

# Committee Report

Community Development Committee



Community Development Committee: June 15, 2026

Metropolitan Council: June 24, 2026

## Business Item: 2026-103

Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan, Carver County

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan.
2. Advise Carver County to consider implementing the recommendations for land use and solar resources in the Advisory Comments section of the business item.

### Summary of Community Development Committee Discussion/Questions

This business item was passed as part of the Community Development Committee's consent agenda on June 15, 2026.



# Committee Report

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



**Community Development Committee:** June 15, 2026

**Metropolitan Council:** June 24, 2026

## Business Item: 2026-103

Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan, Carver County

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan.
2. Advise Carver County to consider implementing the recommendations for land use and solar resources in the Advisory Comments section of the business item.

### Summary of Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission discussion/questions

Colin Kelly, Met Council Planning Analyst, presented the staff analysis for the Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission on June 4, 2026. Sam Pertz, Assistant Carver County Parks Director, was present to answer questions.

Commissioner Dillenburg asked about the timeframe for the plan's proposed increase to operations and maintenance funding. Kelly responded that the plan indicates a five year time horizon.

Commissioners Dillenburg and Johnson both posed questions about maintaining dark skies in the vicinity of the Eagle Lake Observatory and working with local communities. Pertz responded that Norwood Young America has expressed a willingness to work with the County and that the local comprehensive plan update process represents an opportunity to formalize this work, in coordination with the local units nearby including New Germany and Norwood Young America.

Council Member Wulff asked about the near-term priorities for plan implementation. Pertz responded that acquiring the two identified parcels, modernizing the campground, and renovating the barn are the top priorities.

Commissioner Yakes asked about the proposed loop trail around Eagle Lake and whether that would require acquiring additional land. Pertz responded that it would take a lot more coordination and that future road projects could present an opportunity to situate a trail along portions of the route. Chair Yarusso clarified that most of Eagle Lake shoreline is not owned by Carver County.

Chair Yarusso asked about Eagle Lake water quality and coordinating with the watershed management organization (WMO). Pertz noted that the WMO has a treatment plan that will lead to improved water quality in the short term, but that persistent challenges will remain. The park plan calls for transitioning away from a swimming beach on the lake toward installing an interactive water feature (splash pad) in the Central Recreation Area.

Commissioner Freese asked about the large tract of land on the north side of the lake and whether that landowner was willing to sell. Pertz responded that the two parcels currently identified in the plan represent the only landowner currently considering selling property to the County. (Both identified parcels are owned by the same individual.)

Chair Yarusso asked whether municipal approval would be needed to split out the identified 50 acres from its larger parcel. Pertz responded that, to the best of his knowledge, Camden Township does not require approval of such a split, but suggested the County may need to revise its

conditional use permit. Yarusso continued, asking whether both parcels were currently farmed. Pertz replied that they were.

Commissioner Dillenburg noted that Baylor Regional Park is a good example of regional significance; that people from outside of the local area are willing to travel there. Baylor has a lot to offer its visitors, especially the observatory.

Chair Yarusso asked about the plan's equity analysis and how the park's geography at the edge of the metro area may have impacted engagement. Pertz acknowledged the challenges of reaching more diverse audiences in Carver County. Kelly said that County staff and their consultants took innovative approaches to engagement and went where people are, both within Carver County and outside of it. Kelly added that County staff used the Met Council's equity tool as well as other tools, like ESRI Tapestry Segmentation, to conduct its analysis.

Chair Yarusso asked about group camping opportunities. Perz responded that improvements to the main campground and a dedicated group campground should serve groups well.

Motion by Commissioner Dillenburg, seconded by Commissioner Johnson. Motion carried.



# Business Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Community Development Committee: June 15, 2026

Metropolitan Council: June 24, 2026

## Business Item: 2026-103

Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan, Carver County

<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	District B, Makiza Johnson District 4, Deb Barber
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	Minn. Stat. § 473.313; <i>2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan</i> : Section 5, Planning Policy Action 1, Long-range plan requirements
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst (651-602-1361)
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Community Development / Regional Planning

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan.
2. Advise Carver County to consider implementing the recommendations for land use and solar resources in the Advisory Comments section of the business item.

### Background

Baylor Regional Park is located in western Carver County in Camden Township, approximately 2.5 miles north of Norwood Young America. (Figures 1 and 2). Baylor is the Metropolitan Area's westernmost regional park. The regional park is 201 acres in size and is located along the western shore of Eagle Lake, offering visitors many recreation opportunities including a 50-site campground, hiking trails, an 18-hole disc golf course, and more. The park's setting on Eagle Lake, combined with its woodlands, wetlands, and prairie areas contribute to its strong natural character and visitor appeal. The park is also home to the Minnesota Astronomical Society's Eagle Lake Observatory.

Minnesota Astronomical Society signed a lease agreement with Carver County in 1988 due to Baylor Regional Park's location near the Twin Cities but with the dark skies needed for successful viewing. The observatory hosts various programs and events, which are very popular with park visitors.

Western Carver County Regional Trail Search Corridor is referenced in the regional park plan. The future regional trail would connect the regional park to Norwood Young America to the south and Dakota Rail Regional Trail to the north.

