

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

Afton City Hall — 3033 St. Croix Trail South — P.O. Box 219

Afton, Minnesota 55001

Phone — 651-436-5090 Fax — 651-436-1453

This page intentionally left blank.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE #</u>
1. 2012 SUMMARY	6
2. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE	8
3. DEFINITIONS	9
4. CURRENT STATISTICS	10
5. SURVEY RESULTS	11
6. TOPOGRAPHY AND LAND USE	12
7. PARK INVENTORY	12
A. Town Square	13
i. Map of Town Square	
B. Steamboat Park	14
i. Map of Steamboat Park	
C. Meadow Ridge	15
i. Map of Meadow Ridge	
D. Collin Green	16
i. Map of Collin Green	
E. Aftonwood	17
i. Map of Aftonwood	
F. Remus	18
i. Map of Remus	
G. Rinta	19
i. Map of Rinta	
H. Lucy Winton-Bell Athletic Fields	20
8. Trails	21
9. Future Conservancy Park	22
10. Capital Improvement Program and Acquisitions	23
11. Summary of Recommendations	24
12. Addendum	26
13. Attachments	28

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

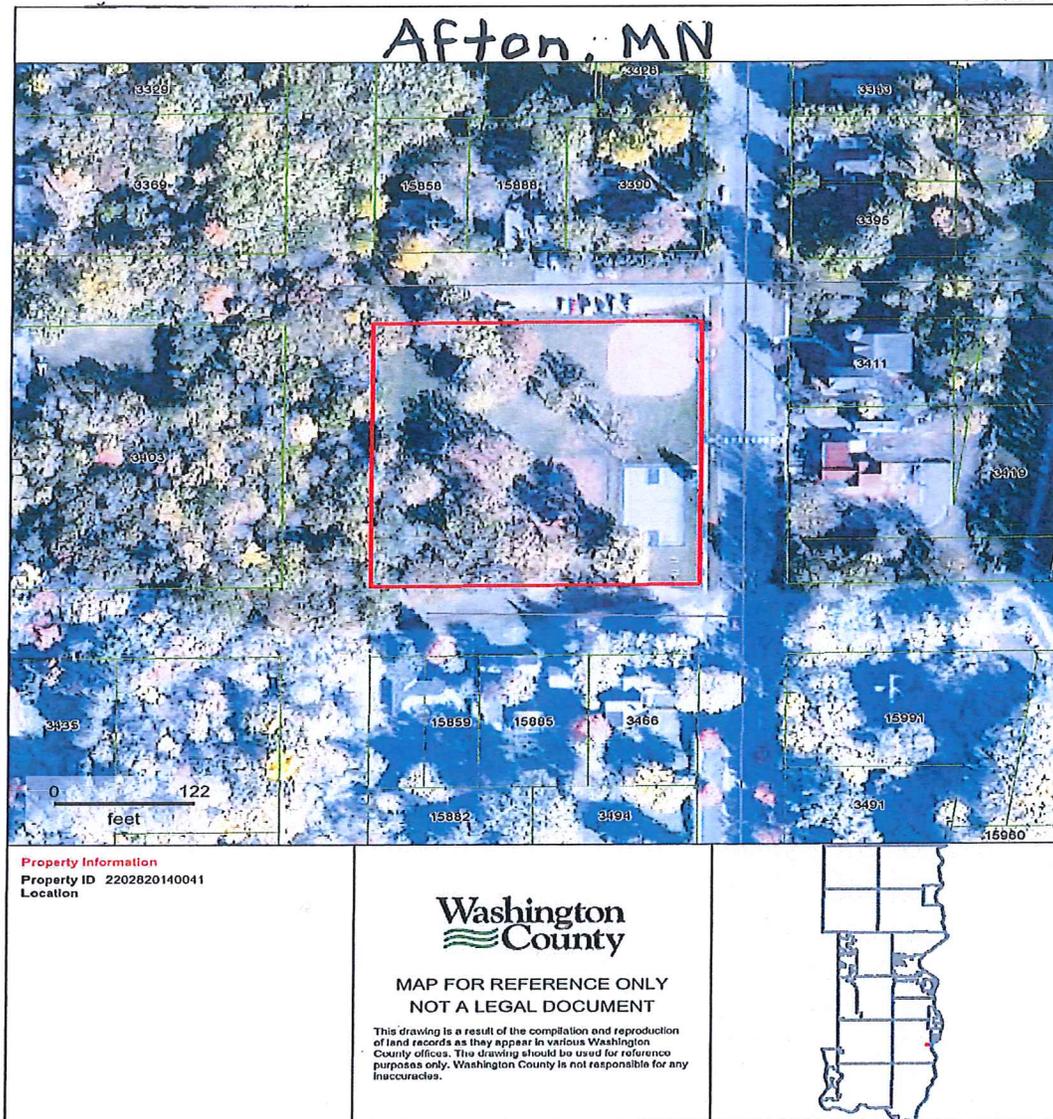
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:

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

TOWN SQUARE PARK

12/7/2011



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

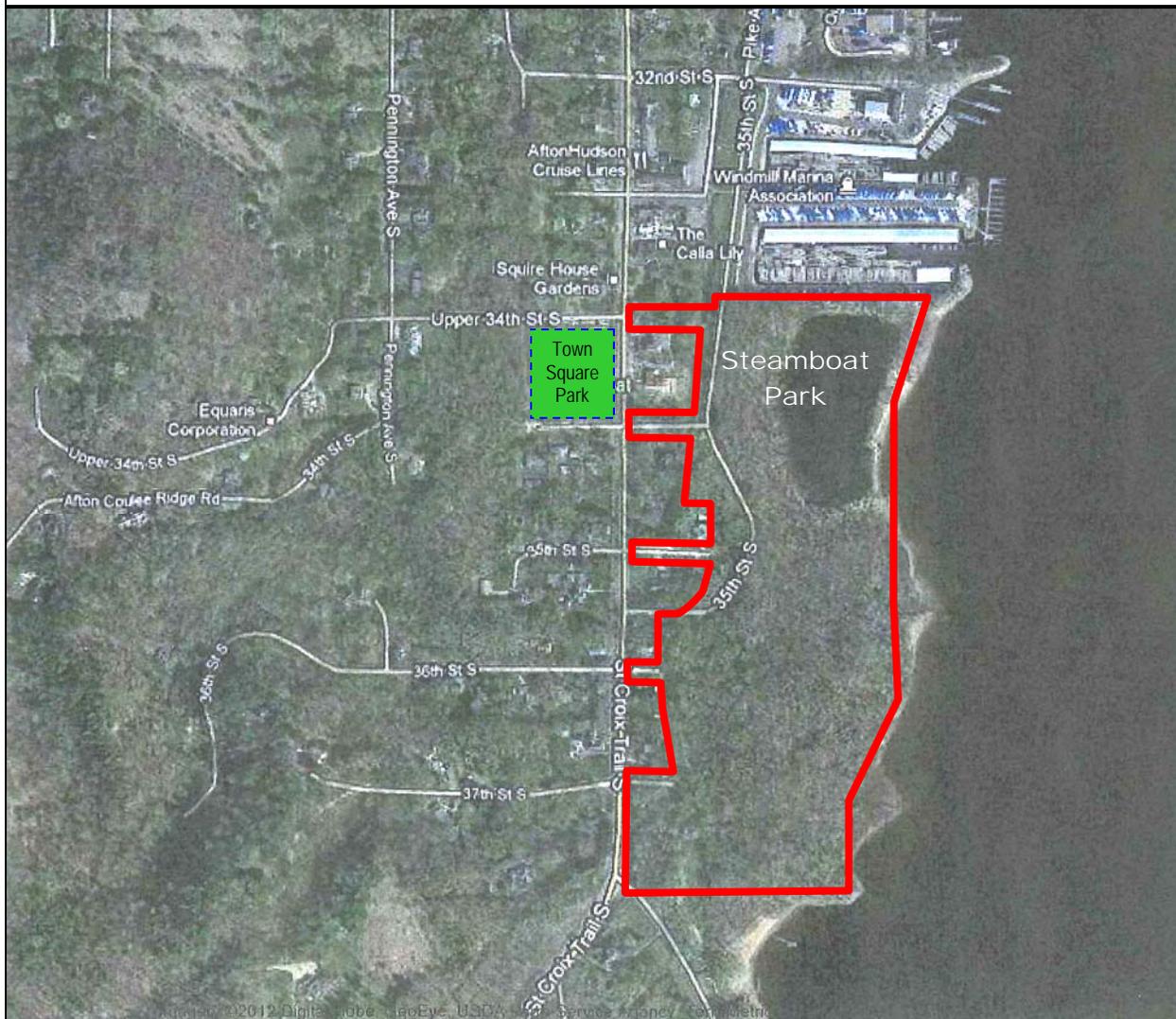
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:

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

STEAMBOAT PARK

Afton, MN



MAP FOR REFERENCE ONLY—NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT

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.

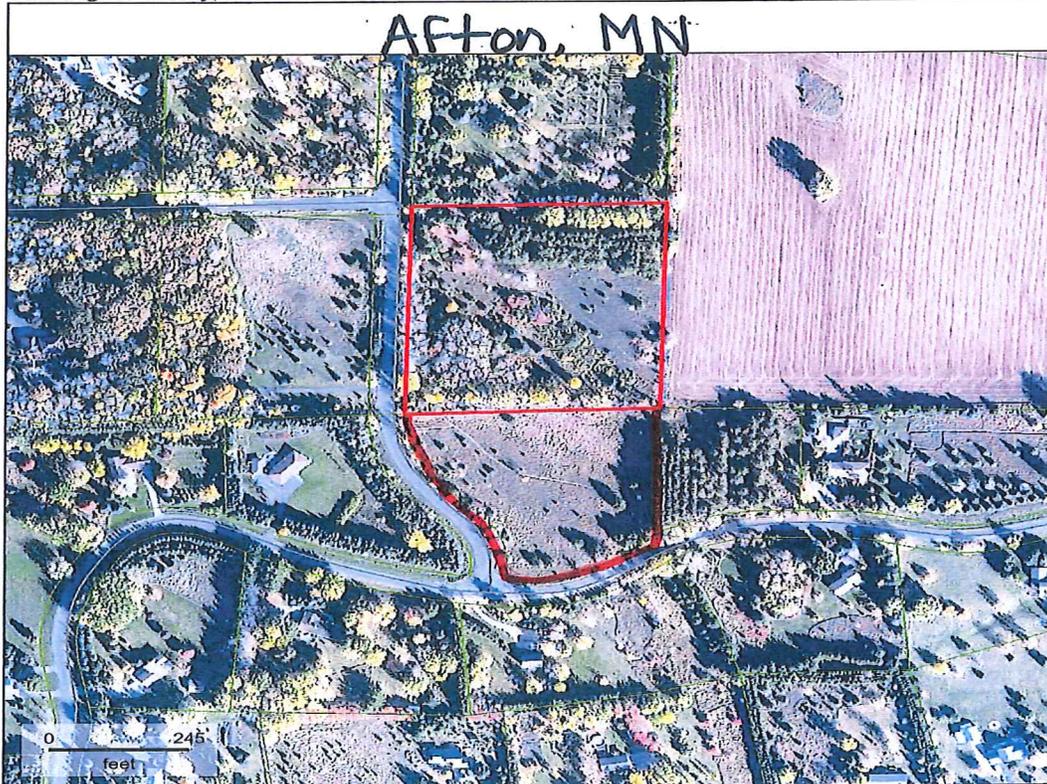
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT COSTS:

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

MEADOW RIDGE

Washington County, MN

12/6/2011



Property Information
Property ID 2002820140004
Location

**Washington
County**

MAP FOR REFERENCE ONLY
NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT

This drawing is a result of the compilation and reproduction of land records as they appear in various Washington County offices. The drawing should be used for reference purposes only. Washington County is not responsible for any inaccuracies.



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

COLLIN GREEN

Washington County, MN

12/7/2011

Afton, MN



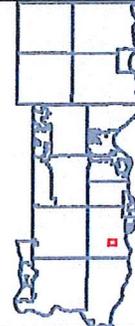
Property Information

Property ID
Location

**Washington
County**

MAP FOR REFERENCE ONLY
NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT

This drawing is a result of the compilation and reproduction of land records as they appear in various Washington County offices. The drawing should be used for reference purposes only. Washington County is not responsible for any inaccuracies.



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.

