

Chapter 7. Parks, Trails, Recreation & Open Space Plan

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INTRODUCTION

A strong parks, trails, recreation, and open space system is a very important ingredient for providing a high quality of life for Chaska residents. While many socio-economic changes have taken place over the years, the need for recreation and open space facilities conveniently accessible to Chaska residents has not changed. Indeed, increased leisure time and a greater awareness of maintaining good health has placed even more emphasis on recreation than in earlier years.

The Parks, Trails, Recreation, and Open Space Plan establishes standards for various classifications of parks and open spaces, compares existing facilities against these standards, projects future park needs, and identifies park lands and facilities needed to serve existing and future residents of Chaska.

SYSTEM HISTORY

The City of Chaska has an extensive parks, open space, and trails system that provides recreation facilities and trail connections throughout the entire community. In general, Chaska's trails system is a combination of trails that traverse through the community's natural landscape, particularly the creek ravines that drain to the Minnesota River, and trails that follow roadways. Appropriate to a river community, the overall trails system's function is analogous to watershed tributaries feeding a major river with neighborhood trails feeding community trails, which then feed regional trails. The primary objective of all trail types is to provide safe and convenient travel routes for recreation or destination purposes while taking advantage of existing community natural resources and roadway systems. The City's trails system is intended to encompass all residential areas, activity centers, and significant natural resource areas throughout the community.

Chaska's trail system has been taking shape since the City's inception and encompasses a variety of trail types that evolved during the City's various development periods. As part of Chaska's early development, provision was made for pedestrian movement via the traditional urban sidewalk system, which continues to serve most of downtown and lower Chaska. Downtown Chaska has sidewalks on both sides of each street. As part of the Jonathan New Town development in the early 1970s, a pedestrian "backwalk" trail system was put in place that separates walkways from streets. The "backwalk" system has continued to develop in many new Jonathan neighborhoods. However, some new Jonathan neighborhoods have been developed with walkways alongside of new sub collector streets. In the Clover Ridge neighborhood, sidewalks are provided on one or

both sides of streets in accordance with traditional neighborhood design principles. In neighborhoods outside of Jonathan, pedestrian facilities are provided via sidewalks located primarily along one side of sub collector streets.

The City of Chaska owns a significant amount of natural open space throughout the City, which is primarily comprised of land within the East Chaska Creek ravine/drainage system and the Minnesota River Valley. Since the 1970s, when a substantial portion of this land was acquired by the City with the assistance of state and federal open space grants, the City has developed an extensive system of trails that traverse the natural areas of the creek ravines. The flood control project to reduce flood damage from the Minnesota River was completed in lower Chaska in 1998. As part of the flood control project, a trail was constructed on the levee and along the East Creek channel diversion structure.

In addition to trails through linear parks and open space, the City has typically installed trails along one side of all collector and arterial roadways to provide safe and convenient travel routes between destinations in the community. As property is platted and developed, the City will continue to require land dedication for the remaining segments of the City’s 2040 Trail System.

SUMMARY OF THE SYSTEM

The City of Chaska contains a wide variety of city-owned parks and facilities, private recreation areas, state and federally owned open space resources as summarized below.

TABLE 7.1: OWNERSHIP & AREA OF PARKS, FACILITIES, & OPEN SPACE IN CHASKA

Park/Recreation Element	Owner	Acreage	Components
City parks	City of Chaska	236.8 acres	Community parks, community playfields, neighborhood parks, mini-parks
City trails, trail corridors, and open space	City of Chaska	1,216.2 acres	Ravines, East Chaska Creek ravine, Minnesota River floodplain, wetlands
Municipal golf courses	City of Chaska	305.4 acres	Chaska Town Course, Par 30 Golf Course
Carver County open space	Carver County	19.7 acres	Courthouse Lake open space and Lake Bavaria boat launch
Mn DNR land	State of Mn	13.6 acres	Land along Minnesota River and open space adjacent to Lake Bavaria
Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge	U.S. Government	133.2 acres	Open space along Minnesota River
School open space, fields, and play areas	Independent School District #112	86 acres	
Private parks and trails	Jonathan	112.7 acres	Jonathan Association trails, tot lots, beach and

	Association		tennis court area
Private golf course	Hazeltine National Golf Club	229 acres	Hazeltine National Golf Course
TOTAL		2,352.63	

The above parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces are shown on the 2040 Parks and Open Space Map (FIGURE 7.1).

PARK BOARD STRUCTURE & PARTNERSHIPS

Chaska’s Park Board is a volunteer body acting in an advisory capacity to the City Council that meets monthly. The Board consists of 10 members who are appointed by the City Council.

The Park Board meets to discuss issues related to the City’s open space, parks, trails, recreation, and public art. The Park Board assists in the review of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and development projects and advises the City Council on matters of policy.

The Chaska Parks and Recreation Department serves as staff for the Park Board. The Chaska Public Works Department provides maintenance services for the Parks and Recreation Department.

The Parks and Recreation Department partners with numerous organizations in order to provide leisure and recreational services for Chaska residents. These groups include: Alphabet Junction Daycare, Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, Bountiful Basket Food Shelf, Breakaway Academy, Carver County Parks, Chaska Cubs, Chaska Downtown Business Alliance, Chaska Figure Skating Club, Chaska Kiwanis, Chaska Lions, Chaska/Chan Hockey Association, Chaska Police Department, Chaska School of Dance, Chaska/Chan United Soccer, Chaska Valley Family Theater, City of Carver, City of Chanhassen Senior Center, Crooked Pint Restaurant, Doterra (Tanya Brown), District #112 Special Education, Fishing with Friends, Independent School District 112, KleinBank Chaska, Landmark Tours, Launch Ministry, local youth athletic associations, Minnesota Curling Association, MN State High School League, Reach Adaptive Resources, School District athletic teams/coaches, SouthWest Christian High School, SouthWest Transit, St. Francis Sports Medicine, St. Francis Capable Kids, West Express Swim Team, Chamber of Commerce, Chaska VFW, and Chaska American Legion.

The Chaska Curling Center maintains partnerships with the following organizations: Twin Cities Curling Association- The Big Spiel, TCCA Invitational, etc.; United States Curling Association- Curling Night in America, U18's, College Nationals, National Training Center; and the World Curling Federation- Curling Night in America.

EXISTING PARKS, TRAILS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

OVERVIEW

The City of Chaska owns 236.8 acres of “active” parkland as well as 305.4 acres of public golf course land. In addition to the “active” parkland, the City also owns another 1,216.2 acres of “passive” parkland for a grand total of about 1,758.4 acres (2.75 square miles) of municipal open space land. The “passive” land consists largely of the East Chaska Creek ravine/drainageway system, Minnesota River floodplain, and related wetlands, and contains nearly 20 miles of off-road trails through linear parks and open space. About half of the municipal park and open space land was acquired with the assistance of state and federal grants during the early and mid-1970s.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has developed a classification system for specific kinds of parks, recreation, and open space facilities. It addresses function, design, use, size, resource characteristics and preferred location.

The Metropolitan Council has adapted NRPA’s classification system and included it in its *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. The classification system contains thirteen components for local and regional recreational facilities ranging from the neighborhood level to the regional level, including trails.

Chaska has adapted the Metro Council’s classification system to more closely reflect the City’s unique development pattern and needs. TABLE 7.2 identifies the twelve classifications for park, trail, recreation, and open space facilities, and also describes each classification according to its use, service area, size, site attributes, and site location. The following park and trail types are located within Chaska:

- » Mini-park
- » Neighborhood Park/Playground
- » Community Playfield
- » Community Park
- » Community Feature/Special Use Park

- » School Park
- » Linear Park or Open Space
- » Trail
- » Regional Park, Trail or Open Space
- » Private Park or Open Space
- » Private Trail
- » Private Golf Course

No regional parks or park reserves are currently situated in Chaska.

