











Parks & Trail System Plan

City of Vadnais Heights

Adopted by City Council on April 1, 2025

Acknowledgments

A special thank you to the community members of Vadnais Heights who shared their opinions, hopes, and needs for their parks and trail system. This document would not have been possible without your input.

Thank you to the following council members, commission members, key city staff, and the many agency and community partners who were involved in the development of this document.

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Vadnais Heights Green Team

LHB

LHB File Location: M:\23Proj\230384\300 Design\Reports\230384 Vadnais Heights Parks & Trail System Plan

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Introduction 01

Lakes, wetlands, and forests provide Vadnais Heights with a rich natural setting that is integral to its identity and important to its residents' quality of life. As a second-ring suburb to St. Paul, the community grew rapidly in the 1980s and '90s and has continued to draw young families due to its idyllic nature and convenient location within the Twin Cities Metro. As Vadnais Heights becomes closer to being fully developed, park dedication funding is slowing while park assets continue to age.

Although planning has occurred in the past, it was never fully funded and has become outdated. To ensure a park and recreation legacy is maintained for future generations, it is important to regularly assess the system, making certain it meets the changing needs of residents and visitors, that it can be managed appropriately and sustained, and to continually imagine new recreational possibilities that this generation can leave for the next.

To support those goals, the city decided to embark on this journey in the fall of 2023 to develop a Park and Trail System Plan that will serve as a guiding document for future improvements, knowing that it is critical for the region's vitality to respond to the changing natural environment and demographics of the community.







What is a Parks & Trail System Plan?

This Document:

- Sets a vision for the future of the parks and trail in Vadnais Heights guiding capital improvements for the next 20 years;
- Aligns priorities with demographics, equitable distribution of resources, and community engagement feedback;
- Looks at the larger system and adjacent communities to identify regional connections and leverage shared resources;
- Creates actionable steps for park and trail project implementation in the framework of addressing rehabilitation and on-going maintenance of aging park assets;
- Provides strategies for sustainable maintenance and protection of natural resources; and
- Allows the city to plan for and seek additional financial resources for implementation.

A parks and trail system plan is not a final design that is ready for construction. The design ideas shown within this document are conceptual, based on existing conditions data, a shared vision, professional design guidance, and community feedback gathered during this planning process. Before each project is implemented, a "design development" process would occur in which the city would hire designers to create construction plans so the projects can be publicly bid and then constructed. During the design development process, additional engagement would occur so that city staff can gather resident feedback on the design as it is developed. During that process, the details may change as the design is further developed, but the overall goal and intentions of the plan remain.

Parks & Trail System Plan Goals

These goals are unique to the City of Vadnais Heights and were developed in collaboration with city staff, City Council, and the Park, Recreation, and Trails Commission. All designs and prioritizes developed in this document were guided by these following goals and project principles.

Goals For This Process & Document

- A collaborative and equitable planning, design, and engagement process.
- Develop a system-wide holistic plan that is unique to Vadnais Heights and reliant on community engagement.
- Develop a park and trail system that is equitable, sustainable, and forward-thinking.
- Prepare a quality document that is accessible and actionable, which includes prioritization and financing strategies.

Priorities For the Parks & Trail System

City Council recognized that parks and trails are critical now and in the future for the overall health, well-being of the community and the natural resources that are present within Vadnais Heights. They also realize that the natural resources the city cares for are part of a larger, interconnected ecosystem. The charge was also to create a Parks and Trail System Plan that advances the following priorities:

- **Ecosystems:** Protection and investment in our natural resources including native vegetation, wetlands, water, and animal habitat;
- **Well Being:** Considering the body, mind, and spirit; and
- **Community:** Sense of place, equity, and social resilience.

Quotes from the first City Council workshop about this project

> **“ All ages should be able to access the parks safely.**

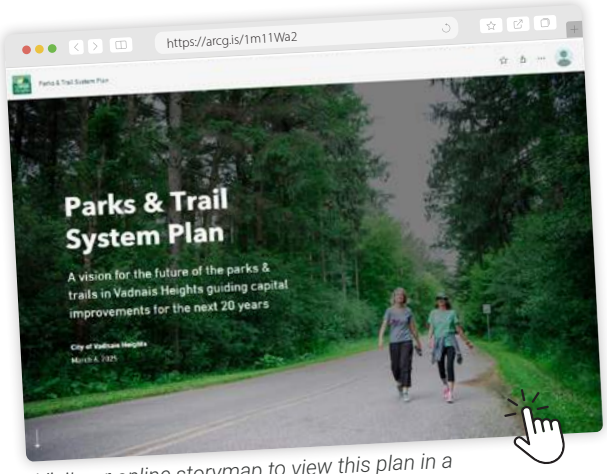
> **“ Equitable also means accessible.**

> **“ Parks & trails should be considered with well-being as well as community & ecosystems.**

> **“ Expand sense of community & address isolated areas.**

> **“ Keep the small-town feel.**

> “Relevant quotes from engagement efforts look like this!



Visit our online storymap to view this plan in a more interactive format!

How to Use This Plan

This document was written and organized in a way that hopefully keeps it off of people's shelves, providing useful background information and actionable implementation steps that help enhance the city's park system over the next 20 years.

Look Out for the Following Visual Cues

- Various links are including throughout the document that help users navigate between sections or to relevant external online resources. When something is an interactive link, **it will look like this**.
- Relevant quotes that were captured during City Council Meetings; Park, Recreation, and Trails Commission Meetings; Community Partners Engagement Sessions; and Community Engagement Events are included throughout in bright yellow boxes like the one shown on the left.

An even more visual and interactive version of this plan is available online as a story map. You can access this version of the Parks and Trail System Plan by **clicking here** or on the image of it included on the left.

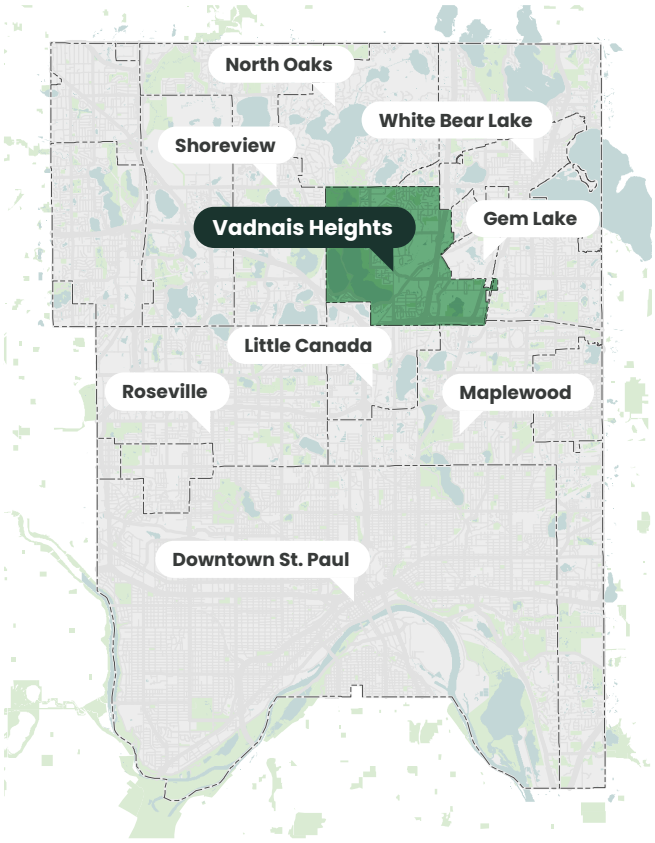


Existing Conditions

02

This chapter includes a review of the current parks and trail system, its regional context, demographics, land cover, and how it relates to equitable distribution of resources.

Figure 02.1 *City Context*



Regional Context

The City of Vadnais Heights is a second ring suburb of Saint Paul, Minnesota. Its location has played a large factor in the city's identity, offering quick access to big city jobs and amenities while feeling like a small town. The volume of parkland that the city owns and manages is impressive, with 194 acres of parkland across 14 parks and a 13-mile trail network. These assets are combined with hundreds of additional acres of regional parkland and open space with connecting trail systems, so working together with agency partners and key stakeholders will be critical to the plan's success.

Vadnais Heights is bordered by Shoreview to the west, Little Canada to the south, White Bear Lake and Gem Lake to the east, and North Oaks to the north. The city is located in Ramsey County and is within the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District *(RWMWD)* and Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization *(VLAWMO)*.

Bicycle connections include the planned Bruce Vento Trail corridor that will eventually connect Vadnais Heights to the Gateway Trail in Saint Paul. A regional trail along the south side of Highway 96 provides an east-west connection between Shoreview and White Bear Lake and connecting to the northern edge of Vadnais Heights. Vadnais-Snail Lake Regional Park, which includes Sucker Lake and Vadnais Lake, bounds the western edge of Vadnais Heights and provides access to natural resources, park amenities, and miles of recreational trail for residents.

Demographics

Population

As of 2022, 12,713 people call Vadnais Heights home. This is 1.5% less than was reported in 2020, which is representative of the larger trend of the population peaking in the year 2000 after a couple of decades of rapid growth, and overall remaining steady since that time. According to the Metropolitan Council's "Imagine 2050" regional plan, the population is anticipated to remain largely the same over the next 20 years, with some potential to increase as the city densifies its housing stock.

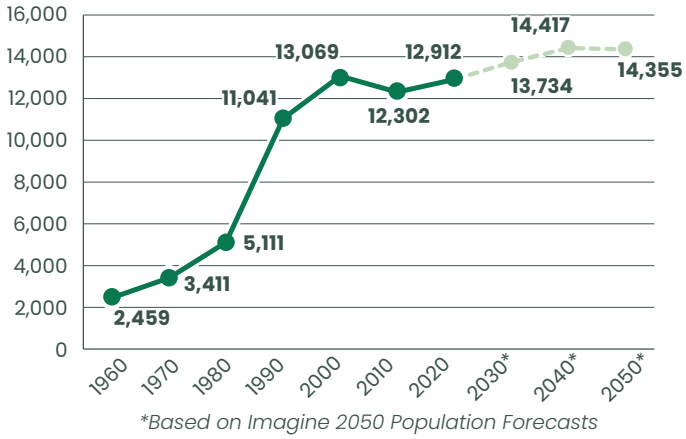
Age

Vadnais Heights' median age is around 41, which is a bit higher than that of Ramsey County and the state, largely because more of the city's residents fall into the "over 65" age category. Despite this, the percent of residents who are under the age of 18 *(23%)* is consistent with county and state averages. Based on this information, this plan should consider activities for a wide range of ages, and especially activities they can do together.

Housing

Most of the community owns their home, with 83% of housing units reported as owner occupied. The majority *(75%)* of Vadnais Heights' housing stock is classified as single unit, while 17% is multi-unit, and 5% are mobile homes. Only 5% of housing units have been reported as vacant. Park amenities may serve different purposes for residents who have their own yard or recreation amenities provided by an apartment complex.

Figure 02.2 *Historic & Projected Population*



*Based on Imagine 2050 Population Forecasts

Figure 02.3 *2022 Age Distribution*

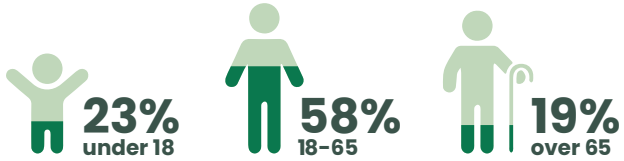


Figure 02.4 *Historic Age Distribution*

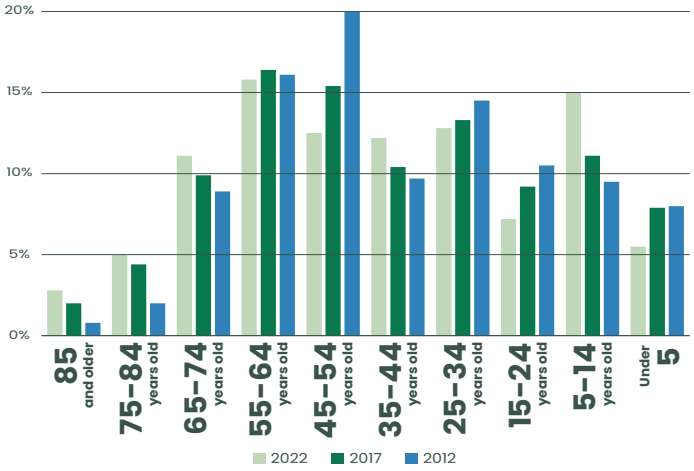


Figure 02.5 *2022 Types of Housing Units*



Income

The median income of Vadnais Heights is higher than both county and state figures, at $51,601 per capita and $89,632 per household. However, the southeast portion of the city near the 694 and 35E interchange has much lower income than the northern portions of Vadnais Heights. This plan should ensure that park and trail resources are equitably distributed.

Racial Diversity

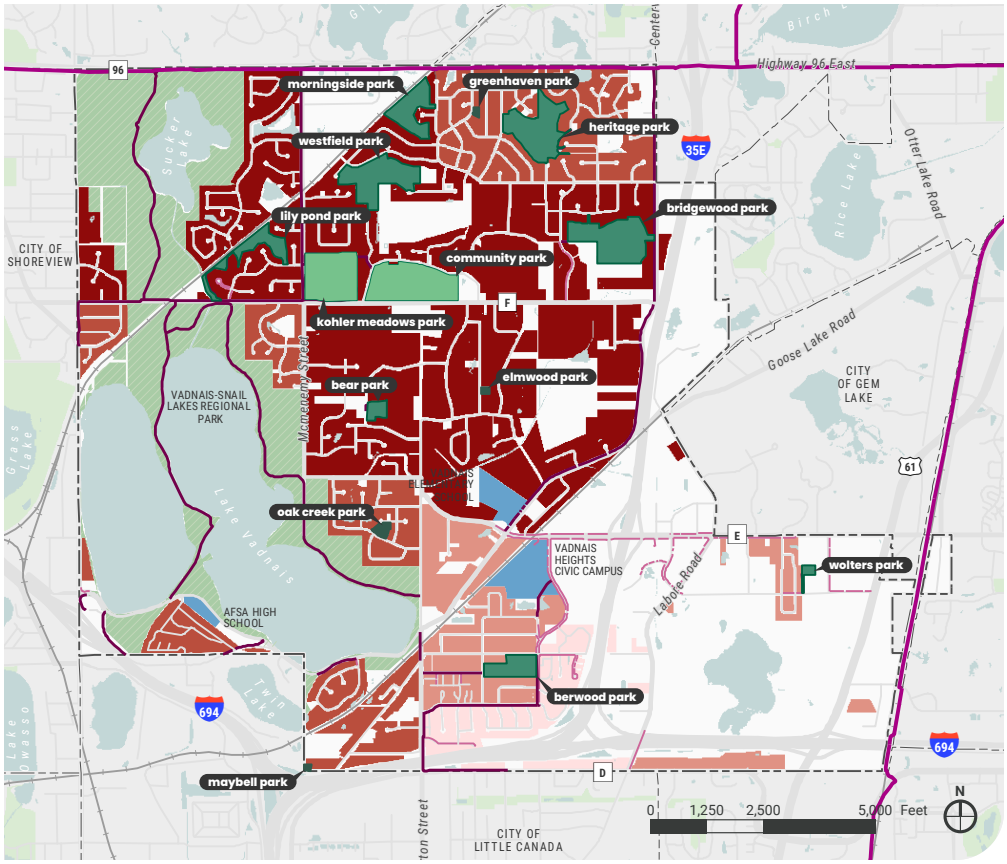
75% of Vadnais Heights' population identifies as white, but like income, this is not evenly distributed geographically. The majority of white residents are concentrated in the center of the city around Vadnais Elementary School, while higher percentages of people of color can be found in the southeast portion of Vadnais Heights. Lower income areas overlap with the portion of the city that has been surveyed as the most racially diverse. Park amenities should consider the particular cultural needs of residents in various areas.

Vulnerability & Equity

These combined factors of income, race, and ownership are important considerations when looking at access to and distribution of the existing park system. Populations with lower income, less home ownership, and more racial diversity have experienced historic underinvestment in greenspace and trees and are not as likely to have close access to private outdoor amenities. These populations, along with elderly and disabled people, are also more vulnerable to extreme heat according to environmental justice research conducted by the Minneapolis Pollution Control Agency *(MPCA)*. This should be a driving factor for the equitable distribution of resources within the parks and trail system.

**This section is based on data from the Decennial Census and the 2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates unless otherwise noted*

Figure 02.6 *Median Income*



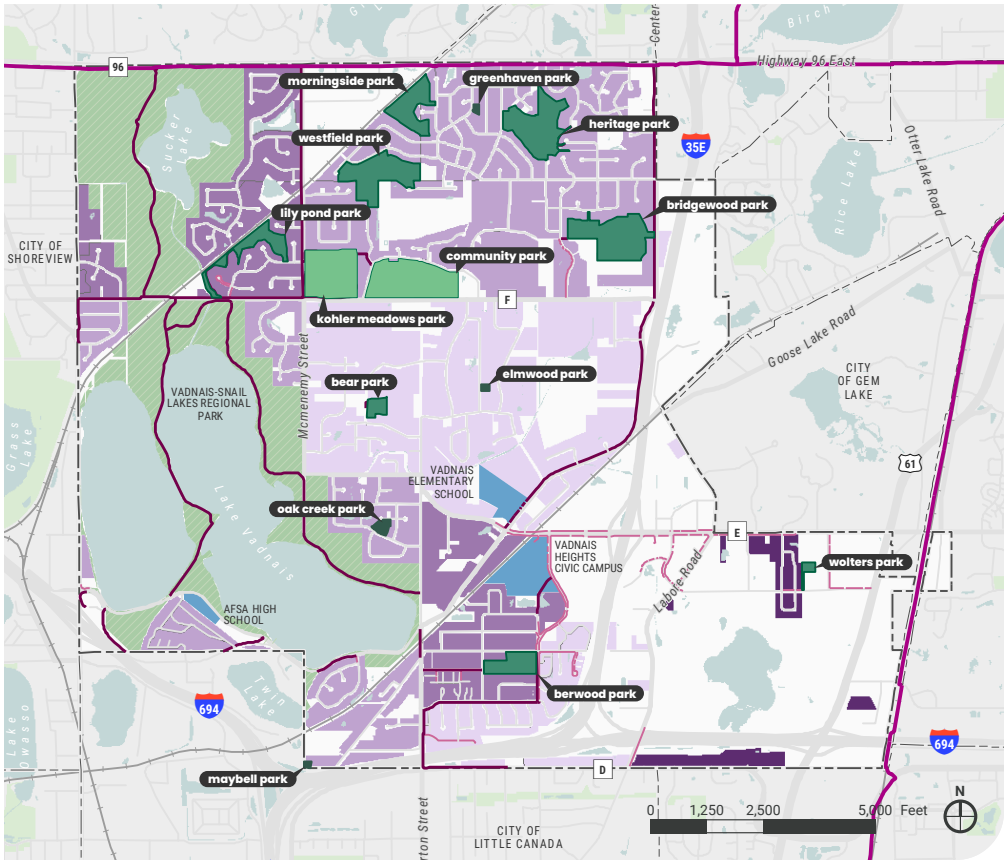
Median Income

- Under $50,000
- $50,000-$75,000
- $75,000-$100,000
- Over $100,000

Background Information

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- City Boundary
- Water Body

Figure 02.7 *Races Other Than White*



Races Other Than White

- Under 10%
- 10-20%
- 20-40%
- 40-60% *(not present in City)*
- Over 60%

Background Information

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- City Boundary
- Water Body



Area composed of primarily heat generating surfaces



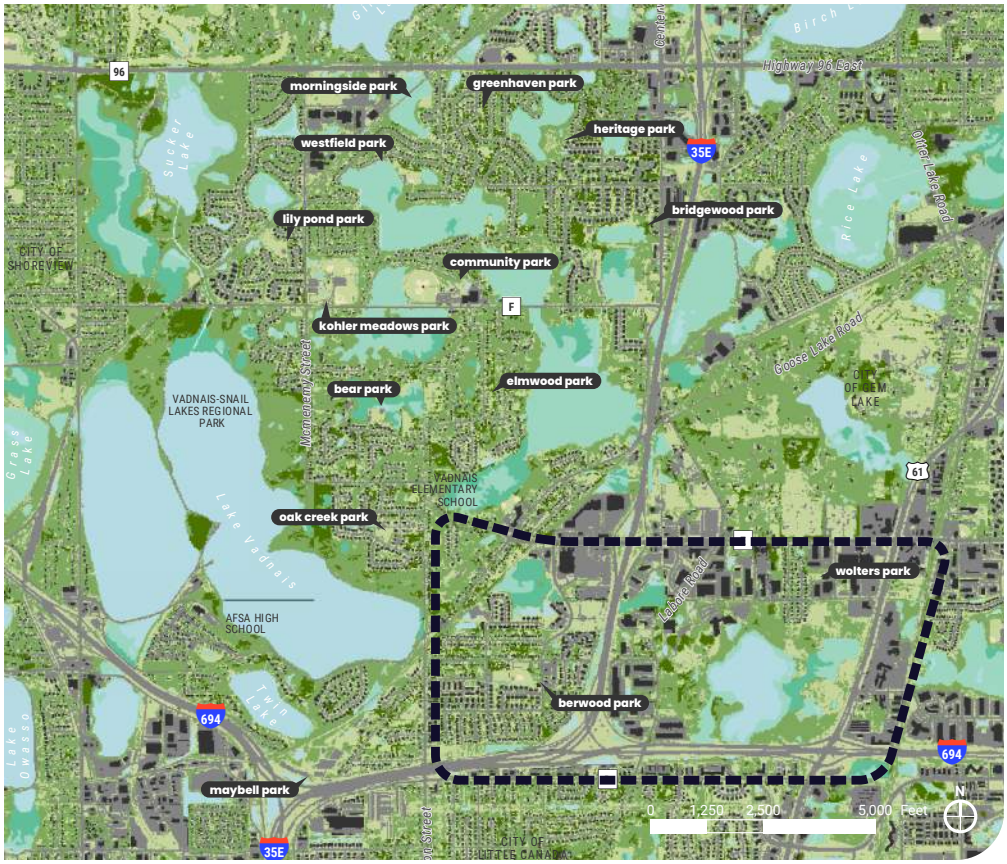
Area composed of primarily heat abating surfaces

Land Cover & Surface Temperature

In looking at **Figure 02.8**, it becomes clear why Vadnais Heights identifies so strongly with lakes and trees. Much of the land cover throughout the city falls into the category of "heat abating," including tree canopies, wetlands, and open water, all of which contribute cooling effects to surface temperatures. Conversely, "heat generating" land covers such as buildings, roads, paved surfaces, and bare soil make the surface temperature higher. Within Vadnais Heights, these can be found along the interstate corridors in the southeast portion of the city.

Figure 02.9 shows how heat generating and abating land cover directly correlate with how the temperature feels in that area, with areas displayed in red reporting surface temperatures in excess of 110 degrees when this reading was taken in June of 2022. As described in the demographics section above, the MPCA's research shows that lower income, elderly, disabled, and racially diverse populations are more likely to experience serious negative medical impacts during extreme heat events. The black dashed outline highlights where the most heat vulnerable populations in Vadnais Heights are currently living and shows how this is in direct correlation with where the hottest surface temperatures are occurring.

Figure 02.8 *Land Cover*



Concentration of Heat Vulnerable Populations

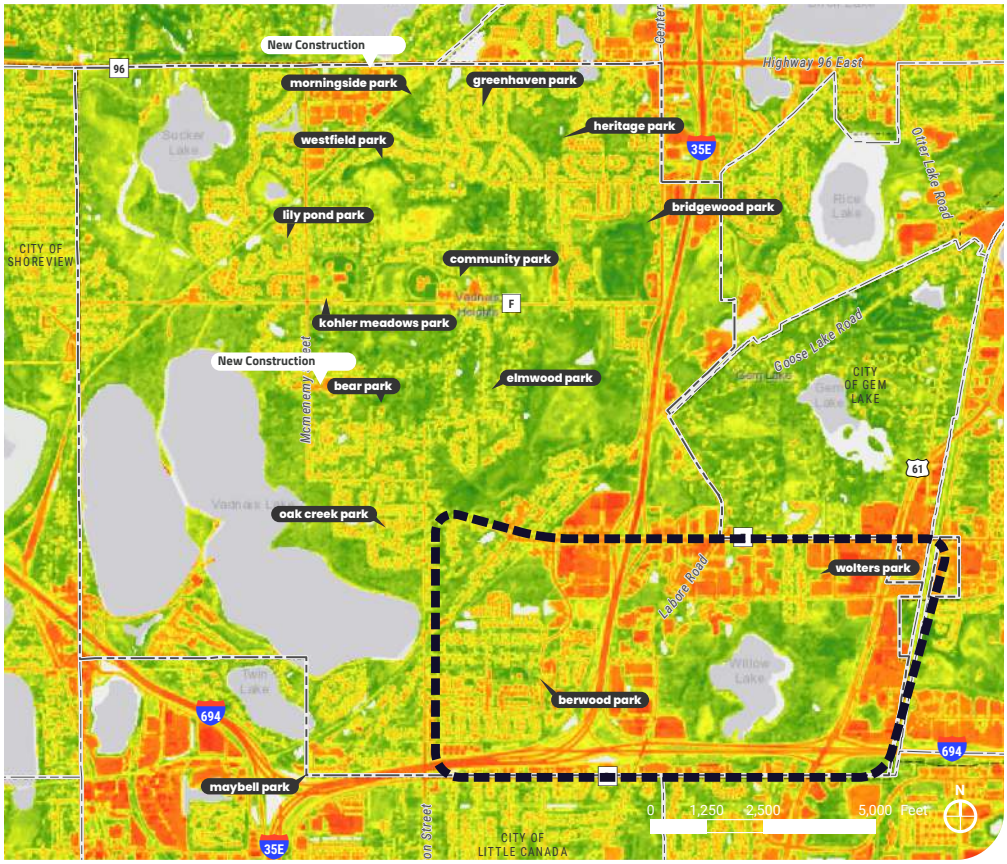
Heat Generating Land Covers

- Roads/Paved Surfaces
- Buildings
- Bare Soil

Heat Abating Land Covers

- Grass/Shrub
- Coniferous Tree Canopy
- Deciduous Tree Canopy
- Forest/Shrub Wetland
- Emergent Wetlands
- Lakes/Ponds

Figure 02.9 *Land Surface Temperature (June 2022)*



Concentration of Heat Vulnerable Populations

Land Surface Temperature

111 Degrees (F)

77 Degrees (F)



Mini Park (Playground at Greenhaven Park)



Neighborhood Park (Pickleball at Bridgewood Park)



Community Park (Birdseye view of fields at Community Park)

Current System

The City of Vadnais Heights' parks and trail system currently spans over 200 acres and 12.6 miles respectively. It includes 15 total parks across three different classifications, as well as special facilities, partnerships, open space and natural resources. An existing facility matrix is located on the following pages. According to the city's comprehensive plan, parks can be categorized as follows:

Mini Park

Mini Parks are used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreation needs. They are generally under an acre in size and are located within residential settings, designed to serve residents within the immediate vicinity *(1/4 mile, or a five-minute walk)* of the park. The city currently has four Mini Parks: Elmwood, Greenhaven, Maybell, and Oak Creek Parks.

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood Parks are designed to serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood, providing both active and passive recreational opportunities. They are five to ten acres in size, located within generally residential settings, and are situated for residents within a 1/4-1/2 mile radius *(or a five to ten-minute walk)* to access the park without being interrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers. Vadnais Heights currently has nine Neighborhood Parks: Bear, Berwood, Bridgewood, Heritage, Lily Pond, Morningside, Vadnais Heights Elementary School, Westfield, and Wolters Parks.

Community Park

Community Parks aim to meet community-based recreational needs, including active and passive recreation. They serve multiple neighborhoods, aimed at residents anywhere from ½ to 3 miles from the park's boundary, and are generally larger in size *(30-50 acres)*. Community Parks typically include a infrastructure to support community events, a building and/or large shelter, plumbed restrooms, and parking areas. Natural resource areas and open space may be significant features to be preserved. There are currently two Community Parks in the center of the city: Community and Kohler Meadows Parks.

Figure 02.10 *Existing Parks & Trail System*

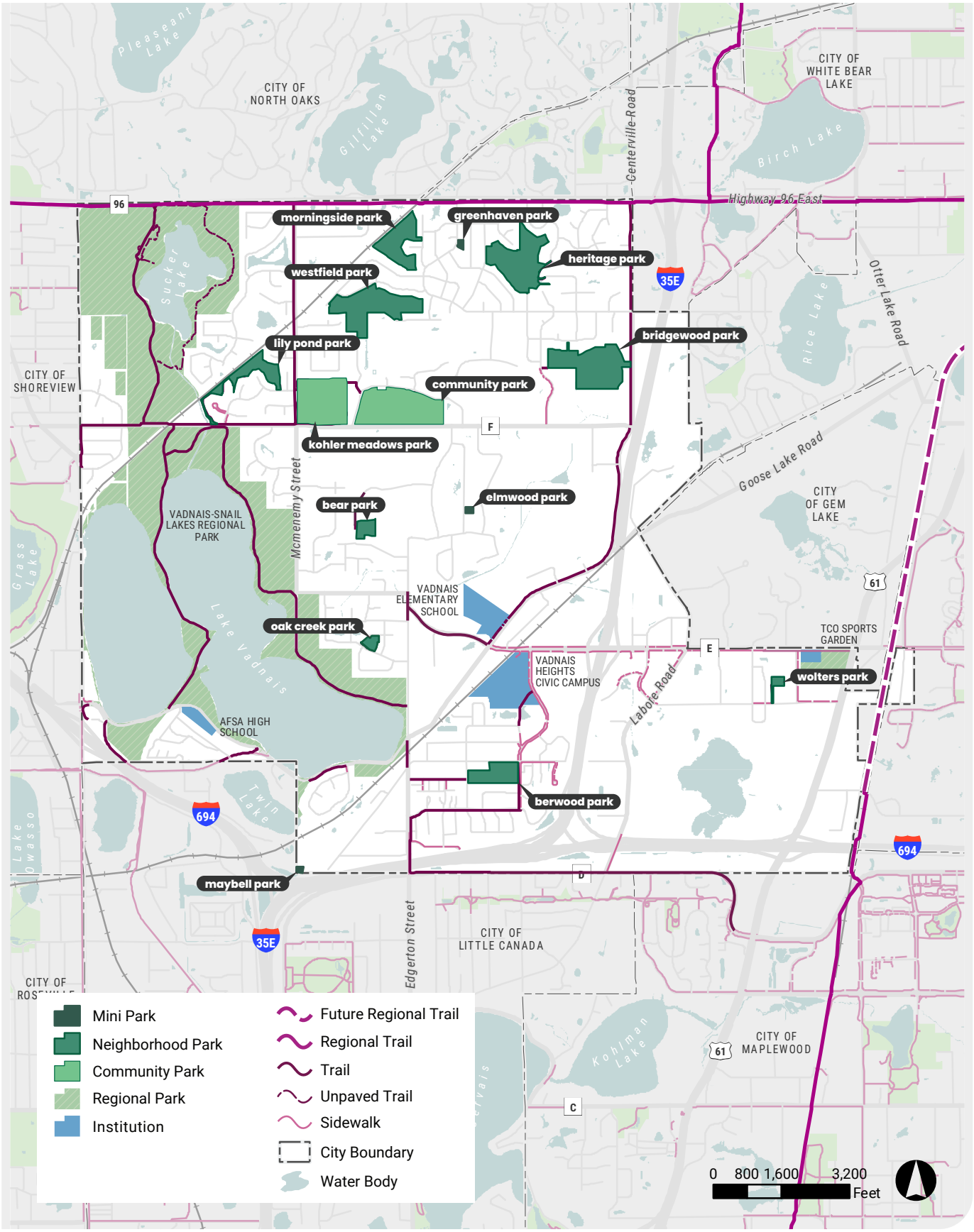


Table 02.1 *Existing Facility Matrix*

	Facility Name	Address	Park Classification	Total Acres	Passive/Wetland Acres	Active Use Acres	Baseball Field *(Adult)*	Baseball Field *(Youth)*	Batting Cages	Basketball Court *(Full)*	Basketball Court *(Half)*
City Facilities	Bear Park	465 Bear Avenue S	Neighborhood Park	4	2	2		1			1
	Berwood Park	780 Berwood Avenue	Neighborhood Park	11	2	9		1		1	
	Bridgewood Park	4224-½ Bridgewood Terrace	Neighborhood Park	30	28	3					1
	Community Park	641 County Road F East	Community Park	35	15	20					
	Elmwood Park	3892 Elmwood Street	Mini Park	0.7		0.7					
	Greenhaven Park	4470 Greenhaven Drive	Mini Park	0.7		0.7					
	Heritage Park	4345 Heritage Drive	Neighborhood Park	28	18	10					
	Kohler Meadows Park	365 County Road F East	Community Park	29	4	25	1		1		1
	Lily Pond Park	325 Lily Pond Lane	Neighborhood Park	12	5	7		1			
	Maybell Park	426 Mario Drive	Mini Park	0.5		0.5					
	Morningside Park	4485 Morningside Avenue	Neighborhood Park	16	14	2					
	Oak Creek Park	485 Oak Creek Drive S	Mini Park	2		2					
	Vadnais Elementary School*	3645 Centerville Road	Neighborhood Park	4		4					2
	Westfield Park	520 Westfield Lane	Neighborhood Park	27	14	13					1
	Wolters Park	1351 Willow Lake Boulevard	Neighborhood Park	2		2					
		City Total	**15**	**201**	**101**	**100**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**6**
		Residents per Facility	*858*	*64*	-	*128*	*12,864*	*4,288*	*12,864*	*12,864*	*2,144*
		National Average Comparison (▲Above, ▼Below)	▲	▲	-	▼	▼	▼	-	▼	-
Non-City	Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park - Sucker Lake	4520 Rice Street	Regional Park	1,252	829	423					
	TCO Sports Garden**	1490 County Road E East	Regional Facility					1	2		
	AFSA High School	100 Vadnais Boulevard	Charter School			0					
		Non-City Total	**1**	**1,252**	**829**	**423**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**0**
		Overall Total	**16**	**1,453**	**932**	**523**	**1**	**4**	**3**	**1**	**6**
		Residents per Facility	*804*	*9*	-	*25*	*12,864*	*3,216*	*4,288*	*12,864*	*2,144*
		National Average Comparison (▲Above, ▼Below)	▲	▲	-	▲	▼	▼	-	▼	-

**The neighborhood park at Vadnais Elementary School is not on city-owned property and is operated under a shared-use agreement. Active acreage includes city-constructed diamond fields and playground, which are publicly accessible outside of school hours.*

***TCO Sports Garden is public but requires fee or program participation for access.*

Dog Park *(Off-Leash)*	General Skating Rink	Hockey Rink	Indoor Gym Space	Park Building	Parking Lot	Pickleball Court *(Dedicated)*	Picnic Area *(Tables)*	Picnic Shelter	Playground	Public Restroom	Rectangular Field *(Multipurpose)*	Skate Park	Sledding Hill	Softball Field *(Adult)*	Softball Field *(Youth)*	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court	Walking Paths	Warming House	X-Country Skiing
					1		X		1	1	1							X		
					2		X		2	1	1					1		X		
					1	6			1	1								X		
	1	1		1	1		X	1	1	1	1		1	3			1	X	1	
					1		X		1									X		
							X		1											
																		X		
				1	3	1	X	1	1	1	3		1		2	4		X		
					1		X		1	1	1							X		
									1											
					1		X			1	1									
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0	**2**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**14**	**8**	**10**	**2**	**15**	**9**	**10**	**0**	**2**	**3**	**5**	**6**	**1**	**11**	**2**	**0**
0	*6,432*	*12,864*	*12,864*	*6,432*	*919*	*1,608*	*1,286*	*6,432*	*858*	*1,429*	*1,286*	*0*	*6,432*	*4,288*	*2,573*	*2,144*	*12,864*	*1,169*	*6,432*	*0*
↓	↑	↓	-	-	-	-	-	-	↑	-	↑	↓	-	↓	↑	↑	-	-	-	-
					5		X	1	1	X								X		X
		2									3				1			X		
			1		1															
0	**0**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**1**
0	**2**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**20**	**8**	**11**	**3**	**16**	**10**	**13**	**0**	**2**	**3**	**6**	**6**	**1**	**13**	**2**	**1**
0	*6,432*	*4,288*	*6,432*	*6,432*	*643*	*1,608*	*1,169*	*4,288*	*804*	*1,286*	*990*	*0*	*6,432*	*4,288*	*2,144*	*2,144*	*12,864*	*990*	*6,432*	*12,864*
↓	↑	↑	-	-	-	-	-	-	↑	-	↑	↓	-	↓	↑	↑	-	-	-	-



Vadnais Heights Elementary School



AFSA High School





TCO Sports Garden

Special Facilities & Partnerships

Vadnais Heights Elementary School

The city has an agreement with ISD #624 that allows for limited public use of the indoor gymnasium. In exchange, the city provides maintenance of the ball fields/ open space.