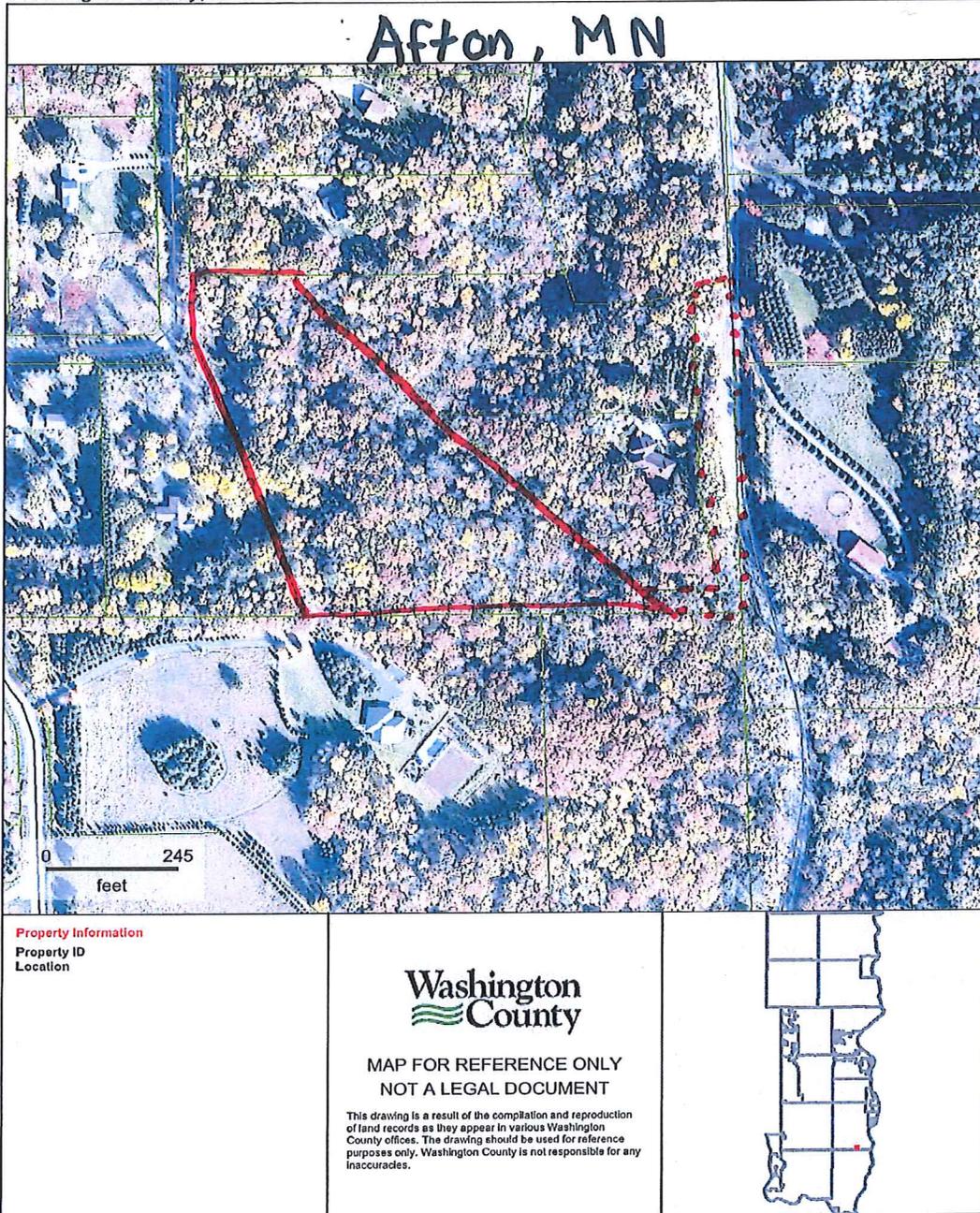
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT COSTS:

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

AFTONWOOD

Washington County, MN

12/7/2011



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.

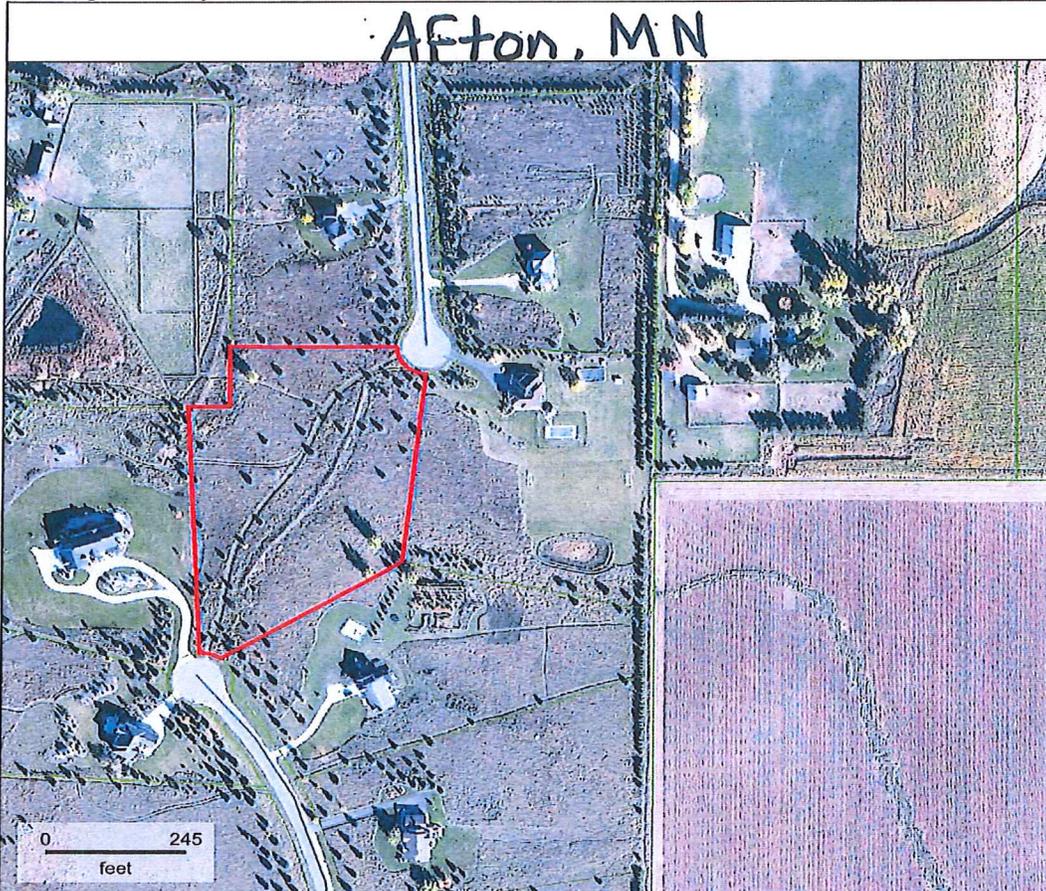
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT COSTS:

Park Boundary Signs	\$500
---------------------	-------

REMUS PARK

Washington County, MN

12/7/2011



Property Information

Property ID 2702820340003
Location



**MAP FOR REFERENCE ONLY
NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT**

This drawing is a result of the compilation and reproduction of land records as they appear in various Washington County offices. The drawing should be used for reference purposes only. Washington County is not responsible for any inaccuracies.



