

Master Plan Purpose and Contents

The main focus of a Master Plan should be on clearly describing the regional-level purpose and compelling features of the park or trail, along with what makes it a place that people will want to go to time and again. Specifically describing exceptional features and how the park or trail will provide a high-quality outdoor experience not otherwise available in the area is especially encouraged. A Master Plan also helps the public and decision-makers understand what their long-term goals and commitments will be before capital investments are made.



Outcome: A qualified Unit Master Plan for an eligible facility is necessary to fully evaluate the facility’s regional suitability in line with the scoring criteria in Section III of this plan. A “Track One” evaluation, completed by the Evaluation Team, is based on those Section III criteria critical to vetting the regional outcomes of the Master Plan. The “Track Two” evaluation of the Master Plan gets into the specific and detailed plan requirements beyond the regional designation criteria, including factors related to feasibility, commitment of partners, reasonableness of planning assumptions, sustainability, etc. that are important for a project and facility to be successful. This evaluation may also factor into deciding the viability and timing of project funding should the facility achieve designation.

Plans or components that fail Track Two would be sent back to the agency for improvement. They would then be re-evaluated by the ETeam before final consideration by the Commission.

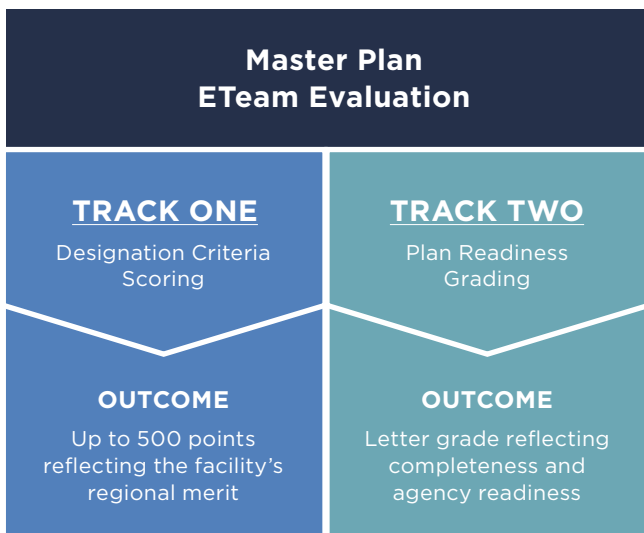


Figure IV-3: Two Track Master Plan Evaluation Process

MASTER PLAN COMPONENTS

For Track Two evaluation purposes, the components are grouped into the following required categories.

1. Proposer/Implementing Agency
2. Regional Significance Statement, Introduction/ Overview, Site Information
3. Setting, Regional Context
4. Vision, Trends, Public Values, Public Input/ Participation
5. Development Master Plan, Implementation Plan
6. Management Plan, Operational Sustainability Plan, Natural Resource Sustainability Plan, Programming, Marketing, Research and User Metrics

Component 1: Proposer/Implementing Agency

- This information is largely the same between the Designation Application and the Master Plan. The lead applicant organization must be clearly defined as either a City or County in Greater Minnesota. There can be more than one city or county jointly partnering on a facility. Any joint, similarly qualified applicants must also be listed, along with official resolutions for each applicant.

Component 2: Regional Significance Statement, Introduction/Overview, and Site Information

- The regional significance statement is the agency's headline description of the facility. This should be concisely written so that an audience of reviewers, legislators, marketers, and users can quickly understand the purpose, highlights, and regional nature of the facility. Think in terms of a short "high-level view" or "elevator speech".
- An introductory overview of the facility should expand on the regional significance statement to provide broad details on the amenities, targeted users, programming, history, and future growth of the facility. Think in terms of a "ground-level view".
- Specific site information, including maps and pictures, should clearly define the current and potential future boundaries, natural land forms and other physical characteristics, development status, current and future amenities, site limitations, and other conditions affecting acquisition or development.

