

Chapter 5: Parks & Trails

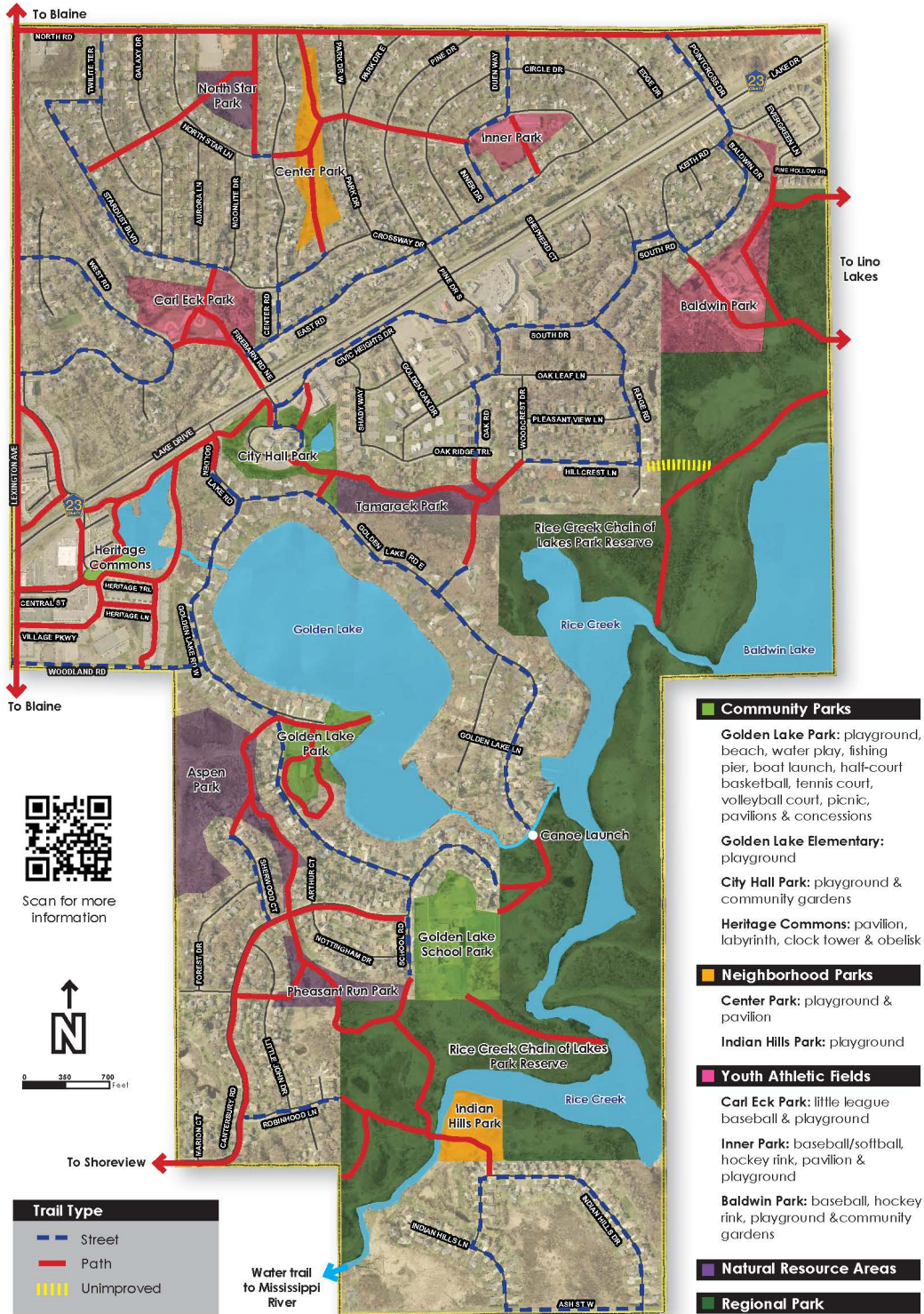
Introduction

City of Circle Pines Park and Trail System

The City of Circle Pines anticipates very little population growth in the next 10-20 years. Circle Pines currently has a high number of parks located in the city. The city plans to continue our focus on updating and maintaining the existing parks and trails in the city. The Circle Pines Parks and Trails map contained in this chapter illustrates the number of parks and trails in the city and the connections to the regional system.



