

# 1

## PARKS, TRAILS & OPEN SPACE

**A robust parks, trails and open space system is essential to Shakopee's high quality of life. Parks and recreation improve community wellness, connect individuals to ecological value and stewardship, promote cultural understanding, and foster economic viability.**

**More and more, individuals and businesses are making the decision of where to establish their home by considering the proximity and quality of amenities available to them. Park and trail amenities are a key factor in this decision-making trend, and a growing amount of research reports significant economic return for investments in parks and trails. The following goals, strategies and recommendations ensure Shakopee is positioned to benefit from this trend and that parks, trails, and open space continue to be an essential component of the high quality of life in Shakopee.**

## OVERVIEW

This element of the plan provides an overview of Shakopee's parks system including facilities and amenities, trails system including local and regional routes, and open space system including undeveloped and protected areas. The plan responds to the community priority that emerged through the Envision Shakopee community engagement process that found Shakopee residents, employees and visitors desire additional park and trail connections across the city. The plan also supports the mission of the Shakopee Parks & Recreation department to provide, develop, protect, and enhance excellent park and recreation services, open spaces, and natural resources that contribute to a high-quality of life for residents. A variety of issues and opportunities related to parks, trails, and open space are considered. These include:

- » **Opportunities to leverage the value of the Minnesota River and transform it from one of the city's biggest under-utilized assets into a regional destination**
- » **A community desire for additional improvements, connections and wayfinding signage along the trail system**
- » **The need for accessibility and safety improvements**
- » **Strategies for leveraging investments in parks to foster economic development**
- » **Opportunities for collaboration across city departments to coordinate parks investments with land use, housing, and economic development strategy**

## SUMMARY OF POLICY PRIORITIES

- » Activate parks & facilities
- » Provide Passive Parks and Open Space
- » Support and Strengthen Trail Systems
- » Embrace the Riverfront
- » Enrich programming
- » Manage and govern as a community effort
- »

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### SHAKOPEE'S PARKS & OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

The Shakopee parks system contains 920 acres of parks and open space. This represents roughly 20 acres per 1,000 residents, and exemplary ratio—compared to the 9.6 acres per 1,000 residents, as recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association—and one Shakopee should strive to maintain. These 920 acres are organized into thirteen community parks, eighteen neighborhood parks, two Tot Lot Parks, and one specialty facility. Currently, 45 percent of residents live within a 10-minute walk of a neighborhood park and 20 percent of residents live within a 10-minute walk of community park. Shakopee Parks include a wide variety of active, passive, developed and undeveloped park areas.

### PARK TYPES

In addition to Shakopee's parks, schools and community centers serve as park-like amenities for surrounding neighborhoods. Other opportunities for park space include Shakopee's existing tree cover and open spaces. See Issues & Opportunities, as well as Goals & Strategies, for more discussion on future opportunities for Shakopee's park system. The park types are defined as follows.

#### Community Parks

Shakopee's 13 Community Parks are larger, ranging from 5 to approximately 140 acres, contain more amenities and open space than Neighborhood Parks, and have both a local and regional draw. All developed Community Parks have off-street parking and trail systems. The majority contain natural/open space areas, picnic shelters, playground equipment and restroom facilities. Other amenities vary from park to park in a broad range including those listed below in the

Neighborhood Parks description, as well and athletic fields. Some parks include specialty facilities, such as swimming and disc golf in Lions Park, the boat landing at O'Dowd Lake, dog park at Southbridge, and amphitheater at Huber Park. One Community Park, Shutrop, is undeveloped but marked for future improvements. Quarry Lake is currently undergoing improvements with phase one complete.

#### Neighborhood Parks

Shakopee's 18 Neighborhood Parks range from just under an acre to approximately 12 acres in size. Neighborhood Parks typically contain playground equipment to serve surrounding residential neighborhoods with children. The majority of neighborhood parks contain basketball courts, trails and informal playfields. Some contain gazebos, picnic shelters, grills and natural/open space. Other amenities include baseball diamonds, hockey, horseshoes, ice skating, volleyball courts and more.

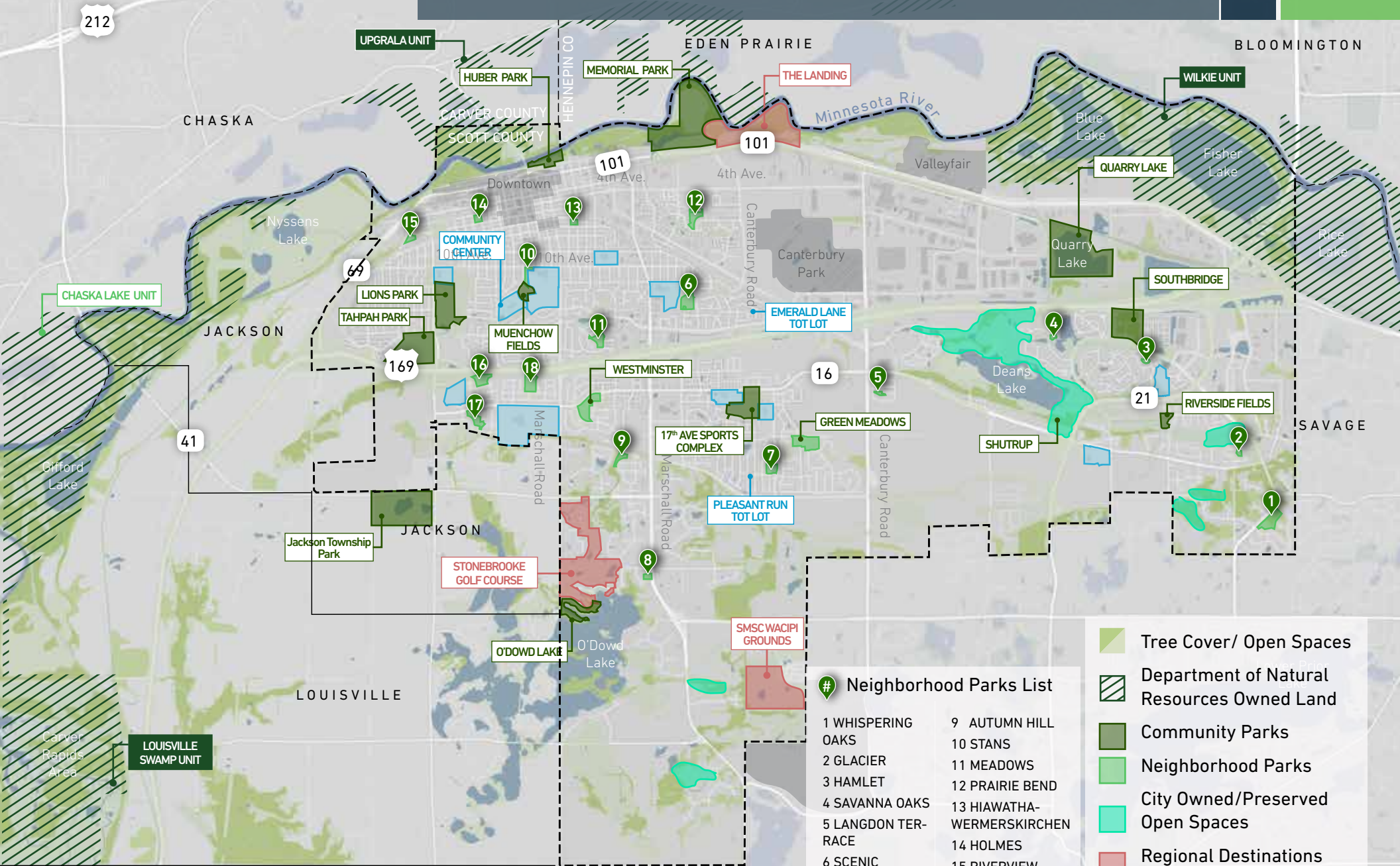
#### Tot Lot Parks

Tot Lots are small park spaces developed with playgrounds serving young children living in the immediate vicinity. Shakopee has two, Emerald Lane and Pheasant Run. These parks are on the smaller side, with one just under an acre and the other less than half an acre, and contain playground equipment designed for children ages 2 – 12.

#### Undeveloped / Natural Open Space Areas

Preservation of open space serves a variety of needs and functions. Open space preserves natural habitats, allows animal movement among a built environment, provides visual relief, connects people to nature, and preserves significant natural resources. Open space areas may include trails, picnic areas, or special use facilities such as fishing piers.

