

# 01

## OUR CITY + OUR PARKS

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## INTRODUCTION + PURPOSE

The City of Bloomington park and recreation system is extensive. 97 parks, natural areas, 45 playgrounds, 2 golf courses, regional parks, cultural resources, and special use facilities including the Bloomington Ice Garden, Center for the Arts, and Family Aquatic Center all create the Park System for Minnesota's 5th largest City. These parks and facilities have been identified by over 80% of city residents as contributing highly to their quality of life. Additionally, the Minnesota River Valley Corridor and Hyland Regional Park are unique features that leave an indelible mark on the City and its park system. Neighborhood and Community parks are distributed throughout the City so that 87% of residents are within a 10-minute walk from parks or green space. Parks, open spaces, and facilities consist of athletic fields, hockey rinks, aquatics facilities, nature trails and wetlands, amphitheatres, Art Centers, playgrounds, and various sport courts among other amenities. These features are a critical part of everyday resident's lives and make up 36% of Bloomington's land area.

Bloomington is at the crossroads of major transportation infrastructure with roads, the MSP airport, and 4 major highway crossings at the Minnesota River. The Mall of America, Hyland Ski Hill and Hyland Play Area are regional destinations along with the River Bottoms mountain bike trail and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters.

There are park features, experiences, and amenities found in Bloomington that are unique to larger Metropolitan Cities in Minnesota. The foundational structure of Bloomington's Park System is well built and carries the potential for an exceptional park system because of its built in advantages. However, there are many and varied opportunities for improvement. Bloomington's parks and recreation facilities (Bloomington Ice Garden, Bloomington Family Aquatic Center, Creekside Community Center, Dwan Golf Course and Hyland Greens Golf Course) were originally constructed during the 1960's and '70's and have not been properly updated. Many of these parks were constructed at the same time with the same design formula and elements. This has left a large number of parks outdated and with a lack of variety. Most importantly, the City of Bloomington and its residents have changed considerably since the original parks were developed. Bloomington has become more diverse and older. An over-riding goal of this Park System Master Plan is to update the parks and make them a more integral part of their surrounding neighborhoods by giving the community a voice in what they want to see their parks become. This Master Plan builds on the framework of the existing system to help Bloomington's Parks realize their full potential and truly **bloom!**

The Park System Master Plan is a road map for planning and completing park improvements. The purpose for developing the Master Plan is to guide the Department's efforts to meet the community's expectations for parks,



recreation facilities, programs, art activities, services and experiences for the benefit of all people who live in Bloomington. The Park System Master Plan will use a summary of the community input received to create a 20-year vision for Bloomington's parks, trails, facilities and programs. This plan will guide City decisions for individual park improvement project and new programming in the future.

Due to the age of our parks, changing community needs and trends in recreation, there will always be more needs and opportunities than funding. The new Park System Master Plan will help decide which parks to focus on first and what new amenities and park experiences should be included. We will use the Plan and additional community input to determine the types of parks and park amenities needed to serve the population today and in the future.

Key areas of focus for the Park System Master Plan include:

- Evaluation of existing Park System features, amenities and services related to comparable communities and accepted national standards to identify where changes are warranted
- Development of a prioritization strategy to guide decision-making and investments in the Park System
- Identifying and prioritizing Park System needs, desires and interests of the community for the next 20 years based on demographic, economic and social changes and input from a Community Needs Assessment
- Establishing a detailed implementation program for achieving the plan vision including the identification of funding opportunities and high-level cost estimates for high-priority actions
- Identifying best practices to ensure the Park System is managed and maintained in a sustainable and equitable manner
- Involving a robust community and stakeholder engagement



*Large group shelter at Bush Lake Park*



*Bloomington Aquatic Center*



## THE DOCUMENT + PROCESS

This Plan marks the beginning of a transformation for Bloomington Parks to ensure we are providing access to parks, trails, facilities, and programs that people need as well as where and when people need them most.

The plan promotes city-wide solutions, but also drills down to neighborhood issues and parks. It includes recommendations for improving equity, accessibility, natural resource protection and access, operations and maintenance, use and park experiences that are distinct to Bloomington.

These recommendations, and the needs they are designed to respond to, have been developed through a thorough assessment of the City's existing infrastructure, analysis of the City and parks department organization, existing strategic planning guidance, and extensive stakeholder and community engagement over the course of the last year. This process has revealed the magnitude of effort to improving the park system and understanding and the importance of alignment to need. Parks staff recognize that this is not the destination in the journey, but a means and commitment to continue improvement.

After the Draft Plan is tested with the community to ensure it responds to the themes, concerns, and needs expressed during community engagement efforts, the City of Bloomington will respond to the recommendations and proposed actions and use the plan to undertake the ongoing effort of transforming the park system.

This is an adaptive plan that will be tracked, reported against and updated on an annual basis. Staff is already looking ahead to refreshing the Master Plan as transformational elements are achieved. The next generation of the plan is seen as an opportunity to create something even better, informed by further research and tracking, and reflecting the ever-changing context of Bloomington as it continues to evolve.



# PROCESS

The process of creating the master plan lasted over 18-months and included significant community engagement at multiple points throughout the process. The major phases of the Park System Master Plan included Discover, Dream and Develop.

Discover included park tours, research, and most important - extensive public engagement including a statistically valid survey, stakeholder interviews, and larger group town hall style meetings. The Dream phase explored the possibilities and opportunities that exist for the park system in Bloomington including significant reinvestment land redevelopment connections. Develop lays out a framework with actions and policies for realizing the Dream of bloom!

This document is to serve the City planners and officials as a tool for the future decision making within the parks and recreation system. The ability to conduct this initiative was provided through a process of gathering essential input from the public through multiple engagement sessions, stakeholder meetings, as well as through valuable City official insight.

