

Business Item 2021-103

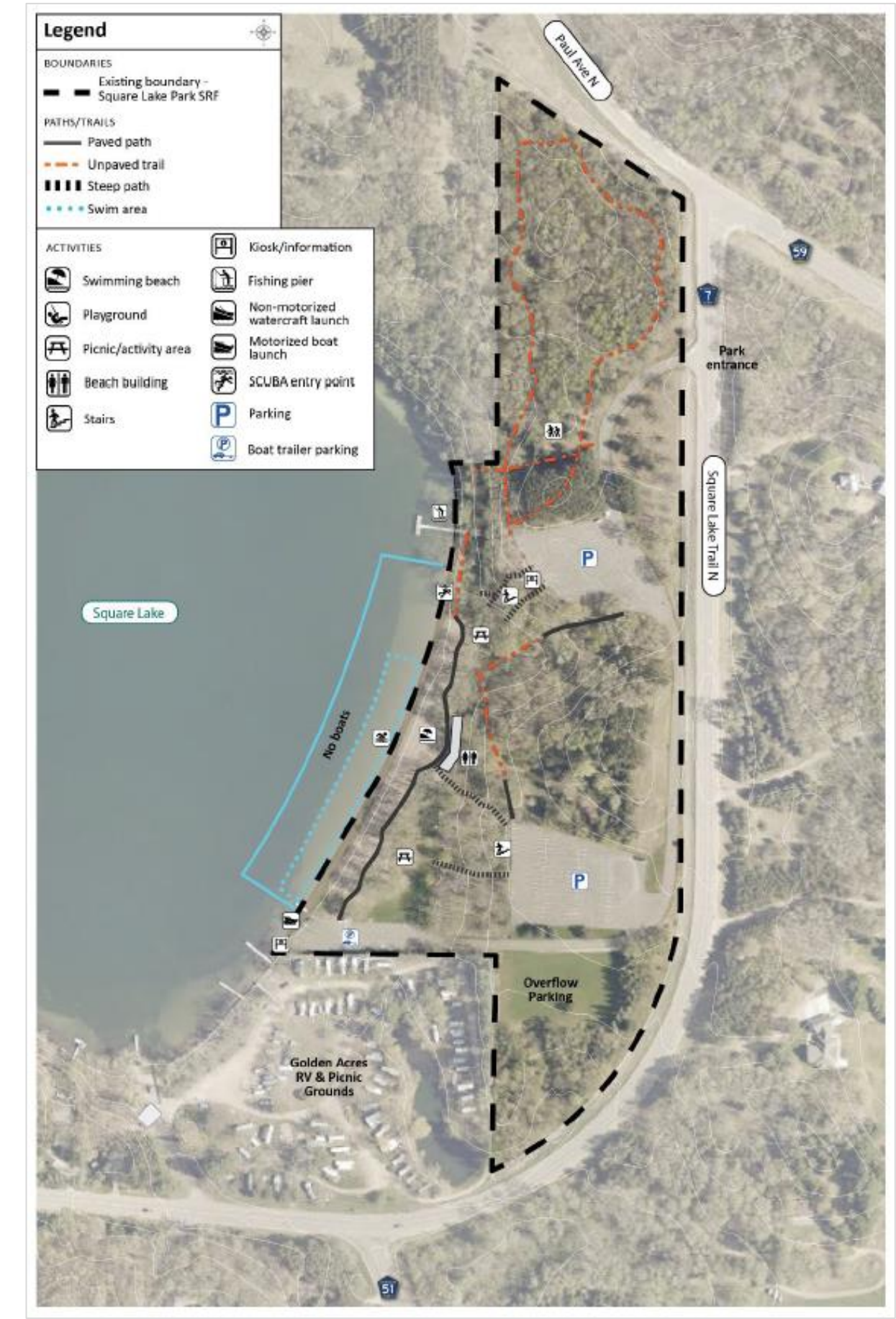
