



City of Farmington

430 Third Street
Farmington, Minnesota
651.280.6800 - Fax 651.280.6899
www.ci.farmington.mn.us

Farmington Parks and Recreation Commission

Wednesday, April 12, 2017

7:00 PM City Hall Council Chambers

Agenda

- I. Call Meeting to Order**
- II. Approve Meeting Agenda**
- III. Approve Meeting Minutes**
 - A.** Approve March 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes
- IV. Presentations**
 - A.** Recognition of Past Commission Member Mike Haley
- V. Discussion Items**
 - A.** Review 2017 Work Plan
 - B.** Draft Park Improvement Fund Financial Planning
 - C.** City Council Park Tour
 - D.** Empire Township Park and Recreation Commission Parks Tour
 - E.** 2040 Comprehensive Plan's Park, Recreation and Open Space Chapter
- VI. Commission Roundtable**
 - A.** Roundtable Format
- VII. Staff Report/Updates**
 - A.** Informational Updates
- VIII. Meeting Agenda Topics**
 - A.** May 10, 2017 Agenda Topics

IX. Adjournment

"The Farmington Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission's mission is to advise and make recommendations to the Farmington City Council concerning the comprehensive planning of the City parks, trails, open space, recreation facilities and recreation programs."



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TO: Farmington Parks and Recreation Commission Members
FROM: Randy Distad, Parks and Recreation Director
SUBJECT: Approve March 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes
DATE: April 12, 2017

BACKGROUND

Attached are draft March 8, 2017 meeting minutes. Commission members should review the meeting minutes for accuracy, and if they are inaccurate, share revisions prior to approval of the minutes.

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	Description
 Exhibit	Draft March 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Farmington Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

Minutes from the March 8, 2017 Regular Meeting

Members Present: Laurie Suchanek, Hannah Simmons, David McMillen, John Moore and Dustin Johnson

Members Absent: None

Other's Present: Recreation Supervisor Missie Kohlbeck and Parks and Recreation Director Randy Distad

I. Call Meeting To Order

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Quorum was present.

II. Approval of March 8, 2017 Meeting Agenda

Moved by McMillen and seconded by Moore to approve the amended meeting agenda with the presentation item of Mike Haley recognition pulled because he was unable to attend. All persons in favor (APIF). Motion carried.

III. Approval of February 8, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes were approved with no revisions noted.

IV. Presentations

A. Introduction of New Commission Members

Laurie Suchanek and Hannah Simmons introduced themselves as the newest members of the Commission.

B. 2016 Park and Recreation Department Annual Report

Director Distad and Recreation Supervisor Kohlbeck presented information that highlighted the following Department accomplishments in 2016:

- Troy Hill Park playground replacement
- Tamarack Park basketball court resurfacing project
- North Creek Park hockey board replacement project that included a partnership with the Farmington Youth Hockey Association
- Outdoor skating rinks usage
- Trail maintenance
- Outdoor pool attendance and projects
- Schmitz Maki Arena program and event participation, ice rentals and improvement projects
- Recreation programs offered and participation numbers
- Events offered and attendance at the events
- The number of people and hours community volunteers provided for recreation programs
- Puppet wagon project
- Rambling River Center number of volunteers and hours volunteered in helping with building operations, programs, events and fundraisers
- Rambling River Center program participation
- Rambling River Center memberships sold
- Rambling River Center Advisory Board member recognition and accomplishments
- Park and Recreation Commission member recognition and accomplishments

V. Business Items

A. Approve Selection of Prairieview Park Playground Equipment

Commission members reviewed seven proposals submitted by six vendors. After comparing the proposals to the selection criteria, the Little Tikes Commercial playground equipment seemed to have the most unique features and offered the most play value when compared to other proposals submitted. Moved by Simmons and seconded by Moore to recommend to the City Council the purchase of the Little Tikes Commercial playground equipment that was proposed by Northland Recreation for Prairieview Park. APIF. Motion carried.

B. Approve Selection of Prairieview Park Shelter

Commission members reviewed three different park shelter proposals. After comparing the proposals to the selection criteria, the Polygon shelter proposal was the largest shelter proposed and therefore had the lowest per square foot cost of the three proposals based on all three proposals estimated costs being \$35,000.00. Moved by McMillen and seconded by

Suchanek to recommend to the City Council the purchase of the Poligon shelter that was proposed by Northland Recreation for Prairieview Park. APIF. Motion carried.

C. Commission Member Photo

Commission members gathered for a group photo that will be posted on the Commission's webpage that is contained on the city's website.

VI. Discussion Items

A. Review 2017 Annual Work Plan

Chair Johnson reviewed the 2017 Annual Work Plan and identified items having been completed since the plan was approved in January. Director Distad shared he would update the document to show which items have been completed based on the discussion that occurred and will include the updated document in the next meeting packet.

B. City Council Parks and Recreational Facilities Tour

The Commission discussed and determined it would like to have the tour on Wednesday, August 9 starting at 6:00 p.m. so it fell on a regular Commission meeting night and the tour started early enough to allow for the tour to be completed in daylight.

The Commission discussed possible park and recreational facilities to tour. Based on the past practice of touring parks that have received recent improvements along with future parks that have been identified for improvements, the following parks were identified for possible inclusion in the tour:

Pine Knoll Park

Fair Hills Park

Troy Hill Park

Prairie Pines Park

Marigold Park

The Commission also discussed possible recreational facilities to tour and determined that the Rambling River Center and Schmitz-Maki Arena were the two preferred facilities to tour with the City Council. Commission members expressed an interest in having further discussion about the tour during the April 2017 meeting.

VII. Commission Roundtable

Johnson: Welcomed members Simmons and Suchanek to the Commission.

Moore: Welcomed members Simmons and Suchanek to the Commission. Asked if a couple of play pieces could be added to the playground equipment that are more accessible. Distad shared he could ask, but it would increase the price of the equipment.

McMillen: Reminded everyone about the Pond and Park Clean-Up Day event that was occurring on Saturday, April 29, 2017 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. and encouraged other Commission members to volunteer and get involved with this event.

Simmons: Thanked everyone for a warm welcome.

Suchanek: Didn't have anything to share.

VIII. Staff Report

A. 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Shared the city has gone through a Request for Proposal process to hire a consultant to help with writing the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. There were three proposals submitted and staff are in the process of scoring and selecting one consulting firm to be recommended to the City Council to hire for this work.

B. Prairie Pines and Marigold Park Master Plans

Shared both master plans were approved by the City Council at the March 6, 2017 meeting.

C. Recreation Supervisor Position

Informed Commission members that Ryan Hayes started in this position on Monday, March 6 and he will be invited to attend a future meeting to meet Commission members.

D. Vermillion River Bank Stabilization and Habitat Restoration Project

Shared the city and the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization partnered on a grant application and were awarded \$255,000.00 to address erosion issues that have occurred over the years in Rambling River Park. The erosion has caused the river to move quite close to the trail in several locations. The project will adjust the channel further away from the trail and at the same time stabilizing the bank of the river so it doesn't erode away in the future. This project will cause the trail to be closed in July and August when the project work will be completed. After the project work in the river is finished, the trail section will be removed and replaced at an estimated cost of just under \$30,000.00.

IX. April 12, 2017 Meeting Agenda Items

The following items were identified by Commission members for its December 10, 2014 meeting agenda:

1. 2017 Annual Work Plan review
2. 2040 Comprehensive Plan
3. Prairieview Park playground and shelter status
4. City Council tour and schedule
5. Schedule parks tour with Empire Township Park and Recreation Commission
6. 2018 park improvements
7. Dew Days

X. Adjournment

Moved by McMillen and seconded by Simmons to adjourn the meeting. APIF. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Randy Distad
Parks and Recreation Director and Recording Secretary



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TO: Farmington Parks and Recreation Commission Members
FROM: Randy Distad, Parks and Recreation Director
SUBJECT: Recognition of Past Commission Member Mike Haley
DATE: April 12, 2017

BACKGROUND

Due to scheduling conflicts for the past three months, former Commission member Mike Haley was not able to be recognized for his 7.5 years of service on the Commission. Mr. Haley will be attending the meeting so he can be recognized for his past service on the Commission. Mayor Todd Larson has been invited to attend and recognize Mike for his years of service on the Commission.



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TO: Farmington Parks and Recreation Commission Members
FROM: Randy Distad, Parks and Recreation Director
SUBJECT: Review 2017 Work Plan
DATE: April 12, 2017

BACKGROUND

Attached is an updated 2017 Work Plan. Items that have been completed in the work plan are shown in red. Commission members are asked to review the updated 2017 Work Plan and be prepared to discuss it during the meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	Description
 Exhibit	Updated 2017 Work Plan

FARMINGTON PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

2017 WORK PLAN

Goal #1: Meet with the City Council at least once in 2017.

1. *By April 1, the Commission will have identified a date to meet with the City Council in a work session setting and will identify possible agenda topics for discussion during the meeting.*
2. *By June 1, develop and recommend to City Council a long-term funding plan for park improvement fund.*
3. *By October 1, the Commission will have had a work session with the City Council and discussed during the workshop the long term funding plan for the park improvement fund and any other agenda topics identified.*

Goal #2: Develop and prioritize a list of parks, trails and recreational facilities improvement projects to be completed in 2018.

1. *By April 1, the Commission will have discussed and identified a list of 2018 improvement projects to be completed in park, trails and recreational facilities.*
2. *By May 1, the Commission will have discussed and identify possible funding sources for the 2018 improvement projects.*
3. *By September 1, the Commission will have met with the City Council to discuss the 2018 improvement projects and how the project(s) may be funded.*
4. *By September 15, at least one of the projects recommended for funding in 2018 will be included in the approved 2018 preliminary budget.*

Goal #3: Continue to build and strengthen relationships with Empire Township's Park and Recreation Commission (ETPRC).

1. *By April 1, discuss and determine a date to have a joint meeting with ETPRC.*
2. *By June 1, a date will have been set to have a joint meeting with ETPRC.*
3. *By August 1, discuss and formulate a list of discussion topics for a joint meeting agenda with ETPRC.*
4. *By October 1, a meeting will have been held with ETPRC.*

Goal #4: Participate in the process of making improvements in Prairieview Park.

1. *By January 11, the Commission will have approved the improvements to be completed.*

Status: Completed. Improvements identified included adding new playground equipment, constructing a shelter, and constructing a basketball court.

2. *By March 1, the RFP specifications for new playground equipment, a new picnic shelter and a basketball court will have been reviewed and approved.*

Status: Completed. RFP was reviewed and mailed to installation contractors and vendors.

3. *By April 15, the Commission will have reviewed playground equipment, picnic shelter and basketball court proposals and made a recommendation to the City Council on the purchase and construction of these improvements.*

Status: Completed. Commission reviewed and submitted recommendations for playground equipment and park shelter to the City Council.

4. *By May 15, the City Council will have approved the purchase and labor for the construction of the improvements.*

Status: Completed. City Council approved playground equipment and park shelter purchase and labor at its March 20 meeting.

5. *By October 30, construction of improvements will have completed.*

Goal #5: Receive periodic presentations from each of the Parks and Recreation professional staff members about programs, parks, facilities and trails.

1. *By March 1, the Commission will have received a presentation by professional staff members of the Department's 2016 Annual Report.*

Status: Completed. Annual report was presented at the March 8 Commission meeting. Recreation Supervisor Missie Kohlbeck and Park and Recreation Director Randy Distad presented the annual report.

2. *By May 1, Commission members will have received a presentation from staff on the results of the Schmitz-Maki Arena's ice season.*
3. *By August 1, Commission members will have received a presentation from staff on the first half operations of the Rambling River Center.*
4. *By October 1, Commission members will have received a presentation from staff on the results of the summer programs offered.*
5. *By October 1, Commission members will have received a presentation from staff about the outdoor pool season.*
6. *By November 1, Commission members will have received a presentation from staff about the spring turf season and summer ice season.*
7. *By November 1, the Commission will have received a presentation from staff about maintenance and improvements to parks and trails*

Goal #6: Work with City staff on the city's 2040 Comprehensive Plan Parks, Recreation and Open Space Systems Plan Update.

1. *Develop an outline for the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Chapter in the City's Comprehensive Plan that can be used as the framework for the city's 2040 comprehensive plan.*
2. *Assess and prioritize outdoor athletic field needs by May 1.*
3. *Update the five-year Park Improvement Fund's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to include parks that have been recently acquired and to also rotate existing parks into the five year CIP by June 1.*
4. *Through the assistance of the Parks and Recreation Department staff create a five year Capital Improvement Plan for the Farmington Civic Arena and Outdoor Pool by July 1.*
5. *Analyze and determine possible future dedicated funding sources for parks and trail development or redevelopment by July 1.*
6. *Analyze and determine future direction for the city's recreational facilities by October 1.*
7. *Complete Park, Recreation and Open Space Chapter by December 31.*

Goal #7: Participate in the master planning process for Marigold and Prairie Pines Parks

1. *Work with staff and consultant to provide a public input meeting in order to receive community input on the development of the Prairie Pines park master plan by January 31.*

Status: Completed. Chair Dustin Johnson attended the public open house held on January 12, 2017 and there were 15 residents who attended and provided input on the initial draft master plan. Additional public input was received at the January 28, 2017 Community Expo.

2. *At one of its meetings receive a presentation from staff and consultant on draft master plans for Marigold Park and Prairie Pines Park, allow public input on the draft during the meeting and then forward recommended master plans for both parks to the City Council by February 28.*

Status: Completed. A presentation was made on the Marigold Park and Prairie Pines Park master plans to the Commission at its February 8, 2017 meeting and a recommendation was forwarded to the City Council to approve the master plans for both parks.

3. *City Council will review the recommended master plans, allow additional public input and then approve the master plans by March 31.*

Status: Completed. A presentation was made to the City Council at its March 6, 2017 meeting. The City Council approved both master plans after the presentations were made and additional input was given by the City Council.

Goal #8: Work with Park and Recreation Department staff to explore offering a program and/or events in different parks.

1. *By May 1, 2017 solicit Farmington service organizations about their interest in offering a special event and/or program in a city park in order to expand programs and events in the parks.*
2. *By June 1, and after discussing possible opportunities and obstacles, determine at least one possible program and/or event that could be held in a different location in 2018 from where it is usually held.*
3. *By December 31, staff will develop a plan and review it with the Commission about the program and/or event that will be held in a different location in 2018, so it can be advertised in the City News and Recreation Guide.*

Goal #9: Initiate a trail wayfinding signage program.

1. *Determine and approve initial trail loop locations for signage program by January 31.*
2. *Work with company in the design and graphics of a trail sign that can be installed at trail heads by April 30.*
3. *Work with city staff on the installation of the new wayfinding signage in the locations determined in the parks by July 31.*
4. *Hold a ribbon cutting of new trail signs by September 1.*
5. *Work with the Heritage Preservation Commission to incorporate wayfinding signage program for historical properties in the city by September 1.*



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TO: Farmington Parks and Recreation Commission Members
FROM: Randy Distad, Parks and Recreation Director
SUBJECT: Draft Park Improvement Fund Financial Planning
DATE: April 12, 2017

BACKGROUND

Included in your packet is a draft long term financial plan for the city's Park Improvement Fund (PIF) showing a revenue and expense scenario for the next 25 years. The plan lays out annually over the next 25 years the revenue amounts that could be achieved through two possible dedicated funding sources. It also shows by park the amounts to be spent annually on improvements if implemented. The annual revenue amounts shown from funding source "A" and funding source "B" are for illustrative purposes and are not meant to be the only source of revenue for the PIF. The draft plan provided has been revised from an earlier plan the Commission saw in late 2016. The draft plan begins to show how the fund balance could be built and sustained to allow improvements to occur over the next 25 years. Please note this is only a beginning draft. Nothing to this point has been approved.

Included also in your packet is a draft 2018-2022 Park Improvement Fund Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The city annually includes a five year CIP within the approved annual budget. A five year CIP will also be required to be included in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan update.

The draft CIP shows the city's two newest parks, Marigold Park and Prairie Pines Park, being developed in 2019 rather than in 2018, which is a year later than what was discussed during the master planning process for both parks. The reason for completing the improvements in 2019 rather than in 2018, is to allow an opportunity for the Park Improvement Fund (PIF) to build a balance. This would then provide enough funding to be in place for improvements identified in the CIP to be completed in 2019. It is unlikely there will be enough funds in 2018 for these two parks to be developed. If dedicated funding is not put in place in 2018, then development of these two parks will likely continue to be delayed until there is sufficient funding in the PIF to cover the improvement costs shown in the CIP.

The CIP also follows the schedule of improvements shown in the long term financial plan of the PIF. The CIP currently shows, which is consistent with what is shown in the long term financial plan of the PIF, there are no park improvements planned in 2018, 2021, and 2022, which is purposeful to allow the balance in the PIF to grow. It also so happens to be years in which no parks fall in the 20 year schedule to have improvements completed. Please note this is only a beginning draft. Nothing to this point has been approved.

In light of the Commission having a meeting with the City Council in 2017 to discuss long term funding of the PIF, which is a goal in the Commission's 2017 Work Plan, it will be important for the Commission to discuss and develop a proposed funding plan for the PIF prior to a meeting with the City Council. The two attached documents are only a starting point in order to begin a discussion on the long term funding plan for park improvements.

ATTACHMENTS:

	Type	Description
D	Exhibit	Draft Park Improvement Fund Long Term Financial Plan
D	Exhibit	Draft 2018-2022 Park Improvement Fund Five Year CIP

25 Year Park Improvement Fund Financial Plan

[illegible]

* Annual contribution to each park assumes \$2,500 from funding source "A" resulting in a total of \$60,000 being placed annually in the PIF.

**** Annual contribution to each park assumes \$2,500 from funding source "B" resulting in a total of \$60,000 being placed annually in the PIF.**

*** The years that larger amounts are shown in bold red is the year improvements would be completed based on the following: when improvements were last completed; 20 year park improvement schedule; and the available balance to spend on improvements.

**** Does not factor in any park dedication cash in lieu funding, which could be added to each of the park fund balances

**** Does not factor in any park development fee funding, which could be added to the fund balance of the new park in the development or park closest to the development if there is no park in the development

*****If the funding source of the \$60,000 amount was to come from a property tax levy and placed in the PIF, it would have cost in 2017 about \$7.00 more annually on the average market value home of \$233,039

*****Does not factor in the Park Improvement Fund Balance at the end of 2017 because it is not known at this time

2018-2022 Park Improvement Fund Five Year Capital Improvement Plan

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Projected Fund Balance Beginning of Year	130,000	250,000	65,000	170,000	290,000	
Projected Additional Revenues	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	600,000

Projects for Park Improvement Fund

Marigold Park <i>Projects List:</i> 2019 improvements include: playground equipment (\$25,000), park shelter (\$25,000), turf/landscaping/trees (\$15,000) and site amenities i.e. grills, waste containers, benches, picnic tables, bike rack (\$5,000)		70,000				70,000
Prairie Pines Park <i>Projects List:</i> 2019 improvements include: install new playground equipment (\$75,000), 5 foot wide sidewalk (\$50,000), install shelter (\$35,000), turf/landscaping/trees (\$40,000), construct basketball court (\$25,000), and site amenities i.e. benches, picnic tables, grills, waste containers and bike rack (\$10,000)		235,000				235,000
Town Square Park <i>Project List:</i> 2020 improvements include: master plan development (\$7,500) and park signage (\$7,500)			15,000			15,000
	0	305,000	15,000	0	0	320,000

Projected Fund Balance at End of Year

250,000 65,000 170,000 290,000 410,000

POSSIBLE G.O. BOND REFERENDUM PROJECTS

Rambling River Park \$2,500,000

**Jim Bell Park and Preserve Development
Community Park and Youth Athletic Complex
\$6,700,000**

Outdoor Pool \$7,200,000



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TO: Farmington Parks and Recreation Commission Members
FROM: Randy Distad, Parks and Recreation Director
SUBJECT: City Council Park Tour
DATE: April 12, 2017

BACKGROUND

In odd number years, the Commission and City Council have jointly conducted a tour of city parks and recreational facilities. In the past the Commission has worked with staff to identify which parks and facilities should be toured. At the Commission's March 8, 2017 meeting the following parks and recreational facilities were preliminarily identified as possible sites to tour with the City Council:

- Pine Knoll Park
- Fair Hills Park
- Troy Hill Park
- Schmitz-Maki Arena
- Marigold Park
- Prairie Pines Park
- Rambling River Center

I have attached a listing of parks and the amenities contained within each park for the Commission to review prior to the meeting. Commission members should come prepared to discuss if there are any addition parks it would like to add to the tour with the City Council based on the attached list of parks.

The Commission also identified August 8, 2017 as a preferred date of the tour with a 6:00 p.m. start time. Staff has shared this information with the City Administrator who has also provided this information to the City Council. I will provide you with an update at the meeting regarding if this date and time will work to tour parks and recreational facilities with the City Council.

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	Description
□ Exhibit	Park Listing with Amenities

Farmington Parks and Open Space Inventory

[illegible]



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TO: Farmington Parks and Recreation Commission Members
FROM: Randy Distad, Parks and Recreation Director
SUBJECT: Empire Township Park and Recreation Commission Parks Tour
DATE: April 12, 2017

BACKGROUND

The Commission has met with Empire Township's Park and Recreation Commission on an annual basis. During the 2016 meeting, it was mutually agreed upon that in 2017 a parks tour would occur. Normally the annual meeting has been rotated, so that in even years, the meeting has been held in Farmington on the second Wednesday of the month and in odd years the meeting has been held in Empire Township on either the second or fourth Monday of the month, which is the date of Empire Township's Park and Recreation Commission regular meetings. Because this is an odd year, and in keeping with past tradition, it is anticipated the parks tour will occur on either the second or fourth Monday in either late summer or early fall.

