



2050 Vision Parks, Greenways, and Natural Systems

Dakota County Parks Department

Overview



1. Findings
2. 2050 Vision Framework
3. Parks, Greenways, and Natural Systems
4. Implementation
5. Questions/Discussion

Process

Spring – Fall 2024:

Research, Community Engagement

Fall 2024-Winter 2025:

Vision Framework and Develop Draft Plan

Spring 2025: Public Review Draft Plan, Community Engagement

Spring - Summer 2025:

Final Plan and Approvals

Project Purpose



- Update 2030 Vision
- Respond to changing demographic and outdoor recreation trends
- Respond to critical issues facing society
- Evaluate potential for new park, greenway, and conservation units

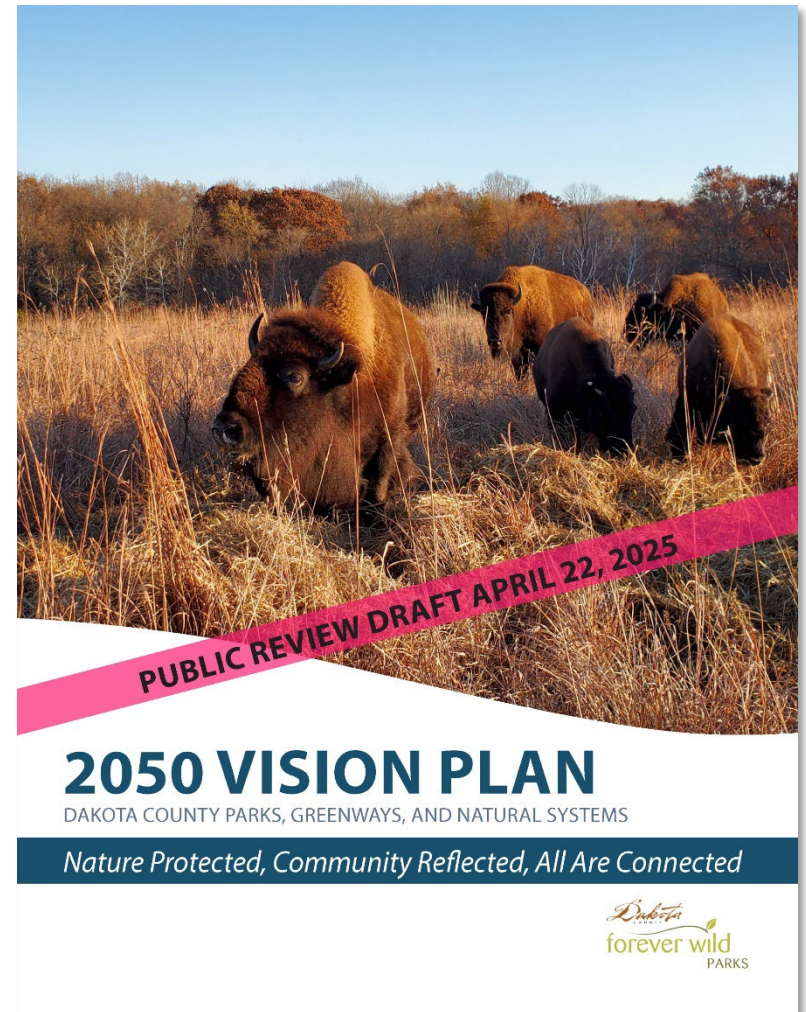
The plan does not make final decisions, set budgets, or allocate resources

Draft Plan



The draft plan is organized into 4 Chapters

1. Introduction
2. Vision Framework
3. Parks, Greenways, and Land Conservation
4. Implementation



1. Key Findings from Analysis and Community



The percentage of park visitors who are youth, people of color, lower income, women, and older adults is lower than their percentage in the county population



