9. PARKS, TRAILS & RECREATION

The City of South St. Paul owns and operates over 240 acres of parkland and natural open space which are available and programmed for use by residents and visitors. In the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Parks, Trails, and Open Space were a section within the Community Services and Public Facilities chapter. As a stand-alone chapter in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the purpose of the Parks, Trails, and Recreation chapter is to guide future goals, policies, and actions for the parks system for the next 20 years, as well as set a foundation for a Parks System Master Plan update, which will provide detailed recommendations for each component to the system.

The following components are contained within this chapter:

» Overview of the Parks Master Plan

» Existing Parks, Trails, Recreation Facilities, and Open Spaces

» Issues and Opportunities

» Goals, Policies and Actions

Overview of Parks Master Plan

In November of 2005, the Parks Master Plan was approved by the City Council. The Parks Master Plan reviewed the existing City park system, park and recreation needs, and established plans for future improvement of the park facilities. A robust community engagement effort during this planning provided the City with broad input to support investment and improvement of the park system. Today, the 2005 Parks Master Plan is still an actively used document by the Parks and Recreation Department. An update of the parks system master plan is intended to begin in 2020 and will provide specific guidance for future investments and enhancements of the South St. Paul parks system.

WHAT WE HEARD:

When asked about the quality of parks and trails in the City, 21.38 percent of community survey respondents rated these services as "excellent" while 55.97 percent rated them "good."

2014 Park Referendum

In February of 2014, a Park Referendum was passed, providing funding for improvements to Doug Wood Arena, the development of Kaposia Landing, and the renovation of McMorrow Field. The following planning and physical development projects have been implemented with this referendum:

- **Doug Woog Arena Improvements:**
  - Conversion of refrigeration system from (environmentally harmful) Freon to Ammonia
  - Remodel of Rink 1 with new locker rooms, restrooms, a community meeting room, office training facility and warm viewing space
- **Kaposia Landing Phase 1 Development:**
  - Four new multi-purpose ball fields, with lights, scoreboards and sheltered bench areas
  - Five new full-size baseball fields with dugouts, batting cages, scoreboards, lights, and bleachers
  - A new concession and restroom building
  - Parking area with 194 stalls
  - Paved trail connections to athletic fields, a loop trail and portions of the Mississippi River Regional Trail
- **Renovation of McMorrow Field:**
  - Four multi-purpose play fields (used for soccer, football, lacrosse); each field has goal end safety fences and ADA accessible viewing areas
  - Addition of lights at two of the multi-purpose fields
  - Paved trail connecting all fields, parking areas, and the concession/ restroom building
  - A new playground structure
  - A new picnic shelter
  - Three internal parking areas with a total of 253 stalls

Kaposia Landing

Park Development and Implementation of the Parks Master Plan

Development of new parks and trails in South St. Paul and the implementation of the Parks Master Plan not only requires the correct phasing but also requires funding for those improvements. With a referendum passed in 2014, today the City is wrapping up many of the projects that were outlined in the Parks Master Plan, including work on two of the largest parks in the city: McMorrow Fields and Kaposia Landing.

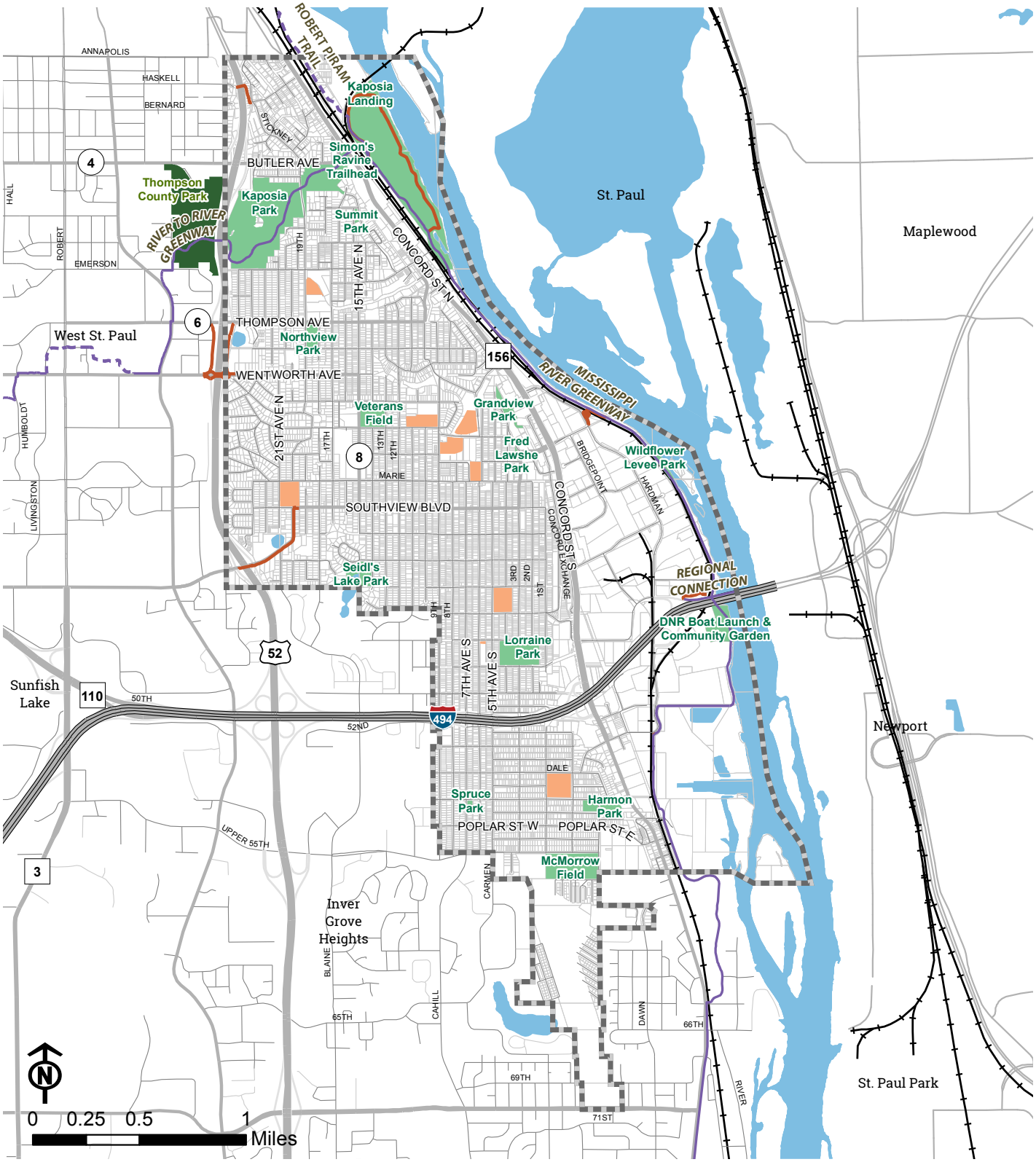
Implemented recommendations from the 2005 Parks Master Plan include the following:

