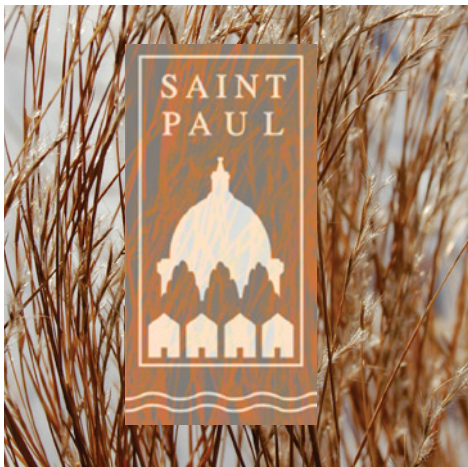


MORE RELEVANT
MORE CONNECTED
MORE SUSTAINABLE



OF THE SAINT PAUL
PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM

DECEMBER 2010



CITY OF
SAINT PAUL
**PARKS AND
RECREATION**
SYSTEM PLAN

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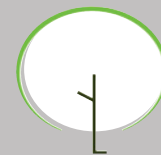
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1. THE BACKGROUND

Saint Paul began its work on transforming the parks and recreation system in 2008 with the Vision Plan. This section gives an overview of that plan and its relation to the System Plan, and describes the planning process for the creation of this System Plan.



2. THE NEED

Goal and Definition. The System Plan sets forth just one goal: To transform the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation System into a 21st Century Parks and Recreation System. What exactly, though, is a 21st Century Parks and Recreation System? This section provides a definition and applies it specifically to Saint Paul.



3. THE PLAN

System Findings and Recommendations. In order to be effective, the System Plan must make specific recommendations about the transformation of the parks and recreation system. This section provides detailed analysis of existing facilities and guidance for the future of those facilities. The System Plan makes recommendations for the following facilities:

- » Community Centers (a new type of facility that builds on existing recreation centers)
- » Trails, the Grand Rounds, and Parkways
- » Natural Areas and Open Space
- » Parks (neighborhood, community, regional, and others)
- » Special Facilities, including golf, aquatics, winter sports, wheel sports (BMX, skateboarding, mountain biking), off-leash dog areas, community gardens, and rental and event facilities
- » Outdoor Athletic Facilities (fields and courts)
- » Children's Play Equipment
- » Fundamental Facilities, including restroom access, pavement management, and system identity and signage



4. THE BENEFITS

Financial and Operational Payback. This section takes a detailed look at what money will be saved, both in the short and long terms, through the transformation of the recreation center buildings, specifically. This section also includes how the System Plan recommendations fit with the Vision Plan Decision Principles (guidelines designed to shape Parks and Recreation Actions).



5. THE STEPS

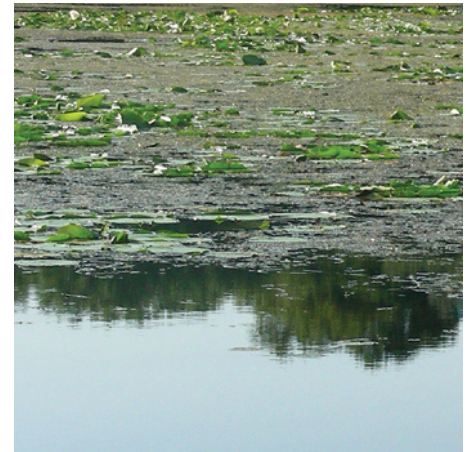
Implementation. This section includes initial actions and tools the Parks and Recreation Department can use to build the 21st Century Parks and Recreation System.



+ . APPENDICES

Included in separate appendices are:

- A detailed inventory of all park facilities and an evaluation of neighborhood, recreation center and community parks. Most of the recommendations included in this System Plan are based on this comprehensive inventory and analysis as well as community and stakeholder input. The inventory and evaluation document is a valuable resource for the Department, as well as further justification for the recommendations contained in the System Plan.
- A summary of input obtained at the ten System Plan community open house meetings.



1. INTRODUCTION

the background

INTRODUCTION

Saint Paul's Parks and Recreation System is on the cusp of a significant transformation.

A decade into the 21st Century, the world seems a different place than when the system first evolved. Environmental concerns ranging from global climate change to overburdened storm sewers have everyone thinking about how we can do better. Our city's population includes fewer children and is generally aging. The economic downturn means there is less money to go around.

Many of the 21st Century changes are very exciting. People are staying in or moving back to the city, after decades of suburban exodus. There are more different sports and activities being actively pursued than ever before. The city has never been more diverse. People are staying more active and more social far later in life.

Saint Paul's Parks and Recreation System is poised to become – in fact must become – a system that addresses these 21st Century changes.

What makes this an opportune moment is the fact that the system needs to be remade anyway. Its facilities are aging, and the city can no longer afford to operate the system as it stands.

This System Plan will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to make necessary city-wide facility improvement decisions. It is highly detailed. It looks at recreation centers, athletic fields, neighborhood parks, trails, sport courts, special facilities (like golf courses, dog parks, and extreme sports venues), and other elements. It weighs community needs and wants with financial realities, to ensure the system remains economically viable and responsible with tax dollars.

In short, this plan describes Saint Paul's new 21st Century Parks and Recreation System.

WHAT IS THE PARK AND RECREATION “SYSTEM”?

In this plan the term System refers to the physical components (infrastructure/built stuff) such as parks, recreation buildings, trails, athletic fields, courts, play equipment, etc. It also includes access to natural areas. While the System Plan recommendations focus on City facilities, the planning process also looked at the facilities and recreation services delivered by schools and private recreation providers.

Helping make Saint Paul the most Livable City in America by facilitating the creation of ...

OUR GOALS



ACTIVE LIFESTYLES



VIBRANT PLACES



A VITAL ENVIRONMENT

through parks and recreation that...



RESPONDS CREATIVELY TO CHANGE



INNOVATES WITH EVERY DECISION



CONNECTS THE ENTIRE CITY

VISION PLAN BACKGROUND

In 2008, Saint Paul completed the Parks and Recreation Vision Plan. This was step one in a two-step planning process for the parks and recreation system. It set forth broad goals for the system and outlined 38 initiatives designed to move the system in a certain direction. The goals were to foster the creation of:

- » Active lifestyles,
- » Vibrant places, and
- » A vital environment

By:

- » Responding creatively to change,
- » Innovating with every decision, and
- » Connecting the entire city.

Of the 38 initiatives set forth in the Vision Plan, 28 dealt specifically with facilities, access, connections, and activities. That is, they directly addressed the built components of the system, rather than programming or operations and maintenance. This makes sense, because the infrastructure (buildings, fields, courts, trails) of the parks and recreation system requires the most money to construct, maintain, and upgrade.

This System Plan is step two in the planning process. It uses the principles of the Vision Plan to make specific recommendations on facilities – upgrades, new facilities, and, yes, elimination of some existing system elements. The System Plan has a narrower focus than the Vision Plan, but is more specific. For example, while the Vision Plan has an initiative that recommends completion of the Grand Rounds, the System Plan will specifically list, in specific locations, what still needs to be done.

While the Vision Plan outlines where we are going, the System Plan describes specifically how we will get there.

PLANNING PROCESS

Inventory and Asset Evaluation

The condition and function of each park and each recreation center building was evaluated and an inventory of park and recreation facilities was prepared.

Needs Assessment

Community and Stakeholder Input – Community and stakeholder input on park and recreation needs and priorities were gathered using a public opinion survey and community, group and individual meetings. The 2007-2008 Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Citizen Survey (conducted by Leisure Vision) collected data from 797 households on park and recreation use and priorities for the future park system. A series of five community meetings were held across the City in May and June, 2010. Meeting participants provided input on recreation needs and priorities for park and recreation facilities. An on-line questionnaire was also used to gather input and priorities from residents. Themes that emerged from the May-June open house meetings and web input are:

- » Access to nature is important.
- » Many people value small neighborhood parks and recreation centers for the sense of community they provide.
- » There are strong feelings about dog parks – both for and against.
- » There is a desire for community gardens close to where people live.
- » A wide variety of facilities are desired for a variety of interests – there is no “typical” park user.
- » Connections to parks and trails across the city are needed.
- » Strong desire for restrooms at all parks.
- » There is a desire for more programming, including for teens and seniors, and better communication to city residents about existing programming.

Trend Evaluation – Recreation, demographic, economic, environmental and social trends were identified and evaluated for their influence on park and recreation activities, resources and facilities.

System Analysis

Service and Access Standards - Park and recreation service standards from the 2008 Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Vision Plan were used to evaluate the distribution and access to recreation facilities. The service standards define the desired access to parks and recreation buildings. For example, a goal is to have a park or parkway within ½ mile (convenient walking distance) of most residents.

21st Century System Criteria – A major goal of the System Plan is to transform the Saint Paul park and recreation system into a more relevant, connected and sustainable 21st Century park and recreation system. The criteria of a 21st Century System are listed on page 5.

Draft Parks and Recreation System Plan

Recommendations for the park and recreation system and individual elements (buildings, parks, trails, etc.) were prepared based on the analysis and input. Those recommendations formed the core of the Draft Parks and Recreation System Plan.

Community and Stakeholder Review – The Draft System Plan was the subject of five open house meetings held between November 3rd and November 18th, 2010. Meeting attendees had a chance to review the Draft Plan, talk with City staff and park planners and submit comments. The Draft Plan was also posted on the City web site with a link to provide e-mail comments. Input themes from community feedback on the Draft Plan include:

- » Recognition of the need to plan and reinvest in the park and recreation system.
- » Concern over site specific recommendations for eventual

removal of the Duluth and Case and Hayden Heights recreation center buildings.

- » The desire for more community involvement in subsequent plans for recreation center sites and school-city partner sites such as NW Como and Baker.
- » Concern over site specific recommendations to include off-leash dog areas in some parks such as Newell Park and support for having additional off leash dog areas distributed evenly across the City.
- » Differing perception between local users and wider community users of recreation center buildings.
- » Support for expanding the trail system, improving parkways and improving access to nature.

The appendix document - Community Meeting Input Summary includes summaries of the input received at the May-June and November community meetings.

Final Parks and Recreation System Plan

Input from the community and stakeholders on the Draft Plan was used to prepare the Final System Plan. General additions and revisions to the Final Plan included:

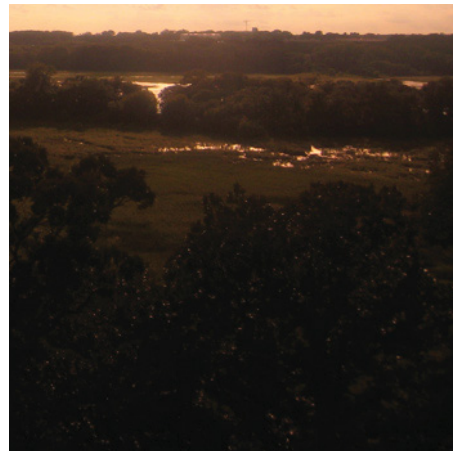
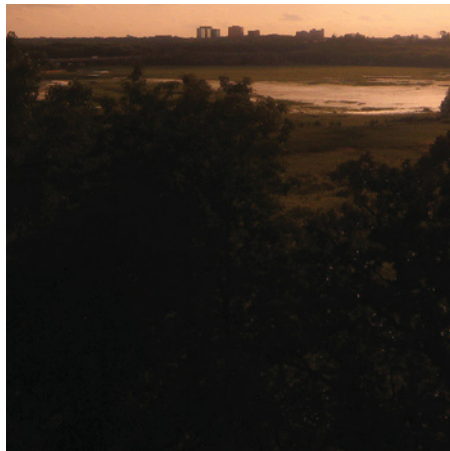
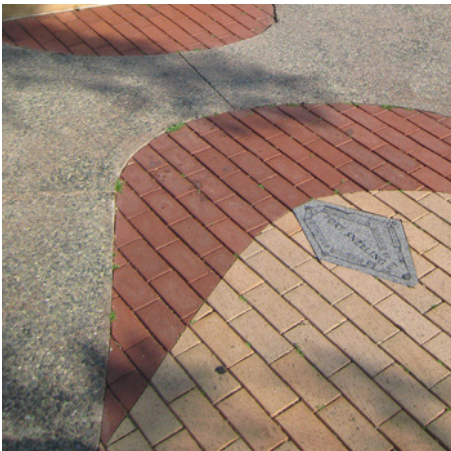
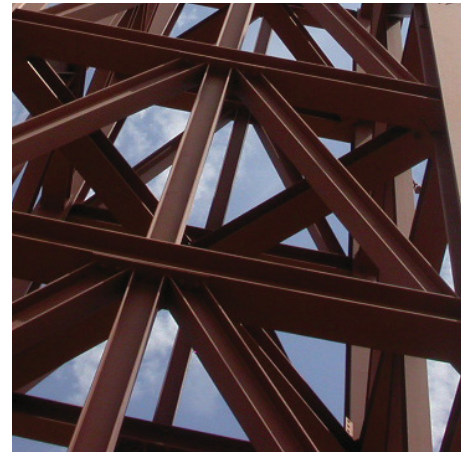
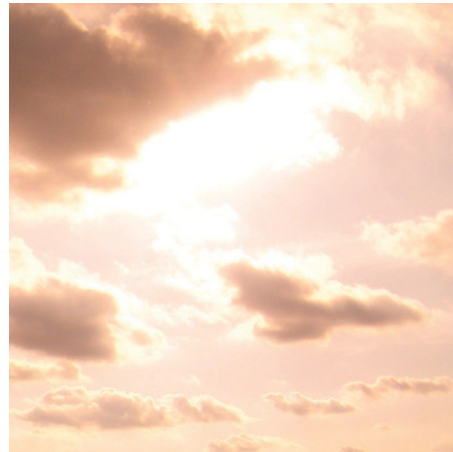
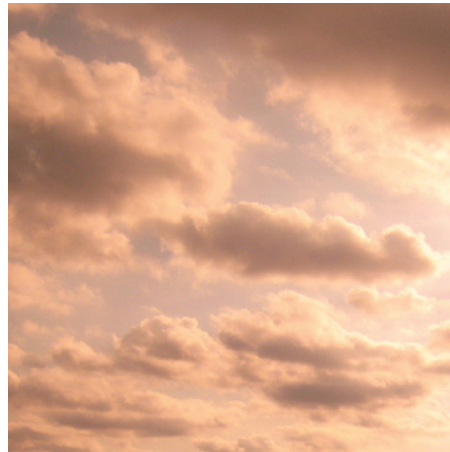
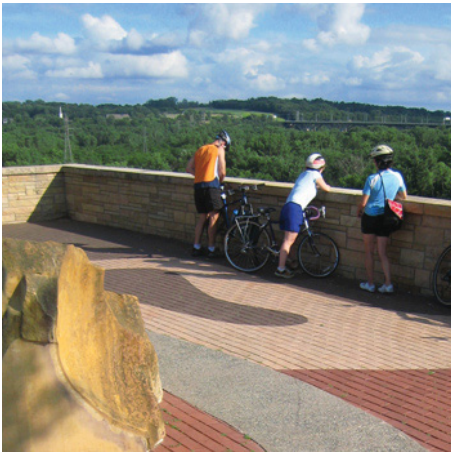
- » Clarification on the timing and public process for site specific actions. For example, the commitment to subsequent community input when significant changes are to occur to parks or recreation buildings.
- » More background on the rationale behind the Plan recommendations.
- » Commitment to continue to engage stakeholders, expand volunteer outreach and help develop structure among affiliated groups to strengthen recreation program offerings.
- » Adding more information about partner buildings, school-city partner buildings and recreation center buildings recommended for removal.
- » Revisions to some site specific recommendations for athletic fields and sport courts.



Inventory and asset evaluation process



Community Meeting



2. A 21ST CENTURY PARK & RECREATION SYSTEM

the need

GOAL AND DEFINITION

The System Plan sets forth just one goal: To transform the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation System into a 21st Century Parks and Recreation System.

The definition of the 21st Century Recreation System includes seven elements:

The system is **activity-oriented**, not facility-oriented

The primary consideration when delivering services is to consider the programs, activities, sports, classes, etc., that will be offered, rather than considering what fields, buildings, and courts will be built.

The system responds quickly to the **community** and its **needs**

The services offered may change periodically, in order to respond to the desires of the entire community. Provision of services must therefore remain flexible and agile.

The system provides **equitable** service to all sectors of the community

The city as a whole shall benefit equally from the services offered, regardless of economics, mobility, ethnic background, or even the ability or wherewithal to ask for particular services. This is the opposite of “squeaky-wheel” planning, where certain areas always get what they want and others go wanting.

The system is **sustainable** – economically and environmentally

The provision of services has no net negative effect on the city’s finances, nor on the environment. This ideal may warrant the consideration of different fee structures, updated maintenance practices, partnering with education providers, and environmentally neutral design.

The system capitalizes on **partnerships**

Non-profit groups, community groups, for-profit providers, educators, and other organizations already provide recreation, parks, and social services within the city. In order to maximize resources for the city and for these groups, it is important to consider partnering to provide services. Though the city will not eliminate services not otherwise publicly available, it may consider working with other groups to provide certain activities in certain locations.

The system is organized around **linear** elements (trails and greenways) rather than around smaller neighborhood sites.

Today, Saint Paul has several major linear recreation elements like the river parkways and trail loops around Phalen and Como lakes. However, the bulk of the system is not connected. Because trails are consistently rated as highly desirable by the community, the city will work to improve existing and create new corridors, as a means of bringing more people closer to recreation facilities with less operations and maintenance investment.

The system recasts traditional recreation centers as “**community centers**” that:

» Offer activities and experiences for the whole community.

The re-naming of “recreation centers” as “community centers” suggests a broader goal for these structures. In addition to traditional sport- and activity-based offerings, they should include a diverse array of benefits to the entire community, including (among others) multi-purpose classrooms/studios, computer labs, gathering spaces, and aquatics.

» Are open and accessible.

These should be welcoming, inviting places that are regularly open to the public. They should be accessible by transit and non-motorized trails and bikeways (since they may not be within easy walking distance). They should provide opportunities for all age groups, economic levels, and ethnic backgrounds. They should operate in all four seasons, and should maximize use of the buildings and staff.



3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

the plan

The Plan's focus on Regional Parks, trail connections, and an enhanced neighborhood and community park system will transform Saint Paul's Parks and Recreation System to be:

More relevant, by including more of the amenities residents want, like trails, high quality sports fields, aquatics, and specialized facilities;

More connected, by implementing linear corridors throughout the city that residents can use to get to parks, the river, and other recreational amenities; and

More sustainable, by reducing system-wide building operating costs, by building low-cost, high-value amenities, like trails, by improving access to nature throughout the city, and by focusing on the long-term quality of the entire system.

SYSTEM PLAN



TRANSFORMATION:

**Neighborhood
System Becomes A
City-Wide System**



SYSTEM PLAN OVERVIEW

Saint Paul has an extensive and well-loved park and recreation system. It developed over time in a mostly piecemeal fashion, however, and has not fully adapted to changes in demographics, recreation trends, and financing that have taken place over the last fifty years. This System Plan envisions a parks and recreation system that better addresses residents' needs and is more flexible in the face of future changes.

In general terms, today's park system is centered around small, scattered neighborhood parks, community athletic parks, and larger regional parks. The recreation system delivers recreation services and programs in parks, city recreation center buildings, in schools and in partner run buildings. There are very few connections between these facilities and the use and quality of recreation center buildings vary widely.

The 21st Century Parks and Recreation System described by this system plan will include improved parks, a flexible approach to delivery of recreation programs and fewer and higher quality community centers linked together by trails and parkways. Of course, the future system must build on what has already been built, so many aspects of this new concept are already complete. This system plan does not try to reinvent the wheel, but rather will make the critical connections, adjustments, and transformations necessary to implement the system of the future.

The transformed system can be thought of as a group of **Regional Parks**, linked by the **Grand Rounds** and other trail connections, with high-quality **community centers**, **neighborhood and special use parks** distributed throughout the city.

While the Plan recommendations are about facilities, the Plan benefits are largely about recreation, providing more self directed recreation in trails and access to nature and more opportunities for youth, adult, family and senior recreation across the city.

Regional Parks

These are the highlights – within the city and beyond – of the St. Paul Park and Recreation System. When people think of St. Paul's parks, these are the ones they immediately envision. They are what make Saint Paul, Saint Paul. All have excellent natural amenities; a variety of unique recreational, social, and educational opportunities; scenic multi-use loop trails; opportunities for special events and gatherings; opportunities for public/private partnerships in the offering of food, specialized activities, and events; and amenities unique in the Twin Cities metro area. St. Paul's Regional Parks include:

- » Como Park
- » Phalen Park
- » Great River Park: The Mississippi River Corridor, including East Mississippi River Boulevard, Hidden Falls, Crosby Farm, Lilydale, Cherokee, Harriet Island, Raspberry Island, Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, Indian Mounds, Pigs Eye Lake, and Battle Creek.

The Grand Rounds and Connecting Trails

An enhanced system of parkways and multi-use off-road trails will allow connections to and between the Regional Parks. This plan envisions a full-amenity (parkway, open space, and off-road trails) Grand Rounds encircling the entire city and a series of other off- and on-road trails and bikeways crossing the city from east to west and north to south.

The Grand Rounds - a scenic green parkway for drivers and trail users around the entire City has been a vision for Saint Paul for over 100 years. Some sections of the Grand Rounds are in place (along the Mississippi River) while other parts of the loop route are incomplete.

Neighborhood Parks, Community Centers, Athletic Facilities, and Special Use Parks

Within the framework of linked Regional Parks are the many other parks and buildings that either have a primarily neighborhood focus or accommodate special uses. The existing recreation center buildings will be reduced in number but increased in quality. Nineteen buildings will be re-envisioned as community centers with longer hours and broader programming and appeal; three additional recreation buildings will operate as they always have, with a part-time recreation focus. Within the system of neighborhood,

special use, and community parks, facilities will be modified to ensure higher quality over greater quantity, and to bring newer recreational offerings (like skateboarding, aquatics, dog parks, etc.) into the system. No neighborhood or community parkland is recommended for removal from the system.

The focus on Regional Parks, trail connections, and an enhanced neighborhood and community park system will allow for more efficient expenditure of resources, while also addressing current residents' needs and desires. This new system will offer more variety and higher quality facilities while also being financially sustainable.

Regional Context

Figure 3.1

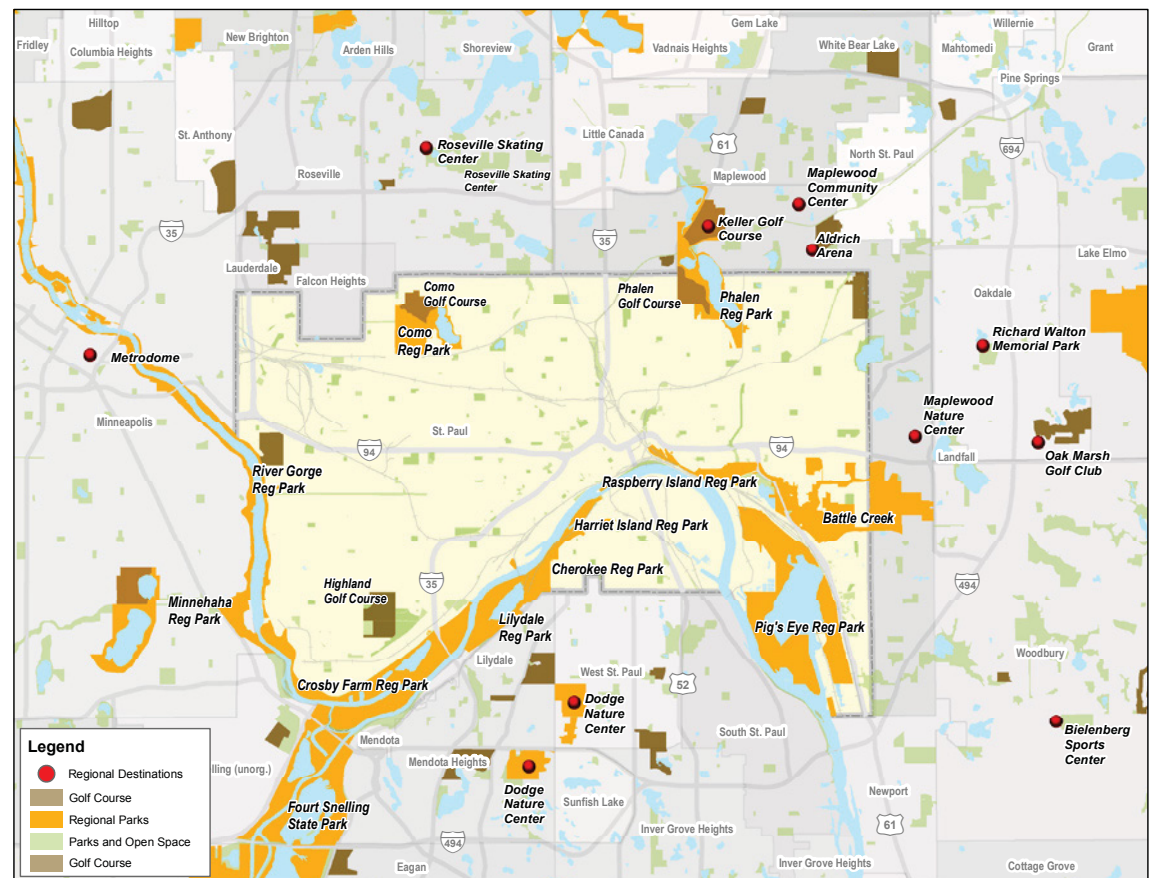


Figure 3.2



Community Survey Findings

The results of the 2007-08 Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Citizen Survey show that Saint Paul resident's top priorities for park and recreation facility improvement are:

Improvement Needs – Most important needs for improvement?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| 1. Trails walk/bike | 35% |
| 2. Neighborhood parks | 31% |
| 3. Restrooms | 24% |
| 4. Como Park | 21% |
| 5. Community centers | 15% |

Park and recreation facility needs that are only being met 50% or less for the following facilities (top 10 needs listed):

1. Indoor fitness and exercise facilities
2. Nature center and wildlife habitats
3. Indoor walking and running tracks
4. Indoor swimming and leisure pool
5. Beach areas
6. Small neighborhood parks
7. Riverfront parks
8. Walking and biking trails
9. Outdoor swimming pools/water parks
10. Large regional parks

Which actions would you be most willing to fund with your city tax dollars? (xx % is the sum of respondent's top four choices indicating the actions they would be most willing to fund with city tax dollars):

1. **Trails 42.3%** - Develop new walking/biking trails and connect existing trails.
2. **Greenways 42.2%** - Use greenways along rivers and creeks to develop trails and other recreational facilities.
3. **Open Space 39%** - Purchase land to preserve open space and green space.
4. **Repair Older Facilities 37.3%** - Fix up/repair older park buildings and facilities.
5. **Upgrade Recreation Centers 27.9%** - Upgrade existing neighborhood recreation centers.

