AGENDA
Park & Recreation Commission Meeting
4:00 PM - Monday, April 13, 2026
City Hall Council Chambers

Page

1. CALL TO ORDER

   1.1. Chairperson Welcome - I call to order the regular April 13, 2026, City of New Ulm Park and Recreation Commission meeting.

2. ROLL CALL

   2.1. All commissioners and staff attending, please state your name and position. Chair welcomes guests.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

   3.1. Approval of Agenda - April 13, 2026 — 4

   to approve or amend/approve the Agenda for the Regular Park and Recreation Commission meeting on April 13, 2026.

   Motion by _____, seconded by _____
   Staff Report Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026 - Pdf

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

   4.1. Approval of meeting minutes for Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting on March 9, 2026. — 5 - 8

   to approve or amend amend/approve the Park and Recreation Commission regular meeting minutes for March 9, 2026.

   Motion by _____, seconded by _____
   Staff Report Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026 - Pdf

5. CITY COUNCIL MEETING RECAP

   5.1. CITY COUNCIL MEETING RECAP — 9

   to receive and order filed this City Council past action report.

   Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.
   Staff Report Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026 - Pdf

6. OLD BUSINESS

7. NEW BUSINESS

   7.1. Park and Recreation Donations — 10

   to recommend the City Council offer a resolution and waive the reading to accept the following donations offered to the City of New Ulm through the Park and Recreation Department for the identified purposes.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.
Staff Report Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026 - Pdf

7.2. Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council Flexible Support Grant Acceptance 11

Recommend the City Council approve acceptance of the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council Flexible Support Grant.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.
Staff Report Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026 - Pdf

7.3. Bicycle Friendly Community Award Designation 12

to receive and order filed the Bicycle Friendly Community Award Designation report from the New Ulm Bicycle Group.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.
Staff Report Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026 - Pdf

7.4. Hermann Monument Use Assessment 13 - 16

to recommend that the City Council receive and order file the Hermann Monument Use Assessment.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.
Staff Report Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026 - Pdf

7.5. Park and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan 90% Draft Presentation 17 - 273

to receive and order filed the Park and Recreation Master Plan 90% Draft Presentation.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.
Staff Report Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026 - Pdf

8. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONER AND STAFF

8.1. Commissioner Reports 274

to receive and order filed the Commissioner Reports.

Motion by _____, and seconded by _____
Staff Report Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026 - Pdf

8.2. Department Activity Report 275 - 277

to accept and file the Park and Recreation Department Activity Report for March 2026.

Motion by _____ seconded by _____
Staff Report Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026 - Pdf

8.3. Staff Report 278

to accept and file the Park and Recreation Department Staff Report.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.

Staff Report Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026 - Pdf

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.1. Date of next meeting: May 11, 2026 at 4:00 pm (Second Monday of each month).

10. ADJOURNMENT

10.1. With there being no further business, Chairperson declares the meeting adjourned.

Please let Donitta Trebesch, Park and Recreation Department Administrative Assistant know if you plan to miss a meeting by calling 507-233-2121, ext 200 or emailing donittat@newulmmn.gov. Also, if you desire hard copies of materials please contact Donitta Trebesch.

Meetings may be cancelled due to lack of items or quorum.

City of New Ulm
Request for Park & Recreation Commission Action

Meeting:	Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026	**Agenda Section:**	APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Resolution:	N/A	**Originating Department:**	Park & Rec
Ordinance:	N/A	**Prepared By:**	Donitta Trebesch
Attachments:	0	**Presented By:**	Kurt Johnson
Item:	Approval of Agenda - April 13, 2026		

Proposed Action:
to approve or amend/approve the Agenda for the Regular Park and Recreation Commission meeting on April 13, 2026.

Motion by _____, seconded by _____

Board/Commission Recommendation:
N/A

Overview:
N/A

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:
N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:
N/A

City of New Ulm
Request for Park & Recreation Commission Action

Meeting:	Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026	**Agenda Section:**	APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Resolution:	N/A	**Originating Department:**	Park & Rec
Ordinance:	N/A	**Prepared By:**	Donitta Trebesch
Attachments:	1	**Presented By:**	Kurt Johnson
Item:	Approval of meeting minutes for Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting on March 9, 2026.		

Proposed Action:
to approve or amend amend/approve the Park and Recreation Commission regular meeting minutes for March 9, 2026.

Motion by _____, seconded by _____

Board/Commission Recommendation:
N/A

Overview:
N/A

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:
N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:
N/A

Attachments:
Meeting Minutes 3-9-2026

City of New Ulm Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 9, 2026 4 p.m. City Council Chambers, City Hall, 100 N. Broadway, Main Floor

1. CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson K Johnson called the March meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.
2. ROLL CALL

Kurt Johnson	Chair	Present
Amy Johnson	Vice Chair	Present
Jim Jensen	Commissioner	Present
Anne Earl	Commissioner	Present
Dave Christian	Council Rep/Commissioner	Present
Greig Glover	Commissioner	Absent
Jeff Gulden	Commissioner	Absent
Joey Schugel	PR Director/Ex Officio	Present
Cheryl Kormann	Assist PR Director/Ex Officio	Present
Clay Schuldt	Journal/Press	Absent
Others Present	Joe Gartner, Deb Steinberg	

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Motion was made by Christian and seconded by A Johnson to approve the March 9, 2026 agenda. All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Motion was made by Jensen and seconded by Christian to approve the February 9 meeting minutes. All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

5. CITY COUNCIL MEETING RECAP – Director Schugel reported the following City Council past action:
   Feb 17 Regular meeting – Johnson Park Scoreboard Replacement was approved, temporary camping request for River Valley BMX State Qualifying Race was approved and donations were accepted. There was also a work session where the Council discussed the National Guard Armory and Field Maintenance Shop. This could be a great option for replacement of our PR Shop located at 7 N Front St., which is nearing its useful life.
   March 3 Regular meeting – Year end transfers and encumbrances were approved
   Motion was made by Christian and second by A Johnson to receive and order filed this City Council past action report. Motion carried unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS – Director Schugel gave a brief Park and Recreation Master Plan update that included staff's continued work through Phase 3, Implementation Stage (final) and working on park specific recommendations. A draft report and presentation will be ready for the Commission in April or May. Earl made a motion that was seconded by Jensen to receive, and order filed the Park and Recreation Master Plan update. Motion carried unanimously.

7. NEW BUSINESS
   7.1 – POLLINATOR PARK – Recap of Activity and Plans by Deb Steinberg and Joe Gartner:
   - 2025 – the group purchased quality signs and conducted classes. They contributed over 500 hours of volunteer work in the park. Joe did major brush control within the park. Additional flower gardens were added that were wonderful pollinators! They receive lots of compliments from passerby's. Toward fall, they had a surge of monarch butterflies. They have fenced areas to assist with dear and critter control, which in turn helped the super bloom.
   - 2026 plans - the flood plain by the park has an Eagle nest, sandhill cranes and otters were spotted and heard. They hope to increase the number of volunteers, due to the increased plantings. They want to plant nonnative plants and put up fencing to help with deer control.

They hope to find ways to add water to the site, increase educational sessions and promote the park, not just in the area, but the region as well, due to its large size.

Director Schugel gave an overview of the park:

- Established in 2017 and sits on 2.64 acres, located at 2250 North Broadway St.
- Staff and volunteers are working on next steps for the area, including expansion and enhancement of City controlled property.
- They are looking for funding from state lottery fund (LCCR money) to help fund playground, shade, trail and native restoration. A Naturescape site plan was shared with Commissioners.
- In the Master plan, an additional 20 acres would be dedicated to this park. It is already under city control, but not currently considered Park land. Christian made a motion that was seconded by A Johnson receive and order filed the 2025 recap of activity and 2026 plans for the Pollinator Park. Christian thanked the group for their efforts. Motion carried unanimously.

7.2 LEASE FOR LAWFUL GAMBLING AT JOHNSON PARK – The New Ulm Baseball Association has a current State of Minnesota Gambling License and are requesting to offer lawful charitable gambling on the premises of Johnson Park during the 2026 baseball season. They also have an approved liquor license that would allow gambling during games when liquor is allowed to be sold, if approved. Per State Statue 249.18, 20 percent of gross profit goes to the owner of the leased facility where gambling is operated, which would be the City. The Association has donated charitable gambling proceeds to the Department for improvements and enhancements at Johnson and Mueller Parks. Al Flor is the gambling manager for the Association was present and said they would be offering 3-5 raffle events, BINGO and possibly a pull tabs at Brewers games and select VFW games. K Johnson asked why the group wants to conduct these activities now. Flor explained they are fund raising and also want to provide the BINGO activity and want all the proper steps necessary. He also explained that this is common at baseball events. K Johnson is personally opposed to this idea. A Johnson pointed out that this is not new to the Commission; they approved it in the past. Earl made a motion that was seconded by Christian to recommend City Council approve the New Ulm Baseball Association (NUBA) to submit a lease for lawful gambling activity at Johnson Park for the 2026 baseball season.
A role was called:

Kurt Johnson	Chair	No
Amy Johnson	Vice Chair	Yes
Jim Jensen	Commissioner	Yes
Anne Earl	Commissioner	Yes
Dave Christian	Council Rep/Commissioner	Yes
Greig Glover	Commissioner	Absent
Jeff Gulden	Commissioner	Absent

Motion carried.

8. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONER AND STAFF

8.1 – There were no Commissioner Reports.

8.2 – Department Activity Report highlights:

- February was tournament season at the Rec Center; two were held and both went well.
- Civic Center also had lots of activities in February

Commissioner Earl praised the maintenance after the tournaments to make the facility look so great after these large tournaments! K Johnson echoed her sentiments.

Motion was made by Christian and seconded by A Johnson to accept and file the February 2026 Park and Recreation Department Activity Reports. Motion carried unanimously.

8.3 – Staff Report – motion was made by Earl and seconded by Jensen to accept and file the Park and Recreation Department Staff Report highlights:

- Staff is preparing the Civic Center for the dry floor show season
- Seasonal employment applications closed March 1
- Hermann Monument Cost Estimate draft to be reviewed by staff on March 10 and will go to the Commission and City Council in April.
- Staff had a walkthrough meeting with Southpoint to formalize signage locations in the Rec Center.

Motion carried unanimously.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: April 13, 2026 4:00 p.m. City Hall Council Chambers 100 North Broadway
10. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned by Chair Johnson at 4:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Cheryl Kormann, Assistant Director

City of New Ulm
Request for Park & Recreation Commission Action

Meeting:	Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026	**Agenda Section:**	CITY COUNCIL MEETING RECAP
Resolution:	N/A	**Originating Department:**	Park & Rec
Ordinance:	N/A	**Prepared By:**	Joey Schugel
Attachments:	0	**Presented By:**	Joey Schugel
Item:	CITY COUNCIL MEETING RECAP		

Proposed Action:
to receive and order filed this City Council past action report.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.

Board/Commission Recommendation:
N/A

Overview:
March 17 Regular Meeting - Trap Range Building Proposal and professional services contract was approved.
March 17 Regular Meeting - Approved the interest to purchase the Field Maintenance Shop and Armory from the State of Minnesota.

March 17 Work Session - Hermann Monument Reconstruction Cost Estimate discussion.

April 7 Regular Meeting - Park and Recreation surplus property was approved.

April 7 Regular Meeting - Approved plan and specifications and advertisement for bids for the Trap Range Building.

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:
N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:
N/A

City of New Ulm
Request for Park & Recreation Commission Action

Meeting:	Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026	**Agenda Section:**	NEW BUSINESS
Resolution:	N/A	**Originating Department:**	Park & Rec
Ordinance:	N/A	**Prepared By:**	Donitta Trebesch
Attachments:	1	**Presented By:**	Joey Schugel
Item:	Park and Recreation Donations		

Proposed Action:

to recommend the City Council offer a resolution and waive the reading to accept the following donations offered to the City of New Ulm through the Park and Recreation Department for the identified purposes.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.

Board/Commission Recommendation:

N/A

Overview:

1	German Park Paver Stone	Janice Wallner	Honoring Harold and Jeanette Schugel Family	$200.00
2	German Park Paver Stone	James Simpson	Honoring Mike and Kay Simpson	$200.00
			TOTAL	$400.00

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:

N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:

N/A

City of New Ulm
Request for Park & Recreation Commission Action

Meeting:	Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026	**Agenda Section:**	NEW BUSINESS
Resolution:	N/A	**Originating Department:**	Park & Rec
Ordinance:	N/A	**Prepared By:**	Joey Schugel
Attachments:		**Presented By:**	Joey Schugel
Item:	Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council Flexible Support Grant Acceptance		

Proposed Action:

Recommend the City Council approve acceptance of the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council Flexible Support Grant.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.

Board/Commission Recommendation:

N/A

Overview:

1. Grant award is for $3,865.00 towards the Summer Concert Series in German Park.
2. The City of New Ulm Park and Recreation Department along with KNUJ partner to provide these free family friendly events throughout the summer.
3. Grant funds will be used for marketing and promotional materials, compensating bands, along with other free activities in the park for these events as such as the Puppet Wagon Show and Rec on the Go.
4. Staff will be required to meet grant requirements including preparing a final report to the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council.

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:

N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:

N/A

City of New Ulm
Request for Park & Recreation Commission Action

Meeting:	Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026	**Agenda Section:**	NEW BUSINESS
Resolution:	N/A	**Originating Department:**	Park & Rec
Ordinance:	N/A	**Prepared By:**	Joey Schugel
Attachments:	1	**Presented By:**	Joey Schugel
Item:	Bicycle Friendly Community Award Designation		

Proposed Action:

to receive and order filed the Bicycle Friendly Community Award Designation report from the New Ulm Bicycle Group.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.

Board/Commission Recommendation:

N/A

Overview:

1. New Ulm's Bicycle Group works to make New Ulm a bike-friendly community. From riding the roads and trails to changing city signage and requesting new routes, this bicycle group is making a difference.

2. The New Ulm Bicycle Group worked to renew New Ulm's designation as a Bike Friendly Community through an application process.

3. The application takes in account many factors including active transportation plans, amount and length of paved trails, policies, and more.

5. The Group's application was once again successful in receiving the Bronze level Bike Friendly Community designation, good through 2029.

6. The New Ulm Bicycle Group will give a more detailed report on what they do, the application process, the designation, and bike friendly related information in New Ulm.

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:

N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:

N/A

City of New Ulm
Request for Park & Recreation Commission Action

Meeting:	Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026	**Agenda Section:**	NEW BUSINESS
Resolution:	N/A	**Originating Department:**	Park & Rec
Ordinance:	N/A	**Prepared By:**	Joey Schugel
Attachments:	1	**Presented By:**	Joey Schugel
Item:	Hermann Monument Use Assessment		

Proposed Action:

to recommend that the City Council receive and order file the Hermann Monument Use Assessment.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.

Board/Commission Recommendation:

N/A

Overview:

1. Each year prior to opening Hermann Monument for the season a site inspection is conducted to evaluate the structural condition of the monument and determine whether continued public access should be allowed.
2. On March 30, 2026 Brent Krohn, Structural Engineer, PE accompanied by City staff conducted a site inspection of Hermann Monument.
3. Mr. Krohn is very familiar with the monument having conducted site inspections over the last number of years.
4. Based on our observations, discussion on-site, and the current condition of the monument, it is our Mr. Krohn's professional opinion that unsupervised public access to the monument should be restricted.
5. Private access to the monument would be allowed provided that the following recommendations are followed:
    - A competent individual inspects the monument for any further spalled material or visible damage/deterioration to the structure immediately prior to the tour.
    - A competent individual accompanies all guests on the tour and guests are not left unsupervised.
6. Temporary signage will be added to Hermann Heights Park to inform visitors that there will be no public access, amongst other communication methods.
7. City staff continues to work on progressing the Hermann Monument Reconstruction project.

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:

N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:

N/A

Attachments:

26-71 City of New Ulm - Herman Use Assessment 260402

April 2, 2026

City of New Ulm
Attn: Ellwood Zabel
Phone: 612-359-8245
Via e-mail: *EllwoodZ@newulmmn.gov*

RE: Hermann Monument Use Assessment – New Ulm, MN
Address: *205 N Broadway St., New Ulm, MN 56073*

Ellwood

On Monday March 30, 2026 a site inspection was conducted at the Hermann Monument in New Ulm, MN. The purpose of the site inspection was to evaluate the structural condition of the monument and determine whether continued public access should be allowed.

Upon arrival there were once again spalled pieces of stone, bricks, gunite and brick dust on the ground which had fallen from the structure over the winter. The most significant spalling was portions of stone and burnished brick on the east side of the structure. The stone was falling from base and the burnished brick had fallen from the upper dome. There was also red dust visible on the floor of the dome from brick deterioration over the winter months as shown in photo 2.

Photo 1: Note portions of gunite / stone which have fallen from above the window

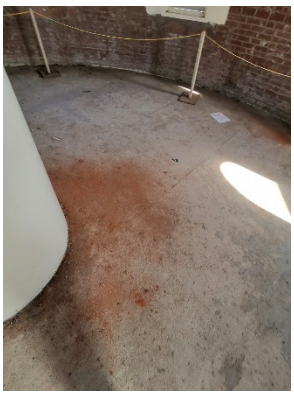

Photo 2: Red dust on floor of dome from deteriorating bricks over winter months

Brent Krohn, PE
MN License #51793
110 Judson Fort Road West
Lake Crystal, MN 56055
Mobile: 507-380-9313
Email: BrentKrohnPE@gmail.com

There is once again a significant amount of red brick dust around the tension tie rods in the dome accompanied with further cracking around the connection point from the tie rods into the dome brick. This is becoming more of a concern as these ties are an integral part of the dome structure and their condition is continuing to decline. One additional concern with these tie rods would be if someone were to jump up and hang on them there is an increasing chance that they could pull out of the brick dome or further damage the deteriorated connection.

Photo 3: Brick Dust on floor below tie connection

Photo 4: Deteriorated tie rod connection to dome masonry

While spalling of smaller pieces is relatively minor, the larger pieces of brick, stone and gunite which appear to have fallen over the winter are becoming larger in size which is more concerning. Furthermore, the risk of damage to the upper dome if someone were to hang from the tie rods is continuing to increase as the structure further deteriorates. **Based on our observations, discussion on-site, and the current condition of the monument, it is our professional opinion that unsupervised public access to the monument should be restricted. Private access to the monument would be allowed provided that the following recommendations are followed:**

1. **A competent individual inspects the monument for any further spalled material or visible damage/deterioration to the structure immediately prior to the tour**
2. **A competent individual accompanies all guests on the tour and guests are not left unsupervised**

Please contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns.

Regards,

Brent M. Krohn

Brent Krohn
Structural Engineer, P.E.
MN License #51793

Brent Krohn, PE
MN License #51793
110 Judson Fort Road West
Lake Crystal, MN 56055
Mobile: 507-380-9313
Email: BrentKrohnPE@gmail.com

City of New Ulm
Request for Park & Recreation Commission Action

Meeting:	Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026	**Agenda Section:**	NEW BUSINESS
Resolution:	N/A	**Originating Department:**	Park & Rec
Ordinance:	N/A	**Prepared By:**	Joey Schugel
Attachments:	2	**Presented By:**	Joey Schugel
Item:	Park and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan 90% Draft Presentation		

Proposed Action:
to receive and order filed the Park and Recreation Master Plan 90% Draft Presentation.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.

Board/Commission Recommendation:
N/A

Overview:
1. The Master Planning process kicked off in April of 2025.
2. The draft plan is now 90% complete.
3. Claire Roth, Project Manager from ISG, will provide a presentation on the draft plan.

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:
N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:
N/A

Attachments:
2026-04-09_NUPRMasterPlan_ISG_compressed
2026-04-13_NewUlmParks_ComissionPresentation_ISG

CITY OF NEW ULM

Park + Recreation Master Plan

NEW ULM
MINNESOTA

MAY 2026

Acknowledgments

A special thank you to the many community members who participated in the planning process and contributed to the City of New Ulm Park + Recreation Master Plan. This Plan is the product of those who worked to inform and present feedback throughout the planning process.

City Council

Kathleen L. Backer, Mayor
Andrea S. Boettger, Council President
David H. Christian, 1st Ward City Councilor
Eric R. Warmka, 2nd Ward City Councilor
Thomas E. Schmitz, 3rd Ward City Councilor
Larry A. Mack, 4th Ward City Councilor

Parks Commission

Kurt Johnson, Chair
Amy Johnson, Vice Chair
Jim Jensen, Commissioner
Anne Earl, Commissioner
Dave Christian, Council Representative/Commissioner
Greg Glover, Commissioner
Jeff Gulden, Commissioner
Joey Schugel, Park and Recreation Director/Ex Officio
Cheryl Kormann, Assistant Park and Recreation Director/Ex Officio

City Staff

Joey Schugel, Park and Recreation Director (Team Lead)
Cheryl Kormann, Assistant Park and Recreation Director
Ben Doeden, Recreation Program Supervisor
David Schnobrich, Community Development Director
John Knisley, Planner
Joseph Stadheim, City Engineer

Consultant Team

ISG
Architecture
Engineering
Environmental
Planning
ISGinc.com

Stakeholder + User Groups

Adaptive Recreation Services (ARS)
Community and Seniors Together (CAST)
Flandrau State Park (MnDNR)
Grand Center for the Arts
Heart of New Ulm
Martin Luther College
New Ulm Baseball Association
New Ulm Basketball Association
New Ulm Bicycle Group
New Ulm Area Catholic Schools (NUACS)
New Ulm Chamber of Commerce
New Ulm Community Education
New Ulm Community Garden
New Ulm Fastpitch
New Ulm Figure Skating Club
New Ulm Junior Baseball
New Ulm Park and Recreation Commission
New Ulm Pickleball
New Ulm Public Schools
New Ulm Sleepy Eye (NUSE) Hockey Association
New Ulm Soccer Club
New Ulm Tennis Association
New Ulm Youth Football
River Valley BMX
Sioux Valley Gun Club
St. Paul's Elementary
Turner Gymnastics Academy

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Introduction

- Purpose
- Mission Statement
- Existing Park + Recreation System Overview
- Goals of the Planning Process

Purpose

The Park and Recreation Master Plan was developed to serve as a guiding document for future development and investment of over 320 acres of parkland, open spaces, and trails over the next 15 years, beginning in 2026 and continuing through 2041.

Mission Statement

The City of New Ulm is driven by a mission, vision, and a set of five themes that guide decisions and operations, established through the 2024 New Ulm Strategic Plan.

City Mission

To sustain excellence through community-led decision making that fosters continuous improvement.

Park & Recreation Vision

New Ulm's Park and Recreation Department is rooted in historic and collaborative efforts, fostering a vibrant system that offers diverse, accessible facilities and activities to promote an active and engaged community.

City Vision

New Ulm is a welcoming and adaptable community, growing a resilient economy that fosters innovation and accountability rooted in German heritage.

City Themes

The City's park and recreation amenities are deeply interconnected and influenced by each of the City's five key themes, as established in the 2024 Strategic Plan. The themes of the Strategic Plan guide the City in allocating resources effectively to achieve the its goals, building a resilient community that doesn't just adapt but thrives.

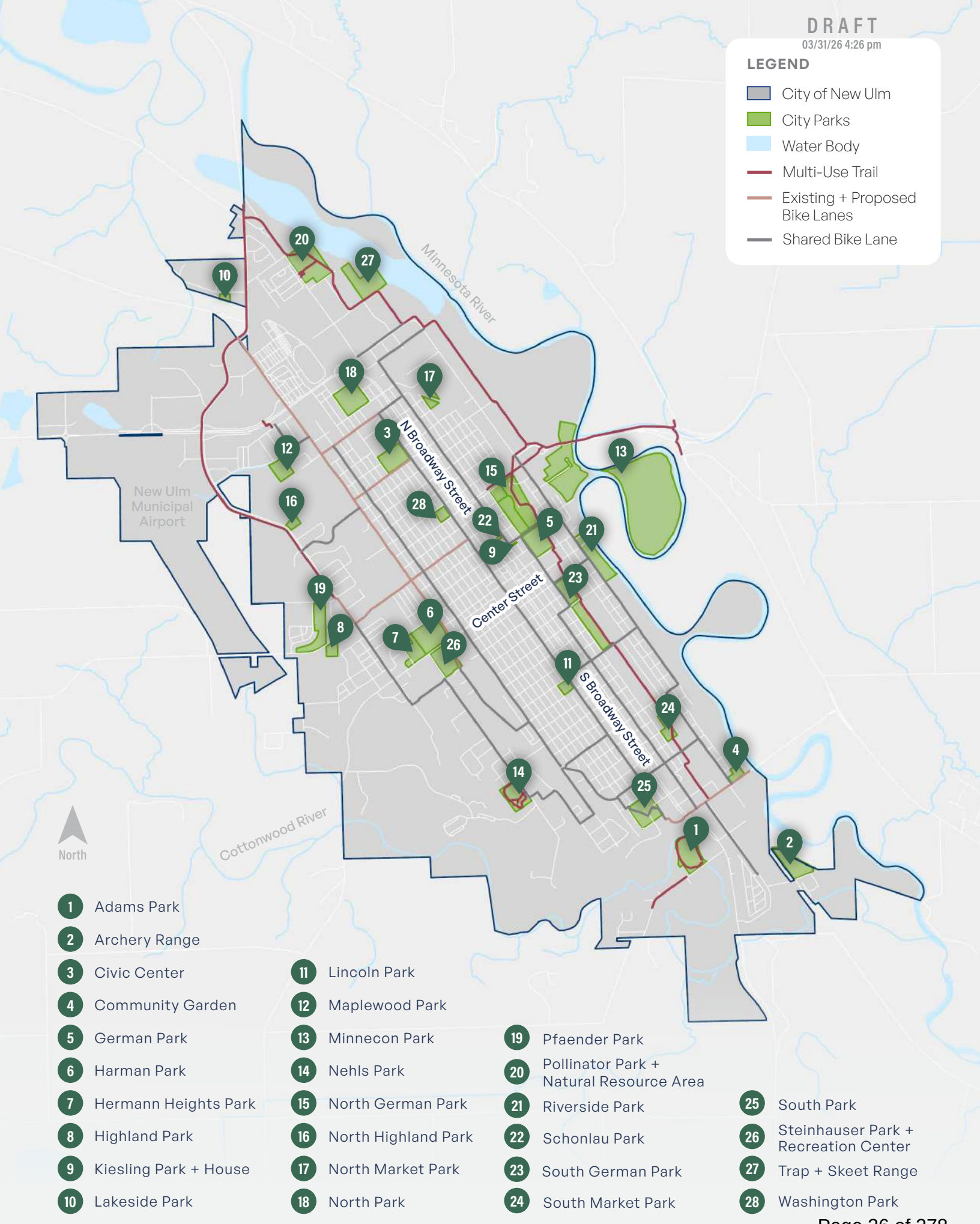
- Economic Resilience
- Governance
- Inclusion + Engagement
- Quality Infrastructure
- Sustainability

Existing Park + Recreation System Overview

Since the establishment of New Ulm, providing spaces for outdoor recreation has remained a community priority.

The founders of New Ulm were rooted in the Turnverein philosophy of sound mind, sound body. Since the establishment of New Ulm, providing spaces for outdoor recreation has remained a community priority. Today, the City's Park and Recreation Department manages, operates, and maintains a diverse and expansive system that includes 28 parks encompassing 320 acres of parkland, open spaces, and trails. This represents about 30% of the City's land area. In addition, the City maintains over 6.5 miles of trails, 111 miles of sidewalks, and 24 miles of roads with shared bike routes. The parks system balances a variety of indoor and outdoor recreation, overseeing three major indoor facilities, including the Civic Center, Community Center, and Recreation Center. The Department also partners with public and private schools to share and maintain recreational spaces, ensuring broad access for residents.

In addition to managing parkland and facilities, the Department offers a wide range of athletic and arts programming, along with family-friendly events throughout the year. With an annual budget of $4.4 million and nearly 100 seasonal employees (October 2025), the Department plays a key role in City identity and economic development by hosting key events, trade shows, and conventions and supporting a vibrant park system that attracts residents and businesses. It promotes public health through fitness programs and green spaces, encourages family engagement through quality programming, and fosters safety and community connection by providing secure and inclusive environments for recreation and social growth.



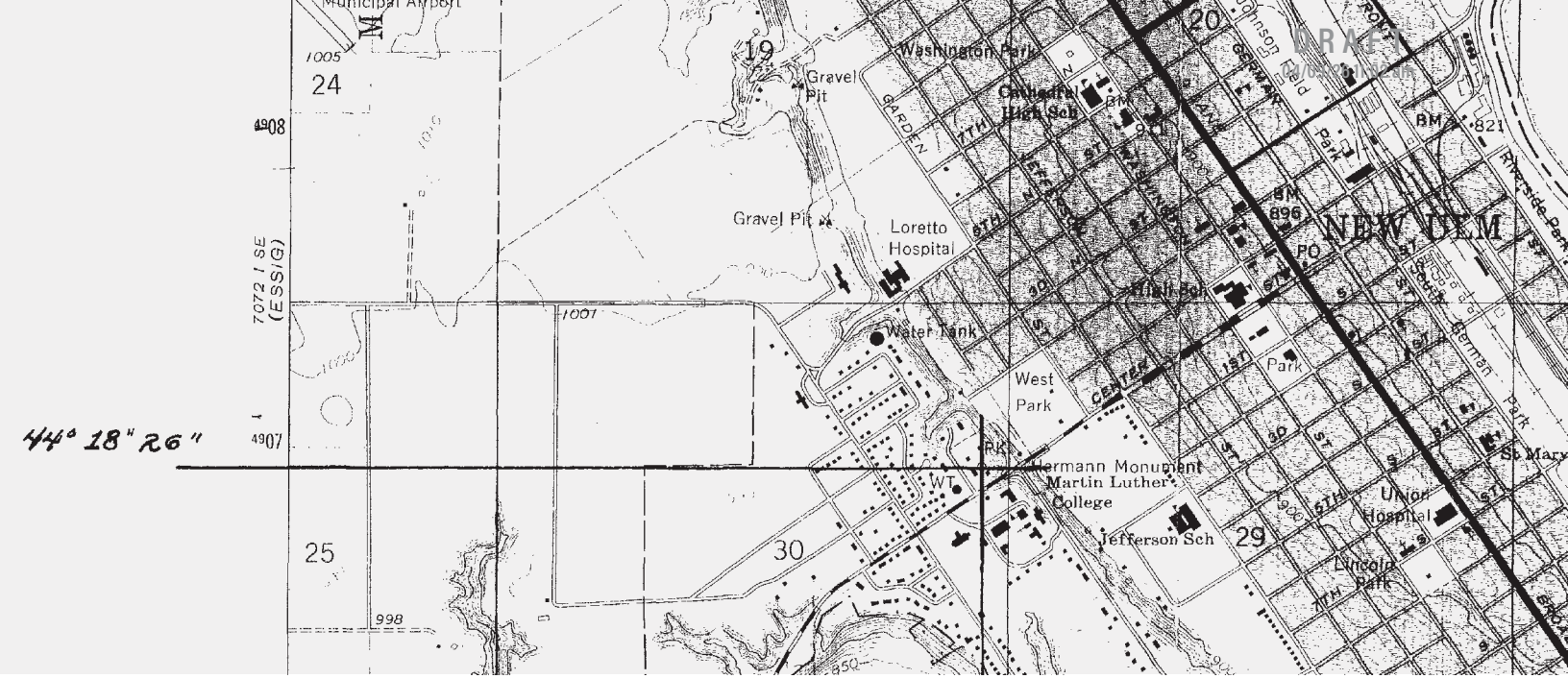
1 Adams Park
2 Archery Range
3 Civic Center
4 Community Garden
5 German Park
6 Harman Park
7 Hermann Heights Park
8 Highland Park
9 Kiesling Park + House
10 Lakeside Park
11 Lincoln Park
12 Maplewood Park
13 Minnecon Park
14 Nehls Park
15 North German Park
16 North Highland Park
17 North Market Park
18 North Park
19 Pfaender Park
20 Pollinator Park + Natural Resource Area
21 Riverside Park
22 Schonlau Park
23 South German Park
24 South Market Park
25 South Park
26 Steinhauser Park + Recreation Center
27 Trap + Skeet Range
28 Washington Park

Goals of the Planning Process

1. **Define a 15-year vision** for New Ulm's parks, open spaces, and public areas that supports current and future community needs and aligns with the City's long-term plans.
2. **Review existing park features and amenities** to identify areas for improvement based on community input and national standards.
3. **Assess how well residents are currently served** by City and partner recreation services, with a focus on improving access.
4. **Create a plan that promotes equity and balance** across the park system, ensuring usability and accessibility for all residents, businesses, and stakeholders.
5. **Develop a strategy to guide future decisions and investments** in parks and recreation, supported by a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
6. **Identify and prioritize community needs and interests** for the next 15 years, considering trends in demographics, recreation, and social change.
7. **Outline a clear implementation program** that includes funding opportunities, staffing needs, and cost estimates for high-priority actions.
8. **Establish a financial strategy** to address both immediate challenges and long-term sustainability.
9. **Consider how parks connect** with transportation, housing, land use, economic development, utilities, natural resources, and public safety.
10. **Ensure meaningful community engagement** throughout the process, including outreach to underrepresented groups.
11. **Create policies for using parkland dedication fees** to support the development and improvement of parks and facilities.

Context

- Park System History
- The Value Of Parks + Recreation
- Demographic Analysis + Change
- Recreation Trends
- Previous Planning Efforts



Park System History

Today, the system includes over 28 parks, three community facilities, and several regional connections.

Overview

The City's park system reflects the German immigrant roots, civic traditions, and long-standing dedication to recreation. From its founding, the City incorporated parks into its original plat, aligning with Turnverein values of public health, fitness, and community gathering. Over time, residents and civic groups created landmark spaces like Hermann Heights and Riverside Park, while state and federal programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) expanded recreational resources with projects that led to the establishment of Flandrau State Park.

The Park and Recreation Department, formally established in 1927, professionalized park operations and expanded programs, facilities, and neighborhood access. A 1989 Master Park Plan provided long-term direction, and today, the system includes over 28 parks, three community facilities, and several regional connections. Through strong community engagement, historic preservation, and continuous adaptation, New Ulm has earned its reputation as the City of Parks.

1857

Founding of New Ulm. Original City plat includes park sites in the grid, reflecting German cultural values of public green space.

1887–1897

Hermann Heights Monument constructed on a hill overlooking New Ulm, later surrounded by Hermann Heights Park.

1890s

Riverside Park established along the Minnesota River as one of the City's earliest public riverfront spaces.

1907

Johnson Park constructed as a baseball facility, which later becomes home to amateur baseball and remains a regional destination.

1910–1920s

German Park developed in the heart of the City, serving as a cultural gathering place and ornamental park.

1927

New Ulm establishes its first formal Park and Recreation Department, bringing organized staff, programming, and policy oversight.

1930s

Flandrau State Park created with help from the CCC and Works Progress Administration (WPA). Trails, shelters, and the stone beach house are constructed.

1950s–1970s

Period of expansion as neighborhood playgrounds and athletic fields are built to serve a growing population.

1970s

Vogel Arena (now known as the New Ulm Recreation Center) opens, providing year-round indoor recreation space.

1989

Citywide Master Park Plan adopted as part of the City's comprehensive plan and establishes service area standards and guides future investments.

2000s

Recreation Center expanded to include fitness, fieldhouse, and community facilities.

2010s

Renewed investment in German Park amphitheater, playgrounds, and trail connections to support festivals and community life.

Present Day

Park and Recreation Department manages 28 parks and facilities with priorities on trail connectivity, natural resource stewardship, and maintaining the City's rich park heritage.

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The Value Of Parks + Recreation

The Park and Recreation Department has worked to extend the life of existing amenities while adapting to evolving community needs.

Continual Improvements for Parks Planning

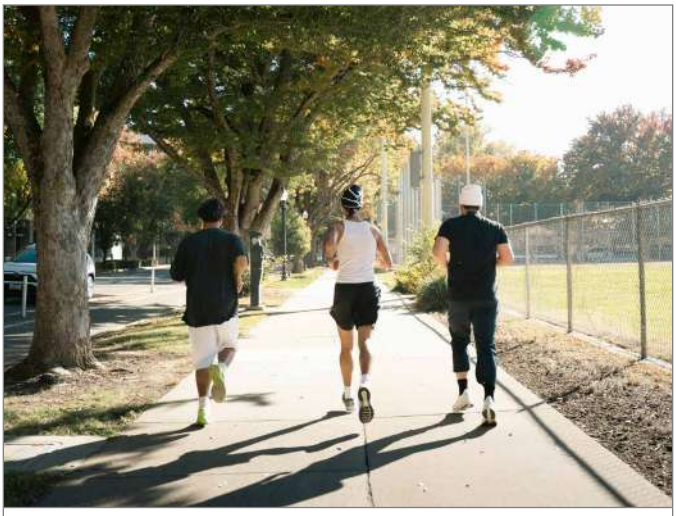
Over the past 30 years, the City of New Ulm has seen steady growth and change, supported by its natural resources and high quality of life. In response, the City's Park and Recreation Department has worked to extend the life of existing amenities while adapting to evolving community needs. City leaders recognized the opportunity to update park features and facilities, prompting a planning effort to align improvements with community priorities and available funding.

As the City continues to develop, funds and development of new parkland must be thoughtfully balanced with other needs, including housing and commercial growth. Careful planning and clear priorities will help guide upgrades, new development, and land acquisition for existing and future parks, ensuring the system continues to serve residents into the future.

Positive Impacts of Parks + Recreation Investment

City parks have long played a meaningful role in supporting the well-being of local residents. Given the many benefits parks bring to a community, it is essential to develop a forward-looking plan that reflects changing demographics and evolving community needs.

Parks and recreation contribute significantly to resident health and happiness by offering spaces to relax, exercise, socialize, and connect with nature. Their impact reaches beyond park boundaries, enhancing the cultural, environmental, and economic fabric of the community.



Physical Health

- **Improves Cardiovascular Health:** Regular physical activity in parks is linked to a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and can lower mortality rates by up to 50% among active individuals.
- **Reduces Chronic Disease Risk:** Access to parks supports active lifestyles that reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes by 40% to 60% in high-risk groups and certain cancers, including colon cancer by 30% to 40% and breast cancer 20% to 30%.
- **Supports General Physical Well-Being:** Spending at least two hours each week in green spaces is associated with higher self-reported health and well-being, especially among children, older adults, and low-income families.

Mental Health

- **Boosts Mental Well-Being:** Time spent in green spaces is linked to reduced stress and improved mood, with proximity to parks associated with higher self-reported happiness and mental health, especially among youth, older adults, and lower-income groups.
- **Reduces Demand for Mental Health Services:** Communities with more green space and tree cover show lower usage of mental health treatments. For example, increased street tree density in the United Kingdom correlated with 1.18 fewer prescriptions per 1,000 people.
- **Improves Productivity + Reduces Stress:** Access to nature, whether through park visits or views from workplaces, has been shown to lower stress and enhance job satisfaction, contributing to better overall functioning and workplace well-being.

Community + Social Connection

- **Fosters Community Connection + Belonging:** Parks provide shared spaces that strengthen social ties and increase residents' sense of belonging. High-quality public spaces are linked to stronger community attachment and reduced feelings of isolation.
- **Promotes Civic Engagement + Inclusion:** Park-based programs, like volunteer opportunities and environmental education, encourage civic participation and help build social capital, especially in underserved neighborhoods.
- **Supports Safer, More Connected Communities:** Community involvement in park planning and programming fosters ownership and pride. Greening vacant urban land and engaging residents in park design have been shown to reduce crime and increase support for nearby park projects.

Environmental + Resilience Impact

- **Improves Air + Water Quality:** Trees in urban parks remove up to 711,000 tons of toxins from the air annually at a value of $3.8 billion to cities. Green spaces also filter rain, reducing water pollution, protecting drinking water, and decreasing the rates of waterborne illness.
- **Supports Climate Resilience:** Tree canopies and green spaces mitigate urban heat island effects and reduce stormwater runoff, helping cities adapt to rising temperatures and extreme weather events.
- **Enhances Disaster Recovery + Social Resilience:** Parks provide restorative spaces that support psychological recovery and community cohesion after disasters, with research showing increased use of green spaces following events like Hurricane Sandy.

Economic Benefits

- **Drives Economic Activity in Minnesota:** In 2021, Minnesota's local park and recreation agencies supported 21,645 jobs, generated $1.3 billion in labor income, and contributed $4.23 billion in total economic output.
- **Enhances Quality of Life + Local Development:** Parks and recreation amenities improve livability and help attract employers and talent. In a 2023 survey, 87% of corporate executives rated quality-of-life features as important when selecting locations for facilities.
- **Supports Public Investment + Community Growth:** According to a 2020 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Pulse poll, 94% of adults support local government investment in park infrastructure that promotes economic activity and community development.
- **Lowers Health + Insurance Costs:** Investments in parks promote physical activity and wellness, helping reduce chronic disease and saving billions in health care costs. One study revealed maintaining a healthy weight saves $1,861 per person in healthcare costs per year.
- **Strengthens Property Values + Tourism:** Parks increase nearby property values and attract visitors, generating revenue through tourism, outdoor recreation spending, and ecosystem services like flood mitigation and cleaner air.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Research findings from these sites helped inform this study on the benefits parks provide to communities, including economic, health, and wellness impacts.

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Demographic Analysis + Change

Greater New Ulm has a long and rich history, beginning with the Dakota people who originally inhabited the region. Indigenous communities lived throughout the Minnesota River Valley for generations, drawn to the area's natural resources and fertile riverbanks. These lands provided important connections for food, trade, transportation, and cultural life, and the area remains significant to Dakota people today.

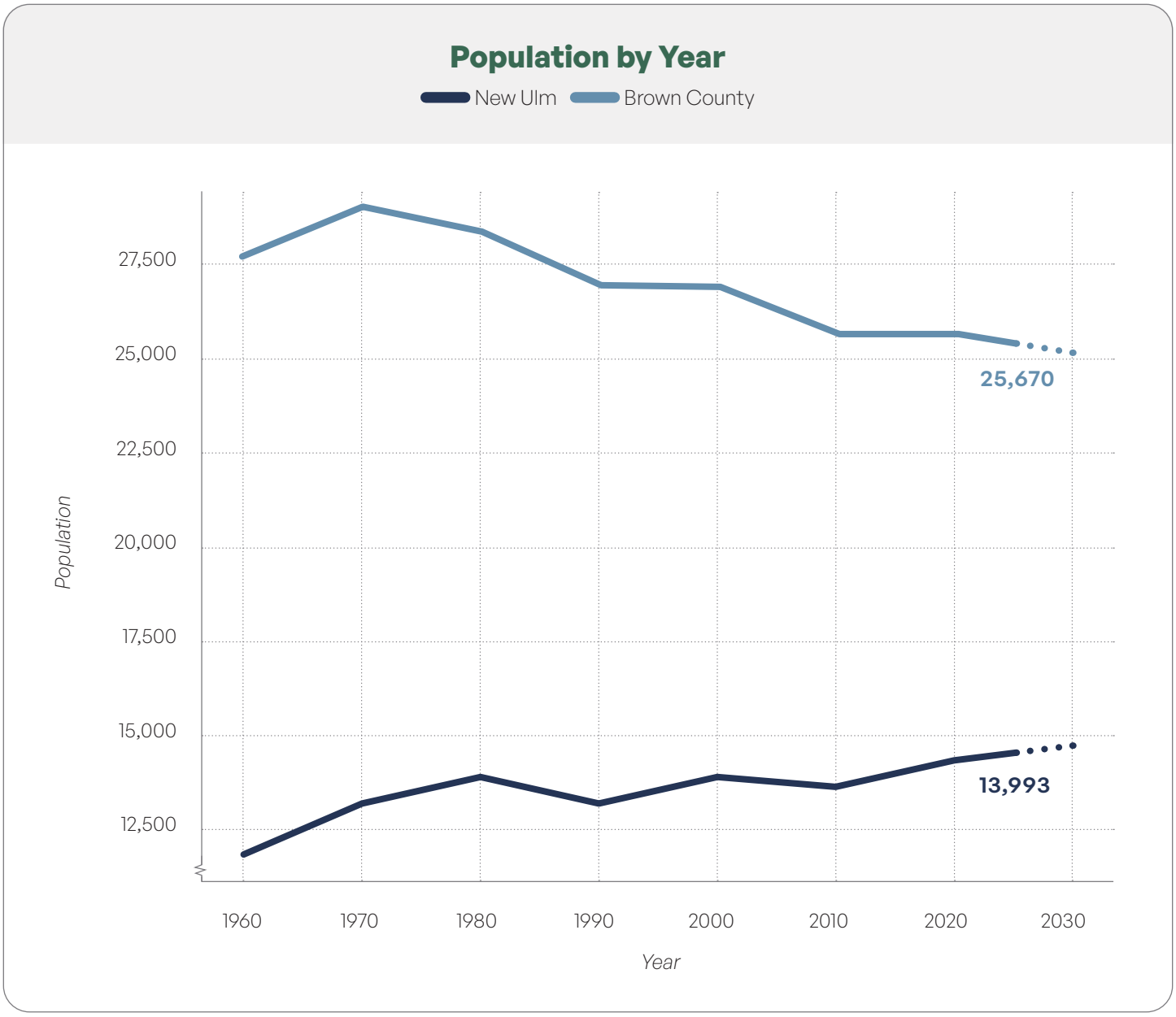
New Ulm was formally established in the 1850s by German immigrants, many of whom were from the Province of Wurttemberg, of which New Ulm is the principal city. These settlers brought strong cultural and civic values, shaping New Ulm's early development as a planned community with a focus on order, education, and shared identity. Through the late 19th and early 20th centuries, New Ulm grew steadily, supported by agriculture, milling, and manufacturing, and became a regional hub with a distinct German-American character that still strongly influences the City's cultural landscape today. New Ulm is recognized as one of the most historic cities in the State of Minnesota, and residents take great pride in the City's German heritage.

A clear understanding of New Ulm's current demographic makeup and how it is evolving is essential for identifying community needs, leveraging local strengths, and shaping a responsive parks and recreation system. Demographic insights provide a foundation for establishing a long-term vision for public spaces, assessing areas in need of improvement, and prioritizing investments. This analysis has informed the community engagement strategy, guided recommendations for new amenities and facility upgrades, and helped determine where and what types of recreational programs should be offered to ensure they reflect the diverse and changing makeup of New Ulm.

This information contains data provided by the U.S. Census, Esri, ACS, Esri-MRI-Simmons.

Population Trends

The City has experienced modest but steady growth over the past several decades, increasing from a population of 11,114 in 1960 to 13,993 in 2025, an approximate 26% increase over 65 years. In contrast, the greater Brown County peaked in population in 1970 and has since seen a gradual decline with a population of 25,670 in 2025.



These demographic patterns have important implications for parks and recreation planning. New Ulm's steady population growth ensures consistent demand for recreational activities, and contrasted with county-wide decline, presents a unique planning challenge for parks. This shift requires a strategic approach to address increased urban demand, potential resource imbalances, and evolving recreational needs. At the same time, it offers opportunities to repurpose underutilized county assets and prioritize equitable access to parks across expanding neighborhoods.

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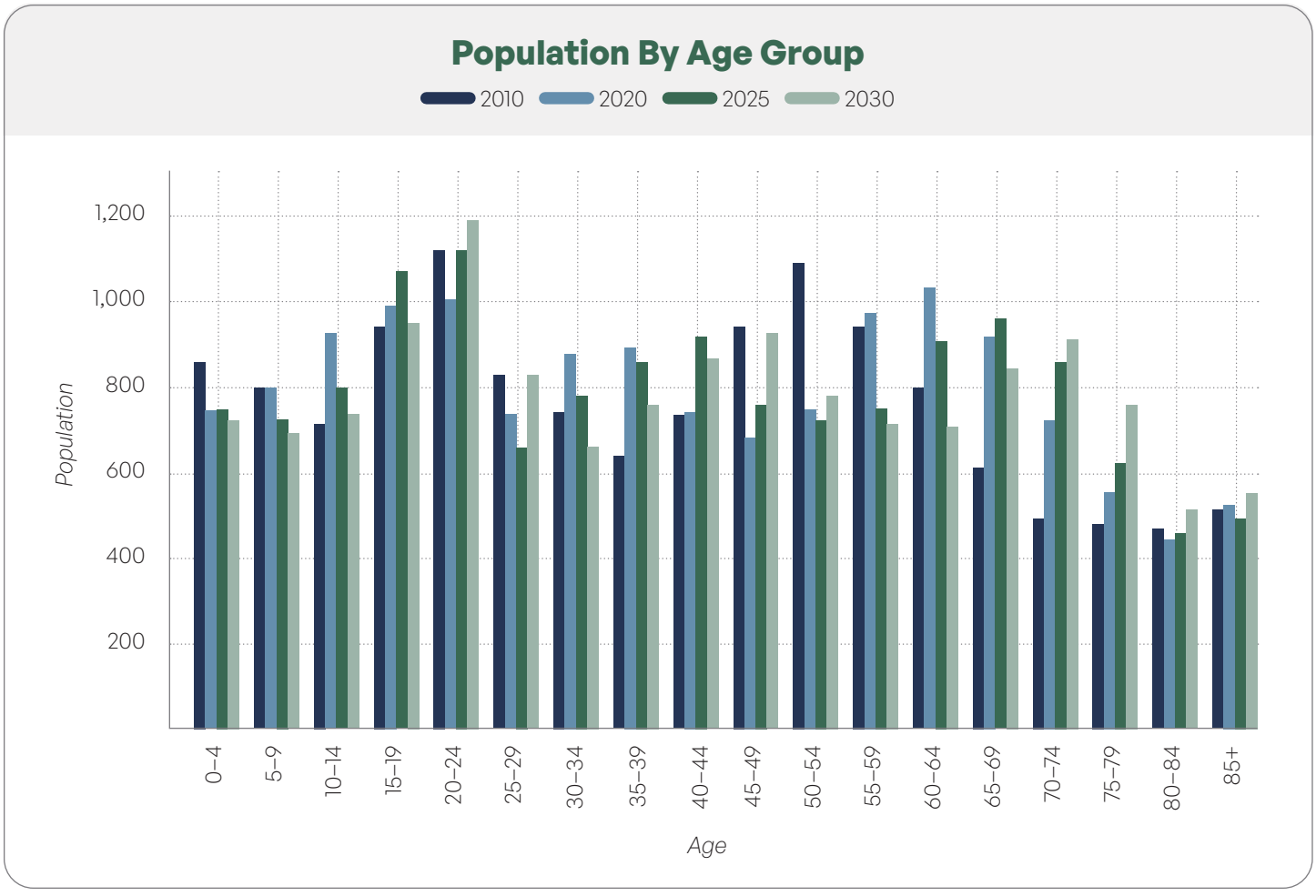
Age

The City's age distribution offers further insights into current and future needs. The median age was 41.6 in 2024. New Ulm has a strong tradition of investing in year-round activities, expanded summer offerings, and programs that engage a wide variety of age groups.



Children + Young Adults (Ages 0–24)

Children, teens, and young adults (ages 0 to 24) comprise 36% of the population, indicating a need for continued investment in youth programming, play areas, and family-friendly park spaces.

- **Children ages 0 to 4** comprise 5% of New Ulm's population. For these youngest residents, safe, accessible, and age-appropriate play spaces are essential. Parks should offer tot lots, imaginative play equipment, restrooms, shade, and fenced areas near seating to support caregivers. Early childhood programming, such as parent-child classes, sensory play, and seasonal activities, help foster social interaction and developmental growth in a welcoming environment.
- **Children ages 5 to 14** represent 14% of the population. This group benefits from a variety of active recreation amenities, including playgrounds with graduated challenges, open fields for unstructured play, and sports facilities for youth leagues. Parks should support after-school and summer programming, nature discovery, and skill-building activities like biking, aquatics, arts, and organized sports. Safe routes to parks with sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths that are well-lit encourage independent play and healthy routines.
- **Young people ages 15 to 24** account for 17% of residents. As teens and young adults seek more autonomy, recreation needs shift toward social gathering spaces, outdoor fitness equipment, skate parks, and multipurpose courts for basketball or volleyball. Parks can provide adventure-based activities, mentorship, volunteer opportunities, and job training programs. Programming for this cohort might include leadership workshops, outdoor concerts, or career-readiness events, continuing engagement and supporting a lifelong relationship with public spaces. This age group also plays a vital role in staffing recreational programs, often serving as lifeguards, coaches, camp counselors, and activity leaders.

Adults (Ages 25–65)

Adults aged 25 to 64, who make up the core working-age population, account for 44% of residents. This demographic represents a wide spectrum of recreational interests, from fitness and wellness facilities to outdoor trails, adult sports leagues, and cultural or passive recreational opportunities. People balancing the care-giving roles for children and parents increasingly value park spaces that serve many needs in one place.

Seniors (Ages 65+):

The senior population, ages 65 and over, has significantly grown from 2,514 individuals in 2010 to a projected 3,531 by 2030, representing a 40.5% increase. Between 2025 and 2030, the population over 65 is expected to grow by a total of 5.8%, with the most significant increase projected in the 75 to 79 age group, which is expected to grow by 22.6%. This trend highlights the importance of designing parks and recreational spaces that support older adults transitioning into more advanced stages of aging. Features such as smooth walking paths, shaded seating areas, and low-impact fitness equipment can enhance accessibility and comfort. Additionally, programming that fosters social connection and supports physical and mental wellness will be increasingly vital as this age group expands.

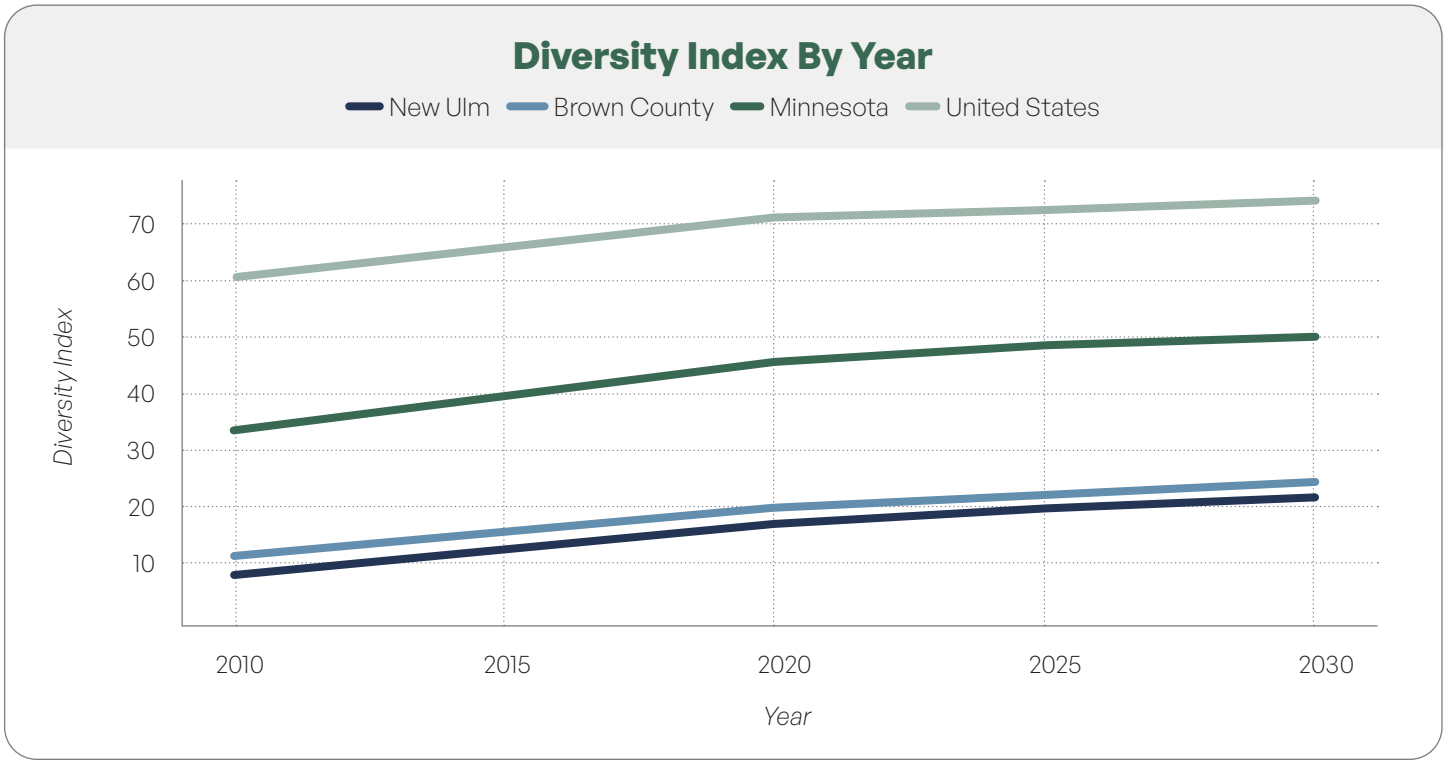
Racial + Ethnic Diversity

New Ulm's population is predominantly White, comprising 94% of residents. The remaining 6% includes 1.4% Black or African American, 1.3% identifying as another race, 1.8% identifying as two or more races, 0.9% Asian, and 0.4% American Indian or Alaska Native.

