

Park Planning

WHAT IS IT AND HOW YOU ARE CONNECTED TO IT.

kelly grissman – director of planning
three rivers park district

General Overview

- Why park planning matters and your role in it!
- Types of park related plans
- Planning tool examples – some may be applicable to you and your work even if you are not a park planner!

PARK PLANNING AND YOU!



Park planning is simply determining:

- **where** future parks/trails should be located
- **who** will be served by them
- **what** offerings will be provided

It is also often tied to:

- Land use, transportation and natural resources planning
- Land acquisition
- Funding
- Community engagement
- Development
- Future operation, maintenance and programming

Why is park planning important?

- **Relevancy** - need to provide what our community members are interested in and be prepared to change and evolve with our communities and their priorities/needs/interests
- **Equity** – helps ensure that offerings serve and are easily accessible to everyone
- **Resources Protection**
 - Reduce duplicity, increase efficiency and provide uniqueness
 - Preserve, restore and manage natural resources
 - Limited land and increasing costs
- **Funding**
 - Set investment priorities
 - Increase grant competitiveness
 - Often required for external funding
 - Help secure private donations

Your role in park planning and common challenges

**... from the
perspective of a
planner**

- **Actively participate.**
 - help work through the SWOT (or similar process) with your planning/project teams
 - attend community engagement events
 - challenge yourself to think long-term
- **Move beyond anecdotal.**
 - gather research to share challenges and build support for ideas
 - stay on top of industry/local trends
- **Shift from 'no' to 'how could we...'.
 - be open to new ideas and change
 - continually ask who is and who is not served
 - identify and engage with the biggest opposition early and often – listen to their concerns, work in partnership with them to build solutions and ownership**

TYPES OF PARK RELATED PLANS

please note: this can and do vary quite a bit!

- **Policy Plans**

- High level – **defines the mission/purpose** of the system
- Includes the policies to implement and protect the park and trail system

- **Comprehensive/System Plans**

- High level – **defines the vision and composition** of the park and trail system
- Includes: goals/priorities/actions, inventories, challenges/trends, geographically elements showing existing parks/trails and growth opportunities

- **Park/Trail Unit Master Plan**

- More detailed – **defines role and offerings of a specific park/trail** within a broader system
- Includes: service area demographic info, park or trail SWOT, natural resources and recreation development plan, implementation cost estimate and schedule

EXAMPLES OF PARK RELATED PLANNING

There are also federal plans, but the work we do is mostly influenced by state, region, county and community level plans.

- State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Metropolitan Council/Region Policy Plans
- Agency/County/Local Comprehensive Plans or System Plans
- Individual Park/Trail Master Plan

everything is related
and connected

MINNESOTA STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE
OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN, 2020-2024

November 2019



A report submitted in fulfillment of requirements for Minnesota's continued eligibility for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

m DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

This high-level plan is Minnesota's outdoor recreation policy plan. It gives outdoor recreation decision-makers and managers a focused set of priorities and suggested actions to guide them as they make decisions about outdoor recreation, but it does not have a strong geographic element (no maps). This plan is also important in that:

- it is a requirement for MN to be eligible to receive LAWCON funding
- helps provide some direction to how Legacy funding is spent

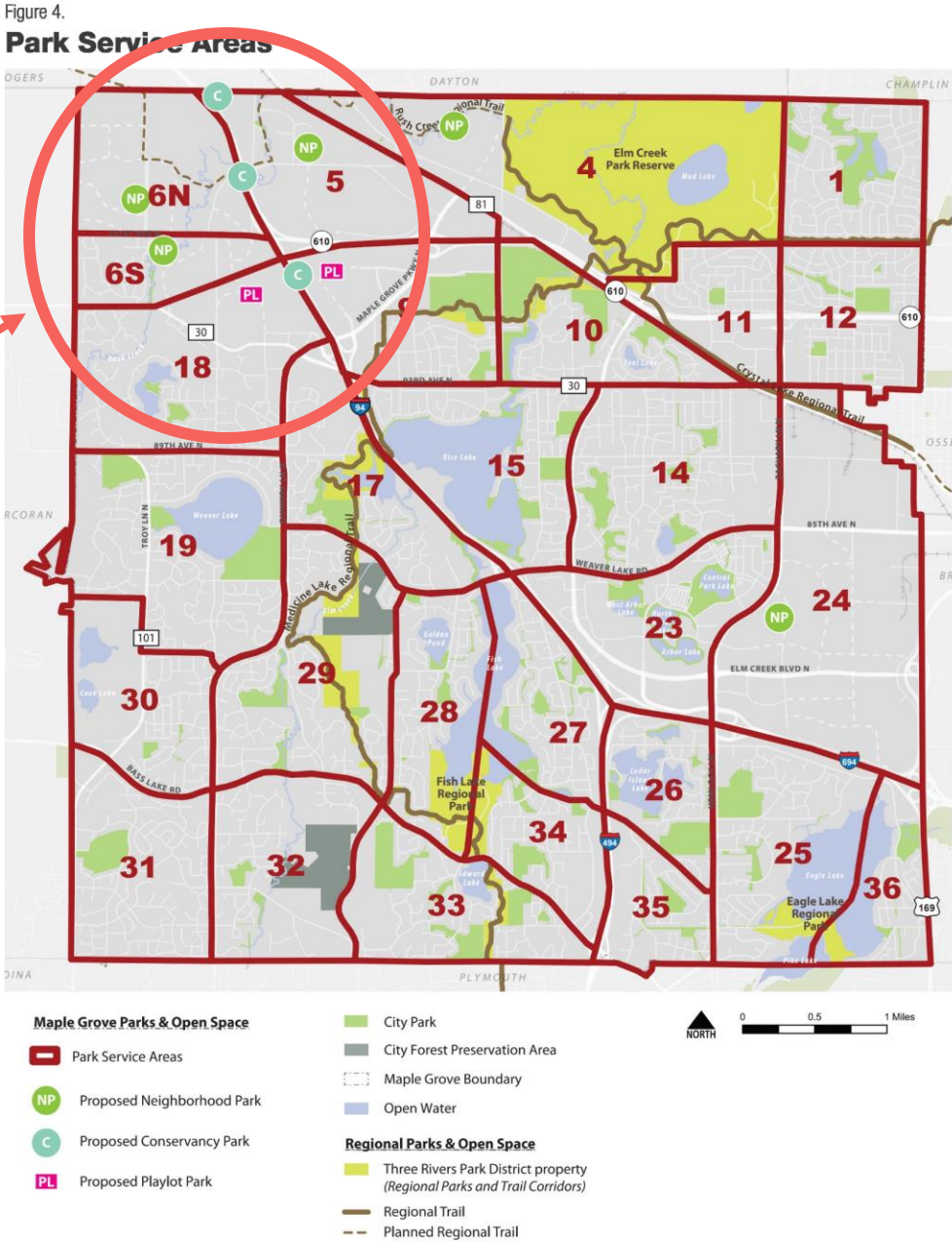
Often city comprehensive plans layout where new parks and trails are needed.

This information is used in partnership with land use planning and development to secure land primarily through Park Dedication.

