

CHAPTER 6: PARKS + TRAILS

Overview

The Parks and Trails Chapter provides a review of existing parkland and recreation land within the City of Springfield. This chapter also provides high-level recommendations for the facilitation and management of parkland and trails in Springfield, as well as ideas and recommendations to include towards the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The chapter also includes three types of level of service (LOS) analyses for the park system today, as well as provides demand estimated based on projected population growth scenarios in 2050. A high-level future trails plan is also provided. The chapter concludes with a series of goals, policies, and action items for Springfield to reference when making decisions over planning and budgeting.

This chapter will overview the following

- Review of Existing Parks and Trails in Springfield + Public Input Summary
- Future Parks Service Area Analysis
- Future Bike Network Planning
- Goals, Policies, and Action Items



EXISTING PARKS

Existing Parks in Springfield

Figure 6.1 shows existing park and recreation land within Springfield today. The City of Springfield has a total of five (5) main parks within city limits, and one (1) just outside of city limits. These parks combined account for a total of 65-acres. These parks vary in their size, function, and programming and as such are classified into five (5) parkland types:

- Neighborhood / Mini Park
- Community Park
- Greenway
- Special Use Park
- School Facility

The largest parkland and recreation areas within Springfield includes the Springfield Soccer Complex, Buffalo Park, and the Springfield Trail and Recreation Area. Other parks servicing the city include City Park, Urban Park, Pines Park, and the Springfield Elementary School.

Park Name	Type	Acres
Urban Park	Mini	1.22
City Park	Neighborhood	5.28
Pines Park*	Neighborhood	0.13
Buffalo Park	Community	10.65
Springfield Creek Trails and Recreation Area	Greenway	13.0
Springfield Soccer Complex	Special Use	35.63
TOTAL	-	65.91

TABLE 6.1 // EXISTING PARKS BY TYPE AND ACRE

* PARK SYSTEM LOCATED OUTSIDE OF CITY LIMITS

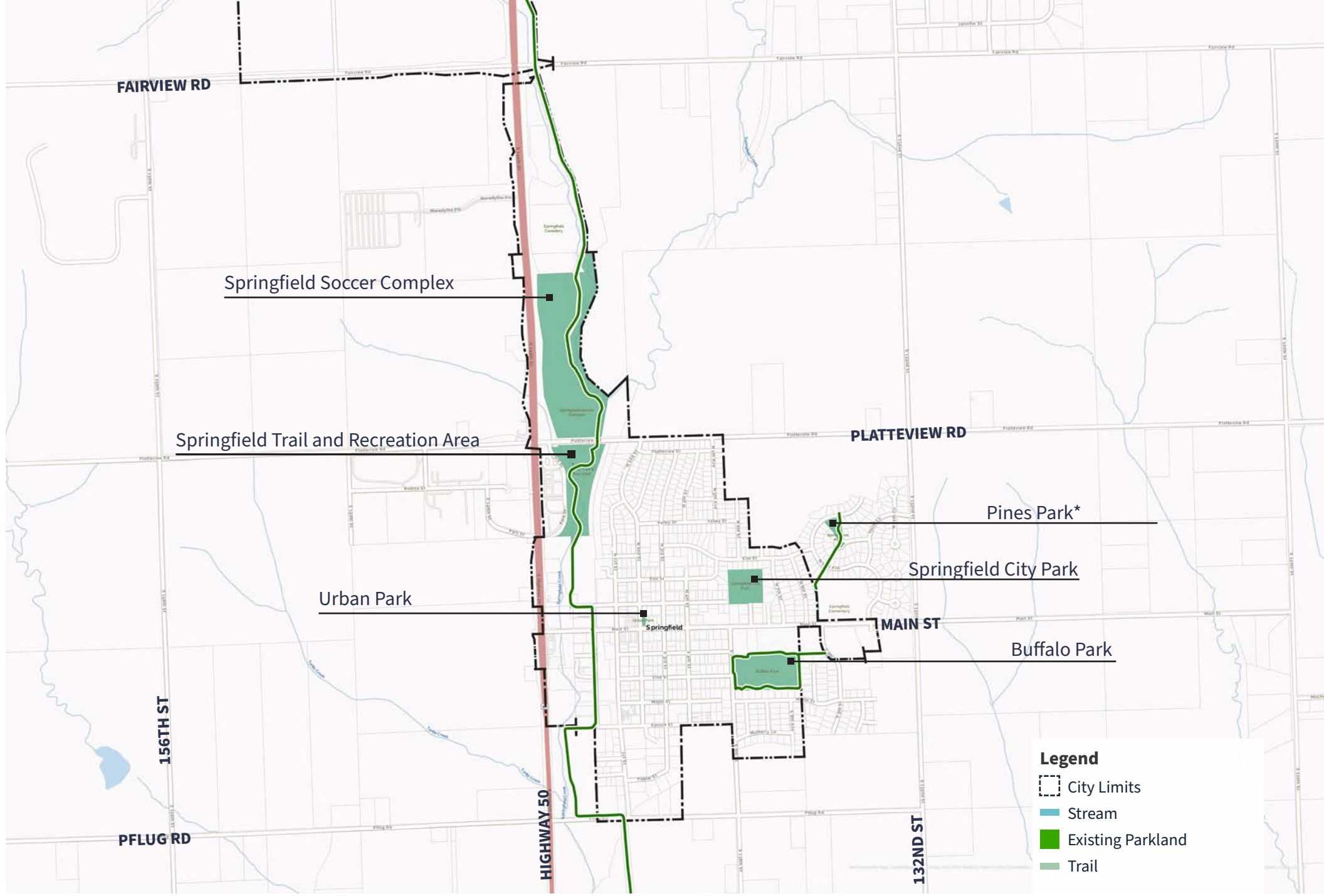


FIGURE 6.1 // EXISTING PARK + OPEN SPACE MAP
 SOURCE: SARPY COUNTY WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

