

City of Princeton Park System Plan

April 11, 2024

City of Princeton Park System Plan

A strategic and comprehensive master plan providing an overall community vision for the parks, trails and recreation for the City of Princeton for the next 10+ years.

It is meant to guide future investments for developments and improvements by establishing goals, policies, objectives, and overall priorities for the park system within Princeton.



Plan Goals and Vision

The following goals and initiatives were prepared as a guide for establishing both short and long term priorities for the parks system, to better meet the needs and desires of the community over the next 10+ years.

1. Strengthen Community Connections
2. Create Spaces to Gather, Interact and Recreate
3. Improve safety and accessibility within the parks
4. Sustain Fiscal & Environmental Responsibility





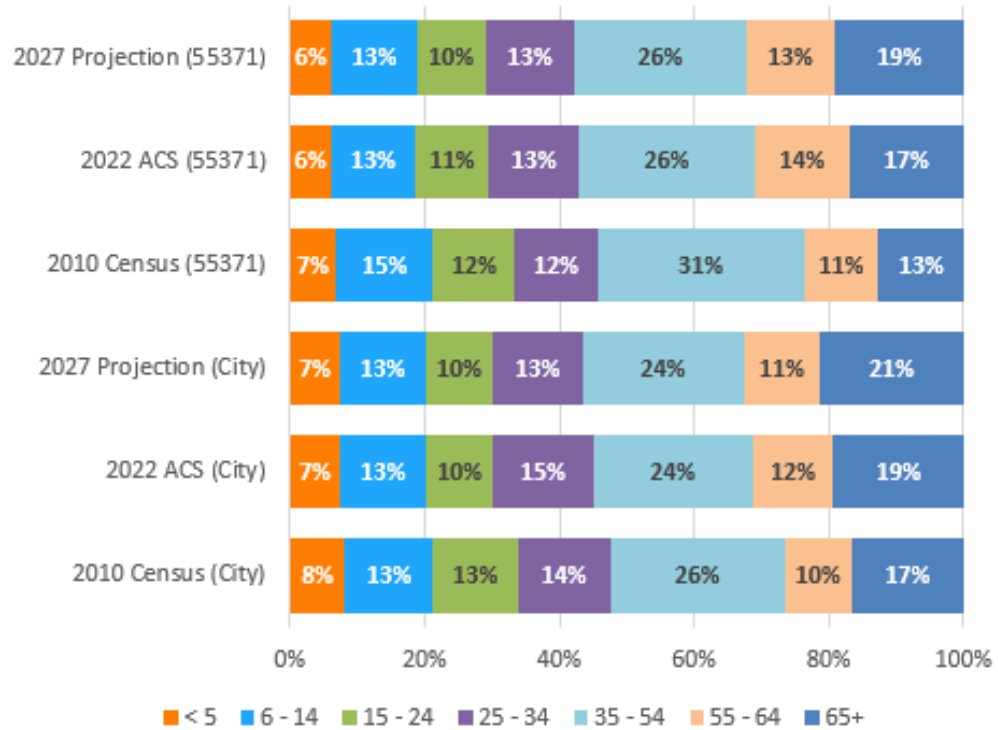
Demographic Trends Affecting Recreation

Nationwide, populations are aging and in need of accessible facilities. In general, accessibility is a trend that relates not only to people with disabilities, but younger generations (think: stroller maneuvering), older generations (think: walking with a cane, poor eyesight). Also, to consider for an aging population is a growing interest in active living as well as providing appropriate recreational programming and opportunities for social gathering.

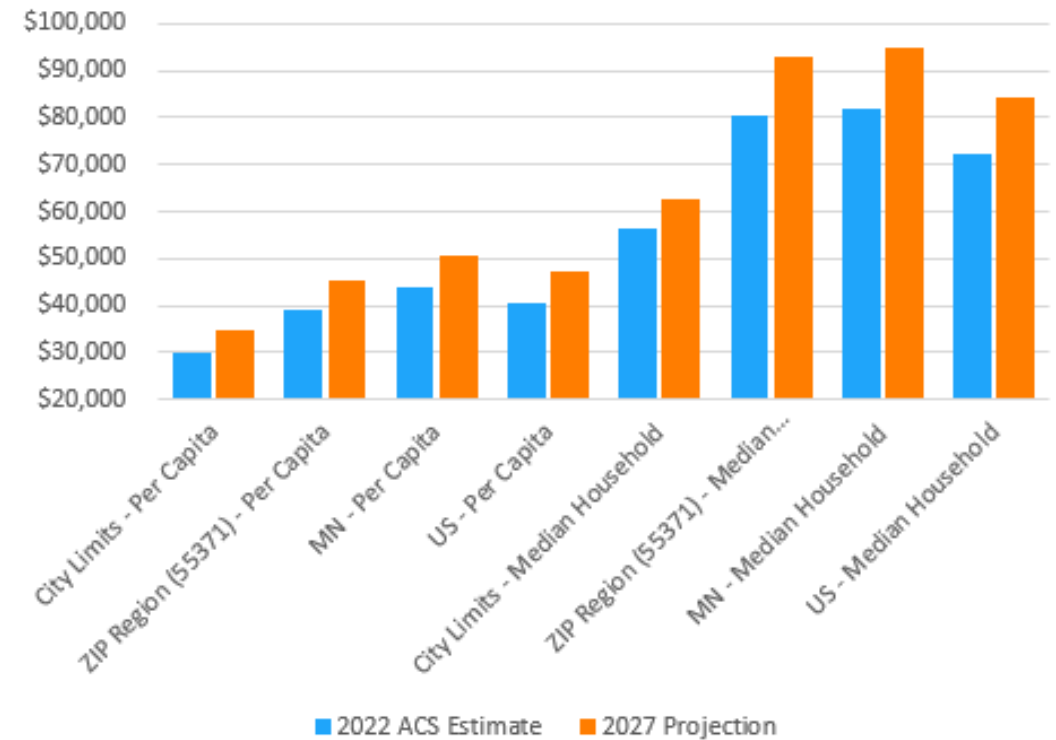
Another concern affecting recreation departments nationwide is barriers to access park programming. Many families today have two working parents and cannot attend during a typical workday with their children. Hosting programs during convenient times for families is important to consider as part of overall recreation offerings.