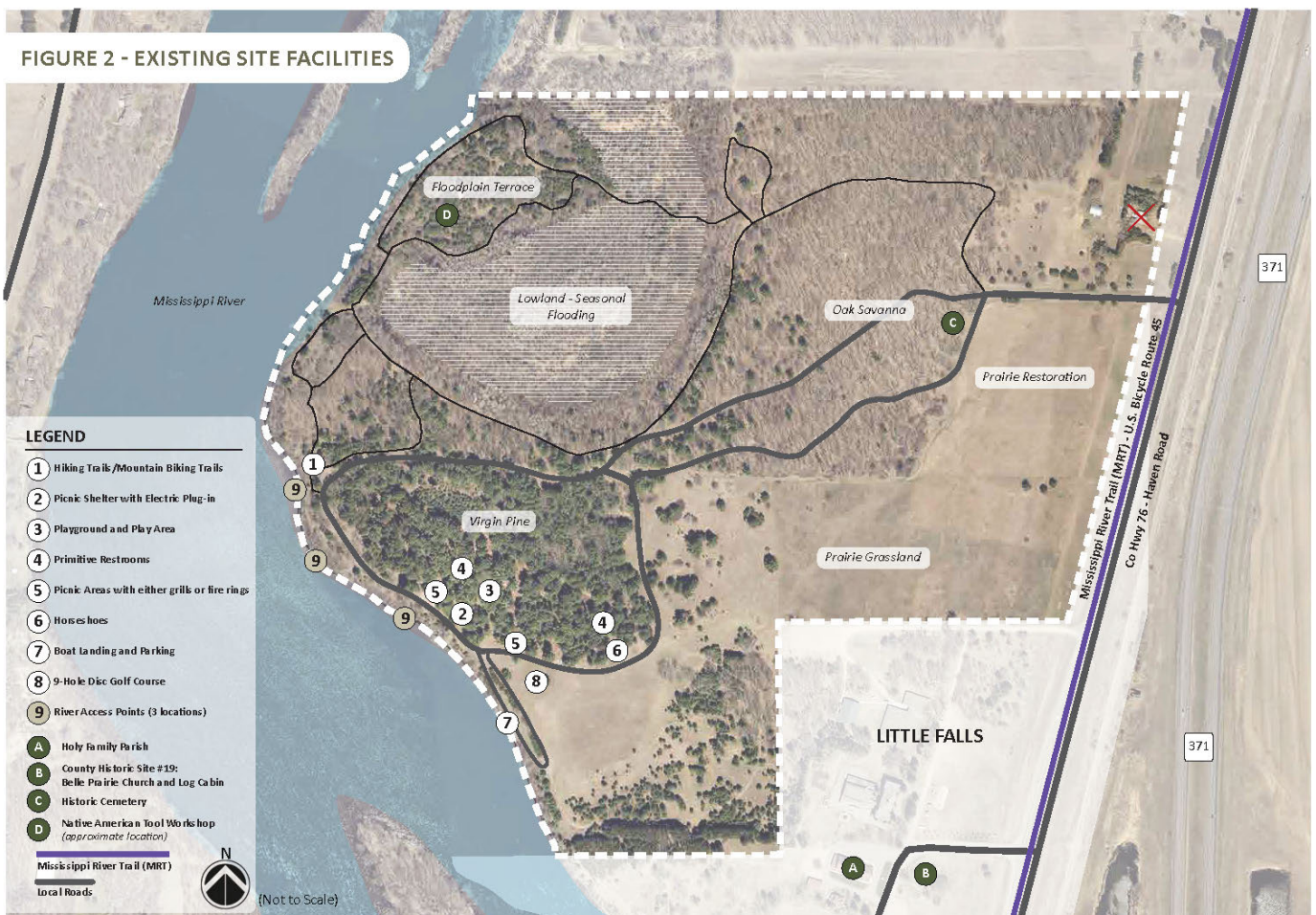


Figure IV-4: Sample Site Map

Component 3: Setting and Regional Context

- Describe the location of the site, whether it is part of a city or county system, and adjacent land use and transportation patterns or systems.
- A regional context analysis should include maps and descriptions of other federal, state, regional, potentially regional, and significant local recreation facilities within at least a 30-mile radius (preferably more). Show how this facility fits in to the outdoor recreation mix in your region, including an analysis of each facility's notable amenities and how the proposed facility would complement or duplicate those amenities. See Section II for guidance on regional indicators.

