



Chapter 8 - Parks and Trails

Introduction

THE City of Stillwater has acknowledged the importance of providing park, trail, and open space opportunities that enhance the quality of life of its residents and visitors. Parks and recreation facilities are essential in promoting community wellness, connecting the individual to ecological value and stewardship, promoting cultural understanding, and fostering economic viability.

Parks, Trails and Riverfront

Goals

Goal 1: Provide a variety of passive and active parks and other leisure, recreational and cultural opportunities that are conveniently located, accessible, affordable, safe, physically attractive and uncrowded for all Stillwater residents.

Goal 2: Enhance and expand existing recreational facilities for Stillwater residents based on the recreational needs of the community and its neighborhoods.

Goal 3: Work to develop an area-wide interconnected recreation and facilities plan with other local governments, the school district and Washington County.

Goal 4: Reinforce the riverfront as the focus of the downtown Stillwater open space system and as a significant cultural and historical amenity.

Chapter 8 Contents

Introduction 8-1
Parks, Trails and Riverfront - Goals. 8-1
Park Standards -
Objectives, Policies, and Programs 8-2
Efficient Use of Facilities -
Objectives and Policies 8-2
Park Location and Design -
Objectives, Policies, and Programs 8-3
Existing Park System 8-3
Park Classifications 8-7
Local Trends 8-10
Sustainability 8-10
Future Needs 8-11
Trails and Pathways. 8-14
Trail System. 8-15
Jackson Wildlife Management Area . . . 8-16
Implementation 8-17

Park Standards

Objectives

Bring the amount of Stillwater's park land into compliance with the city's adopted minimum standards: community park land at a city-wide total of 3 acres per 1,000 population; neighborhood park land at a city-wide total of 7 acres per 1,000 population; park facilities within one-quarter mile or less of residents, no major physical barriers within that one-quarter mile distance.

Provide a balance of active and passive recreation opportunities, including facilities to serve the varied interests of the population.

Designate adequate park sites for the future development of the city.

Provide for an annual evaluation, maintenance and replacement of recreational facilities.

Policies

Policy 1: The city shall require all new development to dedicate land or pay a park fee according to the park dedication policy.

Policy 2: The city shall obtain and develop new public neighborhood parks at a rate consistent with new residential development and in keeping with the city's basic guidelines for park development.

Policy 3: The city shall develop public community parks consistent with growth of the city's population and in keeping with the city's basic guidelines for park development.

Policy 4: The city will provide recreation activity sites to respond to the active and passive needs of a diverse population.

Policy 5: The development of private sector recreation facilities in the appropriate locations shall be encouraged. In addition to public park improvements required of developers, the city shall promote private open space and recreation facilities in large-scale residential developments.

Programs

Program 1: The city shall study and pursue various means of funding for acquisition, operation and maintenance of park, open space, trail and recreation facilities.

Program 2: Acquire and develop land in the western part of the city for community park purposes.

Efficient Use of Facilities

Objectives

Maximize opportunities for the joint use of public land and facilities such as schools, detention ponds and area under the jurisdiction of other public agencies that have land available for possible recreation purposes.

Maximize the extended use of existing public facilities for year-round and evening use.

Identify recreation areas that are owned by school district or other public entities and seek permission to use those lands for recreation programs or facilities.

Policies

Policy 6: The city will work with the school district in identifying and evaluating the potential for park acquisition of school sites which might become surplus school lands.

Policy 7: Joint development of community recreation facilities together with local schools and surrounding governments shall be encouraged.

Programs

Program 3: Develop and implement a program for year-round use of some recreation facilities.

Program 4: Explore methods to integrate a trail system with the systems of surrounding local governments and Washington County.

Park Location and Design

Objectives

Locate new neighborhood parks in areas not necessarily adjacent to schools in order to better distribute urban open space and to enhance neighborhood identity. This is especially applicable in the South Hill and Oak Glen planning areas, where there are insufficient neighborhood park facilities.

Design park and recreational facilities to serve the recreation and social needs of residents of all ages, economic situations and physical abilities.

Establish a volunteer program to help maintain and enhance neighborhood parks.

Add landscaping, sculptures and seating. Vary the landscaping, improvements and construction materials used in different parks to help establish park and neighborhood identity.

Policies

Policy 8: Residential developments adjacent to parks or open spaces should be encouraged to provide direct access to and common open space contiguous with such areas.

Policy 9: In considering the location and redevelopment of parks, the city shall give thought to sites based on maximum geographic and handicapped accessibility, proper topography and visibility (for the safety of park users).

Policy 10: In the design and maintenance of parks, consideration should be given to minimize the impacts on the environment.

Programs

Program 5: Continue a regular patrol of parks to provide for the safety of park users.

Program 6: Design, install and maintain standardized park signage for all city parkland and trails.

Program 7: Develop and implement neighborhood park plans based on the priority list developed by the Park and Recreation Commission.

