

## Chapter 7

# Parks, Trails and Open Space

### 7.0 Introduction

Fridley's parks, trails and open spaces are important elements of the community. As Fridley developed over the past five decades, the city established an extensive network of park and recreation facilities. Today, the Fridley park system offers areas for active and passive recreation, preserves natural habitat, and provides non-vehicular connections to points of interest within the community and beyond Fridley's borders.

The City of Fridley values its park land and recreational opportunities that strengthen and enhance community life. The recreation and leisure experiences contribute to the physical and economic health of the community by providing needed facilities and making Fridley a desirable place to live, work, and conduct business.

Fridley's park system is not likely to expand in future years because the city is nearly fully developed and has limited opportunities for parkland expansion. If additional parks are acquired or if expansions take place, they will generally result from specific opportunities and circumstances such as redevelopment efforts or changes in land uses. In the future, the primary focus on Fridley's park system will be to continue updating and maintaining the existing park and open space facilities.



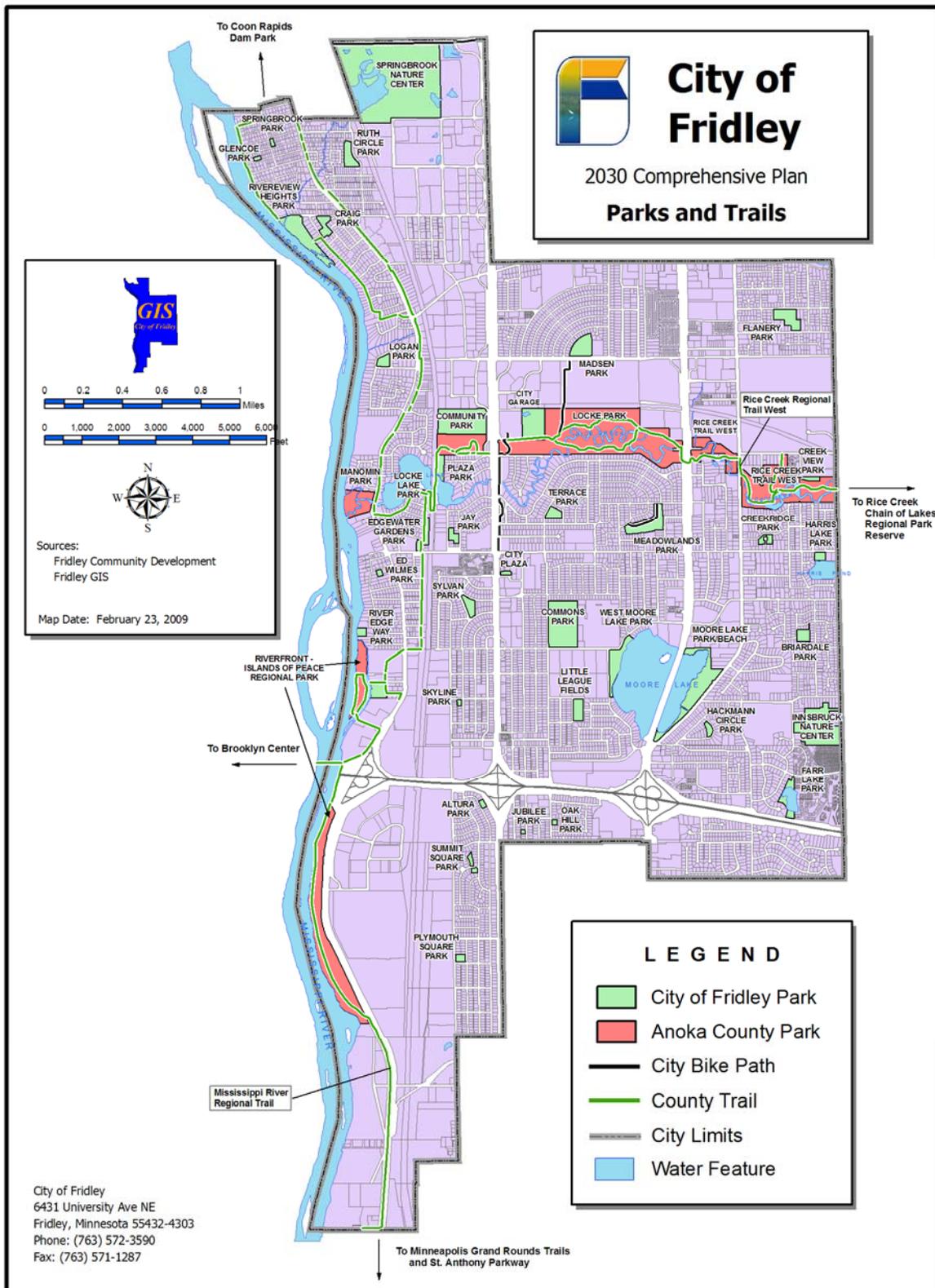
Within this chapter, the term facility is meant to include the natural, landscaped, and built environment.

