

City of Annandale, MN

Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan

July 2011



Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan

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Funding Provided by:



Prepared by:
Northwest Associated Consultants, Inc.

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
SECTION TWO: PARK AND TRAIL PLANNING PRINCIPLES	2
Vision Statement	2
Guiding Principles	2
SECTION THREE: PARK AND TRAIL CLASSIFICATION	4
Regional Parks	4
Community Parks	4
Neighborhood Parks	5
Greenways and Trails	5
Special Use Areas/Open Space	6
SECTION FOUR: EXISTING SYSTEM INVENTORY	7
Regional Parks	7
Community Parks	7
Neighborhood Parks	7
Greenways and Trails	7
Special Use Areas/Open Space	7
Annandale Municipal Park	9
Big Woods Park	10
Willow Park	11
Crow Woods Park	12
Memorial Park	13
Trails and Greenways	14
SECTION FIVE: COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT	15
Population and Demographics	15
Land Use Development Patterns	16
Natural Resource Inventory	16
Park System Assessment of Need	20
SECTION SIX: FUTURE PARK, TRAIL AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING	21
Future Park Classification	22
Park Search Areas	23
Park Site Selection Criteria	26
Trails, Greenways and Open Space Planning	27
Trails	28
Trail, Greenway, and Open Space Classification	28
Trail Location and Development Criteria	31
Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation	32
Annandale Athletic Facility	35

SECTION SEVEN: IMPLEMENTATION 37
 Implementation Strategies 37
 Funding Mechanisms 38
 Park Dedication 40

List of Maps:

Existing Parks and Trails 8
Land Use Plan 18
Natural Resource Inventory 19
Park Search Areas 25
Proposed Parks 33
Future Park and Trail Plan 34
Annandale Athletic Facility Master Plan 36

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

The City of Annandale Park, Trail, and Open Space Plan is intended to set forth a vision of a fully developed park, trail, and open space facility plan. This vision is based on the natural and historic characteristics of the community, existing park and trail facilities, and the City's projected needs for the future. The objective of the plan is to establish future park, trail, and open space priorities that will work with existing recreational investments and infrastructure to establish a comprehensive park and recreation system that efficiently serves the City of Annandale well into the future.

The Plan is being funded through a grant received from LiveWright, a program of Wright County Human Services, distributing the proceeds of a grant from the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), a program of the State of Minnesota. The grants were distributed with the intent of facilitating improvements to healthy lifestyles. For Annandale, the grant funds are helping the community focus on opportunities to recreation, and recreation access in and around the Annandale area.

The City of Annandale completed a Land Use Plan update in 2005 that projected future growth areas and development parameters for the near term. This Park, Trail, and Open Space Plan is intended to work in conjunction with future land uses and the future growth areas and anticipate a full build-out of recreational infrastructure based on the expanded population of the City. As the growth areas are developed, the City needs to keep in mind future park and recreation needs as identified within this planning document.

Through the proactive implementation of these goals and plans, the City of Annandale will be able to establish a high-quality, comprehensive network of recreational spaces that contribute to the quality of life within the community, promote healthy lifestyles, and preserve and build the community's overall identity.



SECTION TWO: PARK AND TRAIL PLANNING PRINCIPLES

This vision serves as the statement of purpose for the Annandale Park, Trail, and Open Space Plan. The vision statement summarizes the purpose behind the overall Park, Trail and Open Space Plan and represents the City's desires and intentions. The guiding principles provide further direction and clarification to the vision. The following vision statement and guiding principles are intended to:

- Provide a shared understanding of community goals
- Provide a focus towards the future
- Maintain a commitment to the comprehensive system
- Create guidance for reviewing projects and proposals

Vision Statement

The City of Annandale is seeking to integrate parks, trails, and key natural preservation areas into a comprehensive, cohesive, and balanced system. This system will provide recreational opportunities for all residents and preserve the historic cultural and natural character of the City.

Guiding Principles

From the vision that is being articulated, guiding principles provide a greater degree of specificity. The City of Annandale establishes the following as its guiding principles:

- **Providing continuity and linkages between public parks, open spaces, residences, and businesses.** The City is expecting that the entirety of the community be interconnected through the park system and trail plan.
- **Provide for facilities that will serve the community in both short and long terms.** The City expects to prioritize recreational needs of the community in concert with all providers of recreation users, facilities, and programs.
- **Allowing reasonable flexibility on final trail routes, park locations, and plan implementation strategies.** Nothing in the plan is intended to be set in stone. If a better option to meet the same goal is available, the City may give it consideration.
- **Providing a range of choices for system users.** The Park, Open Space, and Trail Plan is not just for certain specific system users or interest

groups. The City will strive to provide reasonable recreational opportunities for all residents.

- **Utilizing the system to assist in preserving the natural and historic nature of the community.** When creating the system, a priority will be placed on including areas that are found to be of significance to the community.

SECTION THREE: PARK AND TRAIL CLASSIFICATION

Prior to cataloging existing amenities and identifying future needs, it is important for the City to establish and define the expectations for parks and trails. Historically, Annandale has already established a variety of different types of parks. In order to assess existing parks and future park and open space needs, a uniform classification system is established in this Plan. The classification system aids in planning for future needs by assigning various recreational elements based on the most common users of each facility. The following is a brief description of each classification category.

Regional Parks

Regional parks serve a population that is often well beyond the community boundaries. The most common providers of regional parks are the County and State. For Annandale, planning for regional park use primarily entails ensuring that connections can be made to such facilities, although occasionally, partnering with other levels of government can lead to certain efficiencies in facility planning and, occasionally, programming.

Community Parks

These parks serve a population that is typically community or area-wide. They feature facilities that appeal to a broad spectrum of users and provide access to users that will commonly include a wide variety of transportation options, including pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile. These facilities often preserve open space and are sized to handle large community gatherings and festivals. Facilities are often related to the park's natural resource base. The park size is based on function and natural resources available and usually range up to 50 acres or more.

Community playfields are targeted towards organized adult and youth play on a city or region-wide basis. Most users will come from beyond a walking or biking range and thus require adequate parking facilities. Such parks may contain baseball and softball fields, soccer/football



fields, tennis courts, skating rinks, and other large field sport activities. These facilities are intensely used and often require irrigation and lighting to extend

their use and meet public demands. These facilities should be located with access to major roadways. Joint use with school facilities is encouraged to share cost and maintenance needs.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are the fundamental unit of the park and open space system and serve as the recreational focus of neighborhoods. They are intended to serve residents in an area within a ¼ to ½ mile radius of the park, assuming a typical development density of approximately three units per acre. Access to neighborhood parks should be uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers. Neighborhood parks are usually between 5 and 10 acres in size and emphasize informal active and passive recreation.



In certain instances, smaller than standard facilities may serve special neighborhoods due to geographic limitations. These areas are typically highly individual facilities based upon the nature of the site and the needs of the immediate population. For example, a neighborhood mini-park may be considered for a small area isolate from other neighborhoods by major roadways.

Greenways and Trails

These are a linear interconnected system used to connect system components together in order to form a continuous park environment. Greenways also serve to preserve sensitive natural areas that are often linear in nature. These include waterways, wetland systems, and drainage patterns, as well as habitat movement corridors and other natural features such as bluff lines. Greenways serve multiple functions. They can contain trails and can also be used to buffer incompatible uses such as major roads from residential areas.



Greenways may be located on private land yet serve a public function through the use of easements or other forms of management.

Trails have both a transportation role in the community, as well as a separate recreational role. Trail use has increased dramatically over the past several years as residents, employees of local business, and even visitors seek walking, running, and bicycling opportunities, regardless of their link to a specific location. As a result, trail planning that provides for looped routing is important for those users looking for a trail experience that is not destination-specific.

Special Use Areas and Open Space

This “catch-all” category identifies unique spaces in the community that provide spaces outside of the typical categories listed above. In Annandale, these spaces include the Memorial Park, the Minnesota Pioneer Park, as well as golf courses and other private facilities. It could also serve the needs



of preserving significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, or special view sheds. Nature centers, arboretums, and gardens are additional examples. The location and sizes of these areas depends on resource availability, local interest, and opportunity.

SECTION FOUR: EXISTING SYSTEM INVENTORY

Regional Parks

Although not within the City's boundaries, the Clearwater/Pleasant Regional Park, a part of Wright County's parks system, is located on the opposite shoreline of Pleasant Lake from Annandale, and provides lake access to both Pleasant and Clearwater Lakes. The park contains 210 acres, including a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities related to the lakes, including fishing pier, boat launch, picnic shelter, swimming beach, playground, and disc golf. The park includes just over a mile of paved trail, and connects to another half mile of paved trail extending west along County Highway 39. Wright County maintains the park, and additional information on the facility can be found on the county's website.

Community Parks

Annandale has two parks that would meet the typical definition of Community Parks – the Annandale Municipal Park on Oak Avenue North along the south shore of Pleasant Lake, and Big Woods Park, an area of open space, woods, and municipal public works use south of Highway 55 along South Poplar Lane.

