

City Council  
Date: 2/19/08  
REGULAR  
Item: 89

ITEM: Consider approval of the Lake Elmo Comprehensive Park Plan

SUBMITTED BY: Kelli Matzek, Planner

REVIEWED BY: Susan Hoyt, City Administrator  
Kyle Klatt, Planning Director  
Mike Bouthifet, Park and Public Works Director

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#### SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The City Council is being asked to approve the proposed Comprehensive Park Plan. The purpose of the document is to provide a vision for how the City would like to develop a comprehensive park and recreation system. The document provides the City with knowledge, guidance, and a basis for a response when opportunities arise for new parks through donated land, new developments, or potential land purchases. This document will also provide assistance in reviewing future developments with regards to park locations and land dedication.

The City Council has an opportunity at this time to make policy amendments to the plan. In the future, if it is determined that a significant change has occurred or an amendment is desired after the plan has been approved, the Park Plan can be amended to reflect the adjustment or new direction in some or a portion of the plan as things change.

The implementation of the Park Plan will be through the annually updated Capitol Improvement Plan (CIP) and as well as when future development occurs in areas planned for parks. The city is in the process of implementing a neighborhood park and trail development process which will engage the park commission and neighbors and abutting property owners in neighborhood park and trail planning for individual neighborhoods and along trails that go by various homes.

#### PARK PLAN PROCESS

- Since September of 2006, the Park Commission discussed the Park Plan at nine public meetings during 2006 and 2007. The commission worked with the park planning consultants over the year and a half to formulate the recommended document.
- A well attended public open house was held on February 15, 2007. Twenty-five residents signed in at the door and five written comments were received. In the written comments, two residents suggested adding an off leash dog park and one resident suggested connecting trails be multi-functional. Two residents provided a number of comments such as incorporating the tri-lakes area into the greenway system, maintaining a working relationship with the county, keeping Sunfish Lake Park as it exists, increasing trail connectivity, removing the neighborhood park search area near Sunfish Lake Park, protecting wetlands, and maintaining passive parkland in natural resource areas. A number of verbal comments were received by commissioners, staff, and the consultants at the meeting as well.
- On March 14, 2007, the Village Area Master Plan consultants presented the village plan and discussed with the Park Commission the vision for parks in the village area.

- A joint City Council and Park Commission meeting was held on April 24, 2007. At this meeting, the commission received comments and feedback from the Council on the draft plan.
- A preference menu was conducted during the months of September and October to further engage public input. Fifty-two responses were received and reviewed by the commission for potential integration into the park plan.
- After twelve months of discussion, public input, and editing, the Park Commission recommended the approval of the Comprehensive Park Plan at their September 17, 2007 meeting.
- The Planning Commission reviewed the park plan and held a public hearing on December 10, 2007 at which no one from the public spoke for or against the plan.
- In review by the Planning Commission, a planning commissioner asked about how the potential planned parks would impact housing unit requirements south of Tenth Street. It was discussed that the each development would be reviewed to determine housing unit counts and parks could be adjusted. After discussion, the commission unanimously recommended approval of the plan. The minutes from the meeting are attached.

#### *MAIN POINTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PARK PLAN*

- The draft Comprehensive Park Plan begins with an introduction that includes a list of park system principles written and edited by the Park Commission. The principles serve as the foundation of the Park Plan.
- The existing parks inventory was also compiled and edited by the Park Commission. This list includes the Lake Elmo Center for the Arts Park as that property was purchased with park funding and will eventually be converted into a park use.
- The demographic assessment section of the plan utilizes information from the Lake Elmo Comprehensive Plan for population forecasts, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for recreation participation information, and the U.S. Census for city demographics. This information provided guidance in the proposed future park locations.
- The Natural Resources section identifies city and state policies as well as a Minnesota DNR Conservation Corridor program for guidance. This shows the overlapping vision at various levels of government for the protection of natural resources. Lake Elmo's natural resources were identified as potential future park features.
- The classifications for the park system as identified in the document are based upon characteristics and purpose of the park, and are helpful in assessing the resources currently available to residents.
- The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommends that Cities locally establish a level-of-service rather than use a generalized standard model. The new draft plan follows this recommendation by establishing levels-of-service for the various park types based on discussions at the meetings held throughout the planning process.
- The accepted Village Area Master Plan identifies an area around which sports fields are located. The park plan integrated information provided from the Village Area Master Plan consultants early on in the process. The park plan has identified a primary community sports complex—a green area with the potential for recreational activities such as ball and soccer fields in collaboration with the village plan. Like the other proposed search areas in the park plan, this primary search area is intended to offer guidance as to where to obtain additional park land, but is flexible to allow for other opportunities as they arise.

- The two other areas identified on map 10 as community sports complex search areas are suggested locations if one additional sports complex is determined to be needed after 2020.
- The community park search area was suggested to be located within the village area to serve as a major central community park with a sports center and walking paths that would function as the heart of the community. This was further discussed at the March 14, 2007 Park Commission meeting with the Village Area Planning consultant.
- The park plan recommends a greenway and trail loop that utilized existing and proposed trails identified in the approved 2005 Comprehensive Trail Guide Plan. The greenway along with the trail system would provide for a highly connected park system and establish new connections among the rural and future urban areas of the city.
- Sunfish Lake Park was singled out in the document as it is the largest of all the city parks, and is considered the crown jewel of Lake Elmo's park system. Six policy statements were created by the park commission to provide more detailed guidance for the future use of Sunfish Lake Park.
- Search Area D (as shown on map 9) identifies a search area for a local park directly adjacent to Sunfish Lake Park. The park commission recommended that neighborhood park type facilities not be placed within Sunfish Lake Park as it would not conform to the policies outlined for Sunfish Lake Park in the park plan.
- A recreation preference menu was distributed in a city newsletter, was available on the city website, and also at city hall for completion by residents. The menu was not an official survey, but an attempt to receive information from a broad range of residents on information relevant to the existing and future park system and recreational programming.
- The benchmark study (discussed in section 4) compares Lake Elmo with three other metro area cities. The three cities were chosen by the Park Commission, and were used only for identifying at what point the communities established city recreation programs and how those programs function.

In summary, the draft plan finds that within the next twenty-two years, the City's projected population will develop needs for thirteen neighborhood parks, one community park, one or two community sports complexes, two special use parks, and a greenway to provide connectivity throughout the city. The specific locations for these future recreation amenities would be guided by the search areas established in the plan, but the final locations would be dictated by opportunities (primarily through park dedication in conjunction with development projects). Essential to the plan's success is the City's ability to be flexible with final park locations and to be proactive as opportunities arise.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- This plan would update the most recent park plan from 1990 to reflect updated future demographics, existing park system amenities, and projected future park needs and potential locations.
- This plan does not address how to pay for the proposed parks and greenway system, nor does it identify specific parcels of land in the city for future park and recreation locations. This is not required in the plan and is a budget activity undertaken by the city council with the advice and input of the park and planning commissions.
- Since the public hearing on December 10, 2007, minor edits have been made to update the list of amenities in existing city parks.

#### RECOMMENDATION

The Park Commission, Planning Commission, and staff are recommending approval of the proposed Comprehensive Park Plan.

**SUGGESTED MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:**

*Move to approve the Comprehensive Park Plan.*

**ORDER OF BUSINESS:**

- Introduction ..... Susan Hoyt, City Administrator
- Presentation by staff ..... Kelli Matzek, Planner
- Presentation by park consultants ..... Rich Gray, Berry Farrington, TKDA
- Questions from the City Council (3 minutes) ..... Mayor & Council Members
- Questions/Comments from the public (3 minutes) ..... Mayor facilitates
- Call for a Motion  
(required for further discussion; does not  
imply approval of the motion) ..... Mayor facilitates
- Discussion (3 minutes) ..... Mayor facilitates
- Action on motion ..... Council

**ATTACHMENTS (2):**

1. Comprehensive Park Plan
2. Planning Commission Minutes; 12-10-08





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PART ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1-1</b>
<i>Purpose of the Plan .....</i>	<i>1-1</i>
<i>Park System Principles.....</i>	<i>1-1</i>
<i>Planning Process.....</i>	<i>1-2</i>
<b>PART TWO: SETTING.....</b>	<b>2-1</b>
<i>Existing Parks Inventory .....</i>	<i>2-1</i>
<i>Demographic Assessment: Park Users Between 2006 and 2030.....</i>	<i>2-21</i>
<i>Natural Resources .....</i>	<i>2-26</i>
<b>PART THREE: PARK SYSTEM PLAN .....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
<i>Parks Classification System and Park Standards.....</i>	<i>3-1</i>
<i>Recommendations for Additional Parks.....</i>	<i>3-14</i>
<b>PART FOUR: RECREATION PROGRAMMING .....</b>	<b>4-1</b>
<i>Recreation Programming Offered.....</i>	<i>4-1</i>
<i>Approach.....</i>	<i>4-2</i>
<i>Strategies.....</i>	<i>4-4</i>
<b>PART FIVE: IMPLEMENTATION.....</b>	<b>5-1</b>
<b>PART SIX: APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>6-1</b>
<i>For Further Information.....</i>	<i>6-1</i>
<i>Tabulated Recreation Preference Menu.....</i>	<i>6-2</i>
<i>Benchmarking Study Summary.....</i>	<i>6-5</i>
<i>Level of Service Methodology .....</i>	<i>6-8</i>

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## TABLES

Table No. 1: 2030 Household and Population Forecasts by Area .....	2-22
Table No. 2: Lake Elmo and Twin Cities Age Groups as a Percent of Total Population, Year 2000 .....	2-24

## FIGURES

Figure No. 1: Lake Elmo and Twin Cities Population Pyramids.....	2-24
Figure No. 2: Lake Elmo Recreation Programming Strategies .....	4-5

## MAPS

Map No. 1: Lake Elmo Existing Park System.....	2-20
Map No. 2: Wetlands.....	2-30
Map No. 3: Topography.....	2-31
Map No. 4: Land Cover .....	2-32
Map No. 5: Natural Resource DNR Priorities .....	2-33
Map No. 6: Twin Cities Natural Resource DNR Priorities.....	2-34
Map No. 7: Park System Plan.....	3-15
Map No. 8: Neighborhood Park Service Areas .....	3-20
Map No. 9: Neighborhood Park Search Areas .....	3-21
Map No. 10: Other Park Search Areas .....	3-25
Map No. 11: Greenway.....	3-27



**PART ONE: INTRODUCTION..... 1-1**

*Purpose of the Plan .....1-1*  
*Park System Principles.....1-1*  
*Planning Process.....1-2*  
*Parameters of this Report.....1-2*

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## **PART ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### ***Purpose of the Plan***

Park and recreation planning needs to be integrated with City Planning. Park planning will enhance the quality of life in our Community, will help to protect the City's natural environment, and will serve to meet the recreation needs of Lake Elmo citizens. Parks do have a significant value as a community resource, and they are an essential element of the community. The recreational facilities in the City of Lake Elmo add to the unique rural character of the community, and help to foster civic pride.

This *Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Plan* constitutes a vision for the City of Lake Elmo's park system and is meant to guide city policymakers over the period 2007 to 2030.

In preparing this comprehensive plan, the Parks Commission of the City of Lake Elmo established a set of overarching principles to guide the development of our city's parks:

### ***Park System Principles***

- a. The park system shall showcase, preserve, and respect our city's natural resources, and the location of our natural resources shall guide the placement and uses of our parks.
- b. Parks shall be located so that all current and prospective neighborhoods have a local park where practical and appropriate.
- c. City parks shall be connected to each other and to prominent destinations within and outside of the city through a system of trails as iterated in the *2006 Comprehensive Trail Guide Plan*.
- d. A significant park shall be located at the heart of Lake Elmo and serve as a community gathering place and landmark.
- e. The park system shall serve a diversity of interests and accommodate a wide range of abilities for citizens of all ages. The parks system shall support and foster a diverse range of activities, including sports, arts, music, festivals, informal and formal gatherings, picnicking, nature appreciation, and other activities.
- f. The park system shall be easily accessible to the general public.
- g. Dedicated park land shall not be used for non-recreational or non-conserving purposes.

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## ***Planning Process***

This *Comprehensive Parks & Recreational Plan* was initiated to update Lake Elmo's previously-developed Park Plan written in 1990. The need for the update was prompted by the completion of the *2030 Lake Elmo Comprehensive Plan* in 2008, the adoption in 2006 of the *Comprehensive Trail Guide Plan* for the City of Lake Elmo, the significant growth in the city's park system since 1990, and the anticipated rapid growth in the city's population between 2006 and 2030.

The City of Lake Elmo Parks Commission collaborated with consultants from TKDA over an eight-month period to update this plan. A public open house was held in February 2007 as the draft plan neared completion. Maps showing the draft recommendations and the park system principles were displayed, and the public was invited to offer comments and ask questions. Oral and written comments were conveyed to members of the Parks Commission and professional staff attending the meeting. A public hearing before the Lake Elmo Planning Commission was held on December 10, 2007.

The *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan* was adopted by the Lake Elmo City Council on **January #, 2008**.

## ***Parameters of this Report***

There are extensive private park and recreational facilities in the City of Lake Elmo, including Tartan Park. Because these areas are private and therefore not open to the general public, they cannot by definition be regarded as resources which the citizens of Lake Elmo can reliably use, and consideration of these parks and facilities cannot be productively integrated into long-range civic planning relating to the city's parks.





**PART TWO: SETTING..... 2-1**

*Existing Parks Inventory .....2-1*

*Demographic Assessment: Park Users Between 2006 and 2030 .....2-21*

*Natural Resources .....2-26*

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## **PART TWO: SETTING**

### ***Existing Parks Inventory***

Today, the Lake Elmo parks system supports organized sports, casual play, relaxation, hiking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, picnicking, nature appreciation, and a variety of other outdoor activities. The system also serves as informal gathering places for Lake Elmo's residents. While all parks share the common purpose of providing quality recreation facilities and open spaces for the Lake Elmo community, each park within the system is unique in terms of its history, setting, character, and use.

The Parks Commission compiled a parks inventory that describes the current parks system. This inventory of our city's current parks serves as a useful baseline from which to consider the community's future park needs. For planning purposes, all parks in Lake Elmo are defined in terms of their overall role in the park system, service area and location, size, level of service, and the nature of their facilities. Explanations regarding these classifications can be found on page 3-1.

**Map 1** ("Lake Elmo Existing Park System") illustrates the location of the city's current parks:

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## Carriage Station Park

Carriage Station Park is located along Stillwater Boulevard North / Highway 5 in the northeast corner of Lake Elmo. Facilities for this neighborhood park include a playground, paved trail, basketball court and an excellent sledding hill.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Location:** Marquess Trail North and Stillwater Boulevard North / Highway 5

**Size:** 3 acres

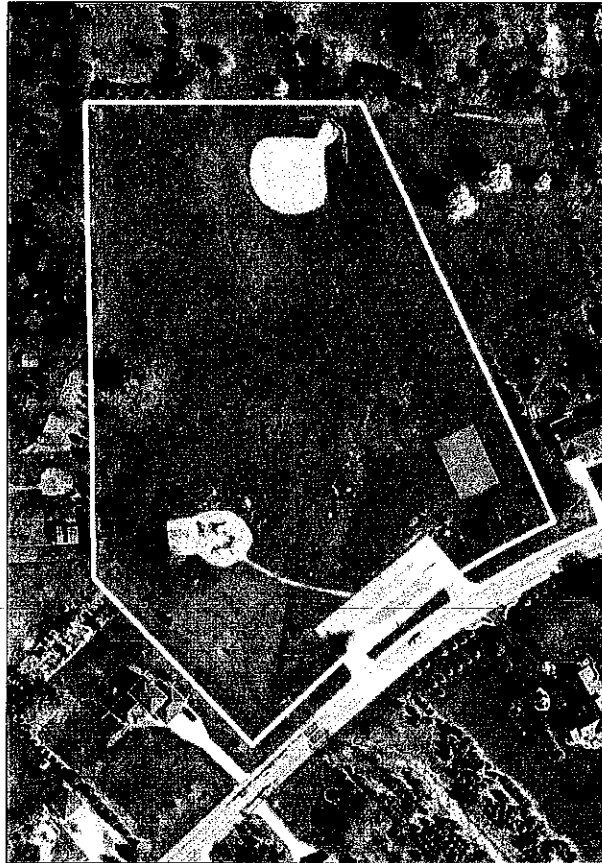
Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
	trail – walking (paved) picnic table	playground sledding hill basketball court	no off-street parking



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## DeMontreville Park

DeMontreville Park, located in the northwest corner of Lake Elmo near the Gateway Trail and the DeMontreville Wildlife Area, is an active recreation park. It complements the DeMontreville Wildlife Area with its softball field, basketball court and large open area that is perfect for group activities and picnicking.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Location:** 5700 Highlands Trail North

**Size:** 6.3 acres

Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
	picnicking	playground basketball court volleyball court softball field football/lacrosse/ soccer field (open area)	off-street parking restrooms - portable/seasonal

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### **DeMontreville Wildlife Area**

DeMontreville Wildlife Area serves as Lake Elmo's access to the Gateway State Trail. Located in the northwest corner of Lake Elmo, the partly-wooded park is home to a large pond and a beautiful creek. This park is a popular destination for hikers and those who choose to enjoy this area for cross-country skiing, walking a pet, or communing with nature.



**Classification:** Community Park

**Location:** 7950 DeMontreville Trail North

**Size:** 24 acres

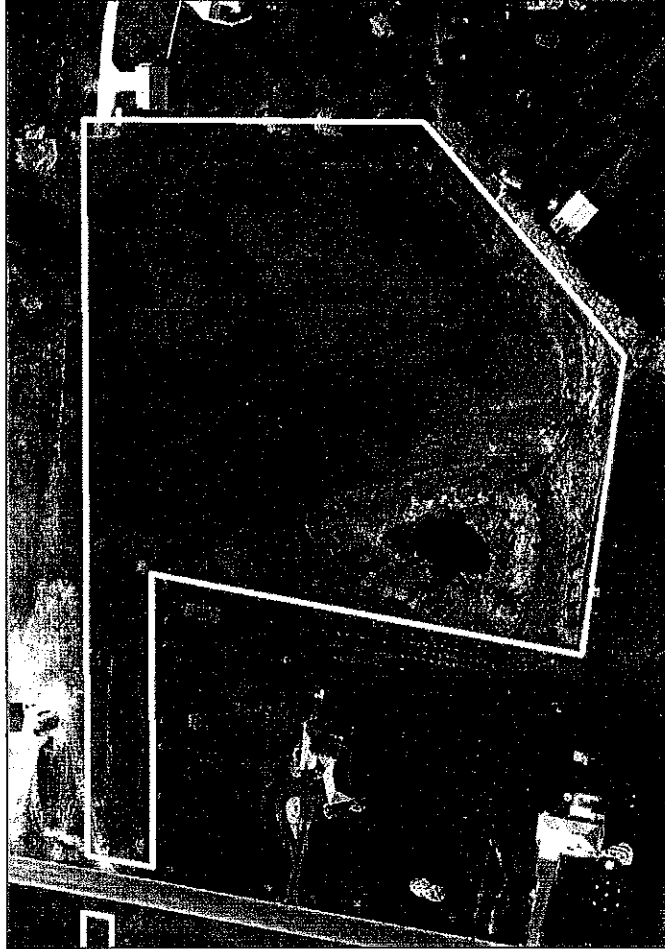
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<b>Natural Features</b>	<b>Passive Uses</b>	<b>Active Uses</b>	<b>Other Facilities</b>
natural parkland lakes/pond natural resource area creek	walking, jogging flora/fauna identification quiet/solitude	sliding hill cross-country/skiing trails	off-street parking

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## Heights Park

Heights Park is an undeveloped park located in west-central Lake Elmo. The park features a grove of trees and a natural pond.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Location:** 14th Street and Lake Elmo

**Size:** 5 acres

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Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
lakes/pond natural resource area			

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## Heritage Park

Heritage Park is 8 acres of undeveloped land located south of Reid Park on the shores of a large pond. With lots of cover along the shoreline, this is a pleasant place for walking and enjoying nature.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Location:** 2700 Block of Lisbon Avenue

**Size:** 8 acres

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Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
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lakes/pond

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## Homestead Park

Homestead Park is an undeveloped neighborhood park in southeastern Lake Elmo.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Location:** 14th Street and Lake Elmo Avenue

