Woodbury treasures the many natural amenities that exist within our community. Our parks, trails and open spaces connect our residents to nature, encourage an active, healthy lifestyle and promote community interaction and resilience.
INTRODUCTION

The parks and recreation system is an important contributor to the quality of life in Woodbury. The system preserves lakes, woodlands, open fields, and wetlands and makes them accessible. It provides pleasant and memorable places and recreational activities that draw people to live, work and play in Woodbury.

Woodbury has developed an excellent parks and recreation system that includes quality recreational facilities, neighborhood and community parks, and a city-wide network of trails and preserved open spaces. A 2017 community survey indicated 95 percent of households felt existing parks and recreational facilities were excellent or good. The survey also indicated 89 percent of households felt existing recreation programs were excellent or good. HealthEast Sports Center programs and facilities were rated as excellent or good by 95 percent of households, and the appearance of park and recreation facilities were rated as excellent or good by 92 percent of households. These ratings were higher than ratings received in a comparable survey in 2015, although the community survey did reveal an on-going downward ratings trend for Central Park.

About one-third of the land within Woodbury’s boundaries is currently undeveloped or agricultural and rural uses. Woodbury has a phased approach to growth with plans for portions of the undeveloped and rural land to be developed at urban densities by 2040. This development will add new households to Woodbury and will create new parks, trails and open space needs. The Land Use Plan also calls for land in the east and southeast portion of the City that is not needed to meet 2040 growth projections to remain in rural use and as an urban reserve for future development through the year 2040.

This Parks, Trails and Open Space chapter serves as the primary guiding document for the City and is referred to in the remainder of the chapter as the “Park Plan.”

PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The City commits to the following guiding principles, which highlight community values regarding parks, trails and open spaces in the City. Collectively, they work together to provide a long-term vision for the on-going implementation, reinvestment, management, and programming of the City’s parks and recreation system.

This Park Plan is a dynamic document responding to Woodbury residents’ evolving needs by emphasizing sustainable land management practices. Implementation of this Park Plan is based on input and recommendations provided by the Parks and Natural Resources Commission, public engagement, and through the participation of community volunteer organizations and local athletic organizations.

Parks

Provide a well-balanced and high quality parks and recreation system that offers passive and active recreation areas. Parks are comprised of a combination of public, private, joint-use and multi-use facilities that maximize the value that each entity can offer.
Recreation

Provide a wide variety of quality year-round recreation opportunities designed to build a culture promoting life-long health and well-being for all ages and interests. Ensure an equitable distribution of facility and program mixture and locations. The City shall continue to be responsive to new trends, piloting and/or partnering to provide new facilities and programs. Accessibility is important to Woodbury, with a priority given to high-demand programs that require low personal financial outlay.

Healthy Lifestyle

Ensure parks or recreation facilities are conveniently and equitably located within one half mile of all residences. The Parks and Recreation Department shall promote all dimensions of wellness through programming and communications. Woodbury’s comprehensive trail system provides access and accessibility to schools, recreation areas and businesses, empowering residents to incorporate active living into their daily routines. City facilities shall provide opportunities for education, social-connectedness and building a sense of community.

Trail System

The trail system serves the recreation and non-motorized transportation needs of residents in a safe and convenient manner throughout the City. Trails will be designed for bicyclists, pedestrians and other compatible modes to ensure access and accessibility for users of all ages and abilities. Strong connections between parks, neighborhoods and businesses with efficient wayfinding techniques will also empower residents to use alternative modes of transportation for their daily needs.

Greenway Corridors

Provide a continuous, connected system of open space that facilitates the movement of animals, plants, water, and people. The corridors (see Figure 8-8) will be comprised of both public and private lands. They will provide access to parks, open spaces, schools and other City destinations where feasible, and will offer a balance between human use and natural resource protection.

Natural Resources

Protect and preserve the natural environment with emphasis on the conservation of natural resources for the benefit of the community. The City will acquire and utilize natural areas to provide an overall open space system that satisfies the varied needs of individual residents and the community at large and ensures enjoyment of natural resources for future generations.

Resilience

Ensure park planning, construction, management and renovation have the capacity to respond, adapt, and thrive under changing conditions. Woodbury is dedicated to protecting natural systems and habitat as a key component of a resilient parks and recreation system. While investing in resilient practices may create greater upfront costs, the City acknowledges that these costs will save money over time.
Community Engagement
Solicit input from a wide variety of community groups and residents to ensure that all stakeholders have the ability to influence the park planning process. This responsive process is key to the success of Woodbury’s parks, trails, open space and recreation facilities and programs.

Funding and Implementation
Serve as a professional, responsible and effective steward of the community’s financial resources in the expenditure of funds for parks and recreation facilities and programs. The City will continue to strengthen its tradition of public trust by using a variety of funding methods to best leverage the community’s tax base. Capital improvement plans will serve as a planning tool for the development, maintenance and replacement of the parks and recreation system.