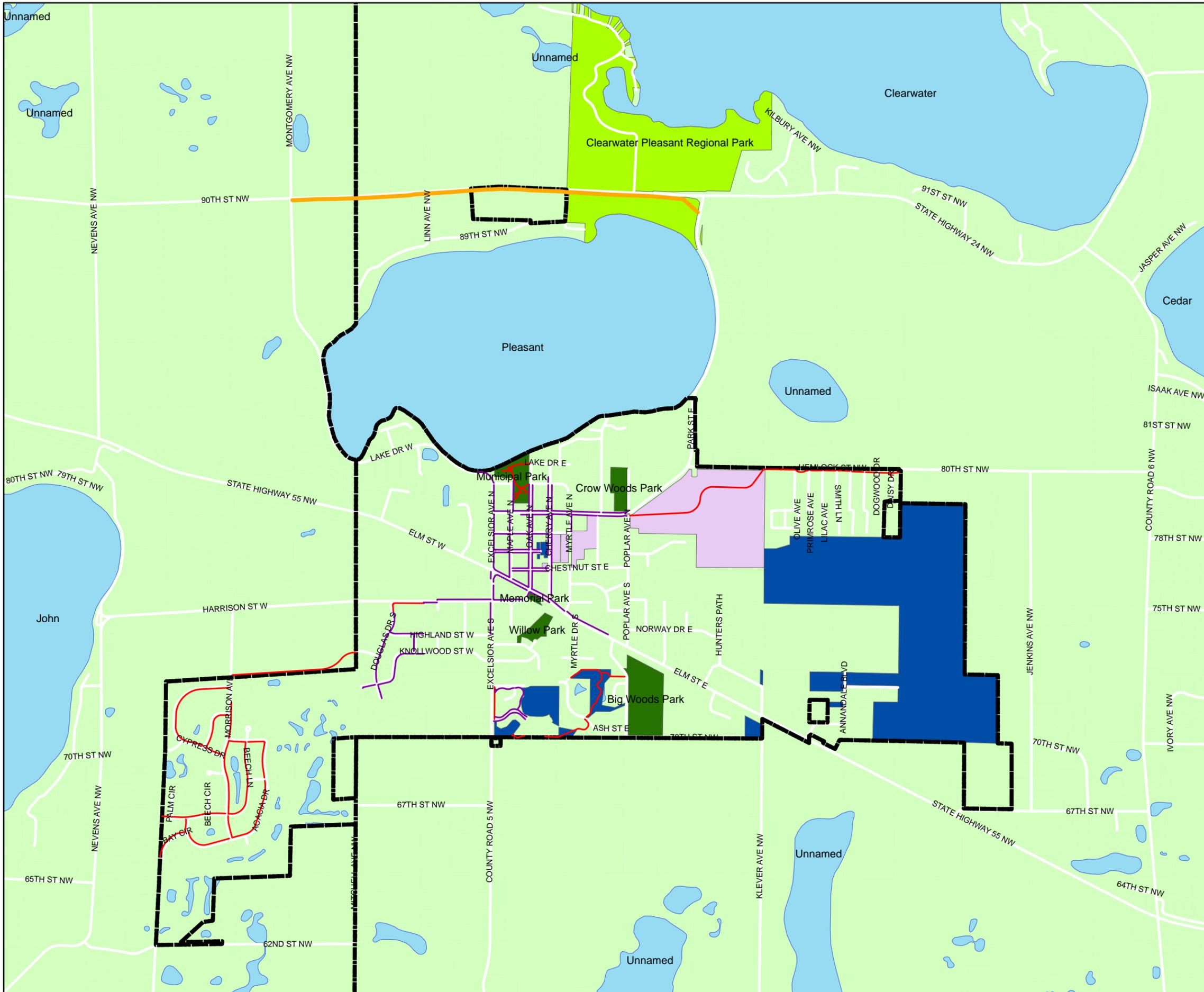
It is not uncommon that Community Parks also serve a neighborhood park role for the neighborhood that surrounds them, depending upon the facilities on the property. This is especially the case for the Municipal Park, given its location and facilities.

Neighborhood Parks

Two parks serve as neighborhood parks for the community. Willow Park lies south of Highway 55 with frontage along Willow Street and Willow Circle. Crow Woods Park across from the school campus along Highway 24 also serves a neighborhood park role, although it is largely undeveloped.

Special Use Parks and Open Space

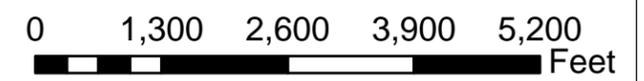
There are a number of open space facilities in the community that serve a public or quasi-public role in open space, recreation, or other role. One of these is a municipal facility – Memorial Park along Highway 55 at Oak Avenue. Others include school district recreation facilities along Highway 24, local privately operated golf courses, and a private facility called Minnesota Pioneer Park, a non-profit museum providing examples of historical buildings and lifestyles from early settlement days.



Park and Trail Plan

Existing Parks & Trails

-  Existing Sidewalk
-  Existing Trail
-  Wright County Path
-  City Parks
-  Regional/County Parks
-  School Property
-  City Property
-  Water
-  City/Township Boundaries



Sources: City of Annandale, Wright County, Bolton & Menk, & NAC, Inc.
 Map Date: February 7, 2011.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Annandale Municipal Park

Between downtown Annandale and the south shore of Pleasant Lake, the Municipal Park serves as a multiple use park facility for the entire community, and for some events, much of central and western Wright County. Municipal Park is a 7 acre facility with an enclosed Park Pavilion, picnic shelters, swimming beach, fishing pier, lighted youth baseball field, beach house, and trails throughout the park.

The park hosts the City’s annual Fourth of July celebration and fireworks, and has parking lots accessible from County Highway 5 and from Maple Avenue North.



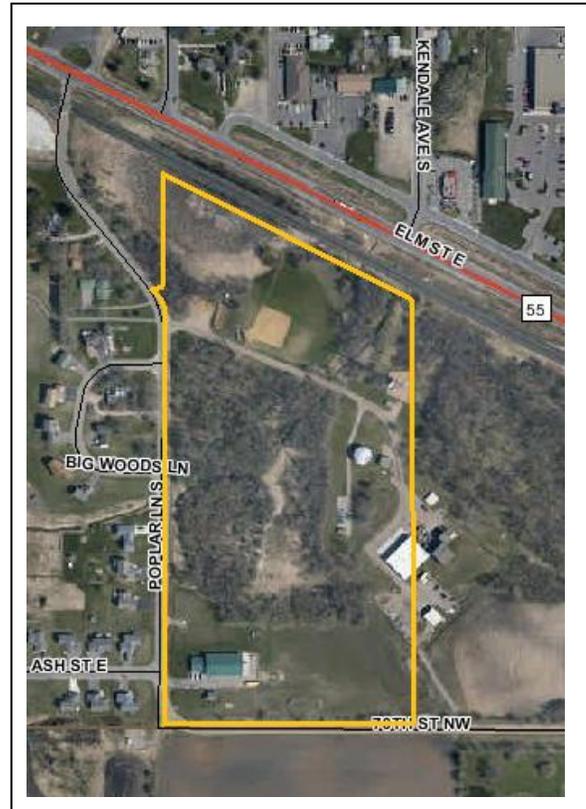
Park Size	Approximately 7 acres	
Location	330 – 400 Oak Avenue North	
Park Description	Municipal Park is a regional park that is planned to provide the entire Annandale community, as well as people from neighboring communities, with an area for many different types of activities. It is used annually for the 4th of July celebration. The northern most area of the park contains Pleasant Lake beach and a fishing dock and trail. The rest of the Park contains a highly used Park pavilion, picnic areas and a softball field.	
Park History	This parkland was acquired in various tracts from various owners over a period of years. Chapter 13.01 of the 1956 City Code confirms the establishment of this area as Annandale Public Park.	
Facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beach 2. Beach house 3. Playground 4. Fishing pier 5. Enclosed Park Pavilion 6. Parking lots 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Picnic shelters and grills 8. Restrooms 9. Boat Launch 10. Trails 11. Basketball court 12. Storage building 13. Public art
Future Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General maintenance of existing land and equipment. 2. Encourage more use of beach house through regular open hours and possible addition of lifeguards in partnership with Community Education. 	

Big Woods Park

Big Woods Park combines an active ballfield facility used for youth baseball, an area of open space dominated by natural woods, and municipal public works and public safety training facilities on a 23 acre parcel.

The youth baseball field occupies the northern-most portion of the park just south of the Canadian Pacific rail line and Highway 55, while public works and public safety facilities occupy much of the south and east portions of the property. The woodland area lies along Poplar Lane South occupying about eight acres of the parcel.

An informal gravel parking area serves the ballfield area. The park is accessible via Poplar Lane South across the railroad tracks to an intersection with Highway 55.



Park Size	23.48 acre total site includes water plant and Annandale Training Center. Approximately 16 acres used for park area, or currently preserved as natural open space.	
Location	541 Ash Street East	
Park Description	Big Woods is located near the City's ground water storage and wells. It contains a small ball field used mainly by youth baseball and a batting cage was added in 2001. Due to the residential growth in the City's south side and the addition of trail way connections to this Park, its use could increase in coming years, but it has not been formally dedicated as parkland.	
Park History	Acquired from Viola Ridgway Estate by Contract for Deed in 1966.	
Facilities	1. Ball field 2. Batting cage 3. Bleachers	4. Storage building 5. Compost site 6. Gravel parking
Future Goals	1. General maintenance of the land and ball field. 2. Based upon the City's projected growth on the south side, this land should continue to be used as park space until other City facilities need to expand on this site or until other parkland is acquired on the City's south side.	

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Willow Park

Willow Park serves the neighborhood south of Highway 55 near the Highway 55 crossing at Harrison Street/Oak Avenue. This park has limited street frontage along Willow Circle, and includes a parking area accessed from Willow Lane.

The park itself includes a playground and an ice skating. During the warmer seasons, the skating rink area provides a limited amount of open playfield area.



Park Size	3.8 acres
Location	26 Willow Circle
Park Description	Willow Park is a small community park primarily used for ice skating in the winter.
Park History	Dedicated parkland as part of Oak Knoll Second Addition. Transfer of the rest of the land known as Willow Park was From Freiberg and Smith in 1978 and Casselius in 1982.
Facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ice skating rink 2. Picnic tables with grills 3. Restrooms 4. Basketball Court 5. Playground equipment
Future Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the existing land and ice rink in the winter. 2. Possible addition of benches.

Crow Woods Park

Crow Woods Park is a joint-use property that serves both for park purposes and the City’s Fire Station site.

The Park facilities lie to the north portion of the property, and have difficult visibility and access. The property is split by a small drainage way.



Park Size	6.5 acre total site includes a fire hall along Highway 24 as well as a fire station and public works storage. Approximately 2.3 acres is available for park use.
Location	350 Poplar Avenue North
Park Description	The area referred to as Crow Woods Park is rarely used due to its location behind the fire station and former public works garage and none of this property has ever been officially dedicated as parkland.
Park History	This area was acquired in 1941 from School District 71.
Facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Green space 2. Picnic tables 3. Basketball court 4. Horseshoe pit 5. Volleyball court
Future Goals	1. Regular maintenance/clean up of ditch area.

SPECIAL USE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Memorial Park

This special use facility lies between Highway 55 and the Canadian Pacific rail line and provides space for reflection and also serves as an entry marker for the downtown area.

The park includes seating and a short walking trail that connects to the sidewalks in the area along Highway 55 and Harrison Street, as well as fountains and memorial markers, landscaping, and an information site maintained by the Chamber of Commerce.



Park Size	Approximately 1 acre
Location	30 Elm Street East at the intersection of Highway 55 and 24.
Park Description	Memorial Park is a community beautification area situated on Highway 55 at its intersection with Highway 24 – truly the heart of downtown. There is a paved trail through the park that connects to sidewalk along Highway 55.
Park History	Acquired from CP Rail in 1999 using funds donated by Marvin and Bernice Marohn, David and Judy Ferrell and Annandale State Bank. Subsequent park improvements were completed by the Lions Club.
Facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recreation trail connected to sidewalk. 2. Veterans Memorial 3. Fountain 4. Chamber of Commerce Information Kiosk 5. Flowers and other plantings 6. Benches 7. Parking area
Future Goals	Consider formally dedicating this as parkland to preserve its use.