**Size:** 3 acres

**Parks Inventory:**

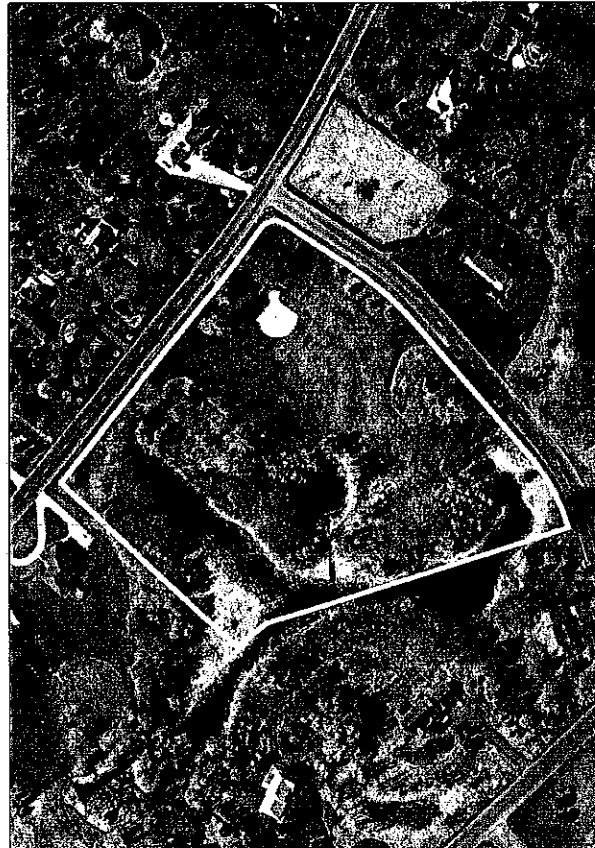
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Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
lakes/pond			

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## Kleis Park

Named after the Kleis family, who settled this area better than a century ago, Kleis Park is a lovely neighborhood park located in northwest Lake Elmo. The park features a large open area with a softball field and enough room for football and soccer. A beautiful highlight of the park is a well-shaded children's play area and a small woods with ancient oak trees and trails for a casual woodland stroll.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Location:** 5285 Jamaca Boulevard

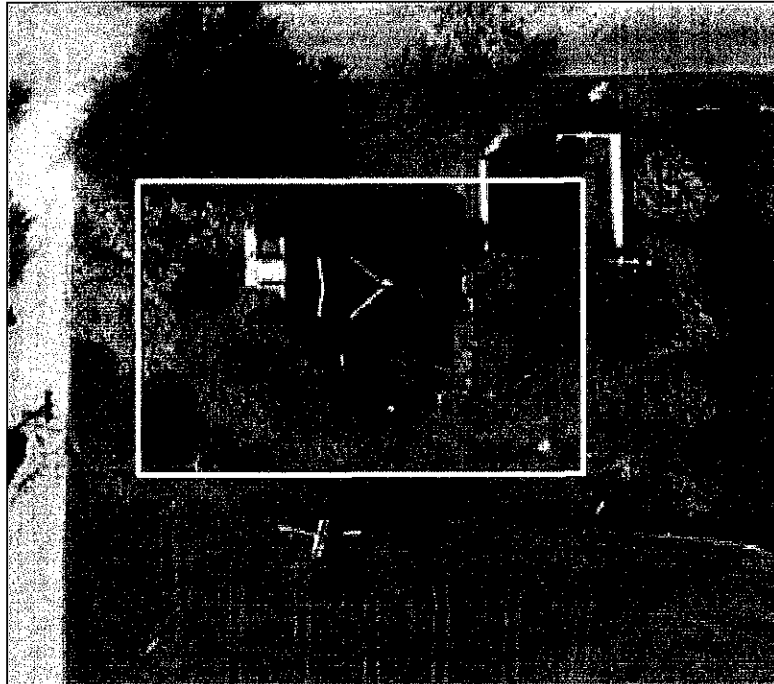
**Size:** 8 acres

Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
natural parkland lake/pond natural resource area	picnicking walk, jogging	Playground softball field football/soccer field (open area)	no off-street parking grills restrooms - portable

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## Lake Elmo Center for the Arts Park

Lake Elmo Center for the Arts is an arts center located in a former house just north of the Lions' Park left-field fence. This facility is dependent upon street parking, but parking for both Lions Park and VFW Park is close at hand.



**Classification:** Arts Center

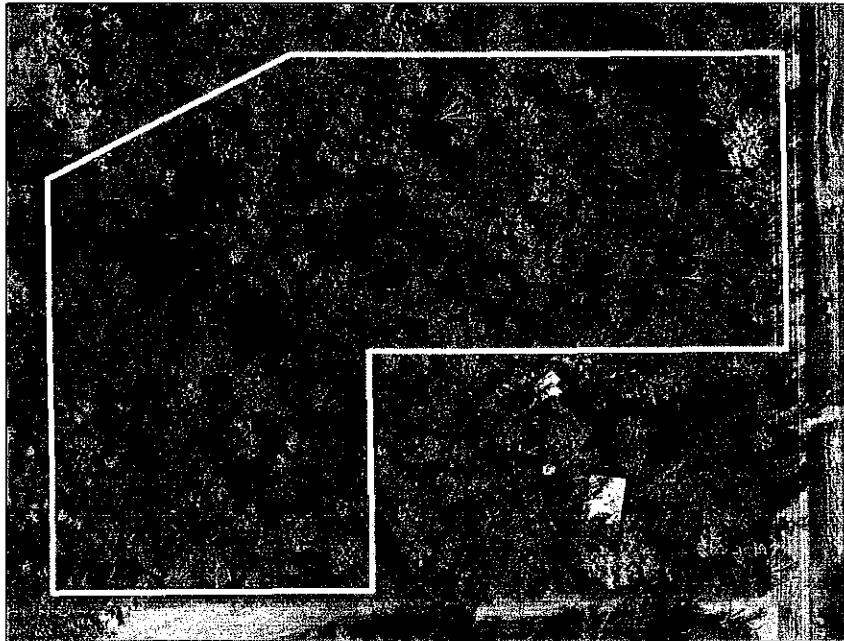
**Location:** 3585 Laverne Avenue North

**Size:** City Lot

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## Lake Jane Hills Park

Lake Jane Hills is an undeveloped park parcel acquired as future park space. These 3.7 acres are wooded with a gently rolling landscape. At this time there is no public parking for access to this property.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Location:** Near Jamaca Avenue North and 42nd Street

**Size:** 3.7 acres

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<b>Natural Features</b>	<b>Passive Uses</b>	<b>Active Uses</b>	<b>Other Facilities</b>
natural parkland			



## Lions Park

Lions Park is a fully developed park located in the heart of the “Old Village” of Lake Elmo. Shelter facilities make Lions Park a good meeting place for group activities. Each August, Lions Park is the site of the annual city celebration, *Huff-n-Puff Days*.



**Classification:** Special Use Park

**Location:** 3525 Laverne Avenue North

**Size:** 3 acres

Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
	picnicking	playground lighted baseball field lighted tennis courts basketball court volleyball court horseshoes hockey/ice skating rink badminton batting cage	off-street parking concession restrooms - permanent water fountain warming house bleachers shelters

## Pebble Park

Pebble Park, located on the west city line, was once a 3M gravel pit. The rim of the pit offers an unpaved parking area nestled among a playground, tennis courts, a basketball court, and an ice rink during the winter season. The bottom of the pit is now a ball field. The south and northeast ends of the park features a rolling wooded terrain with sets of easily accessible trails.

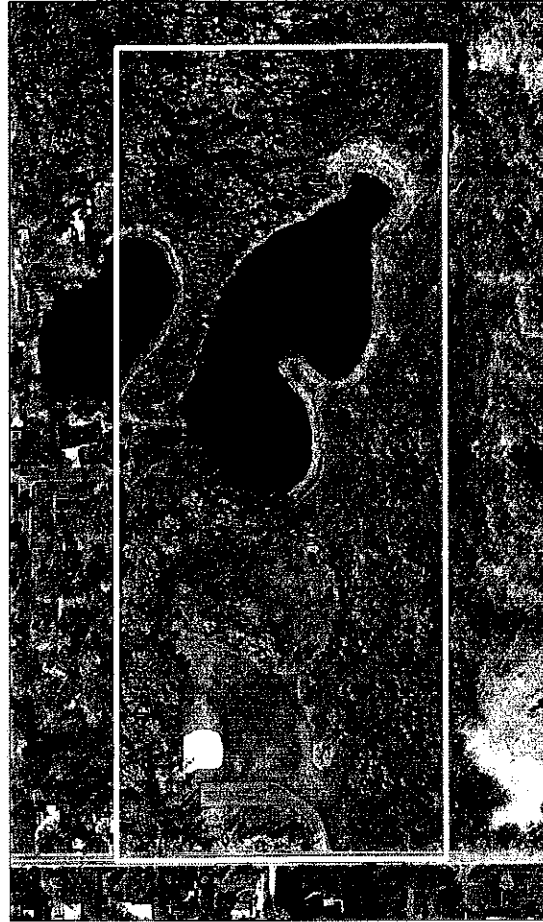


**Classification:** Neighborhood Park  
**Location:** 8160 Lake Jane Trail North  
**Size:** 17 acres

Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
natural parkland natural resource area	picnicking trails - walking, jogging	playground lighted tennis courts basketball court softball field sliding hill trails - mountain bike	off-street parking restrooms - portable water fountain

## Reid Park

This land was once part of the Reid family farm and now contains a softball field with two play areas and a bike/walking path that winds through a wooded area and around a pond. Reid Park is one of the parks used during the city's annual *Huff-n-Puff Days*.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park  
**Location:** 11430 - 30th Street North  
**Size:** 30 acres

Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
natural parkland lake/pond natural resource area	picnicking trails - walking, jogging flora/fauna identification quiet, solitude	playground softball field soccer/football field trails - bike	off-street parking restrooms - portable

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## Ridge Park

This is a neighborhood park located in west-central Lake Elmo. With 24 acres, it is evenly divided between open space with a softball field and playground, and a wooded area with an unpaved walking trail.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Location:** 15th Street and Inwood Avenue

**Size:** 24 acres

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<b>Natural Features</b>	<b>Passive Uses</b>	<b>Active Uses</b>	<b>Other Facilities</b>
natural resource area	picnicking trails - walking, jogging	playground softball field football/soccer field (open area)	no off-street parking



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## Stonegate Park

Stonegate Park is a neighborhood park located in southwestern Lake Elmo.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

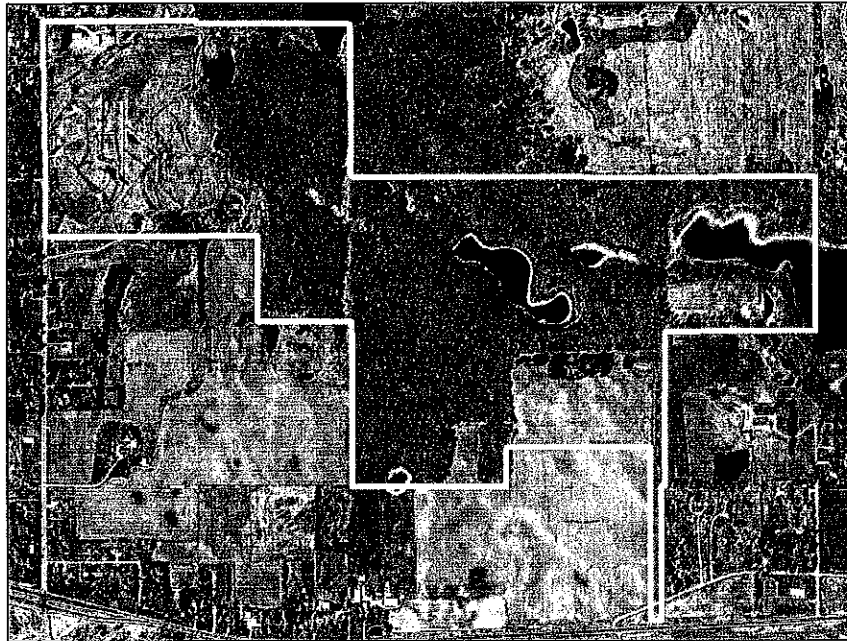
**Location:** 750 Jasmine

**Size:** 5 acres

Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
	picnicking	playground football/soccer field softball field	no off-street parking grill

## Sunfish Lake Park

Sunfish Lake Park is considered by many to be the crown jewel of the Lake Elmo park system – an important symbol of the quiet, rural character Lake Elmo. The first European settlement in Lake Elmo was located near this park, and it is here where the assembly met that created the township we now know as the City of Lake Elmo. This park’s unspoiled rolling landscape is the same today as it was for the first settlers: a well-preserved oak forest with gentle ridges separating ponds that showcase both landscape and a lush wildlife habitat. Spanning almost 300 acres near the geographic center of the city, this park provides an important public access to Sunfish Lake.



**Classification:** Community Park  
**Location:** 10000 Stillwater Lane North  
**Size:** 284 acres

Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
lakes/ponds natural parkland natural resource area	picnicking walking, jogging canoeing flora/fauna identification quiet/solitude	sliding hill cross country skiing horseback riding	off-street parking restrooms - portable

## Tablyn Park

At Tablyn Park, located along a gully, high ground features a paved parking area and tennis courts with a connecting paved trail. The trail leads one on a gentle switchback past the tennis courts down to the gully. Here the trail passes by a picnic area, a playground and the softball field. A wooden stairway connects the field with the parking area located at the top of the hill. In winter, one of Lake Elmo's most popular sledding hills can be found here.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Location:** 8735 Stillwater Boulevard North

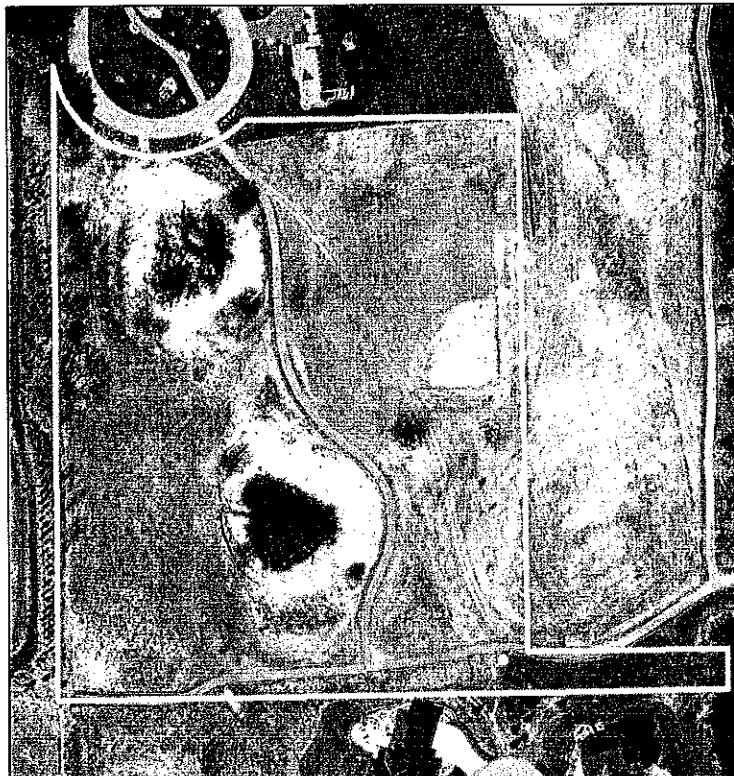
**Size:** 8 acres

Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
	picnicking trails - walking, jogging, biking	playground tennis courts basketball court softball field football/soccer field sledding hill	off-street parking grills restrooms - portable

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## Tana Ridge Park

Tana Ridge Park is a neighborhood park located between two housing developments in northeastern Lake Elmo. It is home to a softball field, soccer fields, and a playground.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Location:** 4525 Lily Avenue

**Size:** 5 acres

Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
	trails - hiking, biking picnic table	playground soccer field softball field	off-street parking



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## VFW Park

VFW Park contains Lake Elmo's only lighted baseball field and is used extensively by little leagues.



**Classification:** Special Use Park

**Location:** 3675 Layton Avenue

**Size:** 3 acres

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**Natural Features**

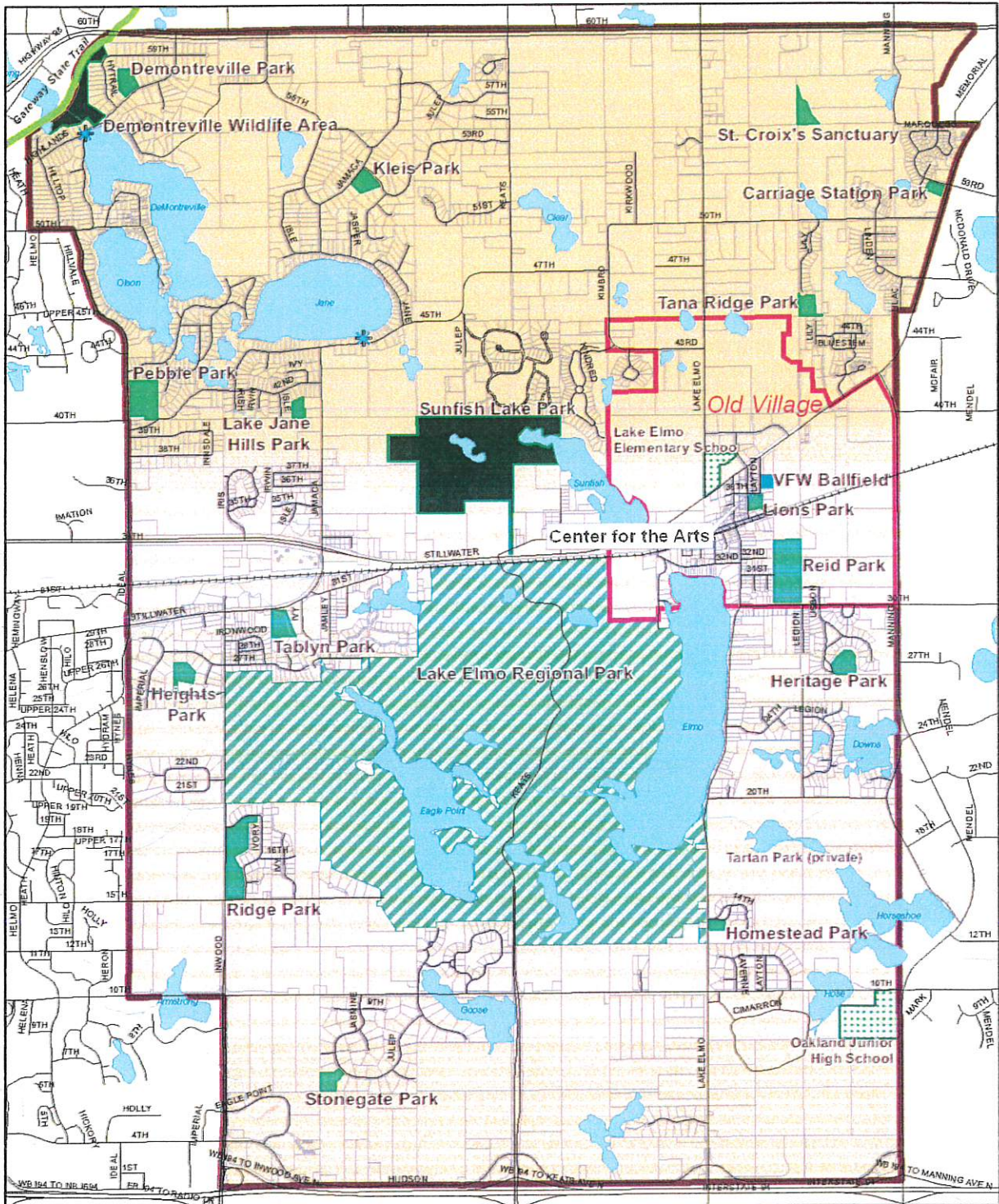
**Passive**

**Active**

lighted baseball field

**Other Facilities**

off-street parking  
restrooms - seasonal  
bleachers  
batting cage



**MAP 1. LAKE ELMO EXISTING PARK SYSTEM**

JANUARY 2007



- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Special Use Park
- Mini Park
- Regional Park
- School
- DNR Boat Launch



Miles



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## ***Demographic Assessment: Park Users Between 2006 and 2030***

### **POPULATION**

#### **The Land Use Plan**

The *Lake Elmo Comprehensive Plan Chapter III, the Land Use Plan*, guides where and how future growth will occur in Lake Elmo. Preserving its rural character, maintaining the Village area as the focal point of the City, and preparing for forecasted growth are key points within the *Land Use Plan*. The *Land Use Plan* provides the basis for understanding future demand for parks and future opportunities for the park system.

