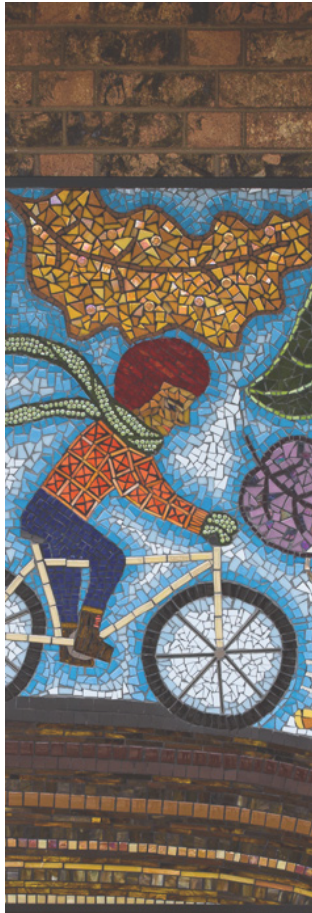
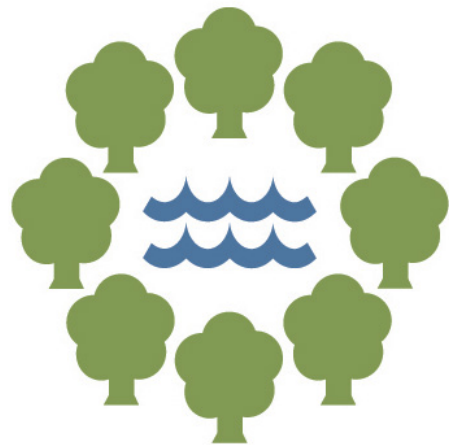


SOUTHWEST SERVICE AREA MASTER PLAN



Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board

DRAFT FEBRUARY 14, 2020



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Southwest Service Area Master Plan (SW Parks Plan) is the result of dedicated collaboration among Minneapolis residents and stakeholders. The Plan was shaped by those who served on the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), members of the public who attended meetings and interacted with Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) staff in the parks, neighborhood and community service organizations, MPRB staff from across the organization, and elected officials. MPRB staff thanks all these individuals for their contributions to the plan.

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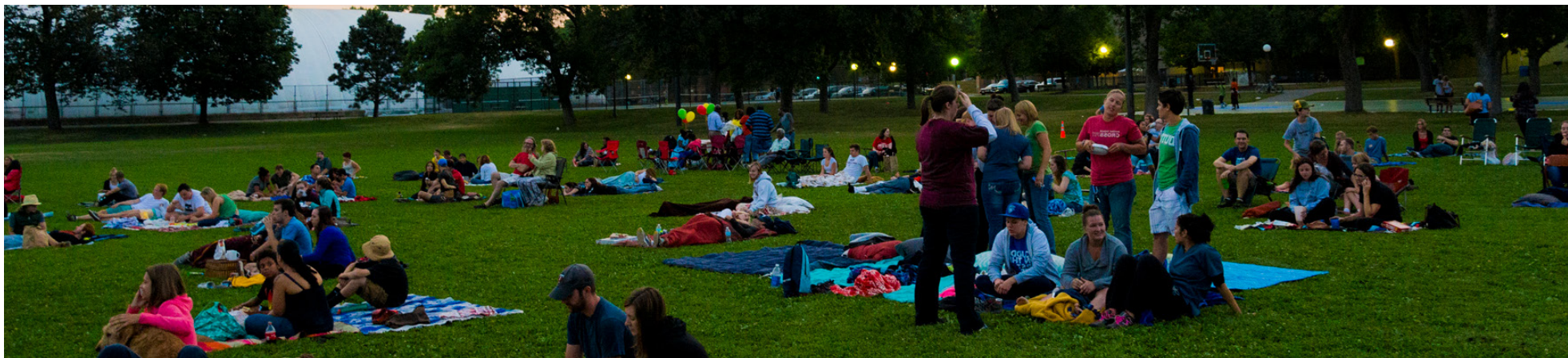
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INTRODUCTION

- INTRODUCTION + PURPOSE
- MPRB VISION AND GOALS
- DOCUMENT OVERVIEW
- RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS OVERVIEW



