Introduction

This section will outline the existing and proposed parks and recreation facilities in St. Paul Park, as well as how those city facilities can connect with the larger regional and county park and trail systems. The following are key issues regarding existing parks and recreation resources in the city:

- Maintenance of existing city park facilities
- Facilities for all residents
- Connections between city parks, neighborhoods, commercial areas and the Mississippi River, to improve connections and broaden recreational opportunities for residents and visitors
- Expansion for new developments

For a system of parks to be successful, efficient, and well-utilized there must be an even distribution of recreational and open space areas throughout the community. For the purposes of park planning, St. Paul Park’s goal is to provide active park space within a ¼ mile of every residence for easy pedestrian access to recreational features. If a ¼ mile is not feasible, the City will aim to have an active park space within a ½ mile radius for bicyclists and extended pedestrian access. Another goal of the City is to provide about 10 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. The City will need to preserve land in key areas for this future parkland.

Active parks are defined by the types of recreation they offer and the extent they are developed. Active parks typically include fields and courts for team recreation, and playgrounds. Passive parks are typically areas that emphasize open space and the preservation of ecologically significant areas.
Park Classifications

Park site and facilities are classified in St. Paul Park as neighborhood, community, and passive parks. Each type of park provides a specific role in the park system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Site Attributes</th>
<th>Site Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Park</td>
<td>The basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Used for informal active recreation.</td>
<td>¼ to ½ mile radius located within a residential area uninterrupted by significant barriers.</td>
<td>2 – 10 acres</td>
<td>Physical geography suited for intense development.</td>
<td>Proximity to residential neighborhoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community park</td>
<td>Larger park with a regional draw featuring larger scale and unique facilities.</td>
<td>Community-wide</td>
<td>5 – 40 acres</td>
<td>Affords natural features with varied physical geographic interest.</td>
<td>Proximity to community facilities and resources with good access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive park</td>
<td>Area of natural resources or unique cultural heritage which provide access for the public to engage in passive activities near such features.</td>
<td>Community-wide</td>
<td>Variable, based on extent of resources</td>
<td>Natural or cultural resources that merit preservation.</td>
<td>Near key natural or cultural resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are intended to be the primary focus of the park system. These parks serve as the focal point of neighborhoods. They provide amenities and recreational space for all residents of an area within the City. Such parks should be within walking or biking distance of the residents and workers it serves.

A neighborhood park typically serves one large or multiple small neighborhoods. The preferred typical size is anywhere between 2 and 10 acres in size. Many of the City’s existing neighborhood parks are on the small side of this range or even below. Such parks could be expanded in the future, if necessary to fulfil recreational needs on an area.
Parks of this type are intended to have service areas between ¼ to ½ mile and should be located within walking distance from the neighborhoods they serve. Such park sites should be suited for multi-use development, easily accessible to individual neighborhood populations, and geographically centered with safe access. If located on higher classification roadways, there should be safe street crossings planned for access.

The overall design and layout of a neighborhood park is important to its usability. These parks should generally be designed for active, programmed space such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, sport courts clustered into activity areas within the park. Siting these areas near existing trees is recommended. Open, passive, or unprogrammed areas should be visible from the active area but delineated by landscaping, walking paths, ponds, or other such features. Neighborhood parks should have trail loops within the park that connects to the City’s trail and sidewalk system.

Neighborhood parks should be designed and maintained with parking needs in mind. Parking for the park should not conflict with the residential neighborhood. If street parking is problematic in a certain area a parking lot could be considered.

**Community Parks**

Community parks are larger parks intended to serve a group of neighborhoods, a large portion of the City, or the entire City. Community parks may be reached by automobile and through access via the City trail system. A variety of recreational facilities should be provided, including ballfields for organized sports, trails, unique features that draw visitors from a greater area, and larger playgrounds.

When possible, community parks should be located on higher classification roadways and have trail or sidewalk access linking the park to the remainder of the system and community. Parking lots may also be necessary to avoid conflicts with nearby neighborhoods.

Community parks may incorporate neighborhood facilities within. This lessens the need for additional neighborhood parks. Therefore, a community park will have a similar ¼ to ½ mile service area for residential access, as well as being a larger city-wide draw.

