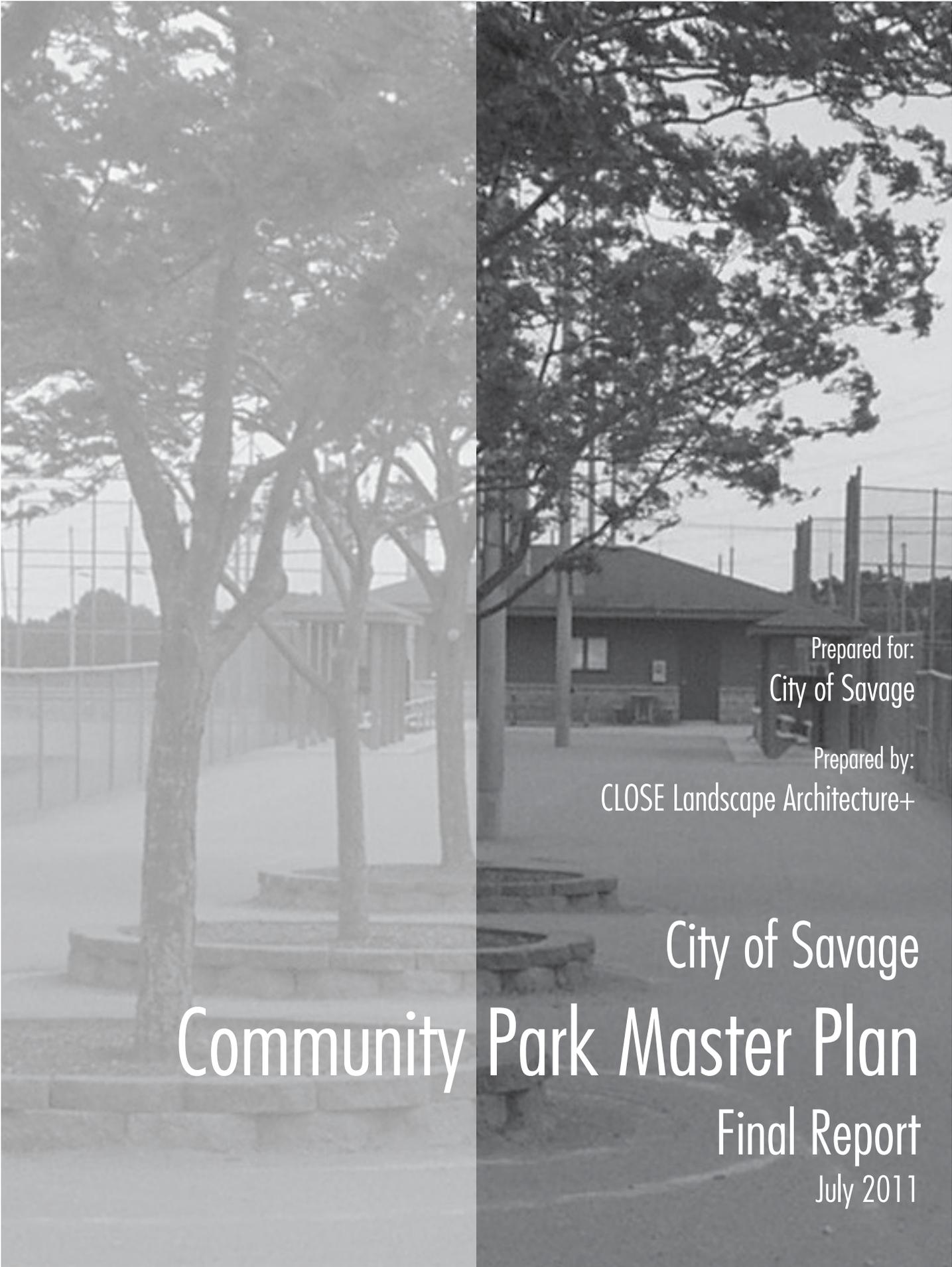




City of Savage
Community Park Master Plan
Final Report



Prepared for:
City of Savage

Prepared by:
CLOSE Landscape Architecture+

City of Savage Community Park Master Plan

Final Report

July 2011

Acknowledgements

The consultant team would like to thank the **Community Park Design Team** for their leadership and direction throughout this master planning process including:

Barry Stock – City Administrator
John Powell – Public Works Director and City Engineer
Bryan Tucker – Planning Manager
Jon Allen – Parks and Natural Resources Superintendent
Chris Dill – Recreation Supervisor
Rob Ampe – Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission
Ron Schwartz – Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission
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We would also like to thank the various **Park User Group Representatives** who volunteered their time to provide input on current and future park needs including:

Eric Rodine – ISD #719 Activities Director
Travis Peterson – Savage Outlaws Ball Club
Lori Anderson – Dan Patch Days and Chamber of Commerce
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And finally we would like to thank the **Mayor, City Council, the Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission, and the citizens of Savage** who participated in this process.