In 2007, the city of Fridley completed a Park Service Area Study that included a detailed geographic analysis of park facilities and needs. The Study also included detailed recommendations for forty different service areas. The Park Service Area Study (see **Attachment E**) is incorporated as part of the comprehensive plan by reference.

### 7.1 Existing Parks, Trails and Open Space System

Fridley has a strong park system consisting of 316.8 acres of land owned by the City, 129.3 acres of property that is owned and operated by four different school districts, as well as, 281.8 acres of parkland operated by Anoka County. Collectively, these facilities offer Fridley residents, business employees, and visitors over 727 acres of park and open space areas and miles of trails. The system was built through park dedications, partnerships with local schools, and individual and civic organization donations. In addition to a vast array of facilities, Fridley also offers a broad range of recreational programs through its Recreation Department as well as some that are sponsored by school districts and private recreational organizations. These programs, while important to the community, are not addressed in detail in the comprehensive plan. Rather, the plan focuses on the physical needs of the park system. The existing park system is shown on the map included as **Figure 7.1**.

Figure 7.1 Existing City of Fridley Park System



## 7.2 Park Classification System

Fridley has a variety of different types of parks that are components of the overall park system. In order to examine existing parks and to discuss future park needs, a uniform system of classification is used in this plan. This system is compatible with the classifications used in the *1997 Park Service Area Study* as well as the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The following categories have been established:

**Table 7.1 Park Classifications**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Location Criteria</b>	<b>Size Criteria</b>
Mini Park	Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population/specific group	Within walking distance of areas not served by larger park sites	Usually less than 1 acre
Neighborhood Park	Basic unit of park system. Accommodate intense activities such as field and court games, crafts, apparatus areas, skating and neighborhood centers	¼ to ½ mile radius service area, preferably uninterrupted by non-residential roads	Ideally, minimum size – 15 acres
Community Park	Area of natural or ornamental quality for passive outdoor recreation – some field or court games. May include areas for intense recreational activities such as athletic complexes.	Determined by quality and characteristics of site. May be placed in close proximity to other community facilities, convenient to all residents.	Typically 25 – 50 acres
Special Use Park	Provide specialized or single purpose recreational activities, including but not limited to nature centers, arenas, etc.	Varies	Varies
Linear Park	Areas developed for one or more modes of recreational travel such as hiking or biking.	Located where the trail resource occurs linking components of the City's recreational system and other points of interest.	Varies
Conservation Area	Protection and management of natural/cultural environment with recreation use as a secondary objective.	Varies, depending upon the site being protected.	Varies
Regional Park	Area of natural quality oriented toward open space activities.	Located consistent with the occurrence of quality natural resources.	Varies, typically in excess of 200 acres

### 7.3 Facility Inventory

Local recreational facilities are provided by a number of sources. City parks are perhaps the most obvious of these resources, however, recreational opportunities provided by other entities need to be considered in assessing the total park and recreation system. Other entities providing public-access park



and recreational opportunities in Fridley include the schools districts, and Anoka County.

A complete listing of existing parks as well as a tabulation of recreational facilities is shown on **Table 7.2**.

### 7.4 Park System Needs

A common tool for analyzing a local park system is the application of population ratio standards. A population ratio standard is expressed as a number of acres of parkland per

one thousand people and is used to provide a general guideline for the assessment of existing and future park needs. For the comprehensive plan, an overall minimum standard of 10.5 acres of municipal parkland per 1000 people has been used as the guideline for planning purposes. This standard is consistent with the guidelines used by the city in 2007 in assembling the Park Service Area Study.

