



Old Hickory Park

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS - EXISTING PARKS

INTRODUCTION

Over the next ten to twenty years, park improvements and expansions will be needed to serve both La Crescent's expanding population and ever the changing needs of park users. This section of the plan identifies recommended improvements to existing parks. No changes are anticipated for Vetsch Park and Vollenweilder Park except for the potential expansion of trails. Similarly, no significant changes are proposed for either Valley South Park or John S. Harris Park. In Harris Park, the existing play equipment should be replaced as it becomes older and outdated. Due to the park's light usage, new play equipment should be similar in size and scale that which exists in the park today.

Additional system-wide recommendations and recommendations for new park facilities are found in the Implementation chapter.

ABNET FIELD

RECOMMENDATIONS

Abnet Field should continue as a joint use facility shared by the City and the School District. An ice skating area or outdoor hockey rink should be added at the southeast corner of the park to replace the skating area that will be lost in Kistler Park due to the tennis court construction. No change in the existing ball field area is anticipated.

Abnet Field is also the home of the La Crescent Community Arena. The arena contains a sheet of indoor ice that accommodates hockey, figure skating, parties, broom ball and a lobby area with sufficient capacity to accommodate community meetings of up to 50 people. The arena is also home to the Boys and Girls Club as well as the bike repair facility currently operated by Active Living La Crescent.

Over the past several years, the arena has had a negative cash flow and during the summer of 2012, the facility was closed for ice skating due to sagging demand. The City will need to continually monitor the usage of the arena and may need to be open to considering future changes that would boost revenue or to the possible conversion of the facility to some other use that would alleviate the financial problems.



