

# 7. Parks, Open Space, and Trails

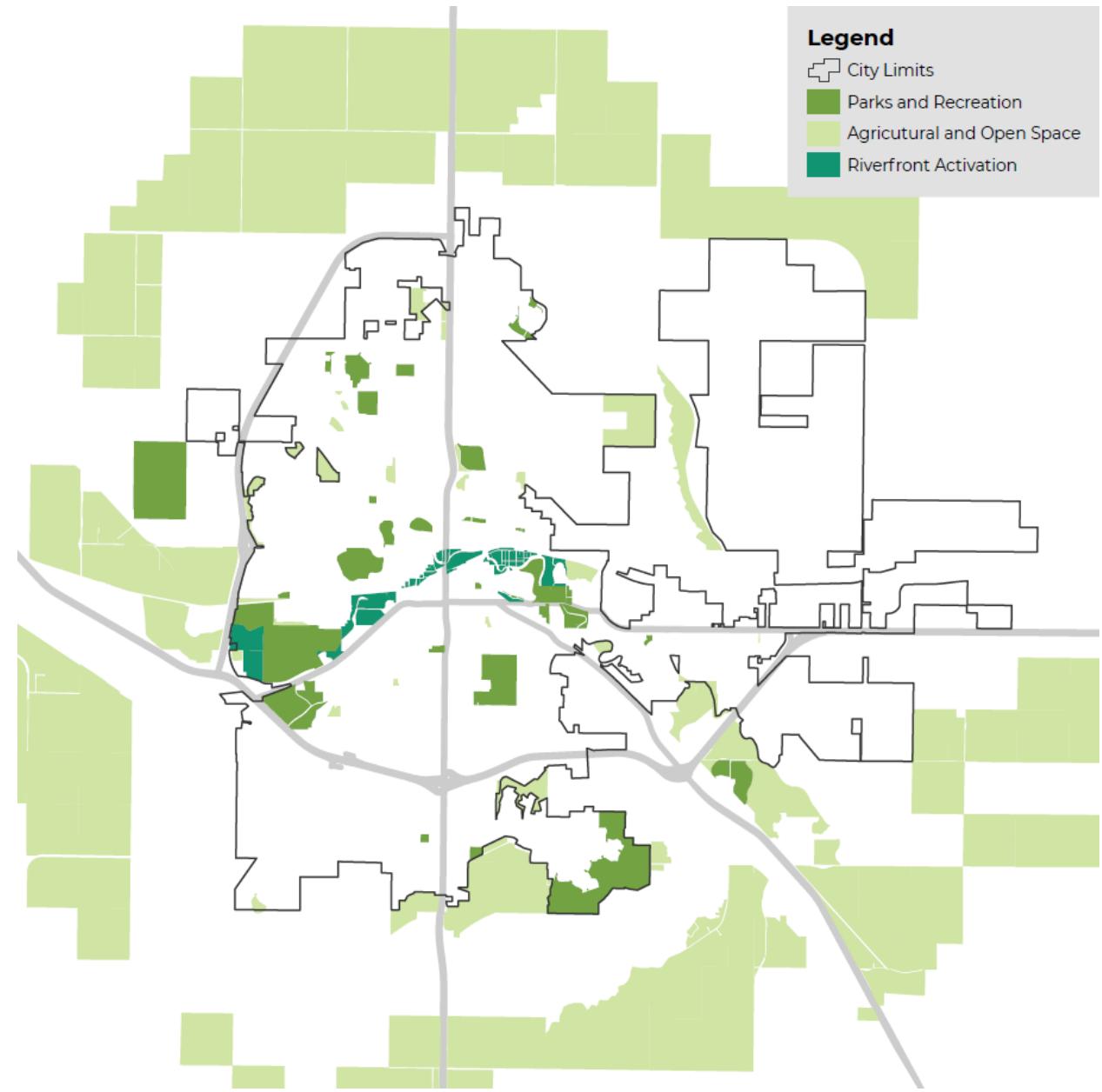


## WHAT'S INSIDE

- Park System Overview
- Trail System and System Gaps
- Growth Opportunities
- Ramstad Site Concept

### Land Use Connection

Parks and open space are areas preserved from intensive urban development. These areas support a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities as well as natural functions, such as floodwater retention and groundwater recharge. Trails connect the community to public parks and open space, and support recreationists who want to walk, bike, and roll.



