CITY OF **ALEXANDRIA**

PARKS & TRAILS MASTER PLAN

ALEXANDRIA
Minnesota

HKGi

June 12, 2023

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Acknowledgments

Thank you to the residents, business owner, visitors, elected and appointed officials, and other stakeholders that have provided input and review of this plan. Your insights have strengthened the ideas and will help guide the next generation of Alexandria's parks and trails system.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Lake Henry at City Park

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The City of Alexandria developed this park and trail system plan to:

- Understand the condition of the parks and trails today and how they are being used
- Collaborate with the community to get a better idea of what people would like to see in the parks and trails system in the future
- Develop a plan to guide where and how the City invests in maintaining, updating, and upgrading parks and trails.

In order to achieve these goals, the project was split into four tasks:

- Inventory and Conditions Analysis
- Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment
- Develop and Refine Recommendations
- Implementation

Inventory and Conditions Analysis

The first task was to collect background documents, review related planning efforts, and develop a conditions inventory of the City's existing parks. This was done through site visits and coordination with city staff.

This task resulted in a comprehensive catalogue of the park features and conditions in the City's parks which informs the needs assessment and recommendations later on in the plan.

Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment

The Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment took the findings from the inventory and conditions analysis and combined that with

- Community Input
- Staff Input
- Trends in Parks and Recreation
- Spatial Analysis
- Community and Demographic Projections
- Best Practices in Park Planning

All of these inputs combined to help better understand the needs and desires facing the park system for the next 20 years. These needs were translated into the wider system initiatives and the specific park designs.

Develop and Refine Recommendations

Based on what came out of the Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment work, recommendations were developed in one of two ways:

System Initiatives

System Initiatives are more general concepts and policies that extend beyond a single park. These initiatives address desires and identified needs that seemed to keep popping up in different locations, or at a City-wide level.

The System Initiatives that were identified were:

- Financially Sustainable
- Replacing Aging Infrastructure
- Well Maintained Parks
- Ecologically Sustainable
- Parks for Neighborhoods
- Trail Loops & Connections
- Accessible and Inclusive
- Signage and Wayfinding
- Support of Athletics
- Four Season Recreation
- Strong Partnerships
- Recreation for All Ages

These initiatives may make themselves shown both at a system level, and in individual park designs. For example “Ecologically Sustainable” parks can be a system-wide initiative like looking at maintenance practices and thinking about park forestry choices. The initiative may also be seen in specific parks, like stormwater treatment and shoreland restoration at Agnes Park or Goose Park.

Park Plans

In addition to the system initiatives, each park in the system went through a design process. Some of the parks are in good shape and the changes are more minor. Others have lots of opportunities for improvement and will see larger changes.

Premier parks in the system are the facilities that have a regional draw, more infrastructure, and more use so the changes at those may be more significant when compared to neighborhood parks.

Implementation

While initiatives and plans are great, they do not represent real change until they are actually built. The final task is to provide the tools, prioritization, and direction to see the plan through.

PUBLIC INPUT

One of the important goals of the plan was to make sure that the plan reflected the community. In order to do that there were three main points for input opportunities.

- Initial System Survey to inform how people use the parks in general, why they do or don't choose to partake in specific activities, their perceptions about the system today, and their hopes for the next generation of parks.

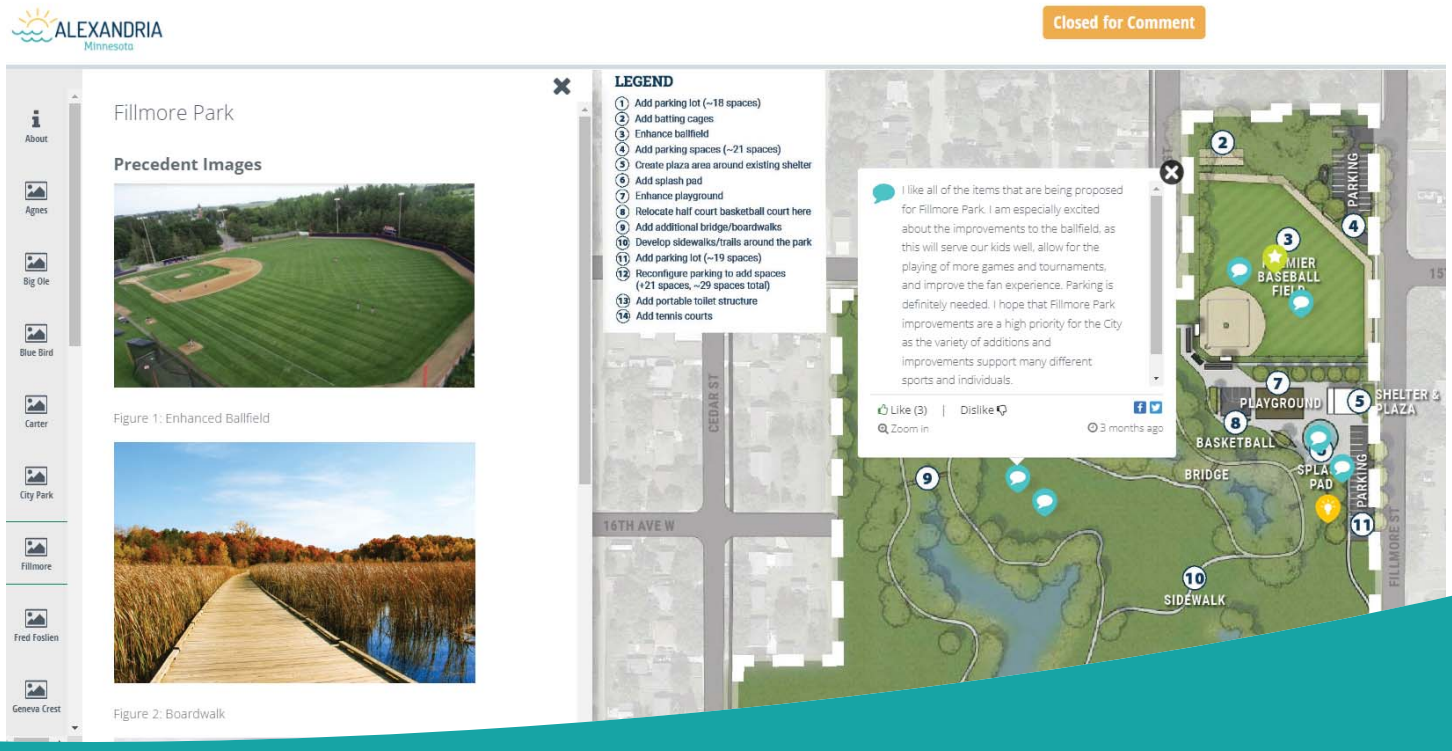
  Summer 2022 - 827 Responses

- In-Person and Virtual Open House to provide initial ideas to help the planners develop park concepts.

  October/November 2022 - Approximately 200 Comments Received

- In-Person and Virtual Open House to review park concepts and provide feedback on the ideas and designs to help planners finalize park plans.

  February/March 2023 - Approximately 250 Comments Received



CHAPTER 2

TRENDS

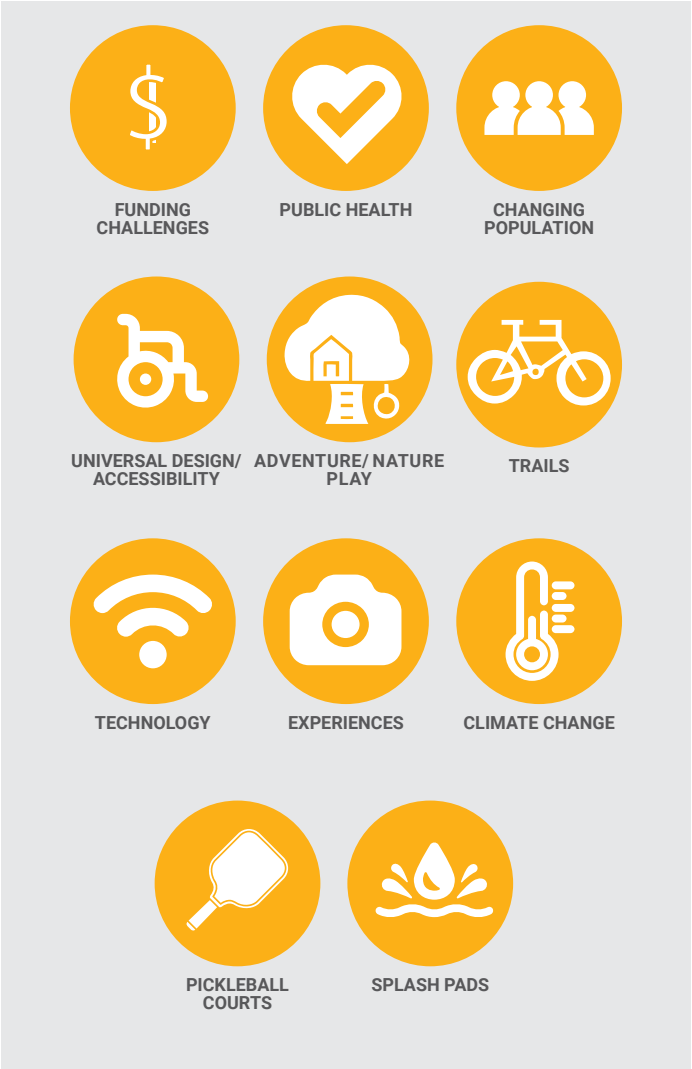
City Park

Trends in Parks and Recreation

The City of Alexandria, Central Minnesota, recreation and the environment are all dynamic and changing. Up and coming activities, shifting demographics, emerging technology, and the way people use parks continues to put new pressures on the system, but also to present new opportunities as well. Alexandria continues to adapt and update offerings to keep up with changing desires and demands from park users.

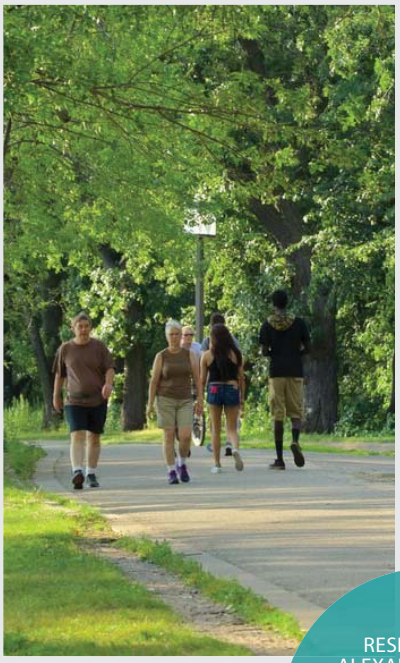
Just as parks from the 1990s may not serve all the emerging desires of the community today, there will almost certainly be new and emerging trends and technology that cannot be anticipated today. What can be done is to look at current trends and emerging issues, and try to incorporate flexibility into the park system so Alexandria can continue to provide outstanding parks for the community into the future.

The trends identified here are largely national trends, meaning Alexandria is not the only one facing these changes.



Funding Challenges

Parks are essential community infrastructure and provide important services, but more and more, communities are finding that park funding as it is currently structured is not sustainable. Too many funding mechanisms pay for park features the first time, but not the ongoing maintenance or the replacement costs for the second generation. Communities then wind up reacting to needs after they arise, rather than planning for and funding existing parks.



Parks and Trails for Public Health

Health continues to be a major focus in the country, in spite of the fact that outcomes are slipping in many places including obesity rates, high blood pressure, and general inactivity. Active living, parks, and recreation can offer a way to get and stay healthier. Researchers are even finding mental health benefits to using parks including stress reduction, improved self-esteem, and reduced mental fatigue. Many grants that can improve park systems are focused on how that funding will improve health outcomes.

The emergence of COVID has made the importance of parks even more important. Park use ballooned during this time and participation in outdoor activities expanded among those that had not participated before the pandemic.

Now as people choose where to live and visit, the nearby opportunities to be active can drive decisions, whether that is pickleball, bike trails, or hiking in a natural area.

RESIDENTS OF ALEXANDRIA SPENT AN ESTIMATED **$41.3 MILLION** ON HEALTH CARE IN 2022 (ESRI)

Aging Population

As the Baby Boomer generation ages, the recreation desires of this age cohort is changing, and changing park systems with it. While this population is getting older, they are still looking to stay active.

This age cohort is looking for lower impact activities that can be undertaken with a few friends. Adult softball leagues have given way to pickleball tournaments and trail use. The Boomers are also looking for multi-generational recreation. Spaces to play with their grandchildren or socialize with their own kids are particularly important.

HALF

OF ALEXANDRIA'S HOUSEHOLDERS ARE 55 YEARS OLD OR OLDER

Universal Design/Equity

The importance of providing park and recreation spaces for people with disabilities is being better understood and emphasized. Parks and public spaces play a key role in helping individuals live active lives while also facilitating social interactions that they may otherwise be excluded from. And it's not just about individuals with disabilities, it's also about their family and friends. As one older brother of a girl in a wheelchair pointed out at an inclusive playground, "I've never gotten to play with my sister like this before!"

Many parks departments are also expanding their ideas of what inclusive play looks like. Just like it's important to provide a great experience to someone with mobility issues, it's also vital that neuro-diverse park users (for example, those with autism) have spaces that meet their needs, including quiet spots, interesting textures, buffers from roads or parking lots, and designing to varied skill sets and abilities.

+15%

OF ALEXANDRIA RESIDENTS HAVE A DISABILITY

Adventure, Nature, and Challenge Play

Playgrounds are now evolving past the typical molded plastic in primary colors and preset activities that defined playground design for a long time. While these structures still have their place, people are looking for unique experiences with their playgrounds. They can help kids build confidence, learn limits, and apply innovative solutions to play problems.

These playgrounds can come in the form of adventure, nature, and challenge play. Adventure play is less structured with loose, movable features to encourage creative thinking and problem solving. Nature play draws inspiration from nature in its forms and materials and may incorporate unique landforms like hills, or have play features that look more like a tree fort or a bird's nest. Challenge play incorporates obstacles and races that require developing different skills such as balance, speed, flexibility, and strength.

Because these playgrounds are unique, they are often more memorable and desired in a community.

Trails

Trails have become, and remain, one of the most desired amenities a community can offer to residents. As people become busier, trails are an appreciated amenity, as people can use them on their own time, at their own pace, and for as long or short as they would like.

Trails are not only recreational, but also serve roles for transportation and exercise in a community. They can be vital for providing safe routes to schools and parks, particularly when many of those users are too young to drive.

ALEXANDRIA IS CONNECTED TO

120 MILES

ON THE CENTRAL LAKES TRAIL AND THE LAKE WOBEGON TRAIL

Technology

Like most other things in society today, parks are being affected by (and improved by) technological advances. From a recreational perspective, parks have become more interactive, with some utilizing apps or QR codes to access activities to do, educational information about a site, or the ability to race against your friends. Many parks offer wi-fi and phone charging stations as well. Community science apps allows birders or naturalists to share information.

On the programming side, technology is how parks departments are reaching people, and how people are reaching back. Online sign-ups for classes, Facebook pages to get information out, and specialized scheduling software have all become commonplace. Equipment rentals are even being automated.

From an operations and maintenance perspective, advances in apps allow park supervisors the ability to turn lights on/off or lock doors from their phone.

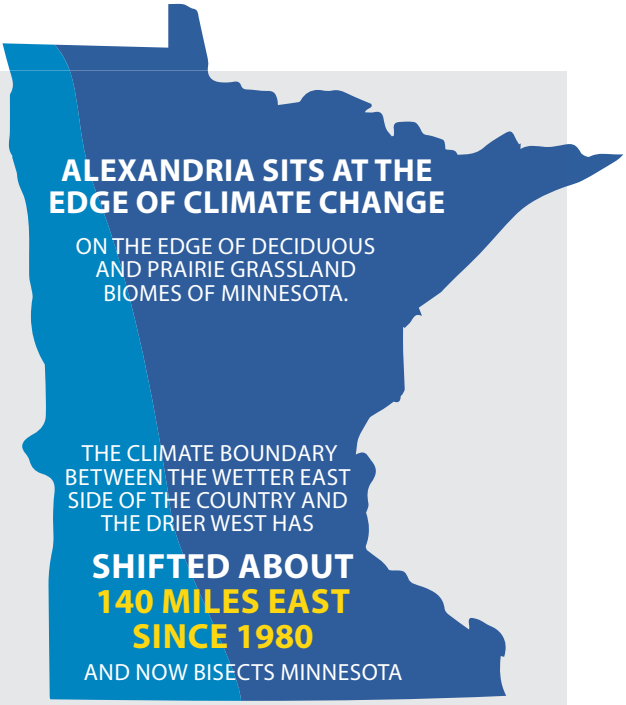
Focus On Experiences

Prior to COVID, there were strong trends where people chose to spend their money on experiences and activities, rather than stuff. This was attributed to a number of different reasons ranging from generational preferences to social media. Whatever the reason, the trend is re-emerging as people re-emerge from quarantines and lockdowns. Parks are a great location for people to come together, be social and active, and build memories and experiences.

Park designs are even considering things through a social media lens (or filter!) when thinking about the amenities that go into parks. Where are the spots or what are the experiences that someone would want to take a picture of and share with their friends? Whether it's a view on hike, a unique play area, or a special activity or event, if someone wants to "share" it, it is probably going to be popular.

Climate Change

Our changing climate is changing how parks systems operate and are able to offer activities. Rain events are becoming less predictable and more extreme which can create flooding and erosion challenges. Winter temperatures are warmer on average, impacting activities like cross country skiing and ice skating. Shifting climate edges such as hardiness zones are meaning that some animal and plant populations can survive in places they could not before.



Park agencies are also taking it upon themselves to change the way they operate to try to minimize their own carbon footprint and promote environmental stewardship. This includes reducing energy and water use at facilities, using sustainable building materials, and considering fuel and energy sources used for maintenance vehicles.

Pickleball

Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in the United States. Originally invented in the 1960s, the sport has boomed in the last ten years.

Pickleball is played on a smaller court than tennis and is more accessible to people of all ages and athletic abilities. This is a large part of what made the sport so popular among Baby Boomers originally, although the sport is now getting younger as well. Most of the sport's core players are over age 65, but the strongest growth is among players under 55. The sport is being played at all levels from elementary gym class to professional tournaments.

The sport also offers a way for people to be social as well as active. Private enterprises are even developing pickleball courts as entertainment venues, recognizing the friendly nature of the game.

At this point, parks departments across the country are struggling to keep up with demand for pickleball courts.

Splashpads

Coinciding with the movement away from swimming pools as a part of many park systems, splashpads have found a place as a different way for cities to offer water play in a fun, safer, and more affordable environment.

Splashpads can be designed and often are accessibly for park users of all ages and abilities. They can take the appearance of a "water playground" with large, colorful features or a more understated "play fountain" with ground features only.

Depending on the type of system, splashpads also are cheaper to operate than standard pools, as pass through systems are not subject to the same testing/treatment protocols as a chlorinated pool. They often do not require lifeguards either, a plus in today's labor environment that has made finding lifeguards very challenging.

CHAPTER 3

THE SYSTEM TODAY

City Park

THE PARK SYSTEM

Alexandria is a destination for residents and visitors who are seeking a connection with the outdoors, recreational opportunities, and an active lifestyle.

Alexandria's park system today is a product of decades of investment, planning, and dedication of many different people. The City now boasts 22 Parks on almost 200 acres. The parks offer unique experiences and safe destinations for play and relaxation.

The park system also serves many varying interests, from neighborhood families to anglers, and baseball players to bicyclists. Residents and tourists, young and old can find fun and engaging opportunities in Alexandria's parks.

That's not to say that the system doesn't have issues to address. Like many established communities, replacing aging facilities is a challenge. Most of the neighborhood parks in the system will be due for an overhaul in the next 10 years. As parks were built out, they were often completed without desired features like walking trails. Parkland acquired from different sources means that every park is different, which gives the system character, but also means that the maintenance staff needs to wear a lot of hats. Overall however, these issues are not major flaws and the system is structurally sound.

Alexandria Park System Highlights

- 6 Lakefront parks with more than a mile of shoreline total and 3 more parks with internal ponds
- A large Veterans Memorial Park facility
- Iconic Baseball Field at Knute Nelson, with a soon to be added turf infield
- On the Central Lakes Trail, connecting with the Lake Wobegon Trail and other local trails to provide more than 120 miles of paved walking and cycling
- Formal gardens at Noonan Park
- A large natural area at Oakwood Trails Park that will be developed to incorporate hiking trails
- Seasonal offerings that can get people outside all year round
- Good partnerships with other recreation providers in the area to provide YMCA, indoor turf and training, large natural areas, mountain biking, cross county skiing, snowmobiling, ballfields, and more!

1938 Aerial Map

John R. Borchert Map Library

PARK DEVELOPMENT

Historically, the City of Alexandria focused on developing community scale parks for the enjoyment of the community. These parks were typically larger (10-20 acres) and included a wider range of offerings, including open water features, ballfields, courts, large shelters, and other unique features. Many of these parks have become the City's "Premier Parks" and continue to serve the larger community.

As the City grew, the approach to parks changed to a neighborhood by neighborhood focus. This was in part due to changes in recreation preferences, the way neighborhoods were developed starting in the 1950s and 60s, and partly due to the City annexing new development occurring in the townships. This meant the City added both the new residents and their neighborhood parks.

The locations and coverage areas of these parks can be seen in the two graphics to the right, showing proximity to the City's Premier Parks in the older parts of town with the traditional city blocks, and the City's Neighborhood Parks in the newer development areas at the edges.

The image on the opposite page shows the City of Alexandria in 1938.