Existing Park System

The City of Stillwater has developed 34 park and recreation facilities, identified in Figure 8.1. These facilities total approximately 348 acres, and include the following:

- Community parks, including:
  - Pioneer Park
  - Lily Lake Park
  - Lowell Park
  - Northland Park
  - Sunrise Park
  - Brown's Creek Park
  - Public Works Park/Boutwell Cemetery
  - Teddy Bear Park

- Neighborhood parks, including:
  - Washington Square
  - Meadowlark Park
  - Ramsey-Grove Park
  - Staples Field
  - So. Broadway - Triangle Park
  - Schulenburg Park
  - McKusick Park
  - Benson Park
  - Anez Ridge Park
  - Legends Gazebo
  - McKusick Lake Park
  - Creekside Park
  - Settlers Park
  - Heritage Park
  - Legends Park
  - Prairie Park
  - Bergmann Park
  - Liberty Square

- Recreational facilities, including the St. Croix Valley Recreation Center, Lily Lake Ice Rink and the Skateboard Park
- Open space and nature areas, including:
  * Kolliner Park in WI.
  * Brown's Creek Nature Preserve
  * Long Lake Nature Area
  * Croixwood Open Space
  * Long Lake Open Space
  * McKusick Lake Wetland Area
  * Nightingale Park
  * Fairy Falls Open Space
  * Lakeside Open Space

Two other facilities that provide important recreation opportunities are the Jaycee's Fields and the Old Athletic Field, both owned by School District 834. As these fields provide numerous public benefits, it is the city's hope to acquire them if the school district ever considers selling them. It is the city's desire to continue to offer these two sites for public recreation purposes.

The city completed Master Plans in 2005 and 2006 for three parks (Millbrook, Brown's Creek Reserve, and Boutwell Cemetery), in the western portion of the community. The city has either completed or has programmed funding to complete these parks in the Capital Improvement Program. In addition to the existing parks, the city has land for both a community park and a neighborhood park in the Millbrook development. Additionally, the Aiple Site, currently owned by the City of Stillwater, is anticipated to be developed as a community park after completion of the future St. Croix River Crossing.

The historic and older portions of the community include larger community parks, such as Lowell Park and Lily Lake Park, and smaller neighborhood parks scattered throughout the older neighborhoods. The larger parks are associated with the city's higher quality natural resources and views, and provide a variety of recreational facilities, as well as locations for significant community events.

Lily Lake Park, located on the southern edge of Lily Lake, is one of the larger recreation facilities in the older portion of the community. This park contains softball fields, tennis courts, a basketball court, a sand volleyball court and an indoor ice arena with one sheet of ice and seating capacity of 787. The park also has a picnic shelter with six picnic tables, B.B.Q. grills, playground equipment, single picnic shelters scattered on the beach, swimming beach, and boat launch with dock and fishing pier.

In the Downtown Area, master plans have been completed for Lowell Park and the Aiple property. These plans are being reviewed and coordinated in the downtown plan, to take into account the proposed flood levee improvements and the future St. Croix River Crossing with its loop trail and conversion of the lift bridge to a pedestrian and bicycle bridge.

Over the past 10 years, the city has added new parks and recreation facilities as the Annexation Area in western Stillwater has developed. Many of these parks are associated with significant natural resources, such as the Brown's Creek Park and Nature Preserve as well as the Long Lake Nature Area. Others provide neighborhood and community recreation facilities for new neighborhoods. The city recently completed development of a neighborhood park as part of Brown's Creek Park site on Neal Avenue, just south of the Zephyr railroad tracks. This park will provide recreational facilities as well as trail connections to Brown's Creek Park and Nature Preserve and residential neighborhoods to the south and east. The proposed Boutwell Cemetery Park focuses on preserving and interpreting a historic area associated with early settlement. The Millbrook development near South Twin Lake will include a larger community park and additional trails.

The St. Croix Valley Recreation Center serves a regional need. It provides indoor recreation facilities for all ages, including facilities for ice skating, hockey, soccer and walking. Its facilities may be rented for special events. Lily Lake Ice

Rink serves as a secondary facility to the Recreation Center and provides additional ice during high demand times.

In recent years, the city completed special studies of its park and trail facilities in the Annexation Area, including a long-term development and management plan for Brown's Creek Park and Nature Preserve. This plan includes detailed recommendations for restoration of natural communities, provision of interpretive facilities, and development of trails within these areas. It also discusses needs for maintenance of these areas and associated trails that link these areas to the city's trail system.

Figure 8.1: Park Facility Inventory, 2008

CITY OF STILLWATER PARKS INVENTORY

	Park Name	Large Picnic Shelters	Shelter covered tables	Uncovered tables	Electricity	Grills	Benches	Trash Receptacle	Flag Pole	Bathrooms Structures	Drinking Fountains	Walking/Hiking Path	Playground	Soccer fields	Softball/Baseball Fields	Tee ball Field	Recreational Fields	Horseshoe Pits	Volleyball Courts	Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Indoor-Skating Facility	Outdoor-Skating Rinks	Other Facilities
1	Pioneer Park	2 w/ 6 tables ea	11	x	2	23			indoor	1	x	x												Band Shell & Scenic View & Bulletin Board
2	Lily Lake Park	1 w/ 6 tables	2	6		2	2	17		indoor	2		x			2							1 full w/lights	1	Beach and Fishing Pier Football on ballfield
3	Washington Square	1 w/ 4 tables	1			2	6	3		indoor	1		x				1	1							
4	Lowell Park			5	x		15	20	1	indoor	1	x													Gazebo & Scenic View & Fishing
5	Northland Park			1	3	x		3	2		x	2		x	2	1	1	1	10 rubber	3 courts lighted				2 lights	Roller Hockey (summer)
6	Sunrise Park				2			7	1		x			x	x			1							
7	Meadowlark Park			2				1	4					x					sand lights		1 full		1 lights		
8	Ramsey-Grove Park			2	3		2	2	3		x			x							1 full lights				Sledding Hill
9	Staples Field				1			2			x	1		x		1	1			3 w/ lights	1 full lights (closed)		1	basketball court closed
10	So. Broadway - Triangle Park				2			1						x							1 half		1	
11	Schulenberg Park			1				2	2					x		1	1						1	Sledding Hill
12	McKusick Park			1					1				x											
13	Benson Park		2	1			12	4		x		x	x	x		1	1		sand		1 full		1	
14	Anez Ridge Park		2				6	1				x	x					1	grass					
15	Kolliner Park in WI *(boat access only)*																							
16	Nightingale Park											x												Pond
17	Brown's Creek Park		1	1			5	5		x		x	x											
18	Brown's Creek Nature Preserve			2				2				x												Cross Country Skiing
19	Legends Gazebo																							Gazebo
20	Croixwood Open Space											x												
21	Long Lake Open Space											x												
22	St Croix Valley Rec Center			1	x		2	3		indoor				indoor									2	Concessions
23	McKusick Lake Trail & Dike			1			2	3																Boardwalk
24	Creekside Park		1	1			1	2					x											wetland area
25	Settlers Park						9	1	2		x	x		x		1	1			2				
26	Heritage Park	1 - no tables		3	x		12	2			x	x	x											
27	Legends Park		1				4	3				x	x			1	1		sand				1	
28	Long Lake Nature Area											x												Lake View
29	Public Works Park							1						x	1						1 half			cemetary
30	Prairie Park						4	2				x	x			1	1							
31	Bergmann Park		3				6	2		1		x	x	x		1	1							wetland area
32	Teddy Bear Park			2			2			indoor			x											Amphitheater
33	Liberty Square	1 w/ 4 tables																						pond
34	Skateboard Park			1				2																Skateboard and BMX bike facilities