AFSA High School

The city has an agreement with the school that allows for limited public use of the indoor gymnasium. In exchange, the school is allowed to use certain sports fields within city parks. The city owns the approximately five-acre parcel directly to the east of the school's property.

TCO Sports Garden *(Formerly Vadnais Sports Center)*

The TCO Sports Garden was opened in November 2010 as the "Vadnais Sports Center" and is located near the intersection of Highway 61 and County Road E. It is currently owned and operated by Ramsey County but was built through a partnership of a private non-profit, Community Facility Partners, and the City of Vadnais Heights. The 183,000 square foot complex has two NHL-size ice sheets with seating for 1,900 spectators, a 100-meter track, a fitness center, and a walkway connecting adjacent restaurant and retail uses. The facility also hosts a variety of open programs, such as walking, open hockey, open skating, free weights, softball and batting practice. Several organizations also run sports teams and leagues out of the facility.

The recently updated City and County Credit Union Fieldhouse *(CCCU Fieldhouse)*, which is 80,000 square feet, is one of only a few indoor turf facilities in the northeast metro.

Vadnais Heights Commons

Opened in 2010, Vadnais Heights Commons is a 10,000 square foot facility containing multi-purpose event, meeting, and social-recreation space. It can seat up to 350 for a meal and accommodate approximately 500 people for other events. It is located just east of Community Park on County Road F, and is owned and operated by the city.

Natural Resources

The pre-European settlement vegetation of Vadnais Heights was classified as Oak Openings and Barrens, a fire-dependent landscape. The ecological community was generally characterized by grasslands with scattered trees, primarily oak, in a larger prairie complex. Wetlands and lakes have been a major part of the Vadnais Heights community throughout its history. Today these areas make up 103 of 201 total park acres. Despite significant wetland cover, these areas are largely inactive, unmaintained, and inaccessible to the public. Many of the parks currently have recreational features within the partner watershed organizations' recommended 30-foot wetland buffer. There are opportunities to integrate wetlands in the future park system to protect, showcase, and educate the public about their importance.

Today, there are also considerable mesic hardwood forests that border the lakes and many of the wetlands within the city that support significant plant and animal species. These forested areas are a large part of the character of Vadnais Heights and should continue to be managed for invasive species.

According to 2011 Comprehensive Plan, key animal species such as Blanding's Turtle and Red-Shouldered Hawk have been identified within Vadnais Heights. Osprey nests are also common sightings. Tubercled Rein Orchid, which is classified as "Threatened" in Minnesota due to development and the spread of invasive buckthorn, has been recorded within the city.

Ongoing Efforts

Showing commitment to the environment, the city joined Greenstep Cities in April 2024 and a natural resource specialist was hired in 2024. In the past several years, green stormwater infrastructure and native planting demonstration gardens have been incorporated into several parks. An osprey nesting platform and chimney swift tower were installed in Community Park in 2024. Management of invasive species, especially buckthorn, is ongoing.



Vadnais Heights Commons



Mesic hardwood forest



Blandings turtle

Previous Planning Efforts

The city, with its regional partners, has undergone a myriad of planning efforts relevant to parks, trails, and open spaces over the past several decades as shown in **Figure 02.11**. The following section includes summaries and key points pulled from these documents that have been used in planning for the future of the Vadnais Heights' parks and trail system. A more complete summary and links to available documents are provided in the **Appendix**. Not listed in this timeline are the recent housing study that was completed in January 2024 and the ongoing NE Quadrant Small Area Plan.

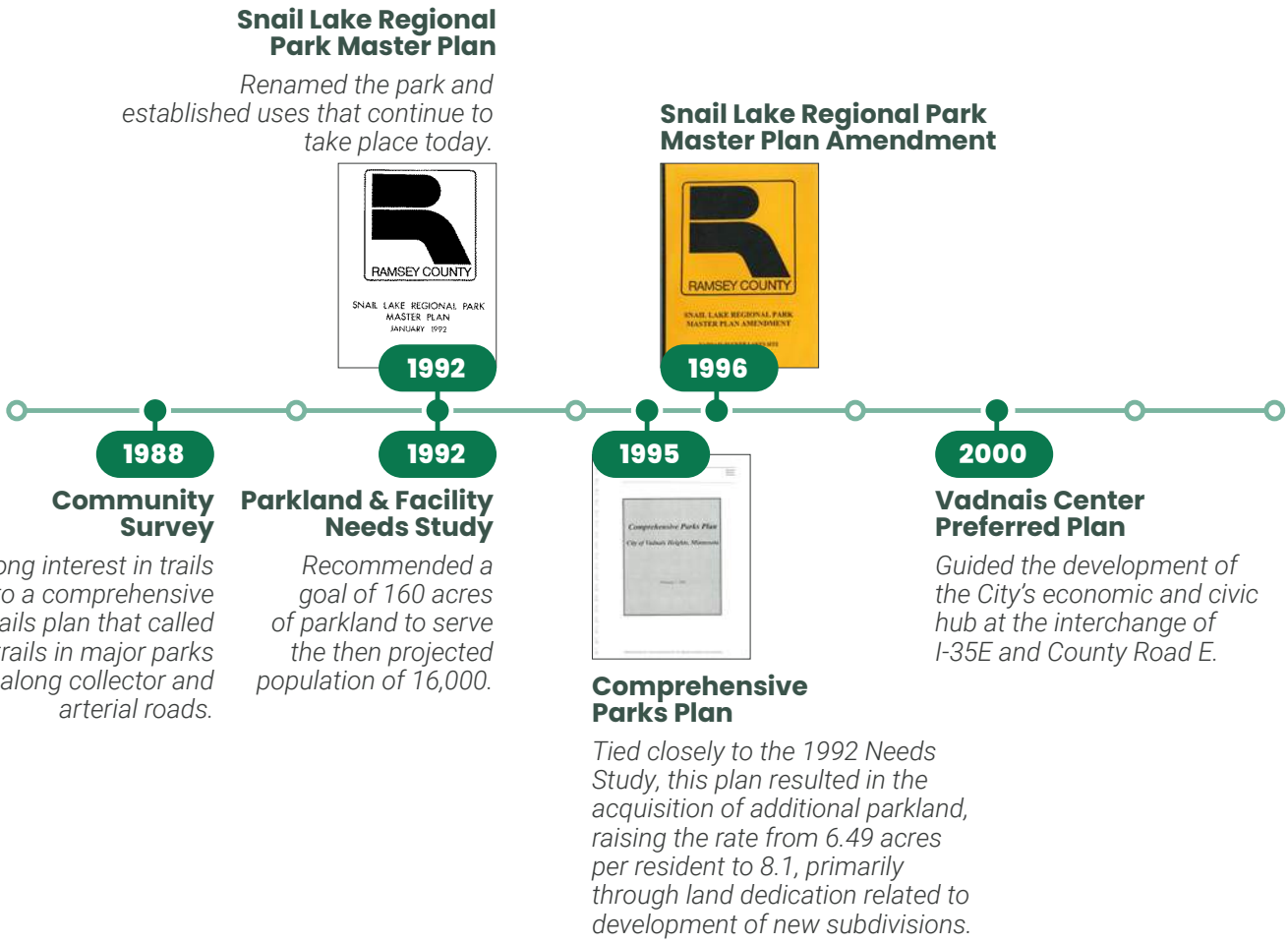


Figure 02.11 *Timeline of Previous Relevant Planning Efforts*

2030 Vadnais Heights Comprehensive Plan

Advocated for "complete streets" for all County roads and major City collectors.

Identified two potential new parks that have not been acquired and recommended incorporating the private lot within Berwood Park for expansion.



2011

Community Survey

By a 75%-19% majority, residents supported a property tax increase to fund their favored parks and recreation improvements or expansions.



2021

County Road E Corridor Action Plan

Recommendations included placemaking and community building, safety improvements, bicycle and pedestrian connections, a mix of development types, and a community gateway at the intersection of County Road E and Highway 61.



2022

2024

Parks & Trail System Plan

2019

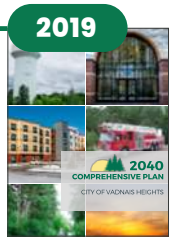


Ramsey County Parks System Plan

Recommends improving access on the east side of Vadnais Lake, but not expanding fishing on the lake.

Included expansion of the Bruce Vento Trail, contingent on the longevity of the area's active railroad line, along with trail upkeep and future connections.

2019



2040 Vadnais Heights Comprehensive Plan

Current park classifications were established in this plan.

Approach shifted to preferring park dedication fees in lieu of land dedication.

Specific areas were identified for future sidewalks and off-road trails, along with a recommendation to establish a wayfinding system and to coordinate more closely with Ramsey County on trail planning.

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Needs Assessment

03

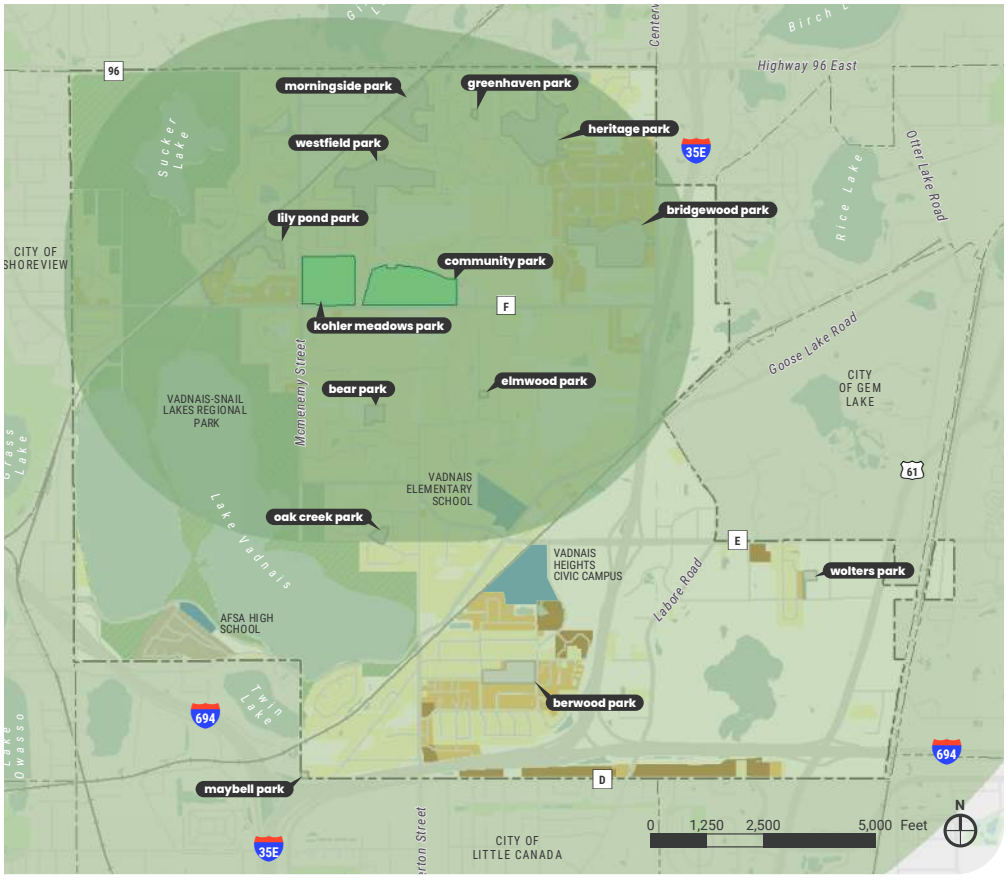
When envisioning the future of the parks and trail system, it is important to first understand how these amenities are currently functioning in the Vadnais Heights community. This section explores the current system's condition and distribution, how it compares to emerging trends and national standards, and summarizes what the community has identified as needs and wants for the future of our parks and trails.

Distribution Analysis

At a high level, Vadnais Heights' parks are well distributed throughout the community, though more concentrated toward the city's northern half. The two community parks are located in the center of the community. As community parks are intended to provide amenities geared toward multiple neighborhoods, access and distribution is considered from the perspective of vehicles over pedestrians. **Figure 03.1** applies one- and three-mile radii to Community and Kohler Meadows Parks and shows that the entire community is being well served by this level of park from a vehicular access perspective.

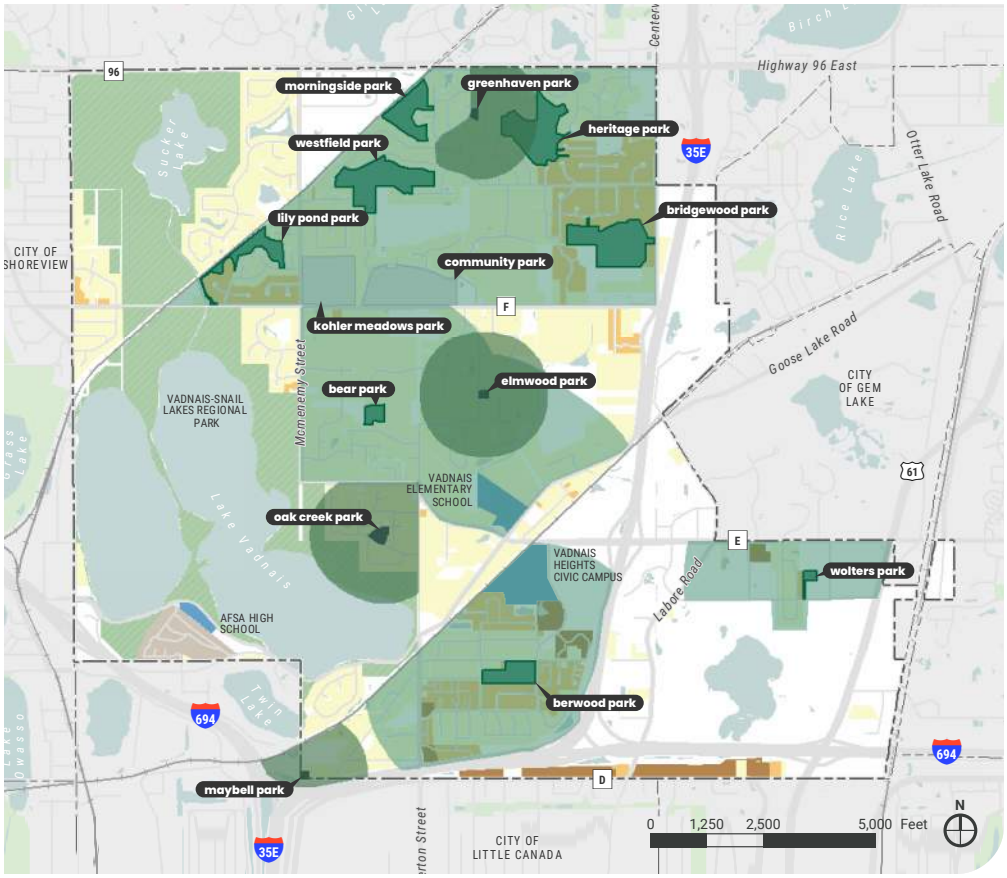
Neighborhood and mini parks are aimed at serving residents in their more immediate vicinity, considering walking and biking as major means of access. Therefore, half and quarter mile access radii are more applicable in these instances. **Figure 03.2** shows the distribution and accessibility of the system's neighborhood and mini parks, and how the access radii are majorly impacted by the barriers outlined in the following section.

Figure 03.1 *Community Park Distribution*



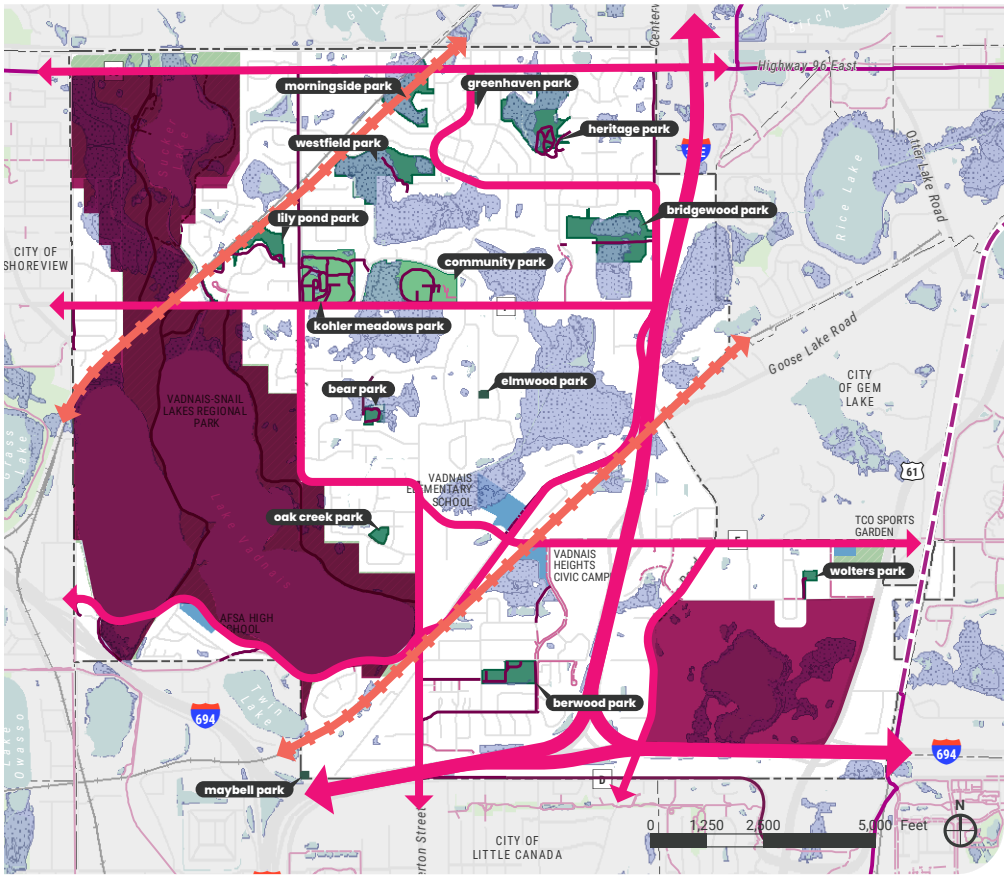
One Mile Buffer *(20 minute walk)*
Three Mile Buffer *(1 hour walk)*
Community Park
Regional Park
Educational/Institutional
Low Density Residential
Medium Density Residential
High Density Residential
Manufactured Housing Park
City Boundary
Water Body

Figure 03.2 *Mini & Neighborhood Park Distribution*



Quarter Mile Buffer *(5 minute walk)*
Half Mile Buffer *(10 minute walk)*
Mini Park
Neighborhood Park
Regional Park
Educational/Institutional
Low Density Residential
Medium Density Residential
High Density Residential
Manufactured Housing Park
City Boundary
Water Body

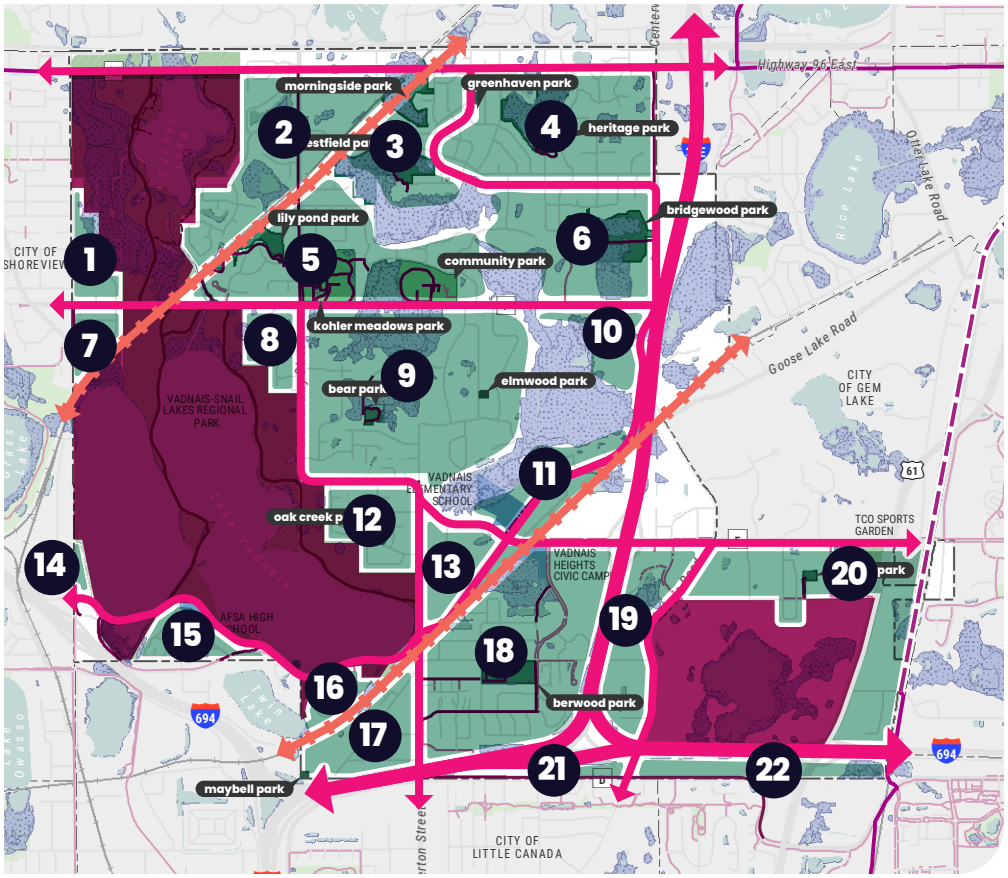
Figure 03.3 *Major Access Barriers*



Park Access Barriers
- Wetland Barrier
- Major Road Barrier
- Railroad Barrier
- Property Barrier

Background Information
- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- City Boundary
- Water Body

Figure 03.4 *Isolated Neighborhood Islands*



Neighborhood Island

Park Access Barriers
- Wetland Barrier
- Major Road Barrier
- Railroad Barrier
- Property Barrier

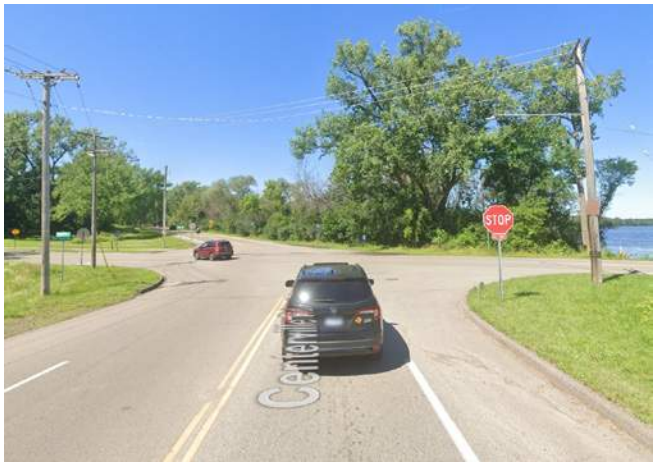
Background Information
- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- City Boundary
- Water Body

Barriers & "Islands"

While Vadnais Heights' backdrop of forests, wetlands, and lakes provides residents unique access to these appealing natural amenities, they also create very real accessibility barriers across the community. Major swaths of wetlands that run through the city's center effectively divide north from south, while Lake Vadnais and Snail Lake create a natural barrier along the city's entire western border. When these natural barriers are combined with the human-made barriers– large developments, railroads, highways, and interstates – the city is left with several isolated neighborhood "islands" as shown in **Figure 03.4**. Movement between "islands" is highly restricted and often requires the use of a personal vehicle.

Layering on these barriers to our parks and trail distribution identifies major inequities in how parks are accessible by residents throughout the community. Those living in the northern and western portions of Vadnais Heights are provided with an abundance of opportunities for outdoor recreation, while those in the southeastern portions of town have fewer options and less amenities. Based on our exploration of demographics and population, this southeastern area is also composed of those residents who are more racially diverse, have less income, and experience more frequent and extreme heat events. These are important considerations as we look at allocating and prioritizing future park and recreation investments throughout the city.

With a community as built-out as Vadnais Heights, it is unlikely that we will be able to address gaps in the system with additional parkland or amenities alone. Instead, we should look at maximizing the parkland that is already within the system and improving how that parkland is accessed. Trails will play a major role in how these separate neighborhood islands can start to feel like a holistic and connected system.



Unsafe pedestrian crossing at Centerville Road, Edgerton Street, and Vadnais Boulevard



Railroad, Country Road F, and trail coming together at entrance to Vadnais-Sucker Lake Regional Park

Amenity Distribution

Park classification alone does not provide the full picture of distribution as each park in Vadnais Heights has different amenities to offer surrounding residents. Park amenities have been broken down into four categories: informal athletic amenities, traditional athletic amenities, winter amenities, and picnic and play amenities.

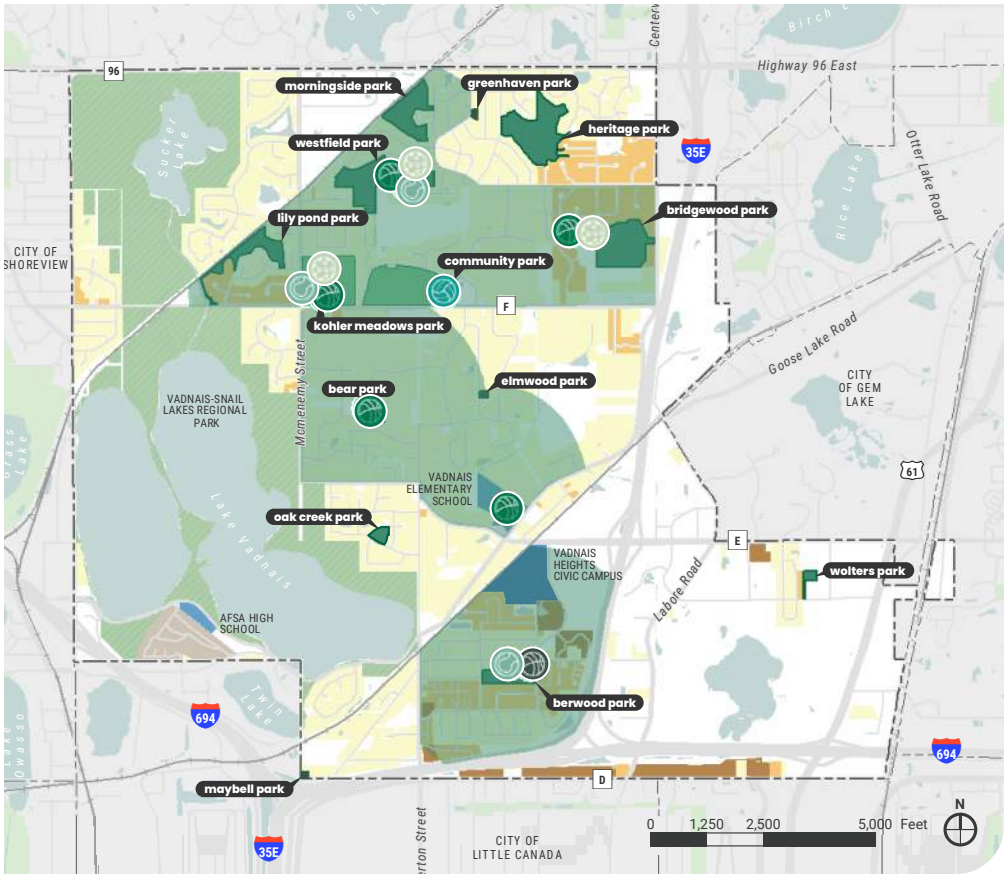
Informal Amenity Distribution

Informal athletic amenities include facilities that are typically paved and are used on a first-come first-served basis. These include basketball courts, tennis courts, pickleball courts, volleyball courts, etc. As shown in **Figure 03.5**, many of these amenities are concentrated within the central portion of the community. All but one of the existing basketball courts are half courts, and the pickleball facilities at Kohler Meadows and Westfield Parks are shared striping with tennis courts.

Traditional Athletic Amenity Distribution

Traditional athletic amenities are the large-scale rectangular and diamond fields which provide space for community-, association-, and school-led recreational programs. Outside of programmed play, these fields are also available for public use. The city is in charge of maintaining and scheduling for these facilities. **Figure 03.6** shows the existing distribution of traditional athletic fields in Vadnais Heights. The majority of the city's parks were built with at least one rectangular and diamond field each, and there is good coverage for this type of amenity through the northern and central areas of the city. However, many of these facilities have proven difficult to maintain for city staff due to soil conditions. This, coupled with diminishing interest in the city's diamond field programming and participation, could result in some rethinking of how this area is utilized moving forward, particularly as it is taking up such a large chunk of the available active park acreage.