## OVERVIEW

Minot's parks, open space, and trails are essential community assets that require planning, management, and investment. Parks, open space, and trails are an integrated system that preserves and enhances access to recreational areas and natural resources. Natural and cultivated greenspace provides enriching experiences that support physical, social, and mental health. Resources like the Souris River and the Roosevelt Park Zoo are an established part of the community's identity. Minot's recreational resources are and will continue to be a major selling point for prospective residents and workers.

### How to Use this Chapter

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan contains broad goals and strategies for developing and maintaining recreational resources to serve the needs of current and future residents. It highlights areas of alignment with other topics in the Plan, including Land Use,

Transportation, and Economic Development. It is not intended to serve as a comprehensive parks plan. Minot Park District's master plan may be adopted in place of this chapter.

## PARK SYSTEM

Minot Park District manages 12 parks. **Table 7-1** identifies each park and its amenities. **Figure 7-1** displays park locations, along with existing and planned trails. The map also highlights gaps within the existing/proposed trail network, which could be prioritized for completion. (The Trails section of this chapter provides additional context).

The existing park system consists of five community parks, several neighborhood parks, ball fields, athletic complexes, and special use facilities.

### Community Parks

Community parks provide recreational opportunities for people of all ages from across the city and the region. Each park is roughly 20-30 acres and has a service area of 2 miles or more.

A community park is a multipurpose space that nonetheless has a unique identity, which stems from the park's core attraction(s). The Roosevelt Park Zoo and Scandinavian Heritage Center are prime examples.

Community parks are accessible from major transportation routes and are linked to the broader trail system.

Minot's community parks include:

- Bicentennial Park (Scandinavian Heritage Park),
- Oak Park
- Polaris Park
- Roosevelt Park
- Roosevelt Park Zoo