Abnet Field aerial



Frank J. Kistler Memorial Park pool



Frank J. Kistler Memorial Park pool

FRANK J. KISTLER MEMORIAL PARK

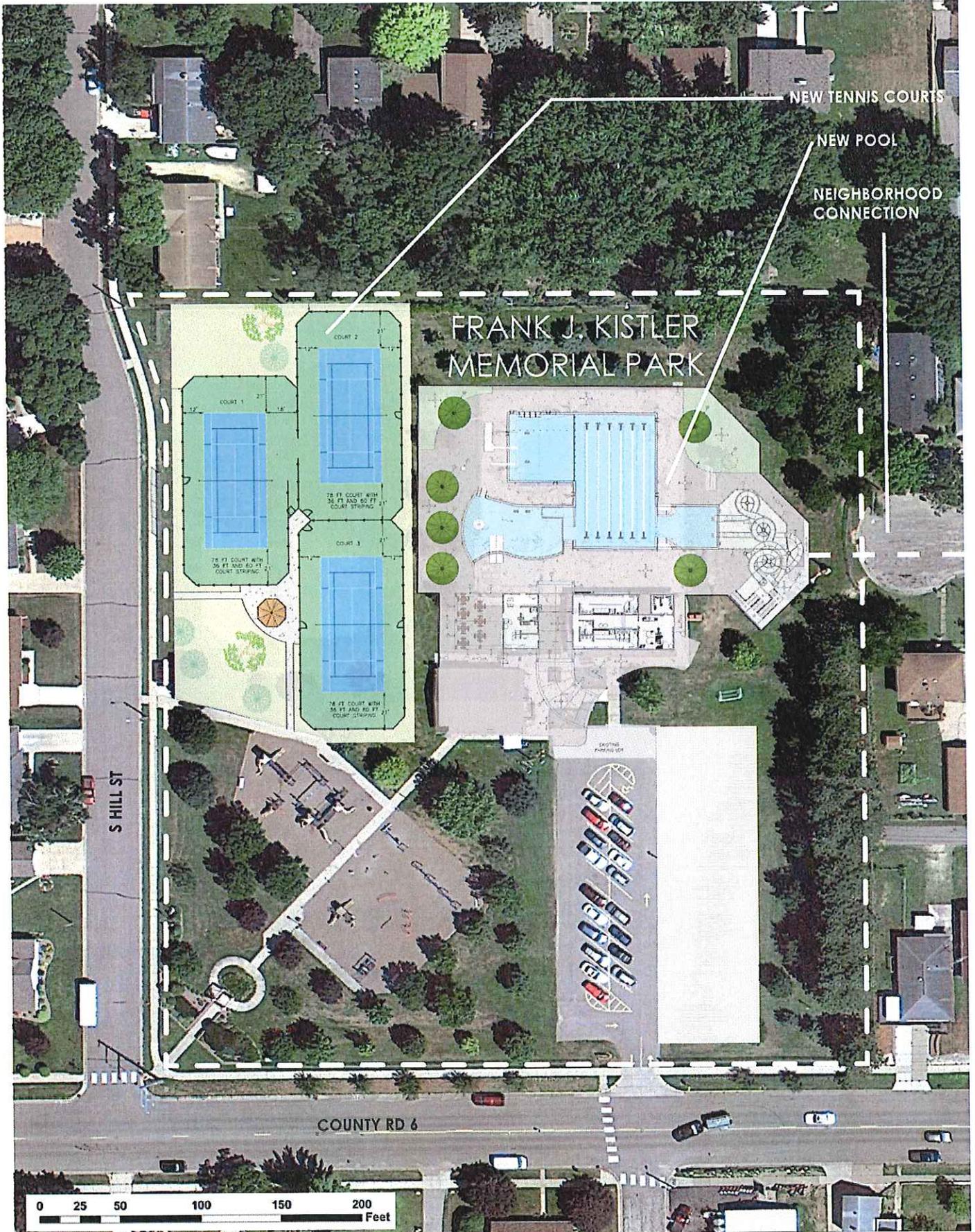
RECOMMENDATIONS

Kistler Park will remain a focal point of La Crescent's park system. The convenient location of the park and attractions like the new swimming pool and an extensive playground area ensures that the park will remain extremely popular with La Crescent residents and visitors.

Kistler Park was the former location of La Crescent's public tennis courts. The bond referendum for the reconstruction of the swimming pool included funds to build new tennis courts and the community has secured additional funding and design assistance from the United States Tennis Association. As a result, three new tennis courts will be constructed in Kistler Park in the northwest corner of the site. When these improvements are complete, Kistler Park will be fully developed.

Reconstruction of the swimming pool elevates the "feel" of Kistler Park and the soon to be constructed tennis courts will further the level of quality in the park. The play area, tennis courts, pool and associated parking are all top notch facilities. The city should continue to add landscaping in the interior portions of the park as well as around the edges to help soften the environment of the park and to enhance the visual attractiveness of the area.