Demographic Review

Age Segmentation

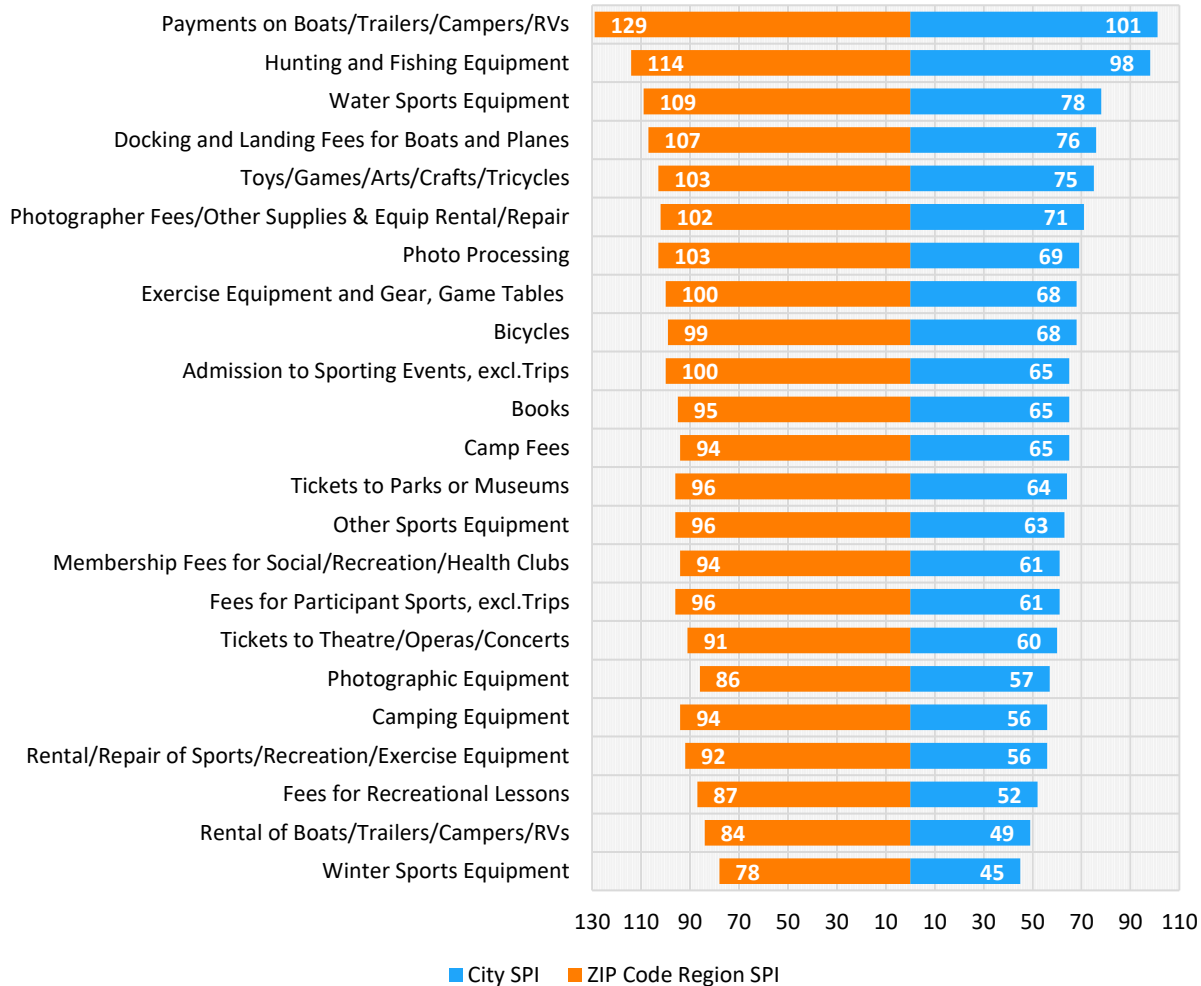


Income

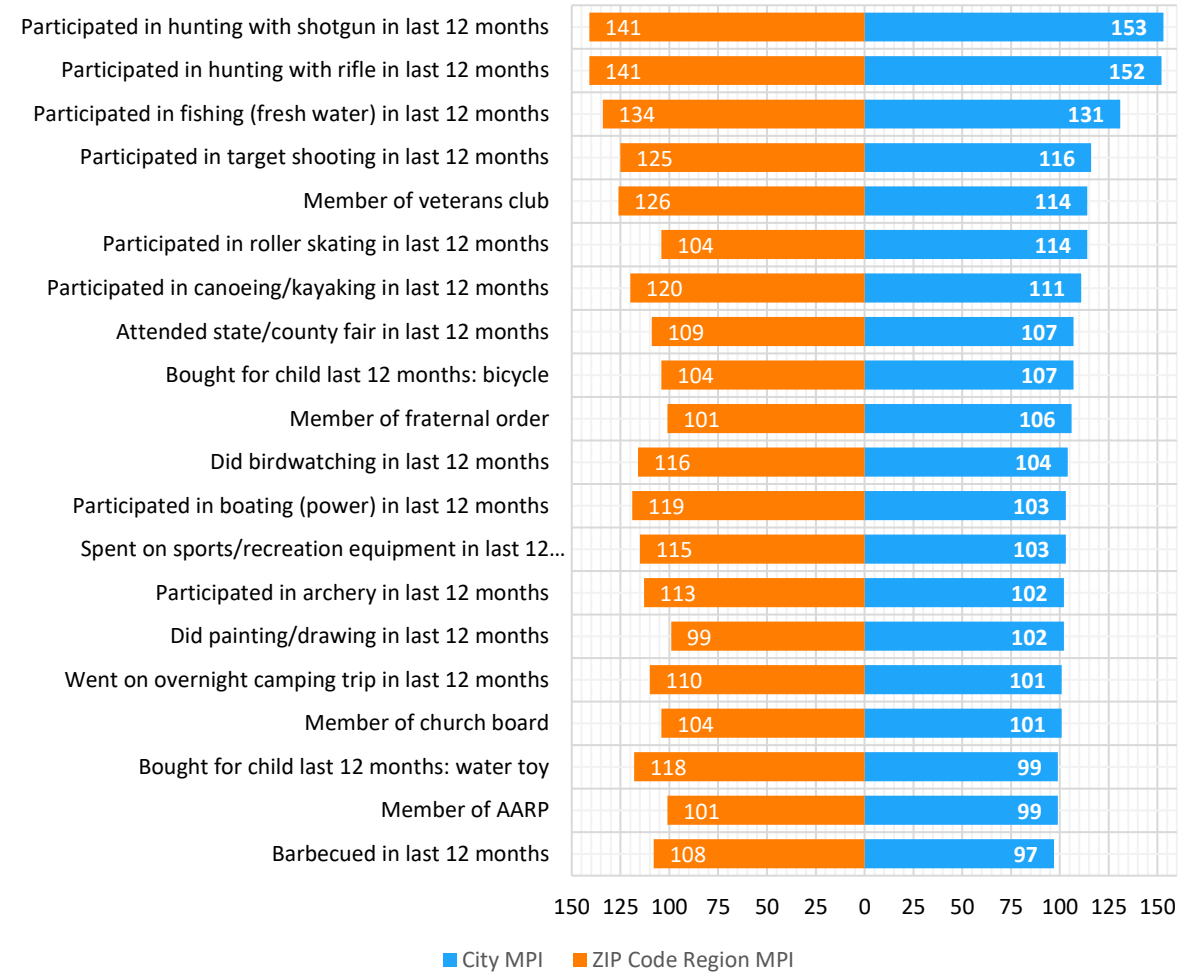


Demographic Review

Recreation Spending Potential Index (SPI)

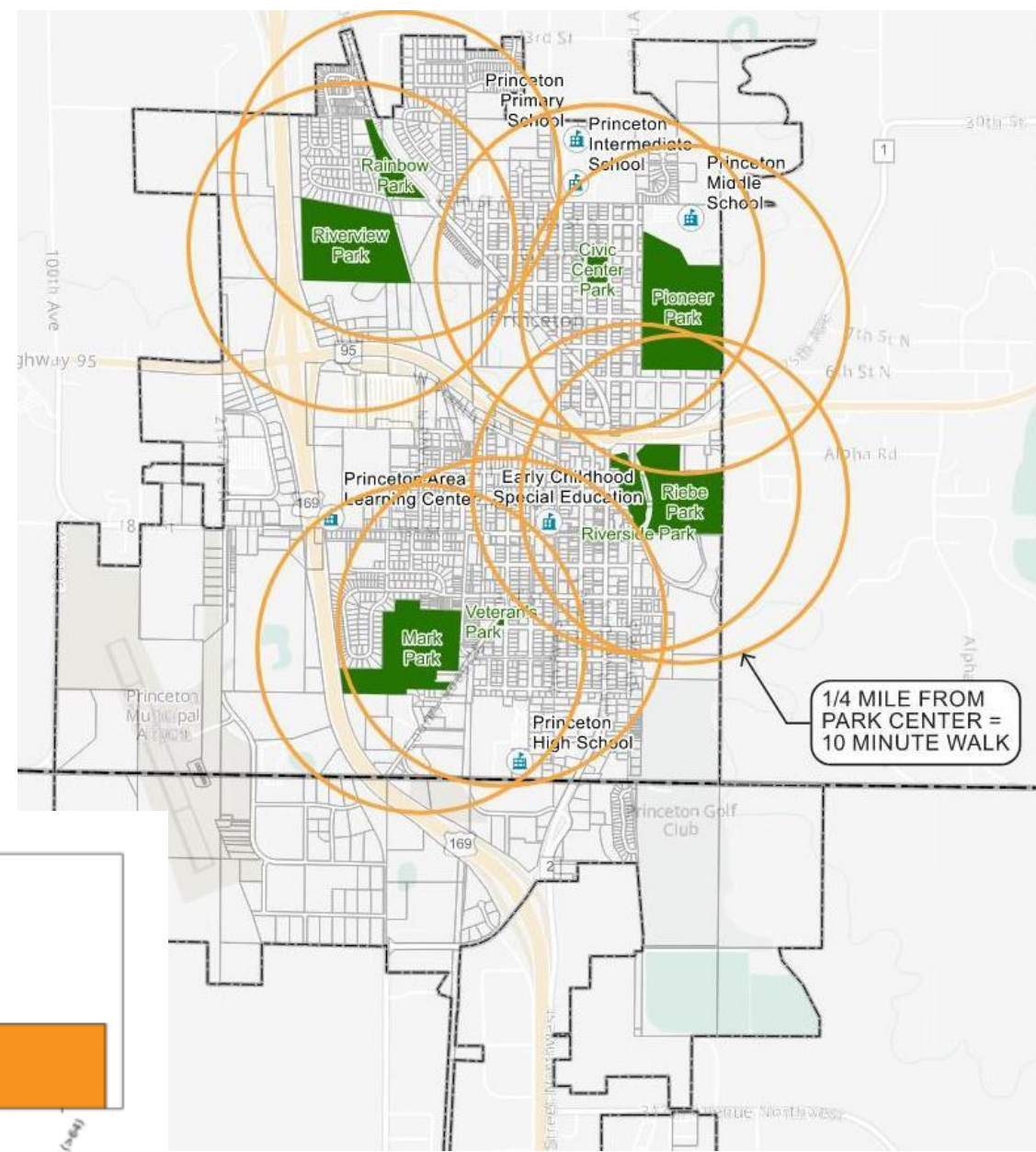


Sports & Leisure Market Potential Index (Top 20)



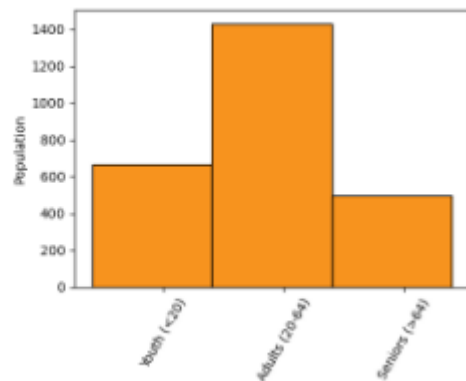
Gap Analysis

One of the goals in national park planning standards, is to ensure that residents are within a 10 minute walking distance from a high-quality public park or open space. Using ParkServe, an online mapping provided by the Trust for Public Land, it shows that 55% of residents within Princeton are within 10 minute walk of a park.