Table 7-1: Minot City Parks and Park Amenities

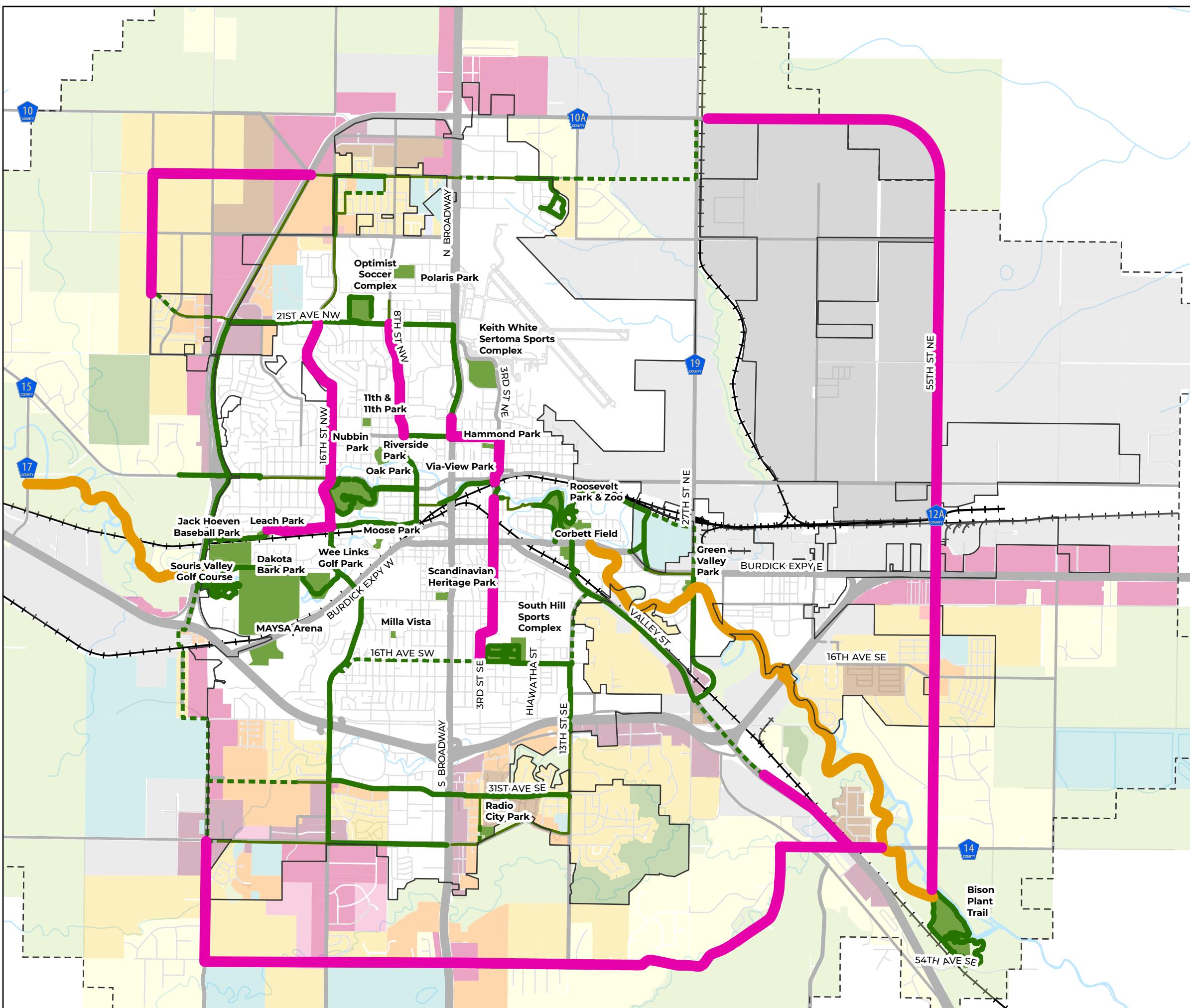


PARKS	AMENITIES																						
	Amphitheater	Band Shelter	Baseball Field	Basketball Courts	Disc Golf	Dog Park	Fishing Docks	Gardens	Hockey Rink	Horseshoes	Magic City Express	Open Space	Picnic Table	Playground	Restrooms	Sand Volleyball	Scandinavian Center	Shelters	Splash Pad	Swimming Pool	Swing set	Tennis Courts	Trails
11 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> Park																							
Dakota Bark Park																							
Green Valley Park																							
Hammond Park																							
Leach Park																							
Moose Park																							
Oak Park																							
Polaris Park																							
Radio City Park																							
Riverside Park																							
Roosevelt Park																							
Scandinavian Park																							



## Existing Parks with Trails and Trail Gaps

Figure 7-1



### Legend

- City Limits
- 2-Mile Boundary
- Existing Parks
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Trail
- Planned Trail
- Conceptual Greenway Connection
- Trail Gaps

0 0.5 1 1.5 Miles





## Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are smaller parks that primarily serve individual neighborhoods. These parks range from one to 10 acres and include standard amenities, such as play structures, shelters, benches, and paths. They have a general service area of  $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile (5- to 10-minute walk). These distances are a guide for system equity and accessibility. All residents should have access to a park or open space within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile.



POST-1. Design and program parks, open space, and indoor recreation facilities for all-season use.



POST-2. Provide safe, equitable access to parks, open space, and trails throughout the community.

