

## Chapter 5:

# The System Plan

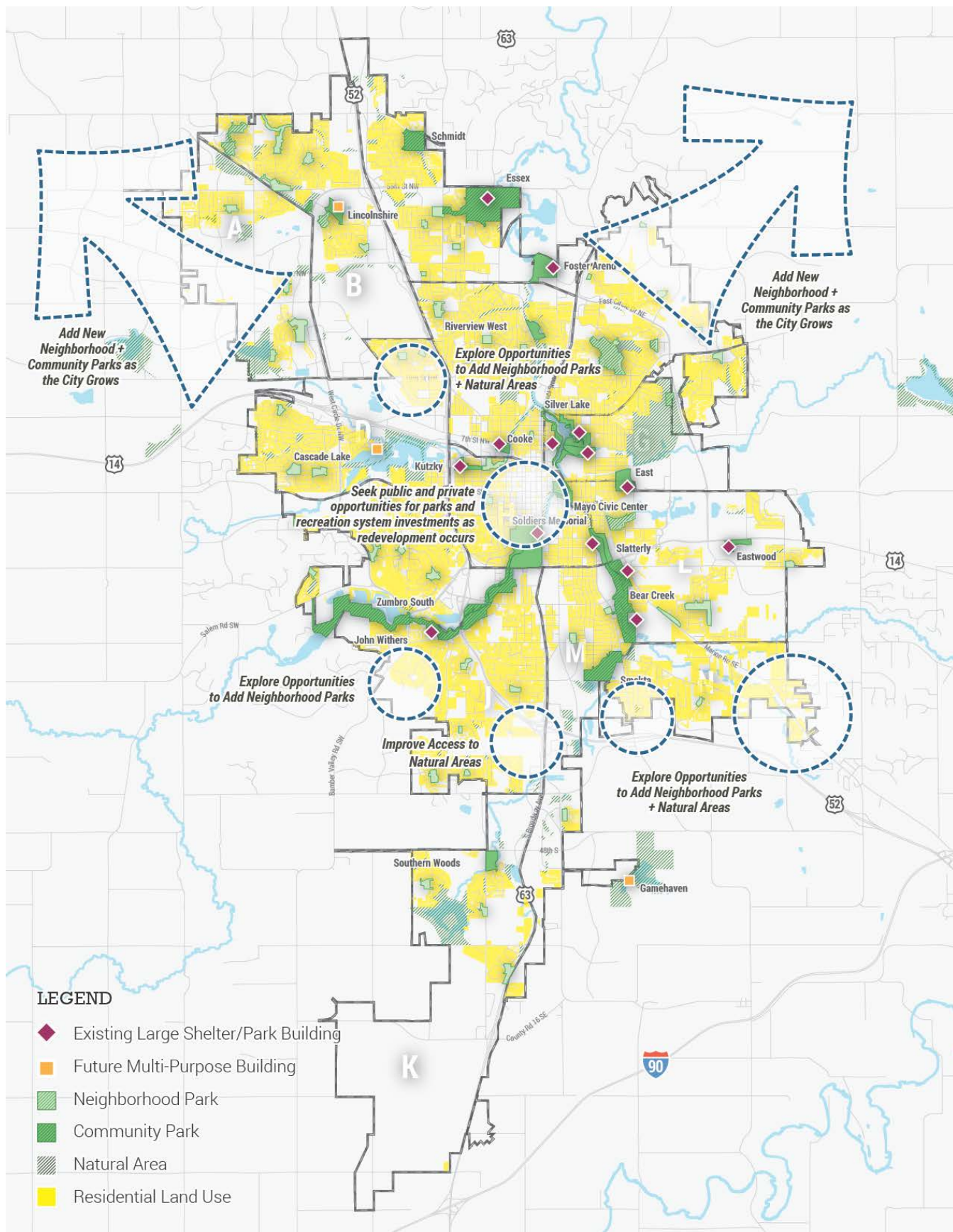
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Rochester’s Parks and Recreation System is intended to serve a broad range of recreation, natural resource, transportation, educational, and community-building needs. This chapter outlines a set of recommendations to achieve the vision expressed in Chapter 4. These recommendations have been organized into the nine categories of parks, facilities, trails, natural areas, programming, sustainability, public health, public art, and management and operations. Recommendations were organized using the following format:

- » **Goals** are broad statements that describe a desired outcome or end-state. Goals are often long-term in scope. These are identified as 1, 2, 3, etc.
- » **Policies** describe the general course of action or way in which programs and activities are conducted to achieve a stated goal. Policies speak to underlying values, context, or principles, and are often place-specific. There may be a range of specific actions or strategies that support the implementation of a given policy. These are identified as 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc.
- » **Strategies** include programs, actions, or practices that support one or more policy statements. Strategies address at a high level, the “who, what, when, where, and how” of achieving an objective. These are identified as 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, etc. Strategies may include:
  - **Strategic directions:** Policy/regulatory change, ongoing practice, cooperation with/support of outside groups/efforts, studies/planning for non-capital projects (economic development, housing, small area plans, etc.)
  - **Programmatic investments:** Programs, initiatives, events, training, resources (toolkits, handbooks, maps, etc.)
  - **Capital investments:** Studies/planning for capital projects (infrastructure, parks, public facilities), implementation of existing plans/priority projects, operations and maintenance, discrete projects/investments
  - **Funding:** Funding streams and strategies



FIGURE 5-1: PARK AND NATURAL AREA ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS



# Parks

When people think of a parks and recreation system, they tend to think about the physical places like their local neighborhood park or community parks like Silver Lake and Soldiers Field. Rochester has a robust parks and recreation system with 120 parks and more than 4,200 acres of city-owned parks, preserves and open space. The system is comprised of nine different classes of park that together form a fully functional parks and recreation system. The park recommendations focus on providing guidance for each type of park to ensure that each park continues to fulfill its role in the overall system.

## 1. Ensure Residents Have Convenient Access to Neighborhood Parks for Informal Recreation And Gatherings.

- 1.1. Ensure neighborhood parks are located within ½- to ¾-mile (10 -15 minute walk) of all residents and are physically integrated into the neighborhoods they serve and that the City maintains a ratio of about 10 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 people.
  - 1.1.1. Work to fill gaps identified within the existing system and add parks as needed as the community grows. Focus on capitalizing on opportunities as development and redevelopment occurs. Use mini parks to provide facilities and open space to meet local needs when neighborhood parks are not possible.
  - 1.1.2. Encourage parks to be defining features of the neighborhood by:
    - » Ensuring a central, connected location rather than an outlot or leftover land.
    - » Providing adequate access by locating neighborhood parks with at least one side fronting a public street.
    - » Improving resident connectivity by adding trails and sidewalks that link with the greater trail network.
- 1.2. Accommodate the needs of the residential populations served by neighborhood parks.
  - 1.2.1. Create and implement a process for engaging the neighborhood on park design when updating existing or planning new neighborhood parks.
  - 1.2.2. Ensure every neighborhood park has at least one opportunity for informal play through an open turf area, natural play area, or playground.
  - 1.2.3. Use the Activity Delivery Guidelines to determine appropriate recreational uses within neighborhood parks.
  - 1.2.4. Design neighborhood parks to have unique features or improvements to avoid a system of 'cookie cutter' parks.
  - 1.2.5. Collaborate with local neighborhood residents and organizations to incorporate public art or develop elements that establish a unique neighborhood park identity and sense of place.



Examples of unique features (i.e. public art, natural resource preservation & interpretation)

## Activity Delivery Guidelines

The guidelines in Table 5-1 on page 5-49 provide direction regarding the frequency and intended geographic distribution of facilities. Geographic access to recreation activities is important to provide equitable and convenient access. The delivery levels range from city to neighborhood scale and define the expectations for the quantity and general location of a particular facility.





Examples of picnic shelters & small, multi-purpose buildings

- 1.2.6. Support volunteer efforts for neighborhood gatherings at parks.
- 1.2.7. Encourage neighborhood groups to take an active role in managing park maintenance and enhancement, using groups like Eastside Pioneers Neighborhood Association and Friends of Indian Heights as models.
- 1.2.8. Strive for neighborhood parks that are universally accessible, incorporating necessary infrastructure such as accessible play equipment, picnic tables, and curb ramps.
- 1.2.9. Provide basic amenities like picnic tables, seating, shade trees, bike racks, and trash receptacles at every neighborhood park.
- 1.2.10. Provide portable restrooms at neighborhood parks as park use and demand warrants.
- 1.2.11. Add posting boards in neighborhood parks to encourage communication and informal meetings in parks.

## 2. Provide a System of Connected, Community Parks That Each Offer a Distinctive Mix of Recreational Activities and Natural Amenities.

- 2.1. Ensure community parks are located within two miles of every resident by adding Community Parks as the community grows and/or opportunities arise. The City should maintain a ratio of about 24 to 30 acres of parks dedicated for a mixture of community, athletic, and regional purposes for every 1,000 people.
- 2.2. Ensure the mix of facilities across Community Parks is equitably distributed and provides for year-round use.
  - 2.2.1. Ensure at least 2-3 recreational activities are accommodated within each Community Park; see the Activity Delivery Guidelines for appropriate activities.
  - 2.2.2. Locate in every Community Park a large picnic shelter or small multi-purpose building that can be used for indoor neighborhood events, programming, and as a warming house in the winter. The type of structure should be determined by the other uses and activities located within each particular Community Park.

- 2.2.3. At a minimum, each Community Park should include the following universally accessible facilities: picnic tables, shade trees, playground, trail loop, a naturalized amenity or feature, a picnic shelter or park building, all-season restrooms, and parking.
- 2.2.4. Make sure there is at least one type of winter recreational opportunity in each Community Park.
- 2.2.5. Conduct park planning processes with community engagement for any significant planned improvement or at least every 20 years after original construction.

### 3. Provide Regional Parks that are Destinations for Residents of Rochester and Beyond.

- 3.1. Build upon the existing regional park assets.
  - 3.1.1. Maintain and implement existing master plans for each regional park.
  - 3.1.2. Apply for funding through the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC) and other available funding sources to support new features, trails, and major maintenance needs such as invasive species control.
  - 3.1.3. As the community grows, evaluate the need for and opportunities to add one or two additional regional parks either independently or in collaboration with other agencies like Olmsted County.
- 3.2. Enhance the visibility of and access to regional parks.
  - 3.2.1. Increase trail connections to surrounding residents and the broader trail system.
  - 3.2.2. Identify additional partnerships for added programming within regional parks.
  - 3.2.3. Ensure universal accessibility to regional parks and their facilities.



*Provide a winter recreational opportunity in every Community Park*



*Cascade Lake Park (top) and Gamehaven Park (bottom) both have received regional designation, and have their own park master plans*



*This plan recommends investments in regional athletic complexes to provide tournament-level facilities*



## Park Development

Traditionally, small towns and cities have been organized around a town green, parks, and open spaces. These green spaces and activity areas give life, energy and character to their surrounding communities. In many ways, they define the places where we live. Therefore, the development of parks and open spaces should be carefully considered and not be relegated to leftover spaces in our communities. Rather, they should play a central role in the organization of our neighborhoods, communities and cities. The criteria for park development should consider the following:

### Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are the basic unit of the park system. They serve the recreational and social focus of the adjoining neighborhoods and contribute to a distinct neighborhood identity. Neighborhood parks should serve as extensions of the neighborhood around them, providing recreational and social activities.

Development Design Criteria:

- » Neighborhood parks should generally be located on a local or major local street.
- » If located near an arterial street, provide a barrier with landscaping, fencing or walls.
- » Provide adequate connections by linking parks to adjacent developments with trails and sidewalks.
- » They should be designed for both active and passive uses and geared toward the specific needs of the neighborhood, all age groups, and all physical abilities.
- » Park design should create a “sense of place” that reflects and enhances neighborhood identity. Use public art, preservation of natural areas, and other park design to distinguish parks from one another.
- » Incorporate natural features on the site, such as topography, vegetation and hydrology.
- » Maximize number of residences fronting the park.
- » Include widened on-street parking area adjacent to the park.
- » Traffic calming devices should be encouraged next to parks.



## Community Parks

Community parks are designed to be accessible by multiple neighborhoods and should focus on meeting community-based recreational needs and on preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. Community parks are generally larger in scale than neighborhood parks, but smaller than regional parks and are designed for residents who live within a 3-mile radius. While community parks may also meet the needs of neighborhoods, they primarily function as “destination” parks with special facilities such as lighted sports fields, amphitheaters, etc. that serve the entire community.

### Development Design Criteria:

- » Community Parks should be located on a collector or higher order roadway.
- » If located near an arterial street, provide a barrier with landscaping, fencing or walls.
- » Preference is for streets on all sides of the park or on three sides with a school, municipal feature or significant natural feature on the fourth side.
- » Encourage trail connections to other parks.
- » 65% of park space should be dedicated to active uses and 35% to passive uses.
- » Parking should be provided sufficient to support park amenities, but should occupy no more than 10% of the site.
- » Design should include widened on-street parking area adjacent to the park.
- » Traffic calming devices should be encouraged next to parks.



*Natural resources should be a primary consideration in the location and designing of new parks. In addition to their contribution to environmental and human health, natural resource areas can contribute to making a park unique, providing a place for informal play and reflection, connecting park system facilities, and stormwater management.*



*Maintain Environmental Parks as opportunities to connect people with nature*

#### **4. Provide a High Quality System of Athletic Complexes That Meet the Needs of Rochester, Now and in The Future.**

- 4.1. Provide complexes designed to meet local and regional tournament needs for rectangular and diamond field sports by providing high quality field surfaces and support facilities such as electronic scoreboards, lighting, shelter with concessions and restrooms, and adequate parking.
- 4.2. Provide complexes designed to meet local play and practice needs for soccer, baseball, softball, football, and lacrosse.
  - 4.2.1. Improve efficiency and quality where appropriate by consolidating single fields into local complexes as the single fields reach their end of life.
  - 4.2.2. Distribute local complexes by park zone to provide convenient access.

