Assessment of Need

2.1 Overview

Assessing the needs of the community is a critical first step in developing a park and trail system master plan because it represents those who it is intended to serve. This plan reflects the needs of the community at the time it was written, in conjunction with a system-wide review and analysis, review of current trends in recreation, and comparison to national recreation standards.

The Prior Lake 2040 Park & Trail System Plan replaces the previous planning documents and will require ongoing measuring, monitoring and updating to ensure the needs of the community are continuing to be met as changes to needs and trends take place over time.

2.2 Demographics

The City of Prior Lake is located approximately 20 miles southwest of Minneapolis in Scott County. The city is located adjacent to Savage and Shakopee, with the townships of Spring Lake and Credit River located to the south and southeast of the city. Portions of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) are located within the Prior Lake city limits.

Overall the city encompasses 19.09 square miles of land with 3.18 square miles classified as water bodies. In 2004, the City entered into an orderly annexation agreement with Spring Lake Township that will eventually add approximately 3,000 additional acres to the city. Much of this land is vacant or agricultural land, however there are some existing single-family residential lots. The orderly annexation agreement expires in 2025 which will then limit annexation to approximately 80 to 120 acres per year, until such a time when this may be renewed.
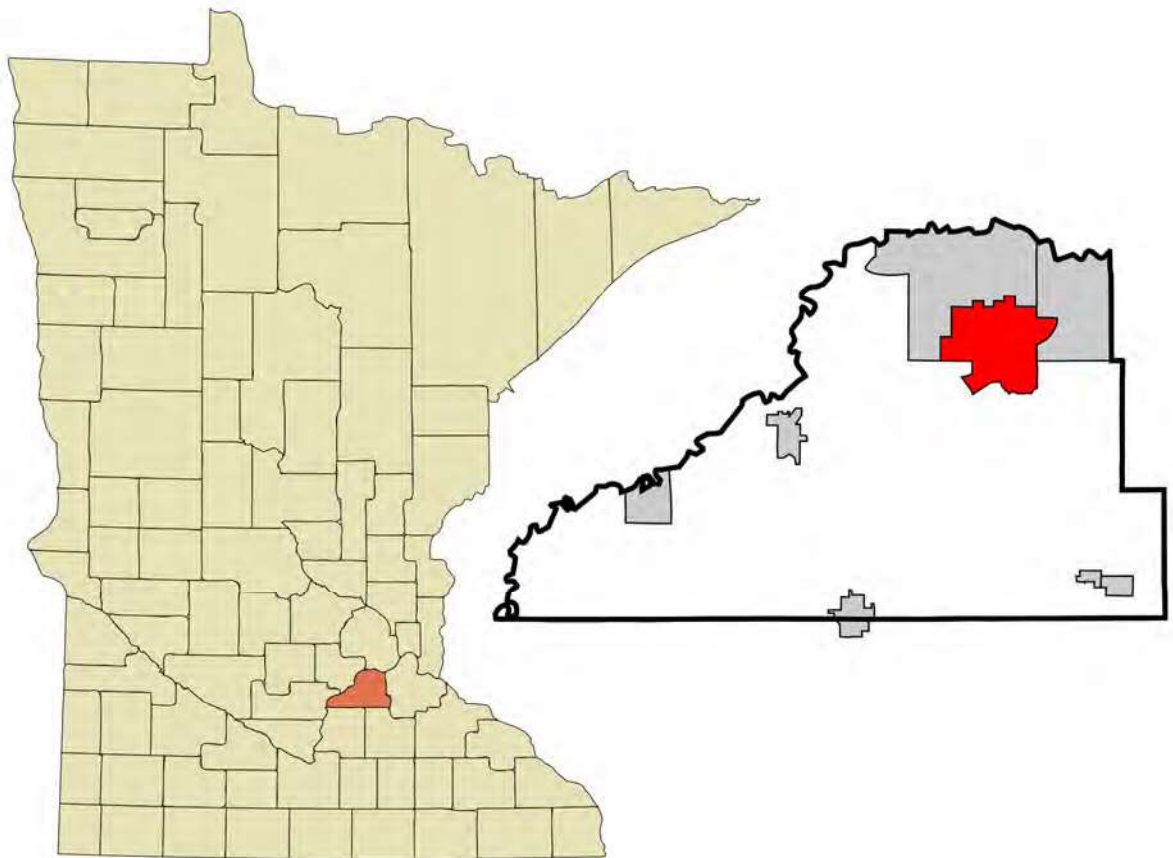

Image by Arkyan - My own work, based on public domain information. Based on similar map concepts by Ixnayonthetimmay, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2934232

Demographic changes will continue to impact preferences for transportation, housing, and park needs. For instance, both millennials and seniors will be seeking walkable neighborhoods and expanded trail facilities, while transportation options for commuting remain a high priority for those who work outside of Scott County.

The following is an overview of the demographics for Prior Lake, which will affect the parks, trails and recreational needs as the community continues to grow and evolve.

A. General Tapestry Segmentation

High level demographics for Prior Lake were determined using a Tapestry Segmentation that provides dominant categories for the community. The top four dominant communities identified in Prior Lake are described in greater detail to include 4A, 1C, 7A and 6A.
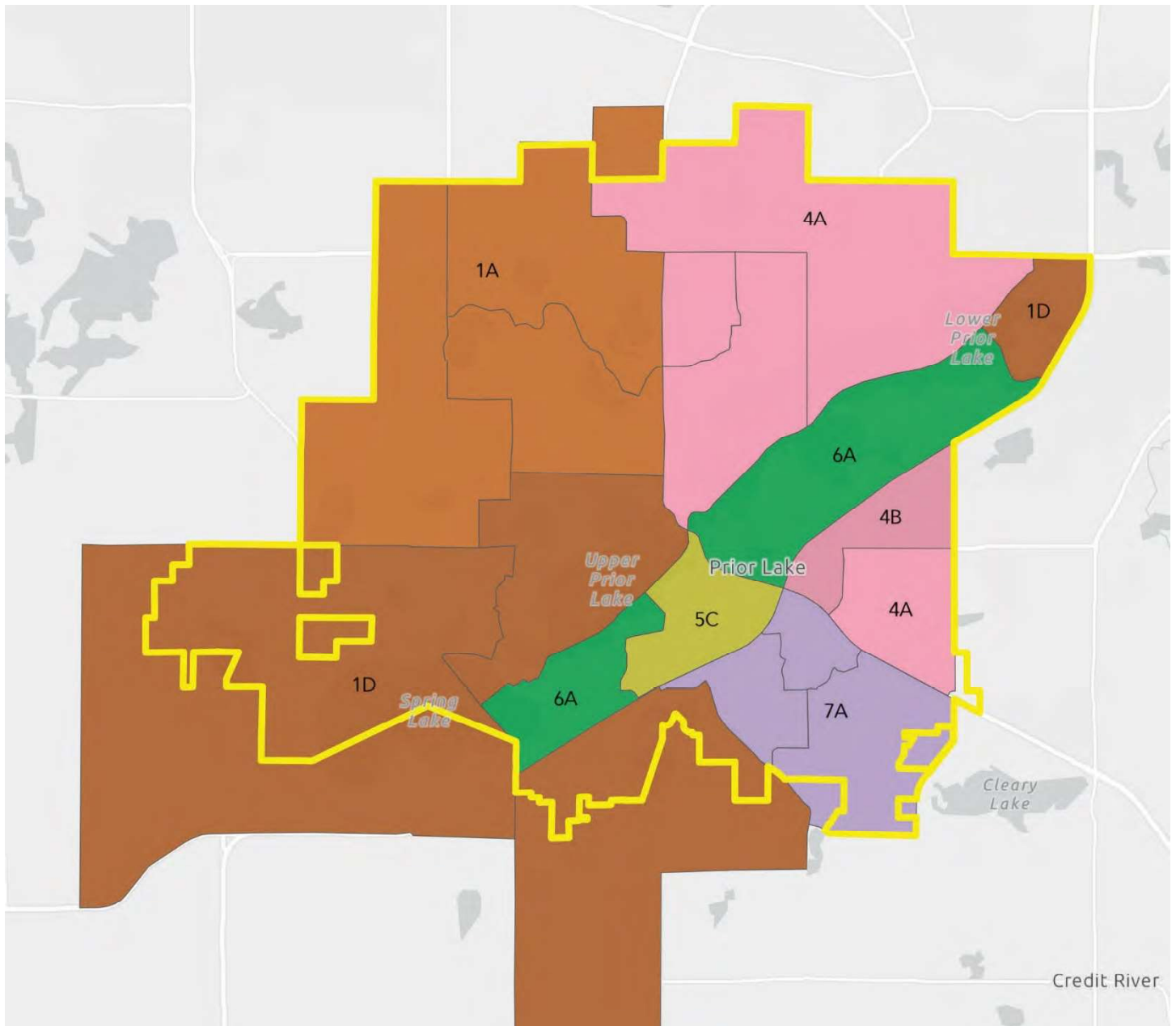
4A: Workday Drive (24.5% households) – Family Landscapes

- Average Household Size: 2.97
- Median Age: 37.0
- Median Household Income: $90,500

WHO ARE WE?

Workday Drive is an affluent, family-oriented market with a country flavor. Residents are partial to new housing away from the bustle of the city but close enough to commute to professional job centers. Life in this suburban wilderness offsets the hectic pace of two working parents with growing children. They favor time-saving devices, like banking online or housekeeping services, and family-oriented pursuits.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- *Workday Drive* residents prefer the suburban periphery of metropolitan areas.
- Predominantly single family, homes are in newer neighborhoods, 34% built in the 1990s (Index 236), 31% built since 2000.
- Owner occupied homes have high rate of mortgages at 68% (Index 164) and low rate vacancy at 4%.
- Median home value is $257,400.
- Most households are married couples with children; average household size is 2.97.
- Most households have two or three vehicles; long travel time to work including a disproportionate number commuting from a different county (Index 132).

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: 40.5% college graduates; more than 72% with some college education.
- High labor force participation rate at 71%; two out of three households include two plus workers (Index 124).
- Connected, with a host of wireless devices —anything that enables convenience, like banking, paying bills, or even shopping online.
- Well insured and invested in a range of funds, from savings accounts or bonds to stocks.
- Carry a higher level of debt, including first (Index 149) and second mortgages (Index 154) and auto loans (Index 149).

