

Business Item 2021-103

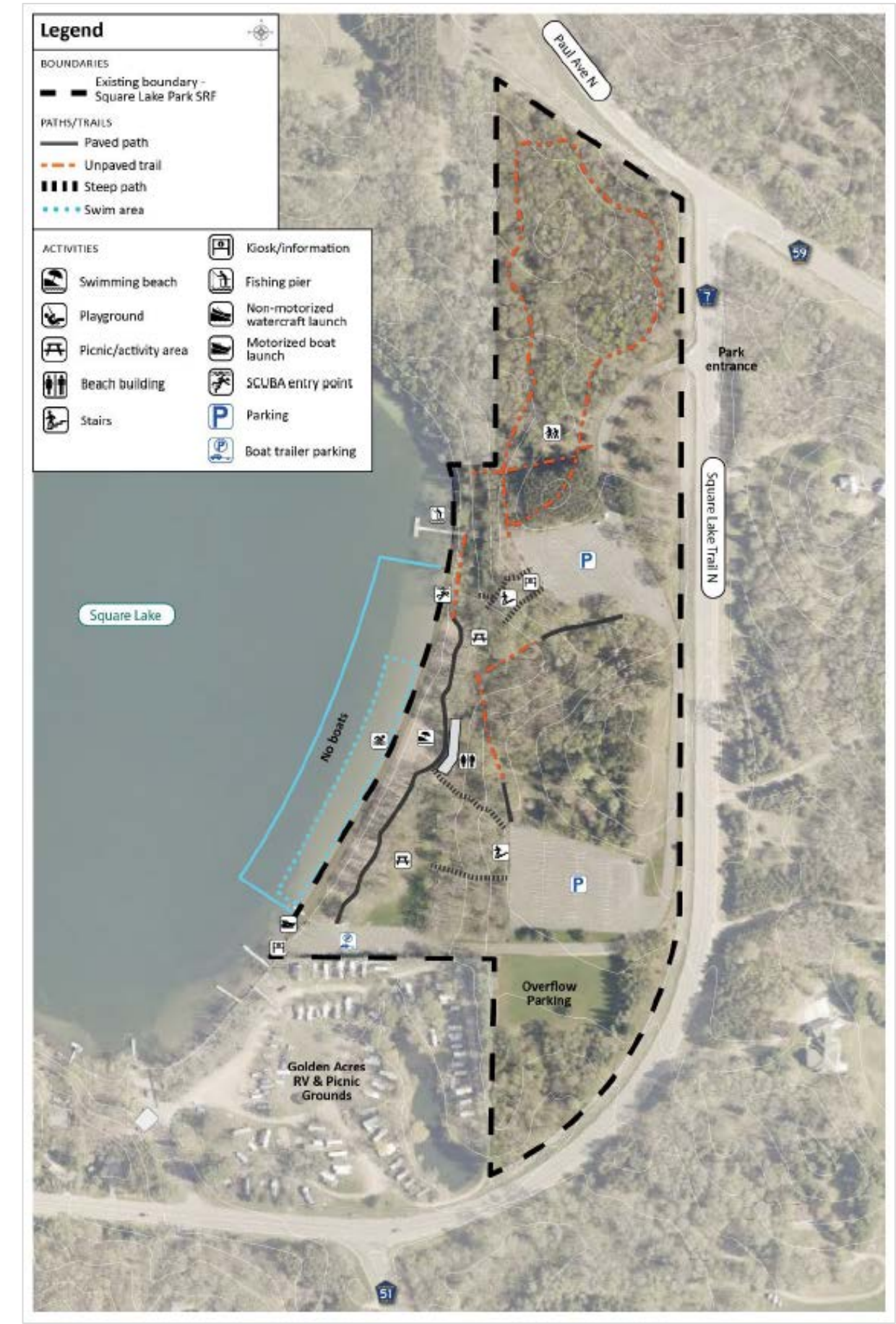
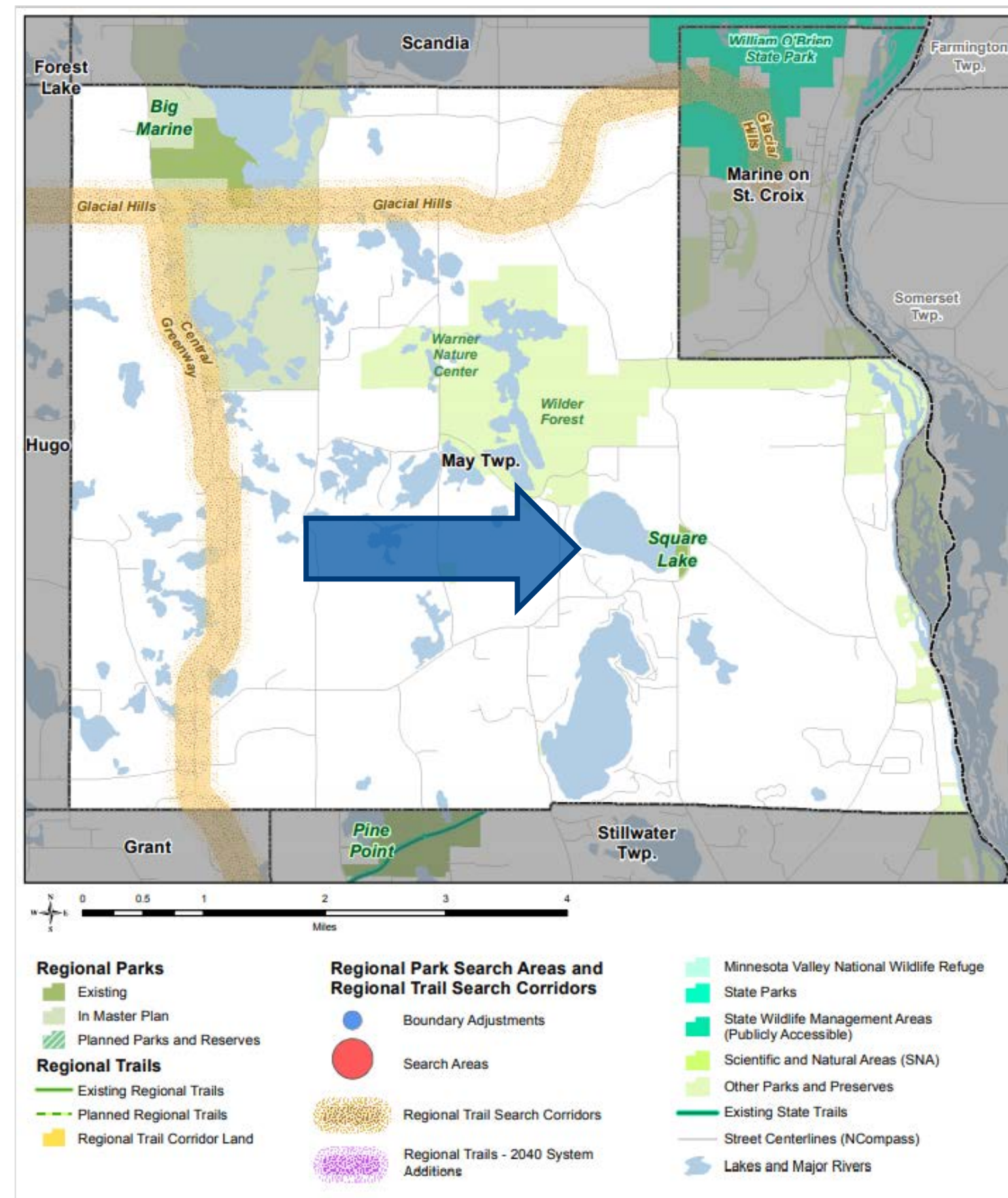
