

City of Afton

Parks Committee Meeting

Tuesday, April 3, 2018

6:00 PM

(Please note new meeting date)

Agenda

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Minutes of the February 28, 2018 Parks Committee meeting**
- 5. Business**
 - A. Review of the Park Plan and Park Dedication Regulations**
 - B. Birds Bikes and Boats Event**
 - C. Bench Update**
 - D. Carlson PLCD Update**
 - E. Parks Committee vs. Parks Commission**
- 6. Adjournment**

City of Afton
Parks Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

6PM

Attendees: Committee members; Karen Weiss, Erin Smillie, Lynn Kaye, Nathan Shaw, and Rick Pung.
Other attendees; Patrick Leahy, Kathy Graham, and Joe Bush.

Business:

- A. The motion to vote Karen Weiss to be chairperson of the Afton Parks Committee was seconded and approved and motion for Erin Smillie to be Secretary was seconded and approved.
- B. Proposal by Will Carlson and JP Bush Homes to dedicate the Five-Acre Parcel at 5550 Odell Avenue to the City as Parkland.

Chairperson Weiss allocated 15 minutes for public comments. A letter in opposition to acceptance of this 5-acre parcel into the City park system was presented, signed by residents who live near the proposed park. We also heard from Patrick Leahy, a resident near the 5550 Odell parcel. He expresses his recommendation to not accept the parcel of land because he feels it does not have context for park planning. He expresses concern that having a "public park" in the neighborhood has the potential to bring in more traffic and shared his view that Afton typically has chosen not to take scattered parcels of parkland throughout the city.

Joe Bush, the developer offering the 5-acre parcel, shared that the Park land would be landscaped as green space and is intended as passive. The parcel would have a 60 foot right of way with a boulevard to be landscaped and trees installed. He comments that the boulevard is typically maintained by the home owners' association.

There was additional discussion about to potential uses of this parcel, the costs associated with the city owning the parcel, and the location of the parcel with regard to other Park Plan goals.

Chair Weiss also reminded us of the Parks Committee's Plan, adopted in 2012, that does set goals for desired improvements or additions to current parcels. It was acknowledged that several of the parcels were acquired during a time when there was not a provision for a "fee option in lieu of land" and if there had been that some of these parcels may not have been accepted. It was noted that regardless of how the city came to own them, there is proposed uses for all but one of them detailed in the Park Plan document.

It was also discussed, that this parcel is **not** an "in lieu of funds dedication" and therefore should not be considered under the current park dedication policy regarding acceptance of parcels vs. funds. It was discussed that our acceptance of the five-acre parcel is NOT tied to the decision of the City to allow or deny the JP Bush development to move forward, but that it does have

advantages as a possible entrance point for a large conservation easement should that become reality.

The committee also discussed its concerns about the maintenance and development cost associated with this parcel, the proximity to proposed trails and bike routes, and the possible addition of basic amenities that could enhance its usability for Afton residents.

After discussion was closed a motion was made by Chair Weiss to accept the 5-acre parcel at 5550 Odell Avenue to the City as parkland. Lynn Kaye made an amendment that the developer would be responsible for landscaping the boulevard and that the Park Committee would review the proposed changes prior to the parcel being altered. Motion seconded by Committee member Smillie and passed 5-0.

- C. Park Signage Update: Final costs for (8) 12"x 18" signs are \$600. Erin will work on a simple sign design and submit it in PDF format for approval. It was discussed that the City of Afton Logo be included.
- D. Bike Repair Station Update. It was decided that the repair station colors would be red, unless the bike rack was some color other than galvanized.
- E. Outhouse Removal. This item will be tabled for now until we figure out if the new restrooms would be open and maintained throughout the year and costs associated with that.
- F. Motion to adjourn

AFTON CODE

- B. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute a practical difficulty if reasonable use for the property exists under the terms of this article.
- C. Applications for any such variance shall be made in writing by the subdivider at the time when the plat is filed for consideration. Such application shall state fully all facts relied upon by the subdivider, and shall be supplemented with maps, plans or other additional data which may aid the Planning Commission and the City Council in the analysis of the proposed project. Such variances shall be considered at the next regular meeting held by the Planning Commission. The plans for such development shall include any covenants, restrictions, or other legal provisions necessary to guarantee the full achievement of the proposed plat. Any variance or modifications thus granted shall be recorded and entered in the minutes setting forth the reasons for granting the variance.

Sec. 12-1267. Security interest.³⁴⁶

Creation of a security interest in a portion of a parcel less than the entire parcel does not entitle the property to subdivision even upon foreclosure of the security interest, unless otherwise approved by the City Council and the parcel is in conformance with this article and the zoning ordinance, article II of this chapter.

Sec. 12-1268. Building permits.³⁴⁷

No building permit shall be issued for any construction, enlargement, alteration, or repair, demolition or moving of any building or structure on any lot or parcel until all the requirements of this article have been fully met.

Sec. 12-1269. Violation and penalties.³⁴⁸

Any person who violated any of the provisions of this article, or who sells, or offers for sale any lot, block or tract of land herewith regulated before all the requirements of this article have been complied with shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof be subject to fine and/or imprisonment. Each day that a violation is permitted to exist shall constitute a separate offense.

Sec. 12-1270. Park and open space dedication.³⁴⁹

- A. *Purpose.* The City Council recognizes that it is essential to the health, safety, and the welfare of the residents of this City to provide for the preservation of land for parks, playgrounds, public open space, and trails. The City Council also finds that it is appropriate that each subdivision within the City contribute toward the City's parks, playgrounds, open spaces, and trails in proportion to the burden it will place upon the City's park and open space system. Therefore, this park and open space dedication requirement is established to require new developments at the time of subdivision to contribute toward the City's park and open space system in rough proportion to the relative burden they will place upon that system, and:
1. To develop a limited number of major public green spaces which shall retain the natural and scenic features of the land and serve as a wilderness environment for City residents to enjoy; and
 2. To create multiple use, non-motorized trails along roads or as a link between various points of interest and public facilities where such trails would enhance the recreational opportunities for residents and provide a safe alternative means of travel within the City; and
 3. If future development creates a need for a neighborhood park, land may be acquired for that purpose pursuant to this article.
- B. *Requirements.* Subdividers, as a prerequisite to approval of a subdivision, shall dedicate to the City for park or playground purposes or for public open space or trail systems a reasonable portion of the land being subdivided or in lieu thereof a cash equivalent. The form of dedication, land or cash, (or any combination) shall be decided by the City and dedicated or paid prior to City signing the final plat, or prior to final City Council approval of minor subdivisions.

