

PARK SYSTEM PLAN

CITY OF SOUTH ST. PAUL



City of
SOUTH ST. PAUL
Minnesota



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APPENDIX A - PUBLIC INPUT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all the members of the South St. Paul community that have provided feedback, input, and ideas to help shape this plan. Your insights will help guide the next generation of South St. Paul's park system.

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INTRODUCTION

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of South St. Paul provides parks and recreation to support a high quality of life for residents and visitors. Each park in South St. Paul brings unique value to the system and both neighborhood-scale playgrounds and community-wide amenities like aquatics facilities have a role to play. Parks and trails are where community members learn how to play with others, to compete, to win with class, lose with grace, and work together as a team. At our parks, we stay active and healthy, connect with neighbors, and we have fun. We use the parks to teach our children how to fish, how to ride a bike, how to swim, and how to form a meaningful relationship with nature.

Like well-maintained roads and public safety, parks and recreation are an investment in the community that makes South St. Paul a better place to live. This Parks Master Plan will inform the City's decision-making and provide a framework for short term, long term, and ongoing investments in parks infrastructure. This includes re-investing in existing facilities and making thoughtful, intentional decisions about updates to the system to better meet the community's needs.

The community is at the heart of these planning efforts. Input and feedback from the public has guided the creation of this plan, and the planning effort has hopefully helped build community support and relationships that will inspire people to champion the parks system long after this plan has been approved.



Northview Park



South St. Paul Trails



PLANNING PROCESS

INVENTORY AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

The planning process started with an analysis of existing conditions to help answer the question: “Where are we today?”

To begin the planning process, all relevant plans and documents were assembled and a project team consisting of City Staff and HKGI consultants reviewed the City’s past goals and priorities. The project team reviewed existing individual park plans and conducted a site visit to each park to build an “existing conditions” inventory. A comprehensive catalogue was produced which separates each park by its features, age, and condition. This paints a complete picture of the overall parks system and helps identify trends in past park development. This information was used to create a needs assessment and priority recommendations for the parks system.

GAP ANALYSIS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Building on the work done to create the existing conditions inventory, the planning process next moved into a gap analysis and needs assessment. This stage of the project essentially asked two questions, “What’s missing?” and “What does the community need from its parks?”

The Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment utilized the findings from the inventory and existing conditions analysis and also incorporated the following:

- Community Input
- Staff Input
- Trends in Parks and Recreation
- Spatial Analysis
- Community and Demographic Projections
- Best Practices in Park Planning

These inputs helped identify the community’s needs and wants for the parks system’s next 20 years of operation. These needs and wants were translated into a set of system initiatives and a proposed design for each individual park.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment work, the next question that this project sought to answer is: “What is the park system we want to have?” Recommendations were developed in one of two ways:

- System Initiatives
- Individual Park Plans

SYSTEM INITIATIVES

System Initiatives are general concepts and City policies that extend beyond a single park. These initiatives address wants and needs that were relevant for several different locations or at a citywide level. The system initiatives identified are as follows:

- Park Replacements
- Playground Variety
- Financial Sustainability
- Engaging Programming
- Aquatics Development
- Teen Recreation
- Trail Connections
- Park Ecology
- Natural Resource Parks
- Wayfinding
- Parks for All Seasons
- Coordination with other Recreation Providers

Some of these initiatives are manifested physically in the individual park plans, while others are more focused on policy or recreation programming across the entire system.

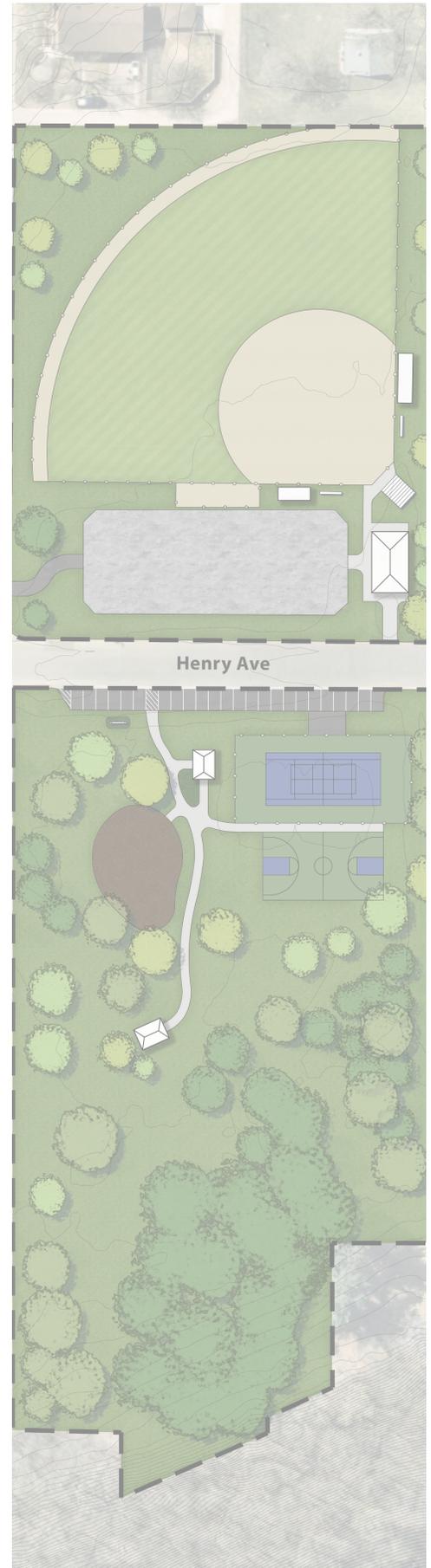
INDIVIDUAL PARK PLANS

Each park within the system requires individualized attention to identify its needs and estimated costs based on the age of its existing features and the viability of those features as trends change. Concept plans for the City's parks have been developed as a guide for future development. Each park has an analysis diagram identifying features, adjacencies, constraints, and desires for each park. This park-by-park analysis inspired the individual concept plans that were prepared for each park.

Concept plans help the City prioritize when and where to build new features. Some features will need additional design work to reach the level of detail necessary for construction, but the individual plans in this document should provide enough information to start making decisions about improvements. The concept plans show what types of amenities are planned for each park, the location of each amenity within the park, and estimated costs that can be used for budget planning purposes. Initial concept plans were made available to the community in early 2024 so that the public could review the plans and provide feedback. Several of the individual park concept plans have been revised since then as a direct result of community feedback.

FUNDING NEEDS AND STRATEGIES

An important part of any plan is identifying funding strategies that can make the plan a reality. This starts with identifying where there is the most need and what investments will most benefit the community. Within the Funding Needs and Strategies chapter, a Capital Investment/Asset Management tool has been developed to produce a database that identifies park system costs. This includes the cost of upcoming projects, ongoing costs, and typical life cycle estimates for each element in the park system. The tool will help the City plan and prioritize so that funding can be appropriately directed to address identified issues and anticipate potential problems.





OPEN HOUSE - CONCEPT REVIEW

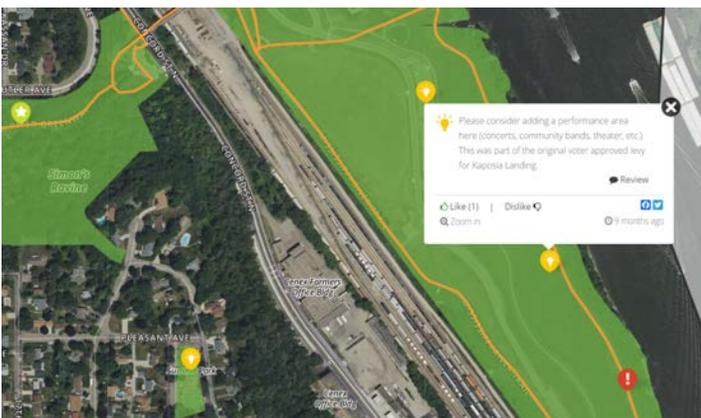


GIANT EGG HUNT - CONCEPT REVIEW

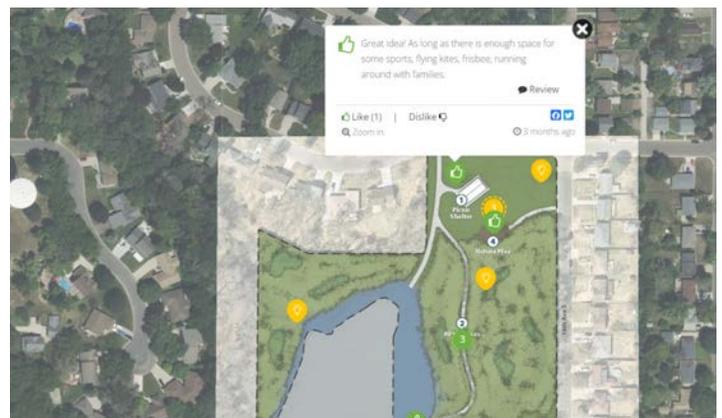
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This plan can only be effective if it reflects the desires and priorities of the community. There was a mix of online, by mail, and in-person engagement to ensure that the City was listening to a wide range of community voices. Engagement included the following:

- Online Survey to understand how people are using the parks system and what they would like to see
- A physical survey was mailed to every household as part of the Sept/Oct 2023 City newsletter
- A Joint Worksession of the Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission in October of 2023 to identify priorities that are important to those two groups
- Project team attendance at Splish Splash Bash 2023 to have conversations and connect people to the survey
- Social Pinpoint online map feedback (prior to concept development) to get a better understanding of how people are using individual parks
- Project team attendance at On the Road Again 2023 to have conversations about individual parks and collect ideas for each park
- A Joint Worksession of the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, and City Council to review concept plans for each individual park in February 2024



SOCIAL PINPOINT - NEEDS ASSESSMENT



SOCIAL PINPOINT - CONCEPT REVIEW

- Social Pinpoint online map feedback on draft plans for each individual park
- Open House to review and provide feedback on concept plans was held at the Kaposia Library in February 2023
- Attendance at the Giant Egg Hunt in March 2024 to review and provide feedback on concept plans
- Online posting of the draft Parks Master Plan document prior to review by boards and commissions and the City Council

A NOTE ABOUT AQUATICS

This project, previous analysis, and ongoing studies make it clear that the community's aquatics program is a major issue that needs to be addressed. The Northview Pool is in poor condition and needs a complete replacement if it is going to continue to serve the community. The play features in the splash pool at Lorraine Park are near the end of their useful life after 30 years of service and this will also soon need to be addressed. Necessary investments in the aquatics program will represent a large portion of future spending on the park system.

It is in the best interest of the community to better understand the design options, detailed cost estimates, and funding options for providing aquatics in South St. Paul. This plan provides two approaches for development at Northview Park and Lorraine Park. One option looks at keeping the same programs in the same locations (box pool at Northview Park, splash pool at Lorraine Park). The other option considers moving all pool aquatic programming to Lorraine Park and developing a zero-depth splash pad at Northview Park. Both concepts have benefits and drawbacks. The "next step" towards determining the future of aquatics will need to be a pool feasibility and design study that refines and analyzes the two alternatives to determine what the capital costs and operating costs will be for each approach. With that information in hand, it will be up to the City Council and the voters to determine a path forward for the design and funding of the aquatics program.



BEHIND THE SCENES AT NORTHVIEW POOL

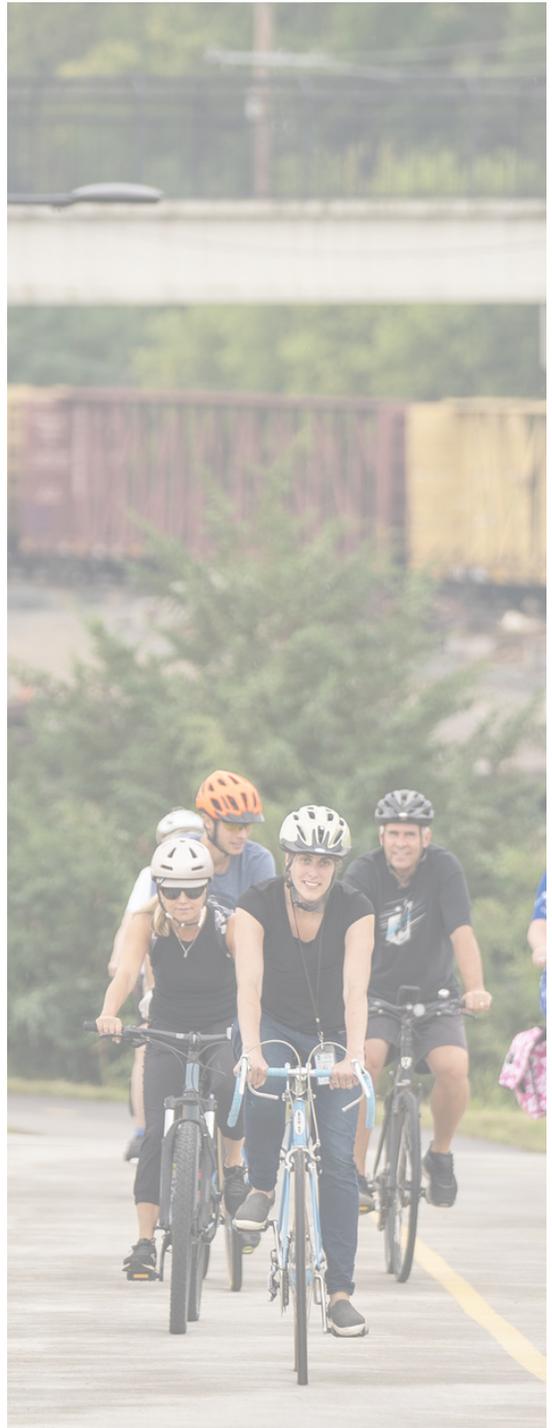


Kaposia Landing, Mississippi River Regional Trail, River to River Greenway, and the Mississippi River

TRENDS

IN PARKS AND RECREATION

Trends in parks and recreation need to be accounted for in creating the South St. Paul Parks Master Plan. These trends will help inform decisions on new park features and also impact the future maintenance of parks. Many of the parks in South St. Paul were constructed in the 1990's when both trends and safety standards were different. What may have been right for the community in the last generation of parks may not meet the needs of current park users, and some of today's most desired park elements may not have been around when South St. Paul's parks were last updated. South St. Paul is a diverse community that continues to change and evolve with emerging technology, climate change, and other societal shifts. These shifts will need to be acknowledged as the City plans for the future of the parks system.



Climate



Financial Issues



Equity



Aging Population



Individual Recreation



Focus on Experiences



Recreation Collaboration



Aquatics



Trails



Regional Athletic Facilities



Non-Traditional Sports



Picnic Areas and Gathering Areas



Activities for Teens



Adventure and Nature Play

LARGE SCALE TRENDS

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

As cities face increased impacts from climate change, parks systems need to adapt to the changing environment. More extreme and irregular weather events alter the nature of recreation and the availability of seasonal activities. Ice rinks and winter sports may not be available until later in the year and may not last as long. Sports seasons may shift due to inclement weather and canceled games from more extreme weather. Wildlife and vegetation have had to adapt to these seasonal changes which has resulted in shifting migration patterns and habitat. Plant hardiness zones have moved north as spring temperatures get warmer faster. Native plants are no longer able to survive in their native range and invasive, warmer climate plants take over. Infrastructure in parks must be able to withstand environmental challenges from unpredictable and more extreme weather patterns including more powerful storms, record flooding, increased snowfall events, and erosion.



EQUITY

Nationwide, there is an increase in the attention being paid to equity issues. In the context of parks, equity means making sure the parks system is designed to provide access and value to all members of the community, regardless of their race, ethnicity, income, ability or national origin. Ensuring that all people feel welcome and included within a parks space is an important goal of the City of South St. Paul. This can be achieved through emphasizing inclusive playgrounds, providing a variety of activities, and expanding the City's understanding of how different cultures use parks. Park activities and programs should not be cost prohibitive and there should be some low cost or no cost options to make recreational accessible for individuals in cost-burdened households.



PLANNING AHEAD WITH FINANCING FOR PARKS IMPROVEMENTS

Funding is needed to support most park improvement projects. Cities with smaller populations may struggle to have a large enough budget to cover these advancements without outside help from grants and other funding mechanisms. Park dedication is a strategy that is commonly employed for funding parks improvements in developing communities, but this funding source is limited because South St. Paul is a fully built-out community with limited redevelopment opportunities that would trigger this type of funding. Many funding sources, such as grants, only finance the initial cost of park improvements rather than long-term maintenance. Because of this many small cities and fully-built out communities are starting to shift how they plan for park maintenance costs instead of relying on park dedication funding and grants. Planning ahead for the future success of the parks system will help avoid the scramble for funding when parks need maintenance.



RECREATION COLLABORATION

Many cities have local organizations with missions and goals that overlap with the City, and collaborating with these organizations can allow the City to expand its range without overtaxing its resources. The City can leverage partnerships with schools, medical systems, businesses, and non-profits with compatible missions to provide recreation programming. Collaboration can help the fill the gaps between what the community is requesting and what the City has the capacity to provide on its own.

TRENDS AMONGST RECREATION USERS

THE LONELINESS EPIDEMIC

In 2023, the United States Surgeon General issued an advisory about the impacts of loneliness and isolation. For individuals, the effects can include decreases in both physical and mental health outcomes. At a societal level, we are losing community fabric that holds us together, with declining participation in churches and social groups. This leads to decreased trust in our neighbors and a loss of a safety net when things go wrong.

Reasons for the decline range from changing family structures, technology, demographics, and disease. While the causes of this epidemic are wide ranging, one of the remedies can be found in a community's parks and recreation. The Surgeon General's report identifies six pillars as a national strategy to combat loneliness and advance social connection. The very first pillar is "Strengthen Social Infrastructure in Local Communities" with parks and programming leading the way. When kids play together at the playground, seniors gather for pool aerobics, extended families come together for a picnic, or neighbors chat over a bowl of booya at On the Road Again, parks and recreation are helping to restore social connections.

AGING POPULATION

As the Baby Boomer generation ages, their recreation preferences are changing, and many parks systems are changing to reflect these new preferences. This age cohort is looking for lower impact activities that allow them to remain active and still spend time with friends. Members of this cohort that have previously participated in softball leagues have taken to pickleball tournaments and trail use. Boomers are also looking for multi-generational recreational opportunities such as spaces where they can play with their grandchildren and socialize with their own children.

ACTIVITIES FOR TEENS

Traditional parks are outfitted with playgrounds and features that are targeted towards school-age children. Communities are beginning to acknowledge that their parks systems need to provide recreation opportunities for kids of all ages. Parents with kids of varying ages can go to one park and have all their kids entertained in one space. This exposure to parks allows for safe recreation options and encourages life-long use and support of the parks system. Teen-based recreation may include skate and bike parks, frisbee golf, ice rinks, and multi-use courts. Hang-out and study spaces for teens can be just as important as active recreation. Features like hammock poles, park shelters, wifi routers and charging stations, and unique seating can be great measures for attracting teens to a space. These park aspects can be shared on social media and this encourages more visitors.





FOCUS ON EXPERIENCES

Prior to COVID, many people chose to spend their discretionary income on experiences and activities rather than material possessions. The attributing factors ranged from a shift in generational preferences to the influence of social media. Now that the COVID pandemic is several years behind us, the trend of “focusing on experiences” has re-emerged. Parks are a great location for people to come together and build memories and experiences.

Many park designers are now considering how the layout and amenities of the park look through a social media lens. They are often driven by the thought of what spots and which experiences someone would want to take a picture of to share with their friends. Whether it’s a scenic view on hike, a unique play area, or a special activity or event, if someone wants to “share” it, it is probably going to be popular.



INDIVIDUAL RECREATION

There has been a shift towards more passive and individual sports, which was sped along by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for social distancing. During COVID, many local recreation equipment retailers reported higher-than-average sales for bicycles, camping and fishing gear and many had issues keeping enough inventory in stock to meet demand. Individual activities and sports such as walking, biking, hiking, paddling, fishing, skating, and cross country skiing can foster healthy habits. These activities are also highly adapted as individuals age and can no longer handle higher-impact or competitive sports.



NON-TRADITIONAL SPORTS

With increased demands on time, many individuals are choosing recreation options that can be enjoyed independently, or with a small group of people versus games that require a large number of participants such as baseball. Sports like pickleball, tennis, and frisbee golf are also more inclusive because they are accessible to people of different ages and abilities. When well-executed, park improvements that support these non-traditional sports can create a regional draw that brings in visitors from neighboring cities.



TRENDS IN RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

ADVENTURE AND NATURE PLAY

At some parks, traditional metal and plastic playgrounds are being replaced with natural material play features that allow for different kinds of play and exploration. Adventure and nature play teach kids important life skills while providing a unique experience that families will travel from other neighborhoods to experience. Play features can include moveable elements, pop-up play, natural materials, obstacle courses, and landforms. Kids are able to learn skills such as risk assessment, creating things out of found materials, maneuvering obstacles, and testing physical limitations. With nature play, there are often no clear rules about what each play item is supposed to be used for, so children are encouraged to use their imagination and expand their idea of what play can look like.