Parks and Trails Public Input

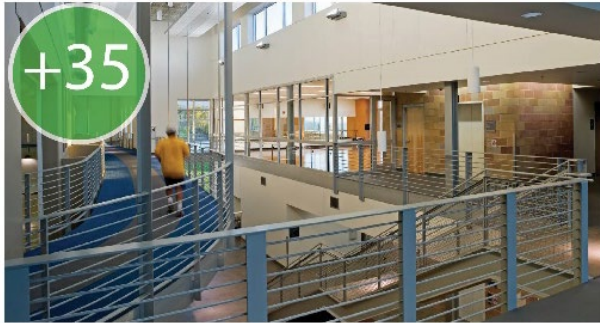
The community has expressed a strong desire for more trail connections to link residents to key destinations both within Springfield (winery, coffee shop) and regionally to the MoPac trail. The floodplain along the east side of Highway 50 presents a unique opportunity that some residents are interested in utilizing for camping, glamping, or an RV park, potentially serving as a long linear green park corridor to connect future developments (i.e. trail oriented development).

Many residents have highlighted the need for an indoor recreation facility to provide active spaces for teenagers and the elderly. When discussing the expansion of sports fields, it was evident that the community prefers parks to primarily serve residents rather than catering to regional tournaments. Additionally, there is a call for updates to existing parks, including more shelters and the continued renewal of aging play equipment.

The community also envisions new outdoor amenities such as a dog park, skate park, city pool, fishing ponds, pickleball courts, community gardens, a fountain, and an amphitheater along the existing bike path near Highway 50.



Top Priorities:



INDOOR RECREATION CENTER



TRAIL



YOUTH RECREATION PROGRAMS

Lowest Priorities:



DISC GOLF COURSE



INTERACTIVE ART SPACE



NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYGROUND

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Evaluating Existing Level of Service

Overview

A level of service analysis shows how well a parks system serves the needs of a community. The analysis can be evaluated by examining different features and characteristics of a city, such as the time it takes to walk to a park, the number of parkland available per 1,000 residents, or the distribution of parkland within the city limits.

The analysis utilized the following to evaluate the level of service in Springfield:

- Availability – Number of Acres per 1,000 residents
- Geographic Distribution – Service Areas by Park Type
- Access – Walk Time Analysis

Service Areas

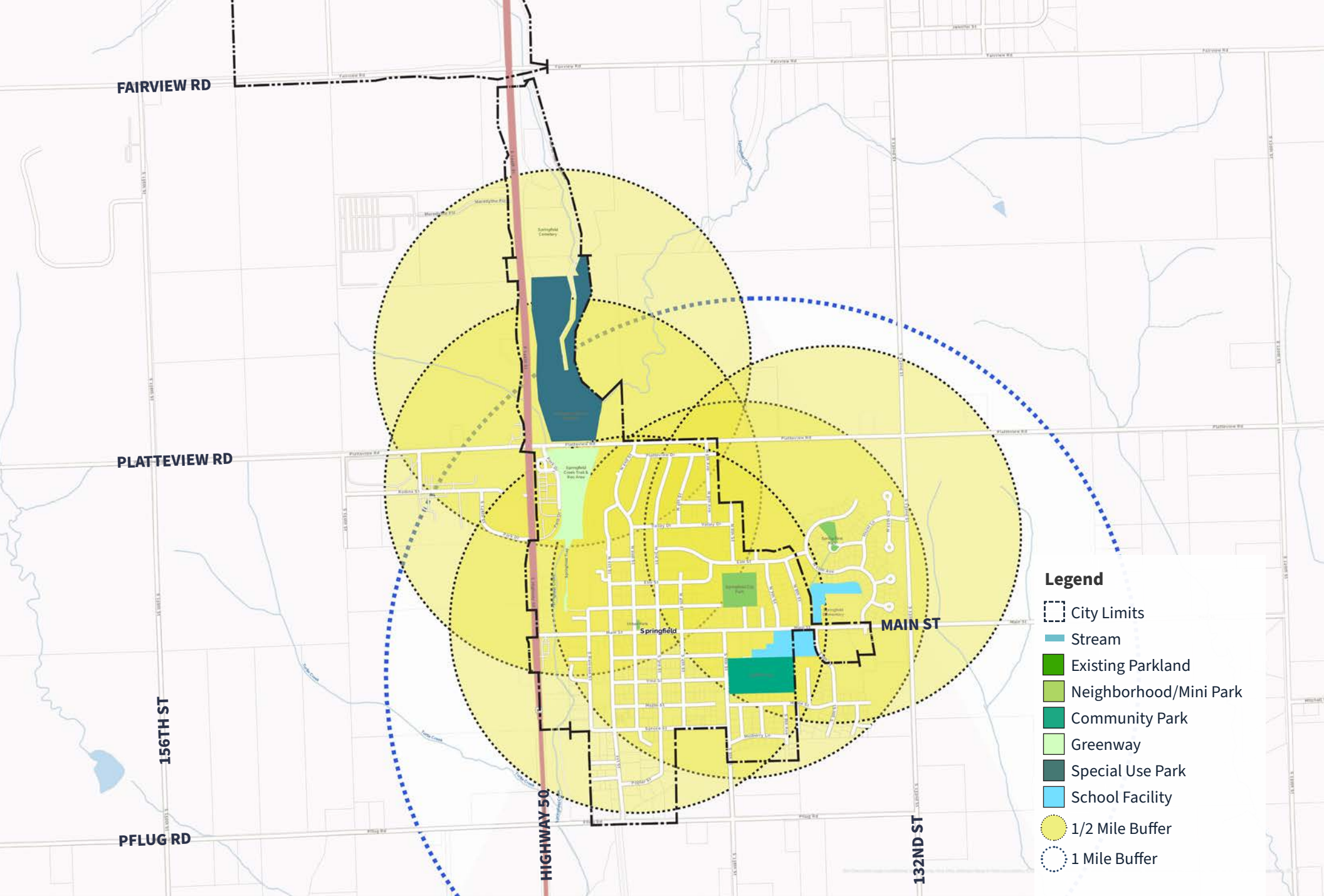
Parkland can also be assessed by examining service areas, which depict how far of a geographic range a park will serve. Neighborhood parks will serve an area of between 1/4 and 1/2 miles. A community park will serve a larger area, typically 1-mile. Special use parks are varied, as their uses may be more specialized or varied from the unique services provided, and are typically not included in level of service analysis. Figure 6.2 shows service areas for the neighborhood and community parks in Springfield.

