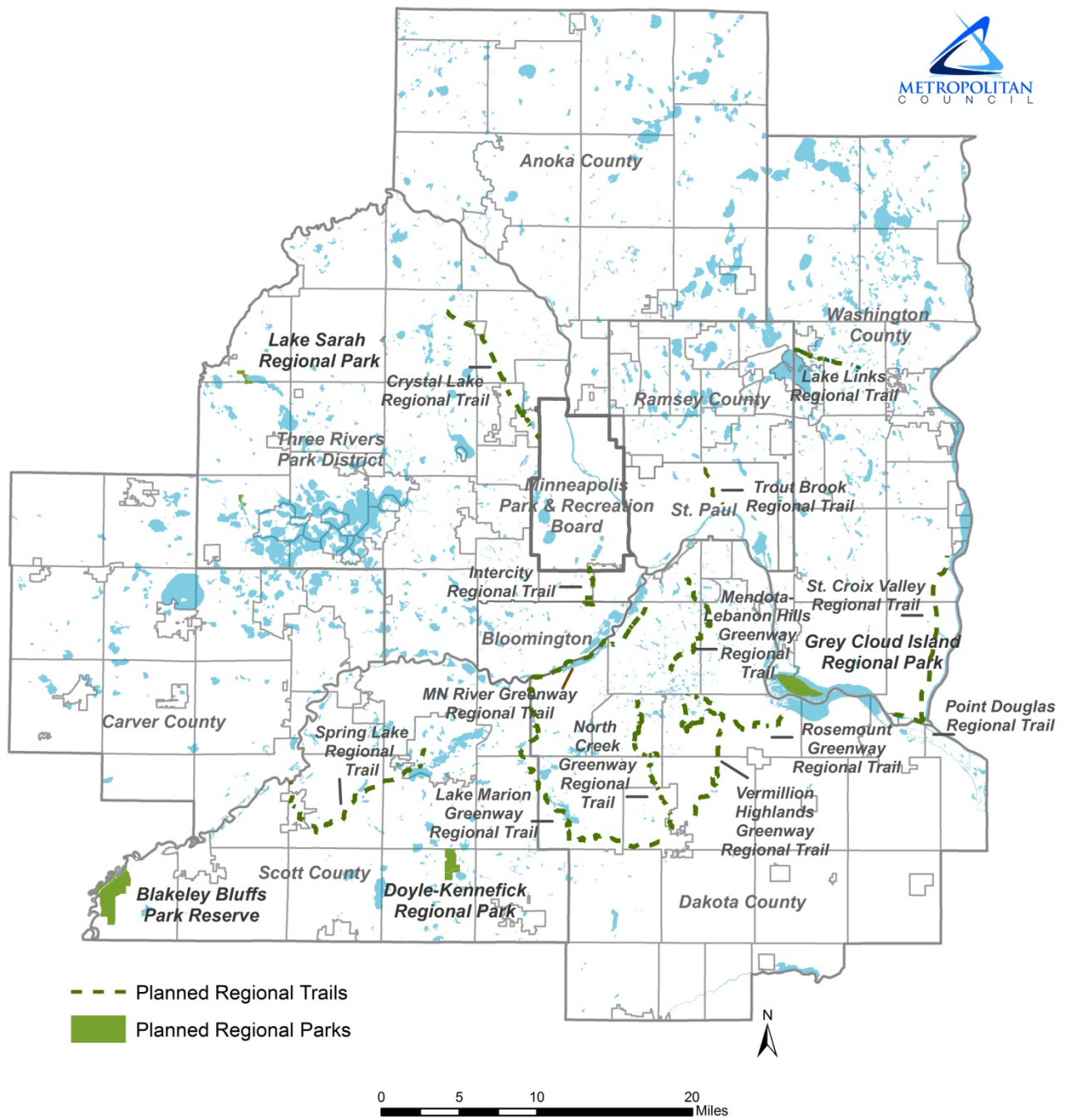
<b>Regional Park Implementing Agency</b>	<b>Regional Park or Regional Trail</b>
Scott County	Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park
Scott County	Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve
Three Rivers Park District	Lake Sarah Regional Park
Washington County	Grey Cloud Island Regional Park

Thirteen regional trails, totaling 147 miles, have Council-approved master plans, but are not yet developed or open to the public, as listed in Table 3-6 and shown in Figure 3-7.

*Table 3-6. Planned Regional Trails Not Open to the Public*

<b>Regional Park Implementing Agency</b>	<b>Regional Park or Regional Trail</b>	<b>Trail Mileage</b>
Dakota County	Lake Marion Greenway RT	20
Dakota County	Mendota-Lebanon Hills Greenway RT	8.5
Dakota County	Minnesota River Greenway RT	17
Dakota County	North Creek Greenway RT	14
Dakota County	Rosemount Greenway RT	13
Dakota County	Vermillion Highlands Greenway RT	13
Ramsey County/Washington County	Lake Links RT	5
Scott County	Spring Lake RT	13.5
Saint Paul	Trout Brook RT	4
Three Rivers Park District	Crystal Lake RT	11
Three Rivers Park District	Intercity RT	5
Washington County	Point Douglas RT	2
Washington County	St. Croix Valley RT	20.5

Figure 3-7. Planned Regional Parks and Trails Not Yet Open to the Public



December 2014

## Regional Park Boundary Adjustments

The 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan recommended Master Plan Boundary Adjustments for five regional parks, one park reserve, and seven regional trails. The proposed adjustments to existing regional parks and trails were identified to protect areas of high-quality natural resources or to provide recreation. Some of the boundary adjustments were achieved through a master plan amendment, such as the addition of the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary to the Bruce Vento Regional Trail in Saint Paul.

Others have been removed from the System Plan because they have been acquired for other recreational purposes. For example, a portion of the Seminary Fen that was proposed to be added to the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail in Carver County was acquired by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Additionally, land designated as a proposed boundary adjustment area for Rum River Central Regional Park was purchased by Anoka County using non-regional funds. This area became the Cedar Creek Conservation Area, which is not part of the Regional Parks System. Four boundary adjustment areas are included in the 2040 System Plan, which are described in Table 3-7.

*Table 3-7. Master Plan Boundary Adjustments*

<b>Regional Park Implementing Agency</b>	<b>Regional Parks System Unit</b>	<b>Estimated Acreage</b>	<b>Description</b>
Carver County	Baylor RP	100	Acquire approximately 100 acres of land adjacent to Eagle Lake, including lakeshore
Carver County	Lake Waconia RP	30	Add Coney Island to the regional park. Includes a great blue heron nesting colony and maple-basswood forest. Potential boundary expansion provides opportunity for preservation, interpretation and compatible recreation.
Ramsey County	Highway 96 RT	47	Adds Snail Lake Marsh to the Highway 96 Regional Trail to provide area for trail facilities and interpretation.

## Regional Park Search Areas

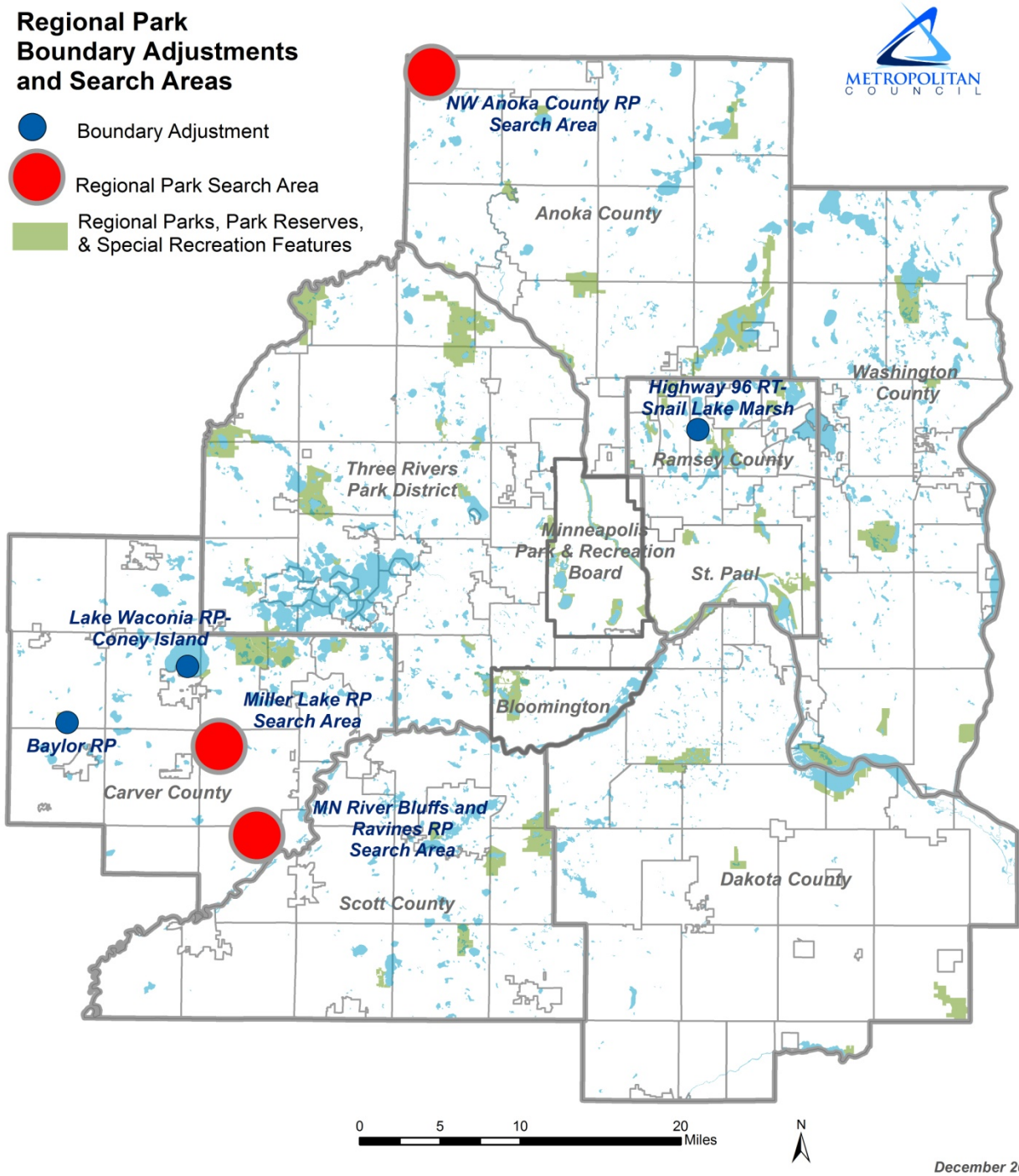
The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, updated in 2010, identified six regional park search areas in the region. Two of the search areas, one in Dakota County and one in Scott County, have been planned, acquired, developed, and are now open to the public as Whitetail Woods Regional Park and Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park, respectively. Another search area has been shaped into the planned Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve, for which Scott County has been acquiring land.

Three regional park search areas, totaling approximately 1,700 acres remain, which are described in Table 3-8. Figure 3-8 shows a map of the regional park boundary adjustment and regional park search areas.

*Table 3-8. Regional Park Search Areas*

<b>Regional Park Implementing Agency</b>	<b>Regional Park Search Area</b>	<b>Estimated Acreage</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Anoka County	NW Anoka County RP Search Area	1,000	Very high-quality natural resource area unique in Anoka County.
Carver County	Miller Lake RP Search Area	200	Very attractive lake resource and appropriate setting for a regional park
Carver County	Minnesota Bluffs and Ravines RP Search Area	500	Large areas of regionally significant natural resources, excellent recreation potential.

Figure 3-8. Regional Park Boundary Adjustments and Search Areas



## Regional Trail Search Corridors

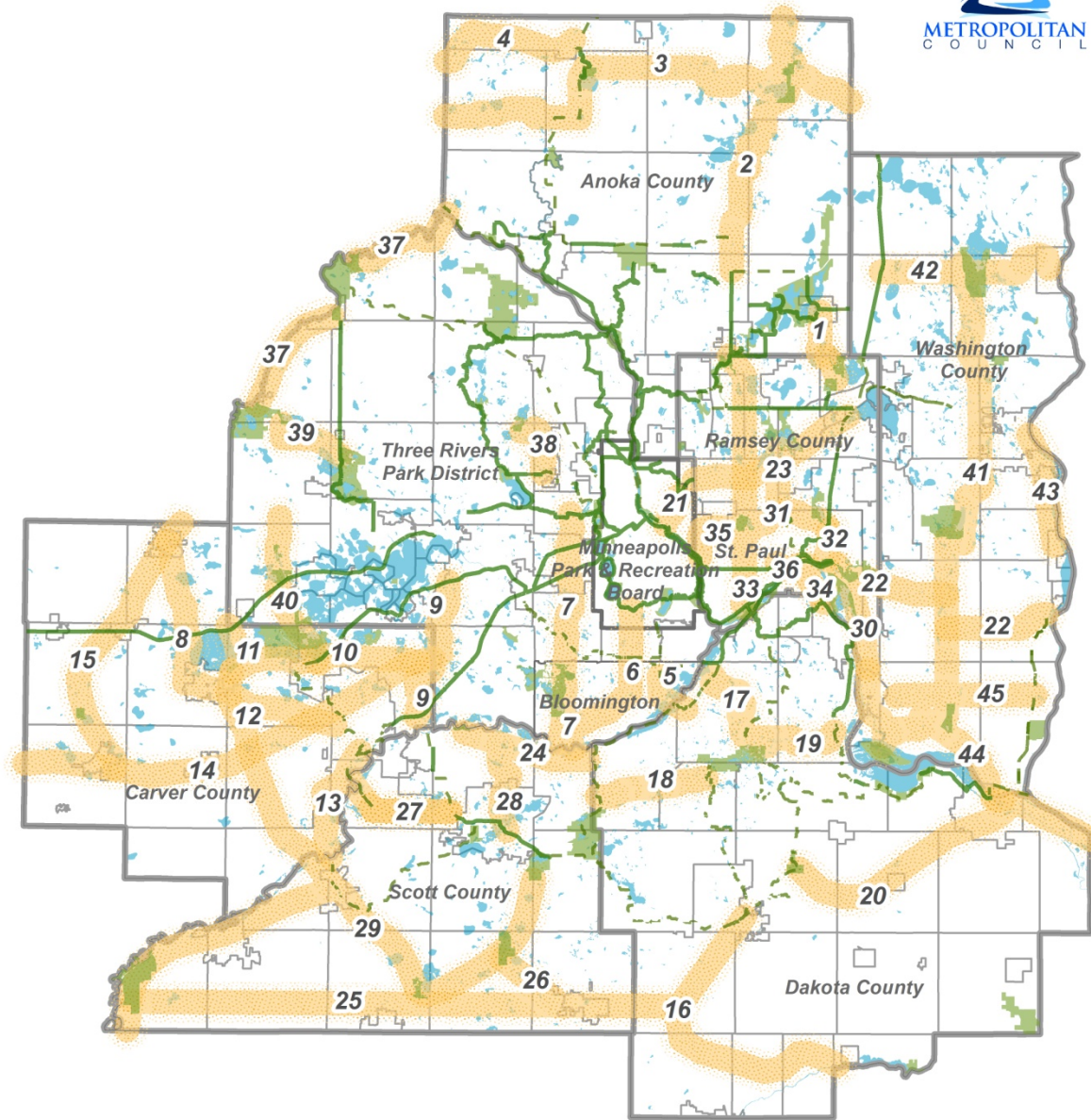
There are 45 proposed regional trails without Council-approved master plans that identify the trail alignments. Many of these trails have been considered part of the Regional Parks System for several years and were mapped in previous Regional Parks Policy Plans as proposed trails showing a tentative alignment. Since alignments for these trails have not yet been approved by the Council as part of a master plan, and are therefore not eligible for Regional Parks System funding for acquisition and development, they are being shown as regional trail search corridors. The estimated mileage of these regional trail search corridors is 488 miles. Regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to prepare master plans for these trails. The regional trail search corridors are listed in Table 3-9 and shown in Figure 3-9.

*Table 3-9. Regional Trail Search Corridors*

Map Designation	Regional Park Implementing Agency	Regional Trail Search Corridor	Est. Miles
1	Anoka County	Chain of Lakes-Otter Lake	3
2	Anoka County	East Anoka County Regional Trail Extension	14
3	Anoka County	North Anoka County	22
4	Anoka County	Sugar Hills	14
5	Bloomington	Intercity Extension	2
6	Bloomington	South Hennepin East (CP Rail)	9
7	Bloomington & Three Rivers Park District	South Hennepin West (CP Rail)	14
8	Carver County	County Road 10	19
9	Carver County & Three Rivers Park District	Highway 101	9
10	Carver County	Highway 5	7
11	Carver County	Lake Waconia	6
12	Carver County	Lake Waconia-Carver	13
13	Carver County	Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Extension	6
14	Carver County	Twin Cities & Western	25
15	Carver County	Western Carver County	17
16	Dakota County	Chub Creek Greenway	20
17	Dakota County	Lebanon Hills-Big Rivers	7
18	Dakota County	Lebanon Hills-Lake Marion	7
19	Dakota County	Lebanon Hills-Mississippi	5
20	Dakota County	Vermillion River Greenway	17
21	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board	Grand Rounds Missing Link	3.5
22	Ramsey County, Saint Paul & Washington County	Afton Bluffs	17
23	Ramsey County	Trout Brook Extension	3.5

24	Ramsey County & Saint Paul	Lexington Avenue/Parkway	16
25	Scott County	Big Rivers Extension	5
26	Scott County	Elko New Market-Blakeley-Doyle Kennefick	32
27	Scott County	Elko New Market-Doyle Kennefick	5
28	Scott County	Louisville	5
29	Scott County	Prior Lake Outlet	6
30	Scott County	Southern Scott	35
31	Saint Paul	Point Douglas (Bruce Vento-Washington County)	4
32	Saint Paul	Como-Phalen (Wheelock Parkway)	6
33	Saint Paul	Johnson Parkway	2
34	Saint Paul	Mississippi River (Harriet Island-South St. Paul)	3
35	Saint Paul	Mississippi-Como	4
36	Saint Paul	Summit Extension	1
37	Three Rivers Park District	Crow River	17
38	Three Rivers Park District	Eagle Lake-Bassett Creek	4
39	Three Rivers Park District	Lake Sarah	5.5
40	Three Rivers Park District	Minnetrasta	9
41	Washington County	Central Greenway	26
42	Washington County	Glacial Hills	12
43	Washington County	Middle St. Croix Valley	8
44	Washington County	Mississippi River	13
45	Washington County	Prairie View	9

Figure 3-9. Regional Trail Search Corridor Map



- Regional Parks, Park Reserves, Special Recreation Features
- Existing Regional Trails
- Planned Regional Trails
- Regional Trail Search Corridors

Numbers correspond to the regional trail search corridors listed in Table 3-9



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## Revisions to the Regional Parks System Plan

Minn. Stat. 473.147, subd. 1, states that:

The Metropolitan Council, after consultation with the [Metropolitan] Parks and Open Space Commission...and after appropriate public hearings, shall prepare and adopt a long-range system policy plan for regional recreation open space as part of the Council's Metropolitan Development Guide...The policy plan shall identify generally the areas which should be acquired by a public agency to provide a system of regional recreation open space comprising park district, county and municipal facilities, which together with state facilities, reasonably will meet the outdoor recreation needs of the people of the metropolitan area and shall establish priorities for acquisition and development.

Minn. Stat. 473.121, subd. 14 defines "regional recreation open space" as:

...land and water areas, or interests therein, and facilities determined by the Metropolitan Council to be of regional importance in providing for a balanced system of public outdoor recreation for the metropolitan area, including but not limited to park reserves, major linear parks and trails, large recreation parks, and conservatories, zoos, and other special use facilities.

In response to these laws, the Council will evaluate proposed additions to the Regional Parks System to determine whether the general areas are of regional importance and will help provide a balanced system of public outdoor recreation for the metropolitan area. Additionally, the proposed additions must meet the applicable criteria described in Chapter 4 for regional parks, park reserves, special recreation features, or regional trails.

