

CHAPTER 8: PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION

PARK INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Neighborhood Parks

- Basic unit of the park system
- Serve a recreation and social purpose
- Development focuses on informal recreation
- Programmed activities are typically limited to youth sports practices and very occasionally, games

North Mankato Neighborhood Parks

- Forest Heights Park
- King Arthur Park
- Langness Playground
- North Ridge Park
- Pleasant View Park
- Reserve Park
- Roe Crest Park
- South Avenue Playlot
- Storybook Park
- Tower Park
- Walter S. Farm Park
- Wallyn Park

Community/Regional Parks

- Serve a broader and more specialized purpose than neighborhood parks
- Focused on meeting community-based recreational needs, regional-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces

North Mankato Community/Regional Parks

- Benson Park
- Spring Lake Park
- Wheeler Park

Regional Athletic Complexes/Facilities

- The City has a number of athletic facilities for varying levels of programmed use
- City-provided facilities are complemented by the local schools, colleges, and neighboring communities' athletic facilities

North Mankato Regional Athletic Complexes/Facilities

- Caswell Park Softball Complex
- Caswell North Soccer Complex
- Webster Ball Diamonds

Other North Mankato Parks

Special-Use Parks

- Centennial Park
- Riverview Park

Open Space

- Bluff Park
- Lee Boulevard Park

Schools/Colleges

- South Central College
- Dakota Meadows Middle School
- Hoover Elementary School
- Monroe Elementary School
- Bridges Community School

VISION FOR PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION

To provide a comprehensive and balanced system of parks, greenways, trails, and support for providers of recreation-orientated activities and programs for City residents in a cost-effective manner that continues North Mankato's commitment to outstanding recreational assets.

Table 8-B. Park Inventory

Park Classification	Existing Parks		Proposed Parks	
	#	Acres	#	Acres
Neighborhood Parks	12	42.5	1	2.7*
Community Regional Parks	3	138.5	1	2.7
Athletic Complex / Facility	2	47.8	1	7
Special-Use Parks	2	8.6	0	0
Open Space Parks	2	40.3	0	0
Totals	21	277.7	3	12.4

*Contingent on extent of future residential development and annexation; based on 5 acres per site and a ½-mile service area radius. **Note** : Greenways are not included in the table.

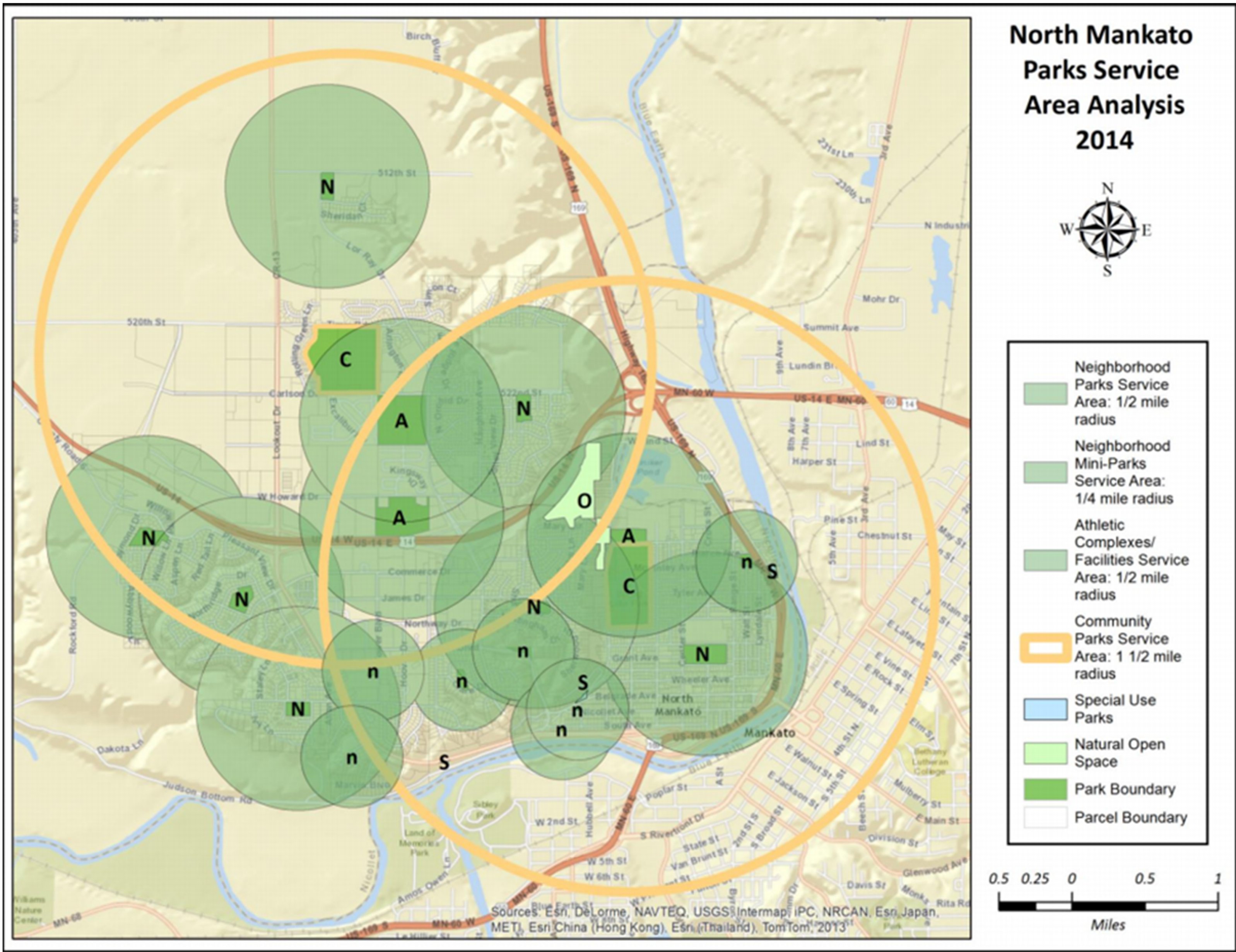
Table 8-C. North Mankato Park Facilities