The service by park type analysis shows that the existing community, especially residential neighborhoods, are very well covered by park distribution. However, as the community continues to grow, future park land should be set aside to ensure park facilities are available in close proximity to future residents.

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	ACRE
Buffalo Park	Community	10.65
City Park	Neighborhood	5.28
Urban Park	Mini	0.13
Pines' Park*	Neighborhood	1.22
Springfield Creek Trails and Recreation Area	Greenway	13.0
Springfield Soccer Complex	Special Use	35.63
TOTAL	-	65.91
ESTIMATED 2024 POPULATION	2,000 (includes SIDs)	
RECOMMENDED LOS	10.5 (per NRPA)	
SPRINGFIELD LOS	8.6 (excluding Special Use + Greenway)	

TABLE 6.2 // EXISTING PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE

* PARK SYSTEM LOCATED OUTSIDE OF CITY LIMITS



Legend

- City Limits
- Stream
- Existing Parkland
- Neighborhood/Mini Park
- Community Park
- Greenway
- Special Use Park
- School Facility
- 1/2 Mile Buffer
- 1 Mile Buffer

FIGURE 6.2 // GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION/PARK SERVICE AREA MAP

WALK TIME ANALYSIS

Walk Time Analysis

A third way that park systems can be analyzed is through a walk-time analysis. The Walk Time Analysis Maps, shown in Figures 6.3-6.8, assess the service area of the six parks assessed below at a scale of 5 to 15 minute walk-times. Overall, a majority of the community has access to parks within a 5 to 15 minute walk time.

