VII. PARKS AND TRAILS

Future land use and development decisions need to consider the necessary infrastructure that will enable growth, protect community character and natural systems, and sustain Scandia as a community over time. Parks and recreation amenities and programs are a critical element to sustaining the community. Park, recreation, and open space goals need to be integrated with Scandia's land use, transportation, and economic goals. This section summarizes the findings and recommendations of the Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Plan, the Comprehensive Trails Master Plan Report, and the Regional Park and Trail needs identified by the Metropolitan Council.

A. Parks and Trails Goals and Objectives

The City established four goals for Parks and Trails in Scandia. These goals were developed from and are in support of the goals, policies, and strategies as identified in the 2006 Parks, Trails, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

Goal: Develop an effective planning approach to developing and maintaining parks and recreation areas and constructing and maintaining trails and routes to meet the needs of City residents.

Objectives:

- Design and locate parks, recreation facilities, trails, and routes in a manner that best meet their purpose and the needs of City residents.

Goal: Develop a close working relationship with other agencies and groups to enhance the parks and recreation facilities and develop trails and routes in the City.

Objectives:

- Continue to work closely with Washington County, the Metropolitan Council, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on more detailed planning efforts to insure the regional green infrastructure system is designed in a manner compatible with existing and planned development in the City.
- Coordinate with local park and trail interest groups in development, implementation, operation, and maintenance of projects.
- Promote volunteerism to enhance community ownership and stewardship of parks, trails, recreation programs, and services
- Promote Scandia's rural and recreational assets to encourage tourism.

Goal: Support a network of parks and trails to provide community-wide connections to serve the health and welfare of the City's residents.

Objectives:

- Emphasize the importance of making connections to regional trails, including the Gateway Trail, the Immigrant Trail, and the Hardwood Trail.
- Promote trail connection between Big Marine Park Reserve and William O'Brien State Park. *(Glacial Hills Regional Trail)*

Goal: Use park search areas and recreational facilities search areas and other natural resource information to guide and encourage park acquisition donations and potential site acquisitions when property becomes available.

Objectives:

- Evaluate property located in park and/or recreational facility search areas for purchase, lease, or easement to augment the existing Park System, if and when it becomes available.

B. Existing Guiding Documents

The 2006 Parks, Trials, Open Space, and Recreation Plan: In 2006, New Scandia Township completed and adopted the Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Plan. This document describes the current state of, and recommended improvements for, the City's existing "green infrastructure." Green infrastructure refers generally to those systems that allow for and sustain growth within the community and improve the quality of life for existing and future residents. Green infrastructure is typically based on natural systems rather than the constructed systems that comprise "grey infrastructure" – roads, water and wastewater, energy and tele-communications, and other engineered systems. Green infrastructure includes some constructed infrastructure that is based on or works with natural systems, such as active recreation parks, trails, and works in conjunction with some built systems, such as stormwater management and conveyance systems that supplement the natural stormwater system.

The Plan includes a detailed inventory of existing green infrastructure, summaries of public and stakeholder priorities that affect the City's investments in and maintenance of its green infrastructure, planning priorities for meeting current and future park and recreation needs, and recommendations for specific parks, trails, and land acquisition to address existing needs or shortfalls. The plan included five park goals and seven trails goals, with multiple policies or strategies for each goal. The policies identified both general principles for creating and managing parks and trails and specific recommendations for tools to achieve park and trail goals. In addition to the goals, policies and strategies, the Park Plan identified specific improvements to existing parks, search area priorities for new parks, and a general prioritization of the local needs for different types of parks. This plan also addresses Scandia's regional park assets and recommend steps to enhance their functional use by managing land use, further developing City and regional trail systems, and adding new recreational amenities in or near these regional parks.

Comprehensive Trails Master Plan Report: The Scandia City Council adopted the new Comprehensive Trail Plan in June of 2011. The plan was developed with the help of many Scandia residents, the Park and Recreation Committee, and the Friends of Scandia Parks and Trails. Developing connections to and among Scandia parks and to regional trails are goals of the trail planning project, as well as identifying safe walking and biking routes to school and other key locations. The plan was funded by a grant from the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) through the Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment. Two of the Trails Planning Maps are included as Figures at the end of this section.

C. Metropolitan Council System Statement

The Metropolitan Council created a Regional Parks System Statement Scandia 2015. The System Statement identifies which regional park issues need to be addressed in the City of Scandia's comprehensive plan. No new regional parks are planned in Washington County by 2040, and no recent changes to the existing regional park system (which could require adjustment of the City's land use maps) are noted in the System Statement.

The System Statement identifies one existing regional park - Big Marine Park Reserve - as well as two state lands - the Rustrum Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the Falls Creek Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) - as Regional Parks Components in Scandia. Since the publication of the System Statement, Crystal Springs SNA was created and is now open to the public as part of the DNR's natural area system. Crystal Springs is within the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

Washington County has additionally called out William O'Brien State Park and the Glacial Hills Regional Trail search corridor in their 2040 comprehensive planning documents. Both of these facilities are located on the southeastern border of Scandia along Marine on St. Croix and May Township.

Thrive MSP 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan calls out the Glacial Hills Regional Trail search corridor running 12 miles, east-west between William O'Brien State Park and the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail. The Plan also calls out the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, a portion of which is located in the region (along the eastern border of Scandia). The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is a unit of the National Park System located on the St. Croix River and the Namekagon River in Wisconsin. The National Riverway includes the two rivers and their riparian areas and occupies the boundary between Wisconsin and Minnesota. The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is maintained and managed by the National Park Service and the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources.