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

1C: Boomburbs (18.8% households) – Affluent Estates

- Average Household Size: 3.25
- Median Age: 34.0
- Median Household Income: $113,400

WHO ARE WE?

This is the new growth market, with a profile similar to the original: young professionals with families that have opted to trade up to the newest housing in the suburbs. The original *Boomburbs* neighborhoods began growing in the 1990s and continued through the peak of the housing boom. Most of those neighborhoods are fully developed now. This is an affluent market but with a higher proportion of mortgages. Rapid growth still distinguishes the *Boomburbs* neighborhoods, although the boom is more subdued now than it was 10 years ago. So is the housing market. Residents are well-educated professionals with a running start on prosperity.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Growth markets are in the suburban periphery of large metropolitan areas.
- Young families are married with children (Index 220); average household size is 3.25.
- Homeownership is 84% (Index 134), with the highest rate of mortgages, 71.5% (Index 173).
- Primarily single-family homes in new neighborhoods, 66% built since 2000 (Index 441).
- Median home value is $350,000 (Index 169).
- Lower housing vacancy rate at 3.7%.
- The cost of affordable new housing comes at the expense of one of the longest commutes to work, over 30 minutes average, including a disproportionate number (33.6%) commuting across county lines (Index 141).

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Well-educated young professionals, 55% are college graduates (Index 178).
- High labor force participation at 71.3% (Index 114); most households have more than two workers (Index 124).
- Longer commute times from the suburban growth corridors have created more home workers (Index 156).
- Well connected, own the latest devices and understand how to use them efficiently; biggest complaints—too many devices and too many intrusions on personal time.
- Financial planning is well under way for these professionals.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

7A: Up and Coming Families (17.8% households) – Sprouting Explorers

- Average Household Size: 3.12
- Median Age: 31.4
- Median Household Income: $72,000

WHO ARE WE?

Up and Coming Families is a market in transition—residents are younger and more mobile than the previous generation. They are ambitious, working hard to get ahead, and willing to take some risks to achieve their goals. The recession has impacted their financial well-being, but they are optimistic. Their homes are new; their families are young. And this is one of the fastest-growing markets in the country.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- New suburban periphery: new families in new housing subdivisions.
- Building began in the housing boom of the 2000s and continues in this fast-growing market.
- Single-family homes with a median value of $194,400 and a lower vacancy rate.
- The price of affordable housing: longer commute times (Index 217).

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: 67% have some college education or degree(s).
- Hardworking labor force with a participation rate of 71% (Index 114).
- Most households (61%) have two or more workers.
- Careful shoppers, aware of prices, willing to shop around for the best deals and open to influence by others' opinions.
- Seek the latest and best in technology.
- Young families still feathering the nest and establishing their style.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

6A: Green Acres – Cozy Country Living

- Average Household Size: 2.70
- Median Age: 43.9
- Median Household Income: $76,800

WHO ARE WE?

The *Green Acres* lifestyle features country living and self-reliance. Avid do-it-yourselfers, they maintain and remodel their homes with all the necessary power tools to accomplish the jobs. Gardening, especially growing vegetables, is a priority, again with the right tools, tillers, tractors, and riding mowers. Outdoor living features a variety of sports: hunting and fishing, motorcycling, hiking and camping, and even golf.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- This large segment is concentrated in rural enclaves in metropolitan areas.
- Primarily (not exclusively) older homes with acreage; new housing growth in the past 15 years.
- Single-family, owner-occupied housing, with a median value of $235,500.
- An older market, primarily married couples, most with no children.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: More than 60% are college educated.
- Labor force participation rate is high at 66.8% (Index 107).
- Income is derived not only from wages and salaries but also from self-employment (more than 13% of households), investments (27% of households), and increasingly, from retirement.
- They are cautious consumers with a focus on quality and durability.
- Comfortable with technology, more as a tool than a trend: banking or paying bills online is convenient; but the internet is not viewed as entertainment.
- Economic outlook is professed as pessimistic, but consumers are comfortable with debt, primarily as home and auto loans, and investments.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

B. 2020 Census Data
Source: US Census

The US Census lists the 2020 population estimate at 27,617 which has grown approximately 21% from the 2010 census of 22,796, and currently has a median age of 39 years and a median household income of $108,481.

Ethnicity & Diversity

While the community is predominantly white, the minority population is showing growth and is expected to continue, which will affect the types of recreation and programs desired.

According to the U.S. Census for 2020, race of the population is predominantly white alone at 88.7% followed by 2+ races and Asian alone at 3.9% each, Hispanic / Latino at 3.6%, Black / African-American at 1%, and American Indian / Indigenous at 0.7%. It is estimated that 8.6% of the households speak a language other than English at home.

Income & Education

The city of Prior Lake is considered fairly affluent with a median household income of $108,481 though there was a slight decline of 1.02% from 2019 to 2020. The median property value was $348,700 and home ownership rate was 86%. One item to note is that some of the higher income areas in Prior Lake can be attributed to the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) lands.

C. Demographic Influences on Recreation

Some basic demographics of Prior Lake are highlighted on the following maps to illustrate population groupings based on age, income and minority populations. This allows a high-level view of the city to identify population groupings that may have disparities in access to quality recreation or the types of recreation desired. The one item to note is that the SMSC lands and populations are served by their own park system but are still taken into consideration.

The minority population grouping map identifies the highest minority populations shown in dark forest green which is the SMSC property. Additional areas with higher diversity are the next level down of dark green. Some of these areas include higher density neighborhoods.
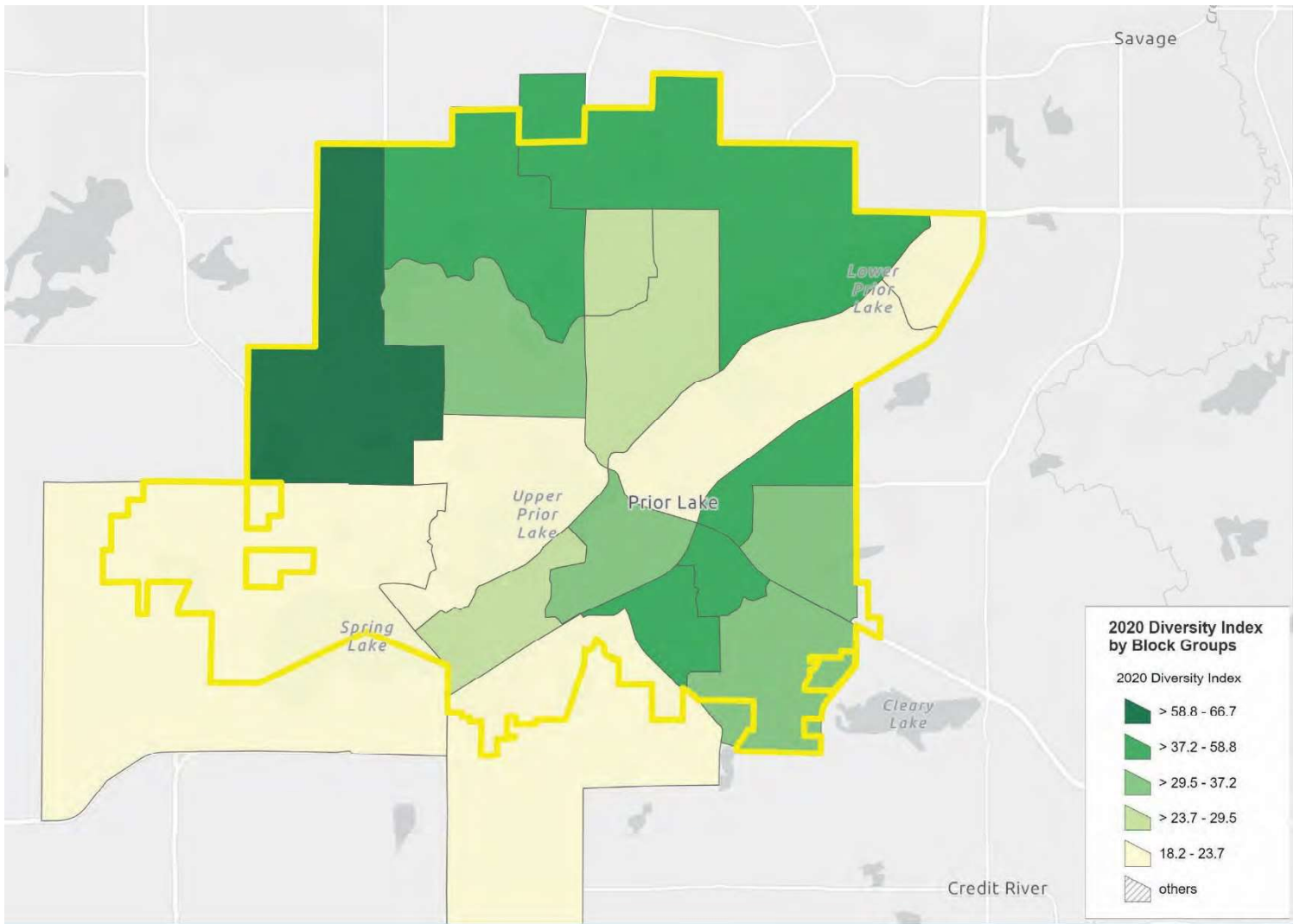
October 17, 2023

The median household income map identifies one grouping of high-income households shown in dark green which correlates to the SMSC property and some of the Wilds housing development. As the map shows, the lower income locations are primarily around the downtown area and south of Hwy 13 where there are higher density homes and older single family homes.

