

# PARKS & TRAILS PLAN

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**City of Montrose, Minnesota**

*June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024*





## Updated Parks & Recreation Commission, January 2024

The mission of the Montrose Parks and Recreation Department is:

*"Fostering a Vibrant Community: Cultivating a sense of belonging, joy, and mental well-being through thoughtfully designed parks and recreational programs. We create spaces where residents of all ages can immerse themselves in the natural beauty of Montrose, promoting an active lifestyle, outdoor activities, and shared experiences."*

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# INTRODUCTION

## Plan Purpose

In 2007, the City of Montrose embraced a forward-looking update to its Comprehensive Plan, setting a 20-year vision for community growth. Building on the foundations laid by the 2002 plan, the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update emphasized the imperative for the city to address evolving recreational needs and opportunities both within the existing community and in areas slated for future growth. This comprehensive growth strategy underwent a thorough review and expansion in 2015.

At the heart of this vision, the Comprehensive Plan introduced a conceptual park and trail plan, anticipating potential future recreation areas and trail linkages. In our ongoing commitment to fostering a vibrant community, the Parks and Trail Plan Update for 2024 aims to build upon the directives outlined in the updated Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, it serves as a dynamic analysis and decision-making framework, guiding City officials in delivering essential community services and facilities while responding to private development proposals.

## Plan Organization

The Plan encompasses a comprehensive approach, including an updated inventory of current facilities, a rigorous needs assessment, and a thorough examination of goals and policies. Recognizing the evolving nature of our city, this document acknowledges that assumptions, strategies, and goals may need adjustments over time. Regular revisions will be integral, ensuring the plan remains in tune with the shifting dynamics of Montrose, especially in response to changes in population and recreational demands.

Importantly, the Parks and Trails Plan integrates key information, goals, policies, and plans from the Comprehensive Plan Update. Where applicable, insights from the Wright County Park and Trail Plan have been seamlessly retained and integrated, fostering a unified and cohesive approach to our community's recreational development.

## Plan Process

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# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Community Context

### Population and Park Needs

The 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update reevaluated land use designations and anticipated growth through 2040, presenting conservative, moderate, and fast growth projections for 2040. The plan used the moderate growth projection of 6,055 in 2040 to plan for housing units and land use, reflected in *Table 1, "2017 Comprehensive Plan Population Projections."* This moderate growth anticipates a population increase of 3,208 persons from 2010 to 2040.

Table 1: 2017 Comprehensive Plan Population Projections		
Year	Projected City Population	Population Growth (2010 base)
2015	3,079	232
2020	3,500	421
2025	4,000	500
2030	4,600	600
2035	5,300	700
2040	6,055	755
Projection Range		
2040 - Conservative	4,465	1,618
2040 - Fast	7,500	4,653

In October 2022, the City Council considered population projections while planning for future wastewater treatment plant and water treatment plant improvements. The City Council approved using a population projection of 50 new homes per year resulting in a 2040 population projection of 6,275 and 2050 population of 7,525. These growth rates are fairly consistent with the projections in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan.

For planning purposes, a rule of thumb for amount of park land is 11 acres for each 1,000 people of population. Under this scenario and based on a 2040 population of 6,275, Montrose is expected to need approximately 69 acres of park land by the year 2040. Thus, the city's 110.81 acres of existing park land is expected to accommodate the city's needs through 2040 on an acreage basis. However, approximately one-third of the city's existing park land is comprised of wetlands. Thus, approximately 45 acres of upland or "useable" park land actually exists within the city. It should be noted that the city has not historically accepted wetlands as required park land dedication. Rather, wetland areas were accepted above and beyond the required "upland" dedication.

While Montrose boasts a substantial city land area, ensuring the fulfillment of future recreational needs involves more than sheer acreage. The availability of land alone does not guarantee suitability for the requisite recreational facilities. A prime example is the need for expansive, flat areas for facilities like ballfields, a characteristic seemingly limited in the current park land inventory.

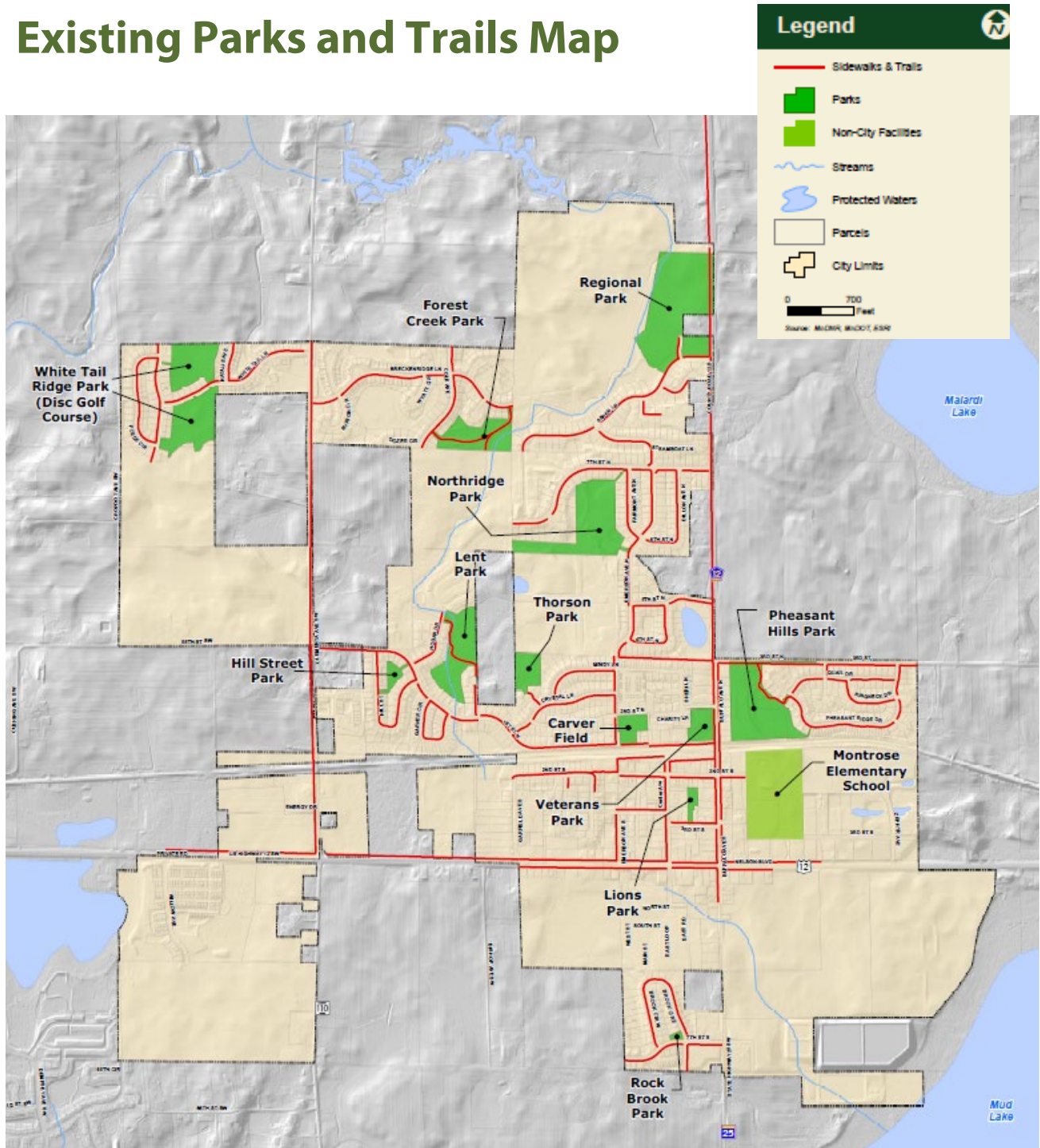
To address this, proactive identification of potential neighborhood park areas ahead of development proposals becomes paramount. This foresighted approach allows for strategic planning to ensure that every corner of our community is thoughtfully served by accessible parks. By anticipating these needs, we can meticulously plan and develop recreational spaces that harmonize with the natural landscape, providing diverse and inclusive opportunities for community engagement.

## Existing Park Facilities

As of 2024, the City of Montrose boasts a diverse range of existing park facilities, encompassing a total of 110.81 gross acres of land. These green spaces are strategically distributed throughout the city, providing residents with a variety of recreational opportunities and natural retreats. As we move forward in our commitment to enhancing community well-being, these existing park facilities will serve as foundational elements for continued development and the creation of vibrant recreational spaces for all.

Montrose City Parks												
Park Name:	Rock Brook Park	Lions Park	Veterans Park	Carver Field	Thorsen Park	Lent Park	Hill Street	Forest Creek	Disc Golf	Pheasant Hill	Northridge Park	Regional Park
<b>Amenities</b>												
Play Equipment	●	●	●		●					●	●	
Rock Climber	●											
Slides	●				●							
Swings		●	●							●	●	
Merry-go-round		●										
Dirt Digger		●										
Disc Golf Groomed Course									●			
Handicap Play items												
Parking Lot		●	●	●					●		●	●
On Street Parking	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●			●
Baseball Field				●								
Basketball Court			●									
Volleyball											●	
Horseshoe Pits		●										
Skateboard Park						●						
Tennis Court			●									
Ice Skating Rink				●		●						
Picnic Table	●	●	●	●	●					●	●	
Picnic Shelter		●	●	●								
Benches	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	
Lighting		●	●	●	●	●				●		
Water			●	●								
Community Garden Plots											●	
Pool												
Splash Pad				●								
Concessions		●		●								
Restroom												
Port a Potty			●	●					●			
Handicap Port a potty			●									
Handicap Restroom												
Handicap Accessible	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Dog Park												
Trail Connection						●	●	●		●		●
Signage	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Adopted Park	●	●		●		●				●		
Storm Shelter												
Mature Shade Trees		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		
Open Area		●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Undeveloped area					●		●	●			●	●

# Existing Parks and Trails Map



## Carver Field (3.8 Acres)

Carver Field, located just west of Veterans Memorial Park between Emerson and Center Avenues, has undergone a comprehensive evaluation by the Park Commission. Originally comprised solely of a regulation-size softball field, the Commission now advocates for a transformative overhaul to maximize its recreational value for the city.

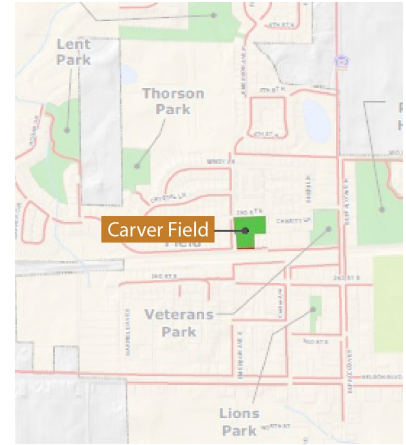
**Current State:** Carver Field has been used as a softball and youth baseball field, but it does not support adult softball or baseball, and the suggestion was to enhance it with an upgraded concession stand and wheelchair access.

### **Proposed Transformation:**

**Concession Stand Renovation:** The concession stand, identified as needing improvements in the previous assessment, requires attention. Rotten wood sections need replacement to enhance the overall facility.

**Dugout Repairs:** Specific attention is needed for the dugouts, particularly along the 1st baseline roof, where sections of rotten wood need repair. This measure ensures the longevity and safety of the dugout structures.

**Future Little League Diamond Conversion:** As part of a forward-looking strategy, the Park Commission envisions the possibility of converting Carver Field into a Little League diamond in the future. This consideration aligns with potential developments and the city's evolving recreational needs.



## Forest Creek Park (7.84 Acres)

Forest Creek Park, situated south of Breckenridge Lane and east of Cole Avenue in the northern sector of the city, serves as a contiguous extension of Rolling Meadows Park. The park currently features a trail segment, and the Park Commission envisions expanding and enhancing its offerings to better integrate with the overall trail system.