The City will need to continue to monitor pedestrian and bike safety around the park. A neighborhood connection should be added off of the cul-de-sac bubble on 6th Street South. Further improvements may be needed to ensure safe pedestrian crossings at South Hill Street and along 7th Street South. La Crescent should instigate conversations with Houston County about potential measures to enhance pedestrian safety along County Road 6 including but not limited to establishing a four-way stop at the swimming pool drive entrance.



Frank J. Kistler Park Improvements

OLD HICKORY PARK

RECOMMENDATIONS

Being one of La Crescent's newest parks and also being almost fully developed, few changes are recommended for Old Hickory Park. The south end of the park contains a storm water basin that only holds water after significant rain events.

Although the area is mowed turf, the pronounced depression is less attractive than the balance of the park. Consideration should be given to treating the stormwater retention area as a rainwater garden area by adding appropriate plants. Establishing a rainwater garden in all or a portion of the depression area could create visual interest and reduce the amount of mowed turf thereby reducing maintenance time and cost.

At the present time, the basketball court in Old Hickory Park lies within a large turf area. User convenience could be enhanced by adding a sidewalk connecting the basketball court to the park shelter and the sidewalk along Red Apple Drive. It is also recommended that the existing gravel parking lot serving the shelter and playground area be paved. Since the turf areas of the park are used intensively for soccer and softball, installation of an irrigation system in the park would help maintain high quality turf.