Park Classifications

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide for the recreation needs of a surrounding residential neighborhood. These parks provide a location for informal play and opportunities for social gatherings that promote a sense of community. They also provide open green space and visual relief for a surrounding neighborhood that can be highly developed. Park sizes can range from 1 to 15 acres but are typically less than 5 acres. They are located as central as possible to a neighborhood they serve and are usually accessible from a trail or sidewalk. Neighborhood park features include picnic areas, playground equipment, a multipurpose playing field and/or playing courts. Neighborhood parks are typically spaced at quarter mile increments.

Community Parks

Community parks serve as a focus for the community's recreation, social, and cultural needs and activities. They can provide a wide array of recreation opportunities ranging from active to passive. Community parks may be located to take advantage of significant cultural, historic, or geographic features. Some community parks will serve the entire city depending on their purpose. Parks should be strategically located and uniformly dispersed throughout the community. Community parks are larger than neighborhood parks generally requiring 15 acres or more. Park features include athletic complexes, large picnic shelters, large natural open spaces, playgrounds, and internal trails.

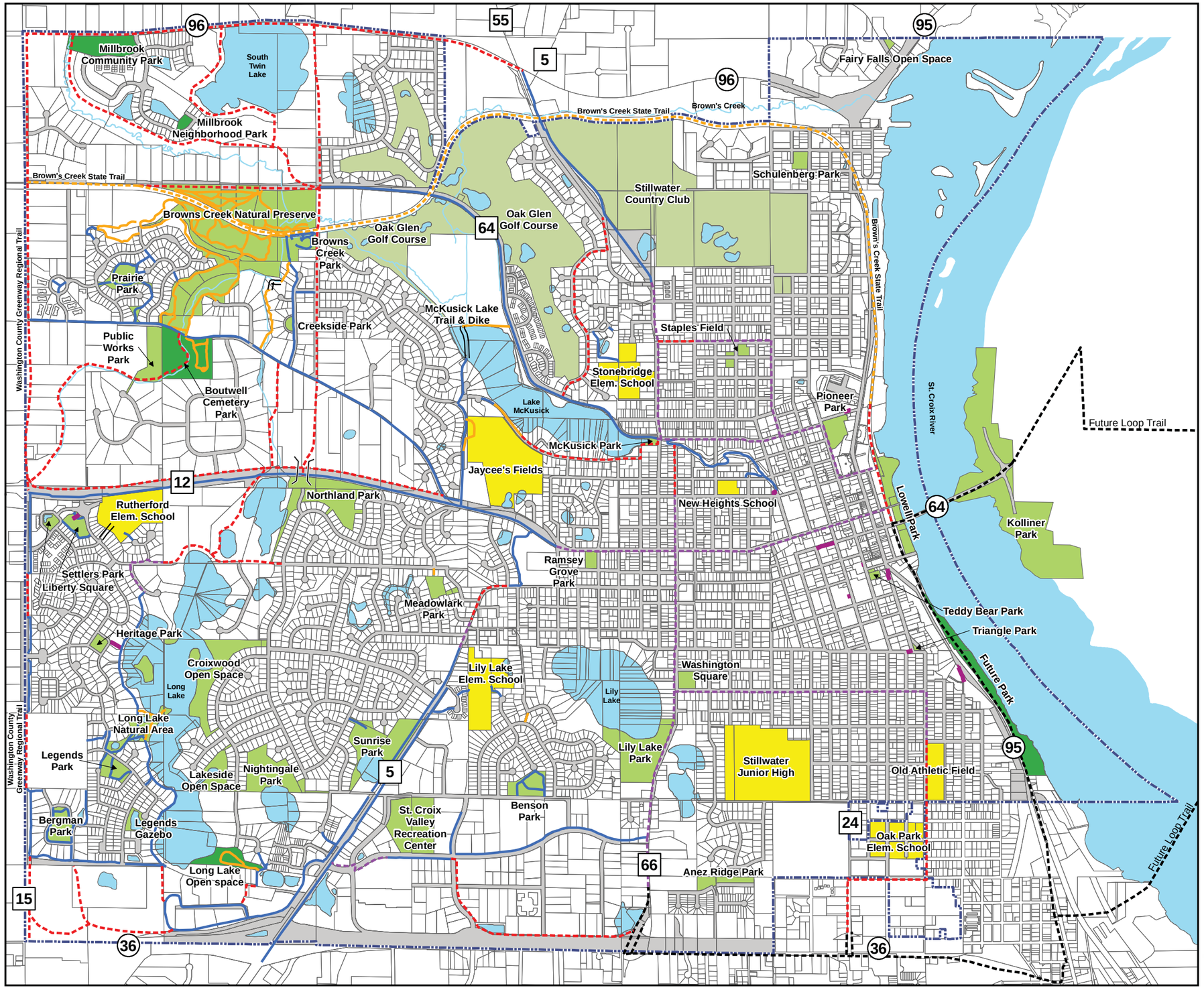
Open Space

Open space serves to protect important natural areas in the community. They also provide a visual relief for a surrounding neighborhood that can be highly developed. Due to the sensitivity of the areas it is not anticipated that these areas will be developed for active recreation uses. Rather for the most part they will remain in an undeveloped state will offer selective passive uses including trails and picnic areas.

Table 8.1: Stillwater Parks and Open Space

Category	Existing # of Parks	Ac	% of System	Future # of Parks	Ac	% of System
Neighbor-hood Parks	19	60	16%	20	61	15%
Community Parks	8	111	30%	10	134	34%
Open Space	6	202	54%	6	202	51%
Total	**33**	**373**	**100%**	**36**	**397**	**100%**

Figure 8.2 : City Parks & Trails Map



Parks and Trails Plan

2008 Comprehensive Plan

N W E S

800 0 800 1,600 Feet

- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails/Sidewalks
- Natural Trails
- Future DNR Trails
- Future Upgrades to Trail
- Future MNDOT Trails
- Bridge
- Underpass (Future)
- Current Stairs
- 2030 City Limit
- Existing Park
- Future Parks
- Golf Course
- School Properties
- Right-of-Way
- Open Water

Bonestroo

January 8, 2010

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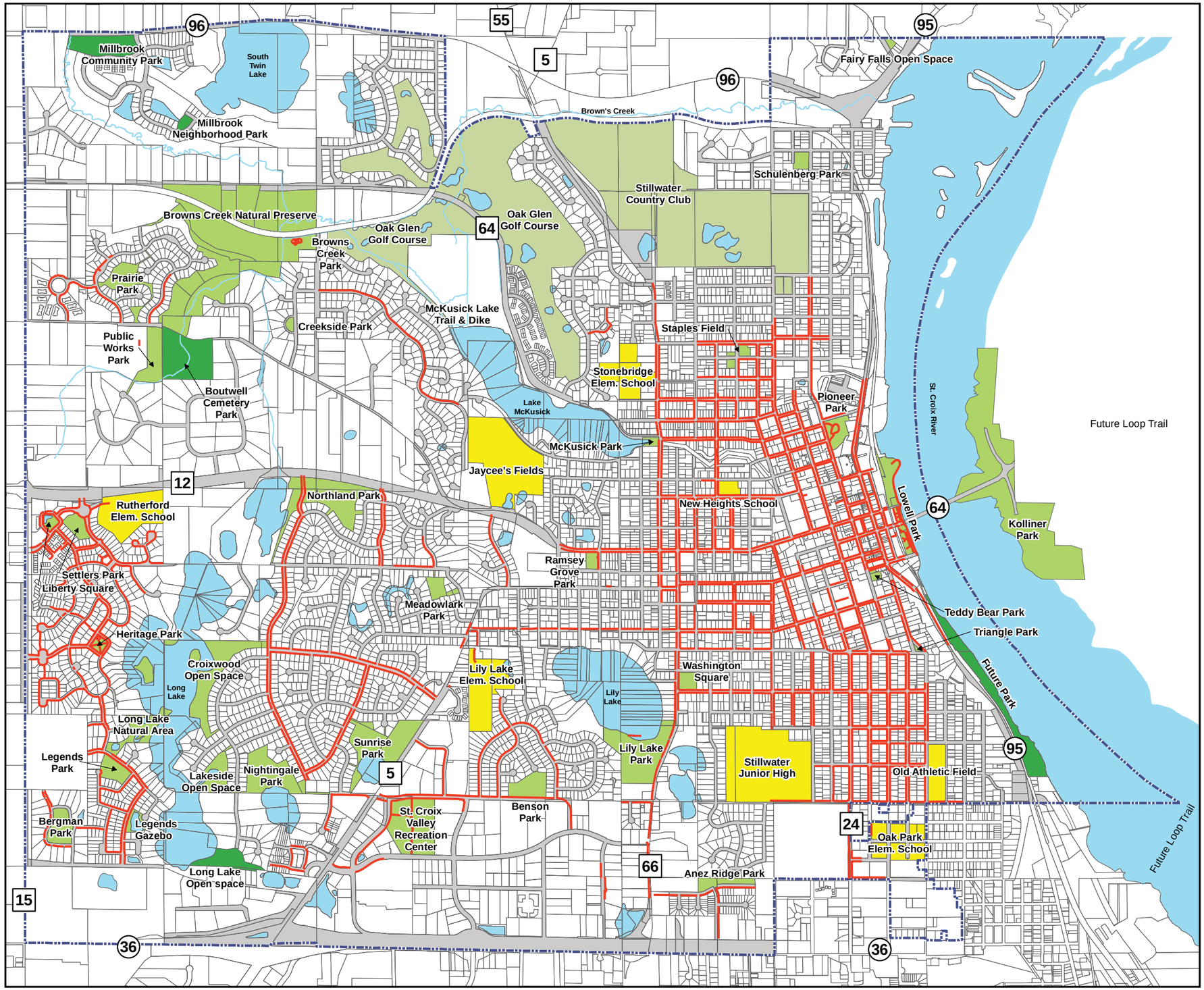
Figure 8.2A : City Parks & Sidewalks Map



