



Chapter 5

SYSTEM PLAN

The system plan recommendations were drafted based on the findings from the needs assessment, peer community and national standards analysis, community input, review of the previous Comprehensive Plan, Advisory Committee discussions, and meetings with City Staff. The recommendations are organized into goals, policies, and strategies.

Goals are broad statements that describe the desired long-term outcomes needed for the system’s guiding principles to be achieved. The next level, **policies**, are statements that will guide City decision-making to achieve the goals. Policies are followed by **initiatives**, which describe the specific actions or steps that need to be taken.

To support and further clarify the initiatives, maps for parks, facilities, trails, and preserves have been included that exhibit the distribution of the Plan’s recommendations. Precedent imagery is present throughout the System Plan to illustrate the potential appearances of proposed facilities and amenities.



Bandimere Park athletic fields



Wifi Access in Parks

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**.

In the System Plan hierarchy, goals are the highest level and are numbered 1-6, while policies are numbered 1.1, 1.2., etc. so it is clear to which goal a specific policy relates.

Goal 1. Provide a comprehensive system of park, recreation, and open space facilities to serve active and passive needs.

- 1.1. Provide a system that includes neighborhood parks, community parks, preserves, and special use parks based on the standards outlined in Table 5-1.
- 1.2. Ensure residents have convenient access to park and recreation facilities at the neighborhood and community park level by ensuring all residents are within a ½ mile of a neighborhood park and 2 miles of a community park.
- 1.3. Provide a mix of athletic complexes with user amenities to meet the needs of recreational, league, and tournament play.
- 1.4. Provide user amenities as appropriate for the type of park
 - 1.4.1. To serve local users walking or biking to their neighborhood park, provide user amenities like benches, bike racks, shade trees, trash and recycling receptacles, and seasonal restrooms.
 - 1.4.2. To serve community and regional users, provide at community parks amenities like benches, picnic tables, bike racks, information kiosks, shelters, permanent restrooms, trash and recycling receptacles, and access to technology.
- 1.5. Balance the use of park and recreational facilities for local needs with events, tournaments, gatherings, and programming.
- 1.6. Support year-round recreation through a mixture of indoor and outdoor facilities.
- 1.7. Explore opportunities to expand the number and quality of the community's preserves to protect natural areas that are ecologically sensitive or representative of the City's natural heritage.
- 1.8. Provide areas for small and large group community gathering through the distribution of shelters in neighborhood and community parks.
- 1.9. Seek opportunities to distribute standalone playgrounds for 2 to 5 year olds throughout the community.

WHAT WE HEARD

“ Needs are being met but more benches on trails would be nice ”

WHAT WE HEARD

“ Please do more winter gatherings, the nights are so long here we need more events to get people outside ”

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK DESIGN

Case Study: Roundhouse Park

When redeveloping or designing a new neighborhood park, it is important and essential to inform and involve the neighbors of the park. In the summer of 2015, neighbors gathered at Roundhouse Park with Park Commission members, city staff, and park designers to discuss how



Neighborhood Meeting at Roundhouse Park

the park should be improved. The City had plans to add pickleball and tennis courts, but wanted the residents input on how they should be designed and incorporated into the park. Some of the residents expressed interest that the basketball court be kept in the park. The park master



Grand Opening Promotional Flyer

plan was updated to include a new basketball half court. The neighborhood meeting was a useful exercise to inform the residents of the plans and gather input on how to design the improvements.



Pickleball Courts

Table 5-1. City Park Classifications

Classification	Use	Service Area	Size (Typical)	Examples
Community	Provides facilities serving the community with programmed, active recreation areas and access to natural areas. May serve regional visitors, although not as primary function.	Community wide in strategic, consolidated locations at a few sites	15 to 100 acres	Lake Ann Park, Bandimere Park
Neighborhood	Primary recreation facility to meet the day-to-day needs of neighborhoods. Provides active recreation and informal gathering spaces for families and groups of neighbors. Fields are sized for practice/youth games.	1/2 mile radius, free of major barriers such as highways or waterways	<15 acres	North Lotus Lake Park, Pioneer Pass Park
Preserve	Areas focused on the provision of natural environments, passive recreation, and ecological education.	Community & Regional Draw	Centered around natural resources and amenities	Fox Woods Preserve, Bluff Creek Preserve
Special Use	Areas primarily serving a single-use activity.	Community & Regional Draw	Site specific	Olson Community Garden

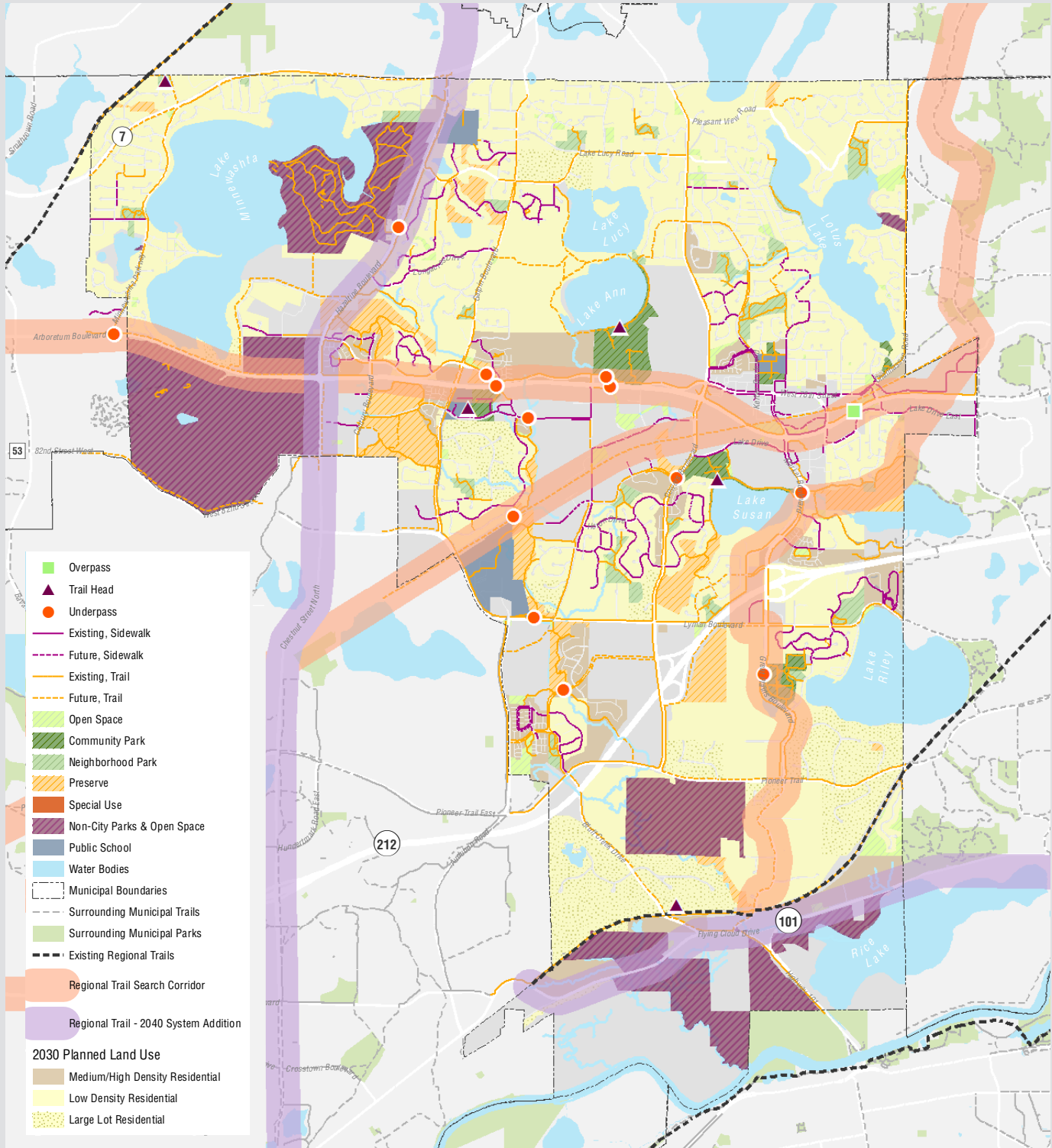
2040 REGIONAL TRAIL SEARCH CORRIDORS

The Metropolitan Council has established general search corridors for new regional trails or extensions of existing regional trails. These corridors were designated in order to create connections between