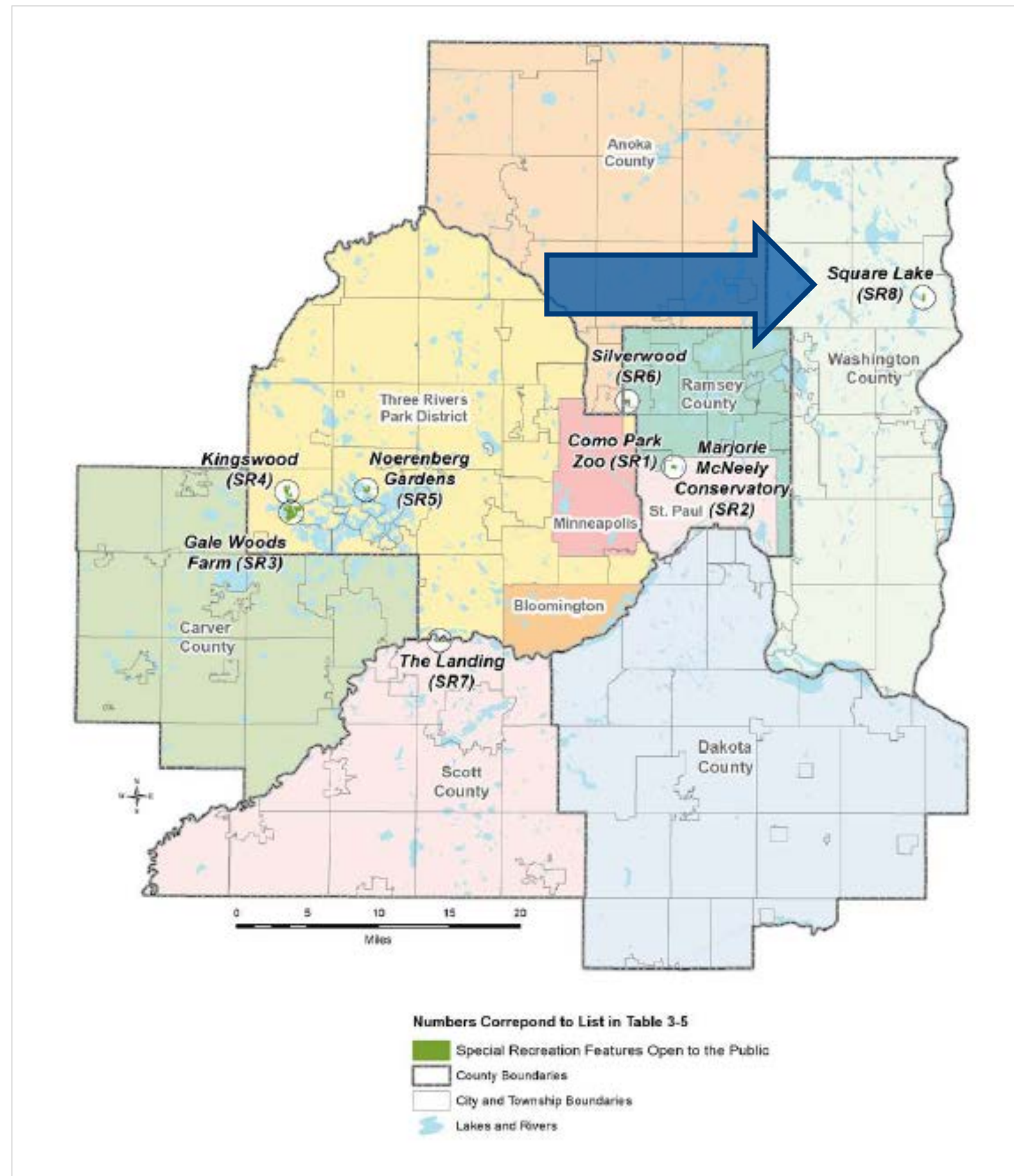
Square Lake Special Recreation Feature Master Plan Washington County