INTRODUCTION + PURPOSE

The beloved neighborhood parks and triangles of southwest Minneapolis are some of the oldest and most storied in the city. They include several parks established before the turn of the century including Kenwood Parkway in 1886, Linden Hills Boulevard in 1888, The Parade in 1888, Kings Highway in 1891, and Lyndale Farmstead in 1896. The southwest area of the city was rich with natural amenities and home to many of the parks' earliest benefactors. The history of the Minneapolis park system is in many ways rooted in southwest Minneapolis, as one of the primary reasons the Park Board was created in 1883 was to create parks at Bde Maka Ska and Lake Harriet, two of the more beautiful areas in the city. Fourteen years before the Minneapolis Park Board was established in 1883, one of the first sites to be considered for a city park was located in southwest. Acquired much later, it now holds Washburn Fair Oaks and Morrison parks. The first neighborhood park actually acquired

south of downtown not adjacent to water was Bryant Square, also in southwest, in 1904.

The acquisition of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park and Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail – although not neighborhood parks – established a strong natural and leisure-focused framework which influenced the design and use of area neighborhood parks as well. At the time of the Park Board's infancy, prominent residents were committed to the "City Beautiful" movement and demonstrated a strong desire to preserve natural resources for future generations. Southwest residents had the financial means to support an expansive vision of parks, and a large number of parks in southwest were acquired through assessments on willing landowners. This community support and demonstrated leadership for natural resource protection remains strong throughout southwest communities today, supported

by a belief in the importance of public green spaces, natural areas, and healthy waterways.

Dakota villages once dotted the landscape of what is now Minneapolis and the Dakota and Ojibwe people remain a foundational part of the Twin Cities culture and community today. The southeast shores of Bde Maka Ska in the Southwest Service Area hosted the important Mdewakanton agricultural village of Cloud Man in the 1830s, where a public art gathering space now stands. This plan respectfully acknowledges the Dakota and Ojibwe People, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.

PARKS AND POTENTIAL PARKS IN THE SOUTHWEST SERVICE AREA INCLUDE SEVERAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS OR ARE THEMSELVES LOCATED IN HISTORIC DISTRICTS:

- Theodore Wirth House in Lyndale Farmstead Park (Individual landmark. Local designation in 1998, national designation in 2002.
- Thomas Lowry Memorial in Smith Triangle (Individual Landmark. Local designation in 2015.
- Washburn Park Water Tower in a Potential/ Proposed Park area in the Tangletown neighborhood (Individual landmark. Local designation in 1980, national designation in 1983.
- Stevens Square Historic District - Stevens Square Park located within (Local designation in 1989, national designation in 1993.
- Washburn-Fair Oaks Historic District – Washburn Fair Oaks Park and Clinton Field Park located within. (Local designation in 1976, national designation in 1978.





Since 1911, the Park Board had used what was called the Elwell Law, passed by the Minnesota legislature, to pay for neighborhood parks. Under that law, property owners in the vicinity of a park were assessed the cost of acquiring (and later developing) the park. If area landowners agreed to pay those assessments, the park was acquired and developed. If they didn't, it wasn't. As a consequence, neighborhoods that were newer and wealthier got parks and older, poorer neighborhoods did not. Beginning in the late 1960s MPRB stopped using Elwell for neighborhood parks and instead sought grants, bonding, and other sources to build parks.

Part of Elwell's legacy, however, together with Minneapolis' history of redlining and the use of racially restrictive covenants, was the concentration of wealth in some areas of the city, including southwest. One outcome of this was larger and more plentiful parks in the south and southwest areas of the city early in the system's development. While residential, commercial, and industrial areas grew in the burgeoning city, natural resources in southwest were protected by those who lived near them. During the 1960s and 1970s when most of the Park Board's recreation centers were built, they were sited in the larger neighborhood parks of the time, of which the already resource-rich neighborhoods tended to have more. One tangible current example of our disparate inheritance: north of I-94 and I-394 there are a total of 18 recreation centers, while south of that there are 33.