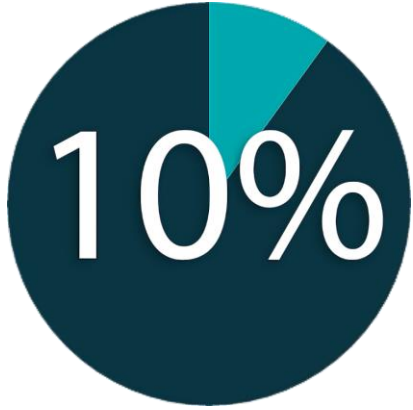
City Comprehensive Plan

Area of planned substantial residential and park/trail growth.

Also noteworthy is the type of proposed park to best meet the needs of the growing community.



Park Dedication



As property is developed or redeveloped, a city may require a developer to set aside up to 10% of developable land for parkland or collect cash (\$3,500-\$5,000+) per residential unit for park development/improvements.

Principles:

- New park demand should be paid for by new residents creating new demand.
- Existing residents should not be taxed to build new parks/trails for new residents.
- Neighborhood parks and basic outdoor recreation facilities in community parks are meant to serve residents in close proximity.

This tool is why we have such fantastic local park systems in MN!



2040 System Plan

Adopted July 9, 2020

2040 Three Rivers Park District System Plan

This type of plan is high-level and sets the vision, goals and overarching priorities for the next 20 years for an entire park system. For example, this plan specifically calls for:

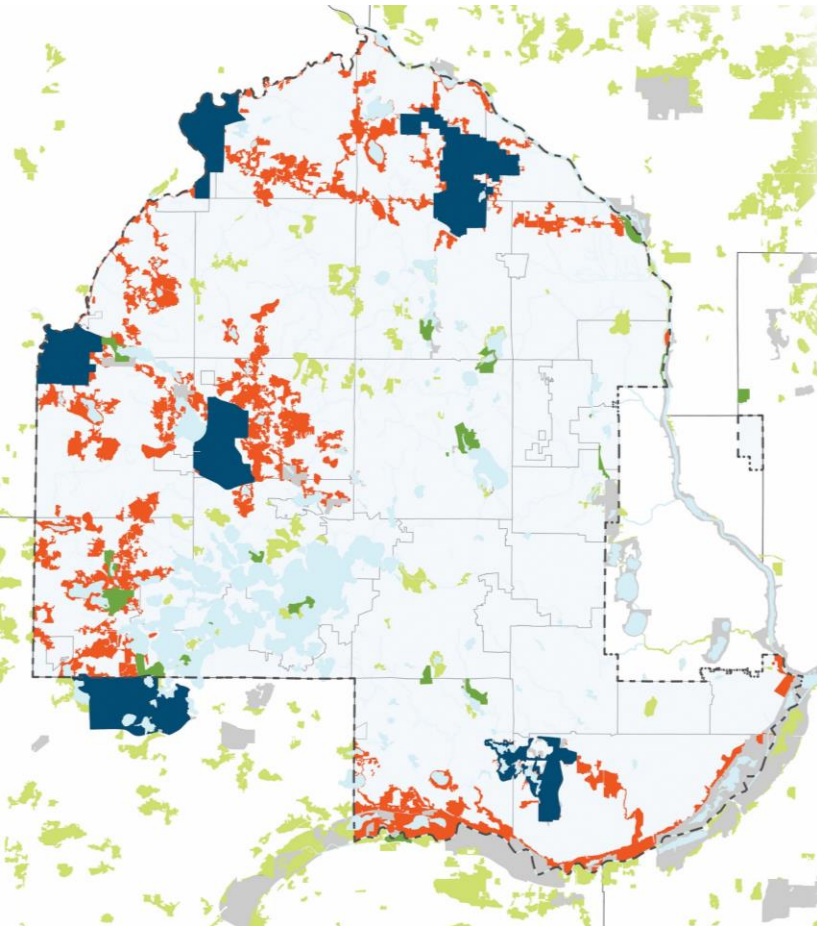
- Engaging and serving underrepresented community members
- Reinvesting in introductory offerings
- Protecting natural resources and expanding parks and trails
- Committing to providing a diversity of experiences, offerings and settings throughout the system

FYI: This level of plan is similar to the State's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan except that it also lays out the desired system components and has a geographic component.

Level of geographic detail included in a system plan:

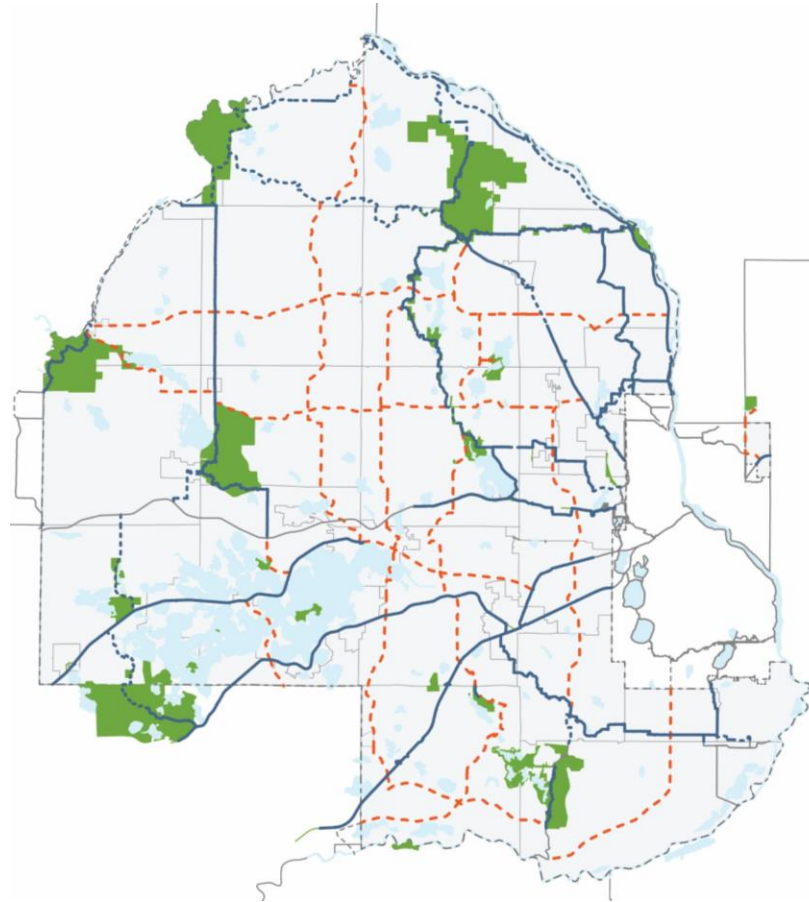
Natural Resources

2040 System Map



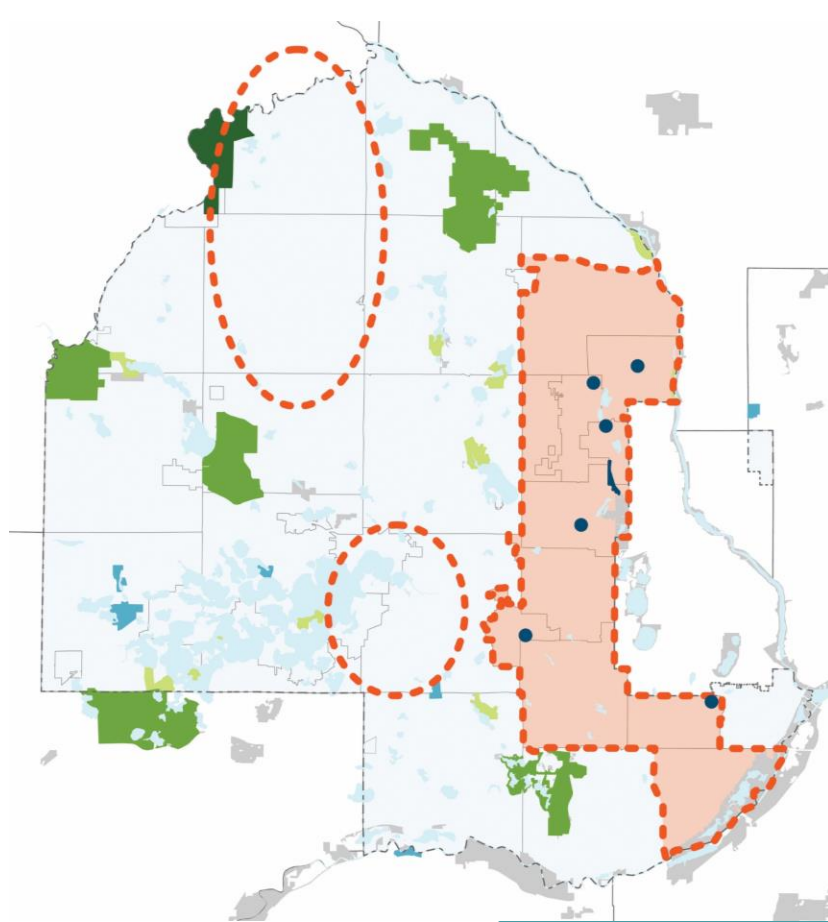
Regional Trails

2040 System Map



Parks

2040 System Map



Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

PARKS

Provide a variety of outdoor recreation facilities and activities
Ample natural areas to ensure quality outdoor recreation experiences
Regional Park Size: 100+ acres
Bridging and Partnership Park size: varies

Protect and manage resilient natural habitats
Foster appreciation for and enjoyment
of natural resources
Park Reserve Size: 1,000+ acres

Unique regional offerings
Size: varies

- TRAILS

- Linear pathways for recreation and transportation
 - Located along natural or built features
 - Link to Three Rivers parks whenever possible

PURPOSE

DEVELOPMENT

THREE RIVERS PARKS

Urban	Bridging and Partnership	Suburban	Semi-Developed	Natural
Regional Park Service Area Travel Time: 10 min. drive	Local Feature Service Area Travel Time: 10 min. walk/bike	Regional Park Service Area Travel Time: 10 min. drive	Park Reserve Service Area Travel Time: 20 min. drive	Park Reserve Service Area Travel Time: 30 min. drive
Getting people outdoors and recreating	Attracting and introducing new users to nature Increasing convenience for community groups with limited connection to nature	Connecting people to nature comfortably and conveniently through nature-based recreation offerings	Protecting natural resources while supporting nature-based recreation and education offerings	Protecting and restoring large areas of significant and unique natural resources
Pockets of natural areas may improve the user experience but are not necessary to support the recreation offerings	Typically dependent on partnerships with municipalities or other agencies due to location, available land and shared goals	Allows visitors to transition into nature as their comfort level increases The entire park may be developed, provided that a natural setting remains	A few concentrated areas of development surrounded by large, intact natural areas At least 80% remaining natural	Minimal areas of development allowing for immersive nature experience Goal of maintaining 90%+ as natural
Not Applicable	Centennial Park Hopkins Depot MAC Nature Area Schaper Park Sochacki Park Taft Park	Bryant Lake Cleary Lake Eagle Lake Fish Lake French Lake Minnetonka Lake Sarah Mississippi Gateway North Mississippi	Baker Carver Elm Creek Hyland, Bush and Anderson Lakes Lake Rebecca	Crow-Hassan Murphy-Hanrehan

Urban to Natural

Completely developed; no large natural areas	ENVIRONMENTAL	Mostly undeveloped; large, resilient natural areas
Continuous visitor interaction; with opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation	SOCIAL	Infrequent visitor interaction; with opportunities to immerse in nature
Supports heavy visitation and a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities	MANAGERIAL	Supports limited visitation and the protection and restoration of natural resources
Significant opportunities for instructor-led recreation, education and special events	PROGRAMMING	Self-guided, natural resources-based experiences with some instructor-led offerings


Specialized Recreation Features

Service Area Travel Time:
45 min. drive

Providing unique, specific, regional recreation, education or natural resources offerings

Setting, size, location and level of development dependent on the purpose of the feature

Gale Woods Farm
Glen Lake Golf & Practice Center
Kingswood Park
Noerenberg Gardens
Silverwood Park
The Landing



Destination Trail	Linking Trail
<p>Service Area Distance: 1.5 mile walk/bike</p> <hr/> <p>Providing a regional recreation facility along a greenway or linear park</p> <p>Trail acts as a destination</p>	<p>Service Area Distance: 1.5 mile walk/bike</p> <hr/> <p>Providing access to regional parks and to the greater regional trail network</p>
<hr/> <p>Independent, wide corridor with opportunities to improve and protect natural and cultural resources and provide recreation amenities</p>	<hr/> <p>Multi-use corridor routed to connect people, destinations and the greater transportation system</p>
<hr/> <p>Baker-Carver Cedar Lake LRT Crow River Dakota Rail LRT Lake Minnetonka LRT Luce Line Medicine Lake Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Nine Mile Creek North Cedar Lake Rush Creek West Mississippi River</p>	<hr/> <p>Bassett Creek Crystal Lake Lake Independence Nokomis-Minnesota River Northeast Diagonal Shingle Creek Twin Lakes</p>

Visitor Experience Model

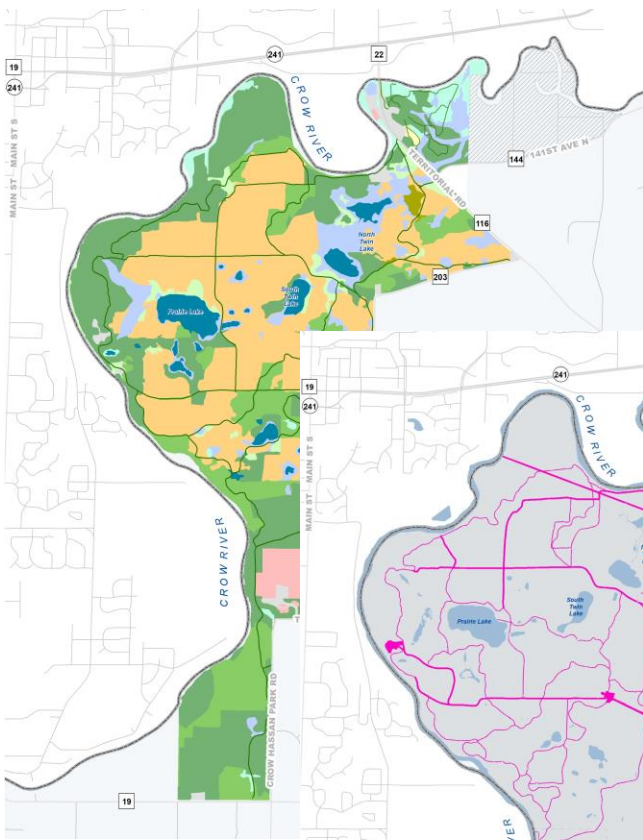


Also noteworthy: Master plans are often required for funding eligibility and help increase grant competitiveness.