³⁴⁶ Code 1982, § 305.1011

³⁴⁷ Code 1982, § 305.1100, **Cross reference(s)**--Building permits, inspections and fees, § 12-1804.

³⁴⁸ Code 1982, § 305.1102

³⁴⁹ Ord 47-2004, 8/17/2004

LAND USE

1. Reasonable portion of land shall be that portion of land which could be purchased with the amount of park dedication fee payment owed by the subject subdivision on a per dwelling unit basis.
 2. Land to be dedicated shall be reasonably adaptable to use for active park and recreation purposes, shall be at a location convenient to the people to be served, and shall be consistent with the general locations as indicated in the official parks map and/or comprehensive parks plan. Factors used in evaluating the adequacy of proposed park and recreation areas shall include size, shape, topography, geology, hydrology, tree cover, access and location.
 3. Where a proposed park, playground, recreational area, or open space that has been indicated in the official park map and/or comprehensive park plan is located in whole, or in part, within a proposed subdivision the site must be dedicated to the City. If the subdivider chooses not to dedicate an area in excess of the land required hereunder for such proposed public site, the City shall not be required to act to approve or disapprove the preliminary plat of the subdivision for a period of sixty (60) days after the subdivider meets all the provisions of the Subdivision Ordinance in order to permit the Council to consider the proposed plat and to consider taking steps to acquire, through purchase or condemnation, all or part of the public site proposed under the official park map in the comprehensive parks plan.
 4. Land area conveyed or dedicated hereunder may not be included by a subdivider as an allowance for purposes of calculating the density requirements of the subdivision as set out in the City Zoning Ordinance and shall be in addition to and not in lieu of scenic easement, conservation easements, and open space requirements pursuant to the City Zoning Ordinance.
 5. The City may determine that land not distinguished in its official parks map and/or comprehensive parks plan is needed as a neighborhood park. Should this determination be made, an amendment to the official parks map and/or comprehensive parks plan shall be made identifying the neighborhood park. Should the City determine that land in excess of what can be obtained via Section 12-1270 (B) (1) is required, the remaining area shall be purchased from the applicant by the City via its park and trail fund at a fair market value.
 6. When a cash park dedication fee is paid in lieu of a dedication of land, the subdivider shall pay a per dwelling unit fee as described in Section 12-1270 (C) (3) and (D).
 7. The City shall maintain a separate fund into which all cash park dedication fees received from owners or subdividers in lieu of conveyance or dedication of land for park or playground, public open space or trail purposes shall be deposited and shall make, from time to time, appropriations from such fund for acquisition of land for park and playground purposes, for developing existing park and playground sites, for public open space and trails, or for debt retirement in connection with land previously acquired for parks and playgrounds, which will benefit the residents of the City.
- C. *Administrative Procedure.* When an application for subdivision is submitted, the City Administrator and City Planner shall evaluate its location with that of the official parks map and the comprehensive parks plan to determine whether land is to be recommended for dedication.
1. Should the subject site be located within an area designated for future parkland, open space, or trail corridor, as designated in the official parks map and comprehensive parks plan, the City Administrator and City Planner shall submit the proposed subdivision to the Park Committee for its review and recommendation.
 2. The Park Committee shall make a determination as to what portion or portions of the site may be dedicated to the City for parkland, open space, or trail use as described in the official park map in the City's Comprehensive Park plan. The subdivider shall be made aware of this recommendation which will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for their review and recommendation to the City Council.
 3. Should the subject site be outside of any future proposed parkland, open space, trail or wildlife corridors, or wildlife habitat areas as defined in the official park map and the comprehensive park plan, the City Administrator shall inform the subdivider and the process will continue with the recommendation for a cash park dedication fee in lieu of land dedication in a per dwelling unit amount as defined in Section 12-1270 (D).
 4. Though the subject site may not be located in an area identified for future parkland, open space, trail or wildlife corridor, or wildlife habitat area in the official park map and comprehensive park plan, the Planning Commission may recommend and the City Council may require that a reasonable portion of the land be dedicated to the City, at which time the subdivision will be sent to the Parks Committee for their review and recommendation as to the sites location. Reasonable portion of the land shall be defined as that portion of land in which could be purchased with the amount of park dedication fee payment owed by the subject subdivision per dwelling unit being proposed.

AFTON CODE

- D. *Cash Park Dedication Fee.* The cash park dedication fee in lieu of land dedication shall be equivalent to 7.5 percent of the predevelopment value of the land to be subdivided, subject to a minimum fee of \$5,000 per dwelling unit and a maximum fee of \$10,000 per dwelling unit, such fee to be reviewed on an annual basis, with adjustments based on the CPI-U and adopted with the City's fee schedule. The cash park dedication fee shall be calculated based on the impact of new dwelling units and the demand they will place on the City's park system.³⁵⁰
- E. *Payment of cash park dedication fees.* Cash park dedication fees are to be established at the time of preliminary plat approval or in the case of minor subdivisions are to be established and paid prior to final Council approval. The Council may approve payment at a later time under terms agreed upon in the development agreement. Delayed payment may include interest at a rate set by the City.
- F. *Deposit of cash park dedication fees.* Cash park dedication fees shall be deposited by the City directly in the City's restricted Park, Open Space & Natural Resources Fund and shall be used only for purposes authorized by state law. Cash payments may not be used for ongoing "operation or maintenance," in accordance with Minnesota Stat. Sec. 462.35 and 471.1941.³⁵¹
- G. *Land Dedication.* When land is dedicated and deeded to the City for park purposes, it shall be the responsibility of the City to maintain such dedicated property.
- H. *Lot and block number required.* Land dedication to the City shall be in the form of lots with approved lot and block number.
- I. *Right to Challenge.* If the applicant or developer does not believe that the estimates contained in this section fairly and accurately represent the effect of the subdivision on the park or trail system of the City, the applicant or developer may request that the City prepare an in-depth study of the effect of the subdivision on the park and trail system and an estimate of that effect in money and/or land. All costs of such study shall be borne by the developer or applicant. If the developer or applicant request the preparation of such a study, the request must be made at the time the development application is submitted. No application for development that is submitted shall be deemed complete until the requested study has been completed and a determination is made as to the appropriate amount of land or money necessary to offset the effect of the subdivision.

Sec. 12-1271. Conflicting provisions.³⁵²

In the event of conflicting provisions in the text of this article or between this article and other City ordinances, the more restrictive shall apply.