Following decades of gradual development, the Southwest Service Area now hosts a wide variety of neighborhood park sizes and types, from small triangles of land with carefully tended neighborhood gardens, to sizable wooded and naturalized areas, active athletic field and diamond complexes, and parks integrated with adjacent public schools. Although rich with water resources, the area also faces the challenges of flooding and soil saturation.

Within the Southwest Service Area defined by MPRB (all land south of I-394 and west of I-35W) economic, racial, and other disparities can still be observed as one moves from southwest to northeast, with the Chain of Lakes and Minnehaha Creek serving as a natural landmark divide. On average, neighborhoods in the far south and west of the service area tend to have higher median incomes, be more homogeneously white, be older, have a higher ratio of homeowners to renters, and more access to vehicles according to census and American Community Survey data.

One benefit of master planning an entire service area at once, as well as planning all the service areas in a city within short succession of each other, is the opportunity to notice, study, and address systemic imbalances and gaps in services and amenities. This master plan, through directed engagement with a wide variety of users and intentionally balanced design moves, contributes to that city-wide effort. The SW Parks Plan is one of five such master plans that collectively updates the design of every neighborhood park in the city.

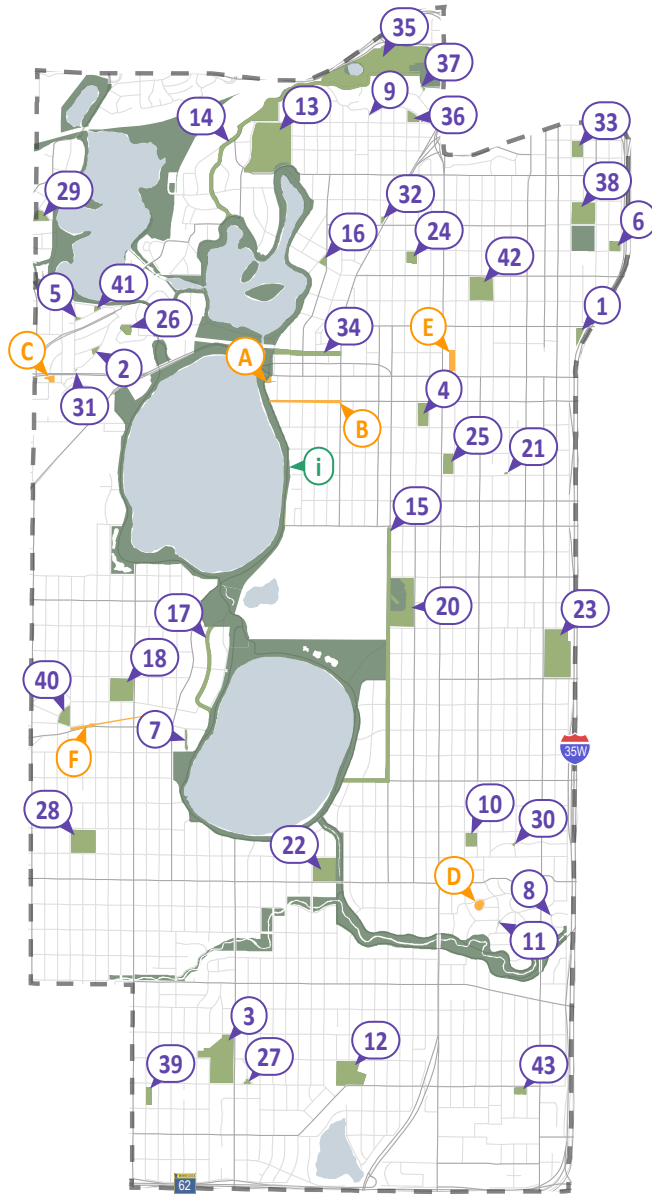
Today Minneapolis overall is more diverse in terms of age, race and ethnicity, and recreational need than ever before. The last time the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board took a comprehensive look at its neighborhood parks was in the 1960s and 1970s when the recreation centers were being built. We are a very different city than we were then. It is time to rethink the neighborhood parks. It is time to set a vision for remaking them in the image of the community that surrounds them and gives them life.