#### **Population Forecasts**

For park planning purposes, the *Land Use Plan* can be described as featuring three areas within Lake Elmo having differing future development patterns: the Village area, the area south of 10th Street, and the remainder of Lake Elmo. The *Plan* envisions for the Village area a wide mix of land uses and housing types, organized in a compact pattern of streets and blocks. The area south of 10th Street is largely classified as Future Sewered Development, in preparation for future regional sewer service. In the near term, most of this area will remain rural. As regional sewer availability expands, the majority of the area south of 10th Street may be developed at more urban residential densities. Future residential development within the remainder of Lake Elmo will occur in a way consistent with rural land use patterns; (at a relatively lesser density as a strategy for preserving Lake Elmo's rural character).

The forecasted 2030 population of Lake Elmo is summarized in the land use staging plan within the *Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Plan*. The staging plan reports a total of 8,727 households and a total of 24,000 persons in Lake Elmo by 2030. The *Park Plan* uses these assumptions to plan for the 2030 park system and responds to the guidance provided in the *Land Use Plan* as to how the population will be distributed throughout three general areas of the City - the Village area, the area south of 10th Street, and the rural area north of 10th Street and outside of the Village area.

Table No. 1 summarizes the forecasted number of households and population envisioned in the *Land Use Plan*. The household distribution described in the *Land Use Plan* can generally be assigned to the three geographic areas: Village Area, South of 10th Street, and unsewered (north of 10th Street and outside of the Village Area).

**Table No. 1:  
2030 Household and Population Forecasts by Area**

	2010 Households	2010 Population	2020 Households	2020 Population	2030 Households	2030 Population
Old Village	515	1,416	600	1,740	1,100	3,025
South of 10th Street	-	-	2,400	6,960	4,100	11,275
*Unsewered	3,104	8,536	3,324	9,640	3,527	9,700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,619</b>	<b>9,952</b>	<b>6,324</b>	<b>18,403</b>	<b>8,727</b>	<b>24,000</b>

\*north of 10th Street and outside the Village Area

### 2005 and 2006 Population Estimates

The Metropolitan Council estimates that Lake Elmo's population in 2005 was 7,966 persons. The forecasts show an average growth of 450 persons per year between 2005 and 2010. Therefore, the *Park Plan* assumes that the population of Lake Elmo in 2006 (the base year for the *Park Plan*) to be 8,416 persons.

## AGE

### Recreation and Age Association

A parks system provides for recreation and enjoyment of open space - activities that appeal to all age groups. Still, certain park activities are associated with certain age groups. Active recreation facilities, such as soccer fields and playgrounds, are usually favored by younger people. Passive recreation, such as picnicking, walking, or fishing, is generally associated with older people.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' *2004 Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey* examined the association of recreation activities by adult age groups. The survey found a strong and moderate association between younger adults and active recreation, including such activities as ice skating/hockey outdoors, sledding, inline skating, downhill skiing/snowboarding, and outdoor court sports (volleyball, basketball, tennis, horseshoes). Older aged adults are found to have strong and moderate association with activities such as nature observation and photography, visiting nature centers, visiting historic or cultural sites, and walking/hiking. The survey associated people in their middle ages with snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and horseback riding. Many activities, especially water-related activities such as swimming, wading, and boating, appear to be universally enjoyed by adults of all ages in Minnesota. Of particular note to Lake Elmo is the survey finding that adults age 35 to 44 have the highest per capita hours spent on outdoor recreation than any other adult age group.



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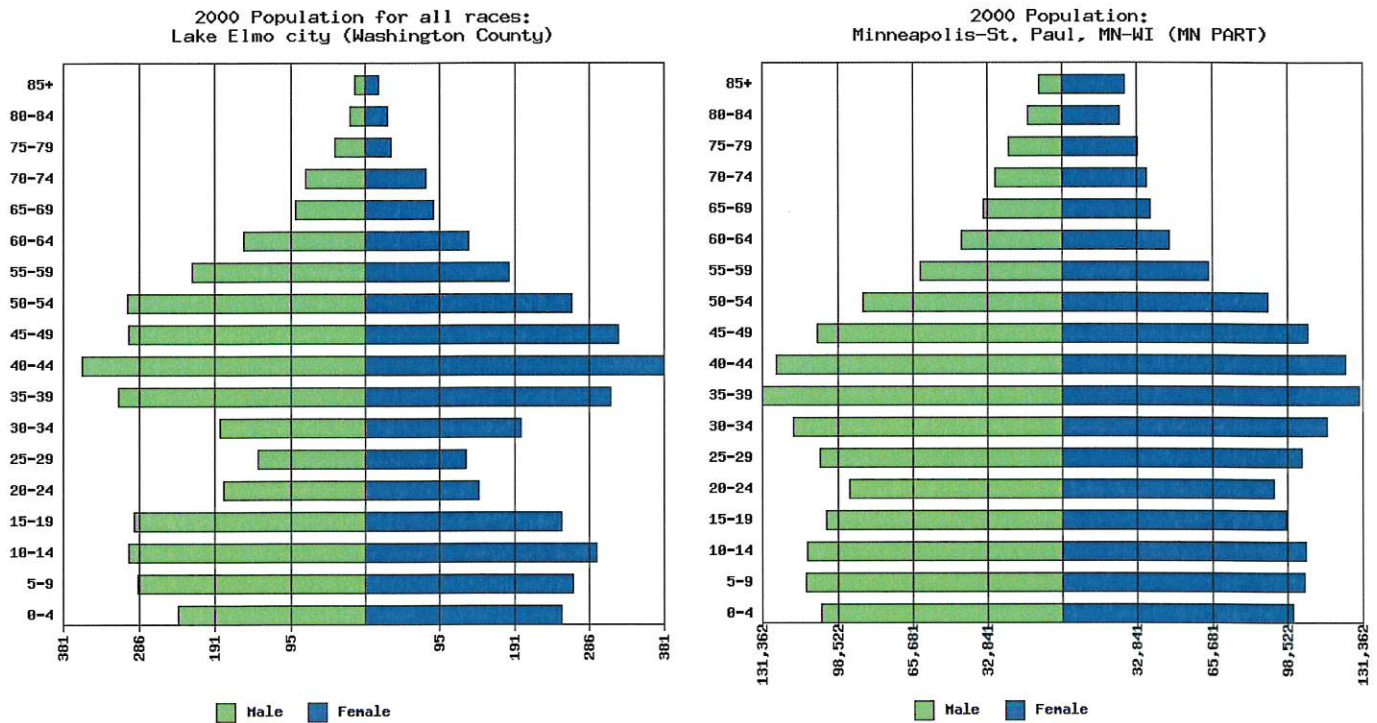
## Lake Elmo Age Distribution

The United States 2000 Census provides a baseline for understanding Lake Elmo's age distribution. Lake Elmo's age distribution in comparison to the age distribution within the Twin Cities overall provides a point of consideration for how Lake Elmo's park system will serve the community over the next 25 years.

Lake Elmo has proportionally more school-age youth (ages 5 to 19) than the Twin Cities in general and has about the same proportion of children younger than 5 years old as the Twin Cities. Using the Twin Cities as a basis for comparison, Lake Elmo has an above average number of children and youth. Youth are associated with high levels of park usage, especially active recreation opportunities. Corresponding to this school-age population is a greater-than-average number of adults in the age groups 35 to 44 and 45 to 54. The Department of Natural Resources survey discovery that 35 to 44 year olds spent more hours on outdoor recreation than any other adult age group highlights the potential for a stronger demand for outdoor recreation in Lake Elmo than in other Twin Cities communities.

Lake Elmo has fewer young adults and seniors compared to the Twin Cities overall. The 2000 Lake Elmo population age groups of 20- to 24-year-olds (4.7% of total population) and 25- to 34-year-olds (9.4%) are less prevalent than in the Twin Cities as a whole, where these age groups respectively made up 6.5% and 15.5% of the population. Lake Elmo's population age 75 and up is noticeably less than this age group's presence in the Twin Cities. These trends are visible in the 2000 population pyramids for Lake Elmo and for the Twin Cities.

**Figure No. 1:  
Lake Elmo and Twin Cities Population Pyramids**



Source: Minnesota Demographic Center

**Table No. 2:  
Lake Elmo and Twin Cities Age Groups  
as a Percent of Total Population, Year 2000**

Age Group	Percent Lake Elmo Population	Percent Twin Cities (Minneapolis -St. Paul, MN-WI MSA)
Under 5 years	7.1	7.2
5 to 9 years	8.0	7.6
10 to 14 years	8.7	7.6
15 to 19 years	7.9	7.0
20 to 24 years	4.7	6.5
25 to 34 years	9.4	15.5
35 to 44 years	19.8	17.8
45 to 54 years	17.3	13.7
55 to 59 years	5.9	4.4
60 to 64 years	4.2	3.2
65 to 74 years	4.8	4.9
75 to 84 years	1.8	3.4
85 years and over	.4	1.3

Source: United States Census Bureau, Census 2000

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As Lake Elmo's population increases, the population will tend to grow proportionate to its age composition today. The cost of land and the appeal of Lake Elmo will continue to attract households that are financially well-established, more so than first-time home buyers. These households will likely be headed by adults in their prime earning years, usually in their 30s and older but before retirement age. However, changes in land use patterns as described in the *Land Use Plan* will bring a greater variety of housing types to Lake Elmo which may be attractive to empty nesters and young adults. In the near-term, the parks system will continue to largely adults in their mid-30s through 50s and their children. In the longer-term, the park system may increasingly serve adults in their 20s to early 30s as well as empty nesters and seniors.

### ***DEMOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT SUMMARY***

The Lake Elmo *Land Use Plan* provides a framework for identifying future park needs. The forecasted population growth and the *Land Use Plan's* guidance for development are the basis for planning expansion of the park system. Overall, Lake Elmo's population is forecasted to be approximately 24,000 people by 2030, with greater population densities in the Village Area and in the area south of 10th Street than in the rest of Lake Elmo. Planning for parks that serve residents within local neighborhoods requires consideration of these different development patterns.

Lake Elmo's parks system will continue to predominantly serve adults in their mid 30s through 50s and their children. Research shows that of all adult age groups in Minnesota, adults age 35 to 44 spend the most time at outdoor recreation activities. This age group made up nearly 20% of Lake Elmo's population in 2000, so planning for the recreational needs of these adults is an important consideration. As change occurs in development patterns in the Village Area and south of 10th Street, the parks system may increasingly serve adults in their 20s to early 30s as well as empty nesters and seniors as a greater variety of housing types become available.

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## *Natural Resources*

### **POLICIES FOR NATURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION**

#### 1. City of Lake Elmo Policies

The Lake Elmo Parks Commission established the principal that preservation of the natural environment is a very high priority within the parks system:

*Lake Elmo Park Plan Principal a.) The parks system shall showcase, preserve, and respect our city's natural resources, and the location of our natural resources shall guide the placement and uses of our parks.*

The interrelationship of parks and long-term responsible environmental stewardship is also recognized by the *Lake Elmo Comprehensive Plan*, which gives guidance for environmental protection within its city-wide planning policy (Chapter 1):

*Lake Elmo 2030 Comprehensive Plan Environmental Protection Policy: The City will evaluate available options to increase the long-term viability of its park system in an environmentally sensitive manner.*

#### 2. State of Minnesota Policies

The State of Minnesota's outdoor recreation policy guidance document also emphasizes natural resource conservation through park planning. Minnesota's *2003 - 2008 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)* establishes priorities for state decision-makers, guides investment of federal funds, and serves as a tool for local decision-makers.

*State of Minnesota SCORP guiding principle: encouraging a better, highly integrated outdoor system that balances recreation and protection of natural and cultural resources.*

The second guiding principle is to strengthen the awareness of the connection between outdoor recreation and good health. These guiding principles are the foundation for seven priorities within the SCORP. Many of the priorities resonate with Lake Elmo's commitment to natural resource conservation. The state uses the priorities listed in the SCORP to evaluate funding requests and to guide investment of federal funds.



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The SCORP's priorities that are especially relevant to Lake Elmo's park system are:

*Protect and restore the natural resource base on which outdoor recreation depends - Minnesota's lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, grasslands and forests.*

*In areas of rapid population growth, reserve prime recreation lands, such as shoreland and significant natural areas, ahead of development and provide recreation facilities such as parks, trails, and water accesses.*

*Expand nature-based outdoor recreation experiences for youth living in urban areas through "near-by" access to the natural world that allows for frequent and unstructured play and exploration.*

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Metro Conservation Corridors program, created in 1998, seeks to protect endangered natural resources in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. It has identified a network of land across the Twin Cities, part of which is located within Lake Elmo. In an effort to promote conservation in the areas designated as the conservation corridor the program works with organizations, local governments, agencies and land owners to build a natural habitat network that protects and improves the health of native vegetation, fish and wildlife. Sunfish Lake Park and Lake Elmo Regional Park are part of the network identified by the program, as is the corridor of land that connects them. Identifying how Lake Elmo's park system principles coincide with state plans may uncover opportunities for partnership and suggest areas in which the city can collaborate with the state to enhance its parks system.

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## **LAKE ELMO'S NATURAL RESOURCES**

The location of Lake Elmo's natural resources and the character of the land were key factors in identifying search areas for future park land. The Parks Commission used maps depicting natural resources to identify features that could be included in future park sites. Bodies of water and wetlands were identified as areas of high importance and included forested shoreland on Lake Elmo, shoreland on Goose Lake, shoreland on Clear Lake, shoreland on Kramer Lake, and steep shoreland north of 50th Street. A forested area off of the northern portion of Lake Elmo Avenue was also highlighted. This information informed recommended locations for future parks.

In many cases, the *Park Plan* utilizes a body of water as the focal point of a search area while in another case, a relatively flat parcel of land was identified as a search area for athletic fields. Maps 2 through 6 depict Lake Elmo's wetlands, topography, land cover, and significant natural resources as identified by the Department of Natural Resources. This information was considered alongside Lake Elmo's *Comprehensive Plan* land use and zoning maps.

### **Wetlands**

Wetlands provide a rich habitat for wildlife, including birds, mammals, fish, and amphibians, and contribute as well to maintaining the quality of our city's water. Wetlands within parks can be a focal point for nature appreciation. Map 2 shows data from the National Wetlands Inventory.

### **Topography**

Contour lines at ten-foot intervals describe slopes and flat lands, views and drainageways. Naturally flat areas are conducive to formal or informal playfields and gardens. Highpoints within parks are opportunities for benches or picnic tables overlooking views below. Slopes may provide for sledding or for natural amphitheaters. Undulating terrain or drainage ways create interest for trails. Playgrounds nestled into a lower area create a sense of safety and separation from nearby streets or homes. See Map 3.

### **Land Cover**

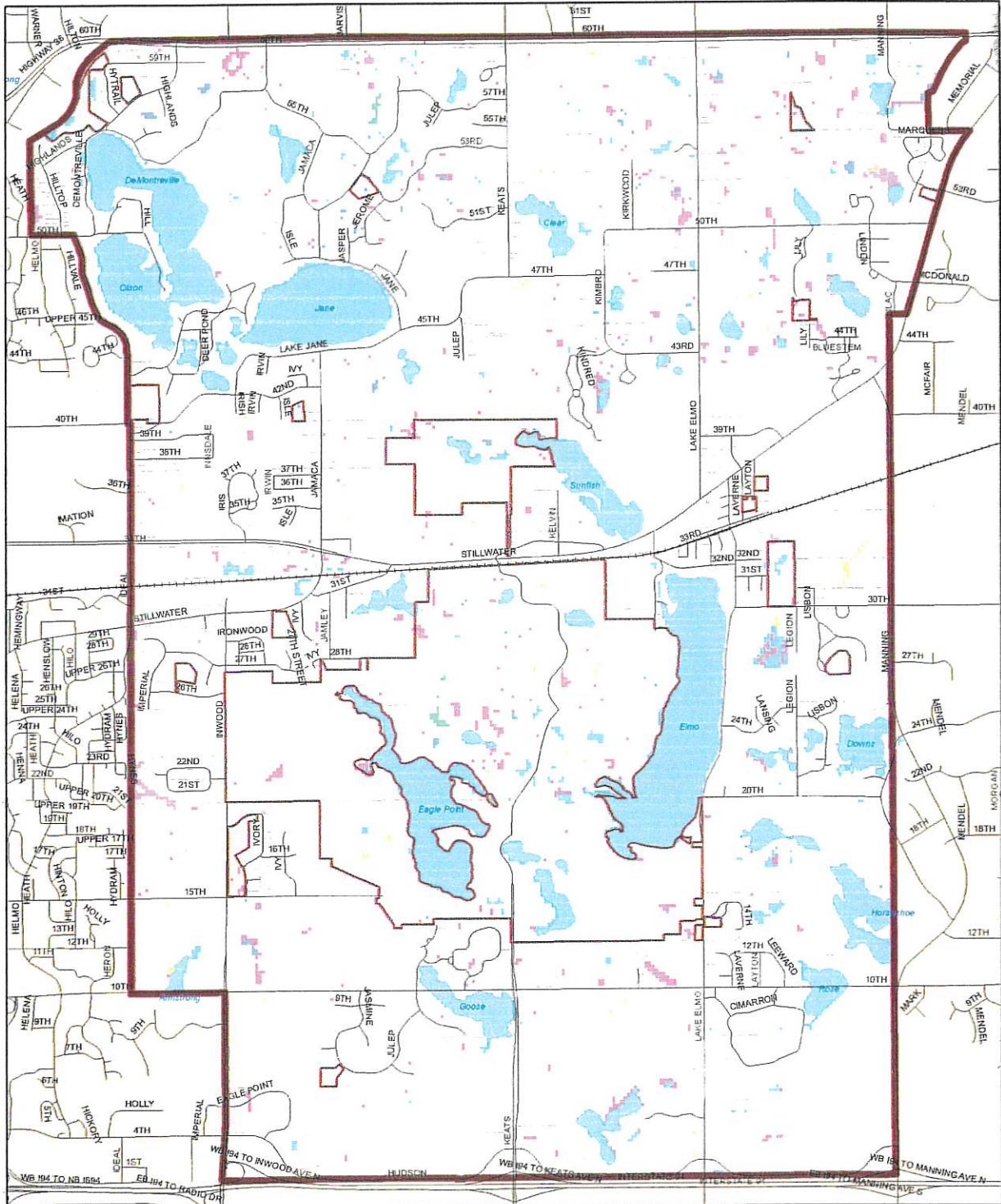
Land cover refers to vegetation, water, rock, and human-made surfaces on the land (Map 4). Examples of common land cover in Lake Elmo are agricultural crops, short grass (lawns), forests, woods, and water. Impervious surfaces are also land covers and include pavement, rock, buildings, or gravel which prevent water from infiltrating into the soil below. Woods, forests, waters, and tall grasslands are groundcovers that provide native plants and a richer biodiversity. The condition and features of these natural resources will be assessed as new parks are located within the park search

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areas. The land cover data used for the park planning process was created from interpretation of aerial photography and is available from the Metropolitan Council. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is developing the *Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS)* which uses on-the-ground field work to describe land cover. This field work has not yet been conducted in Lake Elmo. When the data does become available, it will be a tool available to the Parks Commission in further identifying noteworthy natural resources.

### **Department of Natural Resources Regionally Significant Ecological Areas/Metro Conservation Corridors**

Regionally Significant Ecological Areas (RSEA) are identified by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (Maps 5 and 6). Sunfish Lake Park, Olson Lake, and the Lake Elmo Regional Park Reserve contain RSEAs. RSEAs are places where intact native plant communities and/or native animal habitat are found. They provide habitat for game and non-game animals, biological diversity, groundwater recharge, and improved water quality. Lake Elmo's RSEAs are identified as part of the network that makes up the Metro Conservation Corridors. The area identified as a Conservation Corridor within Lake Elmo is part of a larger system of habitat. The DNR's recognition of Lake Elmo's natural resources indicates that these lands are of environmental importance. Within Lake Elmo's park system, these areas present opportunities for stewardship that preserves and improves the natural environment.