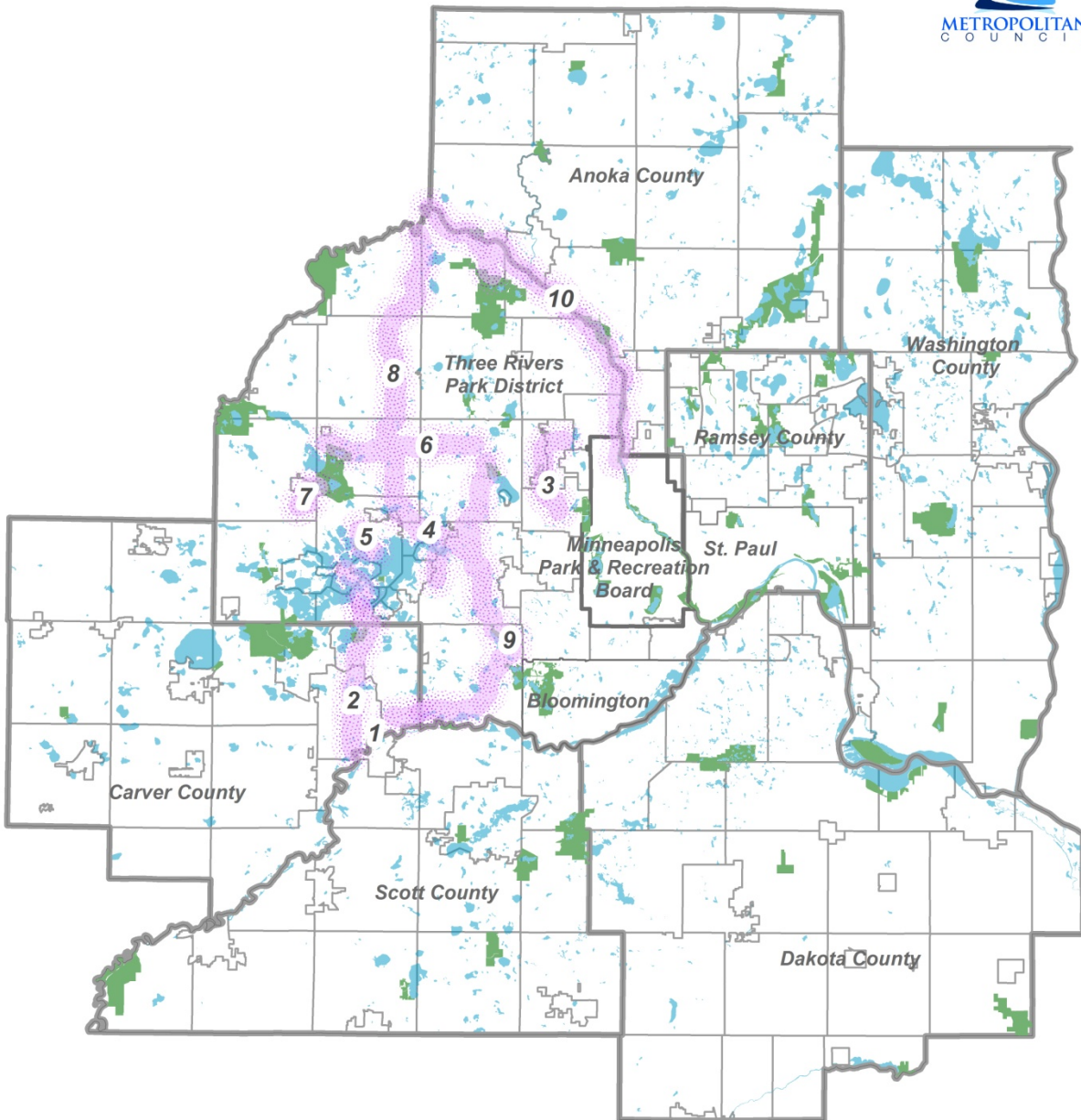
### *2040 Regional Trail Search Corridor Additions*


As part of the development of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* in 2014, the Council provided an opportunity for regional park implementing agencies to propose additions to the Regional Parks System. Carver County and Three Rivers Park District submitted requests to consider several regional trail search corridors. The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Council's Community Development Committee reviewed the proposed regional trail search corridors based on state law described above and the criteria for regional trails described in Chapter 4. Ten regional trail search corridors, totaling approximately 111 miles, met the criteria and are recommended as System Additions to the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. These System Additions are described in Table 3-10 and shown in Figure 3-10.

*Table 3-10. Regional Trail Search Corridor System Additions*

<b>Map Designation</b>	<b>Regional Park Implementing Agency</b>	<b>Regional Trail Search Corridor</b>	<b>Estimated Mileage</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Carver County	County Road 61	1	Connects MN River Bluffs RT, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Seminary Fen and North-South 2 RT System Addition
2	Carver County	Highway 41	7.5	Connects Southwest RT, MN River Bluffs RT, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge and State Recreation Area, Twin Cities & Western RT Search Corridor, Hwy. 5 RT Search Corridor, Lake Minnewashta RP
3	Three Rivers Park District	CP Rail Extension	5.5	Extension of existing CP Rail RT Search Corridor north between the Luce Line RT and Crystal Lake RT
4	Three Rivers Park District	Dakota Rail Extension	2	Connects eastern terminus of the Dakota Rail RT to North-South 2 RT System Addition
5	Three Rivers Park District	Lake Independence Extension	7	Extension of existing Lake Independence RT south to connect with Luce Line State Trail, Dakota Rail RT, Lake Minnetonka LRT RT to Hwy. 41 RT Search Corridor in Carver County
6	Three Rivers Park District	Lake Sarah Extension	10	Extension of existing Lake Sarah RT Search Corridor east to connect Baker PR to Medicine Lake RT
7	Three Rivers Park District	Minnetrista Extension	2.2	Extension of existing Minnetrista RT Search Corridor north to connect Luce Line State Trail to Baker PR
8	Three Rivers Park District	North-South 1	28	Connects Crow River RT Search Corridor, Rush Creek RT, Luce Line State Trail, Dakota Rail RT, Lake Minnetonka LRT RT and Hwy. 101 RT Search Corridor
9	Three Rivers Park District	North-South 2	20	Connects Medicine Lake RT, French RP, Luce Line RT, Lake Minnetonka LRT RT, MN River Bluffs LRT RT, Bryant Lake RP and County Rd. 61 RT System Addition
10	Three Rivers Park District	West Mississippi River	28	Connects Crow River RT Search Corridor, Elm Creek PR, Rush Creek RT, Coon Rapids Dam RP, Twin Lakes RT, North Mississippi RP

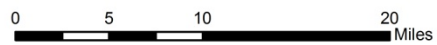
Figure 3-10. Additions to the Regional Parks System



 2040 System Additions

 Regional Parks, Park Reserves & Special Recreation Features

Numbers correspond to the regional trail search corridors listed in Table 3-10



December 2014

## *Regional Park Study Areas*

Typically, new regional parks are proposed as search areas that have been identified based on high-quality natural resources located in portions of the region where population growth is expected. However, there are times when a regional park implementing agency may want to propose including existing parks into the Regional Park System. In an effort to make an informed decision, further study is required to assess whether the proposed addition is of regional significance. The proposed area for consideration is called a Regional Park Study Area. Designation as a Regional Park Study Area does not guarantee that a park will become part of the Regional Parks System. It acknowledges that studies would need to be conducted to determine whether the facility warrants regional status. Once these studies are complete, the information would be presented to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Council for evaluation. The Council's 2008 Regional Parks and Trails Survey shows that at least 40% of visits to most regional parks are made by people who do not live in the jurisdiction of the respective regional park implementing agency where the park is located. Therefore, the benchmark applied for qualifying as a regional distribution of visitation is 40% non-local visits in evaluating a regional park study area.

## *Deletion of a Proposed Regional Park Study Area*

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* included a regional park study area in northern Dakota County. Dakota County proposed evaluating the feasibility of combining Thompson County Park in West St. Paul with Kaposia Park and Kaposia Landing, two local parks in South St. Paul, into one regional park unit. Council staff worked with Dakota County to conduct visitor origin surveys at these parks in 2012. The results of the study determined that 16.7 percent of visits were non-local and that the Thompson Kaposia Study Area did not meet the regional visitation distribution criteria. The Thompson-Kaposia Regional Park Study Area has been removed from the System Plan Map as part of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

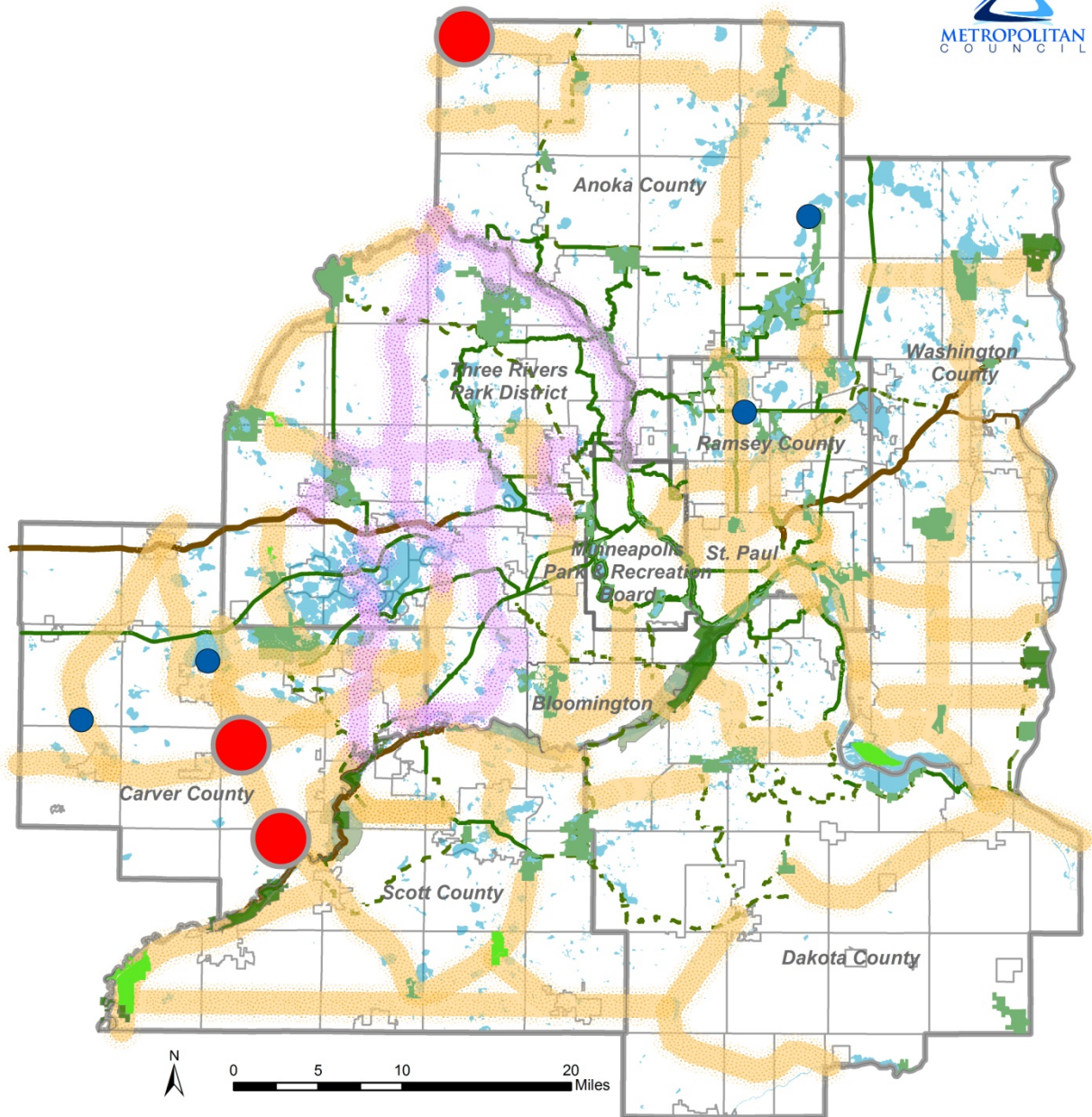
## *2040 Regional Parks System Plan Summary*

As Figure 3-11 illustrates, the 2040 System Plan includes:

- Existing Regional Parks System facilities (2014)
  - 42 regional parks
  - 12 park reserves
  - 8 special recreation features
  - 40 regional trails, consisting of 340 miles
- Planned Regional Parks System facilities that are not yet open to the public
  - 4 regional parks
  - 1 park reserve
  - 12 regional trails, consisting of 147 miles
- Regional Parks System Boundary Adjustments
  - 2 regional parks
  - 1 park reserve

- 1 regional trail corridor
- Regional Park Search Areas
  - 3 regional park search areas
- Regional Trail Search Corridors
  - 45 regional trail search corridors, with approximately 488 miles
- 2040 System Additions
  - 10 regional trail search corridors, with approximately 111 miles

Figure 3-11. 2040 Regional Parks System Plan Map



**Regional Parks-Park Reserves  
Special Recreation Features**

- Existing
- Planned
- Boundary Adjustment
- Regional Park Search Area

**Regional Trails**

- Existing
- Planned
- Regional Trail Search Corridors
- 2040 System Additions

**State and Federal**

- State Trails
- State Lands
- Federal Lands

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## Chapter Four: Policies and Strategies

### *Introduction*

The policies presented in this document are the Council's objectives for the kind of regional recreation open space facilities and services the region needs to acquire, develop, and operate in the future. The policies provide direction to ongoing efforts to plan, develop, operate, and protect the system.

The strategies are short- to medium-term actions that will advance the policies. Some of the strategies represent actions that the Council will take in developing the system or responding to particular conditions. Other strategies are directed to the regional park implementing agencies involved in implementation of the plan. The strategies are incremental actions; each contributes to achieving the Council's policies. Guidelines for implementation and administration are found in the "Management Procedures" portion of the Policy Plan.

This section of the Regional Parks Policy Plan lists the overall policies for recreation activities and facilities, planning, siting and acquisition, finance, and system protection for the Regional Park System. Strategies for accomplishing each policy are stated briefly, explained in more detail, and followed by the history and development of each strategy.

### *Recreation Activities and Facilities Policy*

Provide a regional system of recreation opportunities for all residents, while maintaining the integrity of the natural resource base within the Regional Parks System.

#### **Recreation Activities and Facilities – Strategy 1: Activities in regional parks must be tied to the natural resources of the parks, but not adversely affect them.**

Minn. Stat. 473.147 requires the Council to prepare a policy plan that "...shall identify generally the areas which should be acquired by a public agency to provide a system of regional recreation open space comprising park district, county and municipal facilities, which, together with state facilities, reasonably will meet the outdoor recreation needs of the people of the metropolitan area and shall establish priorities for acquisition and development."

Minn. Stat. 473.121, subd. 14 defines regional recreation open space as "...land and water areas, or interests therein, and facilities determined by the Council to be of regional importance in providing for a balanced system of public outdoor recreation for the metropolitan area, including but not limited to park reserves, major linear parks and trails, large recreation parks, and conservatories, zoos, and other special use facilities."

Based on the legislative directive and definition of "regional recreation open space," activities in the Regional Parks System should:

- Be strongly tied to high-quality natural resources and to the balanced distribution of these resources around the area.
- Require land acreage to serve a regional scale audience

- Be reasonably, feasibly, and safely accommodated without detriment to existing uses as determined through master plans or through policy board decisions of regional park implementing agencies.
- Protect the environment/ecology of the site and not negatively impact its natural resources.

Based on the criteria above, activities that should be accommodated in the Regional Parks System include:

Boating	Horseback riding
Bicycling	Nature appreciation
Camping	Picnicking
Cross country skiing	Snowshoeing
Cultural or historical interpretation	Snowmobiling (in some cases)
Fishing	Swimming
Hiking/walking/trail running	Wildlife viewing

This list does not include unique activities such as those offered by the Como Park Zoo and Marjorie McNeely Conservatory, because these two facilities are, by law, to be included in the Regional Parks System as Special Recreation Features.

The regional activities selected require large tracts of land, or land endowed with unique natural resources, or both. The land needs are easier to meet at the regional level than at the municipal level and the associated activities are more likely to be developed or provided at a regional level than by cities and townships.

When it was established in the 1970s, the Regional Parks System included several existing parks that had activities not currently considered appropriate for inclusion in the regional system. Many of these activities continue to operate legitimately today, such as ball diamonds and tennis courts, but they are not eligible for regional funding for improvement or expansion.

Land is acquired for the Regional Parks System with the intent that it may eventually be developed in a way that provides for the recreational activities listed above. Adherence to this basic list of activities has served the regional system well over the last 40 years and has helped to fend off efforts to acquire and develop Regional Parks System lands for other ventures.

Regional park agencies should consider various factors when determining whether other uses, described below, should be accommodated in regional parks and trails and included in regional park or trail master plans.

- Inline skating and roller skiing. These activities require a treadway wider than eight feet if pedestrians, bicyclists and inline skaters are on the same treadway and traveling in opposite directions. Inline skating and roller skiing also require a smoother/harder surface than bicycling and pedestrian uses. Inline skating and roller skiing are more popular on flat-terrain trails, such as abandoned railroads, than on hilly terrain trails going cross-country.

Inline skating seems to be more popular on looped park trails than on long-distance regional trails. However, skaters will go out and back on linear trails at a distance that meets their physical conditioning. Inline skating can be added as a primary use on a regional trail if the trail treadway is or could reasonably be made sufficiently wide, smooth and flat to safely accommodate skaters, pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Mountain biking. Challenging, hilly terrain is attractive to mountain bicyclists, but the trail treadway must be designed to minimize soil erosion. In some cases, mountain biking on turf trails may be permitted only during dry times of the year if the underlying soil and slopes are not able to withstand mountain bike use when it is seasonally wet. Mixing mountain biking and pedestrian users on the same trail treadway should be carefully evaluated during the trail design process. Trail user rules may be needed to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for both kinds of users. Mountain bike trail terrain is best provided in closed loop trails within regional parks or park reserves rather than in cross-country trails between parks. Regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to consider sustainable design standards, such as those provided by the International Mountain Biking Association, during the trail design process.
- Night trail use. Opening trails at night allows those who work during the weekdays to use them more frequently. Walking and cross-country skiing at night increases trail uses during the off-peak spring, fall and winter seasons. Trail lighting projects are encouraged where appropriate, especially on trails with high demand. When considering lighted trails, however, it's important to assess the lighting's impact on nocturnal wildlife as well as adjacent land uses.

Mixing motorized and non-motorized trail uses, such as snowmobiling and hiking, requires appropriate trail design and possibly speed controls and signage to safely accommodate both uses. Regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to engage the public to develop solutions to any multi-use trail conflicts.

To accommodate trail users of all abilities, trail uses such as motorized wheelchairs or three-wheel bicycles should be reasonably accommodated to serve persons with mobility impairments wherever possible.

There has been a demand for organized amateur athletic facilities that serve several municipalities or organized league play within a municipality. Municipal recreation departments and/or school districts provide these athletic field complexes. The Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission (MASC) is responsible for elevating the social and economic benefits of sports to enrich the lives of all Minnesotans. Grants for such facilities go through the MASC, not the Council. Such athletic field complexes do not require a high-quality natural-resource land base; they are easier to develop on formerly disturbed lands. As such, athletic field complexes are inappropriate for development on Regional Parks System lands. However, informal ball fields that can be used for a variety of pickup games are encouraged. The concept of an informal ball field encourages recreational use in this manner, but is not intended for programmed or league sports, since those services are offered in other recreational settings.

When new recreational activities become popular, regional park implementing agencies need to see if it is appropriate to accommodate them on Regional Parks System lands. For example, in the last 10 years, adventure racing, kayaking, standup paddle boarding, triathlons, and windsailing have become

increasingly popular (Outdoor Foundation, 2013). These activities may preclude the use of an area for other uses, but this doesn't mean they are unacceptable within Regional Parks System lands in all cases. To accommodate new recreation activities on Regional Parks System lands, the regional park implementing agency must first assess how well the proposed activity meets the standards for recreational activities and then incorporate any physical changes to the Regional Parks System landscape through a master plan amendment process that includes significant public engagement.

In some instances, there may be no need for any physical change to the regional park or trail unit, but a change in visitor or park management rules or policies may be necessary, such as allowing off-leash dog use on a trail, for example. Another management issue might be permitting a limited controlled hunt as a means of maintaining the health of a park's deer herd. In both cases, there are no physical changes to the park/trail unit requiring capital improvements, simply a change in how the park/trail unit is used or managed. Such park/ trail management issues should be resolved by the regional park implementing agency's policy board after appropriate public input and consideration of how these management changes affect the regional park's environment, users, and the adjacent property.

Some new recreation open-space uses may be compatible with the long-range basic mission of the Regional Parks System. In some instances, new uses may enhance the viability of the regional system and expand the range of opportunities available in the parks, park reserves, and trails. Other recreation open-space uses may substantially reduce the ability of the regional facilities to carry out their planned roles or may diminish the quality of the recreational experience.

Off-road vehicles (ORVs) are defined as all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), off-road motorcycles (ORMs) and four-wheel-drive vehicles being used off designated roads. For the purpose of this 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, snowmobiles are not considered to be ORVs. Snowmobiles have been permitted on regional trails and in some regional parks when local ordinances and the regional park implementing agency have authorized such use. Local units of government in the rural areas of the region also work with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and snowmobile clubs to provide rights-of-way for snowmobile trails that link to other trails outside the region.

The Council acknowledges that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has statutory authority under Minn. Stat. 84.03 to provide for regulated use of off-road vehicles through its management of several legislatively dedicated accounts that contain license receipts and a portion of Minnesota gas tax revenues from the use of these vehicles. Siting and managing an off-road vehicle use area in the region that doesn't adversely affect nearby land uses and natural resources will require cooperation between the affected local unit of government and the DNR. Regional park implementing agencies may participate in siting an off-road vehicle use area, but the lead responsibility for siting and funding the area will be provided by the DNR under the authority it is granted in statute.

Regional park concessioners may operate within the Regional Parks System if the appropriate approvals from the regional park implementing agency have been obtained, as each agency may have different policies and procedures in place. Concessioners must provide park related amenities and services to park visitors without negatively impacting the natural resources of the regional park. Regional park implementing agencies must contact the Council to determine whether a master plan amendment is required to accommodate the concessioners.

In summary, the initial decision on whether a new activity can and should be accommodated is up to the regional park implementing agency responsible for the regional park, park reserve, special recreation feature, and regional trail. The Council will become involved if the regional park implementing agency decides it would like to accommodate a new activity but the Council deems the use incompatible with the nature-based system or finds that a master plan amendment is necessary before the new activity can be accommodated.

### **Recreation Activities and Facilities – Strategy 2: Most heavy recreational use should be accommodated in the more urban regional parks.**

Facilities that attract many users require large capacity roads and connection to a municipal sewage treatment system. These facilities should be confined to parks and park reserves located in the region's Metropolitan Urban Service Area, as defined in Chapter 1, unless the demands for heavily used services cannot be adequately met at Regional Parks System units in those areas. If facilities need to be developed in the Rural Service Area, the master plan should justify facilities that will attract large numbers of users and indicate how support services and facilities, such as roads and sewers, will be provided.