#### **5. Maintain Environmental Parks as Areas Set Aside for Preserving Natural Resources and Connecting People to Nature.**

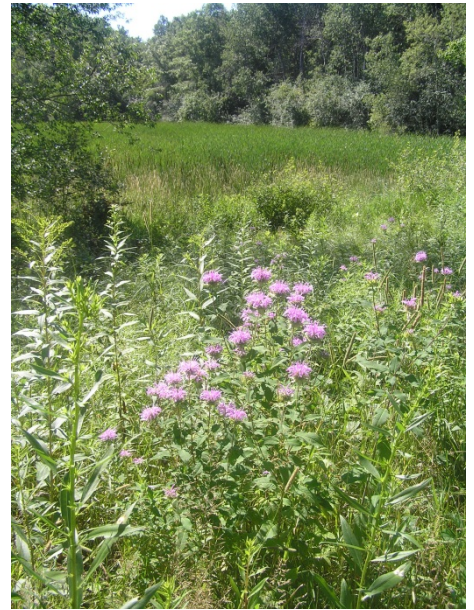
- 5.1. Limit development in Environmental Parks to improvements that support passive uses or address water quality & habitat.
- 5.2. Provide opportunities for users to connect with nature.
  - 5.2.1. Use low impact design to add trails, balancing the types of trails available (paved, soft surface, mowed, etc.) with natural resource quality, topography, existing availability, and needed connections to neighborhoods.
  - 5.2.2. Improve access for people of all ability by ensuring one ADA accessible trail in each park zone.
  - 5.2.3. Facilitate access by connecting residents via trails, bikeways, and sidewalks.



- 5.3. Seize opportunities to create additional Environmental Parks as the City grows or areas of natural value become available.
- 5.4. Develop and use management plans to guide preservation, restoration, and management of Environmental Parks.

## 6. Maximize the Functionality of Linear Parks.

- 6.1. Utilize linear parks to provide ecosystem services, including habitat, stormwater management for the park system, removal of particulate matter from the air, cooling, etc.
  - 6.1.1. Green linear parks by planting more trees and naturalizing where possible.
  - 6.1.2. Reduce development impacts by maintaining a buffer of 50 feet around water resources.
- 6.2. Use linear parks to make trail and natural connections in the park system.
  - 6.2.1. Establish linear parks as the community grows to establish greenway corridors.
  - 6.2.2. Design future linear parks to include trail connections.
  - 6.2.3. Coordinate development and management of linear green spaces with other City and County agencies to effectively provide connectivity and environmentally sustainable resources for the community.



*Provide opportunities for users to connect with nature while balancing natural resource management*



*Investments in Mayo Field are recommended*

## 7. Provide Special Use Facilities to Address Specific Needs.

- 7.1. Re-evaluate special use parks annually to ensure their viability.
  - 7.1.1. Measure use and cost recovery.
  - 7.1.2. Identify and address maintenance needs.
  - 7.1.3. Identify how they meet parks and recreation goals.
- 7.2. Maintain and expand partnerships where possible for the programming, operations, and maintenance of special use facilities.
- 7.3. Where possible, distribute special use parks by zone when building new or relocating existing facilities.
- 7.4. Provide a quality, dedicated baseball stadium by renovating or replacing Mayo Field.

An overview of recommended improvements by zone is provided in the Appendix

# Facilities

Rochester's Parks and Recreation System offers a range of recreational facilities to meet the varied needs of its users. Facility recommendations were organized by the type of use in recognition that the frequency and type of facility differs depending on whether the use will be informal, practice, local leagues, regional tournaments, or specialized users.

## 1. Maintain Quality Facilities for Informal and Practice Use Distributed Across the City.

- 1.1. Ensure each park zone has athletic fields and courts distributed throughout to serve local needs.
  - 1.1.1. Provide high-quality tennis courts by transitioning neighborhood tennis courts to groups of 2-4 courts with a backstop, and provide at least one set per park zone.
  - 1.1.2. Provide convenient access to pickleball by striping at least one tennis court for pickleball in each park zone.
  - 1.1.3. Provide at least one location for cricket in the community at Riverview West Park.
  - 1.1.4. Continue to provide fields for lacrosse at Fuad Mansour Complex or alternate locations as opportunities arise.
  - 1.1.5. Transition full size outdoor basketball courts from neighborhood parks to community parks, locating one or two within each park zone.
  - 1.1.6. Provide at least one outdoor half-court for basketball in each park subzone.
  - 1.1.7. Provide at least one sand volleyball court located adjacent to a picnic pavilion in each park zone.
  - 1.1.8. Ensure within each park subzone that half of the neighborhood parks have open turf areas.
- 1.2. Increase access to nature-based play throughout the City by providing at least one nature play area within each subzone, or nature play components in a playground if the subzone cannot support its own full nature play area.
- 1.3. Expand outreach and engagement to all user groups or potential user groups to better serve their recreational needs.
  - 1.3.1. Engage minority/immigrant groups on a semi-annual basis to assess needs and maintain open communication.
  - 1.3.2. Solicit input from known users on future needs.



Expand nature-based playgrounds



Transition to half-court basketball



Provide sand volleyball courts adjacent to picnic pavilions



FIGURE 5-2: INFORMAL RECREATION FACILITY DISTRIBUTION (BASKETBALL, TENNIS, & PICKLEBALL)

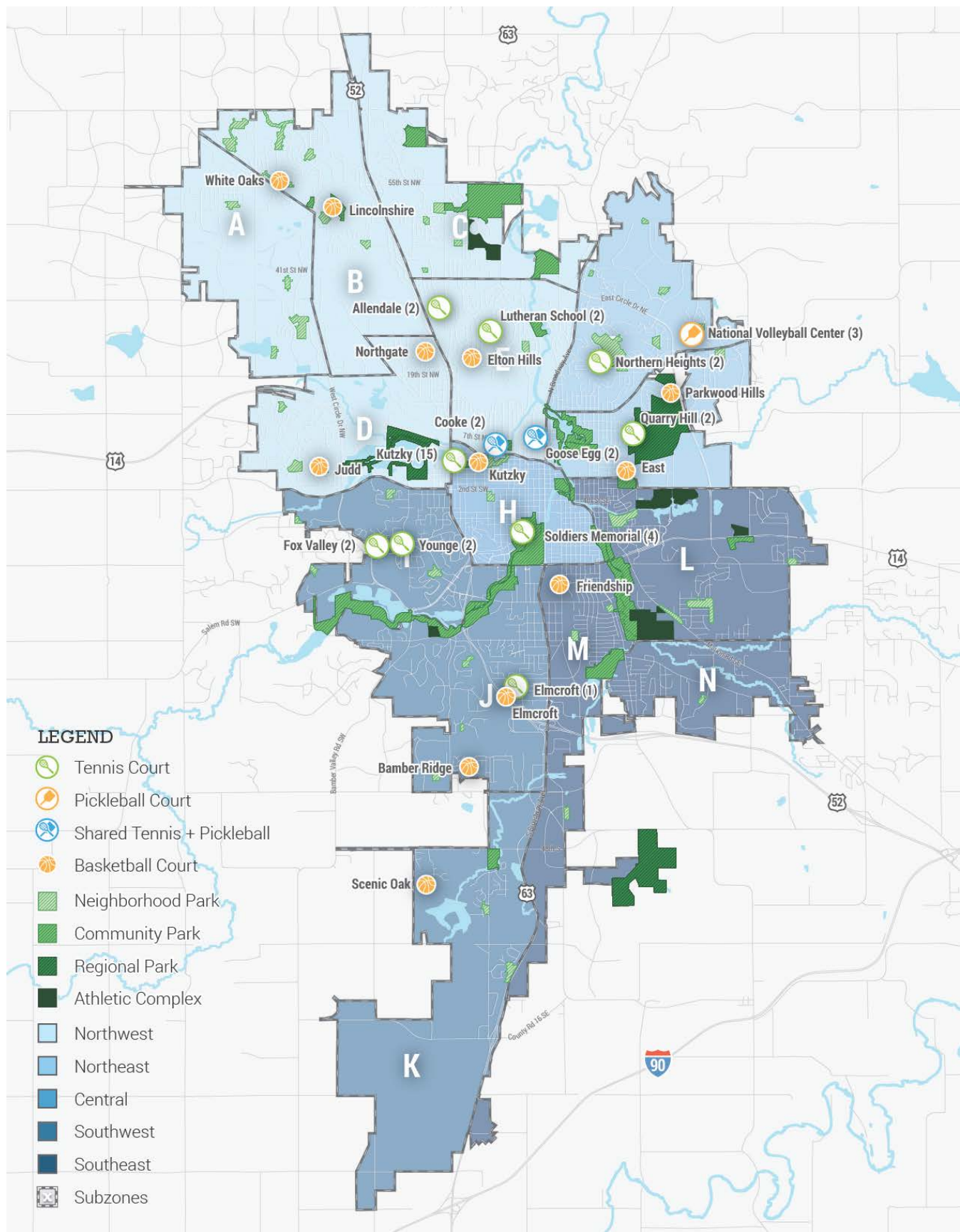
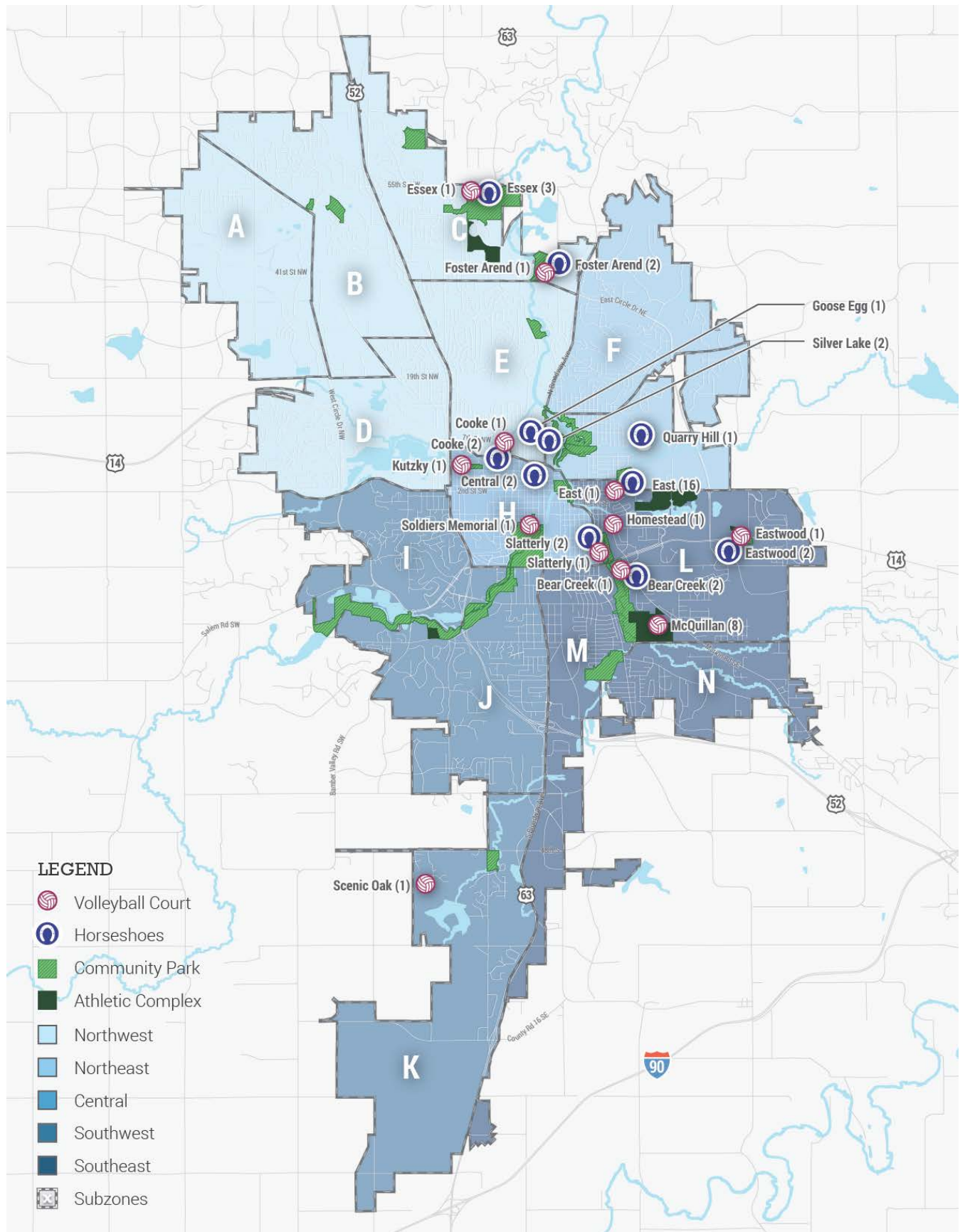


FIGURE 5-3: INFORMAL RECREATION FACILITY DISTRIBUTION (VOLLEYBALL & HORSESHOES)





- 1.3.3. Develop communication tools to facilitate understanding of what facilities may best serve their needs and how to reserve facilities if needed.
- 1.4. Expand partnerships with schools to maximize access to athletic fields and facilities, particularly to serve recreational users.

## 2. Provide Facilities to Serve Local Tournaments and Leagues.

- 2.1. Consolidate and distribute athletic fields to increase convenience and the efficiency of operations and maintenance.
  - 2.1.1. Improve some existing fields for more efficient use. Improvements may include reorientation to reduce conflicts, safety fencing and netting, lighted fields to increase use, irrigation and turf enhancements, and additional parking.
  - 2.1.2. Consolidate baseball fields with two to three fields per location. Convert low-use or poor condition fields to other uses as replacement fields are available. Distribute across the city with at least one set per park zone.
  - 2.1.3. Consolidate soccer into fewer parks, maintaining at least two parks with six fields and the remaining parks with two to three fields each. Distribute across the city, ensuring at least one set per zone (except the Central Zone).
  - 2.1.4. Maintain the existing multi-use, flexible rectangle fields at Soldiers, Kutzky East, and Silver Lake Parks.
  - 2.1.5. Develop two new complex sites with six fields each to serve football, lacrosse, and rugby.
  - 2.1.6. Add permanent rugby goal posts to one or two fields.
  - 2.1.7. Plan for the replacement of the Fuad Mansour sports fields onto city-owned property.
- 2.2. Contribute to the facility needs of the local tennis community by maintaining a set of at least 7 courts at one Community Park.
- 2.3. Contribute to the facility needs of the local aquatics community by maintaining the indoor aquatics facilities at the Recreation Center and providing one outdoor lap pool.
- 2.4. Provide a dedicated pickleball facility at a community park.

