



NORTH BRANCH

—Minnesota—

Charles Klopp
Chair

Bob Bernier
Commissioner

Farfum Ladroma
Commissioner

Lynn Wilson
Commissioner

Wendy Chelberg
Commissioner

**PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE
COMMISSION
REGULAR AGENDA
MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2026 @ 7:00 PM
CITY HALL, 6408 ELM STREET, NORTH
BRANCH, MN 55056**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. ROLL CALL
4. PUBLIC COMMENT
Provides an opportunity for the public to address the Council on items that are not on the Agenda. Please raise your hand to be recognized. Please state your name and address for the record. This section is for the express purpose of addressing concerns of City services and operations. It shall not be used to clarify individual's views for political purposes.
5. AGENDA APPROVAL
 - a. Approve Agenda ACTION
6. CONSENT AGENDA
All matters listed under Consent Agenda are considered routine and/or non-controversial and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Councilmember or citizen so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the Agenda.
 - a. Approval of February 2, 2026 PTOS Commission minutes ACTION
7. REPORTS
 - a. Park Dedication Fund INFO
 - b. Project Updates INFO
 - c. Charitable gambling proceeds for park and trail additions and maintenance funding INFO
 - d. Comprehensive Plan Update INFO
8. NEXT MEETING - Monday April 6, 2026 - 7PM
9. ADJOURNMENT



Prepared By:

Presenter:

Date: 01/06/2026

Board & Commission: Parks, Trails and Open Space Commission

Subject: Approval of February 2, 2026 PTOS Commission minutes

Voting Requirements:

Voting Options Simple Majority



NORTH BRANCH —Minnesota—

Charles Klopp
Chair

Bob Bernier
Commissioner

Farfum Ladroma
Commissioner

Lynn Wilson
Commissioner

Wendy Chelberg
Commissioner

**PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE
COMMISSION
REGULAR AGENDA
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7:00 PM
CITY HALL, 6408 ELM STREET, NORTH
BRANCH, MN 55056**

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH BRANCH IN THE COUNTY OF CHISAGO AND IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

REGULAR MEETING

Monday, February 2, 2026

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Charles Klopp called the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Charles Klopp led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **OATH OF OFFICE**

a. Oath of Office - Klopp

INFO

The oath of office was administered to Charlie Klopp to the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Commission by Community Development Director Nate Sondrol.

4. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioner Charles Klopp, Commissioner Farfum Ladroma, Commissioner Wendy Chelberg, Commissioner Lynn Wilson

Absent: Commissioner Bob Bernier

Remote:

Others Present:

Notes:

5. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Provides an opportunity for the public to address the Council on items that are not on the Agenda. Please raise

your hand to be recognized. Please state your name and address for the record. This section is for the express purpose of addressing concerns of City services and operations. It shall not be used to clarify individual's views for political purposes.

6. AGENDA APPROVAL

a. Approve Agenda

ACTION

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Farfum Ladroma
SECONDER: Wendy Chelberg
AYES: Charles Klopp, Farfum Ladroma, Wendy Chelberg, Lynn Wilson
ABSENT: Bob Bernier
NOTES:

7. CONSENT AGENDA

All matters listed under Consent Agenda are considered routine and/or non-controversial and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Councilmember or citizen so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the Agenda.

a. Approval of January 5, 2026 PTOS Meeting minutes

ACTION

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Wendy Chelberg
SECONDER: Farfum Ladroma
AYES: Charles Klopp, Farfum Ladroma, Wendy Chelberg, Lynn Wilson
ABSENT: Bob Bernier
NOTES:

8. REPORTS

a. Election of Officers - Parks, Trails and Open Space Commission

ACTION

Commissioner Lynn Wilson nominated Charles Klopp for Chair of the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Commission.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Lynn Wilson
SECONDER: Farfum Ladroma
AYES: Farfum Ladroma, Wendy Chelberg, Lynn Wilson
ABSENT: Bob Bernier
NOTES:

Chair Charles Klopp nominated Lynn Wilson as the Vice Chair for the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Commission.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Charles Klopp
SECONDER: Farfum Ladroma
AYES: Charles Klopp, Farfum Ladroma, Wendy Chelberg
ABSENT: Bob Bernier
NOTES:

b. Park Dedication Fund

INFO

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol gave the Park Dedication Fund Update

c. Project Updates

INFO

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol gave Project Updates

- The City Council moved its meetings to the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, starting at 6 PM.
- The County is doing some work at Checkerboard Park by adding some new fencing to allow an area for smaller dogs and a spot for larger dogs.
- The Northwoods Park project is completed.
- We have been notified that there'll be some work in Clayton Anderson Park, Branch Acres Park, and the Woodduck Pond Preserve. There are gas transmission lines that run through those parks, so they'll be clearing trees until the end of March. Any brush that is hanging over the lines will be trimmed.
- An update from the Harder Park Disc Golf Course, statistics from the UDisk App, which people have to log into, there have been almost 3,600 rounds from 705 unique players from 20 states, walking over 13.3 million steps over 6,000 hours recorded in 2025.
- Safe Route to School, will eventually get a website that will allow people to interact, so people can identify areas that need improvement.
- The East Central Arts Grants, the contracts are getting signed with the bands, and all things are moving forward.
- Community Director Nate Sondrol showed a map of the proposed improvements to the Malmquist Property.

d. Hemingway Meadows Minor Subdivision

ACTION

Reliable Land Trust has submitted a minor subdivision application for a plat named Hemingway Meadows. The proposed plat is located on the east side of Hemingway Meadows on the south side of 372nd Street and adjacent to the Janet Johnson Wildlife Management Area. The proposed plat would create 4 lots on 40 acres and is located within the conceptual open space/wildlife corridor. The landcover consists of open cultivated land with a temporarily flooded aspen forest on the southeast corner that the DNR has identified as part of a regionally significant ecological area. The soils are predominantly loamy sand or fine sand, with areas of muck on the southeast corner. The developer is not proposing any impacts to the existing tree cover.

State Statute allows cities the ability to require that a reasonable portion of the buildable land of any proposed subdivision be dedicated to the public to address infrastructure needs created by the

development, including parks, recreational facilities, playgrounds, trails, sidewalks, wetlands, and open space.

In lieu of land dedication for parks, recreational facilities, playgrounds, trails, wetlands, or open space, cities may require a developer to pay cash or “park dedication fees.” Park dedication fees excuse the developer from a local land dedication for park and recreation purposes, but still allow the city to purchase and acquire new, off-site facilities to serve the recreation needs to be created by the subdivision.

It shall be deemed to be in the public interest to require land dedication, cash contribution, or any combination thereof when the city council, after review and recommendation, makes one or more of the following findings of fact:

(1) All or part of the proposed subdivision has been designated as park, playground, public open space, storm sewer holding areas or ponds on an adopted city plan;

(2) Such a contribution is necessary in order to protect adjacent land uses from potential conflicting land uses which could exist on the land subdivided;

(3) The increased number of residents residing or being employed within the subdivision will increase the recreational demands upon the city;

(4) The land proposed to be subdivided contains or borders upon existing unique topographical features including but not limited to ponds, lakes, streams, timber stands, water holding areas, hills, steep slopes, drainage areas, or bluffs which should be preserved to prevent foreseeable safety, pollution, or erosion hazards or to provide unique recreational and aesthetic qualities and enjoyment to the city; Such contribution is necessary to comply with or fulfill the goals, policies, and programs of the city.