When feasible, the transit system should be planned to provide access to Regional Parks System units. Transit planners should consider routes and facilities that are sensitive to parks, park users, park development plans, and local agencies' rules and regulations.

Many regional parks and park reserves are located in the Rural Service Area because a high-quality natural resource base has long been a major criterion for determining lands that are appropriate for the Regional Parks System. Many of the rural park reserves were existing parks that were designated as regional recreation open space when the Regional Parks System was established in 1974. In order to build up a large recreational land reserve to be used for future populations, it has been necessary to acquire land in the Rural Service Area.

Much of the demand for recreational facilities, especially those that attract large numbers of users, can be adequately accommodated at properties in the Metropolitan Urban Service Area. Some activities, such as nature study, camping, and water recreation, because of their resource demand, will likely be accommodated at parks or park reserves located in the Rural Service Area. Intense developments at parks and park reserves in the Rural Service Area should be the exception rather than the rule and should be considered on a property-by-property basis. Developments intended to enhance the protection and preservation of natural resources, whether in the Metropolitan Urban Service Area or the Rural Service Area, advance the strong conservation role of park reserves.

### **Recreation Activities and Facilities – Strategy 3: Strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails among all residents, across race, ethnicity, income, and ability.**

The regional park implementing agencies provide outstanding facilities, amenities, staffing, and programming to offer a welcoming environment. Activities hosted within the Regional Parks System include a breadth of opportunities for visitors, such as movies and music in the park, day camps, festivals, nature programming, among others. The benefits of park use are numerous, including

improvements to physical health, well-being, learning, family bonding, and community building. Therefore, it is imperative that all residents have the opportunity to enjoy the bountiful resources the Regional Parks System provides.

The regional park implementing agencies should act to remove or reduce barriers which prevent use of the regional system. Barriers may include safety concerns, cost, transportation, and lack of information about programming and facilities. If needed, new facilities and/or programs (including marketing programs) should be designed to increase use of the Regional Parks System by all the residents of the region, irrespective of race, ethnicity, income, and ability.

Metro Transit and other transit providers are encouraged to work with the regional park implementing agencies to identify any transportation barriers and design programs to increase the level of access to the Regional Parks System.

The Regional Parks System has been designed and developed to provide outdoor recreation opportunities for all of the residents of the area, with facilities and services geared to meet the demands and abilities of the general population. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), passed by the U.S. Congress in 1990, has created specific requirements for development and rehabilitation projects in the Regional Parks System. All new projects and updated master plans for the system include ADA review. Regional Park Implementing agencies are encouraged to use U.S. Access Board guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas as a minimum standard of accessibility on all new or substantially altered capital projects within the Regional Parks System. Additionally, regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to provide physically challenged participants with similar park/trail experiences through adaptive programs.

Findings from the 2008 Regional Parks Visitor Study found that people of color underuse the regional system. In 2014, the Council released its research findings on Regional Parks System use among select communities of color. A total of 16 focus groups were held throughout the metropolitan region to assess recreational preferences, barriers to recreation participation, and suggestions to enhance participation. In sum, 263 individuals participated in the focus groups and self-reported diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Study findings revealed the most preferred outdoor recreational activities included walking, picnicking or barbecuing, and playground use. In terms of barriers to using the Regional Parks System, the most frequently identified barriers were lack of awareness, available time, fear or safety concerns, language barriers, and weather. Focus group participants identified key suggestions to enhance park use, including:

- Increasing awareness
- Addressing safety
- Enhancing capacity of gathering spaces
- Creating a regional park ambassador program
- Increasing and diversifying programming
- Providing more events in regional parks

In addition to the study noted above, the Council invited feedback from around the region to identify strategies that would have the greatest impact on strengthening equitable use of the Regional Parks System. Based on the insights provided by more than 400 individuals, the Council has committed to

several strategies to enhance equitable use. While the strategies are highlighted briefly below, each bulleted summary is further described in the associated policy and strategy section that follows. To summarize, in an effort to enhance equitable usage of the Regional Park System, the Council will:

- Create a set-aside competitive Park Equity grant program for capital projects, specifically targeted toward projects that would enhance equitable usage of the Regional Parks System.
- The Metropolitan Council and regional park implementing agencies will work together to ensure the 25-year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan's intent to "connect people to the outdoors" is achieved.
- Work with regional park implementing agencies to prioritize funding requests, using equity as a key factor.
- Conduct studies to inform Regional Parks System planning and management. Such efforts will include:
  - A region-wide visitor survey every five years to monitor changes in Regional Parks System use.
  - Targeted studies to better understand and provide for the outdoor recreational needs and preferences across social classes, age groups, racial, ethnic, and educational backgrounds, and ability status.
- Create a Regional Parks System ambassador program to assist with expanding awareness of the Regional Parks System and bring parks to the people.
- Convene stakeholder meetings with regional park implementing agencies, partners, community-based organizations, and advocacy groups to enhance knowledge and continuous improvement.
  - Information shared will be systematically collected and shared electronically
- Require regional park implementing agencies to incorporate a public engagement process that includes involvement from individuals representing diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages, abilities, and national origin when developing a regional park or trail master plan.
  - To that end, the Council will provide staff assistance, where appropriate.
- Encourage regional park and trail design that conforms to changing recreational preferences. Examples of recreational preferences include:
  - Amenities suited for the aging population and those with limited mobility.
  - Non-fee picnic areas that accommodate mid-sized groups (for example, 15-25 people).
  - Clustering of amenities for multigenerational family gatherings.
  - Informal ball fields for pick-up games.

#### **Recreation Activities and Facilities – Strategy 4: Bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be coordinated between the Regional Parks System and the transportation system.**

Safe, high-quality, continuous, barrier-free bicycle and pedestrian systems shall be developed, maintained, and improved to function as integral parts of the Council's Regional Parks System and

transportation system. The Council is responsible for regional transportation planning, including bicycle transportation facilities. Since regional trails also serve commuters, it is important that the Regional Parks System and the transportation system work together when developing trail and transportation plans.

A comprehensive network of trails that serve both recreation and transportation needs is desirable. This network should link state, regional, county and local trails, and should be integrated with other transportation modes, including the transit system.

Regional trails are primarily multi-use recreation trails, although some regional trails also serve bicycle commuter functions. The majority of regional trail miles should be developed so they are off or away from roadways. However, in some instances it may be necessary for a short stretch of trail, to be adjacent to or on a road in order to bypass natural or man-made barriers or private property.

**Regional trails will primarily consist of these types of facilities:**

- Off-road facilities, which are paths within or adjacent to the road rights-of-way but separated from the roadway surface. They may be used for walking and inline skating as well as bicycling.
- Independent trails, such as trails using abandoned railroad corridors or utility easements that exist in their own independent rights-of-way.

**In addition to pedestrians and inline skaters, regional trails are intended to serve:**

- Casual or new adult and teenage bicyclists who prefer comfortable access, preferably by a direct route on low-speed or low-traffic streets. These bicyclists are most comfortable on designated bikeways, off-road facilities and independent trails, or having access to streets with low vehicle speeds and volumes.
- Pre-teen bicyclists whose roadway use is usually accompanied by a parent. They need access to local schools, libraries, recreation facilities, shopping, or other residential areas. These bicyclists have a strong preference for separation of bicycles from motor vehicles through off-road facilities or independent trails.

Regional trails may also serve the most experienced bicyclists, who want direct access to destinations at maximum speed with minimum delays. Highly experienced bicyclists primarily rely on the road system for routes, and value using roads like other vehicles for commuting, but occasionally enjoy independent trails if they are relatively continuous and not overly crowded.

### *Regional Bicycle Transportation Network*

In preparing the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*, the Council conducted a Regional Bicycle System Study in 2013-2014. The purpose of the study was to develop a more complete understanding of how the region's on-street bikeways and off-road trails interact and how they serve regional transportation trips by bicycle. The primary outcome of the study was to identify a Regional Bicycle Transportation Network, which defined a two-tiered network for planning and implementation. The Tier 1 (high priority) network was identified where bicycle travel was greatest, population and job densities were highest, and where there were the most opportunities to connect regional job concentrations and activity centers

with population centers and the regional transit system. Figure 4-1 shows the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network corridors.

The intent of the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network is to encourage planning and implementation of future bikeways by cities, counties, park agencies, and the state that will integrate a seamless network of on-street bikeways and off-road trails to most effectively improve conditions for bicycle transportation region-wide. The Regional Bicycle Transportation Network corridors are intended to serve as the “backbone” arterial system for biking in the region. Figure 4-2 shows existing and planned regional trails with regard to the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network corridors and also highlights the overlap between bicycle recreation and bicycle transportation networks.



Existing regional trails or segments of regional trails that serve a transportation function were included in the proposed Regional Bicycle Transportation Network, such as the Cedar Lake Regional Trail, the Samuel Morgan Regional Trail, and portions of the Luce Line Regional Trail.

For more information on the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network, please refer to the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*. *(insert link to Regional Bicycle Transportation Network section of 2040 TPP in the final version of the 2040 RP3)*.



Figure 4-1. Regional Bicycle Transportation Network Corridors

### Regional Bicycle Transportation Network Vision

**RBTN Alignments**

-  Tier 1 Alignments
-  Tier 2 Alignments

**RBTN Corridors (Alignments Undefined)**

-  Tier 1 Priority Regional Bicycle Transportation Corridor
-  Tier 2 Regional Bicycle Transportation Corridors






**Other Trail Systems**

-  Regional Trails (Regional Parks Policy Plan)
-  Mississippi River Trail (US Route 45)
-  State Trails (DNR)

**Regional Destinations**

-  Metropolitan Job Centers
-  Regional Job Centers
-  Subregional Job Centers
-  Large High Schools
-  Colleges & Universities
-  Major Sport & Entertainment Centers
-  Highly Visited Regional Parks

**Reference Items**

-  Principal Arterial Roads
-  Lakes and Rivers
-  City Boundary
-  County Boundary
-  2040 Municipal Urban Service Area MPO Area

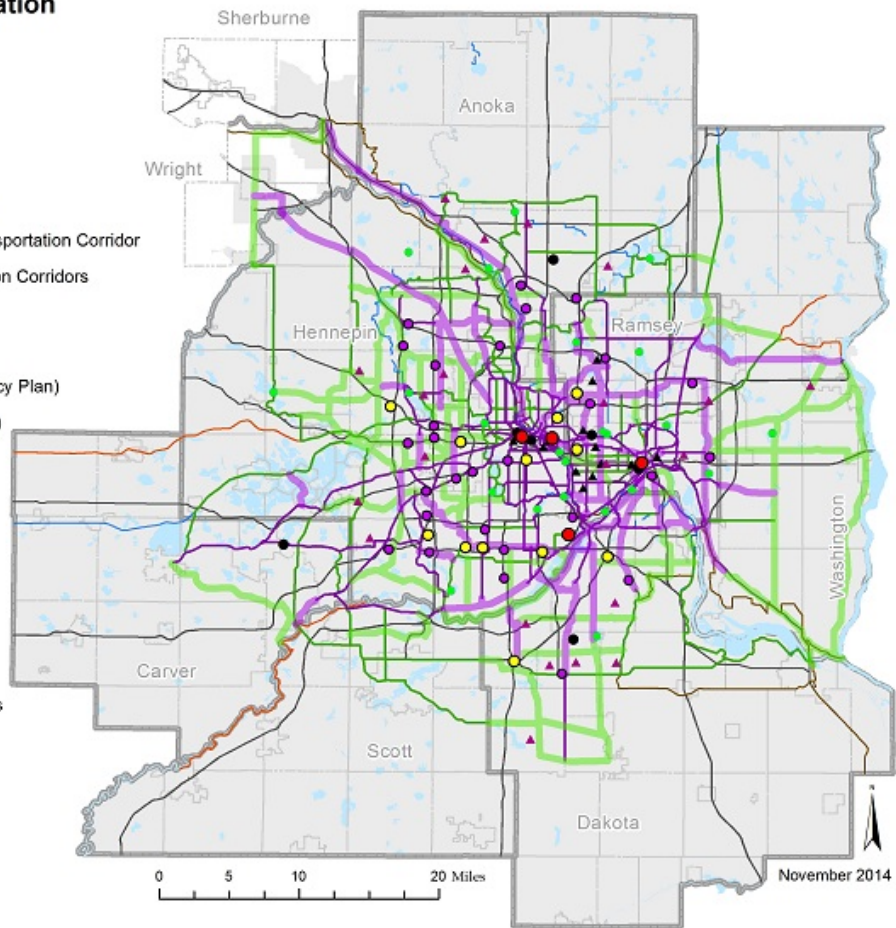
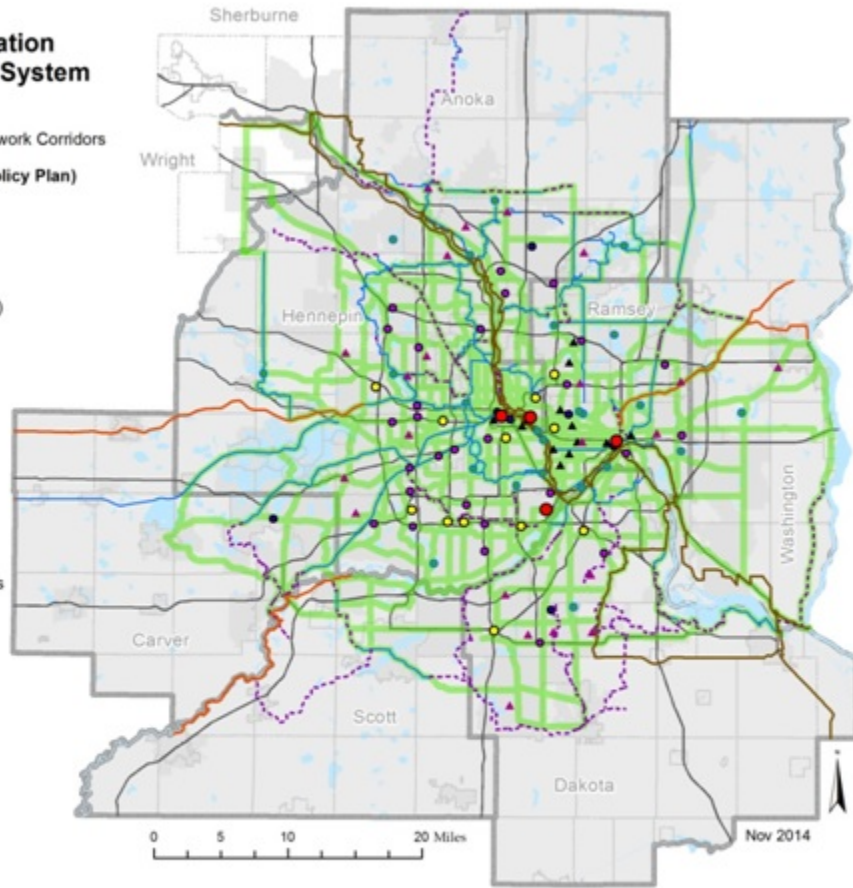


Figure 4-2. Regional Bicycle Transportation Network Corridor and Regional Trails

### Regional Bicycle Transportation Network and Regional Trail System

- Regional Bicycle Transportation Network Corridors
- Regional Trail System (Regional Parks Policy Plan)**
  - Regional Trails
  - ⋯ Planned Regional Trails
- Other Trail Systems**
  - Mississippi River Trail (US Route 45)
  - State Trails (DNR)
- Regional Destinations**
  - Major Job & Activity Centers
  - Regional Job & Activity Centers
  - Subregional Job & Activity Centers
  - ▲ Large High Schools
  - ▲ Colleges & Universities
  - Major Sport & Entertainment Centers
  - Highly Visited Regional Parks
- Reference Items**
  - Principal Arterial Roads
  - Lakes and Rivers
  - City Boundary
  - County Boundary
  - 2040 Municipal Urban Service Area MPO Area



### *Siting and Acquisition Policy:*

Identify lands with high-quality natural resources that are desirable for Regional Parks System activities and put these lands in a protected status so they will be available for recreational uses and conservation purposes in perpetuity.

### **Siting and Acquisition – Strategy 1: Lands with natural resource features and/or access to water will have priority over other proposed park land.**

Future Council designation of lands for the Regional Parks System should emphasize important natural resource features, access to water bodies, and natural resource features that enhance outdoor recreation. Geographic balance or proportionate distribution tied to population distribution patterns can be given weight when natural resource features can be provided through restoration.

The legislative charge to the Council is to prepare a policy plan that “...shall identify generally the areas which should be acquired by a public agency to provide a system of regional recreation open space comprising park district, county and municipal facilities, which, together with state facilities, reasonably will meet the outdoor recreation needs of the people of the metropolitan area and shall establish priorities for acquisition and development” (Minn. Stat. 473.147, subd. 1).

Regional recreation open space is defined as “...land and water areas, or interests therein, and facilities determined by the Council to be of regional importance in providing for a balanced system of public outdoor recreation for the metropolitan area, including but not limited to park reserves, major linear parks and trails, large recreation parks, and conservatories, zoos, and other special use facilities” (Minn. Stat. 473.121, subd. 14).

Water is a major attraction in almost every park unit of the Regional Parks System and an amenity along many regional trails. Most surface water is public, with the waterbeds owned by the state, so it is appropriate to provide access to these water bodies through the Regional Parks System.

Major considerations in deciding which lands should be brought into the Regional Parks System are:

- Acquiring lands with natural qualities most desirable for the outdoor recreational activities
- Protecting an important natural resource feature, such as linking other natural resource areas or water bodies together, which in turn provide a larger natural habitat opportunity; help protect or improve water quality, or provide a larger habitat for protected or endangered species
- Assuring that regional park facilities are evenly distributed around the metropolitan area or distributed in proportion to the existing and forecasted urban development

The legislative directive is clear that the land should be of “regional importance.” Regional importance is not directly defined in the law, but the legislative directive requires that regional parklands, plus state facilities, should reasonably meet the outdoor recreation needs of the people of the metropolitan area. Therefore, lands of “regional importance” would be comparable in size, draw users from rather large geographic areas, and contain natural resources similar to the state parks and trails in the metropolitan region. Lands that serve only a municipality or neighborhood would not be considered to have “regional importance.”

Past acquisition activity has tended to favor lands with high-quality natural resources over even geographic distribution. This has produced a Regional Parks System with more lands and facilities in the west and southwest portions of the metropolitan area than in other sectors.

This geographic imbalance in the Regional Parks System is ameliorated by the presence of state parks in the St. Croix Valley and at Fort Snelling and by the existence of a high-quality highway system with most of the regional facilities within a drive of 30 minutes or less from the urbanized area. The restoration of urban areas that include natural resource features (for example, Above the Falls Regional Park and the Bruce Vento Regional Trail and Nature Sanctuary) have provided opportunities to create regional park sites or regional trails that also address the emerging redevelopment of the Urban Centers.

### **Siting and Acquisition – Strategy 2: Priorities for land acquisition are set by regional park implementing agencies in Council-approved master plans.**

Priorities for acquiring park and park reserve lands identified in Council-approved master plans are lands that are available for purchase now, which would be lost to the Regional Parks System if timely action is not taken, and that are:

- Essential to protect the natural resources that define a park or park reserve and make it usable to the public as planned.
- Essential for the park or park reserve to reach its full service potential for regional natural resource-based outdoor recreation as defined in the Council's Regional Parks System plan and the park unit's master plan.

Most master plans provide for a range of recreational activities and developments that require lands in addition to those strictly needed to protect and enjoy the prime natural resource base. The full intent of the master plan will not be realized until these additional lands have been acquired for the system.

All privately owned parcels within a Council-approved master plan boundary are "inholdings" until they are acquired. Some parcels have homes on them and are called "residential inholdings." The acquisition of inholding parcels – especially those containing homes or those likely to be developed for residential or other urban uses – should be protected by first-right options to purchase, official mapping, life estates or other means. It is imperative that efforts are made to acquire these parcels because every time the land is sold to another private party, the land remains unavailable for Regional Parks System purposes. If once-vacant land is developed for housing or other uses, it may become unreasonably expensive to acquire and is essentially lost to the Regional Parks System.

The Council, with the advice of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, will work with regional park implementing agencies to systematically review inholding parcels that have been developed to determine whether the land is essential to protect the natural resources that define the park and make it usable to the public as planned, or whether the land is essential for the park or park reserve to reach its full service potential for regional natural resource-based outdoor recreation as defined in this policy plan and the park unit's master plan. The results of that review may conclude that some parcels or a portion of a parcel no longer meet those requirements and should be removed from the park's boundary through a master plan amendment. For example, historically small parcels with homes on the edge of parks have either been removed from the park boundary or subdivided, with the undeveloped land acquired for the park and the home removed from the park boundary.

Because of strong public attraction to water resources, acquisition of any additional public water frontage identified in a Council-approved master plan should be given a very high priority. The high demand and rapidly escalating value of water frontage will only make those lands more costly in the future. The priority is to acquire water frontage lands when they are most affordable – when they are undeveloped or, at least, developed with less expensive homes. Trying to convert land with water frontage to public use after it’s been fully developed is politically difficult and very expensive.