Secs. 12-1272.--12-1325. Reserved.

DIVISION 2. PLATTING PROCEDURE

Sec. 12-1326. Sketch plan.³⁵³

- A. Written consent for subdivision from the legal owner of the property to be subdivided is required before the sketch plan is submitted. In order to ensure that applicants are informed of the procedural requirements and standards of this article, the requirements or limitations imposed by City ordinances and the comprehensive plan, applicants should meet with the planning staff and prepare a sketch plan prior to preparing a preliminary plat. Prospective subdividers shall deposit with the City funds to cover anticipated costs in an amount determined by the City Administrator. The prospective subdivider shall also furnish a list of property owners within 500 feet of the property to be developed.

³⁵⁰ Ord 04-2012, § 12-1270, 10/16/2012

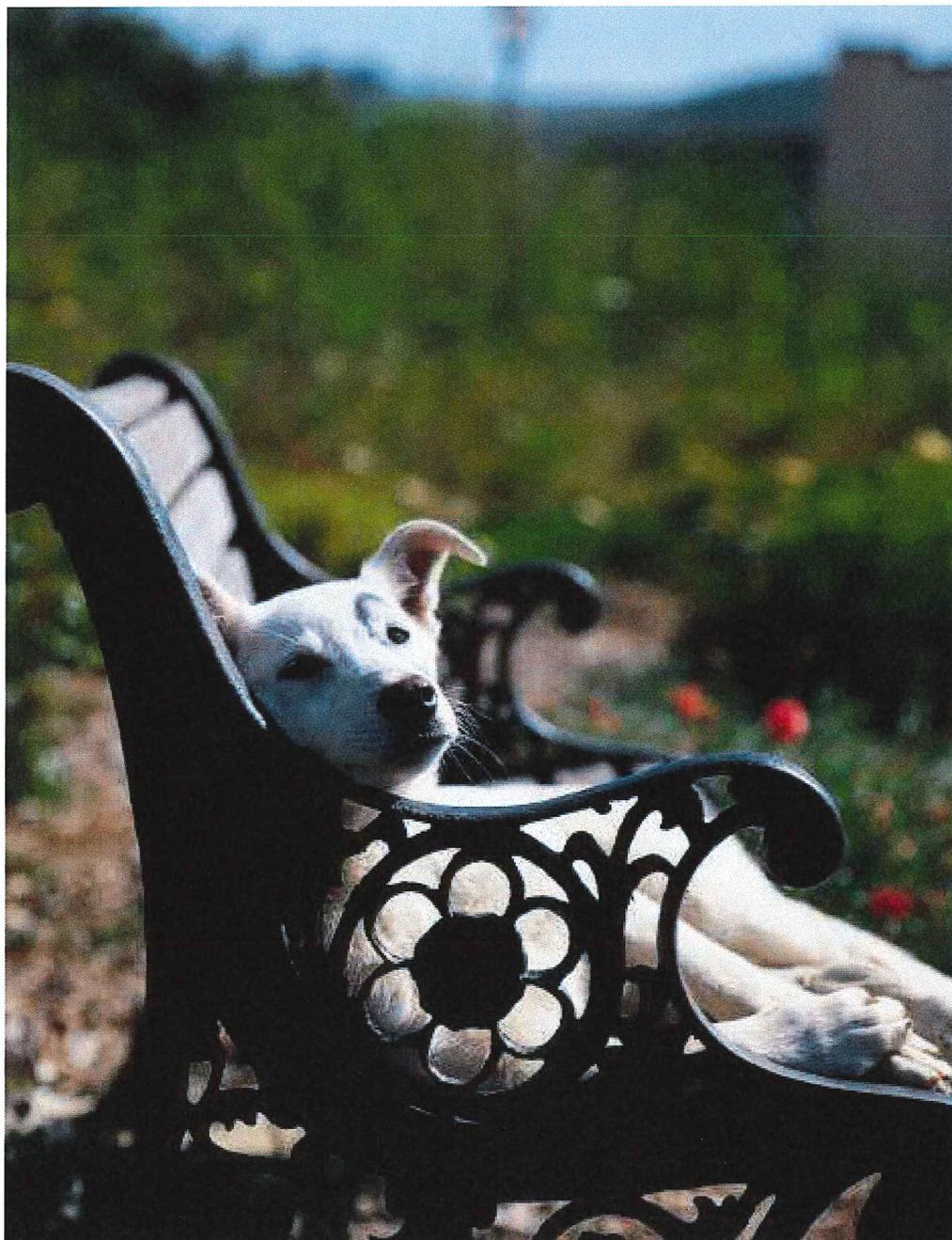
³⁵¹ Ord 13-2005, 9/20/2005

³⁵² Code 1982, § 304.401(04)

³⁵³ Code 1982, § 305.501; Res 1997-16, § 20, 6-17-97, Ord 1997-5, 3-17-98

CITY OF
AFTON

2012 PARK PLAN



Revised 2/5/2013

December 2012

*Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.*



2012 Afton Parks Plan

Planning Commission review 1/7/2013
Public Hearing scheduled 2/4/2013
Edit to Pop chart, p.10 2/5/2013
City Council meeting 2/19/2013

2011-2012 PARK COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bill Palmquist, Council Member Ward 1

Randy Nelson, Council Member Ward 4

Ken Johnson, Afton Public Works Supervisor

Bonnie-Lee Blackley

Julianne Berg

Darcy Cernohous

Steve Dorgan

Nathan Shaw

Karen Weiss

Sara Irvine, City Administrator (2011)

Ron Moore, City Administrator (2012)

CITY OF AFTON, MINNESOTA

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AFTON PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

1. 2012 SUMMARY:

In preparation for this update to Afton's Park Plan, the Park Committee met monthly for one year to review the existing plan and to tour each of the listed parks. In discussions, it became clear that, historically, the city had accepted marginal land from developers in lieu of paying the park dedication fee. Due to this fact, the committee feels that most parcels the city owns are not suitable for development as parks, either active or passive, and as a whole do not meet the intention of the Park Dedication requirement. The exceptions to these findings are noted below. For this reason the committee recommends the city very carefully consider accepting land donations in the future, and have a clear and defined use for any land received in lieu of park dedication funds. Areas of the city where land donations would be encouraged are the western edge of the city along Manning Avenue and the southwest area of the city. Currently no city parkland is located in either of these areas. Per the 2008 Comprehensive Plan, a priority for the acceptance of land in lieu of Park Dedication funds should be to obtain designated open spaces to provide for wildlife corridors, as well as to protect locally important water resources and scenic and natural features.