Dakota County park visitors expect more accessible facilities



In Dakota County Parks, visitation is lower than average for the metro area



A growing County population will expect additional parks and greenways



Programming is limited compared to other metro area parks



Awareness has grown about parks essential role in supporting physical, mental, and spiritual health



Dakota County Parks are viewed as a leader in providing nature-based parks



The changing climate threatens natural systems and recreation opportunities



Urbanization threatens remaining natural areas, habitat, and water quality



Identifying consistent and sustainable funding sources to maintain and grow parks is increasingly challenging

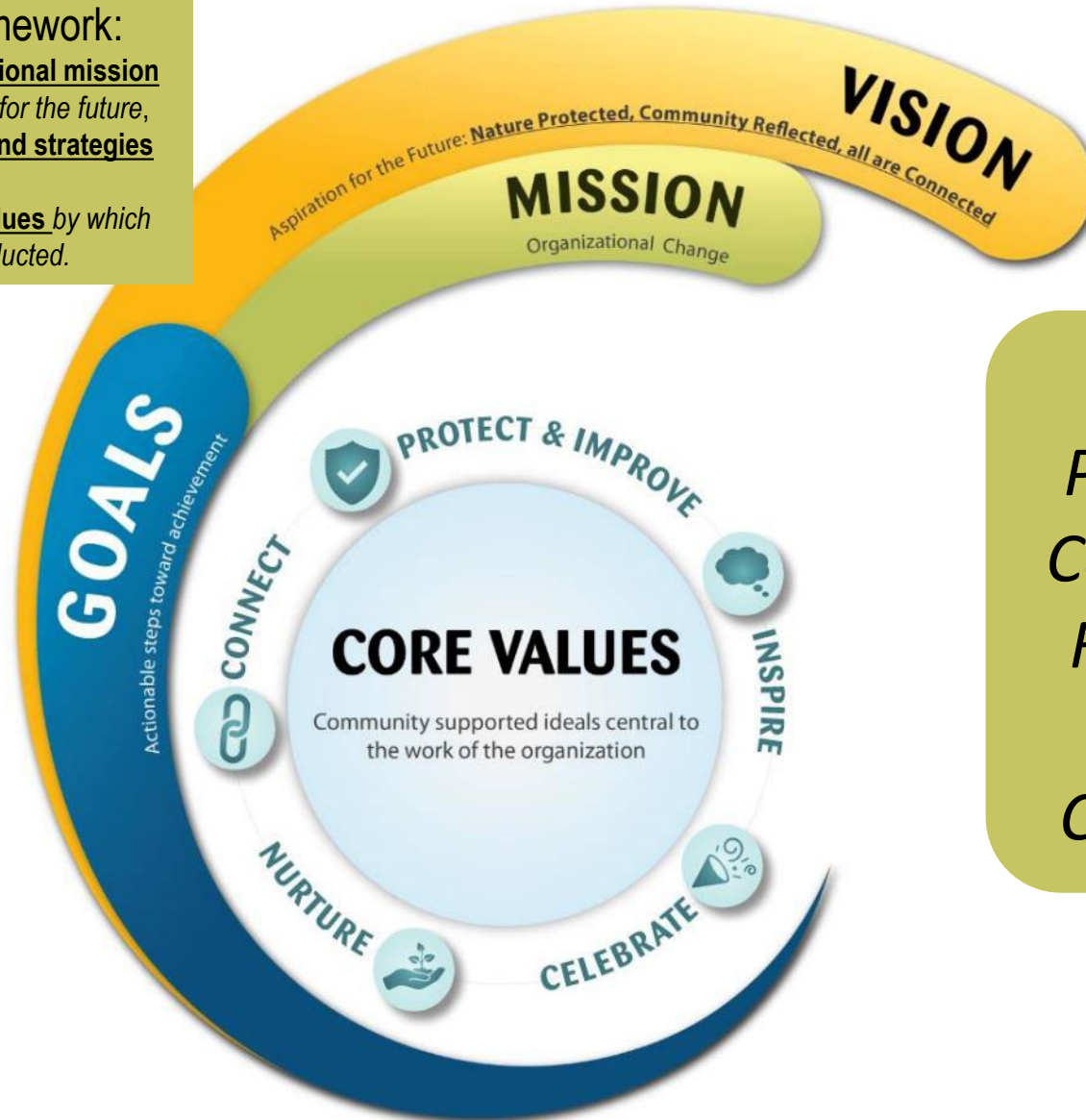


Facilities are aging and have significant deferred maintenance needs

2. Vision Framework

The Vision Framework:

Supports the **organizational mission** by expressing a **vision** for the future, formulating the **goals and strategies** to achieve it, and articulating the **core values** by which the mission will be conducted.



VISION

*Nature
Protected,
Community
Reflected,
All Are
Connected*

Vision Plan Core Values



In alignment with Dakota County's core values of Integrity, People, Service, and Innovation this plan's core values are:

- To **Connect** people to each other and the natural world, fostering a sense of belonging for all.
- To **Protect & Improve**... natural spaces, ensuring a resilient and healthy environment for future generations.
- To **Inspire**... wellbeing, wonder, adventure, and learning through engaging and inclusive outdoor
- To **Nurture**... and heal the vital relationship between people and nature.
- To **Celebrate**... our vibrant and richly diverse communities.

Vision Framework



Goal 1

Nurture the reciprocal relationship between people and nature.

Goal 2

Cultivate belonging by engaging and serving the community, with an emphasis on those who are under-represented in the outdoors.

Goal 3

Provide safe and positive core services, amenities, and experiences.

Goal 4

Create dynamic spaces with unique and memorable experiences.

Goal 5

Expand environmental stewardship through outdoor programs, learning, and volunteerism.

Goal 6

Offer opportunities to improve physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Goal 7

Strengthen partnerships with Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities for the protection of lands and traditions.

Goal 8

Locate new park units close to people or to protect natural areas and recreational assets.

Goal 9

Lead and support on ecological stewardship and climate resilience.

Goal 10

Elevate cultural richness through arts, historic preservation, interpretation, and storytelling within the park system

Goal 11

Seek values-based and mission-driven partnerships.

Goal 12

Care for the system through sustainable and innovative funding.

Goal 13

Invest in a thriving parks workforce that represents the communities served.

Goal 14

Support local and sustainable economic development.

Goal 15

Protect, improve, and manage the natural resources of Dakota County.

