



**City of North St. Paul
City Council
Workshop Meeting Agenda**

**September 17, 2024
5:15 PM**

The City Council Workshop Meeting will be conducted on **September 17, 2024** at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, located at 2400 Margaret St., North St. Paul.

You can watch the meeting on our YouTube channel here: [**tinyurl.com/NSPYouTube**](https://tinyurl.com/NSPYouTube)

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

Council Member Cole
Council Member Schweer
Council Member Wong
Council Member Nordby
Mayor Monge

III. Adopt Agenda

IV. Topic(s)

A. Discuss the Parks and Open Space Master Plan

V. Other Business

VI. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled City Council Workshop meeting is October 1, 2024.



To	Date
Honorable Mayor Monge and City Council	September 17, 2024

Agenda Placement # IV.A

Topic(s)

Subject

Discuss the Parks and Open Space Master Plan

Background/Facts

See attached Staff Report

Recommended Action

Review and discuss the attached North St. Paul Parks and Open Space Master Plan

Attachments

1. 24.9.17 CC Parks and Open Space Master Plan Council Worksession Staff Report
2. Park Master Plan Draft 7.24.24

Respectfully submitted,
Riley Grams, Community Development / Community Services Director

City Council Staff Report



Report To: North St. Paul City Council

Report From: Riley Grams, Community Development Director

Meeting Date: September 17, 2024

Agenda Item: Review and Discuss the North St. Paul Parks and Open Space Master Plan

Action Requested: ☐ Motion ☒ Discussion ☐ Public Hearing

Form of Action: ☐ Resolution ☐ Ordinance ☐ Contract/Agreement ☒ Other

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Review and discuss the draft City of North St. Paul Parks and Open Space Master Plan

BACKGROUND

The City of North St. Paul Parks and Recreation Commission has spent time recently updating the attached draft Parks and Open Space Master Plan and is seeking Council review and discussion before formal approval of the Plan at a future Council meeting.

The purpose of the plan is to lay out an organized framework for reviewing and recommending improvements to City parks and other recreational facilities so that they better serve the residents, businesses and visitors of the City of North St. Paul. The plan will be regularly referred to by City Staff and other elected and appointed officials and is meant to help the City responsibly manage the City's parks and recreational facilities. The plan is specifically intended to:

- 1) Evaluate community input and analyze demographic changes in the City
- 2) Evaluate the existing park system
- 3) Review future trends in parks and recreation
- 4) Provide guiding principles to prioritize improvements to the parks and recreation facilities so that the system stays relevant and functional into the near and distant future
- 5) Provide appointed and elected representatives guidance for capital improvement projects for the parks and recreational facilities
- 6) Be a 10-year roadmap for the overall maintenance of our parks and open space system so that it meets the needs of the City's growing and changing population
- 7) Improve the City's ability to seek and qualify for key grant funding opportunities to help pay for the continued financial support of the City's parks and open space system

The Parks and Open Space Master Plan incorporates multiple other planning documents that provide key findings and recommendations for the City to consider. Those documents include:

- 1) 2022 Park Improvement Plan
- 2) 2040 North St Paul Comprehensive Plan

- 3) 2022 Redevelopment Master Plan
- 4) 2022 Housing Needs Assessment
- 5) 2018 ADA Transition Plan
- 6) 2011 Living Streets Plan
- 7) 208 Ramsey County Parks & Recreation System Plan
- 8) 2020-2024 Minnesota Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

The value of a well maintained, well thought out and well used parks and open space system is incalculable. Residents and visitors seek out parks and open space when determining where to live, where to visit, and where to shop. The system provides immense health benefits, such as physical activity, contact with nature and the natural environment, and social interaction with our families, neighbors, and visitors. Open spaces provide natural habitat for wildlife and absorb storm water runoff. A well-designed system contributes and raises the overall quality of life, increases local property values, and allows for the City to attract new residents and promote economic development.

A special thank you to the Parks and Recreation Commission for their work in this plan, and specifically a thank you to Community Development Administrative Assistant Sara Lang for her continued work in updated this plan.

The City Council should review the attached Parks and Open Space Master Plan. City Staff, Parks and Recreation Commission members, and Council Parks and Recreation Commission Council Liaison Schweer will be on hand to help answer any Council questions.

City Staff will make any final edits to the Plan and bring it back to a future Council meeting for formal approval.

ATTACHMENTS

1. City of North St. Paul Parks and Open Space Master Plan

City of North St. Paul

Parks and Open Space Master Plan

July 24, 2024



Acknowledgements

City Council

John Monge, Mayor
Tim Cole, Council Member
Jason Nordby, Council Member
Cassidy Schweer, Council Member
Lisa Wong, Council Member

Parks and Recreation Commission

Lloyd Grachek, Chair
Laura Greenlee-Karp, Vice Chair
Ben Hansen, Commissioner
Ingrid Koller, Commissioner
Sue Springborn, Commissioner
Sarah Zahradka, Commissioner
David Andren, Commissioner
Cassidy Schweer, Council Representative

Community Development Staff

Riley Grams, Community Development Director
Ron Ritchie, Public Works Director
Sara Lang, Administrative Assistant

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
INTRODUCTION	4
Introduction.....	5
Plan Purpose	5
Related Planning Efforts	6
Value of parks and recreation	7
Role of the Park and Recreation Commission.....	7
OUR COMMUNITY	8
Our City.....	9
Demographics	10
Housing Development Trends	15
OUR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM	18
Park Inventory	19
Community Parks	20
Neighborhood Parks.....	29
Undeveloped Parkland.....	38
Nature Preserves	40
Trails and Other Park Systems.....	43
NEEDS ANALYSIS	45
Community Engagement Overview	46
System Gaps.....	51
Equity	53
Plan Review.....	54
MAINTAINING WHAT WE HAVE, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE	57
Operations and Maintenance.....	58
Partnerships, Agreements, and Donations.....	59
Evolution of a Park Construction Project	60
Park System Funding	62
Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Action Items	63

01

INTRODUCTION

SECTION CONTENTS

- » Introduction
- » Plan Purpose
- » Related Planning Efforts
- » Role of Parks and Recreation Commission

INTRODUCTION

North St. Paul is located on the east side of Ramsey County in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Our fully built-out community occupies just 3.1 square miles, but enjoys 146 acres of parks and open space, including three nature preserves and two recreational lakes. Parks contribute to our community's quality of life by providing residents and visitors numerous recreational opportunities as well as land and water to enjoy.

North St. Paul is an evolving city, with an increasingly dense and diverse population from different backgrounds and countries. As density increases, so does the demand on the park system. This 2023 plan looks to determine if the system adequately provides for North St. Paul's diverse and growing population and to identify how to equitably and thoughtfully apply its resources to provide quality park access for all residents wishing to utilize the park system.

PLAN PURPOSE

A park and open space master plan lays out an organizational framework for improving parks and recreation facilities to better serve the public. If referred to regularly by staff and officials, it can help the City responsibly manage its park system. Specifically, this plan is intended to:

- Evaluate community input and analyze demographic changes, the existing park system, and future trends in recreation.
- Offer guiding principles to prioritize improvements to ensure our park system is relevant and functional into the future.
- Provide guidance and rationale for capital improvement planning for our parks.
- Be a 10-year road map for the maintenance and improvement of our parks and open spaces to meet the needs of the City's growing and changing population.

Additionally, completion of this report improves the City's ability to qualify for key funding opportunities, such as DNR grant funding available from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

Our Promise

As citizens and customers, our residents deserve the best possible service, programs, and facilities.

We, as members of the Parks and Recreation Commission, promise to do everything within our duties to serve you cheerfully and respectfully by providing clean and safe facilities, enjoyable programs, and timely and effective services, which includes listening and responding to your suggestions and concerns.

RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

This document incorporates and refines the park and recreation-related findings and recommendations presented in the 2022 Park Improvement Plan, 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and other city-approved planning documents. Key plans, reports, and surveys that helped inform and guide the development of this plan include:

- » 2040 North St. Paul Comprehensive Plan
- » 2022 Park Improvement Plan
- » 2022 Redevelopment Master Plan
- » 2022 Housing Needs Assessment
- » 2018 ADA Transition Plan
- » 2011 Living Streets Plan
- » Ramsey County Parks & Recreation System Plan, 2018
- » Minnesota Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2020-2024



Why Plan?

One of the key reasons for a park and open space plan is to take a critical look at facilities and services and ask hard questions about performance.

- *Are they still relevant?*
- *Are they meeting the needs and priorities of the community?*
- *Is the city investing an appropriate level of resources into them?*
- *Are ADA requirements being met with new developments of parks?*

Addressing these questions can ensure the City can responsibly and equitably appropriate resources to ensure our parks continue to improve the quality of life in North St. Paul.



VALUE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Residents and visitors value our parks and trails for many reasons: to walk a dog, ride a bicycle, play sports, or engage in a wide variety of other recreational activities. Parks provide health benefits, such as physical activity, contact with nature, and social interaction. Open space provides wildlife habitat and absorbs storm water runoff. A well-designed and maintained park system also contributes to quality of life, increases property values, and enhances the City's ability to attract new residents and promote economic development.

ROLE OF THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

The North St. Paul Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) was established in 1978. The PRC is a seven-member commission that serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council. The duties of the Parks and Recreation Commission are to:

- » Prepare operating policies and procedures for the use of parks.
- » Give due regard to the Comprehensive Plan as it relates to parks, open space and trails when making recommendations to the City Council.
- » Make recommendations to the City Council related to park land dedications, recreational programming, and park and trail improvements.

This Commission welcomes comments, recommendations, and input from the community to help maintain and improve our park facilities.

