

Chapter 6: Parks and Open Space

Parks, Recreation and Forestry

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Section 1: Introduction

This Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan describes how the City of Robbinsdale will maintain, improve and preserve its park system.

Robbinsdale is a fully developed community with a well-established park system. Investment is expected to continue to be focused on the enhancement and preservation of existing park and recreation facilities, the bike/walk trail system, and its recreational programs in light of diminishing resources. A primary goal is to maintain current levels of service.

Through the City's Comprehensive Plan open house process, residents embraced the continued improvement of the park and trail system. A variety of ideas were expressed, including introducing a restaurant along the waterfront at Lakeview Terrace Park. Parks and trails have been a source of pride for residents and a continued City commitment will ensure they will remain as such well into the future. The City should provide varied, accessible, and interconnected open space to be used by a wide range of people throughout the year.

Highway 100 improvements have created some opportunity for park improvements. The Minnesota Department of Transportation had acquired land containing two parks that are expected to be turned back to the City. These "past and future" parks include Graeser Park, a small park with picnic facilities and a boat launch area on Lower Twin Lake formerly known as Lion's Park.

The City should provide facilities that promote pedestrian use, outdoor seating, bicycle racks, sculptures/works of art and other features of interest in the Downtown. However, given limitations of available resources, investment is focused on a Capital Improvement Plan that creates a strategic plan for park improvements. The City has made significant investments in the Downtown streetscape along the West Broadway corridor and Hubbard Ave. N. and a public plaza has been created in the Downtown at 41½ Ave. N. between Hubbard Ave. N. and West Broadway Ave. The City should continue to pursue a "greening the streets" program that will be implemented as properties redevelop.

The City has adopted architectural guidelines for downtown redevelopment and Hubbard Marketplace provides an example of redevelopment with the benefit of the guidelines.

The overall goal is to provide opportunities for the residents of Robbinsdale to participate in a wide variety of leisure activities, which will produce self-fulfilling experiences consistent with the needs, interests, and abilities of all citizens. This includes planning, organizing, promoting, operating and supervising these activities, as well as recruiting and training personnel.

Park aesthetics have been greatly enhanced due to extensive tree, shrub and perennial flower plantings that have occurred and will continue as funding permits. In addition, a uniform sign system, asphalt reduction program, and the removal of overhead wires have made significant contributions to appearance.

The City will continue to embrace the fact that it has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure the safety of recreational program participants and those who use City Parks. Systematic

programs have been developed to monitor equipment and facilities such as the playground equipment inspection program. These programs will be continued. In addition, continued staff safety training helps provide a safe environment for users.

In recent years, a better balance has been achieved in regard to quality and economy in both the program and facility areas. Cost and benefit analyses are now a routine part of the program development process resulting in a more efficient use of the City's resources. There are few, if any, programs which have minimal participation yet high cost. Those programs whose costs exceed revenue generally have such a high level of participation that the cost is justified. (E.g. skating rinks, wading pool, youth programs).

Section 2: Plan Direction

The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Plan places primary emphasis on developing a park system that:

- Recognizes the diverse recreational and leisure needs and interests of the community.
- Provides parkland and facilities that are designed, developed and maintained to the highest and most current standards.
- Provides recreational programs that satisfy the needs and interests of the City's residents.
- Maintains a comprehensive shade tree management program.
- Promotes connectivity with neighboring communities and the Metropolitan region through trail and sidewalk linkages.

While the focus of the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Plan is on the neighborhood and community level, recreational needs and interests exist that our local park system may not provide. Therefore, the City should continue to cooperate with other units of government in developing regional systems that provide recreational experiences that are not available in our local system, and aligning trails and sidewalks to promote the regional trail network.

Section 3: Goals, Objectives, and Policies

GOAL: Provide adequate park facilities and recreational opportunities to ensure the health and well-being of the residents of Robbinsdale and provide a quality living environment.