Carefully consider the regional background and indicators contained in Section II when developing the regional context in this component or the trends in the next component.

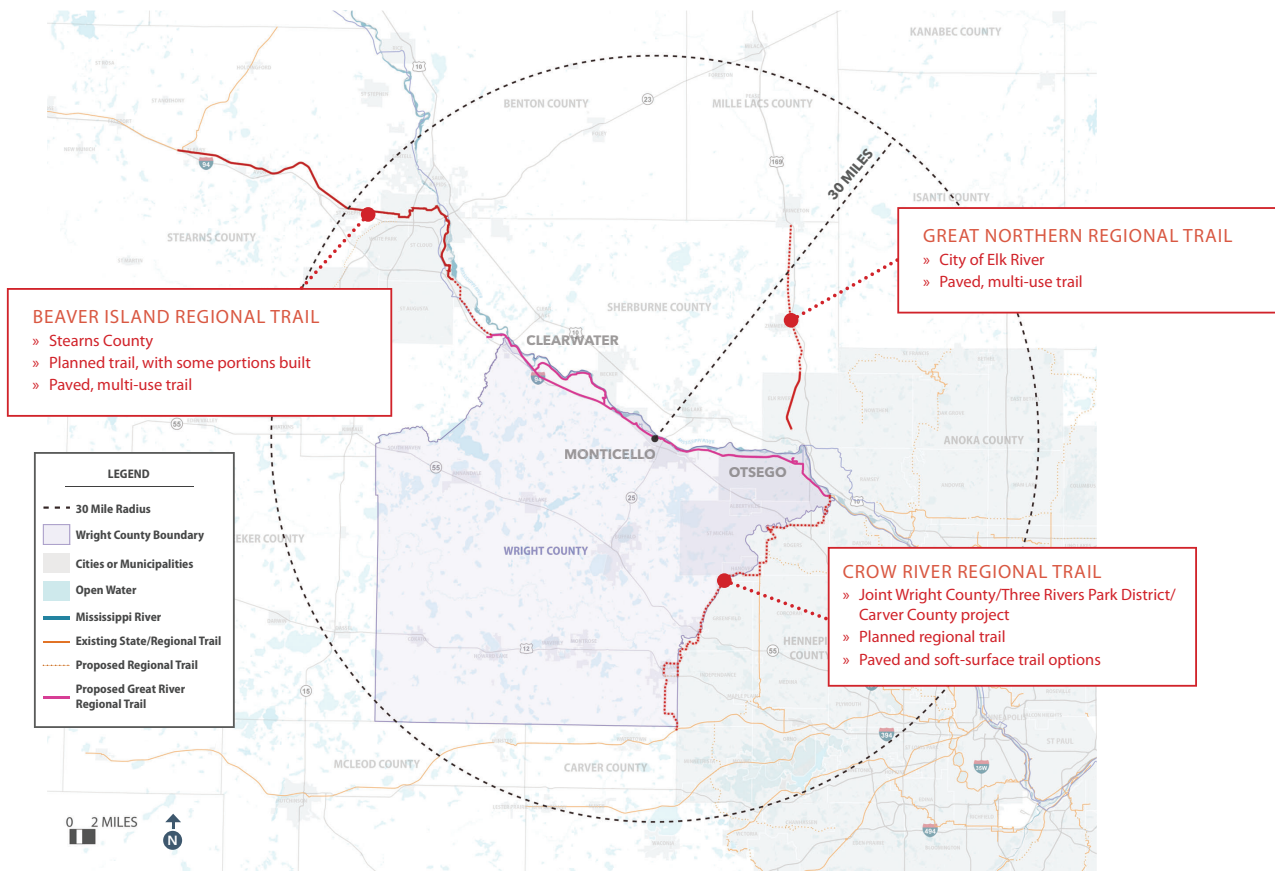


FIGURE 1. REGIONAL TRAILS CONTEXT MAP

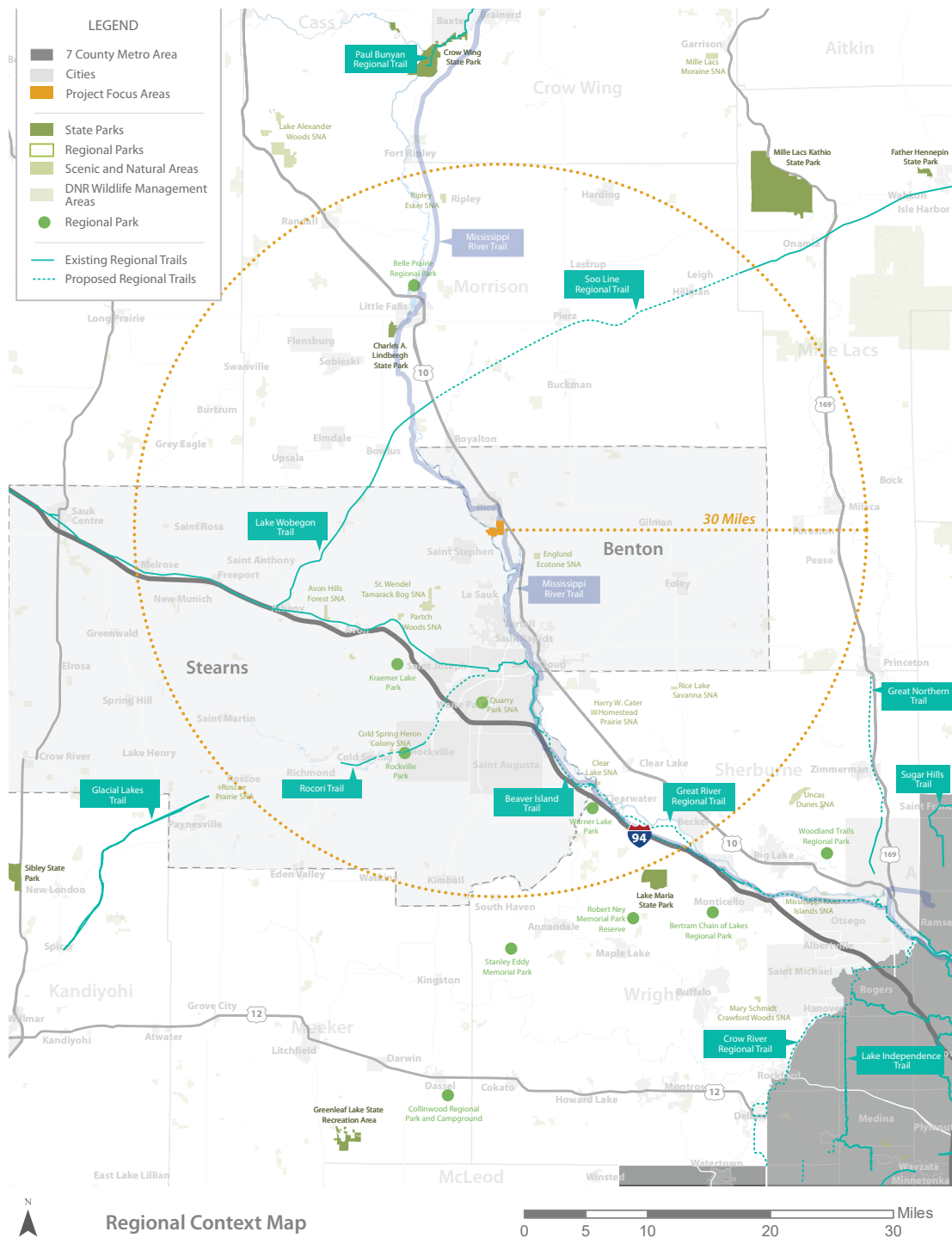


Figure IV-6: Sample Regional Park Context Analysis

Component 4: Vision, Trends, Public Health Values and Public Engagement

- This section summarizes the public input, demographics, recreational trends, public values and economic opportunities that influence a defined vision for the facility – the WHY of the facility story. As such, a clearly defined, concise vision that defines the “why” is important.
- Data should support a regional story as defined in Section II of this document. Demographic, economic, public health values, recreational trend data and public engagement outcomes all work together to create a regional base story in support of a particular facility’s regional impact. It will be rare that any one agency has a full complement of data across all areas. As long as there is a significant foundation of public engagement to support the regional story and all areas are addressed to the best of the applicant’s ability, weakness in one or two data areas will not be discounted against this entire component.
- Recreation trends should be supported primarily by data with a reasonable connection to the proposed facility. For instance, a nationwide study of trail users may be relevant only if there is some form of reasonably current local or regional data that is included in the study or if narrow local data can be sufficiently interpreted to mimic the larger study’s findings. The Commission supports and encourages local agency data collection efforts; however, it recognizes that those efforts may still be in development. Basic user data such as vehicle or trail counts, rental information, campsite use statistics, and more may be complemented by documented anecdotal data where those sources complement or support each other.