**Siting and Acquisition – Strategy 3: New regional trails must serve a regional audience and provide connections between regional parks, park reserves, and regional trails without duplicating an existing trail.**

To qualify for regional trail status, an existing or proposed trail:

- must serve a regional audience, based on visitor origin and service-area research on regional trails
- should not duplicate an existing trail, and
- should connect two or more units of the Regional Parks System

The trail may include part of an existing county or local trail if it is a destination itself, providing a high-quality recreation experience that traverses significant natural resource areas where the trail treadway will have no adverse impact on the natural resource base, and/or it links two or more units of the Regional Parks System.

The regional trail system in the metropolitan area is like the highway system, with regional and local components. The regional component consists of trails in the regional trail system and state administered trails. These trails are complemented by shorter, local trails, which may eventually feed into units of the regional trail system. The opportunities for interesting regional trail recreation experiences are substantially enhanced where local trails intersect with or are reached by elements of the regional system.

The Council has defined two major types of trails to serve the region: 1) destination or greenway trails and 2) linking trails. Destination or greenway trails typically follow along routes with high-quality natural resources, which make the trail itself a destination. Linking trails, on the other hand, are predominately intended to provide linkages between various Regional Parks System units, most notably regional parks or park reserves.

**Destination Regional Trails or Greenways** should be located to reasonably maximize the amount of high-quality natural resources within the trail corridor boundaries. For destination regional trails or greenways, there should be no spacing minimums or maximums between them; instead, the decision to locate the trail should be based on the availability of existing high-quality natural resources or the opportunity to restore, enhance, protect, or re-create natural resources.

The main criterion used to define regional parks and park reserves – the presence of high-quality natural resources – is also relevant to the location of a destination regional trail or greenway. Attractive settings contribute strongly to the quality of trail recreational experience. Since trails or greenways are

linear elements, areas along rivers and streams or chains of lakes are excellent candidates for incorporation into the regional trail system.

Natural features in the greenway or adjacent to the trail treadway serve ecological and environmental educational purposes, too. Restoration and management practices emphasizing native species can maintain and enhance the aesthetic, habitat, and other resource values of these areas.

**Linking Regional Trails** should be located within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area and may be located in the Rural Service Area of the region, as defined in Chapter 1. For linking regional trails, any two trails running parallel to each other, and not separated by natural or human-built barriers, should be at least 1.5 miles apart so as not to overlap the localized service area of those trails. Whenever possible, linking regional trails should be located to reasonably maximize inclusion of high-quality natural resources and connections to local trails, areas of lifecycle and affordable housing, the transit network, and areas of infill and redevelopment.

Visitor origin data from the Council's *2008 Regional Parks and Trails Survey* indicate that regional trails in the metropolitan area are used most by people who live nearby or can reach the trail in a short bicycle trip or drive. Therefore, a priority is to develop trail corridors in the Metropolitan Urban Service Area, where more than 90% of the population lives. Some of the metropolitan area's inner-ring suburbs are not close to regional parks and don't have large tracts of land that would be available for future development of parks for the regional system. Regional trail development should be pursued in these suburbs when the need has been identified, to help achieve geographic balance of Regional Parks System facilities.

In the Metropolitan Urban Service Area, attention should be given to both high-quality natural resources and to major human-built or developed resources in the fully developed areas. Interesting human-built resources include historical and architectural buildings and sites, education facilities, cultural facilities, and major public and private buildings. Utilizing the surface rights of underground utility corridors, such as large sewers, for trail purposes protects the utility for access/maintenance and provides a linear corridor for the trail.

When determining the boundaries of regional trail corridors, regional park implementing agencies should consider high-quality natural resource lands adjacent to the trail treadway to enhance the natural resource values of the trail. This is especially appropriate when the trail treadway is primarily an abandoned rail bed, in a power line corridor, or along a highway. These pockets of natural areas not only enhance the recreational experience of the trail user but also enhance the values of the primary land near the entire trail. Retaining these areas in their natural condition is the best use of the land, especially if it would be difficult to develop them for other land uses. An example would be including wetlands adjacent to the trail within the trail boundary. The wildlife habitat, water-quality values, plus the aesthetic values of the wetlands enhance the trail user's experience and encourage best land-use practices, since the wetland could not be developed economically compared to "dry" land.

Regional trails may pass through local parks along their route. The regional trails can enhance access to these local parks, and the parks may provide amenities for trail users. Because of this synergy, there may be a desire to incorporate these local parks into the regional trail corridor. However, these local parks may not be regionally significant and may only serve a local audience. In determining whether an

existing local park should become part of the regional trail corridor, the Council will evaluate the request in terms of its regional importance and whether the park itself serves a regional or local audience.

As described in Chapter 3, the 2040 Regional Parks System Plan Map includes over 700 miles of planned regional trails and regional trail search corridors throughout the region. Regional trails are one component of a more comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian network, which serves recreation and transportation purposes. To that end, future regional trail proposals need to be evaluated within a comprehensive, region-wide framework, most notably within the context of the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network. This framework will ensure that regional facilities are not duplicated.

The Council will work with all of the regional park implementing agencies to better integrate the regional trail network across jurisdictions and to assess the role of proposed regional trails with respect to the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network. Additionally, efforts will include a comprehensive evaluation of funding for the regional trail system.

**Siting and Acquisition – Strategy 4: Special recreation features must enhance services and facilities already offered, not compete with or duplicate them.**

Special recreation features proposed for inclusion in the Regional Parks System must:

- Be unique and complement or enhance the services already offered by the regional system
- Be capable of functioning within the existing management structure of the Regional Parks System
- Not duplicate or compete with recreation facilities adequately provided by the public or private sector
- Not drain funds from other facilities in the system either because they have an existing or committed financial base or because a prior agreement for a public subsidy has been reached that is in the public’s interest
- Demonstrate the existence or potential for drawing a sizable number of people from throughout the metropolitan area
- Be tied to natural resources
- Be approved by the Council through the master plan process

Regional Parks System legislation indicates that the system should contain parks, park reserves and trails, and zoos, conservatories, and “other special-use facilities” (Minn. Stat, 473.121, subd. 14). The term “other special-use facilities” is not defined in legislation. This policy plan refers to them as a special recreation feature, which is defined to be a facility that preserves, maintains, and provides specialized or single-purpose recreational activities, such as:

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Nature center                                   | Marina                               |
| Zoo   | Downhill ski area                    |
| Conservatory                                    | Arboretum                            |
| Display gardens                                 | Hunter training education facilities |
| Sites of historic or archeological significance | Bridging facilities*                 |

\*Bridging facilities are specialized or single-purpose facilities that are intended to attract and introduce new outdoor recreation users to the Regional Parks System.

Furthermore, special recreation features must:

- Contribute to the inventory of available and needed recreation opportunities
- Contain distinctive developments and/or unique natural landscapes not commonly found in the parks, park reserves, and trails
- Require special programming or management

As of 2014, there are eight special recreation features open to the public:

Como Zoo	Kingswood	Silverwood
Como Conservatory	The Landing	Square Lake
Gale Woods Farm	Noerenberg Gardens	

### *Planning Policy:*

Promote master planning and help provide integrated resource planning across jurisdictions.

#### **Planning – Strategy 1: Regional park implementing agencies are required to prepare a master plan for each Regional Parks System facility it owns and/or operates.**

Minn. Stat. 473.313 requires a master plan to be developed by each regional park implementing agency in consultation with all affected municipalities. While the statute requires only one master plan per regional park implementing agency, the Council requires individual master plans for each regional park, park reserve, trail and special recreation feature. Master plans prepared by the regional park implementing agencies are critical in defining the specifics of acquisition, development and operation of regional facilities.

The plans include the regional park implementing agency's estimates of use and costs. The master plan process allows residents to participate in the development of the plan and other units of government to know what is planned for a park and how it affects them. Collectively, these master plans form the regional park implementing agencies' part of the regional system plan. For a regional park implementing agency to receive a grant for acquisition or development through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program, the proposed project must be consistent with a Council-approved master plan.

Master plans will be reviewed by the Council for consistency with this and other Council policy plans. Inconsistent plans will be returned with comments to the regional park implementing agency, which must be revised, resubmitted, and approved by the Council to be eligible for Council funding.

Minn. Stat. 473 313 provides for the state mandate on master plans; however, it does not provide guidance on timeliness of revisions. A plan is revised when the regional park implementing agency submits a master plan amendment to the Council to change its original proposal for acquisition and/or development, or when it has developed significant additional detail. The Council may approve or reject

the master plan amendment for cause and return the plan to the regional park implementing agency for revisions to address the Council's concerns.

### *Master Plan Content Requirements and Funding Process*

Each master plan for regional parks, park reserves, and special recreation features must include information for each of these items:

- **Boundaries and acquisition costs.** A list of parcels to be acquired and the estimated total cost and schedule for their acquisition, and information on natural resources, site suitability, special assessments, potential contamination based on data from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and other conditions that affect acquisition of the site or location of the boundaries.
- **Stewardship plan:** A program for managing park property, including activities, expenses and anticipated revenue prior to developing the property for recreation purposes. Planned non-recreation uses and disposition of revenue from such use should be detailed.
- **Demand forecast:** The recreational demand to be met by the site as identified by the Council, the regional park implementing agency, or other sources.
- **Development concept:** A plan for recreational development and natural resource management that should include:
  - Description and location of planned development and natural resources management projects.
  - Approximate capacity of each facility.
  - Mapping of existing and planned local and regional trail connections to the site and information on how they relate to development within the park.
  - Wayfinding signage plan, indicating the types of signs and general locations within the park.
  - Information on the source and location of drinking water that is adequate for the recreational uses of the park.
  - Schedule and cost estimates for each project.
  - Conflicts between recreational and natural-resource management needs in developing the park/trail unit should be addressed and resolved. Amendments to an acquisition-phase master plan should be made prior to funding recreation and visitor support facilities if there is insufficient detail on the scale and cost of the facility. Alternatively, the final design/engineering phase of a proposed facility should be funded first, with construction funding provided in a separate capital improvement grant.
- **Conflicts:** Identification of conflicts with other existing or proposed projects or land uses affecting the park/trail unit, including steps necessary for their resolution.
- **Public services:** A description of any non-recreational public services and facilities, such as roads or sewers, needed to accommodate the proposed recreational use, including the timing of these services and the arrangements necessary to provide them.
- **Operations:** Rules, regulations or ordinances affecting the site, including estimated operations and maintenance costs and sources of revenue to operate and maintain recreation facilities and

to manage natural resources in the park/trail unit. The operations plan should indicate how energy to operate and maintain the park unit is being managed and conserved. The plan should also state how solid waste from park users is recycled and disposed of consistent with applicable laws.

- **Public engagement and participation:** A process to engage the public and involve affected agencies, local units of government, and local, state, and federal recreation providers in the development of the master plan. The public engagement process must seek to mitigate existing racial, ethnic, cultural or linguistic barriers and include people of diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages, abilities and national origin. A master plan must include the public engagement plan and describe the process undertaken to engage those mentioned above. The process must include opportunity for the public to be heard and to have influence over the contents in the master plan. The Council will provide staff assistance, where appropriate.

Regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to include transportation and transit planners in the development of a master plan, when appropriate.

The regional park implementing agency shall present the master plan and planned amendments to all affected agencies, local units of government, and local, state and federal recreation providers and address their concerns prior to submitting the plan to the Council. The master plan submitted to the Council shall include a summary of comments received that identifies issues raised and content resulting from engagement efforts.

- **Public awareness:** Plans for making the public aware of services available when the regional park is open, including how to access the park by transit, if applicable.
- **Accessibility:** A plan that addresses accessibility, affordability, and other measures designed to ensure that the facility can be used by people with limited mobility.
- **Natural resources:** As part of the master plan, there should be a natural-resource management component that includes:
  - A Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) as a part of the master plan process. An NRI should include a land cover inventory that is consistent with the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System developed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the MetroGIS – a consortium of government entities in the region that create, manage and share digital geographic-based data in a geographic information system (GIS). The natural resource inventory should include native plant communities mapped in the Minnesota County Biological Survey and listed species (rare, endangered, and threatened) that are documented in the Natural Heritage Information System. The natural resource inventory may include other land-based information.

The Council has created the Natural Resources Digital Atlas (NRDA) – an easy-to-use mapping application designed to assist communities and other organizations and users in the Twin Cities metropolitan area to identify and protect locally or regionally significant natural resources. Using consistent, region-wide information based on the above data or tool will assure compatibility with other natural resource inventories that have been completed or will be done in the metropolitan region.

The Natural Resource Inventory should be a basis for projects/proposals to restore degraded resources and maintain high-quality natural resource features, including the

estimated capital costs of natural resource restoration projects. Regional park implementing agencies should consult with natural resource professionals in the design and final construction of park facilities, especially trails, that are adjacent to or cross over natural resource areas. The final design and construction should allow the public to view and enjoy these natural habitats with minimal adverse impact on that habitat.

- Information on how surface water and groundwater resources in the unit, including wetlands, will be protected. This should include standards and requirements that are consistent with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's best management practices for stormwater management. The master plan should include provisions to, first, avoid wetland impacts; second, minimize impacts; and, finally, mitigate impacts when no other options are available.
- Information on how vegetation will be managed.

The effective date for these master plan requirements is July 1, 2015 in acknowledgement of regional park implementing agency planning processes that may be underway when the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan is adopted. Master plans submitted to the Council prior to this date will be reviewed subject to the requirements outlined in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

#### *Master plans for regional linking trails:*

Each master plan for a regional linking trail must include information for each of these items:

- **Boundaries and acquisition costs:** A list of parcels to be acquired and the estimated total cost and schedule for their acquisition, and information on natural resources, site suitability, special assessments, potential contamination based on data from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and other conditions that affect acquisition of the site or location of the boundaries
- **Demand forecast:** The recreational demand to be met by the trail, as identified by the Council, the regional park implementing agency, or other sources
- **Development concept:** A plan for development, including schedule and cost estimates for the project. The plan should include:
  - Mapping of existing and planned local and regional trail connections to the trail corridor
  - Wayfinding signage plan, indicating the types of signs and general locations along the trail corridor
- **Conflicts:** Identification of conflicts with other existing or proposed projects or land uses affecting the park/trail unit, including steps necessary for their resolution
- **Public services:** A description of any non-recreational public services and facilities, such as roads or sewers, needed to accommodate the proposed trail, including the timing of these services and the arrangements necessary to provide them.
- **Operations:** Rules, regulations or ordinances affecting the trail, including estimated operations and maintenance costs and sources of revenue to operate and maintain the trail.
- **Public engagement and participation:** : A process to engage the public and involve affected agencies, local units of government, and local, state, and federal recreation providers in the

development of the master plan. The public engagement process must seek to mitigate existing racial, ethnic, cultural or linguistic barriers and include people of diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages, abilities and national origin. A master plan must include the public engagement plan and describe the process undertaken to engage those mentioned above. The process must include opportunity for the public to be heard and to have influence over the contents in the master plan. The Council will provide staff assistance, where appropriate.

Regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to include transportation and transit planners in the development of a master plan, when appropriate.

The regional park implementing agency shall present the master plan and planned amendments to all affected agencies, local units of government, and local, state and federal recreation providers and address their concerns prior to submitting the plan to the Council. The master plan submitted to the Council shall include a summary of comments received that identifies issues raised and content resulting from engagement efforts.

- **Public awareness:** Plans for making the public aware of services available when the regional trail is open, including how to access the trail by transit, if applicable.
- **Accessibility:** A plan that addresses accessibility, affordability, and other measures designed to ensure that the facility can be used by people with limited mobility.

The effective date for these master plan requirements is July 1, 2015 in acknowledgement of regional park implementing agency planning processes that may be underway when the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan is adopted. Master plans submitted to the Council prior to this date will be reviewed subject to the requirements outlined in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

#### *Master plans for regional destination trails or greenways:*

Master plans for regional destination trails or greenways shall include all of the elements outlined above for regional linking trails as well as a stewardship plan and natural resource inventory:

- **Stewardship plan:** A program for managing the surrounding greenway areas and natural resource features.
- **Natural resources:** As part of the master plan, the natural resource management component should include:

- A Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) as a part of the master plan process. An NRI should include a land cover inventory that is consistent with the Minnesota Land Cover Classification system developed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Metro GIS – a consortium of government entities in the region that create, manage and share digital geographic-based data in a geographic information system (GIS).

Using the same NRI format will ensure compatibility with other natural resource inventories that have been completed or will be done in the metropolitan region. The natural resource inventory should include native plant communities mapped in the Minnesota County Biological Survey and listed species (rare, endangered, and threatened) that are documented in the Natural Heritage Information System.

- The Natural Resource Inventory should be a basis for projects/proposals to restore degraded resources and maintain high-quality natural resource features, including the estimated capital costs of natural resource restoration projects. Regional park implementing agencies should consult with natural resource professionals in the design and final construction of the trail/ greenway, that are adjacent to or cross over natural resource areas. The final design and construction should allow the public to view and enjoy these natural habitats with minimal adverse impact on that habitat.
- Information on how surface water and groundwater resources in the unit, including wetlands, will be protected. If appropriate, this should include standards and requirements that are consistent with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's best management practices for stormwater management. The master plan should include provisions to, first, avoid wetland impacts; second, minimize impacts; and, finally, mitigate impacts when no other options are available.
- Information on how vegetation will be managed.

### *Design Considerations for Master Plans*

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* incorporates the policy direction provided by *Thrive MSP 2040* to:

- Promote expanded multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails, and the transit network, where appropriate
- Strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all our region's residents, such as across age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin, and ability

To respond to these goals, regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to consider the following design elements in a regional park or trail master plan.

#### **Promote expanded multimodal access:**

- Provide connections to transit stops or park-and-rides when designating the alignment of a regional trail, where appropriate
- Provide bike racks and lockers located near activity areas in regional parks so visitors can safely store their bikes as they recreate
- Design multiple entrance points to a regional park to make it easier for bicyclist or pedestrian to access the park, where appropriate

#### **Strengthening equitable usage:**

- Provide amenities suited for the aging population and/or those with limited mobility, such as:
  - Siting picnic areas or short, looped trails close to parking lots or points of access
  - Providing benches as appropriate intervals along trails
- Designing non-fee picnic areas that accommodate mid-sized groups (for example, 15-25 people), which would allow for spontaneous gatherings:

- Does not need to be a formal picnic shelter – could be a number of picnic tables grouped together
  - Would not require an advance reservation
  - Does not replace picnic areas that require reservations – both options may be offered
- Clustering of amenities for multigenerational family gatherings, such as picnic areas near playgrounds and open ball fields

### *Funding Process for Capital Projects*

With regard to financing the construction of recreation and visitor support facilities proposed in a master plan, it is important that there is sufficient detail about the facility in the master plan and that the regional park implementing agency is ready to construct the facility when funds become available. As a condition for requesting Regional Parks System development funds in the first biennium of the regional parks capital improvement program (CIP), the Council will require regional park implementing agencies to assess and report to the Council whether sufficient information on the cost of the facility has been provided in the master plan and that the project's construction can begin if funds are provided.

Alternatively, the regional park implementing agency may choose to request capital improvement funds to finance the final design/engineering of the facility in the first biennium of the CIP and a separate grant for the facility's construction in the second biennium of the CIP. In either case, the regional park implementing agency must provide an opportunity for the general public and agencies affected by the particular park or trail to participate in the process to amend a master plan or the final design/engineering phase of a facility prior to funding its construction.

If a master plan amendment is needed before funding the construction of a facility, the regional park implementing agency must provide the general public and affected local units of government an opportunity to participate in the process, as outlined the master plan requirements described above.

### **Planning – Strategy 2: Promote enhanced multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails and the transit system, where appropriate.**

The Regional Parks System plays a key role in advancing the livability of the region by increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation, thereby supporting healthy lifestyles and active living. The Council has a unique opportunity to help achieve this objective, through its roles in planning and operating the transit system, as well as planning for the Regional Parks System.

In 2014, Council staff conducted a stakeholder work session that included regional park implementing agency representatives, transportation and transit planners, land use planners, and park planning partners to discuss ideas to support this strategy. The ideas generated in the work session are classified into concepts that regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to consider and projects or discussions that the Council will pursue.

In addition to design considerations for master plans discussed in the previous section, regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to:

- Provide transit schedules and information at regional parks that are served by transit

- Include information on how to access a regional park or trail by transit on their agency’s website, where applicable
- Improve wayfinding signage
- Promote regional trails with existing Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs). A TMO is public-private partnership that provides marketing and advocacy to promote multi-modal options for daily commutes
  - Commute Solutions: serves Anoka County
  - Commuter Connection: serves downtown Minneapolis
  - Commuter Services: serves Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina, Minnetonka, and Richfield along the Interstate 494 corridor
  - Smart Trips: serves Saint Paul
- Coordinate with local jurisdictions to identify and plan for local trail connections to regional parks and trails as well as last mile connections from transit
- Collaborate with bike-share programs to site bike stations near regional parks and trails

The Council will explore the following projects:

- Develop an integrated web application that identifies how to access regional parks and trails using alternative transportation.
- Collaborate with local agencies to develop a Bicycle and Pedestrian Wayfinding Best Practices Guide
- Collaborate with Metro Transit or local transit providers to determine the feasibility of the following actions:
  - Promoting regional parks at bus stops
  - Exploring options for siting new park-and-rides near or adjacent to regional parks, or new regional trails near park-and-rides or fixed-route transit lines
  - Promoting a transit day pass or family pass to regional parks
  - Providing free rides to large special events in regional parks
  - Adding transit stops that are convenient to regional parks and trails

### **Planning – Strategy 3: Joint-powers agreements for regional trails are encouraged.**

Regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to enter into joint-powers agreements with local governments regarding the acquisition and operations/maintenance of regional trails.