Old Hickory Park Improvements

VETERANS PARK

RECOMMENDATIONS

Veterans Park has a number of existing challenges. Although being an important part of La Crescent's overall park system, it is hidden behind commercial uses along the Highway 14/61 frontage road. The park also contains outdated picnic shelters, play equipment and skateboarding ramps. Given abutting property ownership, it is extremely difficult to improve access to or the visibility of the park. It is possible, however, to create new park with unique and compelling facilities that will attract more residents and visitors.

Improvement of Veterans Park requires total reconstruction of the park. Although a major undertaking, improvements can be phased over time as funding resources become available. The existing vacant city owned single-family home within the park should be removed to create space for added park facilities. Recommended park improvements include:

New Soccer Field – Locating a new soccer field in La Crescent is difficult given the scarcity of flat parcels in the community. Removal of the existing house creates an area that can accommodate a full sized soccer field. No other site either within the current park system or in land likely to be acquired for park use in the next five to ten years has the ability to accommodate a full sized soccer field.

New Park Pavilions – Three new structures are proposed for the park. An open air shelter adjacent to the soccer field would provide a small shaded area for observation of games and a focal point for pre and post-game activities. A new picnic pavilion is shown adjacent to a new tot lot and playground area. A building is also shown to support the amphitheater/band shell that is further described below.

Skate Park - The concept plan for the reconstruction of Veterans Park does not include a skate park. When the existing skate park in Veterans Park is removed, an alternative location in the community should be explored.

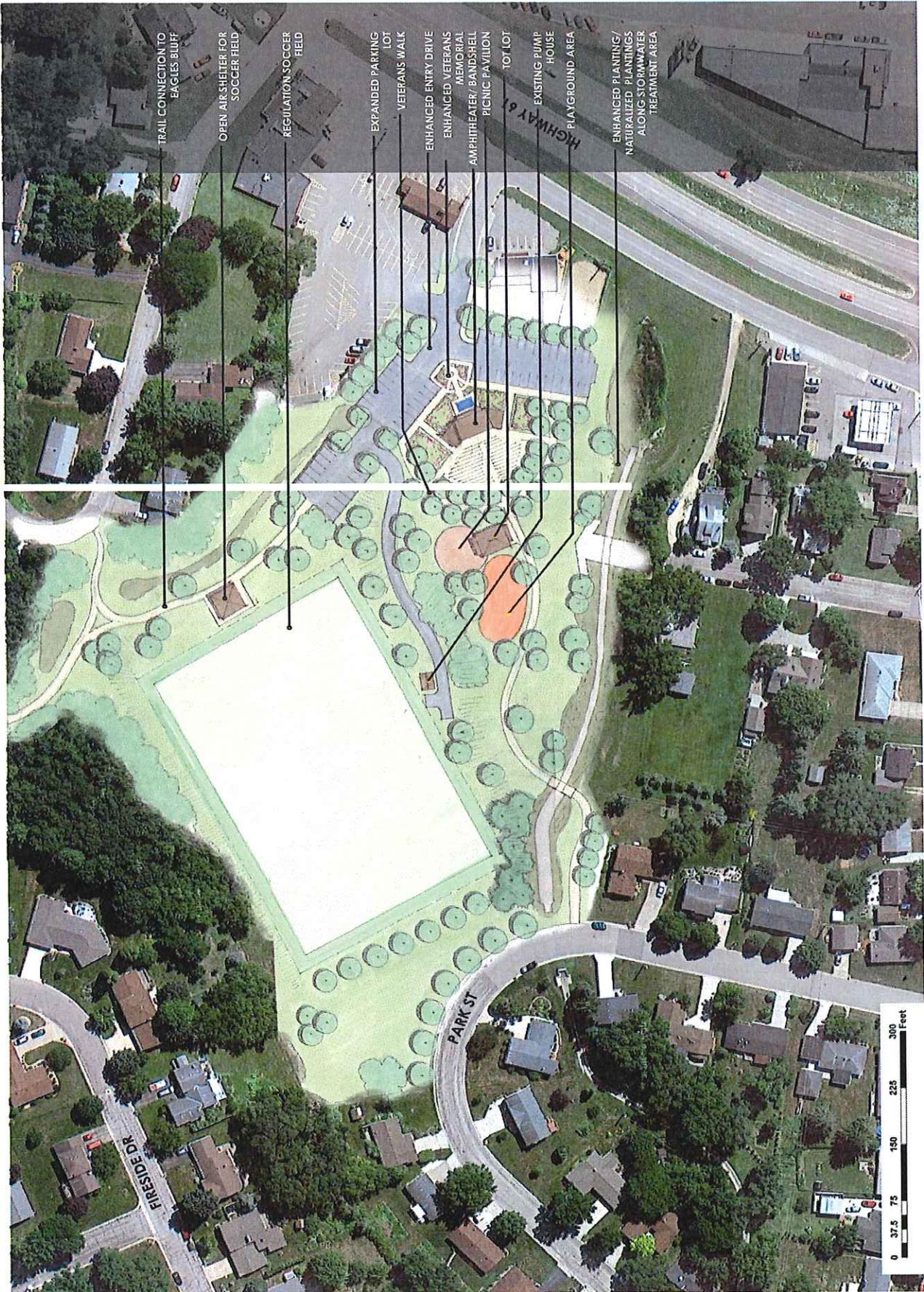
Amphitheater/band shell – The topography of Veterans Park can accommodate a small community amphitheater and band shell. The facility, which would be unique to La Crescent, could accommodate a number of community music, theatrical and community events. It could be the focal point for Veterans Day celebrations and it could include an adjacent memorial walk with added monuments for veteran recognition. The building supporting the amphitheater/band shell could contain restrooms.