The committee attempted to view city property as it related to planned trail expansion by other government agencies or potential trail construction by the city and found little ability to map out a way to use many of these parcels as part of a larger trail system. The committee did identify three additional trail routes to those already part of the trail plan. These trail routes would be off road trails and serve to connect with existing and planned trails or access to locally significant natural resources. Adding these routes would allow Afton residents access to an expansive system of trails throughout the city and neighboring communities. These routes would be located along Manning Avenue, Hudson Road/Industrial Boulevard, 50th Street and Old Putnam Road.

The Park Committee recommends the city use available Park Dedication funds to mark the city's existing parks with signage as "Afton City Park Land," noting that the parcel is "permanently protected as open space" and marking the corners of each parcel to indicate where the public space ends and private property begins. These signs should also include a map of the parcel to assist any residents who enter the park to remain within the park

boundary. One sign is recommended at the following locations: Steamboat Park, Meadow Ridge Park, Aftonwood Park and Rinta Park. Two signs are recommended for Remus Park. This process could begin immediately. The committee believes most residents are unaware that the city owns these park areas, therefore it recommends making an announcement in the city newsletter that park locations have been marked.

The Park Committee also felt that the city should consider marking historical sites within the city. Although not included as part of the Park Plan the committee felt that some of these sites are of regional significance and should be noted as an addendum to this plan. An effort should be made to coordinate with the Afton Historical Society to create the appropriate text for the signage of these historic sites and the city should work with private landowners to gauge their interest in participating and having their buildings or land included in this effort. For sites within existing city parks this process could start immediately.

In all areas, and as resources permit, the city should work to reduce the negative impact of invasive species, most notably buckthorn in our parks. Although not a named park in this plan, special attention should be paid to the public land on which Mount Hope Cemetery is located, as the presence of buckthorn there is seriously threatening the survival of that historic site.

Of the parcels noted in this plan, three stood out as having potential to meet the intent of the park dedication process in providing residents with public open spaces; they are:

1. Meadow Ridge - This park is the second largest park in the city at 10.4 acres. The committee recommends development of this park to include off street parking, adding walking trails and benches.
2. Remus - This park is restricted to passive uses until 2026. The committee felt the city could work with the neighborhood to see if adding park benches along the current trail would be desirable.
3. Rinta - This park is the location for a community garden initiative begun in the fall of 2012 with first planting scheduled for the spring of 2013.

2. **INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE:**

This plan has been prepared by the Afton Parks Committee and incorporates the goals and policies of past plans, the 2008 Afton Comprehensive Plan, the Washington County 2005 Master Plan for the St. Croix Valley Trail, the Green Corridor Project, and the Metropolitan Council 2030 Regional Parks Policy. The preservation of appropriate recreational and scenic areas, natural resources, wildlife habitat and unique landforms is a vital responsibility for all sectors of government. This obligation becomes increasingly apparent as the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area expands outwards and reduces open space.

Recreational needs are not limited to any age group. Recreational needs and desires are constantly changing. New interests create a demand for new facilities that will satisfy the needs of the community. The challenge is to provide a system, which satisfies a broad range of both passive and active recreational needs for all age participants.

Open space is defined as public land owned by the city and/or private land leased by the city for use by the general public. Open space can be used as a buffer between uses, a connector of recreational facilities or simply a natural area, which is preserved for its resources, landforms, wildlife habitat or aesthetic value. Open space can be a visual entity as well as a physical entity. Such an area need not be a vast expanse of land to be considered open space. A narrow strip of land, in some cases, can afford the visual effect of openness, while acting as a physical connector. Scenic roadways, trails and bicycle paths, although not extremely wide, can supply visual open space and act as linkage between recreational areas, thus providing the active aspect of recreation, while at the same time providing the passive form - open space.

Afton's approach toward building a parks, recreation and open space system is to evaluate open space for its recreational and scenic values, natural resources, wildlife habitat and unique landforms, and to coordinate acquisition and development. The plan is intended to chart a course and provide a framework for developing and maintaining the Afton Park system. The Plan will also serve as a guide for city commissioners, the City Council and the citizens of Afton. Afton will coordinate its planning efforts with other governmental units, foundations, agencies and individuals that plan or provide recreational or open space affecting Afton.

3. DEFINITIONS:

A. Belwin Conservancy - Foundation for Nature Conservancy and Land Preservation and a Minnesota non-profit organization.

B. Community Park - Serves community-wide active and passive recreation needs as well as preserving unique landscapes and open space. Active uses include ball fields, courts, informal play space, skating, play equipment etc. Passive use includes trails, picnicking, and nature study gardens.

C. Conservancy Park - Park that has unusual topography, flood plain, shore line, fragile soils, wetland, unique soil or rock formations, ravines. Serves limited passive use, trails, plant and animal viewing, interpretation, areas, canoe landings, swimming areas, picnicking.

D. Neighborhood Park - Serves active, passive and social uses for those living within 1/2 mile of the park (neighborhood walking distance). Active park uses are informal and include, for example, pick-up baseball, soccer, and playing catch.

E. Open Space Park - Open space can be thought of as a divider of uses, a connector to active or passive recreation or simply a natural area that is preserved for its aesthetic, natural or scenic value. It also may be parkland the city has acquired in the past and elected not to develop.

F. Recreation - Any form of play, amusement or diversion used for refreshment of body and mind.

G. SCVAP - St. Croix Valley Athletic Partnership. SCVAP is a volunteer athletic association and a Minnesota non-profit corporation.

H. State Park - Land owned by the State for nature-oriented recreation.

I. Trail – Trails may have a variety of topping materials including pavement, gravel, woodchips, dirt or grass. Serves non-motorized travel, walking, bicycling, horseback riding, roller-blading, roller-skiing, jogging.

4. CURRENT STATISTICS:

Afton encompasses 25.6 square miles. It is bounded on the north by Interstate Highway 94, on the west by Manning Avenue (MN Highway 95) and on the south by 60th Street South. The east boundary is the St. Croix River, with approximately three miles of shoreline, and the neighboring communities of St. Mary’s Point, Lake St. Croix Beach, Lakeland Shores and Lakeland. Manning and Neal Avenues and County Road 21 run from the north to the south boundaries of the city, while 40th Avenue South (also known as Afton Boulevard South) runs from the western border at Manning Avenue to Afton’s Historic Old Village on the St. Croix River.