AQUATICS

Aging and declining aquatic infrastructure is a common theme across communities. Pools were a commonly built park feature as communities grew in the 1950s and 1960s. This means that many cities are now dealing with pools that have reached the end of their functional lifespan. The costs associated with maintaining and replacing pools is leading some communities away from offering them as a part of their park system. The communities that are continuing to offer pools are making difficult decisions about how to fund the replacement of those facilities.

While many communities are moving away from offering full-sized swimming pools, features such as splashpads and interactive fountains have become extremely popular. They offer a different way for cities to provide water play in a fun, safe, and more affordable environment. Splashpads can be designed to be accessible for park users of all ages and abilities. They often take the appearance of a “water playground” with large, colorful features. More understated interactive fountains provide a simpler water play option with ground features only. Depending on the type of system, splashpads and interactive fountains can be significantly cheaper to operate than standard pools. They often do not require lifeguards, a plus in today’s difficult labor environment which has made finding lifeguards very challenging.

PICNIC AREAS/ GATHERING AREAS

Parks are an affordable place to host large gatherings and are regularly used as a place for family and friends to gather, eat, and play. Restrictions on indoor activities imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic led to many people rediscovering their public parks. Many people developed a new appreciation for their local parks that has endured beyond the pandemic and usage rates remain high.

REGIONAL ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Large scale athletic facilities and complexes bring in people from around the region for sports tournaments and events. These facilities have a positive impact on the number of visitors to the park and can bring financial benefits to the city if visitors from out-of-town pay to use the athletic facility and spend money at local businesses. In this way, large-scale facilities can serve as economic support for other more local-scale parks that are used almost exclusively by South St. Paul residents. Recent expansions and renovations at Kaposia Landing and McMorro Field have turned those parks into regional destinations.

TRAILS

Trails are the most popular park feature in the United States. Trails have a nearly inexhaustible list of uses including walking, running, hiking, dog walking, skateboarding, biking, and roller skating. This makes trails popular for many different age groups and abilities. Beyond recreation, trails are a safe, free, and active source of transportation. South St. Paul residents can use the trails system for commuting and access to goods and services. South St. Paul is nearby many large regional parks, and the trail network allows residents to reach parks across the metropolitan area without needing to have access to a motor vehicle.





THE SYSTEM TODAY

THE PARK SYSTEM

South St. Paul has 15 public parks within a 240-acre parks system. The community is also proximate to many regional trails and regional parks in adjacent communities that are significant cultural and recreational spaces. These include: the Mississippi River Trail, Pigs Eye Lake and Park, Indian Mounds Park, and Battle Creek Regional Park. Simon's Ravine Trailhead is located within South St. Paul and users can travel through Kaposia Park to access Thompson County Park in West St. Paul and utilize its trail loop which goes around a lake.

There are several specialized parks within the South St. Paul parks system in addition to community and neighborhood parks. The DNR Boat Launch and Wildflower Levee Park are located on the Mississippi River and provide water access to the river. Seidl's Lake Park provides water access to the lake. Veterans Field and Park has recreational offerings as well as a memorial space.

The parks system includes opportunities for winter recreation including four ice rinks and a dedicated sledding hill. Warming houses and fire pits help attract users to the parks system during the winter. These are valuable features to have in Minnesota where temperatures are cold for at least four months each year. When a park is useable all year, it helps justify the cost of making substantial investments.

Like many cities of its age, South St. Paul has parks and features that need to be updated, replaced, or overhauled. Most of the playgrounds in the system were built in the early 1990s and are over 30 years old. The popular swimming pool at Northview Park needs immediate replacement due to poor condition. The timing of this parks plan update is ideal because many of the park system's larger features need replacement and the City needs to make decisions about how to allocate its resources to prepare the park system for the future.



Kaposia Landing and McMurray Fields offer tournament scale athletic facilities



Connections to the regional trail system are a big benefit to the community



Many of the facilities, like Northview Pool have aged and are in need of replacement

Aging Population in South St. Paul

Walker Methodist senior living center opened in South St. Paul in 2022, increasing the number of seniors living in the area. Just across the interstate into surrounding suburbs is Southview Senior Living, Brookdale, and Woodlyn Heights Senior Living. The proximity of these facilities also increases the need for parks and outdoor spaces that can accommodate those living in these assisted living facilities. This will continue to be the case as the Baby Boom generation ages into their 70's and 80's.

POPULATION CHANGE

Like many older cities and inner-ring suburbs, the population of South St. Paul boomed during and following the World Wars. The population started declining in 1970s and has remained relatively steady since 1990s with the population changing from 20,235 to 20,737 in 2020. Surrounding outer-ring suburbs have seen more growth than South St. Paul in the last few decades. The population is projected to be stable or decline slightly by 1-2% in the next few years.

South St. Paul's population is slightly older than it was last decade with a current average age of 39.3 years. The number of young children in the community has declined since 2010, but this appears to have stabilized. Park needs vary widely between age groups which makes diversity in the parks system important.

Finding: While the overall number of young children in the community has declined slightly since 2010, this is mostly a reflection of national demographic trends. South St. Paul remains a popular community for young families, underscoring the importance of parks and recreation for the City's residents.

DEMOGRAPHICS

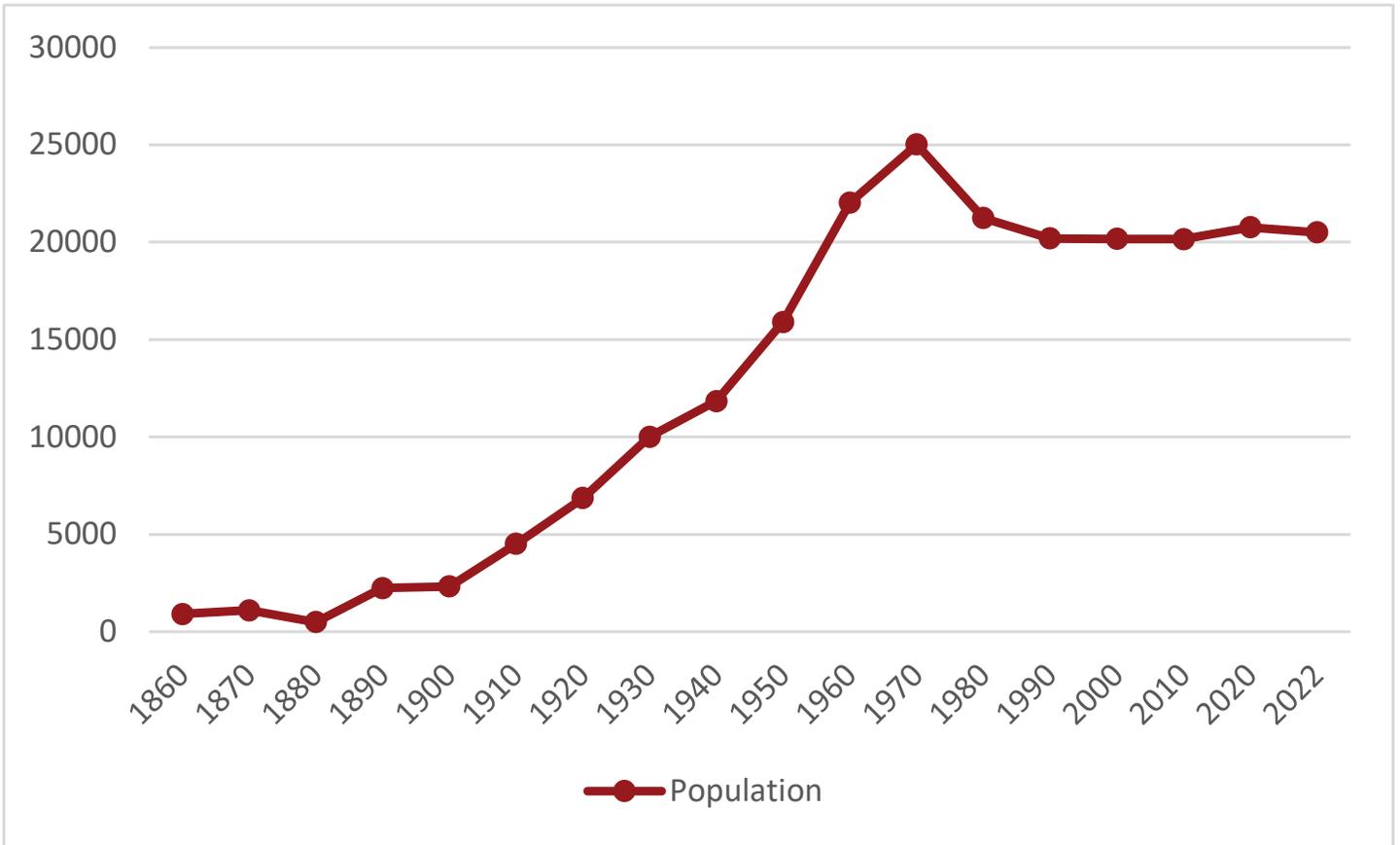
English is the primary language spoken in South St. Paul with only 11.81% reporting speaking another language, primarily Spanish (8.21%). South St. Paul's foreign-born population comes primarily from four countries although there are immigrants living here from across the world. The four countries that have supplied the largest populations of local immigrants are Mexico (535), El Salvador (242), Egypt (124), and Cambodia (80).

Roughly 11% of South St. Paul residents receive SNAP benefits and roughly 6% receive other types of public assistance. These numbers are consistent with overall trends in the Twin Cities metro and Minnesota. Not all South St. Paul residents feel financially secure. Currently, 10.4% of South St. Paul residents live at or below the poverty line. Those making less than twice the poverty income limit comprise 24.7% of the population. This is similar to poverty ratios in nearby Saint Paul.

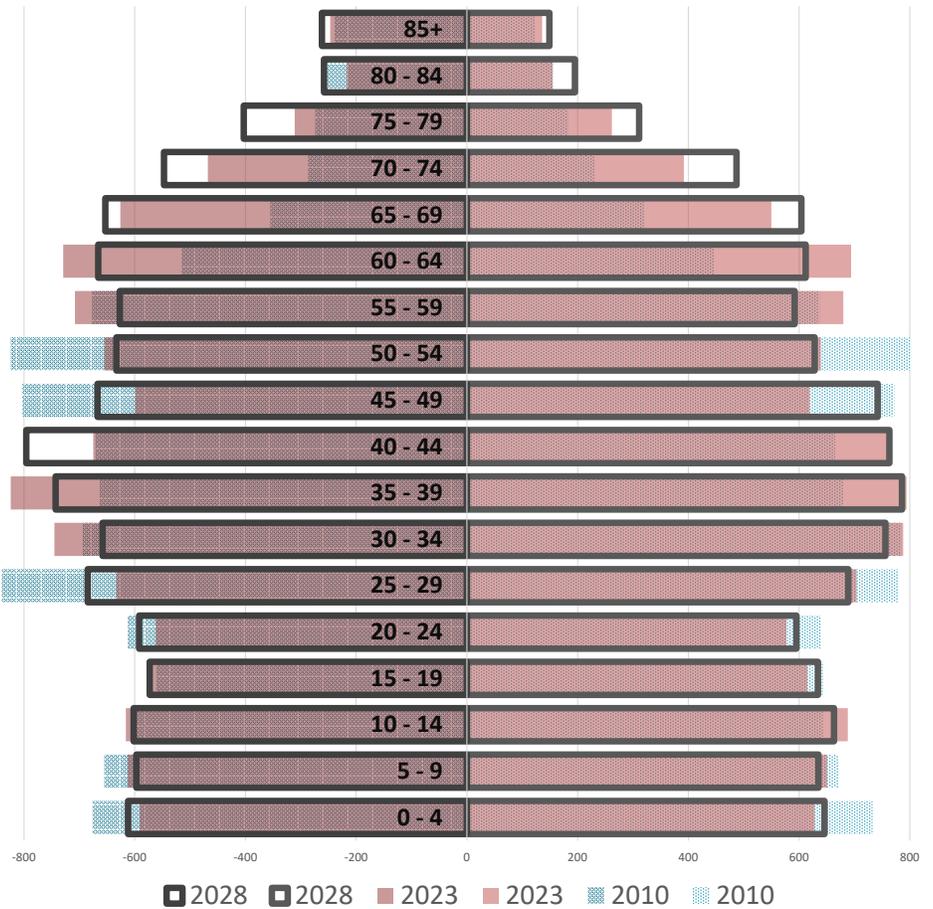
One of the largest cost burdens to families in South St. Paul is the cost of housing. Housing is generally considered affordable if no more than 30% of income is spent on housing-related expenses. Nearly half of all South St. Paul residents are spending over 30% of their income on housing and 21.5% are spending 50% or more of their incomes on housing. This leaves many community members highly cost burdened.

Manufacturing and wholesale trade job sectors represent the majority of primary jobs in South St. Paul (38%). Education and construction are also large sources of employment in the area (20%). Most people employed in South St. Paul live elsewhere (89%) and only 11% of employees of South St. Paul businesses also live in South St. Paul. Over 1,200 residents currently commute into Minneapolis and around 900 residents commute into St. Paul.

Finding: South St. Paul has a stable population that includes many working class families. These families will use and benefit from free and affordable recreation options like City park facilities and programming.



	2010	2023	2028
85+	363	383	411
80 - 84	418	372	453
75 - 79	457	573	714
70 - 74	518	860	1,034
65 - 69	675	1,176	1,257
60 - 64	962	1,423	1,278
55 - 59	1,314	1,388	1,219
50 - 54	1,626	1,294	1,261
45 - 49	1,575	1,218	1,409
40 - 44	1,336	1,434	1,559
35 - 39	1,343	1,618	1,529
30 - 34	1,479	1,533	1,414
25 - 29	1,620	1,337	1,374
20 - 24	1,252	1,139	1,187
15 - 19	1,204	1,188	1,207
10 - 14	1,249	1,304	1,265
5 - 9	1,326	1,264	1,232
0 - 4	1,409	1,219	1,258



NRPA DATABASE

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) collects data from its members and provides national averages that can be useful in assessing how the community is doing in providing recreational amenities for its residents. The center column of the following table represents NRPA median park data for communities that are similar in size and assets to South St. Paul. The last column shows how South St. Paul compares to these national medians.

Overall, South St. Paul has more park space and amenities than other communities of a similar size. The community has much fewer residents per active park and more acres per 1,000 residents, ensuring there is plenty of park space for everyone. There is room for improvement in the availability of basketball courts and tennis courts. While these numbers are still at least slightly above average, these metrics should be evaluated in the future. South St. Paul is doing exceptionally well in terms of the number of ice rinks and baseball diamonds available to its residents.

NRPA DATABASE		
FEATURE	NRPA MEDIAN FOR COMMUNITIES	SOUTH ST. PAUL
RESIDENTS PER ACTIVE PARK	2,286	1,283
ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	10.8	16.3
RESIDENTS PER PLAYGROUND	3,759	1,866
RESIDENTS PER BASKETBALL COURT	7,404	6,845
RESIDENTS PER TENNIS COURT	5,859	3,422
RESIDENTS PER BASEBALL DIAMOND	20,227	10,268
RESIDENTS PER RECTANGLE FIELD	9,176	5,134
RESIDENTS PER OUTDOOR ICE RINKS	17,741	5,134



PARK CLASSIFICATION

Different parks serve different purposes within a park system and a community. Park classifications help define and clarify the intended use of each park type and recreation facility, and provide guidance on the area served, the size, and ideal sites. This is useful when planning for new parks within the community or when contemplating park needs for major redevelopment projects. Classifications help guide facility and use plans. The parks in South St. Paul are classified into the following categories:

- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Nature Parks
- Special Use Parks

PARK CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL USERS	PARKS
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	As their name suggests, neighborhood parks are focused on providing recreation options to individual neighborhoods. These parks serve the everyday needs of the City.	NEIGHBORHOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmon Park • Jefferson Park • Lorraine Park • Northview Park • Summit Park • Grandview Park • Spruce Park
COMMUNITY PARKS	These are larger scale parks that residents are likely to travel a few miles to get to. They have bigger features and a wider range of uses.	COMMUNITY WIDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaposia Landing • Kaposia Park • Mcmorrow Field • Veterans Field
NATURE PARK	Parks that are primarily used for their natural features like woods, lakes, and ponds are natural space parks. People may visit these parks for more informal recreation like hiking, boating, and biking.	COMMUNITY WIDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siedl's Lake Park • Wildflower Levee Park
SPECIAL USE	Special use parks are facilities that have been developed primarily for a specific purpose such as a dog park or a boat launch.	SPECIFIC TO USE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dnr Boat Launch • Fred Lawshe Park • Simon's Ravine Trailhead

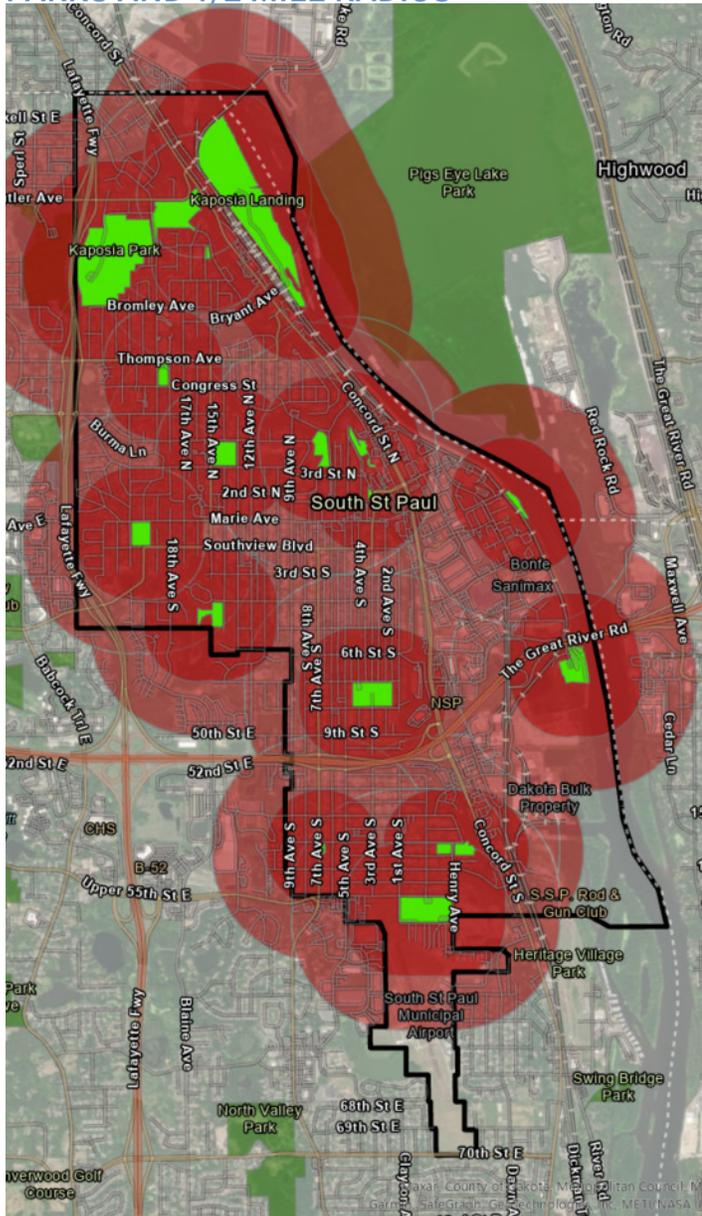
ACCESS TO PARKS AND GAPS

One measure of a park system's quality is whether members of the community are able to walk to a park. This is measured via a 1/2 mile radius from parks. Almost all land within City limits is within a 1/2 mile (15 minute walk) of a City park. The few areas that are not within a 1/2 mile of a park are generally industrial areas and the airport. Even when considering only parks that have playgrounds, almost all the residential areas of the community are within 1/2 a mile. There is a gap just east of Seidl's Lake Park but residents living in this area do have other options, including a playground just outside of City limits in Inver Grove Heights, or school district property that has playgrounds.