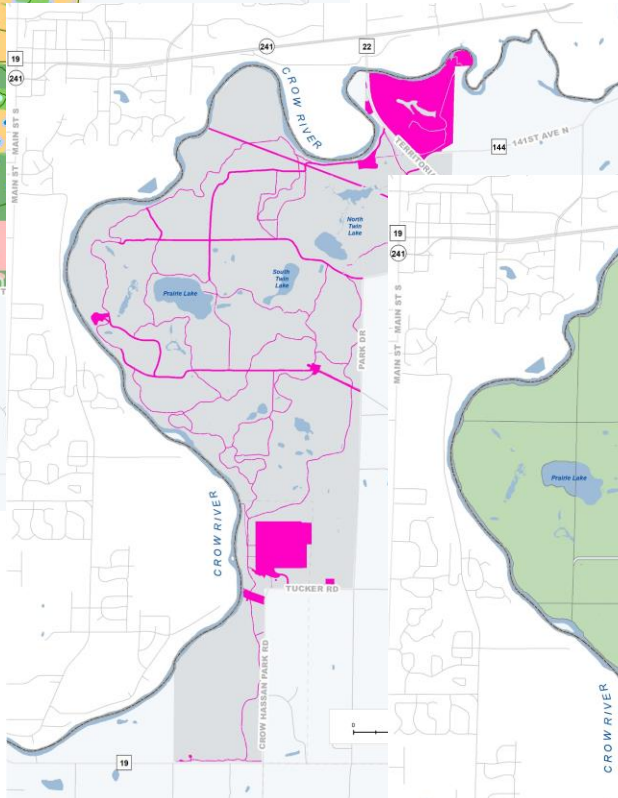
Park or Trail Master Plan

This is a site(park)-specific plan that defines the type and general protection/development concepts for a **park or trail**. Master plans are developed in close partnership with the local communities the park/trail is intended to serve to ensure the long-term plan is representative of their needs. This type of plan is helpful in that it identifies:

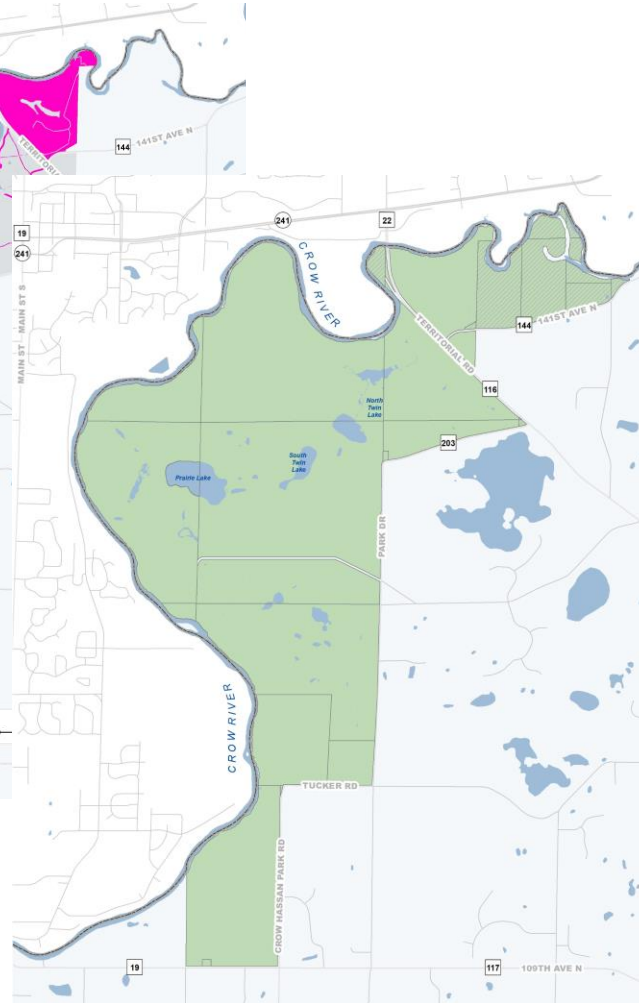
- Community needs and preferences
- Areas for and type of natural resources protection
- Areas for and type of recreation development
- Anticipated costs, funding sources and implementation schedule