The park classifications and standards of TABLE 7.2 serve as the basis for Chaska’s Parks, Trails, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. The park classifications and standards are intended as a guide for planning — not as an absolute requirement. Sometimes more than one component may occur within the same site such as neighborhood play facilities within a community park or playfield.

FIGURE 7.1: 2040 PARKS & OPEN SPACE MAP

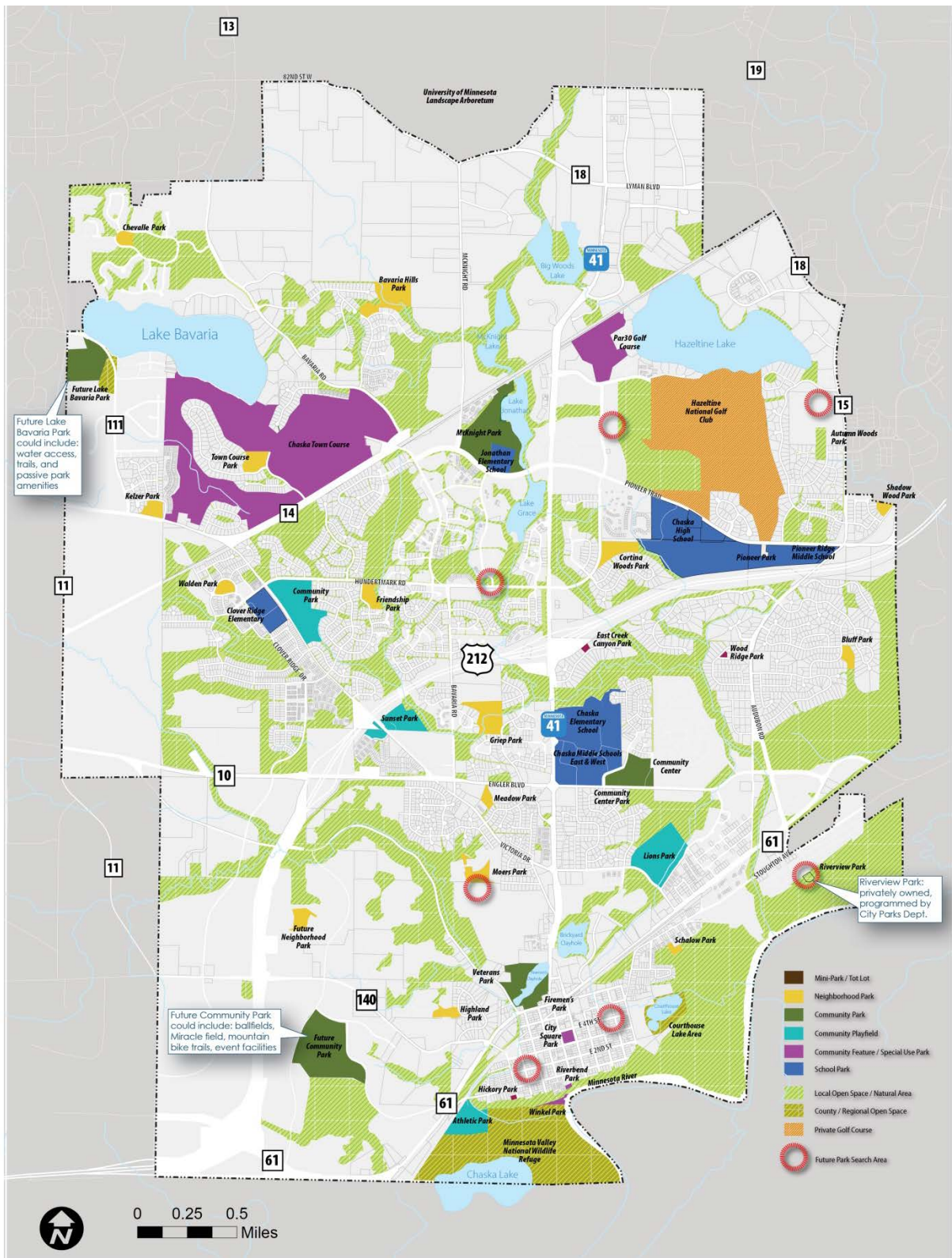


TABLE 7.2: PARK CLASSIFICATIONS / STANDARDS

Feature / Park Classification	Use	Service Area	Size	Site Attributes	Site Location	Level of Service	Quantity	Existing Facilities
City of Chaska								
Mini-Park	Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens	Less than 1/4 mile	Less than one acre		May be in residential neighborhoods or commercial centers that currently lack convenient access to a neighborhood park/playground or as part of a planned residential development		3	East Creek Canyon Park
								Hickory Park
								Wood Ridge Park
Neighborhood Park / Playground	Area for active recreational facilities such as field games, play court games, crafts area, play apparatus area, skating, shelter, open play area	1/4 to 1/2 mile radius (neighborhood)	3-15 acres	Physical geography suited for intense development	Easily accessible to neighborhood population by foot or bike; centrally located with safe and convenient walking and biking access; may be part of a Community Park or Playfield	8 acres per 1,000 population	14	Bavaria Hills Park
								Bluff Park
								Chevalle Park
								Cortina Woods Park
								Friendship Park
								Griep Park
								Highland Park
								Kelzer Park
								Meadow Park
								Moers Park
								Schalow Park
								Shadow Woods Park
Town Course Park								
Walden Park								
Community Playfield	Area for active recreation facilities such as athletic fields for youth and adult league use, and could include neighborhood park uses	3-5 neighborhoods or whole community	25-50 acres	Physical geography suited for intense development	Easily accessible by motor vehicle; edge of neighborhood or in non-residential area	1 per 15,000 population	4	Athletic Park
								Community Park
								Lions Park
								Sunset Park
Community Park	Area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking; could include athletic fields for programmed games; could include neighborhood park features, such as play areas and courts	3-5 neighborhoods or whole community	25-50 acres	Affords natural features with varied physical landscape interest	Proximity to community facilities and natural resources	13 acres per 1,000 population	6	Firemen's Park
								Veterans Park
								Chaska Community Center
								McKnight Park
								Lake Bavaria Park
Future SW Community Park								
Community Feature / Special Use Park	Area that preserves, maintains, and provides specialized or single-purpose recreational activities such as golf course, nature center, marina, zoo, conservatory, arboretum, display gardens, arena, gun club, downhill ski area, and sites of historic or archaeological significance	Community	Specific to standard applicable to desired feature	Appropriate to particular special feature	Where most advantageous for the special feature and the overall park system		4	Chaska Town Course
								Par 30 golf course
								City Square
								Winkel / Riverbend Park
School Park	School parks and playfields that serve as places for community recreation athletics and as neighborhood parks and playgrounds; The joint use	Neighborhood or Community			At local public and private schools		3	Chaska High School
								Chaska Middle School / Elementary School
								Pioneer Ridge Middle School

Feature / Park Classification	Use	Service Area	Size	Site Attributes	Site Location	Level of Service	Quantity	Existing Facilities
	agreement between the City and School District 112 allows large tournaments to be held by each entity in one location.							Clover Ridge Elementary School Jonathan Elementary School
Linear Park or Open Space	Areas of natural quality such as waterways and wetlands that are preserved for environmental or aesthetic benefits to the community, and/or because of the negative environmental or economic effects of development on them; Serves as corridors for trails and park access points	Community	Variable, based on extent of natural resources	Natural resources that merit preservation and would be negatively affected by development	Where natural resources occur			Municipal ownership of extensive open space system focused on East Chaska Creek ravine, Minnesota River floodplain, and wetlands
Trail	Paved and unpaved trails that are along roads or within natural corridors for linear recreation - walking, running, biking, rollerblading, dog walking	Walking / hiking / jogging: 1.1 miles per 1,000 population; Bicycling: 0.7 miles per 1,000 population						
Non City-owned Parks and Open Spaces								
Regional Park, Trail, or Open Space	Area of natural or ornamental quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation, such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail uses; trails are typically within off-road corridors and connect regional open spaces and destinations	3-5 communities	200-500 acres (100 acre minimum)	Complete natural setting contiguous to water bodies or watercourses where possible	Where natural resources occur - particularly water			Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge; Carver County open space area around Courthouse Lake; Southwest Regional Trail, Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail; regional trail search corridors also exist
Private Park or Open Space	A play area or open space provided by a developer or residential housing association in for recreational, aesthetic, or conservation value	Private residential developments						Jonathan tot lots
Private Trail	Paved trails and sidewalks built and maintained by a private developer or housing association	Private residential developments						Jonathan backwalks and trails
Private Golf Course	Golf course that serves members, not open to the general public							Hazeltine National Golf Course

COMMUNITY PARKS

Chaska has four (4) existing community parks and a planned future community park, which are described below. A community park by definition has attractive natural qualities, such as a lake, bluff or wooded area, and has the capacity to serve in both passive and active recreational roles. Chaska's community parks are typically located adjacent to major natural features and distributed throughout the community.