regional parks and trails. The map below displays regional trail search corridors that intersect with the City of Chanhassen. While corridors have been identified, the specific alignment

of the regional trails will still need to be determined through a planning process led by the regional park implementing agency.

Figure 5-1. Regional Search Corridors



DESIGN OF TRAILS AND SIDEWALKS BETWEEN NEIGHBORHOODS

Policy 1.2 and Goal 2 outline various ways to keep the park system connected with trails and sidewalks. Today the city of Chanhassen has many trails and sidewalks that allow pedestrians and bicyclists to move safely between parks, schools, commercial areas, and neighborhoods. As new neighborhoods are developed or changed, thought

should be given to maintaining strong trail connections, as well as adding and improving the connections between parks and neighborhoods, making convenient connections, and creating safe road crossings where needed. Tunnels, like the Hwy 5 underpass shown below, allow continuity and safety in movement for bikers and walkers, young and old. Mid-

block crossings using HAWK signals can be useful in areas where trails can only be on one side of a street or a trail crossing needs to be in a certain area. Stairs and switchbacks can be used in places where trail connections are needed in steep areas.



Existing park trail



Hwy 5 trail underpass



Enhanced trail crossing



Planned neighborhood trail connection

Goal 2. Develop and maintain a comprehensive and easily navigable trail and sidewalk system that connects neighborhoods to park and recreation facilities, schools, community destinations, and other communities.

- 2.1. Prioritize the elimination of trail gaps based on safety, connectivity, and cost.
- 2.2. Create trails within preserves.
- 2.3. Improve the trail user experience through improved maintenance, wayfinding, and amenities (i.e. benches, trash cans, etc.).
- 2.4. Establish trails and sidewalks as a key transportation network in new development.
- 2.5. Explore opportunities to expand the trail and sidewalk system through neighborhoods to enhance connections to surrounding amenities.
- 2.6. Prioritize the construction of grade-separated crossings of roads for trails based on safety, demand, and standard transportation warrants like traffic volumes.
- 2.7. Preserve vacated or abandoned right-of-way for trail purposes.
- 2.8. Collaborate with local and regional agencies on the establishment of regional trails.
- 2.9. Partner with surrounding communities to create inter-community trail connections that enables users to travel to surrounding communities and regional trails without having to 'jump' between different trails and sidewalks.

VACATED/ABANDONED RIGHT-OF-WAY

As a community evolves there are occasions when existing right-of-way is determined to be no longer needed, is abandoned, or is requested to be vacated by adjacent property owners. Where possible given dedication conditions or restrictions, consideration should be given to whether these rights-of-way could be used for trail, open space corridor, or park purposes.

WHAT WE HEARD

“ Need more variety and interesting stuff to do for all ages.

WHAT WE HEARD

“ I would like to see a more natural approach to grounds, grass and trail maintenance. Less mowing of natural areas and zero herbicide/pesticide use.

Goal 3. Ensure all residents have the opportunity to participate in recreation, education, culture, and arts activities.

- 3.1. Strive to offer a diversity of programs at a variety of times to serve all age groups.
- 3.2. Explore art, culture, and nature based programming and partnerships to serve non-athletic community needs.
- 3.3. Draw residents to parks and recreation facilities by hosting City events and supporting partners' events.
- 3.4. Encourage, partner with, and support existing associations, clubs, and groups to fill programming gaps that the City cannot fill.
- 3.5. Expand partnerships with local schools to serve community needs.

Goal 4. Be a leader in environmental sustainability.

- 4.1. Preserve remaining natural areas as opportunities arise.
- 4.2. Support park users' efforts to improve the quality of their environment by offering recycling, composting, etc.
- 4.3. Manage the use of pesticides within parks.
- 4.4. Explore opportunities to convert existing turf areas to native plantings.
- 4.5. Reduce impacts on lakes, waterways, and groundwater by incorporating stormwater best practices in park and facility design.
- 4.6. Use sustainable building practices when developing, expanding or renovating facilities.
- 4.7. Improve energy efficiency when renovating or constructing new facilities.
- 4.8. Use native trees/shrubs planted in appropriate locations to shade and shield buildings and facilities to conserve energy.
- 4.9. Raise public awareness of the the benefits and necessity of natural resources, the importance of sustainability, and the City's efforts through social media, interpretation, and educational programming.

PESTICIDES, PARKS, AND PEOPLE

Lawn space in the public realm has many benefits; it provides a more aesthetically pleasing and softer surface for play and leisure when compared to hard-packed dirt, it stabilizes dust, absorbs rather than reflects sunlight, and absorbs carbon dioxide. While these are beneficial, lawns are still monocultures that support fewer species insects, birds, mammals and other organisms that work together to foster an ecosystem that provides clean air, soil, and water. In addition, the chemicals and energy required to maintain a turfgrass lawn are high. Over the last 20 years the City of Chanhassen has minimized its use of pesticides, generally only using them for the specific issues like Emerald Ash Borer. Several adjustments to current practices can result in lower rates of pesticide applications (including herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and other substances meant for destroying pests), reduced labor and energy inputs, reduced human exposure to carcinogens, and increased habitat. Strategies include:

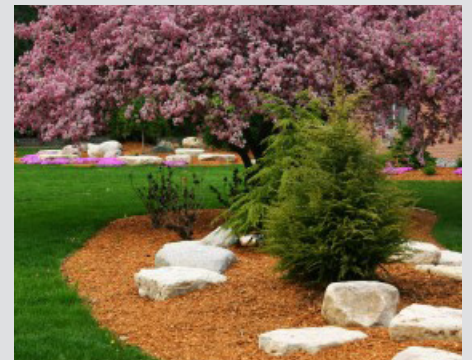
- » Integrated Pest Management, or IPM, addresses pests such as weeds or insects by utilizing a combination of biological controls, maintenance practices, increased tolerance of smaller infestations, and pesticides when needed.
- » Education about the benefits of more sustainable alternatives and appreciating a more natural appearance of parks.
- » Development of low-impact lawns that include the use of fescue grasses, buffalo grass, and other broadleaf, meadow-like components, which require less water and fertilizer than bluegrass.
- » Conversion of underutilized turfgrass areas into native tall grass meadows.
- » Pesticide-free Maintenance Practices such as crack sealing, mowing, propane weed burning, hand weeding, tillage, and mulching.
- » Designing for reduced pesticide use includes utilizing low maintenance, spreading groundcovers and shrubs in landscape beds, mulch in tree wells, and fewer fence lines.
- » Modeling existing Pesticide Free Parks Programs such as those of Eugene and Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington.