# SHAKOPEE'S PARKS & OPEN SPACE SYSTEM



**# Neighborhood Parks List**

|                   |                            |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 WHISPERING OAKS | 9 AUTUMN HILL              |
| 2 GLACIER         | 10 STANS                   |
| 3 HAMLET          | 11 MEADOWS                 |
| 4 SAVANNA OAKS    | 12 PRAIRIE BEND            |
| 5 LANGDON TERRACE | 13 HIAWATHA-WERMERSKIRCHEN |
| 6 SCENIC HEIGHTS  | 14 HOLMES                  |
| 7 CLOVERLEAF      | 15 RIVERVIEW               |
| 8 TIMBER TRAILS   | 16 HACKNEY                 |
|                   | 17 SADDLE RIDGE            |
|                   | 18 ROYALTY                 |

- Tree Cover/ Open Spaces
- Department of Natural Resources Owned Land
- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- City Owned/Preserved Open Spaces
- Regional Destinations
- Schools/Community Center



## OTHER RECREATION AMENITIES & DESTINATIONS

### Shakopee Community Center

In 2017, the city completed a significant upgrade and expansion of the Shakopee Community Center. The new, state-of-the-art facility offers fitness equipment, gyms, a walking track, fitness classes and meeting space. It is also home to the Shakopee Ice Arena, Enigma Teen Center and Shakopee Skate Park.

### Schools

Shakopee's school grounds and facilities also serve as park and recreation amenities to neighborhoods. The city partners with the Shakopee Public School District to allow for shared use by the public. While schools use the facilities during daytime weekday hours, sports associations and the public may use many of the facilities during evenings and weekends. Facilities include playgrounds, athletic fields and courts, paths, and seating. A number of city parks are also co-located with schools, providing larger integrated open spaces and economies of scale for joint maintenance of some grounds between the city and school district.

### Regional Destinations

Shakopee holds a unique position in the region as an entertainment destination and is part of the RiverSouth "Land of Big Fun" partnership. The Valleyfair amusement park, Canterbury Park horse track, and the nearby Mystic Lake Casino and Renaissance Festival collectively draw over 10 million visitors to Shakopee and Scott County annually.

Shakopee is also located along the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area and Trail system, a regional greenspace and recreational linkage that also connects with the The Landing - Minnesota River Heritage Park and Huber Park, the city's premier downtown and riverfront gathering space.



## TRAILS

Shakopee's networked system of more than 60 miles of leisure and transportation trails provide paths for walking and bicycling across the city. The trail system provides users the opportunity to experience the natural landscape of the river valley, as well as connecting them to destinations throughout the city. Regional trail connections include the Minnesota Valley State Trail and the Scott County West Trail.

### **Minnesota Valley State Trail**

Owned and operated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the multi-use Minnesota Valley State Trail parallels the Minnesota River from Belle Plaine to the Bloomington Ferry trailhead in Bloomington. It runs along the northern border of Shakopee, just north of Highway 101. The 10-mile section of trail from Chaska to Bloomington is paved and a popular biking route. Portions of the trail are part of the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area. It is also a designated snowmobile trail.

A pedestrian/bike trail bridge across the Mill Pond channel at Memorial Park was closed due to safety concerns in 2015 and was removed in 2016. The city is working on location and funding options to replace this important crossing.

### **Scott West Regional Trail**

The Scott West Regional Trail connects Cleary Lake Regional Park and Spring Lake Regional Park in Scott County. Approximately eight miles of the trail are open, with another 8.4 miles in the planning stage. When fully complete, the trail also will connect to Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve, the Minnesota Valley State Trail and the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail.



### **Deans Lake Trail**

The Deans Lake Trail is a scenic trail that connects the Deans Lake area to the Southbridge area. The trail includes a loop that contains boardwalks over wetlands.

### **Quarry Lake Trail**

Funded in part by a grant from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, this newly constructed trail connects Quarry Lake Park to 12th Avenue in the Valley Green Business Park. The half-mile trail follows a naturalized drainage way and connects Gateway Drive to Valley Fair Drive. The trail provides access to the new 111-acre Quarry Lake Park, the first phase of which was completed in 2016.

### **Lake O'Dowd Trail**

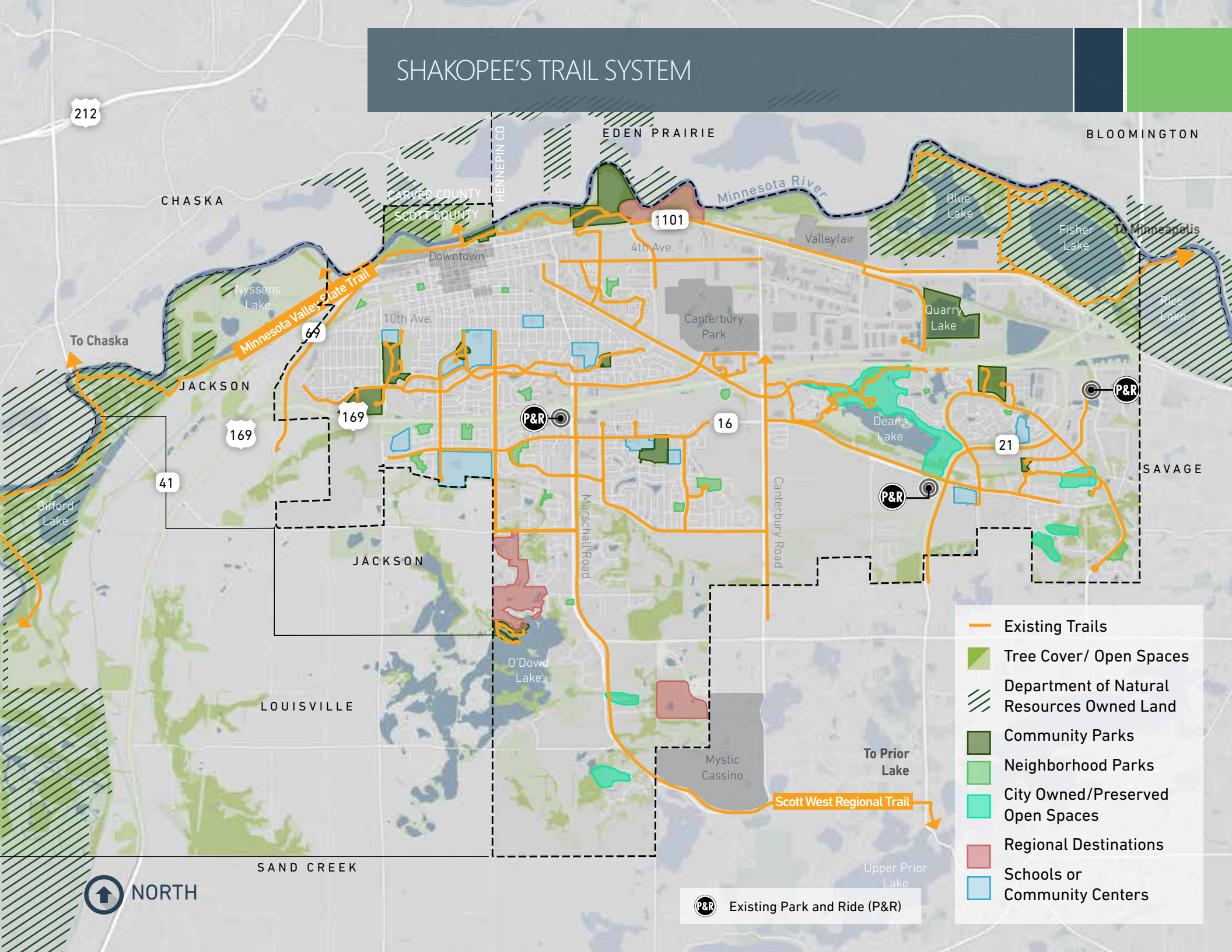
The nature trail at Lake O'Dowd Park has scenic views, particularly in the Autumn overlooking the lake. The park also features a fishing pier.









### **Scenic Heights to Tahpah Park Drainage Way Trail**


This 3-mile, paved trail runs through the heart of Shakopee, running east to west from Scenic Heights Park to Tahpah Park. It follows the Minnesota Valley Drainage Channel. The mostly sunny path runs through several parks and adjacent residential neighborhoods. It also provides access to the Shakopee Community Center.