While these numbers reflect a relatively homogeneous community today, the City is experiencing a notable shift in its demographic composition. Between 2010 and 2030, New Ulm's Diversity Index, a measure of the probability that two individuals chosen at random will be from different racial or ethnic groups, is projected to nearly triple, rising from 7.7 to 21.1, for a total increase of 174% over 20 years. This is the fastest rate of change between New Ulm, Brown County, Minnesota, and national levels. For comparison, the diversity index in Brown County is projected to grow by 120%, Minnesota by 52%, and the United States by 23% over the same period. However, while the City is experiencing the fastest rate of change, it still has the lowest overall score compared to the county, state, and national levels.

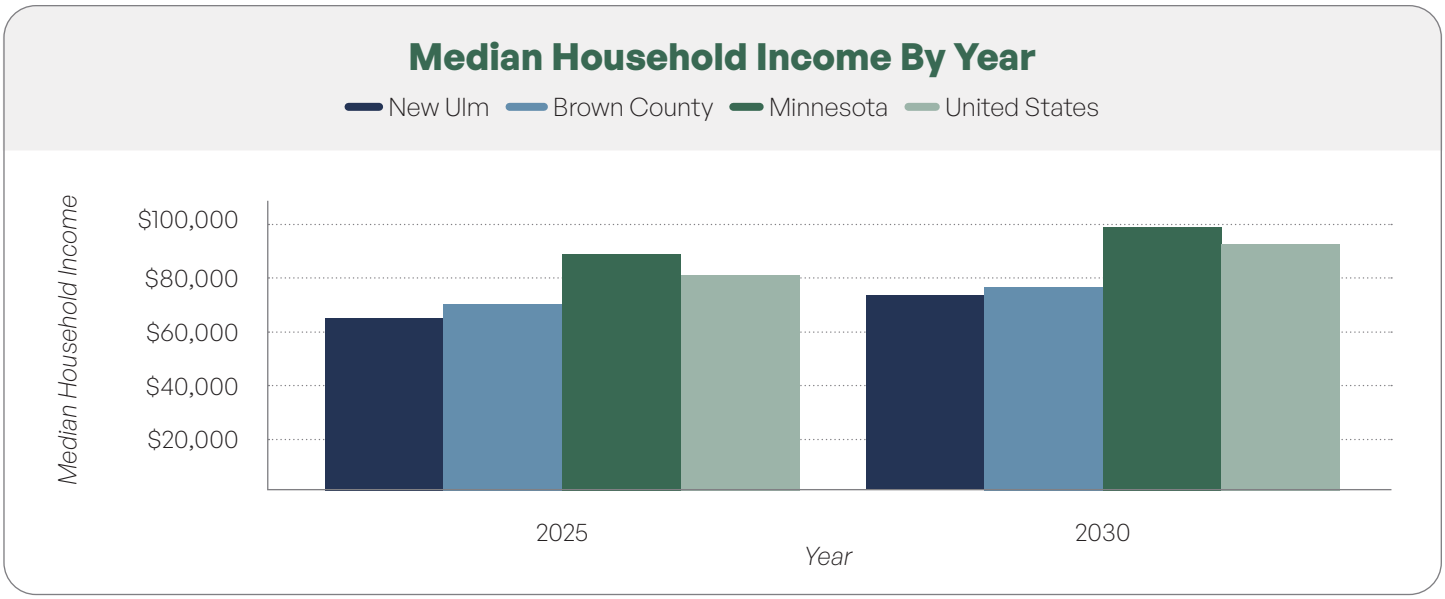
The City's parks and recreation amenities can foster inclusion and belonging by offering culturally inclusive programming and events that celebrate and engage diverse traditions and communities. Multi-lingual outreach efforts help ensure accessibility and encourage participation from all residents. Flexible gathering spaces that accommodate a wide range of cultural events, festivals, and informal social interactions can further support community cohesion. Additionally, community engagement strategies that actively involve underrepresented groups in planning and decision-making processes are essential to creating spaces that reflect and serve the entire population.

- White: 94%
- 2+ Races: 1.8%
- Black or African American: 1.4%
- Asian: 0.9%
- American Indian + Alaska Native: 0.4%



Financial Dynamics

New Ulm's median household income is projected to grow from $65,808 in 2025 to $73,210 in 2030, an 11.2% increase. This growth is slightly below Minnesota's projected increase of 11.6% and the national projected increase of 13.3%, but slightly ahead of Brown County's 10.2%. As of 2023, approximately 9.7% of households in New Ulm are living below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This is slightly higher than Brown County's rate of 9.1%, and just above the state average of 9.4%, but still below the national rate of 12.5%. While poverty rates provide a useful benchmark for economic hardship, they do not fully reflect the number of families who struggle to afford extracurricular activities or recreation programming. Since the City's median household income falls below county, state, and national averages, and its poverty rate exceeds both county and state levels, ensuring equitable access to parks and recreation is critically important. Affordable and accessible public spaces can serve as vital community assets, offering opportunities for physical activity, social connection, and mental well-being. Investments in inclusive park design, free or low-cost programming, and outreach to underserved populations can help ensure that all residents, regardless of income, benefit from the health and social advantages that parks provide.

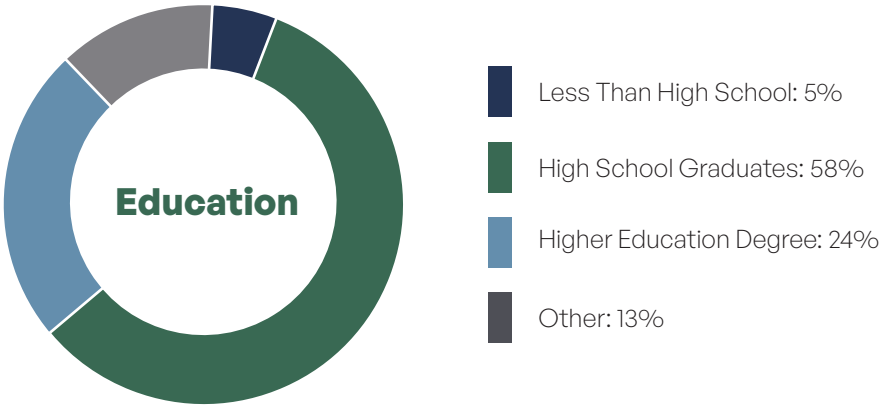


Housing

According to Esri, median home value is expected to rise from $219,873 in 2025 to $271,782 in 2030. The 2024 Comprehensive Plan highlighted a significant need for increased housing availability and recommended expanding the availability and diversity of housing options. As new units are developed and existing buildings are rehabilitated, it will be essential to ensure that park and recreation facilities keep pace with growth, meeting the unique needs of adjacent populations and supporting a high quality of life.

Education

Of residents age 25 and older, 82% have a high school diploma or a college degree, while only 5% have less than a high school degree, and 13% have some other educational training.



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Overall Demographic Trends + Recommendations

The demographic data on the previous pages was assessed to create recommendation themes for the future of New Ulm's Park and Recreation system.

Aging Population with Expanding Needs

The senior population (ages 65+) is projected to grow by 5.8% between 2025 and 2030, with the 75 to 79 age group increasing by 22.6% from 2025 to 2030 alone. This signals a growing need for accessible park infrastructure and low-impact recreation, wellness, and social programming tailored to older adults.

Young Adult Engagement

The 20 to 24 young adult age group is projected to be the largest five-year age group in New Ulm by 2030. This group is often underserved in traditional parks and recreation programming. Ensuring that facilities and activities appeal to young adults, such as fitness classes, organized sports and recreation leagues, social gathering spaces, and volunteer or leadership opportunities, will be essential to keeping them engaged and connected to the community.

Growing Diversity + Inclusion

New Ulm's Diversity Index is projected to increase by 9.3% in the next five years. This trend calls for culturally inclusive programming, multi-lingual signage, staff, or volunteer interpreters, and flexible spaces that support multi-cultural events and gatherings.

Equitable Access

Based on current demographics around median household income and poverty levels, it is important that parks and recreation services be accessible to all residents, with free or low-cost programming, equitable facility access, and outreach to underserved neighborhoods.

Planning for Housing Expansion

As housing stock expands and diversifies, it is essential to maintain, expand, and enhance park facilities and programming to meet the needs of future residents. Parks can serve as neighborhood anchors that foster civic pride and intergenerational connection through community gardens, gathering spaces, and resident-led programming.

Recreation Trends

Examining recreational trends at the national, state, and local levels is essential for anticipating and responding to the evolving needs of the City's park and recreation facilities. As the City's demographics shift, becoming more racially and economically diverse, and as the baby boomer generation ages, the preferences and needs of the community also change. Additionally, as popular culture evolves, so do the preferences for certain sports and recreational activities. Sports that were once in high demand, such as baseball and tennis, may no longer resonate with residents who now favor activities like pickleball. As aging infrastructure reaches the point of replacement, evaluating these trends helps the City determine whether existing or new facilities will best align with community needs. Understanding these trends ensures that the trajectory of the City's recreational programming will effectively meet residents' desires, to enhance their health and well-being.

National Trends

National trends were drawn from publications and data provided by the NRPA, which reflect broad patterns in recreation preferences, facility use, and programming across the United States.

Arts + Cultural Programming

Community and public arts initiatives are transforming parks into vibrant cultural spaces. Murals, sculpture projects, and youth mentorship programs in creative industries contribute to placemaking and community revitalization, and parks are highly visible locations to display art installations. Facilitated through partnerships with local creative industries, an emphasis on youth engagement and skill-building contributes to broader goals of fostering community pride and inclusion through accessible arts programming.

Climate Change + Extreme Weather

Parks are at the forefront of resilience planning as communities adapt to climate-aggravated weather events such as tornadoes, wildfire smoke, droughts, heatwaves, and floods. Agencies are implementing mitigation strategies such as floodplain restoration, wetland protection, green infrastructure installation, and urban heat island solutions. Parks are increasingly valued as essential spaces for climate adaptation, offering shade, permeable surfaces for water absorption, cleaner air, and ecosystems that buffer communities from extreme weather impacts. Aquatics programs and investments in public access to wading pools, splash pads, and natural waterways address urban heat while promoting public health, and equity. Increased access to programs like lifeguard training and learn-to-swim initiatives are expanding participation.

Improved Well-Being Through Connections

Addressing the loneliness epidemic has become a critical focus, with parks providing programs that foster intergenerational connections and combat social isolation. Expanded accessibility to low-cost programming in underserved communities ensures inclusivity while emphasizing mental health benefits and social connectivity. Parks are evolving as hubs of health and well-being, tackling pressing societal challenges through innovative programming.

Adaptive Activities

Recreation activities and programming continue to diversify to meet the needs of those of all ages and abilities. Adaptive sports, such as wheelchair basketball, adaptive swimming, handcycling, and sled hockey, inclusive programming, and specialized recreation opportunities for individuals with disabilities are gaining traction. Transportation to programming, community outreach, and informing people of available programs, can all enhance accessibility. For seniors, activities like short mat bowling and walking soccer are gaining popularity, as they provide low impact, engaging options.

Cricket

Many communities are embracing new and expanded types of recreational demand through the provision of new athletic facilities. Notable is the response to the rapid growth of cricket, with local initiatives like youth leagues, and the opening of new cricket stadiums. This interest is driven by an increase in the Southeast Asian population within many communities nationwide.

Pickleball

Pickleball is rapidly becoming one of the most popular recreational activities across the United States and in Minnesota. Communities are adapting by converting tennis courts, building dedicated pickleball facilities, and organizing leagues to meet the growing interest. As the sport reached 19.8 million participants nationwide in 2024, noise management is becoming a critical consideration, resulting in agencies implementing zoning setback regulations, conducting sound studies, and incorporating sound-deadening technologies to mitigate the noise produced from the pickleballs hitting the rackets, balancing recreation and environmental concerns through strategic site planning.

2025 Pickleball Participation Rates By Region

Minnesota: 3.20%	Brown County: 2.93%
New Ulm: 2.99%	United States: 2.91%

New Ulm's participation rate is slightly above the national average and closely aligned with Brown County, though it trails the state average, suggesting pickleball is gaining traction locally.

Off-Leash Dog Parks

With dog ownership now a priority for 45% of families, the demand for dog parks and off-leash areas has surged, driven by pandemic-era pet ownership. Despite challenges in land availability, funding, and expertise, dog parks with off-leash areas remain the fastest-growing type of park. The key barriers to optimal dog park experiences are land, financial support, and specialized expertise in design.

America's Increased Physical Activity

After years of uncertainty and declining youth engagement, the tide has turned. According to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2025 report, the United States has reached a historic benchmark: 80% of Americans are now physically active, the highest rate ever recorded. This marks a steady climb from 73.2% in 2019, adding 25.4 million active participants over 6 years and 5.1 million new participants joining in just the past year. The resurgence is especially strong in team sports, where 20 of 24 tracked sports saw growth. Eight of those posted gains of over 7%, signaling not just recovery from pandemic-era disruptions but a full-blown revival.

Technology's Role in Parks + Recreation

Parks can leverage existing Wi-Fi infrastructure by introducing interactive wayfinding tools and digital maps, offering virtual or augmented reality tours that showcase local ecology or history, and providing on-demand fitness and wellness classes. Additionally, Wi-Fi-enabled event registration and facility booking, and the integration of smart features, such as lighting, environmental sensors, and waste monitoring, can not only enhance safety and sustainability, but also streamline park operations.

With incremental growth leading to more than 500 million viewers and $3 billion in revenues globally in the next few years, it is only a matter of time before Esports will be on par with traditional sports in participation and viewership. Esports present great potential to attract and offer programming for teens and young adults through creating outdoor or pop-up gaming zones, establishing community gaming clubs and dedicated Esports rooms in recreation centers, hosting hybrid physical-digital events, and offering educational workshops in game design.

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Statewide Recreation Trends

State-level trends were sourced from the Minnesota Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2020–2024, which outlines priorities, challenges, and emerging opportunities specific to outdoor recreation in Minnesota.

Outdoor Recreation as a Public Health Strategy

Minnesotans are increasingly motivated to spend time outdoors for health-related reasons, with 69% citing the desire to feel healthier as a top motivator. Recreation providers are responding by developing wellness-focused programs and forming partnerships with healthcare organizations to promote the physical and mental benefits of outdoor activity.

Advancing Equity in Outdoor Spaces

Efforts to make outdoor recreation more inclusive are gaining momentum. In 2017, 10.8% of Minnesotans reported having a disability, with difficulty moving without assistance, being the most common. In response, a national survey found that 74% of park and recreation agencies offer programs specifically designed for individuals with physical disabilities. Minnesota agencies are working to expand access for underrepresented groups through upgraded facilities and services, policy integration, targeted outreach, and collaborative partnerships.

Responding to Demographic Shifts

Minnesota's population is aging and becoming more diverse. Between 2010 and 2030, the number of adults aged 65 and older is projected to double. Recreation providers are adapting by offering programs that appeal to older adults and developing culturally relevant services for growing communities of color.

Adapting to Climate Change

Climate change is reshaping Minnesota's outdoor recreation landscape. Since 1970, winter temperatures have warmed 13 times faster than summer temperatures, leading to shorter seasons for winter sports and increased damage to trails and facilities. Agencies are investing in sustainable infrastructure and climate-resilient programming to meet these challenges.

Local Trends

The following local trends were identified from responses collected from engagement with City staff, stakeholder groups, community members at events, and the Park and Recreation Master Plan online survey. These insights reflect the recreation preferences, program interests, and priorities of residents and park users within New Ulm.

Arts + Crafts Programming Across All Ages

There is a clear and widespread interest in arts and crafts programming for all age groups. Survey respondents requested more pottery, painting, woodworking, sewing, and hands-on creative classes, as well as community-wide art projects and cultural events. This trend highlights the importance of providing accessible, creative opportunities that foster community engagement and personal enrichment beyond traditional recreation.

Adult + Senior-Focused Programming

The survey revealed a significant desire for adult programming, especially for adults without children and seniors. Residents asked for more social and recreational opportunities, including leagues, enrichment classes, social groups, and programming for older adults. Evening and weekend options were also requested to accommodate working adults.

Support for Bicycle Motocross (BMX) + Trap Shooting

Engagement with user groups revealed strong support and following for BMX and trap shooting within the City. Both activities have strong local associations that lead programming at City owned park sites, the BMX track and the trap and skeet range. These growing activities are both youth-driven, community-supported recreational sports that emphasize skill development, lifelong participation, and regional pride. Growth of trap shooting in New Ulm is reflective of statewide trends, as it is one of the fastest growing high school sports in Minnesota with over 14,000 youth participants. BMX also has steady intergenerational involvement through regular weekly rides at the BMX track.

Trail Connectivity + Access to Nature

Residents of New Ulm spend more time exercising individually, such as running, biking, and walking, and connecting with nature than participating in organized sports. This preference is reflected in the strong community desire for expanded and improved bike and trail systems, as well as enhanced natural areas and greenspaces, including improved access to Flandrau State Park. Survey responses consistently prioritized trail connectivity, smoother surfaces, and access to scenic routes, indicating that investments in trails and nature-based amenities will serve current recreation habits and future demand.

Previous Planning Efforts

Understanding the greater planning context in which the Park and Recreation Master Plan fits is crucial to the success and implementation of this Plan. It incorporates strong past planning efforts and seeks to build upon those ideas, without being duplicative. The following is a review of previous planning efforts, including the City Comprehensive Plan, Four Small Area Plans, Strategic Plan, CIP, Housing Study, and previous park master plans.

DETAILS	FINDINGS SUMMARY + NEXT STEPS	NOTES FOR PARKS AFFECTED
Comprehensive Plan **YEAR** 2024 **PREPARED BY** SEH **PLAN PURPOSE** Established a shared vision, goals, and objectives for future growth and development over the next 20 years. The plan balanced current and long-term needs through a focus on the natural and built environment, guided by resident and stakeholder engagement.	The Plan introduced a framework for categorizing parks based on their function, size, and level of service. This helped to better align park programming and amenities with land uses and community needs. A walkability analysis revealed gaps in access to parks, such as southeastern neighborhoods, northwest growth areas, and some central City blocks, due to being more than a 10-minute walk from a park, indicating a need for infill or new park space. Development opportunities included enhancing underutilized open spaces, strengthening trail and sidewalk connectivity, and reprogramming parks to reflect recreation trends. Public input reinforced these priorities, with interest in expanding trails, improving park access, and offering more nature-based play and year-round uses, with a desire for equitable park distribution and better park identity throughout the system. The plan proposed integrating the framework into capital improvement planning, subdivision review, and future park design. The gap analysis can guide land acquisition or partnerships in underserved or growing neighborhoods. Existing parks may warrant upgrades or reclassification based on their service role and community use. In constrained areas, creative solutions such as mini-parks, shared-use spaces, or programming green spaces may help close gaps. Improved signage, trail connections, and inclusive design should be embedded into future investments.	Pollinator Park Grounds is positioned for a service upgrade through additional amenities and outreach. German Park already plays a community-wide role and could benefit from enhanced programming and visibility. South Market and Harmon Parks support nearby neighborhoods but could extend their reach with modest improvements. Trail-adjacent lands and open spaces in flood-prone areas are strong candidates for low-impact development or ecological enhancement. Future park search areas should prioritize southeast and northwest New Ulm to address access deficiencies and support planned residential growth.

DETAILS	FINDINGS SUMMARY + NEXT STEPS	NOTES FOR PARKS AFFECTED

Four Small Area Plans

YEAR
2024

PREPARED BY
SEH

PLAN PURPOSE
Collaborative effort stemming from the comprehensive plan to develop a vision for four key areas within and surrounding New Ulm to guide new development or redevelopment efforts for: Downtown, East Airport, Upper Cottonwood, and Northwest New Ulm/ Milford.

A vision and concepts were developed for each of the four areas: Downtown, East Airport, Upper Cottonwood, and Northwest New Ulm/ Milford.

DOWNTOWN
Focuses on redevelopment and improvements downtown with a focus on improving universal accessibility, implementing quick wins, historic rehabilitation, rethinking Minnesota street, parking, safe pedestrian crossings, housing, programming, and festival streets.

EAST AIRPORT
Notes a promising location for development as it is primarily undeveloped and is adjacent to areas with existing infrastructure. Intended development includes a variety of housing types including missing middle, an emphasis on walkability and bike-ability, neighborhood amenities and placemaking, low-impact development and green complete streets, and a large airport athletic park.

UPPER COTTONWOOD
Includes undeveloped area south of the City adjacent to Flandrau State Park and the Cottonwood River. The plan proposes sequencing of 400+ mixed type housing units, addition of parks and trails, small commercial uses, and emphasizes low impact development.

NORTHWEST NEW ULM/MILFORD
Offers a unique opportunity to develop industrial uses and grow employment in the City. The area plan guides balanced industrial and housing development with consideration of stormwater corridors, low impact development, and walk- and bike-ability.

The four area plans should carefully be consulted while the City develops/redevelops these areas, as each of them includes parkland or is adjacent to parkland.

DOWNTOWN
Parks within downtown include Schonlau Park; adjacent to Downtown is Johnson Park, German Park, the Skate Park, and BMX Track.

EAST AIRPORT
Parks within East Airport include Maplewood, North Highland, Pfaender, and Highland Park. Proposes a new 25+ acre athletic complex and green-backbone of trails connecting to other routes.

UPPER COTTONWOOD
Parks adjacent to Upper Cottonwood include Adams Park. Proposes a new signature park, neighborhood park, and trails with connections to perimeter trails.

NORTHWEST NEW ULM/MILFORD
Includes Lakeside Village Park and proposes a new neighborhood park as part of residential development.

DETAILS	FINDINGS SUMMARY + NEXT STEPS	NOTES FOR PARKS AFFECTED
Strategic Plan **YEAR** 2024 **PREPARED BY** Bolton & Menk **PLAN PURPOSE** Captured residents' and City Council's vision, goals, and priorities to guide sustainable growth, quality of life, and public service enhancements. Encouraged a shared community direction and commitment to action.	Residents consistently voiced interest in diverse and year-round recreational opportunities that serve all ages and support health, family life, and community identity. Strategic priorities that support parks planning include enhancing recreational connections along the Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers, evaluating and prioritizing trail segments over a 10-year period, leveraging regional amenities like Flandrau State Park through partnership, and expanding equitable access to parks and programs, particularly for teens, families, and seniors. The Plan also calls for identifying alternative funding models such as sponsorships and naming rights, and using parks to celebrate both German heritage and broader cultural diversity. This Plan recommended the City should develop a Parks Master Plan, prepare a trail project prioritization list, and actively pursue grants and partnerships to reduce tax dependence. Partnerships with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and community stakeholders will be critical in activating riverfront spaces, improving access, and expanding programming. Public engagement emphasized a desire for inclusive, connected, and well-maintained park amenities, making these action steps a clear reflection of community priorities.	Riverside parks should be prioritized for nature-based recreation, ecological restoration, and improved access to the trail system. Downtown-adjacent parks offer opportunities to serve as flexible social spaces for events and gatherings, aligning with goals to diversify cultural programming and reinforce the City's identity. Underutilized parks or green spaces may be reconsidered for new uses such as small parks, natural areas, or program-specific zones depending on neighborhood needs. Trail segments near schools, downtown, and along river corridors should be prioritized for safety and connectivity improvements. Flandrau State Park presents a major partnership opportunity for resource sharing, co-hosted events, and expanded access for residents. As New Ulm grows, these park-related strategies and improvements will play a vital role in achieving broader community goals around health, inclusion, sustainability, and quality of life.
Capital Improvement Plan **YEAR** 2025 **PREPARED BY** City of New Ulm **PLAN PURPOSE** A five-year tool for planning and budgeting capital projects over $10,000. Supports coordinated infrastructure investment, fiscal responsibility, and community growth.	The 2026 CIP proposed over $4.2 million in capital improvements in Fiscal Year 2026, spanning utility, street, and alley improvements, surface reconstruction projects, and tree plantings.	Annual investment in tree planting supports canopy coverage, which is especially beneficial in parks and recreational areas. Trail, sidewalk, and intersection improvements are also planned annually.

DETAILS	FINDINGS SUMMARY + NEXT STEPS	NOTES FOR PARKS AFFECTED
Active Transportation Action Plan **YEAR** 2023 **PREPARED BY** Terra Soma & HDR **PLAN PURPOSE** The Active Transportation Action Plan provides a blueprint for promoting a safe, healthy, and lively experience for residents and visitors as they travel around New Ulm.	Following an inventory and assessment of the existing transportation system and challenges, the plan developed a community vision and goals along with a future network for bicycle and pedestrian routes. An action plan is established with evidence-based and action-oriented priorities to guide future investments in making walking and bicycling safer and more accessible. The plan identifies priority routes within New Ulm that are most in need of improvements. Specific actions are recommended for consideration and implementation in the action plan, including creating a comfortable environment downtown and making strategic improvements to street infrastructure that connect places where people live, work, learn, and play.	Provides guidance impacting the network people use to travel to and between parks, particularly the New Ulm Bike Circle Trail.
Comprehensive Housing Needs Analysis **YEAR** 2022 **PREPARED BY** Maxfield Research & Consulting **PLAN PURPOSE** Projected housing needs through 2030 and recommend types and quantities of housing to accommodate future demand.	Estimated demand for 800+ units by 2030, nearly equally split between general occupancy (45%) and age-restricted senior (55%) housing.	The housing study projected the number and types of housing units needed in the future but did not identify specific areas of the City where this development should occur. High-quality parks and recreational facilities play a key role in attracting and retaining residents, making them essential components of future housing strategies. As new housing is added, the demand for park and recreation amenities increases, and development also generates parkland dedication fees that support system growth.

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Park Specific Master Plans

DETAILS	FINDINGS SUMMARY + NEXT STEPS

Pollinator Park Master Plan

YEAR
2024

PREPARED BY
ISG

PLAN PURPOSE
The plan aimed to transform Pollinator Park into an accessible naturescape exploration area. The vision focused on expanding the existing prairie and pollinator gardens, fostering nature-based play and education for all ages, and highlighting monarch butterflies.

The site had evolved from a former rock dump into a prairie with trails, educational signage, and basic amenities. Parking is available along North Broadway Street, but pedestrian safety crossings are lacking.

The City and volunteer group participated in two feedback rounds, resulting in a preferred concept that included features such as a monarch sculpture, themed play zones, a milkweed maze, improved picnic space, and traffic calming measures. The total estimated cost for all improvements is about $551,000, with most work planned to be completed by volunteers as funding allowed.

DETAILS	FINDINGS SUMMARY + NEXT STEPS

Minnesota River Regional Parkway Master Plan

YEAR
2015

PREPARED BY
ISG

PLAN PURPOSE
Provided a vision for park and trail improvements along the Minnesota River, specifically at Minnecon and Riverside Parks.

Recommendations included public water access upgrades, picnic and overlook areas, primitive and boat-in campsites, expanded trails, shoreline and wetland restoration, signage, and enhanced amenities and programming. Recommendations that have yet to be implemented include:

MINNECON PARK

- Twelve-foot wide paved trail connecting amenities
- Fish cleaning station
- Wetland education and overlook
- Restroom (portable and permanent) and shower facility near public shelter
- Vehicular and pedestrian bridge and campground loop
- Five primitive campsites with an elevated tent pad, picnic table, and fire ring
- Portable restroom enclosure by river overlook
- Accessible path to river overlook
- Three canoe and kayak campsites with an elevated tent pad, picnic table, and fire ring
- Five-foot wide soil trail on eastern edge of park
- Carry-in watercraft access
- River overlook and resting area accessible by 3rd Street North
- Bike lane/route along 3rd Street North
- Directional signage

RIVERSIDE PARK

- Twelve-foot wide Paved Trail Connecting Northwest to Southeast Edges of Park to Connect Amenities
- Six-foot wide city sidewalk along front street
- Trail connection to river and river overlook
- River overlook
- Carry-in watercraft access and accessible path
- Paved access drive and permeable-paver trailer parking lot with ten stalls
- Reservable picnic shelter and permanent restroom facility
- Mini-splash pad
- Interactive otter steamship display
- Accessible connections to play container
- Outdoor performance stage
- Native grass vegetation and stormwater management
- Bike lane and route along 3rd street South
- Directional signage

South Market Park Master Plan

YEAR
1999

PREPARED BY
Barton-Aschman Associates

PLAN PURPOSE
Offered three design alternatives for South Market Park.

Design options include various combinations of amenities, but South Market Park is intended to be preserved as a natural area with minimal modifications due to its current condition. For further information regarding this park, refer to the Individual Park Profiles and Recommendation section of this Plan.

DETAILS

Harman Park Master Plan

YEAR
1997

PREPARED BY
Barton-Aschman Associates

PLAN PURPOSE
Provided four alternatives for park development at Harman Park and formed the basis for today's amenities by guiding the design and layout of the park as it exists today. The 1997 Master Plan influenced key decisions related to the placement of recreation features, circulation, open space, and facility improvements, with many of the concepts presented in the plan ultimately shaping the final configuration of the park.

FINDINGS SUMMARY + NEXT STEPS

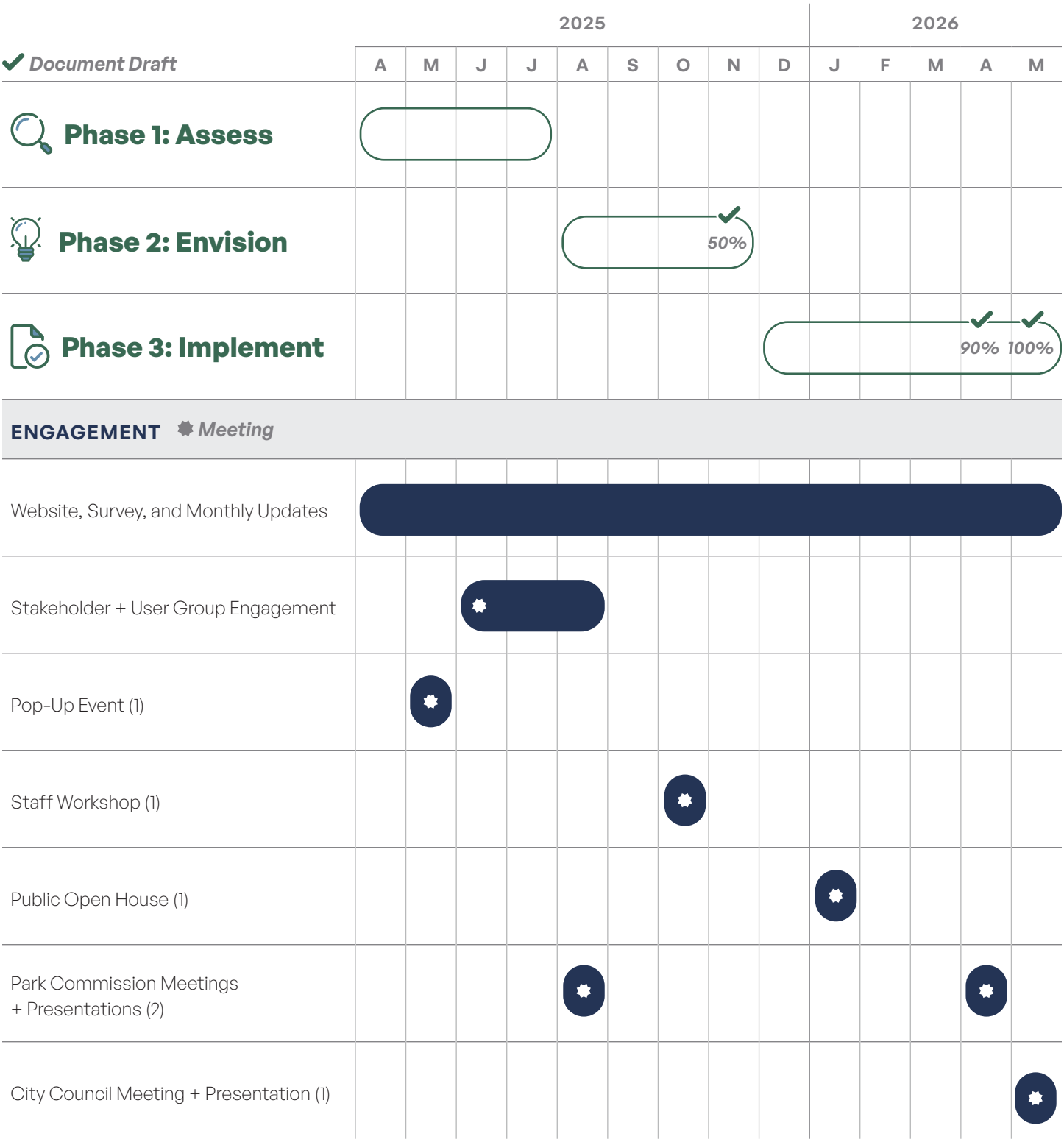
Many recommendations from this Plan have already been completed. Items that remain unbuilt but could be considered for future improvements include:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible paved sidewalks connecting amenities
- Football field markings
- Soccer nets and field markings
- Expansion of the existing building or construction of a new building
- Expanded parking lot with a designated drop-off area
- Crosswalk on 2nd Street North
- Fence along North Garden Street
- Additional evergreen and deciduous trees
- Several hard sports courts
- Picnic and open play areas
- Kiosk or building
- Horseshoe pits

Summary of Engagement

- Schedule
- Findings
- Themes

Schedule


2025
2026
Document Draft
A M J J A S O N D J F M A M
Phase 1: Assess
Phase 2: Envision
50%
Phase 3: Implement
90% 100%
ENGAGEMENT
Meeting
Website, Survey, and Monthly Updates
Stakeholder + User Group Engagement
Pop-Up Event (1)
Staff Workshop (1)
Public Open House (1)
Park Commission Meetings + Presentations (2)
City Council Meeting + Presentation (1)

Community Engagement Findings

Inclusive planning processes builds in feedback loops so that the voices and perspectives of all community members are reflected in the final plan. By engaging residents, park users, and stakeholders throughout the development of the Park and Recreation Master Plan, the City created multiple opportunities for people to review progress and share their input. These engagement sessions and outreach methods were designed to build a comprehensive understanding of the Park and Recreation system and its needs. This approach was essential for developing a plan that will effectively serve New Ulm for the next 15 years, supporting a healthier and more equitable community.

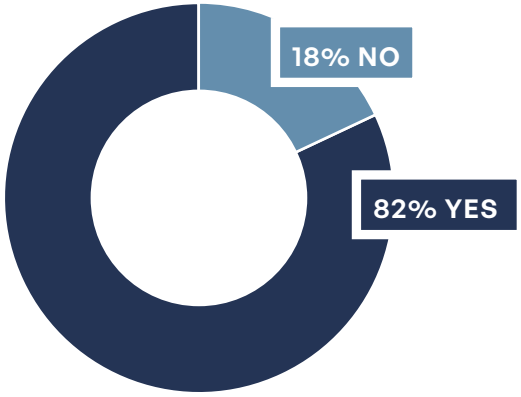
- **Website + Digital Outreach**
- **Pop-Up Events**
- **Public Open House**
- **Stakeholder + User Group Engagement**

Website + Digital Outreach

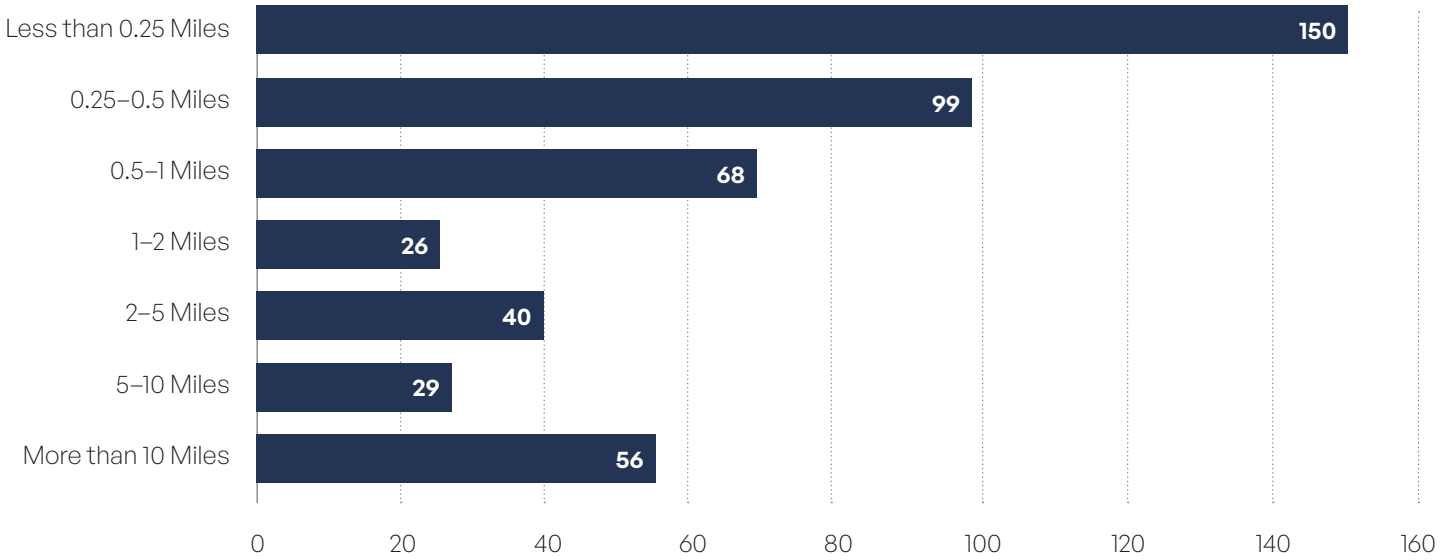
486 TOTAL RESPONSES

To support the development of the Park and Recreation Master Plan, a community survey was conducted to gather input from residents and recreation system users. The survey was made available through the City website and promoted via local channels, including community events, promotional yard signs posted in parks, and social media. The survey was open from June 6 to August 25, 2025 and 486 individuals participated in the survey, providing valuable feedback for the planning process.

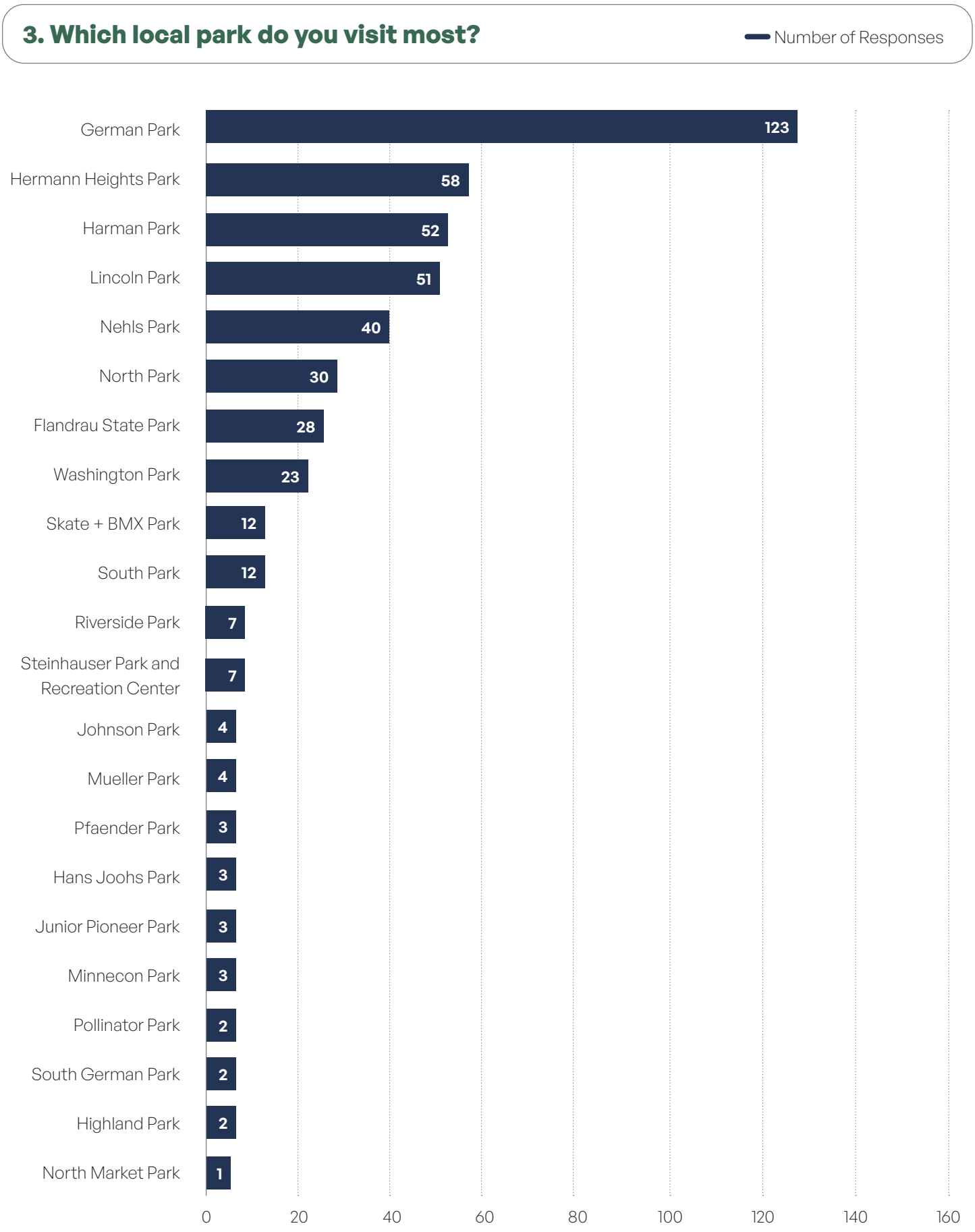
1. Are you a City of New Ulm resident?



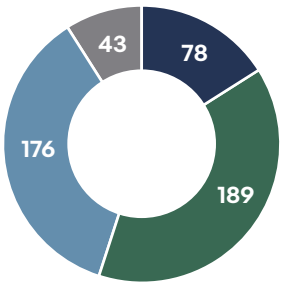
2. How far away do you live from the nearest City park?



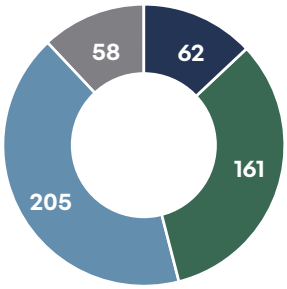
3. Which local park do you visit most?



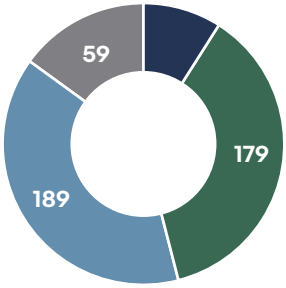
4. On a scale from 1–4, how often do you or your family members use parks and trails in New Ulm for the following activities?



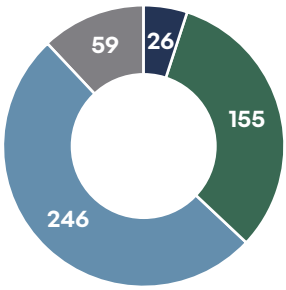
Exercise
Running, biking, walking



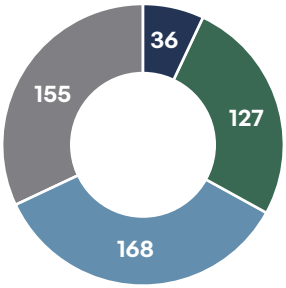
Connect with Nature



Activities for Children + Families



Relax + Hang Out

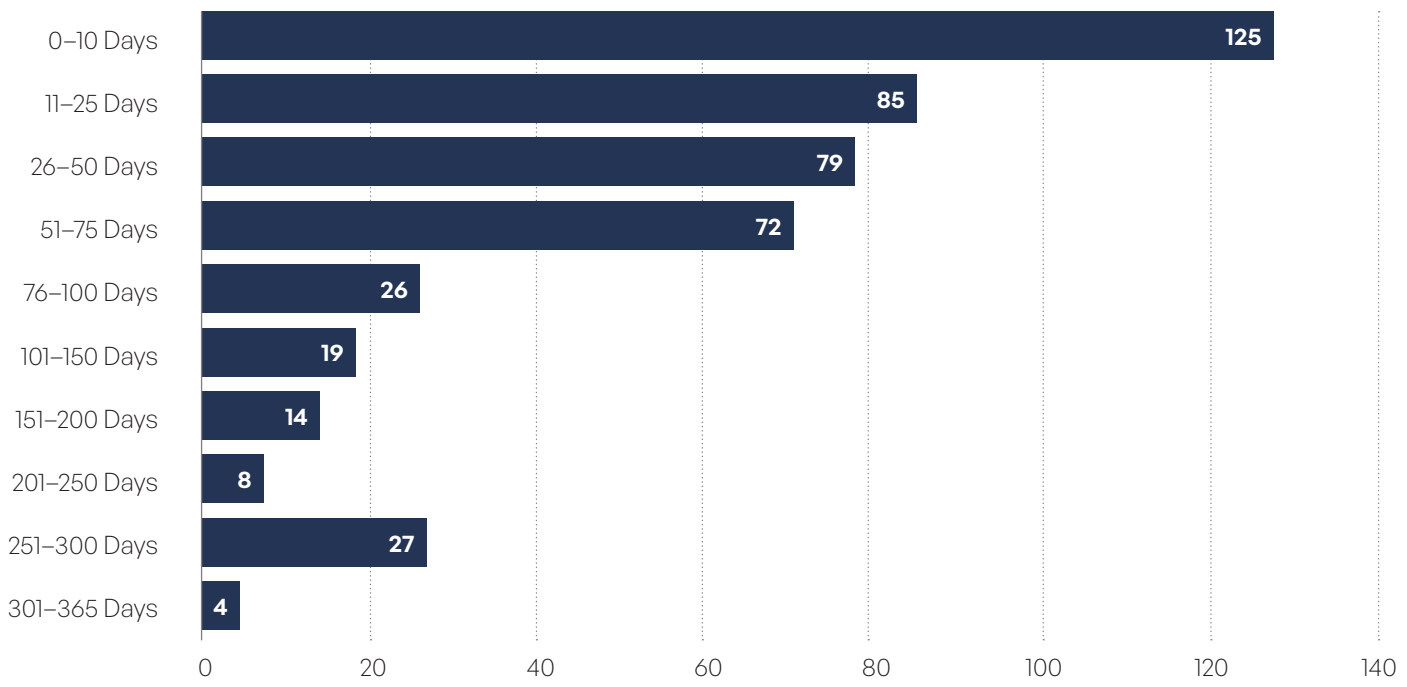


Play Sports

ACTIVITY	SCORE*
Exercise *Running, biking, walking*	2.38
Connect with Nature	2.53
Activities for Children + Families	2.59
Relax + Hang Out	2.70
Play Sports	2.91

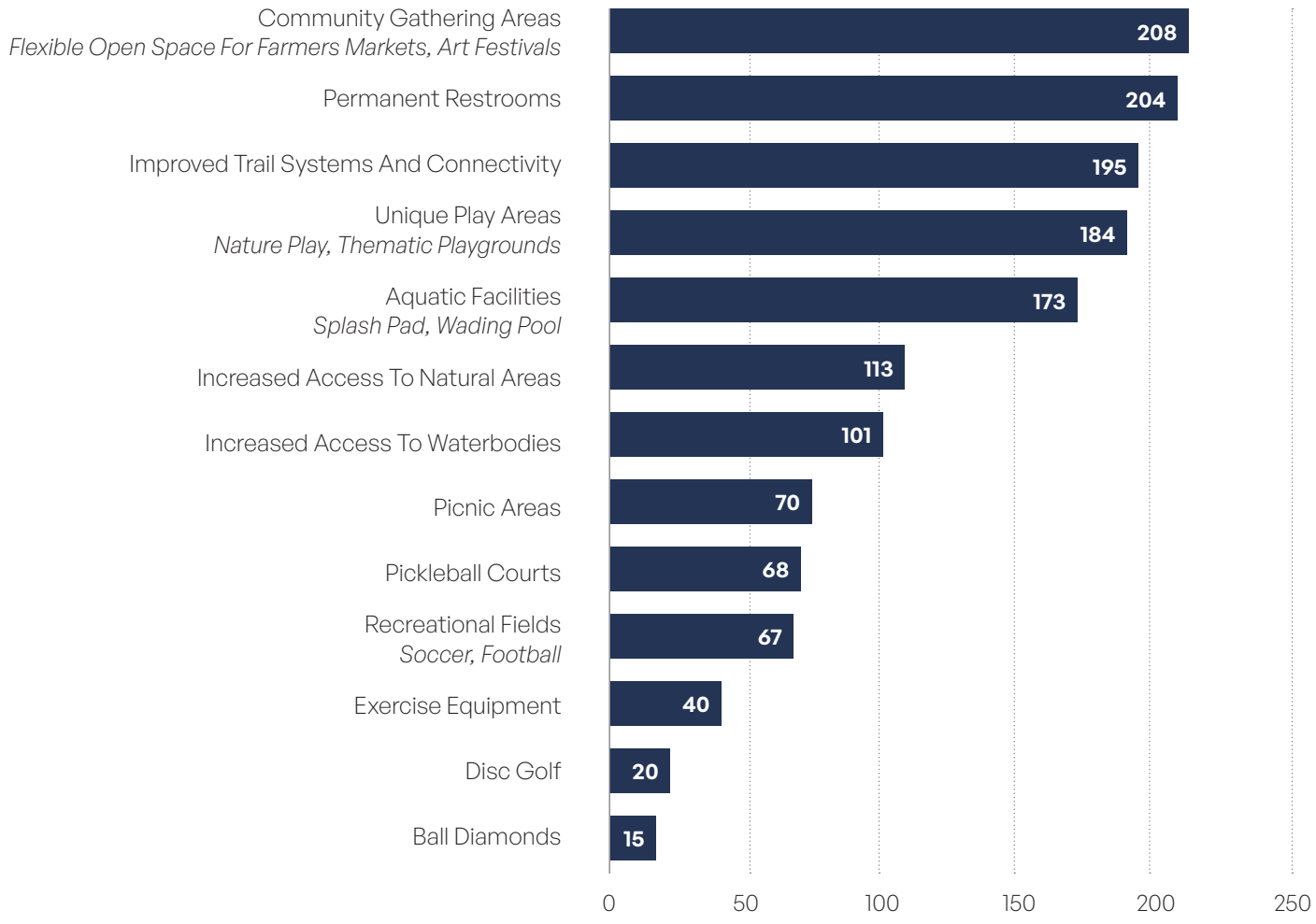
** Score notes average response. The higher the score, the lower the participation in the activity.*

5. On average, how often do you visit a City park in one year?



6. Please select your top three priorities for the Park and Recreation System Master Plan.

7. Please identify the three park amenities that would benefit the community, if added.



8. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the following?

NUMBER OF RESPONSES

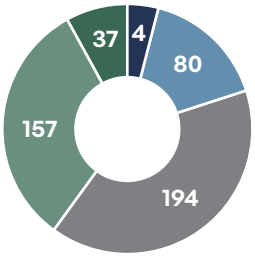
Very Dissatisfied: 1
Current conditions are unacceptable and need major improvement.

Dissatisfied: 2
Current conditions are below expectation and require improvement.

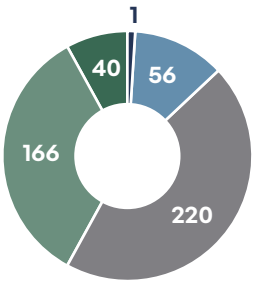
Neutral: 3
Current conditions are adequate but could be improved.

Satisfied: 4
Current conditions meet expectations and are generally positive.

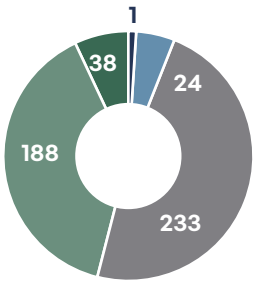
Very Satisfied: 5
Current conditions are excellent and exceed expectations.



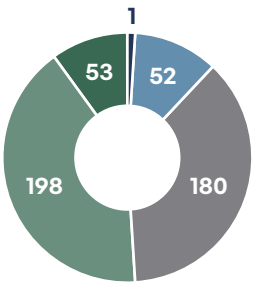
Marketing And Communication Of Programs And Services



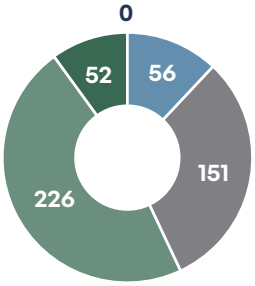
Park Amenities Are Accessible For Limited Mobility Patrons



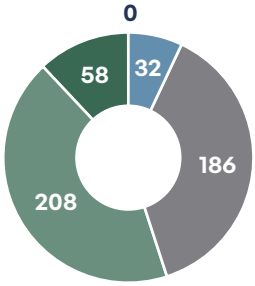
Support From The Community + User Groups



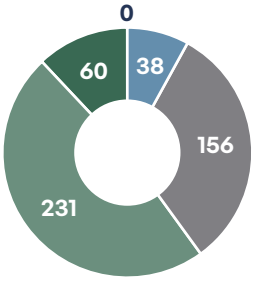
Variety Of Recreational Programs



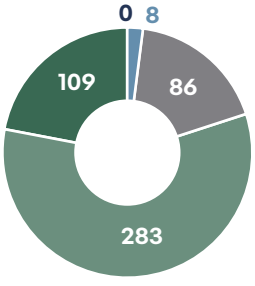
Number + Variety Of Community Events In Parks



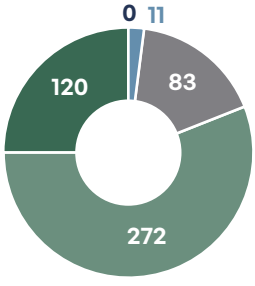
Quality Of Recreational Programs



Park Amenities Meet Community Needs



Park Maintenance, Cleanliness, And General Upkeep



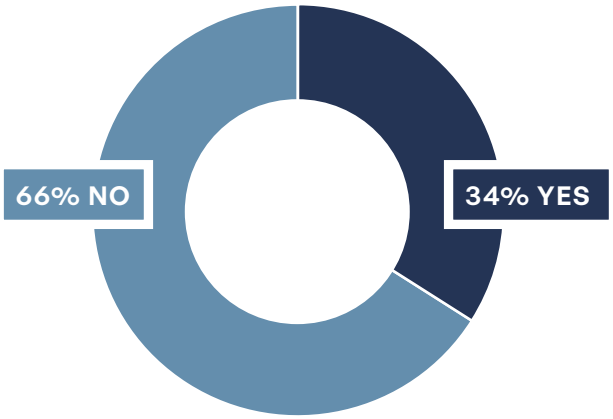
Park Safety + Security

ACTIVITY	SCORE*
Marketing + Communication	3.24
Park Amenity Accessibility	3.37
Support From The Community + User Groups	3.48
Variety Of Recreational Programs	3.51
Number + Variety Of Community Events	3.56

ACTIVITY	SCORE*
Quality Of Recreation Programs	3.59
Park Amenities Meet Community Needs	3.64
Park Maintenance, Cleanliness, and Upkeep	4.01
Park Safety + Security	4.03

** Score notes average response. The higher the score, the increased satisfaction with the statement.*

9. Does the City need a large community park to accommodate soccer and/or other field activities?



10. What is something New Ulm Parks and Recreation does well?

MAINTENANCE, CLEANLINESS, AND SAFETY

Many respondents praised the consistent upkeep of parks, noting that they are clean, well-maintained, and visually appealing. Comments highlighted regular mowing, weed control, and general tidiness. People appreciate that the parks are inviting and safe due to high attention to maintenance.

PROGRAMMING + ACTIVITIES

Many respondents celebrated the wide variety of programs offered, especially for youth. These include sports leagues, swimming lessons, puppet wagon shows, Rec on the Go, and music events. Residents value the diversity and accessibility of these activities, which help keep families engaged year-round.