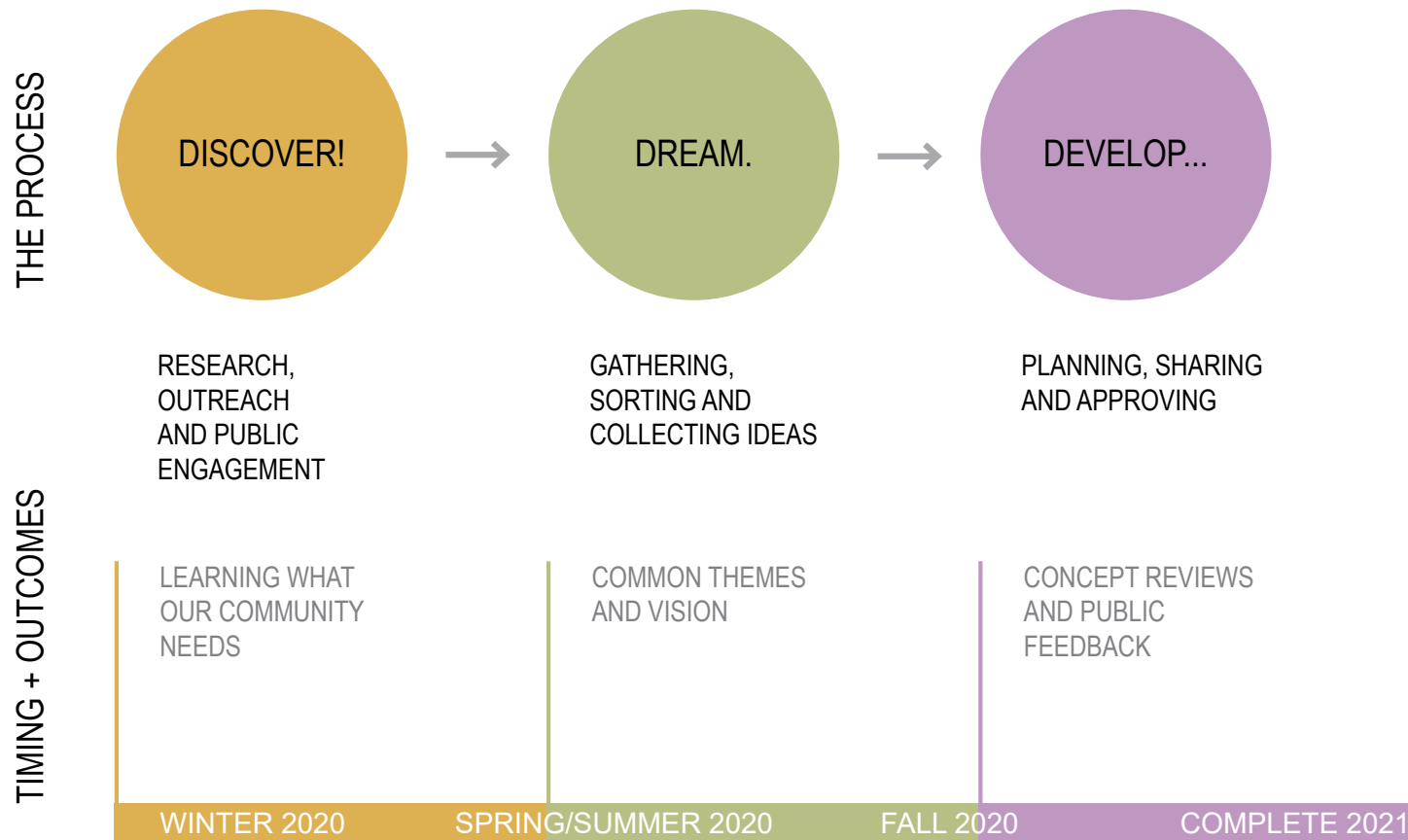


Figure 1-1: Process Timeline

This document is composed of four parts that together form a bold vision for reinventing a parks system that serves ALL residents, responds to demographic changes and recreational trends, reinvests in this essential city service, creates a framework for equitable community investment and processes, and continues to make the City of Bloomington a destination city with a high quality of life.

## 01 OUR CITY + OUR PARKS

This section lays the groundwork for the purpose and intent of the master plan, and how the current park system fits into the overall vision of the City of Bloomington.

## 02 THE PARKS BLOOMINGTON HAS

A detailed breakdown of Bloomington’s current park system and history set the stage for understanding the issues and opportunities present. Day to day performance and impacts of COVID-19 are evaluated for learning opportunities.

## 03 THE PARKS BLOOMINGTON NEEDS

National and regional park trends, community engagement results, and big picture vision is provided in this section. An aspirational picture of a park system that works for all residents is painted.

## 04 HOW BLOOMINGTON GETS THERE

The last section provides a framework for implementation of the park system vision, mission, and guiding principles. The framework is action oriented and focused on key categories.





## PARK ELEMENTS: ELEMENTS IN THE PARK SYSTEM THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR SUCCESS. PRIORITY ELEMENTS ARE CRITICAL

01

### PRIORITY PARK ELEMENTS

#### PARK ELEMENT 01 NATURAL RESOURCES

Protect and restore natural resources to sustain a healthy, diverse and balanced natural park system for all to enjoy and understand.

#### PARK ELEMENT 02 PARK NEEDS (LEVEL OF SERVICE)

Achieve an appropriate balance of parks, recreation facilities, programs, and experiences in each planning area to support access to parks, trails, sports facilities, and recreation amenities that residents want and need.

#### PARK ELEMENT 03 TRAILS AND MOBILITY

Implement past planning recommendations and integrate parks as key destinations into the overall transportation system. Provide a variety of interesting and safe trail experiences inside parks to encourage mobility as recreation.

#### PARK ELEMENT 04 EQUITY AND ACCESS

Build equity and accessibility into the park system to provide exceptional parks and recreation opportunities for ALL residents that meet their needs, and their community's needs.

### ADDITIONAL PARK ELEMENTS

#### PARK ELEMENT 05 SUSTAINABILITY

Use sustainability best practices in projects to mitigate climate change and conserve natural resources.

#### PARK ELEMENT 06 ARTS AND PLACEMAKING

Work with existing successful arts and placemaking organizations to implement more artistic elements into the park system.

#### PARK ELEMENT 07 CORE SERVICES - EXPANDING USER BASE

Provide additional Health, Fitness, Environmental Educational, Recreational, Sports and Special Event Experiences.

#### PARK ELEMENT 08 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Create an organizational structure that provides the best customer experience and cost management for the future of the Department.

#### PARK ELEMENT 09 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUDGET ENHANCEMENT

Promote economic development and establish a budget that matches the expectations of the community.

#### PARK ELEMENT 10 POLICY UPDATES

Create policies that provide flexibility for the Director to operate efficiently and effectively to achieve the Vision for the Master Plan.

#### PARK ELEMENT 11 EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Create Key Performance Metrics to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department.

#### PARK ELEMENT 12 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Understand, respect, and honor the cultural resources throughout the City and beyond that connect it to the past, present, and future.

## THE BIG PICTURE

Bloomington's parks have been a critical element of city living throughout the City's history and their importance has only increased. During the process of this Master Plan COVID-19 shut downs and distancing measures only served to reinforce the importance of accessible open space, trails, and outdoor amenities and activities. People throughout the state and metro were drawn to parks in record numbers and Bloomington was no exception. Google Community Mobility Reports tracked changes in mobility patterns for people during COVID-19. While visits to retail, recreation, workplaces, and grocery all plummeted in the last year, park visitation in Hennepin County increased by +118 over historic baseline for May 2021.

Parks, trails, and recreation are essential city services and provide exceptional health, social, community, and environmental benefits. Residents recognize their value and voice their opinion in annual surveys in which 80%+ of respondents identify parks as being an important part of their high quality of life. The master plan process included significant community engagement efforts with the general public, key stakeholders, city leadership, and others to determine the vision for the park system moving forward. A vision statement, mission, and four key guiding principles were established that will guide the park system to *bloom!*

### VISION STATEMENT:

The Vision Statement presents the Bloomington Parks and Recreation desire for the future:

Bloomington Parks and Recreation envisions an accessible system of interconnected vibrant parks, diverse recreation facilities, sustainable park resources and engaging recreation programs and experiences that contribute to healthy individuals and families, a thriving economy and a high quality of life in the City of Bloomington.

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The Mission statement describes how Bloomington Parks and Recreation will implement the vision:

The mission of Bloomington Parks and Recreation is to build our sense of community and enhance quality of life for all current residents, potential residents, and visitors through the management of high-quality parks and natural areas and by making parks accessible and providing exceptional experiences through innovative recreation programs, art activities, park facilities, and private partnership connections.