It was possible to walk between Lake Agnes and Lake Henry (City Park)

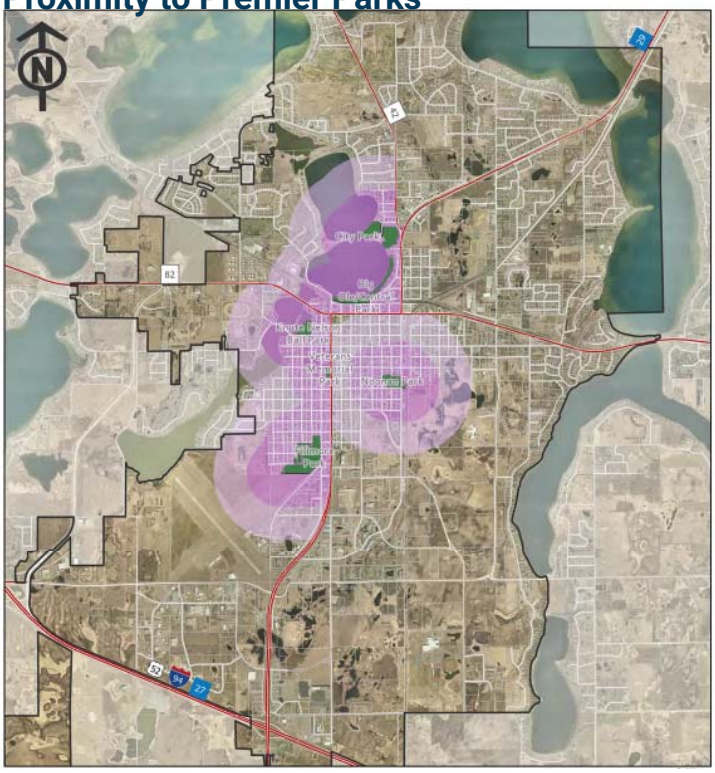
Central Park was train tracks

Knute Nelson Ballfield had a shorter center field than today

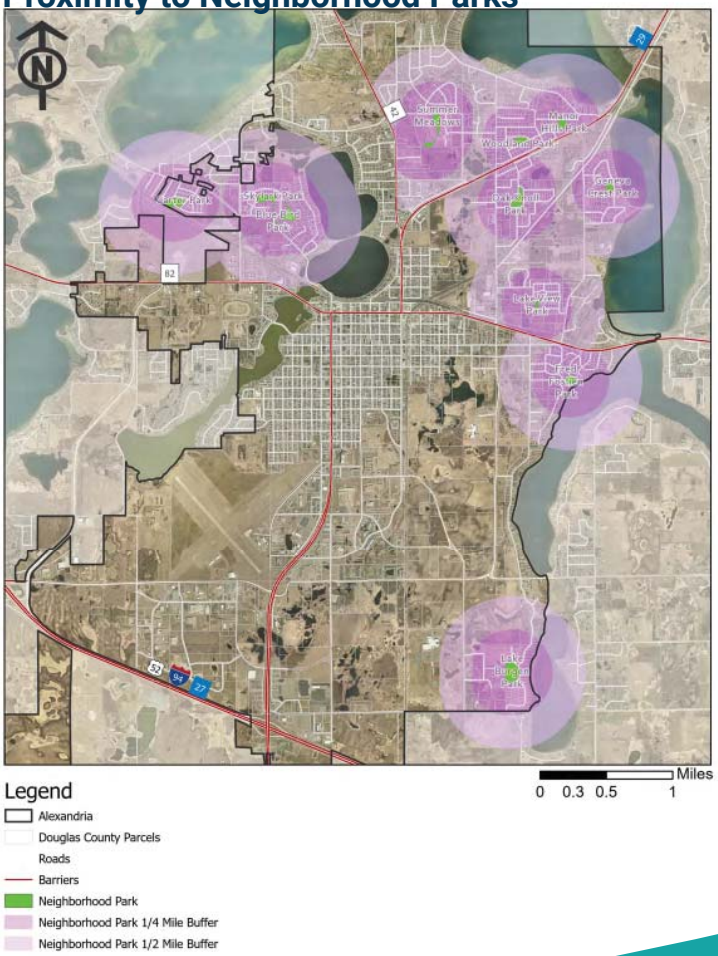
Noonan Park was still privately owned

Fillmore Park had not been developed

Proximity to Premier Parks



Proximity to Neighborhood Parks



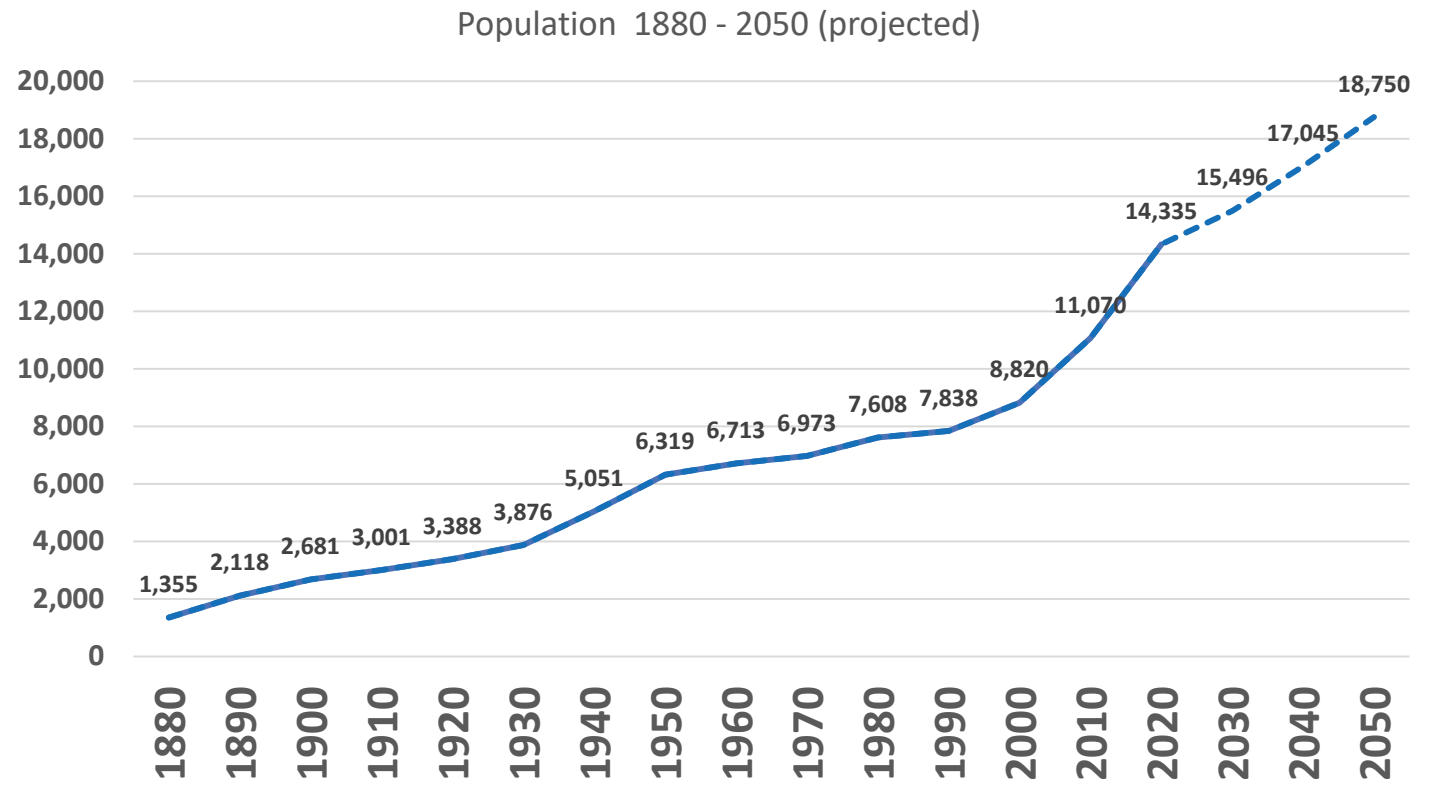
POPULATION CHANGE

The City of Alexandria has maintained steady growth for the last century and a half, seeing particularly rapid growth in the last 20 years, adding over 5,500 people from 2000 to 2020. Some of this growth may be in part due to annexation of surrounding township neighborhoods. The City is expected to continue growing, bucking a trend seen by many cities in greater Minnesota.

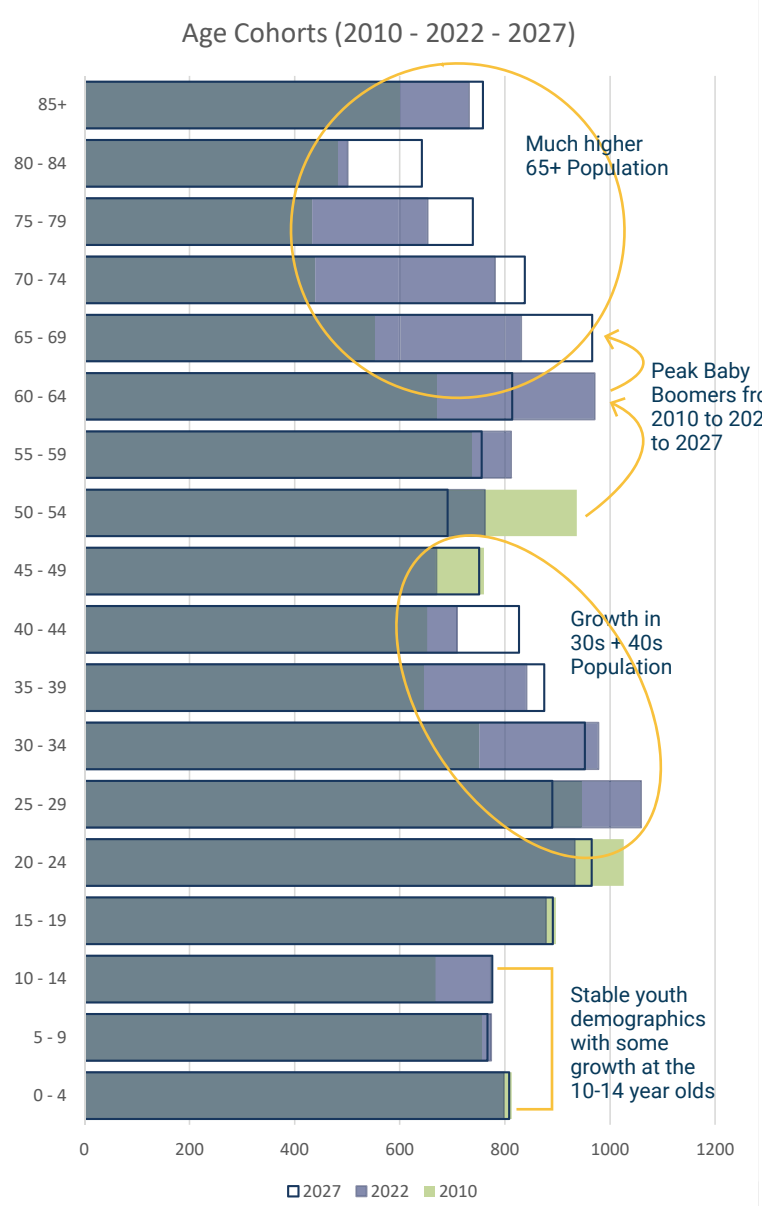
This will continue to add pressure to the park system as more residents are added and the system sees increased use.

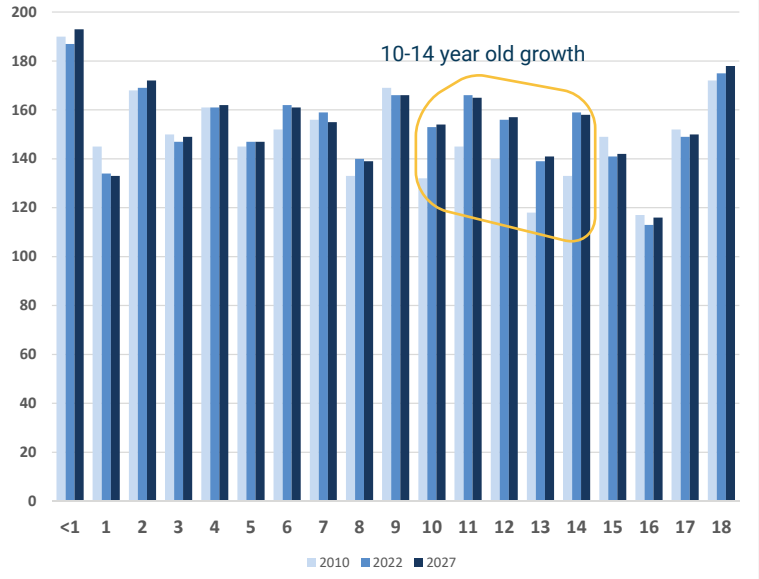
It is also worth noting that a few factors make the experienced population much higher than just the number of residents.

- Alexandria is an employment hub in the region and the daytime population (stay at home residents + employees) raises the number to 21,550 people.
- Changes in hybrid and remote work now allow visitors to stay in the Alexandria area longer. For example, remote working capabilities may allow someone with a cabin to stay there for a week when previously they would only be able to come on the weekends.
- Alexandria has a number of seasonal/snowbird residents that may not all be represented in population counts depending on where they claim primary residency or where they are when counts are completed.



Projections from the Alexandria 2040 Comprehensive Plan





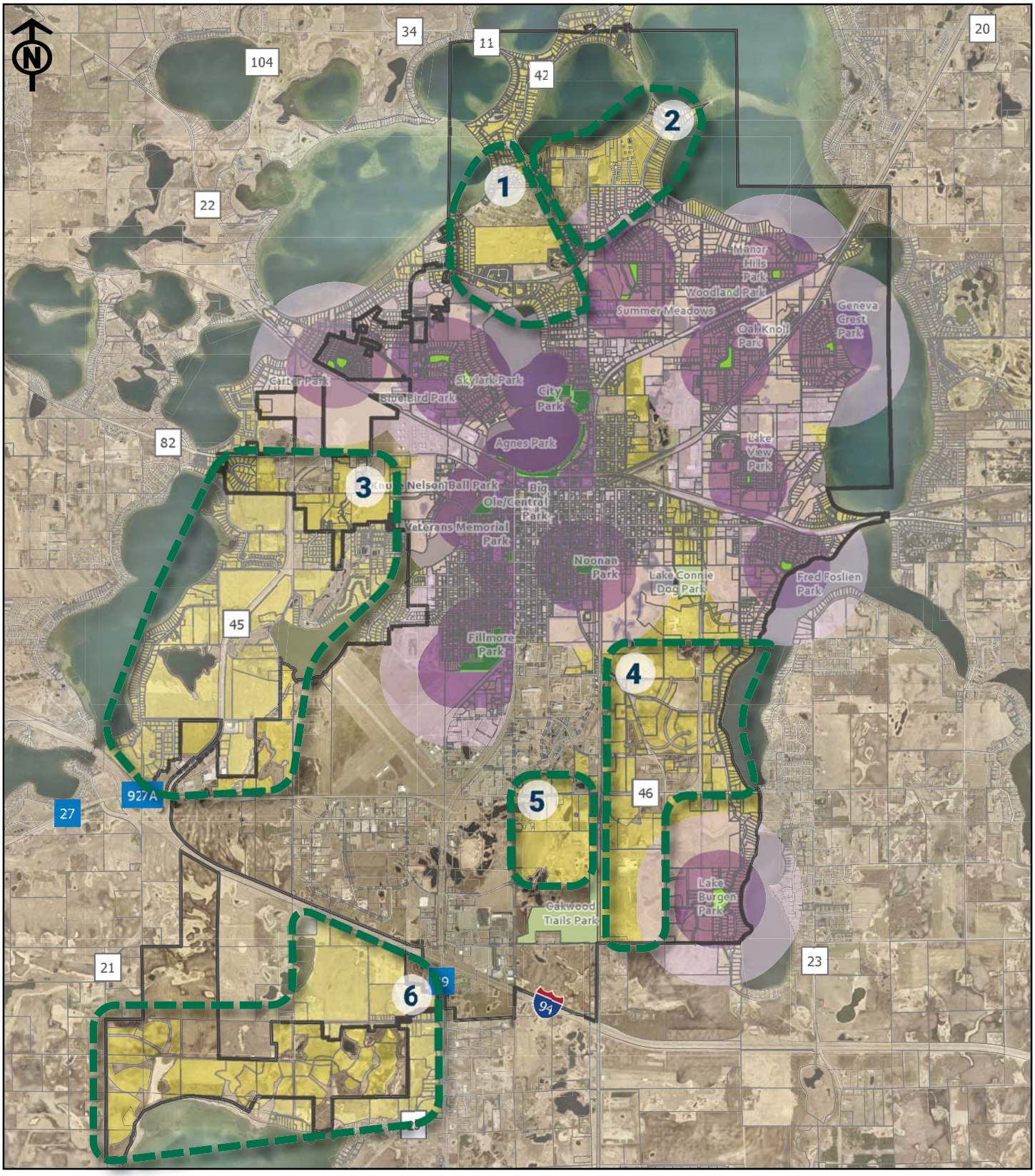
Age Dynamics in Alexandria

The graph at left shows the 5 year age cohorts from 2010, 2022, and projections for 2027. In a similar trend to the state and country, Alexandria's 65+ population has exploded compared to 2010. This is due to the aging of the Baby Boom generation and has impacts for the amount and types of recreation that is desired.

Compared with 2010, there is a much larger population of people from their late 20s to 40s living in Alexandria today and projected in 2027.

Youth Population

Generally, the youth population in Alexandria has been and is expected to remain stable. The one caveat to that is a somewhat elevated 10-14 year old age croup when compared to 2010.


N
34
11
20
104
42
2
1
22
Manor Hills Park
Woodland Park
Summer Meadows
Geneva Crest Park
Oak Knoll Park
Gatter Park
Skylark Park
City Park
Blue Bird Park
82
Agnes Park
Lake View Park
3
Nelson Ball Park
Big Ole/Central Park
Veterans Memorial Park
Noonan Park
Lake Connie Dog Park
Fred Foslien Park
45
Fillmore Park
4
927A
27
5
46
Lake Burgen Park
Oakwood Trails Park
21
6
9
94
23
Premier Park
Neighborhood Park
Other City Park
Premier Park
Within 1/2 mi of premier/neighborhood park
Planned or Existing Residential
Existing or future park gap and search area
0
0.5
1
Miles

NEW PARKS AND GAPS

Generally, the City's neighboroods have good park coverage, with most homes being within 1/2 a mile of a park (without major road barriers). As the City grows, it is important to continue to develop new parks to serve residents in new homes.

The areas outlined in dashed green lines on the map to the left are some of the City's planned growth areas or spots where there are not City parks. Some of these spots have already identified where new parks will be located. These park locations may shift as development occurs. Other areas have not yet identified where the new parks will go, but will need to add them.

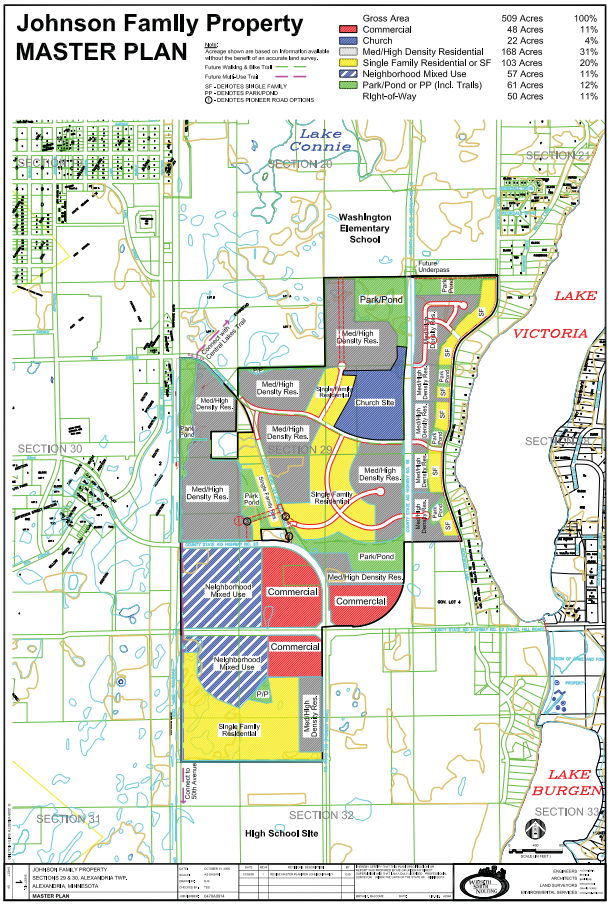
1 - Originally township development, this area has some natural corridors, but if/when the large piece of land south of the golf course develops, there should be a park. Currently the neighborhood has some access to a playground and fields at Voyager Elementary School.

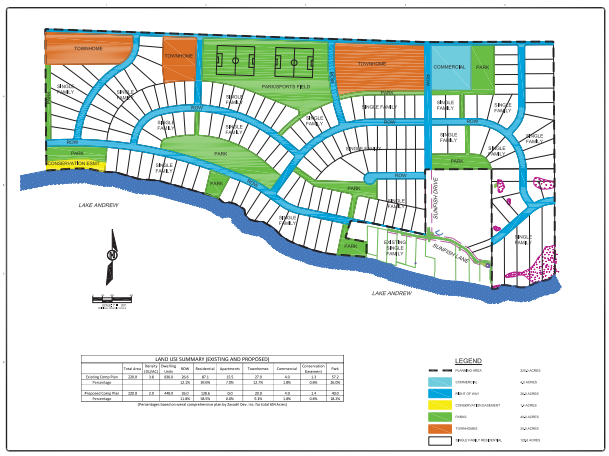
2 - This area was also built out in the township. While it does not have a City park, there is access to Curt Felt Memorial Park and Scenic Park which cannot be transferred to the City due to the requirement for deed changes to the homes in the area.

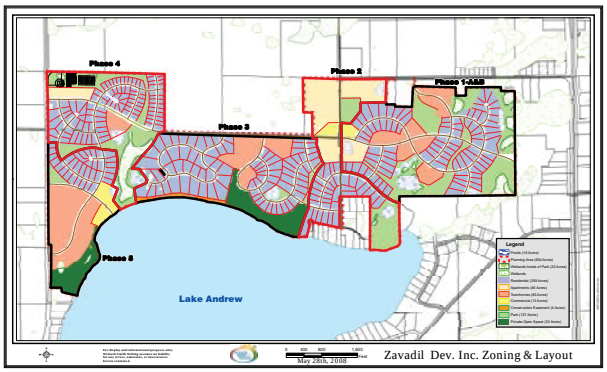
3 - The area east of Lake Winona is another township development area that may see more development in the future. One potential addition of City Parkland may come with changes to the fairgrounds and the potential addition of recreation features there.

4 & 5 - These areas are anticipated to be the largest growth area for the City in the next 20 years. Master planning done for the Johnson Family property includes parkland. The concept may need to be adapted to improve park frontages and accommodate the planned nature trail, but it does show significant expansion of the system.

6 - Development south of I-94 and around Lake Andrew is also expected to include parkland. This includes waterfront parkland, neighborhood parks, and conservation easements. This area is also a good area to consider expansion of the trail network in the City.







PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Different parks serve different purposes within a park system. This helps the park system meet the varying needs of a community. Park classifications help define and clarify the intended use of each park type and recreation facility, and provide guidance on the area served, the size, and ideal sites. This is useful when planning for new parks within the community or when contemplating park needs for major redevelopment projects. Classifications help guide facility and use plans.

Park Types			
Category	**Description**	**Typical Users**	**Parks**
Premier Parks	Premier parks are typically the most visited and largest parks in the system. They are more centrally located in Alexandria and are some of the best known. Premier parks may also serve as neighborhood parks for the residents that live closer to them.	Regional and Community Wide	» Big Ole/Central Park » City Park » Fillmore Park » Knute Nelson Ball Park » Noonan Park
Neighborhood Parks	As their name suggests, neighborhood parks are focused on providing recreation options to individual neighborhoods. These parks serve the day to day needs of the City. Neighborhood parks typically include standard park features like playgrounds, shelters, and open playfields.	Neighborhood	» Blue Bird Park » Carter Park » Fred Foslien Park » Geneva Crest Park » Lake Burgen Park » Lake View Park » Manor Hills Park » Oak Knoll Park » Summer Meadows » Skylark Park » Woodland Park
Special Use	Special use parks are facilities that have been developed primarily for a specific purpose such as a dog park or a boat launch.	Specific to Use	» Agnes Park » Goose Park » Lake Connie Dog Park » Runestone Park » Veterans Memorial
Open Space	Open Spaces are facilities that focus on passive recreation and enjoyment of nature. Activities may include hiking, walking, picnicing, and birding.	Community Wide	» Oakwood Trails Park
Trails	This category includes paved trails and the associated corridors. Trails are used to connect park facilities and other destinations, as well as provide recreational value for walkers, runners, cyclists, and others. May include Snowmobiles in winter.	Regional and Community Wide	» Trails connecting parks » Trails along roads » Alexandria Nature Trail (planned)

Recreation Offerings by Partners/Others

The recreation context in Alexandria extends beyond the City owned parks. Some facilities are owned by others, but maintained in part by the City. Others may supplement City offerings allowing for larger events like athletic tournaments. Still others are a benefit to residents, but are not officially connected to the City, beyond a positive relationship and possible promotion. It is still important to recognize these facilities as they shape the recreation offerings in the area and may help fill gaps that the City cannot close on their own.

Other Recreation Offerings			
Category	**Description**	**Typical Users**	**Examples (Not a full list)**
State/Regional Trails	Longer trails used for cycling, running, walking, and other uses. May include separate winter uses like skiing or snowmobiling.	Regional	» Central Lakes Trail » Lake Wobegon Trail
State/County/ Regional Parks	These parks are typically larger, natural resource focused parks that include outdoor recreation activities like hiking, camping, and skiing. The County also operates a few smaller waysides and swim beaches.	Regional	» Lake Carlos State Park » Lake Brophy Park » Kurt Felt Memorial Park
Schools	Schools often incorporate playgrounds and ballfields into their campuses. These are used by both the schools and community groups.	Community Wide	» Alexandria H.S. » Discovery Middle School
Other City/County Facilities	While not parks, the City and County do operate other recreational facilities. These tend to be specific use based.	Community Wide	» Runestone Community Center » Douglas County Library
Township Parks	Some of the parks near the City of Alexandria are owned and operated by the townships.	Neighborhood	» Tabberts Park » Scenic Park
Private Recreation	Many of the recreation offerings in Alexandria and the surrounding area are owned and run by private operators. The uses are typically specific and vary significantly.	Use Specific	» Northstar Sports Complex » Alexandria Golf Club » Alexandria Shooting Park » Andes Tower Hills
Public Lands and Waters	Land and waters used for recreational activities like boating, hunting, and fishing. Land and waters are often managed by the MN DNR.	Regional	» Lake Le Homme Dieu » La Grand WMA » Rachel WPA

PARK AND POPULATION RATIOS

As the City grows, it is worth considering the population ratios relative to what is offered today.