Other Special Use facilities in and near the community include the Minnesota Pioneer Park, Southbrook Golf Club, Whispering Pines Golf Course, and the following athletic field facilities at the Annandale Schools campus:

- High School: 2 baseball fields, 1 softball field, 1 football field and bleachers, track and field area, 1 practice football/open area
- Middle School: Tennis courts (poor shape), 1 baseball field/open space
- Elem. School: 3 undersized baseball fields/open space and 2 playgrounds
- NOTE: With the new elementary school, the 3 baseball fields will be eliminated.

TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

The City has been developing a system of trails and sidewalks providing pedestrian and bicycle recreation. This system is extensive in the older portions of the community, while in newer areas, the trail system is being built as development occurs, leaving some gaps in pedestrian and bike access. Currently, the City has approximately six miles of local sidewalk, and 4.8 miles of trail constructed.

The Existing Park and Trails map on the following page identifies the extent of the current system. Three primary issues are raised by the current system. First is connectivity, and being able to provide a looped trail system that creates an opportunity to use the trails for recreation. Second is related to the first, and relates to crossing the rail line and the highway. The City has been pursuing grant funds to improve crossings, and this will continue to be an issue for the community as park facilities development, as and growth occurs on both sides of the barrier.

The third issue is the hierarchy of trail use. In some areas, trail development serves as a substitute for sidewalks. This can create an issue with responsibilities for trail and sidewalk maintenance, particularly with regard to the clearing of snow. This plan deals with these issues in later sections, through both policy and plan development.

SECTION FIVE: COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The demand for parks and recreation in a community is closely linked to population. A review of the City’s existing and projected population is an important factor in determining current and future park needs.

Population and Demographics

Annandale will likely see significant growth over the next 10 to 20 years. The 2010 US Census population was 3,228 persons with 1338 occupied households for an average household size of 2.41. In 2009, Wright County conducted an extensive update to its Comprehensive Plan, preparing population forecasts for each of the cities and townships in the northwest part of the County, including Annandale.

Figure 5.1 - Population Projection

Year	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population	2,684	3,228	3,855	4,279	4,658	5,091
Housing Units	1,098	1,410	1,685	1,870	2,040	2,225

Source: 2010 data – U.S. Census
 Others – Wright County Comprehensive Plan – NW Quadrant

For the ten year period from 2010 to 2020, the projections estimate an increase of 1,051 persons. At 2.4 persons per household, this will result in an increase of approximately 460 housing units, including a typical vacancy rate. At common densities for single family homes, the City may be expected to absorb approximately 210 acres of land over this 10 year period. From 2020 to 2030, another 812 persons are forecast, adding another 355 housing units. Thus, by 2030, an additional 160 acres of land is expected to be absorbed, for a total increase of 1,863 additional persons, 815 housing units, and approximately 370 acres of new residential land.

This plan is designed to account for existing demand on the park system, then provide a basis for planning for future growth as forecast above. With projections, it is always necessary to understand that many factors can impact a localized projection such as this one. Therefore, the dates are speculative at best. However, the Plan should reflect a realistic vision of the park system demand when these population and housing benchmarks are reached, whenever that occurs.

When planning park facilities, it is important to keep in mind that neighborhoods go through life cycles. A new neighborhood with young families will demand playground facilities, but as those children age, sports fields, courts, and trails for bicycling may become more important to that same neighborhood. Therefore, the park system should have flexible open areas with enough space for a range of uses so parks can be adapted as the neighborhood ages and recreation trends shift.

Land Use Development Patterns

In addition to understanding how many people the park system will be required to serve, it is also important to know also where those people will be living. Development in Annandale is guided by the Future Land Use Plan in the City's Land Use Plan which was prepared in 2005.

Much of the community's growth in the past ten years has been located to the south of the Highway 55 / CP rail corridor. With the school campus and most of the commercial and industrial business located north of the corridor, challenges exist in providing access to park uses for new residential, and also in developing corridor crossing locations between the two halves of the community.

As will be discussed later in this document, the development of an intensive athletic facility near the school site will concentrate the need to provide both crossing opportunities and neighborhood park opportunities on the south side. In addition, providing continuous trail access throughout this area will help connect south side neighborhoods to park locations, as well as ensure that reasonable pedestrian and bicycle options exist to the proposed corridor crossing.

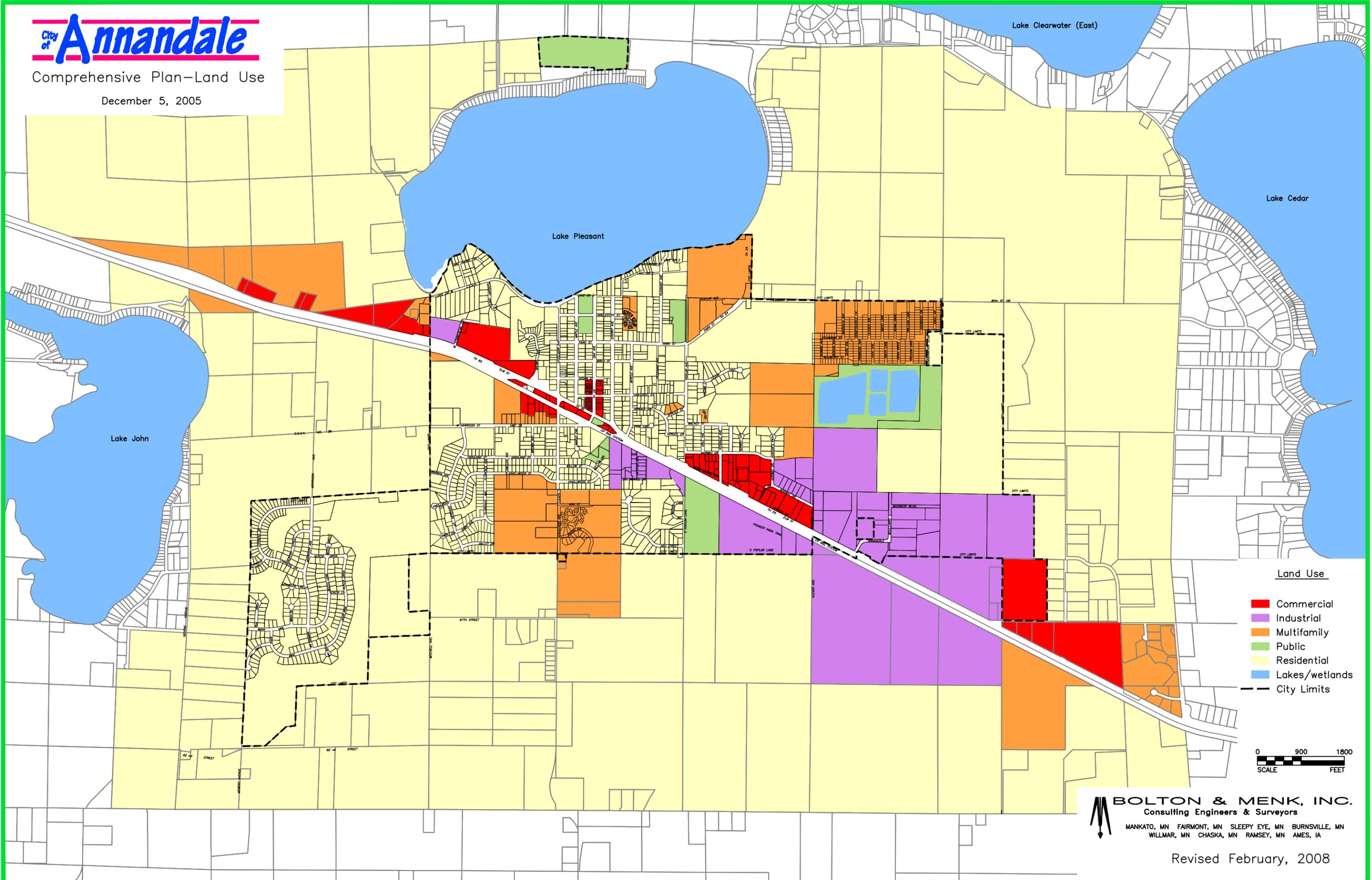
On the north side of the corridor, an extensive sidewalk system is in place in most areas, although making connections to crossing locations will be important, as will development of access to new athletic facilities and the school campus.

Natural Resource Inventory

A generalized land cover classification analysis was conducted to analyze vegetative land cover, ecological resources, and notable physical land characteristics of the City, the future growth area, and vicinity. Inventory information was gathered from various sources, compiled, and categorized. The Natural Resource Inventory Map depicts where areas of significance are located. These areas include several categories of native or ecologically valuable vegetative types, regional streams, wetlands, hydric soils, and lands with steep slopes. These types of physical and ecological resources serve to

give the City and its environs a unique natural context that serves as the basis of any preservation efforts.

A common interest in park and trail planning is the provision of more natural open space for wildlife viewing and other passive recreation. The natural resource inventory provides a guide for the location of these opportunities which can be designed to complement the development of the trail system.



