



COTTAGE GROVE PARKS, RECREATION AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION  
12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH  
COTTAGE GROVE, MN 55016  
COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 PM

May 12, 2025

- 1 Call to Order
- 2 Roll Call
- 3 Approval of the Agenda
- 4 Approval of Minutes
  - A February 10, 2025
- 5 Open Forum
- 6 Action Items
  - A Peterson (Roger & Myra) Park Naming
  - B East Ravine Park and Trail Master Plan
  - C June Meeting
- 7 Presentations
- 8 Action Updates
  - A Denzer Park
  - B Granada Park Parking
  - C Cottage Grove Trailway Corridor Habitat Restoration
  - D Oltman Park
  - E Mississippi Dunes Park
  - F Kingston Park Building
- 9 Donations
- 10 Staff Reports and Materials
  - A Ice Arena Update
  - B Parks Update
  - C Recreation Update
  - D River Oaks Update
  - E 2025 3M PFAS Settlement Priority 2 Grant Program

11 Commission Comments

A Washington County Parks Board Meeting Notes

12 Council Comments

A Council Agendas

13 Workshop

14 Adjournment



# Minutes

## City of Cottage Grove

### Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission Meeting

#### February 10, 2025

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Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Cottage Grove Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission Meeting was held on February 10, 2025.

**I. CALL TO ORDER & READING OF MISSION**

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm at City Hall

**II. Roll Call**

**Members Present:** Susannah Brown, Kelly Glasford, Adam Larson, Debra Gustafson, Shane Waterman, David Olson, & Justin Waterman

**Members Absent:** Samantha Crabtree

**Others Present:** Zac Dockter Parks & Recreation Director, Jim Fohrman Parks Supervisor, Molly Pietruszewski Recreation Services Manager, Noah Ranem Recreational Specialist

**III. Approval of Agenda**

A Motion to approve agenda made by Commissioner Glasford & Seconded by Commissioner Olson. Agenda approved.

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

A Motion to approve minutes from December 9, 2024. Motion made by Commissioner Brown & Seconded by Commissioner Gustafson. Minutes approved.

**V. Open Forum- None**

**VI. Presentations**

**a. Pickleball Programming**

- i. Noah Ranem Recreation specialist presented information about Cottage Grove's Pickleball Advisory Board. They started a 20–30-member volunteer program back in 2019 at Granada Park, with the growing popularity of the sport they partnered with the city and 2024 was our first year having a city lead pickleball program. For the spring league we had 26 teams and for the fall league we had 49 teams. We had 230 members in our city lead pickleball

club. 150 were residents and 80 were nonresidents. Club members have access to priority court hours at both Glacial Valley & Granada Park. We had one tournament in 2024 in partnership with St. Paul Park & Newport Lions Club. Our plans for 2025 include increasing memberships to 300, shorten club windows to 3-hours, update signage, add a spring tournament, split level leagues, and youth and adult lessons. It was a very successful first year and we look forward to more growth and opportunities. Commissioner Gustafson inquired about lessons. Noah explained for adults we will bring in a certified trainer that will most likely be held mid-day. Youth lessons will be in house and split between 8-11 and 11-14 years old.

## **VII. Action Items**

### **a. Peterson (Roger & Myra) Park Naming**

- i. Zac presented an application for a future park. Commissioner Brown asked about the location and if it was part of Michael's Pointe. Zac explained we currently own a very small portion of land on the south side of the lake in Michael's Pointe. The north side of the lake has a pending development and once that is approved, we will own all the land around the lake and will add trails and park. The park will be located on the north side of the lake.

### **b. Public Landscapes Initiative Program**

- i. Zac presented a guiding document that sets a 5–6-year plan that is submitted to City Council to add it to the CIP in the fall. Zac gave a brief explanation of how the Public Landscapes Initiative Program works. It has been a few years since this has been reviewed and Council would like feedback from Commission. Commissioner Larson asked about the current fund balance of \$537,000 under the impression that developers choose to pay in to the program vs replant trees. Zac stated that yes developers have been paying more into this, and the balance does ebb, and flow based on projects. This current amount is higher than normal as we typically have a balance in the \$350,000 range, which is what the commission was presented with last time this was reviewed. Commissioner Olson motioned to adopt the Public Landscapes Initiative and place on file. Commissioner Brown seconded motion.

### **c. East Ravine Park & Trail Master Plan**

- i. The Commission adopted this plan a few years back. Council had a strategic planning workshop recently and there was concern from staff regarding the 6 neighborhood parks, trail, and community park and that there would be a large funding shortage. Unlike 15 years

ago, park dedication does not carry the same weight for the cost of the park and land acquisition. Council wanted the Commission to review the park and trail plan and affirm or edit the master plan to make sure we are on board the way the plan is now. There is quite a bit of overlap in the service radiuses, but as staff, when we look at future land acquisition we always want to plan for more then less as it's easier to subtract then add. Staff is looking for any comments or feedback from the Commission. We can leave the plan as is, we can adjust service radiuses and remove one or two parks, or we could study the natural resources of the area, or additional studies we could bring back. Commissioner Brown had questions after reviewing the plan. The idea of playgrounds disappearing from planning is scary as that is a great point of pride for our city and they provide many resources. Commissioner Brown wants to know more about the development; single family homes, townhomes, apartments, because when we have a higher density population, we need different sizes of parks to meet those needs. Commissioner Brown explained it's hard to anticipate what could move or be eliminated without knowing what types of development we might see. She is also curious about growth from the school district and would there potentially be a school built in this development as schools also have green space, ball fields, & playgrounds that could be shared as community use that could impact how we concentrate on certain amenities. Commissioner Brown would like to know the personality of the areas as they develop as our parks all offer different and unique things. Zac agreed with Commissioner Brown's concerns and stated we don't have any answers as of today regarding the types of developments. Commissioner Olson agreed with Commissioner Brown's comments and would like to better understand the natural resources of this property. The deepest lake in Cottage Grove is located on this property. The beginning of the ravine that goes into the county park is also on this property. So, as we begin to think about developing it, it falls to this group to understand the resources that are in the property and what can do to protect them and leverage them. Commissioner Olson is concerned that the focus is entirely on parks and no focus on recreation, nor is there anything (beyond the lake and ravine) relative to the actual natural resources in this area. Zac stated that we do have a natural resources inventory that does a pretty good job, but this study was

last done in 1997. We could have a focus study for just this area, that we could potentially get grant funding for and update the natural resources inventory for this area. Commissioner Larson asked for a better clarification on what “closer” means for the development. Zac stated there are a couple landowners that are actively engaged in selling and developing their land. Commissioner Larson asked without the shops at Cottage Grove or the community center down on the south end, do we want to keep these mini parks as part of this plan. Zac stated that the primary focus is Ravine Park and 70<sup>th</sup> St to the north. Zac re-stated his original request in feedback from the Commission. The Commission needs to discuss the priority of parks. For example, if the community park is the main focus, the neighborhood parks could be reprioritized. Commissioner Brown requested information on natural resources around the community park, and parks E, F, & G as these areas seem more timely in the next few meetings. Zac stated he will bring that information to the March meeting. Commissioner Brown also asked for access of proposed sales information for type of development that would be there (single family, multi family, mixed use). Mayor Myron Bailey stated that the entire area was master planned a few years ago and the majority of the area that would be near the community park would be single family homes. As you get closer to 70<sup>th</sup> St and Keats Ave you might see medium and higher density. Things can change, but as of yet the developer has only shown single family homes. Commissioner Brown motioned staff to bring back detailed plans of development, potential school, & proposal to update the 1997 inventory. Commissioner Gustafson seconded.

**VIII. Presentation of Information**

**a. Commissioner Terms Review**

- i. February 28<sup>th</sup> is the last day of expiring terms.

**IX. Action Updates**

**a. Denzer Park**

- i. Grading completed last fall, final grading completed this spring, playground and picnic shelter have been ordered. We are hoping to have the park up and functional by mid to late summer.

**b. Granada Park Parking**

- i. Staff has proposal for off street perpendicular parking. We will complete that this summer using in house labor.

**c. CG Trailway Corridor Grant**

- i. This is for the property under the power lines from Hinton to Imperial Ave. We removed a lot of tree species, underbrush, dead and dying boxelder and ash trees. We received a few calls, but after speaking with Zac he was able to explain this is for habitat restoration not demolition. We will be doing Arbor Day in the area this spring.

**d. Oltman/Mississippi Dunes Park Grants**

- i. We received \$350,000 grant for each. For Oltman Park we have plans and specs out for bid, so we expect that work to begin mid to late summer. Depending on the contractor this could be a one- or two-year project. Mississippi Dunes Park grant we are sitting on (we have until 2026 to use this). Council is looking at accepting a fishing pier grant agreement with the DNR and Zac will be working with the Commission on a boat launch through the DNR Parks & Trails and Fishery program with the goal of that having the boat launch installed in 2026, and pier installed in 2025. The 3M priority 2 settlement dollars request for proposal program have been released, so a proposal will be brought to the commission next month to review.

**e. Kingston Park Building**

- i. Schedule is to finish plans and spec and bring to council in October, go out of bid, and close bid before Thanksgiving and getting a contractor on board for construction to begin by 2026. The site power upgrades will be completed this year if not by Strawberry Fest, for sure by 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

**f. Ice Areana Remodel**

- i. Original ice arena was built in 1974 addition and remodeling in 2008. The main area through the back addition is a very inefficient use of space, we have very little office space. The concession stand is also not a good layout and again inefficient use of space. We have an architect reviewing plans.

**X. Donation and Acknowledgements-None**

**XI. Staff Reports & Educational Materials-Submitted along with an article from Parks & Recreation magazine focusing on Economic Vitaliy.**

**XII. Commission Comments**

- a. Washington County Parks Board Meeting Notes
- b. Commissioner Olson inquired about the vandalism at the disc golf park and if the group has reached out to us to see if we would be willing to help them.

Zac responded that they did reach out to us. Jim Fohrman stated that we have not fixed the basket yet. We either will have to replace it or will have to bring it in to weld it. To our knowledge it is only this one basket that has been damaged. Zac stated we will fix the basket (weather depending) before the first tournament in March.

**XIII. Council Comments-**David Clausen has been appointed council liaison.

**XIV. Adjournment-** Motioned by Commissioner Gustafson.

Seconded by Commissioner S Waterman. Meeting Adjourned at 7:50pm

**To:** Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission  
**From:** Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director  
**Cc:**  
**Date:** February 11, 2025  
**Subject:** Park Naming Request – Peterson

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### Introduction/Background

A park naming request application has been submitted to the Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission. The application is included in this report to aid Commissioners in processing the request.

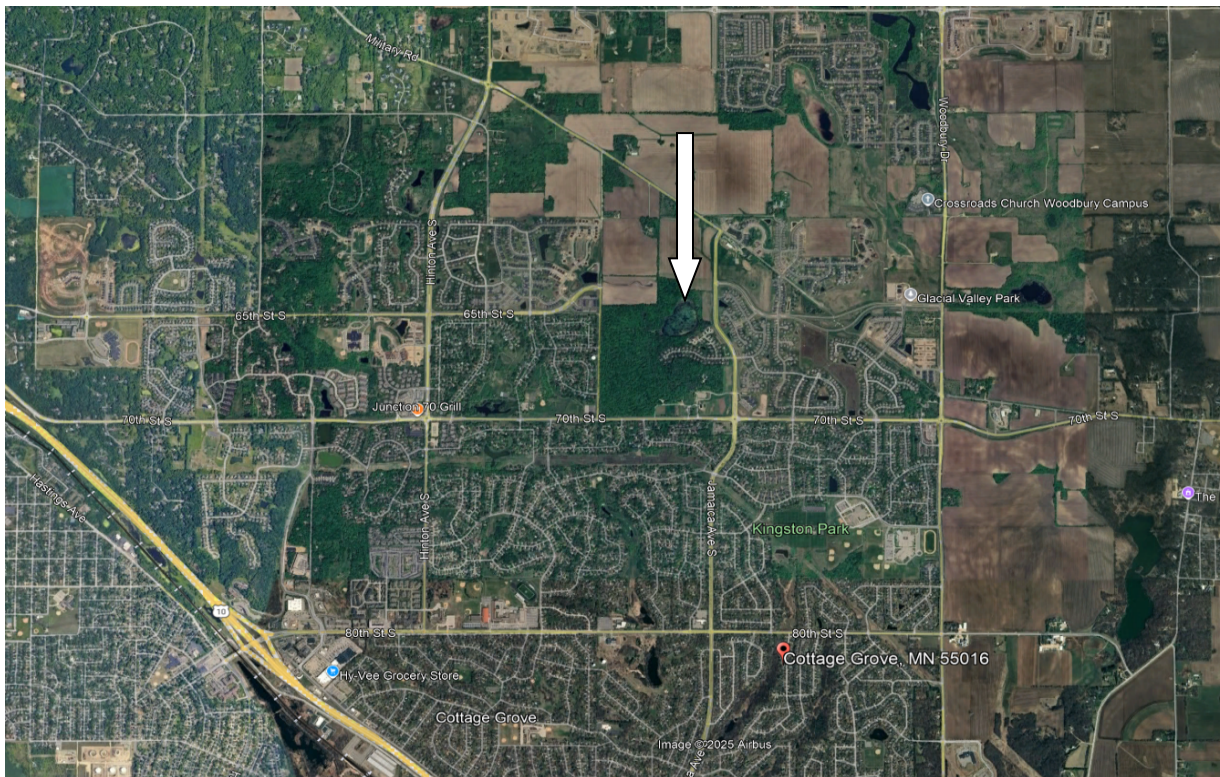
This will be the Commission’s second review of the application so no action is required. The Commission should discuss the merit of the application and request any additional information from staff it may need to make a decision. The Commission has the ability at any time to deny the request with a majority decision.

Should the Commission choose to continue the discussion, at least one additional meeting is required per the park naming policy before making a final recommendation to City Council.

### Action Requested

Provide direction on park naming request.

Park Site



# *City of Cottage Grove*

## *Policy for Naming and Renaming of Parks, Park Facilities, and Open Space*

### **I. Introduction**

The selection of a proper name for a park, park facility, and/or open space is a thoughtful process which requires careful analysis by many people. This procedure has been adopted by the City of Cottage Grove to provide the proper guidelines for any naming or renaming of said amenities.

### **II. Procedure**

The following procedure will be used for the naming of parks, park facilities, and open space:

1. Staff, Council, Advisory Body, or Cottage Grove resident recognizes and requests the naming of a park, park facility, or open space.
2. Staff will prepare and submit the request to the Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission for review.
3. The Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission will discuss the merit of the name(s). If there is a list of potential names, they may be added to or eliminated from the list at this time. No formal recommendation will be made at this meeting.
4. At the subsequent Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission meeting, staff will provide any information requested by the Commission. If there is a list of names, the list should be narrowed to three at this meeting. No formal recommendation will be made at this point.
5. At their next meeting, the Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission shall debate the merits of the remaining name(s) and make a final recommendation to the City Council.
6. The recommendation will then be placed on the next regular City Council meeting. If City Council does not approve the recommended name, they will return the issue to the Commission with direction and the process will begin anew.

### **III. Park, Park Facility, and Open Space Naming Criteria**

Listed below are the criteria used to determine the naming or renaming of Parks, Park Facilities, and Open Spaces.

1. The name of the subdivision associated with the Park.
2. The name of the neighborhood in which the park is located.
3. The street name adjacent to or closely identified with the park.
4. The name of a local interest point, or local focal point near the park.
5. The name of an event or historical occurrence associated with the park or area.
6. The name of a person who dedicates a major part or all of the land for the park.

7. The name of a person of significant stature within the community. He/she must adhere to at least one of the following credentials and complete a waiting period of at least six months from the conclusion of service or time of death:
  - a. At least ten years of local service to the community
  - b. Shown outstanding assistance or support of the local park system
  - c. Major financial donor to the park system
  - d. A historical figure or family

***VIII. Final Determinations***

The City Council reserves all rights in the naming or renaming of all parks, park facilities, or open spaces.

***City of Cottage Grove***  
***Naming/Renaming of Parks, Park Facilities, and***  
***Open Space Application***

Applicant Name: Jack Lavold

Address: 6859 Ideal Ave South

Telephone Number: (H) 651-459-9981 or 651-402-4448 (W)

Existing Facility Name: New Park near Robert's Lake

Proposed Name/Rename: 1. Peterson Park

2. Roger and Myra Peterson Park

3.

Please list reasons for proposed name(s):

Roger was a four term Mayor of Cottage Grove from 1972-1987. He lived in Cottage Grove  
for over 40 years. He was a member of the original Cottage Grove Jaycee's and Lion's Club.

He served on the Board for Stone Soup Thrift Shop and was part of the Annual Cottage Grove  
Strawberry Festival Committee.

He helped create the South Washington County Telecommunications Commission and the

creation of the local branch of the Youth Service Bureau. Roger was married to Washington

County Commissioner Myra Peterson - who served on the Washington County Board for 17

years. She was instrumental at getting the design and funding for the Wakota Bridge. She

helped create the Red Rock Corridor, was a supporter of the Youth Service Bureau and  
often held a local garden tour to raise funds in support of youth and families in need in

Cottage Grove and Washington County.

Both of them have a deep love for our community and worked together to help create the

Cottage Grove, we have today. I feel this new park location would be perfect since it is next to  
a lake, woods and wildlife. Myra has an amazing garden with a waterfall, feeders, and even  
though her home is in a residential neighborhood in Cottage Grove, her backyard looks like  
she is in the country.



**To:** Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission  
**From:** Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director  
**Date:** February 24, 2025  
**Subject:** East Ravine Park Planning

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### **Introduction**

As Cottage Grove developments continues east, staff has taken time to analyze future park plans east of Keats Avenue. Analysis includes identification of both land acreage and dollars needed to acquire and build out the parks planned for this area and allows for strategizing attainment of master plan goals. This report is focused on the land between 70<sup>th</sup> Street to 85<sup>th</sup> Street (north/south) and Lamar Avenue and Keats Avenue (east/west).

### **Background**

At the last Commission meeting, staff presented a report that sought feedback from Commissioners as City Council ponders how best to finance the land acquisition and park construction needs of the East Ravine Park and Trail Master Plan. That original report with the master plan with this report.

The Commission asked for more information from staff to help prioritize the plan concepts. Those requests with staff responses are:

1. Information on whether a public school intends to be a part of the development area.  
Staff Response: There is no current plan for a public school in this area
2. Natural resources inventory.
  - a. Staff Response: Included with this report is the natural resources inventory pertaining to this area.
3. Information on land use plan.

Staff Response: Community Development Director Schmitz states the following:  
*A large majority of the density on the east side of Keats Ave. is planned for low-density residential. I am not certain what their definition of high density is but I anticipate a diversity of housing options that are consistent with other areas of the community with sporadic high density projects.*

*The entire 'neighborhood 1' in the East Ravine, north of 70<sup>th</sup> south of Woodbury boarder is likely a larger area and higher density then the entire 'neighborhood 2', east of Keats north of 85<sup>th</sup> and south of 70<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Staff Recommendation**

Receive East Ravine Park and Trail Master Plan analysis and provide guidance for future financial and development planning. Staff recommends the following language be added as an addendum to the East Ravine Park and Trails Master Plan as correspondence from the March 10, 2025 Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission Meeting:

**Site A/B:** This is the highest priority site for acquisition due to natural resources along with flat land for active recreation area development. This would be a community park. There are high volumes of natural resources including a lake, woodlands and prairie (including documented

threatened prairie species such as Kitten Tails) and provides a great opportunity to protect, restore and preserve natural habitats.

**Site E:** This is a low priority site but was considered a recreational opportunity given the knoll/elevation experience while also having the potential for low cost acquisition because it is a future water tower site. This could be a mini-park with just a playground and landscaping similar to Meadowgrass Park which would minimize construction and acquisition costs. Or, this site could be removed entirely if it is deemed the services are not needed for the neighborhood(s). However, trail connections to other nearby parks should remain a priority. There are minimal natural resources that are a priority to protect or restore here.

**Site F:** This is a low priority site but was considered a recreational opportunity if the stormwater design allowed for appropriate land acquisition at minimal cost. It could also just be a mini park or be funded/maintained by an Homeowners Association if the City does not desire to fund this park site. However, trail connections to other nearby parks should remain a priority, particularly if there is not a park in this location. There are minimal natural resources that are a priority to protect or restore here.

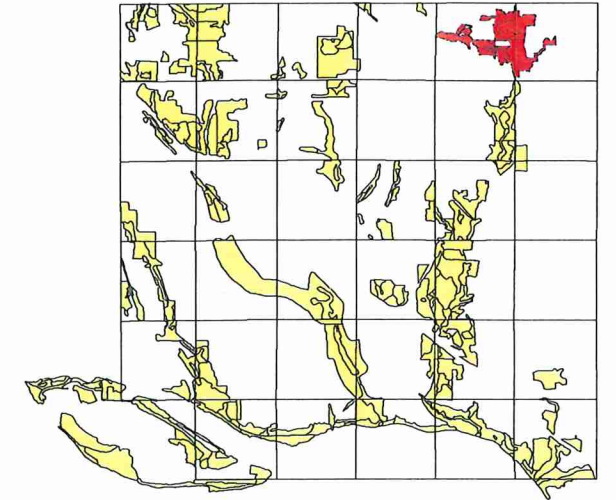
**Site G:** This park is a high priority site due to its' location between major roads and as a trailhead to CG Regional Park. It also compliments the nearby civic campus. Depending on the final housing type(s), staff believes it is most likely to be a standard neighborhood park as defined by the Comprehensive Plan. But given its' proximity to the trails and open spaces of the regional park, it could be reduced to a mini park if service needs are minimal.

**Trails:** Currently there are two trail segments connecting parks E and F. This was originally designed to transport multiple neighborhoods to park and open spaces via a trail system. However, the west trail connection could certainly be eliminated and neighborhood connections be installed to utilize the main easterly trail if the layout of the neighborhood allows for safe pedestrian travel throughout. Doing so would reduce land acquisition and trail construction costs while keeping the trail access priority along the waterway and open space areas.

In general, an interconnected trail system that safely connects residents and visitors to parks is a high priority of this plan. As development occurs, final trail locations must be identified to assure all residents have a park within a 10-mile walk while also giving opportunities to connect with nature through greenways. A well-designed and strategized trail system can reduce, but not eliminate, the need for recreational services and spaces within this future development area.

City of Cottage Grove  
Natural Resource Inventory

**SITE 1**

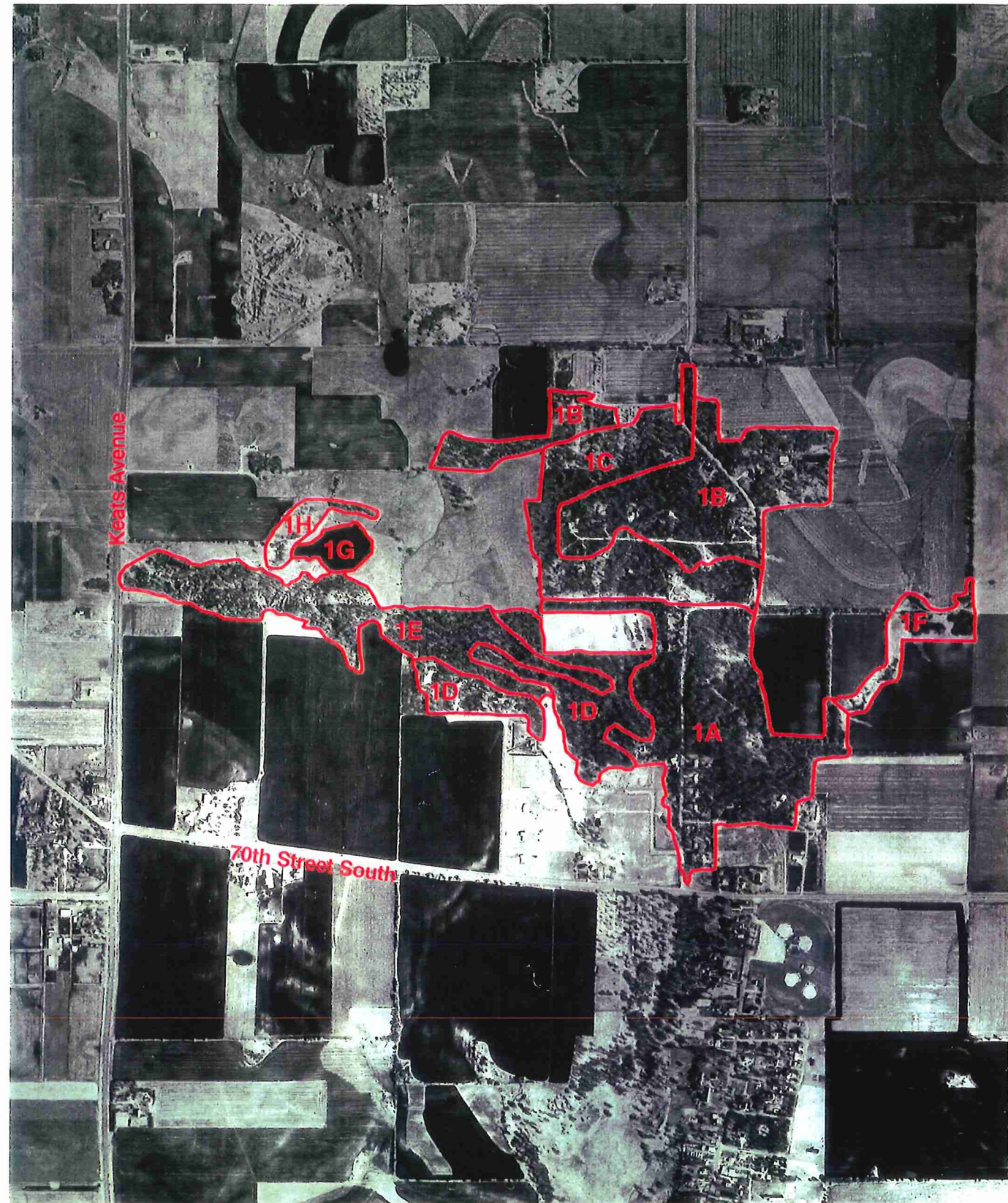


1300 0 1300 Feet



**SITE 1 COMMUNITY LEGEND**

COMM. #	COMMUNITY	ACRES	RANK	LOCAL VALUE
1A	Mesic Oak Forest	67.2	D	4
1B	Oak Woodland-Brushland	59.4	D	4
1C	Mesic Oak Forest	42.6	C	3
1D	Mesic Oak Forest	30.8	C	4
1E	Basswood Forest	42.3	BC	5
1F	Old Field\Prairie	10.0	NA	2
1G	Open Water\Emergent Marsh	4.9	D	6
1H	Dry Oak Savanna	5.2	D	4
Total:		262.4		



## **SITE 1 SUMMARY**

**(8 communities, 306.5 acres)**

### **Location**

Site 1 is located northeast of the intersection of Keats Avenue and 70th Street South.

### **Landforms, Soils, and Geology**

Site 1 is part of the tunnel valley system, which is found throughout Cottage Grove. Characteristics of the tunnel valley system are the steep slopes, reaching up to 30% in this area. Areas located away from the tunnel valley system tend to be more gently sloping. The majority of the soils are well drained, medium texture, thin loess, and colian sand over sand gravel.

### **Local Value**

The average local value is four with the highest value six and the lowest value two. A historic landscape associated with the pioneer phase of Cottage Grove Settlement is located in the north portion of community 1C. In addition, a number of large diameter European larch trees are planted along Lamar Ave. These trees, which are similar to Minnesota's native tamarack, are also present in the Cottage Grove Cemetery. The age of these trees was not estimated, however, they would appear to be in the range of 100 years.

### **Natural Resource Values**

Site 1 contains a mixture of mesic oak forest, oak woodland and savanna, and a small wetland with quality ranks ranging from low to moderately good. The overall natural community integrity ranking is moderate. Because there is a good diversity of natural communities and connectivity to other natural areas, the wildlife values for this site are moderate. There are no documented rare features on, or adjacent to, this site. Therefore, the rare feature value is low.

## **SITE 1 COMMUNITY DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Community 1A**

Community 1A is a low quality mesic oak forest. The canopy layer is dominated by bur oak, hackberry, green ash and black cherry. Other less common tree species include eastern cottonwood, basswood, american elm, bitternut hickory and bigtooth aspen. The bur oak are, on average, 30 inches in diameter, while most of the other tree species are 10 inches or less in diameter. The age of one 31-inch bur oak was estimated to be 155 years. The shrub layer is dominated by buckthorn, tatarian honeysuckle, choke cherry, prickly gooseberry and red raspberry. The groundcover is low in diversity and contains such species as virginia creeper, bedstraw, white avens and enchanter's nightshade.

*Disturbance Indicators:* The understory and groundcover in much of this community is almost completely dominated by aggressive, nonnative shrubs such as buckthorn.

#### **Community 1B**

Community 1B is a low quality oak woodland-brushland characterized by a patchy canopy of white oak and bur oak with a dense understory of shrubs and hardwood trees including such species as pin oak, basswood, ironwood, american elm and boxelder. The bur and white oak average 10 to 12 inches, while most of the other tree species average less than 10 inches. The age of one 19-inch white oak was estimated to be 135 years. The dense shrub layer is dominated by buckthorn, tatarian honeysuckle and prickly ash. The groundcover is not well represented due to the dense shrub layer and consists of such species as bedstraw, enchanter's nightshade and motherwort.