# SHAKOPEE'S TRAIL SYSTEM



-  Existing Trails
-  Tree Cover/ Open Spaces
-  Department of Natural Resources Owned Land
-  Community Parks
-  Neighborhood Parks
-  City Owned/Preserved Open Spaces
-  Regional Destinations
-  Schools or Community Centers

 Existing Park and Ride (P&R)





## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the Envision Shakopee community engagement process, one of the recurring themes that arose as a community priority was the desire for additional park and trail connections. Residents consistently cite Shakopee's abundant open space, extensive trail system, and quality parks and recreation offerings as one of the city's greatest assets. However, they have also noted that safe and convenient access and navigation to parks and trails is difficult in a number of places, and there are a variety of improvements that could enhance the user experience throughout Shakopee's park system. In some cases, these needs are very location-specific — some at the neighborhood level and others with community-wide importance. There area also opportunities for design improvements and programming at the system-wide scale that can be implemented over time through consistent policies and guidelines.

Residents, business owners and community groups have also consistently emphasized the importance of the Minnesota river to Shakopee's heritage and identity, and its role within the city's recreation system and tourist economy. In particular, many have noted that although the city has transformed Huber Park into a great public gathering space, Downtown Shakopee's riverfront remains an under-utilized asset, as it is difficult to access, both physically and visually.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

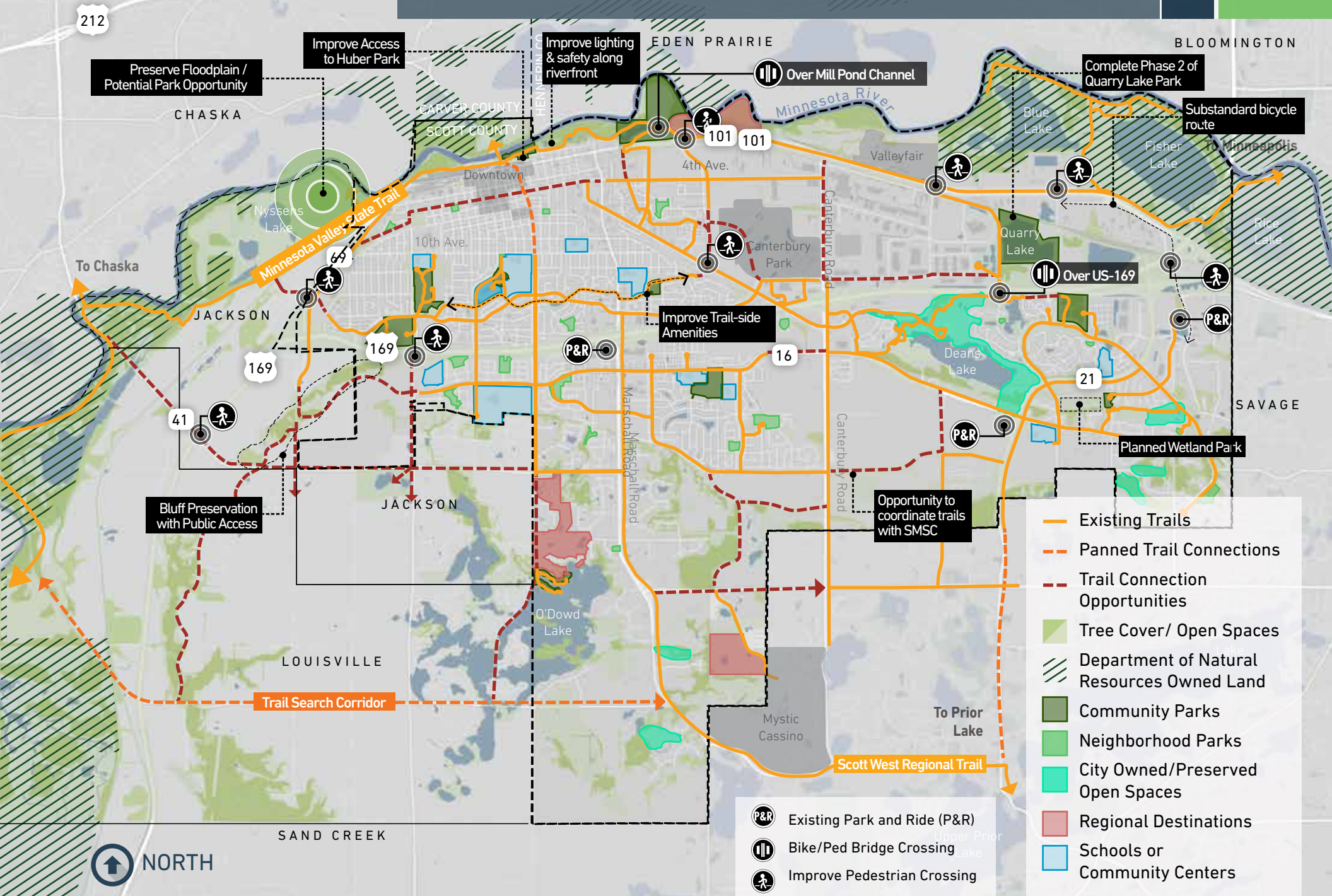
### CHALLENGES

- » 101 and 169 are barriers to trail connection and access to the river
- » Lighting and safety improvements are barriers to park enjoyment for all users
- » Residents desire updated playgrounds and facilities with full accessibility to all ranges of age and ability
- » As the city grows, development interests will compete with open space

### OPPORTUNITIES

- » Shakopee has abundant parks and natural resources to draw more park space from
- » The extensive trail system is an opportunity for Shakopee to market as a regional destination for trail use, especially if key gaps in the system are addressed
- » The plan can protect Shakopee's open spaces, parks, and recreation opportunities with many strategies including land use and development regulations

# ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES



212

Preserve Floodplain / Potential Park Opportunity

Improve Access to Huber Park

Improve lighting & safety along riverfront

Over Mill Pond Channel

Complete Phase 2 of Quarry Lake Park

Substandard bicycle route

Minnesota Valley State Trail

Improve Trail-side Amenities

Bluff Preservation with Public Access

Opportunity to coordinate trails with SMSC

Planned Wetland Park

Trail Search Corridor

Scott West Regional Trail

- Existing Trails
- - - Planned Trail Connections
- - - Trail Connection Opportunities
- Tree Cover/ Open Spaces
- ▨ Department of Natural Resources Owned Land
- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- City Owned/Preserved Open Spaces
- Regional Destinations
- Schools or Community Centers

- P&R Existing Park and Ride (P&R)
- ||| Bike/Ped Bridge Crossing
- 🚶 Improve Pedestrian Crossing