- Enhanced playground equipment, landscape, and age-separated play areas for Spruce Park and Central Square.
- Further develop Kaposia Landing with recreational and athletic facilities (in-progress).
- Plan and implement bank erosion control and stabilization measures in Simon's Ravine and Kaposia Park.
- Work with Dakota County to complete the River to River Greenway and Mississippi River Regional Trail, including installation of a box-culvert tunnel at 19th Avenue.
- Developed a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan (2014).
- Additional picnic shelter installation at Lorraine Park.
- McMorrow Field conversion from softball and baseball fields to flat fields for soccer, football, lacrosse and other field sports.
- Replacement of the warming house at Veterans Field with a new concession and restroom building with adjacent picnic shelter.

Per the recommendation in the Parks Master Plan, the City of South St. Paul approved a Park Dedication ordinance in 2006 (later amended in 2008), requiring dedication of park land or park dedication fees with all new development. The Park Dedication ordinance puts into City Code recognition that with development there is an increased need for parks and greenspace, and in the absence of new parkland there is increased impact on the existing parks and trail system and need for improvement of those resources.

Since the establishment of the park dedication ordinance, the City of South St. Paul has collected $314,088 in fees. Among many improvements and projects across the city, park dedication has contributed funding to build two new picnic shelters: one at Veteran's Field and another at Kaposia Landing. The Kaposia Landing shelter was a combined funding effort between the Lion's Club, who donated 50% of the cost, and collected park dedication fees.

Figure 9.1: Parks, Trails, and Recreation



Existing Parks, Recreation Facilities, and Open Spaces

South St. Paul has 15 municipal parks ranging in size from 0.19 acres (Spruce Park) to 87 acres (Kaposia Landing). The City's parks are diverse in both size and the types of recreational opportunities they provide. Parks are given classifications to describe their use and function, as well as to determine service areas. Service areas help to estimate the ability for residents surrounding a park to walk, bike, or drive to the park. Generally, a neighborhood park should be available within a 5-10 minute walk (approximately half mile) of residents. A community park generally has a broader reach and may have a service area of a 10-15 minute bike ride (approximately 2 miles), while a pocket park is intended to serve a smaller service area of a quarter mile. The 2005 Parks Master Plan for South St. Paul defines the following park classifications:

Grandview Park

Lorraine Park

Wildflower Levee Park

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks consist of small areas intended for use by children, from toddlers through elementary school. The parks usually have small play equipment, sandboxes, swing sets, benches and greens. Pocket parks are generally between 0.1 and 0.3 acres in size and have a service area of 0.25 miles. South St. Paul has four pocket parks.

Neighborhood Parks/Playgrounds

Neighborhood Parks/Playgrounds are designed to accommodate active and passive recreational activities. These parks have distinct areas for court and field games as well as scenic and aesthetic value, picnic areas, drinking fountains and trails. Neighborhood Parks/Playgrounds range in size from 6-15 acres and have a service area of 0.5 miles. South St. Paul has four Neighborhood Parks/Playgrounds. Currently, there exists a gap in service areas for Neighborhood Parks/Playgrounds in the west-central area and far north area of South St. Paul.

Community Park/Playfields

Community Park/Playfields have an athletic complex that serves the community and/or large natural and landscaped areas. They usually include the same amenities as a Neighborhood Park, but may also include pavilions, parking, restrooms, and multi-use trails. Community Parks in South St. Paul are Kaposia Landing, Kaposia Park, McMorrow Fields and Veterans Field. Community Parks range in size from 30-120 acres and have a service area of 2.0 miles.

Nature Parks

Nature parks are predominately tracts of undeveloped land that consists of natural drainage areas, wetlands, steep slopes and forested corridors. Nature Parks in South St. Paul are Seidls Lake Park, Wildflower Levee Park, Kaposia Park and Simon's Ravine Trailhead.

