Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan, Carver County

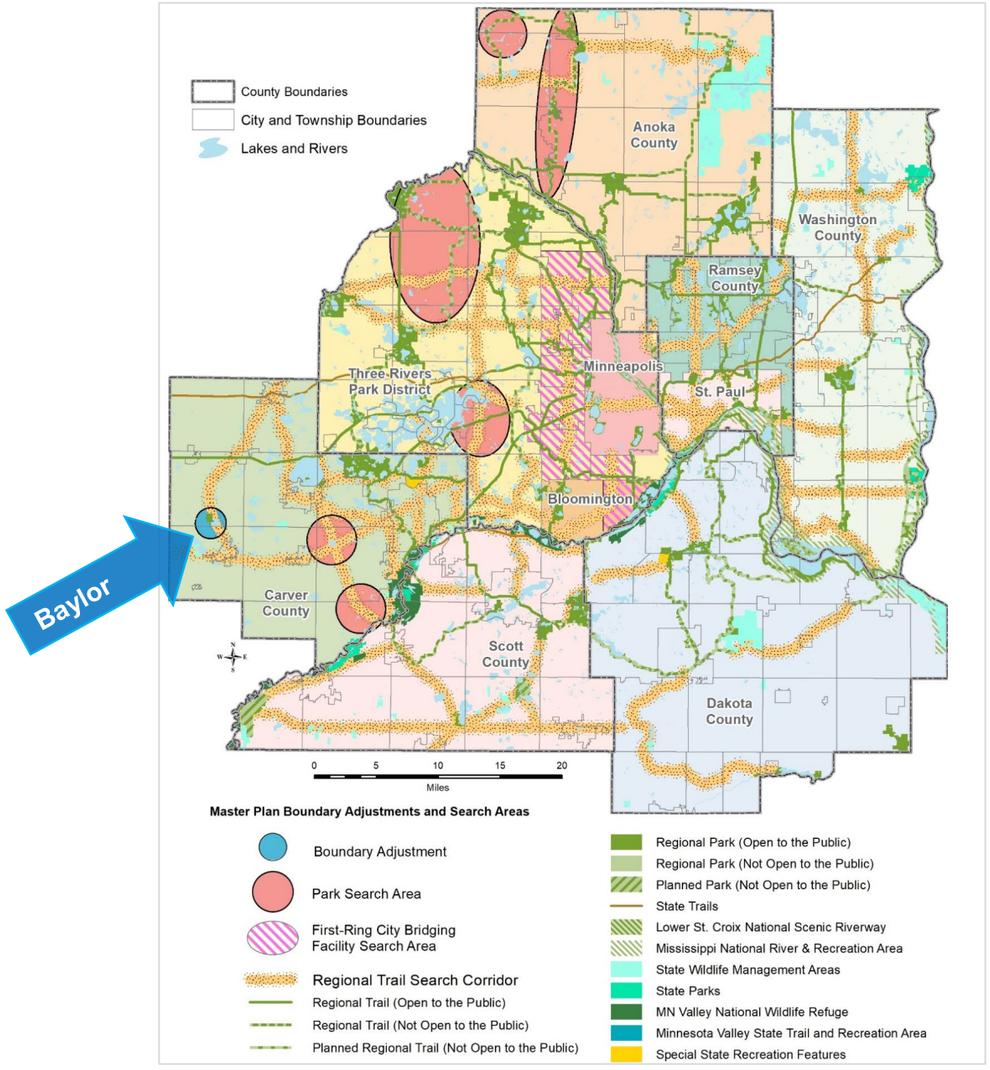
