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To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Southwest Area Plan Team, Angela Puerta
Date: May 1, 2026
Subject: Southwest Area Plan

Background

The Common Council directed Planning Division staff to began working on the Southwest Area Plan on October 8, 2024 (RES-24-00614). A broad community engagement effort was carried out with a focus on reaching Black, Indigenous, and People of Color residents who are often underrepresented in city processes. Community partners with deep relationships in these neighborhoods led outreach throughout 2025, using approaches such as doortodoor canvassing, distributing surveys, and gathering feedback at community meals, meetings, food pantries, and city events. The city also worked with a public engagement specialist to conduct multiple focus groups that informed the planning process

Staff provided an update of park-related recommendations and maps to the Board of Park Commissioners on December 10, 2025. Since then, Planning staff have coordinated with other agency staff to create a final Southwest Area Plan draft for review. Please see the project website for background material, public feedback summaries, and material from past meetings.

Highlights of Draft Parks-Related Actions

1. Prepare a master plan for Elver Park and Marlborough Park and consider access improvements
2. Complete individual Park Development Plans for the 30 mini and neighborhood parks within the Area to enhance recreation opportunities in Southwest Area Parks.

Partnership Recommendations

Initiatives led by partners outside the City, with the City providing support or contributing where appropriate.

1. Collaborate with the City of Fitchburg to:
    - Provide a connection between Allied Park and Belmar Hills Park.
    - Construct a Belmar Hills Park restroom that serves both Allied and Belmar Hills parks.
    - Construct a sidewalk along the western side of Marlborough Park to enhance connectivity and safe park access.
2. Partnership opportunities to create additional community gardens

Feedback received on Draft Parks Actions

1. Better park infrastructure for kids and young adults to play such as port fields, updated playgrounds, and programs that provide positive activities for young adults.
2. When adding bicycle connections through Elver Park limit any crossings with existing ski trails.
3. Better collaboration among municipalities to improve connection between parks (Fitchburg and Verona).
4. Community gardens create an additional safety net for neighbors who might need fresh produce.

Request to the Board of Park Commissioners

The final draft of the Southwest Area Plan has been referred to the Board of Park Commissioners for its review, with the Plan Commission as the lead. Any revisions the Board recommends should be included in a motion to the Plan Commission. Plan Commission, as the lead body, will review revisions recommended by all boards/committees/commissions and make a final recommendation to the Common Council.

Attachments

- PowerPoint Slides
- Southwest Area Plan Final DRAFT