2023 Median Household Income by Block Groups

2023 Median Household Income
- > $169,672 - $193,983
- > $142,308 - $169,672
- > $119,103 - $142,308
- > $93,187 - $119,103
- $58,639 - $93,187
- others
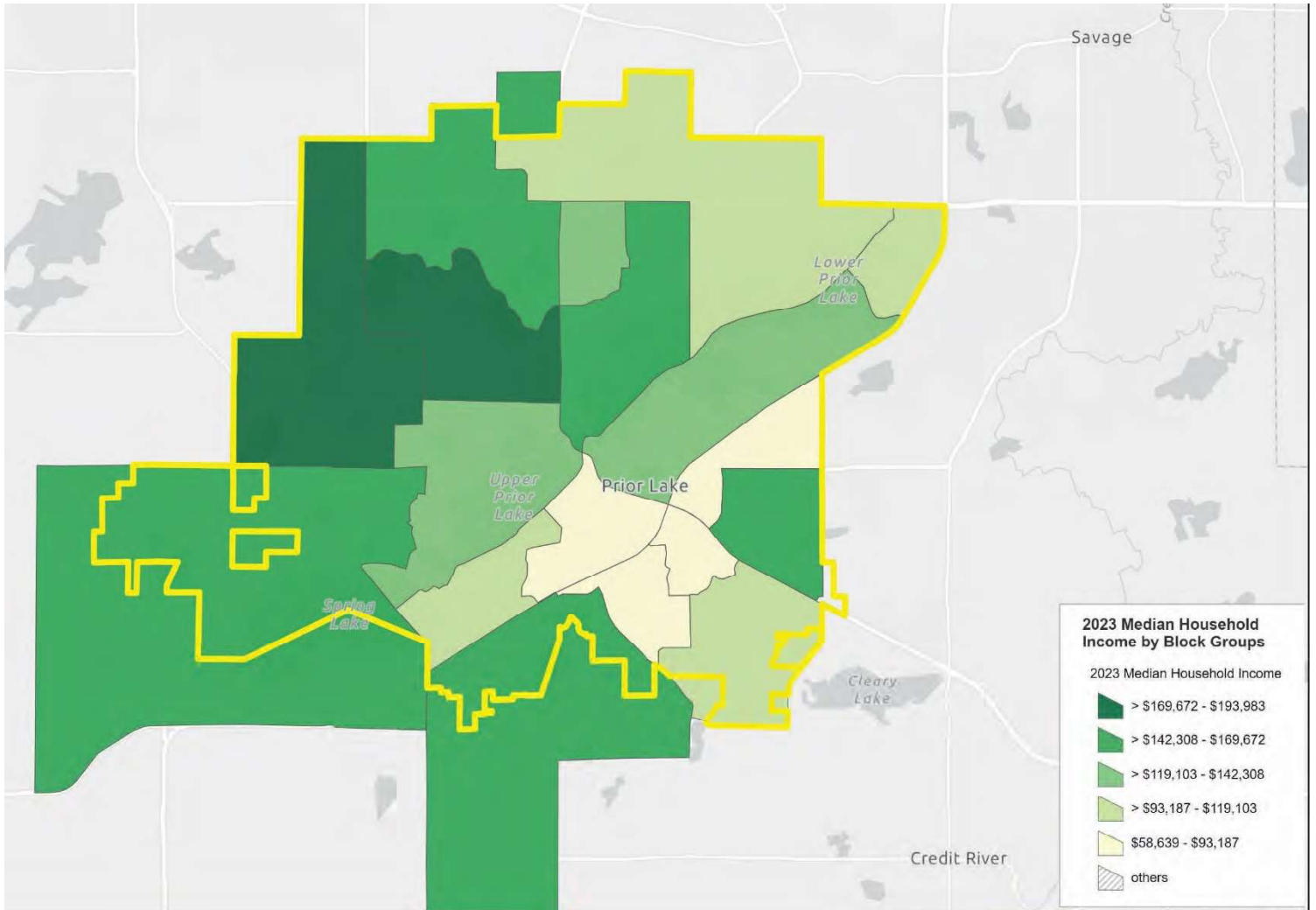
October 17, 2023

The population density map correlates with the previous income map showing that the neighborhoods just south of Hwy 13 and some neighborhoods around the downtown area have both the highest densities and lowest incomes.

Many of these populations can have a higher percentage of residents who do not own a vehicle, have limited mobility, and may also lack their own yard space. Many can't even afford to own a bike to access recreation. These populations are looking for convenient opportunities and pedestrian connections to access outdoor recreation, food opportunities, pharmacies, or convenience items.

2023 Population Density by Block Groups

2023 Population Density

- > 3,989 - 4,444.9
- > 3,225.1 - 3,989
- > 2,443.6 - 3,225.1
- > 914.4 - 2,443.6
- 312.7 - 914.4
- others
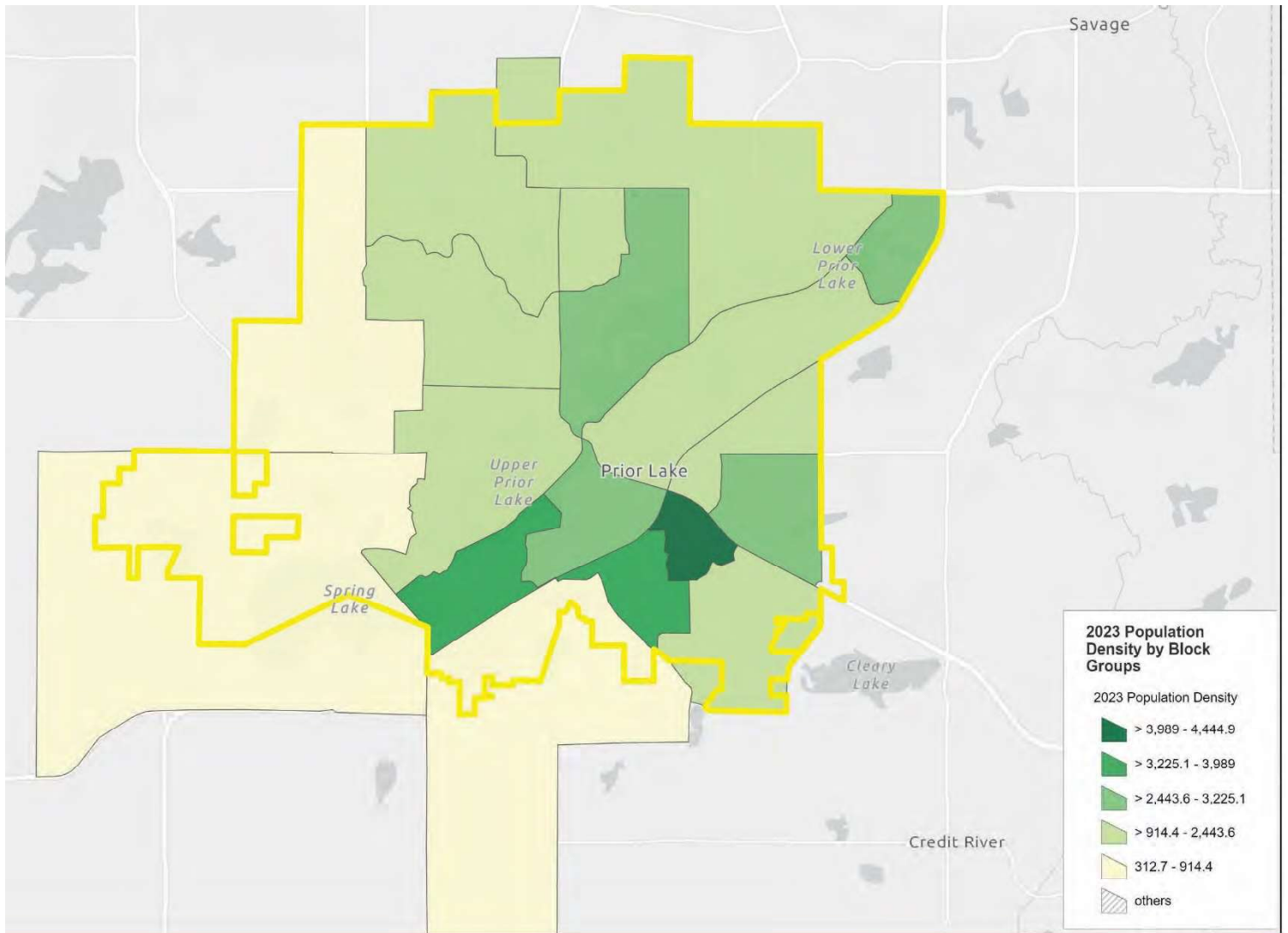
October 17, 2023

2.3 Stakeholder Engagement & Recreational Trends

A. Input Summary

A comprehensive stakeholder engagement process was undertaken as part of the planning effort, allowing for a better understanding of the current views, desires and trends related to parks, trails and recreation. The planning process encompassed a variety of engagement methods in order to reach a broad diversity of stakeholders and perspectives.

B. Engagement Methods

A variety of engagement methods were used in the planning process to gather input and feedback on topics related to parks, trails and recreation and allowed for a greater audience to be reached than is normally found with just the use of standard public open house meetings.

The following outlines the engagement input methods used during the planning process with a variety of social media and press methods utilized for project awareness.

Social Pinpoint
Interactive online engagement map

Pop-Up Event & Misc. Engagement Boards
- Lakefront Days (Aug.3, 2018)
- Sand Point Beach Party (Aug. 17, 2018)
- Lakefront Music in the Park (Aug. 17, 2018)
- Fall Fest at PLS HS
- City Hall Board
- Club Prior Board
- Mayor's Town Hall Meeting (Nov. 15, 2018)

Steering Committee Meetings
- #1 Brainstorming
- #2 Data Findings Review
- #3 Draft Plan Review

Stakeholder Interviews & Input
- City Staff
- PLS School District
- SMSC
- Prior Lake Soccer Club
- PLAY & PLABA
- Pickleball Group
- Scott County Parks / Three Rivers Park District
- City of Prior Lake Hockey
- Citizen Engagement Committee
- City Council
- MNCAPS

Social Media & Press
- Mayor's Video w/survey
- Priority Survey
- City of PL Facebook
- Press Releases & Articles
- City of Prior Lake Newsletter

Pop-Up Meetings

Pop-Up meetings involved setting up a table or booth at various locations and events in the community in order to go where people would already be, rather than trying to get them to come to us. Four specific locations and events were targeted to try and reach varying groups and included:

- Lakefront Days Celebration
- Sand Point Beach – Beach Party
- Lakefront Music in the Park
- Fall Fest at the Prior Lake Savage High School
- Input Bingo boards at various locations

Stakeholder Interviews & Input

Individual meetings were held with select stakeholders in order to gather more in-depth information related to parks and recreational programs and were primarily focused on active recreation and athletics in order to understand programming needs. It also included gathering information from city staff who facilitate recreational programs to better understand concerns related to providing quality and effective programs that are meeting the needs of the residents.

A few select groups and organizations were also included in the interviews to participate in the planning process such as Scott County Parks, the Prior Lake Savage School District and MNCAPS, which is a student let organization that supplemented input from the teen demographics.

