

# Chapter 4. Parks and Trails



# Parks and Trails

## 4.0 Introduction

Fridley's parks, trails and open spaces are important elements of the community. As Fridley developed over the past six 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.

Fridley's park system is not likely to expand in future years because the city is nearly fully developed and has limited opportunities for park land 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.



*Riverview Heights Park Bridge in the fall, Photo by Doug Katzung*

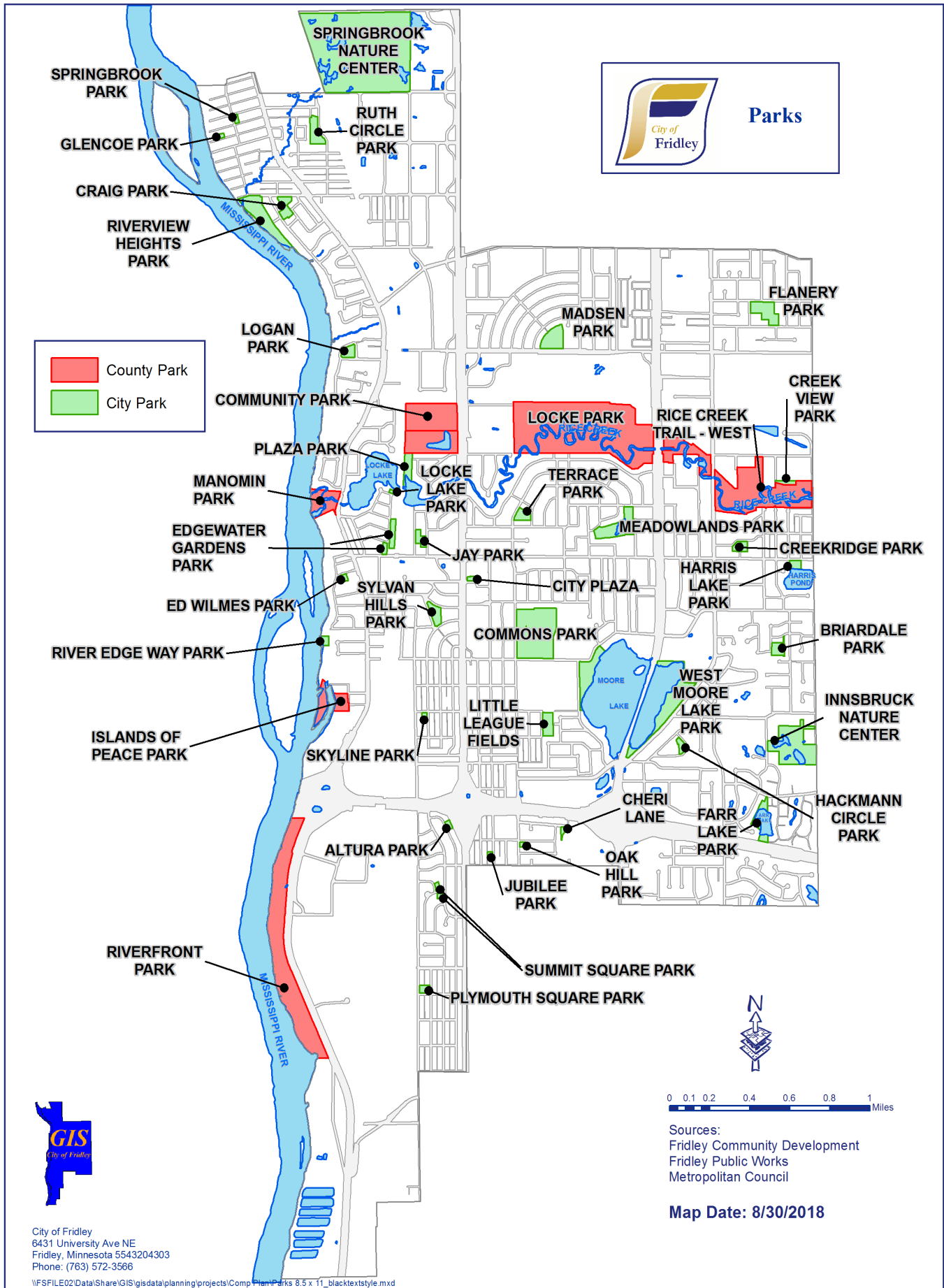
## 4.1 Existing Parks, Trails, and Facilities

Fridley has a strong park system consisting of 295 acres of land owned by the City, 57 acres of property that is owned and operated by four different school districts, as well as, 300 acres of park land operated by Anoka County. Collectively, these facilities offer Fridley residents, business employees, and visitors over 652 acres of park, 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 4.1.

### National Standards

While there is no official government standard for the provision of parks and recreation facilities, the National Recreation and Park Association or NRPA (a private, non-profit professional organization) has established park, recreation and open space guidelines. The NRPA suggests that a park system be composed of a "core" system of park lands, providing a minimum of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of park land per 1000 residents. The Metropolitan Council encourages cities to provide a minimum of 7 to 14 acres of park land per 1000 residents. Fridley far exceeds that minimum with 24 acres of City and County park land per 1,000 residents.