- Public health values are another way to focus the story of a particular facility towards its end user’s highest priority (including underserved and non-traditional users). A basic list of five values noted here can be prioritized and described through public engagement, with the resulting recreation amenities reflecting that priority.

Public Health Values

 - Promotes physical activity
 - Promotes healthy lifestyle
 - Connects all community members to the outdoors
 - Enhances mental health
 - Encourages social interaction
- A summary of the public engagement process and outcomes used in the creation of the Master Plan. Public engagement is critical for successfully understanding which audiences desire what amenities at various levels of demand. As such, public engagement processes that are well designed with the end in mind should invite broad participation using a variety of in-person and virtual methods and share the results with the public for confirmation. Documentation of engagement results should show both the concepts and stories heard, as well as the number and mix of users who participated. The Commission does not set a minimum number of people engaged to be a valid process. However, it is expected that the process used will be proactively inclusive of all potential user groups (including ethnic, racial, mobility- and economically-challenged and other underserved communities), listen and respond carefully, and achieve broad and significant response volume.

Component 5: Development Master Plan and Implementation Plan

- The acquisition and development master plan or concept should describe proposed features/development on two levels. An overview of the proposed features should create a clear “WHAT” to support the vision’s “WHY”. This will typically include a narrative description, development concept maps, aerial photography and other supporting graphics.
- Development details for specific amenities should include a basic concept drawing or pictures, brief narrative descriptions, site plans, and other data to support the use, recreational value and cost of the existing or proposed item, area or trail segment.