Figure 03.5 *Informal Amenity Distribution*



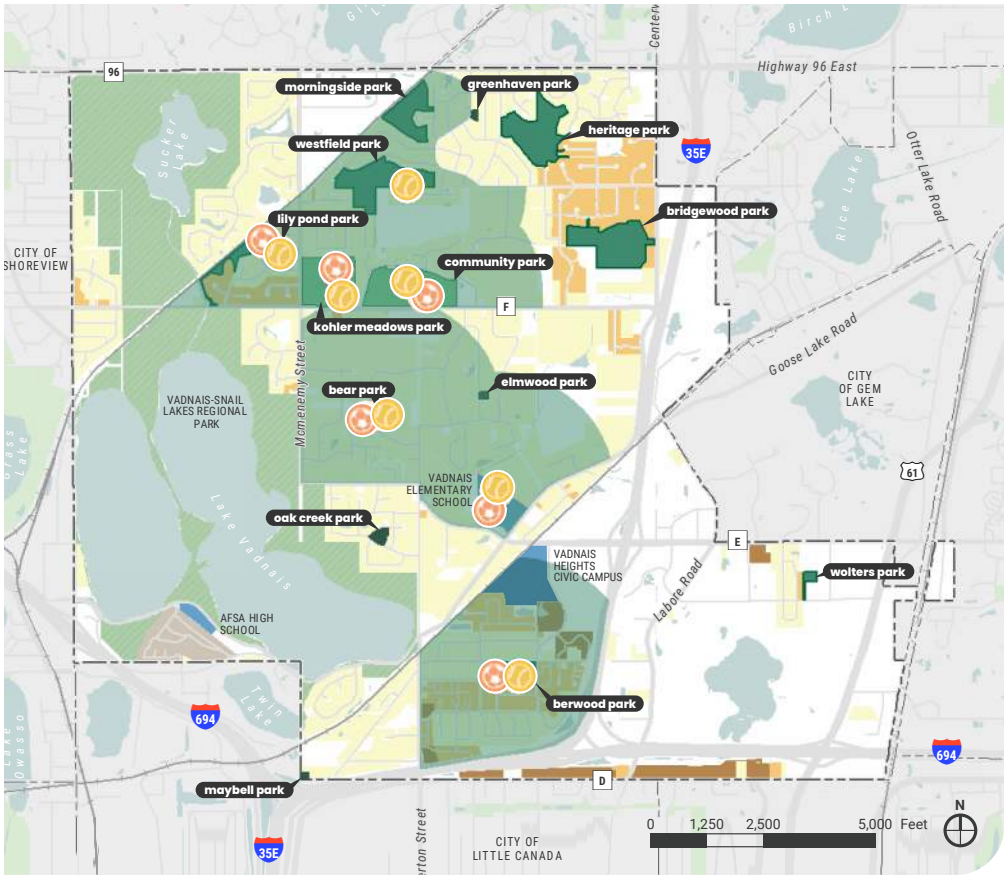
Informal Amenities

- Full Basketball Court
- Half Basketball Court
- Tennis Court
- Pickleball Court
- Sand Volleyball Court
- Half Mile Buffer *(10 minute walk)*

Background Information

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Manufactured Housing Park
- City Boundary
- Water Body

Figure 03.6 *Traditional Athletic Amenity Distribution*



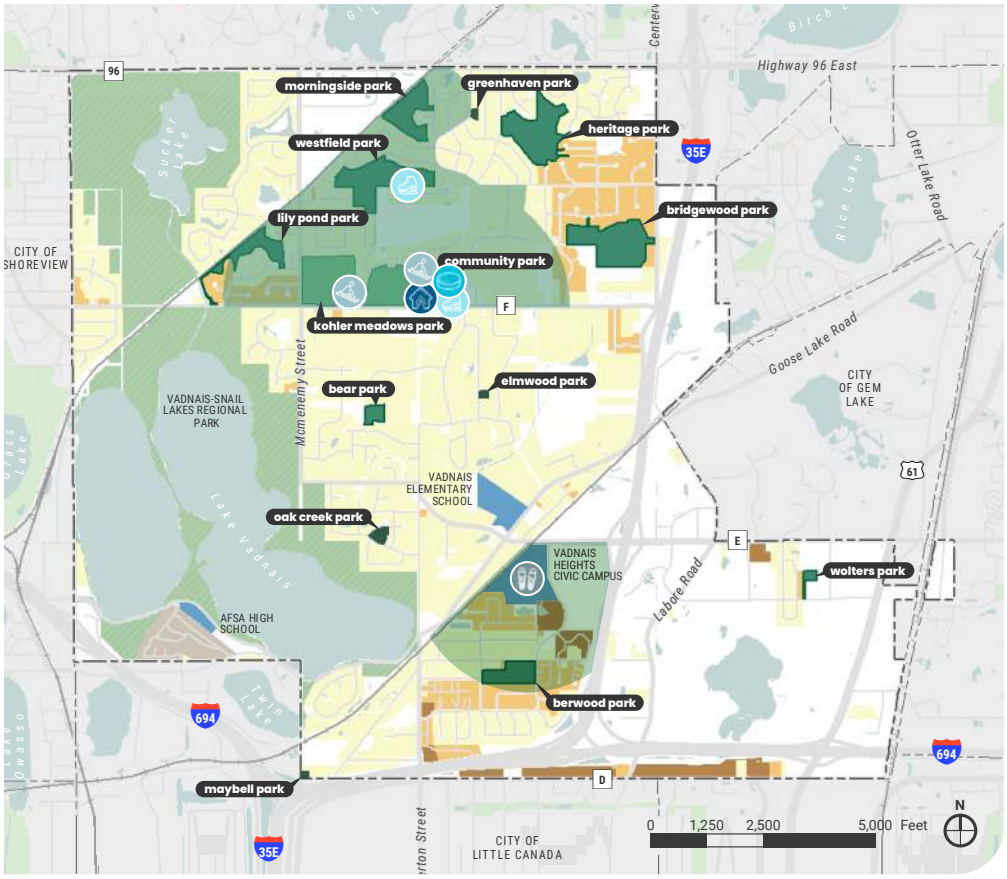
Traditional Athletic Amenities

- Diamond Field
- Rectangular Field
- Half Mile Buffer *(10 minute walk)*

Background Information

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Manufactured Housing Park
- City Boundary
- Water Body

Figure 03.7 *Winter Amenity Distribution*



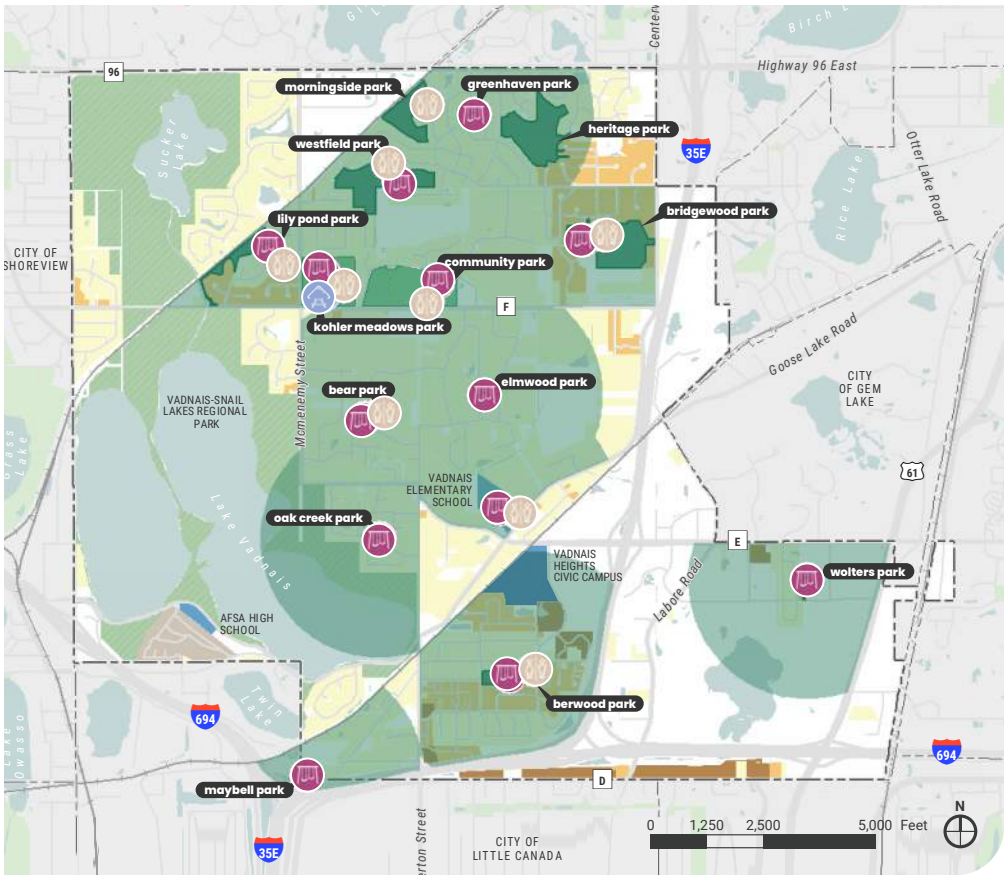
Winter Amenities

- Hockey Rink
- General Skating
- Warming House
- Sledding Hill
- Half Mile Buffer *(10 minute walk)*

Background Information

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Manufactured Housing Park
- City Boundary
- Water Body

Figure 03.8 *Picnic & Play Amenity Distribution*



Picnic & Play Amenities

- Picnic Shelter
- Playground
- Public Restrooms
- Half Mile Buffer *(10 minute walk)*

Background Information

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Manufactured Housing Park
- City Boundary
- Water Body

Winter Amenity Distribution

Winter amenities are seasonally available and weather dependent. Ice hockey, general skating, warming houses, and sledding hills currently fall into this category. These types of amenities are getting harder to maintain and predict as the climate changes around us, which has already resulted in the closure of the hockey rink and warming house at Westfield Park. The remaining winter amenities and how they are distributed is displayed in **Figure 03.7**, which shows that they are primarily located in the north/central portion of the city and within community-scaled parks. County Road F represents a major access barrier for residents in the southern portions of the community. It is also worth noting that Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park provides cross country skiing and snowshoeing as winter amenities, again weather depending.

Picnic Shelters & Playgrounds Distribution

Presently, there are very few picnic shelters in Vadnais Heights as shown in **Figure 03.8**. Playgrounds, however, are well-distributed throughout the community, with at least one present in almost every city park. However, there is a lack of diversity in playground type and many playgrounds feature similar equipment. The existing playgrounds are meeting the minimum ADA standards but many playgrounds do not have accessible pathways which lead to the play containers. Playgrounds could also incorporate at-grade playground curbing and rubber surfacing which would make it easier for wheelchairs, strollers, or park users with disabilities to navigate these facilities.

Across all amenity categories, the southeastern portion of the city continues to represent a significant gap in coverage. Allocating appropriate future amenities within this area, phasing them correctly, and addressing barriers through future trail alignments will be important considerations as we move into future system designs.

Peer Communities & National Standards

The National Recreation and Park Association *(NRPA)* establishes median metrics for communities to use as reference in their annual Agency Performance Reviews. Comparing the existing breakdown of facilities outlined in **Table 02.1** to those outlined in NRPA standards is a helpful jumping off point for understanding how a community is currently serving its residents from a parks and recreation perspective. While it is important to note that the comparison alone does not represent the full picture, it serves as a helpful tool to be used alongside the other needs identified in this chapter. How Vadnais Heights compares to communities of a similar size is outlined in **Table 03.1**.

Table 03.1 *Facility Comparison to National Standards*

Facility Type	City Total	Residents Per City Facility	Difference from National Average*
City Park	15	858	367
Total Acres	201.2	63.9	13.0
Active Use Acres	98.4	130.7	-53.8
Baseball Field (Adult)	1	12,864	-5,237
Baseball Field (Youth)	3	4,288	-1,174
Basketball Court (Full)	1	12,864	-9,135
Community Center	0	0	-9,601
Dog Park (Off-Leash)	0	0	-11,100
General Skating Rink	2	6,432	1,613
Hockey Rink	1	12,864	-4,819
Playground	15	858	1,156
Rectangular Field (Multipurpose)	10	1,286	2,573
Skate Park	0	0	-10,726
Softball Field (Adult)	3	4,288	-1,512
Softball Field (Youth)	5	2,573	2,506
Swimming	0	0	-9,745
Tennis Court	6	2,144	661

National averages are referenced from the* **2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review

According to the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review, Vadnais Heights is providing residents with above average access to overall park acreage and the number of parks in general. However, when parsing out active park acreage from areas that are not developable due to wetlands, access, etc., the city is slightly under national standards. Finding ways to embrace this passive park acreage could help address this deficit. For adult and youth baseball fields and adult softball fields, the city is below national standards, but for youth softball fields they are above. Looking more closely at how these fields are programmed could help address this gap, but it is also important to factor in the local waning popularity in baseball and softball programming. The city is at or above average for playgrounds, rectangular fields, tennis courts, and general skating rinks. Hockey rinks are below the national standard; however, factors like increasing challenges with maintaining outdoor ice, programming statistics, and the presence of the TCO Sports Garden are important to consider when determining if this is indeed an issue that needs to be addressed.

An area where these standards are particularly useful is looking at what facilities are missing entirely from the Vadnais Heights Parks and Trail System. According to national standards, a community of this size would typically include at least one of the following: a dog park, a skate park, a swimming area, and a community center. However, it is also important to review existing and potential partnerships with adjacent communities and special facilities that could be leveraged to gain efficiencies within the regional system before investing in redundant and expensive facilities such as a community center. Vadnais Heights is surrounded by resources *(Shoreview Community Center, YMCAs, TCO, etc.)* that may offer great partnerships to address the shortage of a community center.

Parks & Recreation Trends



Example of shared court space



Example of native landscaping

Finding Greater Flexibility

As more types of sports raise in popularity, the pressures on limited park spaces also increases. Creating spaces that accommodate sports with smaller or more flexible footprints are a popular solution. However, there is a balance to consider to ensure equitable distribution of amenities unique to Vadnais Heights.

- Striping courts and installing removable nets allows for combinations of basketball, tennis, pickleball, and futsal. This can be challenging to manage for equitable time on the courts and should be used only when there is limited space.
- "Universal fields" can provide space for soccer, lacrosse, cricket, and even youth baseball or t-ball.
- Artificial turf can assist with the wear and tear from different sports and high demand allowing for greater flexibility and use.
- Flexible building spaces, such as multi-use rooms serve a wide variety of programming and rental uses. In addition, many park buildings are moving towards gender-neutral and family-friendly restroom configurations.
- Diversifying playground experiences to include nature play, adventure play, and water play.

Resiliency

Parks are changing, both to make them easier to maintain as our climate shifts and to make them part of their community's resiliency preparedness plan.

- Ice is being reduced overall. Covered and/or refrigerated ice rinks can assist with ice creation and quality and provide a shaded gathering plaza for other sports or events in the summer such as roller hockey, soccer, skateboarding, markets, and emerging sports such as futsal or bike polo.
- Parks are acting as Community Wellness Hubs to provide interconnected social, health, and counseling services, refuge from heat, food and nutrition assistance, educational opportunities and public services all in the same place.
- Many park systems are moving away from heavy-input landscape maintenance, especially mowing and glyphosate applications.
- Cause-related programming is showing up in more parks and recreation programs, inviting communities to come together for volunteer and other events.
- Parks are playing a big role in recycling and composting programs, but also finding it hard to navigate around the changing market for waste coupled with public expectations.



Example of cricket field



Example of bike skills course

Emerging Sports Go Mainstream

A variety of sports are moving into the mainstream because of changing demographics, the effect of the pandemic, or for other reasons.

- Twin Cities communities are seeing the demand for international sports, such as cricket, futsal, tub lub, and septak.
- Now an Olympic sport, skateboarding is no longer an emerging trend but has proved it is one that is here to stay.
- Biking *(road, mountain, fat tire, and hybrid)* had a significant upsurge during the pandemic. Pump tracks, skills courses, bike playgrounds, and mountain bike trails are all likely to be popular. In addition, bike polo is a new sport played on a hardcourt surface *(tennis courts or basketball courts with boards or fencing may be used)*.
- Walking remains a primary demand, so addressing trail connections, creating loop trails, and adding unique features like boardwalk trails within wetland or stormwater areas can also add to the usability of these otherwise undevelopable spaces.
- Research around the benefits of adventure and nature play have made those categories of play increasingly popular. Coupled with climbing and bouldering, there are many new options for challenging play.
- Kids aren't the only ones who need play, and "adult recess" *(midday and midweek leagues and classes)* are gaining popularity as another effect of the increased work-life flexibility the pandemic has brought for many. "Yoga with a Goat" classes may fill faster than you'd think.
- Dog parks are extremely popular, especially with the "doggie boom" that happened when people got pets during the pandemic. They provide great opportunities for outdoor recreation, but often are misunderstood by potential neighbors.
- Indoor recreation, such as trampoline parks, climbing facilities, multi-sport turf bubbles, etc., were growing rapidly pre-pandemic and are likely to grow again in the future.



E-bikes



Example of nature playground

New Technology & Materials

New technology that effects parks is constantly emerging. The national trends listed below are not specifically included in proposed park recommendations but should be considered by staff on a project-by-project basis.

- Artificial turf technology is increasingly sustainable, with better materials, potential incorporation with stormwater management systems, and positive impacts on maintenance.
- Incorporation of public wi-fi and charging stations.
- Park buildings acting as resilience hubs to support the community during natural disasters.
- Video surveillance now has improved technology, affordability, and can operate without electric hook up thanks to solar power. Coupled with other best practices *(such as sight lines near bathrooms, careful consideration of bench placement and increased in-person presence)* they can help reduce crime in parks.
- Drones, beacon counters, and geofences can provide improved imagery and data on park use, but there are many concerns around their use, especially regarding privacy.
- More play equipment incorporates technology for both play *(timers, special games etc.)* and maintenance. In addition, eSports *(team competition on electronic games)* are moving into public spaces, often with spectators.
- More people are using electric vehicles, eBikes and eScooters, and parking for these vehicles may need to be considered in the future.

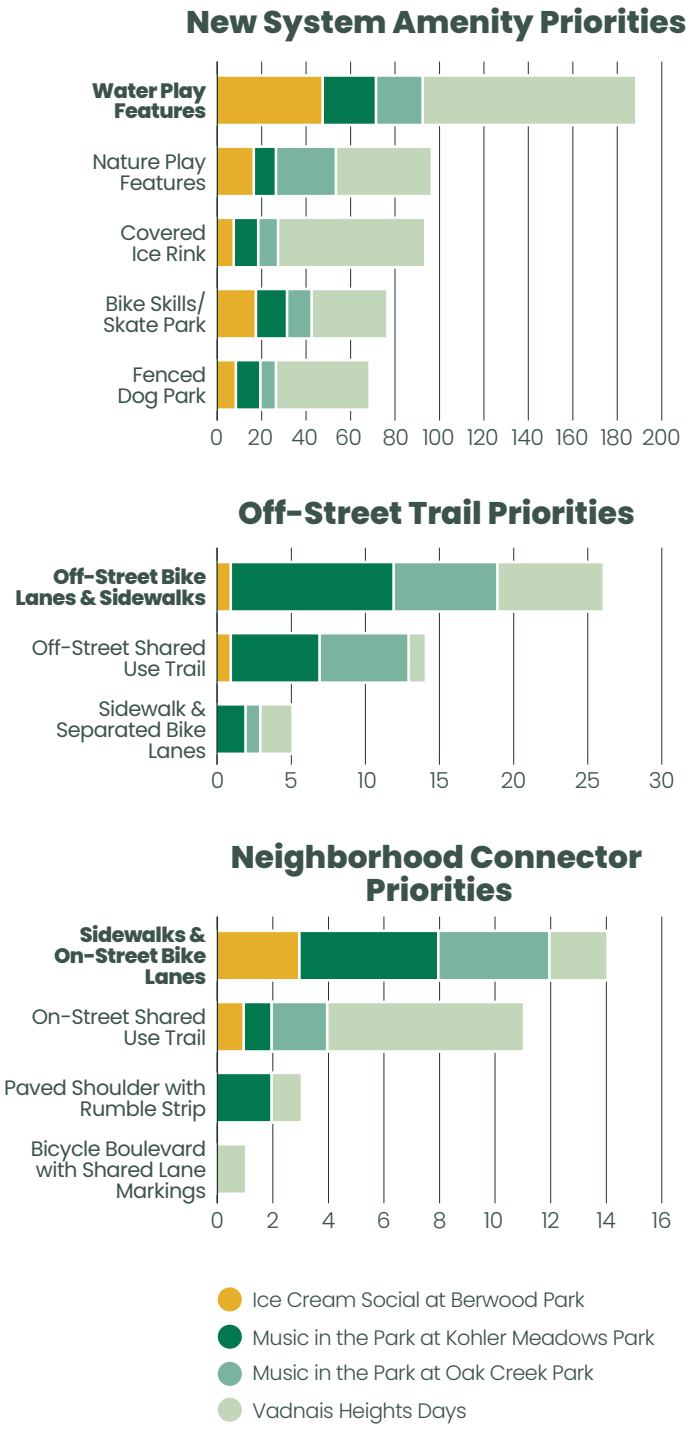
Ideas for Vadnais Heights

Taking trends into account with national standards and the needs of Vadnais Heights, the following ideas were presented to the public during community engagement.

- Reduce ice maintenance by incorporating a covered facility and/or reducing ice rinks.
- Add loop trails in each park where feasible.
- Reduce ballfields.
- Incorporate flexible rectangular fields.
- Add boardwalks to access wetlands as an amenity.
- Provide artificial turf as a potential option for the most popular soccer field.
- Provide accessible connections into playgrounds and diversify play experiences.
- Add an off-leash dog park.
- Incorporate water play and nature play features.
- Incorporate skate parks, all-wheel parks, and bike skills courses.

Based on community engagement feedback not all ideas moved forward into the final park recommendations. Notably, covered ice rinks and artificial turf fields did not move forward but could be considered in the future if there is public support and budget available.

Figure 03.9 *In-Person Engagement Summary Graphics*



Community Engagement Summary

In-Person Overall Feedback

In February 2024, a series of stakeholder meetings were conducted to gather input directly from key user groups. Stakeholders invited included sports associations and school partners, agency partners, community groups *(Lions club, scout groups, etc.)*, and maintenance staff. Feedback from these meetings was documented and incorporated into the first round of trail and park concepts. These concepts were then presented to the community at large in a series of in-person pop-up events and online surveys.

In the summer of 2024, LHB and the City of Vadnais Heights Staff attended four pop-up events throughout the City's park system to have conversations and gain feedback from community members about their vision for the future of the Vadnais Heights Parks and Trail System. The goal was to meet people where they already were, and gain feedback from people who might not otherwise take an online survey or attend a traditional open house event. It is important to note that many of the responses received during in-person events were from children, which captures a different audience's opinion than the presumed demographics of the online survey respondents.

The four engagement events were:

- Wednesday, June 12th, 2024: Vadnais Heights Ice Cream Social at Berwood Park;
- Wednesday, June 26th, 2024: Vadnais Heights Music in the Park at Kohler Meadows Park;
- Wednesday, July 17th, 2024: Vadnais Heights Music in the Park at Oak Creek Park; and
- Saturday, August 17th, 2024: Vadnais Heights Days.

New System Amenities

Overwhelmingly people expressed excitement about the addition of a water play feature somewhere in the park system, and specifically a splash pad. Nature play features were ranked second followed by Covered Ice Rink and Bike Skills/Skate Park. Dog parks were mentioned frequently in conversations at these events, though not many attendees voted on that amenity in comparison to the others.

Proposed Trail System

The main takeaways regarding trails were that people were very interested in safety improvements and additional bike and pedestrian connections throughout the community, and separation both between bicycles and pedestrians, and from vehicular traffic was preferred by respondents. The most popular Off-Street option included grade separated bike lanes that also had physical separation from the pedestrian sidewalk, and for Neighborhood Connectors people preferred on-street bicycle lines with separate sidewalks for pedestrians.

For Off-Street Trails along busier roadways, respondents preferred off-street bike lanes and sidewalks.

For smaller-scale neighborhood connectors that are primarily located on local roads, respondents preferred the “Sidewalks and On-street Bike Lanes” option.

For both categories of trails, people brought up questions about the cost of these additional amenities, as well as how much room they take up. Some residents expressed concerns for tree loss due to the existing trail construction project along Koehler Road.

Priority trail locations included:

- Vadnais Boulevard south of Lake Vadnais;
- Rice Street adjacent to Snail Lake;
- McMenemy Street, connecting to Koehler Road and to Edgerton Street; and
- Meadowood Lane to Sucker Lake.





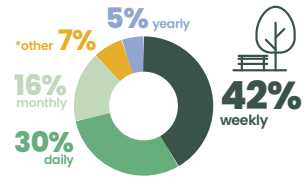


Images from in-person engagement events

Figure 03.10 *Online Engagement Summary Graphics*

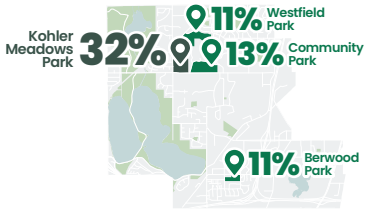
city parks

frequency of respondents visiting their favorite park



*other responses primarily include users only visiting parks in the summer

most popular city parks



67% of respondents **go to parks outside of vadnais heights** for amenities like:



> **We desperately need more trees in our parks.**

> **Leave the border of the park and the area around the wetland areas natural.**

> **A splash pad would be a great community addition!!**

> **We need sidewalks for safety!**

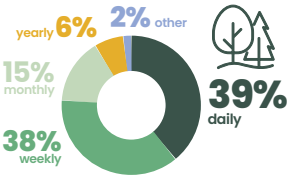
> **Vadnais Heights needs a continuous trail system that connects different parks & neighborhoods**

natural areas

importance of natural spaces near respondent's homes



frequency of respondents interacting with natural spaces

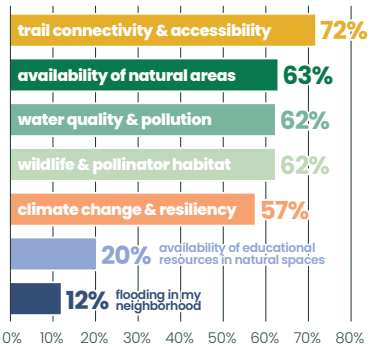


respondents think natural spaces should be enjoyed by

56% exploring & interacting

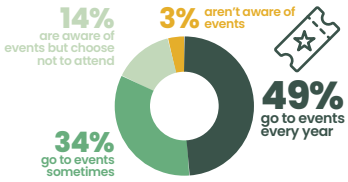
42% traveling through but staying on trail

main areas of concern



social & programming

frequency of respondents attending community events



65% **do not participate** in city recreation programming

they would participate in:



the majority of respondents



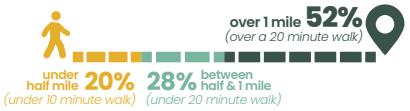
connections

80% currently walk to their most visited park

12% drive

9% bike

distance respondents would be willing to walk to parks



if trails were located closer to respondent's homes

95% would use trails to get to parks

95% would use boardwalk trails

71% would use trails to get to other routine destinations



Example of Community Connector



Example of Neighborhood Connector

Online Overall Feedback

Round one of online engagement was held in winter of 2024, and aimed at understanding overall issues and opportunities throughout the park system. Almost 320 unique respondents left 351 comments and 177 survey responses during this round of engagement. Trail connectivity and accessibility was identified as the main area of concern, with 89% of respondents currently walking or biking to parks, and 95% indicating they would use trails for park access if they were located closer to their homes. Natural areas, water quality, and wildlife and pollinator habitat were identified as the second highest area of concern, with almost 40% of respondents indicating they interact with natural spaces daily. Most respondents found it very important to have natural spaces near their homes. Regarding parks, 42% of respondents visit their favorite park weekly, and Kohler Meadows Park was identified as the most popular park in Vadnais Heights. Programmatically, almost 50% of respondents go to city-hosted events every year, while 65% indicated that they do not participate in current city recreation programming. Walking and hiking groups, pickleball lessons, and expanded youth and senior options were called out as programming that would see larger participation rates.

The second round of online engagement was held over the summer of 2024, between June and August. This engagement opportunity was held in conjunction with the four in-person pop up events. The survey received almost 200 unique comments, which is not necessarily indicative of overall engagement as many of the almost 450 unique users choose to like or dislike proposed features or fellow community member's comments instead of leaving a comment themselves.

Overall, the idea of a water play feature received the most attention and excitement from respondents, and it was not important to them where it was located in the system as long as the park had enough parking and pavilion space to support the increased activity levels. Trails were the second-most commented on feature of the system, with many respondents supporting the proposed system that was presented. The most popular proposed trail routes included completing the loop around Vadnais Lake, connecting trails/boardwalks through the wetland north of Community Park, and adding trails/sidewalks along Greenhaven Drive, McMenemy Street, Koehler Road, County Road F, and County Road D.

Detailed notes from online and in-person meetings, including park-specific feedback, is included in the **Appendix**.

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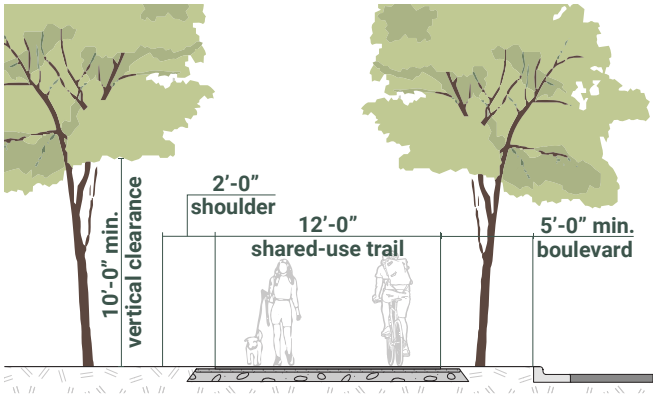
System Vision

04

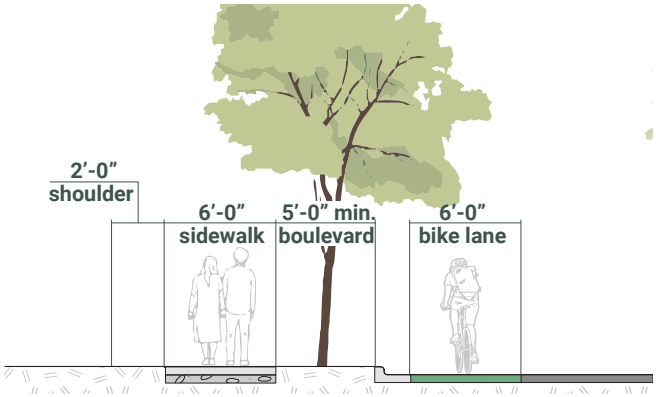


Trail connections are the main story of the Vadnais Heights parks and trail system needs assessment. Investing in the trail system will address critical amenity gaps, provide equitable and safe access to parks, and connect neighborhoods.

Vadnais Heights has an abundance of parks and natural resources for residents to enjoy but accessing them on foot or by bicycle is difficult and even dangerous at times due to some significant trail gaps throughout the system. During the needs assessment process and community engagement, it became clear that physical barriers to access trails and parks safely led to community members feeling isolated within their neighborhoods or disconnected from community amenities in a term coined “islands.” We heard overwhelmingly that trails are desired for accessing parks and recreation amenities as well as for commuting to work or completing errands. Trails also help bridge many of the existing barriers that are preventing residents from accessing amenities within their own neighborhood.



Community connector typical section



Neighborhood connector typical section

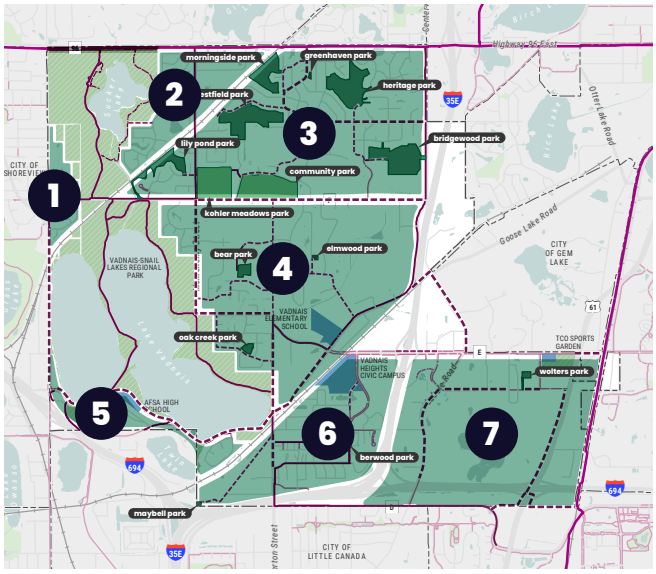


Figure 04.1 *Interconnected Neighborhood Zones*

Trail Recommendations

The proposed trail system includes 18 total trail miles, with the new trails separated into two categories:

- **Community Connectors** are off-road, grade separated trails typically found along major roads which provide larger connections across the city and to community-level parks and amenities.
- **Neighborhood Connectors** route residents to local parks and destinations within a "neighborhood zone" and can be a combination of sidewalks and on-street bike lanes.

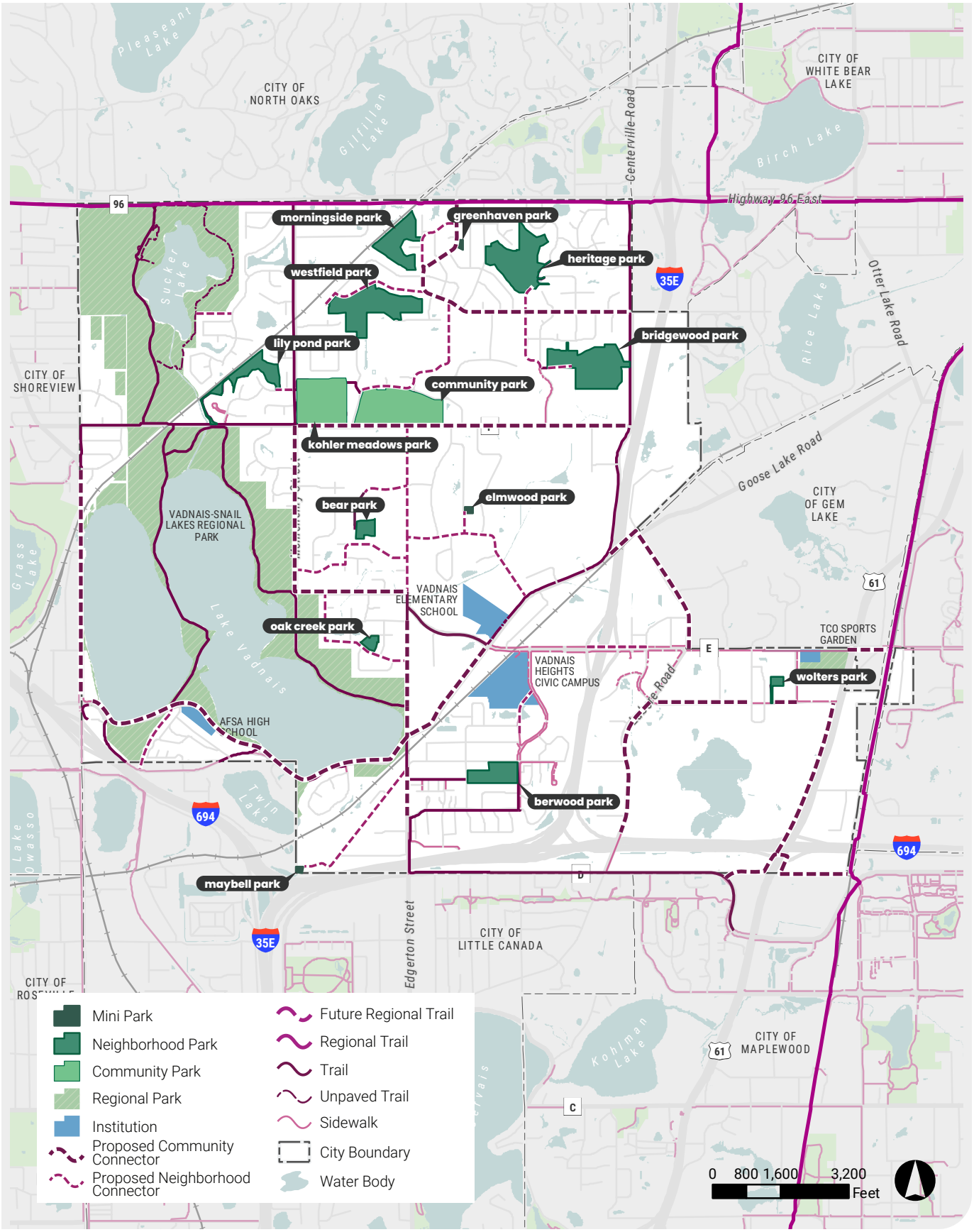
During this planning process, trail projects were currently underway that align with identified critical connections and community feedback. These projects include the Koehler Road Trail between Centerville Road and Edgerton Street and the trail along County Road D which connects to Little Canada. Trail recommendations in this document continue to build on this momentum and prioritize addressing major gaps in the system and completing trail loops.