X - Included P - Proposed O - Open Skating H - Hockey S - Shelters L - Lighted	Picnic Area	Restrooms	Water Fountains	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Sand Volleyball	Horseshoe Court	Ball Fields	Playground Area	Trails* Distance	Swimming	Ice Skating	Warming House	Sliding	X Country Skiing	Wildlife/Nature	Dump Station	Fishing	Lake Depth	ADA Inclusive Play Equipment	Scenic Overview	Park Size (Acres)
Benson Park 2000 Carlson Drive	P	X	X					X	1+					P	X	P		Blue Gills	8 ft			69.12
Bluff Park 194 Mary Circle		X	X						1.2						X	X					X	30.01
Caswell Park 625-3621 1875 Howard Drive	X	X	X			4		L6	X											X		25.00
Centennial Park 840 Belgrade Ave			X																			1.00
Forest Heights Park 401 Marie Lane	X		X	X	L2			1	X						X							5.00
King Arthur Park 1580 Sharon Drive	X		X	X	L2			1	X			O			X							5.10
Langness Playground 355 Carol Court	X			X					X						X							1.10
Lee Boulevard Rest Area 1500 Lee Blvd	X																					1.20
North Ridge Park 1720 Quail Roost Drive	X		X	X		1		1	X			O			X							6.50
Pleasant View Park 2215 Pleasant View Drive	X		X	X				1	X						X							7.79
Reserve Park 1902 Lexington Lane	S1		p						X						X							5.39
Riverview Park 900 North River Drive	X	X	X							X					X	X	X					6.20
Roe Crest Park 2214 Clare Drive	X		X					1	X			O			X							3.80
South Avenue Playlot 937 South Avenue	X								X													0.75
Spring Lake Park 641 Webster Avenue	S5	X	X	X		4		3	X	0.8	X	H	X		X	X		Crappies	12 ft			52.00
Tower Park 1525 Tower Boulevard			X		L2																	3.00
Walter S. Farm Park 1601 Countryside Drive	X		X	X			1	1	X			O			X							6.10
Wallyn Park 201 Pierce Avenue	X							1	X						X							2.30
Webster Ball Diamonds 640 Webster Avenue								2		0.3				X	X							6.50
Wheeler Park 387-5187 402 Page Avenue	S2	X	X	X	2		12	1	X			O	X		X							12.50
South Central College (Leased April-August)	X							5														