Population	Within a 10-minute walk
Total Population	2,593

Age	Within a 10-minute walk
Children (less than age 20)	667
Adults (age 20 to age 64)	1,430
Seniors (age 65 and up)	497



Proximity Map

NON-CITY RECREATION AND SCHOOLS

SCHOOLS IN PRINCETON

Princeton High School

Amenities: 10 Tennis Courts, 2 Soccer Fields, Baseball Field, Track, Football Field, Multi-Purpose Field

Princeton Middle School

Amenities: Playgrounds, 5 Soccer Fields, Multi-Purpose Field

Princeton Intermediate School

Amenities: Playground

Princeton Primary School

CHURCHES IN PRINCETON

Christ Our Light Catholic Church

Amenities: Playground

Freshwater United Methodist Church

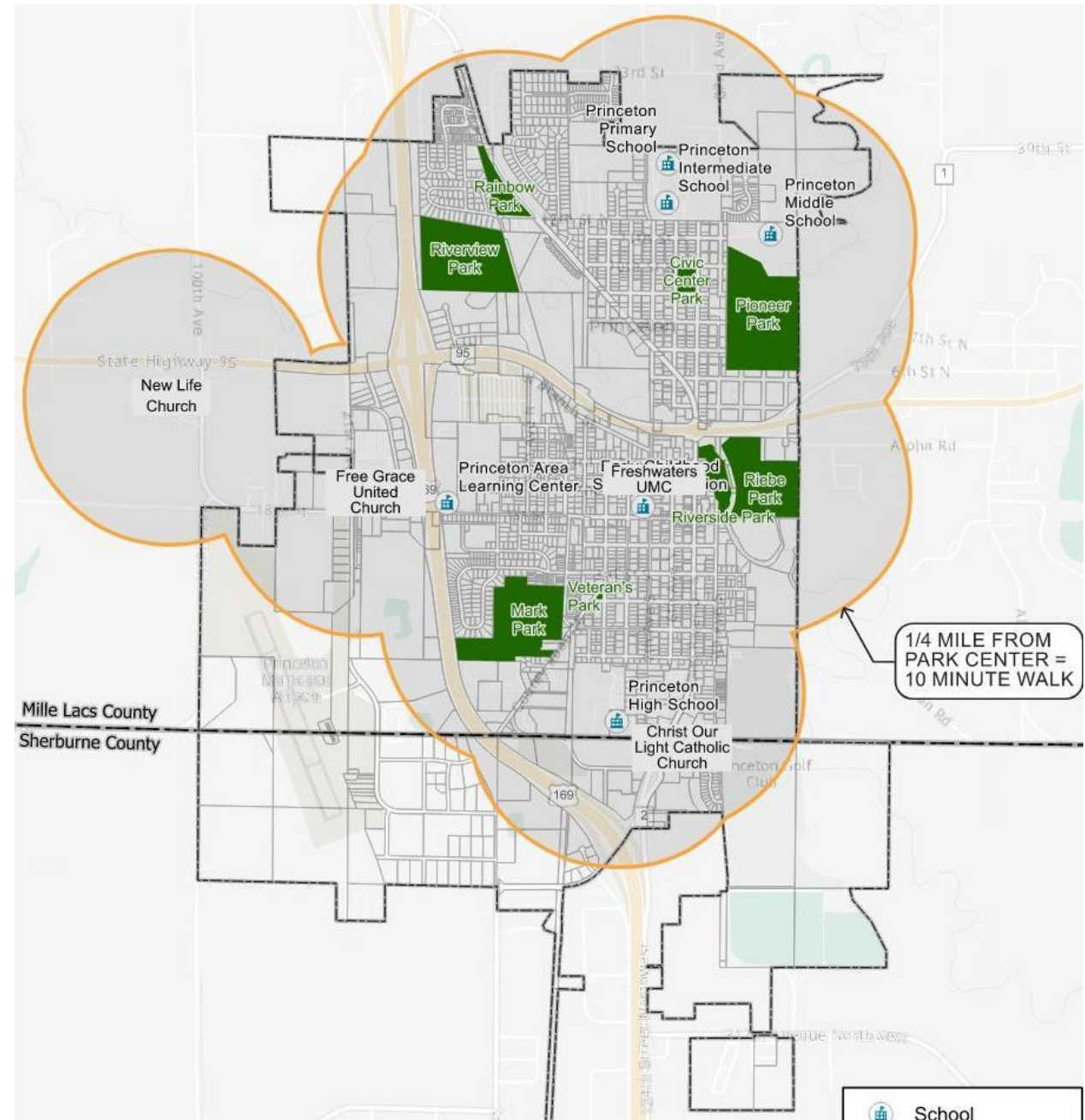
Amenities: Playground

Free Grace United Church

Amenities: Playground

New Life Church

Amenities: Playground



Comparison to National Standards

Comparison to NRPA Standards			
Description	Provided by the Average Agency with less than 20,000 in population (Median - 2023 NRPA Report Park Metrics)	Provided within Princeton Park System	Assessment
Residents Per Park	1,225 residents per park	602 residents per park	Exceeds Average / Standard
Acres of park land per 1,000 residents	13.0 per 1,000 residents	23.9 acres per 1,000 residents	Exceeds Average / Standard
Playgrounds	1 per 2,014 residents	1 per 964 residents	Exceeds Average / Standard
Basketball Courts	1 per 3,729 residents	1 per 2,409 residents	Exceeds Average / Standard
Baseball Fields (youth)	1 per 3,114 residents	1 per 2,409 residents	Exceeds Average / Standard
Softball Fields (youth)	1 per 5,079 residents	1 per 1,60 residents	Exceeds Average / Standard
Multi-Purpose Fields	1 per 3,859 residents	0 per 4,819 residents	Deficient of Standard
Outdoor Ice Rink	1 per 8,045 residents	1 per 4,819 residents	Exceeds Average / Standard
Pickleball	1 per 3,252 residents	1 per 2,409 residents	Exceeds Average / Standard

Engagement Activities

- Attended 3 pop-up events
(Early Childhood Fair, Duck Drop at Rum River Festival, Mille Lacs County Fair)
- Social Pinpoint website / Surveys.
Almost 1200 visits to the webpage.
- Received 77 Survey Responses
- Stakeholder interviews with School District, Baseball Assoc., Age Friendly, Princeton Chamber





Summary of Engagement

- The community believes the biggest benefits of Princeton parks are that they provide places for positive social interactions and provide age-friendly and accessible spaces for all age groups.
- Currently, the most used park elements are trails, playgrounds, and picnic shelters.
- A number of residents were unaware that a few of the parks in the city existed including Riverview, Reibe, and Veteran's parks.
- There is a desire to improve the parks through amenities such as trails and a natural playground with a special focus on elements for older kids and adults.
- Engagement showed that routine maintenance of parks and keeping them clean is important to the community, along with providing information about each park online.
- Overall people seem satisfied with the current state of the parks but believe improvements should be made.

