

# **Agenda**

## **City of Plymouth Special City Council Meeting**

**Tuesday, August 8, 2006  
5:30 p.m.**

### **Meeting Rooms A & B**

1. Call to Order
2. Discuss park survey
3. Adjourn

**MEMO**  
**CITY OF PLYMOUTH**  
 3400 PLYMOUTH BOULEVARD, PLYMOUTH, MN 55447

DATE: August 3, 2006

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Diane Evans, Acting Director, Parks and Recreation 

SUBJECT: **SPECIAL MEETING AUGUST 8, 2006 – MEDICINE LAKE ROOM**

The City Council met with Dr. Bill Morris from Decision Resources on Thursday, July 27, at 6:30 p.m. A second meeting was scheduled to further discuss this issue when all Council could be present. The purpose of the meeting is to review the results of the survey questionnaire done by Decision Resources and Dr. Morris regarding a possible referendum dealing with parks and open space.

For your review I have attached the following;

- Executive summary of the findings from Dr. Morris
- Survey results
- Financial information from Mike Kohn
- Potential outline of a public information campaign
- Open Space informational packet example (1995)

The only hard deadline the City Council faces regarding this issue is notification of the county by September 15, if we wish to have a question on the November ballot.

DE/np

# DECISION RESOURCES, LTD.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *2006 City of Plymouth Referendum Communications Study*

### *Methodology:*

This study contains the results of a telephone survey of 400 randomly selected residents of the City of Plymouth. Survey responses were gathered by professional interviewers across the community between June 19<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The average interview took eight minutes. In general, random samples such as this yield results projectable to the entire universe of adult Plymouth residents within  $\pm$  5.0 percentage points in 95 out of 100 cases.

### *Key Findings:*

1. By a 77%-15% majority, residents support the purchase of open spaces and natural areas to complete the City's Greenway; but, only 13% strongly support this action. To fund the acquisition of open spaces, the typical adult resident would accept a \$1.64 per month or \$19.68 per year increase in his/her city property taxes. In fact, a moderately low 26% are unwilling to accept any tax increase for this purpose.
2. By a 73%-19% majority, residents support expanding purchasing land and developing parks and community playfields; a lower eight percent strongly support this proposal. To fund the expansion of parks and playfields, the typical resident would accept a \$1.38 per month or \$24.00 per year increase in city property taxes. This time 30% are unwilling to accept any tax increase for this purpose.
3. A \$7,000,000.00 bond referendum proposal to fund both the acquisition of open spaces for the Greenway and the expansion of parks and community playfields registers strong majority support at 72%-19%, with nine percent uncertain. The quick differential between the difference between strong support and total opposition is -4%, a small deficit indicative of a solid potential electoral success of this proposal. Supporters cite preservation of open space, good for community, reasonable cost, and benefits for children. Opponents point to already high taxes and lack of need.

Decision Resources, Ltd.  
 3128 Dean Court  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55416

City of Plymouth  
 Park Bond Study  
 FINAL JUNE 2006

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ of Decision Resources, Ltd., a polling firm located in Minneapolis. We've been retained by the City of Plymouth to speak with a random sample of residents about issues facing the city. This survey is being taken because your city representatives and staff are interested in your opinions and suggestions. I want to assure you that all individual responses will be held strictly confidential; only summaries of the entire sample will be reported. (DO NOT PAUSE)

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Approximately how many years have you lived in City of Plymouth? | LESS THAN TWO YEARS....6% |
|   | TWO TO FIVE YEARS.....15% |
|   | SIX TO TEN YEARS.....21%  |
|   | 11 TO 20 YEARS.....35%    |
|   | 21 TO 30 YEARS.....14%    |
|   | OVER THIRTY YEARS.....8%  |
|   | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0% |

Turning to parks and recreation....

I would like to read you a list of parks and recreation facilities in the City of Plymouth. First, please tell me if you or members of your household use that facility. Then for each one used, please rate that facility as excellent, good, only fair, or poor.