The deficits shown here are not hard rules because there are other factors such as location and opportunity that matter more than just the overall numbers of parks, but it is a helpful data point.

Park Ratios						
Feature	2020 pop. 14,335		2030 pop. 15,496		2040 pop. 17,045	
	Count	pop. per	Needed	Deficit	Needed	Deficit
Total Parks	22	652	24	2	26	4
Premier Parks	5	2,867	5-1/2	1/2	6	1
Neighborhood Parks	11	1,303	12	1	13	2
Acres	207.6	69	224.4	16.8	246.8	39.2

As the park system expands, so too will the need for maintenance staff and capital spending. The following table considers the budget in a similar manner as above. In 2022, the City's established the parks budget for the following year at $831,505. This works out to about $57.50 of parks spending per person (note that not every person is paying $58 towards the park budget, there are other revenue sources that the City has such as Local Government Aid, business taxes, and fees). If that number remains constant, *not accounting for inflation*, the City might expect to be spending nearly $1,000,000 (in 2023 dollars) by 2040 just based on population growth.

Park Ratios				
Feature	2022 pop. 14,459		2030 pop. 15,496	2040 pop. 17,045
	Count	$ per pop.	To stay at current funding	To stay at current funding
Budget	$831,505	$57.51	$891,141	$980,220

It is worth noting that the current funding levels are not adequate to continue the replacements and maintain the park system at current levels. This means the overall level of spending will likely have to rise in order to stay at the same park standards. The parks plans as illustrated represent additional improvements based on community desires and changing recreation trends. The budget numbers shown will likely be higher in reality.

NRPA Database

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) also offers some information on ratios for parks, in data collected from its member communities.

Generally Alexandria is ahead of the curve for these facilities when compared to its peers around the country. The features that are notably lacking are the athletic facilities. This is due to two primary factors.

The City's neighborhood parks are often undersized for the provision of large fields, and the City's larger parks are not conducive to laying out a number of fields due to site conditions (stormwater, ponds, topography, shape)

The school district has become the primary provider of athletic fields in the community. As long as the City and youth athletic associations maintain positive relationships with the school district, this is probably fine.

NRPA		
Feature	**NRPA Median for Communities under 20,000**	**Alexandria**
Residents per Active Park	1,318	904
Acres per 1000 Residents	10.8	14.4
Residents per Playground	2,268	1,112
Residents per Basketball Court	3,598	2,410
Residents per Tennis Court	5,860	N/A
Residents per Ball Diamond	1,277	2,892
Residents per Rectangle Field	1,390	N/A
Residents per Outdoor Ice Rinks (when provided)	8,500	7,230

CHAPTER 4

SYSTEM INITIATIVES

Big Ole / Central Park and the Central Lakes Trail

System Initiatives

This plan addresses both the individual park needs (Chapter 5), but also the overarching direction of the park system. These initiatives are ideas and policies that help steer the Alexandria Park System forward, improving the operations, user experience, and long term sustainability of the parks.

The System Initiatives are:

- Financially Sustainable
- Replacing Aging Infrastructure
- Well Maintained Parks
- Ecologically Sustainable
- Parks for Neighborhoods
- Trail Loops & Connections
- Accessible and Inclusive
- Signage and Wayfinding
- Support of Athletics
- Four Season Recreation
- Strong Partnerships
- Recreation for All Ages

Each initiative includes a goal, a description, and strategies for achieving the goal.

Goals: A statement the City should strive to achieve. It may not always be met, or it may take some time to get there, but the goal statement is the aiming point.

Descriptions: Narrative to further elaborate on the goal, and explain the "why" of each initiative.

Strategies: Action steps, policies, suggestions, and directives that can help move the City closer to achieving the goal.

Because these initiatives are intertwined, some themes may be evident in multiple places throughout this chapter. Many of these initiatives are also evident and have been included in the design of individual parks shown in Chapter 5.

FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE

Goal: Ensure that the park system has the appropriate level of funding over time to sustain high quality offerings for residents and visitors in Alexandria.

Long term/Capital Planning

Every year the City develops an annual budget, as well as a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). These documents are what guides the City's expenditures on everything from Parks to Police. It is important that the upcoming needs for the park system are recognized in this planning process.

Operations and Maintenance

Just like you wouldn't buy a car without planning to change the oil and replace the brakes when they wear out, it is important to understand and plan for the costs of taking care of the park system. This includes day to day maintenance like mowing and intermediate investments like resurfacing a pickleball court.

Sources of Funding

Investing in a park system takes significant resources. Fortunately there are multiple ways to pay for specific parts of the system. Unfortunately, each comes with its own set of limitations on how much they can raise and how the money can be spent. The City should continue to pursue and secure funding from a variety of sources. A more in-depth description of the sources can be found in the Implementation Chapter (Chapter 6), but at a high level, some of the options include: general fund, park dedication, bonding (typically backed by a voter approved measure like a referendum or sales tax), grants, donations, sponsorships, user fees and/or other fees like franchise fees.

Strategies

- Update the asset management tool as features are replaced
- Make sure replacement costs are incorporated into the City's CIP, and review the CIP annually to plan for upcoming needs
- Commit to an operating budget that protects Alexandria's investments in parks by maintaining the playgrounds, trails, fields, natural resources, and other features that have been put in
- Pursue efficiencies in park maintenance by incorporating new technology and approaches to maintenance

The City Council should understand both the operations costs and capital needs when establishing the City's budgets.

REPLACING INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal: Improve safety and user experiences by replacing park features as they reach the end of their life cycle.

Life Cycles

One of the challenges that the City of Alexandria faces is how to keep up with the replacement needs of existing infrastructure. It is an enormous credit to the parks maintenance staff at the City that they have been able to keep different park features like playgrounds and trails in functional shape longer than would typically be expected. But the reality is that even with great maintenance, every piece of park equipment in the City will eventually break down and need to be replaced.

Funding Sources

One of the challenges to replacing existing park features is identifying funding to pay for the replacement. The first time a park is built out, it is often built or paid for through park dedication provided by a developer. The issue arises when the playground, field, or trail needs to be replaced. Park dedication laws do not allow for those funds to be used for replacements or maintenance. Options for replacement costs can include the general fund, but also grants, referendums, and donations among others.

Changing Standards

Many features in the Alexandria park system were built over 20 years ago. The standards and expectations about safety and user experience have shifted since some of those went in. There are also features that were popular in the past, but may not meet the needs of the community today. The City should continue to evaluate those features and determine whether they should be replaced, removed, or are candidates for upgrades, even if they are still functional.

Strategies

- Remain vigilant about checking park features to make sure they are safe and in good repair, even if the “anticipated life cycle” has not been reached yet.
- Continue to use and update the asset management tool to get an understanding of what financial obligations the park system will be facing in upcoming years.
- Adequately budget for upcoming needs.
- Remain committed to maintenance to extend the life-cycle of certain park elements.
- Pursue additional funding sources such as grants and donations to replace and improve features.
- Evaluate features that have reached the end of their life cycle, determining whether they should be replaced or removed for something different that better meets the needs and desires of the community.

WELL MAINTAINED PARKS

Goal: Continue to maintain parks to ensure they are safe, enjoyable, and attractive.

Parks Define Community Character

Along with roads, the Alexandria's parks are one of the most visible examples of how the City takes care of their responsibilities. Nicely maintained parks in good repair reflect well on the City, while run down facilities give residents and visitors a less favorable impression. Parks truly are a community's front yard and it is worth considering what kind of "curb appeal" the City is showing off.

When parks are well maintained, they also send a signal to users about what is acceptable behavior. Clean facilities set an expectation that they should be kept that way. Conversely, if there is a bunch of litter, people may think "what's one more wrapper?"

Maintained Parks are Safe Parks

Keeping parks maintained keeps parks safe in two ways. The first is preventative maintenance, taking care of features to help avoid unexpected breakdowns or failures. This can also prolong the life of features, saving money long term.

The second is the increased presence in the park. When workers are in the parks on a more regular basis, they are more likely to discover broken things themselves, rather than relying on a resident or visitor to report the issue.

Establishing and Enhancing Natural Resources

While natural resource enhancements like shoreland restoration or prairie plantings may reduce the long term cost of maintenance, they still require some level of attention. These may also require a shift in mindset (ie. not mowing to the water's edge, distinguishing between broadleaf prairie plants and weeds, etc.). Some cities have experts on staff, while others contract with specialists for specific natural resource activities.

Strategies

- Consider the maintenance implications of adding parkland, and quantify the additional FTE labor and other inputs associated with taking care of new facilities.
- Utilize longer lasting and less maintenance intensive materials
- Maintain a sufficient operating budget to protect the community's investment in parks
- Inspect all park facilities at least monthly
- Expand the City's "Report a Concern" program, including potential development of an app to get more up to date information about safety/maintenance issues.
- Explore maintenance programs such as Cartegraph or similar software to track operations, work management, and assets.
- Consider contracting with and/or obtaining training from specialists to establish and maintain natural resource features like shorelands and prairies.

ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE

Goal: Preserve and enhance the natural character and functioning of the parks. Be a community leader on the responsible use and protection of natural resources to ensure they are here for generations to come.

Parks are how People Connect with Nature

"Access to Nature" was the #2 reason people visit Alexandria Parks, ahead of playgrounds, sports, and events. It is also a big reason people choose to live and vacation in Alexandria. Additions like the recently acquired Oakwood Trails property and the planned nature trail will help improve access to natural areas in the City. Other parks like Big Ole/Central Park and City Park allow users to observe and interact with the lakes. Natural resources like these help set the certain parks apart as important community assets.

Parks as Examples of Sustainability

The park system should be an example of thriving ecosystems and best practices for design and maintenance. The City will be owning and operating these properties for generations and today's decisions have the potential to impact the park system (positively and negatively) for many years to come.

The City has identified the natural environment as integral to the character and way of life in Alexandria. The City also has the ability to demonstrate how best to take care of the environment, through its park system. This could include everything from stormwater management to help clean the lakes, to using green technology when buying new equipment.

Protecting the Investment in Parks

A changing climate may present new challenges for the park system. Milder winters may allow different invasive species to survive and wreak havoc on park plants and waterbodies. Drought mixed with rarer, but more intense rain events may challenge the viability of the City's park vegetation.

It is likely that the vegetative makeup in the parks may need to shift in order to survive. Being proactive about planting more drought tolerant plants will help the system adapt and stay viable into the future.

Strategies

- Focus on the ecological as well as recreational value of parkland as the park system grows. Look for opportunities to incorporate high value natural resources into the park system to protect them and connect park users with nature.
- Explore opportunities to incorporate prairie plantings, stormwater management, and shoreland restoration into parks where appropriate
- Restore shoreland in parks, particularly in places where use and erosion have degraded it
- Evaluate maintenance practices through a sustainability lens. This could include a variety of practices ranging from chemical use, fuel alternatives, mowing practices, and plowing/salting.
- Continue to combat invasive species. This includes vegetation like buckthorn and animals like zebra mussels.
- Evaluate what plants are being used in park projects. Refrain from monoculture approaches that are susceptible to all dying at the same time. Incorporate more drought tolerant plants.

PARKS FOR NEIGHBORHOODS

Goal: Strive to provide all residents in Alexandria with a walkable, attractive, and safe neighborhood park.

Parks Define Neighborhood Character

One of the ways residents identify their neighborhoods and where they live is by the park they use. Parks are one of the community features that are shared destinations for many people. They are the settings for many of the cherished memories of childhood, host family gatherings of multiple generations, and are the spot where all can go for a break or a breath of fresh air. Parks are a key building block in what makes a place loved and special.

Design Defines Use

Neighborhood Parks are often established when new neighborhoods are developed. When a neighborhood is laid out, the designers must consider not only where housing goes, but also how roads and trails create connections and where parks and other green infrastructure fit in.

Sometimes a developer will focus on the park as a key part of the neighborhood. Other times, the parkland is relegated to the leftover space that could not be used for development. These different approaches will greatly affect the functionality, user experience, and overall success of the park.

After the initial build-out, the City is responsible for taking care of the features as they age. When the City determines what parkland and features to accept, consider that it also comes with generations of maintenance and replacement obligations. Settling for parkland that is difficult to access, police, mow, or enjoy will cause more ongoing problems in the long term.

Neighborhood parks are more successful when they include the following elements:

- Significant street frontage & good visibility
- Trail connections and internal loops
- Playgrounds suitable for multiple ages
- Dry, usable land
- Gathering spaces (picnic tables / shelters)
- Parking without having to cross the street

Other features may be included that improve the park:

- Courts
- Open Play Space/Fields
- Natural resources
- Unique recreation features

Strategies

- In developments where appropriate parks cannot be achieved, require cash in lieu and set money aside to purchase and develop nearby parkland as new development occurs
- Evaluate park dedication code requirements to ensure they are at appropriate levels and meet all statutory requirements
- Plan for and allocate funds in the CIP for the replacement of existing facilities as they reach the end of their lifespans
- Incorporate ADA appropriate design
- Consider the introduction of an “Adopt a Park” program for cleanup and/or sponsorship

Preferred Neighborhood Park - Example

Size: 4 acres + 1/2 acre wetland
Street Frontage: On two roads (1)
Unbuildable Land: Does not impede the functioning of the park, trail provides views of wetland (2)
Trails: Create loops (3), connect to the cul-de-sac as well (4)
Playgrounds: large size, multiple age areas (5)
Courts: Basketball (6) & Pickleball (7)
Open Play Space: large enough to accommodate informal games (8)
Rest & Gathering: shelter (9) & picnic tables (10)
Safety: Good visibility, policeable
Parking: Lot (11)

Minimum Neighborhood Park - Example

Size: 2 acres + 1/2 acre wetland
Street Frontage: Longest length of frontage is on street (1)
Unbuildable Land: Does not impede the functioning of the park (2)
Trails: connect to the cul-de-sac and the street frontage (3)
Playgrounds: multiple age areas (4)
Courts: Basketball (5)
Open Play Space: large enough to accommodate informal games (6)
Rest & Gathering: picnic tables (7)
Safety: Good visibility, policeable
Parking: On-Street without having to cross street (8)

Unacceptable Neighborhood Park - Example

Size: 1 acres + 1/2 acre wetland
Street Frontage: None, “flag lot” orientation (1)
Unbuildable Land: creates challenges for the functioning of the park (2)
Trails: dead end (3)
Playgrounds: only one age area (4)
Courts: none
Open Play Space: not large enough to accommodate informal games (5)
Rest & Gathering: picnic tables are in low visibility area (6)
Safety: Poor visibility, difficult to police
Parking: None/minimal (7)

TRAIL LOOPS & CONNECTIONS

Goal: Provide safe and enjoyable trail connections to all community and park destinations.

Trails for Recreation

Trails continue to be the most desired park and recreation features in Alexandria and nationally. Within parks, trails are a well used feature, often used by walkers, joggers, children on bikes and scooters, and dog walkers. Longer trails also accommodate cyclists, skaters, and distance runners. Regional trails like the Central Lakes Trail can even draw people from out of town to Alexandria, bringing an economic development component to them.

Trails for Transportation

Trails can and should connect important community destinations. Places like parks and schools often cater to children that are not yet able to drive. Many in the community may choose not to drive for other reasons. Trails offer an enjoyable and safe transportation alternative.

Trails for Natural Resources

Trail corridors can also be a boon for natural resource protection in a community. They can be located in areas that are more prone to flooding, subject to setbacks, or protected from development. If the right-of-way or trail easements are wide enough, trail corridors can also layer in stormwater management, prairie and tree plantings, and buffers from development.

Trail corridors are also remarkable for their ability to help animals safely move between larger patches of habitat. It is not uncommon to see deer, birds, small game, and other animals using trail corridors.

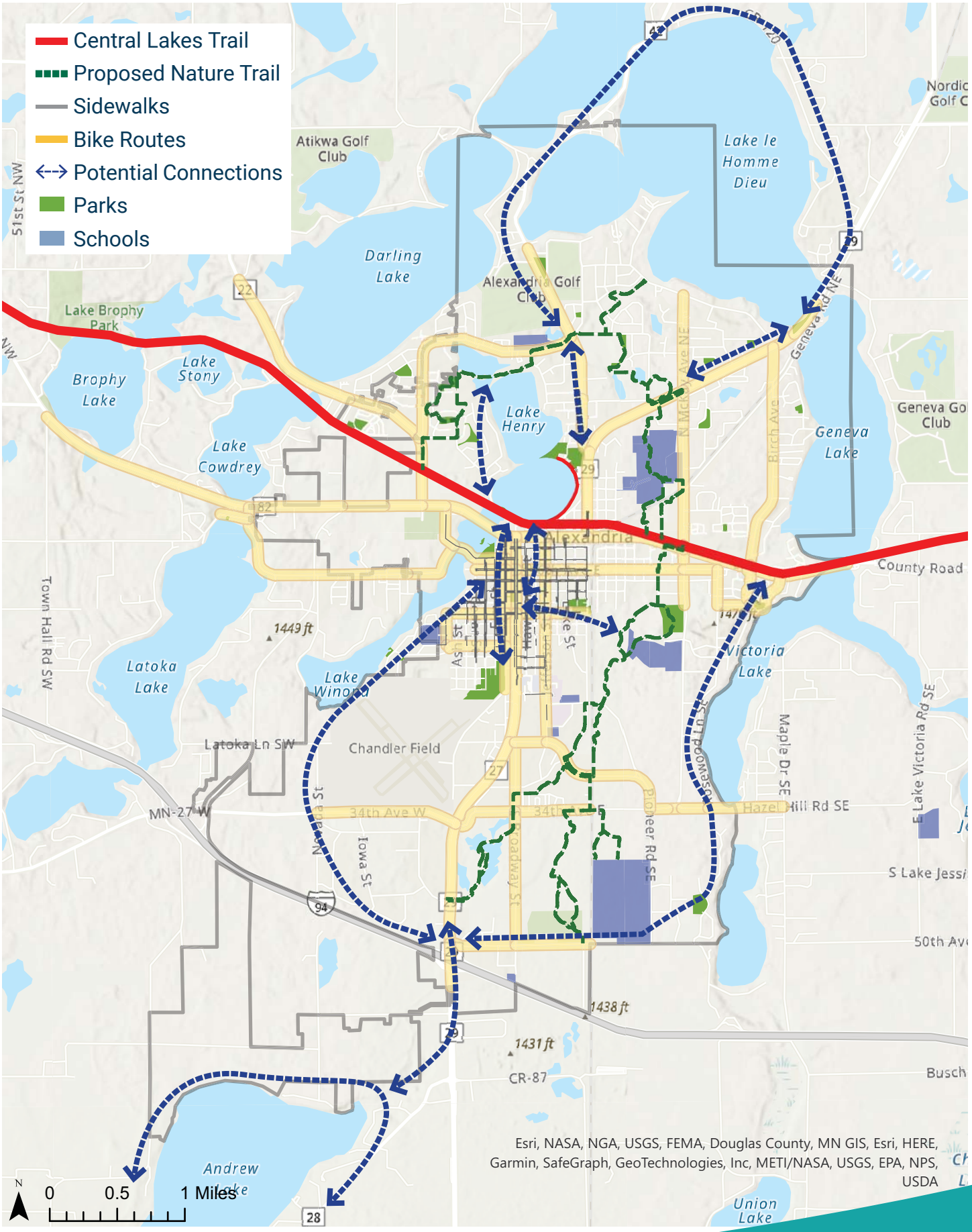
Trail Design Considerations

Trails should be designed carefully, paying special attention to:

- How trail users and vehicles interact, particularly at intersections
- What the natural context of the trail corridor is and how does the trail fit into that setting?
- Opportunities for trail loops which enhance user experiences
- Views and experiences of a trail user (ie. can they see the lake? Are there logical trailhead locations? Is the trail shaded or exposed?)
- Does the trail connect to destinations?
- Can the alignment and width minimize conflicts between users by allowing passing and reducing blind corners?

Strategies

- Continue to pursue the Alexandria Nature Trail as a north/south connection through town and an extension of the CLT.
- Incorporate trail loops and accessible walking paths into park projects.
- Identify other opportunities to connect key destinations in Alexandria to the trail network (Potential Connections on map)
- Continue to build out the larger trail network in Alexandria.
- Pursue grants and other funding sources for the development of the trail network.
- Explore opportunities to secure land and build trails around lakes.
- Consider other support features like trailheads, wayfinding, and fixit stations.


Central Lakes Trail
Proposed Nature Trail
Sidewalks
Bike Routes
Potential Connections
Parks
Schools
Atikwa Golf Club
Lake le Homme Dieu
Darling Lake
Alexandria Golf Club
Lake Brophy Park
Brophy Lake
Lake Stony
Lake Cowdrey
Lake Henry
Geneva Lake
Geneva Golf Club
Alexandria
County Road
Victoria Lake
Latoka Lake
Lake Winona
Chandler Field
Latoka Ln SW
MN-27 W
34th Ave W
Hazel Hill Rd SE
Maple Dr SE
E Lake Victoria Rd SE
S Lake Jessi
50th Ave
1449 ft
1438 ft
1431 ft
CR-87
Town Hall Rd SW
51st St NW
Andrew Lake
Union Lake
Busch
Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Douglas County, MN GIS, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA
0
0.5
1 Miles

SUPPORT OF ATHLETICS

Goal: Continue to utilize the park system to host and support athletic endeavors in Alexandria.

Sports and Youth Development

Sports are one of the great ways for kids to pick up some of life's most important lessons. Teamwork, how to win and how to lose, the value of hard work, exercise, and facing adversity are all things that kids must learn when participating in athletics.

Sports and Economic Development

Youth sports is becoming big business. Recent studies have estimated that approximately $20 billion is spent each year on youth athletics. This includes fees, training, and equipment, but also significant travel expenses. Many places have recognized this and view athletic facilities not just as a community amenity, but as an economic development tool. This is not a new concept for Alexandria. The City hosts almost 8,000 students and many of their families each year at the Minnesota High School Trap Shooting Championship. Similarly, the ice rinks at the Community Center and the ballfield at Knute Nelson bring people to Alexandria from across the state and beyond.

Sports and Community Health

Fewer than a quarter of children across the country get more than 60 minutes of physical activity per day, and about 14% of kids reported no physical activity at all. Sports are one way that kids can reach the suggested levels of activity and have fun doing it while developing habits that can last them through adulthood. These are also activities that can improve outcomes related to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and energy imbalances.

Strategies

- Continue to support enhancements of the ballfields at Fillmore and Knute Nelson.
- Coordinate with the school district and other recreation entities to promote tournaments and provide venues for local athletes to play
- Look for opportunities to provide additional rectangle (soccer/football/lacrosse) fields in the community.
- Explore the potential for a larger athletic complex that could provide additional capacity for youth programs and tournaments.

FOUR SEASON RECREATION

Goal: Provide seasonal facilities and programming that allow people to enjoy and use the parks year round.

Land of Four Seasons

One of the things that makes the upper midwest distinct is the four pronounced seasons. These are even more pronounced in a place like Alexandria where ice fishing, snowmobiling, skating, and skiing are replaced by swimming, boating, biking, and baseball. Summer may be the first thing people think about they think about parks, but Minnesotans can and do embrace opportunities to get outside in the fall, winter, and spring too!

The park system should help facilitate activities year round. Alexandria does a great job of this already, from a facilities and programming standpoint. Lights on Broadway Holiday Light Parade and Lighting Ceremony bring many people out for the event. The rinks at Noonan Park are well used by skaters.