02

OUR COMMUNITY

SECTION CONTENTS

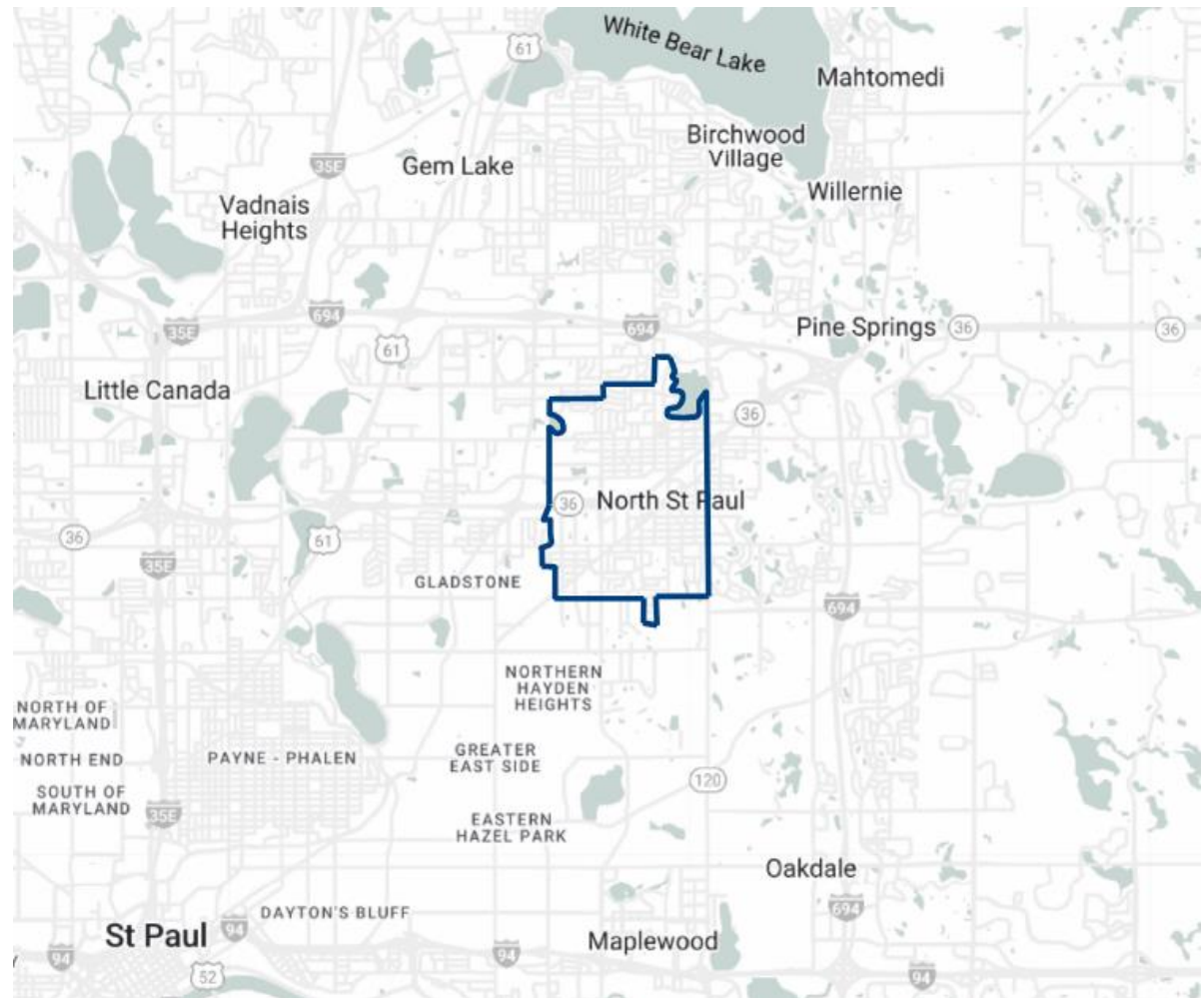
- » Our City
- » Demographics
- » Housing Development Trends

OUR CITY

North St. Paul (NSP) is a city of 3.1 square miles located on the near east side in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

NSP is different from its suburban neighbors that are composed mostly of new, auto-dependent developments. NSP is a distinct city with a history as a small village that is now fully built out. It is known for its industrial and blue-collar roots, but also its abundance of parks, schools, and churches for a city of its size, as well its distinct downtown.

NSP is a town with a great quality of life that embraces its small-town character while recognizing its place in the larger region. As a community, NSP seeks to become more “urban.” By investing in progressive infrastructure improvements and more compact development, it will strive to preserve its small-town character while ensuring that future projects adhere to a quality design standard and aesthetic character.



Regional Proximity

Situated on the near east side in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, North St. Paul is connected to the thriving metropolitan region, and appreciates how this enhances residents' access to a diversity of jobs, cultural and recreational opportunities, quality health care, and higher education opportunities.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Any discussion about park planning must be based on an understanding of the community that the system serves. The following pages examine North St. Paul's (NSP) demographic data.

Population

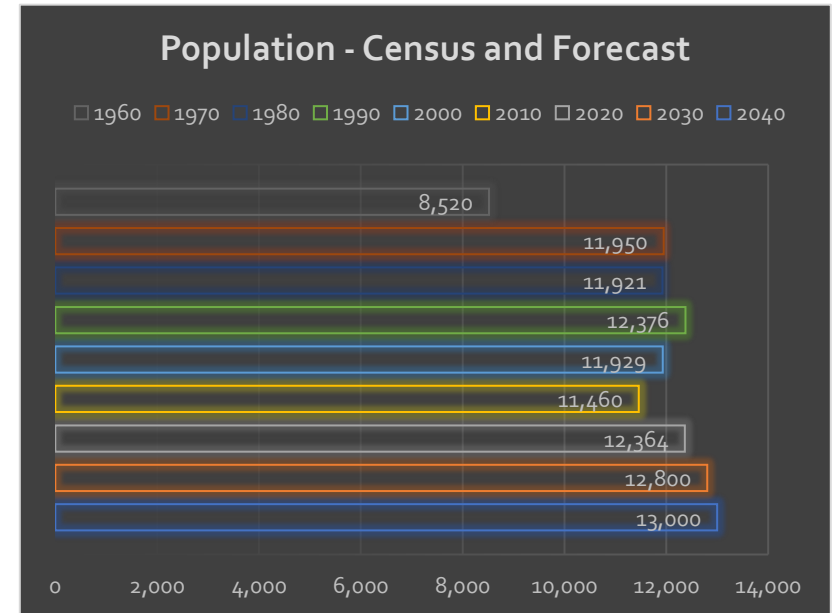
As of the 2020 Census, the NSP's population was 12,800. The City's population has remained relatively steady since 1970, and, according to the Metropolitan Council, it is expected to remain steady with only a slight increase by the year 2040. The anticipated trend may relate to the built-out nature of the City; however, numerous larger-scale multifamily redevelopments have been built in the City's core and will likely continue which may increase NSP's population beyond that which is forecast.

Households

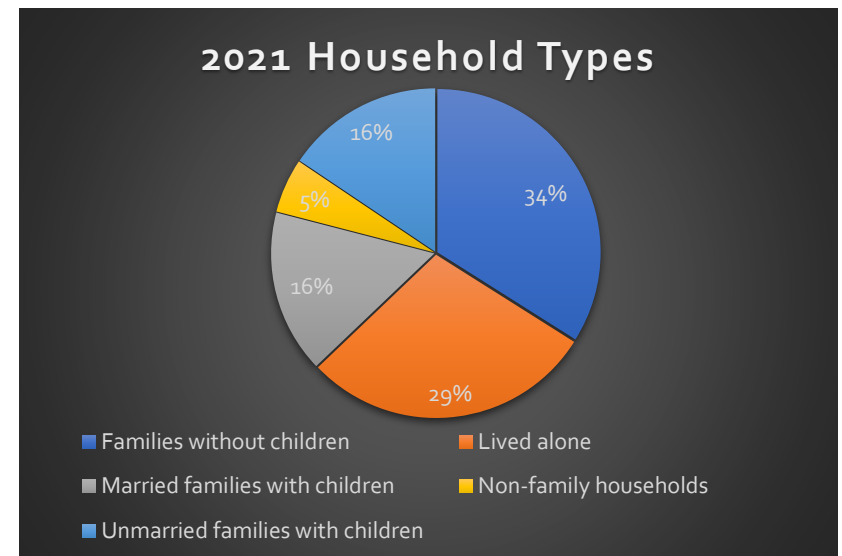
There are 4,593 households in NSP with an average household size of 2.68. Of the total households, 32% are families (married or unmarried) with children; 34% are families without children; 29% live alone; and 5% are nonfamily households (living arrangements with unrelated people). This means that nearly one third of the City's households have children under 18.

Educational Attainment

In 2021, 90% of NSP residents aged 25 and older have a high school diploma or higher; 27% have a bachelor's degree or higher; and over 5% a graduate or professional degree. Comparatively, 91% of Ramsey County residents have earned a high school diploma or higher and 44% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Educational attainment is often linked to income, which may translate to slightly lower incomes in NSP.



Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Metropolitan Council projections



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2021

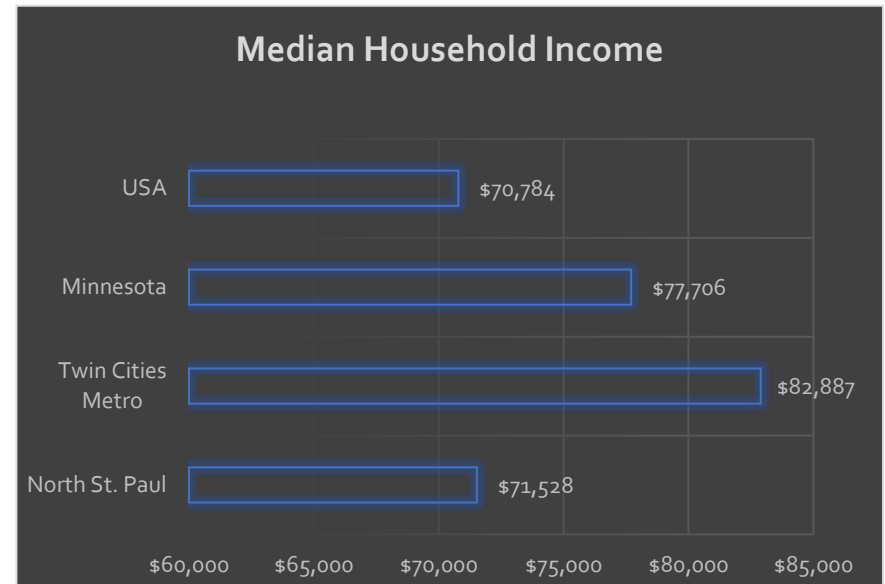
Income and Workforce Statistics

NSP's median household income is currently \$71,528. In comparison, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area median household income is \$80,485 and the average median household income of Ramsey County is \$70,518.