Figure 9.2: Park Service Areas

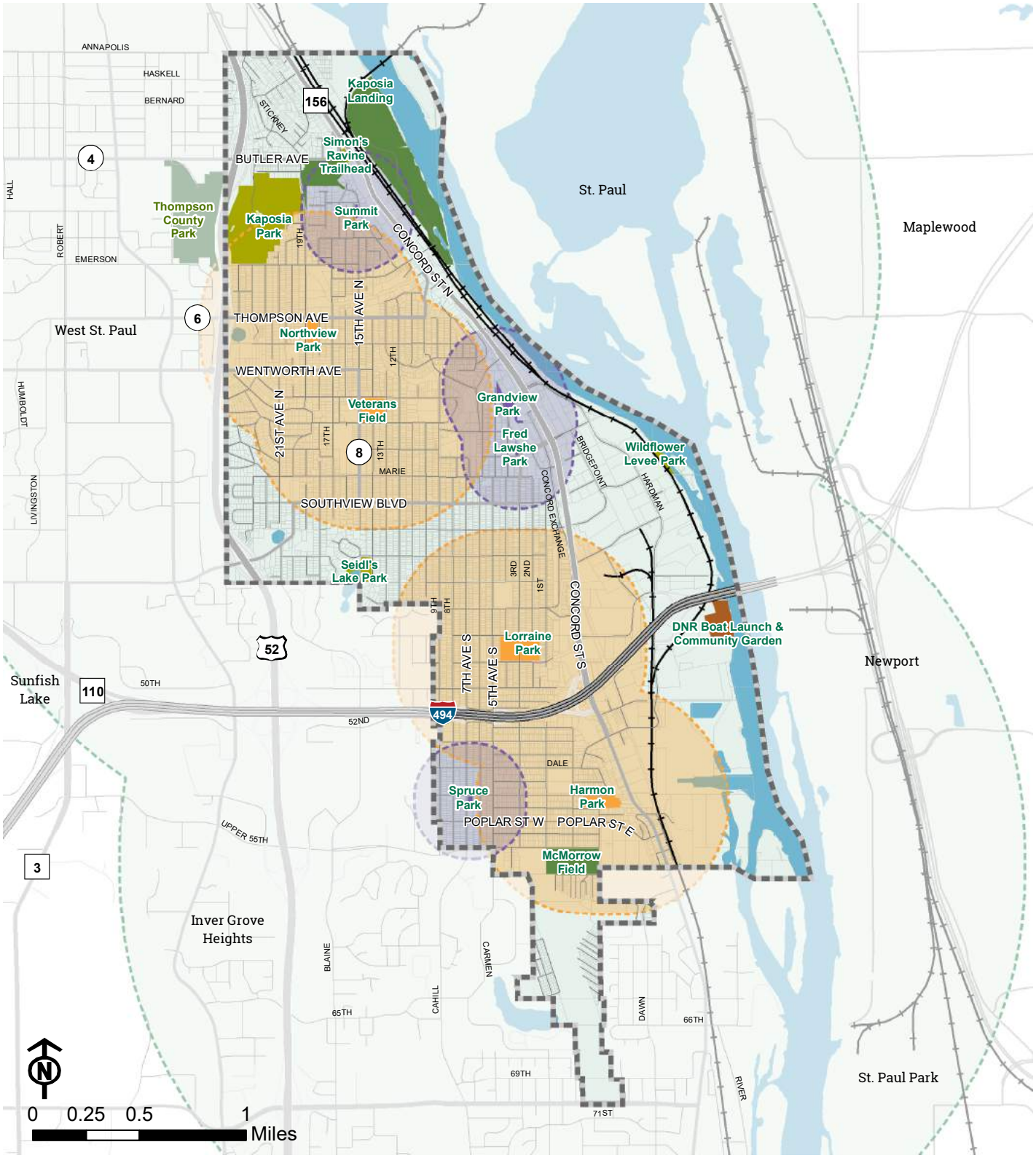


Table 9.1: City Parks Inventory

Park Name	Size (acres)	Classification	Amenities
Community Garden and DNR Boat Launch	16.2	Special Use	Parking, restroom, Community garden, drinking fountain, porta- toilets, seating, boat access, fishing, trail access
Fred Lawshe Park	.67	Pocket Park	Drinking fountain, memorial, seating
Grandview Park	1.23	Pocket Park	Playground, skating rinks, scenic overlook, seating, trail
Archery Range	2.0	Special Use	Parking, archery targets, seating
Harmon Park	4.25	Neighborhood Park/ Playground	Tennis courts (2), playground, softball field, hockey rink, drinking fountain, seasonal (temporary) warming house, bleachers, parking, restroom, natural area
Kaposia Park	85	Community Park / Nature Park	Tennis courts (2), playground, softball field, skating rink, hockey rink (Bromley St. side), horseshoe pits (2), hiking, picnic shelter, pavilion, picnic grills, drinking fountain, restrooms, warming house, natural area, sand volleyball, disc golf, seating, trail
Kaposia Landing	87	Community Park/ Playfield	Walking trails, dog park, parking, seating, restrooms, natural area, batting cages, softball fields (4), baseball field (1), picnic shelter ***Planned: Playground, picnic shelter/band shell***
Lorraine Park	13.33	Neighborhood Park/ Playground	Playground, baseball field, skating rink, hockey rink, horseshoe pits (4), picnic grills, drinking fountain, restrooms, warming house, swimming pool, splash pool, bleachers, sand volleyball
McMorrow Fields	20	Community Park/ Playfield	Playground, soccer/football flat fields (4), field lights (2), picnic shelter, drinking fountain, restrooms, concession building
Northview Park	3.58	Neighborhood Park/ Playground	Playground, softball field, full-court basketball, pool, concession building
Seidl's Lake Park	3.38	Nature Park	Hiking trails, natural area, fishing
Simon's Ravine Trailhead	1.2	Nature Park	Trailhead located at the intersection of the Dakota County River to River Greenway Regional Trail, and the Mississippi River Regional Trail. Restrooms, drinking fountain, information kiosk, walking trails, sculpture
Splash Pool (in Lorraine Park)	--	Special Use	Restroom, concession, splash pad
Spruce Park	.19	Pocket Park	Playground, seating
Summit Park	.55	Pocket Park	Tennis courts (2), playground, tennis volley wall, drinking fountain, half-court basketball
Veterans Field	8.25	Community Park/ Neighborhood Park/ Playfield	Playground, softball fields (4), lighted ball field, soccer/ football field, drinking fountain, restrooms, concession building, warming house, bleachers, batting cage
Wildflower Levee Park	.5	Nature Park	Picnic tables, benches, natural area, trail, sculpture

Source: City of South St. Paul

Special Use Parks

Special Use Parks provide specific local or regional uses or resources for South St. Paul and surrounding communities. These parks are the DNR Boat Launch and Community Garden on Verderosa Avenue, and the Archery Range. Special Use Parks were not defined in the 2005 Parks Master Plan.

School District and Other Public/Semi-Public Park and Recreational Facilities

In addition to City-owned parks, there are a number of School District-owned facilities and parochial school properties that provide valuable open space and additional recreational opportunities for residents of the City. Cooperation between the City, School District, and parochial schools should continue in order to provide more recreational opportunities to City residents.

In 2001, the City of South St. Paul and Special School District 6 entered into agreement to use and maintain specific parcels of each other's property for public purpose. The City of South St. Paul owns parcels of the High School north field currently occupied by a full-size baseball field and open space and Special School District 6 owns parcels of the former Jefferson School site containing a play structure, warming house, paved and boarded hockey rink with lights and open space.