RESILIENT PARKS
Woodbury is committed to the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment. The parks and recreation system represents an important opportunity to provide leadership in achieving resilience. Within the parks and recreation system there are good examples of environmental sustainability, such as but not limited to, development of rain gardens to collect stormwater at Edgewater Park, the green roof at City Hall, the use of solar panels on City buildings, and installation of permeable paving in Powers and Kargel Parks. The Park Plan seeks to continue these initiatives and to explore other means to achieve resilience in the development and operation of the parks and recreation system. Actions described in the Park Plan to improve resilience include:

» Update and implement plans to increase the percentage of tree canopy coverage.
» Restore and manage native vegetation.
» Use native plants to reduce landscape maintenance and mowing requirements, to serve as a source of food and shelter for wildlife, to buffer shorelines, to control runoff and to discourage nuisance species.
» Manage and control invasive species.
» Develop a natural resource and environmental interpretation/education component to City parks and open spaces.
» Use recycled and composted content products.
» Incorporate recycling and composting at City buildings and parks.
» Promote responsible water use through smart irrigation and water reuse.
» Utilize alternative energy sources such as geothermal and solar at City buildings.
» Plan in an equitable manner for park amenities and programming to ensure that all populations have access to the parks and recreation system.
» Retrofit existing buildings and incorporate energy efficiency best practices in new buildings.
EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM

Woodbury has an extensive park and open space system containing more than 3,400 acres of parkland and more than 160 miles of trails. This section highlights the key elements of the existing parks and recreation system.

While Woodbury has no regional parks within its boundaries, the City benefits from close proximity to regional and state parks. These regional facilities supplement the passive and active recreation opportunities provided by the City’s parks and recreation system. Area regional parks include Battle Creek Regional Park, Lake Elmo Park Reserve, St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park (see Figure 8-1). Afton State Park is located on the St. Croix River to the southeast. Belwin Conservancy, a non-profit nature center located in Afton, the Carpenter Nature Center in Hastings, and the Dodge Nature Center’s Shepherd Farm in Cottage Grove also provide Woodbury residents with nearby open space access and programming. A network of existing and planned trails and bikeways offer Woodbury residents access to these regional features. The Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN), including the Regional Trail Network, will ultimately offer enhanced bicycle commuting options via both the Central Greenway and Afton Bluffs regional trail corridors.

The current parks and recreation system consists of twelve community parks and more than 45 neighborhood parks. City parks and open space encompass approximately fifteen percent of the land area of the City. The City also partners with public and private schools within the municipal boundaries for use and maintenance of school recreation facilities.

Figure 8-6 shows the location of existing City parks, trails and open spaces. This map also identifies private parks and recreational facilities, school properties, non-city-owned open spaces, and trail connections in adjacent cities.

System Classifications

The Park Plan utilizes the following park classifications (see Figure 8-2):

- Community Park
- Multi-Use Trail
- Neighborhood Park
- Open Space
- Private Park
- Greenway Corridor

These park classifications provide general guidance regarding park size, service area, and uses. Uses designated for new or refurbished parks will be informed by a combination of community input and parks and recreation system needs based on projected community demographics.
Figure 8-1. Regional Park and Trails Context
Figure 8-2. Park Classifications

**Park Classifications**

- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Other City-Owned Property
- Non-City Parks and Open Space
- Schools
- Private Amenity
- Woodbury Boundary

*Created: Hoisington Kogler Group Inc.*
*Source: City of Woodbury*
*Updated: November, 2018*
Community Parks

USE

Community parks provide recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities with a service area of several neighborhoods. As reflected in Figure 8-3, these parks also seek to preserve unique landscapes and open spaces. Community parks are multi-purpose, providing broader recreational opportunities than neighborhood parks. Community parks typically host community athletic facilities and may serve the neighborhood park needs of immediate residents. Community parks also offer specific, unique uses such as Andy’s Bark Park, Glacial Valley Park, Prairie Ridge Park, the Tamarack Nature Preserve, or Valley Creek Park that are of community-wide interest. La Lake Park’s natural amenities offer great potential for future improvements and/or programming. More traditional parks such as Carver Lake Park, Liberty Park, or Ojibway Park are also designed to appeal to the broadest possible array of potential users. Central Park and the HealthEast Sports Center are focused both to wide audiences as well as to specific users within the community. HealthEast Sports Center in particular is emerging as a center of healthy active living in the community. With 18-holes, a driving range, and banquet facilities, Eagle Valley Golf Course provides an important recreational amenity and scenic community gathering spot. Generally, a detailed plan should be prepared to guide the development and management of community parks.