Business Item 2026-103

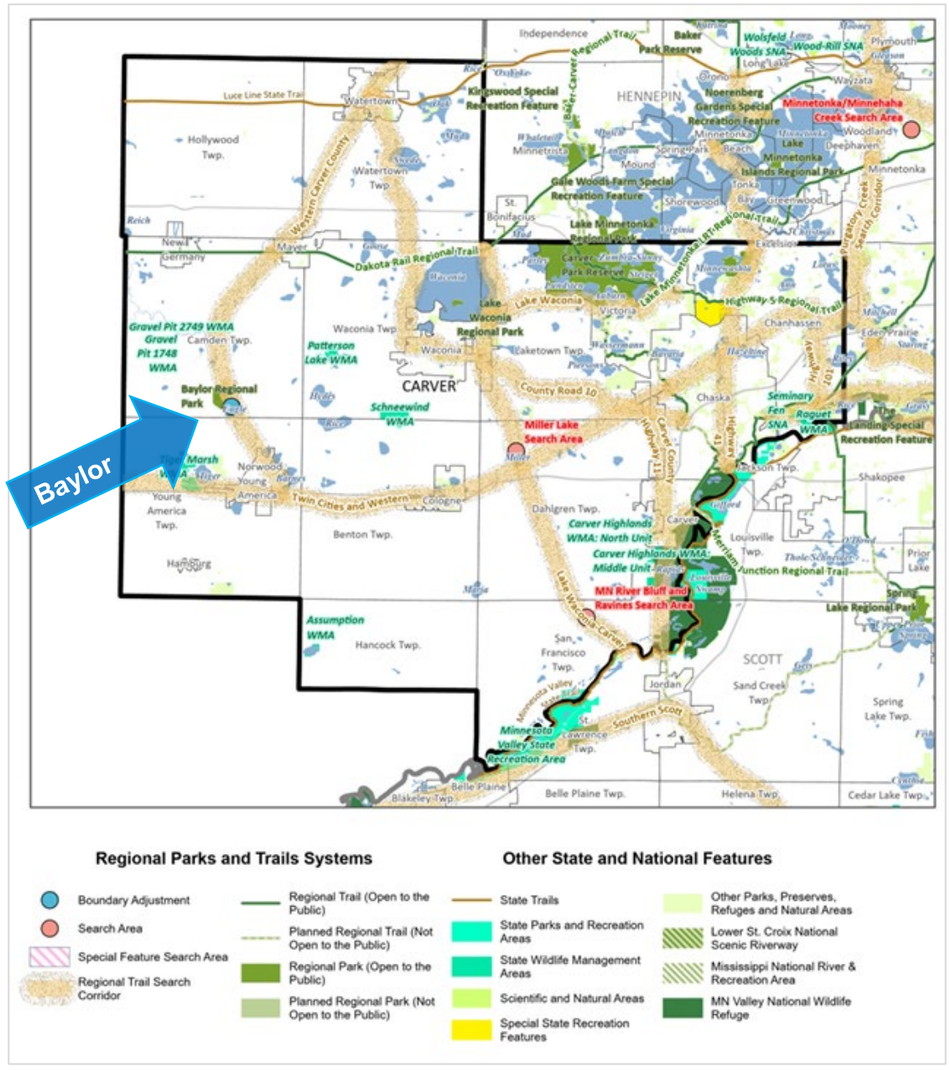
Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