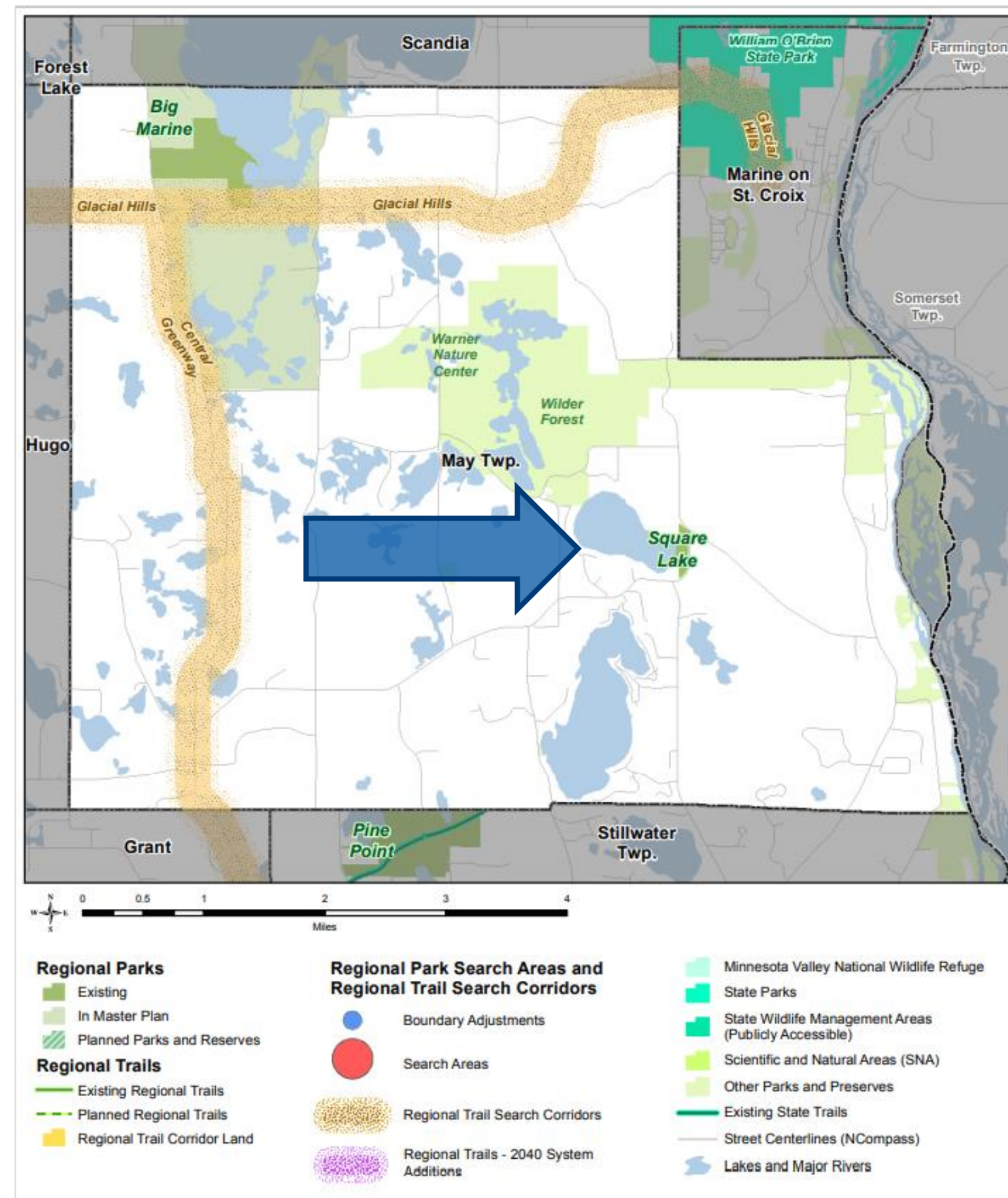
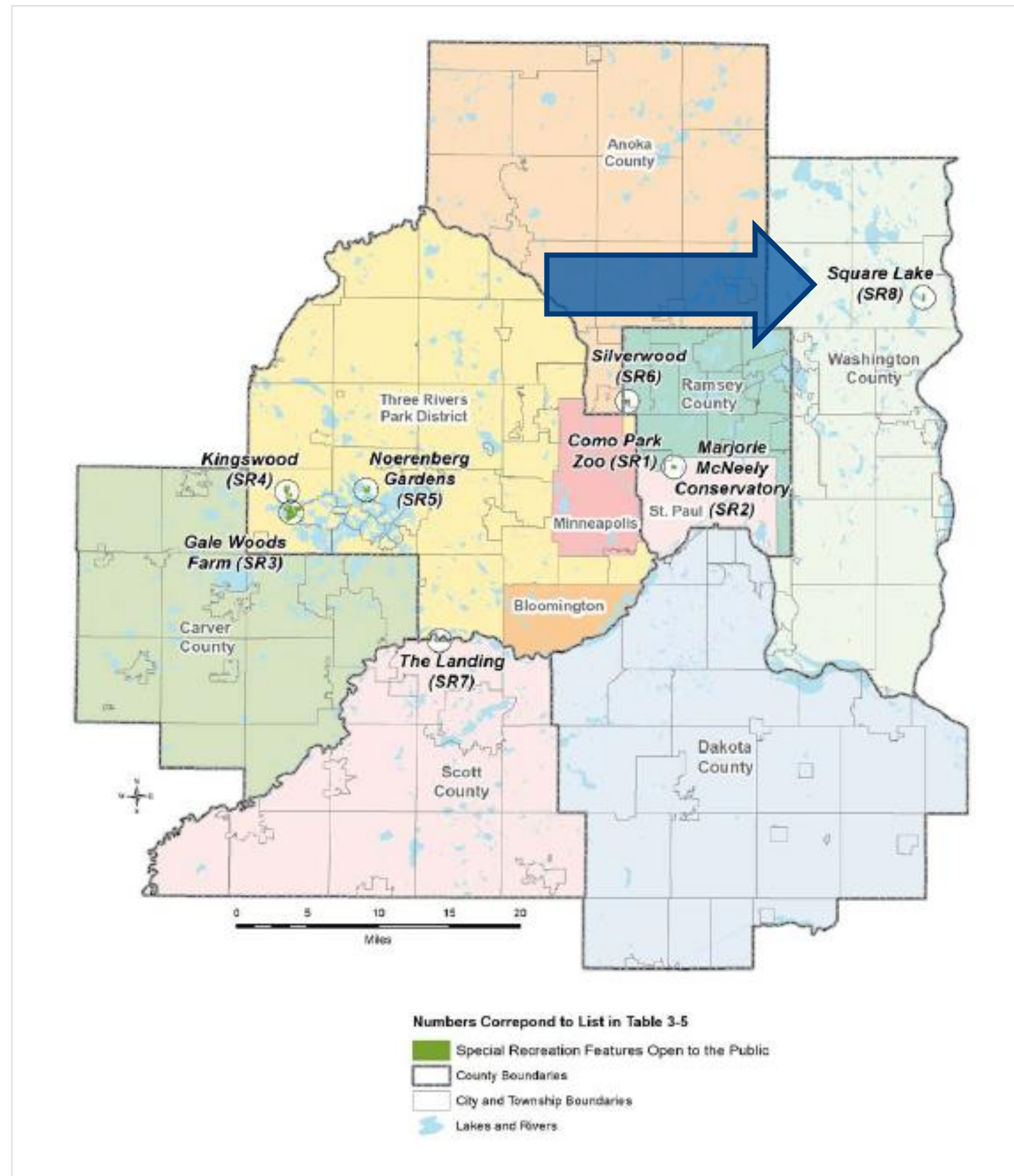
# Square Lake Special Recreation Feature Master Plan Washington County