The Commission is being asked to come prepared to discuss the following items related to the parks tour with Empire Township's Park and Recreation Commission:

- identify a preferred date and backup date for the tour based on the second or fourth Monday of the month meeting timeframe
- determine which city parks, trails and/or recreational facilities to include in the tour
- determine a timeframe for the tour



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TO: Farmington Parks and Recreation Commission Members
FROM: Randy Distad, Parks and Recreation Director
SUBJECT: 2040 Comprehensive Plan's Park, Recreation and Open Space Chapter
DATE: April 12, 2017

BACKGROUND

The City Council approved hiring Hoisington Koepler Group, Inc. (consultant) at its April 3, 2017 meeting to assist city staff with completing the 2040 Comprehensive Plan process. While this contract includes having the consultant collect input about parks, recreation and open space during public engagement meetings, it does not however include having the consultant write the 2040 Park, Recreation and Open Space Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. The estimated cost provided by the consultant to do so would have been between \$30,000 to \$40,000. Because of this estimated cost, and no funding available to cover the cost, the writing of this chapter will be done in-house by Park and Recreation Department staff with input from and review by the Commission.

Included in your meeting packet is the 2030 Comprehensive Plan's full Park, Recreation and Open Space Chapter. Staff felt it was important for the Commission to spend time during the meeting reviewing this information in preparation for starting to write the Park, Recreation and Open Space Chapter for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Specifically this document should be reviewed to determine what information is valid and what is invalid for inclusion in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Keep in mind this is the start of about a year-long process, so you will continue to see this item on future agendas as staff and Commission members work through rewriting the 2040 Comprehensive Plan's Park, Recreation and Open Space Chapter.

Another document included in your packet is the Metropolitan Council's Regional Parks Systems Statement document. This document provides guidance and direction on the requirements to be met in the Park, Recreation and Open Space Chapter in order for the chapter to receive approval from the Metropolitan Council when it reviews the city's 2040 Comprehensive Plan submittal in 2018. Primarily the city is required to identify on its park, open space and trails map the location of future approved master planned regional greenways and future regional greenway search areas within the city boundaries. According to the attached document, the only item on the map the city will need to revise is to identify the Chubb Creek Regional Greenway as a future regional greenway search corridor.

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	Description
□ Exhibit	2030 Comp Plan Park, Recreation and Open Space Chapter
□ Exhibit	Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks System Statement

City of Farmington

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2030 Park and Recreation Master Plan

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Section 1. Acknowledgement

The 2030 Park and Recreation Master Plan (2030 Master Plan) document evolved due to input from many individuals and these individuals should be recognized for their time and effort spent on creating a vision for parks and recreation through a comprehensive 2030 Master Plan for the City of Farmington (City). The following individuals are recognized for their role in the review and final approval of the 2030 Master Plan.

City Council

Mayor Kevan Soderberg

Council Members Christy Fogarty
David McKnight
David Pritzlaff
Steve Wilson

Park and Recreation Advisory Commission

Chair Dawn Johnson

Commission Members Aaron Fitzloff
Karen Neal
Charlie Weber
Tim White

Planning Commission

Chair Dirk Rotty

Commission Members Todd Larson
Ben Barker
Randy Oswald
Tim Burke

City Staff

Administration Peter Herlofsky, City Administrator

Planning Division Lee Smick, City Planner
Tony Wippler, Assistant City Planner

Parks and Recreation Randy Distad, Parks and Recreation Director
Don Hayes, Park Maintenance Supervisor
Patti Norman, Recreation Supervisor
Jeremy Pire, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor
Missie Kohlbeck, Senior Coordinator
Kellee Omlid, Recreation Specialist

Section 2. Executive Summary

Foreward

Parks and Recreation plays an important role in creating a high quality of life for City of Farmington (City) residents. It provides opportunities to learn and play, meditate and rejuvenate, create and imagine, and enjoy life. The 2030 Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2030 Master Plan) is the document that will provide the guidance upon which the City continues to make its decisions for parks, trails, recreational programs and facilities. As required by the Metropolitan Council, a regional planning agency serving the Twin Cities seven county metropolitan area whose responsibilities lie with providing essential services to the region, a city's park and open space plan is required to be updated every 10 years. In 1998, a 2020 Park and Recreation Master Plan was approved. This plan will reach the 10 year threshold, requiring it to be updated to be in compliance with the Metropolitan Council requirements. This required update will enhance and update City information and data allowing elected/appointed officials and staff to accurately assess the current and future direction for parks and recreation in the community. The new updated 2030 Master Plan will create a blueprint for making well-informed decisions that will move parks and recreation forward in the community for the next 20+ years.

Historical Perspective

The City began its parks and open space system (system) with the acquisition and development of Rambling River Park and Evergreen Knoll Park in the early 1970's. From these initial park developments and during the next 30+ years, additional acreage had been added to the system bringing the total in 2007 to 876 acres. The park and open space system will continue to grow in the coming years especially in the next several years due to the platting of a large new development that will occur in 2008.

Parks and Recreation was first organized through the creation of the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) in the 1970's. Hiring of the first Parks and Recreation Department (Department) staff member occurred in 1974. In subsequent years the City added staff in the areas of facilities, park maintenance and recreation programs. The Department currently consists of 12 full-time staff, two part-time staff and numerous seasonal staff making it the largest department (total number of staff) in the City.

Over the years, the City has been fiscally responsible in its development of the parks and recreation system. Acquisition of parkland has been accomplished through creation of a park dedication ordinance and thus has only used fee acquisition in a limited basis to secure public parkland. This park dedication process has also generated money that has been used to develop the park and trail system resulting in a zero debt parks and trail system. In 1974, the City did issue general obligation bonds from a voter approved referendum for the construction of the current ice arena. These bonds have long since been paid off. In previous years development of some park facilities were completed due to the efforts of volunteer organizations and individuals in the community.

Recreation programs began to be offered to residents in the 1990's when the first full-time staff member was hired and whose time was solely dedicated to planning and providing recreational programs. When recreation programs were first provided, only a handful of programs were offered. Today the community enjoys a diverse mix of programs and classes year-round.

The City's recreational facilities include a senior center known as the Rambling River Center, the Schmitz Maki Ice Arena and an outdoor pool. The Rambling River Center was started by a group of older citizens who raised funds to purchase an existing building and created a senior center. When the senior center was not able to financially support itself in the 1980's it was taken over by the City. The outdoor pool and the Schmitz-Maki Arena were both built in the 1970's.

Demographic Profile

The City has seen a rapid pace in its growth over the past twenty years. US Census data showed that in 1990, the population of the City was 5,940. In 2000 the population of the City had increased to 12,365 people. Since the Census in 2000, the population of the City has continued to grow to the Metropolitan Council's certified population estimate of 18,589 residents as of April 1, 2007. This represents a 67% increase in the population from the 2000 Census and a 250% increase from the 1990 Census. Most of the growth is occurring in the northern part of Farmington, but with recent residential development on the east and central areas of the community, the growth has begun to spread and connect with older established neighborhoods.

The age group distribution of Farmington based on the 2000 Census indicates a heavy concentration of families and the overall median age is significantly lower than the national level. Although Farmington can be classified as a young community with the median age being more than 5 years lower than the national level, the age groups that will experience the most growth over the next five years is the 45-54, 55-64 and 65-74 age categories. Median household income is \$61,864 for the City of Farmington, which is about 50% higher than the national median household income of \$41,994. Age and household incomes are two significant factors that impact participation in Parks and Recreation services.

While the City has experienced rapid growth since the 2020 Master Plan, there are still many acres yet to be developed before the community is considered "built out". The final population will of course depend on the development of existing properties in the City as well as what properties outside of the City are annexed into the City. The Metropolitan Council is projecting that by 2020 the population of Farmington will reach 27,510 people. Based on the number of available residential lots and future allocation of MUSA by the Metropolitan Council the 2030 population is projected to be 32,000 people.

While the majority of homes being constructed in Farmington are single family homes, the City's distribution of housing types saw a change in the past ten years with more multi family and attached townhomes being built than in previous years. In many communities residents who live in multi family neighborhoods without sizeable yards of their own or with a small common park area often look for the public neighborhood or community park to meet their recreational needs.

Park And Open Space Areas

As of this 2030 Master Plan update, the City owned park and open space land totaling 876 acres. The breakdown of this acreage includes 436 acres of park land and 440 acres of open space. In addition, the Farmington Independent School District #192 (School District) owns land that is used for athletic fields and open space. The School District also provides, in its school buildings, indoor recreational spaces. However for the purposes of creating an updated 2030 Master Plan

for the City, the School District's facilities, while mentioned, will not be used to determine the City's needs because even though the School District facilities are available to the public, the City has no control over their scheduled use and said facilities are to be used first and foremost by school related programs and activities. Furthermore, the School District's boundaries extend beyond the City's boundaries and so only the area inside the City's boundaries will be addressed in the 2030 Master Plan.

With the Metropolitan Council's estimated population of 18,589 in 2007, the City's parks and open space acreage of 876 acres provides a ratio of 47.35 acres of park and open space per 1,000 residents. However a further analysis finds that of the 876 acres, only 436 acres is active park acreage. The remaining 440 acres consists of open space areas. This means the ratio for active park acreage is 23.57 acres of park land for every 1,000 residents, well within the minimum commonly accepted standard identified by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) of at least 10 acres of active park acreage per 1,000 residents. The City's 2020 Park and Recreation Chapter Master Plan adopted a policy establishing that at least 20 acres of active park acreage per 1,000 residents should be provided in Farmington. The current ratio of 23.57 acres per 1,000 residents meets the policy adopted in the 2020 Master Plan. While a past acceptable practice has been to follow park acreage standards established by the NRPA, it is not the only method. Recently parks and recreation professionals and professional planners have begun incorporating community demand/benefits into the formula when determining park acreage standards for communities. The thinking is that minimum park acreage requirements for communities should not solely be based on minimum number of acres needed per 1,000 residents, but rather park acreage should be determined according to what each community needs based on the demand being made by park users. The City may want to further explore this notion of having the park and open space acreage standards based on demand rather than a standard based solely on the population.

The City lacks adequate athletic facilities based on the minimum standards developed by the NRPA. Of most concern is the shortage of outdoor athletic facilities that the City provides. There is a low inventory in the number of existing ballfields that are provided for youth baseball and adult softball. There is intense pressure currently in the community for green space for soccer. With youth lacrosse beginning to be organized in the community, the pressure for additional green space will only be intensified. The City currently has two outdoor hockey rinks, which is below the minimum standard developed by the NRPA. The City should focus on correcting this shortage by constructing additional outdoor athletic facilities for both youth and adult sports in order to meet the increased growth in participation that has occurred in the community.

Recreation Programs

The Department's recreational programming has been staffed by professionals who are imaginative, resourceful and comprehensive in the planning and facilitating of programs. The innovative and imaginative programs that have been provided to the community has resulted in several recreational programs being recognized in the past five years with an Awards of Excellence, which is a state-wide award provided by the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association.

Recreational programs have been offered in such areas as youth and adult sports, pre-school activities, arts and crafts, fitness, team sports, individual sports, senior citizen programs and trips.

Department staff plan and facilitate some of its own special events that are sprinkled throughout the year. There is also involvement through partnerships with other local organizations to provide seasonal special events and celebrations.

Park And Recreation Administration

The Department provides the administrative oversight for the recreational services, recreational facilities, parks and trails that are offered to the community. The City Council approves the operating and capital improvement budgets that provide the annual funding for the Department. In 2007 operational costs for all Divisions within the Department was budgeted at \$1.7 million. Capital improvement costs including park improvements, equipment and vehicles for the Department was budgeted at \$700,000. The following shows how the budget is distributed to the various divisions within the Department:

Table 8.1: *Department's 2007 Budget by Division*

Division	Amount of Department's Budget
Building Maintenance	6.5%
Park Maintenance	22%
Park and Trail Capital Improvements	24.5%
Recreational Programs	19.5%
Recreational Facilities (outdoor pool, senior center & ice arena)	27.5%

A five year capital improvement budget is vital in determining future parks and trail projects and the funds needed to complete the projects. The capital improvement projects in parks and trails have been funded over the years through two funding sources. The first funding source has been through funds received from residential, commercial and industrial development. These funds were received as cash in lieu of land through the park dedication process. The second source of funding has been through the City's municipal liquor store profit transfers.

Since the 2020 Master Plan was approved in 1998, the City has focused on developing new parks and redeveloping existing parks to make them accessible, attractive and safe. In order to ensure that all parks received a review and a master plan, the Department developed a planning and improvement schedule. As a result of this master planning process for each City park, a capital improvement budget identifying improvements for its parks and trails was created. By the year 2012, all new and existing parks will have received a review resulting in a master plan developed. Then based on the approved master plan for each park, improvements will be completed provided that funding is available. Table 8.2 below provides the most recent five year capital improvement plan from 2008-2012. It identifies which park the improvements are to be made, the type of park and/or trail improvement to be made, the year in which the improvements are to be made and the estimated cost of the improvements.

Table 8.2: Five Year Parks and Trail Improvement Budget

Name of Park and Projects	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Vermillion Grove Park: <i>boardwalk construction</i>	\$55,000				
Farmington Preserve Park: <i>playground, shelter, basketball court, turf seeding, prairie restoration, signage, trails and site amenities</i>	\$100,000				
North Creek Park: <i>playground, shelter with warming house, turf seeding, fishing dock, trails, site amenities, hockey and pleasure skating rinks and park signage</i>	\$125,000				
Meadowview Park: <i>boardwalk construction</i>		\$20,000			
Hill Dee Park: <i>playground</i>	\$45,000				
Lake Julia Park: <i>playground, shelter, trails basketball court and master plan development</i>		\$100,000			
Pine Knoll Park: <i>playground, shelter, basketball court, trails and master plan development</i>		\$85,000			
Middle Creek Park: <i>boardwalk construction</i>		\$35,000			
Troy Hill Park: <i>playground, gazebo and master plan development</i>					\$50,000
Prairieview Park: <i>basketball court, shelter, trails and master plan development</i>				\$50,000	
Fairhills Park: <i>shelter, playground equipment, basketball court and master plan development</i>				\$50,000	
Town Square Park: <i>gazebo, landscaping, playground, site amenities, sculptures and master plan development</i>			\$250,000		
Rambling River Park: <i>master plan development, playground, shelter, trails, amphitheatre, prairie restoration, sculptures</i>				\$1,000,000	
Mystic Meadows Development Community Park: <i>four field adult softball complex, shelters, maintenance building, playground, parking lot, concession and restroom building</i>				\$2,600,000	
Fairhill Development Community Park: <i>five field youth baseball complex, soccer fields, lacrosse fields, shelters, concessions/restroom building, outdoor hockey and pleasure rink, playground, parking lot, turf seeding and site amenities</i>		\$3,300,000			

Middle Creek Park: <i>playground, shelters, trails, parking lot, site amenities and ballfield</i>		\$475,000			
Lake Julia Waterway: <i>pedestrian bridge</i>		\$100,000			

2030 Master Plan Public Input

Public input on the 2030 Master Plan occurred many different ways. Some of the input occurred through earlier studies where the public was invited to participate on task forces and committees. Public meetings were held as part of the committee and task force work that resulted in further input. Several scientific surveys have also been completed in the past few years that provided insight into what the community desires. The recommended actions being offered in the 2030 Master Plan were created as a result of various committees and task forces work and public input meetings.

Additionally two public visioning sessions occurred in early 2007 that provided the community with an opportunity to speak on updating not only the City's Park and Recreation Master Plan but also the entire Comprehensive Plan. While there were some differing opinions, the basis for the information and recommendations being offered in the 2030 Master Plan resulted from the input provided by the community. Items scoring highest on the visioning sessions included:

- Increase the amount of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities
- Creation of additional larger community parks
- Trails are important
- Develop a wide variety of parks
- Develop a wide variety of recreational programs

Guidance For Implementing the 2030 Park And Recreation Master Plan

The City has seen growth in its parks and recreation system since the 2020 Park and Recreation Master Plan was approved. However, the growth of the park and recreation system has not kept pace with the City's double digit population growth since the 2020 Park and Recreation Master Plan was approved in 1998. The City of Farmington has completed several studies, surveys and plans related to parks, recreation, facilities and trails since 2004. Studies that have been completed include the Recreational Facility Needs Study, Community Center Feasibility Study, a Community Center Facility Site Plan Study and a Community Attitude and Interest Citizen Survey. A Trail Master Plan was also completed that identified an existing network of interconnected trails in the community that should be connected to future trails.

A summary of the highest priorities for parks and recreation based on the information collected from the public studies, community surveys and during visioning sessions are identified below. It will be important for the City to continue on an annual basis to review these priorities and modify these priorities as needed.

- 1. Develop a park and open space system that includes active and athletic spaces.**
- 2. Develop a park and open space system that includes natural areas and environmentally sensitive areas for passive and un-programmed spaces.**

- 3. Expand the city's trail and sidewalk system, including adding trails that are safe and provide connections between schools, parks, neighborhoods, commercial areas, open space/natural areas, other communities and regional parks.**
- 4. Develop a long-term financial plan for the development of parks, open space and trails.**
- 5. Re-develop Rambling River Park.**
- 6. Develop maintenance standards for parks.**
- 7. Develop maintenance standards for recreational facilities.**
- 8. Increase marketing of parks and recreation (recreational programs, parks, open space, trails and recreational facilities) to the community.**
- 9. Complete the development of master plans for remaining city parks.**
- 10. Construct new indoor recreational facilities when it may not be financially feasible or structurally possible to make improvements to existing recreational facilities such as the Schmitz-Maki Arena, Outdoor Pool and the Rambling River Center.**
- 11. Work with adjacent cities, townships and Dakota County to develop an interconnected regional trail system providing connections to regional parks.**
- 12. Acquire land in a manner that maximizes the size of parks when possible.**
- 13. Explore opportunities to expand youth, teen, adaptive, adult and senior programs including possible partnerships with other organizations or governmental agencies.**

Section 3 Community Background

Farmington has a relatively short history in regards to having a parks and recreation systems plan in place. In this chapter, historical information will be presented that defines what Farmington's parks, open space, trails, recreation programs and recreational facilities consist of. The City has taken a fiscally conservative approach to the funding of park and trail improvements and has relied on development to pay for the improvements made to parks and trails over the years. Demographic information has also been included that provides a profile of the community's composition.

3.1 City Parks and Recreation: A Historical Perspective

Beginning in the 1970's, with the acquisition of Rambling River Park, a park and recreation system was born in the City. Today the City provides 876 acres of parks that consist of active and passive areas for residents to enjoy. As a result of this growth in the system, a ratio of just less than 42 acres of park, open space and natural areas for every 1,000 residents has been provided for residents to enjoy.

As a result of this tremendous increase in the acreage of park, open space and natural areas, it has demonstrated the City's commitment to providing an appropriate acreage of parks for City residents to enjoy. As development has occurred over the years, the City has chosen to develop a park and recreation system that is diverse. Diversity has occurred through not only the procurement of active spaces but also through the acquisition of passive spaces that contains many natural areas that can be accessed through the City's trail system. The passive and active spaces have been acquired through the park dedication process, which is a process that allows cities, by Minnesota Statute, to require developers to dedicate park land within a development without financial compensation from the City to the developer. As a result, the City has been able to acquire a significant amount of its park acreage through development that has occurred since the first park was acquired back in the 1970's.

The City has been conservative on using property tax dollars for the construction of park and trail improvements. The City's park dedication ordinance has provided the impetus for the funding of park and trail improvements for the past 30 years. In situations where the City did not require land to be dedicated for a park, the City instead chose to take cash in lieu of the park land. The cash that was received has been used to complete park and trail improvements in both new parks and in existing parks. This has created a situation where the City's property owners have not had to pay property taxes in order to provide financial support for the improvements made to City parks and trails.

The City has held a referendum once in the past 35 years for parks and recreation. In 1975 a referendum was held to construct an ice arena. The ballot measure passed and an ice arena was subsequently built. Since then the City has investigated bringing several different park and facility referendums to the voters but none of them in the end materialized. One referendum formulated in 1997, would have provided a number of outdoor recreational facilities including the purchase of land for a park. A second referendum idea investigated was the construction of a community center. A third idea researched was the construction of outdoor recreational facilities.

3.2. Farmington School District

The School District provides both indoor and outdoor facilities for City residents to access for recreation. However during the school year, priority is given to School District activities and so access to the public is limited. The School District currently provides about 90% of the outdoor facilities for the public to use. All of the School District fields and acreage are contained within the existing City boundary with the exception of one elementary school that is located in the City of Lakeville. While the School District facilities are important to note, they serve a population that is beyond just the City's boundary. Therefore the facilities and grounds that are owned and maintained by the school district will be identified but will not be included in the recommendations that are noted in the 2030 Master Plan.

3.3. Demographic Trends

Spurred on by residential development that surged during the late 1990's and into the early 2000's the City's population has grown substantially since 1990. Due to this growth, the demographics of the community have changed. The 2000 U.S. Census and the Metropolitan Council were the two primary sources for the demographic information that was acquired. The demographic information has been formulated in the following categories:

- Population estimates and projections
- Age
- Gender
- Income and Education
- Race
- City Housing Types

1. Population Estimates and Projections

“Farmington has been one of the fastest growing communities in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.”

Since the 1990 Census, the City's estimated population as of September 30, 2007 has grown by 250%. Since the 2020 Master Plan was approved in 1998, the population has almost doubled. The 2000 U.S. Census has estimated that the City is the 56th largest community in Minnesota. Table 8.3 shows the 1990 Census, 2000 Census, 2006 Census estimated population and a September 30, 2007 estimated population that was based on Certificates of Occupancies issued to home builders. Table 8.3 also shows projected populations for 2020 and 2030. If the City were to completely develop as residential development and without any constraints the remaining undeveloped land that is currently contained within the City boundaries, it is projected that the City could achieve a build-out population of 85,272. The projection made an assumption that certain types of housing were constructed that reflected a certain number of units per acre built.

	1990 Census	2000 Census	2006 Census Estimate	2007 Staff Estimate	2020 Projection	2030 Projection	Complete Build-Out Projection
Population	5,940	12,365	18,207	20,768	27,100	32,000	85,272

Table 8.3: Farmington's Population Estimates and Projections

Source: 2000 Census and Metropolitan Council

2. Age

“The community has a younger population than the U.S population.”