The System Plan is divided into 8 elements, for easy categorization of its 176 recommendations. Each recommendation is numbered according to its system element. The order and numbering of recommendations shall not be considered a prioritization. The System Plan elements are:

1. Recreation Center Buildings (recommendations 1.1 through 1.56)
2. Trails, Grand Rounds, and Parkways (recommendations 2.1 through 2.10)
3. Natural Areas (recommendations 3.1 through 3.5)
4. Parks (recommendations 4.1 through 4.28)
5. Outdoor Athletic Facilities (recommendations 5.1 through 5.42)
6. Children's Playgrounds (recommendations 6.1 through 6.6)
7. Specialty Facilities (recommendations 7.1 through 7.21)
8. Fundamental Facilities (recommendations 8.1 through 8.8)

City-System Plan Concept Diagram
Figure 3.3



RECREATION CENTER BUILDINGS



TRANSFORMATION:

**Recreation Centers
Become Community
Centers**



1. RECREATION CENTER BUILDINGS: SYSTEM FINDINGS

Recreation Center buildings have been, historically, a public gathering place for each of Saint Paul's neighborhoods. As recently as three years ago, the Parks and Recreation Department was operating 41 recreation centers and had the highest number of recreation centers per resident of any major city in the United States. Currently, (December, 2010) there are 25 City operated and staffed recreation center buildings open to the public and 12 City owned repurposed buildings that are operated by partner groups. The City owned recreation center buildings vary considerably. Some are high quality and welcoming places with high use. Others are 40 or more years old, in need repair, with little to do and low use. The City also owns three buildings (Sackett, Mt, Airy and Belvidere) that are operated and maintained by the Boys and Girls Club. These Boys and Girls Clubs are a model of a successful partnership for delivery of quality recreation services.

Fewer, but better, recreation center buildings are needed to create an economically sustainable and more relevant recreation system. Current funding is not sufficient to fully staff and repair the existing 37 city recreation buildings. Recreation centers need to be more community oriented with activities for all ages and abilities. Over the last 40 years, our society and recreation have changed. The buildings themselves are not relevant to many residents. There is a common perception that recreation centers are just for kids. The general public, particularly households without children, are not aware of the breadth of programs offered. Our society is more mobile; many people are willing to pay more for and travel farther for quality facilities and experiences, reducing the need for a recreation center building within walking distance to every household. In addition, buildings are not needed for many recreation programs, particularly athletic leagues. Frequently a non-staffed building with restrooms, storage, and/or an open

shelter can meet community and recreation needs as effectively as a staffed building.

The City can provide after school recreation programs in a school building for a fraction of the cost of providing those same services in a City owned recreation center building, due to the reduced cost of not having to operate and maintain a separate building. In addition, the in-school programs also do not require students to travel from school to the City recreation center so program attendance at in-school locations is usually higher.

There are currently more recreation center buildings than the City can staff, maintain, and repair. This has resulted in deferred maintenance and limited staff and hours at some recreation centers, which render them only marginally useful to the community. From 2007-2010, to address declining budgets, the City turned the operation of 12 buildings over to partner groups. While this shift in building management has saved some money in operating expenses, the partnered buildings have limited use/access by the general public. In addition, the City is responsible for some costs associated with the partnered buildings, including repairs and capital maintenance. Since many of these buildings are 30 or more years old, the potential repair costs for these partnered buildings in the next several years are considerable. These costs are not only affecting the City's ability to staff and operate buildings, but also to build and maintain other facilities, like trails and playgrounds, within the system. A new partner model for building use is needed that limits the City's exposure to expensive repairs and upkeep when there is little use of the building by the general public. The approach to partnered buildings that are sustainable is to seek strong viable organizations that can afford to operate, maintain, and repair the buildings. In other words, the City would not incur costs for partnered buildings. If suitable partners cannot be found the buildings should be removed from the City system and the building site renovated to support the surrounding park use.

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation is bonding for park and recreation capital improvement at the same dollar amount as it bonded in 2000. That translates into the City having approximately 40% less park and recreation facility buying power today than in 2000.

RECREATION CENTER BUILDINGS: SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Transform City recreation centers into community places that appeal to all ages and abilities. Accomplish this by reducing the number of buildings, reducing City expenses for partner buildings, and reinvesting in remaining center buildings – staffing, programming, and capital improvements to strengthen youth programming while expanding beyond the current primarily youth recreation role.

1.2 Emphasize quality over quantity. Have fewer, but better, City recreation center buildings. Nineteen City operated community centers are recommended along with three partner/City recreation service sites operated in school or library buildings.

1.3 Reduce the number of low quality buildings to reduce City exposure to building maintenance and expenditures for improvements. The City cannot afford to reinvest in buildings that do not have the ability to be community-wide assets and must prioritize investment to the most effective and well used locations.

1.4 Transition use of 12 partner building to have partners/ tenants assume more of the cost of partnered building operations.

1.5 Re-invest in remaining community center buildings. Wherever applicable, provide the following facilities:

- » A clearly defined, welcoming entrance and reception area
- » Natural daylight
- » A full size, wood floor gym with air-conditioning
- » A fitness room with exercise equipment
- » A dance/ exercise studio
- » A flexible multi-purpose community room/classroom
- » Warming room if it is a skating site
- » Off-hour restroom access
- » Wireless communications
- » Video security with building use counters

1.6 Provide equitable access to community centers.

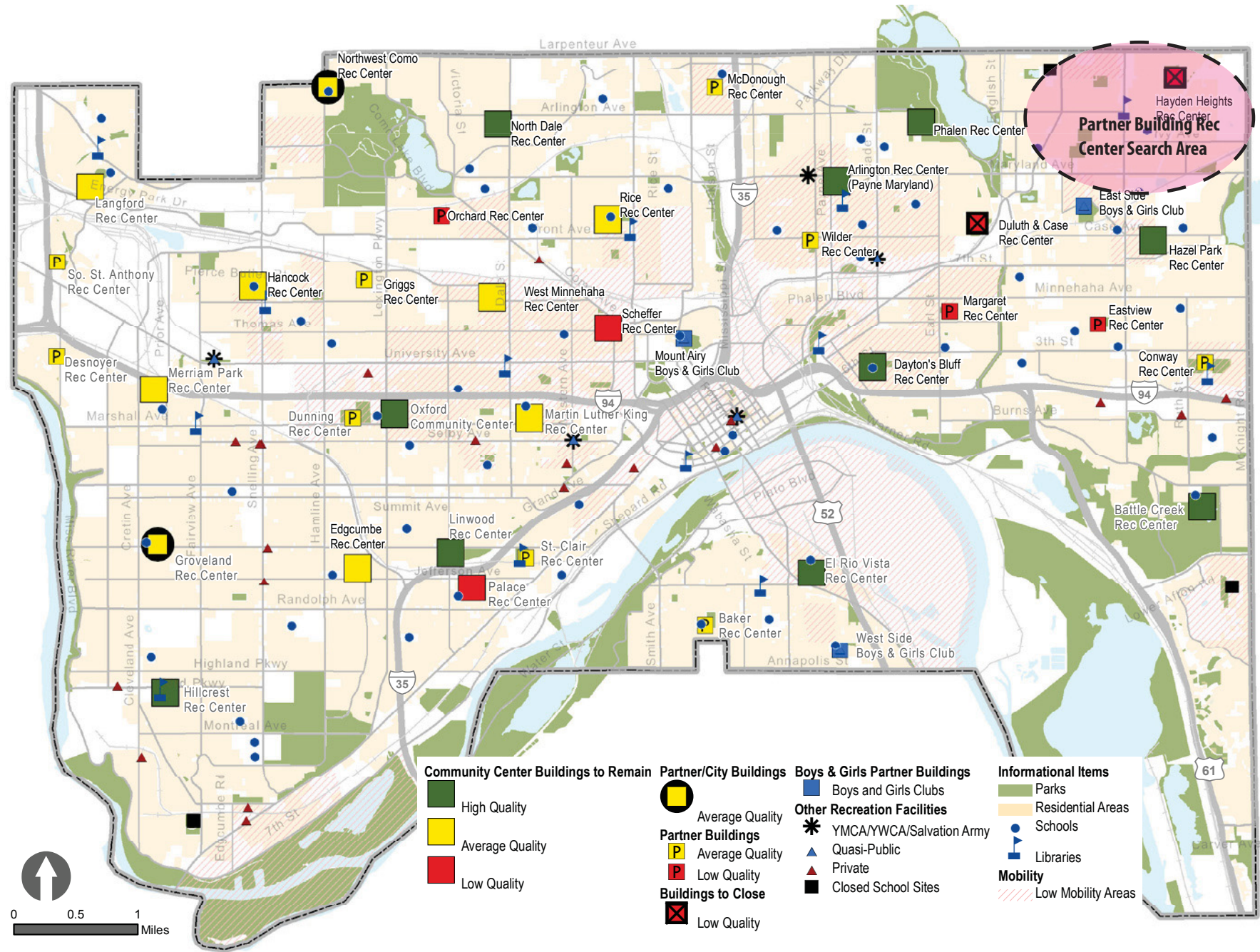
Distribute centers so most residents live within one mile of a center and locations have convenient vehicle, bus and trail connections. In lower mobility areas, ensure access using a combination of strategies: locating centers on transit corridors and city-wide trail corridors, providing a higher concentration of centers, and use of the City's Mobile Recreation Program.

1.7 Strengthen facility, staffing and programming relationships with the School District and libraries. Expand enrichment and life skills opportunities and foster community building. This may mean providing recreation staff and programs within non-parks and recreation buildings like schools and libraries.

1.8 Support Learning Campuses (a model to organize and coordinate out of school activities to assure youth access to high quality activities and learning opportunities) and appropriate partner initiatives at non-city buildings.

Recreation Center Building Recommendations

Figure 3.4



TRANSFORMATION: Recreation Centers Become Community Centers

THE TRANSFORMATION OF RECREATION CENTERS INTO COMMUNITY CENTERS

The Parks and Recreation Department will own and operate a financially sustainable number of community centers across the City. The role of these nineteen centers will expand from the neighborhood and youth focused recreation centers to more community oriented places, responding to neighborhood as well as City-wide needs. In addition to City-owned and operated centers, the City will provide recreation programming at school partner sites. In these sites, the City will not own or manage the building, but will provide staffing for programs and facility use; primarily after school programs and community gym time.

The four categories of recommendations for existing recreation center buildings are listed below followed by site specific descriptions and actions for each location.

Community Centers – Nineteen City staffed and owned community center buildings will provide recreation and enrichment programs, services, and activities for neighborhoods and the city at large. Community centers are to be the foundation of a city-wide recreation system that is financially sustainable and provides equitable access across the City. The following criteria were used to determine the recommended community center locations:

- » Building quality, condition and facilities
- » Building use
- » Proximity to nearby quality recreation buildings
- » Buildings locations that best serve the lowest mobility areas



Arlington Recreation Center



El Rio Vista Community Center

School Partner Buildings - In this new tier of services, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will offer recreation programs and services during out-of-school times in school buildings. Offering recreation programs in school buildings is an effective, efficient and flexible means for the City to deliver quality recreation services. Three school partner sites are planned. As staffing and funding resources allow, the number of school partner sites could be expanded. City recreation staffing and recreation center access will focus on scheduled programs and activities. The school partner buildings will be open during recreation programs and program content would be developed with community and stakeholder input. Volunteer assistance will be sought to expand program offerings. School Partner sites and Mobile Recreation are flexible ways to meet evolving recreation needs.

Partner Buildings – The City will work with existing and new partner organizations to transition 12 City-owned buildings to be fully operated and maintained by recreation and social service partners with no City staffing or investment. If that partner support cannot occur, the buildings would be removed from the City system. The surrounding park land would remain.

Buildings to be Removed – Four low quality recreation center buildings are recommended to be removed (Duluth and Case, Hayden Heights, Merriam Park and Scheffer recreation center buildings). The City cannot afford to reinvest in buildings that will not be effective over the long term. A community input process would occur to help define recreation service options and renovation of the park sites for community and neighborhood use.

Community Centers

Battle Creek

The Battle Creek building is located within a high quality athletic park, adjacent to Battle Creek Regional Park, one of the City's premier natural areas and next to Battle Creek Elementary School. The center building is easily accessible by car and the regional trail. The existing building is welcoming, in excellent condition, functions well and has high community use. There is an opportunity for more synergy between the center building and Battle Creek Regional Park in terms of programing, circulation and activity. Because of its location near a nature-focused park, recreation and educational program offerings will be expanded to include more of a nature focus. No capital improvements in the building are needed at this time. Regular building maintenance and repair will be conducted to maintain this facility's high quality condition.

Recommended actions:

1.9 Create a direct bikeway connection between the regional trail within Battle Creek Park and the community center building entrance.

1.10 Work with Ramsey County to forge a better relationship between the center building and Battle Creek Regional Park including expanded nature-focused program offerings.

Dayton's Bluff

Dayton's Bluff is a short distance from both the Bruce Vento Regional Trail and Johnson Parkway. The building is located in a lower mobility area. The center is an example of an effective partnership with the School District and there is a synergy between school and community center uses. Today, Dayton's Bluff is welcoming, in good condition, functions well and has high community use. Minimal capital improvements are needed. Regular building maintenance and repair will be conducted to maintain this facility's high quality condition.



Battle Creek Community Center



Dayton's Bluff Community Center



Edgumbe Community Center



Hancock Community Center

Recommended action

- 1.11** Replace the existing gymnasium floor with a wood floor and add adjustable height backboards.
- 1.12** Renovate the western part of the park to create high quality multi-use fields.

Edgumbe

This center, though not particularly welcoming or aesthetically pleasing, is well attended. Improvements are needed to enhance the building's appearance and functionality and community center role. Edgumbe is within a large, heavily used park and there is a synergy between outdoor and indoor use.

Recommended action

- 1.13** Re-invest in the building to enhance building condition, appearance, and functionality.
 - » Replace the roof
 - » Update/replace the heating and air conditioning equipment
 - » Remodel the entry, kitchen, and reception areas (indoor and outdoor to improve wayfinding, function and appearance)
 - » Improve/ expand the existing fitness/exercise room
 - » Install a wooden floor in the gym
 - » Provide at least one accessible restroom
 - » Add windows/natural daylight

El Rio Vista (within Wellstone Center)

Built in 2006, El Rio Vista is a new, heavily used and vibrant community center in a lower mobility area. The City has a strong partnership with Neighborhood House, which manages the Wellstone building. The adjacent park land has low quality athletic fields and lacks a variety of outdoor recreation options. No capital improvements in the building are needed at this time. Regular building maintenance and repair will be conducted to maintain this facility's high quality condition.

Recommended action

- 1.14** Improve outdoor facilities to bring them up to the same quality as the building. Athletic field improvements and the addition of a spray pad at Parque de Castillo across the street are recommended.

Hancock

Hancock is located in the western half of the Central Corridor, a bordering lower mobility area with a community center need. Hancock recreation center is an existing school-City partnership site and, with the construction of the Central Corridor LRT line, will have improved regional transit service. At this time, Hancock's location makes it the best option to serve this area, but additional space is needed for facilities such as additional classrooms, an exercise room, etc. to make it a true community center. The small site on which the building is located provides limited opportunities for expansion. The Canvas Teen Center arts program operates in the Hancock location. In the summer of 2010 a new play area was installed. The City will continue to look at partnership opportunities with Libraries, Hamline University, the School District, and others for potential sites to house a new community center in this area.

Recommended actions

- 1.15** Long-term look for partnership/site opportunities for a new center in the west half of the Central Corridor.
- 1.16** Make cosmetic improvements with in the existing building (new carpet and restroom updates).

1.17 Replace existing gym floor with a new wood floor.

Hazel Park

Hazel Park is centrally located in the far eastern portion of the City. The current center is a high quality, welcoming building, in a lower mobility area. The park in which the building is located is heavily used and creates a synergy between indoor and outdoor use. Regular building maintenance and repair will be conducted to main this facility's high quality condition.

Recommended actions

1.18 Add space for fitness and exercise rooms.

1.19 Replace existing gym floor with a new wood floor.

Hillcrest

Today, Hillcrest is a large center that shares the building with the Highland Branch of the Saint Paul Public Library. The Library has identified this location as a priority for improvements, and the shared use contributes to the center's vitality and high attendance. Though the building is in good condition, the site is small, there is a need for additional parking to support current uses, and the athletic fields are in poor condition.

Decision-making regarding the future use of the Ford property will influence how the Hillcrest site is planned. One option for the Hillcrest property is to add parking on part of the current field area and renovate the remaining park space for a high quality turf field and, if space allows, constructing a pair of tennis courts to replace the single court. This would also entail accommodating and potentially expanding baseball and softball use on the Ford site. Over the foreseeable future the City will continue to operate Hillcrest Community Center and Highland Library. However, in the long term, as the building ages and new opportunities arise, the City should evaluate the potential and benefits of relocating this center to a new, nature focused location on the Grand Rounds either within Great River Park or on the Ford Site. If the community center

is relocated, the existing park land could remain in the system and continue to provide neighborhood and community recreation opportunities. Parks and Recreation will continue to collaborate with Libraries to promote quality facility options for the surrounding community into the future.

Recommended actions

1.20 Re-invest to maintain building condition.

- » Install a new flat roof (built 1990, poor condition)
- » Replace existing gym floor with a new wood floor

1.21 Address field and parking issues at this site in coordination with planning and opportunities at the Ford site.

1.22 Long-term build a new community center building with a nature focus in the Great River Park and along the Grand Rounds in the southwestern part of the city.

Langford

Langford is an average quality building with a small gymnasium. The park in which the building is located is a high quality neighborhood park, with a mix of youth oriented athletic facilities and passive areas, creating a synergy between indoor and outdoor use. The building contains a warming room to support the popular winter skating opportunities on site.

Recommended actions

1.23 Re-invest in the building to enhance building appearance and functionality.

- » Paint exterior
- » Install a wood floor in the gym
- » Replace roof
- » Remodel the reception area to improve function
- » Install air-conditioning

1.24 Long-term explore programming and building space partnership opportunities with St. Anthony Elementary School, located on the north side of Langford Park.



Hazel Park Community Center



Hillcrest Community Center



Langford Community Center

Due to budget limitations, some City recreation centers are only a few per day and not on weekends. With the costs of utilities, staff, cleaning, maintenance and repairs that is expensive infrastructure that is not economically sustainable.

Linwood

Linwood is a cheerful, welcoming center that is well used. The building is high quality; and it is in good condition with space for a variety of activities. The athletic fields are in poor condition due to frequent and overlapping use.

Recommended actions

- 1.25** Re-invest in the building to maintain excellent building condition.
- » Replace roof (flat roof, 1991, poor condition. Sloped roof average condition)
 - » Replace existing gym floor with a new wood floor



Linwood Community Center

Martin Luther King (Hallie Q. Brown)

The Martin Luther King center is in good condition with a full range of indoor recreation options: gym with wood floor, fitness room, exercise/dance studio, classrooms and a multi-purpose community room. Because the building is built into a hillside many of the rooms do not have adequate daylight. This, in combination with low ceilings and normal wear and tear showing on the wall and floor surfaces makes parts of the center appear less welcoming and in need of cosmetic improvements.

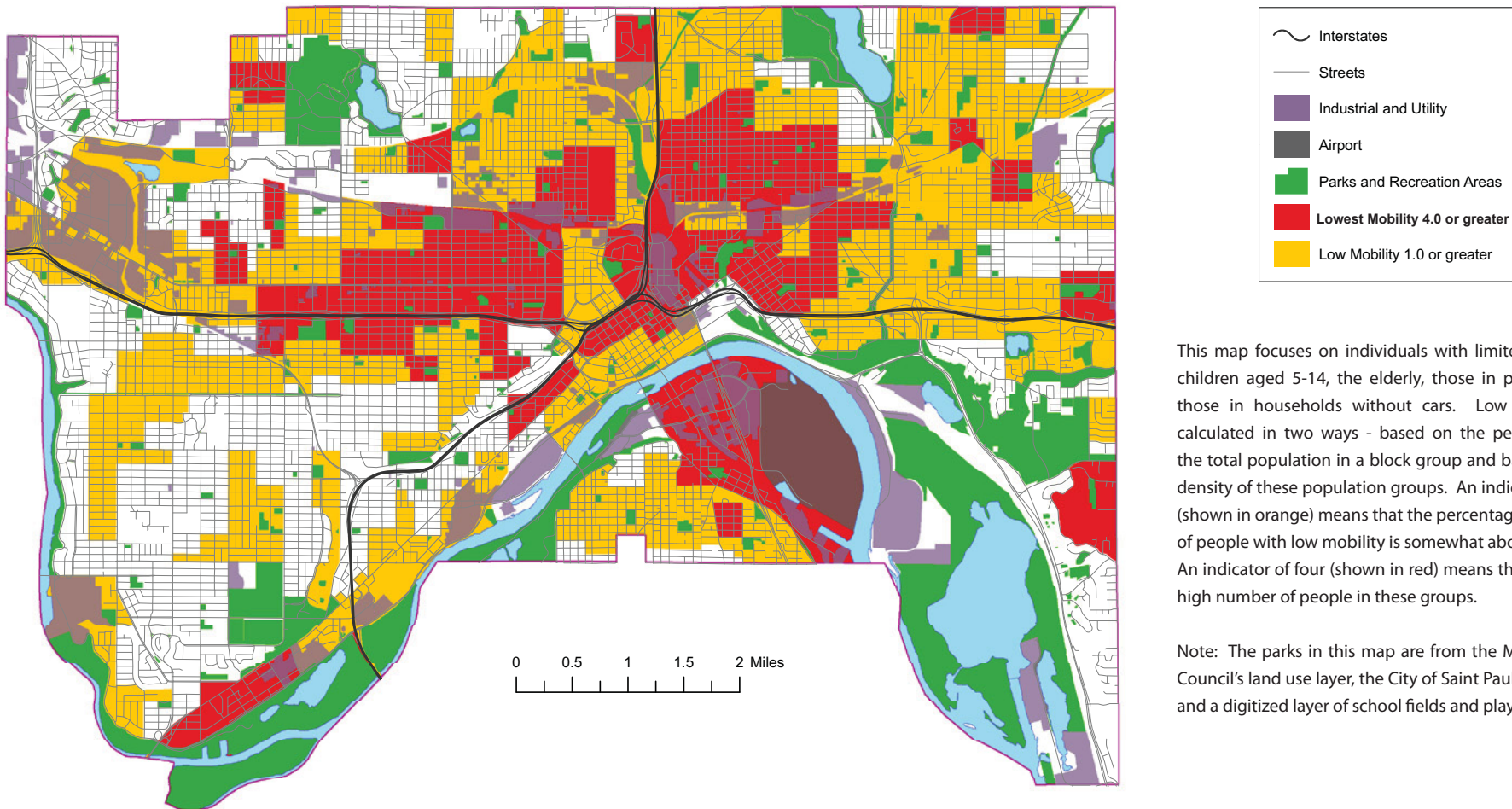
Recommended actions

- 1.26** Re-invest in the building to enhance building appearance and condition.
- » Improve interior lighting to compensate for lack of natural daylight
 - » Update floor and wall surfaces showing wear and tear
 - » Consider creating a single entrance to the building
 - » Provide lighting for the outdoor tennis courts



Martin Luther King Community Center

Areas of Low Neighborhood Mobility
Figure 3.5



This map focuses on individuals with limited mobility: children aged 5-14, the elderly, those in poverty, and those in households without cars. Low mobility is calculated in two ways - based on the percentage of the total population in a block group and based on the density of these population groups. An indicator of one (shown in orange) means that the percentage or density of people with low mobility is somewhat above average. An indicator of four (shown in red) means that there is a high number of people in these groups.