## EMBRACE THE RIVERFRONT

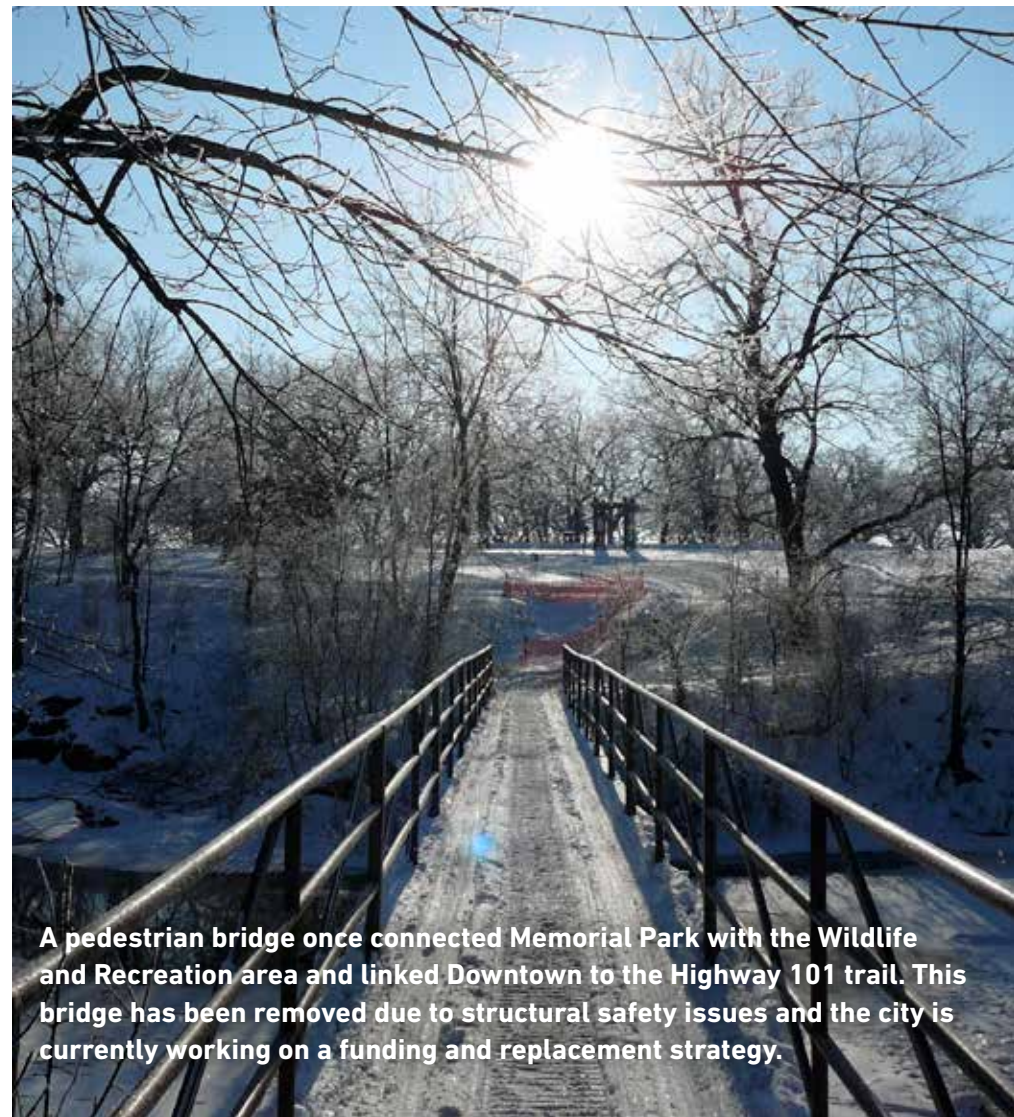
The Minnesota River is Shakopee's most significant natural asset and residents would like better access to it. Increasing the natural beauty and value of the river and its wide channel of wetlands and scenic landscapes that are protected by the mostly contiguous Minnesota Valley National Wildlife And Recreation Area. This protected natural area is open to the public and managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. It contains the Minnesota Valley State Trail which connects the Minnesota Valley State Recreational Area in Belle Plaine all along the river to Fisher Lake just outside of Shakopee near HWY 169.

While the Minnesota Valley State Trail follows along the general path of the river, many public comments during the planning process noted that it is underused. Reasons for this included lack of signage to help users find the trail, barriers to crossing Highway 101 to get to it, lighting, safety and visibility concerns, and difficulty accessing the water with boats or kayaks. While there are barriers today, the riverfront is recognized as an incredible opportunity for Shakopee. Huber Park is a favorite gathering place in the community and celebrated for its recent improvements, though many residents would also like to see it programmed more extensively and to advertise that programming more widely. Likewise, pedestrian access to Huber Park across Highway 101 should be enhanced to better integrate the park with Downtown, capitalizing on the recent public realm and new plaza improvements at the First Avenue entrance to the Downtown business district.

Opportunities to open up views, vistas, and physical access to the river, both in Downtown and beyond should be explored. Overtime, as properties located within the floodplain become available, the city should strategically acquire or work with other partners such as MnDNR, the Three Rivers District, and the SMSC to preserve riverfront lands and integrate into the larger river greenway system.

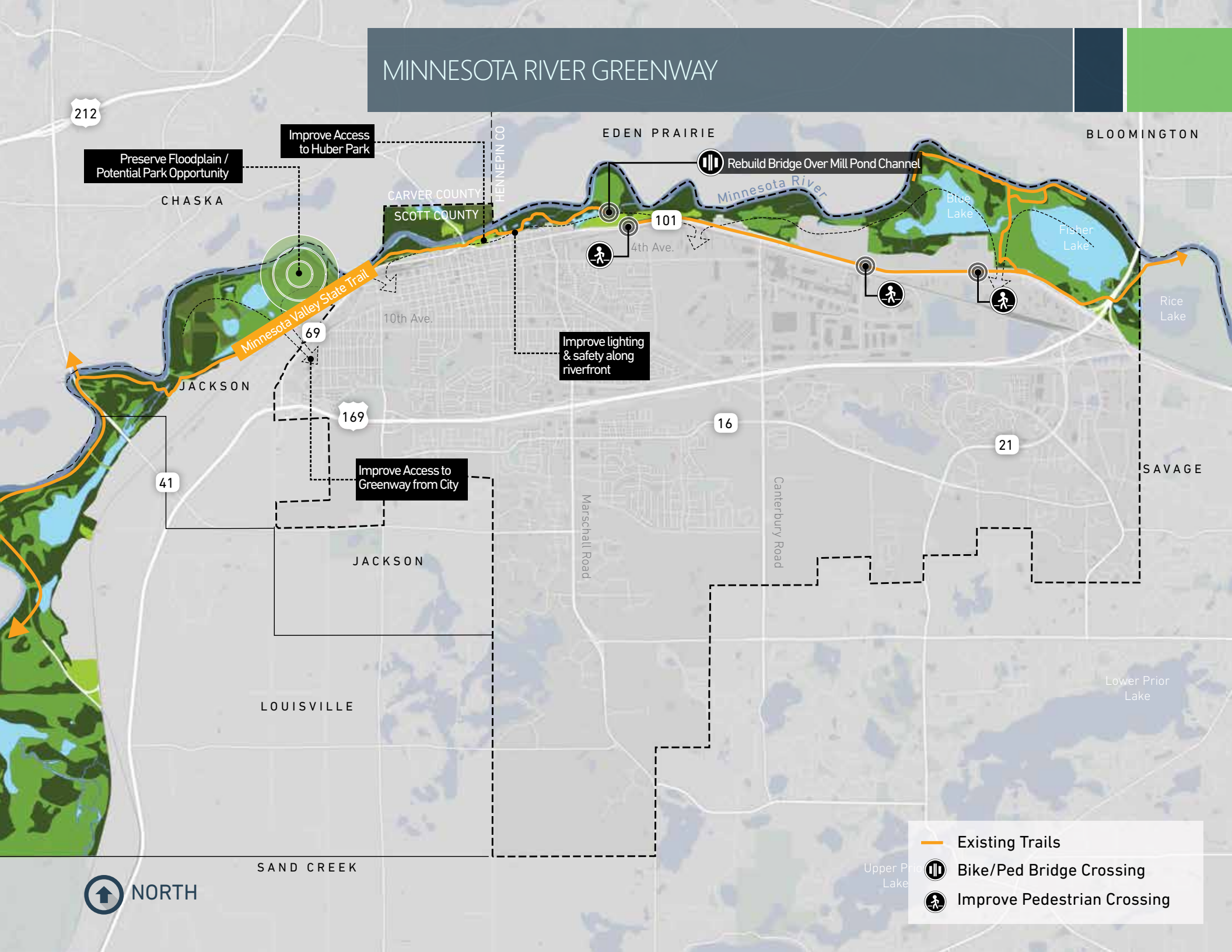


Shakopee residents enjoying a show at Huber Park.



**A pedestrian bridge once connected Memorial Park with the Wildlife and Recreation area and linked Downtown to the Highway 101 trail. This bridge has been removed due to structural safety issues and the city is currently working on a funding and replacement strategy.**

# MINNESOTA RIVER GREENWAY



212

Improve Access to Huber Park

Preserve Floodplain / Potential Park Opportunity

CHASKA

CARVER COUNTY  
SCOTT COUNTY

HENNEPIN CO

EDEN PRAIRIE

BLOOMINGTON

Rebuild Bridge Over Mill Pond Channel

101

4th Ave.

Minnesota Valley State Trail

69

10th Ave.

Improve lighting & safety along riverfront

JACKSON

169

Improve Access to Greenway from City

16

21

SAVAGE

41

JACKSON

Marshall Road

Canterbury Road

LOUISVILLE

Lower Prior Lake

SAND CREEK

NORTH

- Existing Trails
- Bike/Ped Bridge Crossing
- Improve Pedestrian Crossing

## FILL GAPS IN THE TRAIL SYSTEM

Shakopee is considered a regional recreation destination, and the trail system is on its way to being part of this recreational draw. However, disconnections in the trail system can lead to confusion. Many bicycle riders are not comfortable shifting to riding on the street amidst vehicle traffic when they reach a gap in the trail system. Similarly, people on foot are less likely to choose to use a trail if they know gaps in the system will take them far out of their way. Community priorities identified during the planning process emphasized the need to improve trail connections, and multiple comments specifically noted the need for a trail connection across HWY 169 near Southbridge.