- Land Use**
- Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Multifamily
 - Public
 - Residential
 - Lakes/wetlands
 - City Limits

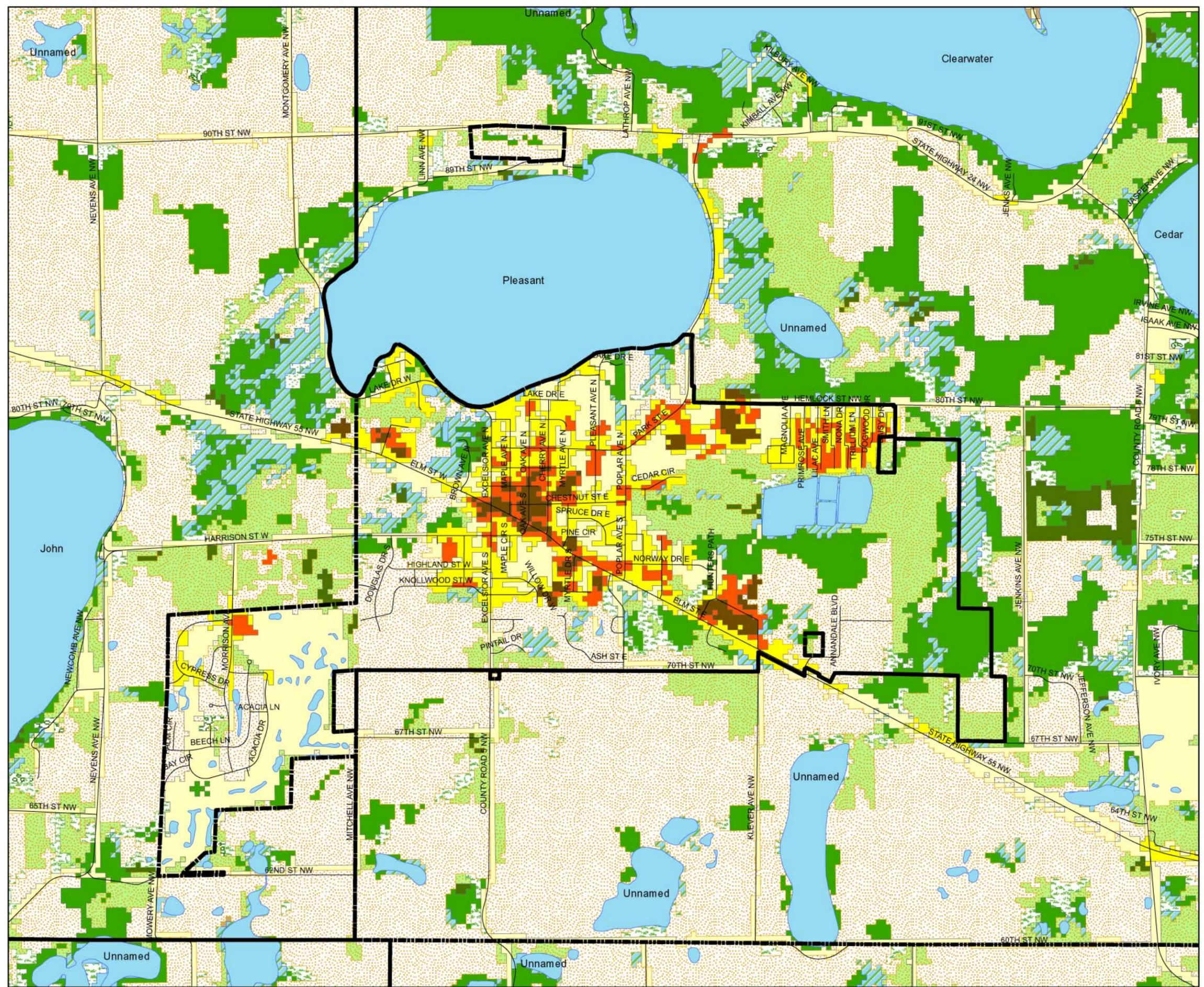


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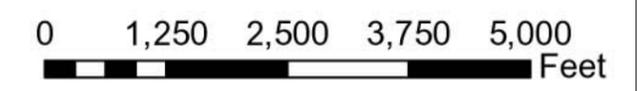
Revised February, 2008

Park and Trail Plan

Natural Resource Inventory



- Land Cover Classification**
- Open Water
 - Developed, Open Space
 - Developed, Low Intensity
 - Developed, Medium Intensity
 - Developed, High Intensity
 - Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay)
 - Deciduous Forest
 - Evergreen Forest
 - Mixed Forest
 - Shrub/Scrub
 - Grassland/Herbaceous
 - Pasture/Hay
 - Cultivated Crops
 - Woody Wetlands
 - Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands
 - City/Township Boundaries



Sources: City of Annandale, Wright County, Bolton & Menk, & NAC, Inc.
 Map Date: February 2011.

Park System Assessment of Need

A common method for evaluating the need for active park space is to apply the population ratio standard for active park space. This standard, expressed as acreage per 1000 population, provides a general guideline for determining current and future needs. The standards shown in the table below are based on the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) data.

An alternative calculation is based on the observed developed acreage of parkland in a complete region. In the Twin Cities, the amount of local and community park as a percentage of developed land is approximately 12.5%. As a ratio to population in the metro area, there are 38 acres of local and community park land per 1,000 persons. When factoring in regional parkland as well, there are 57 acres of total parkland in the Twin Cities seven county area per 1,000 population.

Currently in Annandale, there are a total of approximately 30 acres of municipal parkland, not including lands utilized for public works or public safety. The City's total current acreage is approximately 1,899 acres yielding just 1.6% of the city as local parkland. As noted previously, the 2010 population was 3,228.

The table below projects a growth in overall park acquisition, beginning with currently available City land, with a long-term strategy of increasing land area, faster than the pace of population growth. The objective would be to achieve a park land ratio more representative of the Twin Cities benchmark.

Figure 5.2 - Projected Parkland Demand

	2010	2012	2020	2030
Population	3,228	3,300	4,279	5,091
Projected Parkland Acreage	30	123	163	193
City Acreage	1,899	1,899	2,170	2,380
Parkland Acreage Percentage	1.6%	6.5%	7.5%	8.1%
Additional Park Needs per 1,000		+93	+40	+30

In this table, we have projected an acreage for developed area, based on an incremental increase in the City's size in all land use categories, in addition to the residential absorption previously forecast.

The last row indicates the additional acreage necessary to reach the benchmarks cited as the metropolitan area average for local parkland. Clearly, the City may choose to target a different number – these are provided here for comparison and measurement.

SECTION SIX: FUTURE PARK, TRAIL, AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING

This section is intended to provide guidance to City Officials, developers, and residents for continued development of the City's park and trail system. Search areas for future park facilities have been identified based upon the growth areas outlined by the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Plan projects park and trail development needs through the City's future growth area. It must be emphasized that the future park search areas identified do not target specific properties. Instead, the search areas identify general areas of acquisition toward the goal of providing the City with the ability to reserve land from development as it becomes available.

The City holds as a goal the provision of 12.5% of the City's land area for park, trail, and open space uses. Much of the current parkland "deficit" identified in the needs assessment would be accommodated by the development of the much-discussed Annandale Athletic Facility, an 80 acre parcel owned by the City adjacent to the school district campus in the northeast portion of the community. The development of this facility is supported by a number of factors. These include the following:

- Community recreation officials, both public and private, have identified a significant shortage in active recreational field locations. This shortage impacts game scheduling and practice opportunities.
- The field shortage also raised issues that interfere with club or private association sports leagues, since much of the field availability is subject to school scheduling.
- The school district itself has identified a shortage of field space for its own programming, including conflicts between practice areas and times, as well as between different sports.
- The community has identified the inability to offer tournament play, including regional school tournament play, due to the lack of field space.
- The community has identified the inability to offer certain sports at all, requiring interested participants to enroll in other communities (including soccer, lacrosse, and others).
- Parks and recreation complexes have a positive effect on economic development, through both the attraction of visitors and in encouraging growth in housing and commerce.

Trail development is addressed somewhat differently, in that generalized future trail corridors have been identified to both augment the current system, and to

reserve the potential for preservation as the community grows. The Proposed Trails Map identifies important natural corridors and trail segments that the City believes should be constructed in order to link community facilities to regional facilities, open space systems, and trails that exist or are being planned in adjacent communities and townships.

The basic concept of the Proposed Trails Map is to provide for a pedestrian and bicycle transportation network that connects to important recreational and social centers in the community. The trail element of the plan also seeks to provide intra-community connections with regional trail corridors provided by other agencies and jurisdictions. As noted previously in this regard, Wright County is currently completing an extensive trail planning effort.

In addition to the primary trail corridors that follow street rights-of-way, overland trail segments are proposed which serve two purposes. First, these segments provide more direct access to neighborhoods or destinations and secondly, overland trails may serve a dual purpose as linear parks through areas of high natural amenities and/or as a transportation function. Precise trail locations may shift based on site conditions or available alternatives.

Future Park Classification

The park classification system is intended to serve as a guide to planning, not a specific blueprint. The City of Annandale recognizes the importance of establishing and using park and recreation standards to:

1. Define minimum acceptable facilities for citizens of the community;
2. Establish guidelines to determine land requirements for various kinds of park and recreation areas and facilities;
3. Establish a basis for relating recreational needs to spatial analysis within a community-wide recreation system; and
4. Utilize the Park and Trail Plan as a means to program the demand for parks and open space within the overall land use pattern of the City.

The standards are to be coupled with conventional wisdom and judgment relating to the particular situation to which they are applied and specific local needs. Occasionally, more than one component may occur within the same site, particularly with regard to a specialized use within a larger park. The table below identifies the characteristics of the future community and neighborhood parks.

Figure 6.1: Future Park Characteristics

Future Community Parks	
Use	Designated area of diverse environmental characteristics which may include areas suited to intense recreational facilities such as athletic complexes as well as passive type areas, depends largely upon the site location, suitability and community need
Service Area	City wide
Population Served	All ages, entire community
Desirable Size	40 – 80+ acres
Acres/1,000 Population	20-25 acres
Site Characteristics	Provides for a combination of intensive and non-intensive development ranging from play equipment to trails, may include natural features, such as water bodies or forested land, must include support elements such as rest rooms, drinking water, parking and lighting. Community playfields including organized sports facilities, athletic complex including lighting, court and field games, community center or indoor recreation facility, swimming pool, ice rink, capacity for special events, must include support elements such as restrooms, drinking water, parking and lighting.
Future Neighborhood Parks	
Use	Designated active and passive recreation areas
Service Area	Large neighborhood sizes of up to 5,000 persons within ¼ to ½ mile radius
Population Served	Emphasis upon ages 5 through 15
Desirable Size	5-10 acres
Acres/1,000 Population	10-15 acres
Site Characteristics	Suited for multi-use recreation development, easily accessible to neighborhood population, geographically centered with safe walking and bike access, may include school facilities open space for spontaneous play, play areas for both pre-school and school-age children, multiple use paved areas, limited field games, small court games, ice rinks, playground equipment, within easy walking/biking distance

Park Search Areas

The Park Search Area Map indicates the location of existing parks with ¼ mile service areas. Also, depicted are future park search areas within the City’s designated growth areas, also with ¼ mile spacing. The dashed circles represent areas that will need neighborhood parks as the areas develop into

urban neighborhoods. The circle identifies an area that, based on future development capacity, will provide for an efficient service location.