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Section 1

Introduction

BACKGROUND

The City of Savage is planning for the future expansion of Community Park. The expansion of this park to meet increasing needs for community events and recreation facilities could include property acquisition, construction of new sports fields, the potential for a performance area, relocation of the skate park and a variety of other park elements.

The city's updated Parks, Trails and Open Space System Plan, completed in December of 2006, identified a need for additional park acreage in this part of the City. The Parks, Athletic and Recreation Joint Task Force Report (PAR Report),

provides extensive data related to City Facility needs, and also helped inform the direction and recommendations for this Master Plan.

In addition, the City solicited input from park user groups such as athletic associations, school districts, and others to identify current uses/facilities and future park needs.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate all existing park facilities and develop a long-term plan and estimated costs for continued use and expansion of this site. The City is planning for renovation and expansion of Community Park to begin in 2014.



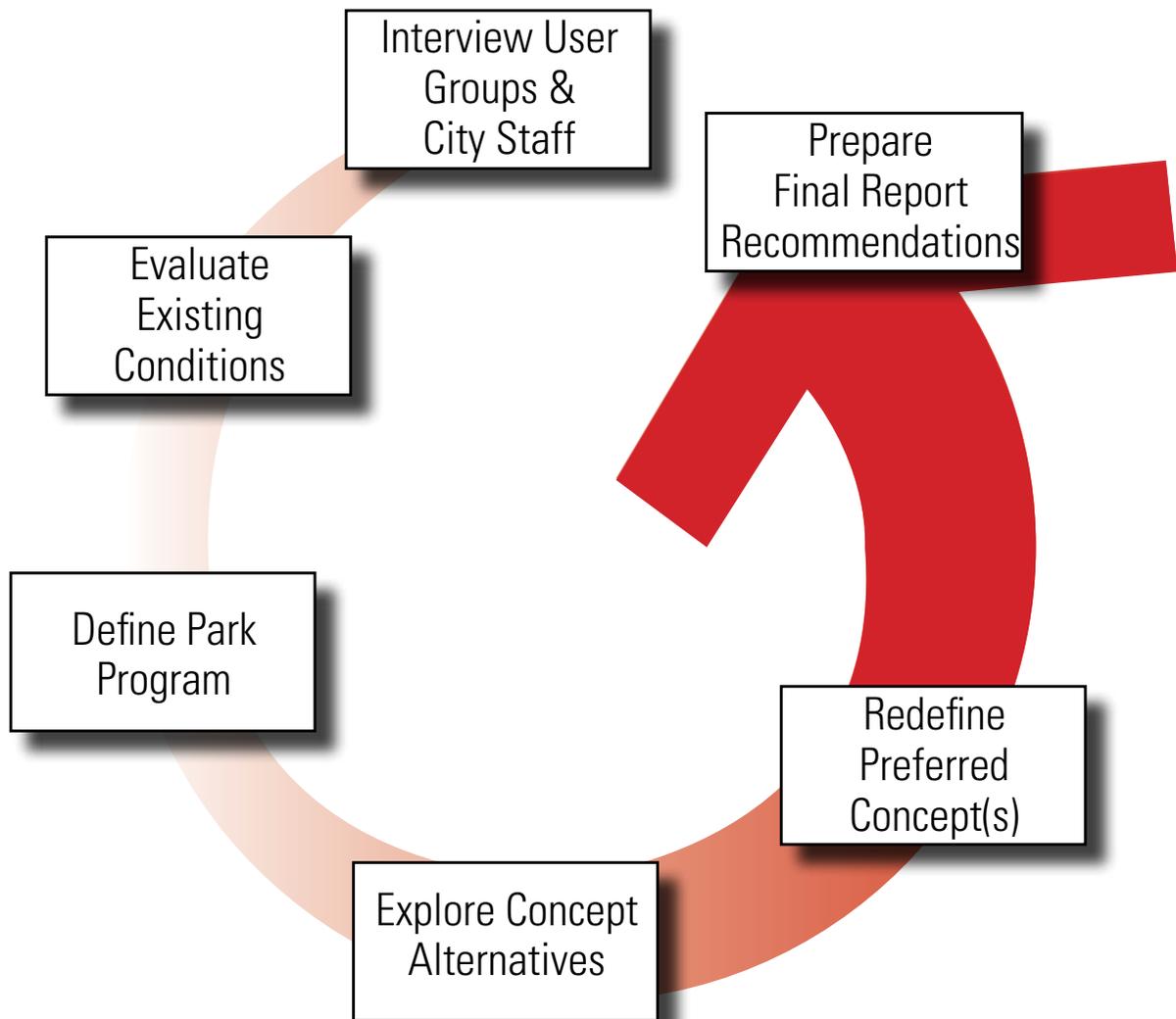
PLANNING PROCESS

This master planning process relied on a strong foundation of previous parks planning studies, collected data and evaluation of potential park system improvements, including recommendations for Savage Community Park Expansion as part of the Park Search Area #3.