Educational signage



Low-impact fescue grass lawn



Low-maintenance landscaping



Educational signage



Native prairie plantings



Pesticide free park

ARTIST DESIGNED PARKS AND PARK AMENITIES

Artistic features can take many forms and range from subtle to spectacular. Art can be incorporated into parks as a mural on a wall, a unique water fountain, an interpretive sign, a play feature, lights, or a bench. Artist designed amenities entice a park user to notice and think about how park facilities and amenities are designed and used and to identify parks and playgrounds with special artistic features. People think, “This is different and cool” or “That’s the park with the big dragonfly.”

Policies 3.2 and 5.2 - 5.4 discuss the inclusion of art and artists in park design. Methods to implement these policies could include the following:

- » Devoting a portion of new construction projects to public art. See Norman, Oklahoma’s ‘Norman Forward’ for an example.
- » Using the CPTED Guidelines (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).
- » Involving an ‘interpretive planner’ in the design of natural and educational experiences (e.g. ‘Preserve trail’ enhancement with wayfinding and nature observation)
- » Including an artist in the early phases of park development and design to explore creative ways to incorporate art into the design.
- » Designing exterior environments to be flexible for public use in a variety of ways (artistic, educational, cultural, performance, etc.).



Nature themed shelter posts and fence



Dragonfly play structure



Musical play features



Artistic sidewalk markings



Artistic bench

Goal 5. Proactively plan for a high quality, efficient parks and recreation system that meets community needs.

- 5.1. Encourage parks to be defining features of neighborhoods through the placement of parks in a visible location and the establishment of connecting trails and sidewalks.
- 5.2. Encourage participation by neighborhoods, community groups, and local artists in the planning for and development of park and recreation facilities. Identify locations for unique features or improvements to avoid a system of “cookie cutter” parks.
- 5.3. Enhance users’ experiences through well-designed exterior environments/places that give consideration to how all members of the public can engage in these spaces in different ways (educational, cultural, performance, artistic, etc.), how places can be interconnected throughout the community, and how lighting contributes to inviting spaces. As part of design process, seek opportunities to use artist-created park features rather than standard catalog pieces.
- 5.4. Encourage the use of the park system for performance art, temporary art installations, and public art.
- 5.5. Explore opportunities to reconfigure or improve efficiencies within existing parks to serve identified community needs.
- 5.6. Continue strong partnership and communication with local associations, clubs, and other organizations to ensure facilities are meeting their needs.
- 5.7. Integrate trails into the planning and design process for public improvements and land development.
- 5.8. Design parks and facilities to address active and passive needs while giving consideration to the environmental context, surrounding land uses, and future maintenance and operational needs.
- 5.9. Establish and routinely update a sustainable operations, maintenance and replacement schedule for all parks and facilities with particular attention on playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, pickleball courts, shelters, etc.
- 5.10. Collaborate with Engineering Department on trail pavement management program.
- 5.11. Explore partnership opportunities for capital improvement costs and life-cycle system costs.
- 5.12. Maintain current management of fields as demand continues to increase:
 - 5.12.1. Rotational resting of fields based on a schedule/level of use.
 - 5.12.2. Postponement of use during and after significant rain events.
- 5.13. Expand the capacity of the athletic facilities through improvements and efficiencies within existing community parks.

EFFICIENT PARK & RECREATION SYSTEMS

Efficient parks and recreations system are those that successfully meet the needs of residents and visitors with minimum wasted effort or expense. An example might be that neighborhood parks are located in a manner that optimizes walkability for residents while minimizing service area overlap.



Performance art in parks

WHAT WE HEARD

“ Facilities to celebrate the arts should be included. Bandstands, public art and sculpture.”

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

The development and maintenance of trails involves collaboration between the Parks and Recreation, Engineering, and Public Works Departments. In addition to design and construction, the Parks Department plows the trails. Pavement management (crack sealing and pavement replacement) for trails, however, is overseen by the Engineering and Public Works Departments in coordination with street construction projects. These departments are also responsible for making improvements for at-grade trail crossings. As this plan’s community engagement process highlighted the importance of improving safety at trail crossings, collaboration between these departments will be important for the implementation of the system plan.

CITY PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are vital to the development and operations of the parks and recreation system. Individuals, businesses, civic organizations, nonprofits, and institutions provide valuable time, money, and space to support a variety of initiatives from educational sessions to park clean-up to helping at community events. Developing and maintaining partnerships will continue to be important as the system plan is implemented.

Current city partners include:

- » 3rd Lair Skate Park
- » AARP
- » AmeriClnn
- » Athletics & Extracurricular Activities
- » Augustana Emerald Crest
- » Baha'i Faith
- » Berne Scale
- » Better Business Bureau
- » Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
- » Boy Scout Troup #330
- » Buy Chanhassen
- » Carver County
- » Chanhassen American Legion
- » Chanhassen Fire Department
- » Chanhassen Floral
- » Chanhassen Interact Club
- » Chanhassen Library
- » Chanhassen Lion's Club
- » Chanhassen Villager
- » Chapel Hill
- » Charter Bank Chanhassen
- » Chaska Park & Recreation
- » Dugout Club/CAA
- » Eastern Carver County Schools (ISD 112)
- » Eden Prairie Senior Center
- » Edward Jones
- » Hazeltine National Golf Club
- » KleinBank
- » Living Christ Lutheran Church
- » MAAA (MN Area on Aging)
- » Minnesota Timberwolves
- » Minnesota Twins
- » Minnetonka Public Schools (ISD 276)
- » MN Postcard Club
- » New Horizons Academy
- » Park Dental
- » Pickleball Association of MN
- » Pinky Swear Kids Triathlon
- » Purple Box Jewelers
- » REACH for Resources
- » Ridgeview Clinics
- » Ridgeview Medical Center
- » Rotary Club of Chanhassen
- » Scouting Groups
- » Senior Advisory Board Member
- » Sentence to Serve (adults)
- » Skyhawks
- » SmartLink
- » SouthWest Christian High School
- » SouthWest Metro Chamber of Commerce
- » SouthWest Metro Pickleball Club
- » Southwest Publishing
- » Southwest Transit
- » Sports Unlimited
- » Summerwood of Chanhassen
- » The Mustard Seed Landscape & Garden Center
- » Twin City Paddle Boards
- » University of Minnesota
- » Walgreen's Chanhassen
- » Work Experience Program

WHAT WE HEARD

“ Our hope is that long term the park areas continue to be protected. Having those areas is a huge plus for living in Chanhassen. ”

Goal 6. Implement strategies to increase the City's capacity to maintain and expand the parks and recreation system.

- 6.1. Identify and expand partnerships with area recreation associations, clubs and groups; local businesses; private organizations; neighborhood groups; and other public agencies.
- 6.2. Utilize our facilities to capitalize on opportunities to generate revenue.
- 6.3. Evaluate options to expand the use of volunteers to support park operations and programming.
- 6.4. Explore seeking voter approval to issue bonds or levy a tax to expand or support the needs of the park and recreation facilities and system.
- 6.5. Encourage property owners interested in donating or granting conservation easements on their land.
- 6.6. Support the creation of a non-profit parks and recreation foundation.

Initiatives

Initiatives are specific actions that are recommended for implementation. Initiatives are organized by the topic areas of parks, facilities, trails, preserves, programming, and operations. In this area in particular, care will be needed to determine what level of detail the system plan should include. For example, the neighborhood park section could become a list of all the specific improvements in each park or it could summarize an approach. Our recommendation is to use the latter method. This would mean that we might have a recommendation that identifies the need to replace and upgrade playgrounds in neighborhood parks according to the maintenance and replacement schedule rather than a list of each park where replacement is prioritized.