This is a vision that will span decades. The physical transformation of the parks will happen gradually over time, project by project, like puzzle pieces fitting into place to form the overall design that is set forth in this plan. This vision will guide capital improvements to reconstruct or build new playgrounds, aquatic facilities, athletic fields, paths, and some amenities never before seen in Minneapolis' parks, like bicycle playgrounds and a field house. It will allow MPRB to leverage additional financial resources by inspiring and then directing outside philanthropy and grant funding. This vision will—like the parks themselves—bring the community together to imagine and then build the future of Minneapolis' neighborhood parks. On April 29, 2016, an historic agreement was reached between MPRB and the City of Minneapolis to fund neighborhood parks of Minneapolis at significantly increased levels until 2037. This agreement demonstrates the importance the Minneapolis community places on its neighborhood parks and addresses a long-simmering need to accelerate maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of aging park assets. Instead of using this additional

funding to merely put back what currently exists, the SW Parks Plan and other service area master plans are asking the community what it wants and then providing guidance for spending. **That is the most important reason for this planning effort: to ensure MPRB uses its increased funding on things that are important to the people.**

An accessible, community-driven park system is a well-used park system. A well-used park system can combat physical, mental, and societal ills—by bringing people together for active recreation, relaxation, companionship, or solitude. This is the next legacy moment for Minneapolis parks.





NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS INCLUDED IN MASTER PLAN

1. 28TH STREET TOT LOT
2. ALCOTT TRIANGLE
3. ARMATAGE PARK
4. BRYANT SQUARE PARK
5. CHOWEN TRIANGLE
6. CLINTON FIELD PARK
7. DELL PARK
8. ELMWOOD TRIANGLE
9. FREMONT TRIANGLE
10. FULLER PARK
11. GLADSTONE TRIANGLE
12. KENNY PARK
13. KENWOOD PARK
14. KENWOOD PARKWAY
15. KINGS HIGHWAY
16. LEVIN TRIANGLE
17. LINDEN HILLS BOULEVARD
18. LINDEN HILLS PARK
19. LYNDALE FARMSTEAD PARK
20. LYNDALE SCHOOL POOL
21. LYNHURST PARK
22. REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. PARK
23. MUELLER PARK
24. PAINTER PARK
25. PARK SIDING PARK
26. PENN MODEL VILLAGE PARK
27. PERSHING PARK
28. RESERVE BLOCK 40 PARK
29. RUSTIC LODGE TRIANGLE
30. SAINT LOUIS TRIANGLE
31. SMITH TRIANGLE
32. STEVENS SQUARE PARK
33. THE MALL PARK
34. THE PARADE PARK
35. THOMAS LOWRY PARK
36. VINELAND TRIANGLE
37. WASHBURN FAIR OAKS PARK
38. WASHBURN AVENUE TOT LOT
39. WAVELAND TRIANGLE
40. WEST END TRIANGLE
41. WHITTIER PARK
42. WINDOM SOUTH PARK

REGIONAL PARKS INCLUDED IN MASTER PLAN

- i. LOON LAKE TROLLEY PATH

PROPOSED PARKS PARKS INCLUDED IN MASTER PLAN

- A. EAST CALHOUN GATEWAY AREA
- B. 31ST STREET MEDIAN
- C. WEST CALHOUN BUS LAYOVER
- D. WASHBURN WATER TOWER
- E. GARFIELD LOT
- F. LINDEN HILLS TROLLEY PATH

MPRB intends that this will be a living document, utilized regularly by all departments for everything from capital planning to detailed park designs to placement of new trees in parks. The document will exist as a complete, stand-alone book, but the material contained in it will also be disseminated in various formats throughout the organization, to ensure its principles are followed and its resources are utilized:

- The park plan “packets” can be separated into individual PDFs and placed into Planning Division files associated with each park. Project managers will have these packets as resources close at hand whenever they begin a project in a Southwest Service Area park.
- Plan information may be associated with the new Asset Management System, so the future vision of each park is embedded into the process for facility evaluation, work orders, and project scheduling.
- The base CAD files that show the park designs can also be included in Planning Division files, as well as provided to Forestry to guide geo-referenced planting.
- The cost estimates shown in this document can be placed as active spreadsheets in each Planning Division park file, as a resource to project managers when they begin projects.
- The park plan packets can be linked to Southwest Service Area park pages on the MPRB website. Visitors to a park’s webpage will not only be able to see what is offered in the park now, but also see what is planned in the future.