OBJECTIVE ONE: (SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT) – Develop and maintain an aesthetically pleasing, safe, efficient, and accessible park system that responds to the recreational and open space needs and interests of the community.

POLICIES:

1. The City should define parks as public land, suitable and available for recreational use.
2. The City will continue to utilize parkland dedication when available through redevelopment to enhance the bike and trail system and promote “connectivity” given the context of being a fully developed city.
3. The City should continue to promptly emphasize the aesthetic aspect of the park and recreation system so as to fulfill its purpose of providing a relief from the urban environment.
4. The City should continue to promptly maintain all parklands at a high level of safety, sanitation, and efficiency consistent with their appropriate function and classification.
 - A. Maintenance levels for critical environmental programs and areas should vary according to the need to avoid irreparable damage to the resources.
 - B. The City should employ maintenance practices that conserve energy and minimize costs.
 - C. The City should continue to provide skilled professional and volunteer leadership for programs and activities.
5. The City should continue to improve accessibility of all parks, recreational opportunities, and scenic areas for all users.
 - A. The City should continue to develop and maintain safe and efficient bikeway/walkway trails as approved in the Bikeway-Walkway Plan (**see Figure 6C**).
 - B. The City should continue to improve accessibility of its parks and facilities to meet American with Disabilities Act requirements.
 - C. The City should continue to cooperate with other governmental and non-governmental agencies in the alignment and development of regional trails and parks.
6. The City should continue to prioritize park improvements through its 5-year Capital Improvement Plan for Parks, Recreation, and Forestry.

OBJECTIVE TWO: (FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS) – Design park facilities and recreational programs that provide the best possible combination of quality and economy.

POLICIES:

1. The City should design parks that:
 - Create an attractive visual appearance.
 - Preserve natural resources.
 - Provide for a variety of uses.
 - Increase energy efficiency.
 - Minimize maintenance cost.
2. The City should ensure that master plans for each park are developed and periodically evaluated.

The City should continue to utilize school facilities for community and recreation activities.

The City should continue to involve the Crime Prevention Program in the design of parks to minimize incidents of crime and vandalism.

The City should continue to encourage citizen participation in the design and management of parks through the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Commission.

The City should continue to strive to provide all residents of Robbinsdale with access to park facilities.

The City should continue to exploit every available resource to provide park facilities and recreation programs.

OBJECTIVE THREE: (RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES) – Assure the development and promotion of a wide variety of recreation opportunities and programs to meet the needs and interests of the community’s residents.

POLICIES:

1. The City should provide programs that meet the physical, emotional, social and educational needs of its residents.
 - A. The City should continue to utilize the forum of the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Commission to encourage active citizen participation in recreation planning, programming of activities, and use of facilities.
 - B. The City should continually re-evaluate and recognize programs, which best meet the changing needs of the community.
 - C. The City should coordinate and cooperate with recreation programming of other governmental and non-governmental agencies.
 - D. The City should provide skilled (and appropriately trained) leadership for programs and activities.

- E. The City should encourage self-initiated recreation.
 - F. The City should continue to encourage cultural development, arts, historical preservation, and special activities where possible.
 - G. The City should continue to provide recreation information and educational materials on leisure time activities.
2. The City should provide a wide range of recreational activities for its residents including active team sports, active individual sports, passive activities, and special group leisure time activities that appeal to all ages, both sexes, both active and passive interests and to special populations.

Section 4: Parks and Recreation Facilities – Inventory

Park Classification and Facilities

Parks are classified and developed according to a functional hierarchy. This functional system suggests the types of facilities and development, which would be appropriate in each park. However, improvements are individually tailored to each park based on neighborhood desires, historical presence of certain types of facilities, and resources available.

Different types of parks are located and designed to serve different needs and populations. For example, there should be a park in each neighborhood that is safely accessible to pedestrians, especially children, within a reasonable walking radius of one-quarter to one-half mile. At the other end of the spectrum, neighborhood scale parks are meeting organized sports and specialized community-wide recreation needs.