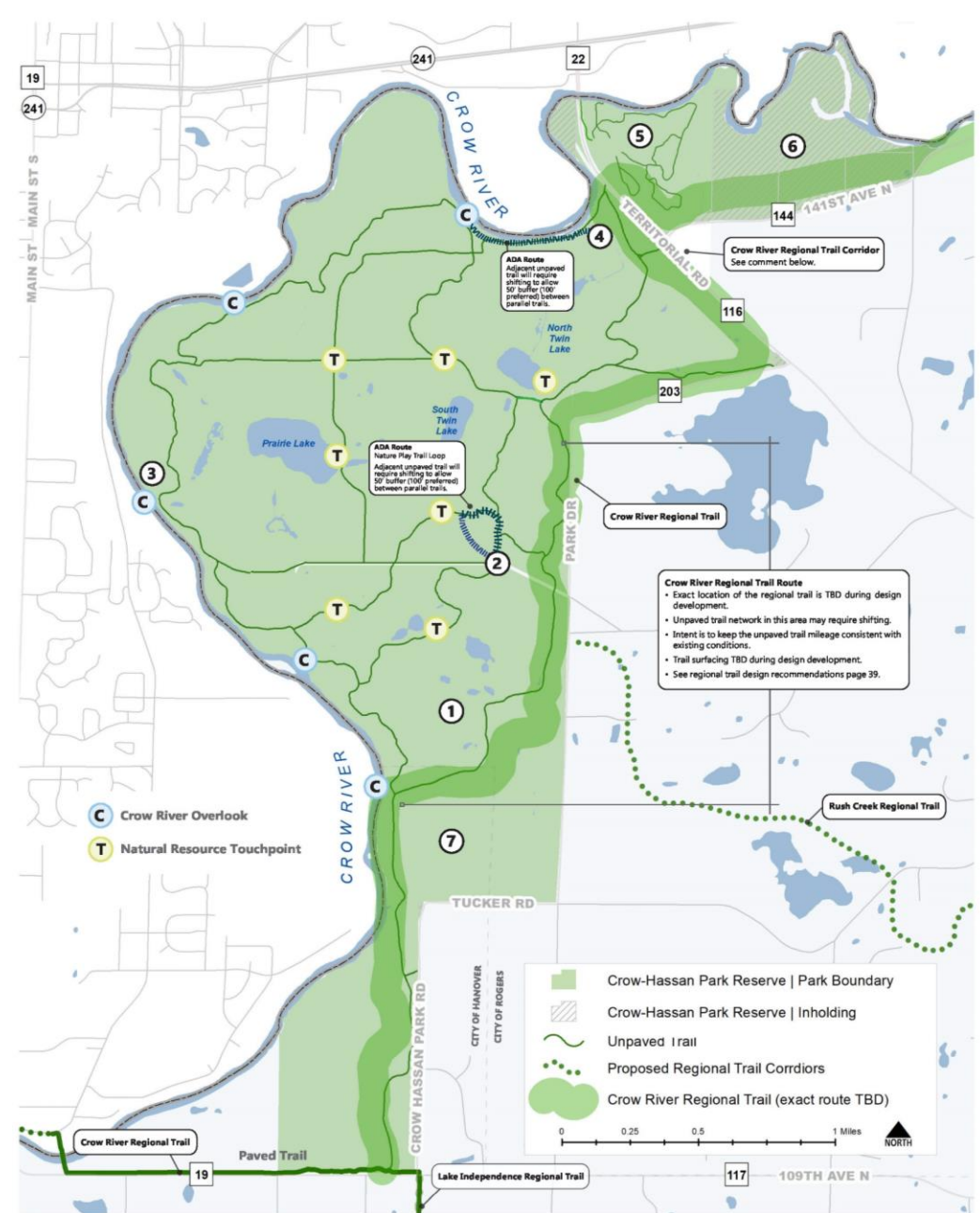
Plant communities



80/20



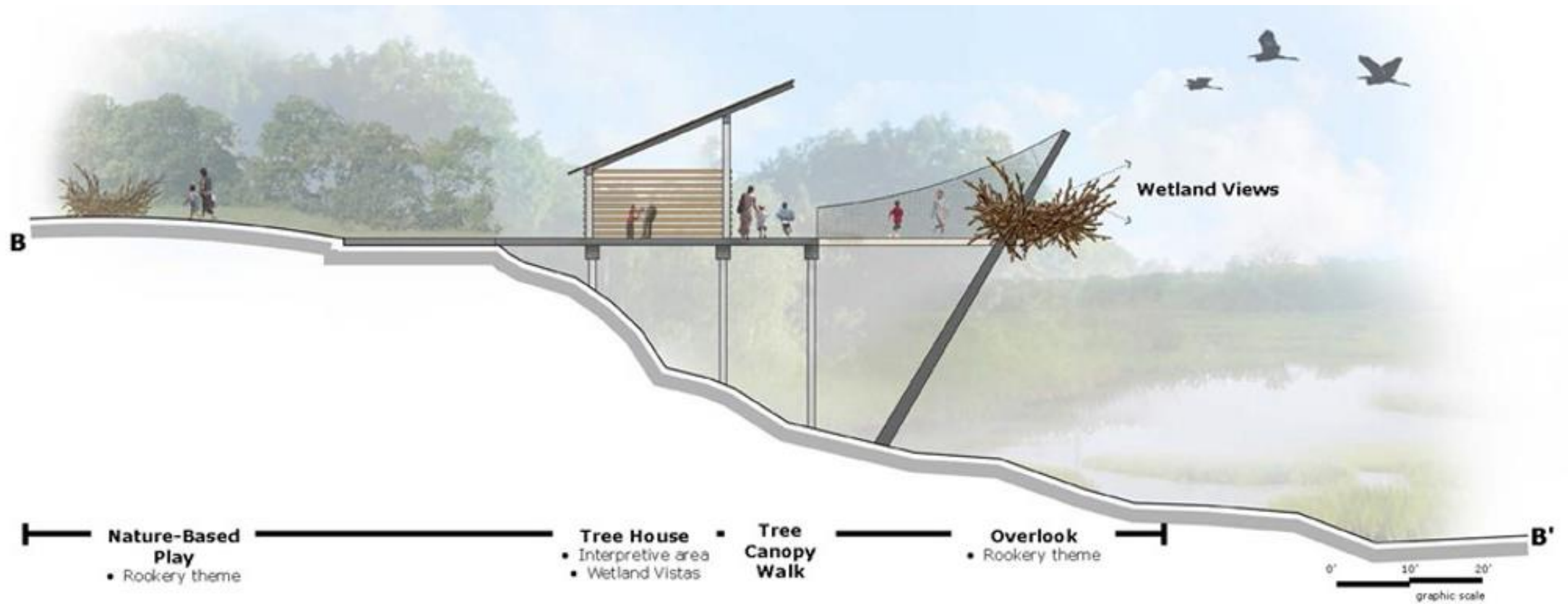
Inholdings



Recreation Development Concept

Maps...

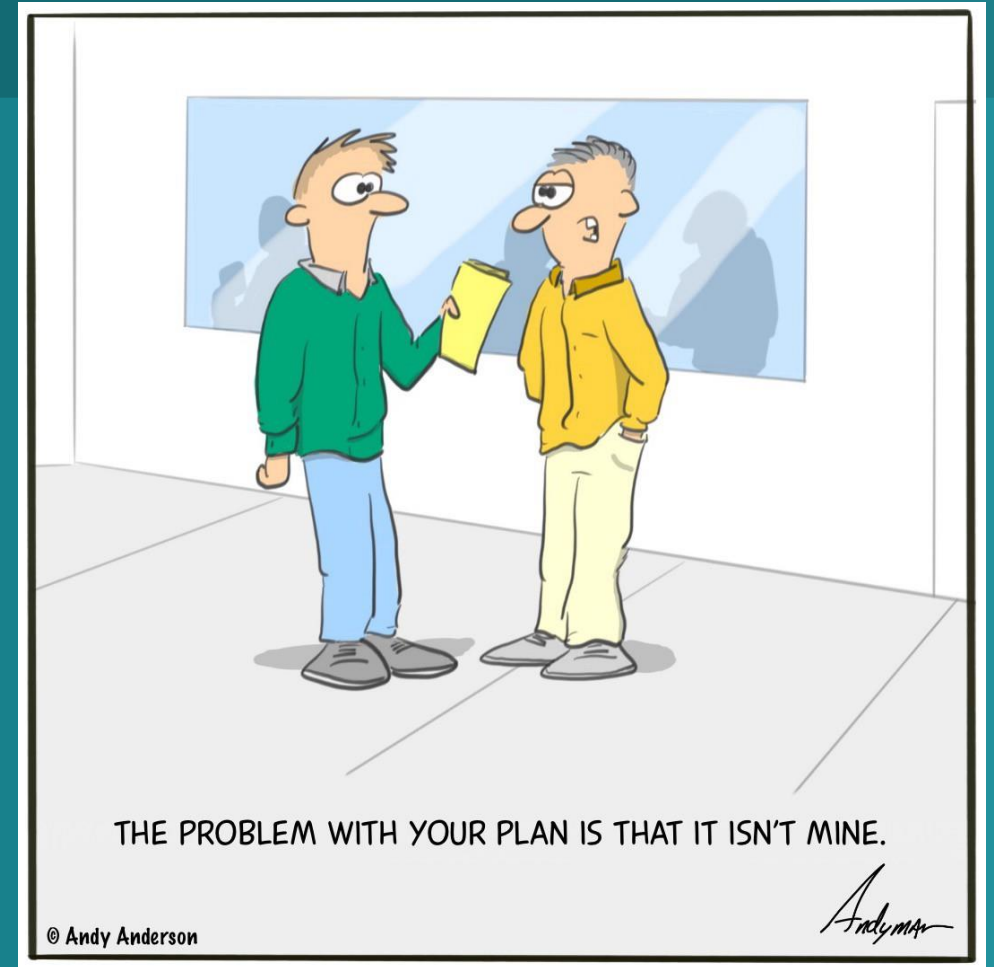
Concept renderings/ideas



EXAMPLE PLANNING TOOLS

The most important tool(s) are those that encourage inclusion and shared ownership.

A plan not representative or supported by the broader public, will not be successful in the long run.



A SWOT process can be done for a whole park system, park/trail, facility or recreation offering.

The most representative SWOT processes are those that include many internal and external stakeholders. They can be done early in the planning process to understand existing conditions and later in the process to vet recommendations.