## Rochester Public Schools

Rochester school facilities supplement the parks and recreation system and are considered when individual park development decisions are made. Given that use priorities for school facilities are given to youth sports and activities, planning for the system cannot assume availability of any individual school facility to serve general community needs over the long term.

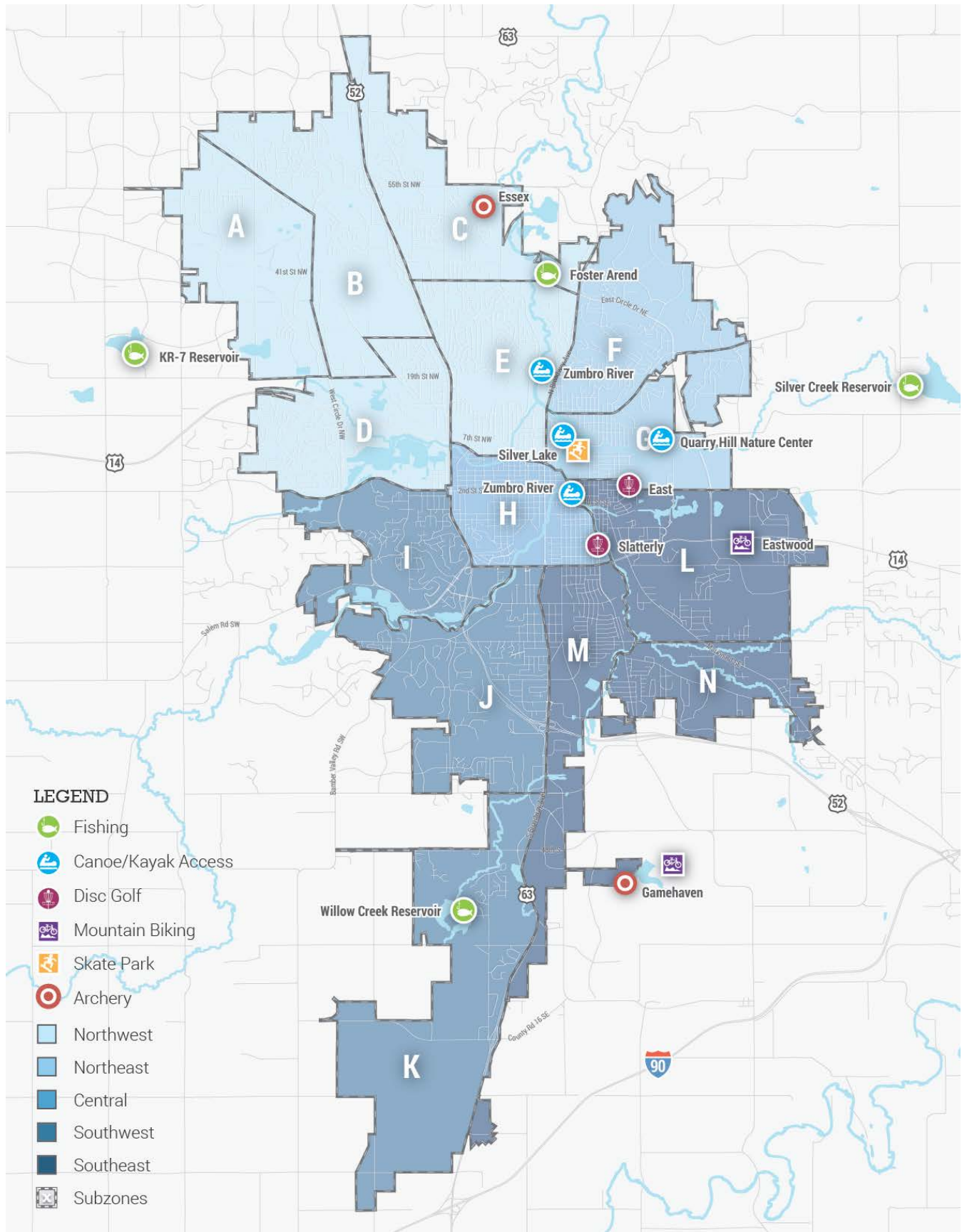


*Plan to acquire Fuad Mansour sports fields as City-owned property*



*Provide dedicated pickleball courts to address the sport's growing popularity*

FIGURE 5-4: ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITY DISTRIBUTION





### **3. Provide Regional Tournament Quality Facilities to Serve Associations and Boost the Local Economy.**

- 1.1. Ensure athletic complexes and indoor facilities include a minimum level of amenities to serve tournaments, including scoreboards, concessions, restrooms, parking, etc.
- 3.1. Maintain partnerships with associations and schools to meet tournament needs.
  - 3.1.1. Collaborate with associations on design, operations, and maintenance.
  - 3.1.2. Support collaboration with the school district to meet tournament needs.
- 3.2. Provide athletic complexes and indoor facilities that attract regional tournaments while serving local needs.
  - 3.2.1. Improve Watson Sports Complex for baseball tournaments and local play. Explore the conversion of some existing rectangle fields to baseball while still maintaining neighborhood access to some rectangle fields. Include amenities and three 75-foot fields and one 90-foot field.
  - 3.2.2. Maintain McQuillan and RYFSA Fields as a softball complex.
  - 3.2.3. Establish a rectangle field complex with 10 to 12 fields and amenities.
  - 3.2.4. Maintain and improve Graham Arena for tournament use.
  - 3.2.5. Maintain the National Volleyball Center and Recreation Center for tournament use.

FIGURE 5-5: LOCAL TOURNAMENT FACILITY DISTRIBUTION

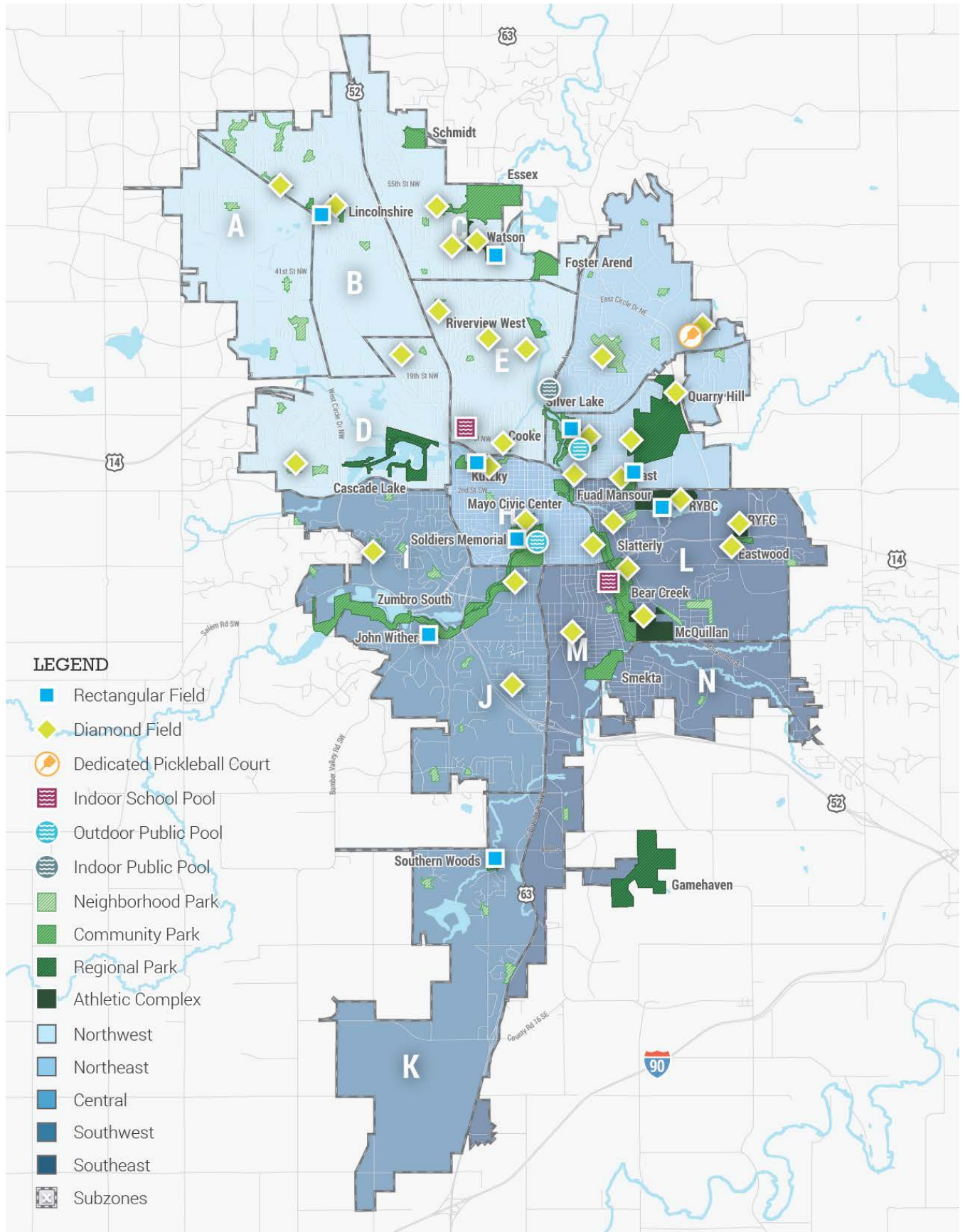
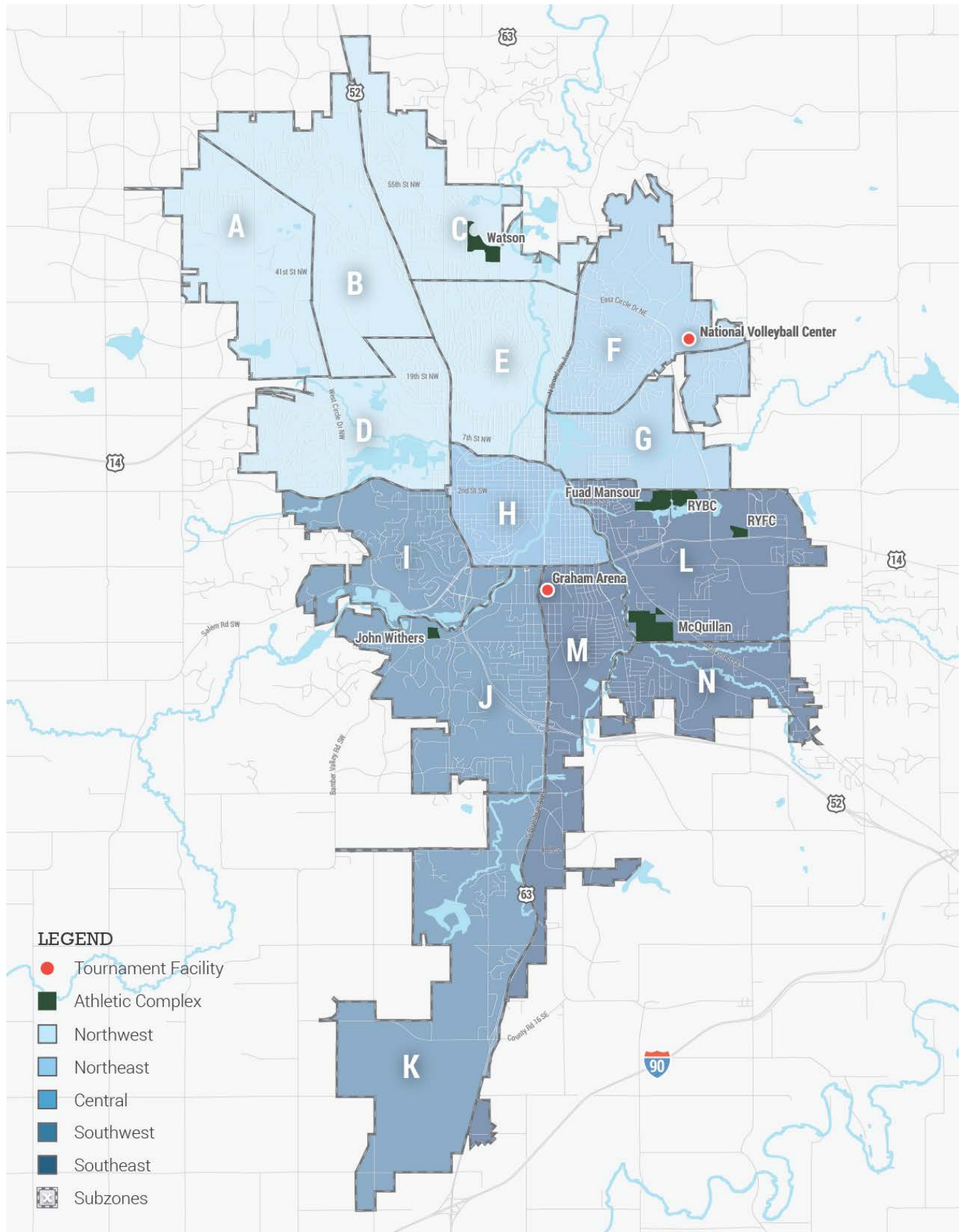




FIGURE 5-6: REGIONAL TOURNAMENT FACILITY DISTRIBUTION



The Advisory Committee considered a waterpark but ultimately determined not to recommend it due to a combination of the cost, proximity of other waterparks in the region, and need for other investments in the system.