Of the total 16,866 acres that comprise Afton, approximately 53.44 acres are currently designated as city parkland available for public use. An additional 820 acres are held in a natural state by the Minnesota Land Trust and is quasi-public. Afton State Park totals 1,500 acres, of which, 787 acres fall within the city limits of Afton.

Per the Metropolitan Council System Statement for Afton, the population is projected to reach 3,650 in the year 2020. Only modest population increases are projected due to Afton's desire to preserve its 1/10 density ratio, its abundance of agricultural and unbuildable land and its 5-acre minimum lot size. The current population is 2,886 (2010 census). The median age in Afton is 48.2 years. The population is divided by age as follows:

2010 Census - Population by Age			
Under 5	5-19	20-64	65 & Over
3.95%	19.72%	62.32%	14%

5. SURVEY RESULTS

The City of Afton conducted a resident survey in 1997 and those responding considered "the abundance of open space" as the #2 reason for living in Afton.

In the "General Priorities" section of the 1997 survey the question asked was, "what topics should the city focus its efforts and funds on during the next ten years." There were eight topics, of which three were parks related:

1. "Improve active parks and recreation (ball fields, skating, play areas)." Results were: 26% Yes, 45% No, 29% No Opinion.
2. "Increase passive park and recreation (picnics, nature study, hiking, & open spaces, wildlife areas, conservation preserves)." Results were: 47% Yes, 32% No, 21% No Opinion.
3. "Establish non-motorized trails (walking, biking, skating, and skiing)." Results were: 50% Yes, 30% No, 19% No Opinion.

Priority for land acquisition may change between "active" and "passive" recreation or land preserves and is dependent upon land availability, land cost and direction from the residents of Afton.

Surveys are an important tool to determine direction from residents. Washington County's 2008 resident survey rated parks, trails and open space as the highest rated County characteristic. Their ratings of these natural amenities were above the national norm for other counties, where comparisons were available.

6. TOPOGRAPHY AND LAND USE:

North: The northern portion contains rural residential, agriculture, ponds, wetlands, streams and a lake. A small industrial area is situated along the I-94 frontage road.

East: The eastern portion of Afton consists largely of bluffs crossed by many deep ravines leading to the St. Croix River, river shoreline, heavily wooded slopes, and many wooded lots and areas of rock outcroppings. The Old Village and commercial area is located here.

West: The westerly portion is a plateau, gently rolling with scattered rock outcroppings, and slopes to the St. Croix River. This area is primarily agriculture with some rural residential.

South: The southerly portion of Afton is mostly agricultural with some rural residential. The land is gentle rolling except for the southeast corner, which is hilly and wooded and contains several oak-covered ravines. The southeast corner of Afton also includes a large portion of Afton State Park.

7. PARK INVENTORY

The following pages of the Park Plan are intended to provide an inventory of existing Parks and Recreation Facilities of Afton. The data / classification sheets highlight the existing facilities and briefly describe each City park. It also provides data on proposed improvements and related estimated costs, if available.

A. TOWN SQUARE PARK

TYPE: Neighborhood Park

LOCATION: Old Village, bordered by 34th St. on the north and Upper 34th on the south sides. The east boundary is St. Croix Trail and the west border is Perrot Avenue.

SIZE: 2 acres

DESCRIPTION: Small centrally located park with large oak trees and considered a focal point for Afton community activities.

FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:

<u>PASSIVE</u>	<u>ACTIVE</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
Picnic tables	Ball field	Parking
	Basketball court	Restroom
	Children's Play Equipment	Bleachers
	Ice skating rink	Water fountain
		Picnic shelter
		Grills

ON-GOING IMPROVEMENTS:

Landscaping	\$1,000
Replacement and upkeep	\$2,000
<u>Picnic tables, benches</u>	<u>\$2,000</u>
	\$5,000 / year

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Re-Roof Picnic Shelter \$4,000
2. Handicapped Accessible toilet facility 2012 grant application
3. Coordinate the development of a master plan that would address current and future proposed improvements to Town Square Park, such as a new toilet facility, creation of a focal point and replacement of the chain link fence. The plan should be developed in coordination with the Steamboat Park and the Main Street improvements slated for 2015. The Parks Committee will work to coordinate donated design services for this strategy.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT COSTS: No Estimate

B. STEAMBOAT PARK

TYPE: Conservancy Park

LOCATION: This park is located on the south end of the Old Village. The west boundary is the flood control dike and bicycle path, bordered by 34th Street on the north and River Road to the south. East boundary is the St. Croix River.

SIZE: 27 Acres

DESCRIPTION: Flood plain with shoreline on the St Croix River, a spring fed pond is located in the middle of park, mature maple, oak and cottonwood trees are found throughout the park. Due to annual spring flooding to a good portion of the park, park improvement selections are limited.

FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:

<u>PASSIVE</u>	<u>ACTIVE</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
Walking Path	Swimming Bike Trail	Nature interpretation

ON-GOING IMPROVEMENTS:

Landscaping	\$2,000
<u>Park Boundary Signs</u>	<u>\$ 500</u>
	\$2,500 / year

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Coordinate development of the new parkland created by property acquisitions and the redirection of Kelle's Creek with planned improvements in Town Square Park and the Main Street improvements slated for 2015. The Parks Committee will work to coordinate donated design services for this strategy.
2. Flood plain trail; signage of unique flora/fauna to provide educational interpretation of flood plain ecosystem.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT COSTS: No Estimate

C. MEADOW RIDGE

TYPE: Neighborhood Park

LOCATION: Meadow Ridge neighborhood off of 40th Street (Afton Boulevard / County Road 18), north on Oakgreen at the intersection of Meadow Ridge Drive and Nybeck Avenue.

SIZE: 10.4 acres

DESCRIPTION: The Park consists of two adjoining parcels. The northern parcel has many trees and bushes on medium sloping terrain to the northeast. The southern parcel has a few trees and bushes on gently sloping terrain to the northeast. A residential power line runs between the two parcels. Adjacent land to the northeast is zoned Rural Residential and may someday be subdivided adding to the size and scope for this park.

FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:

<u>PASSIVE</u>	<u>ACTIVE</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
Open Space	None	None

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Off-street parking, walking paths with benches.
2. Milkweed plants for Butterfly garden.
3. Birdhouses for bird watching.
4. Woodchip Path for trail use.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT COSTS:

Park Boundary Signs	\$500
Landscaping	\$3,000
Benches	\$2,000
<u>Off-street Parking</u>	<u>\$5,000</u>
	\$10,500

D. COLLIN GREEN

TYPE: Open Space Park

LOCATION: Collin Green Addition, northwest end of subdivision, south of 42nd Street, east of Trading Post Trail.

