



***Mayor Coleman's 2008 Proposed Budget:
Making Tough Choices, Moving Saint Paul Forward.***

Better Service at a Better Price: Parks and Recreation

Overview

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department will continue the transformation begun in 2007 by focusing investment in people while investing appropriately in buildings, outdoor fields and amenities. This means identifying those recreation facilities that no longer meet the community's needs and shifting resources to the programs that do serve today's needs.

In the 2007 budget, the City reorganized recreation staffing by reassigning staff to five regional service teams as well as a city-wide Mobile Recreation/ Go Team designed to address developing needs across the city. This allowed staff to be more mobile and respond to recreation needs wherever they occurred. The City accomplished this task without closing any of the 41 recreation centers. That allowed staff to gain a better understanding of which facilities are well used and which are under utilized.

As a result of that work, the Mayor is proposing significant changes in the way eight recreation centers are operated while engaging the neighborhoods around these centers to better meet their recreation needs.

Three of the recreation centers co-located with school buildings will be returned to the school district. Three recreation center buildings will be fully managed by partners. One recreation center building will reduce operations to limited summer activities. One building will be closed and recommended for demolition. In all cases, the City will continue to maintain - and in some cases improve - the fields and amenities surrounding the buildings.

The City will achieve permanent savings through this work and will reinvest some of those savings in improved recreation services.

Why is the Mayor proposing changes?

Saint Paul's Parks and Recreation Services have been nationally recognized because of the service provided by dedicated staff. Mayor Coleman is committed to playing to that strength by investing in people and not buildings. He proposes to take buildings off of the City budget by seeking partners to take over operations of some centers and by eliminating others.

There are three principles that this transformation must meet:

- **More Mobile.** Allow staff to be where the need is rather than tied to a single location. Invest in Go Teams made up of recreation specialists, supplies and equipment, which move around the city to public and private locations and provide high quality recreation services.
- **Better Programming and Maintenance.** Remain more effectively grounded in our neighborhood based system while becoming more mobile, We will ensure our facilities are more programmed and maintained to meet residents' needs.
- **Invest in the Best.** We will invest in some new and/or renovated 21st century facilities that residents have come to expect.

How will it work?

Saint Paul will continue its investment in facilities that meet current needs. Most notably, in 2008, the City will open the new Oxford Aquatic and Jimmy Lee Recreation Center. This new facility will serve a large portion of the city and will work in partnership with the Saint Paul Public Schools.

Eight recreation center buildings will see significant changes in their operations. The City will continue to maintain and improve the fields and amenities surrounding the buildings.

These changes will result in savings of nearly \$1 million each year in building maintenance, management and supervision costs. At least forty percent of these savings will be invested in outreach to neighborhoods around these centers to determine how staff should be redeployed to meet their needs. This may result in an increase in Second Shift out-of-school programming in some neighborhoods. It may mean reconfiguring sports programming to offer more soccer or other youth sports. In addition, other changes may be implemented based on neighborhood feedback.

Changes will be made at the following recreation centers:

Frost Lake Recreation Center, Highwood Hills Recreation Center and Homecroft Recreation Center are located in public school buildings. The City will return this space to the Saint Paul Public Schools and will work with the district to schedule access to the space as needs arise.

Eastview Recreation Center will be managed by Merrick Community Services. The **St. Clair Recreation Center** will be managed the West 7th Community Center. The City will seek similar partnerships for the continued operations of the **Dunning Recreation Center**. In each of these cases, Parks and Recreation will continue to maintain outdoor fields and will invest in some improvements.

The City will work with the community to schedule **Desnoyer Recreation Center** for summer activities.

The City will consider demolishing the **Orchard Recreation Center** building.

After these changes are completed, the City of Saint Paul will continue to own and operate 33 recreation centers across the city.