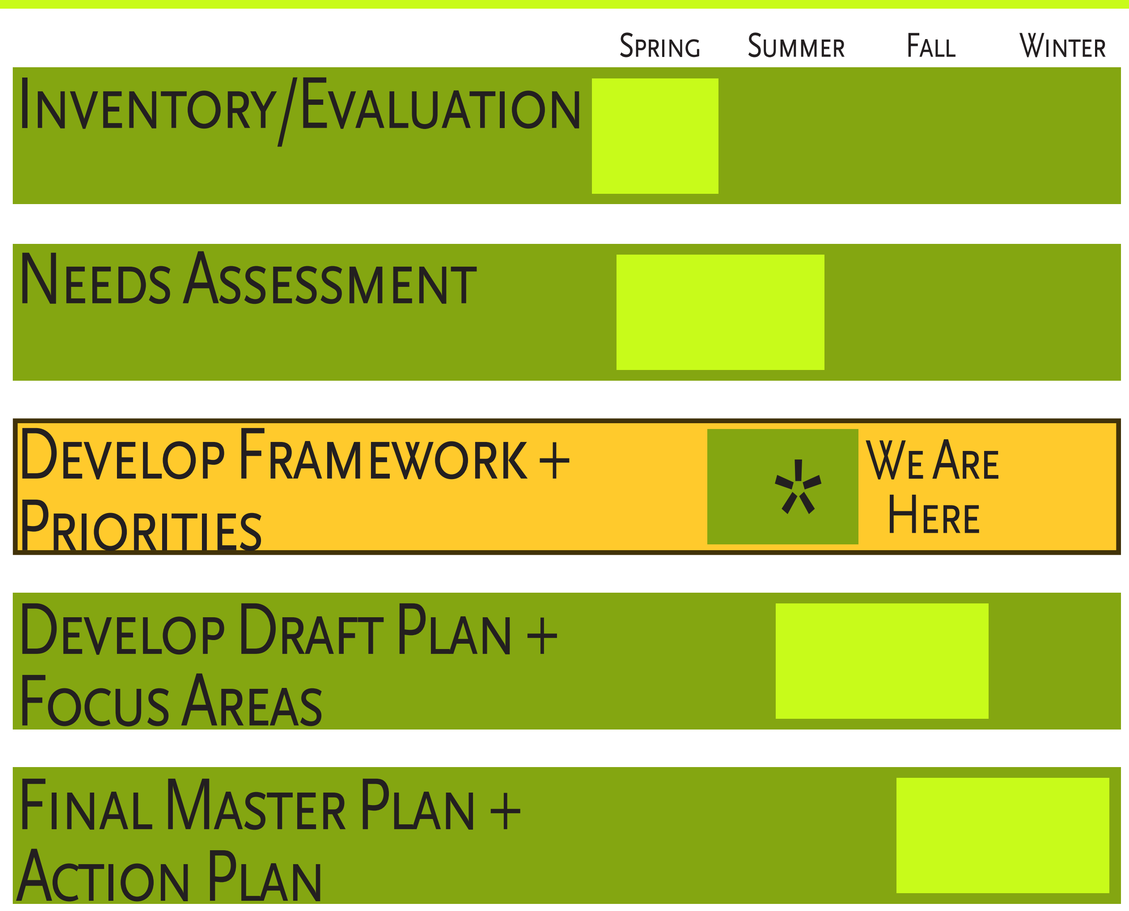
Welcome!

What is a parks and recreation master plan?

- Long range (10-25 yrs) vision and guide for goals, open space, trails recreation in Elk River
- Guide for commission and council decisions for future parks and recreation investment
- Strategies to ensure the parks and recreation system meets community needs now and in the future

What is the project's schedule?



We want to know what you think!

Input given tonight will help shape the draft master plan document and concepts for key parks, to be developed this summer. Ways to provide input tonight include:

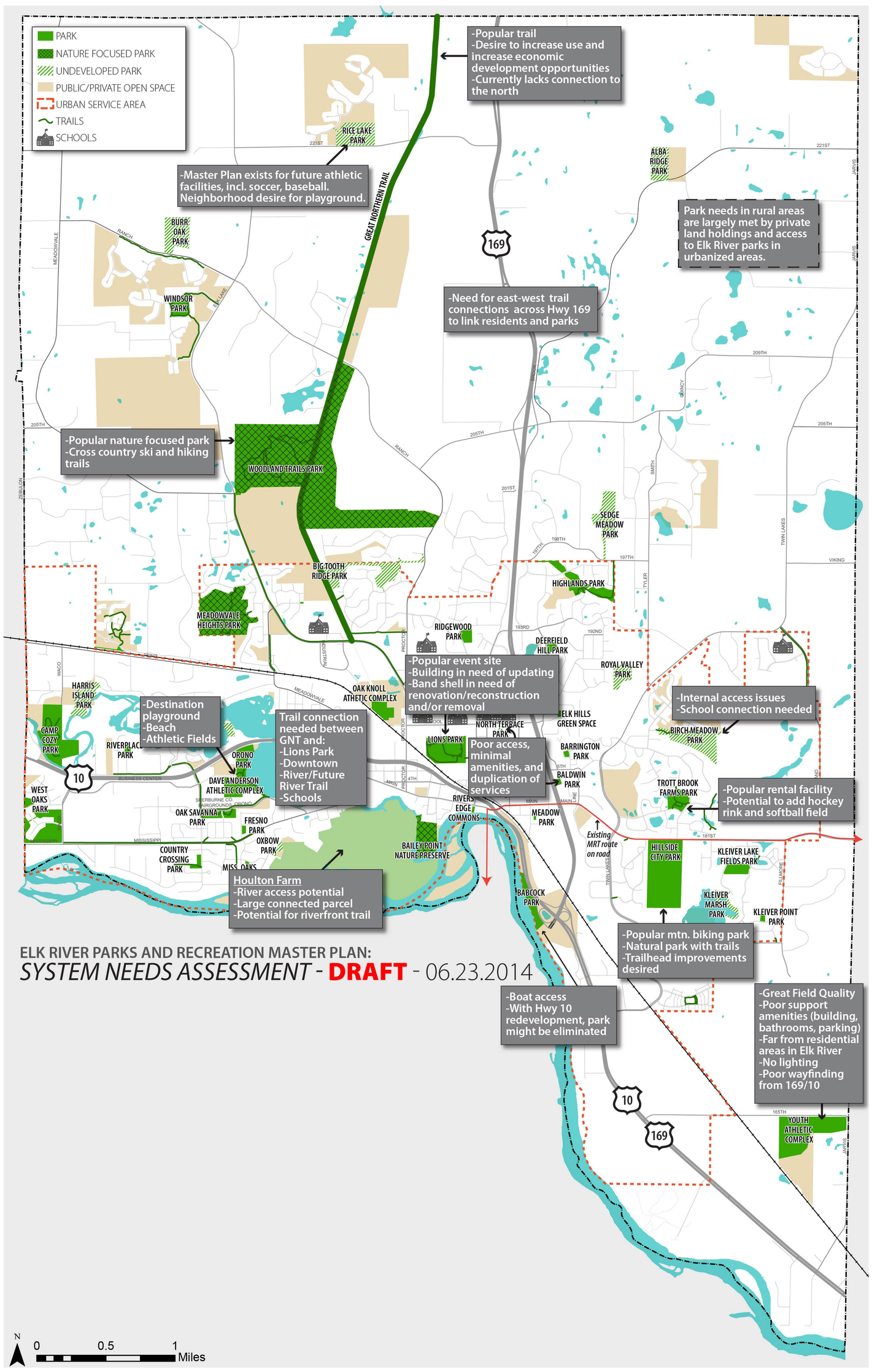
- View display boards/presentation
- Talk to City of Elk River staff & consultants
- Provide input on framework plan & priorities for the future on the boards
- Individual written feedback forms
- Take the online survey

