

# 6. PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

Parks & Recreation in Anoka  
Regional Parks & Trails  
Local Parks & Trails  
Goals & Projects  
Department Policies



# PARKS & RECREATION IN ANOKA

## OVERALL DEPARTMENT GOAL

To provide a wide range of recreational opportunities and park facilities for all citizens and visitors while balancing maintenance, acquisition, and development of parks and recreational areas and preservation of open space. As a river community, citizens may enjoy water sports like boating, canoeing, kayaking, and fishing. Trails, athletic fields, parks, open space, an outdoor aquatic center, and a senior center are all included in Anoka’s park system. It continues to be the goal of the City to provide excellence in parks and recreation for generations to come.

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Anoka’s park and open space system provides facilities for active recreation, such as playgrounds, courts, athletic fields, and an aquatic center. The city offers many trails located within its parks and throughout the community to provide connections to other parks, businesses, and community destinations. Anoka’s trail systems also incorporates a portion of the regional trail system including the Mississippi River Regional Trail (Anoka County) and Rum River Regional Trail.

Anoka is unique in that the Mississippi River and Rum River, two of the six state water trails, are accessible in Anoka. The City maintains a boat launch on the lower Rum River, which provides access to the Mississippi River Recreation Area. In addition, there are several locations on the Rum and Mississippi for canoe and kayak launching, as well as shoreline and pier fishing access.



*Advertising Anoka’s Concerts in the Park series.*

## ADVISORY BOARD

The City of Anoka established the Park Board in 1919. The Board, now referred to as the Anoka Park and Recreation Advisory Board, makes recommendations to the City Council on park and recreation issues, the use of recreational facilities by schools in the community, open space, and natural resource areas. The Board also advises the City Council regarding trails and waterways, boat launches and docks, and the boulevards and trees.

The Park and Recreation Department also works with Anoka-Hennepin District #11, as well as athletic organizations, to ensure the provision of recreational facilities throughout the seasons.

## PARK AND RECREATION PLANNING

Structured planning for Anoka’s park system first occurred with the 1975 Oasis Plan prepared by Wehrman Chapman Associates. The Oasis Plan was used in development of the 1980 Parks and Recreation Section of the Comprehensive Plan.

One outcome of this plan was the adoption of shade tree policies and standards for boulevard plantings.

In 1986, the City sent out 6,000 questionnaires to residents to determine recreational park needs. The results of this survey were used to further develop the park program.

Efforts to gain community input regarding parks and recreation in Anoka were under taken during the 1998 Community Planning Fair, held in August at various park locations throughout the City.

In 2005, the City hired Northwest Associated Consultants (NAC) to prepare a Park Facilities Needs Assessment to quantify the demand for active playfield facilities by programmed sports. The assessment involved the following:

- Identify and quantify facility demand to determine surplus or shortfall in active playfield facilities
- Evaluate the ability to improve or expand active playfield facilities within the park system and school sites
- Identify opportunities to respond to facility shortfalls.

The City has completed several goals and projects identified in the Needs Assessment and Park Plan Amendment including the creation of two full size soccer fields, the reconstruction of Sunny Acres Park, and the creation of a preferred development plan for Riverfront Park.

The City has completed eight (8) of the thirteen (13) parks and open space project goals as identified in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Completed goals including the following:

- Completion of a trail connection along Hwy 10 from Fairoak to Main Street

- Construction of a section of the Mississippi River Trail through Kings Island
- Reconstruction of Bonnell Fields
- Complete construction of a park within the North Central Business District (NCBD) along the Rum River (Riverfront Park phase 1)
- Creation of a preferred plan for a park within the Commuter Rail Transit Village (CRTV) (referred to as Anoka Station Park)
- Relocation and construction of Castle Field
- Incorporation of bike route signage throughout the city's trail system
- Rum River channel restoration

The applicable remaining uncompleted projects have been updated and included in the 2040 plan.

## HISTORY OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Hunting and fishing provided the earliest forms of recreation in Anoka. During the Civil War, the Armory was used for organized basketball for members of the Minnesota Reserves. In addition, informal baseball games were played.

While still a township, three areas emerged as parks: Akin Riverside Park, Peninsula Point Park and Bridge Square.

In the early 1900s, inspired in part by the Cities Beautiful Movement, Anoka began to actively embrace and construct both nature and planned park and recreation areas. Houseboats provided recreation for summer dwellers from the Minneapolis- St. Paul area. Historic photos also show extensive wood walkways along both sides of the Rum River, as well as steam and paddleboats that brought entertainers to the City. In 1914,

citizens came together to construct an open air amphitheater in Windego Park, across the Rum River from Akin Riverside Park. This provided a space for community events in a natural setting.

During the World Wars, typical recreational events included outdoor band concerts, theatrical performances and recitals from passing musicians, football, baseball and basketball games and swimming in the river. Until the 1950s, the City provided swimming lessons at the Rice Street Beach on the Mississippi River.

In the early 1950s, a new swimming pool was constructed with funds from Charles Horn, President of Federal Cartridge Company. During this time, the City added a recreation department, offering summer activities and after school events.

During the 1960s, organized softball, hockey, baseball, volleyball, basketball, and tennis increased significantly, which created a demand for more park facilities.

In the 1970s, Community Education programs were developed through the Anoka-Hennepin School District. These programs were organized to provide additional youth activities. Also during this time, more City fields were added to accommodate increased participation in tennis and soccer.

In the 1990s, the City completed Mississippi River Community Park and Peninsula Point Park, both

of which include internal trails that link to other pedestrian pathways. In the late 1990s, the City reconstructed the Charles Horn pool creating the Anoka Aquatic Center. The facility was one of the first outdoor zero-depth aquatic facilities in the Twin Cities. In addition, a redevelopment plan was created for George Green and Bonnell Parks to create a large multi-use park complex.

In the early 2000's focus shifted to rejuvenating the older parks in the community and creating new recreational activities for residents and visitors

to enjoy. The majority of neighborhood & community parks received new playground structures with updates to picnic shelters and playfields. Additional renovations included replacing the wood decking at Mississippi Park with permeable pavers; construction of paved parking at Sunny Acres; and resurfacing of tennis courts at multiple parks. Akin Riverside Park was reconstructed to include a new shelter, upgraded boat launch, and heritage trail that received a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for

State and Local History. New facility construction included two soccer fields north of the High School.