Parks and Sidewalks

2008 Comprehensive Plan

N W E S

800 0 800 1,600 Feet

- Sidewalks
- 2030 City Limit
- Existing Park
- Future Parks
- Golf Course
- School Properties
- Right-of-Way
- Open Water

Bonestroo

December 8, 2008

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Local Trends

During the comprehensive planning process, public input was collected on how the community felt about parks and trails. Many value the open space and uniqueness of natural surroundings. These types of features should be preserved and made accessible when possible to enjoy up close. Overall the community values the park system, but sees opportunity for enhancement such as improving walkability and interconnectivity between neighborhoods and destinations. Expanding the trail system in multiple locations was a popular opinion voiced by many residents.

Others in the community expressed the need for the following park amenities:

- Public access to river (boat dock, fishing, swimming beach)
- Public sporting complex that includes soccer, baseball, and softball fields
- Public swimming pool/YMCA facility
- Teen center
- Frisbee golf course
- Public restrooms downtown and along trails

Stillwater has become a popular tourist destination in part due to its relationship to the St. Croix River. Visitors and residents alike are participating in boating and water sports. As the city expands and improves its park system, consideration will be given to creating public access to the river.

Aquatic amenities in local parks such as splash pads which provide water play features are on the rise. Many cities throughout the country are constructing these water playgrounds as they become more popular and requested by citizens. They are also low maintenance for city staff to manage. Spray jets can serve dual purposes by providing an attractive water feature in a public plaza. A popular neighborhood park, a new community park or Stillwater's waterfront could be an ideal location for placing a feature such as this.

The above amenity list reflects the interest and lifestyles of Stillwater residents. These facilities can further be discussed as the city works to meet its goal of providing active, passive, and culturally significant activities within its park and trails system.

". . . the community values the park system, but sees opportunity for enhancement such as improving walkability and connectivity. . ."

Sustainability

The need and awareness to be environmentally sensitive in the way residents and visitors impact the city's natural surroundings is ever increasing. The City of Stillwater recognizes that in order for change to occur it must start by adopting goals and standards to protect resources for future generations. The city has ample opportunity to demonstrate and educate its residents on more sustainable practices through the park, trail, and open space system.

Sustainability in park planning can take a variety of forms. By reducing impervious surfaces such as parking lots, water body quality can be improved as surface water runoff pollutants are reduced. Stormwater treatment through alternative methods such as raingardens and native plantings can also reduce infrastructure costs. Utilizing the appropriate Best Management Practices (BMP's) for park maintenance and new development will lessen human impact on the natural environment.

Future Needs

Additional Parkland

Understanding the community's current park and recreation needs will help to plan for future park improvements for the projected 2030 population. The city has established a goal of seven acres of Neighborhood Park per 1,000 people and three acres of Community Park per 1,000 people. Table 8.2 shows the current and projected level of service based on these requirements. Based on this scenario, Stillwater would need to add one additional community park by the year 2030. This new community park would be in addition to the Millbrook Community Park.

Facilities by Geographical Distribution

The City of Stillwater has set a goal to provide park facilities within one-quarter mile or less of residents, with no major physical barriers within that one-quarter mile distance. Figure 8.3 shows the adequacy of the community's park facilities including school facilities in terms of geographic distribution. It can be seen from the figure that there are two areas the city could consider for additional parkland. The first is south of New Heights School and north of Washington Square. In this area approximately eight blocks of residential neighborhood are not served by a park or school facility. A small neighborhood park could be placed on a blighted single-family lot in this residential area. The second search area is in the NE quadrant of Manning Avenue (County Rd 15) and 75th Street (County Rd 12). Since this area is currently undeveloped, opportunity still exists to create a larger community park here.