Continued coordination with Ramsey County and adjacent communities will be key for the successful integration of trail projects in the city as many essential trail connections must occur along County-owned roadways and align with projects occurring on a regional-scale. Vadnais Heights' public works department is responsible for trail maintenance for all trails within the city parks and roadways, and for implementation of trails occurring on local roads.

If all trail recommendations were built out, the isolated neighborhood "islands" would disappear, and seven interconnected "Neighborhood Zones" would emerge, each with its own connections to neighborhood parks while also being connected to the larger community system. This is the vision for the Vadnais Heights parks and trail system.

Refer to the **"Implementation"** chapter for additional trail priorities and costing.

Figure 04.2 *Proposed Parks & Trail System*



Amenity Distribution Recommendations

Based on community feedback, equitable distribution of resources, the needs analysis, and trail recommendations, the following distribution of park amenities is proposed create a holistic system. The proposed amenities align with the specific park recommendations that follow in **Chapter 05**.

Informal Amenity Distribution

Figure 04.3 includes the proposed informal amenities, including unprogrammed sports and activities. Recommendations include adding:

- Full basketball courts at Bridgewood, Oak Creek, and Wolters Parks;
- A dog park at Berwood Park;
- A skate park at Kohler Meadows Park; and
- A community garden at Berwood Park.

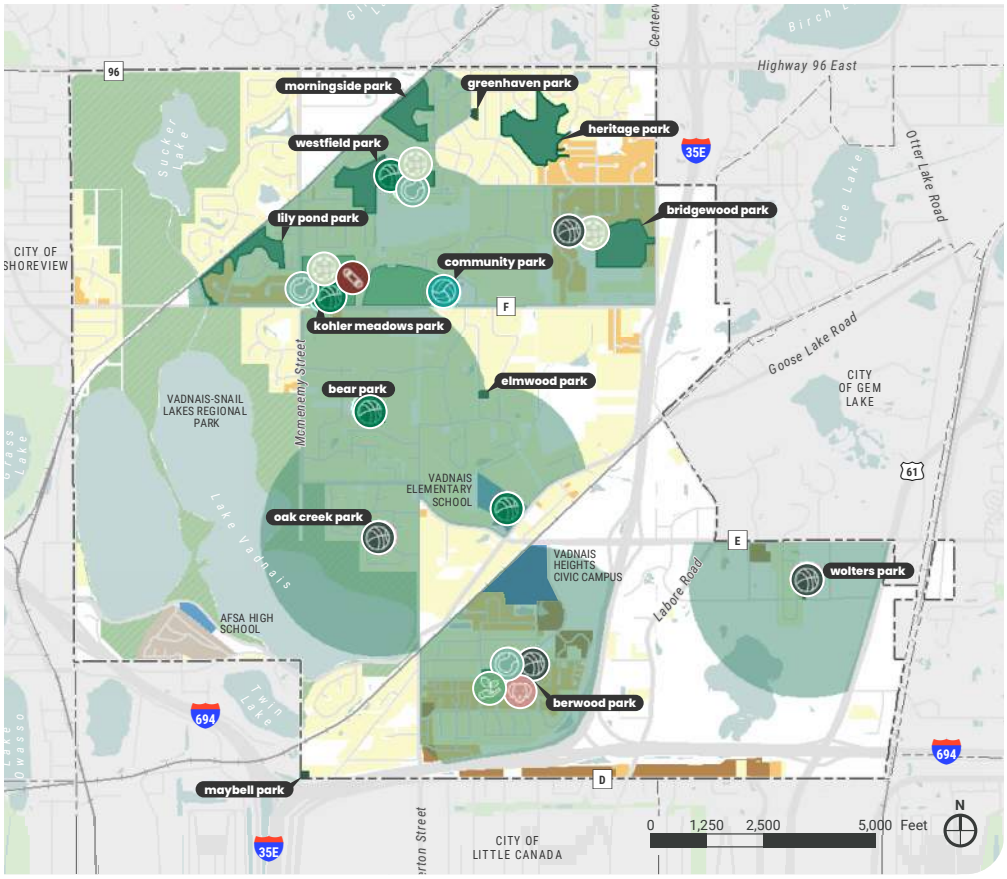
Tennis and pickleball courts were maintained at their current number and locations.

Traditional Athletic Amenity Distribution

The proposed distribution of diamond fields and rectangular fields are shown in **Figure 04.4**. Recommendations include:

- Diamond fields removed from Bear and Westfield Parks;
- Rectangular fields added at Bear, Oak Creek and Westfield Parks; and
- Combine the diamond and rectangular field at Lily Pond Park due to soil quality and proximity to the wetland.

Figure 04.3 *Proposed Informal Amenity Distribution*



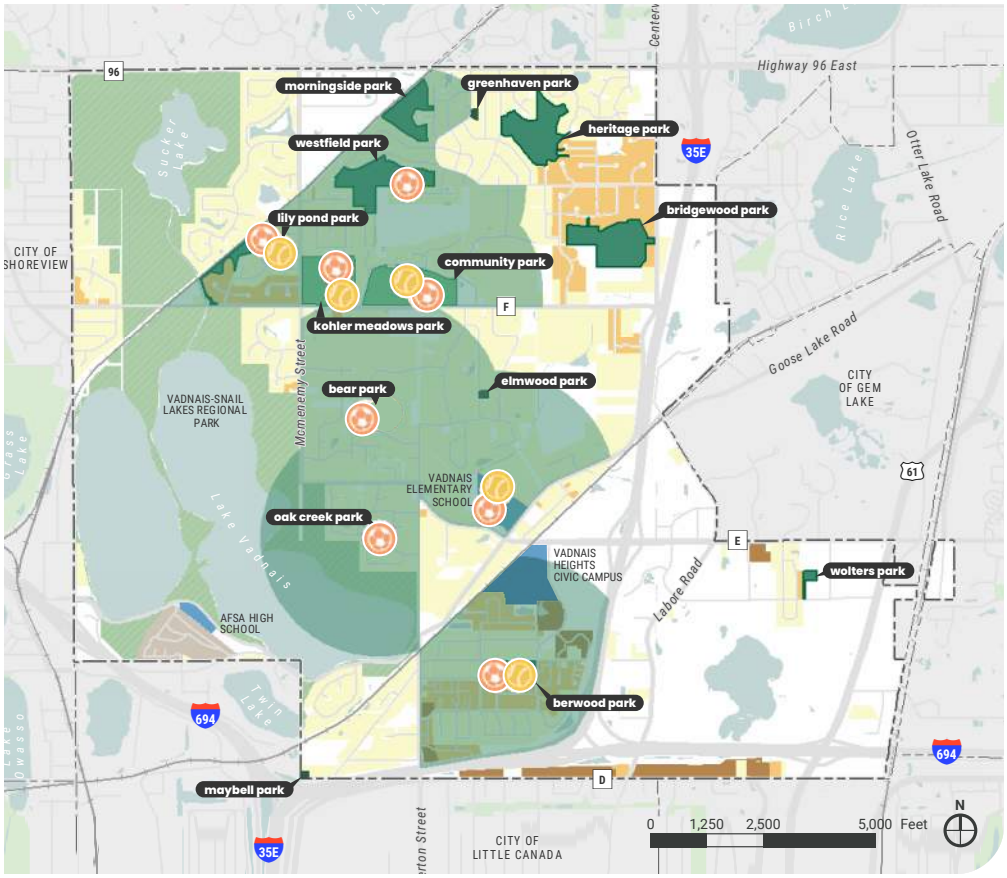
Informal Amenities

- Full Basketball Court
- Half Basketball Court
- Tennis Court
- Pickleball Court
- Sand Volleyball Court
- Skate Park
- Dog Park
- Community Garden
- Half Mile Buffer *(10 minute walk)*

Background Information

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Manufactured Housing Park
- City Boundary
- Water Body

Figure 04.4 *Proposed Athletic Amenity Distribution*



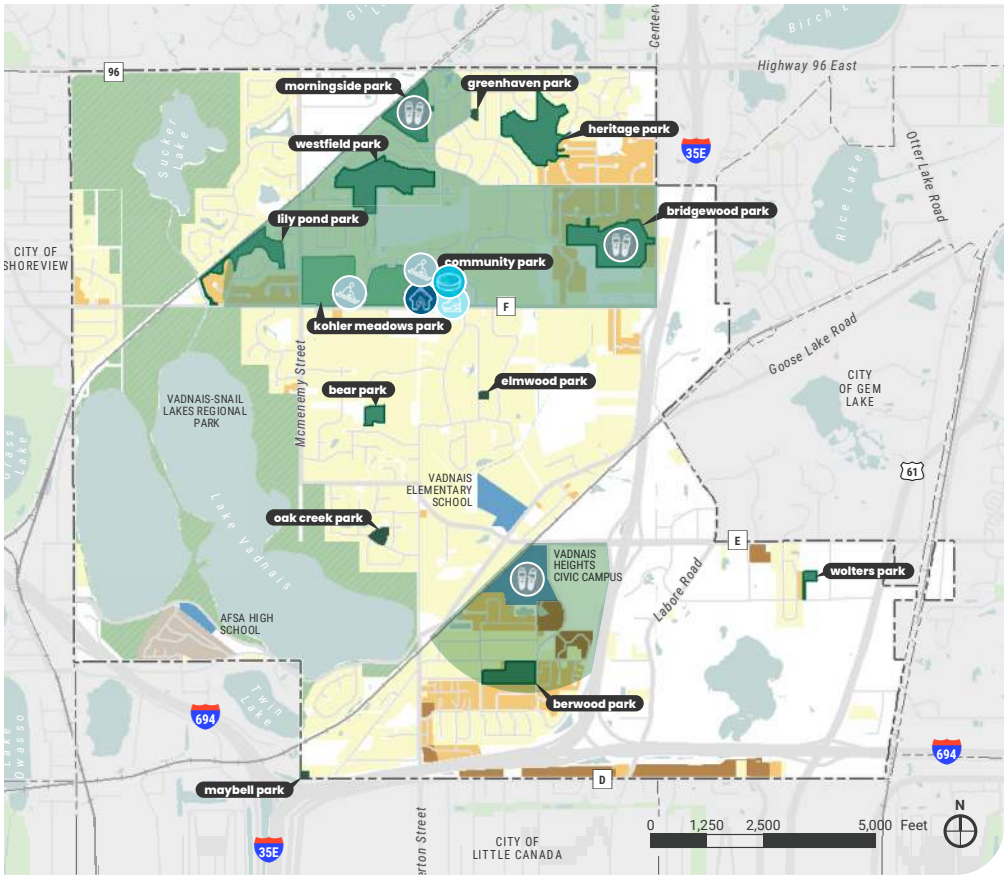
Traditional Athletic Amenities

- Diamond Field
- Rectangular Field
- Half Mile Buffer *(10 minute walk)*

Background Information

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Manufactured Housing Park
- City Boundary
- Water Body

Figure 04.5 *Proposed Winter Amenity Distribution*



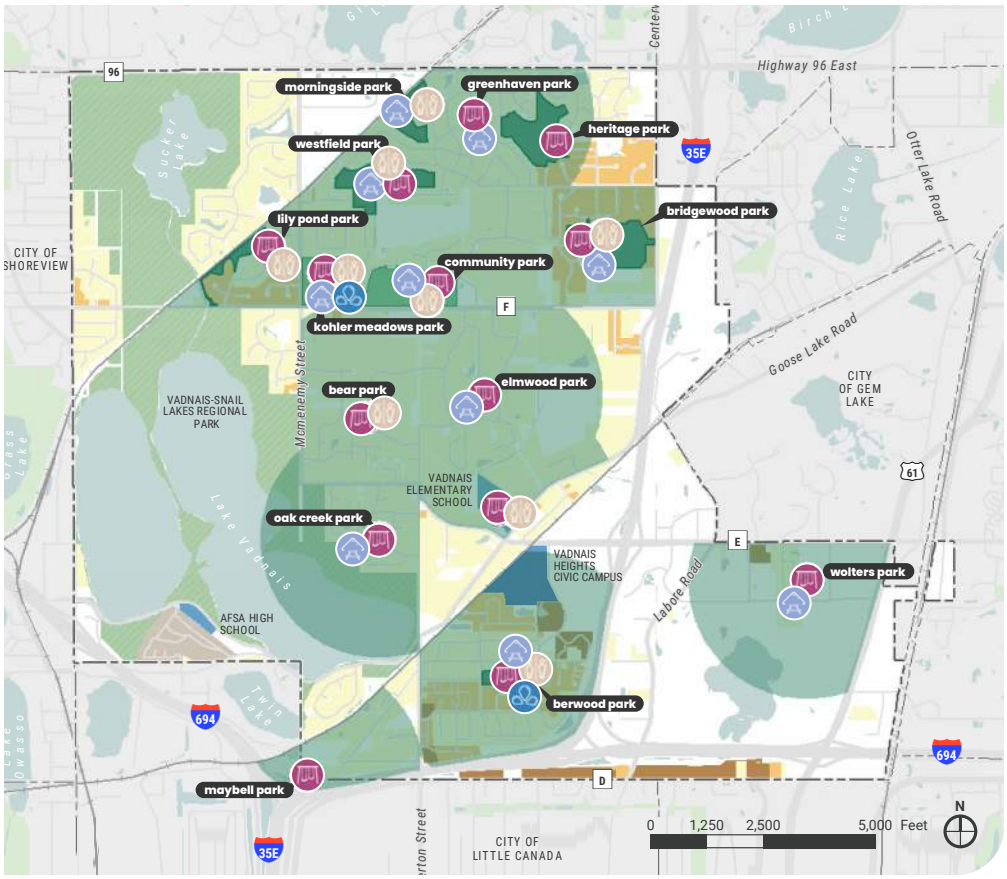
Winter Amenities

- Hockey Rink
- General Skating
- Warming House
- Sledding Hill
- Snowshoeing
- Half Mile Buffer *(10 minute walk)*

Background Information

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Manufactured Housing Park
- City Boundary
- Water Body

Figure 04.6 *Proposed Picnic & Play Amenity Distribution*



Picnic & Play Amenities

- Picnic Shelter
- Playground
- Water Play Feature
- Public Restrooms
- Half Mile Buffer *(10 minute walk)*

Background Information

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Manufactured Housing Park
- City Boundary
- Water Body

Winter Amenity Distribution

Figure 04.4 shows the proposed distribution of seasonal winter activities. Recommendations include:

- Removal of ice and warming house at Westfield Park;
- Adding snowshoeing at Bridgewood Park;
- Morningside Park, and the forested land adjacent to City Hall; and
- Keeping existing winter amenities centralized at Kohler Meadows and Community Park.

Picnic Shelters & Playgrounds Distribution

Figure 04.6 displays the proposed distribution of picnic and play amenities, including an increase in picnic shelters throughout the system and the addition of water play features. Recommendations include:

- Adding nature play areas at Heritage and Westfield Parks;
- Adding water play features at Berwood and Kohler Meadows Parks;
- Replacement of a large picnic shelter at Community Park;
- Addition of a medium to large picnic shelter and plumbed restroom facility at Berwood Park; and
- Adding small to medium-sized picnic shelters throughout the system at Bridgewood, Elmwood, Greenhaven, Morningside, Oak Creek, Westfield, and Wolters Parks.

No community center is proposed. Continue to coordinate with community partners to leverage resources to offer indoor recreation opportunities. If a community center is desired in the future, it is recommended that Vadnais Heights Commons be considered first for additional programming needs. Another option would be to explore combining a community center with another new city facility when that time comes.



Mixed Cattail Marsh



Southern Mesic Oak-Basswood Forest



Southern Dry Savanna

Natural Resource Recommendations

Given the wealth of natural resources within Vadnais Heights, a larger system-wide natural resource plan should be developed that outlines details of existing plant communities, invasive species removals, restoration techniques, and maintenance. This is also noted in the implementation chapter. However, since this document recommends expansion of native plants and restored wetland buffers, a high-level recommendation is included.

Native Plant Community Reestablishment

Based on the Minnesota Natural Resource Atlas, the only existing native plant communities with significant biodiversity significance, as classified by the MnDNR, are around Sucker Lake within the regional park. However, there is tremendous opportunity to restore and manage higher quality natural areas since so much of Vadnais Heights includes wetlands, forested edges, and pockets of dense hardwood forest. During community engagement, 81% of respondents said it was very important to have natural spaces near their homes and 97% of residents were interested in exploring natural spaces by trail, boardwalk, or another interactive manner. Per Minnesota Natural Resource Atlas, native plant communities for Vadnais Heights include:

- Northern Mixed Cattail Marsh and Northern Wet Meadow for wetland areas;
- Southern Mesic Oak-Basswood Forest;
- Southern Dry-Mesic Oak *(Maple)* Woodland;
- Southern Dry Savanna; and
- Southern Terrace Forest.

Wetland Buffer Restoration

As new park projects move forward, wetland buffers will need to be restored and maintained. Restoration should be done with a diversity of native plantings appropriate to the specific location while contributing to the larger ecological context. Within wetland buffers or low-lying areas that will see high ground water levels or fluctuation, native seed mixes for wet to wet-mesic soils and full to partial sun will be planted. In areas that are typically dry but might see occasional moisture fluctuation, native seed mixes for mesic to dry mesic soil and full to partial sun will be planted.

Invasive Species Removal

Invasive species removal of buckthorn is currently being done and should continue. Bringing in goats to graze buckthorn has been an effective and popular option to reduce buckthorn without the use of chemicals based on current city feedback. Having the funding, a plan, and being mobilized to replant a replacement for the buckthorn right after goat grazing is critical to start to restore the forest understory, promote animal habitat and to compete against the ongoing pressure of invasive species. Restoration of a groundcover and shrub layer often needs to occur after buckthorn or other invasive species removal in a forested area. Good species to consider for buckthorn replacement include: chokecherry *(Prunus virginiana)*, American hazelnut *(Corylus americana)*, gray dogwood *(Cornus racemosa)*, snowberry *(Symphoricarpos albus)*, and black raspberry *(Rubus occidentalis)*.



Chokecherry



Gray Dogwood

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Park Concepts 05



This chapter focuses on overall and individual park recommendations which promote the system-wide vision while responding to the individual site context and needs of each park. Each park was reviewed, and its existing condition was documented. Park concepts were based on a culmination of the park system needs assessment, community input, and individual park analysis to ensure that park recommendations are realistic and will serve the community well into the future.



Example of accessible playground access



Example of open space with access to shade



Example of loop trail

Overall Park Recommendations

Based on community feedback, there are many park recommendations at a system-wide level. These overall park recommendations provide a foundation for all new park improvements. Moving forward, the City of Vadnais Heights will establish a park system that:

- **Respects 30-foot buffers around all wetlands.** Wetlands not only compose a large portion of the city's acreage, they also represent an important ecological feature and a piece of the community's identity. All future development related to city parks and trails will aim to maintain 30 feet around all wetlands that is clear of paved or built surfaces and restore native plantings within these buffer areas where possible.
- **Incorporates accessible access to all playgrounds and diversifies play experiences.** Providing pathways and access points to all city playgrounds that conform to ADA standards is an important factor in ensuring all residents are being served by this essential park feature. When replacing aging play structures or establishing new playgrounds, the city will aim to diversify the types of equipment and the ages they focus on to provide play for all.
- **Establishes loop trails in each park.** Designated trail loops provide recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities. Moving forward, all parks within the system will aim to have at least one loop trail that also connects to the larger trail system.
- **Provides shade.** While forests are important to the city's identity, many of the active areas in parks throughout the system offer little coverage from the sun. Planting trees and adding picnic shelters around both new and existing features will provide the community with safer, more comfortable places to recreate, especially as our summers get increasingly hotter.

- **Offers access to water play.** Providing access to water for play is not only another important consideration as summers warm but was requested repeatedly by community members across this plan's engagement efforts. Despite all the shoreline and wet areas within Vadnais Heights, there is not a safe place for residents to interact with water. Incorporating a water play feature within at least one park is a way to fill that gap moving forward.
- **Incorporates sustainable maintenance practices.** Currently, a summer of mowing and a winter of trying to upkeep ice are not only resource-intensive activities, but they also take up a large portion of park maintenance staff's time. Strategically transitioning turf grass to species that require less mowing and incorporating ice reduction will better utilize maintenance hours and use resources more efficiently.
- **Utilizes wetlands for passive recreation and education.** Much of the park acreage that the city of Vadnais Heights currently owns is considered wetland, restricting what can be developed and the ability for residents to use that land. Incorporating boardwalks in these areas will provide a low-impact way for residents to access nature, while helping establish important connections across the community that cannot be developed through traditional paved trails.

The proposed facility matrix is included on the following spread which summarizes the proposed system amenities. The rest of this chapter includes an existing conditions inventory and park recommendations in the form of a concept for each park within the system. The design concepts summarize recommendations for each park and note actionable projects. More detail on phasing and costing is included in the **"Implementation"** chapter.



Example of splash pad



Bee lawn



Example of boardwalk through wetland areas

Table 05.1 *Proposed Facility Matrix*

	Facility Name	Address	Park Classification	Total Acres	Passive/Wetland Acres	Active Use Acres	Baseball Field *(Adult)*	Baseball Field *(Youth)*	Batting Cages	Basketball Court *(Full)*	Basketball Court *(Half)*
City Facilities	Bear Park	465 Bear Avenue S	Neighborhood Park	4	2	2					1
	Berwood Park	780 Berwood Avenue	Neighborhood Park	11	2	9		1		1	
	Bridgewood Park	4224-½ Bridgewood Terrace	Neighborhood Park	30	28	3				1	
	Community Park	641 County Road F East	Community Park	35	15	20					
	Elmwood Park	3892 Elmwood Street	Mini Park	0.7		0.7					
	Greenhaven Park	4470 Greenhaven Drive	Mini Park	0.7		0.7					
	Heritage Park	4345 Heritage Drive	Neighborhood Park	28	18	10					
	Kohler Meadows Park	365 County Road F East	Community Park	29	4	25	1		1	1	
	Lily Pond Park	325 Lily Pond Lane	Neighborhood Park	12	5	7		1			
	Maybell Park	426 Mario Drive	Mini Park	0.5		0.5					
	Morningside Park	4485 Morningside Avenue	Neighborhood Park	16	14	2					
	Oak Creek Park	485 Oak Creek Drive S	Neighborhood Park	2		2				1	
	Vadnais Elementary School*	3645 Centerville Road	Neighborhood Park	4		4					2
	Westfield Park	520 Westfield Lane	Neighborhood Park	27	14	13					1
	Wolters Park	1351 Willow Lake Boulevard	Neighborhood Park	2		2				1	
		City Total	**15**	**201**	**101**	**100**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**5**	**4**
		Residents per Facility	*858*	*64*	-	*128*	*12,864*	*6,432*	*12,864*	*2,573*	*3,216*
		National Average Comparison (▲Above, ▼Below)	▲	▲	-	▼	▼	▼	-	▲	-
Non-City	Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park - Sucker Lake	4520 Rice Street	Regional Park	1,252	829	423					
	TCO Sports Garden**	1490 County Road E East	Regional Facility					1	2		
	AFSA High School	100 Vadnais Boulevard	Charter School			0					
		Non-City Total	**1**	**1,252**	**829**	**423**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**0**
		Overall Total	**16**	**1,453**	**932**	**523**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**5**	**4**
		Residents per Facility	*804*	*9*	-	*25*	*12,864*	*4,288*	*4,288*	*2,573*	*3,216*
		National Average Comparison (▲Above, ▼Below)	▲	▲	-	▲	▼	▼	-	▲	-

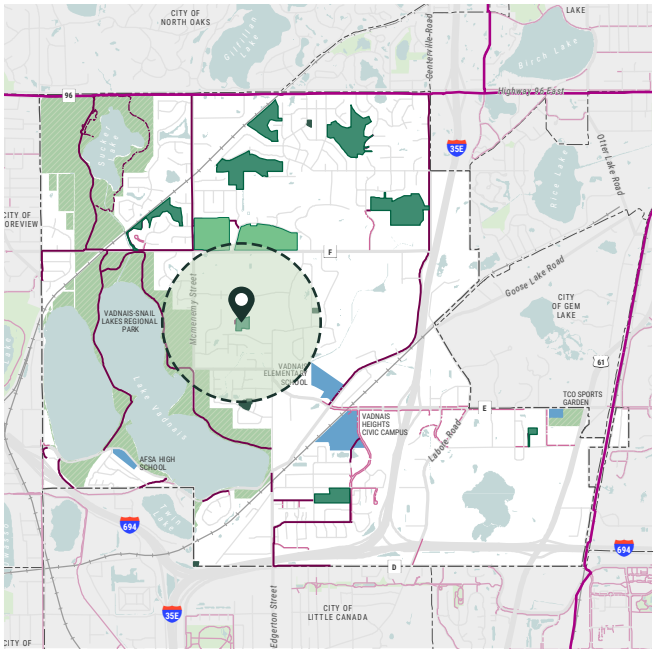
**The neighborhood park at Vadnais Elementary School is not on city-owned property and is operated under a shared-use agreement. Active acreage includes city-constructed diamond fields and playground, which are publicly accessible outside of school hours.*

***TCO Sports Garden is public but requires fee or program participation for access.*

Dog Park *(Off-Leash)*	General Skating Rink	Hockey Rink	Indoor Gym Space	Park Building	Parking Lot	Pickleball Court *(Dedicated)*	Picnic Area *(Tables)*	Picnic Shelter	Playground	Public Restroom	Rectangular Field *(Multipurpose)*	Skate Park	Sledding Hill	Softball Field *(Adult)*	Softball Field *(Youth)*	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court	Walking Paths	Warming House	X-Country Skiing
					1		X		1	1	1							X		
1					2		X	1	1	1	1					1		X		
					1	6			1	1								X		
	1	1		1	1		X	1	1	1	1		1	3			1	X	1	
					1		X	1	1									X		
							X	1	1											
																		X		
				1	3	1	X	1	1	1	3	1	1		2	4		X		
					1		X		1	1	1							X		
									1											
					1		X	1		1										
							X	1	1		1									
			1		2				2	1	1				2			X		
	1				1	1		1	2	1	1					1		X	1	
							X	1	1									X		
1	**2**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**14**	**8**	**10**	**9**	**15**	**9**	**10**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**6**	**1**	**11**	**2**	**0**
12,864	*6,432*	*12,864*	*12,864*	*6,432*	*919*	*1,608*	*1,286*	*1,429*	*858*	*1,429*	*1,286*	*12,864*	*6,432*	*4,288*	*3,216*	*2,144*	*12,864*	*1,169*	*6,432*	*0*
↑	↑	↓	-	-	-	-	-	-	↑	-	↑	↑	-	↓	↑	↑	-	-	-	-
					5		X	1	1	X								X		X
		2									3				1			X		
			1		1															
0	**0**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**1**
1	**2**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**20**	**8**	**11**	**10**	**16**	**10**	**13**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**5**	**6**	**1**	**13**	**2**	**1**
12,864	*6,432*	*4,288*	*6,432*	*6,432*	*643*	*1,608*	*1,169*	*1,286*	*804*	*1,286*	*990*	*12,864*	*6,432*	*4,288*	*2,573*	*2,144*	*12,864*	*990*	*6,432*	*12,864*
↑	↑	↑	-	-	-	-	-	-	↑	-	↑	↑	-	↓	↑	↑	-	-	-	-

Bear Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.1 *Bear Park Location*



Address	465 Bear Avenue S
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	4 Acres
Active Use Acreage	2 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.19 Miles
Convenience Amenities	P
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

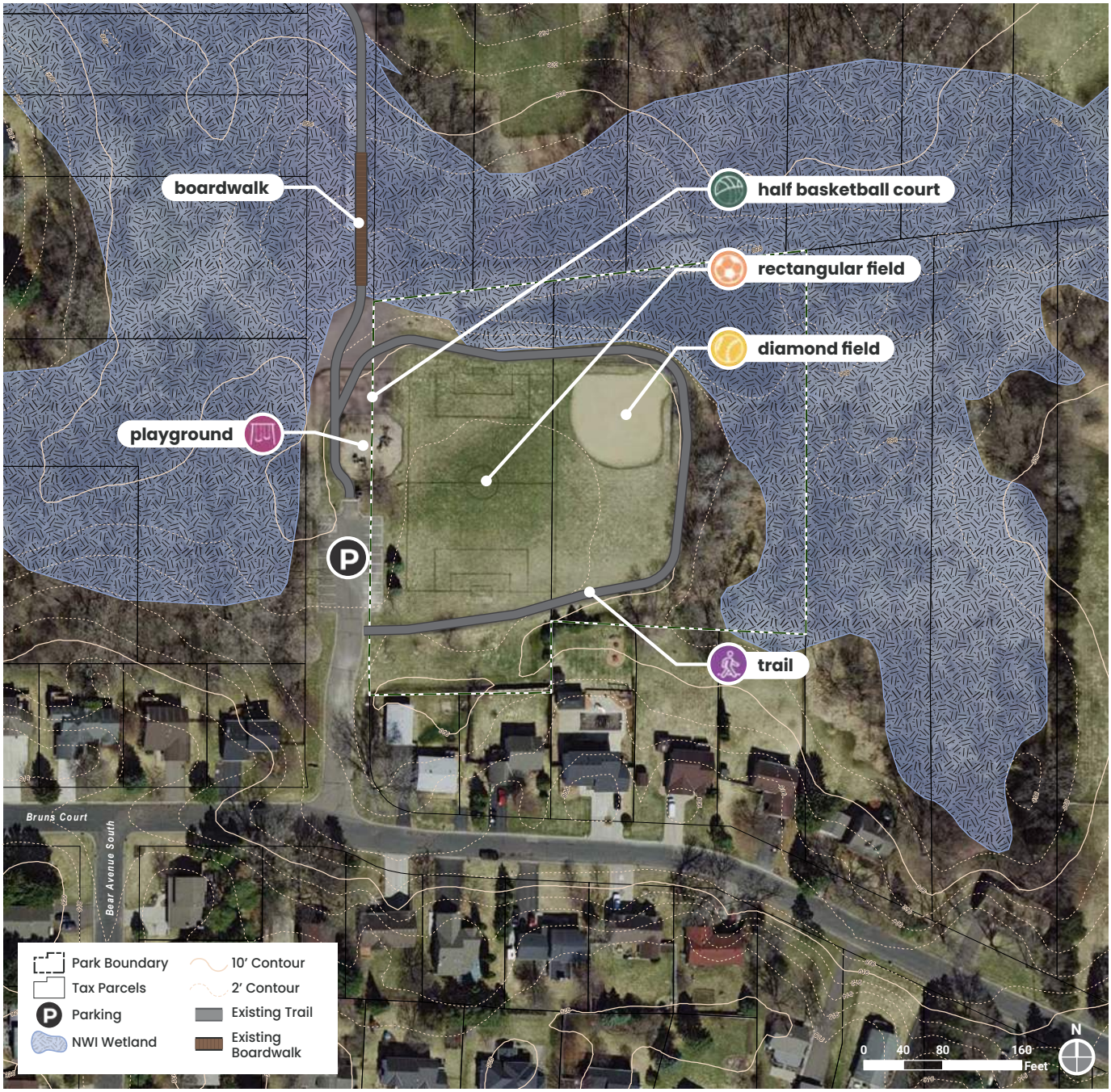
> **“With the new access to Bear Park from the newer development being built this park has gained a lot more traffic from surrounding neighbors.**

> **“This park needs shade! It’d be nice to have more/better seating options.**

Overview & Observations

- Much of this park falls within the 30’ wetland buffer, causing maintenance and environmental concerns.
- The loop trail and boardwalk are well used, but there are pedestrian safety issues with overlapping trail and parking lot circulation patterns.
- Trail clearing during the winter months is made difficult by tight corner radii.
- There is little differentiation between the trail and the half basketball court area.