Joint-powers agreements need not be identical, but regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to negotiate arrangements that:

- address the primary issue of how trail land ownership is controlled and how the trail is going to be managed, and
- ensure that the trail will be open to all people (not restricted by residence). The trail should be treated as a truly regional facility, since it will be eligible for regional and state funds to finance

its acquisition, development and operations/maintenance once the Council has approved a master plan for the regional trail

The duration of the joint-powers agreements should last the expected life of the trail and should be included in the trail master plans submitted to the Council as an assurance that any funds provided by the Council for the trail would be spent consistent with the Council-approved trail master plan.

Regional trails usually extend through several communities. Unlike regional parks, where the regional park implementing agency owns the park and usually coordinates with one or two local governments, regional trails affect several local governments and the land on which the regional trail travels may not be owned by the regional park implementing agency. The regional park implementing agency may lease the trail land and manage it through a joint-powers agreement with a local jurisdiction.

Regional park implementing agencies should include a copy of any joint-powers agreements as part of the regional trail master plan. This assures the Council that any funds it provides or passes on for the trail's acquisition, development or operations/maintenance will be consistent with the Council-approved master plan.

#### **Planning – Strategy 4: Projects may share costs, if they are consistent with a Council-approved master plan.**

Projects that are consistent with a Council-approved master plan but exceed regional need as determined by the Council may proceed on a cost-sharing basis. Regional park implementing agencies must obtain Council approval in advance of undertaking cost-shared developments.

It is possible that a regional park implementing agency may wish to make improvements that substantially differ in type, size, scale or cost from those in the Council-approved master plan and the adopted CIP, in order to meet expanded local recreational demands or satisfy above-average quality standards. These improvements are subject to Council approval of an amended master plan.

The master plan must include a funding proposal under which regional funds will be used only for the regional service facilities, not for facilities intended to serve local needs. In fairness to other regional park implementing agencies, it is necessary for the Council to limit funds to what is necessary to cover average improvements that will deliver adequate services, and not to pay for excessively ornate or elaborate facilities.

Even if all of the improvement funds come from regional park implementing agency sources or are raised through cost-sharing arrangements with other governments or the private sector, the regional park implementing agency must secure Council approval of a master plan amendment. The improvements are to be developed on Regional Parks System lands that are committed to specific long-term planned uses. These lands must be protected from the intrusion of activities and developments that are incompatible with the planned uses of the regional parks, park reserves, and trails, regardless of how the development was funded.

The regional park implementing agency may be required to pay the full amount or the extra portion of the project cost when the regional park implementing agency wants to develop a facility sooner than the Council has determined that it is needed to meet regional demand, or at a scale greater than regional demand warrants, or at a higher cost than the Council finds necessary to serve the regional interest. The following conditions apply to projects funded on a cost-sharing basis:

- The project must meet the same requirements of master planning and Council approval as any other Regional Parks System projects.
- Costs incurred by the regional park implementing agency as the local share of the project are not reimbursable.
- Where funds are available from private sources or sources other than the regional park implementing agency to share in project costs, the Council will work directly with the affected regional park implementing agency.

### *Finance Policy:*

Provide adequate and equitable funding for the Regional Parks System units and facilities in a manner that provides the greatest possible benefits to the people of the region.

### **Finance – Strategy 1: Funds will be granted only to regional park implementing agencies.**

Any funds provided by or through the Council for the Regional Parks System will be granted only to regional park implementing agencies for projects consistent with Council-approved master plans, capital improvement programs, or state law. As previously noted in Chapter 2, and defined by Minn. Stat. 473.351, the regional park implementing agencies are:

- Anoka County
- City of Bloomington
- Carver County
- Dakota County
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- Ramsey County
- City of Saint Paul
- Scott County
- Three Rivers Park District
- Washington County

### **Finance – Strategy 2: Capital Improvement Program funds are used for acquisition, development, and redevelopment of Regional Parks System units.**

Development in Regional Parks System units should be based on the principle of providing and maintaining quality public park areas and facilities primarily for residents of the metropolitan area. The eligibility criteria (not in any priority order) for development and rehabilitation of regional park reserves, parks, trails, and special recreation features are:

- Projects that provide new facilities, rehabilitate facilities, or increase capacity where there is documented existing or projected high use, and where there will be no adverse effect on the natural resource base.

- Projects continuing a phased high-priority project or one of relatively high priority that is timed with other public improvement projects to achieve significant economies in cost of construction.
- A project providing a specific facility that meets a documented need, is currently not available, or is significantly under-represented in the system where there will be no adverse effect on the natural resource base.
- Regional trails that connect to other trails or regional facilities or extend existing trails.
- Natural resource restoration, invasive species control and other types of resource restoration and protection projects.
- Acquisition of parkland parcels or reimbursement for parkland parcels.
- Matching non-state and non-Council funds to develop/rehabilitate recreation facilities or restore natural resource areas is encouraged.
- Projects that provide essential facility improvements and natural resource enhancements to allow for the initial public use of a regional park once there is adequate demand and acquisition base to support the development.

Early efforts of the Regional Parks System program focused on acquiring desirable tracts of land and incorporating existing park facilities that are valuable to the region. Since the lands in question were being used, or were intended to be used, for some form of recreation, it was recognized that eventually the new lands would require development and the facilities in the older parks would have to be redeveloped through replacement or reconstruction.

Regional park implementing agencies are responsible for the development and rehabilitation needs for their units in the Regional Parks System. Each regional park implementing agency ranks its proposed development and rehabilitation projects for possible inclusion in the capital improvement program of the Council. All of the proposed development and rehabilitation projects may be desirable, but some – due to their location, their existing use or intended use – tend to be more valuable from a regional standpoint than others.

Adding recreational facilities to Regional Parks System units must not adversely affect the natural resource base that justifies the park or trail's regional designation. Regional park implementing agencies need to balance the carrying capacity of the recreational facilities against the carrying capacity of the park or trail corridor.

For regional trails, regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to connect existing trails to other Regional Parks System units, most notably regional parks and park reserves. Regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to negotiate with local communities and landowners to provide fencing or vegetative screening to meet safety and local community concerns. Fencing and screening along new or existing regional trails may be grant-eligible development costs. The Council and the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission will consider such costs when reviewing trail development master plans and trail development funding requests. Excessive screening or fencing beyond a reasonable minimum should be cost-shared with the adjacent landowner since the additional cost provides no benefit to the trail-using public.

### **Finance – Strategy 3: Ensure Parks and Trails Legacy Funds are spent in a manner that conforms to the statewide Parks and Trails Legacy Plan.**

The Council is the fiscal agent responsible for administering appropriations from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund to the regional park implementing agencies. It is imperative that the Council ensures the Parks and Trails Legacy dollars are spent in the intended manner. To that end, the Council will ensure regional park implementing agencies target the funds to projects that capture the strategic direction outlined in the Parks and Trails Legacy Plan.

The Parks and Trails Legacy Plan, described in greater detail in Chapter 5, specify four strategic directions:

- *Connect people and the outdoors*
- *Acquire land, create opportunities*
- *Take care of what we have*
- *Coordinate among partners*

The four strategic directions parallel the policy direction put forward in Minnesota’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP, 2014). Most notably, SCORP, citing changing population demographics and declining per-capita participation in nature-based outdoor recreation, emphasizes the importance of connecting people to the outdoors.

While regional park implementing agencies do a great deal to connect people to the outdoors, and their efforts should not be diminished, the additional funds made available by the Legacy Amendment enable them to do more in this regard. The additional funding allows for the enhancement of what is already being done and be innovative and creative in trying to capture and serve a broader and more diverse population.

Considering the statewide significance of connecting people to the outdoors, a percentage of Parks and Trails Legacy Fund dollars should be used for that purpose. In 2015, the Council – in close collaboration with regional park implementing agencies, Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee, and other partners and stakeholders – will identify a minimum percentage of Parks and Trails Legacy appropriations that should be used to “connect people and the outdoors.” Once determined and approved by the Council, the Council will require regional park implementing agencies to adhere to the determined minimum level of spending as it pertains to their annual share of the Parks and Trails Fund appropriations. It is important to note this in no way alters the funding formula that is applied to the overall Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation. The minimum level of spending would be initiated during the 2018-2019 biennium, which begins on July 1, 2017.

### **Finance – Strategy 4: Investments to be funded by the Capital Improvement Plan and Parks and Trails Legacy Fund must be included on the legislatively authorized project list.**

To access its share of grant funds from the Capital Improvement Program and Parks and Trails Legacy Fund, a regional park implementing agency must have the proposed project included on the

appropriate legislatively authorized project list. In certain circumstances, projects can be amended and the process for such an event is described in subsequent content.

### **Finance – Strategy 5: Where appropriate, equity will be a consideration in Regional Parks System funding and investment.**

*Thrive MSP 2040* states the Council will “strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all our region’s residents, such as across age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin, and ability”. *Thrive MSP 2040* also states that the Council will use equity as a lens to evaluate its operations, planning, and investments. An equity lens, otherwise called an equity analysis toolkit or equity impact assessment, is a tool government agencies use to collect information related to their major activities. Many government agencies throughout the country are using an equity lens to inventory, monitor, and institutionalize equity principles. Typically, an equity lens consists of a short series of open-ended questions that clarify both the positive and adverse impacts a project may have on equity. As of 2014, the Council does not have an equity lens developed.

The Council, in collaboration with external partners and stakeholders, will develop a Council-wide equity lens to use to evaluate its operations, planning, and investments. The developed equity lens will serve as a base for creating an equity lens specific to the Regional Parks System, which will be called a Regional Parks System equity toolkit. The Council and the Regional Parks and Natural Resources unit staff will work in close collaboration with regional park implementing agencies, partners, community based organizations, advocacy groups, and other stakeholder groups to develop a Regional Parks System equity toolkit in 2015. Similar to the Council-wide equity lens, the Regional Parks System equity toolkit will be a short series of open-ended questions. Once approved by the Council, the Regional Parks System equity toolkit will be used by regional park implementing agencies and the Council in specific ways described in the following paragraphs.

*Using the Regional Parks System equity toolkit, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and Council will be involved in the prioritization of the project list proposed for funding for the Capital Improvement Program and Parks and Trails Legacy Fund.*

As noted previously, for both the Capital Improvement Program and the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund, a list of projects must be provided to the state for legislative approval on a predetermined schedule. While regional park implementing agencies possess the greatest knowledge of the needs of their respective park and trail units, the Council has a role in reviewing and assessing the ranked list of proposed projects, from both a regional and fiscal perspective, before it is submitted to the state.

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Council will evaluate the project lists using the Regional Parks System equity toolkit. Therefore, the regional park implementing agencies will be required to respond to questions included in the Regional Parks System equity toolkit for each proposed project on their respective project list. To evaluate the proposed list of projects submitted by the regional park implementing agencies, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Council will discuss and evaluate the proposed projects based on the benefit a particular project may provide to all the region’s residents, the needs and preferences of specific under-served populations, and the unintended consequences of the project. On occasion, based on the Council’s evaluation, the Council may elect to recommend shifting the order of the prioritized list. Reprioritization will in no way apply to regional park implementing agency projects that serve as a match to Federal or State funds.

Given the state funding cycle for each fund source, the process outlined above would take effect at different times. For Parks and Trails Legacy Fund dollars, the process would be initiated during the 2018-2019 biennium funding cycle (beginning on July 1, 2017). For Capital Improvement Program dollars, the process would be initiated for 2019 fiscal year (beginning on July 1, 2018).

It is important to note that the review of proposed projects will in no way alter an agency's share of funding received from either the Capital Improvement Program or the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund.

*Require regional park implementing agencies to complete a Regional Parks System equity toolkit in grant applications.*

The Regional Parks System equity toolkit, once adopted, will also be completed by regional park implementing agencies when they submit grant applications. The Regional Parks System equity toolkit will not be used for screening purposes or to determine eligibility of funding, but will provide the Council a mechanism to track and monitor progress toward strengthening equitable use of the Regional Parks System.

*Using Council bonds, the Council will create, fund, and administer a set-aside competitive grant program for capital projects explicitly aimed to strengthen equitable usage of the Regional Parks System.*

The Council will levy Council bonds annually to fund a competitive grant program that is used solely to strengthen equitable use of the Regional Parks System. Considering existing limitations on Council bonds, the grant program will only provide funding for acquisition, development, or redevelopment projects in the Regional Park System.

To develop this grant program, the Council will work in close collaboration with regional park implementing agencies, partners, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and other stakeholder groups in 2015 to formulate criteria and measures for awarding grants to regional park implementing agencies for capital projects aimed to strengthen equitable use.

The amount available for the grant program would vary annually. The amount available is primarily determined by four factors: 1) the Council's \$40 million limit on outstanding park bond debt at any given time (Minn. Stat. 473.325), 2) the Council's policy to limit park bond levying to \$7 million annually, 3) the amount required to fulfill Council's obligated match to state funds, as it pertains to other Regional Parks System grant programs, and 4) Council approval to levy bonds.

**Finance – Strategy 6: The Council may reimburse regional park implementing agencies for the costs of acquiring some lands before they have been made part of the Regional Parks System or for development projects undertaken before they can be financed through the Metropolitan Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program.**

*Reimbursement for acquisition of land not currently designated in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*

Reimbursement will be considered for early acquisition of land that is not currently designated as regional recreation open space by the Council in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* under certain conditions.

If land is acquired or protected under an option to purchase by a regional park implementing agency, or an entity under contract with that agency while the Council considers adding the land to the Regional Parks Policy Plan via a public hearing process, the Council will consider reimbursing the regional park implementing agency for the costs to acquire or protect the land via an option to purchase under the following conditions:

- The Council is informed in writing of the land acquisition or option to purchase before it occurs.
- The Council makes a preliminary finding through staff analysis that the proposed regional park unit is consistent with Siting and Acquisition Strategy 1 and the size/service area requirements for the applicable regional park system unit are met.
- The Council conducts a public hearing to designate the acquired land as regional recreation open space based on a draft acquisition master plan containing the acquired land or land held under an option to purchase. The hearing is conducted under the requirements of Minn. Stat. 473.147.
- Based on the findings/conclusions of the public hearing, the Council designates the land as regional recreation open space and approves an acquisition master plan that contains the acquired land or land held under an option to purchase.

If these conditions are met as required by Minn. Stat. 473.147, and 473.313, the Council will consider reimbursing the regional park implementing agency via a grant as permitted under Minn. Stat. 473.315 for the following costs:

- Appraisal costs incurred by the acquiring regional park implementing agency or entity under contract with the agency
- Surveying costs incurred by the acquiring regional park implementing agency or entity under contract with the agency
- Legal fees incurred by the acquiring regional park implementing agency or entity under contract with the agency
- Fees for service provided by an entity under contract by the regional park implementing agency to negotiate and purchase the land or obtain an option to purchase
- Principal payments made toward the purchase price including principal payments on a contract for deed or bond, or payments made on an option to purchase
- 180% of township or city taxes due on the parcel at the time of closing as required by Minn. Stat. 473.341

In order to comply with Minn. Stat. 16A.695 requirements on the expenditure of state bonds, to minimize the total costs of acquisition and to be consistent with reimbursements made on other projects, these costs are not grant-eligible:

- Acquisition costs incurred to acquire a local park, which is later designated a regional park
- Interest incurred by the acquiring regional park implementing agency or entity under contract with the agency on bonds it issued to buy the land, or interest incurred on a contract for deed payment
- Projected investment revenue lost by the acquiring regional park implementing agency or entity under contract with the agency, based on what it might have earned on funds it spent to acquire the land or to buy an option to purchase the land
- Interest on inter-agency or intra-agency loans used to finance the acquisition payment(s) or option to purchase

### *Reimbursement for development projects undertaken before they can be financed through the Capital Improvement Plan*

Reimbursement will be considered for development projects provided that:

- the project is consistent in timing, scale, type, and cost with a Council-approved master plan
- all information required for the development grant is submitted to the Council prior to the regional park implementing agency undertaking the project, and
- the Council approves the project.

State funds are not eligible to be used for reimbursement grants when the regional park implementing agency uses the reimbursement to pay off its bonds or an account that was used to initially finance the project. In those cases, only Council bonds may be used. In cases where the regional park implementing agency uses the proceeds from the reimbursement grant to finance new capital projects, state funds as well as Council bonds may be used to finance the grant.

The Council will consider reimbursing the implementing agency based on whether the development or rehabilitation project meets the criteria – not on how the regional park implementing agency plans to spend the reimbursement grant. However, regional park implementing agencies should state how they would spend the reimbursement grant so that state funds as well as Council bonds can be used when possible.

This would eliminate any need for amendments to the Council's Unified Capital Budget, since the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP) would accurately reflect, and inform the public and elected officials, how the funds will be spent.

Because Council bonds are limited to financing only 40% of the total biennial Regional Parks CIP, the following steps will be taken when considering reimbursement requests in a biennial Regional Parks CIP:

- Regional park implementing agencies should submit their CIP funding requests with the understanding that reimbursement grants should not exceed 40% of a regional park implementing agency's biennial CIP allocation.

- If the total requests for reimbursement grants exceeds 40% of the total biennial CIP, regional park implementing agencies should submit plans to the Council as to how they intend to spend the reimbursement grant. This information is necessary to ascertain whether or not state bonds can also be used to finance the reimbursement grant in addition to Council bonds. If the total dollar amount of requests for reimbursement requiring Council bond funding exceeds the amount of Council bonds available for that biennial CIP, regional park implementing agencies will be asked to modify their CIP requests for reimbursements for that biennium so that the amount requested for reimbursement does not exceed the amount available.

The Council will use best efforts to implement this reimbursement policy as described above. However, the Council does not, under any circumstances, represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a regional park implementing agency to reimbursement.

**Finance – Strategy 7: Regional trail corridors that may be used for transit in the future are eligible for Regional Parks System funding if it is clear the corridor will be used as a trail for at least 10 years.**

Regional Parks System funds should only be used to acquire or develop a corridor identified for future transit use in a Council-approved transit implementation plan when there is a guarantee that the trail facility will be operational for its useful design life, as negotiated by the transit provider and the regional park implementing agency. As defined by the Federal Highway Administration, the useful design life of a trail is 10 years or more. In cases where trail recreation is to be a permanent partner with transitways, within the corridor, Regional Parks System funds will be used only for that part of acquisition and development attributable to trail use.

Occasionally, existing corridors previously used for railroad or road transportation becomes available for new uses. This is particularly true of railroad rights-of-way that are no longer required for service. The most likely new uses for these corridors are either recreational trails or transitways such as light-rail transit, commuter rail, or bus rapid transit.

The availability of these corridors may offer excellent opportunities for the regional trail system to expeditiously acquire links that would otherwise have to be assembled on a parcel-by-parcel basis. All surplus corridors put on the market should be evaluated for their suitability as additions to the regional trail system. If an available corridor traverses an area with high-quality natural resources, or if it constitutes part of a link in the regional trail system, the corridor should be considered for trail use as part of the Regional Parks System. In some cases, available corridors do not provide any linkages or offer any potentially interesting trail recreation experience. In these cases, the corridors are not suitable for inclusion in the Regional Parks System.

However, where either the linkage or natural resources criterion or both are met, two potential problem situations occur. First is a situation where the surplus corridor is wide enough to accommodate permanent use both as a transitway and for recreational trail purposes. It is hoped that differences between the transportation use and the recreation use can be resolved so that both types of activity can become permanent, valuable additions to the metropolitan area. Planning, development and management arrangements will have to be worked out among the various interests involved.

The trail use of rights-of-way owned by regional rail authorities is allowed as an interim use under agreements between the regional rail authority/transit provider and regional park implementing agencies. Signs on these trails inform the public that trail use may be displaced or shared with transit in the future.

A more difficult situation occurs when the corridor can accommodate either transit or trail recreation, but not both. In the interim, the corridor can be considered for recreational trail purposes. It is possible that the eventual conversion of the corridor to transit will not occur and, presumably, the corridor will be available for permanent recreational uses.

However, it is also possible that transit will eventually claim the corridor after several years. If the facility has been used as a recreational trail, it's possible that the trail will become popular and be viewed as a permanent part of the Regional Parks System. The Regional Parks System will experience a substantial dislocation and deprivation if one of its links is suddenly removed from the system. Public opposition over conversion from recreation to transportation use is likely. If the regional trail system and the transit system are to take this risk, it must be done with the clear understanding that trail recreation may only be a temporary use. No significant long-term recreation investment will be made in the facility unless it will be in operation for its useful design life of 10 years or more.

### **Finance – Strategy 8: The Council will actively seek funding from the state and other sources.**

The Council will seek continued state funding for acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of all components in the Regional Parks System. The Council will also pursue other sources of funding where appropriate.

The Regional Parks System has been funded through a combination of state and local funding sources over the last 40 years. Funding for operations and maintenance of the regional system has been provided primarily by regional park implementing agencies through local taxes available to them and, to a lesser extent, user fees. Since 1985, the state has provided some supplemental funding to regional park implementing agencies to help fund their operations and maintenance costs. Minn. Stat. 473.351, subd. 3, states that:

- Each regional park implementing agency must receive no less than 40% of its actual operation and maintenance expenses to be incurred in the current calendar year budget as submitted to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. If the available operation and maintenance money is less than the total amount determined by the formula, the implementing agencies will share the available money in proportion to the amounts they would otherwise be entitled to under the formula.

Between 1985 and 2014, state funding to support the operation and maintenance of the Regional Parks System has funded, on average, only 9.5% of the overall cost for operations and maintenance. Continued state supplemental support to finance 40% of operation and maintenance costs of the regional system will also be sought.