SIZE: 2.8 Acres

DESCRIPTION: A narrow "T" shaped parcel with one leg only 10 feet wide. The property has some trees. It must be entered by 42nd Street right-of-way. The original plan included a corridor going east to west through Afton. That plan was not implemented by the city as developments progressed over the years. Adjacent parcels have been developed.

FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:

<u>PASSIVE</u>	<u>ACTIVE</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
Open Space	None	None

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS: None

E. AFTONWOOD

TYPE: Trail

LOCATION: Aftonwood neighborhood, east of Trading Post Trail on Osgood Avenue between 55th and 57th Streets.

SIZE: 7.7 Acres

DESCRIPTION: Wooded parcel, gently to steeply sloping, contains a ravine running northwest to southeast. Aftonwood Park connects Osgood Avenue to the westerly side of the St. Croix Trail (County Road 21) right-of-way, north of Trout Brook Bridge.

FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:

<u>PASSIVE</u>	<u>ACTIVE</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
Open Space	None Trail-hiking	None

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Possible location for a non paved hiking/biking trail from Trading Post Trail thru 57th Street thru Aftonwood Park to St. Croix Trail and into Afton State Park.
2. Expected completion: indefinite. A study is needed to determine if soils and topography would support a trail.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT COSTS:

Park Boundary Signs	\$500
Feasibility study	\$4,000 (Grant funding proposed)
Trail	\$25,000
	<hr/>
	\$25,500

F. REMUS

TYPE: Trail

LOCATION: Remus Addition, located east of St. Croix Trail South (County Road 21) between 45th and 50th Streets.

SIZE: 5 acres

DESCRIPTION: Open land with some trees on gently sloping land. A 75-foot wide pipeline easement runs east west through the center of the park. A large drainage easement is situated in the southern 1/3 of the park. A gravel trail runs north and south through the middle of the park and connects the cul-de-sacs of Parsons Court South and Pheasant Court South. The trail is used for walking, biking and horse riding. This trail can be a future connector between the existing trail south, out of Steamboat Park, and into the north side of Afton State Park.

FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:

<u>PASSIVE</u>	<u>ACTIVE</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
Open Space	Walking/jogging Horse back riding Biking	None

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:

No active improvements until 2026, however the city should work with the neighbors to discuss possible additions of park benches along trail.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT COSTS:

Park Boundary Signs	\$500
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G. RINTA

TYPE: Neighborhood Park

LOCATION: Rinta Addition, south side of (Hudson Road) Hwy I-94 Frontage Road, east of Neal Avenue and west of Stagecoach Trail.

SIZE: 3.25 Acres

DESCRIPTION: Low to medium sloping property, west to east, adjoining frontage road that has high-speed traffic present. There are high voltage power lines going east/west through the park and a drainage easement going north /south at the northeast end of the park. The park is adjacent to the north end of Belwin Conservancy (Old Science Museum property).

FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:

<u>PASSIVE</u>	<u>ACTIVE</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
Open Space	None	None

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Current site of 2013 community garden initiative from a grant received from the Lower St. Croix Valley Community Foundation.
2. Addition of wood chip path, planting of milkweed plants for butterfly garden, birdhouses for bird watching. (Could be eligible for Eagle Scout projects.)
3. Possible location for covered picnic bench currently located on city levee as it will have to be removed.
4. Addition of gutters and rain barrels to picnic table roof to collect rain water for garden use. (Could be funded by donations from the Park Donation Program.)

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT COSTS:

Park Boundary Signs	\$500
Rain Barrels (2)	\$140
Gutters for Covered Picnic Bench	\$100
<u>Composting Station</u>	<u>Grant funding (proposed)</u>
	\$740

H. LUCY WINTON-BELL ATHLETIC FIELDS

TYPE: Multi-City Community Active Recreation Park

LOCATION: Located south of I-94 frontage road and a 1/4 mile south of Stagecoach Trail in West Lakeland Township. South border of park adjoins the north border of Afton at Division Street.

SIZE: 80 acres

DESCRIPTION: This park was proposed by the St. Croix Valley Athletic Partnership (a non-profit corporation) with the support and cooperation of the surrounding five cities in the Valley and the Belwin Conservancy (property owner). This park addresses the need for a large complex to conduct organized youth sports. The northern portion of the park (50 acres) consist of soccer, softball, football fields and a concession/maintenance building. The southern portion of the park (30 acres) will be a nature park with hiking trails. The Belwin Conservancy has purchased an additional 69 acres adjoining the complex on the east-side of the property. Improvements to this park were completed as scheduled.

FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:

<u>PASSIVE</u>	<u>ACTIVE</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
Picnic tables	Softball field	Parking
	Soccer	Restroom
	Football	Bleachers
	Hiking trails	Concessions
		Water fountain
		Nature Interpretation

8. TRAILS

The Afton Comprehensive Plan Parks and Open Space Map calls for trails along Hudson Road South, Stagecoach Trail, 40th Street/County 18, Trading Post Trail and St. Croix Trail. Other roadways in Afton are popular biking trails and should be marked with “Share the Road” signs.

There are two existing trails not on a shoulder of a roadway. One is the Afton-Lakeland paved Bike Path along the east side of St. Croix Trail from Hudson Road south to City Hall then to Steamboat Park. The second is a short gravel trail in the Remus Addition located east of St. Croix Trail between South 45th and South 50th Streets South.

A new public access trail is planned for the Cedar Bluff Development at Manning Avenue and 22nd Street. This trail is planned as a minimal impact trail, such as dirt, woodchips or lime rock and will be completed by the Developer.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:

ESTIMATED COSTS:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Afton-Lakeland Bike Path Bridge re-decking (2013) | \$25,000 |
| 2. Afton River Walk | TBD |
| a. Dependant on construction of levee and limitations imposed by Corps of Engineers. | |
| 3. Trail Route Signage-City wide: Estimated # signs (40) | \$2,500 |
| 4. “Share the Road” signs-along roadway: Est # signs (25) | \$1,500 |
| 5. Proposed trail routes along: | No cost estimates |
| a. Manning Avenue | |
| b. 50th Street | |
| c. Old Putnam Road | |

9. **FUTURE CONSERVANCY PARK**

The 2008 Afton Comprehensive Plan highlights several areas for preservation and protection. These areas are creeks, coulees and mounds.