*Provide small-scale aquatic amenities (like splash pads) as well as a lap pool with pool activities (like a climbing wall)*

## 4. Provide a Diversity of Specialized Recreational Facilities Distributed Across the City.

- 4.1. Support year-round recreation by improving access to outdoor winter facilities.
  - 4.1.1. Ensure each park zone has at least one outdoor hockey/pleasure skating rink.
  - 4.1.2. Designate two to three locations throughout the community for sledding.
  - 4.1.3. Provide skating opportunities on Cascade Lake, Foster Arend, and other frozen waterways as appropriate.
  - 4.1.4. Provide access to groomed cross country ski trails at Essex Park, Quarry Hill Park and Nature Center, Gamehaven Park, Parkwood Hills Park, Eastwood Golf Course, and Soldier's Field Golf Course.
  - 4.1.5. Provide and market locations for snowshoeing.
  - 4.1.6. Promote Northern Hills Golf Course and Hadley Creek Golf Course as open for snowshoeing and cross country skiing.
  - 4.1.7. Take advantage of larger natural areas to allow for un-programmed skiing, snowshoeing and hiking activities.
- 4.2. Improve access to aquatics.
  - 4.2.1. Maintain the Indoor Recreation Center to provide year-round swimming opportunities.
  - 4.2.2. Maintain and improve beach facilities at Foster Arend and Cascade Lake.
  - 4.2.3. Replace existing Soldiers Field pool with lap pool, children's activity area, and pool activities like climbing wall, basketball hoop, etc.
  - 4.2.4. Provide access to free water play by adding small scale interactive water features (splash pads, plaza with water) and river access locations. These should be located within community parks with one location per zone where no other low-cost, outdoor aquatic features exist.
  - 4.2.5. Replace the existing splash pad at Nachriener Park.
  - 4.2.6. Consider the development of interactive water features (e.g. fountains, splash pads, etc.) as part of regional and community parks.



FIGURE 5-7: OUTDOOR WINTER RECREATION FACILITY DISTRIBUTION

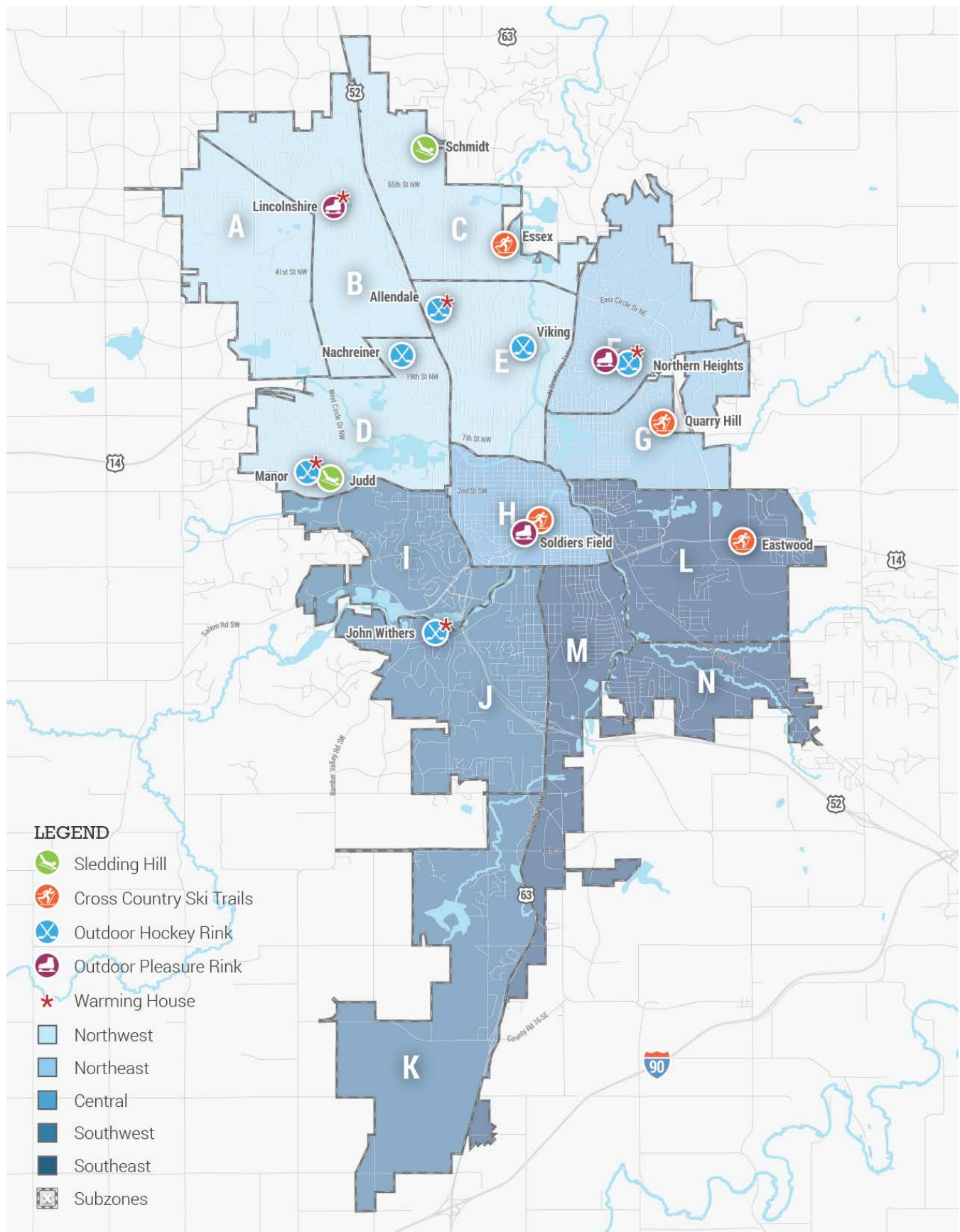
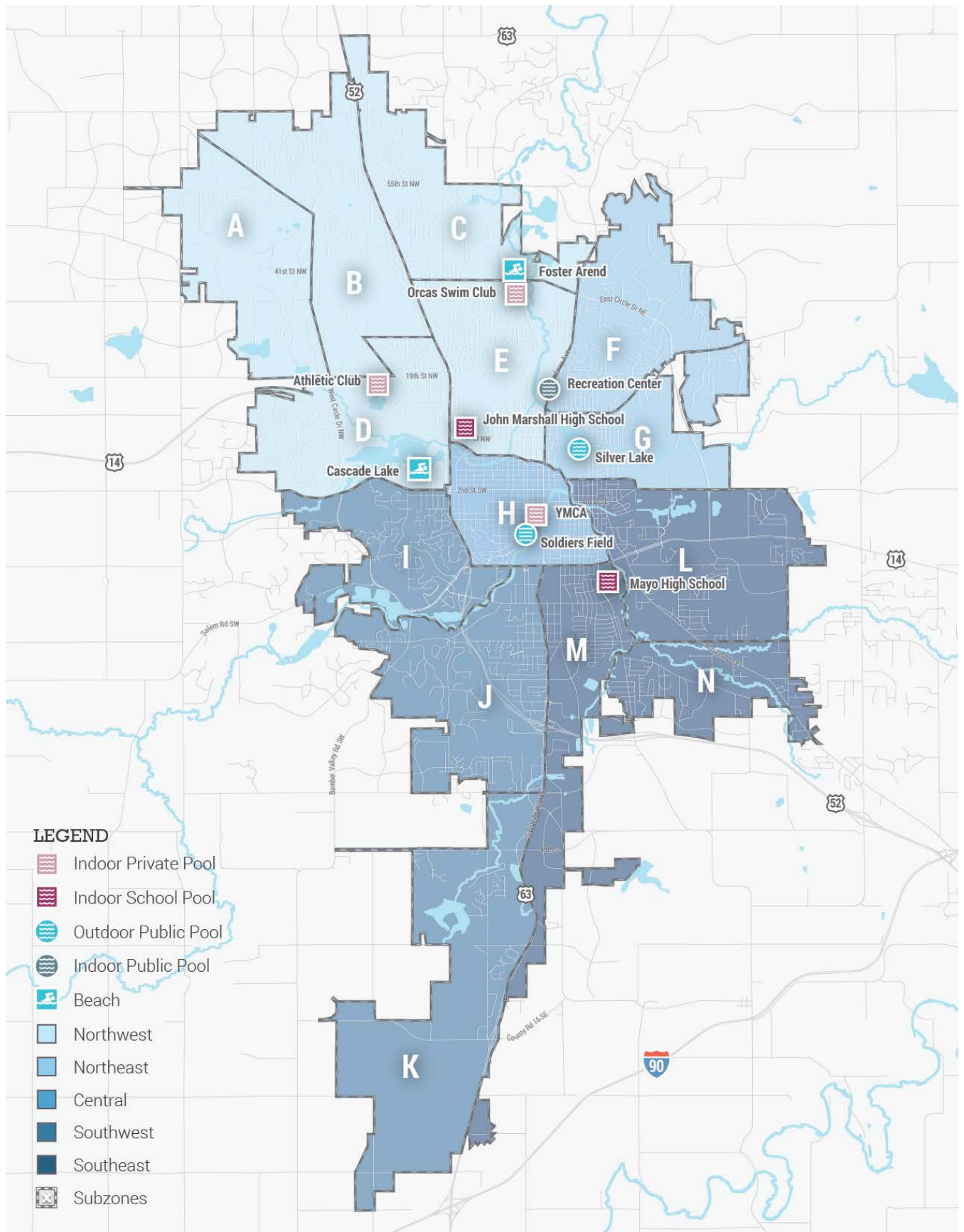


FIGURE 5-8: AQUATIC FACILITY DISTRIBUTION





- 4.3. Manage the golf courses to meet demand and marketplace trends.
  - 4.3.1. Evaluate and prioritize maintenance, upgrades and replacement investments balancing usage and costs.
  - 4.3.2. Develop future golfers by providing the Hadley Creek Learning Center, offering lessons, and supporting The First Tee Organization.
  - 4.3.3. Establish and maintain communication with the golfing community to solicit feedback and discuss operational issues.
  - 4.3.4. Annually review user fees to ensure they reflect demand, costs, and changes in the marketplace.
  - 4.3.5. Maintain and routinely evaluate public/private partnerships to provide food and beverage service at Eastwood, Northern Hills, and Soldiers Field.
  - 4.3.6. Conduct facility assessments to evaluate and prioritize the long-term investments needed for each clubhouse.
  - 4.3.7. Periodically review alternative and compatible uses at the golf course facilities to continue to meet the community's needs.
- 4.4. Expand and improve the existing skate park at Silver Lake Park.
- 4.5. Provide four disc golf courses distributed throughout the city.
  - 4.5.1. Maintain existing disc golf courses at East Park and Slattery Park.
  - 4.5.2. Develop disc golf course at Gamehaven as proposed in the Master Plan.
  - 4.5.3. Add another disc golf course in the Northwest Park Zone at an appropriate location based on the Activity Delivery Guidelines.
- 4.6. Provide four dog parks distributed throughout the city.
  - 4.6.1. Maintain the existing dog park in the south.
  - 4.6.2. Develop a dog park in the Essex Park area.
  - 4.6.3. Develop the dog park behind the Recreation Center.
  - 4.6.4. Add a dog park in the Northwest Park Zone at an appropriate location based on the Activity Delivery Guidelines.
- 4.7. Provide mountain biking at three locations distributed throughout the city.
  - 4.7.1. Develop a course at Gamehaven Park as proposed in the Master Plan.
  - 4.7.2. Evaluate the long term viability of the mountain biking course at Eastwood and explore as needed alternative locations.
  - 4.7.3. Add a new course in the Northwest Park Zone at an appropriate location based on the Activity Delivery Guidelines or in conjunction with Olmsted County.
- 4.8. Maintain and expand two archery facilities distributed at either end of the city.
- 4.9. Maintain one outdoor hockey rink for year-round inline hockey.



*Maintain existing golf courses*



*Maintain and enhance the skate park at Silver Lake Park*



*Maintain existing disc golf courses and add 2 more courses to have 4 city-wide*



- 4.10. Maintain existing river access for canoeing, kayaking, and rowing, and expand the river access in conjunction with County initiatives and the Destination Medical Center (DMC) Development Plan.
- 4.11. Provide one set of specialized sports areas in each park zone. Specialized sports areas could include horse shoe pits, bocce ball fields, bag toss, or other similar features.
  - 4.11.1. Maintain existing facilities for the remainder of their useful life.
  - 4.11.2. Focus new or replacement specialized sports areas in sets adjacent to picnic pavilions.
  - 4.11.3. Explore opportunities to add specialized sports areas in the northwest and southwest park zones.
- 4.12. Provide one community garden in each park zone.
  - 4.12.1. Add public community gardens as demands warrant.
  - 4.12.2. Support partnerships to provide additional gardens.
- 4.13. Pilot facilities for new or trending sports to assess appropriateness for park system, cost, durability, and demand. (E.g. slacklining, gaga ball, human foosball, etc.)



Small, multi-purpose building in neighborhood

## 5. Maintain Quality, Up-to-Date Indoor Facilities to Provide Recreational, Cultural, and Community Gathering Activities.

- 5.1. Maintain and expand existing indoor facilities to address changing recreational needs.
  - 5.1.1. Assess facility needs on an annual basis as part of budgeting and capital improvement planning.
  - 5.1.2. Maintain the Rochester Recreation Center as the hub for indoor recreation and programs, including indoor aquatics, ice rinks, gyms, meeting rooms and senior services.
  - 5.1.3. Maintain the National Volleyball Center as the hub for indoor gym recreation and programming.
  - 5.1.4. Maintain and improve Graham Arena to meet the needs of a variety of users (hockey, figure skating, trade shows, festivals, etc.).
- 5.2. Develop and implement a facility and operations plan for the renovation and long-term use of the former Fire Station #2 for public recreation programs and other users as identified.
- 5.3. Maintain the historic integrity and functionality of the Plummer House and grounds for community gathering.
- 5.4. Provide one small, multi-purpose building per zone that can serve a variety of needs including locations for neighborhood-based classes and programming, private rentals, winter warming house, and restrooms.
  - 5.4.1. Develop and implement facility plans to upgrade the Soldiers Field Pool or Club House and Silver Lake Pool buildings for year-round use.
  - 5.4.2. Design the planned structures for Cascade Lake and Gamehaven parks to provide year-round, multi-functional use.