Since about 2010, redevelopment of city owned properties in North Central Business District and revitalization of the downtown has shifted park and recreation focus back toward the River with the master planning of Riverfront Park, Anoka Station Park, and conservation of the Anoka Nature Preserve.



*Rice Street Beach on the Mississippi River*

- Grant Tot Lot  
(3001 9th Avenue // 0.8 acres)

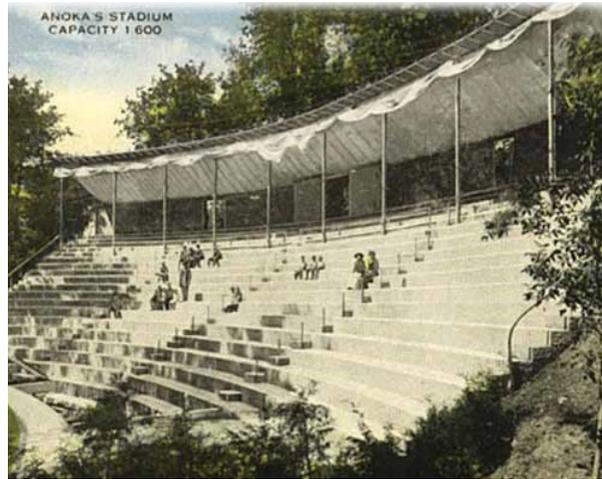
This park includes playground equipment and a picnic shelter. The park borders the southern portion of Sunny Acres wetland area.

- Rice Street Beach  
(532 Rice Street // 0.2 Acres)

Prior to 1957, this area was used as a public swimming beach where the City taught swim lessons. Today, the park functions as scenic vista providing great views of the Mississippi River and provides access to the river for fishing or launching a canoe/kayak. In 1997, the city constructed a large river boulder retaining wall to prevent soil erosion.

- Windego Park Auditorium/Open Air Theater  
(1830 Ferry Street // 0.5 acres)

This 1914 “open air” theater was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. From 1914 to the early 1940’s, the amphitheater played host to outdoor theater productions and musical concerts. The amphitheater was the brainchild of Anoka resident Thaddeus P. Giddings, one of the



*Windego Park Auditorium, built 1914.*

most important American music educators of the twentieth century. The amphitheater was designed by William Gray Purcell, and is now a part of the upcoming Rum

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARK/PLAYGROUNDS

Neighborhood parks are typically parks targeted for intense recreational use such as field games, court games, crafts, apparatus areas, skating, and neighborhood centers. Neighborhood parks are less than 25 acres in size, easily serving a single neighborhood population, and maybe located near local schools. Anoka’s neighborhood parks fall well below targeted national standard range for both current and projected ten-year populations. Anoka’s current neighborhood parks range in size from 2.0 to 5.5 acres. The small size of the existing neighborhood parks limit capacity for larger sport facilities and support a mix of passive and active recreational activities.

- Brisbin Park  
(1047 Brisbin Street // 2.7 acres)

Brisbin Park includes playground equipment, a large open green space, and a picnic area. The park includes a small parking lot and bituminous trail that links the Anoka



*Swim lessons circa 1965 at Rice Street Beach, opened in 1935.*



*King Memorial Park*

trail system to Coon Rapids Wedgewood Trail. This park also serves as a storm water retention area.

- Elm Street  
(900 Elm Street // 1.0 acre)

This park is tucked into the neighborhood at the cul-de-sac on Elm Street and includes playground equipment and limited parking. The park also provides storm water retention.

- Highland Park  
(3000 Euclid St // 2.5 acres)

Playground equipment, ½-size basketball court, picnic tables, grills and open space. This park will be re-developed and reconfigured as a part of the Green Haven Parkway phase II development project within the neighborhood.

- King Memorial Park  
(1201 Park Street // 2.0 acres)

A covered picnic shelter with tables and grills, playground equipment, picnic area and small t-ball field make up King Park. A statue of Anoka's first K-9 officer, King, winner of the Lassie Award for saving a child's life, is

located in the center of the park watching over the kids as they play.

- Rick Sorenson Park  
(2015 State Avenue // 5.5 acres)

Sorenson Park provides playground equipment, a basketball court, four tennis courts, two skinned ball fields and an open play area, which could be used for soccer or football. A four-season park building doubles as a warming house in winter for the two hockey rinks and general skating rink.

- Rudy Johnson  
(605 Polk Street // 2.7 acres)

This park provides playground equipment, four season recreation buildings with restrooms, picnic area, picnic tables, grills, one ag-lime field, open field, and small hockey rink and mature trees. The park provides a lighted general skating rink and a small hockey rink with supervised warming house and minimum parking. Anoka's Middle School utilize this park for physical education and extracurricular athletic programs.

## COMMUNITY PLAYFIELDS

Community playfields are highly active parks, varying in size from 25 - 50 acres, which serve a programmed intensive recreational use such as athletic fields, aquatic centers and complexes.

In Anoka, these parks serve community-wide outdoor athletic recreational needs. Community playfields provide centralized accessibility with multi-park functions often serving as neighborhood parks as well. Area schools utilize a number of the City's community playfields for physical education classes and after school athletic program. Anoka's parks in this category are grossly undersized when

compared to the Metropolitan Council classification system.

Two of the City’s most significant community play fields (John Ward and Sunny Acres) overlay reclaimed landfills, which complicates both the developed use and maintenance of the parks for larger field sports. Generally valued as the highest in existing amenities of the seven park classifications, community play fields provide the majority of organized sport’s needs.

- **Bonnell Fields**  
(1571 7th Avenue // 6.3 acres)

This park is directly north of the George Green Park complex and provides multi-purpose athletic fields for soccer, football, and softball. Anoka Middle School utilizes the fields for physical education classes and extracurricular programs. This park also serves as a storm water retention area for the southeast quadrant of the city.

- **Castle Memorial Field**  
(600 Castle Field Boulevard // 4.91 acres)

Castle field is Anoka’s premiere lit baseball field for youth and adult baseball. It includes a concession stand, restrooms, scoreboard, dugouts, batting cage, public address system, bleachers and parking.