www.surveymonkey.com/s/ElkRiverParkActions

Next steps:

- **July- August** - Develop the draft master plan and concept plans for key parks
- **Late Summer** – 2nd Community Open House to provide feedback on the draft master plan & priorities
- **Fall** – Final master plan and approvals

Needs Overview

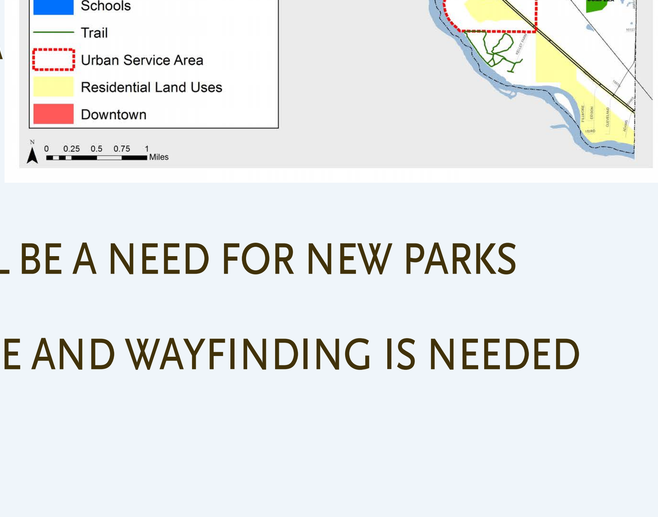


ELK RIVER PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN:
SYSTEM NEEDS ASSESSMENT - **DRAFT** - 06.23.2014

Park and Recreation needs were determined by the community survey, focus group sessions, comparison of facilities to recreation standards and benchmark communities, and staff input.

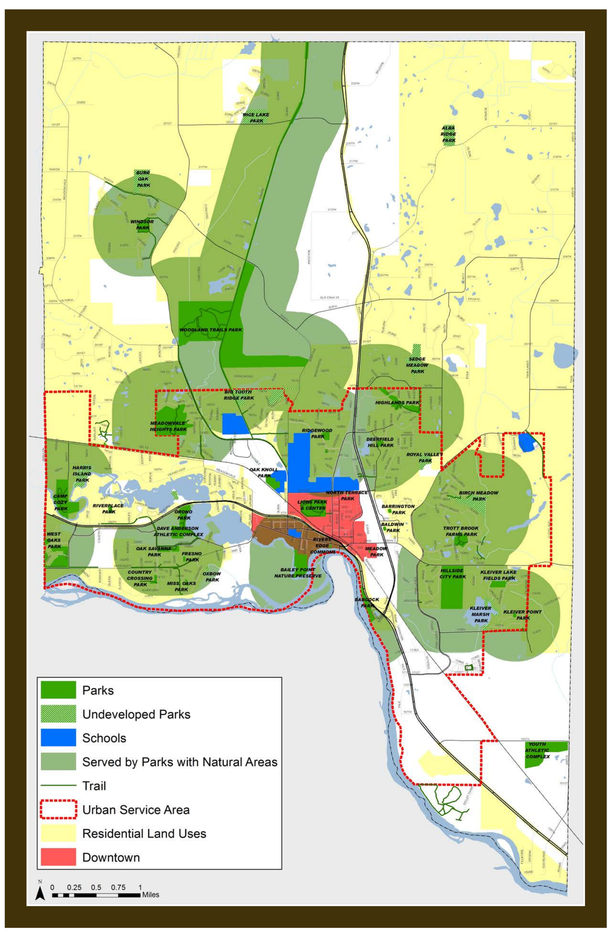
Parks:

- Improvements to existing parks are needed
- Emphasis on destination parks over neighborhood parks in urban service area
- Approximately 90% of residents live within 10 minute walk of a park
- As Elk River grows there will be a need for new parks
- Improved signage and wayfinding is needed



Maintenance:

- Park maintenance received high marks from the community
- Clean, welcoming parks are a priority for the future
- Volunteer efforts are significant, particularly at Woodland Trails Park and Hillside Park

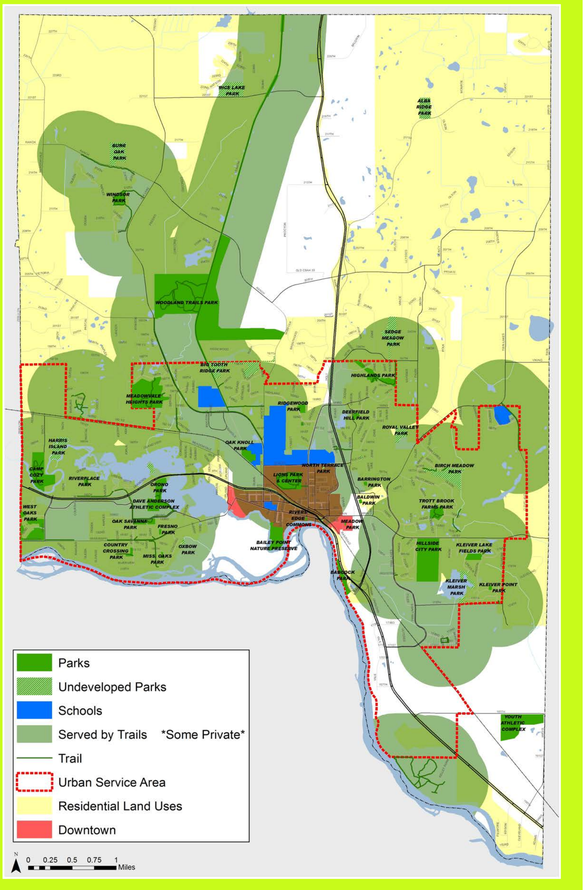


Natural areas + river access

- Good access to natural areas
- Large lots and private land address gaps in the north
- Need for stronger natural resources management/priority, particularly at Woodland Trails and Hillside
- Stronger connectivity to river is needed