	NOT VIS	VIS EXC	VIS GOO	VIS FAI	VIS POO	DK/ REF
2. Small neighborhood parks?	24%	29%	43%	3%	1%	0%
3. Large community parks?	26%	31%	42%	1%	0%	1%
4. Community playfields?	49%	17%	31%	3%	0%	0%
5. Trails?	26%	31%	40%	2%	0%	0%

As you may know, the northwest corner of the city is the last portion of Plymouth to be developed. As the area is developed the City will need to provide parks and recreation facilities for new residents.

In order to provide these facilities, the City of Plymouth is considering a park referendum to fund acquisition of open space for the city's Greenway corridor. The Greenway would consist of a 2.5 mile corridor that preserves Plymouth's natural areas, trees and wetlands. The Greenway corridor will include a public trail that extends between Cheshire Lane on the east and Peony Lane on

If the referendum were successful, the owner of a \$350,000 home would see a property tax increase of \$2.25 per month, or \$27.00 per year for fifteen years. And, the owner of a \$500,000 home would have a tax increase of \$3.15 per month or \$37.90 per year for fifteen years.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 10. If the election were held today, would you support or oppose this referendum proposal? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way? | STRONGLY SUPPORT.....15%<br>SUPPORT.....57%<br>OPPOSE.....10%<br>STRONGLY OPPOSE.....9%<br>DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....9% |
|---|--|

IF A RESPONSE IS GIVEN, ASK: (N=363)

11. Why do you feel that way?

GOOD FOR COMMUNITY, 24%; MORE PARKS ARE NEEDED, 3%; COST IS REASONABLE, 9%; TAXES ARE TOO HIGH, 15%; CITY HAS ENOUGH PARKS, 3%; PRESERVE OPEN SPACE, 27%; NEED PARKS AND BALLFIELDS FOR CHILDREN, 9%; NEED MORE TRAILS, 3%; GOOD FOR PROPERTY VALUES, 4%; SCATTERED, 2%.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 12. In comparison with neighboring areas, do you consider total property taxes in your community to be very high, somewhat high, about average, somewhat low, or very low? | VERY HIGH.....11%<br>SOMEWHAT HIGH.....35%<br>ABOUT AVERAGE.....38%<br>SOMEWHAT LOW.....2%<br>VERY LOW.....0%<br>DON'T KNOW/REFUSED....15% |
|--|--|

Changing topics....

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 13. Do you currently use the Internet at home? (IF "YES," ASK:) How do you connect to the internet -- on a dial-up modem at 28K, on a dial-up modem at 56K, DSL, Comcast High Speed Internet, or some other way? (IF "OTHER," ASK) How? | NO.....20%<br>YES/DIAL-UP AT 28K....4%<br>YES/DIAL-UP AT 56K....10%<br>YES/DSL.....19%<br>YES/COMCAST HIGH SPD..45%<br>YES/OTHER.....1%<br>DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2% |
|---|--|

Now just a few more questions for demographic purposes....

20.	Do you own or rent your present residence? (IF "OWN," ASK:) Which of the following categories contains the approximate value of your residential property -- under \$250,000, \$250,000-\$350,000, \$350,001-\$450,000, \$450,001-\$550,000 or over \$550,000?	RENT.....20% OWN/UNDER \$250,000....10% OWN/\$250,000-\$350,000.32% OWN/\$350,001-\$450,000.23% OWN/\$450,001-\$550,000..8% OWN/OVER \$550,000.....5% DON'T KNOW.....1% REFUSED.....2%
21.	What is your age, please?	18-24.....3% 25-34.....10% 35-44.....28% 45-54.....23% 55-64.....21% 65 AND OVER.....16% REFUSED.....0%
22.	Gender. (DO NOT ASK)	MALE.....50% FEMALE.....50%
23.	REGION OF CITY	WARD ONE.....28% WARD TWO.....24% WARD THREE.....24% WARD FOUR.....25%

MEMO

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

3400 PLYMOUTH BOULEVARD, PLYMOUTH, MN 55447

DATE: July 27, 2006  
TO: Eric Blank, Park and Recreation Director  
FROM: Mike Kohn, Financial Analyst  
SUBJECT: Park Referendum

According to our last projections from March of this year, the City would need approximately \$14,000,000 to acquire a 10<sup>th</sup> playfield site and open space for the Northwest Greenway Corridor (NGC). The costs are estimated at \$8,000,000 for a 40 acre playfield site and \$6,000,000 to acquire about 23 acres of NGC that will likely not be obtained through donation. (Please note that these projections are heavily dependent on timing and availability of willing sellers.)