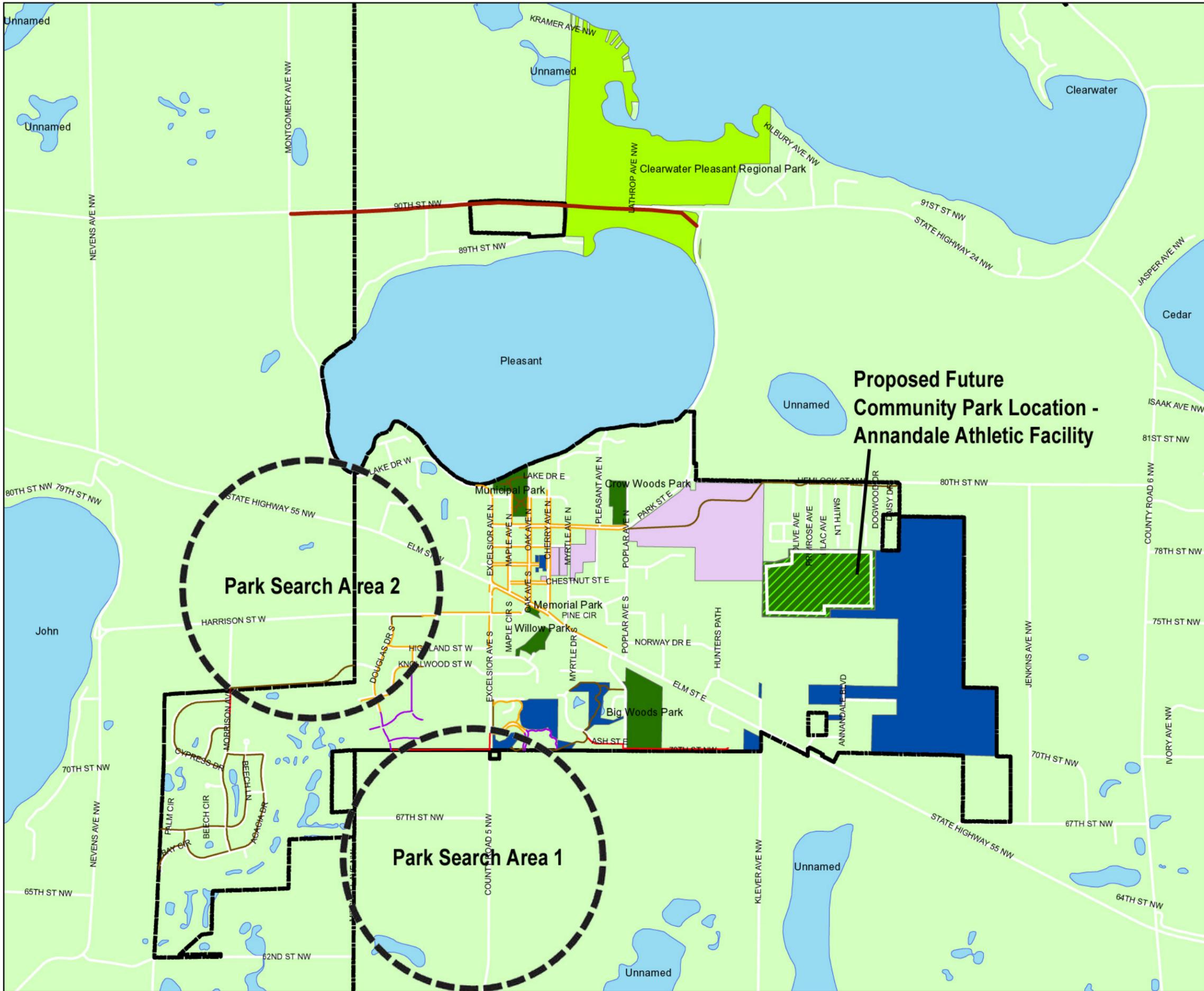
In the population growth analysis in Section Five, it was found that the City will need to accommodate as many as 93 more acres of community and neighborhood parks to meet current demand. Over the next 20 years, an additional 70 more acres would be necessary to meet new demand created by a growing population. While implementing the plan, if opportunities arise to gain more or less parkland, these assumptions could be amended.

Based on the park classification definitions, the future park classification goals, and the population projections, the following future park search areas have been identified. These future parks are specific to serve a future population area and to work with other parks to create a network of accessible parks. The goal is to have available parkland within a half mile from most residences in the City, when feasible and efficient. The proposed park search areas seek to accommodate this goal.

This plan is built around the development of a major community park development on city-owned property adjoining the school district campus – the site of the former wastewater treatment ponds. That facility will provide 80 acres of community park and playfield area, meeting the current and near-term demand for park development.

As noted in the forecast sections above, approximately 13 acres of additional land would be recommended to provide neighborhood park access. This issue is most apparent on the south side of the community, where a majority of residents are more than a half mile from the nearest park, with several more than a mile. This distance makes it impractical for most parents with small children to walk or bike to the park, resulting in more driving and the need for parking lots and other facilities that are not typical of neighborhood park facilities.

Two neighborhood park search sites have been identified in the south portion of the community. Recommended size for each would be between 5 and 10 acres, with the ability to provide for the amenities identified in the table above, and also provide for informal field play space as opportunities for both open play space for the neighborhood, and practice field space for organized recreation.

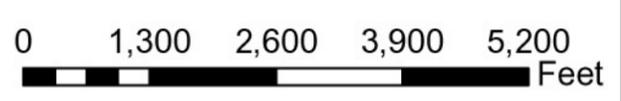


Park and Trail Plan

Park Search Areas



- Proposed Parks**
- City Parks
- Existing Parks**
- Regional/County Parks
- City Parks
- Proposed Trails**
- Proposed Sidewalks
- Proposed Trails
- Existing Trails**
- Existing Sidewalks
- Existing Trails
- School Property
- City Property
- Water
- City/Township Boundaries



Sources: City of Annandale, Wright County, Bolton & Menk, & NAC, Inc.
Map Date: February 7, 2011.

Park Site Selection Criteria

It is important for the City to establish selection criteria for the location of future park land. Since, the City of Annandale seeks to provide park and recreational opportunities in an efficient and comprehensive manner future park sites should adhere to the following location criteria:

- **Active & Passive.** The City has established that the park system is for a full range of users. Therefore, parkland land can be utilized by both passive and active users should be placed at a premium.
- **Accessibility & Visibility.** Parks are more heavily utilized and safer when they are easily visible and accessed.



Figure 6.2 Accessibility and Visibility

- **Natural Aesthetics.** The system will more efficiently meet open space preservation goals when doubled with park system expansion. Park sites will increase the number of users if combined with unique natural aesthetics.
- **Street Frontage.** Parkland should have public street frontage greater than a typical residential parcel. This will allow for greater numbers of access points and help improve visibility. The street should be of a classification sufficient to allow for easy and safe access. Parks with adequate street frontage are more inviting to the general public.

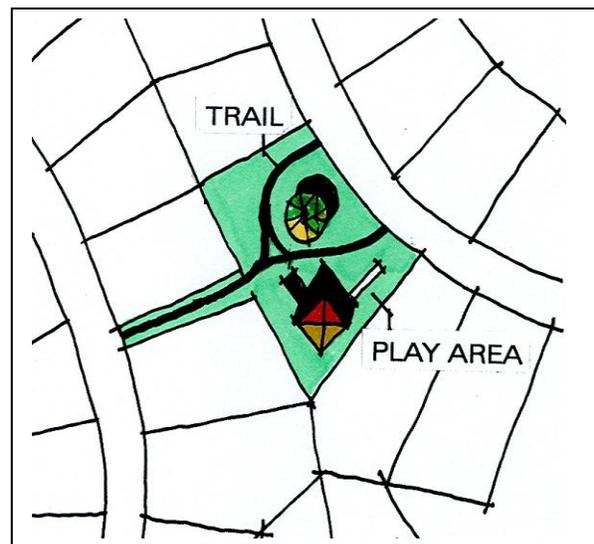


Figure 6.3 Street Frontage

- Connectivity.** Park locations should be selected in conjunction with trail locations. This will improve access and limit the need for extra amenities in the trail system (benches, restrooms) that can serve a dual purpose via parkland. In addition, park locations can be designed to facilitate expansion as the neighborhood grows by choosing locations where future development will make new land available.

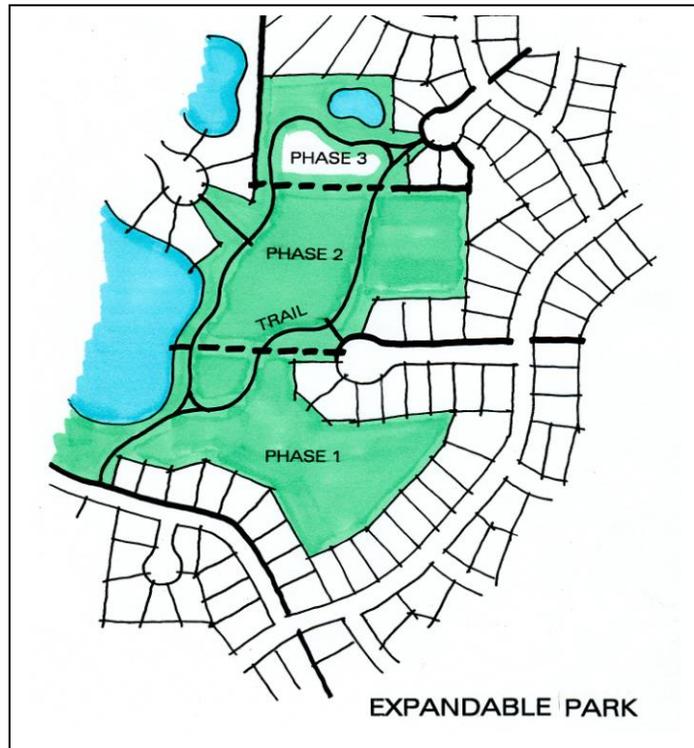


Figure 6.4 Connectivity

Trails, Greenways, and Open Space Planning

Providing connectivity between components of the Park, Trail, and Open Space system both for transportation and nature are the key goals of the Trails, Greenways, and Open Space planning efforts.

The goal of the trail plan is to create a network of interconnected corridors. These corridors are intended to connect parks and other destinations in the community with each other, and to the neighborhoods. This interconnectivity will assist in ensuring the park and recreational system will maximize use in an efficient manner.

The trail plan is intended to be used to help define route and connection goals of trails so that the land and easements can be acquired along with the development of the adjacent land. Along with trail and greenways, site amenities such as benches, signage, lighting, rest rooms, water fountains, bridges, and parking lots may be appropriate in certain situations requiring a greater amount of land acquisition.