Note: The parks in this map are from the Metropolitan Council's land use layer, the City of Saint Paul Parks layer, and a digitized layer of school fields and play areas.

Prepared for: Trust for Public Land Minnesota
2710 University Avenue Suite 300
Saint Paul, MN 55114

Sources: Metropolitan Council, US Census
Date: 20 June 2005



Merriam Park Community Center



Oxford Community Center

Merriam Park

Merriam Park is within a geographic area with a service need for a community center. The existing building was built in 1958 and is one of the oldest within the system. The city recreation use is shared with Keystone Community Center. The City portion of the building is small, consisting of a gym, small warming room and small multi-purpose room and does not have adequate community gathering or classroom space. The building sits in the far northwest corner of Merriam Park bordering I-94. This location is not prominent for the neighborhood nor for the greater community. The building is hard to see and vehicle access is not direct as the site is only accessible by driving through a single-family neighborhood. South of the park, adjacent to Prior Avenue is the recently closed Longfellow Elementary School. Because of the Merriam park building age and access issues, it is not recommended that the City re-invest in the existing building and that it eventually be removed. The City should conduct a community planning process to determine the building renovation/replacement within Merriam Park or use of/or an addition to Longfellow Elementary School that addresses site access, the future Ayd Mill road and trail, recreation building function and services, and partnership opportunities with Keystone Community Services and the adjacent school.

Recommended actions

1.27 Conduct a community planning process for Merriam Park that addresses community center building needs, site access, the future Ayd Mill road and trail, building function, partnership opportunities with Keystone Community Services and Longfellow Elementary School. Coordinate facility and program planning with the nearby Merriam Park Library.

1.28 In the interim, create a single entrance to the existing recreation building.

North Dale

Built in 2002 North Dale is one of the most welcoming and well attended centers in the system with high quality indoor and outdoor amenities. The building offers a full range of activities and spaces including: gymnasiums, community rooms, classrooms, an indoor walking track and a fitness room. North Dale Park is heavily used and there is a synergy between indoor and outdoor uses. Capital improvement needs are minimal. Regular building maintenance and repair will be conducted to maintain this facility's high quality condition.

Recommended action

1.29 Add gutters and downspouts to the west side of the building.

Oxford Community Center

Renovated in 2007, Jimmy Lee/Oxford is a high quality building that partners with the Loft Teen Center and Saint Paul Public Schools. It contains the Great River Water Park, the City's only indoor pool, plus gymnasiums, meeting rooms, and exercise facilities. The center's central location in a lower mobility area and convenient access to 1-94 makes it an ideal location for City-wide recreation services and programs. Investments in the surrounding park land are currently underway with a new synthetic turf field scheduled for installation by Fall 2011. No capital improvements in the building are needed at this time. Regular building maintenance and repair will be conducted to main this facility's high quality condition.

Recommended action

1.30 Complete the planned athletic field improvements.

TRANSFORMATION REALIZED

North Dale Recreation Center

The North Dale Recreation center was typical of many of St. Paul's 1970's era recreation center buildings. It was functional and offered a place for indoor recreation but was looking worn, not welcoming, lacked natural daylight and had limited spaces for community gathering. Both the City and the community recognized that improvements were needed to create a new, welcoming recreation center building. Spearheaded by a CIB proposal from the community and city the new North Dale Recreation Center building was completed in 2002.

Today, North Dale Recreation Center is a community hub. Visitors are welcomed by a well lit reception area and the building has a full range of spaces for recreation, fitness, and community gathering. The outdoor facilities have also been upgraded and there are now high quality, irrigated ball fields and a refrigerated ice rink. This transformation has created one of the most loved and visited recreation centers in St. Paul that successfully meets the recreation needs of St. Paul residents today.





Palace Community Center

Palace

Palace is in an isolated area of the City where there is a need for a community center. It is sandwiched between I-35E, West 7th Street, and railroad tracks. A building renovation and expansion is planned and funded to make the current building more welcoming and relevant. The renovation is funded for 2013-15.

Recommended action

1.31 Renovate building based on the existing plan to create a one level flexible programming space that will include a gymnasium, meeting rooms, fitness areas, and improved access to outdoor activities.

1.32 Renovate the park to complement the building renovation.



Payne Maryland Community Center
(planned new multi-use facility)

Payne Maryland (planned new multi-use community center)

Payne-Maryland is a planned new multi-use recreation center, library, and partner building to be built on the site of the existing Arlington Recreation Center. The convenient access and location within a lower mobility area makes Payne Maryland an appropriate site for a community center. The vision for this center was completed in 2008. Phase 1 includes public funding for the recreation center and library with construction to begin in 2011.

Recommended actions

1.33 Replace building and renovate park per the Payne Maryland Plan. Payne-Maryland will be a new multi-service community center to be located at the site of the existing Arlington Recreation Center. Phase 2 ultimately identifies private investment to include Arlington Hills Church, Bradshaw Celebration of Life Centers, Merrick Community Services and possibly other community service organizations.

Phalen Recreation Center

The Phalen recreation center building is located within Phalen Regional Park, close to Lake Phalen one of the City's most prominent natural features. The building is in good condition, and invites high use and high activity. To transform the building into a community center and to enhance nature based programming, a building addition for exercise/fitness activities and site improvements, such as native plantings in the non-programmed outdoor spaces are recommended. Current recreation program options will be expanded to include environmental education and nature experiences. Trail connectivity to the Grand Rounds is also needed to improve access to this center. Regular building maintenance and repair will be conducted to maintain this facility's high quality condition.

Recommended actions

1.34 Expand the building to add fitness and exercise rooms.

1.35 Add native plantings in the non-athletic outdoor use areas near the building.

1.36 Enhance nature-based programming.

1.37 Connect the community center directly to the Grand Rounds bike trails, and provide bicycle parking.

Rice and Lawson

Rice recreation center is located in Paul and Shiela Wellstone School and the adjoining park land borders Rice Street. The main community center will continue to operate from space located within the school building and a new Teen Center will be located in the existing lower level City recreation center building, which will be remodeled. There is a large under-utilized field space adjacent to the school and recreation center. Investment is recommended in the athletic fields.

Recommended actions

1.38 Re-invest to enhance building, appearance and

functionality.

- » Renovate the lower level City recreation building for use as a teen center and replace the roof
- » Explore opportunities to use space within school building for a fitness room
- » Replace the existing floor in the lower level gymnasium with a wood floor
- » Improve identity and signage to clearly indicate the community center location within the school and teen center location

1.39 Collaborate with the neighboring Rice Street Library to enhance future joint program opportunities.

1.40 Renovate the lower terrace area to create dedicated high quality multi-use artificial turf fields. This area currently contains three softball fields and one baseball field.

Scheffer

Scheffer is a low quality building that is well used. The building is in a lower mobility area where a community center is needed. The City will remove the existing building and construct a new community center on the site.

Recommended actions

1.41 Conduct a community planning process for the park incorporating a new community center building.

1.42 Remove the existing building and build a new community center building and improve the park site.



Phalen Community Center



Rice and Lawson Community Center



Scheffer Community Center



West Minnehaha Community Center



Groveland Recreation Center



Northwest Como Recreation Center

West Minnehaha

West Minnehaha is in a lower mobility area with a need for a community center within walking distance of residents. The center's central location and easy access by foot, bike, and car make it a desirable community center location. The surrounding park is large, with a variety of outdoor activities and athletic fields. The building is welcoming and in good condition though some improvements are needed.

Recommended action

1.43 Re-invest in the building to enhance building, appearance and functionality.

- » Install a wood floor in the gym
- » Replace the sloped, shingle roof
- » Replace middle area of the flat roof
- » Convert one room to a fitness and exercise room

1.44 Make improvements to create higher quality multi-use turf field space.

School Partner Buildings

City recreation services will be provided during out-of-school times in school buildings. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will continue to offer recreation programs and services at these three school sites. City recreation staffing and recreation center access will focus on scheduled programs and activities. The school partner buildings will be open during recreation programs and program content would be developed with community and stakeholder input. Volunteer assistance will be sought to expand program offerings. Offering recreation programs in school buildings is an effective, flexible and responsive means for the City to deliver quality recreation services. The number of school partner recreation locations can adapt to changes in annual operating budgets to meet community needs.

Groveland

Parks and Recreation will continue to offer City recreation programs during out of school times and to program community use of the gymnasium.

Recommended action

1.45 Replace the existing warming room building with a new warming room and equipment storage building with restrooms with direct access to the outside.

1.46 Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will continue to work with the community and service providers to support successful, quality recreation programs.

Northwest Como

Parks and Recreation will continue to offer City recreation programs during out of school times and to program community use of the gymnasium.

Recommended actions

1.47 Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will continue to work with the community and service providers to support successful, quality recreation programs.

New partner recreation center in the northeast portion of the city (Hayden Heights)

The existing Hayden Heights recreation center building is in poor condition and is recommended to be replaced with recreation services at a nearby school or library. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will continue to offer recreation programs at Hayden Heights until an appropriate new recreation center location is in place at a partner building.

Recommended actions

1.48 Find a suitable school or library location in the Hayden Heights/Frost Lake area for the Parks and Recreation Department to provide staffing for out-of-school time recreation and enrichment programs. Potential locations include: Frost Lake Elementary School, Prosperity Heights Elementary School, Hayden Heights Elementary School, or the Hayden Heights Library.

1.49 Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will continue to work with the community and service providers to support successful, quality recreation programs.

1.50 Search for a location along White Bear Avenue (for better community and transit access) for a new multi-use community center combining parks and recreation, a new library and other potential uses.

TRANSFORMATION REALIZED

Mattocks Park

Parkland endures, but facilities change. Throughout the history of the Saint Paul Park System, ever since the first park buildings were built, this has been the case.

In the 1930s Mattocks School was located on the site that is now Mattocks Park. The school was a hub of activity, a neighborhood anchor and a place for recreation. Over time, the school building was no longer desired. When the building was removed, the neighborhood mourned the loss of a community building.

But the land the school was on was transformed into a different kind of neighborhood anchor, a park. Today Mattocks Park endures as a premier example of a neighborhood park in Saint Paul. And it is successful without an indoor recreation building. The pleasant shaded lawns and outdoor facilities, the playground, tennis courts, and picnic tables all create a place where neighbors gather and play.



Partner Buildings

Some recreation buildings are recommended for use by a partner or tenant recreation or social service organization and removal from the City operations and maintenance responsibilities. These buildings are appropriate for partner status for one, or more, of the following reasons: the building would require significant capital investment for remodeling/additions to provide 21st Century functionality for community use, the building has low public use compared to other centers; the building has a successful history of partner use; and the area is served by other recreation centers that are in better condition, function better, or are better located.

Many of these City-owned buildings will be, and in most cases currently are, operated by specialty recreation or social service partner organizations. The goal is to reduce the public cost to operate these buildings by having the partner organizations assume the operating cost and upkeep of the buildings. These buildings would eventually be removed if, over time, partners were unable to take on full costs of operation, utilities, maintenance and upkeep of the building. A community process would be conducted before any buildings are removed. The surrounding park space, fields, courts, play areas, etc. would remain as City park land.

Viable partners would be sought for the better condition buildings. For example, recreation programs at McDonough Recreation Center are vital for the area and the center. The City will seek an appropriate partner such as the Boys and Girls Club or other community service organization to offer recreation programs in the building. Until a partner is in place, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will continue to offer recreation programs and services at McDonough.

Recommended action

1.51 The following centers will be considered partner sites with a gradual transition to a partner's full responsibility

for the building, or if that cannot occur eventual removal of the building. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will work with existing and potential tenants to work through the details and the transition to conform with the Partnered Building Policy. A community process would be before any buildings are removed. See page 34 - Partnered Building Policy Recommendations for more information on the partner process/transition.

1. **Conway** - (currently not partnered) Conway Recreation Center is a larger building in a large park area adjacent to Sun Ray Library. Conway has the potential to attract a viable partner due to its large size and location close to I-94 and Ruth Street. Two high quality recreation center buildings -Battle Creek and Hazel Park are located within one mile of Conway. Conway is the location of senior recreation programs that should continue under a partner or be relocated to another suitable location.
2. **Baker** – The Baker Recreation Center building is located on School District property and is attached to Cherokee Heights School. The school shares use of the Center's gymnasium. The center building would require significant repair and investment to make it into a 21st Century center and Baker is within one mile of the high quality El Rio Vista Recreation Center and the West Side Boys and Girls Club. The City discontinued City staffing at the Baker center in 2009 due to decreasing financial resources. Partners (Jane Adams School, West Side SAFE, Teatro De Pueblo, and Head-Start) have operated the center since then. Baker Recreation Center currently functions well without much City involvement. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department will work with the tenants, Cherokee Heights School and the community to assure continued use of the building as a partnered facility in conformance with the Partnered Building Policies and delivery of successful, high quality recreation and social service programs.
3. **Desnoyer**- Mac-Groveland CC operates Kids Park a drop-in child care in the Desnoyer building. Saint Paul

Parks and Recreation will work with Mac-Groveland CC to work through the details and the transition to conform with the Partnered Building Policy.

4. **Dunning** - Arts-US! runs after school and summer arts programs for youth in the Dunning Recreation Center building. The Dunning building is located 1/4 mile from Oxford Community Center. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will work with Arts-US! to work through the details and the transition to conform with the Partnered Building Policy.
5. **Eastview** - Brunette Boxing and USA Weightlifting operate boxing and weight lifting programs in the Eastview Recreation Center building. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will work with Brunette Boxing and USA Weightlifting to work through the details and the transition to conform with the Partnered Building Policy.
6. **Griggs** - Leonardo's Basement offers science based after-school and summer programs for youth in the Griggs building. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will work with Leonardo's Basement to work through the details and the transition to conform with the Partnered Building Policy.
7. **Margaret** - Hmong Youth Education Services offers after-school programs for youth in the Margaret Recreation Center building. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will work with Hmong Youth Education Services to work through the details and the transition to conform with the Partnered Building Policy.
8. **McDonough** (currently not partnered) - The McDonough recreation center is located within the McDonough community center building on the McDonough public housing campus. The McDonough Homes community is owned and managed by the Saint Paul Public Housing Agency (PHA). In addition to the recreation center, the community building houses the Saint Paul Police Department's outreach program (ACOP) and a Public Housing Agency presence. The recreation center primarily serves the surrounding McDonough Homes area. The City will continue to offer recreation services until a viable recreation partner such as the Boys and Girls Club or other high quality youth recreation provider is brought into McDonough. The new partner would need to conform to the Partnered Building Policy.
9. **Orchard** - Blackhawks Soccer operates youth and adult soccer programs out of the Orchard building. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will work with Blackhawks Soccer to work through the details and the transition to conform with the Partnered Building Policy.
10. **St. Clair/West 7th** - West 7th Community Center operates a variety of social service, adult and senior programs. The building also houses the West 7th Public Library. The community center use is anticipated to continue with a transition to conform to the Partnered Building Policy.
11. **South St. Anthony** - Joy of the People Soccer Association operates youth and adult soccer programs out of the S. St. Anthony building. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will work with Joy of the People to work through the details and the transition to conform with the Partnered Building Policy.
12. **Wilder** - City Academy has operated a Charter School in the Wilder building since 1993. That school use is anticipated to continue. City Parks and Recreation staff will work with City Academy to obtain conformance with the Partnered Building Policy.

The City can effectively deliver youth programming at school and partner buildings for a fraction of the cost of operating a City recreation center building. In many cases it is more effective to go where youth already are (in schools) than get youth to travel from school to a city recreation center building.



Duluth and Case Recreation Center

Buildings to be Removed

The City cannot afford to reinvest in buildings that will not be effective over the long term. Four recreation center buildings (Duluth and Case, Hayden Heights, Merriam Park and Scheffer recreation center buildings) are recommended for eventual closure and removal. These four buildings are in poor condition. Replacement facilities are to be defined with community input. The existing recreation services and building use would continue until a community process is conducted to discuss recreation program options and plans for the park land. The following recreation center buildings will eventually be closed and demolished and replacement facilities defined with community input.

Duluth and Case

The Duluth and Case recreation center building is in poor condition and has low use. The building quality has likely affected the use pattern. Duluth and Case is located within one mile of high quality recreation center buildings – Phalen Recreation Center and the future Payne Maryland building. Vehicular access to the Duluth and Case recreation center and park is not direct. The building is located within a large park area containing athletic fields and tennis courts. In 2009 a concept plan was prepared for the park which showed renovation of the park to include high quality athletic fields, an indoor tennis center and recreation center building, nature trail, children's play area, gardens and the primary vehicular access to the park off of Phalen Boulevard. That concept plan should be revisited with the community and updated to reflect the elimination of the tennis center/recreation center building from the plan and the eventual removal of the existing recreation center building.

Recommended action

1.52 The Duluth and Case recreation center building is recommended for removal and the park is recommended for renovation. The existing building and recreation services

should remain in place until a community process is held, plans for park renovation are updated and other recreation facilities (such as Payne Maryland) are in place. A community process is recommended to discuss recreation program options and refine the 2009 concept plan for renovation of the park. Recommended elements of the park renovation are to include:

- » High quality athletic fields (softball, baseball and multi-use turf fields)
- » Neighborhood park features (new children's playground, tennis courts, basketball, etc.)
- » Trails, community gardens and natural areas
- » A new building with restrooms, storage to support outdoor athletics and a meeting room and picnic shelter to support community use
- » Adaptable building design to retain flexibility for future additions
- » Primary vehicle access to the park directly off of Phalen Boulevard

Consider if a park maintenance facility/building that would also function as a community meeting room space is appropriate for the Duluth and Case location. The timing of removal of the Duluth and Case building should take into account the schedule for opening of the Payne Maryland center and be coordinated with park renovation.

Hayden Heights

The functionality of the current Hayden Heights recreation center is limited and the building is in poor condition. Other options can better serve the community and the City.

Recommended action

1.53 The Hayden Heights recreation center building should eventually be removed when another option is in place. A two track process is recommended.

1. A school partner building site is recommended for the Hayden Heights area (see actions 1.48-1.49). The City will

look to partner with an existing school such as Hayden Heights Elementary or the Hayden Heights Library to offer out-of school time recreation programs. The existing building will not be removed until a viable recreation program option is in place. Hayden Heights Park will remain a neighborhood park and the current outdoor uses will remain. A community process will be conducted before the building is removed.

2. Also investigate the longer term option of a potential new multi-use community center combining parks and recreation, a new library and other potential uses to serve the area. A location along White Bear Avenue would provide a high level of community and transit access.

Merriam Park

A community process is recommended for Merriam Park to define future building and park options (see actions 1.27 and 1.28).

Scheffer

A new community center building is recommended for Scheffer with a community process to define building and park needs (see actions 1.41 and 1.42).



Hayden Heights Recreation Center



Merriam Park Recreation Center



Scheffer Recreation Center

Partnered Building Policy Recommendations

The Department currently hosts partners in several of its recreation center buildings – partners that offer complementary services and save the Department money on staff time, supplies, and, in some cases, building upkeep. However, partner agreements vary considerably and many don't actually provide much benefit to the city with regard to building quality and longevity or public use. The following recommendations are designed to standardize partner agreements, partner selection, and partner and city responsibilities.

1.54 Classify all existing and potential partners into “levels,” with different general requirements, as follows:

- » Level One is reserved for non-profit organizations with stable, highly-capitalized programming:
 - » partner is responsible for:
 - day-to-day maintenance of indoor spaces, building exterior, site access areas (parking and sidewalks), and landscaping adjacent to the building
 - staffing of the building, per the offerings and needs of the organization
 - capital improvements to the building, including HVAC systems, major repairs, roof replacement, and other items
 - all utility fees
 - » partner agreement stipulates:
 - long-term tenancy – more than 10 years
 - minimal or no annual fees paid to the Parks and Recreation Department
- » Building must have some public use opportunities or go through the park land diversion process.
- » Level Two is reserved for smaller non-profit organizations with less capitalization:

- » partner is responsible for:
 - day-to-day maintenance of indoor spaces, building exterior, site access areas (parking and sidewalks), and landscaping adjacent to the building
 - staffing of the building, per the offerings and needs of the organization
 - all utility fees
- » partner agreement stipulates:
 - medium-term tenancy – 5 or more years
 - annual or monthly fees, on a sliding scale based on the organization's business plan
 - building must be at least partially open to the general public on a set schedule

1.55 Establish a process for evaluating and re-evaluating existing and potential partners. This process will ensure partners are matched to appropriate sites, and that those partners have the capability to meet the terms of the partner agreement. This process should also be used to ensure existing partners are well-matched to their current sites. An annual review, coupled by proposals from new partners, may lead to a shift in use of some buildings. The process would include the following steps:

- » Parks and Recreation initiates annual partner reviews for all existing partners, or initial reviews when new partners make inquiries to use park building space
- » Existing and potential partners submit the following information:
 - » A statement of interest in a particular park facility and a description of why the proposed programming is a good match for that facility
 - » A statement of the benefit to the community the organization would provide
 - » A financial statement, showing current funds, annual income and expenditures, and funding

sources and goals

- » A 5-year business plan
- » Parks and Recreation reviews existing partner submittals based on previous performance as a partner (including care of the building) and ability to continue to function at the Partner Level established for them.
- » Parks and Recreation reviews potential partner submittals based on their fit with the proposed building, their ability to provide services to the community that fill a void in park service or would augment park service, and their ability to meet the financial requirements of the agreement.
- » Existing partners that fail the evaluation have a specified period of time to rectify problems, before Parks and Recreation begins the search for a new partner.
- » A search for a new partner should be a public call for proposals from non-profit organizations engaged in recreation, health, education, or community-building activities. Proposals would be evaluated as above for unsolicited partner proposals.

1.56 Consider building quality when making decisions to continue partnering at a particular site. This is especially critical of Level Two Partners, which are not obligated to and likely do not have the ability to pay for significant building repairs. The following recommendations essentially envision eventual removal of the low quality buildings from the system and reinvestment (with partner assistance) in the average and high quality buildings:

- » Low Quality Buildings (a process for eventual removal from the system):
 - » No new partnerships of any kind should be considered in the existing buildings
 - » When major repairs become imminent, Level Two Partners should be provided a timeline for the closure and demolition of the building. They should be encouraged to submit a new partner proposal for another available park site, if so desired.



Hillcrest Recreation Center and Library

- » Parks and Recreation should initiate a community planning process for the neighborhood park in which the low quality building sits. The park plan may consider:
 - The neighborhood park without the building, or replaced with a restroom structure, as appropriate.
 - The neighborhood park with a new building to be partially funded and wholly staffed by a new Level One Partner (the new Payne Maryland facility is an example of this process).
- » Upon departure of the partner, Parks and Recreation should execute the new park plan as soon as possible, to ensure the vacant building does not bring blight to the neighborhood.
- » If a partner departs of its own accord, Parks and Recreation should initiate a community planning process for the park as described above, assuming removal of the building is forecast.
- » Low Quality buildings that are currently partnered include:
 - Margaret
 - Orchard
 - Eastview
- » Average and High Quality Buildings (a process for reinvestment with partner assistance):
 - » New partnerships should be entertained as described above.
 - » When major repairs become imminent at sites with a Level Two Partner, Parks and Recreation shall execute such repairs, with consideration of other building modifications to leverage the planned construction project.
 - » When major repairs become imminent at sites with a Level One Partner, Parks and Recreation shall review all plans and specifications for repair and improvement as proposed, managed,

and paid for by the partner, per the agreement.

- » If a Level One Partner wants to expand on the existing site, Parks and Recreation should initiate a community plan process for the park, which should consider the impacts of expansion, the leveraging of additional outdoor public facilities as part of the improvements, and community desires.
- » If a partner departs of its own accord, Parks and Recreation should actively seek a new partner, per the process outlined above.
- » Average and High Quality buildings that are currently partnered or could potentially be partnered per the recommendations of this Plan include:
 - South St. Anthony
 - Baker
 - Dunning
 - St. Clair/West 7th
 - Wilder
 - McDonough
 - Desnoyer
 - Griggs
 - South St. Anthony
 - Baker
 - Conway (not currently partnered)
 - East Side Boys & Girls Club
 - West Side Boys & Girls Club
 - Mount Airy Boys & Girls Club

In certain cases it may be beneficial to sell an existing building, if public use options are no longer viable. In the case of a sale, full parkland diversion market rate charges would apply and revenues from the sale should go into the parkland replacement fund.

Libraries and Learning Campuses

There is a positive synergy between recreation and libraries which enhances each use and contributes to community quality. The shared building housing the Hillcrest Recreation Center and Highland Library is an excellent example of a successful library/recreation center partnership that functions as a community center. The pending Payne-Maryland project will be another joint recreation, library, and community facility. Additional partnership opportunities will continue to evolve in terms of both programming and facilities between Parks and Recreation and Libraries.

A Learning Campus is a model to organize and coordinate out-of-school activities to assure youth access to high quality activities and learning opportunities. Community based organizations will play an important role in facilitating learning campuses. The intent of the Learning Campus approach is to link the school day with out-of-school time activities to promote the healthy development of every child in Saint Paul. Learning opportunities will focus on programs and services, not necessarily facilities.