Athletics

- Adult Athletics - Dave Anderson Athletic Complex, Oak Knoll
- YAC for youth athletics - Expansion, Parking Lot, Building, Lighting
- Ice Arena - Repair roof, upgrade mechanicals/ refrigeration, expand common space for tournaments, seating
- Heavy reliance on schools for some facilities - fields, gyms, tennis, track
- Desire for Indoor Field House and Artificial Turf



Trails

- Generally good trail access
- 169 acts as a significant barrier
- Trail gaps affect useability
- Great Northern Trail is an asset, but lacks connections to neighborhoods and destinations
- Trails are one of the most used rec facilities and a high priority for the future

Arts

- Interest in additional public art in throughout park system and city
- Integrate arts into infrastructure
- Additional events to raise awareness & enthusiasm

Needs Summary

The Good News:

Elk River has good park access in developed areas

Great Northern Trail provides a good spine for trail system

Residents are satisfied with park and recreation offerings

Strong volunteer culture and contributions

Elk River Park System offers unique programming not easily found elsewhere

Park system includes high quality environmental conservancy areas

The Needs:

Existing parks have some improvement/upgrade needs

Access to the Mississippi River/other water is limited

High quality destination parks

Trail gaps reduce connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians

Heavy reliance on the school district for some athletic programming

Heavy reliance on volunteers for certain parks

Needs generally fall into one of four categories:

More/Improved River Access

- Difficult to move along the rivers
- Would benefit from additional public waterfront
- Need to maintain boat access
- Recreational opportunity

Quality over Quantity

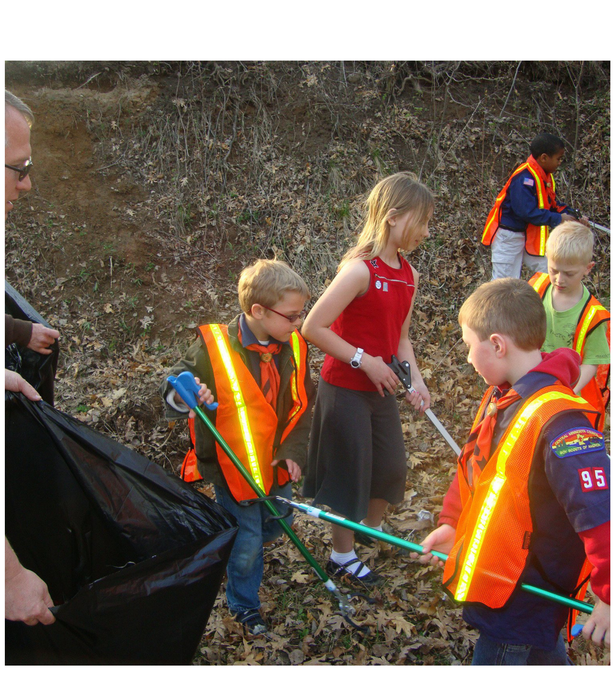
- Preference is for high quality destinations over marginal, dispersed parkland
- Elk river parks provide unique regional recreation opportunities that can have a regional draw (biathlon, mountain biking)

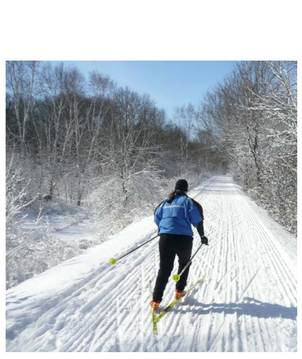
Trail Gaps and Connections

- 169 is a significant barrier preventing east/west movement
- Gaps exist and can force users onto potentialy unsafe roadways
- Poor connectivity to destinations (DT, parks, river)

Park Improvement Needs

- Some facilities reaching the end of their functional lifespan
- Undeveloped parkland
- Some difficulties maintaining parks due to poor access