PARK FACILITIES + COMMUNITY AMENITIES

The high number and variety of parks in New Ulm were highlighted as a major asset. Many noted that parks are within walking or biking distance from most neighborhoods and offer a variety of valued features, from quiet green spaces to sports fields and water features. Respondents also frequently mentioned the quality and availability of facilities like the Recreation Center, sports fields, splashpads, and playgrounds, as well as natural areas and trails. Many noted that these spaces are well-equipped and well-maintained, making them enjoyable for all ages.

11. What improvements or future park development would you like to see in New Ulm's Parks and Recreation system?

BIKE + TRAIL SYSTEM

Respondents strongly emphasized the need for better bike and walking trails, calling for smoother surfaces, safer routes away from traffic, and more scenic, nature-based paths. Many desire trails that connect neighborhoods and offer increased access to the rivers and other parks.

RESTROOM ACCESS

There is a strong desire for permanent restrooms at high-use parks like the BMX track, skate park, and North Park. Requests include year-round access, improved maintenance of portables, and more facilities that are accessible for families and seniors.

RECREATION CENTER

Specific recreation center feedback included expanding locker rooms, improving pool schedules, enhancing ADA accessibility, adding fitness equipment, and enhancing communication about programs. The Recreation Center is well-loved, but users want it to be more accessible and better equipped.

BMX TRACK IMPROVEMENTS

There's a clear desire to invest in the BMX track, including requests for permanent bathrooms, shaded seating, improved signage and parking, and accessibility upgrades. Many see it as a valuable community asset that deserves more support.

PROGRAMMING + EVENTS

People support more City events and programs, especially those that are accessible to working families, older adults, and adults without children. Suggestions included more evening programs, expanded summer camps, and creative community events.

NATURAL AREAS + GREEN SPACE

People desire more native plantings, bird habitats, and nature-based play areas. There's a strong appreciation for preserving and enhancing the natural beauty of New Ulm's parks.

12. What new recreation programs would you like to see in New Ulm?

EXPANDED DIVERSITY OF YOUTH PROGRAMS

There is a strong call for more varied and age-appropriate programming for children and teens. Respondents asked for structured summer and day camps, after-school activities, and drop-off programs that are affordable and engaging. Many emphasized the need for options for older kids (ages 9–16) who may not be involved in school sports. Ideas included nature-based camps, sports samplers, arts and crafts, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and creative play-based programming.

INCLUSIVE ALL-SEASON COMMUNITY EVENTS

People would love to see more concerts, festivals, movie nights, and neighborhood gatherings that bring the community together, particularly those that are free or low-cost. Some respondents desired cold-season offerings and suggested sledding hills, snowshoeing, ice skating events, and other winter-friendly recreation to keep families active year-round.

ADULT PROGRAMS + FITNESS

Adults are looking for more social and recreational opportunities that aren't centered around children. Requests included sports leagues, enrichment classes, social groups, and programming for seniors. Some asked for evening or weekend options to accommodate working adults. There were many requests for outdoor fitness classes like yoga, tai chi, walking clubs, and strength training. Respondents also asked for low-impact options for seniors and beginners, as well as more variety in indoor fitness offerings and leagues.

ARTS + CRAFTS

There is a large appetite for creative programming across all age groups. People desire more opportunities for pottery, painting, woodworking, sewing, and hands-on classes for both kids and adults. Several respondents also expressed interest in community-wide art projects and cultural programming like music, dance, and sculpture.

ATHLETIC FACILITIES + PROGRAMMING

Athletic field and court enhancements along with league programming were of high importance to residents. Pickleball continues to be of high demand, with respondents requesting more outdoor courts, leagues, lessons, and dedicated court time. Other popular suggestions included dodgeball, sand volleyball, adult kickball, and expanded recreational sports leagues for all ages and skill levels. There is also continued interest in BMX and biking, including pump tracks, bike clubs, and more structured programming for riders of all ages.

AQUATICS

Expanded aquatic programming, including additional swim lesson offerings and expanded lap swim hours were requested. There is a large interest in an outdoor pool or water park.

NATURE + OUTDOORS

Residents are eager for more nature-based recreation. Suggestions included guided hikes, birdwatching, foraging, outdoor survival classes, and river-related activities like kayaking and canoeing. Geocaching, community nature scavenger hunts, and educational walks were also popular. Many want to see trails expanded and better connected, with additional seasonal outdoor experiences offered year-round.

ADAPTIVE PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGES

There is a desire for more adaptive and inclusive programming for children and adults with disabilities. Suggestions included sensory-friendly classes, personal care attendant (PCA)-supported activities, and inclusive sports leagues.

13. Can you share your experiences with accessibility in City parks and recreational facilities? Please share specific experiences, suggestions, or improvements.

MOBILITY TO + AROUND PARKS

Many respondents highlighted challenges in navigating parks due to uneven terrain, gravel, wood chips, and long distances from parking areas to amenities. These conditions make it difficult for individuals using wheelchairs, walkers, or strollers, and limit participation for older adults and caregivers. There's a strong desire for smoother, hard-surface paths, inclusive play structures, and more seating along walking routes to support mobility and rest. The BMX Park and German Park received the most comments regarding accessibility.

PERMANENT + ACCESSIBLE RESTROOM FACILITIES

Access to restrooms is a recurring concern, especially in high-use areas like the BMX track, Skate Park, and ball fields. Many parks rely on seasonal or portable facilities that were noted as lacking basic hygiene amenities and difficult to reach for those with mobility limitations. Suggestions include expanding the number of permanent accessible restrooms and ensuring they are well-equipped and open year-round.

TRAIL + PATHWAY ACCESSIBILITY

Community feedback emphasized that some bike and walking paths are uneven, poorly maintained, or disconnected from key destinations. These conditions discourage use by some and pose safety risks, especially in high-traffic areas or where sidewalks are missing. Specific concerns included rough surfaces, lack of safe crossings, and limited north-south connectivity. Respondents called for smoother, wider, and continuous trails that better link neighborhoods, parks, and major roads, along with safer pedestrian infrastructure to support all users.

INCLUSIVE DESIGN FOR ALL AGES + NEEDS

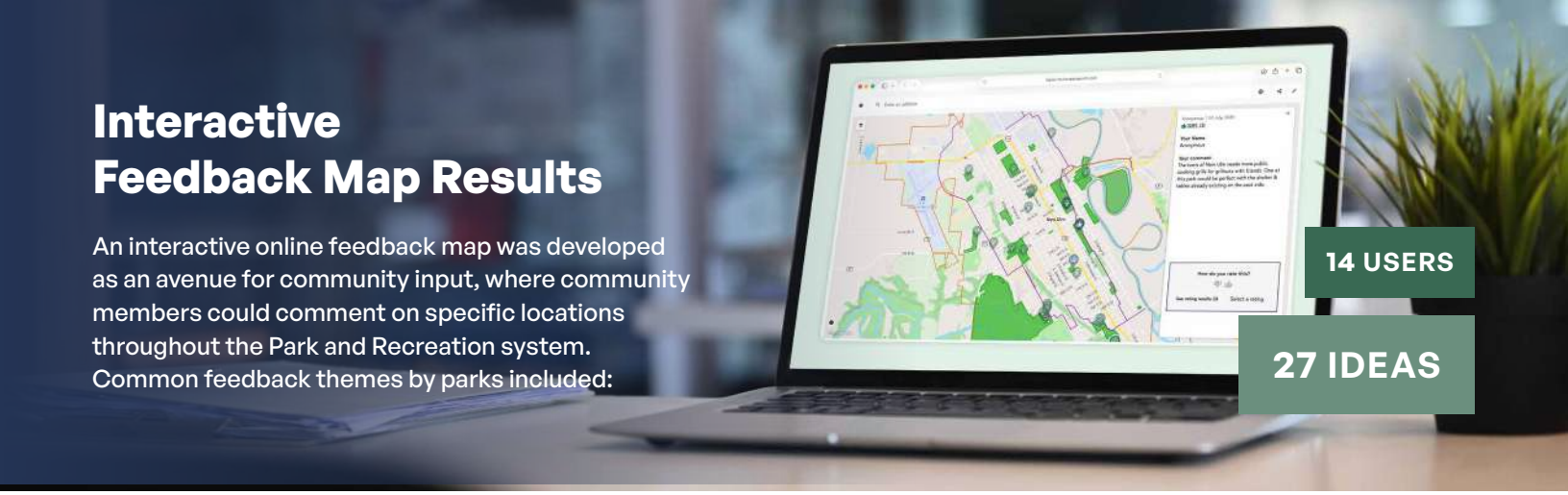
Families with children who have disabilities, older adults, and caregivers emphasized the need for more inclusive features, such as fenced play areas, toddler-friendly equipment, ADA-accessible buildings, open play areas, and shaded seating. While some parks like German and Hermann Heights were praised for their accessible elements, there's a clear opportunity to expand these features citywide and involve diverse users in future design efforts.

ADDITIONAL ACCESSIBILITY SUGGESTIONS

- Increase safety around roads near parks and trails
- Involve people with disabilities in the design process
- Add more braille signage, grab bars, and adult-only locker rooms at indoor facilities
- Improve access to drinking fountains
- Provide seasonal shelters with roll-down sides to extend park usability

Interactive Feedback Map Results

An interactive online feedback map was developed as an avenue for community input, where community members could comment on specific locations throughout the Park and Recreation system. Common feedback themes by parks included:



Civic Center

- Addition of an outdoor skating loop near front entrance of facility

German Park

- Park is well-kept with pleasant gardens
- Provide grills on the east side of the park and additional shade trees on the lower hillside

Hermann Heights Park + Monument Park

- Good shelters
- Integrate additional seating options and grills

Lincoln Park

- Good pickleball courts
- Add more pickleball courts
- Provide shelter for pickleball courts

Maplewood Park

- Inclusion of pickleball facility
- Incorporation of accessible park

Nehls Park + Disc Golf Course

- Good park for families
- Provide additional pathways, especially along the northern side of the site
- Integrate an accessible shelter with a permanent restroom
- Eliminate baseball fields and upgrade the disc golf course to 18 holes, or allow an area to become naturalized
- Incorporate a pathway between the trail surrounding Nehls Park and Entrance Hill Trail

Pfaender Park

- Incorporate elements that transform the area to feel more like a park, such as adding a playground with a water feature, pickleball courts, or a gathering space

Pollinator Park Grounds

- Addition of disc golf course

River Valley BMX

- One of only 10 tracks in the state
- A great place for BMX and community biking
- Incorporate paved pathways, a permanent bathroom, and additional lighting
- Insert visitor signage off Broadway

South Park

- Eliminate vehicular traffic within the park and convert the road to be solely bicycle and pedestrian access
- Add an asphalt parking lot, shelter, permanent restroom facility, and trees
- Good disc golf courses and could further enhance by adding more trees along each hole in the wide-open areas
- An asphalt parking lot may not be necessary at this location

Steinhauser Park

- Include a fitness path into the woods, connecting with Summit Avenue, and provide an accessible pathway that meets ADA Standards

Trails

- Provide additional trails that are well-maintained

Washington Park

- Addition of an accessible shelter house, and updated playground equipment

Pop-Up Events

COMMUNITY EVENT

To meet community members in an informal setting, ISG set up booths at several community events throughout the City to inform people of the planning process and better understand community priorities.

New Ulm National Night Out

This popup event occurred at the New Ulm National Night Out Community Event on July 31, 2025 at German Park located at 200 North German Street from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

At the New Ulm National Night Out event, a project booth was set up. Community members were invited to review findings displayed on boards about current and projected demographics and recreational trends. A large aerial map of the City and each City park was displayed on the table where community members were encouraged to find the park closest to their home and share feedback with staff about the Park and Recreation system.

A project survey QR code was displayed and handouts were provided encouraging attendees to take the online project survey.

Remarks

GENERAL REMARKS

- Residents appreciate nearby playgrounds and overall park coverage, with one sharing that their family gave away their personal playset due to proximity to a local park
- Emphasis on maintaining existing parks
- Desire for a YMCA for casual fitness
- Request to open middle school outdoor track for public use during non-school hours

DESIRED PARK AMENITIES

- Maze
- Airplane-themed playground
- Zipline
- Long swings
- Combined adult/kid swing set (e.g., Sibley Park in Mankato)
- Shoe cubbies
- Equipment for older kids
- Tire swings
- Upgraded basketball courts with basketballs provided

BIKING, BMX, AND SKATING

- Indoor BMX complex (only one in MN)
- Motocross park
- Expansion of BMX park
- Hot wheel track
- Maintain current skate park location

PICKLEBALL

- North Highland Park was suggested for future courts, which are closer to retirement communities
- More shaded pickleball courts, suggested Maplewood
- Concern over tennis courts being converted to pickleball; limited tennis options

POOL, AQUATICS, AND WATER ACCESS

- Outdoor pool
- Extend wading pool season beyond early August
- Outdoor pool for bigger kids
- Learn-to-kayak programs
- Increase river access at more parks

PARK-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS + FEEDBACK

- **German Park:** Play tower and more swings requested
- **Hermann Park:** Swings requested
- **Lakeside Village Park:** Climbing play equipment requested
- **Lincoln Park:** Toddler play equipment requested
- **Pollinator Park:** Additional structured seating requested
- **Riverside Park:** Gravity rail for all ages requested
- **South German Park:** Playground near dog park requested
- **South Park:** Benches appreciated, safety signage for waterfall near South Park requested

CONNECTIVITY

- Connect county and City bike trails
- Sidewalks needed on North Garden Street and near the cemetery
- River access and programming

Public Open House

COMMUNITY EVENT

The open house occurred on January 12, 2026, in the lobby of the City Recreation Center, at the New Ulm Recreation Center Lobby, 122 South Garden Street, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Approximately 40 to 50 community members attended the open house. The purpose of the open house was to provide an informal setting allowing community members to learn about the project and provide input on the draft plan recommendations. Specifically, attendees were able to review the current conditions for each park and were encouraged to add sticky notes with their feedback for each park, which was taken into consideration for the final plan recommendations. Community members were invited to review boards displaying community engagement findings, information about the park system, park level of service, demographics, and future park development. Attendees had the opportunity to speak with project staff members about the project and view printed copies of the plan draft.

FINDINGS

In addition to park-specific comments that were considered in the individual park summaries and recommendations (Section 6), overall findings from the event included:

PARK PRESERVATION + FUTURE PARKLAND

- Strong support for retaining all existing parks and ensuring new development areas include adequate park space

TRAIL EXPANSION, SAFETY, AND WAYFINDING

- Desire to expand paved, off-street trails, improve system connectivity, and add signage identifying nearby amenities such as restrooms and water stations

RESTROOMS + SUPPORT AMENITIES

- Consistent requests for permanent bathrooms and water access at parks, facilities, and along trails

ACCESSIBLE + INCLUSIVE DESIGN

- Interest in parks that serve all ages and abilities, including wheelchair-accessible features and amenities beyond children's play

EXPANDED + YEAR-ROUND RECREATION

- Support for additional recreation opportunities, including a paved pump track for bikes, winter activities, and recognition of the regional importance of cross-country skiing

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP + VOLUNTEERISM

- Emphasis on natural resource management, native plantings, invasive species removal, and encouraging volunteer stewardship through programming and signage

ARTS + CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- Interest in incorporating creative and educational spaces, such as areas for pottery or watercolor activities

Stakeholder + User Group Engagement

18 GROUPS ENGAGED

To engage the many stakeholder and user groups of the Park and Recreation system, a series of in-person listening sessions and an online questionnaire were facilitated. These activities provided an understanding of the current dynamics of stakeholder and user groups within New Ulm, including their respective organization's structure, number and types of users, and how they interact with the Park and Recreation system. Members shared their organization's current and future needs considering how the Park and Recreation Master Plan could support the overarching goals of their organization and identified future partnership opportunities.

Listening Session 1

AUGUST 16 | 6–7:30 P.M.
NEW ULM COMMUNITY CENTER

GROUPS REPRESENTED

- Pickleball Players Group
- River Valley BMX
- Adaptive Recreation Services (ARS)
- New Ulm Area Catholic Schools (NUACS)
- New Ulm City Council
- New Ulm Chamber of Commerce
- New Ulm Bicycle Group

Listening Session 2

AUGUST 23 | 6–7:30 P.M.
NEW ULM COMMUNITY CENTER

GROUPS REPRESENTED

- Sioux Valley Gun Club
- New Ulm Hockey Association
- New Ulm Public Schools
- New Ulm Soccer Club
- The Grand Center for the Arts
- New Ulm Baseball Association

Online Questionnaire Respondents

- Turner Gymnastics Academy
- Heart of New Ulm
- New Ulm Junior Baseball
- New Ulm Tennis Association
- Martin Luther College

Findings

Notes from each of the listening sessions, along with the online questionnaires were shared with City staff for their review. Overall findings from the listening sessions and questionnaires included:

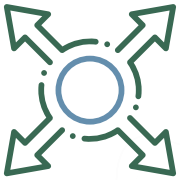
- General satisfaction and praise from organizations about their positive relationship with the Park and Recreation Department. Many organizations noted that the Department was approachable and receptive to their respective needs.
- The Park and Recreation Department is seen as vital to coordinating between user groups, and there is interest by groups for that role to continue.
- There is interest in increased clarity about expectations for cost share percentages for capital improvements and long-term planning tools, including CIP visibility and multi-year fee schedules.
- There is interest in developing shared fundraising resources.
- There is interest in inter-group collaboration in sharing resources and equipment, including activity bag check-outs with sports and game equipment, field painting robot, and ice machines.
- There is opportunity for continued and increased involvement between the Park and Recreation Department, organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, and local businesses during City held events or large tournaments held by sports organizations.

Engagement Themes

The following themes emerged from discussions and input from residents, system users, and stakeholders. The themes highlight the needs, opportunities, and challenges faced by the park system and the City. This information served to inform the development of this Plan.

Maintenance + Safety

- Parks are consistently praised for being clean, well-maintained, and visually appealing, and residents feel safe using park spaces due to regular upkeep and attention to safety features.
- Residents frequently requested upgraded trails with smoother surfaces.



Expanded Amenities

- There is a strong demand for permanent restrooms, especially at high-use parks like the BMX track and skate park.
- There are requests for increased trail system connectivity between parks and neighborhoods.
- There is desire for new or improved aquatics facilities, including outdoor facilities and expanded swim programming.
- There is interest in unique play equipment and expanded athletic facilities.

Communication

- Residents seek increased awareness of available programs, events, and services.
- Improved online calendars, social media outreach, and coordination with local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce is desired.

Inclusive + Adaptive Programming

- More programming that serves all ages and abilities, including sensory-friendly and PCA-supported activities, is desired.
- Inclusive design features like accessible restrooms, accessible trails, and shaded seating areas are needed.
- Expanding adaptive recreation for both youth and adults with disabilities is emphasized.

Environmental Stewardship + Nature Access

- Residents value natural areas and want more nature-based recreation like birdwatching, kayaking, and guided hikes.
- Strong support for improving river access and awareness of boat landings, with ideas for river walks and scenic overlooks.
- Environmental stewardship and management of natural areas is a high priority.

Arts + Culture

- Enthusiasm is present for integrating arts into recreation spaces through public art installations and community-wide art projects.
- There is support for partnerships with local artists and cultural organizations to enhance park experiences.
- Increased art and culture programming for both children and adults are desired.

Community Partnerships

- There is strong interest in collaboration among local organizations, schools, and nonprofits to share resources and coordinate programming.
- Stakeholder groups desire joint capital campaigns, shared equipment, and increased long-term planning coordination.

Parks + Recreation Today

- Existing Parks + Facilities
- Key Takeaways
- Physical Characteristics
- Existing Programs
- Future Programs + Services Recommendation
- Staffing

Existing Parks + Facilities

The City features an extensive recreation system of 28 parks and open spaces that collectively span 320.5 acres, which is nearly one-third of the City's land area. In addition, the City has over 11 miles of trails, 4 miles of bike lanes, and 18 miles of roads with shared bike routes to promote connectivity. The abundance of City-owned parkland is enhanced through one privately owned park, one private golf course, one state park partially within City limits, and a variety of public and private schools with additional recreational facilities. The City's park system offers a wide range of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities that were established at different stages of the City's development. Over the years, they have undergone updates and replacements to align with the evolving needs of the community. Ensuring the expansion, maintenance, and modernization of these amenities remains a top priority for the City as it continues to serve its residents.

4 Miles of Bike Lanes

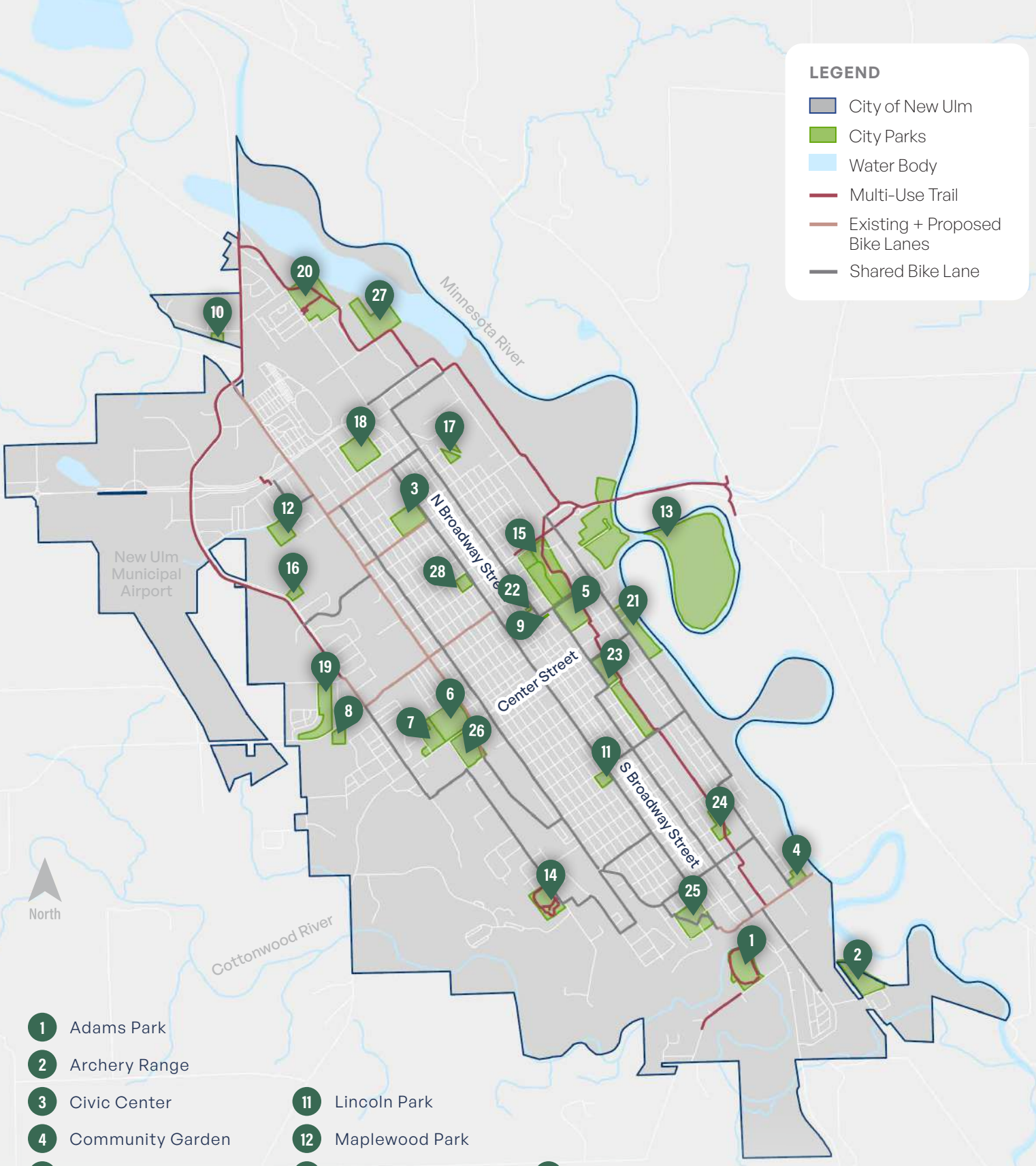
11 Miles of Trails

18 Miles of Shared Bike Routes

28 City Parks

320 Acres of Parkland

- **28** Picnic Shelters
- **15** Playgrounds
- **11** Baseball + Softball Fields
- **5** Outdoor Basketball Courts
- **6** Dedicated Outdoor Pickleball Courts
- **5** Outdoor Volleyball Courts
- **1** Splash Pad
- **2** Wading Pools
- **2** Soccer Fields
- **2** Football Fields
- **2** Disc Golf Course
- **1** Indoor Pool
- **1** Dog Park
- **5** Ice Rinks
- **7** Sledding Hills
- **9** Parks With WiFi



1 Adams Park
2 Archery Range
3 Civic Center
4 Community Garden
5 German Park
6 Harman Park
7 Hermann Heights Park
8 Highland Park
9 Kiesling Park + House
10 Lakeside Park
11 Lincoln Park
12 Maplewood Park
13 Minnecon Park
14 Nehls Park
15 North German Park
16 North Highland Park
17 North Market Park
18 North Park
19 Pfaender Park
20 Pollinator Park + Natural Resource Area
21 Riverside Park
22 Schonlau Park
23 South German Park
24 South Market Park
25 South Park
26 Steinhauser Park + Recreation Center
27 Trap + Skeet Range
28 Washington Park

Parks + Open Spaces Provided By Others

The park system is enhanced by a variety of other parks and natural resource areas that are owned and managed by non-City entities. These spaces provide valuable access to natural resources and opportunities to practice a variety of outdoor recreation activities.

Photo: jrpioneers.com

Junior Pioneer Park

Junior Pioneer Park is located on the south side of New Ulm, on the way to August Schell Brewery. It is adjacent to and overlooks an unnamed creek and the north bank of the Big Cottonwood River. The property was privately purchased from the German Land Association of Minnesota in 1855 and is shown on the original 1858 plat of the City. The Junior Pioneers bought the park in 1923 and still host several community events throughout the year. There are several historic buildings within the Park and a shelter for rent.

Photo: dnr.state.mn.us

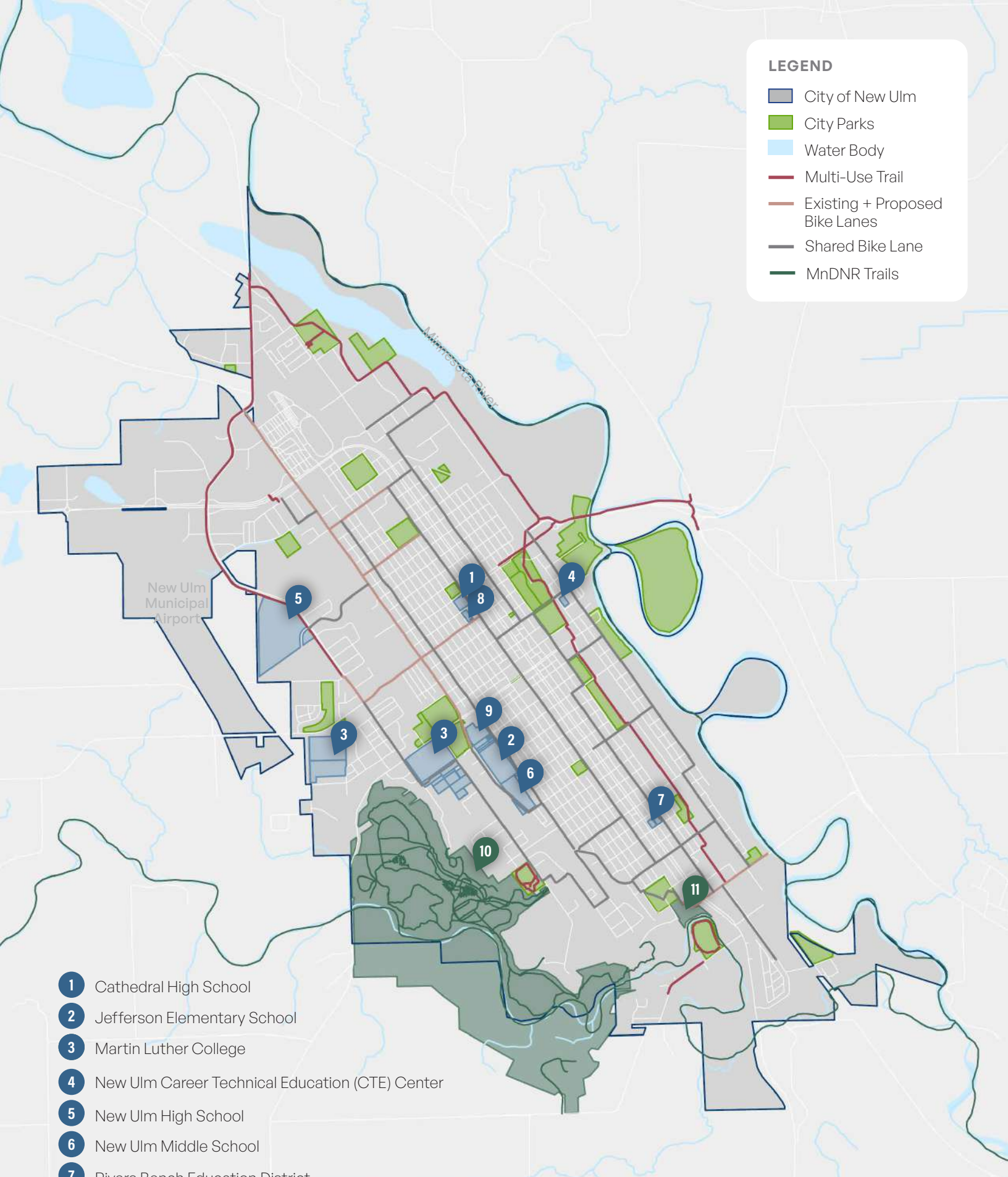
Flandrau State Park

Flandrau State Park is in the southern portion of the City, partially within City limits. The Cottonwood River State Water Trail, sand-bottom swimming pond, picnic area, campgrounds and group center, a natural play area, hiking and cross-country skiing trails, and historic buildings attract many visitors to this popular State Park. There are shelters, sports courts, and outdoor games. Vegetative features include goat prairies, small white lady's slippers, and the floodplain forest. The City maintains a partnership with the State Park and has coordinated amenities and facilities to avoid duplication.

Public + Private Schools

Public schools within the City include Jefferson Elementary School, New Ulm Middle School, New Ulm High School, River Bend Education District, and New Ulm Career Technical Education Center. Private schools within the City include St. Paul's Lutheran School, St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School, New Ulm Christian School, Cathedral High School, Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, and Martin Luther College.

These schools provide numerous recreation facilities, such as baseball and softball fields, track and field facilities, football fields, tennis courts, and indoor and outdoor play facilities for children of all ages. Additionally, Martin Luther College maintains indoor and outdoor facilities for numerous sports, including soccer, football, baseball, softball, track, cross country, basketball, tennis, and disc golf.


LEGEND
City of New Ulm
City Parks
Water Body
Multi-Use Trail
Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
Shared Bike Lane
MnDNR Trails
Minnesota River
New Ulm Municipal Airport
1 Cathedral High School
2 Jefferson Elementary School
3 Martin Luther College
4 New Ulm Career Technical Education (CTE) Center
5 New Ulm High School
6 New Ulm Middle School
7 Rivers Bench Education District
8 St. Anthony Catholic School
9 St. Paul's Lutheran School
10 Flandrau State Park
11 Junior Pioneer Park

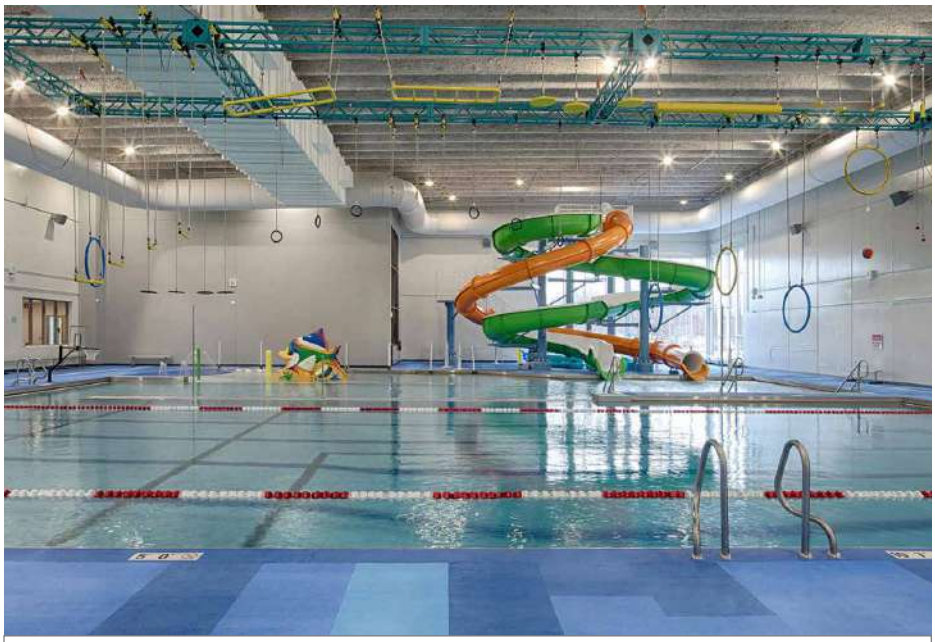
Key Takeaways

The following key themes emerged from system analysis, and highlight the needs, opportunities, and challenges faced by the park system and City. This information served to inform the recommendations provided within this Plan.

Strong Base to Support Growth

The park system has a strong foundation to support the City as it grows. Most facilities are in good condition and are regularly maintained and updated. The City continues to respond to resident and user group input on desired park facilities, such as the recent addition of pickleball courts in Lincoln Park. The Department is eager to install unique facilities, such as the addition of the Ninja Cross System within the Recreation Center pool, Minnesota's first and only facility of this type. The City is prepared to respond to future growth and has acquired or received dedicated parkland in growing areas of the City. It continues to plan for when to develop these parcels and look for future parks, outside of City boundaries, anticipating growth.

Lincoln Park Pickleball Courts



Recreation Center Pool Ninjacross System

Standardized Design

The design of some park buildings and structures have become outdated by today's standards and are inconsistent across the greater park system. The City should develop a unified design language throughout the park system, incorporating best practices in park and recreation planning and design into the language, capitalizing on New Ulm's unique qualities and history in park and facility design. Creation of a modern and unified design language throughout the park system will aid in a consistent implementation of modern and quality design in parks and park structures as these structures reach the end of their lifespans and are replaced. This can also apply to park furnishings, such as benches, bike racks, grills, picnic tables, entry and wayfinding signage, and waste receptacles. Developing a standard palette of options for these furnishings will allow consistency across the system as furnishings are replaced or received through the City Give and Grow Donation Program.

Design updates can be also used to address level of service concerns. During off season months, park buildings, such as warming houses, may be closed and locked due to lack of staff to operate them. As buildings are reconstructed, new technologies can be included to allow off-site options such as remote door locks. General layout of parks affecting circulation and relationships between amenities should be revisited as parks are updated in the next 15 years (see Section 7 for timeline of proposed changes). Small changes to the placement of park facilities and trails can improve the user experience.

Lincoln Park Picnic Shelter

Variety of Benches within German Park

Placemaking Potential

Quality of design not only affects user experience, but it impacts users' sense of place. Placemaking efforts can bolster the community's identity through the process of creating places that enhance the livability of the community, foster community identity and pride, and connect people to the history, culture, and stories of where they live. The City has developed a distinct identity through integration of the City's proud German roots and through events including Spiking' in the Street, Oktoberfest, and upside down Christmas trees. Further, parks can aid in placemaking, as they are a key positive focal point of the community for residents and visitors. By creating a distinct unified design language for park facilities rooted in New Ulm's unique qualities and history, New Ulm parks will grow in their own distinct identities.

Multi-Generational Amenities

As discussed in Section 2, City demographics are projected to shift significantly as the baby boomer generation ages. Currently, a vast majority of the current park amenities are focused on youth play and sports. There are minimal amenities serving the interest of adults or seniors such as social areas, comfortable seating, or individual exercise options. As the City's population ages, it is crucial to ensure park facilities are adapting with the changing demographics to serve the community's needs.

Physical Characteristics

Topography

The City is situated at the confluence of the Cottonwood and Minnesota Rivers, perched on a triangular alluvial landscape. Within Flandrau State Park, the Cottonwood River valley features steep valley walls rising over 150 feet and historic oxbow lakes formed by former river meanders. Elevation ranges from approximately 795 feet above sea level along the rivers to 980 feet atop the surrounding bluffs (MN Topo Interactive Map).

The City lies within the Minnesota River Valley, spanning two major watersheds: the Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed and the Cottonwood River Watershed. Situated along the border of the North Central Glaciated Plains and the Minnesota and Northeast Iowa Morainal ecological classification systems, the area is characterized by level to rolling topography due to calcareous till deposited by the Des Moines Lobe to the west, transitioning to deciduous forest, woodland, and prairie to the east (MNDNR, Context Report).

Elevation Map

LEGEND

City of New Ulm Boundary

Park Boundary

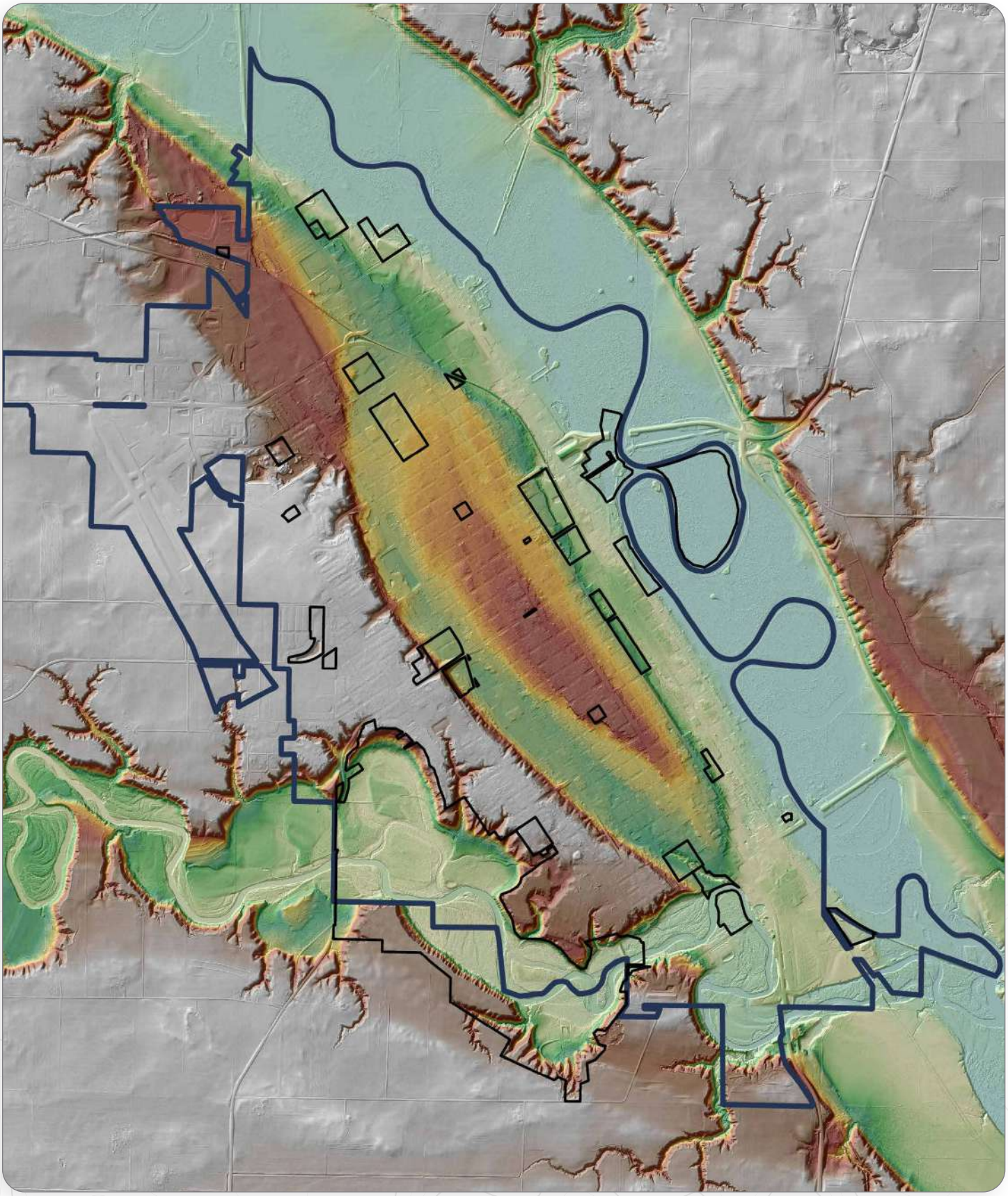
Elevation (M) Value

High: 366.72

Low: 226.63

SOURCES

Municipalities (MnGEO, 2020), Parks and Trails (New Ulm, 2025), Hillshade (MnTopo, 2010)



ELEVATION MAP

Water Resources

The City's drinking water comes from groundwater sources, with 13 wells ranging in depth from 62 to 247 feet. These wells draw water from the undifferentiated cretaceous and quaternary buried artesian aquifers. The primary surface water resource for the City is the Minnesota River, which flows along the northern and eastern edges of New Ulm. Numerous lakes and wetlands are present within a 20-mile radius. The area receives an average of 29.5 inches of rainfall annually with most precipitation occurring during the growing season (Minnesota Department of Health) (U.S. Climate Data).

Cottonwood River Watershed

The Cottonwood River basin covers approximately 1,313 square miles, with 84–88% of its drainage in agricultural land. It is one of 13 major tributaries to the Minnesota River (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 2023).

Minnesota River–Mankato Watershed

This watershed drains roughly 1,291 square miles across nine counties and is dominated by warm-season, annual cultivated row crops. It is comprised of 21 named tributaries as well as numerous unnamed tributaries and ravines that flow directly into the Minnesota River (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 2019).

Water Resources Map

LEGEND

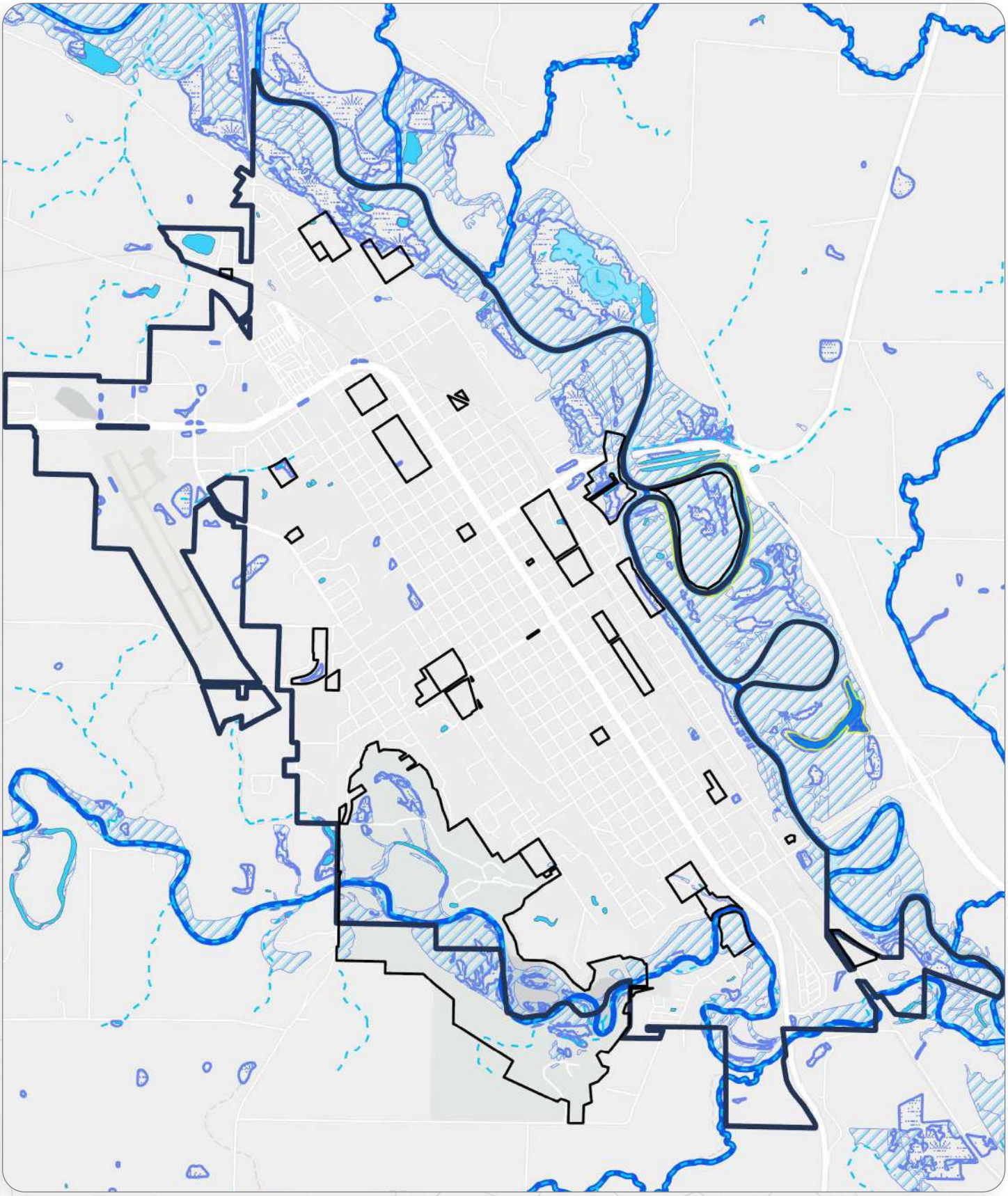
- City of New Ulm Boundary
- Park Boundary
- DNR Public Waters Basin
- DNR Public Waters Watercourses
- USGS Streams

National Wetland Inventory

- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Freshwater Pond
- Lake
- Riverine

SOURCES

Othophoto (ESRI, 2022), Municipalities (MnGEO, 2020), Parks and Trails (New Ulm, 2025), NWI (MN DNR, 2019), PWI (MN DNR, 2020)



WATER RESOURCES MAP

Soils

The City sits primarily on partially hydric soils, most likely due the proximity of the riverine systems nearby. Hydric soils are wetland soils that lack oxygen due to water saturation or flooding. These soils are not likely to be suitable for building, and hydric soil sites may experience flooding. Developed areas of the City itself are primarily located on non-hydric soils, which are non-saturated soils that are not prone to regular flooding.

Soil Survey Map

LEGEND

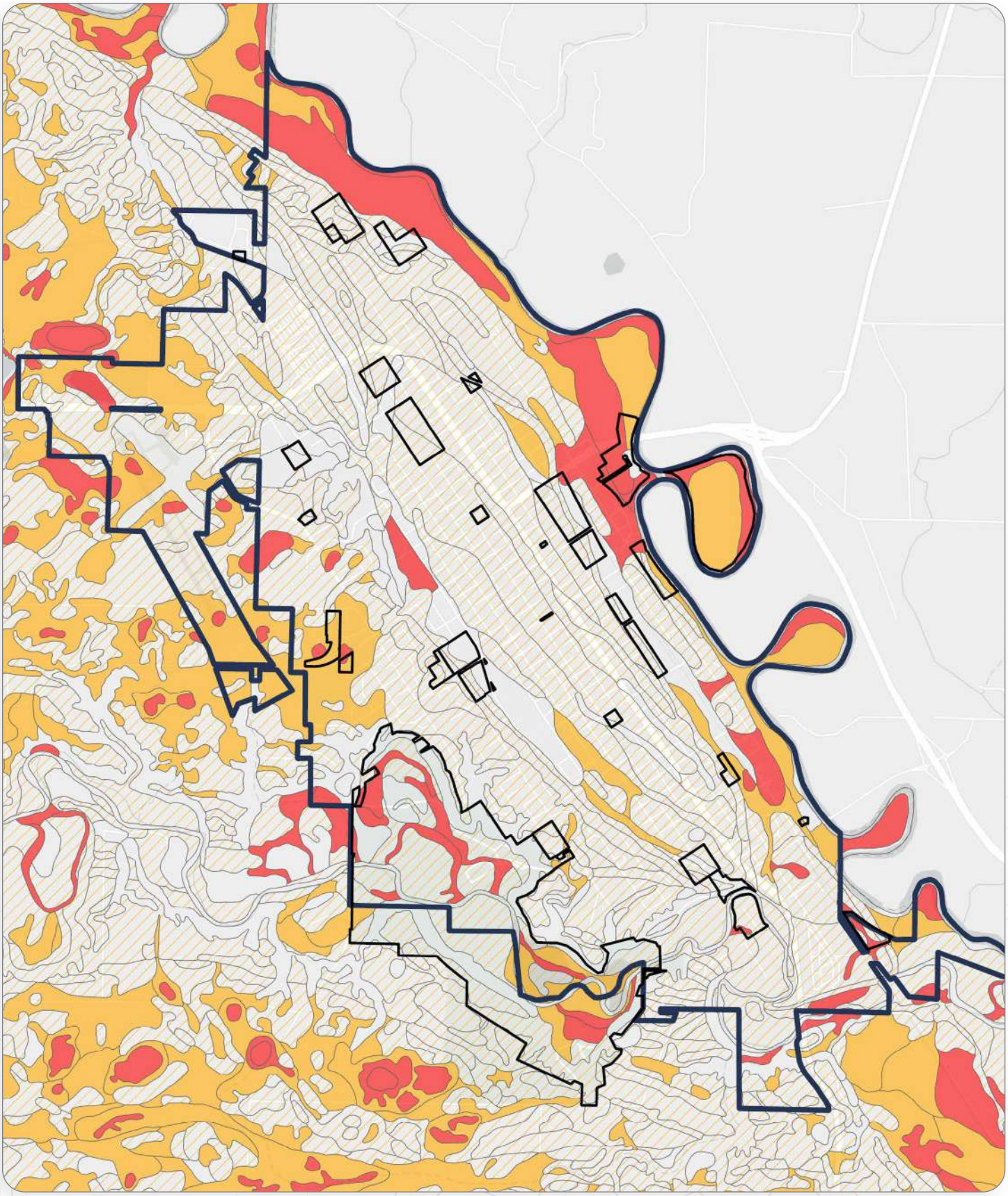
- City of New Ulm Boundary
- Park Boundary

Brown County Soil Survey

- Hydric Soil
- Predominantly Hydric Soil
- Partially Hydric Soil
- Predominantly Non-Hydric Soil
- Non-Hydric Soil

SOURCES

Othophoto (FSA, 2023), Soil Survey (USDA, NRCS, 2014) Municipalities (MnGEO, 2020), Parks and Trails (New Ulm, 2025)



SOIL SURVEY MAP

Flora + Fauna

Historically, the New Ulm area featured a diverse mosaic of dry and wet prairies, bottomland hardwood forests, and mesic woodlands on north-facing slopes. These ecosystems supported a rich array of plant and animal species. European settlement and agricultural expansion have fragmented and degraded much of these natural habitats, allowing invasive species to establish. Despite these challenges, small remnants of historic plant communities persist around New Ulm. To enhance ecology, these historical vegetation patterns serve as references for habitat restoration projects within the City's parks.

The region hosts a variety of wildlife species. Flandrau State Park, located on the southern edge of New Ulm, has recorded up to 158 bird species, making it a notable bird-watching destination. Additionally, the Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers support diverse fish populations, including northern pike, walleye, sturgeon, channel catfish, and sucker. The presence of these species indicates ongoing ecological recovery and the importance of continued conservation efforts.

Pre-European Vegetation Map

LEGEND

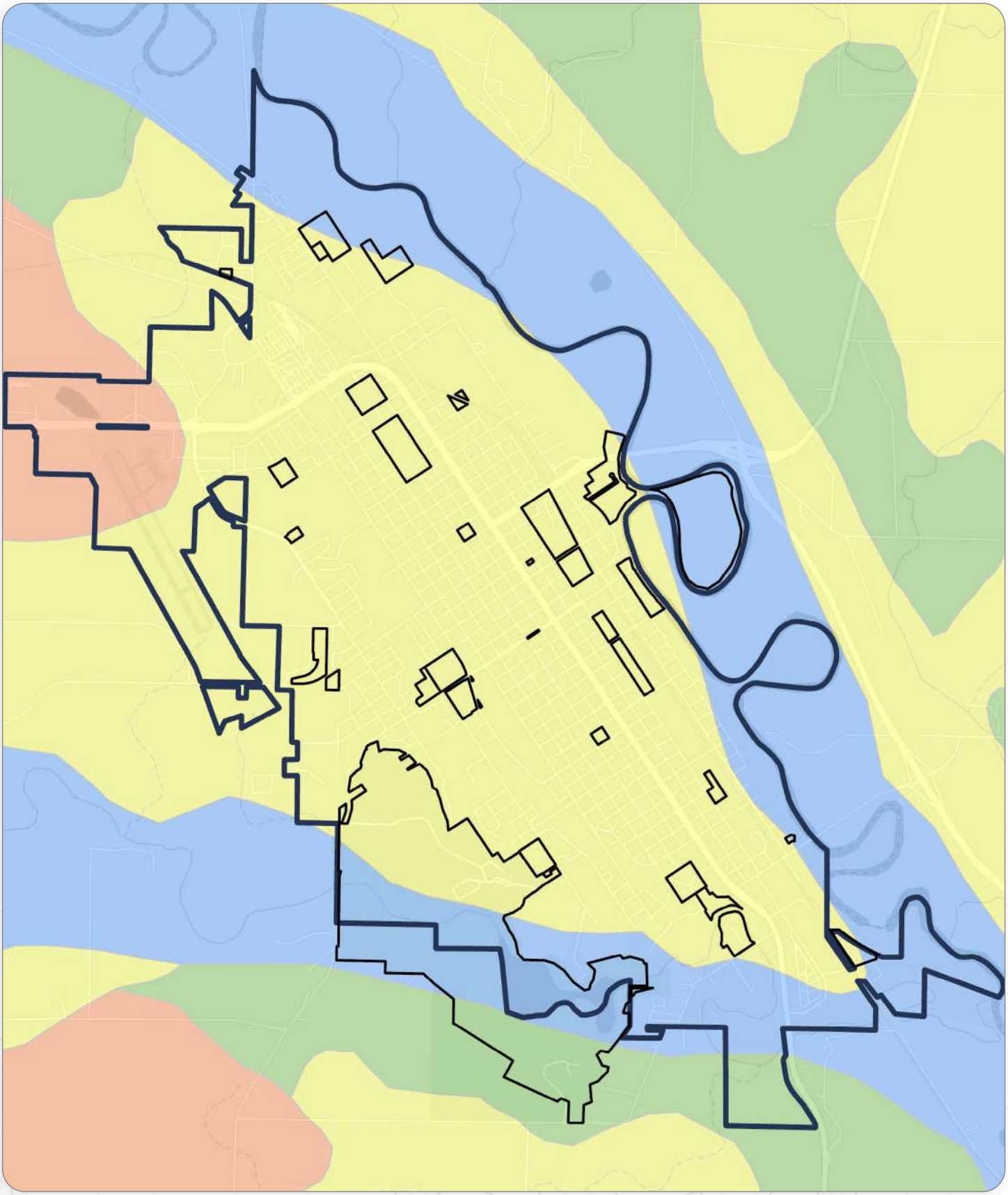
- City of New Ulm Boundary
- Park Boundary

Presettlement Vegetation

- Big Woods - Hardwoods (oak, maple, basswood, hickory)
- Prairie
- River Bottom Forest
- Wet Prairie

SOURCES

Othophoto (ESRI, 2022), Municipalities (MnGEO, 2020), Parks and Trails (New Ulm, 2025), Vegetation (MnDNR, 2020)

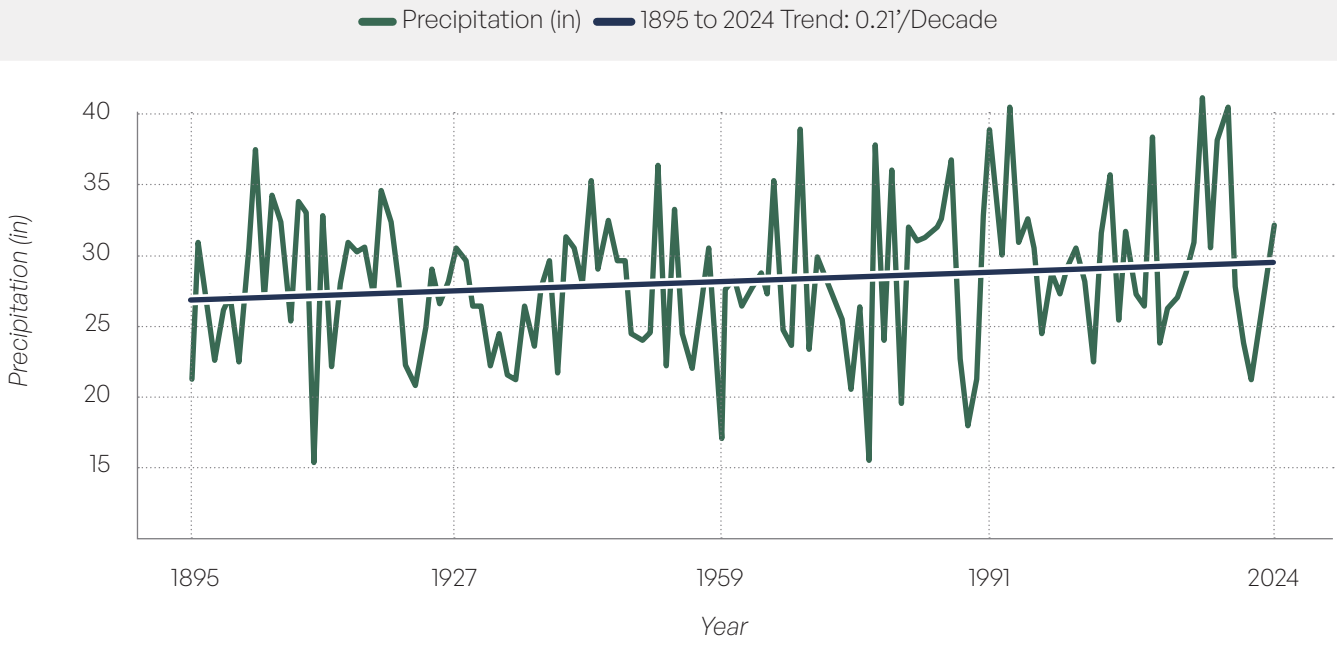


PRE-EUROPEAN VEGETATION MAP

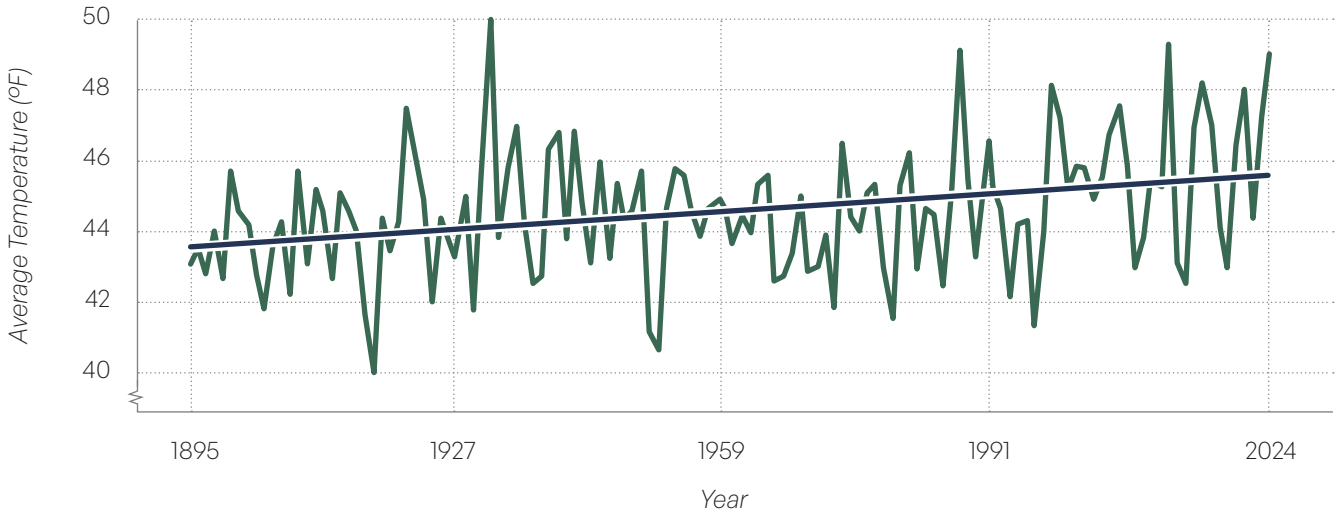
Climate + Precipitation

Throughout the seasons, summers are warm to hot, often accompanied by thunderstorms, while winters are cold and snowy, though generally less so than areas further east in Minnesota. Seasonal temperature averages range from lows near 5 degrees Fahrenheit in January to highs around 85 degrees Fahrenheit in July. The growing season typically spans from late May to early September (GLISA).

