

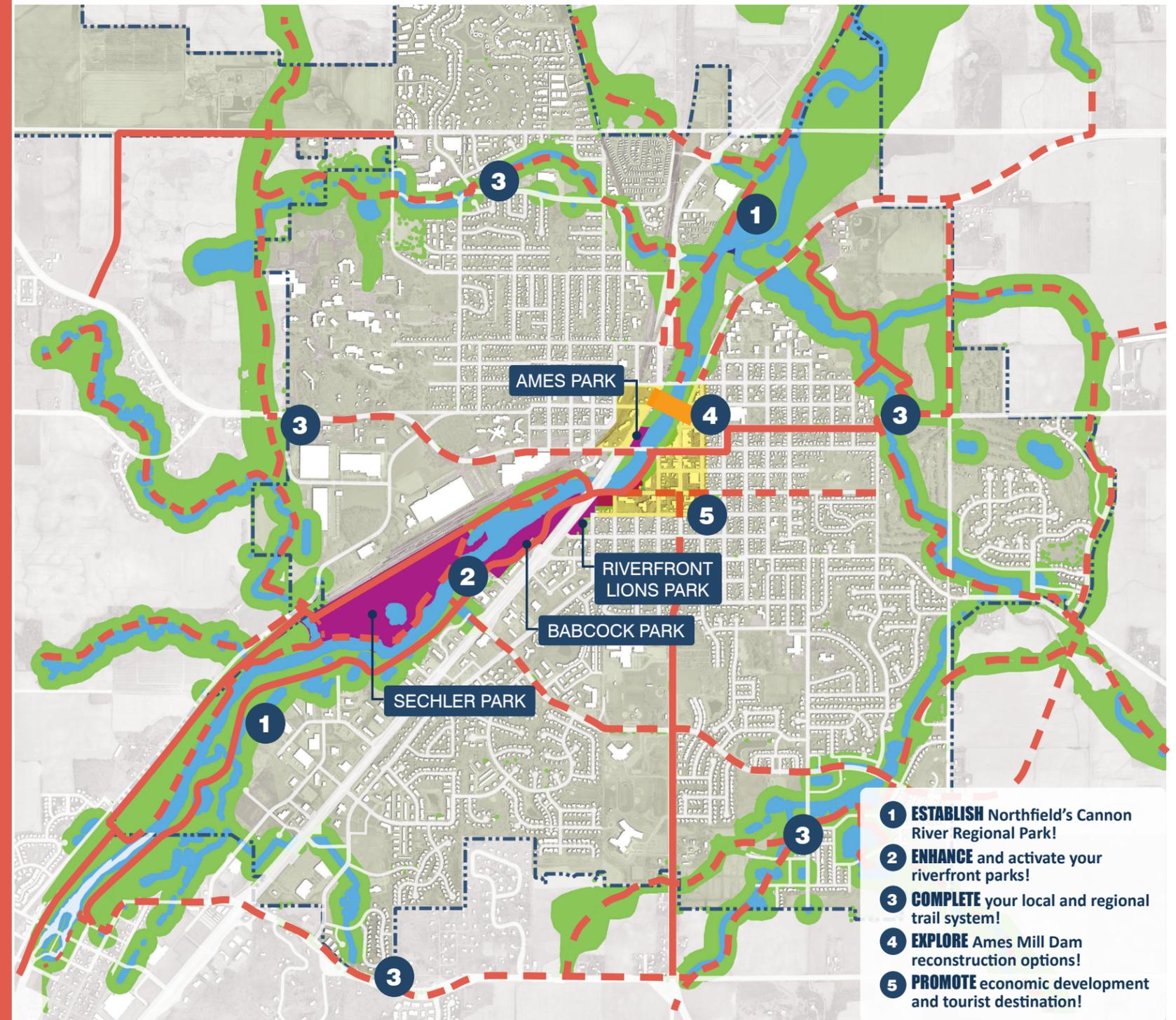
NORTHFIELD'S CANNON RIVER REGIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE

Existing City guiding documents and past studies outline vision, objectives and strategies around the value of the Cannon River as an economic engine and perhaps more importantly, as an essential component of Northfield's overall identity. Its scenic beauty, natural resources, and recreational opportunities support a variety of current and ongoing project initiatives that focus on how to better integrate the river into all aspects of community life.