1. Parks

Chanhasseen's 30 community and neighborhood parks play an important role in the City's quality of life. They act as places for community gatherings, picnics and celebrations, family outings, and group and individual recreation. The following park initiatives aim to provide guidance to ensure each park continues to fulfill its role in the overall system.

- 1.1. Maintain Lake Ann Park as the premier community park.
 - 1.1.1. Develop a master plan that defines the extent of park expansion to the west and north to preserve natural areas, extend the trail around the lake, and provide for additional recreational amenities like an amphitheater. The master plan should also explore additional facilities appropriate for a community park with significant natural amenities, parking expansion, circulation needs, and expanded natural surface and paved trails. The master plan should seek to influence adjacent neighborhood design to promote the extension of park and open space fingers into the adjacent development areas. The master plan should also include a natural resources section to guide the stewardship of the park's natural resources.
 - 1.1.2. Add user amenities in a phased manner, including permanent restrooms near the pavilions and athletic facilities, benches, and electronic scoreboards.
- 1.2. Implement the recommendations of the Bandimere Park Master Plan, which includes a picnic shelter with restrooms, field lights, sport court, hockey warming house, and possible splash pad.
- 1.3. At Lake Susan Park renovate the existing picnic shelter to include permanent restrooms, expand parking and add lighting and structured seating for the baseball field.
- 1.4. Add permanent restrooms and hockey warming house to City Center Park.
- 1.5. Seek opportunities to expand the capacity of the community park network to serve athletic and community event needs.
- 1.6. Use maintenance and replacement schedule to plan for phased replacement of neighborhood park facilities (i.e. playgrounds, sport courts, shelters, etc.).
- 1.7. Add parks and/or preserves as development occurs in the Bluff Creek Golf Course, Bluff Creek Corridor, and County Road 61 Corridor Plan areas.



Amphitheater



Bandimere Park Master Plan

WHAT WE HEARD

“ Keep [area north and west of Lake Ann] free of developers. Natural setting of Lake Ann is wonderful!

PARK DEVELOPMENT

Traditionally, small towns and cities have been organized around a town green, parks, and open spaces. These green spaces and activity areas give life, energy, and character to their surrounding communities. In many ways, they define the places where we live. Therefore, the development of parks and open spaces should be carefully considered and not be relegated to leftover spaces in our communities. Rather, they should play a central role in the organization of our neighborhoods, communities and cities. The criteria for park development should consider the following:



Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are the basic unit of the park system. They serve the recreational and social focus of the adjoining neighborhoods and contribute to a distinct neighborhood identity. Neighborhood parks should serve as extensions of the neighborhood around them, providing recreational and social activities.

Development Design Criteria:

- » Prioritize locating the neighborhood park on local or major local streets.
- » Incorporate barriers with landscaping, fencing or walls when the park is adjacent to arterial roadways.
- » Provide adequate connections by linking the park to adjacent developments with trails and sidewalks.
- » Design the park for both active and passive uses and consider the specific needs of the neighborhood, all age groups, and all physical abilities.
- » Utilize the park to create a “sense of place” that reflects and enhances neighborhood identity.
- » Use public art, preservation of natural areas, and other park design to distinguish parks from one another.
- » Incorporate natural features on the site, such as topography, vegetation and hydrology.
- » Maximize the number of residences fronting the park.
- » Include widened on-street parking area adjacent to the park.
- » Encourage the use of traffic calming devices next to the park.



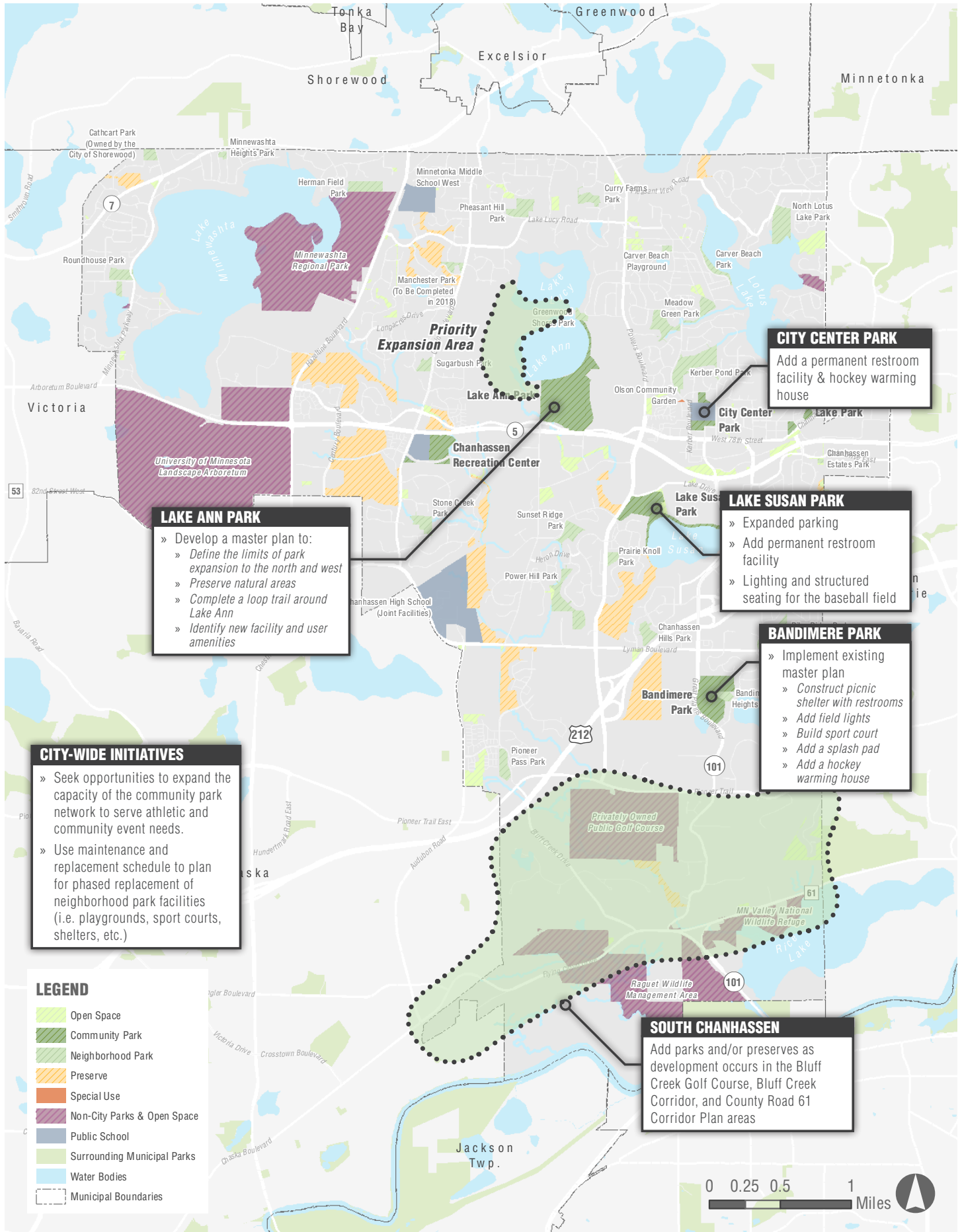
Community Parks

Community parks are designed to be accessible by multiple neighborhoods and should focus on meeting community-based recreational needs and on preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. Community parks are generally larger in scale than neighborhood parks, but smaller than regional parks and are designed for residents who live within a 2 to 3-mile radius. While community parks may also meet the needs of neighborhoods, they primarily function as “destination” parks with special facilities such as lighted sports fields, amphitheatres, etc. that serve the entire community.