Highland Library

TRAILS & PARKWAYS



TRANSFORMATION:

Trails and Parkway
System Becomes
More Connected

2. TRAILS, GRAND ROUNDS, AND PARKWAY FINDINGS

Trails are currently the most desired parks and recreation facility by Saint Paul residents. They are an important quality of life element and a factor in choosing where to locate for many residents and businesses. In Saint Paul, the parks and recreation department also manages a series of parkways and the historic Grand Rounds, planned more than 100 years ago as a scenic parkway route around the city.

Trails and parkways are advantageous from a fiscal and a recreation standpoint. Trails allow self-directed recreation which is immensely popular, does not require any staffing (beside periodic maintenance) and requires less initial investment than single-site recreational amenities like aquatic facilities, or athletic parks. Due to their linear nature, they have large service areas, and can expand the service areas of parks connected by trails. They can also draw from many sources of funding (recreation, transportation, health, and safety) and are very attractive for outside funders. For these reasons, trails, especially those associated with the historic Grand Rounds, are a key part of the 21st Century Parks and Recreation System.

Though there are parts of Saint Paul that are well served by trails, the Grand Rounds, and the parkway system, there are also gaps in service, especially outside of the Mississippi River corridor. The Grand Rounds Parkway outside of the river corridor is only partially improved and it is difficult to follow as the parkway character (trails, landscaping, etc.) is visible only on some segments and not in others. The ideal trail and parkway system would include the following elements, many of which are already in existence:

- » Signature trail loops at five locations, associated with regional parks. These loops will be multi-use, off road trails of high scenic value, with an emphasis on natural elements like lakes, rivers, forests, and hilly topography. Signature loops exist at Lake Phalen, Lake Como, the “confluence” area of the Mississippi River (Hidden Falls Park, Crosby Farm Park, and Mississippi River Blvd) and the Samuel H. Morgan Trail along Shepard/Warner roads. A signature loop is approximately 2/3 complete at Battle Creek Park. High quality trails exist along the downtown riverfront, but a loop is not currently available.
- » An encircling Grand Rounds, with low-speed scenic parkways and off-road multi-use trails all the way around the city.
- » Spokes toward downtown, which may include a variety of facilities but should accommodate scenic driving, bicycling, and walking. The spokes, at a minimum, should include:
 - » Warner Road/Mounds Blvd, which currently has off-road trails
 - » Vento Regional Trail/Phalen Boulevard, which currently has off road trails
 - » Gateway/Trout Brook Trails
 - » Como Ave, which includes bicycle lanes and share-the-road signs
 - » Pierce Butler Route, which includes wide shoulders for bicycling and is recommended for a future off-road multi-use trail
 - » I-35E south/Summit/Ayd Mill/Jefferson corridors, which are in various states of completeness and include various facility types
 - » Cherokee Park / Harriet Island / Wabasha Bridge, part of which includes off-road trails and for part of which such trails are in an approved master plan

Because trails and parkways either include a vehicular transportation element or may occur within road or other transportation right-of-way, they are necessarily a collaborative effort. There have been aspects of a silo mentality in the past where City departments had compartmentalized approaches and lacked a focus on implementation of trail improvements. The recommendations listed in this plan, therefore, step beyond parks and recreation jurisdiction at times. This ensures that the Department becomes an advocate for important trails and bikeways, even if it has no direct jurisdiction, and that the City is working across the Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Planning and Economic Development Departments to pro-actively plan and implement trail, parkway, and bikeway improvements. In the spirit of “activity first, facility second,” it doesn’t matter what city department or regional agency implements trails, parkways, and bikeways, as long as the concept and improvement moves forward. The following trail and parkway recommendations are not meant to be all inclusive. The recommendations define priorities and roles for implementing a comprehensive system of trails and completing the Grand Rounds.

TRAILS, GRAND ROUNDS, AND PARKWAYS RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Take a lead role on the implementation of seven off-road multi-use trail segments. Lead role means that Parks and Recreation would manage the project, coordinate with other agencies, seek funding, and otherwise be in charge of the project’s construction and ongoing management. The segments are:

- » A trail within Cherokee Park, then following Ohio Street and Plato Boulevard to Harriet Island: this segment has been master planned and is in process of phased implementation.
- » A trail within the Johnson Parkway right-of-way from Mounds Boulevard to Phalen Boulevard.
- » A trail within the Wheelock Parkway right-of-way from the western boundary of Phalen Park to the eastern boundary of Como Park.
- » The Mississippi River Trail, from the current eastern terminus of the west side levee to an existing trail in South Saint Paul.
- » Trout Brook Regional Trail, from Lower Landing Park to Lake McCarrons County Park in Roseville.
- » The development of an off road trail along Lexington Parkway south of Como Park to University Avenue. Consider options south of University extending to the Mississippi River, with right of way limitations in mind.
- » The development of off road trails along Furness Parkway from Maryland Avenue extending north to Larpentour Avenue.

Figure 3.6



2.2 Take an active collaborative role in the implementation of eight trails and bikeway corridors. Collaborative role means that Parks and Recreation will advocate for the corridor, support its implementation, and provide expertise as necessary, but will not be chiefly responsible for funding, implementation, or ongoing management. The segments are:

- » An off-road, high-quality, nature-experience trail within Battle Creek Park, looping Lower and Upper Afton together west of McKnight and east of Highway 61. PARTNERSHIP: Ramsey County plans to implement a trail adjacent to the roadway, but this trail should become a segment of a high quality loop on the southwest quadrant, and should therefore be moved away from the roadway and into the park.
- » A trail in the Ayd Mill Road and railroad corridor, extending from the western City Limits eastward to the existing I-35E trail originating at Saint Clair Avenue. PARTNERSHIP: Public Works and PED are still planning to implement this trail, even though property ownership has not yet been solved. Parks should advocate and assist other city departments in the implementation of this critical corridor.
- » The Lafayette Bridge Trail, which will connect Plato Boulevard with an existing trail on 4th Street just east of downtown. PARTNERSHIP: MnDOT and Public Works.
- » Pierce Butler Route Extension, from Dale Street to Phalen Boulevard. PARTNERSHIP: This extension is planned by Saint Paul Public Works and Planning and Economic Development. Parks and Recreation should advocate for an off-road multi-use trail within this corridor.
- » Griggs Street Bike Boulevard, from Energy Park Driver or Lexington Boulevard southward to Summit Avenue. PARTNERSHIP: Saint Paul Public Works and PED are currently considering several alternatives to a long-proposed bicycle transportation facility on Lexington Boulevard. A “regional trail” has not been supported by the community in the past, but a north-south route

connecting Como Park and existing and proposed trails south of I-94 would be beneficial. Public Works is weighing whether to implement a bicycle boulevard on Griggs Street (two blocks west of Lexington) or Chatsworth Street (two blocks east of Lexington). Parks and Recreation should advocate for and support the implementation of the Griggs Street corridor, since it passes directly through or within two blocks of three parks (Griggs, Horton, and Dunning), and also terminates at the Summit Ave / Ayd Mill Road overpass -- a good intersection of existing and proposed trails and bikeways.

- » The I-35E Corridor Trail, from Saint Clair Avenue to the Mississippi River Bridge. PARTNERSHIP: Saint Paul Public Works and Mn/DOT have jurisdiction of this corridor, which is an important trail connection but is currently of variable quality and not well signed. Parks and Recreation should advocate for, support, and participate in a new plan for this corridor, which may utilize other existing and proposed park facilities, such as Linwood Park, the proposed Ayd Mill Road trail corridor, several existing trail segments, and Lexington Parkway.
- » The Ruth Street Route, from Battle Creek Trail to the northern city limits (Larpenteur Avenue). PARTNERSHIP: City Public Works staff expressed a desire for better bicycle transportation service running north-south through the east side, and suggested Ruth Street would be a likely candidate. Though this route is not planned nor proposed, it would be beneficial to east side residents, since it would connect Battle Creek, Conway, and Hazel Parks, and utilize existing trails on Furness Parkway. Parks and Recreation should advocate for and support this corridor.
- » Lake Phalen to Beaver Lake Connection, via a combination of on-street and off-street facilities to be determined. PARTNERSHIP: Though this linkage is not currently proposed by any city or regional agency, it has been identified as an area lacking good non-motorized connections. It is likely any project in this area would be

led by Public Works, since it would be largely on-road, but Parks and Recreation should advocate for and support the project, since it could connect or even pass through Sackett Park and Ames Lake Park.

2.3 Rethink the northwestern segment of the Grand Rounds. Though it is possible to bike, drive, or walk from the State Fairgrounds to Mississippi River Boulevard, this segment of the Grand Round lacks the scenic character and ease of transit of other segments. The efforts to stripe and sign a route along Raymond Avenue and Pelham Boulevard are helpful, but several potential projects create the possibility to find an entirely new route for the Grand Rounds. This will, of course, need further study, but possibilities include:

- » Saint Paul PED will be working on an industrial use study and a traffic study for the industrial area between University Avenue and Energy Park Drive. This study could consider the creation of a new parkway boulevard with Grand Rounds amenities that would also serve as the backbone of the industrial area.
- » The potential to add park or parkway space to serve the expanding higher density residential neighborhood on the western edge of the Central Corridor (west of TH 280).
- » Saint Paul's Grand Rounds could cross briefly into Minneapolis to complete its loop, utilizing a variety of possible projects:
 - » The Ayd Mill railroad trail as it parallels Saint Anthony Avenue and connects back to East River Road
 - » The University of Minnesota Transitway (though this would be bicycle and pedestrian use only), connecting through the Minneapolis campus back to East River Road
 - » The sometimes-discussed Saint Anthony Greenway, which could run from the Pierce Butler Route west into Minneapolis along future Granary Road, then connecting to East River Road



Shepard Road

Though a part of Saint Paul's historic Grand Rounds, Shepard Road, from the Fort Snelling Bridge to downtown, used to be more of a barrier than a connection. It was solely a vehicular route through a primarily industrial area, and offered nothing in the way of connection to the river. In the late 1990s, Saint Paul began the process of redesigning the entire roadway corridor, most significantly between Randolph Avenue and downtown.

The new corridor features a true Grand Rounds experience: a boulevard with separated in-bound and out-bound lanes, a dual-track multi-use trail corridor, trail access to the parks in the river valley, and naturalized medians that manage the roadway's stormwater. This transformation has created an important leg of the Grand Rounds and established a linear trail corridor along the riverfront. It has also helped to spur private development, most notably in the Upper Landing.



TRANSFORMATION: Trails and Parkway System Becomes More Connected



Summit Avenue



Shepard Road/Regional Trail Corridor

- » Como Avenue to the planned Grand Rounds route along Industrial Boulevard then south to East River Road.

2.4 Plan a signature trail loop on the downtown riverfront, primarily using existing trails, and implement directional and interpretive signage for that loop.

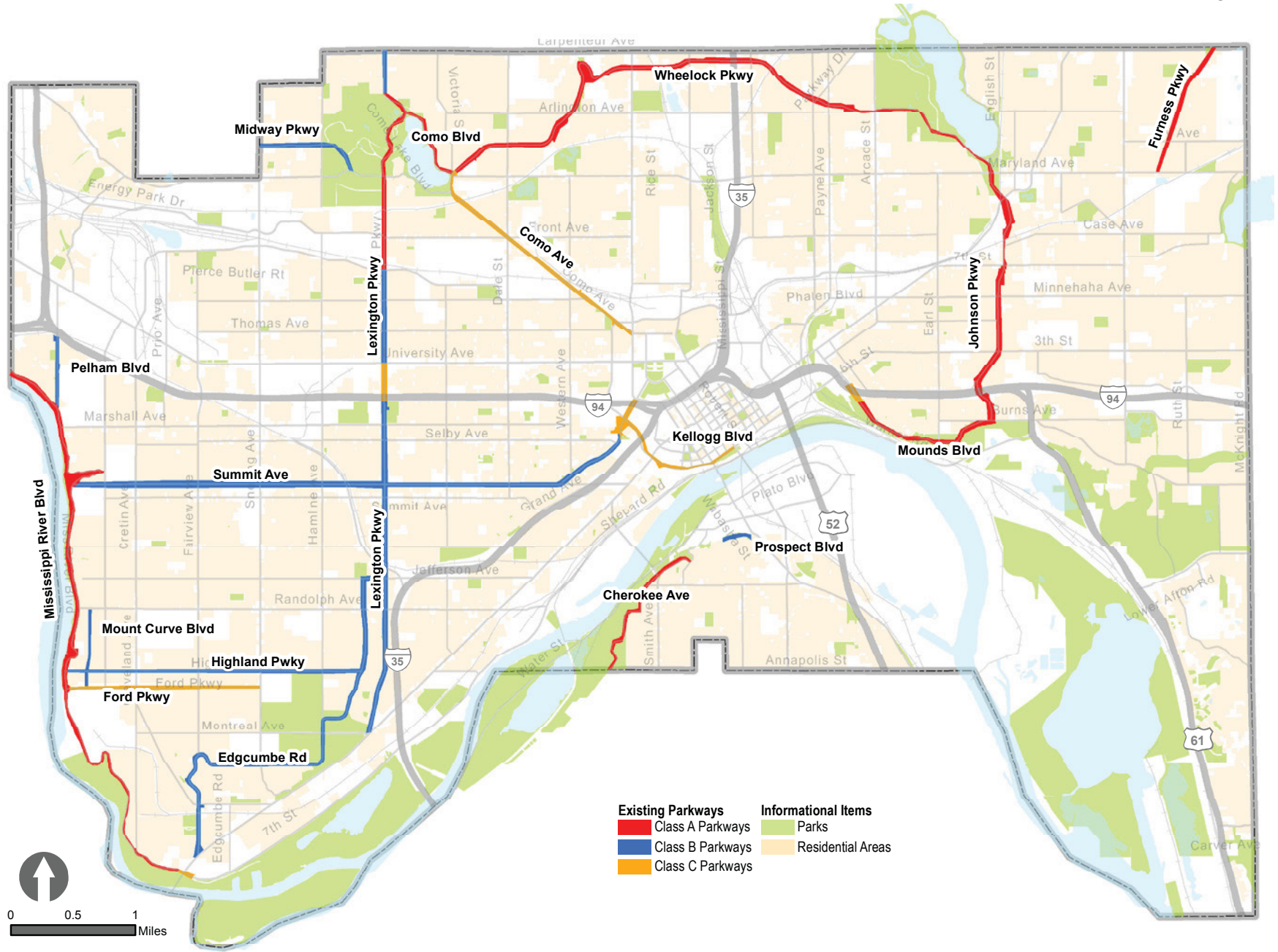
2.5 Improve trail interconnections city-wide, with signage, maps, and linking trails. Several locations have critical improvement needs:

- » The connection between the Gateway State Trail and Wheelock Parkway
- » The connection between Trout Brook Trail and Wheelock Parkway
- » The area of I-35E, Mississippi Street, and Pennsylvania Avenue, which is an intersection of several existing and proposed trails (Phalen Boulevard, Trout Brook, Pierce Butler Extension). This area may benefit from a small area signage and link-trail plan.
- » The area where Ayd Mill Road, Jefferson Avenue, and I-35E intersect, which is an intersection of several existing and proposed trails (I-35E Corridor, Jefferson Avenue bikeway, Ayd Mill Trail corridor). This area may benefit from a small area signage and link-trail plan.
- » The area where I-35E crosses Shepard Road and the Mississippi River, which is the intersection of the Grand Round, the I-35E trail corridor, and an extensive regional system in Dakota County across the river.

2.6 Maintain or complete the following amenities along Class A Parkways:

- » A lower speed vehicular roadway (where appropriate)
- » Linear green spaces, either in medians or in the boulevard, developed as open space (without active recreational amenities), with appropriate vegetation, such as large overstory trees, ornamental trees, native herbaceous plantings, and lawn
- » Off-road multi-use paved trails, for bicycling, walking,

Figure 3.7



- and in-line skating
- » Informational kiosks and signage, including parkway and trail system maps
- » Sidewalks, as necessary
- » On-street bicycle lanes, where space permits
- » Class A Parkways are:
 - » those with existing off-road multi-use trails, OR
 - » those on which trucks are prohibited by City Code (Sec. 145.02) AND where right-of-way is sufficient for trail implementation AND where multi-use trails are proposed in this plan:
- » Class A Parkways include:
 - » Cherokee Heights Blvd from Annapolis Street to Ohio Street (existing trail)
 - » Johnson Parkway from Burns Ave to Wheelock Pkwy (proposed trail)
 - » Lexington Parkway from Pierce Butler Route to the northern boundary of Como Park (existing and proposed trail)
 - » Mississippi River Boulevard from the city limits to West 7th Street (existing trail)
 - » Mounds Blvd from I-94 to Highway 61 (existing trail)
 - » Wheelock Parkway from East Como Blvd to Johnson Pkwy (proposed trail)
 - » East Como Blvd from Lexington Pkwy to Como Ave (trucks permitted; existing trail)
- » On-street bicycle lanes, where space permits
- » Informational signage at key intersections, geared toward the motorist
- » Class B Parkways are:
 - » those on which trucks are prohibited by City Code (Sec. 145.02)
 - » those where right-of-way limitations or urban design considerations, would limit trail implementation:
- » • Class B Parkways include:
 - » Edgumbe Road from Lexington Parkway to West 7th Street
 - » Highland Parkway from Edgumbe Road to Mississippi River Blvd
 - » Lexington Parkway from West 7th Street to Concordia
 - » Lexington Parkway from University Ave to Pierce Butler Route
 - » Lexington Parkway from the northern boundary of Como Park to Larpenteur Ave
 - » Midway Parkway from Snelling Ave to Hamline Ave
 - » Mount Curve Boulevard from Randolph Street to Ford Parkway
 - » Pelham Boulevard from Mississippi River Blvd to St. Anthony Ave
 - » Prospect Boulevard from Bellows Street to hall Street
 - » Summit Avenue from Mississippi River Blvd to Kellogg Blvd

2.7 Maintain or complete the following amenities along Class B Parkways:

- » A lower speed vehicular roadway (where appropriate)
- » Linear green spaces, either in medians or in the boulevard, developed as open space (without active recreational amenities), with appropriate vegetation, such as large overstory trees, ornamental trees, native herbaceous plantings, and lawn
- » Sidewalks

2.8 Maintain or complete the following amenities along Class C Parkways:

- » A lower speed vehicular roadway (where appropriate)
- » Sidewalks
- » On-street bicycle lanes, where space permits
- » Appropriate urban design and streetscape features, including special paving, pedestrian-scale lighting,

informational kiosks, tree planting, enhanced crosswalks, and other amenities

- » Class C Parkway are:
 - » those on which trucks are permitted by City Code (Sec. 145.03)
- » Class C Parkway include:
 - » Como Avenue from Rice Street to Como Park
 - » Ford Parkway from Snelling Ave to Mississippi River Blvd
 - » John Ireland Boulevard from Dayton Avenue to Wabasha Street
 - » Kellogg Boulevard from Mounds Blvd to Summit Ave
 - » Lexington Parkway from Concordia to University Ave
 - » Mounds Blvd from East 7th Street to Surrey Ave
 - » West 7th Boulevard from West 7th Street to Fort Snelling Bridge
 - » Summit Avenue from Dayton Ave to St. Peter Street

2.9 Create and implement a comprehensive system-wide signage plan for the trails, Grand Rounds, and parkway system. The signage system will help motorists, bicyclists, and walkers navigate the system, and should include full system maps at key locations, directions to points of interest and commercial areas, and interpretive information.

2.10 Support the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities not specifically tabulated here, including those envisioned by the Central Corridor Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, the Great River Park Master Plan, the city's Public Works and PED departments, and regional agencies.



River Road Parkway



Lower Landing



Signage to Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary

NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACE



TRANSFORMATION:

**Parks Become
More Natural**

3. NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACE FINDINGS

Access to nature is one of the most important features for Saint Paul park users. Luckily, the city is blessed with extensive Mississippi riverfront and high-quality lake-based parks. However, there are some areas of the city that are underserved with access to nature, and some parks where the quality of nature could be improved. Increasing access to nature within urban areas, particularly for youth, is an important goal that can potentially be supported by State Heritage and Legacy Funds.

The planning process identified all the parks where there is currently some access to nature, then applied the standard ½-mile buffer around those parks. Four significant gaps cover much of the central portion of the city:

- » The East Side north of I-94 and south of East 7th Street, from the eastern city limits to approximately Earl Street;
- » The area to the east of the I-35E corridor north of downtown, as far east as Payne Avenue;
- » Most of the northwest quadrant, with the exception of those areas within the buffers from Como Regional Park and Trillium Nature Reserve; and
- » The center of the southwest quadrant, stretching east-west from Cleveland to Lexington and north-south from I-94 to Randolph.

These service gaps are addressed in several different ways, including the recommendations of this section and also the trails, Grand Rounds, and parkways section.

- » The East Side gap will be addressed through the completion of a multi-use trail along Johnson Parkway to provide connection to Phalen and Indian Mounds Regional Parks (see recommendation #2.1), the naturalization of portions of that corridor (see recommendation #3.4), and augmentation of natural areas in Sackett Park and Conway Park (see recommendation #3.3).
- » The I-35E corridor north gap is partially addressed by the existing Gateway State Trail, and will be further addressed through the completion of a multi-use trail along Wheelock Parkway to provide connection to Phalen Regional Park (see recommendation #2.1); better interconnections with the Gateway State Trail (see recommendation #2.5); and possible re-naturalization of the Wheelock Parkway Triangles (see recommendation #3.3).
- » The northwest quadrant gap will be addressed through the completion of a multi-use trail along Wheelock Parkway to provide connection to Como Regional Park (see recommendation #2.1); rethinking the northwest corner of the Grand Rounds to provide connection to Como Park and the Mississippi River (see recommendation #2.3); and possible augmentation or renaturalization of several parks in this area (see recommendation #3.3).
- » The southwest quadrant gap exists in an area with an excellent urban forest and significant perceived open space on the several college campuses that exist here. This gap, therefore, will not be fully addressed by new facilities, but will be improved through the collaborative implementation of several trails and on-street bicycle facilities connecting to the Mississippi River, including Jefferson Avenue, Ayd Mill Road, and the Griggs/I-35E corridor (see recommendation #2.2).

NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Continue nature-based activities within the Regional Park System. Each Regional Park should include the following “access to nature” elements:

- » Trails that provide access to natural elements (lake, prairie, woods, river bottom, etc.)
- » Areas actively managed for high quality natural ecosystems
- » Interpretation of nature and/or nature education

3.2

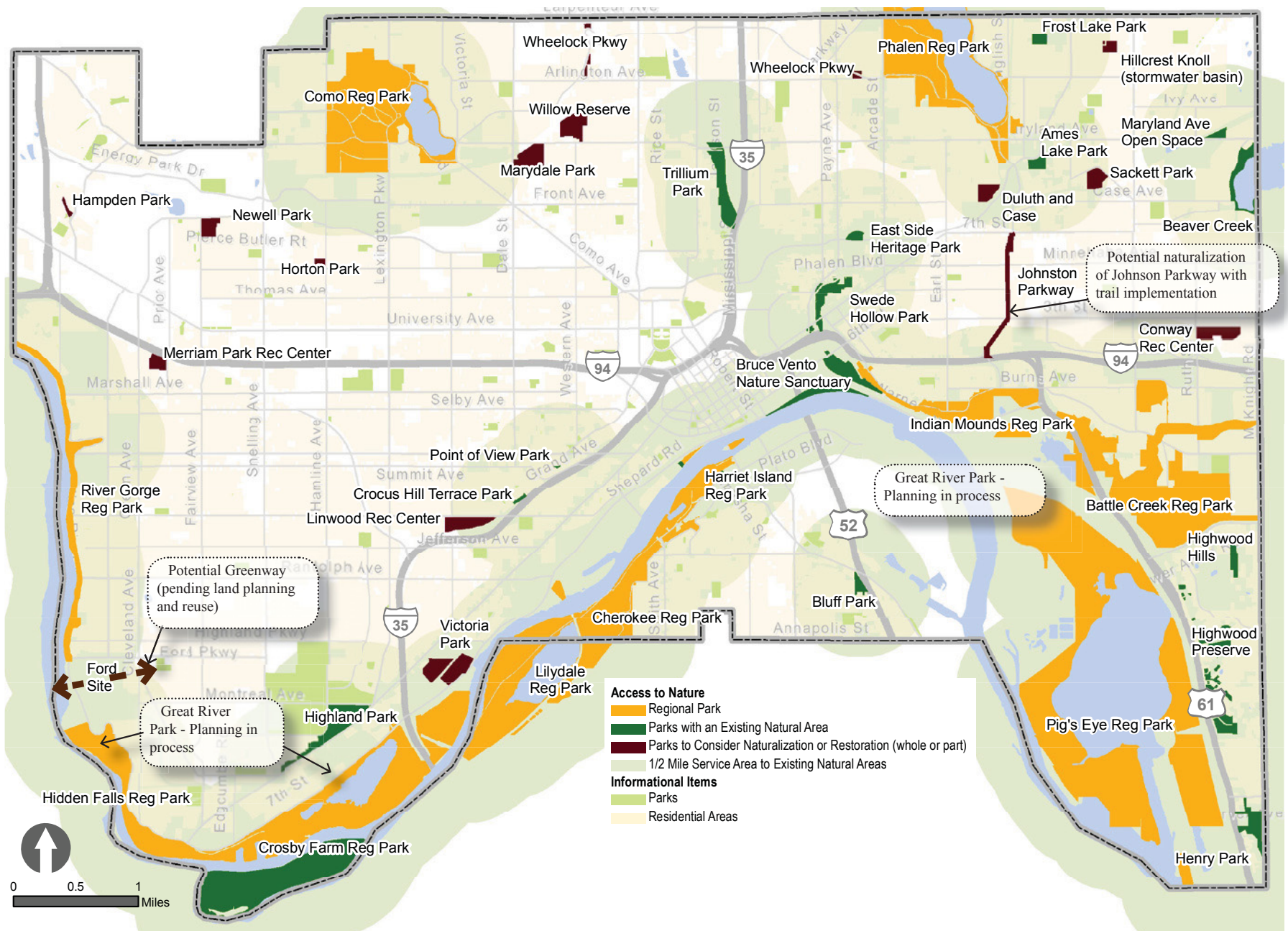
Maintain nature focus at 12 parks. Maintaining this focus should include continued management of the natural areas for high quality natural ecosystems, and consideration of trails and interpretive elements. These parks are:

- » Maryland Avenue Open Space
- » Frost Lake Park
- » Ames Lake Park
- » Beaver Lake Park (Ramsey County)
- » Highwood Reserve
- » Henry Park and the southeastern bluff preservation areas
- » Swede Hollow Park
- » Trillium Nature Sanctuary
- » Point of View Park
- » Crocus Hill Terrace Park
- » Highland Park
- » Bluff Park

3.3 Improve, augment, or restore natural areas within 10-13 parks. These parks currently either have degraded natural areas with limited access and benefit, or have excessive areas of mown lawn in neighborhoods where access to nature is limited. Improvements should include conversion of turf grass to savannah or forest floor ecosystems;

Natural Areas and Open Space Recommendations

Figure 3.8



TRANSFORMATION REALIZED

Phalen Regional Park

Though centered on a lake, Phalen Regional Park did not historically offer much in the way of access to nature. In the late 1990s, Lake Phalen's shorelines were degraded, more an example of what not to do than of environmental stewardship. In 2001 a coalition of public agencies, including the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and additional local partners, initiated a comprehensive ecological shoreland restoration plan. This plan utilized native plant species and bio-engineering techniques to stabilize the lakeshore, establishing a sustainable, natural shoreland.