- Accessibility must be addressed in the development master plan by addressing how a proposed design will meet accessibility standards and the needs of all users. Applicants must demonstrate an understanding and commitment to meeting and exceeding minimal accessibility requirements. Detailed design and construction-level drawings are not required.
- Implementation plans describe the implementation strategy and development priorities. A clear strategy for which components or use areas are the top priority should be outlined in narrative or some similar format. A variety of realistic alternative funding sources must be identified, as Legacy funding cannot and should not be the only funding source for a particular facility.
- All amenities slated for improvement are typically grouped into phases, which may be by short/medium/long term approach, by specified timelines, or some other system that supports the implementation strategy. Maps may depict the phasing graphically.
- A phased budget, broken down by implementation phase with a cost estimate for all proposed improvements, needs to be included. Cost estimates are based on a Master Plan-level professional evaluation, supported by the development details for each particular item.
- The Commission recognizes that the actual order of construction, detailed plans and cost estimates will likely vary once projects are assembled into funding proposals. As long as there is consistency and reasonable,

professional support for the estimates provided, the plan can support the funding application cycle. Master Plans do not need to be updated annually or on short cycles simply to reflect changes in phasing or cost estimates that occur in the natural project development process.



Figure IV-7: Sample Development Concept

Component 6: Management, Operational Sustainability, Natural Resource Sustainability, Programming, and Marketing Plans, and Research and User Metrics