May 17, 2021

Community Development Committee



# Square Lake Special Recreation Feature



# Partner and Public Engagement

## Technical Advisory Team

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Metropolitan Council
- Washington Conservation District
- Washington County Park and Open Space Commission
- Carnelian-Marine St. Croix Watershed District
- May Township
- Square Lake Homeowners Association
- Square Lake Film and Music Festival

## Engagement Tools

- Project website
- County newsletter
- Online engagement events
- Targeted stakeholder outreach
- Listening sessions and site visits with underserved populations

## Public Engagement Outcomes

- Protecting and enhancing water quality and clarity is a key priority
- Significant demand for improving non-motorized watercraft site amenities and programming
- Preservation of natural, scenic setting is desired
- Improvements are needed to better connect and access upper and lower areas of the park
- Crowding at the beach and high use of the lake impacts the park user experience
- People are interested in visiting the park more in non-summer months

# Equity Analysis

## Project Data

- Focus on engaging existing and potential park users with a 30-minute travel shed
- Disparities in Washington County park visitation included age, household income, educational attainment, and physical or mental ability
- Plan recognizes the impacts that past decisions have had on present-day inequitable outcomes

## Public Engagement and Participation

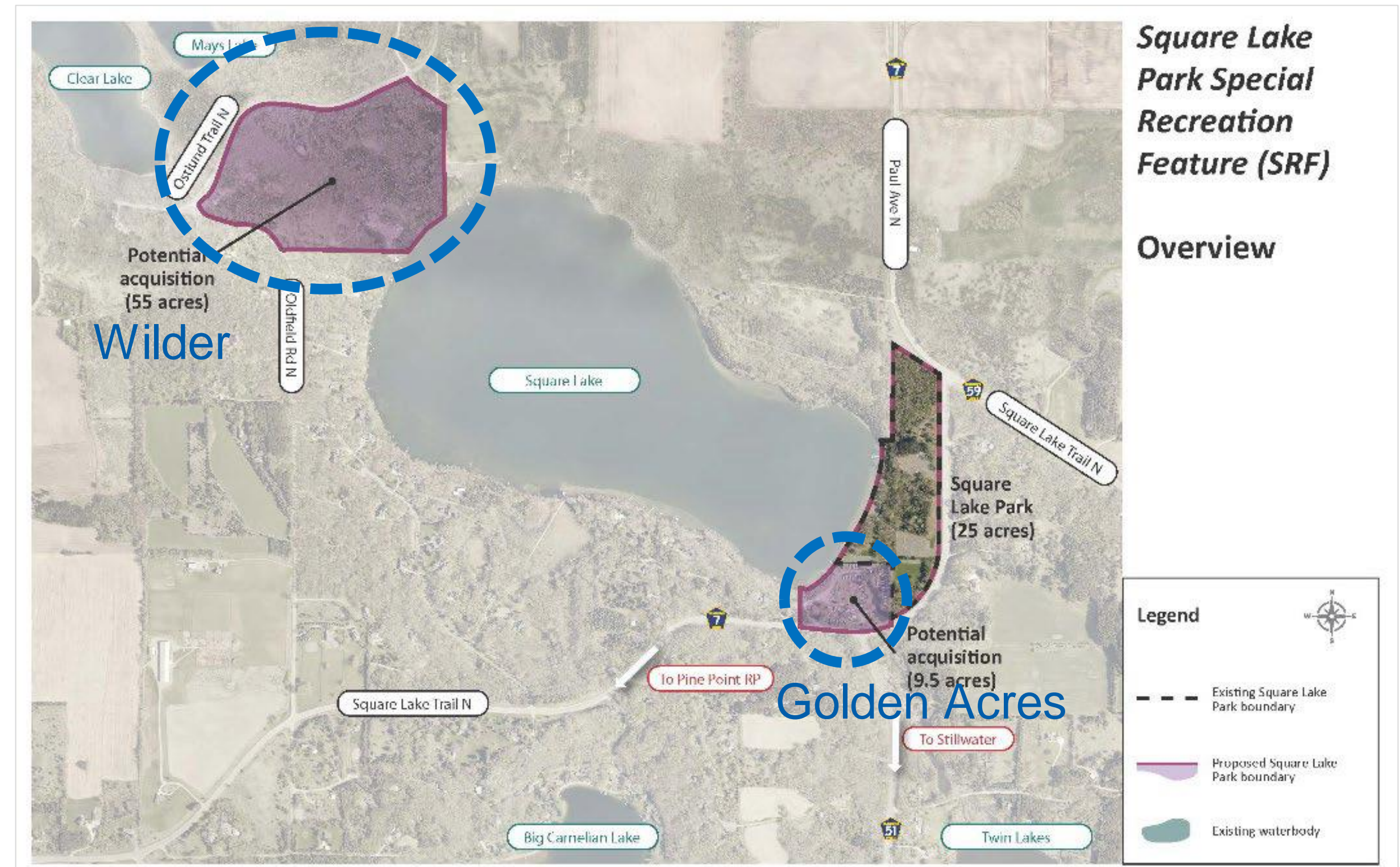
- Provide information in multiple ways with an emphasis on trying to make it easy and accessible for people to participate
- Supplemented engagement strategies with additional outreach
- 17 of 23 plan recommendations directly address input received by underserved populations

## Evaluation Summary

- Targeted engagement led to a better and more inclusive master plan
- Washington County was able to create relationships and built trust with community stakeholders
- Underserved groups were followed up with as the final draft plan was out for public comment
- Washington County will continue to engage the community on plan implementation

# Boundaries and Acquisition

- Two locations have been identified for potential acquisition
- Sites identified for their ability to address project goals, criteria for Square Lake's inclusion in the regional park system
- Golden Acres RV and Picnic Area
  - 9.5 acres immediately south of existing park
- Wilder Property Parcel
  - 55 acres on northwest shore of Square Lake