The City should continue to experiment and evaluate additional endeavors as the weather and staff availability allow. Some things may not work or need refinement, but others may become beloved signs of the different seasons. Events could be supported by outside entities as well and could include concepts like holiday markets, luminary/ice sculpture events, ski+disc golf biathlon, snowshoe hikes, ice-breaker spring bike rides, or others.

Shifts in Maintenance

As the weather changes, so too do the maintenance needs. Mowers are replaced by plows. The strains of heavy use get replaced by the strain of snow loads.

Winters can be particularly hard on the park system. Irrigation and water spigots need to be prepped. Freeze/thaw cycles can create heaving in the roads, parking lots, and trails. It also means that many of the features such as fencing and hardware will not be checked for months.

The structure of the maintenance department means that winter storms require an “all hands on deck” approach and standard park maintenance may need to be paused to ensure the roads are plowed. This flexibility is beneficial to the City’s operations.

Strategies

- Continue to provide seasonal programming. This includes activities such as skating at Noonan, access to the lakes for ice fishing, and lighting Broadway events.
- Work with the County to promote and direct people to County parks for activities that make sense on their land (Skiing, Fat Biking, etc.)
- Coordinate with other entities to promote and host seasonal events that bring the community together during the spring, fall, and winter.
- Keep trying new approaches for seasonal activities and events. Evaluate their success and move forward as appropriate.
- Consider developing capacity in house, or coordinating with the County to groom cross country ski trails on the lakes or in areas like Oakwood Trails.

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE

Goal: Make sure that parks are usable and welcoming for all residents and visitors in Alexandria, regardless of ability.

Welcoming for People of All Abilities

Creating park facilities that are welcoming and usable for those with varied abilities is not only a legal obligation and the right thing to do, but also has many important benefits for residents, families, and the community as a whole. Regardless of ability, all residents deserve access to parks and recreation in their community.

Parks as Social Spaces

Parks play an important role as public spaces where children play together, neighbors meet, and families gather. Ensuring parks are accessible helps create social settings that do not exclude people and foster a sense of belonging. It also exposes other people to a wider swath of the community and can break down internal barriers to interaction.

Parks for Health

The health benefits of parks have been discussed elsewhere in this plan, but parks and trails can be particularly valuable for people with disabilities and their health. Parks provide spaces for improving both mental and physical health ranging from developing strength and coordination to giving people a break by being outside or a spot to interact with friends.

Design

Accessible design in parks is a wide field, but often focuses on providing welcoming spaces in two areas: physical ability and developmental ability.

Designing for all physical abilities can include ensuring there are handicap parking spaces, wheelchair accessible routes around parks, and providing specialized equipment like ADA picnic tables or fishing piers. Playgrounds in particular can include a number of features including accessible surfaces, ramps (into the playground and up to play features), and games that can be played with limited dexterity.

But not all differences are physical. In the past decade, more emphasis has been put on providing play opportunities for those with developmental differences like autism, Down syndrome, ADHD, and others. These play areas may provide unique sensory experiences, quiet spaces that allow users somewhere to calm down if they are overstimulated, communication boards for non-verbal users, and secured/fenced areas in case of wandering.

Strategies

- Design and build new playgrounds to have accessible routes to the play features (including from trails/parking to the playground).
- Develop community playgrounds that have a specific focus on accessibility and inclusivity.
- Incorporate trail loops and accessible walking paths into all park designs and reconstructions.
- Ensure that City and Park communications are offered in accessible formats.

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

Goal: Provide clear and helpful wayfinding to guide park users around the community, establish a brand, and tell the story of Alexandria

Wayfinding Connects People to Place

Wayfinding is the use of signage and other tools to help people find their way around a place. Many of the parks in Alexandria would benefit from additional signage. Though people may know how their neighborhood park is laid out, Alexandria hosts many visitors who may not be familiar with the parks system. Developing a set of signs that is used throughout Alexandria's parks would help as a branding/character tool.

Types of Signs

Monument/ID signs are signs that identify a park or place. They help people know "You are here."

Kiosks/Trailheads are signage tools that convey a lot of information. They may incorporate maps, rules, events, or other community information.

Directional Signage helps people figure out what direction to go to reach a destination or provides reassurance that they are on the right path.

Interpretive Signage tells a story that gives readers more information about a place. Themes can include items of interest like historical background, natural resources, or future plans for an area.

Regulatory Signage is basic signage that lays out the rules for a park or trail. Examples include "No Parking," "Keep Dogs on Leash," or "Open 6AM to Dusk."

Strategies

- Develop a unified signage set for the parks and trails in Alexandria. Include different types and scales of signage
- Explore development of an "Alexandria Area Recreation" app that includes information about Alexandria parks, trails, and other recreation opportunities in the area operated by others.

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Goal: Build strong partnerships to strengthen the recreation offerings in the region for residents and visitors.

Play to Alexandria's Strengths and Let Others Do the Same

Many people move to and visit Alexandria for the recreation offerings that are available here and nearby. While City staff may be acutely aware of what facilities they are responsible for maintaining and what they are not, the average park user is less focused on who owns the park or trail. That is just fine. Having a rich tapestry of public and private recreation providers in the area gives residents and visitors more options than they would be able to have if only the City was providing parks and recreation services.

Evaluate Fit and Obligations Before Taking On New Parks

As the City has grown, it has grown around County, Township, and Homeowner Association parks. Some of these parks have been taken over by the City, while others have remained under the control of different entities. When these situations occur, the City should evaluate the parks and a proposal to take them over based on:

- Does the park fill a need in the system?
- Is there significant deferred maintenance or other challenges that will put undue stress on the City's ability to bring it up to standards or maintain it?
- Is the other entity able to continue maintaining it and/or are there regulatory obstacles to taking it over?

Work with Recreation Programmers

The City should continue to coordinate with entities like the YMCA, Community Ed, and youth athletic associations to provide programming.

Strategies

- Convene regular meetings with Douglas County Parks, the School District, and the State of Minnesota to strengthen the working relationship between the entities.
- Promote County, State, School, and Private recreation options along with City of Alexandria Parks
- Continue to work with recreation focused entities such as the YMCA and youth athletic associations to provide the programming side of things. These offerings are stronger when the programmers (YMCA, youth athletics, etc) have access to the various entities' parks.
- Evaluate requests for the City to take over park facilities based on whether it is a good idea for the City, not just because the City is being asked.

RECREATION FOR ALL AGES

Goal: Shape and develop the park system to include features for people of all ages to enjoy

Aging in Alexandria

24% of Alexandria's population is over 65, a rise of nearly 5% since 2010, and a number that is expected to increase to nearly 27% by 2027. Within 5 years, there will be nearly 4,000 people over 65 years old. The City probably has more 65+ residents than are identified above due to under counting retirees that summer in Alexandria and head south for the winters.

The City should be considering recreation opportunities for all of the currently or soon to be retired Baby Boomer generation.

Recreation preferences at this age tend towards low impact and social focused options. For sports, pickleball is growing at all ages, but is particularly popular among seniors. Similarly trails are a favored amenity for all age groups, but see especially high levels of use from 65+ residents. Including them in parks for strolling provides for great outdoor and movement focused recreation. Other fitness features like outdoor exercise machines offer additional low impact options. Developing spaces that can be programmed for events like music in the park or for family gatherings are great to counteract some of the social isolation that can happen as people age.

Parks for Teens

Teenagers make up about 8% of Alexandria's population. This age group is often times difficult to provide recreation options for as they are discovering much more varied interests, social perceptions of teens in parks, and safety concerns.

Many teens have outgrown the standard playgrounds and may not feel like parks offer the recreation opportunities they would enjoy.

Many times, parks already have features that appeal to some teenagers (athletics, fishing, skate park) but some specific elements to focus on when providing teen specific design to parks include:

Hang out spaces where there is good visibility to feel safe, but also enough distance that teens don't feel like adults are listening in on their conversations.

Technology like wi-fi and charging stations

Artistic/Creative outlets like performance areas, interesting things to photograph, or interesting places for content creation.

Security measures like video systems, lighting, and clear visibility are not only to protect the parks, but also to provide a feeling of safety for teenagers using parks.

Strategies

- Explore developing teen specific social spaces, for example a hammocking area.
- Consider non-traditional activities such as disc golf and enhancements to the skate park.
- Invest in security measures for parks to help both teens and the elderly feel safer.
- Work with programmers to provide venues for teen artists like playing music at the farmers market or hosting a booth at an art fair.
- Continue to support pickleball in Alexandria parks in appropriate locations.
- Develop walking loops in parks.

CHAPTER 5

PARK PLANS

Individual Park Plans

The intent of the individual park plans is to help the City understand the condition of the existing facilities, and to plan for the maintenance and capital investments necessary to ensure the long term sustainability of the park system. They are planning level designs.

What Does "Planning Level" Mean?

The designs and direction for the parks has been completed to a "Planning Level" of completeness. These are not plans that a contractor would use to construct a trail or a playground. They do let the City know when features will need to be replaced and give guidance about what new features will go where. This helps protect investments in parks because the City will not be tearing out good elements just because they are in the way of new improvements. A planning level design might be considered the first measurement of a "measure twice, cut once" approach.

Design

It is likely that the designs will not exactly mirror the final construction of any given park. New or refined information or community priorities may cause the designs to shift or adapt when built.

Timing

The park plans identify likely replacement and new capital timelines. These are based on current needs, but are subject to adjustment as community preferences change, funding sources shift, and features need replacement.

Costs

Costs associated with features are intended to provide a high level number that can be used for budgeting purposes. Because some of the decisions that impact cost have not been made at this level of planning, the numbers tend to be round. For the purposes of this plan, the following symbology is used:

$_____$0-15,000

$$_____$15,000-$50,000

$$$_____$50,000-$150,000

$$$$_____$150,000-$500,000

$$$$$_____$500,000+

Priorities

Different priorities have been established for the park elements. All elements would enhance the parks, but the plan recognizes that at times, trade-offs need to be made.

High - Safety concern or integral to the use of the park

Medium - Important elements, but if they were missing, the park would continue to function, if at a lower level

Low - Items that can be really great features, but might be considered "add-ons." While they could bring a lot to the parks, they may be deferred if necessary.

AGNES PARK

Overview

Agnes Park serves as the boat launch to Lake Agnes, just north of downtown. The boat launch is used, but does not often fill up with trailers. The gravel lot and small green space are also used as a spot to park and eat lunch. Previously, the park had a second entrance that was removed for safety considerations when Agnes Boulevard was reconstructed in 2018.

Size	1.0 Acres
Classification	Special Use
Unique Features	Boat launch, lakefront, water access, trail connection to CLT

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Shelter	Fair	5-10 Years	Roof doesn't stop rain. Not ADA
Parking Lot	Good	10-20 Years	Gravel. Requires addl. maintenance
Boat Launch	Good	10-20 Years	2018 Install
Boat Dock	Good	10-20 Years	Used for boat launch. Lots of geese

AGNES PARK

LEGEND

Trail
Walkway
Site Entry
Parking
Gazebo

EXISTING CONDITIONS
NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Parking Lot	Enhancements	$$$	7-10 Years	Low
Boat Cleaning Station	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Shoreland Restoration	Restoration	$	0-3 Years	Medium
Fishing Pier	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	Low
Kayak Launch	Build New	$$	7-10 Years	Low
Boat Dock	Replace	$$	7-10 Years	High
Site Furnishings	Build New	$$	7-10 Years	Medium
Signage & Wayfinding	Build New	$	0-3 Years	Medium
Concrete Walk	Build New	$	7-10 Years	Medium
Swale Crossing	Build New	$	7-10 Years	Medium
Shelter	Replace	$$$	7-10 Years	High

AGNES PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Add boat cleaning station
2. Restore/reinforce shoreline with native plantings
3. Add a fishing pier
4. Add ADA-accessible canoe/kayak launch
5. Add paved parking lot with ~2 boat trailer parking stalls and 3 car parking spaces
6. Add picnic area
7. Rain garden plantings in existing swale
8. Create trail wayside with wayfinding and bike parking

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

BIG OLE/CENTRAL PARK

Overview

Sitting at the north end of Broadway/downtown, adjacent to the Runestone and Legacy of the Lakes Museums, and serving as a major trailhead on the Central Lakes Trail, Central Park is the Alexandria's most visible park. Over 3,000 feet of park lake frontage ties into another 2,000 feet of lakefront to the west and after a small detour, a connection to City Park. The park also hosts the Alexandria Farmers Market and has an art/music area.

Size	4.5 Acres
Classification	Premier
Unique Features	Lakefront, year round restrooms, Big Ole statue, farmers market, Central Lake Trail, art/music walk

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Building	New	20+ Years	Recent construction. Year round with heat. Fixtures in OK condition.
Trailhead Structure	Good	5-10 Years	Trailhead. Wood aging.
Big Ole Statue	Good	20+ Years	
Music Playground	Good	10-20 Years	
Shelter	Good	10-20 Years	Metal roof. Not ADA
Art Installation	Good	10-20 Years	Structurally good, weeding/paint would go a long way
Shelter	Fair	10-20 Years	Separated location
Dock	Good	10-20 Years	Not ADA Accessible
Farmers Mkt Sign	Fair	Immediate need	Sign blocks view - could be relocated
Parking Lot	Good	10-20 Years	Due for crack fill and seal coat

BIG OLE/CENTRAL PARK

LEGEND

Trail
Walkway
Sign
Site Entry
Restrooms
Parking

EXISTING CONDITIONS
NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Existing Bituminous Trail	Replace	$$$	7-10 Years	High
Planned Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Farmers Market Pavilions	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Farmers Market Plaza	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Boardwalk	Build New	$$$$	11-15 Years	Low
Tree Clearing	Restoration	$	0-3 Years	Medium
Planting Beds	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Low
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$$	0-3 Years	High
Small Stage/Bandstand	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Art Garden Plaza Enhancements	Enhancements	$$	0-3 Years	Low
Site Furnishings	Replace	$$	0-3 Years	High
Fishing Pier	Replace	$$	11-15 Years	Medium

BIG OLE/CENTRAL PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Create farmers market area
2. Strategic tree clearing to enhance the views to the lake
3. Add a small performance stage
4. Create plaza and plantings around existing art/musical instruments
5. Add boardwalks over the water
6. Add park signage
7. Create trail connection to Noonan Park
8. Outdoor fitness equipment stations

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

Revamped trailhead, building on recent improvements

Enhanced art/music/sensory walk with connection to trails

View from Central Lakes Trail

Farmers Market Plaza

BLUEBIRD PARK

Overview

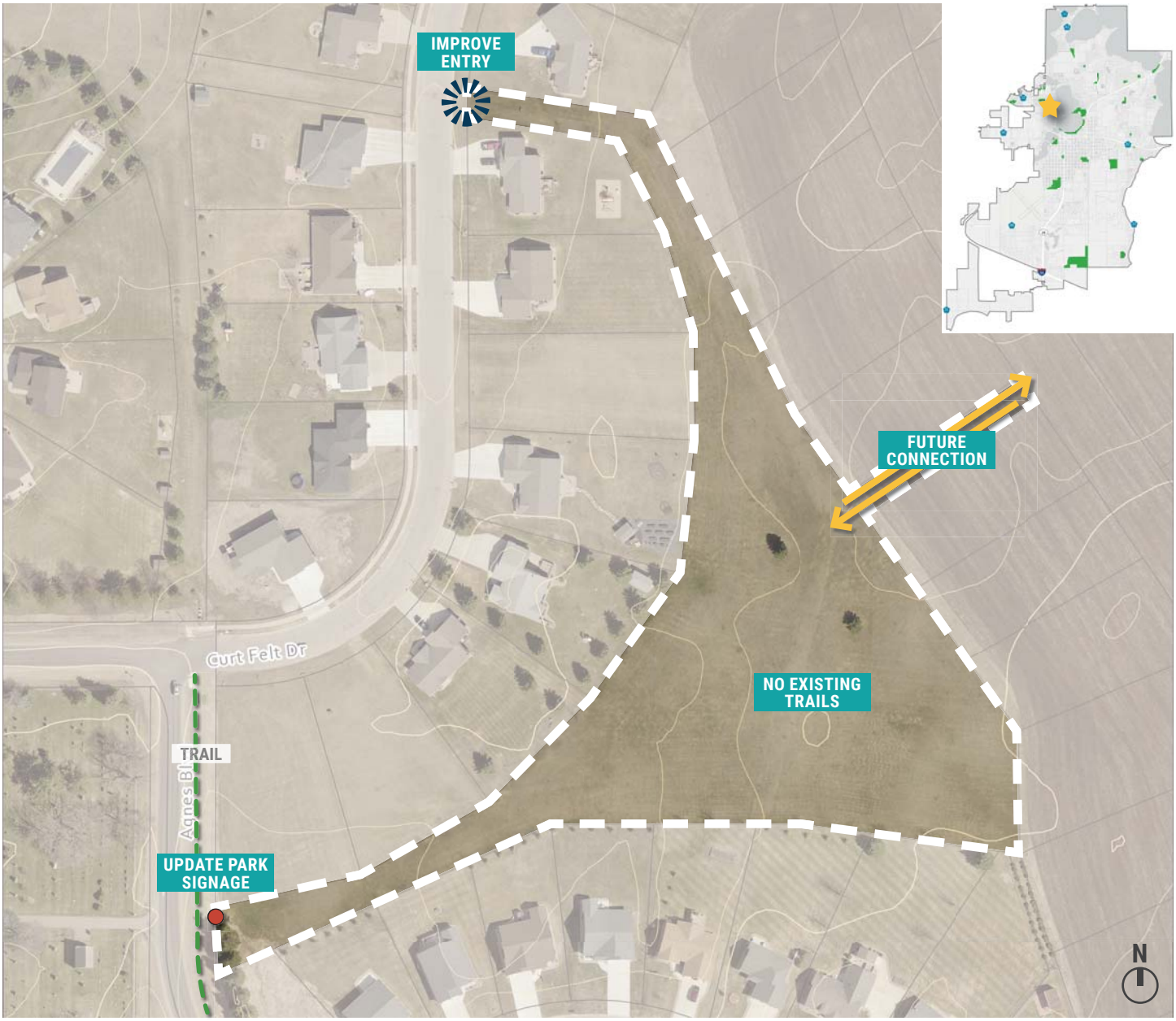
As the neighborhoods in the northwest part of Alexandria fill in, portions of land have been planned and dedicated as parkland, but are not developed. Bluebird Park is one of these pieces of parkland. It will be an important pedestrian and bicycle connection through the neighborhoods.

Size	4.04 Acres
Classification	Undeveloped
Unique Features	Birdhouses

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Sign	Fair	1-5 Years	Sign is aged
Bird Houses	Good	5-10 Years	

BLUEBIRD PARK



LEGEND

Walkway Site Entry

Sign

EXISTING CONDITIONS NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

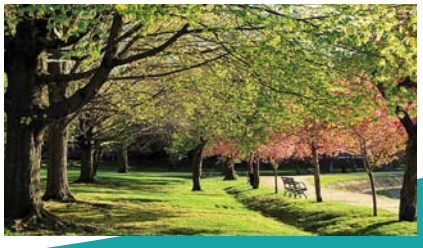
Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	7-10 Years	High
Plantings	Restoration	$	7-10 Years	Medium
Trees	Restoration	$$$	7-10 Years	Medium
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	7-10 Years	Medium
Shelter	Build New	$$$	7-10 Years	Medium
Plaza Space	Build New	$	7-10 Years	Medium

BLUEBIRD PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. New trails and loops throughout the park
2. Prairie restoration areas between trail loops
3. Update and add park signs
4. Trail spur for future connection in Eastern neighborhood
5. Add plantings throughout park to increase plant diversity , habitat, and shade

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



CARTER PARK

Overview

Carter Park is a park serving some of the western neighborhoods in Alexandria with a playground. A former gazebo was destroyed in a storm. The park sits just north of the Central Lakes Trail, providing a nice connection for nearby residents. Carter Park is an example of a park that overlaps recreation with "green infrastructure" by providing floodable basins that can handle extra stormwater.

Size	4.66 Acres
Classification	Neighborhood
Unique Features	CLT Trail Connection, stormwater basins

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Playground	Good	10-20 Years	2016 Build. Pea Gravel & Rubber Curb. ADA Ramp in, but no accessible route to the playground
Shelter	N/A	N/A	Destroyed and removed
Stormwater Ponds	Good	20+ Years	
Trail Spur	Good	10-20 Years	Seal coat

CARTER PARK

LEGEND

Trail
Walkway
Sign
Playground

EXISTING CONDITIONS
NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Plaza Space	Build New	$	0-3 Years	Low
Playground	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years	High
Shelter	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	High
Trees	Restoration	$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Planting Restoration	Restoration	$	0-3 Years	Medium
Signage & Wayfinding	Build New	$	0-3 Years	Medium
Crosswalk	Build New	$	0-3 Years	High
Basketball Half Court	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Site Furnishings	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	Medium

CARTER PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Plant tree to create a wind screen
2. Plant meadow in stormwater basin
3. Update and add park signage
4. Add an enhanced crossing
5. Create ADA access to existing playground
6. Add a shade structure with a trash receptacle and picnic tables
7. Create ADA access to existing playground
8. Add perimeter sidewalk

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

CITY PARK

Overview

City Park sits on the shores of Lake Henry and Lake Agnes. The park is highly programmed with features spread out across the park. The tennis courts were recently converted to pickleball courts and have been extremely popular. The swim beach is the City's only swimming/water play.

Size	18.49 Acres
Classification	Premier
Unique Features	Swim beach, lakefront, pickleball, restrooms, trail connections

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Playground	Fair	1-5 Years	Still decent condition. 1999 Install. Ramp to some features improves ADA access
Pickleball Courts	New	20+ Years	Highly utilized. Displaced Tennis.
Parking Lot	Good	10-20 Years	Single loaded
Shelter	Fair	1-5 Years	Old style shelter
Dock	New	20+ Years	DNR - New in 2023
Grandstand	Fair	10-20 Years	Significant wear/cracking but still sound
Rectangle Field	Good	20+ Years	
Ballfield	Poor	1-5 Years	Backstop. No aglime. No benches. Poor relationship to parking for foul balls
Playground	Good	5-10 Years	Peeling paint but fine
Shelter	Fair	1-5 Years	CMU walls starting to go.
Shelter	Fair	1-5 Years	Doesn't stop rain. Needs paint
Beach	Fair	1-5 Years	Some weeds overgrown. Erosion issues. Benches need fixed. Rip rap corner
Playground	Fair	1-5 Years	Older style slide. Ensure adequate absorption at high traffic spots
Playground	Fair	1-5 Years	Swings. Showing age. Peeling paint. Ensure adequate absorption at high traffic spots
Shelter	Fair	5-10 Years	Old style. Still functional
Shuffleboard	Fair	10-20 Years	Something melted on one. Need paint. Pads in fine shape
Shelter	Fair	10-20 Years	Board missing. Entry sagging
Parking Lot	Good	20+ Years	ADA for pier
Parking Lot	Good	20+ Years	
Building	Good	20+ Years	Restroom and shower. Showing age, maintenance can keep in good shape longer.
Building	Poor	1-5 Years	Storage Garage in poor shape
Building	Good	10-20 Years	Well house

CITY PARK

LEGEND

Walkway · Site Entry · Parking · Gazebo · Pickleball
Sign · Restrooms · Shelter · Playground · Ballfield

EXISTING CONDITIONS | NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

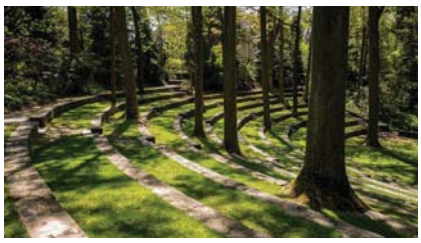
Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Beach Enhancements	Enhancements	$$$	0-3 Years	High
Parking On Street	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Parking Lot Expansion	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	High
Existing Parking Lot	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years	High
South Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	11-15 Years	Low
Amphitheater	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Splashpad	Build New	$$$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Destination Playground	Replace	$$$$	0-3 Years	High
Large Shelter	Replace	$$$$	0-3 Years	High
Shelter	Replace	$	0-3 Years	High
Ballfield Enhancements	Enhancements	$$	0-3 Years	Low
Pump Track	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Low
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Trail and Emergency Access	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	High
Existing Bituminous Trail	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years	High
New Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	High
Site Furnishings	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	High
Bocce Ball	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	Low
Court Shade	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	Low
Restrooms	Replace	$$$$$	16-20 Years	High
Gazebo	Replace	$$	0-3 Years	Medium

CITY PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Enhance beach
2. Connect new trail to existing trail
3. Add parking spaces (~22 spaces)
4. Add amphitheater
5. Add splash pad
6. Expand and enhance playground to be an inclusive, destination playground
7. Replace and shift shelter
8. Reconfigure parking to add spaces (+18 spaces, ~40 spaces total)
9. Provide street parking (~26 spaces)
10. Enhance ballfield
11. Add pump trail off of existing trail
12. Add wayfinding/signage
13. Create an emergency exit route/sidewalk
14. Add shade structure, seating, and bocce courts on east side of pickleball courts

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



Reconstructed shelter and inclusive playground

Amphitheater with lake views

New Splash Pad

Enhancements at the Pickleball courts

FILLMORE PARK

Overview

A large community scaled park on the south side of town, Fillmore Park offers both active and passive recreation options. With the ballfield, playground, building, and skatepark along Fillmore, most of the active recreation sits on the east side of the park, while the open space and ponds make up most of the west side of the park.