June 4, 2026

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

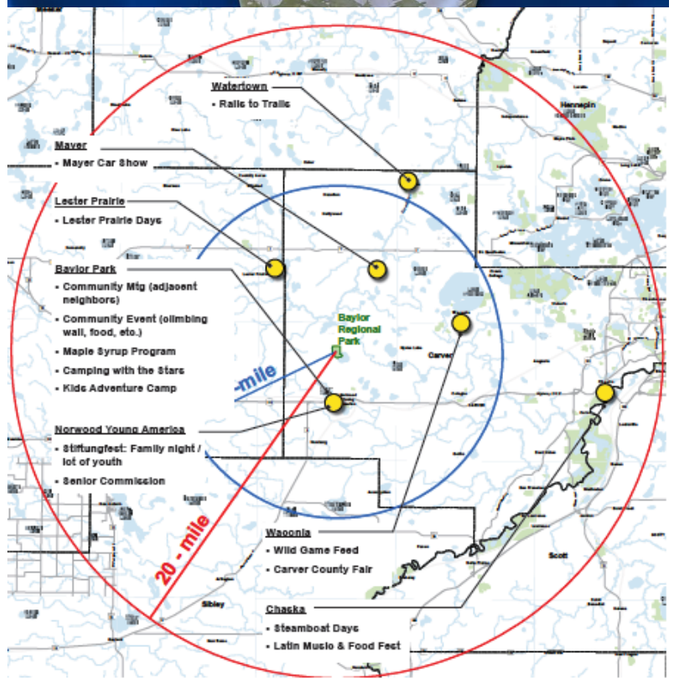
Baylor Regional Park



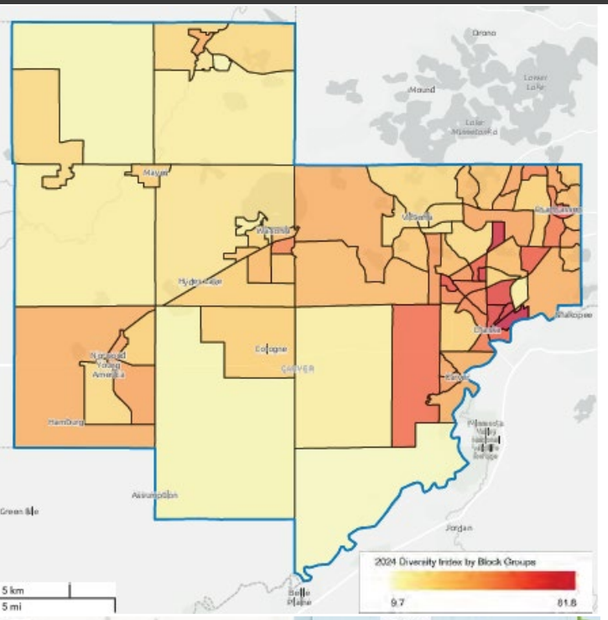


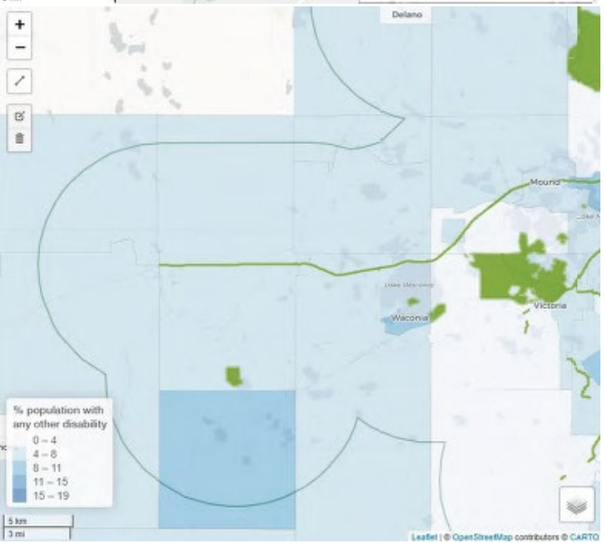
Public and Partner Engagement

- Community engagement efforts were intended to reach a broad and diverse audience across Carver County and neighboring McLeod County.
- Multiple outreach strategies were used including a project website, stakeholder interviews, formation of a technical advisory community (TAC), pop up engagement, meetings with Carver County Boards and Commissions, and public meetings.
- Concept review preferences were consistent with the initial input from stakeholders. The top four preferences included:
  - Expand / improve park natural trails
  - Add an interactive water experience
  - Improve the campground amenities
  - Add a paved regional trail between Norwood Young America and New Germany