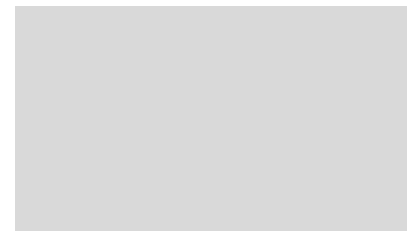
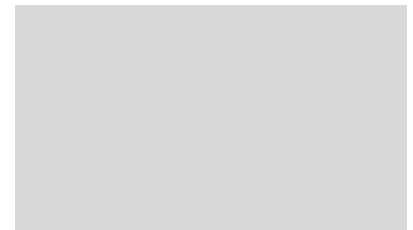
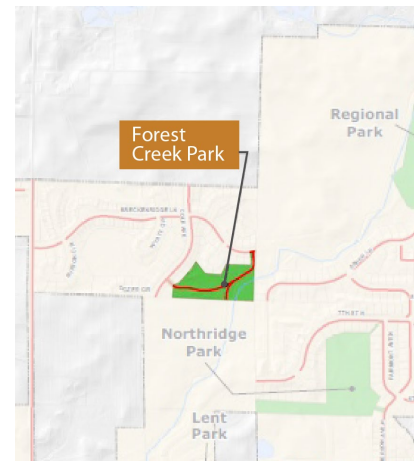
**Current State:** The existing trail segment in Forest Creek Park is seen as a potential connection point to the broader trail system. Future plans include adding playground equipment and ensuring physical handicap accessibility.

**Trail Connectivity:** The Park Commission continues to prioritize the vision of seamlessly connecting Forest Creek Park's trail segment to the wider trail system. This initiative aims to enhance accessibility and provide residents with a more integrated and expansive trail network.

**Future Development Coordination:** Anticipating potential development to the south, the Commission recommends a coordinated trail extension along the drainageway. This approach aligns with future growth and ensures that the park remains well-connected to evolving community needs.

### **Recommendation:**

At the opportune time when the property to the south undergoes development, the Park Commission advocates for a coordinated trail extension southward along the drainageway. This expansion will not only enrich Forest Creek Park's offerings but also contribute to the overall connectivity of Montrose's trail system.



## Lent Park (9.97 Acres)

Lent Park, situated on Garfield Avenue within the Parkview Addition, stands as a valued green space for the community. Acknowledging its unique features, including a walking path, park benches, a skate park, and a soccer field, the Park Commission envisions improvements and expansion for enhanced community use.

**Current State:** The park currently faces limitations due to wetlands, and the soccer field cannot be fully utilized due to inadequate parking.

**Easterly Expansion Consideration:** It is recommended that the city explore opportunities for the easterly expansion of Lent Park, potentially merging it with Thorson Park if the property becomes available. This visionary approach could pave the way for future interconnecting walking trails, promoting accessibility and creating a more extensive recreational network.

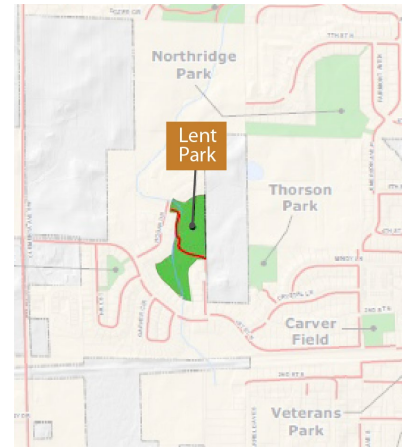
**Skate Park Upgrades and Additions:** Acknowledging the popularity of the skate park, the Commission suggests considering future upgrades and additions. This could involve incorporating new features or enhancing existing structures to maintain the park's appeal as a recreational hub for skaters.

**Path Restoration and Drainage Consultation:** The walking path within the park is identified as requiring attention due to disrepair. It is recommended to repair or replace the path. Given drainage issues, collaboration with city engineers is advised to ensure a sustainable and effective solution.

**Recommendations:** The City is encouraged to explore opportunities for the easterly expansion of Lent Park, fostering a potential merger with Thorson Park if the property becomes available. This forward-thinking strategy aims to create a more extensive green space for the community, complemented by interconnecting walking trails.

Recognizing the popularity of the skate park, consideration should be given to future upgrades and additions. This ensures that the skate park remains an engaging and contemporary space for enthusiasts.

The restoration or replacement of the park's walking path is necessary. Given drainage challenges, the expertise of city engineers should be sought to address these concerns effectively.



## Northridge Park (14.6 Acres) -

Current State: Northridge Park, situated within the Northridge subdivision, has seen recent developments, including a play structure, volleyball courts, swings, picnic benches, a community garden, water access, and a parking lot. The park comprises both a wetland in the northern part with limited development potential and a more developed southern portion featuring various recreational amenities.

### *Recommendations:*

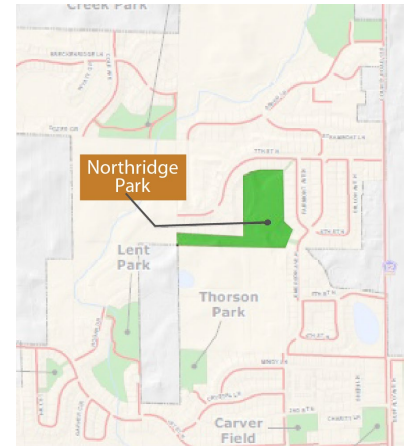
*Trail System/Linkages:* The Park Commission recommends establishing a comprehensive trail system with linkages through Northridge Park. This initiative aims to enhance accessibility from multiple streets and areas, fostering increased community engagement.

*Small-Scale Active Recreational Facilities:* To cater to diverse recreational interests, the addition of small-scale active facilities such as tennis courts and basketball courts is proposed. These facilities will be strategically located with ample setbacks from neighboring single-family residences to ensure harmony with the surrounding community.

*Passive Recreational Facilities:* The incorporation of passive recreational facilities, such as a picnic shelter, is suggested based on the city's assessment of appropriateness for the park. This addition will provide residents with quiet spaces for relaxation and community gatherings.

*Off-Street Parking Expansion:* Although a parking lot is already in place, the Commission proposes expanding and potentially paving it in the future to accommodate the growing needs of park visitors. This initiative aligns with the park's evolving role and increasing popularity within the community.

*Note:* recommendations for Northridge Park will be considered and implemented as resources and priorities allow. The Park Commission emphasizes the need for flexibility in the execution timeline based on overall park development planning and community needs.



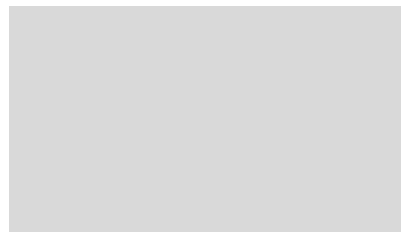
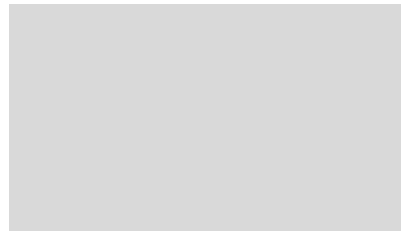
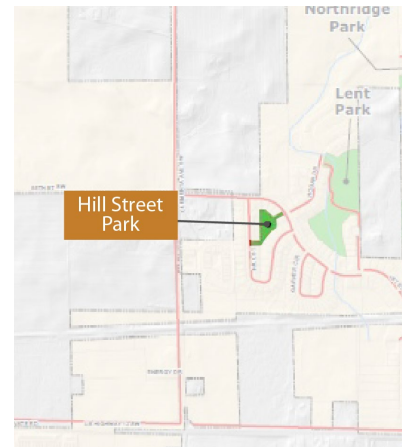
## Hill Street - Parkview Park A & B (2.2 Acres) -

**Current State:** One of the parks within the Parkview Addition, Hill Street Park comprises Parkview Park A, measuring 1.1 acres in upland area, and Parkview Park B, an undeveloped 1.1-acre tract. Recently, both A and B have been combined into Hill Street Park. Positioned in the western part of the city within the Parkview subdivision, the park offers potential opportunities for future trail linkages. However, its limited size and proximity to Lent Park prompt questions about its viability as a standalone community park.

### **Recommendation:**

**Reserved for Future Trail Connection:** Given the park's size and its proximity to Lent Park, the Park Commission recommends reserving Hill Street Park for a future trail connection to Lent Park. This forward-looking approach aligns with the city's overall trail system plan and optimizes the use of limited space.

**Note:** The Park Commission underscores the importance of strategic allocation of city funds, considering the proximity of Hill Street Park to Thorson Park and the potential for duplicative facilities. As such, it is believed that reserving the area for a future trail connection to Lent Park is a prudent use of resources and aligns with broader city planning goals.



## Pheasant Hills Park (7.9 Acres) -

**Current State:** Pheasant Hills Park, nestled within the Pheasant Hills Addition, stands as a developed green space with scenic qualities, featuring significant vegetation and wetlands areas. However, of the total 7.9 acres dedicated as park land, only 2.8 acres are considered upland, limiting its development potential. The park already boasts a trail system connection, play equipment, benches, and solar lighting.

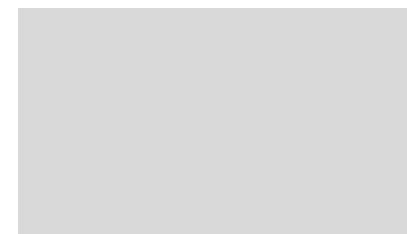
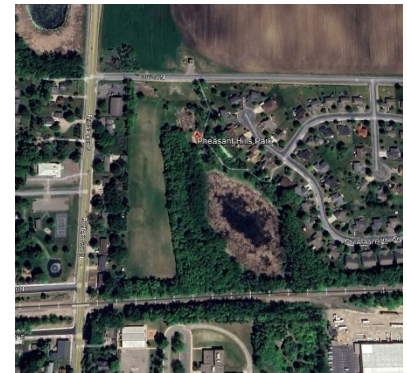
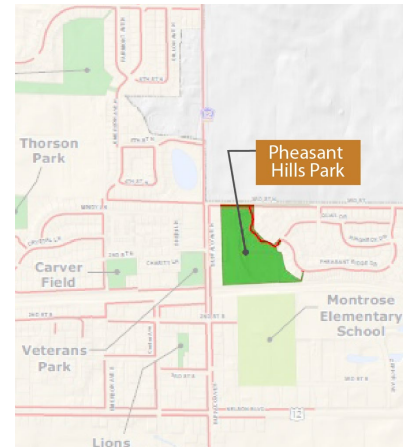
### **Recommendations:**

**Trailway Connections from the East:** The Park Commission recommends establishing trailway connections to Pheasant Hills Park from the east. This initiative aims to improve accessibility and connectivity, ensuring that the park becomes a more integral part of the community trail system.

**Playground Equipment Update:** In order to enhance park usage and provide a more engaging recreational experience, the Commission advises updating the existing playground equipment. The goal is to replace lackluster equipment with modern, enticing structures that cater to a broader age range.

**Potential Future Developments:** If additional adjacent land is acquired, the Commission proposes introducing exercise/fitness equipment, a picnic shelter, gazebo, or other amenities. This approach aligns with a forward-thinking strategy, preparing the park for potential expansion and diversification based on community needs.

**Note:** The Park Commission emphasizes the importance of a phased and flexible approach to these recommendations, taking into account the acquisition of additional land and evolving community needs. The proposed enhancements aim to maximize the scenic qualities of Pheasant Hills Park and contribute to the overall well-being of the residents.