The long-range plan provides a full update to the original 1975 plan and an amendment in 1979. The plan includes several goals, including to modernize facilities, protect and improve natural resources, and support and expand programming. Adding campground amenities, implementing a natural resource management plan, and obtaining Dark Sky Certification are focal points. The plan also proposes expanding the park boundary by adding two parcels totaling approximately 68.36 acres.

On August 7, 2025, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission met at Baylor Regional Park. Carver County staff and a consultant provided an overview of the long-range planning process and Commission members toured portions of the regional park.

## Rationale

As described in the Analysis section of this report, the Baker Park Reserve Long-Range Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan* including Section 5, Planning Policy Action 1, Long-range plan requirements.

## Imagine Lens Analysis

The Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan advances multiple Imagine 2050 goals including:

- Our communities are healthy and safe
- We lead on addressing climate change
- We protect and restore natural systems

The long-range plan expands access to active recreation, improves safety and accessibility, and promotes inclusive community use, focusing on outreach to diverse, aging, and underserved populations. The plan also encourages low-impact recreation and protects carbon-storing landscapes including forests, wetlands, and other natural areas. Further, the plan enhances management and restoration of ecosystems, protects water resources, and integrates education and stewardship, using interpretive signage and programming to connect visitors with ecosystems.

## Funding

The total estimated cost to implement the recommendations of the Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan is approximately \$33,194,550. The plan breaks down this cost estimate into short-, mid-, and long-term priority estimates, with short-term representing projects within the next five years, mid-term representing projects between 5-15 years, and long-term representing projects that are 15+ years out. Short-term priorities are estimated to cost \$5,576,750. Mid-term priorities are estimated to cost \$9,487,800. Long-term priorities are estimated to cost \$18,130,000.

These cost estimates include contingency and mobilization costs (20%) and engineering, design, and permit costs (20%). The estimates do not include land acquisition or easement costs for new park land or trail corridors.

The current annual cost of operations and maintenance of the regional park is \$631,084. The long-range plan recommends a 25% increase to operations and maintenance costs to \$788,925.

Funding sources for the plan activities will come from a variety of sources, including the State of Minnesota and the Metropolitan Council, which will be subject to future Council actions.



## Analysis

Planning Action 1 of the *2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan* requires that long-range plans for regional parks address 10 items: demand forecast; public and partner engagement and equity analysis; boundaries; acquisition costs; development concept; accessibility; operations; public services; natural systems; and Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (when applicable). The following summary analyzes the long-range plan against these requirements.

### **Demand Forecast**

The Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan includes a Demand Forecast section that focuses on regional visitor estimates, Carver County growth, and a benchmark analysis.

The long-range plan references the Metropolitan Council's 2024 use estimates for the Regional Parks and Trails System, noting there was an estimated 65.7 million visits to the system in 2024, a 5.4% decrease compared to 2023<sup>1</sup>. While record-breaking rainfall in 2024 may have been a factor in the decrease in overall visitation, Carver County showed the largest percent increase in visitation of any regional park implementing agency, with 14% growth over 2023 visits.

Two regional trails in Carver County are referenced in the context of the Metropolitan Council's list of most visited regional trails in 2024, including Lake Minnetonka and Dakota Rail. Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail was estimated to have 970,000 visits in 2024 and Dakota Rail Regional Trail was estimated to have 590,000 visits. In the future, Baylor Regional Park is proposed to connect to Dakota Rail Regional Trail via the Western Carver County Regional Trail, currently a search corridor.

Referring to the Metropolitan Council's Imagine 2050 local forecasts<sup>2</sup>, the long-range plan notes that the anticipated growth within Carver County and specifically Norwood Young America will have a direct impact on Baylor Regional Park as new and existing residents continue to seek quality outdoor recreation opportunities. Carver County's population is forecast to increase from 106,918 in 2020 to 161,250 in 2050; a nearly 54% increase. Norwood Young America's population is forecast to increase from 3,863 in 2020 to 5,700 in 2050; a 75% increase.

On behalf of Carver County, PROS Consulting conducted a benchmark analysis to evaluate how the regional park was positioned among other regional parks with similar draws in Minnesota and elsewhere. In 2023, Baylor Regional Park was estimated to have 103,801 visitors. Among the regional parks included in the benchmark analysis, Baylor's visitation was the most similar to Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park in Scott County, which was estimated to have 103,290 visitors in 2023.

Some findings from the benchmark analysis included:

- Support recreation (including equipment rentals, fishing, swimming, dog parks, boat rentals, etc.) improve the overall draw / visitation and user satisfaction.
- Camper cabins are becoming increasingly popular.
- Water features / water recreation are important assets for summer visitors.
- Updated playgrounds are important for users.

### **Public and Partner Engagement and Equity Analysis**

#### **Public and Partner Engagement**

Community engagement efforts were intended to reach a broad and diverse audience across Carver County and neighboring McLeod County using multiple outreach strategies including the development of a project website, stakeholder interviews, formation of a technical advisory community (TAC), pop up

---

<sup>1</sup> [2024-Regional-Parks-and-Trails-Annual-Use-Estimate.aspx](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Forecasts and Estimates - Metropolitan Council](#)

engagement, meetings with Carver County Boards and Commissions, and public meetings. An equity analysis was also conducted.