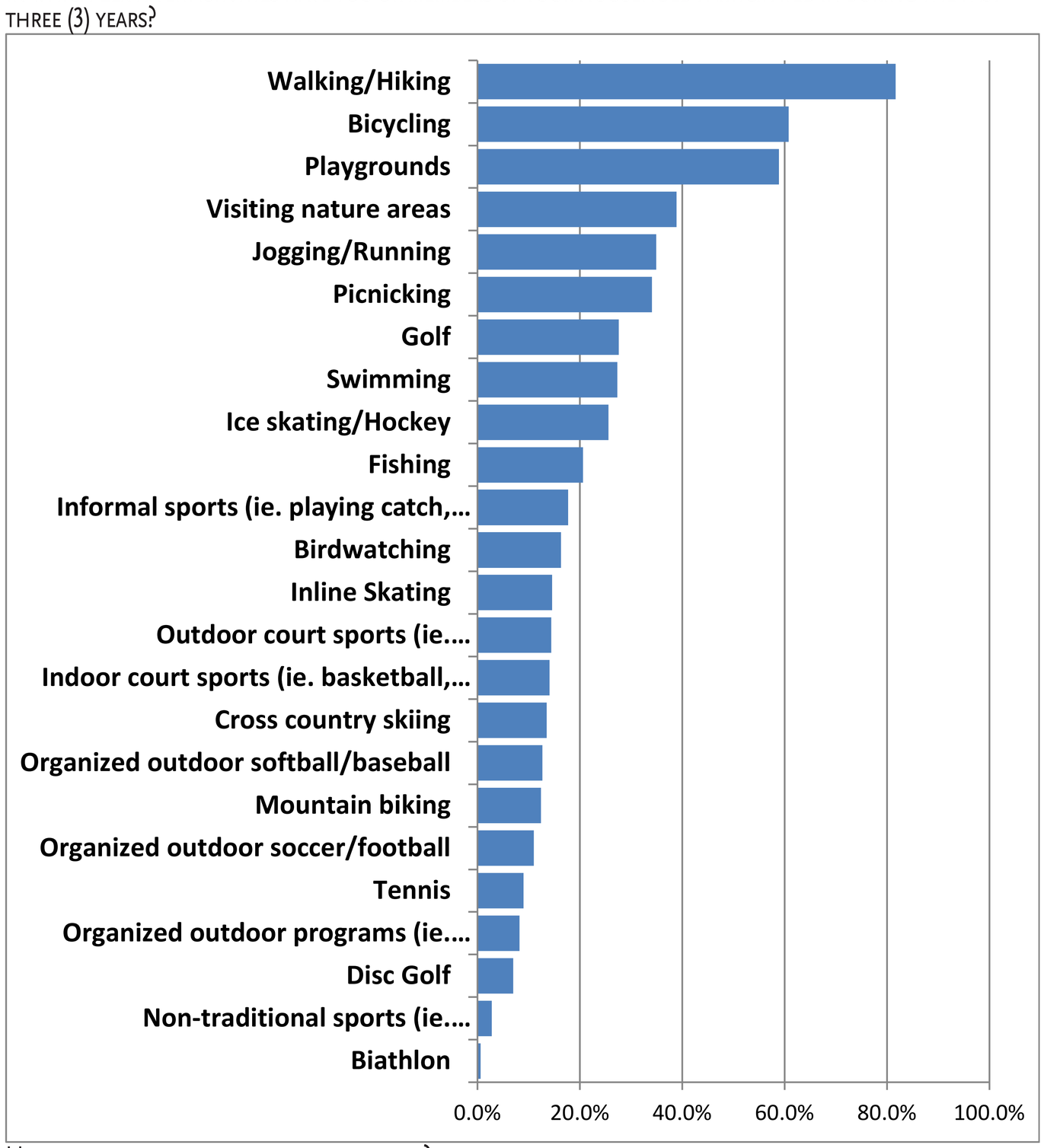


Survey Results

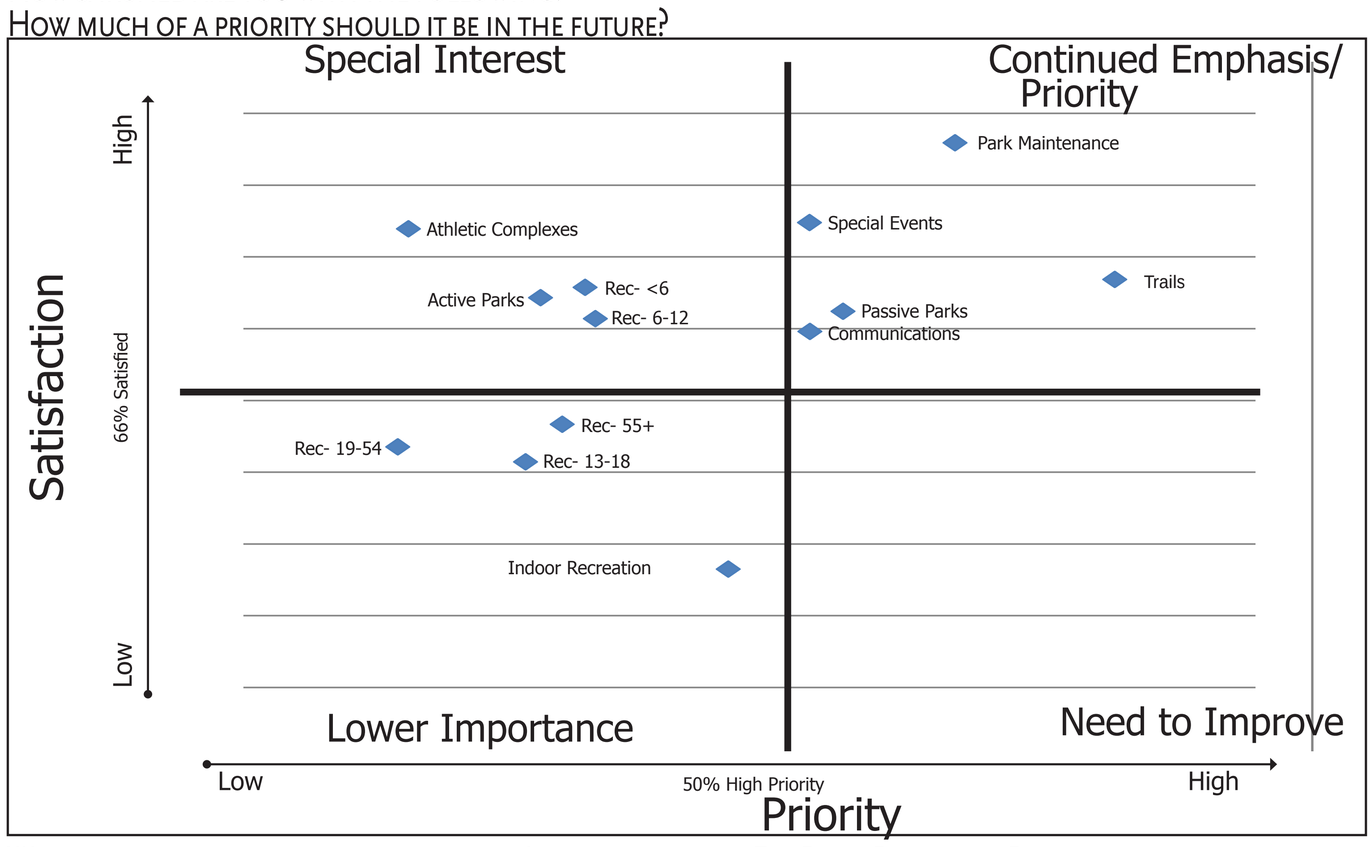
This past spring, as part of the Parks and Recreation master planning process, the City of Elk River conducted a statistically valid, mailed, community survey about how residents use parks today and their priorities for the future.

- 384 responses
- Over 1/2 of respondents use parks at least monthly
- Over 90% use parks annually
- Trails based activities are the most popular features of the park system
- Playgrounds also highly used
- Woodland Trails and Orono Park are most visited
- Swimming pool/Aquatics and trails were most desired features in Elk River
- People are generally satisfied
- While people were satisfied with maintenance and trails, they were also identified as the highest priorities
- Bike/Walking trails are the only improvements/additions that had over 50% "Great Support"

In which Elk River activities have you or members of your household participated in during the past three (3) years?