A list of suggested new or expanded uses and facilities for Community Park (included in the Park System Plan) helped focus discussion in the User Group interviews and initial Community Park Design Team workshops. These meetings, conducted early in the planning process, defined project priorities and established the working draft 'Park Development Program'. A quick, but comprehensive analysis of existing conditions and

park features further emphasized the mandate to build on existing strengths, retain valued/popular facilities and expansion to meet increasing community needs.

Subsequent workshops explored a variety of design concepts including type, size and location of park components, and the infrastructure to support them (i.e. roads, parking lots). Input and direction from the Community Park Design Team, Parks Recreation and Natural Resources Commission, Mayor, City Council and other participants further refined these concept studies leading to the three preferred plans recommended in this report.



STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The first step in the master plan process was to meet individually with various park user groups to solicit input related to current and future park needs. These interviews provided an opportunity to share issues and ideas unique to their group, with a focus on projects and amenities that would best support their programs. To help facilitate discussion, each participant was asked to respond to the following questions:

- 1 – What does Community Park provide that no other place can? (today and in the future)
- 2 – What does Community Park provide that you think is the highest quality, second-to-none experience in the Savage region?
- 3 – What facilities or amenities are needed to support desired uses and activities at Community Park?
- 4 – What is the biggest challenge for your user group?
- 5 – What is the greatest success story for your user group?
- 6 – If you could only accomplish one thing as part of this future park expansion project, what would it be?
- 7 – Please provide a prioritized list of needs and wants for your user group.

In addition, interview participants were asked to review a checklist of potential activities, user groups, facilities and amenities that might be considered for future park improvements including:

- 1 – Additional bicycle trails
- 2 – Additional in-line skating trails
- 3 – Additional trails for walking or running
- 4 – Additional natural surface trails for nature walks, birdwatching etc.
- 5 – Promote more winter uses (ski trails, sledding hill, ice skating)
- 6 – Promote more use of McColl Pond (canoe and kayak)
- 7 – Promote expansion / enhancement of fishing programs
- 8 – Additional education and interpretive elements
- 9 – Expand or improve picnicking
- 10 – Pursue opportunities for equipment rental (revenue generator)
- 11 – Promote more special events (performance, festivals, etc.)
- 12 – Additional structures (picnic shelters, pavilions)
- 13 – Lighting and signage improvements
- 14 – Explore opportunities for public art
- 15 – Additional signature activities (disc golf, community gardens, off-leash dog area)

From their responses ('yes, no, or maybe'), a preliminary program for potential park expansion began to emerge. The images on this page illustrate ideas or improvements suggested by more than one User Group during the interviews.