Figure 05.2 *Bear Park Existing Conditions*











Bear Park Proposed Concept



Example of a parking lot with pervious pavement that helps reduce polluted runoff



Example of a half basketball court

Address	465 Bear Avenue S
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	4 Acres
Active Use Acreage	2 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.22 Miles
Convenience Amenities	P
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Long-Term Priority Projects

Field Reconfiguration

- Remove diamond field.
- Relocate loop trail outside of wetland buffer.
- Install medium rectangular field.

Expanded Play Area

- Realign trail for pedestrian safety.
- Update playground.
- Relocate half basketball court.
- Add pervious pavement in parking lot and along trail leading to boardwalk.

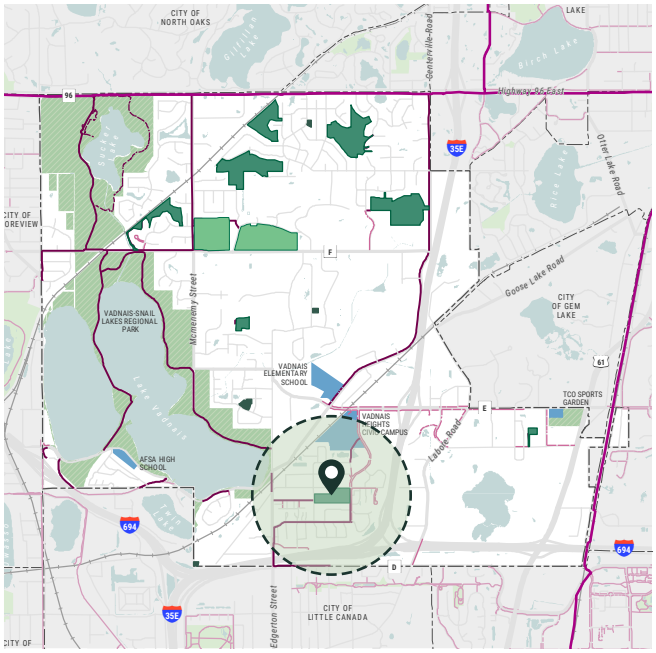
Figure 05.3 *Bear Park Proposed Concept*



- Existing Trail
- Existing Boardwalk
- Proposed Park Trail
- Proposed Pervious Park Trail
- Proposed Neighborhood Connector
- 30ft Wetland Buffer
- **A** Expanded Playground
- **B** Realigned Pedestrian Trail (*Relocate existing light*)
- **C** Relocated Half-court Basketball
- **D** Medium Rectangular Field
- **E** Planted Berm Separating Play & Parking
- **F** Transition to Pervious Pavement in Parking Lot

Berwood Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.4 *Berwood Park Location*



Address	780 Berwood Avenue
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	11 Acres
Active Use Acreage	9 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.31 Miles
Convenience Amenities	P
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

> **“Please add shade around the playground. A pavilion with picnic tables & bathrooms would be nice!**

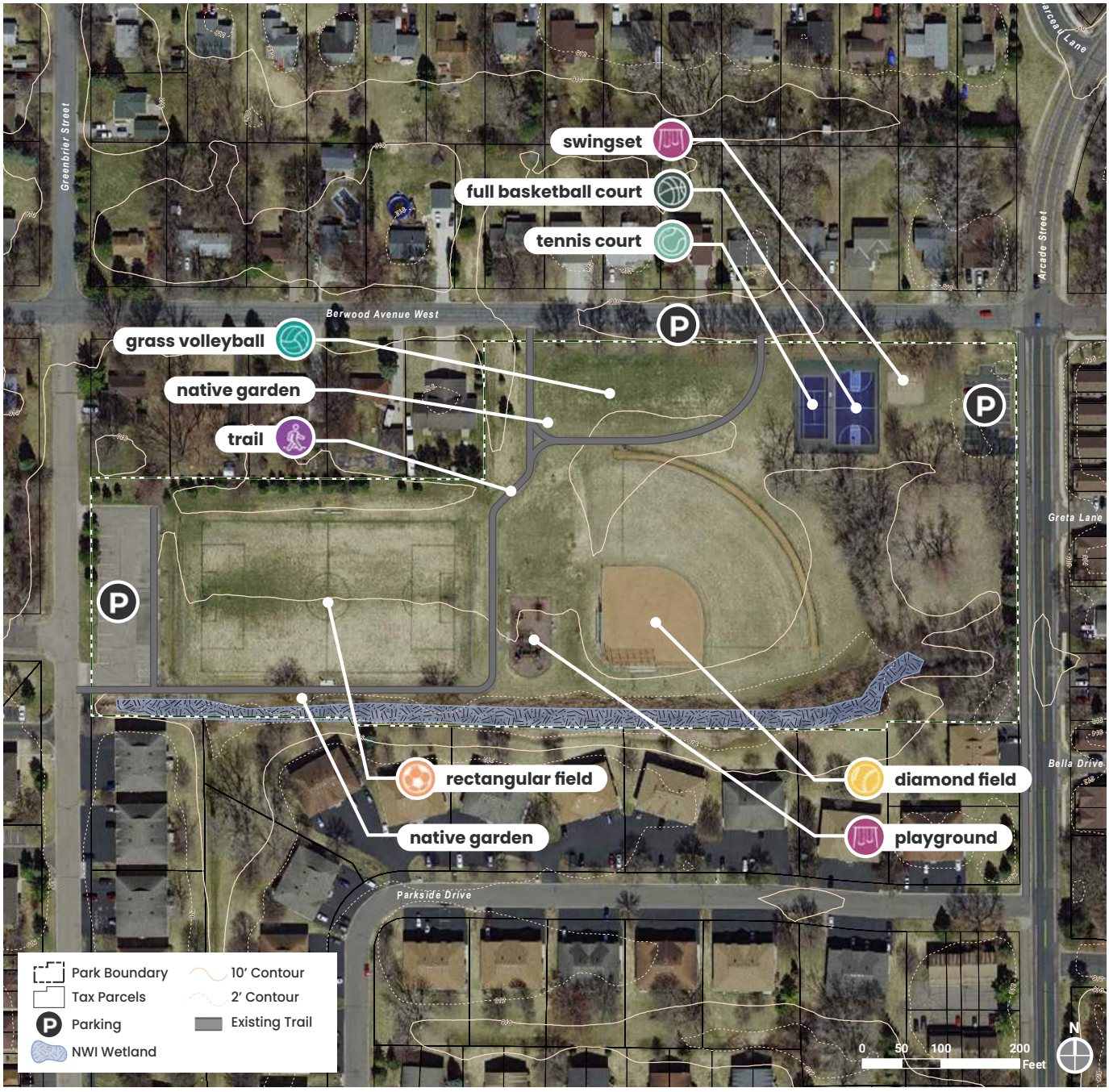
> **“The east side would be a great spot for a dog park. Tons of people already walk their dogs in this area.**

> **“Add a walking path or bike path around the field**

Overview & Observations

- Berwood Park is the largest in the City’s southeast area.
- There are several trails running adjacent to the park, but few connections between the park trails and the larger system and no trails that offer loops.
- The basketball and tennis courts have been recently redone but have no accessible connection.
- The playgrounds are almost 20 years old.
- A gaga ball pit is located just north of the playground.
- Both fields *(diamond and rectangular)* are well used.
- The grassy area north of the baseball field is often used for pick up grass volleyball, but there are no dedicated courts.

Figure 05.5 *Berwood Park Existing Conditions*













Berwood Park Proposed Concept



Example of small water play elements



Example of a fenced off-leash dog park



Example of a park building with restrooms and attached picnic shelter

Address	780 Berwood Avenue
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	11 Acres
Active Use Acreage	9 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.74 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Short-Term Priority Projects

Park Building & Playground

- Add park building with picnic shelter and restrooms, that could also serve as changing rooms. Consider a small indoor programming space within building.
- Update playground with small water play element.
- Add safety fencing along diamond field.

Dog Park

- Install 6-foot perimeter fencing for dog park area with double-entry gates for secure off-leash transfer, mulch surfacing, dog waste stations, and site furnishings.

Parking Lot Reconfiguration

- Reconfigure western parking/trail connection to remove pavement from wetland buffer and align pedestrian crossing with intersection.

Loop Trails

- Complete trail loops throughout park and install pervious pavement within wetland buffer.
- Create accessible connection to existing courts.

Mid-Term Priority Project

Community Garden

- Raised garden plots with gravel surfacing and 8-foot fencing around perimeter.

Figure 05.6 *Berwood Park Proposed Concept*

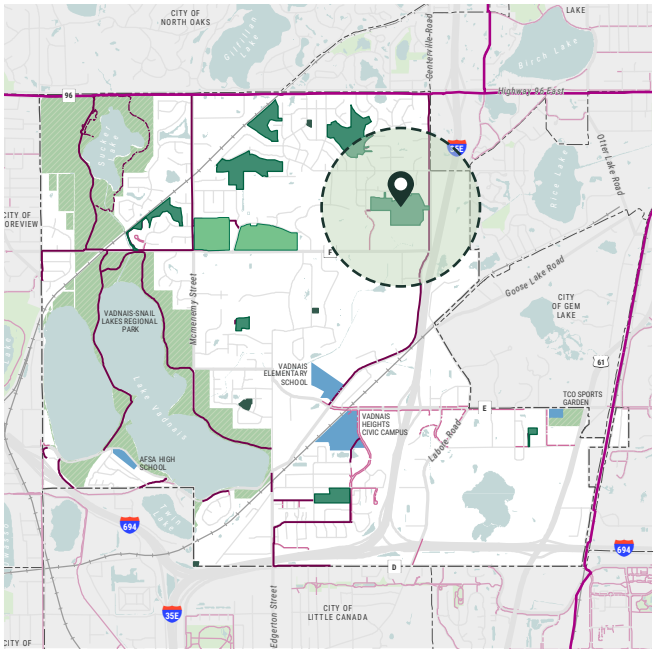


- Existing Trail
- Proposed Park Trail
- Proposed Pervious Park Trail
- 30ft Wetland Buffer

- **A** Reconfigured Parking Lot
- **B** Park Building with Restrooms & Picnic Shelter
- **C** Consolidated Playground
- **D** Small Water Play Element
- **E** Flexible Lawn for Events or Grass Volleyball (*Court striping for reference only*)
- **F** Community Garden
- **G** Fenced Off-Leash Dog Park
- **H** Existing Native Gardens to Remain
- **I** Extended Diamond Field Fencing

Bridgewood Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.7 *Bridgewood Park Location*



Address	4224-1/2 Bridgewood Terrace
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	30 Acres
Active Use Acreage	3 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.30 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

> **Love the pickleball courts & use them regularly!**

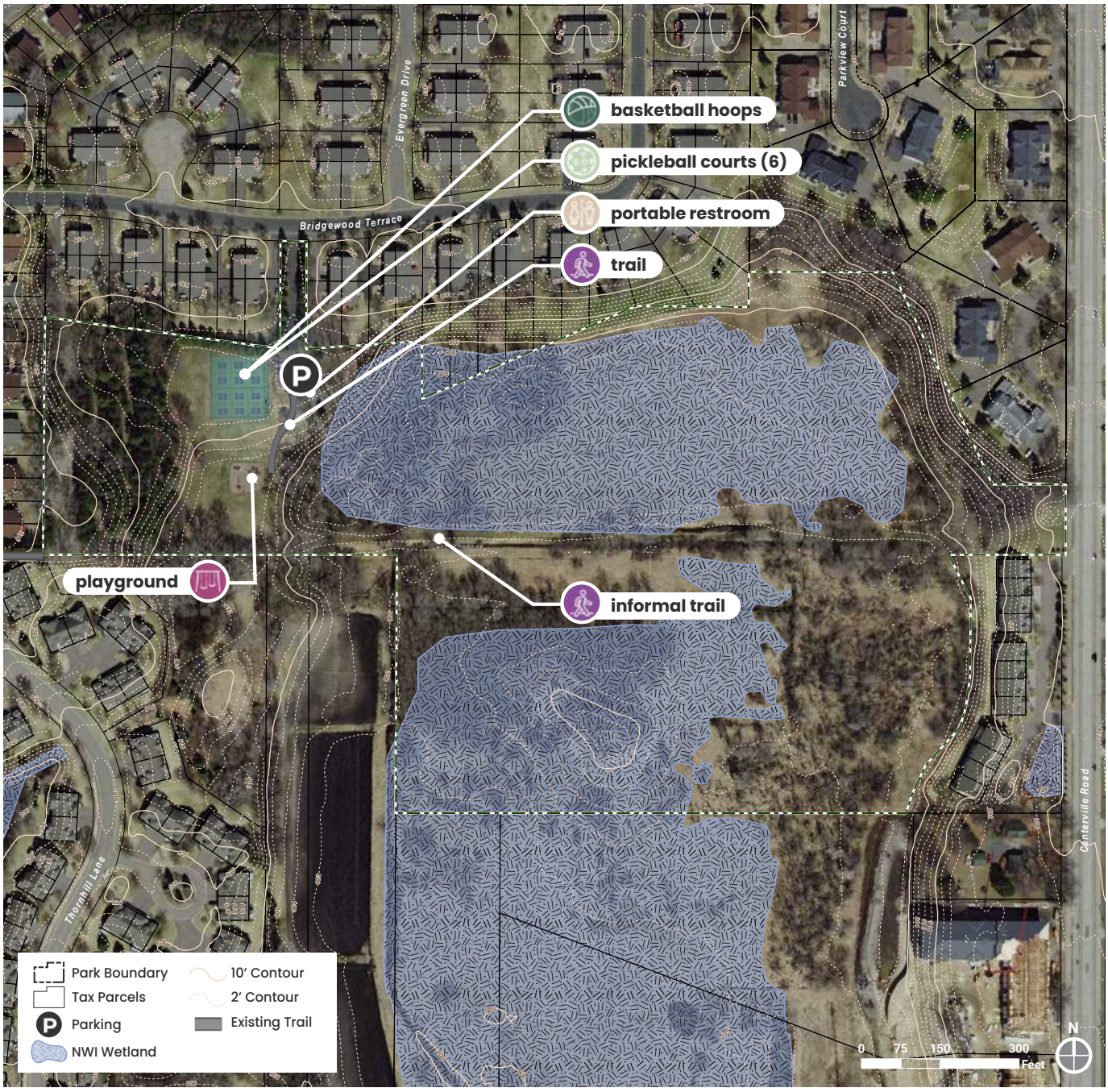
> **Used to have BB courts here before the pickleball courts, now they are unusable.**

> **Shade & picnic tables please**

Overview & Observations

- The majority of this park is covered by wetland or is inaccessible.
- A long, unpaved trail runs east-west through the center of the park.
- The pickleball courts are very well used making it difficult for basketball players to access the basketball hoops which are currently on a shared court with pickleball.
- There is an existing stormwater treatment/rain garden adjacent to the parking lot.
- The slope in the center of the active portion of the park is good for event seating.
- The playground was built in 2001 and is need of replacement.
- Park access exists informally from the east and there used to be an unpaved parking area along Centerville Road.
- There is an existing connection to Thornhill Lane on the west side of the park.
- The western wooded area is in need of restoration after the removal of buckthorn.

Figure 05.8 *Bridgewood Park Existing Conditions*









Bridgewood Park Proposed Concept



Example of a full basketball court



Example of a shade structure



Example of a new playground

Address	4224-1/2 Bridgewood Terrace
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	30 Acres
Active Use Acreage	3 Acres
Trail Mileage	1.35 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Short-Term Priority Project

Picnic Shelter & Playground

- Reconfigure and expand playground.
- Add small picnic shelter near playground.

Mid-Term Priority Projects

Full Basketball Court

- Expand court paving to include a full basketball court with a perimeter of 10’ fencing.

Loop Trails

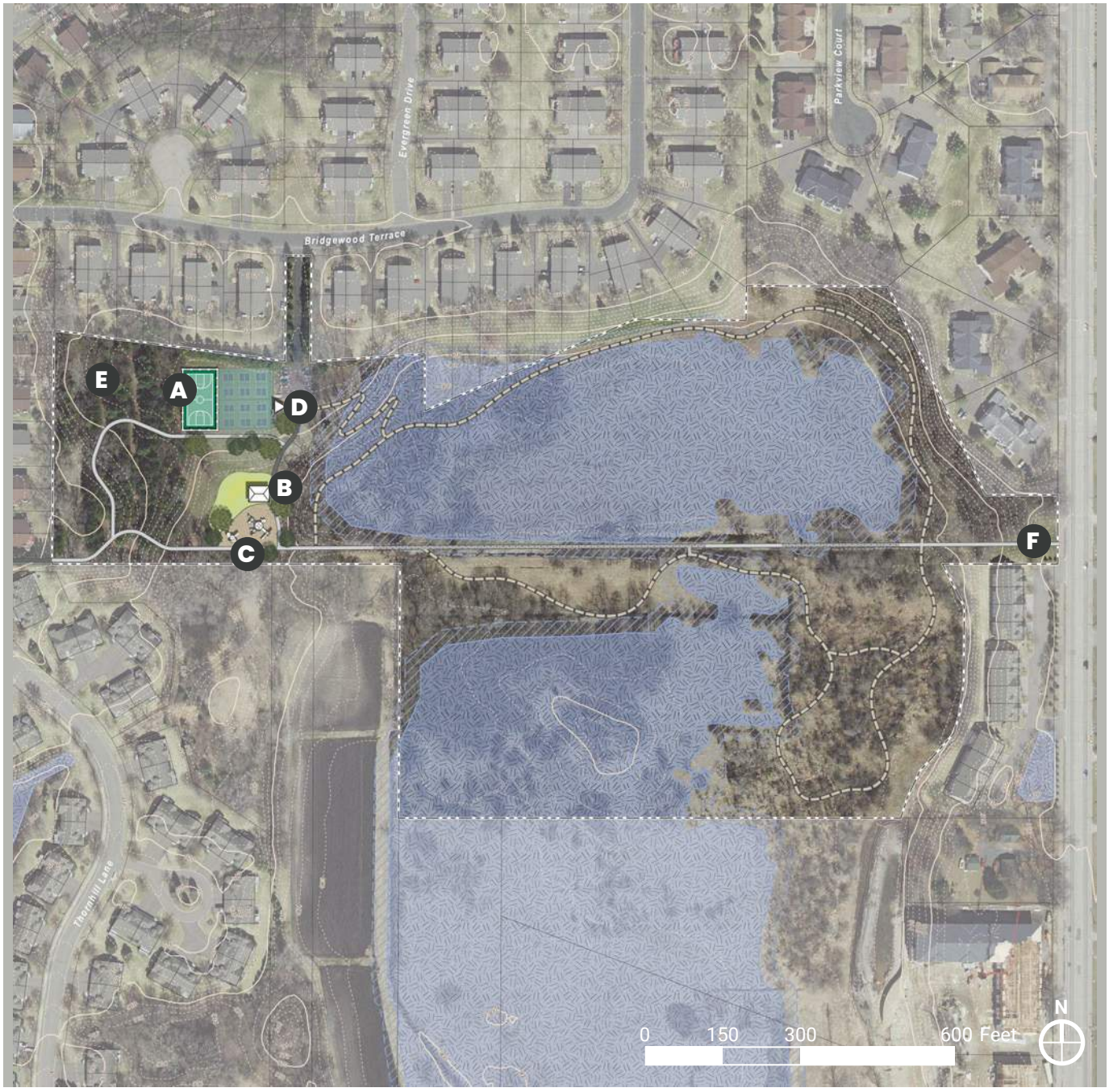
- Create formal trail connections to Thornhill Lane and Centerville Road with associated wayfinding.
- Install informal hiking and snowshoeing trail loops in eastern area utilizing pervious pavement in areas within wetland buffer.

Long-Term Priority Projects

Shade Structure

- Install a small shade structure adjacent to the pickleball courts.

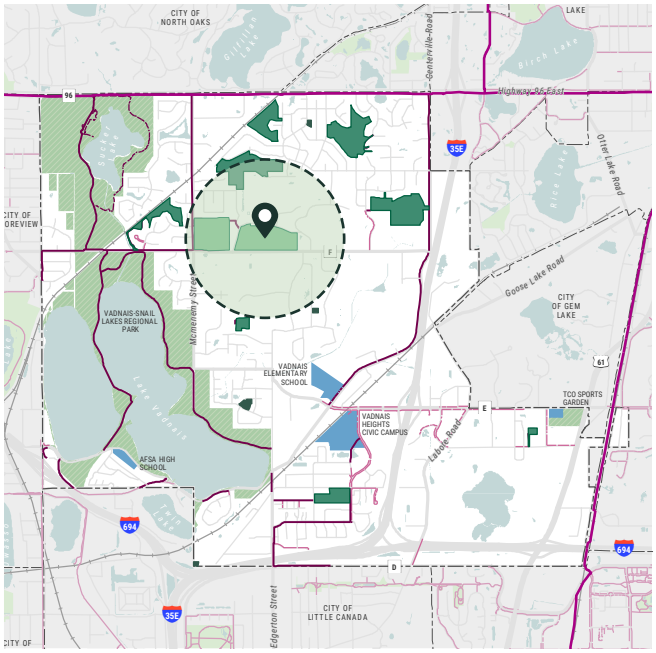
Figure 05.9 *Bridgewood Park Proposed Concept*



- Existing Trail
- Proposed Park Trail
- Proposed Pervious Park Trail
- Proposed Hiking & Snowshoeing Trail
- 30ft Wetland Buffer
- A Full Basketball Court (*Hoops removed from pickleball courts*)
- B Picnic Shelter
- C Relocated & Expanded Playground
- D Shade Structure
- E Restore Forest Understory & Diversify Canopy
- F Wayfinding at eastern park entrance

Community Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.10 *Community Park Location*



Address	641 County Road F East
Classification	Community Park
Total Acreage	35 Acres
Active Use Acreage	20 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.65 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

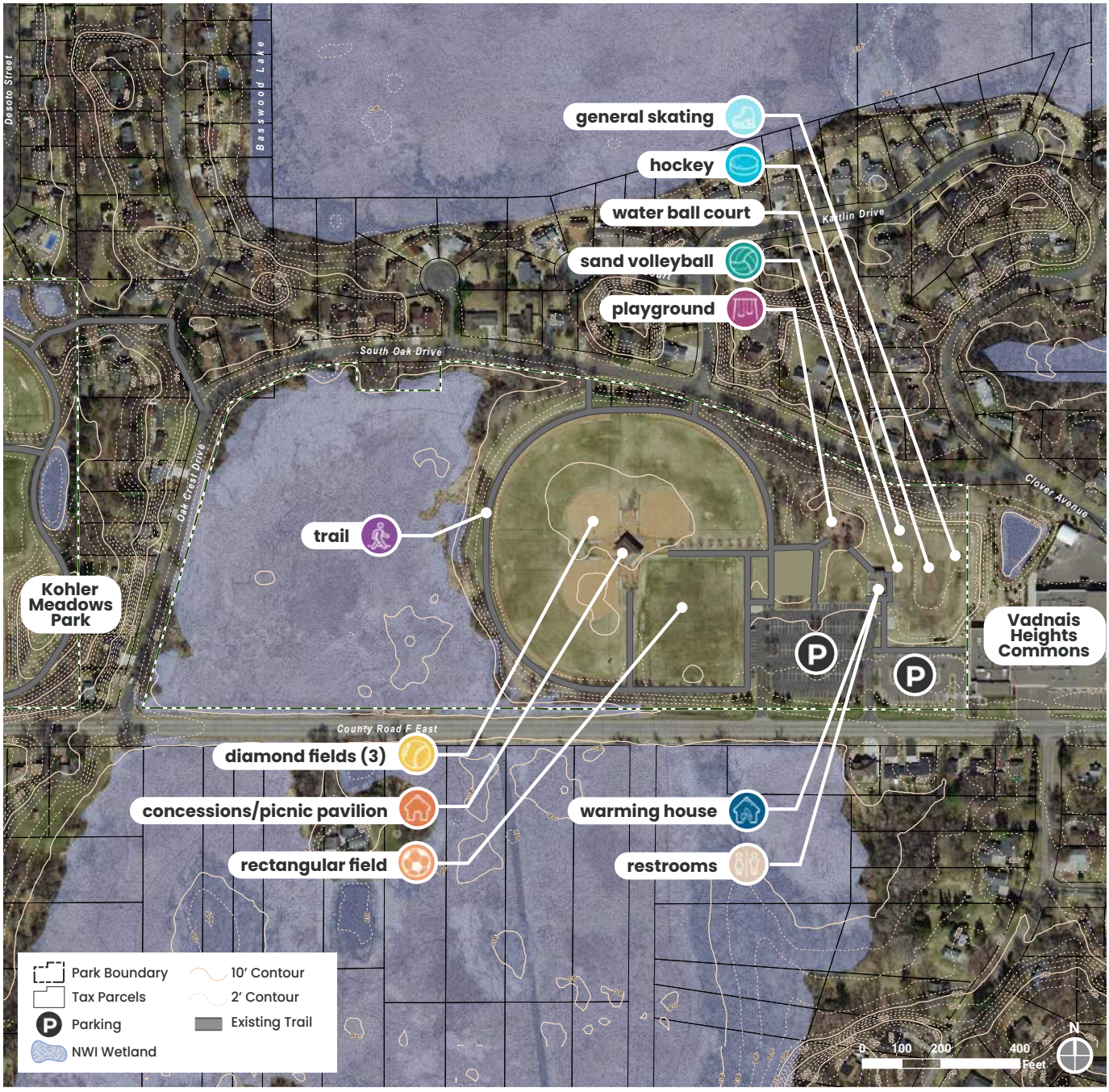
> **“It would be great to see an elevated boardwalk though the wetland areas like other cities have. It offers residents a unique opportunity to connect with nature, fostering physical activity and well-being.**

> **“I much prefer natural outdoor spaces over big structures. That fits better with Vadnais Height’s strengths.**

Overview & Observations

- This park serves as a major event venue for the city’s annual Vadnais Heights Days.
- Active area of the park was constructed on poor soils and landfill materials.
- As the only park in the system with an active warming house, it is a major community destination for hockey and general skating.
- The central picnic shelter was removed in 2023 with plans to replace with a new facility.
- There are current plans for a temporary basketball court to be placed on the concrete pad where the picnic shelter was located. This use is to be reevaluated when it is time to update this park.
- The softball pavilion and the warming house are constructed on piles due to poor soils.
- The softball pavilion is in need of interior renovation and the concrete slab around the pavilion is in need of repair.
- The playground was last updated in 2016.
- Water ball court was installed by the Vadnais Heights Fire Relief Association for friendly competitions with other fire departments. It is no longer being used.

Figure 05.11 *Community Park Existing Conditions*













Community Park Proposed Concept



Example of a boardwalk through a wetland area



Example of a playground integrated with hillside

Address	641 County Road F East
Classification	Community Park
Total Acreage	35 Acres
Active Use Acreage	20 Acres
Trail Mileage	1.07 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Short-Term Priority Project

Softball Pavilion

- Remodel building interior of softball pavilion including restrooms and kitchen.
- Pour new concrete patio around pavilion.

Mid-Term Priority Projects

Central Event Lawn

- Install a large picnic shelter that architecturally relates to the warming house.
- Reconfigure trails to improve accessibility and connections.
- Plant trees to visually buffer ice rink from Vadnais Heights Commons.

Loop Trails

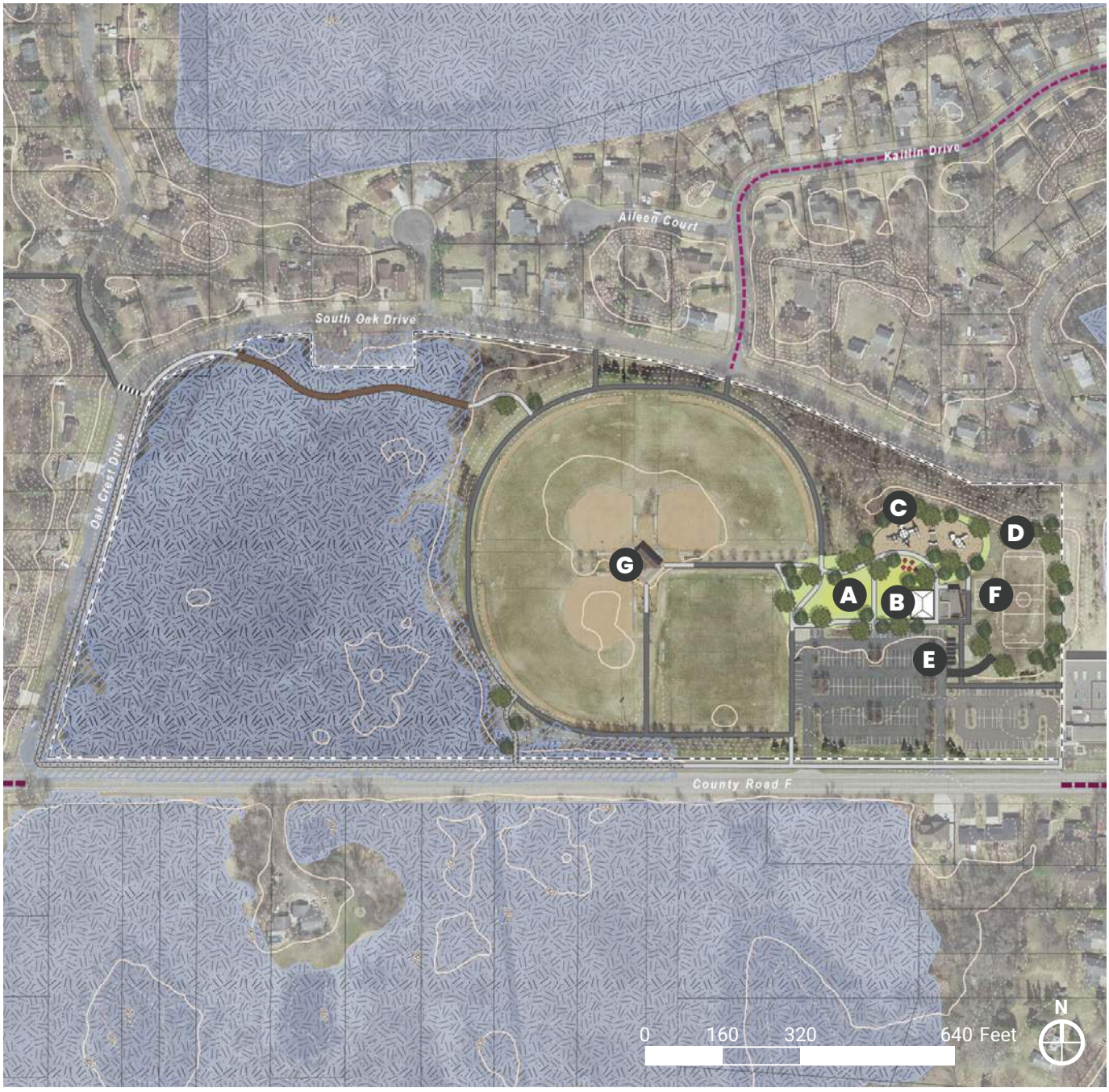
- Add boardwalk and trail connections to complete the connection to the trail across Oakcrest Drive to Kohler Meadows Park.
- Add accessible trail connections to softball pavilion.

Long-Term Priority Project

Expanded Playground

- Upgrade and expand playground including hillside playground equipment to utilize topography.
- Remove water ball courts.