The 2000 Census identifies that the City has a median age of 30 years, which compares to a U.S. median age of 35.3 years. The following is a breakdown of the age makeup of the community's population and how it compares to the U.S. average:

Table 8.4: Population by Age City of Farmington and U.S. Comparison 2000

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Ages	Population Number	% of Total	U.S. Population %	Difference
-5	1,424	11.5	6.8	+4.7
5-9	1,251	10.1	7.3	+2.8
10-14	1,055	8.5	7.3	+1.2
15-19	736	6.0	7.2	-1.2
20-24	543	4.4	6.7	-2.3
25-34	2,769	22.4	14.2	+8.2
35-44	2,364	19.1	16.0	+3.1
45-54	1,005	8.1	13.4	-5.3
55-64	525	4.3	8.6	-4.3
65+	693	5.6	12.5	-6.9
Total	12,365	100.0	100.0	

The demographic makeup of the population age when compared to the characteristics of the national population indicates that there are a higher percentage of individuals in the 5-15, 25-34 and 35-44 age categories and less in the 15-19, 20-24, 45-54, 55-64 and the 65+ age categories. The table illustrates that the age of the City's population has a larger younger population than what the U.S. average shows. It would appear that this demonstrates that the population of younger members of the community has grown either because households are moving to Farmington with young children or that households are moving to the community and are starting families after moving. The lower the median age, the higher the participation rates are for most activities. Since the population of Farmington has a higher percentage of a younger population, it would seem to indicate that a focus for the City in the short term should be on

youth programs and building recreational facilities that provides opportunities for families to recreate together in family-type activities. Attention should also be paid to the fact that long term transitional planning for 2030 in Parks and Recreation should focus on the community's population becoming older.

3. Gender

“The City’s male to female ratio is higher than the overall U.S population ratio.”

The number of males living in the City is slightly higher than the number of females living in the City. This male to female ratio may change in the future given the trend that is taking place with the U.S. population. The male to female ratio shows that the City has a make up of 49.6 percent of its population being female and 50.4 percent of its population being male. The 2000 census shows that there is slightly higher percent of females to males in the total population of the U.S.

Table 8.5: Population by Gender Farmington and U.S. Comparison in 2000

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Gender	Population Number	% of Total	U.S. Population %	Difference
Female	6,130	49.6	50.9	-1.3
Male	6,235	50.4	49.1	+1.3
Total	12,365	100.0	100.0	

4. Income and Education

“The median household income in Farmington is higher than the national median household income.”

Median household income is \$61,864 for the City of Farmington, which is about 50% higher than the national median household income of \$41,994. The City also has a higher number of people who live in a household that are employed in the work force. According to U.S. Census figures, 79.8% of people who are 16 years and older are employed in the work force. This compares to the national average of 63.9% of people who are 16 years and older being employed in the work force. Regarding the poverty level in Farmington, 1.3% of the population in the City falls below the federal poverty level (defined for a family of four as earning \$17,050 or less annually) while on a national level 9.2% of the U.S. population falls below the poverty level. What this all means is that the population of the City has a higher number of people in the work force earning a higher income than what is earned on a national level. A higher amount of income in a household is a significant factor that drives participation in Parks and Recreation services.

Regarding the level of education achieved by residents living in Farmington, a higher percentage of people 25 years and older living in Farmington have completed a high school education than the U.S. population. 90.4% of Farmington’s population are high school graduates, which represents a number that is 10% higher when compared to the 80.4% of the U.S. population being at least a high school graduate. 23.6% have a bachelor’s degree or higher, which is

slightly lower than the 24.4% of the U.S. population having a bachelor's degree or higher. It appears that Farmington has a solid population base that has at least a high school education.

5. Race

“Farmington’s population has little racial diversity.”

A significant majority of the Farmington population is of the white race. Table 4.4 below shows the racial cross section of the community.

Table 8.6: *Racial Makeup of Farmington*

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Racial Group	Number of People	% of entire population	U.S. Population %
White	11,824	95.6%	75.1%
Hispanic or Latino	232	1.9%	12.5%
Asian African Americans	180	1.5%	3.6%
Black or African American	92	0.7%	12.3%
Some other Race	35	0.6%	5.5%

6. City Housing

Farmington’s housing units have increased by more than 3,000 units since 1999.

Housing types can be a good indicator in determining parks and recreational needs in the community. While the City has added more single family type housing units than multi family units since 1999, there has nonetheless been an increase in the overall number of multi family residential units in the City whether they be owned or rented. There are many different types of multi-family units that can be built including townhomes, multiplexes and apartment buildings. It is important to remember that multi family unit neighborhoods become dependent on public parks as the primary area for play because multi family units generally do not have sizeable yards. In Farmington there are many multi-family areas that do not have sizeable yards and so they have become dependent on the use of City parks for play. It will be important that as multi-family developments occur that the City makes sure that adequate public park space is provided.

The City has added 3,016 new housing units since 1999. 1,250 units of this total are multi-family units. **Table 8.6** below shows the breakdown of the housing types that have been built since 1999.

Housing Type	Units Built	% of All Units Built
<i>Single Family</i>	<i>1,766</i>	<i>59%</i>
<i>Multi Family</i>	<i>1,250</i>	<i>41%</i>
Total	<i>3,016</i>	<i>100%</i>

Table 8.6: *Housing Types*

Section 4 Public Input and Planning Process

“It is important for the community be given an opportunity to provide input on what vision it wishes to create for the future of parks and recreation.”

The Department has a history of involving the community in its planning efforts. The community has participated in public meetings that have been held for such planning processes as: 2020 Park and Recreation Master Plan, Recreational Facility Needs Study, Community Center Feasibility Study, Public Facilities Study, park master plans for individual parks, and Community Visioning for the 2030 Master Plan. The City also completes a community survey every five years that measures satisfaction with City services. Utilizing input from the public provides for good government.

4.1 2020 Park and Recreation Master Plan

As part of creating a 2030 Master Plan the goals/issues identified in the previous 2020 Park and Recreation Master Plan that it created needs to be revisited. By looking back first and acknowledging its achievements, the City can use these accomplishments as a springboard forward as it develops a 2030 Master Plan. Through public input, the City created and approved the 2020 Park and Recreation Master Plan in 1998. Ten years ago, the 2020 Park and Recreation Master Plan identified 10 goals. A status report of whether or not the ten goals were achieved is being provided in order to help define future direction for the 2030 Master Plan.

Goal #1: Explore a Centrally Located Community/Regional Park Facility and/or Recreational Public Lake

Status: *A central park location has been identified to be created in a 950+ acre development site in the northeast area of the City. Acquisition of the park land is planned to occur through the park dedication process meaning that the City will not have to pay for the land. Conceptually it has been discussed that the park will contain youth ball fields and soccer fields. A community center being built on this site has also been explored. It also will contain other park amenities such as walking trails, picnic shelters and playground equipment. The community park identified site is adjacent to approximately a 90+ acre wooded and open space area. While a new Dakota County regional park is planned to be created in Empire Township, it will not be centrally located within the City of Farmington border. It will however only be approximately two miles to the east of the City of Farmington and Empire Township border. It should be readily and easily accessible either by walking/biking trails or with a vehicle. Since a centrally located community park has not yet occurred, it seems to make some sense that a centrally located community park or an increase in community parks in general, should be addressed somewhere in the 2030 Master Plan that is being created.*

Goal #2: Evaluate Existing Parks on a Yearly Basis to Ensure the Parks are Safe, Well Maintained and Accessible to All Residents; Identify Upgrade Needs to be Included in the 5 Year CIP; Evaluate Current Park and Trail Needs Based on Demographic Forecasts.

Status: *A five year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) has been created that identifies a schedule of when improvements will be made in specific City parks. This process was*

implemented in 2003. There have been sixteen parks that have had a PMP developed through the end of 2007. The PMP process has used public input to gather information regarding the amenities and programs that the community would like to see in the park. The identification of the amenities and program spaces by the public helped create an estimated budget for the park improvement costs. However due to budget constraints, City staff, PRAC and the City Council prioritized the improvements based on a smaller budget than what was estimated and approved for each park during the PMP process. In some situations though, all of the improvements were completed because the budget was small enough to accommodate the completion of all improvements. The PMPs that have been completed thus far for the sixteen parks will be reviewed on an approximate 8-year cycle. The review will be completed in order to see if the park improvements identified in the original PMP continue to be priorities for the community. If the improvements are still a community priority, then depending on the money available, either some or all of the remaining improvements not completed initially will be completed.

The safety, maintenance and accessibility of the parks are now evaluated on an annual basis. This occurs several ways. One way it is accomplished is through the Park Maintenance Division staff holding one staff retreat in the spring and one staff retreat in the fall to discuss the condition of each park from a maintenance and safety point of view and then developing an annual work plan to address any issues related to safety, maintenance and/or accessibility. A second way this is being accomplished was through a training priority identified during the 2004 and 2005 budget process to send Park Maintenance Division staff to playground safety training school offered by the NRPA National Playground Safety Institute. Staff had not previously been trained on how to identify safety issues when inspecting playground equipment. As a result of this training, staff members now regularly inspect and document the condition of playground equipment. Staff members have corrected a number of playground safety issues as a result of the training received. Accessibility seemed to be an issue to the City's parks. Since 2004 paved trails have been constructed in parks that provide excellent access to park structures. Pea gravel is being removed from playground sites and new engineered wood fiber is being installed in its place. The engineered wood fiber meets the Federal Access Board requirements for an accessible surface to playground equipment. The wood fiber also meets safety surfacing requirements for playground equipment. Accessibility issues to existing park structures along with corrective actions are being identified when PMP's are created.

Goal #3: Present and Restore the Vermillion River Corridor and Acquire Properties Abutting the River When They Become Available.

Status: *Through the shore land protection ordinance and new park dedication requirements, the Vermillion River Corridor is being protected and preserved. This was seen in the Vermillion River Crossing commercial development review process that occurred in 2004 and 2005. Through careful scrutiny by City staff, consultants, and other governmental agencies such as the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District staff, land adjacent to Vermillion River Corridor was protected and preserved as open space. There will be additional development that will occur along the Vermillion River and within the City border that will need to be acquired and preserved. Because the City has shoreland*

protection and park dedication ordinances in place, the acquisition and preservation of Vermillion River should continue to occur.

Goal #4: Assess Current Park Development Trends; Develop a Variety of Park Facilities.

Status: *This is being accomplished through the hiring of a consultant who has worked with City staff and the public in developing PMPs. The PMPs created thus far are a reflection of the trends that are occurring in the area of park development including the amenities and facilities that are being planned for future construction.*

Goal #5: Assess Current Recreational Trends; Develop a Variety of Recreational Activities.

Status: *Recreation Division staff members have developed a variety of new recreational activities. They have formed a partnership with other municipal Park and Recreation Departments to provide an adult soccer league and special events. A new skate park was created to allow youth the opportunity to skateboard, which has become a popular alternative activity for youth. There have been new programs created at the Rambling River Center for older adults. These new programs include weight training, cardiovascular equipment training, aerobics, tai chi and a model railroad club.*

Goal #6: Explore the Construction of a Recreational Water Park and/or Community Center.

Status: *City staff worked with the community to gather information and feedback from the community regarding the construction of a community center. Several committees were assembled and had representation from various interests from the community. One committee assembled in 2004 completed a community center feasibility study that looked at the size and spaces that should be included in a community center. The committee also conducted a survey of the community that showed there was support for a new community center. A second committee, assembled in mid-2005, further studied a community center by analyzing sites, partnerships and the phasing of a community center that would include certain spaces within the first phase of construction. This second committee also conceptually planned what a community center could look like based on the spaces identified to be included in the first phase of construction. The Committee brought forwarded this information and made a recommendation to the City Council in early 2006. The City Council subsequently determined that it was not the appropriate time to construct a community center. While an outdoor pool has not been discussed in great detail, it nonetheless should be discussed and addressed as part of the first phase of a community center and whether or not the first phase should include an indoor pool or an attached outdoor pool. A Facility Master Plan Study was also completed for several city facilities including the outdoor pool. The study showed that the existing outdoor pool facility is in poor condition and needs significant improvements including a new bathhouse, pool shell and pool deck. A PMP created for Evergreen Knoll Park identifies the existing outdoor pool being replaced with a spray ground or splash pad in the park should an indoor or outdoor pool be built as part of a community center. It seems to make sense that a potential community center and/or water park should be addressed somewhere in the 2030 Master Plan that is being created.*

Goal #7: Evaluate Future Expansion or Relocation of the Farmington Senior Center.

Status: *The City has evaluated the existing Rambling River Center through two studies. The first study that was completed late in 2005 was a Facility Master Plan Study that reviewed the present condition of the existing facility. The recommendation based on the facility study stated that the City should continue to defer maintenance on the building but should identify the replacement of the mechanical equipment in the capital improvement plan. It further stated that creating senior space in a community center would be a viable alternative to using the existing building given its age. The community center committee that is currently analyzing spaces seems to favor the inclusion of senior space in a new community center.*

There have been several improvements completed in the past several years that have in the short term addressed space issues. New staff offices were constructed that provided more and separate space for full and part-time staff. Another improvement that was completed was constructing a fitness room by dividing a large meeting room space into separate space for fitness equipment and reducing the meeting room space. As a result of new offices being constructed, the opportunity presented itself to move computer equipment into a new computer lab that was created from the former staff office space. New computer hardware (including a laser printer) and software were purchased from fundraising efforts and from other donations.

The ordinance that pertains to the creation of a Senior Advisory Board was amended in 2004-2005 to change the name from the Senior Center Advisory Board to the Rambling River Center Advisory Board. The ordinance was also amended to identify that the Rambling River Center Advisory Board forward recommendations to the PRAC concerning the Rambling River Center. Previously the Rambling River Center Advisory Board forwarded recommendations directly to the City Council.

Goal #8: Work with Dakota County, Independent School District 192, Surrounding Communities, the City's Boards and Commissions and Private and/or Non-Profit Organizations on Developing Joint Ventures for Recreational Parks, Open Spaces, Facilities and Trails Systems.

Status: *In 200, the PRAC met with the City of Rosemount Park and Recreation Commission, the Empire Township Park and Recreation Commission and the Lakeville Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Committee to discuss common issues and to look at possible partnerships that could be formed. The meetings with Empire Township and Lakeville appeared to be especially beneficial as trail alignments were discussed so future trails could be constructed in such a manner that a trail leading from one community to the next would be seamless. It was determined that these initial meetings were very beneficial from the standpoint that neighboring communities were no longer planning in a vacuum but rather were sharing information that should help neighboring communities better plan together for a comprehensive and regional trail system.*

Dakota County staff members attended several PRAC meetings informing them about the regional park that was identified in Empire Township and asked for their support for the regional park. PRAC and City Council members both endorsed the location of a new

regional park in Empire Township. The regional park location was approved by the County Commissioners and acquisition of the property is underway.

Goal #9: Explore Alternative Revenue Sources to Generate Additional Funds for Park Improvements

Status: *Traditional and alternative funding sources have become more difficult to come by. The City's Park Dedication Ordinance was amended and as part of the amendments, a new park development fee was created that requires a developer to contribute funds that are to be used in the new development that will help pay for half of the cost to construct a new park or trails.*

The PRAC has looked at alternative funding sources and is weighing whether or not to propose a dedicated funding amount from the general levy that would go into the Park Improvement Fund.

One of the alternative funding sources that emerged in the past years is the annual transfer of 50% of the profits from the liquor store operations after the Arena subsidy has been made. Annually \$40,000-\$50,000 has been transferred from the liquor store operations to the Park Improvement Fund. It is hoped that this amount will continue to increase as the Farmington liquor stores have positioned themselves well for growth by leasing larger store space along Pilot Knob and in the City Center development. It seems to make sense that alternative funding sources should be addressed somewhere in the 2030 Master Plan that is being created.

Goal #10: Evaluate Future Expansion of the Farmington Civic Arena.

Status: *The City initiated a feasibility study to analyze whether or not the arena could be expanded on vacant City property to the east of the existing arena. Phase I of the study showed that the site was not big enough to accommodate the parking as required by City Code and also that a significant portion of the property was in the 100 year flood plain and would need to be filled in order to allow the construction of a second sheet of ice. While it is possible to fill the flood plain, it is also very expensive because of the cost to haul material in as well as to mitigate the loss of flood plain by creating flood plain elsewhere along the Vermillion River. Additionally the site was not large enough to accommodate the storage of storm water runoff due to its immediate adjacency to the Vermillion River, which has been classified by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as a protected trout stream.*

4.2 Recreational Facility Needs Study

In 2003-2004 a Recreational Facility Needs Study was completed with the assistance of Ingraham and Associates, a professional planning firm. A 19 member Recreational Facility Study Task Force was created that consisted of community representation from various youth sports organizations, senior citizen, Farmington School District staff, Farmington School Board member, a member of the clergy, Dakota County Fair Board, daycare provider, Farmington Chamber of Commerce, City staff members, Farmington City Council members and other at-large members from the community not affiliated with any organization. The Task Force's primary role was to prepare and submit a final report back to the City Council that would provide

key recommendations concerning the future direction of recreational facilities. As a result of this almost one year study, five key recreational facility priorities were identified:

Priority #1: Prepare a community center feasibility study including space needs, location, partnerships and cost estimates.

Priority #2: Identify sites for separate youth and adult sports complexes with approximately 40-60 acres for each site.

Priority #3: Prepare a park system plan that identifies sites for major facilities.

Priority #4: Build community gyms in a community center in partnership with the school district or through public/private partnerships.

Priority #5: Expand trail network and connections.

4.3 Community Center Feasibility Study

In 2004, and as a result of the Recreational Facility Needs Study, the City Council authorized addressing the recommendation of completing a Community Center Feasibility Study (Feasibility Study). Ballard King and Associates, a consulting firm experienced with community center maintenance and operations, was hired to complete the Feasibility Study. A Community Center Feasibility Study Steering Committee (Steering Committee) was created that consisted of various community members that were similar in makeup to the Recreational Facility Needs Study Task Force. The Steering Committee spent time addressing various types of recreational spaces that could be contained within a community center that would best fit the current and long-term needs of the community. The Feasibility Study also completed a community survey, a market analysis of the primary and secondary markets and developed a proforma for the operation and maintenance of a community center.

A Community Attitude and Citizen Interest Survey was conducted by Leisure Vision in November and December 2004 as part of a Community Center Feasibility Study that was initiated in 2004 and completed in 2005. Leisure Vision was subcontracted by Ballard King and Associates to administer the survey. As a result of this survey, feedback and input was obtained from the community regarding indoor and outdoor recreational facilities. 1,523 surveys were first distributed by mail to randomly selected households. In order to have a high return rate on the survey, Leisure Vision was to make a follow up phone call to encourage respondents to return a completed survey. The goal was to have at least 300 surveys completed and returned to Leisure Vision. This goal was far exceeded with 594 surveys being completed and returned. This resulted in a return rate of 39%. The results of the random sample of 594 households had a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/- 4.0%. While the survey questions focused primarily on indoor facilities and specifically on a community center, there were several questions related to parks and outdoor recreational facilities. The following summarizes the feedback received from the community survey:

Survey respondents indicated that 84% of households use City parks, significantly higher than the national benchmark of 72%. 45% of the survey respondents indicated their households are currently using indoor recreation facilities. However, only 32% of the households using recreation facilities feel the existing facilities meet their needs. Household use of a new community center that had an indoor pool was very high with 71% of the survey respondents indicating their household would use the facility at least a few times per month. The survey results also indicated there was a strong community need and support for developing more natural areas and paved trails. It should be noted that many of the stakeholder interviewed also

identified a need for more sports fields (soccer, baseball, softball and football). Overall, 37% of the survey respondents felt the development of a community center was either a very high priority or high priority compared to other issues facing the City.

Based on the discussion by the Steering Committee and the results of a statistically valid community attitudes and interests survey that was completed by ETC Leisure Vision from Olathe, Kansas, the following components were recommended to the City Council to be included in the construction of a community center:

- Aquatics Area
- Gymnasium
- Indoor Turf Area
- Walking/Jogging Track
- Indoor Playground
- Weight and Cardiovascular Area
- Aerobics and Dance Studio
- Auxiliary Fitness Area
- Multipurpose Room
- Youth Fitness Area
- Birthday Party Rooms
- Rock Climbing
- Game Room
- Senior Center Area
- Babysitting Area
- Lobby
- Park and Recreation Department Offices
- Storage

The City Council accepted the final report of the Feasibility Study and then approved a request to complete a Conceptual Planning Study of a community center that would include completing the following items:

- Develop a building footprint
- Identify a preferred site
- Estimate construction costs
- Develop a conceptual site plan (including indoor and outdoor recreational facilities)

Bonestroo, Rosene, Anderlik and Associates consulting firm was subsequently hired to complete the Conceptual Planning Study of a community center. A Community Center Conceptual Planning Study Task Force (Task Force) was formed to complete the conceptual planning and forward a recommendation to the City Council. The Task Force consisted of two members from the following groups:

- City Council
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
- Rambling River Center Advisory Board (City's advisory board for senior citizens)
- Farmington School District (one staff member and one school board member)

- City staff (City Administrator and Parks and Recreation Director)

The Task Force completed the study of the four identified items and forwarded a recommendation to the PRAC approving the conceptual development plan for a community center. The PRAC forwarded a recommendation to the City Council to accept the community center conceptual development plan and to move forward with a referendum for a community center. The City Council determined that due to other projects having a higher priority and because of the cost to construct a community center it was not the right time to go to referendum. The community center project was postponed until a later date.

4.4 Public Facilities Study

A public facilities study was completed by Wold Architects and Engineers in 2005. Recreational facilities reviewed during the study included the Rambling River Center, outdoor pool and the Schmitz-Maki Arena. The content of this study will be covered more in detail in Section 7 – Recreational Facilities.

4.5 Citizen's Satisfaction Survey

A survey was completed in 2006 that accomplished three objectives:

1. Gather feedback and identify issues and concerns faced by City residents.
2. Determine what residents like most about living in the City of Farmington.
3. Gather opinions about public safety and parks and recreation.