**GUIDING PRINCIPLES:** The following guiding principles will shape the Parks Departments actions and approaches in carrying out their vision and mission. These principles will guide staff in closing the gap between strategies and delivery:



### BE BLOOMINGTON

- Re-establish parks and trails as the critical part of Bloomington’s image and neighborhood’s identity
- Connect the City with premier parks, safe trails, and highly desired facilities and programs
- Provide exceptional customer experiences and services
- Link the community together through quality parks, trails, recreation facilities and programs
- Organize and unleash the volunteer and charitable potential of Bloomington residents to improve parks and build community
- Celebrate the uniqueness of Bloomington through engagement, arts activities, and creative placemaking in the parks



### BE ESSENTIAL

- Be fiscally responsible stewards of entrusted funds
- Challenge the Staff to learn and grow
- Create capacity to endure and thrive
- Collaborate with other departments and public agencies to maximize resources
- Manage all parks, recreation facilities and program services to measurable outcomes



### BE RESILIENT

- Capitalize on Bloomington’s unique natural resources with recreation opportunities that empower residents to preserve, restore, educate, and build resilience
- Ensure long-term sustainability of the park and recreation system by building economic, social, and environmental resilience
- Integrate environmental resilience throughout the park system to address the effects of climate change
- Ensure financial resilience through capital planning, partnerships, and operations and maintenance transparency
- Build new partnerships and evolve existing relationships with private, non-profit, and other governmental agencies



### BE EQUITABLE

- Prioritize equity throughout the system to support all residents, celebrate diversity, and provide inclusiveness
- Strengthen all neighborhoods through diverse parks and trails that reflect surrounding neighborhoods
- Build relationships and prioritize community engagement
- Eliminate accessibility issues throughout the system including physical, financial, and social barriers

## THE ROLE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

The Parks and Recreation Department is undergoing a transition from being a division within the City to its own department. This is an important evolution as it gives parks and recreation more control and responsibility for carrying out their mission. Parks are an essential city service and should function, invest, and be accountable as all other city services.

The importance of parks and recreation services have never been more apparent than in 2020 with the pandemic shutting a majority of the state down and limiting socialization, recreation, and other options for residents. People used parks and trails throughout the metro in record numbers, increasing visits between 70-140%. Minneapolis and St. Paul temporarily closed roads to automobiles and opened them to pedestrians to ease crowding and allow for social distancing. Bloomington saw a similar response from the public with full parks and trails throughout the year. COVID implications highlight what many in the City have known for years – parks and recreation are an essential public service and should function accordingly.

Parks are vital to creating and maintaining a city's quality of life, providing health and fitness opportunities, providing environmental resilience, and positively adding to the community's economic welfare. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) found that parks and recreation have three key values that make them essential services to communities:

- Economic value
- Health and environmental benefits
- Social importance



## ECONOMIC VALUE

Parks add to a city's economy in a number of ways. Property values of private land in proximity to parks is consistently higher and increases property tax revenues. Parks and recreation programs can generate revenue directly from fees and charges, but also provide significant indirect revenues to local and regional economies from sports tournaments and special events such as arts, music, and holiday festivals. Economic activity from hospitality expenditures, tourism, fuel, recreational equipment sales, and many other private sector businesses is a well-established value to local economies and should be a prime focus of Bloomington. The city's transportation access, regional destinations, and hotel room capacity provide opportunities to capitalize on parkland hosted tournaments and events. A market analysis study should be completed to understand this economic value and potential in Bloomington.

A 2018 report by The George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis found that parks and recreation are an 'engine of substantial economic activity in communities' summarized in the following ways:

- Park and recreation departments are significant employers and their operations and capital spending generate positive impacts in local economies
- Investments create a 'virtuous cycle' where a higher quality of life community attracts workers and employers, which finally produces more jobs and private investment
- Local parks shape a community's image that can build a sense of place
- High quality of life communities and high-quality park amenities can be pivotal in decisions for businesses choosing to where to locate. Especially if they wish to attract specific employees and reside in community's that reflect their values
- Parks and trails can enhance a city's 'curb appeal' for businesses and visitors
- Many business owners and residents are introduced to city's as tourists or visitors – positive experiences can influence recruitment
- Park and recreation leaders have become involved in economic development planning and activities by building alliances and promoting the value of parks and recreation



## HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Health and the environment are consistently shown to be linked together. Access and proximity to healthy environments has positive health benefits for people. Parks provide space and infrastructure to improve physical and mental health, but their mere presence has also been shown to have positive effects to surrounding neighborhoods. Parks can provide other ecosystem services that create healthier environments by preserving habitat, providing green infrastructure, creating access to natural areas, educating citizens, and proactively managing natural areas. Bloomington's parks have health and environmental benefits in the following ways:

- Numerous studies show significant correlations to reduced stress, lowered blood pressure, and perceived physical health to the length of stay in visits to parks
- Parks and recreation programs can actively engage youth, adults, and seniors in healthy activities
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has found that creating, improving and promoting places to be physically active can improve individual and community health and result in a 25% increase of residents who exercise at least three times per week
- Parks improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve air quality, provide wildlife habitat and provide close to home opportunities to connect with nature
- The Trust for Public Land found that parks are significantly cooler in peak summertime heat, and can lower surrounding neighborhood temperatures up to 1/4 mile away
- Preservation and conservation efforts in parks can help protect biological diversity
- A 2019 study in Frontiers Science news states that urban biodiversity reduces chronic disease because humans and microorganisms have a symbiotic relationship that relies on ecosystem fitness and biodiversity for optimal health
- Health and equity go hand-in-hand. Several studies have shown the link between the distribution of parks and urban tree canopy impact health and income. Areas with less parks and urban canopy typically associate with lower incomes, often in communities of color, where chronic disease is higher





## SOCIAL CONNECTION AND EQUITY

The public nature of parks and recreation has always intended to be available for all people and serve everyone in the community. Parks are a tangible reflection of the quality of life in a community. They provide identity for citizens and are a major factor in the perception of quality of life. Parks provide social connection and equity in Bloomington in the following ways:

- Nationally, parks and recreation services are often cited as one of the most important factors in surveys of how livable communities are.
- Parks provide gathering places for families and social groups, as well as for individuals of all ages and economic status, regardless of their ability to pay for access.
- An ongoing study by the Trust for Public Land shows that over the past decade, voter approval rates for bond measures to acquire parks and conserve open space exceeds 75%. Clearly, the majority of the public views parks as an essential priority for government spending.
- Parks and recreation programs provide places for health and well-being that are accessible by persons of all ages and abilities, especially to those with disabilities.
- In recent Bloomington surveys, parks were highlighted as one of the primary elements that increased the quality of life for residents.
- Research by the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods indicates that community involvement in neighborhood parks is associated with lower levels of crime and vandalism.
- Access to parks and recreation opportunities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and to reduced juvenile delinquency.
- Parks have a value to communities that transcend the amount of dollars invested or the revenues gained from fees. Parks provide a sense of public pride and cohesion to every community.





# BLOOMINGTON PARK SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The City of Bloomington has a total of 97 neighborhood, community, natural areas, regional parks, and specialty recreation facilities and over 9,000 acres of parkland which includes Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Park Preserve and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The Park System contains 43 playgrounds, 40 miles of paved off-road trails, 18 picnic areas, two golf courses, an art center, indoor ice arena, outdoor aquatic center, a community/senior center, a swimming and recreational beach and a variety of athletic fields. Many of these facilities were built in the 1960s and 70s and are in need of renovation or updating.

The Park System also supports a comprehensive array of arts, recreation, leisure and cultural programs to a diverse population with a wide range of recreational needs. Recreation program opportunities include: adult athletic leagues, outdoor skating rinks, adaptive recreation and inclusion services, arts-in-the-parks, bandshell concert series, special events (Summer-Fete, Winter-Fete, Halloween party, egg hunt), River Rendezvous, golf, indoor figure skating/hockey, swimming, tennis, pickleball and summer playgrounds.

## PARTNERSHIPS

The City has long maintained partnerships with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Three Rivers Park District to provide public access to facilities and to operate programs. These partnerships have been critical to providing needed neighborhood or community facilities to the residents of Bloomington.