DEVELOPMENT

Sites used for community parks will include interesting natural features such as woodlands, wildlife or water bodies. They can be easily accessible from a collector or arterial street and should be located near other community facilities or resources. Community parks will be linked to the City trail system to provide optimum access for residents. Large portions of the site may be restored using native vegetation or left in an undeveloped state.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

| Site Size: | 30 or more acres (Sizes range widely based on the intended use) |
| Service Area: | 2-mile radius |

Typical elements may include buildings/shelters, picnic areas, internal trail system, major playground equipment, refrigerated ice, athletic fields (multi-purpose, soccer, diamonds), courts, splash pads and more. Community parks might also include specific uses such as dog parks or nature interpretation. Off-street parking areas should be of sufficient size and capacity for facility draw.

Fishing Pier at Carver Lake Park
Figure 8-3. Community Parks

Park Classifications
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Other City-Owned Property
- Non-City Parks and Open Space
- Schools
- Private Amenity

Woodbury Boundary
Neighborhood Parks

USE

The neighborhood park is the basic unit of the parks and recreation system and provides for the passive and active recreational needs of neighborhood residents by creating a desirable outdoor recreational place for a wide variety of users. Figure 8-4 identifies the locations of neighborhood parks in Woodbury.

DEVELOPMENT

Neighborhood needs and access to other recreational opportunities determine the level of development of neighborhood parks. Each neighborhood park will be a unique combination of active and/or passive uses. Active recreational facilities are intended to be informal and unstructured. Sites should exhibit the physical characteristics appropriate for both active and passive recreational uses. The site should contain natural features that create a positive outdoor experience. Siting neighborhood parks adjacent to greenway corridors is desirable. Locations adjacent to school sites or utilization of school facilities allow for joint use of park facilities.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

| Site Size: | Varies in size to serve the community’s different neighborhoods with connected open spaces, intermittent activity nodes, and good pedestrian connections to adjacent residential areas. |
| Service Area: | 1/2-mile radius, uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers |

Typical elements may include play equipment, open turf area for flexible group activities and exercise, wildlife observation, courts, picnic tables, trails, no or limited off-street parking spaces. Every neighborhood park is not expected to host every element. Determination of park elements will be done using planning and engagement processes that incorporate input from a wide variety of community groups and area residents to ensure that a wide range of ideas are solicited and that concerns are identified.
Figure 8-4. Neighborhood Parks

Park Classifications
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Other City-Owned Property
- Non-City-Owned Property
- Schools
- Private Amenity

Woodbury Boundary
Private Parks

USE
Private parks, depicted on Figure 8-5, are owned and managed by homeowners’ associations. They may include recreation features such as playgrounds, courts, swimming pools, shelters, amenity buildings and skating rinks. Private parks are typically limited to use by association members. The use decisions and maintenance of private parks are the responsibility of the owner(s) of the private park, most typically a homeowners’ association.

DEVELOPMENT
These areas are developed and maintained by homeowners’ associations. Recreational amenities are a requirement of high density residential developments which could include pools, playgrounds, courts, dog walk areas, etc. These amenities are not specifically identified on Figure 8-5.

DESIGN GUIDELINES
The design and amenities vary by development. Colby Lake, Dancing Waters, Stonemill Farms and Bailey’s Arbor are examples of neighborhoods with private parks.
Figure 8-5. Private Parks
Multi-Use Trails

USE

Most trails in Woodbury are multi-purpose, accommodating pedestrians, wheelchair users, bicycles and other non-automotive users. Unpaved trails are also found in some parks and open spaces where natural surface trails complement and provide access to natural areas. In addition to City trails, paved shoulders provide transportation along major corridors through the City and between neighboring communities. Many paved City trails are plowed in the winter to provide year-round use.

DEVELOPMENT

Trails are installed in Woodbury with the aim of connecting residential neighborhoods to park and open space amenities, schools, commercial areas and community institutions as well as to provide non-automotive linkages to surrounding communities.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Trails are an integral component of the City’s parks and recreation system. The current system includes more than 160 miles of paved and natural surface trails. The existing trail system as shown in Figure 8-6 includes both City and County trails but for purposes of readability the map refers simply to “existing trails.” See Chapter 7, Transportation, for additional information on existing and planned trails and bikeways.

Where possible, trails are designed as handicap-accessible routes to connect residential neighborhoods to park and open space amenities, schools, commercial areas and community institutions. Paved trails are typically eight or ten feet in width. Trails should be developed to connect with the City’s existing trail network, to trails in adjacent communities, and to the regional trail network to facilitate connectivity to community and regional destinations.
Open Spaces

USE

Open space areas include land acquired by the City for preservation of natural features, such as water bodies, woodlands, wetlands and shorelands. Additional open space areas are used as utility corridors and as stormwater features. Open space also includes land owned by other governmental agencies in the City that provides public access. These open space areas may provide stormwater management and/or natural habitat functions, which strengthens community resilience. Open space may be left in a natural state and may be held for future development into parks.

DEVELOPMENT

Sites acquired for open space often include land for future park use. Open space areas should include interesting natural features such as water bodies, woodlands, wetlands and shorelands, or should provide the types of benefits typically provided by green infrastructure features. These benefits can include natural stormwater management and filtration or improvement of natural habitat.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Open spaces vary according to the opportunity and general character of the natural systems within them, but generally require less intensive management over the long-term.