- A joint management plan for the facility should clarify roles and responsibilities for construction, maintenance, programming and all other master plan components. In jointly operated or developed facilities, this information is particularly critical and must be supported by a formal agreement, which can be in joint powers agreement, memorandum, resolution, or other form that is officially adopted by the relevant party's governing bodies. Similarly, any rules, regulations or ordinances affecting the site should be described.
- An operational sustainability plan and budget should provide a reasonable basis for maintenance and operations costs and sources of funding at a Master Plan level. That basis may be derived based on past agency experience, professional analysis or similar assessment. In addition to listing current management and operation expenses, the expected increase in operating expenses associated with the implementation of each development phase (or some similar benchmarking) should be presented.
- The natural resources sustainability plan should show that the agency understands the unique natural resources in the facility and the challenges for managing them. This section should also describe the approach used to foster environmentally sustainable infrastructure design, construction or operations. Broad strategies for addressing the top priority challenges should be included in this section, with the costs included in either the capital Implementation Plan or the Management/Sustainability plan.
- Planning for programming will outline activities that will engage park or trail users and keep them coming back. "Connecting People to the Outdoors" is a pillar in the 25-Year Legacy Plan and is taken seriously. Programming is critical to proactively attracting a broad spectrum of users your facility, including new, non-traditional, and marginalized users that have been historically underserved. Cost estimates and funding sources (including programming revenue) must be included.
- Marketing plans outline the various marketing, advertising and outreach strategies and partnerships that will be used to ensure that local and regional users are made aware of the park or trail. Agencies are encouraged to explore both traditional (free and paid advertising, websites, tourism agency partnerships, etc.) and non-traditional (event partnerships, direct outreach to user groups, social media, etc.) approaches that have the realistic potential to achieve a regional level of use. Cost estimates and funding sources must be included.
- Research and user metrics are critical to understanding use patterns (quantitative) and user satisfaction (qualitative). Collecting and evaluating user metrics in outdoor recreation is a fairly new but developing area of interest that must be taken seriously for the purposes of future iterations of the master plan as well as supporting funding applications. Each facility will have opportunities to take part in GMRPTC system-wide data collection efforts and should provide a statement agreeing to participate. Describe any other local or joint research or data management initiatives the agency is planning to use for its own purposes. A timeline and process for evaluating the outcomes of the Master Plan itself should be outlined.

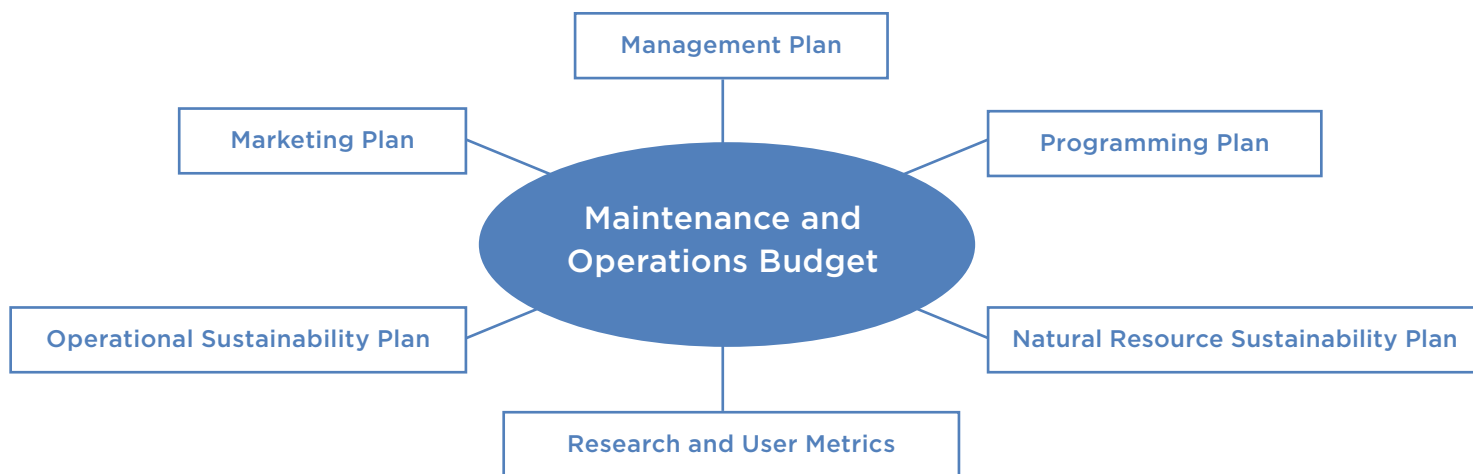


Figure IV-8: Management Plan Components and Budget



Stearns County Warner Lake Park

Wright County Stanley Eddy Park Reserve