As Minot grows, neighborhood parks represent a practical opportunity for park system development. The 2012 Plan provides guidelines for park sizing, noting that 1-2 acres can serve about 1,000 people. Parks should be designed with the surrounding neighborhood in mind and must be accessible and desirable for intended user groups. They should also be easily accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists. Siting neighborhood parks adjacent to greenways and trails

strengthens the parks and trails system as whole. Shade trees and landscaping create a pleasant environment.

Minot's neighborhood parks include:

- 11<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Park
- Green Valley Park
- Hammond Park
- Leach Park
- Moose Park
- Radio City Park
- Riverside Park

*Minot needs a special needs playground (with gate/fence, acceptable climbing, etc.)*

*-Survey Participant*

## Community Play Fields

Community play fields are designed for organized athletic activities that require more space than neighborhood parks provide.

These areas range from 10 to 50 acres. They may be integrated with community parks or co-located with school athletic facilities. The Minot Park District and Minot Public School District have a strong working relationship and work cooperatively to develop shared athletic facilities.



## Athletic Complexes

An athletic complex consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities at larger sites strategically located throughout the community. This design facilitates maintenance and scheduling. Parking, seating, and lighting are important considerations. Athletic complexes generate noise and traffic during off-

peak hours and should be sited away from residential areas as practicable.

Minot's athletic complexes include:

- Centennial Park
- Corbett Field
- Jack Hoeven Baseball Park
- Sertoma Sports Complex
- Optimist Soccer Complex
- South Hill Softball Complex

## Special Use Facility

Special use facilities have one primary use that serves a particular segment of the public (e.g., dog owners). These facilities include MAYSA arena, Souris Valley Golf Course, Wee Links Golf Course, and Dakota Bark Park.

While neighborhood parks offer standardized features and design, special use facilities are important because they expand the variety of recreational offerings within Minot. This is another area of potential growth. In the community survey, respondents prioritized special use facilities, especially those designed for all-season use. Examples include:

- ATV track
- Batting cages
- Indoor skate park
- Indoor community center/aquatic center
- Indoor sports fields

*Minot needs more indoor recreation facilities!*

*-Survey Participants (many)*

## TRAIL SYSTEM

Minot residents have expressed a strong interest in trails, both in the 2012 plan and in the community survey for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan update. Residents desire a highly connected, purposefully designed trail system. In addition, residents have expressed an increasing desire for on-street bike facilities, which can help provide connectivity between multiuse paths.

## Residents say Minot needs...

"More bike **trails** that connect and not random displacements"

"Continuous bike routes without having to go on streets to get from one section to another – check out Trout Run **Trail** in Decorah, Iowa."

"Interconnected paved **trails**"

"Despite development of the riverside **trail** system, I would most like to see a **trail** that passes through the entire length of town."

"Unpaved natural **trails.**"

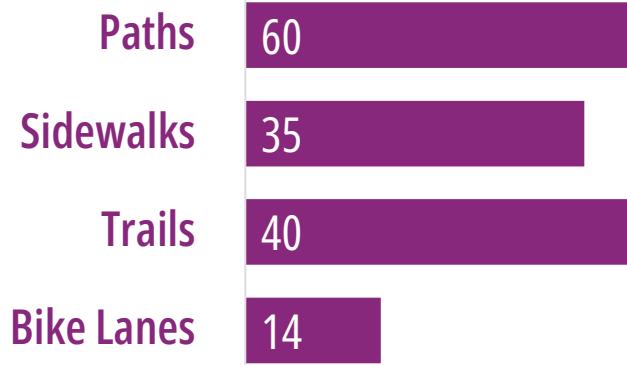
"Comprehensive and connected walking and biking **trails.**"

**"Trail** systems, both paved and natural. Having a large, looped paved trail system would be great."

"Bike-friendly roads/**trails** throughout."

"Bike and multi-use paths that are not along roadways, like Brunsdale Park to Rose Creek Golf Course in Fargo."