# 97

### TOTAL PARKS IN BLOOMINGTON

- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Natural Areas / Open Space
- Regional Parks
- Special Use Parks



**2**  
Golf Courses



**18**  
Picnic Areas



**2**  
Dog Parks



**23**  
Shelters & Pavilions



**20**  
Outdoor Ice Rinks



**43**  
Playgrounds



**44 Miles**  
Unpaved Trails



**41 Miles**  
Paved Trails



**63**  
Baseball & Softball Fields



**42**  
Outdoor Basketball Courts

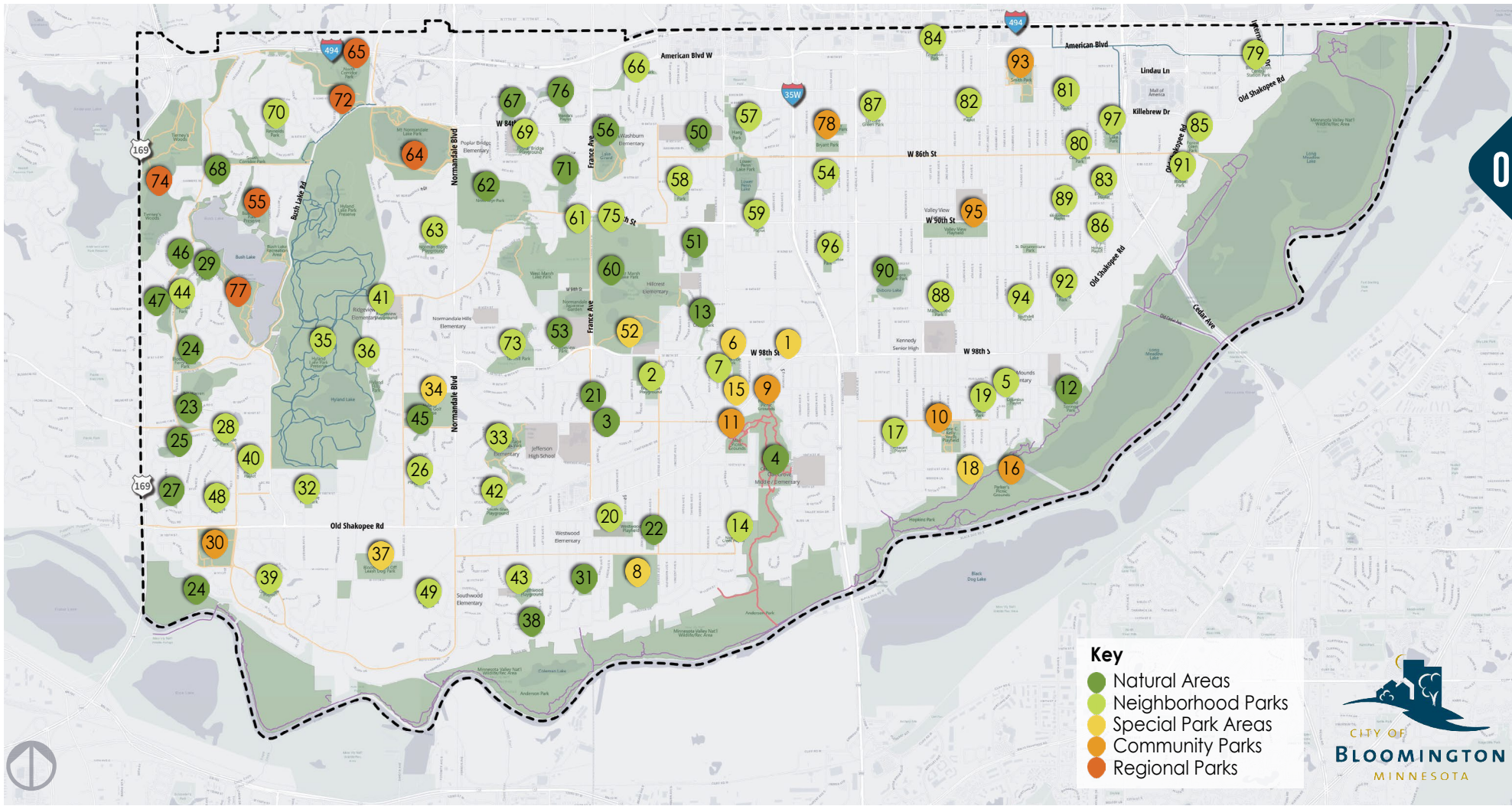


**49**  
Tennis Courts



**8**  
Pickle Ball Courts

Figure 1-2: Bloomington Park System Overview



**Key**

- Natural Areas
- Neighborhood Parks
- Special Park Areas
- Community Parks
- Regional Parks



- |                                     |                              |                                 |                             |                               |                             |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ● 1 Bloomington Center for the Arts | ● 17 Pleasant Playlot        | ● 33 Heritage Hills Park        | ● 49 Xavier Court Playlot   | ● 65 North Corridor Park      | ● 81 Cooks Playlot          |
| ● 2 Brookside Park                  | ● 18 Pond Dakota Mission     | ● 34 Hyland Greens Golf Course  | ● 50 Adelman Pond           | ● 66 Northcrest Playground    | ● 82 Effa Playlot           |
| ● 3 Canterbury Oaks Pond            | ● 19 Soens Playlot           | ● 35 Hyland Hills Playlot       | ● 51 Barthel's Pond         | ● 67 Pauly's Pond             | ● 83 Eight Crest Park       |
| ● 4 Central Park                    | ● 20 Westwood Park           | ● 36 Hyland Hills Tennis Courts | ● 52 Bloomington Ice Garden | ● 68 Pickfair Pond            | ● 84 Fenlason Park          |
| ● 5 Columbus Playlot                | ● 21 Winchester Pond         | ● 37 Off-Leash Dog Area         | ● 53 Collegeview Park       | ● 69 Poplar Bridge Playground | ● 85 Forest Glen            |
| ● 6 Creekside Community Center      | ● 22 Xerxes Pond             | ● 38 Overlook Pond              | ● 54 Dupont Playlot         | ● 70 Reynolds Playground      | ● 86 Hohag Playlot          |
| ● 7 Creekside Park                  | ● 23 Bill Warren Park        | ● 39 Quail Ridge Playlot        | ● 55 East Bush Lake Park    | ● 71 Skriebakken Park         | ● 87 Lyndale Green Park     |
| ● 8 Dwan Golf Course                | ● 24 Bloomington Ferry Road  | ● 40 Rhodes Playlot             | ● 56 Girard Lake Park       | ● 72 South Corridor Park      | ● 88 Maplewood Park         |
| ● 9 Harrison Picnic Grounds         | ● 25 Boone Pond              | ● 41 Ridgeview Playground       | ● 57 Haeg Park              | ● 73 Tarnhill Playground      | ● 89 McAndrews Playlot      |
| ● 10 Kelly Park                     | ● 26 Brye Park               | ● 42 Southglen Playground       | ● 58 Lincoln Park           | ● 74 Tierney's Woods          | ● 90 Oxboro Lake Park       |
| ● 11 Moir Park                      | ● 27 Cavell Pond             | ● 43 Southwood Park             | ● 59 Logan Playlot          | ● 75 Tretbaugh Park           | ● 91 River Ridge Playground |
| ● 12 Mound Springs Park             | ● 28 Countryside Playground  | ● 44 Sunrise Park               | ● 60 Marsh Lake Park        | ● 76 Wanda Miller Pond        | ● 92 Running Park           |
| ● 13 Nine Mile Creek Park           | ● 29 Cranberry Park          | ● 45 Timberglade Pond           | ● 61 Marsh Lake Playfields  | ● 77 West Bush Lake Park      | ● 93 Smith Park             |
| ● 14 Nine Mile Playlot              | ● 30 Dred Scott              | ● 46 Veness Pond                | ● 62 Nord Myr Marsh         | ● 78 Bryant Park              | ● 94 Southdell Playlot      |
| ● 15 Old Town Hall                  | ● 31 France Pond             | ● 47 Woodbridge Marsh           | ● 63 Norman Ridge Playlot   | ● 79 Central Station          | ● 95 Valley View Playfield  |
| ● 16 Parker's Picnic Grounds        | ● 32 Hampshire Hills Playlot | ● 48 Wyoming Playlot            | ● 64 Normandale Lake Park   | ● 80 Cedarcrest               | ● 96 Vanderbie Park         |
|                                     |                              |                                 |                             |                               | ● 97 Wright's Lake Park     |