PARKS & TRAILS MAP



The Parks & Trails Plan includes the following information:

1. Park Classifications
2. Park Inventory
3. Park & Trail Goals
4. Park Plans
 - a. Carl Eck Park
 - b. Inner Park
 - c. Center Park
 - d. Baldwin
 - e. Heritage Commons
 - f. City Hall Park
 - g. Indian Hill Park
 - h. Golden Lake Park
 - i. Aspen Park
 - j. Pheasant Run
 - k. North Star
 - l. Tamarack

1. Park Classifications

Neighborhood Park- remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.

Community Park- Serve broader purpose than neighborhood parks. Focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.

Natural- Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open spaces, and visual aesthetics/buffering.

Youth Athletic- Contains programmed athletic fields and associated facilities.

2. Park Inventory

	Center	Inner	Carl Eck	Indian Hills	Golden Lake	North Star	Baldwin	City Hall	Tamarack	Aspen	Heritage Commons	E Golden Lake	Golden Lake School
Basketball		■			■								
Playground	■	■	■	■	■		■	■					■
Tennis					■								
Volleyball					■								
Baseball		■	■				■						
Hockey		■					■						
Pavilion	■	■	■		■		■				■		
Trails	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Fishing Pier					■								
Concessions			■		■								
Canoe Launch												■	
Pickleball		■											
Programmed Athletics		■	■				■						
Community Gardens							■	■					
Restrooms			■		■								
Natural Spaces	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

3. Park and Trail Goals

To provide city residents with parks, trails and natural areas for recreation uses. To encourage outdoor play, visual/physical diversion from the hard surfacing of urban development and to maintain the character, ambience, appearance, and history of the community.

Policy Statements

Parks, natural resource areas, and related recreation facilities may be acquired and developed by Circle Pines in accordance with the plan for the purpose of shaping community development and establishing an image of balance between urbanization, parks, trail corridors, and natural areas.

Acquisition of specific parcels of land for park uses shall generally be based on the following criteria:

- 1 Quality of the land
2. Natural resources
3. Suitability for desired uses as determined by the Park Board, City Council and Planning Commission.
4. Location

The City shall reserve the right to acquire land within all development areas for park and trail purposes. This includes land acquired through dedication and land acquired through direct purchase by the City.

Park development standards shall be based on the principle of providing and maintaining quality parks and facilities. The principles of universal access/barrier-free design shall generally be applied to all parks and trails.

A reasonable and ongoing effort shall be made to eliminate all physical barriers that deter individuals from using existing or future parks and recreations facilities. Barrier-free design shall generally be applied to all parks and trails.

Design and maintenance procedures shall be consistent with accepted industry standards and be clearly defined and adopted. Design and maintenance of all parks and recreation facilities shall emphasize high quality, user safety, and cost accountability.

The Park Board and staff shall review and comment on all planned development matters that impact park land and trail corridor dedication, acquisition, and development.

4. Park Plans

Carl Eck Park

Classification: Youth Athletic

Location: 2 Fire Bard Road (Fire Barn Road and West Road)

Approximate Size: 15.7 acres

Existing Site Features

1. (2) Little League fields with dugouts
2. Concession/restroom building
3. Children's play area with playground equipment
4. Access drive
5. Warm-up area/general use space
6. Parking area/Parking Lot
7. Wooded area along drainage ditch
8. Bridge across drainage ditch
9. Batting cage
10. Open space with scattered trees

Existing Conditions/Characteristics

The existing Little League fields are in good shape. The building is an aging structure but was built of durable materials. Improvements continue to be made around the playing fields. Concrete walks have also been added in recent years.

Basis for Park Need

As defined by the user groups, the demand for youth sports facilities is already high and continuing to grow. The existing fields are heavily programmed during the season of use, which runs from spring through mid-August. Carl Eck Park will continue to play a major role in providing much needed youth athletic facilities with the community. The concession building/restrooms are aging and is heavily used. Updating or replacement will be needed in the next 10 years.

Interrelationship with Other Parks

Carl Eck is viewed as a youth athletic complex that services the needs of the larger community.