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.)

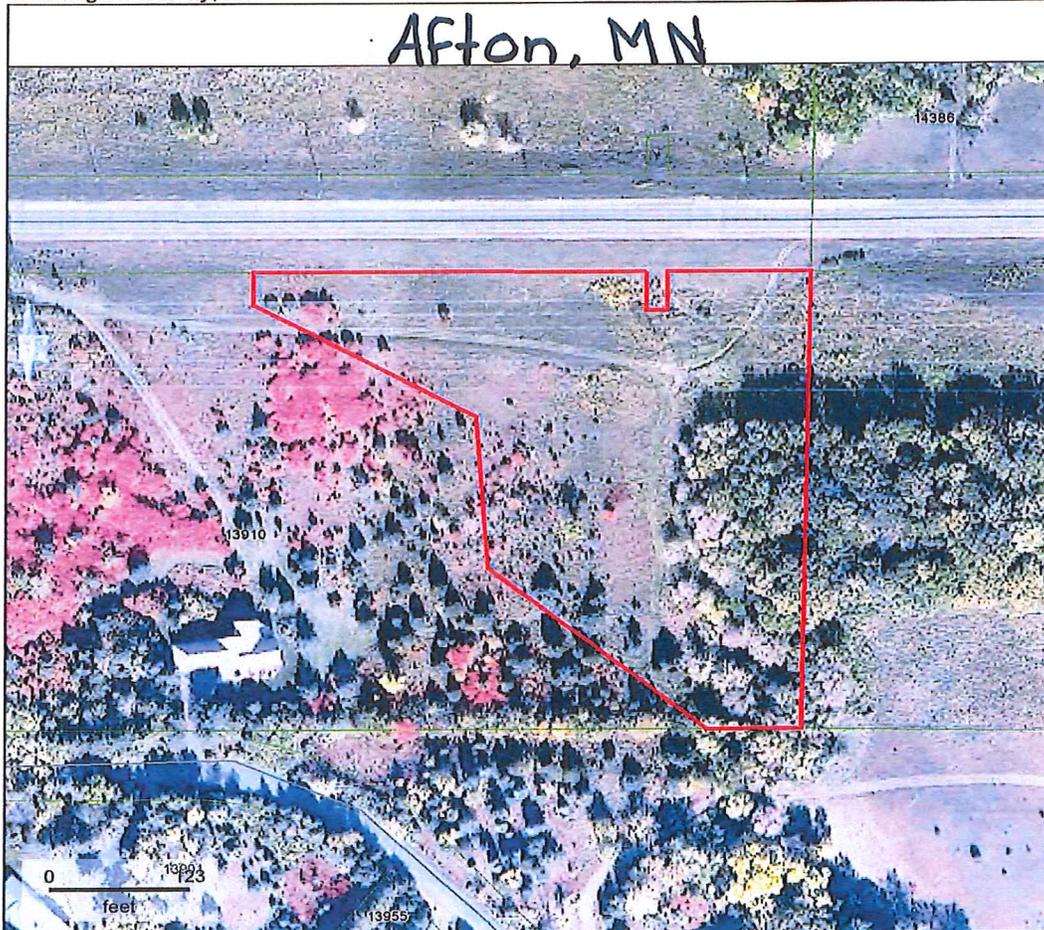
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT COSTS:

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

RINTA PARK

Washington County, MN

12/7/2011



Property Information
Property ID 0502820110004
Location

**Washington
County**

**MAP FOR REFERENCE ONLY
NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT**

This drawing is a result of the compilation and reproduction of land records as they appear in various Washington County offices. The drawing should be used for reference purposes only. Washington County is not responsible for any inaccuracies.



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.

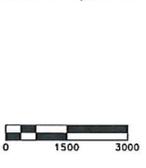
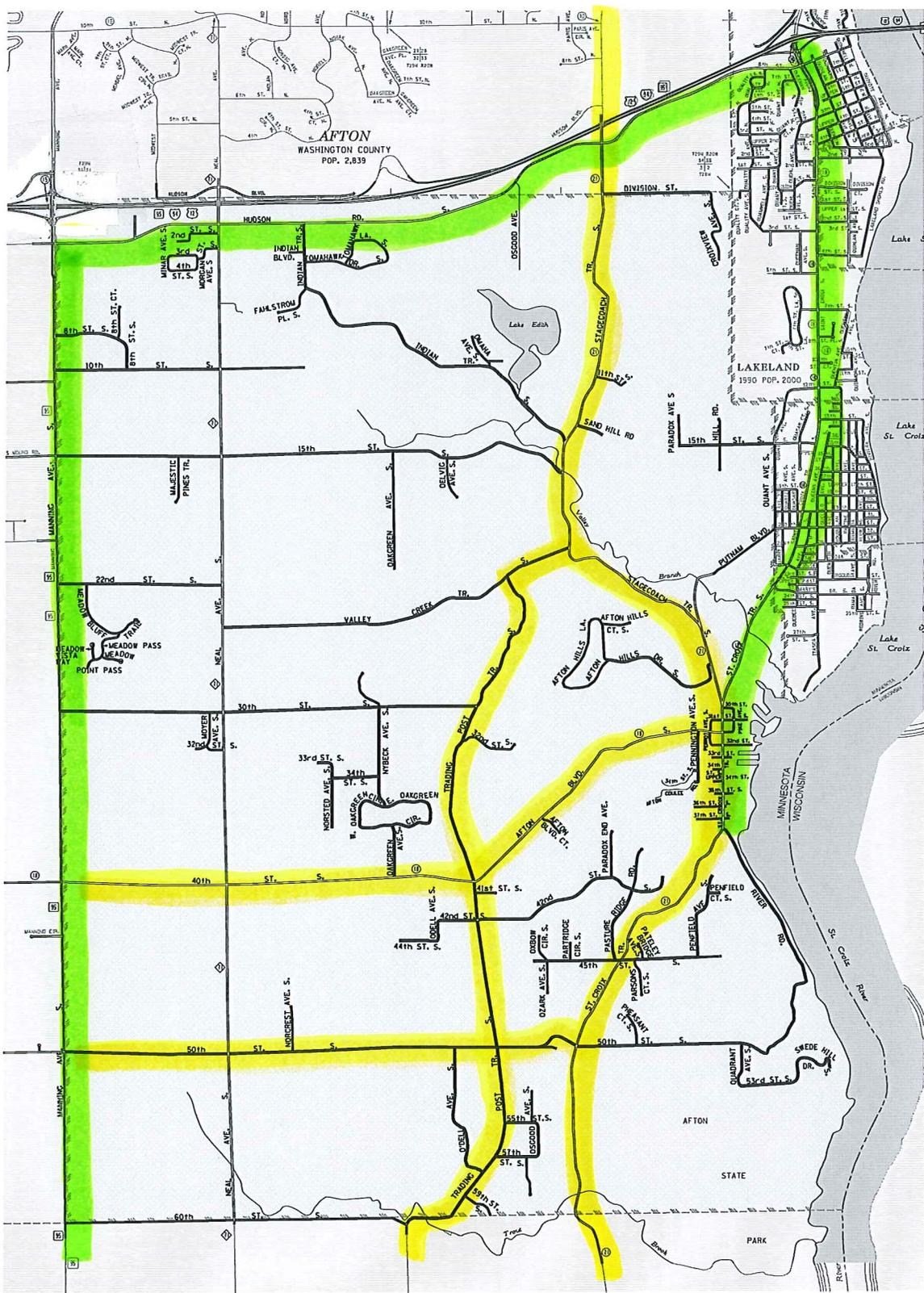
There are two existing trails not on a shoulder of a roadway. One is the Afton-Lakeland paved Bike Path along the east side of St. Croix Trail from Hudson Road south to City Hall then to Steamboat Park. The second is a short gravel trail in the Remus Addition located east of St. Croix Trail between South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