Figure 1-3: Bloomington Park Overview Map

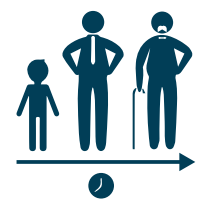




## DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

A key component of this Master Plan is a Demographics Analysis which provides a thorough understanding of the current demographic makeup and projected shifts in the local population. Bloomington's parks need to serve the residents and should reflect the neighborhoods that surround them. This analysis helps staff and planners understand what those neighborhoods look like.

The Demographic Analysis describes the population within Bloomington's service area. This assessment is reflective of Bloomington's total population and its key characteristics such as age segments, race, ethnicity, and income levels. It is important to note that future projections are based on historical patterns and unforeseen circumstances during or after the time of the analysis. This could have a significant bearing on the validity of the projected figures.



2019 TOTAL POPULATION  
**88,812**



2019 TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS  
**38,071**



2019 MEDIAN AGE  
**44.7**



2019 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
**75,813**



2019 RACE  
**76% WHITE ALONE**

Figure 1-4: Demographic Analysis. Information Obtained from: U.S. Census Bureau and ESRI



# METHODOLOGY

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from U.S. Census Bureau and from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in August 2019 and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2010 Census as well as estimates for 2019 and 2024 as obtained by ESRI. Straight line linear regression was utilized for 2029 and 2034 projections. The City's boundaries shown below were utilized for the demographic analysis (Figure 1-5).

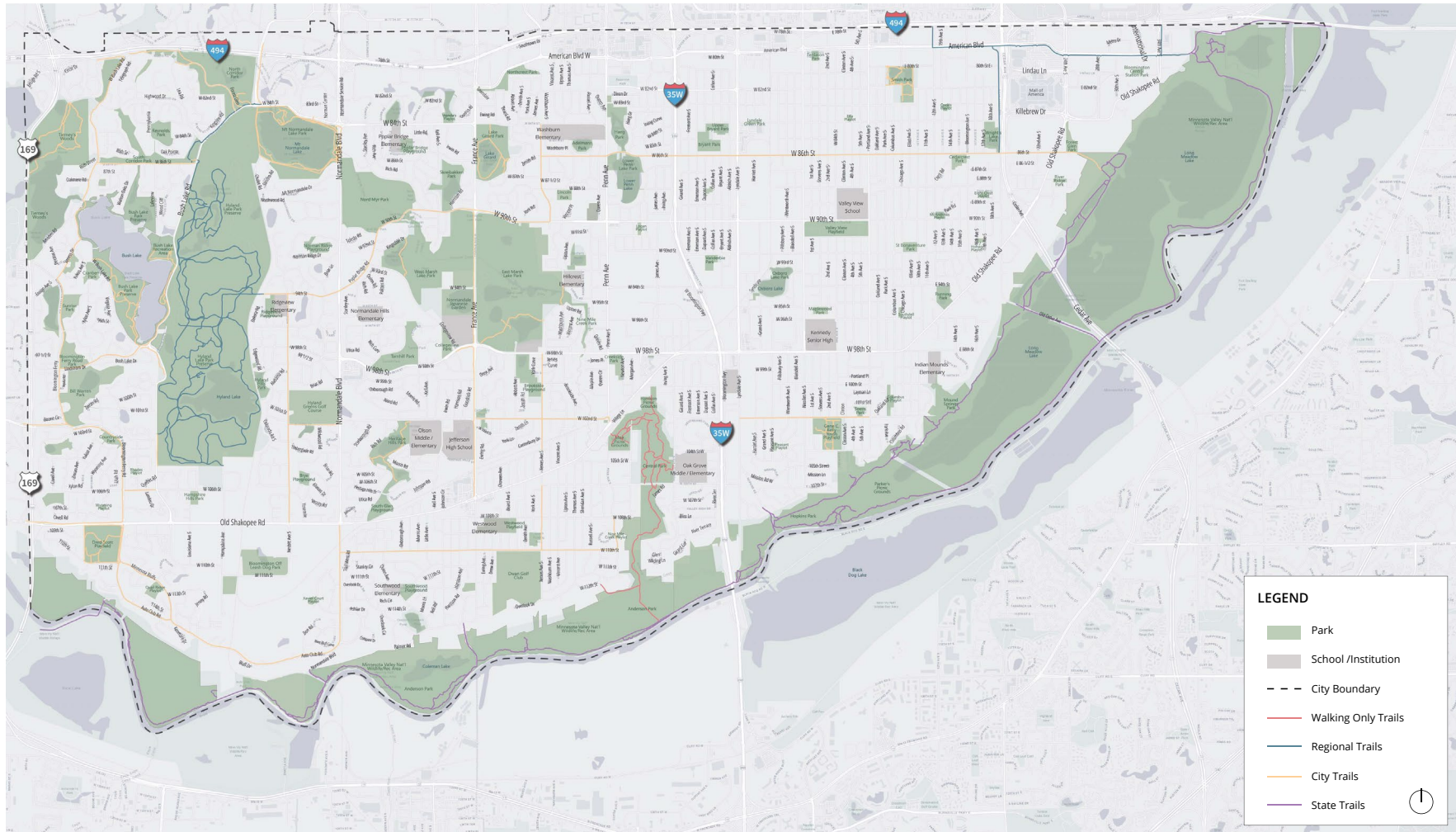


Figure 1-5: City of Bloomington Boundary



# POPULATION

The City of Bloomington’s population experienced an increase in growth within recent years, increasing 7.11% from 2010 to 2019 (0.79% per year). This is below the national annual growth rate of 0.85% (from 2010-2019). Similar to the population, the total number of households also experienced an increase in recent years (6.03% since 2010) with 0.67% per year.

Currently, the population is estimated at 88,812 individuals living within 38,071 households. Projecting ahead, the total population and total number of households are both expected to increase over the next 15 years. The 2034 predictions expect to have 99,874 residents living within 42,173 households (Figures 1-6 & 1-7).