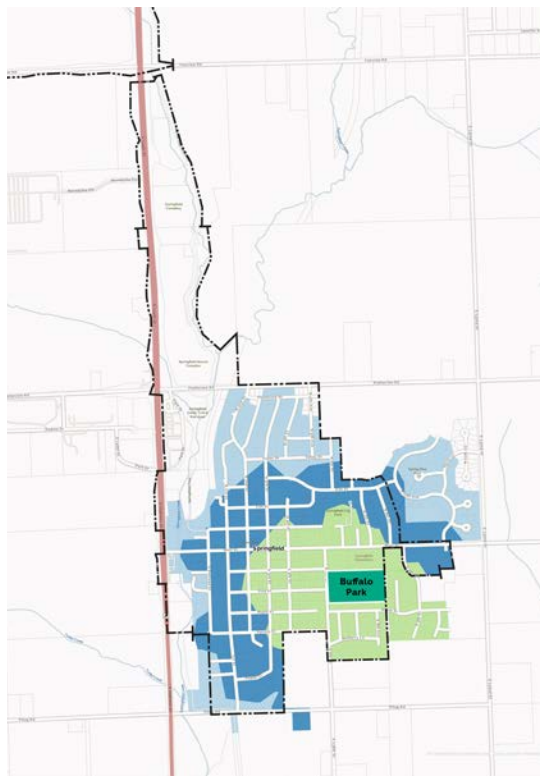


FIGURE 6.3 // BUFFALO PARK

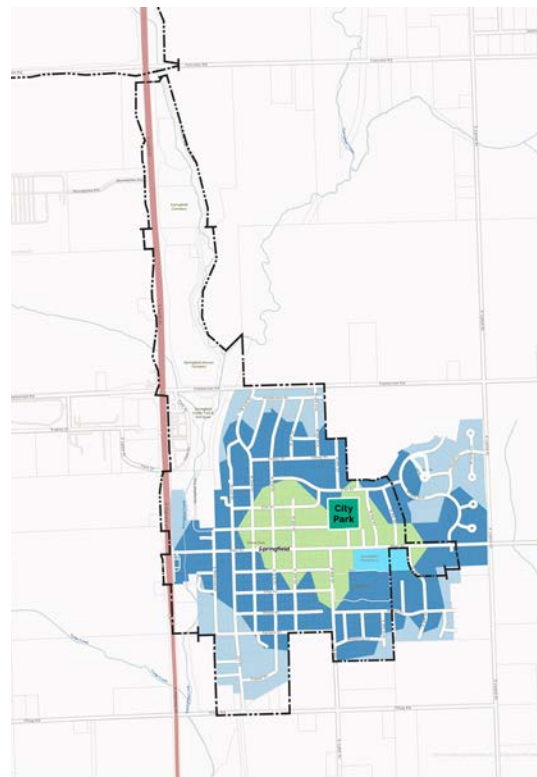


FIGURE 6.4 // CITY PARK

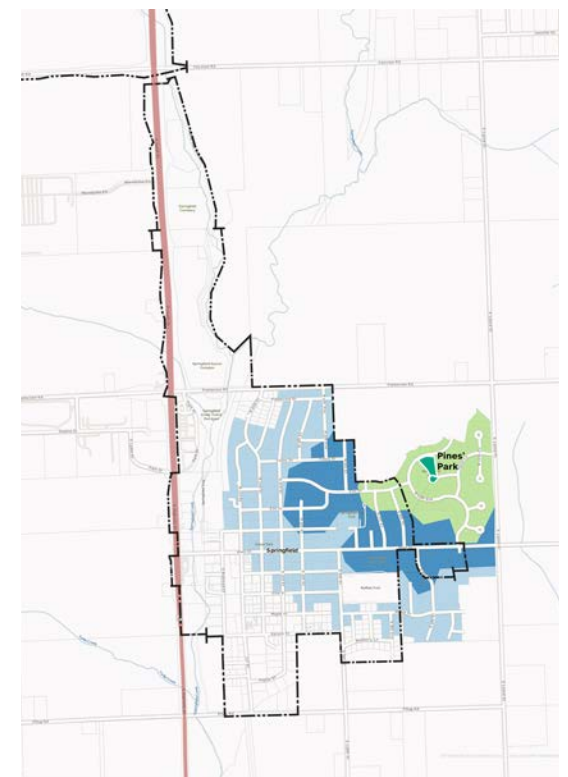


FIGURE 6.5 // PINES' PARK

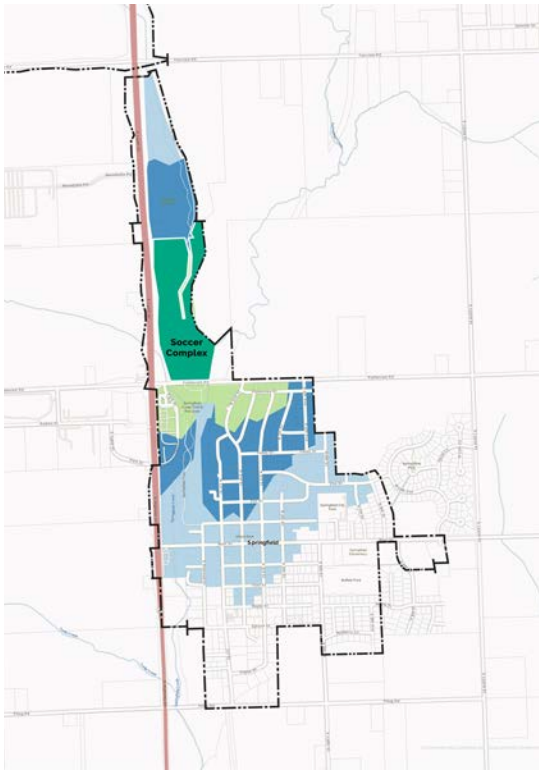


FIGURE 6.6 // SPRINGFIELD SOCCER COMPLEX

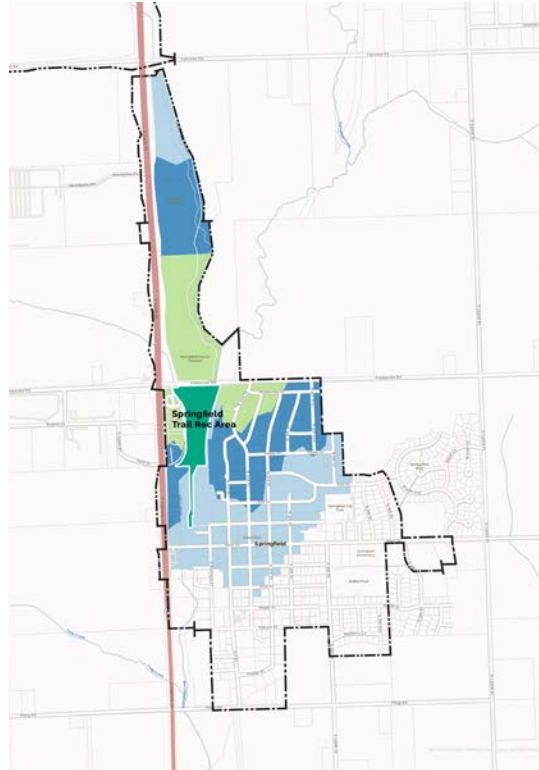


FIGURE 6.7 // SPRINGFIELD CREEK TRAILS AND RECREATION AREA

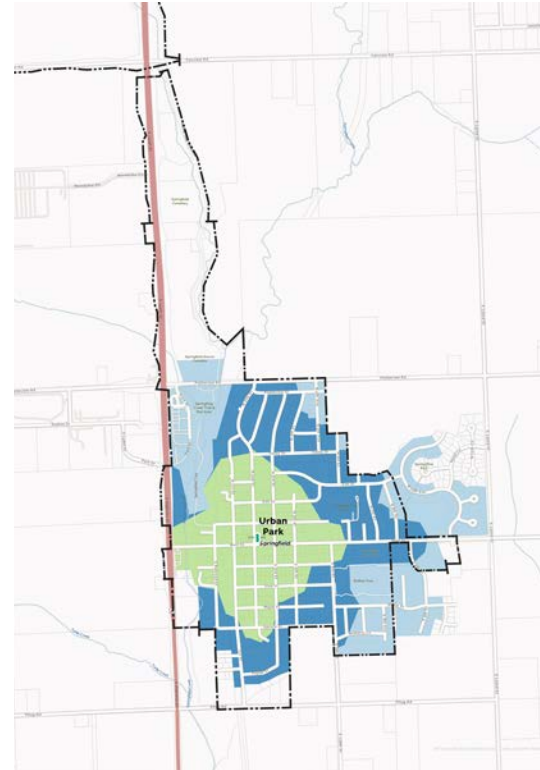


FIGURE 6.8 // URBAN PARK

EXISTING TRAILS

Existing Trails

Figure 6.9 shows the existing trail system within Springfield. The MoPac Trail, which traverses the former Missouri Pacific Railroad Line, currently connects Springfield to the Platte River, located south of the community. The trail line is considered part of the Great American Rail Trail, a national trail providing a 3,700-mile route from Washington to Washington D.C.