Figure 4.1 Existing City of Fridley Park System





*Commons Park Playground*

## **4.2 Park Classification System**

Fridley has many different types of parks that are key components to the overall park system. In order to examine existing parks and to discuss future park needs, a uniform system of classification, developed by the NRPA, is used in this plan. This system is compatible with the classifications used in the 2017 Park Service Area Study as well as the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

### **Mini-Parks (Mini)**

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

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.

### **Neighborhood Parks (N)**

**Standard** - 2 acres per 1000 people

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.



*Ruth Circle Park*

## Community Parks (C)

**Standard** - 8 acres per 1000 people

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 as well as accessibility.



*Commons Park, Photo by Doug Katzung*

## Special Use Facilities (SU)

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 archaeological significance.

## Conservation Areas (CA)

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.



*Springbrook Nature Center Interpretive Center*

### 4.3 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 Figure 4.2.

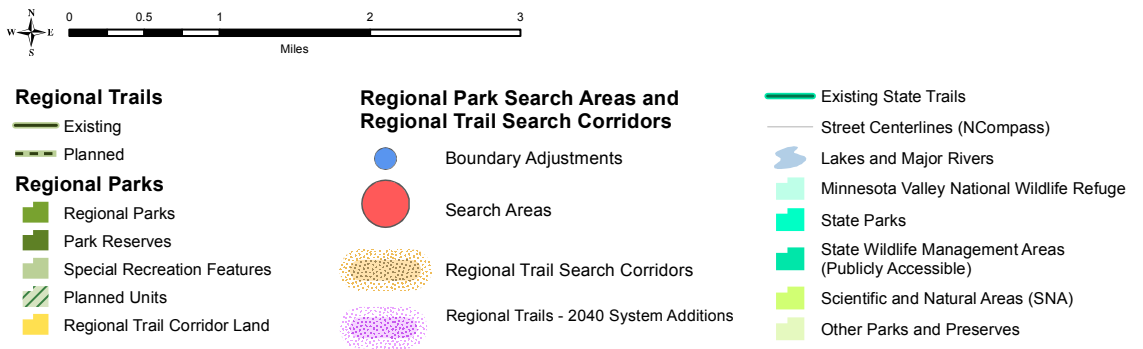
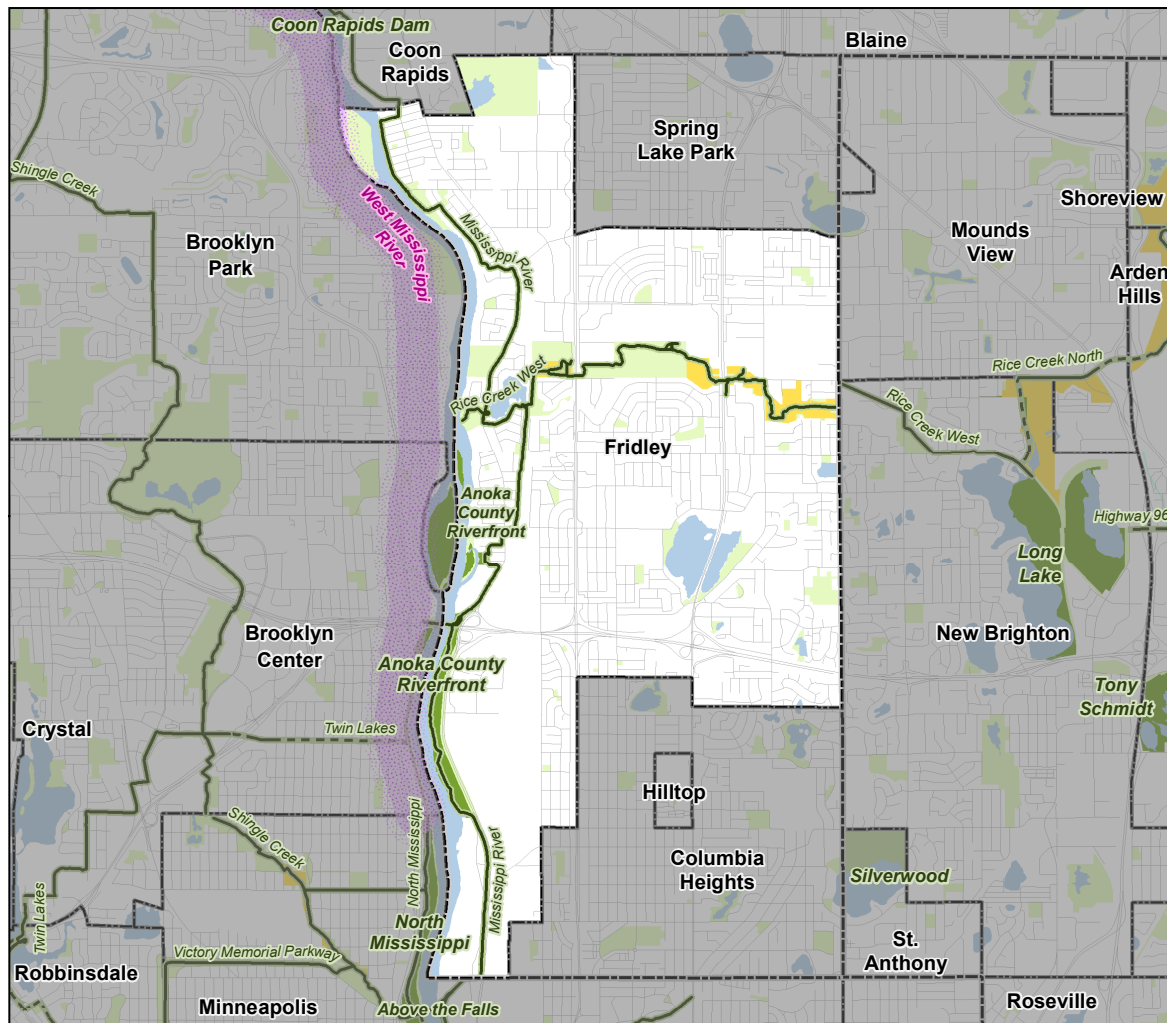
**Figure 4.2 Existing Parks and Recreational Facilities**