The Developer is proposing to subdivide the 40-acre property into 4 lots. The nearest park would be Janet Johnson Wildlife Management Area and Wood Duck Preserve nature areas.

Cash Option 4 Lots @ \$1,800 per lot = \$7,200

Land Option 10% of land = 4 acres

Cash/Land Option Various Combinations of the above

Motion to take the cash contribution.

RESULT: **Passed**
MOVER: **Farfum Ladroma**
SECONDER: **Lynn Wilson**
AYES: **Charles Klopp, Farfum Ladroma, Wendy Chelberg, Lynn Wilson**
ABSENT: **Bob Bernier**
NOTES:

e. Regional Trail — Speed Limit Discussion ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the Regional Trail - Speed Limit Discussion. He noted Chisago County recently adopted a policy to implement a 20 miles per hour (MPH) speed limit on designated regional trails in the county. This designation includes the portions of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail in North Branch that are north of 410th Street and south TH95/ Main St.

The Chisago County Regional Trail Policy establishes design and operational standards intended to promote safe, accessible, and enjoyable multi-use trail experiences. Among these standards is a recommended maximum speed limit of 20 MPH for trail users.

Currently, the City of North Branch trails do not have a formally adopted or consistently posted speed limit. Increased trail use by pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized users has

heightened the importance of establishing clear operational guidelines that reduce conflicts and enhance safety.

Adopting a 20 MPH speed limit directly supports the Chisago County Regional Trail Policy by:

- Promoting uniform trail regulations across jurisdictions
- Reducing potential conflicts between fast-moving and vulnerable users
- Supporting predictable and enforceable trail behavior standards
- Demonstrating regional cooperation and policy consistency

This action will ensure city trails meet regional expectations and best practices.

If approved, staff recommends the following steps:

1. Draft/Adopt Ordinance: Formal approval of a 20 MPH trail speed limit
2. Signage Installation: Coordinate with Chisago Co to install standardized speed limit signs
3. Public Communication: Update park maps, websites
4. Coordination: Coordinate with Chisago County and local enforcement partners as appropriate

Move to approve the 20 MPH trail speed limit.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Farfum Ladroma
SECONDER: Lynn Wilson
AYES: Charles Klopp, Farfum Ladroma, Wendy Chelberg, Lynn Wilson
ABSENT: Bob Bernier
NOTES:

f. Flink Ave Trail Phase II - DNR Local Trail Grant Application Authorization ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the Flink Ave Trail Phase II - DNR Local Trail Grant Application Authorization. The Minnesota DNR is soliciting applications for the Local Trail Connections Program with an application deadline of February 2, 2024. This program provides grants to local units of government to promote a relatively short trail. Connections between where people live and desirable locations, not to develop significant new trails. Funding for this grant program is from "In Lieu Of" lottery proceeds.

The City Council approved Resolution R-5-2024 in February 2024, authorizing City staff to submit an application to the MnDOT Active Transportation (AT) Grant Program for the Flink Ave Trail Phase II Improvement Project. The Flink Ave Phase II Improvement project consists of the construction of a 10' wide trail located on the west side of Flink Ave from 392nd Street to the existing pedestrian network is located on the north side of the entrance to the North Branch Marketplace development.

The City was notified in May 2024 that the proposed project was selected for MnDOT Active Transportation Program Funds in the amount of \$574,332 for infrastructure improvements for the project.

The City Council approved a resolution authorizing WSB to provide engineering and construction inspection services for the project on January 28, 2025, and approved Resolution R-195-2025 on May 27, 2025, to approve the plans and specs and authorize city staff to advertise for bids. The City received 6 bids for the project, all exceeding the budgeted grant award amount. City staff have been working with MnDot on the ability to extend the construction of the trail to start by June 2027 to allow for seeking future grant funding solicitations to assist in completing the project. The DNR has a current local trail connection grant program solicitation that provides up to

\$250,000 with a non-state cash match of at least 25 percent. The grant applications are due March 31, 2026, and will be announced in the summer of 2026.

Motion to recommend approval of submitting a grant application for the Flink Avenue Trail Phase II project to the DNR Local Trail connections grant program.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Charles Klopp
SECONDER: Farfum Ladroma
AYES: Charles Klopp, Farfum Ladroma, Wendy Chelberg, Lynn Wilson
ABSENT: Bob Bernier
NOTES:

g. Comprehensive Plan Update INFO

Sondrol informed the commission of the work session on Wednesday, February 18th, at 6 PM. Chair Klopp requested that the comprehensive plan be made simple, with ordinary words, and also make the plan flexible, more of an outline. Klopp also mentioned he would like to see all the parks in the City of North Branch have a pathway to each park location and a usable park within a mile of each residence in the City.

Other things that were brought up were more streetlights and sidewalks throughout the center of town.

9. NEXT MEETING - March 2, 2026 - 7PM

10. ADJOURNMENT

The Parks, Trails and Open Spaces Commission Meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Farfum Ladroma
SECONDER: Wendy Chelberg
AYES: Charles Klopp, Farfum Ladroma, Wendy Chelberg, Lynn Wilson
ABSENT: Bob Bernier
NOTES:



NORTH BRANCH
City of North Branch
Staff Report

Prepared By: Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Presenter: Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Date: 02/26/2026

Board & Commission: Parks, Trails and Open Space Commission

Subject: Park Dedication Fund

Below are the fund balances as of 1/26/26

Fund	Balance
Park Dedication Fund (486)	\$289,812.56
(Outstanding state grant reimbursements - CSAH 30 Trail (Committments	
Park Improvement Fund (\$20,000 - ECRAC Summer Concerts)	\$124,223.44
Community Center Fund	\$184,806.19

Voting Requirements:

Voting Options Simple Majority



Prepared By: Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Presenter: Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Date: 02/26/2026

Board & Commission: Parks, Trails and Open Space Commission

Subject: Project Updates

March Project Updates

Voting Requirements:

Voting Options Simple Majority

Parks, Trails & Open Space Commission Project Updates

Current Projects	Progress and Next Steps	Approval Date	Estimated Completion Date	Estimated Cost
Website	The city is in the process of updating its website and is looking for feedback from the commission. The commission is expected to go live Dec 9		Dec 2025	
Clayton Anderson Park	<p>The PTOS Commission recommended approval of up to \$2,500 to acquire and place the limestone rock in the park. The City Council approved this at their April 9, 2024. The limestone has been moved to the park.</p> <p>The CCMG are looking to establish an Oak Savanna at the park. . They will be continuing the buckthorn removal from the park and are looking to remove the knapweed.</p> <p>North Woods and Waters have obtained a \$23,000 grant to support the pollinator planting and 2 year maintenance plan at the park. A huge thank you to Tom Anderson for securing the grant funding. The first two seedings of cover crop have been completed.</p>		2026	
Riverwalk Park	<p>Natural Space Domes donated the dome structure at the park. They would like to add a plaque at the dome structure. Below is proposed language: <i>This Park Dome was donated by Natural Spaces Domes of North Branch in memory and honor of MN State Senator Janet Johnson and Kids for Saving Earth founder 11 year old Clinton Hill. Both were defenders of the Planet (R) and would want you to work to protect our beautiful Earth.</i></p>			
Harder Park Disc Golf Course	<p>The NBDGA is in the process of designing signage for the course. The PTOS commission approved moving forward with the concept kiosk and to bring the final design back for approval. The City Council approved the NBDGA funding request of \$5,000 for alternate short tees and an alternate basket location for full build out of the course. The tee pads and kiosk sign will be installed in the spring. Trees have been planted around the course. A draft kiosk sign has been created. Public Works will be working with the NBDGC on site/landscaping improvements at the park for the kiosk.</p>			