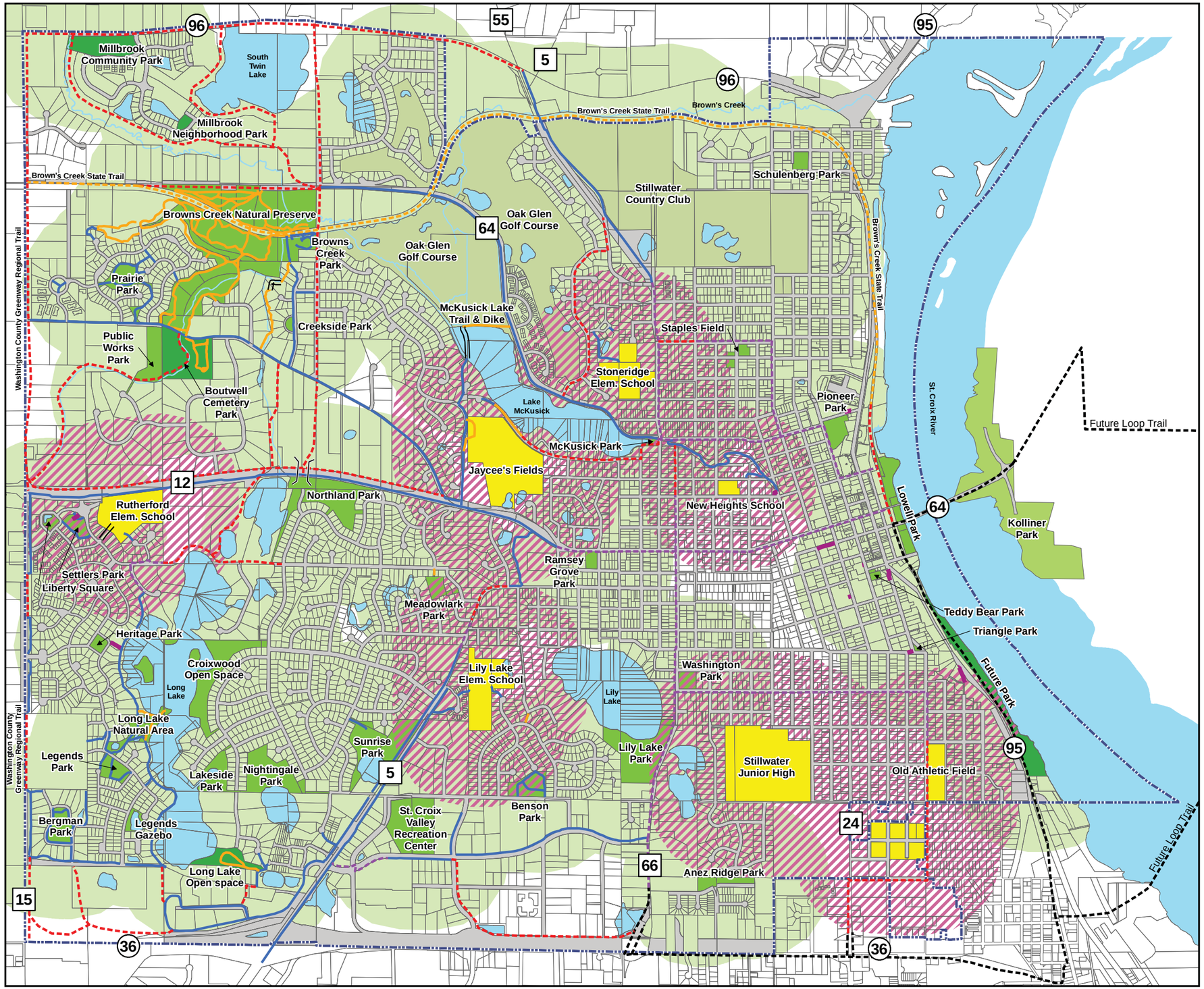
The residential neighborhood between Stillwater Junior High and the Old Athletic Field does not meet the ¼ mile Park Service standard. It does however fall into the ¼ mile School Service standard. This area could also host a small neighborhood park to provide adequate recreational opportunities to residents.

Table 8.2: Projected Level of Service

Category	Neighborhood Parks	Community Parks	Total
Existing # of Parks	19	8	**27**
Existing Acres ***	60.0	111.0	**171.0**
Local Standard (per 1,000)	3.0	7.0	**10.0**
2007 Need based on Local Standard *	55.3	129.0	**184.3**
2007 Surplus (Deficit)	4.7	-18.0	**-13.3**
2030 Need based on NRP Standard **	59.7	139.3	**199.0**
2030 Surplus (Deficit)	0	-28	**-28.0**

Many of the access issues are addressed in the future trail plan allowing safe pedestrian travelways to park destinations from residential neighborhoods. Additional trail planning will be needed as parks are added to the system.

Figure 8.3 : Park Facility Level of Service



Level of Service Parks and Schools

2008 Comprehensive Plan

N W E S

800 0 800 1,600 Feet

- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails
- Natural Trails
- Future DNR Trails
- Future Upgrades to Trail
- Future MNDOT Trails
- Bridge
- Underpass
- Current Stairs
- 2030 City Limit
- Existing Park
- Future Parks
- Golf Course
- School Properties
- 1/4-Mile Park Service Area
- 1/4-Mile School Service Area
- Right-of-Way
- Open Water

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January 8, 2010

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Additional Recreational Facilities

During the planning process, information was gathered at the city level to determine athletic usage and future program needs. The following chart summarizes the effort of calculating future population, considering existing facilities, recreational trends, and city staff comments.

Table 8.3: Projected Athletic Facility Need, 2008 Bonestroo

Facility Type	Existing Quantity 2007	NRPA Standards	2007* Need (NRPA)	2007* Surplus (Deficit)	2030** Need (NRPA)	2030** Surplus (Deficit)
Baseball Fields	7 ***	1 per 3,000	6	1	7	0
Softball Fields	7 ***	1 per 3,000	6	1	7	0
Basketball Courts	4	1 per 5,000	4	0	4	0
Football Fields	10	1 per 20,000	1	9	1	9
Horseshoe Courts	11	1 per 7,500	0	11	0	11
Picnic Shelter	25	1 per 2,000	9	16	10	15
Playgrounds	18	1 per 2,000	9	9	10	8
Running Track	1	1 per 20,000	1	0	1	0
Soccer Fields	8	1 per 10,000	2	6	2	6
Swimming Pools	0	1 per 20,000	1	-1	1	-1
Tennis Courts	11	1 per 2,000	9	2	10	1
Sand Volleyball Courts	5	1 per 5,000	4	1	4	1
Hockey Rinks	3					

* Based on 2007 estimate population of 18,431

** Based on 2030 projected population of 19,900

*** Includes Jaycee's Fields owned by Stillwater Area School District

Trails and Pathways

Objectives

Construct a city-wide trail/bikeway system that connects major activity centers, schools, downtown, scenic open space areas and lakes and other adjacent community systems.

