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PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Parks and Open Space

Although corridors such as Manchester Road have served mainly as focal points for commercial development in suburbs around the St. Louis area, primary arterials have traditionally anchored community parks and open space amenities in communities around the country. Main streets passing through small towns, for example, often serve as the location for a main “City Park” or a town square including open space and seating areas. While few parks exist directly along Manchester Road, the five communities along the corridor boast a significant number of parks and open space amenities within a short distance of the road. However, limited connections (in terms of trails, greenways, and in some cases sidewalks) exist between the Manchester Road corridor and these amenities. The Appendix contains additional information concerning the existing conditions for Parks and Open Space along the Manchester Road corridor.

Key Recommendations for Parks and Open Space

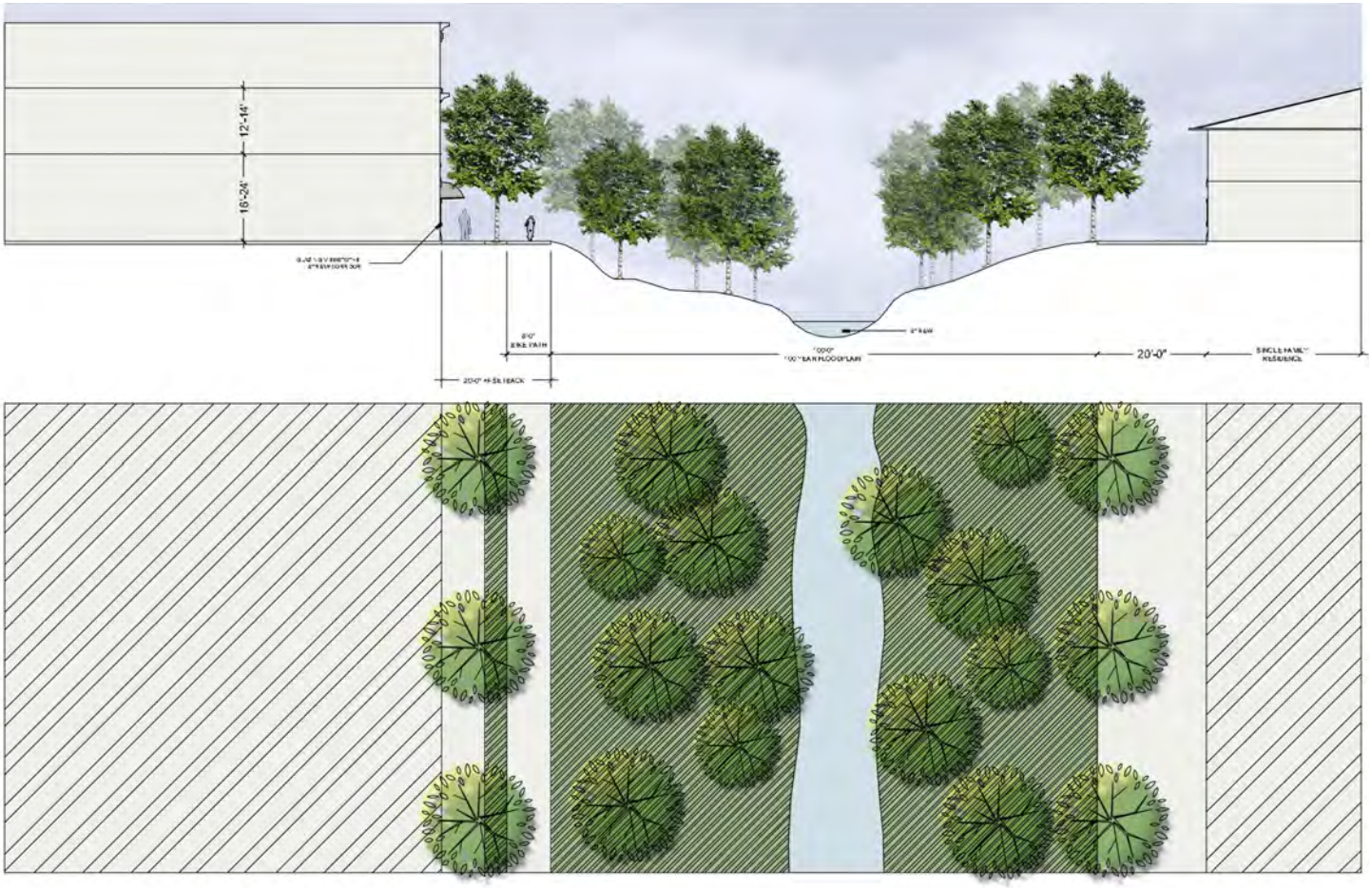
The Manchester Road Great Streets Master Plan proposes that the five communities work together to implement a comprehensive parks and civic spaces system along and near the corridor that effectively links shopping, office, and residential areas along Manchester Road with the area’s significant park amenities.