	There were 3,592 rounds from 705 unique players from 20 states walking over 13.3 million steps over 6,000 hours recorded in 2025. This only included recorded play on udisc.			
Ballfield Improvements	The fencing improvements at Harder and Tower Park have been completed. Future improvements to be addressed are a glime, dugout roofs; drainage, base/bench replacement and fence toprail covers;	Dec 2022	Fall 2023/Spring 24	\$125,000
MERC Grant	The City received grant funding for new dugout roofs for Field 1 at Harder Park. These will be installed in 2026		Spring 2026	
RJMP	The Commission recommend city staff work with the Football association to identify improvements to fields, lighting and storage at the park. Football Foul Poles have been installed by the Football Assoc. They are looking to install additional parking at the park along the east side and outside of the outfield.			
Veterans Memorial	The City Council approved the site plan and MOU with the North Branch Veterans Memorial Group at the July 25, 2023 meeting and are working on their marketing and fundraising efforts. The coming soon sign has been installed in the park. The City Council approved the fiscal agreement.		2025/2026	
Flink Ave Trail Sunrise Bluff 2 Phase II (Co Mkt – 392)	City Staff submitted a grant to MNDOT AT program received funding of \$574,332 to complete the trail section. The City Council approved the plans and specs and authorizing for bids for the project at the May 27 meeting. Bids were received higher than the grant award. The Council approved applying for a DNR Grant		July 2026	\$99,901
Safe Route to Schools CSAH 30 Trail	The City Council recommended approval of submitting the grant application to construct a trail along the east side of CSAH 30 from 379 th St to Maple St and on Maple St from CSAH 30 to Oak St at the 12.7.21 meeting. The estimated engineering City Cost is \$55,004.90. The City has been notified that the project was selected for funding in the amount of \$366,700. The Council approved the plans and specs and the project is out for bid. The bids came in below budget and project is expected to begin Spring 2025. The project has been completed with some final punch list items remaining		June 30, 2025	
SRTS Plan	The SRTS Plan is over 12 years old and is need of		July 2026	

	an update. Will look to apply for grant funding to update this. The City was notified that it was awarded funding to complete its safe routes to school plan. The SRTS Planning Update process has started. There will be engagement activities taking place over winter 25-26 with a project completion July 26.			
Arts Grant	The Council approved the summer concert grant application. Staff submitted the application and and has been notified of receiving the grant award of \$20,000. January 15, 2026 is the official start date of grant activity to begin.			
Pollinator Friendly City/Monarch Community	The legislature approved language allowing property owners to maintain native prairies on all properties. The city will need to amend its existing ordinances to align with this.			
Tree City	The CCMG planted 8 trees in Clayton Anderson park despite the rained out Arbor Day event. City staff will work on tree ordinance and will bring it to a future meeting for review/discussion.		2026	
Skateboard Park	The Commission and Council approved the replacement of the surfacing at the skateboard park. Public Works has installed the new ramp surfaces and the park is getting a lot of use. 3 rd Lair has held provided a concept of a tiered quarter pipe. The PTOS Commission discussed providing up to \$4,000 in funding match for a tiered quarter pipe.	5/3/21		
Malmquist Property	The PTOS Commission recommended to strongly support Mr. Malmquist's proposal for his property to be entrusted to the city at the appropriate time and to care and that the city would care best for it and properly use it at the 1/9/23 meeting. City Staff is working with Mr. Malmquist on next steps. An appraisal (\$3,500 - \$5,000) would be required for DNR grant acquisitions. City staff met with the MN Trust for Public Lands to explore options to help protect the site until grant funding could be acquired.			
North Branch Beautification Association	The NBBA is continuing to work on the Vet Memorial, Flower Baskets, Banners and Memorial Benches.			
Splash Pad	The Commission and City Council have identified a splash pad as top priority improvement and has discussed Williams Park as the location for the splash pad to be tied to a community center location. The Commission discussed hosting a			

	community input meeting on the desired amenities and type of facility the community would desire in in winter 2024. The City is conducting a facility assessment and will help guide the location for a future community center. The Commission would like to hold a joint meeting with other commissions and council through this process.			
Strategic Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan	The City Council approved the Comprehensive Plan at the Oct 23, 2018 meeting. The next steps will be to develop a strategic plan and implementation. Including a bicycle/pedestrian plan and development of a bike friendly community initiatives and to accommodate site amenities within the design i.e. benches at various locations. This is an agenda item. A facility assessment is in the process of conducted and is estimated to be completed in July 2026.		Spring 2026	
Subdivision Review				
Westside Commons 3 rd	The PTOS Commission recommended the acceptance of cash and to work with the developer on the construction of the extension of the trail from 386 th St to TH95. The developer has agreed to construct the trail from 386 th St to TH95 and will receive a credit for park dedication fees.	3/6/23		
Hemingway Meadows	The City Council approved recommended the acceptance of cash on 2/25/26			
Fairway Field	The City Council approved recommended the acceptance of cash			
Walker Hill Farm	The City Council approved recommended the acceptance of cash			
Westside Commons Sr Housing	The PTOS Commission recommended the acceptance of cash on 10/7/24			
Preserve at Spring Hill 2	The PTOS Commission recommend the acceptance of cash on 9/9/24			
Meadows Ridge (LGI)	The PTOS Commission reviewed and recommended approval of the open space in the preliminary plat and recommend the acceptance of cash for units above the park credit utilization area. A park credit utilization area was approved and has been paid for up to 591 total units to be constructed. 308 units have been platted to date.	9/11/23		
Chain Lake Shores	The PTOS Commission reviewed the concept plan and provided feedback of a combination of cash and land for park dedication with a more detailed	9/11/23		

	review with a preliminary/final plat submittal.			
Townsend Master Plan	The PTOS Commission to recommend an acceptance a combo of land and cash for park dedication funds with the land not to exceed 4 acres.	5/2/22		
Casselberry Outlot	The PTOS Commission requested the City Council to reserve the parcel of land located at the northeast corner of Lincoln Trail and Hemingway Ave as park/open space. The City Council discussed this at their November 10, 2022 meeting and noted that the parcel is being reserved as right-of-way for a future intersection improvement (2027) and that any additional space would be preserved as park/open space.		2027	
Long-term Planning and Goals	Progress and Next Steps			
CIP 2025-2036	The Commission discussed focusing on Williams Park and to add the Malmquist Property, Luchts Trail Connection and park expansions to the CIP. The City Council will be reviewing in May/June 2023. – Additional resident support has been provided for the Luchts Crossing trail connection.			