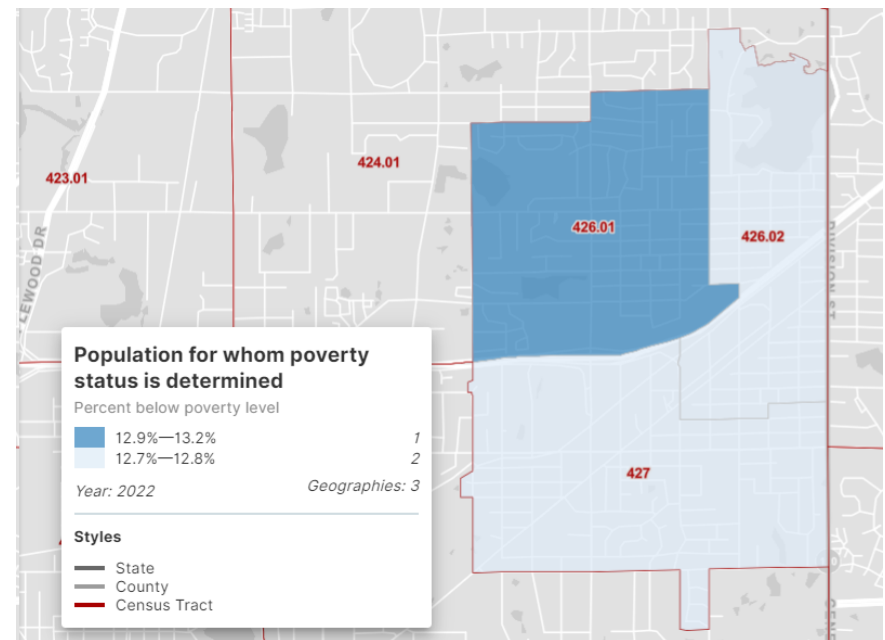
According to the 2021 American Community Survey, white-collar workers make up 80% of the working population in NSP, while blue-collar employees account for 20%. There are also 465 entrepreneurs in NSP (8% of the workforce); 4,225 workers employed in private companies (69%); and 787 people working in governmental institutions (13%).

Poverty Statistics

The official poverty rate in the NSP is 13% according to the 2022 American Community Survey, which is quite higher than the state at 9%, but lower than the national poverty rate of 15%. The figure on the lower right indicates poverty rates by Census Tract in NSP. As indicated, a greater share of the City's population is below the poverty level on the City's northwest side. Consideration of how well our City's parks and recreation system serves residents with limited incomes will be an important consideration when developing the system implementation plan.



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2022

Age Characteristics

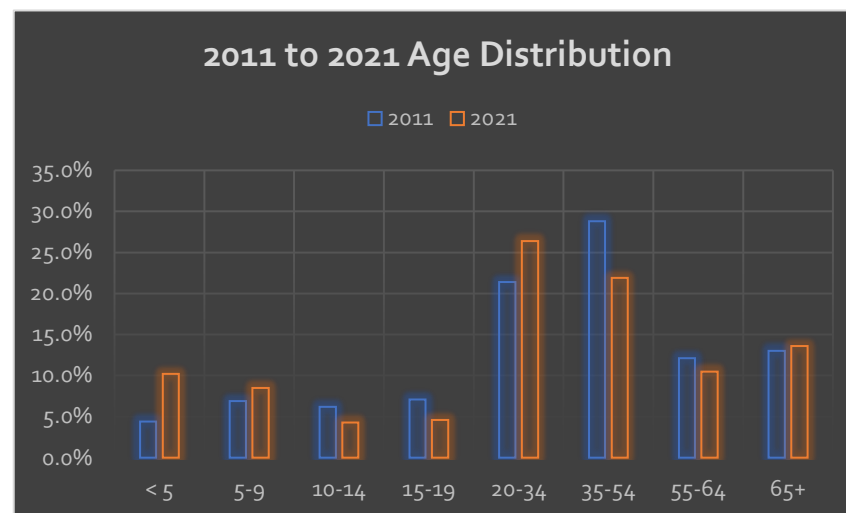
While there is a significant share of older residents in the City, NSP's population is becoming younger overall. Between 2011 and 2021, the share of those aged 19 and below increased by 3%, whereas the 55+ population decreased by 1% during the same period. Presently the largest demographic is those aged 25-34, who are in their child rearing years, which suggests another period for growth in the younger demographic for the next 10+ years to come.

Age is a factor that comes into play when planning for recreational spaces. Senior users may desire facilities that facilitate social interaction or provide physical support, such as benches or wheelchair accessibility. Similarly, small children have much different needs than even elementary school aged children or those in middle or high school.

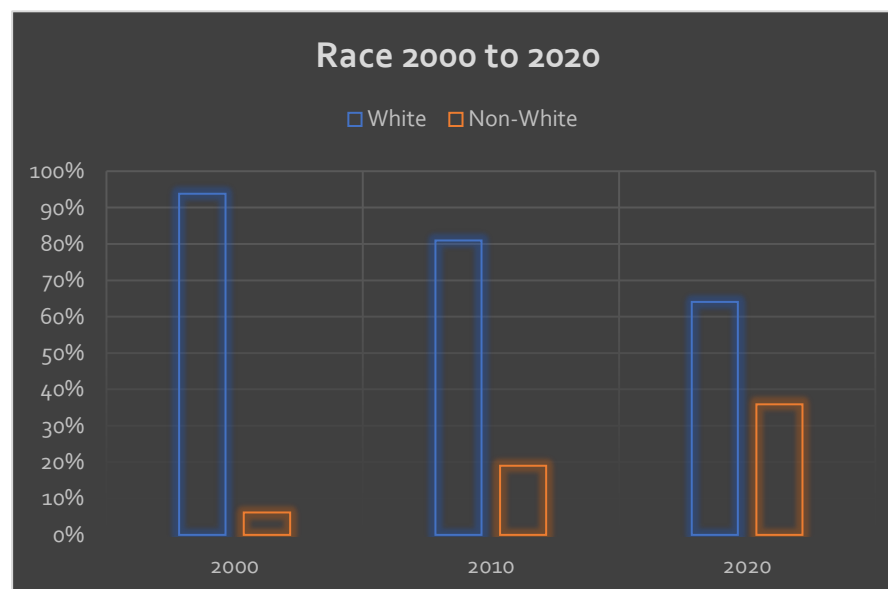
Race Characteristics

NSP's population is also becoming increasingly more diverse. In 2010, white residents accounted for 81% of the population. In 2020, the white residents accounted for 64%, Asians 15%, and African American's 10% of NSP residents. School District 622, which serves 10,770 students in grades K-12 in the cities of North St. Paul, Maplewood, and Oakdale, is also very diverse. Diverse student populations make up about 60% of the student body. At least 57 different languages are spoken by ISD-622 students and their families. English, Hmong, Spanish, and Somali are some of the most frequently spoken languages.¹ These demographic changes may require a shift in how parks are planned and programmed.

¹Minnesota Department of Education, ISD-622 District Demographics.



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2021



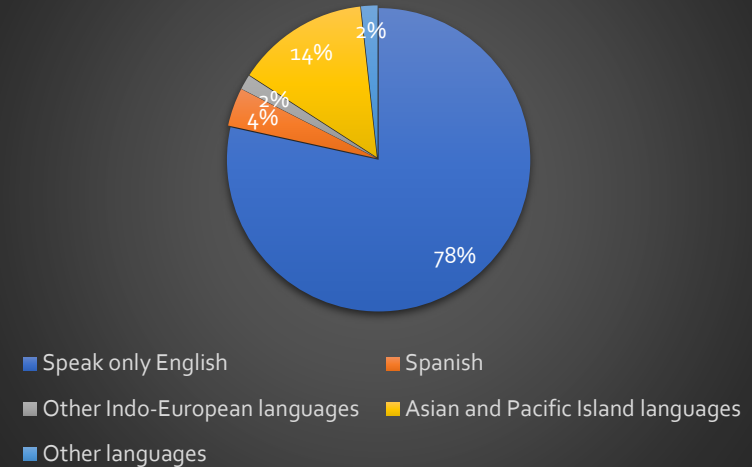
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

Language and Nationality

While the majority (78%) of NSP residents speak English as their first language, 22% of households speak a language other than English at home. Nearly 12% of North St. Paul's overall population is foreign born. Of these, 59% were born in Asia, 20% from Africa, 19% from South and Latin America, 2% from Oceania, and less than 1% from Eastern Europe. Immigrants are bringing a variety of new traditions from across the world into our City and neighborhoods.