May 6, 2021

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



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

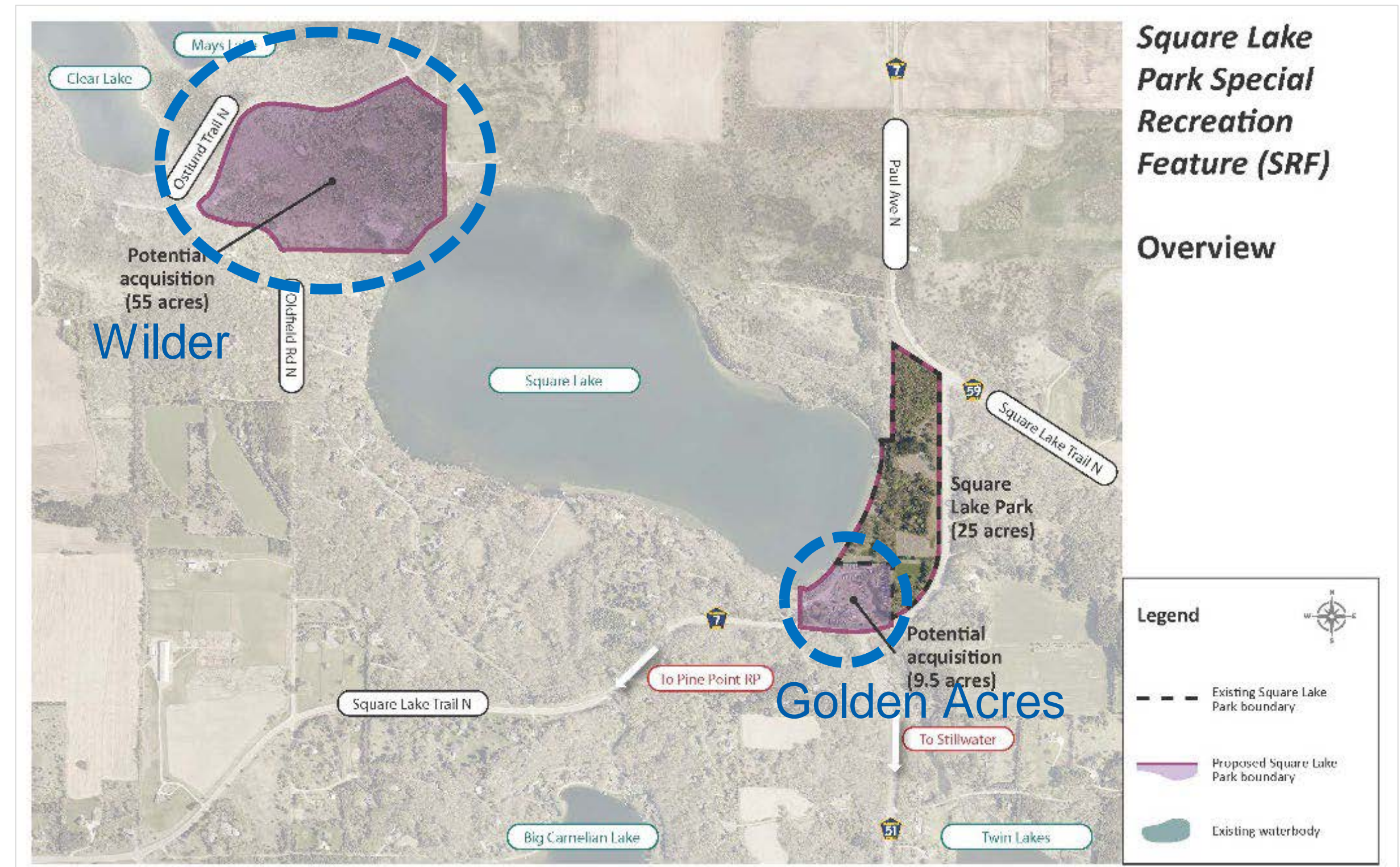
- Provide information in multiple ways with an emphasis on trying to make it easy and accessible for people to participate
- Supplemented engagement strategies with additional outreach
- 17 of 23 plan recommendations directly address input received by underserved populations