In order to know which improvements will have the greatest impact, the first opportunity is to identify the major gaps/barriers to safe access to parks from pedestrian and bicycle networks. The Parks and Recreation Department should collaborate with Public Works to ensure safe and convenient connections to parks within and across the roadway system. Also, planning policy can ensure private development connects to trails and pedestrian pathways. Private and public improvements should connect amenities in the most direct routes possible, to maximize utility and use. To avoid user confusion and to cross-promote Shakopee amenities, opportunities for increased signage and wayfinding should be explored throughout the trail system. This signage could also promote local businesses and other Shakopee attractions. When making these improvements, metrics for tracking trail use should be in place so the city can celebrate and promote successful investments, and provide data to guide future strategic investments..

Placeholder images - remove streetview labels and or replace with better image

### TRAIL GAP AT HAUER TRAIL



### TRAIL GAP AT VALLEY FAIR DR & HWY 101



## ACCESSIBILITY TO ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

Community feedback indicated that some facilities, especially playgrounds, need improvements that all users of differing abilities can enjoy. This includes accommodating young children as well as older kids who are may be in wheel chairs or have other accessibility needs.

As Shakopee plans for parks and facilities needs, improvements can be prioritized to consider the needs for all users. Amenities that are accessible for all abilities can be promoted in parks communications to ensure users know what is available across the parks system. Accessibility standards for the ageing population should also be taken into consideration when implementing parks improvements, so all residents are able to enjoy the parks.

## LIGHTING & SAFETY

Lighting and safety concerns in and around parks were mentioned in the community engagement process, with specific concerns along the riverfront trail. Lighting improvements should be a priority for park and trail investments in high-use areas, especially in places where the community identifies feeling unsafe. Safety concerns can also be addressed with investments such as increased police patrol or a dedicated parks safety patrol.



A traditional playground in Holmes Park.



The Fun For All accessible playground in Lions Park.

## DEVELOPMENT AND OPEN SPACE

The Shakopee community highly values open space and natural amenities. Throughout community outreach, concerns were raised about the potential for future development to compromise the amount and quality of open space and natural features as Shakopee grows. Open space preservation should be a core design objective for new greenfield residential development. One strategy is to implement conservation design or "cluster development" patterns as development occurs in rural transition areas at the edges of the city. This approach provides an opportunity preserve significant natural features and larger amounts of open space as a functional neighborhood amenity. As development occurs, adjacent open spaces and natural features such as stream corridors, woodlots, tree rows, and bluffs should be connected together into a continuous greenway and trail system.

Additional explanation of this graphic to be added, cross-referenced with Land Use and Natural Resources

## OPENSOURCE CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT DESIGN

### Typical Subdivision



### Conservation Design Principles

Preserve Tree Stands and Rows



Maintain Connected Network of Open Space and Natural Features

Preserve Vistas and Road Character of Corridors

Preserve Historic Architecture

Preserve Publicly Accessible Open Space and Natural Areas

## LEVERAGING INVESTMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Shakopee recently completed a significant addition and renovation project at the community center, representing a substantial public investment in the city's recreation system. While most comments from the community engagement process were supportive of continued parks and trails investments, there is also a strong desire to ensure that public investments with tax payer dollars are strategic, founded in principles of wise-use, and not duplicative with investments that could otherwise be made by the private market.

As noted in the Economic Competitiveness section of this plan, it should be noted that parks and trail amenities, particularly in the Downtown and riverfront areas, are recommended as part of a larger economic development strategy for the City of Shakopee. Strategic investments here can be leveraged for continued financial returns and value creation to benefit the city as a whole.

The city can also explore opportunities for public-private partnerships to continually enhance the parks and open space system and to communicate the value of those investments and partnerships to the community. This could occur through parkland dedication, capital improvements, and maintenance agreements with new development. It could also occur through programs that support local business activity within parks and recreation facilities, such as food vending or fitness instruction.

Shakopee has also successfully leveraged grant funding opportunities and partnerships with other jurisdictions and agencies, including the school district and the SMSC, and should continue to pursue these and other collaborative efforts to maximize efficiencies and ensure the greatest value and returns on investment for the community.

## Refine infographic

## PARKS AND TRAILS ARE A GOOD INVESTMENT

INVESTMENT IN PARKS HAS BEEN SHOWN TO LEAD TO...

**\$1,500**  
ANNUAL PER CAPITA  
HEALTHCARE SAVINGS

SOURCE: THE LAND & WATER CONSERVATION  
FUND

**\$2.8 B**  
STATEWIDE ECONOMIC  
IMPACTS IN MINNESOTA

SOURCE: NATIONAL RECREATION  
& PARK ASSOCIATION

**25%**  
INCREASE IN EXERCISE  
WITH ACCESS TO ACTIVE  
PLACES

SOURCE: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

**\$38 B**  
AIR POLLUTION SAVINGS  
NATIONWIDE

SOURCE: US FOREST SERVICE

**\$14B**  
SAVINGS IN  
INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS

SOURCE: FEATHERSTONE ET AL.  
LOCATION: PHILADELPHIA, PA

**+50%**  
INCREASE IN EDUCATED  
25 – 34 YEAR OLDS

SOURCE: CITY OBSERVATORY  
LOCATION: NASHVILLE, TN



**mental health**

SOURCE: NATIONAL RECREATION & PARK ASSOCIATION



**crime**

SOURCE: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL



**preventable disease**

SOURCE: AMERICAN JOURNAL OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, 2011



**property values**

SOURCE: CONSERVATIONTOOLS.ORG



# GOALS & STRATEGIES FOR PARKS, TRAILS & OPEN SPACE

## 1. ACTIVATE PARKS & FACILITIES

Representative Photos to be Added

**1a Conduct a Parks and Recreation Master Plan process to provide detailed parks and recreation strategy and recommendations for parks system in accordance with Comprehensive Plan recommendations.**

A Parks Master Plan should define a shared vision for parks, trails and recreation that is shaped by the community and contain an action strategy for capital improvements, rooted in best practices, informed by national trends, and maximizing the community benefit of public investments in parks and trails.

**XX Coordinate transportation planning, zoning and subdivision regulations to optimize access to and from all parks.**

Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, appropriate plans, regulations, and ordinances should be reviewed and updated to align with the newly adopted plan and point to implementation. This may include new and existing documents such as the zoning code, subdivision regulations, thoroughfare plan, design guidelines, and etc.

**XX Plan a park system that is accessible to all users regardless of age, culture, mobility level, or income**

Parks should be accessible to all users and members of the community. Park and facilities designs should ensure the parks are accessible to the broadest range of individuals regardless of difference in age, culture, mobility level, or income. Considerations may include types and design of facilities, access to parks via transit, discounted or sliding scale programming fees, signage in multiple languages, etc.

**XX Provide park spaces within walkable distance of all Shakopee residents.**

All residents should have access to one or more parks, trails, or greenways within one half mile—or approximately a 10 minute walk—of their home. Safe and convenient connections and street crossings are also critical to ensure residents can access nearby parks and trails.

## 1. ACTIVATE PARKS & FACILITIES

Representative Photos to be Added

### XX Maintain average of 20 acres of park space per 1,000 residents.

The National Recreation and Park Association Maintain reports the typical ratio of municipal park services maintains one community park for approximately every 2,000 residents served, with 9.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents as the national average. Shakopee currently provides 20 acres per 1,000 residents. The city should strive to maintain this average in times of population growth. Levels of service vary for park types and should be addressed in a detailed Parks Master Plan.

### XX Establish unifying design elements across all parks.

While each park is unique and should be designed for its own scale and character, unifying elements of design should characterize all parks as part of a single, connected system. Design guidelines should be developed to unify such elements as signage and wayfinding. Other universal recommendations may address safety, access, lighting, tree planting, benches, furnishings, trail connections, and/or pedestrian connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods.