Playground Area – The playground area could contain equipment suitable for use by children of a wide range of ages and varying physical abilities.

Pedestrian/Bike Circulation – New trails and walkways throughout the park could enhance connectivity within and external to the park. A new trail on the north side of the park can connect to the trails in Eagles Bluff Park. A new bridge over the stormwater swale on the south edge of the park could enhance the connection to homes along and adjacent to Walnut Place. Where possible, trails should also be groomed and used in the winter months for cross-country skiing.

Other Uses – The tennis court construction at Frank J. Kistler Memorial Park will displace the existing sand volleyball courts. New courts should be constructed in Veterans Park. Additionally, Veterans Park has sufficient spaced to accommodate other uses. The City has received resident interest in allocating an area for a cricket pitch.

Landscaping – Added tree and shrub plantings throughout the park would improve the park's appearance and provide shade for park users. Naturalized plantings along the stormwater treatment area would also enhance the appearance of the area.



Veterans Park Concept Sketch

EAGLES BLUFF PARK

RECOMMENDATIONS

Eagles Bluff Park is another of La Crescent's truly unique recreation areas. Trails meandering up the slope of the bluff provide challenging hiking and river observation opportunities. Due to deed restrictions and conservation easements, this area will always remain largely passive open space.

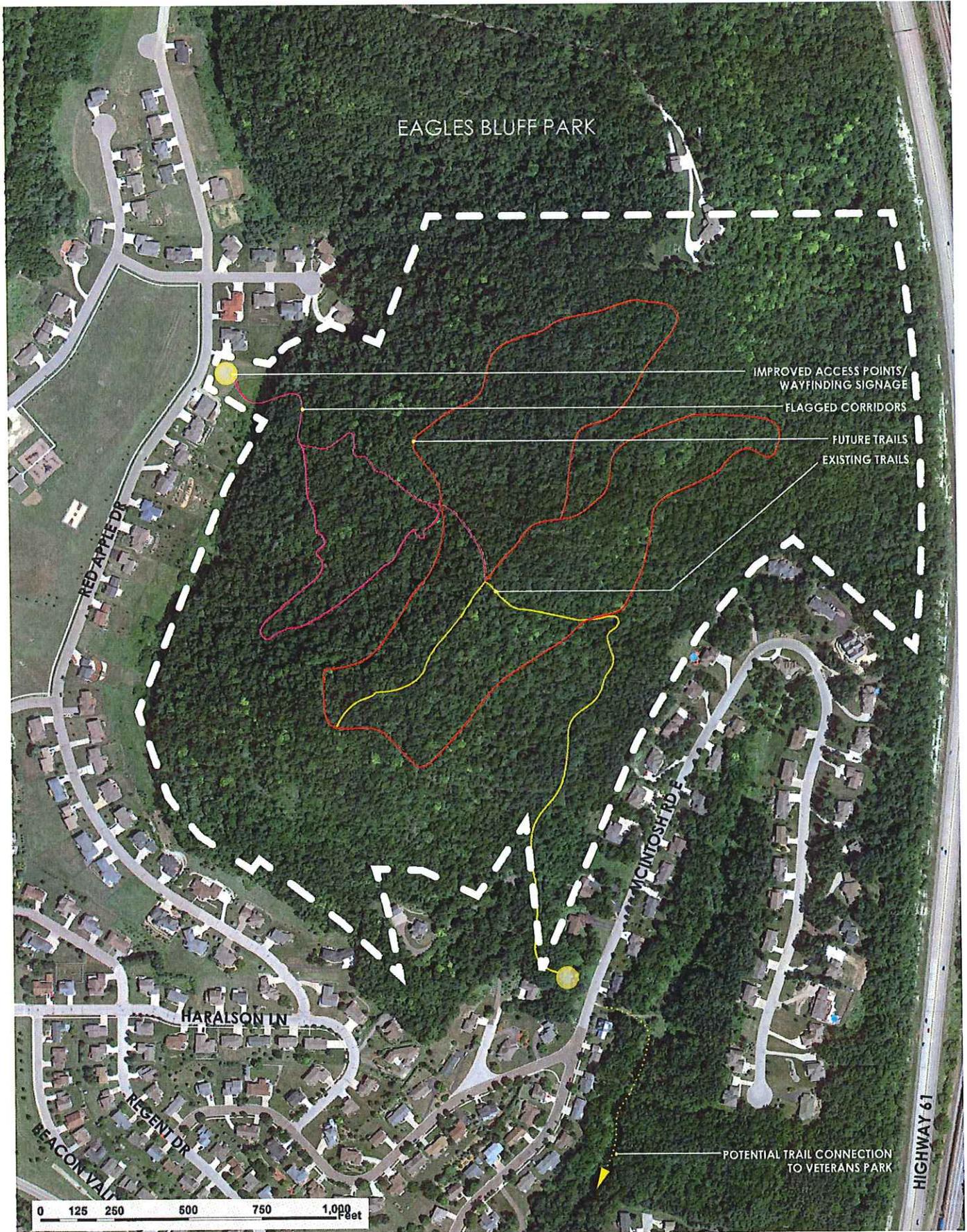
Minor improvements are proposed for the park. First, efforts should continue to improve trails throughout the property. Entrance areas along Red Apple Drive and McIntosh Road could be highlighted by added landscaping and a trail sign identifying the location, length, and required physical ability level of specific trail segments. Additionally, a trail should be constructed between Eagles Bluff Park and Veterans Park. Cross country ski trails should be established and maintained in the Eagles Bluff Park.

Picnic areas and scenic overlooks should be established in the upper reaches of the park.

NORTH END PARK

RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to extreme slope, the City owned park on the north end of the community is not proposed for significant development. It will remain as part of the community's public open space. Possibly in conjunction with adjoining property, the park could include walking trails, mountain biking trails and/or bike bump trails in the future. Establishing such trails would likely require obtaining easements over adjoining properties.



Eagles Bluff Park aerial



Elm Street Bikeway