The outcome of the concept review preferences via online surveys hosted on the project website were consistent with the initial input from stakeholders. The top four preferences included:

- Expand / improve park natural trails
- Add an interactive water experience
- Improve the campground amenities
- Add a paved regional trail between Norwood Young America and New Germany

A number of project stakeholders were identified at the beginning of the planning process. Others were added during the project to ensure direct engagement with groups and individuals with relevant insights. Outreach included engaging people less familiar with the regional park to improve awareness and to reach more diverse demographic groups. Some of the stakeholders included the Minnesota Astronomical Society, youth group leaders (e.g., 4-H, scouts), Carver County Veterans Services, and Mount Olivet Rolling Acres (e.g., disabled youth, adults, and veterans services).

A TAC was formed to help provide personal expertise, feedback, and perspectives as it related to a project vision, goals, and the ultimate recommendations for the long-range plan, along with assisting in outreach & awareness. TAC members represented multiple Carver County boards, commissions, departments, and others including the Board of Commissioners, Park Commission, Water Management Organization, Soil and Water Conservation District, Sheriff's Office, and Parks. US Fish and Wildlife, Camden Township, and Norwood Young America were also represented. Among other topics, the TAC discussed park access and circulation options, campground improvements, phasing, and how proposed improvements would benefit partners.

Pop-up engagement occurred at events across Carver County in order to reach both rural and developed communities, and included an event in McLeod County. Many of the events included a Carver County Parks table and interactive methods to provide quick input on the long-range plan. Some of the pop-up events included the Mayer Car Show, Carver County Fair (Waconia), Stiftungfest (Norwood Young America), Latin Music and Food Fest (Carver), and Lester Prairie Days (McLeod County). Some of the input provided included:

- Awareness of the park, observatory, and programs is needed for many communities beyond Norwood Young America.
- Eagle Lake water quality concerns were common
- Desire for dog parks and splash pads
- Connect Baylor to Dakota Rail Trail

Three public meetings were held during the project to discuss the planning project, review plans, and share preferences. Some of the input provided included:

- Like improved camping opportunities
- Like addition of camper cabins
- Love the idea of a regional trail connection
- Natural resource initiatives are important
- Keep skies dark

### *Equity Analysis*

The long-range plan includes an equity analysis and integrates data from ESRI - an ArcGIS-based geospatial system – and the Metropolitan Council's online equity mapping tool. While Carver County residents predominately identify as "white alone" (86.9%), the County is expected to become more diverse. The City of Chaska is the most diverse community in the County, with 80.9% identifying as white, 9.1% as Hispanic, 8.0% as two or more races, and 3.8% as Asian. The plan includes a snapshot of the County's population density, income levels, and disabilities. The Met Council's equity tool identified higher concentrations of those with disabilities in Norwood



Young America, which has a number of senior housing facilities.

Targeted initiatives focused on engaging underserved populations and culturally diverse communities via attendance at cultural events and conducting stakeholder interviews. For the purpose of the long-range planning process, underserved populations included teens, senior citizens, multi-ethnic populations, veterans, people with disabilities, and low income populations.

Engagement within Chaska and Waconia reached a wider range of age groups with higher overall participation and more diverse participants, largely as a result of event types and locations in more populated areas. Many of the outreach events in the more rural parts of Carver County primarily attracted local residents, but represented a wide range of age groups.

Aside from the Chaska events, most participants identified as white, which aligns with countywide demographics and the Baylor Regional Park primary service area. Engagement efforts involving communities with language or cultural barriers included multilingual staff to support more effective and inclusive participation.

Feedback and comments from culturally diverse communities during the planning process were similar to others who provided input including:

- Improve / modernize the existing amenities
- Improve / protect the lake and natural resources
- Improve awareness of the park and programs
- Improve the safety of park visitors
- Improve regional connectivity

Engagement efforts identified limited public awareness of existing parks and recreation programs as a primary barrier to participation. Continued population growth in the County will bring new residents who aren't familiar with available recreation opportunities, increasing the need for stronger outreach methods.

To enhance public awareness, increased coordination with local communities and partners can help expand outreach. This may include working with local libraries, community centers, and senior housing, and finding community leaders to help expand outreach to more diverse community members.

Proactive community outreach will remain essential as recreational needs evolve. Continued emphasis on incorporation of "gateway" activities like hiking and camping will introduce residents to new experiences, build confidence, and encourage repeat park use.

### ***Boundaries***

The regional park's total owned acreage (management boundary) is 201 acres. The long-range plan proposes adding two parcels totaling 68.36 acres to the park boundary (Figure 3). Approval of the long-range plan would expand the regional park's administrative boundary (owned acres and inholdings) to 269.36 acres.

### ***Acquisition Costs***

The "Northern Parcel" (PID #020270910) contains approximately 50 acres of an overall 157.66 acre property. The "Southern Parcel" (PID #020340600) is 18.36 acres and is located on the west sides of Eagle Lake.

The long-range plan states that Carver County will maintain an open dialogue with willing sellers and stay abreast of market rate acquisition costs and feasibility of acquiring any additional parcels, as directed by the Carver County Board of Commissioners. Land acquisition will require formally establishing property values for review by both parties before proceeding into an agreement.