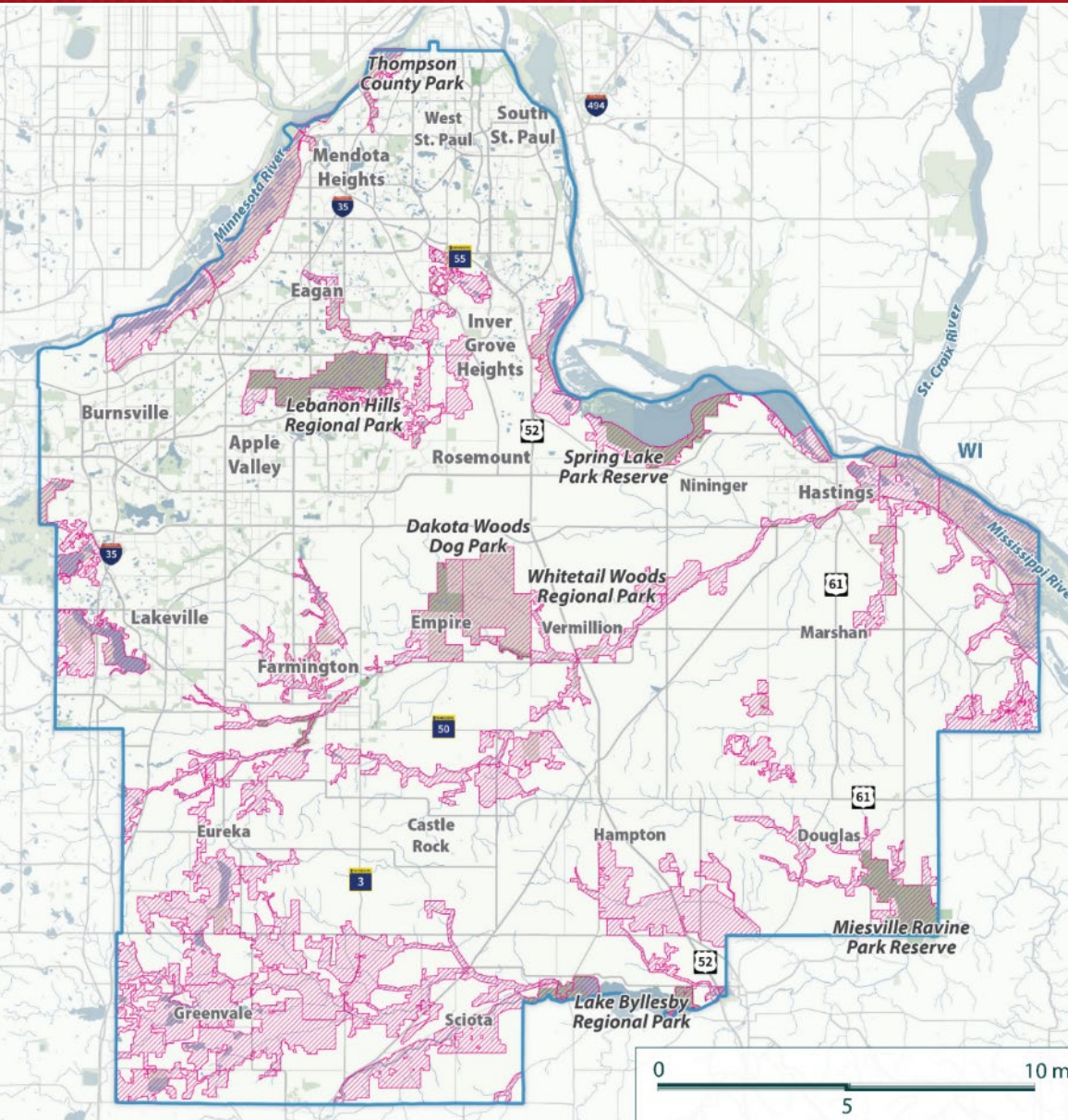
3. System Wide Guidance



Chapter 3 contains system-wide approaches for:

- Land conservation
- Park and greenway development
- New park search areas
- New greenway search corridors