*Disturbance Indicators:* Most of this woodland has been logged and grazed. The shrub layer is dominated by mostly nonnative shrubs and thorny native species such as prickly ash which tend to increase following heavy grazing.

#### **Community 1C**

Community 1C is a moderate quality mesic oak forest dominated by bur oak, red oak, basswood, white oak and hackberry. Throughout most of this site, large, open grown bur oaks in the 20 to 30 inch diameter ranges are found. The diameter of other tree species is generally around 10 inches. The estimated age for one 20-inch diameter bur oak was 192 years. It is likely that most of the other hardwood tree species range in age from 50 to 100 years given their relatively small size. The shrub layer is generally dominated by both native and nonnative species such as red-berried elder, prickly gooseberry, buckthorn and tatarian honeysuckle. Because the shrub layer is so dense, the diversity of forbs is low with such species as virginia creeper, jack-in-the-pulpit, enchanter's nightshade, northern bedstraw and white avens dominant.

*Disturbance Indicators:* Nonnative shrubs are present throughout this community, but are not always dominant.

#### **Community 1D**

Community 1D is of the same type and quality as community 1C.

#### **Community 1E**

Community 1E, a basswood forest, is the best quality forest community on Site 1. This basswood forest which is oriented along a steep north-facing slope, contains 20 to 25 inch diameter basswood along with bur oak, white oak, red oak and ironwood. The basswood, which account for most of the

trees in this community, are estimated to be about 94 years of age. The shrub layer is quite diverse, containing witch hazel, red-berried elder and choke cherry. The ground cover is also diverse and contains such species as blue cohosh, lady slippers, nodding trillium and wild ginger. While visiting this community, a landowner indicated that in the spring, large numbers of wildflowers bloom in this community.

*Disturbance Indicators:* The western portion of this community has been partly cut down for a powerline right-of-way. There is some minor erosion along the slope.

#### **Community 1F**

Community 1F is an old field with scattered patches of moderate quality prairie. Within the prairie patches, indian grass, little and big bluestem, canada wild rye and porcupine grass are found. Some of the prairie forbs include thimbleweed, stiff goldenrod, rough blazingstar and prairie cinquefoil. Unfortunately, much of this site is being invaded by smooth sumac and eastern red cedar. Prescribed burning would both help to remove woody shrub invaders as well as favor reestablishment of prairie species throughout this site. In spite of good patches of prairie, most of this community can be better characterized as old field dominated by kentucky bluegrass and smooth brome.

#### **Community 1G (Gables Lake)**

This community is an open water marsh with an emergent marsh fringe dominated by reed canary grass. Other wetland plants present in low numbers include begger's ticks, spike rush and umbrella sedge.

*Disturbance Indicators:* Most of this wetland has been trampled by repeated grazing and is low in species diversity with nonnative grasses such as reed canary dominant.

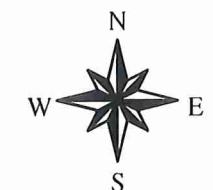
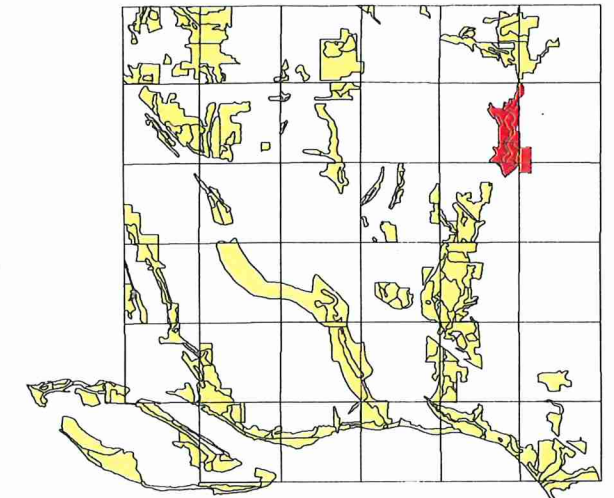
#### **Community 1H**

Community 1H is a degraded oak savanna dominated by 20 inch, open grown bur oak trees estimated to approximately 130 years of age. Other small trees such as eastern red cedar and siberian elm are scattered about this community in clumps. Shrubs such as sumac and tatarian honeysuckle are usually associated with these tree clumps. The open areas are dominated by canada bluegrass and smooth brome. A few forbs such as goldenrods and asters are found in the grassy areas, but overall, the forb diversity is very low.

*Disturbance Indicators:* This area has been heavily grazed in the past and contain a low diversity of native shrubs, grasses and forbs.

City of Cottage Grove  
Natural Resource Inventory

# SITE 11

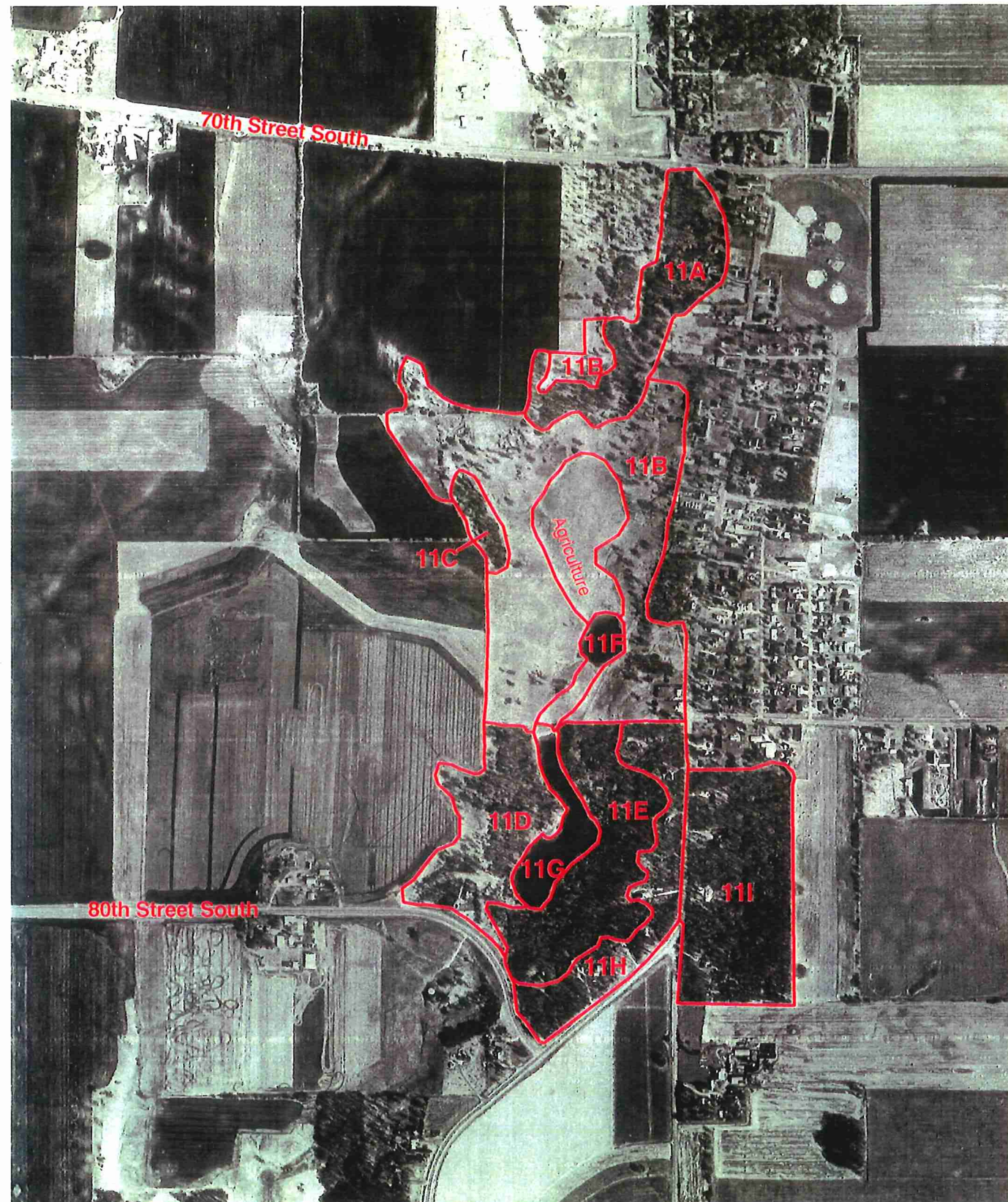


1000 0 1000 Feet



## SITE 11 COMMUNITY LEGEND

COMM. #	COMMUNITY	ACRES	RANK	LOCAL VALUE
11A	Oak Woodland-Brushland	20.1	D	4
11B	Dry Oak Savanna	63.8	D	3
11C	Basswood Forest	3.4	C	3
11D	Mesic Oak Forest	19.8	D	3
11E	Mesic Oak Forest	24.6	C	3
11F	Cattail Marsh/Wet Meadow	3.9	CD	6
11G	Lake	7.1	NA	NA
11H	Maple-Basswood Forest	17.7	C	2
11I	Mesic Oak Forest	30.6	D	2
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>191.0</b>	



## **SITE 11 SUMMARY**

**(9 communities, 191 acres)**

### **Location**

Site 11 is located south of 70th Street South and west of Lamar Avenue.

### **Landforms, Soils, and Geology**

Site 11 ranges from gently sloping to steep. The steep topography is part of the tunnel valley system with slopes as high as 30%. The soils are well drained to excessively drained, medium to coarse textured, consisting of thin loess and eolian sand over sand and gravel.

### **Local Value**

The average local value is 3.4 with the highest value a six and the lowest value a 2. Two historic items, the historic Dr. William W. Furber House and the historic St. Matthew's Church Cemetery are found on this site. The house is valued for its Eclectic Period architecture and the cemetery is important for its artistic tombstones in association with Cottage Grove's 19<sup>th</sup> century German immigrants.

### **Natural Resource Values**

Site 11 provides of good sampling of most of the major forest communities in the City of Cottage Grove. Forest communities on Site 11 include oak woodland-brushland, dry oak savanna, mesic oak forest, basswood forest and maple-basswood forest. In addition, Site 6 also contains a small lake and a wetland. The overall quality of these natural communities is moderate to poor. However, the diversity of different natural communities is high giving Site 11 a moderate natural community integrity value. Wildlife values for this site are moderate. Many species common to oak forest habitat are present on Site 11 including such mammals as red fox, coyote, whitetail deer, gray squirrel and raccoon. Birds observed on this site include downy woodpecker, white breasted nuthatch, a nesting pair of red-tailed hawks, yellow-bellied sapsucker and black capped chickadees.

Within the lake, species such as wood ducks, mallards, canada geese, great blue herons, muskrat and mink are found. No rare features are documented on Site 11; therefore, rare feature values are low.

### **Community 11A**

Community 11A is a low quality oak woodland-brushland dominated bur and white oak most commonly 20-inches in diameter. Scattered smaller diameter american elm, sugar maple, pin oak and boxelder are also present in this community. The sugar maple, which are very uncommon in this part of Cottage Grove, are all small, sapling (2-5 inch) size trees. The shrub layer is patchy with mostly thorny species such as buckthorn, red raspberry, prickly gooseberry and prickly ash dominant.

The ground cover is generally nonexistent with a light covering of kentucky bluegrass.

*Disturbance Indicators:* This area appears to have been heavily grazed in the past. The sparse ground cover and presence of "armed shrubs" suggest excessive grazing and soil compaction.

#### **Community 11B**

Community 11B is a degraded, dry oak savanna. This community is dominated by large, open-grown bur oak trees, many of which are in the 30 to 35 inch diameter size range. The age of these trees was estimated to be about 140 years, however, some of the larger trees probably exceed 200 years in age. In addition to the large bur oak, small bur and pin oak grubs are scattered throughout the community. Like many remnant oak savannas in this part of Minnesota, past grazing has maintained the open, grassy understory and prevented succession of the oak savanna to oak woodland or forest. Past grazing has also all but eliminated native grasses and forbs from this site and today, mostly introduced grasses such as kentucky bluegrass dominate the ground cover. Small patches of shrubs including buckthorn, honeysuckle and smooth sumac occur on the margins of the community where cattle grazing has not been as intensive.

*Disturbance Indicators:* Past grazing has resulted in soil compaction and introduction of nonnative grasses and woody shrubs.

#### **Community 11C**

Community 11C is a moderate quality basswood forest located along a steep, north-facing slope. This community is dominated by 14 to 16 inch diameter basswood, red oak, bigtooth aspen and black cherry. Some very large individual red oak (30-inch diameter) and eastern cottonwood 50+ inch diameter) are also present in this community. Understory tree species include american elm, ironwood and paper birch. The age of one basswood tree was estimated at 56 years. The shrub layer is of moderate density and dominated by hawthorn, tatarian honeysuckle and buckthorn. This site was surveyed during the winter time, so no ground cover species were recorded, however, a good diversity of species common to moist, forested sites is probably present. Such species might include wild geranium, enchanter's nightshade, sweet cicely, false solomon's seal and wild sarsaparilla.

*Disturbance Indicators:* Some past logging has occurred within this community, with most of the larger, higher quality red oaks removed. This logging, however, occurred many years ago and most openings have filled in with shade tolerant hardwood species such as basswood and ironwood. Nonnative shrubs generally dominate the shrub layer.

#### **Community 11D**

This area a lower quality mesic oak forest which was likely much higher quality just a few years ago. This change in quality is due to recent logging and brush removal associated with nearby residential

lot development. Dominant tree species include red oak, bur oak and trembling aspen in the 8 to 12 inch diameter size range. A fair diversity of other tree species is also present including ironwood, paper birch, hackberry, sugar maple and basswood. Most of these species originally occurred as understory tree species before the community was logged. Near the edge of the pond (Community 11G), large, 30-35 inch diameter eastern cottonwood are also present. The shrub layer is of moderate density and consist of red raspberry, chokecherry, hawthorn, buckthorn, prickly gooseberry and red-berried elder. Ground cover species include a mixture of forest plants and species more common to open areas. This mixture is due to many areas recently being opened up from logging activities. Some of the more common forest species include sweet cicely, white snakeroot and bloodroot. In the openings, burdock, daisy fleabane and buttercup are some of the more common species.

*Disturbance Indicators:* As mentioned above, recent logging and brushing out of understory species has reduced the quality of this community. Ironically, this area will likely revert to an uncontrollable buckthorn thicket, rather than the more open forest the landowner was attempting to create.

#### **Community 11E**

Community 11E is a moderate quality mesic oak forest dominated by bur oak, red oak paper birch and trembling aspen in the 8 to 12 inch diameter range. Near the pond (community 11G), larger (12-16-inch diameter) paper birch and scattered eastern cottonwood dominate. Other tree species include black cherry, iron wood, american elm, basswood and butternut. Common shrub species include red-berried elder, buckthorn and tatarian honeysuckle. A good diversity of ground cover species is present with 19 different species noted during the survey. Some of the more common ground cover species include: large-leaved aster, white snakeroot, spinulose shield fern and bittersweet nightshade. This community contains a large number of dead/down trees.

*Disturbance Indicators:* Nonnative shrubs and weedy forbs such as stinging nettle and motherwort are common throughout community. Several patches of oak wilt on red oak trees exist in this area.

#### **Community 11F**

Community 11F is a moderate quality cattail marsh/wet meadow wetland. The north portion of this community contains a small pothole type open water area fringed by cattail, scouring rush, nodding beggertick and reed canary. To the south of this area, a wet meadow dominated by reed canary grass, rice cutgrass, and sedge species connects to the large pond (community 11G). A fair diversity of wetland forbs is scattered throughout the community including culver's root, blue vervain, hoary vervain and pinkweed.

*Disturbance Indicators:* This community has been grazed in the past resulting in soil compaction and introduction of weedy forbs and grasses.

#### **Community 11G**

Community 11G is a pond fringed by flooded lowland hardwood forest. No discernable aquatic vegetation was noted within the pond other than duckweed floating on the pond surface. The fringes of the pond contain flooded eastern cottonwood trees, many of which have died and are still standing. A stormwater outfall on the south end of this pond suggest that stormwater is being routed in from areas to the west along 80th Street.

#### **Community 11H**

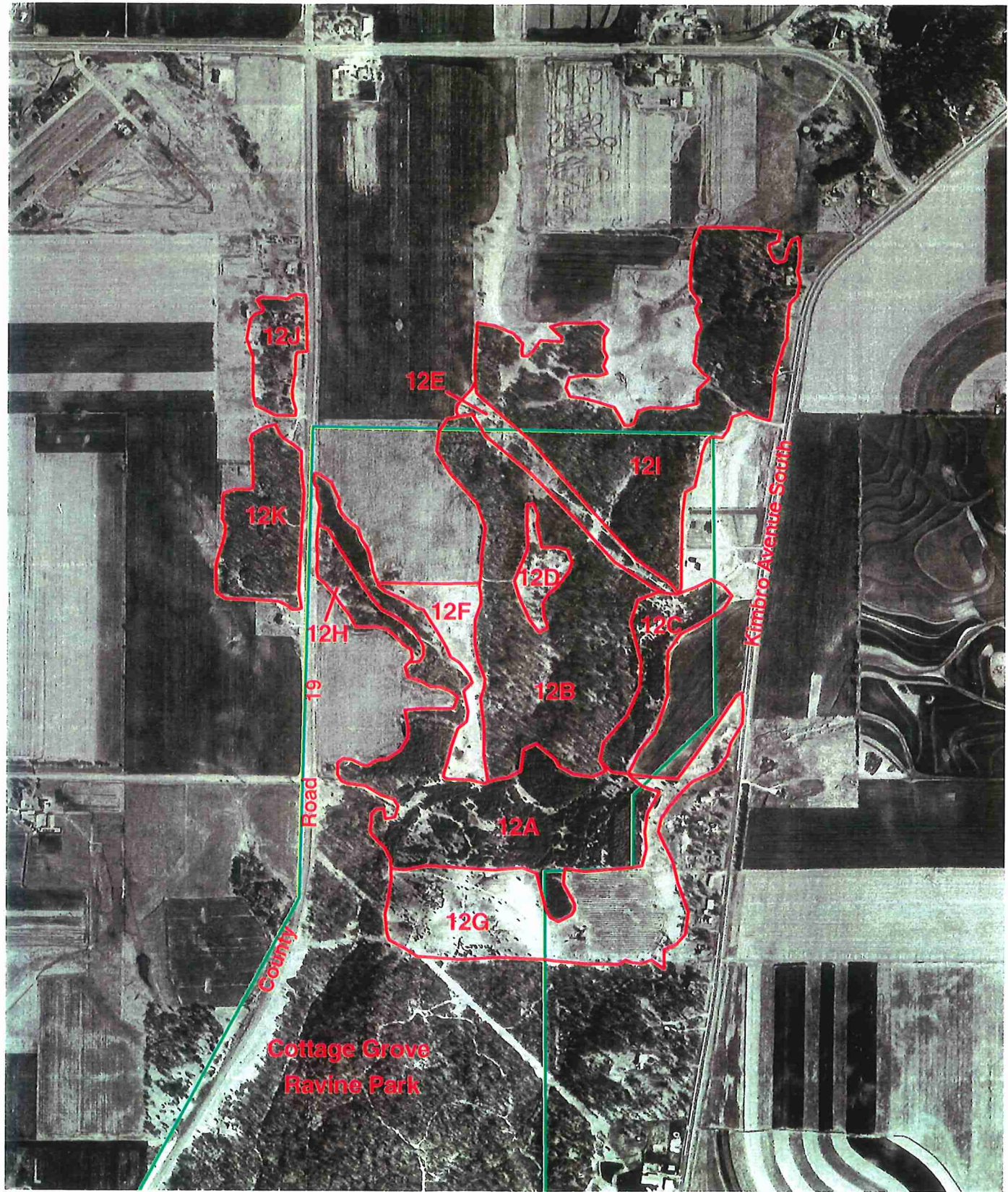
Community 11H is a moderate quality maple-basswood forest. The dominant tree species include basswood and sugar maple in the 10 to 12 inch diameter range. All of the other tree species listed for community 11E are also present in community 11H, including bur oak, paper birch and iron wood. The shrub layer is generally light and dominated by black currant, choke cherry and prickly gooseberry. Ground cover species include spinulose shield fern, white avens, heath aster, early meadow rue and solomon's seal.

*Disturbance Indicators:* Residential development has fragmented much of this community with invasion by exotic shrubs common near yards. Mortality on paper birch is also high, possibly due to soil compaction and a general opening up of the tree canopy near residential areas.

#### **Community 11I**

Community 11I is a recently logged over mesic oak forest dominated by large 20 inch bur and white oak. Large buckthorn shrubs dominate much of the understory along with small american elm and boxelder trees. Where buckthorn is not dominant, other shrubs such as red-berried elder and prickly gooseberry dominate. The ground cover layer is generally sparse due to the dense shrub layer, however, where adequate sunlight is available, nonnative species such as stinging nettle, burdock and creeping charlie make up the majority of the ground cover.

*Disturbance Indicators:* As mentioned above, most of this community has recently been logged over. It appears that more desirable trees were removed, resulting in a thinly stocked stand of smaller, low quality trees. Unfortunately, buckthorn now occupies the space where trees were removed. Further disturbance has occurred from past grazing and more recently, large lot development.



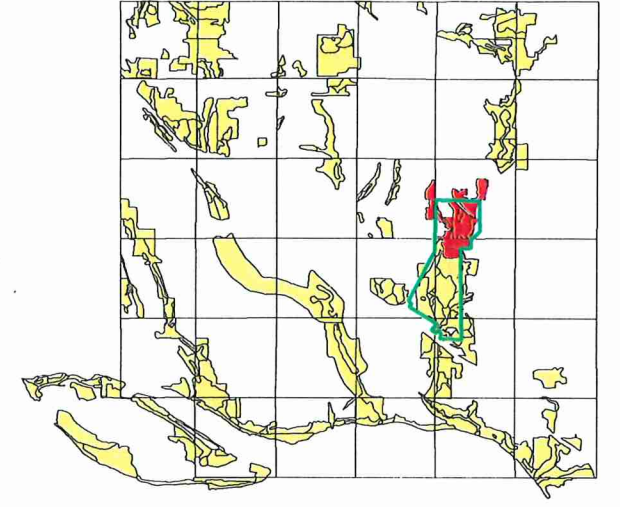
Source Photography: USGS 1991

### SITE 12 COMMUNITY LEGEND

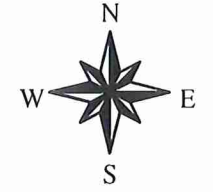
COMM. #	COMMUNITY	ACRES	RANK	LOCAL VALUE
12A	Conifer Plantation	45.1	NA	5
12B	Dry Oak Forest	46.8	C	5
12C	Conifer Plantation	9.8	NA	6
12D	Old Field	3.8	NA	5
12E	Utility Line	6.7	NA	5
12F	Old Field	8.4	NA	5
12G	Old Field	34.9	NA	4
12H	Lowland Hardwood Forest	4.5	D	5
12I	Dry Oak Forest	54.5	C	5
12J	Lowland Hardwood Forest	6.6	D	1
12K	Mesic Oak Forest	14.1	C	1
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>235.2</b>	

## City of Cottage Grove Natural Resource Inventory

# SITE 12



**N** Cottage Grove Ravine Park  
Approximate Boundaries



## **SITE 12 SUMMARY**

**(11 communities, 235.2 acres)**

### **Location**

Site 12 is part of Cottage Grove Ravine Park and is located east of County Road 19 and west of Kimbro Avenue South.

### **Landforms, Soils, and Geology**

Site 12 is gently sloping to steep. The steeper topography is part of the tunnel valley system with slopes as high as 40%. This tunnel valley system called the Cottage Grove Ravine is the oldest glacial landform within the city limits. Soils are well drained to excessively drained, medium to coarse textured consisting of thin loess and eolian sand over sand and gravel.

### **Local Value**

The average local value is 4.3, the highest value is six, and the lowest value is one.

### **Natural Resource Values**

Site 12 is dominated by moderate quality oak forest along with a variety of other community types including conifer plantations and lowland hardwood forest. This site includes the northern portion of Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, which serves as a critical link to areas both to the north and south. The natural community integrity value is moderate for Site 12. Wildlife values also ranked as moderate due to the quality of oak forest, and connectivity of this site to areas to the north and south. Although no rare features are listed for this area, the rare feature value given to Site 12 is moderate due to the rare features located just to the south in Site 12. The federally threatened bald eagle has also been observed hunting in the vicinity of Site 12.

## **SITE 12 COMMUNITY DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Community 12A**

Community 12A is a conifer plantation containing most of the conifers commonly planted in Minnesota. The majority of this plantation contains red and white pine. Additional species include white spruce, jack pine and eastern red cedar. All of these trees with the exception of the eastern red cedar were planted about 37 years ago based on the estimated age of one red pine. The eastern red cedar are the result of natural regeneration. Most of this plantation contains trees in the 8 to 10 inch diameter range and except for small grassy openings has a good density. In addition to eastern red cedar, other tree species, which have become naturally established, include pin oak and black cherry. Shrubs present include buckthorn, red-berried elder and red raspberry.

Ground cover in this plantation is generally needle duff with a sparse covering of virginia creeper and white snakeroot.

**Community 12B**

Community 12B is a moderate quality dry oak forest bur oak, pin oak and black oak in the 16 to 20 inch diameter range. Other tree species include american elm, black cherry, and eastern red cedar. The age of one 16-inch diameter bur oak was estimated at 152 years. Generally, the tree canopy is quite dense, resulting in a relatively light shrub layer. Common shrub species include prickly gooseberry, prickly ash and buckthorn. Some of the ground cover species include virginia stickseed, sweet cicely and white snakeroot.

*Disturbance Indicators:* The presence of nonnative and/or armed shrubs, weedy forbs in the ground cover layer and overall low plant diversity suggest that grazing may have occurred within this community.

**Community 12C**

This area is a conifer plantation dominated by 5 to 8 inch diameter red pine and white spruce. The estimated age of this plantation is 33 years. Shrub and ground cover species, distribution and density are similar to community 12A.

**Community 12D**

Community 12D is an old field with scattered patches of small trees and shrubs. Smooth brome and reed canary are the dominant graminoids. Trees present include a few larger bur oak and small diameter boxelder and wild plum. Common shrubs include buckthorn, hawthorn, smooth sumac and red raspberry. Asters, goldenrod and wild bergamont are common forbs.

**Community 12E**

This area is part of a powerline cut, which is now dominated by a mixture of grasses, forbs and shrubs. Species present in community 12D also dominate this area.

**Community 12F**

Community 12F is an old fallow field now dominated by a mixture of smooth brome and timothy. A moderate diversity of forbs including goldenrods, asters, yarrow, meadowsweet and wild bergamont is present.

**Community 12G**

Community 12G is an old fallow field similar in species composition to community 12F. Dominant graminoids include smooth brome, kentucky bluegrass and timothy. Goldenrod and horseweed are

the dominant forbs. Scattered small trees and shrubs including smooth sumac, hawthorn, trembling aspen and pin oak are scattered throughout this old field.

#### **Community 12H**

Community 12H is a low quality lowland hardwood forest dominated by eastern cottonwood in the 16 inch diameter range. Other tree species include american elm, box elder and bur oak in the 5 to 10 inch diameter range. Common shrub species include tatarian honeysuckle, buckthorn and prickly gooseberry. Ground cover species include white avens, virginia creeper, stinging nettle and burdock.

*Disturbance Indicators:* This community is generally dominated by nonnative and/or weedy shrub and ground cover species.

#### **Community 12I**

Community 12I is a moderate quality dry oak forest similar to, but with a higher overall species diversity than community 12B which lies to the north across the powerline. This difference may be due to more rugged topography, providing a greater diversity of slope and moisture conditions within the community. The dominant tree species within this community are bur oak, pin oak, black cherry, basswood and hackberry. Red maple, a species rare to this area, are also found within this community. The average diameter for the oak species is 16 to 20 inches. For the other tree species, diameters average 8 to 10 inches. The age of one 17 inch bur oak was estimated to be 139 years. The shrub layer is generally light and patchy. Common shrub species include buckthorn, red-berried elder and prickly gooseberry. Common ground cover species include sweet cicely, yellow avens burdock and several species of aster.

*Disturbance Indicators:* Nonnative shrubs.

#### **Community 12J**

Community 12J is a low quality lowland hardwood forest characterized by a patchy coverage of trees, shrubs and forbs in a shallow drainage swale. The dominant tree species is silver maple in the 10 to 12 inch diameter range. The age of one 13 inch silver maple was estimated at 46 years. Other common tree species include box elder, black cherry, american elm and black willow. Ground cover species include white snakeroot, virginia creeper, stinging nettle and virginia stickseed. This community contains a large number of dead and down snags, probably from dead elm trees, which have died from dutch elm disease.

*Disturbance Indicators:* Nonnative shrubs, weedy and/or nonnative ground cover species.

### **Community 12K**

Community 12K is a moderate to good quality mesic oak forest occurring within a shallow ravine draining into Cottage Grove Ravine Park. The tree canopy is dominated by good size (16-18 inch diameter) bur oak, american elm and basswood trees. The age of one 18 inch bur oak was estimated at 134 years. The subcanopy trees consist of hackberry and american elm. The shrub layer is fairly diverse with red-berried elder, black currant, prickly gooseberry, wild grape and poison ivy some of the more common species. The ground cover is light and consist of wood nettle, jewlweed, virginia creeper and false solomon's seal. This community contains a good number of dead and down snags from old elm trees.