A total of 500 phone interviews in the community were completed. The methodology used to conduct the survey produced a statistically reliable survey. The Citizen's Satisfaction Survey contained 25 questions, which of this total, 4 questions were related solely to the Department. In addition to these four questions dedicated to the Department, there were several other questions that included the Department as one of the responses to the question. The following is a summary of the questions asked and responses received relating to the satisfaction with the Department:

Question #8 Which City department have you had the most contact with during the past year? The Department had the most frequent contact with survey participants. Twenty three percent (23%) of participants surveyed said they had the most contact with the Department. The responses showed that females had more contact with the Department than males did. 60% of the respondents that identified that they had the most contact with the Department were under the age of 45 years. Households with incomes between \$70,000-\$89,999 had the most contact.

Question #17 What information on the web site did you find most useful?

The Department area of the website was mentioned as one of the two areas mentioned most often as useful. Twenty two percent (22%) of the respondents identified the Department's area of the web site as most useful. Only City News/Information was higher at twenty four percent (24%).

Question #22 If you or any members of your household have used City parks within the past 12 months, how would you rate the quality of the parks?

A four point scale was used with a rating of 1 meaning poor, a rating of 2 meaning fair, a rating of 3 meaning good and a rating of 4 meaning excellent. 77% of the respondents said that the

quality of parks was either good or excellent. 14% of the respondents said that they had not used the parks in the past year.

Question #23 Which type of park should be the top priority for development in Farmington during the next five years?

Thirty one percent (31%) of the respondents felt that large community parks with athletic fields should be the top priority. Twenty seven percent (27%) of respondents said that natural or open space should be the top priority. Twenty seven percent (27%) of respondents said that neighborhood parks should be the top priority. Only nine percent (9%) of respondents said that small mini-parks should be the top priority.

Question #24 In the past 12 months, if you or any of your household have participated in recreational programs offered by the City, how would you rate the experience?

Again using a four point scale of 1 being poor and 4 being excellent, forty three percent (43%) of respondents felt that the experience was either good or excellent. Only six percent (6%) of respondents felt that the experience was either fair or poor. Surprisingly fifty one percent (51%) of the respondents had not participated in any recreational program offered by the City in the past year.

Question #25 If you or any members of your household have used any City trails in the last 12 months, how would you rate the quality of the trails?

Sixty six percent (61%) of respondents indicated that they would rate the quality of trails as either good or excellent. Only seven percent (7%) rated the quality of trails as either fair or poor. Twenty seven percent (27%) of respondents indicated that they had not used City trails in the past year.

Overall it appears that the community is satisfied with the types of services that the Department provides to the community. The survey seems to indicate that the direction the City should take includes the following:

- 1. Increased marketing of recreational programs should be made to the community making the community more aware of what is offered in order to encourage more residents to participate.**
- 2. More diverse programs should be offered to the community in order to meet what appears to be a broad base of recreational interests in the community.**
- 3. Trails should be marketed more to the community, which should include educating the community about the City's trail system through the use of an updated trails map.**
- 4. When acquiring land for new City parks, larger parks should be the focus.**
- 5. The City should continue to focus on maintenance of its existing parks in order to create safe and attractive parks that encourage the community to use them.**

4.6 Community Visioning

It is important that the community be given an opportunity to provide comments and input on creating a future vision of parks and recreation. Two primary methods were used to gather public input during the updating of the 2030 Master Plan. The first was by holding public meetings in the spring of 2007 that resulted in the community providing input on the vision that it wished to create for the 2030 Master Plan. The second was through a questionnaire that was

provided to youth sports groups through the Farmington Youth Athletic Association in order to gain information about their perceived recreational facility, parks, trails and recreation program needs. A summary of these two primary public input processes follows.

1. Public Open House Meetings

Public open houses were held in January and February 2007. During these visioning sessions, community members reviewed the 2020 Comprehensive Plan and were asked to evaluate the 2020 Comprehensive Plan policies. There were 10 primary goals that were identified in the 2020 Park and Recreation Master Plan that were reviewed above in this section. In addition to the these 10 goals, there were also strategies that addressed parks, trails, open space and recreation program under the over-arching 34 goals for the entire 2020 Comprehensive Plan. Participants were asked to select one of the three following choices: yes if the goal should be carried over into the 2030 Comprehensive Plan; no if the goal should not be carried over into the 2030 Comprehensive Plan; or no answer if they did not want to select either yes or no.

Participants who attended the public open house meetings overwhelmingly supported goals and strategies identifying the preservation of open space, natural areas and environmentally sensitive areas. In almost all situations more than 80% were in support of continuing to identify the preservation of open space, natural areas and environmentally sensitive areas in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Most important elements cited that should be preserved were areas that contained steep slopes, streams, wooded areas, and wetlands.

Goals and strategies that contained reference to trail and sidewalk connections that are pedestrian friendly received a favorable response more than 80% of the time that participants approved carrying the goals and strategies related to trail and sidewalk connections over into the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Interestingly trails, sidewalks and pedestrian connections received the highest response on a strategy related to pedestrian friendly new neighborhoods where 97% of the participants felt that this should be carried over as a strategy for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. More than 80% of participants responded favorably to having goals and strategies related to the preservation and protection of stream corridors as a greenway that would serve as a trail connection between parks, residential areas, schools and businesses.

Arts and culture did not seem to rank as high as a goal and strategy to carry over into the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. In almost all situations related to goals and strategies that dealt with arts and culture, typically 56% or less of participants felt that arts and culture goals and strategies should be carried over to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

Participants felt that the goal of having 20 acres of parks per 1,000 residents should be carried over to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Regarding how many acres of park land should be attained by 2020, 66% of participants felt that the Goal of having 542 acres of park land by 2020 should be carried forward into the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

The community green idea for the Central District that was created in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan received very little support to be carried over as a goal or strategy. In most cases where the community green idea was identified in a goals or strategies, 30% or less of the participants favored it being part of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

A centrally located community or regional park seemed to be a goal that the participants favored as a future goal. In the four strategies developed for locating a community or regional park, the responses ranged from 78-85% in favor of carrying forward the idea of finding a location for a community or regional park as a goal in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

Regarding park and trail improvements, participants felt strongly about carrying over goals and objectives related to funding and making improvements to parks and trails. 78% favored addressing the continued evaluation of park improvements including identifying the improvements in a 5 year Capital Improvement Program. Strategies related to developing a variety of park facilities favorably scored between 83-85% to be continued as a goal in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

Recreational facility improvements were also favored to be continued to be addressed in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The Rambling River Center expansion strategies that were identified scored between 80-83% to be carried forward. The future expansion of the Farmington Civic Arena goal received between a 66-77% favorable response to include in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Exploring construction of a water park or community center continues to be favored as a goal to include as well.

2. Input Questionnaire

Solicitation of input at the public open houses and from youth sports groups occurred through a four question survey that was provided at the first public visioning session and to the Farmington Youth Athletic Association member organizations. Youth sports organized under the organizational umbrella include the following:

Traveling Baseball	In-House Baseball
Traveling Basketball	Hockey Association
Football	Volleyball Club
Tigersharks Swim Club	Traveling Soccer
Recreational Soccer	Tri-County Figure Skating Club
Girls Fastpitch Association	Track and Field/Cross Country
Wrestling Club	

There were nineteen surveys that were returned. The following four questions were asked on the survey:

1. Identify the three biggest issues facing parks, trails, recreational facilities and/or programs.

The most common responses to this question were the following:

- Shortage of outdoor recreational facilities
- Shortage of indoor recreational facilities
- Outdated recreational facilities

2. Identify three things that you like best about the City's parks, trails, recreational facilities and/or programs.

The most common responses to this question were as follows:

- Trails that connect the City of Farmington

- Adequate parks and locations
- Wide variety of good programs
- Well maintained natural areas & trails
- Facilities are old but are kept clean and in good order

3. Identify three new things that should be added to the City's parks, trails, recreational facilities and/or programs either that we don't have or that we need more of.

The most common responses to this question were the following items:

- More Recreation Facilities/parks (for all seasons with full amenities, fields, outdoor rinks, warming houses, tennis courts etc.)
- More trails or sidewalks and parks

4. If you were to leave the City and come back in 25 years what changes in the parks, trails, recreational facilities and recreational programs would you expect to see.

The most common responses to this question were as follows:

- A community center
- Well maintained recreational facilities, parks & trails
- Preserved natural areas and the environment

As a result of this survey, the responses seem to indicate the following:

- there is interest in more indoor and outdoor recreational facilities being built in the City
- trails and parks are important to the community
- the City should acquire more parks that feature natural areas/open space so that they can be preserved for future use
- well maintained recreational facilities, parks and trails is important

Section 5. Parks and Open Space

Section 5 will provide an overview of the City's parks and open space system. The section will depict the location and the acreage of existing parks and open spaces found within the City boundary. It will also provide a description of the location of a proposed Dakota County Regional Park in Empire Township that is in close proximity to Farmington and how access might be provided through Farmington to this proposed regional park. In addition, the Dakota County Fairgrounds lies just south of the City and just outside the City boundary. While this property is not owned by the City, it does provide events that are available to City residents to easily access.

In order to better understand how the City is currently positioned with its park and open space system, a parks inventory was completed that identifies amenities contained within each of the City's parks. The parks inventory will be used to assess if the City currently has any deficiencies with any national standards that have been developed by the NRPA. These standards are primarily based on having certain park amenities within a certain distance of residents.

Since the development of the 2020 Master Plan, the City has undertaken a process of developing a master plan for each of the City's existing parks. This process utilized public input that shaped and defined what amenities should be included in the park and more precisely where each of the amenities should be located in the park. The master plans that have been completed thus far for each park are included in the Appendix of the 2030 Master Plan.

Through the completion of the master planning of each individual City park, the City has been able to identify a cost to make improvements to parks. Not only is there a cost estimate of what it will take to improve a park to meet the master plan that has been created but it also has provided the City with what the total cost will be to improve all parks to the level identified in each of the individual park master plans. Financial detail in this section will include:

- 1. A five year Capital Improvement Plan for parks and trails**
- 2. A table that will identify the following:**
 - *if a park master plan has been created and approved*
 - *the associated master plan improvements that funds have been spent on since 2003 and the total amount spent on the improvements that have been completed in each park*
 - *the improvements shown on the approved master plan that have not been completed and what the remaining costs are to complete those improvements*

This section will include an analysis and mapping of the location of future parks and open space so that as development occurs, a plan may be followed that provides for a park and open space system that meets national standards related to park size, location and are easily accessible either by vehicle, walking or biking.

5.1 Classifications

Parks and open space can be classified according to type and size. One classification system that has been created by the NRPA defines parks according to the acreage contained within the park. Park and open space can also be classified by the features it possesses that make it distinct from other areas. **Table 8.7** explains the classifications of parks and open space.

Table 8.7 *Park and Open Space Classifications*

Classification of Park	Types of Use	Service Area Standard	Size	Site Distinctions
Mini-Park	Small park area that serves smaller population or a specific group	¼ mile or less	Less than one acre	Located close to the neighborhood and population that it serves
Neighborhood Park	Larger park than mini-park it provided an area that can be used for active and passive play	½ mile or less	More than one acre up to 40 acres	Easy access primarily through walking or biking to residents living in a neighborhood
Community Park	Larger park than a neighborhood park it contains both passive and active spaces that can be used for a diverse number of activities	Up to 2 miles	40 acres and up to 200 acres	Captures unique larger environmental features or terrain allows for intense development of recreational facilities
Regional Park (owned and maintained by the Dakota County Park system)	Large park area that is used primarily for passive, outdoor recreation and exploring the natural environment	1 hour or less drive time	200 acres or more	Natural resource based that include features such as: bodies of water, fauna, woodlands, river/stream and topography
Linear Park/Greenway	Area that provide transportation linkage or connections through the following possible modes: hiking, biking, boating, snowmobiling and cross country skiing	No current radius identified	No specific number of acres but width of linear park should be sufficient to protect the environment for wildlife while providing maximum use	Captures areas that occur naturally along streams and rivers or are a result of constructed right of ways or utility easements that provide connections to parks, open space, schools and commercial areas
Open Space	Area that provides habitat for wildlife and passive space for viewing natural areas that includes features such as storm water ponds, wetlands, wooded areas and native/ natural vegetation	No current radius identified	No specific number of acres but adequate size is needed so that the area can sustain itself	Located within close proximity of the community that captures natural resources

5.2 Regional Parks

While the City's park system is composed of primarily neighborhood and community parks, it is important to note that the City does have a need for access to regional parks. The current closest regional park to Farmington is Lebanon Hills Regional Park that is located in Eagan, Minnesota. However recently, the Metropolitan Council has approved creating a new regional park in Empire Township that will be owned and maintained by Dakota County. The park location will be approximately less than two miles from the City of Farmington's municipal boundary. The future regional park will be accessible off of Dakota County Road 66. There are also two future regional trails that are planned to be constructed that will connect to the regional park. One of the regional trails will run parallel with South Creek and will extend from Lakeville through Farmington and will connect to the other regional trail planned to be constructed along the Vermillion River, which will connect to the new regional park in Empire Township. Section 8 Trails and Greenways will address the regional trail system that has been identified by the Metropolitan Council to be created through the City of Farmington.

5.3 Existing Conditions

Table 8.8 below shows in comparison the growth of park acreage by classification since the previous master plan was created and approved in 1998.

Table 8.8: *Park Acreage by Classification*

Classification of Park	1998 Acreage	2007 acreage	Acreage Difference
Mini Parks	0	3.3	+3.3
Neighborhood Parks	57	133.6	+76.2
Community Park	164	252.7	+88.64
Regional Park	0	0	0
Linear Park/Greenway	Not identified	246.52	NA
Open Space	Not identified	239.5	NA

Table 8.13 Farmington's Parks and Open Space Inventory that is found in the Appendix provides a review of the 41 park and open spaces areas that are contained within the City and the amenities found in each park. 23 of these areas are parks and 18 areas are considered open space or natural areas. Of the 23 park areas 19 have been developed with the remaining 4 park areas being planned to be developed within the next 2-5 years. Park and open space acreage currently totals 876 acres with 436 acres of the total acreage being either a mini-park, neighborhood park or community park that utilize well maintained spaces allowing the community to be active in them. The remaining 440 acres are open space that utilizes natural areas for passive recreation. While most of the open space acreage is accessible by the City's trail system some acreage has been set aside as inaccessible in order to either protect its sensitive environment or due to its location as a storm water pond area. The City's current policy is to have at least 20 acres of park acreage per 1,000 residents. Given the current park acreage of 436 acres and the current estimated population of 18,589 people, the City is currently providing 23.57 acres per 1,000 people. The City does not have a current policy of open space and natural area acreage per 1,000 residents. It will be important to set some type of policy related to preserving open space and natural areas for the residents to experience and enjoy. It is being proposed that at least 20

acres of open space and natural area be set aside for every 1,000 residents. If this policy were to be implemented, this would mean that given the City's current estimated population of 18,589, the City would have 23.78 acres of open space and natural areas per 1,000 residents.

5.4 Needs Analysis

It is important to analyze the current inventory of recreational facilities that are owned by the City that were shown in **Table 8.13** and compare them with the minimum number of recreational facilities that are recommended by the NRPA based on a community's population. **Table 8.9** below shows the comparison and identifies where the recreational facility deficiencies currently occur in the City.

Table 8.9: *City of Farmington's Recreation Facility Inventory and NRPA Minimum Standards Based on Population*

Item	Baseball/ Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Playgrounds	Football Fields	Tennis Courts	Outdoor Volleyball Courts	Basketball Courts	Hockey	Indoor Gym Courts
City Facility	11	0	16	0	2	7	12	3	0
NRPA Facility Minimum Standards based on population	1/1,250	1/3,333	1/park	1/20,000	1/2,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/3,000	1/10,000
2007 Estimated population or parks	20,768	20,768	21	20,768	20,768	20,768	20,768	20,768	20,768
NRPA Minimum standard based on 2007 estimated population or number of parks	17	6	21	1	10	4	4	7	2
Currently (under) over NRPA minimum standard	(6)	(6)	(5)	(1)	(8)	3	8	(4)	(2)
2020 Estimated population or parks	27,100	27,100	25	27,100	27,100	27,100	27,100	27,100	27,100
NRPA Minimum standard based estimated population or number of parks	22	8	21	1	14	5	5	9	2
2020 (under) over NRPA minimum standards	(11)	(8)	(9)	(1)	(12)	2	7	(6)	(2)

2030 Estimated population or parks	32,000	32,000	30	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000
NRPA Minimum standard based on estimated population or number of parks	26	10	30	1	16	6	6	11	3
2030 (under) over NRPA minimum standards	(15)	(10)	(14)	(1)	(14)	1	6	(8)	(3)

Based on the above analysis that uses NRPA minimum standards developed for recreational facilities, the City currently does not meet the minimum standards in 7 of the 9 recreational facility categories. In the years 2020 and 2030, it shows that the City will become even more deficient with meeting the minimum recreational facility standards unless it continues to add more facilities as the park and open space system grows.

The School District also owns and maintains recreational facilities. It is important to note that when School District facilities are combined with **Table 8.9** the number of facilities in each category is brought to a level where minimum standards are being met. However it should be noted that because the City does not own these facilities, it has no control over the maintenance or scheduling of these facilities. The issue then is that school district facilities are not always available for public use and are concentrated at a few school sites. School District facilities also serve a larger service area that covers the entire school district boundaries, which are outside the City's boundaries. **Table 8.10** is being used to merely illustrate that the School District does provide recreational facilities that adds to the overall inventory of recreational facilities available to the community.

Table 8.10: *City of Farmington and Farmington School District's Combined Recreation Facility Inventory and NRPA Minimum Standards Based on Population*

Item	Baseball/ Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Playgrounds	Football Fields	Tennis Courts	Outdoor Volleyball Courts	Basketball Courts	Hockey	Indoor Gym Courts
City Facilities	11	0	16	0	2	7	12	3	0
School District Facilities	19	8	3	1	20	0	16	0	24
NRPA Facility Minimum Standards based on population	1/1,250	1/3,333	1/park	1/20,000	1/2,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/3,000	1/10,000
2007 Estimated population or parks	20,768	20,768	21	20,768	20,768	20,768	20,768	20,768	20,768

NRPA Minimum standard based on 2007 estimated population or number of parks	17	6	21	1	10	4	4	7	2
Current (under) over NRPA minimum standard	13	2	(2)	0	12	3	24	(4)	22
2020 Estimated population or parks	27,100	27,100	25	27,100	27,100	27,100	27,100	27,100	27,100
NRPA Minimum standard based estimated population or number of parks	22	8	21	1	14	5	5	9	2
2020 (under) over NRPA minimum standards	8	0	(6)	0	8	2	23	(6)	22
2030 Estimated population or parks	32,000	32,000	30	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000
NRPA Minimum standard based on estimated population or number of parks	26	10	30	1	16	6	6	11	3
2030 (under) over NRPA minimum standards	4	(2)	(11)	0	6	1	22	(8)	21

In looking at the balance of recreational facilities provided by the City and School District, it is difficult to make a fair comparison because facilities at the School District are indoor and outdoor. What can be determined about the analysis is that the City lacks an adequate number of indoor recreational facilities and lacks adequate outdoor recreational facilities in certain areas. The City does not have an adequate number of outdoor recreational facilities such as soccer fields, hockey rinks and ball fields to meet the minimum NRPA standards. This is important to note as the current need for these types of recreational facilities have been made known to the City through community surveys that have been completed over the past several years and from youth sports organizations.

5.5 Park Improvements

The City prides itself in utilizing a public input process to gather input and feedback on the development of park master plans since 2003. As a result, 14 out of the current 21 City parks have approved master plans created that provide a long range (15 years or more) vision for these parks. The public input process for the 14 parks that have been master planned consisted of inviting residents within 350 feet of the park. While the attendance at the public meetings ranged from very few people to many people depending on the type of improvements identified and whether or not neighbors were concerned about the improvements, the important thing to remember is that the approved master plans for the individual City parks reflect improvements that were identified during the public input process.

The public input process for community parks consisted of inviting local youth and adult sports organizations to participate in the planning of the parks. The City currently has master plans for two future community parks. Land for one of the community parks will contain a youth athletic complex and will be given to the City as part of the 965 acre development called Fairhill Development. The other community park that has been master planned is located on land just to the south of the Mystic Meadows First Addition development and park land will be given to the City when this land is developed in the future.

Creation of the individual park master plans has provided the source of information for the timeline to complete the improvements as identified in the five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The strategy has been to first create a master plan for a park and then in the following year make improvements to the park. The City has taken the approach to try and complete all improvements identified in the master plans for new parks provided there is sufficient funding in the Park Improvement Fund (PIF). **Table 8.2** below, previously shown in the Executive Summary Section, shows the City's five year CIP.

Table 8.2: Five Year Parks and Trail Improvement Budget

Name of Park and Projects	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Vermillion Grove Park: <i>boardwalk construction</i>	\$55,000				
Farmington Preserve Park: <i>playground, shelter, basketball court, turf seeding, prairie restoration, signage, trails and site amenities</i>	\$100,000				
North Creek Park: <i>playground, shelter with warming house, turf seeding, fishing dock, trails, site amenities, hockey and pleasure skating rinks and park signage</i>	\$125,000				
Meadowview Park: <i>boardwalk construction</i>		\$20,000			
Hill Dee Park: <i>playground</i>	\$45,000				
Lake Julia Park: <i>playground, shelter, trails basketball court and master plan development</i>		\$100,000			
Pine Knoll Park: <i>playground, shelter, basketball court, trails and master plan development</i>		\$85,000			
Middle Creek Park: <i>boardwalk</i>		\$35,000			

<i>construction</i>					
Troy Hill Park: <i>playground, gazebo and master plan development</i>					\$50,000
Prairieview Park: <i>basketball court, shelter, trails and master plan development</i>				\$50,000	
Fairhills Park: <i>shelter, playground equipment, basketball court and master plan development</i>				\$50,000	
Town Square Park: <i>gazebo, landscaping, playground, site amenities, sculptures and master plan development</i>			\$250,000		
Rambling River Park: <i>master plan development, playground, shelter, trails, amphitheatre, prairie restoration, sculptures</i>				\$1,000,000	
Mystic Meadows Development Community Park: <i>four field adult softball complex, shelters, maintenance building, playground, parking lot, concession and restroom building</i>				\$2,600,000	
Fairhill Development Community Park: <i>five field youth baseball complex, soccer fields, lacrosse fields, shelters, concessions/restroom building, outdoor hockey and pleasure rink, playground, parking lot, turf seeding and site amenities</i>		\$3,300,000			
Middle Creek Park: <i>playground, shelters, trails, parking lot, site amenities and ballfield</i>		\$475,000			
Lake Julia Waterway: <i>pedestrian bridge</i>		\$100,000			

While the five year CIP identifies the schedule for completing improvements in certain parks in the coming years, the sources of where the funding will come from to fund the improvements in the coming year has not. This issue will need to be addressed as part of the 2030 Master Plan so the PIF does not run out of funds in the future so improvements can continue to be made to existing and new parks.