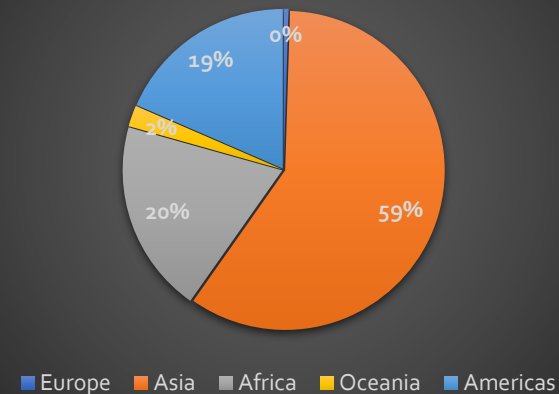
Europe	Romania	7
Asia	China	64
	Japan	9
	Korea	8
	Burma	40
	Laos	351
	Philippines	11
	Thailand	180
	Vietnam	193
Africa	Ethiopia	106
	Kenya	21
	Cameroon	37
	Other East Africa	10
	Morocco	1
	Sudan	13
	Liberia	36
	Nigeria	59
Oceania	Australian and New Zealand Subregion	31
Americas	Belize	145
	Guatemala	20
	Mexico	102

Languages Spoken at Home



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2021

Place of Birth

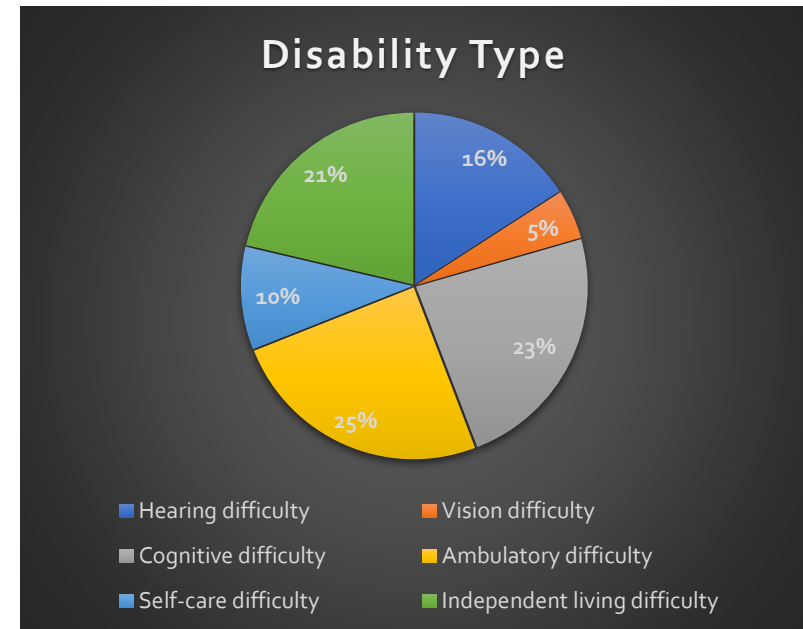


Data Source: American Community Survey, 2021

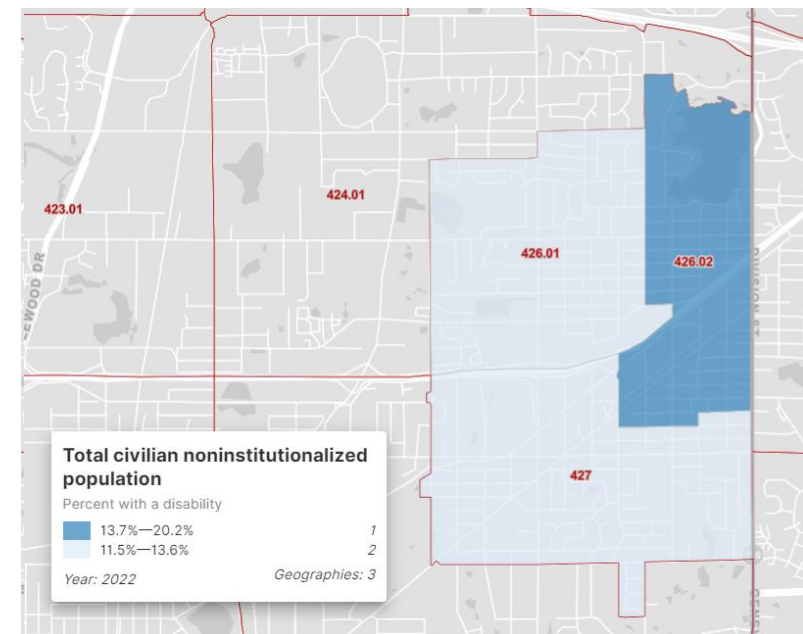
Disability Characteristics

Approximately 13% of NSP's population reported a disability in the American Community Survey. Comparatively, 12.9% of Ramsey County residents reported a disability. According to the Census Bureau, disabilities range from ambulatory (difficulty walking or climbing stairs), hearing, and vision to independent living and cognitive difficulties. The chart to the right indicates the share by type of disability that NSP residents reported. The figure on the lower right indicates the percent of population with a disability by Census Tract in NSP. As indicated, a greater share of the City's population with disabilities is on the City's northeast side.

In planning for new park improvements, the needs of all residents should be considered and planned for. Universal design is intended to make public spaces truly public by providing equal opportunity not only for persons with disabilities, but a variety of situations, such as a parent pushing a stroller, a person on crutches, a person with arthritic knees.



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2021



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2022



HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

In a city of only 3.1 square miles, there is a premium on maintaining parks and open space areas. While our City isn't growing physically, the population is expanding, which has a profound impact on our parks and ability to provide quality recreational amenities.

Recent Development

There has been a significant amount of investment and redevelopment in North St. Paul over the past ten years, particularly in the area closest to the downtown. The projects listed below have contributed an additional 563 new dwelling units since 2015. Each of these new dwelling units places an increased demand on the park and recreational system.

- » Polar Ridge senior living facility was completed in 2015. The facility has 39 units of senior independent living, 54 units of senior assisted living and 21 units of memory care.
- » Suite Living senior facility opened in 2020 with 18-units of senior assisted living and 14-units of memory care.
- » In 2021, M&I Homes completed construction of Gateway at McKnight, a 100-unit townhome neighborhood with direct access to the Gateway Trail and walking distance to downtown amenities.
- » The 128-unit Anchor View Apartments, 20% of its units contribute to the city's affordable housing stock, was constructed in the site formerly known as Anchor Block in 2021.
- » The three-story Sentinel Building was constructed on the former City Hall site and adjoining parcels in 2022. This structure is an 89-unit, market-rate apartment building on a prominent corner in the downtown.
- » Construction of the last of the 18 new townhomes were completed on 7th Street and Kari Lane as of 2024.
- » Most recently, construction has begun on the redevelopment of the former Lillie Newspaper site and adjoining parcels with an 82-unit, market rate apartment building.

Housing Forecast

In 2022, the City engaged Maxfield Research and Consulting, LLC to prepare a housing study that calculated the anticipated housing demand by product that may occur between 2022 and 2030. Several construction projects have been initiated since the completion of that study. The remaining demand is shown based on permits pulled or development approvals.

	2022-2030	2022-2023	
	DEMAND	Planned/Built	DEMAND
PRODUCT	No. Units	No. Units	No. Units
Market rate rental	455	82	373
Affordable rental (60-80% AMI)	164	0	164
Subsidized rental	36	0	36
For sale single family	57	17	40
For sale multifamily	243	0	243
Senior			
Active adult ownership	62	0	62
Active adult rental	105	0	105
Active adult affordable	78	0	78
Independent living	64	0	64
Assisted living	36	0	36
Memory care	24	0	24



Sentinel Apartments



Suite Living Senior Care

Key Findings

- North St. Paul offers 12 parks/open space areas in a city of just 3.1 square miles.
- The City's population is stable but growing slowly. It is also becoming increasingly more diverse. Understanding what our residents value and consider to be quality of life amenities should be a key factor in park planning.
- A third of the City's households have children, but there is also a growing senior population as those aged 35-54 transition to the next demographic category. Parks need to be accessible to all residents and contain amenities of interest to various age groups.
- The City's median income is comparatively lower than the Twin Cities metropolitan area as well as the state of MN. This plan must consider how to provide a park system to serve all residents, particularly those that most need access to outdoor recreation.
- Almost 12 percent of the City's population is foreign born, bringing in cultures and traditions from 21 countries and five continents. Again, consider how our changing demographics will influence park planning.
- Approximately 13% of North St. Paul's population reported a disability, such as ambulatory (difficulty walking or climbing stairs), hearing, and vision to independent living and cognitive difficulties. The City should work toward including universal-design in all parks—meaning facilities that are intended to make public spaces truly public.

03

OUR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

SECTION CONTENTS

- » Park Inventory
- » Community Parks
- » Neighborhood Parks
- » Undeveloped Parkland
- » Nature Preserves
- » Trails and Other Park Systems

PARK INVENTORY

The following chart presents an inventory of the total acreage and existing amenities and facilities at each of NSP park and open space areas.

	ACRES	UNDEVELOPED	BALLFIELDS	BASKETBALL	BEACH	BIKE FIX-IT STATION	BOCCEBALL	CANOE STORAGE	EXERCISE EQUIPMENT	FISHING PIER	GRILL	HOCKEY RINK	ICE RINK	NATURAL AREAS	PICKLEBALL/TENNIS	PICNIC TABLES	PLAYGROUND	PUBLIC RESTROOM	SAND VOLLEYBALL	SHELTER (ENCLOSED)	SHELTER (OPEN AIR)	MEMORIAL	WALKING TRAILS
CENTRAL PARK	0.2	x																					
COUNTRY CLUB PARK	0.2	x																					
COLBY HILLS	0.5										x					x	x				x		
DOWNTOWN LOT	0.3	x																					
DOROTHY PARK	0.9							x								x	x						
HAUSE PARK	2.1			x							x				x	x	x			x	x		
NORTHWOOD PARK	5.6		x	x							x	x	x			x	x				x		
POLAR PARK	2.3										x						x						
TOWER PARK	2.2			x							x					x	x		x		x		x
CASEY LAKE PARK	42.1		x							x	x	x				x	x		x	x			x
MCKNIGHT FIELDS	14.9		x												x						x		
SILVER LAKE	5.3				x					x	x				x	x	x		x		x		
ROTARY PARK	2.8					x										x		x			x		x
SOUTHWOOD	28.0													x		x							x
ENVIRO. LEARNING	13.8	x																					
URBAN ECO CENTER	24.3													x									x
VETERAN'S MEMORIAL	0.6																					x	
TOTAL ACRES	146																						

COMMUNITY PARKS

Casey Lake Park, 2089 17th Avenue E.

Casey Lake Park is a 42-acre community park established in 1960. This park boasts a highly scenic natural setting along Casey Lake and was ranked as the favorite of all NSP parks in 2023 online survey.

Casey Lake is the City's largest park with a variety of active and passive amenities as well as an abundance of open space and natural areas. Amenities include a fishing pier, grills, picnic tables, four ballfields, hockey rink, sand volleyball, open air shelters, and a ½ mile walking trail around the lake. The park also features an indoor pavilion, the Fire Department's Booya building, and "Janie's Playground," a whimsical playground named in honor of 18-month-old Janie Zahradka who loved going to the park with her parents.