Currently, funding of \$4,000,000 is programmed in the CIP over the next 4 years to acquire the 10<sup>th</sup> playfield. The breakdown of this funding is as follows:

Park Dedication Fund	\$1,500,000
Community Improvement Fund	\$2,250,000
Capital Improvement Fund	\$250,000

Another \$350,000 is programmed in the CIP for acquisition of NGC property with funding from the Capital Improvement Fund.

In total, this leaves a shortfall of approximately \$9,650,000.

A referendum authorizing the borrowing of funds for playfield and opens space needs would give the City the ability to realistically acquire land in the near term before land prices become prohibitive. While authorization of \$9,650,000 might fully fund the estimated needs, lower amounts would also be beneficial. For example, the \$7,000,000 bond option outlined in the survey would give the City the capability to purchase a 10<sup>th</sup> playfield and leave a pot of funds (estimated at \$3,650,000) to begin actively pursuing parcels for the NGC.

## Potential Open Space Ballot Question Draft Public Information Timeline & Costs

**Goal:** To raise awareness that the City of Plymouth will have a ballot question on the November 7 ballot, outline what the City is proposing, and define the cost of the referendum to the average homeowner.

Medium	Date	Related Cost
<i>Plymouth News</i> – September/October Issue. Short story that Council approved ballot question. Watch for special mailing. (Ballot question decision must be made by the August 8 City Council Meeting to meet deadline for this publication)	Mailed first week of September	Not Applicable - Existing Publication
Special Mailing to Residents (4-page, 8 1/2" x 11 mailing)	Mailed late September/Early October (use this to also publicize the dates of the public information meetings)	\$4,400 – design/printing/mail service (32,500 pieces)  \$4,300 – postage
Information Meetings	Mid-October	Not Applicable
News Release(s) · Publicizing Special Meetings	Early October	Not Applicable
<i>Northwest Cities</i> (5-minute segment)	September or October (need to negotiate the exact date with other cities)	Not Applicable
<i>Community Journal</i> Closer Look Segment – Use to highlight referendum question	Use the segment highlighting Plymouth which will be closest to the election.	Not Applicable
Web Site	Post information on the ballot question after After Labor Day	Not Applicable

<p><i>Sun-Sailor</i> Guest Column - Submit a guest column by the Parks and Recreation Director which details what the City is proposing and cost to the average homeowner.</p>	<p>Mid-October</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p><i>Plymouth News</i> – November/October issue (this will be mailed earlier than usual to ensure it hits mailboxes before election.) Story highlighting ballot question</p>	<p>Week of October 23</p>	<p>Not Applicable - Existing Publication</p>

**Referendum Overview**

Plymouth voters will decide in a special bond election on May 23 whether the City should issue up to \$2.235 million in general obligation bonds to buy four undeveloped pieces of land and build about 11 miles of new trails. The City would preserve the land as natural open space. Issuing the new bonds would result in no net tax increase for property owners because the new bonds would simply replace old park bonds which expire in 1996. If voters approve the bond issue, the City would match the bond funds with about \$1 million in existing city funds contained in the Community Improvement Fund.

The four sites, comprising about 125 acres, are spread throughout the City. They were selected from a list of 30 possible sites following a professional biological study to determine environmentally significant sites. They include portions of the original big woods forest, other hardwood forest areas, a tamarack wetland area and other land surrounding some of Plymouth's highest quality wetlands. (For a description of each site, see inside.)

**Financing**

The estimated cost of purchasing the open space and building the new trail segments is \$3 million. The City would cover \$2 million of the cost by issuing bonds. It would pay for the remaining \$1 million with existing funds in the Community Improvement Fund.