Archery Range

WHAT WE HEARD:

When asked about factors that would greatly improve the quality of life in South St. Paul, community members suggested a variety of park improvements including:

- Upgraded playground equipment
- Inclusive playground area
- Splash pad
- Expand park programming and activities
- Indoor park

Table 9.2: School District/Parochial School Parks and Recreation Areas

Property Name	Size (acres)	Type	Recreational Opportunities
Central Square Property	1.43	School Dist. Property	Community square/gathering spot, playground
Central Square Community Center	1.12	School Dist. Property	Fitness facilities, indoor pool, exercise rooms/studios
Kaposia Education Center	2.65	School Dist. Property	Playground, softball/baseball field
Jefferson Property	.97	School Dist. Property	Playground, hockey rink
Lincoln Center	5.46	School Dist. Property	Track, playground, soccer/football field
Roosevelt Fields	6.24	School Dist. Property	(8) tennis courts, soccer fields, softball field
SSP Secondary School	12.57	School Dist. Property	Football Field, practice fields, baseball field, softball field
St. John Vianney	4.22	Parochial School Property	Playground, softball/baseball field, open space
Holy Trinity	.37	Parochial School Property	Playground

Source: City of South St. Paul

Parks + Public Health

Parks, trails and public lands contribute to a healthy society. Parks and trails are gateways to healthy lifestyles, providing fun, accessible places for physical activity, social connections, and connections to nature to improve mental health.

- Visiting a park is a great way to enjoy outdoor fun with friends and family.
- Parks and their health benefits can be enjoyed by anyone, regardless of where you live or where you come from.
- Connecting to nature and our environment can improve your mood, decrease stress, and improve physical, mental and spiritual health.
- Parks foster social connections, which are vital to community cohesion and contribute to social well-being.
- For children and adolescents, parks foster active play, which has associated physical, cognitive and social benefits.
- Park use is linked to physical and mental health benefits among adults, especially older adults.

CPR Training

River to River Greenway

Recreation

The South St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department, in coordination with the Central Square Community Center offers over 200 recreation programs and special events to the community for pre-school, youth, teens, adults, seniors and families in South St. Paul. These programs integrate the fitness center, indoor competition pool, activity rooms, gymnastic center and public meeting rooms at Central Square Community Center, as well as outdoor pool admission at Lorraine and Northview Parks, pavilion and shelter rental at Lorrainne and Kaposia Parks, community garden plots, the Kaposia Landing Off-Leash Dog Area, athletic ballfields throughout the city, four outdoor skating and hockey rink locations, archery range, and a 26-hole disc golf course.

There are two city-administered youth athletic leagues for T-ball and youth football. Other recreation-sponsored youth and adult leagues, Special School District 6 athletic teams, and other youth and independent community athletic associations depend on the South St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department for facilities and program scheduling services. Programs are coordinated through the web-based RecTrac database system.

Other special community events include the Giant Kaposia Egg Hunt, Citywide Camp-out, Kaposia Days, the Great Halloween Get Together, Holidaze, On the Road Again, and Breakfast with Santa.

The Parks and Recreation Department is also very involved with hosting community engagement events and gathering community input to serve the needs of the community. Forums related to the off-leash dog area, disc golf course, archery range, field user groups, school district coordination, and park development legislative and neighborhood meetings are coordinated through the department. Volunteer outreach and coordinating is also a function of the department, with volunteers employed as coaches, special event helpers, Senior Center receptionists and special program organization.

Regional Parks

Currently, there are no regional parks within South St. Paul. Thompson County Park is a 58-acre Dakota County Park located immediately west of Highway 52 from Kaposia Park, in West St. Paul. From 2009-2014, there was an effort to explore combining Thompson County Park in West St. Paul with Kaposia Park, Simon's Ravine, and Kaposia Landing in South St. Paul to form one large regional park. After Metropolitan Council evaluation, it was determined that the project did not meet the criteria for regional park designation, as the majority of park users for these three parks are local residents of Dakota County. Dakota County has prepared a master plan Thompson County Park. The Thompson County Park master planning process has identified a potential land bridge over US Highway 52 connecting Thompson Park to Kaposia Park and sound walls to reduce freeway noise to park visitors.

Regional Trails

South St. Paul has two intersecting regional trails: the Dakota County River to River Greenway and the Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT) (illustrated in Figure 9.3). Both of these trails showcase the natural topography and beauty of the area.

River to River Greenway

The River to River Greenway Regional Trail (formerly known as the North Urban Regional Trail) is an east-west eight-mile greenway corridor connecting the Mississippi River at Lilydale to the Mississippi River in South St. Paul, terminating at Simon's Ravine Trailhead and connecting to the Mississippi River Regional Trail. The River to River Greenway is fully developed in South St. Paul; it crosses Concord Avenue via a pedestrian/bicycle bridge and connects to Kaposia Park and Thompson County Park and travels west through West St. Paul. Future trail development will complete the links between Valley Park in Mendota Heights to the Dodge Nature Center in West St. Paul.

Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT)

The Mississippi River Regional Trail is a 27-mile regional trail along the Mississippi River connecting Simon's Ravine Trailhead in South St. Paul on the north end to Hastings on the south. The paved trail is intended for non-motorized uses such as walking, bicycling, and in-line skating. The final segment to be completed between Pine Bend Bluffs Trailhead and Spring Lake Park West Trailhead is scheduled to be completed in 2020. The MRRT provides scenic views along the Mississippi River and connects users to community and regional destinations. Eleven trailheads have been completed with this project.

Mississippi River Regional Trail

Mississippi River Regional Trail

South St. Paul celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1987. One of the events of the Centennial year was a visit from the Governor's Design Team, a group of volunteer architects who spent four days living with families in the community and conducting a series of town meetings and tours. Citizens and business leaders shared their ideas and visions for what the South St. Paul of the future could be. The architects produced a series of drawings that helped people envision a trail and recreational area along the river. It had been over 100 years since the people of South St. Paul had any legal public access to the river. All of the land along the river was controlled by the stockyards, the railroad or private investors. Over the next few years, negotiations were held with the landowners and federal and state funding was obtained to make it possible for South St. Paul to become part of the Dakota County Regional Trail system. The first section of the Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT) was paved in 1992; the trail was completed in 2000. Two pedestrian bridges were erected over the railroad – one at Grand Avenue in 1999, and the other at Simon's Ravine in 2001.

The federal government in 1988 created the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) and the first urban national park was established in 1988. The National Park Service has provided funding for signage, plantings and other amenities to enhance South St. Paul's portion of the regional trail.

In 2011 Dakota County and the City of St. Paul, with the support of the City of South St. Paul, received a $5.5 million Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) grant for the construction of a regional trail extension and connection between Harriet Island Regional Park and Kaposia Landing. When completed, the trail will be a public transportation and recreation corridor connecting Kaposia Landing and the existing Mississippi River Regional Trail to Lilydale Regional Park, Big Rivers Regional Trail, Harriet Island Regional Park and St. Paul's west side and downtown. Construction of the regional trail connection will begin in 2019.

Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT)

Other Recreation Systems

Statewide and national recreation systems are also present in the city, including the Great River Road, the National Scenic Byway of the Mississippi River, traverses the city along Concord Blvd until it crosses the river at 494. In addition, the Mississippi Bike Trail (US Bicycle Route 45) runs through the city, part of a bikeway that follows the river roughly 600 miles from its source at Itasca State Park to the Iowa border, and then continuing south all the way to Louisiana.

City Bicycle and Pedestrian Network

In 2014 the City of St. Paul approved the South St. Paul Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which lays a framework for the City of South St. Paul and its partners to provide the infrastructure, educational tools, policies, and resources necessary for creating safe, comfortable, and connected facilities for walking and biking.

Sidewalks

Today, the city owns over 55 miles of sidewalk, with many streets having a sidewalk on at least one side of the road. Sidewalk density is greatest in the town center, connecting pedestrians to commercial areas. Outside of the town center, sidewalks are primarily located on north-south streets, with fewer east-west connections.

Multi-use Trails

There are a few city-owned multi-use trails:

- Connecting the north end of Hardman Avenue South to the Mississippi River Regional Trail
- Loop trail at Kaposia Landing
- McMorrow Field internal trails

On-Street Bicycle Facilities

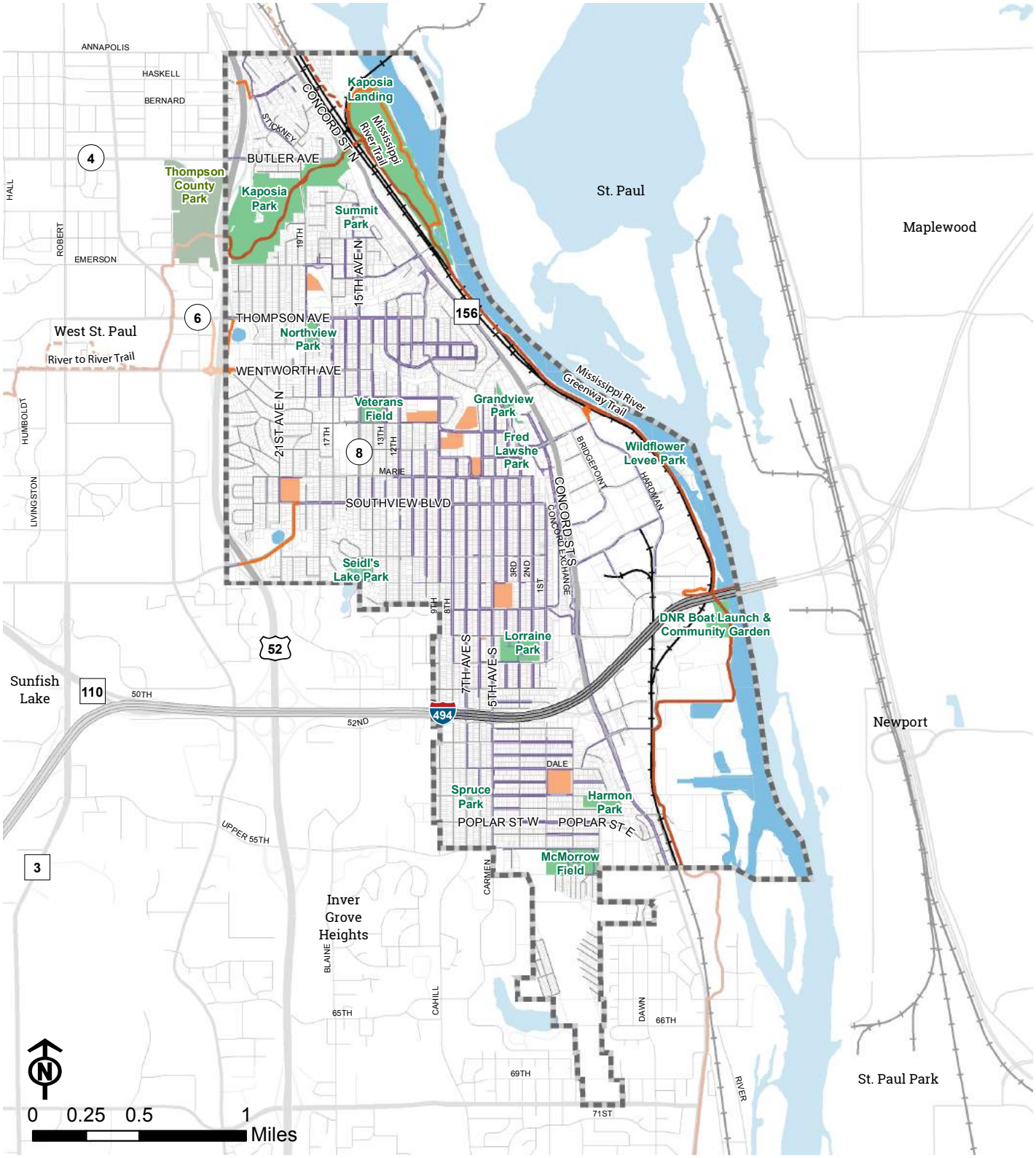
A network of on-street bicycle facilities such as bike lanes, protected bike lanes, paved shoulders and bicycle boulevards are proposed in the 2014 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

There is a wide shoulder marking on Concord Street (TH 156) from Simon's Ravine/MRRT to the City's northern border, connecting to an existing bike lane in Saint Paul. The on-street bike facility improves the connectivity of the regional trail network through South St. Paul and is an interim connection until the future Robert Piram Regional Trail (formerly known as the Harriet Island to South St. Paul Regional Trail) is completed, which will connect Kaposia Landing in South St. Paul to Harriet Island in St. Paul. This project is a joint effort between Saint Paul, Dakota County, and South St. Paul. It is currently anticipated that the trail will begin construction in 2019.

WHAT WE HEARD:

During the community engagement process, residents mentioned that they would like to see a more cohesive network of on-street bike lanes and safer biking routes throughout the City.

Figure 9.3: City Bicycle and Pedestrian Network



Aspect of Sustainability:
» Environment

Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities have been identified during the 2040 Comprehensive Plan process.