## Preserve of Montrose Park (14.3 Acres) -

**Current State:** Preserve of Montrose Park, situated south of U.S. Highway 12 along the east side of Center Lake, remains undeveloped and unmaintained. As per current plans, the city has decided not to take on the development responsibility, leaving it in the hands of the future purchaser of this plat.

Update: Preserve of Montrose Park remains undeveloped and is still not a project undertaken by the city. The current approach is to collaborate with the future developer to create a park that strategically benefits the broader city park system.

Expectations and Collaboration: The Park Commission expects to actively engage with the future developer, fostering collaboration to ensure that the eventual development aligns with the city's overall park system goals. This collaborative effort aims to create a well-planned and beneficial park that complements the community's needs and aspirations.

## Rock Brook Park (0.4 Acres) -

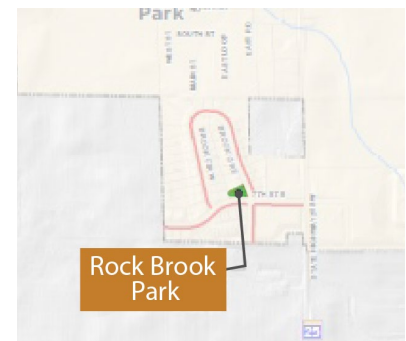
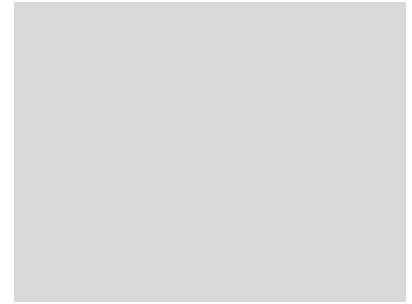
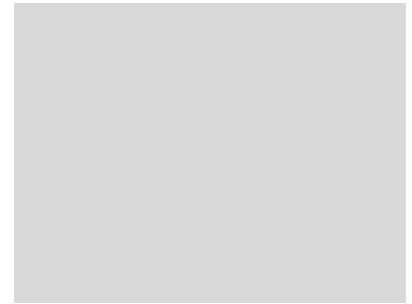
**Current State:** Rock Brook Park, positioned north of 7th Street South and west of Brook Circle East, spans 16,000 square feet. The park is equipped with a play structure, climbing rock, picnic table, and bench, predominantly serving the residents of the Rock Brook subdivision.

### **Recommendations:**

**Sidewalk/Trail Connection:** In anticipation of future development to the west of the park, the Park Commission recommends the establishment of a sidewalk/trail connection between Rock Brook Park and the upcoming westerly neighborhoods. This initiative aims to enhance connectivity and accessibility for residents in the expanding community.

**Shade Shelter Addition:** Recognizing the need for shaded spaces, the Commission suggests adding some form of shade shelter to Rock Brook Park. This enhancement aims to provide visitors with comfortable and protected areas, contributing to an improved overall park experience.

Note: These recommendations align with the city's commitment to neighborhood-centric park development, promoting connectivity and amenities that enhance the well-being of Rock Brook residents. The proposed enhancements will be considered and implemented in alignment with future development plans and community needs.



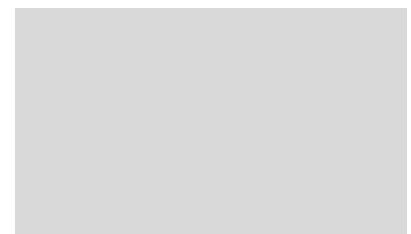
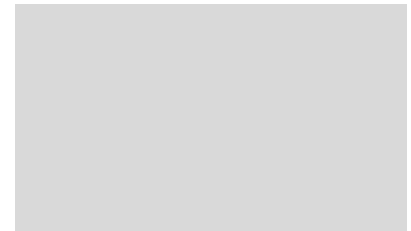
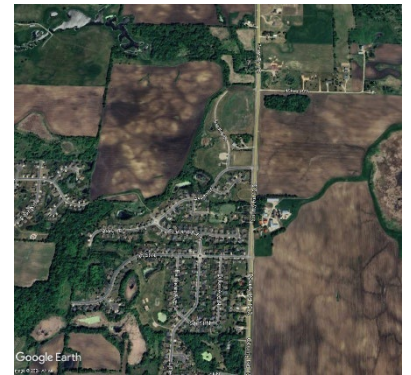
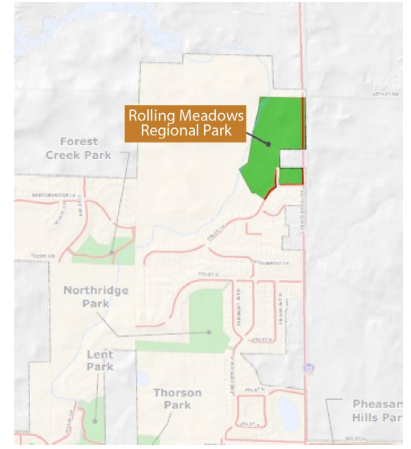
# Rolling Meadows Regional Park (26.7 Acres) -

**Current State:** Rolling Meadows Regional Park, situated west of County Road 12 in the northern part of the city, is Montrose's largest park. The park, initially known as Rolling Meadows Park, has undergone grading by the Army Corps of Engineers as a training project in 2018. Subsequently, the city has conducted grading in the south section, installed a gravel parking lot, and seeded sections for soccer fields. In 2023, the northern portion was seeded as a wild prairie, promoting a natural environment requiring minimal city maintenance.

## Recommendations:

**Ongoing Planning Review:** The Parks & Recreation Commission is actively reviewing future plans for Rolling Meadows Regional Park. Given its significance and potential impact on the community, this plan will be continuously updated as major decisions about the park's development are made. Regular reviews ensure alignment with community needs and evolving park development strategies.

Note: Rolling Meadows Regional Park represents a transformative endeavor for Montrose, offering a diverse range of amenities and a commitment to sustainability through the incorporation of wild prairie areas. The ongoing planning review reflects the city's dedication to thoughtful and community-driven park development.



## Thorson Park (3.5 Acres) -

**Current State:** Thorson Park, nestled within the Parkside Meadows Addition, features a play structure. The park's landscape, marked by the containment of a wetland and rolling topography, deems it unsuitable for active, field-type recreation. Future connectivity to Lent Park is envisioned if the land becomes available.

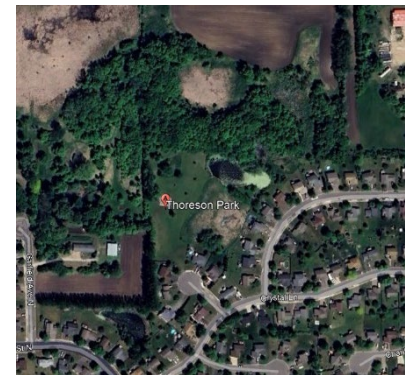
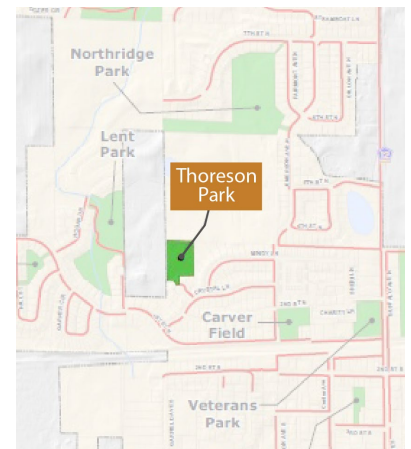
### **Recommendations:**

**Westerly Expansion Consideration:** It is recommended that the city explore opportunities for westerly expansion of Thorson Park, potentially allowing it to merge with Lent Park. This strategic expansion aligns with a comprehensive approach to park development, optimizing available land for community benefit.

**Passive Recreational Facilities:** To enhance the park's utility and appeal, the Commission suggests incorporating passive recreational facilities, such as a picnic shelter, gazebo, benches, etc. These additions create inviting spaces for residents to relax and gather, fostering a sense of community within the park.

**Trail Connections from Emerson Avenue and Park Place Circle:** The installation of trail connections from Emerson Avenue and Park Place Circle is recommended to improve accessibility to Thorson Park. These connections will ensure that residents from multiple areas can easily access and enjoy the park's amenities.

Note: These recommendations align with the city's commitment to thoughtful expansion and enhancement of its park system. By considering westerly expansion, incorporating passive recreational facilities, and establishing trail connections, Thorson Park is poised to become a more integral part of the community, catering to diverse recreational needs and preferences. The city will implement these recommendations based on land availability, community input, and overall park development planning.



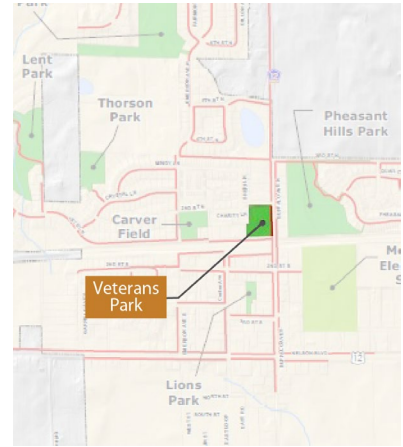
## Veterans Memorial Park (3.3 Acres) -

**Current State:** Veterans Memorial Park, positioned north of First Street North and west of County Road 12, stands as the city's largest developed park. The park features a shelter with picnic tables, a lighted tennis court, playground, swings, and basketball hoops, serving the recreational needs of many community residents. As the city's most utilized and visible park, ongoing upgrades and future changes may be necessary.

### **Recommendations:**

**Parking Lot Rehabilitation:** The Park Commission advises a major repair of the parking lot in Veterans Memorial Park. The suggested course of action involves tearing out and redoing the parking lot. During this process, the locations of basketball hoops should be reconsidered to optimize their placement and functionality.

**Note:** The recommendation for parking lot rehabilitation acknowledges the wear and tear experienced by a frequently used park. By prioritizing this upgrade, the city aims to ensure a safer and more enjoyable experience for park visitors. The reconsideration of basketball hoop locations during this process reflects a strategic approach to enhance the overall layout and accessibility of the park.



## White Tail Ridge Disc Golf Park (16.3 Acres) -

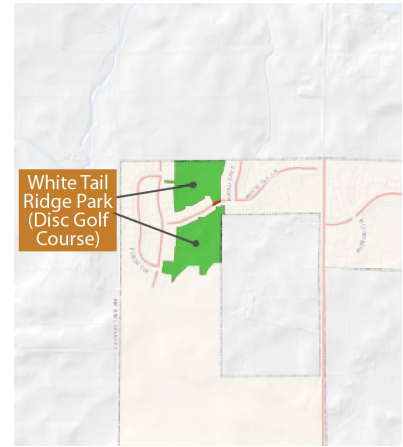
**Current State:** White Tail Ridge Disc Golf Course spans approximately 16.3 acres in the northwest corner of the city. Comprising two adjacent areas, the course has been thoughtfully reclaimed from thick, dense wooded areas, integrating natural rolling topography and wetland features. This unique blend allows the Disc Golf Course to cater to both passive and active park activities. The existing small gravel parking lot on the southwestern corner off Sunset Ave. serves the park.

### **Recommendations:**

**Parking Lot Expansion and Development:** Recognizing the growing interest in disc golf, the Commission advises not only expanding the existing parking lot but also developing additional off-street parking facilities. This will provide sufficient and convenient parking options for players and visitors, enhancing accessibility to the Disc Golf Park.

**Additional Seating at Entrance:** To enhance the overall experience, the addition of seating at the entrance of the disc golf course is recommended. This improvement creates a welcoming atmosphere and encourages social interactions among players and visitors.