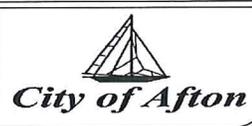
- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Afton-Lakeland Bike Path Bridge re-decking (2013) | \$25,000 |
| 2. Afton River Walk | TBD |
| a. Dependant on construction of levee and limitations imposed by Corps of Engineers. | |
| 3. Trail Route Signage-City wide: Estimated # signs (40) | \$2,500 |
| 4. “Share 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 | |



-  ROUTES ALONG ROADWAYS
-  DEDICATED BIKE PATHS

2012

EXISTING BIKE ROUTES



G:\MAPS\Afton\2012-Plan-Route-figure.dgn

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 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.
- 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.
- 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)		

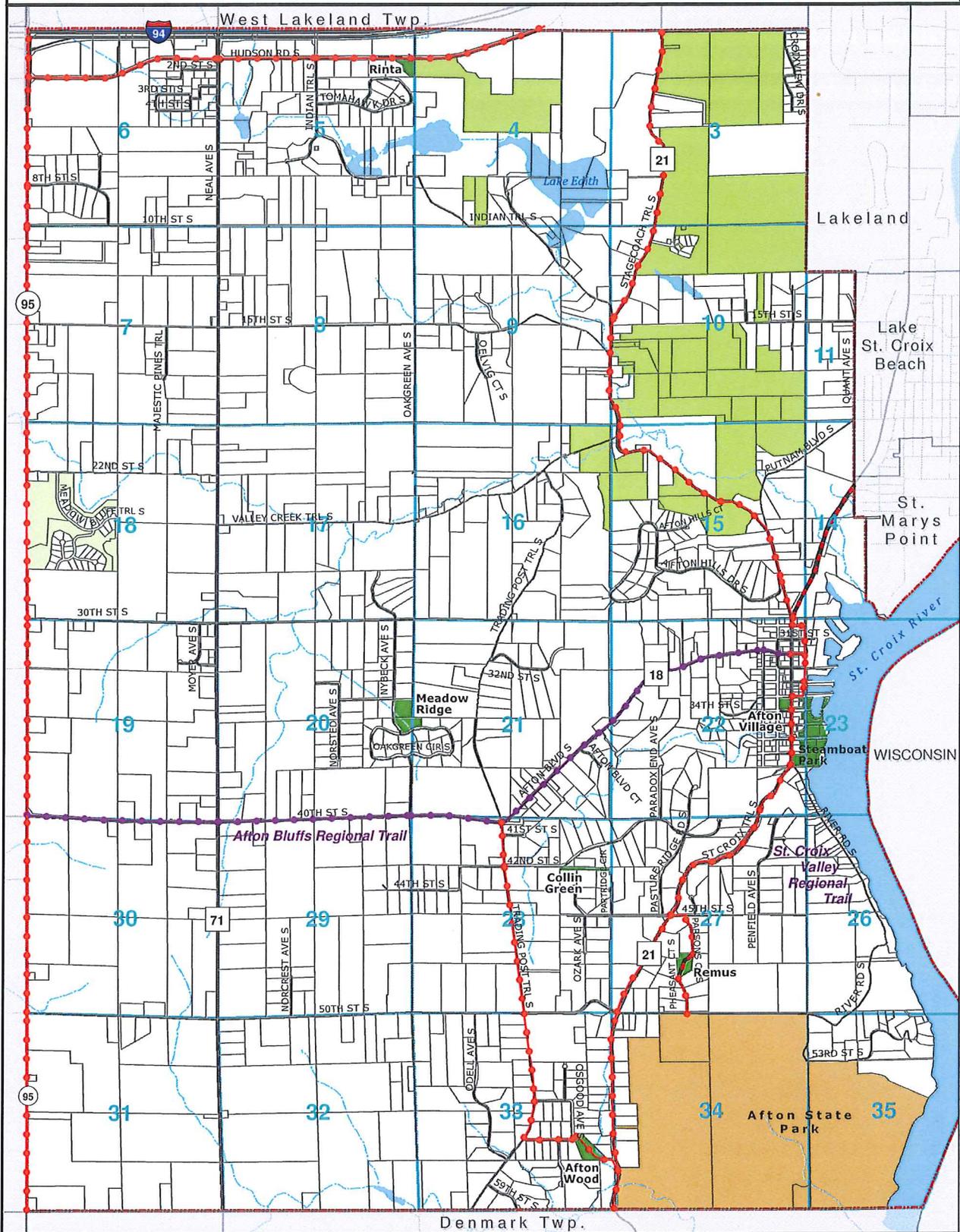
*600 acres are protected by MN Land Trust.