Conservation Focus Areas



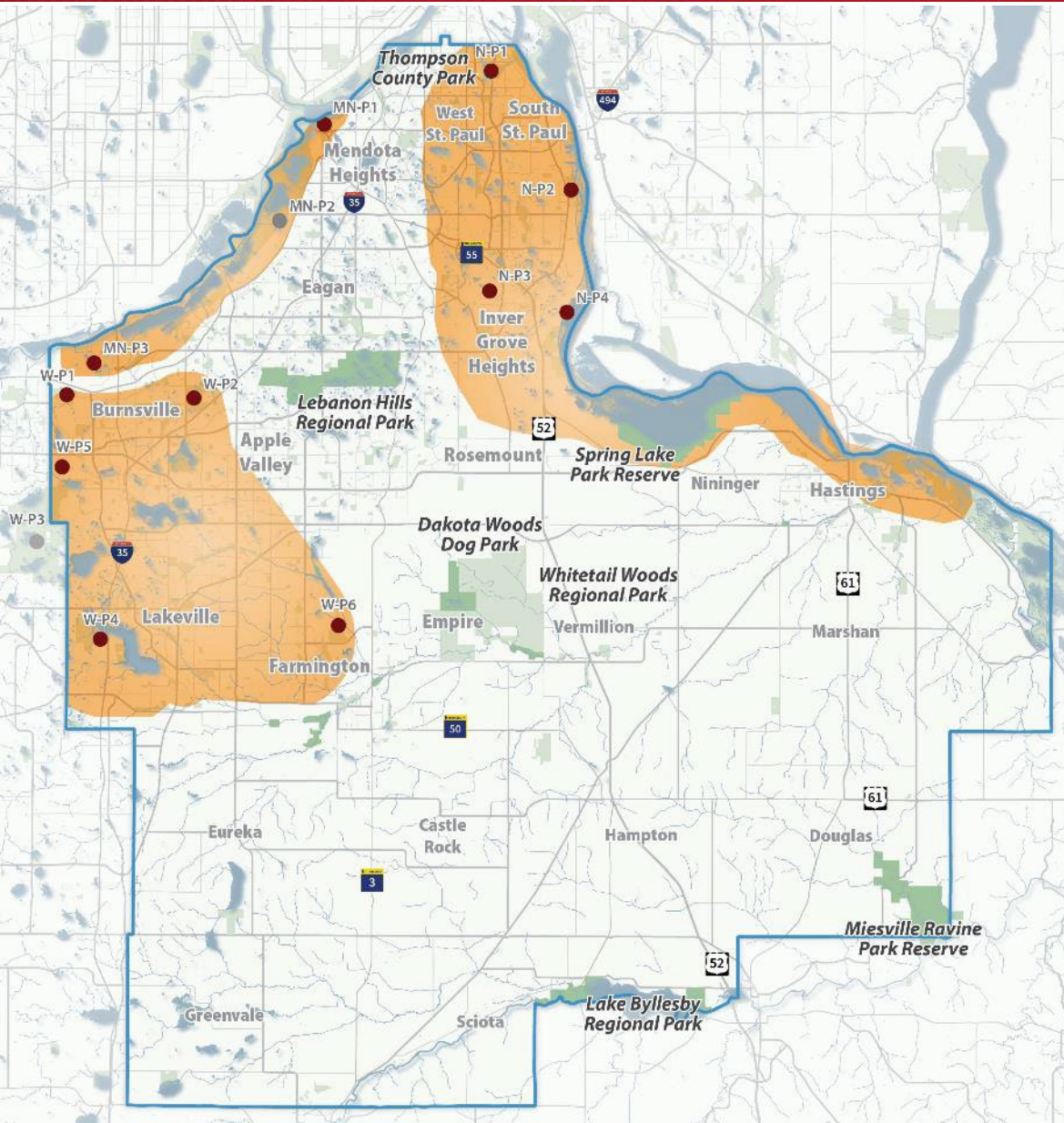
LEGEND

- County Parks, Regional Parks, Park Reserves
- Preliminary Conservation Focus Areas