## MAP 2. WETLANDS

SOURCE: METROPOLITAN COUNCIL DIGITAL ATLAS

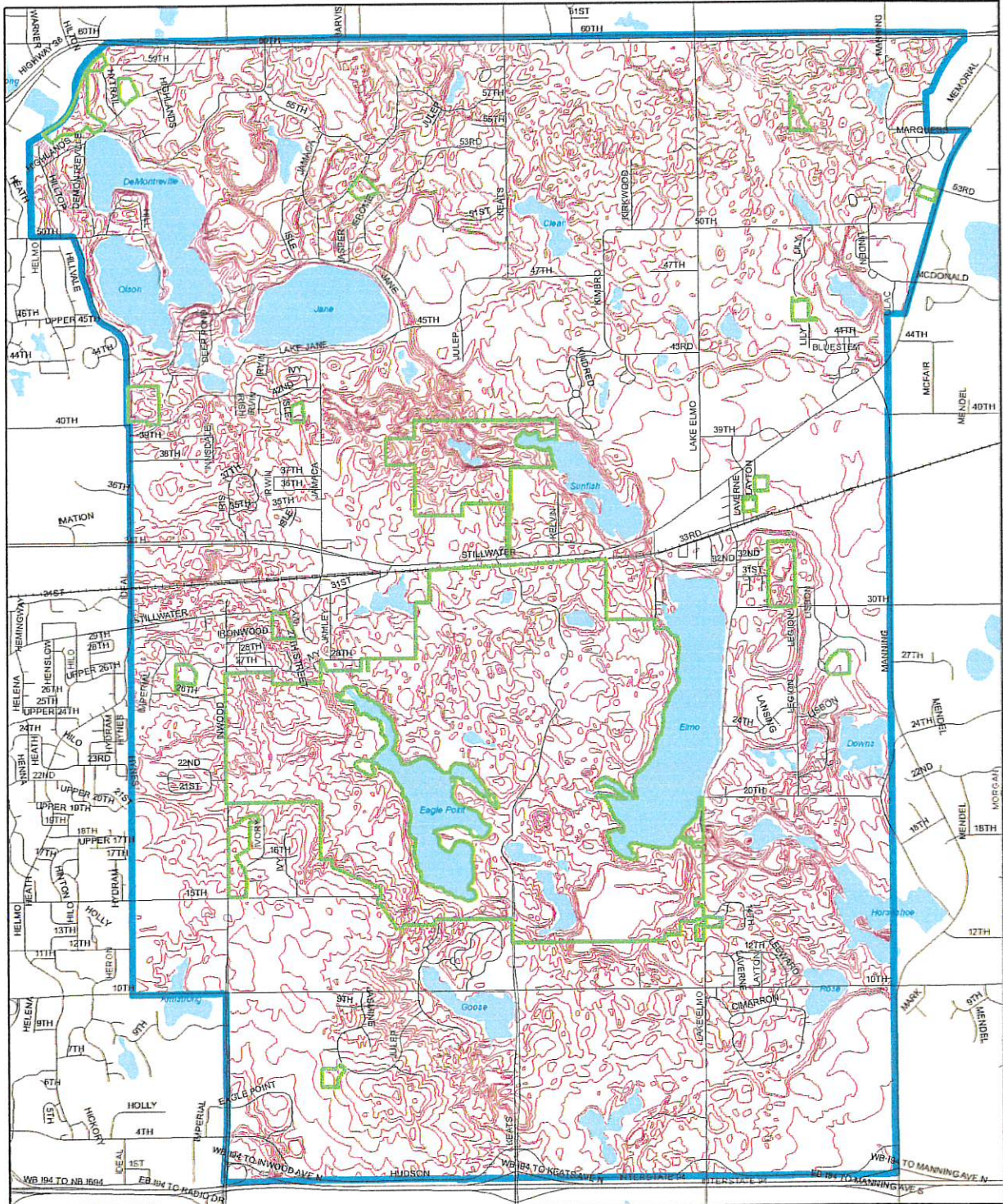


JANUARY 2007

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- |                           |                                    |               |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Bogs                      | Inland shallow fresh marshes       | Shrub swamps  |
| Inland deep fresh marshes | Municipal/industrial ponds         | Wooded Swamps |
| Inland fresh meadows      | Riverine (flowing water) wetlands  | Public Parks  |
| Inland open fresh water   | Seasonally flooded basins or flats |               |





### MAP 3. TOPOGRAPHY

SOURCE: MN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

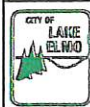
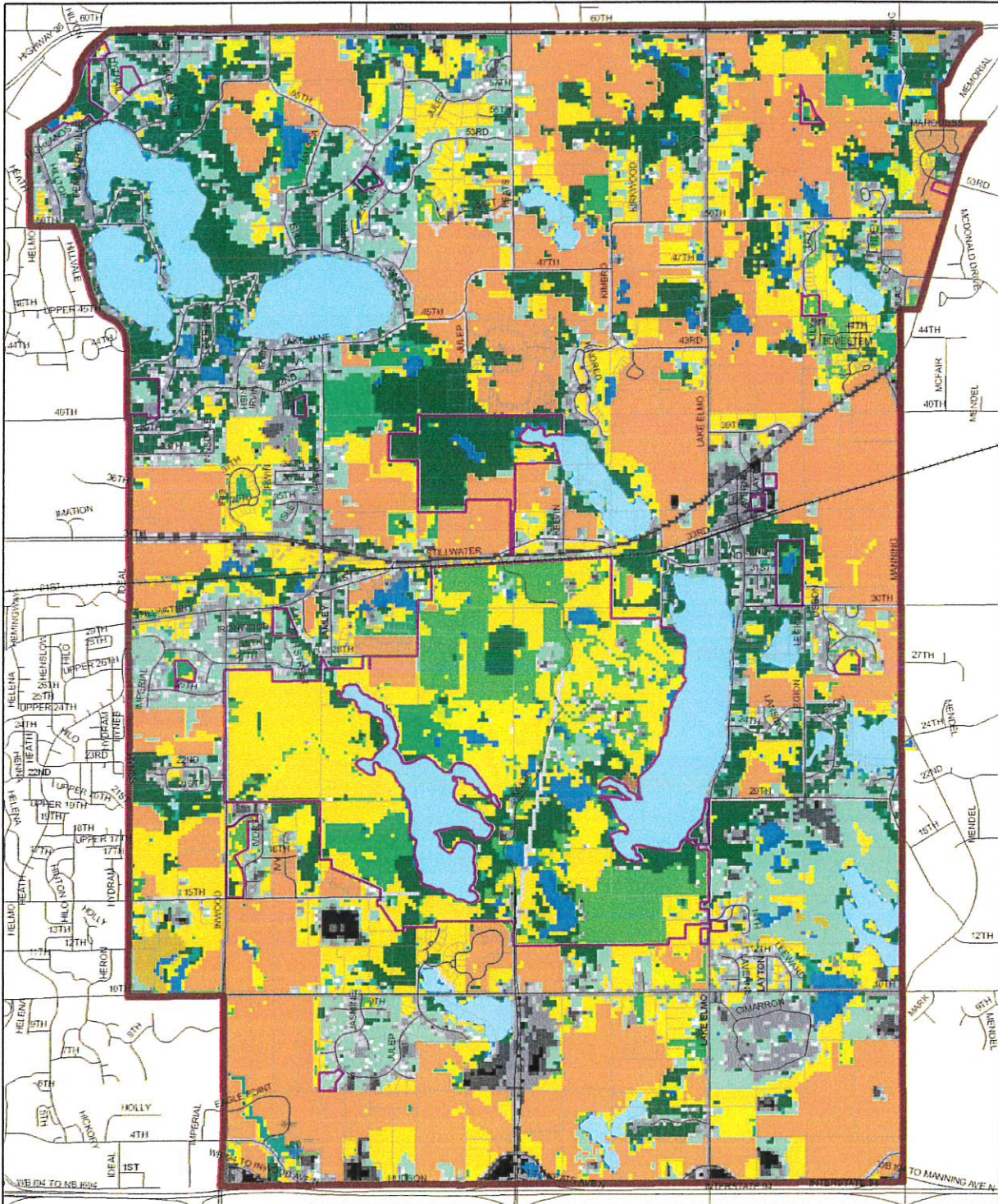


JANUARY 2007



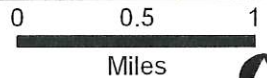
Public Parks — 10-foot contours





# MAP 4. LAND COVER

SOURCE: METROPOLITAN COUNCIL DIGITAL ATLAS

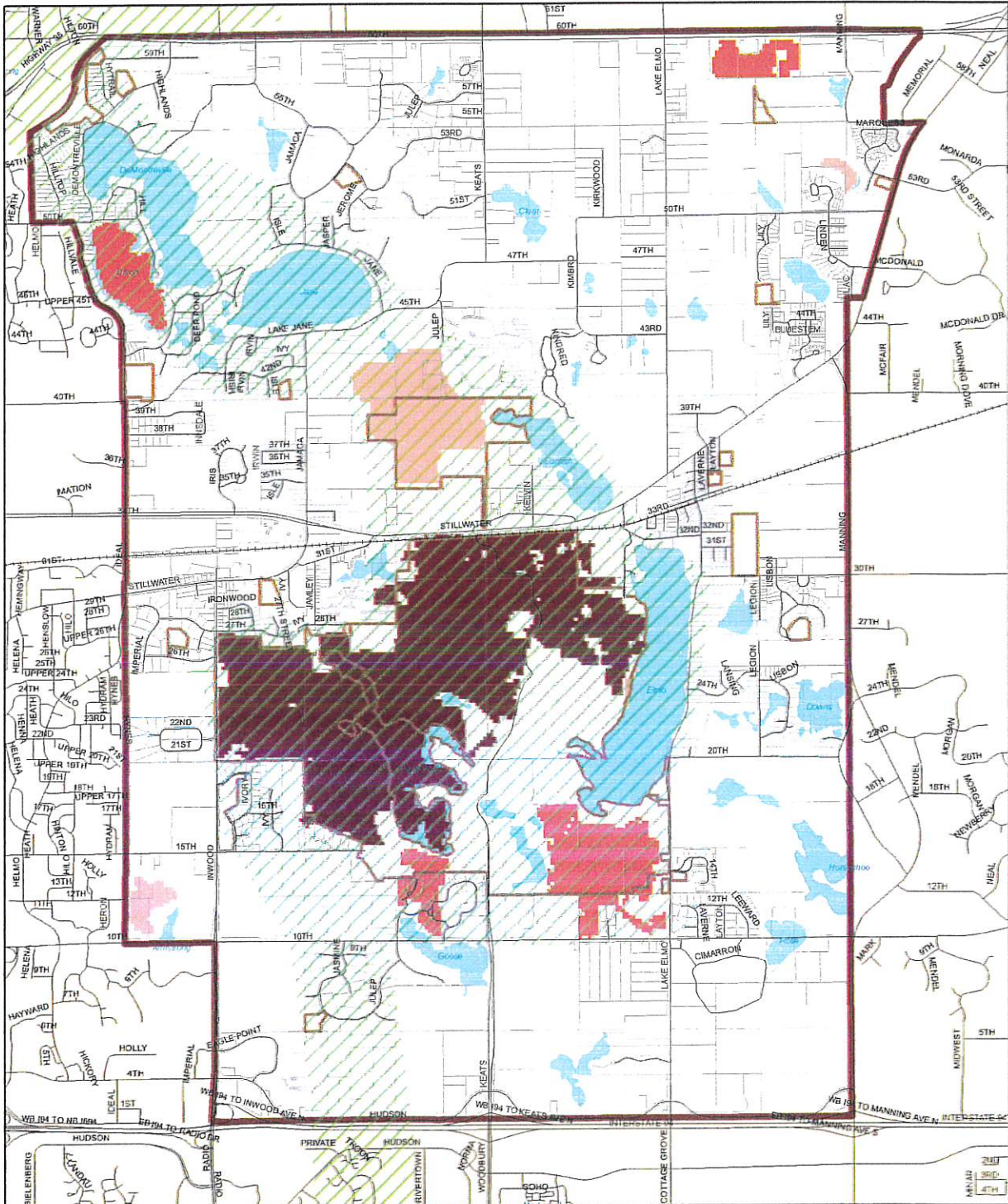


JANUARY 2007



5 - 10% Imperviousness	Agricultural Land	Wetland Shrubland	Barren Ground (Mud Flat)
11 - 25% Imperviousness	Maintained Tall Grasslands (MLCCS Derived)	Tall Grasslands (MLCCS Derived)	Water
26 - 50% Imperviousness	Maintained Tall Grasslands (Satellite)	Wetland Emergent	Palustrine Open Water (Wetlands)
51 - 75% Imperviousness	Forest	Dry Tall Grasslands (MLCCS Derived)	Public Parks
75 - 100% Imperviousness	Wetland Forest	Tall Grasslands (Satellite)	
Short Grass (Lawn, Golf Course)	Shrubland	Barren Ground (Rock Outcrop)	





# MAP 5. NATURAL RESOURCE DNR PRIORITIES

SOURCE: MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

JANUARY 2007



## DNR Regionally Significant Ecological Areas

- Moderate
- High
- Outstanding



Metro Conservation Corridors



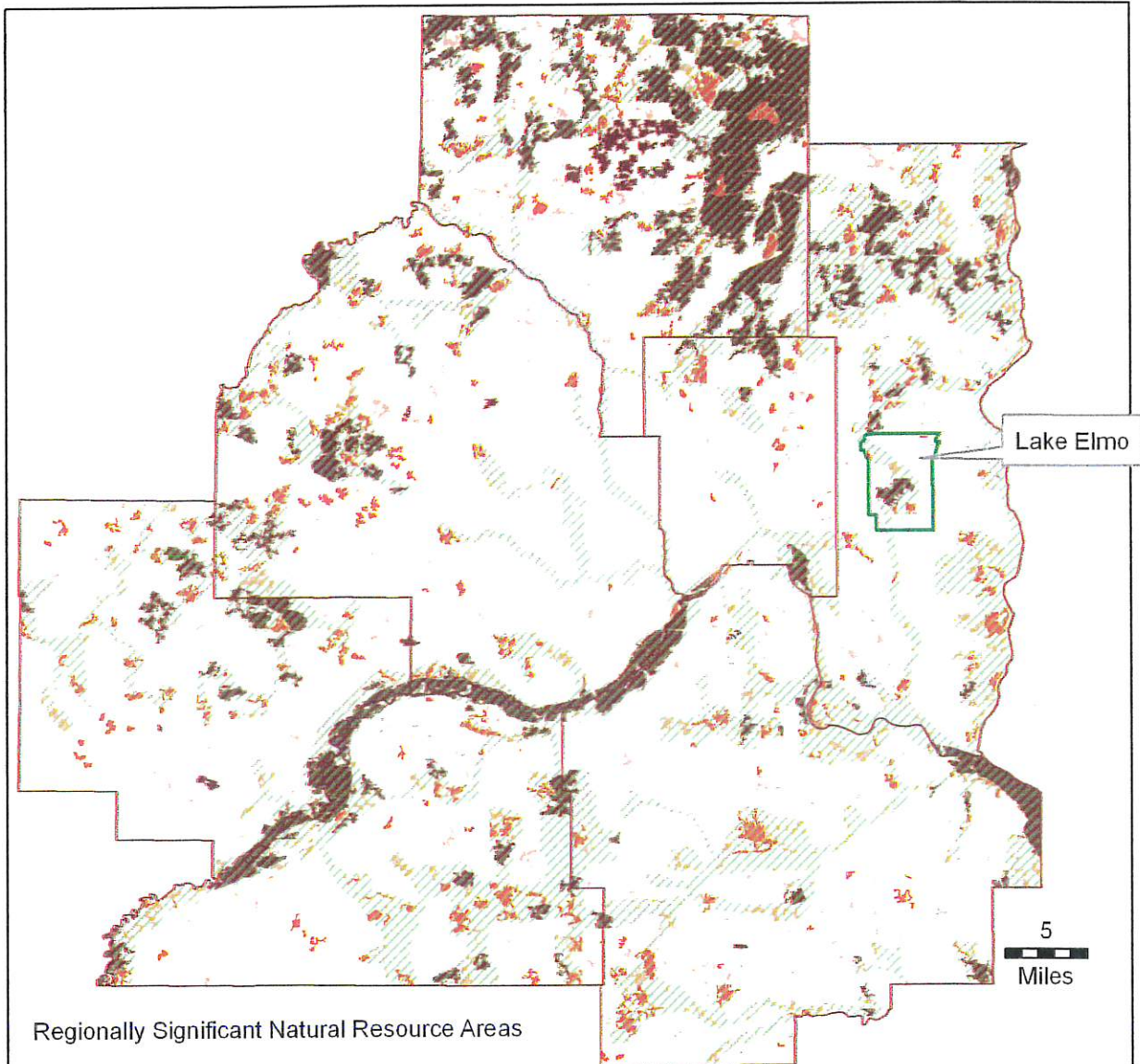
Public Parks

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Mile







**Regionally Significant Natural Resource Areas**

This is an analysis of regionally significant Terrestrial and Wetland Ecological Areas in the seven county metropolitan area. A model was used to identify the areas and generate scores. The scores are determined by examining important ecological attributes including size, shape, cover type diversity, and adjacent land use. The results represent a probability that the modeled conditions exist in any given area.

**Metro Conservation Corridors**

The purpose of the DNR's Metro Conservation Corridors project is to build a successful habitat network, protecting and improving the health of native vegetation, fish and wildlife species. The project works with organizations, local government, agencies and land owners. The areas identified on the map are the priority corridors.



**MAP 6. TWIN CITIES NATURAL RESOURCE DNR PRIORITIES**

SOURCE: MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

JANUARY 2007



**DNR Reg. Significant Ecological Areas**

- Moderate
- High
- Outstanding

**Metro Conservation Corridors**

- Metro Conservation Corridors

See [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us) for more information.





**PART THREE: PARK SYSTEM PLAN ..... 3-1**

*Parks Classification System and Park Standards.....3-1*

*Recommendations for Additional Parks.....3-14*

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## **PART THREE: PARK SYSTEM PLAN**

### ***Parks Classification System and Park Standards***

#### ***INTRODUCTION***

A classification system identifying the types of parks that make up the system is a valuable planning tool. Such a system provides the common language needed to describe and differentiate park lands and the variety of purposes that parks serve. The standards within the parks classification system are not a substitute for park master planning when new park land is obtained or when major capital improvements are proposed within a park. Rather, the park classification system and associated standards are general park development parameters and a starting place for master planning.

The Lake Elmo parks classification system established in the *2020 Comprehensive Plan* was refined based on the classification system established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

The Lake Elmo parks classification system updated through 2030 consists of the following park types:

- ✱ Neighborhood Park
- ✱ Community Park
- ✱ Mini Park
- ✱ Special Use Park
- ✱ Community Sports Complex
- ✱ Natural Resource Areas
- ✱ Greenways

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## **OVERVIEW OF STANDARDS**

Each type of park within the parks classification system consists of a set of standards generated from the Park System Principles and incorporate analysis of existing Lake Elmo parks and current park planning practices. Standards focus on the purpose of the park, service area and location, size, level of service, key facilities, and a facilities menu that offers a range of recreation facility options. Natural Resource Areas and Regional Park types have additional policies to address considerations unique to these park types.

### **Purpose**

Each park type within the system has a unique purpose. The purpose defines the needs that the park type meets and its defining characteristics.

### **Service Area and Location**

“Service area” is a measurement of the area within Lake Elmo that is expected to receive the primary benefits of a park.

### **Size**

A minimum area, in acres, is a standard to allow adequate room for the facilities and open spaces that make up a park. Size standards are based upon an evaluation of Lake Elmo’s existing parks and on NRPA guidance.

### **Level-of-Service**

“Levels-of-service” standards are ratios that describe adequate park facilities for a community. For park types, the ratio is expressed as the number of park acres per 1,000 persons. Park planning practices regarding level-of-service have shifted recently. Since the 1930s, the NRPA had published national level-of-service standards, most recently in 1983. In 1996, the NRPA changed this practice and published guidance for local communities to develop level-of-service standards that reflect local interests, needs, and realities.

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Level-of-service provides a point of comparison in understanding how parks meet the needs of a population. The new guidelines from NRPA specify that not all park types will have a level-of-service policy. For example, park land that is used to protect natural resources must accommodate the unique natural resource base, not the human population served by the natural resource. This park plan provides a level-of-service standard for neighborhood parks, community parks, and community sports complex athletic fields.

The Lake Elmo level-of-service standard recommended in this plan for **neighborhood park land** is 11 acres per 1,000 people. The 2006 existing neighborhood park level-of-service is 16 acres per 1,000 persons. However, a few of Lake Elmo's neighborhood parks are larger than the rest (Reid Park, Ridge Park, and Pebble Park). These parks have land area that is part of Lake Elmo's natural resource base in addition to areas used for active recreation. The natural resources are an important element of the park system, but their land area need not be counted in determining a level-of-service standard, which represents a minimum land area needed. The area in natural resources would be in addition to the minimum standard. The *Park Plan* uses the median size of all neighborhood parks - 6 acres - to estimate a 2006 Level of Service of 11 acres per 1,000.