- 5.4.3. Add a new year-round facility at Lincolnshire Park.
- 5.4.4. Add buildings as needed for community and regional parks to support the goals of the park system.

## **6. Continually Strive to Evaluate And Improve Partnerships with Facility User Groups.**

- 6.1. Work with clubs, associations, volunteers, and other groups to regularly assess needs.
  - 6.1.1. Maintain a database of existing organizations and contacts to facilitate communication.
  - 6.1.2. Ensure, at minimum, annual communications with existing organizations.
  - 6.1.3. Implement an annual feedback mechanism, such as a survey, to measure satisfaction with organizations and groups.





*Trails along roadways (above) have a much different aesthetic than trails through natural areas (below)*



*Construct new trails to fill gaps in the system*

# Trails

Trails are one of the most desired and economical park amenities. They bring the system closer to every resident, offer transportation alternatives, and support a healthy, active population. Trails are an essential component of an accessible recreation system, particularly for those who cannot or choose not to drive, including low income households, children, and the elderly.

Rochester's 85 miles of trails are managed by Parks and Recreation and Public Works. While the System Plan primarily focuses its recommendations on those trails located on parks and recreation system property, it also advocates supporting investment in the trails managed by Public Works and providing amenities in the parks and recreation system that can support the use of the trail systems for commuting purposes.

## 1. Provide a Multi-Purpose Trail System That Encourages Recreation.

- 1.1. Expand the system and eliminate gaps to create an interconnected and comprehensive system of multi-purpose trails.
  - 1.1.1. Establish and market cross-city trails to interconnect the Park Zones.
  - 1.1.2. Collaborate with Olmsted County and surrounding communities on establishing regional trail connections.
  - 1.1.3. Ensure there is at least one major trail loop (greater than 3 miles) in each zone.
  - 1.1.4. Eliminate system gaps giving consideration to the following priorities:
    - » Access to regional parks, community parks, athletic complexes and special use facilities;
    - » Elimination of cross city trail gaps;
    - » Elimination of gaps or interim routes for existing trail loops;
    - » Extension of cross city trails;
    - » Development of new trail loops;
    - » Development of new regional trails.
  - 1.1.5. Ensure subdivisions have mid-block trails or sidewalks that can link to nearby parks.
  - 1.1.6. Link reservoirs to the trail system.
  - 1.1.7. Evaluate the potential aesthetic benefits of aligning trail routes along system water resources like stormwater facilities, infiltration basins, etc.

FIGURE 5-9: PRIORITIZED TRAIL GAPS

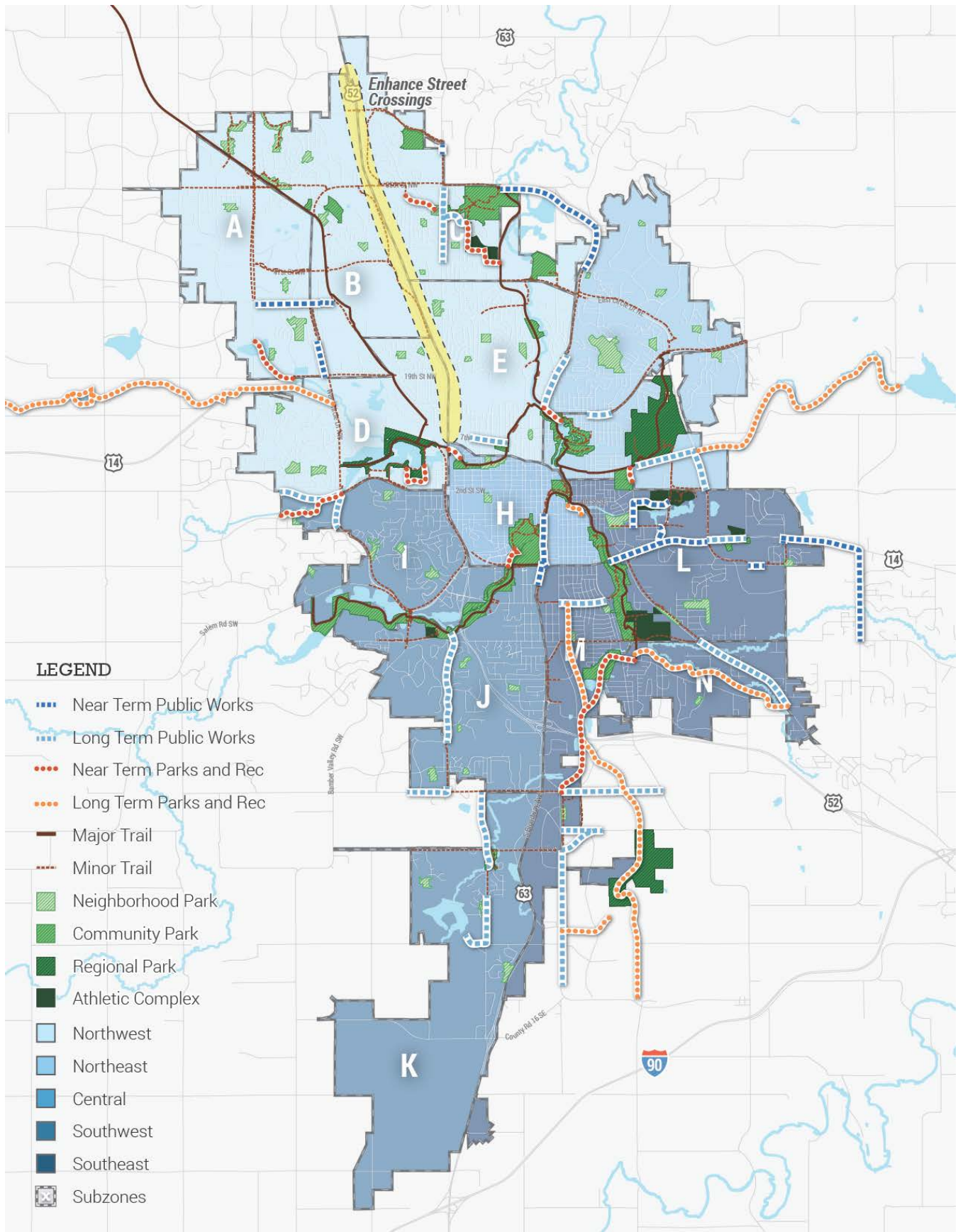




FIGURE 5-10: TRAIL LOOPS

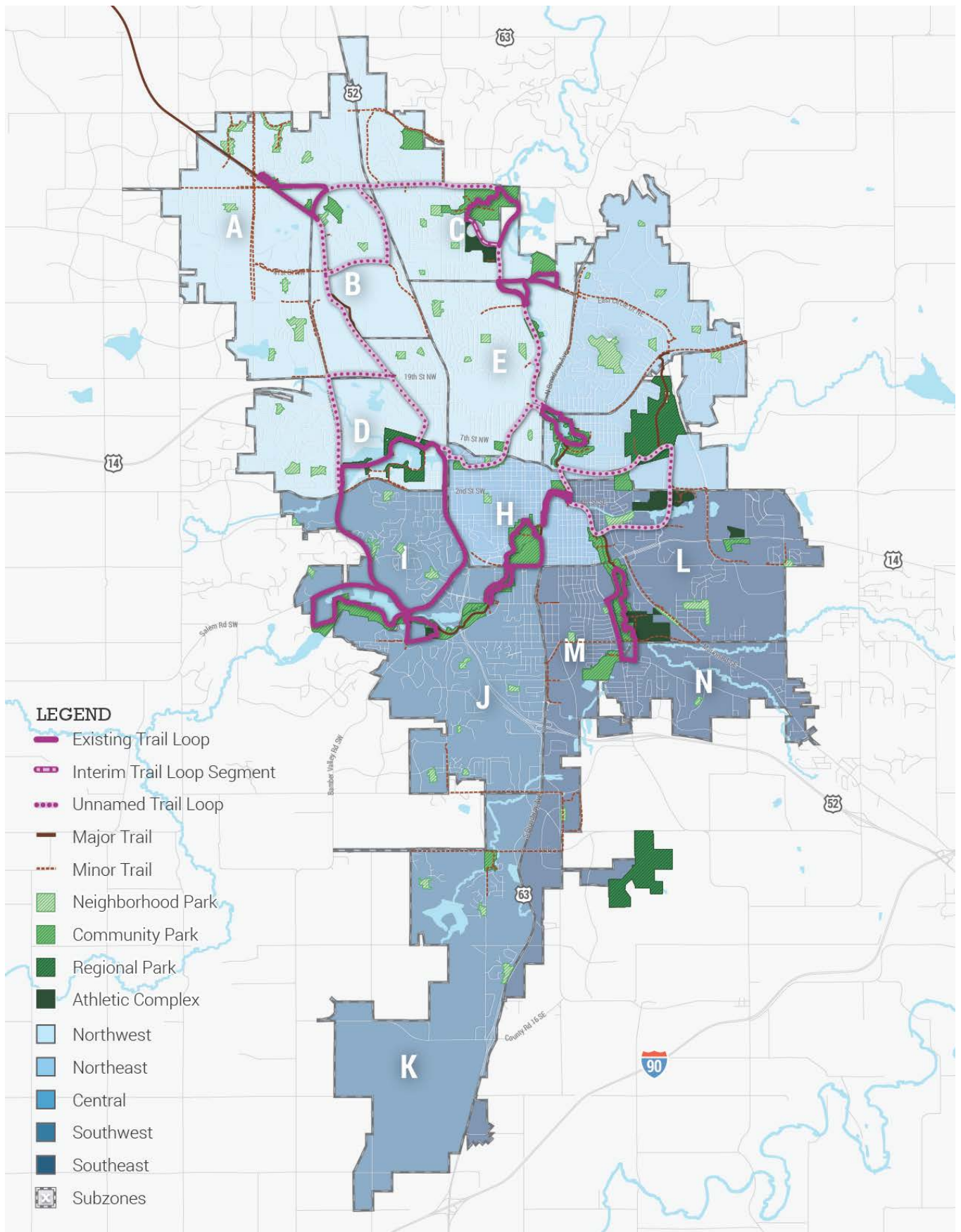
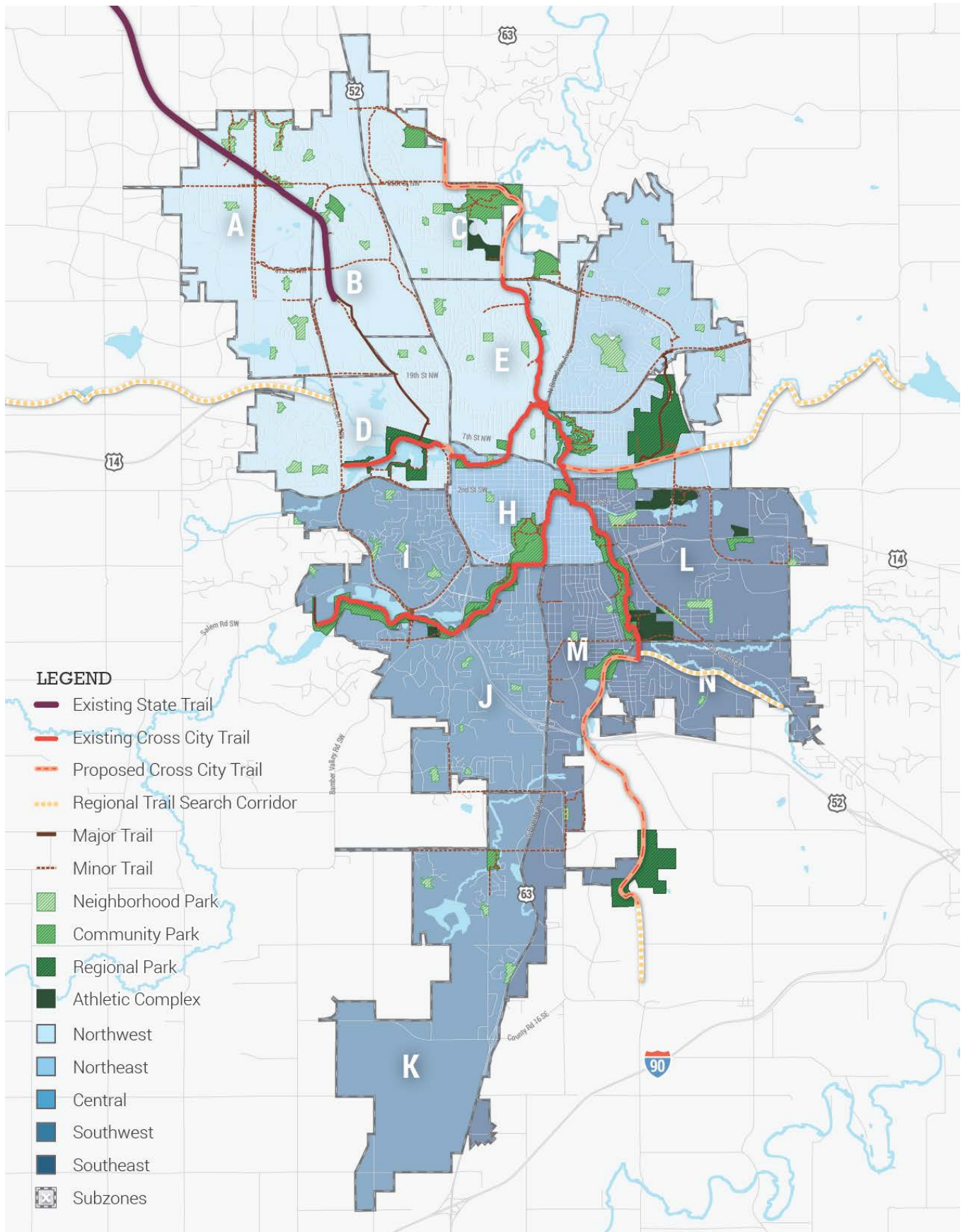




FIGURE 5-11: EXISTING & PROPOSED CROSS CITY & REGIONAL TRAILS





*Expand natural surface trail system*

- 1.1.8. Ensure there is at least one ADA accessible trail in each zone within a natural area 10 acres or larger.
- 1.2. Diversify available trails to serve specific recreational purposes.
  - 1.2.1. Develop a system of natural surface trails to provide hiking opportunities by:
    - » Creating a GIS inventory of the existing natural surface trails;
    - » Developing and providing maps of natural surface trails to the public;
    - » Determining the current level of access and distribution;
    - » Identifying a goal for access and distribution;
    - » Identifying and prioritizing gaps to address.
  - 1.2.2. Look for opportunities to expand mountain biking in new locations.
  - 1.2.3. Expand cross-country skiing opportunities by:
    - » Communicating the availability of community parks, regional parks, and golf courses for ungroomed cross-country skiing;
    - » Groom additional cross-country ski trails.