Robbinsdale's park facilities are shown on the map in **Figure 6A**. These parks are classified primarily by their use, location, and the area they occupy. They include (1) Mini Parks, (2) Neighborhood Parks, (3) Community Playfields, (4) Community Parks, (5) Conservancy Areas and (6) Linear Parks. The map in **Figure 6B** shows the Robbinsdale park classification system.

A description of each park classification is shown below:

- **Mini Parks:** Sites up to one acre in size, which are located within neighborhoods and have specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific groups such as tots or senior citizens.
- **Neighborhood Parks/Playgrounds:** Sites preferably six acres or larger in size which are centrally located within neighborhoods and are designed primarily for use by neighborhood residents within easy walking and biking distance. They are intended for both active and passive participation. They include facilities for field games, court games, crafts, and playground apparatus, skating, picnicking and shelter buildings. They are preferably combined with schools.
- **Community Play-fields:** Sites at least ten acres in size consisting of active recreational facilities for intensive use and organized athletics. These sites have regulation size playfields and are intended to have supportive facilities for competitive athletics for several age groups. Supportive facilities include parking, lighting, and bathroom facilities.
- **Community Parks:** Sites are much larger than neighborhood parks and are intended to serve the entire community. They are areas of diverse environmental character and contain both active and passive recreational facilities including athletic fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, picnic areas and trails. These may also correlate with unique natural features, which are intended to be protected.
- **Conservancy Areas:** Sites for which limited facilities are intended. The primary objective is the protection and management of the natural environment. Native plant interpretation and similarly compatible passive recreational uses are also intended to be accommodated in conservancy areas.
- **Linear Parks:** Sites developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel such as hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, canoeing, walking, and skating.
- **Downtown Plazas:** Sites developed in the Downtown that provide green space/natural area in an urban environment
- **Potential Parkland:** Sites identified as potential land added to the park system. Primarily, land owned by MnDOT that will be turned back to the City.