**Effect on Property Taxes**

The average homeowner would see no tax increase if the bond referendum passes. This is because park bonds issued in 1980 will be retired in 1996 before the levy for the new bonds takes effect. The portion of the city tax levy used to pay these old park bonds is the same as the cost of the new open space/trail bonds. In short, one will replace the other, and the net effect on the average tax bill is that it would remain the same if the referendum passes.



*Vote on*  
**Open Space and  
Trails Acquisition in  
May 23 Election**

**OPEN SPACE/TRAIL REFERENDUM**

## TRAILS

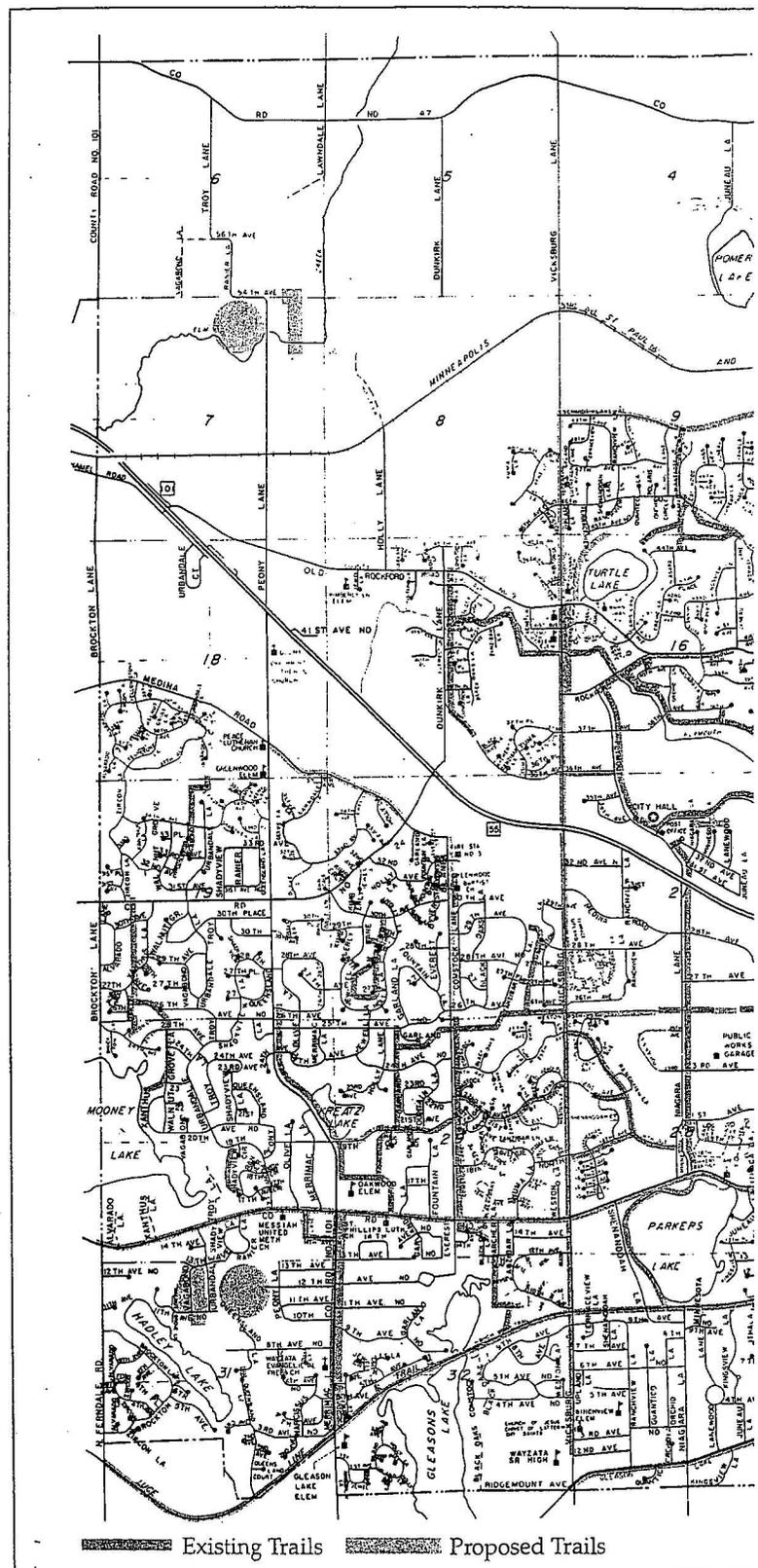
Plymouth's 68-mile trail system links residential areas with parks, neighborhood commercial centers and schools. Respondents in a 1993 park survey conducted by the University of Minnesota for the City identified trails as their most desired new park facility.