Parks & Recreation Areas																
PARKS - CITY OF FRIDLEY	Classification	Acres	Picnic Area	Picnic Shelter	Park Building	Playground Equip.	Walking/Biking Trail	Ball Diamonds	Basketball	Football Fields	Soccer Fields	Hockey Rinks	Skating Rinks	Sand Volleyball	Tennis Courts	Other
	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, 6249 - 7th Street	C	23	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	2-L	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			◆											
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 Pier
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/Amphitheater
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			◆		◆			◆						
Woodcrest Elementary, 880 Osborne Road	ISD 16	8.5			◆		◆									

## 4.4 Trail System

The City of Fridley has four types of trails. 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 includes 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 59th Avenue is a good example of a street with an on-street bike route. 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 dirt pathways.

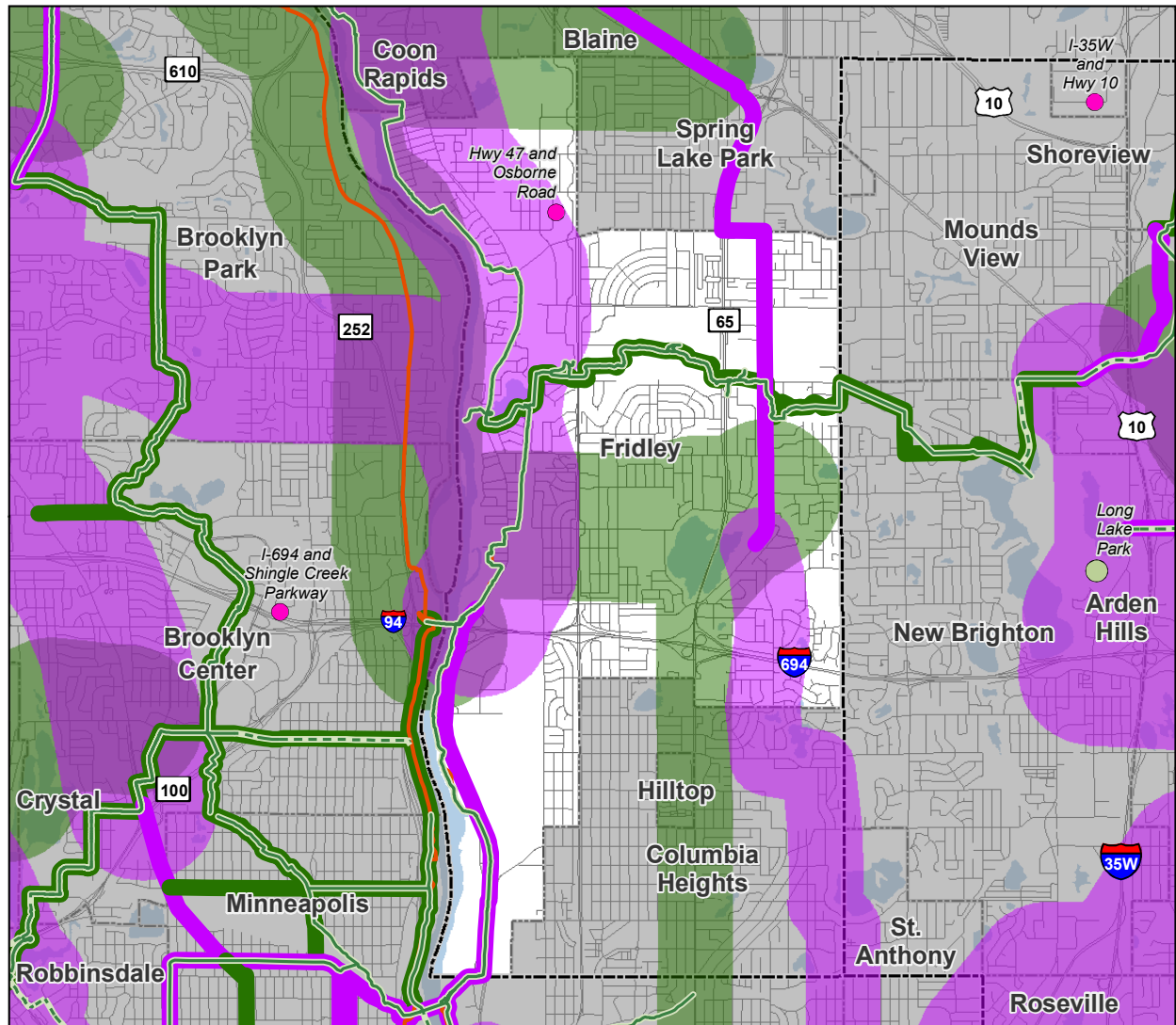
**Figure 4.3 Regional Parks System, City of Fridley, Anoka County**