The MoPac Trail runs north/south in Springfield, through the Springfield Creek Trails and Recreation Area. The Recreation Area is a greenway which is home to a trail head for the MoPac Connection. The recreational area is equipped with bike racks and repair stations, public parking, a pavillion with picnic tables, and more.

Additionally, local trails service the community as connectors to destinations and parks within the city, including the trail segments surrounding Buffalo Park, as well as the segment connected to Pines' Park.

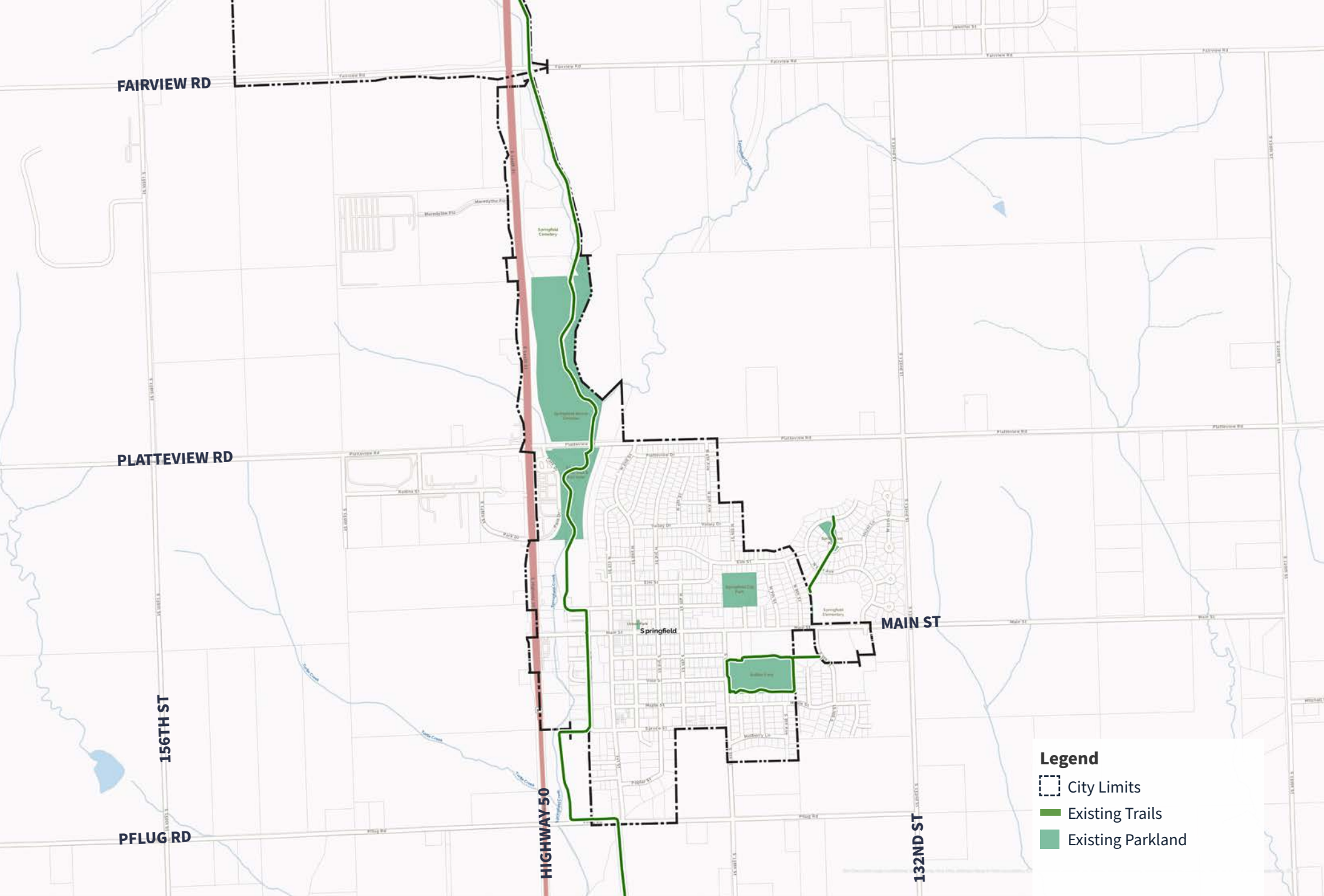


FIGURE 6.9 // EXISTING PARKS + TRAILS MAP

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Springfield Youth Athletic Association