The development concept identifies potential opportunities for using the proposed acquisition lands, which are designed with the ability to be phased in.



## ***Development Concept***

The development concept includes a project vision, goals, and an implementation plan for Baylor Regional Park.

The vision for Baylor Regional Park is to protect and enhance its natural resources while expressing its rural character. The park will provide high-quality outdoor recreation experiences that meet diverse needs and complement the broader regional park system.

The primary project goals include:

- Retain rural character
- Protect and improve natural resources
- Modernize facilities
- Raise awareness
- Improve experiences and safety
- Strengthen partnerships
- Support and expand programming

Long-range plan recommendations focus on six different areas of the existing or potential future regional park (Figure 4) including:

- A. Campground
- B. Barn and Park Entrance
- C. Central Recreation Area
- D. Waterfront
- E. Park Entrance and Southern Acquisition Parcel
- F. Southern Acquisition Parcel

The long-range plan also includes sections on trails and wayfinding. The primary goals related to trails include improving regional connectivity, improving the park experience, and improving the safety of pedestrians. The plan acknowledges the Western Carver County Regional Trail Search Corridor, which would connect Norwood Young America to the Dakota Rail Regional Trail. The plan proposes in-park paved trail segments that would serve to connect future regional trail segments north and south of the regional park.

The plan also proposes a local loop trail around Eagle Lake that would connect to existing park trails. This loop trail will require future feasibility studies to determine alignment options which may need to be times with road improvement projects due to numerous existing constraints.

From a wayfinding perspective, recommendations include developing a coordinated wayfinding signage plan and manual for use across the County parks and trails system. The long-range plan acknowledges that signage should be intentionally developed using universal design principles to ensure that all users – regardless of age, ability or language needs – can successfully access information within the site and their environment.

### ***(A) Campground***

Recommendations for the park campground include new loops for easier maneuvering, realigned RV sites, six new camper cabins, two new comfort stations, realigned natural surface trails, and a new playground. Campground improvements and the new comfort stations would be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible.

Two camper cabins would be built in the north campground and four cabins would be built in the south campground.

One of the comfort buildings is proposed to include a connected outdoor kitchen for maple syrup program use.

### ***(B) Barn and Park Entrance***

Plan recommendations for the barn include an improved campground check-in space and the development of a “campground clubhouse” to include concessions, social areas, and games.



Restrooms would be improved to be ADA accessible.

The park entrance road and parking areas would be paved, and wayfinding would be added. The dump station is proposed to be relocated out of the campground and into this area, contingent upon the removal and relocation of the park maintenance building to the Southern Acquisition Parcel (see below).

Paved trails will connect the parking lot to the barn and to the nearby playground and will be ADA accessible. A 12' wide paved trail is proposed to parallel County Road 33 and could serve to connect future regional trail segments.

### *(C) Central Recreation Area*

A new group picnic shelter is proposed to have two separate picnic areas on either end, accommodating 40-50 people in each space, and connected by restrooms and a changing room.

Adjacent to the picnic shelter, a new interactive water feature is recommended, adding a highly desired park amenity for park visitors. A new playground is also recommended adjacent to the water feature.

Parking capacity is expanded to meet new and existing uses, and is intended to be paved to reduce dust that can affect the observatory equipment. ADA accessible paved trails would be added from the parking lot to the picnic shelter, water feature, and playground.

### *(D) Waterfront*

A new group picnic shelter with restrooms, a small kitchenette, and exterior patio overlooking the lake is proposed to replace the existing building at the end of its useful life. Waterfront deck seating would be added. If the southern parcel is not acquired and developed, and the County wants to develop a new park program building with meeting space, the picnic shelter could be replaced by the park building described below.

A new fishing pier would replace the existing pier at the end of its useful life. The swimming beach is proposed to be removed, to be replaced by a naturalized shoreline.

The parking lot is proposed to be paved and ADA accessible parking stalls added. A central rain garden would be installed, as well as a berm with low plantings to screen headlights from the observatory.

### *(E) Park Entrance and Southern Acquisition Parcel*

Improvements in a portion of this space will require land acquisition. If the regional park is not expanded through land acquisition, the new park building could be built at the waterfront location.

Plan recommendations for this part of the existing and potential future regional park include a new park building with a small scale nature center and program spaces, equipment rentals, a meeting room, and restrooms. A new parking lot with ADA accessible parking stalls would be added as well. In addition, an ADA accessible kayak launch with a paved trail from the parking lot and new park building would be added.

Like the "Barn and Park Entrance" area to the north, a 12' wide paved trail is also proposed to parallel County Road 33 and could serve to connect future regional trail segments. A trailhead including drinking water, seating, a bike rack, kiosk, and a fix it station would be added as well.

### *(F) Southern Acquisition Parcel*

Improvements proposed in this space will require land acquisition. If the regional park is not expanded through land acquisition, the maintenance facility and dump stations will remain in their current locations.

Plan recommendations for this part of the potential future regional park include a new park maintenance facility, an archery range, a small picnic shelter, natural surface loop trail, and a boardwalk across wetland areas.

The archery range would be set into the existing hillside, would expand and improve on park programs, and would have youth targets, intermediate targets, and a 3D target range with elevated



shooting platform.