Open space is a distinct component of Woodbury’s identity. Natural areas are key components of many City neighborhoods and parks that provide health benefits and wildlife habitat to the community. These open spaces also enhance the resiliency of the community. Beyond community and neighborhood parks, Figure 8-7 categorizes public open space as “Non-city Parks and Open Spaces” and “Other City-owned Property.”
Figure 8-7. Open Spaces

Park Classifications
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Other City-Owned Property
- Non-City Parks and Open Space
- Schools
- Private Amenity

Woodbury Boundary

Created by: Michael P. Hughey Group Inc. Special CDRP 2040
Updated: November 2019
Greenway Corridors

USE

Many of Woodbury’s remaining natural areas are fragmented, separated by urban development or agricultural lands. The City has designated greenway corridors as a means to identify existing and potential future physical connections between Woodbury’s natural resource features (see Figure 8-8). Woodbury has defined greenway corridors as continuous and contiguous linear open space which average 100 feet in width with a primary purpose of connecting places or resources of ecological value.

Greenway corridors include both public and private land acquired or set aside as utility corridors that can also serve the purposes of preserving natural features, promoting biodiversity, managing stormwater, improving aesthetics and connectivity, and serving recreational uses. Greenway corridor vegetation, either existing or restored, is intended to be maintained primarily in a natural state, although some sections may be more traditionally landscaped and maintained.

Greenway corridors located on public property may integrate trails to leverage active living or nature observation uses. Greenway corridor segments that are privately owned are intended to remain so, with no expectation of public access or use.

DEVELOPMENT

Whenever possible, greenway corridors shall be used as a structuring element linking parks and open space areas. The City, where feasible, shall provide for connecting trails within greenway corridors to improve access to parks, open spaces, schools, natural features and other City destinations. Programming and design of greenway corridor spaces should be informed by what is best for the space, such as site characteristics, area service needs, recreational trends and community input. While stormwater facilities and utility easements may be considered greenway corridors, such facilities do not fulfill park dedication requirements.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Where practical, greenway corridors shall be restored or planted to natural vegetation. Appropriate widths for greenway corridors will vary depending on habitat, scenic or functional requirements. Based on species desired, corridor widths can range from a minimum of 100 feet for plants, insects, reptiles and select birds, up to 300-foot widths for large mammals. Minimum widths of greenway corridors in Woodbury should be 100 feet but the City reserves the right to modify widths to achieve appropriate greenway corridor design and functionality. The locations of greenway corridors shown in Figure 8-8 are general in nature. The City reserves the right to modify, shift, and/or add additional greenway corridors.

Additional information on the development of greenway corridors in Woodbury can be found in Chapter 9, Natural Resources, of this 2040 Comprehensive Plan.
Figure 8-8. Greenway Corridors

Existing Parks, Schools & Open Space
- Parks
- Other City-Owned Property
- Non-City Parks and Open Space
- Private Amenity

Natural Resource Areas
- Natural Resource Inventory
- Future Ponding
- Existing Trails
- Proposed Greenways
- Existing Greenways

The City reserves the right to modify, shift, and/or add additional greenway corridors.
Parks and Recreation Partnerships

The City partners with school districts, watershed districts, Washington County, the YMCA, athletic associations, arts organizations, and developers to meet community parks and recreation needs, with a goal of complementing but not duplicating services. Schools provide shared use of active recreation facilities such as athletic fields, play equipment and gymnasiums. Examples of partnerships include:

» Central Park, a multi-use indoor facility designed as a partnership with the City, South Washington County Schools, the YMCA and the Washington County Library that is also connected via skyway to the senior living facility located at 8725 Promenade Lane

» Joint use of community and school athletic fields at the HealthEast Sports Center and East Ridge High School, as well as at Ojibway Park and Woodbury High School

» A partnership with the South Washington Watershed District to develop and operate Glacial Valley Park

» Long-standing relationships with the youth athletic associations and community organizations to provide youth athletic programming and community activities

Partnerships such as these provide needed community facilities and recreational programming while maximizing City resources.

PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM NEEDS

Each community is unique in its needs and opportunities. Woodbury’s parks and recreation needs were determined through the process of updating this Park Plan. This process identified the following parks and recreation system needs:

1. New parks, open space and trails to meet planned growth
2. Updated programming and amenities within the City’s community parks
3. Park spaces that provide convenient recreation
4. Preservation, restoration, access to, and interpretation of key natural resources
5. Trail and bikeway connectivity
6. Parks and recreation for all ages and abilities
7. Emphasis on natural resource management
8. Leadership in resilience
9. Planning for major recreation facilities
10. New facilities and programs for changing demographics

The following section provides additional detail regarding these ten identified needs.
1. New Parks, Open Space and Trails to Meet Planned Growth

Woodbury’s parks and recreation system provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities that are accessible to the residents of the community through a combination of neighborhood and community parks, open space areas, trails and recreation facilities. The need for the parks and recreation system to accommodate planned growth was determined by community input and applying existing neighborhood park guidelines found in the Parks Classification section of this chapter. These guidelines are based on previous National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) park standards that have been modified to more accurately reflect local considerations. Woodbury maintains the practice of acquiring land both to expand existing parks and to support the development of future parks and open space areas.