Committees, Commissions & City Council

The use of a Steering Committee of approximately 18 to 20 members was included in the planning process to include diverse members and perspectives based on their affiliation or area of expertise. The committee members provided input, feedback and acted as project liaisons to the community or particular associations in order to inform others and gather additional information. The committee held 3 formal meetings and was also invited to a park tour with the City Council.

- Meeting #1: Project visioning & brainstorming
- Meeting #2: Preliminary findings review
- Meeting #3: Draft master plan review

Additional input was gathered through the use of online videos and two community surveys, as well as attendance at both public and informal meetings with the following:

- Citizen Engagement Committee
- City Council
- Mayor's Town Hall
- Public Open House

Social Pinpoint

An online interactive project map, Social Pinpoint, was developed and utilized through the stakeholder engagement phase of the project. The online tool has a drag and drop feature for adding comments, ideas and feedback on a map of Prior Lake with the ability to provide anonymous information and comment with "Likes" or "Dislikes" on other comments. This tool was especially helpful in gathering specific concerns or ideas at very specific locations within the city and to reach those who could not otherwise participate in public meetings.

Over 400 comments were placed on the map and are included in the Appendix.
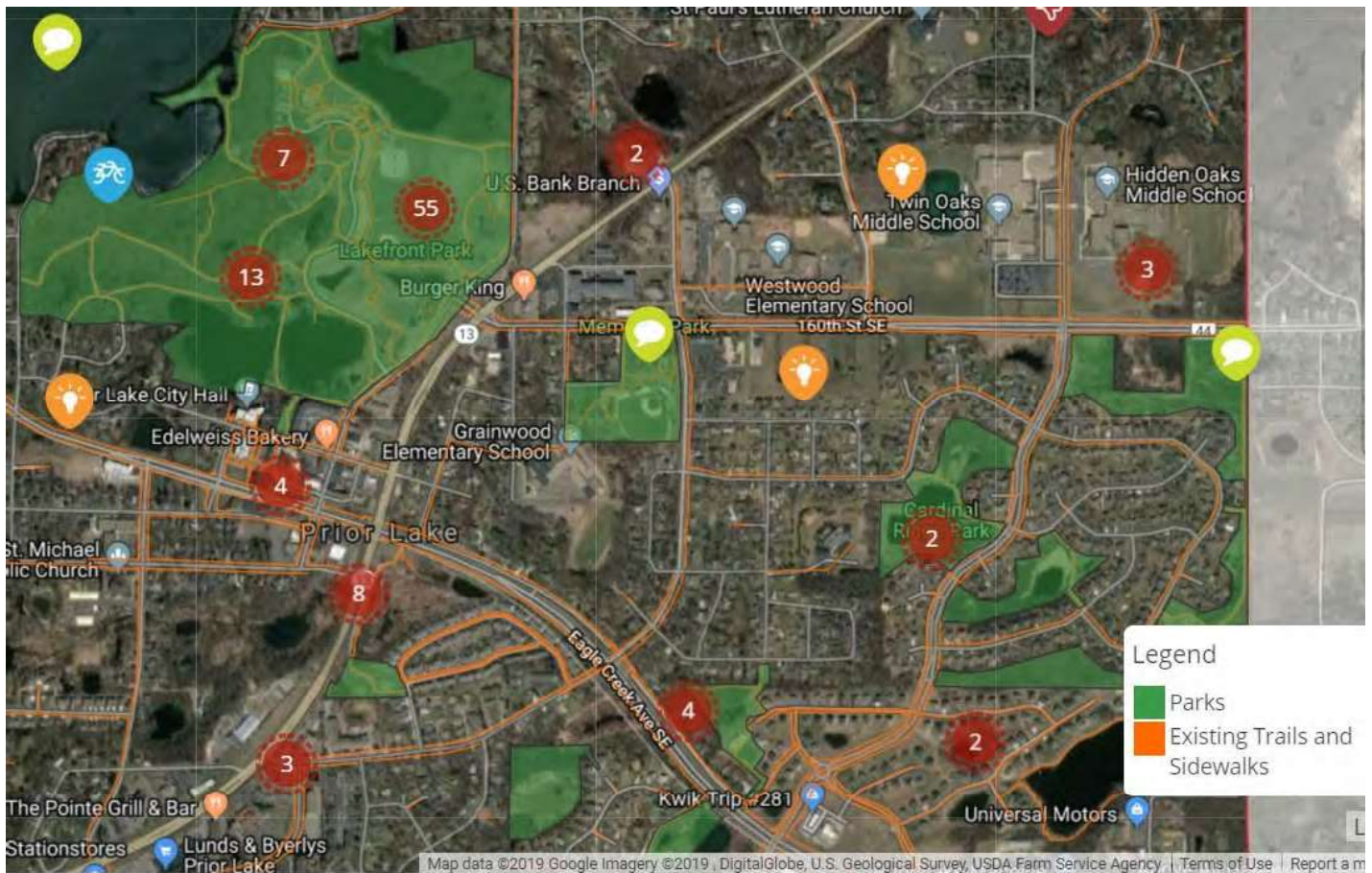
Would love to have proactive consideration to public access and trails around any lakes in PL before they become over developed with private property and houses. It's such a shame we can't take a walk around Prior Lake and there is such limited public access.

4 months ago   Like 👍 +4 Dislike 👎

It would be great to see Sandpoint Park turned into a place like Fireman's park in Chaska with upgraded playground equipment, better sandy beach, and a food stand. Prior Lake is a Great Lake but it's hard to beat the amenities that other towns offer at their beaches.

C. Recreational Trends

Over the past decade there have been significant changes in recreational trends in Minnesota and nationally, while other types of recreation continue to remain constant in popularity. The trends in recreation will continue to evolve and ongoing engagement with the community is critical to understand what the current needs and demands are so the city can provide the right types of recreation. It is important to allow for some flexibility in the system to be able to make the changes necessary to meet these needs.

Trails

Trail use is one type of recreation that continues to rise in popularity and is generally the most desired amenity. Wide multi-use and separated trails generally are more desirable due to increased safety and the overall quality of the experience than is found on narrow trails or trails adjacent to, or mixed with, vehicular traffic.

Seniors / Retirees

Trends related to seniors and retirees is the desire for more active types of recreation and programs. Some specific desires and trends for this group include:
- Pickleball (ability for tournaments)
- Card games
- Social time (coffee shops, wine tasting, etc.)
- Trips / excursions
- E-bikes (electric assisted bikes)
- Activities to enjoy with grandkids
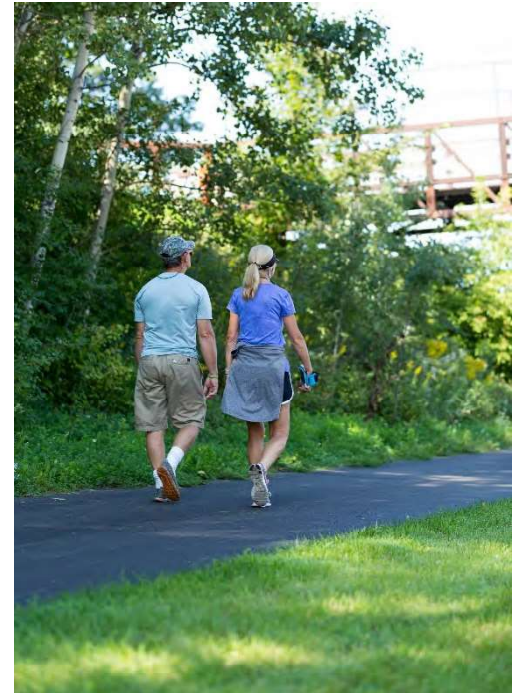
Youth and Teens

Common trends related to youth recreation remain to be focused on fun outdoor play, programs and organized athletics. Field sports like soccer, lacrosse and rugby are still trending up or are leveling while other sports, such as football and baseball, are seeing decreases, though this tends to vary from community to community. Girls fastpitch is still remaining fairly level and in some cases seeing increased participation

While teens tend to be more difficult to reach than youth, especially girls, many are just looking for places to hang out with their friends. Trends in this group has seen increased interest in more challenging types of recreation. More recently there has been a dramatic increase in the desire to participate in, or simply watch, online gaming events. Trap shooting has also taken off nationwide and Minnesota in particular has seen significant increases in participation with trap club tournaments held state-wide.

Some specific desires and trends for this group include:
- Full basketball courts
- Skate parks
- Splash pads & water recreation
- Challenge / Ninja course
- E-sports (competitive online gaming)
- Trap shooting / clubs
- Food availability (Door Dash, food trucks)
- Hang out areas / socializing
- Mountain biking / fat tire biking
- Fishing
- Gaga ball

Convenience & Access

The park, trail and recreation system should allow for convenient and easy access to varying forms of recreation to meet the diverse needs and demographics of the community, as well as improving physical access with routes and amenities that meet ADA guidelines.

Many want the ability to participate in recreation activities and programs without having to purchase their own gear and equipment, while some do not have the ability to purchase their own gear due to financial situations. Ensuring equipment and activities are available to meet the needs of varying income levels is important to an active and healthy community along with reduced or waived fees for participating.

Many families or individuals also lack the time to plan out or participate in activities. People live very hectic lifestyles, kids are highly programmed and there are those who cannot participate in recreational programs due to the fact that many programs are scheduled during standard working hours.

In order to have more successful recreational programs, cities need to consider some programs that are outside of standard weekday hours, provide the ability to utilize equipment to experience or learn a new type of recreation and ensure there is public awareness of the programs and recreation available.

2.4 Findings

The engagement process resulted in a list of items that the community desired and valued the most, along with ideas for future improvements and additions. Generally, the community felt that the overall quality of the parks, trails and recreation programs was more important than adding more to the system and community parks ranking higher in priority than neighborhood parks.

The feedback was organized into the following guiding themes.