1. Funding Issues

There are many issues associated with completing all of the improvements identified in each of the individual park master plans. The biggest current issue is having an insufficient fund balance in the PIF to fund all of the improvements that have been identified in the park master plans. There are currently only three parks that have had all improvements completely constructed as identified in their master plan. Several more parks have a significant amount of improvements that have been completed with only a few items that have been deferred. Parks that have athletic fields shown as part of their master plan have not had any improvements constructed. These parks with athletic field complexes account for a significant portion of what has been deferred to date by the City for park improvements. The Appendix contains **Table 8.12** Deferred Park Improvements that identifies improvements in parks that have been deferred due to a shortage in

funding. The City has relied in the past on the park dedication process to receive cash-in-lieu of land in order to fund improvements in new and existing parks. However, this funding source is unreliable to be the sole funding source for making improvements to parks. The City also established a policy that allows for the transfer of 50% of the municipal liquor store profits into the PIF. However these profits have fluctuated over the years and there has not been enough profits transferred to keep pace with the cost of constructing park improvements.

2. Funding Solutions

The City will need to develop a strategy on how a dedicated long term funding source will continue to occur. By having a dedicated long term funding source, it will provide continuous money for improvements so facilities and amenities can be replaced and/or added in park and open space areas so there continues to be good diversity, which will provide a variety of experiences to park and open space users. There are several possible dedicated funding solutions for the City to consider. While no one solution is necessarily the best, the possible solutions to consider are as follows:

- General obligation bond referendum
- Chapter 429 funding as part of a larger City improvement project
- Increase in amount of liquor store profit transfer
- Annual General Fund transfer
- Financial partnerships
- Grants from other agencies

5.6 Future Park Locations

The City has created an Existing and Proposed Parks, Open Space and Trails Map, which is included in the Appendix that identifies the location of future parks, open space and trails. The map has identified locations for future neighborhood and community parks based on an NRPA standard that no resident in a City shall be further than a half mile (5-6 blocks) away from a City park. While the acreage for each future park has not been established, it is anticipated when land is being developed where a future park is located, the park acreage and location will be determined in order to meet the half-mile standard.

5.7 Parks Amenities Inventory

Table 8.10, previously referenced in **Section 5.4**, identifies the City has fewer facilities than what is recommended by NRPA minimum standards. While the City currently lacks certain facilities compared to recommended NRPA minimum standards, the City does have a diverse park and open space system in regards to the types of facilities and amenities offered to park and open space users. Twenty-six (26) different types of amenities are identified throughout the park and open space system. It is important the City continue to look for new trends in the area of park development including adding new amenities and facilities in park and open space areas that currently do not exist. As mentioned previously **Table 8.13** Farmington Parks and Open Space Inventory found in the Appendix shows the various facilities and amenities that are found in City parks and open space areas.

5.8 Maintenance

The City has maintained its parks and open space areas well. As the City's park and open space system grows, the City will need to budget additional money to cover the increased maintenance and operational costs. This will include providing funding for additional personnel to complete the increased maintenance and operational work in parks and open space areas. While there is no established policy identifying a minimum or maximum staffing level for park maintenance and operations, City staff have recently begun to identify the estimated number of additional hours needed to maintain new parks and open space areas as they are developed. As these hours begin to accumulate, it seems appropriate that when certain thresholds are met such as additional hours that are equivalent to full-time staff hours (2,080 hours), additional staff, whether seasonal, part-time regular or full-time regular staff should be hired in order to adequately meet the increased demand on staff time needed to maintain the additional parks and open space areas.

The City's annual budget contains funds for the purchase of maintenance equipment and vehicles. The City has an established guideline for the replacement of park maintenance equipment and vehicles and when equipment or vehicles are identified to be replaced or added to the existing inventory. Annual funding should be provided in the Capital Outlay budget to acquire the equipment and vehicles identified in a specific year to be replaced or added to the existing inventory.

Section 6 Recreation Programs

6.1 Current Programs

The Department offers a wide range of recreation programs to adults and children of all ages, abilities and both genders. Offerings range widely from team sports, individual sports and fitness programs, themed & play specific activities to cultural enrichment. The City's regular programs are augmented by a broad array of special events, including seasonal activities, community celebrations and other features for children, adults and families. Additionally, community and other departmental partnerships help expand and broaden programs and activities offered through the Department.

Recreation programs the City currently offers include:

Athletics/Sports – Youth

Basketball
T-Ball
Tennis
Kickball
Swim Lessons
Skate Lessons
Golf
Gymnastics
Ski/Snowboard Classes
Martial Arts/Self Defense
In-Line, Skateboard Camps
Baseball Camps
Football Camps
Lacrosse Camps
Soccer Camps
Volleyball Camps

Athletics/Sports - Adult

Golf
Martial Arts/Self Defense
Soccer League
Volley Ball League
Kickball League
7-Man Touch Football League
Softball Leagues
Ski/Snowboard Classes
Skate Lessons
Fitness Programs

Themed & Play Specific Activities/Cultural Enrichment (all ages)

Playground Programs
Trips –day and extended
Recreation/Special Interest Camps
Specific Training Classes
Puppet Wagon
Swim Bus
Yoga
Computer Classes
Dancing
Issue Specific Presentations-Programs
Cards/Board Games
Organ Lessons
Whittling
Interest Specific Clubs
Bowling

Driving Refresher Courses

Special Events/Celebrations:

Easter Egg Hunt

Halloween Walk

Party on the Knoll

Rambling River Days

 Bed Races

 Kiss the Pig

 Dew Run

 Kids Fun Friday (afternoon)

P2 Day

Earth & Arbor Day/Pond Clean Up

Touch a Truck

Annual Bike Auction

Peddler in the Park

Party on the Knoll

Community Expo

RRC Anniversary Dinner

RRC Volunteer Recognition

Outdoor Pool Events

Spring Skate Festival

National Skating Week

Who Done It Hike?

GPS Amazing Family Race

Take a Kid Fishing

CPR Saturday – Farmington

Secret Holiday Shop for Kids

Santa Calls

6.2 Needs Analysis

Recreation programming is clearly one of Farmington's strengths. Programs currently offered are comprehensive and attempt to serve all sectors in the community. The staff is professional, knowledgeable, creative, dedicated and responsive to the needs of the community and to new trends in parks and recreation. There is no question that Farmington's recreation/leisure programming capability is a positive influence on people's perceptions of the City and is a source of pride for the Department. The Division excels at special programs and events, sports programs, senior programming and youth and family activities.

Of special note is the relationship the Division plays in fostering partnerships between the Division and businesses & organizations within and outside community. These partnerships offer greater recreation/leisure opportunities for City residents and visitors.

A general belief taken by the City is that parks and recreation is an important service for the community and by this acknowledgement it recognizes recreation/leisure programming, facilities and parks plays an important role in improving the quality of life for its residents and visitors. To support this belief the City Council has:

- Adopted a fee ordinance setting fees for parks and recreation, such as facility rental fees
- Approved a Strategic Revenue Plan providing the Department with direction to create a fee structure for recreation/leisure programs and facilities identifying at what percent that costs are to be recovered through fees and through general fund subsidy.
- Approved a scholarship program for qualified youths that underwrites program costs. Costs are covered by a sponsorship through the Rotary Club of Farmington and other funding sources.

Planning for the next 25 years is essential to completing and enhancing the current parks and recreation system as well as adapting it to changing recreation trends. The following list is intended to identify where the City could further expand or enhance an already excellent range of programs, activities, events and relationships for its residents and visitors.

1. Recreation Facilities

Park and recreation facilities include features found within the community that fulfill a specific need for a certain segment of our population. Athletic fields for adults and youth, trails, swimming pools, tennis courts, ice rinks, skate parks and playgrounds are excellent examples of outdoor facilities as are gymnasiums/multi-use areas, cardio/weight training exercise areas, natatoriums and ice arenas for indoor facilities.

In the past, Farmington has been fortunate to have had an adequate inventory of both outdoor and indoor recreation facilities serving the needs of the community to meet minimum NRPA standards, but as the city grows and diversifies and the demand for more and better facilities increases, our current facility inventory does not meet current needs and will not meet future needs. **Table 8.9: City of Farmington's Recreation Facility Inventory and NRPA Minimum Standards Based on Population** clearly illustrates this point.

Outdoor programs such as T-ball, Soccer, Lacrosse and adult/youth softball/baseball, skateboarding, archery and disc golf and others, are limited in their ability to grow are non-existent because of limited and outdated field space (availability), or the lack of space in which to play, practice and hold tournaments (a potential source of revenue).

Indoor programs such as ice sports, aquatics, basketball, health/wellness, sport camps and dance, plus an increasing demand for off-season programs to be held year round, such as tennis and soccer, coupled with the demand for space and time from area recreation organizations and school district programs, taxes an already insufficient amount of indoor space and time availability.

Without question, more and better facilities are needed and it will take a clear vision towards the future of our citizens, elected representatives and city officials to create a planned and vibrant direction. This vision is a key component in charting the course for recreation programs and activities and is essential to meet the demands of a changing population and for future generations. For it is a sign of a healthy community to be proactive in its approach to addressing the needs and wants of its residents and in recreation this is accomplished through a vision of diversity in programs and facilities for different ages, gender, interests and abilities. The Department should encourage and support partnerships with other governmental units and organizations that allow reciprocal use of fields and recreational facilities. This cooperative

arrangement should be sealed in a written agreement that identifies facilities to be shared and the costs, if any, to use the facilities.

The City should also address future programming issues pertaining to all recreational facilities due to age and condition. A further analysis of the condition and age of recreational facilities is addressed in **Section 7** Recreational Facilities. The purpose of analyzing recreational facilities is so maintenance and upkeep can be budgeted for appropriately in order for repairs and/or improvements to be made with minimal impact to recreational programs occurring at the recreational facilities. Additional analysis beyond the existing condition of recreational facilities should be completed that identifies current and future space needs, scheduled use including peak and off-peak times and costs associated with providing recreational programs at recreational facilities.

2. Funding Opportunities

Funding for new park and recreation initiatives and maintaining and improving the existing system will continue to be a challenge. As the existing parks and recreation system ages and new parks and facilities are developed it will be necessary to have in place funding sources to secure adequate dollars to develop and maintain the system at the high quality residents have come to expect.

In addition to existing funding tools (park dedication fees, general fund subsidies, liquor store profit transfers, program fees and partnerships) the City should explore other opportunities to secure new and additional funding sources to generate a solid base of funding to address these challenges. These opportunities may include; encouraging donation of land, expansion of partnerships (new & existing), creation of a parks & recreation foundation, development of facilities that generate revenue, voter approved bonds or taxes and a cumulative capital development fund.

The City has been the primary provider of recreation programs to people who live in the surrounding townships. While there has been discussion to create a different fee structure for people who do not live inside the corporate boundary of Farmington, it is important to note that the City should continue to offer recreational programs to all people living in the greater Farmington area, recognizing that nonresident registrations may be needed to fill out classes or programs.

Finally, support should be given to recreation programs and facilities that promote and encourage visitors to Farmington. These programs and facilities have a significant positive impact on the economic health of the city because of their potential for bringing in visitors, and additional dollars, into the community.

3. Technology – The Electronic Future

Technology has had a greater presence in recreation programs. On-line registration software and web based software has made it more convenient for participants to register for programs and events. No longer do participants need to drop a registration in the mail or drive to a municipal building to register. It is much more acceptable to make a payment for an on-line registration by

either credit or debit cards. The Department has contracted since 2003 with a company initially called Community Season but recently with Premier POS to provide web based software for on-line registration. It has been a successful endeavor because it has allowed the use of credit cards to make payment for recreation program registrations. The Department utilizes the contractor's merchant account to complete transactions with credit and/or debit cards. The City pays a small charge to use the merchant account.

The Department is moving towards utilizing new web based software from Premier POS that will allow facility scheduling to occur on-line. This software has the capability of blocking any double scheduling of facilities while utilizing the speed and technology of the web-based software to accept credit and/or debit card payments. This will mean City facilities needed for Department programs, activities and events can first be scheduled by City staff in order to ensure that a facility has been reserved. Long-term it is envisioned the public will be able to access an on-line facility reservation system to reserve and make payment for the use of Schmitz-Maki Arena, picnic shelters, Rambling River Center, outdoor pool and athletic fields.

As the Department continues to move towards using technology it will need to continue to research new technology that is available at a reasonable cost that will deliver good customer service. The maintenance and updating of the Department's existing website will need to be a priority in order to keep customers informed of changing information within the Department. Staffing resources should be allocated to complete the updates as needed. As technology changes it will be important to identify what technology should be acquired and then train staff on it. New technology can provide the following benefits:

- **expand community cohesiveness**
- **enhance parks and recreation services**
- **affect conservation of resources**
- **create a model department through the use of technology by improving service delivery and information dissemination to its stakeholders**

4. Teens/Adolescents (ages 12-17 yrs.)

Research shows free time activities consist of 40-50 percent of an adolescent's life indicating to recreation programmers the importance of offering a diverse selection of positive recreation experiences from which to choose.

Programs which focus on socialization with peers that are presented in a relaxed, yet challenging context, designed to be outcome-based and incorporate youth development assets (cooperation, leadership, citizenship, responsibility, respect, honesty & creativity, etc.), offer the best opportunity for keeping youth engaged and focused on making positive choices.

Specific adolescent programming is a key element in keeping our youth safe, secure and developing into healthy adults. To this end, it is imperative solutions be found addressing supportive funding opportunities and the availability of adequate recreation facilities for these and all recreation/leisure programs within greater Farmington.

Young people who are supported by adults, institutions (including parks & recreation departments), and policies tend to make healthier decisions, show higher levels of academic achievement, and ultimately give back to their communities in positive ways and are less likely to be involved in risky behaviors such as tobacco, drug and alcohol use, sexual activity, violence and gang activity. Attempts should be made to develop teen-based programming that is designed to keep young teens constructively active and supervised while having fun. This could be accomplished through the following methods:

- Identify/assess how many and when there is the greatest number of teens having unstructured and unsupervised time. (before and after-school, Friday and Saturday nights and school holidays including summer).
- Identify and develop a strategic direction which recognizes the unique needs of middle school and high school-aged youth.
- Have youth represent themselves and their peers in developing, implementing and evaluating programs.
- Seek outside partnerships and cooperative ventures which work through barriers or roadblocks to providing programs for adolescents.
- Provide opportunities for program input through organization of discussion groups or an advisory group.
- Research and identify real or perceived road blocks that interfere in providing adequate adolescent programming and identify possible solutions.
- Work with the school district and other Farmington organizations to compile and inventory information about programs, facilities and partnerships available which focus on adolescents.

5. Boomers/Seniors

The aging of the baby boom generation will result in a significant increase in population above age 60 within the next 25 years. It is estimated that by 2030 in Minnesota alone that one in every four Minnesotans will be 65 years of age and older. For parks and recreation departments to be adequately prepared for this large group approaching their retirement years, we must understand what this group is all about, their attitudes and recreation tendencies and how they can best be served. It should be noted Baby Boomers:

- Are better educated than their parents.
- Plan to keep working (at least part-time) and earning money during their retirement years.
- Are devoted to exercise, fitness and wellness.
- Work and play hard.
- Perceive themselves younger than what they are.
- Are nostalgic for their youth (60's culture).
- View retirement as a middle-life event.
- Are constantly on the go and over-programmed.
- Like up-scale goods, services and facilities.
- Have a different attitude in volunteerism – from civic obligation to special interest.
- Repudiate signs or symbols connecting them to being old.
- Tend to enjoy more individualized activities rather than group events.
- Are interested in arts & entertainment and life-long learning pursuits.
- Enjoy the outdoors such as parks, green spaces and trail systems.

To be adequately prepared for baby boomers as they approach their retirement years, recreation programming should incorporate demographic detail of this age group, their attitudes and leisure tendencies. In order to reach the baby boomer population, the strategies in developing and implementing programs might include:

- Shifts away from current attitudinal, environmental and societal senior programming norms
- Develop programs that enhance life-long learning, technology, arts & entertainment.
- Establish programs and partnerships or cooperative ventures that address “active living” concepts.
- Develop programs that work within a compressed leisure timeframe (closer to home, shorter program time commitments, passive park spaces and individual non-programmed leisure opportunities).

6. Inclusive and Adaptive Recreation

Inclusive recreation programs offer opportunities for individuals both with and without disabilities to participate together. The focus is on similar abilities, not differences. Emphasis is on providing understanding, disability awareness, building active participation for all people and involving families. The Department currently does not provide adaptive programs where people with disabilities are segregated in order to learn leisure time skills they can use when mainstreamed into the programs offered to the general public. The ultimate goal should always be to promote and support people with disabilities in all recreation programs whenever reasonable accommodations can be made to allow for successful participation. Alternatively, the City should begin to explore the possible partnership with surrounding communities and school districts to provide adaptive programs that allow people with disabilities an opportunity to successfully learn and acquire leisure time skills in a segregated environment that allow them to mainstream into other recreational programs which are offered in their respective community. This may include the hiring of full-time, part-time and seasonal staff that could oversee the offering of adaptive programs while also overseeing the process of integrating people with disabilities into mainstream recreation programs. Training will also need to be provided in order to make the process successful.

7. Health and Wellness

City parks and recreation facilities and programs contribute significantly to the health and well-being of a community by providing opportunities and settings for physical and mental health. Physical health needs can be met by fitness activities, organized and supervised recreation programs and safe and functional trails for walking, jogging, in-line skating and bicycling. Wellness demands can be satisfied with programs for life-long learning, and providing open spaces for unstructured, individualized recreation opportunities. The Department should look to develop recreational programming and activities that promote wellness, health and well-being for people of all ages. Development of recreational programs that promote health and wellness can be accomplished in the following ways:

- Provide target specific programming to encourage higher participation in recreational programs for mid-life people.

- Provide health & wellness opportunities for individual, non-structured participation.
- Develop or support programs that address the problems associated with obesity and their impact on the individual and society (financial, emotional, and physical).
- Promote regular physical activity and healthy eating and creating environments that support these positive behaviors.
- Develop or support a multifaceted health and wellness program that includes education, community involvement and recreation.
- Identify target-based outcomes for each age group.
- Market programs to preteens, teens, and adults.
- Provide staff training to parks and recreation staff on how to support the healthy community program goals and objectives as they pertain to their jobs.
- Survey participants and develop other community measures to monitor the effectiveness of the program.

8. Trends

Trends also play an important part in the type of recreation programs and activities a community needs. It is important the Department incorporates on-going trends analysis into its recreation program planning in order to help bring focus to the provision of recreation services that are most desired and needed by the community. The following are trends the City should be addressing in the future planning of recreation programs:

- Young adults raised on youth athletics are seeking to maintain active lifestyles. In addition, interest in non-traditional and self-directed recreation is rising.
- More agencies are target marketing a bundling of services to their customers.
- There is an increasing focus on out-of-school activities for youth in order to better serve working families and in response to rising levels of youth crime during after school hours.
- Local park and recreation agencies are reportedly finding great success in programming for the pre-school age child by responding to parent feedback and desires. Requests center on opportunities to expose a child to a variety of activities to learn what the child may be interested in, and opportunities for interaction outside the child's own home. Family programming for tot, starting at age 9 months, with an adult, are increasingly popular (swimming, gymnastics, cooking, music, art, story time, special one-time holiday classes, etc.).
- The introduction of club sports for youth is leading to greater sport specialization and year-round engagement in one sport versus a rotation of sports throughout the year.
- Interest in traditional sports, including baseball, softball, golf, and football, is declining while interest in nontraditional sports such as skateboarding, mountain biking, disc golf, lacrosse, and cricket is increasing.
- Self-directed sports and activities are growing in popularity among adults.
- More leisure time, especially among youth, is spent enjoying a multitude of media, technology, and entertainment options.
- An increase in foreign-born residents requires focus on reducing language barriers and gaining better understanding of the recreational needs for these individuals.
- Older adults, primarily Baby Boomers, are re-writing the script for aging by participating in active recreation years longer than previous generations. They have more discretionary income

than previous generations, and are increasingly applying those funds towards leisure programming.

- Nationally, research shows obesity and related health concerns are rising along with health care costs. Parks and recreation play an important role in supporting the active lifestyles that can reduce health concerns and bolster preventative care.
- Recreation agencies are forming strategic alliances with health, social services, and educational agencies to offer more comprehensive health and wellness programs.
- Demand for programs and facilities providing a higher quality of amenities and services are becoming the norm. To meet these demands, parks and recreation departments must be more specific and diverse in developing recreation programs that address the needs and wants of a targeted group utilizing facilities that are perceived as high quality and sustainable and the group values.
- At regular intervals, identify trends in recreation to insure facilities and programs are based on changing needs and desires of the public such as active living, aging populations, environmental awareness, disc golf, programs/cultural diversity and quality vs. quantity programs and facilities.

9. Historical/Arts/Cultural Diversity

As the City continues to grow, it is likely the diversity of the community will change. The Department should begin discussions on providing programs and activities that promote the cultural and historical aspects of Farmington so they are not lost due to the change in the demographic makeup and the expansion of the community. Department staff should work with local and area-wide historical organizations, art organizations and county/state cultural resource organizations to identify culturally and historically significant areas of the community in order to possibly create development themes, interpretive areas, walking tours and special projects. A focus should be on conducting cultural/historical resource inventories as part of the design/development for all park projects.