The Metropolitan Council's 2005 Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program identified several priority acquisitions in 2006-7 to expand Big Marine Park Reserve and a project scheduled for 2010-11 to develop a campground and related facilities in Big Marine Park Reserve. These investments will likely result in increased use of Big Marine Park Reserve and will enhance the recreational value of trail connections or other local park and open space efforts connecting to the Reserve.

The Regional Parks and Trail System in Scandia is shown in Figure VII-A.

Figure Vii-A - Regional Parks and Trails

Comprehensive Plan

Scandia, Minnesota

Regional Parks and Trail System

October 2019

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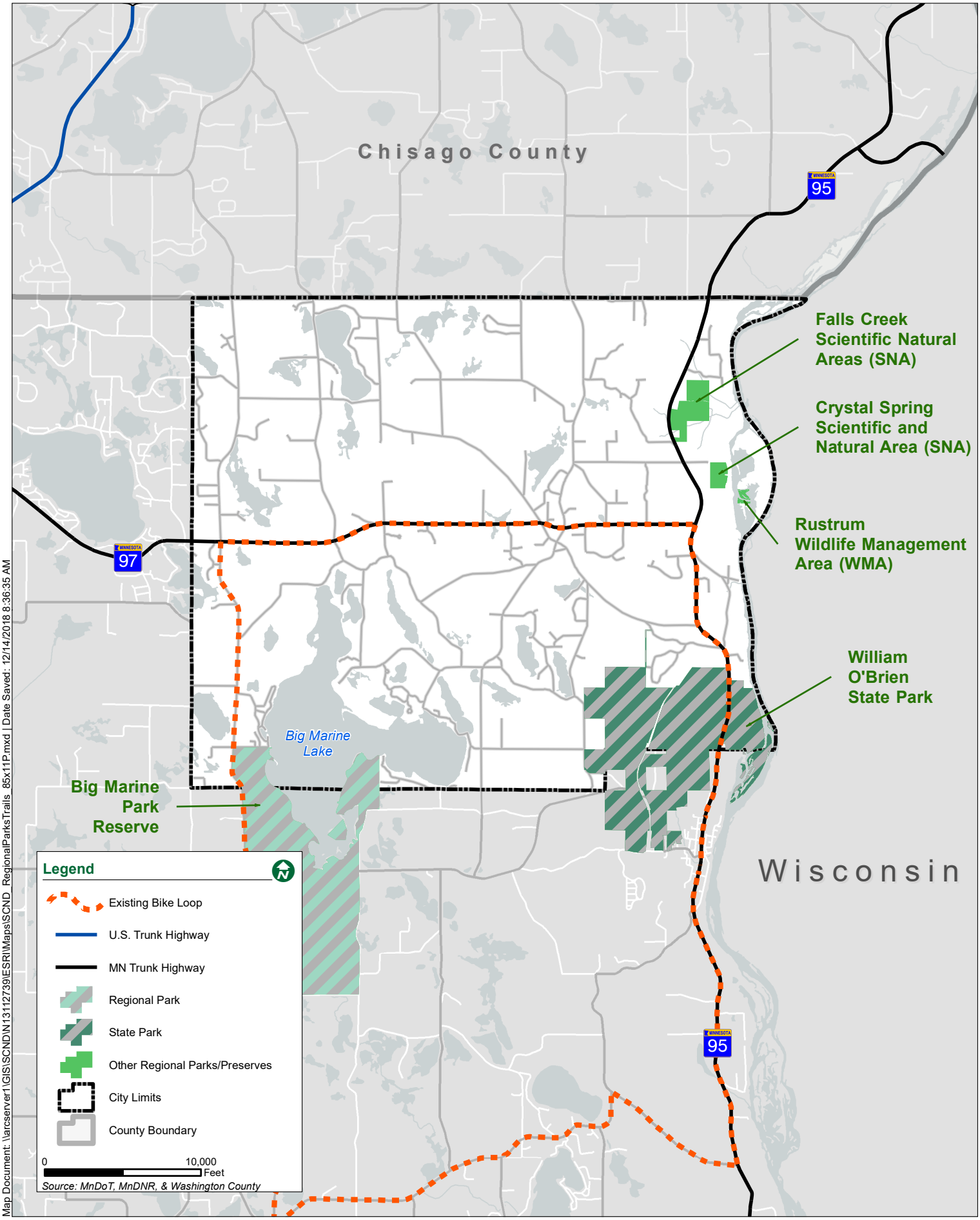
Real People. Real Solutions.



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D. Stakeholder Perceptions and Recommendations

The resident survey showed an extremely strong interest in protecting the City's open space amenities, which include both the natural systems portrayed on the Open Space Plan map and the rural character associated with agriculture. Residents reported greater participation in individual recreation activities (jogging, biking, and fishing) than team or organized activities. The Plan did not report, however, any distinction between adult and youth preferences.

The visioning discussion addressed how the different components of Scandia's green infrastructure interrelate. The visioning process included an identification of issues, listing of opportunities, and a number of recommendations. The recommendations for the Parks and Trails portion of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan update, as developed by the Parks and Recreation Committee are listed in the following section. The recommendations have been separated into four categories: Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Recommendations.