Seidl's Lake Park

Seidl's Lake Park

Siedl's Lake Park straddles the City's southern border with the City of Inver Grove Heights. The park is administered through a cooperative agreement between the two communities. Improvements to the park require the continued cooperation of both communities. The adopted master plan for the park includes a completing a trail around the lake, which is a goal of the cities and also Dakota County. Trail implementation has been difficult due to geographic constraints, as well as the recognized need for stormwater infrastructure at this site. There is potential for Seidl's Lake Park to fill a current gap in the neighborhood park service area through future park amenities such as a playground and/or picnic shelter.

MRRT/River East near the MCES Site

DNR Boat Launch / Wakota Trailhead

The area referred to as the DNR Boat Launch property currently provides a boat launch, fishing pier, community garden, and also functions as the City's compost site. However the site has more potential that the City would like to tap to create a southern trailhead and provide more recreational amenity in the area. In addition, the City has been working to ensure that more riverfront property is available adjacent to the trail to provide a buffer from the industrial properties to the west. This provides the City with a continuous band of greenspace from the proposed trailhead site to the overlook and "Packer Preserve" open space area to the south.

Pollinator/Bee-friendly Policy

Aspect of Sustainability:
» Environment

With strong community support, the City of South St. Paul passed a resolution in 2015 to endorse the protection of pollinators and enhance pollinator habitat. Recognizing that bees and other pollinators are integral to a wide diversity of essential foods, and that native bees and honey bees are threatened due to habitat loss, pesticide use, pathogens and parasites, the City has committed to becoming a pollinator-friendly city. Under this resolution, the city will undertake best management practices in the use of native plantings and refrain from systemic pesticide use on city property.

The following are identified opportunities within the parks and recreation system that support the establishment of South St. Paul as a pollinator-friendly city:

» Integrated stormwater and native planting strategies as rain gardens and bioswales within city parks

» Establish native planting/restoration areas in city parks with flowering plants to support pollinator habitat and decrease turf and mowing

» Educational or interpretive opportunities in parks to teach or inform park users about pollinators and their importance to food and ecosystems

Tree Inventory/Invasive Species

An effort has been initiated since around 2015 to inventory existing park and boulevard trees in South St. Paul. This effort was initially instigated in reaction to Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), which has affected many of the City's green ash trees (most of which were planted in the 1970's). Currently, the City contacts with a forestry service to handle tree removal and inventory, as well as address large stands of buckthorn and other invasive species.

As this effort grows in focus, it is becoming more apparent that a holistic and long-term approach to natural resource systems will benefit the City of South St. Paul, as well as evaluating and creating policies to address future tree replacement and management to grow the urban forest while avoiding monoculture stands of species vulnerable to disease.

Trees in South St. Paul

School District Properties

Today, the Central Square property is owned and maintained by Special School District 6 school district including a playground and outdoor community gathering area. There is potential for a transfer of land from the school district to the City in association with the Parks & Recreation Department's current operation of Central Square Community Center on behalf of the school district and City located on the property. While not an officially city park, Central Square's outdoor areas should be preserved for public use, as it is currently operating similar to a city park. Similarly, the former Jefferson School property is also a candidate for transfer of property. Currently the City operates hockey and skating rinks, including a warming house on the Jefferson property as well as the play structure on site. While not an officially city park, Jefferson has been preserved for public park purposes since 1984 and operates similar to a city park.

Central Square Community Center

Northview Pool

Simon's Ravine

At South St. Paul Secondary School, the school district practice fields are programmed through the city Parks & Recreation Department seasonally. The City owns a portion of the practice fields, which are currently maintained by the school district. An update to the future system-wide master plan should address the potential swap of land ownership for these properties, specifically to preserve the Jefferson property for continued use as a park, accessible by the public. The City should continue to work with the school district regarding any future development of the Jefferson property to ensure the preservation of the current open recreational space if a land swap does not occur.

While the City of South St. Paul does not schedule or operate Roosevelt fields and tennis courts, these facilities are vital for playfield access and for the tennis community. The preservation of Roosevelt as open, recreation space is highly valued within the community, and therefore ongoing communication and coordination between the School District and the City is essential.

Northview Pool

Northview Pool was constructed in 1956 and is well-loved by many in the community. However, today the facility is in need of upgrades to meet the changing needs of the surrounding neighborhood. The 2020 Parks Master Plan Update will need to explore the future use, design and function of this park as a recreational water feature for the community.

Natural Areas

Today, the City of St. Paul has four Nature Parks (Kaposia Park, Seidl's Lake Park, Simon's Ravine, and Wildflower Levee Park) which contain natural areas, as well as Harmon Park, a Neighborhood Park, which also has a significant amount of natural areas along the western bluff edge. Today, management of these natural areas is piecemeal. A long-term approach to managing, restoring, and preserving these natural areas is an identified opportunity, along with identifying future potential natural areas and incorporating educational and interpretive elements.

Parks, Trails, and Open Space Goals and Policies

Goal 9.1: Develop/Redevelop the City's park system consistent with the Parks Master Plan.

Policy 9.1.1: The development of Kaposia Landing and the redevelopment of Central Square Park, consistent with the Parks Master Plan, are priorities and are vitally important to the long-term health of the City. Collaborate with the South St. Paul School District, which owns the Central Square property, to develop Central Square Park in a manner consistent with the Parks Master Plan. Park dedication fees, grants, and budgeting through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are ways that the City will achieve these improvements.

Policy 9.1.2: Explore alternate forms for funding these improvements including, but not limited to; park dedication fees, grants, personal and corporate donations, and bonding for the capital improvements.

Policy 9.1.3: Use parks, public open spaces, and trails as a means of shaping the form of the community and encouraging economic development in nearby areas.

Policy 9.1.4: Meet neighborhood park needs with facilities designed in response to the unique needs of each neighborhood.

Policy 9.1.5: Update the Parks Master Plan in 2020.

Policy 9.1.6: Collaborate with the City of Inver Grove Heights to develop a loop trail around Seidel's Lake.

Policy 9.1.7: Connect trails and pedestrian ways to regional trails, between parks, and to public spaces and schools.

Goal 9.2: Preserve Central Square Park as the town square and meeting space.

Policy 9.2.1: Work with the South St. Paul School District to preserve Central Square Park as the town square and meeting space. If future expansion of school facilities is needed, work with the School District to find space adjacent to the secondary school and Central Square for future expansion needs so that Central Square Park may be preserved as a park.