Other development items include improving the:

Site aesthetics (landscaping, opening up vegetation along ditch, etc.) Continue to work to upgrade trail surfaces

Inner Park

Park Classification: Youth athletic

Location: 6 A Inner Drive (Inner Drive and Duen Way)
 Approximate Size: 6 acres

Existing Site Features

1. Youth Baseball Field
2. Concessions/restroom building
3. Hockey rink
4. Basketball Court
5. Pickleball Courts
6. Children’s play area with play equipment
7. Parking area
8. Open play space
9. Access trail (from Center Park)
10. Access trail (from neighborhood)
11. Small Pavilion

Existing Conditions/Characteristics

The existing ballfield is in good shape. The hockey rink/basketball/pickleball surface was built in 2016 and is in good shape. The building is aging but built of durable materials. Improvements have been made around the building (walks and paving) and within the park (picnic tables and benches). The play equipment is new and appears to meet current standards. The parking lot is paved. Site landscaping is limited.

Basis for Park Need

Inner Park serves an important function by providing:

- Open space within a developed residential area
- Facilities for youth activities
- Facilities for neighborhood use

The existing athletic facilities are heavily programmed during the season of use. These facilities, along with the others listed, also provide for neighborhood needs. The mix of facilities in conjunction with its location will continue to make this park a valuable component of the park system.

Interrelationship with Other Parks

Inner Park should be viewed as one component of an interrelated system of parks that service community needs, as well as offering limited community-wide athletic needs. Its primary use focus is active recreation.

Development Program

Since much of the available space has already been developed, future development should concentrate on enhancing what is already there and improving the aesthetic quality of the park. Continue to work to upgrade trail surfaces

Center Park

Park Classification: Neighborhood Park (with active recreation and social focus)

Location: Center Road and Crossway Drive

Approximate Size: 7.25 acres

Existing Site Features

1. Playground Structure
2. Internal trail system (hard surfaced)
3. General Use Turf Area
4. Residential properties surrounding park
5. Trail access point from neighborhood
6. Picnic shelter
7. Baseball/Kickball Backstop

Existing Conditions/Characteristics

Beyond the play equipment, the park offers a picnic shelter. Although the site is relatively level, the grade is often uneven and therefore difficult to use for even informal games. The landscaping is limited with little overall design character.

Basis for Park Need

The location of Center Park makes it of vital importance to servicing neighborhood needs. This park has the potential to provide:

- Neighborhood recreation facilities focused on non-structured individual and family activities
- A social center for neighborhood gatherings
- Open space for informal group play (with limited use for organized or programmed activities)

Interrelationship with Other Parks

Center Park should be viewed as the central focus of the interrelated system of parks that service community needs. Its primary function will be to service the neighborhood level recreation needs and the local social gatherings of the area.

Development Program

One or more of the following facilities/amenities would be appropriate for the future development of Center Park (in no particular order):

- Enhance landscaping
- Hardcourt area (basketball and hard surface outdoor games)
- Lawn games area and volleyball court (grass or sand)
- General amenities (benches, picnic tables, grills, bike rack, drinking fountain, etc.)
- Continue to work to upgrade trail surfaces

Baldwin Park

Park Classification: Youth athletic/neighborhood park

Location: Baldwin Drive and Keith Road
 Approximate Size: 28.4 acres

Existing Site Features

1. Baseball field (275')
2. Concessions/restroom building
3. Hockey rink with lights
4. Children's play area with play equipment
5. Access drive
6. Parking area
7. Wetland
8. Lowland forested communities
9. Upland hardwoods
10. Community Gardens
11. Paved trails

Existing Conditions/Characteristics

The existing baseball field is in good shape. The building is a older structure and built of durable materials. Improvements continue to be made in the park, namely a new play structure and pavement around the building. The extensive wetlands provide an opportunity for natural resource preservation and passive recreation (although they preclude the development of additional active recreation facilities).

Basis for Park need

As defined by the user groups, the demand for youth sports facilities is already high and continuing to grow. The existing field is heavily programmed for Centennial Baseball use during the season, which runs from spring through mid-August. The hockey rink, skating area, play equipment and building serve both the adjacent neighborhood and general park users. The surrounding wetlands provide open space. The paved trails in the park connect the neighborhood and park users to the Anoka County Trail System providing miles of hard surface trails.