Precipitation for Minnesota River - Mankato, January–December



Average Temperature for Minnesota River - Mankato, January–December



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Existing Programs

The Park and Recreation Department offers a variety of programs for youth, adults, and seniors. A priority is to provide program offerings that serve differing needs and desires. Additionally, the City collaborates with schools, colleges, and the school districts' community education department to provide a variety of learning opportunities for residents. Each season, the City publishes a brochure highlighting the upcoming program opportunities and events. The City-owned community and recreation centers offer many drop-in programs and fitness opportunities tailoring to different interests.

Incorporating recreational programs in City-owned parks fosters community engagement, promoting social interaction and well-being. Recreational programming encourages physical activity, contributing to healthier lifestyles among residents. Additionally, these programs enhance the overall appeal and utilization of public green spaces, promoting a sense of belonging and civic pride.

This analysis does not include programming offered through local schools or other service providers. Recommendations related to programming should be considered in coordination with recreation program providers to avoid duplication and to identify potential partnership opportunities.

Program Offerings By Age Group In New Ulm

AGE GROUP	PROGRAMS OFFERED	PROGRAMMING GAPS
Early Childhood *Ages 0–5*	Parent and Child Aquatics, Preschool Aquatics (ages 1–3), Tot Swim, Tiny Tots T-Ball, Minor League T-Ball, Itty Bitty Camp, Parents and Child Youth Pottery, Youth Soccer (ages 3–4 with an adult), Easter Egg Hunt, Floating Pumpkin Patch, Pool Eggstravaganza, and more.	Programs such as nature and exploration play, music and movement classes, and structured indoor play programs could enhance this age group's offerings.
Youth *Ages 6–12*	Learn-to-Swim Levels 1–6, Swim Club, Major League T-Ball, Youth Soccer, Youth Sand Volleyball, Youth Flag Football, Youth Volleyball, Youth Tennis, Agility Games, Explorer Camp, Children's Theater, Youth Pottery, Youth Ceramics, Puppet Wagon, Rec on the Go, and more.	Fall offers the fewest youth program options. Programs like performing arts and STEM activities are the least represented.
Teen *Ages 13–17*	Swim Club, Agility and Strength, Rock on Ice, Advanced Youth Pottery, Youth Volleyball, Children's Theater, Rec on the Go, and more.	There is limited teen programming, particularly in creative arts, social events, leadership, e-sports or board game clubs, and STEM activities. Summer offerings are the lowest for this age group.
Adult *Ages 18+*	Adult Swim Lessons, Lifeguard Training, Adult Pottery, Adult Tennis League, Adult Volleyball Leagues, Adult Racquetball League, Adult Basketball League, Co-Rec Sand Volleyball League, Broomball, Personal Training, Health Quest/Weight Loss Challenge, Group Fitness Classes, and more.	Summer programming is sparse, particularly for adults without children. Additionally, senior programming, like enrichment workshops and social activities, as well as enhanced programming for children and adults with disabilities, could improve the recreation program offerings.
All Ages	Open Swim, Lap Swim, Open Gym, Open Skate, Open Hockey, Open Pickleball, Indoor Playground, Puppet Wagon, Rec on the Go, Concerts in the Park, Garage Sales, Santa Skate, Rock on Ice, Pool Eggstravaganza, Floating Pumpkin Patch, and more.	Special events are limited during cold weather months.

Programming Management

Adult Programming

City-offered adult athletic programs are managed and operated by the Park and Recreation Department, with support from ARS and Community and Seniors Together (CAST) for teens and adults with disabilities and senior citizens, respectively. ARS engages teens ages 15 and older and adults with disabilities in the Brown County area. They receive a stipend and programming space from the Park and Recreation Department. Operating from the New Ulm Community Center, CAST provides social, educational, recreational, and informational programming, and other services for seniors.

Youth Sports

Youth sports are operated by local athletic associations, clubs, and schools, including:

- Martin Luther College
- New Ulm Baseball Association
- New Ulm Basketball Association
- New Ulm Catholic Schools
- New Ulm Community Education
- New Ulm Fastpitch
- New Ulm Figure Skating Club
- New Ulm Junior Baseball
- New Ulm Pickleball
- New Ulm Public Schools
- New Ulm Sleepy Eye (NUSE) Hockey Association
- New Ulm Soccer Club
- New Ulm Tennis Association
- New Ulm Youth Football
- River Valley BMX
- St. Paul's Elementary
- Sioux Valley Gun Club
- Turner Gymnastics Academy

In addition to providing youth programming, these organizations typically offer programming for a variety of ages, including adults ages 18 and above and seniors.

The Park and Recreation Department meets with clubs and associations annually to discuss specific needs and any changes in operation from the previous year.

Additional findings from engagement with clubs and associations can be found in Section 3 - Summary of Engagement and partnership recommendations in Section 5–Guidelines for Parks and Facilities.

Additional Public, Private, and Non-Profit Recreation Facilities and Service Providers

The following includes an overview private, public, and non-profit recreation facilities and service providers surrounding the City. Other facilities and service providers may be available in addition to those listed below.

CATEGORY	PROVIDERS
Fitness	Alliance Training Center LLC
	Anytime Fitness
	New Ulm Fitness
	Slimmer Weigh Weight Loss and Body Wrap Center
	Snap Fitness
Yoga	Healing Routines
	Power Haus Yoga
	Yoga with Manda
Martial Arts	Fight Squad Mixed Martial Arts (MMA)
	New Ulm ATA Martial Arts
	NU Jitsu Brazilian Jiu Jitsu
	Seiyo Shorin-ryu Karate & Kobudo - Leach Hanshi
Gymnastics + Dance	Just for Kix
	Turner Gymnastics Academy
Golf	New Ulm Country Club
Non-Profits	New Ulm WELLness Collective

Future Programs + Services Recommendations

Recreation Program Recommendations

Analysis of the recreation programming revealed that the City offers a well-rounded array of programs through their staff and facilities or through strategic partnerships. As the population increases and becomes more diverse, the Department should continue to regularly re-evaluate program offerings and the offerings of other area providers to ensure they are meeting local demand or to identify any areas that may be exceeding local demand. When evaluating programming, the City should regularly assess staffing to ensure there is appropriate bandwidth to carry out new programs that are added.

AGE	RECOMMENDATIONS
Early Childhood *Ages 0–5*	– Enhance programming around early mobility, providing opportunities for young children to interact with nature and music. – Provide structured indoor play programs for year-round services.
Youth + Teens *Ages 6–17*	– Expand youth programming to include performing arts and STEM activities. – Partner with schools to provide diverse programming in fall and winter. – Leverage internships and volunteering opportunities within the Department to provide job experience and leadership training for teens.
Adults *Ages 18+*	– Enhance programming to serve adults without children. – Join with community partners to ensure adults with disabilities have adequate offerings or are aware of current offerings. – Consider introduction of new sports such as cricket, badminton, and sepak takraw—a game using a net and a rattan ball—in line with community demand.
Seniors + Active Adults	– Continue to coordinate closely with CAST for senior and active adults programming. As CAST resources fluctuate, the City may need to take an increased role in senior programming to meet local demands.
Special Events	– Balance tradition with innovation to keep events engaging and inclusive. – Increase offerings during cold weather months. – Develop contingency plans for inclement weather when event planning, including rainout days and back-up indoor spaces. – Increase resiliency efforts in operations and facilities.

Staffing

Department Organization

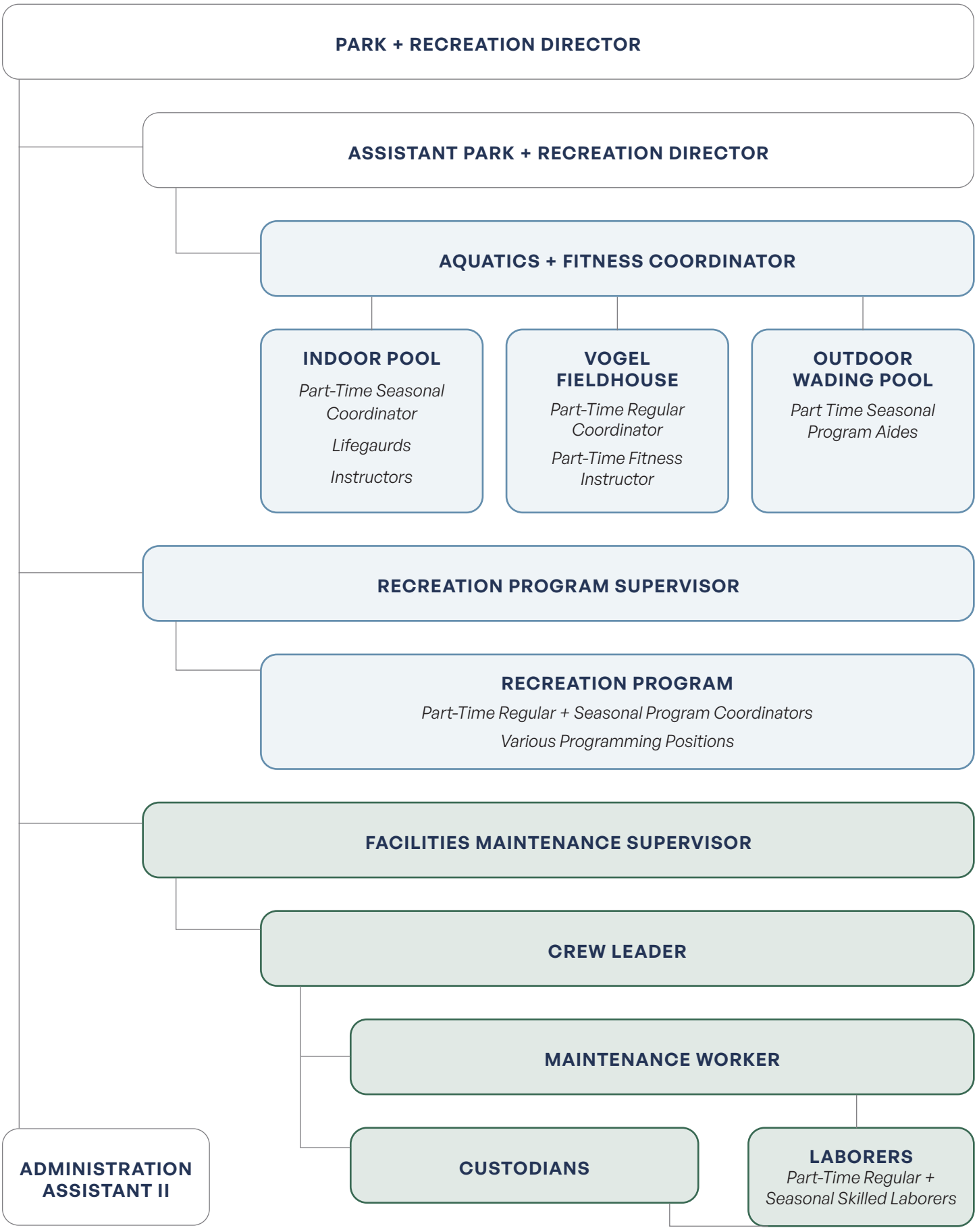
Programming

The Park and Recreation Department operates as a standalone department within the City. The Department is responsible for the planning and delivery of regular and seasonal recreation programs, field and facility reservations, registration processing, coordination and production of the program guide, and coordination of program instructors. The Department also provides budgetary support and serves as the primary point of contact for customers and residents. In addition, Department employees oversee the staffing and daily operations of the Recreation Center, Civic Center, and Community Center.

Facilities + Maintenance

The Department is responsible for the maintenance and operation of City parks, trails, and natural areas, as well as associated facilities such as warming houses and wading pools. Responsibilities include playground inspection and maintenance requiring certified playground safety inspector credentials, oversight of custodial services, and management of bids, contracts, and project specifications related to park facilities and maintenance, such as coordination with Public Works related to snow removal and shared maintenance responsibilities.

Group photo on Park and Recreation Professionals Day | July 18, 2025


PARK + RECREATION DIRECTOR
ASSISTANT PARK + RECREATION DIRECTOR
AQUATICS + FITNESS COORDINATOR
INDOOR POOL
Part-Time Seasonal Coordinator
Lifegaurds
Instructors
VOGEL FIELDHOUSE
Part-Time Regular Coordinator
Part-Time Fitness Instructor
OUTDOOR WADING POOL
Part Time Seasonal Program Aides
RECREATION PROGRAM SUPERVISOR
RECREATION PROGRAM
Part-Time Regular + Seasonal Program Coordinators
Various Programming Positions
FACILITIES MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR
CREW LEADER
MAINTENANCE WORKER
ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT II
CUSTODIANS
LABORERS
Part-Time Regular + Seasonal Skilled Laborers

Guidelines for Parks + Facilities

- Level of Service (LoS)
- Access-Based LoS Mapping
- Park Classification
- Park Amenities
- Park Classification Summary Table
- Park Search Areas
- Trails
- Partnerships
- Vision, Principles, Goals, and Initiatives

Level of Service

Communities use LoS Standards based on factors such as population and access, which can help identify ways to make recreational amenities more available, inclusive, and accessible to residents.

Access to recreational amenities varies by neighborhood. Some areas lack walkable access while others benefit from multiple nearby options. To assess the quantity and types of existing recreational amenities and identify where improvements are needed, the City has conducted an LoS Standards analysis for recreational amenities.

There is no universal rule for determining how many parks or amenities a community should have. LoS Standards are flexible and evolve over time to reflect changing community values, recreation trends, and population shifts. The City will regularly review and update these standards, especially during planning processes and updates to guiding documents.

Not all recreation amenities are subject to LoS Standards; they primarily apply to popular facilities that serve a broad range of users. Communities use LoS Standards based on factors such as population and access, which can help identify ways to make recreational amenities more available, inclusive, and accessible to residents.

Population-Based LoS Standards

Population-based standards consider how many people live in a place compared to the amenities it has, such as parks and playgrounds. This is calculated using a ratio, or a comparison, of the number of amenities available to the total population. This ratio helps communities determine if more or fewer amenities are needed.

LoS Standards are not the same everywhere, as they are based on each community's goals and calculations. However, the standards are informed by considering other places that are similar in terms of attributes such as population, economics, or environmental context. Population-based standards can help cities prepare for the future. For example, if the recommended standard indicates there should be three playgrounds for every 10,000 residents but a city only has two, it means an additional playground should be considered.

Access-Based LoS Standards

Access-based standards help communities determine where to locate new amenities. Access-based standards look at the time it takes for residents to travel to an amenity using different modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, or driving.

People have different expectations about how close amenities should be to their homes. For activities such as basketball courts and playgrounds, which are easy to use and don't require a lot of equipment, residents typically desire them within a short walk. For amenities like athletic complexes, pickleball courts, and ice rinks, which are used by fewer residents or have set schedules, residents are willing to travel further.

Both neighborhood and destination-based amenities have access standards, which support planning their locations. However, amenities that serve niche groups of users do not require access-based standards because those users are willing to travel further to use them. LoS Standards ensure more people can easily access amenities within the community. Actions to increase access to an amenity may include the benefits described below.

Improving Connectivity

In areas lacking sidewalk and trail connections for pedestrians or where roads are disconnected, increased access could mean adding sidewalks, trails, or road sections to improve pedestrian and driver connections to amenities. For example, in New Ulm, increased access could involve the implementation of proposed bicycle facilities as documented in the 2023 Active Transportation Plan.

Formalized Partnerships

Securing funding for capital improvements, operational needs, and maintenance is a challenge faced by most communities. Establishing partnerships with organizations that share aligned goals and missions can optimize the utilization of recreational amenities, foster a sense of unity within the community, and effectively manage costs and efforts. Furthermore, these collaborations open access to a broader spectrum of grant funding options, increase the competitiveness of grant applications, and diversify the pool of potential donors, especially when these partnerships involve a blend of public, private, philanthropic, and non-profit entities.

New Park Construction

In developed areas lacking access to schools or City amenities, increased access could mean constructing new amenities in new parks. There are multiple undeveloped parks on the west side of the City. As residential growth continues in that area, it will be important to coordinate the development of these parks alongside ongoing housing expansion and other City developments to ensure timely access to recreational opportunities. This coordinated approach will require thoughtful financial planning to align capital investments with community needs and may necessitate additional staff or new skill sets to support design, implementation, and long-term maintenance.

Relocation + Consolidation

In areas where there is convenient access to multiple amenities nearby, improving access may create an opportunity for fewer, but higher-quality or repurposed amenities.

Access-Based LoS Mapping

Geographic information systems (GIS) tools were used to analyze the distribution of Park and Recreation Department of parkland and amenities throughout the City, creating buffers of one-quarter mile (five-minute walk time) and one-half mile (10-minute walk time) to demonstrate access-based LoS. The maps help:

- **Understand the distribution of amenities throughout the City, revealing underserved areas**
- **Understand the proximity of parks and facilities to residents**
- **Observe the concentration of similar amenities to assess the dispersion of impacts such as parking, traffic, and high-intensity noise. A softball event is an example of an event that would have a dispersion of impacts.**

Walk Time To City Parks

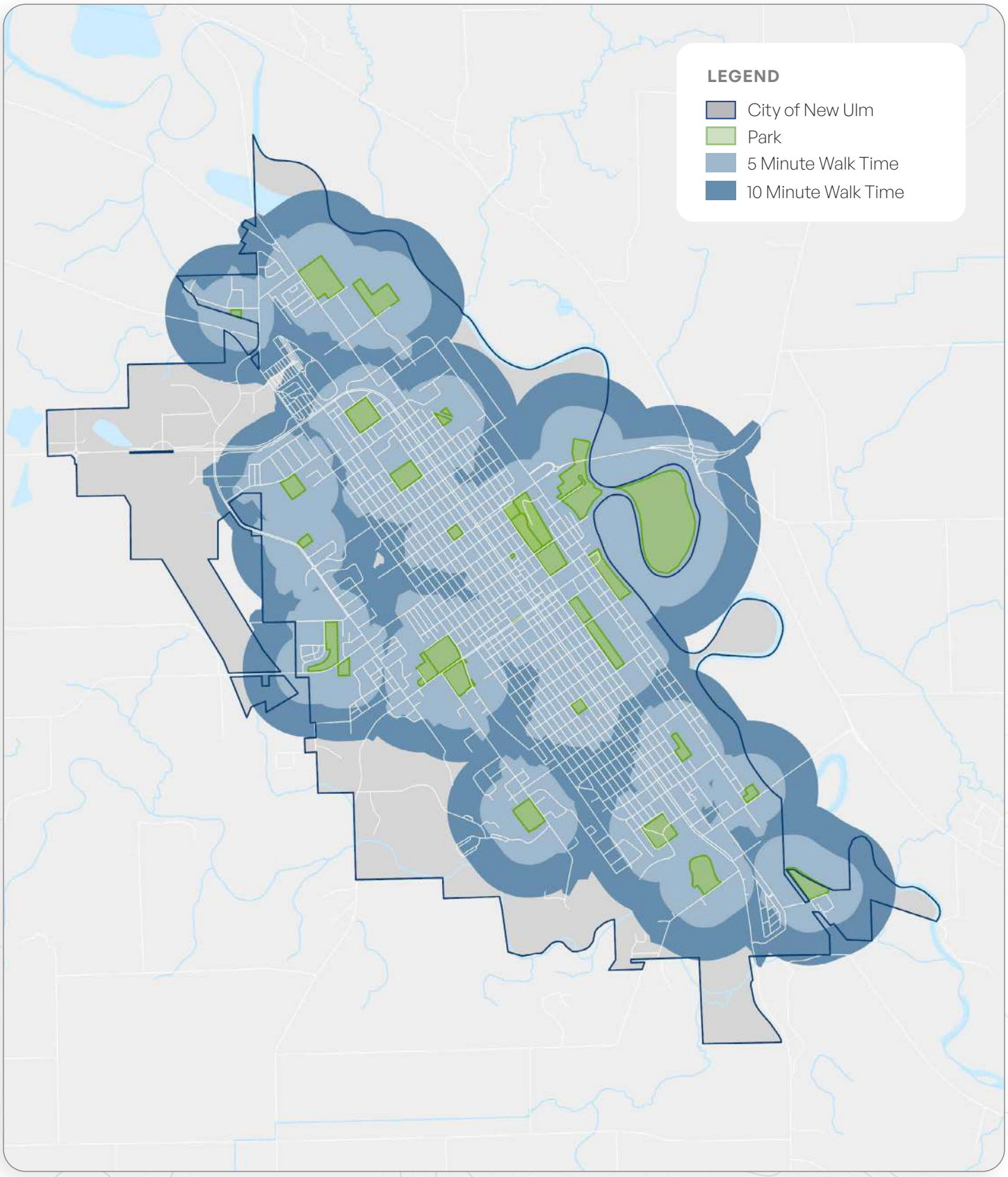
The Walk Time Overview Map depicts the access-based LoS for residents walking to City parks. The map utilizes street and sidewalk data to generate walk time estimates, shown with one-quarter-mile (five-minute walk time) and one-half-mile (10-minute walk time) radius marks.

Walk Time To Amenities

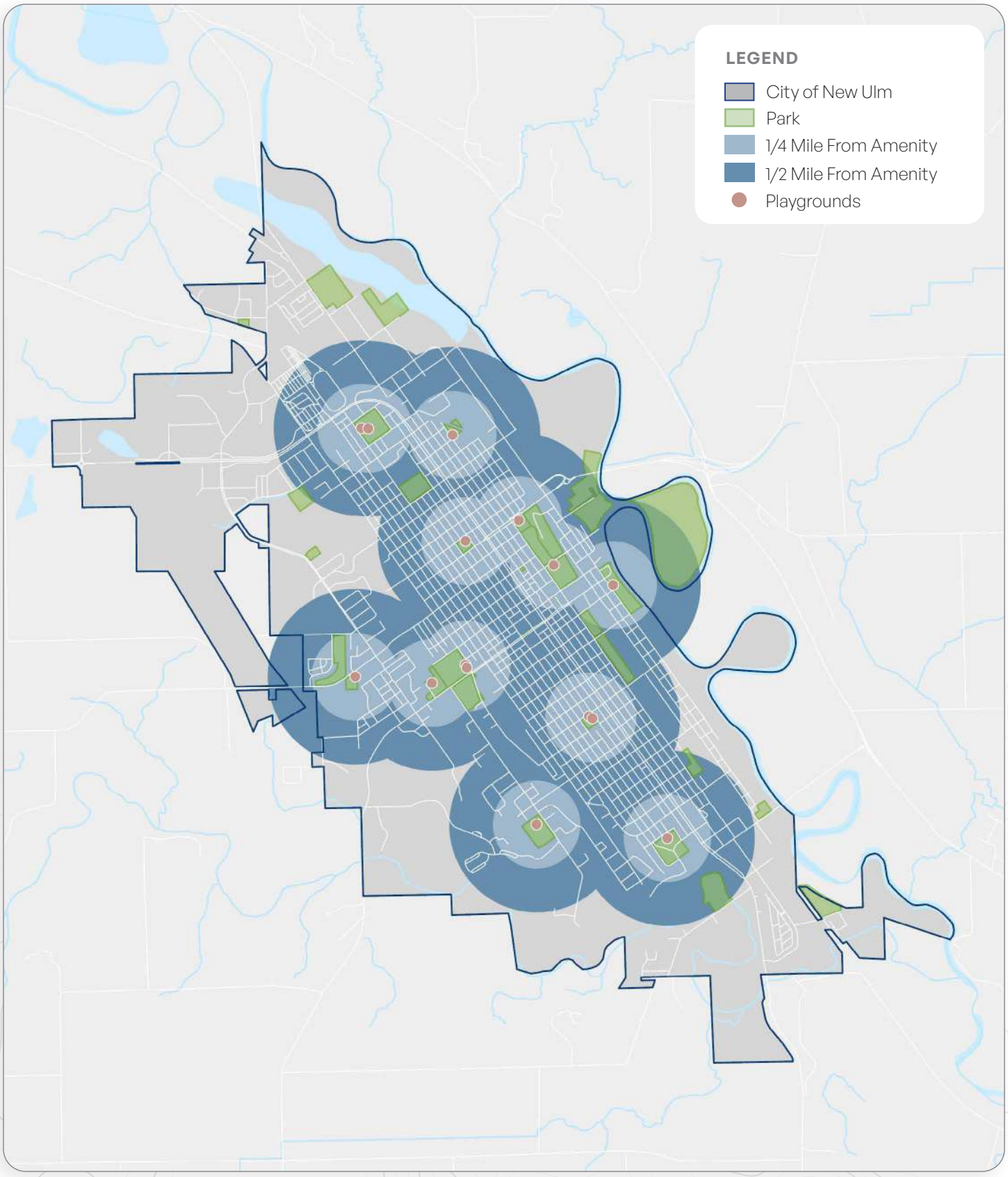
The following maps depict the access-based service for the time it takes people to walk to specific amenities, which include:

- Playgrounds
- Softball + Baseball Fields
- Aquatic Amenities
- Tennis + Pickleball Courts

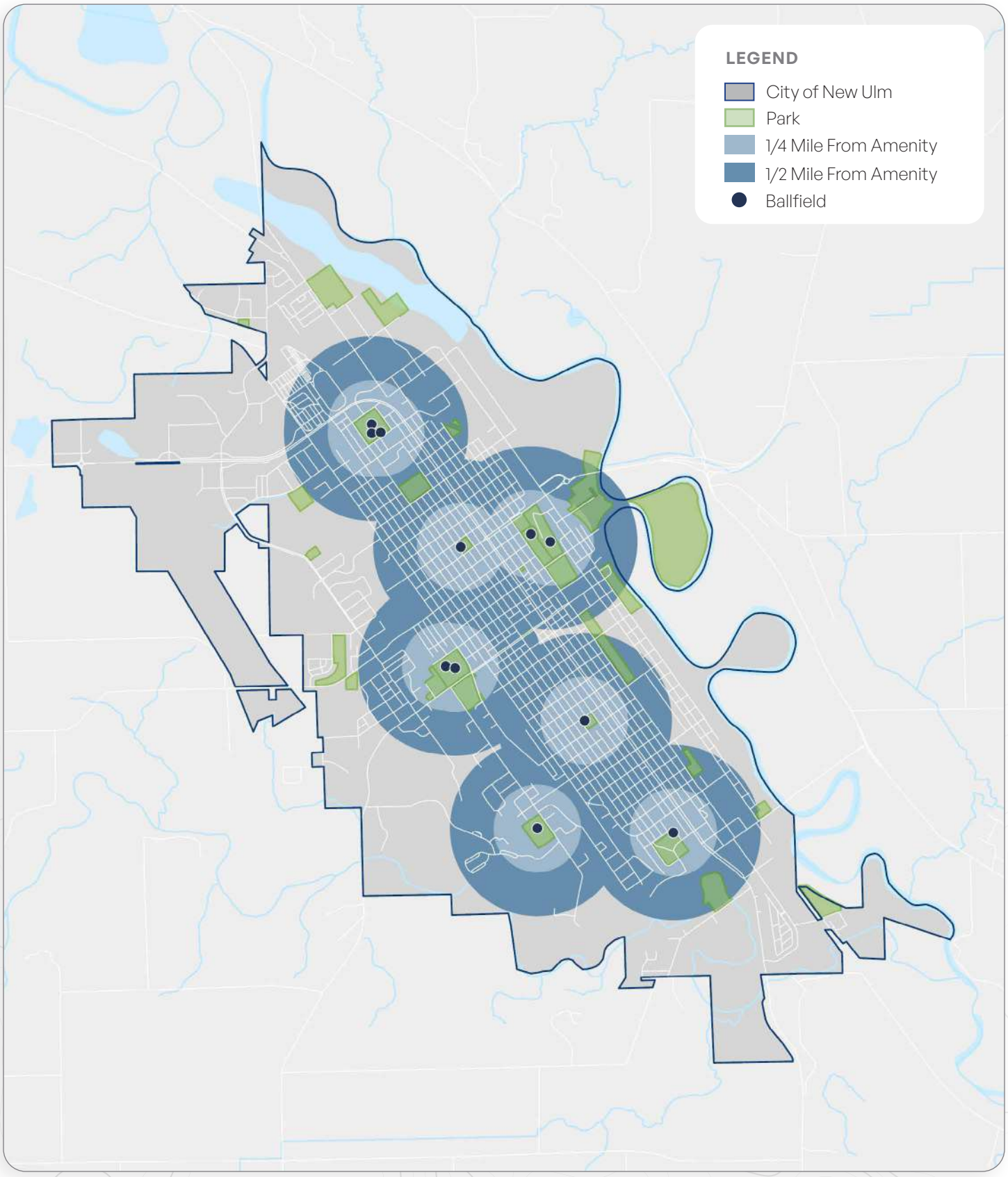
Park Walk Times Map



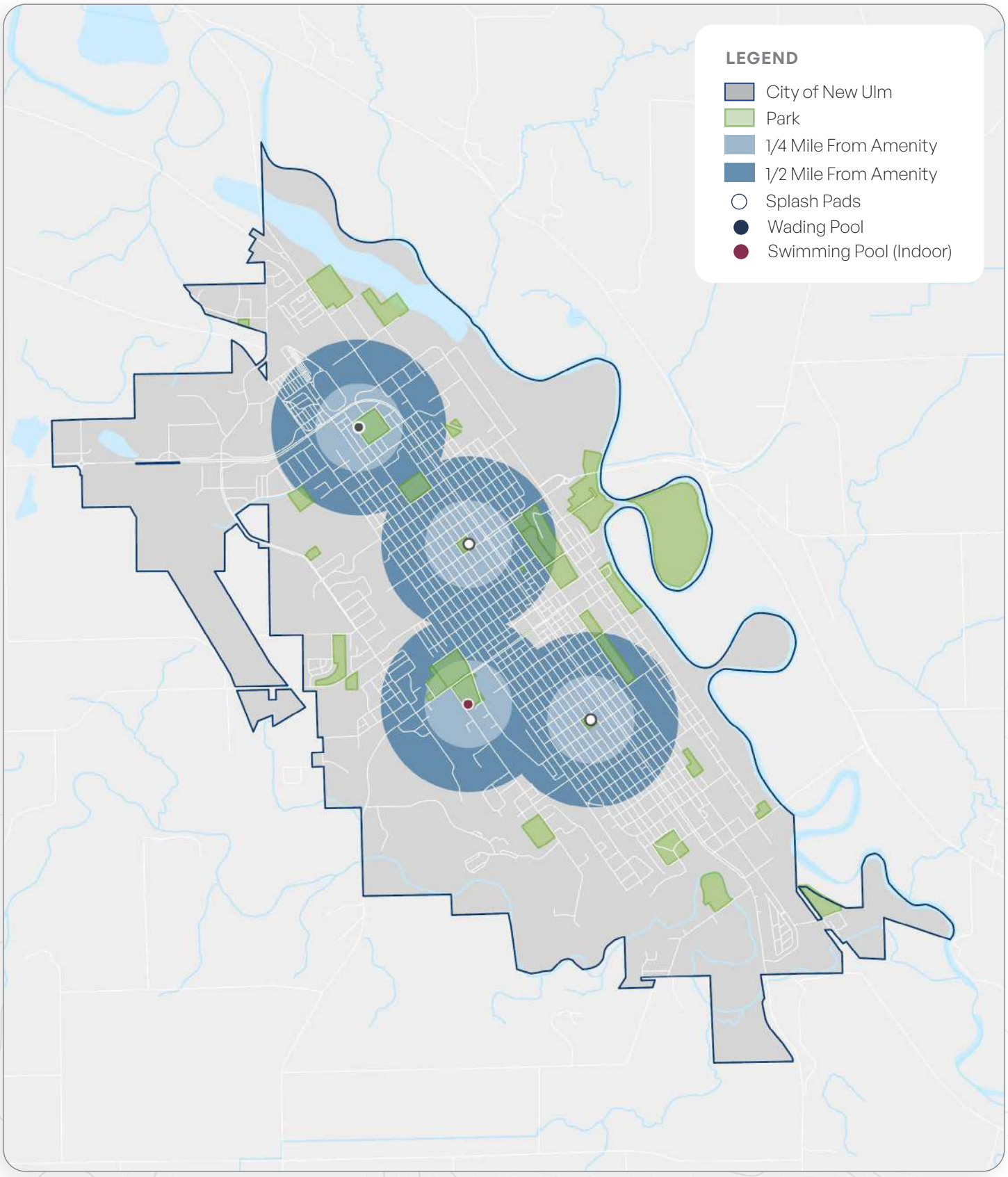
Playground Distribution Map



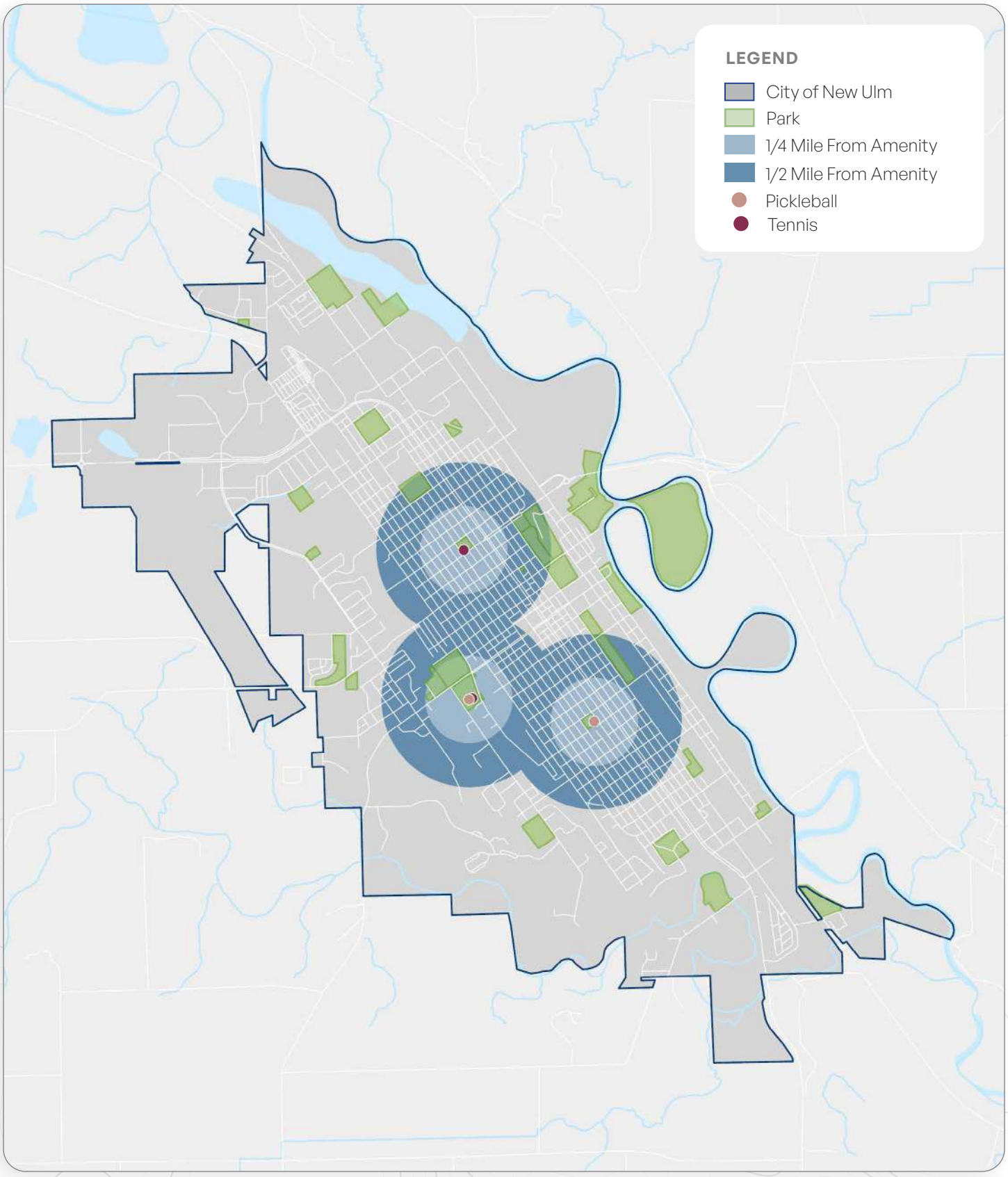
Baseball + Softball Distribution Map



Aquatic Distribution Map



Pickleball + Tennis Distribution Map



Park Classification

All parks and recreational facilities should be designed to serve multiple age groups and a diversity of users.

The City's park system encompasses a broad range of parks and facilities that differ in size, quality, and programming. Together, these spaces serve park users in adjacent neighborhoods, across the community, and from other communities. The 2024 Comprehensive Plan established the park classification system. This includes neighborhood parks, community parks, natural resource areas, special use areas, and monument locations.

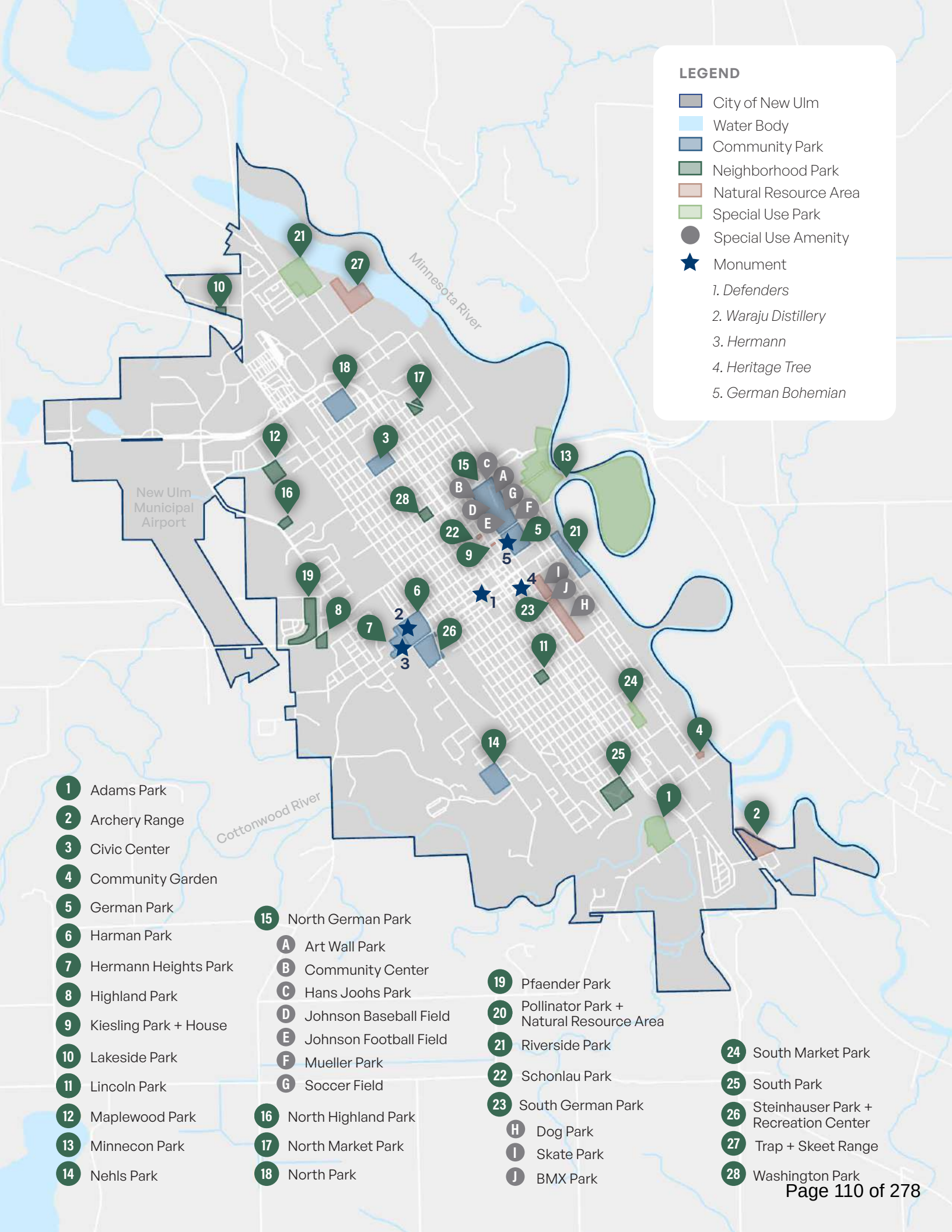
The park classification system proposed in this Plan expands upon the classification system established in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan by introducing special-use amenities. The intent is to expand upon how parks might look and function and provide guidance for planning future park and recreational facilities.

Classification Descriptions

For each park classification, the following pages include a general description of the classification, typical size range, service area, access provisions, existing parks, park search areas, and list of amenities for that park type.

The descriptions, size, service, and access criteria, and list of amenities are not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive, but rather to present a clear image of differences amongst park categories. The appropriate amenities for any individual park or recreational facility should be decided through a regular master planning process that involves the community it is meant to serve. All parks and recreational facilities should be designed to serve multiple age groups and a diversity of users.

Park Classification Map ▶


LEGEND
City of New Ulm
Water Body
Community Park
Neighborhood Park
Natural Resource Area
Special Use Park
Special Use Amenity
Monument
1. Defenders
2. Waraju Distillery
3. Hermann
4. Heritage Tree
5. German Bohemian
Minnesota River
New Ulm Municipal Airport
Cottonwood River
1 Adams Park
2 Archery Range
3 Civic Center
4 Community Garden
5 German Park
6 Harman Park
7 Hermann Heights Park
8 Highland Park
9 Kiesling Park + House
10 Lakeside Park
11 Lincoln Park
12 Maplewood Park
13 Minnecon Park
14 Nehls Park
15 North German Park
A Art Wall Park
B Community Center
C Hans Joohs Park
D Johnson Baseball Field
E Johnson Football Field
F Mueller Park
G Soccer Field
16 North Highland Park
17 North Market Park
18 North Park
19 Pfaender Park
20 Pollinator Park + Natural Resource Area
21 Riverside Park
22 Schonlau Park
23 South German Park
H Dog Park
I Skate Park
J BMX Park
24 South Market Park
25 South Park
26 Steinhauser Park + Recreation Center
27 Trap + Skeet Range
28 Washington Park

Community Park

DESCRIPTION

Community parks provide a range of community-scale recreational activities and facilities, attracting residents from a relatively large area. They should include active programmed recreation areas and passive recreation activities, preserve unique landscapes, open spaces, and historical and cultural features. They should allow for group activities, accommodate community events, and offer recreation opportunities that are not feasible or desirable at the neighborhood park level. Community parks may also include revenue-producing facilities, recreation or community centers, or other recreation facilities, and they should include permanent and accessible public restrooms.

SIZE CRITERIA

5–50 acres, depending on park activities

SERVICE CRITERIA

Community-wide

ACCESS CRITERIA

Community parks should be at locations that are easily accessible via different modes of transportation, including the City's trail network, low-stress bicycle network, sidewalks, and major streets. Since they serve visitors from longer distances and their amenities draw larger crowds, community parks should have on-site parking.

Existing Parks

Civic Center

German Park

Harman Park

Hermann Heights Park

Nehls Park

North German Park

North Park

Riverside Park

Steinhauser Park and Recreation Center

Proposed Community Park Search Areas

Airport Athletic Park

Cottonwood Community Park

Typical Park Amenities

Baseball/Softball Field – Lighting, Bleachers, Concessions, and Dugouts

Basketball Courts

Concessions

Disc Golf

Drinking Fountains

Fire Pits

Fishing Access Points + Fishing Piers

Grills

Group Picnic Shelters

Hockey + Ice Rinks - Outdoor

Motorized Boat Launch + Boat Docks

Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields

Multi-Purpose Open Space

Nature + Environmental Learning Center

Non-Motorized Boat Launch + Carry-in Boat Access

Outdoor Event + Performance Space

Outdoor Fitness + Exercise Facilities

Outdoor Games, Cornhole, and Horseshoe

Parking – Off-Street

Parking – On-Street

Pergola + Small Picnic Shelter

Permanent Restrooms

Pickleball Courts

Picnic Shelter – Large

Picnic Tables + Individual Seating

Playgrounds

Portable Restrooms

Splash Pad + Wading Pool

Tennis Courts

Trails – Mountain Biking

Trails – Paved

Trails – Unpaved + Natural

Unique Landscaping Features

Volleyball Courts

Warming House

Wayfinding + Navigational Signage

Wi-Fi

Winter Sliding Hill

Neighborhood Park

DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood parks are the basic unit of the park system that serve day-to-day recreational and social needs of residents within walking distance of their homes and should not seek to attract visitors from much further away. The parks should strike a balance between passive and active recreational opportunities and provide gathering spaces for families and residents of all age groups living in the surrounding neighborhoods.

SIZE CRITERIA

1–20 acres

SERVICE CRITERIA

One-quarter mile to one-half mile service area radius, uninterrupted by major barriers such as highways or waterways

ACCESS CRITERIA

Neighborhood parks should be accessible by way of City sidewalks, low-stress bicycle network, and local streets. They should be easily accessible from the surrounding neighborhood with no physical barriers or arterial streets restricting access. Where possible, trails and sidewalks should connect to neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks should have street parking nearby, and parking lots are not necessary.

Existing Parks

Highland Park

Lakeside Village Park Undeveloped

Lincoln Park

Maplewood Park Undeveloped

North Highland Park Undeveloped

North Market Park

Pfaender Park Undeveloped

South Park

Washington Park

Proposed Neighborhood Park Search Areas

Cottonwood Neighborhood Park(s)

KC Road Neighborhood Park(s)

Typical Park Amenities

Baseball + Softball Field – Backstop + Benches

Basketball Courts

Disc Golf

Fishing Access Points + Fishing Piers

Multi-Purpose Open Space

Non-Motorized Boat Launch + Carry-in Boat Access

Outdoor Fitness + Exercise Facilities

Outdoor Games – Cornhole/ Horseshoe

Parking – On-Street

Pergola + Small Picnic Shelter

Picnic Tables + Individual Seating

Playgrounds

Portable Restrooms

Splash Pad + Wading Pool

Tennis Courts

Trails – Paved

Volleyball Courts

Winter Sliding Hill

Special Use Park

DESCRIPTION

Special use parks are park sites that are home to special use amenities and may not include other typical recreational facilities that may be commonly found in a community or neighborhood park, such as playgrounds or sport courts. Special use amenities include a broad range of facilities that are oriented toward a single, specialized purpose for recreational, historical, cultural, or social value. This may include gardens, plazas, historic sites, skate parks, BMX bike areas, off-leash dog sites, or well-known sporting fields and arenas. Due to the distinctive uses within them, special use parks can draw visitors from across the City and regionally from neighboring communities.

Existing Parks

Archery Range

Community Garden

Kiesling Park and House

Schonlau Park and Glockenspiel

South German Park

Trap and Skeet Range

Proposed Community Special Use Park Search Areas

N/A

SIZE CRITERIA

Determined by the space required for the planned or present site amenities

Based on the amenities present, consideration should be given to ensuring it is large enough to comfortably accommodate the use, including any necessary support features such as parking, access routes, or staging areas.

SERVICE CRITERIA

Regional, across county and/or City lines

Depending on present amenities, appropriateness of the location should be considered. Due to safety and noise concerns, some amenities such as skeet shooting or an archery range should be located away from residential or high use areas.

ACCESS CRITERIA

Special use parks should be accessible by way of the City's trail network, low- stress bicycle network, sidewalks, and major streets. Since they serve residents from longer distances, special use parks should have on-site parking facilities or allow nearby on-street parking to accommodate the number of visitors projected to use the park. Some special uses would be expected, such as hosting large events like tournaments or community festivals, while other special uses such as community gardens might see variable seasonal traffic.

Typical Park Amenities

- Off-Street Parking
- Permanent Restroom
- Picnic Tables + Individual Seating
- Portable Restroom
- Shade Structures
- Trails – Paved
- Trails – Unpaved + Natural

Natural Resource Area

DESCRIPTION

Natural resource areas are lands with valuable natural resources and open space, which may include features such as woodlands, fields, wetlands, stream banks, floodplains, steep slopes, unique geological formations, and unbuilt areas. Conservation is a priority for these areas with the intention to conserve natural resources, protect scenic areas and endangered habitats, and limit development and high foot traffic. These spaces can help shape urban growth by providing breathing room for development. Active recreational elements can be incorporated if impacts to the natural environment are avoided or minimal.

SIZE CRITERIA

No minimum or maximum size

SERVICE CRITERIA

Community-wide

ACCESS CRITERIA

Natural resource areas should be accessible by way of the City's trail network, low-stress bicycle network, sidewalks, nature trails, and major streets. Since they may serve residents from across the community, natural resources areas may have on-site parking at key access or trailhead locations where disturbance to natural environments are avoided or minimal.

Existing Parks

Adams Park

Minnecon Park

Pollinator Park + Natural Resource Area

Pollinator Park Grounds

South Market Park

Proposed Community Natural Resource Search Areas

N/A

Typical Park Amenities

Disc Golf

Fire Pits

Fishing Access Points + Fishing Piers

Grills

Motorized Boat Launch + Boat Dock

Multi-Purpose Open Space

Non-Motorized Boat Launch + Carry-in Boat Access

Outdoor Games – Cornhole + Horseshoe

Parking – Off-Street

Parking – On-Street

Pergola + Small Picnic Shelter

Permanent Restrooms

Picnic Shelter – Large

Picnic Tables + Individual Seating

Playgrounds

Portable Restrooms

Trails – Mountain Biking

Trails – Paved

Trails – Unpaved + Natural

Wayfinding + Navigational Signage

Park Amenities

Monuments

A monument is intended to preserve and commemorate a historically, culturally, or naturally significant resource. Due to the area's rich history, many monuments are found throughout the City and are in parks. Monuments are included in this section to acknowledge their presence in parks and recreational areas; however, no specific criteria for size, service area, or access are prescribed.

EXISTING MONUMENTS

- Defender's Monument
- Waraju Distillery (Harman Park)
- Hermann Monument (Hermann Heights Park)
- Heritage Tree
- German Bohemian Monument (German Park)

Special Use Amenities

Special use amenities include a broad range of facilities that are **oriented toward a single, specialized purpose for recreational, historical, cultural, or social value**. This may include gardens, plazas, historic sites, skate parks, BMX bike areas, off-leash dog sites, or well-known sporting fields and arenas. This also includes large indoor facilities including recreation, community, and civic centers. Special use amenities can be located throughout the park system and are typically located within the community, special use, and natural resource area park classifications. Since these uses often attract people from around the community or region, special use facilities are not recommended in neighborhood parks as they typically do not have the infrastructure to support high counts of visitors and parking demands.

Special use amenities are not a type of park classification and do not have guiding criteria for park size, service area, or access. These factors should instead be informed by the recommended design standards or best practices for the specific amenity, such as ideal dimensions for a BMX track, layout recommendations for an archery range, or operational guidelines for dog parks, as well as the park classification in which the amenity is located.

EXISTING SPECIAL USE AMENITIES

- Archery Range
- Art Wall Park
- BMX Track
- Community Garden
- Civic Center
- Dog Park
- Johnson Park Baseball Field
- Johnson Park Football Field
- Mueller Park Baseball Field
- Skate Park
- Soccer Field
- Steinhauser Park and Recreation Center

Park Classification Summary Table

COMMUNITY PARK	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	SPECIAL USE AREA PARK	NATURAL RESOURCE AREA
Civic Center (SUA)	Highland Park	Archery Range (SUA)	Adams Park
German Park (M)	Lakeside Village Park Undeveloped	Community Garden (SUA)	Minnecon Park
Harman Park (M)	Lincoln Park	Kiesling Park and House	Pollinator Park + Natural Resource Area
Hermann Heights Park (M)	Maplewood Park Undeveloped	Schonlau Park and Glockenspiel	South Market Park
Nehls Park	North Highland Park Undeveloped	South German Park (3 SUA)	
North German Park (5 SUA)	North Market Park	Trap and Skeet Range (SUA)	
North Park	Pfaender Park Undeveloped		
Riverside Park	South Park		
Steinhauser Park and Recreation Center (SUA)	Washington Park		

MONUMENT (M)

Defender's Monument

Waraju Distillery (Harman Park)

Hermann Monument (Hermann Heights Park)

Heritage Tree

German Bohemian Monument (German Park)

SPECIAL USE AREA (SUA)

Archery Range

Art Wall Park

BMX Track

Community Garden

Civic Center

Dog Park

Johnson Park Baseball Field

Johnson Park Football Field

Mueller Park Baseball Field

Skateboard Park

Soccer Field

Trap and Skeet Range

Steinhauser Park and Recreation Center

Park Search Areas

Park search areas identify places where future development of parks should be considered as new development occurs.