Connectivity

Quality

Sustainability
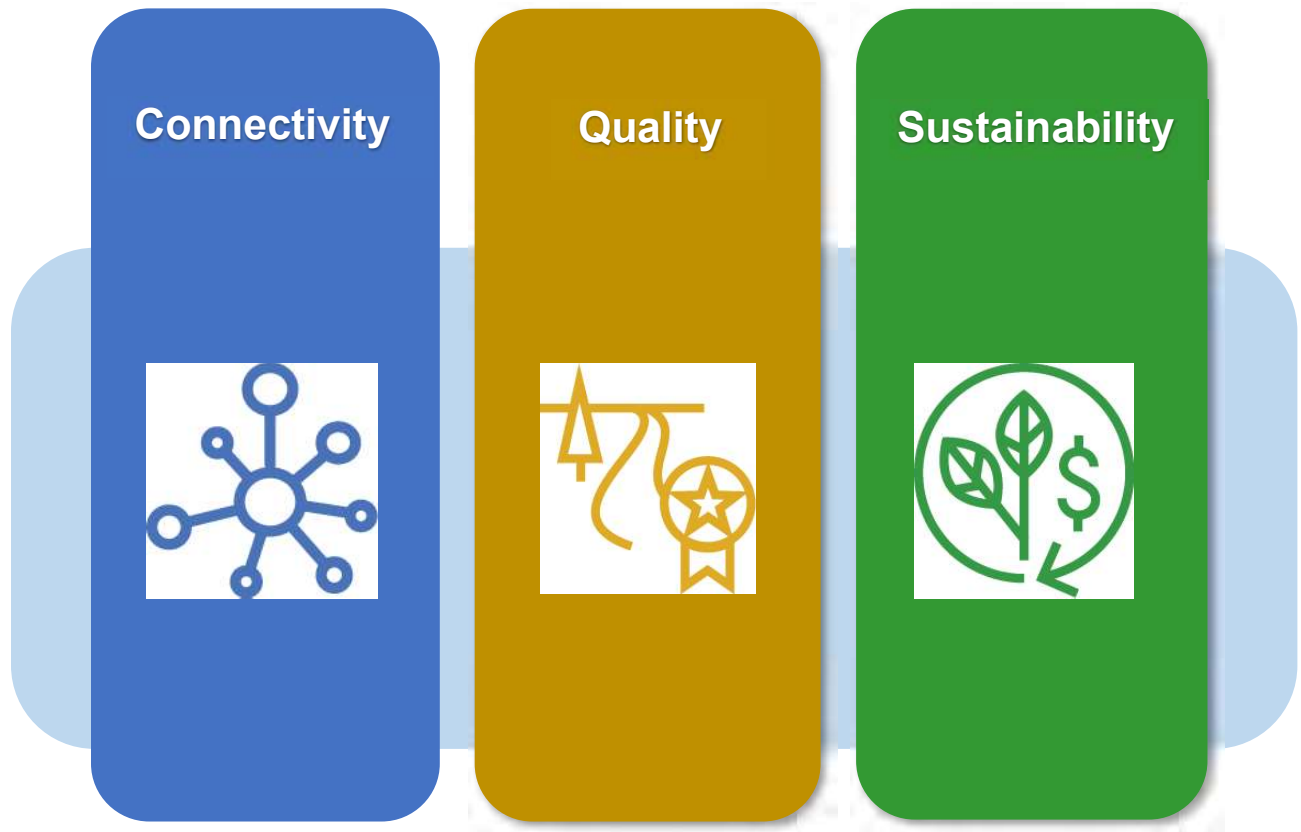
Connectivity

Connectivity refers to improved physical access to parks and recreation and improving the overall sense of community by connecting with the residents.

Accessibility

Accessibility relates to both the concept of the community having proper access to parks, trails and recreational programs, as well as ensuring the system accounts for varying abilities. Specific desires related to accessibility include:

- Improve public access to the lakes and the ability to connect with nature
- Inclusive playground (meeting varying needs)
- Ensure access to a high-quality park within each neighborhood service area
- Recreational programs outside of standard work hours
- Trails and routes meeting ADA guidelines
- Safe pedestrian crossings
- Wayfinding measures throughout the city

Sense of Community

This relates to effectively connecting the residents to their community by improving the overall sense of belonging. This is important for numerous reasons and a high sense of belonging can lead to improved support for future improvements, participation in programs, and volunteering efforts. Specific desires related to sense of community include:

- Civic events and programs reaching broader cultures and diverse users
- Programs located in relation to the populations being served
- More memorable experiences
- Ongoing community engagement
- Awareness of volunteer opportunities
- Improved "Sense of Place" through distinct community identity and characteristics (materials, public art, theming)
- Connect to, and highlight, the culture and history of the community

Quality

The community felt that the overall quality of the parks, trails and recreation programs was much more important than adding more to the system and are identified under the following categories.

Community Parks & Recreation

Community parks and recreation ranked very high in terms of overall priority due to it serving the broader community with a variety of active and passive recreation and is also a source of revenue for the city. Specific desires related to community parks include:

- Renovate Lakefront Park due to importance as key park and the current age/condition of the amenities
- Redevelop Sand Point Beach to provide a higher quality park and beach experience
- Improve Thomas Ryan Memorial Park (parking, drainage, overall quality)
- Improve The Ponds (parking, drainage, overall quality)
- Develop Pike Lake passive use park
- Additional community park desired with athletics with the following considerations:
  - Large baseball field (1-2)
  - 200' Softball (2-4)
  - Indoor or covered turf field
  - Flexible space for growth & rotation
  - Refrigerated outdoor hockey rink
- Consideration of community center and/or improved senior and fitness center

Safety

A high-quality system is one that users feel safe in and will lead to increased participation and overall satisfaction. Specific desires related to safety include:

- Proper lighting and visibility
- Safe pedestrian crossings
- Proper maintenance and replacement (park amenities, trails, etc.)
- Consideration of surveillance

Experience

The overall quality of parks, trails and recreation is gauged by the actual experience users have while participating. Specific desires that would improve the overall experience include:

- Restrooms in parks
- Drinking fountains
- Wifi in parks and improved technology in meeting or rental spaces
- Locations for shade and rest in parks and along trails
- Active and social senior programs & trips
- Diverse programs to reach groups that are more difficult (teens, low-income, new residents, minority populations, etc.)
- Control of insects and invasive or other harmful plants (mosquitoes, poison ivy, etc.)
- More diverse parks and playgrounds (avoid cookie-cutter approach)
- Varying levels of challenge
- Better skate park
- Proper maintenance of amenities
- Improved quality of water and natural resources

New / Added Recreation

Keeping up with current recreational trends is important to overall satisfaction and participation for a quality system. Specific desires related to new and diverse recreation amenities include:

- Updated programs to encourage use
- Splash pad
- Dog Park
- Rock climbing feature
- Unique play features
- Challenge / ninja course
- Nature play
- Fitness circuits
- 4- season recreation
- Equipment rentals
- Archery

Sustainability is a broad term and in the context of this plan relates to the city being able to adequately provide and maintain a healthy and high-quality system for the community under the following categories.

Consolidation

Consolidation of amenities to provide more unique experiences while lowering the costs of ongoing maintenance and replacement was a key goal by the community and include:

- Avoid over-duplication of amenities / facilities within service areas
- Provide more complementary and unique experiences
- Balance the needs of diverse user groups

Sustainable Practices

Specific design, construction and maintenance procedures can result in higher-quality experiences with lower costs related to maintenance and replacement and include:

- Provide adequate parking in relation to the development and programming
- Program sites appropriately to minimize over-use and conflicts
- Allow for flexible spaces to account for future changes and trends
- Utilize construction and maintenance techniques that will result in a higher quality, reduced maintenance and longer life-span
- Utilize newer methods or technologies to maximize efficiency and/or reduce carbon footprint
- Implement a natural resource management plan to aid the resistance of the natural spaces against ongoing pests and diseases and improve pollinator habitats

Oversight and Management

Oversight of the parks, trail and recreation system is necessary to ensure a successfully managed system to implement the needs and includes the following tasks:

- Financial oversight / revenue generation
- Identify and apply for funding opportunities
- Promote partnerships
- Community engagement
- Establish and update priorities for implementation
- Manage staff

2.5 Recreation Design Standards

The National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) is an organization that strives to provide access and recreation to all people, no matter the race, age, income level or ability. The NRPA provides tools and resources to local park and recreation agencies to get the community engaged, participate in programs, and to funding opportunities to meet goals. The NRPA focuses on three pillars:

Health and Wellness

"Leading the nation to improved health and wellness through parks and recreation"

Conservation

"Protecting open space, connecting children to nature, and engaging communities in conservation practices"

Places for Everyone

"Ensuring all people have access to the benefits of local parks and recreation"

The NRPA has park metrics and ratios that can be used to evaluate the existing park system in comparison to similar communities. There are numerous factors that come into play beyond the overall population-based standards and it is recommended that cities conduct routine evaluations to determine how their overall system is functioning based on more specific data to identify improvement opportunities.

The following are general comparisons and ratios determined by the NRPA for park design and recreation standards based on communities with similar populations in order to evaluate some typical amenities, though these can vary based on the park system goals and objectives, trends and other specific community needs. This is especially true for programmed athletics which are dictated by current participation rates, rather than total population, and Prior Lake athletics include adjacent communities with a shared school district.

Prior Lake is estimated at a population of 27,617 and in most cases exceeds the minimum recommendations and national comparisons provided by the NRPA.

NRPA Metrix Comparison	City of Prior Lake
1 park per 1,849 residents served	51 Designated Parks (all developed and undeveloped) = 1 park per 541 residents 41 Developed Parks = 1 park per 673 residents
9.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents	51 Designated Parks (all developed and undeveloped) = about 30 acres per 1,000 residents Developed Parks = about 20 acres per 1,000 residents
1 playground per 3,600 residents	1 playground per 673 residents
1 basketball court per 3,600 residents	1 court per 1,100 residents
1 ballfield per 6,519 residents	1 Ballfield (all) per 840 residents 1 Ballfield (suitable for programmed use) per 2,184 residents
1 ice rink per 17,310 residents	1 outdoor rink per 13,420 residents
1 tennis court per 4,545 residents	1 outdoor court per 13,420 residents

The following is a comparison between Prior Lake and adjoining or similar communities based on information from the Trust for Public Land ParkServe ® Tool.

City	Population	% Within ½ Mile	% Land Parks	# Parks
Prior Lake	27,617	89%	12%	51
Savage	33,472	85%	8%	23
Shakopee	43,749	74%	5%	40
Lakeville	73,256	79%	7%	88
Rosemount	26,998	85%	3%	26

The NRPA standards recommend that one quality developed park be located within 1/2 mile of every household, which is considered a 10-minute walk.

Prior Lake generally meets the goal of having a developed park within 1/2 mile to households, though in a few instances there were some areas outside of this distance and in other instances, there was an overlap of service distances.

One item to note is that some households may be located within a 1/2 mile of a park, but there may be a barrier for safe and adequate access to that park, such as a major roadway, water body, etc.