Additional flex fields for practice, soccer, softball



High quality, full-size baseball field



Enhancements to support Dan Patch Days



Trails (including loops) to support ELC programs



Off-leash dog area



Section 2

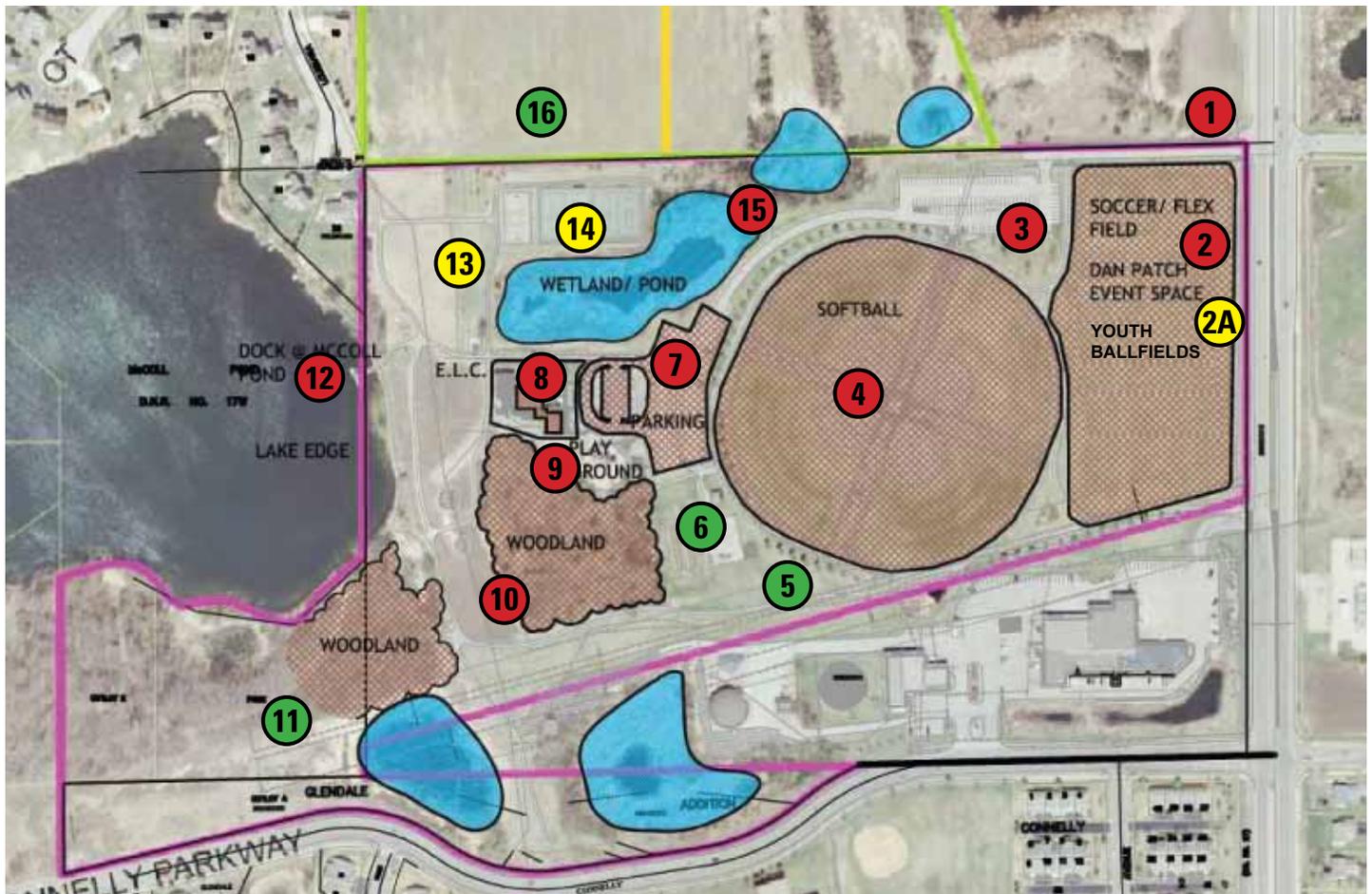
Existing Conditions

The purpose of this section is to provide a general overview of park features, facilities and uses along with a basic understanding of existing capacity (maxed out or underutilized), real or perceived conflicts and other site challenges and opportunities. From this basic inventory, park elements were categorized under the following headings:

- most likely to remain (basically unchanged or with modest improvements)
- most likely to change (relocated within the park or removed), and
- areas that could accommodate expanded or new uses

The diagram below highlights the primary park features and illustrates specific examples for each of these categories including the following:

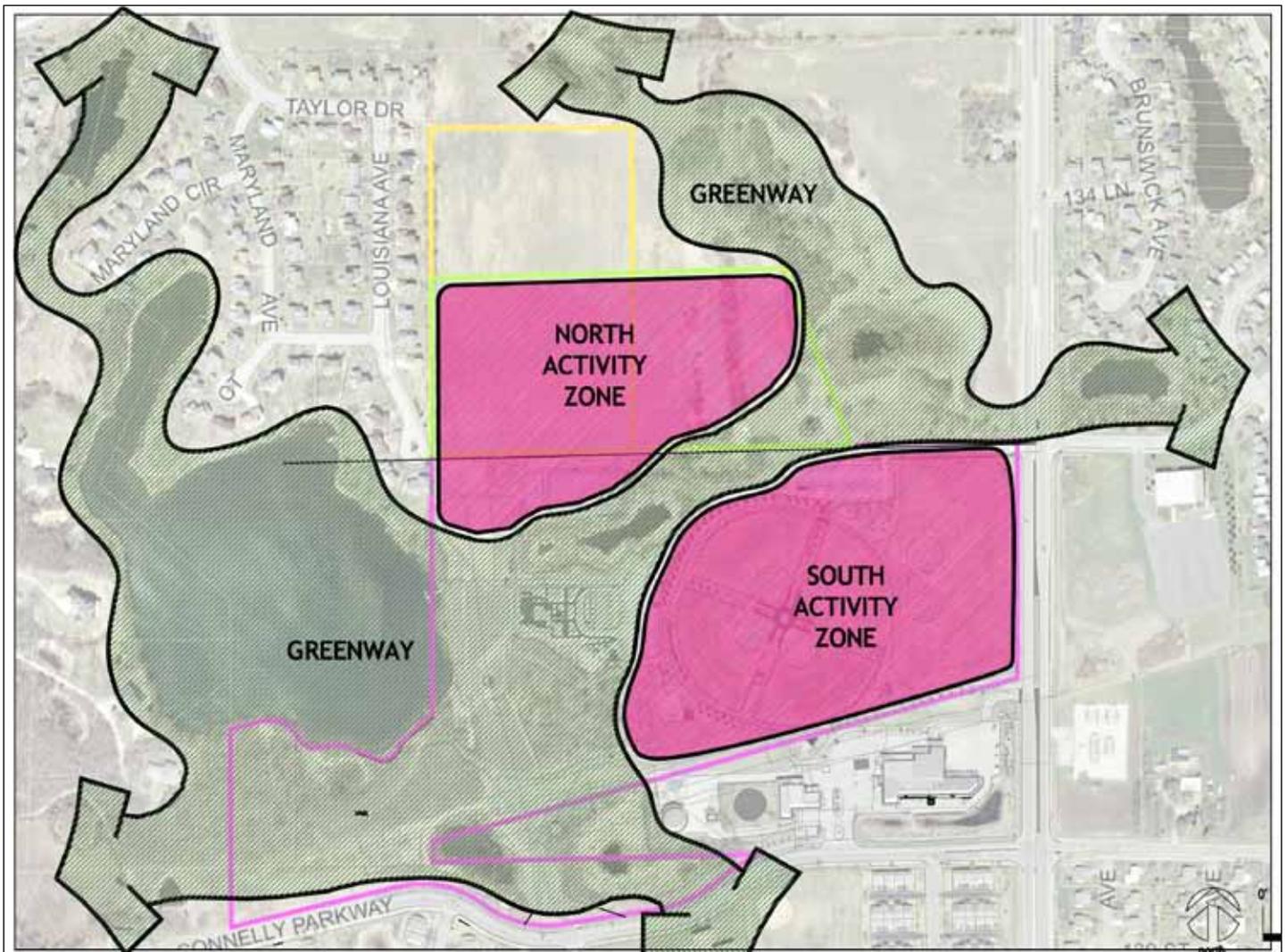
- 1 – Park Entrance
- 2 – Flex Sports Field and Dan Patch Event Space
- 2A – Youth Ballfields
- 3 – ‘East’ Parking Lot
- 4 – Softball Complex
- 5 – South Buffer Along City Public Works Facility
- 6 – ‘Small Sports’ Activity Area (Bocce Ball and Skate Park)
- 7 – ‘West’ Parking Lot
- 8 – Environmental Learning Center (ELC)
- 9 – Playground
- 10 – Woodland Adjacent to ELC
- 11 – Woodland Adjacent to McColl Pond
- 12 – McColl Pond and Fishing Dock
- 13 – Open Land and Tree Nursery
- 14 – Basketball and Tennis Courts
- 15 – Ponds and Wetlands
- 16 – Potential Expansion Area



FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM

The opportunity to expand Community Park with additional acreage to the north begins to define an overall framework (or armature) that will help guide ongoing decisions related to the types and location of various park uses and other improvements. This diagram also suggests a compelling park vision that will meet new imperatives for sustainability, natural resource protection and fiscal responsibility.

Community Park is already recognized for its blend of active and passive recreational activities. But there is also an interesting integration of natural areas, including McColl Pond, woodlands, ponds and wetlands, with more traditional park uses such as softball diamonds and soccer fields. Recent completion of the Environmental Learning Center, including nearby educational/interpretive elements further emphasizes the significance of this unique interplay throughout the park.



SITE EVALUATION—CONTEXT + CONNECTIONS

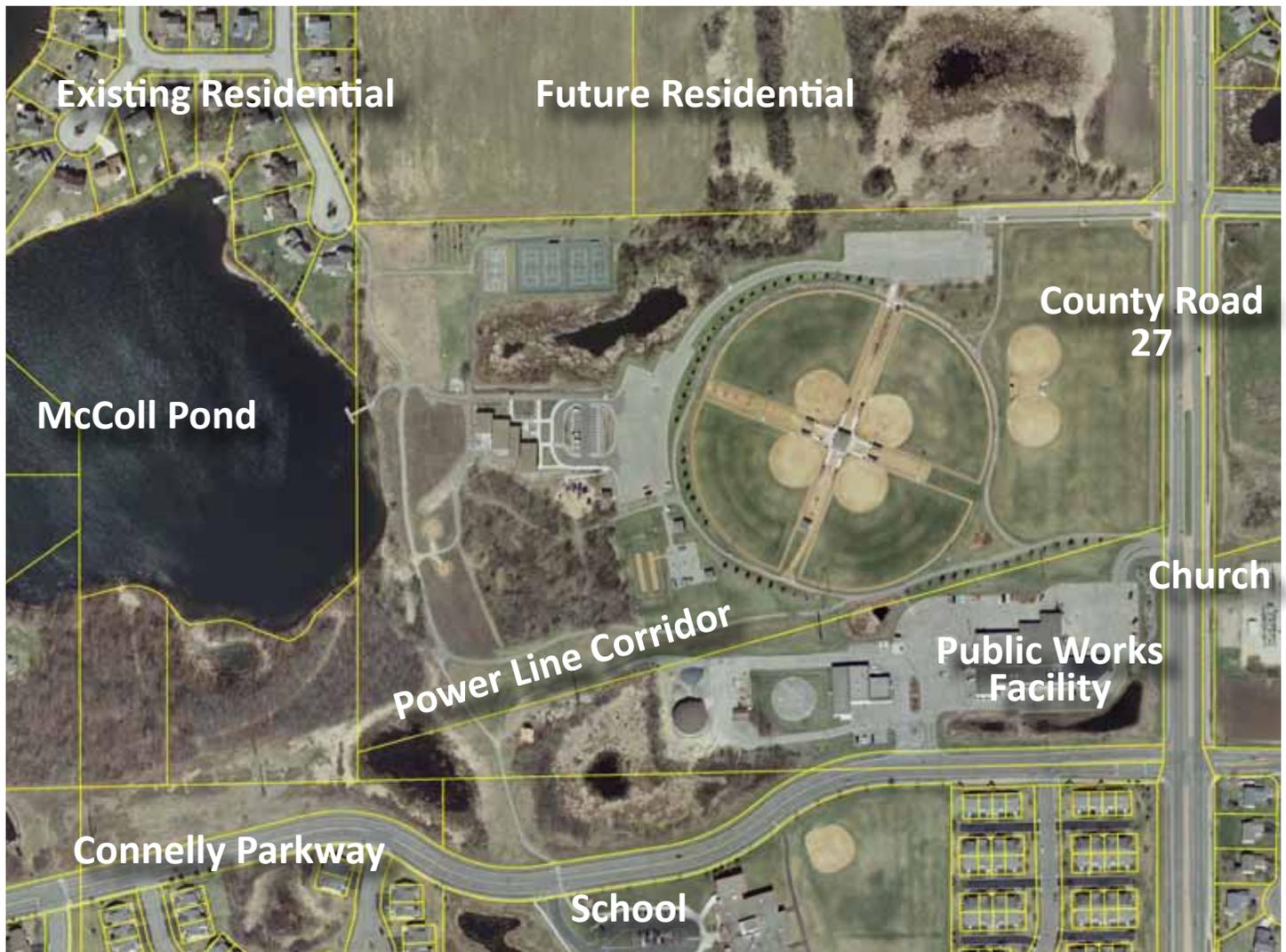
Surrounding land uses, and potential connections with nearby and regional destinations, also have a significant influence on park programming and park amenity design. The close proximity of schools, churches and residential neighborhoods invite organized group activities and spontaneous park use, with the added benefit of public “eyes-on-the-park” surveillance around the clock. But, disruptive, or visually unappealing uses nearby sometimes have a negative impact and may require additional screening or other design response.