Bissel Mounds is good candidate to start the process to establish a conservancy park. Bissel Mounds are several large hills found in the northwest section of Afton. The Mounds are all held in private ownership. The mounds (erosional outliers) are unique to Washington County and are a recognized landmark to the city. Due to the unusual formation of the mounds and topography there is an interest in preserving and protecting the mounds. One avenue to preservation is to obtain the property and designate it as a Conservancy Park. Any facilities or activities would be passive.

The reality of this park is totally dependent upon availability of the property and an acceptable purchase price. The owners have met with the Afton City Administrator and were interested in subdividing the property, but because of the Mounds a Minor Subdivision was not feasible.

SIZE: 5 to 10 acres

EXPECTED COMPLETION: If the City decides to purchase any of this property it should do so within 5 years, before land prices are unaffordable. The City may want to consider acquiring Conservation Easements over the Mounds as an alternative. They would preserve the Mounds and the vista at a much-reduced cost.

COST: \$120,000 (projected cost estimate based on land prices)

10. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND ACQUISITIONS:

Afton will maintain and annually update or amend a five-year Capital Improvement Program for proposed acquisition, development and maintenance of the parks, recreation and open space system. The program shall be funded through the annual city tax levy, park dedication fees, grants and donations.

The City will continue to work with the public and private non-profit organizations as well as County, State and Federal agencies to secure improvements in Afton. The City will apply for federal and state grants (open or matching) when available. The City will encourage the construction of trails as State Highways, County Roads and City streets are upgraded in order to reduce the cost involved.

The City has shown interest in partnering with the Afton Historical Society, Afton's Heritage Preservation Commission, with Washington County Historical Society and with the Minnesota Historical Society to identify and/or develop sites of historical importance or interest. The Park Committee supports these efforts as another way to draw attention and visitors to Afton.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:

ESTIMATED COSTS:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Historical Site identification and development | \$2,500 |
| • This requires the participation by private property owners. | |
| 2. Mount Hope Cemetery annual maintenance | \$1,500 / year |
| • This has been in cooperation with the Afton Historical Museum and volunteers. | |
| 3. Buckthorn Puller Attachment for city tractor | \$2,000 |

11. **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. Use available Park Dedication funds to mark these public lands with signage as “Afton City Park Land”, noting that the parcel is “permanently protected as open space” and provide survey markers at the corners of each parcel to indicate where the public space ends and private property begins. These signs should also include a map of the parcel to assist any residents who enter the park to remain within the park boundary.
- B. Consider adding historical sites within the city as part of the Park Plan. The City should encourage property owners to participate in having their historical structures or land included.
- C. Coordinate with the Afton Historical Society to create the appropriate text for the signage of historic sites in Afton.
- D. Work to reduce the negative impact of invasive species, most notably buckthorn.
- E. Identify and recommend preservation of open space and wildlife habitat; local historic and cultural features or landmarks; unique, scenic or environmentally sensitive areas.
- F. Recommend park land acquisition at an early date, so that appropriate parcels or sites can be obtained to meet long-range needs before developmental pressures render the property too expensive, especially in the western and southwestern portions of Afton.
- G. Recommend parkland acquisition through collection of park dedication fees in subdivisions, appropriations from the General Fund, donations and government grants.
- H. Plan parks based on input from residents and a needs assessment to develop goals and priorities for acquisition, development and use of parks, open space and recreational facilities. Information about present and future parks and recreational needs will be collected and evaluated on a regular basis. Because recreational needs and practices change over time, a periodic review and update of the Park Plan including these objectives and recommendations will be needed.
- I. Provide a forum for public participation and open discussion of issues to ensure early and continuing public support and participation in park planning.
- J. Cooperate with other governmental units, commissions, foundations, and athletic associations, agencies and individuals that plan or provide recreation or open space affecting Afton.
- K. Develop parks and recreational facilities with respect to existing conditions, natural features, wildlife habitat and environmentally sensitive areas; and provide a variety of facilities. Wherever practical, parks will include open space areas that preserve and protect wetlands, natural habitat diversity, unique landforms and cultural resources that have

recreational potential, scenic and environmentally sensitive areas.

- L. Provide a safe, convenient and coordinated system of trails for non-motorized use throughout the city.
- M. Develop non-motorized trails according to public safety concerns and to be environmentally sensitive. Width, location and surfacing shall be adjusted for the terrain and amount and type of projected trail use, with a preference being for low-maintenance impervious surfaces.
- N. Link trails, where possible, to existing or planned regional, state and adjacent community trails and to connect public open space areas. Mark trail routes where they utilize roadways. Seek private, county, state, and federal funds to develop trails along and parallel to city, county, and state roads.
- O. Coordinate efforts with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to improve fish and wildlife habitat.
- P. Coordinate efforts with the Design Review & Historic Preservation Commission to preserve and enhance locally significant cultural and historic resources.
- Q. Develop a Master Plan for Town Square Park, Steamboat Park and the new parkland acquired as part of the Flood Mitigation Project to have a unified plan of use and design when Main Street is reconstructed.

12. **ADDENDUM: (from the 2008 Afton Comprehensive Plan)**

A. Parks and Open Space Goals, Policies and Strategies

The City of Afton establishes the following parks and open space goals:

1. Preserve adequate amounts of open space to maintain a rural atmosphere (from Afton's 2000 Park Plan).
2. Obtain and maintain designated open spaces to provide for wildlife habitat and migration.
3. Reconnect Afton's historical linkages to the St. Croix River.
4. Provide expanded access to the City docks to all residents.
5. Provide safe areas to ride bicycles within the City.
6. Provide safe areas to ride horses within the City.
7. Provide pedestrian friendly means of enjoying Afton's scenic views, wildlife, and connections to the St. Croix River.
8. Preserve locally important water resources, natural and scenic features.
9. Periodically identify the recreational needs of Afton citizens and evaluate ways to meet them.
10. Consider using the Afton Bluffs Regional Trail to create an east-west connection from Afton's Old Village to the City of Woodbury.

The City of Afton establishes the following parks and open space policies:

1. Preserve open spaces and natural resources for passive use and create non-motorized trails through direct purchase, subdivision, scenic and/or conservation easements and other means to include the seeking of grants and the use of matching funds when they are available, but not the use of eminent domain.
2. Maintain central community places.
3. Maintain safe environments for children to play and for the community to gather.
4. Maintain designated open spaces to provide for wildlife habitat and migration.
5. Work cooperatively with Washington County, the Belwin Conservancy, the Science Museum of Minnesota, and other quasi-public and private entities to preserve sensitive lands and open space.
6. Develop a park plan to provide for the five small parcels obtained by the City through park dedication.