1. Firemen's Park
2. Veterans Park
3. Chaska Community Center
4. McKnight Park
5. Lake Bavaria Park

Firemen's Park

Firemen's Park is located in downtown Chaska, on the south side of Firemen's Clayhole Lake, and Veterans Park, which is on the north side of the lake, together form one park but are described separately herein. The park serves as the primary family "active use" facility in the City. The swimming beach, Curling and Event Center building, off shore fishing, and generous open space for play make it unique within the City's parks system.

Veterans Park

Veterans Park is located on the north side of Firemen's Clayhole Lake and the Minnesota River bluff. Veterans Park was expanded in 2019 and features a Veterans Memorial Plaza with an honor wall and an archery range. The park shelter and playground make it an ideal location for family gatherings.

Chaska Community Center

The Chaska Community Center has a relatively central geographic location within the community. It is located on the Minnesota River bluff top and is connected to the community's linear park system and its trails. This significant indoor recreation center, which was initially constructed in 1990, is recognized as a vital component of the City's parks system. It is a state-of-the-art facility within the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

McKnight Park

McKnight Park serves as the City's primary passive park site, particularly for the northern portion of Chaska, and is located along Lake Jonathan. Trail access relative to the water and wooded areas makes this a popular park site. The park underwent significant development during the 1980's and 1990's.

Lake Bavaria Park (Planned Future Community Park)

Lake Bavaria Park is located along the southwest edge of Lake Bavaria in the northwest portion of the community. It does not have developed infrastructure yet. It is adjacent to MN DNR land and Carver County land.

COMMUNITY PLAYFIELDS

Chaska has four (4) existing community playfield complexes for organized league use, which are described below. Neighborhood playground facilities are also provided in all of the community playfield complexes except Athletic Park.

1. Athletic Park
2. Community Park
3. Lions Park
4. Sunset Park

Athletic Park

Athletic Park presently serves as a regulation baseball facility for the Chaska Cubs, Legion, and Chaska High School.

Community Park

Community Park serves as an important softball and baseball complex for adult and youth. As with all other municipal parks, it is attached to the City linear park system.

Lions Park

Lions Park is an active recreation site accommodating softball, tennis, volleyball, baseball, soccer, and ice-skating. An off-leash dog park was developed in 2018.

Sunset Park

Sunset Park includes a regulation-size youth baseball field to host primarily ages 13 & up. In addition, the community playfield serves as a trailhead location for local trails.

COMMUNITY FEATURES / SPECIAL USE PARKS

Chaska has four (4) existing parks that are considered unique community features, which are described below.

1. City Square
2. Winkel and Riverbend Parks
3. Chaska Town Course
4. Par 30 Golf Course

City Square

This unique “town square” park in the center of historic downtown Chaska features a central gazebo/bandstand. It is primarily a passive use park, but is also used for special events such as River City Days and Taste of Chaska. It was renovated in the 1980s including extensive landscaping, pathways, sprinkling and gazebo reconstruction.

Winkel and Riverbend Parks

In conjunction with the flood control project, the City of Chaska traded about six acres with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The City added USFWS land to Athletic Park and USFWS obtained the undeveloped west part of Winkel Park for its Chaska Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

Although Winkel Park is quite small at three acres, it serves a community and regional function as a boat launch access to the Minnesota River outside the new levee. The park includes a small parking lot and the levee trail system, which was rerouted under the T.H. 41 bridge and through Winkel Park as part of the flood control project.

Riverbend Park is a one-acre passive use park that was created in conjunction with the flood control project and the Block 54 redevelopment project. Trail systems link this unique facility to the levee trail, to the downtown commercial area, to Winkel Park via a stairway down the levee, and to the adjacent Riverbend Hotel through its outdoor plaza. Riverbend Park’s strongest feature is the panoramic view afforded of the Minnesota River and attendant woodland at a point where the river makes a sharp turn on its way northeasterly to its junction with the Mississippi River at Fort Snelling. A variety of seating/observation areas are available and a large raised central green area is available for private and public functions.

Chaska Town Course

Designed by renowned golf course architect Arthur Hills, Chaska Town Course sprawls over 285 acres of oak groves, open prairie, and marshlands. Lush bent grass covers the playing area from tee box to green. Chaska Town Course is owned and operated by the City of Chaska and was opened in 1997.

Par 30 Golf Course

The Chaska Par 30 is a small and challenging course designed by Robert Trent Jones. The course opened for play in 1971 and is located on Hazeltine Boulevard near Lake Hazeltine. The bent grass greens of the course are average sized. The bluegrass fairways are wide. Water hazards come into play on 5 holes, and there are 15 sand

bunkers on the course. The Par 30 is a great course for beginning golfers or for experienced players looking to challenge their short game.

SCHOOL PARKS

School District #112 Joint Use Facilities

The City of Chaska and School District #112 have an agreement for joint use of baseball, softball, soccer fields, and tennis courts located on the Senior High School, Middle School, and Pioneer Ridge Freshman Center campuses. In effect, the Middle School campus, including its gyms and swimming pool, together with the adjacent Chaska Community Center can be considered a Community Playfield site. Likewise, the Senior High School campus can be considered an extension of Pioneer Park Playfield. Pioneer Park serves primarily as a community playfield site, similar to Community Park. Pioneer Park incorporates both ballfields with youth dimensions and separate ballfields with adult outfield dimensions. The joint use agreement between the City and School District allows large tournaments to be held by each entity in one location.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

In 2018, Chaska contained 14 neighborhood parks, which are intended to serve a surrounding residential neighborhood within a 10-minute walk. They range in size from 0.5 to 14 acres. In addition, as stated earlier, five community park/playfields also contain a neighborhood facility.

Chaska's existing neighborhood parks consist of the following:

1. Bavaria Hills Park
2. Bluff Park
3. Chevalle Park
4. Cortina Woods Park
5. Friendship Park
6. Griep Park
7. Highland Park
8. Kelzer Park
9. Meadow Park
10. Moers Park
11. Schalow Park
12. Shadow Woods Park
13. Town Course Park
14. Walden Park

MINI-PARKS

Chaska currently has three (3) existing mini-parks, which are listed below. These City-owned mini-parks serve a limited area and typically contain play apparatus and open play space for small children.

1. East Creek Canyon Park
2. Hickory Park
3. Wood Ridge Park

LINEAR PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Chaska's linear parks and open spaces generally consist of the following components:

1. Minnesota River valley and levee
2. East Chaska Creek ravines
3. West Chaska Creek ravines
4. "Chain of Lakes" – Lakes Grace, Jonathan, McKnight, and Big Woods
5. University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum
6. USFWS Minnesota River National Wildlife Refuge, Chaska Lake Unit
7. Seminary Fen / Assumption Creek
8. Chaska Greenbelt

CITY TRAILS

Trails throughout the community are developed within roadway corridors and within linear parks and open space. The roadway trails provide safe places for residents to walk and bike within rights-of-way, while the linear park trails provide a natural experience away from busy roadways. In some cases, natural surface trails are provided. The City contains over 90 miles of paved trails throughout the community.