The recommended system includes a series of “greenways” that would provide recreational amenities for residents as well as improve drainage and stormwater management, improve habitat for local wildlife, increase biodiversity, and create gathering places for residents and visitors.

- The plan calls for the eastward extension of the existing trail along Route 100 in Wildwood through Ellisville, with an eventual connection with bike lanes and sidewalks flanking Manchester Road, between Hutchinson Road / Old State Road and Route 141.
- The bike lane sections along Manchester Road between Old State Road and Route 141 should include connections with the regional greenway and trail systems intersecting the corridor.
- The master plan recommends the development of small park areas within town center districts created along the Manchester Road corridor. These small parks may include fountains, various seating areas, small amphitheater areas designed to show movies or showcase local musicians or artists, and a variety of public art and aesthetic treatments. The town center parks may also include trees designed to provide shaded areas for pedestrians and to reduce the temperature of paved areas.
- The master plan recommends that every redevelopment parcel of 10 acres or more dedicate at least 5 percent of the total surface area to parks or civic spaces.
- The Wildwood Town Center should include a central park and additional small civic open spaces as the town center continues to develop.
- The City of Wildwood should work with MoDOT to return lands along Route 100 to a more natural, wooded, or semi-wooded pattern in keeping with the natural landscape of the area, provided that sufficient clear zones are maintained. Alternatively, MoDOT could pursue an active program of planting wildflowers within the right of way. The wildflowers would require annual mowing, but would add beauty to this stretch of Route 100 and decrease maintenance costs associated with more regular mowing cycles. Providing this kind of landscape buffer along Route 100 would provide higher levels of safety and comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists using the existing trail along either side of the highway. In addition, this landscaping strategy would provide a visual buffer between residential neighborhoods and the highway. Increased vegetative cover along the corridor would also reduce the heat island effect, provide shade, and create a more successful retail and residential community. The consultant team recommends that Wildwood work directly with MoDOT

to create distinctive landscaping along Route 100 to beautify this portion of the corridor and add to the community's inventory of open spaces.