The following identifies the number of amenities currently in the Prior Lake park system.

Park Amenity Description	Existing
Archery Range	1
Ballfields	32
Basketball Courts	24
Beach	2
Concessions	3
Hockey Rinks	2
Play Equipment	40
Pleasure Skating Rink	6
Picnic Shelter	50
Pickleball Courts	16*
Restrooms	7
Skatepark	1
Soccer/Football Fields	5
Tennis Courts	2*
Volleyball Courts	8

*Includes (8) Pickleball courts striped on the tennis courts at Lakefront Park.

The system was mapped to identify neighborhood service areas based on known barriers in order to correctly identify gaps. This in turn helped to identify locations for future park search areas at a neighborhood and community level.

The following maps include:

- Park Service Area Analysis: Also known as the Gap Analysis which illustrates the existing ¼ to ½ mile park neighborhood service areas (developed parks only) with barriers such as primary roadways to identify locations not currently serviced adequately, as shown in red.

- Park Search Areas: Potential locations where future park development should be considered in line with development.

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Park Service Area Analysis

CITY OF PRIOR LAKE · MINNESOTA

LEGEND:

- COMMUNITY PARKS
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
- COMMUNITY / SPECIAL USE PARK
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- NATURAL PARK / OPEN SPACE
- SMSC PROPERTY
- CITY BOUNDARY
- EXISTING TRAILS
- EXISTING SIDEWALKS
- ROADWAY BARRIER
- 1/4 AND 1/2 MILE RADIUS DEVELOPED PARK
- NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE AREA
- SCHOOL SERVICE AREAS
- PASSIVE SERVICE AREA ONLY
- OUTSIDE ALL SERVICE AREAS
- OUTSIDE ALL SERVICE AREAS FUTURE ANNEXATION

N
W E
S
1 inch = 1600 feet

0   700   1,400   2,800   4,200   5,600   Feet

PARK LISTING:

1: Boudins (G2)
2a: Cardinal Ridge (Markley) (F4)
2b: Cardinal Ridge (F4)
3: Carriage Hills (E2)
4a: Crystal Lake (E4)
4b: Crystal Lake / Hickory Shores (D5)
5: Deerfield (F4)
6: Eagle Brook (F4)
7: Enclave at Cleary (F5)
8: Fairway Heights (D3)
9: Fish Point (F3)
10: Glynwater (D3)
11: Grainwood Crossing / Herritage (E3)
12: Green Oaks (F3)
13: Haas Lake (D2)
14: Horkey at Shepherds (D2)
15: Howard Lake (C4)
16: Indian Ridge (F3)
17: Island View (D3)
18a: Jeffers Pond Park (D2)
18b: Jeffers Pond Preserve (D2)
19: Knob Hill (E2)
20: Lakefront (E3)
21: Meadow View (C2)
22: Memorial (E4)
23: North Shore Oaks (F2)
24: North Wood (C4)
25: Northwood Meadows (C4)
26: Oakland Beach (G2)
27: Pike Lake (E1)
28: Raspberry Ridge (E3)
29: Raspberry Woods (E2)
30: Raymond (C5)
31: Rice Lake (D5)
32: Rotary Gateway (E4)
33: Sand Point Beach (F2)
34: Sand Point Park (F2)
35: South Shore (C5)
36: Spring Lake (C3)
37: Stonebriar (D4)
38: Summit Ridge (F1)
39: Sunset Hills (D4)
40: The Ponds (E4)
41: Thomas Ryan Memorial (E5)
42: Timbercrest (E4)
43: Trillium Cove (E2)
44: Westbury Ponds (D4)
45: Wilderness Pond (F4)
46: Wilds (D3)
47: Wilds North (C2)
48: Willows (D4)
49: Woodridge (E4)
50: Woods at the Wilds (D2)
51: Woodview (D5)

* Spring Lake Regional Park
* Cleary Lake Regional Park

Park Search Areas

CITY OF PRIOR LAKE
MINNESOTA

LEGEND:

- COMMUNITY PARKS
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
- COMMUNITY / SPECIAL USE PARK
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- NATURAL PARK / OPEN SPACE
- SMSC PROPERTY
- CITY BOUNDARY
- EXISTING TRAILS
- EXISTING SIDEWALKS
- ROADWAY BARRIER
- COMMUNITY PARK SEARCH AREA
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SEARCH AREA

N E S W

0 700 1,400 2,800 4,200 5,600 Feet
1 inch = 1400 feet

PARK LISTING:

1: Boudins (G2)
2a: Cardinal Ridge (Markley) (F4)
2b: Cardinal Ridge (F4)
3: Carriage Hills (E2)
4a: Crystal Lake (E4)
4b: Crystal Lake / Hickory Shores (D5)
5: Deerfield (F4)
6: Eagle Brook (F4)
7: Enclave at Cleary (F5)
8: Fairway Heights (D3)
9: Fish Point (F3)
10: Glynwater (D3)
11: Grainwood Crossing (E3)
12: Green Oaks (F3)
13: Haas Lake (D2)
14: Horkey at Shepherds (D2)
15: Howard Lake (C4)
16: Indian Ridge (F3)
17: Island View (D3)
18a: Jeffers Pond Park (D2)
18b: Jeffers Pond Preserve (D2)
19: Knob Hill (E2)
20: Lakefront (E3)
21: Meadow View (C2)
22: Memorial (E4)
23: North Shore Oaks (F2)
24: Northwood (C4)
25: Northwood Meadows (C4)

26: Oakland Beach (G2)
27: Pike Lake (E1)
28: Raspberry Ridge (E3)
29: Raspberry Woods (E2)
30: Raymond (C5)
31: Rice Lake (D5)
32: Rotary Gateway (E4)
33: Sand Point Beach (F2)
34: Sand Point Park (F2)
35: South Shore (C5)
36: Spring Lake (C3)
37: Stonebriar (D4)
38: Summit Ridge (F1)
39: Sunset Hills (D4)
40: The Ponds (E4)
41: Thomas Ryan Memorial (E5)
42: Timbercrest (E4)
43: Trillium Cove (E2)
44: Westbury Ponds (D4)
45: Wilderness Pond (F4)
46: Wilds (D3)
47: Wilds North (C2)
48: Willows (D4)
49: Woodridge (E4)
50: Woods at the Wilds (D2)
51: Woodview (D5)
* Spring Lake Regional Park
* Cleary Lake Regional Park

OPTIONAL: SMALL NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- 3-5 ACRES
- ACTIVE & PASSIVE
- TRAIL CONNECTIONS
- MAY ELIMINATE NEED FOR THIS PARK IF COMMUNITY PARK IS DEVELOPED WITHIN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD

COMMUNITY PARK LOCATION OPTIONS
- 20-30 ACRES
- ACTIVE & PASSIVE
- ATHLETC FIELDS

OPTION: LARGE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- IF COMMUNITY PARK IS NOT DEVELOPED IN THIS AREA
- 8-10 ACRES
- ACTIVE & PASSIVE
- SOME ATHLETIC FIELDS
- TRAIL CONNECTIONS

MEDIUM NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- 5-8 ACRES
- ACTIVE & PASSIVE
- SOME ATHLETIC FIELDS
- TRAIL CONNECTIONS

OPTION #2: COMMUNITY PARK
- IF SPRING LAKE PARK IS NOT DEVELOPED WITH ATHLETIC FIELDS
- 20-30 ACRES
- ACTIVE & PASSIVE
- ATHLETIC FIELDS
- NATURAL RESOURCES
- WATER ACCESS (FISHING)
- TRAIL CONNECTIONS

SMALL NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- 3-5 ACRES
- FOCUS ON ACTIVE
- TURF SPACE
- TRAIL CONNECTIONS

MEDIUM NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- 5-8 ACRES
- ACTIVE & PASSIVE
- TRAIL CONNECTIONS

OPTION #1: LARGE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- IF SPRING LAKE PARK IS DEVELOPED WITH ATHLETIC FIELDS
- 10+ ACRES
- ACTIVE & PASSIVE
- SOME ATHLETIC FIELDS
- NATURAL RESOURCES
- WATER ACCESS (FISHING)
- TRAIL CONNECTIONS

MEDIUM NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- 5-8 ACRES
- FOCUS ON ACTIVE
- TURF SPACE
- TRAIL CONNECTIONS

2.6   System Assessments

A.   Park Building Assessments

An architectural assessment was completed for specific park buildings, that included the following:

- Lakefront Park Main Pavilion
- Sand Point Beach Concessions Building

The assessments considered overall age, condition, accessibility, and specific code compliance or safety concerns that were identified. The assessments were completed to provide knowledge of specific items that are of concern for improvements and to understand the overall context of costs related to repairs or replacements. This section provides a high-level overview of the results of the assessments and more in-depth information can be found in the Appendix.

Lakefront Park Main Pavilion

The assessment did not identify any major problems and is currently functioning as intended, though is nearing the end of its useful life with items in need of improvements or replacement. There were also items identified as desired to allow the building to function better for the user groups.

At the time of the assessment, it was determined that various improvements would improve the overall function and desirability of the building, though more in-depth studies would need to be completed to determine if the costs for renovation are more cost-effective than a full building replacement.

Sand Point Beach Concessions

The assessment identified ADA accessibility as the primary concern related to access to the building, as well as proper access within the building areas. The building is old and nearing the end of its useful life but still functioning.

At the time of the assessment, it was determined that various improvements would improve the overall function and desirability of the buildings. The building could be renovated for approximately $250,000 to $300,000 or a new building could be considered that would better serve current needs and expand upon programming. While the costs to renovate are more cost-effective than a full replacement, the overall life span and desirability of the facility will affect decision making regarding the funding approach.

B. Park Assessments

A general assessment was completed for each park site to evaluate how the park was meeting the service needs of the community based on overall design, character, condition of the amenities, age of the amenities, and accessibility. This evaluation was based on a numerical rating for each category and individual assessments should be referenced to understand in greater detail what specifically contributed to the rating score given.

Overall, the parks have been maintained very well, are very inviting and most appear to be in fair to good condition. Specific concerns upon closer inspection show that many park amenities are older in age, as many of the parks were developed 20 or more years ago and are now reaching the end of their useful life and are in need of replacement. Other specific items are related to accessibility which can sometimes be easily remedied.

The park level of service ratings are color coded according to the following rating breakdowns:

Black = Not Rated
this was generally for park sites that were undeveloped at the time of the assessment.