Splash Pad	Location to be determined		2025	\$300,000
Central Park	Basketball Court resurfacing		2025	\$25,000
Northwood Park	Parking Lot Resurfacing		2025	\$20,000
Northwood Park	Basketball Court resurfacing		2025	\$25,000
Co Rd 30 Trail	379 th St to Maple St (East side)	<i>Final Design</i>	2025	\$500,000
Co Rd 30 Crosswalk	Pedestrian crossing near the library to Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail	<i>Final Design</i>	2025	\$600,000

Flink Ave Trail Phase II	Trail connection from existing trail to 392 nd St to NB Marketplace.	<i>Grant ?</i>	2025	\$600,000
Harder Park	Parking Lot microsurfacing		2025	\$65,000
Falcon Ave Trail	385 th – 386 th St		2025	\$55,000
RJMP	Parking Lot Microsurfacing		2025	\$20,000
Outdoor Archery Range	Location to be determined		2025	\$42,000
Malmquist Property	Acquisition and Development		2025	\$600,000
Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail	Maintenance		2026	\$6,000
Wildridge Park	Park Development – parking lot, soccer fields		2026	\$545,000
Williams Park	Park Development		2026	\$1,850,000
Clayton Anderson	Parking lot surfacing		2026	\$200,000
Harder Park Trail Connection			2026	\$1,000,000
Northwood Park Playground Equipment	Replace existing playground equipment		2026	\$100,000
Luchts Crossing	Park Development		2027	\$100,000
Wildridge Park	Basketball Court Resurfacing		2027	\$20,000
Luchts Crossing Trail Connection	Trail Connection from Luchts Crossing to Casselberry		2027	\$100,000
Northwood Park	Irrigation System		2028	\$70,000
Tower Fields	Irrigation System		2028	\$70,000
Townsedge Park	Park Development		2028	\$200,000
Harder Park Playground Equipment	Replace existing playground equipment		2028	\$100,000
North Branch Oaks Playground Equipment	Replace existing playground equipment		2028	\$100,000
Roger Johnson Park	Safety and Security Lighting		2028	\$100,000
Tower Fields	Parking Lot Paving		2029	\$70,000
Meadows North Park	Expansion to west		2029	\$50,000
Dog Park	Dog Park Development - Location TBD		2030	\$30,000
Roger Johnson Playground Equipment	Replace existing playground equipment		2030	\$
Roger Johnson Park	Expansion to east		2031	\$80,000

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail	Maintenance		2032	\$6,000
Wildridge Park Playgrund Equipment	Replace existing playground equipment		2032	\$100,000
Grand Ave Trail	Pedestrian bridge across Sunrise River		2033	\$515,000



Prepared By: Matthew Hill, City Administrator

Presenter: Matthew Hill, City Administrator, Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director, Kevin Schieber, Mayor

Date: 02/26/2026

Board & Commission: City Council

Subject: Charitable gambling proceeds for park and trail additions and maintenance funding

Background:

The City Council has been investigating revenue opportunities to enhance public service while being budget neutral for the residents. One opportunity that has been implemented in many communities throughout the State is utilizing the ability of collecting 10% of the charitable gambling net income derived from local pull tabs. The City adopted an ordinance on February 11, 2026, to assist in the long-term sustainability and enhancement of our city's public green spaces and recreational infrastructure. It establishes a necessary and dedicated funding mechanism by collecting 10% of the charitable gambling net income derived from local pull tabs.

This new revenue stream would be specifically earmarked to fund the following:

- **Additions and Expansion:** New development and expansion of parks and trails within the city.
- **Maintenance:** Essential ongoing maintenance and necessary repairs to our existing parks and trails network.

Ordinance 407-26 provides a stable, local funding solution that directly links a community-generated revenue source to a highly valued community asset. By dedicating a portion of charitable gambling income, the City Council can ensure that our parks and trails remain accessible, well-maintained, and continuously improved for the benefit of all residents.

Ordinance 407-26 has been reviewed by the City Attorney's office.

Requested Action:

Discussion on charitable gambling proceeds for park and trail additions and maintenance funding

Voting Requirements:

Voting Options Simple Majority

CITY OF NORTH BRANCH

ORDINANCE NO. 407-26

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NORTH BRANCH, MINNESOTA, PERTAINING TO THE PROCUREMENT OF CHARITABLE GAMBLING PROCEEDS FOR PARK AND TRAIL ADDITIONS AND MAINTENANCE FUNDING.

WHEREAS, the City of North Branch is authorized to promote the general welfare, public safety, and public good of its residents; and

WHEREAS, the maintenance and improvement of public parks and trails are essential for the quality of life of the residents of North Branch; and

WHEREAS, local charitable gambling organizations operating within the City of North Branch contribute to the community, and the City desires a mechanism to support public infrastructure through a portion of these proceeds;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH BRANCH ORDAINS:

Section 1. Purpose, Intent and Authorization

The purpose of this Ordinance is to establish a legal framework for the City of North Branch to procure a dedicated percentage of the net gambling proceeds from charitable gambling organizations operating within the city limits, for the sole purpose of funding the maintenance, repair, additions and improvement of City-owned parks and trails. The City Council is authorized by the provisions of Minn. Stat. § 349.213, as it may be amended from time to time, to impose additional restrictions on gambling within its limits, including the collection of a portion of net profits derived from lawful gambling.

Section 2. Definitions.

- Charitable Gambling Organization: Any organization licensed by the State of Minnesota pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 349.16, as it may be amended from time to time, to conduct lawful gambling activities within the City of North Branch and as further authorized under North Branch City Code.
- Net Gambling Proceeds: The gross receipts of lawful gambling minus prizes actually paid, allowable expenses, and taxes imposed by law.
- City: The City of North Branch, Minnesota.

Section 3. Procurement of Proceeds.

- A. Every Charitable Gambling Organization operating within the City of North Branch shall remit ten percent (10%) of its Net Gambling Proceeds to the City.
- B. The remittance required by this section shall be made quarterly and shall be accompanied by a report detailing the calculation of the Net Gambling Proceeds for the period, and such report shall be in a form acceptable to the City in order to ensure compliance with the City's reporting requirements under Minn. Stat. 349.213, as may be amended from time to time.
- C. The City Council is authorized to establish, by resolution, rules and procedures for the collection, reporting, and auditing of these proceeds to ensure compliance with this Ordinance and state law.

Section 4. Establishment of the Park and Trail Improvement and Maintenance Fund.

- A. All funds procured by the City under Section 3 of this Ordinance shall be deposited into a dedicated, segregated fund to be known as the Park and Trail Improvement and Maintenance Fund.
- B. The monies in the Park and Trail Improvement and Maintenance Fund shall be used exclusively for the ongoing maintenance, repair, capital improvements, and development of public parks and trails owned or operated by the City of North Branch, and the use of such funds shall be determined at the time of adoption of the City's annual budget or whenever said budget is amended.
- C. All expenditures authorized under this Ordinance shall be reported by City staff to the designated state agency annually pursuant to Minn. Stat. 349.213 subd.1(f)(2), as may be amended from time to time.