Importantly, any changes in the formula used to distribute state funds for operations and maintenance will require legislative action.

### *System Protection Policy:*

Protect public investment in acquisition and development by assuring that every component in the system is able to fully carry out its designated role as long as a need for it can be demonstrated.

The Council has in place several mechanisms that protect the integrity of the Regional Parks System and of individual parts of the system:

- **Master plans:** The master plan defines acceptable activities within a system unit. The regional park implementing agencies must receive Council approval before proceeding with any activities inconsistent with the existing Council-approved master plan.
- **Restrictive covenants:** Regional park implementing agencies are required to record restrictive covenants on lands purchased with regional funds, to ensure that the land remains in regional recreation open space use unless the Council agrees to a change.
- **Land Planning Act:** Proposed plans of local governments that have a substantial effect on or represent a substantial departure from the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* may be subject to a required modification by the Council to ensure that the system is protected.
- **Metropolitan significance:** Proposed development projects that have a substantial effect on or represent a substantial departure from the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* may be required to undergo a review for metropolitan significance, with up to a one year delay in development if the project is found to adversely affect the system.

These standards in the metropolitan significance rules and in the plan amendment guidelines are currently used to determine an effect on or a substantial departure from the Regional Parks System:

- Impacts on the use of Regional Parks System facilities include, but are not limited to traffic, safety, noise, visual obstructions (for example, to scenic overlooks), impaired use of the facilities or interference with the operation or maintenance of the facilities.
- Impacts on natural resources include, but are not limited to, the impact on the level, flow or quality of a facility's water resources (lakes, streams, wetlands, groundwater) and impact on a facility's wildlife populations or habitats (migration routes, breeding sites, plant communities).
- A proposed project is considered to have an impact on the system if it may preclude or substantially limit the future acquisition of land in an area identified in the system plan of the Council's Regional Parks Policy Plan.

**System Protection – Strategy 1: Local comprehensive plans may need to be changed if planned land uses would have a negative impact on current or planned regional park lands or facilities.**

The Council may require plan modifications to local comprehensive plans, updates, or amendments if they:

- will more likely than not have adverse and substantial impacts on the current or future intended uses of the Regional Parks System lands or facilities, or
- are likely to have adverse and substantial impacts on lands that are officially recommended for acquisition in an adopted policy plan

There is a strong case for intervention in situations where potentially adverse land uses are proposed after a site for a Regional Parks System facility has been adopted by the Council in the System Plan section of this policy plan. Local governments will be notified of any changes to the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* following Council adoption of the changes and will be given nine months to bring local plans and ordinances into conformance with the Council's plan.

The Council will review local comprehensive plan amendments and environmental documents to ensure that Regional Parks System sites and facilities are protected from land uses or projects that:

- represent substantial departures from the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, or
- are likely to have a substantial impact on the Regional Parks System

Substantial departures from the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan or impacts on the Regional Parks System may include, but are not limited to:

- Plans that don't acknowledge the presence of the Regional Parks System unit
- Projects that create safety issues for Regional Parks System users
- Projects that impair the use and enjoyment of the Regional Parks System unit due to excessive noise, air pollution or water pollution, and
- Projects that interfere with the operation and maintenance of the Regional Parks System unit

Where appropriate, the Council will initiate or accept for initiation a metropolitan significance review of specific projects if it is necessary to help protect the Regional Parks System. A project that is consistent with a Council-approved local comprehensive plan is exempt from metropolitan significance reviews for metropolitan system effects.

In accordance with the Council's *Thrive* principles, increasing population densities in urban areas is preferable to scattered developments throughout the rural and agricultural areas of the metropolitan region. Increasing population densities adjacent to urban Regional Parks System units is not a detriment to those units if the urban development is designed in ways that are sensitive to areas that enjoy scenic views and the natural features of the Regional Parks System unit, and do not interfere with the operation and maintenance of the unit. The Council will work cooperatively with local governments

to help ensure urban development and land uses in areas adjacent to Regional Parks System units occur in ways that preserve the integrity of the Regional Parks System.

## **System Protection – Strategy 2: Conversion of Regional Parks System lands to other uses**

Lands in the Regional Parks System will only be converted to other uses if approved by the Metropolitan Council through an equally valuable land or facility exchange as defined below:

**“Equally valuable land”** is defined as land that:

- is contiguous to the Regional Parks System unit containing the land proposed to be exchanged (within the same park/trail unit)
- has comparable or better natural resource characteristics, and
- could provide comparable or better recreation opportunities than the land being released from the covenant

In exceptional circumstances, the Metropolitan Council may accept as equally valuable land the addition of land to another unit of the regional parks system where:

- the replacement land has comparable or better natural resource characteristics
- the replacement land has comparable or better recreation opportunities than the land being converted, and
- no other reasonable alternative exists and where all other provisions of this policy can be met

**“Equally valuable facility”** is defined as an exchange of land for facilities when recreational benefits and/or natural resource benefits are increased as a result of the exchange. For example, some land within a regional trail corridor may be exchanged to widen a highway if a highway department constructs a trail overpass or underpass of the widened road at no cost to the regional park implementing agency.

The Metropolitan Council will consider conversion of regional park land to other uses only if the conversion will not harm the Regional Parks System. The following criteria will be used to determine whether regional parks system lands may be exchanged for other land or a facility:

### *Issues with respect to the existing park system unit:*

- Whether the park system unit can continue to meet Council standards for sites and site attributes established for the particular type of park system unit (regional park, park reserve, trail greenway or special recreation feature)
- Whether the park system unit will continue to function as originally planned
- Whether environmental features (wildlife habitat, water quality) will be adversely affected and can be protected with the new use
- Whether the loss of site or function will be made up through acquisition of a site with comparable characteristics adjacent to or in the immediate area of the current location

- Whether the park system unit benefits from a facility in exchange for the parkland
- Whether the need for the conversion, as in the instance of transportation improvements, is generated by the recreational park system unit

*Issues with respect to the alternative use:*

- The land area needs of the proposed project
- Whether the specific site requirements for the proposed project are unique to the area proposed for conversion
- Whether the proposed project is consistent with Council policies
- Whether the proposed project is of greater benefit to the region than having the regional parks system unit remain in place

For those changes that represent a potential system impact, the Council will use a process comparable to the review period for plan amendments that have a potential impact on the regional system. The Council will use an expedited review or conversions such as small exchanges of land to provide right-of-way for access, an expedited review will be used.

Lands in the Regional Parks System may be subject to proposals for converting their use for a number of reasons. Some very limited conversions may be accommodated and still not affect the ability of the remaining area to offer the facilities and services planned. A well-designed transit waiting station or a properly located and operated yard waste compost site could be of positive value to the regional system and can be worked out between the proposing parties, the implementing agencies and the Council in accordance with the system management guidelines.

However, most conversions are likely to detract from the ability to provide the type and quality of outdoor recreation experiences promised in the master plan. Some of the undesirable conversion impacts will be obvious and direct, such as unsightly landscapes or structures, barriers to movement, loud noises, and night light or obnoxious odors. Other conversion impacts are more indirect, such as those that affect water quality and plant and animal life. In addition to adversely affecting the Regional Parks System's ability to deliver service, removal of lands for non-recreation open space uses also sets a bad precedent.

*Restrictive covenants:*

The Metropolitan Council requires that a restrictive covenant must be recorded on all land that has been acquired for the Regional Parks System using regional funds. The restrictive covenant ensures the parkland is used in perpetuity for regional parks system purposes and ensures that there is no sale, lease, mortgage of the parkland or other conveyance, restriction or encumbrance filed against the property unless the Council approves the action in writing and the Council's approval is recorded against the parkland.

The only restrictive covenant amendments approved by the Council in which no land was exchanged were for small strips of land needed for public highway improvements. The land was needed to make

roads safer and there was no alternative. These projects also improved access to the adjacent regional parks system unit.

### **System Protection – Strategy 3: The Council will reimburse regional park implementing agencies for contamination cleanup under certain conditions.**

The Council will consider using Regional Parks System funds for soil contamination cleanup (remediation) or capping abandoned wells that have contaminated their ground water aquifer on Regional Parks System land.

#### **For lands already under regional park implementing agency control:**

A regional park implementing agency may use its share of regional park capital improvement funds for financing soil contamination remediation or capping abandoned wells that have contaminated their ground-water aquifer on regional park land if the following conditions are met:

- The land is already under ownership or control of a regional park implementing agency through a joint powers agreement or lease, and was acquired or was under the regional park implementing agency's control before Phase 1 environmental assessments were required.
- The land is essential to make the regional park or trail function as intended according to a Council-approved master plan, and no reasonable alternative exists to relocate the park or trail facilities elsewhere.
- The park or trail is essential in contributing to strengthening neighborhood livability consistent with *Thrive MSP 2040*.
- The cost of cleanup is not eligible to receive federal or state soil contamination cleanup funds or abandoned well-capping funds from any other program, or funding has been denied.
- The regional park implementing agency has an agreement with the party that will remediate/clean up the contamination or cap an abandoned well that absolves the regional park implementing agency from any future liability of pollution caused by the contaminated soil or contaminated groundwater.

#### **For lands proposed to be acquired by a regional park implementing agency:**

A regional park implementing agency may request a Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant to partially finance soil contamination cleanup (remediation) or capping abandoned wells that have contaminated their ground water aquifer on land that is proposed for acquisition. See Park Acquisition Grant Fund rules in Chapter 5 for further information.

### **System Protection – Strategy 4: Phase 1 Environment Site Assessments must be conducted for land that may be contaminated or that may have abandoned wells prior to seeking regional parks funding for acquisition.**

Regional park implementing agencies must conduct Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments on land that is suspected to be contaminated or land suspected to have abandoned wells as part its due diligence process for land acquisition. The Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment will determine the

likelihood of soil contamination or abandoned wells, including the likelihood of contaminated groundwater aquifers. The findings of the site assessments should be included in the grant request submitted to the Council.

The cost of the Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment is eligible for reimbursement as an acquisition cost.

Prior to the Council determining whether the contaminated land, including lands with abandoned wells, should be part of the regional park or trail corridor, the Council will make findings of fact regarding the following factors:

- The likelihood and extent of the contamination
- Whether the land is essential to make the regional park or trail function as intended according to a Council-approved master plan and the existence of a reasonable alternative to relocate the park or trail facilities elsewhere
- Whether responsible parties have been identified who will remediate the site
- Whether the estimated costs to clean up the contamination or cap the abandoned well(s) outweigh the need versus the recreational, economic and social benefits the regional park or trail would provide

If the Council concludes that the land should be added to the Regional Parks System, this does not imply that the Council will use Regional Parks System funds to clean up the site or cap abandoned wells. Regional Parks System funds will only be used for contaminated soil cleanup or capping abandoned wells if the four preceding conditions have been met.

**System Protection – Strategy 5: Telecommunication towers will only be allowed in regional parks or reserves if there is no alternative site and if mitigation efforts are made to minimize the impact on Regional Parks System lands and users.**

The growth in cellular telephone, personal communication system (PCS) telephone business and implementation of the Metropolitan Emergency Radio System has resulted in requests that Regional Parks System land be leased for antennae towers or that towers be located near Regional Parks System lands. Each of these radio frequency communication systems relies on a grid placement of towers. Co-location of antennae on fewer towers is not always possible, however, because the size of a particular grid varies from one system to another. In addition, co-location of antennas on one tower may not be possible if it causes frequency interference between the antennas. Federal laws allow local governments to regulate the placement of towers as long as there is no ban preventing reasonable market access for that communication system.

Antennae towers for telecommunication services and the Metropolitan Emergency Radio System are generally prohibited on lands within the Council-approved master plan boundaries of a Regional Parks System unit unless:

- The communication system is not able to function without placement of the tower on Regional Parks System land. All other alternatives must be considered for placement within the grid in order to avoid placing any tower on Regional Parks System land. The communication service

provider must demonstrate that this criterion is satisfied in requesting approval by the Council and regional park implementing agency to place a tower on Regional Parks System land. The only exception to this condition is that a tower for the Metropolitan Emergency Radio System may be placed on Regional Parks System land even if it could be placed on private land instead, upon meeting the following mitigation conditions:

- If there is no feasible alternative to placing the tower on park land, the tower's impact on the Regional Parks System land must be minimized.
  - The tower must be screened from view of regional park/trail users as much as possible through tower placement and design features agreed to by the regional park implementing agency.
  - The tower must be located on land that has already undergone regional park or trail development and is accessible through the existing park road system. Land in park reserves or regional parks conserved for habitat restoration and interpretation must be avoided.
- Co-location of antennas on one tower is preferred over constructing several towers if co-location has less visual and other environmental impacts on Regional Parks System land. The only exception to this condition is if co-location would result in frequency interference between antennas.
  - Payments for placing telecommunication towers in regional parks or park reserves should be dedicated to the regional park implementing agency that owns the land for acquisition, redevelopment, development, or operations and maintenance of its Regional Parks System units.

Regional park implementing agencies must submit a master plan amendment to the Council for review that proposes a tower placement. The master plan amendment should state how the conditions listed above have been met. The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and Council will then review the master plan amendment for consistency with the conditions of this policy and either approve, modify or reject the master plan amendment.

If the land for the tower's location has a restrictive covenant on it (required for land acquired with Council bonds), the regional park implementing agency shall amend the covenant to recognize the temporary use of the tower with any conditions required for the tower's lease and submit the amended covenant to the Council as part of the master plan amendment.

The Council will consider the master plan amendment and the restrictive covenant amendment concurrently and either approve or disapprove them, based on whether the tower will negatively impact the Regional Parks System unit. If a regional park implementing agency believes that a tower should not be placed on Regional Parks System land because the tower could not meet the conditions of this policy, the regional park implementing agency has the authority to deny the application.

Tower placement on Regional Parks System land shall be considered a temporary non-recreation use. As stated previously, any lease revenues for the tower easement must be used by the regional park implementing agency to further the acquisition, redevelopment, development or operations/maintenance of that regional park implementing agency's portion of the Regional Parks System. The regional park implementing agency must report the annual lease revenues to the Council

and how the revenues were spent if they exceed \$2,500 per year. Regional park implementing agencies are encouraged to charge “at cost” fees for public safety radio equipment on towers located on Regional Parks System land.

**System Protection – Strategy 6: Regional wastewater conveyance facilities and other utilities on Regional Parks System lands should be placed in ways that minimize negative impact on the regional park, its facilities and its users.**

To provide sanitary sewer services to Regional Parks System facilities and/or to implement the regional wastewater system plan, the Council’s Environmental Services Division will work cooperatively with regional park implementing agencies to locate regional wastewater conveyance facilities on Regional Parks System lands in a manner that minimizes the impact on existing and planned park system facilities and natural resources.

For wastewater conveyance facilities located in existing Regional Parks System facilities, the Council, with the advice of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, shall have the option to purchase an easement or a license.

For new Regional Parks System facilities, the Council reserves the option to include an easement for a future regional wastewater conveyance corridor as a condition of a Council grant used to acquire land, provided that the conveyance is consistent with the Council-approved master plan. If the Council requires an easement for a future regional wastewater conveyance corridor as a condition of its park acquisition grant, the Council will waive the Sewer Availability Charge for that regional park system facility.

To distribute electricity, natural gas, oil and drinking water, it may be necessary to place underground conduits/pipes or aboveground transmission poles/towers on Regional Parks System lands. Such utilities may be needed to serve visitors at that Regional Parks System unit, and to serve other land. Regional park implementing agencies should collaborate with the utility provider to determine where these utilities should be placed that minimizes impacts on the Regional Parks System unit’s natural resources and on its existing and future recreation and visitor support facilities, while providing reasonable access to the utility line for repair and maintenance.

Regional park implementing agencies may either sell or grant an easement or a license to the utility provider that specifies where the utility may be located, conditions for access to the utility, how impacts to the park by placement, repair or relocation of the utility will be mitigated and any time limit on the easement or permit. The utility provider may have to pay for the easement or permit based on the benefit the utility provides to the Regional Parks System unit.

## Chapter Five: Finance

### *Financing the Metropolitan Regional Park System*

Minn. Stat. 473.147, subd. 1, requires the Council – after consultation with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, municipalities, park districts and counties in the metropolitan area – to prepare and adopt a system policy plan for regional recreation open space as part of the Council’s development guide. The law also requires the Council to include a five-year capital improvement program plan in the parks policy plan, which should be revised periodically, and to establish criteria and priorities for allocating funds from the capital improvement program –referred to as the “Regional Parks CIP.”

Minn. Stat. 473.325 allows the Council to issue general obligation bonds for the acquisition and betterment of the Regional Parks System. No more than \$40 million of bond debt can be outstanding at any point in time. Since 1994, the Council has issued on average \$7 million per year of short-term bonds (5 to 10 years) for grants to regional park implementing agencies for land acquisition and capital improvements to the park system.

Minn. Stat. 473.315 authorizes the Council, with the advice of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, to make grants from any funds available to it to the regional park implementing agencies to cover the cost, or any portion of the cost, of acquiring and developing the regional park system in accordance with the parks policy plan. Following are summaries of how these grants are funded and managed:

### **Capital Improvement Program**

The Regional Parks CIP must, in accordance with Minn. Stat. 473.147, include “criteria and priorities for the allocation of funds.” Capital projects proposed for funding must be consistent with a Council-approved master plan. Projects proposed by each regional park implementing agency are prioritized by that agency. Each park agency has unique capital needs, which that park agency can best determine.

State bonds have been appropriated to the Council since 1976 to help finance the parks CIP. Since 1994, the Council has financed the parks CIP with a combination of state bonds and Council bonds. State bonds finance 60% of the parks CIP and Council bonds finance 40%. The premise for this mix of state and regional bonds is that people who live outside the seven-county metropolitan region visit and use the regional park system and should therefore help finance its capital costs. Taxes collected statewide and within the region to pay off the bond debt are proportional to the share of visits to the park system made by people living within the region, and those who live outside the region.

Since 2008, the Metropolitan Council has used a formula to determine how much of the CIP would be allocated to each regional park implementing agency. The formula balances two factors:

- The population within the jurisdiction of each park implementing agency compared to the region’s total population. This factor is weighted 70%.
- The number of visits a park agency hosted from people who live outside the park agency’s jurisdiction (non-local visits). This factor is weighted 30%.

The population factor recognizes the need to provide funds for park capital improvements to serve every person in the region relatively equally. Using non-local visits as a factor recognizes that these regional parks serve a regional and state-wide population. Therefore, a combination of both factors is accounted for in the Regional Parks CIP formula.

The results of this formula determine the amount each regional park implementing agency could request/receive from the Regional Parks CIP. For example, if Anoka County's share of the Regional Parks CIP is 10%, then 10% of appropriations would be granted to Anoka County for its projects in the CIP.

As noted above, the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* must include a five-year capital improvement program plan (Table 5-1). The intent is to outline the funding strategy for the relative near term, such that regional park implementing agencies can use the information in their planning. These figures are subject to change based upon legislative action.

*Table 5-1. Metropolitan Council Six-Year Parks Capital Improvement Plan, 2014-2019 (dollars in 1,000s)*

Sources of Funds	Years						Total
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
State <sup>1</sup>	\$ 31,026	\$ 35,833	\$ 23,325	\$ 25,060	\$ 23,630	\$ 24,107	\$ 162,981
Regional <sup>2</sup>	\$ 9,061	\$ 8,068	\$ 6,083	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 44,212
Other <sup>3</sup>	\$ 80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 80
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$ 40,167</b>	<b>\$ 43,901</b>	<b>\$ 29,408</b>	<b>\$ 32,060</b>	<b>\$ 30,630</b>	<b>\$ 31,107</b>	<b>\$ 207,273</b>

#### Uses of Funds

Preservation (Redevelopment)	\$ 13,034	\$ 15,792	\$ 10,947	\$ 12,737	\$ 12,216	\$ 12,438	\$ 77,164
Expansion (Land Acquisition)	\$ 10,600	\$ 9,113	\$ 7,356	\$ 7,409	\$ 7,464	\$ 7,520	\$ 49,462
Improvements (Development)	\$ 16,533	\$ 18,996	\$ 11,105	\$ 11,914	\$ 10,950	\$ 11,149	\$ 80,647
<b>Total Uses</b>	<b>\$ 40,167</b>	<b>\$ 43,901</b>	<b>\$ 29,408</b>	<b>\$ 32,060</b>	<b>\$ 30,630</b>	<b>\$ 31,107</b>	<b>\$ 207,273</b>

<sup>1</sup> Funds include general obligation bonds issued by the state, Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriations, and Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriations.

<sup>2</sup> Funds include Council general obligation bonds issued by the Council.

<sup>3</sup> Interest earned by the Council. Interest earned must be granted to North Mississippi Regional Park (Laws of Minnesota 1985, First Special Session, Chap. 15, Sec. 5, Subd. 2(b) and Laws of Minnesota 1987, Chapter 384, Article 3, Sec. 45).

The revision of the Council's five-year capital improvement program plan is considered to be a substantial revision to the policy plan and will follow the Council's administrative procedures on amending a policy plan.

## Parks and Trails Legacy Fund

In November 2008, Minnesota citizens approved a constitutional amendment, commonly called the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. The amendment created a new 3/8ths cent sales tax to be collected from July 2009-June 2034. Revenue from the sales tax is placed into four dedicated accounts. One of those accounts is called the Parks and Trails Fund.