While parks are well distributed throughout New Ulm, as the City population increases through the construction of multi-family housing (apartment complexes, townhomes, and tri-plex and duplexes) and an expanded geography (extending north, west and south), establishment of new parks will be necessary to meet the needs of residents. City geographic expansion is contained by the Minnesota River and floodplain to the north and east, and the Cottonwood River and floodplain and Flandrau State Park to the south and west.

Park search areas identify places where future development of parks should be considered as new development occurs. These search areas consider physical barriers like busy roads and floodplains, along with incompatible land uses. Most new parks would likely be Neighborhood Parks to support day-to-day needs of residents. However, a larger scale athletic complex has also been identified as a long-term need along with a community park in the southwest Cottonwood area.

This section provides guidance for development of existing undeveloped City land into parkland, and includes two sub sections: Development of New Parks and Future Search Areas.

Development of New Parks

The City is well positioned to meet the needs of the community as it grows in population and geographic bounds. Over time, the City and Park and Recreation Department have obtained future parkland that has been set aside for future park, recreation, and natural resource use. Many of these sites are located on the northwest side of the City in areas that have yet to see significant development, or are beginning to see increased development.

11. Lakeside Park

Neighborhood Park Expansion + Development

- Current 1.5-acre undeveloped parcel within the Lakeside Village subdivision.
- Rather than develop this property, recommendation is to acquire 4 - 7 acres of new parkland on the north side of the lake to construct a Neighborhood Park with lake access. The existing 1.5-acre Lakeside Park parcel could be resold as residential lots to help pay for the new parkland acquisition and development.

12. Maplewood Park

Neighborhood Park Expansion + Development

- Existing City parkland to be developed into a neighborhood park, dependent on surrounding development.
- Acquisition of additional land needed to serve neighborhood recreation needs for development as current park is small and a majority of area is a retention pond.

16. North Highland Park

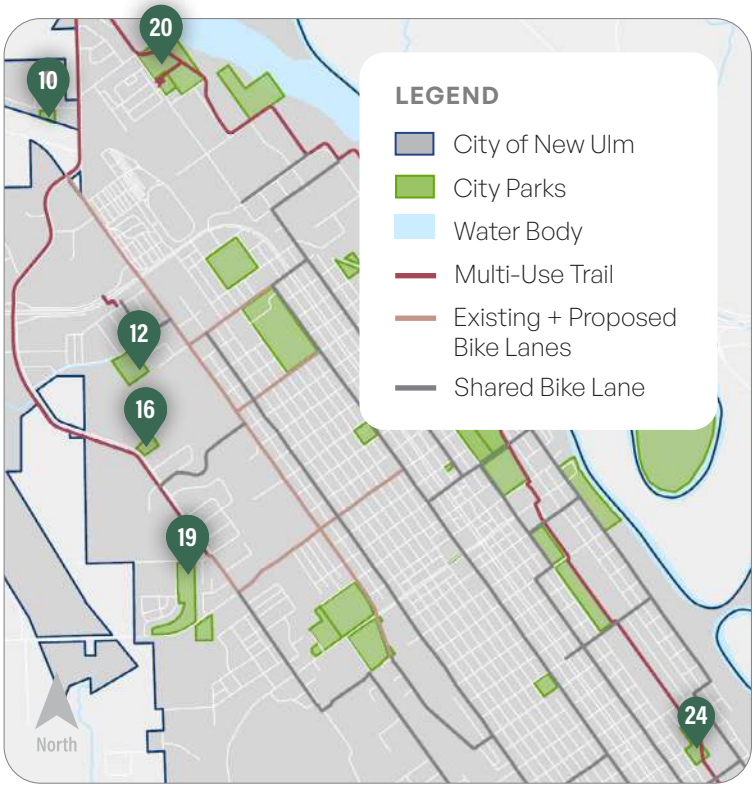
Neighborhood Park Development

- Existing City parkland to be developed into a Neighborhood Park to serve surrounding residences.
- Development of this site is dependent on more residential development taking place within the immediate area.
- Directly adjacent to New Ulm High School campus.

19. Pfaender Park

Neighborhood Park Development

- Existing City parkland to be developed into a Neighborhood Park to serve surrounding residences, generally located in the adjoining hilltop area.
- Area has experienced rapid residential development which is anticipated to continue.



20. Pollinator Park + Natural Resource Area

Natural Resource Area Redevelopment

- A Concept Plan detailing Pollinator Park was developed in 2024. The plan focuses on expanding existing prairie and pollinator gardens, fostering nature-based play and education for all ages through features such as a monarch sculpture, themed play zones, a milkweed maze, improved picnic space, and traffic calming measures. This Plan should be implemented.

24. South Market Park

Natural Resource Area Redevelopment

- Park is an existing undeveloped area with steep slopes and dense tree cover, limiting visibility into the site. The City bike trail runs through the lower part of the park.
- Light development, such as thinning of trees, and addition of nature trails and neighborhood park amenities (playground or picnic shelter), could be added to improve access within site and serve surrounding residences.

Park Development Triggers

The following guidelines have been developed to aid the City in determining what actions may trigger development of these sites into established City Parks. These triggers are intended to guide timing and prioritization rather than mandate immediate construction.

PRIMARY DEVELOPMENT TRIGGERS

Development of a new park should be considered when:

1. **Population Growth Creates Unmet Park Demand**
   - Existing parks within the service area can no longer adequately meet the needs of current or projected residents.
   - Residential development has occurred or is approved in an area not currently served by a nearby park.
2. **Residential Development Thresholds Are Reached**
   - A critical mass of existing households is present within a defined service area (generally a ¼–½ mile walk for Neighborhood Parks).
   - Significant additional residential units are planned or approved that will increase demand on existing parks beyond their intended capacity.
3. **Geographic Barriers Limit Access to Existing Parks**
   - Natural or built barriers (e.g., rivers, flood plains, highways, rail corridors, or steep topography) prevent safe or convenient access to existing parks.
   - Elevation changes between residential areas and nearby parks create functional accessibility barriers, even when distances are short.
4. **Planned Growth Areas Align with Park Search Areas**
   - The park site or search area is identified in the Comprehensive Plan, Park and Recreation Master Plan, or other adopted City plans.
   - Development is occurring in an identified growth area where future park provision was anticipated.

SUPPORTING EVALUATION CRITERIA

Once a primary trigger is met, the following considerations should be evaluated to determine timing, scale, and feasibility of park development.

CATEGORY	CONSIDERATIONS
Population + Service Demand	– What is the current number of households and estimated population within the service area? – What is the projected number of additional households or residents expected within the next 5–10 years? – Are existing nearby parks appropriately sized and programmed for the age groups and recreation needs of the area?

Park System Context	– Are there nearby parks that already serve the area?
	  - What park classifications do they fall under (Neighborhood, Community, Special Use)?
	  - Are their facilities complementary or duplicative?
	– Can nearby parks realistically absorb additional demand without impacting user experience or maintenance standards?

Accessibility + Connectivity	– Can the site be safely accessed by walking and bicycling? – Are sidewalks, trails, or low-stress street connections present or planned? – Are there major barriers such as high-volume roadways or limited crossings? – What is the elevation difference between the park site and surrounding residential areas, and does it create accessibility challenges?

Site Development Feasibility	– What is the anticipated cost to prepare the site for park use?
	  - Clearing, grading, soil conditions
	  - Stormwater management requirements
	– What utilities are required based on anticipated park type?
	  - Neighborhood Parks: typically electricity only
	  - Community Parks or larger facilities: water, sanitary sewer, and electricity
	– How close are existing utilities, and how does proximity affect development cost?

Funding + Implementation Considerations	– Park development should be prioritized when funding opportunities align with identified needs, including:
	  - Availability of park dedication funds tied to nearby development
	  - Private donations or partnerships that offset capital costs
	  - State, regional, or grant funding opportunities
	  - Coordination with other public infrastructure projects that could reduce costs if constructed concurrently (streets, utilities, trails)

Park Development Decision Flowchart

IS RESIDENTIAL GROWTH OCCURRING OR PLANNED IN THE AREA?
Existing households increasing OR new residential units approved or anticipated

NO → Monitor growth; reassess during next plan update

YES ↓

ARE EXISTING PARKS ADEQUATELY SERVING THE AREA?
Evaluate nearby parks within a ¼–½ mile service area:
Capacity and crowding | Park classification and facilities | Ability to serve day to day neighborhood needs

YES → Continue monitoring; no new park needed at this time

NO ↓

ARE THERE BARRIERS LIMITING ACCESS TO EXISTING PARKS?
Rivers, floodplains, highways, rail corridors | Steep slopes or significant elevation changes | Lack of safe pedestrian or bicycle connections

NO → Consider enhancements to existing parks instead

YES ↓

IS THE AREA IDENTIFIED AS A PARK SEARCH AREA OR GROWTH AREA?
Identified in the Comprehensive Plan or Park and Recreation Master Plan
Consistent with long term City growth patterns

NO → Reevaluate need or consider plan amendment

YES ↓

DOES THE CITY CONTROL OR HAVE ACCESS TO SUITABLE LAND?
City owned land designated or intended for park use OR Opportunity for acquisition through park dedication, purchase, or donation

NO → Identify acquisition opportunities or defer development

YES ↓

IS THE SITE SUITABLE FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT?
Approximately 2–10 acres of usable land (Neighborhood Park) | Minimal environmental or topographic constraints | Reasonable site preparation requirements

NO → Consider alternate site or adjust park classification

YES ↓

ARE INFRASTRUCTURE + UTILITIES FEASIBLE?
Access to electricity, water, and sewer (as needed) | Street, sidewalk, and trail connections | Estimated cost to prepare the site

NO → Phase development or revisit when conditions improve

YES ↓

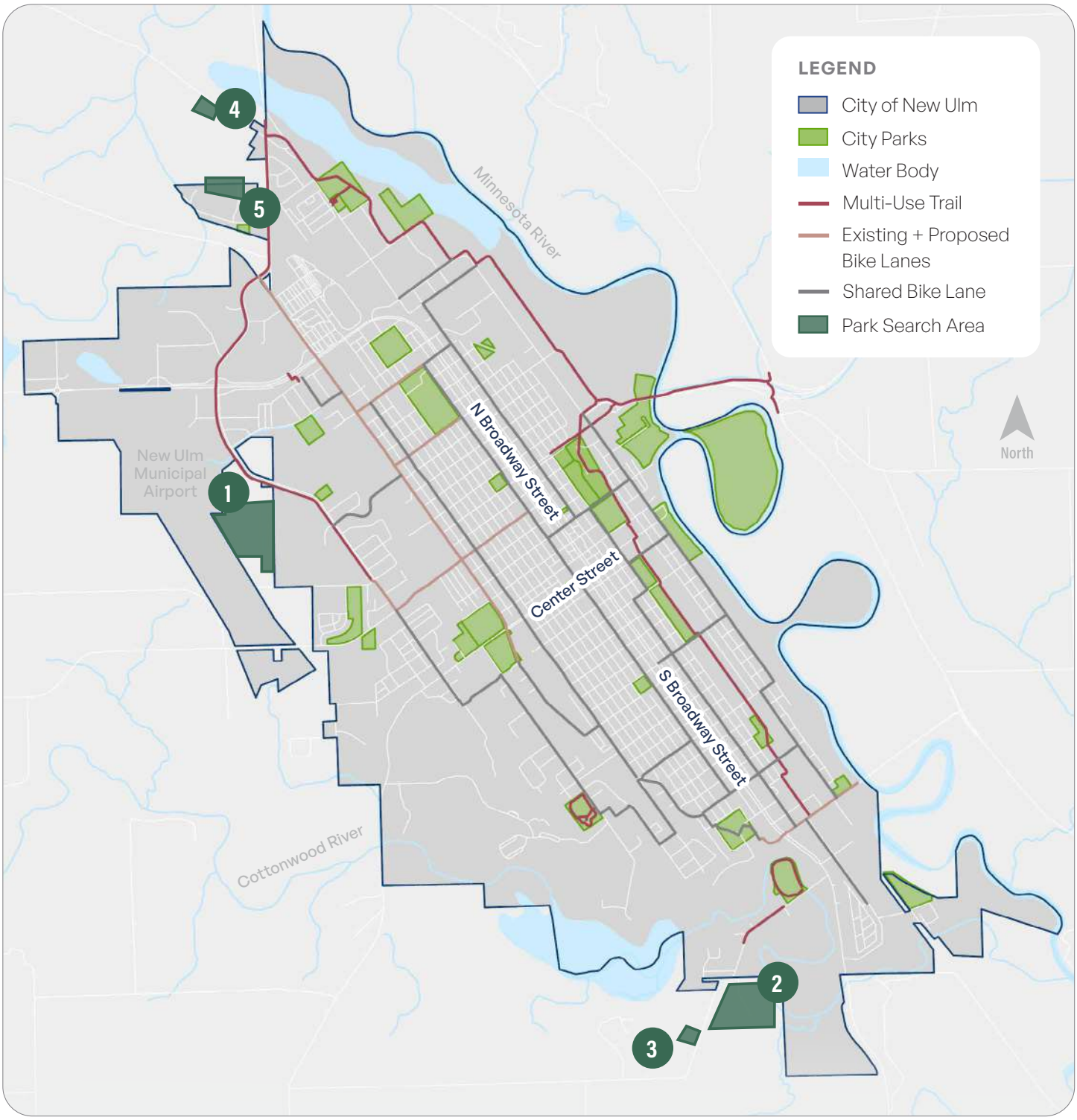
ARE FUNDING OR PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE?
Park dedication funds | Grants, donations, or private partnerships | Coordination with other public infrastructure projects

NO → Plan for future development; include in CIP

→ **PRIORITIZE PARK DEVELOPMENT**

Future Park Search Areas (PSA)

This section identifies where future park and trail development should be considered by forecasting long-term needs and is also based on specific area recommendations provided in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. Most search areas are outside the City boundary, anticipating that as the City grows and develops, this land will be annexed into it and become a part of the City.



PSA 1
Airport Athletic Park

Included in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan and identified in the community engagement process, the City lacks a major athletic park with capacity to host soccer and baseball and softball practice and tournaments. Johnson Park baseball and football fields are used primarily for high school sports. Local soccer groups have received temporary permission to use Martin Luther College soccer fields. This arrangement may change as Martin Luther College is planning for its own facility expansions, which may result in fewer sites for community soccer practice and tournaments.

Acquiring a 20 to 30 acre park site soon will provide interim use by soccer organizations for their immediate needs and allow for flexibility of phased development over time as funding and needs are identified. The park could either be primarily dedicated to sports tournaments with future baseball and softball fields additions, or it could become a large community park that serves future development on the City's west side. The concentration of active athletics at one site will provide flexibility to remove ball fields and other athletics from other neighborhood parks and community parks. This will allow these parks to focus on serving neighborhood recreation and/or a specialized community role. For example, the fields at Harman Park could be reduced and the park could be refocused on being a Neighborhood Park.

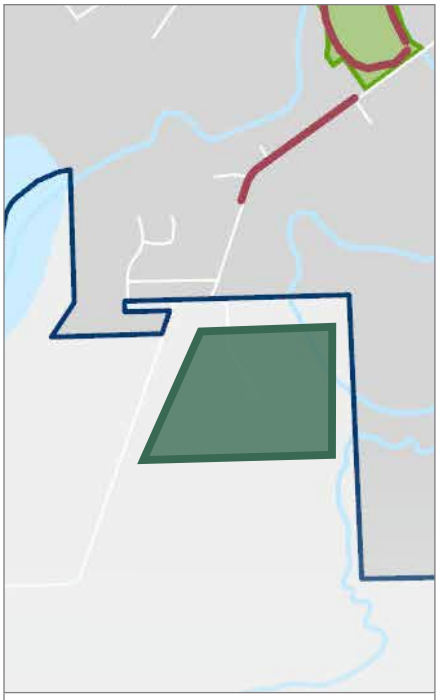
PARK CLASSIFICATION
Community Park (Athletic Focus)

POTENTIAL RECREATION + FACILITIES
Short term (< 5 years)

- Soccer + Lacrosse Fields

Long term (6–10+ years)

- Baseball + Softball Fields
- Playground
- Looped + Connecting Trails
- Concessions + Restroom Building



PSA 2 Cottonwood Community Park

As this area is developed, a Community Park with amenities will be needed.

POSSIBLE AMENITIES INCLUDE

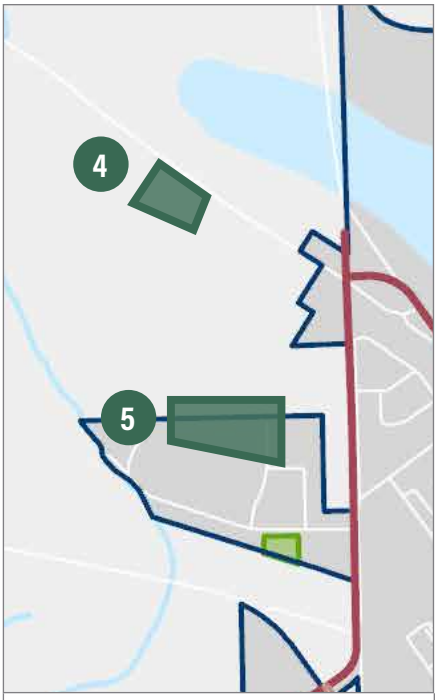
- Splash Pad
- Permanent Restrooms
- Playground
- Large Group Picnic Shelters
- Internal Walking Trails (with connections to a greater trail network and Flandrau State Park)

PSA 3 Cottonwood Neighborhood Park

As this area is developed, a Neighborhood Park will be needed to support new residential development.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK FACILITIES INCLUDE

- Playground
- Picnic Shelter
- Internal Walking Trails (with connections to a greater trail network and Flandrau State Park)
- Casual Multi-Purpose Use Space
- Sport Court(s)



PSA 4 + 5 KC Road Neighborhood Park

As this area is developed, a Neighborhood Park will be needed to support new residential development along and around the KC area.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK FACILITIES INCLUDE

- Playground
- Picnic Shelter
- Internal Walking Trails
- Casual Multi-Purpose Use Space
- Sport Court(s)

Trails

Trail Feedback

Many comments pertaining to trails, sidewalks, and roadways were received during community engagement. Since the primary focus of the Park and Recreation Master Plan is on the park system itself, which includes trails within parks, but not those of the City's greater trail and sidewalk system, many of these items are not within the scope of the Master Plan.

These items fall under the scope of the Active Transportation Plan or a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (depending on the type of action and timeframe).

While the intention for the Park and Recreation Master Plan is to not be duplicative or contradictory to the Active Transportation Plan or replace a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, all comments from the process pertaining to trails, sidewalks, and roadways were shared with City staff. It is recommended that the Active Transportation Plan be updated or a new planning effort for a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan be conducted to include community feedback received.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

bit.ly/NU-ActiveTransportationAP23

Plan Type Comparison

TOPIC	ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN	BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN
Primary Purpose	Implementation + Near-Term Action	Long-Range System Vision + Policy
Typical Time Horizon	Short- To Mid-Term (3–10 Years)	Long-Term (10–20 Years)
Modes Covered	Walking, Biking, Rolling, Micromobility, and Accessibility	Walking And Bicycling (Sometimes Rolling)
Level of Detail	Programmatic, Policy, And Tactical	Network Planning And Capital Projects
Common Use Case	"How Do We Act Now?"	"What System Are We Building Over Time?"

Trail Feedback Key Takeaways

The following key takeaways represent a high-level overview of community feedback:

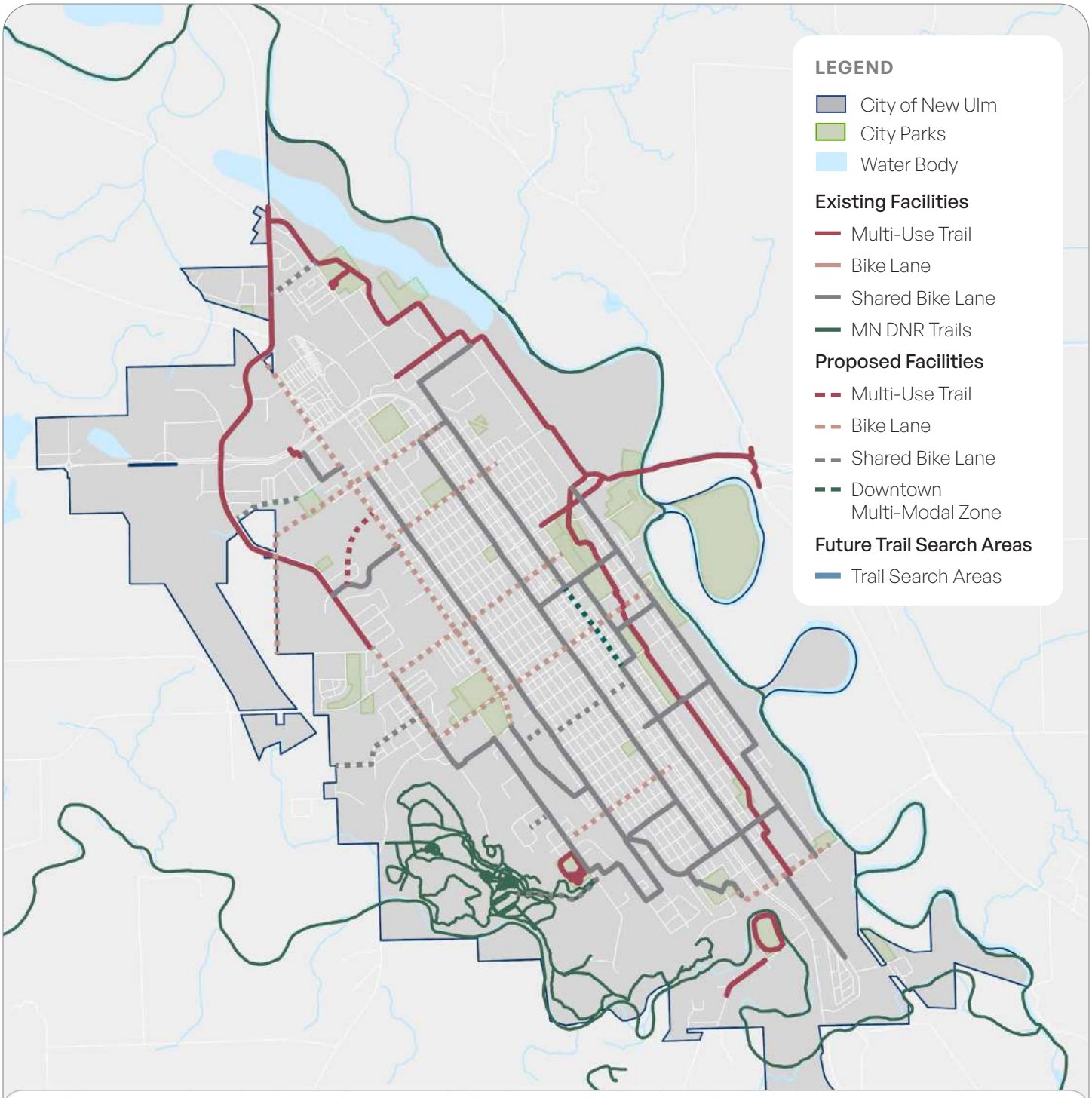
1. **Strong desire for expanding the trail system**, particularly with off-street and protected facilities.
   - Connections to important destinations within the City, include:
     - Parks
     - Schools
     - August Schell Brewing Company
     - Local businesses
     - Flandrau State Park
     - Northern Section of City (Near Walmart)
   - Regional trail connections to neighboring communities, such as:
     - Mankato
     - Sleepy Eye
2. **Wide support for improving existing trails and facilities**, with the following elements:
   - New surfacing
   - Expanded lighting
   - Converting key shared bike lanes to protected facilities, such as Minnesota Street and Highland Avenue
   - Directional signage for nearby amenities such as seating, restrooms, and drinking fountains
   - Easily accessible amenities such as drinking fountains and restrooms
3. **Desire for trail facilities located near natural areas** (woodlands/prairies), water access and floating trails, and shaded routes with scenic views
4. **Mountain biking and hiking trails with educational signage**
5. **Interest in a trailhead with parking for visitors**
6. **Request for facilities to be maintained in winter** (snow plowing of trails and sidewalks)

PARK-SPECIFIC TRAIL FEEDBACK, INCLUDES

- Connection from 7th Street through Pfaender Park to 5th N Street and Highland Park, with a pedestrian crossing added to 5th Street between the parks
- Connection between the trail along Cottonwood Street to Adams Park
- Improvements within Nehls Park

Existing and Proposed Trails and Bicycle Facilities Map

This map provides an overview of existing trails, separated, protected, and shared bike lanes, as well as those proposed in the Active Transportation Plan.



Multi-Use Trail: Paved pathway designed for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Bike Lane: Buffered or protected bike lane along a street.

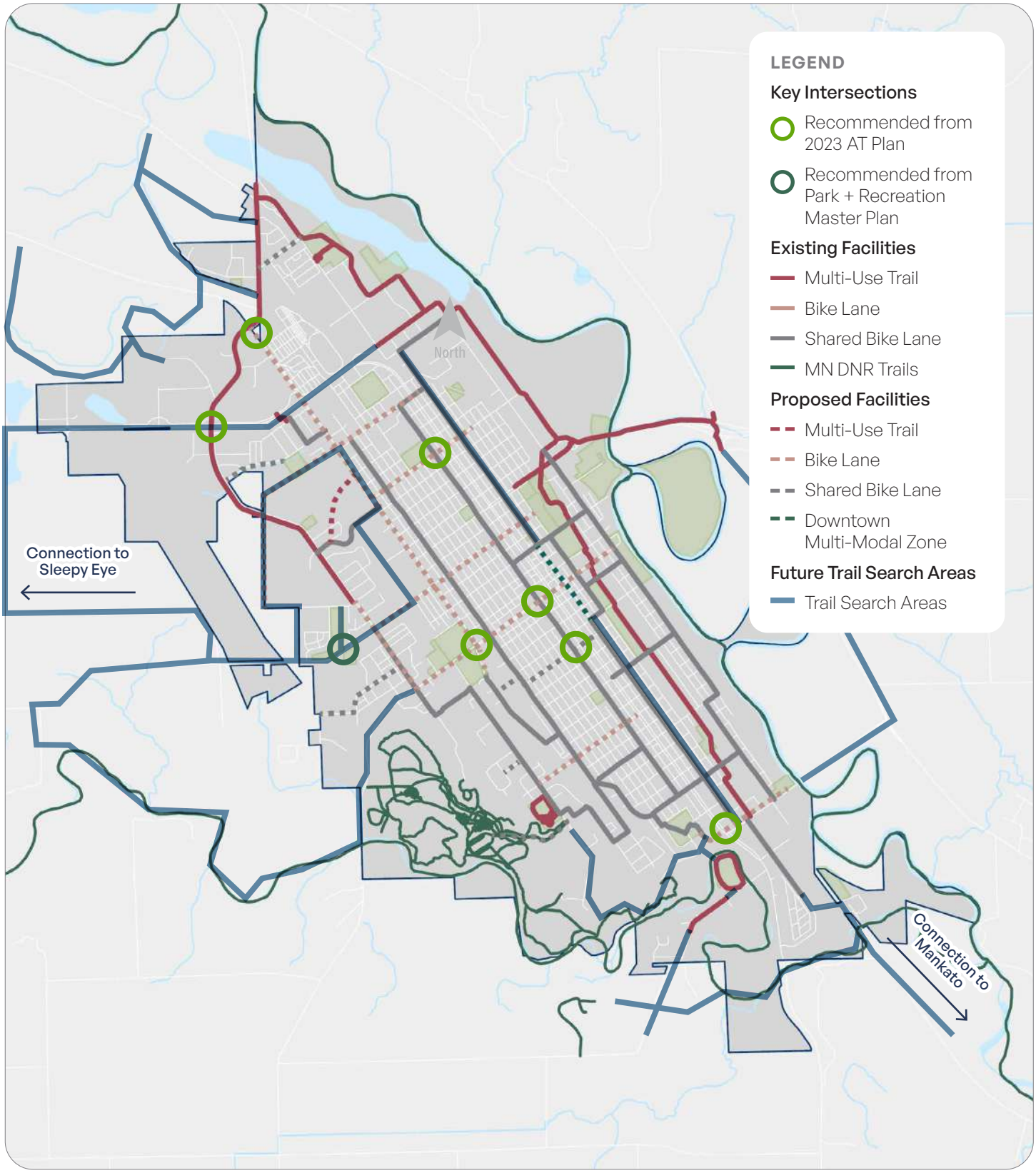
Shared Bike Lane: Shared lane between bicyclists and motor vehicles, typically represented as a shared use arrow (sharrow).

Downtown Multi-Modal Zone: Bicycle and pedestrian improvements located downtown, identified in the 2023 AT Plan.

Key Intersections: Intersections needing targeted safety improvements.

Future Trail Search Areas + Connections Map

This is a generalized map that summarizes engagement takeaways and integrates trail search areas as identified in the 2024 Four Small Area Plans.



Partnerships

As noted in the Parks + Recreation Today section, there are a variety of public, private, and non-profit organizations operating within the City, significantly affecting the dynamics of recreation offerings.

Existing

Schools

A variety of public and private schools and colleges exist within New Ulm. The Park and Recreation Department (Department) is impacted by local schools, as they not only provide numerous recreation facilities, but most schools offer options for community education or recreation programming. There are many existing partnerships with the schools, including use of Washington Park for recess and physical education by New Ulm Area Catholic Schools (NUACS) , and use of many parks by New Ulm Public Schools (NUPS). NUPS Community Education also partners heavily with the Department. During engagement efforts, both NUACS and NUPS reported high satisfaction with their partnerships, noting the Department as critical to their operations. Continued partnership and coordination efforts should be continued, regularly revisited and updated, and formalized through Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) to ensure partnerships are mutually beneficial.

Further, the Department should continue monitoring and evaluating the type and number of programs offered by local schools, along with their respective participation levels and costs. These metrics will help the City as they adjust their own programming to grow and meet local gaps and interests and consider future partnerships with the schools.

NEW ULM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Jefferson Elementary School, New Ulm Middle School, New Ulm High School, River Bend Education District, and New Ulm Career Technical Education Center.

LOCAL PRIVATE SCHOOLS
St. Paul's Lutheran School, Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, Martin Luther College, and New Ulm Area Catholic Schools (NUACS), which includes St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School and Cathedral High School.

Sport + Athletic Organizations

There are many sport and athletic organizations that rely on park facilities to conduct most, if not all their programming and are some of the top system users.

In many cases, the Department has partnered with these organizations to facilitate efforts to support their enhancements on parks that they use regularly. For example, the Department coordinated with the Sioux Valley Gun Club to aid the group in grant funding to construct a new accessible building onsite, and in other instances, partnered with organizations to share the cost of construction of new facilities. The Department partnered with the Turner Gymnastics Academy on the recent Recreation Center construction to include a dedicated Gymnastic Center.

The Department meets with clubs and associations annually to discuss specific needs and any changes in operation from the previous year. Continued close coordination with these organizations is necessary to fully understand what facilities are used by the organizations. For example, the City retains and maintains some facilities such as the soccer field adjacent to the art wall, north of Johnson Park, to provide space for organizations like the New Ulm Soccer Club. The City should maintain regular coordination with the Soccer Club to monitor use and demand of this site.

Feedback from clubs and association representatives indicated overall satisfaction and appreciation for the positive relationship with the Department, noting its approachable and receptive nature. Staff are regarded as essential in coordinating with user groups, and there is strong interest in maintaining this role. Organizations also expressed interest in developing shared fundraising resources and intergroup collaboration in sharing resources and equipment, such as activity bag check-outs with sports and game equipment, field painting robot, and ice machines. These are opportunities for the Department to continue acting as a central coordinator and regular communicator with partners, so youth athletics are accessible and serve stakeholders.

- Turner Gymnastics Academy
- New Ulm Junior Baseball
- New Ulm Baseball Association
- River Valley BMX
- New Ulm Fastpitch
- NUSE Hockey Association
- New Ulm Soccer Club
- New Ulm Youth Football
- New Ulm Pickleball
- New Ulm Basketball Association
- Sioux Valley Gun Club
- New Ulm Figure Skating Club
- New Ulm Tennis Association

Non-Profit Organizations

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Another important partnership influencing the provision, promotion, and perception of parks and recreation is the New Ulm Area Chamber of Commerce, which operates the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) and Visitor Center. The Chamber plays a key role in promoting community assets, coordinating tourism-related activities, and supporting large-scale events that rely heavily on City parks and facilities.

Parks and recreation amenities are closely tied to the City's overall brand and visitor experience, and the Chamber regularly fields inquiries related to parks, trails, events, and recreation opportunities through the Visitor Center. The Chamber's website, which has high visibility, and its managed online community calendar serve as important tools for promoting Park and Recreation programs, facilities, and special events. The Chamber also highlights Park and Recreation initiatives and achievements through newsletters and other communications, reinforcing the Department's role in shaping positive and lasting impressions of New Ulm.

Sports tournaments and large recreation-related events represent a significant opportunity for both the Department and the Chamber, as these events generate tourism activity and benefit local businesses. During engagement efforts, the Chamber expressed interest in improving communication and coordination around tournaments, particularly related to event promotion, scheduling, and alignment with local business outreach. The Chamber supports tournaments through visitor information, promotional materials, and New Ulm-branded items, and provides maps and tourism information at the Visitor Center.

The Department is viewed by the Chamber as an approachable and collaborative partner, and there is strong interest in continuing and expanding this relationship. Opportunities exist to further formalize coordination related to event planning, promotion, and volunteer recruitment, particularly for large tournaments and community-wide events. The Department can support continued partnership with the Chamber of Commerce through regular coordination meetings, shared communication strategies, and alignment of event calendars and promotional efforts.

HEART OF NEW ULM (HONU)

HONU is a longstanding and strategic partner of the Department, working collaboratively to promote active living, community health, and equitable access to recreation and wellness opportunities. The partnership supports shared goals related to physical activity, mental well being, and healthy environments across the park and trail system.

HONU and the Department collaborate across a wide range of initiatives, including joint programming, participation in community action teams, and coordination on planning and policy efforts. Key areas of partnership include active transportation planning and education, Safe Routes to School, and promotion of healthy lifestyles. HONU has also directly supported the park system through funding and installation of outdoor fitness equipment and bike racks, partnership on mobile and pop up programming such as Rec on the Go, and collaborative events and programs, including Holiday Trimmings and community wellness activities.

The partnership extends to policy alignment and advocacy, including efforts to support tobacco free and cannabis free parks, healthy concession initiatives, and the Bicycle Friendly Community designation. HONU's health data, community assessments, and walkability studies provide valuable input that can inform park investments, trail connections, and programming decisions, ensuring parks function as foundational infrastructure for community health.

The Park and Recreation Master Plan supports continued partnership with HONU by reinforcing parks and trails as essential components of the City's public health framework. The Plan encourages ongoing coordination through HONU action teams, integration of health data into planning decisions, and co-development of programs and policies that promote active living, inclusivity, and safe, substance free environments. Strengthening this partnership will help maximize the health benefits of the park system, improve awareness and use of existing amenities, such as outdoor fitness stations, and ensure continued alignment between recreation planning and community health goals.

Other Government Organizations

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES + FLANDRAU STATE PARK

Given Flandrau State Park's location partially within the City of New Ulm and its role as a major regional recreation destination, the Park and Recreation Master Plan recommends continued and expanded coordination with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR). This partnership is particularly important as community interest grows in water based recreation, nature based play, and improved trail connectivity.

There is increasing public interest in expanding water play amenities in New Ulm, including splash pads and the potential for an outdoor pool. At the same time, consideration should be given to avoiding duplication of facilities and ensuring that future investments align with long-term operations and maintenance capacity. The City operates an indoor aquatic facility at the Recreation Center, while Flandrau State Park provides an outdoor swimming pond that serves seasonal demand. Ongoing coordination with MN DNR can help clarify complementary roles and inform future decision making related to aquatic recreation.

The Plan also supports exploring opportunities for nature-based play within the City park system, provided such amenities can be appropriately integrated to support environmental learning, reflect New Ulm's unique character, and address safety, accessibility, and liability considerations. Stakeholder engagement identified interest in learning from Flandrau State Park's existing nature play features as a potential model. Coordination with MN DNR can help inform best practices and regulatory considerations associated with these types of amenities.

In addition, the Plan recommends continued collaboration on the integration of the City trail network into Flandrau and connecting to the trails there. Strengthening these connections can improve access, enhance user experience, and reinforce the park system as part of a broader regional recreation and natural resource network.

This partnership is particularly important as community interest grows in water-based recreation, nature based play, and improved trail connectivity.

BROWN COUNTY + ADJACENT COUNTY COORDINATION

Brown County is an important governmental partner for the City of New Ulm. The Plan recommends continued and expanded coordination with Brown County to support complementary investments, shared use of resources, and alignment of recreation opportunities across jurisdictions.

Brown County owns and manages several County parks, campgrounds, and Cottonwood River corridor access sites that serve residents and visitors. As interest grows in outdoor recreation, trail use, and water-based activities, coordination with Brown County can help ensure that facilities and access points are planned in a manner that avoids duplication, enhances regional connectivity, and aligns with long-term maintenance and operational capacity across both systems.

The City's proximity to the border of Nicollet County reinforces the importance of regional and cross county coordination. Residents regularly access recreation amenities beyond municipal and county boundaries, and future trail and park planning efforts may extend toward or connect with facilities in adjacent counties. The Plan encourages the City to remain mindful of these cross boundary use patterns and to coordinate, where appropriate, with neighboring jurisdictions to support seamless recreation access.

The Plan supports collaboration with Brown County on trail planning and connectivity, particularly where City trails, County facilities, and state assets intersect. Coordination with Brown County should focus on shared planning, efficient investment, and long-term stewardship to ensure that parks and trails function as an integrated system serving both local and regional needs.

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MNDOT DISTRICT 7)

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is a critical partner in advancing trail connectivity, active transportation, and safe access to parks and recreation facilities. The Plan recommends continued coordination with MnDOT to align park and trail planning with state transportation investments and long-range multimodal strategies.

Many existing and future trail connections in New Ulm intersect with or run adjacent to state highways and transportation corridors under MnDOT jurisdiction. As interest grows in expanding the trail system and improving connections between neighborhoods, parks, and regional destinations, coordination with MnDOT can help ensure that trail investments are safely integrated into transportation projects and reflect best practices for design, accessibility, and user safety.

The Plan supports collaboration with MnDOT on trail crossings, corridor planning, and multimodal improvements, particularly where City trails connect to regional routes or coincide with roadway reconstruction projects. Early and ongoing coordination can help the City align priorities, pursue joint funding opportunities, and ensure that trail access is considered alongside transportation planning and capital investments.

Coordination with MnDOT should focus on integrating parks and trails into the broader transportation network, improving safe and convenient access for pedestrians and bicyclists, and reinforcing parks and recreation facilities as key destinations within New Ulm's multimodal system.

Future Partnerships

Arts + Culture

THE GRAND CENTER FOR ARTS + CULTURE

The Department should pursue an expanded partnership with the Grand Center for Arts + Culture (The Grand) to strengthen arts programming in parks and increase public art as a community-building amenity. The Grand's work is centered on public art and community engagement, and it already offers youth and adult programming and collaborates with community events such as the Farmers Market.

During stakeholder engagement, The Grand expressed interest in arts in the park programming and in supporting local artists through commissioned pieces located in parks, while also noting a desire for clear expectations and criteria for what the City is looking for in partnerships. Since The Grand is funded in part through grants and faces ongoing costs associated with maintaining a historic building, a structured partnership that supports shared goals, without creating duplicative services, can improve both community access to the arts and the vibrancy of the park system.

It is recommended that the City formalize an Arts in the Parks partnership framework with The Grand to expand recreation offerings beyond traditional sports programming, elevate community identity, and increase inclusive gathering opportunities in parks. This partnership could prioritize recurring actions such as arts-based programming in neighborhood and community parks and art integration in park improvements through local artist commissions.

Private Providers

A wide range of private recreation, sports, fitness, and creative providers operate within New Ulm, including private health clubs, dance and martial arts studios, youth sports training facilities, art studios, and childcare providers (see list on page 77). These providers offer specialized programming, facilities, and expertise that can complement public recreation offerings.

The Plan recommends exploring strategic partnerships with private providers to expand access to specialized activities that may be difficult for the public sector to deliver independently. These partnerships can help fill program gaps, introduce new recreational opportunities, and increase overall system flexibility without duplicating services or facilities.

Potential partnership approaches may include co-hosted programs in City parks or facilities, short-term, or pilot programming agreements, shared use of space, and coordinated promotion of offerings that align with Department goals. The Plan encourages the City to establish clear criteria for evaluating partnerships with private providers, including alignment with community needs, affordability, equity of access, and consistency with the Department's mission. When thoughtfully structured, partnerships with private providers can enhance the diversity of recreation opportunities available to residents while supporting efficient use of City resources.

Medical Providers

As community trends show increasing interest in fitness, wellness, and preventative health, the Plan recommends pursuing expanded partnerships with local medical providers and wellness organizations. These partnerships can strengthen the role of parks and recreation as foundational infrastructure for community health and well being.

Collaboration with medical providers may support initiatives such as wellness programming, injury prevention and rehabilitation activities, active aging programs, mental health and stress reduction offerings, and health-based use of parks and trails. HONU may serve as a key partner or connector in this effort, helping align recreation initiatives with broader community health goals and data driven outcomes.

The Plan supports future partnerships that integrate health expertise into recreation planning and programming while maintaining clear roles and expectations. By aligning parks and recreation offerings with medical and wellness partners, the City can reinforce parks as safe, inclusive spaces that support physical activity, mental well being, and lifelong health for residents of all ages.

In addition to potential partnerships with medical providers, the City should continue to recognize and build upon the role of community based wellness organizations that already support health focused recreation. HONU serves as a critical partner in advancing active living and community health initiatives, while ARS provides inclusive programming for teens ages 15 and older and adults with disabilities in the Brown County area through stipends and programming space supported by the Department. CAST, operating from the New Ulm Community Center, delivers social, educational, recreational, and informational programming for adults ages 55 and older. Together, these organizations demonstrate the value of integrated wellness partnerships and provide a strong foundation for expanding health oriented recreation services across the park system.

Faith-Based Organizations

New Ulm is home to a variety of churches and faith-based institutions that often provide basic recreation, social, and community services for their congregations and the broader community. The Plan recognizes these organizations as potential partners in expanding access to community based recreation services and facilities.

Faith-based organizations may offer indoor and outdoor spaces, volunteers, and programming capacity that can complement City recreation services, particularly for youth, families, seniors, and underserved populations. The Plan recommends exploring opportunities for shared use of facilities, coordinated programming, and community events that align with Park and Recreation goals while respecting the distinct missions of these organizations.

Future partnerships should be guided by clear agreements that define roles, responsibilities, and public access expectations. When aligned appropriately, partnerships with faith-based organizations can help extend the reach of the Park and Recreation system, increase geographic access to programming, and strengthen neighborhood level community connections.

Vision, Principles, Goals, and Initiatives

New Ulm's Park and Recreation Department is rooted in historic and collaborative efforts, fostering a vibrant system that offers diverse, accessible facilities and activities to promote an active and engaged community.

PARK & RECREATION VISION

The master planning process included creation of a vision statement by City staff during a collaboration workshop. The Park and Recreation Commission adopted the vision statement on November 10, 2025.

Goals + Strategies

A roadmap for New Ulm's Park and Recreation system is outlined in the following goals and strategies which are based on the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. The process included an analysis of needs and community engagement efforts to inform goals and strategies for the future of parks and recreation within the City. The goals describe a key component of focus for the future parks and recreation system and are each supported by a series of strategies. This Plan aims to build upon the 2024 Comprehensive Plan by providing additional context, details, and a roadmap to achieve identified goals.

Goals

1. Provide a diversified park, recreation, and open space system that is accessible and suitable for all ages, incomes, and interests.
2. Provide open space that preserves and enhances significant environmental resources and features, protects scenic vistas and water resources, and retains natural resource corridors.
3. Provide an interconnected system of accessible multi-use trails and greenway corridors that offer diverse outdoor experiences within a variety of landscapes and natural habitats.
4. Provide recreational programs and services throughout the community that are fun, educational, accessible, safe, and promote healthy lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities.
5. Design and develop park and open space facilities that reduce overall maintenance requirements and costs and incorporate sustainable management practices.
6. Utilize park and recreation programming as part of the City's overall economic development strategy.

Goal Table Key

STATUS

- Not Started
- Partially Completed
- Ongoing
- Completed
- Future

LEAD RESPONSIBILITY

- Park and Recreation Department
- City of New Ulm
- Engineering Department
- Planning Department

Goal 1

Provide a diversified park, recreation, and open space system that is accessible and suitable for all ages, incomes, and interests.

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS/NOTES	STATUS	TIMEFRAME	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS	RELATED ACTIONS
1.1 **Prepare a Park, Trails, and Recreation System Master Plan**	Park and Recreation Master Plan completed and adopted in 2026; serves as the guiding framework for future park investments. Need to conduct a Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan and update Active Transportation Action Plan in accordance with trails feedback documented on page 108.	◔	Short-Term (1–5 years)	🌲	Park & Recreation Commission, System User Groups	1.1 - .7, 2.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.3, 5.5
1.2 **Prepare and update a Five-Year Park Improvement Plan**	Align plan updates with the CIP; prioritize park improvements (as outlined in Park and Recreation Master Plan) and assign funding sources.	◑	Short- to Mid-Term Every 5 years	🌲	Finance Department, Park & Recreation Commission, City Council	1.1, 3.1, 4.5, 5.1, 5.5
1.3 **Prioritize neighborhood and community parks within walking distance**	Use service area mapping one-quarter to one-half mile radii to identify gaps in park access, particularly in growth areas.	●*	Mid- to Long-Term	🌲	Planning Department, Developers	1.1, 1.6, 2.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.6, 3.9
1.4 **Partner to avoid duplication of facilities and programs**	Formalize shared-use agreements and coordinated programming with public and private partners.	◑	Short- to Long-Term	🌲	Schools, Brown County, MnDNR, Private Providers, User Groups + Community Organizations See Partnership section page 113.	1.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, 3.5, 5.5, 6.3

**Part of Master Plan and City Comprehensive plan but should be re-evaluated regularly.*

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS/NOTES	STATUS	TIMEFRAME	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS	RELATED ACTIONS
1.5 Support affordable and accessible events and experiences	Expand inclusive programming and reduce participation barriers through pricing and sponsorships.	◑	Short-Term	🌲	User Groups + Community Organizations, Chamber of Commerce	1.1, 4.1, 4.4, 4.6, 5.3, 6.2
1.6 Acquire and develop parks and trails consistent with adopted plans	Use park dedication, acquisition, and redevelopment to balance parks, trails, and open space.	◑	Long-Term	🏛	Park and Recreation Department, Planning Department, Developers	1.1, 1.3 2.2, 3.2, 3.4, 3.9, 5.1
1.7 Evaluate underutilized park properties	Review park usage and condition to guide reinvestment or reprogramming decisions.	◑	Mid-Term	🌲	Park & Recreation Commission, User Groups + Community Organizations	1.1, 5.1, 5.4
1.8 Continue partnership with Flandrau State Park	Maintain cooperative agreements, shared projects, and expanded trail connections.	◑	Short- to Long-Term	🌲	MN DNR	1.1, 3.7, 3.8, 4.2, 4.3,

Goal 2

Provide open space that preserves and enhances significant environmental resources and features, protects scenic vistas and water resources, and retains natural resource corridors.

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS/NOTES	STATUS	TIMEFRAME	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS	RELATED ACTIONS
2.1 Preserve open space corridors and buffers	Identify priority corridors and integrate into development review.	◑	Long-Term		Park and Recreation Department, Developers	1.1, 1.3, 3.2, 3.4
2.2 Protect significant environmental features	Use acquisition, zoning, and restoration to preserve sensitive resources.	◑	Long-Term		Park and Recreation Department, Planning Department, Conservation Organizations	1.6, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7,
2.3 Expand river access and shoreline partnerships	Improve access and programming along the Minnesota and Cottonwood Rivers.	◑	Mid- to Long-Term		Brown County, MnDNR, User Groups + Community Organizations	1.8, 3.7, 4.2, 4.3, 6.1, 6.4
2.4 Integrate stormwater features into parks	Design detention and retention areas as park amenities where feasible.	◑	Mid-Term		Park and Recreation Department	5.2
2.5 Pursue natural resource funding partnerships	Seek grants and partnerships to implement environmental initiatives.	◑	Short- to Long-Term		Local, State, Federal, and Philanthropic Grant Agencies	2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 5.3, 6.3

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS/NOTES	STATUS	TIMEFRAME	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS	RELATED ACTIONS
2.6 Expand pollinator and native restoration	Restore habitat using native and pollinator-friendly plantings.		Short-Term		Local Conservation Groups	2.5, 2.7, 5.4, 6.1
2.7 Brand natural resource areas	Develop signage and messaging distinguishing natural areas from active parks.		Mid-Term		Local Conservation Groups	2.5, 2.6, 5.4, 6.1
2.8 Expand tree canopy	Retain mature trees and expand canopy through development standards.		Long-Term		Developers	2.5
2.9 Reduce impervious cover	Encourage green infrastructure and low-impact development practices.		Long-Term		Planning Department, Park and Recreation Department, Developers	2.6, 5.1, 5.2,

Goal 3

Provide an interconnected system of accessible multi-use trails and greenway corridors that offer diverse outdoor experiences within a variety of landscapes and natural habitats.

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS/NOTES	STATUS	TIMEFRAME	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS	RELATED ACTIONS
3.1 Fund Trail Maintenance	Allocate ongoing funding for trail upkeep and replacement.	◑	Short-Term		City Council, Engineering Department	1.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5
3.2 Develop Uninterrupted Trail Connections	Coordinate trails with development, parks, and roadway projects.	◑	Long-Term		Planning Department, Developers	1.3, 2.1
3.3 Buffer Trail Corridors	Provide screening between trails and adjacent land uses where feasible.	◑	Mid-Term		Planning Department	2.1, 2.2, 5.2
3.4 Link Neighborhoods To Destinations	Prioritize trail and sidewalk connections to key community destinations.	◑	Long-Term		Park and Recreation Department	1.3, 1.6, 3.6, 3.9
3.5 Complete A Looped Trail System	Advance remaining trail segments to complete the Citywide loop.	◑	Long-Term		Engineering Department	1.1, 3.2, 3.8, 6.1

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS/NOTES	STATUS	TIMEFRAME	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS	RELATED ACTIONS
3.6 Improve Sidewalk Access To Parks	Fill sidewalk gaps on residential and arterial streets leading to parks.	◑	Mid-Term		Planning Department, Park and Recreation Department	1.3, 3.2, 3.4
3.7 Establish New Ulm As A Regional Trail Leader	Promote biking, walking, and water trails regionally.	◑	Long-Term		MnDNR, Brown County, Chamber	1.8, 2.3, 6.1, 6.4
3.8 Extend Trails To August Schell Brewery And Flandrau State Park	Improve regional trail connectivity.	◑	Mid-Term		MnDNR, August Schell Brewery + other private businesses	1.8, 6.1, 6.3
3.9 Incorporate Neighborhood Paths	Integrate internal paths during subdivision and redevelopment.	◑	Long-Term		Developers	1.3, 1.6, 3.4, 3.6

Goal 4

Provide recreational programs and services throughout the community that are fun, educational, accessible, safe, and promote healthy lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities.

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS/NOTES	STATUS	TIMEFRAME	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS	RELATED ACTIONS
4.1 Evaluate Recreation Programming	Regularly assess program demand and gaps.	◑	Short-Term	🌲	User Groups + Community Organizations	1.1, 1.5
4.2 Develop Strategic Partnerships	Leverage shared resources and expertise.	◑	Short- to Long-Term	🌲	Schools, Brown County, MnDNR, Private Providers, User Groups + Community Organizations See Partnership section page 111	1.4, 6.3
4.3 Expand River-Based Recreation	Increase programming tied to river access and amenities.	◑	Mid-Term	🌲	Brown County, MnDNR	2.3, 3.7, 6.1
4.4 Expand Age-Specific Programming	Enhance youth, adaptive, adult, and senior offerings.	◑	Short-Term	🌲	Private Providers	1.1, 1.5, 4.5
4.5 Keep Facilities And Programs Current	Update amenities and programming based on community needs.	◑	Mid-Term	🌲	Park & Recreation Commission	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 4.4

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS/NOTES	STATUS	TIMEFRAME	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS	RELATED ACTIONS
4.6 Promote Events And Gatherings In Parks	Use parks as venues for festivals and community events.		Short-Term		Chamber, User Groups + Community Organizations	1.5, 6.1, 6.2
4.7 Promote Parks' Role In Quality Of Life	Communicate benefits of parks for health and economic vitality.		Long-Term		Chamber, Schools, User Groups + Community Organizations	6.4

Goal 5

Design and develop park and open space facilities that reduce overall maintenance requirements and costs and incorporate sustainable management practices.

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS/NOTES	STATUS	TIMEFRAME	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS	RELATED ACTIONS
5.1 Reduce Maintenance And Operating Costs	Design facilities with lifecycle cost considerations.		Long-Term		Engineering Department	1.6, 1.7, 2.6, 5.4
5.2 Use Low-Maintenance Materials	Incorporate value engineering and durable materials.		Mid-Term		Engineering Department	2.4, 2.6, 2.9, 5.4
5.3 Improve Efficiency Of Operations	Explore joint efforts and cost-sharing models.		Mid-Term		Schools, Brown County, MnDNR, Private Providers, User Groups + Community Organizations See Partnership section page xx	1.4, 1.5, 1.8, 4.2, 6.3
5.4 Reduce Mowed Turf	Replace turf with native or low-maintenance plantings.		Short-Term		Local Conservation Groups	1.7, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7
5.5 Use Data-Driven Asset Management	Track park assets to inform maintenance and replacement planning.		Short-Term		Engineering Department, Finance Department	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 5.1

Goal 6

Utilize park and recreation programming as part of the City's overall economic development strategy.