Table 7.2 Parks and Recreational Facilities

Parks & Recreation Areas															
	Classification	Acres	Picnic Area	Picnic Shelter	Park Building	Playground Equip.	Walking/Biking Trail	Ball Diamonds	Basketball	Football Fields	Soccer Fields	Hockey Rinks	Skating Rinks	Tennis Courts	Other
<b>PARKS - CITY OF FRIDLEY</b>															
Altura, 5445 Altura Road	Mini	0.7													
Briardale, 6171 Rice Creek Drive	N	2.8	◆	◆		◆								1-L	
City Plaza, 6431 University Avenue	SU	0.9	◆												
Commons, 555 - 61st Avenue	C	23	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	2	Sliding Hill
Community, 7000 University Avenue	C	21	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆						
Craig, 410 - 79th Way	N	2.8	◆											2-L	
Creekridge, 1380 Creek Park Lane	N	2.2	◆	◆				◆	◆				◆	1-L	
Creek View, 6801 Anoka Street	Mini	0.8						◆							
Ed Wilmes, 150 - 64-1/2 Avenue	Mini	0.6	◆												
Edgewater Gardens, 6700 Ashton Avenue	N	4.4						◆						1-L	
Farr Lake, 1510 North Innsbruck	N	6.6					◆								
Flanery, 1505 Onondaga Street	N	7.9	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆			◆	◆	2-L	
Glencoe, 661 Glencoe Street	Mini	0.4						◆							
Hackmann, 1071 Hackmann Circle	N	1.9	◆					◆	◆						
Harris Lake, 1620 Mississippi Street	N	1.7	◆	◆											
Innsbruck, 5815 Arthur Street	SU	24					◆								
Jay, 6540 - 2nd Street	N	1.8						◆							
Jubilee, 5334 - 5th Street	Mini	0.4													
Locke, 6911 University Avenue	C	16.7					◆			◆					Horseshoe Courts
Locke Lake, 6725 Ashton Avenue	Mini	0.5					◆								
Logan, 155 Logan Parkway	N	2	◆	◆				◆	◆					1	
Madsen, 725 - 73rd Avenue	N	6.2	◆					◆	◆			◆	◆	1-L	
Meadowlands, 6641 Kennaston Street	N	9.9	◆	◆											
Moore Lake, 5890 Central Avenue	C	14	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆					2-L	Beach & Fishing Piers
Oak Hill, 5391 - 7th Street	Mini	0.5													
Plaza, 170 - 69th Avenue	N	3	◆						◆						
Plymouth Square, 4801 Main Street	Mini	1.1						◆	◆						
Ray Thompson Little League, 5875 Jefferson	SU	3.5			◆			◆							
River Edge Way, 154 River Edge Way	CA	1.3													
Riverview Heights, 500 - 79th Avenue	N	7.4	◆	◆			◆								
Ruth Circle, 8160 Ashton	N	3.6	◆		◆	◆		◆				◆	◆	1-L	
Skyline, 5880 - 2nd Street	Mini	0.9						◆							
Springbrook, 8155 Broad Avenue	Mini	0.6													
Springbrook Nature Center, 100 - 85th Avenue	SU	127	◆	◆	◆	◆									Interpretive Center
Summit Square, 5201 Capitol Street	Mini	1						◆					◆	1	
Sylvan Hills, 6205 Jupiter Drive	N	2.6	◆					◆	◆				◆	1	
Terrace, 6735 - 7th Street	N	3.5	◆					◆						1	
West Moore Lake, 6091 West Moore Lake Drive	CA	7.6													
<b>PARKS - ANOKA COUNTY</b>															
Islands of Peace, 200 Charles Street	R	79	◆	◆	◆		◆								
Locke, 450 - 71st Avenue	R	95.3	◆	◆			◆								Dog Park
Manomin, 6666 East River Road	R	15	◆	◆											
Rice Creek Trail West, 1410 - 69th Avenue	R	32.5					◆	◆							
Riverfront, 5100 East River Road	R	60	◆	◆			◆	◆							Boat Launch
<b>SCHOOL FACILITIES</b>															
Community Center, 6085 - 7th Street	ISD 14	10	◆					◆							Senior & Teen Center
Fridley Middle School, 6100 West Moore Lake Drive	ISD 14	46.7						◆	◆	◆				6-L	Indoor Pool
Fridley Senior High, 6000 West Moore Lake Drive	ISD 14	32.9						◆	◆	◆				7	Auditorium
Hayes Elementary, 615 Mississippi Street	ISD 14	10.5				◆		◆				◆	◆		
North Park Elementary, 5575 Fillmore Street	ISD 13	7				◆		◆							
Stevenson Elementary, 6080 East River Road	ISD 14	13.7				◆		◆	◆					2	
Woodcrest Elementary, 880 Osborne Road	ISD 16	8.5				◆		◆	◆			◆	◆	1-L	

### **Mini-Parks**

**Standard** - .5 acres per 1000 people

**Comments** - Mini-parks are facilities that are intended to serve concentrated populations residing generally within ¼ mile of park sites. Because of the limited purpose of such parks, they typically contain one acre of land or less. Mini-parks were popular in the 1970s and 1980s as a means of supplying convenient recreational facilities. Throughout the 1990s, many communities elected not to include mini-parks within their overall park systems because of maintenance and budget concerns. Numerous small parks are more difficult and costly to maintain than fewer, but larger neighborhood parks.

**Existing Supply/Need** - Fridley currently contains eleven sites that are classified as mini-parks ranging in size from .4 to 1.1 acres. Application of the standard for mini-parks results in a deficiency of 7.25 acres in 2000 and 2010 and 7.5 acres in 2020. Although the standards indicate a deficiency of mini-parks, the distribution of neighborhood parks and school sites generally provides convenient recreational opportunities to most Fridley neighborhoods. Therefore, Fridley would cautiously consider development of any additional mini-parks in the future because of the availability of existing facilities and concerns for maintenance.