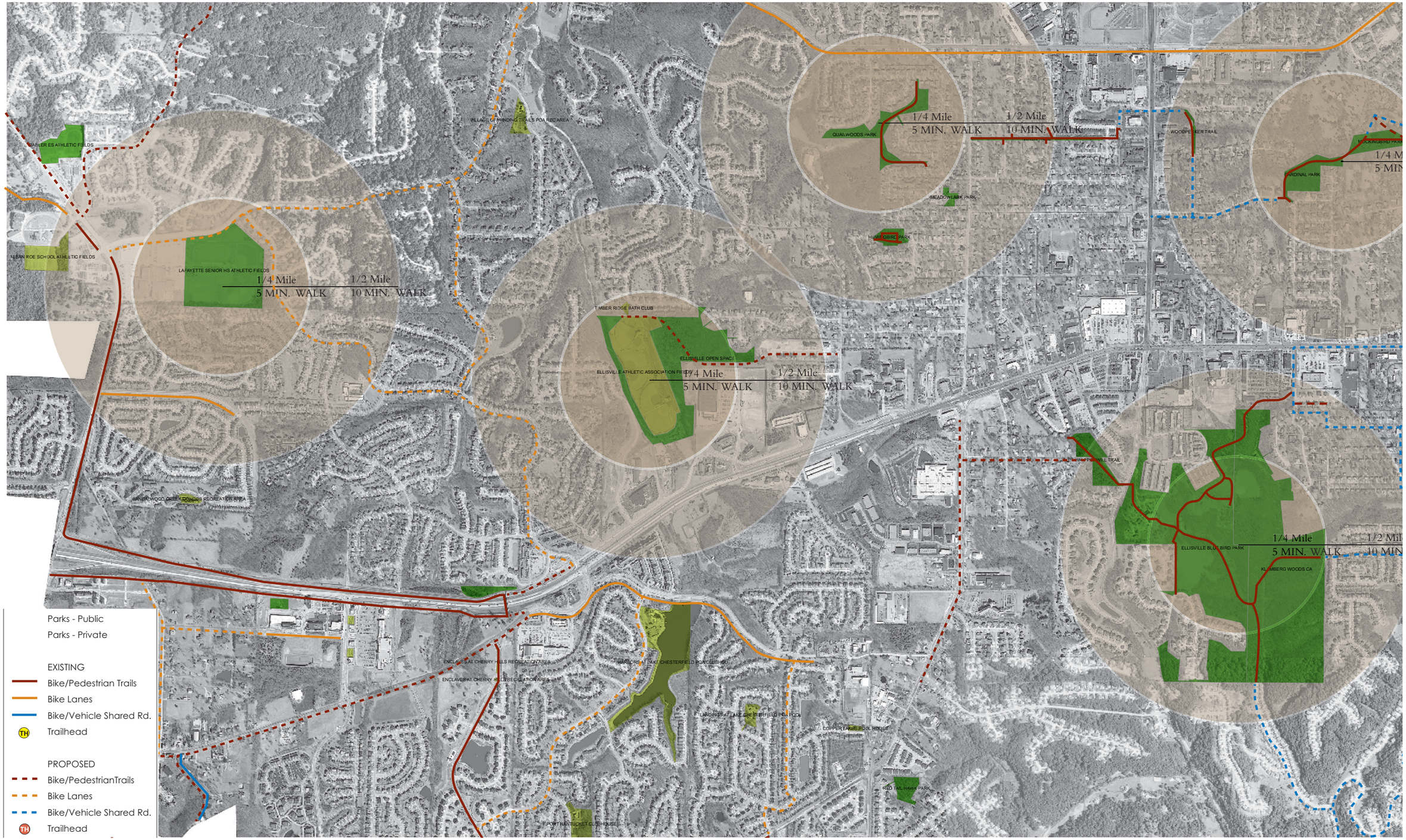
- The master plan specifically calls for the creation of new or improved greenways flanking the main streamways intersecting Manchester Road – Grand Glaize Creek and Fishpot Creek. Trails and sidewalks along either side of these streams will encourage walking and outdoor activity. The design of town centers and commercial and residential areas adjacent to the streams should encourage linking these uses with the creeks, rather than flanking the streams with backdoors, service entryways, and dumpster areas. Providing additional buffer from these streams (a minimum of 50 feet) will create additional greenspace along the streamways and simultaneously improve the ability of the streams to accommodate stormwater flows during peak events.
- The consultant team recommends that the communities designate all floodplain areas within the study area as either publicly or privately owned open space. Constructing buildings in floodplain areas contributes to flooding risks in the community as a whole and detracts from the role of floodplain areas as drainageways for creeks and streams.
- The master plan recommends that the communities provide for trails for bicycling and walking along the streamway corridors, in accordance with many of the previously completed parks and open space master plans in the five communities.
- The communities along and near Manchester Road have significant opportunities to create a system of trails and open space connections on a larger scale, serving the larger West County area. The figure on the following page illustrates potential locations for trails, trailheads, and associated amenities that would fully connect the Manchester Road corridor with larger regional parks and open spaces throughout the area. A full system of trails and greenways would connect the full range of parks within the five communities.
- Trailheads represent an important amenity serving the Manchester Road corridor and provide access from the higher density development areas along the corridor to the many park and civic spaces located to the north and south, with access provided by trail. The communities should work to provide trailheads in or close to town center destinations in order to enhance connections between these community gathering places and major parks such as Bluebird Park and the state parks in the area. For example, a trailhead at the southern end of the town center oriented around Clarkson and Manchester Roads would connect the main street and associated residential and commercial neighborhoods in the area with Bluebird Park to the south and east.
- Trailheads should feature prominent signage to guide visitors and residents to trails and destinations in the area as well as restroom facilities and shaded areas for drop-off and pick-up. Communities around the country have also begun to install bike locker facilities at trailhead locations that provide space for residents to temporarily store bicycles or personal possessions as part of their visit to a greenway or trail area.
- The Manchester Athletic Association (MAA) property in Manchester includes floodplain along Grand Glaize Creek. A potential relocation of the MAA to another location in the area could free up additional land for redevelopment closer to Manchester Road and provide additional open space areas along Grand Glaize Creek. The Athletic Association would need to coordinate with adjacent property owners and the City of Manchester to facilitate a redevelopment involving the relocation of the MAA.



