



City of **CHANHASSEN**  
**PARKS &  
RECREATION  
SYSTEM PLAN**



SEPTEMBER 2017



# Acknowledgements

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# Executive Summary

## What it is?

- 1** The 2017 Chanhassen Parks and Recreation System Plan sets the direction for parks and recreation in Chanhassen for the next 20 years.
- 2** The System Plan ensures the parks and recreation system continues to meet community needs now and in the future.
- 3** The System Plan weighs community needs and desires with financial realities to ensure the system is economically sustainable and responsible with tax dollars.
- 4** The System Plan determines priorities for future investment and contains 6 goals, 52 policies, and 54 initiatives

## Guided By:

The development of the System Plan was guided by the City's vision for the future as well as the following principles:

**Stewardship** Marked as the highest priority to Chanhassen residents, Stewardship aims to incorporate sustainable practices into the system's planning and daily operations to protect the city's vibrant natural resources.

**Connectivity** Chanhassen's parks, preserves, and trails are knitted together to create a network of recreation and open spaces that reaches every corner of the community and provides access to surrounding destinations as well.

**Engagement** Residents of all ages and all abilities are welcome throughout Chanhassen's parks and recreation system, enabling them to lead active, healthy lives in which they engage with the outdoors, with art and culture, and with one another.

**Adaptable** As Chanhassen has evolved, its parks and recreation system has remained adaptable in the way it responds to new needs and challenges, and dynamic in its ability to deliver high-quality programs, facilities, and services.

Over its **50 years**, Chanhassen's Parks and Recreation System has improved the community's quality of life, economic development, and environmental resources. With over **900 acres** of parks and open space, **30 parks**, and almost **80 miles** of trails, the Chanhassen Parks and Recreation System is an essential component of the City.

## Planning Process

This year-long planning effort began in August of 2016, and represents input gathered from the community, stakeholders, city staff, and city officials. Online questionnaires, meetings, focus groups, park and community tours, open houses, and group brainstorming efforts guided the development of the System Plan by providing valuable input and collective wisdom. The plan also incorporates the expertise of the consultant team, analysis of benchmarking data, a system-wide audit conducted by city staff and the consultants, and best practices collected from other peer communities.

The goal of the planning process was to educate and raise awareness about the importance of parks and recreation while ensuring that future investment in Chanhassen's system meets the needs of the community.

## Benefits of a Parks & Recreation System Plan

- Road map for system revitalization and expansion
- Defensible rationale for decision-making
- Strategic resource allocation (budgeting and staffing)
- Fosters strong partnerships
- Creates safe and welcoming parks
- An updated recreation facility mix
- A more connected City
- Improved access to nature
- Selective programming to meet gaps and needs
- Long-term economic sustainability

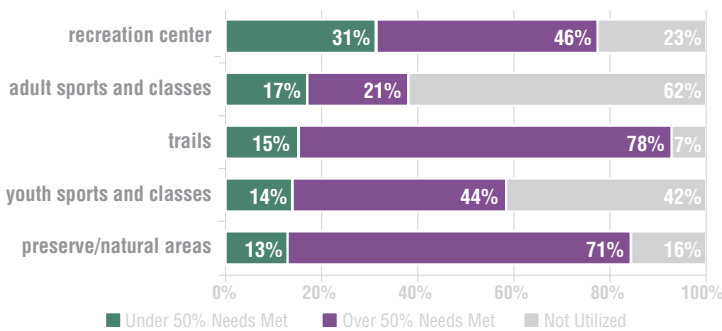
# Community Engagement

The goal of the planning process was to educate and raise awareness about the importance of parks and recreation while ensuring that future investment in Chanhassen's system meets the needs of the community. Throughout this planning process, over 1,000 residents and stakeholders were engaged to ensure the final plan was reflective of community desires.