The Council established a process to prepare a Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan that specifically addresses the following:

- » Preservation and conservation of the riverfront
- » Prioritization to align with the City Strategic Plan
- » Concept plans for strategic park improvements
- » Identified short term + long term projects and funding sources
- » Identification of stormwater management project priorities
- » Strategies for increased active use of the riverfront
- » Opportunities for business expansion in the corridor

The Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan sets the vision and identifies key implementation steps to be taken in the next 1-5 years.



ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR THE NORTHFIELD EXPERIENCE!

Five KEY ACTIONS emerged from the REAC planning process; each of which is fundamental to the TRANSFORMATION of Northfield's riverfront parks into an EXCITING CANNON RIVER REGIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE!

1 ESTABLISH



ESTABLISH NORTHFIELD'S CANNON RIVER REGIONAL PARK

Northfield is on the cusp of realizing a tremendous opportunity, to build on the four completed conceptual park diagrams as the basis for a unified Regional Park Master Plan. This will focus on environmental restoration, recreation and connectivity as the hallmarks for a local and regional park destination. With potential partners including nearby cities, Rice and Dakota Counties, and the Cannon River Watershed Partnership, Northfield is well-positioned to apply for formal designation as a Regional Park in Greater Minnesota.

Immediate Actions:

- » Begin the application process with the goal of submitting by the June 30th, 2021 deadline

2 ENHANCE



ENHANCE + ACTIVATE YOUR RIVERFRONT PARKS

Key to a successful application as an exciting, charismatic regional park are the unique natural features and panoply of recreational opportunities that create a true destination. The four city parks and urban area Riverwalk in Northfield have very distinct identities, based on location, context, and expressed park-user needs. With a common focus on the Cannon River, complemented by the historic downtown and other nearby assets, Northfield's riverfront parks are the cornerstone of a compelling new recreational and ecologically restored system. Developing funding and coordinated programming strategies will position the community for executing larger capital improvements and destination experiences.

Immediate Actions:

- » Develop all elements of Ames Park
- » Start planning for multi use building at Babcock Park
- » Resolve relocation of rodeo and dog-park from Babcock Park
- » Develop canoe/kayak water access

3 COMPLETE



COMPLETE YOUR LOCAL + REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM

As important as the distinct qualities found within the four city-owned parks are the connections between them and to the larger regional trail system. It's noteworthy that the system of trails in the Cannon Valley and beyond comprise one the most beautiful, diverse and extensive systems in the entire state. It is also of crucial importance that missing sidewalk and trail segments be completed as soon as possible. This will provide safe, universally accessible connections to surrounding neighborhoods and energize both additional local use and regional visits.

Immediate Actions:

- » Plan/install a comprehensive wayfinding system
- » Connect Ames Park to Sechler Park
- » Complete the Mill Towns State Trail
- » Add bike lanes to downtown bridges
- » Extend west-side riverwalk north of 2nd Street

4 EXPLORE



EXPLORE AMES MILL DAM RECONSTRUCTION OPTIONS

There is excitement building around the possibility that the Ames Mill Dam might play an important role in reinforcing the health, continuity and variety of the Cannon River State Water Trail. Designated as a wild and scenic river, the Cannon still suffers from environmental degradation and human intervention. A reconstruction for the existing dam has the potential to be both a restorative feature and significant recreational regional attraction.

Immediate Actions:

- » Meet with dam owners, the DNR and other stakeholders to determine study process
- » Assess alternatives for the future of the dam
- » Apply for grant funding

5 PROMOTE



PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT + TOURIST DESTINATION

Northfield is a beautiful and inviting community, possessing attributes that many communities would love to have. The city has the opportunity to build on its successes and innate charm to become a year-round destination for recreation, nature, arts and culture. But, this effort is not simply a parks plan. It is also an economic development strategy that benefits both the local community and attracts a regional audience. Proposed park improvements must align with broader Regional Park Master Plan objectives.

Immediate Actions:

- » Explore incentives to improve river-side of downtown buildings
- » Work with one or more businesses as pilot projects
- » Apply for grant funding