#### ***Fridley Mini Parks***

- |              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| ➤ Altura     | ➤ Oak Hill        |
| ➤ Creekview  | ➤ Plymouth Square |
| ➤ Ed Wilmes  | ➤ Skyline         |
| ➤ Glencoe    | ➤ Springbrook     |
| ➤ Jubilee    | ➤ Summit Square   |
| ➤ Locke Lake |                   |

### **Neighborhood Parks**

**Standard** - 2 acres per 1000 people

**Comments** - Neighborhood parks are recreational facilities that are intended to serve populations residing within a ½ mile radius of the site. Neighborhood parks typically contain open space areas that accommodate uses such as field games, court games, play equipment and other uses. Although ten acres is generally recognized as an ideal minimum for neighborhood parks, smaller tracts of land can be used due to natural conditions or in areas where larger land parcels are not available.

**Existing Supply/Need** - Fridley currently has 18 neighborhood parks. These parks range in size from 1.8 to 9.9 acres. Application of the recommended standards for neighborhood parks results in an excess of 13.6 acres in 2000 and 2010 and an excess of 12.6 acres by 2020. Because Fridley is bisected by a number of major roadways creating distinct residential boundaries, the current supply of neighborhood parks provides a convenient network of neighborhood recreational activities. Accordingly, it is unlikely that Fridley will reduce its supply of neighborhood parks in the future. Based on the application of standards, the community will not need to add additional neighborhood park sites unless opportunities arise to provide better service through the acquisition of vacant land or through redevelopment efforts. If a new neighborhood park were established in the future, it would be appropriate to examine the supply of mini-parks in the area to see if their functions can be incorporated into the new neighborhood park.

***Fridley Neighborhood Parks***

- Briardale
- Craig
- Creekridge
- Edgewater Gardens
- Farr Lake
- Flanery
- Hackmann
- Harris Lake
- Jay
- Locke
- Logan
- Madsen
- Meadowlands
- Plaza
- Riverview Heights
- Ruth Circle
- Sylvan Hills
- Terrace

***Community Parks***

**Standard** - 8 acres per 1000 people

**Comments** - Community parks provide recreational facilities that appeal to a broad spectrum of users. Activities may include athletic complexes, fishing, nature study, hiking, picnicking and other related uses. Community parks commonly contain facilities that are designed to appeal to both active and passive users within one park site. The location of community parks is usually established on the basis of topography and other natural features and on accessibility.



**Existing Supply/Need** - Fridley currently has three community parks ranging in size from 16.7 to 23 acres. Application of the standard for community parks indicates that Fridley's community park system is deficient by 55 acres in both 2000 and 2010 and by 59 acres in 2020. Strict application of this standard, however, ignores other recreational resources within the city that can supply community recreational opportunities. Anoka County parks and school facilities occupy over 411 acres of land in Fridley. Most of the schools have athletic fields that are available during off-school hours for public use. Anoka County parks, such as Anoka County Riverfront Park, provide picnicking, hiking and fishing opportunities for Fridley residents that

reduce the need for such facilities in community parks. As a result, the current supply of community parkland in Fridley is adequate to meet both existing and future needs.

#### ***Fridley Community Parks***

- Commons
- Community
- Moore Lake

#### ***Special Use Facilities***

**Comments** - Fridley also has a number of special use facilities that contribute significantly to the overall park and open space system. Special use facilities are areas that preserve, maintain and provide specialized or single purpose recreational activities such as nature centers, mountain bike trails, display gardens, arenas, and sites of historic or archeological significance.

#### ***Fridley Special Use Parks***

- City Plaza
- Innsbruck Nature Center
- Moore Lake
- Springbrook Nature Center (see below)
- West Moore Lake Sand Dunes



#### ***Conservation Areas***

**Comments** - Conservation areas are parcels of natural quality such as wetlands and watercourses that are preserved for environmental or aesthetic benefits to the community and/or because of the negative environmental or economic effects of development in them.

#### ***Fridley Conservation Areas***

- River Edge Way

#### ***Springbrook Nature Center***

Springbrook Nature Center occupies 127 acres in the northwest portion of Fridley. The center, which is classified as a special use facility, draws visitors from throughout the metropolitan area. In 2006 an estimated 150,000 visits occurred with people participating in programs at the site, using the trails and overlooks for wellness and health restoration in nature, or spending time casually walking the grounds individually, or with family, friends, or business associates.

During past city vision meetings, the nature center was identified as a “favorite” location in the City. The center acts as a “gathering place” for many Fridley residents of all ages.

Springbrook Nature Center serves several purposes including managing and preserving the natural environment and offering educational programs on a broad range of environmental topics. Students from preschools through college participate in this programming. Fridley students are a main focus, however, students from over 30 communities participate. Other important purposes include health restoration and wellness as evidenced through partnerships with local hospital cardiac care and cancer programs, as well

as providing extensive volunteer opportunities for teens, seniors, families, individuals, and special needs populations. Scout, civic, church, and other groups have meetings and programs at the site. Community events are held here with attendance exceeding 3,000 at a single event.