The constitutional amendment states:

“...the parks and trails fund...may be spent only to support parks and trails of regional or statewide significance.... The dedicated money under this section must supplement traditional sources of funding for these purposes and may not be used as a substitute.” (Minn. Constitution, art. 11, sec. 15)

Legislation enacted in 2009 directs how money appropriated from the Parks and Trails Fund to the Council is distributed to the regional park implementing agencies under a formula in the legislation (Laws of Minn. 2009, ch. 172, art. 5, sec. 6, subd. 3) The Council awards grants to the regional park implementing agencies based on that formula for projects that support the regional park system.

In 2011, the *Parks and Trails Legacy Plan* was released, outlining the Parks and Trails vision for Minnesotans. The vision states:

*“In 2035, our world class parks and trails connect everyone to the outdoors. They create experiences that inspire a legacy of stewardship for the natural world and they provide fun outdoor recreational opportunities that strengthen friendships, families, health, and spirit, now and into the future. Minnesotans experience the full range of benefits that outdoor recreation provides, reinforcing our identity as an outdoor culture.”*

The Parks and Trails Legacy Plan specifies four strategic directives:

- Connect People and the Outdoors
  - Develop stewards of tomorrow through efforts to increase life-long participation in parks and trails.
- Acquire Land, Create Opportunities
  - Create new and expanded opportunities to serve current and future users.
- Take Care of What We Have
  - Provide safe, high-quality experiences through regular re-investment in infrastructure and natural resource management.
- Coordinate among Partners
  - Enhance coordination among the network of public, private, and nonprofit park and trail partners.

The strategic directions serve as the guidepost for how Parks and Trail Fund dollars should be invested. The Parks and Trails Legacy Plan should be consulted for additional information, specifically regarding particular activities (for example, investments) that are viewed as priorities to implement the Parks and Trails Legacy Plan. As the fiscal agent for the funds, the Council has the responsibility to ensure regional park implementing agencies target the funds to projects that capture the strategic direction outlined in the Parks and Trails Legacy Plan.

To that end, as previously noted in Chapter 4, the Council will identify a *minimum* percentage of Parks and Trails Legacy appropriations that should be used to “connect people and the outdoors.” Once determined and approved by the Council, the Council will require regional park implementing agencies to adhere to the determined minimum level of spending as it applies to their annual share of the Parks and Trails Fund appropriations.

## **Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund**

In 2001, the Council established a Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant program to assist regional park agencies in acquiring land for the Regional Parks System.

The Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund consists of two accounts:

- The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) acquisition account, which is financed with 60% state appropriations from the ENRTF as recommended by the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources. The remaining 40% of the account is financed with bonds issued by the Council.
- The Parks and Trails Legacy Fund (PTLF) acquisition account, which is financed with 60% Parks and Trails Fund appropriations from the Land and Legacy Amendment. The remaining 40% is financed with Council bonds.

### *Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Rules*

#### **Qualifying Lands**

All properties to be acquired must be within Council-approved master plan boundaries.

ENRTF acquisition requests must be intended for acquisitions of undeveloped land with high natural resource values, to comply with Minnesota Constitution art. XI, sec. 14 and Minn. Stat. Ch.116P.

PTLF acquisition requests do not have any restrictions on the condition of lands within Council-approved master plan boundaries.

#### **Qualifying Land Acquisition Costs**

The following items are eligible in calculating the total costs of the acquisition:

- a. Appraisal cost for the acquiring regional park implementing agency or as part of a condemnation settlement/award consistent with applicable provisions of Minn. Stat. ch. 117;
- b. Appraisal review cost needed to verify the value of a land donation, or the value of land obtained via parkland dedication ordinance and subsequently transferred to the regional park implementing agency when other land is obtained from the same landowner;
- c. Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment;
- d. Environmental contamination remediation costs if consistent with the conditions specified in the “Special Circumstances” section below;
- e. Legal services and closing costs to the park agency for costs associated with the purchase or condemnation settlement/award including attorney’s fees, litigation expenses, appraisal fees and

other expert fees consistent with Minn. Stat., sec. 117.031, that the park agency must pay as part of a condemnation action;

- f. State deed tax/Conservation Fee;
- g. Title Insurance;
- h. Pro-rated share of all property taxes/assessments due on the parcel at the time of closing that is borne by the park agency;
- i. 1.8 times the city or township property tax due on the parcel in the year the land is acquired. This is the property tax equivalency payment, which is paid to the city or township at closing pursuant to Minn. Stat., sec. 473.341;
- j. Negotiated purchase price for the parcel or condemnation settlement/award consistent with applicable provisions of Minnesota Statute ch. 117;
- k. Relocation costs to the seller consistent with Minn. Stat. sec. 117.52 and Minn. Stat. sec. 473.315;
- l. Land stewardship costs defined as follows: costs for boundary fencing or marking; stabilizing or rehabilitating natural resources to aid in the reestablishment of threatened natural resources or to prevent non-natural deterioration thereof; preventing the deterioration of structures that will be re-used for park purposes; removal of unneeded structures, dangerous land forms or attractive nuisances including capping abandoned wells as required under Minn. Stat., sec. 103I.301; and closing unneeded road(s) that provided access to the acquired land;
- m. Development of the land to provide minimal access to it for public recreational use as reviewed and approved by the Council in consideration of the grant. Such development must be consistent with the applicable Council-approved master plan and may include the cost of an access road and/or trail, parking lot, and signage;
- n. Interest costs to acquire the land can be counted as part of the park agency's 25% match to the grant. However, the interest costs are not eligible for reimbursement as part of that park agency's share of a future regional parks capital improvement program;
- o. Holding costs incurred by an outside third party that purchased the property to hold on behalf of the park implementing agency; and
- p. Other expenses not listed above that are directly related to the land acquisition.

All costs shall be documented with appropriate information/data and submitted to the Council with the grant request.

### **Grant Request Finance Amounts**

The Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant may finance up to 75% of the costs to acquire land and related costs, or up to \$1.7 million per acquisition account (ENRTF and PTLF acquisition accounts) for each state fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). The regional park implementing agency must finance at least 25% of the acquisition costs as a local match to the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant.

Special circumstances may apply that could alter the amounts delineated above. "Special Circumstances," below, provides additional information.

### **Park Implementing Agency 25% Local Match**

The regional park implementing agency local match may be one or a combination of the following:

- a. Non-state funds and non-Council funds provided by the regional park implementing agency. Regional Park CIP if the cash contribution is financed with a regional park implementing agency money (that is, the agency's general fund or other account), but not with a grant from another entity such as a watershed district or local government aid provided by the state of Minnesota, that contribution is eligible for reimbursement as part of that park agency's share of a future regional parks capital improvement program. Based on this rule, if the maximum grant of \$1.7 million was awarded and the park agency provided a match of \$566,667, any costs incurred by the park agency above the \$566,667 and paid for with park agency funds for grant-eligible expenses, are also eligible for reimbursement consideration from that park agency's share of future metropolitan regional parks capital improvement programs.
- b. The value of a land donation by the seller. The value of the donation is the difference between the agreed upon purchase price based on a certified appraised value of the property and the lower amount the seller agrees to accept as payment for the land.

The certification of the appraised value of the property will be based on a third-party review appraisal, where the third-party appraiser will perform a field review of the appraisal and determine if the appraisal met the requirements of the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraising Practice (USPAP). Both the appraisal and the review appraisal must be submitted to the Council as part of the grant request. The cost of the third-party appraisal review is a grant-eligible item.

- c. The value of land that is obtained by a municipality under its park land dedication ordinance and transferred to a regional park implementing agency under a fee title or permanent easement agreement at the same time that the regional park implementing agency acquires additional land for that park or trail from the same landowner.

The value of the dedicated land is based on a certified appraisal of the property. The certification of the appraised value will be based on a third-party review appraisal, where the third-party appraiser will perform a field review of the appraisal and determine if the appraisal met the USPAP requirements. Both the appraisal and the review appraisal must be submitted to the Council as part of the grant request. The cost of the third-party appraisal review is a grant-eligible item.

### **Grant Term**

The effective term of the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant is no more than 12 months or the expiration date of the state appropriation that finances the grant, whichever is less. A grant may be extended beyond the initial term of 12 months for cause. However the length of the extension cannot exceed the availability of the state funds financing the grant.

## **Special Circumstances**

### *Lack of Available Acquisition Opportunity Funds*

If funds are not available to fully fund a grant during a given fiscal year, up to 60% of the next fiscal year's appropriation and matching Council bonds for Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund accounts will be used to reimburse park agencies for up to 75% of the grant-eligible acquisition costs or \$1.7 million – whichever is less – the park agency incurred to buy land that would have qualified for a Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant under the rules.

The park agency must request reimbursement consideration from the Council by providing all data required for a Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant required by the rules and obtain Council approval before it acquires the land. The 25% match is not grant-eligible for reimbursement from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund accounts. However, the park agency may request reimbursement of that match as part of its share of future park capital improvement programs.

### *Third-party Acquisitions*

When funds are not available in the Acquisition Opportunity Fund accounts, park implementing agencies may choose to work with third parties to acquire Council-approved master plan acquisitions, for which reimbursement from the Council would be pursued when funds are available. In this instance, the Council may consider acquisition with a bonafide deferred closing.

### *Excess of Available Acquisition Opportunity Funds*

One year before the expiration of the state appropriation to each Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant account (that is, PTLF and ENRTF), the Council – in consultation with the regional park implementing agencies and the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission – will conduct a review of these rules to determine if additional steps should be taken to increase the likelihood that the balance of the expiring state appropriation will be granted and spent before its expiration date.

An example of such a step would be to allow a park agency that has received the maximum amount allowed – \$1.7 million from the ENRTF account or \$1.7 million from the PTLF account in a state fiscal year, July 1 to June 30 to be eligible to receive an additional grant. Another step could be that 60 days before a state appropriation's expiration date, that grants are awarded to partially reimburse the local match of grants awarded from the applicable acquisition account that were initially financed with that state appropriation and matching Council bonds.

The total amount of these reimbursement grants would consume the remaining state appropriation and applicable Council bond match. The amount of each reimbursement grant should be proportionate to the local match amount initially funded by each park agency – not with other funding sources the park agency used as their match. These reimbursement grants would only be for grants initially financed from that soon-to-expire state appropriation and applicable Council bond match. If there were still funds remaining, reimbursement grants for the local matches on other acquisitions could be considered that were initially financed from that acquisition account but from an earlier appropriation.

Such variances to the rules for these situations would be considered by the Council without undertaking a public hearing process since the vetting of the changes is made by the park agencies affected by the

proposed change, and the change is only in effect until the expiration of the applicable appropriation for that account.

### *Acquisition Funds Delineated in Capital Improvement Fund*

The requesting regional park implementing agency must use any available acquisition funds from its share of a regional parks capital improvement program provided by the Council or a line-item appropriation of state funds to buy land for a regional park/trail before it can request a grant from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund. A park agency's capital improvement program share that finances a reimbursement grant for the 25% local match to a previous Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant is excluded. The Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant may finance 75% of the gap between the total cost of an acquisition and the amount financed by the park agency's available acquisition funds from its share of a regional parks capital improvement program and/or a line item appropriation of state funds used for that parcel's acquisition.

### *Eminent Domain*

Occasionally a park agency may need to acquire land by exercising its power of eminent domain by initiating a condemnation proceeding. When land is acquired through the condemnation process, a Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant may be awarded; however, a grant is awarded at the end of the condemnation proceeding that is based on 75% of the final settlement/award and associated grant-eligible costs under applicable provisions of Minn. Stat., ch. 117, to acquire the land and within the agency maximum for the fiscal year when the grant is awarded. The park agency should notify the Council prior to filing its petition in condemnation with the district court that it is acquiring land through condemnation and will be requesting a Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant when the final award is determined. The notification to the Council should be in a letter that contains the park agency's authorization to file its petition and the accompanying documents containing its appraisal of the land. In condemnation matters, the final settlement/award and final certificate should be submitted to the Council in lieu of a signed purchase agreement.

### *Environmental Contamination*

Soil contamination remediation necessary to correct pre-existing environmental contamination known at the time of purchase, the remediation effort to the level needed to allow the land to be used for park and recreation purposes, and/or capping abandoned wells that have contaminated their groundwater aquifer are grant-eligible land acquisition expenses under the following conditions:

- 1) The aggregate cost of acquiring the land and remediation does not exceed the certified appraised value of the land at the time of purchase. The certification of the market value of the property will be based on a third-party field review of the appraisal. The appraisal review must determine that the appraisal followed USPAP. The appraisal review must be submitted to the Council.

The cost of the third-party appraisal review is a grant-eligible item. In addition to the certification of the market value of the parcel, the park agency must submit documentation of the costs for remediation as listed below. The difference between the actual acquisition and remediation costs compared to the certified market value of the land prior to clean up may be applied towards the park agency's local match requirement.

- 2) The regional park implementing agency has an agreement with the party that will remediate/clean up the contamination or cap an abandoned well. The agreement will include mutually agreed upon environmental assurances from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency limiting future liability for pollution caused by the contaminated soil or contaminated groundwater and follow guidance set by the Minnesota Department of Health for sealing unused wells, if appropriate.

Grant-eligible expenses for soil remediation and well capping include:

- a. Costs to prepare Phase 1 and Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessments, the Quality Assurance Project Plan, Remediation Action Plan and the Environmental Engineer's Estimate
- b. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Voluntary Investigation Cleanup (VIC) service charges
- c. Costs to implement the remediation action plan and secure appropriate assurances from the MPCA, and
- d. Other costs not listed above which are directly related to soil remediation or well capping

Documentation of these remediation costs plus other costs associated with the acquisition must be submitted to the Council as part of the grant request.

#### *Subdivision of Lots*

For parcels that can be subdivided into lots and the value of those lots is used to determine the fair market value of the parcel, such acquisitions may qualify for financing from both the ENRTF account and PTLF account. For example, lot(s) must contain high-quality natural resources without structures to qualify for ENRTF financing, and lot(s) that do not contain high-quality natural resources or have structures on them qualify for PTLF financing. The amount from each account shall be proportional to the appraised market value of the lots. However, the Council may grant additional funds from the PTLF account to finance a portion of the costs of land that qualifies for financing from the ENRTF account if there is not sufficient money in the ENRTF account to fully fund the grant.

#### **Operations and Maintenance**

Regional park implementing agencies raise funds to finance the costs to operate and maintain their portion of the regional park system through the following sources:

- Fees collected from people using their parks. Examples include vehicle entrance fees, picnic shelter rentals, recreational equipment rentals, room rentals at visitor centers, and tuition for educational programs.
- Local property taxes.
- Local Government Aid payments from the State of Minnesota.

In 1985, legislation was enacted that allowed state appropriations from the General Fund to be disbursed to regional park implementing agencies to supplement funding for operating and maintaining their portion of the Regional Parks System (Minn. Stat. 473.351).

State appropriations for regional park system operations and maintenance are distributed to regional park implementing agencies according to the following formula:

- 40% based on each agency's proportion of total regional system visits;
- 40% based on each agency's proportion of total regional system operation and maintenance expenditures in the previous calendar year; and,
- 20% based on each agency's proportion of total regional system acreage, with park reserve resource management lands divided by four.

In 2000, legislation was enacted that directed a portion of state lottery proceeds into a "natural resources fund," with the stipulation that a portion of the receipts deposited "may be spent only on metropolitan park and trail grants." This funding source is commonly called "lottery in lieu of sales tax" revenue (Minn. Stat. 297A.94(e)(3)). The Council disburses the appropriations from these two sources to the regional park implementing agencies based on the results of the formula contained in Minn. Stat. 473.351.

Table 5-2 illustrates the amount of appropriations disbursed to the regional park implementing agencies in relation to the total costs to operate and maintain the Regional Parks System from 1985 to 2013.

### Pass-through Grants Financed with State Bonds

Some state bonding legislation appropriates funds for specific capital improvements to the regional park system that are passed-through the Council to the specified regional park implementing agency. These appropriations are typically for projects that have state-wide significance, for example appropriations to improve the Como Zoo and Marjorie McNeely Conservatory.

*Table 5-2. Percent of Regional Park System Operations and Maintenance (O & M) Expenses Covered by State Appropriations, 1985-2013*

<b>Calendar Year (State Fiscal Year)</b>	<b>O &amp; M Appropriation</b>	<b>Park Agency's O &amp; M Expenses (1985-2013)</b>	<b>Percent of O &amp; M Expenses Covered by State Appropriation</b>
1985/(1986)	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 19,091,548	10.5%
1986/(1987)	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 22,656,187	8.8%
1987/(1988)	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 24,595,929	8.1%
1988/(1989)	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 26,461,148	7.6%
1989/(1990)	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 29,294,759	6.8%
1990/(1991)	\$ 2,817,000	\$ 31,107,785	9.1%
1991/(1992)	\$ 2,759,000	\$ 32,076,220	8.6%
1992/(1993)	\$ 2,356,000	\$ 33,453,546	7.0%
1993/(1994)	\$ 2,238,000	\$ 35,646,465	6.3%
1994/(1995)	\$ 2,238,000	\$ 37,928,496	5.9%
1995/(1996)	\$ 2,238,000	\$ 40,158,254	5.6%
1996/(1997)	\$ 2,238,000	\$ 41,322,602	5.4%
1997/(1998)	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 44,338,618	6.8%
1998/(1999)	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 49,242,255	6.1%
1999/(2000)	\$ 4,500,000	\$ 50,748,152	8.9%

2000/(2001)	\$ 9,695,105	\$ 54,801,219	17.7%
2001/(2002)	\$ 7,865,716	\$ 60,595,484	13.0%
2002/(2003)	\$ 8,009,857	\$ 63,587,498	12.6%
2003/(2004)	\$ 7,452,000	\$ 66,825,266	11.2%
2004/(2005)	\$ 7,353,000	\$ 70,124,610	10.5%
2005/(2006)	\$ 7,870,000	\$ 77,584,716	10.1%
2006/(2007)	\$ 7,870,000	\$ 80,326,028	9.8%
2007/(2008)	\$ 8,620,000	\$ 85,009,472	10.1%
2008/(2009)	\$ 8,620,000	\$ 85,230,866	10.1%
2009/(2010)	\$ 8,794,000	\$ 86,239,884	10.2%
2010/ (2011)	\$ 8,854,000	\$ 88,223,782	10.0%
2011/ (2012)	\$ 8,540,000	\$ 95,286,344	9.0%
2012/ (2013)	\$ 8,540,000	\$ 95,988,444	8.9%
2013/ (2014)	\$ 8,540,000	\$ 94,485,576	9.0%
<b>Totals / Average Percent</b>	<b>\$ 154,007,678</b>	<b>\$ 1,622,431,153</b>	<b>9.5%</b>

### Donations from Private Sector

Private sector donations have been critical to match and leverage public sector financing of land acquisition and capital improvements for the Regional Parks System. Foundations of several park implementing agencies and “friends of parks or trails” organizations were the facilitator of these donations. No estimate of those donations is provided here. However, some examples include:

- Donation by Marjorie McNeely for capital improvements and a maintenance endowment for the Como Conservatory, which was renamed the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory in her honor
- Donations by individuals and corporations for improvements to Harriet Island Regional Park. Bricks and plaques honor those contributors
- Donation of land for Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park facilitated by the now defunct Regional Parks Foundation of the Twin Cities

### Estimated Costs to Complete the System

State law requires that the *Regional Parks Policy Plan* estimate the cost of the recommended acquisitions and development of the park system, including an analysis of what portion of the funding is proposed to come from the state and Council levies, and other local government units (Minn. Stat. 473.147, subd. 1). The following analysis is an estimate of funding required to complete the system.

Table 5-3 provides cost estimates for existing regional parks and trails open to the public, planned regional parks and trails, regional park search areas, regional trail search corridors, and 2040 additions to the system. The associated estimated costs for each are described below.

The cost estimate for existing regional parks and trails open to the public include costs associated with acquisition of inholdings and future development. In order to produce the estimates, data were gathered from Council-approved master plans. In 2014, a total of 2,407 acres and 29 trail miles were inholding properties. The estimate to acquire inholding properties for both parks and trails total \$59.3 million, while development costs total \$187.7 million. A total estimate for future acquisition and development of existing regional parks and trails opened to the public totals \$247 million.

The cost estimate for planned regional parks or trails – those park or trail units that have a Council-approved master plan but are not open to the public as of 2015 – include costs associated with acquisition of inholdings and future development. In order to produce the estimates, data were gathered from Council-approved master plans. In 2014, inholding properties totaled 2,739 acres and 222 trail miles. The estimate to acquire inholding properties for both parks and trails total \$36.4 million, while development costs total \$227.8 million. A total estimate for future acquisition and development of planned regional parks or trails totals \$264.2 million.

The cost estimate for regional park search areas also includes costs associated with acquisition of inholdings and future development. The estimates for these were gathered from the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. Inholding properties totaled 7,546 acres, with an associated acquisition cost of \$38.5 million. The estimated costs to develop the regional park search areas total \$26.3 million. A total estimate for future acquisition and development of regional parks search areas is \$64.8 million.

The cost estimate for regional trail search corridors were also gathered from *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. Inholding properties totaled 1,745 acres and 479 trail miles, with an associated acquisition cost of \$19.4 million. The estimated costs to develop the Regional Park Search Areas total \$211.8 million. A total estimate for future acquisition and development of regional trail search corridors is \$231.2 million.

The cost estimate for the 2040 additions to the system were calculated based on data provided by the regional park implementing agencies. The new trail search corridors, comprising 111 miles, will require approximately 400 additional acres. The cost to acquire the land is estimated to be \$4.6 million, while development costs total \$49.6 million. In sum, the cost to acquire and develop the 2040 additions to the system is estimated to total \$54.2 million.