Source: Metropolitan Council

Trails serve several purposes for Fridley residents, visitors, 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.

**Figure 4.4 Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN), City of Fridley, Anoka County**



**RBTN Alignments**

- Tier 1 Alignment
- Tier 2 Alignment

**RBTN Corridors (Alignments Undefined)**

- Tier 1 Priority Corridor
- Tier 2 Corridor

**Regional Destinations**

- Metropolitan Job Centers
- Regional Job Centers
- Subregional Job Centers
- ▲ Large High Schools
- ▲ Colleges & Universities
- Highly Visited Regional Parks
- Major Sport & Entertainment Centers

**Regional Trails (Parks Policy Plan)**

- Existing
- Planned
- County Boundaries
- City and Township Boundaries
- NCompass Street Centerlines
- Open Water Features
- Existing State Trails (DNR)
- Mississippi River Trail

Source: Metropolitan Council



## Regional Trails

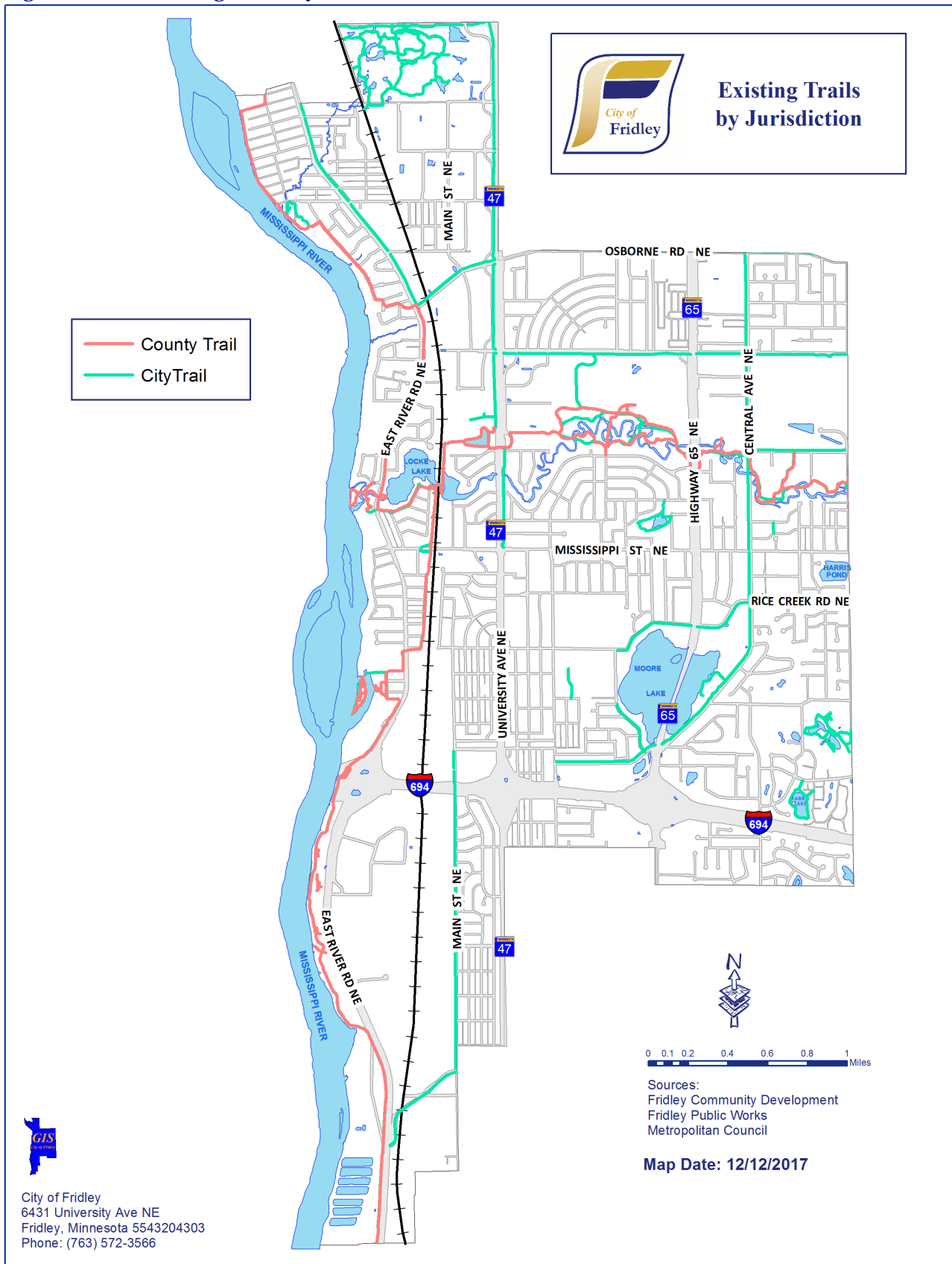
There are two regional trails that dissect Fridley. One, the Mississippi River Trail, which runs north-south, goes through the entire length of Fridley near the Mississippi River. This trail is a national bike trail that runs from the mouth of the Mississippi River in northern Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico, traveling through nine other states besides Minnesota. The purpose of the trail is to provide a route for people to cycle and recreate along the Mississippi River. In addition to being a national bike trail, the route is now designated a national “water” trail also. The trail follows the same route that was originally the Anoka County Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT), so it is signed as both trails along its route through Anoka County. The MRT is under the jurisdiction of MnDOT.