## **2. Support Use of Trails for Active Transportation to Daily Destinations.**

- 2.1. Facilitate implementation of the Rochester Area Bicycle Master Plan in the parks and recreation system.
  - 2.1.1. Recognize the corridor classifications of Regional Bikeway, Major City Bikeway, Local Area Bikeway, and Express Bikeway as set forth in the plan as they pertain to trails under the jurisdiction of Parks and Recreation.
  - 2.1.2. Work with other agencies and departments to aid in the implementation of the goals set forth in the plan.
  - 2.1.3. Sign on-street bike lanes and right-of-way paths/sidewalks when utilized to supplement the trail system, transitioning these to off-road facilities where and when possible.
  - 2.1.4. Support the connection of the bikeways and trail system with public transit, providing flexibility and choice for travel options.
  - 2.1.5. Support efforts to close safe routes to school gaps.



- 2.2. Make biking the easy and safe choice.
  - 2.2.1. Provide bike racks, water fountains, changing facilities, and restrooms at select facilities to support bicycle commuting.
  - 2.2.2. Identify changes in highly-utilized destinations and re-evaluate maintenance and winter plowing policies as needed.
  - 2.2.3. Install bike racks at all regional parks, community parks, athletic complexes, and special use facilities.



*Provide bike racks at high-use facilities*

### **3. Provide a Welcoming and Safe Environment for All Trail Users.**

- 3.1. Increase public awareness of the trail system through marketing, signage, print, and electronic navigation tools.
  - 3.1.1. Improve system navigation by implementing the existing wayfinding plan and expanding its reach to areas outside of the Central Zone.
  - 3.1.2. Reinforce the economic and health benefit of trails.
  - 3.1.3. Promote the trail system as an integral part Rochester's quality of life and the community's ability to attract economic development.
- 3.2. Improve the trail user experience.
  - 3.2.1. Ensure public awareness of proper trail use, seasonal trail closures, and trail etiquette.
  - 3.2.2. Implement a vegetation management program to maintain/trim/thin vegetation back from trails to improve safety.
  - 3.2.3. Update the winter trail maintenance policy on an annual basis based on available funding and staffing, re-evaluating and amending it based on factors like historical maintenance, commuting routes, safe routes to school, and requests from residents.
  - 3.2.4. Expand lighting on select routes to increase safety.
  - 3.2.5. Add call boxes along key, highly-traveled routes to enhance the perception of safety for students, visitors, and commuters.
  - 3.2.6. Provide potable water sources along the heavily-used portions of the trail.



*Install bike lockers for downtown commuters*

## 4. Integrate Trails into the Planning and Design Process for Development and Public Improvements.

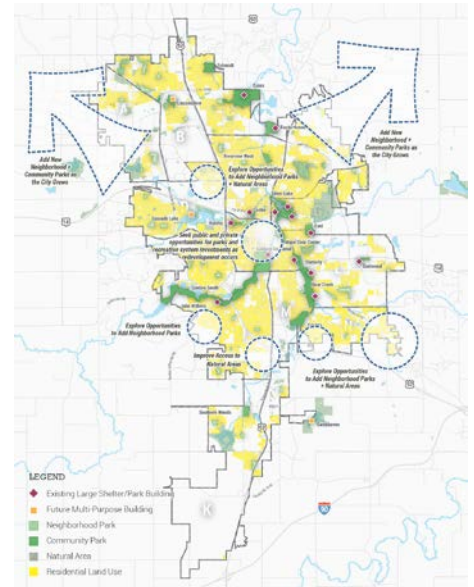
- 4.1. Ensure trails are addressed in the development process.
  - 4.1.1. Proactively acquire and preserve land, right-of-way, or easements for trails identified in this Plan.
  - 4.1.2. During the development design review process, provide clear direction on creating an integrated trail system that provides connections to key locations and the ability for users to complete walking/biking loops.
- 4.2. Make trail planning part of internal processes.
  - 4.2.1. Include bike and trail facilities as appropriate in *all* new and reconstruction street projects and public infrastructure projects.
  - 4.2.2. Evaluate opportunities for the continuation or establishment of trail connections when roads are redesigned, abandoned or closed.
  - 4.2.3. Annually review missing segments and priority segments as part of the City Capital Improvement Plan processes.
  - 4.2.4. Meet with Public Works and other agencies to discuss trails on a semi-annual basis to coordinate/collaborate on upcoming projects.
  - 4.2.5. Initiate planning on priority segments to position projects for grant funding. This could include preparing preliminary plans/layouts, evaluating right-of-way needs, environmental documentation, and review of historic resources.
- 4.3. Take innovative steps towards supporting bicycle infrastructure
  - 4.3.1. Support the installation of bike lockers in key locations around downtown.
  - 4.3.2. Support a cost-share program to encourage existing businesses to install bike racks.
  - 4.3.3. Support the implementation of the Nice Ride bike sharing program and regularly evaluate for infrastructure improvements that will support program expansion.
  - 4.3.4. Support the development of an ordinance requiring enhanced or secure bicycle parking and shower facilities for certain types/sizes of new construction.

# Natural Areas

Rochester has thousands of acres of natural areas, defined as an outdoor space one (1) acre or larger where native and naturalized vegetation is the dominant feature and where public access is provided on a limited basis. Natural areas provide an important link between people and their environment. Planning for natural areas strives to provide a balance between public access and recreation with the need to protect and conserve natural resources.

## 1. Improve Access to Natural Areas.

- 1.1. Ensure residents have access to natural areas 1 acre or larger within  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 mile of their homes.
  - 1.1.1. Map the parks and recreation system's natural areas to better document location, size, and distribution.
  - 1.1.2. Seek opportunities to provide access to natural areas within subzones D and J.
  - 1.1.3. Identify and strategize to acquire areas of natural value or open space in growth areas outside of the City to ensure access to natural areas within  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile of new residential areas.
  - 1.1.4. Encourage interaction with natural areas by providing signage, wayfinding, and maps to guide people to natural areas.
- 1.2. Ensure residents have access to large natural areas with an ADA accessible trail within a long bike ride or short car ride from residences.
  - 1.2.1. Expand naturalized areas in the Central Zone around South Fork of the Zumbro River, Cascade Creek, or Bear Creek in the Central Zone, and ensure an ADA accessible trail loop in this area.
  - 1.2.2. Maintain at least one 20 acre or larger natural area in each of the Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast Zones.
  - 1.2.3. Expand trails in one of the 20 acre or larger natural areas in the NW zone to make an ADA Accessible loop.



Park and natural area improvement areas (an enlarged version can be found in Figure 5-1 on page 5-2)





*Quarry Hill should be supported as the community hub for environmental education, nature-based programming, and natural area stewardship*

## 2. Preserve Areas of Natural Value.

- 2.1. Support Biodiversity
  - 2.1.1. Create a Natural Resources Inventory that identifies, designates, and categorizes natural areas managed by Parks & Recreation by size, quality, and habitat type. Use the Natural Resources Inventory to develop Natural Resource Management Plans for designated areas. Prioritize the development of plans for environmental parks, linear parks, reservoirs, regional parks, and community parks.
  - 2.1.2. Establish technical expertise in natural area establishment and maintenance through hiring, professional development, and contracting.
- 2.2. Identify and prioritize the protection of natural areas that provide corridors/linkages between parks and other destinations.
- 2.3. Work with Public Works on stream bank erosion control efforts and utilize natural stream bank erosion control techniques instead of concrete armor or rip-rap.
- 2.4. Utilize land trusts, conservation easements, and partnerships to protect natural areas.
- 2.5. Coordinate with Rochester - Olmsted County Planning Department for the development of plans that outline preservation of natural areas in future private development areas.

## 3. Expand Nature-Based Programming, Outreach, and Education About Natural Areas.

- 3.1. Provide interpretive information about natural resources/habitat in environmental and regional parks, as well as at key features in other park components (i.e. Silver Lake).
- 3.2. Improve education/marketing of the value of natural areas.
- 3.3. Support Quarry Hill Nature Center as the community hub for environmental education, nature-based programming, and natural area stewardship.
  - 3.3.1. Work with the Friends of Quarry Hill to implement the development and natural resource recommendations from the 2015 Quarry Hill Master Plan and their strategic plan.
  - 3.3.2. Explore/support nature-based programming provided by the center at satellite locations across the city.



## Planning for Future Parks & Natural Areas

Access to parks, natural areas, and outdoor recreation is vital to the long-term sustainability and livability of a community. Parks and public lands serve an essential role in preserving natural resources and wildlife habitat, protecting clean water and clean air, and providing open space for current and future generations. Parks and natural areas provide an essential connection for people of all ages and abilities to the life-enhancing benefits of nature and the outdoors. The quality of life for every person in Rochester is improved by clean, green and accessible parks and open space.

As such, it is critical to identify and preserve sensitive natural areas and open spaces that could be added to the current system to adequately support the area's growing population and future needs for parks, open spaces and natural areas. The strategic acquisition and preservation of these important landscapes can lead to a more robust and connected park and open spaces system, improved human health, cleaner air and water, and enhanced wildlife habitat, and can produce economic benefits for the Rochester community. It is recommended that the land acquisition strategy uses a standards-based methodology for prioritizing key preservation areas. Figure 5-11 illustrates several potential sites in Rochester that should be considered for preservation. These include:

### Sensitive Natural Features

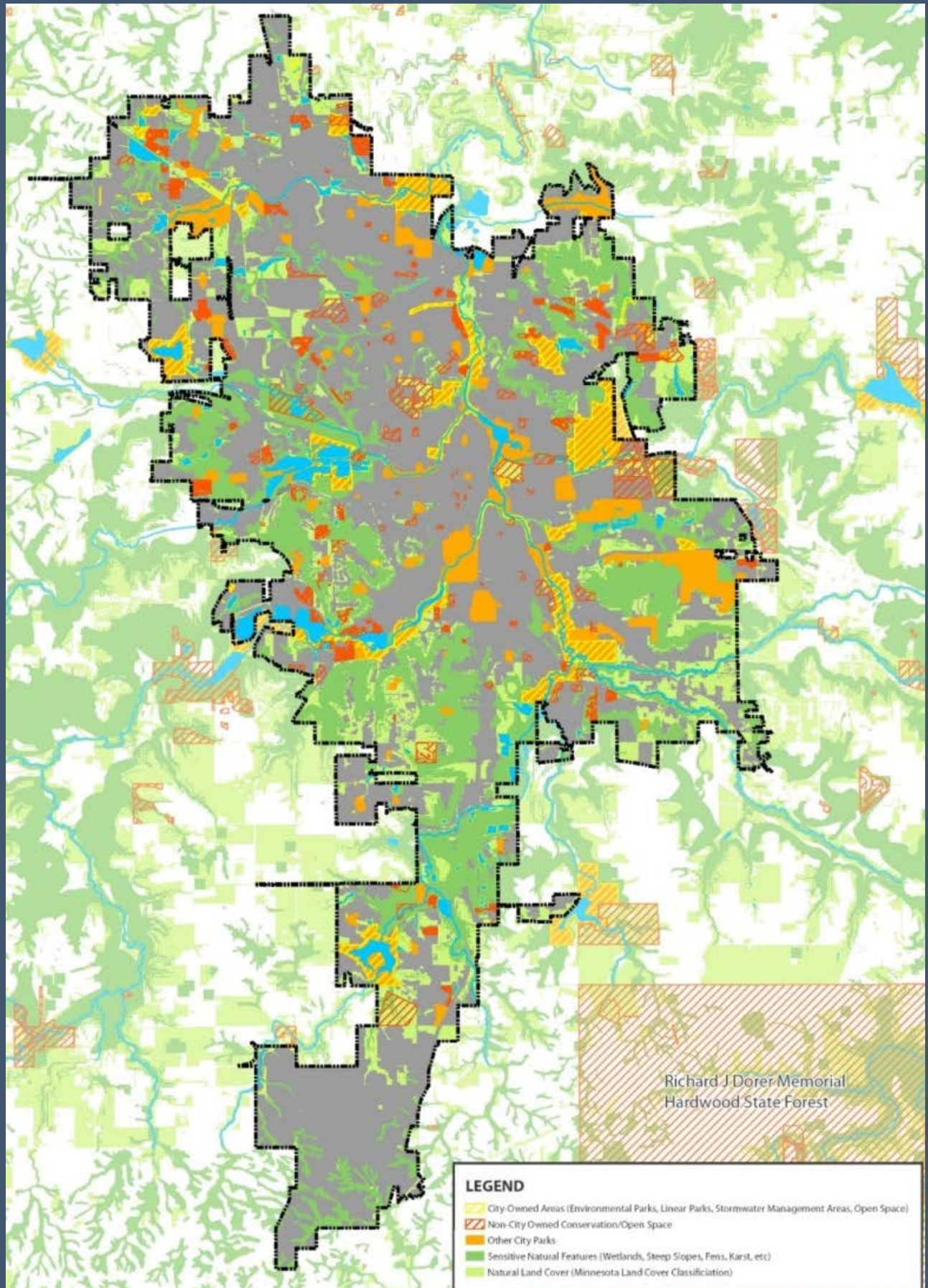
- » Steep slopes (>18%)
- » Fens, wetlands and hydric soils
- » Decorah edge
- » Karst features

### Areas of Natural Land Cover

- » Forests and woodlands
- » Grasslands
- » Shrublands



FIGURE 5-12: PRESERVATION AREAS





# Programming

Users engage in recreation programming for enjoyment, health, skill development, socialization, enrichment, entertainment, physical fitness, and relaxation. In Rochester organizations and associations provide most of the programming and community events. Given the ongoing success of these partnerships in meeting the community's needs, the System Plan focuses recommendations on expanding community gathering opportunities, ensuring programming gaps are addressed, and increasing awareness about opportunities.