### XX Identify target areas for new parks.

These areas may include, but are not limited to, parks and open space within any new West End development such as the bluff area, new riverfront park opportunities, (see recommendation XX), areas containing significant natural features, areas that would fill critical gaps in the trail system, and opportunities for contiguous open greenway connections.

### XX Increase diversity of play experiences.

Update or add playgrounds to increase the types and amounts of activities children of all ages and abilities can partake in. Improvements may include nature play areas, play structures designed for accessibility, digital interactive elements, continuous play design, and/or immersive educational play.

## 2. PROVIDE PASSIVE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Representative Photos to be Added

**2a Approach passive space and open space planning as a system connected to active park uses, natural resources, regional and county parks.**

This strategy includes the creation of a linear and loop park and trail system to create a continuous park setting throughout the city.

**XX Identify and maintain target levels of service for passive and active park space .**

Adopt a ratio of passive space to active space to ensure a balance of experiences for park users, conservation of environmentally sensitive areas, mediation of environmental impact, and clustering of active uses when appropriate in park spaces to promote accessibility. Appropriate metrics should be identified through a detailed parks master plan process.

**XX Improve the natural setting of all park spaces.**

This strategy may include the following: targeting the most beautiful, unique, historically significant, and/or environmentally sensitive areas for growth when purchasing/allocating land for parks; encouraging native, drought resistant, edible and pollinator friendly landscapes on park properties; and enhancing landscaping, trees, and natural settings in existing active parks to provide shade, interest, and ecological benefits.

**XX Require dedicated open space in residential development**

Update design guidelines, subdivision requirements, and zoning code to ensure the amount and quality of public open space on development parcels. Open space types should be calibrated to different zones and encourage preservation of high-quality, usable, contiguous, publicly accessible green spaces in residential subdivision development plans.

### 3. SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN TRAIL SYSTEMS

Representative Photos to be Added

**XX Promote trail use, connectivity and construction, including local and regional trail systems**

Consider trail proximity and potential for connection in all site planning and road improvement project planning. Participate as a leader or stakeholder in regional and state trail systems planning efforts. Promote trails in city communications. Re-brand trails if necessary to boost their value, increase usage and regional draw, such as a renaming and branding of the amenity currently referred to as the Drainage Trail.

**XX Collaborate with public and private groups to ensure consistent, high-quality trail maintenance**

Apply for and secure funding to build and maintain trails. Promote, initiate, and/or support volunteer groups to aid in regular trail maintenance such as trash pick up, debris removal and safety monitoring. Promote and/or initiate formal commitments from organizations and groups to aid in trail maintenance. This could function as an Adopt-A-Trail programs that becomes an extension of the city's existing Adopt-A-Park program.

**XX Align parks planning with transportation planning to ensure the implementation of pedestrian and bicycle friendly street design on roadways—especially those connecting neighborhoods to parks and trails**

**XX Align parks planning with transportation planning to identify gaps/barriers to safe access of parks via pedestrian and bicycle networks and prioritize improvements in these areas**

To be combined and additional description to be added

### 3. SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN TRAIL SYSTEMS

Representative Photos to be Added

**XX Require connections to adjacent local and regional trail systems for approval of development proposals when applicable**

When housing developments, commercial sites, or corporate campuses build new paved areas or significantly improve existing paved areas, they should be required to connect to adjacent sidewalks and trails. Distance criteria should be considered to incentivize connections to nearby, but non-adjacent trails.

**XX Continue to improve and install educational and directional trail system signage**

**XX Collaborate across city departments to ensure broad success of parks and trails systems**

Support and promote the plan's recommendations for natural resources (pages XX), land use (pages XX), and transportation (pages XX). Meet quarterly with leaders of these efforts to celebrate successes, discuss upcoming challenges, coordinate capital improvements and set shared goals.

**XX Promote unpaved trails in natural areas**

Unpaved trails for hiking or trail running should be added to natural areas such as in riverfront park development, Dean Lakes, wooded areas, and the bluff recommended for public open space in the West End.

### 3. SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN TRAIL SYSTEMS

### 4. EMBRACE THE RIVERFRONT

Representative Photos to be Added

**XX Promote paved shared-use trails in all large-scale residential developments.**

Shared-use trails for walking, running and bicycling should follow national best practices and city design guidelines. Trails should form usable loops within developments and connect to city and regional trails as often as possible.

**XX Promote on-road improvements to connect trail systems where applicable**

» **Sharrows, bridges, etc.**

**XX Increase access to the Riverfront**

Increase access points to the River in number and quality. Ensure multi-modal accessibility including wheel chair access. Explore options for water trails such as canoe and kayak launch sites and signage. Coordinate directional and informational signage with Downtown Revitalization efforts. Coordinate with MN-DNR and surrounding communities to provide contiguous access to public spaces along the river.

## 5. ENRICH PROGRAMMING

Representative Photos to be Added

### 5a Include programming in Parks Master Plan process

Conduct programming assessment as part of any parks planning process to ensure collaboration across departments on programming decision-making, programming recommendations that reflect national trends and community desires, and facilities planning that is aligned with programming needs.

### XX Increase and enrich the programming in all applicable venues of the Shakopee parks system

Include programs of differing depth, length, and variety that showcase a diversity of arts, history and culture. Programs may include events, festivals, seminars, active recreation group activities.

## 6. MANAGE AND GOVERN AS A COMMUNITY EFFORT

move text and/or generalizerecommendations into governance sections

### 6a Embed collaboration into internal organizational structure

Engage leaders across departments to meet quarterly to celebrate successes, discuss upcoming challenges, and share goals. At the meetings, select delegate(s) to assemble and refine information for sharing back to departmental teams. Organize public information into concise talking points for all staff, especially those who are public facing and answer questions from citizens or the media. Clarify non-public information and share with all who need to know in order to perform at their best in their role.

### XX Encourage wide participation in parks and recreation planning with diligence in communications

Conduct multimedia—online, email, radio, television, print—outreach campaigns to invite broad audiences to public participation events. Send out monthly or quarterly newsletters to inform the community of upcoming events, volunteer opportunities and organizational updates. Conduct outreach sessions and educational programming at local schools and community organization meetings to broaden the audience. Collect demographic and contact information from attendees.

## 6. MANAGE AND GOVERN AS A COMMUNITY EFFORT

Representative Photos to be Added

**XX Promote coordination, collaboration, and partnerships among local and regional public agencies**

Potential partners may be local school districts, parks or trails advocacy groups, community groups, adjacent parks districts, or the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community. Efforts may include strategies for park planning and development, strategies for aligned programming, opportunities for shared services, plans for trail connection, and other aligned implementation efforts.

**XX Promote coordination, collaboration, and partnerships with private industry stakeholders who are pursuing initiatives aligned with the mission of Shakopee parks**

May include corporate health initiatives, leadership or team development efforts, community outreach campaigns, organized charity initiatives, and other aligned initiatives.

**XX Emphasize use of data and metrics to plan and coordinate parks and recreation**

Measure and track data such as program participation, demographic data of participants, all associated costs of fees, budget and spending, allied organizations and contact information, descriptive statistics of all parks, facilities, amenities, maintenance and improvements. Conduct regular city-wide surveys to measure participation and satisfaction. Collect program evaluations and comment cards in park facilities. Measure data against national trends and local benchmarks.

**XX Maintenance and Budget**

Increase



# 2

## NATURAL RESOURCES

**Shakopee can improve its community resilience with measures to protect our natural environment and celebrate our natural features by preserving and enhancing our water and land resources.**

**shakopee can cultivate an ethic of stewardship and promote sustainable development practices that will allow humans, wildlife, and plant life to flourish in shakopee.**

## OVERVIEW

This element of the plan details the existing conditions, issues and opportunities, and goals and strategies that will enable Shakopee to manage its natural and water resources in ways that are beneficial for both humans and nature. The plan responds to community desires for high-quality parks and open space as well as a high value for community aesthetics.

The land, water, flora, and fauna that underpin all life in Shakopee are prerequisites a healthy, sustainable community.