- **George Enloe Park**  
(631 Lund Boulevard // 23.0 acres)

This is a multi-purpose youth athletic complex with year round recreation activities, including a lit sliding hill, general skating and hockey rinks, and a supervised warming house. Additional amenities include two playground structures, softball fields, one baseball field, soccer field, three parking lots, basketball court, one lit tennis court, picnic

area, restrooms, and a bituminous walking trail.

- **Grey Ghost Fields**  
(559 Castle Field Boulevard // 5.5 acres)

This park, built in 2007, specifically addresses the needs of the growing popularity of soccer and lacrosse. Originally, both fields were regulation size, however, construction of Castle Field Boulevard in 2013 required reconfiguration of the fields and neither field supports regulation soccer.

- **John Ward Park**  
(2400 Forest Avenue // 14.0 acres)

John Ward Park, built atop a decommissioned landfill, is more commonly known in the community as ‘Rocket Park’ due to the large rocket shaped playground structure. The first rocket playground was installed in the late 1960s. Since then, two replacement playground structures have maintained the theme. This park includes three softball fields (two lit), a small soccer field, a restroom facility, two picnic shelters, a skate park, large open space and two parking lots.



*Entrance to Castle Memorial Field*

- Sunny Acres Park  
(3399 Colfax Avenue // 33.7 acres)

Developed in the late 1970s, this athletic field complex has been reclaimed from a decommissioned landfill and is part of the city’s northeast watershed area and wetland. The park consists of a four softball fields, picnic shelter, activity pavilion with restrooms, playground, four tennis courts, three parking lots, and walking trail. Ehe City provides winter skating facilities and a supervised warming house at Wilson Elementary School.



*Bicentennial Band Shell at George Green Park*

## COMMUNITY PARKS

The purpose of this classification is to provide a combination of active and passive recreation areas, such as walking, scenic viewing, and picnicking, which are oriented toward the sites’ natural amenities and beauty. There may be some field and court games located in these parks depending on site suitability and community need.

Anoka has utilized this classification to include facilities that provide an aesthetic appeal to the entire community population due to their proximity to the Rum and Mississippi Rivers or other environmental features. These parks contain open space areas, trails, educational components, and passive recreation opportunities.

- Akin Riverside Park  
(1721 River Avenue // 6.53 acres)

This park borders the eastern shore of the Rum River from Main Street to Washington Street. A pedestrian bridge crosses the Rum River providing a safe connection to Ferry Street. The park provides a view of the historic Windego Park Auditorium and stone house. The park includes playground equipment, picnic shelter with restrooms, picnic tables

and benches, grills, and river access with two fishing platforms, a boat launch and rental boat slips.

- Brom Canoe Rest  
(3812 Rum River Drive // 1.0 acre)

Located off the cul-de-sac on Rum River Drive, the Brom Canoe Rest provides a quaint rest stop and launching location on the west bank of the Rum River.

- City Hall Dam West / Bonnell Overlook  
(2030 Ferry Street // 1.35 acres)

The courtyard provides river access for fishing and picnic tables. An additional ½-acre parcel adjacent to the North was donated to the City from the Bonnell Family in 2007. Development of the West Rum River Trail will provide better utilization of these properties with development of a trail along the river and bluff edge.

- George Green Park  
(Park pavilion: 1498 6th Avenue  
Aquatic Center: 1551 7th Avenue  
Senior Center: 1502 6th Avenue  
// 8.0 acres)

The park is located between Bonnell Fields to its north and Lincoln Elementary School to its south. Large Bur Oaks provide a serene setting for the bicentennial band shell, Senior Center building, and the Anoka Aquatic Center. The park includes three paved parking areas, five tennis courts (three lit), playground equipment, and horseshoe courts.

- **Mississippi River Community Park**  
(2751 Cutters Grove Avenue // 35 acres)

Located on the east bank of the Mississippi River this park provides opportunities to interact with the river via the shoreline and fishing pier. The park offers four shelters, with picnic tables & grills and electrical access within the concession stand. The playground structure is a ship, reminding users of the park connection with the Mississippi River. Additional amenities include open space play area, sand volleyball court, and ½ size basketball court. There are approximately 1.5 miles of interior park trails that provide beautiful views of the river and park. From the north, the Mississippi River Trail enters Anoka at Kings Island, as the trail enters the park it closely follows the river and then moves on street following Benton Street.



*Peninsula Point Two Rivers Historical Park*

- **Peninsula Point Two Rivers Historical Park**  
(1460 South Ferry Road // 8.3 acres)

Located at the confluence of the Rum and Mississippi Rivers, this property served as a primary entry point of Anoka for fur traders, loggers and Native Americans. In 1995, with the assistance of Legislative Commission on Minnesota's Resources (LCMR) grant, the City converted the site from a wastewater treatment plant into a beautiful park. This park includes a seasonal building that offers restrooms, a meeting room, concession service area and a shelter. There is also river overlook, daily use boat docks, multiple historic plaques detailing Anoka's rich river history, playground equipment and open space.

- **Riverfront Park**  
(2201 2nd Avenue // 2.3 acres)

The park includes river frontage from the Main Street Bridge to the Henry Hammer Overlook at Harrison Street providing visitors with multiple opportunities to interact with the Rum River. One of the key features of the park is the Rum River Dam. The existing dam, built in 1941, attracts thousands of tourists and residents who enjoy the river walk and fishing. Accessible daily docking



*Riverfront Park by City Hall*

facilities, both upstream and downstream of the dam, are provided for boaters. The Port of Anoka overlook and the walkway on the dam are favorite fishing spots. Upstream of the dam, the city also provides rental boat slips for citizens that do not live on the river. The Rum River Regional Trail goes through the center of park. The park also includes history boards detailing Anoka’s industrial history as it relates to the Rum River, several overlooks, a rain garden and will soon include the Veterans Memorial. Plans for Riverfront Park include the creation of a plaza near the dam with grand staircase/water feature, restroom facilities, and performance pavilion in the likeness of the Carnegie Library that once stood in the historic downtown.

## COUNTY PARKS

County Parks are areas of natural or ornamental features for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing/sitting, or picnicking. County Parks are smaller facilities than regional parks.