The Lake Elmo level-of-service standard recommended for **community park land** is 15 acres per 1,000 persons. This standard is based on discussion of the need for a community gathering place in the heart of Lake Elmo. The *Park Plan* assumes that one community park within the Village Area will meet this need. The standard of 15 acres per 1,000 persons produces a need for 360 acres using 2030 population forecasts. Given that Lake Elmo today has 305 acres of community park land in Sunfish Lake Park and Demontreville Wildlife Area, an additional 55 acres would allow for planning a significant community park in the heart of Lake Elmo.

Level-of-service is a helpful policy tool in defining the park demand generated by growth and development. For example, with a neighborhood park level-of-service standard of 11 acres per 1,000 persons, the city may demonstrate that a new subdivision with an expected population of 200 will generate demand for 2.2 acres of neighborhood park land. Level-of-service measures may be factored into park dedication requirements.

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## Key Facilities and Facilities Menu

Key Facilities are park facilities that are included in each park. The facilities menu represents a range of options of suitable facilities from which to choose during park master planning. The facility standards are based on input gathered through a *Recreation Preference Menu* filled out by Lake Elmo officials and residents, and through guidance provided by NRPA. The *Recreation Preference Menu* explored perceptions about Lake Elmo's park system and recreation needs. It was not a survey, but a way to summarize the Parks Commission's sense of community interests and needs. A summary of preference menu responses is located in the Appendix.

**It is important to note that a park is not intended to have all of the facilities listed in the facilities menu. Rather, the facilities menu is a starting point for the park master plan. The facilities chosen for each park will depend on the park's unique characteristics and natural features.**

Different types of facilities are appropriate for passive or active parkland. Some parks, especially many neighborhood parks, will provide both active and passive spaces. Passive parkland typically has minimal improvements and little construction of facilities, and the landscape is in a more natural state. Examples of passive facilities include trails, picnic grounds, benches, fishing piers, and natural waterfront. Active parklands are spaces that are more heavily programmed, such as athletic fields, playgrounds, and courts. A mixture of passive and active recreation facilities within the system are important to serve all age groups, interests, and abilities.



*Play structure at Lake Elmo Elementary School*



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## Neighborhood Park

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- Purpose**
- Recreational and social focus of a neighborhood and the basic unit of the park system.
  - Facilities will serve younger children, youth, and adults.
  - Within walking distance, where practical.

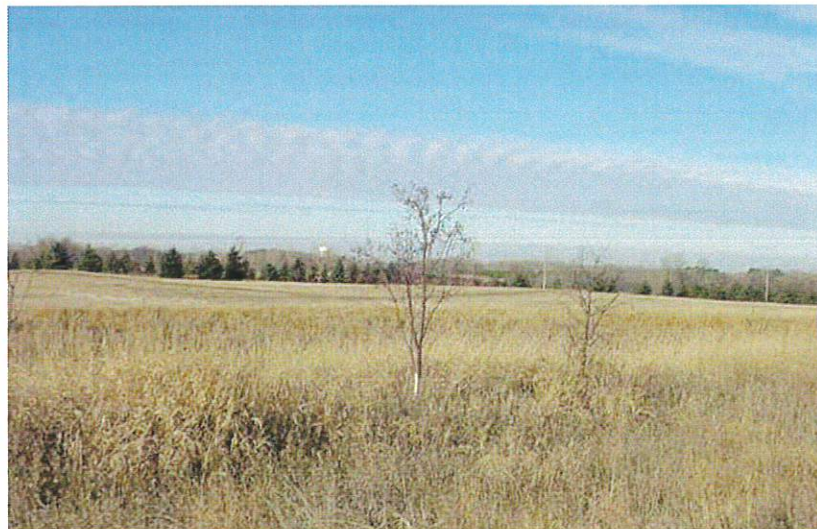
- Service Area and Location**
- Preferred service area is a quarter-mile to half-mile distance.
  - A service area of a quarter-mile is preferred for neighborhoods with more urban residential densities.

- Size**
- Minimum size is 3 acres.
  - Preferred size is 5 to 10 acres.
  - Parks may be larger if combined with natural resource areas.
  - Guidelines for area needed for each athletic facility type are:
    - 3 to 4 acres per multi-purpose playing field
    - 10,000 square feet per multi-use court

- Level-of-Service**
- 11 acres per 1,000 persons.

- Key Facilities**
- Portable toilet, park identification sign(s)
  - Passive parkland: picnic/sitting areas
  - Active parkland: playground, multi-purpose playing field (unlit), multi-purpose court (unlit)

- Facilities Menu**
- Passive parkland: gardens, natural resource areas, water features, paths, trail connections.
  - Active parkland: ice skating rink, sledding hill.
- 



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## Lake Elmo Neighborhood Parks (2006)

Neighborhood Parks	Acres	Active/Passive Parklands
Carriage Station	3.0	Active and Passive
Demontreville	6.3	Active and Passive
Heights	5.0	(undeveloped)
Heritage	8.0	Passive
Homestead	3.0	(undeveloped)
Kleis	8.0	Active and Passive
Lake Jane	3.7	(undeveloped)
Lions	3.0	Active and Passive
Pebble	17.0	Active and Passive
Reid	30.0	Active and Passive
Ridge	24.0	Active and Passive
St. Croix's Sanctuary	6.4	Active and Passive
Stonegate	5.0	Active and Passive
Tablyn	9.0	Active and Passive
Tana Ridge	5.0	Active and Passive
<b>Total</b>	<b>136.4</b>	

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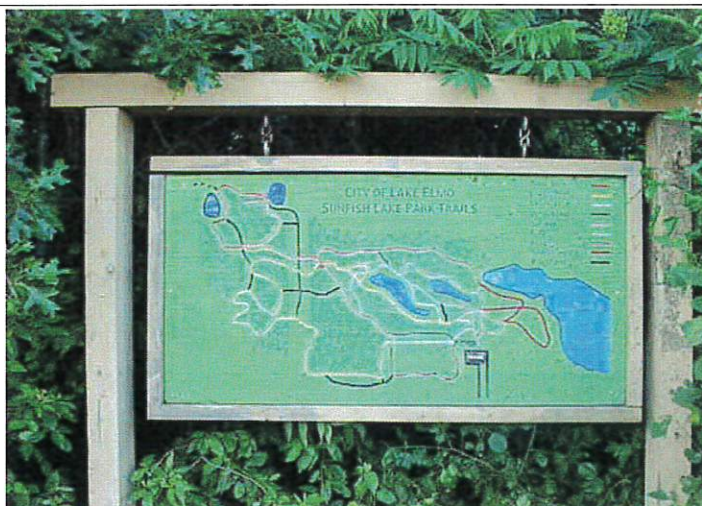


## Community Park

<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Serves recreational and open-space needs for residents living throughout the city.</li> <li>○ Preserves unique landscapes and open spaces.</li> <li>○ Provides community gathering places and locations for group activities that would be too large for a neighborhood park.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Area and Location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Service Area is city-wide.</li> <li>○ An additional community park will be located within the Village Area.</li> </ul>
<b>Size</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Minimum size is 20 acres.</li> </ul>
<b>Level-of-Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 15 acres per 1,000 persons.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Park identification sign, portable or permanent bathroom, off-street parking spaces</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities Menu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Passive parkland: natural resource areas, picnic and sitting areas, gardens, water features, shore fishing, boat launch, swimming beach, natural and cultural interpretation, paths, trail connections, park shelter</li> <li>○ Active parkland: ice skating rink, skate park, disc golf course, sledding hill, shared parking arrangements</li> </ul>

### Lake Elmo Community Parks (2006)

Community Parks	Acres	Active/Passive Parklands
Sunfish Lake	284	Passive
Demontreville Wildlife Area	24	Passive
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	





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## Mini Park

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<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Serves a concentrated population or preserves a unique point of interest.</li><li>○ Mini parks may be developed to augment the parks system for a concentrated population, such as a senior housing development, a shopping area, or an office complex.</li><li>○ Mini parks are used to preserve a unique natural, historic, cultural or recreational point of interest that cannot otherwise be preserved within another park type.</li></ul>
<b>Service Area and Location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ For mini parks serving a concentrated population, service area is a quarter-mile distance or less.</li><li>○ For mini parks preserving a unique point of interest, service area is city-wide.</li></ul>
<b>Size</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Less than three acres.</li></ul>
<b>Facilities Menu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Mini parks are customized for the use of the concentrated population or for the preservation of the unique feature. Mini parks typically do not require off-street parking area dedicated only for park users. Facilities may include sitting areas, scenic overlooks, signage for park interpretation, small playground.</li></ul>

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## Special Use Park

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<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Single-purpose use, for recreation facilities that are not integrated into community parks or neighborhood parks.</li> <li>○ User fees may be established in some cases for special use parks.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Area and Location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Service Area is city-wide.</li> <li>○ Special use parks are serviced by arterial or collector streets.</li> </ul>
<b>Size</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dependant on the use; no minimum or maximum.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sitting areas, off-street parking, portable or permanent bathroom.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities Menu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Specialized facilities dependant on the use.</li> <li>○ Examples of uses that may be suitable for a special use park: arts center, lit ball field, water park, off-leash dog park, ornamental garden, skate park, community-wide playground/creative play area, golf course.</li> </ul>

### Lake Elmo Special Use Parks (2006)

Special Use Parks	Acres
VFW	3.0
Arts Center	0.2
Total	3.2

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## Community Sports Complex

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<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Consolidated athletic fields for programmed use.</li><li>○ A sports complex will be built with involvement from user groups, associations, or organizations to ensure that it is developed based on user demand and meets the specific needs of users.</li><li>○ User fees may be established.</li></ul>
<b>Service Area and Location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Service area is city-wide.</li><li>○ A sports complex is serviced by arterial or collector streets.</li></ul>
<b>Size</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 20 acres minimum contiguous park land.</li><li>○ Guidelines for area needed for each athletic facility type are:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 3 to 4 acres per baseball/softball diamond</li><li>● 2 to 3 acres per soccer/football field</li><li>● 7,200 square feet per tennis court</li><li>● 6,000 square feet per basketball court</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Level-of-Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 1 baseball/softball diamond per 3,000 population</li><li>○ 1 football/soccer field per 5,000 population</li></ul>
<b>Key Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Off street parking, permanent bathroom facilities, field lighting, paths, running water/drinking fountains.</li></ul>
<b>Facilities Menu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Based on user demand, the sports complex may include, but is not limited to: fields for soccer/football/other field sports; diamonds for baseball/softball; courts for tennis/basketball/volleyball/other court sports; ice rinks.</li></ul>

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### Lake Elmo Sports Complex (2006)

VFW Park and Lions Park provide two lit softball/baseball fields for programmed sports.



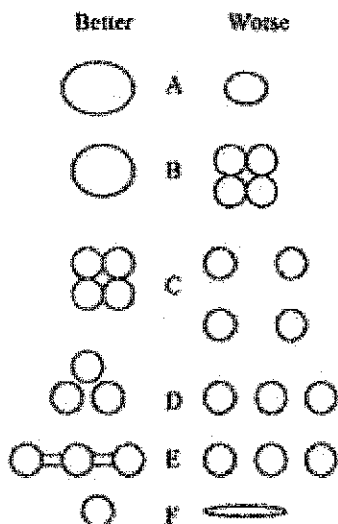
*Lions Park*

## Natural Resource Areas

<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Showcase, preserve, respect, and restore significant natural resources.</li> <li>○ Provide aesthetic variety.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Area and Location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It is preferred that natural resources areas are integrated into neighborhood parks, community parks, mini parks and greenways to facilitate appreciation of natural resource areas by park users, and so that other park land may buffer natural resource areas. Natural resource areas may also be stand-alone elements of the park system.</li> <li>○ Location of natural resource areas is dependent on the landscape and its natural resource potential.</li> <li>○ Service area is city-wide.</li> </ul>
<b>Size</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Variable, depending on the natural resources and landscape.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Natural resources inform park design.</li> <li>○ Passive recreational use of natural resource areas is provided for through marked trails and viewing areas.</li> <li>○ Natural resource areas provide for wildlife habitat. Areas are consolidated, contiguous, and connected where feasible.</li> <li>○ Native plantings are used in natural resource areas to restore prairie, savannah, woodlands, forests, wetlands, and lakes.</li> </ul>

### Lake Elmo Natural Resource Areas (2006)

Natural Resource Areas are located within Sunfish Lake Park, Demontreville Wildlife Area, Reid Park, Kleis Park, Pebble Park, Lake Jane Hills Park, Ridge Park, Heritage Park, Homestead Park, and Heights Park.



This diagram identifies preferred layouts of natural resource areas. Example A is showing that a larger contiguous area is better than a smaller contiguous area. Example C shows that smaller individual areas would be better if they were close together or adjacent rather than spread apart.

#### Design Principles for wildlife habitat within Natural Resource Areas.

From *Drafting a Conservation Blueprint: A Practitioner's Guide to Planning for Biodiversity*. Jonathan V. Higgins, Earl C. Saxon, Craig R. Groves, Michael W. Beck.



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## Greenways

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<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Corridors that tie park system components together.</li></ul>
<b>Service Area and Location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Service area is city-wide.</li><li>○ Greenways are integrated with the trail system.</li></ul>
<b>Size</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Minimum of 50 feet wide (25 feet wide in constrained conditions).</li><li>○ 75 to 100 feet wide is optimal.</li></ul>
<b>Additional Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Greenways are multi-purposed. The functions of greenways include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● increase vegetation along trails and paths,</li><li>● periodically widen off-road trails to create rest areas and overlooks,</li><li>● provide corridors for wildlife movement, linking habitat,</li><li>● buffer between land uses.</li></ul></li><li>○ Greenways are primarily developed along corridors that are also identified for off road trails.</li></ul>

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*Many existing trails in Lake Elmo show the possible characteristics that a Greenway would possess.*

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## Regional Park

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**Purpose** Recognition of the Regional Park

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**Description** Lake Elmo Regional Park Reserve is a 2,165-acre park within the City of Lake Elmo, operated by Washington County and is part of the Metropolitan Regional Park System.

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- Additional Policies**
- Washington County shall be the implementing agency responsible for acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of the Lake Elmo Regional Park Reserve.
  - The city will participate in the master planning and development process for regional park projects that will have an impact on Lake Elmo.
  - The city will oppose any use of the Regional Park Reserve for non-recreational purposes.
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## ***Recommendations for Additional Parks***

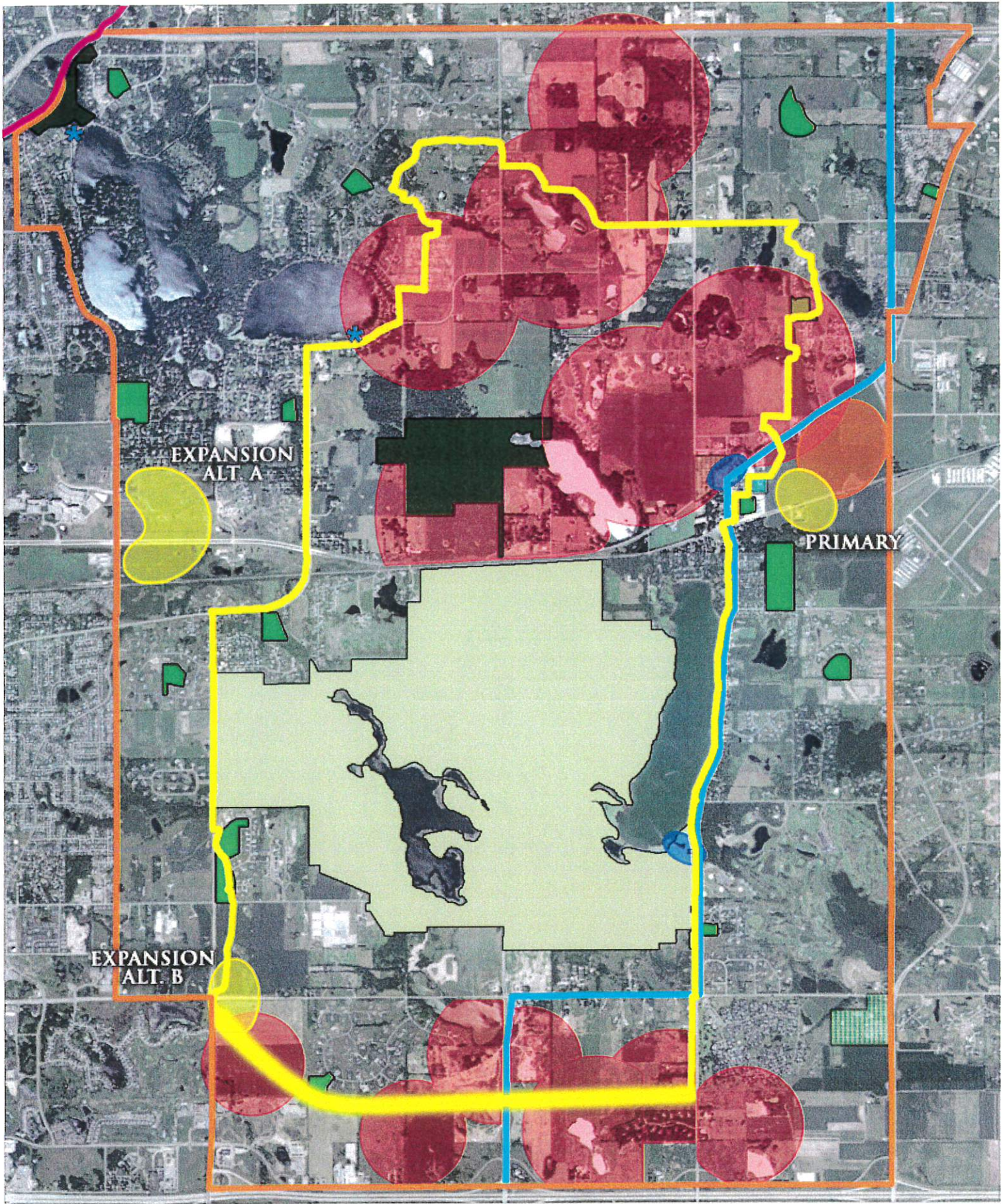
The *Park Plan* recommends adding to the Lake Elmo parks system thirteen (13) neighborhood parks, one community park, one to two community sports complexes, two special use parks, and a greenway. The recommendations are illustrated on Map 7, 2030 *Park System Plan*.

Recommendations for additional park land were created from a synthesis of the park system principles, demographic analysis, existing and planned land use patterns, existing and proposed trails, park service areas, level-of-service (LOS) guidelines, and natural resources data. The *Park Plan* identifies search areas for the proposed additional park land. The search areas are intended to offer the city guidance as to where to obtain additional park land while allowing for flexibility as the potential for each park is evaluated on a case by case basis. ***The exact locations of the parks will be determined as the city obtains parkland and as opportunities arise.***

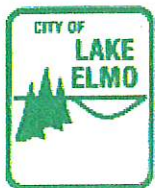
Neighborhood park search areas were identified after review of service area and the LOS guideline of 11 parkland acres per 1,000 population. Mapping of the quarter-mile and the half-mile service areas of existing and already-planned neighborhood parks highlights the parts of the city that are not served by neighborhood parks (Map 8, Neighborhood Park Service Areas). The LOS guideline applied to the 2030 population forecasts results in an additional 128 acres of neighborhood parkland needed, to be concentrated in the area south of 10th Street. Proposed neighborhood parks and the greenway combine to meet local park needs in this area. Specific search areas for neighborhood parks were further refined with respect to natural resources, centrality, access, and barriers (Map 9, Neighborhood Park Search Areas).

Other recommended park search areas are park types that serve the entire Lake Elmo community (community parks, community sports complexes, and special use parks). The location of each search area for these parks was chosen based upon the purpose of the park and the features offered by each locale. The search areas are illustrated on Map 10, Other Park Search Areas. The proposed Greenway is shown on Map 11.





**MAP 7. 2030 PARK SYSTEM PLAN**



FEBRUARY 2007

**EXISTING PARKS**

- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- COMMUNITY PARK
- SPECIAL USE PARK
- GATEWAY STATE TRAIL
- REGIONAL PARK
- SCHOOL
- DNR BOAT LAUNCH

**PROPOSED PARKS SEARCH AREAS**

- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- COMMUNITY SPORTS COMPLEX
- SPECIAL USE PARK
- COMMUNITY PARK
- GREENWAY
- WASHINGTON COUNTY GREENWAY

**TKDA**  
LAND DEVELOPMENT ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS



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## **NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SEARCH AREAS**

Search areas are noted on Map 8, Neighborhood Park Search Areas, and described below.