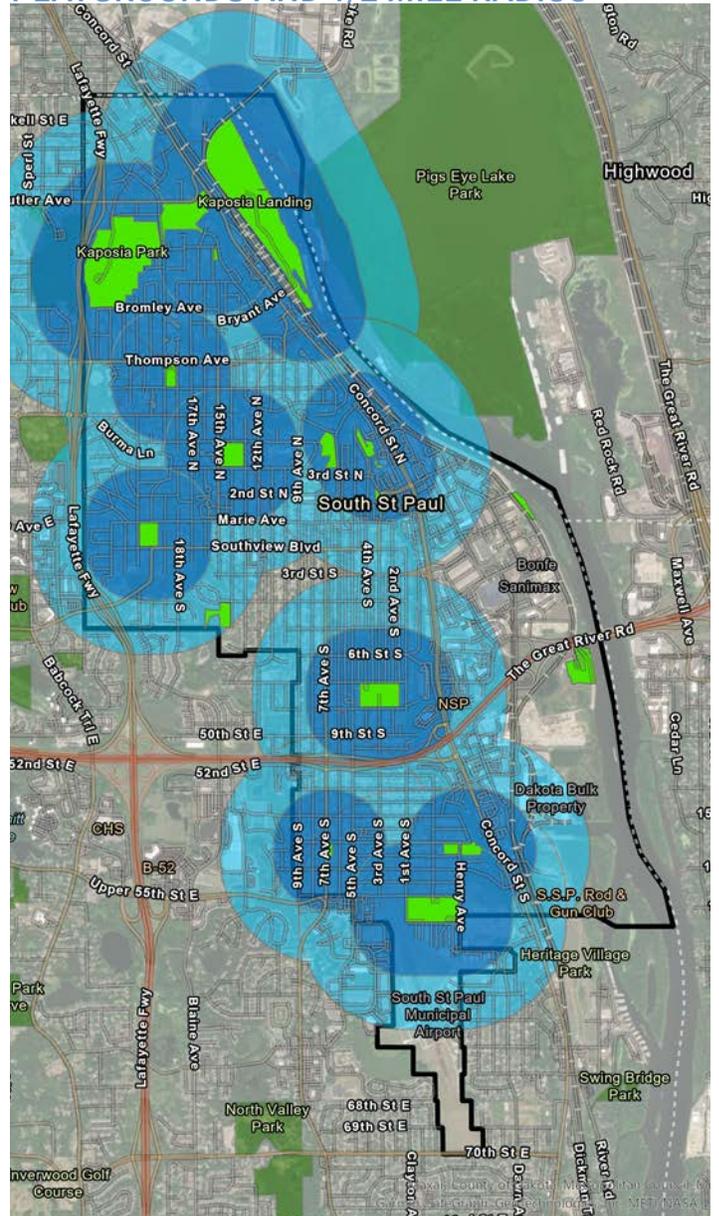
Potential redevelopment in the Hardman Triangle area of the City may ultimately result in a small park space, to service the area east of Concord Street if residential uses are developed there. This will likely be a passive park more focused on plaza/gathering space. It has yet to be determined whether that park would be operated by the City or function more as a semi-private park space that is part of the redevelopment project.

Finding: The City of South St. Paul does not need to add parkland or facilities to close gaps in the park system.

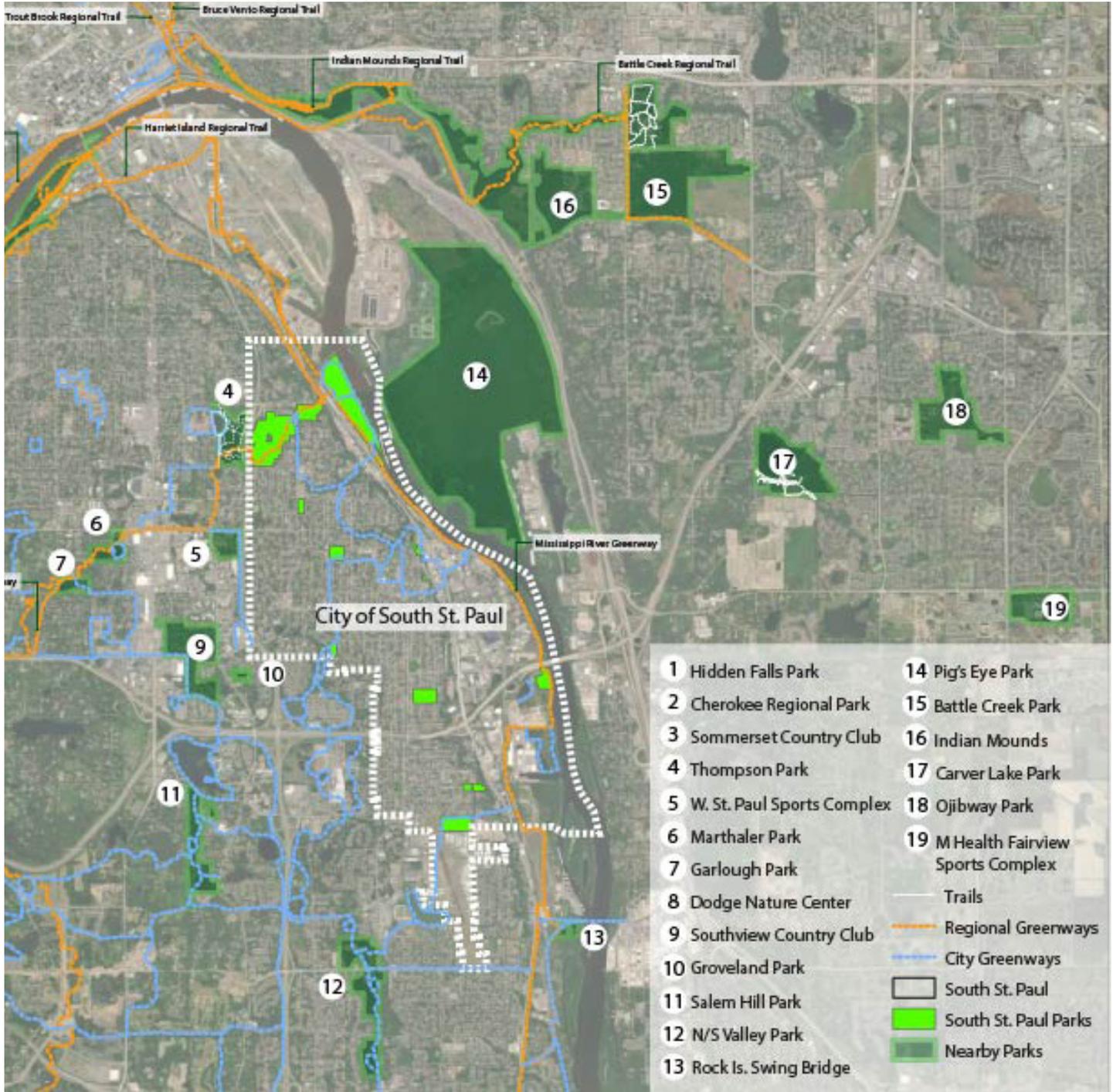
PARKS AND 1/2 MILE RADIUS



PLAYGROUNDS AND 1/2 MILE RADIUS



NEARBY REGIONAL RECREATION FACILITIES



REGIONAL FACILITIES

The buildout of the Dakota County Greenway System connected residents to an extensive bike network that extends from Hastings to Stillwater to Hutchinson. The Mississippi River Greenway runs the length of the city and connects easily to St. Paul.

Thompson County Park in West St. Paul provides County-level park facilities within easy access of most residents. Directly across the Mississippi River is a large network of regional nature parks and trails at Pig's Eye, Battle Creek, and Indian Mounds parks.

Finding: Residents of South St. Paul have access to "regional scale" recreation offerings, through trails in the community, and large park facilities at Kaposia Park and Kaposia Landing, as well as in adjacent cities. The City of South St. Paul does not need to be searching for large regional parkland.

RECREATION OFFERINGS BY PARTNERS/OTHERS

There are many recreation opportunities in South St. Paul that are not owned by the City and contribute to the success of park system. Some of these are regional attractions like the Mississippi River Trail and others are privately owned or school facilities. For many residents, the difference between these recreation providers is not well understood. Many people are not aware that Roosevelt Tennis Courts and Central Square are owned by the school district and the parks department does not have any control over how those facilities are operated. There are instances where other partners utilize municipal park facilities, such as the South St. Paul High School’s baseball and softball teams playing at Lorraine and Harmon Parks.

Finding: The City benefits from and provides benefits to other recreation providers. When collaboration between recreation providers works well, community members have more options than if they only had access to one recreation provider’s facilities. Conversations and collaboration between partners should be proactive, ongoing, and focused on making sure all partners’ needs are being met.

<u>OTHER RECREATION OFFERINGS</u>			
<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>TYPICAL USERS</u>	<u>EXAMPLES</u>
STATE AND REGIONAL TRAILS	Longer trails used for cycling, running, walking, and other uses. May include winter uses.	REGIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mississippi River Trail Thompson County Park Loop River to River Greenway Trail
STATE/COUNTY/ REGIONAL PARKS	These are typically larger, natural resource focused parks that include outdoor recreation activities like hiking and camping.	REGIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pig’s Eye Regional Park Battle Creek Regional Park
SCHOOLS	Schools often incorporate playgrounds and ballfields into their campuses. These are used by both the schools and the community.	COMMUNITY WIDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Square Community Center South St. Paul Community Learning Center South St. Paul HS
OTHER CITY/COUNTY FACILITIES	While not parks, the City and County do operate other recreational facilities that are use specific.	COMMUNITY WIDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doug Woog Arena Kaposia Landing Dog Park Kaposia Library
PRIVATE RECREATION	Private operators own some of the recreation areas in and around South St. Paul with a variety of uses.	USE SPECIFIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South St. Paul Rod & Gun Club
PUBLIC LANDS AND WATERS	Land and waters are often managed by the MN DNR. They are used for activities like boating, hunting, and fishing.	REGIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mississippi River Pig’s Eye Lake

AGE AND CONDITION OF FACILITIES

Site visits and analysis of existing park facilities reveals a system that has aged significantly. The last significant round of neighborhood park capital investments was in 1990/1991 following a successful park referendum. That referendum was undertaken to address the aging of the first generation of many of South St. Paul's neighborhood parks which were initially built in the 1950s-1970s.

Because most of South St. Paul's playgrounds were built at the same time in the early 1990's, they share similar characteristics and lack unique features. Certain elements that were popular in the 1990's have fallen out of favor with playground designers, either due to recreational value or safety concerns.

Most of the community's playground facilities have aged beyond their useful life and the parks department is no longer able to find replacement parts for many playgrounds because they are so outdated. Multiple playgrounds have areas boarded off, typically because the original slide broke and the slide and attachment system is no longer made by playground manufacturers.

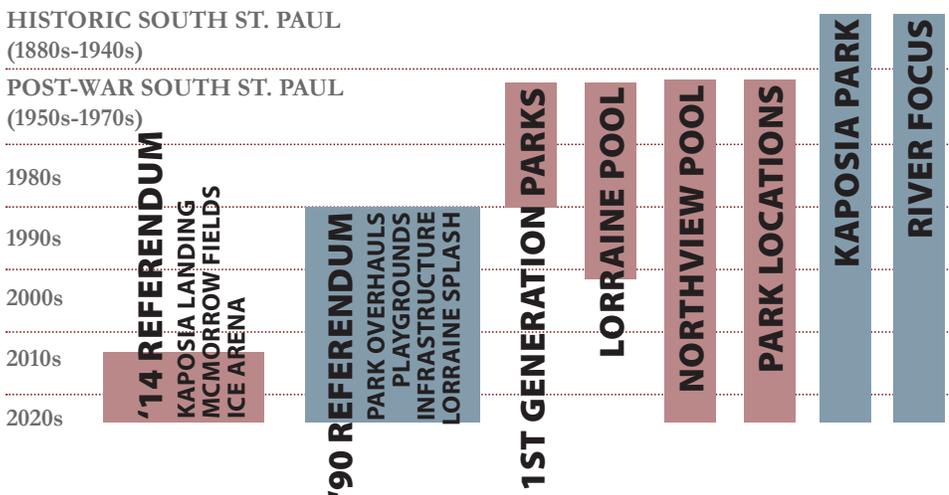
Playground	Installed	Condition
Grandview	Early 1990s	Poor
Spruce	Early 1990s	Poor
Jefferson	Early 1990s	Poor
Summit	Early 1990s	Poor
Kaposia	Early 1990s	Poor
Veterans	Early 1990s	Poor
Lorraine	Early 1990s	Poor
Northview	Late 1990s	Poor
Harmon	Early 1990s	Fair
McMorrow	Late 2010s	Good
Kaposia Landing	Early 2020s	New

There have been investments in the park system since the 1990's but these investments have been mostly focused on larger community parks. For instance, the City has developed a stellar trail system in coordination with Dakota County. There have also been significant investments in community-scale athletic facilities such as Kaposia Landing and McMorrow Fields.

Finding: Industry standards expect a 20-year lifespan for most playgrounds. Nine of the City's eleven playgrounds are much more than 20 years old. The City is largely in damage control mode with each of these nine playgrounds, attempting to make sufficient repairs to keep each playground safe and operational as long as possible even though replacement parts are no longer available.

The aquatic facilities in South St. Paul are also facing challenges due to age. Northview Pool is almost 70 years old which is beyond the typical lifespan of an outdoor pool. Peer communities Crystal and Apple Valley have recently had to replace their box pools due to age-related deterioration and both of their pools were younger than the Northview Pool. Lorraine Park has a splash pool with large play features in the pool that need refurbishment or replacement.

Finding: The City's aquatic offerings need significant investment, up to and including replacement. This will be a large cost which will greatly exceed what can be paid for using the standard parks department budget.



ATHLETIC FACILITIES

The City has invested significantly in tournament scale athletic complexes at Kaposia Landing (baseball/softball) and McMorow Field (soccer). Veterans Field provides athletic facilities and is heavily programmed and there are standalone fields in other neighborhood parks and community parks. The school district uses Lorraine Park for baseball and Harmon Park for softball and these facilities have been designed to reflect that usage.

South St. Paul has been proactive about promoting tournaments which is great for recreation and can aid with economic development if visitors stop in town for food and gas.

Finding: Athletic facilities in South St. Paul are well utilized and programmed. Recent investments have been well-received and are noteworthy gems in the park system. Additional investments in athletics facilities may be a lower priority for the City in the short to mid-term. If there are investments, they should be done in coordination with the school district (programming and financial) and any other user groups.



YOUTH AND TEEN ACTIVITIES

Surveys and conversations with the community suggest that people see a need for teen recreation options. There is some sentiment that this age demographic is underserved and lacks recreational opportunities. At the same time, concerns about community safety have resulted in the removal of some facilities commonly used by teens such as basketball courts and picnic areas.

One of the challenges with providing recreation for teenagers is that individuals in this demographic have extremely varied interests. It is easy to serve young children at a public park because most 7-year-olds will be happy with a playground. Teenagers, on the other hand, have a variety of interests. Some teens enjoy skate parks, some teens enjoy athletic fields, and other teens just want an unprogrammed space in the shade to sit and talk with friends. Some teens just want to play video games at home and do not have a strong natural interest in going to public parks. In general, teens value independence and do not like being compelled to participate in programming that involves heavy supervision by adults. The Kaposia Park disc golf course is an existing park feature that appeals to some teenagers, and there are many existing athletics options for youths who enjoy organized sports.

The City of South St. Paul provides a substantial amount of parks-based programming for residents. Community events appeal to residents of all ages and help build connections. The parks department employs teenagers to run some of their programming and camps and this is a great opportunity for teens that want to get involved in their community.

Finding: Teen recreation is a challenge, but the City is trying to address that with creative programming. Some facilities such as a skate park or general hangout spaces are lacking in city parks. Security upgrades might help keep places feeling safer for teens and discourage behaviors that can give teens a bad reputation.

4

SYSTEM INITIATIVES

A park “system” is more than just a collection of individual parks. A system needs to consider how the parks work together to provide recreation options for the community. It is also more than the physical features, but also how the City provides programming, maintenance, and operations within the larger network. Planning for the park system should also consider how the City’s facilities fit into the larger region of recreation offerings. The system goals and strategies will ultimately be implemented in individual parks, but within the framework of the system initiatives.

This plan addresses both the individual park needs (Chapter 5), but also the overarching direction of the park system. These initiatives are ideas and policies that help steer the South St. Paul Park System forward, improving the operations, user experience, and long-term sustainability of the parks.

The System Initiatives are:

- Park Replacements
- Playground Variety
- Financial Sustainability and Approach to Funding
- Providing Engaging Programming
- Aquatic Development
- Teen Recreation
- Trail Connections
- Park Ecology
- Natural Resource Based Recreation
- Wayfinding
- Parks for all Seasons
- Working with Other Recreation Providers

Because these initiatives are intertwined, some themes may be evident in multiple places throughout this chapter. Many of these initiatives are also evident and have been included in the design of individual parks shown in Chapter 5.

HOW THE INITIATIVES ARE STRUCTURED

Each initiative includes a goal, a description of the key elements, and strategies for achieving the goal:

GOALS: A statement the City should strive to achieve. It may not always be met, or it may take some time to get there, but the goal statement is the aiming point.

DESCRIPTIONS: Narrative to further elaborate on the goal, and explain the “why” of each initiative.

STRATEGIES: Action steps, policies, suggestions, and directives that can help move the City closer to achieving the goal.

PARK REPLACEMENTS

GOAL:

Plan for the replacement of features across the park system to ensure safe and up to date facilities while spreading costs over time to manage financial obligations.

LIFE CYCLES:

Many of the playgrounds in South St. Paul are reaching the end of their life spans. Most of the playgrounds in the system were constructed following a referendum in the early 1990s. That means they are around 30 years old when the average expected lifespan of a playground is around 20 years. The City has worked hard to keep the existing playgrounds functional but, at this point, replacement of these facilities is necessary.

With such a large, system-wide expense, South St. Paul is using this process to plan for playground replacement as soon as possible. Priority will be given to playground facility that pose the greater safety risk and that are in the most widely used parks.

FUNDING SOURCES:

Playground replacement can be one of the costliest replacements in a park. Finding funding to replace existing park features can be challenging as many funding sources are only available for initial construction of a playground facility, not the replacement. Funding options for the replacement costs can include the general fund, but also grants, referendums, and donations. Both governmental and private grants are available for playgrounds and park features.

CHANGING STANDARDS:

As trends change over time so do standards for safety and user experience for park features. There are features that were popular in the past, but may not meet the needs of the community today. The City should continue to evaluate those features and determine whether they should be replaced, removed, or upgraded.

STRATEGIES:

- Remain vigilant about checking park features to make sure they are safe and in good repair
- Continue to use and update the asset management tool
- Adequately budget for upcoming maintenance needs
- Pursue additional funding sources such as grants and donations to replace and improve playground features
- Evaluate features that have reached the end of their life cycle and determine whether they should be replaced or removed



Replacing Playgrounds

PLAYGROUND VARIETY

GOAL:

Incorporate new and unique playground features into the parks system to maintain interest and inclusivity in the parks.

NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY:

By creating playgrounds with unique themes, the City can help strengthen a neighborhood identity and get residents to visit different parts of the community. Many families are willing to travel to different playgrounds, especially if each playground offers a different experiences. Neighborhood residents are more likely to rally around their local playground when they can take pride in the facility's unique features.

MAINTAIN INTEREST:

Classic play features like slides, a set of swings, and monkey bars will always have a place in playgrounds. However, diversifying the play feature offerings throughout the parks system will keep children and their parents engaged and excited to continue visiting different parks in South St. Paul.

ADAPT TO TRENDS:

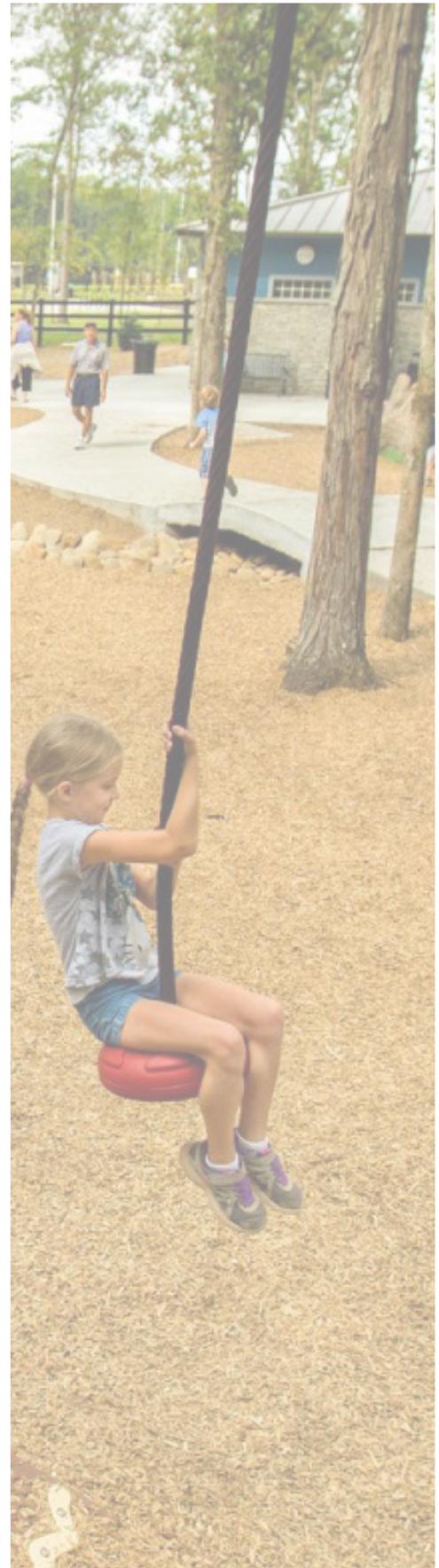
Parks that create a unique experience for its users are very popular and allow a community to offer the types of recreational experience park users desire. Adventure play, nature play, themed equipment, and obstacle courses are all becoming more popular in parks. More updated and modern play features can also be an important asset. These may include ziplines, climbers, and large slides that may be geared towards older children. The unique features create a variety of ways that experiences can be created in parks.