The Springfield Youth Athletic Association (SYAA) was first organized in the 1990's to provide organized youth programs for each sport. Today, the local non-profit youth sports organization offers a variety of athletic programs and activities for the community that are hosted locally, and is looking into adding soccer to their programming.

- Basketball – Girls & Boys
- Football – Flag & Tackle
- Volleyball
- Wrestling

These athletic programs are hosted at City Park Ball Field, Salberg Field at Platteview High School, and at the Springfield Elementary School Ball Field.

Other Programming

The Springfield Youth Athletic Association (SYAA) recently handed over several programs to a new for-profit organization.

- Baseball
- Softball



FUTURE DEMAND FOR PARK ACRES

Future Demand Estimates

Table 6.3 shows the projected demand for park acres based on low to high population growth scenarios in 2050. Park demand estimates were created using the level of service of 10.5 acres / 1,000 residents.

Neighborhood Parks

By 2050, Springfield will likely need between 3.4 to 21.4 additional neighborhood park acres to meet demand.

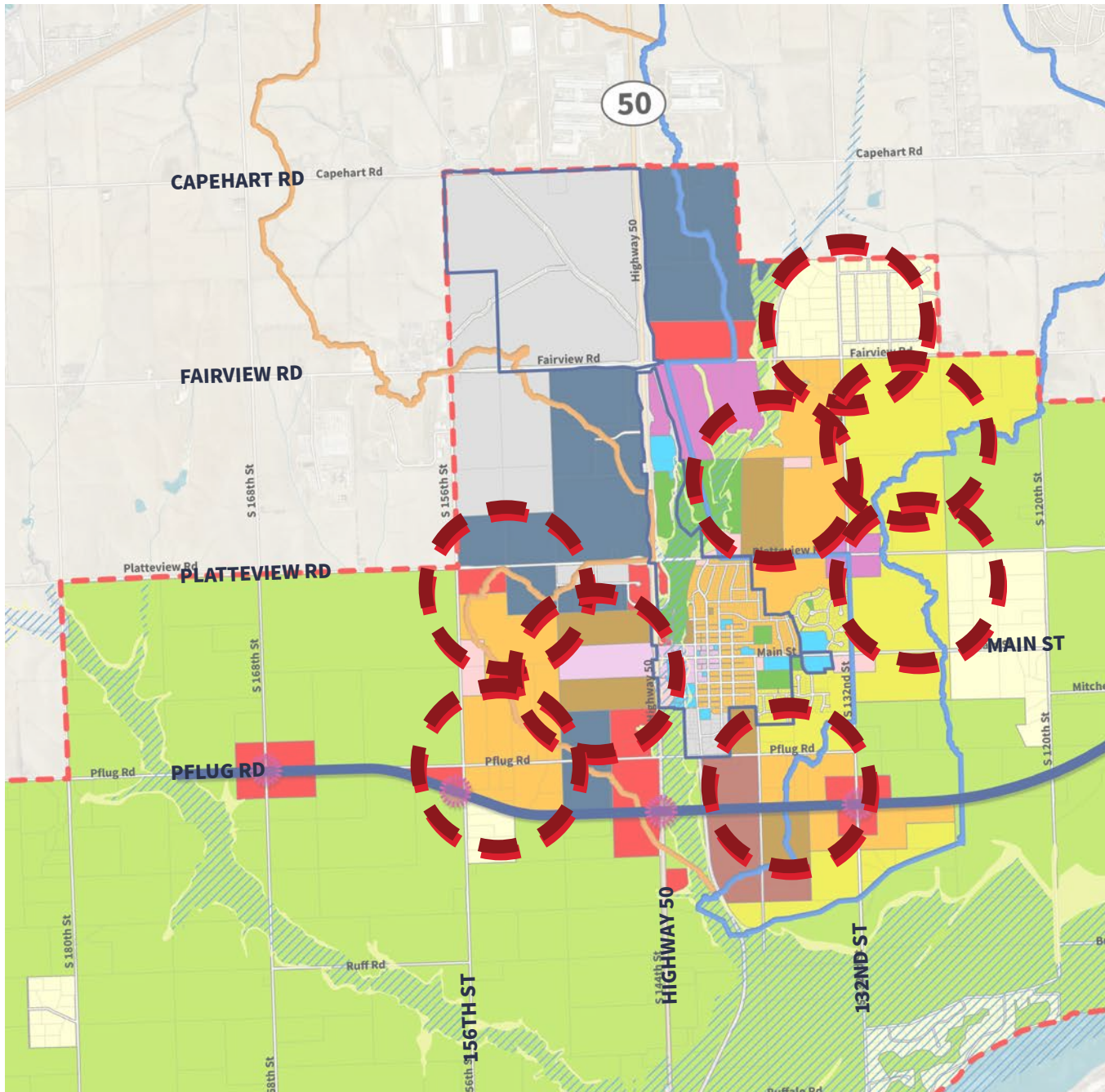
Community Parks

By 2050, Springfield will likely need between 33.4 to 101.4 additional community park acres to meet demand.