Within Chaska's neighborhoods, sidewalks, breakthroughs, and backwalks provide another level of walking and biking facilities. Many of the breakthroughs and backwalks are within Jonathan neighborhoods, and are operated and maintained by the Jonathan Association.

For clarification purposes, these unique terms are defined below:

Pedestrian Backwalk: A pedestrian trail within a neighborhood typically located between residential rear lot lines. In essence, backwalks are a substitute for sidewalks along streets and are designed to separate pedestrian and vehicular

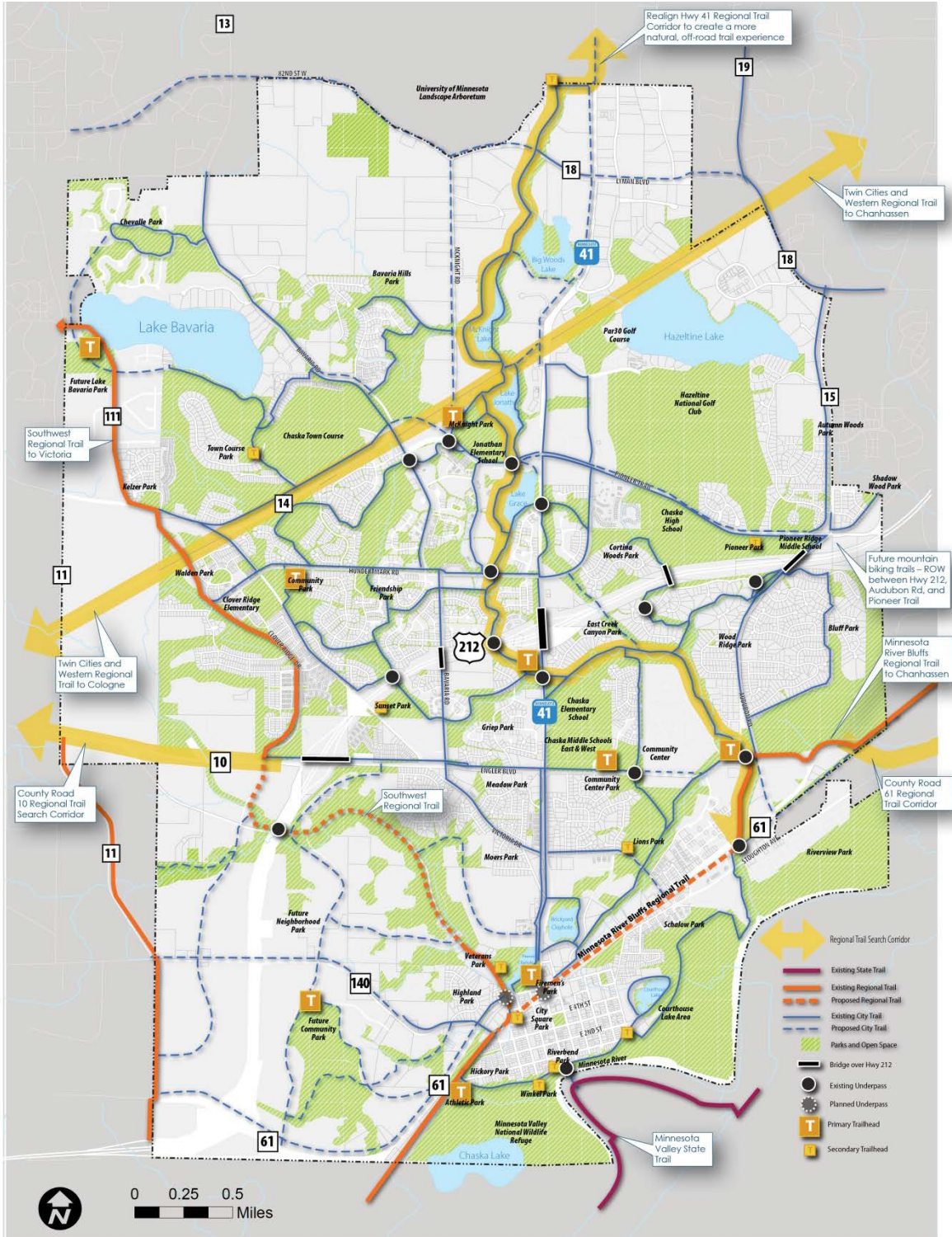
traffic to a greater extent than sidewalks. Backwalks are typically provided by the Jonathan Association.

Pedestrian Breakthrough: A short pedestrian trail between residential lots, which accommodate desired pedestrian movement within neighborhoods, not accommodated by sidewalks along sub collector streets, or by local access streets. Breakthroughs also provide access to adjacent or proximate destinations such as parks and community trails.

All of the City trails are designed for walking, jogging, biking, and hiking purposes. In addition, some of the natural corridor trails may be used for cross-country skiing. Trails exclusively for cross-country skiing and snowmobiling are not identified in this plan.

Chaska's trail system primarily parallels the watershed system of East Chaska Creek from the University of Minnesota Arboretum to the Minnesota River. Other trail segments exist throughout the community in linear parks and open space. The trail system connects most of the City's major public facilities and activity centers.

FIGURE 7.2: 2040 TRAILS MAP



OTHER LOCAL PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACES

Within the City of Chaska, non-municipal local parks and open space facilities are provided by School District #112 as well as various homeowners' associations, most notably the Jonathan Homeowners' Association, which encompasses approximately 1/3 of Chaska's residential neighborhoods. The numerous parks, trails, and open spaces under the jurisdiction of the Jonathan Homeowners' Association are represented on the map as local open space rather than parks and city trails since these parks are not publicly owned or maintained. Finally, the Jonathan Association owns and maintains 14 play lots, which are accessible via neighborhood trail systems.

Private local parks and open spaces, such as private school playgrounds are not reflected as public parks.

Hazeltine Golf Course is identified specifically as a private golf course use, whereas, the Chaska Town Course and Par 30 Golf Course are designated as parks since they are publicly owned.

FEDERAL, STATE AND REGIONAL (METRO) PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Federal and State legislation designates most of the Minnesota River floodplain from Fort Snelling to Belle Plaine as either the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) or the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the State Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) are the primary agencies engaged in planning, acquiring, operating, and maintaining these two areas.

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) consists of eight (8) wildlife refuge units totaling approximately 13,500 acres. The Chaska Lake Unit is located in the extreme southwest part of Chaska, south of the levee and west of T.H. 41, and stretches south into the northeast part of the City of Carver. The Chaska Lake Unit, which is managed by the USFWS, is approximately 600 acres in size. The Chaska Lake NWR is directly south of both Athletic Park and Winkel Park. The primary objective is to preserve and protect wildlife and wildlife habitat and to provide opportunities for wildlife oriented recreation and education. The Chaska Lake Trail is a 1.7 mile unpaved trail that is accessed via a trailhead at Athletic Park in Chaska and connects to the riverfront park in Carver. Just to the south of the Chaska Lake Unit are the Louisville Swamp Unit (2,600 acres) and the Rapids Lake Unit (1,500 acres).

Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area

The MN DNR is also acquiring wildlife refuge land as well as park sites along the river lowlands as part of the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area. In addition, the MN DNR is developing a comprehensive system of trails from Fort Snelling to Le Sueur. The north end of MN DNR's Carver Rapids Wayside recreation area is located directly south of Chaska across the Minnesota River. The MN DNR has developed a horse, mountain bike and snowmobile trail from Chaska upriver to Belle Plaine. The northerly trailhead is on the east side of T.H. 41 about one half mile south of the Minnesota River/Chaska City limits.