Other Comments

- Accessibility and Connectivity Improvements
- Interest in a dog park location without seasonal flooding
- Elements for older users – skate park, basketball courts, Ninja warrior course
- Desire for updated playground equipment
- Opportunities for Nature play
- Would like a community pool
- Concerned over costs / tax implications for improvements



Recreational Trends

- Trails
- Dog Parks
- Pickleball
- Gaga Ball
- Bocce Ball and Lawn Games
- Challenge Courses (Ninja Warrior)
- Bankshot (basketball)
- Nature Play Areas
- Splash Pads
- Paved Trails & Trail Loops
- Mobile Bike and Scooter Rentals (companies such as Byrd, Nice Rice) docked & dock-less
- Raised Planting Beds for Accessibility and Senior Citizens / Community Gardens
- Community installed playgrounds
- Public Art
- Use of drones in park spaces
- Skate parks
- Passive Recreation within Natural Areas and interest in pollinator gardens
- Disc golf



Recreational Programming Trends

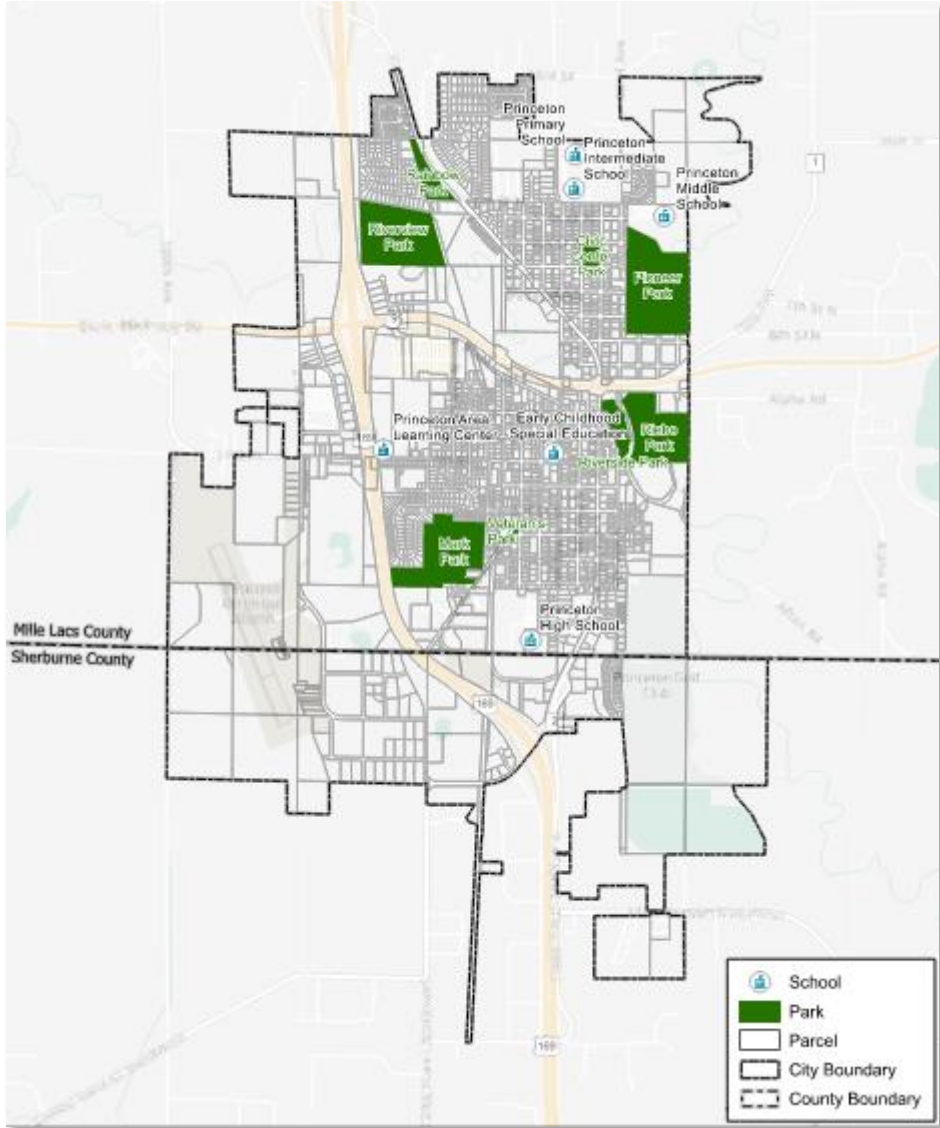
- Active Living & Outdoor Fitness (Yoga) Classes
- Mommy Fitness-exercise and fitness classes for pregnancy
- Joint Programming with Seniors and Teens
- Increased partnering with both non-profit and for-profit organizations
- Program sponsorships
- E-Sports combined with physical activity challenges
- Life Sports (individual sports one can participate in throughout their life, for example, kayaking, biking, swimming)
- Combining recreation with environmental education
- Generational Programming - joint Programming with Seniors and Teens
- Program partners with local businesses (e.g. 5K race) or non-profit and charity organizations
- Program sponsorships by local businesses



Barriers to Participation in Recreation

- Lack of leisure time
- Programs are not offered at convenient times for working parents / families
- Multitude of leisure opportunities for leisure competing with parks and trails recreation
- Lack of transportation or parks aren't easily accessible to participants (safe sidewalk routes)
- Concerns about safety in the parks
- Cost of entry (fees) and costs for specialized equipment (ex: mountain bikes, camping gear)
- Lack of awareness of programs, parks, trails available for public use
- Language barriers

**Source: Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan*



Number	Park Name	Classification	Acreage	Ranking
1	Mark Park	Community Park	32.0	51%
2	Civic Center Park	Neighborhood Park	3.0	50%
3	Pioneer Park	Community Park	40.0	53%
4	Rainbow Park	Neighborhood Park	6.0	55%
5	Riverside Park	Community Park	5.0	56%
6	Riebe Park	Community Park	20.0	67%
7	Veteran's (Triangle) Park	Neighborhood Park	0.3	50%
8	Riverview Park	Community Park	16.0	NA

Total Acreage 122.3
 Average Ranking 55%

- Exceptional - Exceeding Service Level, High Quality, Newer in age
- Good - Meets or Exceeds Expected Service Level, Mid to Newer Range in Age
- Adequate - Meets Basic Service Level, Mid-Older range in age
- Poor - Not Meeting Service Level, Older in age/ outdated

75% +
 61% - 75%
 41% - 60%
 < 40%

Mark Park
 Park Size: 32 Acres
 Location: 405 11th Ave S
 Proposed Classification: Community Park
 Overall Park Design: Athletic and recreation based park, highly used. Includes many athletic facilities, shelters and splash pad. Several elements do not meet current ADA accessibility requirements.