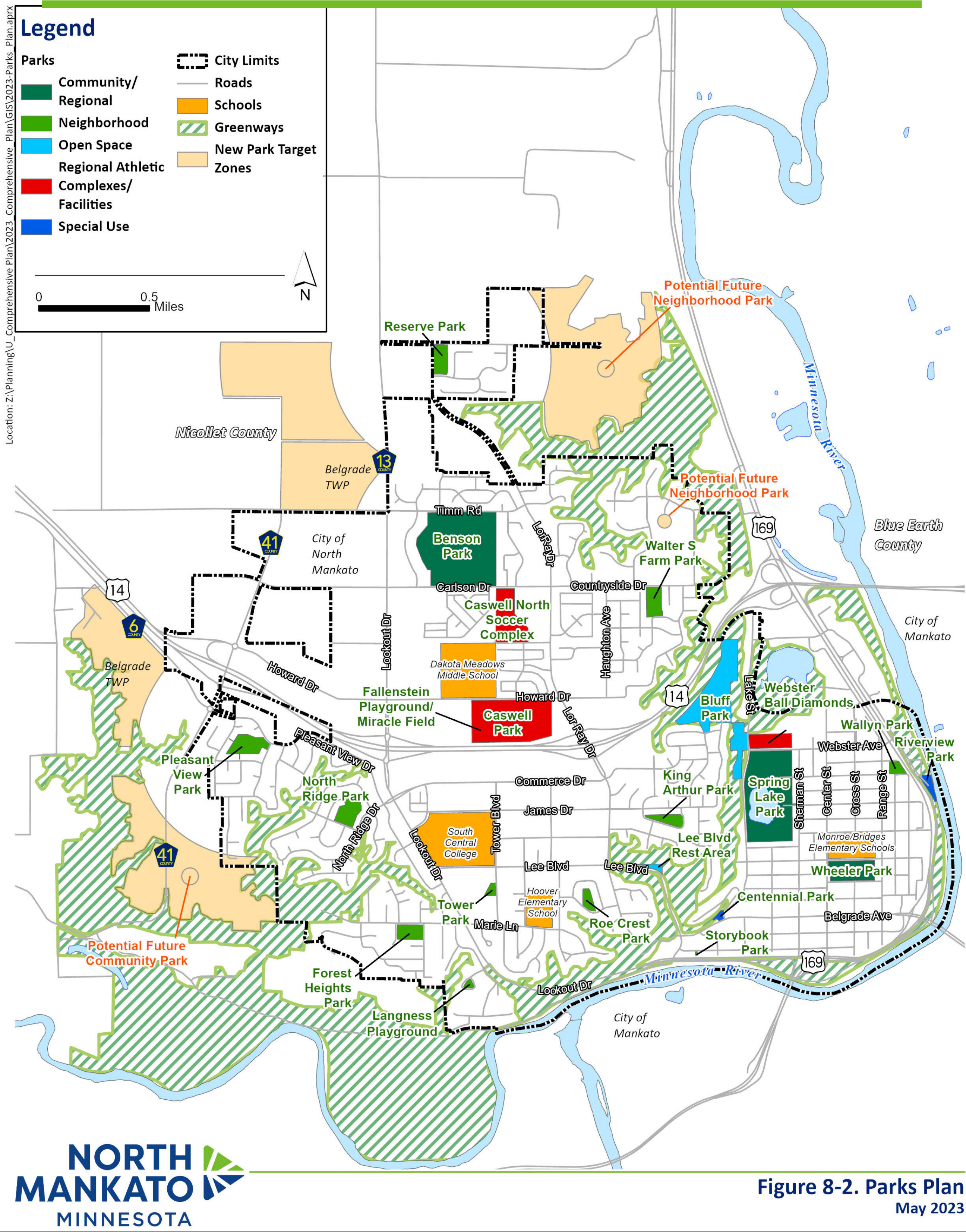
*Trails Distance in Miles

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PARK SERVICE AREAS



2023 PARKS PLAN



CHAPTER 8: PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION

TRAIL SYSTEM GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

GOAL 1: Expand on the existing interlinking system of trails throughout the City that connect with adjoining communities, regional, and state trails.

Objective 1.1: Continue to maintain the trail system plan for the City to better understand community needs and desires.

Policy 1.1.1: Ensure the quality standard for trails within the system is consistent with industry standards for safety, durability, and access.

Policy 1.1.2: Continue to create a comprehensive signage program for trail facilities.

Policy 1.1.3: Integrate new residential, commercial, and industrial development into the existing and expanding trail system when possible.

Policy 1.1.4: Include the development of trails in North Mankato's Capital Improvements

Plan.