Size	18.81 Acres
Classification	Premier
Unique Features	Youth baseball field, skate park, restrooms, wetland/ ponds

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Playground	Good	5-10 Years	Spring toys and merry-go-round
Playground	Fair	1-5 Years	Old metal features. Peeling paint. Not to standards.
Ballfield	Good	10-20 Years	Fair to Good. Has drinking fountain. Needs weeding but pretty good. Dugouts undersized.
Shelter	New	10-20 Years	Metal Roof. Not ADA.
Playground	Poor	1-5 Years	Pea gravel worn down. Cracking and pitted surfaces.
Building	Fair	5-10 Years	
Bridge	Good	5-10 Years	
Parking Lot	Fair	10-20 Years	Some cracking. Crack seal and seal-coat would help
Skate Park	Fair	1-5 Years	Metal ramps. Transitions mostly OK. Pad in pretty good shape.
Shelter	Poor	1-5 Years	Covered bench
Basketball Court	Poor	1-5 Years	Random location. Undersized bituminous. Backboard wood falling apart.

FILLMORE PARK

LEGEND

Barrier · Site Entry · Parking · Playground · Gazebo
Sign · Restrooms · Shelter · Basketball · Ballfield

EXISTING CONDITIONS | NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Skatepark	Replace	$$$$	0-3 Years	High
Tennis Courts	Build New	$$$$$	0-3 Years	High
Batter Cage	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Existing Parking Lot	Replace	$$	0-3 Years	High
Fillmore St Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Low
15th St Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Low
Skate Park and Tennis Parking Expansion	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Ballfield Enhancements	Enhancements	$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Plaza Space	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Splashpad	Build New	$$$$$	0-3 Years	High
Full Basketball Court	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Bridge	Replace	$$	11-15 Years	High
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Crosswalk	Enhancements	$$	0-3 Years	High
Planting Restoration	Build New	$	0-3 Years	Low
Site Furnishings	Replace	$$	0-3 Years	High
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Playground	Replace	$$$$	0-3 Years	High

FILLMORE PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Add parking lot (~18 spaces)
2. Add batting cages
3. Enhance ballfield
4. Add parking spaces (~21 spaces)
5. Create plaza area around existing shelter
6. Add splash pad
7. Enhance playground
8. Relocate half court basketball court here
9. Add additional bridge/boardwalks
10. Develop sidewalks/trails around the park
11. Add parking lot (~19 spaces)
12. Reconfigure parking to add spaces (+21 spaces, ~29 spaces total)
13. Add portable toilet structure
14. Prairie/pollinator plantings
15. Add tennis/pickleball courts
16. Enhance skate park

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

Updgrades to the ballfield

New tennis courts and updated skate park

View from the buiilding/shelter to the splashpad

New playground

FRED FOSLIEN PARK

Overview

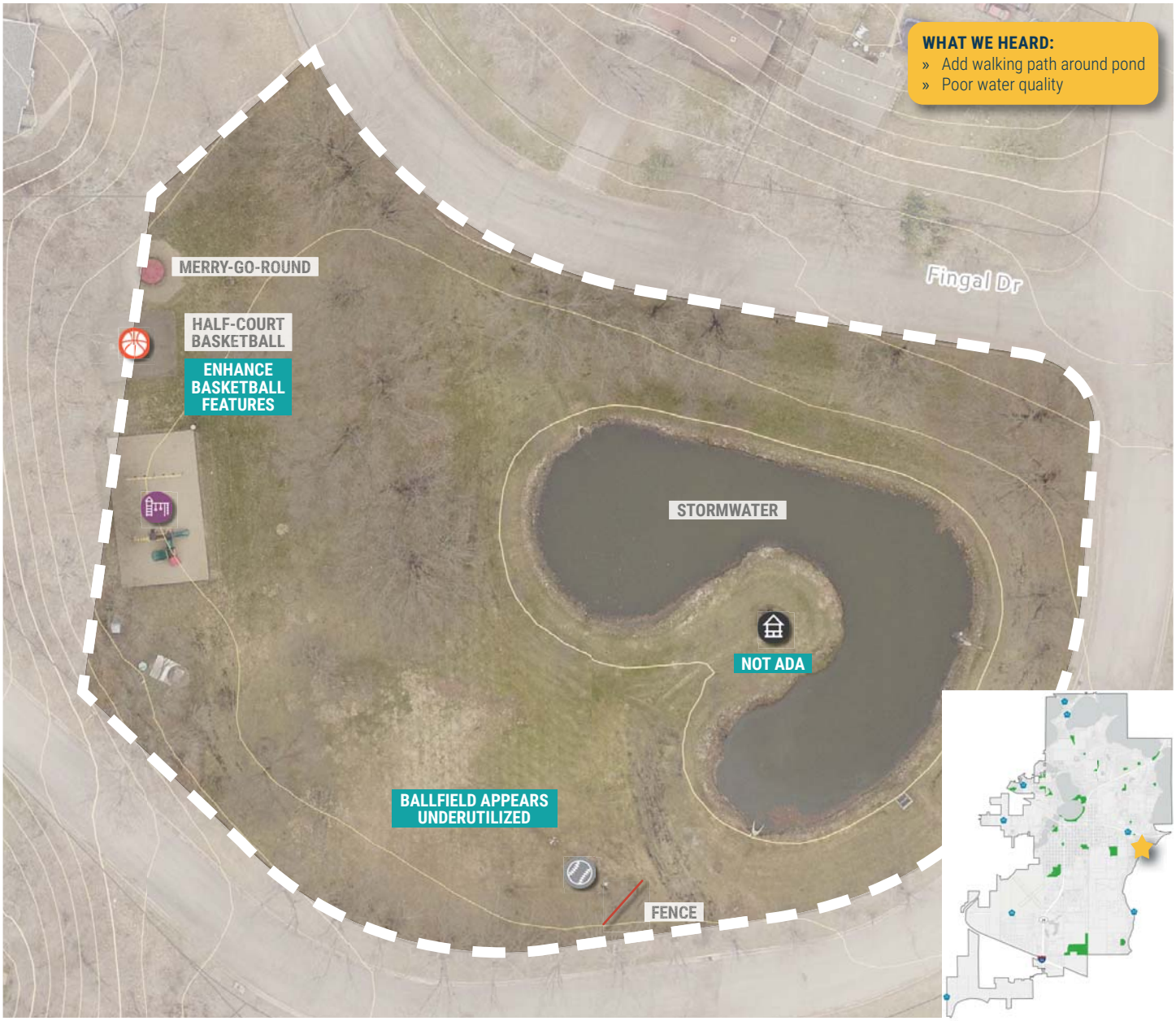
Fred Foslien Park is a serene neighborhood park with views of Lake Victoria, a nice tree canopy, and a horseshoe pond that also accommodates stormwater. The playground and basketball court are tucked in at the edge of a wooded hillside offering sunny and shady options.

Size	1.84 Acres
Classification	Neighborhood
Unique Features	Youth baseball field, skate park, restrooms, wetland/ ponds

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Playground	Fair	5-10 Years	Merry go round OK. Container overgrown. Wood curb
Basketball Court	Poor	1-5 Years	Bituminous has settled. No striping. Hoop and wood backboard falling apart
Playground	Good	10-20 Years	Small. In good shape. Some weeds in pea gravel. Rubber curb
Shelter	Good	10-20 Years	
Ballfield	Poor	1-5 Years	Fence curling. Five feet tall. Roots in batters box. Third base floating.
Pond	Fair	20+ Years	Stormwater and aesthetics. May need additional treatment to prevent growth during hot months

FRED FOSLIEN PARK



LEGEND

Barrier
Site Entry
Ballfield
Gazebo
Basketball

EXISTING CONDITIONS
NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$	7-10 Years	Medium
Nature Playground	Replace	$$$$	7-10 Years	High
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	7-10 Years	Medium
Full Basketball Court	Enhancements	$$$	7-10 Years	Medium
Small Shelter	Replace	$$	7-10 Years	High

FRED FOSLIEN PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Relocate and add a nature playground
2. Add full court basketball court
3. Add portable toilet structure
4. Add park signage
5. Add path to existing gazebo
6. Add new sidewalk loop

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

GENEVA CREST PARK

Overview

Geneva Crest Park is a neighborhood park serving the northeast part of Alexandria. A sunken area can handle stormwater inundation and kickball/t-ball/whiffle ball when dry. The park also offers some peeks at Lake Geneva.

Size	1.69 Acres
Classification	Neighborhood
Unique Features	Sand Volleyball

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Ballfield	Fair	5-10 Years	Overgrown, no outfield, cool/unique feature for whiffle ball or t-ball. No benches
Other	Poor	1-5 Years	Sand volleyball. Curb degrading, overgrown. Posts OK
Playground	Fair	1-5 Years	Old except for one new slide. Wood curb, pea gravel, overgrown in spots

GENEVA CREST PARK

LEGEND

- Sign
- Playground
- Sand Volleyball
- Ballfield

EXISTING CONDITIONS | NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Parking	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	Low
Playground	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years	High
Shelter	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	High
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Low
Trees	Restoration	$	0-3 Years	Low
Backstop Fencing	Replace	$	0-3 Years	Medium
Site Furnishings	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	0-3 Years	Medium

GENEVA CREST PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Add new trail around park
2. Add portable toilet structure
3. Update playground
4. Add shelter
5. Add on street parking striping (~4 spaces)
6. Enhance ballfield backstop, bases, and infield

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

GOOSE PARK

Overview

Goose Park sits on the banks of Lake Winona adjacent to Knute Nelson Ballfield and provides additional parking and a space for teams and visitors to gather outside of the ballpark.

Size	.75 Acres
Classification	Special Use
Unique Features	Waterfront, Knute Nelson Ballfield (adjacent)

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Parking Lot	Fair	10-20 Years	Gravel, requires additional maintenance. Single loaded. Curb stops but no striping may reduce efficiency
Shelter	Good	10-20 Years	Ramp in, no ADA route

GOOSE PARK

LEGEND

- Sign
- Parking
- Site Entry
- Gazebo

EXISTING CONDITIONS | NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Parking Lot	Enhancements	$$$	0-3 Years	High
Plaza Space	Build New	$	0-3 Years	Low
Shelter	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years	Medium
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Shoreland Restoration	Restoration	$	0-3 Years	Low
Trees	Restoration	$	0-3 Years	High
Dog Park Fencing	Build New	$	0-3 Years	Low
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	0-3 Years	Medium

GOOSE PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Create restored shoreline
2. Add new pathways
3. Resurface and enhance parking lot (~25 spaces)

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

KNUTE NELSON BALLFIELD

Overview

Knute Nelson Ballfield is a regional draw, hosting tournaments and ballplayers from around the state and beyond. The park is slated for improvements in 2023 and 2024 including turf infield, covered batting cages, a playground, and other enhancements.

Size	4.0 Acres
Classification	Premier
Unique Features	Regional ballfield with associated amenities, waterfront and lake views

KNUTE NELSON BALL PARK

LEGEND

Walkway
Parking
Site Entry
Ballfield

EXISTING CONDITIONS
NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Artificial Turf Infield	Build New	$$$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Scoreboard	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years	High
Concessions and Restrooms	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years	High
Playground	Build New	$$$	7-10 Years	Low
Covered Batting Cages	Build New	$$$$	7-10 Years	Medium
Grandstand Overhaul	Enhancements	$$$$	7-10 Years	High
Lighting	Replace	$$$$$	7-10 Years	High
Fencing and Backstop	Replace	$$$$	7-10 Years	High
Shoreland Restoration	Enhancements	$$	0-3 Years	Low
Dog Park Fencing	Build New	$	0-3 Years	Low
North Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	4-6 Years	Medium

KNUTE NELSON BALL PARK CONCEPT

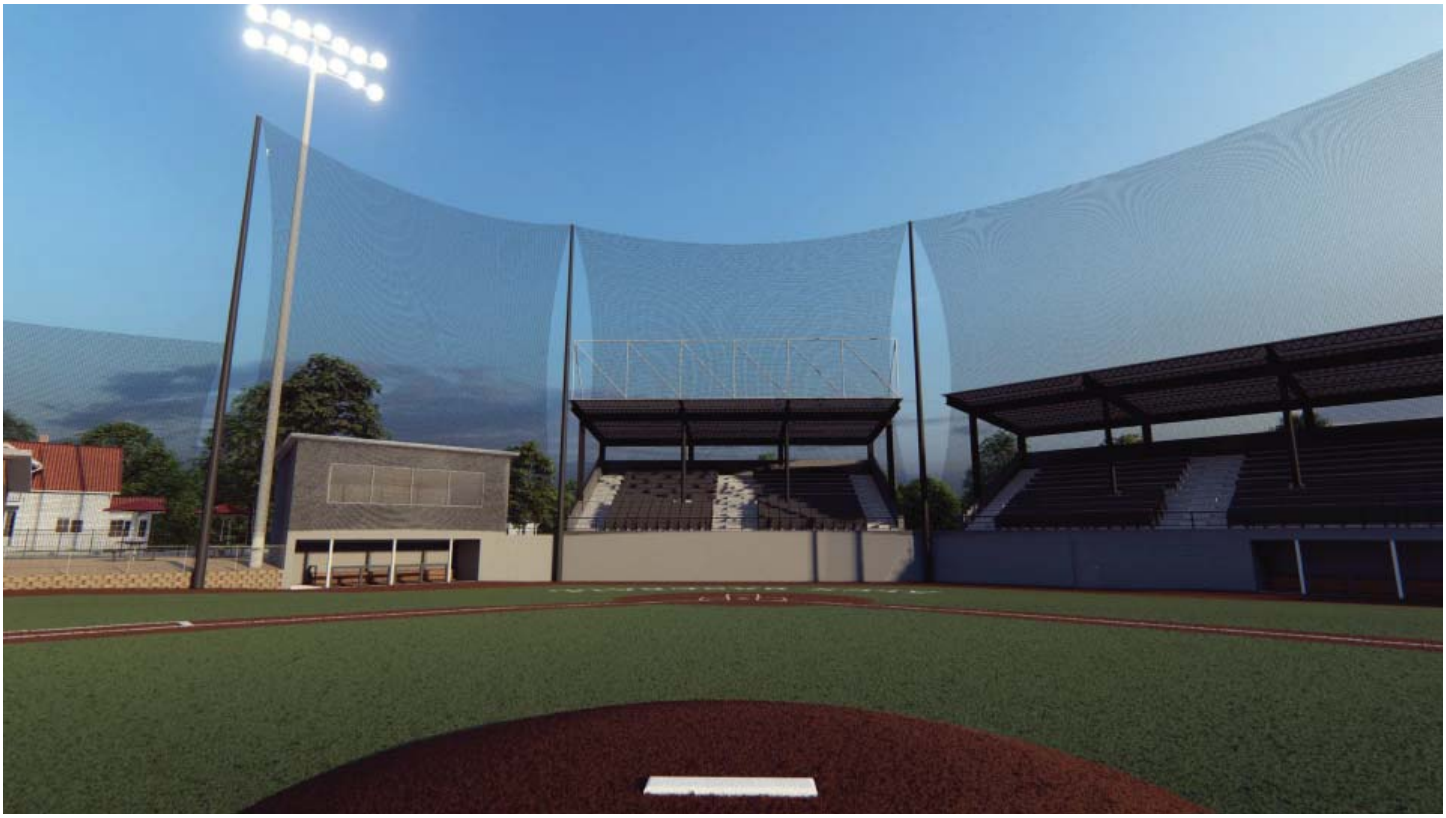
LEGEND

1. Add off-leash dog park
2. Pave and add parking lot (~15 spaces)
3. Enhance ballfield to premier ballfield
4. Add playground

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

Enhanced entries

View from the grandstand



View from the field on new turf

Improvements on the first base line

These renderings are courtesy of Alexandria Youth Baseball Association

LAKE BURGEN PARK

Overview

Lake Burgen Park is in the process of being developed as the neighborhood around it is built. A playground and gazebo have been built. The park also includes a treed area and open fields. The site also includes stormwater features.

Size	8.4 Acres
Classification	Neighborhood
Unique Features	Stormwater

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Playground	New	20+ Years	2018. Pea gravel and rubber curb
Shelter	Fair	5-10 Years	Roof does not stop rain. Not ADA
Rectangle Field	Good	20+ Years	Not striped, but flat

LAKE BURGEN PARK

LEGEND

Walkway
Site Entry
Playground
Sign
Gazebo

EXISTING CONDITIONS
NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Parking	Build New	$$	4-6 Years	Low
Trees	Restoration	$$	4-6 Years	Low
Planting Restoration	Restoration	$	4-6 Years	Low
Playground	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years	High
Shelter	Replace	$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	4-6 Years	Medium

LAKE BURGEN PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Continue sidewalk along Snowbird Ln
2. Plant meadow in existing stormwater basin
3. Add nose-in parking (~4 spaces)
4. Create ADA access to existing playground
5. Add sidewalks with amenities (i.e. benches, litter receptacles); connect to existing sidewalk
6. Add trees along new sidewalk

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

LAKE CONNIE PARK

Overview

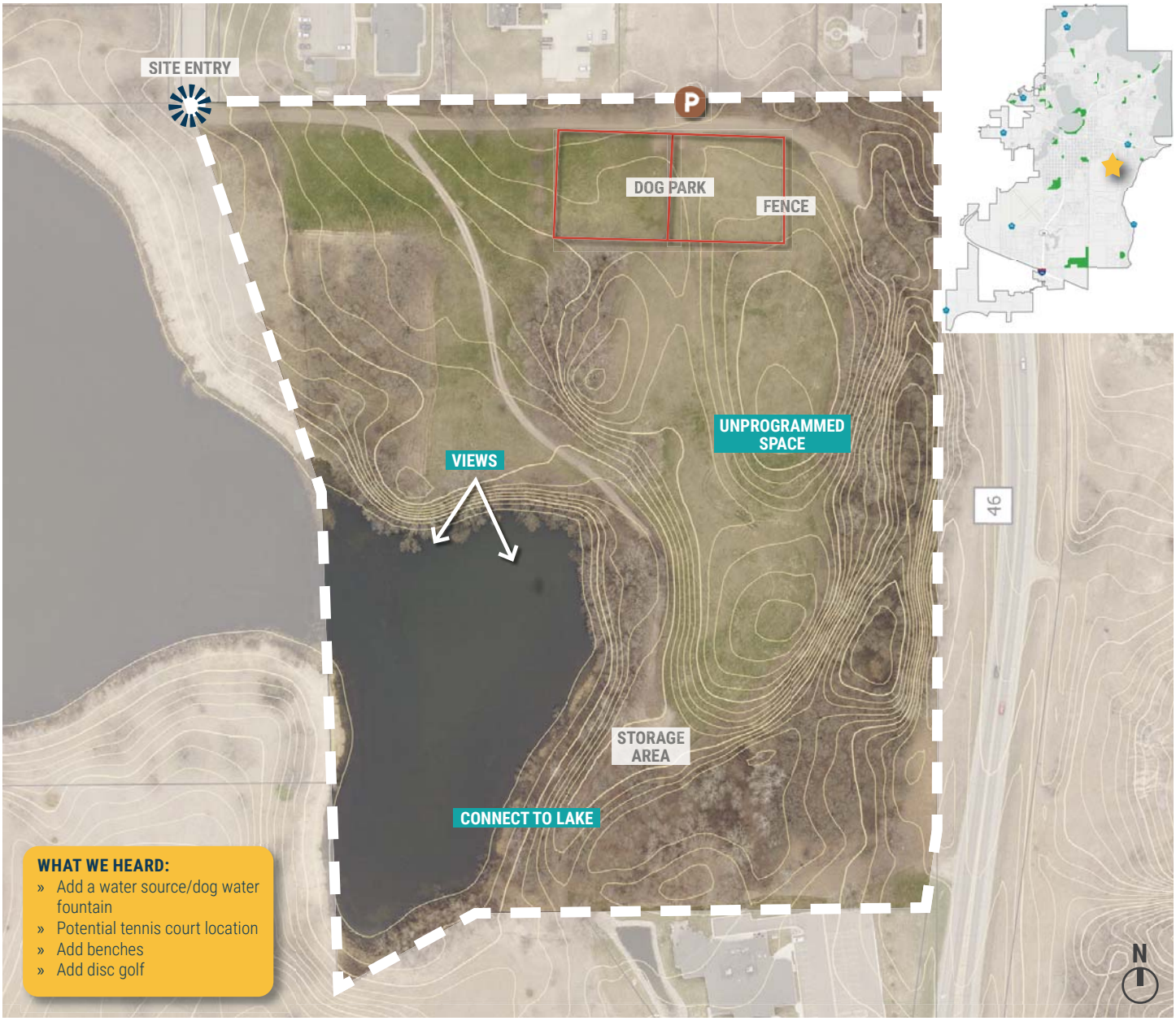
Lake Connie Park serves as the City's dog park. The property is also a beautiful piece of land with frontage on Lake Connie. The City uses the backside of the park for some material storage.