Preserve and provide views of natural resources by aligning trails appropriately.

Provide alternative means to reach city parks, county parks, regional parks, state parks and other community destinations.

Preserve and enhance public-owned ravines.

Policies

Policy 12: Bikeways, hiking trails, rest areas and picnicking accommodations should be provided within designated trail corridors, wherever feasible. In addition the trails connecting neighborhoods into downtown should be identified with emphasis on the existing stair cases (Chestnut Street, Laurel Street, Willard Street, Broadway Street and Quarry Lane Stairs) and the creation of new stair cases. A linear trail should be developed in Lowell Park running from the Dock Café to the MN Zephyr depot (Nelson Street to Elm Street). Trail connections should also be explored that connect Lowell Park to the Aiple property, Kolliner Park and the Boom Site.

Policy 13: The city should control land development along designated trails and pathway corridors in order to provide sufficient right of way and to ensure that adjacent new development does not detract from the scenic and aesthetic qualities of the corridor.

Policy 14: When new development occurs adjacent to a designated trail and pathway corridor, the city should require the development to install the trails.

Policy 15: The design, construction and management of trails and pathways should be carefully planned and executed in order to minimize environmental disturbance.

Policy 16: Public improvements such as roads that are to be located within trail and pathway corridors should be designed to provide safe and secure routes for trails, including grade separation whenever feasible.

Policy 17: Encourage the incorporation of trails and pathways into corridors used for public and utility purposes.

Programs

Program 8: Implement the trails and pathways corridors plan.

Program 9: Consider improving trail systems around the city's lakes including completion of the trail around McKusick Lake and Long Lake, as well as between the lakes.

Trail System

Communities across the country have worked hard to improve their quality of life through developing trail systems – connecting individual trail segments to form larger recreation and transportation networks. Creating more trail connections among existing trails multiplies their effect and usage. Trails provide opportunities for people of all ages to walk to local destinations, bike to work, exercise, meet neighbors, observe local wildlife, and experience the outdoors with their families in an efficient and safe manner.

A new trend in trail planning has emerged that engages transportation engineers, water resource specialists, ecologists, planners, and open space advocates. Today, trails have become part of greenway corridors that provide wildlife habitat and movement corridors, open space vistas, water treatment benefits, and the opportunity to interpret local history and culture.

In November 2000, the city completed a Comprehensive Trail Plan. The plan includes 51.25 miles of trails, 11 miles of which currently exist. The goal of the plan is to develop and maintain a city-wide interconnected network of trails to provide recreational and transportation opportunities for city residents and visitors. The proposed trail network is shown in Figure 8.2 Parks and Trails.

"Trails" in the older Stillwater neighborhoods are mainly sidewalks. Several trails have been constructed that help link older Stillwater neighborhoods with developing neighborhoods in western Stillwater, including the following:

- The McKusick Ravine Trail (County)
- Trails and boardwalk around McKusick Lake (City)
- County Road 12 and 5 Trails (County)
- Stonebridge Trail (City)
- Eagle Ridge Trail (City)

New trails have been developed in the Annexation Area along Boutwell Road, Long Lake, and Brown's Creek and its tributaries. Washington County is developing a trail along County Road 15 (Manning Avenue) as part of improvements to the County Road that is under construction.

Western Stillwater is the last part of city to have pockets of open developable residential and commercial land. In conjunction with the development of this property, consideration should be given to adding to and improving the current trail system. One area of concern is around the Rutherford Elementary School. Many school districts are limiting bus service due to budget constraints and require students to utilize other means to get to school; e.g. walking and biking. Currently there is no trail available on the north side of County Rd 12, which would make it dangerous to walk or bike to school from neighborhoods to the north of Myrtle Street. The Park and Trail Plan identifies the need at County Rd 12 for a future underpass, which would safely connect future trails north of Myrtle Street to trails south of Myrtle Street.

The Trail Plan includes specific direction for trail design, location, type, construction, maintenance and signage. It also discusses priorities for system improvements. Some of these priorities have been completed or designed during the past five years.

The city is implementing the trail plan as a part of new development, and as improvements to roadways or other infrastructure occurs. The plan notes the following system issues that the city is continuing to work on:

- Some trails are unfinished, or do not interconnect
- Trails are not available to some primary destinations, such as elementary schools or parks
- Trails are not sufficient to the St. Croix River or proposed future trail loop
- Some older trails do not meet current design standards
- There are needs for ongoing maintenance and consistent signage

Jackson Wildlife Management Area

The city has discussed the future of the Jackson Wildlife Management Area (WMA) with the Minnesota DNR several times in recent years. The area is north of Long Lake, and the wetlands in the WMA are part of the drainage system for the lake.

The WMA was donated to the DNR by a local resident. It does not meet many of the DNR's current goals for WMA's. But, the WMA offers an opportunity to connect the recreational trails from Long Lake to those along the Brown's Creek Tributaries and other trails in western Stillwater. Unfortunately, DNR Wildlife Section staff and the Browns Creek Watershed District (BCWD) have indicated that agency rules do not allow development of recreational trails within their jurisdictions—their primary purposes are wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing. The property would need to be transferred to the city or another governmental agency to allow construction of trails within the WMA.

In addition to the wetlands within the WMA, the southern portion of the site provides upland habitat and open space. A rare plant species (a small population of Tubercled Rein-orchid, Platanthera flava) was identified within the upland area of the WMA by a local resident.