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



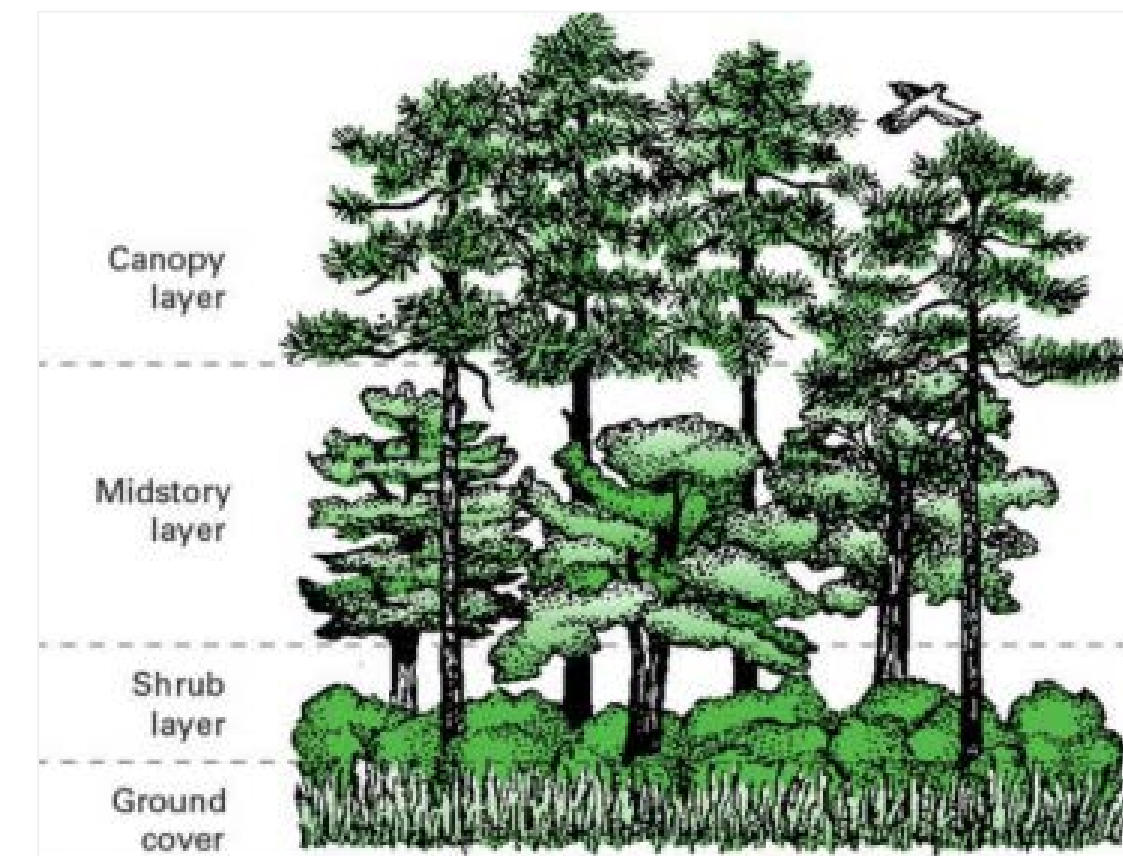
Development Concept

- 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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