Development Design Criteria:

- » Locate community park on a collector or higher order roadway.
- » Provide a barrier with landscaping, fencing or walls if located near an arterial roadway.
- » Encourage trail connections to other parks.
- » Position park with streets on all sides or on three sides with a school, municipal feature or significant natural feature on the fourth side.
- » Dedicate 65% of park space to active uses and 35% to passive uses.
- » Provide sufficient parking to support park amenities, but avoid occupying more than 10% of the site.
- » Include widened on-street parking area adjacent to the park.
- » Encourage the use of traffic calming devices next to the park.

Figure 5-2. Park Initiatives



WHAT WE HEARD

“ Adding community nature play as part an expansion of Lake Ann Park would enhance this park as an area destination, setting it apart from surrounding communities.



Destination Splash Pad



Outdoor Lab Space



Interpretive Center

2. **Facilities**

There are a wide range of facilities currently provided in the Chanhassen Parks and Recreation System. From traditional diamond fields to a Senior Center, the City meets many of the needs of its various types of users. The facility initiatives aim to build on the existing system to better accommodate current users while potentially attracting new ones.

- 2.1. Identify and construct a year-round signature recreation facility in the community that includes indoor, outdoor, and passive spaces.
 - 2.1.1. Complete an aquatic facilities need study.
 - 2.1.2. Complete a facilities study for the Recreation Center to plan for the renovation and expansion of facilities and services.
 - 2.1.3. Complete a facilities study for the Senior Center to plan for the renovation and expansion of facilities and services.
- 2.2. Add a destination splash pad at a community park. Ensure expansion includes additional parking if needed and user amenities like benches, restrooms, and changing facilities.
- 2.3. Develop and implement a phased improvement plan for improvements to the skate park.
- 2.4. Support pickleball by adding user amenities like seating, wind screens, and sun canopies.
- 2.5. Add permanent concrete tee boxes and improved site amenities to support users at the Bandimere disc golf course.
- 2.6. Improve existing volleyball facilities within community parks through improved seating, nets, and shelters.
- 2.7. Add community-scale nature play at a community park.
- 2.8. Add unstructured nature play throughout the community as appropriate.
- 2.9. Establish an interpretative center with an outdoor lab space and a nature based play area to support natural resources outreach and education.
- 2.10. Explore opportunities for a second community garden.
- 2.11. Complete an audit of system ADA accessibility and address issues identified. Prioritize an examination of accessibility at the Recreation Center and Senior Center to address concerns regarding handicapped parking, door access, and trip hazards.
- 2.12. Pilot facilities for new or trending sports to assess appropriateness for park system, cost, durability, and demand.

NATURE PLAY

Nature play evokes a range of images in people's heads from total immersion in a natural environment to playground structures that are man-made to look like natural elements. The idea behind nature play is to get kids in touch with their natural environment. These playgrounds are different from standard playgrounds in that they encourage children to get

dirty, imagine, create, and learn with nature. Natural play areas are designed to incorporate natural elements, such as wood, stone, water, plants, soil, and sand, that facilitate kids' interactions with them in a playful manner. Children can see how natural materials interact with each other and themselves, as well as observe insects and other wildlife in their

natural habitats. Simply allowing and directing kids to experience their natural environments in a playful way, rather than being fearful of the outdoors, promotes confidence, independence, and ecological and environmental stewardship.



Low-impact nature playground structures



Stone, water, sand, and plants in play area



Natural play using existing natural structures



Wood and downed trees as play features



Destination nature playground

SIGNATURE RECREATION FACILITY STUDY

Community input in the Parks and Recreation System planning process identified the need for improvements to the Recreation Center and Senior Center. A recommended initiative of the System Plan is the development of a facility study for a Signature Recreation Facility.

Completing a facility study is important as it will provide:

- » A thorough assessment of existing conditions - including an inventory of existing facilities, analysis of service levels, and an assessment of other public and private resources serving the community
- » The identification of community needs now and into the future - including community preferences for potential amenities and services
- » The exploration of a range of options with an analysis of costs, benefits, and challenges of each
- » An assessment of construction, operation, and maintenance costs, as well as the potential economic impact of the facility
- » The exploration of partnership and funding options

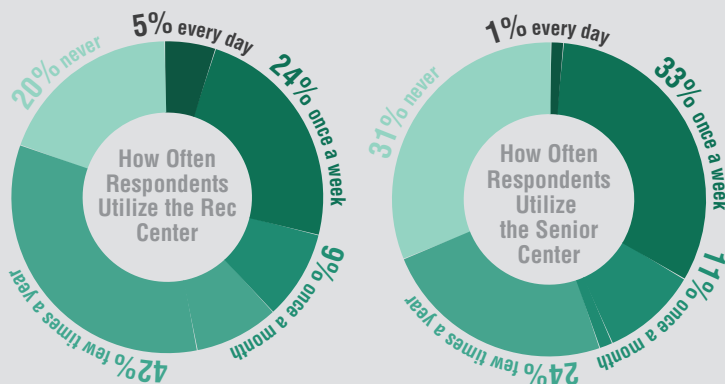
While a detailed examination of the recreation and senior centers was not conducted in the system planning process, outreach as part of the system planning process did invite discussion on the future needs of the community relative to those facilities. The charts provided on the next page are summaries of some of the community input received. These provide a foundation for a specific facility study to be conducted. All of the community input received during the system planning process is available in Appendix A of the system plan.

Through the system planning process, the following amenities and services were identified as needs that have the potential to be served by a signature recreation facility:

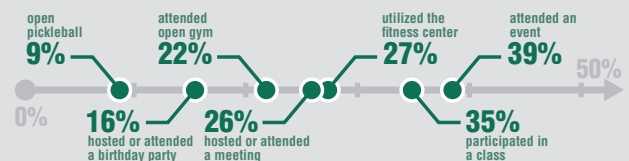
- » Childcare

- » Coffee shop/snack bar
- » Community meeting space/banquet space with kitchen
- » Expanded classes and programming
- » Field House/Dome
- » Fitness Center
- » Garden
- » Gym space
- » Ice rinks (indoor/outdoor)
- » Indoor kids play area
- » Passive recreation areas
- » Pool (indoor/outdoor)
- » Running/walking track
- » Splash pad
- » Sport courts
- » Studio for art/hobbies
- » Swim lessons/open swim
- » Theater
- » Waterpark

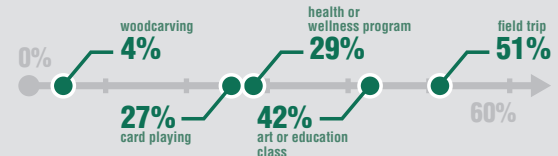
Existing Facilities & Programming Use



Recreation Center



Senior Center



Of Respondents That Never Use the Recreation Center:



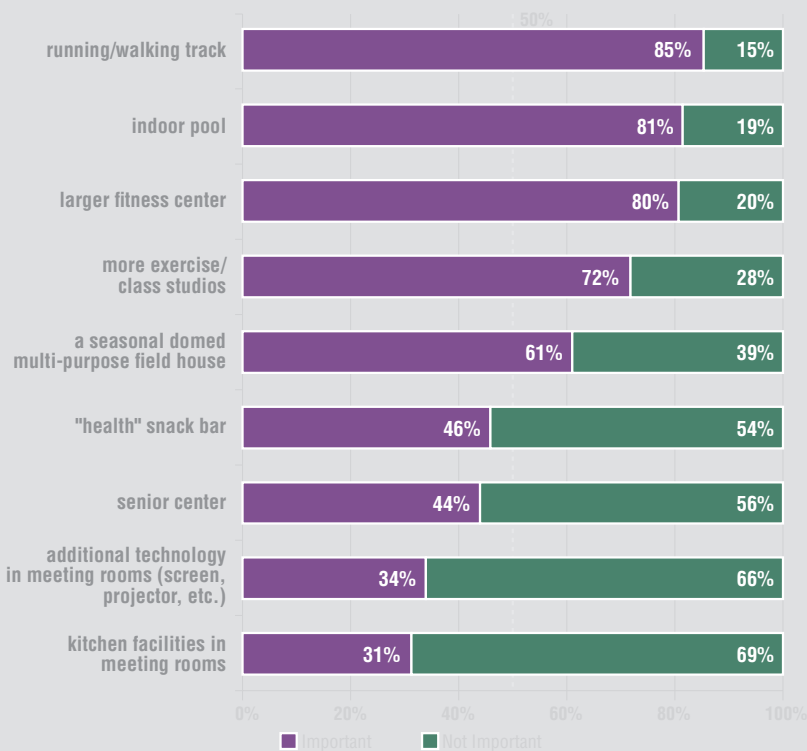
Of Respondents That Never Use the Senior Center:





Importance of Additional Facilities & Programming

Recreation Center



Senior Center

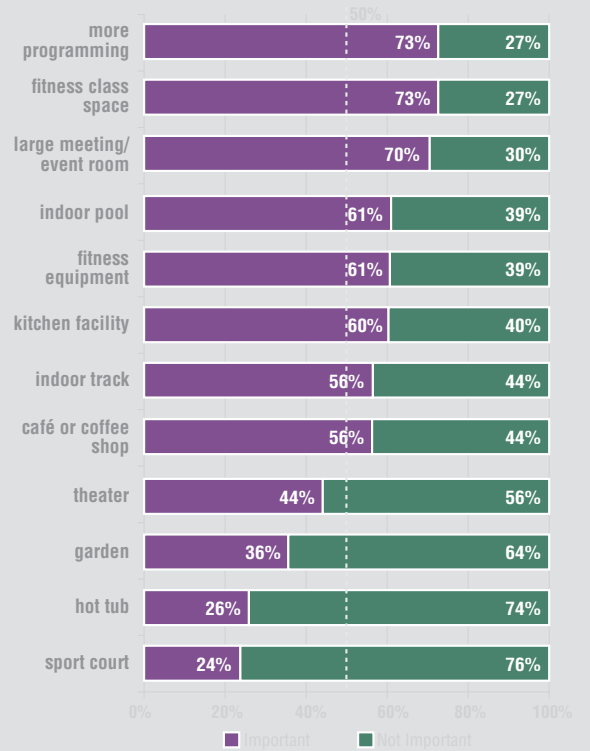
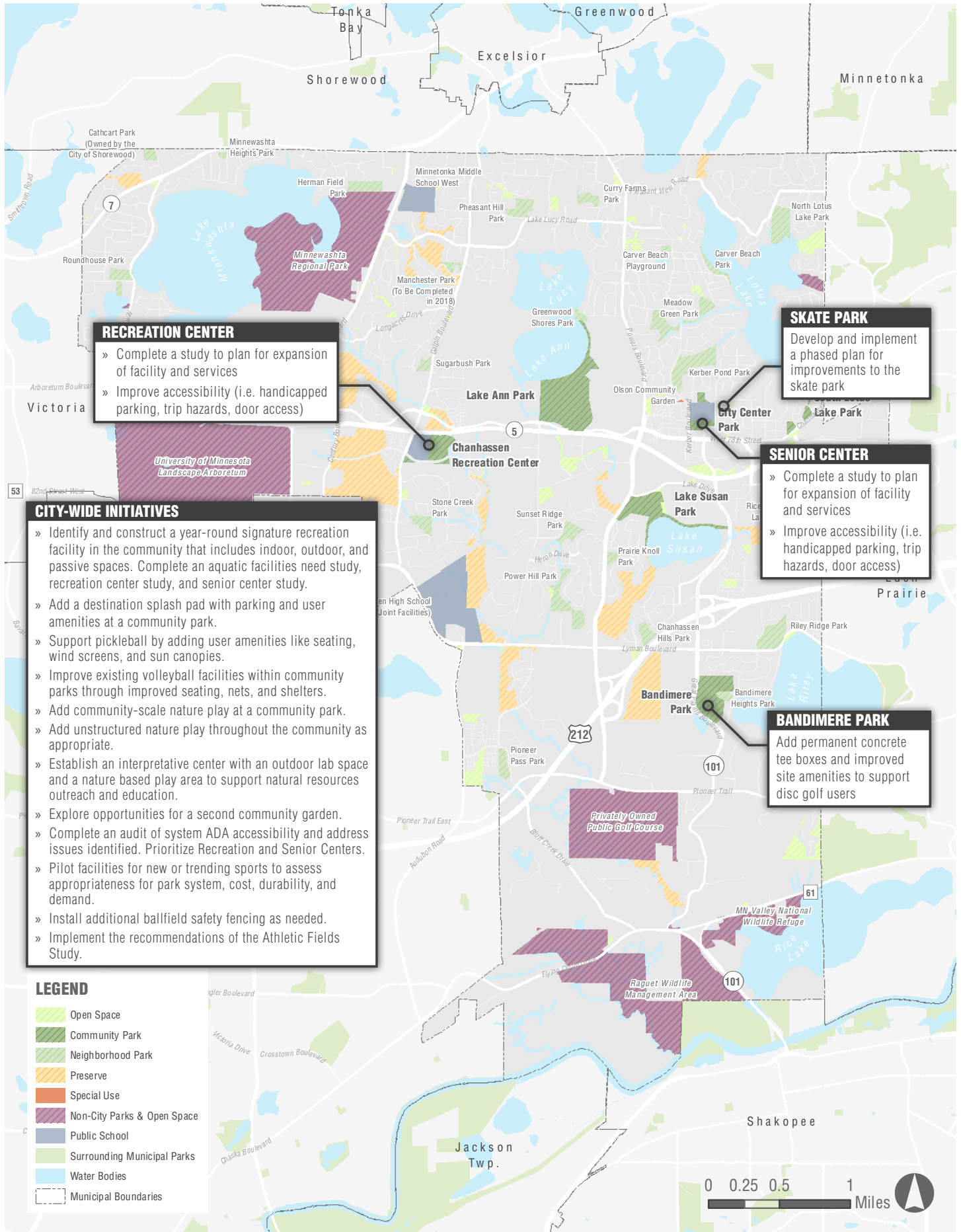


Figure 5-3. Facility Initiatives



- 2.13. Install additional ballfield safety fencing as needed.
- 2.14. Implement the following recommendations of the Athletic Fields Study:
 - 2.14.1. Based on current trends combined with projected demand, Chanhassen should plan for new multi-purpose field construction (1-3 fields) in the next 15 years.
 - 2.14.2. Based on national standards and desires of the baseball community, the City should continue to emphasize flexibility in the ballfields with basepaths and moveable pitching rubbers or mounds to better meet the demands for 75' and 90' basepath ballfields.
 - 2.14.3. Provide lights at Bandimere Park on baseball and soccer fields to expand capacity of fields and improve scheduling flexibility.
 - 2.14.4. Provide a lighted, artificial turf multi-use field at Bandimere Park to expand capacity, ensure playability, provide a premier field, and protect and allow for more resting of grass fields.