*Disturbance Indicators:* Some limited cutting of firewood has occurred in the recent past in this community. There also appears to be minor erosion from diversion of stormwater runoff into this ravine.



**To:** Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission  
**From:** Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director  
**Date:** January 29, 2025  
**Subject:** East Ravine Park Planning

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**Introduction**

As Cottage Grove developments continues east, staff has taken time to analyze future park plans east of Keats Avenue. Analysis includes identification of both land acreage and dollars needed to acquire and build out the parks planned for this area and allows for strategizing attainment of master plan goals. This report is focused on the land between 70<sup>th</sup> Street to 85<sup>th</sup> Street (north/south) and Lamar Avenue and Keats Avenue (east/west).

**Parks and Trails**

The East Ravine Parks and Trails Master Plan was originally adopted by City Council and the Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission in 2021. It was later updated in 2023. The current master plan is included with this report. It calls for inclusion of the following recreational elements:

- One Community Park
- Three Neighborhood Parks
- Extensive Trail Network Throughout Development

The Community Park is estimated at 139 total acres. This would include active and passive recreational areas along with nearly 74 acres of Vandenberg Lake and natural space. The City is anticipating the South Washington Watershed District to pursue acquisition of the 74 acres of lake and natural space as part of their Groundwater Protection Plan. The remaining 65 acres of the park as planned would be acquired utilizing land dedication requirements and/or cash. Additionally, construction of the park as is estimated at \$10M.

The three neighborhood parks are each estimated at 5 acres in size but may include additional open space as development occurs. Additional open spaces near neighborhood parks often include ponds, railway corridors or undevelopable spaces and are acquired with little to no resources necessary from the City. Construction cost of each neighborhood park is estimated at \$700,000 which includes moderate site grading, utilities, a picnic shelter, sport court, playground, trails, irrigation and landscaping.

**Master Plan Cost Summary**

Staff has estimated total land and construction costs and compared those against anticipated park dedication land and revenue ordinance requirements.

Park Land Acquisition Analysis

Planned Municipal Park Land Acreage:	77.5 acres
Park Land Acquired Through Development:	43.71 acres
Remaining Park Land To Be Acquired:	33.79 acres
Land Acquisition Dollars Needed (\$85k/acre):	\$2,872,150

Park Construction Analysis

Planned Municipal Park Construction Costs:	\$12,100,000
Park Dedication Revenues:	(\$2,607,500)
Construction Dollars Needed:	\$9,492,500

**Total Cash Needed for Master Plan: \$12,364,650**

**City Council Review**

During the City Council’s Strategic Planning Session in January, Councilmembers reviewed the aforementioned data. Council suggested the Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission review the master plan and provide feedback on park service areas in order to assist them in developing a financing strategy for this future development area.

**Considerations**

When park master plans are launched, the design team starts with identification of any key natural resources, historical locations or otherwise unique opportunities to preserve important public spaces for future generations. Additionally, the team studies zoning, comprehensive planning, housing projections, recreation service area mapping, planned roadways, utility locations, grading, constructability, land ownership and much more. With all those considerations, park and major trailway locations are mapped in an effort to assure all residents have quality access to the parks and natural spaces that we believe improves livability and wellness in Cottage Grove.

However, as area development nears, it is not uncommon to revisit park master plans to assure the strategy remains relevant. Road realignments, housing/commercial use shifts and/or development phasing can all have an impact on the master plan. And now appears to be a good time to revisit the East Ravine Park and Trails Master Plan.

Attached with this report are service radius maps. The City generally tries to achieve these park service radiuses across the community. In review of those maps, there is considerable overlap which may offer discussion on the reduction of future park acquisition. Staff is asking the Commission to review those service radius maps, compare against the master plan (which includes individual park descriptions/rationale) and offer direction on retaining or amending the East Ravine Parks and Trails Master Plan.

**Cost Consideration**

Given the ask of the Commission on this topic, it seems valuable to provide an analysis of the cost impact of removing one neighborhood park.

Neighborhood Park Value

Land Cost (5 acres)	\$425,000
Construction Cost	\$700,000
Total Neighborhood Park Cost	\$1,125,000

**Staff Recommendation**

Receive East Ravine Park and Trail Master Plan analysis and provide guidance for future financial and development planning.



# COTTAGE GROVE EAST RAVINE GROWTH AREA PARK MASTER PLAN

City of Cottage Grove – April 2021 – Updated April 2023

Consultant:

Hoisington Koegler Group Inc.

Planners | Landscape Architects | Urban Designers

612-338-0800

## Overview:

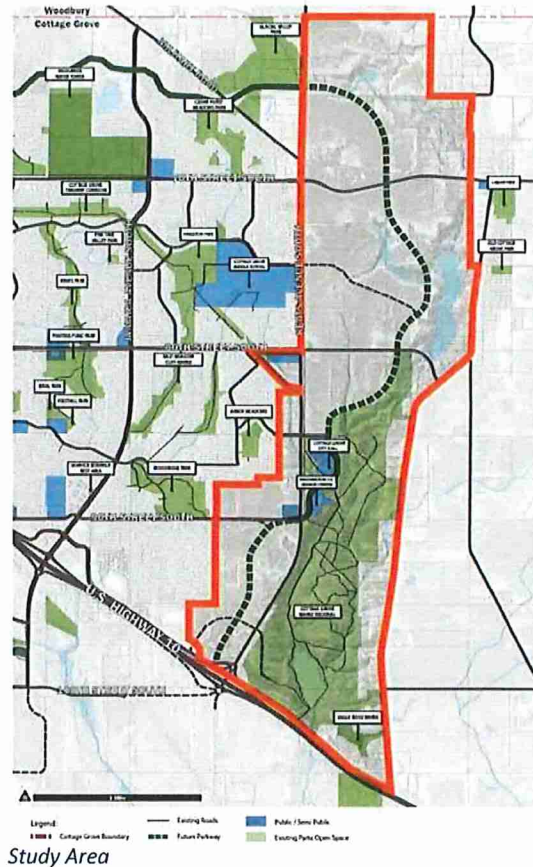
The City of Cottage Grove is continuing to see strong growth and one of the reasons people choose to move to and stay in the community is its' recreation offerings. As the City develops, it is important to have a plan in place for expanding the park and trail system to meet the needs of new residents. Cottage Grove has benefited from previous efforts to implement plans to guide public and private investments involving parks and open space. This plan serves that purpose as Cottage Grove prepares for growth east of Keats Avenue.

The City is in the process of building out Ravine Parkway, which will be the organizing feature in creating neighborhoods and setting the character of the area.

The East Ravine Parks and Trails Master Plan anticipates a need for the following recreational opportunities:

- A community park along Ravine Parkway with natural resources and athletics fields
- Six neighborhood parks
- Three smaller mini-parks to serve smaller neighborhoods
- Trails for recreational and/or non-motorized transportation links around the community to key destinations such as parks, schools, and commercial nodes

Existing recreational amenities included within the scope of this study include Washington County's Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park and Central Greenway Regional Trail, the City's planned Community Center and Eagle Ridge Ravine Park (existing natural park area).



## Study Purpose:

The purpose of this plan is to guide park and trail development and assist the City of Cottage Grove and private development partners as the land develops. This plan identifies the parks and trails needed to support new neighborhoods in Cottage Grove in currently undeveloped areas between the ravine on the east, existing neighborhoods to the west, CG Ravine Regional Park to the south and the Woodbury border to the north.

Cottage Grove's Comprehensive Plan includes the following language regarding the purpose and authority for this plan:

*POLICY 5.5 The City will prepare a master plan for each component of the park and recreation system based on the criteria established in this comprehensive plan. The park master plans shall be the basis for site acquisition, development, and use, and upon establishment, be reviewed in connection with updates to capital improvement plans and budgets.*

This plan also helps establish the nexus between new development and new park needs within the City of Cottage Grove.

The study is intended to provide:

- Sound planning rationale for the location and type of parks to be developed in the study area
- A clear document that the City can use when working with private landowners and developers to evaluate development proposals
- A tool to help the City collaborate with other public entities (MNDOT, DNR, Washington County, ISD 833, South Washington Watershed District, Washington Conservation District, Metropolitan Council) regarding public investments in parks, conservation, and infrastructure.

### Study Approach:

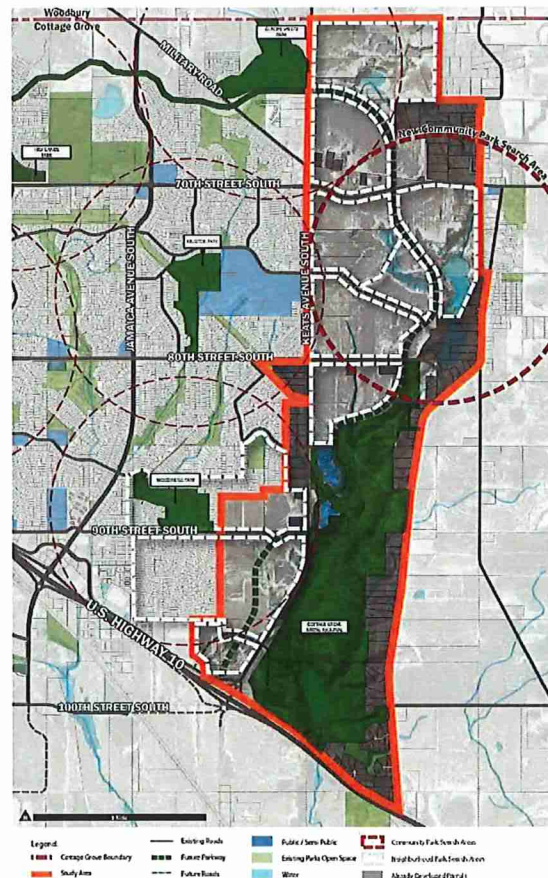
The findings of this plan are based in analysis of:

- Natural Resources (uplands, wetlands, lakes, slopes, soils)
- Previous Planning Efforts
- Land Ownership and Patterns (parcels that are already developed, park/public land, large landowners)

Based on the analysis, there are multiple park “search areas” identified. These areas are intended to identify future neighborhoods that will need a park within walking distance, and that do not require crossing a major roadway or other barrier, such as a waterbody, to get there.

When developed, each search area should include a neighborhood park or a community park that also serves neighborhood functions.

This study recognizes that to some extent the development of these parks will be dependent on a number of factors such as the timing and phasing of future development, land ownership, and infrastructure such as roads, stormwater features, and sewer easements. Variation in location may occur on a case-by-case basis, but should be minimized to the extent possible.



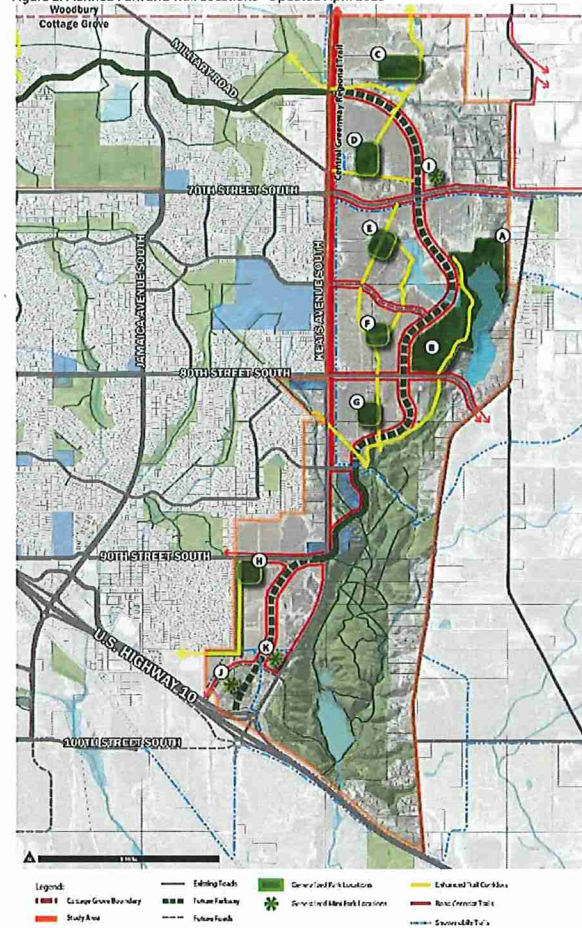
Community and Neighborhood Park Search Areas

## Community Parks:

Community Parks are recreation areas intended to serve the larger Cottage Grove community, rather than focusing solely on the adjacent neighborhoods. The Cottage Grove 2040 Comprehensive Plan describes Community Parks as:

*Community parks and open space are typically larger than 50 acres in size and serve a broad audience of users and purposes within the City park and open space system. Multi-functional design and facilities are found within the boundaries of these parks and focus on meeting the recreation needs of large sections of the community. Preservation of unique landscapes and open space is possible on a grand scale in community parks, and management of community parks require special attention and fiscal resources because of the size and amount of facilities and the intensive community use.*

Figure 2: Planned Park and Trail Locations - Updated April 2023



Future Park and Trail Locations

### Natural Resource Community Park (A)

The ravine and lake area north of Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park (Washington County Parks) and east of Ravine Parkway should be retained for community. This park should provide trails and a green edge along the parkway. Water access and views should be a part of this park as this is one of the largest and deepest bodies of water in the city. The land identified is made of a mix of landscapes including water, forest, oak savannah, and farmland. This habitat should be retained and protected through the development of the park.

### Community Ballfields (B)

The area in the northeast corner of Ravine Parkway and 80<sup>th</sup> Street, and west of the the planned wetland/pond should be utilized for active, athletic uses, meeting the City's need for additional field space. Depending on roadway and pond design, the site could accommodate 2-4 additional rectangle (soccer/football/lacrosse) or diamond (baseball/softball) fields.

## Neighborhood Parks:

Neighborhood parks are the "building blocks" of a recreation system, providing for the day-to-day recreational needs of nearby residents; neighborhood parks typically serve residents within a ½ mile radius. The Cottage Grove 2040 Comprehensive Plan describes Neighborhood Parks as:

*The neighborhood park and open space is the basic unit of the City's park system and is designed to serve as the recreational and social focus of neighborhoods. They include active and passive recreation activities geared specifically for those living within a half mile service area. The park should be centrally located and easily accessible by way of interconnecting trails, sidewalks, or low-volume residential streets. Five acres is the accepted minimum standard necessary to provide space for recreation activities. Seven to ten acres are considered optimal. The site should exhibit physical characteristics appropriate for both active and passive recreation uses including suitable soils, positive drainage, varying topography, and a variety of vegetation and natural resource areas. Sites should be connected to schools and other park system components such as natural resource areas, lakes, ponds, and greenways.*

Neighborhood parks have generally been located to:

- Be central to neighborhoods, reducing travel distances and major road crossings for residents
- Connect to and enhance future trail corridors
- Protect and enhance natural resources such as drainageways, ponds, and slopes

The exact location of parks may shift slightly to accommodate development patterns, but in general locations should correspond to the locations identified in the plan and continue to respond to the location criteria listed above.

All neighborhood parks should, at a minimum, include:

- 5 acres (minimum) with 7-10 acres preferred
- a playground
- open field/play space
- a sport court
- Internal trail loop
- picnic tables
- at least 2 sides of street frontage with the wide sides of the park providing the frontage
- Integration with natural resources as appropriate
- Additional features as appropriate

#### **Neighborhood Park C**

This park is located on the north side of a small lake and should incorporate water views/observation areas along with the standard neighborhood park features.

#### **Neighborhood Park D**

This park is centrally located in an area planned for higher density housing and a commercial node. The park should be located within the residential area. Due to the larger population base served, the park should be on the larger side for neighborhood parks. There is a smaller stand of trees that should be preserved and incorporated into the neighborhood park. If the Military Road extension is abandoned, the corridor may be retained for trail use and the park should be connected to that. Further, this site could support Washington County's Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan by acting as a trailhead or rest stop between Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park and Lake Elmo Park Preserve.

### **Neighborhood Park E**

Like Neighborhood Park D, this park is centrally located in an area planned for mixed use commercial and a mix of residential densities. It also serves a larger population base and should be sized on the larger end. The park is located to include a grove of existing trees and unique topography which gives the park significant elevation above surrounding areas which will provide a great viewshed. The site is also set along the edge of a gasline easement that will eventually contain a trail.

### **Neighborhood Park F**

This park is sited in a way that stormwater could be included in the park design. The site aligns with the start of a draw and should contain a trail to offer views of the restored habitat landscapes of wetlands and grasslands.

Because of the proximity to the proposed community park, the need for Neighborhood Park F should be carefully evaluated in the context of surrounding development and the design of Ravine Parkway. This park location should be considered if the surrounding development contains single family or multi-family homes that need recreational opportunities within safe walking distance. If a safe pedestrian crossing is available to the community park across Ravine Parkway, this location may not be necessary, or may be more of a "Mini Park" as described below.

### **Neighborhood Park G**

This park should provide upland and small ravine features in a location that is easily accessible for the neighborhood. Like Neighborhood Park F, this park would be a good opportunity to implement stormwater "best management practices" such as wetland habitat and additional stormwater storage that can accommodate recreational use or improve the neighborhood vista.

### **Neighborhood Park H**

This park is located along a planned green corridor and will likely serve new development as well as the existing neighborhood to the west. The park location considers the current and future local road network connections to the existing neighborhood, parks and trails. The western edge of the park should reach the easement east of the existing neighborhood. It should also be located to incorporate the US Airmail Aviation Beacon (large concrete arrow) south of 90<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **Mini Parks:**

In addition to neighborhood parks, mini parks are considered where the development pattern does not support the development of a full sized neighborhood park. These parks should serve the neighborhood in a way that is appropriate to the context. Mini park amenities may include but are not limited to:

- Playground
- Trailhead
- Picnic Area
- Small Turf Play Area

### **Mini Park I**

This park should support the smaller neighborhood north of 70<sup>th</sup> Street and east of Ravine Parkway. It should include a playground, picnic tables, benches, and internal walking trails.

### **Mini Park J at The Shoppes at Cottage View**

The Shoppes at Cottage View are anticipated to develop as mixed use. This area should be served with a context appropriate mini-park. This park may take the form of a “village green” or other gathering space that supports the commercial and residential uses nearby. Most likely this location would include a playground, resting spaces and gardens.

### **Mini Park K at the Community Center**

The City is planning a recreation center and although much of the facility will be indoors, there may be outdoor supporting spaces such as a playground, picnic areas and landscaped park areas. This will be accessible to the neighborhood and will serve the role of neighborhood park. Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park has also master planned a destination playground near the west side of the park. The crossing at Keats Avenue will be an underpass for pedestrians and bicyclists which should provide further access to play opportunities to residents west of Keats Avenue. This mini park could serve as a conduit for that recreational connection.

## **Trails:**

### **Enhanced Trails**

Enhanced trails are bike and pedestrian facilities that are located off of the roadway corridor and should include features like landscaping and wayfinding that emphasize their role for recreation. Many of these will be collocated with utility easements or go through parks.

Enhanced Trail Corridors as illustrated are intended to show the connections and general location. Corridor width may vary based on development conditions but should be wide enough to be natural in character as opposed to feeling like a user is in the backyard of homes. Enhanced trails may utilize multiple “lanes” to allow for a more comfortable trail experience for different user types.

### **Road Corridor Trails**

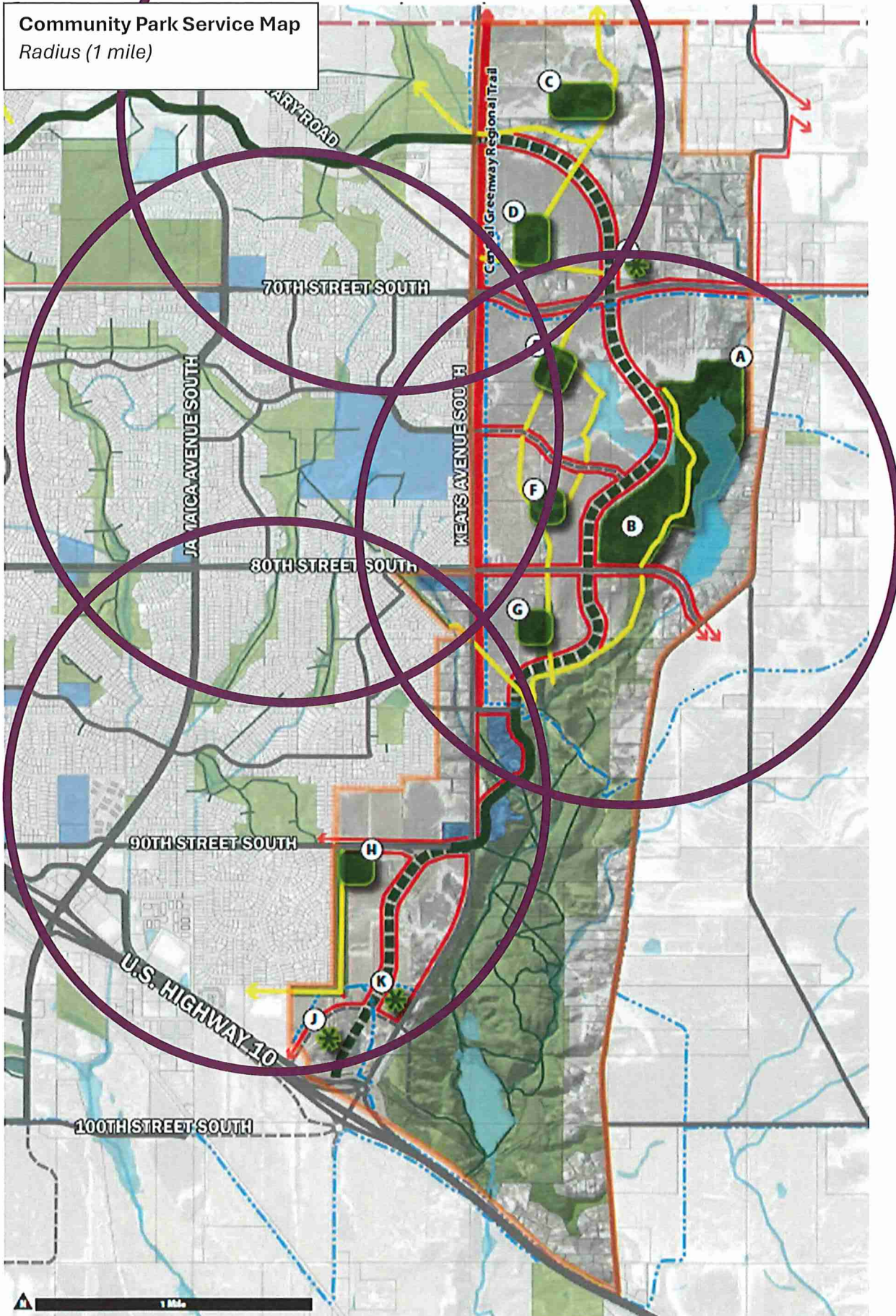
Road corridor trails are focused on providing pedestrians and bicyclists with transportation focused routes. They may be more utilitarian in design and should be located on one or both sides of planned arterials and collector streets. Road Corridor Trails should, to the extent possible, be located within the road right of way.

### **Snowmobile Trails**

Cottage Grove has the unique opportunity of being home to the southern start point of the Star Trail. The Washington County Star Trail Association manages 140 miles of groomed, marked and maintained snowmobile trails that stretch the entire length of the County. Providing access to the Star Trail has been an expressed desire by local leaders and residents.

Snowmobile trails are intended to connect residents to the larger Star Trail system to the east of the study area. Setbacks and buffer space from Keats should be able to facilitate that movement. It should be noted that when development occurs, speed, noise, and/or stud restrictions may be required until snowmobilers are able to reach the rural trail system. These routes may shift eastward gradually as new development occurs.

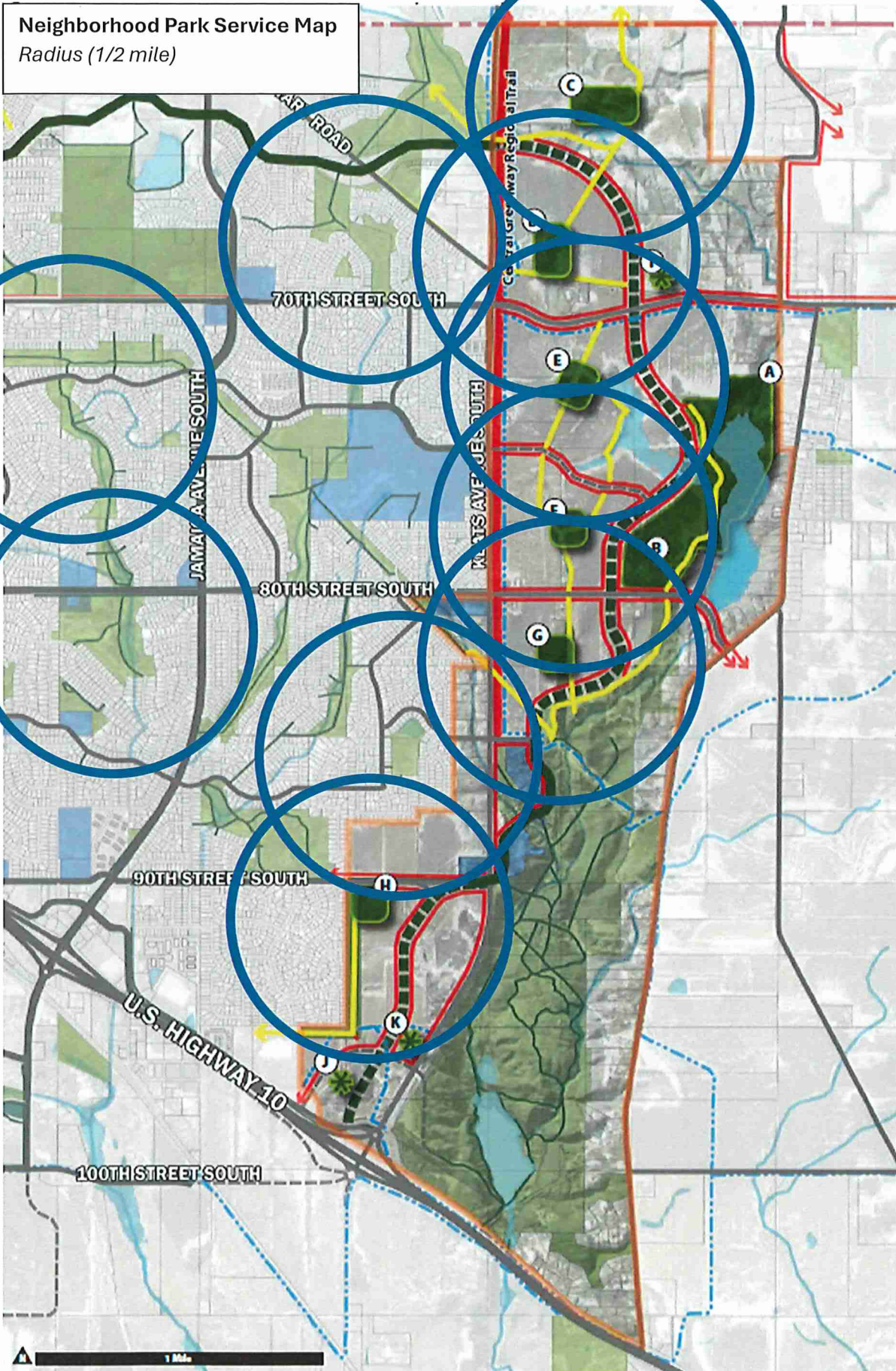
**Community Park Service Map**  
Radius (1 mile)



**Legend:**

- |                        |                |                                 |                          |
|------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cottage Grove Boundary | Existing Roads | Generalized Park Locations      | Enhanced Trail Corridors |
| Study Area             | Future Parkway | Generalized Mini Park Locations | Road Corridor Trails     |
|                        | Future Roads   |                                 | Snowmobile Trails        |