Policy 1.1.5: During the planning process for major street and utility improvements, evaluate the appropriateness of developing community and neighborhood trails with the proposed improvements, even if the Trail System Master Plan does not show proposed trails associated with the areas to be improved.

Policy 1.1.6: Incorporate trails into ravine restoration or improvement

Objective 1.2: Strengthen east and west connections over the Minnesota River to enhance system continuity and regional connectivity.

Policy 1.2.1: Explore the feasibility of, and options for, the construction of a dedicated pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Minnesota River from North Mankato to Mankato and the regional trail system.

GOAL 2: Strengthen trail connectivity within City limits

Objective 2.1: Create a stronger north and south connection over Highway 14 in Upper North Mankato

Policy 2.1.1: Construct proposed on-street and multi-use trails as identified in the City Trail System Master Plan.

Policy 2.1.2: Pursue grant funding opportunities identified in the Highway 14 Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study to construct a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Highway 14 that will connect the Commerce Drive Trail and planned on-street trail facilities on Tower Boulevard to the Caswell Sports Complex and trails north.

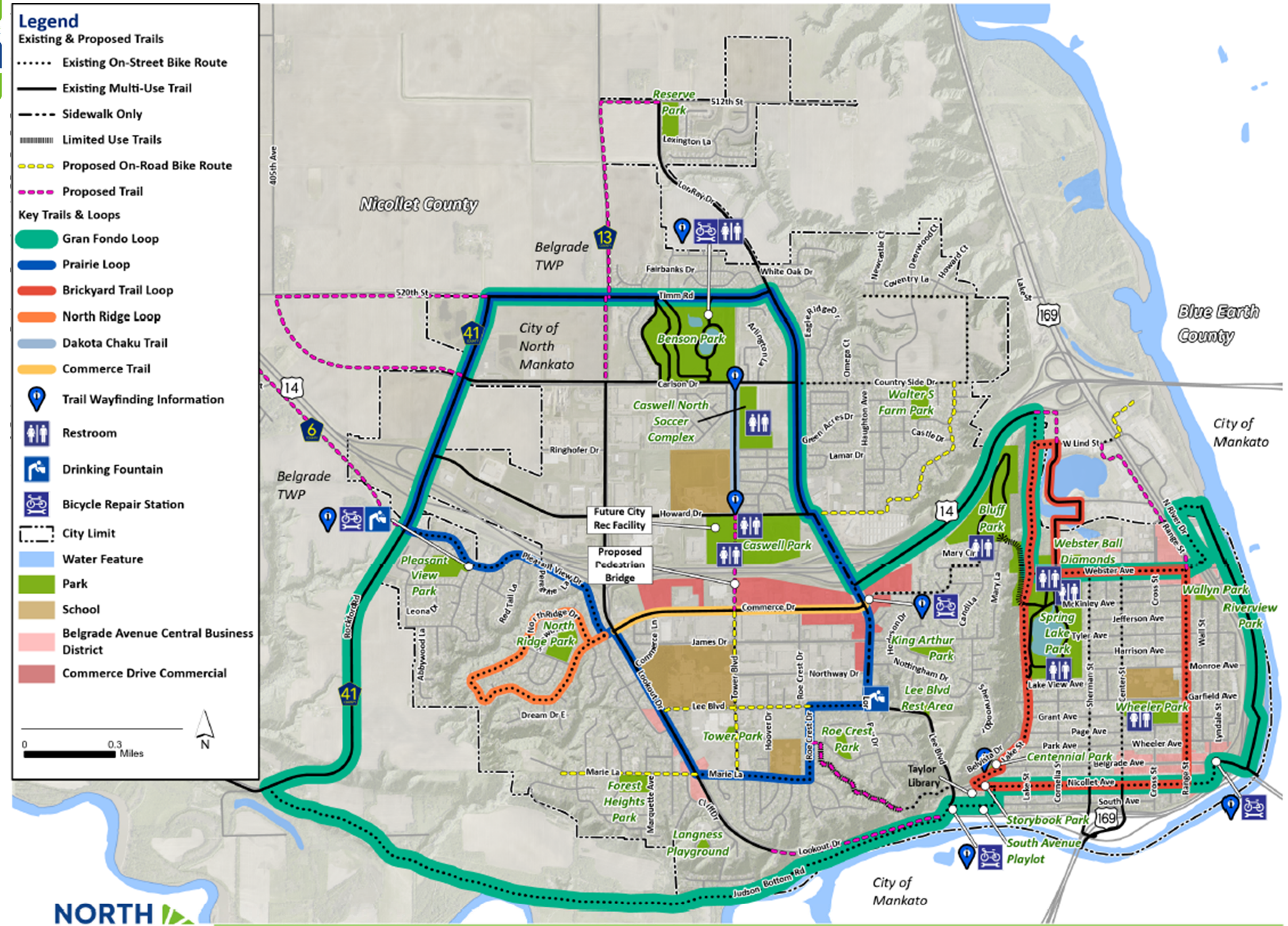


Figure 8-3. City Trail System Master Plan
April 2023

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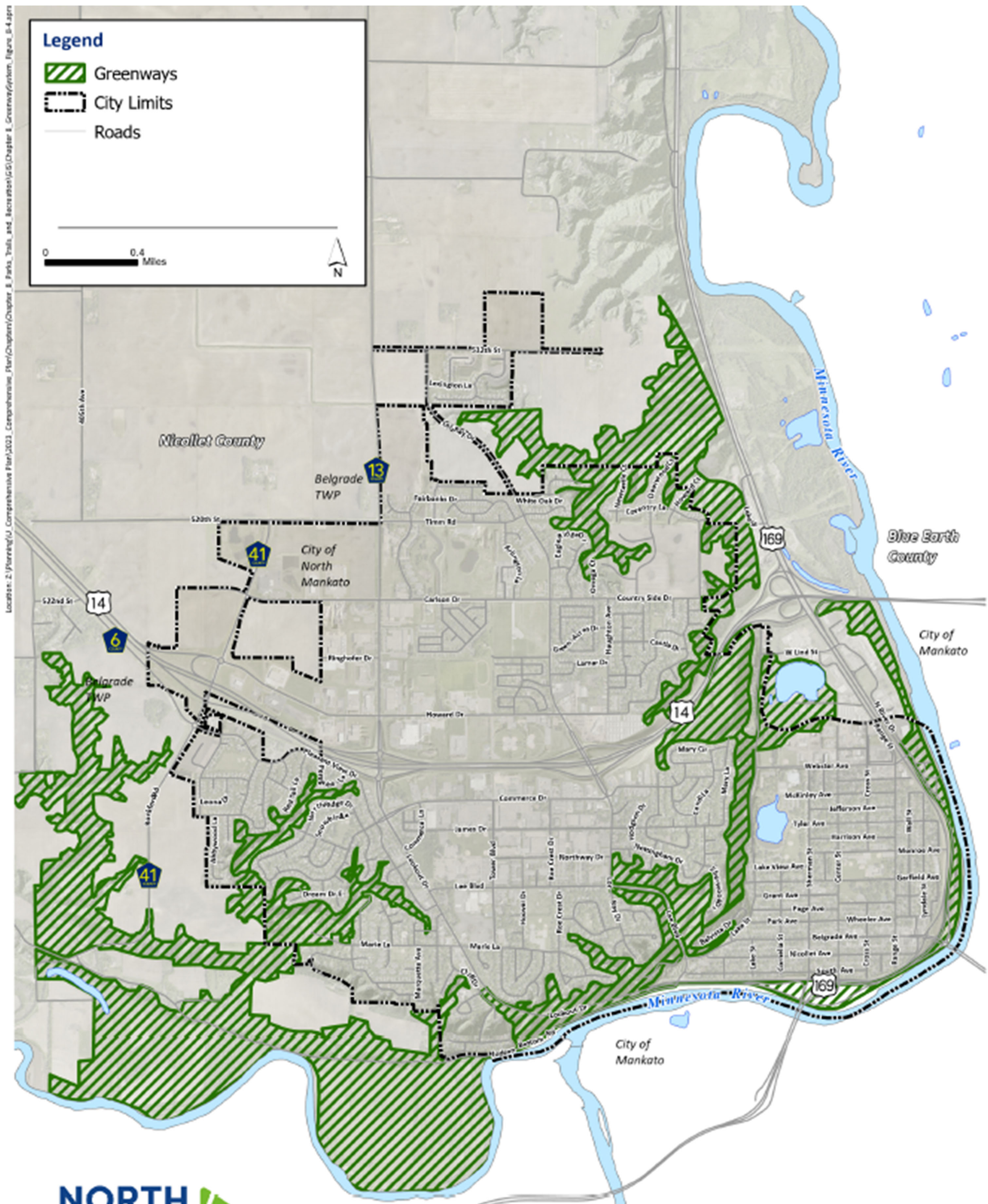


Figure 8-4. Greenway System
April 2023

GREENWAY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

GOAL 1: Create a greenway system that provides recreational opportunities, protects and enhances natural resources, is valued by the community, and can be maintained long-term by the City.