Interrelationship with Other Parks

Given its unique setting and past development, Baldwin Park serves a cross-section of community needs that cannot be categorized under only one classification. Although the primary land uses are already set, ample opportunity exists to improve the park's function within the park system. Since the park services are in the eastern half of the interrelated park system every effort should be made to maximize its potential.

Development Program

One or more of the following facilities/amenities would be appropriate for future development in Baldwin Park:

- Picnic areas with shelter
- Improved site aesthetics
- Continue to work to upgrade trail surfaces

- Paved Parking Lot
- Rehab or rebuild building with restrooms and concessions

Heritage Commons

Park Classification: Neighborhood Park

Location: Village Parkway

Approximate Size: Less than 1 acre

Existing Site Features

1. Pavilion
2. Clock Tower
3. Obelisk
4. Benches
5. History Walk
6. Mayor's Walk
7. Labyrinth
8. Pier

Existing Condition/Characteristic

Heritage Commons was built in the early 2000's. Most of the elements in the park are in good condition.

Basis for Park Need

Heritage Commons provides a community gathering space in a multifamily/business area. The park was built in the early 2000's and is beginning to show its age. Items of need

- Vegetation management program
- Enhanced landscaping
- Trail restoration

Development Programs.

- Continue to work to upgrade trail surfaces
- Improving the site aesthetics such as the landscape

Interrelationship with Other Parks

Heritage Commons role is to provide a historical connection to the community as well as a gathering place for residents in the service area.

City Hall Park

Park Classification: Community Park

Location: Civic Heights Circle

Approximate Size 14 acres

Existing Site Features

1. City Hall
2. Area Food Shelf
3. Library
4. Post Office
5. Community Garden
6. Parking
7. Entrance circle with ornamental garden feature
8. Drainage pond
9. Sidewalks
10. Playground structure
11. Integrated trail system

Existing Conditions/Characteristics

City Hall, other municipal buildings, and associated parking/drives consume much of the available site. The drainage pond serves as a storm water control basin, but offers ornamental possibilities. With the exception of the community vegetable garden, most of the remainder of the site is covered with turf grasses. Some high quality mature trees add to the overall appeal of the site. The ornamental character of the turn-around in front of the building begins to establish an ornamental character for the site which could be carried throughout more of the site.

Basis for Park Need

The park serves primarily as a community park that provides an outdoor space to compliment and enhance the current civic buildings. It also serves an important neighborhood park function for the west-central portion of this area. Adding ornamental landscape elements will also add to the general appearance of the central civic feature of the community.

Interrelationship with Other Parks

As a community park City Hall Park provides an outdoor space that aids in creating a positive community image and character. As a neighborhood park, it functions in conjunction with Baldwin Park to service the neighborhood-level recreation needs of this area. It also offsets the neighborhood park amenities removed from Tamarack Park.

Development Program

The development program focuses on two primary components:

- Fostering the “city center” concept by enhancing the outdoor spaces surrounding the existing buildings
- Providing recreation amenities to service the needs of the surrounding neighborhood

Some of the facilities/amenities that are in the plan for the future development of City Hall Park:

- Enhanced landscaping
- A small gathering space with the picnic shelter/structure for small community groups and neighborhood gatherings
- General amenities
- New play structure
- Asphalt trail

Indian Hills Park

Park Classification: Neighborhood Park

Location: Indian Hills Drive

Approximate Size: 5.4 acres

Existing Conditions/ Characteristics

The playground equipment is in good condition. The turf areas are in fair conditions. Natural vegetation surrounds the developed area. A gravel trail provides access to the park and to the regional trail system (which connects the park with other parks in the area).

Basis for Park Need

Indian Hills Park services the neighborhood park needs in an area of the community not readily serviced by other parks. It also provides access from the neighborhood to the regional trail system that runs through the Rice Creek Regional Park Reserve.

Interrelationship with Other Parks

The primary role of Indian Hills Park is to provide neighborhood level recreation facilities for this fairly isolated area of the city. It functions in conjunction with Golden Lake School and Golden Lake Park to ensure that neighborhood level recreation needs are met.