Figure 6B Parks Classification System

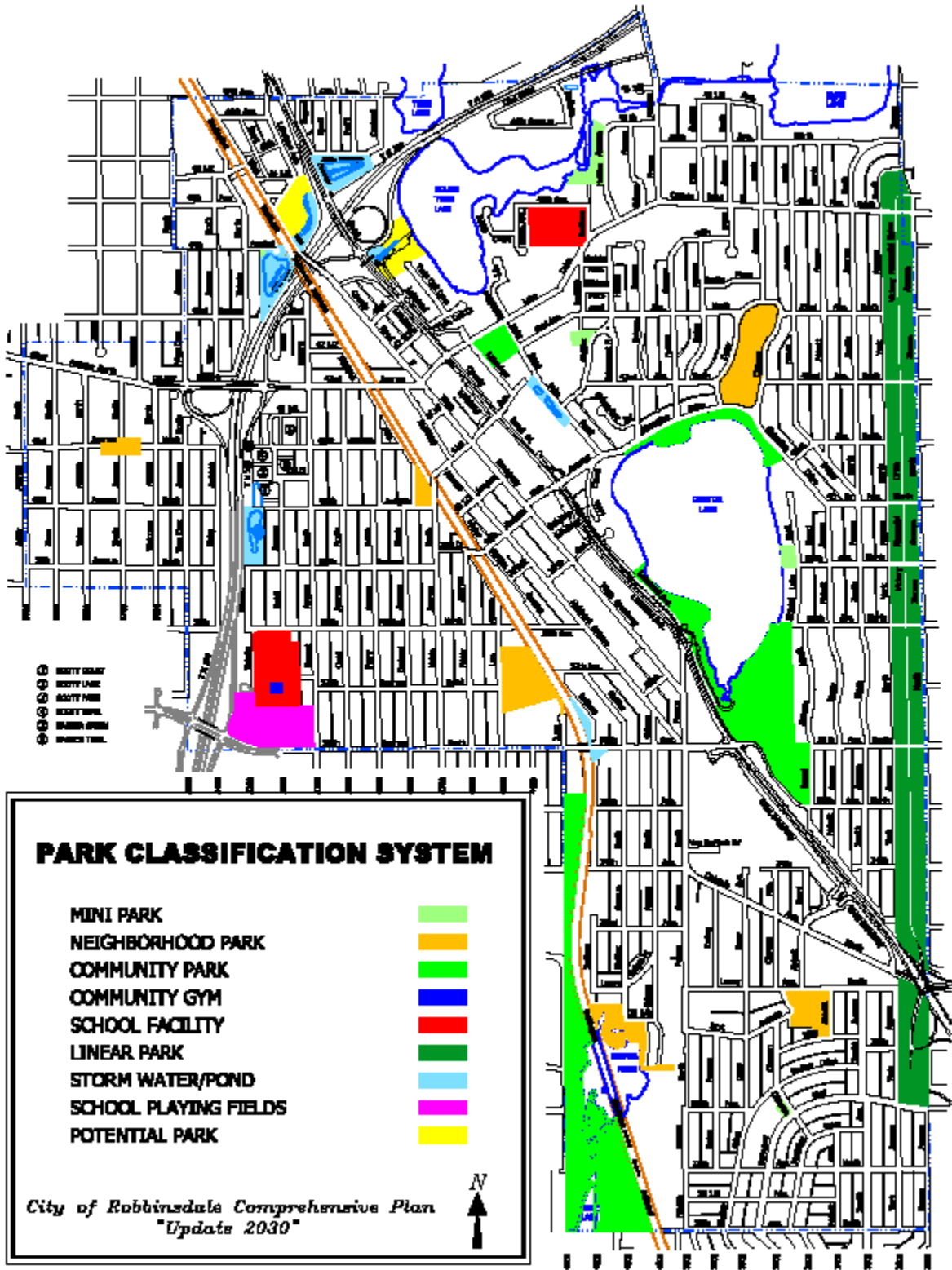


Table 6-1 reveals the location, improvements, and acreage of the park facilities in Robbinsdale.

Table 6-1 Robbinsdale Park Facilities: 2008

Robbinsdale Parks	Park Locations	Acres	Shelter Building	Ball Diamonds	Playground Equip.	Skating Rinks	Hockey Rinks	Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Picnic Areas	Picnic Pavilion	Paths & Trails	Public Meeting	Horseshoe Courts	Wading/Splash	Concession Stand	Boat Access
Hollingsworth	4237 Shoreline Drive	4.4								*		*					
Humphrey	4545 Halifax Ave	3.8								*		*					
Kelly	4100 Xenia Ave	1.7			*			*	*			*		*			
Lakeview Terrace Park	3769 Crystal Lake Blvd.	33.9	*	*	*	*	*	*		*		*				*	*
Lee	3738 Lee Ave	2.5	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*					
So. Halifax	3101 Halifax Ave	6.4			*				*	*		*					
Parkview	2765 Parkview Blvd.	0.20			*												
Manor	3129 Abbott Ave	3.9	*	*	*	*	*	*							*		
Mielke	4239 Halifax Ave	0.60															
Sanborn	4236 Drew Ave	8.4	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*			
Sochacki	3500 June Ave	36.9								*	*	*					
Spanjers	4511 Lake Drive	4.0		*												*	
Sunset	3901 Crystal Lake Blvd.	0.80			*					*							
Triangle	4001 Noble Ave	1.03	*	*	*	*				*			*		*		

Not included:

- Graeser Park (Currently MnDOT property) Includes Picnic facilities and parking.
- South Twin Lake Boat launch (Currently MnDOT / DNR property, formerly Lions Park)

Table 6-2 reveals the classification of Robbinsdale Parks.