The typical community park should be large enough to provide a variety of amenities while still leaving space for unstructured recreation and passive areas. Lighted areas may be incorporated into community parks.
Passive Parks

Passive parks serve to protect, manage, and provide access to the natural/cultural environment. Ideal components of a passive park are natural preservation areas, walking trails, rest areas, picnic areas, monuments, and off-street parking. Such parks are not included in the active park system for programming purposes like the community or neighborhood parks because of limited infrastructure and less intense uses.

Passive parks should only be established where there are important natural features to be preserved that are incompatible with active recreation uses or in areas where there are key cultural resources. If these conditions are not present, such a park may end up being an inefficient use of City resources. A park may be classified as a passive park in the short term but may change classification if needs arise. The Natural Resources Chapter identifies significant ecological areas in the City and can be used to help guide where future preservation, and creation of passive parks, should occur.

Existing Facilities

St. Paul Park is fortunate to have a number of park resources spread throughout the city, allowing a large proportion of the residential population to be served by a park within walking or biking distance. Currently the city has eight parks, totaling around 53 acres. There is some variation in the facilities provided by each park which will be covered below, but most have a focus on providing adequate recreation space and facilities. Classifications are taken from the National Recreation and Park Association.
Active Recreation Parks

Heritage Park: On 13th Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, and Portland Avenue
Classification: Community Park
Size: 13.5 acres
Existing Facilities:

- Ball Fields (four for baseball; seasonal football)
- Tennis Courts
- Badminton Court
- Basketball (half court)
- Horseshoe Pits
- Sand Volleyball
- Playground Equipment (handicap accessible)
- Pavillion
- Shelter
- Picnic Area (tables and grills)
- Park building housing the community room, maintenance shops, and recreation programs.
- Community Room Amenities (electric outlets, refrigerator, bathrooms)

Heritage Park has park improvements slated for 2019.

Whitbred Memorial Park: On Lincoln Avenue, between 13th and 14th Avenues
Classification: Community Park
Size: 2.8 acres
Existing Facilities:

- Little League Baseball Field
- Football Field
- Basketball Court
- Playground Equipment
- Hockey Rink
- Skating Rink
- Warming house
- Picnic Area (tables and grills)
- Workout Equipment

Designed Specifically for teenagers.
Abdella Memorial Park: On Hastings Avenue, east of Selby Avenue. Entrance on Dayton Avenue.
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Size: 5.5 acres
Existing Facilities:

- Walking Path (Paved, handicap accessible, ½ mile)
- Tennis courts
- Ball field
- Basketball court
- Soccer field
- Playground Equipment
- Shelter
- Picnic area, with picnic tables and grills

Dingle Park: On 11th St, between Portland and Holly Avenues.
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Size: 1.5 acres
Existing Facilities:

- Playground Equipment
- Shelter
- Picnic area, with picnic tables and grills
- Shuffleboards

Designed Specifically for toddlers.

Sittlow Park: On 5th St, between 10th and 11th Avenues.
Classification: Neighborhood Park
Size: 1.5 acres
Existing Facilities:

- Playground Equipment (Handicap Accessible)
- Picnic area, with picnic tables and grills
**Axelrod Park:** On Pullman Avenue, between 4th and 5th Streets.

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Size:** 1.5 acres

**Existing Facilities:**
- Handicap accessible
- Small ball field
- Basketball court (half court)
- Shelter
- Playground Equipment
- Picnic area, with picnic tables and grills

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**Passive Recreation Parks**

**Veterans Memorial Park:** North of Broadway, between 4th and 5th Street.

**Classification:** Passive Park

**Size:** 0.8 acres

**Existing Facilities:**
- Handicap accessible
- Paved walkways
- Picnic area, with picnic tables and grills
- Memorial garden

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**Riverside Nature Study Park:** On Pullman Ave, with an entrance on 13th Ave

**Classification:** Passive Park

**Size:** 14.4 acres

**Existing Facilities:**
- Walking Paths
- Benches
- River Overlooks
**Lion’s Levee Park**: West end of 7th Avenue
**Classification**: Passive Park
**Size**: 11.7 acres

**Existing Facilities**:
- Boat launch
- Foot bridge
- Benches
- Picnic tables
- Parking area
- Overlook (handicap accessible)

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## County, Regional And State Parks

There are a number of county, regional and state parks within close proximity to St. Paul Park.