How satisfied are you with the following?
How much of a priority should it be in the future?



Which of the following improvements/additions to the Elk River Parks and Recreation system would you be willing to support? (ie. through a bond referendum -- temporary annual property tax increase)

Answer Options	Great Support	Marginal Support	No Support
Biking/Walking trails - add to and extend them	58%	25%	17%
A splash pad/spray park (water play area)	31%	29%	41%
A nature center	28%	41%	31%
Community Passive Parks - Acquire land	24%	39%	37%
Elk River Ice Arena	22%	28%	50%
Multi-use fieldhouse	22%	36%	43%
Athletic Complexes - make improvements to existing facilities	20%	42%	38%
Community Athletic Facilities - Acquire land	19%	33%	48%
An expanded senior activity center	17%	45%	37%
A teen center	15%	39%	45%
Skateboarding/Climbing - Include more non-traditional recreation	12%	33%	55%

Programs

The City of Elk River hosts poplar community events and offers a range of events and programs. Current programs enjoy high community satisfaction. Existing programs include:

- Successful Concert Series at River's Edge Park
- 4th of July Celebration
- Strong senior programming at the Activity Center
- Range of programs for youth and adults

Additional programs are offered to residents though partnerships and other community organizations including athletic organizations, community education and the Arts Alliance.

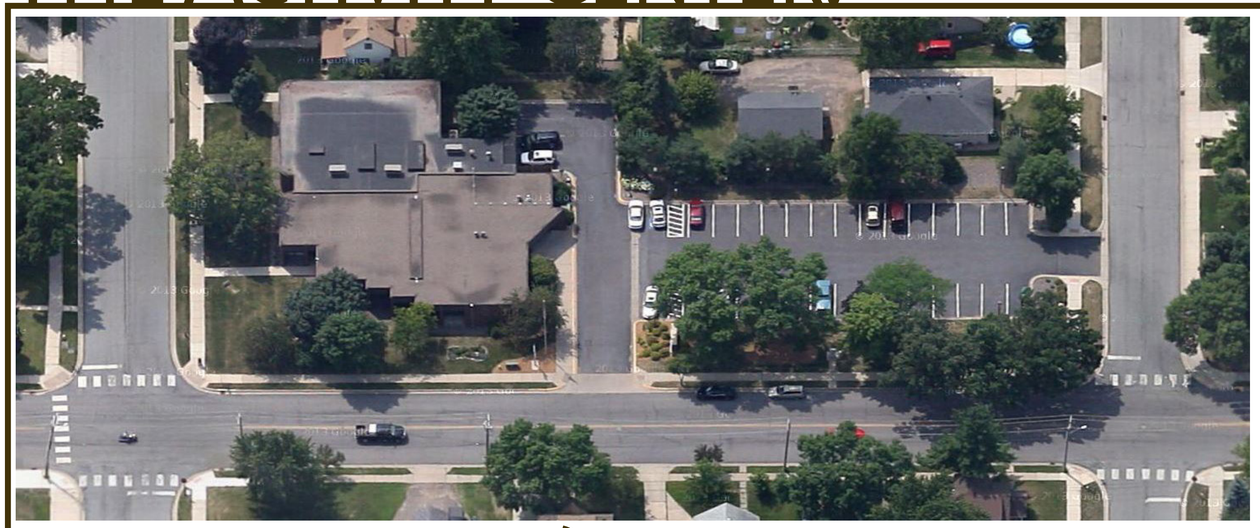
We want to know what you think!

How can the Parks and Recreation Department improve program offerings in the future?

What new programs would you like to see?

When should programs be offered (day, evening, after school, weekends, etc.)

The Activity Center:



What works well?

What could be improved?

Ideas for the future?

Framework Master Plan

Based on a community-wide survey and parks and recreation needs assessment, a draft framework for future investment has been developed. The framework identifies four priority initiatives for future park and recreation investment.

Develop Signature Parks

- Develop a signature community park to serve all of Elk River
- Improve YAC to be the premiere athletic complex
- Promote Woodland Trails Park as a regional destination in the metro area

Connect to the Rivers

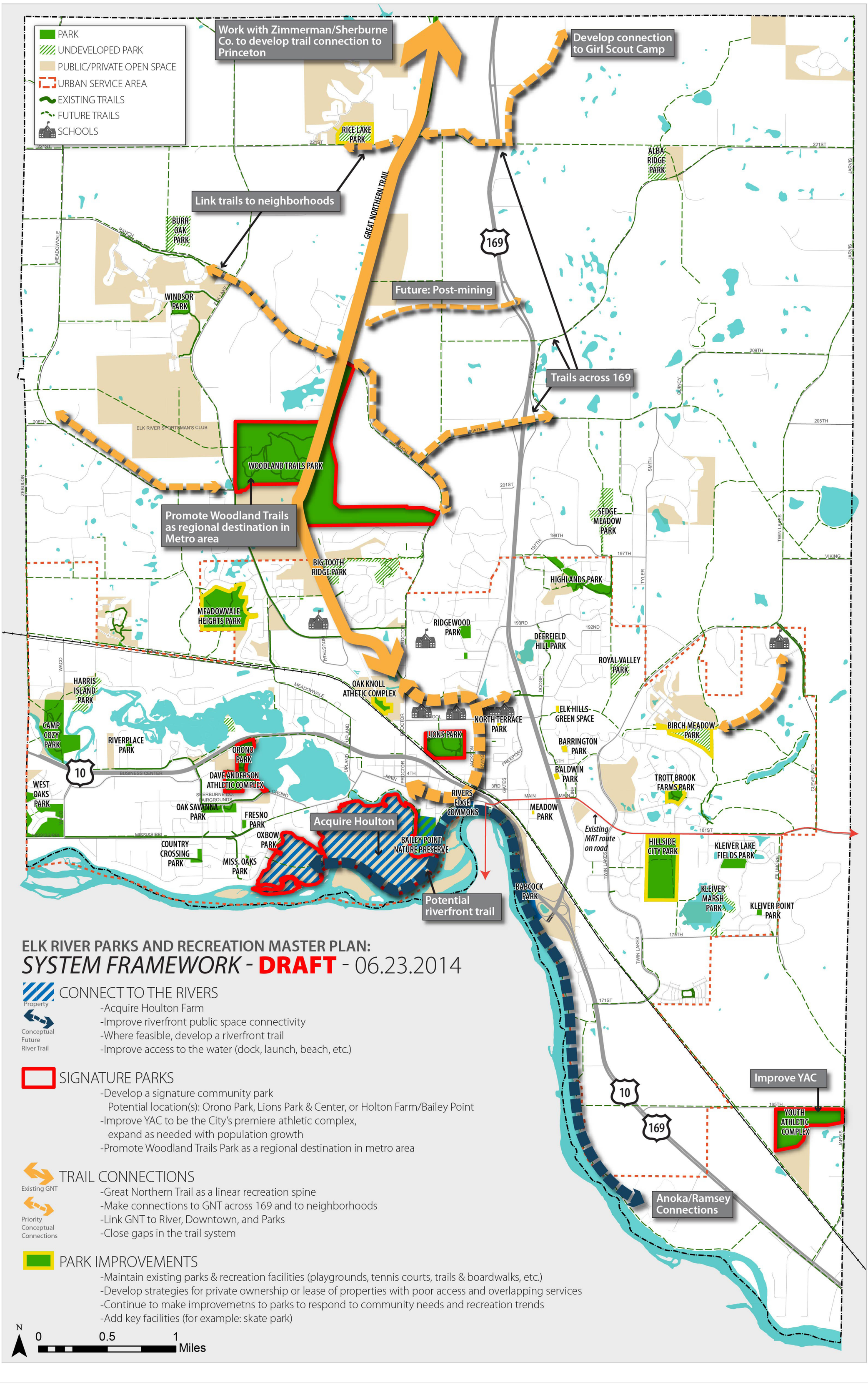
- Acquire Houlton Farm Property
- Improve riverfront connectivity
- Where feasible, develop a riverfront trail
- Improve access to the water (docks, beaches, launches, etc.)