Trails

The trail plan is designed to be part of a community wide system providing greater access to community assets and provide recreational opportunities. The plan is intended to show conceptual trail alignments and may be revised as opportunities arise or are further defined. The City may elect to utilize existing roadways for trail construction or when feasible have independent trail corridors. As parkland is developed, the City fully intends to connect parks to an overall system of trails to ensure there is adequate access to each park. Design standards are utilized to insure accountability and safety, while also minimizing roadway crossings and other potentially dangerous situations.

As mentioned, trail locations are conceptual. In cases where trail locations are dependent upon co-locating with a current higher classification roadway and that roadway designation or location is shifted, it shall be assumed that the trail location is to be shifted, as well. In cases where the conceptual trail location is determined to be infeasible, a more realistic route may be chosen as long as it provides connections to the intended sites.

Trail, Greenway, and Open Space Classification

The Trail System Map depicts three types of trails. The trail classifications are intended to work with the City's Transportation Plan street cross sections.

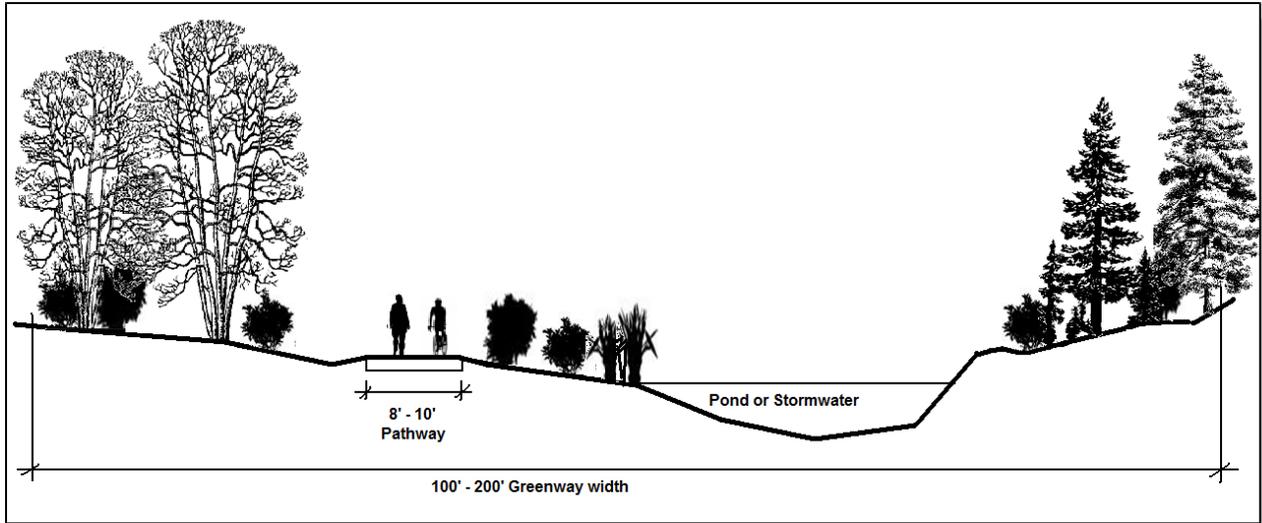
- **Primary Trail Corridor.** These corridors are intended to be for preserving key natural resources, while allowing for multiple types of transportation. These may be along roads as well as multi-purpose trails in a greenway environment located within a wider than standard right-of-way. The Primary Trail system will serve as the main pedestrian and bicycle link to the community's major park and recreation resources. It is often the case that the City will maintain this corridor during all seasons. Primary Trails also provide connections to regional trail corridors and park facilities. Primary Trail corridors are designed with a strong emphasis on off-road and grade-separated design, maximizing the distance between the trail and a roadway surface to enhance the recreational environment as well as to avoid snow maintenance problems.
- **Secondary Trail Corridor.** In some instances a multi-purpose trail may be planned for use independently of a Parkway, in its own corridor, or within a more standard right-of-way. As mentioned above, the trail will be designed to support its determined users at the time of development. Secondary Trails may or may not be maintained during winter periods. Their primary purpose is to provide connections between Primary Trails and local neighborhoods that are served with a sidewalk system or on-street pedestrian and bicycle options. Preferred design is for off-road

locations wherever possible, however, on-road options may be included where practical and safety can be maximized.

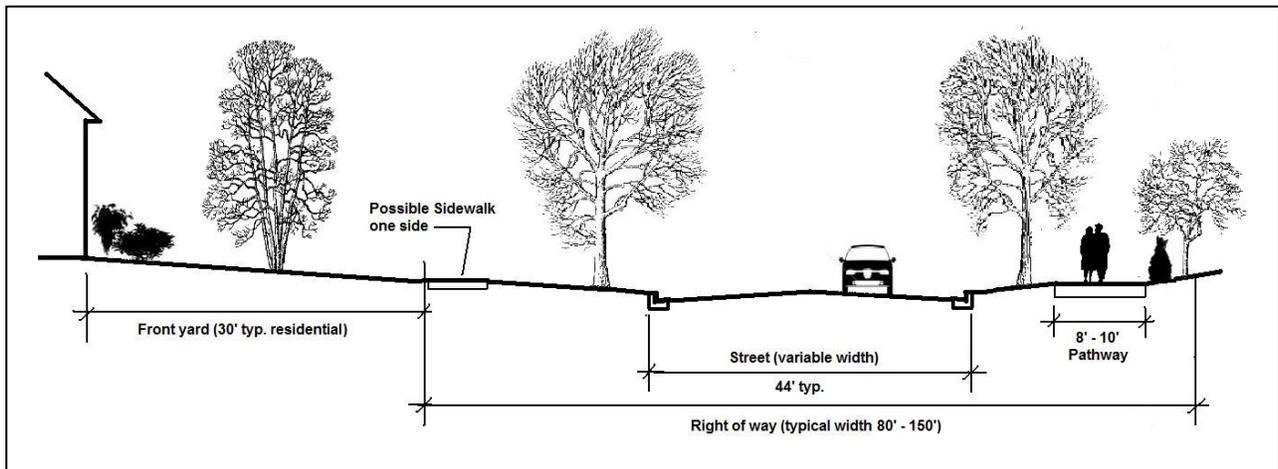
- **Sidewalk.** Sidewalks serve local neighborhoods and provide off-street pedestrian options for local access and travel. Sidewalks are typically maintained by the adjoining property owner during all seasons. A differentiation between construction and materials is desirable between Sidewalks and Trails to denote the change between maintenance responsibilities.

Figure 6.5 - Trail Cross Sections

Primary Trail Corridor – Greenway

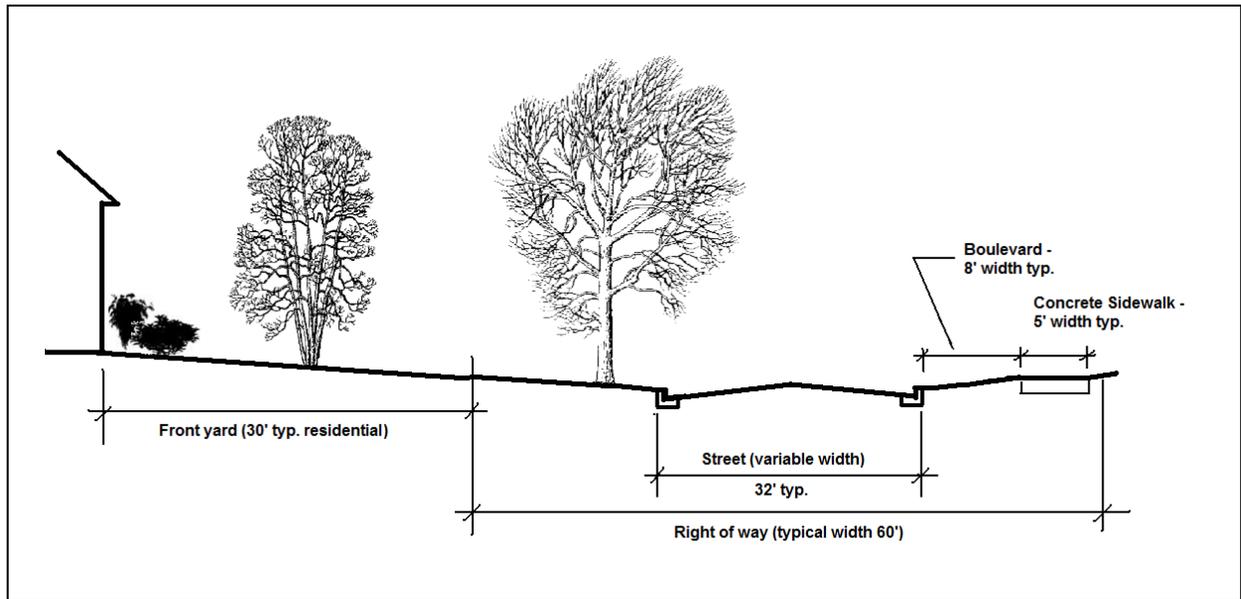


Secondary Trail Corridor



The Secondary Trail Corridor shown above is designed to be the predominant trail design along major roadways, and in more urbanized areas.

Sidewalk or Minor Pathway



Trail Location and Development Criteria

Selecting the actual location of a trail corridor shall be done in a case by case manner and based on providing feasible and efficient locations that are practical. The following location and development criteria shall be considered when reviewing potential trail location and development:

- **Dedication.** Right-of-way dedication shall be wide enough to include trails, when necessitated by the Trail Plan. Trails outside of right-of-ways shall be platted in outlots or placed in easements at the discretion of the City Engineer in terms of size to allow for easy maintenance and access.
- **Safety.** When placing trails in a right-of-way, the trail shall be constructed off-street with grade separation to maximize safe use. Other trail segments shall be planned for adequate access and visibility.
- **Minimize Costs.** In an effort to minimize construction costs, trails, where designated may be constructed in conjunction with state, county, and city street improvements. Developers may be expected to install trails at the time of street construction.

- **Connectivity.** Trails shall be placed in subdivisions to serve the City's intent of connecting amenities and resources. This connection shall be done in an efficient manner providing as direct of a connection as feasible. The City expects the trail system to connect residences to parks, open spaces, and businesses. Businesses should develop site amenities to encourage trail use.
- **Coordination.** The City will coordinate with other governmental units to provide trail resources when opportunities arise.

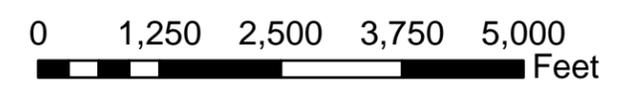
Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation

There may be areas where the City chooses to preserve key open spaces without designated access. Significant stands of trees, river banks, wetlands, unique native vegetation, or other such key natural resources may be present on site and be preserved by dedication of land. In such instances the area should be adjacent to a significant stream, noted on the natural resource inventory, identified through a planning process to be a significant natural resource, or identified as a key historic or cultural amenity.