The City of Afton establishes the following parks and open space strategies:

1. Develop signage and pedestrian-friendly connections to the St. Croix River.
2. Protect Steamboat Park as a nature preserve and passive use area.

B. Appendix F - Table of Afton parks and Open Spaces

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES				
NAME	SIZE	OWNER	TYPE	FACILITY
Aftonwood	7.74 acres	City	Open Space	Conservancy with Trail
Collin Green	2.8 acres	City	Open Space	Conservancy with Trail
Meadow Ridge	10.4 acres	City	Neighborhood	Currently Open Space
Remus	5 acres	City	Neighborhood	Passive Uses until 2026 with Trail
Rinta	3.25 acres	City	Neighborhood	Currently Open Space
Steamboat Park	27 acres	City	Community	Minimum development: Trails, picnic, fishing, swimming, non-motorized small craft
Town Square Park	2 acres	City	Neighborhood	Picnic, Basketball, Tennis, Baseball, Volleyball, Playground
CITY SUBTOTAL	53.39 acres	(2 acres developed for active recreation and the remainder undeveloped)		
Afton State Park	787 acres	State	Regional	Trails, Picnics, Swimming
Bowles Mill Monument	.5 acres	State	Historical Site	Monument with small parking lot
STATE SUBTOTAL	787.5 acres	(plus 715 acres of Afton State Park located in Denmark Township to the south, surrounding Afton Alps and Golf Course, a very active recreation area)		
Belwin Conservancy*	1400 acres	Non-Profit	Quasi-Public	Outdoor Educational Center and Land Trust, Private
TOTAL	2240.89 acres	Located within Afton City Limits and about 13% of the total acreage of the City of Afton (2240/16896), with an increase of 28% in acreage since 1990 (predominately quasi-public Land Trust Acquisitions)		

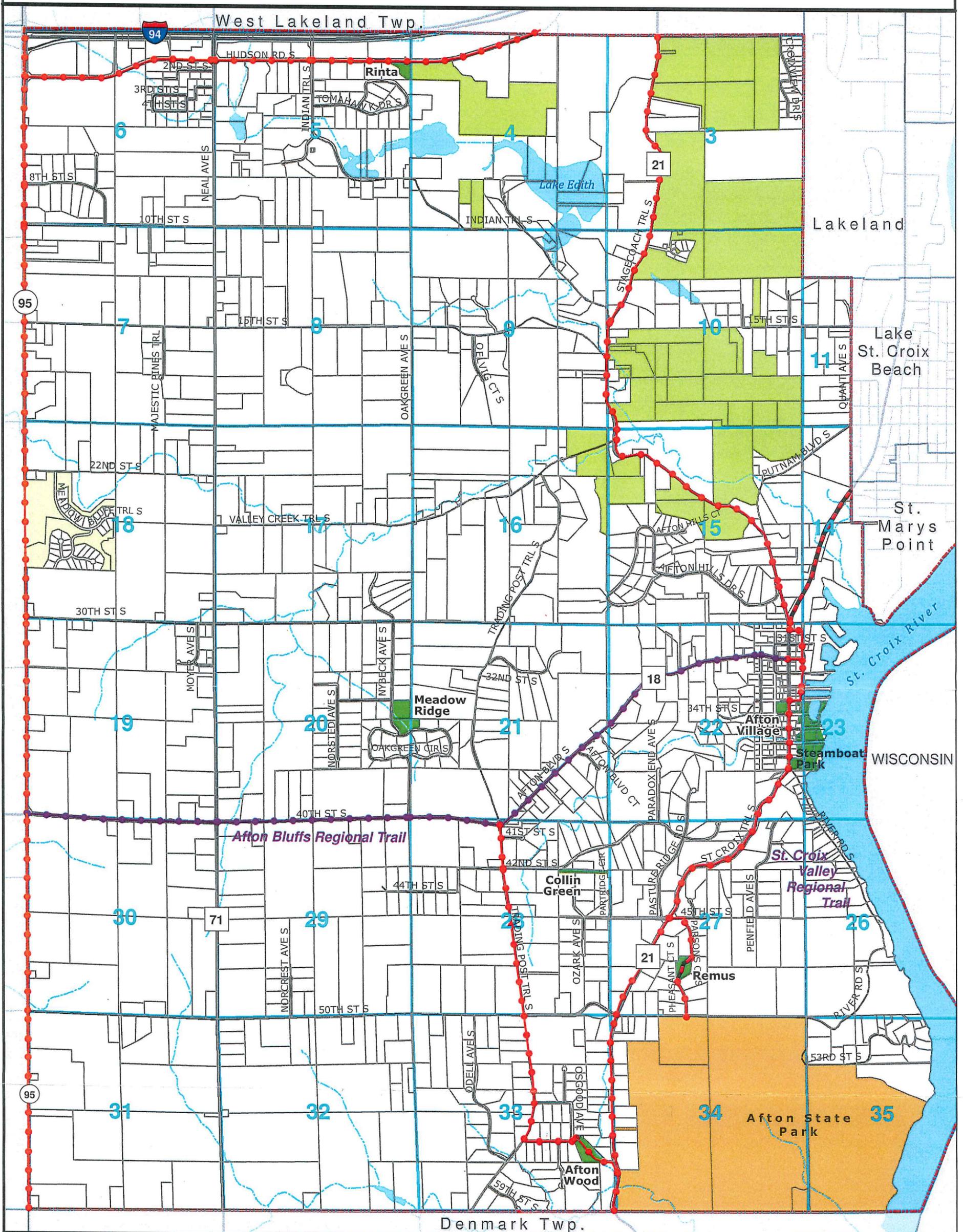
*600 acres are protected by MN Land Trust.

13. ATTACHMENTS:

- Exhibit 1 "Parks and Open Space Plan" – Appendix I-Map 10; 2008 Comp Plan
- Exhibit 2 "Historic Sites" – Appendix I-Map 8; 2008 Comp Plan
- Exhibit 3 Afton "Old Village" Map
- Exhibit 4 Washington County St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Master Plan Map
- Exhibit 5 Washington County Parks & Trails Map
- Exhibit 6 Green Corridor Project Information

Parks and Open Spaces

MAP 10



Trail System

- Existing Trail
- Planned Trail
- Proposed Trail
- Existing City Park & Open Spaces

- Afton State Park
- Belwin Property
- Other Protected Open Spaces
- City of Afton
- Section Lines

Roads

- Major Road
- Local Road
- Lakes & Rivers
- Streams