Develop Trail Connections

- Connect Great Northern Trail to parks, downtown, & the river
- Develop connections from neighborhoods to GNT with the GNT acting as a recreation spine
- Support extension of GNT north to Princeton
- Close gaps in the trail system

Improve Existing Parks

- Continue maintaining existing parks and recreation facilities
- Develop strategies for private ownership or lease of properties with poor access and overlapping services
- Continue to make improvements to parks to respond to community needs and recreation trends



ELK RIVER PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN:

SYSTEM FRAMEWORK - **DRAFT** - 06.23.2014

CONNECT TO THE RIVERS

Property

Conceptual Future River Trail

- -Acquire Houlton Farm
- -Improve riverfront public space connectivity
- -Where feasible, develop a riverfront trail
- -Improve access to the water (dock, launch, beach, etc.)

SIGNATURE PARKS

- -Develop a signature community park
  Potential location(s): Orono Park, Lions Park & Center, or Holton Farm/Bailey Point
- -Improve YAC to be the City's premiere athletic complex, expand as needed with population growth
- -Promote Woodland Trails Park as a regional destination in metro area

TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Existing GNT

Priority Conceptual Connections

- -Great Northern Trail as a linear recreation spine
- -Make connections to GNT across 169 and to neighborhoods
- -Link GNT to River, Downtown, and Parks
- -Close gaps in the trail system

PARK IMPROVEMENTS

- -Maintain existing parks & recreation facilities (playgrounds, tennis courts, trails & boardwalks, etc.)
- -Develop strategies for private ownership or lease of properties with poor access and overlapping services
- -Continue to make improvemetns to parks to respond to community needs and recreation trends
- -Add key facilities (for example: skate park)

N 0 0.5 1 Miles

Trails & Connectivity

Give us your opinion:

What do you think of the following draft priorities?

Agree Disagree

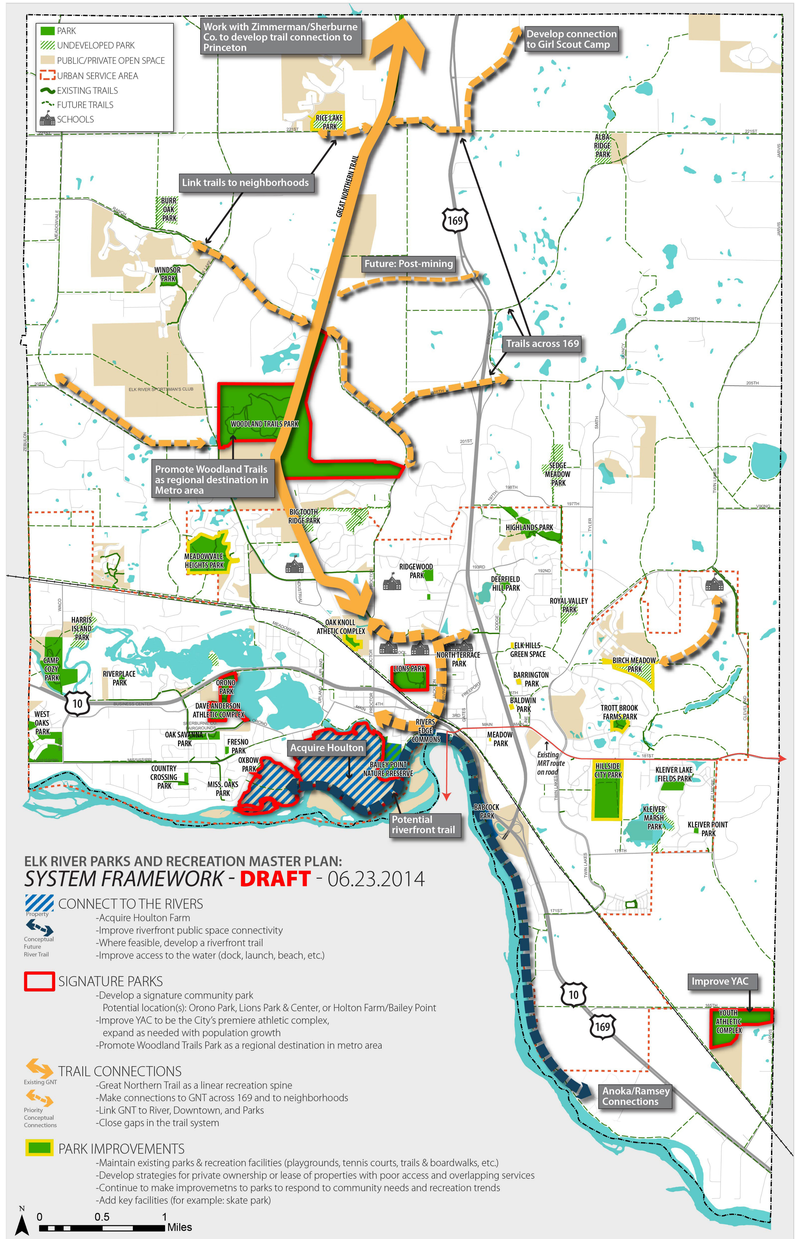
Connect Great Northern Trail to parks, downtown, and the river

Develop connections from neighborhoods to GNT with the GNT acting as a recreation spine

Support extension of GNT north to Princeton

Close gaps in the trail system

Use a marker to show us where there are gaps in the trail system that should be filled in



Tell us what you think:

Connect to the Rivers

Give us your opinion:

What do you think of the following draft priorities?