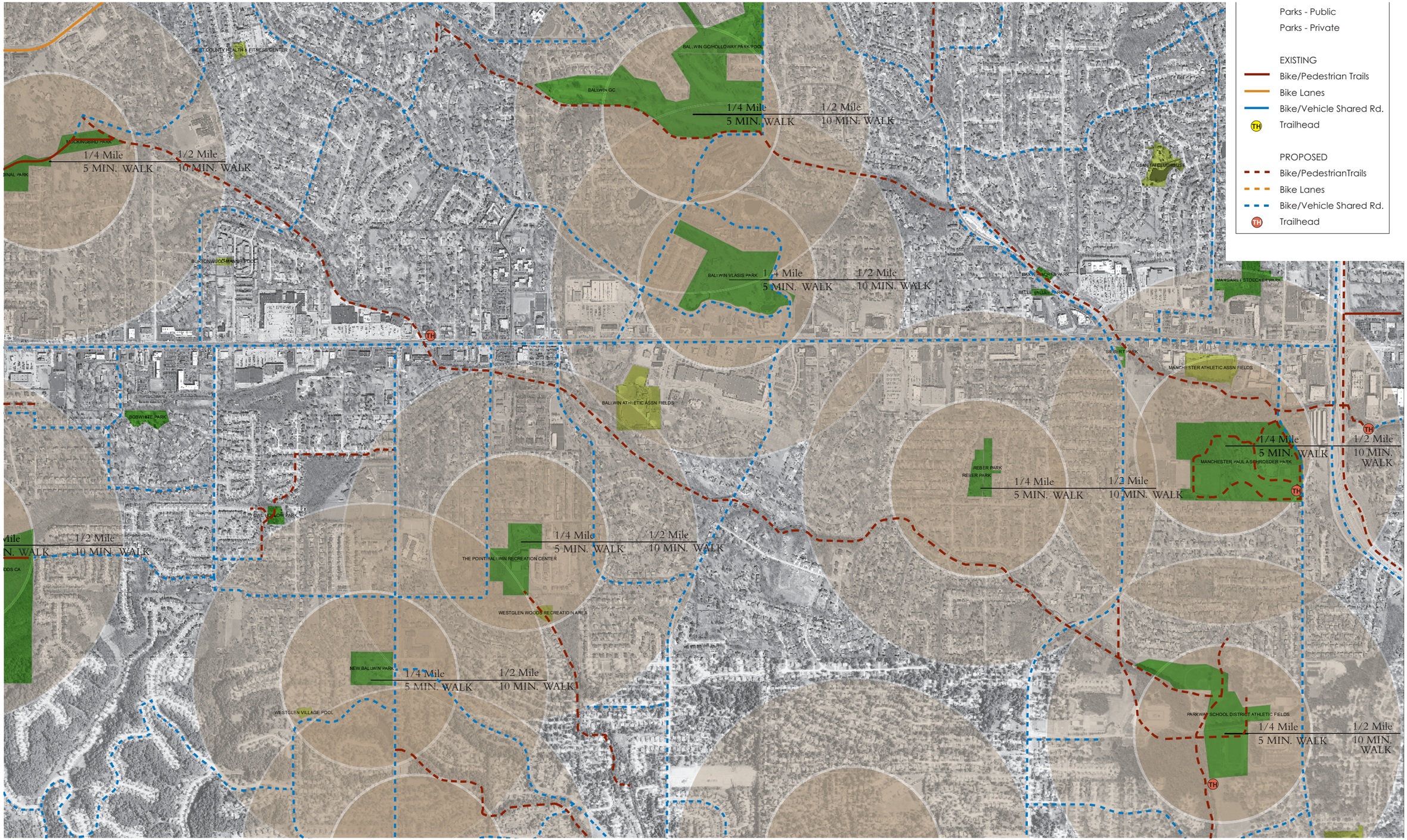
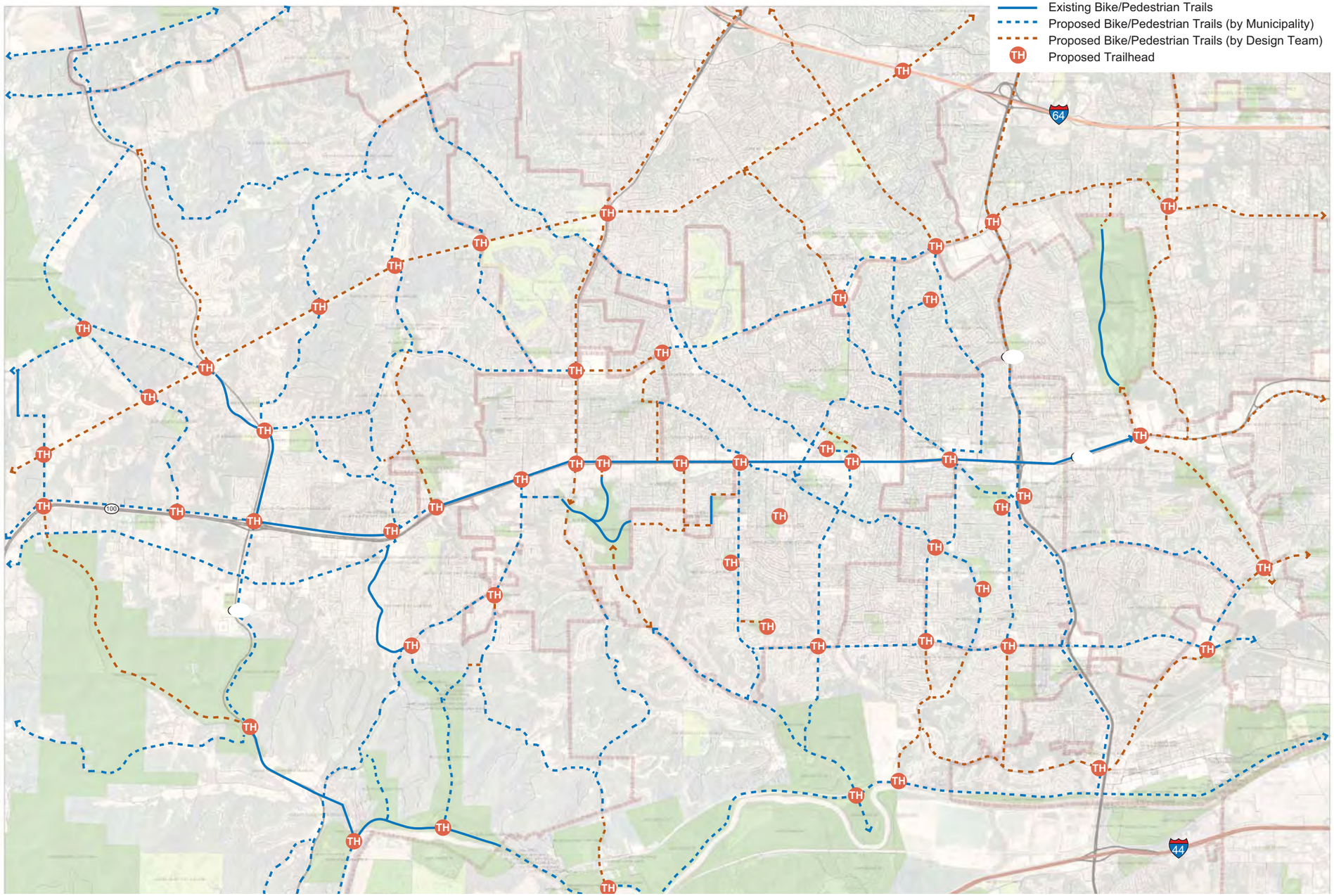
The diagram above depicts the potential design for streamway corridors located along or near Manchester Road. The design of these corridors should provide sufficient space for recreation along trails and sidewalks running parallel to streamways and should also provide sufficient open space to absorb runoff and therefore reduce risks from flooding.

The integration of streamway corridors in the revitalization of the corridor study area will represent a key strategy in providing for parks and open space amenities along the corridor over the next few decades.

Parks and Open Space - Western Segment



Parks and Open Space - Eastern Segment



Potential Bike and Pedestrian Trails