SWOT



Strengths – Weakness – Opportunities - Threats

PRO TIPS:

- Ask community leaders/groups **how they want to be engaged**
- Define the desired level of engagement
- Engage early and often
- Balance virtual and in-person opportunities as well as quick interactions with in-depth conversations

Community Engagement

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Engagement Ideas:

- Partner with community organization to reach difficult to reach groups
- Listening sessions
- Online interacting mapping, surveys, discussion boards
- In-person/virtual and planned/pop up meetings
- Post-it posters at community centers and events
- Partner with recreation staff/programs
- **SPREAD THE WORD:** Mailings, road signs, emails, local newsletters, social media and more!



REGIONAL UNITY

extend from Wayzata to Dayton and
es being considered for the Diamond
neighborhood. To learn more and to
es, visit the project website:

lkthreerivers.org/
onal-trail-master-plan

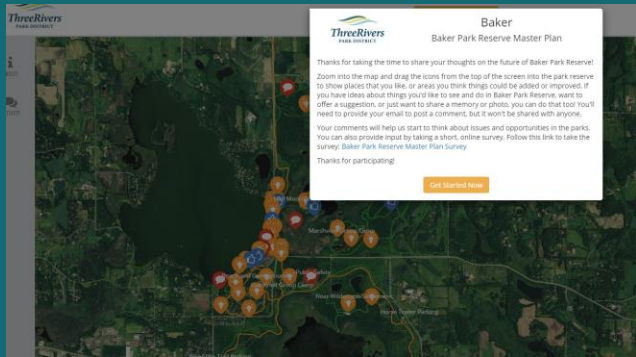


Preliminary public comments may be submitted through November 30, 2020



Engaging community members at community events and festivals is a great way to reach new audiences. When doing so:

- Consider offering a recreation activity (utilize your amazing rec staff to help!)
- Offer culturally appropriate food
- Keep things fun, easy and quick
- When it works, turn everyday conversations into informal listen sessions