Agree Disagree

Improve riverfront connectivity

Acquire Houlton Farm Property

Where feasible, develop a riverfront trail

Improve access to the water (docks/beaches/launches,etc.)

We want to know what you think!

Make notes about your ideas for the future of the riverfront in Elk River

What works well?

What could be improved?

Ideas for the future?

Bailey Point

Ideas for possibilities include:

+Habitat restoration
+Nature observation
+Restrooms
+Picnic tables/benches
+Hiking trails
+Boardwalks
+Canoe/kayak launch
+Interpretive signage
+Other?

Improve Existing Parks

Give us your opinion:

What do you think of the following draft priorities?

Agree Disagree

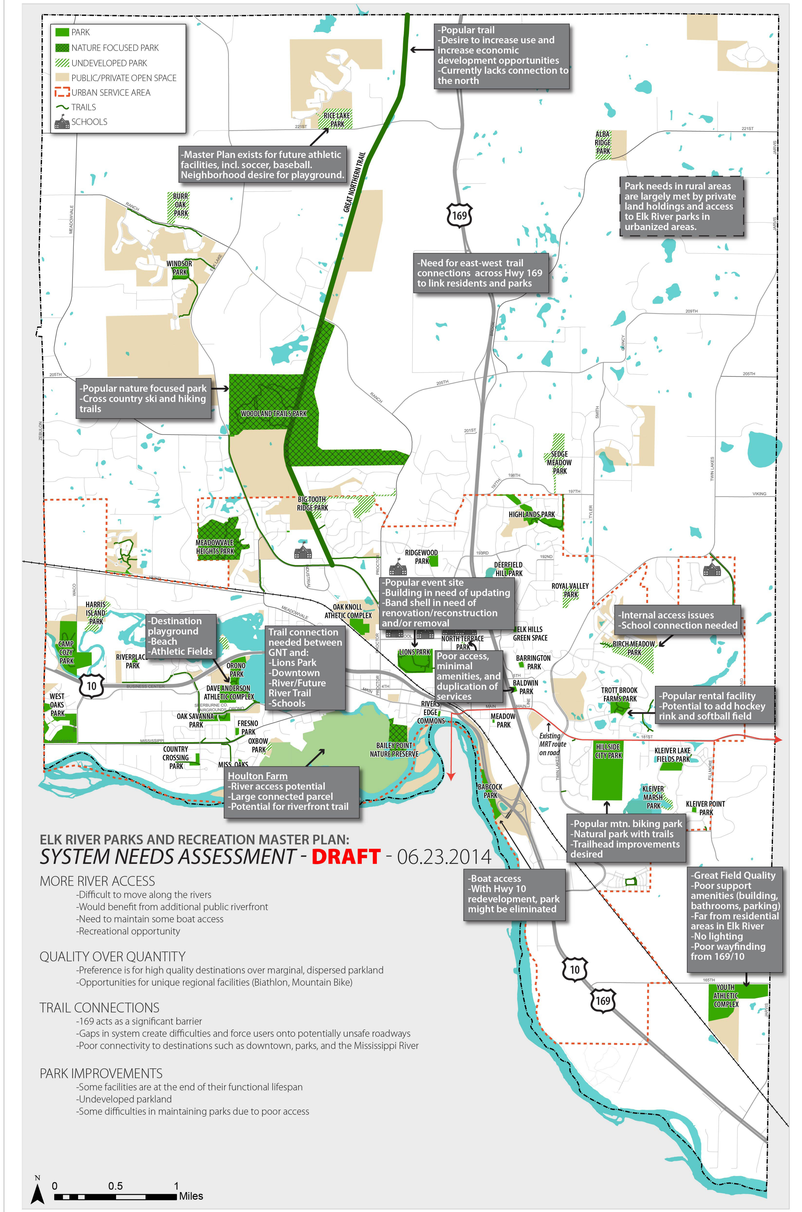
Continue maintaining existing parks and recreation facilities

Develop strategies for private ownership or lease of properties with poor access and overlapping services

Continue to make improvements to parks to respond to community needs and recreation trends

Add Key Facilities (ie skate park, etc.)

Make notes on specific parks (on the map or in the comments section) that need improvements and what should be done.