Overall Park Maintenance: Well maintained. Heavily used for ballfields and splash pad.

Natural Resources/Landscape: Well maintained turf and mature trees throughout.

Overall Park Ranking: 50.5%

Park Activity Name	Overall Condition	Overall Design & Character	Accessibility	Age Considerations	Active Points	Water Features	Composites
Soccer Field 1	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
Soccer Field 2	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
Soccer Field 1	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
Soccer Field 2	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
Soccer Field 3	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
Picnic Shelter 1 - Lions	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
Picnic Shelter 2	1	2	0	2	0	0	0
Picnic Shelter 3	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
Walking Trail	2	2	1	2	0	0	0
Baseball Court (1/2 court)	2	2	1	2	0	0	0
Playground	2	2	1	2	0	0	0

RATINGS / POINT SCALE DESCRIPTION
 0 = Does not meet basic standards; Poor Quality; Outdated
 1 = Meets basic standards; Fair Quality; Older
 2 = Meets or exceeds basic standards; Good Quality; Mid-way Age
 3 = Exceeds basic standards; High Quality; Newer

Park Evaluations

Individual Park Assessments

Each Park site / park amenity was evaluated with the following point scale:

RATING / POINT SCALE DESCRIPTION

0 = Does not meet basic standards; Poor Quality; Outdated

1 = Meets basic standards; Fair Quality; Older

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Common issues / deficiencies:

- ADA Accessibility
- Age / condition
- Well maintained, but at end of life cycle.



Civic Center Park

Issues:

- ADA Accessibility / connections to elements
- Aging equipment



Mark Park

Issues:

- ADA Accessibility / connections
- Shade near ballfields
- Age / condition of equipment (volleyball)



Pioneer Park

Issues:

- ADA Accessibility
- Opportunities for seating
- Lack of signage



Rainbow Park

Issues:

- ADA Accessibility / connections
- Condition of courts
- Age of equipment



Riebe Park

Issues:

- ADA Accessibility
- Lack of connection to Riverside Park
- Dog Park floods seasonally



Riverside Park

Issues:

- ADA Accessibility to elements
- Difficult connection to Riebe Park



Riverview Park

Issues:

- Lack of Amenities
- Lack of awareness of park



Veteran's Park

Issues:

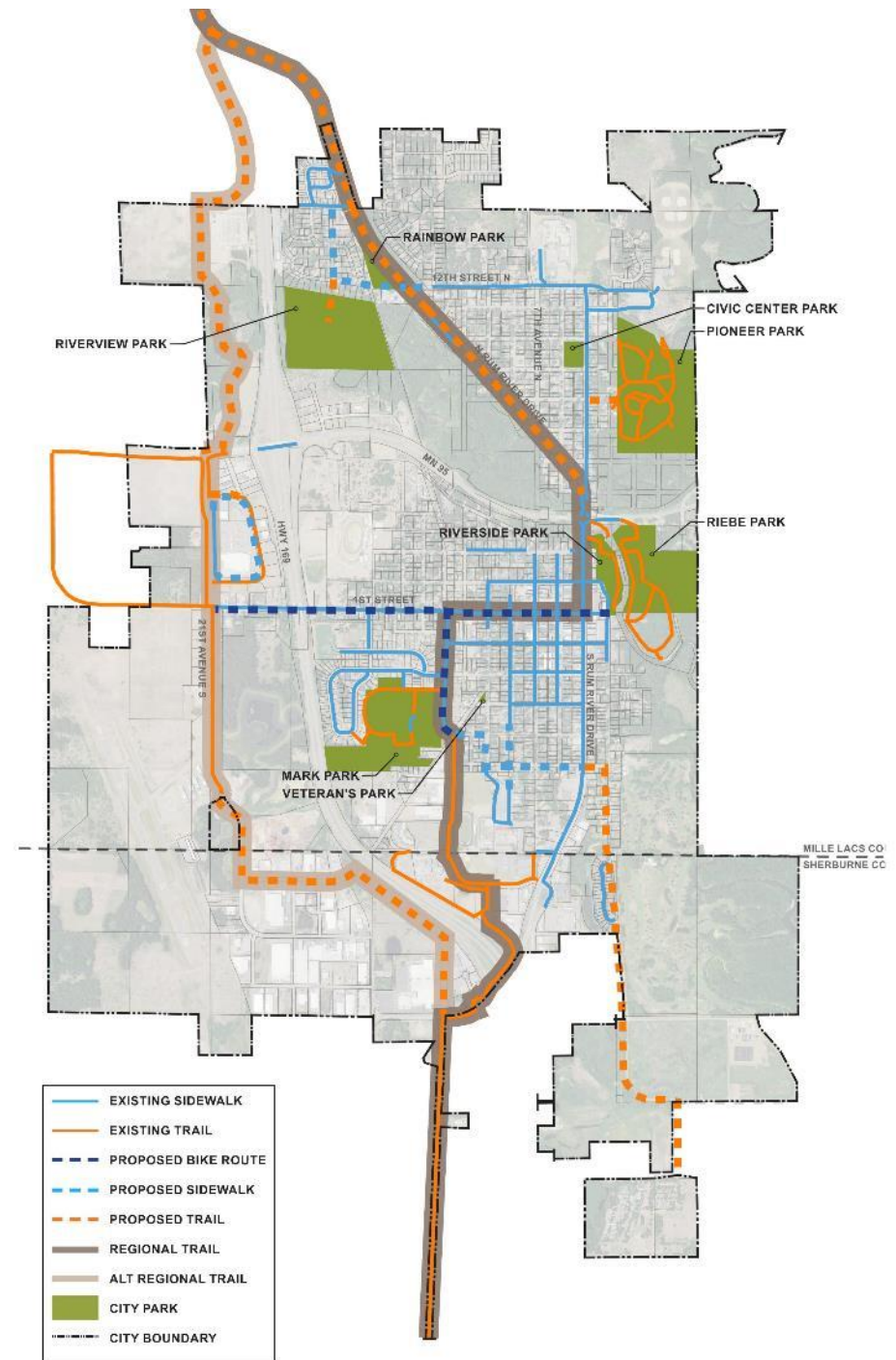
- ADA Accessibility / connections
- Age of amenities