**Point Douglas Park**, located at the southern end of Denmark Township, is a seven-acre Washington County park including a swimming beach, bathhouse and restrooms. It is roughly 15 minutes from St. Paul Park.

**Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park** is located north of Highway 61, east of County Road 19, in Cottage Grove. A regional park, it is largely open space that has been left in its natural state. There are 515 acres in the park, which includes wide ravines and heavy woods. There are seven miles of trails for hiking and cross-country skiing. Facilities include a shelter with restrooms; picnic tables and grills; a play structure; a fishing pier; and, drinking water. Washington County oversees operation and maintenance of the park. This park is roughly 15 minutes from the City.

**Afton State Park**, in Afton and Denmark Township, is 1,702 acres of natural land. There are 20 miles of hiking trails; 15 miles of those trails are groomed for cross country skiing in the winter. A beach and picnic area are available. Another picnic area near the parking lot has picnic tables and grills. There is one backpack campground and two campgrounds for group use. Afton State Park is approximately 20 minutes from St. Paul Park.

Currently, there are no proposed regional or state parks for St. Paul Park.

**The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area** is a 72-mile river corridor that stretches from the cities of Dayton and Ramsey, in the northern part of the metropolitan area, to just south of Hastings. It also includes four miles of the Minnesota River at its juncture with the Mississippi River. The area was first designated a State Critical Area by Executive Order 79-19, and when the MNNRA was established it assumed the same geographic areas.

MNRRA was established as a unit of the National Park System with the goals of protecting and conserving the resources of the river corridor and providing access to the river by guiding the development and use of lands in the corridor so that they are compatible with the goals of protection, conservation, and access. Additional discussion of the river corridor can be found in the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Plan.
**Park Site and Design**

To assist park planning, and to maximize access, efficiency, use, and the preservation of significant ecological areas, the City of St. Paul Park intends to establish goals for all parks within both the present and future park system. When the ideal park is not feasible the goals will be used as a guide to assist in analyzing trade-offs and maximizing opportunities.

**Visible & Accessible**

Visible and accessible parks maximize public safety and usability. Play areas should be in open areas to increase their safety and visibility. Interior paths should link any amenities to the parking areas, sidewalk, and trails. Large grade changes should be avoided between the street, trail, sidewalk, and park facilities.

**Adequate Frontage**

Parks that lack significant frontage and access to public are roads are to be avoided. Parks lacking adequate frontage are usually found behind houses in a subdivision and may create confusion of ownership and restrict adequate access. The park may also conflict with the surrounding residential land use when noise, lighting, and heavy usage occur. While, these types of park can be necessary to preserve natural areas, actions should be taken to minimize active parkland that lack adequate frontage.

**Central location**

Parks located in a geographically central location are important for increasing accessibility from multiple directions. This increase the number of residents it can serve. Focusing acquisition on key intersection or the center of neighborhood will accentuate and enhance utilization and potentially other key community facilities. Parks that are strategically located may also provide opportunities for expansion with adjacent development.

**Roadway Access**

Parks with community attractions should be located on higher classification roadways such as collector or arterial streets, as much as possible. In areas where it is not possible, parks should have direct routes from such roadways. Parking opportunities should be available on site or include availability nearby in public lots or on public streets. Only smaller minor parks should be located on lower classification roadways to avoid interfering with local residential traffic. It is important to have public trail and sidewalk access to the and within the park. This should be available to ensure that pedestrians and bicyclists have easy access to the site and all its amenities.

**Reflect Community Character**

St. Paul Park is a unique community, parks within the City should reflect the community’s character. Natural areas and views should be preserved by the park system. Equipment selection should reflect the City’s cultural heritage.

**Provide Facilities For All Ages**

The City’s park system shall provide recreational opportunities for users of all ages. The needs of the young and old alike shall be reflected in the system.
Reflect Community Character

St. Paul Park is a unique community, parks within the City should reflect the community’s character. Natural areas and views should be preserved by the park system. Equipment selection should reflect the City’s cultural heritage.