### **North-Central Lake Elmo**

Map 8 shows four proposed neighborhood park search areas within north-central Lake Elmo, the land area bound by Highway 5 and the City's north, west and east boundaries. Of the four search areas, a neighborhood park located within Search Area B is of greatest importance to the system. This search area location could best serve the north-central neighborhoods if the city were not able to establish parks in Search Area A or Search Area C. A body of water and a major east-west connecting piece of the trail system are key elements of Search Area B. Yet, the importance of parks in Search Area A, Search Area C and Search Area D should not be overlooked, as they would provide recreational facilities within walking distance of more neighborhoods in the north-central area.

**Search Area A.** Located a quarter to half-mile south of Highway 36 between Keats and Lake Elmo Avenue, Search Area A features a relatively level area suitable for playfield space to the north. Hills to the south, marshes, and forests provide points of interest for passive park facilities or for playgrounds. Search Area A connects to a spur of Lake Elmo's proposed trail system.

**Search Area B.** Search Area B encompasses much of Clear Lake, north of 47th Street and east of Keats Avenue. Search Area B connects to the proposed trail system and greenway loop. The western portion of Clear Lake is developed while the east shore is part of larger tracts of land where there may be greater opportunities for park land acquisition. The northern part of the search area has more varied topography with woods and grasslands, creating a potential point of interest for nature appreciation and resource protection. The land closer to 47th Street is flat and offers an opportunity to create a playfield area. A trail and pier are examples of facilities that would allow for passive recreation along the water. The *Plan* recommends that the park be large enough to combine the features offered by the shore as well as the more level area. The recommended size for a neighborhood park is five to ten acres; in Search Area B, the *Plan* recommends a **park of ten acres or more** to include areas of natural resource preservation.

**Search Area C.** Search Area C is located north of the curve where 45th and 47th streets connect. The search area is contiguous to the northern edge of the Metro Conservation Corridor running across Lake Elmo and so has the potential to contribute its natural habitat to the larger Corridor system. The land within the search area is relatively high and flat. A neighborhood park within Search Area C would be intended to meet the recreation needs of neighborhoods north of Sunfish Lake Park and families living along the southeast shore of Lake Jane. Because the land here is level, a full-size

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playfield and multi-purpose courts would be appropriate. Special attention to landscaping and habitat restoration would be needed, as forests, woods, or tall grasslands are not found in this location.

**Search Area D.** A neighborhood park within Search Area D would provide active recreation facilities to residents living south of Sunfish Lake Park and along Highway 5. This neighborhood park would be relatively small -- three to five acres -- to provide active recreation facilities such as a playground. Significant passive recreation facilities are not necessary here, owing to the proximity of Sunfish Lake Park.

### **South of Tenth Street**

The majority of the recommended additional neighborhood parks are located south of 10th Street in order to prepare for future sewered development in that area. The *Park Plan* recommends seven (7) neighborhood parks in this area. The neighborhood park search areas are organized around a segment of the proposed greenway that would run east-west south of 10th Street. The greenway would be linear parkland with a trail that would connect with the adjacent neighborhood parks. This segment of the greenway would knit together the immediate neighborhoods, the local neighborhood parks, and connect to the greater greenway loop, which would further link the area south of 10th Street to the northern parts of the City. The proposed neighborhood parks and greenway south of 10th Street would integrate approximately 100 acres of parkland into the future neighborhoods of the area.

**Search Area E.** Search Area E is southeast of 10th Street and Inwood Avenue. It is relatively flat and currently used for agricultural purposes. There are not wetlands or trees in the area, so playfields and courts would be an appropriate option. Picnic tables, benches, and walking paths in the park would also serve employees from the business district just south of here. The Search Area is along the proposed trail system and would connect to the greenway as it turned northward.

**Search Area F.** Located north of the I-94 frontage road where the proposed trail system has a spur to the north, Search Area F is contiguous with the Metro Conservation Corridor. The land has rolling hills and drainageways. Like Stonegate Park to the west, the search area has the potential for long views. Search Area F is located so that it would be connected to the proposed southern trail spur to the greenway.



**Search Area G.** Search Area G is focused on the southeast shore of Goose Lake. Once the gravel quarry that is currently operating in this location completes its operations, there may be an opportunity to design a neighborhood park as part of the reclamation plan. Trail connections from the existing trail through Stonegate Park, and the proposed trail along the west side of Keats Avenue, will allow this park to serve neighborhoods to the west and south. The park may also connect these trails with the proposed greenway.

**Search Area H.** Because of the high volume of traffic on Keats Avenue in this area, a formal crossing to connect the neighborhoods to the east to the proposed neighborhood park in Search Area G is not recommended. Search Area H would serve the active recreation needs of neighborhoods located east of Keats Avenue and north of the proposed greenway.

**Search Area I.** The body of water located north of the I-94 frontage road between Keats Avenue and Lake Elmo Avenue is the central feature for Search Area I. Wetland grasses stretching along the shore, along with some hills, would serve as a visually compelling location for a trail along the water. The proposed park would be accessible both from the proposed trail along the frontage road and from the greenway. This park would have a focus primarily on passive recreation. An informal open area, rather than an athletic field, would be most appropriate for this park.

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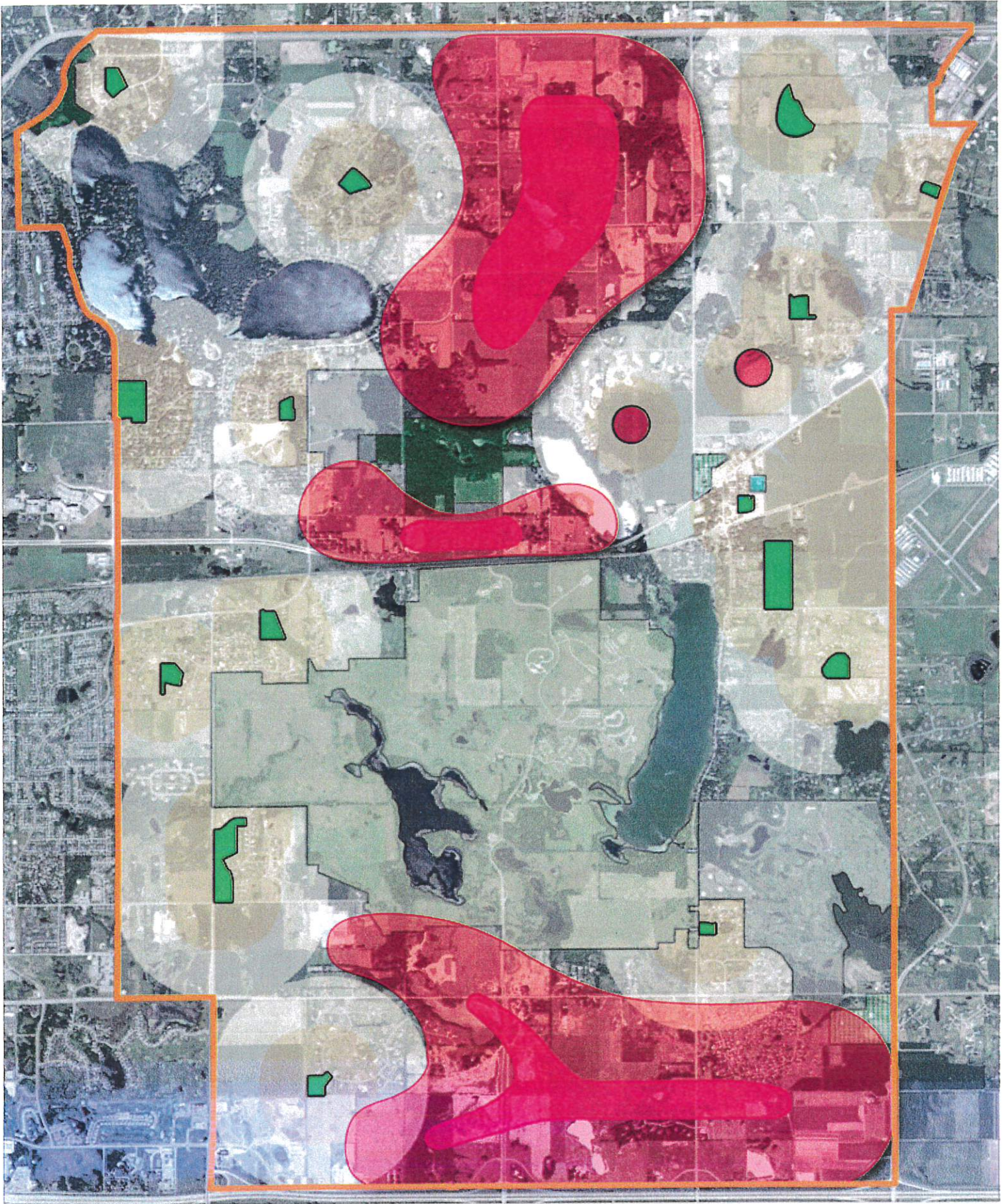
**Search Area J.** Search Area J would serve neighborhoods west of Lake Elmo Avenue. The area contains a small forest that could contribute to the park's character. Parkland in this area would be relatively flat and could include a multi-purpose athletic field and multi-purpose court that could serve the more active recreational needs that would not be met by the park in Search Area I.

**Search Area K.** Search Area K is located east of Lake Elmo Avenue and south of the Cimarron community. A wetland is present in the search area and presents an opportunity for an attractive focal point within the park. The park would be embraced by the greenway's linear open space and be a destination for business park employees as well as serving neighbors to the south and in the Cimarron community to the north.

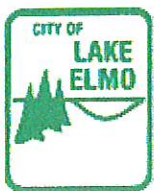
### **Village Area**

The *Village Area Master Plan* is being developed by the City of Lake Elmo concurrently with the *Park Plan*. The recommendations within the draft master plan include two neighborhood parks, identified in the plan as West and North parks. These locations are identified on the Neighborhood Parks Search Area map.





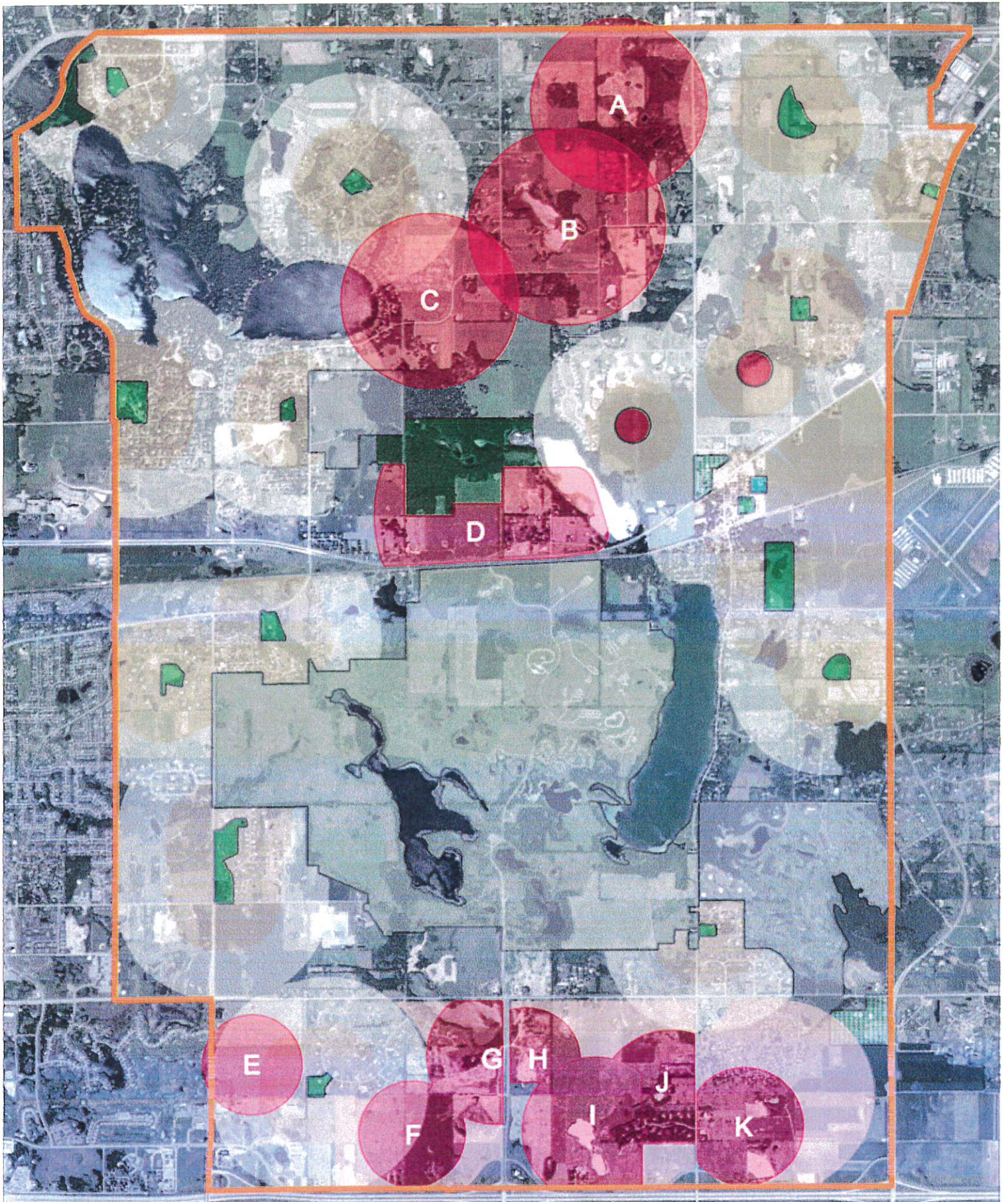
**MAP 8. NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS SERVICE AREAS**



FEBRUARY 2007







MAP 9. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SEARCH AREAS



FEBRUARY 2007





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## **COMMUNITY PARK SEARCH AREA**

This plan calls for the creation of one additional community park, addressing one of the key principles by which this plan has been developed: *A significant park shall be located at the heart of Lake Elmo and serve as a community gathering place and landmark.* This park, which would likely emerge as the heart of Lake Elmo and the most important gathering place in the entire community, would feature gentle walking paths, grassy open space, flower beds and decorative plantings, mature trees and ponds and streams, park benches and a playground, picnic areas, and perhaps a band shell for summer concerts. Spanning approximately 20 acres in the Village Area (not including bodies of water), this community park should be located close to senior housing and should provide ample opportunity for organized flower clubs and other civic groups to contribute to the quiet beauty of the park. It should also serve as a place for city celebrations, ice cream socials, a farmer's market, and other activities that will bring the people of Lake Elmo together. The community park search area is located north of the railroad tracks and south of Highway 5, as shown on Map 10, *Other Parks Search Areas.*

## **SPECIAL USE PARK SEARCH AREAS**

The *Park Plan* recommends two special use parks: a public access to the city's namesake lake and a civic square outside of the proposed City Hall.

The access to the waterbody of Lake Elmo is envisioned as passive parkland that may accommodate a fishing dock or a canoe rack, but not motor boats or a swim beach. The search area identified on the *Other Parks Search Area* map is on the southeast shore of Lake Elmo. A different location may be sought if the southeast location should prove to be infeasible or if a preferred alternative is found.



The city is currently considering options for locating a new City Hall. The *Village Area Master Plan* identifies a site south of Highway 5 and closer to the center of the Village Area than its current location shows a civic square outside of City Hall. A civic square would serve Village Area residents, employees, and visitors as a meeting place, an opportunity for fresh air over lunch, and as a location for community events.

### ***COMMUNITY SPORTS COMPLEX SEARCH AREAS***

This plan recommends the construction of one or perhaps two community sports complexes. The first priority sports complex search area is within the Village Area, southwest of the community park search area. There are two alternative search areas for the potential second sports complex: alternative A is located near Ideal Avenue and Highway 5, while alternative B is located east of Inwood Avenue at 10th Street.

The recommendation for two sports complexes was generated using a level of service (LOS) guideline for athletic fields and baseball diamonds. Using an LOS of 'one diamond per 3,000 persons' and 'one athletic field per 5,000 persons,' a total of eight diamonds and five athletic fields would be needed citywide by 2030. This plan recommends that these facilities be constructed in two locations, and that the second location be developed after usage of the first sports complex demonstrates that these LOS standards are fitting for Lake Elmo.

Today, the Lake Elmo park system has two lighted baseball/softball diamonds that serve programmed athletics programs. With the 2006 population estimated at approximately 8,000, the LOS of one baseball/softball diamond per 3,000 indicates a need for 2.6 diamonds in 2006. In 2030, Lake Elmo's population of 24,000 would suggest the need for a total of eight diamonds. An LOS of 'one diamond

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per 3,000' falls within the range of national guidelines and local research findings and reflects the apparent demand for diamonds today.

The sports complex soccer/football field LOS guideline for Lake Elmo is 'one field per 5,000 persons.' Currently the Lake Elmo park system does not have any lighted soccer/football fields or any park with multiple fields in one location. National and local comparisons illustrate that soccer/football field LOS guidelines range between 25% to 50% less than LOS guidelines for softball/baseball diamonds. The LOS guideline of 'one field per 5,000' proportionally follows this trend. Using this guideline, in 2006 Lake Elmo currently has a deficit of 1.6 soccer/football fields, and in 2030 would need a total of 4.8 sports complex soccer fields. See the Appendix for information about comparable national and local LOS guidelines for athletic fields.

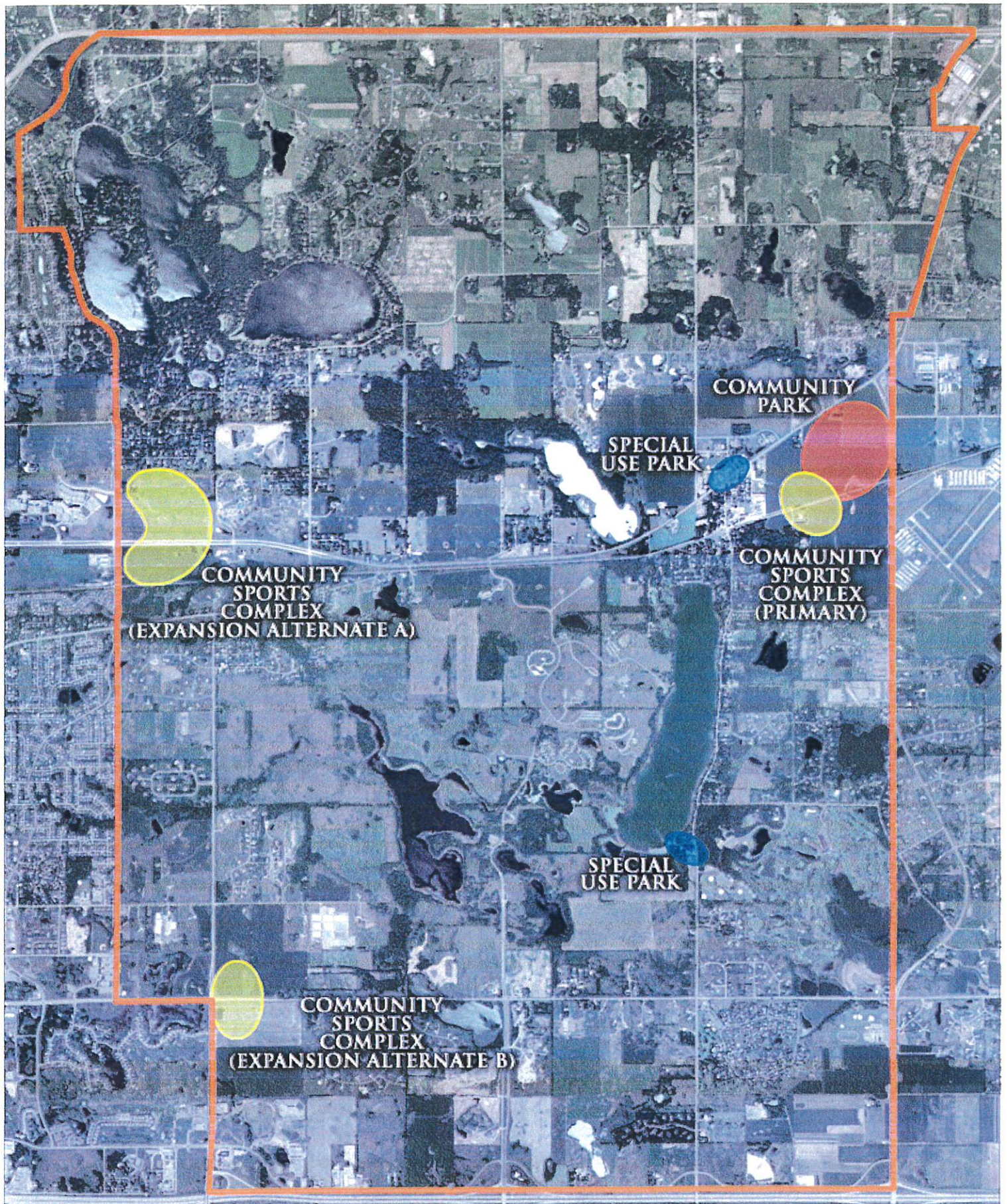
For the Village Area Sports Complex, this plan recommends the development of three soccer/football fields and three baseball/softball fields on approximately 20 acres. These fields would bring athletic competition to the center of the community and reinforce the Village Area as the center of the community. The lighted diamonds at Lions Park and VFW Park would continue to be used to meet Lake Elmo's needs for highly programmed playfields. Therefore, the combination of the Village Area Sports Complex, Lions Park and VFW Park would offer five baseball/softball diamonds and three soccer fields. Using the LOS guidelines, these fields would serve 15,000 people, a population that Lake Elmo is predicted to reach approaching the year 2020.