New Neighborhood Parks

Ongoing development will result in the need for additional parks. As of the drafting of this document in 2018, the City foresees the need for approximately six new neighborhood parks in addition to expansions at neighborhood parks that are suitable for active and passive recreation. (see Figure 8-9 and Figure 8-10). While existing open space may meet some neighborhood park needs, future additional land acquisition will likely be required. Parcels identified for strategic acquisition in Figure 8-9 are based on the City’s Natural Resource Inventory as well as the potential to expand existing parks and trails or preserve shoreland. The anticipated distribution of new neighborhood parks is identified below. It should be noted, though, that as recreation trends and development patterns change with time this distribution may change as well.

South Central: Approximately four new neighborhood parks
Northeast: One new neighborhood park
Northwest: One new neighborhood park

A review of Figure 8-10 may indicate park service area gaps in the southwest area of the City (south of Military Road and west of Radio Drive). This area is primarily guided for rural estate and urban estate land uses. The City does not provide active parks within rural estate zoning districts, or in places guided as places to work and places to shop, although other open space, natural areas and trails may be provided in these areas.

2. New Community Park Programming and Amenities

Future development in Woodbury will create the need for new recreation facilities of community-wide significance. This Park Plan identifies community parks in a variety of geographic locations; however some of them such as Andy’s Bark Park, Glacial Valley Park, La Lake Park, Liberty Park, Prairie Ridge Park and Valley Creek Park will require additional study to determine what the ultimate needs are for programming and amenities. Master plans will be prepared to determine the design and expansion of new or existing community parks.
Figure 8-9. Priority Acquisition Parcels

The City has identified a number of parcels that contain high quality natural resources and are adjacent to lakes or existing parks. When a development is proposed that involves these parcels the City will be seeking to preserve them through acquisition or dedication.
3. Park Spaces that Provide Convenient Recreation

Convenient access to recreation is an increasing community need. With busy schedules, residents are experiencing significant time constraints and want recreational opportunities close to home that provide shorter (i.e., one-hour) experiences. Future greenway corridors, trails and sidewalks combined with activity nodes can help serve this function. When neighborhood parks are refreshed, they should not necessarily be replaced in kind; but, rather, should be considered for reconfiguration to meet current and projected recreation needs and trends. This process will use planning and engagement activities that incorporate input from a diverse segment of community groups and citizens to ensure that a wide variety of ideas are solicited and that concerns are identified.

4. Preservation, Restoration, Access to, and Interpretation of Natural Resources

This Park Plan continues to make natural resource and open space preservation a high priority. The 2040 urban growth areas provide important opportunities for the creation of greenway corridors that will preserve and connect quality natural resources, while also allowing for the restoration of the connecting corridors that may have been environmentally degraded by previous uses. Trails may be incorporated into publicly-owned greenway segments to facilitate convenient recreation and active living opportunities (see Figure 8-8). Interpretation of natural resource areas help residents better understand and value these resources. The City desires to provide interpretation opportunities throughout the parks and recreation system, possibly through signage and/or new technology approaches, such as cell phone applications.

5. Trails and Bikeway Connectivity

Walking and biking for recreation and transportation has become increasingly popular in response to demographic shifts and an increased interest in active living. Trails are among the most desired amenities by City residents and can also support redevelopment and economic development initiatives.

Multi-Use Trails

The City’s existing trail system is well established throughout the developed area, primarily consisting of multi-use trails for walking, running and bicycling. Trails are also important components used to provide access and accessibility for people of all ages and abilities to parks, recreation facilities, retail destinations and community destinations. Additionally, trails are an increasingly important component of our commuter transportation network. To enhance user safety and comfort, trail underpasses have been constructed at several locations where trails cross major roads.

Regional Trails

The Metropolitan Council has designated two regional trail search corridors within Woodbury: the Central Greenway Regional Trail and the Afton Bluffs Regional Trail. The Central Greenway Regional Trail will connect Woodbury residents with Lake Elmo Park Reserve to the north and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park and the Mississippi River Recreational Area to the south.
In 2017 Washington County adopted a master plan for this trail. The master plan primarily aligns the trail along the Woodbury Drive right-of-way with one alternative route that passes through Bailey Lake Park and Glacial Valley Park. The Afton Bluffs Regional Trail is proposed to extend from Battle Creek Regional Park in Maplewood to the City of Afton via Valley Creek Road, Woodbury Drive and Bailey Road. Coordination with Washington County is needed to implement the Central Greenway Regional Trail and to develop a master plan for the Afton Bluffs Regional Trail.