Provide Facilities For All Ages

The City’s park system shall provide recreational opportunities for users of all ages. The needs of the young and old alike shall be reflected in the system.

Park System Planning – Future Park Areas

This plan identifies a need to acquire parkland to continue to provide adequate amounts of parks in appropriate locations. Acquisition of land should be focused primarily on the provision of active parks and preserving natural areas.

The City has a goal of providing active parkland within 1/4th of a mile from all residential areas. Another goal is to provide about 10 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. The City will need to ensure that this amount of parkland is provided within this planning period.

The City seeks to provide adequate amounts of parkland for all residents. The majority of this parkland should be active parks in the form of neighborhood and community parks. Passive parks may, and currently do, constitute a portion of this amount but should be limited to prevent inadequate amounts of active parkland.

Despite a number of existing parks within the City, analysis shows that there are still some gaps in the park system. It is a common standard to have active parks within a quarter mile of most residential areas in a City. This is a standard related to a “walkable” distance for most people. A half-mile park distance is also acceptable, as that is a common biking standard. It is also important to consider providing parkland near employment areas for workers in the City.

Maps have been prepared showing the active parks and the corresponding quarter and half mile service areas. To begin the City was divided into four quadrants. The number of households and employment were calculated for each quadrant for today and 2040. All quadrants are expected to experience an increase in households, except for the Northwest and Southeast Quadrants. The two quadrants that will experience the greatest increase in households are the Southwest Quadrant. All quadrants will experience an increase in estimated jobs; the highest increase is expected in the Northeast Quadrant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Current Households</th>
<th>Current Estimated Jobs</th>
<th>2040 Projections Households</th>
<th>2040 Projections Estimated Jobs</th>
<th>Change Households</th>
<th>Change Estimated Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NE Quadrant</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>+127</td>
<td>+422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW Quadrant</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>1,120</td>
<td>1,156</td>
<td>1,454</td>
<td>+532</td>
<td>+334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Quadrant</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>+19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW Quadrant</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>+601</td>
<td>+38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Metropolitan Council, Northwest Associated Consultants*
### NW Quadrant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>2040 Projections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>1,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Jobs</td>
<td>1,120</td>
<td>1,454</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NE Quadrant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>2040 Projections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Jobs</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SW Quadrant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>2040 Projections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Jobs</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SE Quadrant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>2040 Projections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Jobs</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further study should be performed on the expected changing demographic of these areas to inform future park design and the equipment necessary to support the new population.

Next, an analysis was conducted showing how many people currently live within the quarter-mile park service areas and how the new future land use plan changes this. This analysis shows that most quarter-mile park service areas will grow slightly over the 2010-2040 period with the exception of Abdella and Sittlow which will have greater rates of growth:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>2040 Projections</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Households</td>
<td>Estimated Jobs</td>
<td>Households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sittlow</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axelrod</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dingle</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage-</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitbred</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Metropolitan Council, Northwest Associated Consultants*

Outside of the quarter mile service areas, in each direction, the following households and employment are found:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>2040 Projections</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Households</td>
<td>Estimated Jobs</td>
<td>Households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE Quadrant (Minus ¼ Mile Service Area)</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW Quadrant (Minus ¼ Mile Service Area)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Quadrant (Minus ¼ Mile Service Area)</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW Quadrant (Minus ¼ Mile Service Area)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Metropolitan Council, Northwest Associated Consultants*

Based on these factors and growth assumptions, it would seem likely that future active park areas should be discussed for the northeast, northwest, and southwest areas of the City. These areas could be in the general vicinity of the community garden, Riverside Park, Lions Levee Park, or in other suggested areas. Specific parcels are not necessary to be identified but rather general areas.
St. Paul Park Comprehensive Plan

Parks and Recreation

St. Paul Park 2040 Comprehensive Plan

City Parks

Special Sites

Future Park Search Area

Water Features

Quarter Mile Radius

Half Mile Radius

Passive Parks

Active Parks
The Sittlow Park area and the Southwest Quadrant are estimated to experience the largest increases in households. Sittlow Park is 1.5 acres and is classified as an active mini-park. To plan for increased demand of Sittlow Park the City will examine adding active components to Riverside Park. Any addition of an active component to Riverside Park or new parkland will follow the design guidelines outlined above.