**Neighborhood Park Service Map**  
 Radius (1/2 mile)

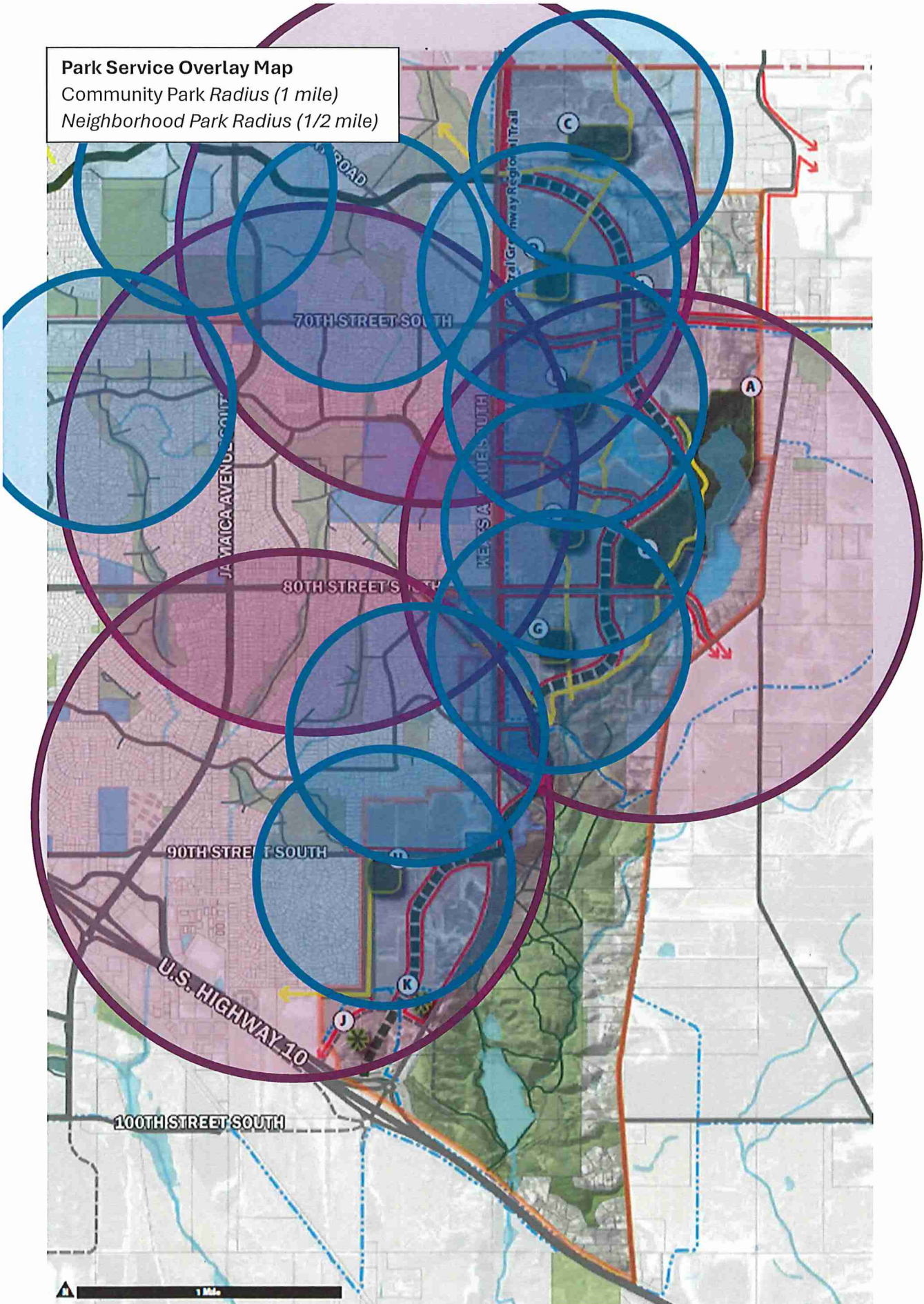


- Legend:**
- Cottage Grove Boundary
  - Existing Roads
  - Generalized Park Locations
  - Enhanced Trail Corridors
  - Study Area
  - Future Parkway
  - Generalized Mini Park Locations
  - Road Corridor Trails
  - Future Roads
  - Snowmobile Trails

# Park Service Overlay Map

Community Park Radius (1 mile)

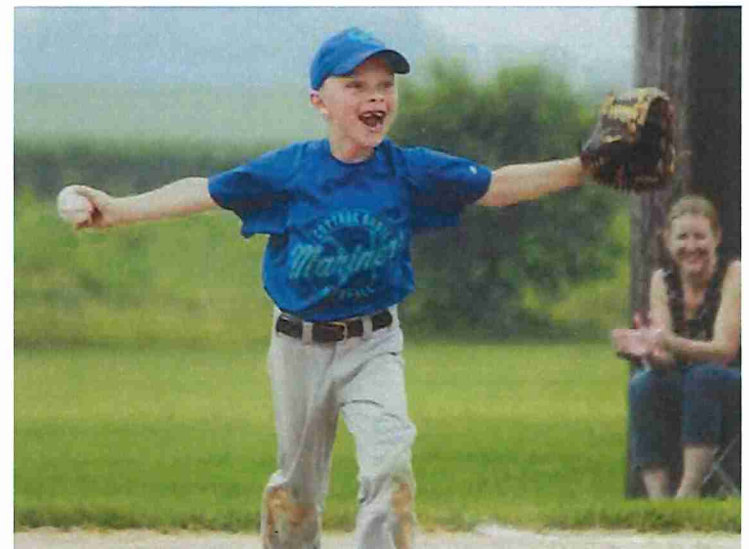
Neighborhood Park Radius (1/2 mile)



### Legend:

- Existing Roads
- Cottage Grove Boundary
- Study Area
- Future Parkway
- Future Roads
- Generalized Park Locations
- Generalized Mini Park Locations
- Enhanced Trail Corridors
- Road Corridor Trails
- Snowmobile Trails

# COTTAGE GROVE 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



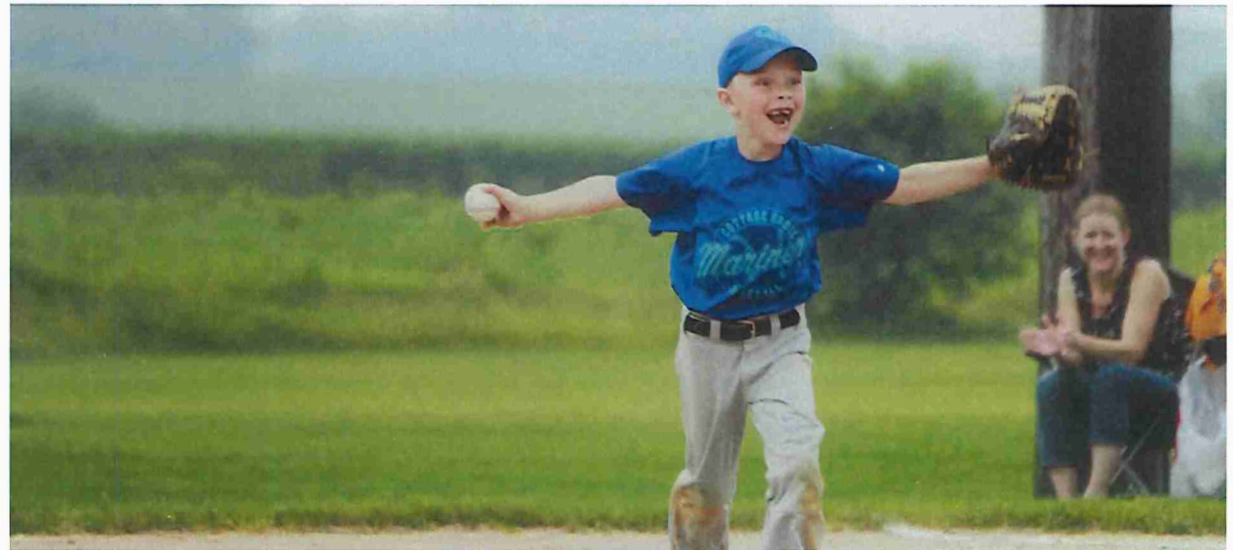
PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF COTTAGE GROVE, MINNESOTA



# 5

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The Parks and Open Space chapter provides information on existing and future parks, open space, and trail facilities in Cottage Grove. These facilities are a major asset in the community and important features to maintain and expand as the city develops. This chapter also addresses Cottage Grove as part of a regional system of parks, trails, and open space.



## INTRODUCTION

The Parks and Open Space chapter provides information on planning for acquisition, development, and functionality of a signature parks and open space system. Included is an inventory of existing parks, open space, and recreation facilities and a guide for future park land. This chapter builds upon previous park plans, the 2006 Park and Open Space Study, the East Ravine Master Plan, My Future Cottage Grove Bike/Ped and Parks Commissions, and incorporates new ideas and standards that reflect a shifting public expectation on design, function, and maintenance of public facilities.

The Comprehensive Plan lays the ground work for assembling and maintaining a first-class park and recreation system for the city and presents some of the tools needed to make sound planning decisions. The acquisition, development, and maintenance of the Cottage Grove parks, recreation, and open space system should continue to be a community priority in the governing and development process.

As part of the established Community Vision, the City of Cottage Grove strives to address these key themes related to Parks and Open Space:

- **Parks, Trails, & Recreation** – continue to build the City’s parks and trail systems as a source of pride for residents.
- **Mississippi River Access** – work to provide public access to the river and appropriate development opportunities on Lower Grey Cloud Island.
- **Environmental Stewardship** – continue to protect and enhance the natural environment, including air quality, groundwater resources, stormwater management and energy usage.

## TRAILS, BICYCLE, AND PEDESTRIAN ISSUES IN COTTAGE GROVE

On March 26, 2018, the City of Cottage Grove hosted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Forum, identifying key issues and opportunities for recreation and alternative transportation in the city. The forum was attended by a variety of stakeholders including members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, Parks Commission, and Planning Commission. The forum began with a presentation, educating attendees on the existing trail network in Cottage Grove and bicycling and walking issues.

Finally, forum attendees used maps of the city to identify existing destinations and desired connections to those destinations. This was replicated online using an ArcGIS interactive mapping tool. The online tool and in-person map activity identified key barriers and opportunities in the bicycle and pedestrian network. The routes identified by the public have informed the future trail network, discussed later in this chapter.

The City of Cottage Grove also hosted an online survey to replicate the Form online. The survey was open between March 27, 2018 and May 9, 2018. The online survey received 71 responses addressing bicycling and walking preference in the city and areas for improvement. Key highlights from the survey are listed below.

- 45% of participants walk in Cottage Grove every day
- 55% of participants walk for exercise, but only 3% walk to get to a destination
- 67% of residents rank the trail system as good or excellent
- A lack of sidewalks and destinations are too far are the biggest factors keeping people from walking
- Participants support the development of a trail network and building off-road trails
- 72% of participants would support a nominal or significant increase in funding to support trails

## GOALS AND POLICIES

### ***Goal 1: Acquire and preserve necessary park and open space areas.***



- POLICY 5.1 Parkland and open space areas will be acquired through park dedication, purchase, or donation. Private developers will be required to dedicate a portion of their land for public use when a development includes areas planned for park and open space acquisition. Full dedication credit is not given for lands with steep slopes, tree preservation areas, wetlands, bedrock, or other areas that are development constrained.
- POLICY 5.2 When feasible, the acquisition of parks, open space, and other recreational facilities should be accomplished at an early date, so that appropriate sites can be obtained to meet long-range public recreational needs before development pressures render the property too expensive.
- POLICY 5.3 The City will coordinate its recreation plan with bordering communities, South Washington County School District 833, Washington County, South Washington Watershed District, Washington Conservation District, the Metropolitan Council, and the State of Minnesota.
- POLICY 5.4 Whenever practical, parks shall include conservancy open space in areas that preserve and protect woodlands, wetlands, prairies, natural or cultural resources, and environmentally sensitive areas.

### ***Goal 2: Develop an integrated system of parks and open space areas that offers a variety of facilities and programs to all residents of the city throughout the year.***

- POLICY 5.5 The City will prepare a master plan for each component of the park and recreation system based on the criteria established in this comprehensive plan. The park master plans shall be the basis for site acquisition, development, and use, and upon establishment, be reviewed in connection with updates to capital improvement plans and budgets.
- POLICY 5.6 All park and open space facilities will be designed to be environmentally friendly. Appropriate measures will be taken during construction to mitigate any negative environmental impact.
- POLICY 5.7 Design and maintain park facilities and programs to be as accessible as possible to all ages, backgrounds and lifestyles of Cottage Grove residents, with special consideration for the needs of young people and senior citizens. Best management practices will be utilized during all grading and construction activities.

### ***Goal 3: Create a coordinated network of trail routes that are designed to accommodate a variety of users while providing for integrated links to neighborhoods, the community, the Mississippi River and associated backwaters, the region, and other special points of interest.***

- POLICY 5.8 New trail installations shall include the identification of future replacement and maintenance programs and appropriate funding sources for these programs.
- POLICY 5.9 The trail system will be separated from roadways whenever feasible.
- POLICY 5.10 For safety reasons, the trail system will include incorporate security lighting where needed.
- POLICY 5.11 The trail system will include landscaping, informational signage, directional signage, educational signage, benches, bike racks, garbage receptacles, pet waste disposal bags, and other similar amenities where reasonable or necessary.

- POLICY 5.12 The trail system will include a variety of surfaces, slopes, and linear distance that will accommodate the needs of all segments of the general population. The system will be implemented to conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act, except when topography or other environmental constraints prohibit meeting the majority of the standards. 
- POLICY 5.13 The trail system within the Mississippi River Critical Area will be limited to links to scenic overlooks, public property, and other points of interest unless the existing railroad right-of-way is abandoned and a linear trailway can be established along the river.
- POLICY 5.14 Transportation sidewalks and trails shall be installed by developers along all collector and minor arterial streets, or on roadways that are determined to generate sufficient traffic to warrant concern for either pedestrian or bicycle use within the street right-of-way.
- POLICY 5.15 The trail system will be implemented by creating links between all new and existing developments in the city, through the acquisition of easements, right-of-way dedications, purchase, eminent domain, or donations.
- POLICY 5.16 The trail system will include the establishment of a set of rules of operation that is actively provided to the public and is periodically updated to reflect current usage needs, problems, and trends.
- POLICY 5.17 The individual components of the trail system will be monitored for volumes of usage and safety factors to determine if additional improvements are required.
- POLICY 5.18 Preservation of unique resources and amenities and provide for public enjoyment in an environmentally-friendly manner. 
- POLICY 5.19 The park system should provide a diversity of experiences.

## DEFINITIONS AND STANDARDS

Development of a Park Open Space and Trail System relies on standards for the systematic approach to providing facilities.

Definitions and standards have been created to help communicate and coordinate park and open space facility development standards. It should be noted that standards are relative guidelines, not absolute requirements when dealing with unique park and open space components and landforms. A proper understanding of the following terms is essential for correct interpretation of this chapter:

## PARK AND OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATIONS

### ***Public Park***

An area dedicated to recreational use and generally characterized by its natural, historic, topographic, or landscape features. It may be used for both passive and active forms of recreation and may be designed to serve a neighborhood, larger community, or as a local link with regional systems. Encroachment on lands within a public park by adjacent neighbors is not permitted.

### ***Public Open Space***

A relatively undeveloped area which may be located within or outside of the urbanized development area. Open space may include utility easements, drainageways, ravines, holding ponds, treed slopes, and steep slopes, and may also include any land unsuitable for building. Open space may be used general recreational activities. Encroachment on lands within a public park by adjacent neighbors is not permitted.

## ***Private Open Space***

Privately-owned land, which because of certain limiting conservation easements, are permanently protected from development. Privately owned recreational facilities, such as golf courses, would not be considered private open space because of future development potential.

## ***Mini-Park***

Mini-park is the smallest park classification and is used to address limited or specific recreational needs. Examples of where a mini-park may be located include areas of concentrated populations, isolated development areas, landscaped public use areas in an industrial/commercial area, scenic overlooks, and play areas in shopping districts. Although demographics and population density play a role in location, the justification for a mini-park lies more in servicing a specific recreational need or taking advantage of a unique opportunity. In a residential setting, the service area is usually less than a quarter mile in radius and the park is generally one acre or less in size.

Site selection criteria should include ease of access from the surrounding area and ideally be linked to a community pathway system. Given their size, they are typically not intended to be used for programmed activities, and off-street parking is not provided.

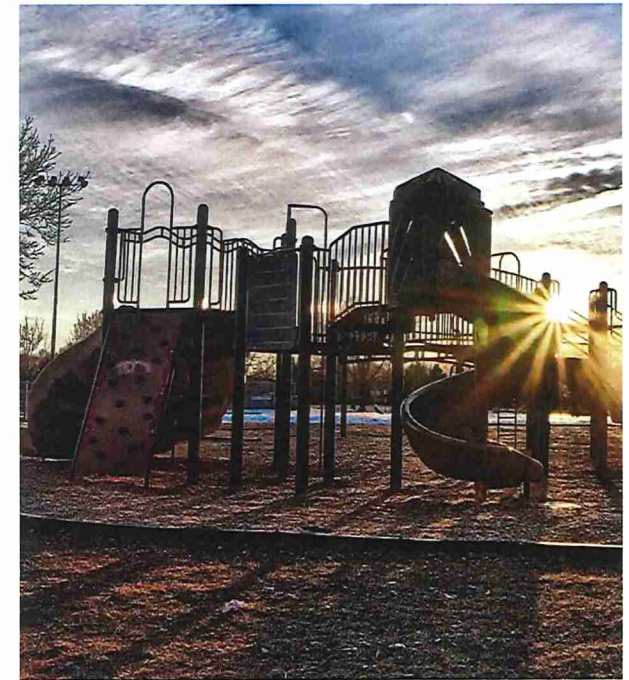
## ***Neighborhood Park and Open Space***

The neighborhood park and open space is the basic unit of the City's park system and is designed to serve as the recreational and social focus of neighborhoods. They include active and passive recreation activities geared specifically for those living within a half mile service area. The park should be centrally located and easily accessible by way of interconnecting trails, sidewalks, or low-volume residential streets. Five acres is the accepted minimum standard necessary to provide space for recreation activities. Seven to ten acres are considered optimal. The site should exhibit physical characteristics appropriate for both active and passive recreation uses including suitable soils, positive drainage, varying topography, and a variety of vegetation and natural resource areas. Sites should be connected to schools and other park system components such as natural resource areas, lakes, ponds, and greenways.

Potential active recreation facilities include play structures, creative play attractions, game courts, ball fields, tennis courts, volleyball courts, horseshoe courts, bocce ball, pickle ball, basketball, and general ice skating areas. Cedarhurst Park is illustrated in Figure 5-1.

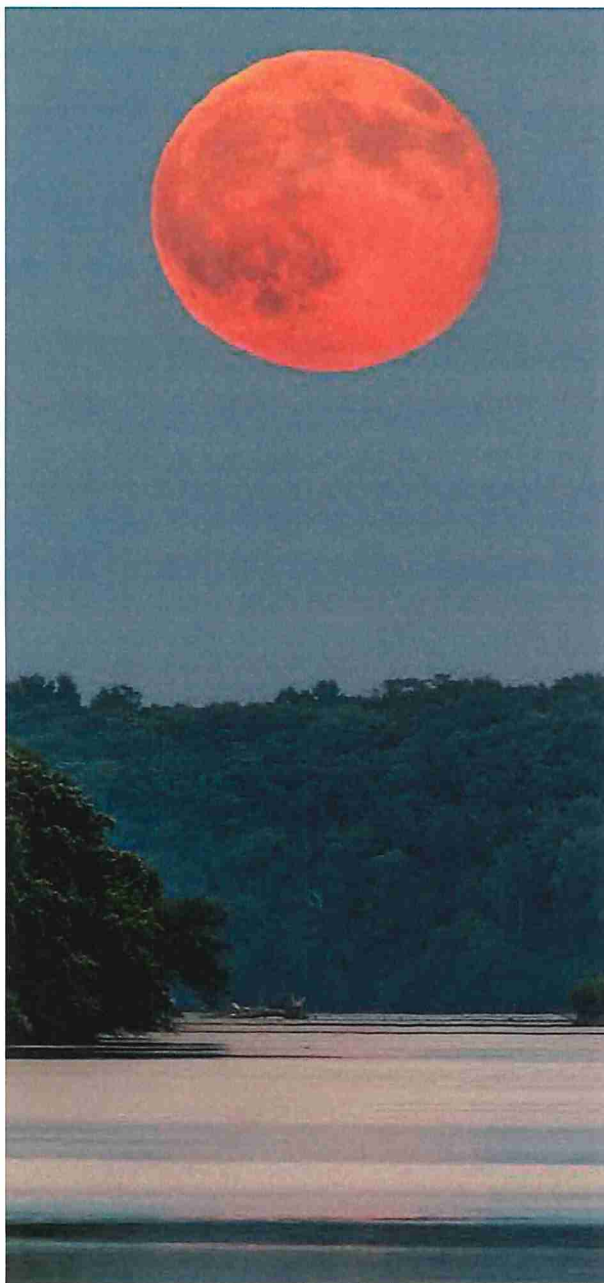
Passive activity facilities include networks of recreation and nature trails, individual and group picnic/sitting areas, general open space and unique landscapes/features, nature study areas, and ornamental gardens. The ability to hold cultural activities, such as plays and concerts, is also appropriate for a community park. Distribution of land area between active and passive recreation is determined on a site-by-site basis. Parking lots of limited size should be provided as necessary to accommodate user access, and park lighting should be used moderately due to proximity to residential units.

**Figure 5-1: Playground in Cottage Grove**



Source: City of Cottage Grove

Figure 5-2: Hazen P. Mooer Park



Source: City of Cottage Grove

### ***School Commons***

A school commons allows for expanded recreation, social, and educational opportunities available to the community in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Depending on its size, one school site may serve in a number of capacities such as a neighborhood park, youth athletic fields, and the obvious outdoor active area for the school. The important outcome in the joint-use relationship is that both the school district and the park system benefit from shared use of facilities and land area. When planning efforts coincide, attempts should be made to coordinate the needs of the school district with that of the park and recreation system. The criteria established for neighborhood park and community park classifications is the basis for determining how a school commons site should function and be developed.

### ***Community Park and Open Space***

Community parks and open space are typically larger than 50 acres in size and serve a broad audience of users and purposes within the City park and open space system. Multi-functional design and facilities are found within the boundaries of these parks and focus on meeting the recreation needs of large sections of the community. Preservation of unique landscapes and open space is possible on a grand scale in community parks, and management of community parks require special attention and fiscal resources because of the size and amount of facilities and the intensive community use.

A community park should serve two or more neighborhoods with a service area of one to three miles in radius. Ideally, the site should be serviced by arterial and collector streets and be easily accessible from throughout its service area by way of interconnecting trails. Selection of community park sites should take into consideration existing private conservancy areas, natural resource areas, and regional parks and schools, each of which may provide recreational opportunities normally provided in community parks.

The site should exhibit physical characteristics appropriate for both active and passive recreation uses. It should have suitable soils, positive drainage, varying topography, and a variety of vegetation and include natural resource areas, greenways, lakes, ponds, and woodlands.

Potential active recreation facilities include large play structures, creative play attractions, game courts, ballfields, tennis courts, volleyball courts, horseshoe courts, bocce ball courts, ice skating areas, archery ranges, disc golf areas, aquatic features, and amphitheatres.

Passive activity facilities include extensive recreation and nature trails, individual and group picnic/sitting areas, general open space and unique landscapes/features, nature study areas, and ornamental gardens. The ability to hold cultural activities, plays, and concerts, is also appropriate for a community park. Distribution of land area between active and passive recreation is determined on a site-by-site basis, and active field areas should be sized large enough to accommodate a field rotation maintenance program. Landscaped parking lots should be provided as necessary to accommodate user access. Park lighting should be utilized as appropriate for security, safety, lighting facilities, and extending the hours of use/scheduling of active athletic areas.

## ***Regional Park***

Often a regional park includes outdoor recreation such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail uses. The sites are normally contiguous to or encompass existing natural resources.

The Metropolitan Council recommends that regional parks shall be of 200 or more acres, though occasionally an exception may be made because of the quality of the resource, and a regional park may be as small as 100 acres. Due to their size, they can provide a wider array of activities, some of which cannot be found in a community park. Their size also dictates that they have several parking areas and good access, and often they contain some type of park shelter. An example is Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, 553 acres of varied topography and an usual variety of vegetation and habitats.

The placement of regional park facilities within Cottage Grove should only occur after careful consideration of the regional facility's impacts on local traffic, transportation routes, infrastructure and General Fund and the creation of assurance that negative consequences will not occur.

## ***Regional Park Reserve***

An area of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping, and trail uses. May include some minor active play areas. Generally 80 percent of the land is reserved for conservation and natural resource management. Desirable characteristics include unique or diverse natural resources such as lakes, streams, marshes, flora, fauna, and topography.

The Metropolitan Council recommends that regional park reserves shall be of 1,000 or more acres.

## ***Greenway Linking Corridors***

Greenway linking corridors are lineal oriented public open spaces that are designed to provide buffering, transition, continuity and access between adjacent parks and open space areas, neighborhoods, and schools. The minimum cross dimension of greenway corridors is 30 feet in width, and shall contain a Class III recreational trailway. Larger corridors may contain a combination of trailway classifications. Spacing of major community wide greenway linking corridors is based on a square mile grid section offset one-half mile from the major transportation grid.

## ***Greenway Buffer Areas***

Greenway buffer areas are lineal oriented open spaces along minor arterials and major collector roadways that are designed to provide buffering, transition, and continuity along the roadway. The minimum average cross dimension of the corridors is 75 feet in width and shall contain a combination of trailway classifications. The buffer area can be publicly owned or under the control of a private homeowners association with an overlying public trailway/access easement. Buffer areas are required to be extensively landscaped with a variety of native or formal vegetation and may include existing natural areas, lakes, wetlands, and stormwater ponds.

## ***Natural Resource Areas***

The City's Natural Resource Inventory categorized local natural resources as compared to those found in the state and also based upon a local value categorization of natural resource areas identified as having significant natural resources woodlands or remnant landscapes. Many of these areas serve as habitat corridors. The natural resource areas identified as the highest quality in the Natural Resource Inventory should be given priority in access or preservation efforts. Development impacts should be kept to a level that preserves the integrity of the resource. One such example is the Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific and Natural Area. Figure 5-2 on the previous page illustrates the unique, isolated location of Hazen P. Mooer Park on Grey Cloud Island on the Mississippi River.

**Figure 5-3: Highlands Park Splash Pad**



Source: City of Cottage Grove

### ***Golf Courses***

One 18-hole daily fee golf course is recommended for each 25,000 population. A daily fee golf course may include a semi-private facility that draws from the golfing element who use the public facilities.

Approximately 75 acres are recommended for a 9-hole course and at least 180 acres is considered necessary for regulation courses. An example is the River Oaks Golf Course near the Mississippi River.

### ***Swimming Pools and Splash Pads***

A standard of one pool per 20,000 population is recommended. The deck area should be twice the area of the water surface. Year-round swimming facilities should be considered when deciding to construct a pool in the community. Splash pads provide another unique water recreation opportunity for communities. Figure 5-3 illustrates the splash pad at Highlands Park in Cottage Grove.

### ***Recreation Buildings***

#### ***Sun Structure***

The sunshade structure is an open-sided canopy of limited size that provides shade for a passive or waiting area. The shaded area may be hard or soft surfaced. No kitchen facilities, electricity, water or restrooms are included in the design.

#### ***Picnic Structure***

The picnic structure is a large open-sided facility of a size that provides shade and picnic activity areas for larger groups. No kitchen facilities are included in the design, but electricity, water, and restrooms may be included.

#### ***Neighborhood Center***

The neighborhood recreation center is a smaller community-based recreation service facility in the City. It should serve the neighborhood in which it is located by providing a facility for general neighborhood organizations as well as supervised recreation programs. The building is approximately 3,000 to 5,000 square feet in size and typically includes meeting, game, and multi-purpose rooms; an office; limited kitchen facilities; a storage area; and restrooms. The mechanical equipment necessary for year-round use should be included in the design.

#### ***Community Center***

A community center provides an opportunity for year-round programming of leisure time activities. A wide range of social, cultural, and physical programs typically take place in community centers. Building sizes varies from 30,000 square feet to 60,000 square feet and typically include multi-purpose rooms, performance space, community education, gymnasium, indoor playground, and administrative offices. A community center facility serves the needs of the entire community, for that reason, location and access are key to facility siting. A community center is often located in close proximity to housing and commercial amenities, therefore the Shoppes at Cottage View the proposed master planned area at East Point Douglas Road and County Road 19/Keats Avenue will provide a community center visibility and proximity to commercial amenities and additional natural features such as Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.

## **Sports Complex**

A sports complex consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities at larger sites strategically located throughout the community. This allows for economies of scale and higher quality facilities, improved management and scheduling, and improved control of facility use, and reduces the number of areas dedicated to sports facilities. The greatest advantage, if planned appropriately, is the City's ability to control negative impacts to neighborhood and community parks such as overuse, noise, traffic congestion, parking, and in some cases, domination of facilities by those outside the neighborhood.

Sports complexes should be developed to accommodate the specific needs of user groups and athletic associations within the community based on demands and program offerings. Sport complexes are community-wide facilities and attempts should be made to centrally locate the site. Because it serves the greater community, access from arterial collector streets is desirable. Demographic profiles, age group population forecasts, and participation rates should be used to determine the types of facilities to provide.

Potential sites should exhibit physical characteristics appropriate for developing athletic facilities. Topography and soils are of the utmost concern. Although extreme topographical change should be avoided, some elevation is desirable to allow for drainage and to give the site some character. Natural vegetation along the perimeter of the site and in non-field areas is desirable to buffer their impact on surrounding land uses. Currently, there are several areas in the community both inside and outside the MUSA that would appear to meet the designated locational parameters for a sports complex.

Sports complexes are intended for programmed athletic use, such as youth and adult softball, baseball, and soccer leagues and tournaments. Sports complexes increase tourism, drawing both tournament participants and spectators. Potential facilities include ballfields, soccer fields, football fields, tennis courts, play structures, hard courts, and volleyball courts. Internal trails should provide access to all facilities as well as connection to the citywide pathway system. Group picnic areas and shelters should also be provided along with support facilities such as multi-purpose buildings, restrooms, and common space.

## **RECREATION STANDARDS**

Sound principles of recreation planning include standards and more general elements:

- Designating areas for differing age groups and abilities, rather than just children;
- Consideration of aesthetics in addition to function; and
- Creating a proper balance between private and public recreation activities.