Like the “Barn and Park Entrance” and “Park Entrance and Southern Acquisition Parcel” areas to the north, a 12’ wide paved trail is also proposed to parallel County Road 33 and could serve to connect future regional trail segments.

### **Accessibility**

Providing ADA accessible facilities is a key part of the long-range plan and its goal to modernize facilities at Baylor Regional Park. Proposed improvements are referenced in the Development Concept section above.

The long-range plan acknowledges that enhancing accessibility includes physical access as well as ensuring regional park facilities are inclusive and able to accommodate a wide range of needs and abilities. In addition to the physical access considerations referenced in the Development Concept, the plan includes a number of strategies for advancing accessibility throughout plan implementation in the areas of Park Access and Universal and Inclusive Design.

#### *Park Access*

- Continue collaboration with schools, community groups, and other organizations to ensure that the facility meets the needs of visiting groups and supports programming.
- Continue the practice of not charging entrance fees for general park use, which supports equitable access and encourages broader participation.
- Incorporate multi-modal design to accommodate vehicles, buses, bikes, and pedestrians, as well as charging stations for cars and bikes.

#### *Universal and Inclusive Design*

- Incorporating sensory experiences such as cooling misting stations, tactile elements, fragrant plantings, and calming sensory experiences.
- Integrating supportive equipment and features including large-print and multilingual signage, audio and tactile wayfinding components, adult changing tables, and adaptive equipment to support diverse needs.
- Improving comfort through use of more opportunities for places to rest, view nature, and find share that supplement universal design, such as bench pads that have space for wheelchairs to sit beside them.

### **Operations**

Carver county Parks is charged with the management and operation of the county’s parks and trails system, including Baylor Regional Park. The Carver County Board of Commissioners establishes policies and ordinances for the park and trail system and sets the budgets for operations and maintenance.

According to the long-range plan, Pros Consulting assessed the current operations and maintenance responsibilities and resourcing practices of Carver County Parks. It is estimated that Baylor Regional Park receives a greater percentage of the overall maintenance and operating budget in comparison to the other Carver County parks and trails. Additionally, the scale of operations is higher per acre. This is primarily due to the operations of the campground and available programs.

Carver County maintains a high standard of care for Baylor Regional Park which was reflected in community engagement outcomes. While the regional park is well maintained, its amenities are aging, heavily used, and deteriorating under normal expected impacts. The costs associated with maintaining these sites and facilities will increase over time as these assets continue to age. As a result, the plan recommends an increase in annual operations and maintenance expenses over the next five years to better meet these needs.

Maintenance of facilities and lands is essential to protect public investment, enhance natural systems qualities, and achieve the County’s goals of providing users clean, safe, and enjoyable year-round park experiences. As park improvements and redevelopment takes place, new or



expanded maintenance services will need to be provided. For example, new camper cabins, a water feature, a multi-purpose building, and an archery range will expand operations and maintenance needs.

The current annual cost of operations and maintenance of the regional park is \$631,084. The long-range plan recommends a 25% increase to operations and maintenance costs to \$788,925.

### **Public Services**

Baylor Regional Park contains several water wells to provide potable drinking water, as there are currently no municipal water services to connect to. Proposed improvements will rely on existing wells if they meet current standards, regulations, and capacity. The long-range plan assumes existing wells are suitable for continued use and identify areas where additional wells would likely be necessary if municipal services do not exist at time of implementation.

Two new wells are proposed: One in the Central Recreation Area for restrooms and a water feature, and another in the Southern Acquisition Parcel for the new park building and trailhead.

Baylor Regional Park also contains several septic fields as there are currently no regional sanitary services available. As with the well water, proposed improvements will rely on existing infrastructure if it meets current standards, regulations, and capacity. The long-range plan assumes existing septic fields are suitable for continued use and identifies areas where additional septic fields would likely be needed if municipal services don't exist at the time of implementation.

Two new septic fields are proposed: One at the Central Recreation Area for restrooms and another in the Southern Acquisition Parcel for the new park building.

Currently there are no bus routes or transit stops along County Road 33, however, the Met Council and Carver County expanded TransitLink services to supplement Dial-A-Ride services during non-traditional business hours and have fixed routes for senior citizens between Norwood Young America and Waconia.

### **Natural Systems**

The majority of the regional park historically consisted of the "Big Woods," transitioning to aspen-oak land as it extended north. The Big Woods are characterized by tree species consisting of sugar maple, basswood, red oak, and elm. Remnant maple-basswood forest remains in the northern section of the regional park and contribute to the park's successful maple syrup programs.

The Minnesota Land Cover Classification System categorizes the regional park into 17 land cover types. The land cover types that make up the greatest percentage of the park include cattail marsh (21%), dry prairie (18%), and maple basswood forest (12%).

The plan notes the presence of low-quality woodland as well, where the structure, function and species composition have been severely altered. The presence of invasive species like buckthorn and garlic mustard restricts the viability of native plant regeneration without human intervention. Native ash trees are being impacted by the emerald ash borer. Wetland areas are dominated by invasive narrow-leaved cattail and reed canary grass. Overall, the plan notes an opportunity for habitat improvement in the wetlands, woodlands, and grasslands within the regional park.

According to the Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Information System database, there are no rare plants, animals, or habitats that exist within the park or within one mile.