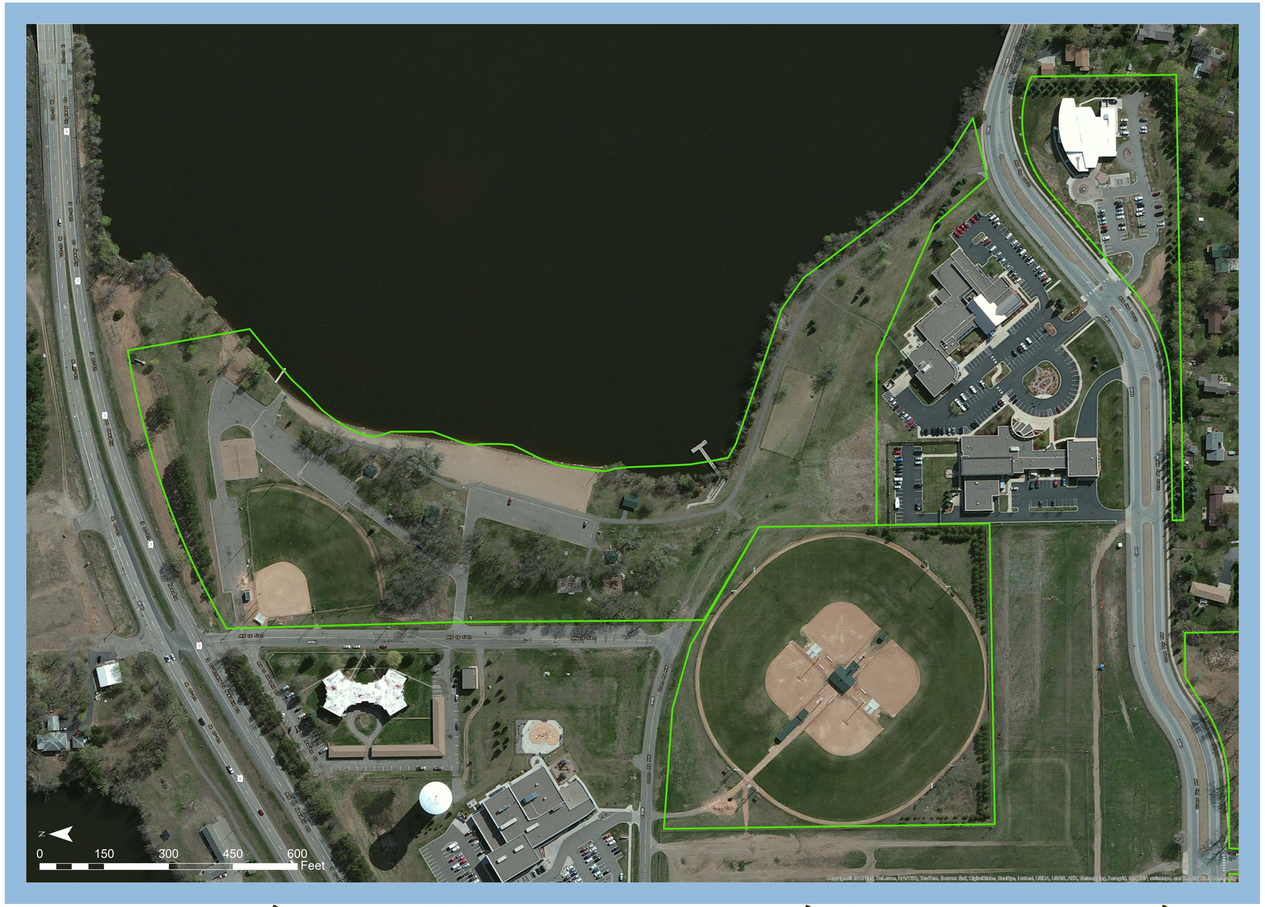


Tell us what you think:

Signature Parks

Use green dots● to mark what works well, red dots● to mark what needs improvement, or markers to add comments

Orono Park + Dave Anderson Athletic Complex



What works well?

What could be improved?

Ideas for the future?

Lions Park

What works well?

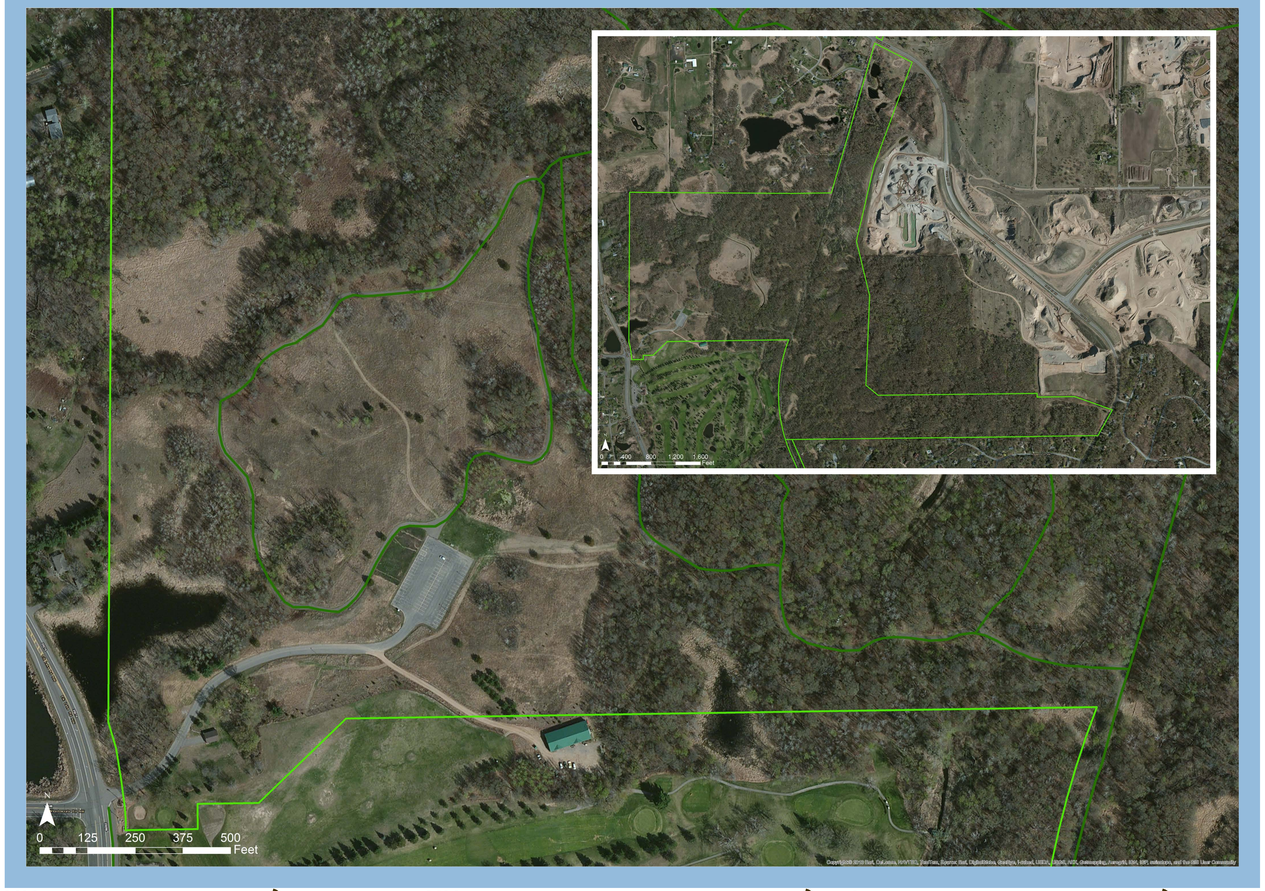
What could be improved?

Ideas for the future?

Signature Parks

Use green dots ● to mark what works well, red dots ● to mark what needs improvement, or markers to add comments

Woodlands Trails



What works well?

What could be improved?

Ideas for the future?

Youth Athletic Complex

What works well?

What could be improved?

Ideas for the future?