CREATE INCLUSIVITY:

Having variation in playgrounds can open up the possibilities for more kids of different age ranges and abilities to enjoy the parks. Features such as climbers, obstacle courses, and adventure play can be adapted for many different users. Children have a variety of play needs depending on ability and sensitivity and these needs will change as they grow up. Different types of play features throughout the parks system will allow for kids to have all their needs met in one community through their childhood.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop parks for all ages and abilities
- Consider alternatives to traditional playground replacement when play features have aged
- Create a financially plan for the upfront costs of unique park features that may be more costly but draw larger crowds



Themed Playgrounds



South St. Paul City Hall

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL:

Ensure that the park system has the appropriate level of funding to sustain high quality offerings for residents and visitors.

LONG TERM/CAPITAL PLANNING

Every year the City develops an annual budget as well as a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). These documents are what guides the City's expenditures on everything from parks to police. It is important that the upcoming needs for the park system are recognized in this planning process.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Planning for the operations and maintenance costs of the parks system is an important step for the long-term success of the parks. This includes routine maintenance like mowing and bigger investments like replacing playgrounds. This will be especially important as most of the playgrounds in South St. Paul are facing immediate replacement.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Investing in a park system takes significant resources. Fortunately, there are multiple ways to pay for specific parts of the system. Unfortunately, each comes with its own set of limitations. The City should continue to pursue and secure funding from a variety of sources. A more in-depth description of the sources can be found in the Implementation Chapter. Some of the options include the following: general fund, park dedication, bonding, grants, donations, sponsorships, user fees and/or other fees.

The City has and should continue to prioritize providing services with an affordable fee structure.

STRATEGIES:

- Update the asset management tool as features are replaced
- Make sure replacement costs are incorporated into the City's CIP, and review the CIP annually to plan for upcoming needs
- Commit to an operating budget that protects investments in parks by maintaining the playgrounds, trails, fields, natural resources, and other features that have been put in
- Pursue efficiencies in park maintenance by incorporating new technology and approaches to maintenance
- Continue to monitor fees and costs for programming with other communities

ENGAGING PROGRAMMING

GOAL:

Continue to offer affordable and memorable programming that serves the community by creating social connections, providing activities for the youth, teaching skills, and improving health.

PROGRAMS CREATE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS:

Events like Kaposia Days, Splish Splash Bash, and On The Road Again bring thousands of residents and visitors together to have a great time. In a time when loneliness is being characterized as a public health crisis at all age levels, it is especially important that the City continue to offer opportunities for connection. Using local staff further connects the community to the offerings and is a great opportunity for recreation employees to learn leadership skills while making a difference in South St. Paul.

PRIORITIZE PROVIDING PROGRAMMING THAT IS ACCESSIBLE AT ALL INCOME LEVELS

Park and recreation programming in South St. Paul has many important benefits to the community. Community pride, fostering social interactions, giving the youth productive things to do, and public health are just a few of the reasons the City has supported a robust approach to recreation. It is important that *all* residents of South St. Paul are able to benefit from these offerings.

CONTINUE TO ADAPT

As society continues to change, so does a community's recreation needs. Consider South St. Paul's demographics and larger national recreation trends to decide when to offer new programming. When trying new ideas, be willing to experiment, but grow the level of investment in specific programs as they "prove themselves." At the same time, if the community no longer needs or desires certain programming, be willing to move on from it.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop annual evaluation of programs to make sure the offerings are meeting the needs of the community. Decide which category each program should be in for the next year:
 - **Keep** - "This is going well. It may need minor changes, but let's do it again next year!"
 - **Adjust** - "There is still value in providing this, but we could make it better by changing X or Y."
 - **Discard** - "We tried something new, but it didn't work" or "This has been good but sometimes programs run their course."
 - **Create** - "Next year we should try..."
- Monitor other communities to evaluate competitive fee structures, but prioritize making sure programs are available at all income levels.



Programming in the parks

AQUATICS DEVELOPMENT

GOAL:

Plan for the long-term viability, development, and funding of aquatics facilities in South St. Paul.

POOL VIABILITY

Although pools provide a great asset to a community's park system, they come at a high cost. Having two pools in South St. Paul means double the maintenance and repair costs. The City will need to continually assess if having two pools is a benefit or if the cost is a detriment to the upkeep of the other features in the parks system. It may prove the most beneficial for the city to combine aquatics facilities and maintain one pool with an additional splash pad feature attached.

CONSIDER OTHER AQUATICS OPTIONS

Full-sized pools are great for older kids, adults, and anyone looking for low impact exercise. However, they can also be a barrier to accessibility for smaller children and younger kids with physical limitations. Other options may include smaller wading pools, splash pads, and fountains. These options can be more accessible, have lower maintenance costs, and generate more feature diversity in parks than a traditional pool. South St. Paul Public Schools also has a large lap pool with public access hours at limited times throughout the year when an additional pool is needed.

STRATEGIES:

- Continually assess the popularity and use of the aquatics facilities
- Find outside funding for sources for the construction and upkeep of aquatics
- Assess changing trends and consider alternatives to pools as needed
- Increase diversity in parks through a variety of aquatics options
- Combine aquatics facilities to utilize the existing water infrastructure to its fullest potential while decreasing overall aquatics maintenance costs



Exploring Aquatics Options

TEEN RECREATION

GOAL:

Develop a parks system that is inclusive and attractive to teenagers that have moved beyond the playground stage of recreation in parks.

PROVIDE SOCIAL SPACES

Teenagers make up around 13% of the population in South St. Paul. This age group is often difficult to provide recreation options for as they are discovering much more varied interests. Providing spaces for teens to gather and socialize can be just as important as recreation features. These spaces can be unique to the parks and include hammocking spaces, covered picnic tables, study spaces, and non-traditional seating.

ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

Parks have gone beyond just being places for exercise, there are also opportunities for artistic expression that may be of interest, particularly to teens. Performance spaces, sanctioned graffiti walls, and interesting photography opportunities can all provide this.

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Teen-based recreation provides a great opportunity to explore new, trending activities in parks. Some of these activities could include disc golf, pickleball, skateboarding, basketball, sand volleyball and others that are emerging in popularity. The success of these features can inform South St. Paul of the potential to expand them to the larger system. Teens can also provide input through being on the Parks Commission.

SAFETY

Safety concerns can deter parents from encouraging their kids to use the parks. Security measures like video systems, lighting, and clear visibility are not only to protect the parks, but also to provide a feeling of safety for teenagers using parks. These can be included along trails, on play equipment, and in parking lots.

STRATEGIES:

- Explore developing teen specific social spaces, for example a hammocking area
- Consider non-traditional activities such as disc golf and enhancements to the skate park
- Invest in security measures for parks to help both teens and the elderly feel safer
- Work with programmers to provide venues to teen artists



Disc Golf for Teens

TRAIL CONNECTIONS

GOAL:

Provide safe and enjoyable trail connections to all community and park destinations.

CLOSING THE LOOP

South St. Paul is fortunate to have many trails, including both City and Regional facilities. Many of these trails link directly to regional parks that are highly significant in the Twin Cities. However, these trails can be disconnected from the city itself and do not serve residents the way that they have the potential to.

TRAILS FOR RECREATION

Trails continue to be the most desired park and recreation features in the United States. They are also some of the most inclusive park features because of their varying uses. Within parks, trails are a well-used feature, often used by walkers, joggers, children on bikes, and dog walkers. There are many larger, regional trails that run through South St. Paul and can also accommodate cyclists, skaters, and distance runners.

TRAILS FOR TRANSPORTATION

Trails can and should connect important community destinations. Places like parks and schools need to be accessible to children and teenagers that are not yet able to drive. Trails are also great for active transit, making trail transit healthier for people and the environment.

TRAILS FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

Trail corridors can also be a catalyst for natural resource protection in a community. They can be located in areas that are more prone to flooding, subject to setbacks, or protected from development. If the right-of-way or trail easements are wide enough, trail corridors can also layer in stormwater management, prairie and tree plantings, and buffers from development. Trail corridors are also remarkable for their ability to help animals move safely between larger patches of habitat. It is not uncommon to see deer, birds, small game, and other animals using trail corridors.

STRATEGIES:

- Prioritize development of trails that connect to a greater trail network
- Consider the accessibility from important South St. Paul services (like schools and grocery stores) to trail links
- Utilize transportation grants and funding for the development of these trails
- Further connections to Simon's Ravine Trailhead



Mississippi River Trail

PARK ECOLOGY

GOAL:

Develop the parks to serve as an example of ecological protection, restoration, and responsibility for the surrounding community.

PARKS AS EXAMPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY

The park system should be an example of thriving ecosystems and best practices for design and maintenance. The city will own and operate these properties for generations and today's decisions have the potential to impact the park system (positively and negatively) for many years to come.

PROTECTING THE INVESTMENT IN PARKS

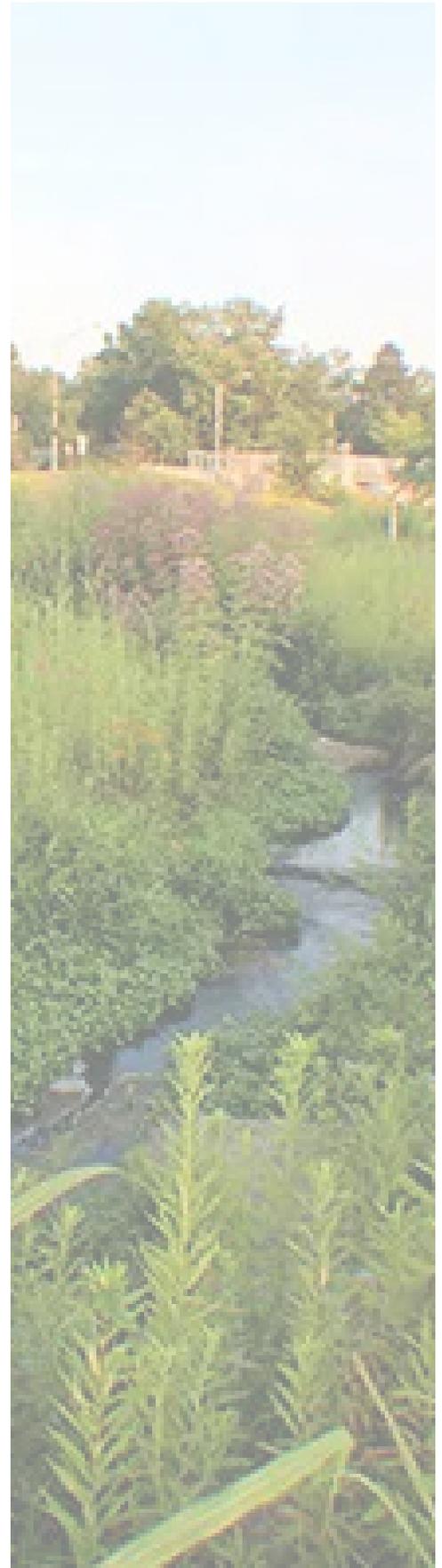
A changing climate may present new challenges for the park system. Milder winters may allow different invasive species to survive and wreak havoc on park plants and waterbodies. Drought mixed with rarer, but more intense rain events may challenge the viability of the City's park vegetation. It is likely that the vegetation makeup in the parks may need to shift in order to survive. Being proactive about planting more drought tolerant plants will help the system adapt and stay viable into the future.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Parks are a key way to connect people to nature and facilitate a relationship to the natural world. It is through these connections that preservation efforts continue. The more people appreciate the natural resources that we have, the more they are willing to do to protect them and make them a priority.

STRATEGIES:

- Focus on the ecological as well as recreational value of parkland as the park system grows
- Look for opportunities to incorporate high value natural resources into the park system to protect them and connect park users with nature
- Explore opportunities to incorporate prairie plantings, stormwater management, and shoreland restoration into parks where appropriate
- Evaluate maintenance practices through a sustainability lens. Consider the impact of practices such as chemical use, fuel alternatives, mowing practices, and plowing/salting
- Evaluate what plants are being used in park projects. Refrain from taking a monoculture approach that makes vegetation more susceptible to dying at the same time. Incorporate more drought tolerant plants.



Preserving Minnesota Ecology

NATURAL RESOURCE PARKS

GOAL:

Preserve and enhance the natural character and function of the parks to protect their natural resources so they are here for generations to come.

PRESERVE NATURAL SPACES FOR RECREATION

There are many parks within South St. Paul that are appreciated for their natural, undisturbed spaces. Seidl's Lake in particular is noted by the community as being a "hidden gem" in South St. Paul. Kaposia Park and Simon's Ravine offer outstanding walks in the woods. Both natural and highly programmed parks see regular use and have their place within the parks system. Natural spaces can be used at all times of the year for activities like hiking, biking, dog walking, snowshoeing, and in line skating.

PARKS FOR RESTORATION

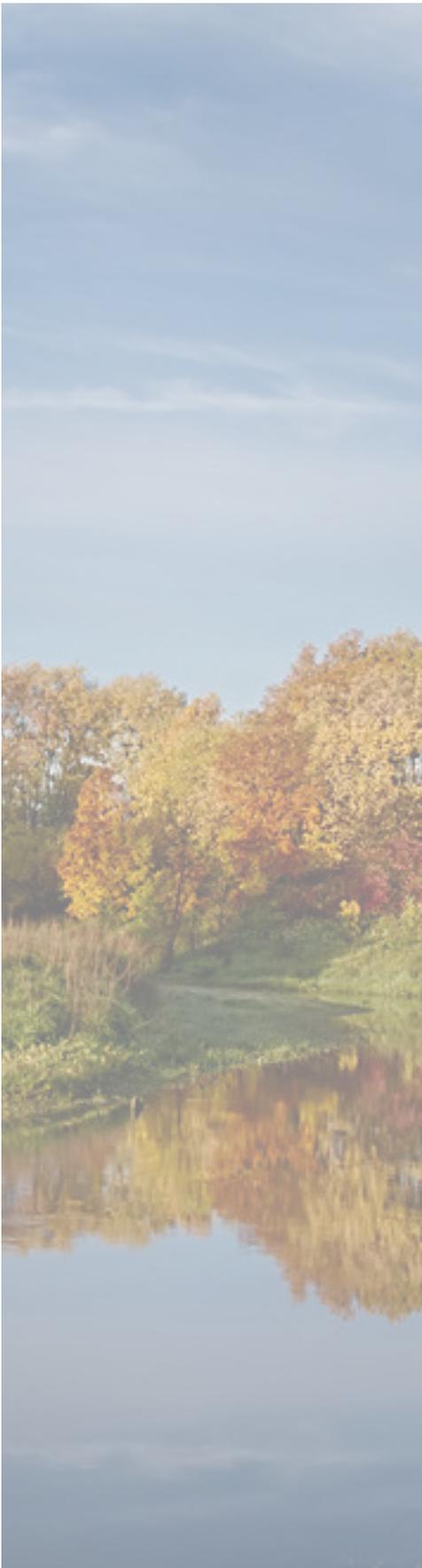
Natural resource parks can offer the best of both worlds: preserving important ecological features and creating a recreational asset to the community. Because of this, restoring and maintaining these spaces should be a top priority. This includes controlled maintenance practices like removal of invasive plants and pests, re-establishing native habitats, and protecting existing species present on the site. Planting true native plants is a great step towards restoring species diversity and supporting important pollinators.

INVEST IN NATURAL SPACES

It is important to remember that although these spaces are natural and do not require the replacement of play features or the maintenance of sports fields, they do still need to be maintained. Keeping the area free of litter, debris, and snow is an important step to the enjoyment of these parks. Without this maintenance, the enjoyment of the parks will decrease. This may lead to a shift in the priority of the community and risk losing these ecologically important spaces.

STRATEGIES:

- Prioritize natural spaces in the parks system by ensuring they are both well maintained and free from unnecessary development
- Keep up to date on the latest plant and tree diseases to protect the spread
- Specify and install native plants when plantings are required



Maintaining Natural Resources

WAYFINDING

GOAL:

Provide clear and helpful wayfinding to guide park users around the community, establish a brand, and tell the story of South St. Paul.

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO PLACE

Wayfinding is the use of signage and other tools to help people find their way around a place. Many of the parks in South St. Paul would benefit from additional signage, especially for visitors to the parks system. Visitors will increase as many of the planned improvements are made as a result of this plan.

ACCESSIBILITY

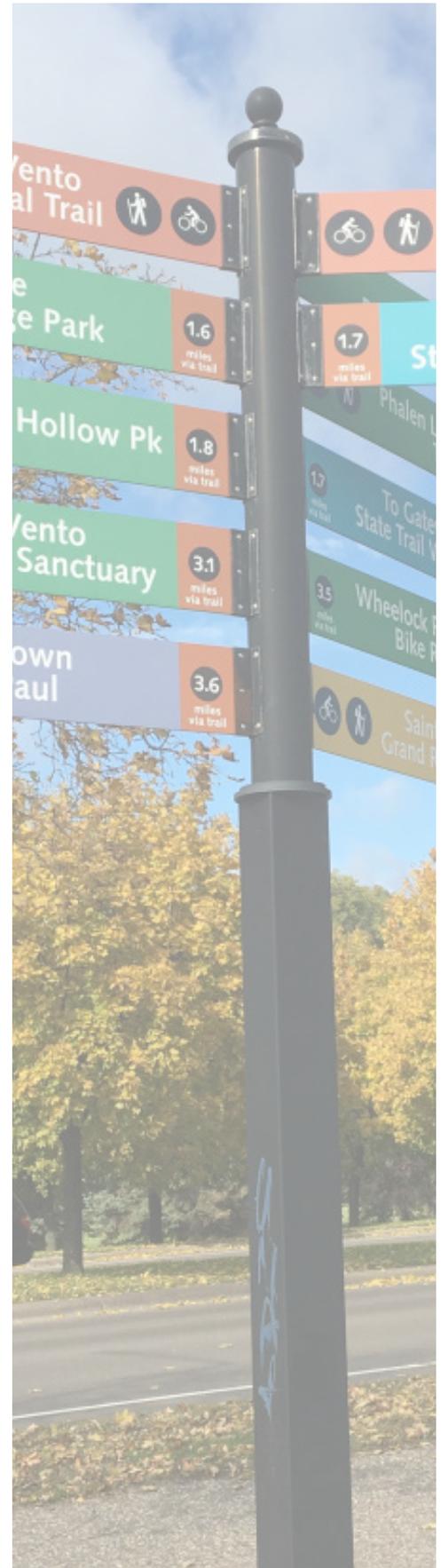
Wayfinding is a great way to increase accessibility throughout South St. Paul. Signage can be translated into many different languages to accommodate the more diverse population in South St. Paul and the surrounding communities. Icons and colors that are accessible to those with visual impairments can be incorporated to make directions as clear as possible.

BRAND IDENTITY

Developing a set of signs that is used throughout South St. Paul parks can help as a branding and character-building tool. As visitors come to the parks, cohesive signage will make it clear that they are within the South St. Paul parks system and the park will be held to the high standards of the City. This signage can include: monument signs, kiosks and trailheads, directional signage, interpretive signage, and regulatory signage.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop a unified signage set for the parks and trails in South St. Paul
- Include different types of scales of signage throughout the parks
- Establish a brand identity and reputation for inclusivity and accessibility



South St. Paul Signage

PARKS FOR ALL SEASONS

GOAL:

Provide seasonal facilities and programming that allow people to enjoy and use the parks year-round.

FOUR SEASON RECREATION

Minnesota has four distinct seasons that each foster unique sports and activities. With the long, cold winters, Minnesotans like to get out and maximize cold weather activities. Each winter, activities such as hockey, ice fishing, snowmobiling, skating, and skiing replace summer activities like swimming, boating, biking, and baseball. The park system should help facilitate these different activities so the parks can be used year-round.

South St. Paul Parks and Recreation currently uses the parks for the Flannel Fest every year as well as various holiday events. The City should continue to facilitate activities and events year-round to promote the parks system. Events could be supported by outside entities in addition to the City and could include concepts like holiday markets, luminary/ice sculpture events, fat bike rentals and races, and snowshoe hikes.

SHIFTS IN MAINTENANCE

As the weather changes, so do the maintenance needs. Mowers are replaced by plows. The strain of heavy use gets replaced by the strain of snow loads. Winter can be particularly hard on the park system. Irrigation and water spigots need to be prepped. Freeze/thaw cycles can create heaving in the roads, parking lots, and trails. It also means that many of the features such as fencing and hardware will not be checked for months. The structure of the Public Works department means that winter storms require an “all hands on deck” approach and standard park maintenance may need to be paused to ensure the roads are plowed. This flexibility is beneficial to the City’s overall operation.