Management of the terrestrial natural resources will require ongoing effort. General management goals include improving existing communities, controlling and/or removal of invasive species, and ecological restoration. Priorities include enhancing the remnant maple-basswood forest, implementing prompt interventions to prevent the dominance of non-native species, and restoring native plant species to promote biodiversity, soil health, and ecological health.

Protection of surface and groundwater in the regional park is important for the health of the ecosystem and park users as well. Protecting and reestablishing natural environments, managing runoff, developing riparian buffers, and supporting water quality monitoring are essential to support clean water. Through the long-range planning process, several locations were identified around



Eagle Lake that may contribute to pollutant loading. The plan includes conversion of existing agriculture fields to prairie, conversion of mowed wet prairie to natural plant communities, reduction of mowed turf grass through the establishment of prairie or bee lawn, and enhancing or expanding riparian buffers adjacent to water resources.

The long-range plan estimates \$821,000 in initial investments for tree plantings, prairie restoration, bee lawn conversion, wetland restoration, and shoreline restoration. As with overall project cost estimates, the natural resource estimates include contingency and mobilization costs (20%) and engineering, design, and permit costs (20%).

### ***Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area***

Baylor Regional Park is not located within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area. Therefore, this long-range plan requirement does not apply.

## **Other Council Policies and Systems – Advisory Comments**

### Community Development – Land Use and Solar Resources (MacKenzie Young-Walters, 651-602-1373)

If additional parcels are acquired for Baylor Regional Park, Carver County will need to amend their comprehensive plan to re-guide these parcels from Agricultural Area to Parks and Preserve.

Carver County Parks should consider integrating solar panels into proposed new/renovated buildings and explore adding electric vehicle charging infrastructure to parking areas. These elements could provide an opportunity to showcase and educate the public on sustainability and conservation while also reducing the park's long-term operating expenses.

### Community Development – Forecasts (Todd Graham, 651-602-1322)

The long-range plan appears complete and consistent with policy. Carver County provides a demand forecast analysis that includes Met Council's Imagine 2050 local forecasts (2025). Carver County expects park use demand to expand proportionate to population growth.

### Environmental Services – Water Resources (Steve Christopher, 651-602-1033)

The plan appears to be accurate and complete, and potential water resource impacts appear to be addressed. Council Water Resources staff commend the coordination with the Carver County Water Management Organization to identify potential water quality projects for implementation. These potential improvements would benefit Eagle Lake which is identified as a Met Council Priority Water.