Section 5. Conflict and Severability.

- A. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.
- B. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.
- C. This Ordinance shall supplement existing regulations on the operation of Charitable Gambling Organizations as reflected in the North Branch City Code, chapter 18, article 4, as may be amended from time to time.

Section 6. Enforcement.

Failure of a Charitable Gambling Organization to comply with the requirements of this Ordinance shall be deemed violation of City Code, and shall subject to enforcement action under City Code Section 18-97, as may be amended from time to time, including the potential suspension or revocation of any operating license.

Section 7. Effective Date.

This Ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and publication as required by law.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of North Branch, Minnesota,
this _____ day of _____, 2026.

APPROVED: _____
Mayor

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk



Prepared By: Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director

Presenter: Nathan Sondrol, Community Development Director, Matthew Hill, City Administrator

Date: 02/26/2026

Board & Commission: Parks, Trails and Open Space Commission

Subject: Comprehensive Plan Update

Background Info

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee requests that the Planning Commission review two specific sections of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan:

- **Section 2: Values and Vision (all groups will review this section)**
- **Section 8: Natural Environment, Parks, Trails, and Recreation**

Your focused review is vital as we move toward the final revision of the plan. This should include a thorough overview of the current language, and listing any changes that the group feel necessary due to the changes and growth of the City.

We are establishing the following timeline for the process:

The Comprehensive Plan Committee met on Wednesday February 18, 2026, and discussed the following:

Introduction needs to add 'connectivity'. Trails need to connect new development, parks, and neighborhoods.

Is adding a community 'splash pad' still a priority that needs to be added?

Do the trends need to be updated? Adult league popularity has reduced, as have soccer. Lacrosse and pickleball have increased in popularity. Softball and Baseball remain the same. Regionally, the trend seems to include an indoor facility for sports like pickleball, soccer and lacrosse. Pools and indoor hockey rinks are expensive and difficult to maintain and operate.

New revenue source has been opened up via council approval at the first meeting in February, allowing 10% collection of gambling revenue to go toward park and trail building and maintenance. Are there other opportunities for additional revenue?

Accessibility - needs to be addressed in a couple of parks in our community

Discussion on adding a full-time parks and rec director to lead the development and maintenance of the parks, ice rinks, and gardens.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2026.

- **March 2026:** The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee will convene to review the individual group findings.
- **April or May 2026:** Presentation of the Comprehensive Plan review results to the Planning Commission for consideration and Council approval in June.

Supporting documents are attached, including:

- Sections 2 and 8 of the Comprehensive Plan, and a link to the entire document <https://www.northbranchmn.gov/228/Comprehensive-Plan>
- Summary of the feedback forms from the community questionnaires

Requested Action

To provide input on Sections 2 and Section 8 of the Comprehensive Plan and to provide input/directoin on a date for conducting a park tour.

Voting Requirements:

Voting Options **Simple Majority**

2

VALUES AND VISION

Values

Residents and other stakeholders were asked what they loved about North Branch at the Community Expo, at a chamber meeting, and at the first community café. The values expressed most often were:

THE STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY

A HOME TOWN FEEL

THE CITY'S COMMITMENT TO ITS PARKS AND TRAILS

A COMMUNITY THAT ENCOURAGES BIKING AND WALKING

QUALITY SCHOOLS

These values were reiterated at each of the other three community cafes and served as the foundation for the vision statements expressed below.

Vision for North Branch in 10 years

North Branch is a growing and safe community with outstanding natural and recreational amenities and opportunities for all, and well maintained infrastructure, vibrant business districts and neighborhoods, and provides residents with an excellent quality of life.

Vision for Land Use

The City of North Branch is a complete community that provides a well-balanced and wide range of places to live, work, shop and play. Land uses make efficient use of existing infrastructure, contribute to a strong local economy, preserve natural resources and contribute to a high quality of life.

Residential Uses

A diverse housing stock allows people at any stage in their life to be able to find a home in North Branch. Older housing is well maintained while new development expands housing options to complement existing neighborhoods.

Commercial and Industrial Uses

A significant amount of commercial and industrial uses can be found within the City that allow residents to work in North Branch, while also being able to meet all of their day-to-day needs. Commercial and industrial uses are compatible with their surrounding land uses.

Public/Institutional

Public and institutional uses are viewed as valued resources to the community and contribute to making North Branch a better place to live and do business.



North Branch is a growing and safe community with outstanding natural and recreational amenities and opportunities for all, and well maintained infrastructure, vibrant business districts and neighborhoods, and provides residents with an excellent quality of life.

Parks, Open Spaces and Trails

Quality parks and open space are within close proximity to all residents, providing recreational opportunities to encourage an active lifestyle. A wide variety of community facilities are provided to serve a range of interests. The City of North Branch has a proposed trail system that will allow bicycle and pedestrian access to most of the major pedestrian generators within the city, including schools, shopping areas, and parks. Many of the proposed trails are destinations in themselves, offering scenic walks or rides around many of the city's scenic views. With recreational activities such as running, bicycling, and walking increasing in popularity, the city's trail system will not only offer a recreational opportunity in itself, but will also help to connect the community's parks with the neighborhoods.

Vision for Economic Development

A strong business community is the cornerstone of a vibrant city. Economic development encompasses the policies and activities that improve the long term economic and social wellbeing of the community. Communities with strong economies have financial resources to support the levels of service that their residents need and desire. Successful communities realize that economic development is about bringing together social, natural, infrastructure, and economic assets in the community to sustain the "whole" community.

Vision for Municipal Utilities

The City of North Branch, individually and in collaboration with the North Branch Water & Light Utility, has a significant investment in its existing public utilities systems (water, wastewater and stormwater). The continued expansion and development within the Urban Service Area will require the extension of public utilities. In general, the existing infrastructure system is well-positioned and of adequate size to support expansion. However, coordination will be required between community development and the required expansion of the utility system. In some cases, the cost of providing utility service may dictate where and when future growth will occur.

Vision for Transportation

North Branch is located at the cross roads of I35 and TH95, providing for ease in and out of the city. Within the city limits, however, these features will require a coordinated approach to providing movement of traffic through the city to local destinations, safe pedestrian and bike corridors, and improved intersections to safely serve the increasing number of commercial vehicles passing through North Branch.

Vision for the Environment and Sustainability

Natural infrastructure includes all systems that relate to natural resources and contribute to an improved public life. Natural infrastructure considers the full range of natural resource uses including economic, environmental, health, cultural, and aesthetic. This broad view leads us to include surface water, groundwater, stormwater, wastewater, drinking water, geology, topography, soils, natural areas, open space, green spaces, urban forest, habitat, vegetation, scenic views, and parks and trails in natural infrastructure.

Natural infrastructure is a key element in planning where development should or should not take place within a city. This element is important to communities and development as it avoids certain development hazards, provides health benefits to citizens, protects ecological systems and enhances biological diversity, and offers communities unique quality of life components. Consideration of natural infrastructure ensures that homes are built upon stable dry soils, provides clean drinking water, accounts for resource based economic activities, provides scenic views and open spaces, and plans development that respect the integrity of natural systems and incorporate natural features into development.