MPRB VISIONS AND GOALS



**VISION
THEME 1:** Urban forests, natural areas,
and waters that endure and
captivate

GOALS

- Sound management techniques provide healthy, diverse, and sustainable natural resources.
- Healthy boulevard trees connect all city residents to their park system.
- Residents and visitors enjoy and understand the natural environment.
- People and the environment benefit from the expansion and protection of natural resources.
- Knowledgeable stewards and partners generously support the system's natural resources.



**VISION
THEME 2:** Recreation that inspires personal
growth, healthy lifestyles, and a
sense of community

GOALS

- People play, learn, and develop a greater capacity to enjoy life.
- Residents, visitors, and workers enjoy opportunities to improve health and fitness.
- People connect through parks and recreation.
- Volunteers make a vital difference to people, parks, and the community.
- Parks provide a center for community living.



**VISION
THEME 3:** Dynamic parks that shape city
character and meet diverse
community needs

GOALS

- Parks shape an evolving city.
- Park facility renewal and development respects history and focuses on sustainability, accessibility, flexibility, and beauty.
- Focused land management supports current and future generations.
- Financially independent and sustainable parks prosper.
- Through outreach and research, park and recreation services are relevant today and tomorrow.
- Easily accessible information supports enjoyment and use of the park



**VISION
THEME 4:** A safe place to play, celebrate,
contemplate, and recreate

GOALS

- Positive recreation experiences and welcoming parks prevent crime.
- Residents, park visitors, and staff make safe choices in the parks.
- Intervention and communication reduces safety concerns.
- Parks are safe and welcoming by design.
- Communities, public and private partners, and staff cooperate to promote safety.



VALUES

We apply the following values to all of our work:

- **Sustainability:** Meet current park and recreation needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by balancing environmental, economic, and equity concerns.
- **Visionary Leadership:** Respect the vision and leadership that built the park and recreation system and recognize the need for ongoing leadership in achieving excellence.
- **Safety:** Work safely to support a thriving work environment and an outstanding park experience for visitors.
- **Responsiveness and Innovation:** Anticipate and thoughtfully respond to the diverse needs of the city's communities, continually seeking ways to better deliver park and recreation services.
- **Independence and Focus:** Independence allows the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to focus on providing and obtaining the resources necessary to accomplish its mission and form effective, responsible partnerships.



PRINCIPLES

WE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES WHEN MAKING DECISIONS THAT HAVE A DISTRICT OR SYSTEM-WIDE IMPACT:

- **Identified Community Need and Demographics:** Emphasis will be placed on researching community needs and demographics when considering program and facility delivery.
- **Quality versus Quantity:** The amenities provided to meet the park and recreation needs of communities will be high quality and provided at a sustainable level. Amenities that have completed their useful life-cycle, especially those with a blighted appearance, will be removed and, as funding becomes available, replaced with new amenities.
- **Embracing Technology:** Decision-making will embrace technology to better serve the community.
- **Fostering a New Face for Partnerships:** Non-traditional partners that provide new opportunities for residents and are consistent with the organization's mission will be encouraged.
- **Focusing on the Activity, Then the Infrastructure:** After evaluation of what the Park Board currently provides, the status of other service providers, and existing infrastructure, infrastructure will be provided to meet the service goals for that activity. Service goals for an activity will be based on demographics of an area, identified community need, and the identified target audience for the activity.
- **Sustainable Rate:** A sustainable park system will be supported by decisions that provide services at a sustainable rate, such as providing infrastructure that can be reasonably maintained, setting realistic program and service delivery targets, or modifying land management techniques to increase efficiency.

DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

The Southwest Service Area Master Plan document is the result of more than 18 months of community participation in discussing and designing neighborhood parks south of I-394 and east of I-35W, along with 6 proposed/potential facilities: East Calhoun Gateway Area, 31st Street Median, West Calhoun Bus Layover, Washburn Water Tower, Garfield Lot, and Linden Hills Trolley Path, as well as 4 park search areas and one regional park feature (Loon Lake Trolley Path). MPRB and its partners—neighborhood organizations, community service organizations, hired urban designers, stakeholder groups, and interested residents—hosted more than 170 engagement activities. These ranged in style from formal meetings to community design workshops to spontaneous walks through parks, as well as discussions at school PTA meetings, neighborhood workshops, pop-up parks events, ice cream socials, farmer's market stands, Open Streets booths and much more. The main purpose of this document is to describe and display the vision for the Southwest Service Area parks.