The other regional trail that dissects Fridley runs the entire length of the City east to west and connects to the MRT and continues down to the Mississippi River in Manomin Park in Fridley. This trail is the Rice Creek West Regional Trail. The trail follows Rice Creek as it meanders through the City. There are many spur trails in the City that connect to the regional trail, which actually runs through the new Fridley Civic Campus near the intersection of University Avenue and 69th Avenue. The Rice Creek West Regional Trail is under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council.



There is also a need to maintain the trails for American Disability Act (ADA) Compliance and the safety of all users. The last time trail conditions were analyzed was in 2013, so they are due to be reviewed again. Funds are budgeted in the Capital Improvements Budget annually for trail repairs. When old trails are rebuilt, ADA compliance features are incorporated.

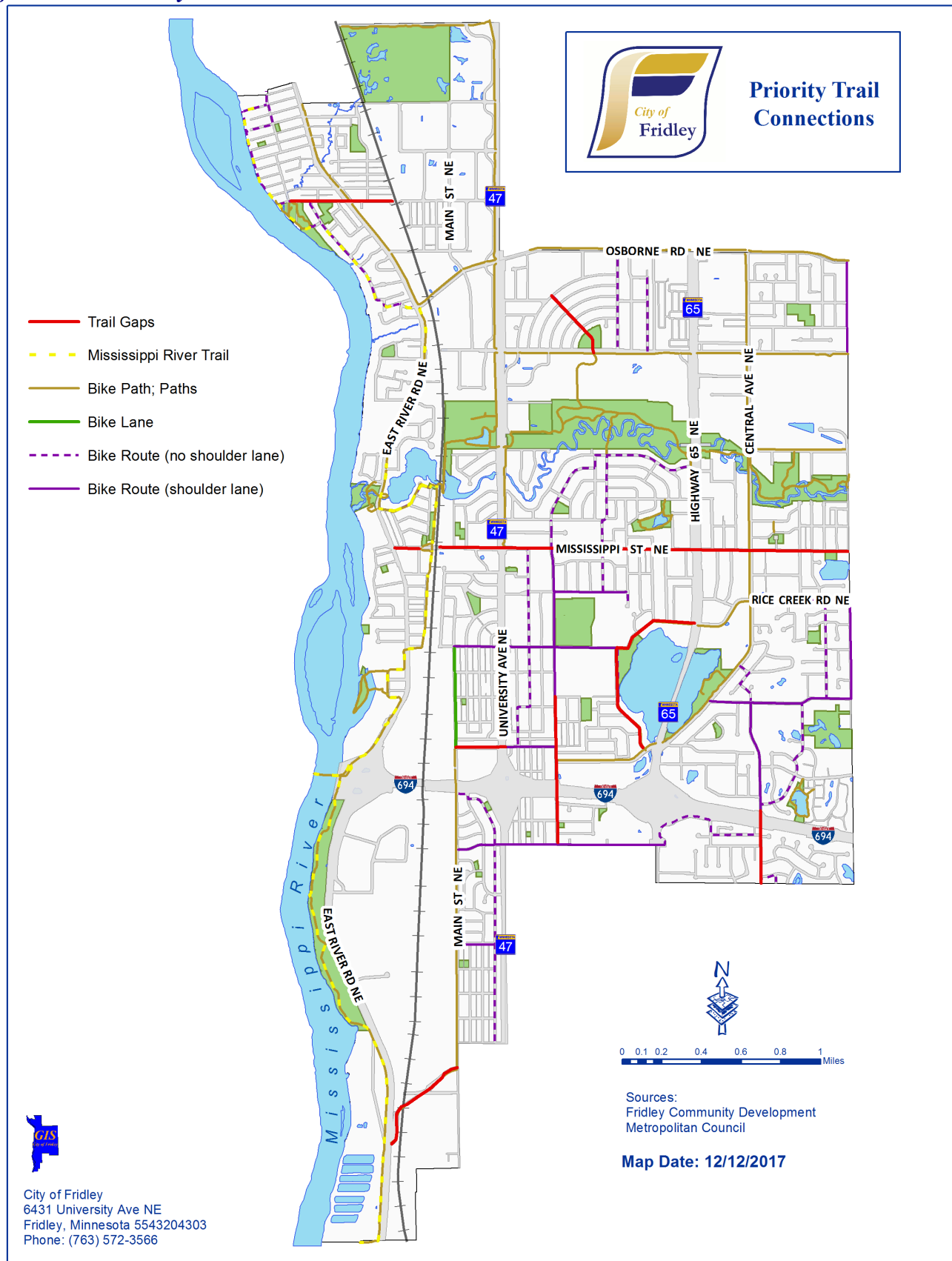
**Figure 4.5 Existing Trails by Jurisdiction**