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update Community Survey (conducted in 2017) identified the following priorities with regards to parks and trails:

- Walking/Biking/Horse Trails - 13% of survey respondents identified this as one of their top three development priorities for the City of Scandia (this is the second highest ranking after Commercial growth)
- Outdoor Recreation - 9% of survey respondents identified this as one of their top three development priorities
- Parks - 6% of survey respondents identified this as one of their top three development priorities

Forty-one percent (41%) of survey respondents enjoy walking and do so daily within their neighborhoods. Approximately 22% of respondents stated that they would walk/bike more if there were more sidewalks/trails and approximately 24% said they would walk/bike more if local roads were improved for this use.

Focus groups also expressed a desire for sidewalks and bike paths in the city. There was also an interest in dog parks and public beach access on Bone or Big Marine Lake.

The Scandia Parks and Recreation Committee reviewed the Parks and Recreation portion of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and updated recommendations for the 2040 vision for the City. These recommendations are summarized in the following list, divided by park, trail, open space and recreational facilities recommendations.

Park System Plan

a) Focal point of Scandia Community Center Park as central hub of parks network throughout township
b) Increase active recreation at Scandia Elementary School area
c) Identify where and what kind of park acquisition is desirable
d) Identify appropriate use of existing parks

Trail System Plan

a) Support development of Gateway trail and identify connections
b) Identify opportunities for new trail systems, trailheads, and rest stops within the community

Open Space System Plan

a) Protect stream corridors; link to promote preservation of open space
b) Promote public awareness of value of open space and conservation easements

Recreational Facilities System Plan

a) Develop partnerships with local and regional recreation facilities (e.g. adjacent school districts, neighboring communities, and government agencies).

E. Existing Parks and Trails

1. Regional/State Parks

Regional parks generally serve populations within a one-half hour to one-hour travel time. They are usually in areas that exhibit highly valued scenic or natural qualities. In the Scandia area, many regional parks and open space relate to the Lower St. Croix River, lakes or natural communities. This section describes and maps the regional facilities in Scandia. Scandia has a state park, a county park reserve, two scientific and natural areas and a wildlife management area located within the city. Figure VII-A shows regional parks located in Scandia.

William O'Brien State Park

William O'Brien State Park is on the St. Croix River and it offers many recreation opportunities including biking, swimming, and nature interpretation. The park is located in the southeast and includes 16 miles of hiking trails. The park located 5 minutes from Scandia Village.

Big Marine Lake Park Reserve

Big Marine Park Reserve is owned and operated by Washington County and is partially located within the City of Scandia. The park was selected as a regional facility because of its excellent natural resource features, including the St. Croix Valley/northeast ground moraine and high-quality upland and wetland wildlife habitat. When completed, the park will be 1,800 acres, with 80 percent of its acreage set aside for preservation and protection. This 80 percent will eventually resemble the land as it was prior to the arrival of the settlers in the mid-1800s.

Falls Creek Scientific Natural Areas (SNA)

Falls Creek is a MN DNR owned 136-acre scientific and natural area in Scandia. It represents one of the most diverse natural areas in Washington County. It is home to a myriad of Paleozoic rocks, steep ravines, pine and oak forests, and protection for wildlife. Many areas that have been destroyed are undergoing reforestation with seedlings grown from acorns collected at the site. Unique aspects of the park include a stand of virgin hardwood and white pine forest as well as numerous wildflowers like trilliums, rue anemone, and bellwort.

Crystal Spring Scientific and Natural Area (SNA)

Crystal Spring is a 38-acre MN DNR site offering high quality scenic views, impressive steep cliffs, hiking, wildlife watching, photography opportunities, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. High quality native plant communities including red oak – basswood forest, exhibiting old-growth characteristics, carpet the rugged terrain. This site is included in an Audubon Important Bird Area within the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway providing bird watching opportunities. This SNA is located between the St. Croix River and County Rd. 95 (St. Croix Trail),

approximately 3 miles east of central Scandia. There are no maintained trails or other recreational facilities.

Rustrum Wildlife Management Area (WMA)

Rustrum WMA is 24 acres, owned by the MN DNR, and located approximately three miles east of central Scandia on the St. Croix River. The WMA is accessible by water only with the nearest carry-in access located at Otisville, one mile downstream. The site is 83% open water and emergent vegetation marsh and 17% flood plain forest. This site offers unique boat access, hunting opportunities, and flood plain forest wildlife viewing.