The NSP Fire Department and NSP Athletic Association built the Booya and storage building in 1981. This building hosts a variety of events including the annual Firefighter's Booya. With volunteer help and funding from the two groups, the building was completed and given to the City with a 99-year lease issued to each group for their respective parts of the building.

Casey Lake Park has hosted to numerous City events over the years including Music in the Park, Autumn Arts Festival, Star Watch, and Easter egg hunts.

"I think Casey Lake Park is a prime example of a wonderful park. It has so much to offer and is cared for so well."

~North St. Paul resident



Casey Lake Pavilion



Janie's Playground

Table 1: Casey Lake Park Amenities

AMENITY	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Aeration system	The aeration system contributes to improving Silver Lake water quality by sustaining desirable aquatic species and preventing hard-freeze fish-kill. The aeration system was installed in 2013.	Maintenance every 5 years. Replacement of submersible pumps and baffles every 20 years.
Ballfields	Field 1, Lower Casey Field, is a youth baseball field with fencing, backstop, bleachers, dugout, and night lighting. Field 2, Upper Casey Field, is a youth baseball field fencing, backstop, and bleachers. Field 3, Middle Casey Field, is a youth baseball field with 65' bases and 50' pitching rubber. Field 4 is a softball field with throw down bases and either 38' or 50' pitching rubber.	Maintenance every 10-15 years.
Booya Building	The Booya building was renovated in 2016. The NSPAA still uses the building for equipment storage.	50+ years.
Fishing Pier	The fishing pier was installed in 2015.	Plan for replacement by 2040.
Hockey Rink	The hockey rink has poor orientation (east-west versus north-south) and is in poor condition.	Replacement needed in next few years.
Park Sign	A new freestanding park sign was installed in 2023, which has a 10-year warranty. The monument sign with electronic message center (EMC) installed at the 17th Avenue entrance in 2018.	Replace EMC in 3-5 years, 15-20 years for freestanding sign, and 30+ years for monument sign base.
Pavilion and Shelter	The indoor pavilion was rebuilt in 2016. This ADA-accessible building features a catering kitchen, indoor seating for 120, outdoor picnic tables, restrooms, and Wi-Fi. Floors were refinished in 2023. The chairs and tables need to be replaced.	50+ years.
Picnic Area(s)	Numerous picnic tables and grills are located within the park. The picnic tables under the shelter are in good condition. Outlying picnic tables are in fair to poor condition.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Picnic Shelter	An open-air shelter is located on the northwest side of Casey Lake by Ballfield 4. This shelter is past its useful life and needs replacement. It is not available for rent.	Plan to replace soon (within 1-year) if this amenity is deemed necessary.
Playgrounds	Janie's Playground is located on the south side of the park next to the pavilion. This playground was constructed in 2014. The Upper Playground is located on the northeast side of Casey Lake Park and can be accessed via Shawnee Drive as well as the walking trail. This playground was built in 2016.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.

Sand Volleyball	A sand volleyball court is located at the south side of the park adjacent to Janie's Playground.	N/A
Walking Trail	A ½-mile asphalt walking trail meanders through the park was constructed in 1989. The Public Works Department resurfaced half of the trail in 2023; the remaining half is planned to be resurfaced in 2027.	Once reconstruction is completed, the trail will last 7-15 years.

Issues and Opportunities

The 2022 Park Improvement Plan (PIP) recommends the redevelopment or replacement of some of the Casey Lake Park amenities. The 2023 park and recreation survey also offered some insight into future improvements at Casey.

- » The former "Army Playground" on the southeast side of the park was installed in the 1970s and removed in 2022 due to wear and safety concerns. There is some desire by the community to have it replaced.
- » The open-air picnic shelter on the northwest side of the park by Field 4 is in poor condition and beyond its useful life. This structure should either be removed or replaced. Consideration should be made for the necessity of this shelter given the Booya shelter as well as the Pavilion in Casey Lake Park.
- » The PIP made several suggestions for new improvements including a warming house with restrooms, cross-country ski trails, new exercise equipment along the paths, and a new nature-based play feature.
- » The hockey rink has poor orientation (east-west versus north-south) which can be an issue when sunlight is shining into the faces of one team. The rink is also a distance from the parking lot which was noted as a concern in the 2022 PIP. Prioritization of improvements to the hockey rink should be considered before significant changes are made to this structure.
- » Fields 3 and 4 are noted to have poor orientation in the PIP. Prioritization of improvements to the ballfields should be considered before changes are made to ensure the need and desire of ballfields at this park and in the community overall.



Casey Lake and fishing pier

Before any major new improvements are considered at Casey Lake, a master plan should be developed as described under Evolution of a Park Construction Project on pages 60-61. Because of its status as a community park, as well as the number of amenities at Casey Lake, the master planning process should include a robust community engagement component.

Silver Lake Park, 2601 19th Avenue E.

Silver Lake Park is the second favorite and second most frequented park in North St. Paul. This park is located on the south end of Silver Lake on land originally donated by Henry Castle in 1889. The historic land donation stipulates that Silver Lake Park only be used for public park facilities, which assures that this park will continue to be an amenity for residents into the future.

Silver Lake Park is a linear park with a variety of recreation amenities including picnic spaces and a very popular swimming beach. This 5.3-acre park features also features two playground areas, tennis/pickleball courts, a sand volleyball court, a restroom and shower facility, walking path, and an open-air shelter.

Silver Lake Park has an accessible fishing pier that is sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The City has worked with the MNDNR to help provide native landscapes to improve water quality and enhance the overall appearance of the park for visitors.

In the past, Silver Lake Park hosted Silver Lake Splash, an annual beach party and fundraiser.



Silver Lake beach (above); Silver Lake picnic shelter (below)



Table 2: Silver Lake Park Amenities

AMENITY	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Aeration system	The aeration system contributes to improving Silver Lake water quality by sustaining desirable aquatic species and preventing hard-freeze fish-kill.	Maintenance every 5 years; replacement of submersible pumps and baffles every 20 years.
Beach	Silver Lake features North St. Paul's only and very popular swimming beach.	N/A
Fishing Pier	The first fishing pier was built in 1987 on the south side of the lake. It was reconstructed at its current location in 2014.	Plan for replacement by 2040.
Park Sign	A new park sign was installed in 2023.	The replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding sign.
Picnic Area(s)	Grills and picnic tables are located throughout the park.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Pickleball/ Tennis Courts	Tennis courts were installed in the 1970s. A pickleball overlay was painted onto the courts in 2020.	Concrete pavement is estimated to last for 20-30 years with proper maintenance. Bituminous is expected to have new color coating every 3-5 years.
Playground	The playground equipment on the east side of the park was installed in 2006. The west side playground equipment was installed in 2015. Both playgrounds are in good condition.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.
Public Restroom	The restroom building was constructed in approximately 1980. The building was repainted, and a mural was painted on three sides in 2023 (muralist Taylor Berman). There are also port-a-potties located within the park.	Expected life of 50+ years.
Sand Volleyball	A sand volleyball court is located on the east side of the park. This court has concrete curbing installed around the perimeter.	N/A
Shelter	The open-air shelter was built in 2015.	Expected life of 20+ years.
Walking Trail	The 0.37-mile walking trail was first built in 1987. New lighting along the trail was installed in 2023.	Resurface every 7-15 years.



Issues and Opportunities

The 2022 Park Improvement Plan (PIP) recommends ongoing maintenance and accessibility-related improvements. In addition, the 2023 park and recreation survey offered some insight into potential modifications to Silver Lake Park.

- » The PIP suggests that more unique or challenging playground equipment be considered to meet the needs of varying demographics and ages when the eastern playground is replaced.
- » Residents are appreciative of park improvements but noted in the 2023 survey that shade trees near metal playground equipment would be desired to protect children from burns.
- » No lifeguards are on duty at the beach; however, this was a service provided by the city until 2019. Residents have indicated a desire for this service to return.
- » Trail connectivity around Silver Lake is desired by area residents. This idea has been conceptually investigated to connect existing multiuse trails around the east and north sides of Silver Lake. Multiple attempts have been made to interest the state legislature in assisting with funding for this project.
- » The concrete border around the volleyball court is a potential hazard.

McKnight Fields Complex, 2310 10th Avenue E.

McKnight Fields is a large community park at the NE intersection of McKnight Road and Highway 36. This park is adjacent to North High School and is primarily focused on athletics. Amenities include a baseball field, four softball fields, T-ball field, announcing building, central concessions area, restrooms, tennis courts (no longer in use), and an indoor batting cage. The facility is currently used for North St. Paul High School softball and baseball and has been used for football, soccer, and tennis programs.

A portion of this park is located on land that was originally part of North St. Paul Land Company holdings. The area was a low wetland that was used as a dump site for many years. In 1970, the City purchased a 16-acre tract through condemnation of private property and the purchase of state highway land. The total cost of the land purchase was \$120,551, which was partially funded by a HUD grant that the City received in 1972, for \$23,533. Originally, the City and School District were to enter the venture jointly, but the City was concerned about the delays in negotiations and decided to pursue the grant and purchase without a commitment from the School District.

This complex is a direct result of the community, school, and City working together to provide quality recreational facilities for the entire community. From 1972 to 1974, the City made minor improvements such as adding hockey rinks and a warming house. In 1974, the City and School District signed an agreement to develop the east part of McKnight Field. This development included four lighted softball fields, a new baseball field in conjunction with American Legion Post 39, tennis courts, and playground equipment. In 1980, the American Legion funded the placement of lights on the baseball field. In 1993, upgrading of the park took place through funds donated by local community groups and organizations.