Framework for
prioritizing land
protection in
ecological corridors

Developed as part of
the 2020 Land
Conservation Plan

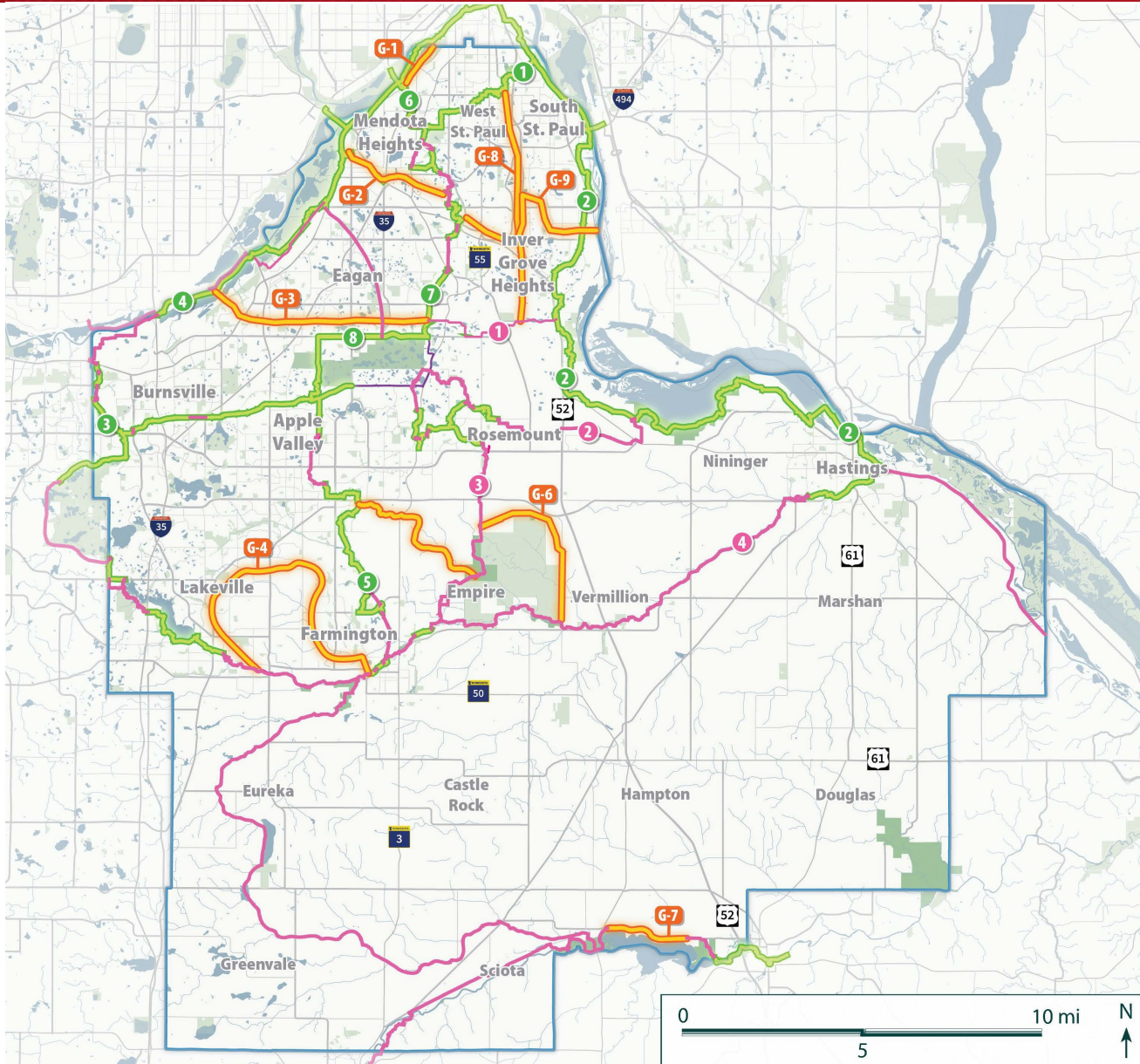
Park Search Areas



LEGEND

- County Parks, Regional Parks, Park Reserves
- Potential New Park Candidate Sites
- Potential Partnership Candidate Sites
- New Park Search Areas

Greenway Search Corridors



LEGEND

- Existing/In Development County Greenways
 - 1 River to River
 - 2 Mississippi River
 - 3 Lake Marion
 - 4 Minnesota River
 - 5 North Creek
 - 6 Big Rivers Regional Trail
 - 7 Lebanon Hills
 - 8 Greenway Linking Route
- 2030 Greenway Vision
 - 1 Veterans Memorial Greenway
 - 2 Rosemount Greenway
 - 3 Vermillion Highlands Greenway
 - 4 Vermillion River Greenway
- Greenway Linking Route
- New Greenway Search Corridors
 - G-1 Lilydale - St. Paul
 - G-2 Soo Line
 - G-3 Highline
 - G-4 Farmington - Lakeville
 - G-5 Empire Greenway - Mining Lakes
 - G-6 Vermillion Highlands to Vermillion River
 - G-7 Lake Byllesby Greenway
 - G-8 Highway 52 Trail
 - G-9 Lebanon Greenway to Mississippi River