Purple = Very Good; rated greater than 75%
- o High quality facility exceeding minimum design standards
- o Generally newer in age and in very good condition
- o Accessibility meets most to all requirements
- o Minor improvements or maintenance needs

Green = Good; rated at 61%-75%
- o Meets or exceeds minimum design standards
- o Generally mid-level in age to newer and in good condition
- o Accessibility meets most requirements
- o Adequate for now, minor improvements identified

Yellow = Adequate; rated at 40%-60%
- o Meets minimum design standards
- o Generally mid-level in age or older and in fair condition
- o Accessibility meets some requirements
- o Some varying improvements likely required, approaching end of life

Red = Low / Poor; rated below 40%
- o Does not meet minimum standards
- o Generally older in age and in less than ideal condition
- o Accessibility meets few to no requirements
- o Liability issue, requires more immediate attention

LEGEND

■ = Very Good >75%   ■ = Good 61%-75%   ■ = Adequate 40%-60%   ■ = Low/Poor <40%

PARK NAME	PARK #	RATING	PARK NAME	PARK #	RATING
Boudins	1	57.1%	Oakland Beach	26	46.7%
Cardinal Ridge (Markley)	2a	50%	Pike Lake	27	58.3%
Cardinal Ridge	2b	36.1%	Raspberry Ridge	28	49.5%
Carriage Hills	3	61.3%	Raspberry Woods	29	41.7%
Crystal Lake / Hickory Shores	4a/4b	27.8%	Raymond	30	43.8%
Deerfield	5	39.6%	Rice Lake	31	83.3%
Eagle Brook	6	93.3%	Rotary Gateway	32	61.1%
Enclave at Cleary	7	84.0%	Sand Point Beach	33	41.5%
Fairway Heights	8	36.1%	Sand Point Park	34	40.6%
Fish Point	9	26.7%	South Shore	35	40.3%
Glynwater	10	33.3%	Spring Lake	36	91.7%
Grainwood Crossing / Heritage	11	55.6%	Stonebriar	37	62.5%
Green Oaks	12	47.6%	Summit Ridge	38	93.3%
Haas Lake	13	33.3%	Sunset Hills	39	22.2%
Horkey at Shepard's	14	29.2%	The Ponds	40	34.2%
Howard Lake	15	62.5%	Thomas Ryan Memorial	41	60.7%
Indian Ridge	16	33.3%	Timbercrest	42	50.0%
Island View	17	36.1%	Trillium Cove	43	72.2%
Jeffers Pond Park & Preserve	18a/18b	51.8%	Westbury Ponds	44	20.8%
Knob Hill	19	46.7%	Wilderness Pond	45	27.8%
Lakefront w/Watzl's	20	47.7%	Wilds	46	48.4%
Meadow View	21	45.8%	Wilds North	47	47.2%
Memorial	22	41.7%	Willows	48	44.1%
North Shore Oaks	23	8.3%	Woodridge	49	41.7%
Northwood	24	45.8%	Woods at the Wilds	50	39.6%
Northwood Meadows	25	72.6%	Woodview	51	58.3%

The park level of service ratings were mapped to help determine the neighborhood parks that would be of higher priority for improvements based on current level of service condition, the neighborhood service area, ability to program, and the populations served. This is to ensure that each neighborhood service area has access to at least one quality park or recreational area.
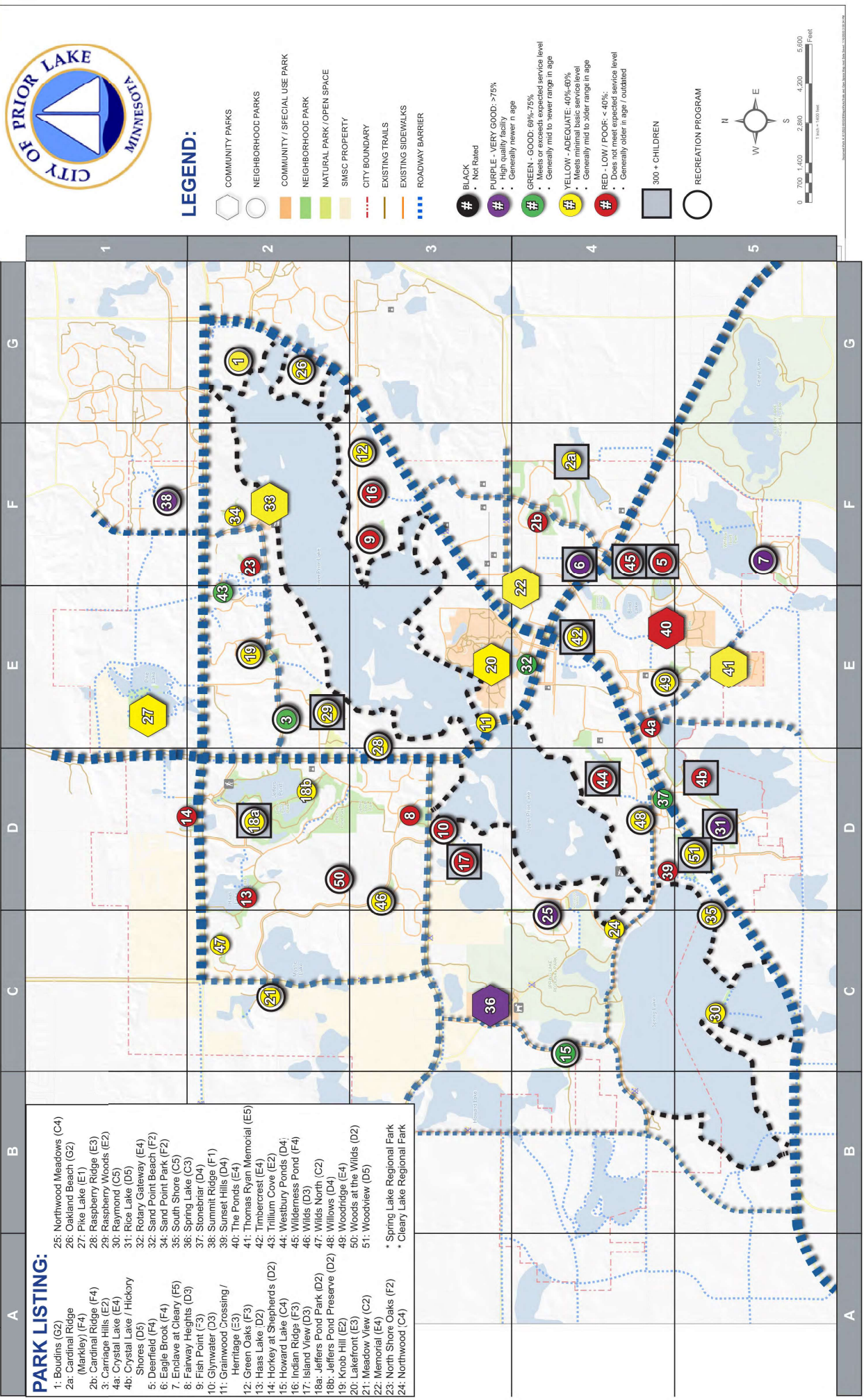

The following map includes:

- Park Level of Service Ratings: Illustrates the existing park level of service quality rating, identifies the parks that are currently programmed, identifies parks noted in neighborhoods with 300+ children, and existing barriers such as primary roadways.

Park Level of Service Ratings

CITY OF PRIOR LAKE MINNESOTA

LEGEND:

- COMMUNITY PARKS
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
- COMMUNITY / SPECIAL USE PARK
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- NATURAL PARK / OPEN SPACE
- SMSC PROPERTY
- CITY BOUNDARY
- EXISTING TRAILS
- EXISTING SIDEWALKS
- ROADWAY BARRIER

- **#** BLACK - Not Rated
- **#** PURPLE - VERY GOOD: >75%
  - High quality facility
  - Generally newer n age
- **#** GREEN - GOOD: 60%-75%
  - Meets or exceeds expected service level
  - Generally mid to newer range in age
- **#** YELLOW - ADEQUATE: 40%-60%
  - Meets minimal basic service level
  - Generally mid to older range in age
- **#** RED - LOW / POOR: < 40%
  - Does not meet expected service level
  - Generally older in age / outdated

- 300 + CHILDREN
- RECREATION PROGRAM

PARK LISTING:

1: Boudins (G2)
2a: Cardinal Ridge (Markley) (F4)
2b: Cardinal Ridge (F4)
3: Carriage Hills (E2)
4a: Crystal Lake (E4)
4b: Crystal Lake / Hickory Shores (D5)
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36: Spring Lake (C3)
37: Stonebriar (D4)
38: Summit Hills (D4)
39: Sunset Ridge (F1)
40: The Ponds (E4)
41: Thomas Ryen Memorial (E5)
42: Timbercrest (E4)
43: Trillium Cove (E2)
44: Westbury Ponds (D4)
45: Wilderness Pond (F4)
46: Wilds (D3)
47: Wilds North (C2)
48: Willows (D4)
49: Woodridge (E4)
50: Woods at the Wilds (D2)
51: Woodview (D5)

* Spring Lake Regional Park
* Cleary Lake Regional Park

C. Trail Assessments

Prior Lake generally has a good system of trails and pedestrian routes but there are some major gaps identified by the community and some trails that are in poor condition.