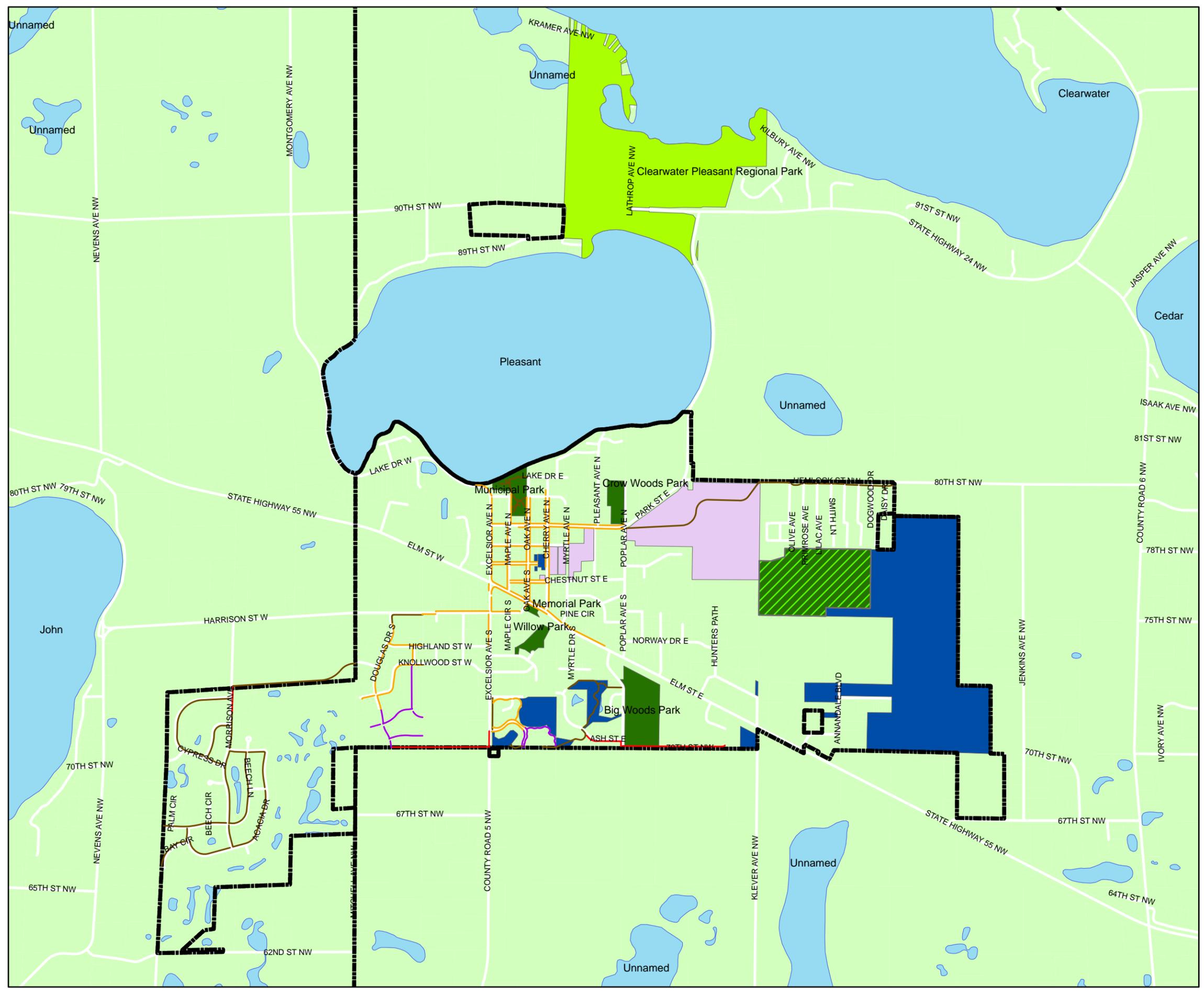
Park and Trail Plan

Proposed Parks & Trails

- Proposed Parks**
- City Parks
- Existing Parks**
- Regional/County Parks
 - City Parks
- Proposed Trails**
- Proposed Sidewalks
 - Proposed Trails
- Existing Trails**
- Existing Sidewalks
 - Existing Trails
- Other Features**
- School Property
 - City Property
 - Water
 - City/Township Boundaries



Sources: City of Annandale, Wright County, Bolton & Menk, & NAC, Inc.
 Map Date: February 7, 2011.



Park and Trail Plan

Future Parks & Trails

-  Proposed Primary Trail Route
-  Proposed Secondary Trail Route
-  Potential Future Crossing Locations

Proposed Parks

 City Parks

Existing Parks

-  Regional/County Parks
-  City Parks

Proposed Trails

-  Proposed Sidewalks
-  Proposed Trails

Existing Trails

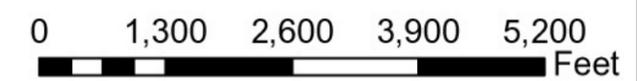
-  Existing Sidewalks
-  Existing Trails

 School Property

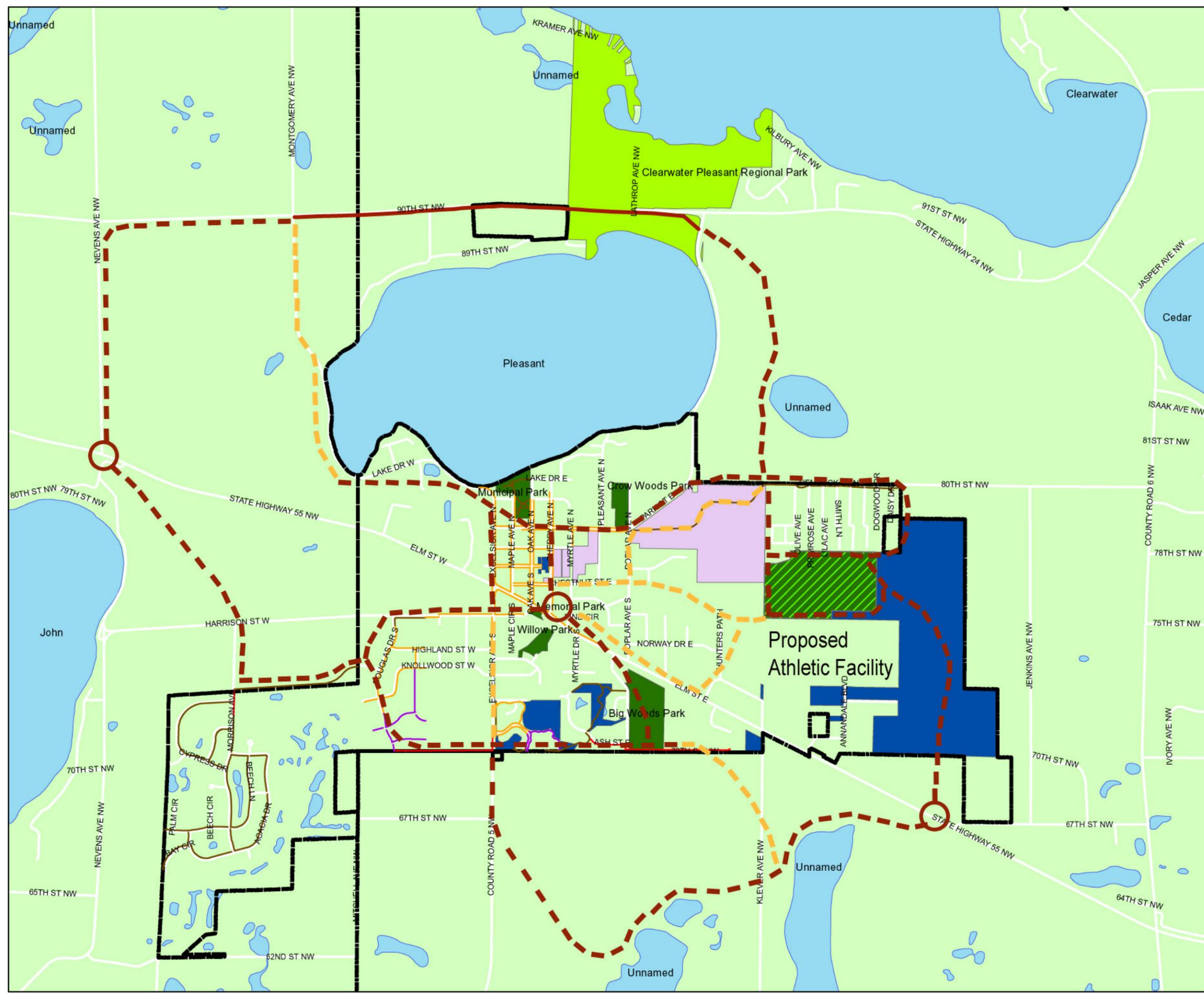
 City Property

 Water

 City/Township Boundaries



Sources: City of Annandale, Wright County, Bolton & Menk, & NAC, Inc.
Map Date: February 7, 2011.



Annandale Athletic Facility

The proposed Annandale Athletic Facility is envisioned to be the centerpiece of the City's park and recreation system. The facility is located on former wastewater treatment property adjacent to the Annandale school district campus, and provides the opportunity for the City and School District to coordinate both facility and program planning.

The property itself is approximately 78 acres in area, and would be constructed to guide stormwater to a new regional pond to the west of the facility. Access would be gained via a new roadway along the east edge of the school property to a parking lot in the northwest corner of the site. The drawing on the following page illustrates a conceptual preliminary layout of the site, including the following elements:

- 160 space parking lot
- 8,000 square foot building housing:
 - Concessions
 - Maintenance
 - Warming house
- Direct access from parking area to maintenance
- Playground area adjacent to parking and concession building
- Approximately 1.9 miles of trails around and throughout the property
- Trail connections to school property and to future extensions to the east and south
- Central boarded hockey area over 3 full-size basketball courts
- Potential open skating area adjacent to hockey and concession/warming house
- Two full-size baseball facilities
- Opportunity for one baseball facility to expand with grandstand, other amenities
- Batting cage location adjacent to baseball
- Four youth baseball and/or full-size softball diamonds
- Two youth soccer/football/lacrosse fields in southwest corner of site
- Four multi-use full-size soccer fields
- Six acres of open practice and/or warm-up field area accessible to all competition fields
- Approximately 20 acres of additional expansion area

These uses reflect comments received from residents, school officials, community education officials, and sports association representatives throughout the planning process. As always, needs and demands change. The facility as proposed would provide a measure of flexibility and expansion to address those changes. Lighting has not been planned with this concept, as that would depend on need and funding.