Minnesota GreenStep City

In 2018, the Mayor and City Council approved a resolution to make North Branch a GreenStep City through the MPCA and League of Minnesota Cities' program. Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. This free continuous improvement program, managed by a public-private partnership, is based upon 29 best practices. Each best practice can be implemented by completing one or more actions at a 1, 2 or 3-star level, from a list of four to eight actions. These actions are tailored to all Minnesota cities, focus on cost savings and energy use reduction, and encourage civic innovation. North Branch is currently a Step 1 City. As North Branch plans for the future, it will continue to consider GreenStep City Best Management Practices as they relate to the goals and objectives of this comprehensive plan.



8

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION

Introduction

Natural resources are beneficial to the social, environmental, and economic vitality of a community. To ensure their quality and benefits, it is essential to plan and manage natural resources and areas as we do residential and commercial areas. The City of North Branch will promote, preserve and enhance the natural resources within the city and protect them from adverse effects occasioned by poorly sited development or incompatible activities by regulating land disturbances or development activities that would have an adverse and potentially irreversible impact on water quality and unique and fragile environmentally sensitive land; by minimizing conflicts and encouraging compatibility between land disturbing and development activities and water quality and environmentally sensitive land; and by requiring detailed review standards and procedures for land disturbing or development activities proposed for such areas, thereby achieving a balance between urban growth and development and protection of water quality and natural areas.

Wildlife Corridor

The Minnesota DNR has identified a regional greenway corridor in North Branch as part of the Metro Wildlife Corridors project (a 12-county metro area). The project, “ensuring that people and nature in the Twin Cities Area can grow together for generations to come” seeks to protect and restore key natural lands in the metro area by:

- Focusing pro-actively on strategic areas, of which North Branch is a part
- Efficiently leveraging private and public partners and resources
- Building upon prior investments in public lands, and
- Enhancing the cost-effectiveness of conservation efforts by coordinating them within a regional framework.

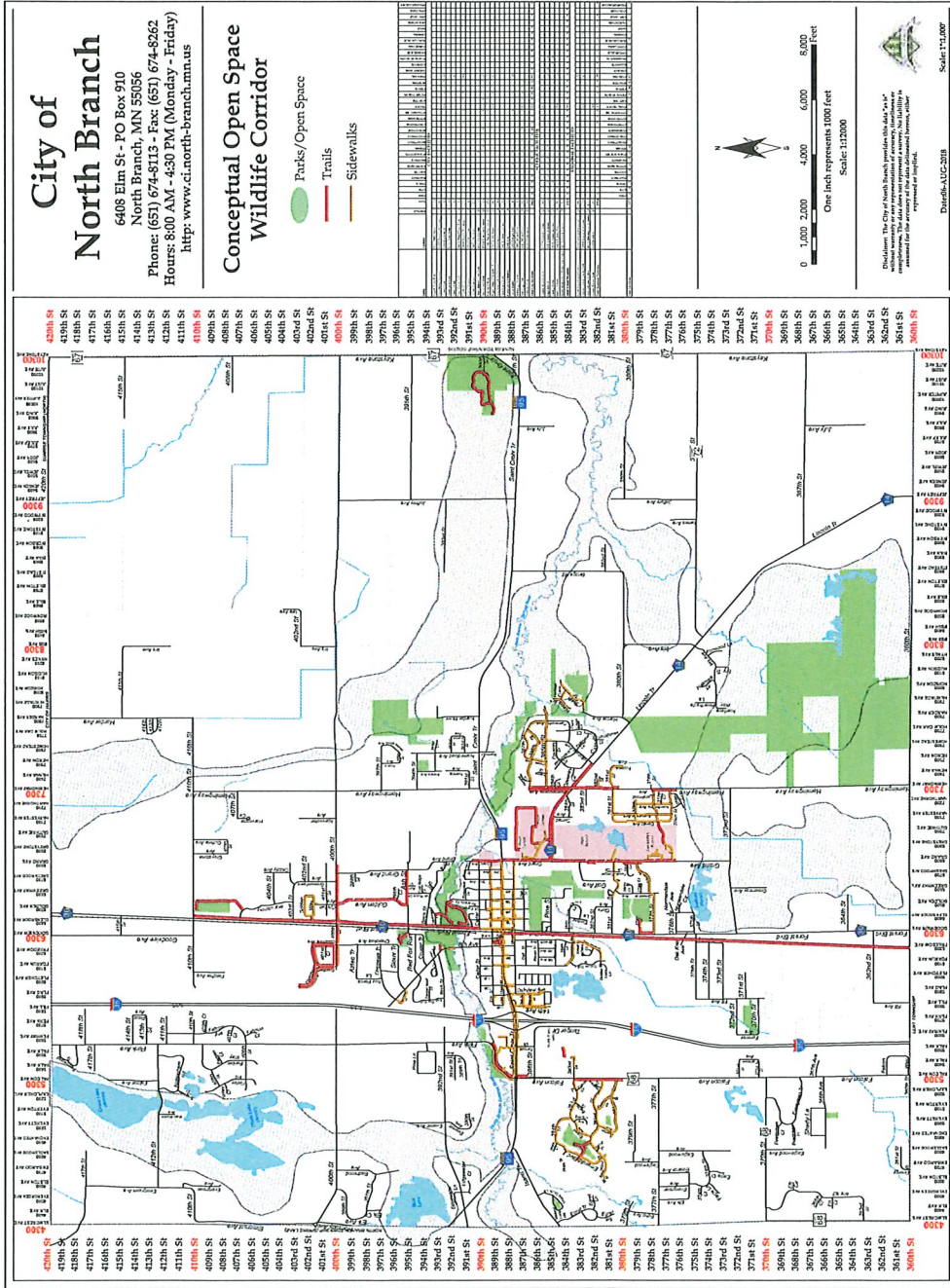
This corridor is specifically designed to incorporate, the high quality natural areas such as those identified in the Natural Resource Inventory or mapped by the MnDNR, natural corridors such as the Sunrise River, and areas that connect these features.

The City of North Branch supports the preservation of natural and open spaces along the north branch of the Sunrise River, the city’s name sake. It has also identified a conceptual greenway corridor, and as much as possible, development within the greenway corridor, should be encouraged to use conservation design strategies, conservation easements, park dedication, parcel evaluation, and the strategic siting of open space and natural areas parks to develop and improve habitat quality and connectivity within the greenways. Strategies to avoid fragmentation of existing natural areas are especially important for maintaining ecological function of the natural areas.



The City of North Branch will promote, preserve and enhance the natural resources within the city

Figure 8-1:
Conceptual Open
Space Wildlife Corridor



Tree Preservation

The City's tree preservation ordinance acknowledges the benefits and amenities trees offer to the community and acknowledges that trees are part of a more complex, interrelated system. Trees protect the environment by moderating climate, improving air quality, reducing erosion and stormwater runoff, and harboring wildlife. The ordinance focuses on protection of quality wooded areas rather than of individual trees. To preserve wooded areas in the City, each new development is required to submit a Tree Preservation Plan. The regulation also provides guidance for permitted tree removal, mitigation procedures, and tree replacement provisions.