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

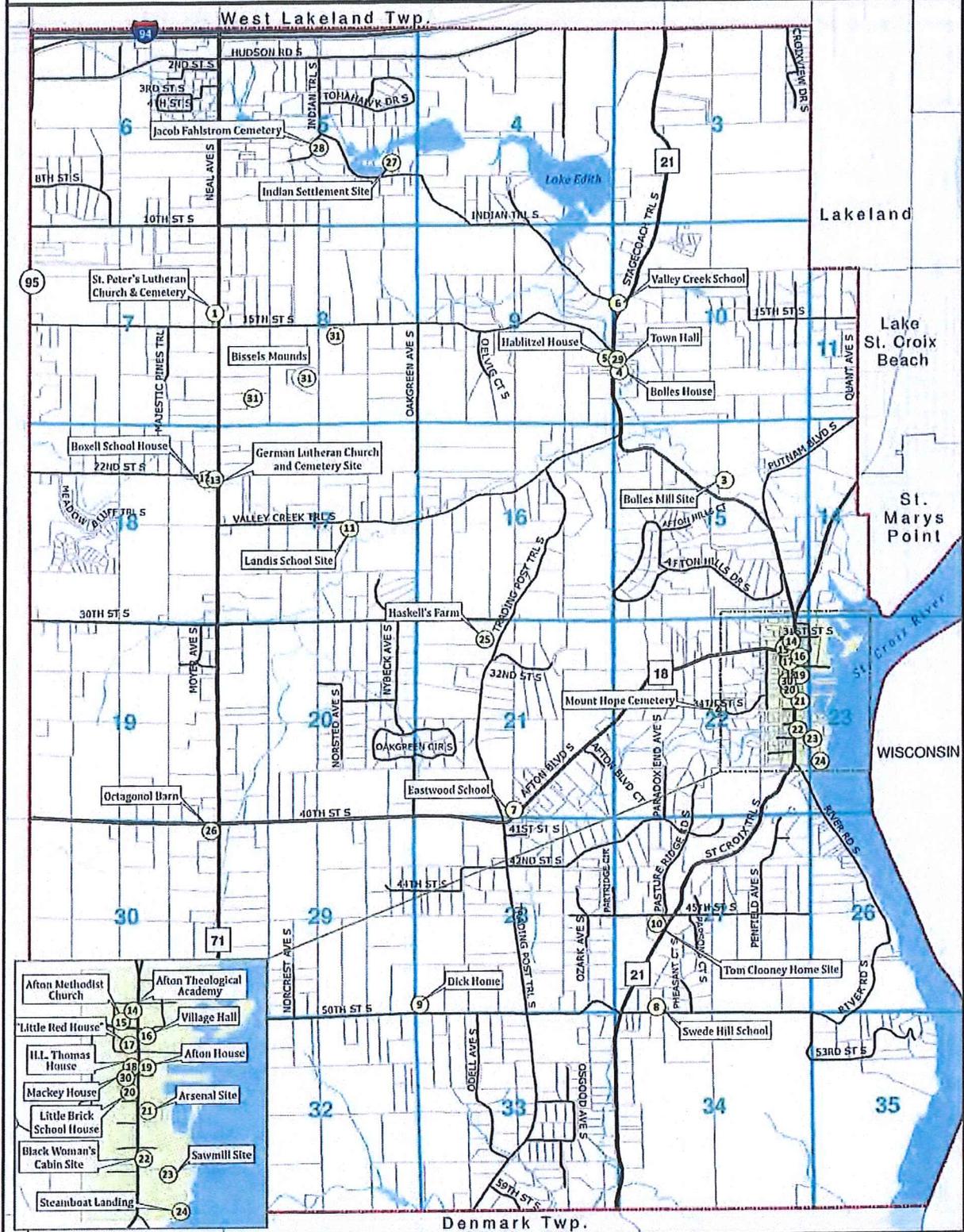
MAP 10



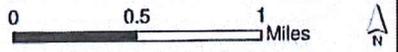
Trail System		Afton State Park	Roads	0	0.5	1	Miles	
Existing Trail	Belwin Property	Other Protected Open Spaces	Major Road					
Planned Trail	City of Afton	Section Lines	Local Road					Lakes & Rivers
Proposed Trail	Existing City Park & Open Spaces		Streams					

Map prepared June 2010 1000 Friends of Minnesota TRC Data Sources: Metropolitan Council, MN DNR, MN DOT, Washington County

Historic Sites



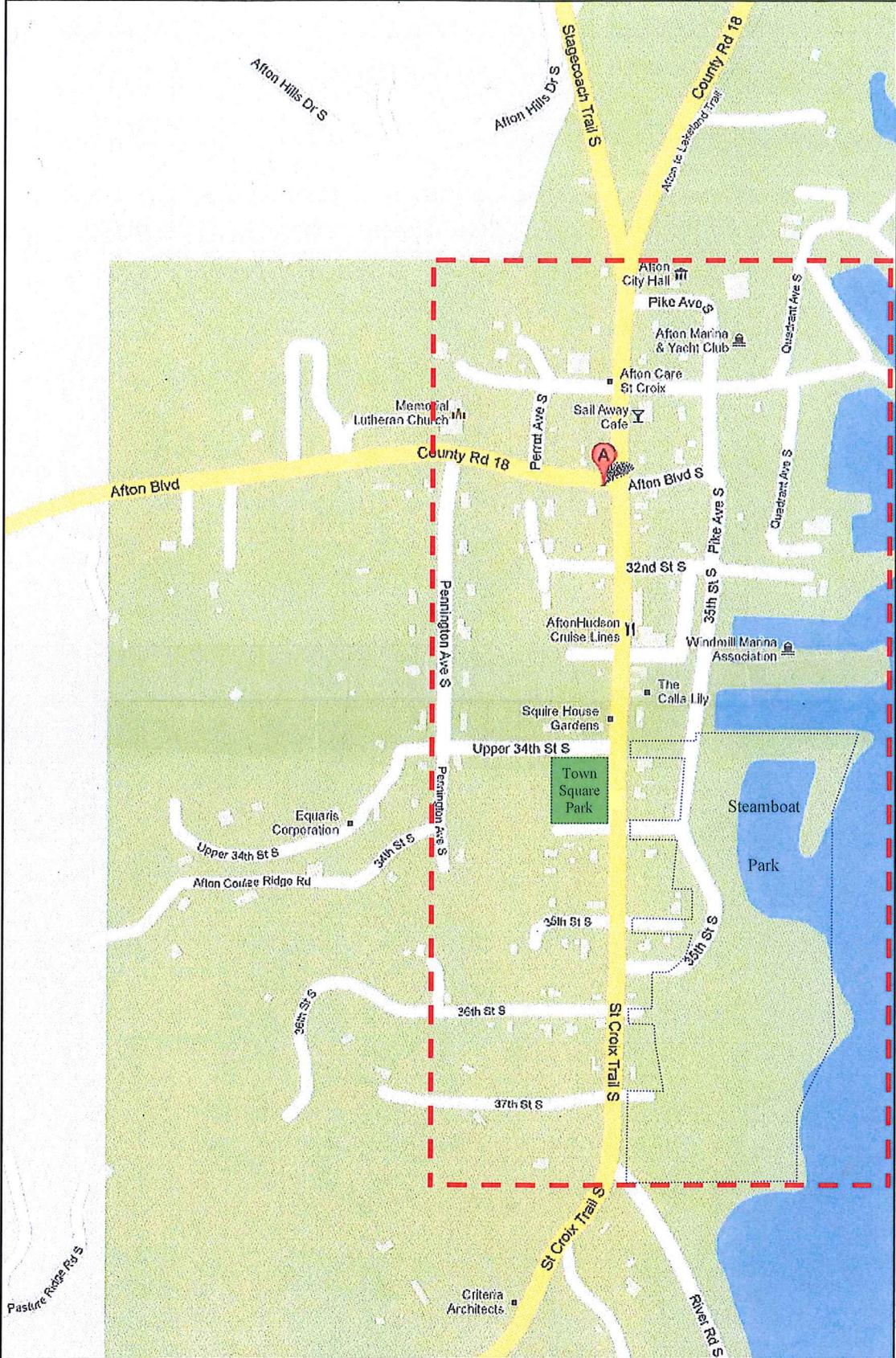
- Historic Site
- Village Historic Site
- ▭ City of Afton
- ▭ Parcel Boundaries
- ▭ Section Lines
- Roads
 - Major Roads
 - Local Road
- Lakes
- Streams