- Rum River South County Park  
(3000 St. Francis Boulevard // 14.6 acres)

The park offers visitors a chance to enjoy the scenic Rum River while enjoying a picnic or walking the trail. Amenities include a fishing pier and boat launch, parking, playground and picnic area.

## CONSERVANCY LANDS

Conservancy lands are areas of natural quality such as watercourses and wetlands that are preserved for environmental or aesthetic benefits to the community and/or because the negative

environmental or economic effects of development in them.

- Anoka Nature Preserve  
(4301 Parkview Lane // 212 acres)

The Anoka Nature Preserve, formerly referred to as the Rum River Nature Area, is a 200+ acre natural area on the northern boundary of Anoka with the Rum River forming its westerly border. The Anoka Conservation District (ACD) holds the conservation easement. The City and ACD



*Anoka Nature Preserve*

have jointly adopted a management plan for the Anoka Nature Preserve and has begun work to mitigate the buckthorn overgrowth. The ANP is available to the community for walking, hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing/skijoring. The City organizes an archery deer-hunting program, which is consistent with the management plan.

- Kings Island  
(Eastbank of the Mississippi bordered by Mississippi River Community Park, the City of Ramsey, and Highway 10 // 57.0 acres)



*The channel around King's Island*

This property has been City owned since 1996. An oxbow channel from the Mississippi River formed the island. Previous owners created earthen dams that blocked the water flow from the river making the channel unnavigable. In 2012, the city dedicated the area as the Federal Premium Ammunition Wildlife Conservation Area on Kings Island to honor the business' commitment to local and national conservation efforts. In 2013, the City cleared the channel of fallen trees and removed the earthen dams; and excavated the channel to restore water flow allowing small watercraft to navigate it. A year later, through collaboration with Anoka County and the city of Ramsey, the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) was constructed across the island. Construction of this segment was essential in completing the Anoka County MRT. The City has designated a waterfowl-hunting zone on the Mississippi River adjacent to Kings Island, offers two permanent hunting blinds, and issues archery deer hunting permits as part of the wildlife management program.

- Station Park  
(East bank of the Rum River north of

BNSF Rail line and west of 4th Avenue // 15 acres)

The City purchased these properties in 1999 from the State of Minnesota. The lower portion contains a conveyance of a Scenic Easement under custodial control of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, applicable on approximately five acres of the property. Portions of this area are in either the Recreation or Scenic designated river zones.

The City plans to create a trailhead and parking area to serve the Rum River Regional Trail and future park for the Commuter Rail Transit Village. Park features will include an accessible canoe/kayak launch in the backwater channel of the Rum River, a series of boardwalks and nature trails creating interaction with the Rum River and natural area, playground, and river overlook. Station Park features a unique, hand-laid stone wall that is identical to walls located on the adjacent grounds of the historic Anoka State Hospital.

## INSTITUTIONAL

Within the City of Anoka, there are other government entities in addition to Anoka Hennepin Schools that own property that contributes to the outdoor recreation system.

- Anoka County Fair Grounds  
(3200 St. Francis Boulevard // 20 acres)

## LOCAL LINEAR PARKS, TRAILS, CORRIDORS, & PARKWAYS

Linear parks, trails, and parkways are corridors developed for one or more modes of recreational travel such as biking, walking, or cross-country skiing in areas that may/may not traverse scenic areas but do not negatively affect the natural

resource base. Where needed, these trails provide necessary links to neighborhoods, points of interest, and community facilities such as schools or commercial areas, or provide links to neighboring municipalities.

- Henry Hammer Trail

This trail is part of the Rum River Regional Trail. This trail begins at the Henry Hammer overlook within Riverfront Park. The trail, named in honor of past Park Board member Henry Hammer, moves north past the feed mill to an overlook then meanders along the river crossing Hwy 10 on a converted rail bridge. The Henry Hammer trail terminates at the Milk Factory, but the Rum River Regional Trail continues to the northern border of Anoka.

- Stout Pond Trail

This 8 acre site contains the man-made storm water pond for the industrial park but provides wildlife habitat for waterfowl and other animals. The pond/trail was dedicated in 1997 in memory of Gary Stout, a planner of the City's Enterprise Park. The property

contains a paved trail around the pond with multiple sitting areas. This ½-mile trail is accessible from Lund Blvd, McKinley St, and Thurston Blvd.

- East Main Street Trail Corridor

The East Main Street Trail Corridor begins at the eastern corporate limits of the City, providing pedestrian access to the downtown area on the Main Street sidewalks to 5th Avenue. This trail continues through the Central Business District for foot traffic only from 5th Avenue to 1st Avenue. Bike traffic is redirected to Monroe Street located one block south of Main Street. The trail crosses the Main Street Bridge and connects to the Ferry Street Trail Corridor and the Hwy 10 / West Main Street Trail Corridor.

- West Rum River Trail River Walk

Located along the South Ferry Street (TH 169) corridor, this will trail provide pedestrians with their first glimpse of Anoka as they enter the city from the south. The trail will follow the west side of the Rum River from the Mississippi Bridge to the Rum River Dam. Plans include a pedestrian bridge connection from Peninsula Point



*Envisioning sketch of the West Rum River Trail section near the pedestrian bridge over the Rum River. Sketch by Kimley-Horn.*

Park to Akin Riverside Park, a bluff line trail from the Woodbury House to the Windego Amphitheater, and a water's edge trail from the amphitheater north to the Rum River Dam.

- Seventh Avenue Trail Corridor

The Seventh Avenue Trail Corridor begins at its connection point to the Mississippi River Regional Trail on Oakwood Lane and continues north to the City's north corporate limits at Bunker Lake Blvd. Pedestrians must utilize the sidewalks and bicycles ride on street. The corridor connects several parks and facilities including the Aquatic Center and Rum River Library. The corridor provides links to several local trail corridors and the Central Anoka County Regional Trail.

- North Street Trail Corridor

The North Street Trail Corridor begins at the corporate limits of Anoka and Coon Rapids and follows North Street to 11th Avenue where the trail moves on street. The trail follows 11th Avenue north where it connects to Grant Street and takes pedestrians west toward 7th Avenue taking advantage of the traffic light to cross 7th Avenue. It then continues west on Grant Street to 4th Avenue where the trail turns back to the south to connect to Pierce Street heading west again to cross Ferry Street. The trail follows Wingfield Avenue to Garfield Street around the perimeter of Green Haven Golf Course. The trail stays on Garfield Street where it makes the connection from Green Haven Parkway to Thurston Avenue, users can then join the Mississippi River Regional Trail to the south or follow Thurston Avenue to the north and link to the Central Anoka County Regional Trail.