The above described State and Federal efforts to preserve the natural resources within the Minnesota River lowlands, and to provide complementary recreational opportunities therein, have many positive and long-term benefits to area communities and the region as a whole. The City of Chaska has worked closely with agency representatives to achieve mutual goals and will continue to do so in the future.

Regional Parks and Open Spaces

There are no existing or proposed metropolitan regional parks located within the City of Chaska; however, three regional parks are located nearby the City.

Carver Park Reserve is located about two miles northwest of Chaska in the City of Victoria and Laketown Township. The park contains 3,700 acres (5.8 square miles) and features a boat launch, camping, picnicking, interpretive center, as well as bike, horse, cross country ski and snowmobile trails. The park is owned and operated by the Three Rivers Park District.

Lake Minnewashta Regional Park is located 1.5 miles north of Chaska in Chanhassen. It contains 350 acres and features boat accesses, picnicking, swimming, a play area and trails. Future additions will include camping, a nature interpretive center, and additional trails. The park is owned, operated and maintained by Carver County with facility funding from Metro Council.

Lake Waconia Regional Park on the southern shore of Lake Waconia is about nine miles west of Chaska. This 135-acre park with views to the lake and Coney Island has a swimming beach, reservable group picnic shelter, picnic tables, grills, play equipment, restrooms, volleyball court, sledding hill, and the indoor Lake Waconia Event Center.

Recent expansion of the park's land and shoreline will enable the County to consider adding a boat launch within the park, possibly in partnership with the MN DNR.

Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Although not formally designated a regional park or open space, the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum is located directly adjacent to and north of Chaska in Chanhassen. The facility contains over 900 acres with about 50 acres of undeveloped property located in Chaska. It features over 5,000 species of plants as well as six miles of trails. It is open year-round and is operated and maintained by the University of Minnesota.

REGIONAL TRAILS

Regional trails are those located on land owned by Carver County, Metro, State and Federal agencies. The following existing and proposed regional trails are relevant to Chaska's trails system.

Minnesota Valley State Trail & Recreation Area

The Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) has developed a comprehensive trail system plan for the Minnesota River Valley from Ft. Snelling to Le Sueur, a distance of 72 miles. The first section of a hard surfaced trail was developed on the former Milwaukee Railroad right-of-way between the Courthouse Lake area in Chaska and The Landing in Shakopee, a distance of about five miles. Unfortunately, the rail bridge across the Minnesota River deteriorated to the point where it was removed by the MN DNR in 1997. The existing state trail consists of a paved trail from The Landing west to the Nyssen's Lake area just southeast of Chaska on the south side of the river. The trail then extends westerly to the T.H. 41 bridge, approximately one half mile south of the Minnesota River (border of Chaska) and then veers south along the river eventually connecting to the cities of Carver and Belle Plaine. The T.H. 41 bridge includes a trail that connects Chaska's river levee trail system to the Minnesota Valley State Trail system. Directly south of Chaska across the Minnesota River, the MN DNR has developed hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking and snowmobiling trails from Chaska upriver to Belle Plaine.

Hennepin County Rail Trails: Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail and Southwest Regional Trail

The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) acquired two abandoned rail lines in the early 1990s for a potential Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) use. The lines originate in Hopkins as two branches of a triangle; the north branch extending

westerly through Minnetonka and Excelsior to Victoria, and the south branch (former C & NW Railroad) extending southwesterly through Eden Prairie and Chanhassen to Chaska. Both of these routes are considered to be long-range LRT projects. In the interim, an agreement between HCRRA and the Three Rivers Park District allows the right-of-way to be used for “temporary” aggregate lime regional trails. These two trail segments were constructed in the mid-1990s. The cities of Chaska and Chanhassen financially participated in constructing the portion of the south branch trail between Bluff Creek Road in Chanhassen to CSAH 61 in Chaska.

The two trails have become very popular and receive extensive use. Both regional trails have proposed future segments near downtown Chaska in order to complete the connections between Victoria and Chaska and Chanhassen.

Metro Council Proposed Regional Trails

The Metropolitan Council’s 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan identifies future planned regional trails and proposed regional trail search corridors. Local comprehensive plans are required to conform to this regional system plan. Trails with relevance to Chaska are:

- » Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail, which is a proposed extension of connection from the existing Southwest Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail at its current terminus in Chanhassen to downtown Chaska and the proposed Southwest Regional Trail;
- » Southwest Regional Trail, which is a proposed connection from the proposed extension of the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail in downtown Chaska to downtown Victoria, Carver Park Reserve, and the proposed Highway 5 Regional Trail
- » Twin Cities & Western Railroad Regional Trail, which is a proposed regional trail that would follow the existing active railroad corridor if there is a change in the status of the use of the tracks.

Chaska’s Trails Plan recognizes these existing and proposed regional trails and identifies connections between the community and regional trail systems.

Carver County 2040 Trail and Bikeway System Plan

Carver County’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan update includes a county wide Trail and Bikeway System Plan that is intended to seamlessly connect the County’s trail and bikeway system with the regional and local trail systems. This plan consists of four types of trails:

- » Destination Trail – paved trail in a Conservation Corridor setting that serves pedestrians and bicyclists;

- » Destination Trail – paved trail in a Rail-to-Trail setting that serves pedestrians and bicyclists;
- » Bikeway – on-road bike lanes or shoulders that serve bicyclists but not pedestrians;
- » Linking Trail – paved trail within roadway right-of-way that serves pedestrians and bicyclists.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY INPUT

In August of 2018, an online questionnaire was promoted to Chaska’s residents to gain input on the existing values and future desires related to parks and recreation. The online questionnaire returned a total of 1,267 responses, of which 79% of the responses were from Chaska residents.

The key findings of the input are summarized below:

- » Residents are engaged – there is a high level of interest from Chaska’s residents and visitors in the future of the parks, recreation, and trails system
- » Residents and park users value the existing biking and walking trails more than other parks and recreation facilities, and building more paved trails is a high priority for park and trail users
- » Protection of natural resources was identified as the highest priority among a list of 19 choices for future initiatives – 44% of respondents strongly agreed it should be a priority, and 34% agreed it should be a priority.
- » After protection of natural resources, the initiatives that more than half respondents agreed or strongly agreed should be priorities include: add more paved trails, improve biking and walking-friendly areas in downtown Chaska, improve park and trail wayfinding with signs and maps, expand indoor recreation facilities for winter use, update the Community Center, update existing playgrounds and park shelters, expand outdoor winter recreation facilities, and add more off-road, mountain bike/hiking trails. Initiatives that were lower on the priority list included adding more parks, athletic fields and facilities, expanding recreation programming, and improving the quality of athletic fields
- » Residents are interested in continued maintenance of the existing system (especially trails) before building new facilities.
- » The word cloud below identifies the most used words in the open-ended question listed above it:

Q4 What else do you feel is a priority in Parks & Recreation over the next 10-20 years?