Public outreach efforts included:

- » Six Advisory Committee meetings spread throughout the year-long planning process
- » Two listening sessions (Athletic Associations and Senior Center Commission)
- » Three online questionnaires and two online interactive mapping exercises which reached almost 2,000 individuals and solicited 1,500 responses
- » Seven Pop-up meetings at community events
- » A Community Open House held on April 6th of 2017, where over 70 community members provided feedback on the System Plan's draft recommendations

## Top 5 Unmet Facility & Programming Needs



## Top 3 Desired Facilities



# Trends

In order to meet the demands of a growing population, the City needs to consider the following national population trends:

- » Need for convenience
- » Increasingly anxious about safety
- » More transient
- » Pinched government budgets
- » Demand for green alternatives
- » Desire for conservation and opportunities to connect with nature
- » Increased interest in aging actively
- » Engaging new generations
- » Increased interest in weight loss and active living
- » Rise in informal adult recreation versus league participation
- » Popularity of new and nontraditional sports
- » Demand for group fitness events and races
- » Desire to create more memorable experiences
- » Increased importance of "place"

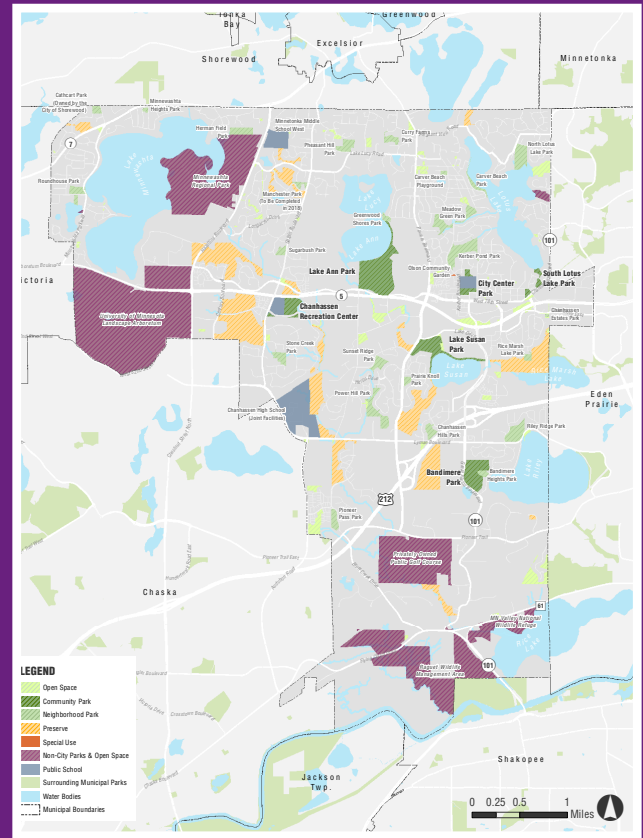


## Existing Conditions

- » Over 900 acres of city-owned parks, preserves, and open space
- » 30 community & neighborhood parks
- » 14 preserves & 1 special use park
- » Almost 80 miles of trails

### Facilities

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  27 playground areas      |  1 skate park                              |
|  21 picnic shelters       |  1 disc golf course                        |
|  5 swimming beaches       |  1 garden plot site                        |
|  16 tennis courts         |  7 docks & 3 fishing piers                 |
|  10 pickleball courts     |  5 outdoor hockey rinks & 5 pleasure rinks |
|  28 diamond fields        |  1 dog park (in partnership)               |
|  21 rectangular fields    |  1 recreation center                       |
|  20 basketball courts     |   |
|  6 sledding hills         |   |
|  4 sand volleyball courts |   |



## Goals & Policies

The System Plan's goals and policies are high-level statements intended to guide City decision-making over the next 20 years. The six goals represent the desired long-term outcomes of Chanhassen's System Plan, and were prepared as depictions of how the Parks and Recreation System will function when the guiding principles are achieved. To guide City decision-makers, the general characteristics of each goal are described by a series of policies.