**Note:** Building upon the natural features of the Disc Golf Course, the city's commitment to further development underscores its dedication to providing accessible and enjoyable recreational spaces. The proposed enhancements align with the evolving needs and interests of the community, ensuring that White Tail Ridge Disc Golf Park remains a vibrant and popular destination for residents and visitors alike. As the city continues to grow and diversify, these improvements contribute to the overall well-being and vitality of the community.



## EXISTING FACILITIES - TRAILS

The community's trail and sidewalk network, as depicted on the Existing Facilities Map, reveals an interconnected system throughout the city. Predominant trail and sidewalk segments run along both sides of County Road 12 (north of U.S. Highway 12) and on the west side of Center Avenue (north of U.S. Highway 12). Additional segments extend north and south of the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe rail line.

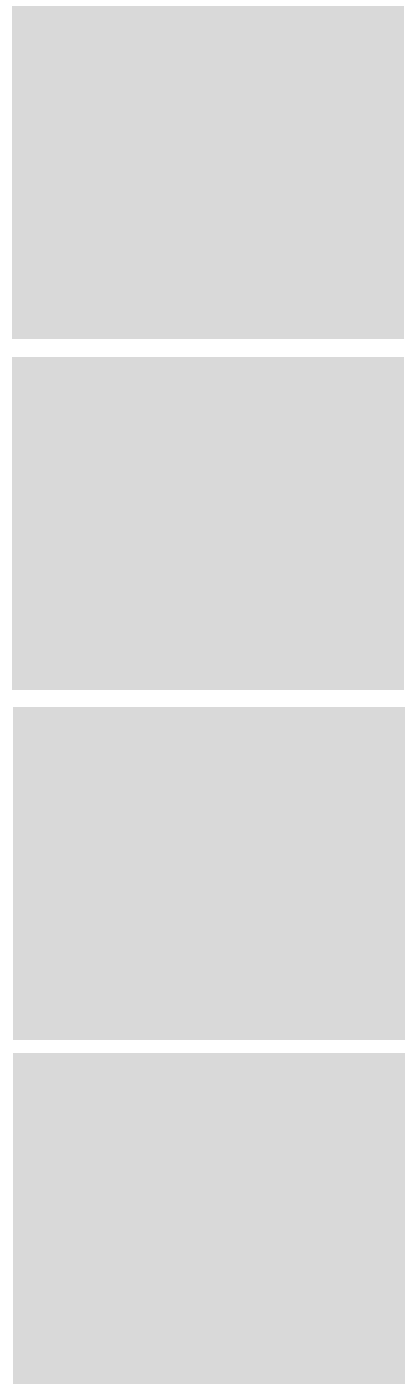
**Current Status:** The existing trail and sidewalk infrastructure forms a foundational framework, fostering walkability and connectivity within the community. However, certain segments remain undeveloped, presenting opportunities for expansion and improvement.

### **Recommendations:**

**Completion of Trail System:** The Parks and Recreation Commission underscores the critical importance of completing the trail system by connecting all existing trails and finishing segments currently undeveloped. This initiative aligns with the city's commitment to promoting an active and healthy lifestyle, providing residents with safe and accessible pathways for recreational and commuting purposes.

**Maintenance Protocol:** The commission advocates for a proactive maintenance approach, addressing the needs of existing trail segments. Regular maintenance, including repairs and upkeep, ensures the longevity and safety of these well-utilized pathways.

**Note:** Fulfilling the highest priority and strongest recommendation to the City Council, the commission's proposals aim to fortify the community's commitment to an integrated and well-maintained trail system. This ongoing effort contributes to the city's identity as a pedestrian-friendly and vibrant community, fostering a sense of connectivity and well-being among residents.



## NON-CITY FACILITIES

In addition to the previously mentioned parks, the city's recreational landscape is further enriched by facilities situated on the elementary school property, contributing significantly to the community's park needs. Additionally, numerous recreational facilities located outside the city limits are available to residents, enhancing the overall recreational landscape.

***Elementary School Property:*** The recreational facilities on the elementary school property continue to play a vital role in meeting the city's park needs. The collaborative use of these facilities reinforces the community's commitment to providing diverse recreational opportunities for residents.

### ***Recreational Facilities Outside City Limits:***

***Crow Springs County Park (Franklin Township):*** Situated south of 4th Street and west of Highway 25 within Franklin Township, Crow Springs County Park, operated by Wright County, offers residents a scenic and well-maintained outdoor space.

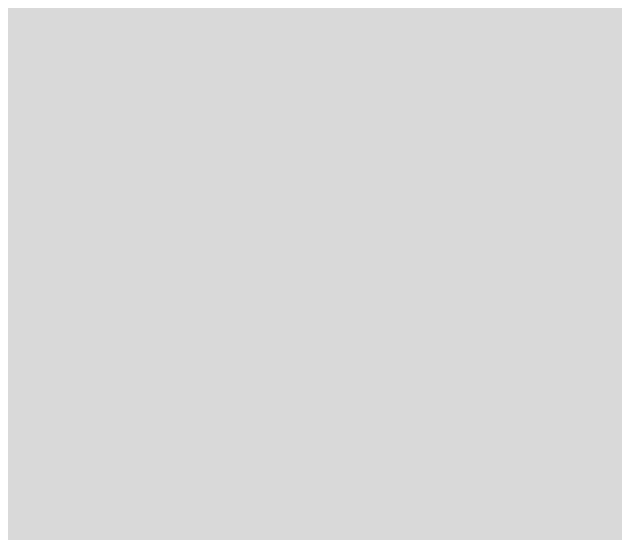
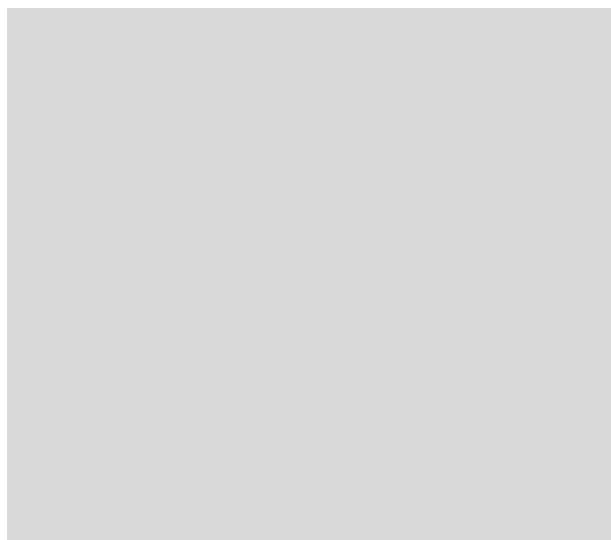
***State Wildlife Management Areas:*** Two wildlife management areas, operated by the State of Minnesota, provide additional opportunities for passive recreation and immersion in natural environments:

**Malardi Lake State Wildlife Area:** Located east of the city limits, south of 45th Street, and west of Meridian Avenue.

**Woodland State Wildlife Management Area:** Situated south of the city limits, north of 72nd Street, and east of Highway 25.

**Fountain Lake Public Access:** Serving as an additional recreational amenity to the area, the Fountain Lake DNR public access provides opportunities for water-based activities and leisure.

***Note:*** The collaborative utilization of both city and non-city facilities reinforces the holistic approach to recreation in the community. These diverse offerings cater to various recreational preferences and ensure that residents have access to a wide range of outdoor spaces, contributing to the overall well-being and satisfaction of the community.



## WATERWAYS

The Crow Springs County Park, located in the extreme northeast corner of the study area, provides public boat access to the Crow River.

## RECREATION PROGRAMMING

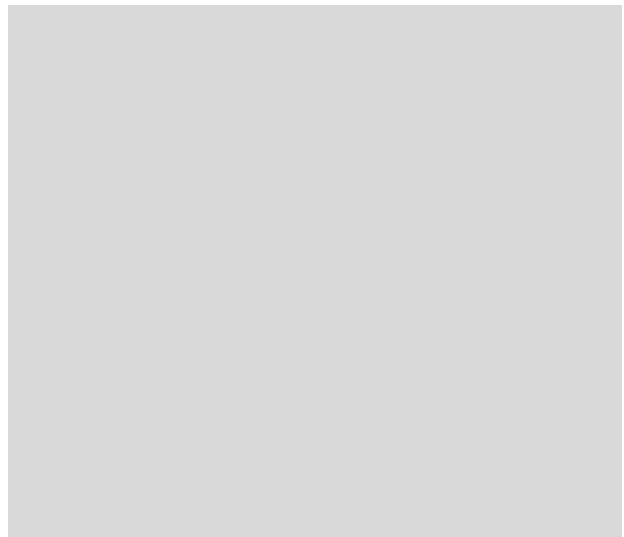
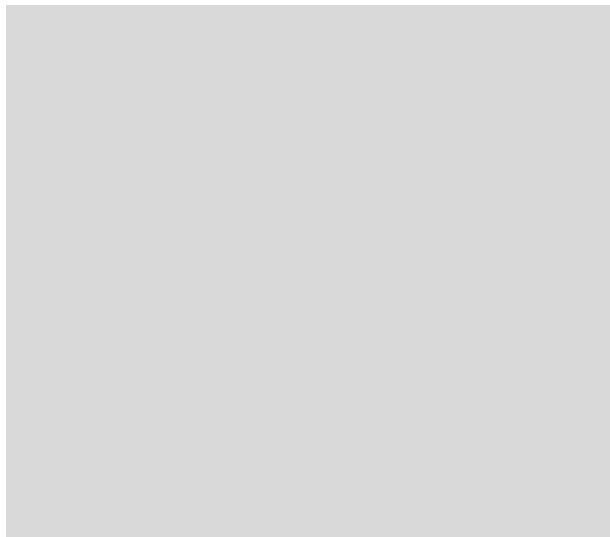
Montrose has traditionally looked to partners like Wright County and the Buffalo School District to offer a variety of recreation programs for community residents. During the summer months, the SPARKS Community Education Program provides extra activities for children. Residents are encouraged to check the City of Montrose Facebook Page, City of Montrose Web Page, and Nextdoor for upcoming activities. Additionally, the Parks and Recreation Commission is actively exploring opportunities to enhance recreation programming, ensuring a well-rounded and engaging experience for the community. Stay tuned for updates on new and exciting recreational initiatives!

## TRAIL DESTINATIONS

A well-planned trail system connects activity centers within Montrose, including the elementary school, various parks, commercial areas, and the neighboring City of Waverly. Completing and connecting all trail segments remains a top priority.

## PARKS COMMISSION

Montrose has established a Parks Commission consisting of up to seven members plus a City Council representative. The Parks Commission undertakes comprehensive park and trail planning, development of park facilities, implementation of recreation programs, and reviews park dedication elements of subdivision requests. The Parks Commission is an advisory board, making recommendations for City Council action.





# Needs Assessment

## Park and Trail Issues & Strategies

Montrose's recent and ongoing population surge, which includes a 32.59% growth over the past ten years, there is a pressing need to address not only the current recreational requirements but also those anticipated for the future. The city's potential for continued development and increased density underscores the growing demand for localized park and recreational facilities. As our population ages, the need for a community trail system is becoming increasingly evident. Montrose, fortunately, possesses the foresight to plan and provide these community facilities in advance, positioning itself strategically to meet the evolving needs of its residents.

The establishment of a dedicated Parks Commission, the inclusion of a conceptual city park and trail plan within the Comprehensive Plan, and the implementation of park dedication requirements through the City's subdivision regulations are all commendable steps taken to ensure that the recreational needs of the community are met comprehensively.

The initial phase of the Parks and Trails Plan involves a meticulous identification of issues associated with community park and trail development. These issues will play a pivotal role in formulating policies that align with the community's consensus. The objective is to develop policies that accurately reflect the envisioned park and trail system that the City of Montrose aspires to achieve.