2. Regional Trails

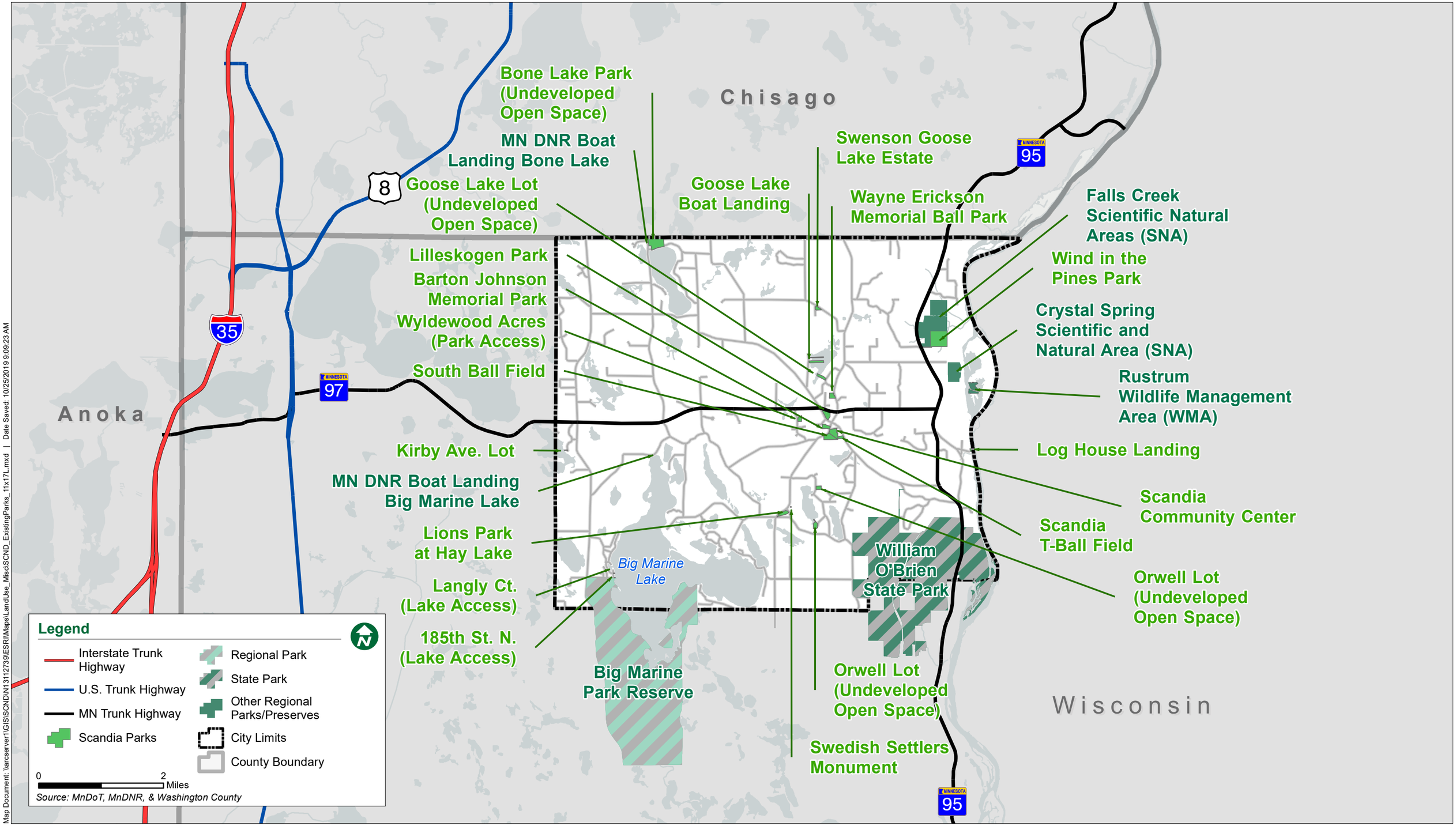
Washington County has a 29.7 mile on-road bike loop identified through Scandia, Marine on St. Croix, and May Township. This loop runs along County Highway 15, Trunk Highways 97 and 95. This loop intersects another bike loop that connects to the Gateway State Trail at Pine Point Regional Park (Stillwater Township).

There are no other regional trails currently identified through Scandia.

3. Local Parks

This section describes and maps the existing local parks, trails, and recreation facilities in Scandia. Table VII-A highlights the available amenities provided by each park, shown in Figure VII-B.

Figure VII-B - Local Parks and Trails



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Scandia Community Center, 14727 209th St N.
Located in Olinda Trail North, just south of the Village Center, the Scandia Community Center is a well-used facility with a community building that houses the township offices, banquet hall with kitchen facilities, meeting rooms, restrooms and outdoor recreational facilities on an 18-acre site. The Community Center shares a parking lot of approximately 120 parking spaces with the Leonard Wojtowicz Skating Park. There is a public works maintenance building on site.

Wind in the Pines Reserve, 22199 St. Croix Trail
Wind in the Pines Park is thought to be one of the most diverse ecological areas left in Washington County by the Minnesota DNR. This 44-acre site is located in the northeast corner of the Township along State Highway 95 across from Pilar Road. Bounded by the Falls Creek SNA to the north and the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway to the east, this parcel offers diversity of old growth forest and pristine prairies, providing invaluable wildlife habitat and unparalleled scenic value. There is a small grave lot off Highway 95. Trails are marked and maintained by volunteers for non-motorized pedestrian use.

Lilleskogen Park, 14600 Oakhill Road
This 8-acre park is located near the Village Center, with approximately half its area in wetlands. Parking and access are problematic off of Oakhill Road. A few old footpaths remain. Existing facilities include a parking lot, a Veteran's Memorial, and a butterfly garden. This park is currently undergoing restoration of the wetlands, in preparation for future development. This park was formerly known as Old Lion's Park.

Lion's Park at Hay Lake, 14001 Old Marine Trail
Located at the intersection of Old Marine Trail and Olinda Trail North in the south-central part of the city, this 7-acre site has been updated with a park shelter, picnic tables, grills, lighting, and electrical hook-ups. Parking is available on the street. This site is adjacent to the Hay Lake School Museum and across the road from the Swedish Settler's Monument.