The stabilization work used a combination of staff, contractor, and volunteer labor. Since 2001, more than 1,800 students have donated thousands of volunteer hours to the project. The use of student labor results in hands-on stewardship and education and creates tangible environmental community benefits. Phalen Regional Park now features approximately two miles of stable, biologically diverse shoreland, making it one of the largest lakeshore ecological restoration projects in the state. This transformation has allowed park visitors to have access to nature beyond just the lake itself.



active management for high quality ecosystems; and/or consideration of trails and interpretive elements. Recognize the need to manage and maintain natural landscapes which can be equal to or even greater than turf grass maintenance.

These open space lands and parks are:

- » Hillcrest Knoll (stormwater basin): naturalize majority of the land area, while retaining the stormwater management function; provide information and interpretation
- » Sackett Park: augment woodland areas; formalize woodland trails; restore forest floor
- » The Wheelock Parkway open spaces between Arcade and Payne; consider replacement of lawn areas with native savannah landscape
- » The Wheelock Parkway Hairpin: augment forested slopes; formalize trail loop through woods and along the parkway
- » Willow Reserve: consider in tandem with Marydale Park; prepare a park plan for this pair with nature in mind
- » Marydale Park: consider in tandem with Willow Reserve; prepare a park plan for this pair with nature in mind
- » Horton Park Arboretum: transform ground-plane to extend the arboretum function of this park to appropriate urban perennials, grasses, and other sustainable home landscaping options
- » Newell Park: consider transformation of a portion of the lawn areas to prairie / savanna
- » Hampden Park: implement naturalized stormwater management facility according to the park plan
- » Merriam Park: augment woodland areas; formalize natural surface walking trails; provide interpretation
- » Linwood Park (Community Center): add soft surface trails and interpretation along the wooded slope
- » Victoria Park: include natural elements according to the park concept plan
- » Conway Park: consider transforming the east part of the park to native overstory trees in conjunction with other facility recommendations
- » Parts of Duluth and Case Park through the potential

addition and naturalization of adjacent Ramsey County land

- » Depending upon the results of land planning and reuse of the Ford property, add a linear greenway connection from Cleveland Avenue to the River

3.4 Restore savannah-type landscapes along Johnson Parkway, along with implementation of the Grand Rounds. Though all currently mown areas do not have to have this more natural character, providing some larger contiguous native areas would increase access to nature in a part of town currently underserved. In addition, the areas that are restored can, once they are established, minimize maintenance time and dollars.

3.5 Implement the recommendations of the Great River Park Master Plan with regard to connections to the river (Saint Paul's most important natural assets), restoration/augmentation of natural ecosystems, and interpretation.

Great River Park Master Plan

In 2009 the City of Saint Paul received legislative funding to create a master plan for the Mississippi River valley that stretches through the city. The Great River Park Master Plan is the fusion of Saint Paul's unique natural systems and recreational resources on the Mississippi River with community and economic development in adjacent neighborhoods.

A team of national and local experts is working with Saint Paul Parks and Recreation and the community to apply best practices and innovation in sustainable park and open space planning, ecological restoration, transportation and urban design to support a system of river-based amenities that is unique to Saint Paul.

The Great River Park Master Plan is intended to transform Saint Paul in profound ways. Developed with hundreds of hours of citizen input, the Great River Park vision is based on three principles – to be more natural, more urban and more connected. These principles guide a grand vision for unifying the entire 17 mile length of Saint Paul's riverfront. Moving forward, the master plan will set the stage for the manifestation of sustainable parks and open spaces, ecological restoration and economic development, connecting the City, its neighborhoods and people, to Saint Paul's unique Mississippi River resources.

The first stages of community participation in the development of the Great River Park Master Plan were conducted in Summer/Fall 2010. Around 300 community members participated in the project introduction open house in August 2010. Week long community design forums (charrettes) were completed in October and November 2010. Program and concept plan alternatives were developed and comments recorded. Refinement and review of the concept alternatives will occur in early 2011. The Master Plan is scheduled for completion in July 2011.

For more information on the Great River Park project, please visit www.greatriverpark.org.

The background of the slide is a solid orange color. Overlaid on this are dark brown silhouettes. In the upper left, a bird is perched on a thick tree branch. Below it, a person is captured in a handstand, with one leg extended upwards and the other bent. To the left of the person, there are several tall, thin stalks with circular flower heads. In the background, there are more trees and a distant horizon line.

PARKS

TRANSFORMATION:

**Parks Become
More Sustainable**

4. PARKS FINDINGS

Saint Paul has an extensive system of 170 park properties that provide a wide range of recreation, open space, social, aesthetic, environmental, health, and environmental benefits to the City. Existing parks are well located across the City. Approximately 95% of residents are located within ½ mile of a city park, trail, or open space area. Saint Paul's parks include regional scale parks, community parks, recreation centers (parks and recreations center buildings), neighborhood parks, linear parks, parkways, and other miscellaneous lands (traffic circles, and remnant public park properties).

Park and recreation coverage - Parks are generally high quality and most residents are within ½ mile of a park space. Four recreation coverage gaps have been identified- near Grand/Snelling, in the Central Corridor near Lexington, one north of TH 61/I-94 and one in the Sibley Manor area (Snelling/West 7th).

Park and recreation coverage strategies:

- » Grand/Snelling Gap – the concentration of colleges and universities in these areas provide semi-public open space. Additional park space is not recommended. There is a need for a children's play area.
- » Central Corridor near Lexington– if redevelopment presents an opportunity, a new neighborhood park or totlot should be established south of University Avenue, north of I-94 between Hamline and Victoria.
- » North of TH 61/I-94 Gap – improve Johnson Parkway with trail connections to provide better access to existing parks. Residents are also able to access Sackett Park Play Area.
- » Snelling/West 7th Area - The high concentration of residents located between W. 7th Street and Shepard Road create a need for additional recreation services. Because of the developed nature of the area adding a new park may be difficult. Delivery of additional recreation services through Mobile Recreation is recommended. In the long term continue to monitor the ability to create a park through redevelopment or add recreation through a partnership with an area business or property owner.

Resident satisfaction with City parks is generally very high (The results of the 2007-08 Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Citizen Survey show that most people are very satisfied with Saint Paul's parks and recreation facilities. 78% of respondents rated the overall quality of parks and recreation in Saint Paul as excellent or good.

Regional Parks

The Twin Cities' regional park system serves to protect natural resources and provide outdoor recreation for public enjoyment. Saint Paul owns and operates, in partnership with the Metropolitan Council and other local government agencies, 11 regional parks within and adjacent to its border. Regional parks contribute significantly to Saint Paul's entire parks, trails and open space system. When implemented, the Grand Rounds parkway will serve as the connector or link to each of the regional parks.

Most of Saint Paul's regional parks are part of the 3,500 acres of publicly owned land along the 17 mile section of the Mississippi River within Saint Paul. Planning for these areas is currently underway as part of the Great River Park (GRP) Master Plan. GRP is intended to guide the long-range vision for future development, revitalization and implementation. Rather than duplicate this planning effort, this plan defers to the future recommendations of the Great River Park Master Plan. In addition to the Great River Park Master Plan, all other regional parks have their own individual master plans. When available, the recommendations of recent master plans have been summarized for reference below.

Battle Creek

While Battle Creek Regional Park has over 1,800 acres, only about 400 acres are located in the City of Saint Paul. Managed by Ramsey County, the park is located in both the cities of Saint Paul and Maplewood. The park has extensive woods, wetlands and grassland attracting many species of wildlife. The park has soft, paved, and mountain biking trails. Cross country skiing is available in the winter months. The Maplewood portion has a playground, off-leash dog park, the Waterworks Family Aquatic Center, picnic shelters, and a picnic pavilion that can accommodate up to 500 people. The park has a tunnel which connects it to the Samuel H. Morgan Regional Trail. Battle Creek Regional Park has a master plan in place.

The 2005 Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework Great River Park Master Plan Charrette Briefing Package identifies the need for additional soft hiking trails, native plantings, and invasive species control in Battle Creek. Planning for Battle Creek will be a part of the Great River Park Master Plan currently underway.

Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary

Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary has trails, limestone and sandstone bluffs, spring-fed wetlands, abundant bird life, and dramatic views of downtown Saint Paul and the Mississippi River.

Cherokee

Cherokee Regional Park extends along the Mississippi River Bluff on the West Side. The 66-acre park is used principally as a parkway and picnic grounds. The majority of the park consists of mature over-story trees and turf. The park offers two open-air picnic shelters, restroom building, playground, basketball court, two tennis courts and a backstop for an informal athletic field. There are two formal scenic overlooks and access to Vento's View Scenic Overlook in Lilydale Regional Park.

In addition to its own master plan, the park will be a part of the Great River Park Master Plan. There is also the Cherokee Regional Trail Master Plan which guides the improvement of the regional trail through Cherokee Park.

Como Regional Park

One of Saint Paul's busiest attractions, Como Park is a 384-acre park that has an extensive array of activities that attracts visitors from far outside of Saint Paul. Park facilities are connected by 2.3 miles of paved trails. Featured attractions include the Como Park Zoo and the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory which are open daily to inspire visitors to value the presence of living things in our lives. Adjacent to the zoo is an amusement area with Como Town Amusement Park, the Cafesjian Carousel, and Putt'er There MiniGolf. Across Lexington Parkway,

the portion of the park around Como Lake includes a paved multi-use loop trail, fishing pier, the Lakeside Pavilion, and paddleboat rentals. The entire park has extensive picnic and gathering areas, including a shelter, pavilion, and a Historic Streetcar Station. Active recreational facilities include the 18-hole Como Golf Course, Como Pool, tennis courts, ball fields, soccer fields, a playground, and the Woodland classroom that is scheduled to open in 2012.

In addition to the master plan, there is a concept plan which was developed in 2003 for the Como Zoo, Conservatory, and Amusement Ride Area. The concept plan seeks to plan for this area as one unified campus which creates an attractive, educational and memorable setting for plant displays, animal exhibits, and amusement rides. Some of the recommendations include the redesign of the amusement ride area, upgrade of the circulation system, improvements to the conservatory and animal exhibits, redesign of the support areas, and improvements to the campus edge. Some of the initiatives identified that have already been completed include the construction of the new entrance and the Polar Bear Odyssey.

Crosby Farm

With 546 acres, Crosby Farm Regional Park, provides a unique natural resource area along the Mississippi River. The park boasts two lakes, wetlands, and flood plain forest. There are 6.7 miles of paved trails that wind through the park and connect to Mississippi River Boulevard parkway. The park also has soft interpretive trails, a floating boardwalk and dock between the lakes, and a picnic area. Anglers can catch fish from Crosby Lake, Upper Lake, or the Mississippi River.

Proposed facilities identified in the 2005 Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework Great River Park Master Plan Charrette Briefing Package include a nature interpretive facility, additional interpretative program tools, and the addition to and restoration of the trails. There is a master plan for this park along with the Great River Park Master Plan that will encompass this area.

Harriet and Raspberry Islands

Located on the Mississippi River across from downtown Saint Paul, Harriet and Raspberry Islands were one of the first recreational sites in Saint Paul. With over 70 acres of urban riverfront park, the site offers a wide range of activities. Harriet Island offers a formal river walk, picnicking, a 300-person pavilion, two small performance stages, and a unique playground (currently under construction) with a paddleboat-shaped climbing area, track ride, swings, slides, and a water table. The two marina harbors offer landing and restroom facilities, a boat storage area, and live aboard boats. The public and excursion docks area includes transient boat accommodations, floating restaurants/bed and breakfasts, river boat cruises, and a theater boat.

Renovations to Raspberry Island were completed in 2008. Additional user amenities include a river walk, additional boat landing or slips, and restroom facilities added to the Saint Paul Boat Club building.

A Master Plan for Harriet Island was completed in 1982. The Master Plan focuses improvements on the west side of the park, including the extension of the river walk and additional paved and soft trails. A new play area for 2-5 year olds is proposed, as is a new picnic area with a shelter. Raspberry and Harriet Islands will also be part of the Great River Park Master Plan.

Hidden Falls

Hidden Falls Regional Park was one of the four original parks selected for Saint Paul by noted landscape architect Horace Cleveland. The 128 acre park is flanked by the Mississippi River and 75 foot high bluffs. In addition to more developed areas, the park still contains a primitive setting where nature abounds. The small spring-fed waterfall from which the park got its name is a unique feature of the park. There are continuous paved trails and looped soft paths throughout the park. Picnic facilities, including a shelter and restroom building are available. No-fee car and trailer parking is provided adjacent to the public boat launch. Cross-country ski shelters extend



Lilydale Regional Park



Crosby Farm Regional Park

the park's use into the winter months. Hidden Falls is separated from Crosby Farm Regional Park by the Watergate Marina, but connected by the trail system.

There is a master plan for Hidden Falls along with the 2005 Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework Great River Park Master Plan Charrette Briefing Package that identifies the need for an additional picnic shelter/restroom structure at the downstream end of the park. Planning for this park will be part of the Great River Park Master Plan.

Indian Mounds

Indian Mounds Park is one of the oldest parks in the region. Situated atop Dayton's Bluff east of downtown, the park is a burial site for at least two American Indian cultures. At one time at least 37 burial mounds stood along the bluffs of the park, now only six remain. The park also preserves a municipal forest and restored oak savanna and prairie plantings. The 100 acre multi-use park has nearly three miles of paved trails that traverse the bluffs, a playground, tennis courts, two scenic overlooks, and two picnic shelters/restroom buildings.

A planning process is currently underway to update the existing master plan for Indian Mounds Park. Initial goals for the master plan include preserving the historical and cultural resources, viewshed, and valuable natural resources; restoring native vegetation and desirable existing facilities; and improving connections to nearby neighborhoods, trails and parks, park amenities and signage. The park will also be a part of the Great River Park Master Plan.

Lilydale

Named for the abundance of lily pads that dot the surface of Pickerel Lake during the summer, Lilydale Regional Park is a 384-acre park which straddles the cities of Saint Paul, Lilydale, and Mendota Heights. The park is owned and operated by the City of Saint Paul. The park contains steep 200-foot bluffs, a 100-acre lake, and 1,700 feet of shoreline. Historically the site was the location for the Village of Lilydale and had a

mixture of residential, commercial, industrial, and landfill uses. Structures have been removed, though significant rubble remains entangled in volunteer vegetation growth. Lilydale is also the site of the former Twin City Brick Co., which mined the bluff for clay for almost 100 years. The mining operations exposed extensive fossil beds, and the area has become well known among paleontologists. The park currently has 2 miles of multi-use trail, public boat launch and parking, and a bluff overlook.

A Master Plan amendment to the original 1980 master plan was recently completed. Its implementation will restore the park to a natural resource-based park. There are extensive improvements planned to address motorized and non-motorized transportation through the park, removal of contaminated soils and debris, stormwater management, and the restoration/stabilization of shoreline. New facilities will include an 8.5 acre off-leash dog park, five wildlife viewing platforms, and a fishing pier extending into Pickerel Lake. The park will also be a part of the Great River Park Master Planning process.

Phalen-Keller Regional Park

Phalen-Keller Regional Park encompasses nearly 750 acres in Saint Paul and Maplewood and includes almost nine miles of shoreline on four lakes. The regional park is jointly administered by Saint Paul (Phalen Park) and Ramsey County (Keller Park). Aquatic-related facilities include a swimming beach, sand volleyball court, Lakeside Activities Center, boat launch, and fishing piers. The park also has paved trails and a playground. Upcoming construction will include racquetball and handball courts at Maryland Avenue and Johnson Parkway. In addition to picnic spots spread throughout the park, visitors can use the picnic shelter, picnic pavilion, or amphitheater for larger gatherings. The park also has both Phalen and Keller Golf Courses. These 18-hole golf courses each have a clubhouse/banquet facility that is available for rental and during wintertime cross country skiing.

The Phalen/Keller Regional Park Master Plan was one of the first to be submitted to the Metropolitan Council in 1975. Currently, there is a park master planning process underway to address changing recreational trends, current demographics, updates of outdated facilities, and the effect high levels of use have on the park's natural resources. The conceptual master plan includes facility renovations, trail enhancements and additional native plantings and restorations. It also identifies the potential for a splash pad at the beach, the provision of a durable surface for active recreation on Picnic Island, and an active recreation area for tennis and handball.

Pig's Eye

Largely undeveloped, the 1,200-acre Pig's Eye Regional Park contains 500 acres of shallow lake and 700 acres of mostly undeveloped wetland and flood plain forest. Near the river there is an inaccessible Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Scientific and Natural Area which protects one of the largest heron and egret rookeries in a metropolitan area in the upper Midwest. A portion of the site was a landfill which was closed in the early 1970s. There is also a wood recycling facility on the northwest corner.

The Great River Park Master Plan Charrette Briefing Package discusses the potential for limited soft surface hiking trails, observation blinds, and connections to Battle Creek and Samuel H. Morgan trails. The Great River Park Master Planning process will include this area.

Mississippi River Gorge Regional Park

This 219-acre parkway and trail corridor extends on both sides of the Mississippi River from near downtown Minneapolis at St. Anthony Falls to Crosby Farm Regional Park. The 5.7-mile Mississippi River Gorge was formed as the Mississippi River carved out the sandstone and limestone bluffs. Multi-use trails and scenic overlooks are located on both sides of the river. The City owns and operates the area between Emerald Street and the Hidden Falls Regional Park entrance on Mississippi River Boulevard.

There is a need for additional bluff preservation work, trail restoration and expansion, river edge access, and interpretative elements at the National Register's Meeker Island Lock and Dam, the first lock and dam on the Mississippi River, which was abandoned around 1912. There is a Master Plan for the adjacent Mississippi River Boulevard. In addition, this area will be part of the Great River Park Master Plan.

Community Parks and City-Wide Athletic Parks

Saint Paul's community parks and athletic parks continue to serve as important sites for athletic programming and specialty recreation facilities. Often the sites of adult and youth sports leagues, it is important that they have user amenities such as restrooms, water fountains, and benches, as well as high quality fields and facilities. Since they draw from both within and outside of Saint Paul, it is important that community parks and athletic parks have convenient access from major roadway corridors, ample parking, and trail connections.

City-wide athletic parks such as Dunning Fields, McMurray, and Rice & Arlington Sports Complex primarily provide fields for baseball, softball, and turf field sports such as soccer, football, rugby, Lacrosse, etc. Arlington-Arkwright Park has one fenced baseball field, one fenced soccer field and an off-leash dog area.

Community parks such as Highland, Trillium and Oxford offer a wide variety of active and passive community oriented recreation. Highland Park offers the City's only disc golf course, the Highland Park Aquatic Center, a large playground and 27 holes of golf. Oxford Community Center/Jimmy Lee Recreation Center offers the City's only indoor waterpark called Great River Water Park, four indoor gymnasiums, a playground and planned athletic field improvements. The proposed 40-acre Victoria Park will encompass both passive and active elements, including four synthetic turf fields, a community garden, a



Highland Park

playground, and a wetland trail. Trillium Nature Sanctuary is scheduled for development beginning the Fall of 2010.

Recommended Actions

4.1 Focus on high quality fields and specialty facilities at city-wide athletic parks distributed throughout the community. See the Outdoor Athletic Facilities section for recommendations for specific city-wide athletic parks.

4.2 Ensure each community park provides user amenities including restrooms, water fountains, and lighting.

4.3 Routinely assess parking adequacy to ensure use is not adversely affecting surrounding neighborhoods.

4.4 Classify the new Victoria Park as a community park and implement the proposed concept plan.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide for active recreational needs close to home. They are easily accessible by foot or bicycle. In addition to providing outdoor facilities such as play equipment, fields, and sport courts, many also are the site for recreation or community centers. Saint Paul's neighborhood parks are generally in good shape. Some reinvestment is needed for the areas where recreation centers have been recently removed.

Saint Paul's neighborhood parks form the foundation of its historical recreational system. While the future vision is of a system which is activity-oriented rather than facility oriented, neighborhood parks still have an important role to play in ensuring convenient access. An analysis of the distribution of neighborhood parks shows that approximately 85% of residential properties are within a half mile walk of a neighborhood park. The current service area gaps include:

» Between University Avenue and Interstate 94 in the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) area. Additional information about this area can be found in the subsequent Central Corridor subsection. As redevelopment allows, a new neighborhood park should be developed between Hamline and Victoria to address this gap.

» Around the intersection of West Seventh Street and Snelling Avenue. There are concerns about access to neighborhood park facilities in this area due to topography, the railroad lines and Shepherd Road.

» In the Snelling and Summit area near Ramsey Middle School. The significant open space available at the private colleges and universities minimize the need for an additional neighborhood park in this area.

» Northwest quadrant west of Como Park. This small gap is generally served by the facilities located at Tilden Park.

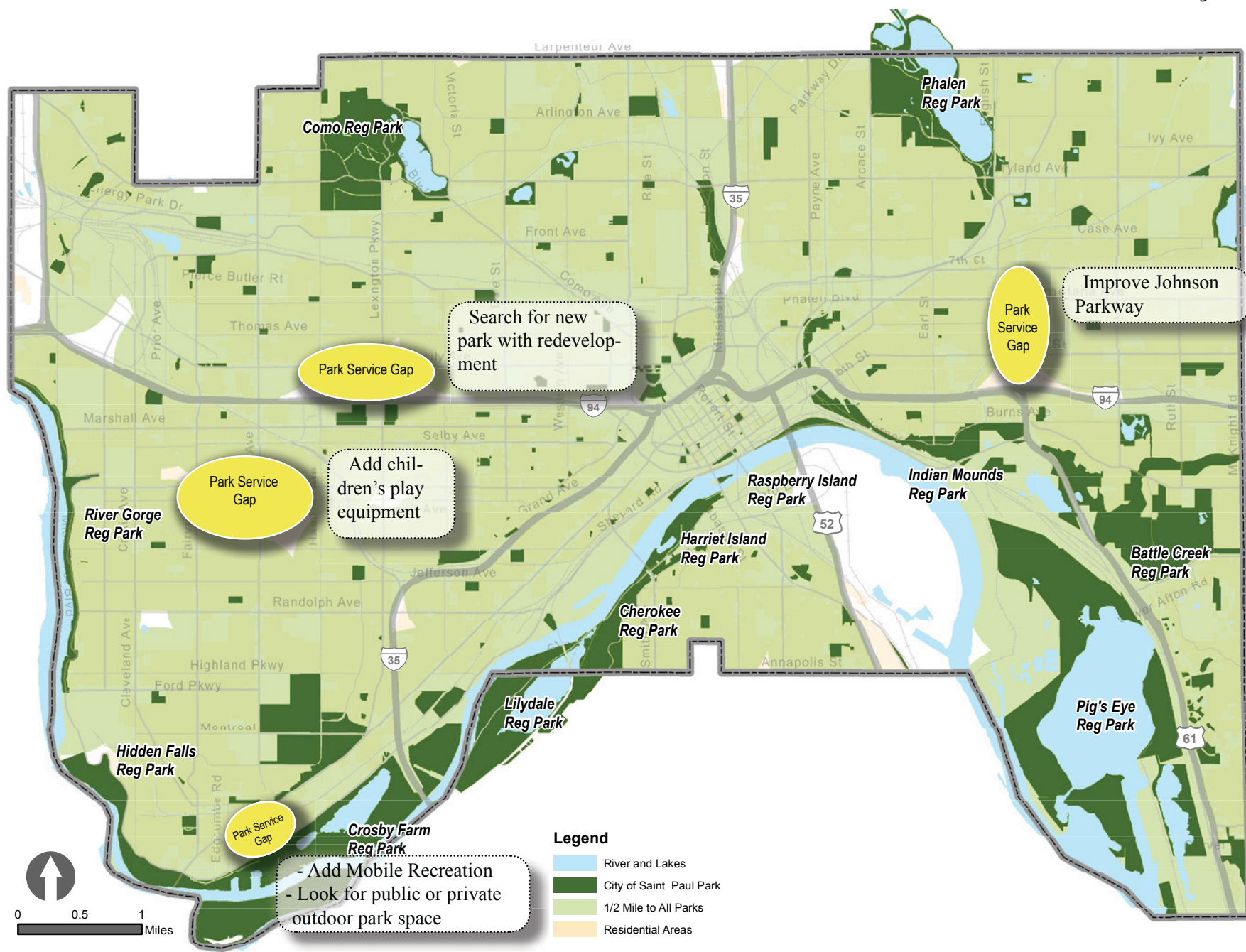
» Northwest quadrant around Wheelock and Arlington. While this area is not served by a neighborhood park, there are recreational facilities at the Rice and Arlington Sports Complex. Residents may also be able to access facilities at the nearby middle school or at Roseville's Tamarack Park located just north of Larpenteur Avenue.