### Park and Trail Issues

Following discussions with Parks Commission members, several primary issues have been identified as crucial for the city's park and trail development:

#### *Visibility and Containment of City Parks:*

While the city boasts ample acreage to cater to both passive and active recreational needs, concerns persist about the visibility of some City parks, particularly those containing wetlands or limited in size.

#### *Improvements to Existing Park Sites:*

Prioritizing physical enhancements to existing park sites is of paramount importance to meet the growing recreational demands of the community residents.

#### *Alternative Funding Sources:*

Beyond standard park dedication fees, the city must explore alternative funding sources, such as grants, to facilitate necessary facility improvements.

#### *Trail/Sidewalk System Connectivity:*

Addressing the fragmented nature of the existing trail/sidewalk system is a primary goal and top priority. The completion of the trail system is crucial given its high usage.

#### *Collaboration with Wright County and the City of Waverly:*

Recognizing the mutual benefits, fostering cooperation with Wright County and the City of Waverly on park and trail planning is deemed highly beneficial.

Promoting the use of park and trailway facilities is crucial for shaping and reinforcing our community identity. These spaces not only provide recreational opportunities but also serve as gathering points that contribute to the unique character of Montrose. By actively encouraging and showcasing the diverse activities and amenities available in our parks and trailways, we strengthen the sense of community and pride among residents.

## Recommended Strategies

Effective community promotion can involve various strategies, including:

### *Public Awareness Campaigns:*

Launching campaigns through local media, social platforms, and community newsletters to highlight the benefits of our parks and trailways. This could include success stories, upcoming events, and features on specific facilities.

### *Community Events and Activities:*

Organizing and promoting events within the parks and trailways, such as family picnics, sports tournaments, or nature walks. These activities not only engage residents but also showcase the versatility of our recreational spaces.

### *Collaborations with Local Businesses:*

Partnering with local businesses to promote the use of park and trail facilities. This could involve sponsorships, joint events, or special promotions tied to park activities.

### *Educational Programs:*

Implementing educational initiatives to raise awareness about the health and well-being benefits of outdoor activities. Workshops, fitness classes, or nature education programs can be organized to encourage community members to explore and use these facilities.

### *User Testimonials and Stories:*

Collecting and sharing testimonials and stories from community members who have benefitted from the parks and trailways. Real-life experiences can inspire others to discover and make use of these resources.

### *Online Platforms and Apps:*

Leveraging digital platforms and mobile apps to provide real-time information about park events, trail conditions, and interactive maps.

This enhances accessibility and encourages tech-savvy residents to explore these spaces.

### *Community Art and Beautification Projects:*

Encouraging community art installations and beautification projects within parks and trailways. These projects not only enhance the aesthetic appeal but also create a sense of ownership and pride among residents.

### *Directional Park Signage:*

The City has taken strides to enhance directional park signage, featuring large identifying signs in each park displaying park names, rules, and hours. To further improve community engagement, there's a recognized need for additional signage providing detailed information on park locations, amenities, and upcoming events, fostering greater accessibility and participation.

### *New Regional Park Planning:*

Plans for a new Regional Park are underway, reflecting our commitment to expanding recreational opportunities. However, future implementation hinges on securing funding, making it a top priority. As we work towards realizing this vision, collaboration with community stakeholders and exploring potential grant opportunities will be key to success.

### *Enhancing Local Recreational Facilities/Programs:*

Acknowledging a current reliance on external sources, the Park Commission is actively addressing the need for local active recreational facilities and programs. Initiatives such as open gym basketball at local schools and the introduction of annual community events are underway. This effort aims to create a diverse range of recreational opportunities

within Montrose, fostering community engagement and local participation.

### *Establishing Priorities for Park and Trail Development:*

Recognizing the importance of strategic planning, the City aims to establish a set of priorities for park and trail development. This involves a comprehensive assessment of current and future needs, considering factors such as population growth, changing demographics, and community preferences to guide informed decision-making.

### *Inclusive Planning for All Population Groups:*

Ensuring inclusivity is at the forefront of our park and trail planning efforts, with a specific emphasis on addressing the recreational needs of all population groups. A particular focus will be placed on designing facilities and amenities that cater to the needs of the physically handicapped, promoting accessibility and equity for all residents.

### *Interdepartmental Collaboration:*

Recognizing the interconnected nature of community development, an active working relationship is imperative between the Park Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council. Collaborative efforts will streamline decision-making processes, enhance coordination, and ensure that park and trail planning align seamlessly with broader city development goals.





# PARK AND RECREATION PLAN

Park and recreation planning in any community occurs at three levels. Maps and plans provide graphic visualization of physical resources. But no matter how extensive, they cannot anticipate every eventuality. Growth in the city may occur in new locations which the Parks and Trails Plan does not expect, or it may occur much faster or slower than originally thought. Proposed land use types and streets may have to be changed in response to present-day circumstances which will in turn alter the planned park and trail system. For this reason, policies are developed which can be applied to new situations.

The Policy Plan is the first and most critical part of the planning process. It is a strategic management tool that reflects the community's general treatment of its recreation facilities and services and provides more detailed guidance on park/trail development and maintenance standards. Community recreation standards are the means by which a city can express its goals and objectives in quantitative terms, which in turn can be translated into spatial requirements for physical resources.

## OVERALL SYSTEM POLICIES

1. *Integrated Planning Process:* Develop and maintain an ongoing planning process for the establishment and development of parks and trails, aligning with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan policies and those identified herein.

2. *Strategic Goals and Priorities:* Formulate clear goals and priorities for the acquisition and development of parks and trails, providing a strategic framework for the city's growth and community well-being.

3. *Continuous Needs Assessment:* Continuously identify present and future park and trail needs, allowing for thorough evaluation by the Planning Commission as development proposals emerge. Recommendations will be presented to the City Council.

4. *Adaptive Planning and Budgeting:* Regularly update physical plans and related documents to swiftly respond to changes in goals, needs, priorities, and budget constraints, ensuring flexibility and adaptability in the planning process.

5. *Master Planning for Development:* Develop comprehensive master plans for each component of the park and trail system, serving as foundational documents to guide future development, recreational facility planning, and budgeting.

6. *Community Engagement:* Actively promote public participation in the planning process through the Planning Commission, hosting forums for open discussions on relevant issues. Encourage community input and feedback.

7. *Holistic Integration:* Foster integration with other city activities, services, and facilities, ensuring a holistic approach to community development and well-being.

8. *Effective Administration and Operations:* Clearly identify and implement policies, procedures, and ordinances for the administration and operations of parks and trails, specifying the roles of the Parks Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council.

9. *Comprehensive Review and Recommendations:* Empower the Parks Commission to thoroughly review and provide recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council on all aspects of park and trail planning, including design, acquisition, development, and maintenance.
10. *Equitable Distribution:* Work towards achieving an equitable distribution of park lands, trails, recreational facilities, and programs

## ACQUISITION

1. *Strategic Land Dedication:* Dedicate land for park and open space facilities only when it effectively satisfies the needs of the community, ensuring thoughtful and strategic allocation.
2. *Grant Pursuit for Acquisition:* Actively pursue park and recreation grants to acquire park and trail land, as well as enhance existing parks and trails, leveraging external funding opportunities.
3. *Commission Oversight:* Entrust the Parks Commission with the responsibility to thoroughly review and provide recommendations to the City Council on all matters related to park and trail land acquisition.
4. *Financially Feasible Acquisition:* Whenever financially viable, acquire and reserve sufficient park and open space lands to meet the needs of the current and projected future population of the community.
5. *Strategic Recreation Site Planning:* Seek new recreation sites in collaboration with new residential subdivisions, ensuring inclusivity by catering to a broad range of age groups and activities.
6. *Right-of-Way Planning:* During the subdivision process, secure proper right-of-way widths for sidewalks and

throughout the community, fostering accessibility and inclusivity.

11. *Directional Park Signage System:* Develop and implement a comprehensive system of directional park signage. While individual park signage is in place, consider additional signage showcasing "all" parks, their locations, and contained amenities, enhancing community awareness and engagement.

trails, enhancing pedestrian and recreational infrastructure.

7. *Sidewalk and Trail Development by Developers:* Mandate developers to provide sidewalks or trails on both sides of all new collector streets within their developments with projected average daily trips (ADT) above 500.

8. *Maximization of Natural Features:* Develop and improve park and open space areas to capitalize on natural community features, such as lake frontage, forests, native prairie, unique vegetation associations, or areas with rugged topography offering quality views and vistas.

9. *Coordination with Surrounding Communities:* Plan and develop park and open space facilities in coordination with similar services offered by surrounding communities, fostering a collaborative and interconnected recreational environment.

10. *Limitations on Wetlands and Slopes:* Exclude portions of a parcel within delineated wetlands or with slopes exceeding 12 percent from being credited for dedication of park and trail lands.

11. *Trail Construction by Developers:* Developers with land abutting a minor arterial or collector street must construct a bituminous trail according to City design standards. If the street

leads to a major park, school, commercial center, or other significant activity area, the city may require the construction of a concrete sidewalk in place of the bituminous trail.

12. *Cost Allocation for Facilities:*

Allocate costs for the construction of park facilities, sidewalks, and trails to those benefiting from the improvements, ensuring fair distribution of financial responsibilities.

## PROGRAMMING / DEVELOPMENT

1. *Holistic Recreational Balance:* Ensure an appropriate balance between active, passive, and cultural recreational areas and activities that cater to the diverse needs of the entire population throughout the community.

2. *Comprehensive Recreational Facilities:* Whenever financially feasible, provide recreational facilities and a year-round program of activities that are well-suited to the varied recreational needs of all age groups within the community.

3. *Emphasis on Safe Access:* Consider safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to recreational facilities as a high priority, fostering accessibility for residents of all ages.

4. *Cost-Efficient Trail Construction:* Optimize resources by coordinating the construction of trails with state, county, and city street improvements whenever possible, minimizing construction costs and enhancing overall connectivity.

5. *Capital Improvements Based on Need:* Gauge capital improvements made to individual park facilities based on the relative need for developed park facilities, ensuring a strategic and

needs-based approach to enhancements.

6. *Structured Capital Improvement Program:* Program recreational open space improvements in alignment with a Capital Improvement Program, subject to annual updates to address evolving community needs.

7. *Periodic Effectiveness Studies:* Conduct periodic studies to analyze the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the community recreation program, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with changing community dynamics.

## FACILITY PURPOSE AND DESIGN

1. *Classification System*

*Implementation:* The City shall classify and make improvements to the park system based on a classification system defined by the Parks and Trails Plan, ensuring strategic development aligned with community needs.

2. *Dual Functionality of Trail Corridors:*

Trail corridors shall serve both transportation and recreational functions. Transportation-focused corridors aim to provide direct links between population areas and activity centers, while recreational corridors shall be developed in areas of interest, such as natural spaces, parks, creek corridors, lakesides, or other recreational zones.

3. *Long-Term Cost Considerations:*

Factor in the long-term costs of maintenance and operation in the design and development of recreational facilities. Implement a plan, in collaboration with Public Works, to address these considerations effectively.

4. *Accessible Recreational Facilities:* Ensure that neighborhood and community-scale recreational facilities are conveniently located, offering safe and easy access to users.
5. *Safety-Centric Park Design:* Design and maintain parks with proper lighting, landscaping, shelter design, etc., to ensure a high degree of public and property safety.
6. *Regulation of Motorized Recreational Vehicles:* Regulate the use of motorized recreational vehicles in accordance with applicable City regulations and limit them to designated areas.
7. *Buffering and Screening Measures:* Implement buffering and screening measures, such as fences, berms, plantings, or a combination thereof, where necessary in park and open space areas to ensure the safety and protection of users.
8. *Adequate Parking Provision:* Provide adequate parking facilities to serve major park and recreational facilities, facilitating ease of access for visitors.
9. *Trail Slope Considerations:* Ensure that the slope of trails along their length adheres to accessibility standards, with a maximum slope of 5 percent for disability accessibility and 8 to 10 percent in areas where access would otherwise be limited.
10. *Inclusive Park Design:* Incorporate the recreational needs of the disabled community into park designs. Emphasize inclusive elements in the development of the local parks making accessibility a major consideration in its planning and implementation.

## MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION

1. *Regular Inspections:* Conduct regular inspections of park facilities and trail

systems to identify and address any safety or maintenance issues promptly.

2. *Scheduled Maintenance Programs:* Implement scheduled maintenance programs to ensure the consistent upkeep of all park and trail facilities.
3. *Coordination for Availability:* Coordinate maintenance efforts to guarantee the continuous availability and safety of park and trail facilities for the community.

## FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMING

1. Develop and maintain a *flexible programming schedule* that accommodates the diverse needs and abilities of all community members.
2. *Community Partnerships:* Foster partnerships with local civic groups, businesses, and organizations to enhance the range of recreational services and events available to the community.
3. *Donations for Recreation Programs:* Accept gifts and donations, including cash, building materials, and other resources, for the improvement and development of recreation programs, subject to evaluation and determination of being in the city's best interest.
4. *Accessible Recreation:* Ensure that recreation services and programs are accessible to individuals of all ages and abilities, promoting inclusivity and diversity.
5. *Regular Program Assessments:* Conduct regular assessments of recreation programs to evaluate their effectiveness and make necessary adjustments to better meet the evolving needs of the community.
6. *Collaborative Agreements:* Establish cooperative agreements with the School District to optimize the

provision of recreational open space areas, athletic programs, and related services.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS / COMMUNITY ISSUES

1. *Community Engagement*: Foster and encourage ongoing citizen participation in the planning, development, and operation of recreational open spaces, ensuring that community input is valued and considered.

2. *Education on Facility Use and Safety*: Implement educational initiatives to inform residents and facility users about proper use and safety rules for each recreational facility, promoting a secure and enjoyable environment.

3. *Media Promotion*: Utilize various communication channels, including print and broadcast media, the local newspaper, the city's promotional packet, and informational signs, to effectively promote recreational facilities and programs to the community.

4. *Trail Graphics and Signage*: Develop a clear and concise system of trail graphics and signage that guides people along trails and into parks, highlighting specific points of interest and ensuring a seamless and enjoyable recreational experience.

5. *Maximizing Participation*: Implement strategies to organize recreation programs and facilities in a way that maximizes participation, overcoming potential physical or economic barriers and promoting equal opportunity for all citizens



# PLAN DEVELOPMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The Plan Development chapter of the Montrose Parks and Trails Plan serves as a comprehensive guide for the ongoing development of the city's park and trail system. This chapter details the identification of existing facilities, outlining plans for their full development. Additionally, designated search areas for future park facilities are identified, aligning with the growth strategies outlined in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update. It is crucial to note that these future park search areas do not pinpoint specific properties but rather identify general areas for potential acquisition, allowing the city to reserve land from development as opportunities arise.

In terms of trail development, this chapter takes a distinct approach by explicitly identifying future trail corridors, especially those planned to utilize street right-of-way. The fundamental concept of the trail element in the Parks and Trails Plan is to establish a pedestrian and bicycle transportation network connecting vital recreational and social centers within the community. Moreover, the plan aims to facilitate intra-community connections with regional trail corridors managed by other agencies. Beyond primary trailways following street rights-of-way, the proposal includes overland trail segments, serving both as direct access routes to neighborhoods or destinations and as linear parks in areas with high amenities, fulfilling a dual transportation and recreational function.

## PARK CLASSIFICATION

While Montrose boasts numerous parks, many remain undeveloped, making classification challenging without physical improvements. Nevertheless, it is essential in the park and trail plan preparation to recognize a park classification system that caters to the diverse recreational needs of all residents.

The park classification system presented here is intended as a planning guide rather than a rigid blueprint. The City of Montrose acknowledges the significance of establishing and applying park and recreation standards for several reasons:

*Minimum Acceptable Facilities:* As an expression of the minimum acceptable facilities for the citizens of the community.

*Land Requirements:* As a guideline for determining land requirements for various types of park and recreation areas and facilities.

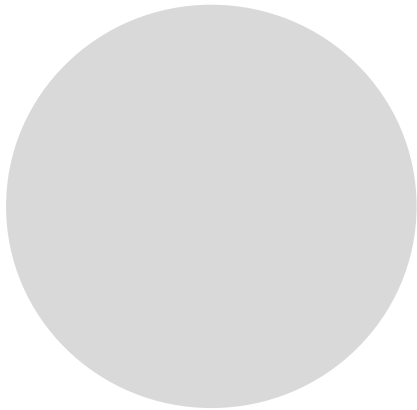
*Spatial Analysis:* As a basis for relating recreational needs to spatial analysis within the community.

*Structuring Element:* As one of the major structuring elements to assist with development.

*Land Use Justification:* To justify the need for parks and open space within the overall land use pattern of the city.

These standards should be applied with consideration for local circumstances, using conventional wisdom and judgment. In certain situations, more than one component may coexist within the same site, particularly regarding specialized uses within a larger park.

## Standard Park Classification or Standard Park Types



### *Neighborhood Mini Parks*

**Use:** Designed for passive activities with some short-term active activities, may include specialized facilities for a limited population or specific groups such as playgrounds

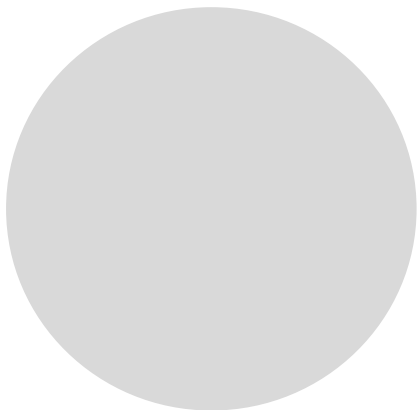
**Service Area:** Neighborhood sizes of 1,000 to 5,000 persons, within 1/4 to 1/2 mile

**Population Served:** Toddlers through age 15, with informal recreation for all ages

**Desirable Size:** 1 to 10 acres

**Acres/1,000 Population:** 1.0 - 2.0

**Site Characteristics:** Open space for spontaneous play, play areas for preschool and school-age children, multiple-use paved areas, limited field games, small court games, ice rinks, playground equipment, within easy walking/biking distance.



### *Neighborhood Parks*

**Use:** Area for designated active and passive recreation areas

**Service Area:** 1/2 to 1-mile radius to serve a population of up to 5,000 persons (a large neighborhood)

**Population Served:** Focus on ages 5 through 39 with emphasis on ages 5 through 18

**Desirable Size:** 5 to 10 acres

**Acres/1,000 Population:** 1.5 - 2.0

**Site Characteristics:** Suited for multi-use recreation development, easily accessible to neighborhood population, geographically centered with safe walking and bike access, may include school facilities.

### *Community Playfields*

**Use:** Large recreation area with primarily athletic facilities designed to serve older children and adults

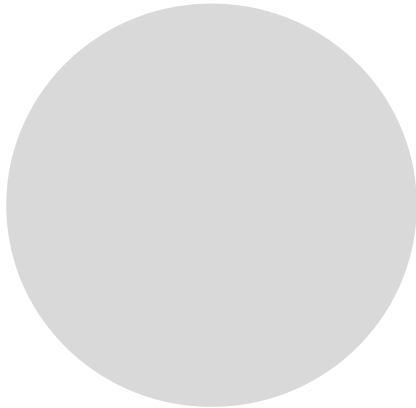
**Service Area:** 1 - 1.5-mile radius citywide

**Desirable Size:** 10 to 25 acres

**Acres/1,000 Population:** 2.0 to 5.0 **Site Characteristics:** Organized sports facility or athletic complex including lighted

court and field games, community center or indoor recreation facility, swimming pool, ice rink, capacity for special events, must include support elements such as restrooms, drinking water, parking, and lighting.

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### *Community Parks*

**Use:** Area of diverse environmental quality including areas suited to intense recreational facilities such as athletic complexes as well as passive-type areas, depends largely upon the site location, suitability, and community need

**Service Area:** Several neighborhoods, 1-to-4-mile radius

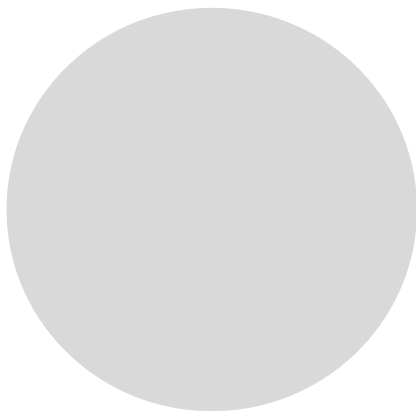
**Population Served:** All ages, toddler to retiree, entire community for cities up to 25,000

**Desirable Size:** 20 to 35+ acres

**Acres/1,000 Population:** 5.0 - 10.0

**Site Characteristics:** Provides for a combination of intensive and non-intensive development ranging from play equipment to trails, may include natural features, such as water bodies or forested land, must include support elements such as restrooms, drinking water, parking, and lighting.

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### *Natural/Conservancy Areas*

**Use:** Protection and management of the natural/cultural environment with recreational use as a secondary objective

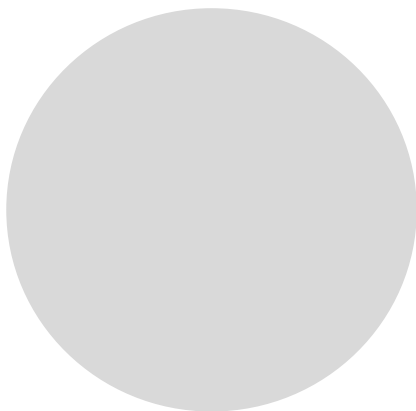
**Service Area:** No applicable standard, scattered among city parks of all sizes

**Desirable Size:** Sufficient to protect the resource and accommodate desired recreational uses

**Acres/1,000 Population:** Variable

**Site Characteristics:** Variable, depending upon the resource being protected.

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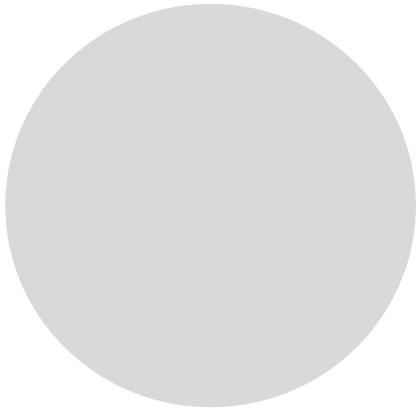
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*Natural/Conservancy Areas*

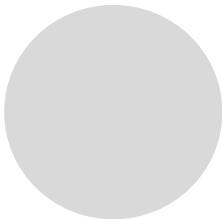
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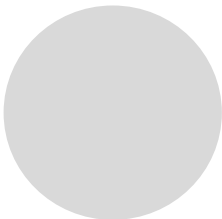
**Acres/1,000 Population:** Variable

**Site Characteristics:** Variable, depending upon the resource being protected



*Private Facilities*

**Use:** Areas for specialized or single-purpose recreational activities, such as golf courses, nature centers, display gardens, arenas, outdoor theaters, gun ranges, historical buildings/areas, and parkways or boulevards within commercial centers.



*School Facilities*

**Use:** Facilities developed in association with schools intended for children's educational and recreational instruction, which on a secondary basis, provide opportunities for community residents. This shared usage allows for daytime usage by students and evening, weekend, and summer usage by all.