At the same time as the community continues to grow, it will also be important to promote and build recreation opportunities for and with members of diverse cultural groups. This could include the facilitation of group discussions with community members in order to identify needs and wants of specific groups. It could include the implementation of program formats that encourage the development of cross-cultural skills and communication, such as classes, workshops, special events, open facility, and resource centers that promote an understanding and appreciation of the different cultures found within the City.

The Dakota Valley Arts Council (DVAC) does provide an opportunity for members of the community to join an arts organization. While the DVAC has been actively involved in the creation, expansion and promotion of Depot Way Arts Park, it has been limited in the number of art programs and classes it offers to the community. It may be beneficial for the Department to look at an opportunity to explore a partnership or collaboration on the offering of art classes to all age groups in the community utilizing the many different mediums used to create art.

10. Environment/Nature/Outdoor

The City has a good diversity of natural areas and environmentally sensitive areas that could be used as teaching areas that allows the community to be educated about the natural environment.

The Department does provide albeit on a limited basis environment programs, there seems to be an opportunity to increase the offering of environmental programs. However due to limited staff and resources, expansion of environmental programs will be a challenge. In this case, staff members should look for opportunities to partner with other organizations or agencies who may have the staff and resources to provide environmental programs. The Department does currently partner with Three Rivers Park District and Dakota County Parks on several programs. However, there may be other opportunities that should be explored including area school district environmental programs and community education departments, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District, Vermillion River Watershed, private and public colleges and other private natural resource/conservation organizations. The goal of an environmental program should be to provide appropriate public access and offer a diversity of environmental education opportunities that are hands-on. Environmental programs should be created that take the following into consideration:

- Make it possible for people of all ages to learn about natural resources and the environment through education and self-guided exploration.
- Encourage and support opportunities that provide outdoor classrooms and gathering places where appropriate in city/public parks and open spaces to facilitate environmental learning programs by the city and outside groups.
- Explore the possibility of adding a broad based environmental summer camp into the existing summer recreation program schedule.
- Develop and/or enhance programs for youth that teach introductory and basic outdoor sports skills for a wide variety of outdoor sports i.e. cross country skiing, archery, fishing, etc.
- Develop/Partner on outdoor adventure type programming for youth and teens.
- Continue partnership with city staff on environmental education/awareness programs and explore new opportunities to enhance current programs or develop new ones.
- Explore partnerships with agencies and organizations to develop innovative programs such as specialized teen programming, special needs programming, health & wellness camps, environmental education camps, etc.

11. Volunteerism

The Rambling River Center and recreational programs have in the past relied on volunteers from the community to run programs and provide customer service assistance at the Rambling River Center. While this has saved the City from having to allocate funds to pay staff to run certain programs or provide customer service at the Rambling River Center, it does create some limitations.

Youth organizations also provide a valuable volunteer service in the community. Most of the youth organizations utilize adult volunteer coaches, leaders and/or teachers to facilitate sports, educational or service programs. In most cases these organizations also rely on volunteers to provide administrative and organizational oversight for the organization. This keeps program fees down and makes them more affordable to interested participants.

Volunteerism has and will always be a struggle since it can sometimes be difficult to find people in the community who are interested in volunteering and are willing to commit their time to volunteering. It is difficult to predict future growth in volunteerism because it will depend on the

value that the community places on volunteerism. In order to address continued volunteerism in the Department, it will be important to complete the following:

- Identify the value amount (time and dollars) placed on volunteer staffing and market this information to the community.
- Identify duties currently being completed by volunteers.
- Suggest possible solutions to a decreasing volunteer base and the impact it will have on recreation programming opportunities and daily facility operations of the Rambling River Center and Adopt-A-Park programs.
- Due to the expected increase of the senior adult population there should be an on-going review regarding the volunteer staffing levels at the Rambling River Center in the event there would be a shortage of volunteers that would compromise customer service.
- Explore options that will help address the Center's staffing limitations and the decreasing role volunteers will play in day-to-day facility operations and with fundraising projects.

Section 7 Recreational Facilities

The City undertook a Public Facilities Study (the Study) in early 2005. City staff initiated the Study as a means of determining long term maintenance and replacement needs for City buildings. The City contracted with Wold Architects and Engineers to help evaluate what the space needs were as well as a physical assessment of the City's existing facilities. A committee consisting of City staff and City Council members was created that reviewed the information compiled and then made recommendations on a solution or solutions the City could make to correct the deficiency or deficiencies. While this study included all City buildings, for the purposes of developing Section 7 of the 2030 Master Plan, only the following recreational facilities will be discussed in this section:

- Ice Arena
- Outdoor Pool
- Rambling River Center

7.1 Schmitz-Maki Arena (Arena) Analysis

The Arena was constructed in 1975. The original building contained one sheet of NHL size ice (200 feet x 85 feet) and four team rooms. The building is approximately 30,000 square feet in size. The shell of the Arena is concrete. The roof is a curved metal roof. An addition was constructed after the initial facility was built that resulted in two new team rooms, including showers, being added to the facility. The seating capacity of the Arena is 750 with additional standing room available, which allows for additional capacity to be achieved.

1. Existing Favorable Conditions

The following favorable conditions exist:

- The main entrance is handicap accessible and is properly marked
- The interior finishes are painted and in good condition
- The rubber mats used to protect the concrete floor in the lobby area are in good condition
- Seating area bleachers are in good condition
- Roof is in good condition with no reported leaks
- Overall building maintenance has been good

2. Existing Unfavorable Conditions

The following unfavorable conditions exist:

- Front sidewalk is cracked
- Moisture problems exist due to no dehumidification system.
- Parking lot is worn
- Inadequate paved parking lot size
- Lack of office and storage space
- Older team rooms are inadequate for high school sports teams
- Paint in newer team rooms is deteriorated due to moisture

- Poor countertop conditions in concessions areas
- Sub floor heat is no longer operable.
- Ice making equipment is original and ending its useful life
- Accessibility to the mezzanine and office areas does not exist
- Mechanical system is original and is near the end of its useful life
- Electrical system is original and will need to be upgraded if building improvements occur

7.2 Outdoor Pool Analysis

The outdoor pool shell and bathhouse was constructed in the early 1970's. The pool shell was constructed in an "L" shape and is made from concrete. The outdoor pool has a three meter diving board and a one meter diving board board that are installed in the deep area of the pool. The pool contains one drop slide that is located in the shallow end of the pool. Several "Funbrellas" were added in 2003 to increase the amount of shade available to the customers. The bathhouse has a block foundation with 2 x 4 walls and contains two locker rooms with showers and toilets. The ceilings are exposed in the locker rooms and a drop ceiling with tiles can be found in the remaining parts of the bathhouse. The exterior of the bathhouse is covered with a cedar siding. The roof is wood shingles. A concessions, office area, lifeguard station and first aid station are located in the back and in the center of the building.

1. Existing Favorable Conditions

The following favorable conditions exist:

- The City changed from a chlorine pellet system to a liquid chlorine feeding system that is much more efficient and less costly to operate
- A high rate sand filter system is used to filter pool water
- The pool heaters were replaced within the past few years
- The pool pumps were replaced within the past few years
- New diving boards installed in past few years
- New "Funbrellas" installed in past few years, which increases shaded areas around the pool

2. Existing Unfavorable Conditions

The following unfavorable conditions exist:

- The concrete pool deck is cracking in many locations.
- The concrete liner has been damaged from previous attempts to pressure wash or sandblast for painting and is uneven and pitted
- One of the lateral fingers in the sand filter system is broken and leaks sand into the pool
- The wood construction of the bath house leaves it susceptible to water damage
- Small concessions area limits sales of concession items

7.3 Rambling River Center Analysis

The building in which the Rambling River Center is located was constructed in the early 1900's. It was purchased by a group of citizens who were looking for a place senior citizens could gather

together to socialize and recreate in. The building's exterior is constructed of clay bricks. However over time, the clay bricks have required increased maintenance. The building is 4,000 square feet in size. The interior of the building contains many separated rooms so the facility can be used simultaneously for many different activities. The Rambling River Center is available to the public to rent for a fee. There is a full service kitchen that the CAP Agency leases from the City for its use in preparing congregate dining meals as well as meals for the Meals on Wheels Program. The roof of the building is flat. There is an accessible entrance to the Rambling River Center. The Rambling River Center was remodeled in 2004-2005 that resulted in several new spaces being created including a fitness room, a sunroom and a relocation of the computer lab that allowed the computer lab to be expanded in square footage and number of computer terminals. The building is available for groups to rent however, current staff levels does not allow for staff supervision during evening and weekend rentals. In these situations, the rental party is responsible for securing a key and then unlocking and locking the building during its rental.

1. Existing Favorable Conditions

The following favorable conditions exist:

- Accessible entrance
- Interior of the facility is clean and well maintained
- Remodeling has opened up space for new programs

2. Existing Unfavorable Conditions

The following unfavorable conditions exist:

- Windows are not energy efficient
- Paint on the exterior of the building is cracking and peeling
- Roof has had some leaks
- Electrical system can be overloaded during peak demand
- Large events difficult to hold due to building support structure
- Heating system does not evenly heat the building
- Current staffing levels does not allow for coverage during evening and weekend rentals

While the City has aging facilities, they have nonetheless been well maintained. The City will need to address the aging facilities in the following manners:

- 1. Assess the cost to upgrade or make improvements to existing facilities in order to either allow the continued use of the facility or reuse the facility in a different manner.**
- 2. Assess the cost to construct new recreational facilities.**
- 3. Determine the cost benefit of upgrading or improving existing recreational facilities rather than the construction of new recreational facilities.**
- 4. Determine funding methods or sources to either make improvements to existing recreational facilities or construct new facilities.**

Section 8 Trails and Greenways

8.1 Introduction

The City has an adopted Parks, Open Space and Trails Dedication Ordinance. The ordinance defines trail requirements including a developer must pay for the construction of all trails in a development if they are identified in the Trail Master Plan (TMP). The City's TMP has been reviewed and amended to reflect the strategic future location of trails along stream and river corridors and through natural areas that contain wetlands, uplands and woods. The City has given good foresight in developing the TMP sooner rather than later. By developing the TMP it has allowed the City to identify a future connected trail system before the land is developed and the opportunity for a connected trail system is lost.

The City's current trail system contains 40 miles of paved trails. A significant number of these paved trails have been constructed within the last ten to fifteen years. In order for a connected trail system to occur, it is important the TMP emphasizes future links that connect existing trails to new trails. Providing connections from existing trails to new trails will promote a system that allows users to travel between older developed areas of the community and new emerging developments. It also identifies connections to be made well into the future as new development occurs.

Trails are beneficial to a community. Trails can serve as an alternative method of transportation to more traditional methods such as roads and streets that serve vehicular traffic. Encouraging and providing opportunities to people in the community to walk or bike to work, school, play and retail centers can improve the air quality in the community by reducing vehicle emissions due to less vehicular traffic. Trails provide opportunity for community members to improve and increase health and fitness through walking, in-line skating and biking. Trails can also improve the livability of a community because they attract many different types of users such as children, teens, adults, older adults, people with disabilities and families. Trails provide space for socialization and a safe place to recreate. Trails have a positive economic impact on communities. A well-planned and comprehensive trail system that provides links and connections to Farmington's amenities will be inviting to visitors from outside the community to come and use the trails and provide a boost to the local economy.

8.2 Types

Trails are classified according to their location in relation to vehicular traffic. There are five types of trails: park trail, connector trail, bikeway, alternative use trail and greenway.

1. Park Trail

These are typically multi-purpose trails located within natural areas, open space and parks. Park trails emphasize a strong relationship with the natural environment within a park setting. The City should place a priority whenever possible on the construction of a park trail due to its desirability of being located away from streets and roads and being located within parks, open space and natural resource areas. The main benefits of park trails are as follows:

- creates a connectedness to the natural environment

- creates a safer trail system since user's travel through areas like parks, open space and natural areas that are rarely interrupted by traffic
- useful for bringing the entire park, open space, and natural areas together under one comprehensive system
- effective tool in identifying property boundaries for residential, commercial areas and industrial parks from parks, open space and natural areas

Park trails should be developed using the following strategies:

- clearly define the routing of park trails through the creation of a comprehensive trail plan
- it is imperative land acquisition occur at an early stage either through fee simple or easement so that the City controls the land
- create an assortment of funding mechanisms provide money for the construction of park trails in new developments as well as new trails in existing subdivisions where there are none
- construct at a minimum width of 10 feet
- develop specifications for design standards identifying how park trails should be built that not only reflect local standards, but also reflects standards of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN DOT), the American Association of State Highway Transportation Organization (AASHTO) and American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) design guidelines

2. Connector Trail

Connector trails can be defined as trails that provide safe travel for users traveling to and from parks and the community. Connector trails are commonly constructed as a separated trail along the side of streets and roads. They are commonly built within road and street right of ways, boulevards, utility easements or along artificial drainage ways.

The main benefits of a connector trail are:

- uses existing space that sometimes is underutilized
- can provide connections from neighborhoods to the trail system in locations where park trails or greenways are not able to
- keeps trail users off of streets and roadways

Connector trails should be developed under the following strategies:

- construct connector trails as part of a street and utility infrastructure project in areas where no current trail exists
- identify future connector trails on the TMP map in order to establish trail right of ways and easements at an early stage of development
- connector trails should be constructed at a width of at least 8 feet



Shown in this photo is an example of how an easement between two homes was acquired during the early stages of development that resulted in an important trail connection having been completed.

A connector trail is constructed either in the boulevard or right of way and is commonly separated from the street.



3. Bikeway

Bikeways are defined as paved segments of roadways that serve to safely separate bicyclists from vehicular traffic. There are two types of bikeways and they are commonly referred to as either a bike lane or bike route. Bike routes are designated streets or roadways that have either paved shoulders or portions of the roadway that separates vehicle traffic from users. A bike lane is a designated portion of a street or roadway that has a painted line that creates separation of bicyclists and vehicular traffic. The striped lane is for the exclusive use by non-vehicular traffic, primarily bicycle use.

The main benefits to creating bikeways are as follows:

- bikeways can play an important role in encouraging commuters to bicycle to work
- can be created at a relatively cheap cost resulting in a the trail network for bicyclists to be expanded
- provides connections from neighborhoods to off-street trails for bicyclists

Bikeways should be developed under the following strategies:

- clearly identify on the TMP map locations of bikeways
- establish design standards that define how bikeways are to be built using local, MN DOT and AASHTO standards
- should be considered along collector, minor arterial and when these are not possible, major arterial roads
- develop bikeways when new roads are constructed or upgrades are made
- install proper signage that connects users to either off-street trails or other bikeways

4. Alternative Use Trail

Trails that provide uses for cross country skiing, snowmobiling, horseback riding and mountain biking are considered alternative uses for trails. Like park trails, alternative use trails have

strong ties to the environment albeit a different one. A description of the different types of alternative uses is provided below.

Mountain Biking: Mountain biking is an emerging trail use and appeals to a wide age-range of participants. Since it is such a new and emerging sport, users have a wide range of skill level. Mountain biking utilizes the challenges the natural environment presents while at the same time degrades it. The City should not provide this type of trail to its residents. Dakota County, through its regional park systems, should be the primary provider of this type of trail.

Cross Country Skiing: Cross country ski trails can be either groomed on unplowed paved surface trails or in locations separate from paved trails. There are two different styles for cross country skiing: diagonal (also called traditional) and skate-ski. A diagonal cross country ski trail requires a groomer, which is a special piece of equipment that is pulled across the snow and lays down tracks for cross country skiing. A skate-ski trail, which is an alternative method of cross-country skiing, requires a wider packed and groomed surface where the skis do not ride in tracks. Cross country ski trails should be designed with a series of longer loops rather than be a continuous linear trail.

Horseback Riding: Created for horses, these types of trails utilize a grass, wood chip or natural soil for its surfacing material. A strategy is to use the same trail for horseback riding in the summer as the trail that is used for cross country skiing in the winter. The City should not provide this type of trail unless it has developed a cross country ski trail system that can be used for skiing in the winter and horseback riding the remainder of the year.

Snowmobiling: The City currently has an adopted ordinance that specifies where snowmobiles may be driven (Title 6, Chapter 8, Section 3). As the City continues to grow, snowmobile trails that currently exist within the rural areas of the City will no longer be available for use because they will become part of the urban area of the City. The City needs to address how future development may impact current snowmobile trails and if there are ways to mitigate the loss of snowmobile trails. The City should examine whether or not it wants to amend its current snowmobile ordinance to allow snowmobiles in trail corridors so long as the use of the snowmobiles in the trail corridors does not infringe on other users such as cross country skiers and pedestrians. Should the City decide to amend its current ordinance it should make sure it provides trail corridors for snowmobiles to travel from the City to regional and state snowmobile trails. These corridors should be designated and separated from other trails. This may require a trail corridor of 50 feet wide or more to accommodate snowmobile use. Currently local snowmobile trails located within the corporate boundary of the City are maintained by a local snowmobile club called the Farmington Area Sno-Tigers Snowmobile Club.

Alternative use trails should be developed using the following strategies:

- assess the need for alternative use trails before any are constructed
- determine if the need can be better met through county, regional or state park agencies
- alternative trail design should follow the same standards created by county, regional park and state resource agencies
- if needed, provide space for trail corridors that are at least 50 feet wide to accommodate separated trails for different user groups
- develop alternative trails so they do not negatively impact the natural environment

5. Greenway

A greenway can be defined as a linear corridor that provides uninterrupted travel for alternative forms of transportation (typically non-motorized forms) that provide connectivity between parks, open spaces, natural areas, schools and neighborhoods. Greenways should be looked at as a vital component of a comprehensive trail system.

Greenways main benefits are as follows:

- A reduction in the number of trails crossing roads and streets due to their uninterrupted movement of users through parks, open space and natural areas
- An opportunity for preservation of natural and environmentally sensitive areas
- Control over what natural and open space areas users are able to travel through and access
- Increased value for adjacent and abutting properties

There are two types of greenways that are recognized, natural and man-made. The following table identifies some of the different physical characteristics that may be found in the two types of greenways.

Table 8.11: *Types of Greenways*

Natural	Man-Made
creek	vacated railroad bed and/or right of way
stream	residential subdivision
river	electrical overhead power line easement or right of way
wooded area	pipeline easement
wetland	engineered drainageways

Greenway trail corridors should be developed using the following strategies:

- whenever possible incorporate natural areas into the trail corridor at a width of at least 50 feet with preference given to a corridor width of up to 200 feet
- utilize man-made corridors when natural area corridors are not feasible or possible
- locate man-made corridors along drainage ways
- improve man-made corridors to include native trees, native grasses, wildflowers and shrubs to create a vegetative buffer along the corridor creating a distinct property edge to the corridor
- develop man-made corridors that are least 50 feet in width to allow proper space for vegetative buffers to be planted and to thrive
- trails should be constructed at a minimum width of 10 feet with an optimum width of 12 feet or wider if funding allows
- trails in greenways should meander through the greenway in order to create interest and mystery
- the construction of paved trails in greenways should have minimal impact on existing vegetation

- as much as possible trails should be constructed out of the floodplain so as to reduce the likelihood of the trail being flooded

8.3 Greenways and Regional Trail Plan

The City is fortunate to currently have five natural greenways within the City boundaries. Two greenways, the Vermillion River and South Creek, have been identified as future regional trail corridors through Farmington that will provide connections to the future regional park in Empire Township, to the Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve and to the Cannon Valley Trail. A trail map is included in the appendix and identifies the locations of the five greenways including the two greenway corridors that have been identified by the Metropolitan Council as future regional trails. The five greenways are as follows:

1. North Creek

North Creek Greenway will provide an important connection from the north edge of Farmington to the Vermillion River Greenway. A significant portion of this greenway will become part of the City with the future Fairhill Development and the recent Riverbend Development projects. Because of the width of this greenway and its connectivity not only to the Vermillion River Greenway but also to the City of Lakeville trail system, trails have been identified to be constructed on both sides of the greenway. Since this greenway extends into the City of Lakeville and beyond that to the City of Apple Valley, it is anticipated the North Creek Greenway will become a heavily used greenway not only by City residents, but also by residents from Lakeville, Apple Valley, and residents from the area surrounding the City. The connection of this greenway to the Vermillion River Greenway will provide another connection through Farmington to the new regional park that is currently being planned for in Empire Township. The trail width for the greenway should be constructed at a minimum width of 10 feet with a preferred width of 12 feet in anticipation of it becoming a heavily used trail. Since North Creek flows into the Vermillion River, which is a designated trout stream by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), care must be taken in the planning and design of the trails using Best Management Practices so as to cause no net impact on the creek from storm water run off due to its connection to the Vermillion River. Vegetation along the trail should be restored after construction is completed. An effective strategy to ensure natural scenery can be viewed by trail users, is to meander the trail in and out of the greenway so from time to time the vegetation and wildlife found along the North Creek Greenway can be viewed from the trail. Since certain parts of North Creek are prone to flooding, it will also be beneficial for the trail to be located out of the floodplain as much as possible to minimize the impact of flooding on the trail. The City should look for ways to acquire land for parks along the North Creek Greenway in order to improve the connectivity of its parks and open space system.

2. Vermillion River

The Vermillion River Greenway contains a corridor rich in habitat and resources for wildlife. Designated as a trout stream by the DNR and identified as a wildlife corridor, the Vermillion River has immense value to the City's greenway system. All creeks located in and adjacent to the City are tributaries to the Vermillion River. The benefit of creating the Vermillion River Greenway is so it can become the greenway that ties all of the City's greenways together as part of an interconnected and comprehensive system consisting of parks, open spaces, natural areas

and trails. The Vermillion River Greenway extends beyond the borders of Farmington which provides an opportunity for the City's trails to connect to other communities' and regional trails and parks to the east, south and west. The Vermillion River Greenway will also provide a viable connection from new emerging growth areas to older parts of the community. A portion of the trail system has already been constructed through the Rambling River Park area. The Vermillion River Greenway trail corridor should be expanded from the existing trails built in Rambling River Park. Existing trails have been constructed at an 8 foot width and any future construction of new trails or reconstruction of existing trails through the Vermillion River Greenway should be constructed at a minimum width of 10 feet with a preferred width of 12 feet in anticipation of it becoming a heavily used trail. Since the Vermillion River provides wildlife habitat and has been designated as a trout stream, care must be taken in the planning and design of the trails along the Vermillion River by using Best Management Practices so as to cause no negative impact on the river from storm water run off. Vegetation along the trail should be restored after construction is completed. An effective strategy to ensure the natural scenery can be viewed by the public, is to meander the trail in and out of the greenway so that from time to time, the river can be viewed from the trail. Since certain parts of the Vermillion River are prone to flooding, it will also be beneficial that the trail be located out of the floodplain as much as possible to minimize the impact of flooding on the trail.