Size	21.23 Acres
Classification	Special Use
Unique Features	Dog park, waterfront, large natural space

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Dog Park	Good	10-20 Years	Includes fencing, stunt features, small shade benches. Two stage entry.
Road	Good	10-20 Years	Access road/Walking trail

LAKE CONNIE PARK



LEGEND

Barrier

P Parking

Site Entry

EXISTING CONDITIONS

NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Existing Dog Park Fencing	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years	High
New Dog Park Fencing	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Natural Surface Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years	High
Shelter	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Plaza Space	Build New	$$	4-6 Years	Low
Playground	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Dog Park Shade	Replace	$$	4-6 Years	High
Disc Golf	Build New	$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Planting Restoration	Restoration	$	4-6 Years	Medium
Overlook Classrooms	Build New	$$	4-6 Years	Low
Dock	Build New	$$	4-6 Years	Low

LAKE CONNIE PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Add new nature playground
2. Provide a shelter
3. Create paved parking lot (~20 spaces)
4. Add stormwater basin
5. Add new shade structures in existing dog park
6. Develop off-leash dog area
7. Future Regional Trail connection
8. Create a scenic overlook
9. Develop natural surface trail system
10. Provide outdoor classroom space
11. Create water access point
12. Add disc golf

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

LAKE VIEW PARK

Overview

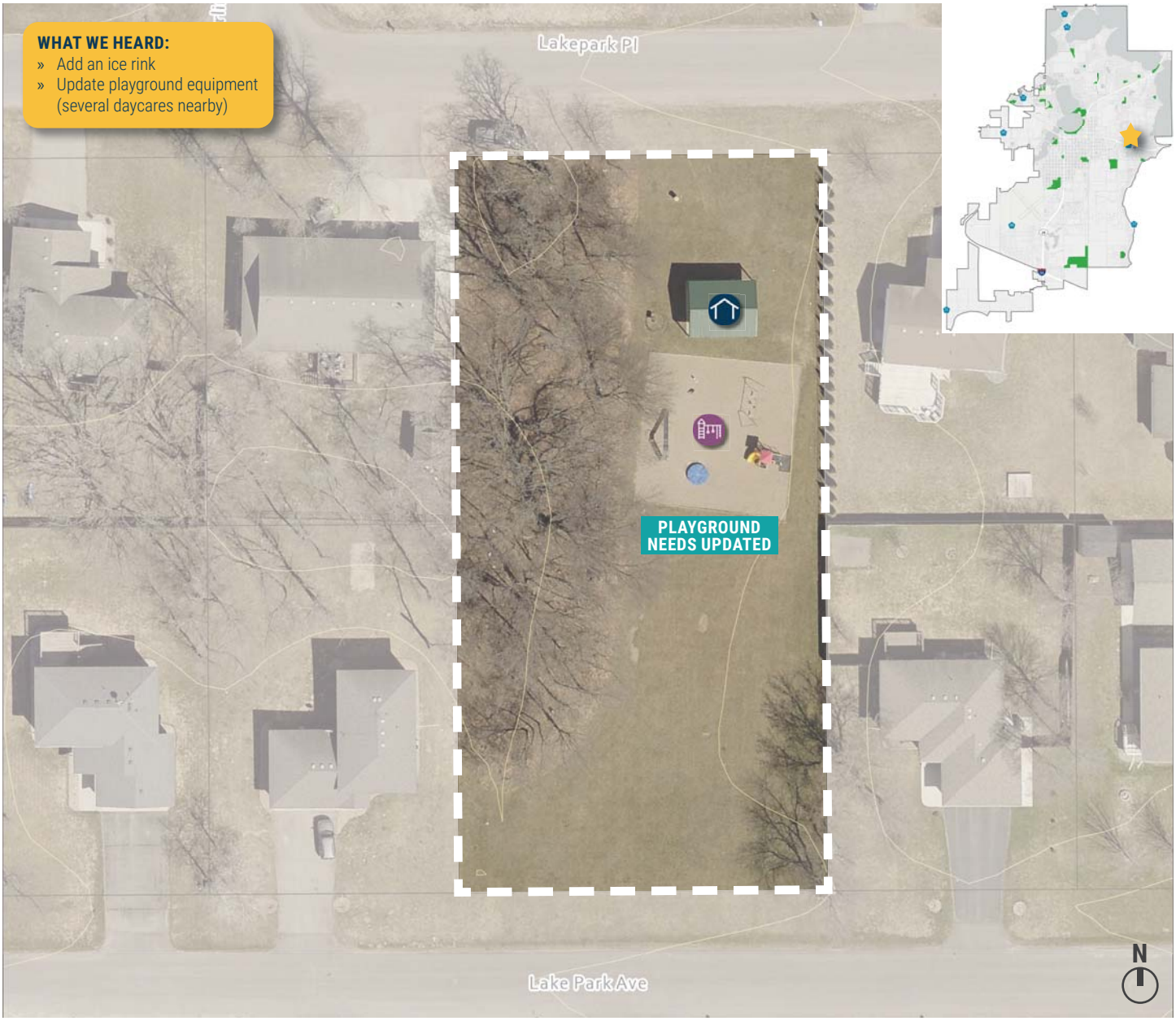
Lake View Park is a small neighborhood park in the eastern part of the city. It has a playground and a larger picnic shelter than most neighborhood parks.

Size	1.0 Acres
Classification	Neighborhood
Unique Features	Large picnic shelter

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Playground	Fair	1-5 Years	Outdated equipment. Slide looks new. Pea gravel with some weeds. Wood curb. Tot playground showing age but still has a few years left.
Shelter	Good	10-20 Years	Pad looks great. Metal roof.

LAKE VIEW PARK



LEGEND

- Shelter
- Playground

EXISTING CONDITIONS

NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Playground	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years	High
Traffic Garden	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Trees	Restoration	$	0-3 Years	Medium
Shelter	Replace	$$$	16-20 Years	High
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years	Medium

LAKE VIEW PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Add sidewalk to park
2. Enhance and expand playground
3. Plant new trees around sidewalk, playground, and traffic garden
4. Add traffic garden

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

MANOR HILLS PARK

Overview

Manor Hills is a former township park that has good size and serves as a neighborhood park in the northeast part of Alexandria.

Size	2.03 Acres
Classification	Neighborhood
Unique Features	

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Playground	Fair	1-5 Years	Merry go round OK. Swings OK. Slide sturdy but old. Ensure adequate absorption at high traffic areas. Lacks a climber and age differentiation.
Ballfield	Poor	1-5 Years	Aglime overgrown. Backstop eight feet. No benches.

MANOR HILLS PARK

LEGEND

- Playground
- Ballfield

EXISTING CONDITIONS

NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Playground	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years	High
Plaza Space	Build New	$$	0-3 Years	Low
Full Basketball Court	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Shelter	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	0-3 Years	Medium
Trees	Restoration	$	0-3 Years	Low
Planting Restoration	Restoration	$	0-3 Years	Medium

MANOR HILLS PARK

LEGEND

1. Add park signage
2. Relocate and create new playground
3. Add trees
4. Create full court basketball court
5. Add a shelter
6. Plant prairie seed

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

NOONAN PARK

Overview

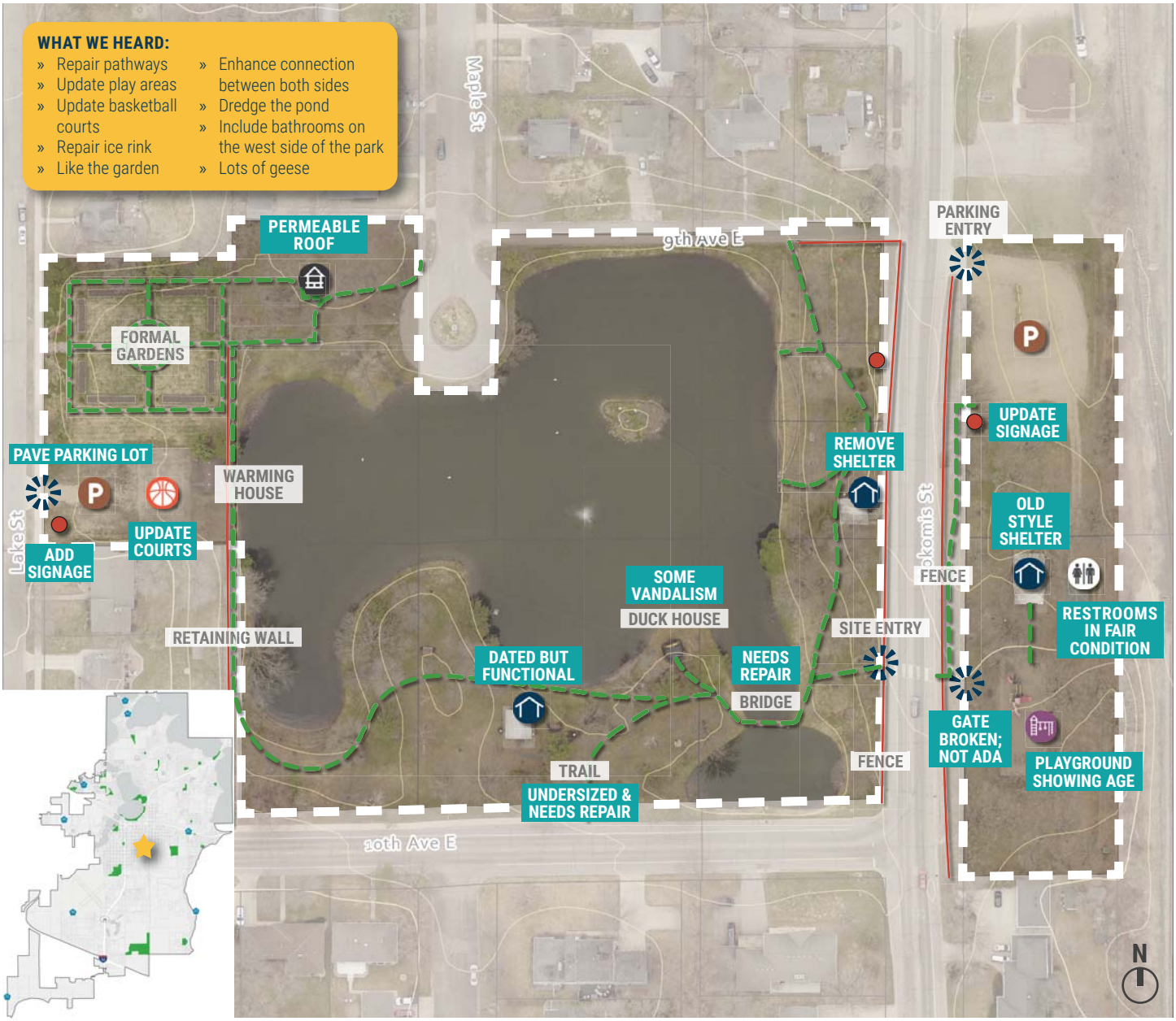
Noonan Park is a unique community focused park. The park includes a formal garden a large pond that is used for skating in the winter, and is home to a large number of ducks and geese. The park is also bisected by Nokomis Street, separating the playground from the pond area.

Size	7.44 Acres
Classification	Premier
Unique Features	Duckhouse, formal gardens, outdoor skating rinks with warming house, large pond, ducks and geese

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Trail	Poor	1-5 Years	Trail in rough shape and undersized. Heaving and cracking
Shelter (South)	Fair	1-5 Years	Old style. Still functional
Shelter (Bench)	Fair	1-5 Years	Bench shelter
Shelter (Duck House)	Good	10-20 Years	Duck house - Some vandalism inside, limited visibility inside
Bridge	Fair	1-5 Years	Some soft boards and cross slope on bridge.
Shelter (By Nokomis Street)	Fair	1-5 Years	September 14 1937 date on fire pit. Wall falling apart. Old shelter.
Crossing	Poor	Immediate	Crossing gate broken. Busy road. ADA concerns
Shelter (East)	Poor	1-5 Years	Old style shelter. CMU in poor condition. Shelter fair.
Building	Fair	5-10 Years	Showing significant wear. Water fountain broken.
Playground	Fair	1-5 Years	Showing age. Minimal cracking and rust. Wood chips pretty worn down, ensure adequate absorption. Wood curb.
Parking Lot	Fair	5-10 Years	Gravel, partially railroad land.
Parking Lot	Poor	1-5 Years	Not clear if it is a parking lot or not.
Basketball Court	Poor	1-5 Years	Bituminous is degraded. Hoops in bad shape.
Building	Good	10-20 Years	Warming house. In good shape. Fairly new or new siding
Formal Garden	Good	10-20 Years	Nice. Well taken care of.
Shelter (Garden)	Fair	5-10 Years	Roof does not stop rain.
Wall	Fair	5-10 Years	Worse along 9th.
Rinks	Good	10-20 Years	Small sized rinks, nice boards

NOONAN PARK



LEGEND

Walkway · Barrier · Sign · Site Entry · Restrooms · Parking · Shelter · Gazebo · Playground · Basketball

EXISTING CONDITIONS | NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Playground	Replace	$$$$	0-3 Years	High
West Parking Lot	Enhancements	$$$	7-10 Years	High
East Parking Lot	Enhancements	$$$	0-3 Years	High
Bituminous Trail	Replace	$$$$	0-3 Years	High
Boardwalk	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Low
Bridge	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years	High
Crosswalk	Enhancements	$$	0-3 Years	High
Pier	Build New	$	0-3 Years	Low
Full Basketball Court	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Labyrinth	Build New	$	0-3 Years	Medium
Art Pieces	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years	Medium
Warming House Overhaul	Enhancements	$$$$	11-15 Years	High
Rinks	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years	High
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	0-3 Years	Medium
Pond Dredge and Cleanup	Restoration	$$$$$	11-15 Years	High
Shelter	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years	High
Small Shelter	Replace	$$	7-10 Years	High

NOONAN PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Pave parking lot (~24 spaces)
2. Add art piece
3. Include interactive art
4. Add a boardwalk
5. Provide an overlook/dock
6. Replace bridge, add decorative lighting
7. Repave existing sidewalks
8. Remove existing shelter
9. Enhance and relocate crossing; add bump-outs
10. Pave parking lot (~35 spaces)
11. Relocate basketball court
12. Create adventure playground
13. Add walking labyrinth
14. Provide rentals at warming house

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

Improved crossings at Nokomis Street and an overview of the park

Artistic play features

Public art

Nature playground

OAK KNOLL PARK

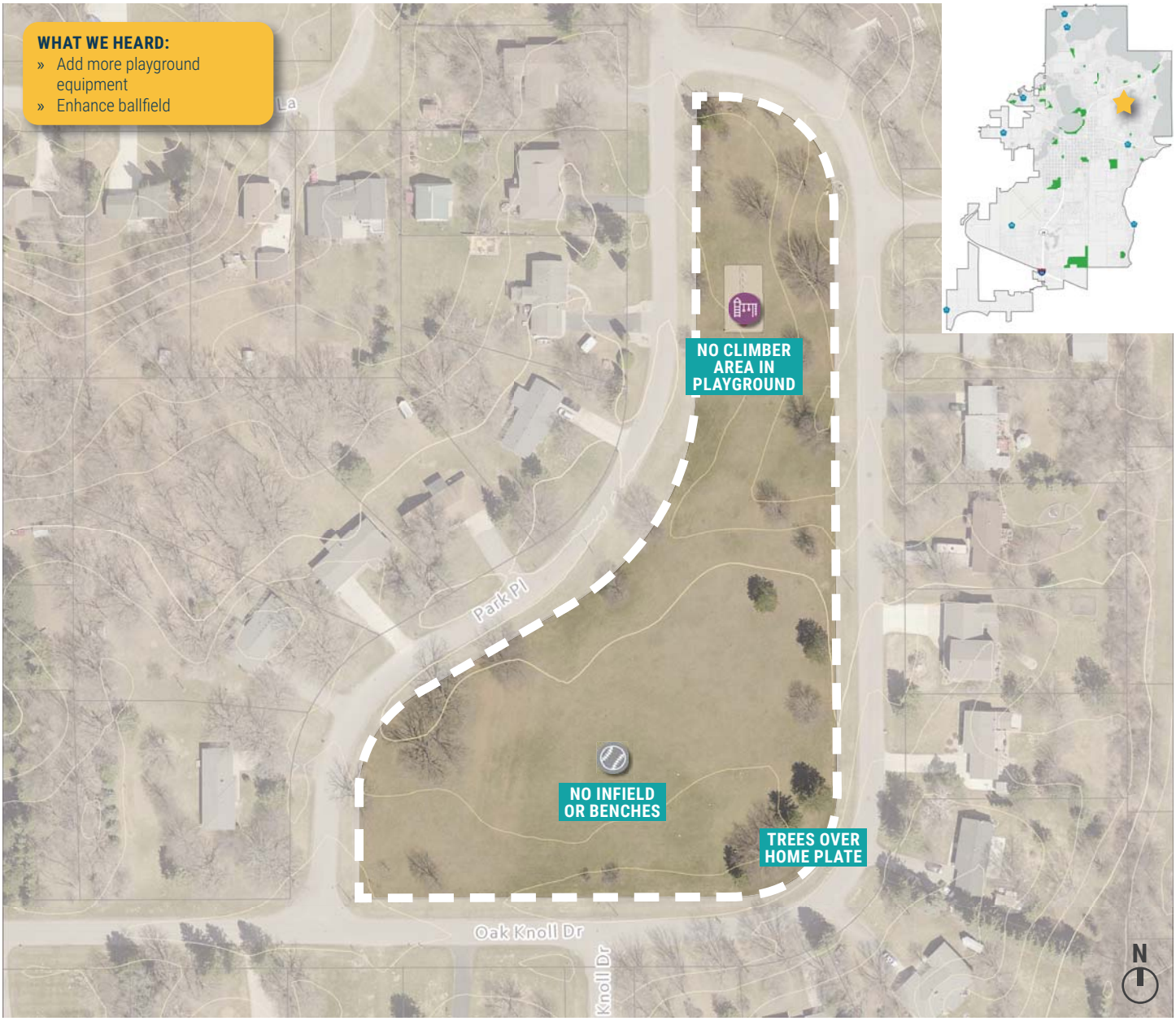
Overview

Oak Knoll is a neighborhood park in the northeast part of Alexandria. With a small ballfield and minimal playground features, the park is somewhat undeveloped, but is a nice open greenspace.

Size	4.15 Acres
Classification	Neighborhood
Unique Features	

Park Feature Inventory			
Feature	**Condition**	**Estimated Life Span Remaining**	**Notes**
Ballfield	Poor	5-10 Years	Trees over home plate. No infield or benches. Grass looks good
Playground	Good	10-20 Years	No climber area. Pea gravel and rubber curb

OAK KNOLL PARK



LEGEND

Playground

Ballfield

EXISTING CONDITIONS

NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Playground	Replace	$$$	4-6 Years	High
Ballfield	Replace	$	4-6 Years	Medium
Shelter	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	4-6 Years	Medium

OAK KNOLL PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Replace existing playground
2. Add a shelter
4. Enhance ballfield (backstops, benches, infield)
5. Add new sidewalks throughout the park

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

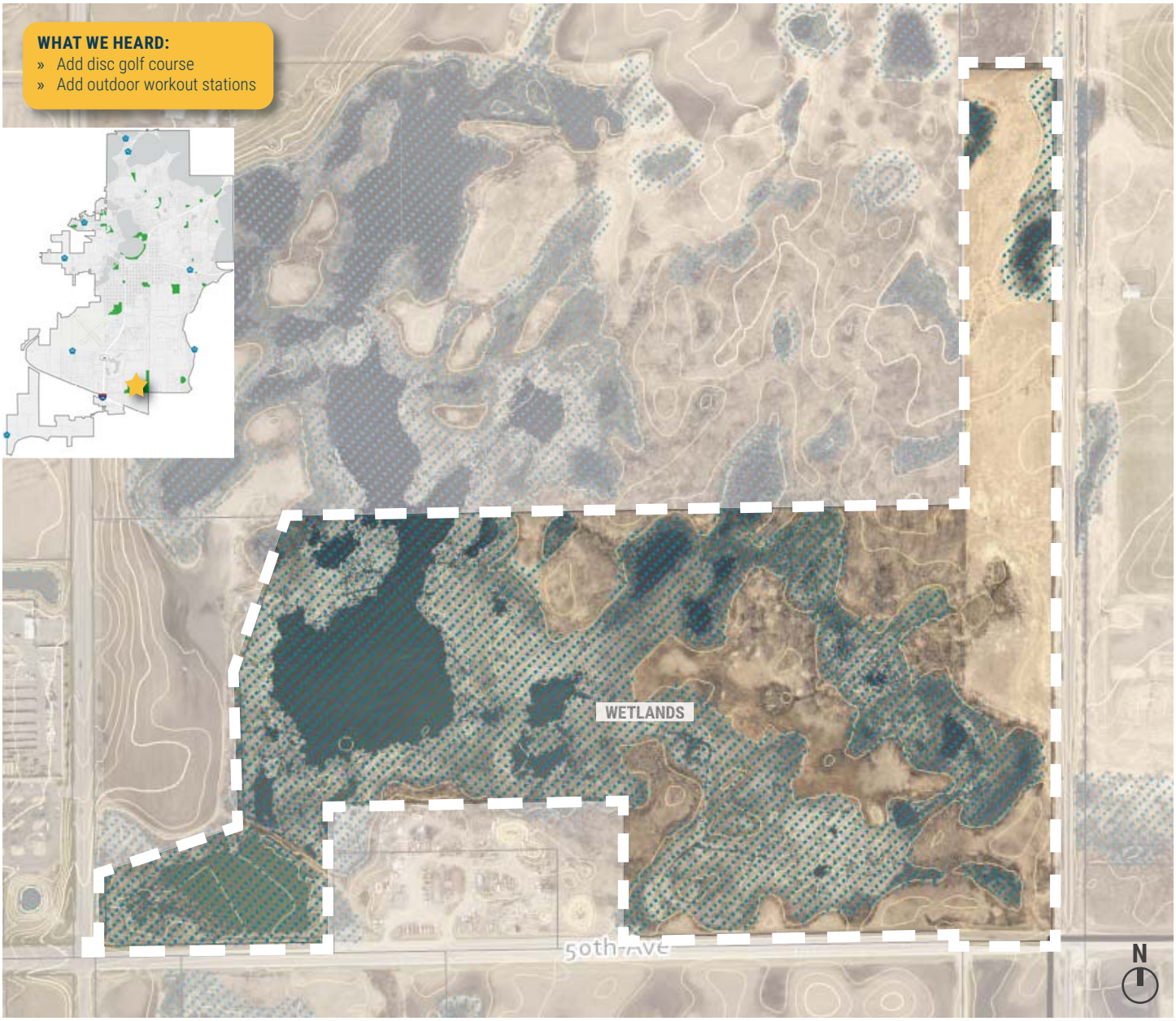
OAKWOOD TRAILS PARK

Overview

Oakwood Trails Park is a recently acquired property at the south end of Alexandria. It is a mix of prairie, treed areas, and wetlands. Based on the land donation requirements, the land must remain natural and without active recreation (playgrounds, ballfields, etc.)