## 4.5 Trail System Needs

Several trail segments have been identified as needed additions to the Fridley Bikeway/Walkway System. These are illustrated in Figure 4.6. Descriptions of the needed trails are listed in the Conclusions and Action Steps section of this chapter.

**Figure 4.6** *Priority Trail Connections*



## 4.6 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 it is reasonable to assume that the park system will not change dramatically. Rather, 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.



*Rice Creek Regional Trail*

## 4.7 Parks and Trails 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, the City may see higher demand, in the future, for passive recreational facilities such as walking trails and strategic bench placements; as well as active play equipment for young children in neighborhood parks.

### Parks viewed as Community Gathering Spaces

More large groups are using park facilities as the community gathering space for day long socializing. The popularity of renting picnic shelters has remained high and there are increased requests for reserving of adjacent park land to accommodate additional participants and activities.

### Increased Demand for Multi-Sport Open Play Areas

With a more diverse interest in sport and recreation opportunities, there is a movement away from set park athletic areas being designated for one sport or activity only. More and more park areas are designated as multi-sport/open play fields to accommodate a variety of interests such as football, soccer, ultimate frisbee, lacrosse, rugby, kickball, and cricket on the same field.

## **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. Since Fridley is a built community, it is more difficult to acquire new areas to preserve open space and balance development within the community. Most likely, 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. There is also growing support for wider and more multi-use trails (accommodating biking, running, walking, scooters, and skateboards on the same surface), along with trail system loops, returning the trail user to a starting point following a continuous circuit.

## **Increased Demand for Year-round Facilities**

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 participation in various sports during the traditional season, more participants than ever are pursuing their sports on a year round basis.

## **Increased Interest in Outdoor Winter Recreation Opportunities**

There is growing interest in having facilities available for winter pursuits such as fat tire biking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, skate skiing and trail walking/running. Special treatment and maintenance of facilities may be required to accommodate these opportunities.



*Springbrook Trail*

## **Increased Environmental Awareness**

People in Fridley and throughout Minnesota are taking an active role in 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 and achieve resiliency.

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

Indoor and outdoor alternative sports and challenge activities have continued to gain popularity and the participants want to see more facilities available and opportunities close to their home. Examples of specialized sports and recreation facilities include mountain biking, pickleball, in-line skating, rock climbing, nature experiences, sand volleyball and splashpads.

## **Growing Interest in Shared Equipment Stations**

Specialized recreation equipment such as kayaks, canoes, paddleboards and bicycles are being provided in many park systems through shared equipment rental stations. Participants generally use the shared equipment on site and return the equipment to the rental station when use is complete.

## Park Opportunities with Pets

There have been local residents showing an interest in more local dog parks or dog runs be a part of our City's Park and Recreation system. Making parks more pet-friendly will likely appeal to a growing number of participants.



*Dog Park in Locke Park*

## More Themed Playgrounds and Special Use Parks

Fridley has recently opened a Nature Based Playground area at Springbrook Nature Center and other cities provide parks based on themes such as teddy bears, butterflies, woodlands and challenge courses.



*Springbrook Nature Based Playground*

## All Inclusive Parks

The concept of accessibility is not new and many park and recreation facilities are legally mandated to meet accessibility requirements. There is an on-going movement toward even greater accessibility with playgrounds, trails and athletic facilities being adapted to meet the needs of all citizens, to provide for all people.

## Resiliency

Since Fridley has a well-established park system, the City's challenge is maintaining infrastructure that exists. Heavy rainfall events and severe wind events have caused unanticipated costs in tree replacement and open space flooding that pose financial challenges. If climate change is going to bring more of these events, the City needs to be creative in how those expenses can be covered. Like every other aspect of municipal operations, parks pose an opportunity to be energy conscious and conserve resources.

The changes that have taken place at Springbrook Nature Center over the past year are a great example of how the City can lessen its impact on the environment. The building expansion at Springbrook incorporated many sustainable design features like water-saving bathroom fixtures, natural lighting, bird-friendly glass, and a green roof. The parking lot was partially constructed with a pervious surface. The landscape around the building was planted with native wildflowers rather than turf grass, and an outdoor play area was created to give kids the means to feel more connected to the natural environment in a safe, enclosed space.

The City is expanding the native landscaping concept beyond Springbrook Nature Center and is installing more pollinator-friendly landscape in other park locations in areas where mowing turf has been problematic. The City has also been removing ash trees and replanting with a diverse mix of tree species to help create a resilient urban forest.