STRATEGY	IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS/NOTES	STATUS	TIMEFRAME	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS	RELATED ACTIONS
6.1 Promote Parks To Attract Visitors	Market parks and open spaces to support tourism.	◑	Short-Term		Chamber, User Groups + Community Organizations	3.7, 3.8, 4.3, 4.6
6.2 Expand Park-Based Event Programming	Highlight unique park identities through events.	◑	Mid-Term		Chamber, User Groups + Community Organizations	1.5, 4.6
6.3 Explore Public-Private Partnerships	Leverage sponsorships and partnerships.	◑	Long-Term		Private Sector	1.4, 5.3
6.4 Promote Outdoor Lifestyle	Use recreation assets to attract residents and businesses.	◑	Long-Term		Chamber, Economic Development	3.7, 4.7
6.5 Develop Economic Development Materials	Integrate parks messaging into tourism and business materials.	◑	Short-Term		Chamber, Economic Development	6.1

Park Profiles + Recommendations

Adams Park

Archery Range Park

Civic Center

Community Garden

German Park

Harman Park

Hermann Heights Park + Monument

Highland Park

Kiesling Park + House

Lakeside Village Park

Lincoln Park

Maplewood Park

Minnecon Park

Nehls Park

Pollinator Park Grounds

North Highland Park

North Market Park

North Park

Pfaender Park

Pollinator Park + Natural Resource Area

Riverside Park

Schonlau Park

South German Park

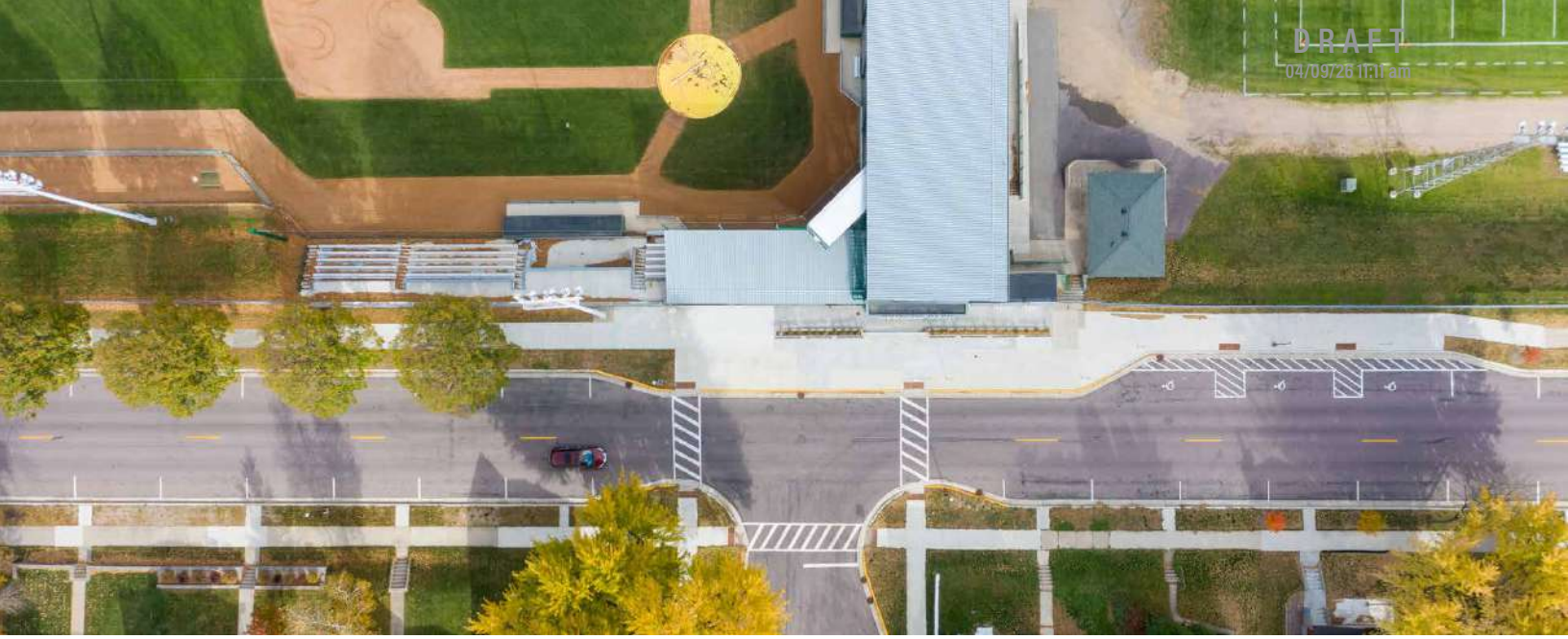
South Market Park

South Park

Steinhauser Park + Recreation Center

Trap + Skeet Range

Washington Park



Park Profiles + Recommendations

This section describes the various parks that make up New Ulm's park system, including profiles and existing conditions of each of the City's parks and recreation facilities. The plan recommendations were drafted based on the findings from the facilities assessment, community input, and discussions with City staff. The system plan is based on current and anticipated needs of the community, and although the public process provided a sound basis for system planning, the plan remains dynamic and will require adjustments.

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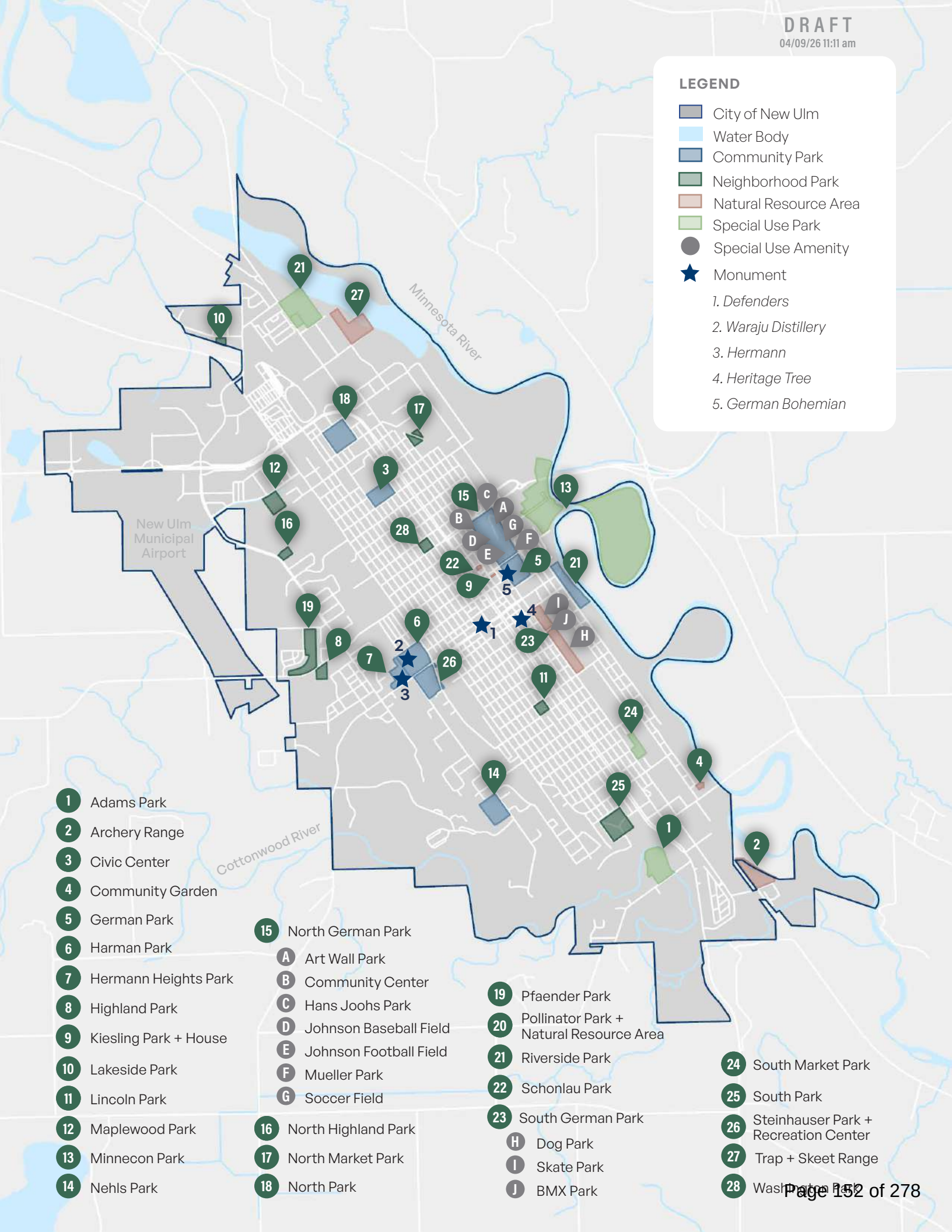


1 Adams Park
2 Archery Range
3 Civic Center
4 Community Garden
5 German Park
6 Harman Park
7 Hermann Heights Park
8 Highland Park
9 Kiesling Park + House
10 Lakeside Park
11 Lincoln Park
12 Maplewood Park
13 Minnecon Park
14 Nehls Park

15 North German Park
- A Art Wall Park
- B Community Center
- C Hans Joohs Park
- D Johnson Baseball Field
- E Johnson Football Field
- F Mueller Park
- G Soccer Field

16 North Highland Park
17 North Market Park
18 North Park

19 Pfaender Park
20 Pollinator Park + Natural Resource Area
21 Riverside Park
22 Schonlau Park
23 South German Park
- H Dog Park
- I Skate Park
- J BMX Park

24 South Market Park
25 South Park
26 Steinhauser Park + Recreation Center
27 Trap + Skeet Range
28 Washington Park

1. Adams Park

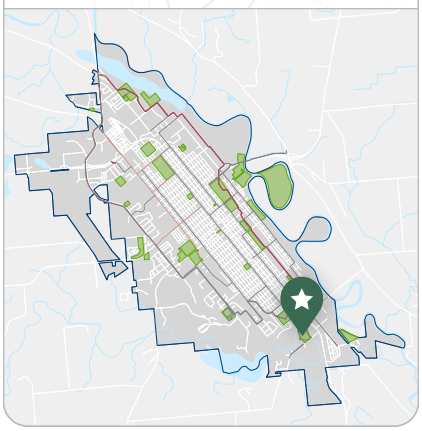
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
620 Cottonwood Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Natural Resource Area

ACREAGE
15.9



General Description

Adams Park is a floodplain parcel that is bound by the Cottonwood River, providing a peaceful and serene experience for park users. River access is provided near the park origin, through provision of access stairs and a kayak/canoe launch. There is a large gravel bar on the northwest end that provides additional access for fishing and picnicking. The park hosts natural trails that are used for walking, hiking, and mountain biking. The large massing of trees provides shade coverage throughout the site. Steep banks line the site's edge where land meets water, including sandy terrain caused by its location within the floodplain. As the site experiences frequent seasonal flooding, addition or maintenance of infrastructure should be carefully evaluated to ensure amenities can weather impacts of regular flooding.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

An unpaved parking lot provides access to the site from Cottonwood Street. There are no sidewalks along Cottonwood Street. Natural trails are used by both hikers and mountain bikers, but sandy trails and their location within the floodplain create challenges for its users.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

Adams Park is in a relatively secluded area on the southern end of the City. The Cottonwood River supports a dense floodplain forest surrounding the park and abuts the west, north, and eastern sides of the park. To the north and across the Cottonwood River is Junior Pioneer Park, a private park within the City. Southwest of the park is a residential district, and to the west are light industrial uses.

Proposed Recommendations

● *High Priority (2–5 Years)* ● *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* ● *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

● Analyze the site with community to explore expanded uses and features such as:
- Hiking and natural trails
- Trail connection from Cottonwood Street to park trail
- Low impact water access-floodable improvements
- Interpretive signage

● Improve carry-in boat access

Amenities

Boat Launch

Interpretive Signage

Monument Sign

Mountain Biking Trails

Natural Area

Natural Trails

Unpaved
Off-Street Parking

Waste Receptacles

Wayfinding Signage

Programs + Partnerships

None

2. Archery Range Park

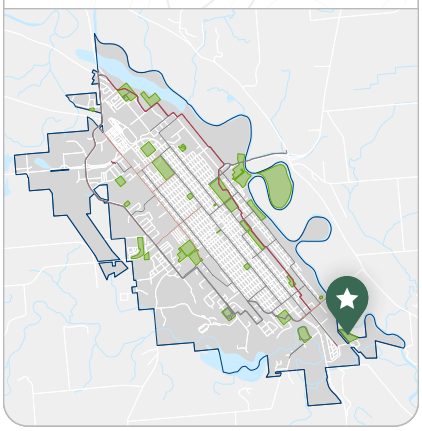
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
220 Tower Road

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Special Use Park

ACREAGE
0.7



General Description

Archery Range Park is a special use park and has open and flat terrain. The site features an archery stand, targets, and supporting features such as an off-street parking lot, lighting, and picnic tables. Deciduous trees are distributed throughout the site, increasing in density to the north and west sides of the park.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

Archery Range Park shares an access drive with the adjacent New Ulm Wastewater Plant from Tower Road. An unpaved gravel parking lot serves park users. Circulation within the park is minimal because there are no dedicated pathways to ensure accessible movement.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

Archery Range Park is on the southeast border of the City. The site is on the same parcel as the New Ulm Wastewater Treatment Plant. Immediately adjacent to the southeast is the plant's Bio-Solids Processing Facility. North and east of the parcel is the Cottonwood River and surrounding floodplain forest. To the west is the Kraft-Heinz manufacturing plant, along with associated light industrial uses.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Increase park accessibility through parking improvements and accessible paths to amenities
●	Screen park visually from Bio Solids Processing facility
●	Consider converting sections of unused grass to native prairie to support pollinators and reduce mowing
●	Consider a berm backstop or archery reconfiguration to support broader use of the west portion of the park

Amenities

Archery Targets (3)

Archery Stand

Monument Sign

Unpaved,
Off-Street Parking

Picnic Tables

Portable
Restrooms (Seasonal)

Site Lighting

Programs + Partnerships

None

3. Civic Center

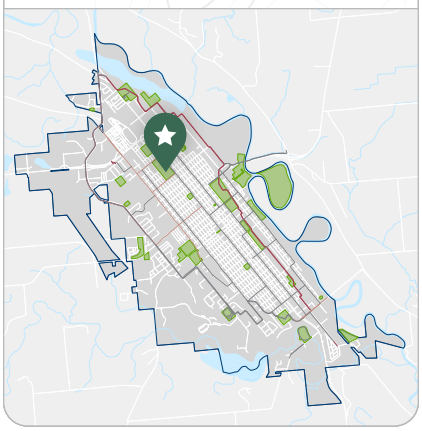
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
1212 North Franklin Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Special Use Park

ACREAGE
10.3



General Description

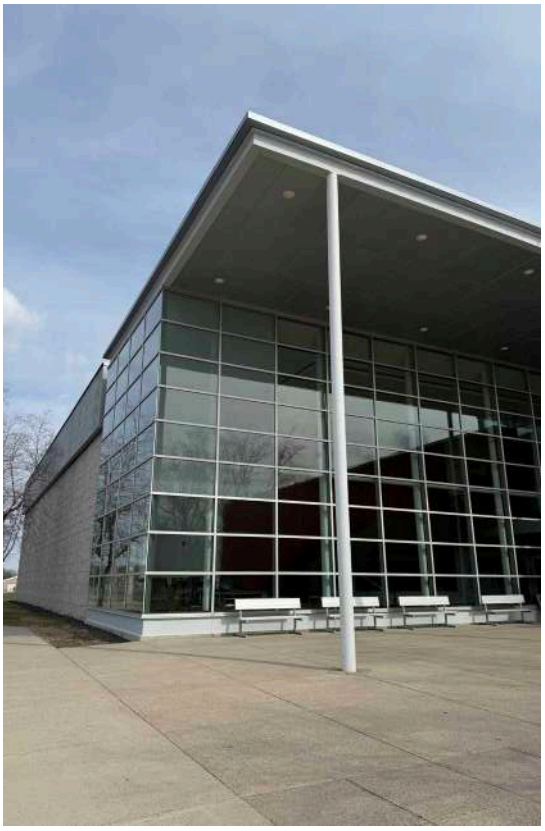
The two-story Civic Center features meeting space, one regulation ice rink and an Olympic size ice sheet, ten team rooms, a large concourse area on the upper level with common areas, seating, and concessions. The dry floor space is available for banquets, showers, and convention spaces. A warming kitchen is available for caterers, and event items such as tables, chairs, dance floor, and drapery are available for rent.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

The Civic Center has a paved parking lot that can be accessed via 12th Street North and Franklin Street, both of which have off-street parking. Sidewalks along 12th Street North and Franklin Street connect the facility to the City's greater sidewalk network.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

The Civic Center is on the same parcel as the Brown County Fairgrounds, which hosts events throughout the year, including the annual Brown County Free Fair annually in August. The parcel is directly east, across North Franklin Street, from the Washington Learning Center, which offers preschool and kindergarten programs. The surrounding area is primarily residential, with some commercial and light industrial uses to the northeast. About one-third mile northwest of the Civic Center is North Park.



Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

- Implement recommendations from the 2024 Civic Center Ice System Study

Amenities

Benches

Bike Racks

Civic Center

- Indoor Ice Rinks (2)
- Warming Kitchen
- Meeting + Multipurpose Rooms (9)

Monument Sign

Paved, Off-Street Parking

Waste Receptacles

Wi-Fi

Programs + Partnerships

New Ulm Figure Skating Club

New Ulm High School Eagles Hockey Team

New Ulm/Sleepy Eye Hockey Association

4. Community Garden

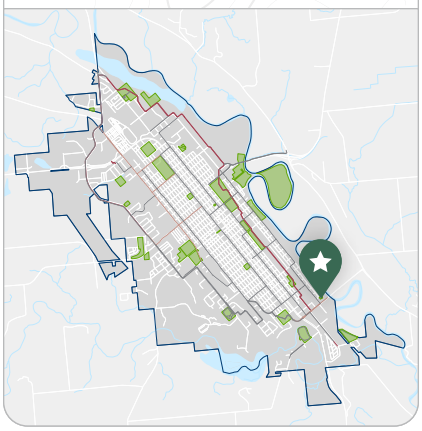
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
107 19th South Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Special Use Park

ACREAGE
2.0



General Description

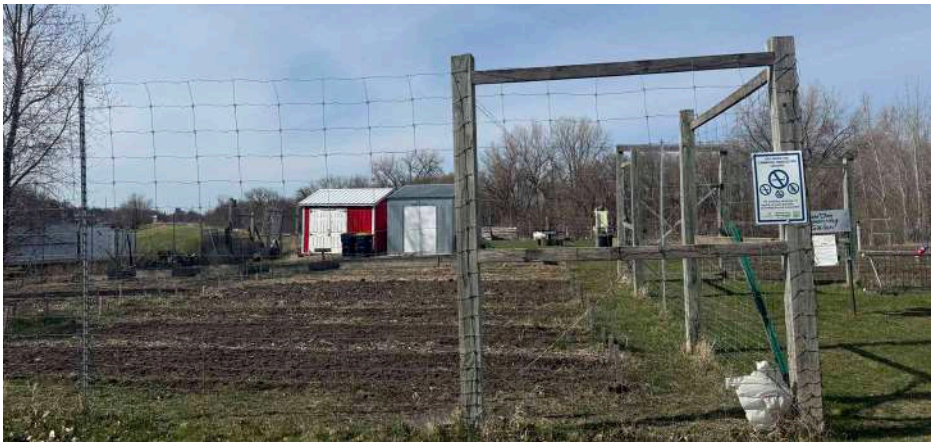
The New Ulm Community Garden is the City's only community garden and consists of 70 plots, each approximately 10-by-10 square feet. Gardeners can rent a plot for rates up to $40 per growing season, dependent on applicant's financial needs, on a first come, first serve basis. The New Ulm Community Garden has several "Plant it Forward" plots to donate produce to the New Ulm Emergency Food Shelf.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

An off-street gravel parking lot is accessible from Valley Street. The site is bordered by a grassy area and a forested buffer adjacent to the Minnesota River. Circulation within the site is limited to grass and dirt paths and lacks ADA-compliant paved walkways. There are some raised garden beds intended for ease of use as needed by gardeners with physical limitations. A City trail borders the southern edge along 20th Street providing connection to the greater sidewalk and trail network.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

The site is visible from and along one of the primary roadways bringing people into New Ulm. In the City's southeastern corner, the site is surrounded by a mix of commercial and industrial land uses, such as the August Schell Brewery warehouse directly to the north, while the Minnesota River Floodplain and forest lie to the east.



Proposed Recommendations

● *High Priority (2–5 Years)* ● *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* ● *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Construct accessible pathways within the park and trail connection to Riverside Park
●	Develop canoe access to Minnesota River
●	Review the 2019 Preliminary Master Plan recommendations for feasibility and need and implement relevant improvements, including: – Off-street parking and accessible circulation – Multi-use lawn – Trail connection – Fewer community garden plots, if done through an expansion in other key City locations

Amenities

Bike Fix-It Station

Bike Racks

Community Garden Plots

Drinking Fountain

Natural Area

Unpaved,
Off-Street Parking

Picnic Tables

Portable Restrooms
(Seasonal)

Storage Shed

Programs + Partnerships

New Ulm Community
Garden Group

5. German Park

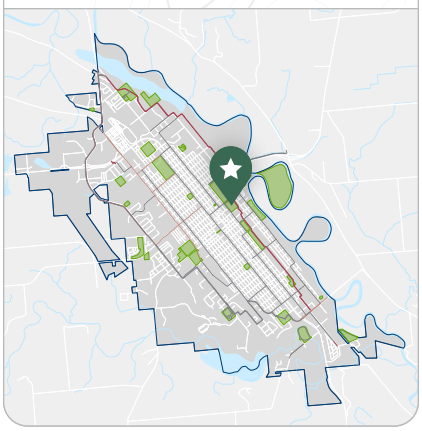
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
200 North German Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Community Park

ACREAGE
5.8



General Description

German Park is a well-loved and heavily utilized community park, providing a wide range of amenities including an amphitheater, landscaped garden, open air shelters, an accessible playground, and numerous ADA-compliant pathways. The gardens are professionally maintained and often serve as a venue for weddings and special events. Monuments, memorials, and informative signage placed throughout the site enhance the user and visitor experience by engaging them with the City's history. Shade structures along the upper western edge of the amphitheater and the park create substantial deciduous tree coverage in the site's north, south, and west edges.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

Despite significant topography changes throughout the site, many efforts have been made to design the park with accessibility in mind. Ramped pathways connect North German Street to the eastern edge of the park, and the amphitheater provides accessible seating areas. On-street parking is available along North German Street, with accessible stalls near the entrance to the park, and off-street parking is along the eastern border. A designated drop-off zone is provided in the southeastern corner to facilitate loading/unloading for events and to host food trucks.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

German Park is surrounded by the Central Business District on the west border and industrial uses on the east. It is near other City parks, including North German Park directly northwest across 3rd Street North, Minnecon Park is one-third mile to the northeast, and Riverside Park is one-fourth of a mile southeast.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Add bicycle parking along the sidewalk at entrances to park on North German Street and 3rd North Street to provide secure bicycle parking outside of the park
●	Add grills on the east side of the park
●	Expand tree canopy cover on the lower hillside
●	Standardize furnishing palette to enhance cohesion and aesthetics; maintain and replace in conjunction with the City's Give Grow Donation Program
●	Construct a staging area off the service road to be used as a drop-off zone and food truck plaza
●	Upgrade playground equipment in 2037

Amenities

Amphitheater

Drinking Fountain

Flower Gardens + Fountains

Historical Marker + Monument

Monument Sign

Paved, Off-Street Parking

Pergola

Permanent Restrooms

Open Air Picnic Shelter

Picnic Tables

Playground with Poured In Place Surfacing

Waste Receptacles

Wi-Fi (Seasonal)

Two-Story Shelter with Storage (Band Shell)

Veterans Memorial

Programs + Partnerships

None

6. Harman Park

MAP LEGEND

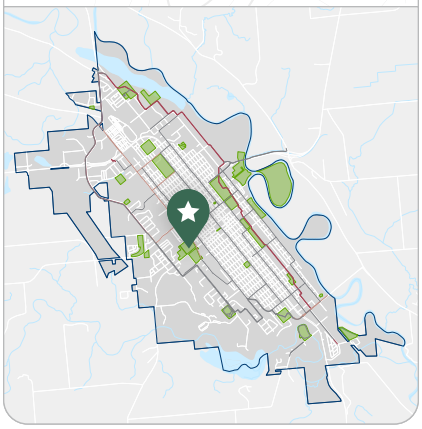
- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
101 North Garden Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION

Community Park

ACREAGE
17.5



General Description

Harman Park is a well-loved, heavily utilized community park that provides many sport amenities for users and visitors, including three baseball/softball fields, a football field, four sand volleyball courts, and a flooded ice hockey rink in winter. The sand volleyball courts and ice hockey rink are equipped with lighting that are activated on a timer. A playground features a gaga pit and adult exercise equipment, and a permanent building has restrooms, concessions, and meeting rooms. Along Center Street, the southern border of the site, a significant change in elevation occurs and includes a row of street trees. A no-mow section of grass is along the steep slope. Along the western border, Harman Park abuts Hermann Heights Park and Monument with a collection of trees and a change of elevation separating the parks.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

Harman Park is lined with sidewalks and contains a paved path connecting the parking lot to the southern baseball/softball field, allowing partial accessibility within the park. The sidewalk along 2nd North Street ends abruptly midway through the park, preventing an accessible route to the bleachers.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

The site is near multiple educational facilities, including St. Paul's Lutheran School, Jefferson Elementary School, New Ulm Middle School, and Martin Luther College to the south. The park also borders Hermann Heights Park and Monument and Steinhauser Park and Recreation Center. Single-family and multifamily residential surrounds the park as well.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Increase programming on hockey rinks during the summer
●	Upgrade playground equipment in 2027
●	Add a drinking fountain/bottle filling station
●	Analyze the site with community to explore: – Relocating football field and/or baseball fields to other City athletic sites to consolidate active athletic fields and repurpose space in the park. Space may be repurposed to include splash pad feature behind the building that can be converted to refrigerated ice rink in the winter – Expanding paved pathways between park amenities and sports fields, particularly from the main entrance – Expanding no-mow areas to reduce maintenance and enhance pollinator habitats – Enhancing tree canopy and natural habitat along the western edge of the park to ensure ecological health and to mitigate erosion

Amenities

Baseball/Softball Field with Bleachers (2)

Baseball/Softball Field with Bleachers + Lights (1)

Combined Picnic Shelter and Warming House with Restrooms and Concessions

Drinking Fountain

Monument Sign

Floodable Ice Skating Rink

Football/Soccer Field

Historical Marker/ Monument

Paved, Off-Street Parking

Open Play Area

Outdoor Ice Hockey Rink with Boards + Lights (2)

Picnic Tables

Playground

Sand Volleyball Courts With Lighting (4)

Wi-Fi

Programs + Partnerships

None

7. Hermann Heights Park + Monument

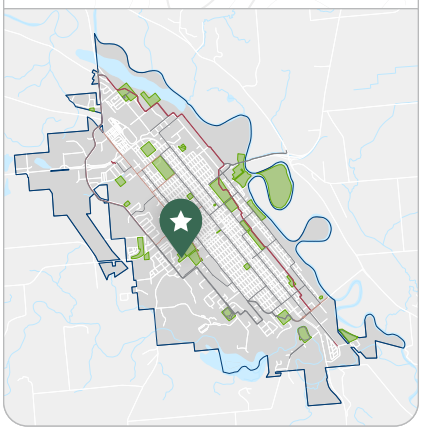
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
14 Monument Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Community Park

ACREAGE
8.2



General Description

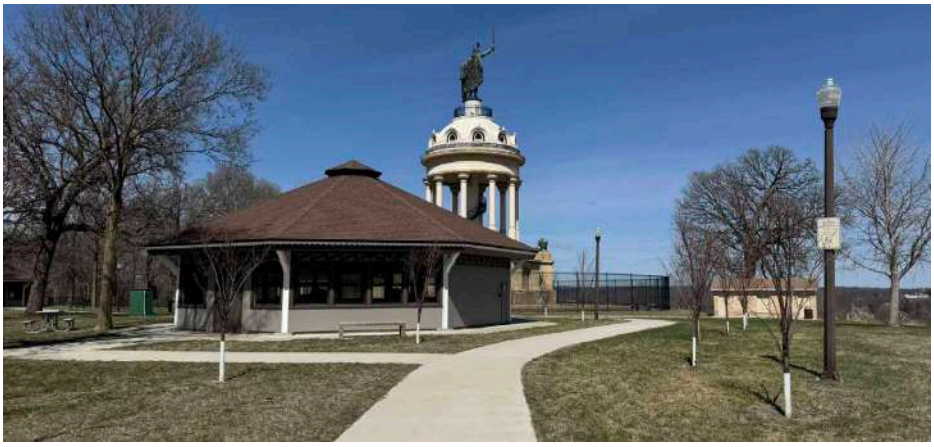
Hermann Heights Parks + Monument, home to the beloved Hermann Monument, a 102-foot monument depicting Hermann the Cherusci, the ancient hero whose army liberated Germany from Roman rule in 9 C.E. Each year, tens of thousands of visitors climb a spiral staircase to the base of the statue for a stunning, panoramic view of the City and the Minnesota River Valley. Hermann Heights Park is a cherished community park offering a variety of amenities, including several shelters and an accessible playground. The site provides excellent circulation and an abundance of mature deciduous tree coverage. Tiered native plantings are placed along the site's southern border which has a significant change in topography.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

This site is fully accessible with numerous paved pathways linking amenities within the park, such as one of only two fully accessible playgrounds within the City. Ample off-street parking is provided along the western edge of the park, complemented by rain gardens within the parking lot islands that manages stormwater runoff and features native plantings.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

The site is near multiple educational facilities, including St. Paul's Lutheran School, Jefferson Elementary School, New Ulm Middle School, and Martin Luther College to the south. The park also borders Harman Park to the north and Steinhauser Park and Recreation Center northeast. Single-family and multifamily residential surrounds the park as well.



Proposed Recommendations

● *High Priority (2–5 Years)* ● *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* ● *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Replace playground surfacing
●	Expand seating
●	Explore spreading ground cover plant varieties, such as spreading juniper and low sumac at the terraced slope on the park's southern border to reduce the need for controlled burns
●	Design and construct a new welcome center with restrooms in a central location within the park. Coordinate with Hermann Monument repairs
●	Demolish old restrooms
●	Replace play equipment 2036

Amenities

Bike Racks

Drinking Fountain

Enclosed Picnic Shelters (2)

Hermann Historical Monument

Interpretive Center

Little Book Library

Natural Area

Paved, Off-Street Parking

Permanent Restrooms

Picnic Tables

Playground Equipment with Poured in Place Surfacing

WiFi (Seasonal)

Programs + Partnerships

Hermann Monument Society

8. Highland Park

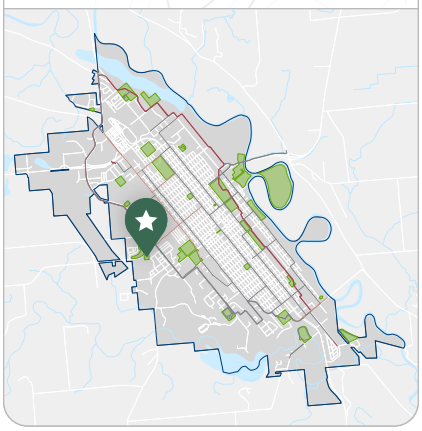
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
1627 5th North Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Neighborhood Park

ACREAGE
3.0



General Description

Highland Park is a neighborhood-serving green space featuring a playground, open-air shelter, picnic tables, and an open play field with a designated soccer area. The playground is modest in scale and oriented toward children ages 5–12. A row of evergreen trees lines the eastern edge of the park, providing a visual buffer between the park and adjacent residential homes. Additional deciduous trees are along the playground's edges, offering seasonal shade and enclosure.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

Primary access is from 5th North Street, which includes sidewalks on both sides and lighting along the southern side of the street. On-street parking is available however, there is no designated crosswalk on this busy street, making pedestrian access from the north side challenging. Additionally, there are no paved paths connecting the sidewalk to key amenities like the shelter or playground. Secondary access is available from Sunset Avenue in the southwest corner, with the sidewalk ending at the park entrance, not extending into the park.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

Along the western edge of the City, Highland Park is adjacent to the Martin Luther College Soccer Complex and across the street from Pfaender Park. Surrounding land uses are a mix of institutional and residential, with additional Martin Luther College facilities to the east and single-family homes to the south and west.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

- Analyze the site with the to explore expanded uses and features such as:
  - Upgrading playground
  - An accessible pathway connecting 5th Street and Sunset Avenue, providing accessible access to amenities within park
  - Increasing tree coverage within park
  - Additional seating
  - Pickleball courts
- Replace playground equipment
- Expand gravel parking lot
- Install an ADA-accessible pathway through the park
- Implement remaining Master Plan recommendations, such as increasing tree coverage, adding seating, and installing pickleball courts

Amenities

Monument Sign

Multi-Use Field

Open Air Picnic Shelter

Picnic Tables

Playground

Portable Restrooms (Seasonal)

Soccer Field

Storage Shed

Programs + Partnerships

Martin Luther College

New Ulm Soccer Club

9. Kiesling Park + House

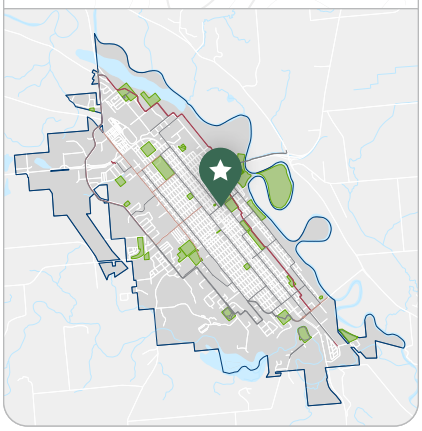
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
220 North Minnesota Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Special Use Park

ACREAGE
0.2



General Description

Kiesling Park and House is a historic landmark in downtown New Ulm that offers visitors a glimpse into the City's pioneer heritage. Built in 1861 by German immigrant Friedrich Kiesling, the Kiesling House is one of the few remaining wood-frame structures from the era of the U.S.–Dakota War of 1862. The restored home features exhibits, interpretive displays, and seasonal programs that highlight 19th-century life, while the surrounding park provides a peaceful setting with native plantings and historical markers. Operated by the Brown County Historical Society, the site stands as a tribute to the resilience and traditions of New Ulm's early settlers.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

Located along North Minnesota Street in downtown New Ulm, the park includes a paved plaza at the street frontage and a pathway connecting the plaza to the historic house at the rear of the site. Street parking is available in front of the park, complemented by a small, surfaced lot behind the property for additional convenience.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

Kiesling Park is well-positioned among nearby parks, including Schonlau Park to the north and North German Park and German Park to the east. Surrounded by downtown businesses, the site provides a valuable green space and seating area within the urban core, offering both historical interest and a welcoming environment for visitors.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

- Increase native plants and trees on site to better reflect its historical character

Amenities

Picnic Tables

Bicycle Racks

Historic Landmark + Sign Marker

Open Space

Paved, Off-Street Parking

Programs + Partnerships

Brown County Historical Society

10. Lakeside Village Park

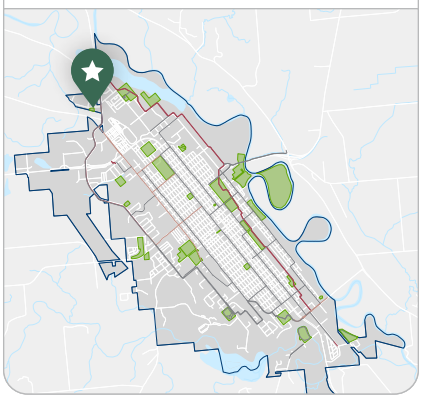
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
2315 Lake Avenue

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Neighborhood Park (Undeveloped)

ACREAGE
1.5



General Description

Lakeside Village Park is an undeveloped neighborhood park in a growing residential area in northwest New Ulm. The park currently consists of a mowed, grassy open space framed by deciduous trees along the east and west property lines. It features a monument sign and is primarily used for informal play and passive recreation. The site is likely to see further development and programming as the City expands.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

Lake Avenue is the only street adjacent to the park. The street is equipped with sidewalks. As surrounding development continues, sidewalks, formalized access, and connectivity within the park should be prioritized to enhance walkability.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

The park is on the northwest edge of the City. To the south is an active railroad corridor, buffered by a berm and rows of evergreen and deciduous trees. East and west of the park are residential homes, with trees providing a modest buffer. The surrounding neighborhood includes a mix of single- and multifamily housing.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Conduct a Master Plan with community engagement for this site to serve as a Neighborhood Park
●	Consider opportunities for acquisition of adjacent property to facilitate water access

Amenities

Monument Sign

Multi-Use Field

Programs + Partnerships

None

11. Lincoln Park

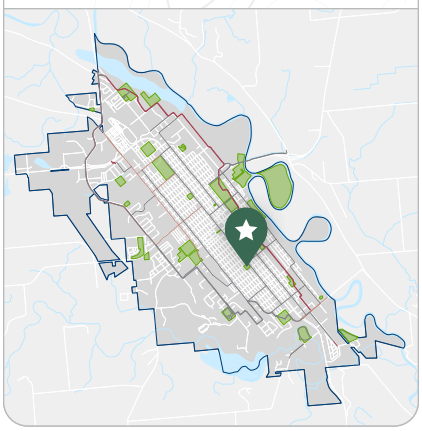
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
718 South State Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Neighborhood Park

ACREAGE
2.8



General Description

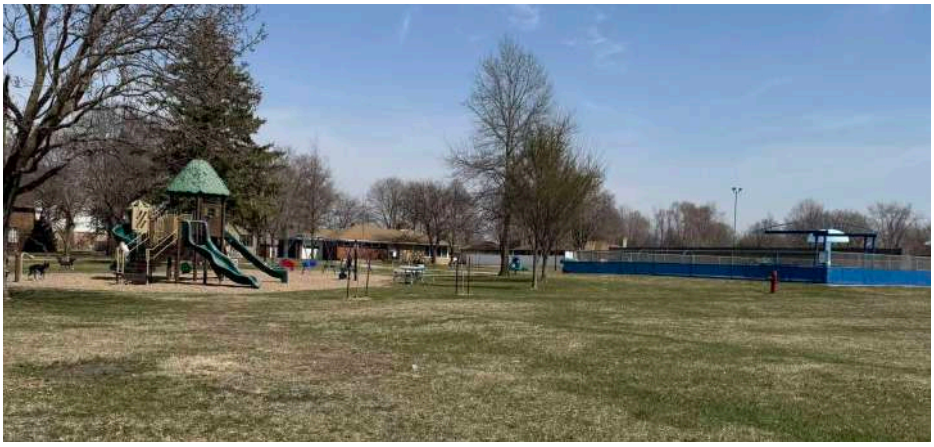
Lincoln Park is a well-utilized neighborhood park that offers a diverse range of recreational amenities, including a wading pool, playground equipment, open shelter, courts for basketball and pickleball, as well as a baseball/softball backstop. The wading pool area includes built-in seating, shade structures, and waste receptacles. Deciduous trees line the northern and southern edges of the site, with additional tree coverage providing partial shade near the playground. The park serves as a key recreational space for surrounding residents.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

Sidewalks line the park along the northern and eastern boundaries, providing some pedestrian access. A paved pathway runs east-west through the center of the park, connecting the splashpad and shelter. Circulation is limited in other areas and additional pathways are recommended to improve accessibility across the site. On-street parking is available along South State Street, 7th Street, and South Washington Street.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

Lincoln Park is centrally located within the southern section of the City in a mostly residential neighborhood. It is bordered by South State Street to the east, 7th Street to the north, and South Washington Street to the west. The park is surrounded by a mix of single-family and multifamily homes, along with multiple churches, including St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and Redeemer Lutheran Church. The nearest adjacent park is South German Park, approximately one-half-mile northeast.



Proposed Recommendations

● *High Priority (2–5 Years)* ● *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* ● *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Replace play equipment in 2026
●	Add shade canopies and seating near the pickleball courts
●	Expand paved pathways throughout park, particularly between the shelter, splashpad, and playground, with a new connection to 7th Street
●	Construct additional pickleball courts
●	Consider relocating the basketball court to accommodate pickleball court expansion, and upgrading to a full-sized court

Amenities

Basketball Court (Half Court With Lighting)

Benches

Bicycle Racks

Exercise Equipment

Little Book Library

Monument Sign

Multi-Use Field

Pickleball Courts with Lighting (6)

Playground

Shelter

Seasonal Permanent Restrooms

Drinking Fountain

Softball/Baseball Backstop

Picnic Tables

Shade Structures

Trash Cans

Wading Pool

Programs + Partnerships

None

12. Maplewood Park

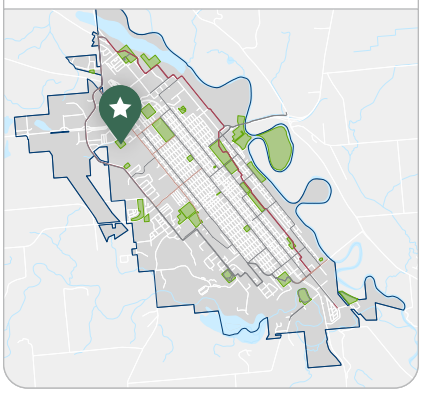
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
1321 Maplewood Drive

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Neighborhood Park (Undeveloped)

ACREAGE
6.9



General Description

Maplewood Park is an undeveloped neighborhood park that also functions as a stormwater basin. The site features pronounced elevation changes and is exposed to prevailing southern winds. A cluster of deciduous trees in the southwest corner, offers natural screening and habitat. The park's naturalistic character provides environmental benefits while also presenting opportunities for compatible recreational uses.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

As the park has yet to be developed, there is no dedicated parking and access is informal with no established pathways or connections within the park. Maplewood Drive has sidewalks along both sides of the street and has street lighting. As surrounding development continues, sidewalks, formalized access, and connectivity within the park should be planned.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

The park is in the City's northwest side on Maplewood Drive, which is experiencing new residential development. This positions the park to serve new residents as the area is built out. Maplewood Park is bordered by agricultural fields, open space, and single-family residential zoning districts. The New Ulm Municipal Airport is nearby, and an active gravel mine is directly adjacent to the site. North Park and the Civic Center are approximately one mile away, serving as additional community recreation destinations.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Acquire additional parkland to develop neighborhood-serving recreational amenities
●	Conduct a new Master Plan with community engagement for the park, carrying forward relevant aspects from the 2019 Master Plan

Amenities

Community
Stormwater Basin

Programs + Partnerships

None

13. Minnecon Park

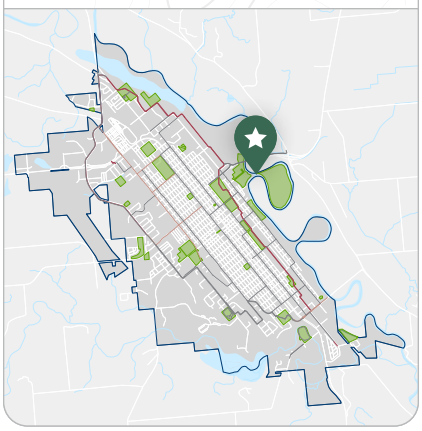
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
2 Minnecon Drive

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Natural Resource Area

ACREAGE
118.6



General Description

Minnecon Park is a significant natural resource area within the City, featuring over 100 acres of woods along the Minnesota River and floodplain. The park offers multiple access points to the river and a variety of recreational opportunities, including hiking, mountain biking, boating, kayaking, and picnicking. Visitors can enjoy the natural beauty, river overlooks, campfire areas, and grills scattered throughout the site, making it a versatile destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

The park is accessible from Minnecon Drive from the west and via an access road off of U.S. Highway 14 on the east side of the Minnesota River. Parking is available at both entrances. Internal circulation consists of natural trails , a pedestrian bridge, and access routes leading to the river and other park amenities.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

Minnecon Park lies along New Ulm's eastern border adjacent to the Minnesota River. Surrounding land uses include agricultural and open space to the east, with industrial zoning nearby. Major transportation corridors, Highway 15 and Highway 14, border the park to the north and east, respectively.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

- Restripe parking lot
- Review the 2015 Master Plan recommendations for feasibility and need, including:
  - Construct a 12' wide paved trail along Minnecon Drive and southwest along the Minnesota River to connect to Riverside Park
  - Install a picnic shelter and permanent bathrooms
  - Replace existing pedestrian bridge to support vehicles and construct campground loop
  - Develop five primitive campsites and three canoe/kayak campsites.
  - Construct carry-in watercraft access and river overlook and resting areas
  - Install a bike lane along river with directional signage
- Consider pursuing MN DNR grant resources for the addition of a boat cleaning station to prevent the spread of invasive species

Amenities

Boat Ramp

Carry-In Boat Access

Fire Pits

Grills

Biking Trails

Monument Sign

Paved, Off-Street Parking

Pedestrian Bridge

Pergola

Picnic Tables

Portable Restrooms (Seasonal)

Unpaved Natural Trails

Programs + Partnerships

None

14. Nehls Park

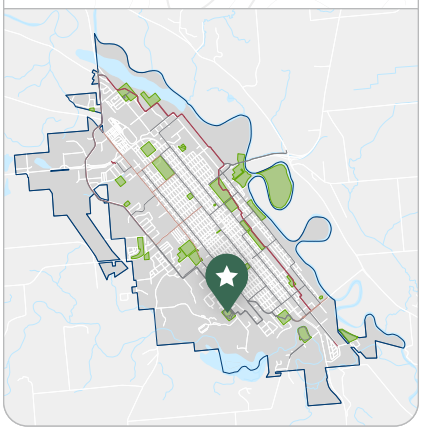
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
1100 Summit Avenue

PARK CLASSIFICATION
12.0

ACREAGE
Community Park



General Description

Nehls Park is a well-equipped community park offering a range of amenities, including a disc golf course, a junior baseball/softball field, a playground, and outdoor exercise equipment. A paved trail loops around the park and is maintained year-round with winter plowing. Deciduous and evergreen trees line the trail and park perimeter, creating a pleasant green buffer around the central open space.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

While the looped paved trail enhances accessibility around the park, connections to key amenities such as the playground and baseball/softball field are limited. Improving internal pathways to better connect these areas would increase usability. Parking is currently limited to on-street options.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

In the southeast corner of New Ulm, Nehls Park borders Flandrau State Park and is accessible via Summit Avenue. The surrounding area is primarily single-family residential with some commercial and manufacturing uses nearby.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Add regulatory signage around off-leash dogs or designate specific area within park for off-leash dogs
●	Include more seating throughout the park
●	Improve trail connections within the park, including: – A pathway between the northeast sidewalk along Summit Avenue to the playground – Coordinate trail connections between Nehls and Flandrau State Park
●	Explore opportunities to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and other trail users such as bicyclists and E-bikes through signage, striping, or dedicated facilities
●	Construct shelter and permanent seasonal restrooms
●	Replace playground equipment 2035

Amenities

Baseball/Softball Field

Benches

Exercise Equipment

Picnic Tables

Disc Golf - 9 Holes

Fitness Equipment

Playground

Monument Sign

Paved Trails

Portable Restrooms (Seasonal)

Programs + Partnerships

None

15. North German Park

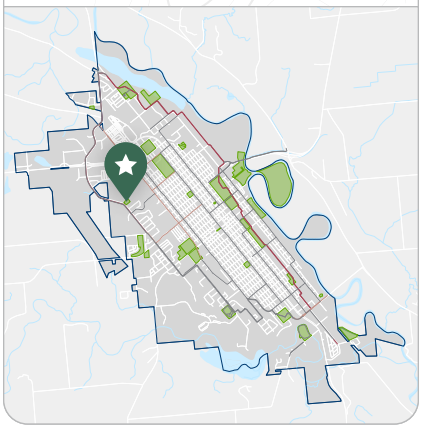
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
600 North German Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Community Park

ACREAGE
27.5



General Description

North German Park contains seven special use amenities within it, each with its own distinct identity. This includes: Art Wall Park, the New Ulm Community Center, Hans Joohs Park, Johnson Park Baseball Field, Johnson Park Soccer Field, and Mueller Park Baseball Field. Detailed information about each of these special use amenities is continued on the following pages.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

North German Park is bound by Highway 14 to its north, North German Street to its west, 3rd Street North to its south, and railroad tracks to the east. Sidewalks line both sides of North German Street and 3rd Street North, providing pedestrian access. The City Bike Trail bisects the center of the park, running between the Soccer Field (G) and the remainder of the park. Two off-street parking lots are located throughout the site, serving respective special use amenities, the Community Center (B) and Mueller Park (F). Both unpaved and paved trails provide circulation throughout the site. Specifics about Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility for each special use amenity are continued on the following pages.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

North German Park is near many other parks and recreational facilities within the City. German Park is just south of the site, across Third Street and Washington Park, with Schonlau Park, and Kiesling Park and House to the west. The surrounding area is primarily residential, with the downtown to the west and the Minnesota River to the east.

Proposed Recommendations (Overall Park)

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

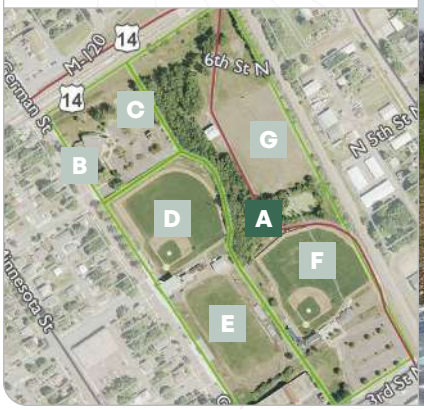
●	Standardize furnishing palette to enhance cohesion and aesthetics; maintain and replace in conjunction with the City's Give Grow Donation Program
●	Create a plan for signage and wayfinding throughout park

Special Use Amenities Within Park

A. Art Wall Park

ADDRESS
221 6th North Street

ACREAGE
3.6



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Art Wall Park, on the west side of the soccer field, showcases the community's murals along a wall.

AMENITIES

Art Wall

PROGRAMMING + PARTNERSHIPS

None

ACCESS, PARKING, CIRCULATION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

Access to Art Wall Park can be challenging for those with limited mobility due to steep terrain and distance from parking. The site can not be accessed from the east or north due to the presence of a railroad and Highway 14, which act as barriers. The Bike Path is the only paved trail providing access to and through the site.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

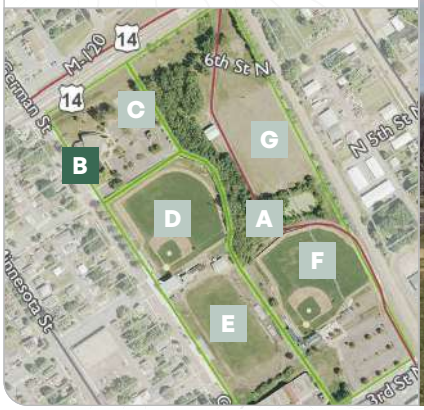
- *High Priority (2–5 Years)*
- *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)*
- *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

- Explore long-term feasibility of Art Wall park, considering alternative locations for community art

B. Community Center

ADDRESS
600 North German Street

ACREAGE
1.9



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Community Center, in the northeast section of North German Park, offers flexible indoor multi-use spaces that can be rented out for special events and contain a range of programs including senior, art, and theater activities.

AMENITIES

Monument Sign

New Ulm Community Center

- Meeting/Multi-Purpose Rooms - 4
- Kitchen/Cafeteria
- Off-Street Parking

Wi-Fi

Waste Receptacles

PROGRAMMING + PARTNERSHIPS

CAST

ARS

Lutheran Social Services

ACCESS, PARKING, CIRCULATION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

The Community Center has a dedicated off-street parking lot accessible from North German Street to service visitors. On-street parking is permitted along North German Street, in addition to sidewalks that connect to the site.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

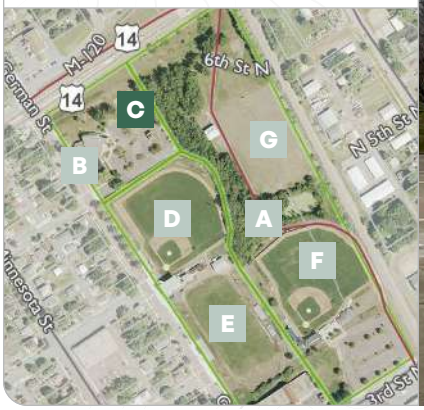
- *High Priority (2–5 Years)*
- *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)*
- *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

- Explore long-term use and viability of community center and programming at this location

C. Hans Joohs Park

ADDRESS
600 North German Street

ACREAGE
2.0



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Hans Joohs Neighborhood Park offers outdoor amenities immediately adjacent to the Community Center, including a playground, basketball court, and an off-street parking lot, along with other supporting features. The site contains several deciduous trees of varying sizes and is mostly flat, with a gradual slope upward toward 7th Street North.

AMENITIES

- Basketball Court with Lights
- Monument Sign
- Paved, Off-Street Parking (shared with Community Center)
- Playground
- Waste Receptacles

PROGRAMMING + PARTNERSHIPS

None

ACCESS, PARKING, CIRCULATION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

Hans Joohs shares a dedicated off-street parking lot with the Community Center. On-street parking is permitted along North German Street, in addition to sidewalks that connect to the site. No paved trails are present at Hans Joohs.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

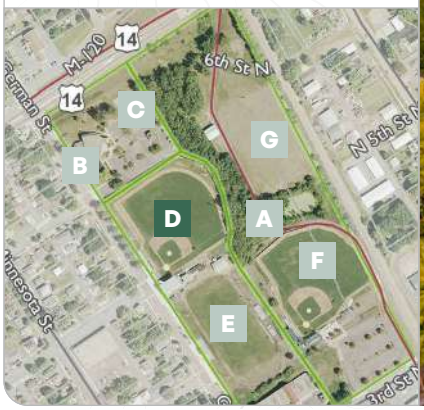
- Implement accessible pathways connecting amenities within park

- As long-term use and viability of community center are evaluated, consider impacts to Hans Joohs and potential improvements, including:
  - Upgrading playground equipment
  - Re-surfacing of basketball court to reduce flooding

D. Johnson Park Baseball Field

ADDRESS
500 North German Street

ACREAGE
4.9



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Johnson Park features a variety of premier athletic facilities, including a full-sized baseball field with a concourse, plaza, grandstand, and dugouts. This facility regularly hosts multi-team, multi-state baseball tournaments. Tree coverage is limited within the park, with minimal deciduous trees near the edge of the site.

AMENITIES

- Baseball Field with Lights + Grandstand
- Batting Cage
- Concessions
- Drinking Fountain
- Dugouts
- Monument Sign
- Permanent Restrooms
- Picnic Tables
- Scoreboard
- Storage Sheds
- Wi-Fi (Seasonal)

PROGRAMMING + PARTNERSHIPS

- New Ulm Baseball Association
- New Ulm Cathedral High School
- New Ulm Legion Baseball
- New Ulm Public Schools
- Minnesota Valley Lutheran School

ACCESS, PARKING, CIRCULATION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

While Johnson Park has no dedicated off-street parking lot, visitors may park along North German Street or in the lot at the Community Center and walk to the park using sidewalks along North German Street. ADA-compliant walks and amenities are provided within the park's primary plaza.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

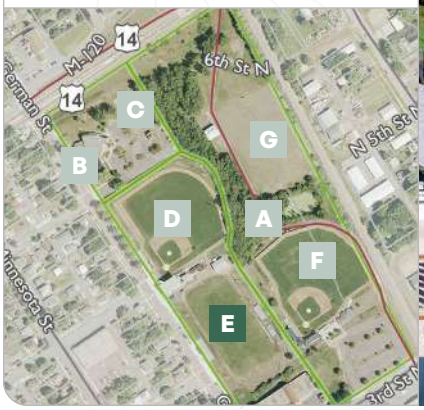
High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

No recommendations

E. Johnson Park Football Field

ADDRESS
527 South German Street

ACREAGE
10.9



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Johnson Park Football Field features a football field with a surrounding track, and a concession stand. Tree coverage is limited within the park, with minimal deciduous trees near the edge of the site.

AMENITIES

Bleachers
Concessions Stand
Football Field with Lights
Gravel Track
On-Street Parking

PROGRAMMING + PARTNERSHIPS

New Ulm Cathedral High School

New Ulm Public Schools

Minnesota Valley Lutheran School

ACCESS, PARKING, CIRCULATION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

The primary access to Johnson Park Football Field is via North German Street, which allows on-street parking and contains sidewalks on both sides of the street. While there is no dedicated off-street parking lot, visitors may park in the lot at the community center or at Mueller Park. There are limited paved trails providing circulation within the Field, with connectivity addressed through gravel paths.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

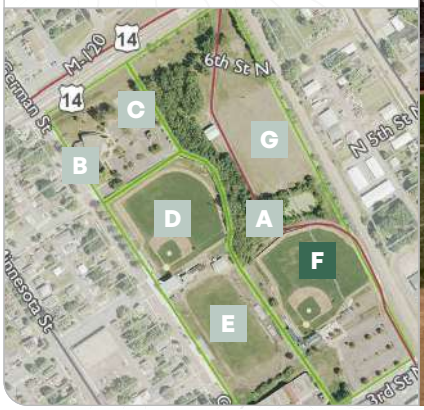
High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)*
Low Priority (11–15 Years)

- Expand ADA-accessible pathways around site
- Improve track surfacing
- Expand shade structures over bleachers

F. Mueller Park Baseball Field

ADDRESS
527 South German Street

ACREAGE
10.9



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Mueller Park Baseball Field is in the southern portion of the park and adjacent to a surfaced parking lot. There is a concession stand with permanent restrooms and seating with dugouts, bleachers, and batting and pitching cages for the baseball field. This facility regularly hosts multi-team, multi-state baseball tournaments.

AMENITIES

- Baseball Field with Lights
- Batting Cage
- Benches
- Bleachers
- Concessions Stand
- Drinking Fountain
- Dugout
- Garbage
- Historical Marker
- Wi-Fi (Seasonal)
- Restrooms
- Picnic Tables
- Paved, Off-Street Parking
- Pitching Cage
- Scoreboard
- Waste Receptacles

PROGRAMMING + PARTNERSHIPS

- New Ulm Cathedral High School
- New Ulm Legion Baseball
- New Ulm Public Schools
- Minnesota Valley Lutheran School

ACCESS, PARKING, CIRCULATION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

Mueller Park has a dedicated off-street parking lot accessible via 3rd Street North. Paved, ADA-compliant pathways and a plaza provide connectivity throughout the facility.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

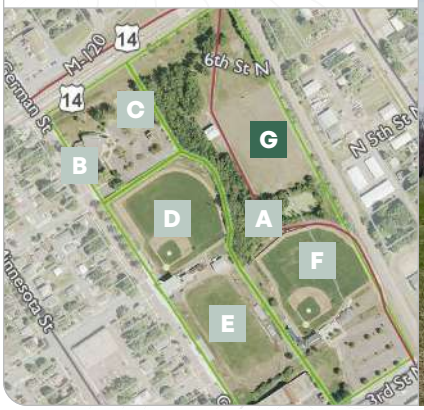
High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

- Improve sidewalks near entrance
- Expand and restripe parking lot

G. Soccer Field

ADDRESS
221 6th North Street

ACREAGE
3.4



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The soccer field is west of Art Wall Park and is bordered by railroad tracks to the east. A trail runs north and south at the west of the field.