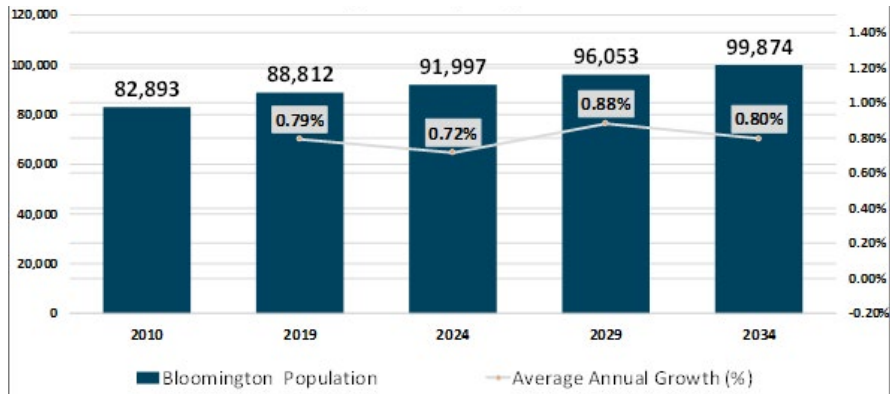


Figure 1-6: Total Population / Average Annual Growth

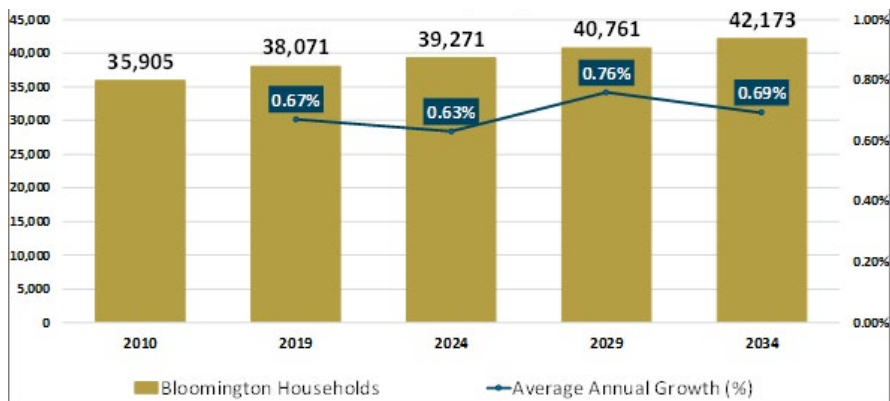


Figure 1-7: Total Number of Households / Average Annual Growth



## AGE SEGMENT

Evaluating the City by age segments, currently the service area has a higher population in age segment of 55-74 (27%). A potential to grow to 30% of the population in the next 15 years. The City of Bloomington is already ahead of the aging national trend with the median age of 44.7 (Figure 1-8).

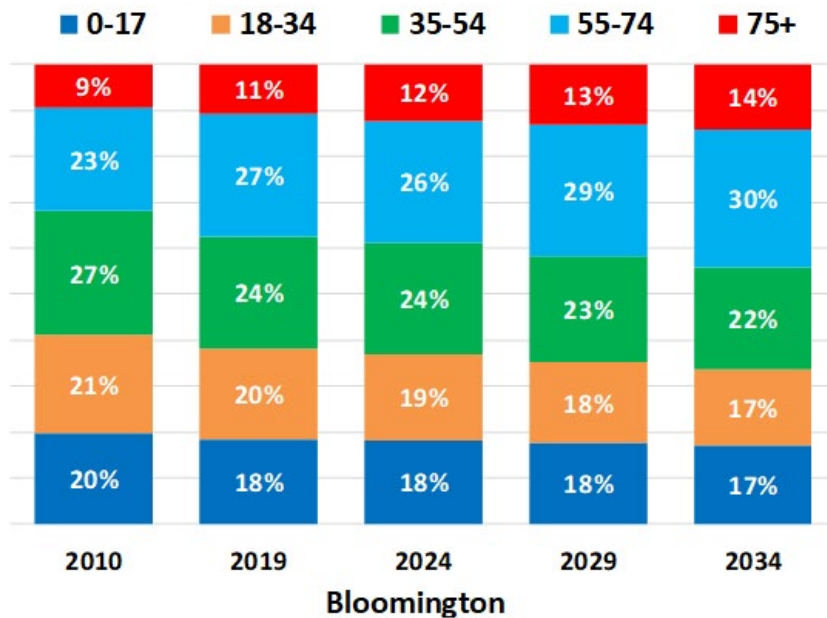


Figure 1-8: Population By Age Segments





## RACE AND ETHNICITY DEFINITIONS

The minimum categories for data on race and ethnicity for Federal statistics, program administrative reporting, and civil rights compliance reporting are defined as below. The Census 2010 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 2000 Census and earlier censuses; therefore, caution must be used when interpreting changes in the racial composition of the US population over time. The latest (Census 2010) definitions and nomenclature are used within this analysis.

- American Indian – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment
- Asian – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam
- Black – This includes a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands
- White – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa
- Hispanic or Latino – This is an ethnic distinction, a subset of a race as defined by the Federal Government; this includes a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race

*Please Note: The Census Bureau defines Race as a person's self-identification with one or more of the following social groups: White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, some other race, or a combination of these. While Ethnicity is defined as whether a person is of Hispanic / Latino origin or not. **For this reason, the Hispanic / Latino ethnicity is viewed separate from race throughout this demographic analysis.***



## RACE

Analyzing race, City’s current population is primarily White Alone (76%). The 2019 estimate shows that (8.7%) of the population falls into the Black Alone category and Asian (7.5%) represent the next largest population groups. The City is less diverse than the national population, which is approximately (70%) White Alone, (13%) Black Alone, and (7%) Some Other Race. The predictions for 2034 expect the City’s population to become (69%) White Alone, (11%) Black Alone, and (10%) Asian (Figure 1-9).

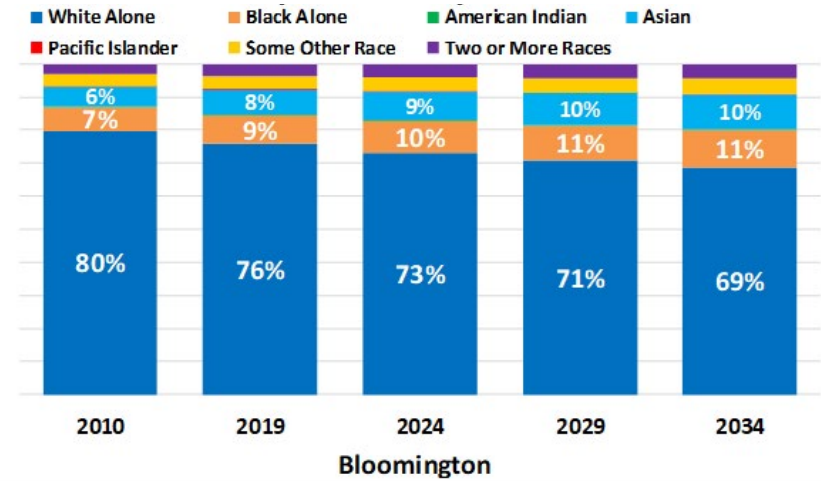


Figure 1-9: Population By Race

## ETHNICITY

The City’s population was also assessed based on Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, which, by the Census Bureau definition, is viewed independently from race. It is important to note that individuals who are Hispanic/Latino can also identify with any of the racial categories from above. Based on the current estimate for 2019, those of Hispanic/Latino origin represent just 7% of the City’s current population, which is much lower than the national average (18% Hispanic/ Latino). The Hispanic/Latino population is expected to slightly grow over the next 15 years, to represent (9%) of the City’s total population by 2034 (Figure 1-10).

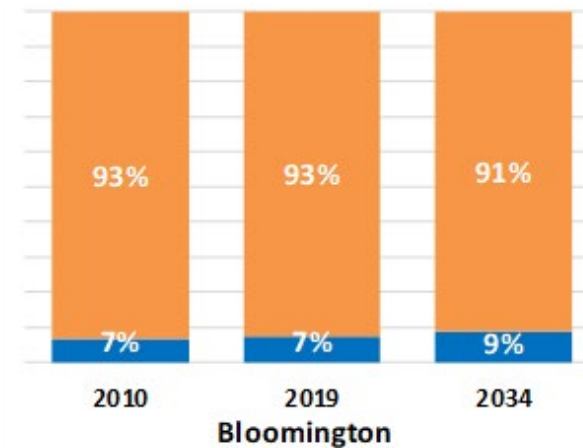


Figure 1-10: Population By Ethnicity



## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The City's median household income (\$75,813) is higher than the state (\$69,559) and national (\$60,548) levels. The City's per capita income (\$43,800) is higher than both the state (\$36,727) and national (\$33,028) level. This may indicate a higher rate of disposable income among the population served and should be considered when developing financial sustainability within the City of Bloomington's future plans for community needs.