Table 3: McKnight Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Baseball field (McKnight Field)	Kuenkel field is in fairly good condition. Some updates have been funded by the school district; they covered the cost to rebuild the pitching mound which cost the district \$14,000. The project included regrading, re-sodding, and spreading ag lime. The school district also built the press-box at Kuenkel field in 2003.	Add ground limestone every other year; replace facility components as needed.
Concessions Building	The concessions building includes the announcing booth, concessions stand, and restrooms. The bathrooms were remodeled in 2016. The concession stand has been leased to nonprofit groups over the years.	Expected life of 50+ years.
Exterior fencing	New fencing is needed around the entire McKnight athletic complex site.	Replace as needed; 10+ years.
Indoor batting cage	In 1992, the City entered into a lease agreement with Mark Motz and Dennis Bartholomew (Triple Crown Batting Cages, LLC) wherein the lessee agreed to construct the batting cage facility in exchange for no rent. The lease has been extended several times, most recently in the fall of 2023 with a termination date of 2030.	Expected life of 50+ years.
Park Sign	A new park sign was installed in 2023.	The replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding sign.
Path	An asphalt path connects the softball fields to the sidewalk along 10 th Avenue E. Portions of the path are upheaved and crumbling and replacement is recommended.	Plan to replace soon (within 1- years) if this amenity is deemed necessary.
Shelter	An open-air shelter is on the site—the date of construction is unknown but estimated to have been built in the 1970s.	Plan to replace soon (within 1- years) if this amenity is deemed necessary.
Softball fields	There are four softball fields at McKnight Fields Complex. Fields #2 and #3 require refurbishment and maintenance; the ag-lime warning track and outfield fence need to be replaced and the fields need to be regraded. Fields #1 and #4 were refurbished with new backstops and dugouts.	Maintenance every 10-15 years.
T-ball field	The t-ball field (field #5) is in poor condition. It requires regrading, a new backstop, and an outfield fence. Field 5 is rarely used.	If this is to remain, it should be maintenance every 10-15 years.
Tennis Courts	The two tennis courts are in complete disrepair and are no longer open to the public for recreational use.	Replacement needed.

Issues and Opportunities

Given the level of reconstruction needs at McKnight, the 2022 Park Improvement Plan (PIP) recommends the preparation of a master plan to guide development of new improvements (refer to Evolution of a Park Construction Project on pages 60-61). Like Casey Lake, because of its status as a community park, the master planning process for McKnight should include a robust community engagement component. The 2024-2033 capital improvement plan set aside funding for the master plan. The City intends to hire a consultant in 2024 to complete a concept plan for this work.

The 2023 park and recreation survey offered some insight into future improvements at McKnight.

- » Consider construction of a playground; this can be beneficial for children in attendance but not playing at ballgames.
- » Consider new parking layouts to improve the capacity and circulation.
- » Evaluate the need for tennis courts; consider removal or replacement with pickleball or other park amenities.
- » Consider the potential for community gardens at McKnight.



East Tennis Court at McKnight



McKnight Field

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Colby Hills Park, Corner of 7th Street N. and Belmont Lane E.

This ½-acre park is located on the north side of Belmont Lane. Colby Hills was part of the residential area plotted in 1888 in what was called the 5th addition to North St. Paul. The name refers to a depot owned by the Wisconsin Central Railroad that was located near what is now South Avenue and 7th Street. The land was used as an unofficial park (a skating rink was flooded by the residents). This site was a state-owned, tax delinquent property that sat vacant since the 1920s. In 1939, the Colby Hills Community Club was started by residents to improve recreational and social facilities in the area. This group successfully petitioned the City Council to purchase the land from the state to be used as a park.

Issues and Opportunities

There are no imminent improvements required at Colby Hills Park other than the replacement or removal of the chain-link fence.



Table 4: Colby Hills Park Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Park Sign	New park sign was installed in 2023.	Replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding sign.
Picnic Area(s)	Picnic tables, grills, benches, and a water fountain are located in this park. Benches were installed in 2021.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Playground	The playground equipment was installed in 2019, but the swings have been in place since 2009. A chain-link fence surrounds the playground that needs replacement.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.
Shelter	The open-air shelter was built in 2010. An ADA-accessible concrete sidewalk was added to Colby Park in 2019 to connect the shelter to the street.	Expected life of 20+ years.

Dorothy Park, 2916 Lake Blvd.

Dorothy Park is located just off Lake Boulevard on the northwest side of Silver Lake, a short distance north of Poplar Avenue. The park is part of the designated floodplain for Silver Lake. The City obtained the land in 1911 and in 1989 the City placed playground equipment and picnic tables in the area after completing limited landscaping. Although it is a small park, residents appreciate the opportunity to play and enjoy the Silver Lake shoreline. The on-again, off-again flooding of the area prevents more development, but it does afford visitors the opportunity to see firsthand the impact the lake has on the shoreline and surrounding area. This is a nice park to enjoy Silver Lake in a more natural setting.

Issues and Opportunities

No specific issue or opportunities were identified in the PIP or the 2023 community survey for this park.



Table 5: Dorothy Park Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Canoe storage	A canoe storage rack is available for rent in Dorothy Park for a nominal annual fee.	Replace as needed.
Park Sign	New park sign installed in 2023.	Replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding sign.
Picnic Area(s)	Benches and picnic tables are in this park.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Playground	The playground equipment and swings were installed in 2017.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.

Hause Park, 2616 4th Avenue

Hause Park is located near downtown, just four blocks from City Hall. The 2-acre park features a small indoor pavilion, open-air shelter, playground, tennis court, and numerous picnic tables and grills. During the winter, the open space area is flooded for ice skating.

This park was originally known as 'Park A', was one of three parks platted out by the North St. Paul Land Company as part of the planned community. In 1955, the City Council renamed the park, Hause Park, to honor former Police Chief Walter Hause who spent many hours improving the park located across from his home.

In 2023, the City was awarded grant funding from the MNDNR to replace the dilapidated tennis court with four pickleball courts. Pickleball is a high demand sport and there are no courts on the south side of NSP. This project will also construct an accessible path to connect the playground, pickleball courts, picnic shelter, and pavilion to the street. The ballfield will not be connected by the path and will be removed for compliance with the accessibility requirement of the DNR grant.

Hause Park is host to numerous events throughout the year including Food Truck Night and Fire and Ice. The Fire Department held their annual Booya at Hause Park for many years before moving to the new building they built at Casey Park.

Issues and Opportunities

The 2023 community survey indicated potential interest in volleyball, basketball and/or a water amenity at Hause Park.



Fire and Ice at Hause Park



Hause Park Playground

Table 6: Hause Park Amenities

AMENITY	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Ballfield	A small ballfield is located at the southwest corner of the park. As mentioned above, the ballfield will be removed for compliance with DNR grant.	N/A
Park Sign	New park sign was installed in 2023.	The replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding sign.
Pavilion	The pavilion was constructed in 1979 and remodeled in 2018.	20+ years.
Picnic Area(s)	Numerous benches, grills, and picnic tables are in this park.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Playground	The playground equipment was installed in 2017 with a merry-go-round that was installed in 2015.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.
Shelter	The open-air park shelter was built in 2012.	Expected life of 20+ years.
Tennis/Pickleball courts	The existing tennis court will be reconstructed in the spring of 2024 with four pickleball courts. This project will be funded by a MNDNR grant.	Concrete pavement is estimated to last for 20-30 years with proper maintenance. Bituminous pavement color coat is expected to have new color coating applied approximately every 3-5 years.

Northwood Park, 1995 1st Street N.

Northwood Park is nestled on the corner of Skillman Avenue and 1st Street. This 5-acre park features a playground area, ballfields, picnic shelter, and skating rink with warming house. The City acquired this property in 1946, but the land went undeveloped until 1958. The 500,000-gallon water tower was built in 1960.

Issues and Opportunities

The 2022 Park Improvement Plan recommends the redevelopment of most amenities at Northwood Park as well as the addition of proper trail connections. The 2023 community survey identified the following for Northwood Park:

- » The basketball court is in poor condition and there is no dedicated pickleball court.
- » The playground should be expanded and include amenities that are more inclusive.
- » Northwood could potentially hold a community skate park.



Northwood Park Playground



Northwood Park Shelter

Table 7: Northwood Park Amenities

AMENITY	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Ballfield	The ballfield donated by the North St. Paul Athletic Association in 1981. It was most recently renovated in 2018. According to the 2022 PIP, the ballfield has less than ideal orientation for programmed games but is meant for younger aged players.	Add ground limestone every other year; replace facility components as needed.
Basketball Court	The basketball court is in poor condition.	Plan to replace soon (within 3-5 years) if this amenity is deemed necessary.
Ice Skating Rink	The A hockey/ice skating rink in fair condition. The 2022 PIP indicated that hockey rink boards should be replaced.	Plan to replace soon (within 3-5 years) if this amenity is deemed necessary.
Park Sign	A new park sign was installed in 2023.	The replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding sign.
Playground	Modernized playground equipment was initially installed in 1995. New playground equipment was installed in 2016.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.
Sand Volleyball	A sand volleyball court is located north of the ballfield. It is presently in fair condition.	N/A
Shelter	The picnic shelter was built in 1980 and is nearing the end of its useful life.	Expected life of 20+ years.
Warming House	The recreation building was completed in 1971 and is nearing the end of its useful life.	Plan to replace soon (within 3-5 years) if this amenity is deemed necessary.

Polar Park, Hilltop Court (Shawnee Drive)

Polar Park was purchased in 1956 as tax forfeiture land. This park is surrounded by private property and has public access from narrow easements off 19th Avenue and Shawnee Drive. Amenities at Polar Park include a playground, picnic tables, grills, and mature shade trees. A new ADA-accessible concrete walk from Shawnee along the north entrance point of the park to the playground was recently completed per the park concept plan, right. It was determined the path would not continue to the south access point based on the desires of the neighborhood. Because the park is surrounded by private residential housing, park improvements to date have been governed by the desire of adjacent residents.

Issues and Opportunities

The 2022 Park Improvement Plan recommends that future improvements follow the 2020 conceptual plan except for the trail extension to the south. The remaining improvements include an internal park trail loop, expanded playground equipment with engineered wood fiber surfacing and new site furnishings to include benches, tables, grills, bike racks, etc. The proposed improvements should continue to be confirmed by the City and residents to meet the actual needs and desires. The 2023 community survey did not identify specific or suggestions specific to Polar Park.