Specifically, this document is meant to:

- Show the Minneapolis community what it can expect from MPRB
- Guide development of the Capital Improvement Program each year, through resources such as concept design plans and cost estimates
- Set a framework for collaboration with outside groups around implementation of, stewardship of, and fundraising for park improvements
- Create an MPRB-wide framework for park design and maintenance, so all divisions are on the same page
- Provide resources for tracking progress, so MPRB is continually accountable to the promises made during the Southwest Service Area planning process



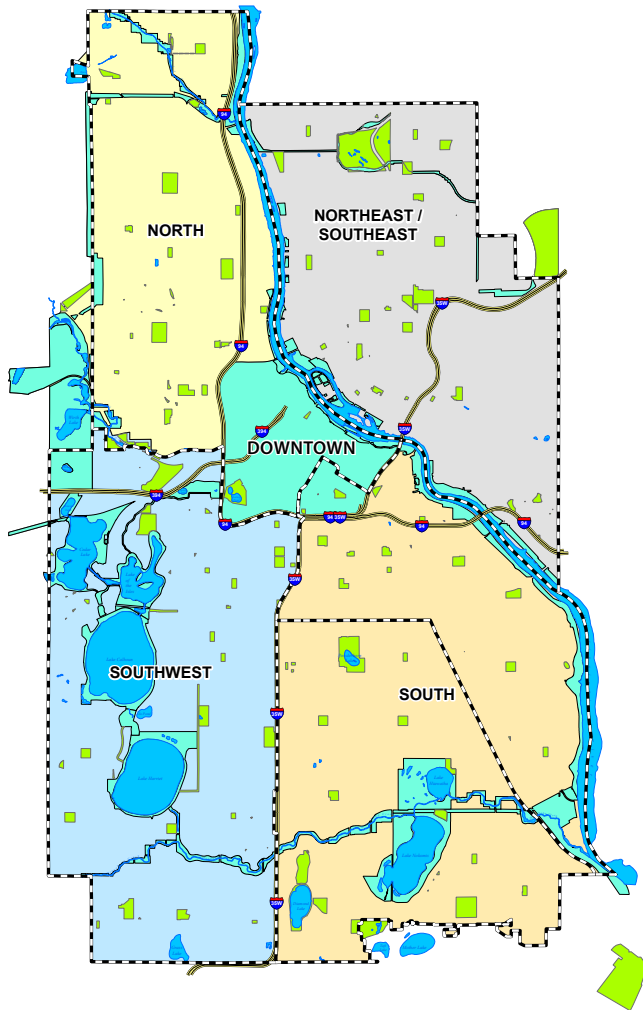
THIS DOCUMENT HAS SIX PARTS:

- ONE: INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK** - This chapter provides an overview of the plan, this document, and related MPRB planning efforts.
- TWO: PLANNING PROCESS** - This chapter documents how MPRB and the community arrived at this plan. It provides key background information on demographics, recreation trends, and the service area itself. It discusses the various stages of the planning process and the community engagement undertaken at each stage.
- THREE: SERVICE AREA VISION** - This chapter is a look at the service area as a whole. It features the “guiding principles” that are at the core of the plan, and provides graphic information on planned facilities across the service area as well as park search areas.
- FOUR: PARK AND PARKWAY PLANS** - This chapter includes the designs for each neighborhood park in the southwest service area, the 6 proposed/potential facilities, and one regional feature included in this planning process. It features a packet of information for each park, including cost estimates.
- FIVE: OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE** - This chapter outlines recommendations for maintaining parks and includes background on operations.
- SIX: IMPLEMENTATION** - This chapter speaks to future park planners, designers, and community advocates about how to make the park plans real. It provides guidance on using this planning document for capital planning, detailed design, partnerships, and park dedication expenditures. It discusses how to track progress and ensure accountability to the public.