Minnesota GreenStep City

In 2018, the Mayor and City Council approved a resolution to make North Branch a GreenStep City through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and League of Minnesota Cities' program. Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. This free continuous improvement program, managed by a public-private partnership, is based upon 29 best practices. Each best practice can be implemented by completing one or more actions at a 1, 2 or 3-star level, from a list of four to eight actions. These actions are tailored to all Minnesota cities, focus on cost savings and energy use reduction, and encourage civic innovation. North Branch is currently a Step 1 City. As North Branch plans for the future, it will continue to consider GreenStep City Best Management Practices as they relate to the goals and objectives of this comprehensive plan.

Parks, Trails and Recreation

The comprehensive parks and recreation plan is the first planning document devoted to establishing park, recreation, and trail planning criteria, guidelines, and standards, for future development of these amenities within the City of North Branch. The existing park system is already fairly developed with a strong emphasis and need placed on youth recreation opportunities. The community has done a good job of including sidewalks in various neighborhoods, but currently lacks a comprehensive trail system along TH 95 and the Sunrise Prairie Trail needs to be extended from 410th north to the city limits. Pedestrian and bike crossings are needed throughout the City. In addition, alternative transportation and exercise options through the use of trails should continue to be expanded and enhanced.

North Branch is part of the Metro Wildlife Corridors project (a 12-county metro area)



Vision for Natural Environment

Natural infrastructure includes all systems that relate to natural resources and contribute to an improved public life. Natural infrastructure considers the full range of natural resource uses including economic, environmental, health, cultural, and aesthetic. This broad view leads us to include surface water, groundwater, stormwater, wastewater, drinking water, geology, topography, soils, natural areas, open space, green spaces, urban forest, habitat, vegetation, scenic views, and parks and trails in natural infrastructure.

Natural infrastructure is a key element in planning where development should or should not take place within a city. This element is important to communities and development as it avoids certain development hazards, provides health benefits to citizens, protects ecological systems and enhances biological diversity, supports economic activities such as mining and forestry, and offers communities unique quality of life components. Consideration of natural infrastructure ensures that homes are built upon stable dry soils, provides clean drinking water, accounts for resource based economic activities, provides scenic views and open spaces, and plans development that respect the integrity of natural systems and incorporate natural features into development.



Natural Environment Goals, Objectives, and Policies

OBJECTIVE 1.1

PRESERVE OPEN SPACE AND WILDLIFE CORRIDOR.

Policy 1.1.1

Build upon the Metro Area Green Corridor System within North Branch incorporating the wooded edge while maintaining the rural character of the City's major natural amenities into the Open Space System.

Policy 1.1.2

Identify and conserve critical wildlife habitat including nesting sites, foraging areas, and migration corridors within or adjacent to natural areas, open spaces, and the developing urban areas, preserve sensitive habitat sites that support threatened species and urban wildlife habitat.

Policy 1.1.3

Identify and conserve forested and woodland cover and the scenic attributes provide between rural and urban land uses, preserve and protect significant environmental features including unique wetlands, open spaces, woodlands, shorelines, waterfronts and other characteristics that support wildlife and reflect the cities resource heritage.

Policy 1.1.4

Develop Partnerships with other organizations, institutions, and local units of government on planning and zoning, land use, preservation and conservation related issues, capitalize on the development and promotion of the North Branch of the Sunrise River and take ownership and promote the advantages of the City's relationship to the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway and the importance the North Branch of the Sunrise River has to the river's federally protected status.

GOAL 1

Develop an integrated plan that balances community growth, natural resources, cultural and historical features.



OBJECTIVE 1.2

MAINTAIN HEALTHY URBAN FOREST AND PARK SYSTEM.

Policy 1.2.1

Continue high standards of park and public land maintenance, and management by continued investment in personnel, equipment, and methods, expand sustainable practices and invasive species management (i.e. the Emerald Ash Borer, buckthorn, etc.) and obtain the information, training and resources needed to effectively address planning, preservation and conservation issues.

Policy 1.2.2

Undertake citizen-based planning designed to manage growth and build needed infrastructure, while at the same time preserving the natural qualities with which the region is blessed.

Policy 1.2.3

Increase natural areas and open space linkages within the developing urban areas

OBJECTIVE 1.3

FOSTER NATURAL PARK DEVELOPMENT.

Policy 1.3.1

Promote native landscaping and greening initiatives, support use of best management practices and reduction of chemical use, establish community gardens, and encourage the use and planting of pollinator friendly habitats.

OBJECTIVE 1.4

IDENTIFY, PRESERVE, AND ENHANCE NORTH BRANCH'S MULTICULTURAL HERITAGE, TRADITIONS, AND CULTURAL FEATURES WITHIN HISTORICAL SITES, BUILDINGS, ARTWORK, PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS TO PRESERVE INTEREST AND PROVIDE A BALANCED SOCIAL EXPERIENCE.

Policy 1.4.1

Identify, designate and protect significant historic structures and sites, establish history and heritage preservation programs utilizing existing resources to help increase knowledge and promote the history and heritage of North Branch.

Policy 1.4.2

Implement natural resources and environmental educational and interpretive programs.

GOAL 1

Plan for a sustainable park and trail system.

Vision for Parks, Trails, and Recreation

To provide a comprehensive and balanced system of parks, greenways, trails, and support for providers of recreation- orientated activities / programs for city residents in an as cost effective manner as possible.

Park Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following section outlines the primary goals for parks followed by a series of objectives and policies intended to influence future development efforts that align with the community visions in this plan.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

PLAN AND DESIGN PARKS, TRAILS, SIDEWALKS, AND BIKE PATHS IN A WAY THAT ENSURES THEIR LONG TERM VIABILITY.

Policy 1.1.1

All park properties that are set aside (and/or are proposed in the future) must take into account the long-term commitments required to develop, operate, and maintain across their lifecycles, with buildings constructed to the state's SB2030 performance standards for on-going cost reductions, when feasible.

Policy 1.1.2

Balance maintained turf areas with natural areas to add aesthetic appeal, control maintenance costs, infiltrate stormwater, eliminate toxic chemical use and provide wildlife habitat, and reduce carbon emissions.

Policy 1.1.3

Update parks plan every 5-10 years depending on the amount of change and development within the city.

Policy 1.1.4

Explore alternative methods for parkland dedication that will assure sufficient park facilities well into the future.

Policy 1.1.5

Phase Improvements based on replacement needs and available funding. Manage system investments through analysis of applicable data.

OBJECTIVE 1.2

UNDERSTAND CURRENT TRENDS AND COMMUNITY ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND NEEDS AS RELATED TO PARKS WITHIN THE CITY.

Policy 1.2.1

Discuss local and regional park and trails issues and opportunities with the Department of Natural Resources, Chisago County, adjacent communities, environmental organizations, and others.

Policy 1.2.2

Master plans should be prepared for each park prior to their development to ensure that the right mix of amenities are provided and the park's design is cohesive and complementary to the design for other parks and public spaces.

Policy 1.2.3

Ensure public participation in the master planning process is included for each park development project.

Policy 1.2.4

Analyze the placement and use of "nature play" equipment in existing and proposed parks.