Figure 1. Baylor Regional Park location in the Regional Parks and Trails System

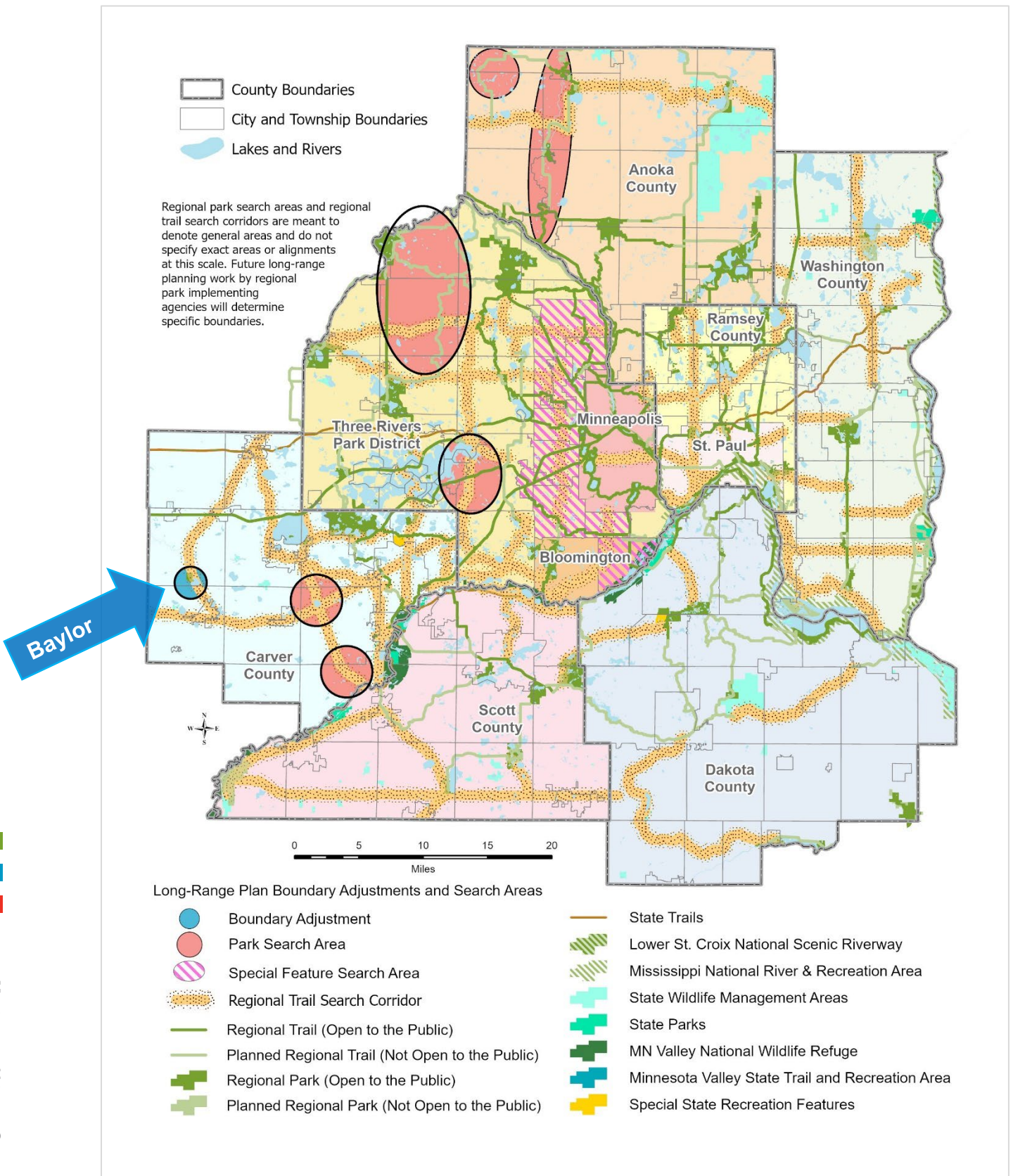


Figure 2. Baylor Regional Park location in Carver County

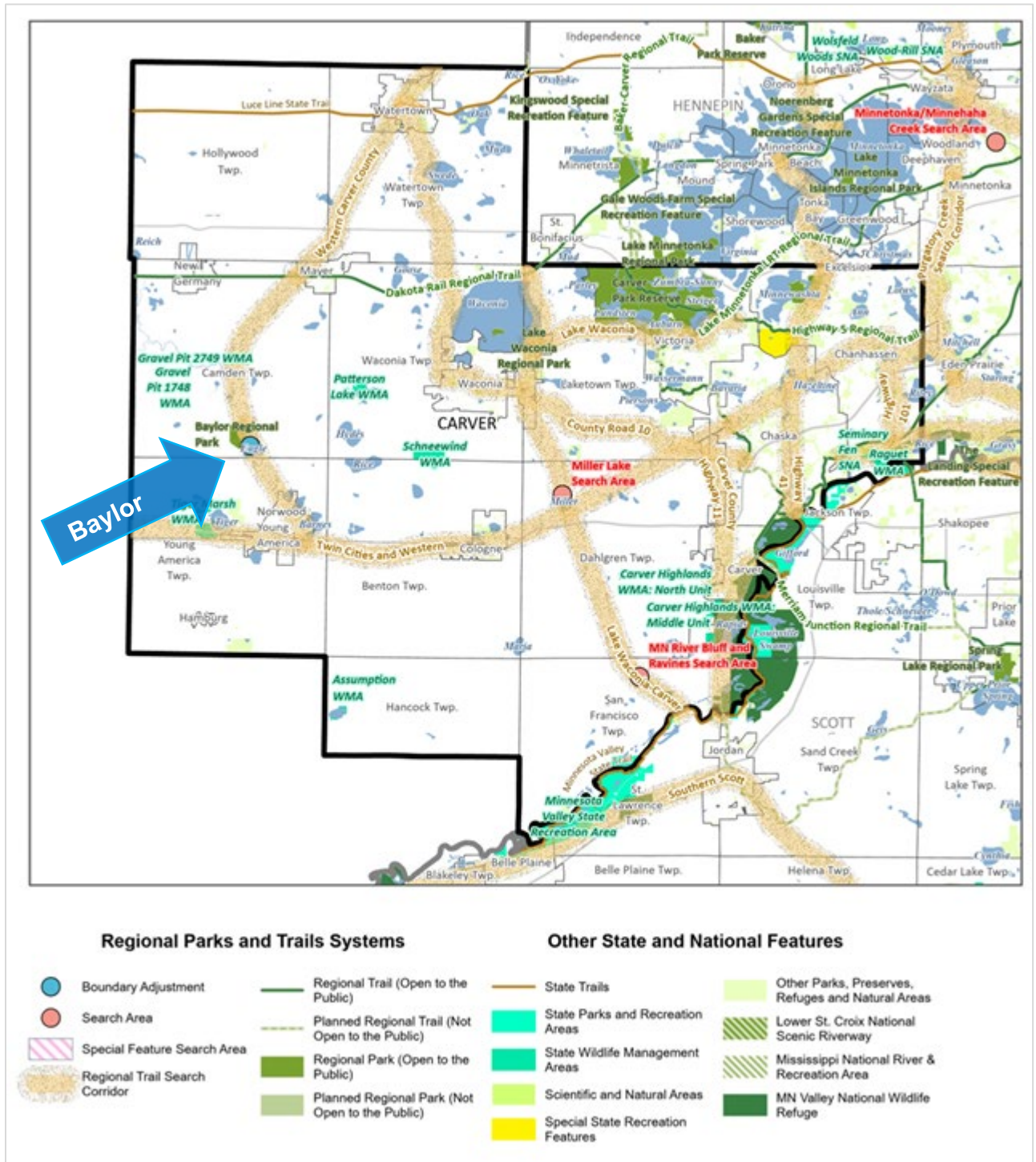


Figure 3: Baylor Regional Park Boundary Acquisition Opportunities (LRP Figure 3.2)