Recreational activities are generally divided into two types – active and passive. Facilities for both active and passive recreation should be available to the public on three levels:

- Neighborhood Level: Facilities intended for use by those within a half-mile radius and bounded by major streets.
- Community Level: Major facilities designed for residents of the entire community. Immediate service radius of 1-mile is used for Community Parks.
- Regional Level: Major facilities utilized by residents of the metropolitan area.

Figure 5-4 shows the Existing Park and Open Space System and Table 5-1 shows an Inventory of Existing Facilities.

Figure 5-4: Existing Parks, Open Space, and Trails

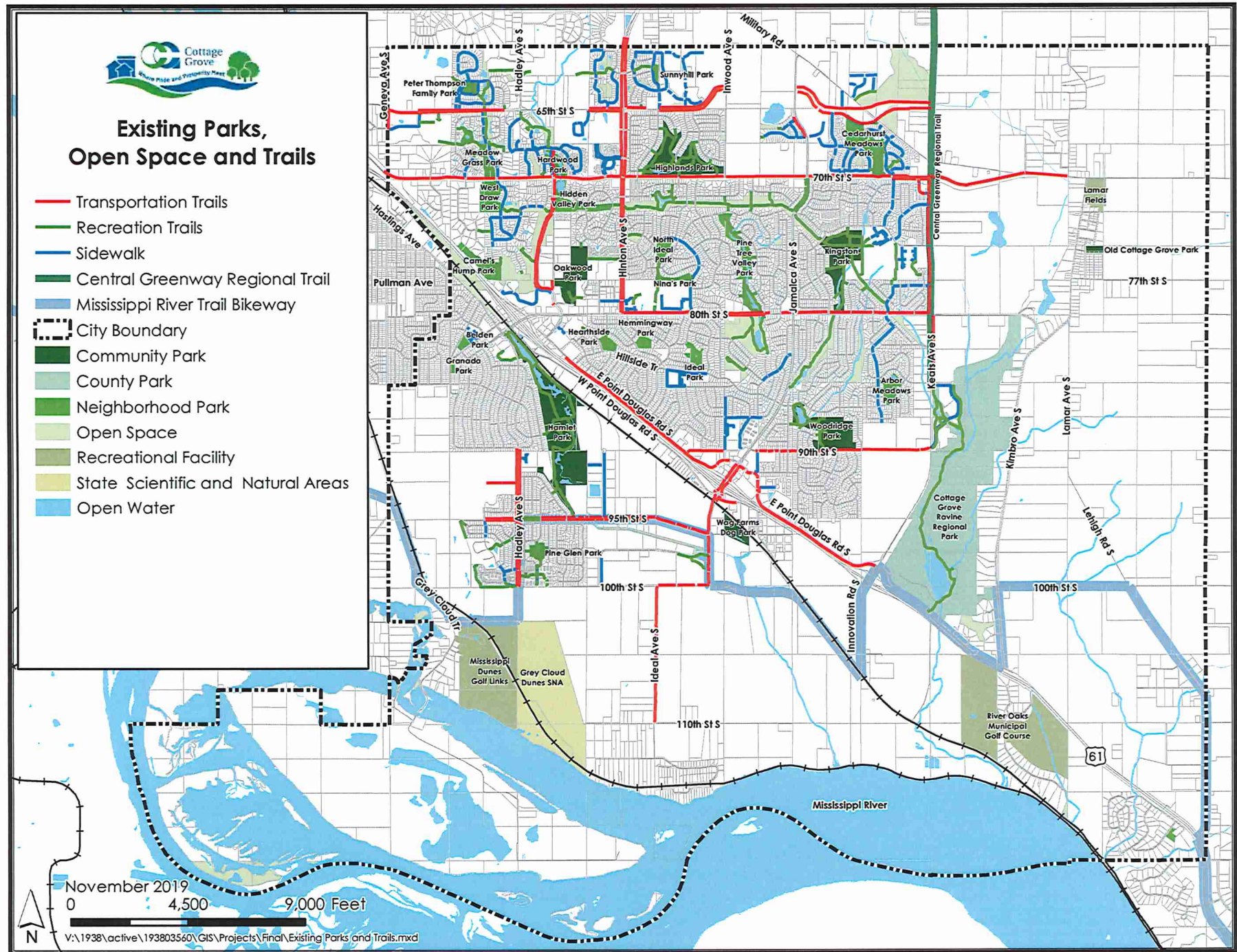


Table 5-1: Existing Parks Inventory



	Acres	Archery Range	Baseball/Softball Field	Basketball Court	Bike Path	Boat Launch	Bocce Ball Court	Building	Disc Golf Course	Dog Park	Fishing Pier	Football Field	Golf Course/Range	Grill	Horseshoe Court	Lacrosse Field	Pickleball	Picnic Shelter	Play Structure	Skate Park	Skating Rink	Sliding Hill	Soccer Field	Swimming/Wading Pool	Tennis Court	Trails	Undeveloped	Volleyball Courts
Arbor Meadows Park	12.0		1	1											•				•	•			1		•			
Belden Park	3.7		2																•				1					
Camel's Hump Park & Open Space	19.1																									•		
Cedarhurst Meadows Park East	3.3																									•		
Cedarhurst Meadows Park West	1.7		1	1														2	•							•		
Foothill Park	7.8																									•	•	
Granada Park	1.8																•	•	•						3			
Grey Cloud Dunes State SNA	238.0																										•	
Hamlet Park	158.0		4	2L				•				2 (1L)		•				•	•	•	•		1 (1L)		2L	•	•	
Hardwood Park	11.0																									•		
Hazen P. Mooers Park	0.5									•																		
Hearthside Park	6.5		1	3L				•											•		•	•			1L			
Hemmingway Park	5.6		1																•		•		2					
Hidden Valley Park	26.0										•								•							•		
Highlands Park	63.0		1	3				•						•				•	•		•	•	4		2L	•		
Ice Arena	16.0																					•						
Ideal Park	9.1																		•		•	•						
Kingston Park	57.0			2				•					•					•	•				11		2	•		
Lamar Fields	20.0		4 (2L)					•	•									•	•									
Meadow Grass Park	16.0																		•									
Nina's Park	5.0																		•	•								
North Ideal Park	10.0																		•		•					•		
Oakwood Park	37.0		1						•					•				•				•				•		
Old Cottage Grove Park	4.0		1	1															•		•							
Peter Thompson Park	6.4		1	1				•						•				•	•		•	•	1			•		
Pine Coulee Park	2.9		1															•			•							
Pine Glen Park	8.8		2	1															•				2				•	
Pine Tree Pond Park	44.0	•		1															•							•		
Pine Tree Valley Park	36.0		1					•											•		•					•		
Ravine Regional Park	553.0																											
River Oaks Golf Course	220.0												•															
River Oaks Scenic Overlook	2.2																										•	
Sunnyhill Park	12.0			1															1	•						•		
WAG Farms Dog Park	14.0									•																		
West Draw Park	21.0				•														•	•			3			•		
Woodridge Park	57.0		2	2L				•						•				•	•		•	•			2L	•	•	
<b>SCHOOLS</b>																												
Armstrong Elementary	5.0		2	1															•		•							1
Cottage Grove Junior High	52.5		4	1								1											3					
Cottage Grove Elementary	35.0		2	1															•				2			•		
Crestview Elementary	40.0		3	1															•				1					
Grey Cloud Elementary	52.5		5																•				2			•		
Hillside Elementary	9.0		4									1				1			•				2					
Park Senior High	63.0		4									2											3		5	•		
Pine Hill Elementary	4.0		2	1															•							•		

## FUTURE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Plans for future park acquisition and development are based on two basic assumptions. First, there will be a continued increase in demand for park and recreation services and facilities for our youth population and a dramatic increase in recreational demands from the adult segment of the population. Second, as the city continues to grow, parklands and open space areas will become more important for their growing recreational, aesthetic, and conservation values.

Demographic data suggests that Cottage Grove will continue to be a community dominated by families with children. At the same time, the age structure of the community is changing; even though the proportion of children to adults is predicted to slowly decrease. If the city continues to grow, the total number of children will probably remain stable or increase. In light of this, future parks, trails, and open space acquisition and development plans are predicated on the vision of a city where both the total population and the average age of the citizens will continue to increase.

Cottage Grove cannot afford to stop investing in parks, trails, and open space. The engagement found that the parks and open space system is a source of community pride and that residents approve of acquiring, developing, and maintaining a quality park and recreation system in Cottage Grove. The general public consensus appears to be that parks are a critical factor in assessing the “quality of life” in the community. Figure 5-5 shows the 2040 Future Parks and Open Space System.

## TRAILS

### *Existing Trail Network*

The trail network in Cottage Grove consists of a combination of routes designed for pedestrian and non-motorized use that links neighborhoods, commercial areas, schools, parks, points of interest, scenic overlooks, unique natural and historical features, and other public gathering places. The trail network is accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, non-motorized users, and persons with disabilities; and has connections with other transitway components of the network.

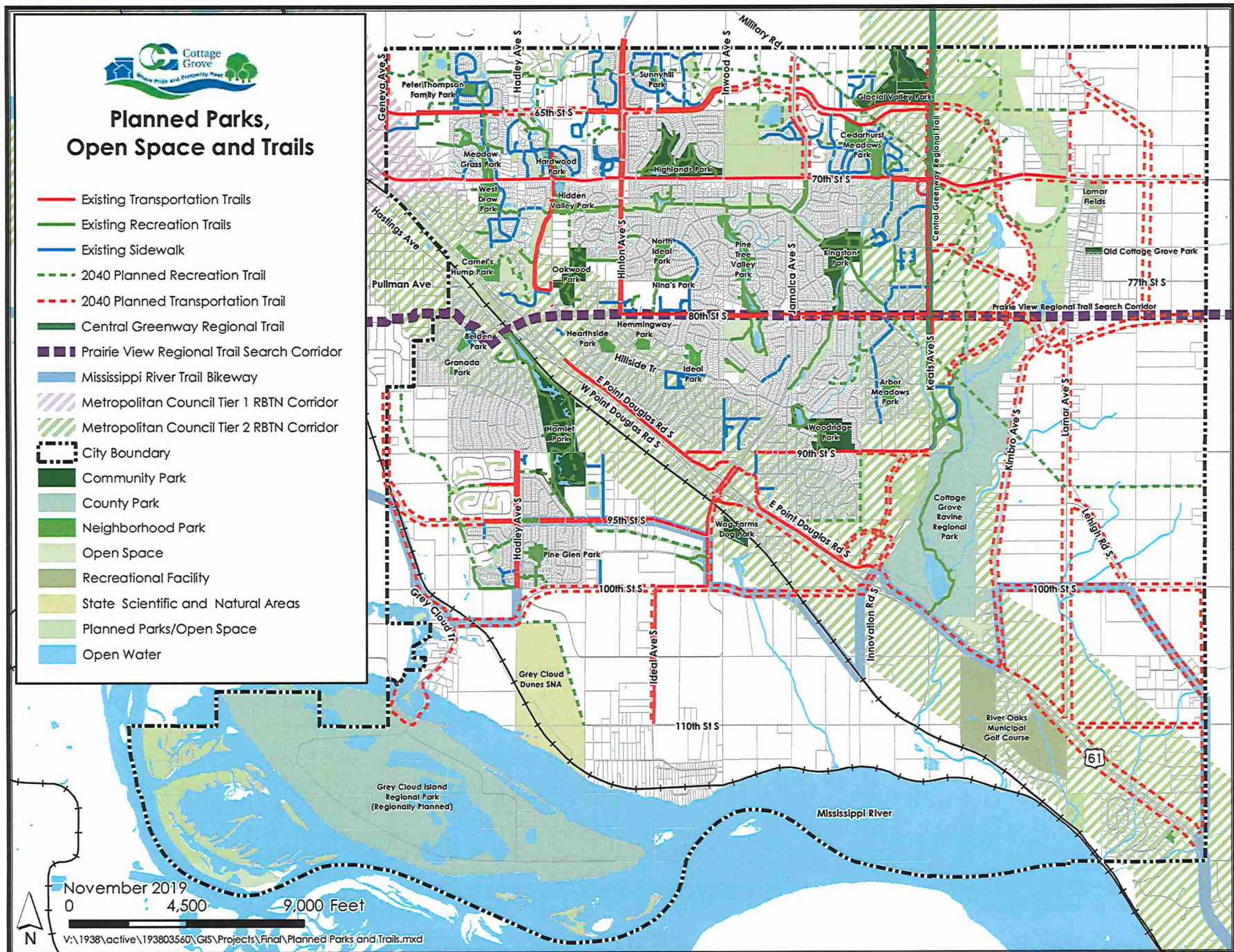
The purpose of the trail network is to offer the residents of Cottage Grove the safest possible access route for pedestrian and non-motorized uses. The City has been actively working to improve the trail network to one that offers a greater variety of access opportunities. Each segment identified on the trail network is a vital component of the whole trail network. The major routing emphasis of the trails plan correlates directly with the future transportation network and ties higher class trails with collectors and minor arterials. However, roadways that function as residential collectors or provide access to schools, parks, and other gathering spots should also be considered for some type of pedestrian access. The trail network provides residents with not only recreational access, but also with alternative transportation options to the major destination points in the city.

Where feasible, it is preferable to develop off-road trails, which provide facilities for both bicyclists and pedestrians. Trails along rivers and through parks and natural areas are always highly desirable routes, if and when they can be attained, as they provide a more scenic experience for the user. An off-road trail is one that is physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier either within the road right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way. According to AASHTO guidelines, the minimum width of a trail that provides for two-way bicycle traffic and allows for pedestrian use is eight (8) feet with two-foot shoulders on each side. Where traffic volumes are higher, ten (10) feet is the desired width.

Adequate space is not always available within the existing right-of-way for an off-road trail. Where it is necessary to develop continuous trail segments, it is recommended that the City work with residential developers and owners of commercial properties to obtain easements in areas where the road right-of-way is insufficient or in areas with topography constraints.

In cases where funding or right-of-way is limited, an on-road bicycle trail can present a more economical solution. The provision of an on-road bicycle trail can be accomplished through the restriping of existing roadways or with extra consideration during the design of a new roadway. The City does not currently have any on-street bikeways. Similar to a functional classification of roadways, trail facilities also have a hierarchy of structure. The following classification helps to define the different facilities available for trails.

Figure 5-5: Planned Parks, Open Space, and Trails



## ***Trail Facilities***

### *Sidewalks*

Sidewalks are installed on public right-of-way, constructed of concrete, five to six feet in width, and are located along local streets, sub-collectors, and collector streets. On neighborhood local streets, sidewalks may be located on only one side of the street. On collector and arterial streets, sidewalks or a combination of sidewalks and trails are required to be located on both sides of the street unless prohibited by topography or other engineering constraints. Pedestrian curb ramps are required at the terminus of the sidewalk with public or private roadways, driveways, and parking lots. Due to a sidewalk's width, pedestrian use has right-of-way over bikes and other non-motorized use.

### *Transportation Trails*

Transportation Trails are installed in public right-of-way or in trailway easements adjacent to collector and minor arterial streets and are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic. Class II construction consists of asphalt bituminous material with a minimum width of eight feet. Microsurfacing is periodically performed on transportation trails. Pedestrian curb ramps are required at the terminus of the transportation trails with public or private roadways, driveways, and parking lots. Transportation trails are designed for bicycle, other non-motorized, and pedestrian uses.

### *Recreational Trails*

Recreational Trails are installed in public parks and open-space and other natural areas of the community. Recreational trails are located in and adjacent to a variety of different landscapes in the community including wetlands, woods, prairies, and other passive areas. The recreational trail system also links the different active areas of the city park and open space system to provide for accessibility and cohesiveness of the facilities. Class III construction consists of asphalt bituminous material with a minimum width of eight feet. Microsurfacing is periodically performed on recreational trails. Pedestrian curb ramps are required at the terminus of the recreational trail with public or private roadways, driveways and parking lots. Recreational trails are designed for bicycle, other non-motorized, and pedestrian uses.

### *Natural Trails*

Natural Trails are installed in public parks and open space and other natural areas of the community. Natural trails are located in and adjacent to a variety of different landscapes in the community including wetlands, woods, prairies, and other passive areas. Trail construction consists of woodchip, grass, or crushed rock material with a width of four to eight feet. Natural trails are located in areas of future Recreational Trail corridors that have yet to be completed, or in other areas that cannot be hard surfaced due to steep slopes, tree massing, water features, or other environmentally sensitive features. Tree trimming, erosion control, and surface restoration are required to be periodically performed on natural trails. These trails are designed specifically for pedestrian use and some limited bicycle use.

## REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities abound to connect regional systems with inter-community non-vehicular trailways. However, such linkages along minor arterial road systems and utility easements will only occur as urban expansion occurs toward the Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park or toward future federal or regional park acquisitions on Grey Cloud Island. Urban expansion can occur through upgrading of various roadway systems with associated sidewalk or trailways, through parkland dedication of utility easement areas, or future park bond land and trail acquisition and development programs. Highway 61 complicates the connectivity of the network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the City of Cottage Grove.

The Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) established by the Metropolitan Council identifies two corridors within the City of Cottage Grove for prioritization of bicycle infrastructure. Most of the identified sections within the City are identified as Tier 2 Corridors, indicating that these corridors should be given second highest priority for transportation investment. A small area in the north west corner of the City has been identified as a Tier 1 corridor. The RBTN corridors are shown in Figure 5-5, and existing portions of the Mississippi River Trail and Central Greenway Regional Trail are located within the Tier 2 RBTN corridors.

### ***Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park***

Outside the time frame of this plan as urban development crosses Keats Avenue and development occurs contiguous to this regional facility, pathways and street access points will need to be coordinated with Washington County Park Department's interpark trail systems and park master planning. More than likely, future trail connections will occur along an NSP transmission line easement that enters on the northwest portion of park. Roadway connection opportunities also exist opposite the 90th Street and Keats intersection and at several other points along Keats Avenue.

Washington County updated the Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park Master Plan in 2017 that established a new park entrance road and contact station, updating the existing network of bike/pedestrian and cross-country ski trails, and preserved remaining natural areas for wildlife habitat.

### ***Grey Cloud Island Regional Park***

Lower Grey Cloud Island has been identified and approved as a regional park by Washington County, the Metropolitan Council, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The current infrastructure to Lower Grey Cloud Island will not support the estimated level of visitation as referenced in the Grey Cloud Island Regional Park Master Plan. However, the Master Plan also states that projections of usage and resulting traffic volumes are speculative due to the timing of proposed park development. Existing access to this area is inadequate for park use due to winding narrow causeways, low railroad bridges, and older minimally designed rural roads. Any federal or regional acquisition and development of land on Grey Cloud Island must be accompanied with funds to upgrade the complete transportation system.

Although the City's overall sanitary sewer study shows engineering potentials, present and future residents on the Island are not expected to receive sanitary sewer or municipal water without additional study of future land uses overall on the island.

The Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan designates the majority of Lower Grey Cloud Island as a Transitional Planning Area. The Transitional Planning Area is intended to indicate areas of the city that require additional review than allowed under the scope of the comprehensive plan. The City should develop a master plan in advance of establishing land use classifications and potentially opening the area for any non-regional park related development.

### ***Mississippi River Trail***

The Mississippi River Trail (MRT) runs through the southern part of Cottage Grove on Hadley Avenue, 97th Street, Jamaica Avenue, 100th Street, Miller Road, and Keats Avenue. The Trail is a segment of a larger system that follows the Minnesota portion of the Mississippi River roughly 600 miles from its source at Itasca State Park to the Iowa border. The City is planning for an improved, more direct routing of the bicycle facility. The planned reroute would provide a bicycle/

pedestrian path or protected route along 100th Street South between Hadley Avenue South and Jamaica Avenue South that is more direct and reduces potential conflicts between vehicles and Trail users in an area for future industrial business development.

### ***Prairie View Regional Trail Search Corridor***

The Prairie View Regional Trail Search Corridor crosses Cottage Grove east-west along or near 80th Street, connecting into St. Paul Park on the west and Denmark Township on the east. There is already an off-road paved trail on 80th Street for a significant portion of the corridor.

## **UPCOMING PARK AND TRAIL DEVELOPMENT**

The City of Cottage Grove and Washington County have developed capital improvement plans to identify future park and trail development. Projects taking place in the next five years are listed below.

### ***Cottage Grove Projects***

- Skate Park Maintenance and re-design - Hamlet Park
- Playground Equipment Replacement - Pine Tree Valley Park
- Cottage Grove Trailway Corridor, Public Landscape Initiative - Citywide
- Park Design and Master Planning - Citywide
- Hamlet Park South Development

### ***Washington County Parks - Upper East Ravine Park Development; Eastbrooke, Sunnyhill Park, Glacial Valley Park***

- Pedestrian Trail - CSAH 18 to Ravine Park in Cottage Grove
- Central Greenway Regional Trail (Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park to Lake Elmo Reserve)



**To:** Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission  
**From:** Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director  
**CC:**  
**Date:** May 6, 2025  
**Subject:** June Meeting

---

**Introduction/Background**

For the June meeting, the Commission typically takes a bus tour of the parks or has a field meeting at a park. Last year we celebrated the Glacial Valley Park grand opening. Staff is asking for guidance on the June meeting format.

**Staff Recommendation**

Provide staff direction for June meeting.



**To:** Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission  
**From:** Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director  
**CC:**  
**Date:** January 28, 2025  
**Subject:** Action Updates

---

### **Introduction/Background**

Staff will present on the following topics:

1. Denzer Park
2. Granada Park Parking
3. Cottage Grove Trailway Corridor Habitat Restoration
4. Oltman Park
5. Mississippi Dunes Park
6. Kingston Park Building

### **Staff Recommendation**

Receive information.



**To:** Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission  
**From:** Jordan Hirman, Facility Services Manager  
**CC:**  
**Date:** May, 2025  
**Subject:** Update on Ice Arena Activities

---

Below is an overview of Ice Arena Activities that are complete, projects/programs we are working on, and upcoming projects/programs:

### **COMPLETED PROJECTS/PROGRAMS**

- Co-Hosted Egg Hunt with Recreation on April 12 with 550 tickets sold.
- Co-Hosted Inflatable Fun Fest with Recreation on April 21<sup>st</sup> with 300 tickets sold.
- Completed indoor turf season with 213 hours and over \$17,000 in revenue.
- Scheduled 6 Spring/Summer tournaments.
- Spring Skating Lessons with 145 participants.
- Spring preventative HVAC maintenance completed by Kraft Mechanical.
- Worked with Recreation and Discover Cottage Grove and updated the lobby brochure information holder for a more modern look.
- Solar panel project with nearly 500 solar panels on the West Rink roof went online Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **CURRENT PROJECTS/PROGRAMS**

- West Rink Ice install May 1<sup>st</sup> with first user scheduled for May 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Booking Spring/Summer clinics and schools for 2025.
- Scheduling City programs for the Fall and Winter.
- CGHA scheduling for the 2025/26 hockey season.
- Training in full time Ice Arena Specialist.
- Reaching out to customers to gain ideas on what they would like to see for a potential remodel of the inside of the Ice Arena.

### **UPCOMING PROJECTS/PROGRAMS**

- 2025 Cottage Grove Ice Show "Skate-Tacular Soundtracks" May 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Spring/Summer Camps and Clinics
- Removal of CG Logistics Rink scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup> to let boards relax and repaint the rink on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Install West Rink for week of June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Over 560 hours booked June 10<sup>th</sup> through August 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Maintenance: clean rink glass/boards, wash bleachers and locker rooms, compressor maintenance, resurfacers maintenance, ice maintenance, miscellaneous lighting replacement.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call us at 651-458-3400.



**To:** Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission  
**From:** Jim Fohrman, Parks Superintendent  
**Date:** May 6, 2025  
**Subject:** Park Maintenance Activity Update

---

Below are the projects for the Parks Maintenance division. The projects are either in the process of being completed or have been completed.

#### **April 1-15**

- Fixed windscreen around town
- Fencing on ballfields and courts
- Install goal standards soccer/lacrosse
- Inspect summer equipment
- Drinking fountains put together
- Paint fields
- Turn water on at dog park
- Bolt down portable restrooms
- Ballfield prep and drag
- Trash run
- Shade structures at Highlands
- Work on infields
- Roll fields
- Playground mulch
- Hydroseed: Hearthside, Pine Tree Pond, Hemmingway
- Stump grinding

#### **April 16-30**

- Remove turf on West rink
- Ballfield dragging/grading
- Install garbage cans
- Arbor day planting 4/24
- Tennis/basketball nets
- Sunscreen Hamlet # 2

Irrigation  
6-month seasonal staff start  
Shade structure installs Hamlet  
Shelters at Granada  
Trash run  
Paint fields  
Lamar net installed

### **May 1-15**

Remove ice on North rink  
Bocce ball court prep  
Spring cleanup  
Trash run  
Crabgrass/fertilizing  
Irrigation  
Seasonal Employee Training 5/12  
Backflow inspections and repair  
Install Paddle boat Highlands  
Ballfield maintenance  
Spraying of parks  
Plows to old town  
Remove the rink at Woodridge  
Rough cutting (prairie and dog park)  
Paint fields  
Plant trees at Hamlet

### **May 16-31**

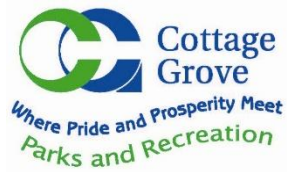
Irrigation  
Fountain at City Hall  
Turf spraying  
Landscape bed maintenance/weeding  
Wash shelters  
Yang rental  
Ballfield maintenance  
Splash pads start up  
spray weeds in playgrounds  
Kayak install  
Install volleyball nets  
Paint fields

Trash run

Rec softball tournament

Remove the playgrounds at Hardwood and  
Belden

Seasonal training 5/19



**Memo**

To: Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission

From: Molly Pietruszewski, Recreation Services Manager

Date: 4/30/2025

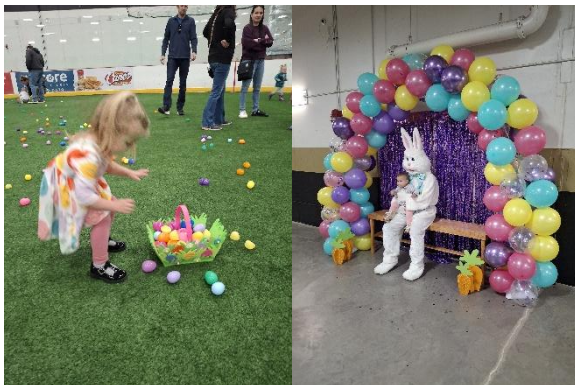
Re: May 2025 Meeting Update

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Please feel free to call or email with any questions or comments, 651-458-3404.

Egg Hunt – April 12  
550 Tickets Sold  
Annual community event  
Eight Sessions  
Photos with the Bunny

Inflatable Fun Fest – April 21  
300 Tickets Sold  
New event in 2025  
Three Sessions  
Will host again





**To:** Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission  
**From:** Dennis Neitz, River Oaks General Manager  
**CC:** Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director  
**Date:** May 3, 2025  
**Subject:** River Oaks Updates

---

+900 rounds (+29%) in April 25' compared to April 24'  
+\$37,708 in golf revenue (+24%) in April 25' compared to April 24'  
+\$6962 in clubhouse revenue (+10%) in April 25 compared to April 24'  
+\$44,670 in total revenue (+20%) in April 25 compared to April 24'

- Summer grill menu is available (Based on Weather)
- Leagues are all starting for the season
- Working with PW to redo cart path #6 to #7
- Clearing out area between #13 and #14 (Underbrush)
- Course is in great condition
- Implemented our new POS in both golf and food/beverage sides
- Busy couple months with events coming up



## 2025 3M PFAS SETTLEMENT PRIORITY 2 GRANT PROGRAM REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Published: February 5, 2025

### Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Division of Ecological and Water Resources

500 Lafayette Rd, St. Paul, MN 55101

3MPriority2@state.mn.us

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/index.html>

### GRANT OVERVIEW

In February 2018, the State of Minnesota and the 3M Company (3M) announced an agreement to settle the State's natural resources damage lawsuit for environmental harm and losses due to PFAS contamination in the East Metropolitan Area. The settlement agreement's second priority is to fund projects that restore and enhance aquatic resources, wildlife, habitat, fishing, resource improvement, and outdoor recreational opportunities in the East Metropolitan Area and in downstream areas of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers.

Up to \$20 million is available in this Request for Proposals (RFP) grant opportunity.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**State Agency Name:** Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)

**Funding Opportunity Title:** 3M PFAS Settlement Priority 2 Grant Program

**3M PFAS Settlement Funding:** The funding for this grant opportunity stems from the 2018 settlement with 3M, which provided compensation to the State of Minnesota for harm done to natural resources and lost natural resource services from the release of PFAS into the environment.

**Funding Opportunity Description:** The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) welcome proposals for projects that align with the [3M Settlement](#) Priority 2 goals and requirements described within this Request for Proposal (RFP). The settlement details that the grant funds shall be utilized on “projects that restore and enhance aquatic resources, wildlife, habitat, fishing, resource improvement, and outdoor recreational opportunities in the East Metropolitan Area and in downstream areas of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers.” Example projects “may include, but are not limited to, aquatic habitat and water resource protection and restoration, terrestrial and water trails, boat ramps and/or fishing piers, restoration of wildlife habitat, and other terrestrial conservation and recreation improvements.” Certainly, other projects beyond this list may be considered for funding.