Afton

EXHIBIT 3

Afton Old Village

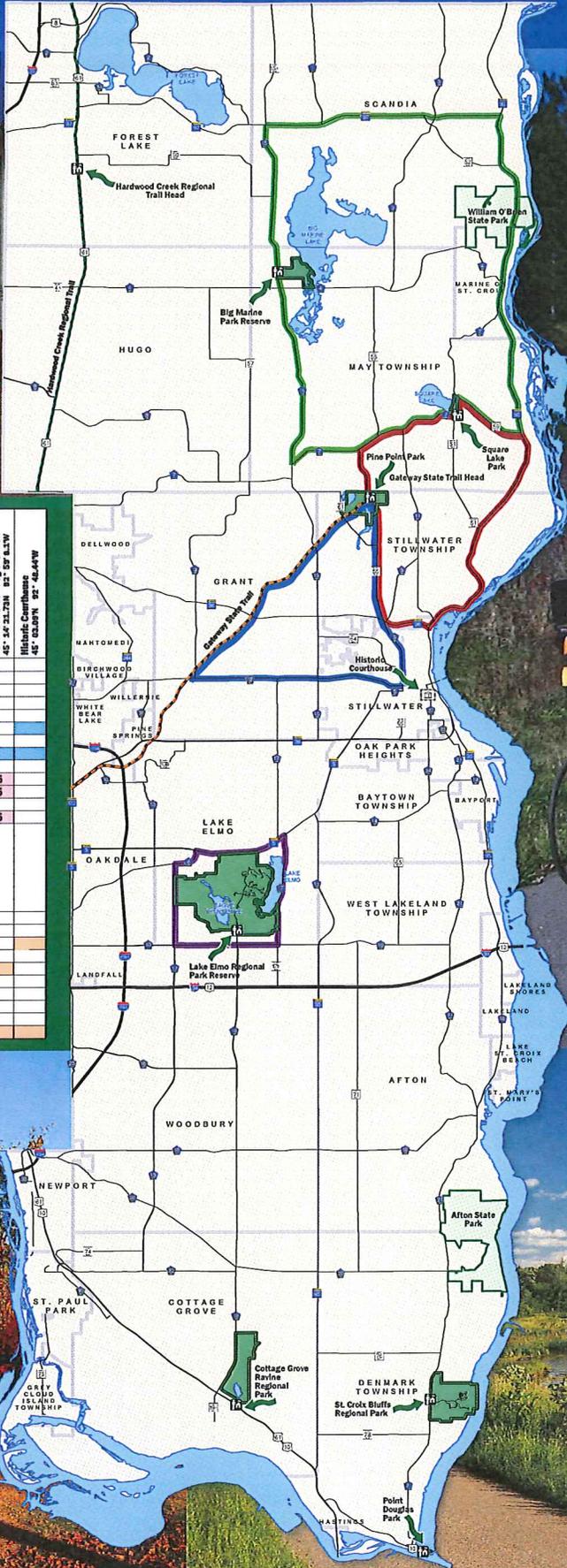


Visit the Parks of
Washington County

Touring Washington
County by Bike



	Big Marine Park Reserve 49° 52.53'N 92° 56.27'W	Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park 44° 48.13'N 92° 56.23'W	Lake Elmo Park Reserve 44° 58.34'N 92° 54.37'W	Pine Point Regional Park 45° 07.25'N 92° 56.23'W	Pine Point Regional Park 44° 47.56'N 92° 48.33'W	Square Lake Park 45° 05.27'N 92° 47.87'W	St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park 44° 48.00'N 92° 48.24'W	Hardwood Creek Regional Trail 45° 34.71'N 92° 57.81'W	Historic Courthouse 45° 02.07'N 92° 46.44'W
Ares	200	515	2165	296	7	27	579		
Modern Camping			80						73
Hike-In Camping			3						
Equestrian Camping			20						
Group Camping			3						1
Meeting Facilities									
Picnic Shelters	1	1	2						3
Restrooms									
Beach Buildings									
Hiking/Walking Trails (Miles)	1.5	7	20	5				4	9.5
Paved Bicycle Trails (Miles)	1.5	3	5					1	9.5
Mountain Biking (Miles)			8						
Equestrian Trails (Miles)			8	5					9.5
Lighted Cross-Country Ski Trails (Miles)			5.5						
Cross-Country Ski Trails (Miles)	1.2	5.2	10.8	4.1					6.2
Winter Walking Trails									
Picnic Shelters									
Boat/Canoe Launch									
Swimming Beach									
Fishing Pier									
Ice Fishing									
Play Structures									
Historic Information Site									
Special Programs and Events									
Picnic Tables									
Grills									
Archery									
Orienteering Course									
Geocaching									
Drinking Fountains									



BIKE LOOPS

Minnesota law requires bicyclists to obey the same regulations as automobile drivers when they use public streets and roads. Please observe all highway and traffic signs. State law requires cyclists to stay close to the street's right edge and to travel in the same direction as traffic.