## 4.8 Parks and Trails Policies

There are several policies that have been agreed upon related to the vision of keeping Fridley's parks and trails *safe, vibrant, friendly, and stable*:

- 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 Investment Plan for the parks and recreation system.
- The City should continue to include citizen participation in the planning and improvement of the local parks and trail system.
- The City should consider acquiring sites to develop park land or create appropriate access to nearby parks for under serviced neighborhoods identified in the 2017 Parks Service Area Study.
- The City should continue to require park dedication of land or cash when land is platted and redeveloped for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes. Wetlands and storm water ponding areas shall not be accepted as fulfillment of park dedication requirements.
- The Parks and Recreation Commission and City staff should continue to utilize and support citizen volunteers wherever possible to help with programs, services, and beautification projects in the parks and recreation system.



*Edgewater Gardens 4th grade park cleanup*

- The City should carefully address park and trail needs as part of any future redevelopment efforts, incorporating different facilities as demographics change in the community.
- 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, visitors and the environment. The City shall preserve open space whenever possible. Open Space is considered undeveloped land in a natural state.
- The City will integrate GreenStep Cities best practices into park design, management and maintenance.
- The City will integrate low impact design standards (such as pervious pavement and raingardens) for parks and trails where appropriate.
- The City will identify, prioritize and take steps to remedy gaps and lack of connectivity within City sidewalk and trail networks; and plan for needed changes in updates to the City's Active Transportation Plan.
- The City should encourage multi-modal transportation through kayak/canoe and bike sharing programs and infrastructure installation.
- The City should work with partners to increase recreational access to the Mississippi River and Rice Creek.



## 4.9 Parks and Trails Goals

Goals have been assembled related to our parks and trail system. The term “goals” is used throughout this plan to define the City’s desired outcome relative to key community issues. There were several Parks and Trails goals that emerged from the neighborhood planning meetings and the community survey.

1. Provide park and recreation opportunities for all ages who live in, work in, and visit our community.
2. Provide a park and recreation system that meets the needs and interests of local residents by maintaining quality facilities and being responsive by keeping pace with changing facility/program trends.
3. Provide more bike/walk opportunities and keep them maintained for year round community use.
4. Protect our natural resources in the City’s park system by implementing careful park design, sound use policies and proven maintenance practices. Use educational programs and demonstration projects to further the protection efforts.
5. Promote Fridley as a river community by providing park and recreation opportunities that connect people to the Mississippi River resource.



*Riverfront Park*

## 4.10 Conclusions and Action Steps

Several general statements can be drawn from the analysis of the existing parks, and trails system in the City. 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 parks and recreation infrastructure is a necessity for public safety.
  - **Action Step:** The City should develop a Parks Master Plan and continue to maintain and implement park maintenance and upgrade plans in accordance with the capital improvements program. The overall Master Plan will be completed in 2019 to provide additional guidance and detail for future improvements and development.
    - » Parks recommended for play equipment replacement in the next 2 to 5 years are as follows: Commons Park, Locke Park, and Moore Lake Park.
    - » Parks recommended for play equipment replacement within the next 10 to 12 year time span are as follows: Springbrook Park, Ruth Circle Park, Craig Park, Flanery Park, Logan Park, Plaza Park, Community Park, Creekview Park, Edgewater Gardens Park, Jay Park, Terrace Park, Meadowlands Park, Creekridge Park, Ed Wilmes Park, Sylvan Hills Park, Harris Lake Park, Briardale Park, Hackmann Park, Jubilee Park, Summit Square Park and Plymouth Square Park.
    - » All hard surface basketball and tennis court areas in the parks should be placed on a regular resurfacing 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:** Implement the park redesign and trail improvements/expansions identified in the Northstar TOD Master Plan and the Islands of Peace Park Plan as redevelopment of the area occurs.
- **Action Step:** Evaluate opportunities to add more lighting and benches to the neighborhood parks in response to these amenities being given a high priority in the 2017 Citizen Survey.
- **Action Step:** The City should update a promotional map that highlights park and trails throughout the City. This map should be made available for viewing on the City’s web page and printed copy available at City Hall.

2. Visits to the Nature Center have increased significantly over the years and the City of Fridley has partnered with the Springbrook Nature Center Foundation to create and implement the S.P.R.I.N.G. (Sanctuary Protection and Renewal Into the Next Generation) Project to revitalize the 7 acre entrance area and interpretive building. The SPRING Project has four main goals:

- Provide additional and improved environmental and science education capabilities.
- Create an expanded environment to host special events and community celebrations.
- Provide enhanced, wonderful outdoor experiences
- Continue to protect the park’s fragile ecosystem while still catering to the increasing number of visitors.



*Springbrook Nature Center Amphitheater*

The SPRING Project is well underway and an expanded and renovated interpretive center was opened in 2016. A new amphitheater and Children’s nature based play area were opened in 2017.

- **Action Step:** Work with the Springbrook Nature Center Foundation to replace the old picnic shelter with a new picnic pavilion/outdoor classroom structure with a fall 2019 target date for completion.