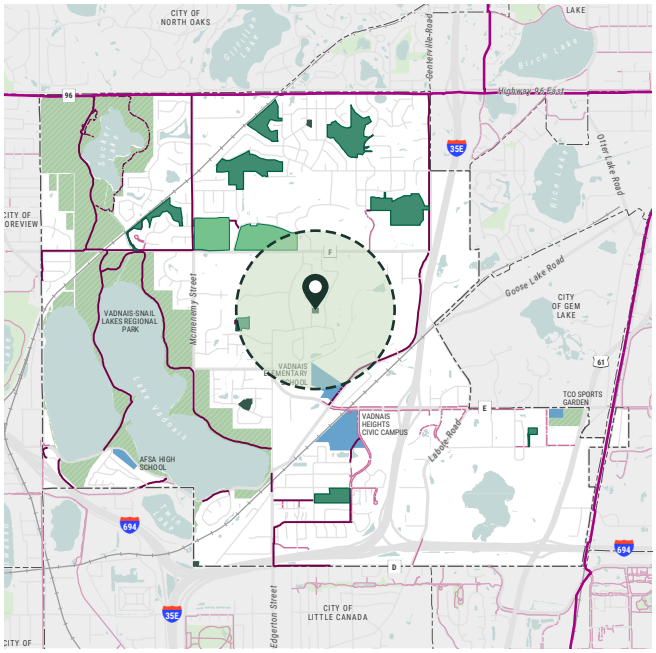
Figure 05.12 *Community Park Proposed Concept*



- Existing Trail
- Proposed Park Trail
- Proposed Pervious Park Trail
- Proposed Boardwalk
- Proposed Neighborhood Connector
- Proposed Community Connector
- 30ft Wetland Buffer
- **A** Central Event Lawn
- **B** Picnic Shelter & ADA Improvements to Warming House
- **C** Expanded Playground Utilizing Natural Topography
- **D** Remove & Restore "Water Ball" Area
- **E** Reconfigured Parking Lot & Ice Service Access
- **F** Winter Ice Area & Sand Volleyball Court Remain As-Is
- **G** Renovate Softball Pavilion & Improve ADA Access

Elmwood Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.13 *Elmwood Park Location*

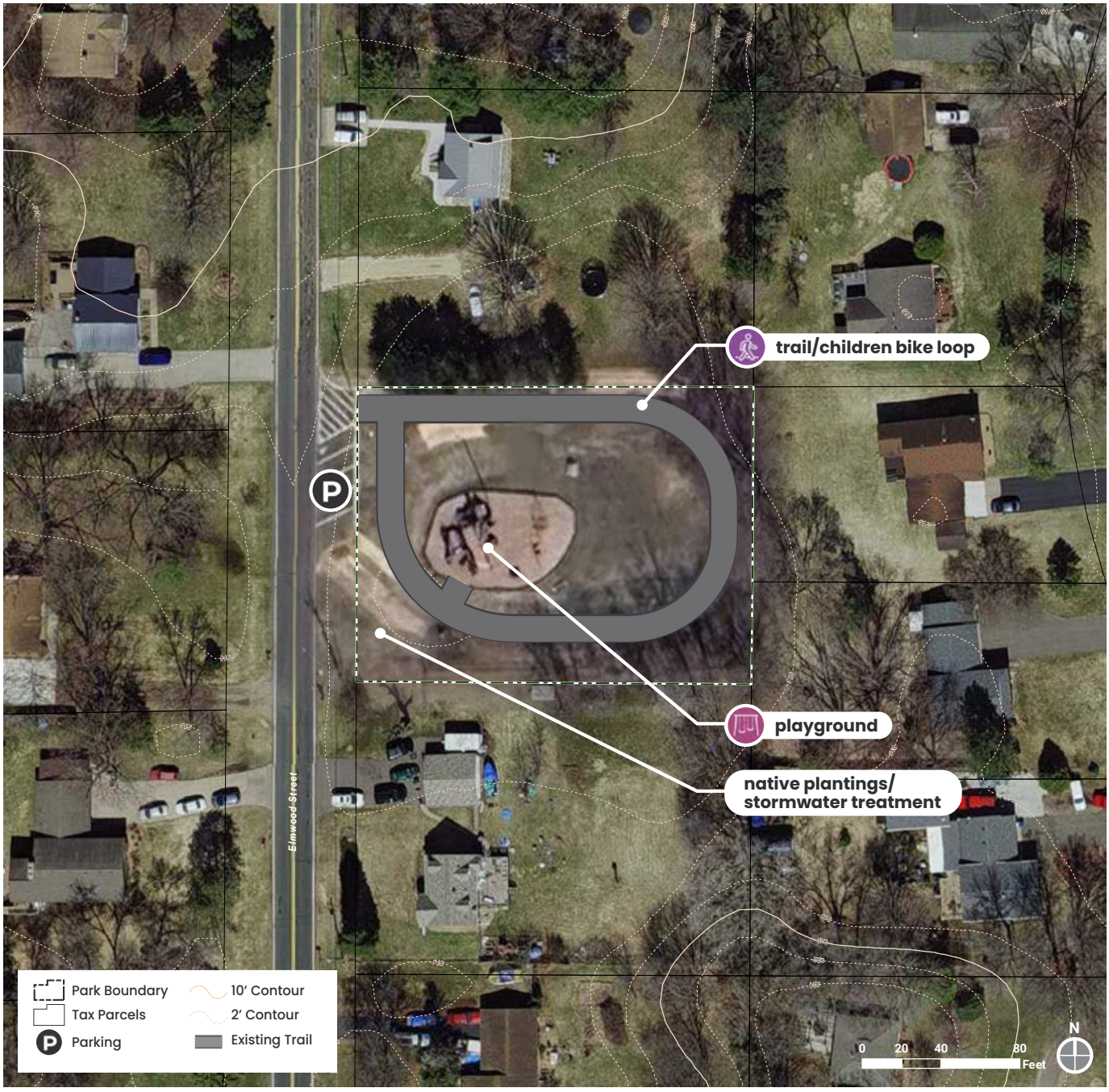


Address	3892 Elmwood Street
Classification	Mini Park
Total Acreage	0.7 Acres
Active Use Acreage	0.7 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.10 Miles
Convenience Amenities	P
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Overview & Observations

- Parking, loop trail, and native plantings/stormwater treatment were recently added as part of Elmwood Street reconstruction project.
- Covered picnic table is in poor condition and needs replacement.
- Park lacks shade.
- Playground was updated in 2023.

Figure 05.14 *Elmwood Park Existing Conditions*









Elmwood Park Proposed Concept



Example of native plantings



Example of a small picnic shelter

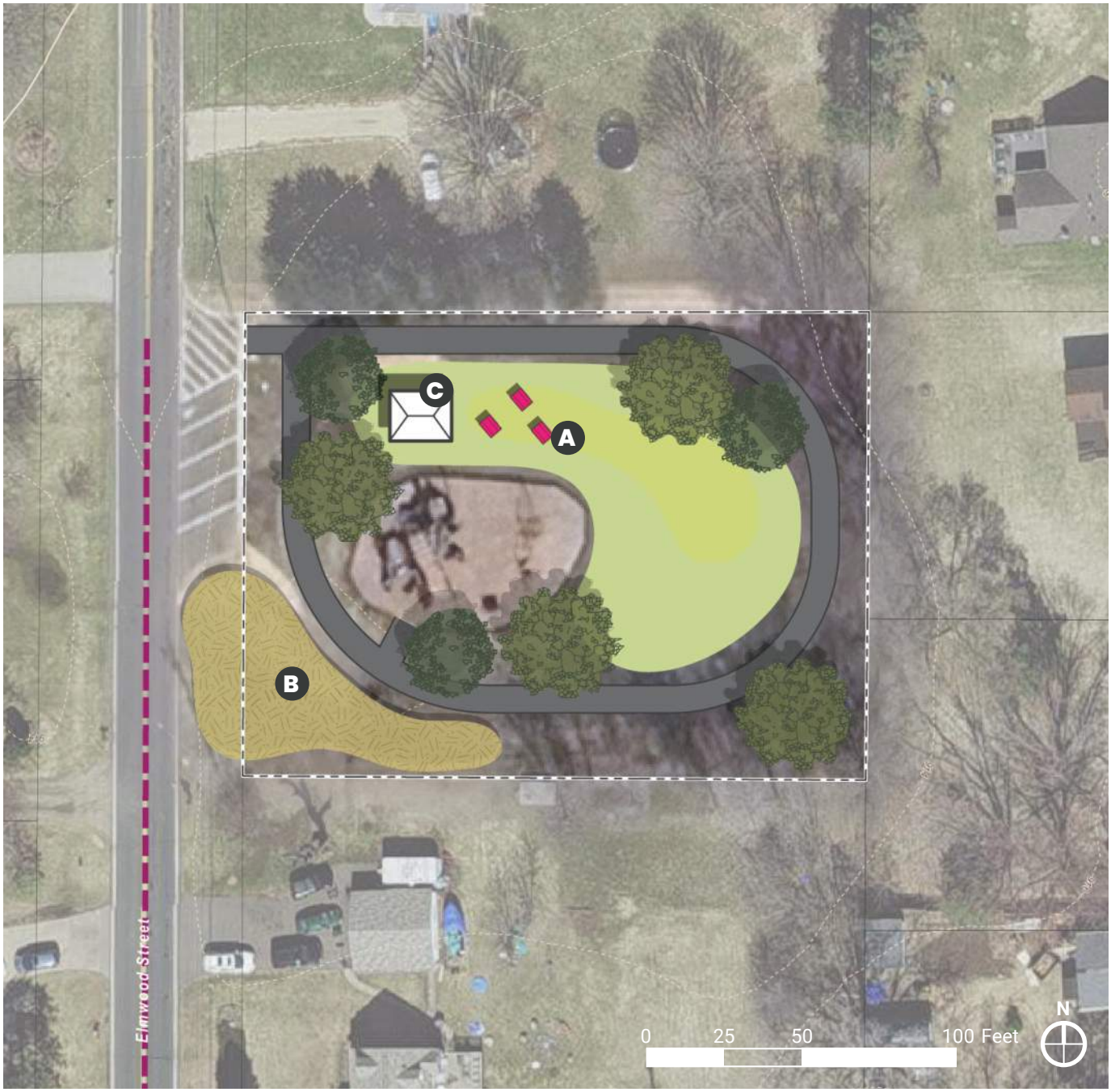
Address	3892 Elmwood Street
Classification	Mini Park
Total Acreage	0.7 Acres
Active Use Acreage	0.7 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.10 Miles
Convenience Amenities	P
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Short-Term Priority Project

Picnic Shelter

- Add mini-picnic shelter near playground.
- Create a picnic area with the open lawn.
- Plant shade trees.

Figure 05.15 *Elmwood Park Proposed Concept*



Existing Trail

Proposed Neighborhood Connector

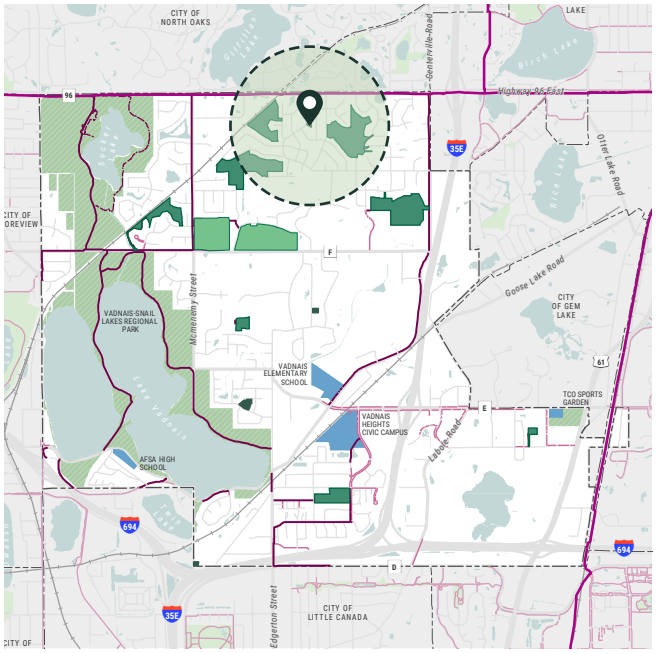
A Picnic Lawn with Tables

B Existing Native Plantings/ Stormwater Treatment

C Mini-Picnic Shelter

Greenhaven Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.16 *Greenhaven Park Location*



Address	4470 Greenhaven Drive
Classification	Mini Park
Total Acreage	0.7 Acres
Active Use Acreage	0.7 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.00 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

> **“A small shelter to provide shade & some seating would be nice here.**

> **“The new play equipment is great! Would love to see trees & shade. Also finishing the path from the road to the playground instead of mud would be great!**

Overview & Observations

- Playground was recently updated in 2023 which resulted in the loss of open space and shade trees.
- No accessible trail connection exists to playground.

Figure 05.17 *Greenhaven Park Existing Conditions*







Greenhaven Park Proposed Concept



Example of a loop trail



Example of a small picnic shelter

Address	4470 Greenhaven Drive
Classification	Mini Park
Total Acreage	0.7 Acres
Active Use Acreage	0.7 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.07 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Short-Term Priority Project

Picnic Shelter & Loop Trail

- Add a mini picnic shelter and associated picnic lawn.
- Plant shade trees throughout park.
- Add a loop trail around playground creating accessible connection to ramp into play container.

Figure 05.18 *Greenhaven Park Proposed Concept*



Existing Trail

Proposed Park Trail

Proposed Community Connector

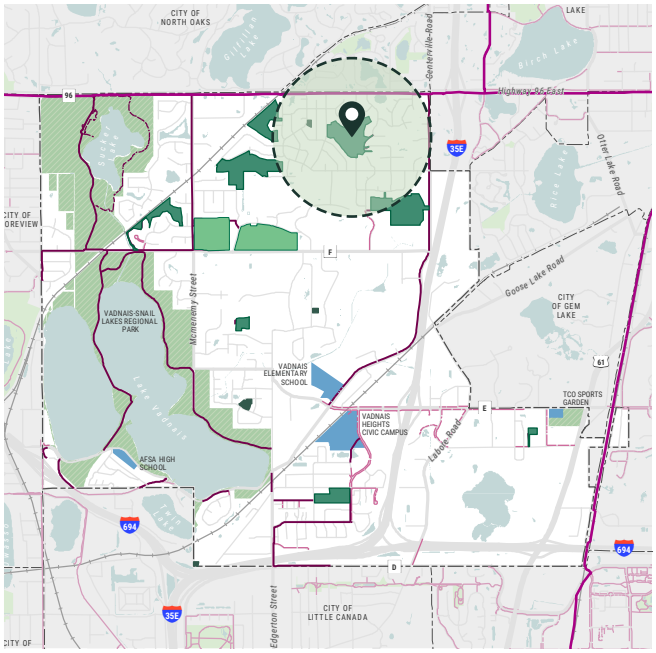
A Mini Picnic Shelter

B Picnic Lawn with Tables

C Accessible Connection to Ramp into Play Container

Heritage Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.19 *Heritage Park Location*



Address	4345 Heritage Drive
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	28 Acres
Active Use Acreage	10 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.72 Miles
Convenience Amenities	P
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

> **“I really love this wooded, undeveloped park, & hope it can remain as such, it’s a nice escape.**

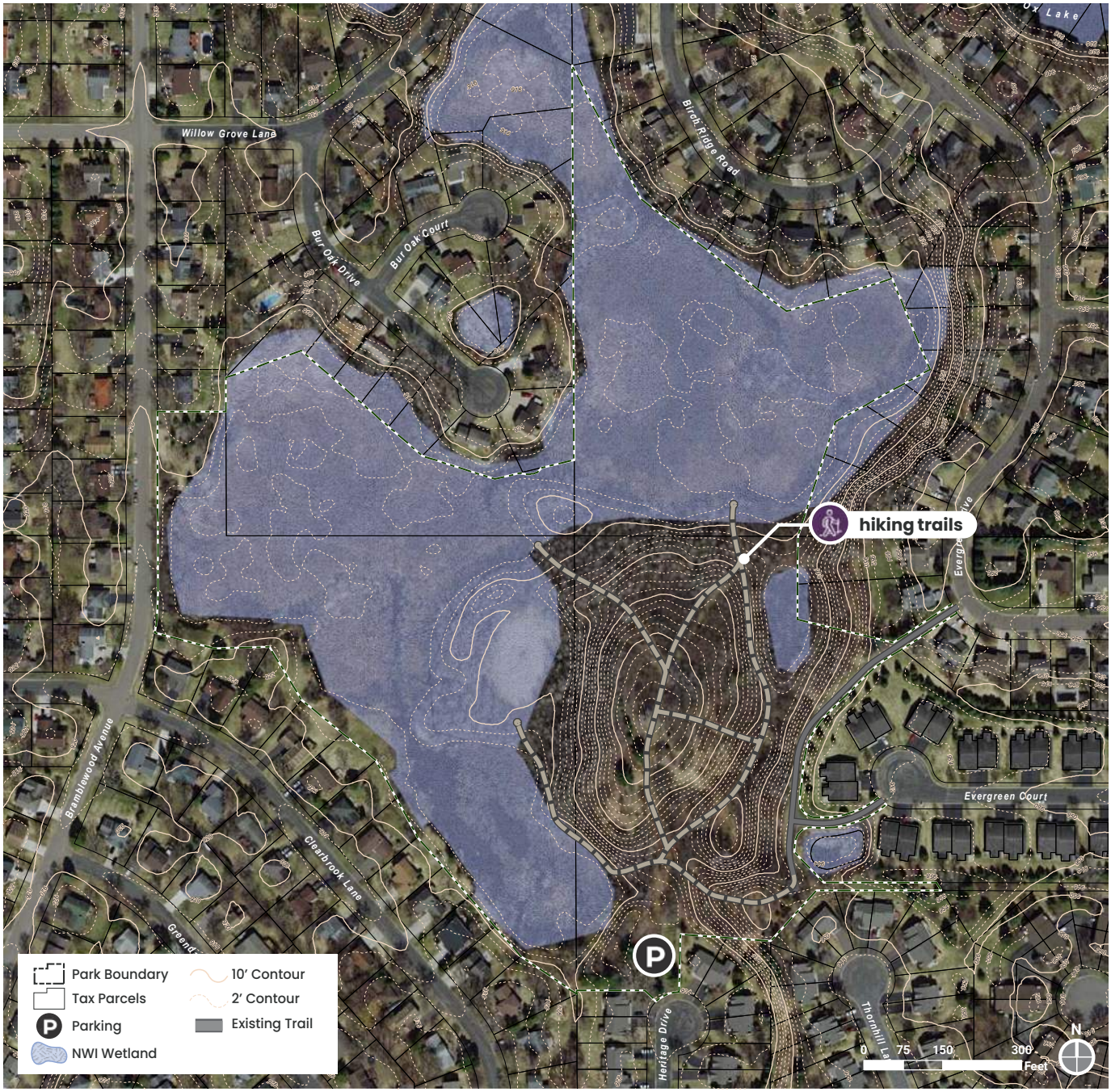
> **“Would love a boardwalk across path through the wetland area near the side of Bramblewood road to get to the trails in the park.**

> **“Please add a playground to Heritage Park...it is quite a ways to any other park to bring our grandchildren to.**

Overview & Observations

- Park is primarily wetland and woodland.
- Trails are mainly soft surface, informal trails.
- Some significant trees and natural resources are present.
- Need for forest management and clearing of invasive species.
- A small parking area is located on the south end of the park.
- A wooden sign denotes the general pattern of the informal trail loops.

Figure 05.20 *Heritage Park Existing Conditions*











Heritage Park Proposed Concept



Example of a nature playground



Example of an informal hiking or snowshoeing trail



Example of a woodland rest area



Example of a boardwalk through a wetland area

Address	4345 Heritage Drive
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	28 Acres
Active Use Acreage	10 Acres
Trail Mileage	1.14 Miles
Convenience Amenities	P
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Short-Term Priority Projects

Wayfinding & Furnishings

- Add benches and interpretation along trail, located to highlight significant oak trees.

Mid-Term Priority Projects

Loop Trails

- Formalize and expand trail system, utilizing soft surface trail materials like mulch, aggregate, or mown grass.
- Explore the potential of creating boardwalk connections to Bramblewood Avenue and Bur Oak Drive through the park's western wetland.

Nature Playground

- Install a small nature playground near the park's southern entry and parking lot.

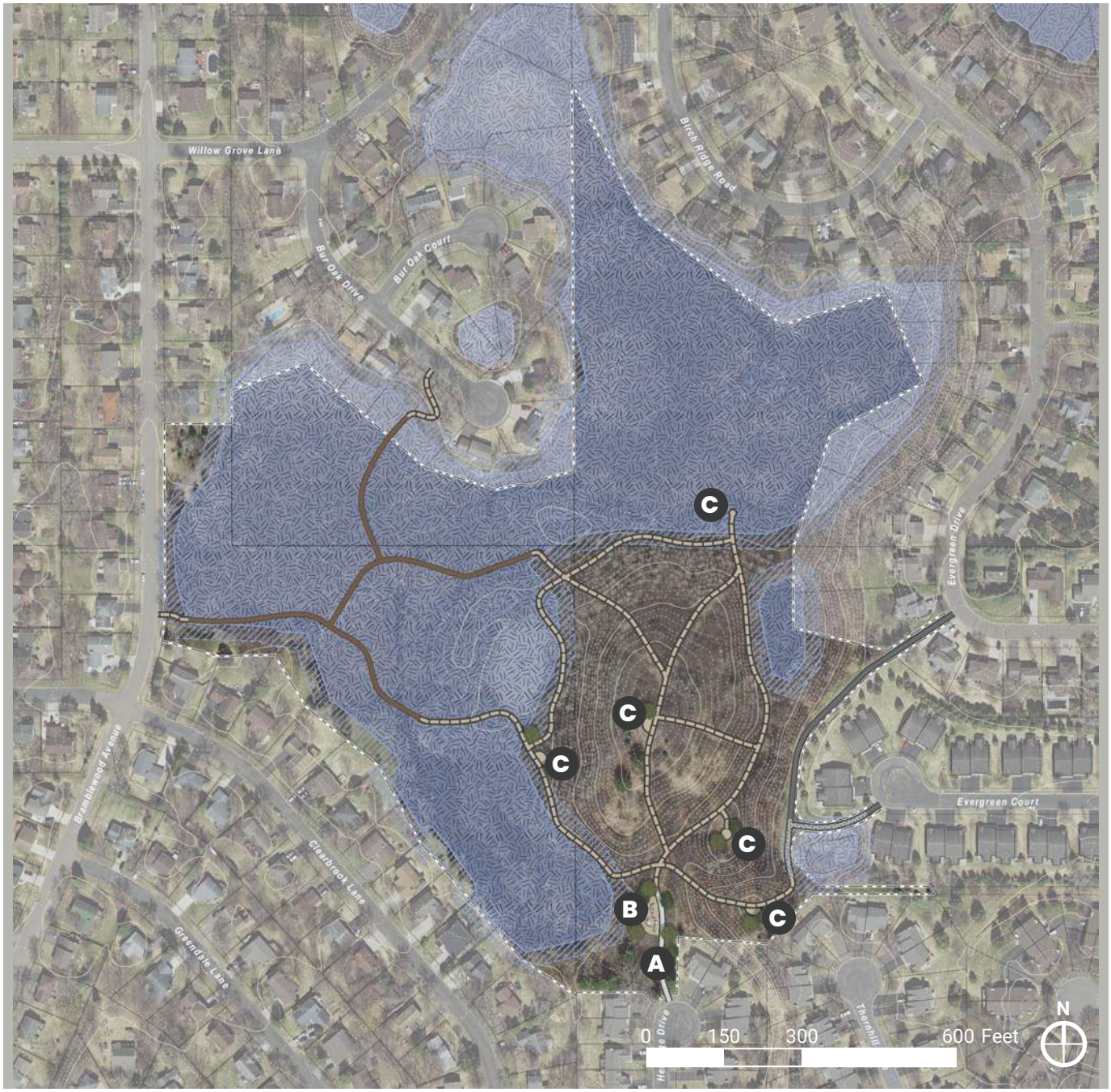
Long-Term Priority Projects

Forest Management

- Continue to restore woods by managing invasive understory species *(like Buckthorn)*.
- Develop a forest management plan for the park as part of city-wide natural resources management effort.[1]

[1] *Not included in cost estimates within Implementation Chapter*

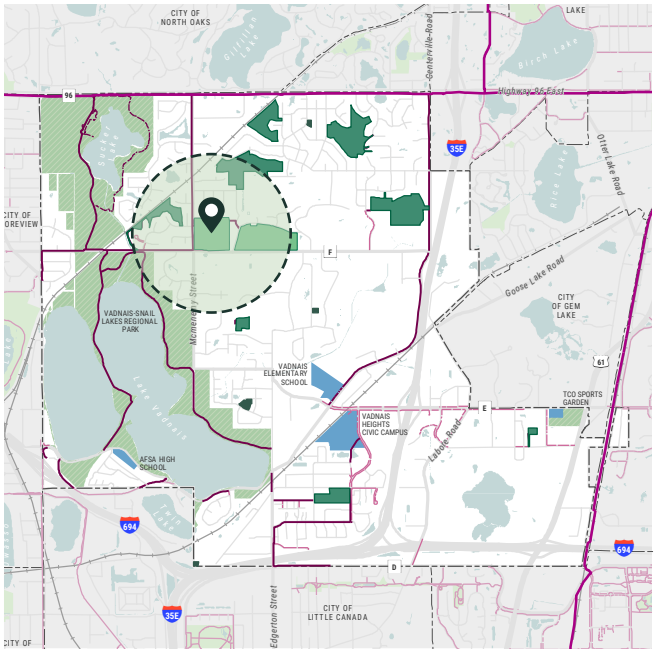
Figure 05.21 *Heritage Park Proposed Concept*



- Existing Trail
- Proposed Park Trail
- Proposed Pervious Park Trail
- Proposed Boardwalk
- Hiking & Snowshoeing Trail
- Proposed Neighborhood Connector
- 30ft Wetland Buffer
- A — Existing Parking Lot & Restored Interpretive Sign
- B — Small Nature Playground
- C — Proposed Rest Area/Interpretive Feature

Kohler Meadows Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.22 *Kohler Meadows Park Location*



Address	365 County Road F East
Classification	Community Park
Total Acreage	29 Acres
Active Use Acreage	25 Acres
Trail Mileage	1.80 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

> **“Fantastic walking park, & fully used for soccer and youth baseball.**

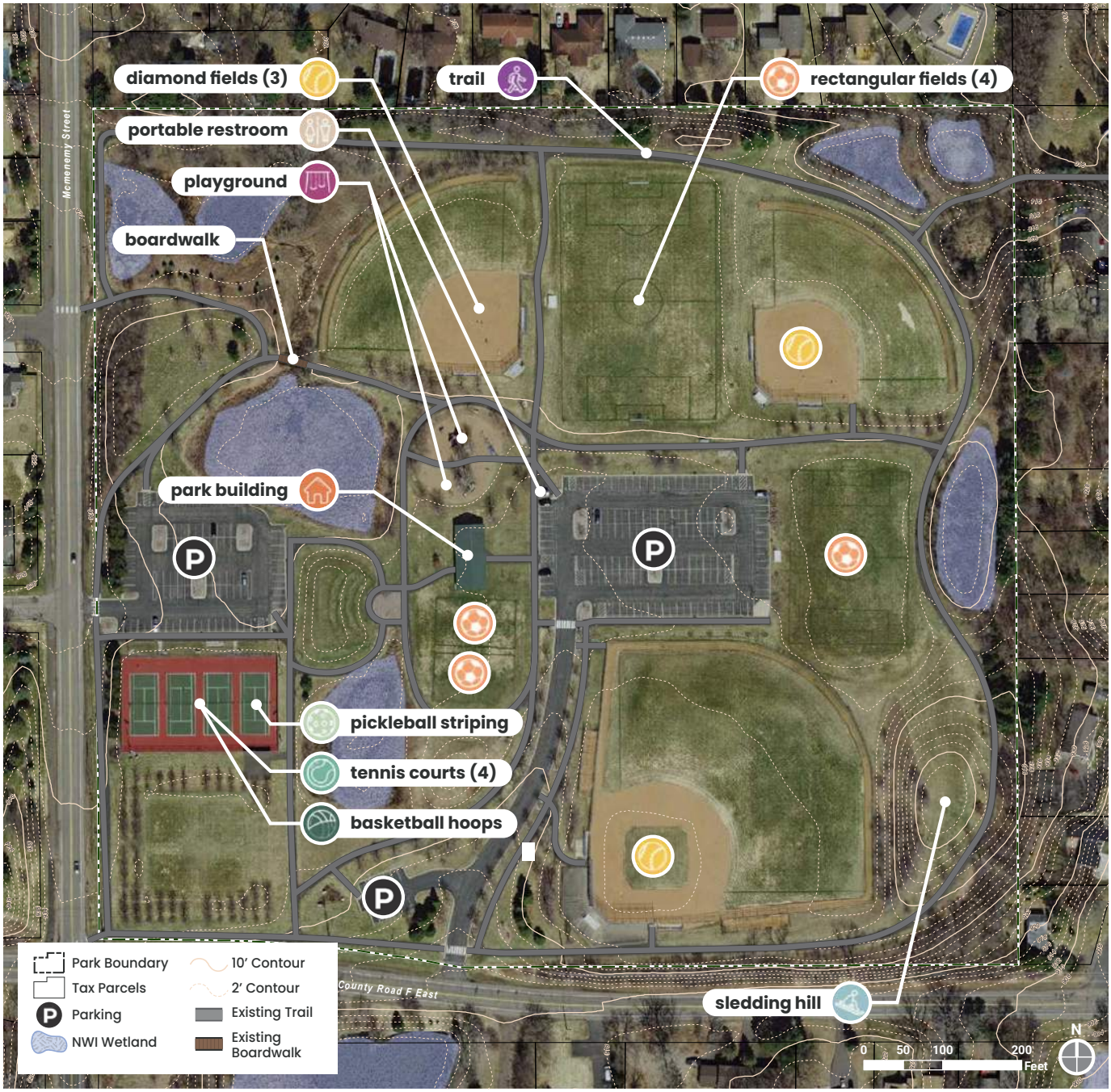
> **“Some full basketball courts would be nice... There are very few around.**

> **“The two parks here are fantastic! There are no splash pads near Vadnais & this would be a great addition.**

Overview & Observations

- Well established and loved park with great entry experience off of County Road F.
- Athletic facilities are in good condition and are well used.
- Earthen amphitheater and associated paved area are not used for events. This area separates second parking lot and tennis courts from the rest of the park.
- Playground was updated in 2021.
- Tennis courts were resurfaced in 2019.
- Light was installed on sledding hill in 2023 to accommodate more use over the darker winter season.
- Park building which includes a picnic shelter and restrooms are central to the space. The picnic shelter faces south and does not have a visual connection to the playground. Plan for long-term replacement.

Figure 05.23 *Kohler Meadows Park Existing Conditions*











Kohler Meadows Park Proposed Concept



Example of a splash pad



Example of a skate park



Example of native plantings with interpretive pathways



Example of a hammock grove

Address	365 County Road F East
Classification	Community Park
Total Acreage	29 Acres
Active Use Acreage	25 Acres
Trail Mileage	2.11 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Mid-Term Priority Projects

Full Basketball Court

- Reconfigure western parking lot to allow space for full basketball court. Install full basketball court.
- Add in shade trees and trail connections to larger loop trail system.

Hammock Grove

- Install hammock posts and shade trees.

Long-Term Priority Projects

Central Lawn & Water Play

- Incorporate central water play feature to expand playground *(existing playground maintenance not included in costs)*.
- Reconfigure central lawn space to remove amphitheater.
- Construct new park building with changing rooms, restrooms, picnic area, and indoor programmable space.

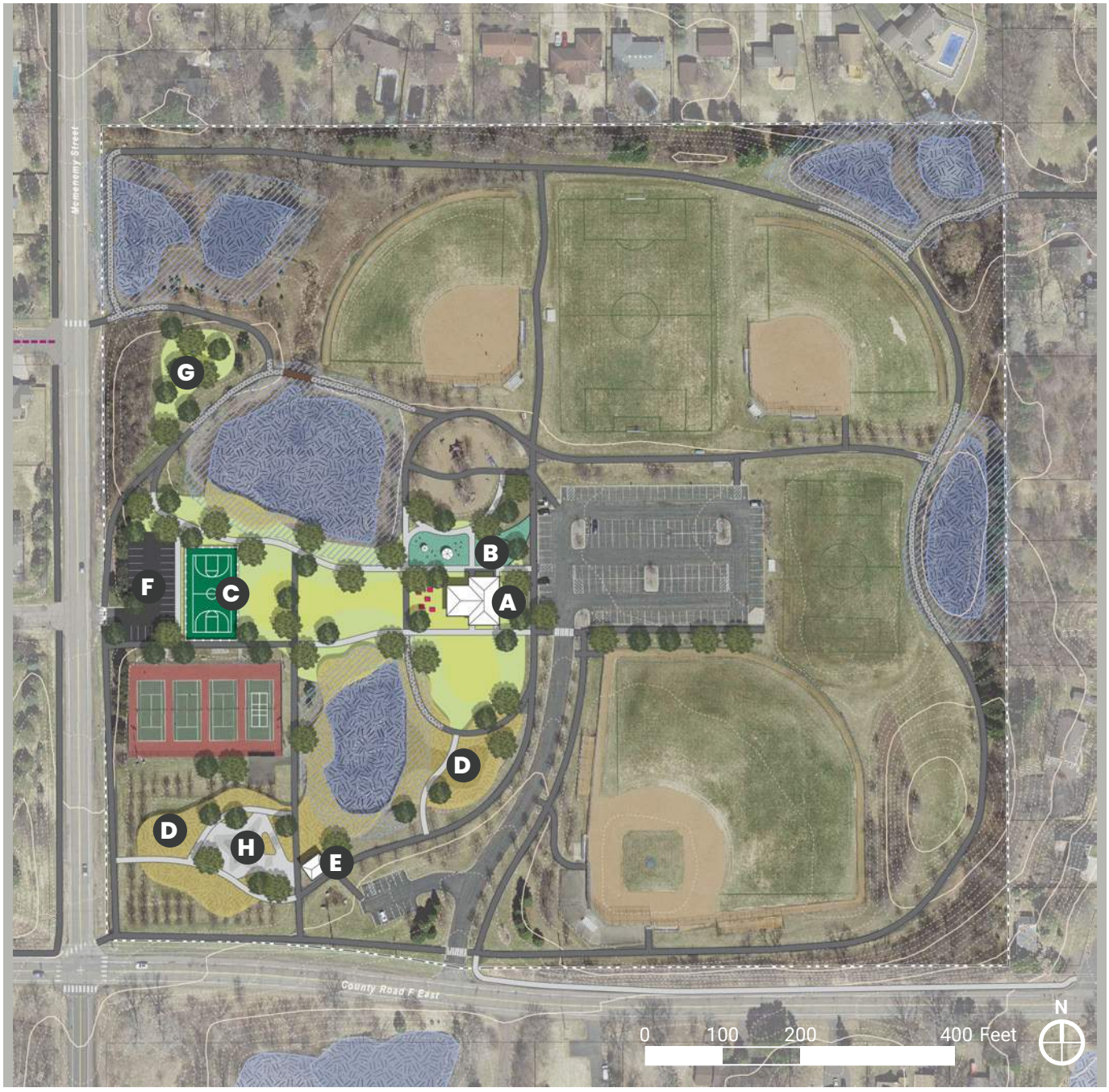
Skate Park & Native Gardens

- Add skate park and small picnic shelter with native plantings and interpretive trails connecting to larger trail system.

Pervious Trail Replacements

- Replace trails within wetland buffers with pervious pavement.