STRATEGIES:

- Continue to host and promote seasonal activities and events
- Coordinate with Dakota County and other entities to promote and host seasonal events that bring the community together during all seasons
- Consider winter usability when developing new park features
- Continue to refine maintenance strategies about what gets cleared/plowed in the winter



Winter Recreation

COORDINATION WITH OTHER RECREATION PROVIDERS

GOAL:

Build strong partnerships with other recreation providers to strengthen the recreation offerings in the region for residents and visitors.

RECREATION PROGRAMING

Getting involved in school sports and activities is a great way for kids to gain exposure to different ways of recreating and using the parks. Schools can only provide so many activities because of limited facilities. Utilizing the South St. Paul's city parks eliminates lack of facility space as a barrier to expanded school programs.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMING

Outdoor classrooms in parks are a great way to get young children hands on experience with nature and the environment. These classrooms can encourage problem solving and critical thinking while fueling creativity. They can be as informal as a hillside surrounded by trees or as formal as a tables and chairs under a pavilion.

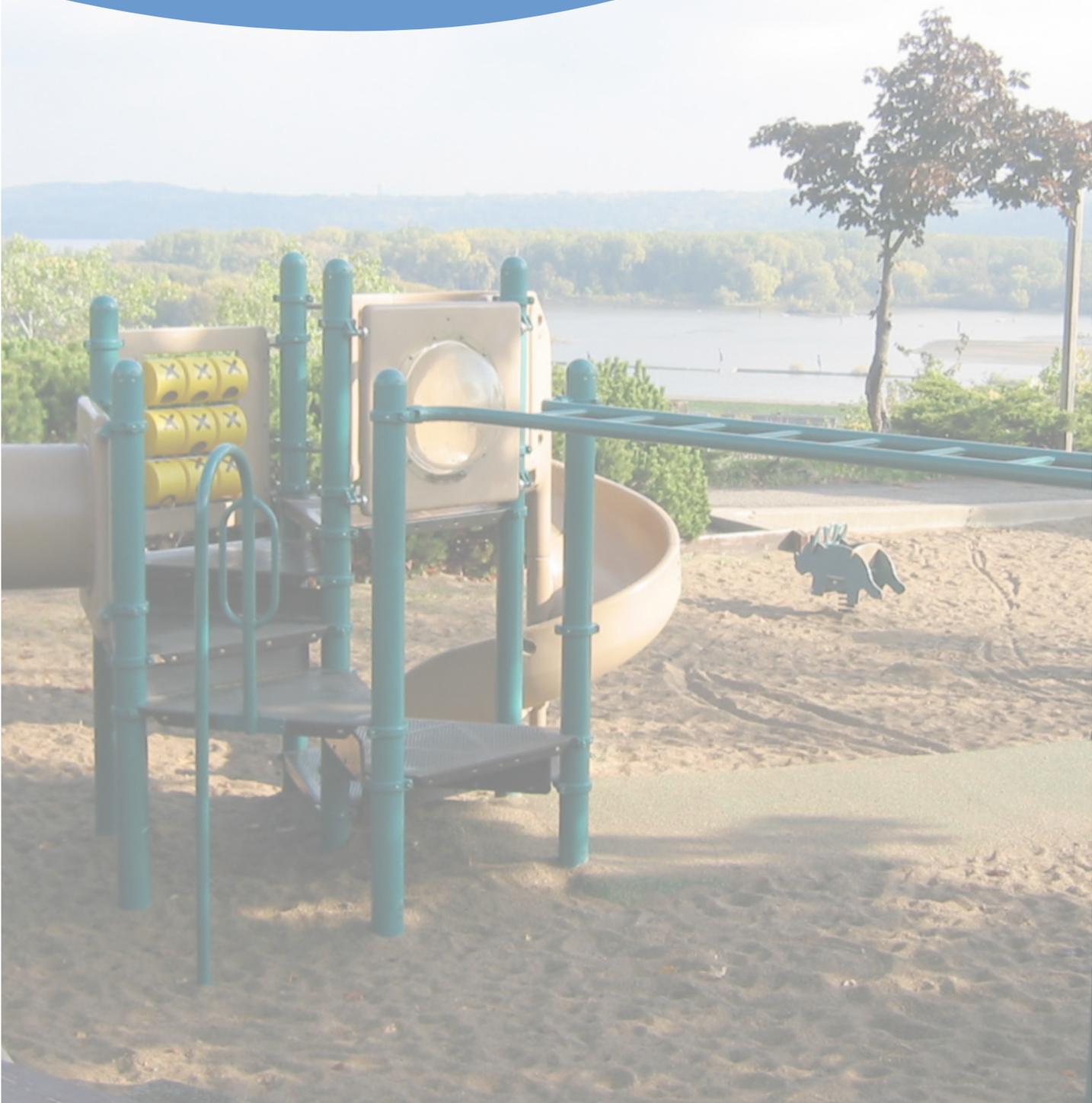
STRATEGIES:

- Convene regular meetings to strengthen the working relationship between South St. Paul and other recreation providers
 - South St. Paul Schools
 - Dakota County
 - Neighboring communities (West St. Paul, Inver Grove Heights, St. Paul)
 - Athletic Associations
- Use park facilities to support school sports programing
- Ensure that other recreation providers that are using the City's facilities are helping with the maintenance, upkeep, and investment commensurate with their level of use/impact to the system
- Look for opportunities other than recreation for schools to get involved with the parks system (ie. nature field trips, PE, learning about civics and park management, etc.)
- Consider partnerships with neighboring communities to provide joint programming. Examples* could include:
 - Learn to golf at InverWood or Mendota Heights Par 3
 - Tour De Dakota County bike ride
 - Paddle The Mississippi with St. Paul, South St. Paul, Newport, and Inver Grove Heights
 - Coordinating regional athletic tournaments with Woodbury, Cottage Grove, and Inver Grove Heights

**These are possibilities of what could be done. Further conversations with other Cities/County and the South St. Paul community should guide offerings.*



South St. Paul School Sports



PARK PLANS

INDIVIDUAL PARK PLANS

Individual park plans are a great tool to assess how each individual park in South St. Paul is contributing to the greater system. Assessing and creating an inventory of each of the park features aids in planning for future maintenance and replacement needs. These are planning level designs that are intended to adapt depending on trends and other updates in parks in South St. Paul. These are not plans that a contractor would use to construct a trail or a playground. They do let the City know when features will need to be replaced and give guidance about what new features will go where. This helps protect investments in parks because the City will not be tearing out good elements just because they are in the way of new improvements. A planning level design might be considered the first measurement of a “measure twice, cut once” approach.

TIMING

The park plans identify likely replacement and new capital timelines. These are based on current needs, but are subject to adjustment as community preferences change, funding sources shift, and features need replacement.

COSTS

Costs associated with features are intended to provide a high level number that can be used for budgeting purposes. Because some of the decisions that impact cost have not been made at this level of planning, the numbers tend to be round. For the purposes of this plan, the following symbology will be used:

\$ _____	\$0-\$15,000
\$\$ _____	\$15,000-\$50,000
\$\$\$ _____	\$50,001-\$150,000
\$\$\$\$ _____	\$150,001-\$500,000
\$\$\$\$\$ _____	\$500,000+

PRIORITIES

Different priorities have been established for the park elements. All elements would enhance the parks, but the plan recognizes that at times, trade-offs need to be made.

HIGH: Safety concern or integral to the use of the park.

MEDIUM: Important elements, but if they were missing, the park would continue to function, if at a lower level.

LOW: Items that can be really good features, but might be considered “add-ons”. While they could bring a lot to the parks, they may be deferred if necessary.



ARCHERY RANGE

TYPE: Special Use

SIZE: 1 Acre

Located next to the South St. Paul water pump house 3, this portion of Fred Lawshe Park features an archery range that offers 3 accessible shooting lanes ranging from 20 yards to 40 yards for archery enthusiasts.



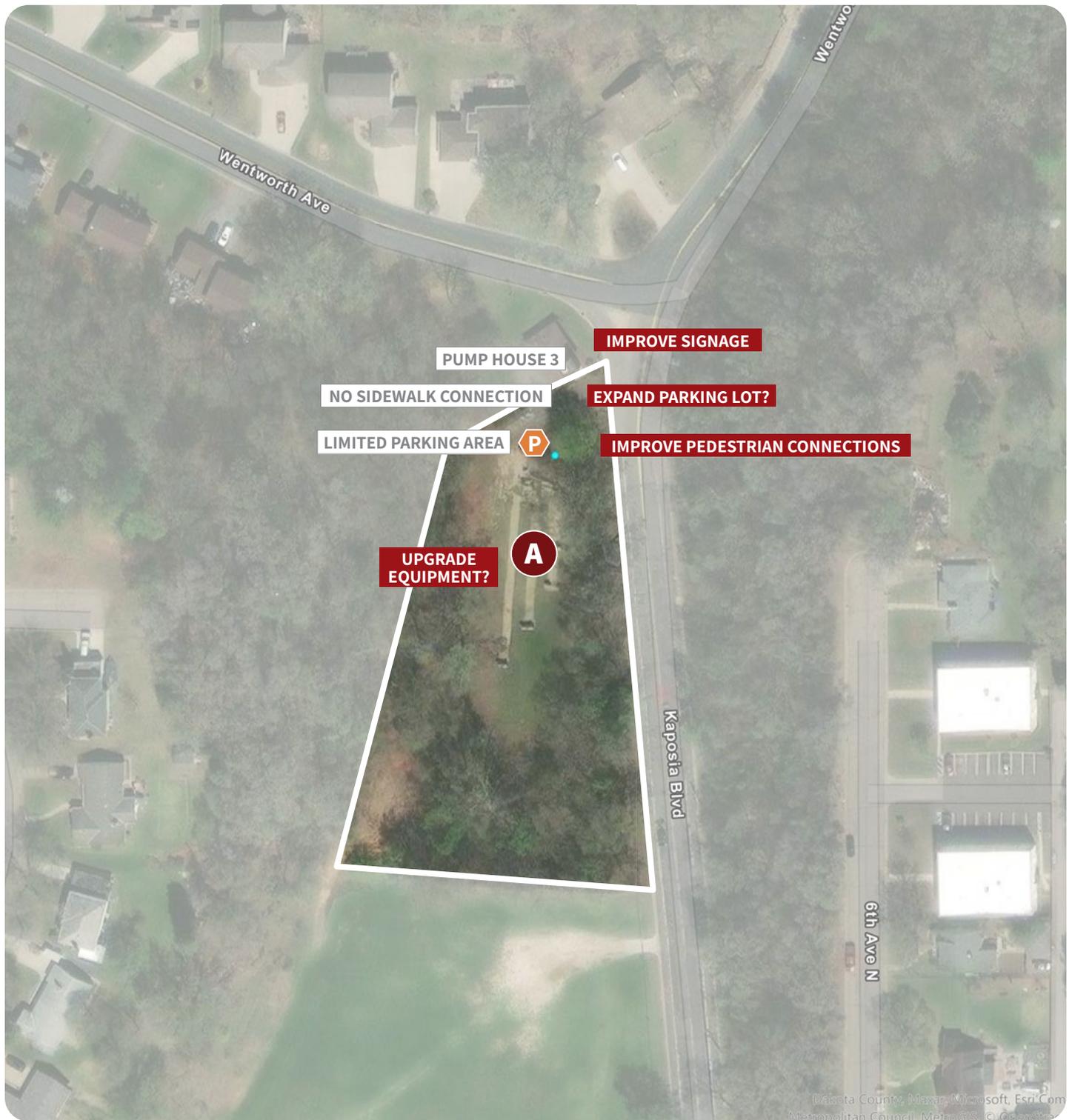
EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	ARCHERY RANGE	FAIR	-

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

- EXISTING CONDITIONS
- NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES
- P PARKING



CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① New water treatment facility
- ② Add new porta potty
- ③ Add new ADA picnic area with timed lights and tall tables for adjusting bows
- ④ Relocate and replace archery lanes and add targets with wooden backstop framing
- ⑤ Add new bituminous trail

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
BOW SETUP TABLES	CONSTRUCT	\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW
TIMED LIGHTS	CONSTRUCT	\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW
ARCHERY LANES	REPLACE	\$	10-20 YEARS	MEDIUM
PORTA POTTY	REPLACE	\$	20+ YEARS	LOW
PICNIC TABLES AND BENCHES	REPLACE	\$	20+ YEARS	LOW
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$	20+ YEARS	LOW
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	REPLACE	\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	LOW
WATER TREATMENT FACILITY	REPLACE	N/A	20+ YEARS	LOW

DNR BOAT LAUNCH

TYPE: Special Use

SIZE: 11 Acres

The DNR boat launch has space to launch two boats off of floating docks. There is also space for shore fishing. The site is home to the City's community gardens and the City's compost site. A new trailhead is being built here.



EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	PARKING LOT	POOR	5-10 YEARS
B	BOAT LAUNCH	POOR	0-5 YEARS
C	FISHING AREA	GOOD	20+ YEARS
D	GARDENS	GOOD	10-20 YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

 EXISTING CONDITIONS	 NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES	 TRAIL	 SIGN	 
 SITE ENTRY	 PARKING			

CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Add new restrooms building
- ② Add new parking lot
- ③ Add new bituminous trail
- ④ Relocate community gardens
- ⑤ Relocate compost sites
- ⑥ Replace boat ramp
- ⑦ Work with DNR to provide a fish cleaning station and an aquatic invasive species (AIS) boat cleaning station
- ⑧ Add a paddle share station to expand the network of rentable kayaks and canoes on the Mississippi River Trail

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
BOAT RAMP	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	REPLACE	N/A	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
FISH AND AIS BOAT CLEANING STATION	CONSTRUCT	\$\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW
PADDLE SHARE STATION	CONSTRUCT	N/A	0-5 YEARS	LOW
COMMUNITY GARDENS	REPLACE	\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	MEDIUM
ROAD	REPLACE	N/A	20+ YEARS	HIGH
RESTROOMS	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
FISHING AREA	REPLACE	\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	LOW
COMPOST SITE	REPLACE	N/A	20+ YEARS	LOW

GRANDVIEW PARK

TYPE: Pocket Park

SIZE: 3.6 Acres

Grandview Park has a playground and field space that overlooks the Mississippi River.



EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

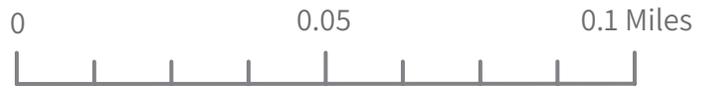
	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	DRINKING FOUNTAIN	POOR	0-5 YEARS
B	PLAYGROUND	POOR	0-5 YEARS
C	TRAIL	GOOD	10-20 YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

- EXISTING CONDITIONS
- NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES
- TRAIL
- SIGN



CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Replace playground
- ② Add new open sided picnic/stage shelter
- ③ Add new benches
- ④ Add new picnic tables

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
DRINKING FOUNTAIN	REPLACE	\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
PICNIC TABLES AND BENCHES	CONSTRUCT	\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
LIGHTING	REPLACE	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
PICNIC SHELTER	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	REPLACE	\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	MEDIUM

HARMON PARK

TYPE: Neighborhood Park

SIZE: 5.5 Acres

Harmon Park features various opportunities for recreation with a hockey rink, tennis courts, a playground, and baseball field. The South St. Paul HS Girl's Fast Pitch Softball team utilizes this field.



EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

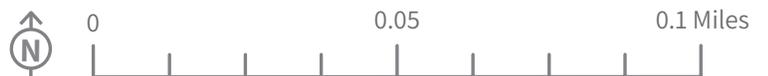
	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	PLAYGROUND	FAIR	5-10 YEARS
B	COURT	POOR	0-5 YEARS
C	PARKING LOT	GOOD	20+ YEARS
D	ATHLETIC FIELD	GOOD	10-20 YEARS
E	ICE RINK	FAIR	0-5 YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

- EXISTING CONDITIONS
- NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES
- P PARKING
- SIGN



CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Add new warming house with concessions and restrooms
- ② Remove existing tennis courts and replace with full-size tennis court
- ③ Add new full-size basketball court
- ④ Add (2) new small picnic shelters
- ⑤ Add new nature-inspired playground

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
ICE RINK	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
TENNIS COURT	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
FULL BASKETBALL COURT	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
CONCESSIONS BUILDING AND RESTROOMS	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	HIGH
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	REPLACE	\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
PICNIC SHELTER	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
PICNIC SHELTER	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
SOFTBALL FIELD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	HIGH
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM

JEFFERSON PARK

TYPE: Neighborhood Park

SIZE: 12.7 Acres

Jefferson Park is a neighborhood park that provides opportunity for winter recreation with an ice skating rink and sledding hill.



EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	ATHLETIC FIELD	FAIR	5-10 YEARS
B	PLAYGROUND	POOR	0-5 YEARS
C	ICE RINK	FAIR	5-10 YEARS
D	BUILDING	POOR	0-5 YEARS
E	PARKING LOT	POOR	0-5 YEARS
F	SLEDDING HILL	GOOD	20+ YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND



CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Resurface existing parking lot
- ② Add new playground
- ③ Add new bituminous trail
- ④ Improve sledding hill
- ⑤ Add new warming house and garage for ice rink
- ⑥ Add new covered ice rink. Ice rink to act as a multi-court space during the summer
- ⑦ Add new parking lot
- ⑧ Relocate softball field

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
PARKING LOT	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW
SOFTBALL FIELD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
ICE RINK	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
WARMING HOUSE AND SHELTER	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
COVERED ICE STRUCTURE AND REFRIGERATION	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
SLEDDING HILL	REPLACE	N/A	20+ YEARS	HIGH

KAPOSIA LANDING

TYPE: Community Park

SIZE: 80 Acres

Kaposia Landing is a large community park connecting to the Mississippi River and Trail. The park includes ballfields, a dog park, a trailhead, an inclusive playground, and open space.