Because the Nature Center is receiving significant increasing use and requests for various types of public access and usage, plans have been developed to enhance approximately 7 acres surrounding the entrance area to accommodate these needs. Focusing activities in this area will reduce increasing usage of the park's interior, which will assist the sustainable management of the natural diversity of the site.

Funding for this entrance area project (SPRING—Sanctuary Protection and Renewal Into the Next Generation) is being applied for through State and private sources by the City and the Springbrook

Nature Center Foundation. The Park and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission, and the City Council have approved this improvement in concept. The Springbrook Foundation Board has funded concept drawings and pre-design plans for this project.

## 7.5 Trail System

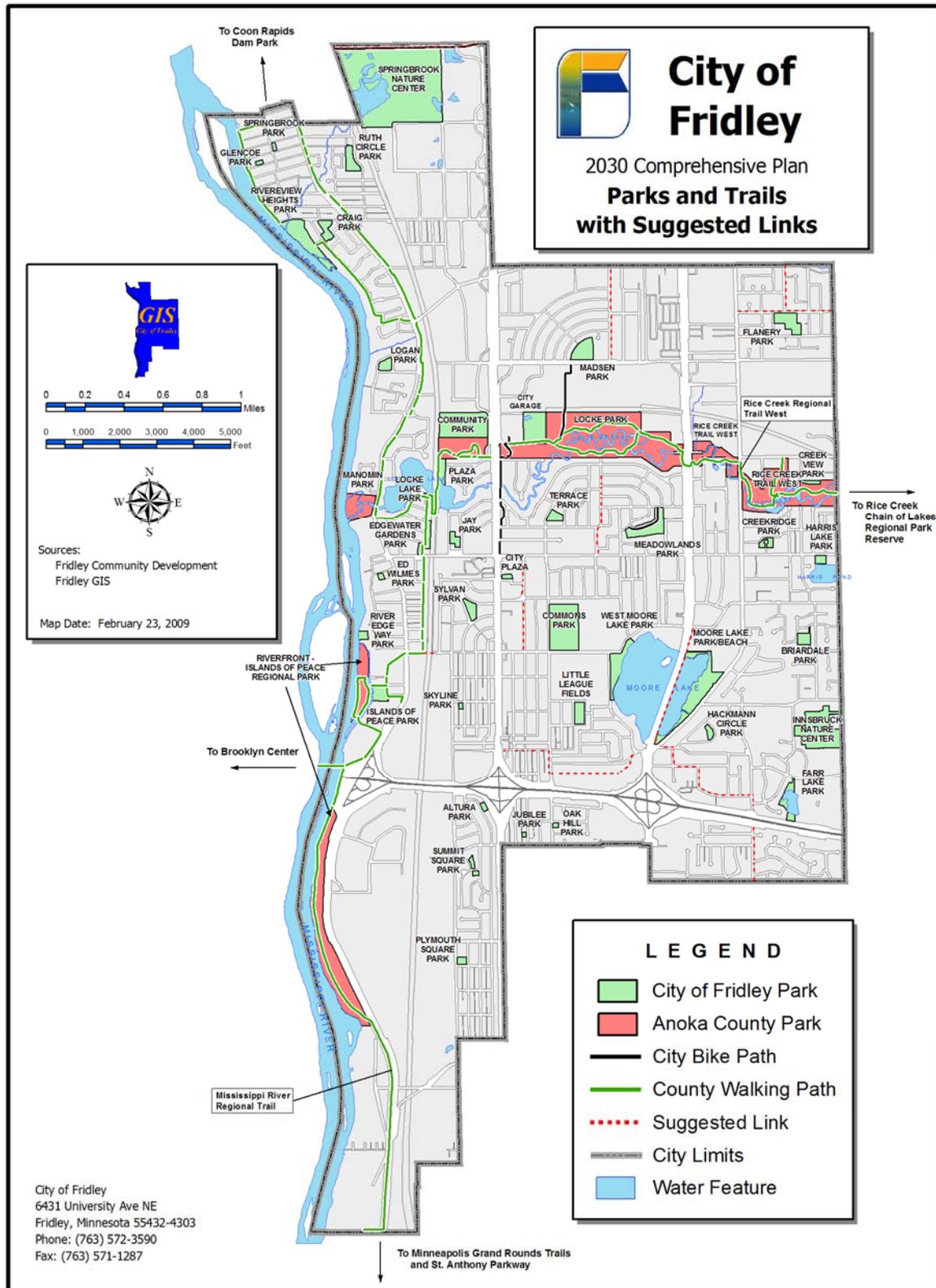
The City of Fridley has four types of trails in the community. Some parts of the community have traditional concrete sidewalks (about five feet wide) located off street and within the public right-of-way (portions of 61st Avenue and Mississippi Street for example). The second type of trail in Fridley include multi-purpose bikeway/walkway trails. Bikeway/walkways are usually 8 to 10 foot wide bituminous surface trails. The Rice Creek West Regional Trail is a good example of the bikeway/walkway trail. The third type of trail is the on-street bikeway (or sometimes referred to as bike lanes). The on-street bikeway is usually delineated by striping and signage that identify bike routes. These on-street bike routes require a five foot width. Seventh Street south of 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a good example of a street with an on-street bikeway. The last type of trail includes primarily unpaved trails entirely within parks. These are commonly used for hiking and mountain biking. These trail surfaces are made of boardwalk, wood chips or cleared pathways.