Policy 9.2.2: Central Square is the town meeting space and center. Develop Central Square Park consistent with the Parks Master Plan.

Parks & Recreation Department Logo and History

In 1948, Jack Niles was hired as the city's first Recreation Manager, which signaled the creation of the South St. Paul Parks & Recreation Department, one of Minnesota's earliest municipal park department. In 2018, the City of South St. Paul Parks & Recreation Department celebrated its 70th year.

In commemoration of the anniversary, the department log underwent a modernization of the 1970s era version, which was originally created by the South St. Paul High School Art Department.

The refresh continues the symbolism from the original logo, celebrating the special characteristics of South St. Paul parks: varieties of trees, sunshine, and the Mississippi River. A new wildlife element has been added: a soaring eagle. The symbolism and spirit of the eagle pays tribute to the city's native people and heritage. The colors used for the text link back to the city's logo.

South St. Paul Parks a& Recreation is proud to serve and continually improve the quality of life in our community!

2018 Parks & Recreation Logo

Aspect of Sustainability:

» Environment

Goal 9.3: Provide a safe, well-maintained, state of the art park system.

Policy 9.3.1: Maintain and replace park facilities and equipment to protect users and provide proper levels of service.

Policy 9.3.2: Explore and create alternative forms of recreational opportunities using music, cultural events, art appreciation, etc.

Policy 9.3.3: Work with the School District to promote the internal and external recreational facilities at Central Square.

Policy 9.3.4: Work with the Police department, neighborhoods and other groups to provide patrols of the parks, including bike patrols during summer periods to ensure park user safety.

Policy 9.3.5: Create state of the art parks. Improve safety by increasing activity in and around parks through encouraging buildings to face or overlook parks in adjacent development. Install security cameras throughout the park system with the goal of "having eyes" on every city park. The installation of security cameras can help to deter crime, vandalism, misuse, and assist City Staff when issues occur in a park.

Policy 9.3.6: Plan for and conduct the upkeep and replacement of park structures and equipment.

Policy 9.3.7: Explore implementation of new, state of the art park structures and equipment.

Policy 9.3.8: Enhance existing playground locations with play equipment and swings for children ages five and under or create a toddler playground site at one of the City parks.

Goal 9.4: Assess the needs and expectations of the public for recreational opportunities in order to provide a system that effectively meets the needs of a changing population.

Policy 9.4.1: Monitor regional and national studies for recreational trends.

Policy 9.4.2: Periodically conduct user surveys to determine the public's satisfaction with the City's recreational opportunities and levels of service.

Policy 9.4.3: Cooperate with other recreation providers, including the School District, to meet recreational needs of the public in a cost-effective manner.

Policy 9.4.4: Monitor the City's demographic changes and modify recreational opportunities and levels of service accordingly.

Policy 9.4.5: Acknowledge the increasing senior population within the City and develop recreational opportunities that can be utilized by that segment of the population.

Policy 9.4.6: Meet neighborhood park needs with facilities designed in response to the unique needs of each neighborhood.

Policy 9.4.7: Make parks and trails accessible and inclusive. Use the 2018 ADA Transition Plan to guide incremental improvements to provide greater accessibility.

Policy 9.4.8: Convert one of the destination playgrounds in town to a fully accessible space with resilient surfacing, full wheelchair access, and sensory enhancements for children with disabilities. Potential locations will need to be assessed and community input and funding will be needed for the development of this playground.

Policy 9.4.9: Continue to emphasize that the City's park and trail system is a location for health and fitness for all.

Goal 9.5: Preserve and restore natural resources within parks where and when opportunities arise.

Policy 9.5.1: Work with Federal, State, and County resources and inventories to identify natural resources within City parks.

Policy 9.5.2: Design park improvements in a manner sensitive to the natural resources available.

Policy 9.5.3: Work with the DNR, SWCD, other agencies, and local groups to preserve and restore natural resources when possible.

Policy 9.5.4: Protect bluffs and ravines used for passive recreation from physical degradation.

Policy 9.5.5: Plan and implement bank erosion control and stabilization measures in Simon's Ravine and Kaposia Park Ravine, particularly west of 19th Avenue on the north side of the ravine.

Policy 9.5.6: Initiate tree planting and maintenance programs in all parks and open space areas.

Policy 9.5.7: The City will strive to integrate planning to protect, preserve, and enhance water and natural resources within City parks where it is possible and feasible.

Policy 9.5.8: Control / remove invasive species from parks (such as Emerald Ash Borer and Buckthorn).

Policy 9.5.9: Promote pollinator habitat and consider development of an apiary on public property.

Policy 9.5.10: Promote green infrastructure (such as rain gardens/bio-filtration cells) within the park and trail system.

Aspects of Sustainability:

» Environment
» Land Use/Buildings

Goal 9.6: Work with public owners of land to develop additional recreational facilities within the Critical Area/MRCCA corridor:

Policy 9.6.1: Convert the portion of the former Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) land along the Mississippi River into recreational facilities or open space for the City, per the standards and guidelines of Executive Order 79-19. This shall include working with MRCCA to improve and restore natural habitat and restore natural vegetation.

Policy 9.6.2: Develop the Wakota Trailhead and Overlook at the DNR Boat Launch site and adjacent trail property.

Policy 9.6.3: Cooperate with the Cities of Saint Paul, Inver Grove Heights, and Dakota County to connect the Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT) with other recreational facilities in the region, per the standards and requirements of Executive Order 79-19.

Goal 9.7: Expand recreational activities along the Mississippi River to create a recreation destination. Work to establish better trail linkages between the riverfront and the residential neighborhoods west of Concord Street where possible.

Aspect of Sustainability:
» Environment

Policy 9.7.1: Convert the portion of the former MCES land along the Mississippi River for recreational purposes or open space.

Policy 9.7.2: Work with the Federal, State, and other agencies, Dakota County, existing businesses, and volunteer groups to develop Kaposia Landing park, complete the Regional trail, and improve other recreational facilities along the Mississippi River.

Policy 9.7.3: Acquire scenic and pedestrian easements along the Mississippi River consistent with open space and trail needs.

Policy 9.7.4: Work with the Federal, State, and County agencies, the National Park Service, other agencies, and volunteer groups to develop planned activities highlighting the City's relationship with the river.