Proposed New Trails of Local and Regional Significance

In addition to these overall issues, two significant opportunities have emerged to expand the city's trail system, provide additional linkage between the Downtown and other neighborhoods, and link the city with other communities and destinations in the eastern Metro Area. These proposed trails are shown on Figure 8.2, and include the following:

- **Conversion of the historic Lift Bridge to pedestrian and bike connection, and development of new trails along the St. Croix between the Lift Bridge and the new St. Croix River Bridge**, on both the Minnesota and Wisconsin sides of the Riverway. These trail projects are proposed as a part of the St. Croix River Crossing Project. Construction of this project is dependent on funding, but is possible to begin by2014
- **Development of a potential Brown's Creek State Trail.** Owners of the Zephyr Railroad have indicated that they wish to close or sell the line. The Minnesota DNR, local legislators and trail advocates are proposing the purchase of the Zephyr right-of-way and development of a state trail linking Downtown Stillwater to the Gateway Trail.

The Metropolitan Council has required the city to include two additional trail segments on their master trail plan. These include the following:

- **Washington County Greenway Regional Trail (Future):** This regional trail runs north-south in Washington County. It is intended to connect the City of Hastings to Cottage Grove Regional Park, Lake Elmo Park Reserve, and Big Marine Park Reserve. Part of the trail is located within Stillwater. In the future Washington County will be working with the City to plan more of the trail alignment.
- **White Bear Lake-Stillwater Regional Trail (Future):** This proposed trail would connect the Gateway Trail that runs through neighboring metro cities to the City of Stillwater and the St. Croix River. In Stillwater this generally runs along TH 96 and includes the Brown's Creek Ravine trail. This trail is part of the Lakes Links Trail Master Plan that calls for this section of trail to be part of the Regional Park System.

Implementation

To implement the Parks and Trail Plan, the city will consider the following implementation measures, which were developed from the goal and policy categories, listed in the beginning of this chapter:

Park Standards: To increase the amount of public park land the city will:

- Study and pursue various means of funding the acquisition, operation and maintenance of park, open space trail, and recreation facilities. (Program 1)
- Acquire and develop land in the western part of the city for community park purposes. (Program 2)

Efficient Use of Facilities: To maximize opportunities for the joint use of public land and facilities and efficient use of such facilities the city will:

- Consider cooperative efforts with the school district, athletic organizations, public utilities, and other public agencies in order to acquire and/or develop parkland, retain open space areas and recreation facilities and provide programs. This would include considering acquisition of the Old Athletic Field and Jaycee's Fields from the school district should the school district ever entertain the possibility of divesting themselves of those properties important to the community.
- Periodically update and distribute the list of available public park facilities, park maps, and trail maps to the community and interested groups.
- Develop and implement a program for year-around use of some recreation facilities. (Program 3)
- Explore methods to integrate parks and trails with the systems of surrounding local governments.

Park Design: The city will:

- Design, install and maintain standardized park signage for all city parkland and trails.
- Develop and implement neighborhood park plans based on the following priority list developed by the Park and Recreation Board and level of service needs. These plans shall reflect neighborhood input into the planning

2009 - 2018 Park Improvement Priorities Approved by Stillwater Park & Recreation Commission on July 28, 2008

Community Parks

Lowell Park
- Major redevelopment

Millbrook Community Park
- New park development

Pioneer Park
- Continue park improvements
- Renovate band shell (roof and west wall)

Northland Park
- Replace upper play equipment
- Make an "entryway" park
- Replace irrigation systems

Aiple Park
- New park development

Brown's Creek Park
- New irrigation systems

Lily Lake Park
- Replace irrigation systems

Neighborhood Parks

Long Lake Open Space

- Add Picnic Shelter
- Add Nature Trails
- Consider adding parking on north side

Millbrook Neighborhood Park

- New park development

Boutwell Cemetery

- New park development

Staples Field

- Acquire additional park property
- Add additional facilities
- Reopen basketball court or convert the courts to another park use

Legends Park

- Add additional equipment
- Bergman Park
- Add addition equipment (play structure on north side of park)

Triangle Park

- Replace play equipment

Ramsey/Grove Park

- Replace play equipment with a structure for children 5 to 13 years of age

Public Works Park

- Continue baseball field improvements
- New irrigation systems

Trail Improvements

- Replace steps at Chestnut Street, Laurel Street, Willard Street, Broadway Street and Quarry Lane Stairs

process. (Program 2)

- Require park land dedication or cash in lieu for all new residential, commercial and industrial developments.
- Acquire the Jaycee's Fields and the Old Athletic Field from School District 834 if the school district ever considers selling them. It is the city's desire to continue to offer these two sites for public recreation purposes.
- Seek opportunities through public or private funds for the establishment of new neighborhood parks and/or redevelopment of existing neighborhood parks.

Trails and Pathways: To effectively maintain and expand a city-wide trail system that connects to all major activity centers, schools, downtown, scenic open space areas and lakes and other adjacent community systems the city will:

- Continue to implement the comprehensive trails and pathways corridors plan.
- Continue working with the state and county for the development of a potential Brown's Creek State Trail.
- Continue to improve trails and sidewalks as local roadways are improved or reconstructed.
- Create improved trail and pedestrian connections into downtown from the west and from the north through Lowell Park to the Aiple property south of Nelson Street.
- Consider improving trail systems around the city's lakes including completion of the trail around McKusick Lake and Long Lake, as well as between the lakes.