LOOP 1 - 29.7 Miles

Moderate terrain, some long, steep grades

This ride offers views of small towns, wooded areas, farmlands and the bluffs of the St. Croix River. Begin at Square Lake Park and travel west on the paved shoulders of County Road 7, to the junction of County Road 15 (Manning Avenue). Turn north on County Road 15 and pass by Big Marine Park Reserve on the way to Highway 97 and pass through Scandia to Highway 95. Turn south on Highway 95, and follow the off-road trail that takes riders through William O'Brien State Park and Marine on the St. Croix. Continue on the paved shoulder of Highway 95 to County Road 59, then turn west on County Road 59 and follow to the park entrance.

LOOP 2 - 16.7 Miles

Moderate terrain, some long, steep grades

This ride goes through farmland, wooded areas and offers views of the St. Croix River. Begin at Square Lake Park and travel east on the paved shoulders of County Road 59 to the junction of Highway 95. Ride south on the paved shoulders of Highway 95 to the intersection of Highway 96, and then go west on Highway 96. This route passes a historic site, a wayside rest and an overlook on the St. Croix River. At County Road 55, travel north past Pine Point Park to County Road 7 (The trail has paved shoulders from Highway 96 to County Road 61, then is off-road to the park entrance).

LOOP 3 - 17.1 Miles

Moderate terrain, some steep grades

This route passes wooded areas, farmlands, ponds and the City of Stillwater. Begin at Pine Point Park and take the paved Gateway Trail for 6.8 miles to the intersection of County Road 12. Go east on County Road 12 (off-road trail) for 6.3 miles to County Road 5. Go north on the roadway (Owens Street/County Road 5) to Highway 96 (The trail is off-road for one mile before Highway 96.) As the route crosses Highway 96, it becomes County Road 55. Travel north on County Road 55 to the park (The trail has paved shoulders from Highway 96 to County Road 61, then is off-road to the park).

LOOP 4 - 9.8 Miles

Rolling hills, flat terrain

This route is all paved shoulders and passes through the town of Lake Elmo, skirts the shores of Lake Elmo, and offers views of farmland and small towns. Begin at Lake Elmo Park Reserve and ride west on County Road 10 to County Road 13. Go north on County Road 13 to County Road 6. Follow County Road 6 northeast to Highway 5, and then follow Highway 5 into the City of Lake Elmo. At County Road 17, turn south and follow the road past the lake to County Road 10. Turn west on County Road 10 and follow to the park entrance.



Reservations

Washington County Parks offers reservations for campsites, picnic shelters, banquet and meeting spaces and a conference cottage. A reservation for these facilities can be made by contacting the appropriate park office directly. Reservations for campsites can be made by phone or online at www.co.washington.mn.us/parks.

Park Regulations

Park Hours: 7:00 A.M. - ½ hour after sunset
Boat Launch Hours: 6:00 A.M. - ½ hour after sunset

Alcoholic Beverages: The consumption of alcoholic beverages is not allowed in any general use area of a park (trails, beaches, play areas, general picnic areas, etc.). The consumption of limited quantities of beer and wine is allowed only on registered campsites and in reserved picnic shelters or banquet facilities. Hard liquor, kegs or the excessive consumption of alcohol is not allowed anywhere in the parks.

Washington County Vehicle Permits are required to enter all parks except Point Douglas Park, Hardwood Creek Regional Trail, and the Historic Courthouse.

Pets are only allowed in parking areas and on summer trails; they must be on a maximum, six-foot leash at all times. Pets are not allowed at Square Lake Park.

Please observe all posted regulations within the parks.

Vehicle Permits

Vehicles entering Washington County Parks must display a valid vehicle permit to avoid being issued a citation. A permit is sold as either a day use permit or an annual permit. Day use permits can be purchased at all park entrances. Annual permits are sold at Big Marine Park Reserve, Lake Elmo Park Reserve, St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park, and at all Washington County License Centers. An annual permit grants unlimited yearly access to all Washington, Anoka and Carver County Parks. Funds from permit sales are used to help manage park resources and facilities.

Washington County

Parks
and Trails

EXHIBIT 6

Fact Sheet #1

Green Corridors Protect More than Open Space

Journal Entry by Envision Minnesota (formally 1000 Friends of Minnesota) on April 19, 2011

Around the Midwest and throughout the country, green corridors have worked to help communities accommodate fast growth and still keep the landscapes they love. Green corridors provide connections between communities, between already protected lands, and between people and the land. Green corridors protect our green infrastructure, providing a legacy for future generations.

Communities in places from Massachusetts and Michigan to Colorado and Oregon have used green corridors to improve the appeal of neighborhoods and support their long-term tax base. Economic studies around the country have demonstrated proximity to open spaces, agricultural land, and parks boosts property values and enhances the appeal of neighborhoods.

- A study in Boulder, Colorado found that properties immediately next to green corridors had market values 32 percent more on average than similar properties without green corridors nearby.
- In Minnesota, 61 percent of property owners living next to the Luce Line Trail noted an increase in their property values. Realtors confirm that proximity to the trail enhances the appeal and selling value of property.
- An Oregon study found that urban land next to agricultural land was worth \$1,200 more per acre than similar land 1,000 feet away.

Tools to Keep Open Spaces

The following tools can help people keep the landscape we love using four incentive-based tools.

- Donated Conservation Easements
- Purchased Development Rights (PDR)
- Transferred Development Rights (TDR)
- Land Acquisition

For more information on these tools, refer to the other fact sheets in this series.

The Green Corridor Project was a project of 1000 Friends of Minnesota, dedicated to helping Washington and Chisago County residents keep the beautiful countryside, farmland, and special natural areas that make this a great place to live. The project was organized by an independent network of seven local public and private organizations.

Statistics for this fact sheet developed from: MN Dept. of Agriculture, American Farmland Trust, National Park Service, US Dept. of Agriculture, MN Dept. of Trade and Economic Development, US Census Bureau, Metropolitan Council, & MN Demographer's Office.

Funding for this project approved by the Minnesota Legislature: ML1997, Chapter 216, Section 15, subdivision 9(d) as recommended by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources, from the Environmental Trust Fund.