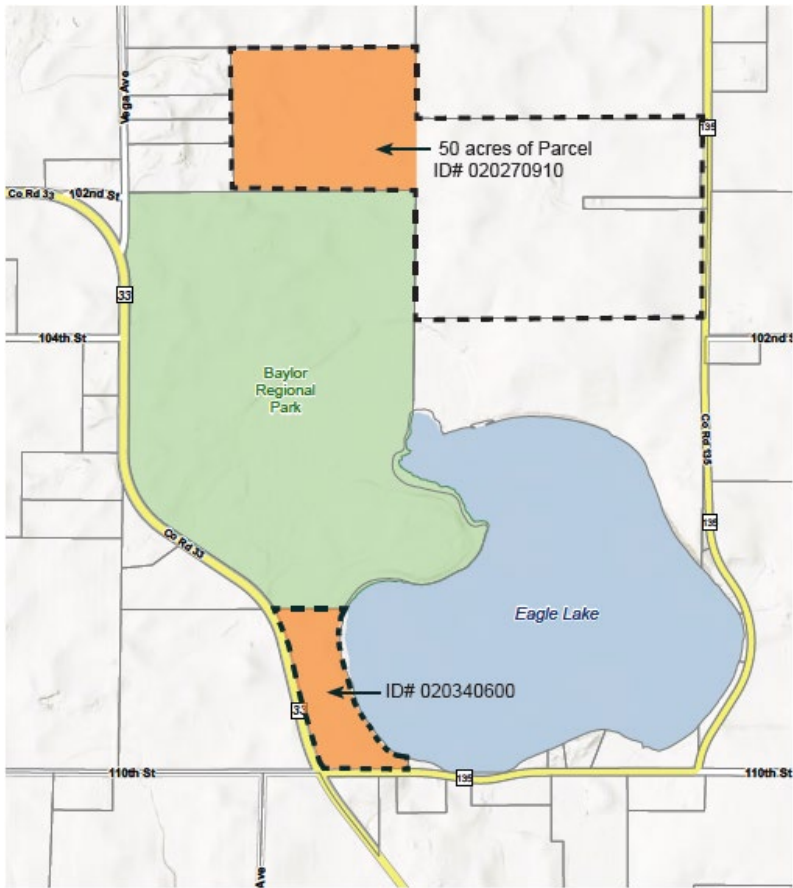


Figure 4: Development Concept Areas (LRP pg. 76)

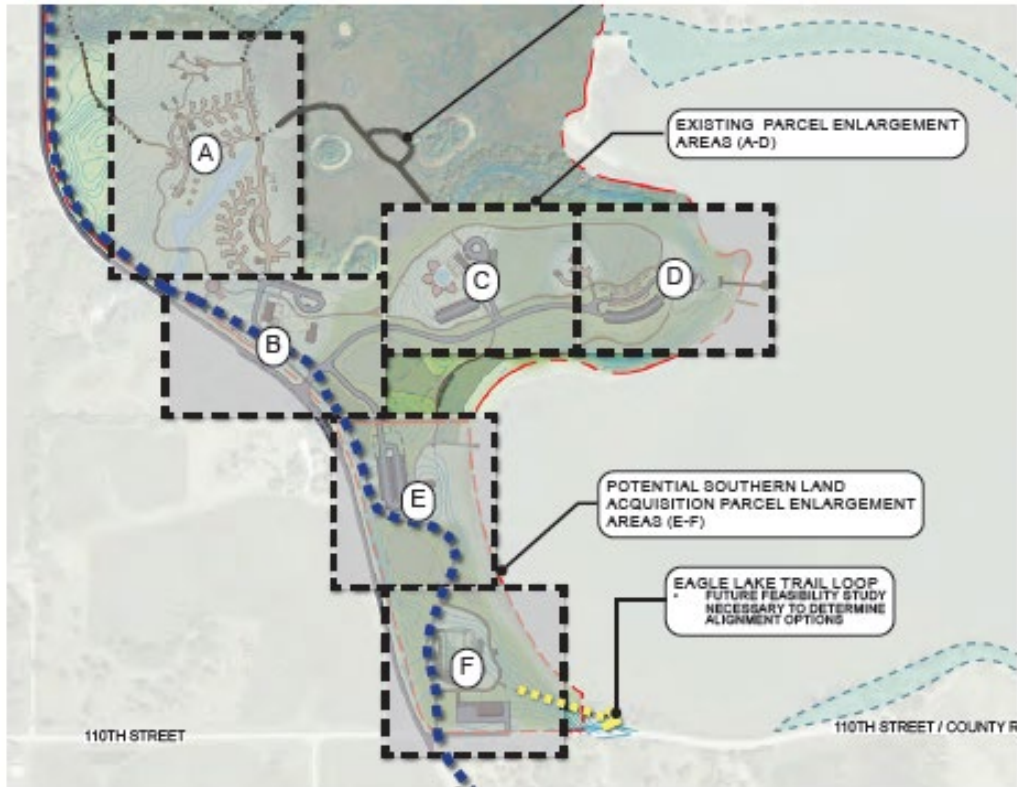


Figure 5: Baylor Regional Park Overall Long-Range Plan (LRP Figure 3.3)