If approved, the \$1 million for trails would pay for 19 trail segments in all parts of Plymouth (see map). The additional 11 miles of trails would connect many existing trails. Some trail segments may require feasibility studies to determine their final location and alignment. The proposed projects would accelerate trail construction by about five years. Trails are generally funded at about \$200,000 a year.

The following are the proposed trails, subject to feasibility studies to determine their final cost, location and alignment.

### Trail

• Xenium Ln. from Minnetonka to Luce Line	1
• Vicksburg Ln. from Old Rockford Rd. to Schmidt Lake Rd.	1.6
• 19th Ave. from Holly Ln. to Co. Rd. 101	3
• Co. Rd. 61 from Plymouth Creek to Co. Rd. 9 (west side)	1
• Fernbrook Ln. from Co. Rd. 9 to 34th Ave. (east side)	5
• Vinewood Ln. from Co. Rd. 9 to Northwest Blvd.	.5
• Schmidt Lake Rd. from Fernbrook to Vicksburg	1.1
• Xenium Ln. from 32nd Ave. to Co. Rd. 9	.75
• Turtle Lake Trail to Old Co. Rd. 9	4
• Dunkirk Ln. from 24th Ave. to 33rd Ave.	.75
• West Medicine railroad track to Hwy. 55	3
• 34th Ave. to Lanewood Ln. (south side)	3
• Co. Rd. 47 from Annapolis to Northwest Blvd.	6
• East/West off-road trail from Vicksburg to Fernbrook	.5
• Northwest Blvd. from 42nd to 43rd Ave.	15
• Northwest Blvd. from 54th to 56th Ave.	.37
• St. Mary's Park to Wayzata East Jr. High	25
• Hemlock Ln. from Co. Rd. 10 to 62nd Ave.	.37
• Medina Rd. from Co. Rd. 24 to Co. Rd. 101	7