Trails

Issues:

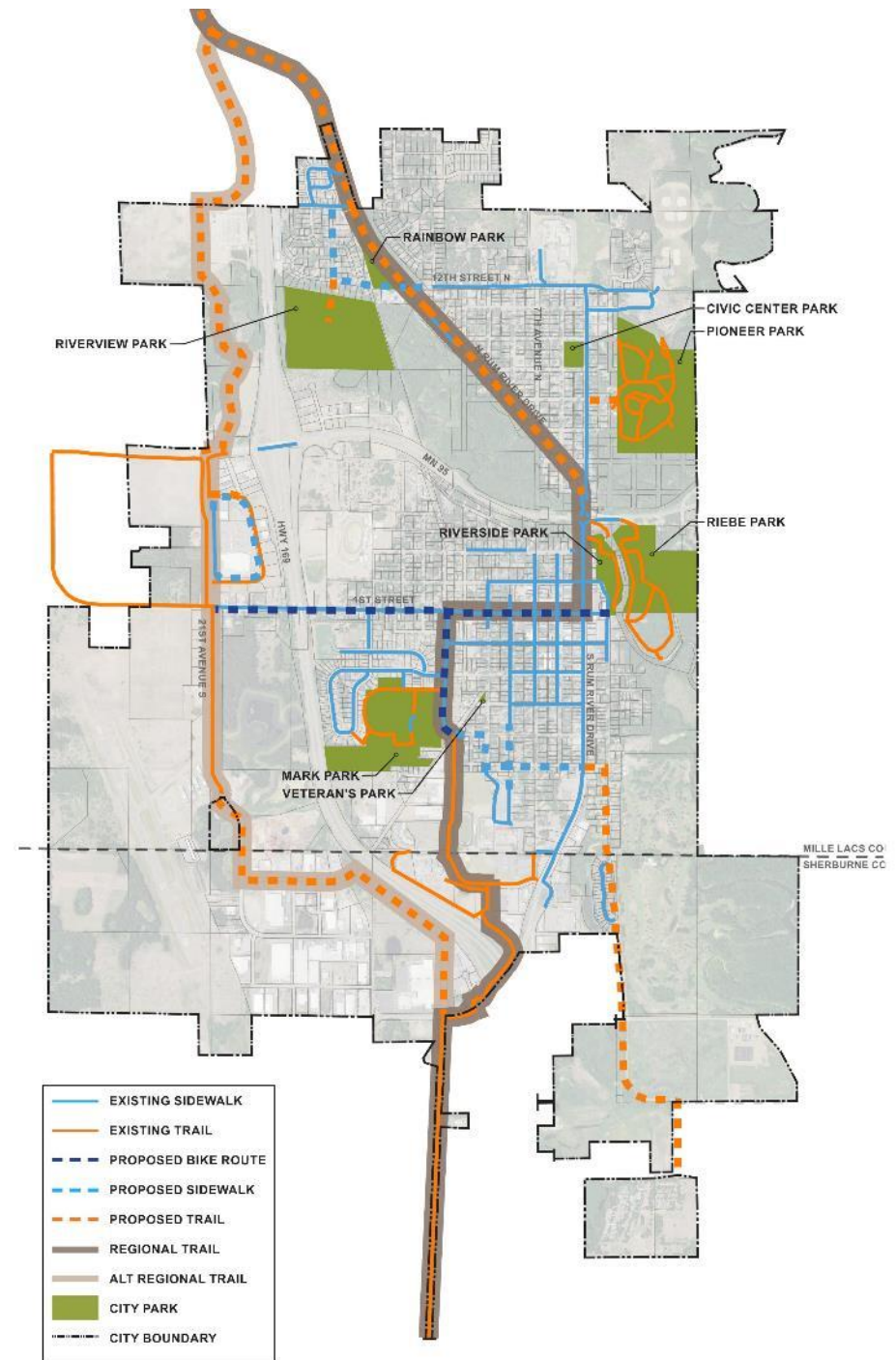
- Plan for connection to Great Northern Trail Corridor
- Lack of connections between parks



Trails

Issues:

- Plan for connection to Great Northern Trail Corridor
- Lack of connections between parks



Mark Park

- Add accessible trails/connections to all park elements - including ballfield bleachers, play elements, picnic tables, and benches and all other park features.
- Repair/replace volleyball net
- Add safety netting in ballfield areas
- Add scoreboards to softball fields
- Plant additional shade trees
- Add skate park
- Long term goal: Additional baseball field



Civic Center Park

- Upgraded Playground Equipment
- Add seating / shade
- Add accessible trails/connections to all park elements



Veteran's Park

- Add accessible trails/connections in park
- Upgrade benches and picnic tables



Riebe Park

- Add accessible trails/connections to all park elements
- Expand/reconfigure dog park to include area for smaller dogs
- Add bike racks
- Add picnic tables
- Pave parking lot
- Add bridge connection to Riverside Park



Rainbow Park

- Add accessible trails/connections to all park elements
- Repair / update Basketball courts
- Add bike racks
- Update Playground Facilities



Pioneer Park

- Add accessible trails/connections in park
- Add maps and wayfinding signage
- Add benches throughout the park
- Add Nature play features



Riverside Park

- Add accessible trails/connections to all park elements
- Improve boat landing area
- Add Parking
- Update play features
- Add bridge connection to Riebe Park