The Vermillion River Greenway has been identified by the Metropolitan Council to be designated as part of a future regional trail that will serve as an important regional connection from southwestern Dakota County to the new regional park planned in Empire Township. The designated future regional trail will provide a connection from the Cannon Valley Trail past Chub Lake where it will run along the Vermillion River through Farmington to the new regional park in Empire Township. The City should work with Dakota County, Metropolitan Council and adjacent land owners to either acquire land through fee acquisition, park dedication (should development occur along the river), gifting and/or easement. It is important to acquire the land along the river in order for a public trail corridor to be set aside for future generations to enjoy.



The Vermillion River Greenway corridor should be expanded in the future to allow a regional trail connection to the new regional park in Empire Township.

3. Middle Creek

Running through the central part of the community, the Middle Creek Greenway will serve as a major connector from the parks, schools and neighborhoods on the east side of the City to the parks, schools and neighborhoods on the west and northwest side of the community. Currently there has been some development that has occurred along a portion of the Middle Creek Greenway, which has created a missed opportunity to construct trails on both sides of the greenway much like the North Creek Greenway. However, the City should look for ways to

work with the property owners adjacent to the north side of the greenway to construct a trail sometime in the future. The Middle Creek Greenway provides an excellent opportunity to provide a trail connection to the Farmington Industrial Park which borders the greenway on the south from Akin Road to Pilot Knob Road. The trails through the Middle Creek Greenway should be constructed at a minimum width of 10 feet with a preferred width of 12 feet in anticipation of it becoming a heavily used trail. The City should look for ways to acquire land for parks along the Middle Creek Greenway in order to improve the connectivity of its park and open space system.

4. South Creek

Like the North Creek Greenway, the South Creek Greenway presents an opportunity for future connections to the City of Lakeville's trail system. The South Creek Greenway is located south of CSAH 50 and its creek empties into and connects with the Vermillion River Greenway. Because of the width of this greenway and its connectivity not only to the Vermillion River Greenway but also to the City of Lakeville trail system, trails should be constructed on both sides of the greenway. The trails should be built at a minimum width of 10 feet with a preferred width of 12 feet in anticipation of it becoming a heavily used trail. Since South Creek flows into the Vermillion River, which is a designated trout stream by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), care must be taken in the planning and design of the trails so as to cause no negative impact on the creek from storm water run off due to its connection to the Vermillion River. An effective strategy is to ensure the trail remains as much as possible at least 100 feet from the creek bed in order for runoff from the trail to be filtered and slowed by vegetation before it reaches South Creek. Since the creek may flood from time to time, it will also be beneficial to keep the trail itself on the outer edge of the flood plain as much as possible while still allowing the natural features of South Creek to be viewed and enjoyed. The City should look for ways to acquire land for parks along the South Creek Greenway in order to improve the connectivity of its parks and open space system.

The South Creek Greenway has been identified by the Metropolitan Council to be designated as part of a future regional trail that will serve as an important regional connection between Murphy Hanrehan Regional Park and the new regional park identified in Empire Township. The regional trail will connect the two regional parks by following a route through Lakeville where it will eventually connect to a trail running along South Creek into Farmington. From there the trail will connect to a trail running along the Vermillion River that will connect to the new regional park in Empire Township.

5. Prairie Waterway

The Prairie Waterway is located on the east side of Farmington. Its length is extended from Minnesota T.H. 50 to the Vermillion River. It serves as an area where storm water runoff is filtrated through a series of ponds before it empties into the Vermillion River. Native plants and wild flowers have been planted along the Prairie Waterway in order to assist with the filtration of the water as it moves through this system of ponds. The restored prairie areas provides abundant habitat for wildlife, which is spotted frequently when walking on the trails. The Prairie Waterway was constructed as part of the East Farmington development in the 1990's. Approximately half of the length of the Prairie Waterway has paved trails constructed within it. This greenway will serve as an important connection to the new Dakota County regional park in

Empire Township for residents who live on the east side of Farmington. Making the connection from Farmington's trails to the regional park will need to occur in Empire Township and should be reflected in Empire Township's trail plan.

8.4 Design Standards

The City has developed specific design standards as they relate to the construction of paved trails, pedestrian ramps and crosswalk identification. The City's design standards shall be the accepted design format unless there are other Federal or State requirements that would supersede the City's design standards such as the ADA. The City's trail design standards are included as part of its Engineering Guidelines and Standard Plates Document. The following is a summary of the City's basic requirements for trail construction:

- initially remove six inches of subsoil
- install six (6) inches of Class 5 aggregate 100% crushed limestone compacted base
- first lift of bituminous will consist of a 1.5 inch 2331 bituminous base
- final lift shall consist of 1 inch of 2341 bituminous wear course
- when constructing collector trails (trails in the boulevard or right of way) the City allows the base lift to be placed first and then the wear course is only placed after home construction is completed in order to minimize the amount of heavy equipment driving on the finished wear course
- an alternative construction method that the City has allowed in the past in park trail locations, has been to lay one lift of 2.5 inches of 2341 bituminous wear course, after the base has been properly placed and compacted

8.5 Safety and Security

Once constructed, it is important for trails to be maintained at a high standard in order for the trail system to be successful. Trails that are improperly maintained can create potential hazards for users. The safety of trails users should not be compromised. The City needs to create a funding mechanism that provides money for the future maintenance of trails to ensure they remain safe and don't deteriorate prematurely.

Another critical component of trail maintenance is establishing a regular inspection schedule of the trail system by City staff. Regular inspections should catch maintenance issues which then can be corrected in a timely manner. Regular inspections also provide the opportunity to keep litter picked up, which in turn provides the appearance the community cares about rather than neglects its trail system. Monitoring of the trails by staff will help to deter vandalism, as the person who is monitoring the trail should catch vandalism in the early stages before it becomes significant. If vandalism is not caught early and either removed or repaired, it could lead to even more vandalism occurring creating a potential hazardous condition along the trail. Littering and vandalism should be recorded in a log book in order to track and identify trouble spots along the trail system. Once these trouble spots are identified, the Police Department should be notified for their support in providing additional surveillance of the trouble spots by either its Community Service Officer or a bike patrol.

The following are items the City needs to consider when developing a safety plan for its trail system:

1. Rules

In order to create order rather than chaos on the trail system rules need to be identified and users need to be informed of them. Rules should be posted at trailhead and rest area locations. Rules that are appropriate for the City of Farmington's trail system should include the following:

- Only non-motorized vehicles are allowed on trails.
- Pets must be kept on a leash and domestic animal waste must be picked up and properly disposed.
- Users should stay to the right except to pass.
- When entering onto a trail allow existing users to pass before entering onto the trail.
- When trails intersect, use traffic laws to determine who has the right of way to pass through the intersection first.
- Please keep yours and other's litter picked up.
- Bicycle riders should yield to pedestrian traffic.
- Provide a warning signal that can be heard prior to passing someone on the trail.
- Follow all traffic laws when riding bicycles on streets.
- When using the trail, wait to rest or socialize with other users until you have come to a rest area or shelter. If there is not a rest area or shelter nearby, move off of the trail beyond the shoulders to rest or socialize with others.
- Users should be off of trails before dark unless the trail is lit and then users should be off of the trail from 11:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m.

2. Education

As much as possible, users of the trail system should be educated about safety while using a trail. While it should not be a requirement to receive safety education prior to using a trail, the City nonetheless should do its part in ensuring trail users understand how to remain safe when on trails. The following strategies are suggested ways to increase trail safety:

- Provide an annual bike safety camp day or program to youth in the community that teaches them about such things as proper protective equipment, trail rules, rules of the road, use of hand signals and a bike safety inspection.
- In the spring of each year, provide a press release that identifies safety topics related to trail use and reminds the community about the trail rules.
- Work with other agencies and organizations in order to make bike helmets available to youths in the community at either a reduced cost or for free.
- Provide safety signage along the trail system and in various locations that reminds users of such things as what side of the trail to ride on, correct manner in which to pass someone and which user groups have the right of way over other user groups.

3. Enforcement

While the City is not always able to provide police staff to patrol the trail system on a daily basis, occasional patrolling could potentially be done by either the Community Service Officer or

through a bike patrol. Perhaps however, the most effective and visible enforcement will occur by users of the trail system.

The following are strategies the City may want to consider when providing enforcement on the trail system:

- Create good visibility to abutting property owners who can provide 24 hour observation of trails by removing some or all of the tall brush or branches in order to provide views to the trail.
- Create a volunteer trail patrol unit that strictly patrols trails and reports criminal or suspicious activity to the City's Police Department. Visibility of the patrol unit is the key to deterring criminal activity.
- Keep law enforcement agencies informed of trouble spots on the trails in the event that they have an opportunity to increase patrol of the area around the trouble spot.
- Make sure people are reminded to lock vehicles when parking their vehicle at a trail head parking lot.
- Explore costs and options related to emergency call boxes being placed in key locations.
- When trouble spots are identified, consider lighting the trouble spots to deter criminal activity.
- When opportunities exist and it is financially feasible, trails should be lit but only in situations that it do not significantly impact or affect property owners adjacent to the trail.

8.6 Amenities

Trail amenities are yet another piece of the comprehensive trail system puzzle. Supporting facilities such as signage, restrooms, shelters and parking areas are important amenities that when provided assist in making the trail system more attractive and successful. Trail amenities identified below are necessary to promote use of the system. Proper care of these amenities means they will need to be continually maintained and replaced over time.

1. Parking Areas

Adequate vehicle parking space is critical to the trail system's success. While it is the intent of the trail system to provide an opportunity for residents to gain quick and easy access to a comprehensive trail system, there will be some residents and visitors to the community who wish to drive to a trailhead and park their vehicle. The City should provide parking at designated trail head locations so as to encourage and enable users to drive to and access trails. The City should focus on providing off-street parking areas such as within parks to gain access to a trail and limit the amount of on-street parking. Currently Rambling River Park is one such trailhead location where an off-street parking area is provided. In the development of new parks, parking areas should be constructed in larger parks that have adequate space to accommodate vehicle parking.

2. Bike Racks

Bike racks are important for bicyclists who use trails. It provides a place where bikes can be secured for short periods of time that allow the bicyclists an opportunity to use the restroom, stop and rest on a bench or eat a lunch under the gazebo. The size and number of bike racks will depend on the number of bicyclists using the trails. The City should monitor the need for

additional bike racks. Bike racks should be installed close to other amenities such as a restroom, kiosk, playground or ballfield. Bike racks should be securely fastened into a concrete pad that abuts the trail. Color and design are dependent on the location of installation. Bike racks should be inspected and maintained on an as needed basis.

This picture illustrates one example of a bike rack design that can be installed for trail users.



3. Waste Containers

In order to encourage users to properly dispose of their litter, refuse containers need to be provided at rest areas, shelters, trail heads and strategic locations along the trail. Containers should be dumped on a regular basis in order to ensure litter does not overflow and cause pollution. Refuse containers should be aesthetically pleasing and fit with the natural environment. Refuse containers should have lids that keeps litter inside and animals out. Containers should be secured so they cannot be tipped over or removed from the premises.

4. Benches

Benches serve as an inexpensive but good resting stop for users or they can provide an opportunity to enjoy a splendid view of nature. Benches should be installed along the trail edge but far enough off of the trail so as not to interfere with the activity that is occurring on the trail. Bench legs need to be securely fastened to a concrete base that does not allow them to be either tipped over or removed from the premises. The concrete base should be poured so it is contiguous with the trail in order to provide access to all users of the trail. As much as possible benches should have an aesthetically pleasing color and fit with the natural environment. When purchasing benches, serious consideration should be given to purchase recycled plastic benches due to low maintenance and long life. Benches need to be regularly inspected and maintained in order for them to be of any use. Planks should be replaced as soon as possible when they are broken.

5. Gazebo

Small gazebos or shelters should be provided in pre-determined locations along the trail and primarily along park trails. Preference should be given for constructing an all-metal gazebo due to metal having a longer life span than wood. Size should be the main factor considered when purchasing a gazebo for trails. A gazebo should serve as a facility whose main purpose is to provide a place where users can get out of the sun or rain or stop and eat a meal. Gazebos should

be constructed off of the trail with a small trail leading from the shelter back to the main trail so that it is accessible to all. Two or three picnic tables should be provided for seating and eating. Picnic tables should be made from recycled plastic material similar to what the benches are made from.

6. Kiosk

Kiosks are decorative structures that are used to provide important information to trail users. The information provided at a kiosk may include: trail rules, a map of the existing City trail system and general safety tips and information related to trails. Kiosks should be constructed out of durable and low maintenance materials. Build a secure case that the informational material may be posted in so it does not blow away and more importantly so control can be maintained about what information is posted in the kiosk case. Kiosks should be located at trailhead locations and should be located close to the parking area.

7. Restrooms

Restrooms should be provided at trailhead locations. Restrooms may either be a facility with plumbing or may be a portable toilet. Restrooms with plumbing will need to be cleaned on a daily basis. Restrooms should not be solely constructed for trail users but rather should be constructed in trailhead locations that have other facilities as well such as a playground or ballfield. The reason for this is so they are built in areas where there is additional traffic for other reasons besides the trail. Increased traffic should deter vandalism in restrooms. The City should contract the portable toilet service from an outside contractor. If using portable toilets, they should be secured properly so they cannot be tipped over. The trails should lead to the restrooms in order to make them accessible. The restroom facilities whether they contain indoor plumbing or are portable should be accessible to all users.

8. Signage

In order for trail users to successfully navigate the trail system, a comprehensive sign program should be implemented. Trail signs should indicate distances and provide direction to destinations that are important community landmarks such as parks and schools. Signs should contain their unique and distinctive characteristic such as color, shape and/or style of lettering (branding) that makes them easily identifiable to trail users. Signs should be made from a material that is attractive, requires little or no maintenance and is durable.

8.7 Maintenance Plan

Maintenance plays a critical part in the survival of a trail system. Without an ongoing maintenance program, the pavement will break down and will become unsafe for use. A preventive maintenance program will provide the following benefits:

- effective way to promote the trail system during the budget process
- can deter vandalism, litter and encroachment
- create positive public relations between the City and abutting property owners
- encourages the community to take pride in their trails system and thus helping to make enforcement easier to manage

- keep the surface of the trail in a usable and safe condition
- extend the life of the trail system

Maintenance of trails can mean many different things other than just maintaining and managing the trail surface. **Table 8.12** identifies common issues that should be addressed and strategies that should be implemented for long-term maintenance of the trail system:

Table 8.12: *Long-Term Maintenance*

Issue	Maintenance Strategy
trees	Prune back limbs to at least six feet off of edge of trail. Continually inspect trails for hazardous trees and when identified remove hazardous limbs or the tree itself if needed.
weeds	Mow or apply pesticide in areas that are not environmentally sensitive and only on plants that are harmful to the public
roots	Removal of tree or shrub should occur or it may eventually cause heaving of the trail
cracks	Cracks should be cleaned and then filled with appropriate material.
aggregate breaking away from pavement	Sealcoat with slurry, or if too much aggregate has been lost, and the trail is old, do an overlay on the existing trail.
pothole	Clean out pothole and remove any additional trail surface that has failed or has been undercut by the washout. Replace with class 5 aggregate and patch with hot asphalt.
litter or debris	Remove and dispose of properly. Document location for historical reference. Inform public to get involved by volunteering to clean up trails through the Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Trail Programs. Provide garbage containers along the trail for litter and trash to be disposed of by trail users.
dog waste	Install signage that requests owner to scoop up and dispose of the waste. Provide stations that have baggies and a container for disposing of waste.
dumping lawn clippings and leaves	Provide signage identifying that dumping is illegal. Remove as quickly as possible the dumped material so that it prevents further dumping by other residents.
graffiti	Take photo to document graffiti and retain for future reference. Clean up and remove graffiti as quickly as possible.
drainage issue	Check drain structures nearby to ensure they are not plugged. Remove water from the trail if possible. Work with Engineering to correct drainage issue.
broken glass	Sweep up glass as quickly as possible and dispose of properly. Document location for historical purposes.
loose sand or gravel	If a significant amount is present, it should be swept from the trail.

The following timeline should be followed for correcting maintenance issues related to the trail surface:

- crackfilling should occur every 5-7 years
- sealcoating should occur every 6-8 years
- if the base of a trail is still stable, but the surface has deteriorated, then an overlay should occur at 13-15 years

Finally, a maintenance and management plan should be created that identifies the trail by location, the year it was constructed, the cost of construction, the year preventative surface

maintenance was performed (crackfilling, sealcoating and overlaying), the costs associated with preventative surface maintenance, the projected year of reconstruction and the projected cost of reconstruction.

8.8 Issues

While the City has created a trail system it can be proud of, there are still issues with the trail system that need to be resolved in the next 20 or more years. The issues needing to be resolved include:

- 1. Create a safe trail system that provides safe connections and crossings to parks, schools, neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas.**
- 2. Provide education programs about bike safety to youth and adults so they can become knowledgeable about trail use.**
- 3. Provide for the construction of trails along natural areas, open space and greenways in the community.**
- 4. Construct trails that are flexible in meeting a variety of user group's needs, desires and abilities.**
- 5. Provide connections to neighboring communities' trails.**
- 6. Provide trail access in older areas of the community where it does not exist.**
- 7. Create trail construction and on-going maintenance funding mechanisms to ensure the trail system is a long-term investment.**
- 8. Provide trails with alternative surface types when traditional surfacing is not feasible.**
- 9. Create trail connections and not trail dead-ends.**
- 10. The City should plan for and create a limited number of alternative use trails.**
- 11. Provide signage that informs and directs users to destinations and provides proper warning to potential hazardous conditions.**

Section 9 Implementation Plan

A community's comprehensive plan for parks, open space, recreational facilities and recreational programs should be diverse. The comprehensive plan is the community's guiding document that identifies key issues and contemplates the resolution of the key issues identified. The guiding policies that are developed should be based on a combination of appointed advisory commission members, elected council members, City staff, consultant and community input during the information gathering stage in the development of the comprehensive plan. This input should be the impetus for the initiatives that are undertaken in the next 20 or more years in the acquisition of parks and open space/natural areas, construction of recreational facilities, recreational program implementation and construction of trails.

Guiding policies and strategies created were based on previous studies, community surveys, and public planning sessions the City had initiated. While these guiding policies and strategies are meant to provide priorities for the direction the City should take with regards to Parks and Recreation, it is important to remember issues and priorities can change with time. The 2030 Master Plan will be mandated for an update in 10 years by the Metropolitan Council and so the City will continue to have opportunities in the future to assess the direction it wants to go with Parks and Recreation.

9.1 Guiding Policies and Strategies

Policy #1: Develop a park and open space system that includes active spaces.

Strategies

1. *Acquire land according to the long range plan for future parks that is flat or contains very little grade change and is unencumbered by utility easements during the development process.*
2. *Include resident and local youth sports organization input when master planning parks in order to address active and athletic spaces.*
3. *Maintain a ratio of a minimum of 20 acres of active park land per 1,000 people.*
4. *Complete master plans for remaining parks that could include active and athletic spaces.*
5. *Construct a youth outdoor athletic complex that consists of baseball, soccer and lacrosse fields.*
6. *Construct an adult softball complex that consists of at least four regulation size fields.*
7. *Add facilities and amenities to parks in order to meet minimum standards identified by the National Recreation and Park Association.*
8. *Complete deferred improvements that have not been completed due to funding shortfalls.*
9. *Explore the development of a cross-country ski trail system.*
10. *Explore the construction of a mountain bike trail.*
11. *Explore the construction of a dog park.*
12. *Explore the construction of a disc golf course.*
13. *Explore the construction of an archery range.*
14. *Explore opportunities to add art work in parks.*
15. *Identify preferred site for future Veteran's Memorial.*

Policy #2: Develop a park and open space system that includes natural areas and environmentally sensitive areas for passive and un-programmed spaces.

Strategies

1. *Encourage developers to donate land to the City during the development process that cannot be developed due to steep slopes, encumbered with utility easements, wetland(s) and/or floodplain.*
2. *In order to create a balance of active and passive land in the City's park and open space system, a ratio establishing a minimum of 20 acres of open space and/or natural area per 1,000 residents should be adopted.*
3. *Protect and preserve stream, river and waterway for wildlife, trail and greenway corridors.*
4. *Identify and acquire scenic land in the community that should be protected from development.*
5. *Identify areas where trails can be constructed through or adjacent to natural areas.*
6. *Complete master plans for remaining parks that could include passive and un-programmed spaces.*
7. *Include resident and community organization input when master planning parks in order to address passive and un-programmed spaces.*
8. *Acquire land along the Vermillion River and its tributaries either through the development process or through acquisition from existing property owner in order to preserve the open space for all to enjoy and a greenway system that provides connections to schools, parks, neighborhoods, commercial areas and surrounding communities.*
9. *Develop a budget for the removal of invasive species and restoration of native vegetation along streams and rivers that provides suitable habitat for wildlife.*

Policy #3: Expand the city's trail and sidewalk system to include trails that are safe, provide connections between schools, parks, neighborhoods, commercial areas, open space/natural areas, other communities and regional parks are interesting and include future regional trails.