Existing neighborhoods in this district will be joined by proposed residential development on the north side of the park. Preliminary plans for this development indicate additional lands for public open space (mostly related to existing wetlands), and acreage for active recreational uses as part of Community Park expansion.

The west boundary of the park is dominated by McColl Pond. This small lake provides dock and shoreline access for fishing, opportunities for environmental education/outdoor classroom programs and of course pleasant views from adjacent trails that are located in this part of the park.

Other adjacent land uses include the City of Savage Public Works Facility and power line right-of-way to the south, along with Glendale Elementary School, Bridgewood Church, and LifeTime Fitness nearby.

Convenient vehicular access to the park is provided via Connelly Parkway and County Road 27. Existing trails provide connections north to the residential cul-de-sac, south to the school site and east to join sidewalks along County Road 27.



PARK COMPONENTS—UNDERSTANDING THE LAYERS

All parks are comprised of parts (or layers) that define physical character, support a mix of uses and promote signature facilities or amenities. The unique combination of these components at Community Park have created a one-of-a-kind, popular destination for the City of Savage and the surrounding communities. These layers include:

Vehicular Access and Circulation

As illustrated on the Context Map (page 13), the site borders on two major arterials, with the park entrance located on County Road 27. Additional vehicular access points, or park entrances, were studied early in the master planning process. A new road connection to the proposed residential neighborhood north of the park is under consideration.

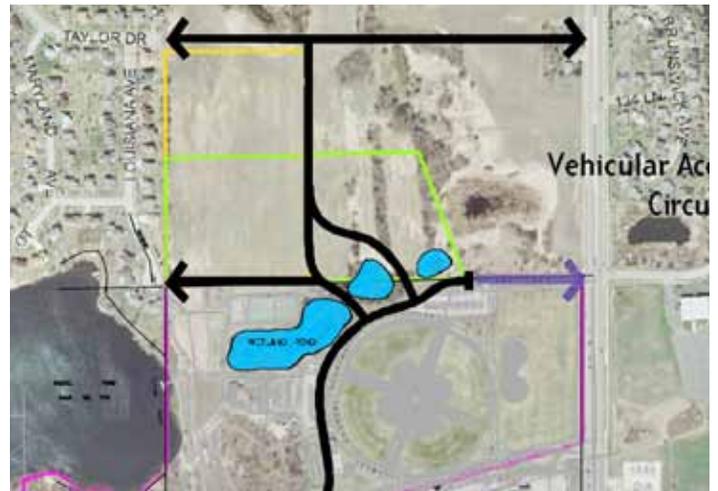
Pedestrian and Bike Access

The network of existing park trails provides good access and connections to all park amenities and use areas. Additional trails within existing park boundaries were suggested for the underutilized area south of McColl Pond. Extension of the existing trail system to the north as part of potential Community Park expansion was also discussed.

Additional Parking

Parking capacity, and providing enough parking for peak use, is an ongoing concern and a major component of park design. Expansion (or reorganization) of existing parking, and new parking lot locations were explored. The potential to expand Community Park to the north includes adequate space for parking to support additional activities and amenities in this part of the park.

One additional note related to parking: shared parking, seasonal parking, shuttle service and other creative approaches are being studied.