As Shakopee grows, the already-pressing issues of conversation of sensitive areas will only become more important. Decisions made today will impact the ability of natural resources thrive as well as the ability of humans to enjoy the natural world. A variety of issues and opportunities related to natural resources are considered. These include:

- » **Opportunities to enhance and protect the Minnesota River**
- » **Protection and enhancement of community character and aesthetics**
- » **Ecological challenges and opportunities for conservation**
- » **Protection of open space and farmland**

## SUMMARY OF POLICY PRIORITIES

- » Protect, preserve, and enhance Shakopee's water resources
- » Protect and preserve Shakopee's open space and other natural resources
- » Encourage and require high-quality, environmentally-sensitive land development
- » Strengthen beneficial connections between the natural world and built environment
- » Cultivate a culture of environmental awareness, stewardship, and respect

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

From its earliest days, the City of Shakopee has been defined by the Minnesota River, its floodplain and wetlands, and the bluffs that overlook these prominent features.

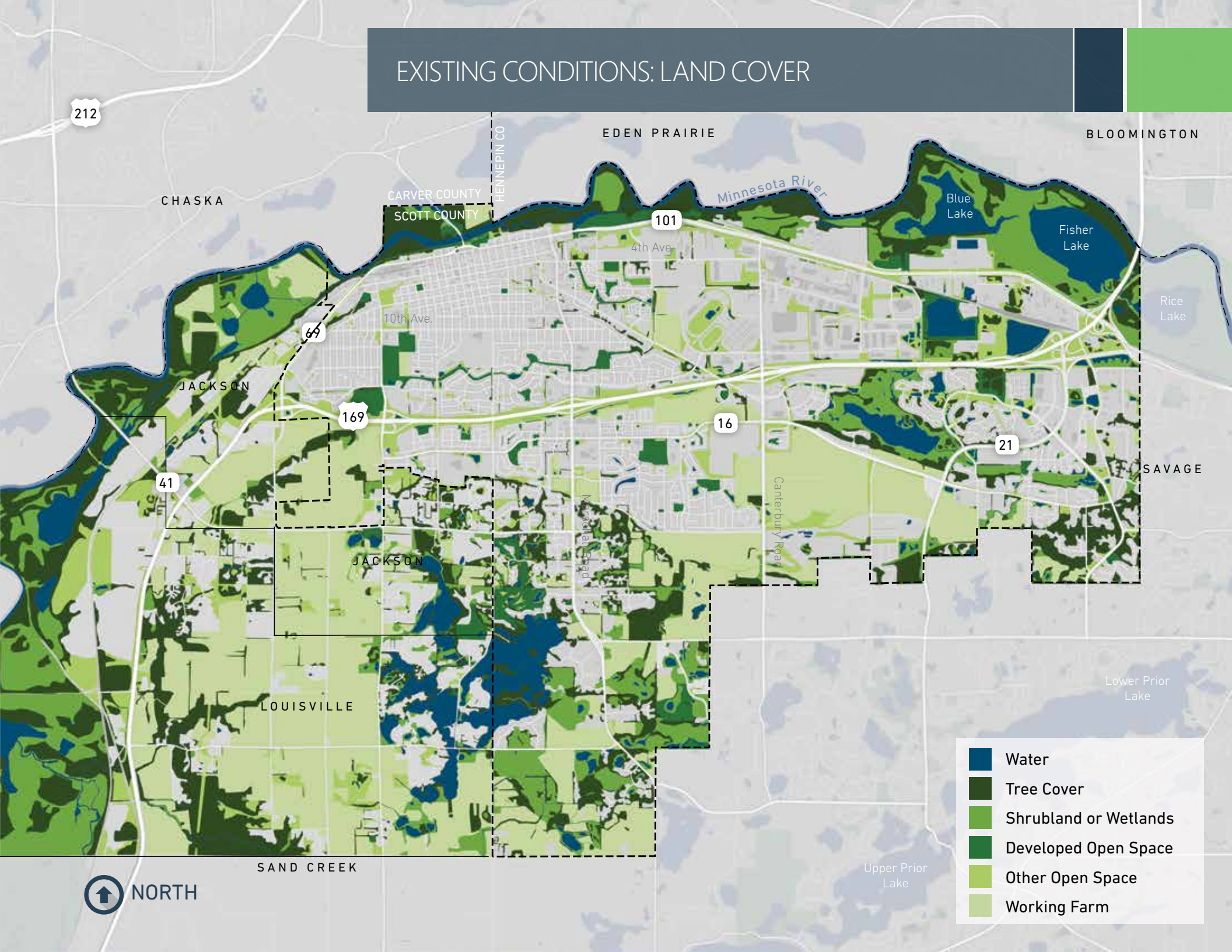
Today, the majority of contiguous tree cover and natural open space are in these same community-defining areas. At the same time, these high-quality natural features have been largely excised from the heart of the city and have been pushed to the outer edges of Shakopee to the south and west.

The built environment, which has shifted from the riverfront to Highway 169 and its arterial roads, has impacted the natural environment in several key ways: one, it has reduced the overall acreage of undisturbed land; two, it has constrained or eliminated natural wildlife corridors within the city; and three, it has placed greater environmental stress on wetlands and other key water resources, such as Dean's Lake.

Additionally, in the area south of Highway 169, Shakopee features an abundance of working farmland which, while developed by humans, has significant impacts on natural and water resources than the City's urban core. In these areas, agricultural uses have stormwater impacts for wetlands, streams, and lakes.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS: LAND COVER



## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

As Shakopee continues to grow, the City must balance new development with environmental protection and remediation. In particular, the City should address the following issues and opportunities:

- » The Minnesota River: This is one of the city's most under-utilized assets. A high-quality riverine environment provides an important opportunity for human engagement and a crucial requirement for many native flora and fauna. A functional riverine ecosystem depends on healthy streams, wetlands, and floodplains. Protecting and rehabilitating these elements will strengthen the overall system and improve quality of life for humans and nature alike.
- » Parks and recreation: Where possible, existing and new facilities should allow people to engage the natural world. Otherwise, we will disconnect parks from natural corridors and limit access to natural resources. Additionally, the enjoyment of water resources is impacted by the quality of water and the health of wetland, riverine, and lake-based ecological systems.
- » Community character: There exists widespread concern that continued development will diminish Shakopee's community character. In particular, this concern includes the farmlands and rural area south of Highway 169 and the City's lakes and wetlands, the quality of which is especially susceptible to development.
- » Environmentally-sensitive areas: Of particular concern are the high bluffs overlooking the Minnesota River, which feature environmentally-sensitive steep slopes; contiguous open space, which serve as wildlife corridors; and wetlands, rivers, streams, and lakes.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