» Northeast quadrant adjacent to Interstate 35E and north of Arlington. While there is not a playground, there is a sport court, basketball court, and tennis courts at Arlington-Arkwright Park. Improvements to Wheelock Parkway will facilitate residents in accessing other parks in the system. In addition, there is playground and some fields at Wheelock Elementary, a school operated by the Saint Paul School District for early childhood education.

» Northeast quadrant adjacent to Interstates 35E and 94. This area is served by Weida Park, a small 1.5 acre park with a playground and softball field. Weida Park is scheduled to receive 2011 construction dollars for a new play area.

» Northeast quadrant east of Johnson Parkway. This area could be better served if Johnson Parkway was improved as a trail corridor. Area residents are also able to access Sackett Park Play Area, a recreation center operated by the Boys and Girls Club of Saint Paul.

» Northeast quadrant adjacent to McKnight Road. Serving this area is challenging due to the railroad track that bisects it. Exploration of the addition of neighborhood facilities at Ramsey County's Beaver Lake Park should be explored.



TRANSFORMATION REALIZED

Carty Park

Carty Park is one of St. Paul's most successful neighborhood parks. It occupies a full city block and is truly the heart of the neighborhood. The park is defined by mature trees and a mix of casual, active and passive recreation options. There is a place for picnicking, a central playground, tennis and basketball courts. Shady, well lit pathways connect recreation features to the surrounding neighborhood.

Carty Park's success is based on continued commitment to creating a special, neighborhood recreation place. The playground, park walkways, and tennis and basketball courts have all been upgraded and improved as needed over the last 10-15 years. Mature trees, some planted many years ago, provide shade. Though Carty Park has not undergone a dramatic, one-time investment, it is an example of how incremental transformations, say replacing the new playground or adding lighting, over time can elevate a neighborhood park from utilitarian to a cherished gathering place.



Recommended Actions

4.5 As redevelopment allows, a new neighborhood park should be developed in the Central Corridor area bounded by I-94, Victoria, University Avenue, and Hamline to address this service gap.

4.6 For the recreation need in the Snelling/West 7th area, delivery of additional recreation services through Mobile Recreation is recommended. In the long term, continue to monitor the ability to create a park through redevelopment or add recreation through a partnership with an area business or property owner.

4.7 Trail connections along Wheelock and Johnson Parkways should be strengthened in order to provide better access to the neighborhood park system, particularly for the small number of residents who are outside of the half mile service areas (also see recommendation #2.1).

4.8 Identify planning funds and conduct a concept planning process once a recreational center building has been earmarked for closing or removal so as to identify how the park will function once those facilities and services are no longer available.

4.9 Renaming and/or signage change should be considered when a recreation center building is no longer operating.

4.10

Implement planned improvements at Front, Sylvan, Prosperity and Burns Avenue parks.

4.11 Create or maintain neighborhood park amenities at Aldine, Hamline and Hague, Lockwood, Tilden, and Weida parks as these smaller parks serve as neighborhood parks for the surrounding residents.

4.12 Maintain neighborhood park amenities at community parks, including Duluth and Case, Highland, and Arlington-Arkwright to fill a need for those types of facilities.

Downtown Parks

Downtown Saint Paul has an exceptional system of urban parks in downtown and river parks along the Mississippi. The fifteen parks located between Interstate 94, the Mississippi River, Smith Avenue (the High Bridge) and Highway 52 total 38 acres in size. The largest, at 21 acres, is the Lower Landing Park created by the relocation of Warner Road just east of Jackson Street. The park currently has a multi-use paved trail, river overlook, and numerous picnic tables and benches. The remaining fourteen downtown parks range in size from 0.1 to 3.3 acres, with an average of 1.2 acres. Only two of these parks, Wacouta Commons and Fourth and Sibley (downtown children's play area) have a children's playground. The other downtown parks are for passive uses and include features such as public art, fountains, an off-leash dog area, ornamental gardens, and small civic gathering spaces.

It is evident that the downtown parks add to a vibrant urban appeal and livability that attract residents, employers, and visitors to the downtown area. The downtown core east of Kellogg Boulevard has approximately 10,000 residents. This number is expected to increase due to continued redevelopment, especially in the historic Lowertown neighborhood.

Recommended Actions

4.13 Seize opportunities to add to the publicly accessible plazas and open spaces in the downtown area. Where possible, these should be privately owned and managed.

4.14 Create an inviting trail connection from downtown to Bruce Vento Regional Park and Swede Hollow Park.

4.15 Enhance pedestrian connections across Interstate 94 to improve access to the extensive open space located on the State Capital Grounds.

4.16 Maintain the strong connection between downtown and Harriet Island and Raspberry Island Regional Parks, especially across the Wabasha Street bridge.

4.17 Add off leash dog park areas and children's play areas and public art for increased livability and to attract future residents to the downtown area.

4.18 Add amenities such as outdoor exercise stations, shaded seating areas, and other elements that appeal to a burgeoning senior population.

Central Corridor

The six and a half miles of the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) line in Saint Paul is the most significant public investment project in the history of the east metro. It will result in a significant amount of public and private investment, particularly along University Avenue. Planning already conducted along this corridor includes the Central Corridor Development Strategy and ten station area plans. These planning efforts have identified a need for a significant amount of park and open space along the corridor. Of particular concern is serving the existing residential neighborhoods between Prior Avenue and Marion Street, and any new residential concentrations occurring as part of redevelopment.

Within the almost four-mile stretch along the Central Corridor between Prior Avenue and Marion Street there are only four parks totaling approximately 13 acres. Central Village Park (4 acres) and Western Park (5 acres) are neighborhood parks located at the eastern end of the corridor. While both parks are in relatively good shape and provide neighborhood facilities, stronger neighborhood connections to each would be beneficial for the corridor. Iris Park (1.8 acres), located just east of Prior Avenue, serves as a small open space area. Located along University Avenue, Dickerman Park (2.4 acres) is a park that needs to be reclaimed and restored as a linear park as it currently serves as private parking and front lawn area for the adjacent businesses. The half mile neighborhood park service area gap shows a need for an additional park between Hamline and Victoria. In planning for this area,



Lower Landing Park

consideration needs also be given to the multitude of parks and recreational facilities that are located just north and south of the area. Stronger north-south connections to these facilities are needed to encourage their use.

Recommended Actions

4.19 Parks and Recreation should take a proactive role during the redevelopment process to ensure consideration is given to the creation of additional private parks and open spaces, as well as enhanced streetscape to create a high quality pedestrian environment. Specific desires during this process include:

- » A new neighborhood park or totlot should be established south of University Avenue between Hamline and Victoria to address the half-mile neighborhood park service area gap
- » Streetscape enhancements should provide stronger connections to the existing park and recreation facilities both north and south of the corridor, particularly south of Interstate 94
- » Additional plazas and open spaces should be a focus of redevelopment efforts, especially in areas with new concentrations of residential development. These should be privately owned and managed with public access provided via an easement

4.20 Reclaim and restore Dickerman Park as a linear park by delineating the park boundaries and establishing park function and visual character.

4.21 Recognize the YMCA's presence as an asset in the recreation system in Saint Paul. Support their desire to be in a location that takes advantage of the synergy and access to transit.

4.22 In conjunction with Central Corridor planning and redevelopment, study route and improvement options for the Grand Rounds Parkway section between Pelham Blvd. and Como Ave.

4.23 Assess recreation needs along in the higher density Central Corridor residential area west of TH 280.

Parkland Diversion

City park land is a highly valued public asset that if sold or lost often cannot easily be replaced. To protect from the loss of park land, the City has an established process for replacing park land that is diverted or disposed of (sold or leased) for non-park purposes. Cell towers are an example land leased for non-park purposes. If land is diverted or disposed of, replacement park lands must be acquired with consideration given to replacing park land within the same area of the City and maintaining a balance of park types within the park system. Chapter 13.1.01 of the Saint Paul City Charter provides for the diversion or disposal of city park land by resolution of the City Council.

There is a formal process for all parkland diversions which involves City staff, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the City Council as well as the diversion applicant.

Encroachments occur when a land owner is using adjacent park land for private purposes, sometimes unknowingly. Encroachments may be as small as installing a private play set on park land to as permanent as a garage on park property. When mutually beneficial, encroachments can result in diversions of land but there are often cases where diversion is not appropriate and the encroachment must be enforced. There are currently no formal guidelines for enforcing encroachments. A process and guidelines for encroachments is needed.

Recommended Actions

4.24 While the current diversion process is effective in discouraging removal of land from the park system, it is, in some cases, not residential friendly. In cases where a resident desires a very small portion of land, administrative and appraisal costs may be much larger than the actual land value. The City should consider revising the policy to include levels

of diversion based on the amount of land desired, the public benefit of the park land, and purposes it is being used for (i.e. temporary structure such as portion of a deck or permanent structure such as a garage).

4.25 If the Mounds Maintenance Facility is not needed within the system as a maintenance location, the property should be evaluated to determine if it can provide a valuable recreation function such as an off leash dog area or other similar use or if the property should be considered for diversion.

4.26 There are some small park lands that are not currently developed with recreation and have little value as recreation or open space features and should be considered for diversion or enhancement to create recreation or access to nature.

These are:

- » Cambridge Triangle (0.07 acres)
- » Dawson Park (1.99 acres) – wooded slope without public access
- » Gordon Square (0.06 acres)
- » Forest St Triangle (0.03 acres)
- » Kidd Park (0.14 acres)
- » May Park (0.81 acres)
- » Skidmore Park (0.37 acres)
- » Tatum Park (0.61 acres) - retain sufficient land adjacent to Pierce Butler Route to allow for potential future off-road trail.
- » Walsh Park (0.79 acres) – wooded slope without public access

4.27 Small park lands that are open space within the road right-of-way are recommended for removal from the park system and turned over to Public Works as right-of-way, with the stipulation that they remain open space. These are lands that have little recreational value and function in much the same way as other traffic circles and medians on other city streets:

- » Bohland Triangle (0.18 acres)
- » Commonwealth Park (1.04 acres)

- » Concord Park (2.789 acres)
- » Crocus Triangle (0.23 acres)
- » Feronia Square (0.01 acres)
- » Holcombe Circle (0.18 acres)
- » Kenwood Park (0.19 acres)
- » Leroy Triangle (0.05 acres)
- » Maria Ave Triangle (0.04 acres)
- » Oakely Square (0.01 acres)
- » Oakland Terrace Park (0.05 acres)
- » Raymond Square (0.37 acres)
- » Stonebridge Oval (0.17 acres)
- » Van Slyke Triangle (0.07 acres)
- » Xinia Triangle (0.21 acres)

4.28 Address encroachment issues in the following ways:

- » Guidelines are being developed for enforcing encroachments that can be fairly applied to all properties.
- » To discourage future encroachments, consider adopting guidelines for communicating park land boundaries with adjacent landowners. Guidelines may include sending homeowners property boundary information at the time of sale and/or implementing a policy of marking the park boundary with fencing, signs, or survey stakes.
- » Differentiate between encroachments into parks and encroachments into parkways with more specific guidelines for parkways that better relate to the unique issues of parkway encroachments.

OUTDOOR ATHLETIC FACILITIES

TRANSFORMATION:

**Athletic Facilities
Become More Frequent
and More Concentrated**



5. OUTDOOR ATHLETIC FACILITIES FINDINGS

Outdoor athletic fields and courts offer facilities for organized team and group activities and informal use. They are well used by youth and adults. Saint Paul's athletic parks and outdoor athletic facilities at community and neighborhood parks play an important role in community health and identity, socialization and individual health.

Athletic Fields

The city-wide athletic parks in Saint Paul (Dunning Fields, McMurray, and Rice & Arlington Sports Complex) are very successful and well used facilities which attract residents and visitors. Many neighborhood fields are also well used by youth and adults. There are problems, however, caused by use and, in some cases, layout. Across Saint Paul's park system, there is a need to improve field quality over quantity. Today, Saint Paul's park system has an oversupply of small baseball and softball fields and an undersupply of dedicated multi-use full size turf-fields (shared by soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, Ultimate Frisbee, etc.). Many fields, particularly those in parks with recreation center buildings or in neighborhood parks, are low quality due to multiple, over-lapping and conflicting

uses, which leads to poor field conditions including erosion and compaction issues. Overlapping use can cause safety issues, limits simultaneous use of fields, and results in poor turf quality and over-use. For example, when softball, soccer, football, and ice skating all occur on one field space, the field quality and the playing experience will be poor to mediocre for all users. Though there are examples of high quality fields in the system, primarily in city-wide athletic parks, even these fields, particularly the soccer and football fields, are stressed from overuse. Opportunities for new full size adult baseball and softball fields are limited within existing park lands. To meet current demand, there is a need to maintain the overall number of adult fields and make improvements to existing fields. There is also a need to make quality improvements to youth fields. There is a need for more multi-use turf fields and dedicated high quality fields (artificial turf or irrigated sand-based grass). With changes occurring in use of Saint Paul schools there may be opportunities for more community use of some School District fields in closed or revised school sites.

Recommended Actions

- 5.1** Reduce the number of overlapping fields to improve quality. Remove unused/under-utilized ag-lime infields and restore to natural turf.
- 5.2** Create more high quality irrigated turf fields and artificial turf fields (soccer, football, rugby, lacrosse, Ultimate Frisbee, etc.). Flat turf areas have the greatest flexibility of use and adaptability to future needs. Determine which fields will be fenced and programmed and which will allow unscheduled walk-on use.
- 5.3** Maintain roughly the existing overall number of adult softball and baseball fields while improving quality.
- 5.4** Explore expanded use of school facilities.

Park Specific Recommendations

- 5.5 Arlington-Arkrigh Park** - Improve the tennis, basketball, and sport courts so the park can also function as a neighborhood park.
- 5.6 Baker Park** – remove one baseball/softball field to remove field overlap and improve quality of the existing multi-use field. Coordinate improvements with Cherokee Heights Elementary School.
- 5.7 Cherokee Regional Park** – remove softball ag-lime infield, retain backstop for informal play (remove backstop when replacement becomes necessary).
- 5.8 Como Park West Picnic Grounds** – remove one softball field to reduce field overlap and improve flexible lawn area.
- 5.9 Conway Park**– renovate existing field space at two dedicated high quality multi-use artificial turf fields.
- 5.10 Dayton's Bluff Community Center**- remove the two western softball fields. Use this space for higher quality multi-use fields (northern area).
- 5.11 Duluth and Case Park**- renovate as a high quality athletic park. Re-orient the site with the primary

vehicle access off of Phalen Boulevard and incorporate adjacent Ramsey County land into the park. Include neighborhood park amenities such as a playground and tennis courts.

- 5.12 Dunning Fields** – install higher fencing on the northern two fields; replace lighting for high quality evening play. Add lighting to the Dunning South field.
- 5.13 El Rio Vista Community Center** - renovate the eastern field space and create dedicated high quality multi-use artificial turf fields. Retain the western baseball field.
- 5.14 Ford Site** - with Ford Site redevelopment, at a minimum, retain the three high quality baseball fields and add fields to replace fields currently at Hillcrest Park (two youth softball, one youth baseball and one full size soccer field).
- 5.15 Frost Lake Park** - remove one baseball/softball field to remove field overlap and improve quality of existing multi-use field. Coordinate improvements with Frost Lake Elementary School.
- 5.16 Hazel Park Community Center** – remove northernmost softball fields to reduce field overlap. Enhance remaining fields.
- 5.17 Highwood Hills Park** – remove one baseball/softball field to remove field overlap and improve quality of existing multi-use field. Coordinate improvements with Highwood Hills Elementary School.
- 5.18 Hillcrest Community Center** – address field and parking issues at this site in coordination with planning and opportunities at the Ford site. If the existing fields can be retained and additional baseball and softball fields can occur on the Ford site, consider renovating Hillcrest Park to create a high quality turf field, add parking and, if space allows, construct a pair of tennis courts to replace the single court.

Figure 3.10



5.19 McMurray Fields - reduce the number of softball fields to three. Reconfigure and renovate the remaining fields with fencing and synthetic turf to yield additional seasonal space. Consider lights for existing soccer and baseball field. Evaluate relocating the overlapping broom-ball winter use to Rice & Arlington Sports Complex or another suitable location to improve quality.

5.20 Oxford Community Center – Implement the multi-use fields as planned.

5.21 Palace Community Center – remove two softball fields and redesign the site for building renovation, increased ice skating use, and higher quality multi use field space. Improve turf quality on remaining fields; consider soil improvements and /or irrigation.

5.22 Prosperity Park – remove two softball fields to reduce field overlap.

5.23 Rice & Arlington Complex – evaluate removing the westernmost artificial turf field and replacing it with broomball facilities (potential relocation from McMurray Fields/Como Park).

5.24 Rice and Lawson Community Center - renovate the lower terrace field space for dedicated high quality multi-use artificial turf fields. This area currently contains three softball fields and one baseball field.

5.25 Scheffer Community Center – reconfigure field space based on a new community center building layout and configuration.

5.26 Sylvan Park – remove two softball fields to reduce field overlap.

5.27 Victoria Park - add four new high quality multi-use turf fields at Victoria Park (pending new park development).

5.28 Washington Technology Magnet School (former Arlington High School) – explore City use of field spaces with School District.

5.29 Weida Park - remove backstop when replacement becomes necessary.

5.30 West Minnehaha Community Center– remove two softball fields for higher quality multi-use turf space.

Regional Baseball Stadium

Midway Stadium, home of the Saint Paul Saints and many other events, is falling apart and will soon have to undergo a major renovation or be replaced. The stadium is almost 30 years old. The field, restroom, concourse, and concessions infrastructure are failing and are woefully inadequate. The energy systems are terribly inefficient and not sustainable.

There is a tremendous opportunity to build a new regional ballpark at the most connected and vibrant locations in the Twin Cities - a site in the Lowertown area of Saint Paul in the midst of a regional transit hub. The downtown site is adjacent to Union Depot which will have high speed rail, passenger service, bus transportation and be the eastern terminus for the Central Corridor LRT. The Lowertown site is also the nexus of several regional trails.

The downtown stadium will be a state and regional sports facility used by students and amateur athletes from around the state, and will host fans from around the state for the Saint Paul Saints.

Recommended Action

5.31 Preserve land and obtain funding for construction of a new regional baseball stadium in Lowertown to replace Midway stadium.

TRANSFORMATION REALIZED

McMurray Fields

The open fields south of Como Regional Park were typical of many of Saint Paul's well-used sports fields. They featured poor turf on compacted soil: not a high-quality sports venue. The city's eight dedicated soccer fields and other shared multi-purpose fields were unable to meet the demands of the nearly 25,000 soccer players in Saint Paul. Teams and players were beginning to leave the city for recently built, higher quality sports venues in the suburbs.

Saint Paul installed three artificial turf fields at McMurray Athletic Fields in order to create a more sustainable long-term facility for soccer. Two of the fields have lights. Artificial turf has lower day-to-day maintenance than natural turf, and the addition of lighting ensures these fields can be used almost continuously for 8 - 9 months of the year. The centralized location simplifies maintenance and staffing, and the high quality attracts leagues and teams, which brings revenue to the system. The transformation of a city-wide scattering of moderate to low quality soccer field into a centralized high quality athletic facility has improved the park system as a whole while also reducing operating costs.



Tennis Courts

Saint Paul has an over-supply of outdoor tennis courts. City courts are supplemented by public school courts. City courts vary in condition from new to cracked and peeling. Tennis courts should not automatically be rebuilt when they wear out. Currently, an annual capital maintenance budget of \$250,000 (varies) supports replacement and repair of hard court surfaces. Courts are located across the city at recreation centers and in neighborhood parks, typically in groups of two, though there are several parks with only one court. Tennis players typically prefer, and are willing to travel longer distances for, groups of four or more high quality courts as players can usually get court-time. From a park system asset management perspective, groups of four or more courts are also desirable; it is more efficient to maintain a quality surface and to provide support facilities such as parking, lighting, and access to restrooms in a few highly used locations rather than spreading them across the system. There is also a need for indoor courts for non-summer use. Saint Paul Indoor Tennis Club operates indoor courts in Railroad Island, northeast of Downtown. Urban Tennis is pursuing options for additional indoor tennis courts.

Recommended Actions

5.32 Do not automatically rebuild courts when their condition deteriorates. Court rebuild/repair should occur in a strategic manner to assure even distribution of courts and to create groups of quality courts. Locations where there are single courts, where there are other court options nearby and/or where court condition is poor should be considered for removal. Areas where tennis courts are not replaced, the park land can be refurbished into turf, landscaping or other park facilities as needed. Courts can also be re-used for non-tennis activities such as soccer, in-line skating, general court game (four square, shuffleboard, etc.) and basketball.

Fourteen of the City's 83 courts are not recommended for replacement when they become deteriorated:

- » **Burns Avenue Park** – single court location; not recommended for replacement.
- » **Carty Park** – When their condition deteriorates, do not replace the two existing courts; The area is served by high quality courts at Dunning.
- » **College Park** – When their condition deteriorates, do not replace the two existing courts; existing courts at Langford Recreation Center serve the area.
- » **Desnoyer** – single court location; not recommended for replacement.
- » **Eastview Park** – do not replace two courts; area is served by nearby Conway Recreation Center and Harding High School.
- » **Griggs Park** – single court location; not recommended for replacement. Additional space would allow room to expand the children's play area.
- » **Hillcrest Community Center** – Do not rebuild the single court. If space allows, build a pair of courts with future park redevelopment.
- » **McQuillan Park** – single court location; not recommended for replacement. The area is served by nearby Martin Luther King Recreation Center.
- » **Orchard Recreation Center** – two courts; not recommended for replacement. The area is served by nearby courts in Como Regional Park and at Como High School.
- » **Webster Park** – low quality single court location; not recommended for replacement.

5.33 Where possible, partner with the School District to provide public access to groups of quality courts at school locations as opposed to building new City courts. Schools with existing groups of courts are: Washington Technology Center, Highland Park School, Humboldt High School and Harding High School.

5.34 Add lighting for the two existing courts at Martin Luther King Community Center.

Figure 3.11



5.35 Implement the proposal to install two tennis courts and two handball/bang board courts at Phalen Park/Johnson Parkway .

5.36

Include new lighted tennis courts when Duluth & Case park is rebuilt as a high quality athletic park. While there is a need for tennis courts in the area south of Phalen Park, depending upon the timing of Duluth and Case and Phalen Park/Johnson Parkway, both new tennis court locations may not be needed.

5.37 Replace the McMurray/Como tennis courts.

5.38 Support Urban Tennis in its efforts to find a location for indoor tennis.

Basketball Courts

Basketball is a very popular activity at outdoor courts in the City parks and in recreation center and school gyms. Outdoor courts are typically a single freestanding full or half court in a park. There are 19 full courts and 21 half courts in Saint Paul parks. Outdoor court condition varies from excellent to poor condition. Currently approximately 20% of City outdoor courts are in need of resurfacing.

Some outdoor court locations experience conflicts with surrounding uses such as adjacent residences and children's play areas. Conflicts caused by noise, late night activity, and foul language occasionally occur on full size courts used by adults and at locations where courts are close to play areas or neighboring homes. The result of the conflicts can be permanent or scheduled hooding of the basketball rim to prevent/regulate use of the court or removal of the court.

Indoor basketball occurs in community center gyms and schools across the city. Gym size, floor, materials vary widely. Replacement of synthetic surface gym floors with wood floors is recommended for all Community Center buildings (see Community Center Recommendations). Replacements should be packaged in groups to increase efficiency and lower replacement costs. Priority court floor replacements are at Dayton's Bluff, Edgcumbe, Hancock, Hazel Park, Hillcrest, Langford, Linwood, Rice and West Minnehaha.

Recommended Actions

5.39 Institute an asset management program for outdoor court surface replacement and repair.

5.40 Locate new and renovated outdoor courts to lessen proximity to sensitive uses and/or use half courts which have a tendency to attract more youth use and less intensive adult use. Identify courts where problem behavior exists and manage appropriately. Work with partners and the local community.