- Brisbin Trail Corridor

The Brisbin Trail Corridor begins at its junction with the City of Coon Rapids Wedgewood Trail in Brisbin Park at the eastern limit of Anoka. The trail moves westward on Brisbin Street where it enter George Green Park and continues through the park to South Street. The trail moves back on street and crosses 5th Avenue following Military Road, at the pumpkin roundabout, the trails heads west on Washington Street taking pedestrians to 2nd Avenue. At this point users have an option to link up with the Rum River Regional trail heading north through Akin Riverside Park or following the Mississippi River Trail on Oakwood Drive.

- Highway 10/West Main Street Corridor

Highway 10/West Main Street Corridor begins at Ferry St and Main Street traveling west to Cutters Grove Avenue/Thurston Avenue where users can opt to connect to the Mississippi River Trail (in Mississippi River Community Park) or follow Thurston Avenue to Bunker Lake Boulevard where they can connect to the Anoka Central Regional Trail. Currently only the segment of the trail, from Fairoak Street to West Main Street along Forest Hill Cemetery, is located off-street. The Highway 10/TH169 reconstruction project will improve pedestrian travel with the creation of the West Main Extension.

## GOALS & PROJECTS

### GOAL PRO-1

Invest in Anoka’s existing park properties to improve functionality, increase recreational opportunities with upgraded and/or highly maintained amenities, and anticipate and embrace innovative and trending recreational activities

**Objective:**

To be proactive in the implementation of recreation trends, adapting to community needs, and responding to changes in community demographics

**Strategies:**

- Stay current in regional and national recreation trends.
- Foster partnerships with neighboring communities to increase service capability.
- Coordinate with school district to share implementation costs for updated facilities/amenities used for physical education curriculum and afterschool athletics.

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**PROJECT 1.1:** *Revitalization of George Green Park*

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**Objective:**

To improve the overall functionality by upgrading/relocating park amenities.

**Strategies:**

- Parking: Create additional off-street parking adjacent to the Senior Center on the site of the current pavilion.
- Site Structures:



*George Green Park contains many Anoka staples include the Band Shell, Aquatic Center, and Pavilion.*

- » Pavilion: Remove the existing picnic pavilion. Construct a new shelter with restrooms, which will create a focal point and increased functionality for the park. The existing picnic shelter lacks the utilities to serve as a quality rental space and the location to function as the park’s main identifier.
- » Band shell: Replace and improve overhead lighting. Remove the ag-lime area in front of the stage. Consider converting band shell into a picnic shelter.
- » Aquatic Center: Regular maintenance and introduction of new features will enhance the facility, help sustain aesthetics, and make it a main stay in the community for many years to come.
- Access and Circulation: Address access to and from park at each of the corners.
  - » An interior park trail connects all of the major park elements and provides a nice walking path through the park.

- » Access to the elementary school to the south and to the middle school to the west requires improvement.
- » Add sidewalk on the south side of Brisbin Street with midblock crosswalk connection from George Green Park and Bonnell Fields with street renewal project.
- Playground:
  - » Installation of playground apparatus for 2 – 5 year olds to help serve a broader cross-section of park users.
  - » Regular maintenance of the net playground structure (installed in 1998) will ensure many years of safe, imaginative play in the park for youth 5 – 12 years of age.
- Play fields and Courts:
  - » In 2015, the city Bonnell Fields underwent reconstruction for storm water drainage; field sizes and layouts modified.
    - Full size football, lacrosse, and/or soccer field fits without obstruction.
    - North ag-lime field converted to a little league grass baseball field with 200' outfield
    - South skinned ag-lime infield resized for baseball/ girls fast pitch with 200' outfield
  - » Currently there are five tennis courts located in George Green Park (2 courts/3 courts with lights). Consider reconstruct the north tennis courts as pickle ball courts.

- Vegetation:
  - » Mature Bur Oak trees enhance George Green Park's character and charm. Consider planting a variety of tree species in the future as a lack of diversity in the park creates a monoculture that could be devastated by disease.
  - » Careful placement of boulevard trees should occur at Bonnell to increase connectivity of these parks.

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**PROJECT 1.2:** *Refurbishment of Rudy Johnson Park*

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**Objective:**

To improve the overall functionality of the park for the neighborhood, Anoka Middle School – Washington campus, and overall community use.

**Strategies:**

- Parking: Address parking issues with creation of improved parking lot sized appropriately for park amenities.



*The ice rink at Rudy Johnson Park.*

- Site Structures:
  - » Four Season Building: Repair exterior façade and replace broken windows; paint the building.
  - » Hockey Rink: Evaluate the relocation of the paved hockey rink within the park to help create a large open play field free of obstructions to better serve middle school physical education classes.



*John Ward Park hosts Anoka's iconic rocketship play area.*

- Access and Circulation:
  - » Address issues with accessibility from parking lot to amenities
  - » Implement Safe Routes to Parks for neighborhood

activities associated with the Highway 10 solution will eliminate on street parking on Church Street and access to the dirt overflow parking lot.

- Playground:
  - » Installation of playground apparatus for 2 – 5 year olds and 5 – 12 year old with appropriate fall surfacing that meets standards for ADA compliance
- Play fields and Courts:
  - » Evaluate needs for play fields or courts within this park.

- Site Structures:
  - » Relocate/reconstruct Restroom Building: Existing restroom facility is substandard; no interior lighting, does not meet ADA regulations
  - » Shelter 2: Evaluate existing location and need for small wooden shelter; primarily serves as an enclosure for the field lighting controls.

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### PROJECT 1.3: *Renewal of John Ward Park*

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**Objective:**

- To improve the overall functionality of this community park.

**Strategies:**

- Parking:
  - » Reconfiguration or construction of new parking area for Field 1. Construction

- Access and Circulation:
  - » There are currently no internal trails or sidewalks that provide connection between park amenities.