Neighborhood Park Acre Demand Estimates by 2050 by Growth Scenario	Total Demand (Acres)	Existing Acres	Acres to be Added	Total Number of Parks
Low (around 5,000 population)	6.25 to 10	6.63	0 to 3.15	1
Medium (around 7,000 population)	8.75 to 14	6.63	2.12 to 7.37	1-2
High (around 10,000 population)	12.5 to 20	6.63	5.87 to 13.37	2-3

Community Park Acre Demand Estimates by 2050 by Growth Scenario	Total Demand (Acres)	Existing Acres	Acres to be Added	Total Number of Parks
Low (around 5,000 population)	27.5 to 40	10.65	16.85 to 29.35	1
Medium (around 7,000 population)	38.5 to 56	10.65	27.85 to 45.35	1-2
High (around 10,000 population)	55 to 80	10.65	44.35 to 69.35	2

TABLE 6.3 // PARK ACRE DEMAND ESTIMATES



Future Park Nodes

While the exact location of future parks are not generally identified within a comprehensive plan, possible future park nodes can be shown. Development of new neighborhood and community park types will need to expand as the community continues to grow. Future parks should be spaced approximately every 1/2 mile to service new residential growth areas. While exact locations aren't specified, potential park nodes can be shown within the planning boundary. Figure 6.10 shows how these parks could be spaces within the planning boundary, particularly in areas planned for new residential development. It is recommended that these parks are accessible via safe sidewalks/trails. Planning for neighborhood parks is straightforward, but community parks require larger parcels and more proactive planning. These parks typically require larger parcels of land, making it crucial to carefully consider available spaces that can accommodate their larger size and the diverse needs of the community.



FIGURE 6.10 // FUTURE PARK NODE MAP

FUTURE TRAILS MAP

Future Trails

Figure 6.11 shows a proposed future trails map for Springfield and builds upon the MoPac Trail system which runs north/south through the community. Existing trails are shown in dark green. Future trails, shown in orange, are proposed along major arterials to expand shared use paths and provide internal circulation in proposed residential areas. Trail connections are also shown to provide future connections to commercial and mixed-use areas, as well as tourist destinations.

This high-level trails master plan should be explored in greater detail as part of the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

**TOTAL TRAIL MILES IN
SPRINGFIELD = 4.31**

Springfield City Limits + SID

**2.15 MILES OF TRAIL PER
1,000 RESIDENTS**

Springfield's LOS for bicycle and walking trails.

	ALL MUNICIPALITIES	MUNICIPALITIES WITH A POPULATION LESS THAN 20,000
Median LOS	16.0	4.5
Lower Quartile	6.0	2.0
Upper Quartile	46.0	9.2