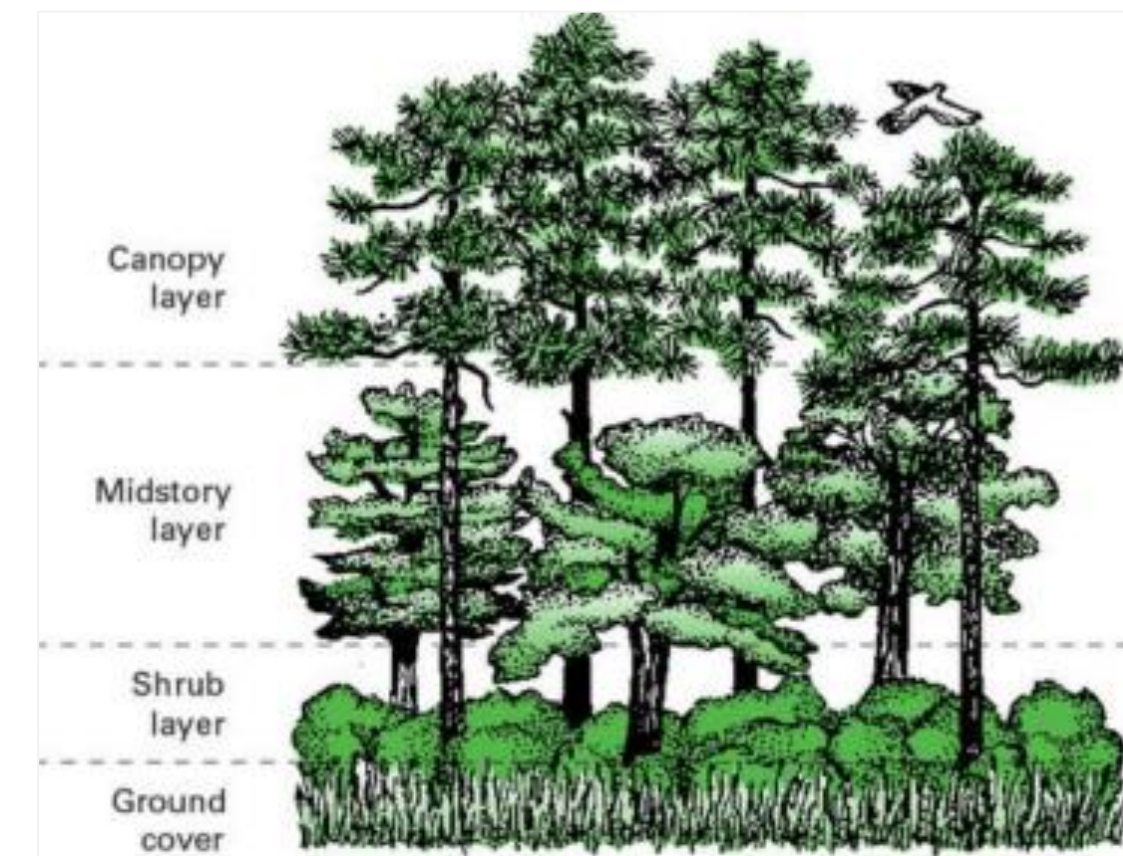
# Development Concept

- Enhance park's infrastructure to address stormwater runoff while enhancing park's ecological qualities
- Propose non-motorized watercraft launch and rental opportunities
- Also propose small group picnic shelter, fishing pier improvements, and expanded shoreline fishing amenities
- Renovate and expand beach building with ADA upgrades, access to facility from parking lots
- Restore shoreline
- Develop additional trails to provide more accessible connections, fitness loop



# Natural Resources

- Protecting the water quality of Square Lake is critical
- Upland areas of the park are dominated by mixed woodlands, planted pine stands and oak savanna
- Field surveys noted opportunities for oak savanna restoration, pine grove management, prairie restoration, shoreline restoration, and invasive species control
- An adaptive management approach is recommended



# Estimated Project Costs

- The Plan estimates:
  - \$ 1,760,804 in acquisition costs
  - \$ 8,696,116 in development and infrastructure costs
  - \$ 543,200 in natural resource management costs
  - \$ 2,711,434 in contingencies
- Total estimated costs are \$13,711,554
- Approval of master plan does not commit the Council to any funding at this time





# Rationale for Proposed Action

- The Square Lake Special Recreation Feature Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the:
  - *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*
    - Planning Strategy 1
  - Other Council policies



# Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Washington County's Square Lake Special Recreation Feature Master Plan



# Thank you

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