**Funding Available:** Up to \$20 million dollars is available for eligible projects. The number of awards to be made will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested, the ranking of the applications, and the funding available for each category.

Applicants can apply for no less than \$20,000 per project. No match is required. There are three primary approximate allocations for projects within this funding opportunity:

- Wildlife and habitat restoration (\$13 million)
- Recreational fishing related projects (\$1 million)
- Outdoor recreation (\$6 million)

**Due Dates:** Proposals will be reviewed through a two-phase process. First, project proposers will submit a Letter of Intent that describes activities and outcomes for a project. Next, projects that meet the passing threshold for the Letters of Intent will be invited to submit full grant applications. Interested applicants **must** submit a Letter of Intent for each project to be considered for funding. Note the following deadlines for the first grant cycle:

Request for Proposals Opens	February 5, 2025
Letters of Intent due	April 4, 2025, by 4:30 PM CST

This Request for Proposal provides the information needed to apply. Please read the entire RFP and materials on the [Priority 2 Grant Program webpage](#) before starting an application.

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## ELIGIBILITY

All projects must be consistent with the objectives of the 2018 3M Settlement for Priority 2, align with the settlement Priority 2 goals, and help fulfill the obligation of the DNR and MPCA who serve as Co-Trustees of natural resources to act on behalf of the public to implement the settlement. The [2018 3M PFAS Settlement](#) provides the basis for projects to restore and enhance aquatic resources, wildlife, habitat, fishing, resource improvement, and outdoor recreational opportunities in the East Metropolitan Area and in downstream areas of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers. The DNR and MPCA commissioners are authorized to determine the projects that best align with the objectives and goals of the settlement under State statutes [115B.52](#) and [115B.20](#).

To be eligible, a project must meet all three of the below conditions:

1. Help achieve a 3M PFAS Settlement Priority 2 settlement goal;
2. At least 50% of project activities take place within the Priority 2 Project Area (defined and exhibited in Appendix B below); and
3. Be submitted by an eligible organization.

### 3M PFAS Settlement Priority 2 Grant Program Goals and Eligible Projects

A wide range of project types are eligible for grant funding, provided they meet one of the settlement goals, which were developed by the DNR and MPCA with feedback from the Priority 2 3M/Government and Residential Work Groups. To be eligible, a project must help achieve one or more of these settlement goals:

- Goal 1** – Restore, protect, and enhance aquatic and terrestrial resources, wildlife, and habitats.
- Goal 2** – Increase understanding of fish tissue contamination, improve communication about PFAS-based fish consumption advisories, and identify and enhance alternative, non-contaminated fishing areas.
- Goal 3** – Improve and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities.

### Eligible Organizations

The following types of organizations are eligible to apply:

- Local units of government (e.g., city, township, county)
- Soil & water conservation, watershed, and lake improvement districts
- Area-wide agencies, including a county and/or regional planning agencies
- Nonprofit organizations
- Public school district and nonprofit schools
- Institutes of higher education (public and nonprofit)
- Port authorities
- Tribal governments
- Federal agencies
- State agencies (excludes direct funding to the DNR and MPCA; however, agencies may participate as collaborators)

Individuals and for-profit organizations may not apply.

## Ineligible Projects

Projects that would be ineligible for funding through this grant opportunity include:

- Any project that would be used to fulfill regulatory requirements
- Projects at wetland mitigation banks
- Sports and recreational facilities such as sports fields and play equipment, etc. and other recreation that is not focused on recreating in nature
- Groundwater and drinking water projects
- Large-scale hard structure erosion and flood control projects, such as revetment or riprap
- Infrastructure projects primarily related to road, drinking water, and sewer line construction
- Improvements to buildings for rental, lodging or private property
- Projects solely conducted as research, including those dedicated to understanding PFAS toxicity, remediation, destruction, migration and health impacts
- Projects consisting solely of project planning and design, unless implementation funding has been secured

## FUNDING

The DNR is the lead agency for letting grants from the 3M PFAS Settlement Priority 2 Grant Program funds. Up to \$20 million dollars in awards are available for projects. **A \$20,000 minimum project budget applies to all projects.** Funds are anticipated to be distributed as follows:

### \$13 million to restore wildlife and habitats.

- We do not have a targeted average cost per project in this category.

### \$7 million for outdoor recreation.

Note there are separate allocations for recreational fishing related projects and non-fishing related projects.

- \$1 million for fishing related recreation projects. In order to distribute the funds widely, we envision the average cost per project to be \$100,000. However, larger scale projects will be considered.
- \$6 million for non-fishing related outdoor recreation projects. In order to distribute the funds widely, we envision the average cost per project to be \$500,000. However, larger scale projects will be considered.

The number of awards to be made will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested, the ranking of the applications, and the funding availability for each category. There may be multiple funding rounds. The first round of awards will be given to the highest scoring and highest priority projects. If funds remain, applicants will be given an opportunity to submit new or revised applications in subsequent rounds of funding.

## Match Requirements

No match is required. However, providing match, leveraged or in-kind funds will be evaluated more favorably as part of the full application. These other funding commitments must be demonstrated in an application.

## Eligible Expenses

This includes expenses incurred through project activities that are direct to and necessary for the project described in the application. All eligible expenses must have occurred after the effective date of the grant agreement.

- Expenditures incurred after the effective date of the grant agreement
- Administration. Wages for grant-related tasks – such as bill paying, submitting reimbursement requests, grant monitoring, and reporting (should not exceed 20% of total project costs)
- Design, engineering and construction observation (should not exceed 35% of total project costs)
- Professional and technical services (e.g. legal)
- Equipment, tools, materials and supplies specific to project
- Capital expenditures, including acquisition and/or construction of tangible fixed assets
- Publication and printing related to the project

## Generally Ineligible Expenses – Unless Explicitly Approved

- Office rental fees and conference attendance expenses
- Insurance
- Advertising and marketing expenses

## Ineligible Expenses

- Any expenses incurred before the effective date of the grant agreement
- Operations and maintenance expenses occurring after the closeout of the grant
- Indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related and necessary to the project
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services
- Entertainment, decorations, gifts and prizes

## APPLICATION AND PROCESS TIMELINE

Projects will be reviewed through a two-phase process. First, proposers will submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) that describes activities and outcomes for a project. If an LOI satisfies the eligibility requirements, the proposer will be invited to submit a full grant application. Applications will be scored by the DNR and MPCA Evaluation Team based on the Evaluation Criteria and ultimately selected by the DNR and MPCA Commissioners. The award decisions of DNR and MPCA will be final and not subject to appeal.

Request for Proposals opens	February 5, 2025
Questions about LOI due	March 28, 2025
LOIs due	April 4, 2025
Invitations sent to submit full application	June 2025 (estimated)
Grant workshop	Late June 2025 (estimated)
Questions about full application due	Early August 2025 (estimated)
Full applications due	August 2025 (estimated)
Notice of project selection	December 2025 (estimated)

## Letter of Intent Instructions

Project proposers **must** submit an LOI for each project to be considered for funding (link [here](#)). The purpose of the LOI is to give the proposers an opportunity to briefly explain the activities and outcomes of their proposed project. The LOI will also allow DNR and MPCA to assess whether the proposed project is eligible for Priority 2 funding, based on eight screening criteria, listed below:

1. Lead applicant is an eligible organization.
2. Addresses losses of natural resources and services.
3. Is technically and administratively feasible.
4. Would not jeopardize public health or safety.
5. Complies with applicable laws, regulations, and rules.
6. Unlikely to be completed without Priority 2 funding.
7. At least 50% of project activities are located within the Priority 2 Project Area. If located in a Limited Project Area, is consistent with the qualifying project activities (see Appendix B).
8. Not expected to be impacted by planned remediation actions.

Members of the DNR and MPCA Evaluation Team will evaluate LOIs to determine whether proposed projects meet each of the screening criteria. If an LOI passes all screening criteria, the DNR will invite proposers to complete a full grant application and provide feedback in preparation for the application process. An invitation to complete an application does not guarantee funding will be provided.

LOIs may be submitted electronically to the email address [3MPriority2@state.mn.us](mailto:3MPriority2@state.mn.us), and must be received by 4:30 p.m. CST on Friday, April 4, 2025. Applicants submitting multiple LOIs must use a unique project title for each LOI. LOIs received after the deadline will not be eligible for consideration.

Questions related to the LOI process must be directed to [3MPriority2@state.mn.us](mailto:3MPriority2@state.mn.us). The DNR will post summaries of questions received and responses weekly and will field questions until March 28, 2025, one week before the LOIs are due.

## Full Grant Application Instructions

Proposers that pass the LOI screening shall be invited to submit an application that consists of the following:

- Application form
- Budget table
- Letters of support (for applications involving multiple collaborators)
- Completed appraisal and DNR Property Information Summary (if project involves the purchase of property)
- Preliminary designs, as applicable
- Other supplemental information, as applicable

Application form and budget table will be provided to applicants at the time of invitation.

Questions related to the full grant application process must be directed to [3MPriority2@state.mn.us](mailto:3MPriority2@state.mn.us). The DNR will post summaries of questions received and responses weekly and will field questions until one week before applications are due.

## Grant Workshop Opportunity

A virtual workshop is planned for all potential grantees who have been invited to submit full grant applications. The purpose of the workshop is to support the development of a more clear, concise, comprehensive, and competitive application. The date and time for the workshop will be shared with applicants that have been invited to submit a full grant application.

## Evaluation Criteria

Below is a short description of each Evaluation Criteria along with information needed from the applicants to address in the application submittal. Criteria are numbered for reference only, not priority. It's possible that one or more criteria do not apply to a proposed project. In these cases, final scoring will be adjusted for these applications so as not to be penalized. The following criteria will be weighted more heavily than others in the scoring process: (1) Benefits to injured resources and services, (8) Demonstrates equity and environmental justice, (9) Provides public access, and (10) Provides self-sustaining benefits.

### 1. **Benefits to injured resources and services**

Delivers benefits to injured natural resources and/or services in the Priority 2 Project Area, demonstrating a central focus on those resources or services. Detail the proposed project activities and description of expected benefits. If proposing a habitat protection/conservation project, also provide information on how imminent the threat of development is to the parcel(s) in question.

### 2. **Cost**

Costs must be realistic and adequate for the project needs and timeframe. Please provide a detailed project budget and an associated budget justification.

### 3. **Consistent with local, county, state, and regional planning**

Demonstrates consistency with existing natural resource and recreational planning efforts. Include references to existing plans and explain how the project is identified in or would work synergistically with such plans.

### 4. **Minimizes potential for additional wildlife injury or fish consumption related human health risks**

Minimizes additional injury to natural resources and human health. Risks of non-PFAS related injury (e.g., habitat degradation, disturbance, pollution) will be assessed based on the project location, proposed project activities, and measures taken to mitigate injury. As applicable, risks of PFAS-related injury to wildlife and to human health will be assessed based on the project location and proposed project activities. Describe the specific measures the project will take to minimize potential harm to wildlife, habitat and people.

### 5. **Minimizes adverse community impacts**

Minimizes adverse impacts to human communities (e.g., nuisance/noise/pollution) due to both short-term and long-term actions. Provide information on anticipated adverse impacts, the location where those impacts would occur, and a list of planned mitigation measures.

### 6. **Benefits multiple municipalities**

Delivers substantial benefits to multiple municipalities. Projects benefiting multiple municipalities may physically cross municipality boundaries or may be located in areas used by residents from multiple municipalities. Please provide details on the potential project beneficiaries.

**7. Includes community engagement**

Includes a strong community outreach and engagement component and actively involves community members in multiple phases of the project (e.g., design, implementation, monitoring). Provide all plans for community outreach and engagement.

**8. Demonstrates equity and environmental justice**

Will ensure fairness, precision, equity, and consistency in grant awards, which includes implementing diversity and inclusion. Provide information for how your project will benefit under-served populations and areas of concern for environmental justice (communities with higher populations of low-income residents, or people of color, including tribal communities and those with physical or mental disabilities). The [Understanding Environmental Justice in MN](#) mapping tool can be referenced as a resource.

**9. Provides public access**

Provides the public with access to restored resources and services, unless such access would be detrimental to project goals. Provide information about current land ownership and use as well as a description of how public access would be provided.

**10. Provides self-sustaining benefits**

Yields expected benefits with little maintenance or management. Alternatively, demonstrates long-term support or funding for maintenance if maintenance is required. Describe all maintenance and management needs to sustain project benefits as well as available local support.

**11. Matching/leveraged funding**

Substantially leverages funding from other sources to achieve Priority 2 goals. While projects that would use Priority 2 funding to supplant existing funding are not allowed, Priority 2 funds can be used to expand upon or enhance activities that already have dedicated funding streams; in such cases, dedicated funding sources would be considered match. List all sources and amounts of additional project funding.

## **Collaboration**

Collaborative projects involving multiple communities or organizations are welcome. One eligible applicant must lead the partnership effort and assume program and financial responsibility and serve as the main program contact through implementation. Applications for collaborative projects will require a letter of support from each partner. Letters in any format will be acceptable. Individuals, for-profit organizations, the DNR, and MPCA may not apply, however, DNR and MPCA staff may participate as collaborators and resource specialists. Due to the requirements for deed restrictions (see Appendix A), any non-governmental organizations proposing the acquisition or betterment of real property will require a willing public entity to participate as a collaborator.

## **Project Selection and Awards**

Members of the DNR and MPCA Evaluation Team will conduct an independent review of each eligible application. If necessary, the Evaluation Team may contact applicants for additional information on project scope or scale. The DNR and MPCA commissioners will consider the Evaluation Team recommendations, availability of funding, and funding priorities, and will determine the final selection of projects to receive funding. The State reserves the right to offer grant amounts that differ than the applicant's request. If funds remain, there may be an opportunity for applicants to submit new or revised applications in a subsequent round of funding. The DNR and MPCA do not guarantee that grant funds will be available for all projects.

## **APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS AND RESOURCES**

This grant program shall be in accordance with Minnesota Statutes [16B.97](#) and [16B.98](#), and shall be implemented in the greatest extent possible in accordance with the [Minnesota Department of Administration's Office of Grant Management, and their Grants Management Policies](#). Some of these requirements are detailed further below:

### **Requirements for Permanent Protections and Deed Restrictions**

All lands acquired or improved with grant funds must be maintained and managed long-term. Grantees will be responsible for recording deed restrictions for each parcel to guarantee these protections. Some projects may warrant permanent protections (such as acquisitions or restoration projects), while others (such as a fishing pier) may warrant guarantees for the useful life of the structure.

Although non-governmental organizations are eligible grantees, all recorded property interests (e.g. fee simple ownership, conservation easements, and/or deed restrictions) must be held by a unit of government. As such, all non-governmental applicants must secure the support of a public entity willing and able to accept responsibilities for the long-term maintenance and management of the site. The public entity should be identified as a collaborator in the application, which requires a letter of support. If there is no willing public entity, the project will not qualify for funding under this program.

At no point in the future will Grantees be allowed to convert any portion of the property to uses other than what is specified in the grant agreement without prior written approval from the State.

### **Requirements for Land Acquisitions**

Applications involving the purchase of property (fee title or easement) should include a letter of support from each private landowner who would be participating in the program. Applications should include an appraisal prepared by an independent appraiser, that satisfies the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP). Prior to the completion of the appraisal, applicants should complete a [DNR Grant Property Information Form](#) and share a copy with the appraiser. The negotiated price of the property or easement may not exceed the fair market value as established by the appraisal. Eligible costs include the purchase price of the property, surveys, recording fees, and legal fees (if applicable). The appraisal is not eligible for reimbursement.

### **Applications Made Public**

Responses to this RFP may be subject to a request for information. Per [Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#)

- Names and addresses of grant applicants will be public data once applications are opened (two business days after deadline).
- All remaining data in application responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [§13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is complete.
- All data created or maintained by the DNR as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [§13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is complete.

### **State's Right to Cancel**

This Notice does not obligate the state to award a grant. The state reserves the right to cancel the Request for Proposal if it is in its best interest due to lack of funding, agency priorities, or other considerations.

## **Payment/Reimbursement**

The state will not advance funds to grantees, unless authorized. The DNR shall specify the method and schedule of payments for each grant in the grant contract agreement or grant award notification. Grant payments must be in the form of reimbursement and may not be issued until the grant agreement is fully executed. For certain projects, the State may retain up to 10% of the total grant award until it determines the conditions of the Agreement have been met.

Any expenses incurred prior to the effective date of the grant contract agreement will be ineligible for reimbursement.

## **Design Review**

The state reserves the right to review designs before project activities are carried out. Grantees will be expected to provide designs to the state before the bid letting process is undertaken.

## **Digital Accessibility Requirements**

Any materials and/or products provided to the state as part of this program that are intended to be shared publicly must be provided in an accessible electronic format per [Minnesota Statute 16E.03](#), State Information and Communications System, Subd. 9. Subdivision 9, Accessibility Standards, incorporates federal requirements under [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) (Revised) and the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1, level AA](#). For guidance on producing accessible electronic documents, see the Minnesota IT Services [accessibility website](#).

## **Data Collection**

Certain types of data collected or created using Priority 2 grant funds must be compatible for use with the state's data standards and guidelines (e.g. metadata or data management plans). This will be clarified further for in the grant agreement, as applicable.

## **Grantee Financial and Capacity Review**

Minn. Stat. §16B.981/[MN Laws of 2023, Chapter 62, Article 7, Section 11](#) requires that a pre-award risk assessment is conducted for grant awards of \$50,000 or more.

## **Prevailing Wage**

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient or contractor to pay prevailing wages on construction projects to which state prevailing wage laws apply ([MN Statutes 177.41 to 177.44](#) and corresponding [MN Rules 5200.1000 to 5200.1120](#)), as established by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. Specifically, grantees must ensure that contractors and subcontractors pay all laborers and mechanics the established prevailing wages for work performed under the contract. Failure to comply with the aforementioned may result in civil or criminal penalties. For details, see DLI's page [Prevailing Wage Information](#).

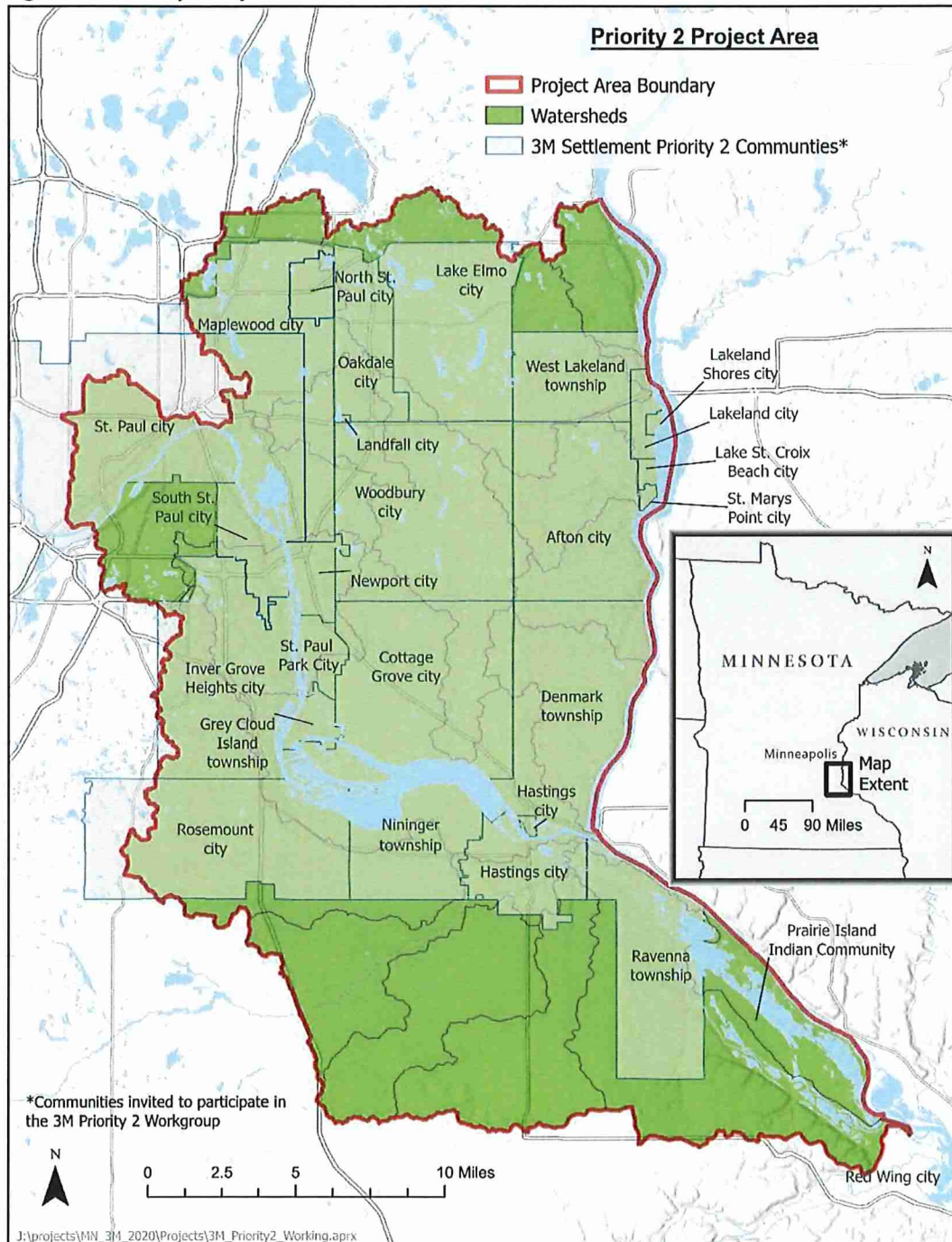
## **Permitting**

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all required approvals and permits. Applicants must coordinate with local governments, watershed districts, and other relevant authorities before any work begins.

## APPENDIX B: PRIORITY 2 PROJECT AREA AND LIMITED PROJECT AREA MAPS

At least 50% of project activities must take place within the Priority 2 Project Area as shown in Figure B-1, below. The local units of government identified in the map include those that were invited to participate in the Work Group meetings. For a more detailed project area boundary, download a Google Earth, .kmz file, [here](#).

Figure B-1. Priority 2 Project Area



## Limited Project Areas

The hatched areas in Figures B-2, B-3 and B-4 exhibit levels of PFAS contamination that are not compatible with certain types of project activities or are under active remedial investigation and other restoration initiatives. These areas are considered “**Limited Project Areas**”.

Projects that include the following types of activities will NOT qualify for Priority 2 Funding in a Limited Project Area:

- Aquatic, wetland or nearshore habitat restoration
- Aquatic connectivity (dam removal/fish passage)
- Bird nesting platforms for birds that consume fish
- Fish or bivalve stocking
- Island construction/enhancement
- Fishing pier/access point construction or improvements

Project activities that are qualified in these areas, include, but are not limited to:

- Trail construction or improvement
- Kayak or boat launch construction or improvement
- Wildlife observation platform construction
- Land and habitat conservation and protection
- Natural resources related education (if addressing injured resources)

Figure B-2. Limited Project Areas in Oakdale and Lake Elmo

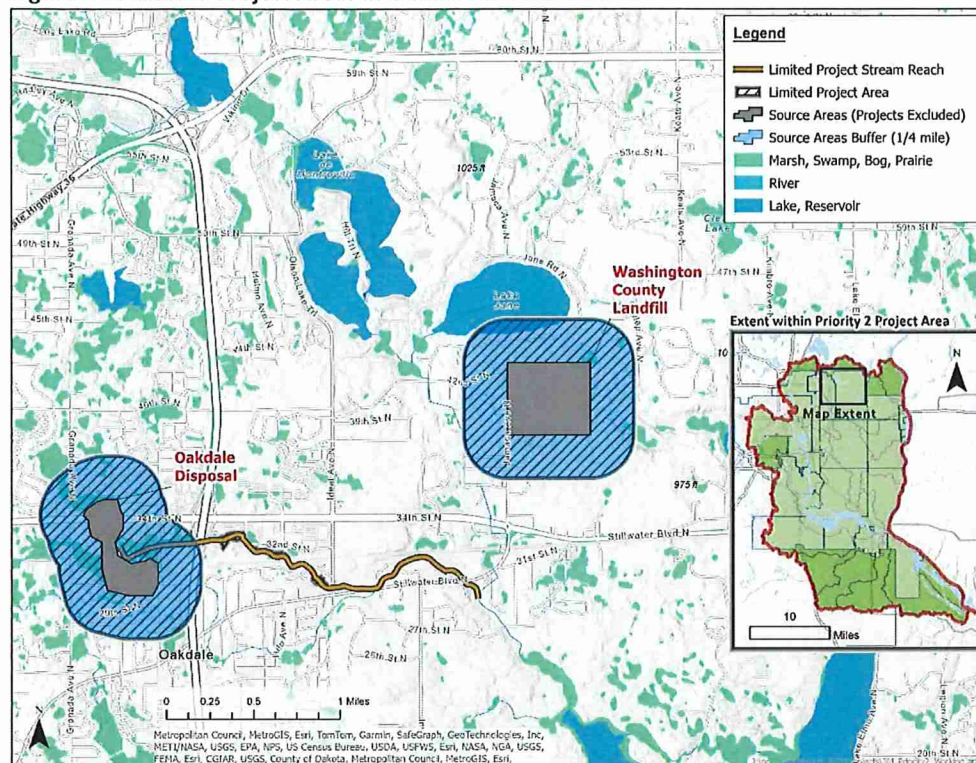


Figure B-3. Limited Project Areas in Woodbury and Cottage Grove

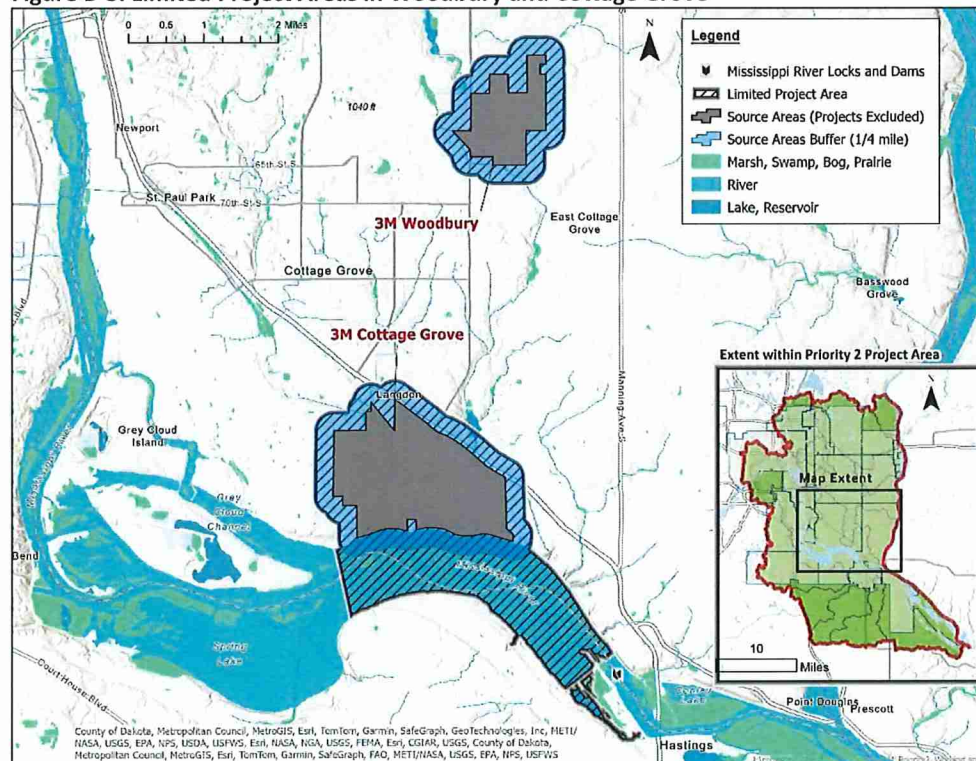
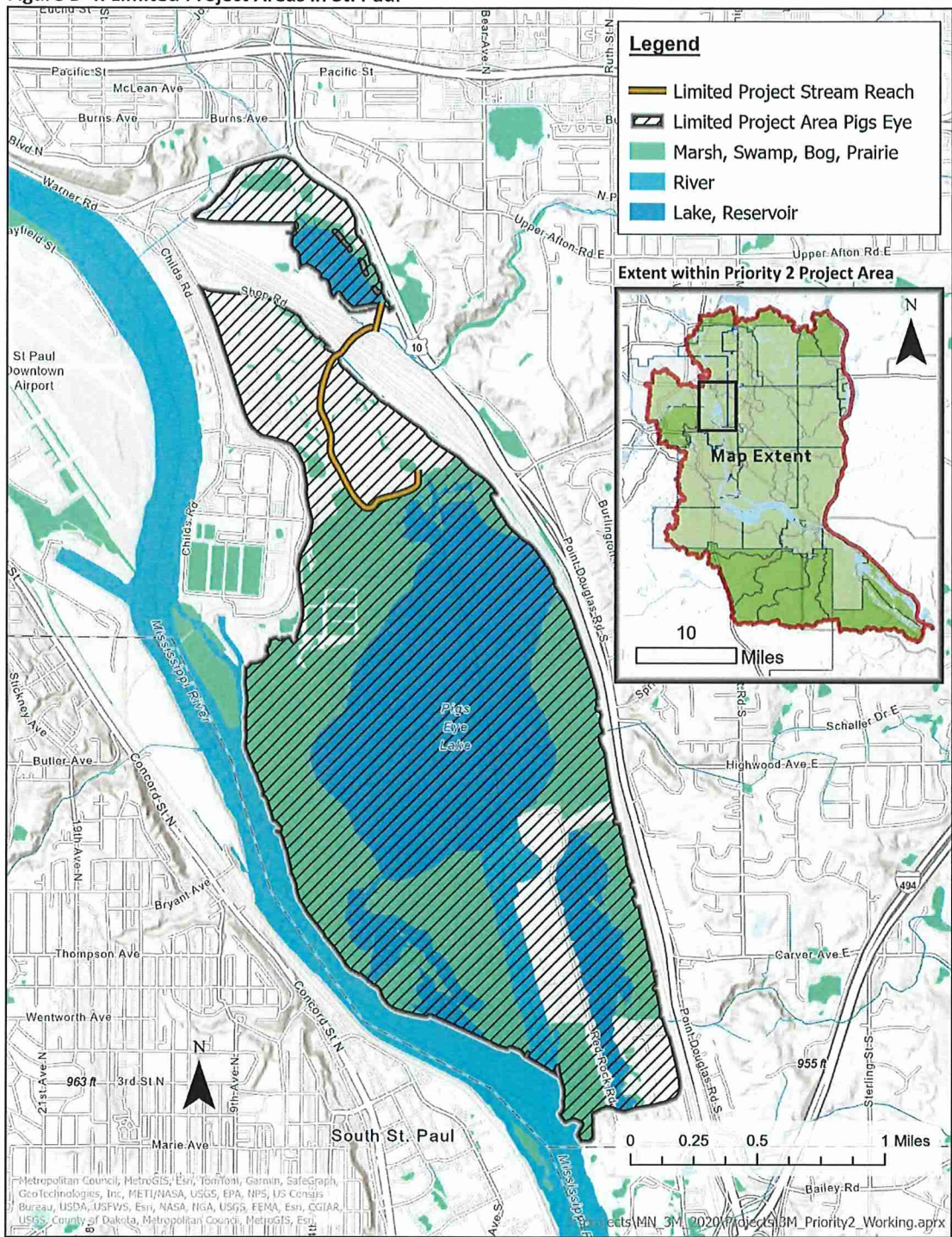


Figure B-4. Limited Project Areas in St. Paul



# **Washington County Parks and Open Spaces Commission**

**March 20, 2025**

- A. Agenda below
- B. January 16, 2025 unapproved minutes are below. I was not able to attend this meeting, but normally these are approved with only minor changes.
- C. NEW BUSINESS
  - A. Natural Resources update - report below
    - A. Tree Trek plan for CG Ravine along paved trail
    - B. 2024 Annual Stewardship Report - summary is in the report. I have the entire report as well, only 18 pages but a lot of info.
  - B. Equity Updates - report attached. The training for commissioners was approved for October 9th.
  - C. Legislative Updates - verbal; Letters of Support [attached]
  - D. Pine Point Regional Park Kiosk - verbal
- D. Park updates - document attached
- E. If you have any questions or want copies of other items on the agenda, please let me know.