*Springbrook Nature Center Amphitheater Opening*

- **Action Step:** Work with the Springbrook Nature Center Foundation to complete the green roof installation on the new interpretive center addition.
- **Action Step:** Improve the entrance gate and trail system at the park entrance area adjacent to the Springbrook Apartments.
- **Action Step:** Improve the entrance gate and trail system at the park entrance area adjacent to the pedestrian entrance in the southwest corner of the park.



*Bicyclists on the Trail*

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. The 2017 Citizen Survey results indicated support for trail connections to the neighborhood parks.
  - **Action Step:** The City should continue to expand the existing trail network to service all neighborhoods and areas of the city.
  - **Action Step:** Publicize the local trail system through updated maps and appropriate trail signage; include identifying the Mississippi River Trail, which runs through four of the local parks located adjacent to the Mississippi River.
  - **Action Step:** Continue to cooperate with other governmental and non-governmental agencies in the development of trails that complement the local system.
  - **Action Step:** Construct an off street bikeway/walkway connection linking the existing trail on Medtronic parkway, through the proposed City View area, to the University Avenue corridor when the future road development occurs.
  - **Action Step:** Pursue infrastructure funding for the 2017 Safe Routes to School (District 14) Plan for 7th Street and Commons Park between Mississippi Street on the north and 53rd Avenue on the south.
  - **Action Step:** Evaluate expanded opportunities for walking and biking along the south side of 61st Avenue from Main Street to the Fridley High School/Middle School 4-way intersection at West Moore Lake Drive.
  - **Action Step:** Pursue Safe Routes to School (District 13) infrastructure funding to provide walking and biking opportunities on Matterhorn Drive, south of Interstate 694 – to North Park Elementary School and Park facilities located north of the freeway.
  - **Action Step:** Pursue funding for the East River Road Corridor Plan of 2013 to expand trail and sidewalk connections along East River Road.
  - **Action Step:** Survey and rate trail conditions regularly and use the information to budget for needed improvements in the Capital Investment Program allocations.

4. Moore Lake Park is one of the City’s most heavily utilized park areas during the months of May through August. With recreation amenities such as the swimming beach, sand volleyball, fishing piers, picnic shelters, trails and play equipment, the park is a destination for residents and visitors to the community. To plan for better handling of the many visits to this park each year, the City enlisted the services of Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc. in 2016 to assist with the development of a master plan for Moore Lake Park. While the master plan document is a recommendation to the redevelopment and improvements to the park, the city’s overall Master Parks Plan will address Moore Lake and future actions.



*Moore Lake Beach and Park*

- **Action Step:** Move the sand volleyball court area to the south end of the beach area.
  - **Action Step:** Reconfigure and install a new parking lot in 2018 next to the existing beach house building.
  - **Action Step:** Work with the Rice Creek Watershed District to provide shoreline restoration, infiltration basins and iron-enhanced sand filters to improve water quality at the lake.
  - **Action Step:** Install a new 75 person picnic shelter in 2019 in the former location of the sand volleyball courts.
  - **Action Step:** Replace the outdated playground equipment with new and modern play structures.
  - **Action Step:** Remove the tennis courts and basketball court in keeping with the park master plan developed in 2016.
  - **Action Step:** Remove the softball infield area and backstop, and replace with a flexible open-space multi-use field as per the master plan.
  - **Action Step:** Relocate the newer fishing pier in the location of the original fishing pier to provide better fishing opportunities.
5. Heavy rain events in recent years have led to extremely wet conditions in some of the parks in the City. Creative solutions may be needed to provide usable park land for all or a portion of the existing park area.
- **Action Step:** Work with local watershed districts and engineering professionals to determine cost effective solutions to the water issues in Craig Park, Madsen Park and Springbrook Nature Center.
6. Natural Resource management deals with planning, controlling and overseeing the way people and landscapes interact. Being good stewards of our natural resource areas will help insure healthy park natural environments for future generations.
- **Action Step:** Work with volunteer groups to provide annual buckthorn removal programs at Innsbruck Park, Springbrook Nature Center and West Moore Lake Sand Dunes Park.
  - **Action Step:** Work with the USDA Department of Wildlife to provide management of the deer herd at Springbrook Nature Center.
  - **Action Step:** Work with Canada Goose Management to control the number of Canadian Geese at Moore Lake Beach and Park.
  - **Action Step:** Continue to pursue funding Action opportunities to plant more trees in City parks and ensure that a wide diversity of tree species are planted to protect against massive loss due to disease.

- **Action Step:** Analyze the suitability of the City parks for planting alternative grass species, native perennial plantings, low maintenance grasses, and plants that provide habitat for pollinators and migrating birds. Consider planting these options in appropriate areas and including signage and other public education regarding the change.



*Couple walking the trails at Springbrook Nature Center,  
Photo by Doug Katzung*

## 4.11 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. On-line survey results showed that residents ranked their neighborhood park as their favorite thing about Fridley. Park conditions ranked high. Responses also indicated that many residents are biking and walking to parks and therefore would like safer pedestrian access to parks.

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