**Connectivity**

Gaps in the existing trail system need to be addressed to improve City-wide trail connectivity and connections to adjacent cities. New trails in future growth areas are needed to connect to existing trail corridors, to provide access to new neighborhoods, and to create connections with community facilities. When practical, the City will install trails in greenway corridors, which can provide active living opportunities, access to natural resources, connections between parks, and access to community destinations.

Gaps have been identified between the multi-use trail network and retail businesses. While there are a variety of multi-use trails on the roadways adjacent to many areas guided for commercial uses within the City, there are not always safe and convenient routes from these trails to the front doors of local businesses. The City shall be opportunistic and review the following principles when redevelopment or reinvestments occur in areas guided for commercial uses.

- Provide safe and convenient bicycle connections, supported with clear wayfinding, from existing local trails to major retail building entrances. Solutions may include, but are not limited to grade-separated independent trails or sidewalks; painted bike lanes; bike sharrows (street markings to indicate a shared bicycle-auto lane); and protected bike lanes.
- Retrofit existing commercial areas to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, at the time of future redevelopment.
- Incorporate traffic calming measures such as, but not limited to, raised intersections, raised trail crossings, and tight turning radii at corners to slow vehicle speeds.
- Consolidate parking lot entrances where feasible.
- Provide bicycle connections from existing and planned transit stops to shopping districts.
- Provide separate facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists if multi-use trails are not feasible.
- Provide convenient bicycle parking at retail building entrances and encourage bicyclists to transition to being a pedestrian in walkable shopping districts.

**Best practices**

Opened in 2016, Madison’s Place is an example of a playground that brings children of all abilities together. Located on the south side of the HealthEast Sports Center, the 16,000 square-foot playground, offers sun-shade covered play decks, swings, sensory play equipment, ramps and rubber surfaces for wheelchair access and much more. The playground is a regional gathering destination for children of all ages and abilities to foster friendships, experience the excitement of climbing on a playground and spend time outdoors. Made possible through the generous fundraising efforts of the Madison Claire Foundation, a foundation created by a local Woodbury family as a legacy to their daughter, the playground showcases Woodbury’s continued welcomeness and inclusiveness.
6. Parks and Recreation for All Ages and Abilities

There is an increasing desire to provide parks, trails and open spaces that are safe and comfortable for people of all user groups. A universal design approach considers the needs of all ages and abilities and is intended to create positive park experiences for all residents. An emphasis on universal design will guide development of new parks and recreation facilities as well as renovations of existing parks.

7. Natural Resource Management

Remaining high quality natural systems must be managed to avoid diminished quality from invasive species, deer browse, forest succession and other threats. This Park Plan encourages the development of management plans for open spaces, allocation of adequate implementation resources and continued partnerships with other organizations. Additional information can be found in Chapter 9, Natural Resources.

8. Leadership in Resiliency

The parks and recreation system represents an important opportunity for the City to provide leadership in achieving greater resiliency. Within the parks and recreation system, there are good examples of resilient design and practices, such as the development of rain gardens and stormwater ponds, high efficiency lighting, trails as an alternative to motorized vehicles, the use of permeable pavers, and increased use of native vegetation and low-maintenance vegetation to reduce mowing. Initiatives such as these as well as incorporating water reuse, smart irrigation, and recycling and composting into City operations should continue, and the City will explore other means to achieve resiliency in the development and operation of the parks and recreation system.

9. Planning for Major Recreation Facilities

Woodbury continues to proactively identify, evaluate and address community recreation needs. As part of the 2017 community survey, community residents were provided nine different parks and recreation facility types and then asked to indicate whether they thought there was too much, too little or about the right amount of these facilities to serve their needs. At least 85 percent of residents felt the amount of community parks, neighborhood parks, playgrounds and outdoor athletic fields was about right, and three-quarters felt there was about the right amount of event center/event space, trails and paths and outdoor hockey/pleasure skating rinks. Residents indicated some desire for additional off leash dog areas and outdoor court facilities (41 percent and 32 percent too little, respectively); however, a majority of respondents still felt there was the right amount of these facilities in the community.

The following major recreational facilities were identified as potential future community needs:

HealthEast Sports Center Expansion

HealthEast Sports Center is a premier multi-use sports center. While substantially complete, thirty-five acres of the site south of Hargis Parkway remain undeveloped and are reserved for future recreational facilities to be determined. Development will either be by the City or through some form of public/private partnership.
Central Park Renovation

Central Park was designed to serve as a community gathering place in the City. Woodbury’s population has grown by nearly fifty percent in the fifteen years since the park has been open, resulting in the need to refresh and renovate aspects of the park to better meet community needs. The City, along with South Washington County Schools, Washington County and the YMCA have completed a visioning process for the future of Central Park that identifies interim remodeling and plans for a future major expansion.