Add ^{use} better disc golf courses disc golf city need Make
trails Update parks dog park Chaska maintain
community center facilities area great community
keep

- » The open-ended answers include a variety of suggestions, including:
 - Desire for more trails, trail improvements, and trail connections
 - Desire to maintain and improve/repair existing facilities throughout the system
 - Desire to maintain the rural/suburban character of Chaska with wide open spaces and less growth
 - Add mountain bike trails
 - Desire for disc golf
 - Desire for dog park
 - Desire to improve wayfinding on trails
 - Desire to improve the community center, add an outdoor pool

PARKS AND RECREATION TRENDS

- » The following national parks and recreation trends have been identified as potentially having an impact on the use of parks and recreation facilities in Chaska.
- » Increasing Demands on Time
- » Changes in employment patterns are altering patterns of parks and recreation use and are creating more demand at new times. Notable trends include a shorter workweek, flexible work hours, home offices, and two-income households. For example, use of parks during day hours by mothers with toddlers has decreased, but park use at day's end by young family groups has increased.
- » Safety
- » Residents are more concerned about safety in parks and open spaces. Desired features include lighting in parks and along trails, security cameras, and open spaces with long sight lines.
- » Budget Constrained
- » Many communities are dealing with tight budgets due to impacts from the economic recession during 2007/2008. In some cases, maintenance and replacement of recreation facilities has not kept up with the need.
- » Place-Making

- » Destination parks and special facilities, such as event spaces, amphitheaters, bars/restaurants, and unique facilities have been popular developments in recent years as communities try to attract visitors and provide memorable experiences for their residents.
- » Aging Actively
- » People are living longer today than ever before, and many seniors have a desire to stay active as they grow older. Activities, such as pickleball, swimming, walking, and biking, are popular among seniors.
- » Universal Design and Accessibility
- » There is a need for public services, such as parks and recreation facilities, to be designed to meet the needs of all citizens in terms of accessibility and usability.
- » Disconnected From Nature
- » Digital devices, such as mobile phones, tablets, and laptops, provide constant distractions from the outdoors. Parks and recreation need to stay relevant to ensure youth and adults engage with the outdoors.
- » Special Facilities & Non-Traditional Activities
- » There is more interest today in unique and non-traditional recreational activities as people are constantly discovering and learning about new ways to recreate. These include: disc golf, challenge courses, dog parks, splash pads, and pickleball, among others.
- » Green Alternatives
- » Changing weather patterns, increased flooding, larger rain events, and increased development have brought attention to smart stormwater design and best practices for protecting the environment. Implementation of rain gardens, prairie restoration areas, and native landscaping along shorelines have become popular ways to improve the local landscape.
- » Trail Use
- » In many communities, trails are the most requested facility. As the popularity of walking, running, biking, and dog-walking have continued to increase, people are looking for trails that are safe and provide high quality experiences, including loops, off-road paved surfaces, and natural corridors.
- » Changing Winters
- » As winter temperatures have varied in recent years, many communities are finding it difficult to maintain outdoor ice rinks, ski trails, and sledding hills. Refrigerated ice rinks and snow making have been used to provide reliable outdoor winter recreation facilities. Other flexible winter activities, such as fat tire biking, have become popular.
- » More Transient

- » In order to relocate for a job, better schools, or up-size or down-size, people are moving where they live more often now than in past decades. In order to keep local residents informed of offerings, parks and recreation departments should provide ample information through multiple outlets: City website, social media, and mailed/print publications.
- » High Quality Athletic Facilities
- » Artificial turf fields are becoming more popular as a way to provide reliable multi-use athletic fields that require little maintenance compared to natural turf fields. Tournament complexes with multiple features and amenities, such as covered dugouts, concession stands, permanent restrooms, shaded viewing areas, and warm up spaces are also becoming more in demand.
- » Aquatic Facilities & Recreation Centers
- » Many communities provide or are being asked to provide high quality indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities and community or recreation centers that include options for all ages: senior center, teen center, preschool, meeting rooms, event facilities, indoor pool, indoor children’s play area, and fitness center.

PARK LAND ANALYSIS

Park Land Quantity Analysis

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has established a set of metrics for park land acreage and facilities. These metrics include a summary of data collected from around the country that establishes a baseline of comparison for the amount of park land acreage and number of facilities based on a community’s population. A median level of park land for a community between 20,000 and 49,999 residents is 9.6 acres of developed park & recreation land for each 1,000 residents. In the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the City used a standard of 15 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. This metric is a high standard compared to other communities nation-wide.

Application of Chaska’s desired acreage standard of 15 acres per 1,000 residents to Chaska’s past, present and future population levels is calculated in TABLE 7.3 below:

TABLE 7.3: CHASKA PARK LAND ACREAGE ANALYSIS

Year	Population	Existing Developed Park Land Acreage	Minimum Desired Park Land Acreage	Excess / Deficient Acreage	2019 - 2040 Additional Acreage Needed
2018	27,433	628.2 *	411	217.2	—
2030	32,000	684.2 **	480	204.2	—
2040	36,600	684.2 **	549	135.2	—

* Includes 305 acres of public golf courses and 86 acres of school ballfields and playgrounds.

** Includes 305 acres of public golf course, 86 acres of school ballfields and playgrounds and 56 acres of future parks in the SW Growth Area.

According to this standard, Chaska exceeded the 15 acre/1,000 residents standard in 2018 by 217.2 acres which includes 542.2 acres of City-owned developed park land together with 86 acres of joint use District #112 facilities, largely ballfields. This standard demonstrates that the City currently exceeds this general guideline for desirable developed “active” park land on a city-wide quantitative basis, which also includes public golf course land. Other developed open space in the city, which includes numerous trail corridors, is not included in the calculation.

Looking out to the future, this quantitative analysis indicates that the City should add park land to the current park system as the community continues to grow in population. The City has identified two specific parks that are planned for expansion in the future which total approximately 56 acres. The two parks, which are also identified on the 2040 Park & Open Space System Plan, are SW Community Park and the SW Neighborhood Park.

Park Land Mix and Distribution Analysis

In addition to the above quantitative analysis, it is also beneficial to evaluate the various types of parks provided in the community in order to reveal potential deficiencies in the community’s desired mix of parks. An indication of where deficiencies exist can be obtained by comparing existing parks by type, including the particular facilities provided at each park, to the park standards listed in TABLE 7.2.

FIGURE 7.3: PARK SERVICE AREAS MAP

Finally, a parks distribution analysis was conducted, which analyzes park service areas, to determine whether the community's parks are adequately distributed to provide active recreational facilities within an appropriate distance for all residents. The Park Service Area Analysis map (FIGURE 7.3) shows the service areas for all active city parks, including neighborhood parks/playgrounds, mini-parks, community parks, and community playfields. A desired service area of ½ mile radius was used for these parks. This distribution analysis reveals the following:

Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds

- » Existing neighborhood parks or mini-parks are located within one half mile of the majority of residential areas.
- » A few residential areas in the city are more than one half mile from existing neighborhood park facilities. These areas are identified on FIGURE 7.3 as future park search/expansion areas, which include:
 - Downtown Chaska east and west of Hwy 41
 - Riverview Park in the Riverview Terrace neighborhood
 - Neighborhood Three (quadrant northwest of Highway 41 & Highway 212)
 - Hazeltine Lake neighborhood (west and south of lake)
 - Autumn Woods neighborhood (east of Hazeltine Golf Course)
- » Neighborhoods served by mini-parks rather than neighborhood parks/playgrounds should be considered for improved access to neighborhood park facilities when opportunities arise.

Community Parks

- » All of the community parks, with the exception of the Chaska Community Center, are "natural resource based" parks with locations adjacent to or incorporating significant natural features such as lakes, woodlands, bluffs, wetlands, and the creek/ravine system.
- » Community parks, based on the standards in TABLE 7.2, should be 25-100 acres in size. Additional land should be acquired for the planned Lake Bavaria Community Park to achieve this standard.

Community Playfields

- » The four (4) community playfields as well as the school parks/playfields, are well located throughout the community to serve existing residential areas.
- » A new Community Playfield should be considered in coordination with the design and development of the future SW Community Park.

Other Facility Needs

In addition to the traditional parks and recreation facilities discussed above, a desire has also been expressed by various user groups for specialized recreational facilities and sites including an outdoor swimming pool, pickleball courts, a disc golf course, mountain bike trails, and an off-road B.M.X. bike park. The Parks and Recreation Department is giving consideration to accommodating these facilities somewhere in the City.