AMENITIES

Portable Restrooms (Seasonal)

Soccer Field

PROGRAMMING + PARTNERSHIPS

New Ulm Soccer Club

ACCESS, PARKING, CIRCULATION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

Access to the soccer field can be challenging for those with limited mobility due to steep terrain and lack of proximity to off-street parking lots. The site can not be accessed from the east or north due to the presence of a railroad and Highway 14, which act as barriers. The Bike Path is the only paved trail providing access to and through the site.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

- *High Priority (2–5 Years)*
- *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)*
- *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

Monitor use and community group demand of this site

- If community groups continue to use, consider ways to improve access to the site through investments in formalized access, parking, and circulation
- If community group needs are met with other facilities, consider re-purposing or sale of site

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16. North Highland Park

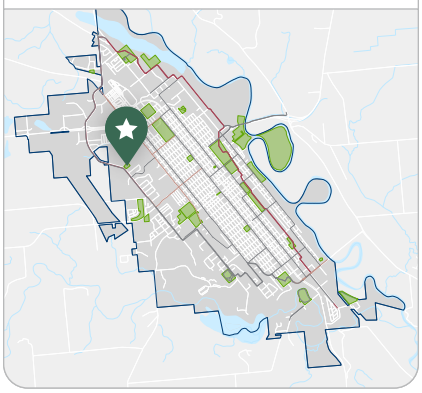
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
1300 North Highland Avenue

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Neighborhood Park (Undeveloped)

ACREAGE
2.3



General Description

North Highland Park is an undeveloped open space on the western edge of New Ulm along North Highland Avenue. The site is characterized by gently varying topography and is used for agricultural purposes under lease. With anticipated surrounding neighborhood growth, the site is well-positioned for future improvements to support family and community use.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

North Highland Avenue runs along the south side of the park and is equipped with sidewalks on both sides. As surrounding development continues, sidewalks, formalized access, and connectivity within the park should be prioritized to enhance walkability.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

Situated directly across from New Ulm High School, North Highland Park offers opportunity for integration and enhanced connectivity with the school. The park is bordered by agricultural fields to the west and planned single and multifamily housing developments to the north and south.

Amenities

None

Programs + Partnerships

None

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

Evaluate the future of park access and site sizing

- If site meets the needs for a new park, conduct a Master Plan with community engagement for this site to serve as a neighborhood park when adjacent residential development occurs. Partner with New Ulm High School to identify areas for partnership
    - » If not possible, consider disposing of site and searching for one that will fit needs

17. North Market Park

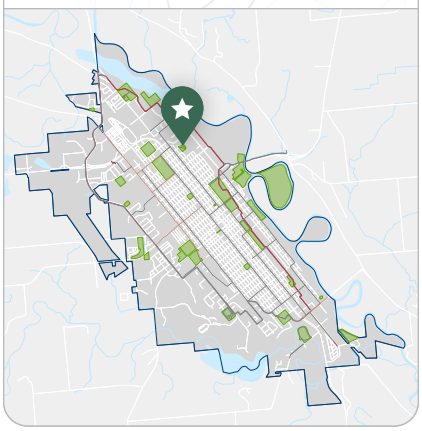
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
1414 North German Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Neighborhood Park

ACREAGE
1.1



General Description

North Market Park is a compact neighborhood park situated along North German Street. The park features a play area designed for children ages 5 to 12 and an open-air picnic shelter equipped with picnic tables and waste receptacles. The northeastern portion of the park consists of mature forested land that provides a natural buffer from the adjacent railroad tracks. At the western edge of the play area, there is a steep drop off near the tree line. Deciduous trees line the sidewalk and play area, complemented by a mature evergreen near the shelter, offering significant canopy coverage and natural shading.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

Sidewalks run along both sides of North German Street, connecting the park to the surrounding neighborhood. The sidewalk adjacent to the park terminates at the northern boundary due to a railroad crossing. There are no accessible connections to the park amenities from the sidewalk. On-street parking is available along North German Street, with one curb cut and pedestrian ramp providing accessible sidewalk entry at the southern edge of the play area. Street lighting is on both sides of the sidewalks, enhancing safety during evening hours.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

North Market Park is about one-half-mile east of North Park and the New Ulm Civic Center. The park is bordered by single and multifamily residential neighborhoods.

Proposed Recommendations

● *High Priority (2–5 Years)* ● *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* ● *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Replace playground equipment in 2030
●	Add marked on-street accessible parking stalls on the east side of German Street, connected to the sidewalk
●	Add an accessible pathway connecting the shelter to the sidewalk, with a pedestrian ramp providing access to on-street parking
●	Add additional seating and shade trees around the play area
●	Add fencing or vegetative buffer along western edge of play area to enhance safety around steep elevation in tree line
●	Enhance ecological health of natural wooded area

Amenities

Garbage

Natural Area

Open Air Picnic Shelter

Picnic Tables

Playground

Portable Restrooms (Seasonal)

Waste Receptacles

Programs + Partnerships

None

18. North Park

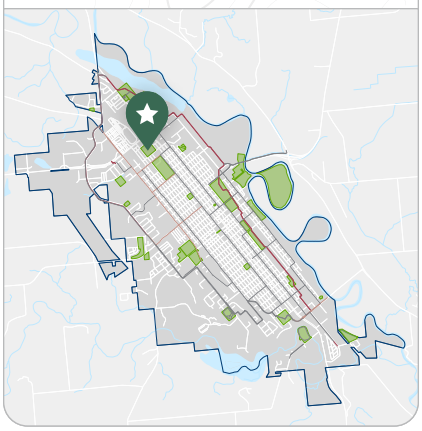
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
1801 North State Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Community Park

ACREAGE
14.0



General Description

North Park is a well-utilized community park that offers a variety of multi-generational amenities and year-round activities, including three lighted baseball/softball fields with bleachers, dugouts, and batting/pitching cages. Recreational features include a splash pad, playground, permanent cornhole boards, horseshoe courts, shade structures, drinking fountains, concessions, picnic tables, and permanent bathrooms open seasonally. Deciduous trees line the perimeter sidewalks, fill spaces between the ball fields, and surround the playground, providing ample shade and greenery.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

Sidewalks border the park on all sides, with paved pathways connecting to key amenities such as the playground, splash pad, open-air picnic shelter, concessions, and sports fields. Several paved pathways exist; however, there are no paved connections between the playground-splashpad area and the baseball/softball fields and concessions. There is a steep slope between the play area and the southern baseball/softball field. Parking includes an off-street lot along the eastern edge on State Street. There is a marked ADA parking stall near the playground entrance on the western edge along North Franklin Street.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

North Park is bordered by 19th Street, State Street, 17th Street, and North Franklin Street. It is adjacent to single-family residential and general business district zoning, and is one block from the Civic Center and Brown County Fairgrounds.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Install an additional drinking fountain near the playground and splash pad
●	Add an accessible pathway between play area on the western edge and concessions and bathrooms in the middle of the park
●	Replace brick pavers around fire hydrant to maintain safety and aesthetics
●	Add additional seating and shade trees around the play area
●	Add artificial turf to three youth ballfields
●	Replace playground equipment in 2034

Amenities

Baseball/Softball Fields with Lights, Bleachers, and Dugouts (3)

Combined Picnic Shelter and Warming House with Restrooms and Concessions

Cornhole Boards

Drinking Fountain

Grills

Horseshoe Courts

Monument Sign

Paved, Off-Street Parking

On-Street Parking

Paved Trails

Picnic Tables

Wi-Fi (Seasonal)

Shade Structures

Splashpad

Waste Receptacles

Programs + Partnerships

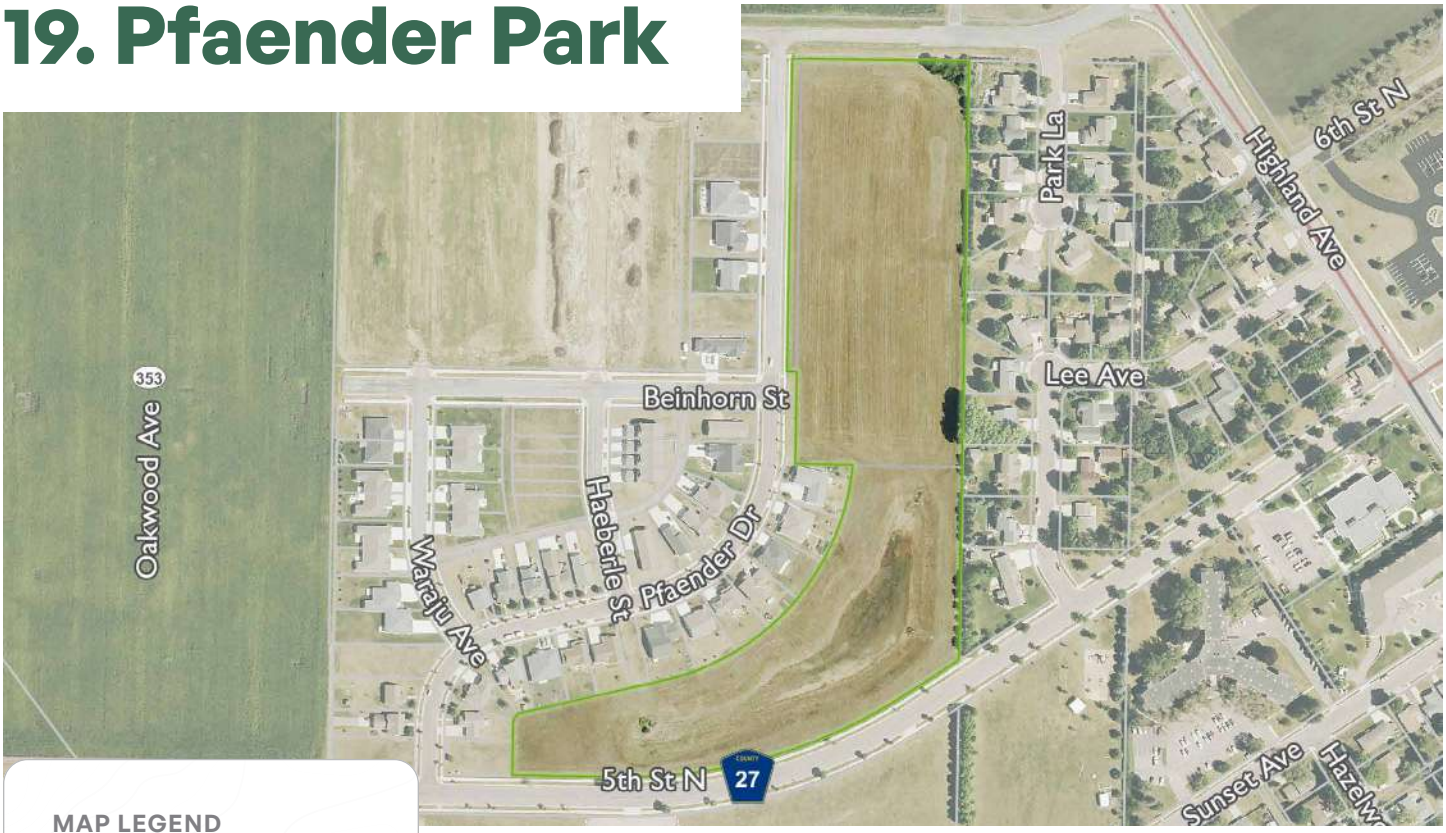
Minnesota Valley Lutheran School

New Ulm Jr. Baseball

New Ulm Public Schools

St. Paul's Lutheran School

19. Pfaender Park



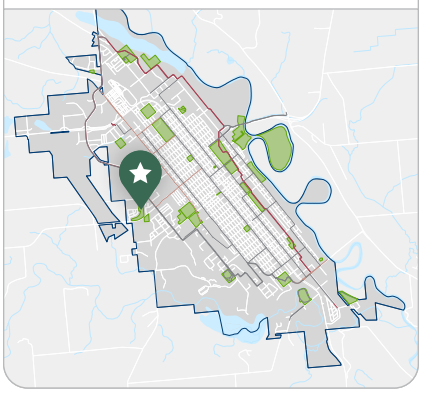
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
1601 7th North Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Neighborhood Park (Undeveloped)

ACREAGE
6.6



General Description

Pfaender Park is an undeveloped neighborhood park in a growing residential area in western New Ulm. The park currently consists of a grassy open space framed by single family homes and future multifamily residential development to the west. With anticipated surrounding residential growth, the site is likely to see further development and programming.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

Access to the undeveloped park is provided via on-street parking along Pfaender Drive. As surrounding development continues, formalized access and connectivity within the park should be planned. Safety enhancements, including crossings, will be important given the proximity to residential and institutional uses.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

On the western edge of New Ulm, Pfaender Park sits within a residential neighborhood. It is bordered on the north by the Kids X-Cel Center daycare and New Ulm High School, separated from the park by busy streets and open fields. Highland Park and Martin Luther College baseball and soccer facilities are south of the site, across 5th Street North.

Amenities

Monument Sign

Natural Area

Open Play Space

Programs + Partnerships

None

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

- Conduct a Master Plan with community engagement for this site to serve as a Neighborhood Park

20. Pollinator Park + Natural Resource Area

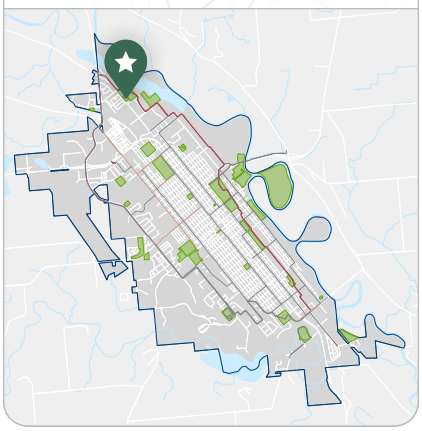
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
2250 North Broadway

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Natural Resource Area

ACREAGE
22.7



General Description

Pollinator Park is a natural resource area that emphasizes environmental stewardship and passive recreation. It features native plantings, diverse tree canopy coverage, stormwater basins, and interpretive signage that educates visitors on pollinators and ecosystem health. Trails, both paved and natural, wind throughout the site, complemented by two rest areas at the north and south ends with seating, picnic tables, and waste receptacles. A shade structure near the northern portion offers a gathering spot.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

Pollinator Park and Natural Resource Area can be accessed from North Broadway Street and 22nd Street North. On-street parking is allowed on the east side of North Broadway Street. Internal circulation consists of a mix of paved and natural trails, with notable grade changes to the west towards North Broadway Street. A sidewalk with street lighting runs along the park's eastern edge.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

Situated on the northern edge of New Ulm, Pollinator Park and Natural Resource Area is bordered by North Broadway Street to the east and shares a parcel with Pollinator Grounds Park. The eastern edge of the park borders the floodplain of the Minnesota River. Much of this floodplain land is owned by the City of New Ulm. The park is about a half mile from the City Trap and Skeet Range and is surrounded by a mix of light industrial and residential uses. Its proximity to other public spaces positions it well for future trail connections and ecological education initiatives.

Proposed Recommendations

● *High Priority (2–5 Years)* ● *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* ● *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●

Work with volunteers to implement 2024 Master Plan recommendations, including:

- Park entrance improvements: Pollinator garden additions, bank stabilization, limestone bench seating, wayfinding signage, and monument sign/monarch sculpture
- Monarch butterfly life-cycle play zone: Engineered wood fiber play surfacing, natural play equipment, boulders, landscaping, and limestone seating
- Chrysalis caves: Engineered wood fiber play surfacing, crushed gravel seating area, limestone seating, hammock poles, natural play equipment, pollinator garden/landscaping, and educational signage
- Milkweed maze: Crushed gravel pathways with a 5-foot width, pollinator garden/landscaping, and limestone seating
- Improved picnic space: Crushed gravel, picnic tables, trash receptacle, and open air shelter
- Native prairie restoration: Seeding and landscaping
- Regional basin restoration: Seeding and landscaping
- Pedestrian safety improvements: Landscaped curb extensions and crosswalk art

2024 cost estimates have been adjusted for 2026 inflation.

Amenities

Bike Fix-It Station

Covered Picnic Table

Educational Signage

Little Book Library

Monument Sign

Multi-Use Field

Natural Area

Natural Trails

Paved Trails

Picnic Tables

Portable Restrooms (Seasonal)

Shade Structure

Stormwater Basin

Waste Receptacles

Wayfinding Signage

Programs + Partnerships

None

21. Riverside Park

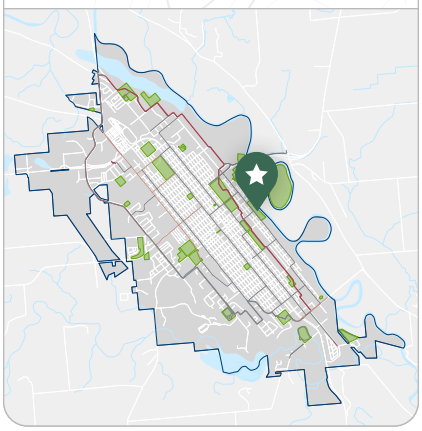
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
101 South Front Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Community Park

ACREAGE
13.2



General Description

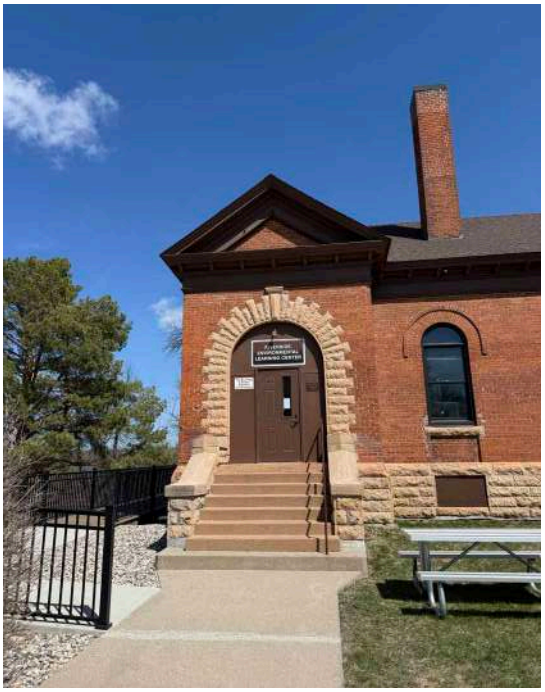
Riverside Park is a sizable community park offering abundant green space and diverse amenities along the Minnesota River. This expansive park features the Environmental Learning Center, a historic building, located in the southeast portion of the site and operated by a local non-profit organization. An exterior deck and ramp at the learning center overlook the Minnesota River. The park's north side houses a City maintenance shop near the kayak launch with trailer parking. Steep terrain is present along the river's edge, and due to proximity to the river, seasonal flooding occurs. Fishing contests are popular summer activities. Deciduous trees are distributed throughout the park's north, south, and west areas, providing ample canopy coverage.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

On-street parking is available near the park, primarily along South Front Street. Sidewalks exist along both sides of Front Street leading to the park but terminate within park boundaries. The only existing on-site pathway leads to the Environmental Learning Center and a drinking fountain. A proposed bike trail will run parallel to the river, connecting Riverside Park to Third Street.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

Situated along the Minnesota River, Riverside Park is bordered by residential and industrial land uses. The river connection offers direct access for visitors to travel between Riverside Park and Minnecon Park, enhancing recreational opportunities along the river corridor.



Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

Replace playground equipment in 2030.

Review the 2015 Master Plan recommendations for feasibility and needs, including:

- Add 12-foot-wide paved trail from Center Street to 3rd South Street
- Extend the sidewalk on the east side of Front Street for the entire length of the park
- Install multiple paved trail connections to the river with overlook areas
- Improve public access dock/pier off Center Street
- Enhance carry-in watercraft access and add accessible path
- Implement paved access drive and trailer parking lot (10 stalls with permeable pavers)
- Construct reservable picnic shelter and permanent restroom facility
- Install a mini-splash pad
- Add interactive otter steamship display
- Add interpretive signs on the porch of the Riverside Environmental Learning Center to learn about the Minnesota River
- Increase tree canopy coverage throughout the park
- Add more native plantings to reducing turf maintenance and stabilize the river bank
- Construct outdoor performance stage
- Add bike lane/route along 3rd South Street

Amenities

Basketball Court with Lights

Bike Racks

Boat Launch

Educational Signage

Indoor Restrooms (Seasonal)

Little Book Library

Riverside Environmental Learning Center

Picnic Tables

Playground

Sliding Hill (Winter)

Monument Signage (3)

Drinking Fountain

Natural Area

Open Play Space

Waste Receptacles

Programs + Partnerships

None

22. Schonlau Park + Glockenspiel

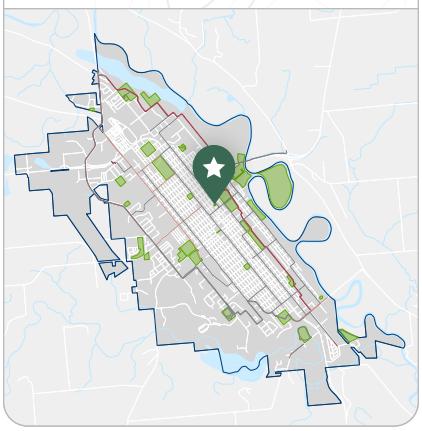
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
327 North Minnesota Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Special Use Park

ACREAGE
0.4



General Description

Situated in the heart of downtown New Ulm, Schonlau Park showcases the City's distinctive German cultural identity. The park features German-themed public art, daily clock tower performances, and a prominent clock tower as a central landmark. Mature trees offer shade, and numerous planters around the clock tower and plaza contribute to the park's visual appeal and inviting atmosphere.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

On-street parking is available along the northeast and southwest sides of the park. Public off-street parking is available at the southwest corner of the site, providing convenient access for visitors. Connectivity within the park is sufficient, with multiple paved connections to the park's perimeter and surrounding sidewalk.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

Schonlau Park is centrally located within downtown New Ulm and is bordered by commercial properties to the northeast, east, and southeast, with residential areas surrounding the remainder of the site. Approximately one block to the northeast lies North German Park. German Park is located southeast of Schonlau Park.

Amenities

Clock Tower with Daily Performances

Flower Gardens

Interpretive Signage

Monument Sign

Planters

Picnic Tables

Public Art

Programs + Partnerships

None

Proposed Recommendations

● *High Priority (2–5 Years)* ● *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* ● *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Add planters or shrubs along the edges of the park to provide a natural buffer between the park and adjacent businesses
●	Enhance shade coverage through shade canopies
●	Upgrade brick pavers as needed

23. South German Park

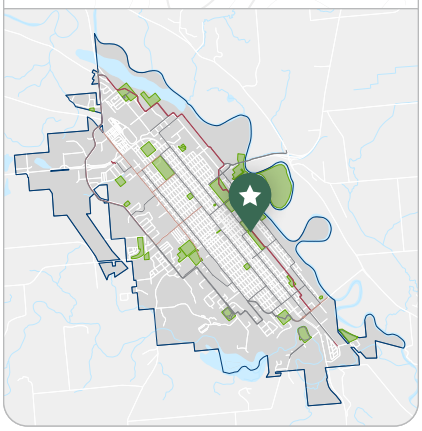
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
501 South German Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Special Use Park

ACREAGE
16.1



General Description

South German Park contains two special use amenities within it, a dog park and Skateboard Park and BMX Track. Detailed information about both of these special use amenities is continued on the following pages.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

The skate park can be accessed from 1st South Street, and the BMX track can be accessed from 3rd South Street. A paved vehicle access road runs along the park's western edge, and a paved City trail parallels the site, supporting both vehicular and non-motorized circulation. Unpaved, off-street parking is situated between the two tracks. The dog park and natural area are to the south of the stake park and BMX track, over 3rd South Street. Two off-street parking lots, one paved and one gravel, are provided within the site, accessible from 7th South Street and 3rd South Street.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

In central New Ulm, the park is bordered by a mix of industrial and residential land uses. Industrial businesses, including Puhlmann Lumber & Design, Penske Truck Rental, and a City pump house, lie to the northeast and east, while residential neighborhoods border the park to the south and west. The U.S. Postal Service is immediately north. A trail runs along the eastern edge of the park. Riverside Park is three blocks east and Lincoln Park is three blocks west.

DOG PARK

Special Use Amenities Within Park

H. Dog Park

ADDRESS
527 South German Street

ACREAGE
10.9

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

South German Park hosts the City's only dog park, catering to both small and large dogs. The flat site provides ample green space to run within a gated environment. There are numerous amenities for dogs and their owners, including various seating options, waste receptacles, a water fountain, paved shelters, dog ramps, and dog waste bags. Large deciduous street trees line 7th South Street and South German Street, with minimal trees near the southeastern border of the site. Power lines are on the northeastern edge of the site. The open space is used as a downtown snow dump site during winter months.

AMENITIES

- Dog Ramps
- Dog Waste Bags
- Paved Trail
- Natural Area
- Open Play Space
- Paved, Off-Street Parking
- Paved Shelters - 2
- Picnic Tables
- Portable Restrooms (Seasonal)
- Sliding Hill (Winter)
- Waste Receptacles
- Water Fountain

PROGRAMMING + PARTNERSHIPS

None

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

- Analyze the site with community to explore expanded uses and features such as:
  - Extension of paved pathways throughout the site to increase accessibility
  - Increased lighting
  - Standardized furnishing palette
  - Expanded tree canopy cover
  - Public art opportunities
  - Stormwater retention on the northern portion of the park

I. Skate Park

ADDRESS
600 North German Street

ACREAGE
1.9

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The skate park and BMX track are part of a special use facility that caters to skateboarders, BMX riders, and other bike enthusiasts. The BMX track, owned by the City and leased to the River Valley BMX, is equipped with bleachers and concessions, supporting event programming and providing seating for spectators. River Valley BMX Group volunteers maintain the track. The park is equipped with lighting evening use. The site is complemented by clusters of deciduous trees on the south, southwest, and southeast perimeters, as well as scattered natural plantings throughout.

AMENITIES

Lighting

Monument Sign

Unpaved, Off-Street Parking

Portable Restrooms (Seasonal)

Skate Park

PROGRAMMING + PARTNERSHIPS

None

I + J PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Skate Park and BMX Track are on the next page and were grouped together since they apply to both parks and would be implemented in tandem.

J. BMX Track

ADDRESS
600 North German Street

ACREAGE
1.9

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Skate Park and BMX Track is a special use facility that caters to skateboarders, BMX riders, and other bike enthusiasts. The BMX track, owned by the City and leased to the River Valley BMX, is equipped with bleachers and concessions, supporting event programming and providing seating for spectators. River Valley BMX Group volunteers maintain the track. The park is equipped with lighting evening use. The site is complemented by clusters of deciduous trees on the south, southwest, and southeast perimeters, as well as scattered natural plantings throughout.

AMENITIES

- Bike Fix-It Station
- Bleachers
- BMX Track
- Concessions Building
- Dumpster
- Lighting
- Monument Sign
- Drinking Fountain
- Unpaved, Off-Street Parking
- Picnic Tables
- Portable Restrooms (Seasonal)

PROGRAMMING + PARTNERSHIPS

River Valley BMX

I + J PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

- Partner with the River Valley BMX Group to analyze the site to explore expanded uses and features such as:
  - Accessible pathways throughout the site and to the track
  - Addition of shaded area for seating.
  - Installation of visitor signage of Broadway Street
  - Addition of permanent restroom facility.
  - Additional lighting
  - Accessible parking stalls and parking lot improvements
- Partner with the River Valley BMX Group to implement Master Plan improvements in two phases, with accessible pathways and shade structures for seating comprising phase one
- Partner with the River Valley BMX Group to implement remaining Master Plan improvements as phase two

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24. South Market Park

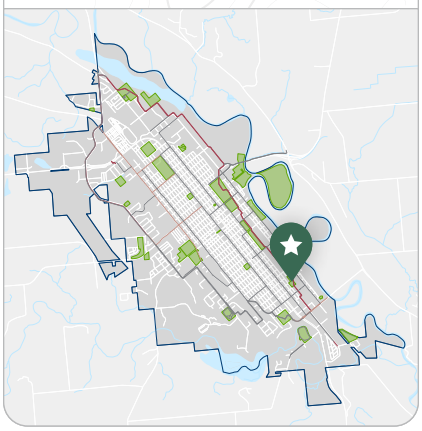
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
1415 South German Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Natural Resource Area

ACREAGE
2.8



General Description

South Market Park is an undeveloped park, designated as a natural resource area. Significant topography changes and the presence of natural springs throughout the site present challenges for park development. A paved trail travels through the wooded site, featuring benches and waste receptacles along the way. It intersects the park at the lower southern edge and continues to the northwest portion of the site. The park is heavily wooded with mature trees.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

From the south, the site is accessible via a shared drive/bike path, which transitions to a dedicated, paved bike path at the park's edge. On-street parking is available at both ends of the trail.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

South Market Park is approximately half of a mile southwest of South German Park and is near the Riverbend Education District. The northeastern to southeastern borders of the site are adjacent to industrial uses, including Gary Aschenbrenner Trucking and New Ulm Storage. Multifamily residential encompass the remaining edges of the site.

Proposed Recommendations

● *High Priority (2–5 Years)* ● *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* ● *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Analyze the site with community input to evaluate future uses and investment, which may include: – Extension of the sidewalk along South German Street along the western edge of the park, to close the gap in the sidewalk network – Removal of invasive species – Thinning of woodlands to open up the under story to create an urban forest park – The front of the park, paralleling South German Street, should be lowered to improve visibility into the park area and to also provide a level area adjacent to German Street – Addition of nature play area – Addition of nature trails
●	Construct sidewalk extension along western edge of the park
●	Implement site restoration and invasive species removal
●	Implement remaining Master Plan amenity improvements such as nature trails or play area

Amenities

Benches

Paved Bike Trail

Natural Area

Waste Receptacles

Programs + Partnerships

None

25. South Park

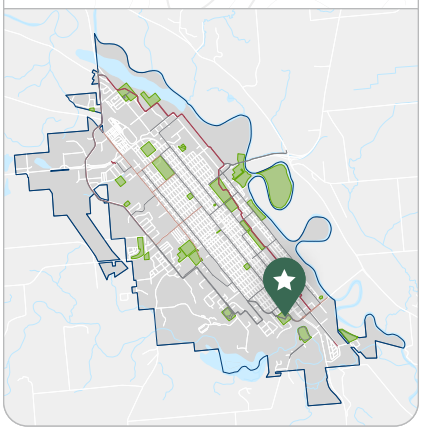
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
1800 South State Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Neighborhood Park

ACREAGE
10.2



General Description

South Park is intersected by stormwater flows, dividing the park into two distinct sections. The park features significant change in elevation, specifically near the stream and the southern border of the site, with slopes descending towards the stream and ascending near the south. Access across the stream within the park is provided via a bridge on 18th South Street, a road that runs through the park. Park amenities include a ball field, disc golf course, and a playground. Numerous trees are scattered throughout the site, specifically near the stream's edge, providing substantial shade coverage.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

The park is bisected by multiple streets that run converge at its borders. A pass through access street allows people to connect from one side to the other and through it, including Cartway, South Washington Street, and 18th South Street. The site contains limited paved pathways for pedestrian use, which restricts accessibility. One off-street gravel parking lot is on each side of the stream.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

South Park is located at the southeastern edge of New Ulm. The site borders Junior Pioneer Park on the southeast edge. The area surrounding the park has mixed uses, including commercial to the north and east, August Schell Brewing Company to the southwest, and single-family residential to the south and west.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Add safety signage near stormwater
●	Replace playground in 2029
●	Construct accessible pathway from sidewalk along 17th Street to playground
●	Add an open-air shelter with seating
●	Expand tree canopy cover, particularly along each hold of the disc golf course in the wide-open areas
●	Conduct circulation study to analyze pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle circulation to determine appropriate routes and surfaces for the park

Amenities

Baseball/Softball Field

Disc Golf (9 Holes)

Unpaved, Off-Street Parking Lots (2)

Picnic Tables

Playground

Waste Receptacle

Portable Restroom (Seasonal)

Sliding Hill (Winter)

Programs + Partnerships

None

26. Steinhauser Park + Recreation Center

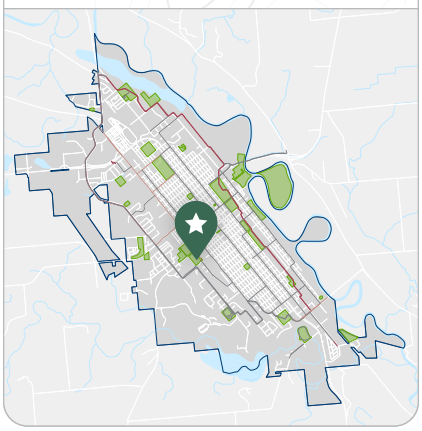
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
122 South Garden Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Community Park

ACREAGE
5.0



General Description

Steinhauser Park is home to the newly renovated New Ulm Recreation Center, completed in 2021. This dynamic facility includes the Fieldhouse, featuring a walking track and three multi-purpose rubber-floored courts suitable for basketball, open gym, pickleball, preschool gym activities, tennis, and volleyball. The center also has a multi-level indoor playground and a cutting-edge indoor aquatic center, with a zero-depth entry pool, whirlpool, climbing wall, flume slides, Minnesota's first and only Ninja Cross system, and a zipline. In addition to fitness equipment and group exercise classes, the Recreation Center is also home to the Turner Gymnastics Academy Facility, providing specialized space and programming for gymnastics enthusiasts of all ages.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

The site features a large off-street parking lot for facility users and visitors. A pedestrian crossing is on the southeast border of the site, providing safe access to the nearby school.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

The site is near multiple educational facilities, including St. Paul's Lutheran School, Jefferson Elementary School, New Ulm Middle School, and Martin Luther College to the south. The Recreation Center is also adjacent to Hermann Heights Park and Monument and Harman Park. Single-family and multifamily residential surrounds the site.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

During future Recreation Center updates, consider:

- Expand gym and equipment
- Expand locker rooms
- Add a sauna

Amenities

Bike Racks

Monument Signage

Natural Area

Open Play Space

Picnic Tables

Recreation Center

- Fitness Center + Group Fitness Classes
- Indoor Aquatic Center
- Indoor Playground
- Turner Gymnastics Academy
- Fieldhouse with Walking Track + Multipurpose Rubber Floor Courts (3)
- Basketball Courts (4)
- Wi-Fi

Sliding Hill (Winter)

Waste Receptacles

Programs + Partnerships

Turner Gymnastics Academy

27. Trap + Skeet Range

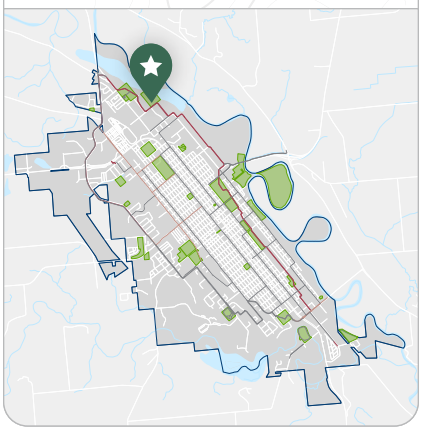
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
214 21st North Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Special Use Park

ACREAGE
6.1



General Description

Trap and Skeet Range is a heavily utilized special use park. The City owns the land and buildings, and all programming is through the Sioux Valley Gun Club, a non-profit organization focused on introducing youth to shooting sports. The site allows users and visitors the unique experience of target practice and organized trap programming within the City. The Trap and Skeet Range features a variety of amenities within the site, including a trap building, shooting lines, throwers, and shotgun rests.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

The site is along a shared drive and bike path route. Limited accessible routes are provided throughout the site, lacking connections and access to the trap building. Gravel areas are present within the park that can be used to accommodate parking, although no designated off-street parking spaces are available.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

On the northeast side of the City near the Minnesota River, the shooting range is surrounded by greenspace and industrial uses. The site is within one-half mile of Pollinator Grounds Park and Pollinator Park and is adjacent to the City bike path. A City burn site, a dog kennel, and the New Ulm Battery are also present on the site. The City burn site, north of the site, constrains hours of use for the range due to the presence of workers and equipment behind the targets.

Proposed Recommendations

● *High Priority (2–5 Years)* ● *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* ● *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

● Partner with Sioux Valley Gun Club and facilitate efforts to support their enhancements on the site, including:

- Enhance lighting and add sun shades
- Increase the number of off-street parking spaces
- Consider relocating a burn site to the west to increase available hours
- Expand paved pathways surrounding trap building and throughout the site to enhance accessibility
- Consider expanding adult five-stand shooting

Amenities

Cinderblock Towers (Seasonal and Enclosed, Screened) (2)

Dumpster

Shooting Lines (2 with lighting, 2 without lighting)

Shotgun Rests (5)

Trap Building

Throwers (3)

Picnic Tables

Restroom (Seasonal)

Paved Trail

Drinking Fountain

Programs + Partnerships

Sioux Valley Gun Club

28. Washington Park

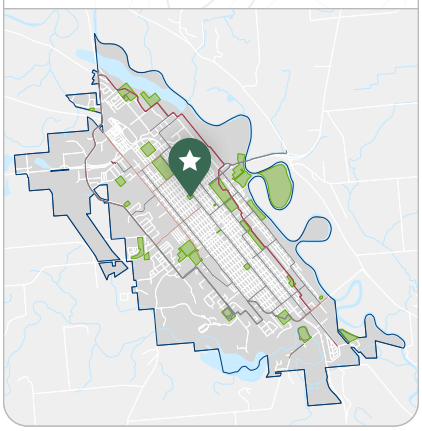
MAP LEGEND

- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
715 North State Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Neighborhood Park

ACREAGE
2.8



General Description

Washington Park is a cherished neighborhood park that offers amenities for a wide age-range of visitors. The park features play equipment for kids, exercise equipment for adults, a wading pool, a shelter with seasonal restrooms, and a variety of sports fields and courts, including basketball, sand volleyball, a ballfield, and tennis courts with a pickleball overlay. The site is relatively flat, bordered by street trees. There are limited deciduous trees within the park.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

The site does not have a designated off-street parking lot, with available on-street parking on surrounding roads. While sidewalks border the entire site, internal circulation through paved connections is limited, specifically on the southwest side of the park.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

Washington Park is centrally located in New Ulm, near multiple educational facilities, including New Ulm Area Catholic School to the southeast. Traditional neighborhood single-family and multifamily residences border all sides of the park.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

●	Reposition benches to be a consistent height and hide supports
●	Install a drinking fountain/bottle filling station
●	Add marked crosswalks at the adjacent intersections along 8th Street and consider painted bump outs at the intersections along 7th Street
●	Conduct mini-master plans for the following improvements: – Expand ADA-accessible pathways throughout the park, particularly from the basketball court to the playground – Increase shade coverage, particularly near the tennis/pickleball courts – Add fencing and seating around pickleball/tennis courts
●	Construct master planned accessible pathways for enhanced accessibility
●	Implement remaining master planned improvements, including seating, shade coverage, and fencing near pickleball courts

Amenities

Baseball/Softball Field

Basketball Court

Drinking Fountain

Little Book Library

Picnic Shelter with Permanent Restrooms

Exercise Equipment

Playground

Open Play Space

Picnic Tables

Sand Volleyball Court

Wi-Fi (Seasonal)

Tennis Courts with Pickleball Overlay + Lighting

Waste Receptacles

Wading Pool

Programs + Partnerships

New Ulm Area Catholic Schools

Implementation

→ Implementation

→ Prioritization Strategy

→ Proposed Capital Improvements

→ Funding Strategies

→ Greater Minnesota Regional Park + Trail System

→ Implementation Recommendations

Implementation

Overview

This section provides a clear, action-oriented roadmap for achieving the vision and recommendations outlined in this Plan. It identifies the specific steps, timelines, and strategies needed to guide decision-making, prioritize investments, and align resources over the next 15 years.

This section is grounded in the Plan's broader goals: supporting community needs, promoting equity and access, improving facilities and programming, and ensuring long-term financial and operational sustainability. It translates those goals into a practical framework for progress.

Spanning the planning horizon of 2026 to 2041, the purpose of this section is to create a framework, so the Plan remains a living document, adaptable, measurable, and responsive to change, while providing a clear path forward for City leaders, staff, and community partners.

Outreach Plan

The implementation plan includes descriptions of an array of improvements recommended through the public process, staff engagement, industry best practices, and trends in parks and recreation facilities planning. Many of the recommendations will require additional targeted engagement with neighborhoods and hyper-local stakeholders to fine-tune park offerings and create authentic, relevant local places for residents to recreate. Once Master Plans are completed, development will need to be implemented accordingly. To accomplish this, the City should develop an outreach plan to guide the level of engagement efforts in relation to development of individual park Master Plans and park redevelopment. It will outline the strategy for recurring efforts to gauge resident series and satisfaction of the Park and Recreation system and to learn which outreach efforts make sense and work for the community.

Prioritization Strategy

Principles for Prioritization

The prioritization strategy was developed based on community needs, with consideration of cost-effectiveness and feasibility for implementation. They are rooted in community and staff values, including equity, diversity, and sustainability. Safety, accessibility, and inclusivity are the top priorities, to ensure that all can feel safe and welcome in City parks and programs and that people are able to access these services and facilities without barriers, regardless of age, ability, or socioeconomic status. Facility quality and connectivity, paired with responsible stewardship of natural areas, are guided by a balanced approach to maintenance, protection, and enhancement.

The following principles reflect community input, staff expertise, and adopted City policies. Together, they provide a consistent lens for evaluating park and recreation investments.

1 Safety + Accessibility

The City prioritizes safe, accessible park environments that support all users.

2 Inclusive + Equitable Access

Parks and programs should be welcoming and usable by people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

3 Quality + Function

Parks should function well, be appropriately programmed, and reflect community needs over time.

4 Connectivity

Parks should be physically and socially connected to people, places, and natural systems.

5 Environmental Stewardship + Long Term Health

The City is committed to protecting, restoring, and improving natural systems for long term environmental health.

6 Planning Led Investment

Major park investments should be guided by thoughtful planning and community input.

7 Fiscal Responsibility + Phasing

Park investments should be realistic, phased when necessary, and aligned with long-term stewardship of public resources.

TOP 5 COMMUNITY PRIORITIES FROM THE ONLINE SURVEY:

1. Update + Enhance Existing Facilities
2. Grow Connectivity of Trails
3. Expand Access to Natural Resources
4. Enhance Recreation Programming
5. Promote Physical Activity + Wellness

These priorities reinforce the emphasis on reinvestment, connectivity, and health embedded in the prioritization principles.

Park Improvement Drivers

The following drivers and questions help to translate the prioritization principles into practical decision-making criteria. They were used to evaluate and prioritize park improvements.

DRIVER 1

Safety, Accessibility, and Asset Lifecycle

- Are facilities safe and accessible today?
- Has equipment reached the end of its useful life?
- Is replacement needed to reduce risk or liability?

Repair, replace, or remove facilities immediately as needed.

DRIVER 2

Environmental Condition + Restoration Needs

- Presence of invasive species
- Degraded habitat or erosion
- Need for a formal restoration or management plan

Implement restoration and establish long term stewardship plans.

DRIVER 3

Master Planning + Readiness

- Has the site been master planned?
- Has community input informed and/or gained support for major investment?
- Is the scope defined enough to proceed?

Complete planning before committing to major capital investments.

DRIVER 4

Reinvestment Versus Expansion

- Can needs be met by improving existing parks?
- Are new sites or new facilities required?

Balance reinvestment and expansion.

DRIVER 5

Site Suitability + Capacity

- Adequate usable space
- Appropriate classification
- Utilities and access
- Acquire additional land or adjust park classification as needed

DRIVER 6

Scale, Phasing, and Funding Readiness

- Is this a small improvement that can be implemented immediately?
- Is this a large project that should be phased?
- Are funding sources identified or anticipated?

Phase projects strategically to maximize impact and efficiency.

Implementation Scale

Improvements identified in this Plan vary in scale. Small scale improvements, particularly those addressing safety, accessibility, or routine maintenance, are recommended for implementation as soon as feasible and may not require inclusion in the CIP.

In addition, larger or more complex improvements were often phased to allow time for budgeting, grant pursuit, and coordination with other City projects. These prioritization principles and drivers were used to assign cost ranges, phasing, and priority tiers for each park.

Additional criteria, including availability of funding, ongoing City actions, and other planning efforts should be considered when improving or enhancing parks. As these criteria shift, the priority of the action may adjust in response. For example, if grant funding or a large donation is received for an applicable facility, it should be prioritized. Similarly, if a street reconstruction project is occurring near a community park, improvements to park infrastructure, including trails and parking area, should be timed to coincide with street reconstruction to save costs.

Proposed Capital Improvements

This section summarizes the projected capital costs for improvements across the City's park system. These estimates are based on a detailed, park-by-park analysis and are intended to serve as a working tool for City staff as they update and manage the CIP.

While the Plan provides a high-level overview of system-wide needs, cost projections are inherently limited by the absence of detailed design and programming for each project. As individual projects move forward, more refined cost estimates should be developed. These should include allowances for design, engineering, surveying, testing, and contingency—typically estimated at 20% of total construction costs. **All cost estimates are based on 2026 construction values.** To account for inflation, a 2.5% per-year cost estimate increase is recommended from the date of Plan adoption.

All recommendations from the Individual Park Summaries section (report section 6) have been assigned cost estimates and are organized into short-term (5-year capital costs) medium-term (6 to 10-year capital costs) and long-term (11 to 15-year capital costs, based on community priorities. The following table provides an overview of these costs, separated by Park Classification type.

Cost by Phase

PARK	SHORT *1–5 Years*	MID *6–10 Years*	LONG *11–15 Years*	TOTAL CAPITAL COST
COMMUNITY PARKS				
Civic Center	$-	$9,149,638	$-	$9,149,638
German Park	$3,750	$299,750	$374,250	$677,750
Harman Park	$466,875	$-	$50,000	$516,875
Hermann Heights Park + Monument	$284,750	$2,637,500	$208,750	$3,131,000
Nehls Park	$39,750	$1,997,213	$-	$2,036,963
North German Park (whole park)	$-	$10,000	$-	$10,000
Art Wall Park	$-	$-	$-	$-
Community Center	$-	$-	$-	$-
Hans Joohs Park	$56,250	$-	$-	$56,250
Johnson Baseball Field	$-	$-	$-	$-
Johnson Football Field	$-	$2,641,250	$-	$2,641,250
Mueller Park	$500,000	$-	$-	$500,000
Soccer Field	$-	$-	$-	$-
North Park	$36,250	$4,867,000	$-	$4,903,250
Riverside Park	$156,250	$20,000	$-	$176,250
Steinhauser Park + Recreation Center	$-	$-	$-	$-
Sub Total	**$1,543,875**	**$21,622,351**	**$633,000**	**$23,799,226**
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS				
Highland Park	$238,125	$174,438	$-	$412,563
Lakeside Village Park	$-	$15,000	$-	$15,000
Lincoln Park	$241,375	$388,625	$-	$630,000
Maplewood Park	$-	$-	$20,000	$20,000
North Highland Park	$-	$-	$-	$-
North Market Park	$172,500	$25,000	$28,969	$226,469
Pfaender Park	$-	$25,000	$-	$25,000
South Park	$210,969	$-	$-	$210,969
Washington Park	$77,500	$856,750	$-	$934,250
Sub Total	**$940,469**	**$1,484,813**	**$48,969**	**$2,474,250**

Cost by Phase

PARK	SHORT *1–5 Years*	MID *6–10 Years*	LONG *11–15 Years*	TOTAL CAPITAL COST
SPECIAL USE PARKS				
Archery Range Park	$9,375	$28,125	$42,725	$80,225
Community Garden	$133,250	$133,250	$-	$133,250
Kiesling Park + House	$38,938	$-	$-	$38,938
Schonlau Park	$80,625	$-	$-	$80,625
South German Park (whole park)	$-	$-	$-	$-
Dog Park	$20,000	$-	$-	$20,000
Skate Park/BMX Track	$146,250	$1,052,500	$-	$1,198,750
Trap + Skeet Range	$-	$493,750	$-	$493,750
Sub Total	**$428,438**	**$1,707,625**	**$42,725**	**$2,045,538**
NATURAL RESOURCE AREA				
Adams Park	$12,000	$56,250	$-	$68,250
Minnecon Park	$-	$21,250	$-	$21,250
Pollinator Park	$575,000	$-	$-	$575,000
South Market Park	$137,625	$187,500	$-	$325,125
Sub Total	**$724,625**	**$265,000**	**$-**	**$989,625**
ALL PARK TOTAL	**$3,637,406**	**$25,079,788**	**$724,694**	**$29,308,638**

Funding Strategies

Funding Sources

A variety of funding mechanisms are available to support park system development, enhancement, and maintenance. The following options are either in use or recommended for consideration based on best practices and the City's budget history:

General Fund Tax Levy

The General Fund is the primary source for the City's ongoing park operations, maintenance, and minor improvements. Annual allocations from this fund support staffing, natural resource management, and routine upkeep of park amenities. General Fund dollars are also commonly used as local matches for state and federal grants.

Dedicated Tax Levy

A dedicated tax levy identifies funds sourced to pay solely for park improvements. Adding a separate general tax levy line item increases transparency by clearly showing funds set aside for long-term improvements. This functions as a pay-as-you-go approach versus a large one-time infusion of capital. The City does not currently maintain a separate dedicated tax levy for parks.

Bonding

Several bonding options exist, including General Obligation Bonds, Annual Appropriation Bonds, Tax Abatement Bonds, and Revenue Bonds. Bonding provides a large one-time infusion of capital for acquisition, replacement, repair, expansion, or new construction. Bonding allows for current and future residents to pay for park improvements over time which typically corresponds to useful life of the asset improvements. Not all bonds require a referendum; statutory authority allows council-approved bonding for certain purposes.

Bonds By Referendum

When residents approve bonding authority through a referendum, the City benefits by the lowest available interest rate, an option of a longer repayment term of up to 30 years, as well as increased transparency. The bonds are counted against a city's net debt limit and the levy to support them is outside of typical legislated levy limits. Property taxes are an authorized means of support for General Obligation Bonds, but do not have to be used if alternative revenue sources are available. For example, rental revenues or local sales tax can be used to pay general obligation bonds and offset some or all the property taxes that would otherwise be required.

Local Sales Tax Option

Minnesota Statutes 297A.99 provides the authority to levy a local sales tax with special legislation of a dedicated tax. The statute requires that a resolution also be passed by the jurisdiction including, at minimum, information on the proposed tax rate, how the revenues will be used, the total revenue that will be raised before the tax expires and the estimated length of time the tax will be in effect. Once legal authority is granted, an election must be held prior to a jurisdiction actually levying the sales tax. The election will permit the use of the sales tax for specific capital improvements.

The City levies a 0.5% local sales tax and a 0.5% special tax, totaling 1.0%. Sales tax revenues have historically funded major park and recreation projects, such as the Civic Center and Recreation Center.

Franchise Fees

Franchise fees are a charge listed on the monthly bill that customers receive from a utility, such as natural gas, electricity, or cable. This can be a flat amount each month or a percentage of the monthly bill. A franchise fee can be implemented with an ordinance that must be approved by the City Council. As of 2025, the City did not leverage any franchise fees for the Department.

Park Dedication

Park dedication ordinances are enacted to ensure that a new development will contain enough space for parks, trails, open space, and recreational areas.

2025 PARKLAND DEDICATION FEE POLICY

As of 2025, the City required a parkland dedication of 675 square feet per residential dwelling unit in R-1, R-2, and R-3 zoning districts, based on a standard of five acres per 1,000 residents. Developers may meet this requirement through land dedication, cash-in-lieu payments, or a combination of both. The City charges a $350 per lot fee at the time of platting and a $350 per unit fee at the time of building permit for most residential and mixed-use districts. For higher-density developments (five or more units per lot), the platting fee increased to $1,050 per lot, while the per-unit building permit fee remained the same. Commercial, industrial, and special-purpose developments are also subject to park dedication fees, as outlined in the City's annual fee schedule. Credits may be granted for trail construction, public amenities, or site improvements such as grading and seeding. All fees collected are placed in a dedicated fund and used exclusively for the acquisition and development of parks, trails, and open space.

PARK DEDICATION POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Clarify Preferred Forms of Dedication**
  - Prioritize land dedication in growth areas where Neighborhood Parks are planned
  - Encourage cash-in-lieu in infill or high-density areas
  - Discourage small or functionally constrained land dedications
- **Strengthen Trail + Connectivity Credits**
  - Clearly recognize trail segments, sidewalk connections, and greenway improvements as eligible credits
  - Allow off-site trail credits where they advance system-wide connectivity
- **Tie Dedication Use to Service Areas**
  - Invest fees in parks and facilities that serve the contributing development area
  - Use dedication funds to close identified access or amenity gaps
- **Periodically Reevaluate Fee Levels**
  - Review dedication fees at regular intervals (every three to five years)
  - Ensure fees align with current land acquisition and park development costs
- **Align Dedication Decisions with Plan Priorities**

USE THIS PARK AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN AS THE GUIDING DOCUMENT FOR:

- ✔ **Accepting land versus cash**
- ✔ **Identifying priority investment areas**
- ✔ **Ensuring equitable distribution of park resources**

Any changes to the park dedication ordinance would require separate City review and adoption.

GRANT TITLE	GRANTING ENTITY	MATCH	AWARD RANGE	TYPE OF PROJECTS FUNDED	ANTICIPATED APPLICATION DEADLINE	ANTICIPATED AWARD DATE
NATIONAL						
USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program	USDA Rural Development	65%	Varies	Construction, improvement, or equipment for essential community facilities, such as parks, recreation centers, libraries, and public safety	Year-round	Year-round
AARP Community Challenge	AARP	None	$2,500–$50,000	Quick-action projects to improve public spaces, transportation, housing, civic engagement, and more for all ages	March	June
Community Innovation Grants	Bush Foundation	None	Varies	Flexible program that invests in great ideas and the people who power them across Minnesota and the Dakotas	Year-round	Year-round
Community Heart and Soul Seed Grant Program	Community Heart and Soul	100%	$10,000	For resident-driven projects in cities with a population under 30,000	Year-round	Year-round

GRANT TITLE	GRANTING ENTITY	MATCH	AWARD RANGE	TYPE OF PROJECTS FUNDED	ANTICIPATED APPLICATION DEADLINE	ANTICIPATED AWARD DATE
STATE						
Clean Water Fund	MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)	10%	Up to $5,123,000	Stormwater practices, agricultural conservation, livestock waste management, lakeshore/streambank stabilization, stream restoration, subsurface sewage treatment system (SSTS) upgrades, and groundwater/drinking water protection	August	December
Keep it Clean	MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)	10%	$10,000–$40,000	Pollution prevention practices, project development, and program, project support, and technical assistance necessary to reduce water pollution from garbage and human waste left on lakes during winter activities	October	Unknown
Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants	MN Historical Society (Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund)	Varies based on grant size	Up to $300,000	Preservation of historic structures, museum collections, oral histories, exhibits, research, and more	Small Grant - January Large Grant - April	8 weeks after the application deadline
Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)	Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)	25%	Varies	Land acquisition, habitat restoration, water resources, environmental education, invasive species, climate, and recreation	March	June
Conservation Partners Legacy Grant	MN DNR	10%	$5,000–$500,000	Restoration, enhancement, or protection of forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife; public land or land under permanent conservation easement	September	December
Local Trail Connections Program	MN DNR	25%	$5,000–$250,000	Short trail connections between residential areas and parks, trails, or public resources; acquisition and/or development	March	Summer

GRANT TITLE	GRANTING ENTITY	MATCH	AWARD RANGE	TYPE OF PROJECTS FUNDED	ANTICIPATED APPLICATION DEADLINE	ANTICIPATED AWARD DATE
Regional Trail Connections Program	MN DNR	25%	$5,000–$300,000	Acquisition and development of trail facilities outside the seven-county metropolitan area that are considered of regional or statewide significance	March	Summer
Outdoor Recreation Grant Program	MN DNR	50%	$25,000–$350,000	Acquisition, development, or redevelopment of local parks, including trails, playgrounds, shelters, and athletic fields	March	Summer
Natural and Scenic Area Grants	MN DNR	50%	$25,000–$500,000	Acquisition of natural/scenic areas; minimal development and includes: signage, stabilization, and restoration	March	Summer
Federal Recreational Trails Program	MN DNR	25%	$2,500–$200,000 (trail); up to $75,000 (equipment)	Motorized/non-motorized trail projects, such as maintenance, restoration, trailhead facilities, and safety education	February	Summer
State Park Road Account Program (SPRA)	MN DNR	None	Varies	Build, repair, or improve roads providing access to state parks, trails, lakes, rivers, and campgrounds, including county state-aid highways and local roads	November	April
Community Tree Planting Grants	MN DNR	None	Up to $500,000	Replacement of trees lost to forest pests, disease, or storm; or to establish a more diverse community forest better able to withstand disease and forest pests. The eastern half of the City is within the priority area	October	December
ReLeaf Community Forest Grants	MN DNR	None	Up to $500,000	Inventory, planting, assessment, maintenance, treatment, improvement, protection, wood utilization, and restoration of trees and forest resources	November	February
New Initiative Grant Program	Minnesota Recreation and Park Foundation	None	Up to $4,000	Programs and services that demonstrate innovation in parks and recreation services	November	Unknown

Greater Minnesota Regional Park + Trail System

The City recognizes the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC, or Commission) as the primary entity responsible for designating and funding regionally significant parks and trails. As part of this Master Plan, the City has identified select parks and trails that may have the potential to serve regional users and contribute to the Greater Minnesota Regional Park and Trail System.