Size	74.14 Acres
Classification	Open Space
Unique Features	

OAKWOOD TRAILS PARK



LEGEND

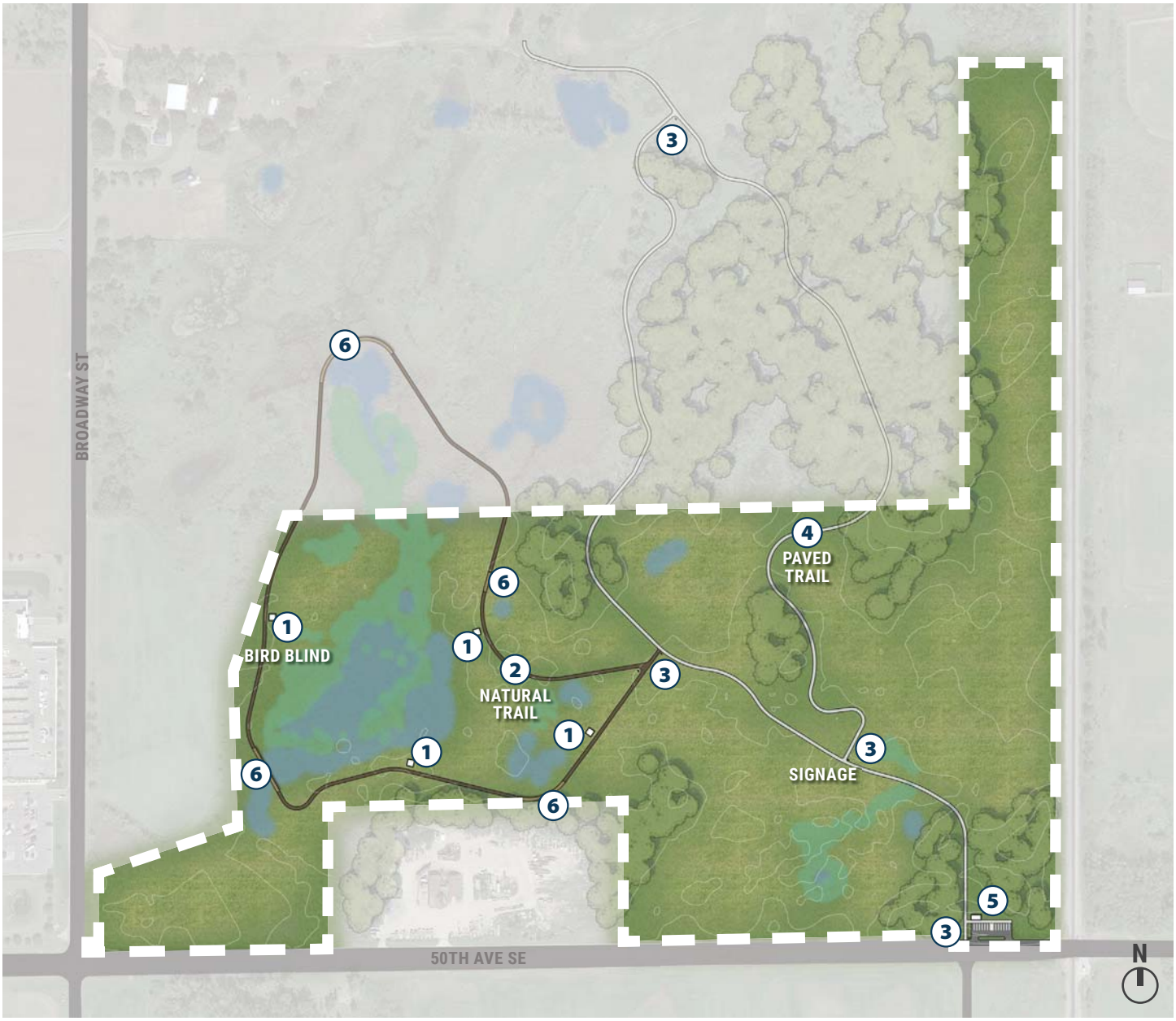
Wetland

EXISTING CONDITIONS | NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years	High
Natural Surface Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years	High
Boardwalk	Build New	$$$$$	4-6 Years	High
Bird Blinds	Build New	$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years	High
Shelter	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Signage & Wayfinding	Build New	$$	4-6 Years	Medium

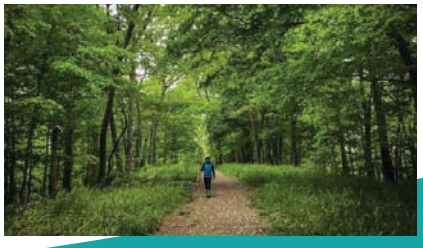
OAKWOOD TRAILS PARK CONCEPT



LEGEND

1. Add bird blinds
2. Add natural surface trail
3. Include educational and wayfinding signage
4. Add paved, accessible trail
5. Add picnic shelter
6. Boardwalks

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



RUNESTONE PARK

Overview

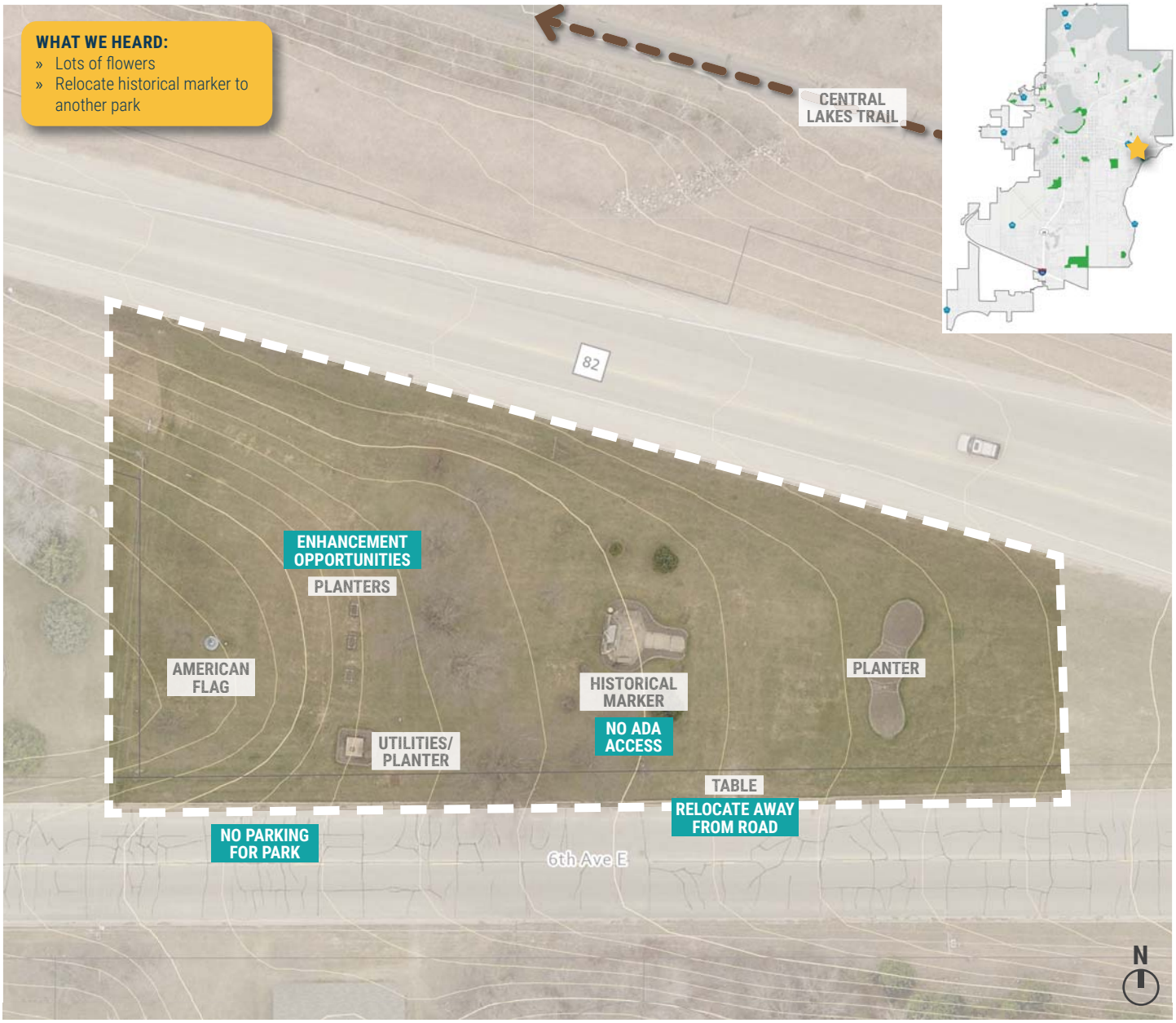
Runestone Park holds a large replica of the Kensington Runestone set in ornamental plantings. The design of the site was originally oriented to a road that crossed to Highway 82 before reconstruction.

Size	1.75 Acres
Classification	Special Use
Unique Features	

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Runestone Replica	Good	20+ Years	
Flag	Good	10-20 Years	
Walk/Paving	Fair	10-20 Years	No ADA Access

RUNESTONE PARK



LEGEND

Trail

EXISTING CONDITIONS

NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Flagpole	Replace	$	11-15 Years	Low
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$	11-15 Years	Medium
Site Furnishings	Build New	$	11-15 Years	High
Striping on Road	Build New	$	11-15 Years	Low
Planting Beds	Enhancements	$$	11-15 Years	Medium
Plaza Space	Build New	$$	11-15 Years	Medium

There have been some discussions about the long term location for the Runestone replica. If this feature is relocated, this site may transition to a “Welcome to Alexandria” sign and other improvements should be evaluated for suitability.

RUNESTONE PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Add planting beds
2. Add seat walls around monument
3. Create small plaza area
4. Add picnic tables in shaded area
5. Add parallel parking striping

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

SKYLARK PARK

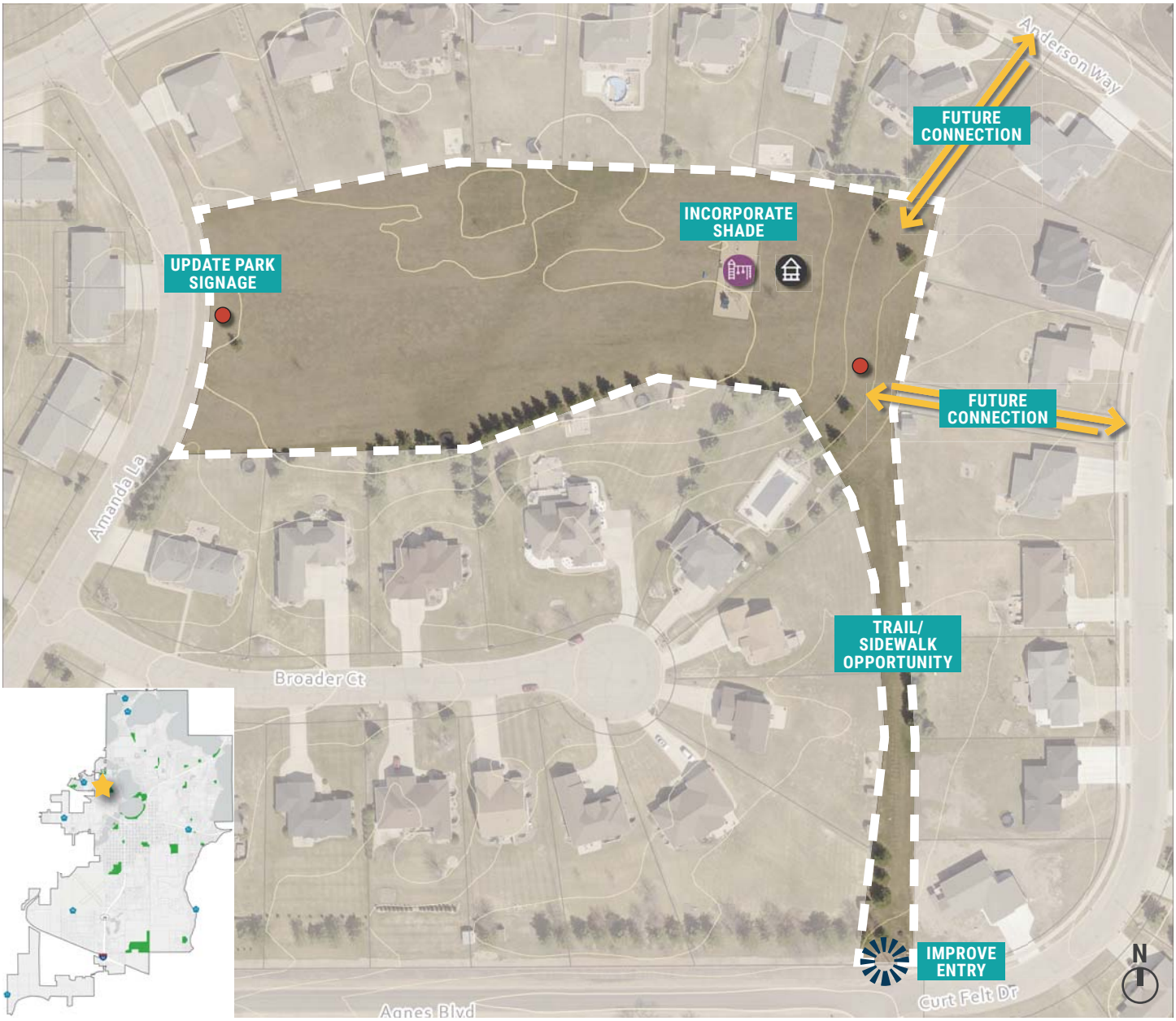
Overview

Skylark Park is a neighborhood park that will be connected to a larger network of parks as the area develops. It has a large open area and a newer playground.

Size	4.47 Acres
Classification	Neighborhood
Unique Features	

Park Feature Inventory			
Feature	**Condition**	**Estimated Life Span Remaining**	**Notes**
Sign	Fair	1-5 Years	
Shelter	Good	10-20 Years	
Playground	New	20+ Years	20 year replacement. Rubber curb and pea gravel. Fairly new. Set way back from road
Rectangle Field	Good	20+ Years	General maintenance. In good shape
Sign	Fair	1-5 Years	Trail connection coming
Sign	Fair	1-5 Years	

SKYLARK PARK



LEGEND

- Sign
- Gazebo
- Site Entry
- Playground

EXISTING CONDITIONS

NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years	High
Plaza Space	Build New	$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years	Low
Shelter	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Trees	Restoration	$$	4-6 Years	High
Signage & Wayfinding	Build New	$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Field Enhancements	Build New	$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Crosswalk	Build New	$	4-6 Years	High
Playground	Replace	$$$	16-20 Years	High

SKYLARK PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Add parking (~17 spaces)
2. Create youth soccer field
3. Add new trails across park
4. Add shelter
5. Relocate gazebo
6. Add park signage

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

SUMMER MEADOWS PARK

Overview

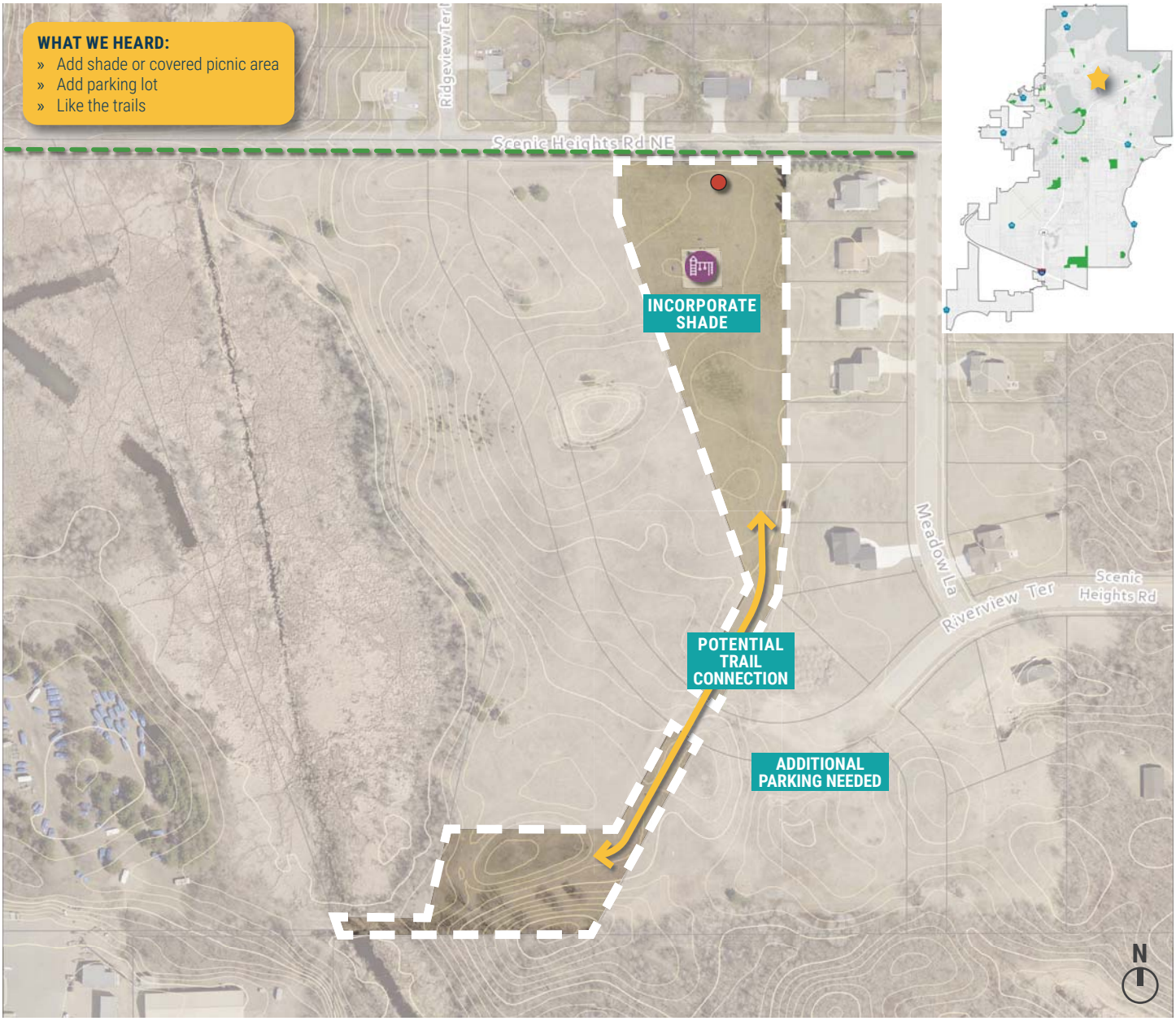
Summer Meadows Park is another park that sits in a developing neighborhood. Currently the park's main feature is the playground.

Size	4.77 Acres
Classification	Neighborhood
Unique Features	

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Playground	New	20+ Years	Rubber curb and pea gravel. Newer.

SUMMER MEADOWS



LEGEND

Walkway

Playground

Sign

EXISTING CONDITIONS

NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Playground	Replace	$$$	16-20 Years	High
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years	High
Shelter	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Parking Lot	Build New	$$	4-6 Years	Low
Stormwater Enhancements	Restoration	$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Full Basketball Court	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years	Medium
Signage & Wayfinding	Build New	$	4-6 Years	Medium
Trees	Restoration	$$	4-6 Years	High
Crosswalk	Build New	$	4-6 Years	High
Site Furnishings	Build New	$$	4-6 Years	Medium

SUMMER MEADOWS CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Add paved parking lot (~5 spaces)
2. Add park signage, including monument sign and smaller signs/wayfinding at secondary entries
3. Add a shelter
4. Add a full court basketball court
5. Add ADA-accessible entry to existing playground
6. Add vegetated screening between park and adjacent homes
7. Add paved paths for internal circulation
8. Future Regional Trail connection
9. Add native planting to existing stormwater basin

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK

Overview

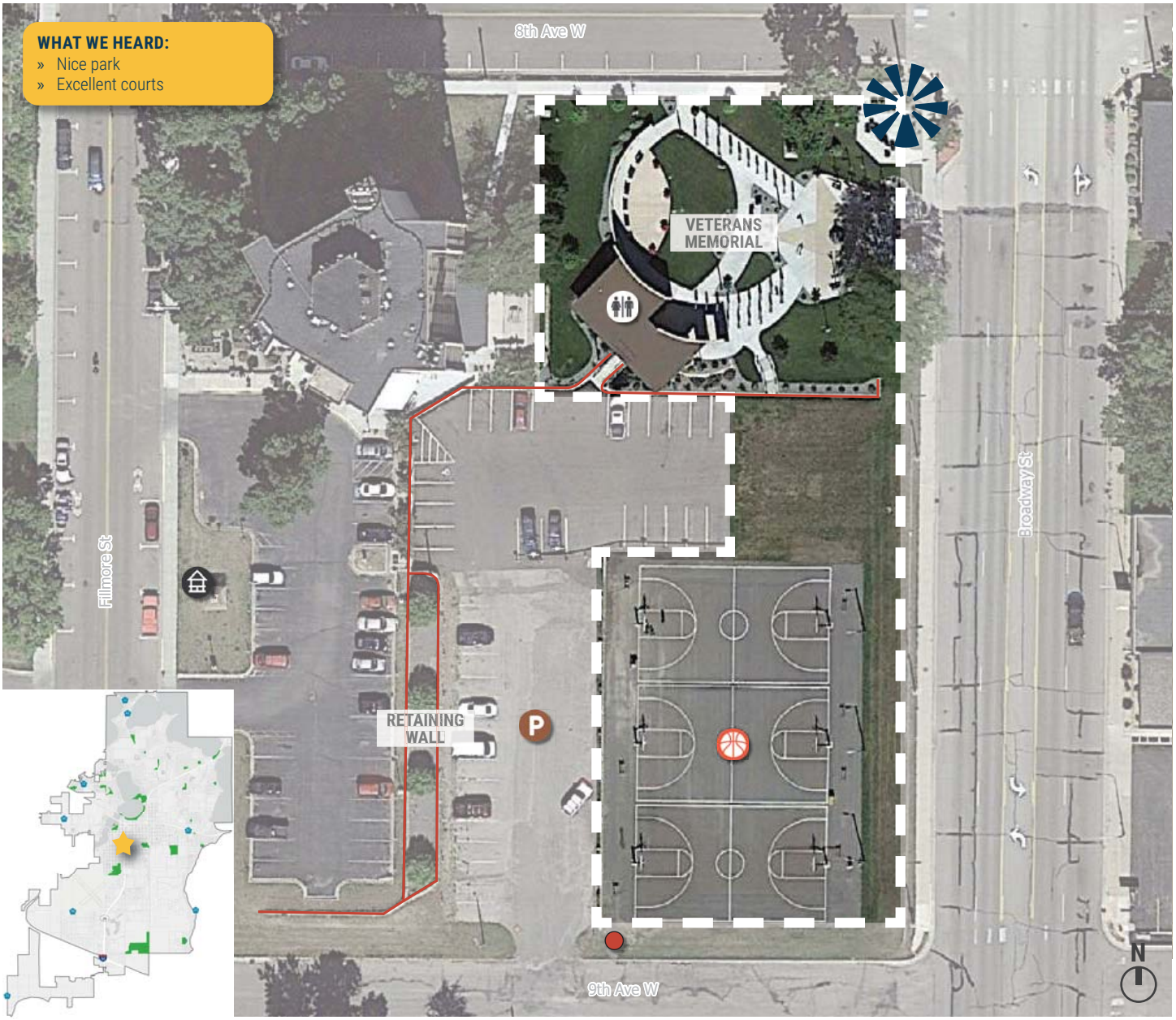
The monument portion of Veterans Memorial Park is an impressive new project for the City along Broadway. On the south side of the site sit three full sized basketball courts with high quality baskets. Horseshoes were removed from the grassy area a few years ago.

Size	1.32 Acres
Classification	Special Use
Unique Features	Veterans memorial, restrooms/shelter building, high quality basketball courts

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Memorial	New	20+ Years	New and very well done
Building	New	20+ Years	Brand new
Basketball Courts	Good	10-20 Years	Very nice. Great hoops. 3 courts.

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK



LEGEND

Barrier
Site Entry
Parking
Basketball
Sign
Restrooms
Gazebo

EXISTING CONDITIONS
NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Bituminous Trail	Build New	$	0-3 Years	Low
Trees	Restoration	$	0-3 Years	Low
Full Basketball Court	Replace	$$$$	11-15 Years	High

The new facilities at Veterans Park are not anticipated to require replacement within the next 20 years and are not included in the line items

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Add a new sidewalk to connect the Veterans Memorial to the basketball courts
2. Add trees

WOODLAND PARK

Overview

Woodland Park is a neighborhood park in the northeast part of the City. The mature tree canopy creates a serene setting.

Size	1.99 Acres
Classification	Neighborhood
Unique Features	Large open area with mature trees

Park Feature Inventory

Feature	Condition	Estimated Life Span Remaining	Notes
Playground	New	20+ Years	2019 Install, accessible entry ramp, but no ADA route. Rubber curb and wood fiber.

WOODLAND PARK

LEGEND

- Sign
- Playground

EXISTING CONDITIONS | NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING SITE PHOTOS

Park Plan Line Items				
Park Feature	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**	**Need Based Priority**
Natural Surface Trail	Build New	$$$	11-15 Years	Medium
Stormwater Enhancements	Restoration	$$$	11-15 Years	Medium
Playground	Replace	$$$	16-20 Years	High
Nature Playground	Build New	$$$	11-15 Years	Medium
Site Furnishings	Build New	$$	11-15 Years	Medium
Signage & Wayfinding	Build New	$	11-15 Years	Medium

WOODLAND PARK CONCEPT

LEGEND

1. Add park signage, including monument sign and smaller signs/wayfinding at secondary entries
2. Add picnic area with an ADA-accessible individual shelter
3. Add ADA-accessible entry to existing playground
4. Add small nature playground area between existing trees
5. Add natural surface trail loop
6. Add rain gardens to existing low points
7. Potential trail connection or sharrow to Manor Hills Park

PRECEDENT PHOTOS

CHAPTER 6

IMPLEMENTATION

Veterans Memorial Park

GETTING IT DONE!

The Implementation Chapter addresses how Alexandria can get from the ideas illustrated on paper in this plan, to fully built out parks throughout the system. This includes looking at funding, prioritization, the "To Do" list, how to make decisions when new ideas arise, and measuring progress.

Seeing this plan through will take significant work, resources, and determination. The plan will need to shift and adapt based on what can be accomplished and changing community preferences in the future.

Ultimately, the completion of this plan is about providing recreation opportunities for residents, meeting the community's desires and needs, strengthening Alexandria as a destination, and making the city an even better place to be.

This Chapter

The Implementation Chapter includes

- Information on potential funding sources
- Prioritized projects based on need
- A new project evaluation tool
- Recommendations for measuring progress

In addition to this chapter, City staff has a series of spreadsheets with line item estimates and scheduled construction that will be used to help guide CIP planning, evaluate where spending is going, and can be updated as projects are completed. Those spreadsheets are intended to be a living document to be adapted as new pricing information comes in, funding sources show up or disappear, and needs rise quicker than anticipated.