Strategies

1. *Meet with adjacent communities to discuss trail development, trail connections and the creation of a possible joint trails committee.*
2. *Meet with Dakota County to discuss regional trail development and implementation.*
3. *Require trails to be constructed during new development that closely matches the City's future trail plan and connects to exiting trails so trails do not dead-end.*
4. *When possible and financially feasible, construct pedestrian tunnels under or pedestrian bridges over local streets, railroads, county highways or state highways in order to create safe crossings for users.*
5. *Whenever possible construct trails to comply with the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). If compliance with the ADA is not possible, provide alternative routes that allow individuals who are physically challenged to still traverse the trail system if they so desire.*

6. *The City should create various lengths of looped trails that accommodate users who have varying levels of skills, health and methods of transportation.*
7. *Provide support facilities such as a restroom, benches, bike rack, drinking water source, parking and rest areas along the trail system.*
8. *Work with developers to construct trails that lead to commercial and industrial areas from residential areas.*
9. *Work with the Farmington School District to construct trails that safely connect from neighborhoods and parks to school building sites when possible by using controlled intersections such as at a four-way stop or at signal lights or utilize natural greenways and/or man made greenways that minimize the number of street crossings..*
10. *Provide adequate and visible trail crossing signs for motorists to see.*
11. *In older neighborhoods that lack trails and/or sidewalks and when space is possible, off-street trails and/or sidewalks should be constructed in boulevards when infrastructure replacement projects occur.*
12. *If there is no space to construct off-street trails in the boulevard or it is financially not feasible, an eight (8) foot bike lane should be striped on the shoulder of at least one side of the street with a preference for striping eight (8) foot bike lanes on both sides of the street if there is adequate space to do so, in order to provide a connection to the City's off-street trail system.*
13. *Signs designating certain streets as a bike route should be installed when striping a bike lane or lanes is not possible.*
14. *Be cognizant of the environmentally sensitive areas and use good environmental planning that limits the encroachment of the trails on the waterways by constructing the trails on the outer edges of the greenway.*
15. *Trails constructed in greenways should be built at a minimum of 10 feet in width with a preferred width of 12 feet or wider due to anticipated heavy use.*
16. *Construct a limited number of narrow aggregate or wood chip hiking paths from paved trails to the interiors of the greenway so users have a limited number of access connections into natural areas of the greenway.*
17. *Develop interpretive trails when possible that educates the public about the natural environment.*

Policy #4: Develop a long-term financial plan for the development and maintenance of parks, open space and trails.

Strategies

1. *Research alternative methods of financing the construction and maintenance of trails.*
2. *Research and pursue possible grant programs for funding park and trail construction.*
3. *Create, when possible, financial partnerships with other agencies to assist with funding trail construction.*
4. *Create a pavement management plan for the maintenance and future reconstruction of trails.*
5. *Encourage and foster volunteers through the City's Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Trail programs that currently exist in order to keep litter picked up along trails.*

6. *Create a maintenance program that identifies costs and ensures that trails are crack filled and overlayed at appropriate and specified intervals.*

Policy #5: Re-develop Rambling River Park.

Strategies

1. *Through a public input process develop a master plan for the park.*
2. *Develop a cost estimate to construct the improvements identified in the master plan for the park.*
3. *Create a financial plan identifying the funding source(s) that covers the cost to completely construct the improvements identified or covers the cost through a phasing plan.*
4. *Identify a construction schedule to complete improvements identified in the approved master plan.*
5. *Construct the improvements utilizing the schedule and funding source(s) identified.*

Policy #6: Develop maintenance standards for parks.

Strategies

1. *Identify City parks that are highly visible and have high visitor rates.*
2. *Identify City parks that have less visibility and have lower visitor rates.*
3. *Identify maintenance tasks and the frequency they should be performed and are appropriate for parks with high visibility and have high visitor rates.*
4. *Identify maintenance tasks and the frequency they should be performed and are appropriate for parks less visible and/or have low visitor rates.*
5. *Implement the maintenance standards.*

Policy #7: Develop maintenance standards for recreational facilities.

Strategies

1. *Identify routine maintenance tasks associated with the interior of recreational facilities and the frequency maintenance should be performed.*
2. *Identify routine maintenance tasks associated with the exterior of recreational facilities and the frequency maintenance should be performed.*
3. *Identify routine maintenance tasks associated with the recreational facilities equipment and the frequency maintenance should be performed.*
4. *Identify routine maintenance tasks associated with each recreational facility and identify whether staff should perform the maintenance or if it should be completed by a contractor.*
5. *Develop an appropriate budget that allows the maintenance tasks to be performed either by staff or a contractor at the intervals identified.*
6. *Implement the maintenance standards.*

Policy #8: Increase marketing of parks and recreation (recreational programs, parks, open space, trails and recreational facilities) to the community.

Strategies

1. *Create a colored map showing the location of parks, trails, open space, greenways and recreational facilities and can be distributed to the community.*
2. *Expand the use of technology to notify participants about the Department offerings.*
3. *Install kiosks or information boards with rules, information and trail maps at trail head and rest area locations to provide helpful and useful information to users.*
4. *Continue to provide new signage in parks.*
5. *Create and provide trail signage that is attractive with large enough lettering that creates information that allows successful use of trails and promotes the trail system.*
6. *In locations where there is a narrow park entrance with a trail that leads from a street or sidewalk and runs between homes, a sign with the park name should be installed along the edge of the trail and be visible from the street indicating the trail is a public entrance point to the park.*
7. *The City should continue to provide an updated snow removal map identifying trails that are cleaned during the winter.*

Policy #9: Complete the development of master plans for remaining city parks.

Strategies

1. *Identify the remaining parks to be master planned.*
2. *Identify a schedule for completing the master plans for each park.*
3. *Identify whether staff or a consultant will develop a master plan for each remaining park.*
4. *Using the public input process, develop a master plan for each remaining park.*
5. *Create/show both active and passive spaces in the master plans that are developed.*
6. *Include/show amenities in the remaining park master plans that address meeting the minimum NRPA standards.*

Policy #10: Construct new indoor recreational facilities when it may not be financially feasible or structurally possible to make improvements to existing recreational facilities such as the Schmitz-Maki Arena, Outdoor Pool and the Rambling River Center.

Strategies

1. *Identify which facilities can be improved and which facilities cannot be improved and need to be replaced.*
2. *Identify a cost estimate for improving or replacing the recreational facilities.*
3. *Explore any possible capital and operational public or private partnerships.*

Policy #11: Acquire land in a manner that maximizes the size of parks when possible.

Strategies

1. *Look for opportunities to acquire land adjacent to existing parks.*
2. *Create park areas adjacent to storm water detention ponds and/or infiltration ponds.*
3. *Acquire park land adjacent to wetlands.*
4. *Acquire park land adjacent to stream, river and/or waterway corridors.*
5. *Acquire park land on the edge of developments so when adjacent land is developed, park land can be acquired in the new development that abuts the previously acquired park land.*
6. *Acquire park land adjacent to steep slopes.*
7. *Acquire park land adjacent to wooded areas.*
8. *Work with land owners to place conservation easements on their property that abuts park land.*

Policy #12: Explore opportunities to expand youth, teen, adaptive, adult and senior programs.

Strategies

1. *Expand recreation programs to make them more inclusive.*
2. *Explore programming partnerships with private and public organizations that currently provide programs for different populations.*
3. *Explore programming partnerships with adjacent communities and townships in order to provide adaptive recreation program opportunities.*

REGIONAL PARKS SYSTEM STATEMENT

City of Farmington

The Regional Parks System includes 62 regional parks, park reserves, and special recreation features, plus more than 340 miles of regional trails that showcase the unique landscapes of the region and provide year-round recreation. The Regional Parks System is well-loved by our region's residents and attracted over 48 million annual visits in 2014.

The organizational structure of the Regional Parks System is unique, built upon a strong partnership between the Council and the ten regional park implementing agencies that own and operate Regional Parks System units. The regional park implementing agencies are:

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

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* was developed based on furthering the *Thrive MSP 2040* outcomes of Stewardship, Prosperity, Equity, Livability, and Sustainability. *Thrive MSP 2040* states that the Council will collaborate with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, the 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.

Key Concepts in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* includes the following policies, each with specific associated strategies:

- **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.

- **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.
- **Planning Policy:** Promote master planning and help provide integrated resource planning across jurisdictions.
- **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.
- **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 *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* is the metropolitan system plan for regional recreation open space with which local comprehensive plans must conform. This system statement highlights the elements of the system plan which apply specifically to your community. Find the complete text of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* on [the Council's website](#).

2040 Regional Parks System Facilities

The Regional Parks System is comprised of four main types of facilities: regional parks, park reserves, special recreation features and regional trails.

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 passive recreation activities.

Park Reserves

Park reserves, like regional parks, provide for a diversity of outdoor recreation activities. One major feature that distinguishes a 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 up to 20 percent of the park reserve can be developed for recreational use, with at least 80 percent of the park reserve to be managed as natural lands that protect the ecological functions of the native landscape.

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.

Regional Trails

Regional trails are classified as 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. Linking trails are predominately intended to provide connections between various Regional Parks System facilities, most notably regional parks or park reserves.

2040 Regional Parks System Components

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* identifies six components which together comprise the vision for the Regional Parks System in 2040, as described below.

Existing Regional Parks System Facilities: include Regional Parks System Facilities that are open for public use. These facilities include land that is owned by regional park implementing agencies, and may include inholding parcels within the boundaries of these parks and trail corridors that have not yet been acquired. Existing regional trails may include planned segments that will be developed in the future.

Planned Regional Parks System Facilities (not yet open to the public): include Regional Parks System Facilities that have a Council-approved master plan and may be in stages of acquisition and development, but are not yet open for public use.

Regional Parks System Boundary Adjustments: include general areas identified as potential additions to existing Regional Parks System Facilities to add recreational opportunities or protect natural resources. Specific adjustments to park or trail corridor boundaries have not yet been planned.

Regional Park Search Areas: include general areas for future regional parks to meet the recreational needs of the region by 2040 where the regional park boundary has not yet been planned.

Regional Trail Search Corridors: include proposed regional trails to provide connections between Regional Parks System facilities where the trail alignment has not yet been planned.

2040 Regional Trail Search Corridor System Additions: include regional trail search corridors that were added to the Regional Parks System as part of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

Key Changes in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

Adopted by the Metropolitan Council in February 2015, the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* incorporates the following changes:

Identify all proposed regional trails as regional trail search corridors

All proposed regional trails that are not yet open to the public and do not have a Metropolitan Council approved master plan are represented as a general regional trail search corridor. The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* depicted these trails with a proposed alignment. The alignment of these regional trails will be determined in the future through a planning process led by the regional park implementing agency. The alignment of these trails is subject to Metropolitan Council approval of a regional trail master plan.

Acquire and develop ten new regional trails or trail extensions to meet the needs of the region in 2040. The 2040 Regional Trail Search Corridor Additions include:

Carver County:

- County Road 61
- Highway 41

Three Rivers Park District:

- CP Rail Extension
- Dakota Rail Extension
- Lake Independence Extension
- Lake Sarah Extension
- Minnetrista Extension
- North-South 1
- North-South 2
- West Mississippi River

The 2040 *Regional Parks System Plan Map* is depicted in Figure 1. Farmington should consult the complete [2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan](#) in preparing its local comprehensive plan. In addition, Farmington should consult *Thrive MSP 2040* and the current version of the Metropolitan Council's [Local Planning Handbook](#) for specific information needed in its comprehensive plan.

System Plan Considerations Affecting Your Community

Regional Parks System Components in your community

The following Regional Parks System Components within Farmington as identified in the 2040 *Regional Parks Policy Plan* are listed below.

Regional Trails

North Creek Greenway Regional Trail: This is a planned regional trail that is not yet open to the public. The planned regional trail travels through Apple Valley, Lakeville and Farmington as it connects Lebanon Hills Regional Park, Lebanon Hills-Lake Marion Greenway Regional Trail Search Corridor and Vermillion River Regional Trail Search Corridor. The regional trail alignment as shown in Figure 2 should be acknowledged in the comprehensive plan.

Lake Marion Greenway Regional Trail: This is a planned regional trail that is not yet open to the public. The planned regional trail travels through Burnsville, Lakeville, and Farmington as it connects Minnesota River Greenway Regional Trail, Lebanon Hills-Lake Marion Greenway Regional Trail Search Corridor, Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve in Scott County, and Vermillion River Greenway Regional Trail Search Corridor. The regional trail alignment as shown in Figure 2 should be acknowledged in the comprehensive plan.

Chub Creek Greenway Regional Trail Search Corridor: The regional trail search corridor travels through Farmington, Eureka Township, Greenvale Township, Waterford Township, Sciota Township and Randolph Township as it connects Vermillion River Greenway Regional Trail Search Corridor, North Creek Greenway Regional Trail, and Lake Byllesby Regional Park. Dakota County will lead a planning process in the future to determine the alignment of the regional trail. When preparing its comprehensive plan, Farmington should verify whether a master plan has been approved by the Metropolitan Council. If a master plan has been approved, the planned regional trail alignment should be acknowledged in the comprehensive plan. Otherwise, the general search corridor as shown in Figure 2 should be acknowledged in the comprehensive plan.

Please contact Dakota County for more information regarding Regional Parks System Components in Farmington.

Figure 1. 2040 Regional Parks System Plan Map

Regional Parks System Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

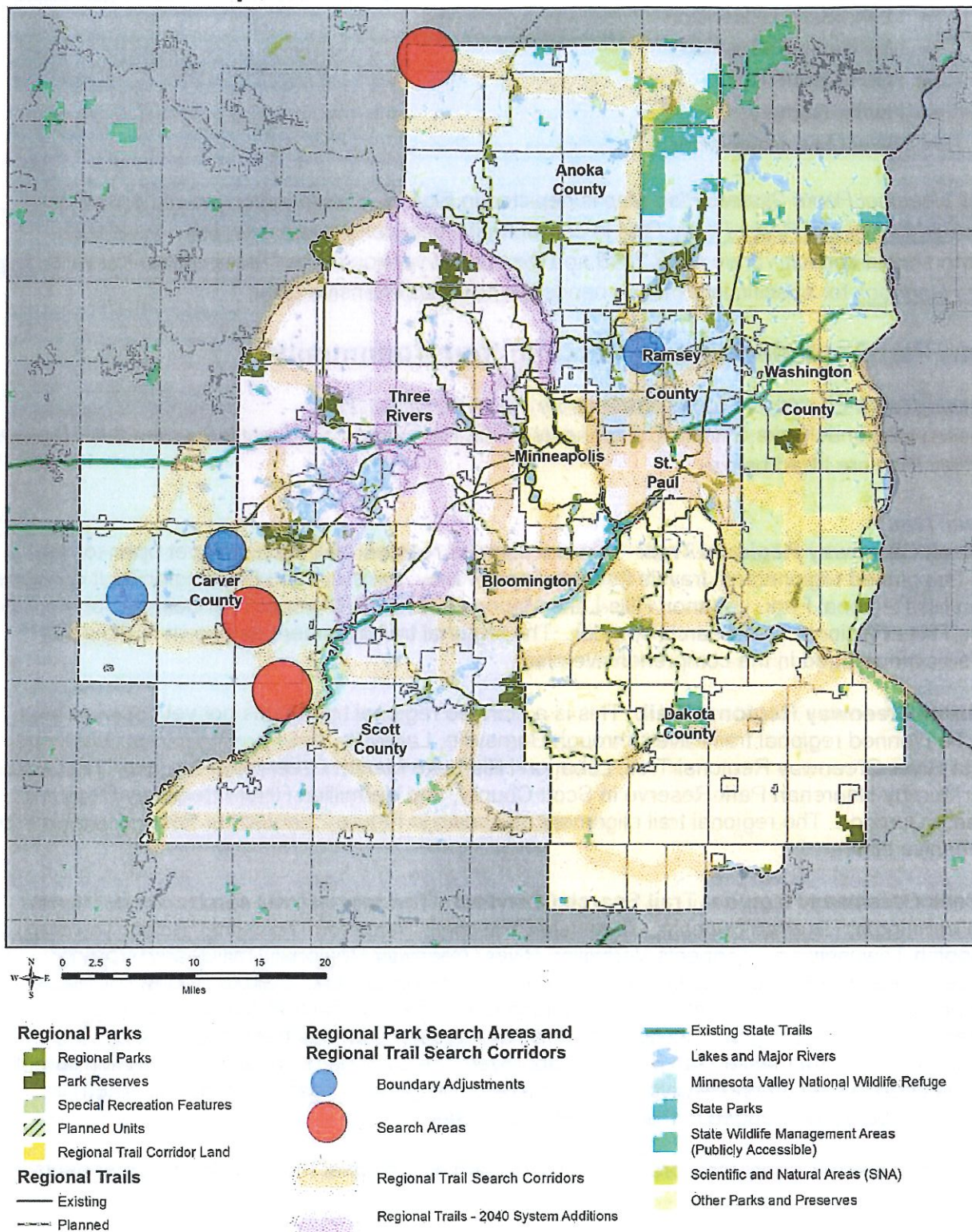
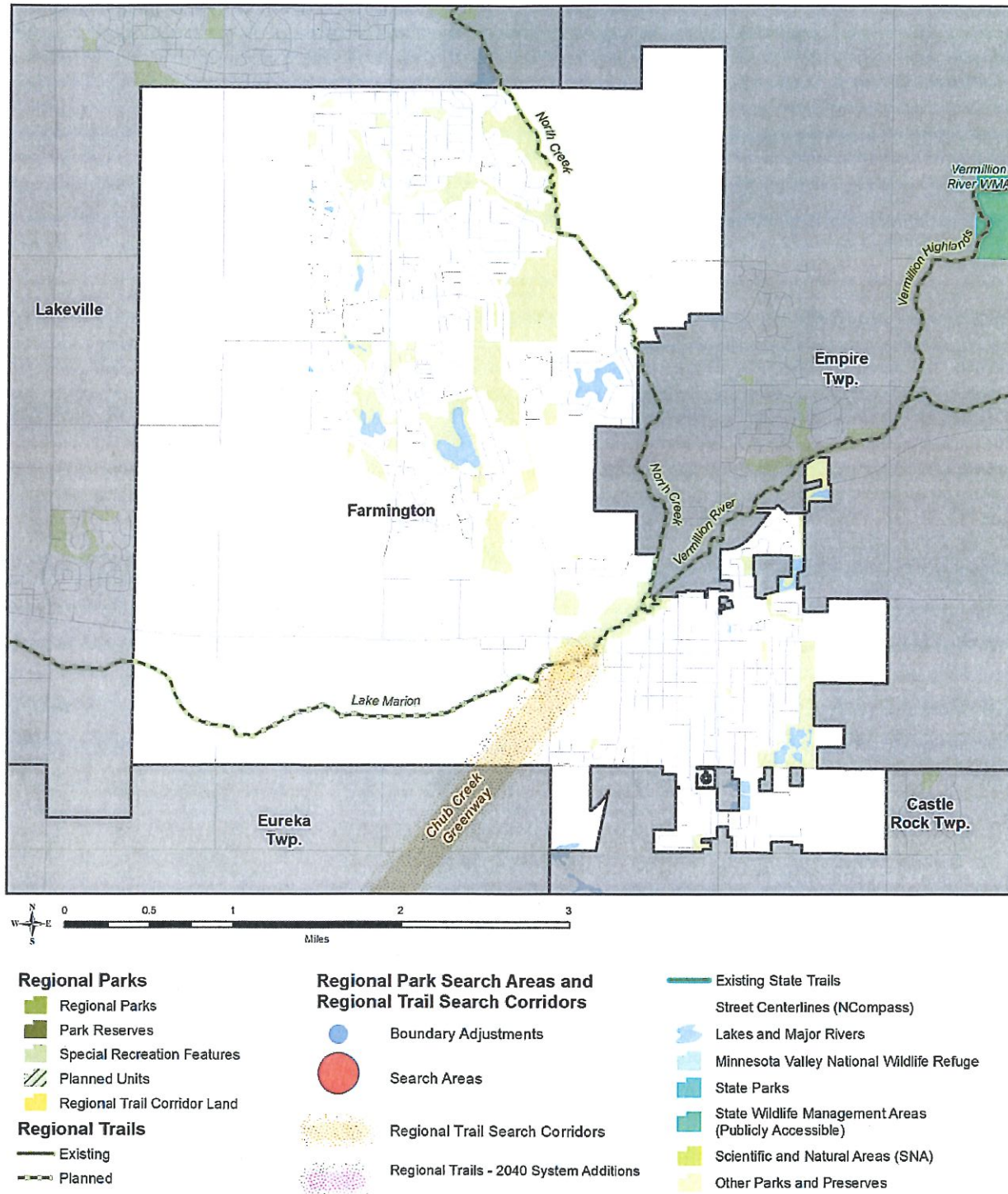


Figure 2. Regional Parks System Facilities in and adjacent to Farmington

Regional Parks System City of Farmington, Dakota County





City of Farmington

430 Third Street
Farmington, Minnesota
651.280.6800 - Fax 651.280.6899
www.ci.farmington.mn.us

TO: Farmington Parks and Recreation Commission Members
FROM: Randy Distad, Parks and Recreation Director
SUBJECT: Roundtable Format
DATE: April 12, 2017

BACKGROUND

The Roundtable portion of the agenda allows Commission members to share information or ask questions of staff about items not on the agenda. No formal decisions are made during this agenda item.



City of Farmington

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TO: Farmington Parks and Recreation Commission Members
FROM: Randy Distad, Parks and Recreation Director
SUBJECT: Informational Updates
DATE: April 12, 2017

BACKGROUND

Staff will provide information at the meeting to Commission members about the following items:

1. Prairieview Park playground equipment
2. Prairieview Park shelter
3. Dew Days
4. Rambling River Center Plaza
5. Akin Road Elementary School Project



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TO: Farmington Parks and Recreation Commission Members
FROM: Randy Distad, Parks and Recreation Director
SUBJECT: May 10, 2017 Agenda Topics
DATE: April 12, 2017

BACKGROUND

The following are possible topics staff has identified for the Commission to consider including on the May 10, 2017 meeting agenda:

- 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- Park Improvement Fund 2018-2022 Capital Improvement Plan
- Parks tour with Empire Township Park and Recreation Commission