Barton Johnson Memorial Park, 20880 Olinda Trail
Barton Johnson is a private neighborhood park located adjacent to the Gammelgarden Museum and across Olinda Trail from the Scandia Community Center.

Wayne Erickson Memorial Ball Park, 21398 Olinda Trail
Formerly known as Scandia Lighted Ball Field, Wayne Erickson Memorial Ball Park is located on the west side of Olinda Trail/County Road 3, north of Scandia Trail/Highway 97. The site includes a concession stand and children's play structure.

South Ball Field, 20835 Olinda Trail
The ball field is located just south of the Community Center, on the east side of Olinda Trail/County Road 3.

Scandia T-Ball Field, 14849 Oakhill Road North
This ball field is located on the south side of Oakhill (County Road 52), east of Olinda Trail.

Swenson Goose Lake Estate
This 1.7-acre parcel is part of the Swenson Estate Subdivision off of Oren Road North near the north central part of the city. There are no existing facilities on site. In 2016, the Soaring Eagles 4-H Club led a pollinator planting project on the parcel.

Log House Landing, Off 205th Street North- North of William O'Brien State Park
Log House Landing is located off 205th Street North just east of Quinnell Ave in Scandia and provides access to the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

Bone Lake Park (undeveloped open space)
Located in the northwest corner of the city near Lofton Ave., this 26-acre park is under approximately 60% wetland cover and supports the inlet to Bone Lake. It contains a DNR boat launch on the north side of Bone Lake with associated parking. Area Boy Scouts have been given permission to establish trails in this park, but Bone Lake is currently undeveloped.

Goose Lake Lot (undeveloped open space)
This 5-acre parcel with lake frontage is located on Goose Lake across from boat launch and is surrounded by single-family homes. The lot is not maintained and is currently undeveloped due to steep terrain.

Orwell Lot (undeveloped open space)
Approximately 50% of this 2.5-acre lot is covered in wetlands. There are no existing facilities on site.

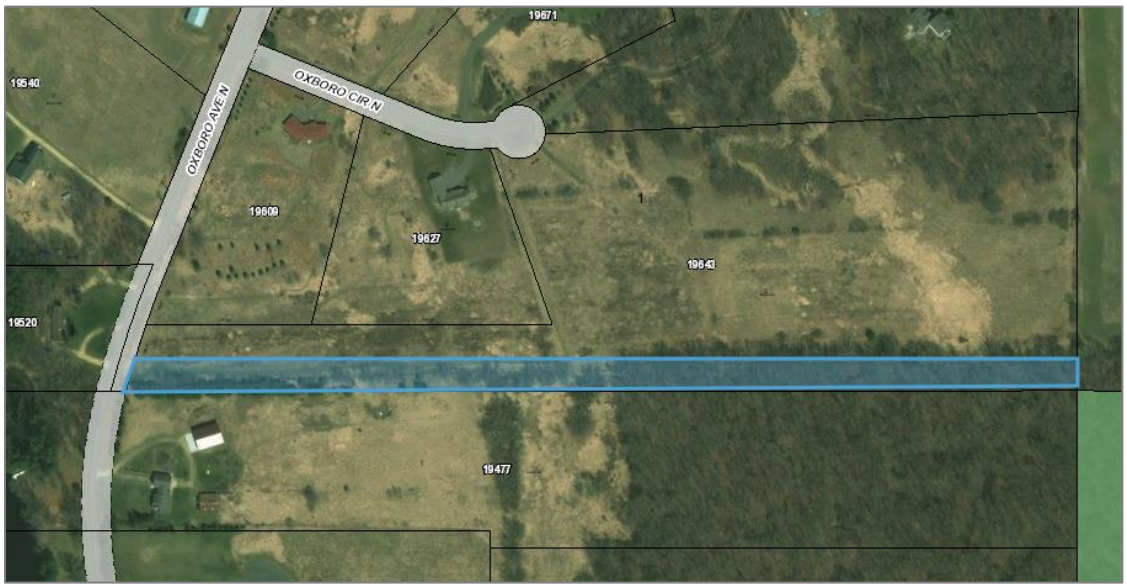
Table VII-A – Park Amenities by Location

Parks	Park Size (Acres)	Recreation Area	Walking/Hiking Trails	Picnic Area/Shelter	Playground	Skating	Nature Preserve	Kitchen Services	Restroom	Banquet Room	Ballfield	Boat Launch	Parking Lot	No Existing Facilities
Scandia Community Center	18	X			X	X		X	X	X			X	
Wind in the Pines Preserve	44		X				X						X	
Lilleskogen Park (Old Lion's Park)	8		X										X	
Lion's Park at Hay Lake	7		X	X									X	
Barton Johnson Memorial Park		X											X	
Wayne Erickson Memorial Ball Park		X			X						X		X	
South Ball Field											X		X	
Scandia T-Ball Field											X		X	
Swenson Goose Lake Estate	1.7													X
Log House Landing												X		
Bone Lake Park (undeveloped)	26		X									X	X	
Goose Lake Lot (undeveloped)	5													X
Orwell Lot (undeveloped)	2.5													X

4. Local Trails

There are few local trail systems in Scandia. There is an existing sidewalk along Oakhill Road N and Olinda Trail N in the Old Village Area. The City also maintains the easement from Oxboro Avenue North to William O'Brien State Park, shown in Figure VII-C, below. This mowed grass trail provides access to the state park.