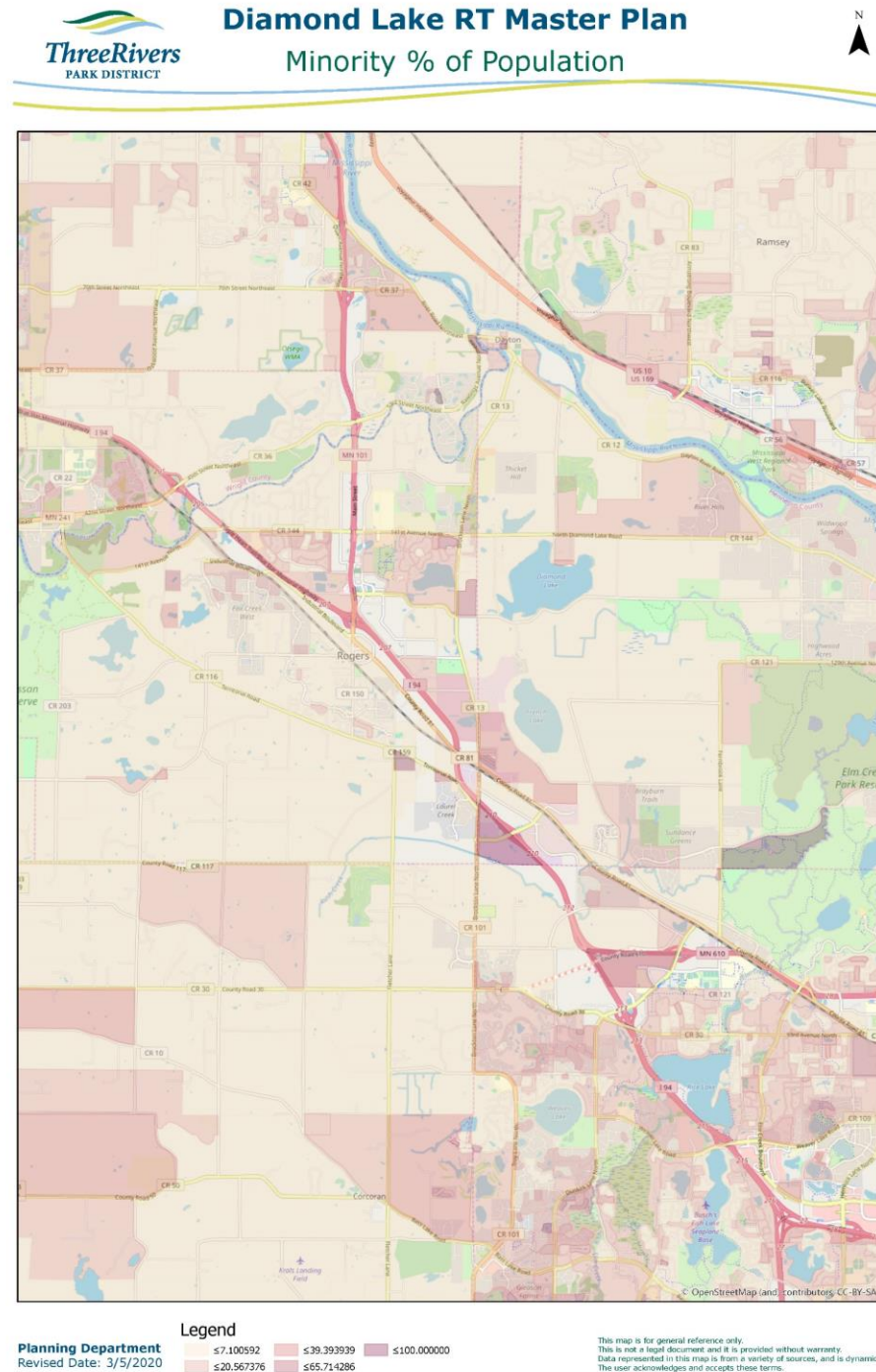


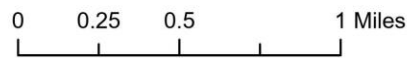
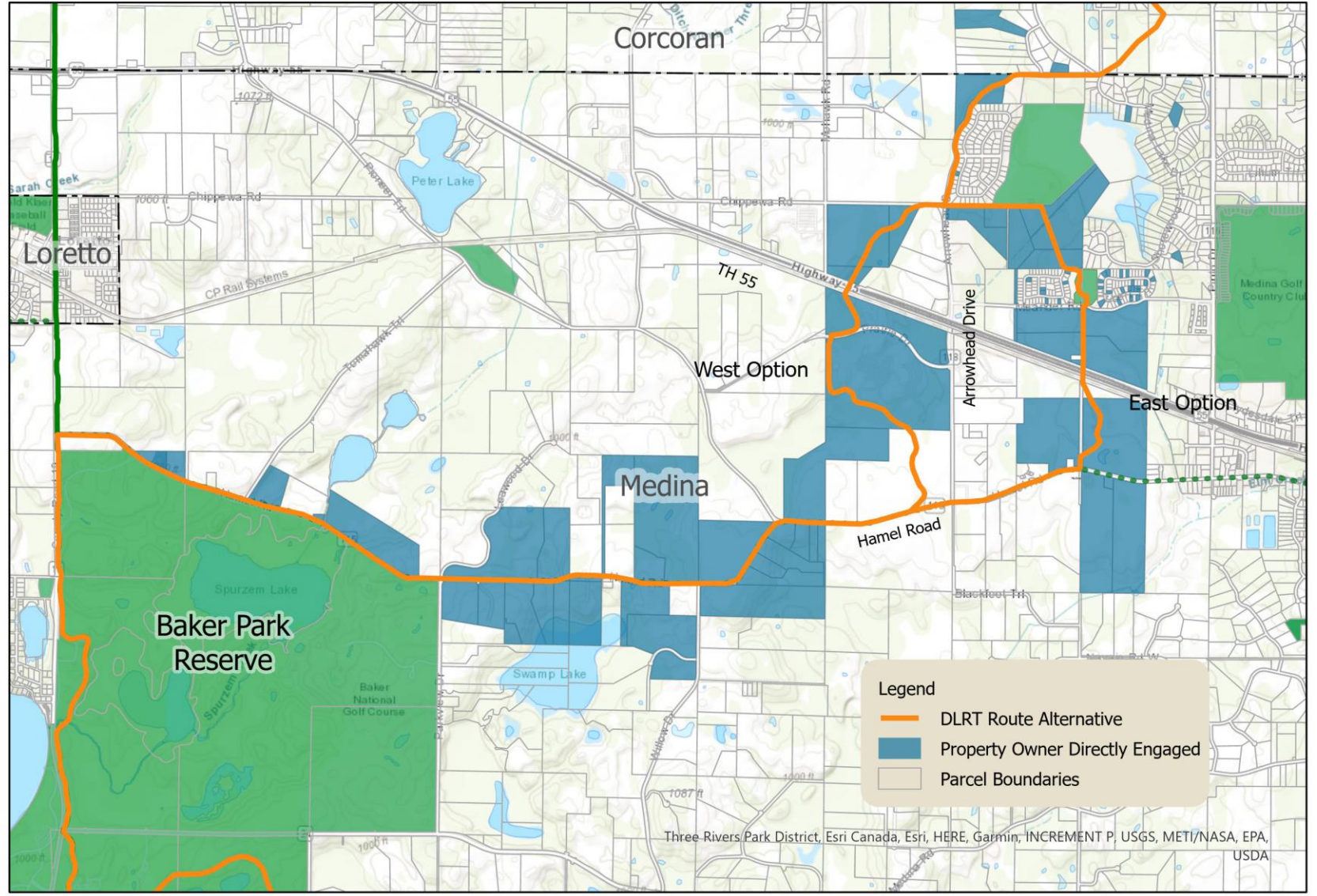
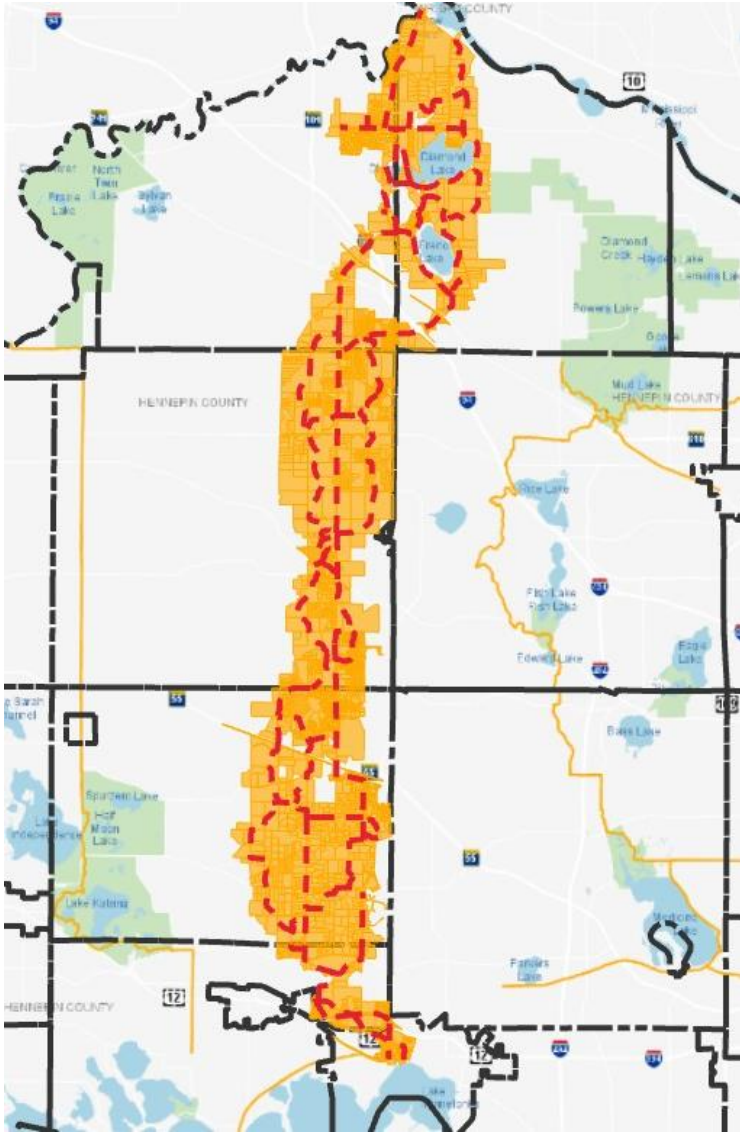
Interactive mapping allows people to virtually share geographically accurate input from their phone, tablet or computer.

Demographic mapping can help identify where to reach targeted community members/groups that can be difficult to engage with/serve.

This information is helpful when doing targeted mailings and engagement activities.

Mapping





DLRT - Medina North Route Alternative
Property Owners Engaged
May 12, 2021

Surveys: Service Areas, Satisfaction Findings, Demographics, Preferences and More!



**One question
survey ahead.**

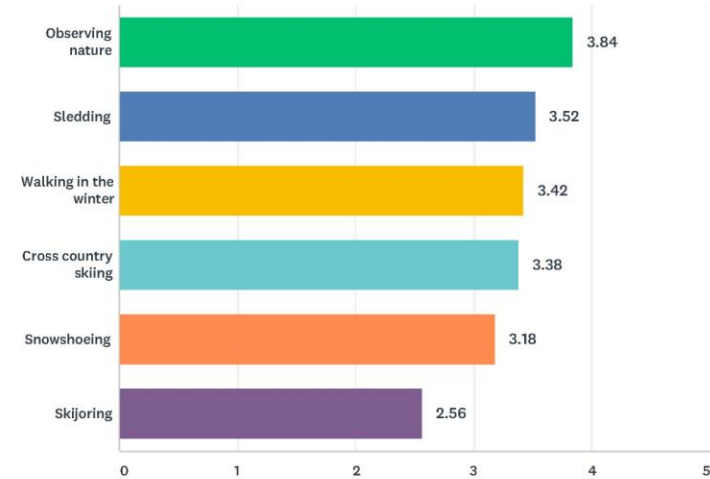
**Why are you
using the
trail today?**



Baker Park Reserve Master Plan

Q4 How important are the following current winter activities in Baker Park Reserve?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 5



	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Observing nature	46.00% 23	26.00% 13	6.00% 3	10.00% 5	12.00% 6	50	3.84
Sledding	25.00% 12	41.67% 20	8.33% 4	10.42% 5	14.58% 7	48	3.52
Walking in the winter	28.00% 14	28.00% 14	16.00% 8	14.00% 7	14.00% 7	50	3.42
Cross country skiing	28.00% 14	26.00% 13	20.00% 10	8.00% 4	18.00% 9	50	3.38
Snowshoeing	14.29% 7	36.73% 18	20.41% 10	10.20% 5	18.37% 9	49	3.18
Skijoring	10.42% 5	14.58% 7	25.00% 12	20.83% 10	29.17% 14	48	2.56