- |   |   |  |   |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| 1. Provide a comprehensive system of park, recreation, and open space facilities to serve active and passive needs. | 2. Maintain a comprehensive and easily navigable trail and sidewalk system that connects neighborhoods to park and recreation facilities, schools, community destinations, and other communities. | 3. Ensure all residents have the opportunity to participate in recreation, education, cultural, and arts activities. | 4. Be a leader in environmental sustainability. | 5. Proactively plan for a high quality, efficient parks and recreation system that meets community needs. | 6. Implement strategies to supplement the City's capacity to maintain and expand the parks and recreation system. |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|

## Initiatives

Initiatives are specific actions or steps that are recommended for implementation. They include programs, actions, or practices that support one or more policy statements, and begin to address the "who, what, where, and how" of achieving a plan objective. Chanhassen's initiatives may include: strategic directions for policies, ongoing practices, partnerships, and future planning efforts; programmatic investments for events, training, and/or resources; capital investments for facilities, amenities, and/or infrastructure; and potential funding streams and strategies.

Initiatives are organized by the topic areas of **parks, facilities, trails, preserves, programming, and operations**. The following page contains a summary of the System Plan initiatives by topic area.

# Summary of Plan Initiatives

## Parks

- » Maintain Lake Ann Park as the premier community park
- » Add amenities to Bandimere, City Center, and Lake Susan Community Parks
- » Use a maintenance and replacement schedule to keep neighborhood park facilities up to date
- » Seek opportunities to expand the park network to serve changing community needs and preserve natural amenities.

## Preserves

- » Continue to preserve sensitive lands within the Bluff Creek Corridor
- » Collaborate with other agencies to protect the Seminary Fen
- » Collaborate with other agencies to protect the Minnesota River Valley
- » Expand marketing & wayfinding
- » Expand opportunities to interact with and explore nature
- » Identify & protect natural areas that link parks, preserves, & destinations
- » Develop natural resource management plan

## Facilities

- » Identify and construct a year-round signature recreation facility in the community
- » Add a destination splash pad at a community park
- » Establish an interpretative center with outdoor lab space and nature-based play
- » Add community-scale nature play at a community park and unstructured nature play throughout the community as appropriate
- » Improve user amenities at existing facilities
- » Explore opportunities for a second community garden
- » Implement recommendations of the Athletic Fields Study

## Programming

- » Continue to host at least 5 major community events
- » Expand informal, year-round events & nature-based programs
- » Collaborate with new & existing partner organizations to provide events & programming
- » Establish an Event Management Plan
- » Annually assess pricing structure

## Trails

- » Address trail gaps and trail crossing safety issues
- » Work with partner agencies to reopen Minnesota River Bluff LRT Regional Trail
- » Complete trail connection to Minnesota River
- » Increase maps and wayfinding to identify loops, distances, & destinations
- » Provide more user amenities
- » Expand the number of natural surface trails
- » Explore opportunities to add trailheads
- » Initiate a single-track mountain bike trail study

## Operations

- » Use System Plan as basis for budgeting & Capital Improvement Plan
- » Incorporate sustainable design & maintenance practices to make Chanhassen a model
- » Create a tobacco use policy
- » Communicate benefits of parks and recreation
- » Establish formal review process for program & event development

## Implementation

Achieving the vision set forth in the Parks and Recreation System Plan will take additional funding, not only for big, exciting, new facilities like a signature recreation facility or interactive water feature, but for neighborhood park revitalization, new programs, and outreach, etc. The City needs to ensure that adequate funding is available by identifying and regularly communicating system funding needs, expanding and diversifying funding sources, and maximizing the use of volunteers to support system development and operations. The System Plan identifies initiatives for the next 20 years in the areas of Capital Investments, Plans/Studies, Management, Ongoing Initiatives, and Trails. The System Plan also estimates that the system will need more than \$8 million in maintenance, repair, and replacement.

Priority	Cost (Low)	Cost (High)
Short term	\$5,770,000	\$12,660,000
Long term	\$31,075,000	\$63,100,000
Ongoing	\$500,000	\$5,000,000
Trail Gaps	\$4,943,000	\$14,831,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$42,228,000</b>	<b>\$95,591,000</b>
<i>Estimated Cost of Signature Facility</i>	<i>\$25,000,000</i>	<i>\$50,000,000</i>
<i>(Total Without Signature Facility)</i>	<i>\$17,288,000</i>	<i>\$45,591,000</i>