FUNDING SOURCES

Funding mechanisms for the City are changing. Resources that helped build the system in the past may not be there in the future, and it is important to understand the different types of funding that is available, and what it can be used for. It is anticipated that Alexandria will use multiple methods to fund park replacements, maintenance, and new projects. The applicability of different sources is discussed below.

General Funds

General funds are appropriate for developing and maintaining the parks and recreation system. General funds are the primary funding source for on-going maintenance and operations. Many of the grants that can be pursued have a matching requirement that may be matched with general funds.

Dedicated Tax Levy

A city can hold a referendum for a dedicated tax levy with proceeds directed specifically for recreation and parks. This levy can be used for capital projects as well as operations and maintenance. The proceeds may be in place of general funds or be supplemented by general funds. This creates a more stable source of funding for recreation and parks but requires the political support and need to pass a referendum

Local Option Sales Tax

Local Option Sales Taxes can be used to fund "regional" features in a park system. Because the tax is levied on anyone who shops in Alexandria, there needs to be a connection that they would also be potential users of those parks. It is more likely that this could be used for the premier parks and trails. Sales tax is probably not going to be approved at the legislature to pay for neighborhood parks.

Bonding

General Obligation Bonds and Revenue Bonds provide another source of implementation funding for new public facilities, as well as for repairs and upgrades to existing facilities. These are often backed by a referendum, local option sales tax or other reliable source of funding.

General Park Bond Issue

Residents can decide to raise revenue through a permanent or temporary tax increase dedicated for specific purposes such as park or trail construction and maintenance. Funds are usually provided through bonds approved as part of a referendum. Projects that enjoy significant public support, such as a signature community park with unique features or improvements to a number of parks that serve a large number of residents throughout the community are typically most successful.

Transportation Funds

Funding for pedestrian and bicycle improvements may be funded through programs like state aid and county road construction funding. This funding source is particularly relevant at the time of street construction or re-construction.

Park and Trail Dedication

Minnesota Statutes allow local governments to require dedication of land or cash in-lieu of land for parks and trails from new subdivisions. The dedication must be reasonable and rationally related to the recreation demand created by the development. All money must be spent on new capital costs, not maintenance or replacements. Cities can also require dedication of right-of-way or easements for sidewalks or trails. Some cities have adopted a separate trail fee or dedication. The decision about what kind of land the City will accept, and when to require cash in-lieu is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Cost Recovery

In some instances it may be appropriate to charge users to cover costs incurred to provide a facility or service. Charges could include use fees, association fees, dog park licenses, admissions, or tuition. Cost recovery is usually most appropriate when there is a clear relationship between the use and the need to spend resources. It is easiest to enforce when the service is excludable, such as ticketed admission.

Partnerships

Partnerships can be developed with public and private organizations. Organizations with partner funding can also provide assistance with design, outreach and maintenance. Partnerships and relationships with private businesses can also result in easements and use agreements for trails across private land.

Donations

Private donations are another potential funding source. These may be financial donations from individuals or area corporations or donations of labor from recreation clubs. Programs such as "adopt-a-trail" , "adopt-a-park" , or "adopt-a-river" by an organization, business, or individuals can successfully help with maintenance tasks and promote awareness of the park system.

Grants

Grants are a way to make Alexandria's dollars go further. Grants may have specific uses and need to be evaluated for both fit and effort vs. reward. Some of the most likely grant sources are:

» Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

The Minnesota DNR is one of the most comprehensive resources when it comes to state funding for park and trail programs. They offer a variety of grant programs and technical assistance. Current programs provide assistance for cross country skiing trails, mountain biking trails, horseback riding trails, and recreational trails. Some programs also offer assistance for the development of parks or for trail amenities such as restrooms, lightning, benches, etc.

Each of the Minnesota DNR grant programs is unique. The DNR should be consulted before pursuing a grant to clarify funding availability and qualifications.

» Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT)

A portion of most trail or bikeway improvement projects funded through Minnesota DOT is from federal dollars. Examples of programs typically funding trail or sidewalk improvement projects include Safe Routes to School or the Transportation Alternatives Program. Given the size of these grants the City should begin preparing in advance for future applications by identifying the type of improvement, the right-of-way needs, preliminary layout, and cost estimates.

» Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment

Minnesota voters approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the Minnesota State Constitution which increased the general sales and use tax and dedicated the additional proceeds for the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, the Outdoor Heritage Fund, Clean Water Fund, and Parks and Trails Fund.

Funding from the Legacy Amendment is administered by a variety of agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources, Pollution Control Agency, Department of Health, Historical Society, Minnesota State Arts Board and regional art councils. A number of new grant programs were created. Information about grant opportunities can be found on individual state department and organization websites.

» Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP)

SHIP funds are often used to develop parks, programming, and infrastructure that improve community health.

This plan recognizes that completing the system initiatives and park plans as shown represents spending above and beyond what the City currently allocates to the parks budget through the General Fund. It is not realistic for the general fund to expand to cover all the costs. There are other opportunities to fund park improvements and the City should consider which ones are appropriate to be pursued. Some sources of funds come with restrictions related to what they can and cannot be spent on. The table below is generalized, but is a starting point for thinking about how to get projects paid for and built.

	General Fund	Tax Levy	Sales Tax	Bonding	Transportation Funds	Park/Trail Dedication	Cost Recovery	Partnerships	Donations/Volunteers	Grants (case by case)
Athletics	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	◑
Buildings & Shelters	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	◑
Roads & Parking	●	◑	◑	◑	●	◑	○	●	○	●
Trails	●	●	●	●	●	●	◑	●	●	●
Playgrounds	●	◑	◑	◑	○	●	○	◑	◑	◑
Special Projects	◑	●	●	●	○	◑	●	●	●	◑
Maintenance	●	◑	○	○	○	○	●	●	◑	○
Operations	●	◑	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○
Land Acquisition	◑	◑	◑	◑	●	●	○	●	●	◑

● Likely Source ◑ Possible Source ○ Not a Likely Source

PRIORITIES

The following tables identify all the anticipated park projects based on the plans shown for individual parks. Each item has been evaluated and prioritized based on how much the project would affect the use of the park if it was not completed. It is important to note that some projects identified as a "medium" or "low" need will likely be constructed earlier than some of the "high" need line items. This is because some high need projects are for park features that still have a lot of life left in them, but when they are up for replacement, they will be important to tackle. Other lower projects may occur sooner because:

- They will bring new elements to the park that enhances what is already going on there
- The project is a good "inertia" project to help build momentum for change
- The project already has a funding source identified and specified for that use (ie. or donations)
- The project will be performed in tandem with other work being completed on the park

Projects are sorted by need category, timeframe, and then alphabetically by park.

High Priority Based on Need

These projects are categorized as high priorities base on either:

- A safety concern that needs to be addressed
- A feature that is integral to the use and enjoyment of the park that would significantly alter and detract from the function of the park if it was not completed (playgrounds, shelters, etc.)

High Priority Based on Need				
Park	**Park Feature**	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**
Carter	Shelter	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Carter	Crosswalk	Build New	$	0-3 Years
City	Beach Enhancements	Enhancements	$$$	0-3 Years
City	Parking Lot Expansion	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
City	Destination Playground	Replace	$$$$	0-3 Years
City	Large Shelter	Replace	$$$$	0-3 Years
City	Shelter	Replace	$	0-3 Years
City	Trail and Emergency Access	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
City	New Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
City	Site Furnishings	Build New	$$	0-3 Years

High Priority Based on Need				
Park	Park Feature	Planned Action	Cost	Timeframe
Fillmore	Skatepark	Replace	$$$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Tennis Courts	Build New	$$$$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Existing Parking Lot	Replace	$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Splashpad	Build New	$$$$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Crosswalk	Enhancements	$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Site Furnishings	Replace	$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Playground	Replace	$$$$	0-3 Years
Geneva Crest	Playground	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years
Geneva Crest	Shelter	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Goose	Parking Lot	Enhancements	$$$	0-3 Years
Goose	Trees	Restoration	$	0-3 Years
Knute Nelson	Scoreboard	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years
Lake View	Playground	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years
Manor Hills	Playground	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years
Noonan	Playground	Replace	$$$$	0-3 Years
Noonan	East Parking Lot	Enhancements	$$$	0-3 Years
Noonan	Bituminous Trail	Replace	$$$$	0-3 Years
Noonan	Bridge	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years
Noonan	Crosswalk	Enhancements	$$	0-3 Years
Noonan	Shelter	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years

High Priority Based on Need				
Park	**Park Feature**	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**
Knute Nelson	Concessions and Restrooms and Press	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years
Knute Nelson	Lighting	Replace	$$$$$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	Natural Surface Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	Dog Park Shade	Replace	$$	4-6 Years
Oak Knoll	Playground	Replace	$$$	4-6 Years
Oakwood Trails	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years
Oakwood Trails	Natural Surface Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years
Oakwood Trails	Boardwalk	Build New	$$$$$	4-6 Years
Oakwood Trails	Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years
Skylark	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years
Skylark	Trees	Restoration	$$	4-6 Years
Skylark	Crosswalk	Build New	$	4-6 Years
Summer Meadows	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years
Summer Meadows	Trees	Restoration	$$	4-6 Years
Summer Meadows	Crosswalk	Build New	$	4-6 Years
Nature Trail	Section 1	Build New	$$$$$	4-6 Years
Nature Trail	Section 2	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years

High Priority Based on Need				
Park	**Park Feature**	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**
Agnes	Boat Dock	Replace	$$	7-10 Years
Agnes	Shelter	Replace	$$$	7-10 Years
Big Ole and Central	Existing Bituminous Trail	Replace	$$$	7-10 Years
Blue Bird	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	7-10 Years
Fred Foslien	Nature Playground	Replace	$$$$	7-10 Years
Fred Foslien	Small Shelter	Replace	$$	7-10 Years
Knute Nelson	Grandstand Overhaul	Enhancements	$$$$	7-10 Years
Knute Nelson	Fencing and Backstop	Replace	$$$$	7-10 Years
Noonan	West Parking Lot	Enhancements	$$$	7-10 Years
Noonan	Small Shelter	Replace	$$	7-10 Years
Nature Trail	Section 3	Build New	$$$$$	7-10 Years
Nature Trail	Section 4	Build New	$$$$$	7-10 Years
Nature Trail	Section 5	Build New	$$$$	7-10 Years
Nature Trail	Section 6	Build New	$$$$$	7-10 Years

High Priority Based on Need				
Park	**Park Feature**	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**
Carter	Playground	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years
City	Existing Parking Lot	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years
City	Existing Bituminous Trail	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years
Fillmore	Bridge	Replace	$$	11-15 Years
Lake Burgen	Playground	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years
Lake Connie	Existing Dog Park Fencing	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years
Noonan	Warming House Overhaul	Enhancements	$$$$	11-15 Years
Noonan	Rinks	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years
Noonan	Pond Dredge and Cleanup	Restoration	$$$$$	11-15 Years
Runestone	Site Furnishings	Build New	$	11-15 Years
Veterans	Full Basketball Court	Replace	$$$$	11-15 Years
Nature Trail	Section 7	Build New	$$$$$	11-15 Years
Nature Trail	Section 8	Build New	$$$$$	11-15 Years
City	Restrooms	Replace	$$$$$	16-20 Years
Lake View	Shelter	Replace	$$$	16-20 Years
Skylark	Playground	Replace	$$$	16-20 Years
Summer Meadows	Playground	Replace	$$$	16-20 Years
Woodland	Playground	Replace	$$$	16-20 Years

Medium Priority Based on Need

These projects are ones that are important elements to the parks, but may not rise to the level of integral to the park. Deferring these projects would negatively impact the use of the park, but could be done if necessary.

Medium Priority Based on Need				
Park	**Park Feature**	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**
Agnes	Boat Cleaning Station	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
Agnes	Shoreland Restoration	Restoration	$	0-3 Years
Agnes	Signage & Wayfinding	Build New	$	0-3 Years
Big Ole and Central	Planned Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Big Ole and Central	Farmers Market Pavilions	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years
Big Ole and Central	Farmers Market Plaza	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
Big Ole and Central	Tree Clearing	Restoration	$	0-3 Years
Big Ole and Central	Small Stage/Bandstand	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years
Big Ole and Central	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$$	0-3 Years
Big Ole and Central	Site Furnishings	Replace	$$	0-3 Years
Carter	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years
Carter	Trees	Restoration	$$	0-3 Years
Carter	Planting Restoration	Restoration	$	0-3 Years
Carter	Signage & Wayfinding	Build New	$	0-3 Years
Carter	Basketball Half Court	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Carter	Site Furnishings	Build New	$$	0-3 Years

Medium Priority Based on Need				
Park	**Park Feature**	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**
City	Parking On Street	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
City	Amphitheater	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years
City	Splashpad	Build New	$$$$$	0-3 Years
City	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$$	0-3 Years
City	Gazebo	Replace	$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Batter Cage	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Skate Park and Tennis Parking Expansion	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Ballfield Enhancements	Enhancements	$$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Plaza Space	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Full Basketball Court	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$$	0-3 Years
Geneva Crest	Backstop Fencing	Replace	$	0-3 Years
Geneva Crest	Site Furnishings	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
Geneva Crest	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	0-3 Years

Medium Priority Based on Need				
Park	**Park Feature**	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**
Goose	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
Goose	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	0-3 Years
Knute Nelson	Artificial Turf Infield	Build New	$$$$$	0-3 Years
Lake View	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
Lake View	Traffic Garden	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
Lake View	Trees	Restoration	$	0-3 Years
Lake View	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years
Manor Hills	Full Basketball Court	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Manor Hills	Shelter	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Manor Hills	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	0-3 Years
Manor Hills	Planting Restoration	Restoration	$	0-3 Years
Noonan	Full Basketball Court	Replace	$$$	0-3 Years
Noonan	Labyrinth	Build New	$	0-3 Years
Noonan	Art Pieces	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Noonan	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	0-3 Years

Medium Priority Based on Need				
Park	**Park Feature**	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**
Knute Nelson	North Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years
Knute Nelson	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	4-6 Years
Lake Burgen	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years
Lake Burgen	Shelter	Replace	$$$	4-6 Years
Lake Burgen	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	New Dog Park Fencing	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	Shelter	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	Playground	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	Disc Golf	Build New	$$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	Planting Restoration	Restoration	$	4-6 Years
Oak Knoll	Ballfield	Replace	$	4-6 Years
Oak Knoll	Shelter	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years
Oak Knoll	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years
Oak Knoll	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	4-6 Years
Oakwood Trails	Bird Blinds	Build New	$$	4-6 Years
Oakwood Trails	Shelter	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years
Oakwood Trails	Signage & Wayfinding	Build New	$$	4-6 Years

Medium Priority Based on Need				
Park	**Park Feature**	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**
Skylark	Plaza Space	Build New	$$	4-6 Years
Skylark	Shelter	Build New	$$$$	4-6 Years
Skylark	Signage & Wayfinding	Build New	$$	4-6 Years
Skylark	Field Enhancements	Build New	$$	4-6 Years
Summer Meadows	Shelter	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years
Summer Meadows	Stormwater Enhancements	Restoration	$$	4-6 Years
Summer Meadows	Full Basketball Court	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years
Summer Meadows	Signage & Wayfinding	Build New	$	4-6 Years
Summer Meadows	Site Furnishings	Build New	$$	4-6 Years
Agnes	Site Furnishings	Build New	$$	7-10 Years
Agnes	Concrete Walk	Build New	$	7-10 Years
Agnes	Swale Crossing	Build New	$	7-10 Years
Blue Bird	Plantings	Restoration	$	7-10 Years
Blue Bird	Trees	Restoration	$$$	7-10 Years
Blue Bird	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	7-10 Years
Blue Bird	Shelter	Build New	$$$	7-10 Years
Blue Bird	Plaza Space	Build New	$	7-10 Years
Fred Foslien	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$	7-10 Years
Fred Foslien	Signage & Wayfinding	Replace	$	7-10 Years
Fred Foslien	Full Basketball Court	Enhancements	$$$	7-10 Years
Knute Nelson	Covered Batting Cages	Build New	$$$$	7-10 Years

Medium Priority Based on Need				
Park	**Park Feature**	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**
Big Ole and Central	Fishing Pier	Replace	$$	11-15 Years
Goose	Shelter	Replace	$$$	11-15 Years
Runestone	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$	11-15 Years
Runestone	Planting Beds	Enhancements	$$	11-15 Years
Runestone	Plaza Space	Build New	$$	11-15 Years
Woodland	Natural Surface Trail	Build New	$$$	11-15 Years
Woodland	Stormwater Enhancements	Restoration	$$$	11-15 Years
Woodland	Nature Playground	Build New	$$$	11-15 Years
Woodland	Site Furnishings	Build New	$$	11-15 Years
Woodland	Signage & Wayfinding	Build New	$	11-15 Years

Lower Priority Projects Based on Need

These are items identified in the park plans that could be really outstanding, unique, and even iconic features, but they might be considered “add-ons.” Others are things that would make the park more enjoyable, but the park is also functioning adequately without them. While these projects could bring a lot to the parks, they may be deferred or be completed when specific funding comes available for them.

Lower Priority Based on Need				
Park	**Park Feature**	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**
Agnes	Fishing Pier	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
Big Ole and Central	Planting Beds	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Big Ole and Central	Art Garden Plaza Enhancements	Enhancements	$$	0-3 Years
Carter	Plaza Space	Build New	$	0-3 Years
City	Ballfield Enhancements	Enhancements	$$	0-3 Years
City	Pump Track	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
City	Bocce Ball	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
City	Court Shade	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Fillmore St Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	15th St Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Fillmore	Planting Restoration	Build New	$	0-3 Years
Geneva Crest	Parking	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
Geneva Crest	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Geneva Crest	Trees	Restoration	$	0-3 Years
Goose	Plaza Space	Build New	$	0-3 Years
Goose	Shoreland Restoration	Restoration	$	0-3 Years
Goose	Dog Park Fencing	Build New	$	0-3 Years
Knute Nelson	Shoreland Restoration	Enhancements	$$	0-3 Years
Knute Nelson	Dog Park Fencing	Build New	$	0-3 Years

Lower Priority Based on Need				
Park	**Park Feature**	**Planned Action**	**Cost**	**Timeframe**
Manor Hills	Plaza Space	Build New	$$	0-3 Years
Manor Hills	Trees	Restoration	$	0-3 Years
Noonan	Boardwalk	Build New	$$$	0-3 Years
Noonan	Pier	Build New	$	0-3 Years
Veterans	Bituminous Trail	Build New	$	0-3 Years
Veterans	Trees	Restoration	$	0-3 Years
Lake Burgen	Parking	Build New	$$	4-6 Years
Lake Burgen	Trees	Restoration	$$	4-6 Years
Lake Burgen	Planting Restoration	Restoration	$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	Plaza Space	Build New	$$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	Overlook Classrooms	Build New	$$	4-6 Years
Lake Connie	Dock	Build New	$$	4-6 Years
Skylark	Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	4-6 Years
Summer Meadows	Parking Lot	Build New	$$	4-6 Years
Agnes	Parking Lot	Enhancements	$$$	7-10 Years
Agnes	Kayak Launch	Build New	$$	7-10 Years
Knute Nelson	Playground	Build New	$$$	7-10 Years
Big Ole and Central	Boardwalk	Build New	$$$$	11-15 Years
City	South Parking Lot	Build New	$$$	11-15 Years
Runestone	Flagpole	Replace	$	11-15 Years
Runestone	Striping on Road	Build New	$	11-15 Years

In the next 10-20 years, it is likely that the City will face a number of requests, opportunities, and decisions about expanding and/or improving the park system. Many of these will not have been anticipated in this plan. This worksheet is intended to help staff, the Park Board, and the City Council to evaluate new ideas.

The Project

Describe the project and why it is a good idea for Alexandria to consider it:

Need

Does the proposed project meet an unmet recreation need in Alexandria? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the proposed project meet one or more of the system initiatives outlined in the parks plan?

☐ Financially Sustainable
☐ Ecologically Sustainable
☐ Accessible and Inclusive
☐ Four Season Recreations
☐ Replacing Aging Infrastructure
☐ Parks for Neighborhoods
☐ Signage and Wayfinding
☐ Strong Partnerships
☐ Well Maintained Parks
☐ Trail Loops and Connections
☐ Support of Athletics
☐ Recreation for All Ages

What evidence is there that this is a desired project in the community?

Finances

How does the proposed project impact the City's financial situation?

What is the initial cost to implement this proposed project? _____

Where are these funds coming from? _____

What are the ongoing costs to implement this proposed project? (annual operations / maintenance)

Where are these funds coming from? _____

Does the City have enough staff to program and take care of this new project? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, how will additional staff be added and funded? _____

At the end of it's life span, what will the replacement cost for this be? _____

What is the expected life span of the proposed project? ÷ _____

What is the replacement cost divided by the life span of the proposed project? _____
(annualized replacement cost)

Where will the replacement funds come from?

Location

Where is this proposed project going to be located? _____

Is this the best spot in the park system for it? ☐ Yes ☐ No If no, where is? _____

Are there potential conflicts with adjacent land uses that need to be considered? (noise, parking, lights, etc.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what and how will the potential conflicts be mitigated?

_____

_____

_____

Is the proposed project displacing something else? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does this need to be relocated somewhere else? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, where? _____

Local Businesses & Partnerships

Is this project best provided by the City or another partner? (County, Schools, Associations, etc.)

☐City ☐Other(s): _____

Is this proposed project something that is already provided by the private sector? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is this proposed project something that is already provided by other partners? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, how will we make sure this proposed project isn't competing with existing options?

_____

_____

Can the proposed project be done more efficiently through a partnership with the existing private provider(s) rather than doing it by ourselves? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the proposed project offer economic development opportunities? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, how?

_____

(more visitors, promotion of the community, increased local spending, etc.)

Decision

Should we proceed? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Revise Proposal

Rationale: _____

_____

_____

Measuring Progress

Working through a park system plan is no small feat. The City should take time to note and celebrate its successes as they occur with regards to the park system, while learning from the things that could have gone better.

Routine evaluation of the park and recreation system is valuable, particularly when justifying requests for funds, facilities, staff time and volunteers. It is important that system benefits are communicated as it is likely that elected officials, the public and other decision makers may not have a thorough understanding of the magnitude of park and recreation users and the benefits the system provides.

Regular evaluations also have the potential for pinpointing which improvements would better serve system users and identifying benchmarks for excellence.

Comprehensive evaluations of park and recreation systems should include both qualitative and quantitative components. Qualitative tools, such as surveys, are relatively easy to conduct and are important in gauging satisfactions, trends, and need. Quantitative methods, such as counts, are important in capturing the who, what, where, and when of park and recreation use. Counts are the most beneficial in demonstrating the magnitude of usage. The evaluation system should also include an analysis of the community's progress on its goals and implementation of its plans.

An annual review of how things went, where participation numbers are trending, and how partnerships are going will be a helpful reflection tool to help the City keep getting better.

Examples of Quantitative Data Collection

- Number of recreation activities and participants tracked through registrations
- Number of events, facility users and participants tracked through reservations, permitting and in requests of associations
- Number of "To-Do" items checked off the list
- Number of volunteer participants
- Number of people using parks, trails and other non-fee based facilities through the development of a user count program. This might be accomplished by counting cars in the parking lot, creating a neighborhood park count volunteer program, or installing new technology to count trail users
- Miles of sidewalks/trail completed
- Park and trail safety – number of accidents, incidents and crime

Examples of Qualitative Data Collection

- City-wide survey on a regular basis to evaluate trends over time
- Conduct satisfaction surveys of recreation activity participants
- Create evaluation for associations and other groups which regularly use facilities
- Conduct focus groups to gather information about park use habits and desires for future park system directions

System Analysis Steps

- Outline steps taken toward implementing System
- Plan goals and initiatives
- Evaluate the ability to fund the desired system
- Summarize the amount of outside funding (partnerships, grants, etc.) secured
- Identify challenges and what steps have been taken to address them
- Review agreements to make sure they are still meeting everyone's needs

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