*Additional information is included in several appendices to this document, including expanded discussions of demographics and detailed documentation of community engagement.

RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS OVERVIEW



OTHER SERVICE AREA MASTER PLANS

The neighborhood parks in the MPRB system are divided (for management and planning purposes) into five service areas. Four Service Area Master Plans have already been adopted - South (2016), Downtown (2017), Northeast/Southeast a.k.a. East of the River (2019) and North (2019). The SW Parks Plan will be the last and final area of the city to have neighborhood parks planned. This will mark the first time in MPRB's history that all neighborhood parks have been master planned together. Unique among service area master plans, the Downtown Plan was created in collaboration with the City of Minneapolis and is a comprehensive look at all public spaces—parks, plazas, street corridors, etc.

Several other past, present, and future planning efforts are related to the Southwest Service Area Master Plan.



REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLANS

Many of the larger, natural resource-based parks in Minneapolis are regional parks. This includes (in the Southwest Service Area) The Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park (Brownie, Cedar, Isles, Bde Maka Ska, Harriet) and Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail. The service area also contains the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the Kenilworth Regional Trail. Per Metropolitan Council funding requirements, these large parks are master planned individually. Though existing facilities within these parks are shown on some SW Parks Plan maps, it is the regional park master plans that govern future investment in these parks. For purposes of efficiency and effective communication, one regional park feature without a current master plan was planned alongside the southwest side neighborhood parks. Loon Lake Trolley Path was planned as if it was a neighborhood park just like Linden Hills Boulevard or Stevens Square. A Master Plan for this park is included in this document, but it will be subsequently submitted to the Metropolitan Council for approval as an amendment to the adopted Bde Maka Ska-Harriet Master Plan.

RECQUEST

This major multi-year project will create a new vision for recreation centers and programs across the city. While the SW Parks Plan is considering outdoor facilities (and has assumed, for the time being, the existing recreation center footprints as a basis for planning, with a few exceptions where a need arose to examine site impacts of community desires for building changes), RecQuest is looking at buildings and at how MPRB programs indoor and outdoor facilities. RecQuest has a direct relationship with all service area master plans, as it may create new models for outdoor programming and recreation center buildings. Careful coordination has taken place as these complementary projects unfold, to ensure community input is heard by all projects. Chapter 6 describes a method for modifying this plan should plans for recreation centers change.





ACTIVITY PLANS

Activity Plans are topical resource documents that guide and are guided by service area master planning. They look at specific use types in the parks (such as urban agriculture and skateboarding). They make recommendations for level of service, provide design standards and guidelines, and create task lists for improving delivery of an activity system-wide.

During the SW Parks Plan process, two activity plans had been completed—the Urban Agriculture Plan and the Skatepark Activity Plan. The Urban Ag Plan guided the SW Parks Plan relative to the placement and opportunities for urban agriculture areas. The SW Parks Plan implements a key feature of the Urban Ag Plan and the Community Garden Policy by officially designating urban agriculture areas on park plans. Chapter 6 describes a process for adding additional urban agriculture areas in southwest service area parks. The Skatepark Activity Plan sets forth system-wide targets for total skatepark area and targets for different types of parks in the city. The SW Parks Plan follows this guidance, proposing skate/all-wheel/bike parks in quantities in line with the Skatepark Activity Plan. A third activity plan, The Ecological System Plan, was under development during the planning of the SW Parks Plan. Its draft goals will guide decisions to improve water and air quality, protect land and water habitat, build resiliency and connectivity, mitigate climate change, maintain and improve soil health and the urban forest, and reduce construction and human-related negative environmental impacts. The SW Parks Plan follows this guidance in a number of ways. It proposes maintenance or introduction of naturalized areas, tree canopy, daylighted waterways,

and best management practices for stormwater capture and treatment including rain gardens and underground storage cisterns.

MPRB COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2007-2020 comprehensive plan and its 2021 update guide all decision making at MPRB. As such, many key principles of the plan are reflected in the SW Parks Plan. However, the service area master plans can also be seen as a look forward to the next revision of the comprehensive plan, as they are an important documentation of community desires around neighborhood parks. The comprehensive plan update will not replace the recommendations made in the SW Parks Plan, rather the two plans will work in concert with each other.

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