SUMMARY OF FUTURE PARK NEEDS

Chaska parks and recreation land deficiencies and future needs in 2018 can be summarized as follows:

- » Overall developed park and recreation land exceeds the standard of 15 acres/1,000 persons by more than 200 acres through 2030 and by more than 100 acres in 2040.
- » Whereas existing neighborhood parks are generally well located, several neighborhoods are not adequately served by a neighborhood park or playground due to 1) location outside of the desired park service areas of one half mile, 2) neighborhood park needs being met by an existing mini-park rather than a neighborhood park, and 3) underdevelopment of some existing neighborhood parks.
- » Chaska is served fairly well by four (4) existing Community Playfields as well as the school joint-use facilities at accessible locations. Some additional improvements to and site expansion of these playfields may be needed in the future.
- » The five (5) existing "natural resource based" Community Parks are fairly well positioned throughout the community. Potential park expansion and/or development to meet community park standards are needed.
- » Development of the future SW Community Park should consider including Community Playfield-type facilities.
- » Sites should be explored for more non-traditional recreation activities that have become popular in recent years such as specialized facilities and sites for an outdoor swimming pool, pickleball courts, a disc golf course, mountain bike trails, and an off-road B.M.X. bike park.

Thus, while approximately one third of the developed area in Chaska is permanent park/recreation/open space land, some of the existing parks need further development and/or expansion and new parks are needed to serve the existing and future residential areas.

2040 PARKS, TRAILS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

FIGURE 7.1 identifies the existing and planned parks and open space in Chaska.

FIGURE 7.2 identifies existing and planned trails, trailheads, and trail crossings in Chaska.

GOALS & POLICIES

The following goals are broad, high level statements that reflect the values of the Chaska community regarding parks, recreation, trails, and open spaces. The statements are written to reflect the end results or desired scenarios for the City of Chaska's parks, trails, recreation, and open space system. The following policies shall apply to the acquisition, development and maintenance of park/recreation facilities within the City of Chaska. The goals and policies are organized so that each goal has several policies that relate to achieving the goal. Some policies relate to more than one goal but are listed under the goal that is most applicable.

PARK SYSTEM ACCESSIBILITY GOAL

Chaska's parks and recreation facilities are planned, designed and distributed based on the principle of universal access and design, providing facilities that conveniently accessible and are able to be used by people of all ages, abilities and cultures.

Policies

1. Chaska shall utilize the Park Classifications/Standards presented in TABLE 7.2 as a guideline for acquisition, expansion, development and investment of park, trail, recreation and open space facilities.
2. Chaska shall develop and maintain a city-wide parks/trails system plan as well as individual park master plans for all city parks and playfields to provide a tool for evaluating, planning, designing, and prioritizing needed improvements to the parks/recreation/trails system.
3. Chaska shall consider adding or expanding Neighborhood Park facilities for Future Park Search/Expansion Areas identified on the Park Service Areas Map for the following neighborhoods:
 - a. Riverview Terrace – the park search process should include the area south of Chaska Blvd/Hwy 61 and east of the East Creek diversion channel, as well as potential reinvestment/expansion of the current park facilities;
 - b. Downtown Chaska east and west of Hwy 41;

- c. Jonathan Neighborhood Three (quadrant NW of Highway 41 and Highway 212;
 - d. Hazeltine Lake (neighborhood west and south of lake);
 - e. Autumn Woods (east of Hazeltine Golf Course);
 - f. Moers/Hammers Park – a northern expansion of the existing park should be considered unless future residential development south of the existing park includes sufficient private park/open space facilities.
4. Chaska shall develop Neighborhood Park facilities in conjunction with Community Parks and Community Playfields, where appropriate, such as in Community Park (Clover Ridge neighborhood) and Lions Park.
 5. Chaska shall only develop new mini-parks as a part of Planned Residential Developments that will be owned and maintained by home owners' associations or rental housing owners. In rare cases where a residential development lacks safe or convenient access to a neighborhood park, a City-owned mini-park may be considered.
 6. Chaska shall develop additional Community Park facilities, including the following:
 - a. Lake Bavaria Park – consider partnering with Carver County to develop as a County Park in conjunction with their existing boat launch, rerouting Shady Oak Drive (a potential roadway turnback from the County to the City) south of the future park, and acquiring additional park land to meet Community Park size standards;
 - b. Southwest Community Park – a future Community Park adjacent to the remnant Big Woods and including playfields.
 7. Chaska shall ensure that new residential conservation/cluster development proposals in Greenbelt areas are required to evaluate the potential needs for both active and passive neighborhood parks.
 8. Chaska shall provide safe and convenient pedestrian access to neighborhood parks by means of a neighborhood pedestrian movement system to be designed as a part of each residential development.

TRAIL SYSTEM GOAL

Chaska's trail system is designed as a conveniently accessed and attractive community-wide network that links neighborhoods to community destinations (commercial, schools, civic, recreation), downtown, and the city's wealth of natural areas.

Policies

1. Chaska shall provide trail access between neighborhood parks and the Linear Parks and Trails system.
2. Chaska's trail system shall include on road trails (i.e. Pioneer Trail) and off road trails (i.e. Highway 41); however, the preference is for the latter. Off road, paved trails shall be installed along one side of all collector and arterial roadways.
3. Chaska's paved trails along roads shall provide for safe destination oriented travel. The roadway trail network also serves activity centers and trip generators.
4. Chaska shall strive to achieve a trail network that provides for multi-use recreational travel while encompassing the community natural resource system. Border plantings shall identify the public-private boundaries within the trail system. The trail system will connect community activity centers and trip generators in addition to providing a means of travel for the destination-oriented user whenever possible.
5. Chaska shall provide trails through natural open space corridors and trailhead facilities in the Chaska Greenbelt to enable public access to natural resource corridors within the Greenbelt, at such time that these areas develop with residential conservation/cluster development.
6. Chaska shall optimize reuse of the abandoned Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way for providing convenient links within the City's trail system.
7. Chaska shall plan for the connection of regional trails with the City's trail system; however, the use of the connecting regional and community trails should be compatible. For example, regional agencies should not indicate a snowmobile trail leading to the City limits if snowmobiles are not permitted in that part of the City.
8. Chaska shall partner with, support, and encourage State, County, and other agencies in developing trail connections within and to Chaska.
9. Chaska shall consider the potential for formally incorporating off road mountain biking/hiking trails (unpaved) into its trail system, including engaging with these type of trail users and conducting a trail planning and design study.

PARK AND TRAIL INVESTMENTS GOAL

Chaska is committed to making the investments needed to ensure a high quality parks, trails, recreation and open space system is designed, developed, improved and maintained into the future.

Policies

1. Chaska's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identifies the five-year plan for constructing additional parks and trails and is updated annually.
2. Chaska shall determine acquisition and development responsibilities for specific projects within the CIP. Timing of construction will depend upon connection to trip generators or residential areas, major roadway projects, and grants.
3. Chaska shall acquire land for open space corridors through the City's CIP. Development and maintenance of trails within open spaces are City responsibilities. This procedure is the same as that which the City has been pursuing to date and which best guarantees uniformity and usability of the greenway system.
4. Chaska shall make every effort to pursue cost sharing options with other jurisdictions (i.e. State, County) when proposed trails are in State, County, or other agencies' rights-of-way. New developments adjacent to collector or arterial streets shall continue to pay their proportionate share of roadway trails, as has been the past practice.
5. Chaska shall require that the provision of neighborhood trails are the financial responsibility of the developer and shall not be credited against the park land/fee dedication responsibility. The premise is that neighborhood trails are primarily a transportation system as opposed to being part of the park system.

NATURAL RESOURCES PRESERVATION GOAL

Chaska's parks and open spaces contain natural resource areas that are protected and conserved for the purposes of wildlife habitat, ecological function, environmental services, and aesthetic interest.