Drainage Surface Water

The most prominent surface water feature is McColl Pond, located along much of the eastern boundary of the park. McColl Pond supports a variety of interpretive elements, educational activities and the DNR fishing program.

Several wetlands and small ponds occur along Connelly Parkway to the south, and along the northern edge of the park. These ponds and wetlands, including the seasonal streams and drainage ways that connect them, are part of the overall site drainage and stormwater management system for the park.

Vegetation

For the purposes of this study, existing vegetative cover at Community Park includes the following basic categories: mown turf, woodland, prairie (or unmown areas) and wetland/pond/lake edge (described above). Much of the park is used for field sports requiring regular mowing, irrigation and other maintenance activities. The rest of the park contains some woodland, prairie and wetland areas located near the Environmental Learning Center and south of McColl Pond.

This park also has a small tree nursery, located in the northwest corner of the site, that could be expanded to provide an easily accessible inventory of trees for future planting projects throughout Community Park.

Sports Dome Location Option

Master planning for Community Park also includes the potential to locate an indoor sports facility somewhere within the existing site or as part of future park expansion. A 'sketch study' evaluation of alternative sites, and direction from the Community Park Design Team, determined that the optimum location for this facility is within the expansion area north of the existing park property.





Section 3

Park Program

OVERVIEW

As defined in the City of Savage Park, Trail and Open Space System Plan, “community parks provide facilities for community-scale recreation, varying from multi-field athletic complexes to natural resource-based passive park areas – or combinations of both.” Savage Community Park meets this definition with a variety of amenities that support both active and passive uses. For the purposes of this Master Plan, and to better define an approved ‘Program for Improvements’ related to potential park expansion, all existing uses and facilities were inventoried within the following categories:

Active (Sports and Games-Based) Recreation

- Adult softball complex
- Tennis and basketball courts
- Hockey and pleasure rinks
- Skate park
- Youth ball fields
- Flex soccer fields
- Bocce Ball courts
- Playground

Passive (Natural Resource-Based) Recreation

- Walking trails
- Picnicking
- McColl Pond and fishing dock

Education and Interpretive Elements

- Environmental Learning Center
- Outdoor classroom(s)
- Interpretive opportunities:
 - + Water resources (pond, wetlands)
 - + Woodland, prairie and other native landscapes
 - + Stormwater management (rain gardens etc.)
 - + Energy demonstration projects (on-site generation and use)

Special Events and Other Activities

- Dan Patch Days
- What else happens here

One of the primary objectives (and outcomes) for preparing a refined park program is to ensure that concept studies for the potential park expansion area will yield recommendations that either expand or complement these existing uses and amenities.