Trails serve several purposes for Fridley residents and employees. They function as a mode of transportation connecting residents to park and recreation facilities, transit stops, places of employment and shopping destinations. Trails also provide a safe place for biking, walking, jogging or other forms of recreation. Fridley's trail system connects many regional sources of recreation. These attractions include the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park to the north, the City of Minneapolis Trail and Park System to the south (both of these systems are accessed via the Mississippi River Regional Trail) and the Rice Creek West Regional Trail connection to Long Lake Regional Park in New Brighton.

## 7.6 Trail System Needs

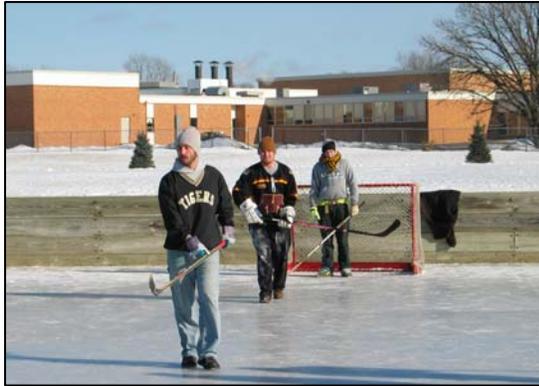
Several trail segments have been identified as needed additions to the Fridley Bikeway/Walkway System. These are illustrated in map named **Figure 7.2** Parks and Trails with Suggested Links. A description of the needed trails is listed in the *Conclusions and Action Steps* section of this chapter.

Figure 7.2 Parks and Trails with Suggested Links



## 7.7 Recreational Uses in Parks

Fridley has a well-established park system that is the product of the development of the community over the past 50 years. Because the city lacks vacant land and therefore is not expected to grow substantially in population in the next 20 years, it is reasonable to assume that the park system will not change dramatically. Rather, the change in the park system is likely to be more of an evolution that reflects the needs to the community based on changing demographics and recreational interests. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s, tennis was a very popular sport and in response, communities like Fridley constructed numerous tennis courts to meet demand. Today, tennis is not as popular as it once was and accordingly, many communities are converting tennis courts to other uses such as basketball, sand volleyball, or in-line skating. In some cases, cities are simply removing courts rather than incurring substantial renovation costs for older facilities.



Changes in recreational interests occur over a longer period of time and are difficult to predict. Frequently, the popularity of various recreational pursuits can be attributed to new equipment technologies or professional personalities that have a broad public appeal.

While it is difficult to accurately predict the next popular sporting trend, it is possible to reflect on some of the factors that are likely to impact the public's interest in recreation in the years ahead. This information is not conclusive enough to suggest immediate changes but should be monitored on an annual basis as part of an ongoing process to supply recreational facilities that meet local needs.

## 7.8 Park and Recreational Trends

Based on national and local information, the following trends should be continually monitored to assess their impact on the Fridley recreation system:

### ***Changing Demographics***

In Fridley, the general aging of the population may be accompanied by the strong retention of younger segments of the population. This may occur due to the fact that the housing supply in Fridley is relatively affordable and attractive to younger families with younger children. As a result, in the future, the city may see higher demand for passive recreational facilities such as walking trails and seating areas as well as active play equipment for young children in neighborhood parks.

### ***Desire to Preserve Open Space and Other Natural Features***

Communities throughout the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area have expressed an interest in preserving open space areas and key natural features. In many instances, voters have approved bond issues to provide funds for the acquisition of such properties. In Fridley's case, the lack of vacant land restricts the ability to acquire new areas simply to preserve open space to balance development within the community. In all likelihood, however, this trend will result in a continued strong interest in preserving the natural areas that currently exist in the community.



### ***Increased Interest in Trails***

Regional trends point to increased interest in the development of trails both for recreational purposes and to provide an alternative to the automobile. Fridley has been active in developing a trail system that links neighborhoods, parks, commercial areas and other points of interest, such as the Springbrook Nature Center. The trail system needs identified in the plan further support the City's commitment to connect major land uses, transit stations, and "gathering spaces" with residential areas or employment centers.

### ***Increased Demand for Year-round Facilities*** (indoor soccer, hockey, etc.)

For many years, sports programs were generally confined to a specific season and/or time of year. For example, baseball was in the summer, football in the fall, hockey and basketball in the winter. While there is still heavy participation in various sports during the traditional season, more participants than ever are pursuing their sports on a year round basis.