Policy 9.7.5: Preserve and promote historical and cultural opportunities along the river. Work with Dakota County to develop historic interpretation signage; consider highlighting the lamplighter, Jane Robinson, the South St. Paul Monorail, Mississippi River Ferry between South St. Paul and Newport, and the stockyards and meat packing industry.

Policy 9.7.6: Develop the Wakota Trailhead and Overlook at the DNR Boat Launch site and adjacent trail property. Include a multi-purpose park building with restrooms, information kiosk at the DNR boat launch. The building could serve as a southern trailhead for the Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT).

Goal 9.8: Continue to develop recreational facilities along and with access to the river.

Policy 9.8.1: Continue implementation of the Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT).

Policy 9.8.2: Develop scenic design standards for pedestrian bridges and trail facilities.

Policy 9.8.3: Work with the local Gun Club to provide river access through their site. Establish new park facilities or open space at the southeast corner of the City adjacent to the South St. Paul Rod and Gun Club.

Policy 9.8.4: Develop passive trail facilities through "Packer Preserve."

Policy 9.8.5: Work to achieve a continuous band of park/open space land and river based recreational opportunities between the City's borders

Policy 9.8.6: Work to establish better trails and linkages between the riverfront parks and the residential neighborhoods west of Concord Street.

Policy 9.8.7: Work with the National Park Service on access to the river by exploring the implementation of a watercraft rental station.

Policy 9.8.8: Maximize the value of, and access to, natural and scenic areas along the Mississippi River and other natural greenway corridors.

Policy 9.8.9: Protect and/or enhance the appearance of major natural features of South St. Paul, such as the steep slopes, ravines, floodplains, wetlands, and the river edges as important elements in the appearance of the community and nearby neighborhoods.

Goal 9.9: Recognize the importance of the river as a key community asset and important part of the City's identity and use parks and recreation to connect people to the river.

Policy 9.9.1: Prioritize opportunities for redevelopment and improved access along the Mississippi River. Identify gaps in the river recreation system both within and adjacent to South St. Paul.

Aspect of Sustainability:
» Environment

Policy 9.9.2: Work together with private developers and granting agencies to enhance the attractiveness and draw of the riverfront area.

Policy 9.9.3: Maximize the value of, and access to, natural and scenic areas along the Mississippi River and other natural greenway corridors defined by the system plan. Acquire and improve a continuous band of public parkland along the Mississippi River between the City's northern and southern borders.

Policy 9.9.4: Work to achieve a continuous band of public riverfront parkland and river based recreational opportunities between the City's borders, and establish new trailhead facilities at the southeast corner of the City adjacent to the DNR Boat Launch. Work to establish better trails and linkages between the riverfront, parks/trails and the residential neighborhoods west of Concord Street where possible.

Policy 9.9.5: The City is committed to an area of natural resources on this site east of Hardman Avenue and South of 494, spanning from the Mississippi River west a distance of 300 feet. This area will provide natural areas along the River that will provide more natural resources along the river, additional area for the recreational trail along the river, will enhance the natural beauty of the City from the river, and will help to enhance the appearance of the future redevelopment of the area to the west

Policy 9.9.6: The City is committed to an area of natural resources on the eastern portion of the site provide more natural resources along the river, additional area for the recreational trail along the river, will enhance the natural beauty of the City from the river, and will help to enhance the appearance of the future redevelopment of the area to the west.

Goal 9.10: Provide long-term funding options to maintain and improve parks, programming and public spaces.

Policy 9.10.1: Continue to identify capital improvement funding for enhanced amenities in parks that will draw people to these spaces and encourage active and passive recreation.

Policy 9.10.2: Concentrate efforts to improve public spaces on locations that are in high demand as well as spaces that have the greatest potential to draw people of all ages and abilities.

Policy 9.10.3: Consider opportunities to expand hours and access to public facilities where feasible.

Goal 9.11: Maintain strong partnerships with the public schools and operators of semi-public places.

Policy 9.11.1: Continue to collaborate with the School District to offer sufficient recreational and community-oriented programming for youth and families.

Policy 9.11.2: Ensure that City athletic facilities efficiently and effectively serve the needs of the community in concert with other providers such as the school district.

Table 9.3: Parks, Open Space, Trails, & Recreation Actions

Action	Time Frame	Same As
Action 9.1: Follow the Parks Master Plan to continue to improve Kaposia Landing into a premier community park for the city	5-10	
» Focus on implementing Phase II and optimizing the connection with Bryant Avenue to the North Concord Corridor	5-10	
» Construct the Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT) extension to the northern border of the city in 2019	0-5	
Action 9.2: Construct a trail connection at Bromley Street; signage, information kiosk to show linkage to Kaposia Park and Dakota County River to River Greenway Trail (R2RG)	10+	Action 7.4
Action 9.3: Plan and implement bank erosion control and stabilization measures in Simon's Ravine and Kaposia Park Ravine, particularly west of 19th Avenue on the north side of the ravine.	10+	
Action 9.4: Work with the School District to identify the highest and best uses for the former Jefferson School site, with possibility of residential uses and the inclusion of some neighborhood park space on this parcel to fill a gap in the park service area.	5-10	Action 4.9; Action 6.3
Action 9.5: Develop the Wakota Trailhead and Overlook at the DNR Boat Launch site and adjacent trail property	5-10	
» Include a multi-purpose park building with restrooms, information kiosk at the DNR boat launch		
» The building could serve as a southern trailhead for the Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT)		
Action 9.6: Convert the portion of the former Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) land along the Mississippi River into recreational facilities or open space for the City	5-10	*Critical Area 1
» Per the standards and guidelines of Executive Order 79-19		
» This shall include working with MRCCA to improve and restore natural habitat and restore natural vegetation		
Action 9.7: Develop a citywide trail map, especially for off-street trails	5-10 (ongoing)	Action 7.7
» Identify and prioritize missing connections between city sidewalks and trails		

Action	Time Frame	Same As
Action 9.8: Update the Parks Master Plan.	10+	
Action 9.9: Install security cameras throughout the park system with the goal of "having eyes" on every city park	10+	
Action 9.10: Initiate tree planting and maintenance programs in all parks and open space areas.	10+	*Critical Area 2
Action 9.11: Acquire scenic and pedestrian easements along the Mississippi River consistent with open space and trail needs » Make permanent measures (such as public acquisition, conservation easement, deed restrictions, etc.) that protect PCAs a high priority	ongoing	