*Linear Park/Trails*

**Use:** Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel, may include other activities such as sitting areas, exercise courses, play areas, landscaping, etc.

**Service Area:** No applicable standards

**Population Served:** All of the community

**Desirable Size:** Sufficient width to provide for specified activities, maximum usage, and setbacks from streets or residential areas

**Acres/1,000 Population:** Variable

**Site Characteristics:** Built or natural corridors such as utility rights-of-way, bluff lines, vegetation patterns, and roads that link other components of the recreation system or community facilities such as parks, schools, and residential areas



# IMPLEMENTATION

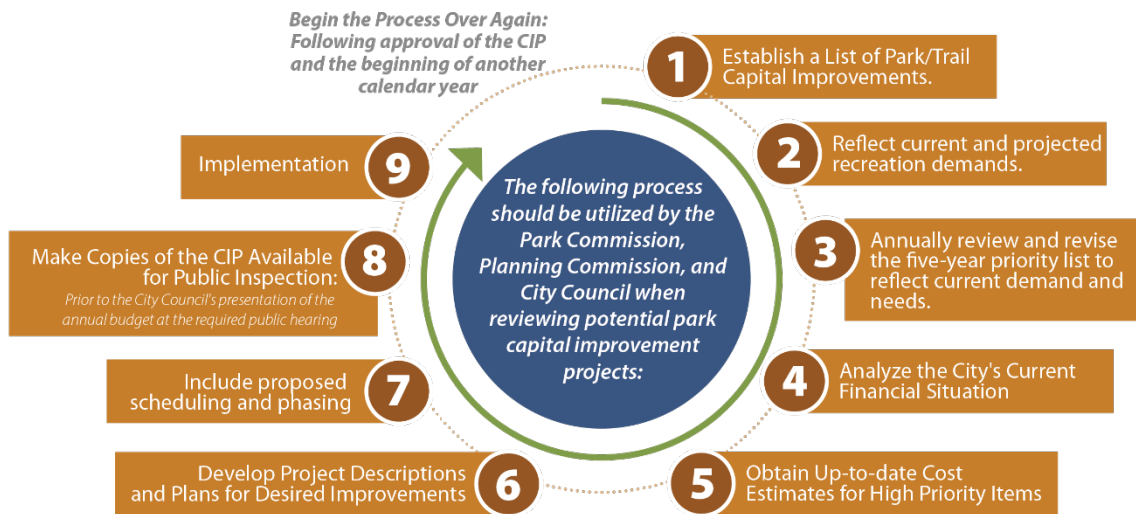
## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROCESS

The final phase of the Parks and Trails Plan establishes a process for projecting land acquisition and park/trail improvements, setting priorities, and scheduling for their provision and financing over time. This process produces a long-range guide for recreation and requires the city to anticipate capital expenditures and provide revenues to meet them. This section does not replace a capital improvements plan in that precise costs are beyond the scope of this document. However, the city should begin thinking about establishing a five-year priority list, analyzing its financial situation, and obtaining cost estimates for the desired short-term improvements.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) provides an instrument for carrying out the objectives and recommendations of the Montrose Parks and Trails Plan. Through the prioritization of five-year capital needs for the city's park and recreational facilities and identifying the amount of money available to finance the improvements during this period, the city will be able to determine which improvements are necessary in terms of their ability to pay. The CIP is a flexible process, and as social, physical, and financial conditions change within the city, the priority of the scheduled projects may also change. In response to changes in the city, the CIP must be an ongoing process. Each year, the CIP should be re-evaluated for consistency with the Plan, current recreational needs, and the fiscal condition of the city.

The following process should be utilized by the Park Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council when reviewing potential park capital improvement projects:



It is recommended that a specific annual CIP review schedule be established for the review of potential park/trail projects. This will enable individuals who wish to request consideration of new items to present their position in ample time to change the CIP, if necessary, in a manner consistent with community needs. This will also help in reducing or eliminating financial commitments for projects that might not proceed to the final construction stage in the event that they are deleted or moved back on the priority list.

## LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

In lieu of land dedication, the City currently imposes the following cash contribution requirements upon new subdivisions:

*Residential Development:* \$1,600 per dwelling unit

*Commercial Development:* \$3,000 per gross acre

*Industrial Development:* \$2,000 per gross acre

The city's park dedication fees should be continually monitored and modified if necessary to ensure that such fees reflect the effect of a subdivision on the City's park system.

## CONCEPT PLANS

Concept plans are site-specific and serve as the basic documents for the layout, facility mix, landscaping, and construction details for a park or recreation facility. For this reason, they are best prepared once the Parks and Trails Plan has been completed, and the location of individual park sites determined. They are based upon a well-defined program of recreation facilities and services to be provided and the overall physical arrangement of such. Such plans are not provided within this document but should be pursued in future years. Their preparation will become a necessity in defining project costs as part of the yearly budgeting or capital improvement process.

## LAND ACQUISITION

Park and trail land dedication will play a major role in acquiring and developing park/trail facilities. Acquisition through dedication is a long-term process since land can only be obtained as the abutting land is developed. While the outright purchase of land is often prohibitive due to investment costs and anticipated benefit per capita through the city, it will be necessary where developments are already in place and lack recreational facilities or to acquire special, distinct pieces of land that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to obtain through park dedication. While portions of Montrose contain developments that are already in place where several of the trail corridors are proposed and will likely require land acquisition through purchase or the establishment of easements, the utilization of road rights-of-way can also provide an easy alternative for establishing public trail routes.

## CONSISTENCY WITH PLAN ELEMENTS AND ORDINANCES

Parks and trails have a positive, but often intangible, effect on the economy and quality of life in suburban areas. A healthy, attractive neighborhood results when a combination of factors is present, such as well-kept homes, adequate jobs, quality public services, including well-planned and maintained recreation facilities. Many communities are encouraging the rehabilitation of older homes in established neighborhoods where, congruently, parks and trails can also be upgraded or expanded where necessary.

In this regard, it is important that the Parks and Trails Policy Plan contained herein is followed in association with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Policies. In fact, the Parks and Trails Plan will actually be adopted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. Implementation programs

involving capital outlays, levied fees, zoning, and related actions must be consistent with the Plan's policies. Arbitrary departure from adopted or endorsed policy statements could lead to litigation. The focus of attention on a broad policy framework provides more flexibility for guiding government response to rapid physical, economic, and social change. Since the Plan documents a continuing planning process and records this evolution only for a given segment of time, regular review and updating are critical.

Along these lines, the City's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances should be consistent with established Plan elements or they will be difficult, if not impossible, to command and execute. Ordinance amendments are a critical part of the Implementation process which should directly follow the completion of this Plan. Without updating existing code requirements, the City may miss out on opportunities to realize potential benefits of newly established policies, particularly when the development season is upon us and the rate of growth is accelerating throughout the community. Specific ordinance criteria to address include: park dedication requirements, trail width and location standards, tree planting requirements, etc.

## PROGRAM ASSISTED FUNDING OPTIONS

While park land acquisition and development are capital outlays that are typically financed with the revenues from city dedication or general funds, there are other methods available to assist the city in raising necessary money for large projects. The following outdoor recreation and trail grant programs may be available to the city if the intended project(s) comply with the submission criteria.

### Local Trail Connections Grants (MNDNR)

**Program Purpose:** To promote relatively short trail connections between where people live and desirable locations, not to develop significant new trails.

**Eligible Projects:** Land acquisition and trail development. Projects must result in a trail linkage that is immediately available for use by the general public. Local/area support must be demonstrated. Acquisition of trail right-of-way is eligible only when proposed in conjunction with trail development. Lands purchased with this fund require a perpetual easement for recreational trail purposes and a 20-year maintenance commitment by the project sponsor.

**Priorities:** Priority is given to projects with residential connections to state and regional facilities. A secondary purpose of the program is to develop linkages to existing trail segments.

**Level of Assistance:** Minimum grant - \$5,000.00. Maximum grant - \$50,000.00. The maximum grant amount is 50 percent of the total eligible project costs. There is a 50 percent cash match for eligible elements of the project proposal. Neither this funding source nor the cash match may be used to meet existing payroll (i.e., only contract services, materials, and supplies are reimbursable). Matches may not include other State funds, Metropolitan Council grants, or National Recreational Trail Grant Program (formerly Symms). This grant may serve as a partial local match for a TEA-21 (former ISTE) Enhancement Project.

**General Information:** Projects must be completed within a three-year period.

### Outdoor Recreation Grants (MNDNR)

**Program Purpose:** To increase and enhance outdoor recreation facilities. Provides matching grants to local units of government for up to 50 percent of the cost of acquisition, development, and/or redevelopment costs of local parks and recreation areas.

**Eligible Projects:** Park acquisition and/or development/redevelopment, including, among others, internal park trails, picnic shelters, playgrounds, athletic facilities, boat accesses, fishing piers, swimming beaches, and campgrounds.

**Minimum Requirements:** Project proposals must include at least one eligible primary outdoor recreation facility and have a total project cost of at least \$10,000.00. Land proposed for development and/or redevelopment must be owned by the applicant or be part of an acquisition project. Significant progress must be completed on active projects before an additional proposal can be submitted.

**Program Funding:** A maximum of 50 percent of the total eligible project costs. Applicants must be able to fund at least 50 percent of the total project costs. The local share can consist of cash or the value of materials, labor, and equipment usage by the local sponsor or by donations or any combination thereof. Costs must be incurred and paid for before reimbursement can be made. Applicants are eligible to receive more than one grant.

## OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

One of the final levels of recreational planning addresses the operation and maintenance plan for parks, trails, recreation, and open space facilities. Part of the Implementation process is to provide tools for the development of facilities and delivery of services necessary for the provision of recreation experiences. These action plans include capital improvement programs, operations manuals, personnel tracking plans, zoning, scheduling, and maintenance standards. Montrose, along with professionals in the field, must combine the art and science of park management to balance park and open space resource values with the provision of needed recreation facilities. The park and recreation standards utilized herein serve as one of the benchmarks against which the quality of life within a community can be measured. The DNR (Department of Natural Resources) inspected Veterans Park in 2015, and they determined the park passed their criteria.

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION

An essential aspect of park and trail development is ensuring that users are knowledgeable about recreational facilities. To promote the use of the community recreational system, the city should provide informational materials to residents as the facilities are implemented. This information could be conveyed on the city's website, a newsletter, and a map mailed to each household, or through articles in local newspapers. Simultaneously, the city should work to establish a set of rules and encourage community awareness of such.