Source: National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

TABLE 6.4 // TRAIL MILES COMPARISONS

Trail Miles in Springfield

MoPac Trail	3.4
Buffalo Park	.61
Springfield Pines SID	.30

TABLE 6.5 // TRAIL MILES SPRINGFIELD

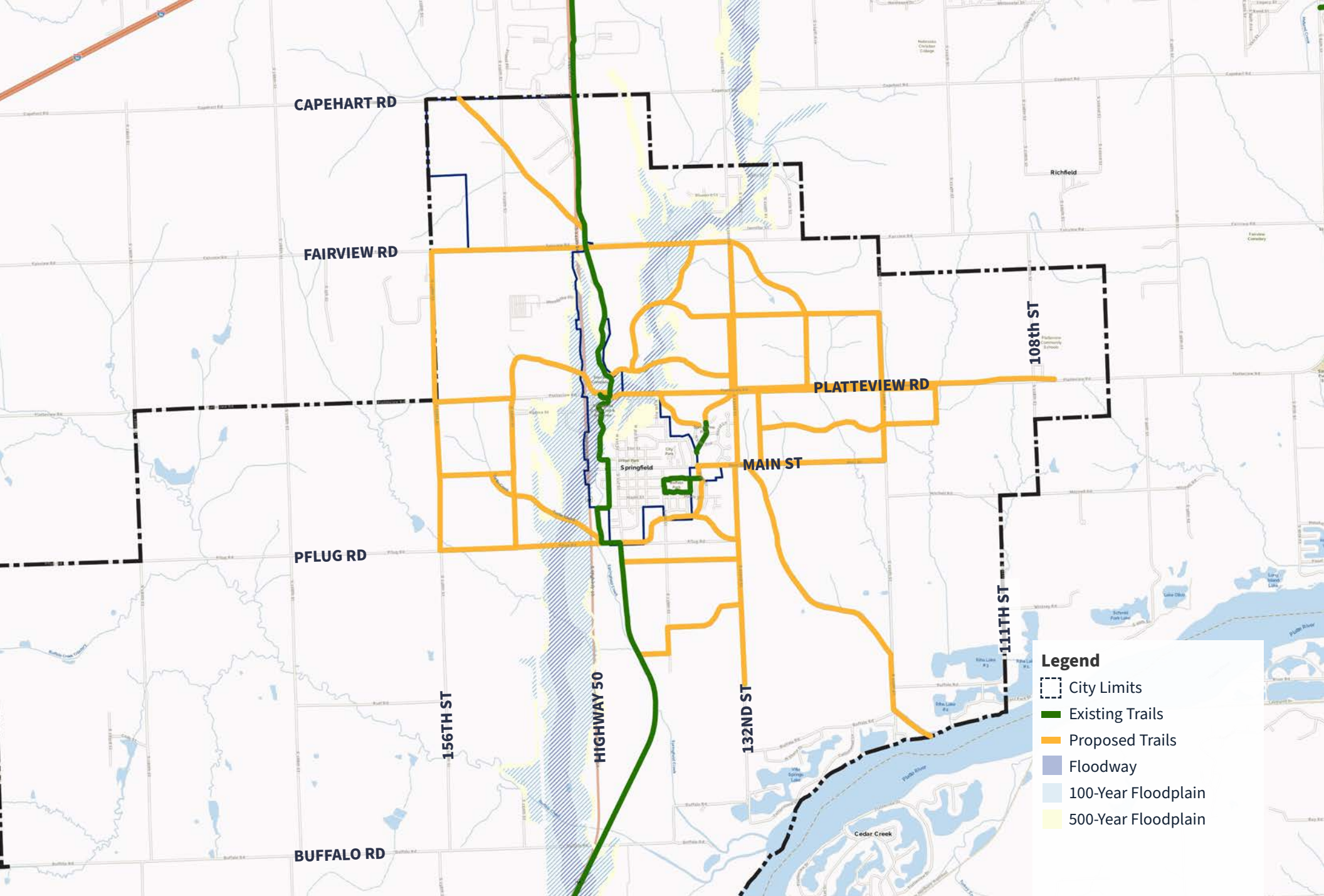


FIGURE 6.11 // FUTURE TRAILS MAP

FUTURE DEMAND FOR PARK STAFF

Future Demand for Staffing

As the City of Springfield continues to grow, additional demand and support to program and maintain Springfield’s recreational services and park system will also grow. Adequate staffing is necessary to ensure oversight of recreational properties to maintain equipment and services, provide noxious weed control, and provide for a safe environment for the community to recreate and play.

Additional support for maintaining and supporting Springfield’s park system may also include volunteer recruitment, with recognition strategies to help support volunteerism.

Parks and Recreation Staff Demand by Role	Low Growth	Medium Growth	High Growth
Operations / Maintenance	2	3	5
Programming	1	2	3
Administration	1	1	2
Other	0	0	1

TABLE 6.6 // PARKS AND REC STAFF BY ROLE

Parks and Recreation Staff Demand by Growth Scenario	Total by 2050
Low (around 5,000)	5
Medium (around 7,000)	7
High (around 10,000)	10

TABLE 6.7 // PARKS AND REC BY GROWTH



GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTION ITEMS

GOAL PT-8: PROVIDE A HIGH-QUALITY PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM FOR EXISTING AND FUTURE SPRINGFIELD RESIDENTS.

Policies

P-8.1	Expand trail connections, including intra-neighborhood trail access like those found in the Springfield Pines SID development.
P-8.2	Expand neighborhood parks as new residential areas developed according to the Future Park Node map.
P-8.3	Routinely upgrade and perform maintenance of playgrounds, fields, courts, and other park facilities on a rotating schedule to be efficient with limited funding.
P-8.4	Continue to partner with the Springfield Platteville Community Schools on shared park facilities for recreation space.
P-8.5	Ensure parks and recreation facilities are served by pedestrian and bicycle facilities to and inside of the facility.
P-8.6	Integrate low-maintenance landscapes such as native prairie land to add variety to the user experience and reduce mowing and other maintenance costs.
P-8.7	Explore expanding the park space south of town along Spring Creek to connect to the future regional lake.
P-8.8	Incorporate green infrastructure into community parks and recreation facilities to provide on-site stormwater management, reduce irrigation, and for use as an educational tool for residents.
P-8.9	Connect all parks and community facilities with adequate trail connections.

GOAL PT-8: PROVIDE A HIGH-QUALITY PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM FOR EXISTING AND FUTURE SPRINGFIELD RESIDENTS.

Policies (Continued)

P-8.10	Encourage the use of wayfinding signage along the Springfield trail system.
P-8.11	Encourage public art and other placemaking efforts along trails and within parks in Springfield.
P-8.12	Work with partners to establish a regional trail connection.

Action Items

AI-8.1	Complete a parks and recreation master plan to help enhance existing and future parkland in Springfield.
AI-8.2	Create a neighborhood park planning policy for all future park planning that emphasizes quality design and neighborhood input.
AI-8.3	Evaluate indoor recreation needs to determine long-term need for a community-owned indoor recreation space.
AI-8.4	Identify a timeline for long-term park and recreation staffing increases, including the creation of separate Parks and Recreation Department that handles administration, programming and operations/maintenance.
AI-8.5	Monitor the development of the JEDI Potential Lake Location south of Springfield as well as trail connections to this potential future amenity.
AI-8.6	Design a timeline for a new parks and wayfinding signage package to improve wayfinding, aesthetics, and placemaking in Springfield parks.
AI-8.7	Explore opportunities to connect regional trail to key destinations throughout Springfield, such as coffee shop and winery.
AI-8.8	Leverage floodplain for future trail extensions as a way to connect future developments (i.e. trail oriented development) to existing Springfield neighborhoods and districts.
AI-8.9	Coordinate with Heartland B-Cycle to establish electric bike stations at Platteview Road and the Platte River to create an out and back tourism loop.