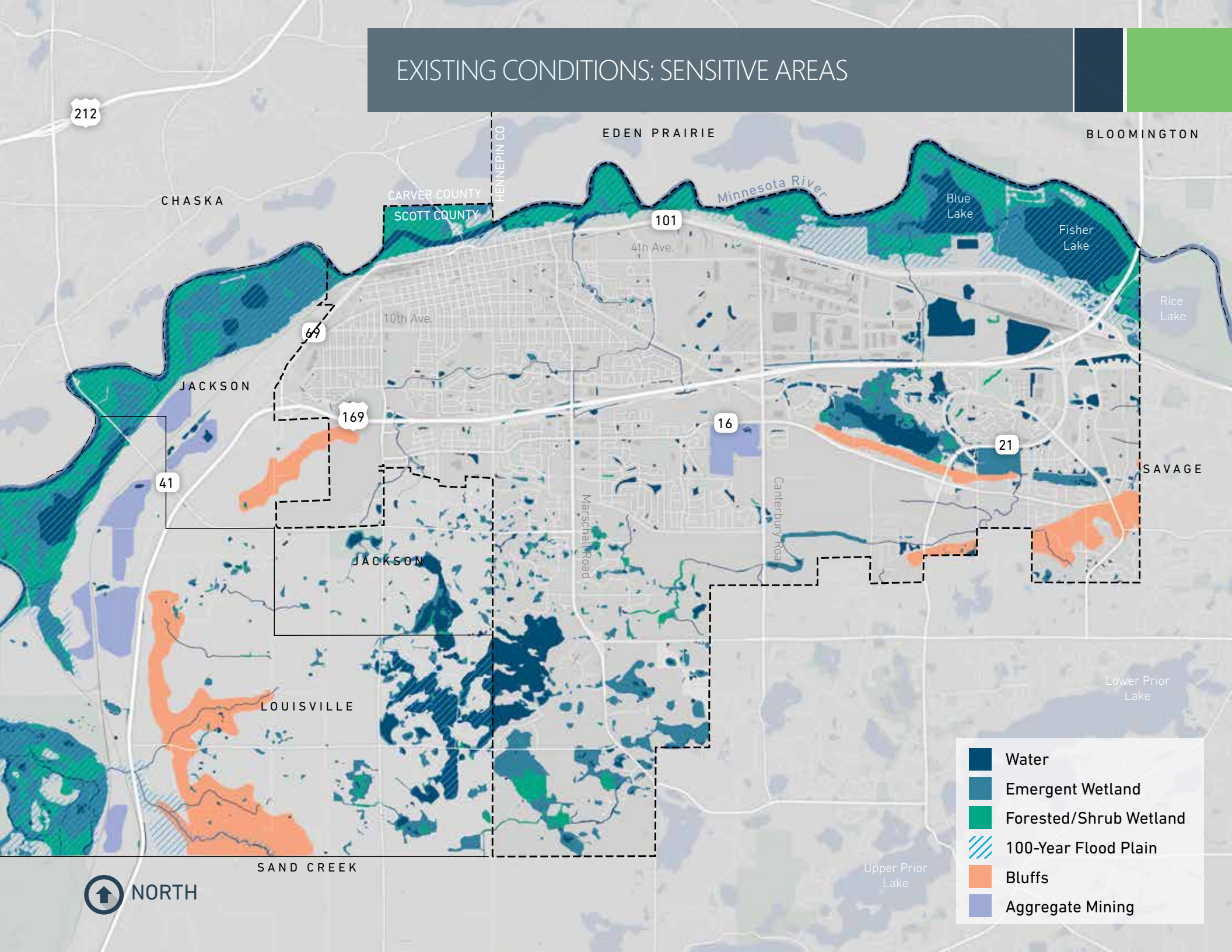
### CHALLENGES

- » Growth presents a challenge to open space and natural resources such as wetlands, habitats and bluffs
- » Steep slopes along the bluffs present challenges from stormwater runoff and erosion

### OPPORTUNITIES

- » The Minnesota River is an incredible natural asset that spans the northern extent of the city
- » Protecting natural resources supports the community priority of high quality parks and recreation opportunities
- » Natural resources add to the beauty and character of the community

# EXISTING CONDITIONS: SENSITIVE AREAS



- Water
- Emergent Wetland
- Forested/Shrub Wetland
- 100-Year Flood Plain
- Bluffs
- Aggregate Mining



## POLICY AREAS

### **WATER RESOURCES**

The first key policy area concerns the protection and improvement of Shakopee's water resources. This plan details a goal and series of strategies to preserve, promote, and ensure clean surface water and groundwater for humans and wildlife alike. Additionally, water resources policy must include planning and partnerships to ensure that local policies address specific local needs and conform with regional standards and practices.

### **OPEN SPACE & NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

The second key policy area is rooted in the ecological importance of open space and land-based natural resources. This plan details goals and strategies to: protect, preserve, and enhance open space and wildlife and native vegetation; codify land development regulations to minimize environmental degradation; and cultivate a culture of environmental stewardship through education and outreach initiatives.



# GOALS & STRATEGIES FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

## 1. PROTECT, PRESERVE, AND ENHANCE SHAKOPEE'S WATER RESOURCES

Representative Photos to be Added

### 1A. IDENTIFY AND FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES FOR SURFACE WATER PRESERVATION AND REMEDIATION

- » Preserve and restore rivers, streams, and wetlands to provide floodwater retention, groundwater recharge, nutrient assimilation, wildlife habitat, shoreline protection, and safe drinking water.
- » Improve existing drainage infrastructure and promote use of alternative stormwater design solutions such as rain gardens, pervious hardscaping, on-site stormwater treatment.

### 1B. IDENTIFY AND FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES FOR GROUNDWATER USE AND PROTECTION

- » Assess the vulnerability of groundwater resources, estimate dates of resource exhaustion, and plan for mitigation.
- » Identify and protect groundwater recharge areas and vulnerable aquifers.
- » Create a watering ordinance, water-wise landscaping ordinance and guidance, and WaterSense purchasing program.

### 1C. IDENTIFY AND CONFORM TO WATER RESOURCE-RELATED PLANS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- » Continue to implement existing plans and strategies, including the Shakopee Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan and enforce the Shoreland and Floodplain Ordinances and Wetland Conservation Act.
- » Adopt and use Minnesota's Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS) to address site stormwater runoff and pollution.
- » Coordinate water resource planning and protection efforts with adjacent jurisdictions.



## 2. PROTECT AND PRESERVE SHAKOPEE'S OPEN SPACE AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES

Representative Photos to be Added

### 2A. IDENTIFY AND FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES FOR OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT.

- » Preserve existing woodlands, bluffs, and steep slopes from development.
- » Coordinate open space plans with adjacent jurisdictions.
- » Apply local, state, and federal standards and regulations for open space protection, preservation, and restoration.
- » Conduct build-out analysis and fiscal impact study to consider long-term protection of natural resources and systems.

### 2B. IDENTIFY AND FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES FOR WILDLIFE AND VEGETATION MANAGEMENT.

- » Develop plan to minimize invasive and exotic plants and animals.
- » Update plan to preserve wildlife habitat and travel corridors.
- » Work with partners to develop conservation easement program to preserve wildlife habitat.
- » Develop policies to prevent habitat fragmentation and altering of high-quality natural areas.
- » Conduct a Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment.

To be combined and additional description to be added

### 3. ENCOURAGE AND REQUIRE HIGH-QUALITY, ENVIRONMENTALLY-SENSITIVE LAND DEVELOPMENT

Representative Photos to be Added

#### 3A. INCORPORATE ENVIRONMENTALLY-RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES INTO LAND SUBDIVISION AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS.

- » Consider impacts to native threatened or special-concern species when reviewing land use development.
- » Encourage roadway design to follow existing contours of landscape.
- » Curtail development that disturbs identified natural corridors or environmentally-sensitive areas.
- » Adopt or amend city codes and ordinances to support sustainable sites, including roadsides, and environmentally protective land use development.
- » Incorporate protection of priority natural resource systems through the subdivision and development process.
- » Adopt a conservation design policy and use a conservation design tool in negotiating development agreements.
- » Incorporate woodland best management practices addressing protection of wooded areas into zoning or development review.

#### 3B. INCORPORATE ENVIRONMENTALLY-RESPONSIBLE SITE DESIGN PRACTICES INTO PLAN APPROVAL AND REVIEW PROCESSES.

- » Require low-impact development requirements, such as on-site stormwater management techniques and tree replacement for new development.
- » Adopt a revised and updated landscaping ordinance.
- » Require use of native vegetation in areas disturbed by new development.
- » Consider site density, placement, and buffer requirements to minimize land disturbance and reduce on-site erosion.

## 4. STRENGTHEN BENEFICIAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE NATURAL WORLD AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Representative Photos to be Added

### 4A. ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT PLANS AND POLICIES TO PROTECT PARKS AND TRANSITIONAL NATURAL AREAS.

- » Develop an urban forestry plan for street tree planting and management.
- » Preserve natural resources in areas in or adjacent to parkland.
- » Strategically acquire natural space and corridors for future parkland.
- » Identify and obtain conservation easements for parks and natural spaces.
- » Develop a countywide natural resources corridor system.

### 4B. CULTIVATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE NATURAL WORLD.

- » Develop passive parks and recreation facilities that draw the community into nature.
- » Develop low-impact trail systems that balance community connections with wildlife corridor protection.

To be combined and additional description to be added

## 5. CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS, STEWARDSHIP, AND RESPECT

Representative Photos to be Added

### 5A. ENCOURAGE AND CONDUCT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH INITIATIVES.

- » Educate the public on environmentally-responsible alternatives to traditional landscape practices (ex. herbicide and pesticide use as well as sustainable, native alternatives to traditional lawns and landscape vegetation).
- » Support or develop outreach tools and activities to promote water quality initiatives, residential stormwater management, recycling and composting, etc.

### 5B. SUPPORT COMMUNITY EFFORTS TO PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTALLY-RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES.

- » Support or establish demonstration projects for environmental remediation and enhancement.
- » Support or create programming and events for active transportation as trails and pathways system is developed
- » Pursue city accreditation for environmentally-friendly designations, such as Bird City Minnesota and Tree City USA.

### 5C. EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE THREAT OF INVASIVE SPECIES TO THE NATURAL WORLD.

- » Provide materials to identify invasive animal and plant species and instructions on what to do if spotted.
- » Support or host events to promote awareness of invasive species and best practices for preventing their expansion.