As Lake Elmo's population approaches 15,000, the programmed usage of the fields at the Village Area Sports Complex, Lions Park and VFW Park needs to be evaluated, and the LOS guidelines adjusted accordingly. If it is found that the fields cannot meet the demand of the expected 2030 population of 24,000 people, then the second sports complex at Inwood Avenue and 10th Street or at Highway 5 would be developed. If the LOS of one baseball/softball diamond per 3,000 and one soccer/football field per 5,000 is maintained, then an additional three diamonds and two fields would be needed at the second sports complex location to serve a population of 24,000.

### **NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS AND MINI PARKS**

This plan does not note search areas for natural resource areas and mini parks. These types of park lands are to be added to the system as a way to serve the community where other types of parks are not meeting recreation or natural resource protection needs. The locations of these types of parks will respond to unique opportunities as they arise.





**MAP 10. OTHER PARK SEARCH AREAS**

- COMMUNITY PARK
- COMMUNITY SPORTS COMPLEX
- SPECIAL USE PARK



FEBRUARY 2007



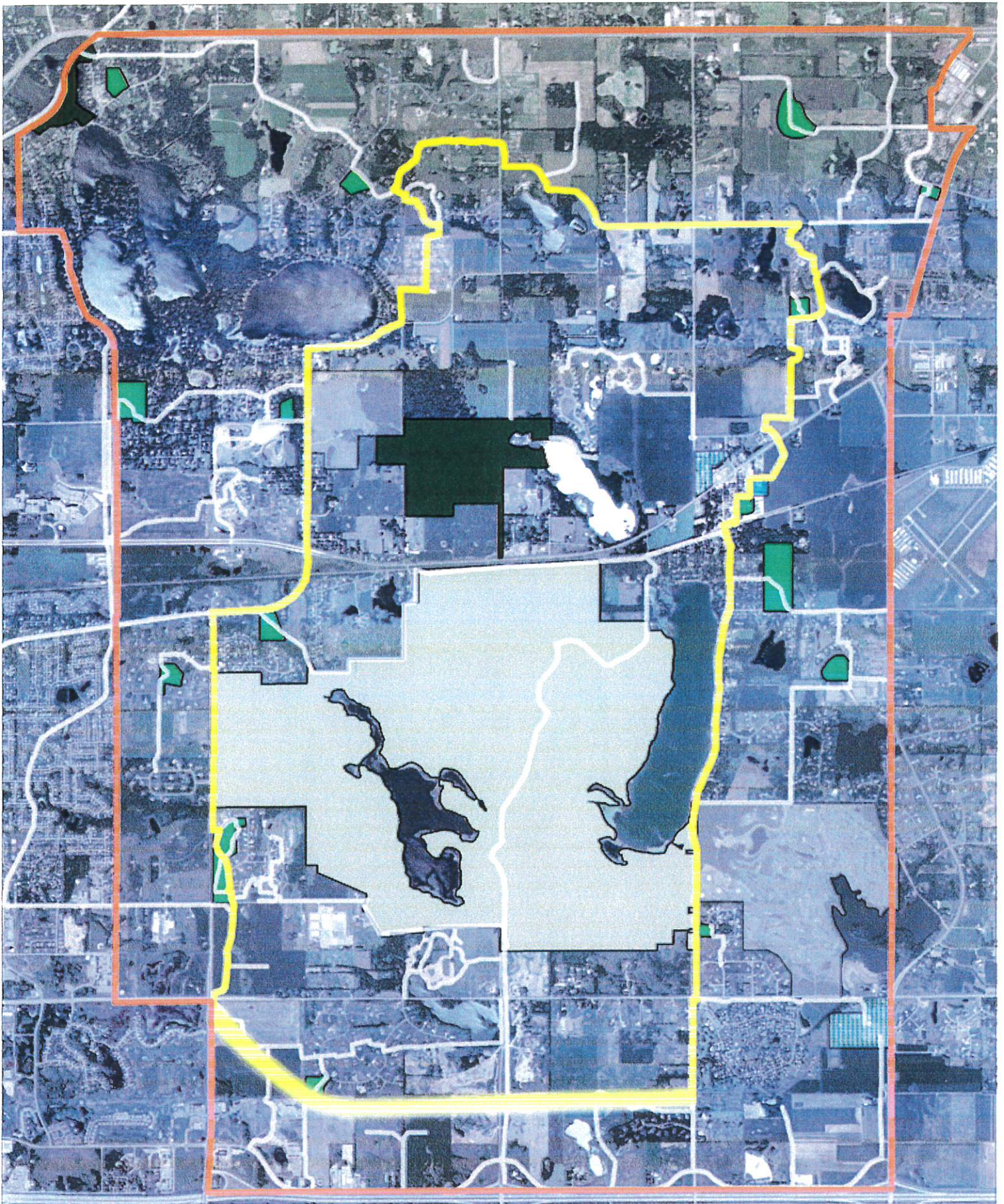
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## **GREENWAY**

This plan recommends a greenway loop that fully utilizes trails proposed by the *Comprehensive Trail Plan*. During the development of the *Park Plan*, discussion at Parks Commission meetings focused on the need to enhance connectivity within the park system. The greenway along with the trail system would provide for a highly connected park system and build new connections among the rural and future urban parts of the city. The greenway would also provide additional park land to serve local neighborhoods in the immediate area. The level of service guideline for neighborhood parks is 11 acres per 1,000 people. South of 10th Street, the linear parkland that would comprise the parkway would contribute to the park land needed in this more densely-populated area of the city.

The greenway loop would make good use of existing and proposed trails to create a unique route through the city. Where the trails have not yet been developed and where there is space for additional parkland acquisition, the greenway could expand in width to allow for more significant landscaping, trees, and resting places. A recommended minimum width for the greenway is 25 feet, although it would be optimal to construct it at 50 to 100 feet wide so that it could include more natural settings and/or park amenities within the corridor. Conservation subdivisions with open space abutting the greenway would provide users access to views of natural and rural landscapes.





MAP 11. GREENWAY



FEBRUARY 2007

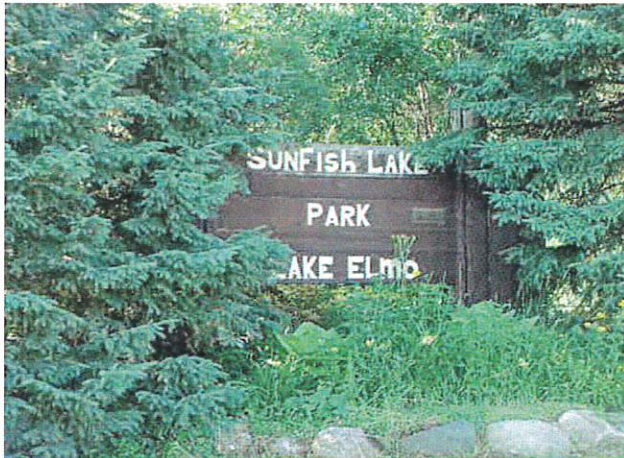




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## ***POLICIES FOR SUNFISH LAKE PARK***

Sunfish Lake Park is considered the crown jewel of Lake Elmo's park system. This 284-acre park has rolling hills, forests, and wetlands. Its mulched and mowed trail system provides a shady hiking area and a challenging natural terrain for cross-country skiers. Sunfish Lake Park is recognized by the Department of Natural Resources as a "Regionally Significant Ecological Area" and is a central feature of the Metro Conservation Corridor running across Lake Elmo. This plan classifies Sunfish Lake Park as a community park, designates it as passive parkland, and recognizes it as a natural resource area within the Parks Classification System.



*Sunfish Lake Park*

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In 1973, the Nature Conservancy developed a representative catalog of the woods of Sunfish Lake Park, calling it, "probably the best upland forest in the County and unique in the area because of the unusually high diversity of the fauna and especially the flora." In 1994, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources also created such a catalog, calling it, "a fairly high quality native forest, including two records of rare species (Blanding's Turtle and Red-shouldered Hawk) that occur in the vicinity, and a remnant of an important natural community that was once more widespread in the state."

To ensure that Sunfish Lake Park continues to serve future generations as an ecological treasure and as a place for nature-based recreation experiences, the Parks Commission is working with the Minnesota Land Trust to create a conservation easement for Sunfish Lake Park. A factor to consider in creating the conservation easement is the type of park uses that the easement will allow or restrict. One area of the park - a field currently used for agricultural purposes at the southern end of the park near the entrance road - was deemed critical to the long-term conservation of Sunfish Lake Park, and the Parks Commission emphasized that all plans relating to the development of the park must include strategies for conserving the open area of the park as critical habitat.

The following policy statements were generated through Parks Commission discussion. They provide guidance for decisions that affect Sunfish Lake Park and specifically the field within the park.

1. The Park is a unique natural oasis within the Lake Elmo park system, and all future development within the Park should be pursued in a way that fosters only quiet, low-impact uses that are protective and sustaining of a natural environment that the citizens of Lake Elmo hope to bequeath to future generations.
2. The southernmost, non-wooded area of Sunfish Lake Park is an integral part of the Park and should be developed in ways that are consistent with the overall vision for Sunfish Lake Park as a whole. No future development should be pursued in this section that does not speak directly to or enhance the overall vision of Sunfish Lake Park as a natural oasis. Nor should this open area be used for non-park purposes or for organized sports and recreation that require significant allotment of land, the construction of large facilities, or outdoor lighting that does not conform to Lake Elmo's Dark Skies practices.
3. Consistent with the designation by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources of a corridor of land encompassing all of Sunfish Lake Park as well as large areas surrounding the Park on all sides as "Regionally Significant Ecological Areas," all future development within the Park as well as in those adjoining areas should be significantly informed by a need to protect natural resources,



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habitat, and flyways, and the City should explore the *possibility* – as land becomes available for purchase -- of extending the southern borders of the Park to Highway 5 as a strategy for creating a contiguous natural wildlife corridor between Sunfish Lake Park and the Lake Elmo Park Reserve.

4. The entrance to Sunfish Lake Park shall provide a calming landscape that prepares those entering the park for a nature-based experience.
5. Sunfish Lake Park's natural resources shall be preserved and enhanced to act as a wildlife habitat corridor. The corridor shall link Sunfish Lake Park's habitat with that of the Lake Elmo Regional Park Reserve.
6. Recreation facilities shall be low-impact and in harmony with the quiet and natural qualities of Sunfish Lake Park.



**PART FOUR: RECREATION PROGRAMMING ..... 4-1**

*Recreation Programming Offered..... 4-1*

*Approach..... 4-2*

*Strategies..... 4-4*



**PART FOUR: RECREATION PROGRAMMING**

***Recreation Programming Offered***

Today, Lake Elmo residents have access to recreation programs offered by area agencies and organizations. The City does not offer its own programming at this time. Programming available to the community is summarized below. In addition, a YMCA may be constructed within Lake Elmo's Village Area. The YMCA would be another local source of recreational programming available to the community.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Programming</b>	<b>Population Served</b>
Stillwater Area Schools District 834 Community Education	Early Childhood Family Education Community Theatre Aquatics Special Olympics Adult athletic leagues Adult enrichment/classes Youth Adventure Club Youth enrichment/classes Youth athletic teams and clubs	The Stillwater school district covers the majority of Lake Elmo's land area.  Designed for various ages: early childhood/family, youth and adults.
North Saint Paul- Maplewood-Oakdale Schools District 622 Community Education	Early Childhood Family Education Aquatics Adult enrichment/classes Youth enrichment/classes Classes and support for disabled adults Childcare for school-age youth Senior programs	District 622 includes the southeast edge of Lake Elmo.  Designed for various ages: early childhood/family, youth, adults, seniors.
Mahtomedi Public Schools District 832 Community Education	Early Childhood Family Education Adult and Senior enrichment/classes Band instruction Youth enrichment/classes Youth athletics	District 832 includes the northeast corner of Lake Elmo.  Designed for various ages: early childhood/family, youth, adults, seniors.
Saint Croix Valley Athletic Association	Baseball Softball Soccer Football Basketball Wrestling	School-age youth in Saint Croix Valley communities





<b>Organization</b>	<b>Programming</b>	<b>Population Served</b>
Saint Croix Soccer Club	Soccer	School-age youth in Saint Croix Valley communities
Washington County 4-H University of Minnesota Extension	Citizenship/service Agriculture/Animals Technology Arts	Washington County school-age youth
Lake Elmo Regional Arts Center	Clay Painting Computer graphics Poetry workshops	All ages: separate classes for children and adults

## ***Approach***

With a number of recreation program providers serving the Lake Elmo community, the City does not administer any recreation programming currently. The city is considering ways to increase collaborative efforts with area program providers and will continue to assess if the community would benefit from city-offered programs. In the *Recreation Preference Menu* conducted at the beginning of the planning process, it was expressed that the currently-offered activities -- pre-school programs, youth day camps, youth sports, youth instructional, adult sports, and adult instructional programming - - adequately serves the community.

In considering if and how the city might offer programs in the future, a small benchmark study was conducted to understand how other communities with long-established recreation programs are operating. The benchmark study considered Apple Valley, Inver Grove Heights, and Woodbury. The three cities chosen have larger populations than that of Lake Elmo -- ranging from 33,000 to 55,000 people -- and provide examples of extensive recreation program offerings. The consultants asked a series of questions in telephone conversations with senior parks and recreation staff from each city. The summary of the benchmark community findings is within the Appendix.





These cities' experiences in recreational programming demonstrate a number of common themes that offer guidance to Lake Elmo as it considers the possibility of offering future recreation programming in the future.

✱ ***Collaboration with other providers.***

In Apple Valley, youth athletic organizations run most of the sports programs, with the city supplying the fields and providing assistance with coordinating field availability. Apple Valley Recreation Supervisors attend monthly meetings with the organizations to help coordinate their efforts.

Inver Grove Heights has a Community Center jointly owned by the city and school district. The city collaborates with athletic associations and surrounding municipalities to offer field trip programs.

Woodbury provides facilities/fields and scheduling for associations and organizations running youth leagues. The City Parks and Recreation Department coordinates with the YMCA, local cooperative housing, community education, and others to avoid duplication of effort.

✱ ***Balance between recreational programming that responds to public demand and programs that make the best use of existing facilities.***

Demand from the public initially compelled Apple Valley to begin providing recreational programming and staff support. Now, recreation supervisors stay current on new trends and offer suggestions to the public to see if there is interest in new programs. Their approach to recreational programming has clearly gone from one that was initially *reactive* to one that is much more *proactive*. Inver Grove Heights, for its part, offers programming based on local demand and also tries new ideas generated by staff. For example, due to a previously successful family skating program, a seasonal "Skating with Santa" event is now held every year. Woodbury's programming is designed to make use of the park system's existing facilities and to respond to community interest.

✱ ***Full-time, as well as part-time and seasonal staff, develop, coordinate, and implement programs.***

Professional staff, with the help of volunteers, are needed for extensive recreational programs. The number of full-time staff in our sample cities range from 4 to 7.5 positions in each Park and Recreation Department. On a staff-person-per-population basis, these cities have approximately one staff person per 7,400 to 9,800 persons.



## *Strategies*

The following strategies suggest how Lake Elmo may want to enhance its collaboration with organizations in support of creative recreational programming and offer benchmarks for evaluating when (and if) the city should develop city-administered recreational programs:

### **NEAR-TERM STRATEGIES**

These strategies would be pursued in advance of offering city-administered programs:

1. Continue to offer organizations and agencies opportunities to use city play fields and support the scheduling of these facilities.
2. Offer organizations and agencies opportunities to meet with the city and/or each other to share information about their common needs and to explore the feasibility of developing collaborative programming.
3. Evaluate the level of interest among Lake Elmo citizens in hosting community recreation special events and evaluate the degree to which citizens are willing to volunteer to assist at these events.
4. Assist organizations and agencies to promote programs through the city newsletter, website, cable, and other venues.
5. As citizens and community groups express interest in new or improved programming, advise agencies and organizations of community interests.

### **LONG-TERM STRATEGIES**

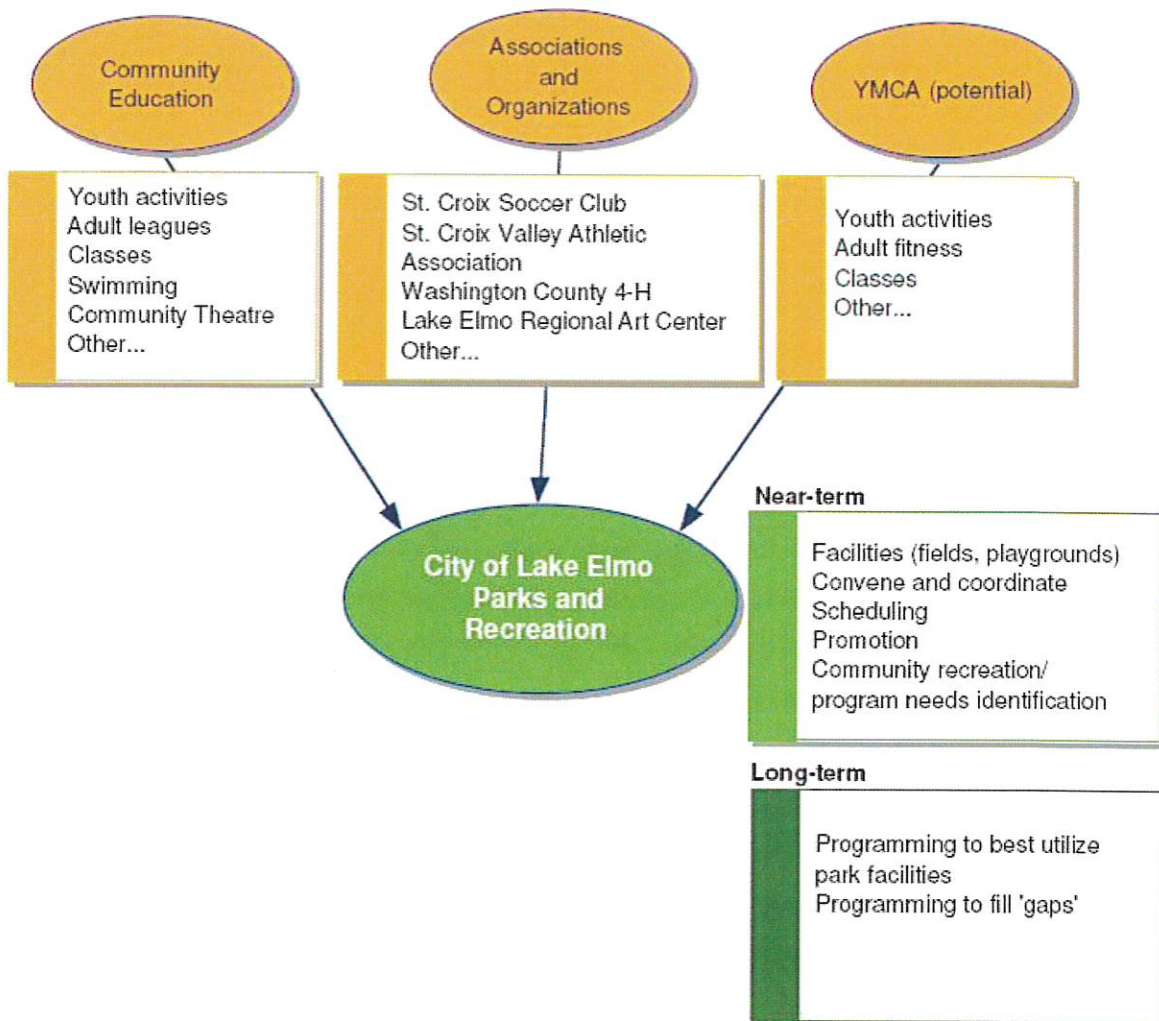
These strategies would be pursued if interest in city-administered recreational program grows in the future. Recreation staff would work with the city to develop and implement programs:





1. Create programs that generate additional park usage where facilities are underutilized. Active park spaces which are underutilized can appear uninteresting or unsafe, reducing their attractiveness and further lessening park usage. Park programming could play a significant role in activating and enlivening targeted parks.
  