Additional Athletic Facilities

High quality athletic facilities are in high demand by athletic associations and the general public. Overuse of existing facilities detracts from the recreational experience and causes long-term damage. In 2015, the cities of Woodbury and Cottage Grove, and the South Washington County School District partnered to perform an inventory and needs analysis of public athletic facilities. The City is working to address key recommendations from the report as they relate to the City of Woodbury.

Nature Interpretation

Nature interpretation will be strategically integrated into City parks and open spaces through signage, programming and/or new information sharing technologies with special emphasis on Glacial Valley Park, Tamarack Nature Preserve and Ojibway Park. When areas are restored using native vegetation, interpretation and signage should be a component of the overall restoration project.

10. Facilities and Programs for Changing Demographics

Like many communities, Woodbury’s demographic profile is changing and increasingly diverse. Technology is influencing how residents interact with the parks and recreation system. Residents who have emigrated from other countries typically bring new recreational activities with them. It is important that the parks and recreation system provide flexibility to accommodate ever changing recreation demands while recognizing that youth, family and special event programming will continue to be in high demand.

Woodbury’s parks, trails and open space embrace the diversity of our community by providing spaces designed for all people to gather and play, fostering an inclusive and welcoming community. It is important that all users of Woodbury parks feel welcome, safe and connected in the community. The City is committed to providing a parks and recreation system that is prepared to meet the recreation and social demands of a growing population with shifting demographics to deliver the best public service possible to people of all backgrounds and forms of diversity.
IMPLEMENTATION

This Park Plan provides the framework for maintaining, building and improving Woodbury’s parks and recreation system. It consists of recommendations for park land acquisition, park development, trails development and natural resources protection and restoration. The individual aspects of the Park Plan are shown in “Figure 8-9. Priority Acquisition Parcels” on page 160, “Figure 8-10. Future Park Search Areas” on page 166 and “Figure 8-11. Future Trail System Plan” on page 169.

Implementation of the initiatives identified in this chapter will require detailed project studies to better clarify needs, associated costs, and funding options.

Parks and Open Space

Neighborhood Parks

In Figure 8-10, locations for new parks are typically represented by a ½-mile search area. Actual park locations will depend upon a variety of factors, including the pattern of new development, locations of roads, neighborhood needs, recreation trends, natural features, and connections to trails and streets. Implementation steps or initiatives related to neighborhood parks include:

» Study the potential need for new and expanded parks in future development areas.

» Study or identify methods of land acquisition as needed in future development areas.

» Create and maintain a park programming matrix on the City’s website that identifies what amenities are located at which parks.

Community Parks

This Park Plan anticipates that several community parks in eastern Woodbury require additional programming and planning for appropriate amenity levels. Implementation steps or initiatives related to community parks include:

» Continue improvements to Andy’s Bark Park.

» Study Liberty, Prairie Ridge, and Valley Creek parks to determine how to serve broad community needs with a mixture of active and passive recreation.

» Central Park will require future renovations and the planning process for this is underway. Potential facility renovations identified to date include:
  • Improved building safety, security and technology
  • Space programming to better serve all ages
  • Increased private rental opportunities
  • Wayfinding and marketing
  • Landscaping and ornamental gardens
  • Increased/improved parking
  • Accessibility accommodations
  • Updating Lookout Ridge
  • Access to natural light in lower level and addressing poor acoustics in upper level
Figure 8-10. Future Park Search Areas

Planned City Parks
- Park Search Area
- Woodbury Boundary
- Planned City Parks
  - Priority Park Acquisition Parcels

Existing Parks, Schools & Open Space
- Parks
- Other City-Owned Property
- Non-City Parks and Open Space
- Private Amenity
- Schools

Source: City of Woodbury
Updated: May, 2018

Created: Hoisington Kogler Group Inc.
Further study La Lake Park to determine how it will ultimately serve the needs of Woodbury residents.

Plan for the ultimate expansion of the HealthEast Sports Center by developing the remaining thirty-five acres of the site.

Conduct a robust study of facility needs, costs, and funding sources across the parks and recreation system to ensure that the future improvements, upgrades and maintenance at existing and future parks can be achieved in a cost-effective and transparent manner.

**Community Recreation Facilities**

Potential future parks and recreation facilities implementation steps or initiatives identified in this Park Plan that are related to Community Recreation Facilities include:

- Study the potential for a community pool in partnership with another recreation provider.
- Create the Glacial Valley Park Learning Center in partnership with the South Washington Watershed District.
- Improve scheduling to maximize utilization of athletic fields and facilities.
- Study the need for new athletic facilities for South Washington County (consisting of the cities of Woodbury and Cottage Grove, and the South Washington County School District). New facilities or actions that may be needed include the following:
  - Full sized multi-purpose rectangular fields to meet the demand for soccer, football and lacrosse youth programs
  - Consider additional lighting of existing fields in lieu of new field construction
  - Consider converting existing lighted grass fields to artificial turf
  - Continue using school gyms for youth athletic association and City recreation programs
  - Coordinate the installation of tennis court lights at East Ridge High School with School District 833
  - Improve quality of existing athletic fields and gyms on park or school sites by partnering with youth athletic associations and school districts
  - Upgrade existing gyms as needed for multi-use purposes
- Integrate nature interpretation strategically into City parks and open spaces through signage and programming.
- Incorporate athletic uses and/or special use recreation facilities into community park areas in the northwest part of the City.
- Evaluate financial feasibility of facility construction, expansion, and renovation to identify needs, costs, and funding sources.
- Coordinate with any future public or private school planning so as to ensure their associated athletic facilities work with the parks and recreation system, allowing facility resources to be shared and resulting in a more effective use of land and buildings.
Greenway Corridors

Implementation steps or initiatives related to greenway corridors include:

» Development of additional greenway corridors for the south and east areas of Woodbury. Proposed greenway corridors are shown as generalized locations in **Figure 8-8**. The greenway corridors will be implemented concurrent with adjacent development.

» Further delineation of greenway corridors based on the specific natural resources of individual areas to help designate a continuous corridor that connects existing wetlands, drainageways, woods, natural areas, hill crests, stormwater ponds, naturalized utility corridors and existing parks and open space.

» Connect scenic and/or unique natural features to neighborhoods, parks and recreation amenities, open space, and stormwater facilities.

» Encourage the evaluation of utility easements, stormwater areas, and drainageways for use as greenway corridors.

Future Trails

This Park Plan is coordinated with the City’s Transportation Plan to create a comprehensive network of off-street trails and on-street bike facilities to provide a range of non-automotive recreation and transportation options.

Future Trail System Plan Map

The City of Woodbury Corridor Design Guidelines establishes standards and requirements for future roadway corridors as well as for roadway rehabilitation, reconstruction or new construction. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan anticipates direction from these guidelines will be applied as opportunities arise when existing roadways are rehabilitated or reconstructed. Existing collector and residential roadways within neighborhoods not currently served with pedestrian facilities will be considered for designs including these facilities at the time of rehabilitation planning within neighborhoods. The roadway rehabilitation process will determine the appropriate design for collector and neighborhood streets by accounting for existing right-of-way, tree impacts, property impacts, topography and other considerations. This methodology is consistent with the design process and application of the Corridor Design Guidelines applied since 2010.

Implementation steps or initiatives related to Future Trails include:

» Continue to plan and build a City-wide trail system to improve accessibility to the parks and recreation system and other community destinations. **Figure 8-11** shows planned trails in parks and along collector and arterial streets. See **Chapter 7. Transportation** for a summary of the plan.

» Identify and construct additional trails and sidewalks as well as improvements to existing trails.

» Identify and construct internal paved and soft surface trails in individual parks.

» Require trails and sidewalks internal to private developments and connecting to the main City trail system through the development review process.
Figure 8-11. Future Trail System Plan
Following the adoption of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the City’s Parks and Natural Resources Commission will:

- Prioritize the construction of trails in new development areas.
- Close known trail gaps.
- Include this prioritization as part of the City’s annual budgeting and long-term capital improvement planning processes.

- Coordinate with Washington County to implement the Central Greenway Regional Trail.
- Coordinate with Washington County to develop a master plan for the Afton Bluffs Regional Trail.
- Continue to communicate with neighboring communities to coordinate trail planning and construction to provide a comprehensive and integrated system of trails. Figure 8-11 shows trails or bikeways connecting to neighboring communities, including a potential bridge at Bielenberg Drive and Interstate 94 that could be built, contingent on implementation of the Gold Line.
- Support the use of trails as part of a healthy active lifestyle by:
  - Ensuring convenient and equitable access to parks and recreation facilities for users of all ages and abilities through expanded trail opportunities.
  - Providing increased wayfinding opportunities to guide and direct users of the system.
  - Providing frequent and comfortable rest areas along trails.
  - Providing paved trails of varied lengths within parks.

**Natural and Historic Resources**

As the City of Woodbury takes ownership of additional natural, and historic resources, the focus will move towards better management of these areas for people, wildlife and habitat. Implementation steps and initiatives related to management of these resources include:

- Dedicate resources to improve the City’s management efforts to minimize damage caused by buckthorn and other invasive species, deer browse, forest succession, and other threats.
- Remain committed to a resilient and sustainable parks and trails system, from both a development and operations perspective.
- Remain committed to partnering with community and environmental agencies and organizations in efforts to manage, conserve, and improve natural resources.
- Investigate opportunities for partnerships with community groups to preserve historic properties, moments, natural features, and cultural artifacts that could be an asset to our parks and recreation system.
- Provide meaningful interpretation of natural, heritage and cultural resources. Utilize technology, signage and communication strategies to engage and educate residents on cultural, natural and historical resources.
- Identify parcels with significant historic context and review opportunities to acquire and pair these properties with planned park development or greenway corridors.