Figure VII-C – Maintained Easement to State Park



Maintained (mowed) easement to William O'Brien State Park

F. Proposed Parks and Trails

1. Regional Parks

There are no new regional parks currently proposed within the City of Scandia.

2. Regional Trails

The *Scandia Comprehensive Trails Master Plan Report* outlines three citywide trail loops, a County trail, a rails-to-trails possible conversion, and connections to the proposed Gateway Trail. Applicable maps from the plan have been included at the end of this section. The following trail descriptions are excerpts from the Trails Master Plan:

Three Major Trail Routes

The major routes identified on the plan include the **Big Marine Trail**, **Scandia/Marine Trail**, and **Scandia North or Bone Lake Trail**. These trails are proposed to be on-road trails, designated by signage that will be developed by the Friends of Scandia Parks. The City will need to approve trail signage on their respective roadways. The major trail loops are assumed to be on-road trails that will primarily be used by bicyclists but may also be used by pedestrians.

Trunk Highway 97 Trail

The planning group identified a goal to explore creation of an off-road trail along portions of Trunk Highway 97, from Odell Avenue to TH 95. The proposed off-road trail and TH 97 crossings are particularly needed near Scandia Elementary School. The City would need to work with MN DOT to develop and fund this trail and the proposed crossings.

Soo Line Trail

The Master Plan includes a proposed Soo Line Trail route near the St. Croix River. This loop would follow the existing Soo Line railroad tracks. This is currently an active rail line. The route will be developed if the rail route is abandoned in the future. The trail surface should accommodate biking and walking. The route would connect Scandia with Marine on St. Croix and communities to the south and could connect with communities in Wisconsin. The proposed trail would be an off-road route parallel to the St. Croix River and TH 95.

Gateway Trail (Connection to Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail)

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has acquired portions of the proposed route of the Gateway Trail in Scandia. The proposed route travels from William O'Brien State Park to the Village Area. The DNR has also identified a large search area for extension of the trail north from the Village Area. The City of Lindstrom received a grant to help complete this extension, connecting the segments of the Gateway Trail in Scandia to the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail in Lindstrom. The search area is shown on the County trail map in Appendix C.

Figures VII-D and VII-E identify proposed Scandia connections to the Gateway Trail from the Scandia/Marine Trail and from sub-loops within the Village area.

Glacial Hill Regional Trail Search Corridor

While not in Scandia's System Statement, the Glacial Hills Trail in Marine on St. Croix is identified as running close to Scandia's southeast border. This proposed regional trail will connect the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail to the west with Big Marine Park Reserve to east. This proposed trail does not have an approved master plan yet. The county will conduct a master planning process for this trail in the future.

Figure VII-F shows proposed trail extensions and connections.