Figure 05.24 *Kohler Meadows Park Proposed Concept*

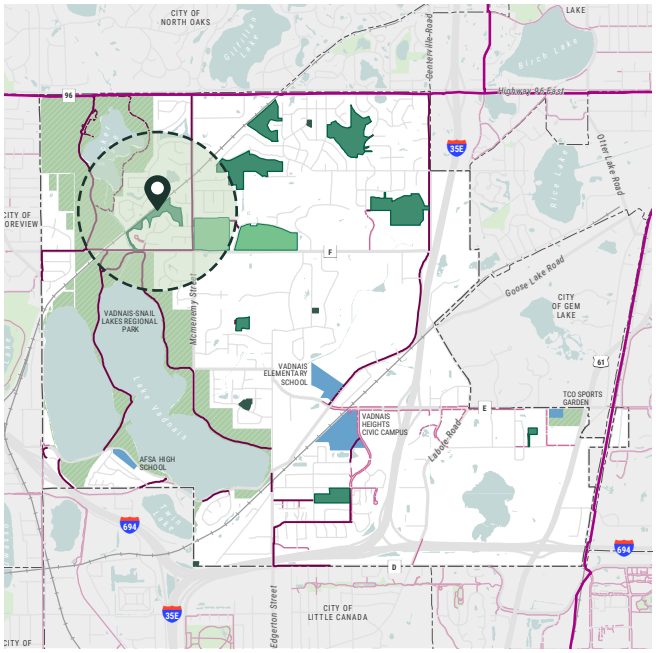


- Existing Trail
- Existing Boardwalk
- Proposed Park Trail
- Proposed Pervious Park Trail
- Proposed Neighborhood Connector
- 30ft Wetland Buffer

- **A** New Park Building with Restrooms & Changing Rooms
- **B** Expanded Playground with Water Feature
- **C** Full Basketball Court
- **D** Native Garden Interpretive Area with Pathways
- **E** Picnic Shelter
- **F** Reorganized & Reduced Parking Lot
- **G** Hammock Grove
- **H** Skate Park

Lily Pond Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.25 *Lily Pond Park Location*



Address	325 Lily Pond Lane
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	12 Acres
Active Use Acreage	7 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.68 Miles
Convenience Amenities	P
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

> **“Maintain open field area at Lily Pond - great for kite flying and space to run**

> **“I would suggest native grasses here & removing the field. There is a pair of nesting sandhill cranes in this area.**

> **“It would be great to have native plantings with pathways, and also add labels, perhaps with Dakota or Ojibwe names and meanings.**

Overview & Observations

- Rectangular field is hard to maintain, gets wet due to soils and adjacent wetlands during the spring season and then gets very hard and dry during summer months.
- Playground was replaced in 2017.
- Trails are well used by neighbors.
- Diamond field still used.
- Small playground and parking lot near Lilly Pond Lane.
- Existing trail connection spans park from County Road F East to Lilly Pond Lane.
- Challenging to provide crossing to neighborhood northeast of park due to active railroad constraints.

Figure 05.26 *Lily Pond Park Existing Conditions*









Lily Pond Park Proposed Concept



Example of native plantings with pathways

Address	325 Lily Pond Lane
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	12 Acres
Active Use Acreage	7 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.88 Miles
Convenience Amenities	P
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Replacement and maintenance of existing playground not included in costs.

Mid-Term Priority Projects

Field Reconfiguration

- Rectangular field relocated to diamond field's outfield.

Loop Trails

- Expand native plantings and incorporate interpretive trails.

Figure 05.27 *Lily Pond Park Proposed Concept*



Existing Trail

Proposed Park Trail

Proposed Pervious Park Trail

Proposed Neighborhood Connector

30ft Wetland Buffer

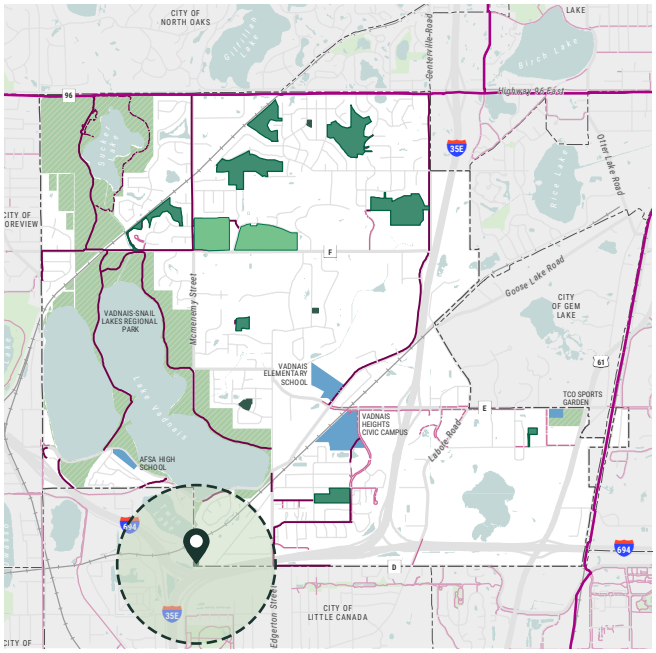
A Native Plantings with Pathways (*Soil Amendment Needed*)

B Small Rectangular Field Striping in Outfield

C Ongoing Eagle Scout Bench Project

Maybell Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.28 *Maybell Park Location*



> **Cute park, some benches and trees/shade on the structure or nearby would be helpful to use the space since there is nowhere to sit.**

Address	426 Mario Drive
Classification	Mini Park
Total Acreage	0.5 Acres
Active Use Acreage	0.5 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.00 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

This park was in development during this parks and trail system planning process. No concept plan was created as part of this document due to the timing and proposed conditions are not included in this document's implementation section.

Overview & Observations

- This is the City's newest park, built in 2023.
- Currently only consists of a playground.
- Trail access improvements are currently being reviewed.

Potential Projects

Develop a concept plan for this park, including but not limited to:

- Providing an accessible trail connection from the roadway down to the playground;
- Planting shade trees; and
- Providing seating.

Figure 05.29 *Maybell Park Existing Conditions*



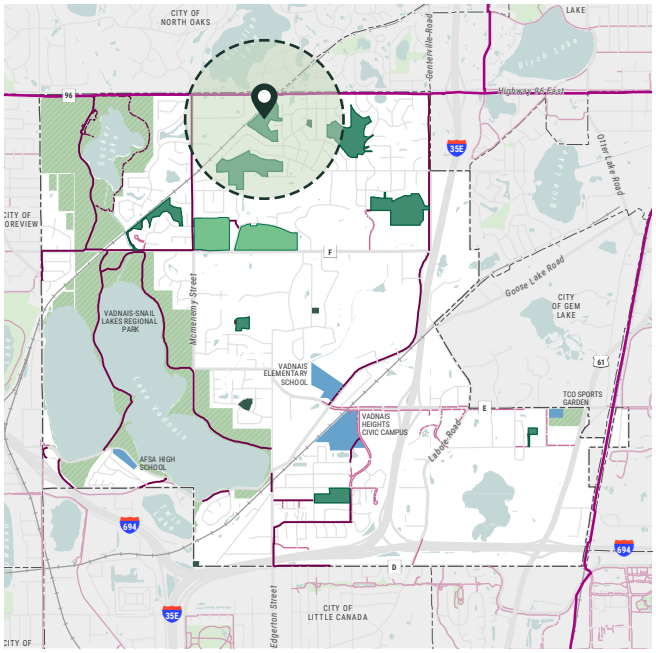






Morningside Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.30 *Morningside Park Location*



Address	4485 Morningside Avenue
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	16 Acres
Active Use Acreage	2 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.00 Miles
Convenience Amenities	P
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

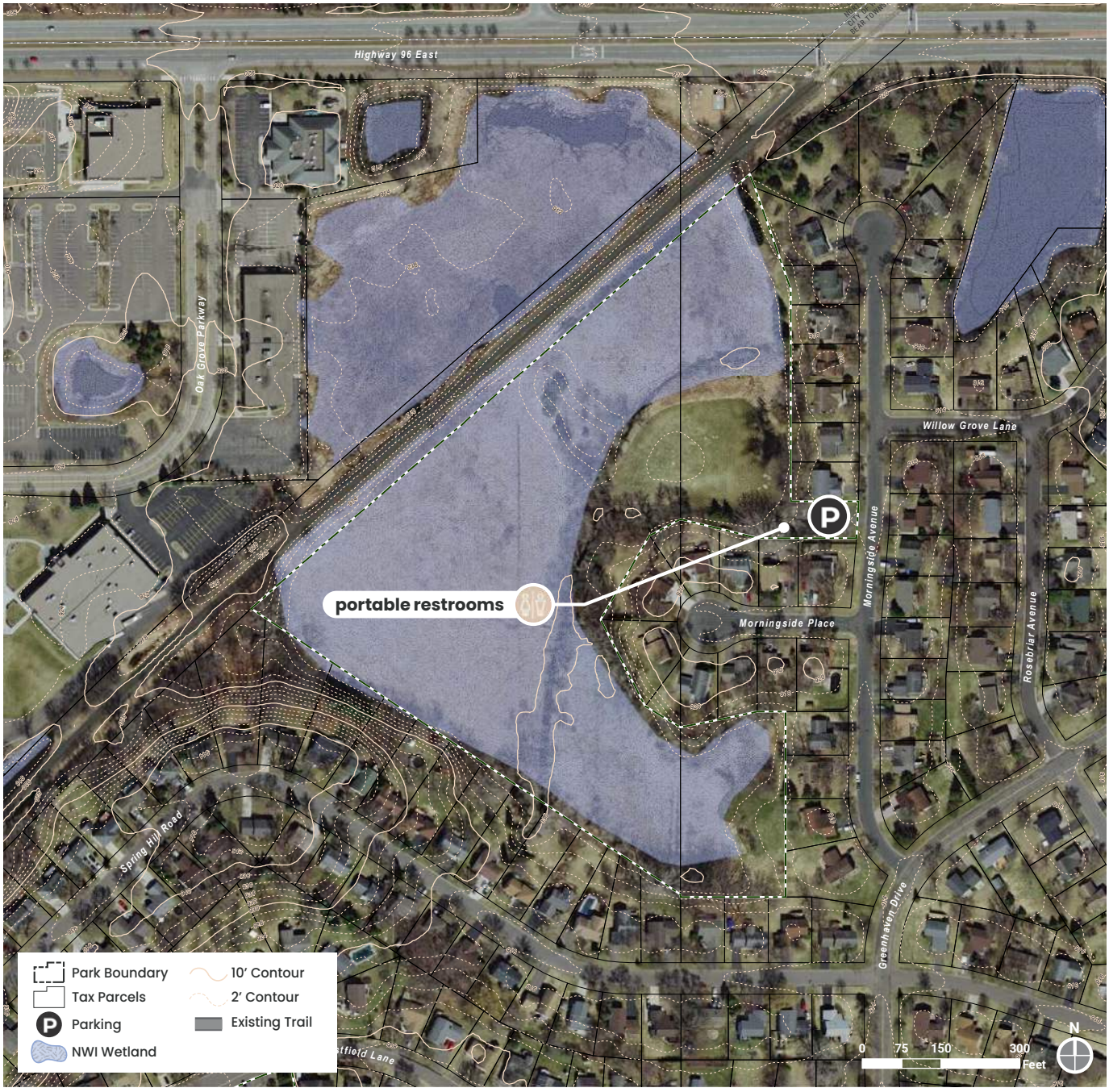
> **“Greatly appreciated area for the kids to come & play ball!**

> **“This park is underutilized & should have a purpose & be kept up.**

Overview & Observations

- Park is primarily a wetland.
- Small open field near park entry.
- Portable restrooms available adjacent to parking lot.

Figure 05.31 *Morningside Park Existing Conditions*











Morningside Park Proposed Concept



Example of dog waste amenities



Example of small picnic shelter

Address	4485 Morningside Avenue
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	16 Acres
Active Use Acreage	2 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.18 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Mid-Term Priority Projects

Loop Trail & Picnic Shelter

- Expand wetland buffer and native plantings and incorporate with new trail loop.
- Create a trail loop that connects to parking lot and Morningside Avenue and include dog waste amenities along its path.
- Add medium picnic shelter with tables near adjacent central lawn area.
- Explore the addition of informal snowshoeing trails within the large, western wetland area.

Figure 05.32 *Morningside Park Proposed Concept*



Existing Trail

Proposed Park Trail

Proposed Neighborhood Connector

Proposed Community Connector

30ft Wetland Buffer

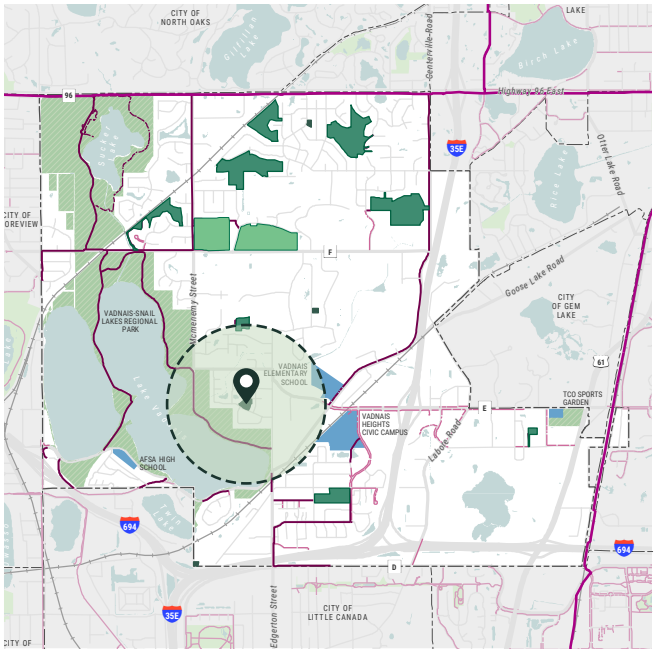
A Picnic Shelter

B Native Plantings with Pathways

C Informal Snowshoeing Trails Throughout Wetland

Oak Creek Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.33 *Oak Creek Park Location*



Address	485 Oak Creek Drive S
Classification	Mini Park
Total Acreage	2 Acres
Active Use Acreage	2 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.01 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

> **“Create a bit of screening and noise reduction for the surrounding neighborhood**

> **“I like that this park has open grass area for kids to learn to ride a bike, fly a kite, or play ball.**

> **“Would be nice to have new playground equipment, basketball court, walking path or even soccer nets.**

Overview & Observations

- Playground was installed in 2001 and is well shaded by mature trees.
- Majority of park is open turf lawn and is underutilized.

Figure 05.34 *Oak Creek Park Existing Conditions*









Oak Creek Park Proposed Conditions



Example of nature play features



Example of a full basketball court



Example of native plantings and pathways

Address	485 Oak Creek Drive S
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	2 Acres
Active Use Acreage	2 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.25 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Short-Term Priority Projects

Loop Trail & Rectangular Field

- Add a loop trail with native plantings to buffer from adjacent residents and provide area for stormwater treatment.
- Create a rectangular field/flexible event space as part of the open lawn area.

Expanded & Updated Playground

- Update existing play equipment and expand container to include nature play elements.

Mid-Term Priority Project

Picnic Shelter

- Add a small picnic shelter near playground with picnic tables.

Long-Term Priority Project

Full Basketball Court

- Full basketball court with 10’ fence and associated trail for access.

Figure 05.35 *Oak Creek Park Proposed Concept*



Existing Trail

Proposed Park Trail

Proposed Neighborhood Connector

A Picnic Shelter

B Full Basketball Court

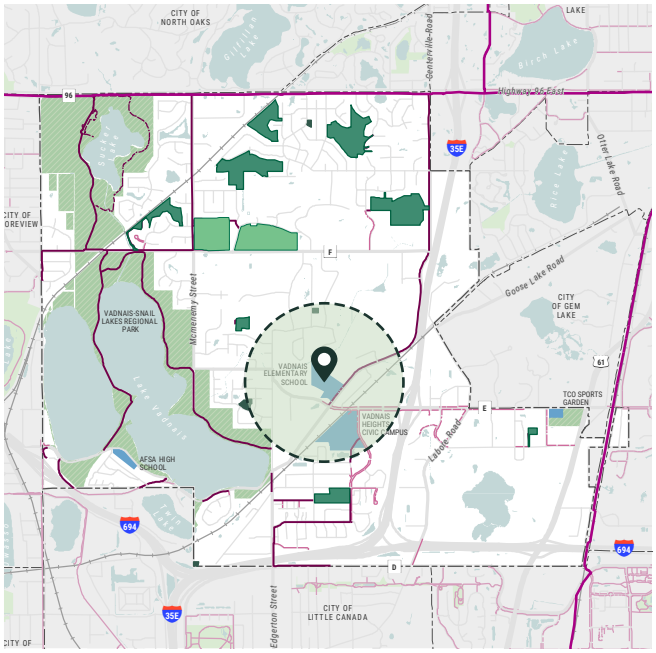
C Native Plantings & Pathways

D Updated & Expanded Playground with Small Nature Play Elements

E Flexible Lawn/Event Space

Vadnais Elementary School Existing Conditions

Figure 05.36 *Vadnais Elementary School Location*



> **Love the boardwalk into the woods. Could used to be cleaned up a little more frequently back there from teenagers but my littles love exploring there**

> **I would like to see a bike trail or sidewalk so that our kids wouldn't need to bike Koehler Rd to get to elementary school.**

Address	3645 Centerville Road
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	4 Acres
Active Use Acreage	4 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.42 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

As this park is technically owned by White Bear Lake Area Schools *(ISD 624)*, it was not given a full concept as all improvements will have to occur in close conjunction with the school district.

Overview & Observations

- Outdoor facilities are publicly accessible outside of school hours.

Potential Projects

- Continue to coordinate with school on field improvements.
- Investigate playground enhancement in coordination with school district.
- Update irrigation with smart controller.
- Explore potential for providing public access to indoor gym.

Figure 05.37 *Vadnais Elementary School Existing Conditions*





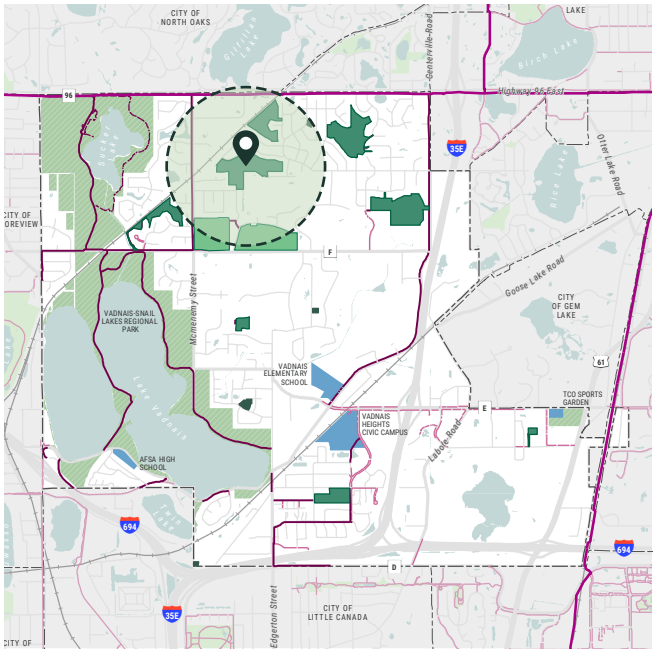






Westfield Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.38 *Westfield Park Location*



Address	520 Westfield Lane
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	27 Acres
Active Use Acreage	13 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.21 Miles
Convenience Amenities	P
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

> **“I love the skating trail, it was a great addition to this park and has been very successful in engaging the community.**

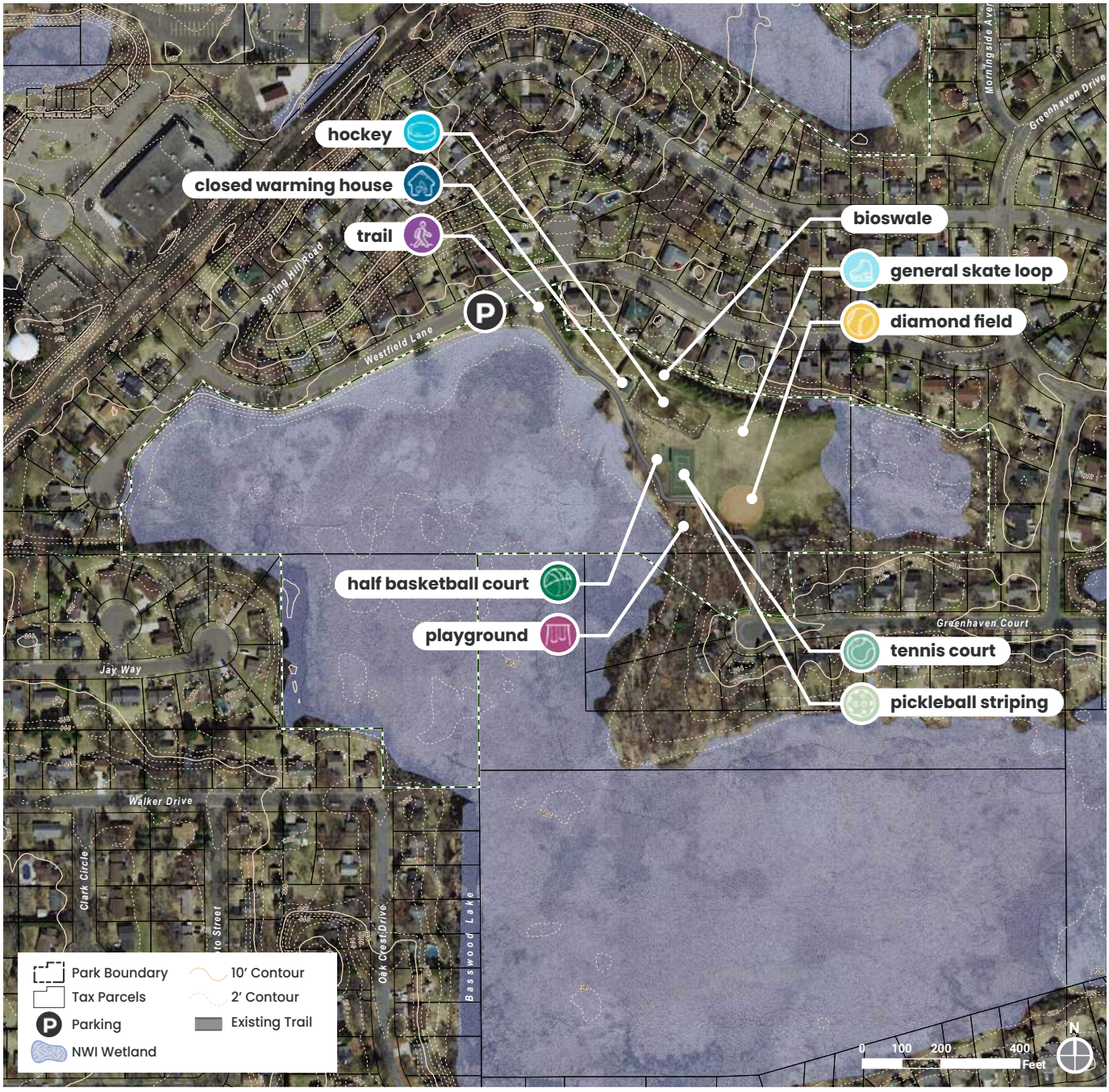
> **“I think it would be cool if we added a boardwalk around the wetlands.**

> **“There is a lot of turf at this park that is not used and I’m assuming is mowed/fertilized, etc.**

Overview & Observations

- Warming house is no longer operational or open.
- Ice for hockey is hard to maintain in this location but general skating is well loved.
- Diamond field’s outfield gets very wet due to poor soils and adjacent wetlands.
- Playground was installed in 2011 and is nestled into woods but does not receive significant shade.
- Tennis court was resurfaced in 2018 and has shared pickleball striping.
- A large portion of this park is wetland and there are great views of it from the main trail connection through the park. However, the main trail is within the wetland buffer.

Figure 05.39 *Westfield Park Existing Conditions*











Westfield Park Proposed Concept



Example of a boardwalk through a wetland area



Example of a playground with adjacent picnic shelter and trail



Example of a nature playground

Address	520 Westfield Lane
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	27 Acres
Active Use Acreage	13 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.61 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Mid-Term Priority Projects

New Playground & Picnic Shelter

- Remove hockey rink and warming house.
- Install a small picnic shelter and a medium playground focused on younger age groups.
- Realign main trail as needed for project, utilizing pervious pavement when in wetland buffer.

Nature Playground

- Transition playground nestled into woodland to nature play equipment as existing equipment needs updating.
- New equipment to be geared toward older age groups.
- Plant shade trees around playground.

Long-Term Priority Projects

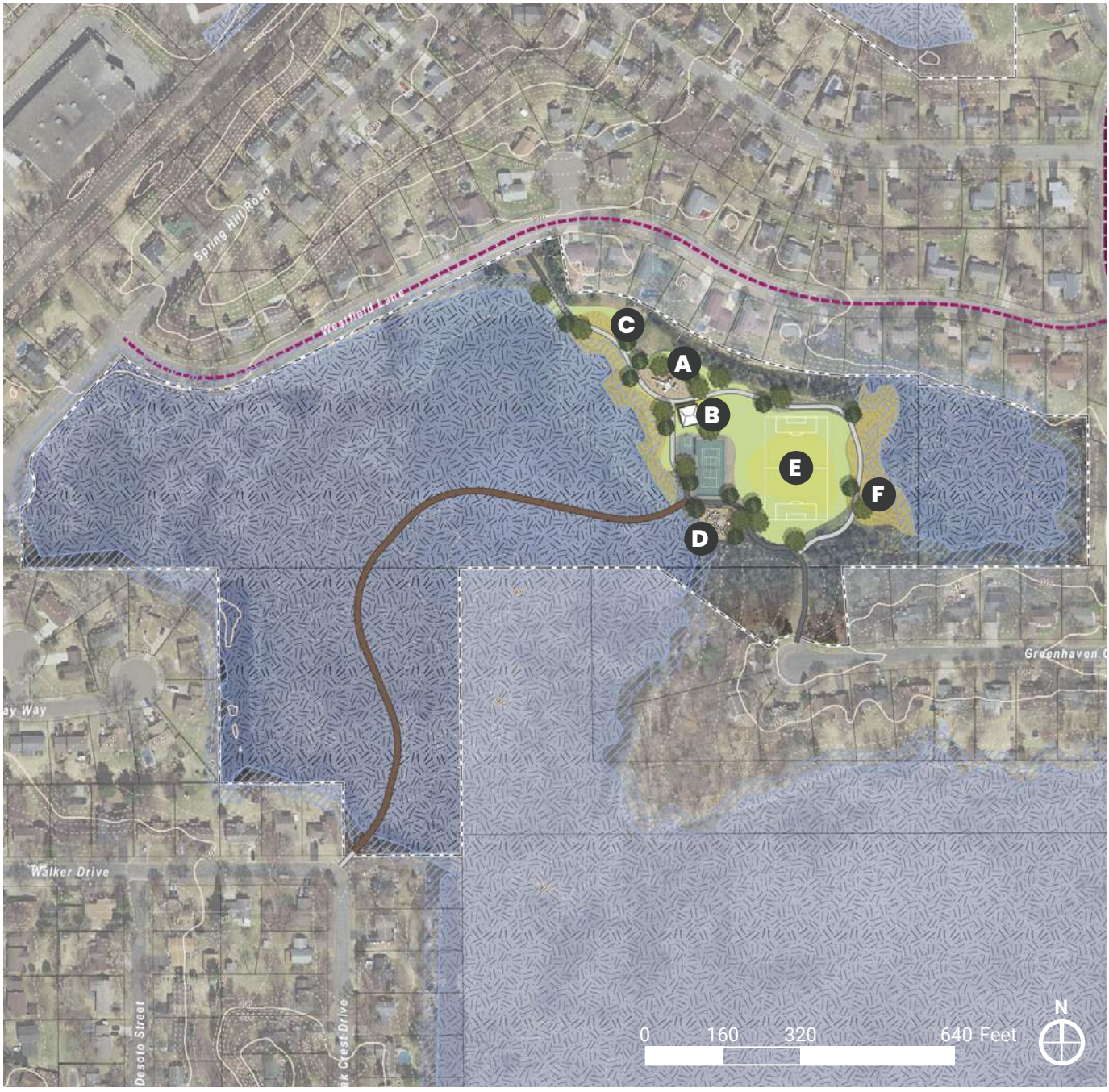
Field Reconfiguration

- Remove diamond field.
- Install a medium rectangular field.

Loop Trails & Native Plantings

- Create a loop trail within active area of park.
- Establish trail connection through wetland to corner of Walker and Oak Crest Drives, utilizing boardwalk or pervious trail material as needed *(costs assume full boardwalk connection)*.

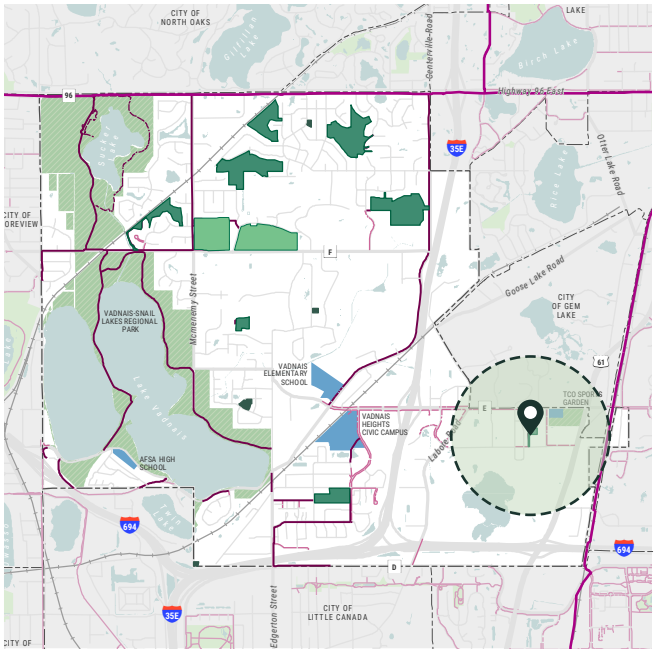
Figure 05.40 *Westfield Park Proposed Concept*



- Existing Trail
- Proposed Park Trail
- Proposed Pervious Park Trail
- Proposed Boardwalk
- Proposed Neighborhood Connector
- 30ft Wetland Buffer
- A Playground
- B Picnic Shelter
- C Existing Bioswale to Remain
- D Nature Playground
- E Medium Rectangular Field
- F Native Plantings

Wolters Park Existing Conditions

Figure 05.41 *Wolters Park Location*

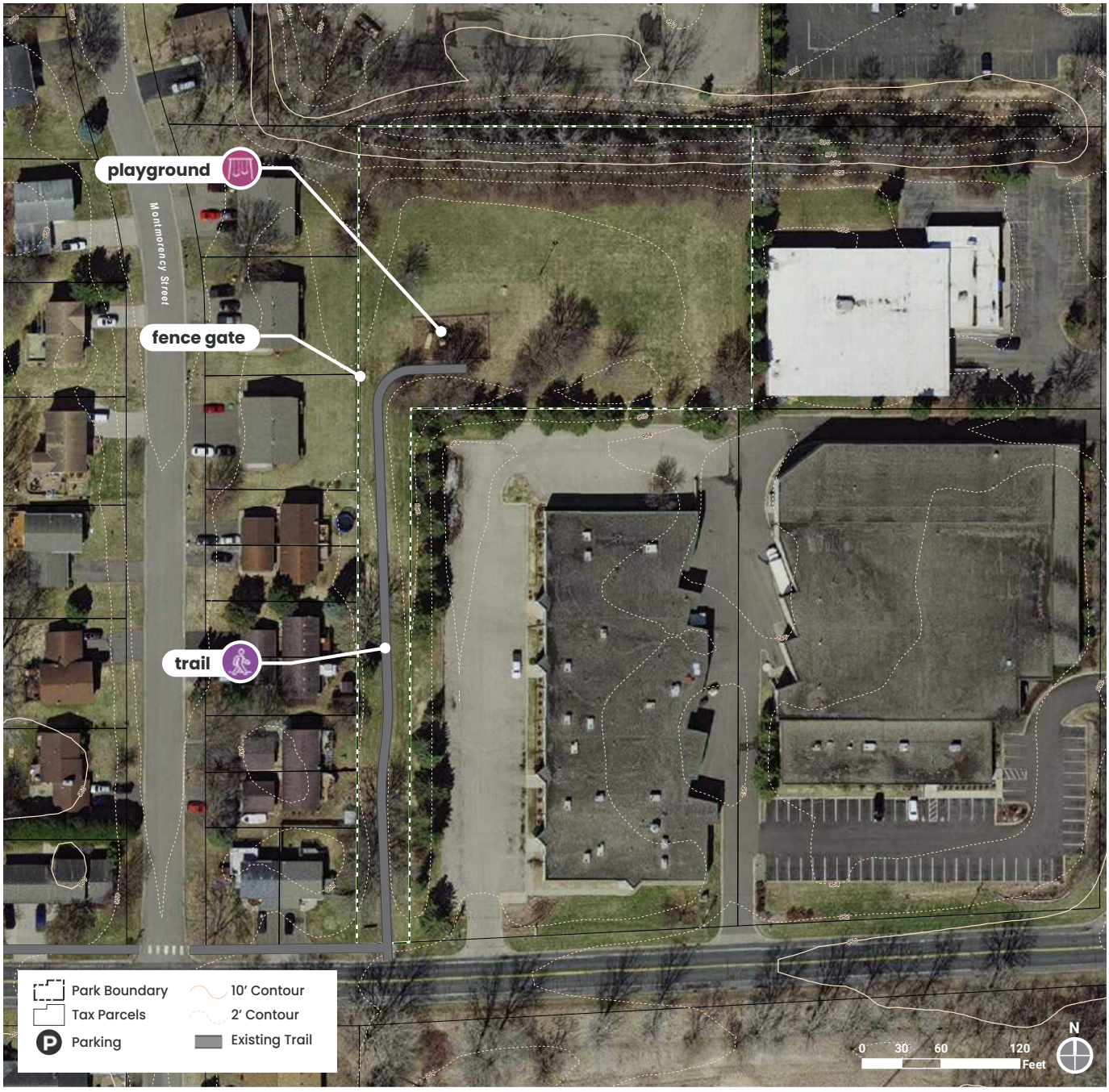


Address	1351 Willow Lake Boulevard
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	2 Acres
Active Use Acreage	2 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.10 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

Overview & Observations

- This park is somewhat unknown due to secluded location with limited access from the nearby street.
- Good screening from adjacent businesses but visually open to residential neighbors.
- Playground was installed in 2014.
- A park trail connects the playground to the existing trail along Willow Lake Boulevard.
- There is outdated lighting along the park trail.