Equity Analysis

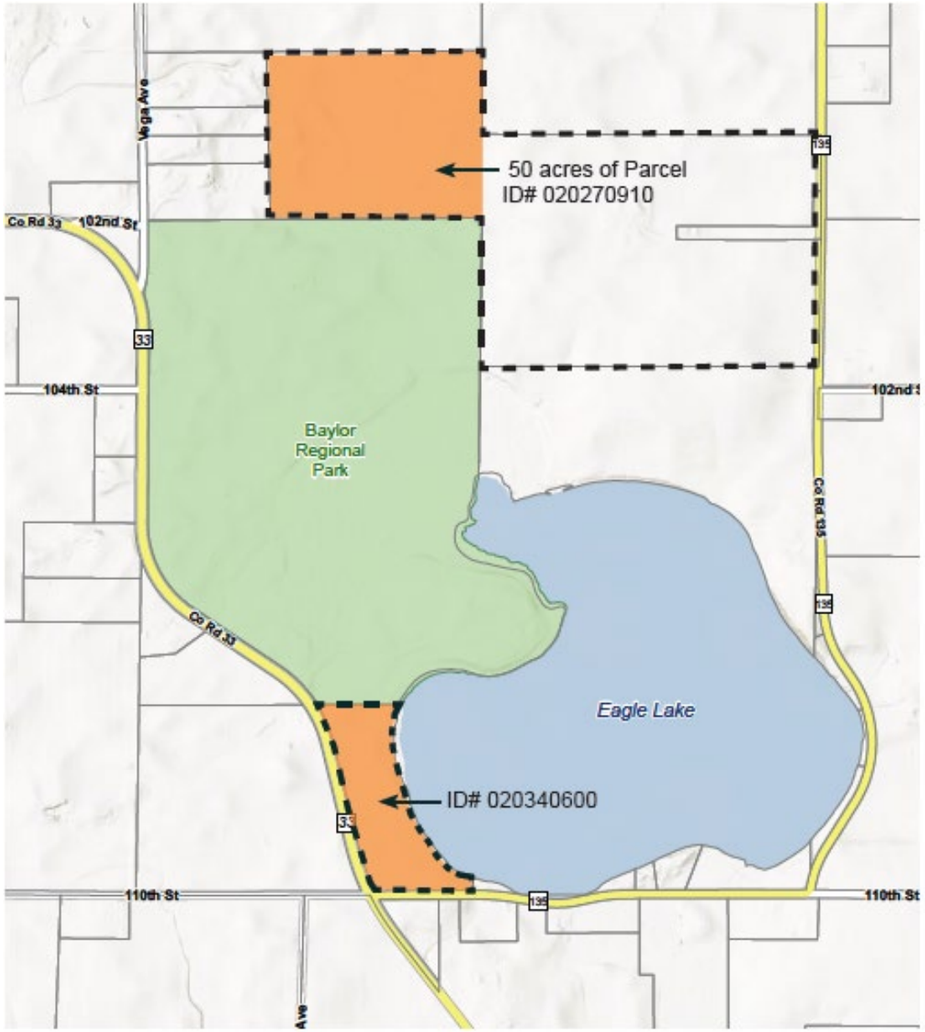




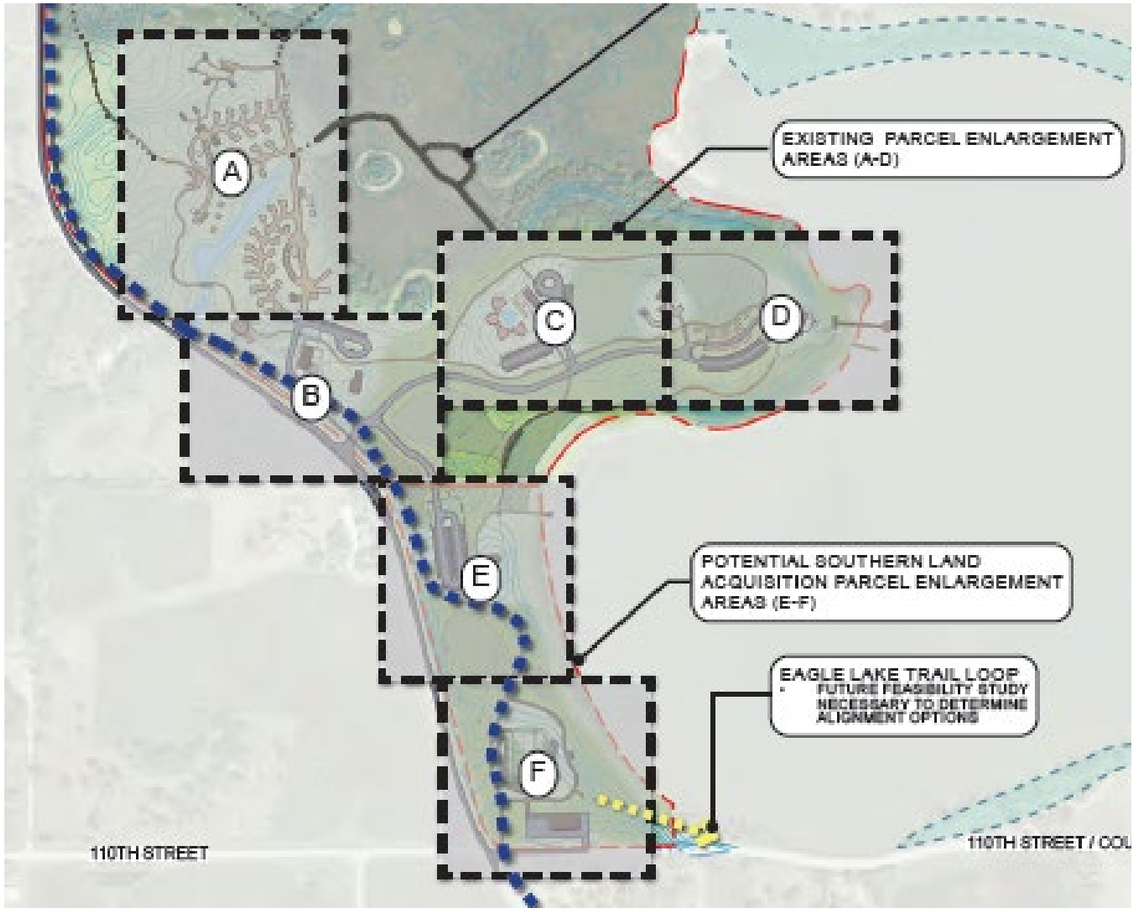
- Targeted initiatives focused on engaging underserved populations and culturally diverse communities.
- Underserved populations included teens, senior citizens, multi-ethnic populations, veterans, people with disabilities, and those with low-incomes.
- Engagement within Chaska and Waconia reached a wider range of age groups with higher overall participation and more diverse participants.
- Feedback from culturally diverse communities was like others who provided input including:
  - Improve / modernize the existing amenities
  - Improve / protect the lake and natural resources
  - Improve awareness of the park and programs
  - Improve the safety of park visitors
  - Improve regional connectivity
- Engagement efforts identified limited public awareness of existing parks and recreation programs as a primary barrier to participation.

Boundaries

- Baylor Regional Park's total owned acreage (management boundary) is 201 acres.
- The long-range plan proposes adding two parcels totaling 68.36 acres to the park boundary.
  - Northern Parcel = 50 acres
  - Southern Parcel = 18.36 acres
- Approval of the long-range plan would expand the regional park's administrative boundary (owned acres and inholdings) to 269.36 acres.
- Carver County will maintain an open dialogue with willing sellers.