- Play fields and Courts:
  - » Replace equipment or fully reconstruct the existing skate park to suit the changing trends in skate park design; determine if this is the best location for an upgraded facility
  - » Reconfiguration of the softball field

1 and 3 maybe required following the Highway 10 construction and redevelopment of properties adjacent to the park.

- Minimize implementation cost by utilizing park with existing parking and restroom facilities

**PROJECT 1.4:** *Creation of Disc Golf Course within City park system*

**Objectives:**

- To enhance the recreation amenities offered to citizens
- To stay current with recreation trends

**Strategies:**

- Incorporate industry standards for optimal course design
- Insure a high quality design by working with local user groups
- Park location should include natural features that enhance course design (i.e. woods, elevation changes, water)



*A disc golf course would include natural features to challenge players and enhance contact with nature.*

**PROJECT 1.5:** *Construct restroom facility at Anoka Nature Preserve trailhead.*

**Objective:**

- To provide multi-seasonal restroom facility for this popular park location and users of the Rum River Regional Trail.

**Strategies:**

- Sewer and water stubs installed with Rum River Shores development
- Explore funding opportunities for amenity located on a regional trail



*Project 1.5 initiates planning for a restroom facility at the trail head of the Anoka Nature Preserve.*

**GOAL PRO-2**

Improve connectivity, accessibility, and interaction with the Rum River and Mississippi River natural environment while preserving and improving the natural character/beauty

**Objective:**

- To provide residents and visitors to Anoka multiple opportunities to access and interact with the Rum and Mississippi Rivers.

**Strategies:**

- Preserve the natural landscape features to ensure environmental protection while simultaneously providing access for public use and enjoyment.
- Provide a diversified open space system that preserves and enhances significant environmental resources and features to preserve habitat and protect water resources.
- Create river access points, interpretive areas and overlooks.

**PROJECT 2.1:** *Continue to implement Anoka Nature Preserve management plan.*

**Objective:**

- Create passive recreation areas, which include paved trails for hiking, grass trails for running, hunting, wildlife watching, fishing, picnicking and interpretive areas.

**Strategy:**

- Work with Anoka Conservation District to rehabilitate the Oak Savanna with on-going treatment/harvest of Buckthorn, non-native and invasive species.

- Work with Anoka County to pave the interior trail designated for future extension of the Rum River Regional Trail.

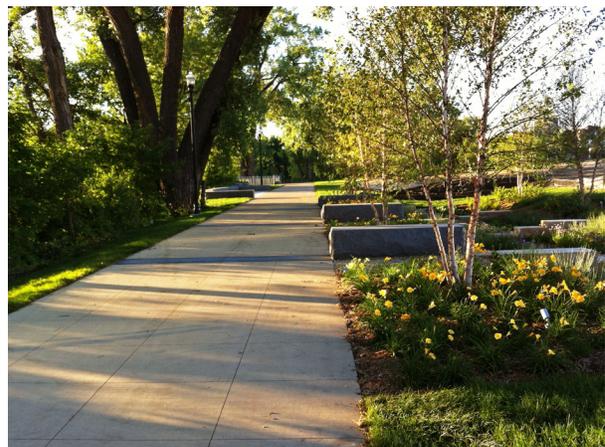
**PROJECT 2.2:** *Complete construction of Riverfront Park.*

**Objectives:**

- To create a prominent park and public gathering place that celebrates Anoka’s rich history and connection to the Rum River.

**Strategies:**

- To complete construction of future phases of Riverfront Park as planned.
  - » Construction of the performance stage and Veterans Memorial in 2018
- Preserve the natural landscape features to ensure environmental protection while simultaneously providing access for public use and enjoyment.
- Apply for grants and identify potential funding sources



*The completed walkway leading along the Rum River from City Hall to the Veteran’s Memorial.*

## PROJECT 2.3: Develop Anoka Station Park

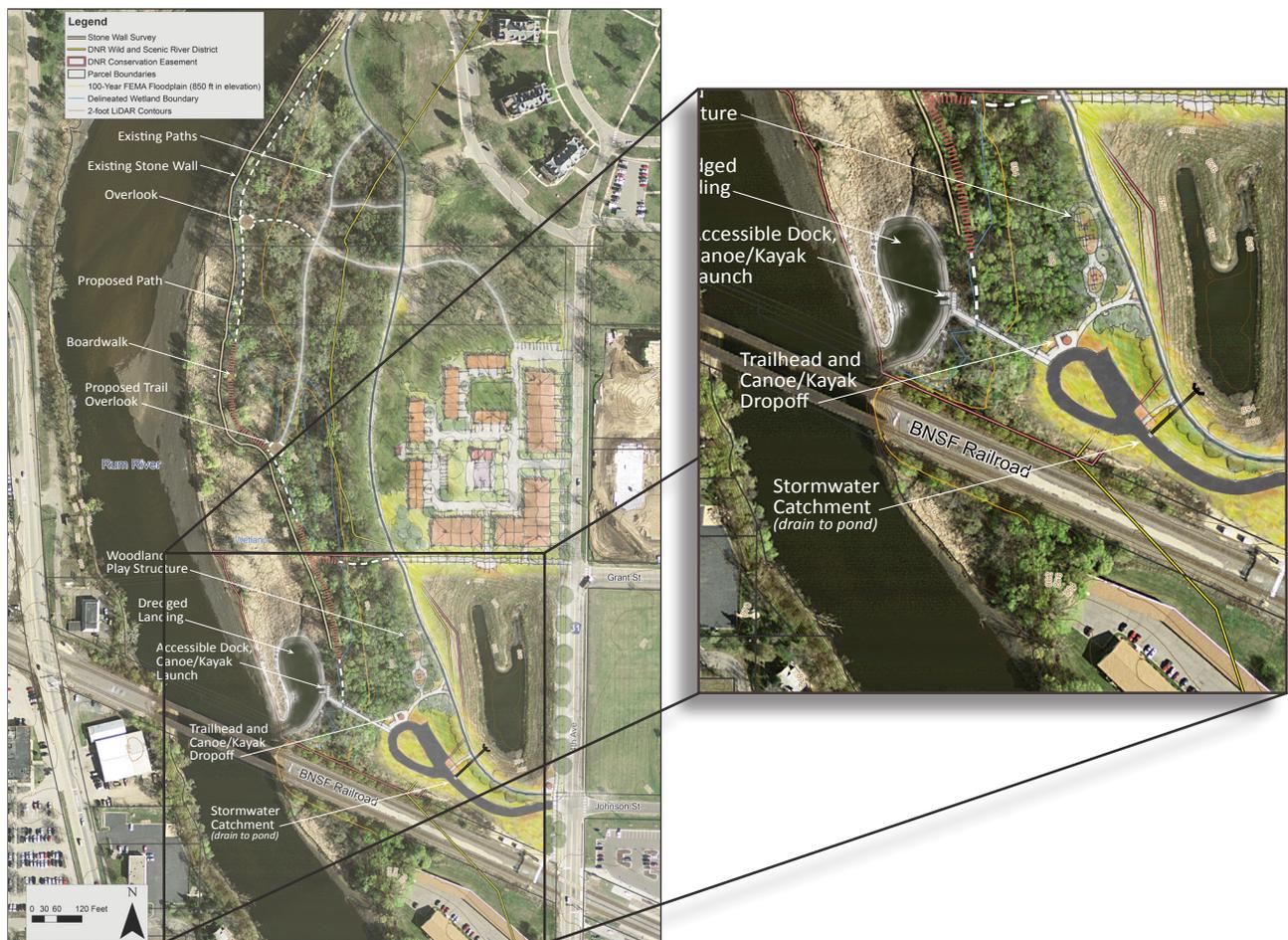
### Objective:

- To provide increased access to the Rum River and a high degree of interaction with the environment in natural areas while preserving the beauty of the natural landscape.

### Strategies:

- Creation of a trailhead and accessible canoe/kayak launch area in an existing backwater area of the Rum River

- Improve interaction with nature by constructing trails with innovative/low impact construction techniques such as boardwalks and natural surface trails.
- Create an active play environment for the community and neighborhood currently served by the Garfield Tot Lot
- Celebrate Anoka's unique history by creating access to interact with the rock wall, river and natural landscape.



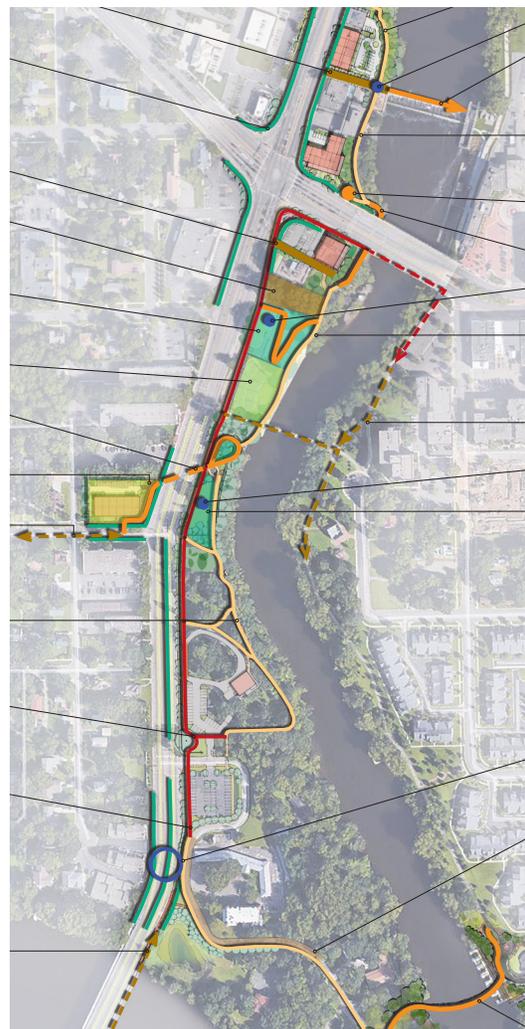
**PROJECT 2.4:** *West Rum River Trail & River Walk*

**Objectives:**

- Improve the Ferry Street Corridor as a Gateway to the City
- Preserve and Maintain Historical Assets
- Improve the Natural Character of the River
- Improve Connectivity and Accessibility to the Rum River
- Improve the corridor as a recreational and economic development amenity to attract tourism, residents, and businesses.

**Strategy:**

- Complete master planning process and begin implementation of the master plan.
- Create a safe pedestrian corridor along Ferry Street
- Establish a rehabilitation/stabilization plan for the historic Windigo Park Auditorium
- Construct a pedestrian bridge from Peninsula Point Park to Akin Riverside Park connecting to the Rum River Regional Trail and Mississippi River Trail.
- Complete the Rum River Walk trail loop with multiple river crossing points that extends on both sides of the Rum River from the dam to the confluence of the Mississippi & Rum Rivers.
- Balance the desire for public river access and interaction with the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and sites within the MRRCA and Wild and Scenic designations.



## GOAL PRO-3

Provide a system of accessible multi-use trails and corridors that offer pedestrians access to significant environmental features, public facilities, neighborhoods and business districts.

### Objective:

- To provide a comprehensive system of sidewalks, multi-modal trails and on-road designated bicycle routes/share-right of ways (ROW)

### Strategies:

- Link neighborhoods to community facilities like parks, special use areas, the riverfront, downtown and other unique or special destinations.
- Promote links to the Regional Trail System and neighboring communities.
- Provide adequate funding to maintain existing and build new trails.
- Implement the Safe Routes to Parks within neighborhoods

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### PROJECT 3.1: *Construction of the 4th Avenue Rail Crossing for Rum River Trail*

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### Objective:

- To provide safe pedestrian and bicycle crossing on the west side of 4th Avenue

### Strategies:

- Acquire easements from adjacent properties (2727 4th Ave, 2701 4th Ave, 2665 4th Ave)
- Coordinate construction with BNSF to install pedestrian crossing arm

- Seek grant funding to assist with improvement costs

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### PROJECT 3.2: *Regional Trail connection to 7th Avenue through the Anoka Nature Preserve*

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### Objective:

- To extend the Rum River Regional Trail through the Anoka Nature Preserve providing river views and a scenic experience

### Strategies:

- Coordinate with Anoka County Parks for funding options as regional trail improvement
- Seek grant funding for trail construction

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### PROJECT 3.3: *Construct 11th Avenue Trail Connection*