The City intends to align future planning, investment, and partnerships for these facilities with the Commission's Strategic Plan and designation criteria, including preparation of Unit Master Plans where appropriate. Regional designation will be pursued strategically, recognizing that designation is a prerequisite, but not a guarantee, for Parks and Trails Legacy funding.

Overview

The following pages briefly outline the process, criteria, and planning expectations for pursuing designation of a park or trail as part of the GMRPTS. It is intended to guide the City, decision makers, and future project partners in understanding how regional designation works, how it aligns with this Plan, and what steps are required before a facility becomes eligible for regional funding.

Regional designation is facility specific and separate from adoption of this Plan. However, this Plan establishes the policy framework and strategic intent needed to position select parks or trails for future designation. For the full overview, please refer to the GMRPTC Strategic Plan.

bit.ly/GMRPT-StrategicPlan2020

The GMRPTC does not establish minimum acreage or length thresholds for regional designation. Instead, facilities are evaluated on whether their size, design, and setting are sufficient to deliver a high quality outdoor recreation experience and meet regional needs consistent with their classification.

Why Regional Designation Matters

Only parks or trails that are formally designated as part of the GMRPTC are eligible to apply for parks and trails legacy funding administered by the GMRPTC. Designation recognizes facilities that provide regionally significant, high quality outdoor recreation experiences serving users beyond the local community. Designation is not guaranteed and is based on a structured evaluation of:

- **Regional Significance + Quality Of Experience**
- **Natural + Scenic Value**
- **Regional Access + Connectivity**
- **Ability To Fill Gaps In Regional RecreationalOpportunity**
- **Readiness For Long-Term Implementation, Operations, and Stewardship**

Process Summary

STEP	DETAILS
Step 1: Designation Application *(Initial Screening)* The first step is submission of a designation application through the GMRPTC online system. This step allows an agency to test whether a park or trail concept is likely to meet regional significance thresholds before investing in a full Unit Master Plan.	**KEY CHARACTERISTICS** – Focuses on the regional story of the facility – Evaluated by the GMRPTC Evaluation Team – Results in ranking of: high, medium, or low **OUTCOMES** – High ranking: Facility may proceed toward formal designation and Master Plan evaluation – Medium or Low ranking: Applicant may refine the concept and re apply **A formally adopted Unit Master Plan is not required at this stage, but strong narrative, maps, and photographs are encouraged.*
Step 2: Unit Master Plan + Formal Evaluation A Unit Master Plan is required for a facility to be considered for formal designation into the regional system. The Commission evaluates the Master Plan using a two track review process that balances quality with readiness.	**TRACK ONE: REGIONAL MERIT (SCORED EVALUATION)** – Measures how well the facility meets the regional designation criteria – Results in a numerical score reflecting regional level outcomes – There is no fixed minimum score, but the evaluation serves as the primary gauge of overall quality **TRACK TWO: PLAN READINESS (PASS/FAIL EVALUATION)** – Evaluates completeness and feasibility of the Master Plan – Assesses implementation strategy, partnerships, funding, and long term operations – Plans or components that fail this track are returned for revision prior to final consideration **Both tracks must be successfully addressed before the Commission determines whether a facility is designated as part of the GMRPTS.*
Step 3: Annual Legacy Funding Applications Once designated, a facility becomes eligible, but not guaranteed, to apply for Parks and Trails Legacy funding through an annual competitive process.	**FUNDING APPLICATIONS** – Must advance a regionally significant component of the adopted Unit Master Plan – Focus on specific projects or phases rather than re telling the full regional story – Are scored and prioritized by the Commission prior to legislative submission

Core Regional Designation Criteria

To be competitive for designation, a park or trail must clearly demonstrate alignment with the following four criteria.

1. HIGH QUALITY OUTDOOR RECREATION EXPERIENCE

The facility should function as a destination that attracts regional users by offering:

- High quality, well designed amenities consistent with its classification
- Experiences that encourage repeat visitation
- Facilities that reflect contemporary, sustainable design standards
- Amenities that broaden access to outdoor recreation for diverse user groups

2. NATURAL + SCENIC SETTING WITH A COMPELLING SENSE OF PLACE

Priority is placed on preserving and showcasing regionally important landscapes, including:

- Unique landforms, water features, or ecological resources
- Historically or culturally significant landscapes
- Ecological integrity and stewardship of natural systems
- Adequate size and design to support recreation without degrading natural resources

3. WELL LOCATED TO SERVE A REGIONAL NEED OR TOURISM DESTINATION

Facilities must be reasonably accessible to regional populations through:

- Proximity to a regional center or established visitor destination
- Functional vehicular and/or trail access
- Connections to local, regional, or state trail systems
- Accessibility is evaluated based on practical travel patterns, not solely distance

4. FILLS A GAP IN REGIONAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The facility should complement rather than duplicate existing regional assets by:

- Addressing unmet recreational needs
- Expanding access in underserved regions
- Providing unique experiences not readily available nearby

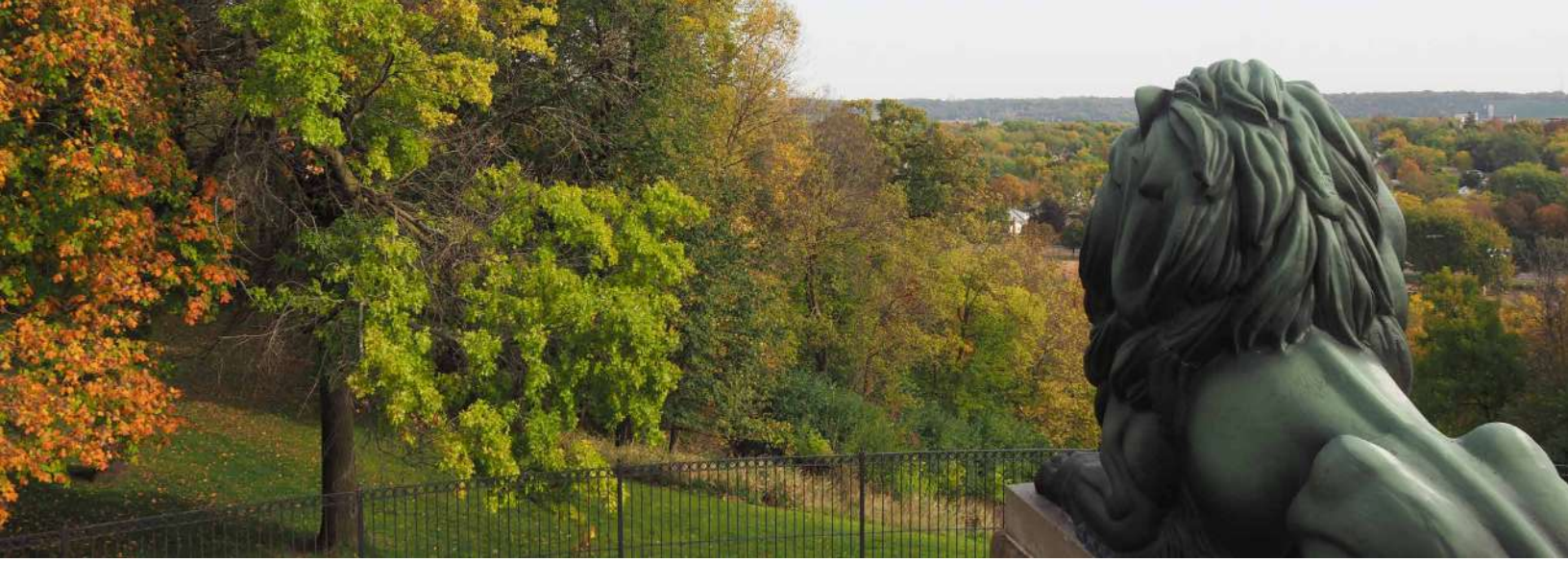
Key Takeaway

Regional designation is a deliberate, multi step process that prioritizes quality, regional value, and long-term stewardship. By aligning this Master Plan with the GMRPTC Strategic Plan and clearly articulating a pathway to designation, the City of New Ulm positions itself to pursue regional opportunities in a thoughtful, defensible, and implementation ready manner.

Facilities to Consider for Regional Significance

The City should strategically pursue regional designation for facilities that demonstrate clear regional function and readiness, prioritizing system level assets such as the Minnesota River Gateway Project, while evaluating culturally significant parks like Hermann Heights Park and Monument for potential designation as planning, partnerships, and programming capacity mature.

	Next Steps	
FACILITY	**SHORT TERM**	**LONG TERM**
Minnesota River Gateway Project The Minnesota River Gateway Project is a coordinated Master Plan that intends to connect City park and trail facilities along the Minnesota River including the Community Garden, Riverside Park, Minnecon Park, and Pollinator Park. The Minnesota River Gateway may be considered for regional significance by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission. Regional designation would require a focused Unit Master Plan centered on corridor wide experience, stewardship, access, and programming.	Formally define the Gateway as one regional system by updating the current Minnesota River Regional Parkway Master Plan to include the Community Garden and Pollinator Park, demonstrating that these sites are intended to function as a connected river corridor destination, not independent candidates. Frame the Gateway around: – Minnesota River access – Landscape continuity and habitat – Trails and everyday river recreation – Gap filling riverfront experiences in southern Minnesota Strengthen regional access and connectivity narrative should document how regional users: – Arrive – Move through the corridor – Experience multiple destinations in one visit Identify key implementation partners, such as County, watershed, conservation, and trail partners to strengthen both Track One and Track Two evaluations.	Prepare a Unit Master Plan for the Gateway corridor, focused on: – River-based recreation and stewardship – Systemwide experience (not park by park plans) – Phased implementation and funding – Operations, maintenance, and programming across the system Submit a Designation Application positioning the Gateway as a regional river corridor destination.



Next Steps

FACILITY	SHORT TERM	LONG TERM
Hermann Heights Park + Monument Hermann Heights Park and Monument may be considered for regional significance by the GMRPTC . The Commission recognizes parks with unique cultural and historic features as potentially regionally significant where those facilities provide a compelling sense of place, attract regional users, and offer high quality outdoor experiences not otherwise available in the region.	Decide whether Hermann Park is intended to be: – A stand alone regional cultural park candidate – A supporting regional cultural anchor tied to a larger designated system Document regional function, not just significance – Regional tourism draw – Programming and repeat visitation – Cultural experience in an outdoor setting. Avoid framing it as primarily a monument or passive local park Assess designation readiness. Conduct a brief internal check of: – Programming capacity – Stewardship responsibilities – Long-term operations and maintenance Identify partners – Cultural, tourism, arts, or heritage organizations strengthen the application and are especially important for cultural parks	Prepare a focused Unit Master Plan centered on: – Regional cultural experience – Programming and events – Visitor access and wayfinding – Long term monument and landscape stewardship Submit a Designation Application once a clear regional story and operational strategy are in place.

Implementation Recommendations

This section describes the proposed implementation recommendations pertaining to maintenance, staffing, volunteers, design, programs, partnerships, and program and facility fees.

Staffing

Regarding staffing, operations, and maintenance, the following actions are recommended.

As New Ulm continues to grow and new neighborhoods are developed, the City should periodically evaluate Park and Recreation staffing to ensure adequate capacity and the appropriate mix of expertise to support evolving programs, facilities, and maintenance needs. Rather than relying solely on fixed staffing models, the City should approach staffing on an incremental basis, responding to changes in service demand, geographic coverage, and program complexity over time.

When staffing transitions occur, the City should view these moments as opportunities to reassess overall staff structure and responsibilities before immediately filling vacant positions. This approach allows the Department to adapt roles, balance workloads, and align staffing resources with current and anticipated programming priorities, maintenance expectations, and partnership responsibilities. Maintaining this level of flexibility will help ensure the Department can continue to evolve efficiently while delivering high quality services to the community.

Volunteers

The City should continue to support and adapt volunteer programs as a supplemental resource to Department staffing when appropriate for the task at hand. Volunteer involvement can provide meaningful community engagement while assisting with activities such as park stewardship, natural resource management, and targeted improvement projects.

Volunteer roles should be clearly defined, aligned with staff capacity for coordination and oversight, and focused on tasks that are well suited to volunteer participation rather than core operational responsibilities. As community interest and capacity evolve, the City should periodically reassess volunteer opportunities to ensure they are safe, effective, and mutually beneficial for participants and the Park and Recreation system.

Maintenance

The City's parks are well maintained and were consistently rated highly by residents for cleanliness and general upkeep. Maintaining this level of quality will require continued attention as new parks, facilities, and amenities are added to the system.

As new parks and facilities come online, the City should regularly evaluate their long-term feasibility from a maintenance perspective, including staffing capacity, required skill sets, and lifecycle costs. New amenities and design approaches should be assessed not only for initial capital cost, but also for the City's ability to maintain them to the community's expected standard over time.

The City should periodically reassess Park and Recreation maintenance staffing levels and areas of expertise to ensure they align with the evolving park system. As maintenance responsibilities expand, opportunities may emerge to support more specialized maintenance functions, such as playground safety and inspection, irrigation systems, native plantings, natural resource management, and landscape maintenance. Supporting specialization can improve system performance while providing professional growth opportunities for maintenance staff.

Consistent with sustainability goals, the City should continue converting underutilized, intensively mowed turf areas to native plantings or prairie where appropriate to reduce mowing demands. These conversions should be paired with appropriate staff training, expertise, and resources, recognizing that natural areas require ongoing management and maintenance to remain healthy, safe, and visually appealing.

Standardized Design

As park facilities, buildings, and amenities reach the end of their useful life, the City should incrementally implement a standardized design approach to guide replacement, renovation, and new construction. Rather than retrofitting the entire system at once, standardized design elements should be applied as part of routine capital projects, lifecycle replacements, and park reinvestment efforts over the 15 year planning horizon.

The City should develop and maintain a unified design language for the park system that establishes consistent expectations for architectural character, materials, colors, and site elements while remaining flexible enough to respond to different park types and contexts. This design language should be informed by best practices in park and recreation design and rooted in New Ulm's unique history, identity, and sense of place. Once established, the design language should be referenced when planning new facilities, evaluating renovation options, and preparing future capital improvement projects.

Standardization should extend to park furnishings and site amenities, including benches, bike racks, picnic tables, grills, waste receptacles, and entry and wayfinding signage. The City should identify a limited palette of approved furnishing and signage options (consistent with the City's current Give Grow Donation program) that can be used consistently across the system. This approach will streamline replacement decisions, simplify maintenance and procurement, and support consistent application of donated amenities through programs such as the City's Give and Grow Donation Program.

By applying standardized design incrementally and strategically, the City can ensure that future park investments are coordinated, maintainable, and visually cohesive. Over time, this approach will strengthen the identity of the park system, improve operational efficiency, and reinforce parks as intentional, high quality public spaces throughout New Ulm.

Apply standardized design elements during scheduled replacements, renovations, and new park development rather than system-wide retrofits. Use design standards to guide decisions, not delay projects.

Programs

Action items for programs, which were discussed in Section 4, are summarized in the following table.

FOCUS AREA	PRIORITY DIRECTION	LEAD
System-Wide Programming	Regularly evaluate recreation programs and staffing to ensure offerings align with changing community demand and complement services provided by partners.	Park and Recreation Department
Early Childhood (0–5)	Expand early childhood programming focused on movement, nature-based play, music, and year-round indoor play opportunities.	Park and Recreation Department
Youth + Teens	Broaden youth and teen programming through arts, STEM activities, seasonal school partnerships, and structured internship or volunteer opportunities.	Park and Recreation Department + Schools
Adults	Increase programs serving adults without children, including inclusive recreation options and emerging sports that reflect community interest.	Park and Recreation Department + Partners
Seniors + Active Adults	Continue coordination with CAST and prepare for an expanded City role in senior programming as community needs and partner capacity evolve.	Park and Recreation Department + CAST
Special Events	Evolve special events to balance tradition and innovation, expand winter offerings, and strengthen weather contingency and operational resiliency.	Park and Recreation Department

Partnerships

Action items for programs, which were discussed in Section 5, are summarized in the following table.

PARTNER	PRIORITY DIRECTION	LEAD
Schools (Public + Private)	Coordinate facility use and programming with school partners through regular communication and updated shared-use agreements to complement school-based recreation offerings.	Park and Recreation Department
Sport + Athletic Organizations	Coordinate with athletic organizations on facility scheduling, cost sharing, and capital needs to support efficient use of recreation facilities.	
Chamber of Commerce	Partner with the Chamber to coordinate event promotion, tourism-related activities, and volunteer recruitment for major tournaments and community events.	
HONU	Collaborate with HONU to integrate health and wellness priorities into park planning, programming, and policy initiatives.	
ARS	Support inclusive recreation by continuing partnerships that expand adaptive programming opportunities within the park system.	
CAST	Coordinate senior programming with CAST to align recreation opportunities with community center services, park amenities, and wellness initiatives.	
MN DNR/Flandrau State Park	Coordinate with MN DNR to align nature-based recreation, aquatic amenities, trail connections, and visitor experience across City parks and Flandrau State Park.	
Brown County + Adjacent Counties	Coordinate regionally on park, trail, and river access planning to enhance connectivity and respond to cross-county recreation patterns.	

PARTNER	PRIORITY DIRECTION	LEAD
MnDOT (District 7)	Coordinate early with MnDOT on transportation projects to integrate trails, crossings, and active transportation improvements.	Park and Recreation Department
Arts + Culture Organizations	Partner with arts organizations to expand arts programming and public art in parks through clear roles, shared funding, and maintenance expectations.	
Private Recreation Providers	Evaluate and pilot partnerships with private providers to expand specialized programming while maintaining public access and alignment with City goals.	
Medical Providers	Explore partnerships with medical providers to support wellness, preventative health, and active aging initiatives connected to parks and trails.	
Faith-Based Organizations	Explore shared use and co-hosted programs with faith-based organizations to improve neighborhood-level access to recreation opportunities.	

Program + Facility Fees

Fee Philosophy + Policy

The City's park and recreation fee philosophy is to balance affordability and accessibility with the responsible stewardship of public resources. Fees are set to recover a portion of the costs for facility maintenance, staffing, and programming, while ensuring that parks and recreation opportunities remain open to all. The structure reflects the value and intensity of use for each amenity, with resident discounts acknowledging local tax support and non-resident rates helping sustain facilities for the broader community. The City regularly reviews its fee schedule to ensure fairness, competitiveness, and responsiveness to community needs.

Current Program + Facility Fee Schedule

Fees vary by facility, size, and amenities, with larger or more in-demand venues commanding higher rates. Flexible rental options, such as time-slot or full-day reservations, accommodate a range of users, while deposits protect City assets.

SHELTER + FACILITY RENTALS

A variety of park shelters and facilities are available for rent, with rates reflecting location, capacity, and demand. Options for both short-term and full-day use provide flexibility for gatherings and events.

BALLFIELDS + ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Rental rates for athletic fields are competitive with similar communities. Discounts are available for organizations booking multiple games, and additional fees for tournaments and field preparation help offset maintenance costs while supporting local leagues and events.

RECREATION, COMMUNITY, AND CIVIC CENTER

Admission and rental fees for the Recreation Center, Community Center, and Civic Center are designed to encourage regular use and support operational costs. Modest daily rates, punch cards, and season passes offer value for frequent users, while additional fees for equipment rentals and special events help cover specialized programming.

SEE THE PARK AND RECREATION FEE SCHEDULE FOR SPECIFIC COSTS

newulmmn.gov/492/Fee-Schedule

ISG

NEW ULM MINNESOTA

Park + Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan

Commission Presentation
April 13, 2026

Purpose

Establish a 15-year vision for the City of New Ulm's parks, recreation, open, and public spaces to **meet current and future community needs** and align with the City's Comprehensive and Strategic Plans.

Planning Process Goals

Establish

Prepare a clear, 15-year vision for New Ulm's parks, recreation, and open spaces

Evaluate

Assess existing park and recreation system features, amenities, and services

Engage

Involve robust engagement and find ways to include voices from underrepresented populations

Establish

Create an action plan for achieving the plan vision

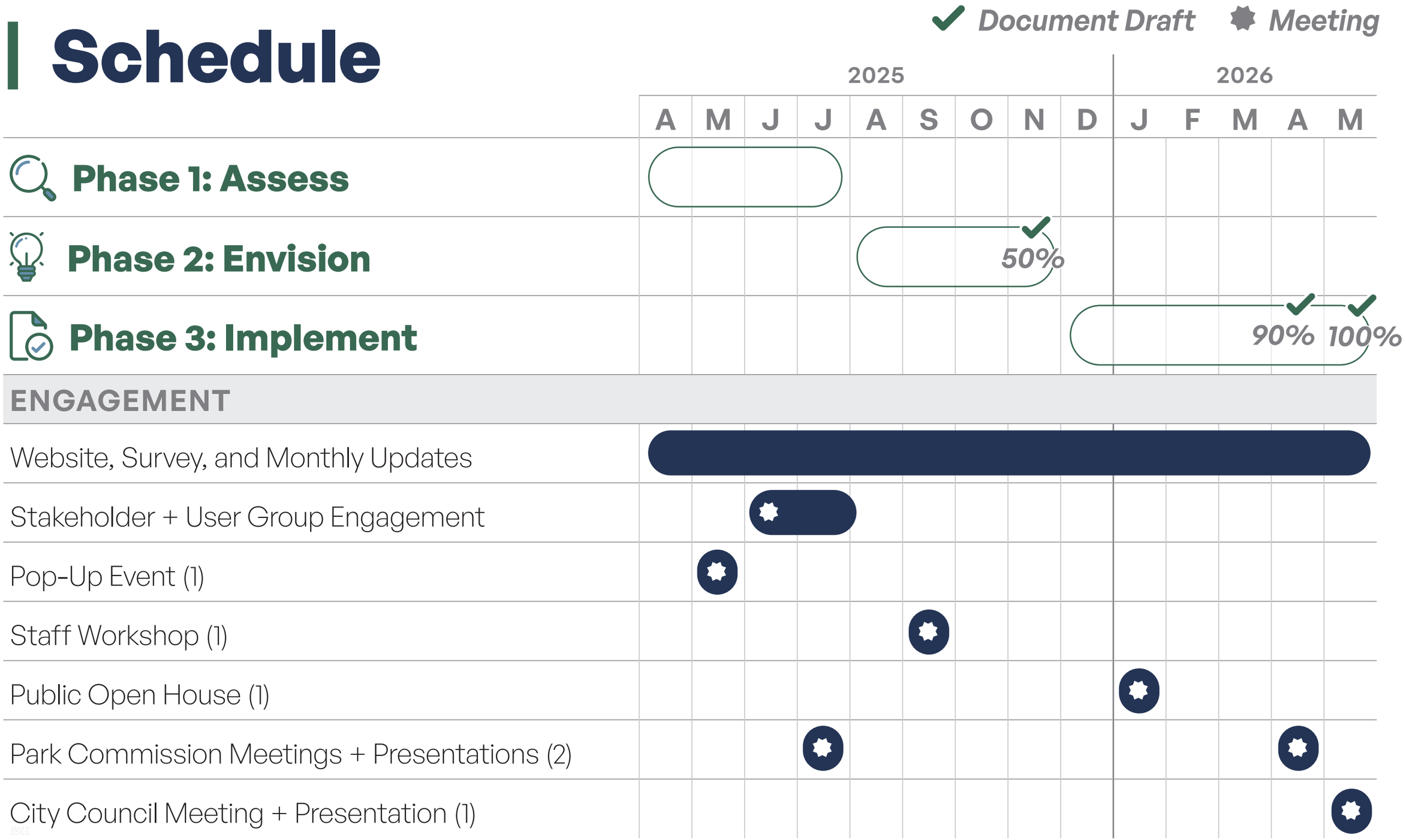
Prioritize

Develop a strategy to guide decision-making and investment priorities

Identify

Select best practices to ensure the park system is managed and maintained

Schedule


Document Draft
Meeting
2025
2026
A M J J A S O N D J F M A M
Phase 1: Assess
Phase 2: Envision
50%
Phase 3: Implement
90%
100%
ENGAGEMENT
Website, Survey, and Monthly Updates
Stakeholder + User Group Engagement
Pop-Up Event (1)
Staff Workshop (1)
Public Open House (1)
Park Commission Meetings + Presentations (2)
City Council Meeting + Presentation (1)

Where Are We Now?

90% Park + Recreation Master Plan Draft

1. Introduction + Purpose
2. Context
3. **Engagement Summary**
4. Parks + Recreation Today
5. **Parks + Facilities Guidelines**
6. **Park Profiles + Recommendations**
7. **Implementation**

Today's Focus

How We Got Here

1

Past Planning Efforts

2

Inventory Findings

Parks, Programming, Partnerships

3

Engagement Feedback

4

Professional Recommendations

Community Engagement

4 Public Events + Meetings

1 Open House

1 National Night Out

2 Community Group Meetings

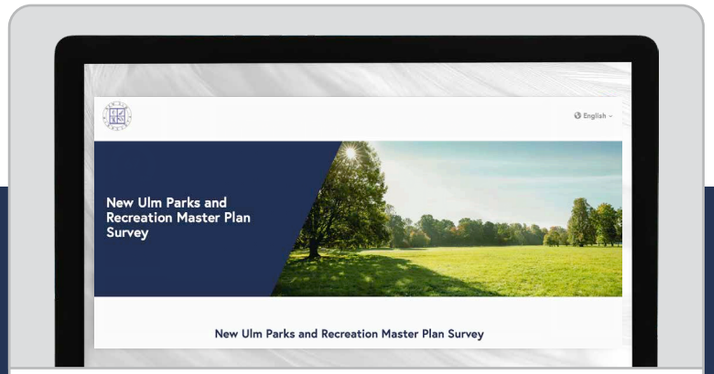
City Meetings

1 Kickoff Meeting

3 Days of Consultant Site Visits + Park Tours

Twice Monthly Core Team Check-In Meetings

1 Staff Workshop



Project Website + Digital Outreach

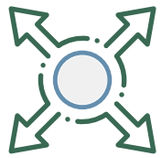
486 Survey Responses

27 Feedback Map Contributions

25 Yard Park Signs Promoting Website

Community Engagement Themes

Maintenance + Safety



Expanded Amenities

Communication

Inclusive + Adaptive Programming

Environmental Stewardship + Nature Access

Arts + Culture

Community Partnerships

Parks + Facilities Guidelines

- → Level of Service
- → Park Classification
- → Park Search Areas
- → Development Triggers
- → Trails
- → Vision, Principles, Goals, and Initiatives Statement

Park Classifications

Park Classification Summary Table

COMMUNITY PARK	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	SPECIAL USE AREA PARK	NATURAL RESOURCE AREA
Civic Center (SUA)	Highland Park	Archery Range (SUA)	Adams Park
German Park (M)	Lakeside Village Park Undeveloped	Community Garden (SUA)	Minnecon Park
Harman Park (M)	Lincoln Park	Kiesling Park and House	Pollinator Park + Natural Resource Area
Hermann Heights Park (M)	Maplewood Park Undeveloped	Schonlau Park and Glockenspiel	South Market Park
Nehls Park	North Highland Park Undeveloped	South German Park (3 SUA)	
North German Park (5 SUA)	North Market Park	Trap and Skeet Range (SUA)	
North Park	Pfaender Park Undeveloped		
Riverside Park	South Park		
Steinhauser Park and Recreation Center (SUA)	Washington Park		

New Ulm Park + Recreation Master Plan

Guidelines for Parks + Facilities | 97

+ Community Parks
+ Neighborhood Parks
+ Special Use Parks
+ Natural Resource Areas
+ Park Amenities, Including Monuments + Special Use Areas

Intent: Expand how parks might look and function to guide future park and recreational facility planning.

Using Park Classifications

Draft Pages 93–96

→ **Size**

→ **Service**

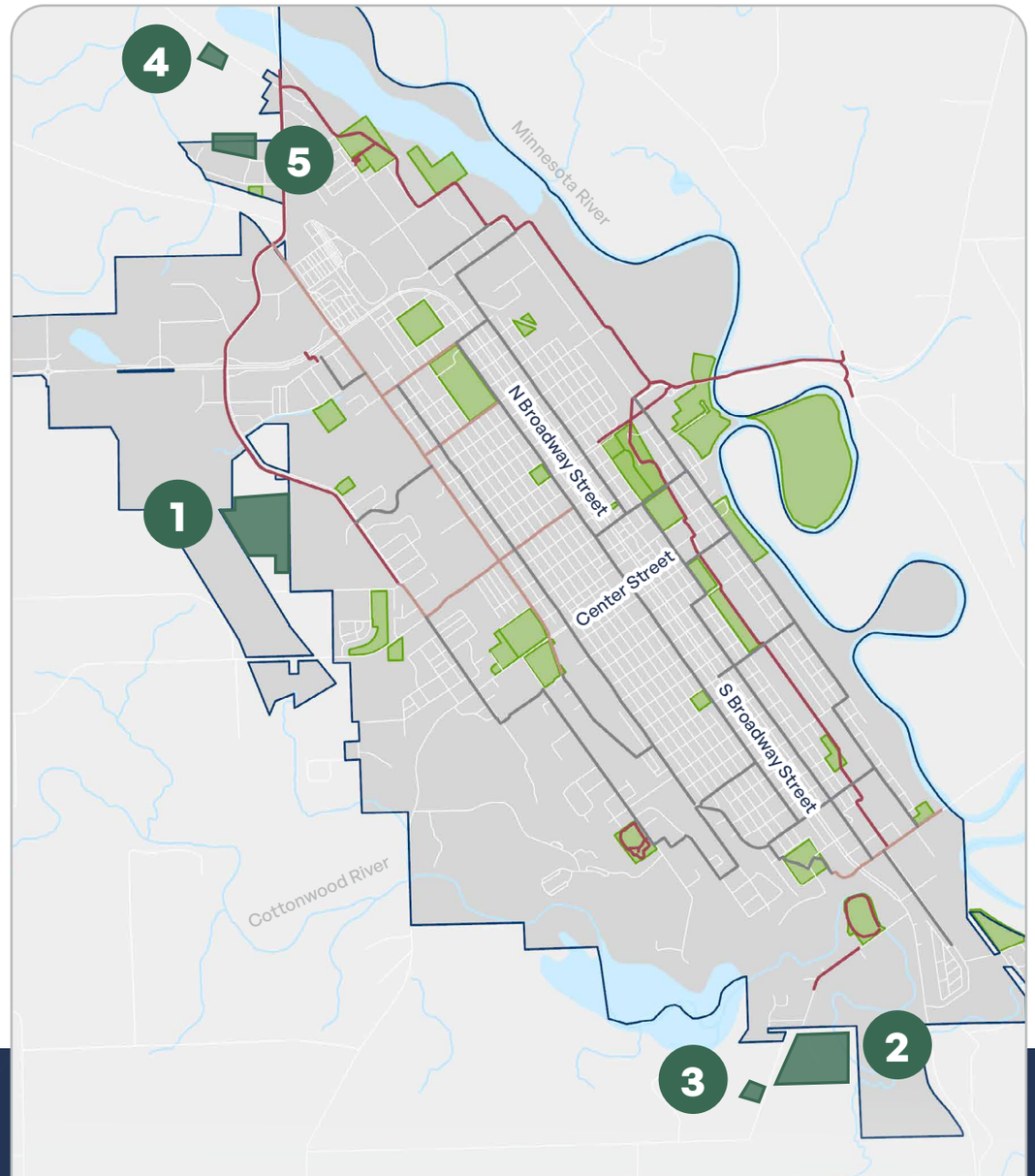
→ **Access**

→ **Typical Park Amenities**

→ **Existing Parks + Park Search Areas (PSAs)**

Park Search Areas

Draft Pages 104–106



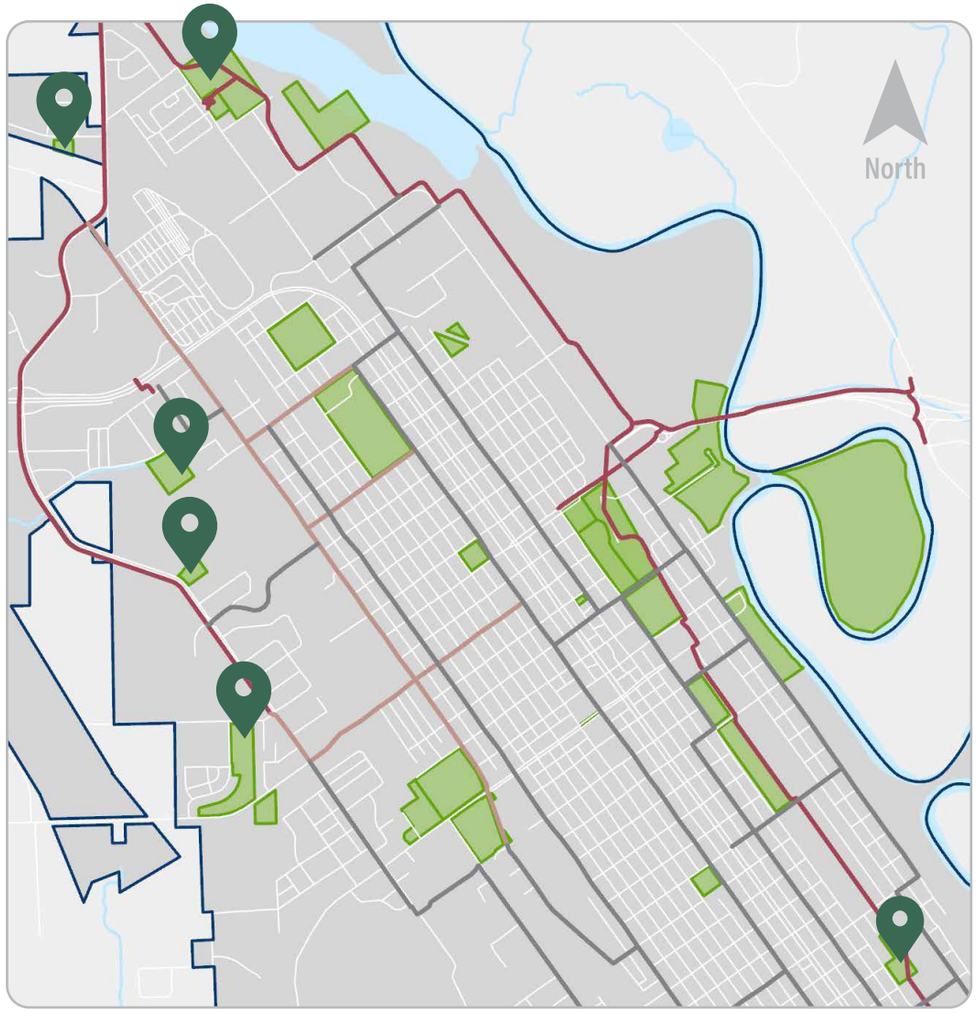
Future developments should incorporate new open spaces.

Considerations

+ Long-term needs and growth
+ Proximity to new residential areas and existing parks
+ Physical barriers, such as busy roads or water bodies

Development Triggers

Draft Pages 100–103



Park Development Decision Flowchart

IS RESIDENTIAL GROWTH OCCURRING OR PLANNED IN THE AREA?
Existing households increasing OR new residential units approved or anticipated

NO → Monitor growth; reassess during next plan update

YES ↓

ARE EXISTING PARKS ADEQUATELY SERVING THE AREA?
Evaluate nearby parks within a ¼–½ mile service area:
Capacity and crowding | Park classification and facilities | Ability to serve day to day neighborhood needs

YES → Continue monitoring; no new park needed at this time

NO ↓

ARE THERE BARRIERS LIMITING ACCESS TO EXISTING PARKS?
Rivers, floodplains, highways, rail corridors | Steep slopes or significant elevation changes | Lack of safe pedestrian or bicycle connections

NO → Consider enhancements to existing parks instead

YES ↓

IS THE AREA IDENTIFIED AS A PARK SEARCH AREA OR GROWTH AREA?
Identified in the Comprehensive Plan or Park and Recreation Master Plan
Consistent with long term City growth patterns

NO → Reevaluate need or consider plan amendment

YES ↓

DOES THE CITY CONTROL OR HAVE ACCESS TO SUITABLE LAND?
City owned land designated or intended for park use OR Opportunity for acquisition through park dedication, purchase, or donation

NO → Identify acquisition opportunities or defer development

YES ↓

IS THE SITE SUITABLE FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT?
Approximately 2–10 acres of usable land (Neighborhood Park) | Minimal environmental or topographic constraints | Reasonable site preparation requirements

NO → Consider alternate site or adjust park classification

YES ↓

ARE INFRASTRUCTURE + UTILITIES FEASIBLE?

NO → Phase

Implementation Plan Overview

- → Implementation
- → Prioritization Strategy
- → Proposed Capital Improvements
- → Funding Strategies
- → Greater Minnesota Regional Park + Trail System
- → Implementation Recommendations

Implementation Plan

A clear, actionable road map for turning the vision into progress

+ Guides priorities, investments, and decisions over the next 15 years
+ Remains flexible and responsive to community needs, resources, and change
+ Applies Plan recommendations

Prioritization Strategy

Purpose

+ Provide a **clear, consistent, and transparent framework** for park investment decisions
+ **Align priorities** with community values, adopted policies, and available resources

Prioritization Strategy

Safety, Accessibility, and Inclusion

Parks must be safe, welcoming, and usable by all.

Quality + Function

Facilities should meet community needs and last over time.

Connectivity

Strengthen parks, trails, people, and natural systems links.

Environmental Stewardship

Protect and restore natural resources.

Planning-Led + Fiscally Responsible

Investments should be phased, realistic, and informed by planning and public input.

Prioritization Strategy

Reinforced By Community Priorities

+ Updating existing facilities
+ Expanding trail connectivity
+ Improving access to natural areas
+ Enhancing recreation programming
+ Supporting health and wellness

Park-Specific Recommendations

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03/31/26 3:54 pm

7. Hermann Heights Park + Monument

MAP LEGEND
- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
14 Monument Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Community Park

ACREAGE
8.2

General Description

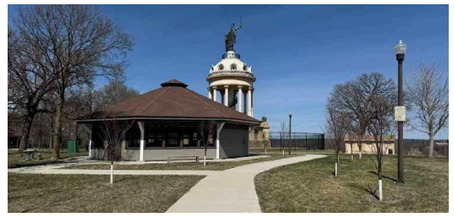
Hermann Heights Parks + Monument, home to the beloved Hermann Monument, a 102-foot monument depicting Hermann the Cherusci, the ancient hero whose army liberated Germany from Roman rule in 9 C.E. Each year, tens of thousands of visitors climb a spiral staircase to the base of the statue for a stunning, panoramic view of the City and the Minnesota River Valley. Hermann Heights Park is a cherished community park offering a variety of amenities, including several shelters and an accessible playground. The site provides excellent circulation and an abundance of mature deciduous tree coverage. Tiered native plantings are placed along the site's southern border which has a significant change in topography.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

This site is fully accessible with numerous paved pathways linking amenities within the park, such as one of only two fully accessible playgrounds within the City. Ample off-street parking is provided along the western edge of the park, complemented by rain gardens within the parking lot islands that manages stormwater runoff and features native plantings.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

The site is near multiple educational facilities, including St. Paul's Lutheran School, Jefferson Elementary School, New Ulm Middle School, and Martin Luther College to the south. The park also borders Harman Park to the north and Steinhauser Park and Recreation Center northeast. Single-family and multifamily residential surrounds the park as well.



Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

- Replace playground surfacing
- Expand seating
- Explore spreading ground cover plant varieties, such as spreading juniper and low sumac at the terraced slope on the park's southern border to reduce the need for controlled burns
- Design and construct a new welcome center with restrooms in a central location within the park. Coordinate with Hermann Monument repairs
- Demolish old restrooms
- Replace play equipment 2036

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Amenities

Bike Racks
Drinking Fountain
Enclosed Picnic Shelters (2)
Hermann Historical Monument
Interpretive Center
Little Book Library
Natural Area
Paved, Off-Street Parking
Permanent Restrooms
Picnic Tables
Playground Equipment with Poured in Place Surfacing
WiFi (Seasonal)

Programs + Partnerships

Hermann Monument Society

Hermann Heights Park + Monument

Prioritize Improvements

+ Safety + Asset Cycle *Playground improvements*
+ Environmental Condition

Coordinate Monument Planning Efforts

Draft Pages 148–149

Park-Specific Recommendations

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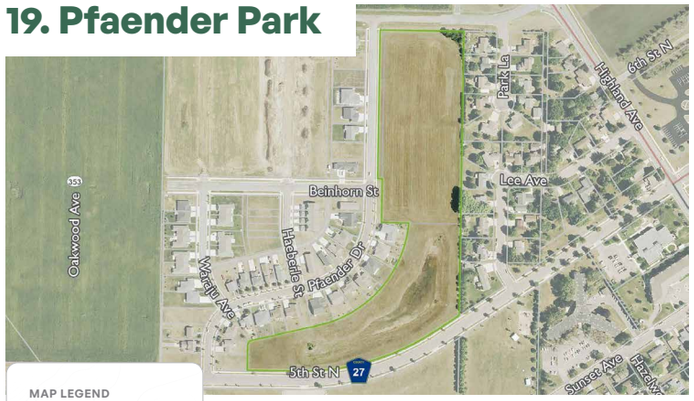
19. Pfaender Park

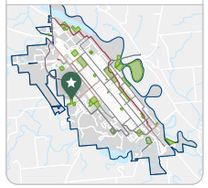


MAP LEGEND
- Park Boundary
- Multi-Use Trails
- Existing + Proposed Bike Lanes
- Shared Bike Lanes

ADDRESS
1601 7th North Street

PARK CLASSIFICATION
Neighborhood Park (Undeveloped)

ACREAGE
6.6



General Description

Pfaender Park is an undeveloped neighborhood park in a growing residential area in western New Ulm. The park currently consists of a grassy open space framed by single family homes and future multifamily residential development to the west. With anticipated surrounding residential growth, the site is likely to see further development and programming.

Access, Parking, Circulation, and Accessibility

Access to the undeveloped park is provided via on-street parking along Pfaender Drive. As surrounding development continues, formalized access and connectivity within the park should be planned. Safety enhancements, including crossings, will be important given the proximity to residential and institutional uses.

Relationship to Adjacent Use

On the western edge of New Ulm, Pfaender Park sits within a residential neighborhood. It is bordered on the north by the Kids X-Cel Center daycare and New Ulm High School, separated from the park by busy streets and open fields. Highland Park and Martin Luther College baseball and soccer facilities are south of the site, across 5th Street North.

Proposed Recommendations

High Priority (2–5 Years) *Medium Priority (6–10 Years)* *Low Priority (11–15 Years)*

- Conduct a Master Plan with community engagement for this site to serve as a Neighborhood Park

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03/31/26 3:54 pm

Amenities

- Monument Sign
- Natural Area
- Open Play Space

Programs + Partnerships

None

Pfaender Park

Establish park status

Further direction to study potential site uses

Draft Pages 180–181

Proposed Improvements + Funding Strategies

Draft Pages 210–211

PARK	Cost by Phase SHORT 1–5 Years	MID 6–10 Years	LONG 11–15 Years	TOTAL CAPITAL COST
COMMUNITY PARKS				
Civic Center	$-	$9,149,638	$-	$9,149,638
German Park	$3,750	$299,750	$374,250	$677,750
Harman Park	$466,875	$-	$50,000	$516,875
Hermann Heights Park + Monument	$284,750	$2,637,500	$208,750	$3,131,000
Nehls Park	$39,750	$1,997,213	$-	$2,036,963
North German Park (whole park)	$-	$10,000	$-	$10,000
Art Wall Park	$-	$-	$-	$-
Community Center	$-	$-	$-	$-
Hans Joohs Park	$56,250	$-	$-	$56,250
Johnson Baseball Field	$-	$-	$-	$-
Johnson Football Field	$-	$2,641,250	$-	$2,641,250
Mueller Park	$500,000	$-	$-	$500,000
Soccer Field	$-	$-	$-	$-
North Park	$36,250	$4,867,000	$-	$4,903,250
Riverside Park	$156,250	$20,000	$-	$176,250
Steinhauser Park + Recreation Center	$-	$-	$-	$-
Sub Total	**$1,543,875**	**$21,622,351**	**$633,000**	**$23,799,226**
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS				
Highland Park	$238,125	$174,438	$-	$412,563

PARK	Cost by Phase SHORT 1–5 Years	MID 6–10 Years	LONG 11–15 Years	TOTAL CAPITAL COST
SPECIAL USE PARKS				
Archery Range Park	$9,375	$28,125	$42,725	$80,225
Community Garden	$133,250	$133,250	$-	$133,250
iesling Park + House	$38,938	$-	$-	$38,938
chonlau Park	$80,625	$-	$-	$80,625
uth German Park (whole park)	$-	$-	$-	$-
g Park	$20,000	$-	$-	$20,000
te Park/BMX Track	$146,250	$1,052,500	$-	$1,198,750
+ Skeet Range	$-	$493,750	$-	$493,750
o Total	**$428,438**	**$1,707,625**	**$42,725**	**$2,045,538**
URAL RESOURCE AREA				
s Park	$12,000	$56,250	$-	$68,250
on Park	$-	$21,250	$-	$21,250
or Park	$575,000	$-	$-	$575,000
larket Park	$137,625	$187,500	$-	$325,125
tal	**$724,625**	**$265,000**	**$-**	**$989,625**
K TOTAL	$3,637,406	$25,079,789		

Implementation Recommendations

Staffing

- Evaluate Department staffing as the City grows and avoid fixed staffing models
- During staffing transitions, reassess structure and responsibilities before refilling vacant positions
- Leverage volunteer programs when appropriate and clearly define roles
- Periodically reassess volunteer activities

Implementation Recommendations

Maintenance

- Parks highly rated for cleanliness and upkeep
- Evaluate long-term feasibility for maintenance of new facilities
- Reassess maintenance staff, areas of expertise, and specializations
- Convert underused turf areas to native plantings where appropriate
- Natural areas require ongoing maintenance to remain healthy, safe, and visually appealing

Standardized Design

Develop a unified design language for the park system to establish expectations for:

- Architectural character
- Materials
- Colors
- Park furnishings and site amenities

  Benches, bike racks, picnic table, grills, waste receptacles, and signage

---

This should remain flexible and respond to different park types and contexts.

Apply standardized design elements during replacements, renovations, and park development rather than system-wide retrofits.

Use design standards to guide decisions, not delay projects.

Programming

Evaluate recreation programs and staffing to align offerings with changing needs and services from partners.

FOCUS AREA	PRIORITY DIRECTION
System-Wide Programming	Regularly evaluate recreation programs and staffing to ensure offerings align with changing community demand and complement services provided by partners.
Early Childhood (0–5)	Expand early childhood programming focused on movement, nature-based play, music, and year-round indoor play opportunities.
Youth + Teens	Broaden youth and teen programming through arts, STEM activities, seasonal school partnerships, and structured internship or volunteer opportunities.
Adults	Increase programs serving adults without children, including inclusive recreation options and emerging sports that reflect community interest.
Seniors + Active Adults	Continue coordination with CAST and prepare for an expanded City role in senior programming as community needs and partner capacity evolve.
Special Events	Evolve special events to balance tradition and innovation, expand winter offerings, and strengthen weather contingency and operational resiliency.

Draft Page 224

Partnerships

Ongoing coordination and with partners will be key to maintaining and advancing partnerships.

PARTNER	PRIORITY DIRECTION
Schools (Public + Private)	Coordinate facility use and programming with school partners through regular communication and updated shared-use agreements to complement school-based recreation offerings.
Sport + Athletic Organizations	Coordinate with athletic organizations on facility scheduling, cost sharing, and capital needs to support efficient use of recreation facilities.
Chamber of Commerce	Partner with the Chamber to coordinate event promotion, tourism-related activities, and volunteer recruitment for major tournaments and community events.
HONU	Collaborate with HONU to integrate health and wellness priorities into park planning, programming, and policy initiatives.
ARS	Support inclusive recreation by continuing partnerships that expand adaptive programming opportunities within the park system.
CAST	Coordinate senior programming with CAST to align recreation opportunities with community center services, park amenities, and wellness initiatives.
MN DNR/Flandrau State Park	Coordinate with MN DNR to align nature-based recreation, aquatic amenities, trail connections, and visitor experience across City parks and Flandrau State Park.
Brown County + Adjacent Counties	Coordinate regionally on park, trail, and river access planning to enhance connectivity and respond to cross-county recreation patterns.

Draft Page 225

Next Steps

April

Incorporate staff and Commission comments

May

Present to City Council for approval and adoption

Thank You!

Questions?

ISG

City of New Ulm
Request for Park & Recreation Commission Action

Meeting:	Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026	**Agenda Section:**	REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONER AND STAFF
Resolution:	N/A	**Originating Department:**	Park & Rec
Ordinance:	N/A	**Prepared By:**	Donitta Trebesch
Attachments:	0	**Presented By:**	Kurt Johnson
Item:	Commissioner Reports		

Proposed Action:
to receive and order filed the Commissioner Reports.

Motion by _____, and seconded by _____

Board/Commission Recommendation:
N/A

Overview:
N/A

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:
N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:
N/A

City of New Ulm
Request for Park & Recreation Commission Action

Meeting:	Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026	**Agenda Section:**	REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONER AND STAFF
Resolution:	N/A	**Originating Department:**	Park & Rec
Ordinance:	N/A	**Prepared By:**	Donitta Trebesch
Attachments:	1	**Presented By:**	Joey Schugel
Item:	Department Activity Report		

Proposed Action:
to accept and file the Park and Recreation Department Activity Report for March 2026.

Motion by _____ seconded by _____

Board/Commission Recommendation:
N/A

Overview:
N/A

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:
N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:
N/A

Attachments:
March 2026 Activity Report

PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES MARCH 2026 REPORT

Parks

Crews performed routine maintenance; spring cleanup, including leaf removal from fences and light field maintenance in preparation for the stickball season. Mueller Park was opened. Crews re-installed nets in the parks and miscellaneous tree maintenance and began preparing outdoor pools for the summer.

Civic Center

Repairs included a glycol line and a valve that was leaking freon. Annual maintenance was performed in the compressor room in preparation for re-installing ice. Repairs were made on the hockey boards in the North rink. March was show month. The New Ulm Figure Skating Club presented Oz on Ice, followed by the Farm City Hub Club's Farm Show. Joe's Camper Show held their 5-day show. The Career Expo took place Wednesday March 25 and the Home Show moved in the next day and held their show March 27-28.

Civic Center Sales through March 25:

Name	Account Number	Balance
CC Admissions	215-5600-34741	$1,282.64
CC Concessions	215-5600-34782	$172.09
CC Skate Rental	215-5600-34748	$356.05
CC Skate Sharpening	215-5600-34749	$50.95
Misc CC Sales	215-5600-36200	$1,549.56
Rent- CC Dry Floor	215-5600-34746	$14,610.33
Rent- CC Ice	215-5600-34743	($933.46)
Rent- CC Meeting Room	215-5600-34763	$1,165.14

Community Center – routine maintenance and repairs were made to the commercial cooler and walk in freezer. Community Center Sales through March 25):

Name	Account Number	Balance
CM Programs	215-5700-34726	$283.78
Rent- CM Cafetorium	215-5700-34703	$2,827.38
Rent- CM Meeting Rooms	215-5700-34763	$871.02

Recreation Center 122 S. Garden St. – Martin Luther College started their spring physical education swimming classes in the pool and there were a few sports teams that held organized practices in the pool. Adult volleyball league concluded. A youth basketball program was offered as an introduction to the sport by focusing on game fundamentals such as practice shooting, passing, dribbling and working as a team. Youth Tennis concluded. Health Quest, a program that focuses on overall health and wellness with structured goals and objectives for participants started in March. Points can be earned by attending fitness events/classes, working out at the Rec Center, weight loss and completing challenges. Seven new Water Safety Instructors were certified and are now able to independently teach Red Cross Swim Lessons.

Staff replaced parts in a basketball hoop and did a lot of deep throughout the Rec Center, including carpet tile, pool floor, wall and gutters. Staff was also able to improve the flow rate in the pool, which offers several benefits.

March Membership Report	March	February	Difference
24/7 Access	491	472	+19
3-month memberships	613	588	+25
Annuals paid in full	873	811	+62

Insurance Memberships	2,471	2,387	+84
Ongoing	1,359	1,358	+1
Rec Center General, Youth & senior punch cards	1,408	1,363	+45
Playground	258	252	+6
Walking Track	556	541	+15
Total	8,029	7,772	+257

Rec Center Sales through March 25:

Name	Account Number	Balance
Misc RC Sales	215-5400-36200	$220.60
RC Admissions	215-5400-34731	$27,212.16
RC Equipment Rental	215-5400-34745	$125.95
RC Memberships	215-5400-34770	$36,063.85
RC Programs	215-5400-34726	$2,173.99
RC Sales	215-5400-36200	$11.12
Rent- RC Gym	215-5400-34730	$1,218.27
Rent- RC Indoor Pool	215-5400-34723	$789.45
Rent- RC Meeting Room	215-5400-34763	$3,366.48
Rent- RC Racquet/Wallyball Court	215-5400-34751	$400.15
Swim Lessons	215-5400-34724	$3,618.82

Administration

City Council; Department Heads After Council meetings; Department Management Team Monthly Meeting; Heart of New Ulm, KNUJ monthly radio show; MMUA monthly safety training; Hermann Monument Society; Emergency Management Committee; Community Education Advisory Board, HONU Committee and worksite wellness committee, SMRPA Monthly meeting; CASHS/SRTS Action Team; NUCAT Park and Recreation Department update; Bi-Weekly Park and Recreation Master Plan Meetings; City Safety Meeting; Staff also participated in the Annual Career Expo and a staff member attended a National Turf Management Conference in Florida..

Staff met with NUSE Hockey for a season wrap-up meeting, New Ulm United Soccer Club for a season kick-off meeting, and Sioux Valley Gun Club in preparation of bid schedule for the new Trap Range Building. Additionally, Hermann Monument Reconstruction Project has received media attention. Staff did interviews with KEYC, KNUJ, and MPR discussing next steps in the project.

Ben Doeden was promoted to Program Supervisor took over the reins. He hit the ground running by recruiting an intern, summer staff and made preparations for the upcoming summer programming season, all while continuing the duties of the Aquatics and Fitness Coordinator. Recruitment efforts are currently underway.

As of March 25, the Department took in approximately $50,015 in cash and checks and another $51,900 in credit card sales.

City of New Ulm
Request for Park & Recreation Commission Action

Meeting:	Park & Recreation Commission - 13 Apr 2026	**Agenda Section:**	REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONER AND STAFF
Resolution:	N/A	**Originating Department:**	Park & Rec
Ordinance:	N/A	**Prepared By:**	Joey Schugel
Attachments:	0	**Presented By:**	Joey Schugel
Item:	Staff Report		

Proposed Action:
to accept and file the Park and Recreation Department Staff Report.

Motion by _____ and seconded by _____.

Board/Commission Recommendation:
N/A

Overview:
1. North Park Dugout Project is now complete.
2. Mueller Park Backstop project completed.
3. New Ulm Tree City USA application was approved. This is the 22nd year designated a Tree City from the Arbor Day Foundation.
4. Recreation Coordinator (Aquatics & Fitness) position recruitment is active through April 19.

Primary Issues/Alternatives to Consider:
N/A

Budgetary/Fiscal Issues:
N/A