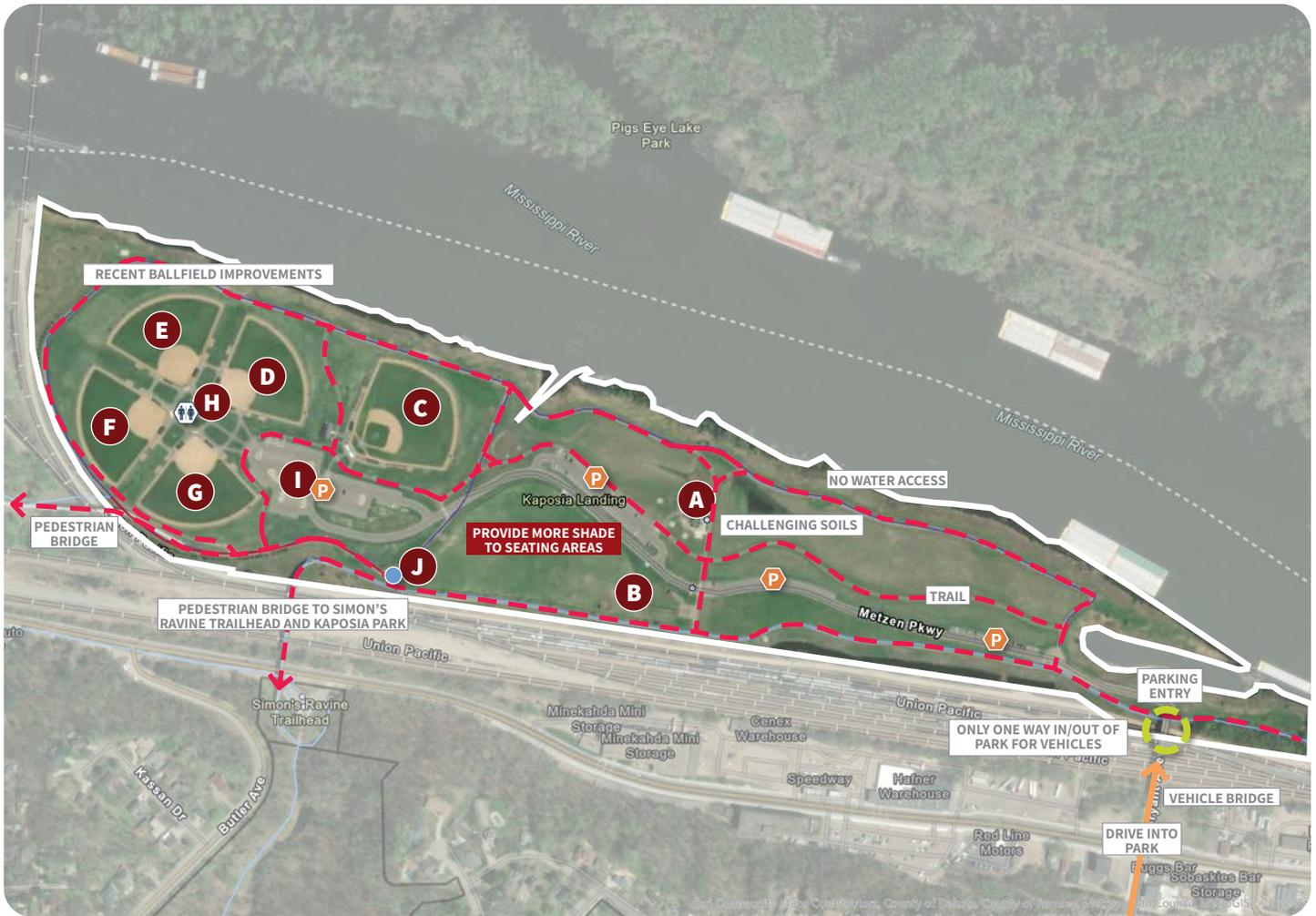
EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	PLAYGROUND	NEW	20+ YEARS
B	DOG PARK	NEW	20+ YEARS
C	ATHLETIC FIELD	NEW	20+ YEARS
D	ATHLETIC FIELD	NEW	20+ YEARS
E	ATHLETIC FIELD	NEW	20+ YEARS
F	ATHLETIC FIELD	NEW	20+ YEARS
G	ATHLETIC FIELD	NEW	20+ YEARS
H	BUILDING	NEW	20+ YEARS
I	PARKING LOT	NEW	20+ YEARS
J	TRAILHEAD	NEW	20+ YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------|------|
| EXISTING CONDITIONS | NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES | TRAIL | SIGN |
| SITE ENTRY | PARKING | RESTROOMS | |



CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| ① Plant additional trees at dog park | ⑧ Add new amphitheater |
| ② Add new paddle share station | ⑨ Expand parking |
| ③ Add new kayak launch | ⑩ Add new picnic area |
| ④ Add new food truck station | ⑪ Native Plantings |
| ⑤ Add food and drink area | ⑫ Enhance pedestrian crossing at bridge |
| ⑥ Add new pickleball courts | ⑬ Shoreline enhancement restoration |
| ⑦ Add new bituminous trails | ⑭ Explore long-term feasibility of roadway connection across tracks |

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
TREES (DOG PARK)	CONSTRUCT	\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
PICKLEBALL COURT	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
SHORELINE RESTORATION	REPLACE	\$\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW
KAYAK LAUNCH	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW
PADDLE SHARE STATION	CONSTRUCT	N/A	0-5 YEARS	LOW
FOOD AND DRINK AREA	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
STAGE	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
NATIVE PLANTINGS	CONSTRUCT	\$\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	HIGH
TRAIL	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	HIGH
ROAD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	HIGH
SOFTBALL FIELD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	HIGH
BASEBALL FIELD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	HIGH
REGIONAL TRAIL	REPLACE	N/A	20+ YEARS	HIGH
TRAILHEAD	REPLACE	\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
DOG PARK	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
CONCESSIONS BUILDING AND RESTROOMS	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM

KAPOSIA PARK

TYPE: Community Park

SIZE: 85 Acres

Kaposia Park features both natural spaces and opportunities for recreation. It is the largest park within the parks system and features a disc golf course, various courts, a baseball field, and fire pits.



PARK FEATURES

	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	BUILDING	GOOD	20+ YEARS
B	FIRE PIT	POOR	
C	PARKING LOT	POOR	0-5 YEARS
D	COURT	FAIR	5-10 YEARS
E	COURT	FAIR	IMMEDIATE
F	ATHLETIC FIELD	FAIR	0-5 YEARS
G	TRAIL	GOOD	10-20 YEARS
H	BUILDING	POOR	0-5 YEARS
I	SHELTER	GOOD	10-20 YEARS
J	FIRE PIT	FAIR	
K	PLAYGROUND	POOR	0-5 YEARS
L	PRO SHOP	FAIR	0-5 YEARS
M	DISC GOLF	GOOD	10-20 YEARS
N	ICE RINK	POOR	5-10 YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

- EXISTING CONDITIONS NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES --- TRAIL ● SIGN
- SITE ENTRY P PARKING



CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Improve sand volleyball court
- ② Expand parking lot
- ③ Add new disc golf building
- ④ Add new nature-inspired playground
- ⑤ Add new covered dugouts

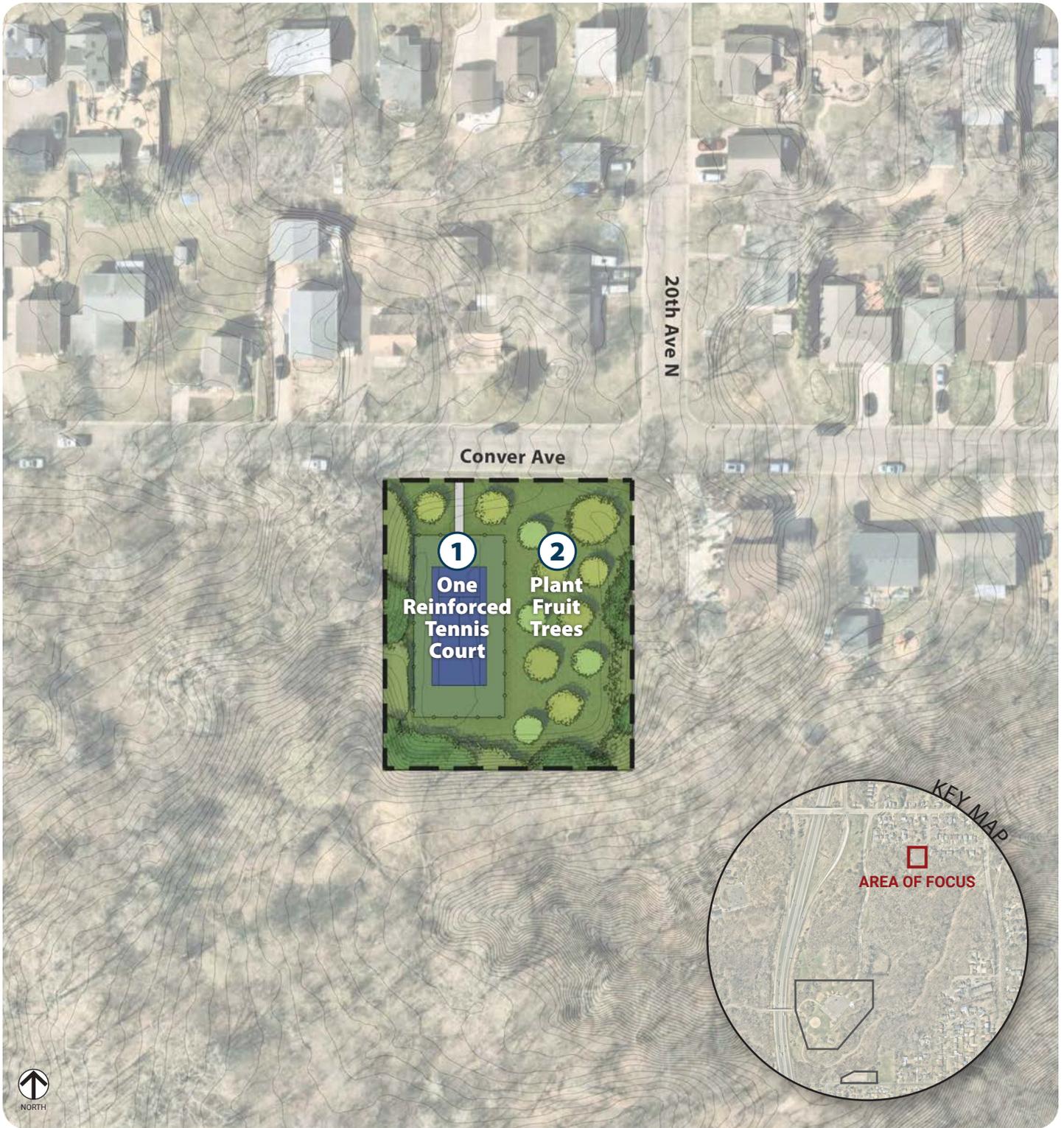
PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
FIRE PIT	REPLACE	\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
SAND VOLLEYBALL COURT	REPLACE	\$\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW
SOFTBALL FIELD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
PRO SHOP	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
STORAGE BUILDING	REMOVE	\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
DISC GOLF	REPLACE	\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	HIGH
ROAD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	HIGH
REGIONAL TRAIL	REPLACE	N/A	10-20 YEARS	HIGH
PICNIC PAVILION	REPLACE	\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	MEDIUM
BUILDING	RENOVATE	\$\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	HIGH

CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Replace current bituminous courts with one tension reinforced court
- ② Plant fruit trees

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
TENNIS COURTS	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
FRUIT TREES	CONSTRUCT	\$\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW

CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Add new, reduced size parking lot. Explore green/permeable paving options. Rain Garden
- ② Add new community gardens
- ③ Add stairs to connect to River to River Greenway Regional Trail, Kaposia Park, and Thompson Park

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
ICE RINK	REMOVE	N/A	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
COMMUNITY GARDENS	CONSTRUCT	\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
STAIRS	CONSTRUCT	\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW

LORRAINE PARK

TYPE: Community Park

SIZE: 13 Acres

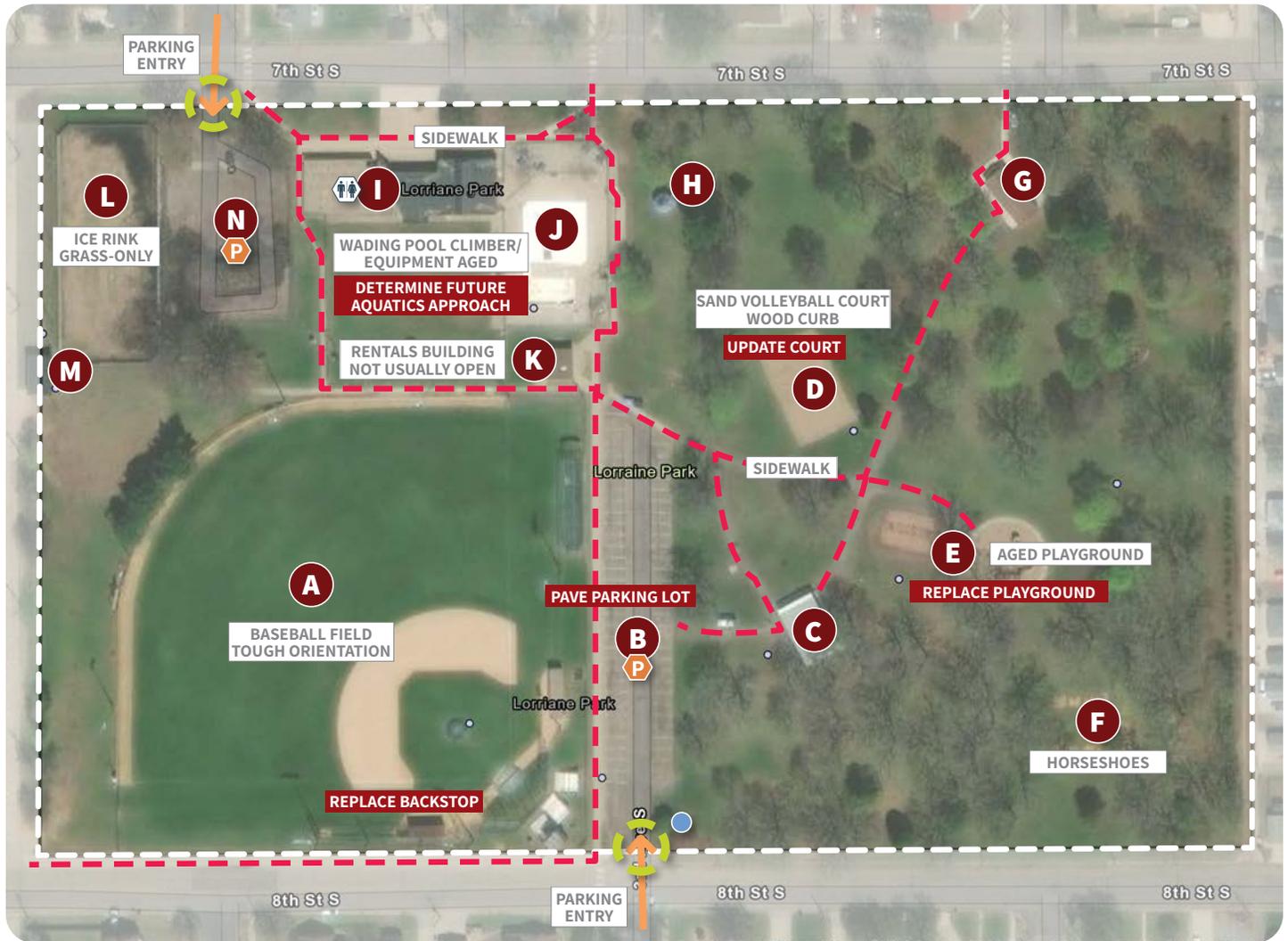
Lorraine Park is located at the center of South St. Paul and is a key asset to the community. The Park features many recreation amenities to accommodate four season use.



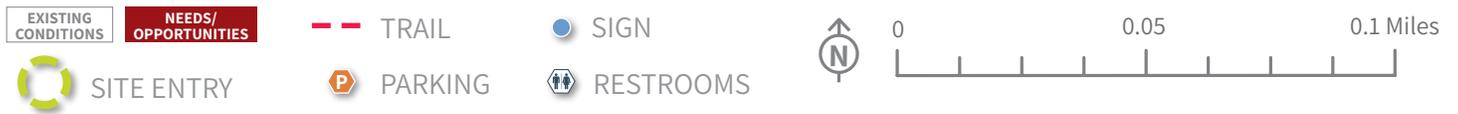
PARK FEATURES

	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	ATHLETIC FIELD	FAIR	10-20 YEARS
B	PARKING LOT	POOR	0-5 YEARS
C	SHELTER	FAIR	5-10 YEARS
D	COURT	GOOD	10-20 YEARS
E	PLAYGROUND	POOR	0-5 YEARS
F	HORSE SHOE	FAIR	5-10 YEARS
G	SHELTER	GOOD	5-10 YEARS
H	SHELTER	GOOD	20+ YEARS
I	BUILDING	FAIR	5-10 YEARS
J	POOL	FAIR	20+ YEARS
K	BUILDING	FAIR	5-10 YEARS
L	ICE RINK	FAIR	10-20 YEARS
M	WARMING HOUSE	FAIR	10-20 YEARS
N	PARKING LOT	POOR	0-5 YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND



CONCEPT PLAN (OPTION 1)



LEGEND

- ① Remove existing ice rink and warming house and add new parking lot
- ② Add new swimming pool
- ③ Replace splash pool
- ④ Improve sand volleyball court
- ⑤ Add new playground
- ⑥ Improve play area with horseshoes and bocce ball as well as a small shelter
- ⑦ Expand existing parking lot

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
SWIMMING POOL	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
SPLASH POOL	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
PARKING LOT	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
PARKING LOT	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
PICNIC SHELTER	REPLACE	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
PICNIC SHELTER	REPLACE	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
RENTALS BUILDING	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
PLAY AREA	CONSTRUCT	\$\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
CONCESSIONS BUILDING AND LOCKERS/RESTROOMS	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	HIGH
BASEBALL FIELD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	HIGH
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	MEDIUM
SAND VOLLEYBALL COURT	REPLACE	\$\$	10-20 YEARS	LOW
PICNIC SHELTER	REPLACE	\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM

CONCEPT PLAN (OPTION 2)



LEGEND

- ① Improve warming house
- ② Replace existing parking lot
- ③ Add new entertainment area, including pickleball courts, shuffleboard and bocce ball courts, as well as green open space for lawn games
- ④ Replace splash pool
- ⑤ Improve sand volleyball court
- ⑥ Replace playground
- ⑦ Remove horseshoe courts and plant trees
- ⑧ Expand existing parking lot

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT AREA	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
CONCESSIONS BUILDING AND LOCKERS/RESTROOMS	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	HIGH
PICNIC SHELTER	REPLACE	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
PICNIC SHELTER	REPLACE	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
RENTALS BUILDING	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
BASEBALL FIELD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	HIGH
ICE RINK	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	MEDIUM
WARMING HOUSE AND SHELTER	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	MEDIUM
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	MEDIUM
SAND VOLLEYBALL COURT	REPLACE	\$\$	10-20 YEARS	LOW
SPLASH POOL	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	HIGH
PICNIC SHELTER	REPLACE	\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM

McMORROW FIELD

TYPE: Community Park

SIZE: 20 Acres

This park primarily serves the youth soccer and football community with the addition of shelters and a playground to the north.



EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

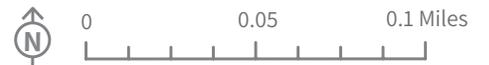
	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	PARKING LOT	FAIR	0-5 YEARS
B	PARKING LOT	NEW	20+ YEARS
C	PLAYGROUND	NEW	20+ YEARS
D	BUILDING	GOOD	20+ YEARS
E	SHELTER	NEW	20+ YEARS
F	ATHLETIC FIELDS	NEW	20+ YEARS
G	TRAIL	NEW	20+ YEARS
H	PARKING LOT	NEW	20+ YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------|------|
| EXISTING CONDITIONS | NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES | TRAIL | SIGN |
| SITE ENTRY | PARKING | RESTROOMS | |



CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Replace existing parking lot
- ② Add new electric hook-ups for food trucks

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
ELECTRIC HOOK-UPS	CONSTRUCT	\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	HIGH
FULL SOCCER FIELD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	HIGH
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
BUILDING	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
PICNIC SHELTER	REPLACE	\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	LOW

NORTHVIEW PARK

TYPE: Community Park

SIZE: 3.7 Acres

The pool draws the most visitors to Northview Park. Other features include a basketball court, playground, and baseball field.



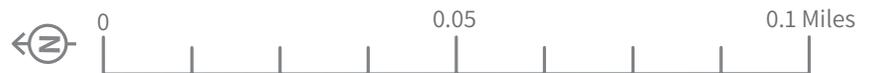
EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	BASKETBALL COURT	FAIR	5-10 YEARS
B	PLAYGROUND	POOR	5-10 YEARS
C	ATHLETIC FIELD	POOR	0-5 YEARS
D	PARKING LOT	GOOD	10-20 YEARS
E	BUILDING	FAIR	
F	POOL	POOR	IMMEDIATE

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------|------|
| EXISTING CONDITIONS | NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES | TRAIL | SIGN |
| SITE ENTRY | PARKING | RESTROOMS | |

CONCEPT PLAN (OPTION 1)



LEGEND

- ① Resurface existing parking lot
- ② Replace swimming pool
- ③ Replace playground
- ④ Resurface basketball court
- ⑤ Improve softball field

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
SWIMMING POOL	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
SOFTBALL FIELD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	HIGH
FULL BASKETBALL COURT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	MEDIUM
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	REPLACE	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	HIGH
CONCESSIONS BUILDING AND LOCKERS/RESTROOMS	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	HIGH

CONCEPT PLAN (OPTION 2)



LEGEND

- ① Add new parking lot
- ② Add new skate park
- ③ Add new picnic area and restrooms building
- ④ Add new splash pad
- ⑤ Add new inclusive playground
- ⑥ Add new full-size basketball court
- ⑦ Improve softball field

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
POOL COMPLEX	REMOVE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
FULL BASKETBALL COURT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
SKATE PARK	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
COMMUNITY BUILDING AND RESTROOMS	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
SPLASH PAD	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
SOFTBALL FIELD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	REPLACE	\$\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	HIGH

SEIDL'S LAKE PARK

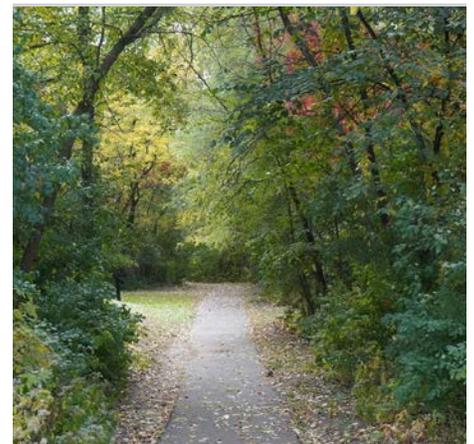
TYPE: Nature Park

SIZE: 5.3 Acres

This undeveloped natural park space is an ideal spot for walking by Seidl's Lake.



EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	TRAIL	GOOD	20+ YEARS
B	TRAIL	POOR	0-5 YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND



CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Add new picnic shelter
- ② Add new bituminous trail
- ③ Add new fishing dock
- ④ Add new nature play area

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PLAYGROUND	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
PICNIC SHELTER	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	REPLACE	\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	HIGH
FISHING DOCK	CONSTRUCT	\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM

SIMON'S RAVINE TRAILHEAD

TYPE: Special Use

SIZE: 3 Acres

This trailhead provides access to the Dakota County River to River Greenway regional trail system connecting through Kaposia Park to Kaposia Landing Park and the Mississippi River Trail.



EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	PARKING LOT	GOOD	20+ YEARS
B	BUILDING	FAIR	5-10 YEARS
C	TRAILHEAD	GOOD	5-10 YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND



CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Add bike repair station
- ② Update landscaping
- ③ Add remote door locks to existing restrooms building
- ④ Plant additional fruit trees

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PLANTINGS	REPLACE	\$\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
KIOSK	REPLACE	\$\$\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
REGIONAL TRAIL	REPLACE	N/A	10-20 YEARS	MEDIUM
PARKING LOT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
PARK PATROL AND RESTROOMS	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM

SPRUCE PARK

TYPE: Neighborhood Park

SIZE: 0.68 Acres

The playground and large open space provides accessible park space to children in the neighborhood.



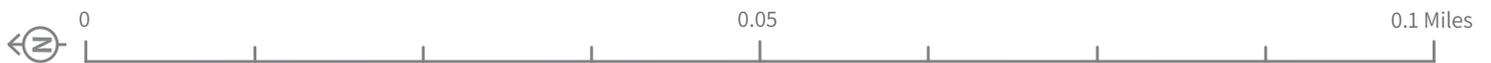
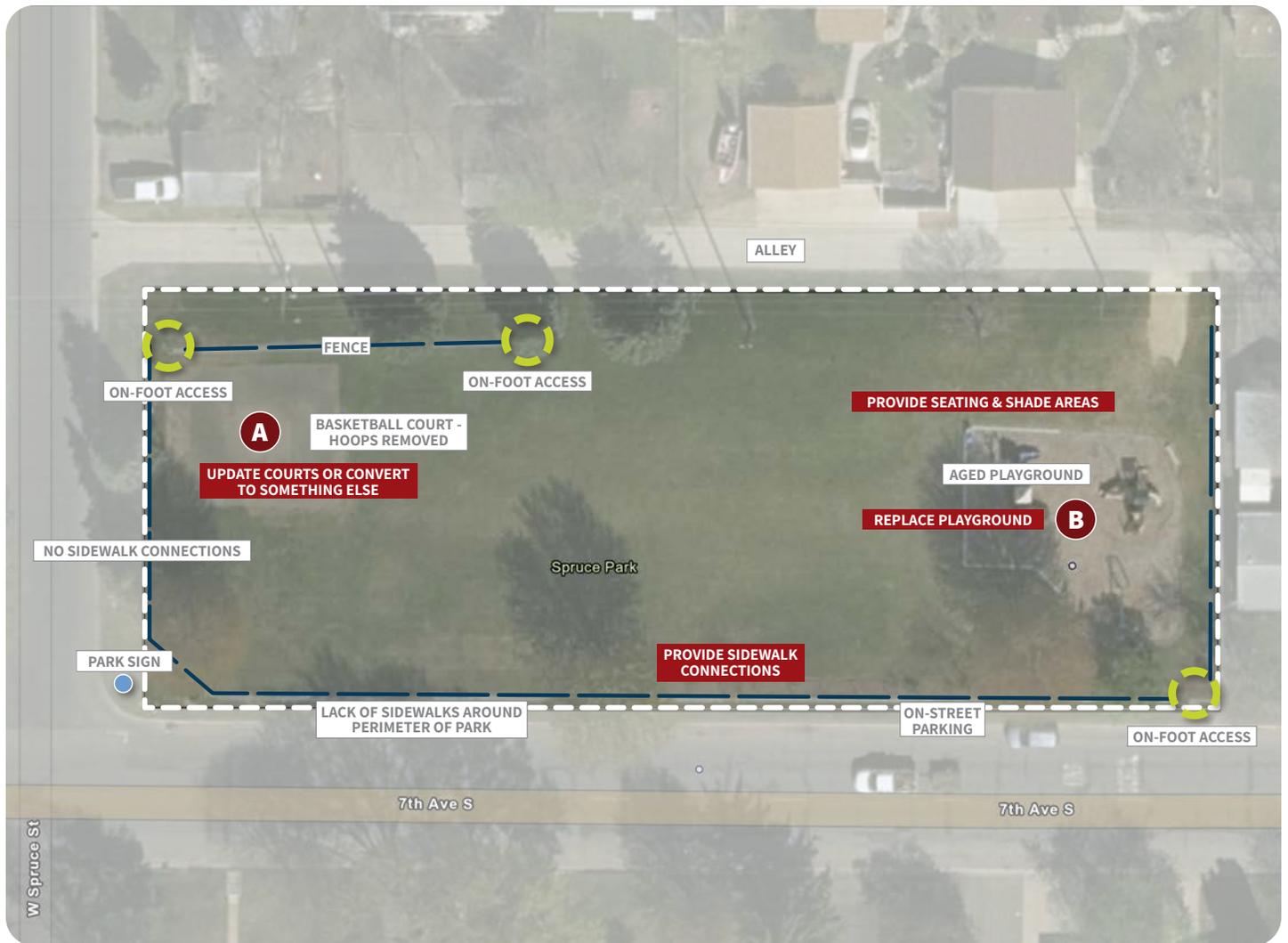
EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	COURT	POOR	0-5 YEARS
B	PLAYGROUND	POOR	0-5 YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

- EXISTING CONDITIONS NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES
- SITE ENTRY
- SIGN
- FENCE

CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Improve play lawn with more shade
- ② Add new sidewalk along 7th Ave. South
- ③ Add new picnic shelter
- ④ Add new traffic park
- ⑤ Add new city-themed playground

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
PLAY LAWN	REPLACE	\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
BASKETBALL COURT	REMOVE	\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
TRAFFIC PARK	CONSTRUCT	\$\$	0-5 YEARS	MEDIUM
PICNIC SHELTER	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	LOW
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	CONSTRUCT	\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM

SUMMIT PARK

TYPE: Neighborhood Park

SIZE: 1 Acre

This neighborhood park features newly updated tennis courts and a playground at the center.



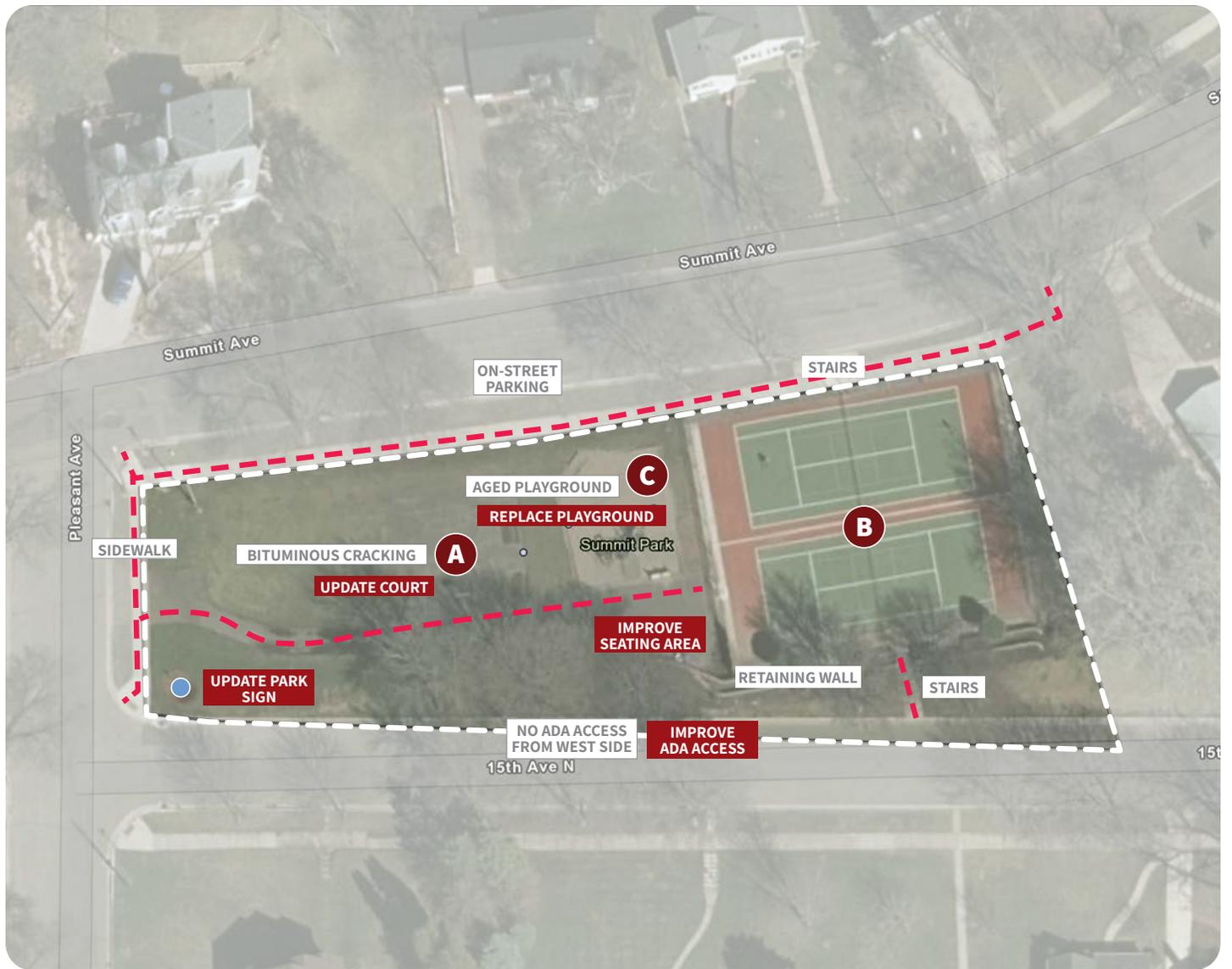
EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	COURT	FAIR	10-20 YEARS
B	COURT	GOOD	10-20 YEARS
C	PLAYGROUND	POOR	0-5 YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

- EXISTING CONDITIONS
- NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES
- - - SIDEWALK/TRAIL
- SIGN

CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Relocate half basketball court
- ② Add new bituminous trail
- ③ Replace playground
- ④ Add new stepped seating/small plaza
- ⑤ Resurface existing tennis courts

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
HALF BASKETBALL COURT	REPLACE	\$\$	10-20 YEARS	MEDIUM
TENNIS/PICKLEBALL COURT	REPLACE	\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	MEDIUM
SIDEWALK/TRAIL	REPLACE	\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	LOW

VETERANS FIELD

TYPE: Community Park

SIZE: 8 Acres

Veteran's Field features courts and fields for softball, baseball, and soccer. There is also a shelter and building on the southern part of the park.



EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	MEMORIAL	GOOD	20+ YEARS
B	BUILDING	GOOD	20+ YEARS
C	SHELTER	GOOD	10-20 YEARS
D	PLAYGROUND	POOR	0-5 YEARS
E	ATHLETIC FIELD	GOOD	10-20 YEARS
F	ATHLETIC FIELD	GOOD	10-20 YEARS
G	ATHLETIC FIELD	GOOD	10-20 YEARS
H	ATHLETIC FIELD	GOOD	10-20 YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

- EXISTING CONDITIONS NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES SIDEWALK
- P PARKING ♿ RESTROOMS ● SIGN



CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- ① Replace trees on block perimeter and around the playground
- ② Replace existing playground
- ③ Add new covered dugouts around all four softball fields

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY
PLAYGROUND	REPLACE	\$\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
TREE PLANTING	REPLACE	\$\$	0-5 YEARS	HIGH
SOFTBALL FIELD	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	HIGH
PICNIC SHELTER	REPLACE	\$\$\$	10-20 YEARS	MEDIUM
MEMORIAL	REPLACE	\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM
CONCESSIONS BUILDING AND RESTROOMS	REPLACE	\$\$\$\$\$	20+ YEARS	MEDIUM

WILDFLOWER LEVEE PARK

TYPE: Nature Park

SIZE: 2.5 Acre

This park can be accessed by trail only and is located next to the Mississippi River. At the center is a large sculpture from the DNR Adopt-A-River program.



EXISTING SITE PHOTOS



PARK FEATURES

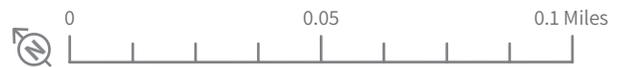
	FEATURE	CONDITION	REMAINING LIFESPAN (EST.)
A	TRAIL	GOOD	20+ YEARS
B	PUBLIC ART	FAIR	10-20 YEARS
C	PICNIC TABLES	GOOD	10-20 YEARS

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

- EXISTING CONDITIONS
- NEEDS/ OPPORTUNITIES
- - - TRAIL
- SIGN



CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- 1** Plant more trees for shade
- 2** Add more seating areas
- 3** Add wayfinding/interpretive signage
- 4** Restore shoreline, add native plantings

PRECEDENT PHOTOS



PARK PLAN LINE ITEMS

PARK FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST	TIMEFRAME	NEED BASED PRIORITY
BENCHES	REPLACE	\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
PUBLIC ART	REPLACE	\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
SHORELINE RESTORATION	CONSTRUCT	\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
NATIVE PLANTINGS	CONSTRUCT	\$	5-10 YEARS	LOW
REGIONAL TRAIL	REPLACE	N/A	20+ YEARS	LOW



6

IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation chapter addresses how South St. Paul can get from the illustrated ideas in this plan, to fully built parks throughout the system. This includes considering funding options, prioritizing items on the “To Do” list, determining how decisions will be made when new ideas arise, and measuring progress on implementation.

Implementation of this plan will not be without challenges and changes. The plan will need to shift and adapt based on circumstances that dictate feasibility, and changing community preferences as time goes on.

Ultimately the completion of this plan is about providing recreation opportunities to residents, meeting the community’s needs, and strengthening the future of South St. Paul.

The Implementation Chapter includes:

- Information on potential funding sources
- Prioritized projects based on need
- A new project evaluation tool
- Recommendations for measuring progress



Park Dedication

What are its limitations?

Minnesota Statutes allow local governments to require dedication of land or cash in-lieu of land for parks and trails from new developments. This dedication is to help offset the impacts of the additional demands that will be put on the park system with new residents or employees. Because of this, all money must be spent on new capital costs, not maintenance or replacements of existing features. This can be a useful funding tool for some growing cities in building a park system, but established communities like South St. Paul may not benefit in the same way.

The amount of land or fee that is required to be dedicated to parks is dependent on the size of the developer's project. For built out cities like South St. Paul, these developments are adding density in already developed areas, which makes adding parkland a challenge.

FUNDING

One of the largest barriers to park development is a lack of funding. It is anticipated that South St. Paul will use a variety of funding sources to fund park replacements, maintenance, and new projects. The City cannot finance all park development within its existing budget. Each of the potential funding sources has varying applicability that is discussed in this chapter.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

GENERAL FUNDS

General Funds are appropriate for developing and maintaining the parks and recreation system. General funds are the primary funding source for ongoing maintenance and operations. Many of the grants that can be pursued have a matching requirement that may be met using general fund dollars.

DEDICATED TAX LEVY

A city can hold a referendum for a dedicated tax levy with proceeds directed specifically for recreation and parks. This levy can be used for capital projects as well as operations and maintenance. The proceeds may be in place of general funds or be supplemented by general funds. This creates a more stable source of funding for recreation and parks but requires the political support to pass a referendum.

LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX

Local Option Sales Taxes can be used to fund "regional" features in a park system. Because the tax is levied on anyone who shops in South St. Paul, there needs to be the connection that these individuals would be potential users of the "regional" park features. It is more likely that this could be used for SSP's premier parks and trails as a sales tax is probably not going to be approved at the legislature to pay for neighborhood parks. This funding source would also need to be approved by the voters of South St. Paul.

BONDING

General Obligation Bonds and Revenue Bonds provide another source of implementation funding for new public facilities, as well as for repairs and upgrades to existing facilities. These are often backed by a referendum, local option sales tax or other reliable sources of funding.

GENERAL PARK BOND ISSUE

Residents can decide to raise revenue through a permanent or temporary tax increase dedicated for a specific purpose such as park or trail construction and maintenance. Funds are usually provided through bonds approved as part of a referendum.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDS

Pedestrian and bicycle improvements may be funded through programs like state aid and county road construction funding. This funding source is particularly relevant at the time of street construction or reconstruction.

COST RECOVERY

In some instances, it may be appropriate to charge users to cover costs incurred to provide a facility or service. Charges could include use fees, association fees, dog park licenses, admissions, or tuition. It is easiest to enforce when the service is excludable, such as ticketed admission.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships can be developed with public and private organizations. Organizations with partner funding can also provide assistance with design, outreach, and maintenance. Partnerships and relationships with private businesses can also result in easements and use agreements for trails across private land.

DONATIONS

Private donations are another potential funding source. These may be financial donations from individuals or area corporations or donations of labor from recreation clubs. Programs such as “adopt-a-trail”, “adopt-a-park”, or “adopt-a-river” by an organization, business, or individuals can successfully help with maintenance tasks and promote awareness of the park system.

GRANTS

Grants may only be available for specific types of park projects. Each project needs to be evaluated to ensure that it fits the scope of the grant and that the amount of staff time and money that goes into preparing the grant application can be justified by the potential reward. Some of the most likely grant sources are:

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: The DNR is one of the most comprehensive resources when it comes to state funding for park and trail programs. The following are just a few grants that could be applicable in South St. Paul:
 - Outdoor Recreation Grant
 - Conservation Partners Legacy Grants
 - Parks and Trails Legacy Grant Program
 - Natural and Scenic Areas Grants
 - No Child Left Inside Grants
- Minnesota Department of Transportation: Many park features also qualify as transportation features. Trails are one of the most popular elements of a park and can utilize funding such as the Transportation Alternative Grant.
- Minnesota Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment: This amendment increased general sales and use tax and dedicated it to environmental agencies around the state. This also creates grant opportunities.
- Minnesota Recreation and Park Association
- Statewide Health Improvement Partnership
- Waste Management Charitable Giving
- Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota’s Resources
 - Trust Fund Appropriations
- Facility specific grants: There are many grants that can be utilized for specific park features such as pools, playgrounds, or tennis courts:
 - Life Floor Make a SPLASH! Grant Program (splashpads)
 - USTA Tennis Venue Services
 - American Academy of Dermatology Association Shade Structure Grant Program
 - Pool Safety Grant Program

Pool and Aquatics

What are the funding possibilities?

Pools and aquatics facilities can be a large financial burden on the parks budget in any city. This is especially true of South St. Paul which currently owns and maintains two facilities separate from the indoor pool at the High School.

As the City makes decisions on how to distribute aquatics, they may utilize grant funding. There are several grants that are possibilities for financing pools including:

- MN DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant
- Life Floor Make a SPLASH! Grant Program
- Pool Safety Grant Program
- Community Facilities Grant Program

While somewhat limited compared with the overall costs of funding the construction of pools and splash pads, these sources may be worth exploring. If the City does proceed with one of these programs, it is important to read the fine print and understand the requirements that go along with them. This includes construction related costs (such as prevailing wages, additional accessibility requirements, etc.) and ongoing costs and obligations.

In addition to grants, the City of Crystal recently had repairs to their failing box pool included in State Bonding money. The restrictions with this source change from year to year. The City of South St. Paul was unsuccessful in securing funding for pool design services in the 2023/24 session.

FUNDING PATHS MOVING FORWARD

Many of the features in the park system in the City of South St. Paul remain from the early 1990s referendum. Most of these have reached the end of their functional lifespan and need to be replaced. Furthermore, the future of the pools remains an open question.

There are two likely approaches for the City:

- Implement a more robust replacement strategy, with increased annual capital funding allocations for park features and eliminate the aquatics program entirely. In order to address *just* the playgrounds needing replacement over the next five years, that means approximately \$250,000 - \$300,000 per year in funding.

-or-

- Identify a large funding source, likely via a referendum, that can provide an immediate infusion of funds to address overdue deferred replacements of park features. This should include standard park features like playgrounds, courts, trails, and fields. The referendum request could also be expanded to include aquatics, either through replacement of facilities at current locations or by combining aquatics in a single location.

In both cases, the funding should be further supplemented by the other sources identified on the previous pages (grants, donations, etc.).

It will also be important in future years to budget for park replacements over time so that the City is not in the same situation where a large percentage of the assets in the park system need to be replaced at the same time.