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### Objective:

- To provide a 10' bituminous trail connection from Sunny Acres Park/Cleveland Street to the North Street Corridor Trail

### Strategies:

- Gravel trail currently in place from Cleveland St to Grant St.
- Construct trail on 11th Ave with future street renewal project

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**PROJECT 3.4:** *Construct trail on west side of 7th Avenue from Garfield Street to Castle Field Blvd*

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**Objective:**

- Construct a 10' bituminous trail on the west side of 7th Avenue creating safe pedestrian and bicycle route for the 7th Avenue Trail Corridor

**Strategies:**

- Coordinate trail construction with the Anoka County CSAH 7 road reconstruction project

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**PROJECT 3.5:** *Construct trail on west side of 7th Avenue from Bunker Lake Boulevard to northern City limits*

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**Objective:**

- Construct a 10' bituminous trail on the west side of 7th Avenue creating safe pedestrian and bicycle route for 7th Avenue Trail Corridor

**Strategies:**

- Coordinate with future commercial development of city owned property at 7th/Bunker
- Trail bed was graded as part of Rum River Shores 2nd edition

**GOAL PRO-4**

Continue collaboration with Anoka Hennepin Schools regarding shared recreational programming and playfield usage.

**Objective:**

- To coordinate City and school district park facilities and recreation programming for more effective utilization of existing athletic facilities, to ensure quality programming, and avoid duplication of services.



*Anoka Tornados lacrosse game in 2015.*

**Strategies:**

- Active participation on the Community Education Advisory Board
- Continued financial support of the Community Schools Programming
- Reconstruct park facilities/amenities to complement school programming and curriculum
- Supplement Community Education programming with unduplicated and/or coordinated recreational programs

## GOAL PRO-5

Enhance the city’s historic, cultural and artistic assets

### Objective:

- Incorporate art, sculptures, and interpretive elements into future park design and redevelopment
- Restore, improve and recognize Anoka’s historic landmarks

### Strategy:

- Collaborate with the Anoka History Center and Heritage Preservation Committee to identify and research Anoka’s landmarks, significant people and accomplishments.
- Celebrate Anoka’s history through the incorporation of interpretive markers
- Work with local and regional artists and Young Artists of Anoka to enhance and beautify Anoka



*Young Artists of Anoka transformed the Anoka Pedestrian Tunnel in 2015.*

## GOAL PRO-6

Facilitate community involvement and stewardship of Anoka’s parks and public open spaces.

### Objective:

- To foster stewardship, ownership, and pride as a means to increase use of Anoka’s park system and trails; and as a means to deter vandalism and destruction of public property.

### Strategies:

- Continue with and expand the implementation of community service projects within the parks and trails.
- Promote the Adopt-a-Park program.



*Anoka County bluebird coordinator Jeanne Wilkinson cares for 39 bluebird houses across the City of Anoka. (Photo by Richard Sennott)*

## DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Anoka Park and Recreation Advisory Board (Board) has existed since 1919. Policies and principles of the City Code guide the Board. The Board has many functions including overseeing the parks, recreation, facility users, performing arts, urban forestry, trails, and the aquatic center.

The Public Services Department at the City of Anoka administer the following policies:

### DESIGN

- Identify high quality natural, scenic and historical areas to preserve and enhance them for public use and enjoyment.
- Develop and build our trail corridors, parkways and linear parks to maximize recreational opportunities, interconnect neighborhoods and promote community distinction and regional facilities.
- Meet the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and federal safety standards at all municipal owned facilities, including parks and trails.
- Integrate the historical significance of the community through interpretive elements integrated into the park and recreation areas.
- Maintain existing and plant new boulevard trees on the rights-of-ways for neighborhood beautification and vitality

### PROCESS

- Develop conservation planning techniques that identify the importance of preservation of natural resources and open space.

- Develop a recreational capital improvement plan and provide for an annual update.
- Provide the highest quality of park maintenance services and routinely review service needs.
- Make efforts to provide the appropriate level of staff, equipment and facilities.
- Routinely review park and trail dedication requirements when modifications are needed.
- Routinely evaluate athletic field needs of local athletic organizations.
- Annually review and coordinate all Parks and Recreation goals as directed by the Anoka City Council and as advised by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- Inform and educate the public about recreational opportunities in and around the City.
- Create the opportunity for citizens to participate in recreation activities that focus on the Rum and Mississippi Rivers.
- Develop a sense of stewardship and responsibility to preserve natural resources for recreational opportunities for current users and future generations.
- Actively encourage the support of civic organizations and corporate/business community and education systems through funding, developing, volunteering and maintaining the recreation system.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Continue Joint Powers Agreements, amended in 2005, with Anoka-Hennepin Schools to share recreational facilities, programs and services where feasible.
- Coordinate with school district to consolidate programmed sports into specialized play fields.
- Routinely meet with school district to discuss coordination of facility needs and programming.

## FUNDING

Develop a funding resource that meets the needs for maintenance and replacement of the City's parks and recreation program.

## FINANCING

Understanding the resources and tools available for implementation of the Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan will aid in the decision making process for future development. Routinely analyze the financial resources to determine the availability of funding for recreational facilities and programs:

1. Park Dedication Fees
2. User Fees
3. Donations
4. General Tax Levy
5. Grants
6. Partnerships with other governmental agencies and/or private corporations

## FINANCING POLICIES

Adhere to the following City policies regarding park and trail facility financing:

- Apply park dedication standards to all new subdivision and redevelopment projects to address the growing need for recreation associated with community growth.
- Establish fees to cover costs associated with the development, maintenance and operation of community recreational facilities and programs where appropriate.
- Work with Anoka Hennepin Schools and local athletic groups to provide equitable use of available facilities and fair distribution of program costs.
- Budget park and trail maintenance operations and capital outlay into the City annual financial budget.
- Establish a five-year capital improvement plan for system improvements, renovations and maintenance.
- Pursue applicable grants to supplement local financing.
- Investigate corporate partnerships with other government agencies and /or private organizations when the objectives are consistent with City goals.
- Unsolicited gifts or donations will be accepted if they are free of obligations which may limit the use of a facility, do not offend other segments of community and do not come with a hidden or later cost for development, maintenance, or operation, which is outside the City's best interest.