REGIONAL POND

BOOTHING LOUNGE

MINT

CONCESSIONS WARMING HOUSE

OPEN SKATING

BASKETBALL HOCKEY

OPEN FIELD PRACTICE AREA

FUTURE EXPANSION

LACROSSE FOOTBALL U13 SOCCER

ADULT SOCCER

SECTION SEVEN: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This section of the Park and Trail Plan identifies the tools and processes to implement the Plan.

Implementation Strategies

The following implementation strategies are suggested:

1. The Parks Commission will review and update neighborhood park needs and service areas as development occurs so that new barriers and changing recreational needs, as well as trends in park development, are acknowledged and accommodated.
2. The Parks Commission will review and evaluate each development project to ensure it provides appropriate park land dedication, open space preservation and trail connections to the planned city park, trails, schools, and commercial/industrial developments as well as the town center.
3. The Parks Commission will review and prioritize trail needs and recommend a schedule and funding framework to the City Council.
4. The Parks Commission will investigate the use of grants, donations, partnerships, and opportunities for joint powers agreements for the development of park, trail and recreation facilities.
5. The park dedication fee should be reviewed on an annual basis and updated pursuant to any changes to the Park, Trail, and Open Space Plan and adjusted for cost of living indexes.
6. The Parks Commission recommends that the City Council consider incorporating park redevelopment infrastructure planning as part of the 5-year Capital Improvements Plan. Minnesota Statutes specify that park dedication fees may not be used for maintenance purposes and therefore it is important for the City to continue to provide a separate budget fund for maintenance. As the park system ages, there will be an increased need to retrofit existing facilities, as they will have aged beyond their useful life in the older parks. Park dedication fees can be used to replace some facilities and infrastructure however, the City will need to establish other sources to pay for replacement of the park system facilities in fully development neighborhoods or park service areas.
7. The Parks Commission recommendations for future land dedication will be based on the park land need defined by the Annandale Park and Trail Plan. Active park areas shall be exclusive of wetlands, slopes exceeding 12 percent, ponding areas, or other features unsuitable for active park

development. The City may accept natural open space as part of the parkland dedication. Selection of parkland for dedication shall be at the discretion of the City Council, based upon the policies and recommendations of the Parks Commission and Annandale Park and Trail Plan.

8. The Parks Commission will act as the steering committee to further investigate options and agency participation for development of natural resource corridors and the City's trail system outside of the current planning area.
9. The City will actively seek opportunities to integrate the City's Park and Trail system improvements into regional open space efforts, including School District, County, State, and/or Federal projects. This effort may include either joint projects, or it may mean working to create local "connectivity" projects that coordinate with other regional park, trail, and open space development.
10. The Parks Commission will work closely with the Planning Commission in reviewing proposed subdivisions for park and trail dedication requirements, including whether or not to recommend the dedication of land, or cash in lieu of land.

Funding Mechanisms

Financing the park and trail improvements will be a challenge for the City. The acquisition and development of the park and trail system will not occur without adequate funding and taking advantage of opportunities as they present themselves. Fortunately, in the short term, the City owns a significant portion of the land needed to meet the community park facilities identified in this Plan.

The financing of the park and trail system will occur one of two ways, either by raising revenue or incurring debt. Revenues provide the means to make investments in the park system and can be saved to finance improvements. Borrowing money provides upfront funding and pledges to repay the debt. A brief description of potential funding sources is provided as follows:

- **Park Dedication.** Pursuant to Minnesota State Statutes, the City requires the dedication of either land or cash, or combination thereof at the time that residential property is subdivided. Dollars collected from park dedication fees represent the primary source of park and trail revenue. A more detailed examination of Park Dedication issues is included in a separate section below.

The City's current Subdivision Ordinance section addressing Park Dedication raises some issues related to consistency with current statutes (particularly for calculating the fee-in-lieu requirements). Moreover, with a revised park plan in place, it would be beneficial to apply the current statutory language to the City's expectations for growth and parkland dedication needs, to ensure that the amounts of land being dedicated are consistent with the planning expectations.

- **Property Taxes.** The City has the ability to raise property taxes to help to pay for the park and trail system. As this Plan indicates, the current population has paid for more than their proportionate share of park and trail improvements. However, this may not continue to be the case. In the event that future changes to the Park and Trail Plan, growth projections, land areas subject to the dedication analysis or other changes occur, the park dedication will need to be reviewed and adjusted accordingly. Property taxes are a means to raise revenue for the part of the Park and Trail system that should be borne by existing residents. The use of property tax may be limited by overall financial management of the City or by State imposed levy limitations.
- **Special Assessments.** The ability of a city to levy assessments for park improvements is governed by Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 429. This statute defines eligible park improvements as “acquire, improve and equip parks, open space areas, playgrounds, and recreational facilities within or without the corporate limits.” This definition would cover the vast majority of projects anticipated by this Plan. A special assessment represents the portion of a park improvement costs levied against benefiting properties. The special assessment tool must be reviewed carefully to identify whether historic park dedication fees have been collected and applied to the benefiting properties to ensure that owners are not charged twice for park and trail improvements. Also, an analysis would need to be done to identify which properties receive benefit from the park and trail improvement as there must be a rational nexus between the charge and benefit received. The typical method would be to levy an equal assessment on each benefiting parcel. The assessment could be for all or any portion of the improvements. At least 20% of the costs of the improvement must be assessed to gain the authority to issue bonds. If less than 100% of the costs are assessed, then park dedication fees, property taxes, or other available revenues would be needed to pay back the dept.
- **Referendum – Voter Approved Bonds.** The City may place a referendum on voter ballots for consideration by the public to support park and trail improvements. Voter approved debt service levies are spread on the market value of property. This funding mechanism is

typically utilized for major improvements such as a community center, athletic complex or to acquire high amenity park and recreation areas.

- **Grants.** The City should continue to apply for available grants for development of its Park and Trail Plan through agencies such as but not limited to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Wright County, and any other agency.
- **Private Donations.** The City should establish a list of facilities that can be provided to the public, charitable institutions, on the City Website etc., identifying Park and Trail needs and the process the public can use to donate revenue or equipment. Additionally, the Park Board could proactively contact private foundations such as The Trust for Public Land, 1,000 Friends of Minnesota, McKnight Foundation, Metro Greenways and others to identify potential funding sources for the community Park and Trail System.

Park Dedication

The City sets a park dedication requirement in its subdivision ordinance. Under state law, the City may require a subdivider to dedicate a reasonable portion of land for public park purposes, or the City may acquire an amount of cash in lieu of the required land, provided that the amount is based on the value of the land that would have been dedicated. The statute provides that this amount is to be no greater than the value of the land “no later than at the time of final plat”. In other words, the value is essentially that value of platted lots, but without the value of public infrastructure.

Because the cost of developing a park system includes the cost of building improvements, cash donated for parks can be used for improvements, but the amount of the dedication may not be included in the dedication calculation. Therefore, a deficit between the cost of the built-up park system and the value of land dedication is inevitable. As such, it is important that while the City may require dedication, additional funds are necessary to develop the park system as planned.

For the dedication amount itself, there are two methods to consider when setting a dedication amount. One is to measure the amount of acreage required as a percentage of the City’s overall acreage. The second is to measure the amount of acreage required as a percentage of the City’s projected population.

Percentage of Gross Acreage Method. For the first method, the City would calculate the amount of current park and pathway acreage, along with the acreage of the City overall, and establish the percentage of total parkland that

is provided. As the City grows in acreage, the City would establish a dedication requirement that maintains a similar percentage for park land.

In projecting this to a finite growth area, the City can calculate the size of the growth area, then apply the percentage to obtain an acreage that would be expected to be dedicated as parkland over the planning period. Since the City only requires park dedication from residential subdivisions, the amount of acreage to obtain would be pro-rated over the number of acres of future residential land.

As an example, assume that the City currently provides approximately 9% of its gross area as public parkland. If the future growth area comprises 1,000 acres of gross land area, then the City would expect to require dedication of an additional 90 acres of parkland during the planning period required to see this area fully developed. However, assume further that the 1,000 acre growth area will be comprised of 70% residential land, and 30% for other uses, such as commercial, industrial, water surfaces, public rights of way, and other uses. In this case, then, 700 acres of residential land would be needed to dedicate 90 acres of land for park purposes. In this calculation, the park dedication requirement would then need to be set at 12.9% to reach the required park acreage (90 acres divided by 700 acres = 12.9%).

Since the City will want land from some subdividers, but cash from others where land is not projected for parks or pathways, the cash-in-lieu requirement must be calculated.

Taking the same 90 acres required from 1,000 gross acres or 700 acres of residential land, the cash requirement must be equivalent to the value of 90 acres of platted, undeveloped land. This value will change regularly, especially in today's unpredictable real estate environment. However, assume an appraiser states that the value of such property is \$30,000 per acre. A developer of 100 acres of residential land would normally be required to dedicate 12.9% of the land, or 12.9 acres in our example, for parkland purposes. If the City chooses to require cash, rather than land, the cash requirement would then be a simple factor of 12.9 times \$30,000, or \$387,000.

The City may choose to split the dedication by requiring some land and some cash. In such a case, the City would simply pro-rate the amounts based on the relatively percentage of land being required versus cash-in-lieu of land.

This calculation is complicated somewhat when the City decides to defer collection of the cash payment until building permit, as often happens. In this case, then, bulk cash payment must be assigned to individual lots on a pro rata basis. The issue that arises is that the per lot cash payment will vary based on the density of the subdivision, and thus, the cash payment

requirement would vary with each subdivision – a difficult, if not impossible, administrative tracking function.

To resolve this, most communities will make a representative estimate of overall residential density and assign a flat-rate cash requirement per lot. This creates a disparity between the fee charged and the demand created by the subdivision. However, it is easier to track the fee requirement if a consistent per-lot fee is established.

Percentage of Population Method. The second model is different from the first only in that the City makes an estimate of the population of a given subdivision based on standard expectations for housing density and household size (persons per household). In this model, the City would establish a requirement for park dedication that is expressed as a number of acres per 100 or 1,000 population. The City would use census data to project the population of a given subdivision, then apply the park dedication formula on that basis to establish the amount of acreage required for dedication. The same conversion to a cash equivalent would apply as in the first method.

By applying either of these formulas to the City's growth area and its land use plan, a representative requirement for park dedication can be established.