### ***Increased Environmental Awareness***

People throughout Minnesota are taking an active role and promoting important environmental issues such as concern for global warming, energy conservation, protection of our natural resources, and improving water quality. Maintenance practices and improvement to the park and recreation system will be expected to enhance efforts to protect and improve the environment.

### ***Increased Demand for Specialized Sports and Recreation Facilities***

Specialized sports have continued to gain popularity and the participants want to see more facilities available and opportunities close to their home. Examples of specialized sports include mountain biking, skateboarding, in-line skating, and BMX biking.

### ***High Expectations of Facility Quality***

People have an expectation that park and recreation areas will be up to date with modern equipment and good facilities.

## **7.9 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Policies**

Several policy statements were developed upon analysis of the findings in this chapter. The following policy statements are listed in no particular area of priority.

- The City will continue to maintain all park and recreation areas to a high level of safety and cleanliness.
- The City will continue to develop park and recreation facilities which minimize the maintenance demands on the City. This will be done by emphasizing the acquisition of well planned parks, quality materials, and labor saving devices and practices. When appropriate, the City should submit grant applications to obtain funding assistance for the park and recreation system from regional, state, and federal agencies, and private organizations, foundations, businesses, and individuals.



- The Parks and Recreation Commission will, each year, recommend the adoption of a five-year Capital Improvements Plan for the parks and recreation system.
- The City should continue to include citizen participation in the planning and improvement of the local parks, trail, and open space system.
- The Parks and Recreation Commission and City staff should continue to utilize and support citizen volunteers wherever possible to help with programs, services, and projects in the parks and recreation system.
- The City should evaluate establishing a program that promotes a variety of beautification projects by partnering with other service groups, government agencies, or volunteers.

- Fridley is nearly fully developed and has limited opportunities for park or open space acquisition. Although Fridley meets the overall minimum acreage for neighborhood parks in the community, not all neighborhoods are served with adequate park land. The City should acquire parkland where necessary to improve the service of the park system and provide open spaces and greenways where appropriate. When selecting land for park and/or open space purposes, the land should possess scenic and/or unique natural features; or possess qualities conducive to recreation



- The City should consider acquiring sites to develop adequate park land for under serviced neighborhoods that are separated from existing parks by natural or man-made barriers.
- The City should continue to require park dedication of land or cash when land is developed or redeveloped for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes. Furthermore, the City should place greater emphasis on dedication of cash rather than land, except in areas of the community that are under serviced by existing park facilities. Wetlands and storm water ponding areas shall not be accepted as fulfillment of park dedication requirements.



- The City should carefully address park and trail needs as part of any future redevelopment efforts.
- The City should not allow conversion of park land and public open space to other uses except when no feasible alternative exists. When such conversion is unavoidable, the taking agency shall pay for replacement of equal or greater value land and facilities to serve the need of the people in that area.

- Fridley would cautiously consider development of any additional mini-parks in the future because of the availability of existing facilities and concerns for maintenance. The City shall continue to retain and maintain its existing mini-parks.
- When considering the total acreage for community parks serving the City, Fridley should include areas and facilities provided for public use by other agencies such as the public schools. The City will continue to cooperate with other governmental and private organizations in providing park, open space and recreation areas.
- Give high priority to the provision of public access to the River and public use of River shoreline.
- Ensure that park design and development will provide for a balance between function and aesthetics, including the conservation of natural resources wherever possible.
- Open space contributes to health and well being of residents, business employees, and visitors. Preserve open space when possible.



### 7.10 Parks, Trails and Open Space Goals

Goals have been assembled related to parks, trails, and open space. The term “goals” is used throughout this plan to define the City’s desired outcome relative to key community issues. There were several Parks, Trails and Open Space goals that emerged from the 2007 neighborhood planning meetings. The following action plans placed under these goals in Chapter 1 of this plan are the ones which are addressed in this chapter:

1. Provide recreational opportunities for all ages
2. Maintain the good park system
3. Provide more bike/walk paths and keep them maintained in winter
4. Protect the Mississippi River, trees, and open space in the City and reduce air and noise pollution

### 7.11 Conclusions and Action Steps

Several general statements can be drawn from the analysis of the existing parks, trails and open space system. The following statements have been discussed and debated and related action steps have been developed. Action steps reflect the city’s general intentions and will guide the community in the attainment of goals.

1. Sustaining a well-maintained infrastructure is a necessity for public safety.

**Action Step.** The City should continue to maintain and implement park maintenance and upgrade programs in accordance with the capital improvements program.

**Action Step.** A consistent signing policy shall be developed for all park and recreation areas and buildings, to include directional and informational signs.

**Action Step.** The City should develop and distribute to its residents, employers, and visitors a promotional map that highlights park and trails throughout the City. This map could also be made available for viewing on the City's web page.

2. Visits to the Nature Center have increased significantly, as have requests for various types of public access. Plans have been developed to enhance approximately 7 acres surrounding the entrance area to accommodate these needs. Focusing activities in this area will reduce increasing usage of the park's interior, which will assist the sustainable management of the natural diversity of the site.