Policies

1. Chaska shall preserve and protect the existing and future Community Linear Park/Ravine system in its natural state. It is not essential to own the ravine and attendant wetland system and bluff areas in order to protect them. The City shall use conservation/scenic easements and environmental ordinances as effective preservation devices.
2. Chaska shall provide pedestrian accessibility to the Community Linear Park System from proximate residential areas as well as from appropriate commercial/industrial and public areas.
3. Chaska shall optimize preservation of natural resource corridors in Greenbelt areas, with any subdivision of land or change of use, particularly new residential conservation/cluster development proposals.
4. Chaska shall support preservation of and connections to the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area and Trail within the lower Minnesota River Valley.
5. Chaska shall support preservation of and connections to the Chaska Lake Unit of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
6. Chaska shall ensure that the City's trail system is connected to the Regional, State and Federal trail systems.
7. Chaska shall require land dedication for the remaining segments of the City's 2040 Trail System as property is platted and developed.
8. Chaska shall complete the trail system throughout the Community Linear Park System through the acquisition of additional right-of-way outright or by easement. The types of pathways and attendant development, such as rest areas and signs, should be complementary to the desired natural setting.

COMMUNITY RECREATION BENEFITS AND ENGAGEMENT GOAL

Chaska's Parks and Recreation Department has strong relationships with community residents and visitors to ensure that the facilities and programs provided continue to meet the community's recreational needs and desires.

Policies

1. Chaska's Parks and Recreation Department maintains a strong connection with its community residents and visitors through attentive service, responsiveness to residents' needs, and engaged staff members.
2. The health and wellness of Chaska's residents are supported by parks and recreation. Residents are healthy and active through their use of parks, trails, and open spaces, and their participation in the City's and its partner organizations' recreation programs.
3. Chaska's parks and recreation department stays aware of current recreation trends and continuously evaluates its system for new programs and facilities to meet the needs and desires of its changing population.
4. Chaska's parks, trails, and recreation facilities incorporate technological advances, such as interactive signage and wayfinding, wifi, lighting, and security measures. Recreation programming and information is delivered using sophisticated technological methods.
5. Chaska's parks, facilities, and recreation system includes spaces and programs that support and promote the arts and reflect the culture of its diverse population.
6. Chaska shall encourage the continued joint use of school district, Jonathan Association, County and other available recreational facilities by the general public.
7. Chaska shall utilize partnerships and joint use agreements with other agencies, private organizations and businesses, athletic associations, volunteers, and other groups in order to provide efficient recreation services.
8. Chaska shall make efforts to ensure community residents are engaged during park planning processes in order to incorporate the desires and needs of residents into new parks and facilities.
9. Chaska shall provide current park maps and easily accessible parks and recreation information on its website.

10. Chaska shall develop and enhance primary and secondary trailheads as defined and identified in the Chaska Wayfinding Master Plan and shown on Figure.7.3, Chaska Trails Map. Primary trailheads are located at places with convenient roadway access and vehicle parking, sometimes providing trail signage (L-shaped wood kiosks), shared bike parking and restrooms. Secondary trailheads would include trail access and wayfinding signage, not necessarily parking or other amenities.
11. Chaska shall develop park and trail wayfinding signs as identified in the Chaska Wayfinding Master Plan as follows:
 - a. Trail Gateway Marker: where the city's trails cross the city's border, signs welcome visitors to Chaska's trail system
 - b. Trailhead Kiosk: trailheads downtown and at major trail intersections provide detailed trail maps and a place to rest
 - c. Trail Map Sign: primary trail intersections throughout the community provide trail maps
 - d. Trail Directional Sign: secondary trail intersections provide signs that point to major destinations, identify trail names, and identify distances from standard starting points

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK GOAL

Chaska contains a fully connected pedestrian and bicycle network with paved trails that connect residential neighborhoods to community destinations and provide multiple trail loops for leisure, fitness and other recreation experiences.

Policies

1. Chaska shall strive to make streets more pedestrian friendly in general.
2. Chaska shall utilize the following standards when designing and implementing trails and sidewalks. The standards recognize the use of low volume, local access streets for pedestrian movement, but they require sidewalks on one side of sub-collector streets for safety, leisure and destination purposes. Pedestrian breakthroughs are required where sidewalks and local access streets do not accommodate desired pedestrian movement.

Guidelines for Designating Residential Sub-Collector Streets

The following guidelines shall be used as a basis for identifying sub-collector streets in existing neighborhoods and new subdivisions at the time they are submitted for review and approval. The premise is that by identifying sub-collector streets at an early stage of subdivision review, and by requiring sidewalks along all sub collector streets, the process of designing a neighborhood pedestrian movement system will be easier, more objective and non-controversial.

In most cases, the criteria below are not meant to be absolutes, rather, they should be treated as guidelines. It is not necessary for a sub-collector street to meet each of the criteria.

Residential sub-collector streets have some or all of the following characteristics:

- a. Carry residential through traffic generated by tributary local streets;
- b. Carry residential through traffic between adjacent neighborhoods;
- c. Carry through traffic, which does not have origin or destination within the neighborhood;

- d. Connect to minor arterial or collector streets;
 - e. Are over 1,200 feet in length;
 - f. Carry over 500 trips per day on some portion of the street;
 - g. Have relative continuity within a neighborhood as opposed to cul de sacs or short loop streets; and/or
 - h. Carry significant school children traffic.
4. Chaska shall provide pedestrian accessibility to the Linear Park System from proximate residential areas as well as from appropriate commercial, industrial and public areas.
 5. Chaska shall determine the provision of sidewalks based on the type of development, pedestrian needs, and proximate trail connections to each subdivision.
 6. Chaska shall strive to provide trail crossings of minor arterial roadways and some collector streets that are grade separated or occur at signalized intersections for safety purposes.
 7. Chaska shall ensure that roadway trails are physically separated from the street pavement by a safe distance — in the range of seven (7) to 12 feet, and also be located in full view of roadway motorists.
 8. Chaska shall ensure that safe and convenient internal pedestrian circulation shall be provided as an integral part of the design of new residential areas.
 9. Chaska shall require that the acquisition and development of the neighborhood system of sidewalks and backwalks will be the responsibility of the developer separate from the park dedication responsibility. Maintenance responsibility for sidewalks will be with the lot owner, and the backwalk system will be with the homeowners' association or lot owner in that order. The City will not pursue backwalk systems in areas where a homeowners' association does not exist.
 11. Chaska shall ensure that its neighborhoods contain pedestrian circulation systems that serve a wide variety of purposes including the following:
 - a. to help achieve unified, cohesive neighborhoods and enhance Chaska's sense of neighborhood and community,
 - b. to promote social interaction among neighborhood residents,

- c. to provide leisure walking/jogging opportunities,
 - d. to provide pedestrian access to neighborhood parks, adjacent community trails, nearby community park and recreation facilities, other public/semi-public facilities, and other similar destinations within convenient walking distance, and
 - e. to provide safe walking opportunities in areas of moderate to high vehicular traffic volumes — generally over 300 trips per day.
12. Chaska shall ensure that within all new non-Jonathan neighborhoods, five-foot wide concrete sidewalks are provided along both sides of all residential local streets and, to the extent possible, shall form a continuous walkway system by connecting to other neighborhood or community trails.
13. Chaska shall allow within Jonathan neighborhoods, pedestrian backwalks may be provided in place of sidewalks along residential local streets, as desired by the Jonathan Association; however, where such backwalks do not provide for a reasonable level of personal safety, then traditional sidewalks should be installed.
14. Chaska will not require pedestrian backwalks in non-Jonathan neighborhoods unless a homeowner’s association exists for ownership/maintenance purposes, or unless unusual circumstances dictate the use of such backwalks.
15. Chaska will not require sidewalks along local streets, in recognition of their low traffic volumes and their non-continuous nature; however, in certain cases, such sidewalks may be required in order to achieve continuity in the walkway system, or to provide access to adjacent or proximate destinations.
16. Chaska may require pedestrian breakthroughs between lots in order to provide access to proximate destinations such as parks and community trails. New residential areas should be designed to avoid pedestrian breakthroughs to the extent possible.
17. Chaska shall review new subdivisions on an individual basis, depending on the varied characteristics of each development, regarding the specific makeup of the required internal pedestrian circulation system.
18. Chaska’s City Council shall have discretionary authority to require neighborhood trails where necessary or desirable to carry out the above policies.