Future Park Search Area 3 is located in the Southwest Quadrant and the planned Rivers Edge residential development. This development includes plans for active and passive park space that is in compliance with the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area guidelines. The City will continue to work the developer on this future project to ensure all guidelines and regulations are met.

St. Paul Park should explore adding active components near Lions Levee Park. The addition of active components to this park’s general area will help to achieve Future Park Search Area 1. The Northwest Quadrant is expected to experience an increase in households and jobs. Lions Levee Park is not centrally located in the Search Area. The use of a centrally located mini-park will be explored in this Search Area in the future.

The Northeast Quadrant is home to Future Park Search Area 2 and is expected to see large growth in estimated jobs. The community garden identified in the future park search area in the northeast quadrant could offer future active park space.

To the east of Gray Cloud Island Drive, Post-2040 development projections estimate a total of 779 new residential units. This area was not identified on the map as a Future Park Search Area, as a result of the current land agricultural land use. The City will work with the developer to ensure proper active park space is included in the development to ensure park needs of the new residents are met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2040</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>5,273</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>7,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acreage Needed</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Acres Needed</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>+7.3</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The City’s subdivision ordinance includes provisions (Sections 62-131 through 62-138) that require the dedication of land, or money in lieu of dedication, “as a prerequisite to approval of a plat, subdivision or development of any land” for use as parkland or the development of existing parks.

Parks are not just for residents but are also enjoyed by the employees that work in the City. The City recognizes that employees of commercial and industrial land uses place demands on parks, albeit to a lesser extent. Such uses should continue to participate in providing their share of the park dedication.
Trail System

The City of St. Paul Park proposes a trail and sidewalk system that provides for access throughout the community and connections between key areas. This system should provide corridors of access and connectivity that may be implemented by sidewalks, trails, bicycle lanes, and other such features.

Washington County has proposed a county-wide system of trails to provide connections to federal, state and county recreational facilities and to city trails. The Linear Park System Plan takes advantage of the county’s shape, which is long and narrow. The Washington Parkway is the north-south spine that follows the alignments of County State Aid Highways (CSAH) 15 and 19. In south Washington County, the Washington Parkway runs between Lake Elmo Park Reserve and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. A small portion of this trail runs through the northeast corner of St. Paul Park.

The Washington County trail is extended into St. Paul Park by the Mississippi River Trail. The Mississippi River Trail, or U.S. Bicycle Route 45, is roughly 620 miles long, beginning at Itasca State Park. This trail helps to connect St. Paul Park to the County trail system.

The City’s existing bike lane is shown on the following map. It follows Pullman Avenue, helping to connect Axelrod, Dingle, and Lions Levee Park. The existing trails provide a good base to continue to integrate active and safe transportation options, while also helping to increase the number of visitors to the City.

Connections Between City Parks, the City, and to the River

St. Paul Park has many park resources, broad rights-of-way on its collector streets and proximity to the Mississippi River. City parks, however, function independently of each other, which has the potential of precluding certain types of recreational opportunities (as an example, an organized bike outing of children from the Stevens Ridge neighborhood, leaving from Heritage Park, to study wildlife habitat at Riverside Park). In addition, the only way to access the parks currently is by vehicle. There are virtually no sidewalks in the city and portions of the street rights-of-way are not designated for bicycles. Park usage, recreational activities, and economic development will be enhanced and expanded by connecting the largest city parks to each other with trails for pedestrians and bicyclists, to the river, and commercial areas to residences.