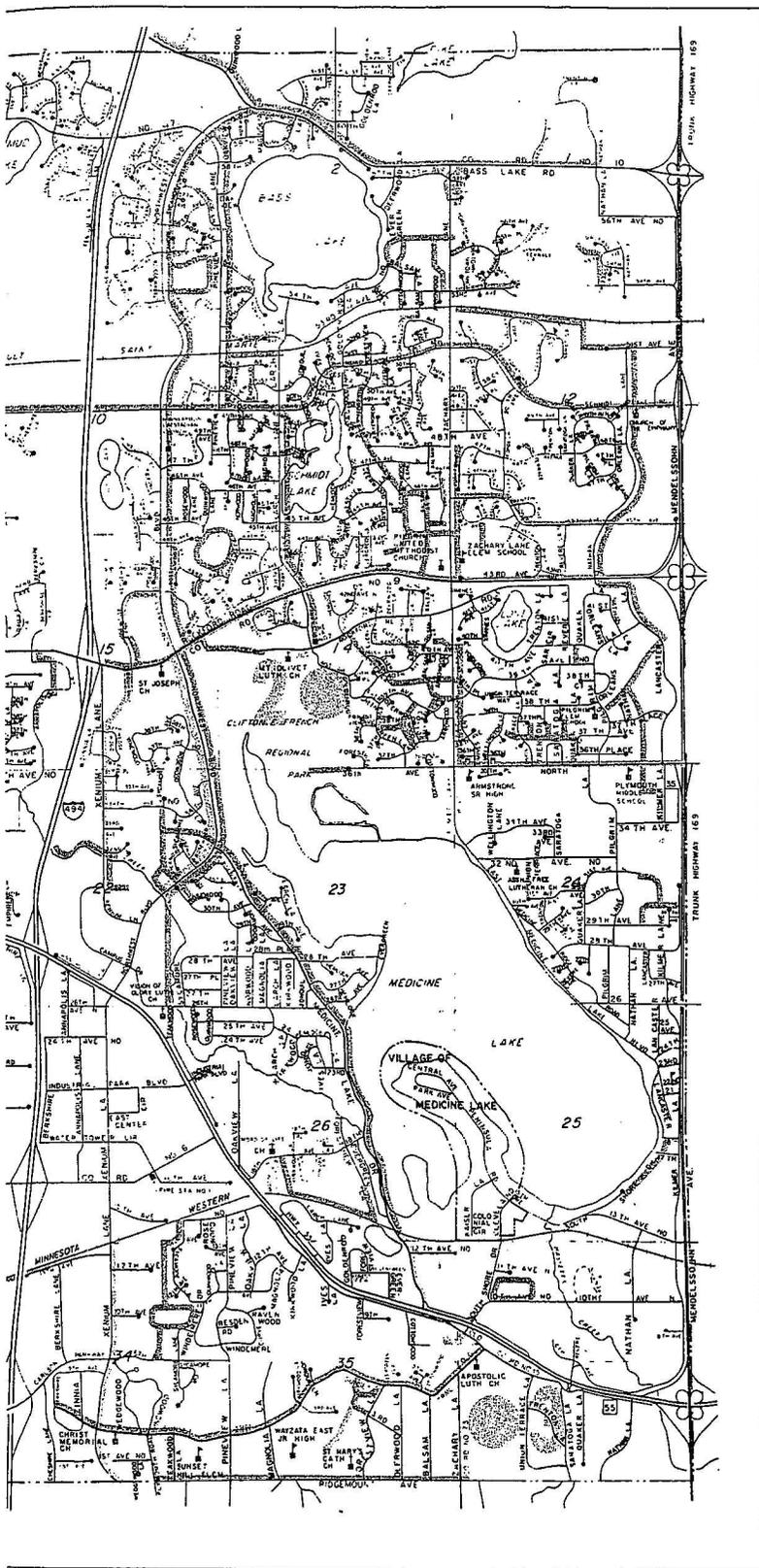


### Site Selection

The City Council unanimously approved the special bond election after receiving a report from a 10-member Open Space Task Force and a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Open Space Committee was

made up of four Park and Recreation Commissioners, one citizen from each of Plymouth's four wards, one Planning Commissioner and one City Council member.

The task force spent over a year evaluating the sites and developing a



## Sites

**Maple and Basswood Forest (Site 1):**  
This site is part of the original "Big Woods" in Plymouth and is located west of Peony, south of 54th Ave. and north of the Soo Line Railroad tracks. The 29-acre site is the largest undisturbed high quality maple/basswoods forest left in the city. Elm Creek runs through the site.

**French Regional Park (Site 2):**  
This diverse 26-acre site is located just west of Goldenrod Ln. on the north side of Medicine Lake. It includes forest tracks, cattail marsh and open field. The area also features a great variety of wildlife. If voters approve the bond issue, this site would be incorporated into French Regional Park.

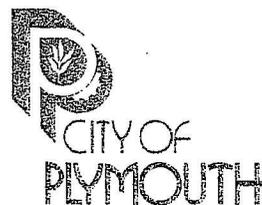
**Tamarack/Complex Wetland Communities (Site 3):**  
The largest of the four sites, this 47-acre site is in the southeast corner of Plymouth. It is east of Co. Rd. 73, north of Ridgemount Ave., and south of Co. Rd. 15 and Sunset Trail. This site contains tamarack, cattail and emergent marshes as well as a major wetland.

**Old White Oak Forest (Site 4):**  
Located in the southwest corner of Plymouth near Hadley Lake, this 23 acre site has a very old white oak forest along with green ash and sugar maple.