Figure 05.42 *Wolters Park Existing Conditions*









Wolters Park Proposed Concept



Example of a full basketball court



Example of a small picnic shelter adjacent to playground

Address	1351 Willow Lake Boulevard
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Total Acreage	2 Acres
Active Use Acreage	2 Acres
Trail Mileage	0.24 Miles
Convenience Amenities	
Athletic Amenities	
Informal Amenities	
Winter Amenities	
Picnic & Play Amenities	

This park does not have enough street frontage to provide city-owned parking, but the potential to coordinate access to adjacent parking lots with surrounding property owners could be explored moving forward.

Replacement of existing lighting to be assessed as part of larger lighting study and is not included in costs.

Short-Term Priority Projects

Full Basketball Court

- Install a full basketball court with a 10' perimeter fence.

Loop Trail

- Add a loop trail and shade trees around park perimeter.

Mid-Term Priority Projects

Expanded Playground & Picnic Shelter

- Replace and expand playground.
- Install a small picnic shelter with picnic tables.
- Provide access with central trail connected to larger trail loop.

Figure 05.43 *Wolters Park Proposed Concept*



Existing Trail

Proposed Park Trail

Proposed Community Connector

A Expanded Playground

B Picnic Shelter

C Full Basketball Court

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Implementation 06



This plan includes many exciting ideas that support the community's goals and vision for its parks and trail system over the next 20 years. However, it is only as meaningful as the action steps taken to make it happen. This chapter outlines a plan for prioritization, implementation, and maintenance of the future system.

It is important to note that this plan records a moment in time, outlining the community's desires, best practices, trends, and prices for the parks and trail system in 2024. The goal of this plan is to remain relevant over a long period of time, allowing for flexibility as needs change or as new opportunities arise. The vision is especially important as a litmus test for ideas we cannot currently anticipate, especially beyond the three- to five-year horizon.

With that perspective in mind, this chapter provides:

- Short-, mid-, and long-term priorities to provide city staff an action plan for implementation efforts;
- High-level costing for planned projects, intended to be revisited each year to inform the Capital Improvement Project *(CIP)* budget annually along with potential funding sources; and
- Strategies for reducing long-term maintenance and increasing sustainable operations.

Prioritization & Costing

Estimated costs provided are to be considered "planning-level" to assist city staff with planning and budgeting. The estimated project costs are based on 2024 numbers and have the following assumptions built into the unit prices:

- Escalation *(4% for short-term, 10% for mid-term, and 15% for long-term)*;
- Professional design costs *(8% typical)*;
- Contractor fees and costs associated with construction such as permitting, testing, insurance, bonds, and general conditions;
- Other construction costs such as mobilization, demolition, and erosion control; and
- Contingency *(5% for short-term, 10% for mid-term, and 15% for long-term)*.

Since costs reflect this moment in time, it will be important to revisit unit prices and contingencies at least every five years to assist with planning and funding efforts. Costs have been grouped by logical projects that are interdependent and accomplish a goal of the system plan.

All costs are associated with improvements and generally do not include costs to maintain existing assets. Examples of costs not included are parking lot resurfacing, standard trail pavement repair, on-going ballfield maintenance, irrigation system maintenance, and on-going park building maintenance. However, playgrounds that are due for replacement within the next 10 years have been incorporated into the park recommendations. It is important that existing assets continued to be funded and maintained in tandem with new park and trail improvement projects. Recommendations about existing asset management and costs are included at the end of this chapter.

Based on community feedback, maintenance needs, and this plan's equity and distribution analysis, the various projects outlined for the parks and trail system have been grouped into logical and manageable projects and have been phased into three larger phasing priority categories: short-, mid-, and long-term. The following costing and priority tables outline projects by phase and are organized by location and with the appropriate level of detail provided based on the project timing.

Trail projects include community and neighborhood connectors. Priorities for trail projects also align with planned street improvements. Loop trails, located within parks, are included within park project costs.

Short-Term Priority Projects

Projects that fall within the short-term phase are anticipated to take place within the next five years, and therefore have more detailed descriptions and costs than longer-term projects. Short term priorities are focused on finishing on-going park projects and projects that address discrepancies in equitable distribution.

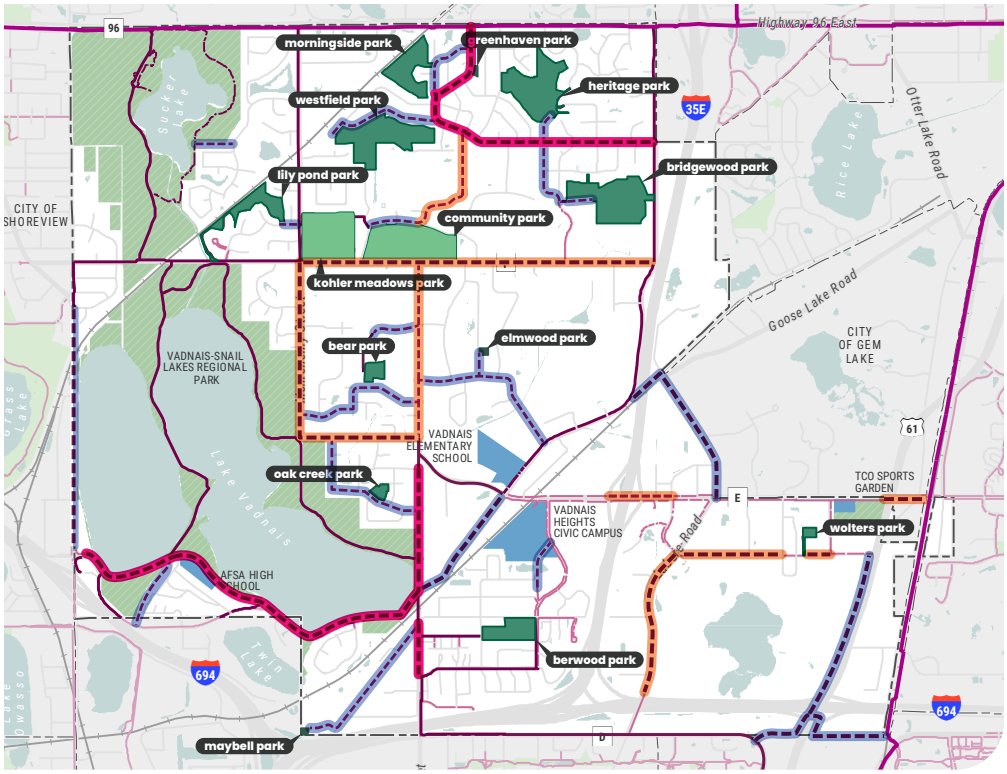
Mid-Term Priority Projects

Mid-term projects are planned for the five to ten year timeframe and have planning-level descriptions and costs associated with them acknowledging that some things may change in that time. Projects in this category will have big, community-wide impacts such as, key trail connections, increasing shade, addressing maintenance efficiencies, and updating phased out amenities.

Long-Term Priority Projects

Projects placed within the long-term category are anticipated to occur ten or more years from this plan's adoption. Significant change could occur in that timeframe, particularly in pricing, so while these projects are identified as needs, their detail will come later and will likely require further community participation to ensure their relevance. Projects that fall into this category include recent park updates that won't phase out for another 15 or more years, as well as large-scale, high-budget projects that may need additional planning to find adequate funding. Large impact projects in this category could shift to a shorter time frame as funding allows.

Figure 06.1 *Priority Trail Projects Diagram*



Priority Level
- Short-Term Priority Trail
- Mid-Term Priority Trail
- Long-Term Priority Trail

Proposed Trail Types
- Community Connector
- Neighborhood Connector

Background Information
- Existing Regional Trail
- Existing City Trail
- Existing Unpaved Trail
- Existing Sidewalk
- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Educational/Institutional
- City Boundary
- Water Body

Table 06.1 *Priority Trail Projects*

Short-Term Priority Trail Projects

	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Community Connectors [1]				**$5,208,500**
Edgerton Street	*LF*	*2,750*	*$256*	*$704,000*
Edgerton Street South of Vadnais Boulevard East	*LF*	*1,170*	*$256*	*$299,600*
Greenhaven Drive	*LF*	*7,495*	*$256*	*$1,918,800*
Vadnais Boulevard East [2]	*LF*	*8,930*	*$256*	*$2,286,100*

Mid-Term Priority Trail Projects

	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Community Connectors [1]				**$7,730,000**
Clover Avenue	*LF*	*2,735*	*$278*	*$760,400*
County Road E East	*LF*	*1,475*	*$278*	*$410,100*
County Road F East	*LF*	*7,850*	*$278*	*$2,182,300*
Koehler Road	*LF*	*2,620*	*$278*	*$728,400*
Labore Road	*LF*	*6,175*	*$278*	*$1,716,700*
McMenemy Street	*LF*	*3,950*	*$278*	*$1,098,100*
Willow Lake Boulevard	*LF*	*3,000*	*$278*	*$834,000*
Neighborhood Connectors				**$2,367,000**
Edgerton Street North of Koehler Road	*LF*	*2,360*	*$209*	*$492,100*
Kaitlin Drive	*LF*	*1,200*	*$209*	*$250,200*
Marigold Ave	*LF*	*300*	*$209*	*$62,600*
Marigold Easement [3]	*LF*	*1,100*	*$1,610*	*$1,562,100*

Long-Term Priority Trail Projects

	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Community Connectors [1]				**$5,209,300**
Centerville Road	*LF*	*2,930*	*$298*	*$873,200*
County Road 61	*LF*	*3,765*	*$298*	*$1,122,000*
County Road D Circle & Court	*LF*	*4,000*	*$298*	*$1,192,000*
Goose Lake Road	*LF*	*845*	*$298*	*$251,900*
Rice Street	*LF*	*5,940*	*$298*	*$1,770,200*
Neighborhood Connectors				**$6,298,900**
Bear Avenue North	*LF*	*1,775*	*$224*	*$396,800*
Bear Avenue South	*LF*	*3,220*	*$224*	*$719,700*
Easement between Stockdale Road and Centerville Road [3]	*LF*	*1,200*	*$1,725*	*$1,035,300*
Centerville Road	*LF*	*3,000*	*$224*	*$670,500*
Elmwood Street	*LF*	*550*	*$224*	*$123,000*
Heritage Drive	*LF*	*2,600*	*$224*	*$581,100*
Lily Pond Lane	*LF*	*375*	*$224*	*$83,900*
Oak Creek Drive South	*LF*	*3,140*	*$224*	*$701,800*
Southeast Civic Campus [4]	*LF*	*920*	*$57*	*$52,100*
Stockdale Road	*LF*	*1,785*	*$224*	*$399,000*
Trail off of Meadowood Lane	*LF*	*890*	*$224*	*$199,000*
Vadnais Boulevard East to Twin Lake Boulevard	*LF*	*1,630*	*$224*	*$364,400*
Westfield Lane	*LF*	*2,600*	*$224*	*$581,100*
Willow Grove Lane	*LF*	*1,750*	*$224*	*$391,200*

[1] Estimate reflects total construction costs for the proposed trail improvements. Funding partnerships and/or grant opportunities will be explored in more detail during the time of the project. Projects to be timed with roadway improvements to leverage resources effectively.

[2] Estimate reflects the City's portion of a larger project that would be funded in partnership with Ramsey County.

[3] Project assumed to involve stretches of boardwalk due to presence of wetland.

[4] Project assumes only bituminous pavement will be needed to replace existing informal trail.

Table 06.2 *Short Term Priority Park Projects*

Short-Term Priority Park Projects

	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Berwood Park				**$4,220,000**
Dog Park				$244,800
Dog Amenities	*LS*	*2*	*$3,200*	*$6,400*
Dog Park Surfacing	*SF*	*30,000*	*$4*	*$115,200*
Fence - 6'	*LF*	*775*	*$154*	*$119,100*
Trees	*EA*	*4*	*$1,024*	*$4,100*
Parking Lot				$75,800
Asphalt	*SF*	*5,915*	*$13*	*$75,800*
Park Building & Playground				$3,678,700
Concrete Patio	*SF*	*5,204*	*$15*	*$80,000*
Fence - 10'	*LF*	*350*	*$256*	*$89,600*
Park Building with Restrooms & Shelter	*SF*	*2,754*	*$896*	*$2,467,600*
Playground Curb	*LF*	*660*	*$15*	*$10,200*
Playground Equipment - Large	*EA*	*1*	*$384,000*	*$384,000*
Playground Surfacing Traditional	*SF*	*13,589*	*$16*	*$223,600*
Trees	*EA*	*20*	*$1,024*	*$20,500*
Water Play Equipment	*EA*	*1*	*$192,000*	*$192,000*
Water Play Surfacing	*SF*	*2,000*	*$90*	*$179,200*
Demolition - Flatwork	*LS*	*1*	*$25,600*	*$25,600*
Demolition - Equipment	*LOC*	*1*	*$6,400*	*$6,400*
Loop Trails				$220,700
Bituminous Trail	*LF*	*2,620*	*$49*	*$127,500*
Pervious Trail	*LF*	*510*	*$92*	*$47,100*
Trees	*EA*	*20*	*$1,024*	*$20,500*
Demolition - Flatwork	*LS*	*1*	*$25,600*	*$25,600*
Bridgewood Park				**$419,500**
Picnic Shelter & Playground				$419,500
Picnic Shelter - Medium	*EA*	*1*	*$96,000*	*$96,000*
Playground Curb	*LF*	*360*	*$15*	*$5,600*
Playground Equipment - Medium	*EA*	*1*	*$160,000*	*$160,000*
Playground Surfacing Traditional	*SF*	*7,415*	*$16*	*$122,000*
Trees	*EA*	*10*	*$1,024*	*$10,300*
Demolition - Flatwork	*LS*	*1*	*$25,600*	*$25,600*
Community Park				**$704,000**
Softball Pavilion				$704,000
Concrete Patio	*SF*	*2,500*	*$15*	*$38,400*
Demolition - Flatwork	*LS*	*1*	*$25,600*	*$25,600*
Park Building Remodel	*SF*	*2,500*	*$256*	*$640,000*

	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Elmwood Park				**$93,500**
Picnic Shelter				$93,500
Picnic Shelter - Small	*EA*	*1*	*$64,000*	*$64,000*
Picnic Tables	*EA*	*6*	*$3,200*	*$19,200*
Trees	*EA*	*10*	*$1,024*	*$10,300*
Greenhaven Park				**$115,000**
Picnic Shelter & Loop Trail				$115,000
Bituminous Trail	*LF*	*400*	*$49*	*$19,500*
Picnic Shelter - Small	*EA*	*1*	*$64,000*	*$64,000*
Picnic Tables	*EA*	*6*	*$3,200*	*$19,200*
Trees	*EA*	*12*	*$1,024*	*$12,300*
Heritage Park				**$41,000**
Wayfinding & Furnishings				$41,000
Wayfinding Signage	*EA*	*4*	*$6,400*	*$25,600*
Bench	*EA*	*6*	*$2,560*	*$15,400*
Oak Creek Park				**$460,600**
Expanded Playground & Native Plantings				$278,100
Native Plantings	*SF*	*150*	*$5*	*$800*
Playground Curb	*LF*	*120*	*$15*	*$1,900*
Playground Equipment - Medium	*EA*	*1*	*$160,000*	*$160,000*
Playground Equipment - Small	*EA*	*1*	*$64,000*	*$64,000*
Playground Surfacing Traditional	*SF*	*1,315*	*$16*	*$21,700*
Trees	*EA*	*4*	*$1,024*	*$4,100*
Demolition - Flatwork	*LS*	*1*	*$25,600*	*$25,600*
Loop Trail & Rectangular Field				$182,500
Bituminous Trail	*LF*	*985*	*$49*	*$48,000*
Native Plantings	*SF*	*12,500*	*$5*	*$64,000*
Trees	*EA*	*15*	*$1,024*	*$15,400*
Earthwork - Standard	*LS*	*1*	*$12,800*	*$12,800*
Field Striping	*LS*	*1*	*$3,200*	*$3,200*
Turf Seed	*SF*	*15,250*	*$3*	*$39,100*
Wolters Park				**$171,200**
Loop Trail				$51,900
Bituminous Trail	*LF*	*750*	*$49*	*$36,500*
Trees	*EA*	*15*	*$1,024*	*$15,400*
Full Basketball Court				$119,300
Basketball Hoop	*EA*	*2*	*$3,840*	*$7,700*
Court Surfacing	*SY*	*778*	*$28*	*$22,000*
Fence - 10'	*LF*	*350*	*$256*	*$89,600*

Table 06.3 *Mid Term Priority Park Projects*

Mid-Term Priority Park Projects

Berwood Park	**$118,200**
Community Garden	$118,200
Community Garden	*$111,200*
Earthwork	*$7,000*
Bridgewood Park	**$482,000**
Loop Trails	$380,200
Site Furnishings	*$7,000*
Trails	*$373,200*
Full Court Basketball	$101,800
Basketball Court	*$32,300*
Fencing	*$69,500*
Community Park	**$1,445,800**
Parking Lot	$29,600
Parking Lot	*$29,600*
Loop Trails	$976,800
Landscape	*$5,600*
Trails	*$971,200*
Central Event Lawn	$439,400
Earthwork	*$27,800*
Landscape	*$111,200*
Picnic Shelter	*$208,500*
Site Furnishings	*$41,700*
Trails	*$50,200*
Heritage Park	**$2,319,400**
Loop Trails	$2,294,400
Landscape	*$16,700*
Trails	*$2,277,700*
Nature Playground	$25,000
Playground	*$25,000*
Kohler Meadows Park	**$326,100**
Full Basketball Court	$297,700
Basketball Court	*$32,300*
Earthwork	*$27,800*
Fencing	*$97,300*
Landscape	*$16,700*
Parking Lot	*$110,300*
Trails	*$13,300*
Hammock Grove	$28,400
Landscape	*$8,900*
Site Furnishings	*$19,500*
Lily Pond Park	**$483,600**
Field Reconfiguration	$17,400
Earthwork	*$13,900*
Rectangular Field	*$3,500*
Loop Trails	$466,200
Landscape	*$410,700*
Trails	*$55,500*
Morningside Park	**$495,700**
Loop Trail & Picnic Shelter	$495,700
Earthwork	*$13,900*
Landscape	*$294,700*
Picnic Shelter	*$104,300*
Site Furnishings	*$31,300*
Trails	*$51,500*
Oak Creek Park	**$83,400**
Picnic Shelter	$83,400
Picnic Shelter	*$69,500*
Site Furnishings	*$13,900*
Westfield Park	**$601,200**
Nature Playground	$117,300
Landscape	*$5,600*
Playground	*$111,700*
New Playground & Picnic Shelter	$483,900
Earthwork	*$41,700*
Landscape	*$11,200*
Picnic Shelter	*$104,300*
Playground	*$263,800*
Site Furnishings	*$27,800*
Trails	*$35,100*
Wolters Park	**$267,200**
Expanded Playground & Picnic Shelter	$267,200
Earthwork	*$34,800*
Landscape	*$5,600*
Picnic Shelter	*$69,500*
Playground	*$128,400*
Site Furnishings	*$27,800*
Trails	*$1,100*

Table 06.4 *Long Term Priority Park Projects*

Long-Term Priority Park Projects

Bear Park	**$378,900**
Field Reconfiguration	$107,400
Earthwork	*$52,200*
Landscape	*$14,400*
Rectangular Field	*$3,800*
Trails	*$37,000*
Expanded Play Area	$271,500
Earthwork	*$37,300*
Parking Lot	*$34,600*
Landscape	*$8,400*
Playground	*$154,000*
Basketball Court	*$13,100*
Trails	*$24,100*
Bridgewood Park	**$12,100**
Shade Structure	$12,100
Shade Structure	*$12,100*
Community Park	**$872,000**
Expanded Playground	$872,000
Earthwork	*$67,100*
Landscape	*$29,900*
Playground	*$763,600*
Trails	*$11,400*
Heritage Park	**$149,000**
Forest Management	$149,000
Landscape	*$149,000*
Kohler Meadows Park	**$5,962,500**
Central Lawn & Water Play	$4,723,900
Earthwork	*$74,500*
Landscape	*$29,800*
Site Furnishings	*$59,600*
Park Building	*$3,650,500*
Water Play	*$864,200*
Trails	*$45,300*
Pervious Trails	$156,400
Earthwork	*$29,800*
Trails	*$126,600*
Skate Park & Native Plantings	$1,082,200
Earthwork	*$44,700*
Landscape	*$261,300*
Picnic Shelter	*$74,500*
Skate Park	*$670,500*
Trails	*$31,200*
Oak Creek Park	**$160,300**
Full Basketball Court	$160,300
Fencing	*$104,300*
Landscape	*$4,800*
Basketball Court	*$35,600*
Trails	*$15,600*
Westfield Park	**$2,719,600**
Field Reconfiguration	$115,600
Earthwork	*$22,400*
Landscape	*$89,400*
Rectangular Field	*$3,800*
Loop Trails & Native Plantings	$2,604,000
Landscape	*$285,500*
Trails	*$2,318,500*

Funding Sources

During this planning process, the community feedback aligned with placing value and investing in a park and trails system, but the question remained: how are we going to pay for this? Historically, the city has been conservative about spending, preferring to pay year by year instead of seeking bonding or a referendum to increase taxes to pay for projects over a longer period. This method generally leads to lower taxes for residents but makes it challenging to grow and maintain a parks and trail system that stays relevant to community desires. This plan is an investment that will assist the city in planning ahead, seeking funding, and competitively pursuing outside government funding and grants. Going out and seeking grants requires staff time and commitment which is not always feasible. There need to be funding mechanisms built in that provide the city with a more reliable source of revenue that is allocated for parks, trails, and the on-going maintenance and care of those assets. The following is an overview of the most relevant funding mechanisms that apply to Vadnais Heights.

Half Percent Sales Tax

In the recent past, cities would collect a half percent *(0.5%)* sales tax on products purchased within city boundaries. This has become a standard method of raising funds for community projects with a "regional" benefit and it brings a portion of revenue into the community from taxpayers who live outside, making it more palatable to resident taxpayers. This is relevant to Vadnais Heights because many of the "Community Connector" trails will have regional benefit as they will offer better connections throughout the larger community, between regional trails, and to Vadnais-Sucker Lake Regional Park.

Currently, the Minnesota Legislature has placed a two-year moratorium on any new sales tax proposals until they re-assess how they want to implement moving forward. As a result, cities must get legislative approval prior to gaining community approval through a referendum vote.

The University of Minnesota Extension office will provide a relatively low-cost economic analysis for Minnesota cities, a service Vadnais Heights could explore to help determine the amount of revenue that could be generated and how much of that revenue would be generated outside the community.

Parks Bond Referendum

Typically, after a significant parks and trail system planning effort, many Twin Cities communities have opted to finance system-wide improvements in large bonding bills that have gone to voters via a referendum. This increases taxes for residents over a designated timeframe. This method of funding leads to significant improvements in maintaining, revitalizing, and expanding parks and trail systems. Regional examples include:

- City of Apple Valley voters approved a $66.7 Million referendum in fall of 2023 to fund improvements to parks, recreation facilities, and the trail system over a 20-year timeframe. This will cost a homeowner $13.24 per month for a median home value of $250,000;
- City of Lakeville voters approved a $38 Million Park Bond Referendum in 2021;

- City of Brooklyn Park voters approved a $26 Million Park Bond Referendum in 2018 to be spread out over a 20-year timeframe. This cost a homeowner $4.84 a month for a median home value of $214,800; and
- City of Minneapolis voters approved a 20-year Neighborhood Park Plan in 2016 which adds $11 Million to existing funding each year through 2036 and can be spent on increased maintenance, rehabilitation of assets, and capital investments.

Funding through bonding can help jump start improvement projects and show the community that the planning efforts are actionable. Great support for park and trails were heard during this project through the community surveys and the engagement events. Building on this momentum would help a referendum be successful for Vadnais Heights.

Non-profit organizations, such as the Trust for Public Land, offer services to assist communities in pursuing and strategically crafting referendum ballot measures. Working with an advisor is recommended to help market the referendum and educate the public prior to a vote.

Franchise Fees

Franchise fees are typically a small dollar amount added to monthly residential and commercial utility bills. Franchise fees can be added to utility bills through a city ordinance process. The administration of collecting the fees is done by the utility company in their billing process and then is transferred to the city every few months.

Vadnais Heights currently uses franchise fees to offset the costs of street projects. If there were additional fees available from this source of revenue, funding sidewalk and trail improvements within roadway rights-of-way or programs with a nexus to utility usage, such as a lighting along a trail system, could be considered.

Park Dedication Fees

Historically, this has been the only dedicated source of funding for parks in Vadnais Heights. With a city that is nearly built out, this source is drying up. Moving forward, the city could increase the fee on developers when turn over and new development occurs.

Park Maintenance Fees

This fee would be in addition to a park dedication fee where developers are also charged a fee, usually per unit, for multi-family developments to help fund the maintenance of existing parks. This is not going to provide a lot of new funding for Vadnais Heights, but it is an interesting tool to consider especially as housing stock turns over and developers seek to max out their land.

Applying for Grants

Based on our research, there are over 60 grants that could pertain to various elements of the parks and trail plan. Grants could be a good source of funding for Vadnais Heights especially as it relates to natural resources, habitat restoration, protection of impaired waters, and trail connections that provide access to schools and regional amenities. Part of this planning effort included research on funding sources and grants from public and private sectors to provide as a tool to city staff. A spreadsheet with descriptions, application deadlines, grant ranges, and active links to project webpages was provided to city staff to use as tool and a living document. A static version of this document is provided in the **Appendix** for reference.

Obtaining state money through the legislative bonding process, or State Bonding Bill, is certainly still a good option to be explored but it is not listed as above since it is an unpredictable process and typically should not be considered a reliable source of funding. A compelling story, good lobbyists, and influential elected officials all need to be in support of a project prior to perusing state money.

Maintenance Strategies

The current maintenance practices for Vadnais Heights are the source of ongoing challenges in terms of available labor, even to cover the basic requirements of existing infrastructure. They also do not align with the city's goals for increasing the community's climate resiliency. City staff has identified the following issues with current maintenance practices.

- **Staffing:** Ideally, the parks need 8 full time equivalent employees to maintain the current system but there are currently 4.5. There are also seven part time employees seasonally, who spend nearly all their time mowing.
- **Trail pavement:** Existing trails are degrading, and the current method of repair is continuing to fail.
- **Plowing:** There are 13 miles of trails to plow in the existing system, but inadequate winter staff.
- **Flooding:** Recreational amenities, especially athletic fields, are located in low areas near wetlands making them very time-consuming to maintain.
- **Tree pruning:** Existing trees are too much for staff to maintain.
- **Ice rink maintenance:** These are increasingly burdensome as our winters warm.
- **Natural systems:** The need for invasive species control and natural resource restoration outpaces staff resources.

At its core, to address these issues it is necessary to budget for more maintenance staff time. This requires ongoing investment, so the funding sources above that



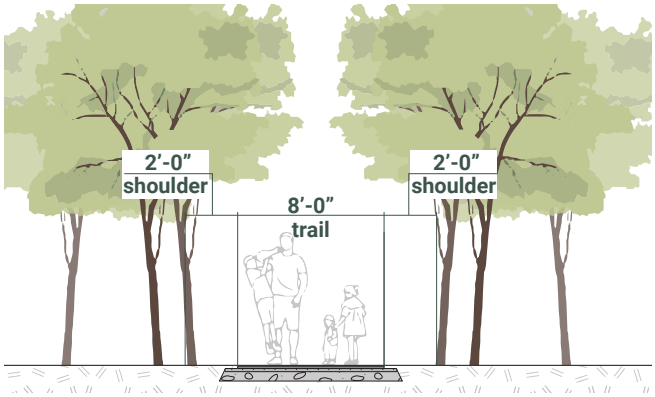
City staff putting up hockey boards at Community Park



Difficult to maintain turf area at Morningside Park



Invasive species management using goats behind City Hall



Standard 8-foot trail section



Example of infrared repair before on the left and after on the right (Source: MPRB)



Example of trail mill and overlay (Source: LRRB)

can be utilized over the long term should be considered to create a maintenance fund. In addition, there are some potential solutions for the specific issues facing Vadnais Heights:

Explore new trail maintenance strategies

- All new trails to be at 8-feet wide and all new sidewalks to be 6-feet wide to assist with plowing and maintenance equipment.
- Review plans for trail construction to review the design to verify it has the proper surfacing and base for the soil conditions.
- Prioritize funding for preventative maintenance versus major rehabilitation or replacement to make city dollars go further. To do this, increase the amount of planned trail maintenance from $4 per linear foot to $8 per linear foot and complete a mill and overlay every 15 years versus 20 years.
- Work with Ramsey County and asset management within adjacent communities to explore new technologies and resources in bituminous repair.
- Explore infrared technology to repair damaged, cracked, or failing pavement.

- Utilize the Local Road and Research Board *(LRRB)* research and resources for assistance in developing a trail maintenance checklist and repair plan.

Mow less

- Adopt a new "park turf" blend that includes fescues that need a lot less mowing.
- Replace turf grass in non-essential and hard to maintain areas *(such as on steeper slopes)* with native plantings.
- Educate the public that there will be less mowing in the parks along with the on-going educational campaign of protecting pollinators.
- Embrace native plantings and utilize volunteers, such as the Vadnais Heights "Green Team," to assist in the education campaign for native plants, pollinators, and mowing less.
- Use high-efficiency irrigation system with smart controllers where needed to maintain critical turf play areas.

Reduce ice

- Eliminate underutilized rinks, as proposed in the plan.
- Keep ice rinks oriented in a North-South configuration to help reduce on-going maintenance, per plan.
- Consider adding shade structures on remaining rinks to reduce freeze/thaw in the future. This was not included in the current plan due to lack of community interest and overall cost.

Avoid wet areas

- Plans are based on respecting a 30-foot wetland buffer which will ease maintenance of recreational amenities, but it will add to the maintenance of native plantings.

Plan for natural resources

- Work with the natural resource specialist to develop a natural resources plan and maintenance guide that addresses the system holistically.
- Include a budget to train staff in native plant identification and/or hire out this specialty maintenance item, especially during early establishment of new plantings.

> **"Transition to flowering bee lawns (fine fescue mixes) in parks- less maintenance required, better for the pollinators.**



Example of signage distinguishing mown from unmown areas



Smart irrigation controls at City Hall



Example of playground with integrated rain gardens



Example of 8-inch playground curb that is flush with surrounding surfaces



Example of solar trail lighting

> **“Please check into new field lights that cause less light pollution**

> **“Would love to see more inclusive playgrounds...accessible to kids of all needs**

Addressing Accessibility

As previously noted, all current playgrounds are technically meeting ADA standards. However, we heard strongly from the community that they wanted to see more done for accessibility, especially within playgrounds. To address this, all costed playground projects include:

- Eight-inch wide concrete curbing that is flush with surrounding grades;
- 10-20% of playground surfacing to be poured-in-place rubber; and
- Direct trail connections to the playground container.

Moving forward, this is to be the new playground standard. Each playground project will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and could opt to include a greater percentage of poured-in-place surfacing, if funding allows. A playground curbing and surfacing detail will be provided to city staff for reference.

Additional Planning Recommendations & Next Steps

In some cases, additional study is needed before implementation. These are aspects of park operations and facilities management that are outside the scope of this plan but will complement the goals established here.

Lighting

Lighting locations, hours, controls, and types came up as an issue at several parks and along some planned trail corridors. Examples include the parking lot fixtures at Berwood Park and the lighting that is failing along the existing trail at Wolters Park. Residents and staff expressed interest in more efficient and consistent lighting operations. A comprehensive approach to lighting throughout the system should be established before installation of new fixtures to ensure their necessity for safety or for consideration of activities needing illumination. In keeping with a sustainable system that is environmentally friendly, it is recommended that

new fixtures are dark-sky approved, LED, and 3000K temperature to keep glare down. Solar-powered exterior park lighting is becoming more widely used and can be cost-effective long-term.

Signage & Wayfinding

As the trail system is built-out, a system-wide wayfinding and signage plan should be developed to assist with directional wayfinding that builds on the branding of Vadnais Heights and ties into the existing park signage for a standardized look. All park signs, including monument signs, rules, wayfinding, and other sign types should continue to be updated as needed.

Asset Management Plan

A next step for city staff is to complete a comprehensive review of how asset management is scheduled, planned, costed and how it will be aligned with planned improvements. All assets should be catalogued to note their age, condition, and anticipated replacement year to inform a 10-year maintenance schedule. This should be a coordinated, joint effort between public works and parks and recreation staff. Ideally, all assets would be tracked through a GIS database or other asset management software. The asset management plan should be updated at least annually.



Examples of trail wayfinding marker



New city standard for park signage

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Appendix A

Supplementary information to the Parks & Trail System Plan that was developed as part of this planning process is included in this appendix, and includes:

- Additional demographic maps developed as part of the existing conditions and needs assessment efforts;
- A larger overview of relevant past planning efforts;
- Individual summary memos for each community engagement event;
- Funding spreadsheet; and,
- A regionally-focused concept and high-level cost estimate for a combined Kohler Meadows Community Park.

If you are viewing this document online, view the appendix by clicking the button below!

View Appendix