*When you visit other communities, what is one thing you love that Minot needs? Number of survey mentions:*



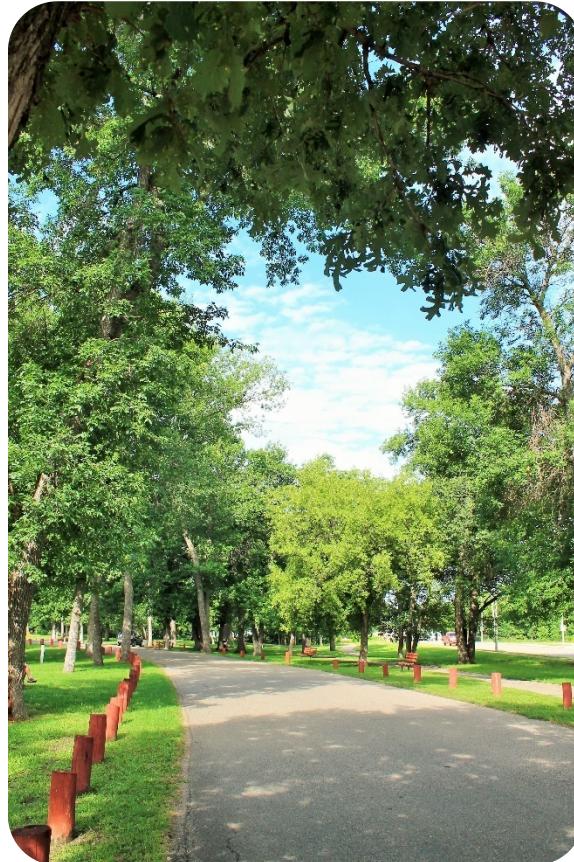
## *System Gaps*

**Figure 7-1** displays Minot's existing and planned trail system. Existing gaps and conceptual extensions are drawn in magenta. These alignments are generalized; future trails would not have to follow the alignments depicted.

Many residents expressed a desire for more extensive trails or a loop trail system. Figure 7-1 illustrates how a loop system could be developed around the airport/industrial park and through future growth areas.

There is another critical gap between Downtown and the riverfront. While it is important to limit the number of access locations through the floodwall, public access to the river needs to be retained to support both Downtown and the river amenity.

***It is vital to retain and enhance public access between Downtown and the riverfront trail system.***



Trail extensions in southeast Minot would improve accessibility and enhance the Bison Plant Trail system. A trail connection to the Bison Plant area could be developed along the river or generally with the Highway 52/BNSF corridor.

Another priority is improving the connection between MSU and

Downtown. Within existing neighborhoods, it is difficult to make trail improvements without modifying the right-of-way and/or reconstructing facilities. In these areas, the best solution might be to deploy on-street bicycle lanes.

## *Funding Programs*

**North Dakota's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)** provides funding for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, Safe Routes to School projects, and other projects. These funds are awarded through a statewide competitive process and require a local match (about 20%). Minot should commit to applying for TAP funds each year.

NDDOT also administers North Dakota's **Safe Routes to Schools Program (SRTS)**. Funding supports construction and construction engineering of facilities that help students walk and bike to school, including sidewalks, on-street bike/ped facilities, and off-street bike/ped facilities.

Federal funding programs increasingly prioritize projects that include a multimodal component. The **RAISE discretionary grant program** supports multimodal projects that might be difficult to fund through the NDDOT.

The North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department facilitates several grant opportunities, including the **Recreational Trails Program (RTP)**. The RTP provides funding for motorized and non-motorized trail projects.

## NATURAL OPEN SPACE

Natural open spaces are areas with significant development constraints and/or areas that are intended to be preserved from intensive development in order to maintain their natural qualities. They include forested areas, riparian corridors and floodplains, and coulees. Unlike parks, open spaces are not programmed for organized use but they can support passive recreation opportunities.

Open space may be publicly or privately owned, and may or may not be maintained by Minot Park District.



## GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

As Minot expands, new parks will be dedicated in developing areas. Minot will need to ensure that future residential neighborhoods have access to parks and open space opportunities. Future growth areas located beyond principal arterials (i.e., outside the Northwest Bypass or south of Highway 2) presently have limited park access and the highways present barriers to trail connectivity.

In 2022, all community parks and neighborhood parks in Minot

constitute about 250 acres, or about 5 acres per 1,000 residents (excluding open space, golf courses, and athletic complexes). **If population growth meets the 2040 projection, Minot would need 80-100 additional acres of parkland to meet community needs.** This acreage would be divided between a combination of new community parks and neighborhood parks.

**Figure 7-2** shows how the park system could expand in step with future growth. The map shows general locations for future parks. Locations were selected to provide equitable community access, good accessibility, and align with the Future Land Use Map. Neighborhood parks (P) are shown with a 1/2-mile service area. Community parks (CP) are shown with a 2-mile service area. This map is intended to serve as a guide. It shows potential areas of need, but the community should not anticipate that park facilities will be developed at every location as shown.

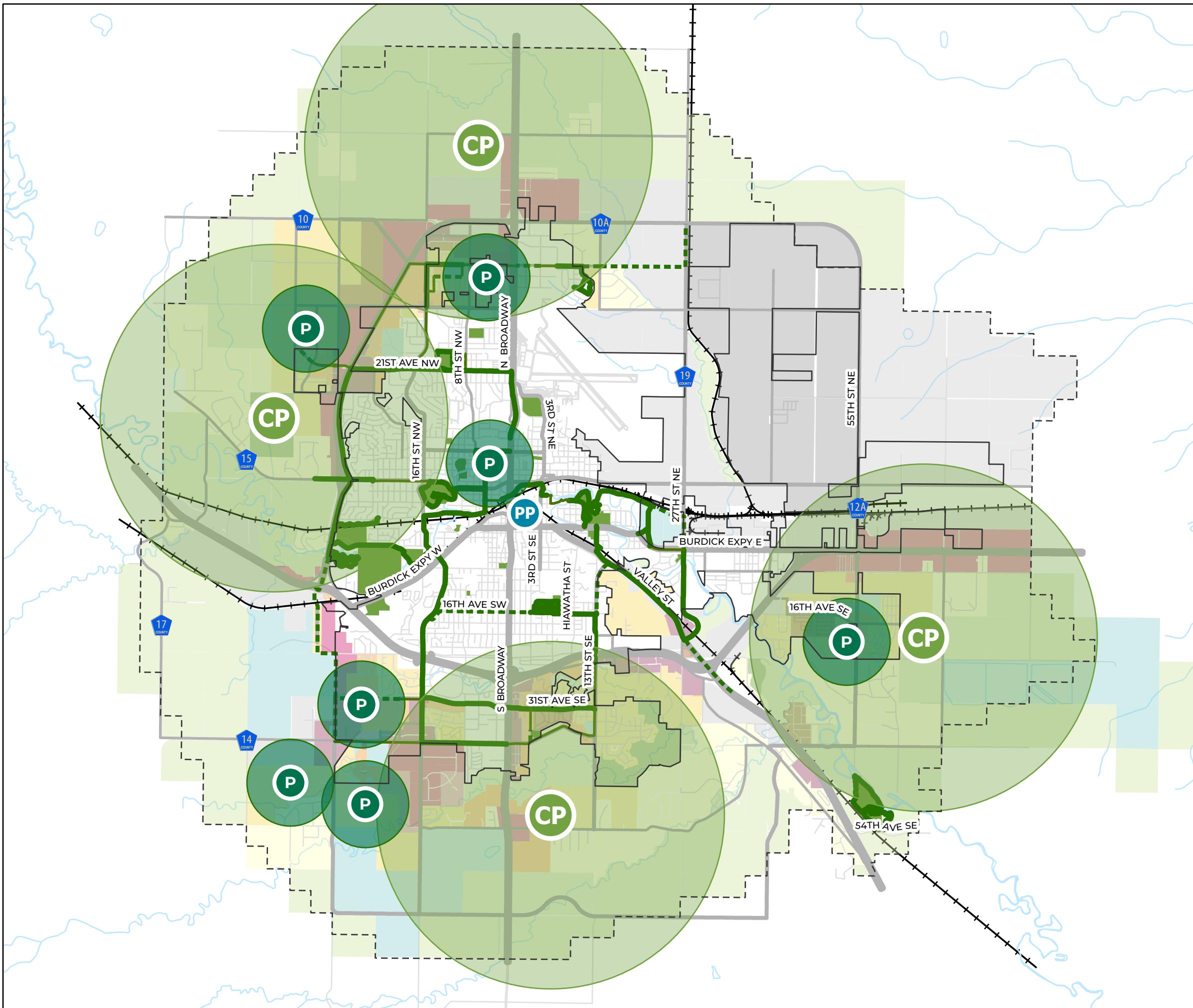


## Park System Growth Areas

Figure 7-2

## Legend

- + City Limits
- + 2-Mile Boundary
- Existing Parks
- P Parks Concept
- CP Community Park Opportunity
- P Neighborhood Park Opportunity
- PP Pocket Park(s) Opportunity
- Community Park Service Area (2 miles)
- Neighborhood Park Service Area (1/2 mile)
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Trail
- Planned Trail



## Downtown Pocket Park(s)

Residents expressed a desire for a park and more landscaping within Downtown. As Trinity Hospital relocates its primary services from Downtown, Minot should pursue opportunities to create a park and/or plaza on land that may become available. Having a park in Downtown would help attract residents and businesses to the city core and would support events programming.