OBJECTIVE 1.3

USE SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PRACTICES.

Policy 1.3.1

Use renewable energy where possible (i.e. solar lights for trails, solar power at athletic facilities).

Policy 1.3.2: Consider use of recycled materials and promote recycling in all park areas.

OBJECTIVE 1.4

IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVE, SUSTAINABLE REVENUE SOURCES.

Policy 1.4.1

Expand grassroots parks and recreation advocacy.

Policy 1.4.2

Pursue alternative revenue sources such as program fees, community funds, grants, charitable gaming, memorials, commemoratives, and donations, etc.

Policy 1.4.3

Encourage business involvement, sponsorship, and naming rights of parks, recreation facilities and events.

Policy 1.4.4

Apply marketing strategies to increase income potential and broaden awareness.

OBJECTIVE 2.1

SERVICE LOCAL PARK AND RECREATION NEEDS BY PROVIDING NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY PARKS AS RESIDENTIAL GROWTH OCCURS.

Policy 2.1.1

Ensure neighborhood parks are developed as part of new residential neighborhoods with buildings constructed to the state's SB2030 performance standards for on-going cost reductions, when feasible.

Policy 2.1.2

Explore the possibility of including a community park in appropriate areas of the City.

Policy 2.1.3

Locate new parks based on how they can be best integrated with the new development that the park will serve.

GOAL 2

Provide additional park and recreation opportunities in areas of new development throughout the city.



GOAL 3

Adhere to Park
Master Planning
and Facility
Design Quality
/ Development
Standards.

OBJECTIVE 3.1

ENSURE THE QUALITY STANDARD FOR BUILT FEATURES WITHIN THE PARK SYSTEM IS CONSISTENT WITH INDUSTRY STANDARDS FOR SAFETY, DURABILITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY.

Policy 3.1.1

Periodically inspect and repair all parks, trails, and recreation facilities for hazardous conditions, including unsafe play equipment, fallen vegetation, etc.

Policy 3.1.2

The design of individual parks should be of a consistent quality, with buildings constructed to the state's SB 2030 performance standards for on-going cost reductions, when feasible.



OBJECTIVE 4.1

CREATE AND SUSTAIN CRITICAL PARTNERSHIP.

Policy 4.1.1

Partner with the North Branch School District, local athletic organizations, private enterprises, surrounding communities, and others to address those community and regional needs that cannot be met exclusively by the city or others.

Policy 4.1.2

Cultivate and support public/private partnerships with organizations like the YMCA, Park Trail Council and similar non-governmental organizations whose mission is to promote active living and recreation.

Policy 4.1.3

Involve representatives from the North Branch School District, athletic organizations, and others when developing new parks that may be co-located with educational and daycare facilities.

Policy 4.1.4

Consider the desire of the community to offer a multi-use athletic facility to the residents and attract regional tournaments and events.

Policy 4.1.5

Explore the impacts of developing such facilities, including impacts to adjacent neighborhoods.

Policy 4.1.6:

New facilities should provide year-round activities and programs for all age groups and all income levels.

Policy 4.1.7

Identify and build relationships with local special interest groups, such as scouting programs, Chisago County Master Gardeners, North Branch Monarch Strategy Group, North Branch Garden Club, North Branch Arts Group, Lions, Rotary, etc.

GOAL 4

North Branch's parks meet the diverse recreation needs of the community.

Policy 4.1.8

Identify and build relationships with regional organizations, such as Chisago County Parks and Recreation Department, Chisago Soil & Water Conservation District, Friends of Wild River State Park and association with the St. Croix River National Scenic Riverway and the Lower St Croix Management Commission, Chisago County Historical Society, etc.

OBJECTIVE 4.2

PROMOTE THE CITY'S PARKS AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Policy 4.2.1

Utilize diverse methods of communication, including social and digital media, and highlight youth, families, volunteers, etc. Provide information on the City's website and in outside publications about parks, facilities and programming that is accessible to all people.

Policy 4.2.2

Highlight the quality of life benefits of parks, trails, recreation and open space.



OBJECTIVE 5.1

USE PARK DESIGN TO MAKE THEM WELCOMING.

Policy 5.1.1

Ensure visible and legible signage at park entrances, use recognizable branding to indicate that parks are open to all people, provide entrances on public streets, and utilize vegetation that does not obscure views into and through the parks.

OBJECTIVE 5.2

IMPROVE THE PERCEPTION OF PUBLIC SAFETY.

Policy 5.2.1

Utilize planning techniques, designs and site planning to improve safety, such as cluster compatible activities to avoid conflicts and increase social observation, locate parking lots and facilities near streets so they are easily observable at night, locate restrooms and playgrounds in areas that are easily observable, and use the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in the design of parks.

OBJECTIVE 5.3

ENSURE SAFETY THROUGH REGULAR MAINTENANCE AND EQUIPMENT UPGRADES.

Policy 5.3.1

Conduct annual inspections of parks, buildings, restrooms, shelters, ballfields, play courts, skate park, outdoor ice rinks, parking lots, trails, and nature areas. Input annual inspections into asset management system and use to analyze and prioritize system investments.

GOAL 5

Provide a welcoming and safe parks and recreation system.



Comprehensive Plan Questionnaire: Key Patterns and Trends

1. Community Strengths and Identity

Across the early sections of the questionnaire (pages 2–3), respondents consistently highlight:

- A strong sense of community pride and belonging.
- The small-town feel and safety that make the area family-friendly.
- Deep appreciation for natural spaces, recreation, and access to the outdoors.
- Recognition that schools and local events form the heart of community identity.

Trend: The community’s greatest strength lies in its cohesion and shared values. Schools, local partnerships, and volunteerism serve as anchors of civic pride and engagement.

2. Transportation and Accessibility

From the middle portion of the survey (around page 6), respondents discuss:

- A strong desire for safe biking and walking routes, particularly for students and families.
- Concerns about traffic flow near schools and main corridors.

Trend: Participants want more walkable, connected routes—aligning with health, safety, and sustainability goals. There is clear community interest in making it easier to move around town without a car.

3. Education and Workforce Alignment

Later responses (pages 7–8) show widespread recognition of:

- Education quality as a defining strength of the community.

- Calls for more career-connected learning, technical training, and real-world skills.
- Alignment with the district's goal of ensuring students graduate with a plan, not by chance.

Trend: The community supports educational innovation—especially programs that bridge academics with career readiness and local workforce opportunities.

4. Economic and Environmental Balance

Responses from pages 9–10 highlight the desire to:

- Support small businesses and encourage local job creation.
- Promote sustainable growth that balances targeted industry development with environmental preservation.
- Explore renewable energy and responsible land use; Maintain and protect natural resources and open spaces.

Trend: Residents value a balanced approach—advancing economic opportunity while safeguarding the environment and rural character that define the community.

5. Community Engagement and Governance

The final sections (page 11 and beyond) emphasize:

- Appreciation for transparent communication from local leaders.
- Calls for inclusive planning that welcomes voices from all age groups, especially youth and families.
- Recognition that civic collaboration is essential for moving forward.

Trend: There is strong appetite for collaboration and communication—people want to be informed, involved, and part of shaping the community's future.