FRENCH REGIONAL PARK

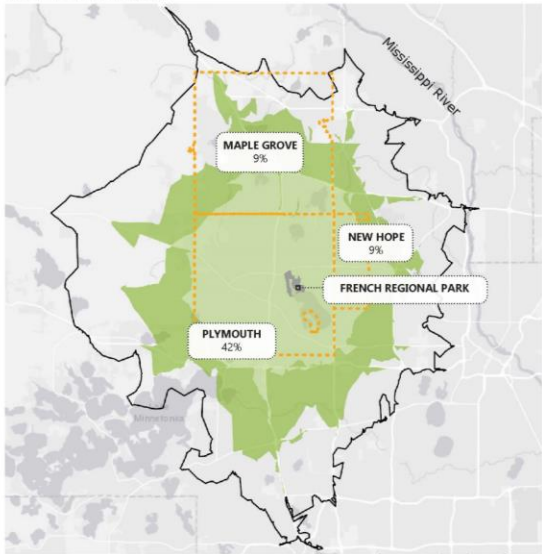
2018 SUMMER VISITOR REPORT

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The actual service area is smaller than expected. Offerings with a greater regional draw should be better promoted, enhanced or added to ensure the park serves a greater regional role.
- Adults over 45, when grouped together as a whole, are underrepresented. To reach the desired target, the park needs about 210 additional visitors over age 45 each summer day.
- First-tier community member summer visitation rose approximately 5% from 2013 to 2018. This is an extra 130 visitors a day!
- French visitors are more racially and ethnically diverse than the park's service area population.
- Visitors with household incomes under \$50,000 a year are underrepresented at the park. To reach the desired target, the park needs about 240 additional visitors from this income category each summer day.
- The park facilities and services scored equal to or better when compared to District averages in all categories except one. The Visitor Center was rated B+ compared to A- for the District-wide average.
- The number of summer visitors reporting the park as 'very crowded' jumped over 10%, while the number of people indicated that the 'number of people at the park decreased their enjoyment' remained stable.

PARK SERVICE AREA

50% of all park visitors travel 9 minutes or less and 75% of visitors travel 12 minutes or less. The park service area shows the geographic area that the park is intended to serve and where the majority of visitors originate from or live. For French in 2018, these drive times are slightly less than the service area goals of a 10-minute median drive time and a 15-minute 75th percentile drive time for a regional park.



NOTE: Any other cities of origin contributed <5% of visitors.

50% of visitors drive 9 minutes or less
75% of visitors drive 12 minutes or less
Ideal (75%) drive time is 15 minutes
City boundaries



DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Underrepresented community groups represent people or groups that are not participating in a park activity to the extent in which it is expected given their percentage of the overall population - these are groups Three Rivers would like to better serve. In addition to the groups denoted below, it also includes immigrants, refugees, and community members with a range of abilities that may benefit from adaptive offerings.

AGE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<5 years		✓	
5-9 years			✓
10-17 years		✓	
18-24 years		✓	
25-34 years		✓	
35-44 years		✓	
45-59 years		✓	
60-74 years		✓	
75+ years	✓		

GENDER	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
Female		✓	
Male		✓	

RACE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
White	✓		
Black		✓	
American Indian		✓	
Asian			✓
Other			✓

ETHNICITY	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
Not Hispanic	✓		
Hispanic			✓

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<\$50,000	✓		
\$50,000 - \$75,000			✓
>\$75,000		✓	

To reach the desired target, summer park visitation needs to increase by about:

- 90 visitors over age 75 per day.
- 1100 adult white visitors per day.
- 780 adult non-Hispanic visitors per day.
- 240 visitors from households with annual incomes under \$50,000 per day.

SATISFACTION FINDINGS

VISITORS FELT



FACILITIES & SERVICES REPORT CARD

	2013	2018	District	Notes
Concessions	B	B	B	
Drinking Water Availability	N/A	B+	B	1
Garbage Can Availability	N/A	A-	B+	1
Natural Areas	N/A	A-	A-	
Non-paved Trails	B+	B+	B+	
Open Space	B+	A-	B+	2
Park Information During Visit	B+	A-	B+	2
Park Staff	N/A	A-	A-	
Parking	B	B+	B+	2, 3
Paved Trails	B+	A-	A-	2, 3
Places to Sit	B	A-	B+	1, 2
Play Area	A-	A-	A-	4
Picnic Areas	A-	A-	B+	4
Rental Equipment	B	B+	B+	
Restrooms	B	B+	B	1, 2
Swim Areas	B	A-	A-	2, 5
Visitor Center	B	B+	A-	1
Water Quality (lakes/streams)	C+	B	B	2, 5

Notes and Takeaways

- When compared to the District, these facilities or services were statistically different:
 - Drinking Water Availability (5% of respondents rated it a D or F compared to 12% for the District).
 - Availability of Garbage/Recycle Cans (68% of respondents rated it an A compared to 52% for the District).
 - Places to Sit (67% of respondents rated it an A compared to 53% for the District).
 - Restrooms (66% of respondents rated it an A compared to 48% for the District).
 - Visitor Center (50% of respondents rated it an A compared to 64% for the District).
- Although some facilities or services indicate a grade change from 2013 to 2018, these saw a statistically significant change.
- The increase of parking and paved trail satisfaction may be due to the repaving of the roadways, parking lots and paved trails in 2018.
- Facilities or services with smaller sample sizes have combined scores that include data from 2013 and 2018.
- The increase of swim area and water quality satisfaction may be due in part to the additional 10 days the beach was open in 2018 (92 days open) compared to 2013 (82 days open).

PERCEIVED CROWDING & IMPACT

The percent of summer visitors reporting 'very crowded' increased from 1% (2013) to 13% (2018). This did not seem to affect overall visitor enjoyment as survey respondents reporting that the 'number of people in the park decreased their enjoyment' remained constant at 5%.

How crowded was the park today?



FURTHER EXPLAINED AS...

How did crowding impact your enjoyment of the park?



THINGS TO NOTE

TOP 5 SUMMER ACTIVITIES	MOST LIKED
#1 HIKING 81,800 visits/summer	1. Play area
#2 PLAY AREA 47,100 visits/summer	2. Trails
#3 PICNICKING 31,700 visits/summer	3. Park location/proximity
#4 BIKING 28,100 visits/summer	4. Natural areas
#5 SWIMMING/BEACH 21,100 visits/summer	5. Swim/beach area

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

- Increase parking near beach/lake
- Provide more places to sit
- Allow dogs on all trails
- More food and beverage options in more convenient locations
- More drinking fountains

METHODOLOGY

Park surveys are administered every five years by research staff. This summary includes data collected primarily in summer 2018. Park visitors age 16 or older were eligible to participate in the study except for those camping at a designated group campsite or visiting with a staff-led organized group. Surveys were not administered to more than one person per group. Data has been weighted by the main park activity the respondent participated in to mirror the percent of actual summer visitors, ensuring study results did not over or under represent any one user group. Demographic categories marked as under or overrepresented were significantly different than the most recent data available from the 2018 American Community Survey or 2010 Census results within the park's service area. Demographics for race and ethnicity represent adults only. Full methodology can be found in the [full report](#).

questions, thoughts and inspirations?

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