## 1. Expand Opportunities for Local Community Gathering and Education.

- 1.1. Program and support partners' events to draw residents to parks and recreation facilities.
  - 1.1.1. Scale events appropriately to the type of park, such as concerts in community parks and picnics in neighborhood parks.
  - 1.1.2. Ensure there are winter sports and opportunities for social connections (sledding, skating, and snowshoeing).
  - 1.1.3. Collaborate with cultural groups to provide community events in the parks.
  - 1.1.4. Establish and promote informal or self-directed recreation.
  - 1.1.5. Support open street festivals or public art forums that highlight interesting things about Rochester.
  - 1.1.6. Partner with the schools and other organizations to provide community education in the parks.
  - 1.1.7. Explore opportunities with partner organizations to share space for similar programming.
- 1.2. Encourage a sense of community at the neighborhood level by partnering with RNeighbors to host events, block parties, and neighborhood "nights out" at parks and park facilities to help strengthen relationships and the overall health of the community

## 2. Encourage Recreation Participation by All Rochester Residents, Regardless of Age Or Ability.

- 2.1. Maintain and expand the Adaptive Recreation program as necessary to meet needs.
  - 2.1.1. Annually analyze participation rates, requests, and user evaluations to determine program offerings.
  - 2.1.2. Explore partnerships with local organizations to diversify and expand offerings.
- 2.2. Expand opportunities for affordable or low-cost recreation within Rochester parks and recreation facilities.
  - 2.2.1. Ensure the tiered pricing structure (Figure 5-13) prioritizes community benefits over individual benefits.



*Utilize permanent park facilities as event space when possible*



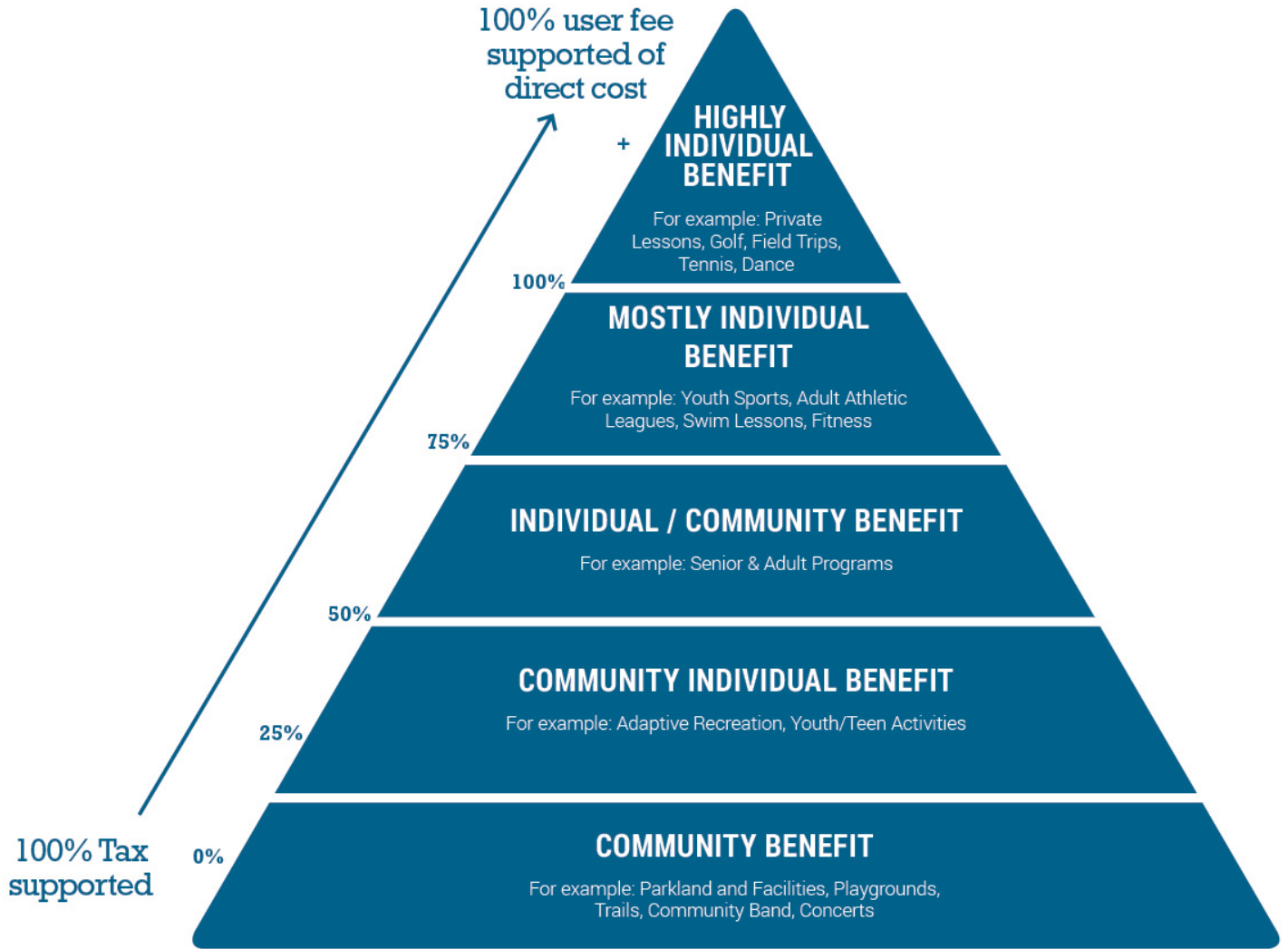
*Promote active living at all ages*



*Maintain and expand partnerships for adaptive recreation programming, like Miracle League*

- 2.2.2. Provide grants and scholarships to eliminate financial barriers to City sponsored events and programs.
- 2.2.3. Encourage associations that are supported by Parks and Recreation to provide grants and scholarships to eliminate financial barriers to participation.
- 2.2.4. Organize informal winter sledding, snowshoeing, ice skating, and other events.
- 2.2.5. Collaborate with partner groups to offer free and low-cost summer youth programming.
- 2.2.6. Reduce transportation barriers by locating programming throughout the community. For example, distributing tennis lessons throughout the system rather than at one particular park.
- 2.3. Activate the downtown parks and open spaces with more destinations and activities year-round, 7 days a week, daytime and nighttime.
  - 2.3.1. Events that activate downtown parks and open spaces.
  - 2.3.2. Establish a clear, criteria-based permitting system for vendors to operate in parks.
  - 2.3.3. Partner with local restaurants and food trucks to offer refreshments and snacks in parks and open spaces utilizing a concessionaire fee system.
- 2.4. Encourage, partner with, and support existing recreational clubs and associations in the city to fill programming gaps that the City cannot fill.
  - 2.4.1. Seek input from schools and residents to find overlaps in program offerings.
  - 2.4.2. Form a working group made up of city staff, community recreation leaders, and school representatives to meet quarterly to discuss programming needs.
  - 2.4.3. Work with partners to modify programming to meet the needs of diverse populations, such as offering times for female only fitness or swimming.
  - 2.4.4. Identify where organizations' goals and objectives overlap.

FIGURE 5-13: TIERED PRICING STRUCTURE



Source: Cost Recovery Pyramid from GreenPlay LLC





Support events like Rochesterfest

### 3. Expand Marketing and Awareness of Facilities And Programs.

- 3.1. Encourage use of parks and recreational facilities for events, tournaments, and programming.
  - 3.1.1. Collaborate with Rochester Amateur Sports Commission, athletic organizations, and other partners to promote parks and facilities, using a clear, criteria-based process for doing so.
  - 3.1.2. Support community events and festivals to bring people into the parks (e.g. Rochesterfest, 4<sup>th</sup> of July).
  - 3.1.3. Ensure recognition of Parks and Recreation as a sponsoring partner by providing and requesting the use of Parks and Recreation logo on promotional materials and signage.
- 3.2. Ensure consistent communication between City staff, schools, and recreation organizations.
  - 3.2.1. Establish a regularly meeting working group of City staff, School representatives, recreation association representatives, and other members as necessary.
    - 1. Discuss status of recreational facilities used by organizations—cost, maintenance, updates needed;
    - 2. Manage expectations of the city and of the organizations;
    - 3. Discuss opportunities to work together to meet shared goals.
  - 3.2.2. Evaluate city staffing and duties to ensure sufficient capacity for coordinating and managing use of city facilities by recreation associations, volunteers, and city programs.
- 3.3. Use the parks website, local media, and other technology for promotion of recreation opportunities.
  - 3.3.1. Develop process and standards for publicizing community events using parks and recreation facilities.
  - 3.3.2. Publicize partner organizations' opportunities on the front page or other easily accessible area.
  - 3.3.3. Expand parks and recreation outreach using social media and local media (paper/radio).

# Sustainability

Sustainability in the parks and recreation system focuses on minimizing impacts of park and facility development, operations and maintenance. This includes a wide range of activities aimed at reducing consumption of resources, minimizing impacts on waterways and natural areas, and promoting sustainable management of resources. With over 4,200 acres, there are many opportunities for the parks and recreation system to positively impact the ecosystem and be a model for sustainable practices.

## 1. Innovate in Parks with Sustainable Design Practices.

- 1.1. Reduce impacts on waterways and ground water by incorporating stormwater best practices in park and facility design.
  - 1.1.1. Incorporate rain gardens, bio-swales, water retention, and permeable paving when feasible.
  - 1.1.2. Reduce impervious surfaces in the design of parks and facilities.
  - 1.1.3. Use cisterns and other water-saving methods to reduce water consumption.
  - 1.1.4. Establish 50-foot vegetation buffers around wetlands, rivers, ponds, reservoirs, and lakes on appropriate public land and parks.
- 1.2. Consider utilizing sustainable building practices, including locally sourced materials, when developing, expanding, or renovating facilities.
- 1.3. Support city goals regarding renewable energy use.
  - 1.3.1. Use solar, wind, geothermal, and other reliable technologies where and when feasible for lighting, heating, and cooling.
  - 1.3.2. Improve energy efficiency of facilities when renovating and constructing new.
  - 1.3.3. Use native trees/shrubs planted in appropriate locations to conserve energy.

## 2. Become a Model for Sustainable Maintenance Practices.

- 2.1. Offer recycling options in community, athletic, and regional parks.
- 2.2. Manage the use of pesticides in parks consistent with the current plan.
  - 2.2.1. Utilize integrated pest management strategies to control nuisance plants, weeds, insects, rodents, etc.
  - 2.2.2. Implement a turf conversion program to transition underutilized turf areas to forest or other native cover.



*Stormwater management practices reduce impacts on waterways and groundwater*



*Utilize renewable energy generation techniques*



*Vegetative buffers along roadways and around water resources protect water quality*





Native Prairie Plantings



Low Maintenance, No Mow Lawn



Stormwater Bioswale



Stormwater Plantings

## Pesticides, Parks, and People: Strategies for reducing the use of toxic chemicals in parklands

Lawn space in the public realm has many benefits; it provides a more aesthetically pleasing and softer surface for play and leisure when compared to hard-packed dirt, it stabilizes dust, absorbs rather than reflects sunlight, providing some cooling, and absorbs carbon dioxide. While these are beneficial, lawns are still monocultures that support fewer species of insects, birds, mammals and other organisms that work together to foster an ecosystem that provides clean air, soil, and water. In addition, the inputs of chemicals and energy required to maintain a turfgrass lawn to the typical standard of an impeccable green carpet are high. Several adjustments to current practices can result in lower rates of pesticide applications (including herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and other substances meant for destroying pests), reduced labor and energy inputs, reduced human exposure to carcinogens, and increases in habitat. Strategies include:

- » **Integrated Pest Management** or IPM, addresses pests such as weeds or insects by utilizing a combination of biological controls (use of natural enemies), maintenance practices, increased tolerance of smaller infestations, and pesticides when needed.
- » **Education** about the benefits of more sustainable alternatives and appreciating a more natural appearance of parks.
- » **Development of low-impact lawns** that include the use of fescue grasses, buffalo grass, and other broadleaf, meadow-like components, which require less water and fertilizer than bluegrass.
- » **Conversion of underutilized turfgrass** areas into native tall grass meadows.
- » **Pesticide-free Maintenance Practices** such as crack sealing, mowing, propane weed burning, hand weeding, tillage, and mulching.
- » **Designing for reduced pesticide use** includes utilizing low maintenance, spreading groundcovers and shrubs in landscape beds, mulch in tree wells, and fewer fence lines.
- » **Modeling existing Pesticide Free Parks Programs** such as those of Eugene and Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington.



- 2.2.3. Look for opportunities to convert existing landscape areas (non-native/introduced species) into native plantings.
- 2.3. Use vegetation management to protect water quality.
  - 2.3.1. Use natural stream bank erosion control methods.
  - 2.3.2. Minimize the application to turf of chemicals that will leach into ground and surface water.
- 2.4. Experiment with sustainability pilot programs.
  - 2.4.1. Test out a pesticide-free park.
  - 2.4.2. Create a pollinator-friendly lawn that incorporates flowering perennials such as white clover, fescue grass, and self-heal.
- 2.5. Raise public awareness about sustainability and the City's efforts through social media, interpretation, and other marketing information.



*Clear invasive species, like buckthorn, to protect/convert back to native landscapes*

### **3. Continue to Implement Progressive Urban Forestry Practices.**

- 3.1. In continued recognition of the importance of a healthy urban forest to the health of the community, support and encourage the planting of trees and the care of trees in the community.
  - 3.1.1. Continue to follow and implement the Urban Forest Management Plan.
  - 3.1.2. Continue to follow and implement the Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan.
  - 3.1.3. Continue to follow and enforce Rochester City Ordinance 47 - Tree Management.
  - 3.1.4. Continue to follow and enforce the Boulevard Tree Planting requirements found in the Land Development Manual.