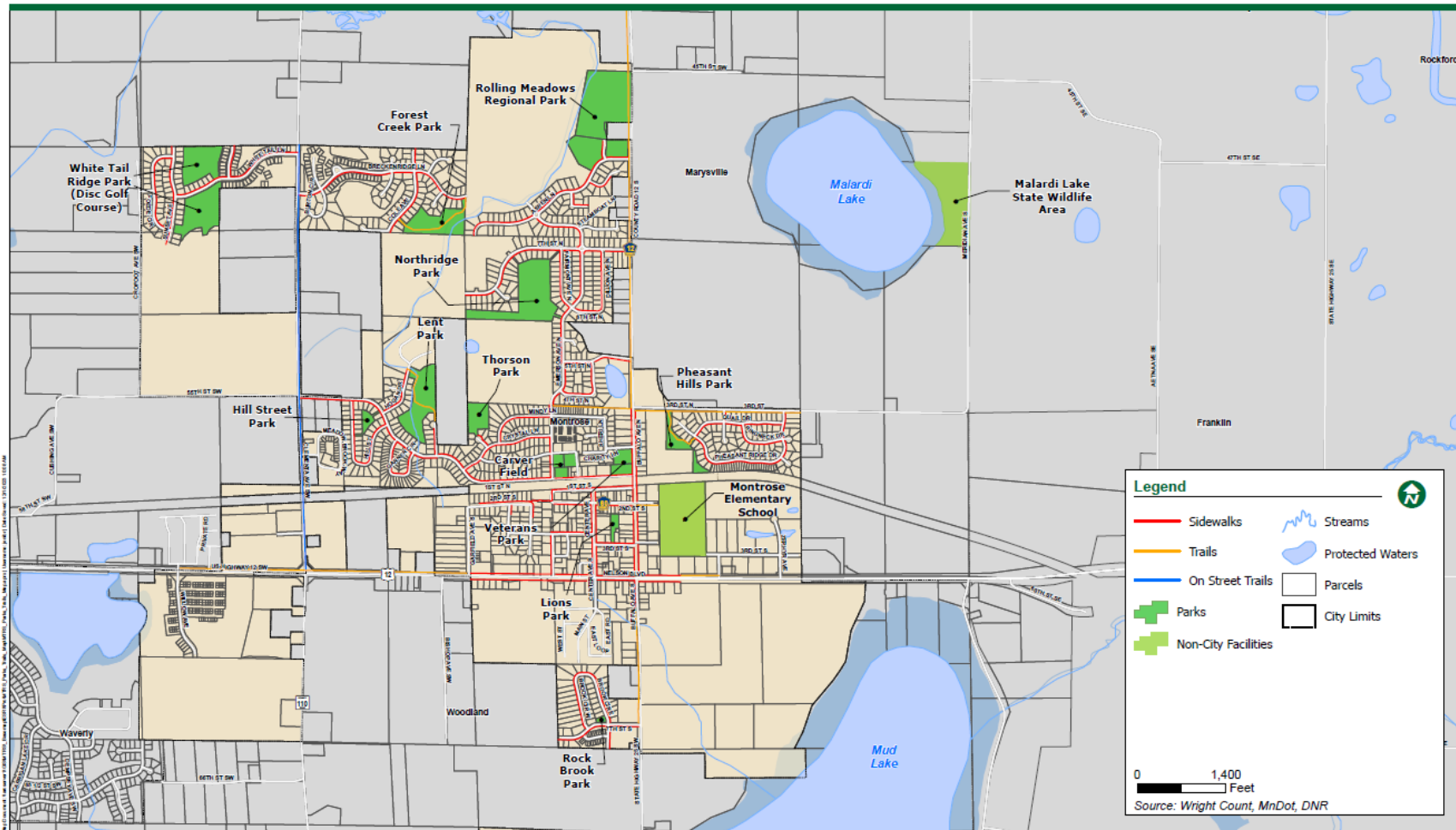
## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The development or improvement of parks and trails in the city is an excellent way to energize and direct the resources and talents of community volunteers, who are becoming increasingly important in delivering quality leisure services. This approach can result in higher quality recreation opportunities at a more reasonable cost to the taxpayer. Under this scenario, it is essential that the city organizes projects and cooperates with the volunteers of non-profit, private, industrial, commercial, or religious groups in the planning, financing, maintenance, and scheduling of projects.

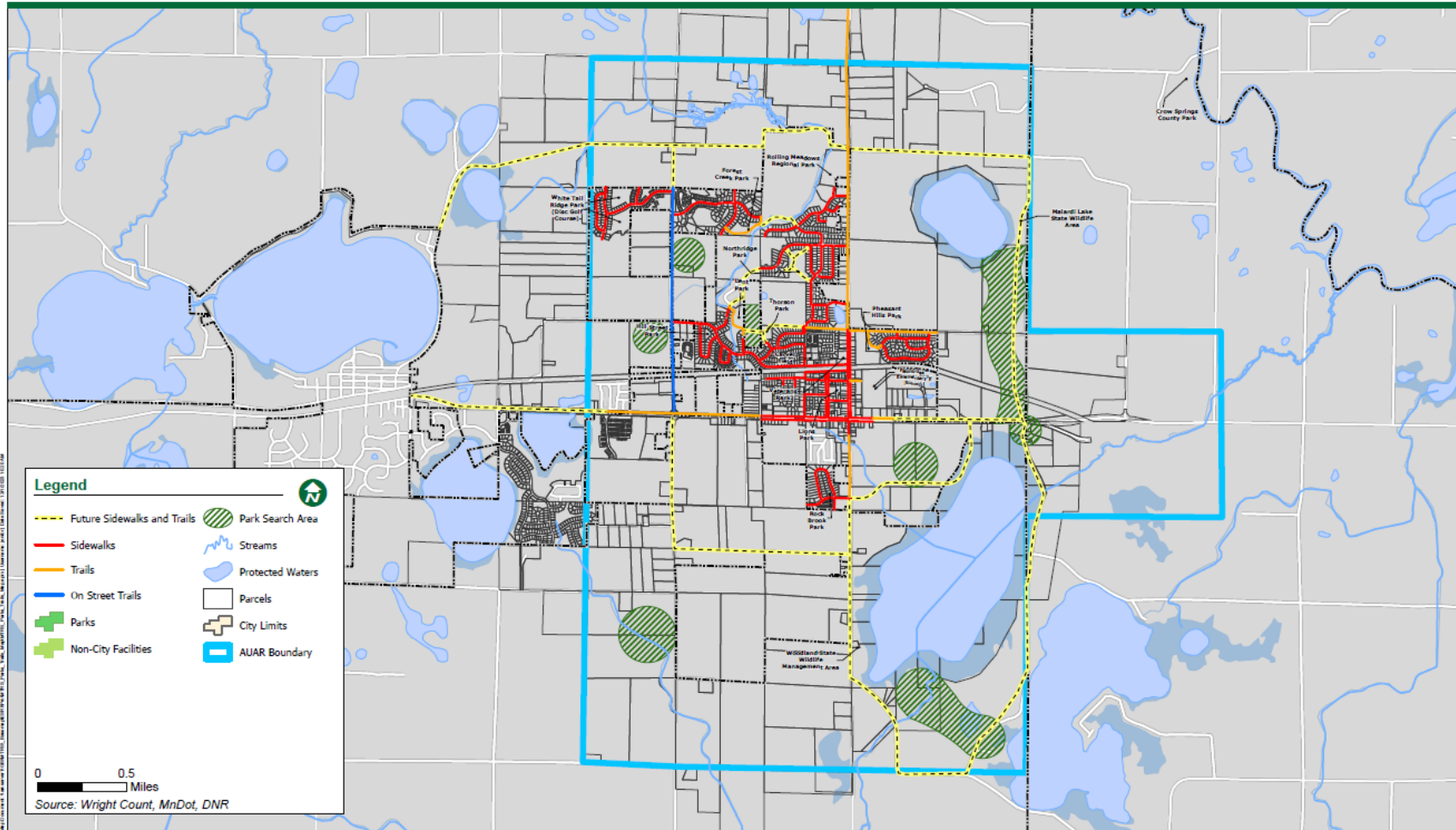
## IDENTIFICATION AND SIGNAGE

A clear, consistent, and concise system of park and trail signage is beneficial in any recreational system to assist users in finding and using the facilities. Many times, signage is also beneficial when installed to identify future park or trail improvements as a means of informing prospective owners of adjacent/nearby property and for general public knowledge to let citizens know of work in progress. Most commonly associated with existing facilities, directional graphics may be in the form of painted pavement symbols, lettering, or any variety of regulatory, warning, or guidance signage. Signage should include general identification of an area, layout and types of facilities present, directions for specific points of interest such as handicapped areas, restrooms, or connections to destinations, trail distances, and user/safety rules. The best location for much of this information is near the entrances to parks/trail segments or near parking areas. The signage should be consistent throughout the city and should be easily understandable and maintainable. The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration has outlined size, shape, and color criteria for signs in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

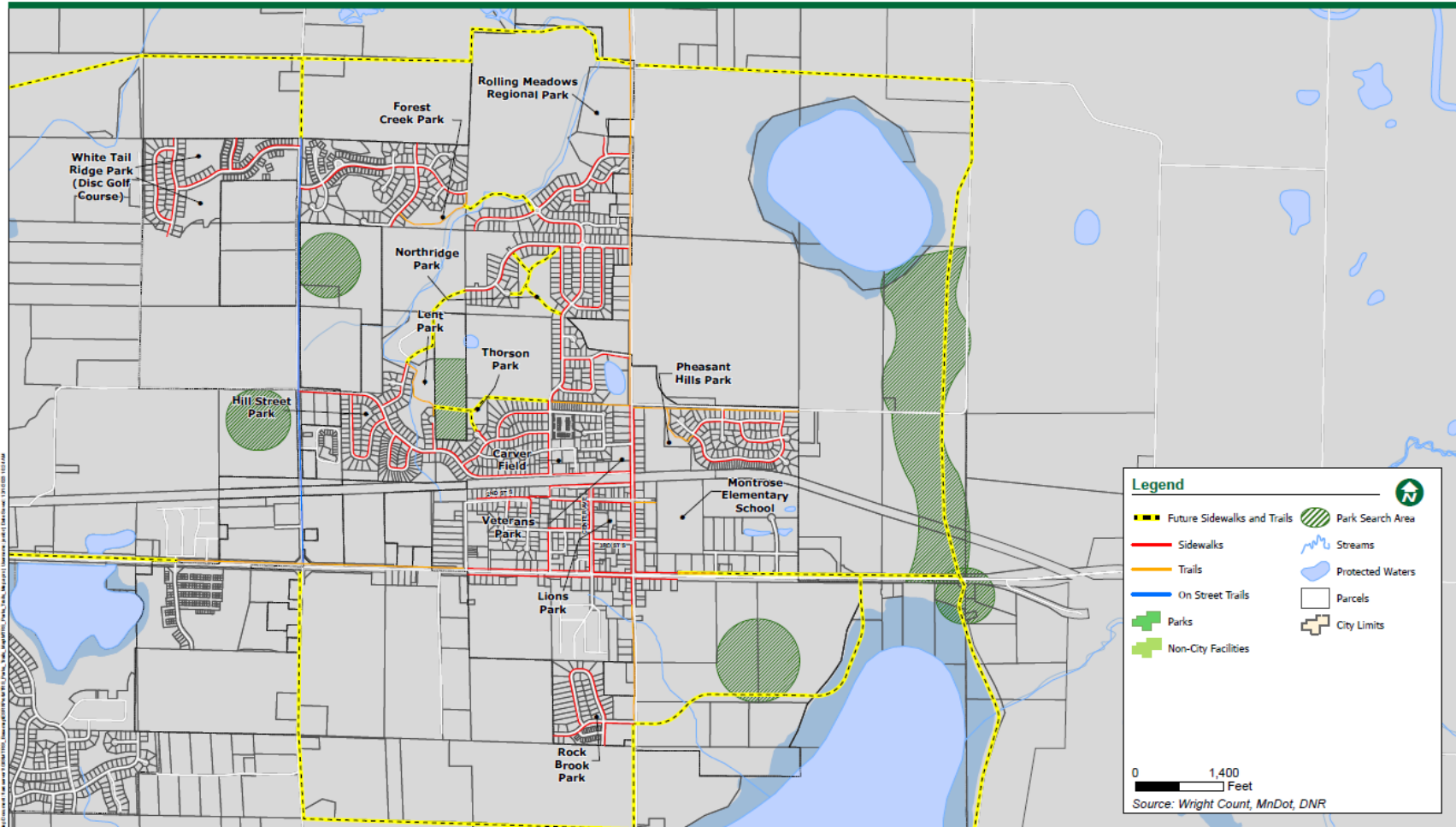




# Master Plan:



# Priority Areas:



The "Parks" and "Non-City Facilities" legend items don't show up on the maps.