Table 6-2 Park Classification

<i>PARK NAME</i>	<i>CLASSIFICATION</i>
Hubert H. Humphrey	Conservancy Area
Lakeview Terrace	Community
Lee	Neighborhood
Manor	Neighborhood
Kelly	Neighborhood
Parkview	Mini Park
Sanborn	Neighborhood
Sunset	Mini Park
Hollingsworth	Community
South Halifax	Neighborhood
Spanjers	Community Playfield
Triangle	Neighborhood
Sochacki	Community Conservancy
Mielke Addition-park dedicated property	Mini Park
MNDOT-Lions (state owned)	Community
MNDOT – Graeser (state owned)	Community
School District 281-Language immersion	Community Playfield
Victory Memorial Parkway	Linear Park
School district 281- Lakeview Elementary	Community Playfield

Source: Park & Recreation Department, City of Robbinsdale

Section 5: Regional Parks and Trails

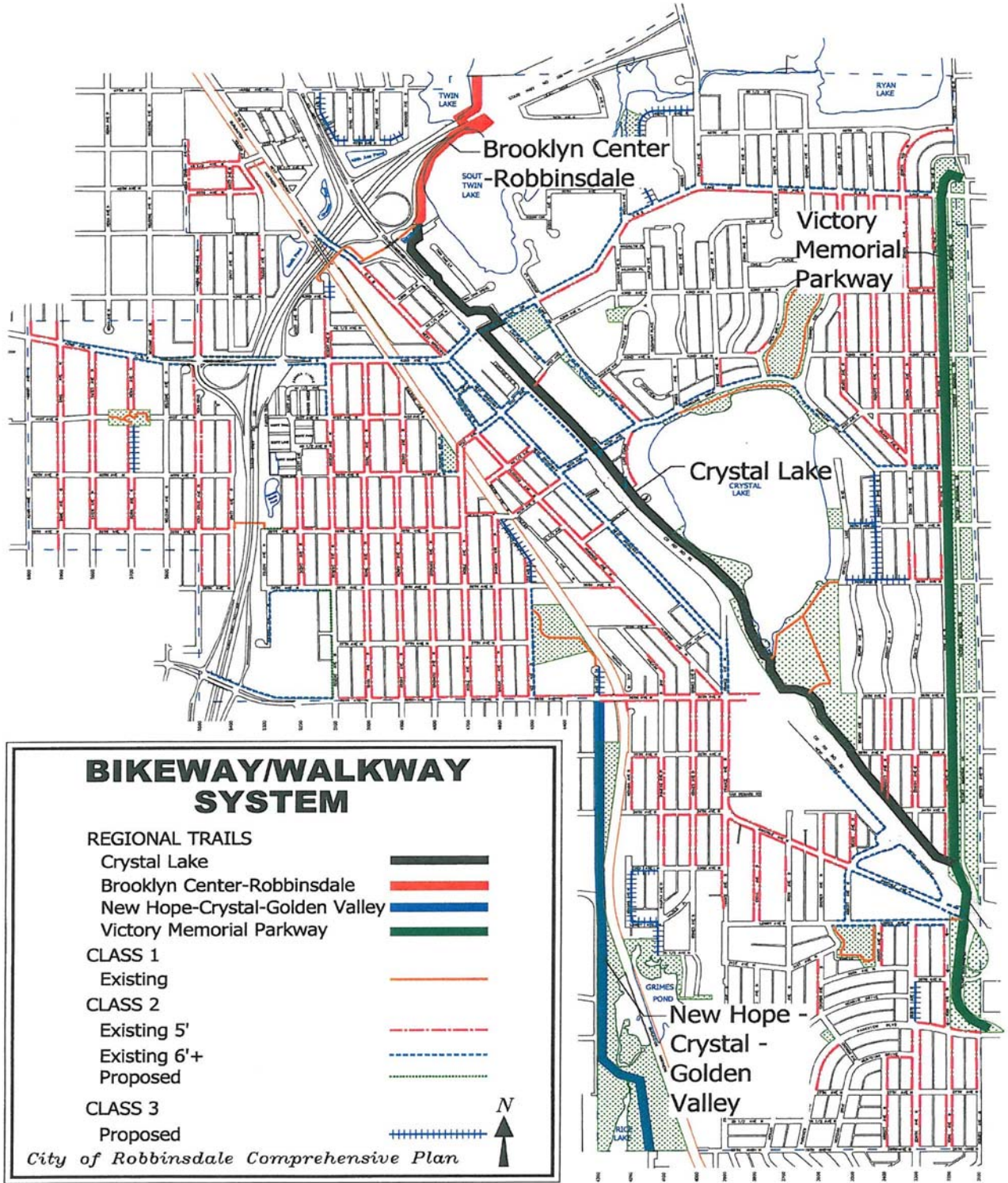
Robbinsdale has connections to the regional trail system. The Robbinsdale portion of the regional trail system is almost complete. The following trails connect Robbinsdale to its neighbors and the region:

- **Wirth/Victory Memorial Parkway Regional Trail** This existing Regional Park System facility is located on the eastern border of the City of Robbinsdale and is maintained by the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Commission.
- **Crystal Lake Regional Trail** – Linking Robbinsdale and Crystal ultimately to Elm Creek Park Reserve in Maple Grove. Located along the east side of the County Road 81 corridor, the Three Rivers Park District is responsible for the Regional trails in Robbinsdale. Elements of the trail have been completed with improvements to County Road 81, (Bottineau Blvd.)
- **Twin Lakes Regional Trail** – Linking Brooklyn Center and Robbinsdale. This portion of the Regional Trail system is conceptual; however elements have been completed with the Highway 100 improvements. It links trails via tunnels and underpasses constructed with Highway 100 to the north, generally along the east side of (Middle) Twin Lake as it crosses into Brooklyn Center. Three Rivers Park District is responsible for this section.
- **Bassett Creek Regional Trail** – Linking Robbinsdale with Golden Valley and beyond. The Bassett Creek Regional Trail traverses Golden Valley southwest of Robbinsdale. The southwest corner of Sohacki Park is the nearest point in Robbinsdale to the conceptual regional trail. Existing trails in the park provide links to the Robbinsdale sidewalk and trail system. The regional trail will also be maintained by the Three-Rivers Park District.

Walkways/Bikeways

Figure 6C illustrates Robbinsdale's current and proposed walkways and bikeways. Robbinsdale is served on its eastern border by one of the most scenic walkways/bikeways in the Metro area - Victory Memorial Parkway. The other major route is comprised of land adjacent to the County Road 81 corridor. The walkways/parkways provide an essential transportation alternative, particularly between parks.

Figure 6C Bikeway/Walkway System



Recreation Programs

The Robbinsdale Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department offers a wide variety of recreation programs. The programs are both instructional and sports/fitness oriented. They are broken down into four categories: 1) Youth Programs, 2) Adult Programs, 3) Senior Programs, and 4) General Interest Programs. The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department are able to provide these programs as a result of cooperation with several surrounding northwest suburbs.

Activities offered under these programs are listed below:

Youth Programs:

After School Programs	Slow Pitch Softball
Arts/Crafts Services	Soccer
Basketball	Soo Bahk Do – Karate
Early Childhood Programs	Storytelling/Art
Golf Instruction	Summer Playground Programs
Gymnastic Programs	Summer Wading Pools
Instructional Baseball Programs	Tennis Instruction & League
Music for Everyone	Tennis Instruction & League
Non-School Day Programs	Volleyball
Rink Rat Hockey	West Hennepin Community

Adult Programs:

Art Workshops	Robbinsdale Historical Society
Basketball Leagues	Soccer
Fitness Programs	Softball League
Garden Club	Soo Bahk Do – Karate
Jazzercise	Tennis Leagues
Robbinsdale City Band	Trips & Tours
Robbinsdale Gallery	Volleyball League