*Pollinator-friendly practices support biodiversity*



*Fitness equipment along trails and next to playgrounds for adults*

# Public Health

As host and home of the Mayo Clinic, Rochester is focused on helping its residents and visitors make healthy choices about how they live, work, learn, and recreate. The parks and recreation system serves a valuable role in providing facilities for many activities. Leveraging that system to its maximum benefit requires broad partnerships with other units of government, local organizations, health care facilities, and educational institutions.

## 1. Leverage Parks and Recreation to Improve Public Health and Well-Being.

- 1.1. Encourage active living.
  - 1.1.1. Work with Public Works to support implementation of trail recommendations to promote healthy lifestyles.
  - 1.1.2. Support the implementation of the Nice Ride bike sharing program and regularly evaluate for infrastructure improvements that will support program expansion.
  - 1.1.3. Add outdoor exercise equipment adjacent to playgrounds to support adult activity while children are playing.
  - 1.1.4. Add outdoor exercise equipment along trails.
  - 1.1.5. Increase exposure to the array of recreational opportunities by providing low-cost and low commitment trial programs targeted towards children, seniors, and immigrants.
  - 1.1.6. Create an annual winter program to address seasonal affective disorder by providing a day for free or reduced equipment rental rates (cross country skis, fat tire bikes, etc.) and instruction for outdoor activities.
  - 1.1.7. Evaluate and address safety in the parks and along trails during design, development, redevelopment, and vegetation management.
- 1.2. Seek, support, and engage potential partners in addressing public health.
  - 1.2.1. Support private entrepreneurs who may want to provide programming in the parks by developing vendor selection criteria and a permitting process.
  - 1.2.2. Seek collaborations with health care providers and local higher education institutions to implement programming/events/outreach/research opportunities.
  - 1.2.3. Work with local arborists/ecologists/horticulturists to communicate the benefits of trees, forests, and habitat on air quality, water quality, and human health.

## 2. Leverage Parks and Recreation to Build on Rochester's Healthy City Image.

- 2.1. Create a 'Find Your Healthy Place' campaign in the park system.
  - 2.1.1. Bring health specialists to park events to provide information to park visitors.
  - 2.1.2. Use social media to promote the campaign and events.
  - 2.1.3. Establish a permitting policy to support the planting, maintaining, harvesting, and distribution of edible vegetation in parks.
  - 2.1.4. Seek partners to co-host gardening and cooking demonstrations at existing garden plots.
  - 2.1.5. Initiate activities in the parks, such as a 'Count your Steps in the Park' day.
  - 2.1.6. Work with individual artists and arts groups to create interactive installations that address the correlation between parks/natural area visits and mental/physical health.
  - 2.1.7. Collaborate with local schools to encourage the use of parks as outdoor classroom space.
- 2.2. Explore and communicate the health benefits of being outdoors and interacting with nature by developing and maintaining a public service campaign to market the benefits of unstructured nature play for childhood development and the mental and physical health benefits for teens, adults, and seniors.



*Build on and enhance Rochester's healthy city image*



# Public Art

A thriving arts and cultural community is considered vital to creating a vibrant community. The arts enhance livability and economic vitality, bring diverse groups of people together, celebrate history and heritage, enhance learning, raise awareness of social issues, and bring beauty and meaning to the built environment. The parks and recreation system provides a place for art and cultural expression, and the City of Rochester can foster public art through the development of meaningful relationships and partnerships with individuals, organizations, and institutions throughout the community.

## 1. Incorporate Permanent Public Art Into The Fabric Of Parks And Trails.

- 1.1. Seek opportunities to use artist-designed park features rather than standard catalog pieces when repairing, replacing, and developing new amenities in neighborhood and community parks.
  - 1.1.1. Involve artists in park and trail design teams at the beginning of projects to ensure the exploration and inclusion of interactive art features within new development and construction.
  - 1.1.2. Include permanent artistic furnishings such as artist-designed benches, picnic tables, lighting, signage, bike racks, fencing, and trash receptacles within parks and along trails where appropriate. Ensure maintenance and replacement costs for public art are incorporated into department budgets and capital improvement plans.
  - 1.1.3. Explore the creation of a themed park that has multiple, theme-related public art pieces.
- 1.2. Use public art to support and interpret the existing natural, cultural, health, and recreational themes in Rochester.
  - 1.2.1. Develop nature-themed public art within the environmental parks and natural areas in and around Rochester.
  - 1.2.2. Find partners within the community to develop public art that emphasizes and promotes healthy lifestyles to residents and visitors of Rochester.
  - 1.2.3. Reach out to cultural groups in the development of public art that can highlight the community's diversity.



*Install permanent public art displays*

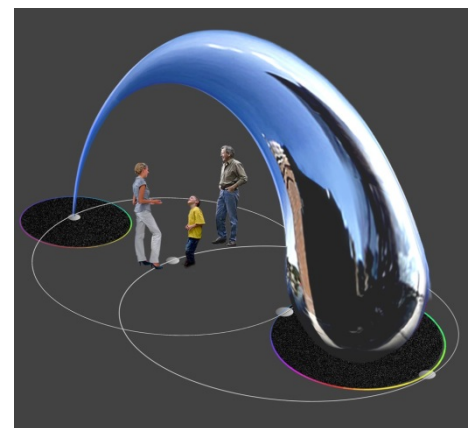
## 2. Include Temporary and Seasonal Art in Rochester Parks.

- 2.1. Develop partnerships with local artists and other private arts organizations to create temporary public art installations in parks around the city.
  - 2.1.1. Create a public art working group made up of city staff, a representative of the Greater Rochester Arts and Cultural Trust, local artists, and resident representatives that meets a few times per year to discuss opportunities for public art displays.
  - 2.1.2. Aim for one temporary art display per season, such as winter ice sculptures downtown, paddling and rowing related art along the river in the summer, and harvest/local food art in the fall.
  - 2.1.3. Partner with school groups to develop public art in local parks.
- 2.2. Encourage the use of parks for performance art.
  - 2.2.1. Identify, develop, and maintain a set of outdoor performance spaces distributed throughout the City. These spaces should range in size and formality.
  - 2.2.2. Partner with school groups, the Greater Rochester Arts and Cultural Trust, and others to offer theatrical and musical performances in city parks.
  - 2.2.3. Collaborate with cultural groups and the Greater Rochester Arts and Cultural Trust to offer performances in local parks.
- 2.3. Incorporate public art initiatives into existing and future events and festivals in Rochester.
  - 2.3.1. Work with event planners to incorporate and suggest opportunities for art displays and interactive art as part of all future events
  - 2.3.2. Partner with surrounding communities, the Greater Rochester Arts and Cultural Trust, and arts organizations to promote local and regional art to Rochester residents and visitors

**Rochester Parks and Recreation continually strives to make its system accessible. See page 3-30 for more information about its ongoing efforts**



*Support temporary public art displays and performances*



*New public art created by Po Shu Wang will be installed at the Mayo Civic Center in 2017*

## Asset Management Plan

An Asset Management Plan catalogs maintenance, renovation, and replacement needs for the majority of the City's park assets. The purpose of the plan is to establish an accurate inventory of park assets and their conditions to help identify and prioritize needs for renovation and replacement. This inventory would include playgrounds, sports facilities, beaches, and amenities like shelters, restrooms and benches. Asset Management Plans assist in identifying and communicating system needs, and can also assist in sufficient planning for long-term maintenance and replacement costs.

# Management and Operations

While the results are visible throughout, management and operations rarely make the list of the public's desired improvements to a parks and recreation system. However, management and operations practices are important for the long-range success and economic sustainability of the parks and recreation system. Recommendations for Rochester focus on improving operational efficiencies and capabilities, maintenance, communications, and programming evaluation.

## 1. Improve Operational Efficiencies and Capabilities.

- 1.1. Disperse and decentralize maintenance facilities to reduce travel time across the city to provide routine maintenance of parks and facilities.
  - 1.1.1. Relocate the existing maintenance facility adjacent to Mayo Field to a more functional location and ensure the new facility is sufficient in size and configuration to meet the department's operational needs.
  - 1.1.2. Continue to implement the Essex Park maintenance facility as a north operations satellite facility.
- 1.2. Ensure Parks and Recreation's ability to efficiently and effectively achieve its mission when responding to requests to address the needs of other departments.
- 1.3. Explore options to maximize the use of volunteers to support park operations and programming.
  - 1.3.1. Expand partnerships with local neighborhood groups to support improvements and activities in their neighborhood park.
  - 1.3.2. Collaborate with local groups that can oversee volunteers for specific activities (i.e. buckthorn removal, community event, etc.)

## 2. Efficiently Maintain Assets at a High Level.

- 2.1. Design parks and facilities with maintenance in mind and implement a life-cycle approach.
  - 2.1.1. In developing new assets prepare a feasibility study that includes the following as appropriate: a needs assessment, projected user/participate analysis, development funding method, and lifecycle cost analysis.
  - 2.1.2. Ensure adequate access for maintenance vehicles.
  - 2.1.3. Incorporate strategies for turf maintenance including field rotation, irrigation, etc.
- 2.2. Develop and formalize maintenance priorities.
  - 2.2.1. Develop tiered maintenance level standards for routine maintenance to guide the most intensive to the least intensive maintenance.



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- 2.2.2. Write maintenance policies and schedules as part of the parks maintenance manual.
- 2.2.3. Prioritize snow removal in areas which become dangerous without immediate attention.
- 2.2.4. Update the winter trail maintenance policy on an annual basis, re-evaluating and amending it based on factors like historical maintenance, commuting routes, safe routes to school, and requests from residents.
- 2.2.5. Standardize athletic field maintenance and construction standards.
- 2.3. Annually inspect all facilities and amenities.
  - 2.3.1. Develop an asset management system that tracks asset condition, critical systems maintenance, and repair and rehabilitation requirements to inform park and facility investment decisions.
  - 2.3.2. Prioritize safety upgrades.
  - 2.3.3. Replace outdated park equipment and materials with high-efficiency models and high-quality, low-maintenance materials.
  - 2.3.4. Annually prepare a five-year Capital Improvement Plan.

### **3. Conduct Highly-Responsive and Engaging Communications with the Public.**

- 3.1. Improve the department's web presence.
  - 3.1.1. Encourage interaction by allowing users the ability to send in or post their pictures from special events or programs.
  - 3.1.2. Leverage the website to obtain feedback on programs, events, parks and facilities, and customer service.
  - 3.1.3. Explore enhancements like Google Translate to allow users to translate pages into language of choice.
  - 3.1.4. Develop an app that provides parks and facilities information, events, trails, hours of operation, contact information, etc.
- 3.2. Expand the current marketing message.
  - 3.2.1. Dedicate staff time to marketing and communications.
  - 3.2.2. Communicate collaborations and active partnerships by developing, updating, and sharing on an annual basis a master list of partnerships.
  - 3.2.3. Communicate the true cost of offering services to the users to ensure they are educated and knowledgeable about what they pay versus what the offerings cost.

### **4. Ensure Engaging and Well-Utilized Programs.**

- 4.1. Create ongoing feedback loops to track for trends in program and event performance
  - 4.1.1. Intercept surveys, online surveys and APP for real-time customer feedback.

- 4.1.2. Use Customer Feedback to enhance services
- 4.1.3. Conduct post-program evaluations
- 4.1.4. Periodic user surveys to identify needs, changing trends, and gaps to address.
- 4.2. Formalize program and event development
  - 4.2.1. Conduct pilot programs/events with follow up surveys or focus groups
  - 4.2.2. Continue program innovation by eliminating and repositioning programs with declining participation in favor of new trends or those better aligned with community needs

# Activity Delivery Guidelines

These guidelines provide direction regarding the frequency and intended geographic distribution of facilities. Geographic access to recreation activities is important to provide equitable and convenient access. The delivery levels range from city to neighborhood scale and define the expectations for the quantity and general location of a particular facility.

TABLE 5-1: ACTIVITY DELIVERY GUIDELINES

Facility	Class of park that may provide this facility
<b>Provide within each Park Subzone</b>	
Playground every 1/2 mile	Mini-park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Regional Park, Athletic Complex
Open Play Field (available in half of neighborhood parks in subzone)	Mini-park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Regional Park, Athletic Complex
Nature Area (1 acre+) every 3/4 mile	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Environmental Park, Linear Park, Regional Park
Basketball - one half court	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Regional Park, Athletic Complex
<b>Provide within each Park Zone</b>	
Diamond Field (baseball, softball) - one set of 3-4 fields	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Regional Park, Athletic Complex
Basketball - one or two full size courts, prioritize locations with parking	Community Park, Athletic Complex
Community Garden	Neighborhood Park, Community Park
Hockey/Pleasure Skating	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Athletic Complex
Horseshoes - one set of 2, prioritize locations with shelters	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Regional Park
Interactive water feature - in zones with no other aquatics facility	Community Park, Athletic Complex
Nature Area (20+ acres)	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Regional Park, Environmental, Linear
Natural Playscape	Any park
Pickleball - at least one tennis court striped for pickleball	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Regional Park, Athletic Complex
Rectangular Field (soccer, football, lacrosse) - one group of 6+ fields	Community Park, Athletic Complex
Sand Volleyball - one court, prioritize locations with shelters	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Athletic Complex
Tennis - set of 2-4 courts	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Athletic Complex
<b>Provide within the Community</b>	
Aquatics (pool)	Community Park, Regional Park, Special Use
Aquatics (beach)	Community Park, Regional Park
Archery	Community Park, Regional Park
Community Garden	Community Park
Cross-country Skiing	Community Park, Regional Park, Environmental, Golf
Disc Golf	Community Park
Dog Park	Community Park, Special Use
Golf	Golf
Indoor Athletic Facility	Community Park, Special Use
Indoor Multi-Purpose Facility	Community Park
Mountain Biking	Community Park, Special Use
Nature Center	Community Park, Regional Park, Special Use
Skate Park	Community Park
Sledding	Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Regional Park, Golf
Sports Complex – Outside	Community Park, Athletic Park
Tennis – set of 7 courts	Community Park
Pickleball – set of 6 courts	Community Park