Dave Olson



**PUBLIC WORKS**

Wayne Sandberg, P.E., Director, County Engineer  
Frank D. Ticknor, P.E., Deputy Director

**PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION AGENDA**

Thursday, March 20th, 2025 / 6:00 p.m.

**Washington County Public Works Room 1244**

**11660 Myeron Rd. N**

**Stillwater, MN 55082**

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL
- III. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC
- IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
  - a. January 16th, 2025
- VI. OLD BUSINESS
- VII. NEW BUSINESS
 

a. Natural Resource Updates	Theresa Friendshuh	30 min.
b. Equity Updates	Elena Schewe	15 min.
c. Legislative Updates/Letters of Support	Alex McKinney	10 min.
d. Pine Point Regional Park Kiosk	Alex McKinney	10 min.
- VIII. INFORMATION / UPDATES
 

a. Board Updates	Comm. Clasen	5 min.
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- IX. NON-AGENDA ITEMS (GROUP DISCUSSION)
- X. ADJOURN

**NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 20 AT WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLICS WORKS**

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*Washington County is an equal opportunity organization and employer*

**PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION  
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, January 16, 2025**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Anne Siess called to order the Parks and Open Space Commission (POSC) meeting at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held at Historic Courthouse, in Stillwater MN.

**ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Anne Siess, Chair  
Ben Meyer, Jyneen Thatcher, Gary Severson, Michael Kraemer, Jim Kelly, Meri Danielson, Dave Olson, Tammy McColloch, Corcoran Wicker, Tori Dupre, Kevin Smith  
Members Absent: None  
Staff present: Alex McKinney, Emily Jorgensen, Serena Rath, Connor Schaefer  
Others Present: Commissioner Michelle Clasen

**Comments from the Public**

None

**Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Election of Chair:

*Michael Kraemer motioned to nominate Anne Siess for the position of Chair. The motion was seconded by Jim Kelly. With no other nominations, a white ballot was called, all in favor. Anne Siess elected as chair.*

Election of Vice Chair:

*Dave Olson nominated Cork Wicker for the position of vice chair. The motion was seconded by Meri Danielson. With no other nominations, all in favor. Cork Wicker was elected as vice chair.*

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Motion by Dave Olson, seconded by Michael Kraemer, to approve the agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*A great place to live, work and play...today and tomorrow*

*Motion by Tori Dupri, seconded by Jyneen Thatcher, to approve the November 21, 2024, POSC minutes, as written. All in favor. Motion carried.*

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Parks and Open Space Commission Ordinance Update**

*Presented by Alex McKinney, Parks Director*

Alex reviewed discussion topics from the November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, updates to the POSC Ordinance and requested a motion of support. The ensuing discussion covered several key points including term limits, WACO policy #6006, DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), Land Water Legacy Program, and added responsibilities.

*Tori Dupri moves to support the proposed ordinance and recommends approval to the Washington County Board of Commissioners, seconded by Dave Olson, all in favor. Motion carried.*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Land and Water Legacy Program: Thomas Project**

*Presented by Serena Rath, Planner I-Office of Administration*

Serena presented the Thomas Project, a potential Land and Water Legacy Program (LWLP) initiative located in Afton. This 5.2 acre property aligns with the long term vision for the Valley Creek Greenway due to its natural features and its location. The project is a collaborative effort involving Washington County, Belwin Conservancy and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Funding for the Thomas project comes from two main sources.

1. The 2024-2026 interim fund, approved though by the county board on May 21, 2024.
2. Grant funds awarded by the DNR.

The conservation easement for the property has been appraised at \$395,000. Washington County will be the sole holder of this easement and will be responsible for its monitoring, which typically involves annual site visits to ensure compliance with the easement terms. The project builds upon previous conserving efforts, demonstrating the county's ongoing commitment to preserving natural spaces.

Serenna then presented an overview of the Thomas and Cremens Conservation Easement Stewardship Plan for restoration and management. The plan, developed with recommendations from the Belwin Conservancy, outlined management zones including lowlands, bluffs and ravines, bluff prairies and savanna, creekside meadow. POSC was requested to review the plan provide and provide comments and questions by January 30.

### **Parks Financial Analysis Study**

*Presented by Connor Schaefer- Senior Planner*

Connor introduced a new project called the Parks Financial Analysis Study. Washington County has initiated a comprehensive study to evaluate the funding requirements for its parks division. This year long project aims to assess current revenue generation strategies and explore alternative methods to

ensure adequate resources for park maintenance, operations, and expansion. This study will scrutinize various funding sources with particular attention given to vehicle permits, which currently account for 20% of park financing.

Two consultants have been engaged in this project:

1. Viable City: Tasked with providing demographics data and analysis
2. Ehler: Leading the study as public finance experts

The county has drawn inspiration from similar studies conducted by other agencies including Three Rivers Parks and Dakota County to inform their approach. Upon completion, the study's findings will be presented to this committee for recommendations.

### **2025 Proposed Work Plan**

Alex presented the 2025 work plan for this commission and noted that the plan can be flexible as needed and an additional special meeting may be discussed later.

### **INFORMATION/UPDATES**

*Board updates by Commissioner Michelle Clausen*

Commissioner Clausen attended a demonstration on mobile biochar kilns with Great River Greening. Presented with Alex to the Governor's office (alongside other agencies, commissioners, and a lobbyist) issues including Hardwood Creek, plans such as connecting trails, and funding because legislation is not allotting funds. The board adopted a resolution to acquire approximately 80 acres near Big Marine Park which will be a critical connection for that park. Snowmobile grant from the state of MN, adopted a resolution to participate in the MN DNR Snowmobile assistance program to administer a grant to the Star Trail Association.

### **Park and Legislative updates**

Alex walked through the bond requests supported by Washington County, that impact parks and trails. They include:

1. Lighted trails at Cottage Grove Ravine
2. Stone Bridge Trail connection project
3. Hardwood creek regional trail extension
4. Metropolitan Regional Park System
5. Wood waste and diseased tree (Public Health initiative)

### **Non-Agenda Items**

none

### **ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by Cork Wicker, seconded by Dave Olson, to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.*

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, *Rebecca Denn*



# Natural Resources Updates

POSC  
March 20, 2025



# Overview

- Tree Trek Program Introduction & Proposal
- 2024 Annual Stewardship Report
- Questions



# Tree Trek Program

- Started by the University of Minnesota's Urban Forestry, Outreach, Research Nursery and Lab
- Self-guided tour that leads park users to different tree species
- Encourages engagement with the trees in parks and educates the public
- Each tree has a sign with information about the specific tree species



# Proposed Tree Trek Location

- Tree Trek at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park
  - On the paved sidewalk, from the playground to the kayak launch
- Marking at least 10 trees along the path
- Considerations included maintenance, native species, visibility, and access



# Questions

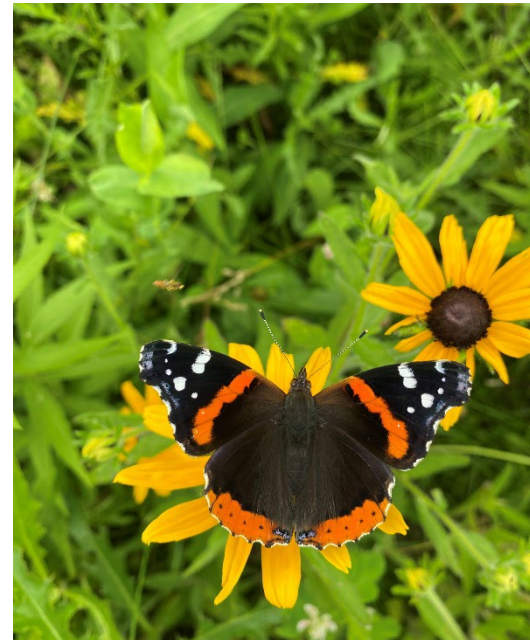
# 2024 Annual Stewardship Report

- First report created in 2023, in response to a feedback from the Commission.
- Provides an overview of stewardship occurring across the park system, program accomplishments, operational details, community engagement and partnerships, project results, and an outlook of goals and status of conversations.



# Highlights

- Grants
  - 8 active grants, \$431,145
  - Received 2 new Conservation Partner Legacy grants
- Planted 2,000 bareroot trees and shrubs in Lake Elmo Park Reserve
- Prescribed Burning
  - Burned 22.5 acres
  - Created a prescribed burn List Serv
  - Held open house and training for Lake Elmo Fire Department
- Solarized smooth brome and seeded with native prairie seeds harvested from the parks



# Land Stewardship 2024 vs 2023

	North Parks				South Parks							
	Big Marine Park Reserve	Pine Point Regional Park	Square Lake Park	Long Lake Conservation Area	Hardwood Creek Trail	Cottage Grove Ravine Park	Lake Elmo Park Reserve	Point Douglas Park & Trail	St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park	Grey Cloud Island Park	2024 Total	2023 Total
<b>Maintenance (acres)</b>												
Prescribed burning	0	1.5	0	0	0	0.2	20		0	0	22	83
Prescribed grazing	0	0				10	4		0	0	14	64
Noxious weed control	0	4	0	0	0	55	44	0	14	0	118	50
Shrub control	0	0	0	0		21	48		17	0	86	115
Thin or harvest	0	0	0	0		0	0		0	0	0	9
Cropland	25	19					90		118		252	252
<b>Restoration and Enhancement</b>												
Establishment mow/hay (ac)	0	8			0	20	39		0		67	97
Shrub or tree removal (ac)	0	7	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	31	21
Seeding (ac)	0	12	0	0	0	18	21		0	0	51	142
Planting – trees and shrubs	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N		
Planting – forbs	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N		
<b>Monitoring</b>												
Site visit(s)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Bird survey	Y	N	N	N		Y	N		N	N		
Deer survey	N	N	N	N		Y	N		Y	N		
Vegetation survey	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N		

# Upcoming Goals

## 2025 Goals

- Hire and train in a FTE Natural Resource Land Steward
- Implement 200 acres of prescribed fire use across the park system.
- Develop a pine stand improvement strategy for St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park, Pine Point Regional Park, and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.



# Ongoing Conversations

- Invasive shrubs and need for land stewardship
- Big Marine Park Reserve natural resource stewardship plan
- Pine stand management throughout the park system
- Five-year cropland bid development and implementation
- Wood waste improvements
- Foraging





Questions?



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# Parks Equity 2025

By Parks Equity Coordinator, Elena Schewe

# Agenda



Equity Overview



POSC Equity Training – Action item for recommendation



Art in the Parks



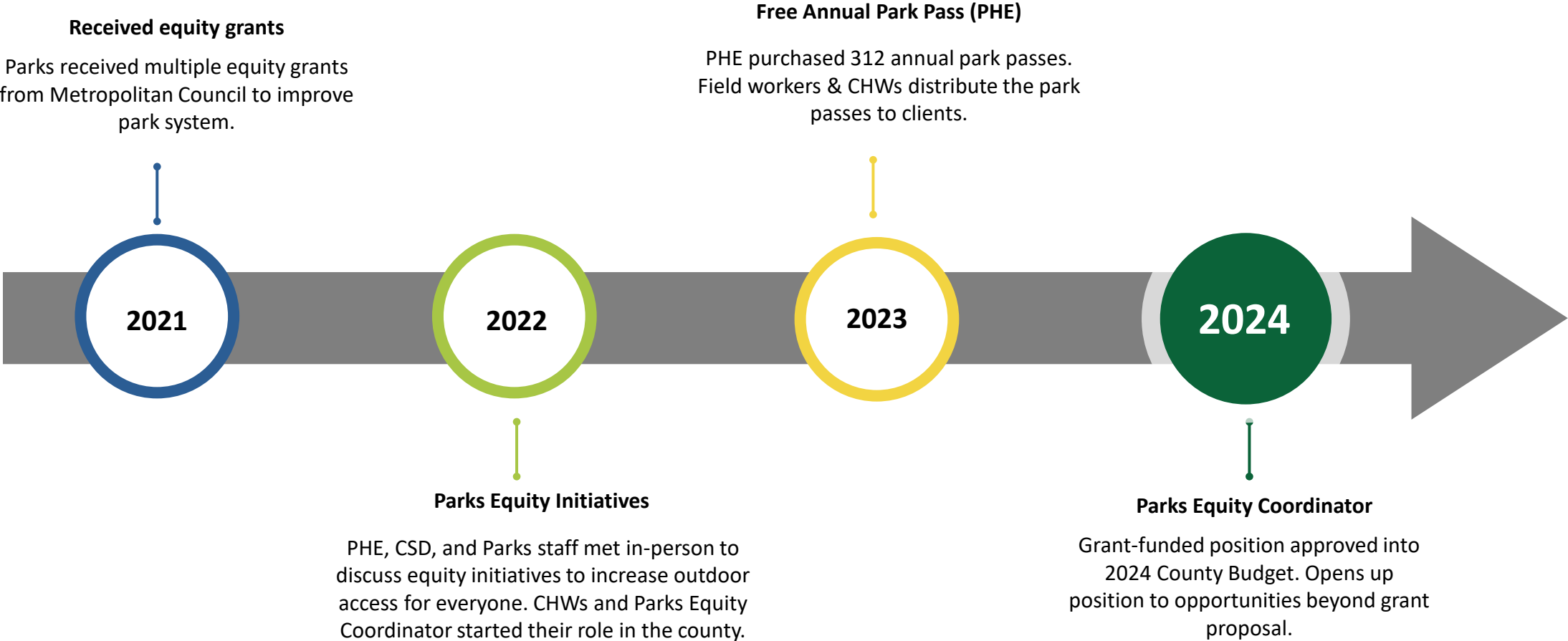
Cultural Arts Festival Themes – Action item for recommendation

# Equity Initiatives

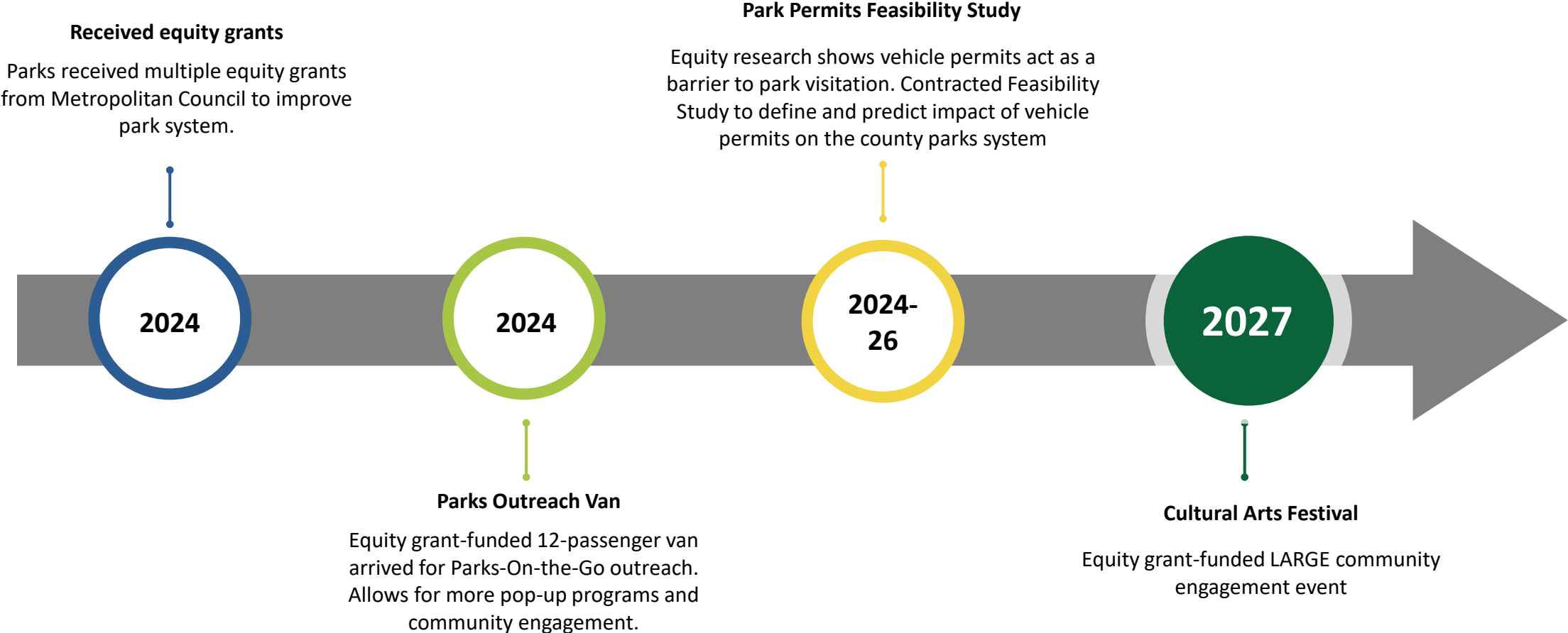
- Increase outdoor access to underrepresented communities in Washington County through outdoor recreational programs
- Includes, but not limited to:
  - BIPOC
  - Ages 65+
  - LGBTQIA+
  - Accessibility (physical and/or cognitive)
  - Low-income



# Parks Equity Initiatives Timeline



# Parks Equity Initiatives Timeline



# Equity grant-based programs - 2024



### Learn to Paddle - Kayaking

Private and private sessions  
Partnered with Wild Rivers Conservancy



### Adult Learn to Bike

June and July courses  
Free bike, helmet, lock, and lights  
Partnered with Bicycle Alliance of MN (BIKE MN)



### BIPOC Connect

Free park opportunities focused on welcoming Black, Indigenous, and People of Color  
All are welcome



### Flock Together

Family-based bird event and BIPOC Connect opportunity  
Partnered with Urban Bird Collective



### Dia de Muertos Celebracion

Culturally significant program  
Bilingual program  
Partnered with Wash Co Libraries



### Nature Based Healing Training

For county staff and providers to promote the parks as safe spaces to meet with clients  
Partnered with Wash Co PHE and Community Services



ZOO SIAB TXAIS TOS!  
**WELCOME!**  
SOO DHAWOOW!

WELKOM!  
WITAMY!  
ALOHA!

BIENVENIDOS!  
Chào mừng!  
TERVETULOA!

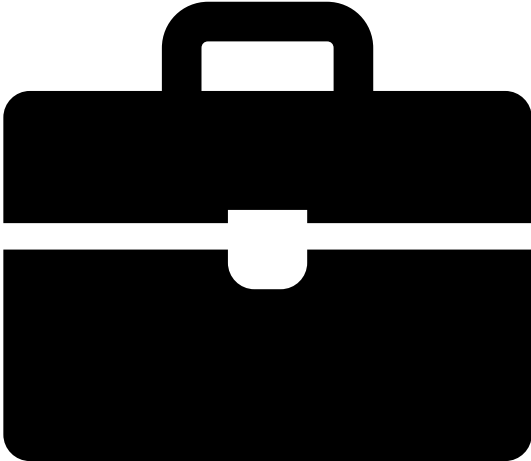


Washington  
County  
PARKS

ship



# Outreach Events



Career & Resource Fairs



Living Healthy Washington County Events



SoWashCo School District Skoolie Nights

## Other Initiatives...

- Translations
- GRIT Freedom Chair
- Action Trackchair
- Trails at Your Pace
- Private Programs



# Parks and Open Space Equity Training

- Training for POSC members to learn more about key life concepts that encompass the experiences of all county residents
- Hosted by Washington County's Train-the-Trainer Cohort
- October 16<sup>th</sup>, 5-8 p.m. at Lake Elmo Park Reserve's Nordic Center

## **DEI Foundational Training: Beyond Diversity 101**

### Tentative Course Topics:

- Defining and recognizing bias, racism, and other key DEI concepts
- Comparing implicit bias, explicit bias, and institutional/structural forces
- Leading nuanced conversations with inclusive communication
- Promoting effective allyship in organizational contexts
- Supporting anti-racist workplaces with proper tools, policies, and practices
- Thriving as an increasingly diverse county

# POSC Equity Training Recommendation

**Does the POSC recommend moving forward with foundational equity training hosted by Washington County's Train-the-Trainer Cohort?**

# 2024 Met Council Equity Grants



Project Title	Description	Request - Type	Request - Amount
<b>St Croix Bluffs RP Hilltop Area Improvements</b>	Additional funding for accessible and sensory play area design and equipment	Capital	\$100,000
<b>LEPR Mountain Bike Intro-skills Area</b>	Additional bike trail with skill-building features, located near new play area. Targeted to new users, young riders	Capital	\$75,000
<b>Action Trackchair</b>	All terrain accessible trail and trailer for storage and transport	Capital	\$25,000
<b>Parks-Native American Historical Cultural Study</b>	Work to develop relationship with local tribes, to document history and identify steps for parks to improve interpretation, programming, and management of parks.	Programming	\$125,000
<b>Cultural Arts Festival</b>	<b>Large kickoff to summer event, showcasing music, performance, and art representative of the diversity of the region.</b>	<b>Programming</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>
<b>Water Safety Program (multiple years)</b>	Provide safety tip and demonstrations for families to learn how to be safe and more comfortable in water and on boats. Lifejackets included.	Programming	\$20,000
<b>Social Media – Awareness Marketing (joint with Anoka Co.)</b>	Implement a social media based awareness campaign to increase awareness of regional parks. May include partnerships with influencers, SEO improvements, other social media advertising.	Programming	\$10,000/\$10,000

Interactive slides ahead!

# Art in the Parks



Why art in our parks?



Art examples in parks



Current art



Cultural Arts Festival



Art wants



Why art in our parks?



# Art examples in other parks



## Sculptures

Seen in gardens, as memorials, and can portray different emotions

Installation usually requires concrete below or strong materials to withstand weather



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

## Mural

Seen on structures and buildings, displayed throughout communities usually with a message or experience depicted

Experienced design and painter

<https://www.voyageurs.org/news/sam-zimmerman-mural>



## Nature Based

Less common, traditional outside art method

Can showcase natural resources within the park such as geological features, native plants, and more

# Art examples in other parks cont.



# Art examples in other parks cont.



# Current art

01

## Interpretive Signs

Not art forward but includes interpretation of natural resources with pictures, can be art

02

## Exhibits

At the courthouse, historical in nature but have done art shows in the past

03

## Rotating photo display

For annual vehicle permit photo contest

04

## Guide to Parks

Includes description and user-friendly design to learn about parks

# Cultural Arts Festival

## Initial Stakeholder Engagement

Parks Art Committee  
POSC brainstorm  
Set art wants – goals and features



Feb  
/March  
2025

## Artists Call

Set contract and vision  
Create maintenance plan



Summer  
2025



Winter  
2026



Spring  
2027

## Cultural Arts Festival

Grand opening of curated art



June  
2027



## Bring in Forecast Art

Help with artists call or RFP if needed

<https://forecastpublicart.org/consulting/>



## Installation

Work with maintenance

- Started February 2025
- Created due to want for more art in the parks
- For feedback, suggestions, and communication around art
- Includes staff representatives
  - Guest Services
  - Maintenance

**Goal:** Create a semi-permanent art installation that positively influences park guests' visit

**Objectives:**

1. Curate art in the parks that portrays the richness of community within our park
2. Curate art in the parks that is educational and interactive

**Audience:** Washington County park users, residents, non-users, youth, families, underrepresented populations (65+, LGBTQ, BIPOC, persons with a disability)

**Success indicators:**

1. visitors feel a sense of belonging from the added art
2. the art portrays a relatable experience of underrepresented park visitors
3. the curated art positively portrays Washington County Parks

Art Wants – does POSC have suggestions?

# Cultural Arts Festival Themes Recommendation

- The following themes for the Washington County Cultural Arts Festival have been determined as the potential 2027 event theme:
  1. Everybody Has a Right to Nature
  2. Reflections
  3. Where Inspiration (or Connection) Grows
  4. New Beginnings
  5. Art in the Open

**Does the POSC recommend any of the 5 themes for the 2027 Washington County Cultural Arts Festival? If yes, which theme are you most interested in?**



**PUBLIC WORKS**

Wayne Sandberg, P.E., Director, County Engineer  
Frank D. Ticknor, P.E., Deputy Director

March 20, 2025

Dear Representative,

The Washington County Parks and Open Space Commission requests your support of three projects that will greatly enhance the quality of life for Washington County residents and neighboring communities. Impacts of these projects will improve mental health, physical wellbeing, appreciation of our natural resources, and positive economic impacts.

The three projects, listed below, total a request of \$6 million in state bonds.

Project	Bill #s	Goal	State	Local Agency	Estimated Total
Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park Trail Lights	HF 1195 SF 1293	Install trail lighting for expanded park use, improved visitor experiences and safety.	\$2M	\$150,000	\$2.15M
Hardwood Creek Regional Trail Extension	HF 233 SF 919	Complete a one-mile gap that connects 40+ miles between St. Paul and North Branch	\$1M	\$2M	\$3M
Brown’s Creek State Trail Connection	HF 209 SF 918	Complete a trail connection between CSAH 5 (Stonebridge Tr.) and Brown’s Creek State Trail	\$3M	\$6M	\$9M

Lighted trails at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park will extend the use of the park, enhance safety, and provide both mental and physical health benefits to visitors. There is strong community support for this project, not only from individual skiers, hikers, and trail runners, but also large community events.

Completing the one-mile gap in the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail will encourage all Minnesotans – particularly our youth – to engage in physical activity and connect more than 40 miles of regional trails from Ramsey, Anoka, Washington, and Chisago Counties.

Similarly, completing the Brown’s Creek State Trail Connection from CSAH 5 (Stonebridge Trail) will create a safe, accessible, and ADA compliant link to City of Stillwater neighborhoods. Without this improvement, users must use an uneven, unsanctioned footpath down a steep ravine.

Washington County owns, operates, and maintains parks, regional trails, a conservation area, and the oldest standing courthouse in the state of Minnesota. These amenities are visited more than 1.9 million times annually, and residents have consistently singled out parks and trails as some of the county’s most visible and well-used services. Please support HF 1195, HF 233, and HF 209. Such an investment will benefit generations of Washington County residents, Minnesotans and visitors who come to the region.