WHAT WE HEARD

“ Maintaining current baseball/softball fields and possibly adding an additional complex/fields to accommodate youth baseball/softball practices/games and to better showcase our community during hosted tournaments.

WHAT WE HEARD

“ Mileage markers on trails, 5k/10k routes marked. Work with local schools (Earth Club) or Boy Scouts to have the youth help plan routes, post routes/ mileage markers on website.

TRAIL MARKERS AND WAYFINDING

Identification of routes, such as trail loops or distances, can be addressed in ways that range from easily implementable and temporary, to embedded and permanent. Route markers should be context sensitive, reflecting the feel of the surroundings.



3. Trails

Trails bring the park and recreation system closer to every resident, offering recreational opportunities and transportation alternatives, particularly for those who cannot or chose not to drive including low income households, children, and the elderly. As the most popular amenity in Chanhassen, the City's 80 miles of trails already excel at creating accessible connections between destinations and supporting a healthy and active population. These trail initiatives aim to support the system's excellent reputation by addressing gaps and improving user experiences.

While the Parks and Recreation Department manages Chanhassen's trail system, it is important to recognize that the construction and maintenance of trails are a result of collaboration between Parks and Recreation, Engineering, and Public Works.

- 3.1. Address trail gaps identified in Figure 3-17.
- 3.2. Address trail crossing safety issues identified in Figure 3-17.
- 3.3. Increase awareness and expanded trail use through maps and trail wayfinding to help identify loops, distances, and destinations.
- 3.4. Support trail accessibility through the identification of easily accessible routes that do not have steep slopes, gaps, or challenging transitions.
- 3.5. Enhance user experiences and placemaking through the addition of user amenities that incorporate art and education (i.e. benches, lighting, garbage cans, kiosks/signage, etc.)
- 3.6. Complete the connection to the Minnesota River through the construction of a trail along Bluff Creek Drive or Great Plains Boulevard.
- 3.7. Expand the number of natural surface trails by mapping existing locations, identifying opportunities for expansion, including in preserves, and incorporating trail expansion in the Capital Improvement Plan.
- 3.8. Explore opportunities to add trailheads.
- 3.9. Work with partner agencies to reopen the Minnesota River Bluff LRT Regional Trail.
- 3.10. Initiate a single-track mountain bike trail study.

Figure 5-4. Trail Initiatives

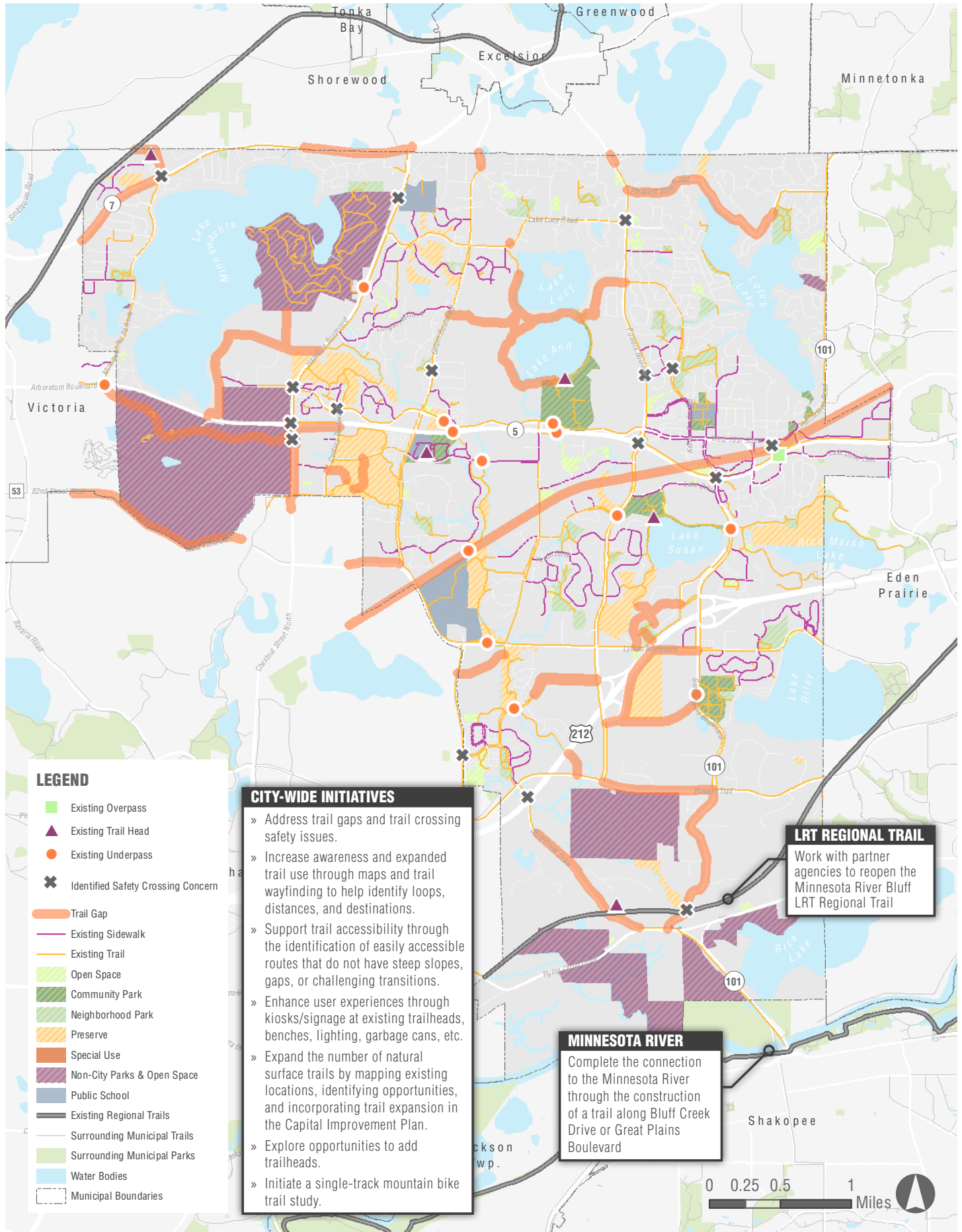
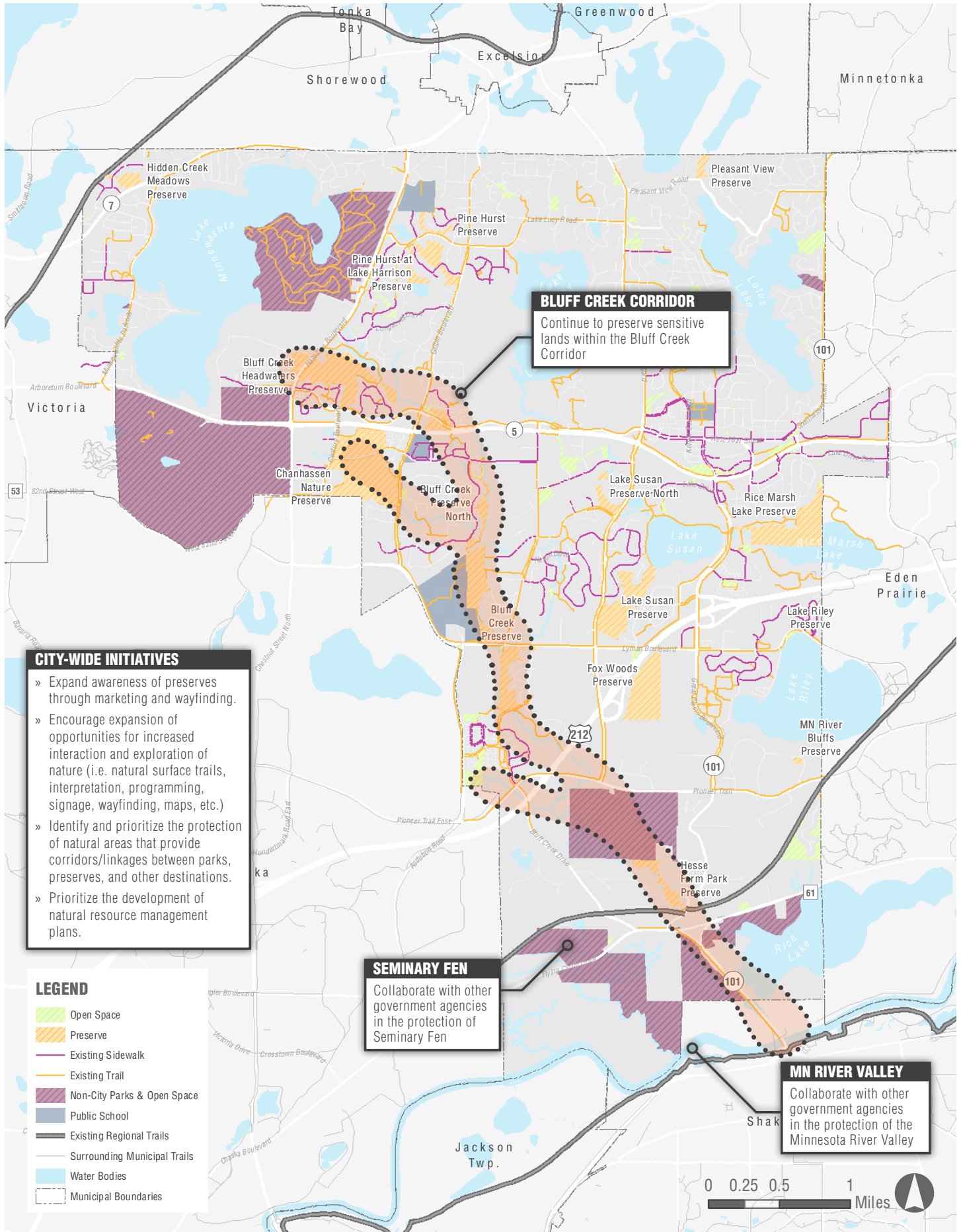