Active recreation



Passive recreation



Education + Interpretation



Special events

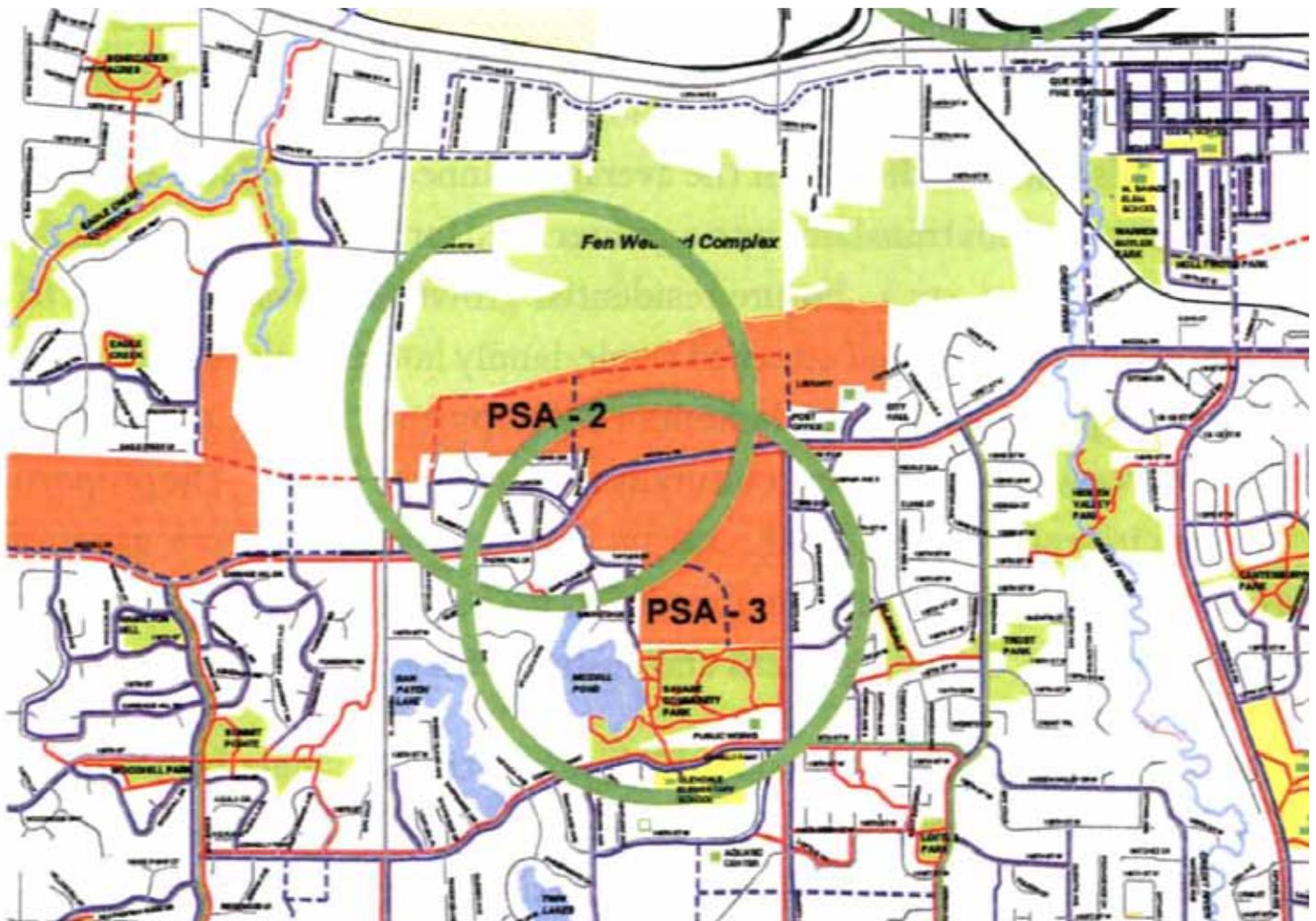
SAVAGE COMMUNITY PARK EXPANSION – PARK SEARCH AREA #3

Based on the City of Savage Parks, Trails and Open Space System Plan ‘Needs Assessment’, Community Park falls under Park Search Area (PSA) #3 and includes the following recommendations:

“The intent of this search area is to provide expansion area for Savage Community Park and to provide a needed neighborhood park function and an adult baseball field. Depending on the size of the expansion, there may also be the potential to provide a youth recreation facility that would include additional ballfields, soccer fields . . . and looped trails. Savage Community Park is also a candidate location for a potential community center or indoor athletic facility. The expansion to the north might include the following uses:”

- Adult baseball field
- Looped trail around a pond
- Additional parking
- Band shell
- Community picnic shelter
- Neighborhood playground
- Neighborhood picnic shelter
- Soccer fields
- Youth baseball fields
- Community center or indoor athletic facility

Recommendations from the Parks, Trails and Open Space System Plan, input from the User Group interviews and direction from the Community Park Design Team provided the basis for a ‘Draft Program of Improvements’.



Growth Areas and Future Park Needs (Search Areas) (source: Parks, Trails and Open Space System Plan)

SAVAGE COMMUNITY PARK – PROGRAM OF IMPROVEMENTS

The recommended Program of Improvements, for both existing park acreage and the potential Community Park expansion, is organized according to each Activity Zone and other focus areas unique to this park.

South Activity Zone

The primary purpose of site improvements in the South Activity Zone is to maximize the multi-purpose, flex use of the open field between Highway 27 and the Adult softball complex, including ongoing support for the Dan Patch Days celebration. Specific program components include:

- 1 – Adult softball complex to remain
- 2 – Redesign main entrance road to avoid parking area
- 3 – Remove and relocate the two youth baseball fields
- 4 – Create two U-13 / flex fields
- 5 – Provide (or improve) access, circulation, utilities and other site design elements to support Dan Patch Days

North Activity Zone

The primary purpose of site improvements in the North Activity Zone is to maximize use of limited acreage (expand existing or support new uses), with an emphasis on active recreation, sports fields and the potential for an indoor athletic facility. Specific program components include:

- 1 – Create two or three sports flex fields to accommodate soccer, lacrosse and other field sports
- 2 – Create two new youth baseball fields (to replace those removed in the South Activity Zone)
- 3 – Create one high quality, full-size baseball field (with potential for press box, concessions, changing room and permanent bleachers)

- 4 – Provide multiple picnic pavilions (rentable) to accommodate groups of 20 to 200
- 5 – Provide an additional playground
- 6 – Explore locations for an indoor athletic facility (Sports Dome)

Other Focus Areas

In addition to the two primary activity zones, there are numerous opportunities for improvements throughout the park including refinements to, or relocation of existing facilities, more trails and support for a variety of ‘small sports and games’ that are gaining in popularity. Specific program components include:

- 1 – Potential relocation of Skate Park to an area of higher visibility
- 2 – Potential to expand and/or relocate Bocce Ball courts
- 3 – Provide additional parking (extend existing lot) south of the Environmental Learning Center; explore potential for porous pavement or grass surface (‘green’ parking lot for seasonal use only)
- 4 – Expand trail network throughout the park including the area south of McColl Pond and potential trail loops within the wetland/pond areas of the adjacent housing development site to the north

Initial conceptual designs, described in Section 4, were evaluated using this Program of Improvements. Throughout the master planning process, each informed the other as further refinements were made to both this Program and the final (preferred) Concept Plans.