Polar Park Conceptual Plan, 2020

Table 8: Polar Park Amenities

AMENITY	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Playground	The playground was installed in 1997 and new swings were added in 2020.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.

Tower Park, 2375 13th Avenue

Tower Park is a 2.23-acre park located on a full City block between 2nd Street and East 2nd Street. This park is halfway between North High School and Richardson Elementary School on a water tower site. It has a lot of mature trees and recent updates have added to the overall character and appeal.

Issues and Opportunities

The concrete around the perimeter of the volleyball court is hazardous to players.



Sand Volleyball at Tower Park

Table 9: Tower Park Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Basketball	A basketball court is located to the northwest of the water tower.	Pressure cleaning every 1-2 years; resurfacing of asphalt or concrete courts every 4-5 years.
Picnic Area(s)	Picnic tables and grills are located on the northeast side of the park.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Playground	The playground structure was installed in 2015, the swings were installed in 2009 and the merry-go-round dates to 1999.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.
Shelter	The open-air shelter was built in 2012.	Expected life of 20+ years.
Sand Volleyball	A sand volleyball court is located on the southwest side of the park. This court has concrete curbing around the perimeter that was installed in 2020.	N/A

Veteran’s Memorial Park, 2480 Margaret Street N

Veteran’s Memorial Park is 0.60-acre located next to Highway 36 on Margaret Street N. This park was established in 2015 after years of planning and fundraising by the North St. Paul Veteran’s Park, Inc. Funds were contributed by Governor Dayton, who signed a bonding bill that contributed \$100,000 in state funding for the project. Those funds, plus a \$9,900 State Legacy Grant, was added to the more than \$124,525 in private donations for the park (including \$10,000 from the North St. Paul Park Fund).

The park features a walk of more than 1,200 engraved pavers commemorating those who served our country. The marble wall is inscribed with each branch of the Armed Forces and the names of North St. Paul-area citizens who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our continued freedoms. The entrance to the park is marked by statute of an American serviceman of the modern era.



Veteran’s Park Memorial

Issues and Opportunities

None identified.

Table 90: Veteran’s Memorial Park Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Memorial	The memorial statue, walls, and benches were installed in 2015.	As needed
Memorial pavers	The park features memorial pavers that can be purchased annually and installed in the summer of the same year. Pavers are placed randomly in the three red striped areas or may be requested to be placed in rows with other pavers of family members or comrades.	As needed

UNDEVELOPED PARKLAND

Central Park, 2375 Margaret Street N.

Central Park (formerly known as Seppala Park) is a 0.23-acre minimally developed located on land that was part of the original plat. The City obtained the property in 1966. Because the location is within the downtown business district, the city decided to landscape the area with a circular flower bed and add a resting bench. This site is adjacent to City-owned land to the north and has been considered for inclusion in redevelopment activities that may occur on that land.

Country Club Park, 2300 block of Eldridge Avenue E.

Country Club Park (also known as Eldridge Tot Lot) is a 0.15-acre site located in the 2300 block of Eldridge Avenue E. It is part of three lots of the Northwood Heights Addition (lots 26, 27, and 28, Block F). Records suggest that this property has a clear title and the City may use it for any purpose. A swing set, slide, spring toys, and a picnic table were located on the site for many years, but the park is currently undeveloped. A storm sewer runs along the east side of this property and sanitary sewer are reportedly stubbed out to the property line. An unimproved alley lies to the west where utilities run north south. The measures 6,700 square feet, which meets zoning requirements for a single-family home. The site should be investigated by the City Engineer to determine if it would be suitable for the student-built housing program, a joint initiative by the City of North St. Paul Housing & Redevelopment Authority and NE Metro Intermediate School District 916, Career and Technical Center (CTC).



Central Park



Country Club Park

Downtown Lot, 2475 7th Avenue E.

The undeveloped downtown lot is located at approximately 2475 7th Avenue E. The address is the site of a former service station. The undeveloped greenspace was established when the City purchased 2475 7th Avenue E. in 2008 from Hillcrest Brakes and Alignment. The structure was determined to be blighted and the structure was razed to realign street right-of-way that is now North St. Paul Drive. The site is adjacent to a transit stop and is located within walking distance to downtown as well as many new high density residential developments.

Amenities

None.

Issues and Opportunities

The 2022 Park Improvement Plan indicates that this park should be developed to serve the growing population in surrounding neighborhoods while also serving as a gateway to the downtown business district. Per the 2022 PIP, the design could accommodate a plaza area with unique elements, public art, or recreation while providing gathering space that would fit appropriately within this space.



NATURE PRESERVES

Southwood Nature Preserve

1975 Henry Street (North entrance) / 2651 Holloway Avenue E. (South entrance)

Southwood Nature Preserve is a 28-acre nature park (with a 5-acre pond) on the south side of the City that provides valuable green space and walking trails for residents. Formerly a fill site in the 1960s, the City acquired this land as a future park in 1969 with the assistance of Federal HUD and MN Natural Resources grant funds. Per the 1969 grant agreement, the public body agrees to retain the land for permanent open space purposes.

Today, this park is home to a diverse population of wildlife, particularly waterfowl and turtles, as well as urban wildlife. The land is mostly low wetlands which were designated as open space areas. All facilities in the park are made of natural materials. Many local schools use this land as an extension to the classroom where students can learn about nature and ecology. Turtles migrate between Southwood Nature Preserve and the Holloway Marsh to the south.

Many volunteer activities have occurred at Southwood Nature Preserve over the years to maintain and protect this natural area, such as buckthorn removal, Earth Day cleanups, garlic mustard pull, fall workdays, and Eagle Scout projects. In late 2023, the City Council adopted a statement of policy to provide guidance for the coordination of volunteer groups.



Southwood Nature Preserve



Southwood Nature Preserve

Issues and Opportunities

- » Numerous invasive species have been reported in the preserve, including buckthorn, burdock, curly dock, dame's rocket, honeysuckle, Japanese Knotweed, and garlic mustard. This issue has been addressed with numerous volunteer activities as well as prescribed burns performed by the Fire Department.
- » The presence of the Emerald Ash Borer was reported in 2021.
- » Runoff from streets, houses, and lawns impact water quality which affects the kinds of aquatic life in the pond and stream. For example, the use of chemicals containing phosphorous from lawn fertilizers creates a large amount of algae growth on the pond.
- » There is no parking lot for visitors. Although Holloway is a wide road with large shoulders, it is not an ideal spot to park or unload groups of children visiting the park for educational purposes.

Table 10: Southwood Nature Preserve Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Benches	Benches are placed throughout the park on small spur trails off the main trail.	Commercial grade benches can last 15-20 years.
Interpretive signs	There is an interpretive kiosk at the south entrance near the trailhead. There are small signs near the ground in the northwest quadrant that identifies different plant species that were placed by volunteers of the Minnesota Master Naturalists Program.	The replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding signs.
Picnic Tables	Picnic tables are scattered around the main entrance at Holloway Ave.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Overlook deck	A wooden deck overlooking the pond was initially built in 2010.	Expected life of 20+ years.
Walking trails	Approximately 1.5-miles of woodchip trail runs through the park and around the pond.	Periodic maintenance when woodchips deteriorate.

Urban Ecology Environmental Learning Center, West of McKnight Road along South Avenue E.

The Urban Ecology Environmental Learning Center (ELC) is a 24-acre wetland restoration project in North St. Paul along the Gateway Trail. The city acquired approximately 19-acres in 1989 from Ramsey County for parks, recreation, open space, and storm water storage purposes. The city acquired the remaining 5-acres in 1997.

In 1995, the District’s Natural Resources Board, with the help of the University of Minnesota Department of Landscape Architecture, authored a restoration plan. The design established multi-basin wetland ecosystem that provides opportunities for urban ecology education, water quality improvement, and vegetation restoration. Construction and initial planting took place in 1997 and 1998. This site includes an open space and walking trail, and it has also served as an educational resource for area schools.



Urban Ecology Environmental Learning Center

Issues and Opportunities

While the pond buffer and observation mound now have established native plant communities, invasive plant management on the site continues to be a challenge. Reed canary grass and Canada thistle populations have so far proven difficult to contain and reduce. Tatarian honeysuckle and buckthorn have been largely removed from the public lands but continue to re-invade from adjacent private property.

Table 11: Urban Ecology ELC Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Observation Deck	A boardwalk and overlook deck provide access to overlook the pond and wetland areas.	Expected life of 20+ years.



TRAILS AND OTHER PARK SYSTEMS

North St. Paul is not the only provider of recreational opportunities in North St. Paul. Regional trails, school playgrounds, sports fields, and private gyms owned by other organizations also provide space for fitness and play. All of these facilities are valued components of the City's recreational amenities and they play an important role in the community. They're largely not discussed in this document because the City has no authority to plan, manage, or improve private and school-owned facilities.

Trails

The Gateway State Trail is an 18-mile multiple use trail that begins in St. Paul and continues northeast through Maplewood, North St. Paul, and Oakdale, through Washington County, and ends just four miles northwest of Stillwater. The Gateway also provides connections to many local and regional trails, including Phalen-Keller Regional Park and the Bruce Vento Regional Trail.

Rotary Park

Rotary Park is owned by MnDOT and serves as a trailhead for the Gateway State Trail, which also provides connections to the downtown business district. This land was part of the old Soo Line Railroad M property obtained by the City in 1957. In 1996, the Rotary Club funded construction of a paved trail with a small bridge coming from the state trail to a park area. Amenities at Rotary Park include restrooms, picnic tables and benches, open air shelters, drinking fountain, and a bicycle fix-it station. The open-air shelters were built in 2014 and 2016. The restroom building was constructed in 2021.

ISD-622 Facilities

The City and ISD 622 have collaborated on recreational facilities at the McKnight athletic complex since the 1960s. As mentioned, a joint effort by the City and school district identified a need for public athletic facilities and subsequently resulted in the purchase and construction of 11.7-acres to establish McKnight Field. The two parties entered into their first shared use agreement for facilities in 1974.