Figure 5-5. Preserve Initiatives



4. **Preserves**

Natural areas have been highlighted as an important amenity for Chanhassen residents to connect to, interact with, and learn about conservation and wildlife. While the City contains ample natural resources and preservation areas, their existence is generally unknown. The following initiatives aim to expand accessibility and awareness of existing preserves, while protecting every current and future natural area.

- 4.1. Expand awareness of preserves through marketing and wayfinding.
- 4.2. Encourage expansion of opportunities for increased interaction and exploration of nature (i.e. natural surface trails, interpretation, programming, signage, wayfinding, maps, etc.)
- 4.3. Identify and prioritize the protection of natural areas that provide corridors/linkages between parks, preserves, and other destinations.
- 4.4. Prioritize the development of natural resource management plans.
- 4.5. Collaborate with other government agencies in the protection of the Seminary Fen and the Minnesota River Valley.
- 4.6. Continue to preserve sensitive lands within the Bluff Creek Corridor.

5. **Programming**

Users engage in recreational programming for enjoyment, health, skill development, socialization, enrichment, entertainment, physical fitness, and relaxation. Chanhassen hosts several popular community events and successfully partners with local organizations and associations to provide other programming opportunities. Programming initiatives aim to maintain existing programs and events, while improving accessibility for all users and expanding awareness and outreach.

- 5.1. Continue to host at least five major community events in the city (currently there is Feb Fest, Easter Egg Hunt, 4th of July, Halloween, Tree Lighting).
- 5.2. Continue to partner with area business and organizations to provide summer concert series.
- 5.3. Continue to collaborate with schools and other organizations to provide public recreation activities in the parks.
- 5.4. Expand the number of informal, indoor and outdoor, seasonal recreation events.
- 5.5. Expand nature based events and programs.
- 5.6. Expand Senior Center awareness through rebranding and a marketing campaign.
- 5.7. Collaborate with high school youth leaders to organize quarterly teen activities (fun runs, music, arts) and pilot programs.
- 5.8. Collaborate with the Arts Consortium of Carver County to support the expansion of arts related programming in the City.
- 5.9. Establish an Event Management Plan to address the registration and notification process; cost recovery; and strategies to minimize general park user impacts associated with non-City sponsored events seeking to utilize Chanhassen's parks or trails.
- 5.10. Annually evaluate that the City's pricing structure reflects the benefits of the program or event to the community versus the individual.

BLUFF CREEK CORRIDOR

The Bluff Creek Corridor is a small tributary of the Lower Minnesota River, and is a treasured natural amenity in the City of Chanhassen. A 2007 inventory of Bluff Creek indicated that stormwater runoff and groundwater seepage occurring as a result of urban development is resulting in excessive ravine erosion and sediment buildup within the stream. Bluff Creek is now within a zoning overlay district that prevents development within the primary zone of the corridor and limits development types in surrounding areas. While some of the corridor is already within park preserves (as seen in Figure 3-16), the City should capitalize on any future opportunities to expand this protection.

WHAT WE HEARD

“ Greater variety of community events throughout year. Want to attract folks from region to more than 4th of July.”



Fourth of July Carnival



Vegetative buffer surrounding Lake Susan



Tobacco-free park signage

WHAT WE HEARD

“ NO SMOKING in all parks! Better yet, NO TOBACCO!

6. **Operations**

As the City of Chanhassen is almost completely built out, there is limited land left for the development of new parks and open space. As a result, maintenance of the high-quality system is an essential component of meeting the needs of current and future users. The following initiatives for Chanhassen focus on improving operational efficiencies and capabilities, maintenance, sustainability, communications, and programming evaluation.

- 6.1. Ensure the System Plan is used as a basis for the annual budgeting and capital improvement planning process to evaluate and address the parks and recreation system needs, including staffing, program/event expansion, facility expansion, maintenance, and replacement.
- 6.2. Communicate benefits of parks and recreation system, including the impact of the preserves and races/tournaments on the business community.
- 6.3. Incorporate stormwater best practices, such as rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavers, in park and facility design.
- 6.4. Reduce impervious surfaces and explore turf conversion to native plantings in the design of parks and facilities.
- 6.5. Preserve natural buffers and setbacks around wetlands, rivers, ponds, reservoirs, and lakes on appropriate public lands and parks.
- 6.6. Improve water conservation and energy efficiency of facilities when renovating or constructing new.
- 6.7. Annually assess trail maintenance policies for debris removal and winter plowing. Reevaluate and amend winter plowing plans based on factors like historical maintenance, commuting routes, safe routes to school, and resident requests.
- 6.8. Establish a formal process for program and event development and evaluation and trend analysis.
- 6.9. Create a tobacco use policy for the parks and recreation system.
- 6.10. Incorporate innovative sustainable design and maintenance practices to make Chanhassen a model and educational resource for residents and surrounding communities.