Objective 1.1: Complete an action plan that further defines the limits and opportunities of the greenway corridors and includes strategies, timelines, and costs for implementing the system.

Policy 1.1.1: Develop an operations and maintenance strategy for each greenway to assure the public that the City has the capacity to meet these responsibilities.

Policy 1.1.2: Clearly define how improvements will be funded, and the potential costs to the average homeowner in the City, to avoid any uncertainties in this regard.

Policy 1.1.3: Make strategic prioritized investments toward the greenway system that will continue to expand their role as defining elements in the City's infrastructure and enhance the region's economic prospects by attracting new residents and supporting robust levels of tourism.

Policy 1.1.4: During platting of development, ravines and greenways will be either dedicated to the City or covered by conservation easement allowing continued protection erosion and other degrading activities (i.e. sump pumps, dumping brush and grass, clear cutting, and other personal property).

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PARK GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

GOAL 1: Plan for a sustainable park system.

Objective 1.1: Plan and design parks in a way that ensures their long-term viability.

Policy 1.1.1: All park properties that are set aside (and/or are proposed in the future) must take into account the long-term commitments required to develop, operate, and maintain across their lifecycles.

Policy 1.1.2: Balance maintained turf areas with natural areas to add aesthetic appeal, control maintenance costs, infiltrate stormwater, provide wildlife habitat, and reduce carbon emissions.

Policy 1.1.3: Update the parks plan every 5-10 years depending on the amount of change and development within the city.

Policy 1.1.4: Explore alternative methods for parkland dedication that will assure sufficient park facilities well into the future.

Objective 1.2: Understand current trends and community issues, opportunities, and needs as related to parks within the city.

Policy 1.2.2: Master plans should be prepared for each park prior to their development to ensure that the right mix of amenities are provided, and the park’s design is cohesive and complementary to the design for other parks and public spaces.

Policy 1.2.3: Ensure public participation in the master planning process is included for each park development project.

Policy 1.2.4: Analyze the placement and use of “nature play” equipment in existing and proposed parks.

Policy 1.2.5: Provide all users an opportunity to participate in park activities by ensuring trails, buildings, fountains, etc. are ADA compliant and playgrounds include inclusive play equipment where feasible.

GOAL 2: Provide additional park and recreation opportunities in areas of new development throughout the city.

Objective 2.1: Service local park and recreation needs by providing neighborhood and community parks as residential growth occurs.

Policy 2.1.1: Ensure neighborhood parks are developed as part of new residential neighborhoods.

Policy 2.1.2: Explore the possibility of including a community park in appropriate areas of the City. Analyze placement of such a park in the southwest quadrant of the City.

Policy 2.1.3: Locate new parks based on how they can be best integrated with the new development that the park will serve.

GOAL 3: Adhere to Park Master Planning and Facility Design Quality / Development Standards.

Objective 3.1: Ensure the quality standard for built features within the park system is consistent with industry standards for safety, durability, and accessibility.

Policy 3.1.1: Periodically inspect and repair all parks, trails, and recreation facilities for hazardous conditions, including unsafe play equipment, fallen vegetation, etc.

Policy 3.1.2: The design of individual parks should be of a consistent quality.

GOAL 4: North Mankato’s parks meet the diverse recreation needs of the community.

Objective 4.1: Partner with the relevant organizations and others that cannot be met exclusively by the city.

Policy 4.1.1: Coordinate with relevant local organizations to address park and recreation issues during the creation of the Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Plan.

Objective 4.2: Consider the desire of the community to construct a multi-use, indoor athletic facility for residents and to attract regional tournaments and events.

Policy 4.2.1: Explore the impacts of developing such facilities, including impacts to adjacent neighborhoods.

Policy 4.2.2: New facilities should provide year-round activities and programs for all age groups, abilities, and all income levels.

GOAL 5: Create a comprehensive signage program for park facilities.

Objective 5.1: Provide a consistent message and information to park visitors through the use of a uniform sign style and program throughout the city.

Policy 5.1.1: Identify the information to be included on the signage. Typically, this includes: park names, direction to features, general information and rules, and ecological stewardship program and interpretive information.

Policy 5.1.2: Ensure the program remains an ongoing priority by providing an annual investment in a signage program.