***Chapter 8 provides a vision for Downtown Minot.***

## Ramstad Middle School Site

A new neighborhood park is envisioned at the old Ramstad Middle School site. Minot Public School District retains ownership of the 13.5-acre property. With the demolition of the school complete, the site could be converted to an active park space. The concept rendering depicts a skate park, play field, and carousel, but many uses are possible. While there is one skate park in Roosevelt Park,



***Concept rendering of the former Ramstad Middle School Site, looking north.***

several residents expressed an interest in having a second skate park/indoor skate park in the community survey. Given the size and history of the former school site, a design charrette that involves the neighborhood would be appropriate. This would allow park users to determine the amenities they'd like to

see and take ownership of the space. The School District and Park District should coordinate planning efforts.

## Riverfront Activation

An overarching goal of this Plan is to activate the riverfront. The community should build on the Mouse River Enhanced Flood Protection Project (MREFPP) and the River Front and Center Plan to develop a coordinated design plan. Riverfront activation strategies include:

- Expanding public access to the riverfront
- Improving sight lines to the river
- Promoting activities on the water
- Incorporating paths, trails, and attractive landscaping with flood improvements
- Organizing efforts to improve water quality and riparian buffers

- Developing a coordinated system of amenities and trails within the greenway

## SUMMARY

This chapter has identified several objectives, tools, and strategies to guide development of Minot's park system. Recommendations include:

- Develop a park system master plan focused on activating the Souris River Greenway
- Preserve acreage in primary growth areas for park development
- Continue to apply Minot's park dedication requirement
- Incorporate shared-use paths with construction of major collectors and minor arterials
- Consider service area reach and user characteristics when siting and planning new parks

- Plan to add two or three special use facilities by 2040, with a focus on providing indoor recreation spaces
- Engage neighborhood residents in park design
- Pursue state and federal discretionary funding opportunities on an annual basis
- Consider a corridor retrofit on North Broadway to strengthen multimodal opportunities between Minot State University and Downtown
- Use tactical urbanism to test the feasibility and response to on-street bike lanes if separated trails/paths cannot be provided