There are currently no complete regional trail corridors in Prior Lake, though there are segments of the planned Scott County West Regional Trail that starts on the north side of Spring Lake Regional Park and go south-east to connect up to Cleary Lake Regional Park, as identified in the red box below.
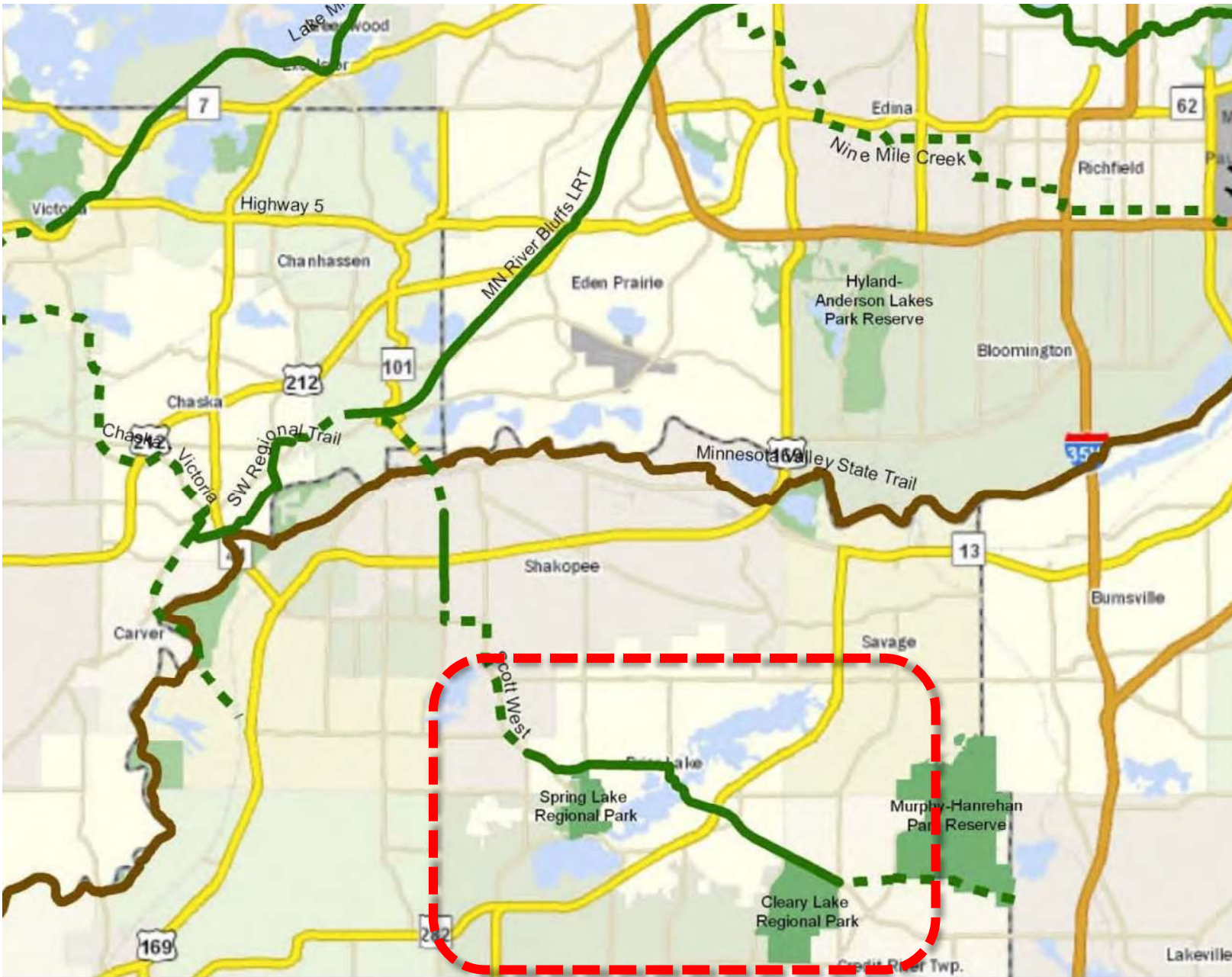
A general assessment was completed for the existing trail system to evaluate existing gaps, pedestrian crossing concerns, and trail segments that rank as higher priority for repairs and replacements due to the specific trail route, condition and community need. Though most of the trails were in fair to good condition, some trail areas will need to be replaced or repaired (seal-coating) in the near future.

A summary of issues and barriers was developed based on a review of existing city documents, public engagement activities, and an analysis of existing and proposed trail corridors. Some common gaps and issues that were identified during the planning process included:

- Highway 13 was identified as a major barrier and was also the most commonly desired trail gap to be completed. The intersections along this highway were noted to be of safety concerns for pedestrians as well as vehicles. Schools and senior populations had repeated comments about safely crossing from south to north for access to Lakefront Park and the downtown business district.
- Strong desire for improved connections to Cleary Lake Regional Park, Spring Lake Regional Park and Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve.
- Strong desire for improved pedestrian connectivity to the lakes in the community. Specific water bodies mentioned included Upper and Lower Prior Lake, Spring Lake, Pike Lake, Markley Lake, and Arctic Lake.
- Desire for improved pedestrian connections between Thomas Ryan Memorial Park and The Ponds Park.

Some of these issues will be resolved as the city continues to develop its proposed network of biking and walking facilities. Others will require specific attention to facility design and proactive identification of opportunities to shape planned roadway projects to better accommodate biking and walking facilities, as well as joint cooperation between various agencies, such as MnDOT and Scott County.

The following Pedestrian Analysis map illustrates some commonly identified trail gaps, pedestrian crossing concerns, trail safety issues, and trails that had a poor quality that resulted from the community engagement process.
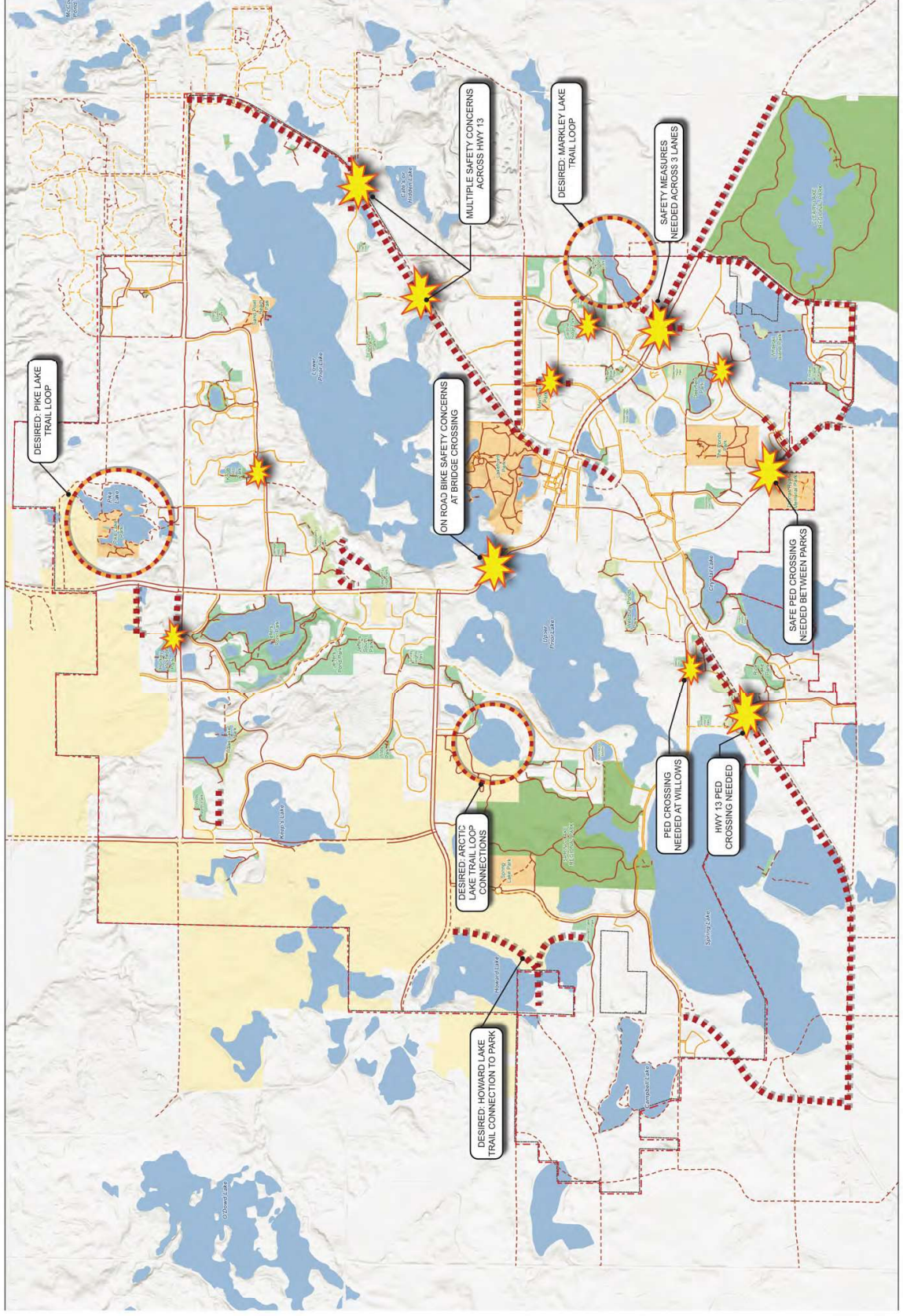
Trail & Pedestrian Analysis

CITY OF PRIOR LAKE · MINNESOTA

LEGEND:

- COMMUNITY PARK
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- NATURAL RESOURCE PARK
- CITY BOUNDARY
- TRAIL GAP
- TRAILHEAD PARKING
- PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS
- DOG PARK
- SCHOOL
- EXISTING TRAIL
- EXISTING SIDEWALK
- PEDESTRIAN CROSSING HAZARD

DESIRED: PIKE LAKE TRAIL LOOP

MULTIPLE SAFETY CONCERNS ACROSS HWY 13

DESIRED: MARKLEY LAKE TRAIL LOOP

SAFETY MEASURES NEEDED ACROSS 3 LANES

ON ROAD BIKE SAFETY CONCERNS AT BRIDGE CROSSING

SAFE PED CROSSING NEEDED BETWEEN PARKS

DESIRED: ARCTIC LAKE TRAIL LOOP CONNECTIONS

PED CROSSING NEEDED AT WILLOWS

HWY 13 PED CROSSING NEEDED

DESIRED: HOWARD LAKE TRAIL CONNECTION TO PARK

2.7   Needs Assessment Summary

Several key themes were identified during the needs assessment that, when combined with goals and priorities, helped to develop the recommendations and priorities for implementation.

Improve Connectivity

- Close trail gaps
- Connect to primary destinations
- Ensure access to a quality park within each service area
- Improve convenience
- Improve ADA across the system
- Improve sense of place
- Incorporate wayfinding measures

Improve Overall Quality

- Improve quality of the community parks
- Provide adequate parking at community facilities
- Ensure parks and trails are properly maintained
- Ensure a quality park within 1/2 mile to places of residence
- Meet current recreational needs & trends
- Incorporate improved safety measures

Improve Sustainability

- Avoid over-duplication of facilities
- Program site accordingly
- Incorporate flexible spaces
- Utilize newer methods and technology to minimize ongoing maintenance and operations
- Utilize proper construction methods and materials
- Ensure proper oversight and management of park system