The entire system as completed – including inholdings, planned regional parks and trails, regional park search areas, and regional trail search corridors – would require an additional 14,836 acres to be acquired and 850 trail miles. The associated costs are estimated to be \$158.2 million for acquisition and \$703.3 million for development, totaling \$861.4 million to complete the system.

*Table 5-3. Estimated Acquisition and Development Costs for Regional Parks System 2015-2040 (2014 dollars)*

<b>Category</b>	<b>New Acreage</b>	<b>New Trail Mileage</b>	<b>Acquisition Cost</b>	<b>Development Cost</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Existing Regional Parks and Trails Open to the Public (acquisition of inholdings and future development) <sup>a</sup>	2,407	39	\$59.3 M	\$187.7 M	\$247.0 M
Planned Regional Parks and Trails (Council-approved master plan, not yet open to the public) <sup>a</sup>	2,739	222	\$36.4 M	\$227.8 M	\$264.2 M
Regional Park Search Areas [Update from 2010 plan] <sup>b</sup>	7,546	N/A	\$38.5 M	\$26.3 M	\$ 64.8 M
Regional Trail Search Corridors <sup>c</sup>	1,745	479	\$19.4 M	\$211.8 M	\$ 231.2 M
2040 Additions to the System (Regional Trail Search Corridors) <sup>d</sup>	400	111	\$4.6 M	\$49.6 M	\$54.2 M
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>14,836</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>\$158.2 M</b>	<b>\$703.3 M</b>	<b>\$861.4 M</b>

M=million

Data Source:

<sup>a</sup> Master plans.

<sup>b</sup> 2030 Parks Policy Plan for "New Units" and "Completing the System".

<sup>c</sup> Master plans of comparable trails.

<sup>d</sup> Estimates from regional park implementing agencies

## Chapter Six: Management Procedures

### *Amending the Policy Plan*

The Council will amend the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* only for a substantial revision. A substantial revision is defined by the Council as (1) a proposed revision that is intended to or could have the effect of changing the direction or intent of adopted Council policy; (2) addition or deletion of a policy; or (3) addition or deletion of a system element.

An amendment request initiated by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission should include documentation to substantiate that it constitutes a substantial revision as defined here. A Council decision to amend the plan on its own initiative or that of the Commission will be preceded by a finding that a substantial revision is proposed. When amending the policy plan, the Council will conduct a public hearing in accordance with Minn. Stat. 473.147 and adopted Council policy.

### *Updating the Policy Plan*

Minnesota law requires the Council to conduct a comprehensive review of the Regional Parks Policy Plan at least every four years (Minn. Stat. 473.147). However, over a four-year period, changes occur in population, acquisition, development, and system use. Updating the data and factual information to keep the policy current with new trends and conditions is not a substantial revision to the policy plan, and will be accomplished through the ordinary process of consideration and approval by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, the appropriate Council committee, and the full Council. The regional park implementing agencies will receive formal notice of any proposed update prior to consideration by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission.

### *System Plan*

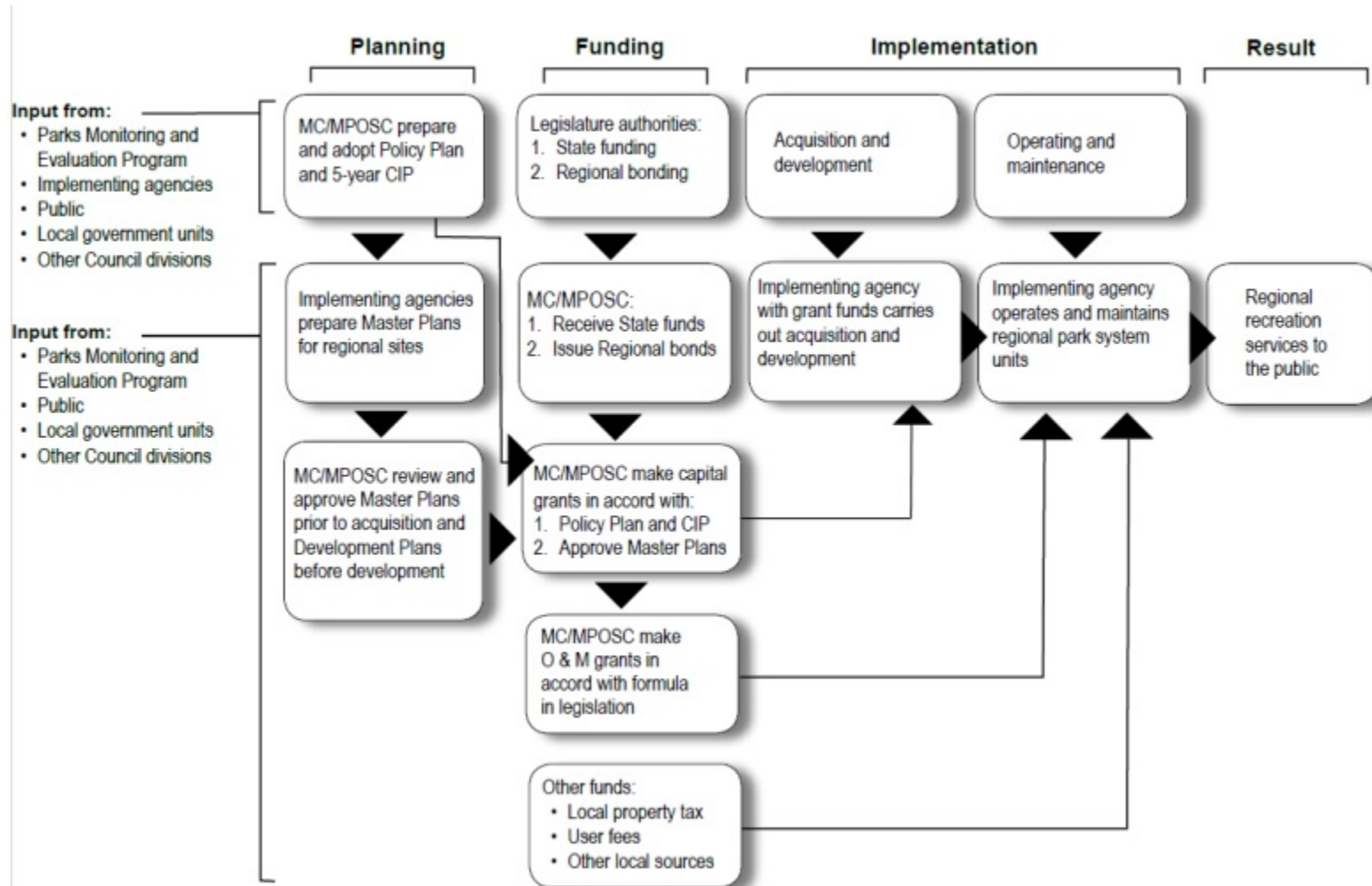
The Council has the responsibility to prepare a system plan for the Regional Parks System. The system planning process begins with the Council identifying “generally the areas which should be acquired,” as required by the 1974 Metropolitan Parks Act. The Regional Parks Policy Plan includes the system plan, which identifies the regional parks and trails that are included in the Regional Parks System.

The Council reviews the system plan portion of the Regional Parks Policy Plan every four years as part of the policy plan revision process and may add or delete planned elements to the system. Additions or deletions to the system proposed outside the regular plan review process are substantial revisions to the policy plan. Identification of specific boundaries and detailed planning for individual units of the system are addressed in master plans for each unit. The master plans are prepared by the regional park implementing agencies.

Minn. Stat. 473.351 limits regional parks funding to regional park implementing agencies and defines them to be as the counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Ramsey, Scott and Washington; the City of St. Paul, the City of Bloomington, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; and the Three Rivers Park District.

Figure 6-1 shows the Regional Parks System process. Regional park implementing agencies prepare a master plan for each Regional Parks System component within their respective jurisdiction consistent with the Council's Regional Parks Policy Plan, These master plans are reviewed by the Council for consistency with the system plan and, when approved by the Council, constitute an element of the system plan.

Figure 6-1. Regional Parks System Process



## *Regional Parks System Capital Improvement Program Process*

The Regional Parks CIP is one component of the Council's unified Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The unified CIP process includes several elements. It ranks projects across the system based on three factors: first, consistency with Council finance policy and strategies outlined in this policy plan; second, relationship to applicable state law regarding the allocation of funds among the regional park agencies; and third, ranking of those projects within each regional park agency's allocation.

The ranked project list in the CIP then serves as the basis for requesting legislative funding for the biennium. A draft funding request for state bonds is due in June and a final request is due in September preceding the second year of the legislative biennium.

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, working with the regional park implementing agencies, initiates the annual process of revising the CIP. The Commission reviews requests from the regional park implementing agencies based on consistency with policies in this policy plan, applicable state law regarding the allocation of funds among the regional park agencies, and the relative share of each regional park implementing agencies share the funding request. The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission will recommend a ranked list of projects to approve as a funding request for the Regional Parks portion of the Unified CIP, which is the capital improvement program for the entire Council.

After state bond appropriations have been authorized, the Council adopts amendments to the current year of the Council's Unified Capital Budget (CB), which award grants proposed for funding in the Unified CIP. Projects financed with state bonds and matched with Metropolitan Council bonds will follow applicable rider language of that appropriation and applicable Council policy requirements in the finance section of this plan.

The amendment to the Unified CB identifies which projects from the CIP are funded and the level of funding by revenue source. Adopting amendments to the Unified CB to award grants that had been proposed in the Unified CIP is not a substantial revision to the policy plan provided that all projects are consistent with the Unified CIP. Projects that are not consistent with the Unified CIP (for example, a project that was not in the CIP and is proposed to replace one that is, or to change the funding level from one project to another) will be reviewed by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission based on the project's consistency with the finance policy and strategies outlined in this policy plan and applicable state law and subsequently make a recommendation to the Council.

## *Regional Parks System Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Process*

The process for distributing appropriations from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund follows a process similar to that described above. There are important distinctions to make, however. First, a funding request for Park and Trails Legacy Fund appropriations is due to the state in October preceding the first year of the legislative biennium. Projects financed with appropriations from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund will follow applicable rider language of that appropriation and Council policy requirements in the finance section of this plan. Similar to

Capital Improvement Program dollars, the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriations are incorporated into the Unified Capital Budget and Unified Capital Improvement Plan.

### *Negotiated Purchase*

Acquisition of land is costly and limited public funds must be used wisely. It is sometimes necessary to acquire land through condemnation, which can be a long and costly process. Whenever possible, regional park implementing agencies must make negotiated purchases based on appraisals by qualified appraisers to minimize the need for condemnation.

### *State Bond Declarations*

The commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB), through an order dated August 26, 2010, requires a state bond declaration to be recorded on the land that is acquired or improved with the state bonds. The declaration states that any lease or sale of the improved land must be approved by the commissioner of MMB while the declaration is in effect.

The declaration must be in effect for 125% of the useful life of the improvement on the land that was financed with the state bonds. For example, if state bonds were used to build a picnic shelter, and the picnic shelter has a useful life of 20 years, the declaration on the land where the picnic shelter is located would be in effect for 125% of 20 years, which is 25 years. If the land is to be sold before the state bonds are paid off that financed the improvement, the MMB will ask for a pro-rated refund of the state bonds that financed the grant.

To comply with the law, the Council will work with regional park implementing agencies on drafting declarations for each grant and will record them with the applicable land records office. A copy of the recorded bond declaration will be part of the Council's land records and part of MMB's records. A portion of the bond proceeds for the grant will pay the recording fee since this is a stipulation of using the state bonds and is ultimately the responsibility of the Council to ensure compliance with the law.

### *Stewardship*

Use of Council grant funds is limited to the costs of acquisition and/or development of the Regional Parks System unit consistent with the Council-approved master plan. Grants for acquisition pay for the cost of real estate, relocation assistance, special assessments existing at the time land was designated for the regional system, land stewardship and legal fees and appraisals. Land stewardship is defined as boundary fencing or marking; stabilizing or rehabilitating natural resources to aid in reestablishing threatened natural resources or to prevent non-natural deterioration thereof; preventing the deterioration of existing structures; removal of unneeded structures, dangerous land forms or attractive nuisances; maintaining or closing existing roads; and developing the unit to support minimal recreational use, including access roads, parking lots, signage and restrooms until capital improvement funds are available to develop the Regional Parks System unit.

### *Special Assessments*

Special assessments may be levied against parkland after its designation for the Regional Parks System. Such assessments are legitimate and grant-eligible when they are for benefits

conferred on the park that are consistent with the Council-approved master plan. To encourage prompt payment of special assessments by the regional park implementing agency, regional funds will not be used for penalties and interest charges resulting from late payments unless the regional park implementing agency has requested funds from the Council to pay the special assessments and did not receive them.

Under the provisions of Minn. Stat. 473.334:

...the governing body [charging the assessment] shall not consider any use of the property other than as regional recreation open space property at the time that the special assessment is determined. The Metropolitan Council shall not be bound by the determination of the governing body of the city but may pay a lesser amount, as agreed upon by the Metropolitan Council and the governing body of the city, as they determine is the measure of benefit to the land for the improvement.

This statute does not pertain to assessments on Bald Eagle-Otter Lake Regional Park land located in White Bear Township. Special assessments on that park are governed by Minn. Stat. 435.19.

If a regional park implementing agency challenges a special assessment to determine the measure of benefit to the regional park unit, regional funds may be used to pay the assessment and for any penalties and interest incurred during the time of challenging the assessment, as well as for the regional park implementing agency's legal costs in challenging the assessment if agreed to previously by the Council.

### *Payment in Lieu of Local Property Taxes*

Under the provisions of Minn. Stat. 473.341, 180% of the property taxes due to the city or township are paid when land is acquired for the Regional Parks System. This provides a financial cushion to the city or township for the loss of tax base. The payment in lieu of taxes is an eligible land acquisition grant expenditure.

### *Revenue from Nonrecreational Uses*

Lands acquired with regional funds are to be used for Regional Parks System purposes. On occasion, usually during but not limited to a period prior to development, land may be used in various other ways. The Council has defined the following nonrecreational uses as consistent with Regional Parks System purposes:

- Sale of buildings, equipment or materials acquired with land
- Rent or lease of buildings to protect structures or secure services for the park, and
- Rent or lease of land for park benefits

All uses of this kind must be consistent with the Council-approved master plan. Revenue that regional park implementing agencies receive from such uses may be used in regional park lands for land stewardship or for the capital costs of providing recreation opportunities. Otherwise they will be returned to the Council. Any other use requires prior Council consent.

Revenue from recreation uses in Regional Parks System units consistent with the Council-approved master plan shall be used for park purposes as determined by the regional park implementing agency. Revenues generated by nonrecreational uses in regional park lands, consistent with a Council-approved master plan, shall be used in regional park lands either for stewardship or for the capital costs of providing regional recreation opportunities, unless the Council consents to another use.

Regional park implementing agencies shall make an annual report of such revenues when their revenues exceed an amount determined by the Council (\$2,500 per year). Unused nonrecreational revenues will be returned to the Council by the end of the year succeeding the one in which they are earned.

### *Enterprise Activities*

Regional parks, park reserves and special features may contain enterprise-fund recreation facilities that are compatible with the natural-resource base of the unit and do not conflict with the primary recreation uses of the park unit. Enterprise-fund recreation facilities include any facility that is expected to generate sufficient revenues to pay its own costs, such as golf courses, downhill ski areas, and water parks. These facilities are not eligible for regional park funds from the Council because enterprise-fund recreation facilities are expected to raise money for their development and operation in the same way as their private sector counterparts.

### *Equal Access*

Development financed with regional funds and subsequent park operation must be carried out in a manner consistent with this policy plan, whether the land was acquired with regional funds or not. Development grant contract agreements require the regional park implementing agency to operate and maintain the facility so as to provide access to all persons in the region as described in the Council-approved master plan.

### *Design Plans*

When master plans are first approved by the Council, it is often true that large or complex recreation facilities are only conceptually described. When development of a particular recreation facility within a regional system component is imminent and when funds allocated in the CIP are available, the regional park implementing agency may request a grant.

Upon Council approval, the regional park implementing agency may use an agreed-upon portion of the allocated amount to prepare construction documents through what is generally defined as the design development phase of the project. If preferred, the regional park implementing agency may proceed with design in advance of a grant and request reimbursement consideration in a future CIP by following the reimbursement policy in this policy plan. The remainder of the grant will be used to construct the project after the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission has reviewed the nature, scope and cost of the project for consistency with the Council-approved master plan and the regional CIP.

The Council will make development grants to regional park implementing agencies as follows:

- Development grants will be made for improvements such as recreational buildings, utilities, roads, parking and landscaping in regional parks, park reserves, trail corridors and special-use areas.
- Development grants may be made for natural resource rehabilitation within park reserves and conservation zones of regional parks.
- The costs of preparing and executing construction documents for development are grant-eligible, including consultations with natural resource professionals to ensure the development does not adversely affect the park system unit's natural resource features.
- The Council may approve development grants before the preparation of construction documents for a project. Construction of such a project will not proceed until the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission has been made fully aware of the nature, scope and estimated complete cost as determined in the design development phase of the process.
- Agency-wide improvements by regional park implementing agencies are grant-eligible expenses. When such eligible improvements are also used for other than regional park purposes, the regional funding will be on a negotiated, pro-rated basis.

### *Closing Grants*

Financial transactions of Regional Parks System grants are reported through grant reimbursement forms requesting funds to reimburse the park agency for grant eligible expenses, which are audited by the Council. A final report is generated by the regional park implementing agency. A final audit is conducted when the project is completed.

Under the terms of the agreements, grant agreements are to be "closed" once all grant-eligible work has been completed and paid for with grant funds. If there are any unspent funds from the grant after the project is completed, the regional park implementing agency must contact the Council to determine whether the scope of the grant can be amended. This does not apply to Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grants.

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission will review the grant scope amendment request for consistency with the Council-approved master plan for that project and/or other Council policy applicable to the request. Council approval is required to amend the scope of a grant. Legislative approval may be required to amend the scope of a Parks and Trails Legacy grant.

It is in the interest of the Council and the regional park implementing agencies to close out completed projects in a timely manner and free up unspent funds for other projects within the timeline of the state appropriation that initially funded the grant or a portion of the grant. Any unspent state funds and matching Council bonds that financed the grant are no longer available for the project. The undisbursed funds are retained by the state or the Council.

### *Executing Minor Amendments to Grant Agreements*

To maximize the efficiency of the work of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Council, the Council has authorized its regional administrator or his/her designee to

execute minor amendments to Regional Parks System grant agreements if such amendments meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The amendment is consistent with the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.
- The amendment does not change the intent of the grant agreement in any essential respect.
- The amendment extends the duration of the grant agreement within the timeline permitted under the applicable funding source for the grant.
- The amendment clarifies the Council's intent in entering the agreement.
- The amendment does not change the total amount of the grant.
- The amendment reflects changes officially adopted by the Council in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.
- The amendment is required under terms of the contract the Council has with the state agency that transmits state funds for the grant agreements.
- The amendment reflects changes officially adopted by the Council in Council policies or procedures (for example, changes in affirmative action plans or grant management procedures).
- The amendment executes restrictive covenants on land acquired with regional funds or releases restrictive covenants to permit another land use compatible with the park (for example, widening a county road that also provides access to the adjacent park).

### *Annual Legislative Reports on Parks and Trails Fund Expenditures*

Laws of Minn. 2009, ch. 172, art. 3, sec. 3(b) requires the Council to submit an annual report on the use and expenditure of Parks and Trails Fund appropriations it receives by March 1. The annual report must detail the outcomes, which are identified and specified in grant applications. The outcomes identified shall be relevant to the type of project undertaken and the associated Parks and Trails Legacy Plan four strategic pillars, previously discussed.



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**Environmental Policy Board (EPB)**

**6. 1.**

**Meeting Date:** 04/17/2017

**By:** Chris Anderson, Community  
Development

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**Information**

**Title:**

Comprehensive Plan Update Workshop

**Action:**

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**Attachments**

[Workshop Invitation](#)

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**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Tim Gladhill

Form Started By: Chris Anderson

Final Approval Date: 04/13/2017

**Reviewed By**

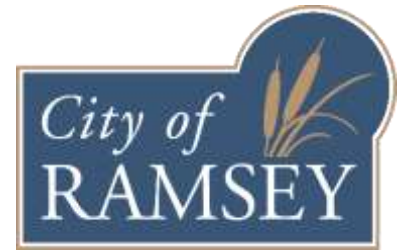
Tim Gladhill

**Date**

04/13/2017 10:52 AM

Started On: 04/12/2017 06:12 PM

# Ramsey2040 Comprehensive Plan Update



## Workshop #3 Economic Development Plan Natural Resources Plan

How can we add value to our economic development program and natural resources plan?

Join us in developing plans for future economic development (new businesses, job growth) and natural resources. This is part of an ongoing series related to the city's Comprehensive Plan.

Draft materials, goals, and maps can be found online at [www.cityoframsey.com/ramsey2040](http://www.cityoframsey.com/ramsey2040).

You can also provide input at [www.facebook.com/ramsey2040](https://www.facebook.com/ramsey2040).

Please RSVP at  
[cityoframsey.com/ramsey2040](http://cityoframsey.com/ramsey2040)

Ramsey Municipal Center  
Alexander Ramsey Room  
7550 Sunwood Dr NW

**Event:** Workshop #3

**Date:** June 12, 2017

**Time:** 5:30 p.m to 8:00 p.m.

**For more information:**

763-433-9824

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