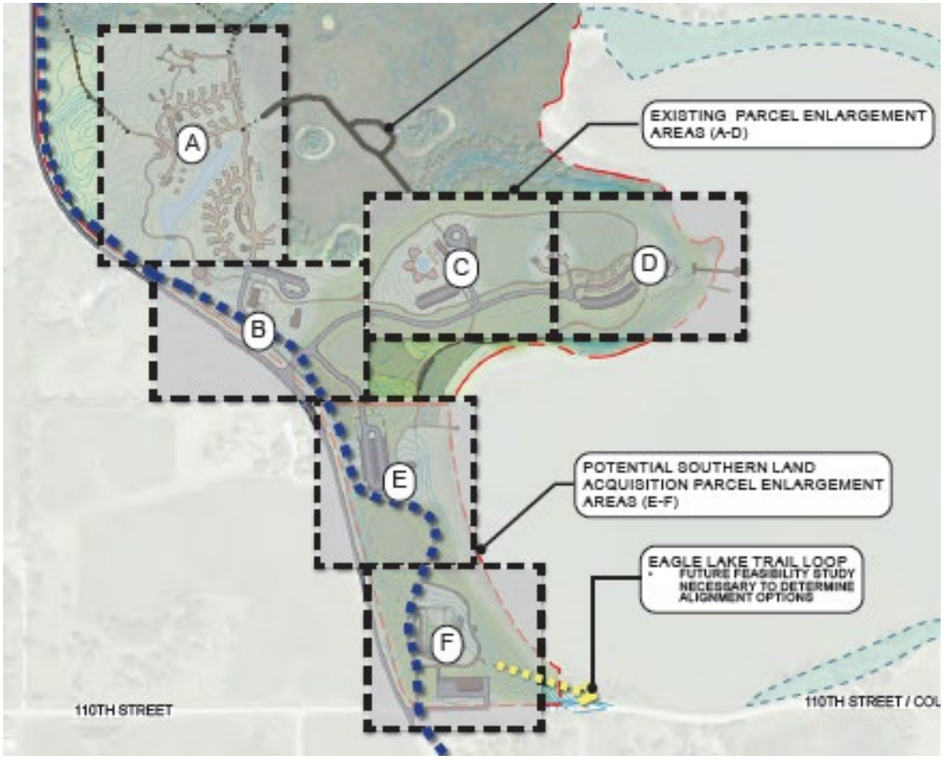


Development Concept

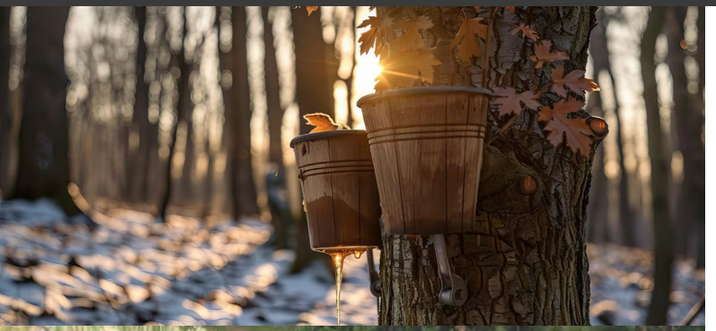


- Plan recommendations focus on six different areas of the existing or potential future regional park including:
  A. Campground
  B. Barn and Park Entrance
  C. Central Recreation Area
  D. Waterfront
  E. Park Entrance and Southern Acquisition Parcel
  F. Southern Acquisition Parcel
- The plan acknowledges the Western Carver County Regional Trail Search Corridor, which would connect Norwood Young America to the Dakota Rail Regional Trail.
- The plan also proposes a local loop trail around Eagle Lake that would connect to existing park trails.
- In addition to physical access, the plan includes several strategies for advancing accessibility in the areas of park access and universal and inclusive design.

Development Concept *continued*



Natural Systems



- Remnant maple-basswood forest remains in the northern section of the regional park and contribute to the park's successful maple syrup programs.
- The presence of invasive species like buckthorn and garlic mustard restricts the viability of native plant regeneration without human intervention. Native ash trees are being impacted by the emerald ash borer.
- General management goals include improving existing communities, controlling and/or removal of invasive species, and ecological restoration.
- Protection of surface and groundwater in the regional park is important for the health of the ecosystem and park users as well. Protecting and reestablishing natural environments, managing runoff, developing riparian buffers, and supporting water quality monitoring are essential to support clean water.

Estimated Costs

- The total estimated cost to implement the recommendations of the Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan is $33.2M.
  - Short-term priorities (1-5 years) = $5.6M
  - Mid-term priorities (5-15 years) = $9.5M
  - Long-term priorities (15+ years) = $18.1M
- Acquisition of two parcels is proposed; formal appraisals have not been completed at this time.
- The current annual cost of operations and maintenance of the regional park is $631,084. The long-range plan recommends a 25% increase to operations and maintenance costs to $788,925.

Rationale for Proposed Action

The Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan is consistent with the requirements of the:

- *2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan*
  - Section 5, Planning Policy Action 1, Long-range plan requirements
- Other Council policies

Proposed Actions

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Carver County's Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan.
2. Advise Carver County to consider implementing the recommendations for land use and solar resources in the Advisory Comments section of the business item.

Colin Kelly, AICP

Planning Analyst, Community Development

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