Development Program

In addition to the existing facilities, one or more of the following facilities/amenities would be appropriate for the future development of Indian Hills Park:

- Vegetation management program
- Enhanced landscaping
- Lawn games
- Sitting areas/overlooks
- General amenities

Golden Lake Park

Park Classification: Community Park

Location: West Golden Lake Road

Approximate Size: 6.8 acres

Existing Site Features

1. Parking lot
2. Canoe/boat landing
3. Picnic area
4. 2 Pavilions
5. 2 Playground structures
6. Water play structure
7. Swimming/beach area
8. Fishing dock
9. Tennis court
10. Sand volleyball
11. Half-court basketball
12. Concession building with restrooms
13. Wooded area
14. Fitness Station
15. Trails and sidewalks

Existing Conditions/Characteristics

The park is in good condition and was renovated in 2001.

Basis for Park Need

- Additional programming in the park.
- Outdoor shower
- Additional amenities
- Enhanced landscape

Interrelationship with Other Parks

As a community park Golden Lake Park serves the broader community by providing important special use facilities. At the neighborhood level, the park works in conjunction with the other parks in this area to provide a full pallet of recreational opportunities for nearby residents.

Aspen Park

Park Classification: Natural resource area

Location: West Golden Lake Road

Approximate size: 19.4 acres

Existing Site Features

1. Lowland/wetland area
2. Internal trail system
3. Upland woodlot
4. Trail connection to neighborhood

Existing Conditions/Characteristics

Aspen Park is largely a natural resource area with past development limited to a trail corridor that links the park with the surrounding neighborhood and park system. The existing woodlot exhibits some nice mature hardwoods. Unfortunately, invasive undergrowth in the woodlot plus elimination of the natural revitalization process (wild fires) is resulting in less diverse ecological systems which threatens the long-term vitality of this natural resource area. Immediate vegetation management is needed to forestall any deterioration.

Basis for Park Need

Aspen Park provides needed open space as well as a natural resource amenity that enhances the overall character of the city. This park has the potential to provide:

Natural observation and interpretive area

A trail corridor that links the park developed areas with parks and nature areas

Aesthetic amenity that softens the hardscape features of the developed city.

Interrelationship with Other Parks

Aspen Park’s primary role is to preserve the historic natural resources of the city and provide a park trail corridor and a setting for nature interpretation.

Development Program

One or more of the following facilities/amenities would be appropriate for the future development of Aspen Park

- Natural resources management program
- Improved trail system that links the park with other parks and development areas
- Continue to work to upgrade trail surfaces
- Nature interpretive program
- Sitting areas, which could include small deck overlooks

Pheasant Run Park

Park Classification: Greenway with natural resource component

Location: Canterbury Road

Approximate Size: 11.0 acres

Existing Site Features

1. Lowland/wetland area
2. Internal trail system
3. Upland woodlot
4. Trail connection to neighborhood
5. Trail connection to Golden Lake School and regional park

Existing Conditions/Characteristics

The park is a greenway with a trail corridor that links the park with the surrounding neighborhood and park system. The existing woodlot exhibits some nice mature hardwoods. Unfortunately, as with the other parks, invasive undergrowth in the woodlot plus elimination of natural revitalization process is resulting in less diverse ecological

systems which threatens the long-term vitality of this natural resource area. Vegetation management is needed to forestall any further deterioration.

Basis for Park Need

Pheasant Run Park provides a greenway open space and natural resource amenity that enhances the overall character of the city. This park has the potential to provide:

Nature observation and interpretive area

A trail corridor that links the park developed areas with parks and nature areas

Aesthetic amenity that softens the hardscape features of a developed city.

Interrelationship with Other Parks

Pheasant Run Park is considered a greenway because its primary function is to provide a park trail corridor. It also preserves the historic natural resources of the city and provides a setting for nature interpretation. It also offers some opportunity for community vegetable gardens.

Development Program

One or more of the following facilities/amenities would be appropriate for the future development of Aspen Park:

- Natural resources management program
- Improved trail system that links the park with other parks and development areas
- Continue to work to upgrade trail surfaces
- Sitting areas, which include small deck overlooks
- General amenities
- Community vegetable garden

North Star Park

Park Classification: Neighborhood Park

Location: North Star Lane and North Road

Approximate Size: 4.2 acres

Existing Site Features

1. Internal trail system (hard surface)
2. Woodlot (with extensive undergrowth)

Existing Conditions/Characteristics

Basis for Park Need

North Star Park provides much needed open space in a densely populated residential area. This park has the potential to provide:

- Ornamental and natural vegetation

Interrelationship with Other Parks

North Star Park primary role is to augment the amenities provided in Center Park. Whereas Center Park is a more active space and social gathering area, North Star would be more passive in character and offer the neighborhood a quiet, less active park area. The trail system provides a route to school.