St. Paul Park is located in the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area and Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. This area is overseen by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and National Park Service. The requirements and guidelines of this area emphasize the importance of trails and parks. Open space, parks, and trails add to the quality of a community, increase public health and public access to the river, and foster a sense of stewardship. The City has proposed a bike and pedestrian trail to connect Lions’ Levee Park and Riverside Park, and the rest of the community, including a connection with the County trail.
City Parks and Trails
St. Paul Park
2040 Comprehensive Plan

Parks
- Special Sites
- Active Parks
- Passive Parks

Trails
- Sidewalk
- Existing Bike Lane
- Mississippi River Trail Route
- Existing County Trail
- Future City Bike and Pedestrian Connections

St. Paul Park Comprehensive Plan 146 Parks and Recreation
The County Trail and the Mississippi River Trail both run through St. Paul Park. By increasing connections from these trails to the rest of the St. Paul Park community can help to increase tourism and economic development. The proposed trail system would help to link these trails to St. Paul Park’s downtown to increase traffic to its businesses. Trails are just one element of a larger visitor experience, and the City should explore other opportunities to draw its diverse users to explore the City.

Sidewalks and bike trails offer a healthier alternative to driving. An increase in sidewalks and bike trail connections to various sectors of the City could result in increased public health from an increase in physical activity.

The City trail map depicts both the existing and proposed trail, sidewalk, and bike lane systems which will run throughout St. Paul Park. These trail systems will not only help to better connect the cities park system, but will help connect residents with the city’s downtown, or to areas where new development is occurring.

### Parks And Recreation Goals And Policies

**St. Paul’s goals for parks and recreation by 2040:**

**Goal:** Safe and well-maintained parks, trails and recreation facilities for all residents.

**Policies:**

- Continue the on-going maintenance program for parks and recreation facilities.
- Continue the capital improvement program for parks and recreation facilities.
- Provide facilities for all ages in the park system.

**Goal:** Ensure future and current parkland is appropriate for both the community and neighborhoods they serve.

**Policies:**

- Establish minimum standards for appropriate parkland for the community, neighborhood, mini, and subdivision parks based on design guidelines outlines in this chapter.
- Create a community outreach and engagement program to ensure parks are meeting the needs of the City’s residents and reflect the character of the City.
- Identify opportunities for existing and new park spaces to appeal to a variety of users by offering varying landscapes (highly maintained to more natural) and varying activities (active to passive).
- Properly categorize all parks to better plan for appropriate uses.
- Provide Recreational opportunities that are “life-cycle” to meet the needs of all residents.

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**Community Designation**

The Metropolitan Council has designated St. Paul Park as an “emerging suburban edge” community. This designation includes specific policy designations that relate to parks and recreation.

- Align land use, development patterns, and infrastructure to make the best use of public and private investment.
- Conserve, restore, and protect the region’s natural resources to ensure their ongoing availability, to support public health, and to maintain a high quality of life.
- Sustain and improve a multi modal transportation system to support regional growth, maintain regional economic competitiveness, and provide choice and reliability for the system’s users.
**Goal:** Create a park and trail system that is efficient, effective, and serves the purpose for which it is intended.

**Policies:**
- Continue to identify bicycle routes with striping and road signs and provide bicycle racks at appropriate locations.
- Establish better connection between the City’s parks, commercial area, key community assets, and the Mississippi River.
- Identify opportunities for additional park spaces in underserved areas of the city.
- Establish connections between Riverside Park and passive river open space to the south.

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**Goal:** Provide for open space and passive parks in areas to buffer and protect sensitive natural resources and low density residential neighborhoods.

**Policies:**
- Establish connections between Riverside Park and passive river open space to the south.
- Use the Natural Resources Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan to help identify areas of significant ecological value for preservation.

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**Goal:** Increase the overall ecological and public health of St. Paul Park through its park system.

**Policies:**
- Utilize native plant materials for park landscaping and preserve or plant trees to provide natural cover.
- Examine the creation of City sponsored educational opportunities in the park including: nature walks, invasive and native plant identification, birding, etc.

### Implementation Actions

- Create a detailed inventory of existing park equipment, its installation date, and condition to project future replacement.
- Review all existing parks for expansion, enhancement, and improvement.
- Establish detailed capital improvement plans with short and long term windows.
- Plan for future improvements for all users and place in appropriate parks.
- Create a forum for residents to communicate with the City’s Park Commission on park needs and ideas.
- Establish firm sidewalk, trail, and bicycle routes connecting parks, neighborhoods, Downtown, and the Mississippi River.
- Ensure new parkland meets the goals of this chapter through the subdivision review process.
- Update park dedication fees.