**Action Step.** The Springbrook Foundation will re-apply to the State Legislature for funding for this entrance area project (SPRING—Sanctuary Protection and Renewal Into the Next Generation). The Park and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission, and the City Council have approved this improvement in concept. Matching funds are being secured by donations to the Springbrook Foundation. The Springbrook Foundation Board has funded concept drawings and pre-design plans for this project.



3. Trails serve several purposes for Fridley residents, business employees and visitors. They function as a mode of transportation connecting residents to park and recreation facilities, transit stops, places of employment and shopping destinations. Trails also provide a safe place for biking, walking, jogging or other forms of recreation.

**Action Step.** The City should seek creative ways to fund and implement the following trail segments.

- An off-street bikeway/walkway along the south side of 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue from East River Road to University Avenue connecting the two roadway corridors to Springbrook Nature Center. Development of this segment of trail will need to be coordinated with the City of Coon Rapids to connect to East River Road.
- An underpass under the railroad tracks at 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue. This segment would provide a safe connection for residential neighborhoods east of the railroad tracks with the riverfront park amenities such as Islands of Peace Park. It will also compliment the planned commuter rail station



providing a bikeway connection to the Northstar Rail Station.

- An off street bikeway/walkway connection linking the Medtronic world headquarters, through the proposed City View area, to the University Avenue corridor along 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
  - Improvements along 7<sup>th</sup> Street between Rice Creek and 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue would include a combination of off-street bikeway/walkway and on-street bikeway facilities. Sidewalks exist along 7<sup>th</sup> Street from Mississippi Street to 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This segment should be considered for an off-street bikeway/walkway facility and continued from 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue south to 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. An on-street bikeway should be considered for the segment north of Mississippi Street, where traffic volumes are lower and land use is residential.
  - An expansion of the existing sidewalk along the south side 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue to an off-street bikeway/walkway from Main Street to TH 65 should be evaluated. This expansion would provide a strong east/west pedestrian link connecting schools and community center to the future commuter rail station area on 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue.
  - An off street cantilever bikeway/walkway and fishing pier on the east side of TH 65. This segment has been designed and should be completed when TH 65 is expanded between Medtronic Parkway and East Moore Lake Drive across Moore Lake. This trail segment would create a safe access to the fishing pier and would also complete a recreational trail loop around Moore Lake for jogging, biking, or rollerblading.
  - An on-street bikeway on Matterhorn Drive south of I-694 connecting residential neighborhoods south of the Interstate to parks north of the Interstate via the Matterhorn Drive overpass.
  - An off-street walkway along the west side of 5<sup>th</sup> Street from 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue would provide a pedestrian connection for seniors from Norwood Square to access Columbia Park medical facilities to the north and would provide pedestrian access to the Community Center on 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue.
  - Although there is an underpass under East River Road connecting Manomin County Park and the Banfill Locke Center for the Arts to the regional trail on the east side of the road, the City seeks to add an off-street walkway/bikeway on the west side of East River Road between Manomin Park and 61<sup>st</sup> Way.
  - The City should continue to expand the existing trail network to service all neighborhoods and areas of the city by continually updating its Trail Plan; publicizing the trail system through maps and signage; and continuing to cooperate with other governmental and non-governmental agencies in the development of trails that complement the local system.
4. In addition to trail connections, certain areas of the City need more on-street bikeway connections. More east-west bike/walk connections are needed and options for bike/walk connection under or over I-694 are also needed, especially at Matterhorn Drive, 7<sup>th</sup> Street, University Avenue, and Main Street.

**Action Step.** See action steps related to this need in the Transportation chapter.

5. While we have much park land along the Mississippi River, there is not much visible access from major thoroughfares. The City needs to display its most valuable natural resource through its parks.

**Action Step.** Allow periodic clearings of underbrush in Riverfront, Manomin, and Islands of Peace parks to create strategically located vistas of the Mississippi River.

6. The Locke Park soccer fields do not have dedicated parking lots. For years, the Fridley park system has shared parking with the former Columbia Arena site. This ice arena and its associated parking changed ownership in 2007. When redevelopment plans are proposed, the Locke Park soccer fields face a loss of parking.

**Action Step.** Work with future developer(s) of the Columbia Arena site to secure parking for the Locke Park soccer fields.

## 7.12 Summary

The natural amenities that Fridley parks, trails, and open space provide impacts property values and property owners desire to call Fridley home. The preservation of many of Fridley's parks along waterways also helps preserve water quality in the region. During the Neighborhood Planning Meetings held in the spring of 2007, Fridley residents made it very clear that maintaining Fridley's park system was very important to them. There was also much interest in more walking and cycling opportunities. While balancing the financial needs of the City often puts parks and recreation near the bottom of the funding list as non-essential services, residents rank parks very high on their list of services they desire.