Other Court Sports

There are no dedicated outdoor volleyball or kato/takraw courts in the City park system. Today, people who participate in these sports tend to bring their own equipment and set it up in on flexible turf open spaces in parks. Two outdoor handball courts are planned in Phalen/Johnson Parkway location within the Regional Park.

Indoor handball and racquetball are played on specialized indoor courts. There are currently two racquetball courts at Edgumbe Recreation Center. There are no indoor handball courts.

Volleyball and badminton can all be played in standard indoor gyms. Gym size and floor materials vary widely. Special considerations for badminton use include: ceiling color other than white, so the bird is easily visible and adjusting heat and air-conditioning vents so as not to disrupt play.

Recommended Actions

5.41 Provide flexible turf open space in parks to support informal outdoor volleyball and kato / takraw. Work with the community and continue to monitor trends/developments in these sports. As demand warrants provide moveable equipment that can be set up at some Community Center parks.

5.42 Dedicate regular gym time for volleyball and badminton use. In gyms where badminton use is high, consider customizing the gym with a non-white ceiling to improve court quality.

Recreation center buildings are not needed to deliver high quality outdoor athletics. McMurray Fields, Rice & Arlington and Dunning Fields are very successful and well used examples of quality athletic experiences without staffed buildings.

CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS



TRANSFORMATION:
Play Area Experiences
Become More Diverse

6. CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS FINDINGS

There are 78 children's play areas located in parks across the City of Saint Paul. There is one new play area planned in the future Victoria Park. These play areas are supplemented by play areas at public schools. A neighborhood or public school play area should be within is easy walking distance (1/2 mile) free of major road crossings for most residents. Though in some cases school and park play areas are located very close together, many park playgrounds are heavily used during school hours by the schools. An example of this is the Martin Luther King play area, which receives constant school use in spite of a large play area on the adjacent school property.

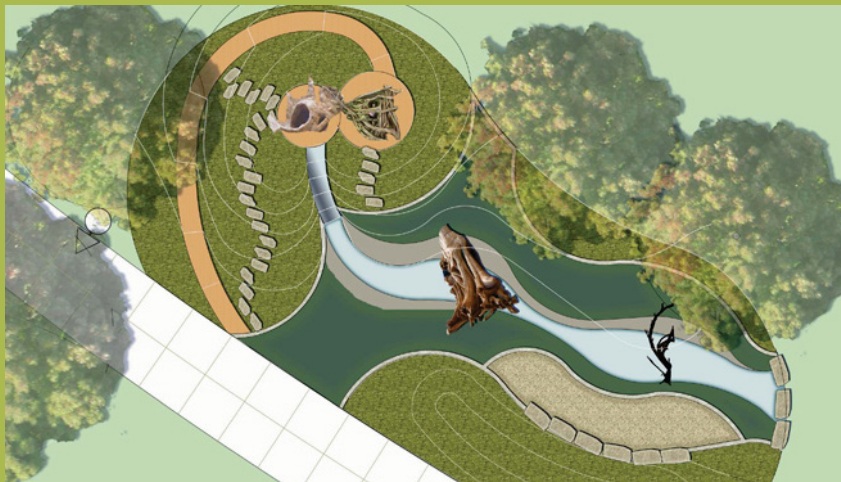
The City's asset management program for play area replacement works fairly well. Play areas are regularly inspected and are ranked in order of priority for replacement based on a variety of factors including age, condition, ADA accessibility, and safety. Currently, there is access to capital maintenance funding (\$250,000) to replace one play area per year. In addition, direct CIB requests have supplemented funding/replacement through CDBG dollars. Unfortunately, this level of funding is insufficient to replace all the existing play areas at the end of their 15 – 20 year life-cycle. This has resulted in play areas that vary widely in their condition. Some are brand new and meet all current safety and accessibility standards. Others are more than 30 years old and in desperate need of replacement. The City should move to replacing an average of four play areas per year to stay within a recommended 15-20 year life cycle.

Most of Saint Paul's play areas have standard play equipment. Few City play areas provide for unique play experiences. The rocket-ship themed playground at the Highland Park Picnic Grounds is the only example of a unique play area in the system. More use of public art and other unique play experiences is recommended.

TRANSFORMATION REALIZED

Harriet Island Play Area

With over 78 playgrounds in City parks, children in Saint Paul have many opportunities for play. But many of the city's playgrounds are similar to each other and there are few locations with unique themed play experiences. To address the desire to provide diverse play experiences in special locations, the parks and recreation department is currently building a new, unique play area at Harriet Island Regional Park. This play area will supplement the existing play area which is aimed at kids over the age of 5. The new play area, for younger children and to be completed in spring 2011, is sited near Kelley's Overlook at the west end of the park. The play area has a naturalized feel and theme featuring climbing, sliding and stepping, crawling and sand play events with driftwood and mussel shell shaped sculptural elements, evocative of the river location. Within the driftwood pieces, figures of animals found within the river valley are subtly depicted creating an element of surprise. The transformation of the play experience at Harriet Island Regional Park from typical to unique will provide a memorable play experience and be another reason to visit one of Saint Paul's most loved parks.



Recommended Actions

- 6.1** Continue the current asset management program of regular inspection, maintenance and phased replacement.
- 6.2** Evaluate the removal, through attrition, of play areas in over-served areas. There are three parks where removal of play area equipment should be considered because of proximity to other nearby play areas.
- » Hendon Triangles (served by College Park)
 - » McQuillan Park (served by Holly Tot Lot)
 - » Mounds Park Maintenance Building (served by Indian Mounds Regional Park)
- 6.3** Expand requests for funding to replace four play areas per year so that all play areas within the system can be replaced at the end of a 20 year life-cycle.
- 6.4** As play area equipment replacement is needed, create and maintain unique regional play areas across the City. Six sites are recommended:
- » Highland Park – existing
 - » Como Park Picnic Grounds – install when existing play equipment needs replacement
 - » Phalen Park Picnic Grounds – install when existing play equipment needs replacement
 - » Harriet Island – unique play equipment. Installation is to be completed in 2011
 - » Downtown
 - » Indian Mounds Park – install when existing play equipment needs replacement
- 6.5** Ensure new play areas are built with new housing development in the Central Corridor and Downtown (particularly the west side of Downtown) to attract families. These play areas can be public or private.
- 6.6** Monitor areas where public school play areas fill the service need, shown on the Play Area Map. If these play areas are removed, the City will look for opportunities to add play areas that fill the service gap.

Play Area Recommendations

Figure 3.12



SPECIAL RECREATION FACILITIES



TRANSFORMATION:

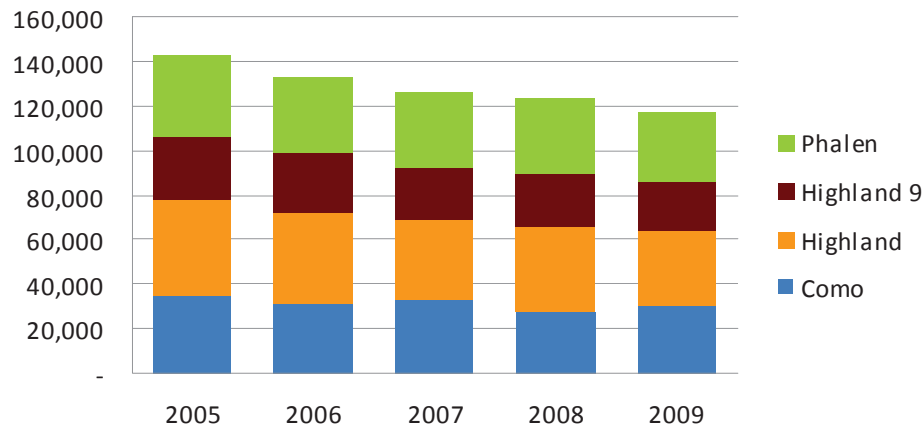
**Recreation Offerings
Become More Relevant to
Current Recreation Trends**

7. SPECIALTY RECREATION FACILITIES FINDINGS

Specialty recreation facilities such as golf courses, swimming pools, off-leash dog areas, skate parks, ice skating, etc. are important recreation and community facilities used by large but select segments of the population. Many specialty facilities, like off-leash dog areas, skate parks, sledding, cross-country skiing, disc golf, and mountain-biking are popular self directed recreation facilities that are cost effective as they don't require staffing. Combining community and specialty uses can be an efficient strategy- i.e. having rental banquet and event facilities at golf courses. A goal is to have convenient access to specialty recreational facilities spread evenly across the city.

Recreation services can be cut back to be mediocre for all or can be focused to deliver quality experiences.

Golf Rounds



Golf

The number of golf rounds has declined over the last few years in Saint Paul and across the country. The City should continue to monitor golf course use and financial performance.

Recommended Actions

7.1 Evaluate the need and benefit for three City owned golf courses (Como, Highland and Phalen). There should be a minimum of two public golf courses in Saint Paul. Monitor the future of Hillcrest Golf Course (a private course located in the northeast corner of the City that is currently for sale). If the Hillcrest course becomes a public course, study alternate use of Como Golf Course and/or Phalen Golf Course and the potential conversion to open space, trails and private uses. Conversion of golf course land to other uses could create a revenue source for other park improvements and could increase the property tax base. However, depending upon the acquisition history of golf course lands, the conversion of land in a regional park to other uses would require Metropolitan Council approval and the conversion may need to meet the City's no net loss of parkland requirement (City Charter section 13).

7.2 Renovate the Phalen Golf Course Clubhouse and its food service, if Phalen remains a golf course in the Saint Paul system. Also see recommended action 7.20 - Expand Highland Golf Course Clubhouse to 200+ seats to accommodate tournament event and rental use.

Aquatics

The 2005 Aquatic Facility Study recommended renovation of Highland Pool (pool completed in 2009, phase II bathhouse to be constructed in 2011), construction of an indoor aquatic center at Oxford Community Center (completed in 2007), construction of an outdoor aquatic center at Como Park (completion 2013) and renovation of Phalen beach and bathhouse. The popular spray pad at Lewis Park is the only outdoor spray pad in Saint Paul. Spray pads do not require lifeguards so they are a cost effective means to provide water play.

Recommended Actions

7.3 Renovate the beach and bathhouse at Phalen Regional Park.

7.4 Add spray pads evenly across the City to provide more access to free aquatic amenities. New spray pads are recommended at Phalen, Highwood Hills , El Rio Vista (Parque de Castillio) and Merriam Park.

TRANSFORMATION REALIZED

Lewis Park

Lewis Park used to be a lot like many small, neighborhood parks in Saint Paul. Though it had a small play area, the equipment was old and was not enough to draw people to the park. In the summer of 2010, the park was refurbished with the City's first neighborhood splash pad and a new playground.

The new splash pad was an immediate success and now the park bustles with activity - children splashing in the water while parents linger at the perimeter. The addition of a new and special facility has transformed this park into a neighborhood anchor that strengthens neighborhood identity, helps to build community and makes outdoor recreation more relevant and fun.



Winter Sports

The Park and Recreation system currently has facilities for sledding, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, and ice skating. In the past decade, warmer winters and variable precipitation rates have negatively affected conditions for skating and skiing. This, coupled with demographic shifts, has resulted in declining participation in these sports, particularly general skating and outdoor ice hockey.

There are 11 sledding hills in Saint Paul. These are located where topography allows, typically in neighborhood and regional parks and distributed so that most residents live within a short drive of a sledding location. Sledding hills require minimal maintenance and upkeep.

Groomed classic and skate-style cross-country ski trails are maintained by Ramsey County in Battle Creek Regional Park and by the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department at Highland, Como, and Phalen Golf Courses. There are no groomed trails in more natural parks near the Mississippi River. There is one downhill ski location, in Como Regional Park. Ski rentals and lessons are offered at this location.

There are indoor and outdoor facilities for general ice skating and ice hockey throughout the City. Ice rinks can be labor intensive to create and staff. In the face of warmer winters and a desire to provide dependable ice conditions the City has installed three refrigerated rinks. The outdoor refrigerated rink at Palace has in-ground refrigeration which efficiently establishes ice. The rinks at North Dale Recreation Center and Phalen Recreation Center use a roll out mat refrigeration system which is labor intensive to set up, remove, and store each year. A refrigerated pleasure skating rink is installed annually downtown in the street adjacent to Landmark Plaza and is the only signature pleasure skating rink in the City. Other natural surface general rinks and hockey rinks are installed in locations where there is participation in these sports and the locations can vary from year to year. Many outdoor skating rinks are operated and maintained in City

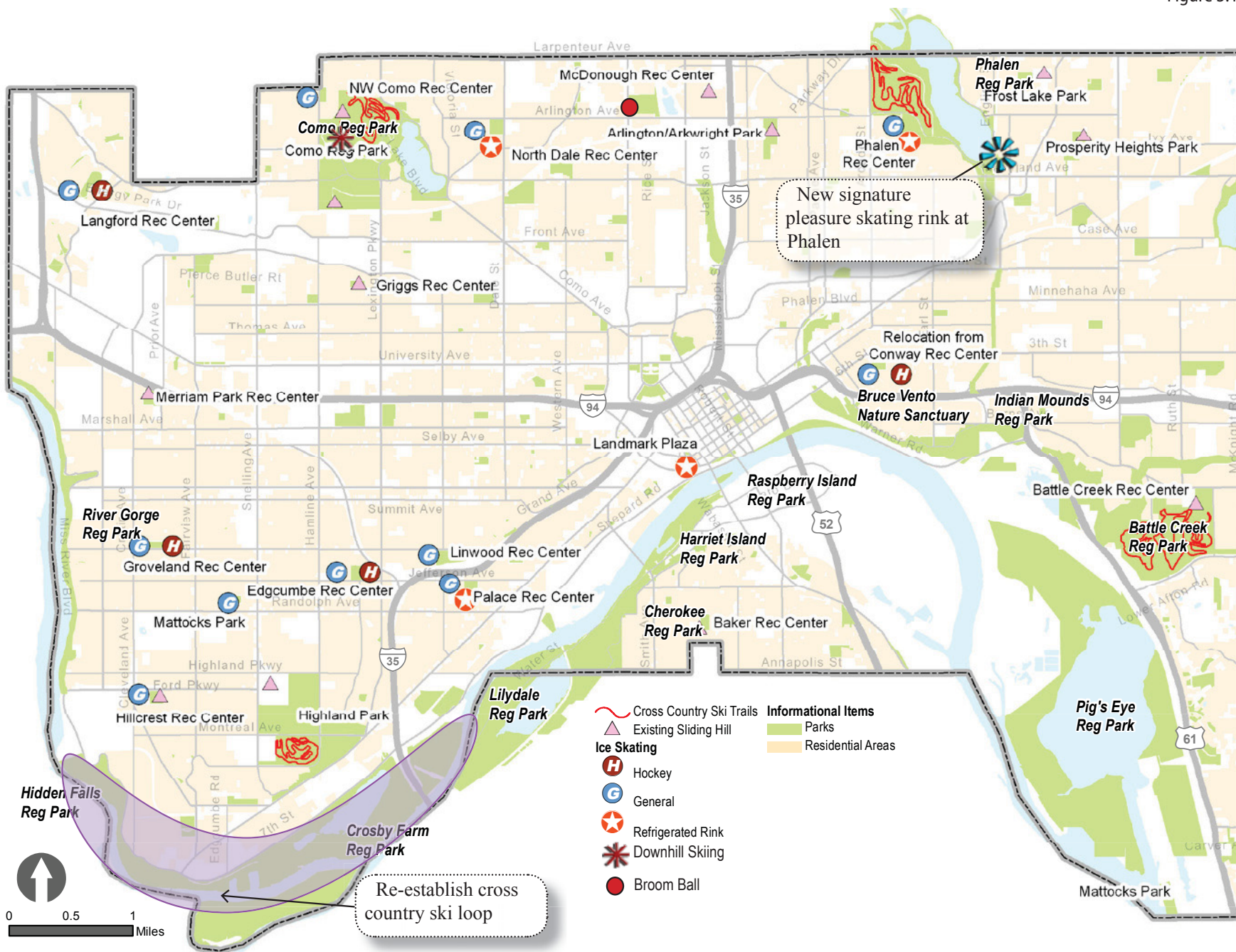
parks by neighborhood groups and hockey associations. In the winter of 2009-2010, in addition to refrigerated ice locations, there were rinks in seven parks: Langford Recreation Center, Groveland Recreation Center, Edgumbe Recreation Center, Hillcrest Recreation Center, Linwood Recreation Center and Conway Recreation Center. Ramsey County operates indoor ice arenas in and around Saint Paul. Use of County arenas has been declining in the last few years due to demographic shifts and the presence of newer arenas in the east metro area.

The City currently maintains ice rinks for adult broom ball league use at McMurray Fields in Como Regional Park. These rinks will need to be relocated to accommodate the planned renovations to McMurray Fields.

Recommended Actions

7.5 Continue to provide or create new unique winter outdoor recreation experiences in the following park and recreation areas:

- » Como Regional Park - existing downhill and cross country skiing.
- » Phalen Regional Park - existing groomed cross country skiing on the golf course; consider adding a signature pleasure skating rink with lake views.
- » Battle Creek Regional Park – existing groomed cross country ski trails. Work with Ramsey County to better integrate programs, activities, connections, etc. between Battle Creek Recreation Center and Battle Creek Regional Park.
- » The Mississippi /Minnesota confluence area – re-establish a cross country ski loop in Hidden Falls/Crosby Regional Parks.
- » Highland Park – groomed cross country skiing.
- » Downtown– The annual winter light displays, signature pleasure skating rink at Landmark Plaza and Winter Carnival create a unique ‘Winter City’ experience.
- » Neighborhood sledding hills.





Large Off-Leash Dog Area



Small Off-Leash Dog Area

7.6 Convert the permanent outdoor ice skating rinks at Phalen and North Dale to an in-slab refrigeration system.

7.7 Minimize outdoor, non-refrigerated neighborhood ice sites based on use and as appropriate.

- » Continue to utilize volunteer assistance at sites where neighborhood rinks are desired. Have a process in place for best practices as volunteers change.
- » Maintain general and hockey rinks at Conway Recreation Center until fields are rebuilt as high quality multipurpose turf. After this time, if use warrants, relocate skating to serve the southeast portion of the City. Locate rinks to minimize overlap with field uses.

7.8 Evaluate relocating broom ball from McMurray Fields to Rice & Arlington Athletic Complex or another suitable location which has adequate parking and support facilities and a central location to accommodate adult use.

Off-Leash Dog Areas

Off leash dog areas are very popular, low cost facilities. Many people are passionate about off leash dog areas; they either want them desperately or have a strong “not in my backyard” attitude. Trends support the need for additional off leash dog areas. There are more households with dogs 36% (2009 Lifestyle Profile survey) than households with children 29% (2000 Census) in the Twin City metro area. Today there are four off leash dog areas that serve Saint Paul (compared to playgrounds in 78 parks). One is located just east of the City in Battle Creek Regional Park; one is in Roseville on the North side of Larpenteur Avenue, east of Dale Street; one is in Arlington Arkwright Park; and one is in downtown. Additional off leash dog areas are needed, spaced evenly across City. Dog area size can vary from very small, urban dog relief areas to large natural off leash dog areas. In areas of the City with concentrations of high density housing, small, urban off-leash dog areas within walking distance of residents housing are an essential element to attract residents.

Figure 3.14



Recommended Actions

7.9 In Downtown, encourage new and existing residential developments to create private dog relief areas for resident use, and formalize dog use areas in the following parks:

- » Landmark Plaza
- » Mears Park
- » Wacouta Commons
- » Lower Landing Park
- » Pedro Park

7.10 In the Central Corridor, look at opportunities to create an off leash dog park in high density residential areas. Encourage new and existing residential developments to create private dog relief areas for resident use.

7.11 Create a new large natural area off-leash dog areas in Lilydale Park, as outlined in the Lilydale Park Master Plan.

7.12 Create new natural area off-leash dog area along the Mississippi River to serve the southwestern portion of the City and the Fish Hatchery area to serve the southeast part of the City. Coordinate off-leash dog area plans in the river corridor with the Great River Park Plan.

7.13 Search for a suitable off leash dog area to serve the northwest area of the City.

Disc Golf

Disc golf is a popular recreation activity with low capital costs and low maintenance requirements. Disc golf courses require sufficient space for a 9- or 18-hole course in a loop configuration. There is an existing disc golf course at Highland Park.

Recommended Action

7.14 Add disc golf courses at four locations:

- » Hillcrest Knoll (storm water basin) or Phalen Park
- » Conway Park
- » Como Park
- » Great River Park, as determined by the Master Plan.

Skate Parks

Existing skateboard areas are located at Front and Merriam Park.

Recommended Actions

7.15 Add removable skate parks at all refrigerated ice rink locations: Palace, Phalen and North Dale.

7.16 Look for a location for a larger, destination skate park, such as at Conway, Hillcrest, or the Central Corridor.

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is a very popular low capital cost activity. There are existing mountain bike trails in Battle Creek Park (Ramsey County facility). Mountain bike trails need adequate length and varied terrain for a suitable experience. Mountain bike trails should be designed to meet International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) standards for sustainable trails.

Recommended Action

7.17 Great River Park plans should address river corridor mountain bike trail use options.

Community Gardens

Community gardens are very popular and provide gardening plots for people who do not have access to garden space or to those who desire additional garden space. Community gardens can be organized as seasonal rental plots or administered by community or non-profit organizations. Open sunny locations with access to a water supply are minimum requirements. Locations near higher density multi-family and senior housing developments can provide people with convenient access to gardening opportunities. There are approximately 60 existing community gardens in Saint Paul. The City HRA and the Public Works Department administer use of some City lands for community garden use. Many City park properties are suitable for new community gardens.

Recommended Action

7.18 Continue to offer appropriate areas for community garden use and coordinate community garden administration with the City Arts and Garden Coordinator. Community gardens are also program opportunities at community centers or through mobile recreation.

Rental and Event Facilities

Rental and event facilities for weddings, family gatherings, company events, etc., can be good sources of revenue. City golf course clubhouses, Harriet Island Pavilion, and Como Park offer rental opportunities for events and pavilions and picnic shelters can be rented at several City parks. The City should continue to consider facility rental as parks are developed and redeveloped. Mississippi River corridor parks and parks with scenic views are of particular demand.

Recommended Actions

7.19 Study the market for a larger (200-350 seat) facilities for wedding and gatherings.

7.20 Expand Highland Golf Course clubhouse capacity to +200 seats to allow for tournament, event and rental uses. Clubhouse capacity limits use of Highland golf course for significant golf tournaments and events.

7.21 The Great River Park Plan should address rental facilities within the river corridor.



Community Gardens



Skate Parks

FUNDAMENTAL FACILITIES



TRANSFORMATION:
**Facilities Become
More User-Friendly**

8. FUNDAMENTAL FACILITIES FINDINGS

Restrooms

Greater access to restrooms in parks is a top desire of many park visitors. Access to bathrooms, drinking water, and shade are fundamental needs for many park users. Restrooms in existing recreation centers are only open when the building is open. Reduced hours at many centers limit bathroom access. Portable toilets are only available at some parks used for scheduled athletic leagues use. Vandalism can be a problem in public restrooms.

Recommended Actions

8.1 Expand access to restrooms by remodeling to add outside access to restrooms in community center buildings.

8.2 Add freestanding restroom buildings in higher use parks.

8.3 Use electronic digital locks to eliminate the need to physically lock and unlock restroom doors.

8.4 Add portable toilets and screens at appropriate locations in parks and along trails.

Pavement Management

Parking lots, trails, and walkways in parks are currently not actively managed to extend pavement life. The strategy to date has been to replace the pavement when the condition becomes bad enough or when a major renovation of the park occurs. As a result there are several instances of cracked and buckling bituminous pavement in City parks and the lifecycle of existing bituminous surfaces is not being maximized through active management actions such as seal coating and overlaying. The City Public Works Department is instituting a pavement management program for City streets. That program evaluates existing pavement condition and recommends a strategy of maintenance based on pavement age and condition. Pavement management has proven to be a cost effective measure to extend pavement life.

Recommended Action

8.5 Extend the Public Works pavement management program to park parking lots, park roads and park access drives. A similar pavement management program should be conducted by the Parks and Recreation Department for park trails. Trails are a unique amenity in that they may be located in separate trail rights of way, may have more curves and steeper grades than roads and drives and therefore may require different pavement management techniques.

System Identity and Signage

Park and trail signage is vital for efficient access and use of the recreation system. There is a general lack of awareness of park and trail opportunities and trail use is hampered in some cases by a lack of trail maps and trail way-finding signage. Existing park signs are generally in poor condition, outdated, and in need of replacement. A system of updated park signage has been designed. Funding has yet to be secured.

Rename park portions of recreation centers to community and neighborhood park designations.

Recommended Actions

- 8.6** Secure funding and install a system of updated park signage.
- 8.7** Install trail and park system maps and way-finding signage at appropriate locations.
- 8.8** Rename park portions of recreation centers to community and neighborhood park designations.