*A great place to live, work and play...today and tomorrow*

North Shop | 11660 Myeron Road North | Stillwater, MN 55082-9537  
P: 651-430-4300 | F: 651-430-4350 | TTY: 651-430-6246  
[www.co.washington.mn.us](http://www.co.washington.mn.us)

*Washington County is an equal opportunity organization and employer*

Sincerely,

Anne Siess, Washington County Parks and Open Space Commission Chair

Ben Meyer, District 1

Greg Severson, District 2

James Kelly, District 3

Dave Olson, District 4

Corcoran Wicker, Vice Chair, District 5

Tori Dupre, At-Large

Michelle Clasen, Parks and Open Space Board Liaison, Washington County Commissioner, District 5

Jyneen Thatcher, District 1

Michael Kraemer, District 2

Anne Siess, Chair, District 3

Meri Danielson, District 4

Tammy McCulloch, District 5

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## March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Park Updates

### Programs and Events

- Over 112 people visited the Winter Market at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park on Saturday, January 18. The event featured seven craft vendors, D's Kitchen Food Truck, and a nature craft activity. Despite an average temperature of just 8 degrees, many people were out on the lake enjoying ice fishing.
- Parks hosted its 4th Annual Blizzard Bash on February 15 at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, with approximately 250 attendees. The event invites visitors to explore and enjoy a variety of winter recreational activities. A "Learn to Ice Fish" demonstration, provided by Fishing for All, was a highlight, attracting 65 participants. Guests also had the opportunity to enjoy free use of snowshoes and kick-sleds, winter-themed crafts, a bonfire, and delicious offerings from two food trucks. The day was made even more special by the fresh snowfall, creating a picturesque winter setting for all to enjoy.
- On Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, Parks hosted its first Adult Learn to Ski program. Through a new partnership with Minnesota Youth Ski League's SkiSparks Saturday Club, Parks was able to pilot a beginners' ski class with a total of 10 participants. Instructors taught cross country skiing basics such as equipment needed, striding techniques, and how to get back up from a fall. Each participant received a free buff and hat and left with knowledge to bring on their next skiing endeavor. Feedback from this program showed interest in follow up lessons and ski rentals at the parks.
- On Monday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, Parks staff provided outreach activities and information at the Washington County Multilingual Resource Fair in partnership with Raices Latinas and SoWashCo Schools. Staff engaged with about 50 attendees through flyers, resources, and games and answering questions or sharing information.
- The Historic Courthouse hosted its first Game Night program, a free program welcoming guests to enjoy a variety of board games within the setting of the historic building. Several families joined in on the fun with staff available to help teach games and provide light refreshments.
- Parks hosted its first community Winter Clothing Swap on January 25<sup>th</sup> at the Historic Courthouse. This swap brought many community members into drop-off locations including Lake Elmo Park Reserve, Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, and the Historic Courthouse. In total, 175 clothing donations were claimed at the swap including 25 coats, 12 boots, and 28 pairs of mittens. Leftover donations not

claimed at the swap will be donated to Valley Outreach's Style Exchange thrift store where county residents can shop for gentle used clothing items for free. Positive participant feedback from this new event shared how great it felt to see the County practicing sustainability and promoting outdoor enjoyment for all by providing winter clothing staples to those in need.

- Washington County Summer Camps continues to be a popular item. This year 10 camps are offered allowing up to 200 youth to participate in outdoor experiences. Currently all camps are at full capacity with waitlists forming except for:
  - Outdoor Skills Camp June 30 – July 3<sup>rd</sup> has 7 available spaces
  - Outdoor Skills Camp August 11 – 14<sup>th</sup> has 2 available spaces

### **Social Media Influencer Survey**

- Washington County and Anoka County seek to plan and implement an influencer partnership as part of a social media marketing campaign to increase awareness of regional parks and trails. If you have any recommendations for local influencers from the Twin Cities Metro area, specifically Washington and/or Anoka County, dedicated to sharing their love of the outdoors, please complete the short survey below.
- [Parks Social Media Influencer Survey](#)

### **History**

- Check out this video of Washington County Parks in 1997. Nothing like nostalgia to remember the good old days! [Washington County Parks \(1997\) - Minnesota Digital Library](#)

### **Construction Updates**

- **Lake Elmo Park Reserve Destination Play Structure**
  - Work has commenced on the new destination play structure at Lake Elmo Park Reserve. Contractors are removing any remaining play structures and digging out the base of the current container to prep for necessary site work
- **St. Croix Bluffs Hilltop Shelter**
  - Work will begin next week at the Hilltop Shelter area of St. Croix Bluffs. Beginning work will include pavilion restoration and beginning site work of the new restroom facility.

## **Horse Trails Closed**

- Horse trails are now closed at Pine Point Regional Park and Lake Elmo Park Reserve until the spring melt concludes. Horse trails will re-open no later than May 1<sup>st</sup> but may open sooner pending conditions. The Gateway State Trail remains open for horseback riding.

## **New Fishing Pier for Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park**

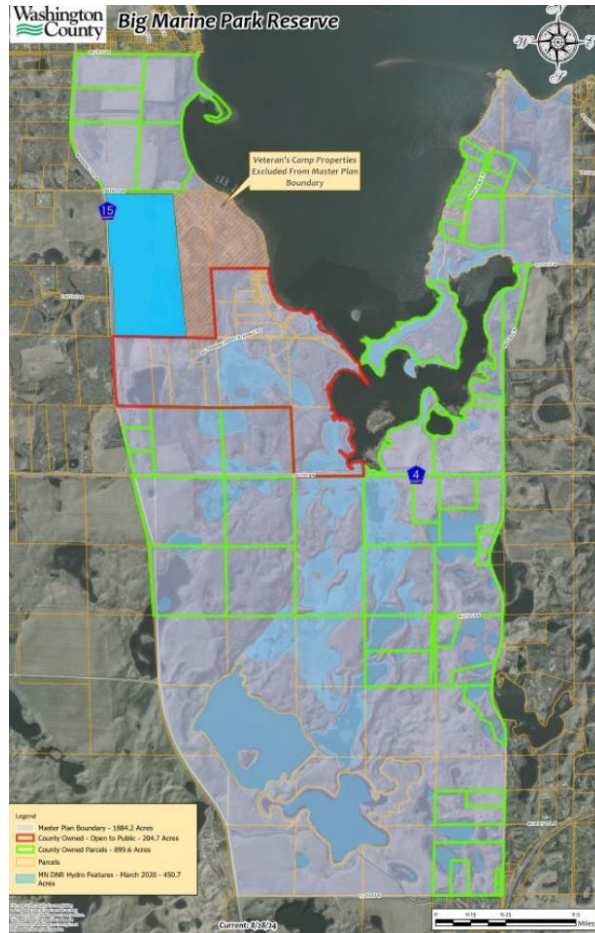
- On February 6<sup>th</sup>, the Met Council approved grant funding for \$125,000 for a second fishing pier to be placed at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. The funding was appropriated from the 2024 legislative session. The second pier at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park is proposed to go near the newly installed ADA canoe/kayak launch.

## **Natural Resources**

- Natural Resource crews have been focusing on invasive species removal of [buckthorn](#) and [honeysuckle](#) removal at Lake Elmo Park Reserve and St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park.
- A Short-eared Owl was spotted in a Washington County Park! This was a particularly exciting find, since the Short-eared Owl is a species of special concern in Minnesota. It is smaller than the more common owls in the state, like the Barred Owl and Great Horned Owl. Its bouncy, moth-like flight pattern helps set it apart from other owl species. Click [here](#) for more information from the MN DNR.

## **80 acres to be added to Big Marine Park Reserve**

- The reimbursement for purchase of 80 acres located within the park master plan boundary of Big Marine Park Reserve was approved by the Metropolitan Council Parks and Open Space Commission last night (February 6<sup>th</sup>). Final approval will now head to the Met Council to allow for 75% reimbursement of the purchase price of the property. The 80 acres is a critical connection located west of the veterans rest camp. Until restoration resources can be identified, the plan is to continue to lease the land for agricultural purposes. The area highlighted in blue below is the location of the 80 acres. The closing will occur this fall after the harvest.



## Jobs and Employment

- **Land Steward (Full Time)**
  - Parks is hiring a full time natural resources land steward. To learn more about the position, [click here](#).
- **Seasonal Positions**
  - [Guest Services Attendant \(Seasonal\)](#)
  - [Parks and Outdoor Recreation Intern](#)
  - [Outdoor Recreation Instructor \(Seasonal\)](#)
  - [Lifeguard - \\$300 Hiring Bonus \(Seasonal\)](#)
  - [Beach Coordinator - \\$300 Hiring Bonus \(Seasonal\)](#)



COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL  
12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH  
COTTAGE GROVE, MINNESOTA 55016  
COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 PM

April 2, 2025

- 1 Call to Order
- 2 Pledge of Allegiance
- 3 Roll Call
- 4 Open Forum
- 5 Adoption of Agenda
- 6 Presentations
  - A World Autism Month Proclamation  
*Staff Recommendation: Proclaim April 2025 as World Autism Month.*
  - B National Volunteer Month Proclamation  
*Staff Recommendation: Proclaim April 2025 as National Volunteer Month.*
- 7 Consent Agenda
  - A City Council Special Meeting Minutes (2025-03-05)  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the March 5, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes.*
  - B City Council Regular Meeting Minutes (2025-03-05)  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the March 5, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.*
  - C City Council Special Meeting Minutes (2025-03-19)  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the March 19, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes.*
  - D City Council Regular Meeting Minutes (2025-03-19)  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the March 19, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.*
  - E Planning Commission Meeting Minutes (2025-02-24)  
*Staff Recommendation: Accept and place on file the minutes from the February 24, 2025, Planning Commission meeting.*
  - F Temporary Liquor License - Cottage Grove Lions Club  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize issuance of a temporary intoxicating liquor license to Kaitlyn Mary Tobritzhofer on behalf of the Cottage Grove Lions Club for Strawberry Fest on June 19 - 21, 2025.*
  - G Temporary Liquor License - St. Paul Park Lions Club  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize issuance of a temporary intoxicating liquor license to Zac Dockter on behalf of the St. Paul Park Lions Club for Strawberry Fest on June 20th and June 21st, 2025.*
  - H Single Occasion Gambling Permit - Phoenix Residence  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize issuance of a single-occassion gambling permit to Corrie Lynn Kopischke and Jacqueline Marie Larson on behalf of the Phoenix Residence to conduct a raffle at River Oaks Golf Course (11099 South Highway 61, Cottage Grove, MN 55016) on June 9, 2025, from 12:30pm to 6:00pm.*

- I League of MN Cities Insurance Trust Workers Compensation & Package Policy Renewals  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the renewals of the workers compensation and package policies with the League of MN Cities Insurance Trust for the 2025–2026 policy period in the amount of \$1,347,293.00.*
- J Rental License Approvals  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the issuance of rental licenses to the properties listed in the attached table.*
- K Authorization to Apply for Spark Good Grant  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize the Public Safety Department (Fire Division) to apply for the Spark Good Grant offered through the Walmart Foundation.*
- L Fire Services Standards of Cover Study Professional Services Agreement  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the Professional Service Agreement between the City of Cottage Grove and Fitch and Associates to complete a Standards of Cover/Community Risk Assessment for the cost of \$49,995.00.*
- M Kingston Park Building-Contract for Construction Management Services  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize Construction Manager as Adviser AIA C132 contract with Kraus Anderson for construction of the Kingston Park building project.*
- N Metropolitan Council Community Tree Planting Grant  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize staff to apply for the Metropolitan Council Community Tree Planting Grant in the amount of \$75,000.*
- O Tree Planting Quote Award  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize Resolution 2025-038 awarding the 2025 Tree Planting Contract to Hoffman & McNamara Nursery and Landscape in the amount of \$43,180 for the material and labor to install 100 boulevard trees and authorize the service agreement between Hoffman & McNamara Nursery and Landscape and the City of Cottage Grove.*
- P 2025 Stump Grinding Project  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-037 awarding the 2025 Stump Grinding Contract to Anderson Stump Grinding & Restoration in the amount of \$3.10 per linear inch and authorize the service agreement between Anderson Stump Grinding & Restoration and the City of Cottage Grove.*
- Q Intermediate Zone Water Treatment Plant Project – Approve Plans and Specifications and Authorize Bidding  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-044 approving the plans and specifications and authorizing bidding for the Intermediate Zone Water Treatment Plant Project.*
- R Ravine Parkway Soil Borings - Approve Right-to-Enter Agreements  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the Right-To-Enter agreements to allow soil boring work to be completed for Ravine Parkway from 85<sup>th</sup> Street to 70<sup>th</sup> Street, with minor modifications by the City Attorney.*
- S Summers Landing 4th Addition Final Payment  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve Resolution 2025-047 authorizing the final payment for the Summer Landing 4th Addition Project to Northern Lines Contracting in the amount of \$45,725.80.*
- T Resolution of Support CR 74 Improvement Project  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-053 in support of the County Road 74 Improvement Project.*
- U Mississippi Landing 2nd Addition – Final Plat, Development Agreement, & Plans & Specs  
*Staff Recommendation: 1) Adopt Resolution 2025-040 approving the Mississippi Landing 2nd Addition final plat, which is an approximate 15.06-acre residential development with 80 single family lots. 2) Approve the Mississippi Landing 2nd Addition Development Agreement with Rachel Development, Inc. and authorize execution of all easements, deeds, and agreements required for the plat and project. 3) Adopt Resolution 2025-041 approving the Mississippi Landing 2nd Addition Development Plans dated January 27, 2025, prepared by Alliant Engineering, and as modified by request of the City Engineer.*

- V East Point Douglas Road and Jamaica Avenue Reconstruction and Signal Project - Easement Acquisition – Parcel 17  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the Award of Commissioners for Parcel 17 and authorize payment.*
- 8 Approve Disbursements
  - A Approve Disbursements
- 9 Public Hearings
  - A Hawthorne Pines 2nd Addition - Easement Vacation & Boundary Line Adjustment  
*Staff Recommendation: 1) Hold the public hearing and adopt Resolution 2025-045 vacating, rescinding, terminating, and releasing certain easements pertaining to real property within the City of Cottage Grove. 2) Adopt Resolution 2025-046 approving the boundary line adjustment and the drainage and utility easement as proposed on Lots 3 and 4, Block 4, Hawthorne Pines 2nd Addition.*
- 10 Bid Awards
  - A High Zone Raw Water Main Project  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt resolution 2025-039, awarding the High Zone Raw Water Main Project to A-1 Excavating LLC, in the amount of \$5,134,648.00.*
  - B 2025 Mill and Overlay - Bid Award  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-052 awarding the 2025 Mill and Overlay and Hardwood Court Intersection Improvements to Northwest Asphalt, Inc. for the base bid amount plus the alternate for a total of \$1,845,575.90.*
- 11 Regular Agenda
  - A Kwik Trip – Conditional Use Permit, Site Plan Review, and Variance  
*Staff Recommendation: 1) Adopt Resolution 2025-043 to approve the Conditional Use Permit for a Kwik Trip convenience store to be located on 95th Street South. 2) Adopt Resolution 2025-042 to approve the Site Plan Review and Variance to the minimum side yard setback for a parking area and drive lanes. 3) Approve the Development Agreement with Kwik Trip, Inc. and authorize execution of all agreements required for the project as outlined in the Development Agreement.*
- 12 Council Comments and Requests
- 13 Workshops - Open to Public
  - A Twin City Land Development – Tank Property Concept Workshop  
*Staff Recommendation: Receive information from Twin City Land Development on their proposed concept plan on land east of Keats Avenue and south of 70th Street and provide comment and feedback on their proposed concept plan.*
- 14 Workshops - Closed to Public
  - A Closed Meeting - Property Acquisition  
*Staff Recommendation: Closed session pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05 subd. 3(c) to develop offers for the purchase of property at PID # 11.027.21.41.0001 & PID # 11.027.21.12.0003.*
- 15 Adjournment



COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL  
12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH  
COTTAGE GROVE, MINNESOTA 55016  
COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 PM

April 16, 2025

- 1 Call to Order
- 2 Pledge of Allegiance
- 3 Roll Call
- 4 Open Forum
- 5 Adoption of Agenda
- 6 Presentations
  - A Spring Cleanup Presentation  
*Staff Recommendation: Receive Public Works Spring Cleanup Event Presentation.*
  - B Arbor Day Presentation  
*Staff Recommendation: Proclaim Friday, April 25, 2025, as Arbor Day in City of Cottage Grove.*
- 7 Consent Agenda
  - A Response to Open Forum Inquiry  
*Staff Recommendation: Receive the response to the City Council open forum inquiry on April 2, 2025.*
  - B Economic Development and Convention & Visitors Bureau Meeting Minutes  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the February 11, 2025, Regular Economic Development and Convention & Visitors Bureau Meeting Minutes.*
  - C Rental License Approvals  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the issuance of rental licenses to the properties listed in the attached table.*
  - D Artificial Intelligence Use Policy  
*Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends the approval to implement this policy and establish governance structures that align AI deployment with public trust and city values.*
  - E Receive Fund Balance of General Fund as of 12-31-2024  
*Staff Recommendation: Receive information on the General Fund as of December 31, 2024.*
  - F 2024 Budget Revisions  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-57, 2024 Budget Revisions.*
  - G Approve 2024 Interfund Transfers  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve Resolution 2025-56, Approving interfund transfers and closing funds.*
  - H 2024 Ambulance Write-Offs  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve Resolution 2025-055, Authorizing Write-offs of the EMS accounts receivable of \$4,742,890.*

- I Abatement of Tall Weeds Certification  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-58, authorizing the abatement of a Tall Weed Certification in the amount of \$334.81 for parcel identification number 17.027.21.41.0063.*
- J 2025 Washington County Grant Agreement for Municipal Recycling  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the 2025 Grant Agreement for Municipal Recycling Grant Distribution in the amount of \$59,016.00.*
- K Rental Agreement with Midwest Machine for Track Loader  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the one-year rental agreement with Midwest Machinery for a track loader for the amount of \$12,000.*
- L City Hall Fountain Renovation  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize Resolution 2025-59 awarding the City Hall Fountain Renovation Project to Superior Landscape and Irrigation in the amount of \$14,877.63 and authorize the service agreement between Superior Landscape and Irrigation and the City of Cottage Grove.*
- M 80th Street Feasibility Report Scope Amendment  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt resolution 2025-062 amending the scope of the 80<sup>th</sup> Street Reconstruction Project feasibility report to include East Point Douglas Road from 80<sup>th</sup> Street to the three-way intersection of East Point Douglas Road.*
- N Maxfield Research Comprehensive Housing Needs Study  
*Staff Recommendation: Accept the Maxfield Research Comprehensive Housing Needs Study*
- O Prairie Dunes – Revised Final Plat and Development Agreement  
*Staff Recommendation: 1) Adopt Resolution 2025-060 approving the amended Final Plat for Prairie Dunes. 2) Approve the First Amendment to the Prairie Dunes Development Agreement with Pulte Homes of Minnesota LLC and DRP Multistate P, LLC, with minor modifications as approved by the City Attorney.*
- P Ordinance Amendments - Zoning Code, Sign Code, and Mining, Sand, and Gravel Operations Code  
*Staff Recommendation: 1) Adopt Ordinance No. 1100 amending Title 11, Zoning Regulations. 2) Adopt Ordinance No. 1098 amending Title 12, Sign Regulations. 3) Adopt Ordinance No. 1099 amending Title 3, Business and License Regulations.*
- Q Belden and Hardwood Park Playground Surplus Declaration and Disposal  
*Staff Recommendation: Declare surplus for fixed assets Belden Park (#100778) and Hardwood Park (#100781) and authorize disposal services agreement with Kids Around the World.*
- R Oltman Park Project – Approve Plans and Specifications and Authorize Bidding  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-064 approving the plans and specifications and authorize bidding for the Oltman Park Project.*
- S 2025 Water Conservation Program, SWWD Cooperative Agreement, and Water in Motion Work Order  
*Staff Recommendation: 1) Approve the Residential Smart Irrigation Controller Program Cooperative Agreement with SWWD; 2) Approve the work order from Water in Motion; 3) Approve the expenditures from the Water Utility Fund of up to \$96,000 to supplement the SWWD contribution of \$4,000 for the implementation of the 2025 Water Conservation Program.*
- T Water Service on 110th St S - Agreement for Contractor Services and Memorandum of Understanding with Property Owner  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the Agreement for Contractor Services and the Memorandum of Understanding and appropriate officials are hereby authorized to sign all necessary documents to effectuate these actions.*

- U Professional Services for Crisis Communications Plan Agreement  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve Agreement for Professional Services with Eckberg Lammers to create a crisis communications plan for the City of Cottage Grove.*
- V Marathon Community Investment Programs Grant  
*Staff Recommendation: Accept the Marathon Community Investment Programs grant in the amount of \$8,900.*
- W Hotel Leakage Study and Property Purchase Updates  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the Hotel Leakage Study by HVC, LLC in an amount not to exceed \$13,300, plus approved expenses. Funding is approved and will come from the economic development budget.*
- 8 Approve Disbursements
  - A Approve Disbursements  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve disbursements from 03-28-25 through 04-10-25 in the amount of \$2,067,537.18.*
- 9 Public Hearings
- 10 Bid Awards
  - A 2025 Denzer Park Project - Reject All Bids  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-063 rejecting all bids submitted for the 2025 Denzer Park Project.*
  - B Public Works Shop Remodel  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt resolution 2025-054 awarding the Public Works Facility Mechanics Shop Remodel to Rochon Construction for the base bid amount plus the alternate for a total of \$298,915.*
- 11 Regular Agenda
  - A Leafline Labs – Conditional Use Permit  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-061 rescinding prior conditional use permit and site plan resolutions and approving the Conditional Use Permit for a Medical Cannabis Combination Business at 8235 97th Street South.*
- 12 Council Comments and Requests
- 13 Workshops - Open to Public
  - A 2026 Budget Workshop  
*Staff Recommendation: Receive information regarding the 2026 Budget Workshop and provide feedback to staff.*
- 14 Workshops - Closed to Public
- 15 Adjournment



COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL  
12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH  
COTTAGE GROVE, MINNESOTA 55016  
COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 PM

May 7, 2025

- 1 Call to Order
- 2 Pledge of Allegiance
- 3 Roll Call
- 4 Open Forum
- 5 Adoption of Agenda
- 6 Presentations
  - A Proclamation - Mental Health Awareness Month  
*Staff Recommendation: Proclaim May 2025 Mental Health Awareness Month.*
  - B Proclamation - Police Week and Police Officer Memorial Day  
*Staff Recommendation: Proclaim National Police Week May 11-17, 2025, and Peace Officers Memorial Day May 15, 2025.*
  - C Proclamation - EMS Week  
*Staff Recommendation: Designate the week of May 18-24, 2025 as Emergency Services Week.*
  - D Proclamation - Building Safety Month  
*Staff Recommendation: Proclaim May 2025 Building Safety Month.*
  - E Proclamation - Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month  
*Staff Recommendation: Proclaim May 2025 Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.*
- 7 Consent Agenda
  - A City Council Special Meeting Minutes (2025-04-02)  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the April 2, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes.*
  - B City Council Regular Meeting Minutes (2025-04-02)  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the April 2, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes.*
  - C City Council Regular Meeting Minutes (2025-04-16)  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the April 16, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.*
  - D Gambling Permit - Ruth Kay Linkenmeyer-Meirick (MN Foundation for Agriculture)  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize issuance of a single-occassion gambling permit to Ruth Kay Linkenmeyer-Meirick on behalf of MN Foundation for Agriculture to conduct a raffle at River Oaks Golf Course (11099 Highway 61) on June 17, 2025.*
  - E Gambling Permit - Pamela Jeane Tobritzhofer (Cottage Grove Lions Club)  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize issuance of a single-occassion gambling permit to Pamela Jeane Tobritzhofer on behalf of the Cottage Grove Lions Club to conduct a raffle at Carbones Pizza (7155 Jorgensen Avenue South) on September 16, 2025.*

- F      Massage Therapist License - Sarah Ann Meyer  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize issuance of a Massage Therapist License to Sarah Ann Meyer.*
- G      Fee Table Change - Ordinance 1097  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Ordinance 1097 accepting the changes to the City Fee Table as outlined in the City Ordinance.*
- H      City Engineer Position - Appointment  
*Staff Recommendation: Appoint Paul Sponholz to the position of City Engineer, at grade X01, step 6, with a start date to be effective as soon as possible.*
- I      Approval of Rental Licenses  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the issuance of rental licenses to the properties in the attached table.*
- J      2025 Body-Worn Camera Audit - Executive Summary  
*Staff Recommendation: Accept the Cottage Grove Police Department 2025 Body-Worn Camera (BWC) Audit.*
- K      FinnlySport MSA and Contract  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the proposed contract between the City of Cottage Grove and FinnlySport in the amount of \$6,157.30. This partnership will allow the Ice Arena to modernize its systems, improve operational efficiency, and better serve our community.*
- L      Code Compliance/Abatement Mowing - Valdes Lawn Care and Snow Removal LLC  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-36 approving the agreement for Lawn Care Maintenance Abatement Services to Valdes Lawn Care and Snow Removal LLC for the 2025 - 2026 seasons in the amount of \$80 per hour.*
- M      Temporary Certificates of Occupancy Policy  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy Policy.*
- N      ISD 833 - Park High School Turn Lane MOU  
*Staff Recommendation: Execute the Memorandum of Understanding with Independent School District 833 to include the design and construction of the required turn lane modifications in the 80th Street Improvements project related to the Park High School Improvements.*
- O      Purchase Agreement - Outlot G Eastridge Woods 2nd Addition  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the Purchase Agreement between the City of Cottage Grove and Ryan and Colleen Johnsen for Outlot G of the Eastridge Woods 2nd Addition.*
- P      Boundary Adjustment and Drainage and Utility Easement – 7560 Harkness Avenue & 7675 Hardwood Avenue  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-067 approving the Boundary Adjustment and Permanent Drainage and Utility Easement at 7675 Hardwood Avenue South.*
- Q      Utility & Engineering Building Change Order #6  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve Change Order #6 in the amount of \$40,419.50 for the Utilities and Engineering Division Building project, resulting in a remaining construction contingency in the amount of \$458,048.44, and a remaining Owner's contingency in the amount of \$86,800.11.*
- R      105th St Engineering Study and Traffic Investigation - Ideal Ave to Hadley Ave  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-068 requesting MnDOT to complete an Engineering Study and Traffic Investigation along 105<sup>th</sup> Street South from Ideal Avenue to Hadley Avenue.*
- S      Newport Water System Interconnection - JPA Approval  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Newport for a Water System Interconnection to supply water to the Cherrywood and Cherry Meadow developments.*
- T      6646 96th Street South - Encroachment Agreement  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the Encroachment Agreement for 6646 96th Street South and appropriate officials are hereby authorized to sign the Encroachment Agreement to effectuate this action.*

- U CCIP Grant Acceptance  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) Coordinated Capital Improvement Program (CCIP) agreement for the Salt Spreader Controls Upgrade Project in the amount of \$102,500.*
- V Public Works Concrete Quote & Service Agreement  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt resolution 2025-066 awarding the Public Works Concrete Services Contract to Frank Zamora's Concrete and authorize the service agreement between Frank Zamora's Concrete and the City of Cottage Grove.*
- W 2026 Pavement Management - Isle Ave ROW  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the MOU for Isle Avenue Right of Way.*
- X 2025 Televising and Cleaning Project Quote Award  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-070 awarding the 2025 Televising and Cleaning Project to the accepted quote supplied by Pipe Services in the amount of \$32,371.41, and the appropriate officials are hereby authorized to sign all necessary documents to effectuate these actions.*
- Y 2025 Joint Services Street Striping Project – Quote Award  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-069 awarding the 2025 Joint Services Street Striping Project to the lowest accepted quote supplied by Sir Lines-A-Lot, LLC in the amount of \$77,931.62, and the appropriate officials are hereby authorized to sign all necessary documents to effectuate these actions.*
- Z 2025 Joint Services Crack Sealing Project Quote Award  
*Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2025-071 awarding the 2025 Joint Services Crack Sealing Project to the lowest accepted quote supplied by Asphalt Surface Technologies Corporation in the amount of \$85,680.00, and the appropriate officials are hereby authorized to sign all necessary documents to effectuate these actions.*
- AA Hearthsides Park Sports Lighting  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize purchase order to Musco Sports Lighting, LLC for Hearthsides Park sports lighting package in the amount of \$40,900.*
- BB Denzer Park Retaining Wall  
*Staff Recommendation: Authorize service agreement with Boulder Images, Inc. for construction of the Denzer Park boulder wall for the amount of \$48,160.00.*
- CC WCD Native Vegetation Inspection Contract  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve the 2025 Service Agreement between the Washington Conservation District and the City of Cottage Grove for Native Vegetation Inspections.*
- 8 Approve Disbursements
  - A Approve Disbursements  
*Staff Recommendation: Approve disbursements from 04-11-2025 through 05-01-2025 in the amount of \$4,230,541.57.*
- 9 Public Hearings
- 10 Bid Awards
- 11 Regular Agenda
- 12 Council Comments and Requests
- 13 Workshops - Open to Public
  - A Real Estate Equities – Proposed Multi-Family Project  
*Staff Recommendation: Provide feedback and direction related to the proposed project and LAHA request by Real Estate Equities.*

B New Well 13 Construction Update

*Staff Recommendation: Receive information on the construction status of Well 13 and offer feedback.*

14 Workshops - Closed to Public

15 Adjournment