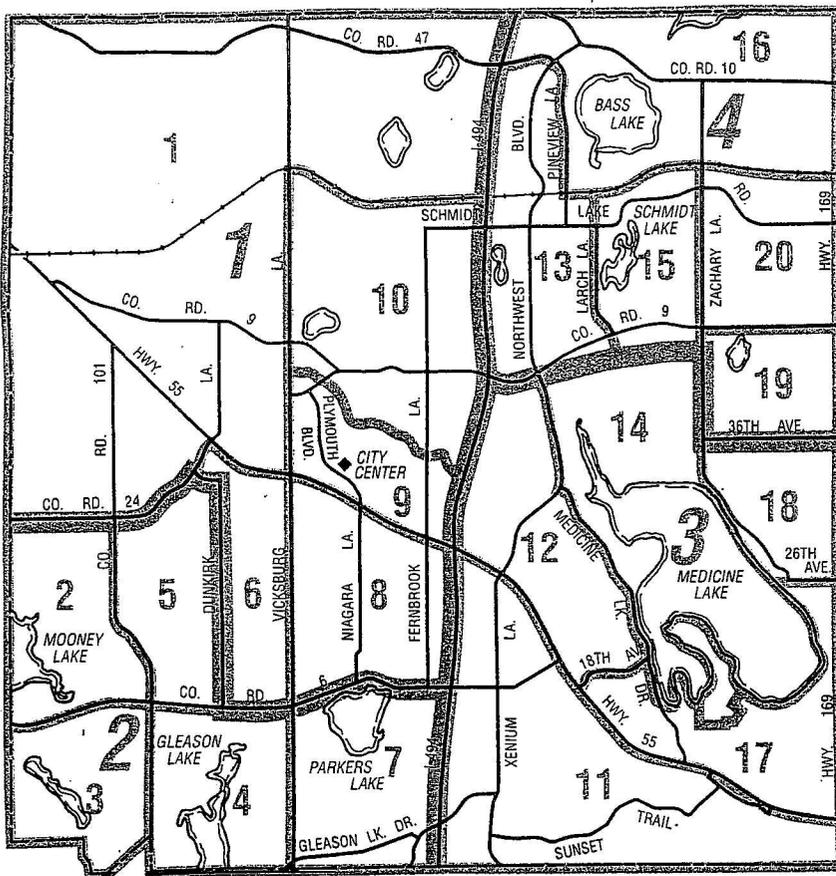
**OPEN SPACE SITES**

detailed ranking system. It inventoried all wetlands and wooded areas remaining in Plymouth. After identifying 107 parcels of land, totaling 1,538 acres, it narrowed the list to 30 priority sites. Next, an environmental biologist team analyzed the sites

and identified the top 15. Each site received a grade based on environmental factors. Based on criteria established by the task force, these four sites were selected as the highest priority pending completion of purchase options with the respective property owners.



# WHERE TO VOTE



WARD BOUNDARIES  
 PRECINCT BOUNDARIES

## Polling Locations

By voting yes, on the ballot question, you will be authorizing the City to issue the bonds. By voting no, you will be voting against the bond issue. Polls will be open 7:00 am – 8:00 pm on May 23. The following are polling places in Plymouth. For information on where to vote, call 550-5000.

Precinct	Location	Precinct	Location
1	Kimberly Ann Elementary 17405 Old Rockford Road	11	Christ Memorial Church 13501 Sunset Trail
2	Peace Lutheran Church 3695 County Road 101	12	Vision of Glory Lutheran Church 13200 Highway 55
3	Messiah Methodist Church 17805 County Road 6	13	Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church 12235 Old Rockford Road
4	St. Phillips Lutheran Church 17205 County Road 6	14	Fire Station 2 12000 Old Rockford Road
5	Oakwood Elementary 17340 County Road 6	15	Pilgrim United Methodist Church 4325 Zachary Lane No
6	Fire Station 3 3300 Dunkirk Lane	16	Bass Lake Playfield Building 5450 Northwest Blvd.
7	Parkers Lake Baptist Church 14720 County Road 6	17	Apostolic Lutheran Church 11015 County Road 15
8	Parkers Lake Baptist Church 14720 County Road 6	18	Armstrong High School 10635 36th Avenue No.
9	Plymouth City Center 3400 Plymouth Blvd.	19	Pilgrim Lane Elementary 3725 Pilgrim Lane
10	Plymouth Creek Elementary 16005 41st Avenue North	20	Zachary Lane Elementary 4350 Zachary Lane