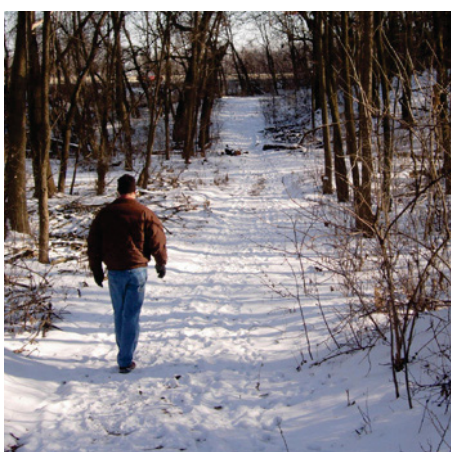
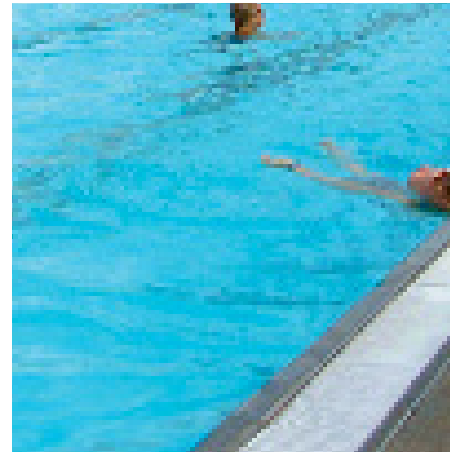
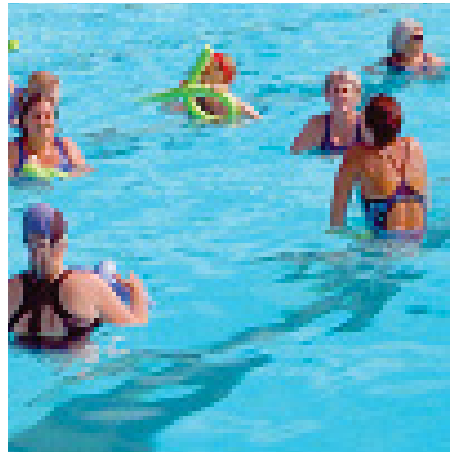
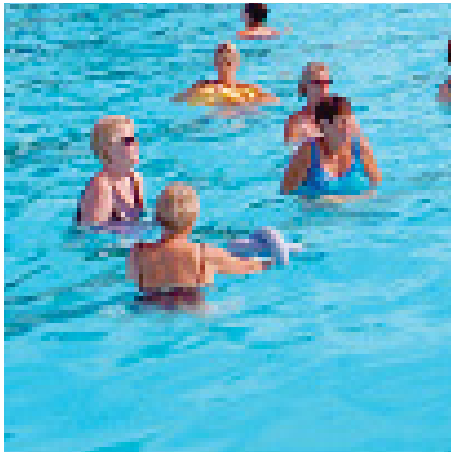
TRANSFORMATION REALIZED

Eastside Heritage Park

Eastside Heritage Park is a park and trailhead amenity on the Bruce Vento Regional Trail and Phalen Boulevard. The park and trailhead are an example of the benefits and transformative power of seemingly mundane items such as public bathrooms and way-finding signage.

The park was created in 2010 with community involvement and award-winning design. The trailhead contains a small parking lot, a public bathroom building, a picnic shelter, interpretative kiosks that celebrate local social, industrial and natural history, and way-finding signage for the adjacent trail system. The pleasing design and provision of bathrooms, a picnic shelter, drinking water and signage provide for park and trail visitor needs and help get people using the area trails. The trailhead is a welcome stop along the Bruce Vento Regional Trail for bicyclists and walkers who access Lake Phalen and nearby Payne Avenue, and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, Swede Hollow Park and Mounds Park, as well as the Lowertown District via East Fourth Street. The park and trailhead are helping to transform this former industrial wasteland into new job centers and the community is attracting new industry, investment, and developing new public recreational lands and trail amenities.





4. FINANCIAL & OPERATIONAL PAYBACK

the benefits

THE BENEFITS: COMMUNITY, RECREATION, ENVIRONMENTAL, FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONS

There are two methods for a parks and recreation system to develop and change. The first is in a piecemeal fashion, in which improvements are made as money and resources allow, and when constituents ask for them. This method can create a system that is unbalanced and financially unsustainable. The second method is through careful planning, in which the existing system, financial realities, community desires, and recreation trends are carefully analyzed and a city-wide system is carefully designed to meet the community's needs. This method ensures that Parks and Recreation lives within its means, while also addressing the changing desires and demographics of the city as a whole.

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation has chosen to plan. It is true that this requires an initial investment in staff resources and planning fees, but this careful planning will create a system that is less expensive to run in the future, thereby offering a return on investment. In addition, planning empowers community members – all community members – to help make the decisions that will define their future park system.

Helping make Saint Paul the most Livable City in America by facilitating the creation of ...



ACTIVE LIFESTYLES



VIBRANT PLACES



A VITAL ENVIRONMENT

through parks and recreation that...



RESPONDS CREATIVELY TO CHANGE



INNOVATES WITH EVERY DECISION



CONNECTS THE ENTIRE CITY

Planning Rationale

The 2008 Vision Plan set forth a series of Decision Principles that were meant to guide every decision the Department would make. The spirit of these principles is embedded in every recommendation included in this System Plan. They apply to how a recommendation will affect the entire city-wide system, not a single park, athletic field, or trail corridor. The Decision Principles are included here, with several examples from this system plan to illustrate how they apply.



Does the action further Parks and Recreation's role as the champion of health and wellness?



- » The completion of the Grand Rounds trail loop and several other cross-town trails and bikeways will provide longer-distance non-motorized routes through the city.
- » New athletic facilities at Duluth and Case and Victoria Park will offer more opportunity for organized sports.
- » The transformation of recreation centers into community centers will allow for more programming of health and wellness classes for all ages.



Will the action be a catalyst for private sector investment?



- » Better defined and more understandable park building partner policies may attract private partners, like what is being planned at the new Payne-Maryland Community Center
- » Trails and parks are catalyst for redevelopments. Improved access and recreation facilities in Great River Park, Downtown and the Central Corridor will foster private investment and redevelopment.



Does the action exemplify environmental leadership?



- » Interpretation, augmentation, and restoration of natural areas are planned for numerous Regional and neighborhood parks.
- » The projected costs associated with community center additions and reconstructions take into account the inclusion of green technologies.
- » The elimination of the poorest quality, least efficient buildings will save energy.



Does the action creatively respond to changing needs?

- » New recreation amenities, like off-leash dog parks, disc golf courses, and skateboard parks are proposed throughout the city.
- » Some of these new types of facilities will share facilities with other, seasonally offset activities, like skate parks on refrigerated ice rinks.



Does the action reflect different needs for different neighborhoods?

- » The Plan encourages park and field renovations based on use and the recommendations are designed to help assure that facilities match local and city-wide needs.
- » Local planning and design involvement is recommended for proposed park renovations and new community center design (such as at Scheffer).
- » Facility recommendations are tailored to unique needs such as in Downtown and along the Central Corridor.



Have life cycle and operational costs been adequately addressed?

- » The financial analysis of recreation and community centers calculates operation, maintenance, and capital cost savings of approximately \$20 million for a twenty-year horizon. These funds are to be reinvested in the park and recreation system and programs.
- » Naturalization of portions of regional and neighborhood parks will reduce landscape maintenance over time.



Is the action economically, environmentally, & socially sustainable in both the short & long terms?

- » The transformation of recreation centers into community centers will save money, save energy, and provide greater access to all age groups and interests
- » The implementation of new trails and bikeways, with assistance from partners, will create high quality but low maintenance facilities that require almost no energy to operate and will connect all the city's neighborhoods.



Does the action support quality over quantity?

- » The reorganization and elimination of some overlapping neighborhood park athletic fields will result in better fields throughout the city



- » The gradual elimination of many of the poorest quality recreation center buildings will allow for reinvestment in the remaining buildings and construction of new buildings, thereby improving the overall quality of the system.



Does that action help connect people, parks, trails and open spaces?

- » The emphasis on trails will create linkages to and between existing parks, especially in areas that are currently underserved.
- » The incorporation of natural areas into some neighborhood parks will provide connections to nature for neighborhoods far removed from the Regional Parks.



Have all facility and partnership options been evaluated before deciding to add infrastructure?

- » The plan for the community centers is based on a careful accounting of existing and potential partners, and new partner policies will facilitate collaboration between Parks and Recreation and its building partners.
- » The plan for trails specifically references partners, such as Public Works and Ramsey County, that will take lead on implementation of some corridors.



Does the action support a City-wide system of parks and recreational facilities?

- » The overall concept of the system envisions a group of Regional Parks connected by a city-wide system of trails and bikeways.
- » Specialized facilities, such as athletic facilities, off-leash dog parks, splash pads, and skateboard parks are placed in key locations throughout the city.



Will the action build community awareness, advocacy and passion for parks and recreation?

- » As part of the System Plan process, Parks and Recreation hosted ten community meetings at five different locations, met with city council members on several occasions, met with the Park and Recreation Commission, seniors, and youth and provided written, verbal, and on-line opportunities to comment on and share ideas about the park system.
- » The plan proposes a greater variety of facilities than is available today, and will thereby bring more people into the parks.
- » The transformation of recreation centers into community centers will create facilities that will be more inclusive, remain open for longer hours, and provide more diversity of activities for all ages and interests.



The City can effectively deliver youth programming at school and partner buildings for a fraction of the cost of operating a City recreation center building. In many cases it is more effective to go where youth already are (in schools) than get youth to travel from school to a city recreation center building.

Financial Rationale

Though there are many investment changes proposed in this System Plan to all types of facilities, recreation center buildings are the largest single area of expense for the Department. The System Plan, therefore, focuses this discussion of financial rationale on those buildings.

The planning process included a careful calculation of hard costs (maintenance and utilities), soft costs (salaries, fringe, services and supplies), capital maintenance costs, and capital improvement costs associated with the existing system of recreation centers and the proposed new system of community centers. The hard and soft cost data comes from 2009 actual expenditures, while capital maintenance and improvement costs were estimated based on the specific recommendations included in the System Plan.

The detailed analysis is included in the Appendix, but this section provides a general overview of the numbers.

- » Overall, Parks and Recreation currently spends just over \$3 million per year on soft costs for the recreation center system.
- » Overall, Parks and Recreation currently spends just over \$4.1 million per year on hard costs for the recreation center system.
- » Replacement of HVAC systems, roofs, and flooring, and exterior upgrades should take place for each recreation center once every 20 years. System wide, that would be a total of \$21.7 million over a 20-year period.

The recommendations included in the System Plan envision improvements to some buildings to bring them up to the quality of community centers, removal of some buildings, and partnering of some buildings to reduce hard and soft costs. Based on these recommendations, the new community center system would:

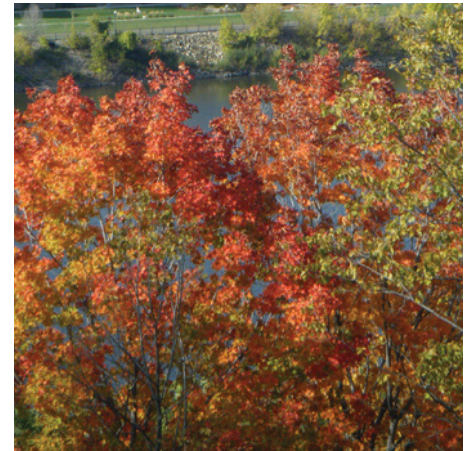
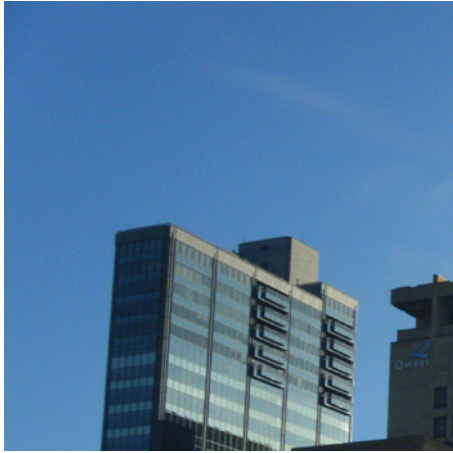
- » Save \$534,000 per year in soft costs, which would then be distributed throughout the rest of the system to extend hours and increase staffing at community center buildings;
- » Save \$1,039,000 per year in hard costs, the result of partnering of buildings and demolition of some buildings;
- » Save just over \$4.4 million over a 20-year period in capital maintenance (HVAC, roof, flooring and exteriors), again the result of partnering and some demolition; and
- » Require investment of \$16.2 million in new building construction, additions, renovation and demolition. The building capital improvement assumptions are listed to the right.

Over the next 20 years, then, the community center system will result in a savings of \$19.7 million to the Parks and Recreation Department and the residents of Saint Paul. This takes into account the total annual savings listed above, reduction in system-wide capital maintenance, and the building improvements over 20 years.

Some of these dollars (the soft costs) would be reinvested in the community center system, while the additional savings could be used for other Parks and Recreation System Plan elements, such as trails, natural areas, and athletic fields.

Recreation Building Capital Improvement Assumptions

- » New community center construction: \$6,980,000
 - Scheffer - new
 - Merriam Park- new/renovate
- » Other new recreation buildings: \$1,666,000
 - Duluth and Case - new athletic/neighborhood park building
 - Groveland - new ice skating and bathroom building
- » Building renovation, additions and remodeling: \$6,576,000
 - Edgcumbe, Hazel Park, Langford, Palace, Phalen, Rice, and West Minnehaha
- » Demolition: \$997,000
 - Contingency for Level Two partner buildings (as needed over 20 years)



5. IMPLEMENTATION

the steps

THE STEPS: IMPLEMENTATION

This System Plan establishes a strategic action plan to improve Saint Paul's parks and recreation facilities over time. The Plan includes area, site and facility specific recommendations to shape the City-wide system. The intent is for City staff, City officials, stakeholders and the public to use this Plan to guide decision making and investment. Some actions can be implemented right away while others, particularly those which involve changes to significant public facilities like buildings or parks will need site specific community outreach to define the details and timing of the facility change. This section includes tools the Parks and Recreation Department can use to build the 21st Century Parks and Recreation System. It sets initial priorities and makes recommendations for asset management.

Priority Actions for 2011-2013:

1. Meet with existing building partners and tenants to begin shaping the transition of building responsibility for partnered buildings and amend agreements, when appropriate, to obtain compliance over time with Partnered Building Policy Recommendations.
2. Seek viable partners for Conway and McDonough Recreation Center buildings.
3. Work with School District to establish a school-city partner recreation program site in the Hayden Heights area.
4. Conduct community process meetings at Duluth and Case, Hayden Heights, NW Como and Baker Recreation Centers to further define building changes and delivery of recreation program services.
5. Utilize the Plan recommendations to prepare capital and annual operating budgets.
6. Use the Plan with staff work groups to plan facility maintenance and capital maintenance actions.
7. Work with other City Departments and the public to advocate and coordinate trail and Grand Rounds Parkway development.
8. Study alignment options to rethink the northwestern segment for the Grand Rounds between Como Avenue and Pelham Boulevard in coordination with other western area transportation planning.
9. Begin to refine delivery of recreation program and services as staff and funding resources allow and building changes occur.
10. Work with the Public Works Department to establish a regular pavement management program for park drives and parking lots and establish an internal pavement management and funding program for park trails and paths.
11. Determine the best property maintenance strategy for smaller park parcels in road right of way.
12. Seek funding for Grand Rounds Parkway development.
13. Begin naturalizing select park and open space parcels as staff and funding allows.
14. Continue to work with partners and developers to create publicly accessible, but privately owned park and plaza space in the Central Corridor. Search for a new publicly owned neighborhood park or totlot south of University Avenue, north of I-94 between Hamline and Victoria. Assess recreation needs for the far western edge (west of TH 280) of Saint Paul's Central Corridor area.
15. Plan for and establish off-leash dog areas in downtown, in the northwest part of the City and in the Mississippi River corridor.
16. Begin athletic field quality improvements by removing select overlapping fields and establishing multi-use turf fields.

+ . APPENDIX

Recreation Center Building	Building Rating 0-45	Quality Category
Arlington Rec Center	13	LOW
Duluth and Case Rec Center	17	LOW
Scheffer Rec Center	17	LOW
Hayden Heights Rec Center	18	LOW
Margaret Rec Center	18	LOW
Orchard Rec Center	18	LOW
Palace Rec Center	19	LOW
Eastview Rec Center	19	LOW
Northwest Como Rec Center	21	AVE
Merriam Park Rec Center	23	AVE
Baker Rec Center	24	AVE
Desnoyer Rec Center	24	AVE
So. St. Anthony Rec Center	24	AVE
Rice Rec Center	27	AVE
Edgcumbe Rec Center	28	AVE
Langford Rec Center	28	AVE
Groveland Rec Center	29	AVE
Conway Rec Center	31	AVE
McDonough Rec Center	31	AVE
Hancock Rec Center	32	AVE
Griggs Rec Center	32	AVE
Wilder Rec Center	33	AVE
Martin Luther King Rec Center	34	AVE
West Minnehaha Rec Center	34	AVE
St. Clair Rec Center	34	AVE
Dunning Rec Center	34	AVE
Linwood Rec Center	36	HIGH
Hillcrest Rec Center	37	HIGH
Oxford Community Center	37	HIGH
Hazel Park Rec Center	38	HIGH
Phalen Rec Center	39	HIGH
Battle Creek Rec Center	41	HIGH
Dayton's Bluff Rec Center	41	HIGH
North Dale Rec Center	42	HIGH
El Rio Vista Rec Center	43	HIGH
45 Points Possible		
0-20 Low Quality 21-35 Average Quality 36-45 High Quality		

RECREATION CENTER BUILDING RATINGS

Evaluation of existing recreation center buildings was performed in Spring 2010 by Miller Dunwiddie Architects. Each building was rated based on the following categories; flexibility of use, visual character, indoor/outdoor relationship, condition, energy efficiency, Code compliance Core function/amenities, quality of building systems (City ratings of HVAC, roof, etc.) and use/visitation (2009 city data). A total of 45 points were possible based on the nine rating categories. Recreation center building ratings range from a low of 13 points to a high of 43 points. Buildings with rating scores of 20 or less were categorized as low quality buildings, buildings with rating score of 21-35 were rated as average quality and buildings with scores from 36 to 45 were rated as high quality buildings. The evaluations and ratings were part of many factors, such as location, proximity to other centers, service area, etc. that went into the recreation center building recommendations.

COMMUNITY MEETING INPUT SUMMARY

The meeting input summary is contained in a separate document which includes summaries of the input received at the May-June and November, 2010 community meetings. The input was used to shape the System Plan recommendations.

RECREATION CENTER RECOMMENDATIONS FINANCIAL EVALUATION

An inventory of Saint Paul's parks is contained in a separate document. The inventory also includes evaluations of community, recreation center and neighborhood parks. The inventory helped inform the System Plan, but is also intended as a tool and resource for subsequent planning. The inventory is a living document that Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will update as changes occur in the park and recreation system.

RECREATION CENTER BUILDING		COSTS			RECOMMENDATION	FINANCIAL EFFECT		
Name	Existing Building Quality	Annual Soft Costs (salaries, fringe, services, supplies)	Annual Hard Costs (maintenance, utilities)	Capital Maintenance HVAC, roof, exterior and flooring (one-time per 20 years)		Annual Soft Cost Savings	Annual Hard Cost Savings	Capital Maintenance Savings (HVAC, roof, exterior and flooring)
Arlington (Payne-Maryland)	Low (High)	\$196,603	\$325,908	\$245,060	Retain in System, new Payne-Maryland building construction in 2011	\$0	\$0	\$0
Battle Creek	High	\$140,571	\$140,388	\$804,290	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Daytons Bluff	High	\$96,366	\$110,747	\$848,250	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Edgcumbe	Average	\$92,974	\$100,328	\$566,885	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
El Rio Vista	High	\$105,282	\$336,320	\$1,132,765	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Hancock	Average	\$105,808	\$48,189	\$278,100	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Hazel Park	High	\$97,760	\$101,160	\$528,455	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Hillcrest	High	\$119,800	\$118,331	\$1,142,530	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Jimmy Lee	High	\$196,603	\$325,908	\$3,267,520	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Langford	Average	\$112,523	\$76,686	\$322,200	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Linwood	High	\$151,971	\$119,755	\$736,600	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Martin Luther King	Average	\$84,235	\$154,348	\$1,894,470	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Merriam Park	Average	\$40,547	\$56,035	\$139,185	Retain in System, community process for future building or use of school building	\$0	\$0	\$0
North Dale	High	\$331,345	\$149,877	\$845,100	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Palace	Low	\$58,542	\$136,070	\$355,100	Retain in System, building renovation 2013-15	\$0	\$0	-\$355,100
Phalen	High	\$119,698	\$156,278	\$658,200	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Rice	Average	\$59,511	\$46,805	\$90,150	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Scheffer	Low	\$126,516	\$75,835	\$235,050	Retain in System, community process for new community center building and park renovation	\$0	\$0	-\$235,050
West Minnehaha	Average	\$76,814	\$110,983	\$402,700	Retain in System	\$0	\$0	\$0
Groveland	Average	\$47,017	\$73,488	\$430,805	Staff as School Partner Rec Bldg	-\$11,754	\$0	\$0
NE Rec Program Site	n/a	\$0	\$0	\$0	Staff as School Partner Rec Bldg	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0
NW Como	Average	\$83,388	\$43,947	\$89,100	Staff as School Partner Rec Bldg	-\$20,847	\$0	\$0
Baker	Average	\$66,688	\$97,679	\$418,310	Continue with existing partners at Level One	-\$66,688	-\$97,679	-\$418,310
Conway	Average	\$58,886	\$119,159	\$603,495	Seek Level One partner	-\$58,886	-\$119,159	-\$603,495
Desnoyer	Average	\$0	\$38,533	\$104,920	Continue with existing partner at Level One	\$0	-\$38,533	-\$104,920
Duluth Case	Low	\$45,150	\$76,460	\$247,265	Demolish, community process for new athletic/neighborhood building and park renovation	-\$45,150	-\$57,345	-\$247,265
Dunning	Average	\$0	\$62,736	\$341,765	Continue with existing partner at Level One	\$0	-\$62,736	-\$341,765
Eastview	Low	\$118	\$44,311	\$250,590	Continue with existing partner at Level Two	-\$118	\$0	\$0
Griggs	Average	\$10,103	\$56,685	\$77,200	Continue with existing partner at Level One	-\$10,103	-\$56,685	-\$77,200
Hayden Hts	Low	\$68,117	\$85,053	\$325,770	Demolish, community process, establish school partner rec bldg site	-\$68,117	-\$85,053	-\$325,770
Margaret	Low	\$49,094	\$72,525	\$455,095	Continue with existing partner at Level Two	-\$49,094	\$0	\$0
McDonough	Average	\$42,900	\$108,302	\$278,100	Seek Level One partner	-\$42,900	-\$108,302	-\$278,100
Orchard	Low	\$48	\$32,320	\$235,750	Continue with existing partner at Level Two	-\$48	\$0	\$0
S St Anthony	Average	\$20,077	\$62,736	\$349,255	Continue with existing partner at Level One	-\$20,077	-\$62,736	-\$349,255
St Clair	Average	\$21	\$34,727	\$775,100	Continue with existing partner at Level One	-\$21	-\$34,727	-\$775,100
Wilder	Average	\$83,156	\$99,648	\$375,890	Continue with existing partner at Level One	-\$83,156	-\$99,648	-\$375,890
Belvidere Westside B & G Club		\$0	\$0		Retain current partnership	\$0	\$0	\$0
Mt. Airy / Valley		\$23,514	\$61,580	\$243,205	Special (B&G Club/School)			
Sackett Eastside B & G Club		\$0	\$0		Retain current partnership	\$0	\$0	\$0
Frost Lake	n/a	\$0	\$28,450	\$272,605	already given to school	\$0	-\$28,450	\$0
Highwood Hills	n/a	\$0	\$32,917	\$383,100	already given to school	\$0	-\$32,917	\$0
Homecroft	n/a	\$0	\$28,450	\$246,600	already given to school	\$0	-\$28,450	\$0
Front	n/a	\$46,476	\$54,523	\$237,395	Programed by school	-\$46,476	-\$54,523	\$0
Prosperity	n/a	\$23,057	\$68,299	\$227,000	Programed by school	-\$23,057	-\$68,299	\$0
Sylvan	n/a	\$38,483	\$54,265	\$241,700	Programed by school	-\$38,483	-\$54,265	\$0
TOTAL		\$3,019,764	\$4,126,745	\$21,702,625		-\$534,977	-\$1,039,509	-\$4,487,220

ANALYSIS

Item	5 years	10 years	20 years	notes
Total soft-cost reinvestment	-\$2,674,884	-\$5,349,767	-\$10,699,535	
Total hard-cost savings	-\$5,197,543	-\$10,395,086	-\$20,790,172	
Total financial effect (method 1)	\$3,859,157	-\$4,013,269	-\$19,758,122	assumes all capital improvement costs in year 1
				assumes 25% cap imp & HVAC etc @ 5 years, 25% @ 10 years, 50% @ 20 years
Total financial effect (method 2)	-\$4,939,531	-\$9,879,061	-\$19,758,122	assumes one time capital improvements (new building construction, additions, renovation and demolition) of \$16,218,804

CITY OF SAINT PAUL
PARKS AND RECREATION
SYSTEM PLAN
DECEMBER 2010