Senior Programs:

Book Discussion	Movie Discussion Group
Crime Stopper Series	Over 55 Outdoor Walkers
Five Cities Transportation	Prudential Van Program
Flea Market/Craft/Bake Sales	Robbinsdale Robins Club
Golden Age Club	U of M Extension Study Group
Just for Seniors (Trip)	

General Interests:

Adaptive Recreation Programs	Robbin Gallery
Community Gyms	Robbinsdale City Band
Holiday Specials	Robbinsdale Senior Commission
Ice Rinks & Warming Houses	Splash Pool
Music for Everyone Programs	Volunteer Activities
Park Shelter Building Rentals	Wading Pool
Picnic Shelter Rentals	Walk for Health

Robbinsdale School District

The Robbinsdale Parks and Recreation Department, in addition to using City parks, also use the Lakeview School Ball Field, and the RHS Resource Center at 3730 Toledo Avenue North. The gyms at the RHS Resource Center are used for programming by the Robbinsdale Parks and Recreation Department on an arrangement with ISD 281.

Forestry

Robbinsdale's urban forest is comprised of boulevard, park trees, and private residential and commercial landscaping which has been planted over the years. This urban forest represents a valuable community asset and is viewed by many as an indicator of the local quality of life.

The City has an active Forestry Department that is responsible for a wide range of programs. The three major responsibilities/programs of the Forester are diseased tree identification and removal, tree trimming, and tree replacement.

With regard to tree replacement, the City has undertaken a very active program of replanting trees on public boulevards, where tree losses have been particularly great. The Forestry Department maintains a healthy urban forest by trimming small trees 2 to 3 years after planting and trimming mature trees in a 5 to 7 year cycle. The Forester inspects trees on City property looking for potential hazardous trees and will remove them if necessary.

The Forestry Department seeks to provide the services essential for the protection of the City's environment and improvement of the City's natural resources. Robbinsdale has received the designation of "Tree City, U.S.A." for many consecutive years. The Forestry Department strives to maintain this honor by maintaining an active and comprehensive shade tree management program. The program includes a shade tree disease control program, tree trimming and tree replacement. In addition, the Forestry Program maintains a hazardous tree removal program for public trees and provides Forestry consulting services to the community.

Lakes and Water Quality – See Chapter 2 Land Use, Redevelopment, and Community Image

Section 6: Five Year Capital Improvement Program

FIVE YEAR LONG RANGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Preamble: The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Commission continues to believe that the facilities and activities provided at the Robbinsdale Community Center are the most important Parks and Recreation service to be offered by the City.

The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Commission may recommend that priorities change in any given year if funding becomes available for any specific projects.

Current Capital Improvement Plan (Parks)

Park	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Lakeview Terrace – Ballfield Lights		\$130,000				\$130,000
Lee				\$214,000		\$214,000
Graeser	\$20,000		\$180,000			\$200,000
Lakeview Terrace – Pumphouse roof	\$5,000					\$5,000
Sanborn		\$18,150	\$199,650			\$217,800
Sochacki					\$50,000	\$50,000
5215 44 th Ave. N. – Pocket Park	\$5,000					\$5,000
Lakeview Terrace – Resurface parking	\$50,000					\$50,000
Resurface Tennis Courts	\$22,500		\$40,000			\$62,500
Manor Park Splash Park	\$330,000					\$330,000
Kelly	\$10,000		\$100,000			\$110,000
Parkview Play Equipment					\$54,500	\$54,500
Sochacki Road Improvement	\$40,000					\$40,000
Lakeview Terrace – Trail Recon			\$12,200	\$134,200		\$146,400
Sochacki – Trail rehabilitation				\$11,650	\$128,350	\$140,000
Lakeview Terrace - Pavilion	\$20,000		\$120,000			\$140,000
Fitness Center equipment replacement	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$60,000