Figure VII-D – Trails Planning Map

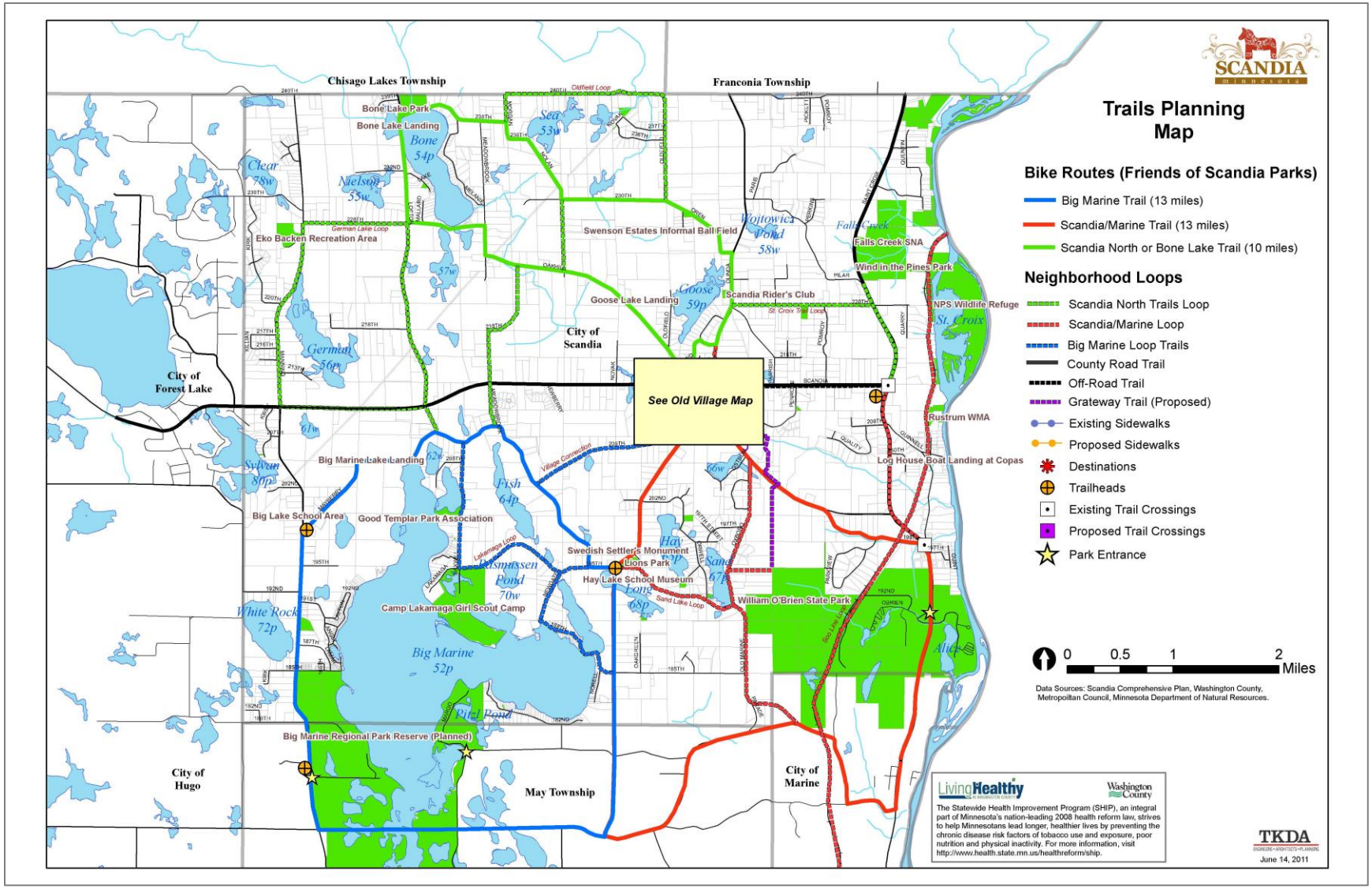


Figure VII-E – Trails Planning Map, Old Village

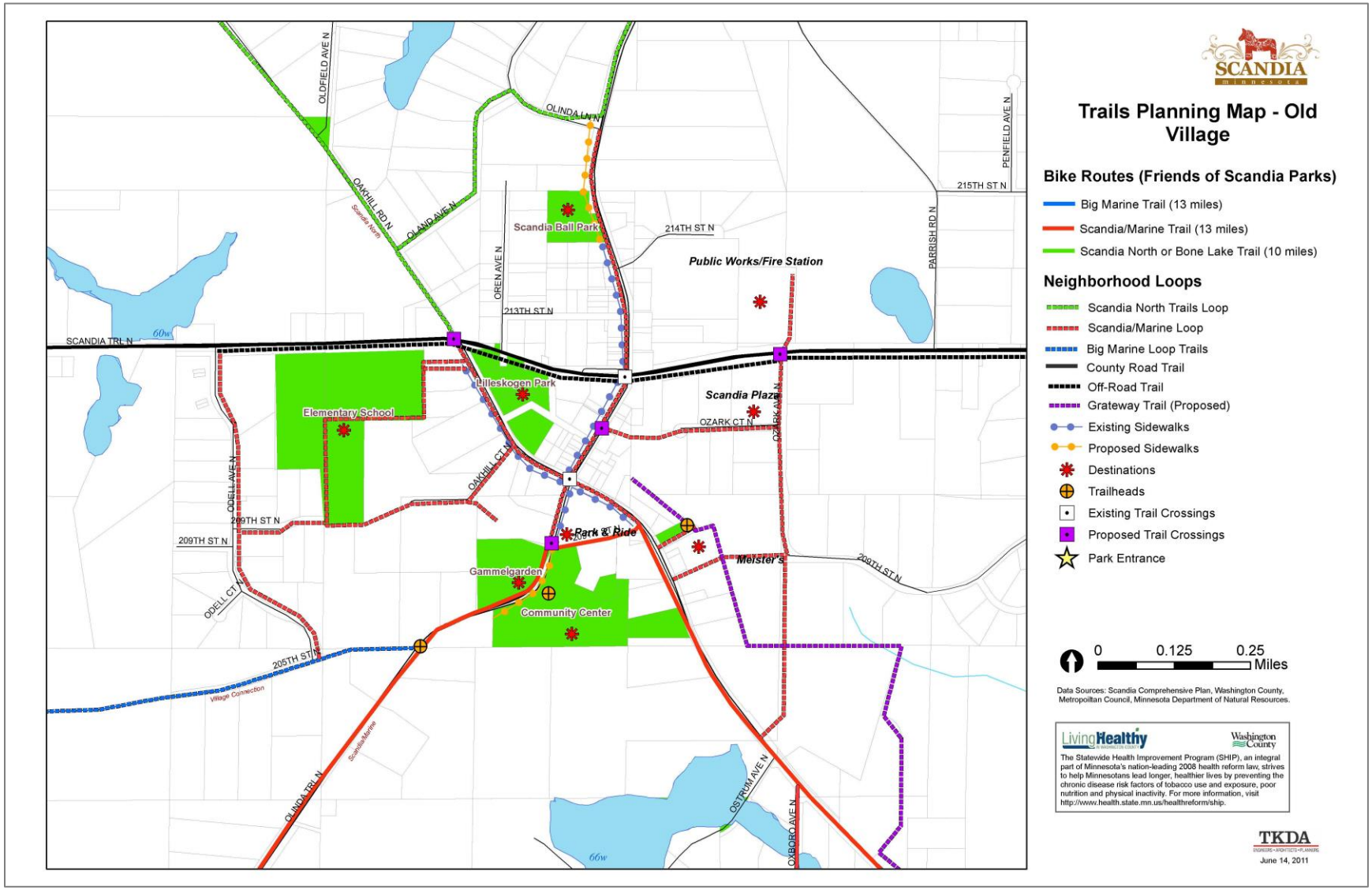


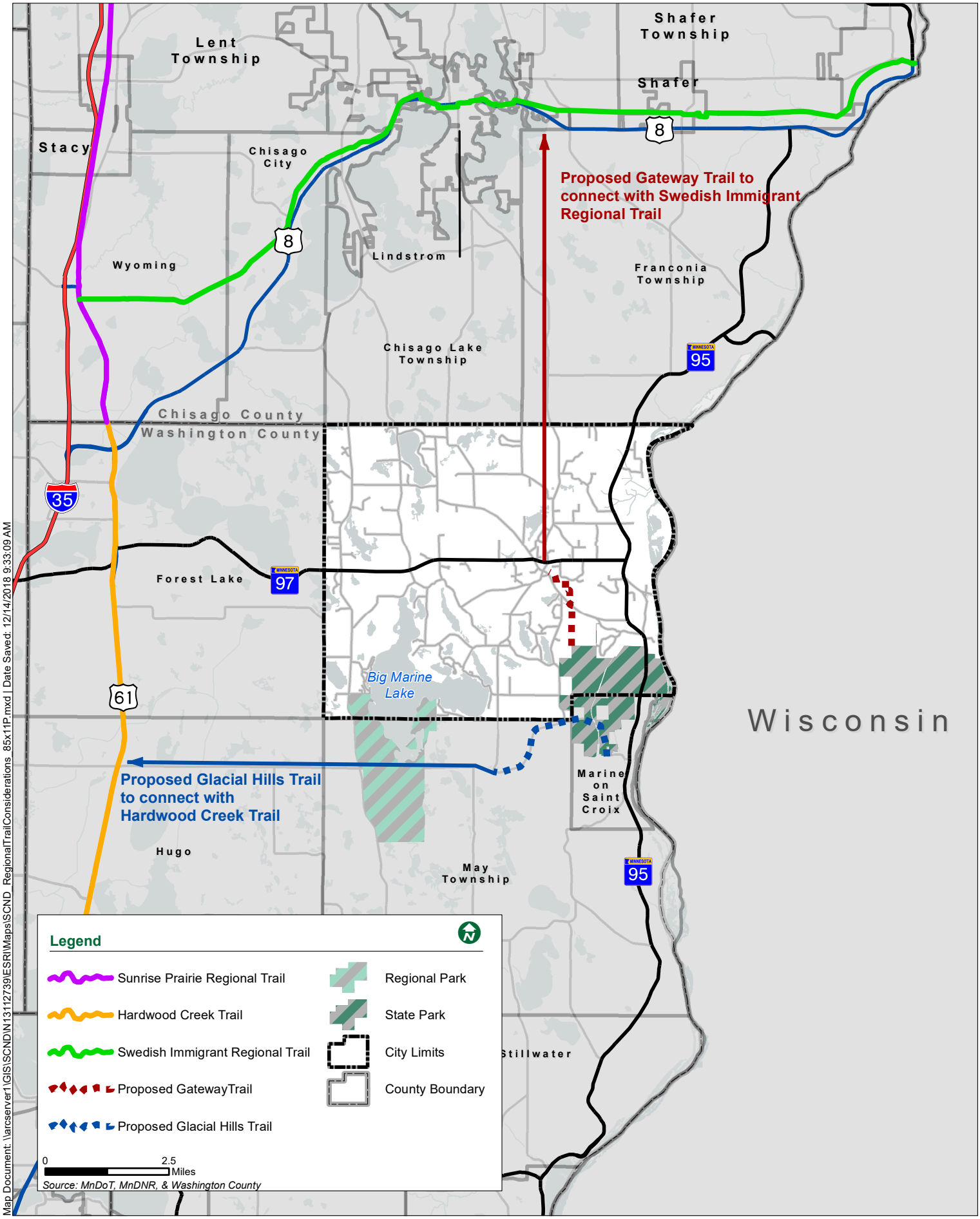
Figure VII-F - Proposed Local Parks and Trails

Comprehensive Plan

Regional Trail Considerations

Scandia, Minnesota

October 2019



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3. Local Trails

The *Scandia Comprehensive Trails Master Plan Report* outlines Village area sub loops to the identified citywide loops as described here. Applicable maps from the plan have been included at the end of this section.

G. Implementation

The Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Plan (2006) identified the following actions as high priorities for implementation:

- Develop existing undeveloped parcels as an integral part of Scandia's Park System for the benefit of residents and visitors.
- Evaluate property located in park and/or recreational facility search areas for purchase, lease, or easement to augment the existing Park System, if and when it becomes available.
- Continue to identify the Gateway Trail Extension Search Areas. The trail right-of-way has now been acquired from William O'Brien State Park to the village center as shown on Map 20, Park and Recreation Search Areas.
- Promote trail connection between Big Marine Park Reserve and William O'Brien State Park.
- Develop and install uniform park system signage (to include park, trail, open space and recreational facility components).
- Provide pedestrian crosswalk on Olinda Trail North between the Scandia Community Center and the Gammelgarden/ Barton Johnson Memorial Park.
- Continue development of master plans for all existing parks.
- Implement the German Lake Management Plan, as per Carnelian-Marine St. Croix Watershed District (CMSCWD) recommendations.
- Develop a Landowner Outreach and Stewardship Program, as per CMSCWD recommendations.

H. Appendices

The Scandia Comprehensive Trails Master Plan Report is included in Appendix C.
The Official Map for Big Marine Park Reserve is included in Appendix D.