Development Program

Vegetation management program and enhanced landscaping. Continue to work to upgrade trail surfaces.

Tamarack Park

Park Classifications: Natural resource area

Location: Oak Ridge Trail and Oak Road

Approximate Size: 17.8 acres

Existing Site Features

1. Internal trail system
2. Woodlot (with extensive undergrowth)
3. Wetland/watershed

Existing Conditions/Characteristics

The park is largely a wooded/wetland natural resource area. Although the existing woodlot exhibits some nice mature hardwoods and transitional forests, excessive invasive undergrowth is threatening the long-term vitality of the natural resources in this park.

Basis for Park Need

Tamarack Park provides open space in a populated residential area as well as natural resource amenity that makes the city an appealing place to live.

This park has the potential to provide:

- Nature observation and interpretive area
- A trail corridor that links the park with developed areas and other parks
- Aesthetic amenity that softens the hardscape features of developed city

Interrelationship with Other Parks

Tamarack Park's primary role is to preserve the historic natural resources of the city and provide a park trail corridor and setting for nature interpretations.

Development Program

Implement a natural resource management program to preserve the site's natural vegetation.

One or more of the following facilities/amenities would be appropriate for the future development of Tamarack Park:

- Natural resources management program
- Nature interpretive program (signage, observation points)
- Sitting areas
- Continue to work to upgrade trail surfaces

Capital Improvement Plan

Description	Funding Source	Amount	Year
Baldwin Playground	Playground Equipment Fund	\$80,000	2025
Indian Hills Playground	Playground Equipment Fund	\$30,000	2027
Golden Lake EVO Playground Equipment #2	Playground Equipment Fund	\$75,000	2025
Aspen Park Trail Improvements/Broadwalk	General Fund	\$80,000	2025
Golden Lake Fishing Pier	General Fund	\$75,000	2026
Tamarack Park Trail Improvements	General Fund	\$80,000	2027
Carl Eck Building/Restrooms	General Fund	\$75,000	2030
Pavilion in City Hall Park	Unfunded/Donations	\$100,000	2030
Center Park Playground	Playground Equipment Fund	\$80,000	2032
Carl Eck Park Playground	Playground Equipment Fund	\$40,000	2033
Golden Lake Exercise Equipment	Playground Equipment Fund	\$15,000	2033
Golden Lake Playground Equipment Burke#1 & Water Play	Playground Equipment Fund	\$100,000	2034
City Hall Playground	Playground Equipment Fund	\$100,000	2039

Equipment			
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Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park Reserve

Circle Pines is in the fortunate position to be bisected by Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park Reserve, an exceptional regional park amenity that traverses almost the entire eastern municipal boundary. This park has the potential to provide residents with the multitude of recreational opportunities not otherwise available within the city. The park serves as a major natural resource area and recreational amenity to the community and plays a significant role within the city’s overall park and trail system plan.

The 5,500-acre Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve is one of the largest in the seven-county metropolitan area and contains some of the most significant native wildlife habitat and water resources in the regional area.

The park offers a wide variety of amenities, including the Wargo Nature Center, Chomonix Golf Course, Rice Creek Campground, and Centerville Lake Beach. Other amenities include picnic areas, boat launch facilities, biking and hiking trails, playgrounds and a fishing pier. A unique partnership with the [YMCA Day Camp Heritage](#) offers another day camp opportunity for the community.

The Anoka County Parks Department is in the process of exploring the addition of single-track mountain bike trails to Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve. While still in the planning phase, the proposed trail system would be a total of roughly 7-9 miles of single-track trails in 5 separate nodes within the park. The project would be completed in two phases over the course of a few years. Check out the map of the [proposed trails](#).

The city acknowledges the Council approved master plan boundaries of regional parks, park reserves, and special recreation features by guiding the properties with the land use of “park”.