4. Implementation

We Are Here

Through the life of the 2050 Vision Plan

VISION PLAN

Vision
Mission
Core Values
Goals

POLICY GUIDES

Written Policies
Natural Resource Management System Plan
Parks Visitor Services Plan
Land Conservation Plan
Greenway Guidebook
Long-Range Plans, Natural Resource Management Plans, Interpretive Plans, Cultural Landscape Plans
Operational and Program Plans

BUDGETING

Partnerships
Volunteerism
Revenue
Grants

OPERATIONALIZE

Capital Investment
Programming
Operations & Maintenance

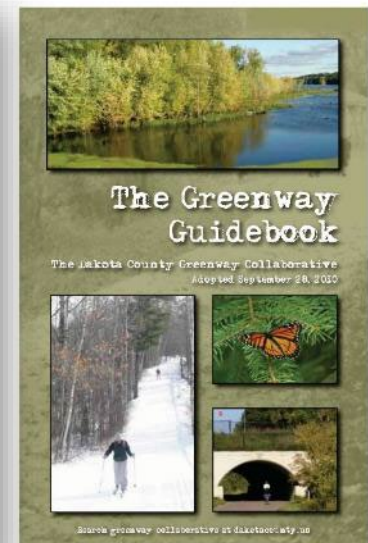
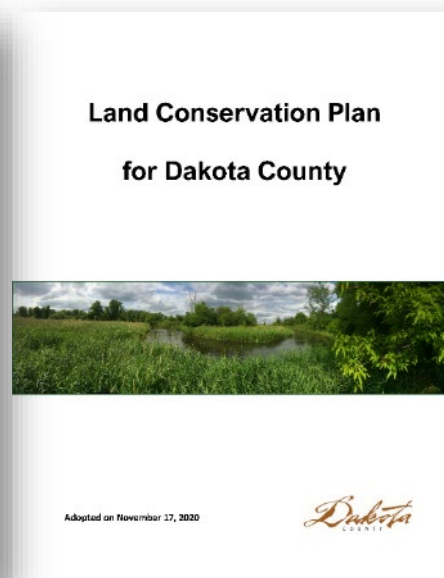
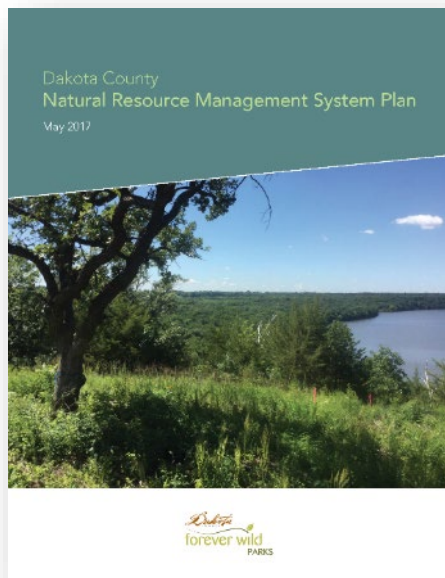
Success Metrics

Next Steps - Update Operational Plans



Operational plans will be updated in 2026 and include tactics, metrics, and 5 year targets

- Natural Resources Management System Plan (NRMSP)
 - Land Conservation Plan (integrate into NRMSP)
- Visitor Services Plan
- Greenway Guidebook



Questions and Discussion



Public Review

April 22- May 20

- On-line www.co.dakota.mn.us search 'vision plan'
- Community Open House
Thursday May 8, 5:30-7:00 pm
Lebanon Hills Regional Park
Visitor Center

Next Steps

- June: Plan Revisions
- July: Final Vision Plan Adoption
- 2025-2026: Update Operational Plans

Thank you!