2. Create programs to serve needs not being met or needs that complement programs offered by agencies and organizations. Through communications with agencies and organizations, it may become apparent that additional recreation programs are needed.

**Figure No. 2:  
Lake Elmo Recreation Programming Strategies**







**PART FIVE: IMPLEMENTATION.....5-1**

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## PART FIVE: IMPLEMENTATION

### Park Planning

1. The Parks Commission shall make recommendations to the City Council on plans and policies governing the location, design, maintenance, and public use of parks.
2. In order to seek opinions and diverse recreational interests, the City Council shall appoint residents to the Lake Elmo Parks Commission who have various backgrounds.
3. Park planning will include public participation, and a forum will be provided for open discussion of issues to ensure early and continuing public participation in park planning.
4. The park system principles outlined in this report should be used to guide decision-making:
  - a. The park system shall showcase, preserve, and respect our city's natural resources, and the location of our natural resources shall guide the placement and uses of our parks.
  - b. Parks shall be located so that all current and prospective neighborhoods have a local park where practical and appropriate.
  - c. City parks shall be connected to each other and to prominent destinations within and outside of the city through a system of trails as iterated in the *2006 Comprehensive Trail Guide Plan*.
  - d. A significant park shall be located at the heart of Lake Elmo and serve as a community gathering place and landmark.
  - e. The park system shall serve a diversity of interests and accommodate a wide range of abilities for citizens of all ages. The parks system shall support and foster a diverse range of activities, including sports, arts, music, festivals, informal and formal gatherings, picnicking, nature appreciation, and other activities.
  - f. The park system shall be easily accessible to the general public.
  - g. Dedicated park land shall not be used for non-recreational or non-conserving purposes.
5. Lake Elmo's demographic makeup and associated changes in recreational facility needs should be periodically evaluated.

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6. Information about Lake Elmo's natural landscape should continue to be used to guide the location and design of future parks.



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### Park Acquisition and Development

1. The parks classification system and park standards should be used as a guide when developing new parks or planning improvements to existing parks. The park standards should be periodically updated so that parks are developed in a consistent manner throughout the community while maintaining flexibility to highlight the unique attributes of each park.
2. Additional park land should be obtained through purchase, parkland dedication, donation, land exchange, or easement.
3. The city should explore grants or partnerships for natural resource stewardship and park development. Potential resources include the Department of Natural Resources Metro Conservation Corridors program, Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds through the DNR, DNR Fishing Pier Grants, DNR Natural and Scenic Area Grants, Washington County's conservation bond funds, Minnesota Land Trust, and the Washington Conservation District.
4. The City should periodically evaluate park dedication requirements for subdivisions. Today, the Lake Elmo's park dedication requirement is:

Zoning District	Maximum Percent Land Dedication
R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4	10%
RE	7%
R-R, Ag	4%
GB, LB, HB, BP, CB	3%
R-R, Ag with OP Conditional Use Permit	7%

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### **Park Maintenance**

1. The city should maintain clean, orderly, safe, and attractive parklands and recreational facilities within city budgetary limits.
2. The city should develop comprehensive maintenance and management plans for active and passive parkland.
3. To ensure a quality recreational experience for park users, the city should have a Parks and Recreation Department to manage its facilities.

### **Recreational Programming**

1. The City should communicate with organizations, agencies, and other entities that provide recreational programming for Lake Elmo residents to explore possibilities for collaboration and coordination.



**PART SIX: APPENDIX ..... 6-1**

*For Further Information..... 6-1*

*Tabulated Recreation Preference Menu..... 6-2*

*Benchmarking Study Summary..... 6-5*

*Level of Service Methodology ..... 6-8*



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**PART SIX: APPENDIX**

***For Further Information***

***NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION***

<http://www.nrpa.org/>

Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, 1983.

Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, 1996.

***TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND***

<http://www.tpl.org/>

The Excellent City Park System: What Makes it Great and How to Get There, 2003.

Center for City Park Excellence Annual Survey

***MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES***

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/>

*2004 Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey*

*State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*

*Metro Conservation Corridors Program*

*Regionally Significant Ecological Areas*

*Grant programs*

## *Tabulated Recreation Preference Menu*

Recreational Activity	Is respondent interest High, Medium or Low?			Are facilities Adequate, in Surplus, or in Deficit for park users today?		
	High	Medium	Low	Surplus	Adequate	Deficit
Playgrounds	18	9	12	5	28	4
Natural areas – wildlife and nature observation	23	17	2	6	28	7
Picnic grounds – tables and grills	9	22	11	4	27	8
Nature, history and culture interpretation	8	13	22	7	22	9
Swimming beach	9	11	23	7	16	12
Lake access and boat launch	12	16	16	7	20	11
Shore fishing areas	11	7	24	5	20	11
Campgrounds	5	10	26	8	30	4
Gardens	10	16	17	6	17	15
Indoor programming space	6	14	22	6	15	13
Off-leash dog areas	11	7	26	5	13	16
Sledding hill	16	13	14	4	20	14
Swimming pool	14	8	22	4	15	18
Skate park	1	9	32	6	10	16
Disc golf	4	5	34	5	13	15
Downhill ski areas	7	8	28	5	16	11
Golf course	6	9	28	12	17	3
Athletic fields: Baseball/Softball	15	15	13	5	18	13
Athletic fields: Soccer/Football/other field games	13	14	16	5	16	14
Skating and hockey rinks	12	16	15	5	18	14
Tennis courts	6	16	19	6	24	6
Volleyball courts	3	11	29	4	20	10
Basketball courts	6	17	19	3	18	13
Other:						

## *Tabulated Recreation Preference Menu (Continued...)*

Park Facilities	Is respondent interest High, Medium or Low?			Are facilities Adequate, in Surplus, or in Deficit for park users today?		
	High	Medium	Low	Surplus	Adequate	Deficit
Restrooms	17	8	14	5	28	6
Portable toilet	16	11	14	5	29	5
Running water	14	10	15	4	21	12
Shelter	11	18	10	4	22	11
Warming house	9	17	15	4	20	10
Park building	6	15	18	4	21	9
Parking	16	18	5	6	28	6
Other:						

Recreational Programming <i>*The City of Lake Elmo does not currently offer Recreational Programming*</i>	Is respondent interest in <u>City-offered</u> Rec. Programming High, Medium or Low?			Is currently available programming (offered by associations or others) Adequate, in Surplus, or in Deficit for park users today?		
	High	Medium	Low	Surplus	Adequate	Deficit
Pre-school activities	7	3	28	4	16	7
Youth day camps	7	7	23	4	15	9
Youth sports	8	3	24	4	20	4
⚾ Baseball	9	5	23	4	21	4
⚾ Softball	7	5	24	4	19	4
⚽ Soccer	9	5	23	4	20	4
⚽ Football	8	6	23	4	18	6
🏒 Hockey	9	4	24	4	18	6
🎾 Tennis	5	7	24	4	17	5
🏐 Volleyball	4	7	25	4	17	5
🏀 Basketball	8	7	22	3	19	6
Other:						
Youth Instructional (dance, martial arts, arts and crafts, etc.)	3	8	24	3	8	8
Adult Sports	1	5	25	3	16	4
⚾ Baseball	1	9	25	4	19	4
⚾ Softball	4	7	25	4	17	5
⚽ Soccer		5	29	4	18	4
⚽ Football		4	31	4	18	4
🏒 Hockey	1	8	27	4	19	4
🎾 Tennis	1	8	25	4	18	6
🏐 Volleyball	2	7	26	4	19	4
🏀 Basketball	3	7	25	3	18	5
Other:						
Adult Instructional (fitness classes, dance, martial arts, etc.)	8	12	13	3	12	10



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The Recreation Activity Menu included an "Other" category for respondents to fill in additional activities, interests, and comments. Below is a summary of the information that was written in the "Other" category. Some of these comments address items that were listed in the menu (such as campgrounds) as well as items that were not (such as fishing boat rentals).

Activities and Park Facilities, Indicated High Interest:

Water Park  
Fishing Boat Rental  
Cross-Country Skiing  
Trails (2)  
Dog Beach  
Off-leash dog area  
Trees and Native Grasses  
Natural Areas  
Interpretive Center  
Swimming Beach: indicated high interest, but not on Lake Elmo.

Comments Regarding Adequacy of Facilities:

Campgrounds: indicated adequate due to Lake Elmo Regional Park.  
Athletic fields, skating/hockey, and tennis: indicated adequate facilities.  
Various facilities: indicated adequate/more than adequate due to Lake Elmo Regional Park.  
Skating and hockey rinks: increase maintenance of existing facilities.  
Park building: indicated not needed.

Comments Regarding Deficit of Facilities:

Lake Elmo's boat launch: improvements needed.  
Trails: need to implement a plan for trails.  
Restrooms and Parking: needs vary from park to park.  
Parking: fields are adequate but need more parking.  
Full Court basketball and tennis courts: need facilities.

Recreational Programming Interest:

Youth Gymnastics: indicated high interest.  
Youth Wrestling, Gymnastics, Swimming: indicated low interest.  
Adults Pick-up Games: indicated medium interest.  
Adults Racquetball: indicated Medium interest.  
Youth and Adult Instructional: More needs beginning to be met. Central space with low fees would be used.  
There is a lack of programs for youth.  
The City of Lake Elmo does not have to duplicate existing facilities or programs.  
Not interested in City-offered programs.  
The school districts and athletic groups provide for current and future needs.

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## ***Benchmarking Study Summary***

### **APPLE VALLEY**

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2005 population estimate:	48,988 people
Current acres of city park land:	500 Acres of neighborhood parks +/- 400 Acres of community parks +/-
Recreational program offerings:	<p>City began offering recreation programming in the mid- to late sixties.</p> <p>Youth athletic organizations run most of the sports programs, with the city supplying the fields and providing help with coordinating field availability. Recreation supervisors attend monthly meetings with the organizations to help coordinate their efforts.</p> <p>Most popular adult programs are volleyball (2,000 participants) and softball (1,500 to 2,000 participants)</p> <p>Most popular youth programs are soccer &amp; then baseball/softball.</p> <p>Demand from the public was the initial factor for the city to provide recreational programming and staff. Now, recreation supervisors stay current on new trends and offer suggestions to the public to see if there is interest in new programs. It has gone from an initial reactive position to a more proactive position.</p> <p>They started with providing playing fields, then developed a couple of community centers and staff. They now have 102 athletic fields within their park system.</p> <p>There are 5 full time recreation supervisors in the Parks and Recreation Department.</p>
Sports complex:	<p>The City has 3 sports complexes, with potential for a fourth one in the future. The number of fields was determined from a combination of demand from the public and by referring to national standards. There is always pressure for more fields from the public, but there is also a realistic limit to land and resources available. The sports complexes serve families beyond the limits of the city, primarily following the school district boundaries which spill over into adjacent communities.</p> <p>Approximate level of service:</p> <p>Baseball/softball: 1/3,000 Football/soccer: 1/3,000</p>
Advice:	Get ahead of the curve in acquiring land and providing facilities before development occurs making it more difficult and expensive.

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## **INVER GROVE HEIGHTS**

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2005 population estimate: 33,195 people

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Current acres of city park land: 884 acres

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Recreational program offerings: The city has offered recreation programming since the 1970s. It began as a sports-based program but has since branched out to a wide variety of programming types. In 2006 the Parks and Recreation department had four full time staff.

Inver Grove Heights has a Community Center jointly owned by the city and school district. The city works with the athletic associations and collaborates with surrounding municipalities to jointly offer trips.

The most popular city programs are programs for pre-schoolers and family events. Sports programs, both instructional and leagues, are also popular. The city offers programming based on local demand and also tries new ideas generated by staff. For example, due to a previously successful family skating, a seasonal "Skating with Santa" event is now held. One consideration is to offer a variety of activities, from more intensive with a more substantial fee to programming that is free.

For level of service standards, *The Inver Grove Heights 2020 Park Plan* has guidelines of 3 acres per 1,000 people for neighborhood parks and 5 acres per 1,000 for community parks.

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Sports complex: Inver Grove Heights has Rich Valley Athletic Complex. The complex has 6 softball fields, 3 baseball fields, and 4 soccer fields. It was built by the city with financial commitments from the athletic associations. The soccer fields are the most heavily used while the softball and baseball fields are used less often. If the space were to be redesigned, more soccer fields and fewer diamonds would better serve the community's needs. Lighted fields allow for fewer fields because of the increase in hours in which they can be programmed.

Approximate Level of Service:

Baseball/softball: 1/3,700

Football/soccer: 1/8,300

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Advice: Partnering with other organizations is important. Do not be disheartened by failures in establishing recreation programming. It takes a few years for a program to get off the ground.

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## WOODBURY

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2005 population estimate: 55,341 people

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Current acres of city park land: 2,895 acres

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Recreational program offerings: The city offers adult programs, youth programs, special events, performing arts, supervised warming houses, facility rentals (buildings, shelters, fields), volunteer programs, collaborative programming with Woodbury Arts Connection, Woodbury Athletic Association, Woodbury Youth Athletic League, Woodbury Area Hockey, and Woodbury High School clubs.

The city provides facilities/fields and scheduling to associations and organizations running youth leagues. City Parks and Recreation Department coordinates with the YMCA, local cooperative housing, Community Education and others to avoid duplication.

City programming is designed to make use of the park system's existing facilities and to respond to community interest.

There are 7.5 full-time staff in the recreation division of the Parks and Recreation Department. There are 30.5 full-time staff in the entire department.

Woodbury does not use a level of service standard for park land. The city did its park plan in the mid-1980s and has been following it as a guide for park land needs.

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Sports complex: The city has a sports complex that primarily serves city residents. The Bielenberg Sports Complex has 8 softball/baseball fields, 6 soccer/football fields, indoor ice arena with 2 sheets of ice, field house, track, trails, sand volleyball, and picnic area.

Approximate Level of Service:

Baseball/softball: 1/6,900

Football/soccer: 1/9,200

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Advice: If starting a recreation program, begin by programming the facilities already in the system, such as playgrounds or warming house.

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## Level of Service Methodology

### EXISTING LEVEL OF SERVICE

Lake Elmo 2005 Population Estimate:		7,966
Forecasted Growth 2005 to 2010 is 450 additional persons per year		
Lake Elmo 2006 Population Estimate:		8,416
Parks Classification	2006 Acres of Existing Park Land	Existing Level of Service, Acres per 1,000
COMMUNITY PARK	308	36.6
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	136.4	16.2

### NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

	2030 population	Acres, 11 acres per 1000 persons	Acres, existing parks	Acres needed by 2030
Village Area	3,025	33	33	0
South of 10th Street	11,275	124	5	119
North of 10th/Outside VA	9,700	107	98.4	8
TOTAL	24,000	264	136.4	127.6

11 acres per 1000 is derived from using the median of all existing neighborhood parks, which is approximately 6.3 acres, times 15, the total number of neighborhood parks.  $6.3 \times 15 = 94.5$  acres. This adjustment is to address outlier neighborhood parks with large acreage.

$94.5 \text{ acres} / 8.416 = 11 \text{ acres per } 1000$ .  
8.416 is the 2006 population estimate divided by 1000.

### COMMUNITY PARKS

2006 population	24,000
2030 population	8,416
acres, existing parks	305
Acres, 15 acres per 1000	360 acres
Acres needed by 2030	55 acres

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## Level of Service for Sports Complex Fields

The level of service (LOS) guidelines for fields and diamonds were developed in comparison to the LOS provided by local data, NPRA national guidelines, and national data collected by the Trust for Public Land. The Preference Menu, which indicated a deficit in athletic fields, was also considered.

The National Recreation and Parks Association LOS (last published in 1983) for baseball and softball diamonds, and soccer and football fields are:

- \* Baseball diamond: 1 per 5,000 population
- \* Softball diamond: 1 per 5,000 population
- \* Soccer field: 1 per 10,000 population
- \* Football field: 1 per 20,000 population

Based on a 2005 survey of 65 U.S. cities conducted by the Trust for Public Land Center for City Park Excellent, the LOS for baseball diamonds and soccer fields are:

- \* Baseball diamond: 1 per 6,300 population (average LOS)
- \* Baseball diamond: 1 per 1,900 population (greatest LOS)
- \* Soccer field: 1 per 12,500 population (average LOS)
- \* Soccer field: 1 per 2,600 population (greatest LOS)

The existing Lake Elmo LOS for lit baseball/softball diamonds provided in Lions Park and VFW Park are:

- \* Baseball/softball diamond: 1 per 4,200 population

It should be noted that Lake Elmo youth, through the Saint Croix Valley Athletic Association and the St. Croix Soccer Club, have access to the Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields located in West Lakeland Township. This facility has 4 baseball/softball diamonds, 8 soccer fields, and 3 football fields. Today these fields are meeting the needs of Lake Elmo residents to some extent and will likely continue to serve some of the demand for fields by Lake Elmo residents.



**City of Lake Elmo  
Planning Commission Meeting  
Minutes of December 10, 2007**

Chairman Ptacek called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m. COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Armstrong, Deziel, Fliflet, Helwig, Lyzenga, McGinnis, Pelletier, Ptacek, Schneider, and Van Zandt. STAFF PRESENT: Planner Matzek, Senior Planner Gozola, Planning Director Klatt. CONSULTANTS PRESENT: Rich Gray and Berry Farrington with TKDA

**Agenda**

Commissioner Fliflet asked if the commission could watch the City Council meeting tape of the discussion on the commission terms after the meeting adjourned.

M/S/P, Helwig/Van Zandt, to approve the agenda as presented. Vote: 9:0.

**Minutes – November 14, 2007**

M/S/P, Helwig/Lyzenga, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote: 8:0. Commissioner Helwig abstained.

**Introduction of Kyle Klatt, Planning Director**

Senior Planner Gozola introduced the new planning director, Kyle Klatt.

**Public Hearing: Draft Comprehensive Park Plan**

Mr. Gray with TKDA introduced the Draft Comprehensive Park Plan by briefly describing the process, the information that was analyzed, and the resulting report and recommendation on additional parks.

Berry Farrington with TKDA identified the policy statements set specifically for Sunfish Lake Park and the section of the plan discussing recreational policies.

Commissioner Deziel said the city-owned Triangle Park is not identified in the plan. He said there is some lakefront property under "East Oakdale Township" ownership along Hill Trail and on Olson Lake.

Commissioner Schneider asked if there is a timetable or implementation plan for adding parks to the park system.

Mr. Gray said that a timetable was not provided as parks could be added as opportunities arise.

Commissioner Lyzenga asked what the total proposed additional park acreage is in the area south of 10<sup>th</sup> Street. She expressed concern due to the sensitivity of the number of homes proposed for that area.

Mr. Gray stated that the proposed size of the proposed parks are five to ten acres, so the total could be thirty-five to seventy acres with the actual amount dependent upon development plans.

THE CHAIRMAN OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:31 P.M.

No one spoke.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:31 P.M.

Commissioner Lyzenga suggested that developers in the area south of 10<sup>th</sup> street should drive the recreational activity. She suggested using caution for the number of proposed city parks in that area.

Chairman Ptacek said that areas utilized for non-housing uses in the area south of 10<sup>th</sup> Street will mean more densely compacted housing elsewhere.

Commissioner Armstrong identified the alternative option B area for the community sports complex would be in a future sewered area. He asked if the alternative option A is a part of the 3M property that was previously offered to the city.

Commissioner Fliflet suggested the plan include guidance on how to address individual projects and plans as they are submitted. She said a process should be established for looking at park improvements.

Chairman Ptacek said after speaking with City Administrator Hoyt, it is his understanding that a master planning process will occur for the area south of 10<sup>th</sup> street similar to that of the village area.

Commissioner Deziel said he believes the city chose not to continue with the park proposal from 3M previously and if this park plan is adopted, the city should return to discussions with the company for utilizing the property.

M/S/P, Pelletier/Van Zandt, move to recommend approval of the Draft Comprehensive Park Plan. Vote: 9:0.

**Public Hearing: Neighborhood Conservation District**

Senior Planner Gozola said staff has evaluated the types of variances applied for over the past five years in order to address those variance types being requested and reduce the number of future variances. He is recommending adjacency averaging not continue to be pursued as state statute has changed which would eliminate some of the previously requested variances and the existing city code provides flexibility in many cases. He recommended a minor change to the front yard setback code instead.

Commissioner Deziel said that it is not possible to include in the analysis those residents who did not apply for a variance due to the fee and the uncertainty of a positive result.