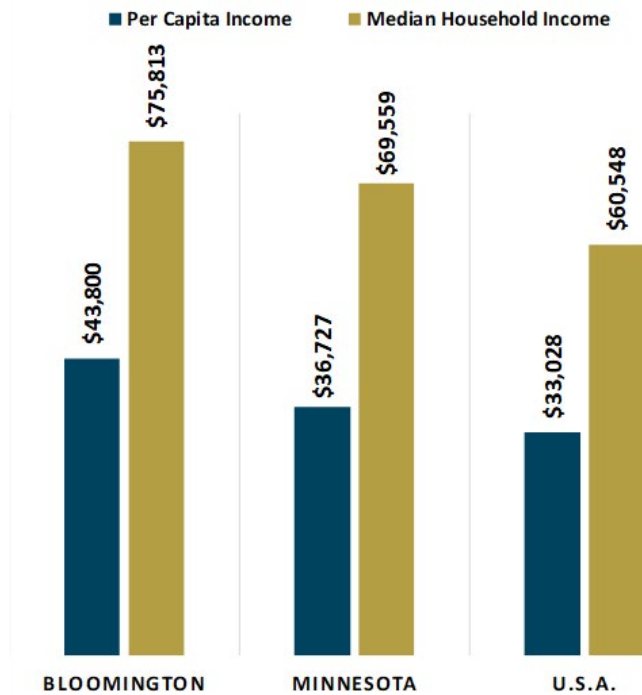


Figure 1-11: Income Characteristics





## DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARATIVE SUMMARY

The table below is a summary of the City’s demographic figures. These figures are then compared to the state and U.S. populations to enable a local and national comparison of the local demographic. The highlighted cells represent key takeaways from the comparison between the City and the State/National population.

- Significantly lower than the National Average
- Significantly higher than the National Average

2019 Demographic Comparison		Bloomington	Minnesota	U.S.A.
Population	Annual Growth Rate (2010-2019)	0.79%	0.86%	0.85%
	Projected Annual Growth Rate (2019-2034)	0.83%	0.93%	0.90%
Households	Annual Growth Rate (2010-2019)	0.67%	0.81%	0.80%
	Average Household Size	2.31	2.49	2.59
Age Segment Distribution	Ages 0-17	18%	22%	22%
	Ages 18-34	20%	23%	23%
	Ages 35-54	24%	25%	25%
	Ages 55-74	27%	23%	23%
	Ages 75+	11%	7%	7%
Race Distribution	White Alone	75.8%	81.5%	69.6%
	Black Alone	8.7%	6.8%	12.9%
	American Indian	0.4%	1.2%	1.0%
	Asian	7.5%	5.2%	5.8%
	Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
	Some other Race	4.0%	2.3%	7.0%
	Two or More Races	3.6%	2.9%	3.5%
Hispanic/Latino Population	Hispanic / Latino Origin (any race)	7.3%	5.6%	18.6%
	All Others	92.7%	94.4%	81.4%
Income Characteristics	Per Capita Income	\$43,800	\$36,727	\$33,028
	Median Household Income	\$75,813	\$69,559	\$60,548

Figure 1-12: Demographic Comparative Summary Table

## KEY DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Bloomington’s demographic study highlights a city that is aging and slowly becoming more diverse. As a fully built out city, growth is currently limited and park and trail amounts currently serve the overall existing and anticipated population numbers. Redevelopment opportunities could change this balance and the City should consider creation of additional usable park space when redevelopment increases population and/ or density in certain areas of the City. Above average income levels suggest that the population could support an updated pricing strategy. However, deeper analysis of the City’s demographics show that diversity and income challenged populations are located in pockets throughout the City. Bloomington should continue to monitor these demographic changes in order to fully understand needs and promote equity throughout the system. Key findings of the demographic analysis:

- The annual growth rate of the City’s population (0.79%) is lower than national rate (0.85%) and state’s annual rate (0.86%)
- The City’s household annual growth rate (0.67%) is lower than national (0.80%) and state (0.81%) averages.
- Age segments 55-74 (27%) is higher than national (23%) and state (23%) age segments.
- The City’s racial distribution has White Alone (75.8%), Black Alone (8.7%) and Asian (7.5%).
- The City’s percentage of Hispanic/Latino population (7%) is well below the national level (18.6%)
- City’s per capita income (\$43,800) and median household income (\$75,813) is above average compared to the state (\$36,727 & \$69,559) and U.S. (\$33,028 & \$60,548) income characteristics.

To support the summary and opportunity reflected in the demographics, The City should examine the regional and national recreational and sports trends defined in section 03 *The Parks Bloomington Needs*, while also considering their own communities’ market potential index. Bloomington’s parks have not been updated appropriately over time and recreation trends have changed significantly. This demographics report should be used along with trends and community engagement to ensure the park system is updated in a way that meets the City’s current and expected future needs.





## RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

The Park System Master Plan will complement and work with recent planning and design efforts completed by the City of Bloomington. Park plans are required by the Metropolitan Council. The City's Comprehensive Plan fulfilled this requirement. This Park System Master Plan provides much greater detail than Metropolitan Council requirements. The following documents were referenced and influenced the Park System Master Plan:

### FORWARD 2040: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan provides guidance and information that is used in many ways by City officials, staff, citizens, and others. The Plan forecasts growth in population, households, and employment over the next 20 years. These forecasts are used to identify needed improvements to the City's roads, utilities, and other infrastructure systems to accommodate future growth. The Plan also identifies trends that may impact changes in demand for public services, such as

recreation programs and facilities. The Plan identifies where future development can occur and priority areas for redevelopment. It lays out the long-term vision for the City and provides guidance to ensure that zoning decisions are consistent with that vision.

The Plan provides guidance to set priorities for investments in public infrastructure and other public actions. It also describes the various tools used to fund improvements.

A wealth of information about the City (now and in the future) is compiled that may be helpful to residents, businesses, developers, other governmental agencies, and others. This information is also often used to help the City secure outside funding (e.g., grants) for specific public projects.





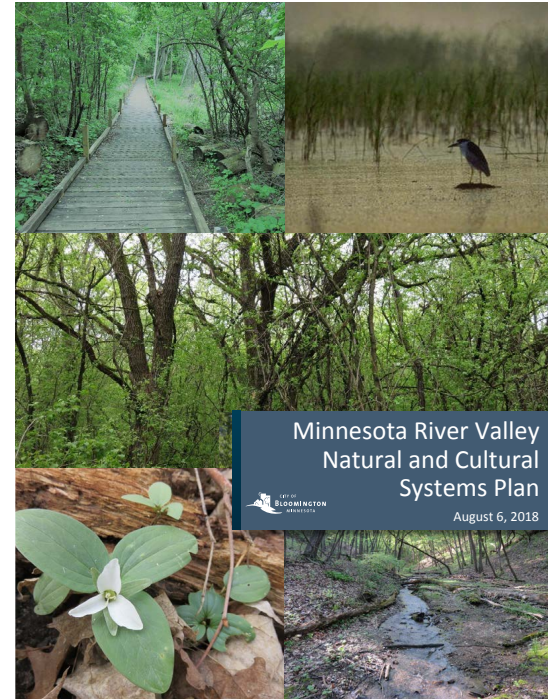
## MINNESOTA RIVER VALLEY NATURAL AND CULTURAL SYSTEMS PLAN

The purpose of the Natural and Cultural Systems plan is to identify high priority areas for resource enhancement. The plan also provides detailed analysis of natural and cultural resources in the River Valley in order to assess management strategies and where they should be applied. This plan strives to balance wildlife, habitat, and cultural resources management and visitor use within the River Valley. Using existing studies and analysis of natural and cultural resources, the plan assesses management strategies and where they should be applied. Due to funding difficulties, many of the proposed management strategies are not immediately feasible solely through City resources. However, this plan identifies areas in the River Valley that are of highest priority in the event that resources become available. Several elements of this plan directly contribute to the Park System Master Plan and the Natural Resources section. Most notably the following goals can be expanded to apply to the entire city's natural resources:

- Enhance access to recreational opportunities in the River Valley
- Increase awareness and understanding of the River Valley environment
- Improve utilization of land and resources in the River Valley
- Ensure protection and preservation of natural and cultural resources

## ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The ATP Update includes identification and prioritization of a core bicycle and pedestrian network throughout the City. New elements that focus on enhancement and maintenance of existing trail and sidewalk network, as well as way-finding. Acknowledge work done since original ATP adopted in 2008 and provide direction for future implementation and maintenance efforts. The ATP Update provides a framework for prioritization of implementation of the City's goals to meet the needs of individuals and families living, working and recreating in Bloomington through strategic investments in multi-modal transportation features. Throughout the update process the residents have had opportunities to provide input into the plan through an on-line survey, stakeholder meetings and resident open houses.



## LYNDALE AVENUE SUBURBAN RETROFIT

The Lyndale Ave. Retrofit provides a clear vision and specific steps the City can take to enhance the function, vitality, and appearance of Lyndale Avenue and attract reinvestment to this aging corridor. Rooted in solid economic market analysis, the suburban retrofit strategy will provide clear and realistic implementation guidance, ultimately creating economic, social, and environmental value for Lyndale Avenue and the community.

The goal is to transform Lyndale Avenue into a thriving, walkable, mixed-use corridor that serves as an amenity to attract new, and retain existing, residents and businesses. This change won't happen overnight. While the study will identify actions that can be implemented in the near-term, transformation will take time and will be influenced by evolving market conditions.

Bike routes and potential additional park space were explored in the Lyndale Retrofit project and the Park System Plan. Both plans work to support and complement each other.

## CITY COMMISSIONS

The City of Bloomington has organized a number of Commissions to focus on key initiatives and topics that will improve the City. At times the Parks Department will interact with most of these groups. The following are identified as key partners in advancing elements of this Master Plan.

### PARKS, ARTS & RECREATION COMMISSION

The Bloomington Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission (PARC) advises the City Council on matters related to the capital development, improvement and maintenance of city parks as well as recreation and cultural arts programs. The Bloomington City Code charges PARC with the following duties:

- To review and evaluate park and recreation programs and how these programs can and do fulfill the existing and future needs of the City.





- To review and evaluate parks, recreation and arts financing methods as they relate to needs.
- To review, study, and evaluate the use, operation, and need for revenue facilities in the City such as the golf courses, swimming pools, and Bloomington Community Ice Garden.
- To study, review, and evaluate existing and future programs and facilities in the area of cultural activities as an important additional source of recreation for the people; and to study how these programs and facilities meet the cultural needs of the community.

PARC is a key advisor for the Park System Master Plan and has provided guidance, direction, and feedback on key elements including:

- Community Engagement
- Overall Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles
- Natural Resources and Sustainability
- Equity

## SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

The Sustainability Commission advises the Bloomington City Council, Bloomington City staff, and the Bloomington community on policies, practices, procedures and proposals that relate to the sustainable use and management of environmental resources that include air, water, energy, land and ecological resources, and waste. The Commission helps to ensure that such resources will be sustained and continue to provide for a high quality of life for present and future generations. The Commission is appointed by and advisory to the City Council. Its duties and responsibilities include the following:

- Collaborate with the City staff to review, evaluate, develop and advise the City Council on policies and practices regarding sustainability and management of environmental resources.
- Engage with the Bloomington community and serve as a community liaison for issues, ideas and proposals while providing appropriate feedback.
- Serve as a resource for other Bloomington commissions, boards, committees and task forces on any issues related to sustainability.

The Sustainability Commission has provided leadership for the Natural Resources and Sustainability portions of the Park System Master Plan.





## CREATIVE PLACEMAKING COMMISSION

Appointed by the City Council and Artistry Board, the Creative Placemaking Commission advises the City Council on using arts, design, culture and creativity to help accomplish the City's goals for change, growth and transformation of the South Loop District in a way that also builds character and quality of place in Bloomington. In the future, the Council intends to extend creative placemaking to all of Bloomington.

- The Creative Placemaking Commission:
- Establishes strategies and approves work plans for Bloomington's creative placemaking initiatives;
- Promotes and markets placemaking activities in Bloomington to residents, visitors, employers, developers, and the media;
- Adopts decision making criteria and processes for use of resources and project selection;
- Cultivates relationships with project hosts, placemaking partner organizations and artists;
- Reviews placemaking proposals and makes recommendations;
- Submits annual work plans and progress reports to the City Council and Artistry Board of Directors.

Creative Placemaking is an evolving field that works to build vibrant, distinctive, and sustainable communities through the arts. It engages the community, artists, and other stakeholders in building social fabric and local economies while making physical, place-based improvements, leveraging the distinctive character and creative and cultural resources of each place. Parks are a natural fit for Creative Placemaking and the Department should seek to continue developing relationships and looking for opportunities with the Creative Placemaking Commission.



*Creative Placemaking. Photo Credit: Bruce Silcox*



## PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission advises the City Council on comprehensive planning, district planning, small area planning, zoning, development standards, development applications, subdivision, platting, variances, and transportation. The Planning Commission shall also make final decisions on applications, subject to appeal to the City Council, where expressly allowed under the City Code.

The Planning Commission:

- Holds hearings, review applications and make recommendations, and where applicable, act upon applications as set forth in the City Code;
- Reviews and makes recommendations on variance and appeal applications where such review is required of the Planning Commission by the City Code;
- Reviews and makes recommendations on proposed amendments to zoning, subdivision and transportation provisions of the City Code;
- Reviews and makes recommendations on proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and district plans; and
- Reviews and makes recommendations on transportation issues including transportation planning, street extensions and modification, street layout, on street parking, neighborhood traffic plans, transportation grant applications, transit systems, pedestrian ways, and bicycle traffic, and
- Other duties as may be assigned by the City Council or by state law.



**CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:** The following city council priorities were used to inform and guide the direction of the park system master plan. Revised priorities are anticipated sometime after completion of the master plan. The plan should be updated to reflect any modifications.

01



**COMMUNITY AMENITIES**



**ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY**



**EQUITY AND INCLUSION**



**COMMUNITY IMAGE**



**ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**



**FOCUSED RENEWAL**



**HIGH QUALITY SERVICES**

*Park System Guiding Principles were informed by and complement the City Council's Strategic Priorities. The Park System is a reflection of the City of Bloomington and the strategic and operational values and mission should always speak to each other.*



*If Council Priorities are adjusted following the publication of this master plan, the Guiding Principles should be evaluated for compatibility.*

**PARK SYSTEM  
GUIDING PRINCIPLES**





## SECTION 01 REFERENCES

- Anton, P. (2005). *The Economic Value of Open Space: Implications for Land Use Decisions*. Saint Paul, MN: Wilder Research.
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