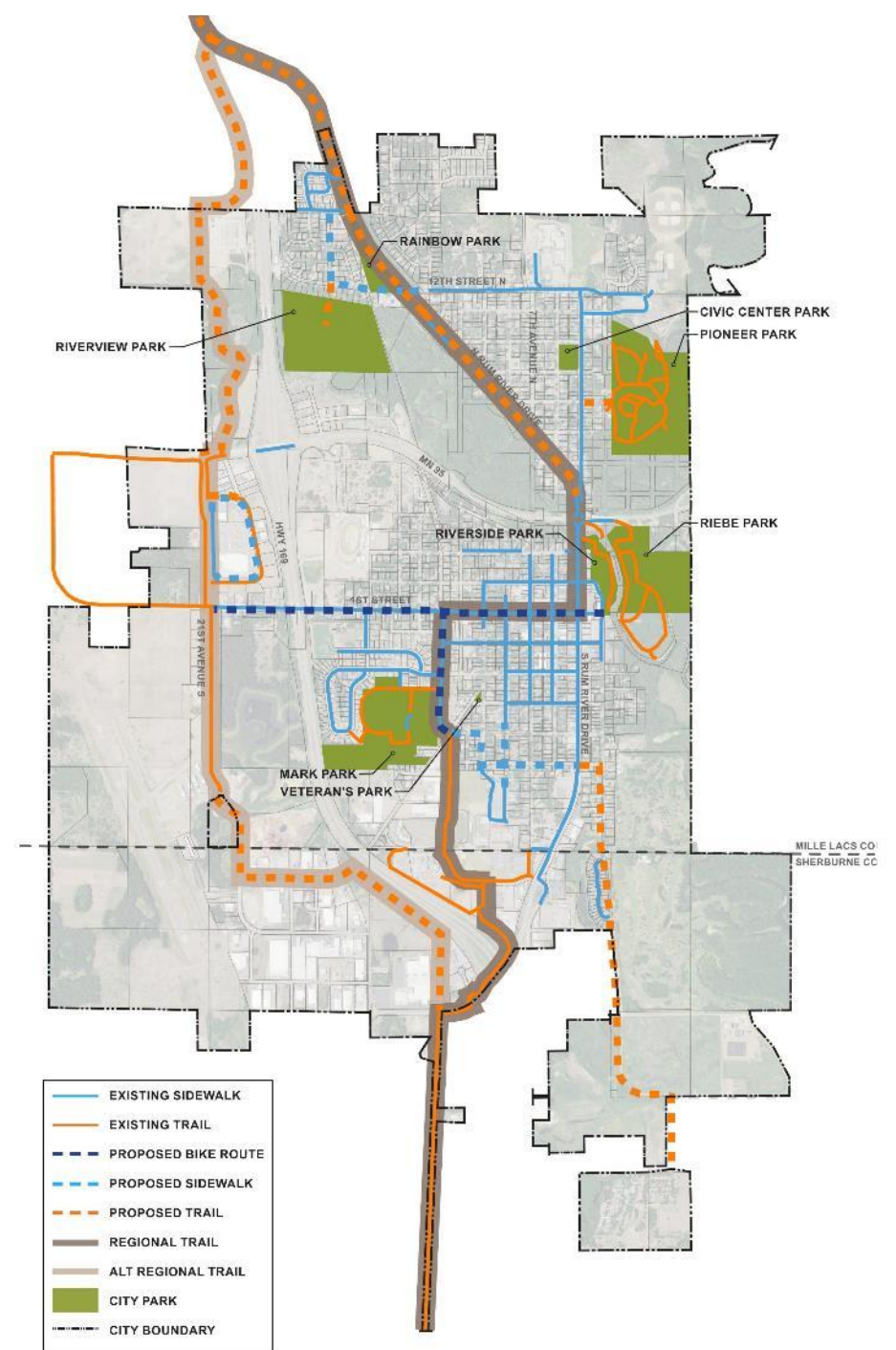
Riverview Park

- Add accessible trails throughout park
- Improve signage
- Add seating areas - picnic tables / benches
- Add nature play area



Trails

- Connection to Great Northern Trail Expansion
- Add trail connections / dedicated bike lanes within City





Park Improvements

- Improve quality, safety & accessibility
- Expand Trails and Connections
- Redevelop / Improve: Playgrounds and Picnic shelters and other amenities



Added Recreation

- Nature Play
- Trail Expansion / Regional Connections
- Skate Park / Ninja warrior course

Moving Forward:

- Improve accessibility throughout the park system.
- Redevelop and improve existing parks and amenities
- Continue to expand and enhance trail and sidewalk system
- Add safety improvements in field areas at Mark Park
- Add river crossing between Riebe and Riverside Parks.

Estimated Costs for Park Improvements		
Park Name	Estimated Costs (Low)	Estimated Costs (High)
Mark Park	\$189,000	\$226,800
Civic Center Park	\$239,400	\$287,300
Pioneer Park	\$154,000	\$184,800
Rainbow Park	\$420,000	\$504,000
Riverside Park	\$812,000	\$974,400
Riebe Park	\$658,000	\$803,600
Veteran's (Triangle) Park	\$224,000	\$268,800
Riverview Park	\$357,000	\$428,400
Trails	\$3,950,000	\$4,730,000
Total	\$7,003,400	\$8,408,100



Funding Opportunities For Parks:

- Pursue Grants, partnerships, fees or donations to augment annual budget.



Potential Funding Opportunities for Parks		
Funding Source	Description	Probability
State Outdoor Recreation, LCCMR, Legacy Fund, and Similar Grants	The State of Minnesota annually allocates funds for park acquisition and development projects which meet recreational needs identified by the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. In recent years, Legacy Amendment Fund has emerged as a legitimate potential funding source for projects of regional or state-wide significance. Whatever the program, the grants are competitive and awarded according to project merits.	Very competitive, especially with very tight public funding available at all levels.
Land and Water Conservation Fund	The Federal Government allocates monies each year to states for public acquisition and development projects. The State of Minnesota Administers these grants through the Department of Natural Resources.	Funding availability through this program has been limited in recent years.
Fees/ Enterprise Funds	Minnesota statute allows cities to prescribe and provide for the collection of fees for the use of any City park or other unit of the City park system or any facilities, accommodations, or services provided for public use therein.	Becoming a much more relied upon funding source, especially for singular use facilities ranging from ballfields to hockey arenas.
Partnerships	Relates to partnerships formed with adjacent cities, the county, and school districts to develop, maintain, and operate parks and recreational facilities on a joint-use basis.	Although limited public funding availability is an issue at all levels, forming partnerships to spread the cost of providing a specific type of service or facility still has merit whenever there is an opportunity.
Park Dedication Fees	The park dedication fees provides funding for parks as long as community development continues to occur. Any controls imposed on the extent (i.e., total number of units) or rate of development (i.e., number of units per year) allowed within the City will limit the revenue generated under this fund. The City will need to ensure the fees imposed are consistent with current state statutes.	Even with periodic adjustments, park dedication fees alone will not be adequate to fund the system plan to an optimal level.
Donations	Donations relates to cash donations, gifts, volunteerism, and professional services donated to the park for planning, acquisition, or development purposes.	Limited potential from a cash perspective, but important with respect to the use of volunteers to offset some program costs.

THANK YOU