FUNDING MATRIX

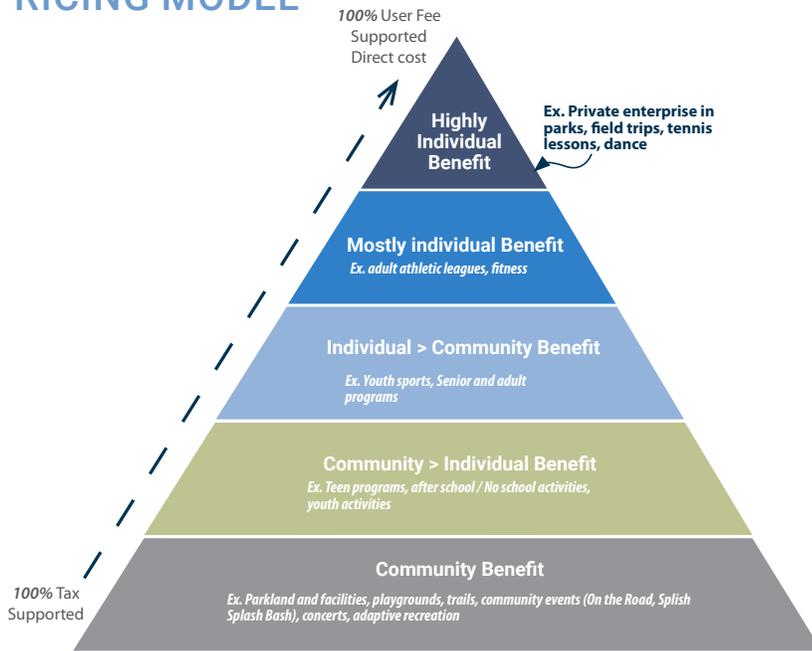
This plan recognizes that completing the system initiatives and implementing the park plans would result in spending above and beyond what the City currently allocates to the parks budget through the General Fund. It is not realistic for the general fund to expand to cover all the costs. There are other opportunities to fund park improvements and the City should consider which ones are appropriate to be pursued. Some sources of funds come with restrictions on how the funds can be used. The table below is generalized, but is a starting point for thinking about how to get projects paid for and built.

	GENERAL FUND	TAX LEVY	BONDING	TRANSPORTATION FUNDS	PARK/TRAIL DEDICATION	COST RECOVERY	PARTNERSHIPS	DONATIONS/VOLUNTEERS	GRANTS (CASE BY CASE)
ATHLETICS	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	◐
BUILDINGS & SHELTERS	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	◐
ROADS & PARKING	●	◐	◐	●	◐	○	●	○	●
TRAILS	●	●	●	●	●	◐	●	●	●
PLAYGROUNDS	●	◐	◐	○	●	○	◐	◐	◐
SPECIAL PROJECTS	◐	●	●	○	◐	●	●	●	◐
MAINTENANCE	●	◐	○	○	○	●	●	◐	○
OPERATIONS	●	◐	○	○	○	●	●	○	○
LAND ACQUISITION	◐	◐	◐	●	●	○	●	●	◐

● LIKELY SOURCE ◐ POSSIBLE SOURCE ○ NOT A LIKELY SOURCE

Table 2.1 Opportunities to fund park improvements

RECREATION TIERED PRICING MODEL



Recreation tiered pricing model

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The City of South St. Paul has robust recreation offerings. Residents truly value the opportunities to get out, connect with neighbors, be active, and build community.

Similar to park land, recreation offerings offer significant community benefit and as such the City has a reason to financially support this programming. This is particularly important in a community like South St. Paul where there are a wide range of incomes. For many residents, park programming provides affordable, accessible recreation that cannot be found elsewhere. While some cost recovery may be appropriate for certain activities, this is not the primary goal of the recreation department. One framework to consider when setting pricing and cost recovery approaches is to understand where the benefit of the programming lies. If there is a strong community benefit, it makes sense for City funds to support a higher percentage of the cost. In other cases, where the benefit is mostly individual, those individuals can carry more of the cost.

Fee structure has an impact on the public's ability to enjoy recreation and parks programs and facilities. The City must undertake a balancing act between managing facilities and programs to preserve high standards, providing open and equal access, and securing enough funding to cover capital funding and operating expenses. It can be challenging to ensure equal and fair access to public facilities for all people regardless of their income level. Many participants will seek out the best combination of price, service, and convenience in recreation and leisure services, seeking value and quality. Public programs that welcome varying abilities to pay help make communities stronger, both socially and culturally.

RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Evolve special event programming to respond to changing demographics.
 - Assess current special events to determine if any changes are needed to be culturally sensitive.
 - Reach out to other communities to identify potential new special events or ways to modify existing special events to better serve the community.
2. Develop strategies to connect with families relocating to the community.
 - Identify and reach out to local businesses who regularly relocate families to South St. Paul.
 - Conduct outreach with recently relocated families to identify recreation needs, information gaps, and barriers to participation.
 - Explore how to reduce language barriers to participation and outreach.
3. Seek opportunities to further support adaptive recreation participants. Explore new and expanding opportunities to create or adjust recreation options so that they can better serve people of all abilities.
4. Enhance options for older adults to be involved in recreation.
 - Analyze where older adults are living and where programming is available (55+ townhome projects, age-restricted multi-family housing, etc.).
 - Engage with older adults to better understand programming needs, facility needs, transportation needs, and most appropriate locations. Include evaluating the programming needs of working older adults.
5. Build relationships with teens and identify opportunities to expand programming.
 - Reach out to teens to better understand programming needs, facility needs, and appropriate locations. Conduct outreach where teens already congregate, such as schools, churches, parks etc.
 - Identify teen representative(s) that can help with outreach and participation in focus group(s).
 - Continue to hire and train teen recreation leaders from the community.

PRIORITIES

THE TO DO LIST

The following tables identify all the anticipated park projects based on the plans shown for individual parks. Each item has been evaluated and prioritized based on how much the project would affect the use of the park if it was not completed. It is important to note that some projects identified as a “medium” or “low” need will likely be constructed earlier than some of the “high” need line items. This is because some high need projects are for park features that still have a lot of life left in them, but when they are up for replacement, they will be important to tackle. Other lower projects may occur sooner because:

- They will bring new elements to the park that enhances what is already going on there
- The project is a good “inertia” project to help build momentum for change
- The project already has a funding source identified and specified for that use (ie. grants or donations)
- The project will be performed in tandem with other work being completed on the park
- Projects are sorted by need category, timeframe, and then alphabetically by park.

HIGH PRIORITY BASED ON NEED

These projects are categorized as high priorities based on either:

- A safety concern that needs to be addressed
- A feature that is integral to the use and enjoyment of the park that would significantly alter and detract from the function of the park if it was not completed (playgrounds, shelters, etc.)

<i>HIGH PRIORITY - 0-5 YEAR TIMEFRAME</i>			
<i>PARK</i>	<i>FEATURE</i>	<i>PLANNED ACTION</i>	<i>COST</i>
DNR Boat Launch	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$\$
DNR Boat Launch	Boat Ramp	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
DNR Boat Launch	Sidewalk/Trail	Replace	N/A
Grandview Park	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$
Jefferson Park	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Trees	Construct	\$\$
Kaposia Park	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Park	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Swimming Pool	Construct	\$\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Splash Pool	Construct	\$\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Remains)	Swimming Pool	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$

HIGH PRIORITY - 0-5 YEAR TIMEFRAME

PARK	FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST
Northview Park (Pool Removed)	Pool Complex	Remove	\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Removed)	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Spruce Park	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$
Summit Park	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$
Veterans Field	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$
Veterans Field	Tree Planting	Replace	\$\$\$

HIGH PRIORITY - 5-10 YEAR TIMEFRAME

PARK	FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST
Harmon Park	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Concessions Building and Lockers/Restrooms	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Remains)	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$

HIGH PRIORITY - 10-20 YEAR TIMEFRAME

PARK	FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST
Harmon Park	Softball Field	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Park	Disc Golf	Replace	\$\$\$
Kaposia Park	Road	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Park	Regional Trail	Replace	N/A
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Concessions Building and Lockers/Restrooms	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Baseball Field	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Baseball Field	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Remains)	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Removed)	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$
Veterans Field	Softball Field	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$

HIGH PRIORITY - 20+ YEAR TIMEFRAME

PARK	FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST
DNR Boat Launch	Road	Replace	N/A
Jefferson Park	Sledding Hill	Replace	N/A
Kaposia Landing	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Trail	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Road	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Softball Field	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Baseball Field	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Regional Trail	Replace	N/A
Kaposia Park	Building	Renovate	\$\$\$\$\$

HIGH PRIORITY - 20+ YEAR TIMEFRAME

PARK	FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Splash Pool	Construct	\$\$\$\$\$
McMorrow Field	Playground	Replace	\$\$\$\$
McMorrow Field	Full Soccer Field	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Remains)	Concessions Building and Lockers/Restrooms	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Seidl's Lake Park	Sidewalk/Trail	Replace	\$\$\$

MEDIUM PRIORITY BASED ON NEED

These projects are ones that are important elements to the parks, but may not rise to the level of being integral to the park. Deferring these projects would negatively impact the use of the park, but could be done if necessary.

MEDIUM PRIORITY - 0-5 YEAR TIMEFRAME

PARK	FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST
DNR Boat Launch	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$
Grandview Park	Drinking Fountain	Replace	\$
Grandview Park	Picnic Tables and Benches	Construct	\$
Harmon Park	Tennis Court	Construct	\$\$\$
Harmon Park	Full Basketball Court	Construct	\$\$\$
Harmon Park	Ice Rink	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Jefferson Park	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Pickleball Court	Construct	\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Park	Fire Pit	Replace	\$
Kaposia Park (Bromley Park)	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$
Kaposia Park (Bromley Park)	Community Gardens	Construct	\$\$
Kaposia Park (Bromley Park)	Ice Rink	Remove	N/A
Kaposia Park (Food Forest)	Tennis Courts	Remove	\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Parking Lot	Construct	\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Parking Lot	Construct	\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Outdoor Entertainment Area	Construct	\$\$\$\$
McMorrow Field	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Removed)	Full Basketball Court	Replace	\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Removed)	Skate Park	Construct	\$\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Removed)	Community Building and Restrooms	Construct	\$\$\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Removed)	Splash Pad	Construct	\$\$\$\$\$
Seidl's Lake Park	Playground	Construct	\$\$\$
Seidl's Lake Park	Picnic Shelter	Construct	\$\$\$
Spruce Park	Play Lawn	Replace	\$
Spruce Park	Basketball Court	Remove	\$
Spruce Park	Traffic Park	Construct	\$\$

MEDIUM PRIORITY - 5-10 YEAR TIMEFRAME

PARK	FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST
Grandview Park	Lighting	Replace	\$\$\$
Harmon Park	Sidewalk/Trail	Replace	\$\$
Harmon Park	Picnic Shelter	Construct	\$\$\$
Harmon Park	Picnic Shelter	Construct	\$\$\$
Jefferson Park	Softball Field	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Jefferson Park	Ice Rink	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Jefferson Park	Sidewalk/Trail	Construct	\$\$\$\$
Jefferson Park	Warming House and Shelter	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Park	Storage Building	Remove	\$
Kaposia Park	Softball Field	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Park	Pro Shop	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Picnic Shelter	Replace	\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Picnic Shelter	Replace	\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Picnic Shelter	Replace	\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Picnic Shelter	Replace	\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Remains)	Full Basketball Court	Replace	\$\$\$

MEDIUM PRIORITY - 10-20 YEAR TIMEFRAME

PARK	FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST
Archery Range	Archery Lanes	Replace	\$
DNR Boat Launch	Community Gardens	Replace	\$\$\$
Grandview Park	Sidewalk/Trail	Replace	\$\$\$
Kaposia Park	Picnic Pavilion	Replace	\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Sidewalk/Trail	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Ice Rink	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Warming House and Shelter	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Sidewalk/Trail	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Simon's Ravine Trailhead	Regional Trail	Replace	N/A
Summit Park	Half Basketball Court	Replace	\$\$
Summit Park	Tennis/Pickleball Court	Replace	\$\$\$
Veterans Field	Picnic Shelter	Replace	\$\$\$

MEDIUM PRIORITY - 20+ YEAR TIMEFRAME

<i>PARK</i>	<i>FEATURE</i>	<i>PLANNED ACTION</i>	<i>COST</i>
DNR Boat Launch	Restrooms	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Harmon Park	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Trailhead	Replace	\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Dog Park	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Concessions Building and Restrooms	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Picnic Shelter	Replace	\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Picnic Shelter	Replace	\$\$
McMorrow Field	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$
McMorrow Field	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$\$
McMorrow Field	Sidewalk/Trail	Replace	\$\$\$\$
McMorrow Field	Building	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Seidl's Lake Park	Fishing Dock	Construct	\$\$
Simon's Ravine Trailhead	Parking Lot	Replace	\$\$\$
Simon's Ravine Trailhead	Park Patrol and Restrooms	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Spruce Park	Sidewalk/Trail	Construct	\$\$\$
Veterans Field	Memorial	Replace	\$\$
Veterans Field	Concessions Building and Restrooms	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$

LOWER PRIORITY PROJECTS BASED ON NEED

These are items identified in the park plans that could be memorable, unique, and even iconic features, but they might be considered “add-ons.” Others are things that would make the park more enjoyable, even if the park is functioning adequately without them. While these projects could bring a lot of value to the parks, they may be deferred or completed when specific funding comes available for them.

LOW PRIORITY - 0-5 YEAR TIMEFRAME			
PARK	FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST
Seidl's Lake Park	Sidewalk/Trail	Replace	\$\$\$
Archery Range	Bow Setup Tables	Construct	\$
Archery Range	Timed Lights	Construct	\$
DNR Boat Launch	Fish and AIS Boat Cleaning Station	Construct	\$\$
DNR Boat Launch	Paddle Share Station	Construct	N/A
Harmon Park	Concessions Building and Restrooms	Construct	\$\$\$\$
Jefferson Park	Parking Lot	Construct	\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Shoreline Restoration	Replace	\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Kayak Launch	Construct	\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Paddle Share Station	Construct	N/A
Kaposia Park	Sand Volleyball Court	Replace	\$\$
Kaposia Park (Bromley Park)	Stairs	Construct	\$
Kaposia Park (Food Forest)	Fruit Trees	Construct	\$\$
McMorrow Field	Electric Hook-ups	Construct	\$
Northview Park (Pool Remains)	Softball Field	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Removed)	Softball Field	Replace	\$\$\$\$
Spruce Park	Picnic Shelter	Construct	\$\$\$

LOW PRIORITY - 5-10 YEAR TIMEFRAME			
PARK	FEATURE	PLANNED ACTION	COST
Grandview Park	Picnic Shelter	Construct	\$\$\$
Jefferson Park	Covered Ice Structure and Refrigeration	Construct	\$\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Food and Drink Area	Construct	\$\$\$\$\$
Kaposia Landing	Stage	Construct	\$\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Play Area	Construct	\$\$
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Rentals Building	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Rentals Building	Replace	\$\$\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Remains)	Sidewalk/Trail	Replace	\$\$\$
Northview Park (Pool Removed)	Sidewalk/Trail	Replace	\$\$
Simon's Ravine Trailhead	Plantings	Replace	\$\$
Simon's Ravine Trailhead	Kiosk	Replace	\$\$\$
Wildflower Levee Park	Benches	Replace	\$
Wildflower Levee Park	Public Art	Replace	\$
Wildflower Levee Park	Shoreline Restoration	Construct	\$\$

LOW PRIORITY - 10-20 YEAR TIMEFRAME

<i>PARK</i>	<i>FEATURE</i>	<i>PLANNED ACTION</i>	<i>COST</i>
Lorraine Park (Combined Aquatics)	Sand Volleyball Court	Replace	\$\$
Lorraine Park (Splash Pool Only)	Sand Volleyball Court	Replace	\$\$
Summit Park	Sidewalk/Trail	Replace	\$\$\$

LOW PRIORITY - 20+ YEAR TIMEFRAME

<i>PARK</i>	<i>FEATURE</i>	<i>PLANNED ACTION</i>	<i>COST</i>
Archery Range	Porta Potty	Replace	\$
Archery Range	Picnic Tables and Benches	Replace	\$
Archery Range	Parking Lot	Replace	\$
Archery Range	Sidewalk/Trail	Replace	\$\$\$
Archery Range	Water Treatment Facility	Replace	N/A
DNR Boat Launch	Fishing Area	Replace	\$\$\$
DNR Boat Launch	Compost Site	Replace	N/A
McMorrow Field	Picnic Shelter	Replace	\$\$\$
Wildflower Levee Park	Regional Trail	Replace	N/A

PROJECT EVALUATION

In the next 10-20 years, it is likely that the City will face a number of requests, opportunities, and decisions about expanding and/or improving the park system. Many of these will not have been anticipated in this plan. This worksheet is intended to help staff, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, and the City Council to evaluate new ideas.

PARK IMPROVEMENTS WORKSHEET

THE PROJECT

Describe the project and why it is a good idea for South St. Paul to consider it:

NEED

Does the proposed project meet an unmet recreation need in South St. Paul? Yes No

Does the proposed project meet one or more of the system initiatives outlined in the parks plan?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Park Replacements | <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Resource Based Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playground Variety | <input type="checkbox"/> Teen Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Wayfinding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Sustainability & Approach to Funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Trail Connections | <input type="checkbox"/> Parks for all Seasons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Providing Engaging Programming | <input type="checkbox"/> Park Ecology | <input type="checkbox"/> Working with Other Recreation Providers |

What evidence is there that this is a desired project in the community?

FINANCES

How does the proposed project impact the City's financial situation?

What is the initial cost to implement this proposed project? _____

Where are these funds coming from? _____

What are the ongoing costs to implement this proposed project? (Annual operations / maintenance)

Where are these funds coming from? _____

Does the City have enough staff to program and take care of this new project? Yes No

If no, how will additional staff be added and funded? _____

At the end of it's life span, what will the replacement cost for this be? _____

What is the expected life span of the proposed project? _____ ÷ _____

What is the replacement cost divided by the life span of the proposed project? _____

Where will the replacement funds come from?

LOCATION

Where is this proposed project going to be located? _____

Is this the best spot in the park system for it? Yes No If no, where is? _____

Are there potential conflicts with adjacent land uses that need to be considered?
(Noise, parking, lights, etc.) Yes No

If yes, what and how will the potential conflicts be mitigated?

Is the proposed project displacing something else? Yes No

Does this need to be relocated somewhere else? Yes No If yes, where? _____

LOCAL BUSINESSES & PARTNERSHIPS

Is this project best provided by the City or another partner? (County, Schools, Associations, etc.)

City Other(s): _____

Is this proposed project something that is already provided by the private sector? Yes No

Is this proposed project something that is already provided by other partners? Yes No

If so, how will we make sure this proposed project isn't competing with existing options?

Can the proposed project be done more efficiently through a partnership with the existing private provider(s) rather than doing it by ourselves? Yes No

Does the proposed project offer economic development opportunities? Yes No

If so, how?

(More visitors, promotion of the community, increased local spending, etc.)

DECISION

Should we proceed? Yes No Revise Proposal

Rationale: _____

MEASURING PROGRESS

For the City of South St. Paul, implementing the changes, policies, and replacements in this park plan will take time, effort, financial resources, and strong leadership. The City should take time to celebrate its successes when they occur, and learn from the things that could have gone better to continually improve.

Routine evaluation of the parks and recreation system is valuable, particularly when justifying requests for funds, facilities, staff time and volunteers. It is important that system benefits are communicated as it is likely that elected officials, the public, and other decision makers may not have a full understanding of the benefits the system provides or the number of residents and visitors that use the parks.

Regular evaluations also have the potential for determining which improvements would better serve park users and identifying benchmarks for the services the City provides.

Comprehensive evaluations of park and recreation systems should include both qualitative and quantitative components. Qualitative tools, such as surveys, are relatively easy to conduct and are important in gauging satisfactions, trends, and need. Quantitative methods, such as counts, are important in capturing the who, what, where, and when of parks and recreation use. Counts are the most beneficial in demonstrating the magnitude of usage. The evaluation system should also include an analysis of the community's progress on its goals and implementation of its plans.

An annual review of how things went, where participation numbers are trending, and how partnerships are going will be a helpful reflection tool to help the City keep getting better.

Examples of Quantitative Data Collection

- Number of recreation activities and participants tracked through registrations
- Number of events, facility users and participants tracked through reservations, permitting and in requests of associations
- Number of "To-Do" items checked off the list
- Number of volunteer participants
- Number of people using parks, trails and other non-fee based facilities through the development of a user count program. This might be accomplished by counting cars in the parking lot, creating a neighborhood park count volunteer program, or installing new technology to count trail users
- Miles of sidewalks/trail completed
- Park and trail safety – number of accidents, incidents and crime

Examples of Qualitative Data Collection

- City-wide survey on a regular basis to evaluate trends over time
- Conduct satisfaction surveys of recreation activity participants
- Create evaluation for associations and other groups which regularly use facilities
- Conduct focus groups to gather information about park use habits and desires for future park system directions

System Analysis Steps

- Outline steps taken toward implementing System Plan goals and initiatives
- Evaluate the ability to fund the desired system
- Summarize the amount of outside funding (partnerships, grants, etc.) secured
- Identify challenges and what steps have been taken to address them
- Review agreements to make sure they are still meeting everyone's needs