The current shared use agreement under which the City and school district have been operating was approved in 2011. The agreement addresses fees, maintenance, capital improvements, insurance, etc. In general, the agreement designates field maintenance to the owner of the field, and, per the agreement, user fees are to be as listed in the fee schedule of each governing body.

The 2011 agreement has been in place over a decade and numerous changes have occurred in city and school district staff and city and school operations since that time. Chiefly, the city no longer offers a youth recreation program and no longer has a need for school district facilities.

Polar Arena, located at 2444 11th Avenue E., is an indoor hockey area that is home to the North High School boys and girls teams, the Tartan Area Youth Hockey Association, and the Maplewood Figure Skating Club. The area was opened in built in 1969 and is owned and operated by ISD-622. Open skate is available at limited times throughout the winter months.

Private Facilities

Ramsey County's Goodrich Golf Course is in St. Paul with a portion that spills over into North St. Paul. Goodrich Golf course is a fun and challenging 18-hole, par 70 course. Its gently rolling hills create a relaxed atmosphere in a beautiful environment.

04

NEEDS ANALYSIS

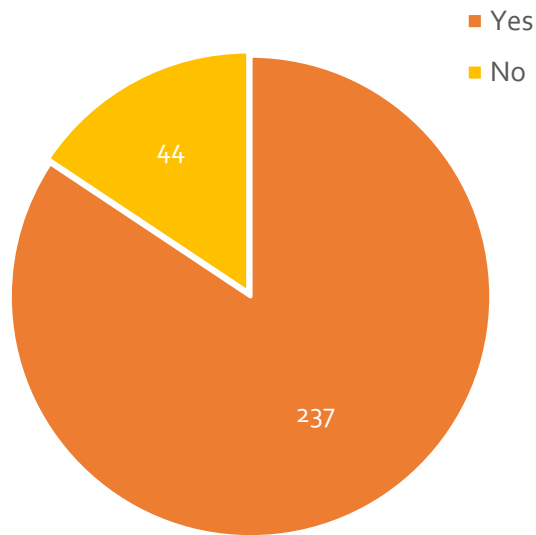
SECTION CONTENTS

- » Community Engagement Overview
- » Plan Review
- » System Gaps
- » Equity

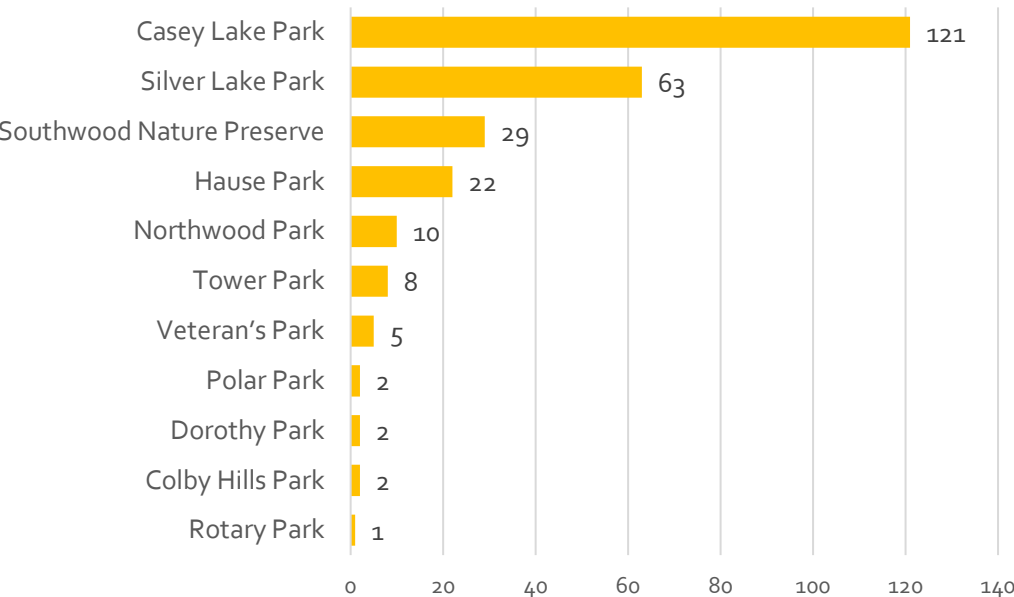
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

During the summer of 2023, City staff and Park and Recreation Commission members reached out to community members at City-sponsored events to discuss this plan and encourage participation in a city-wide park survey. The survey was available online or as a paper form from June through September. A total of 286 surveys were completed. The following summarizes input collected from the city-side survey.

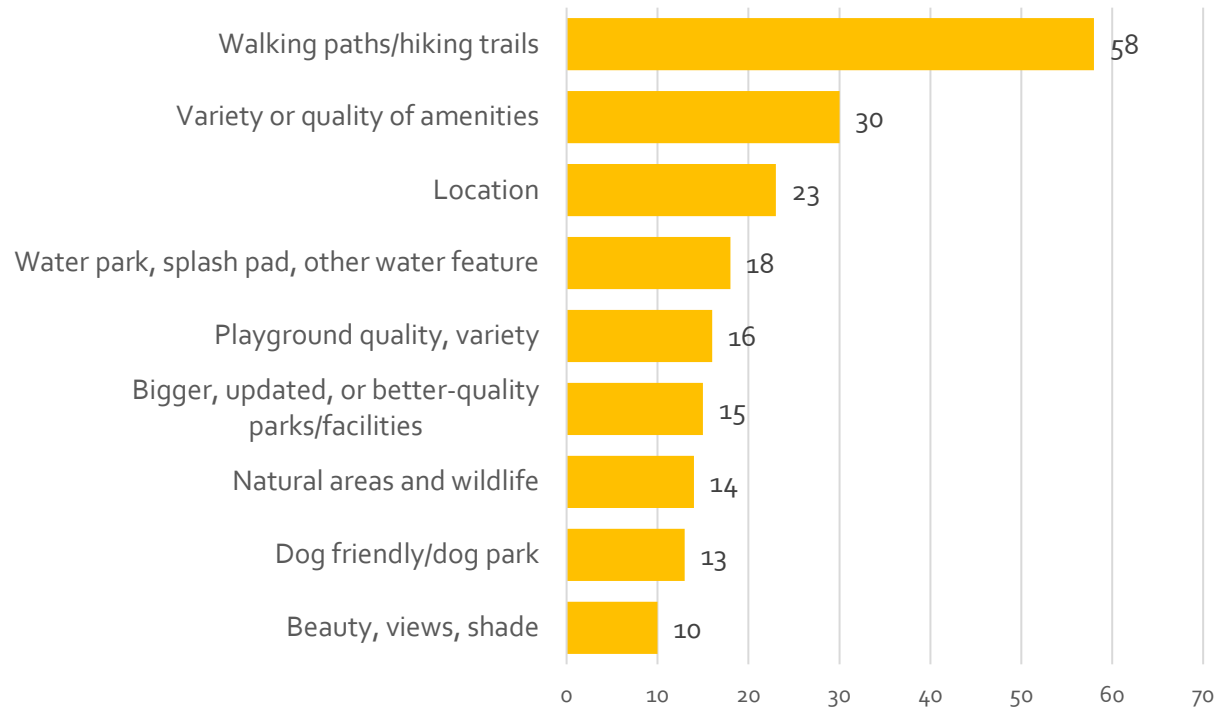
Are you a resident of North St. Paul?



What is your favorite North St. Paul Park?



Why do you visit parks outside of North St. Paul?

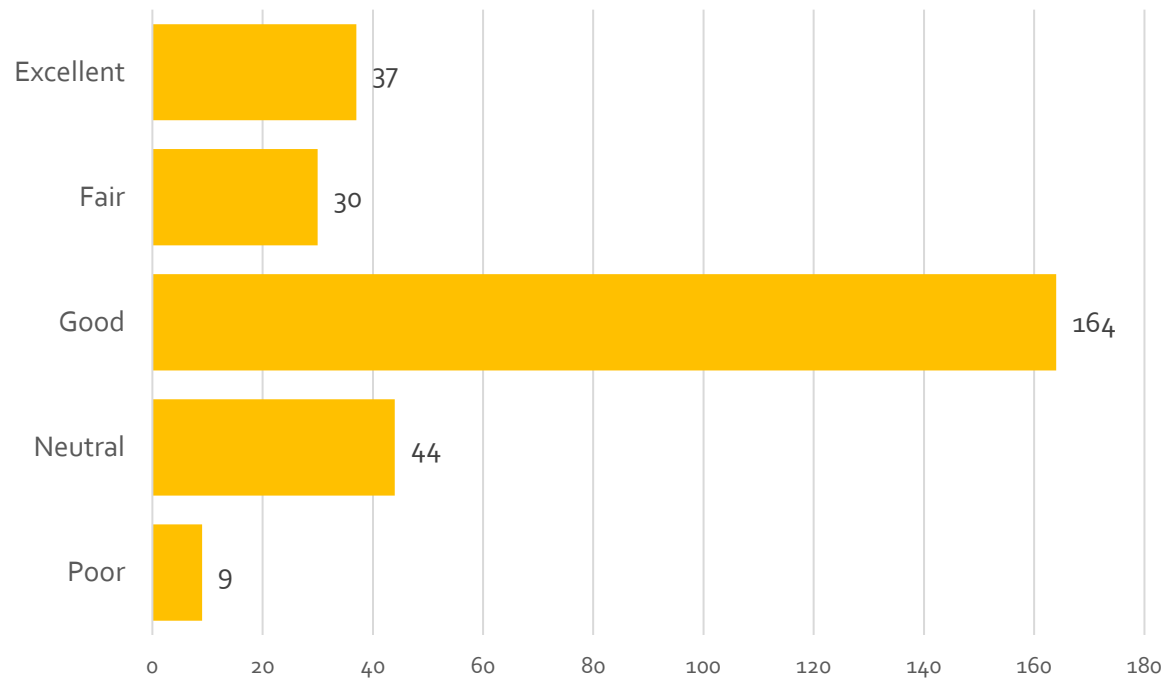


29%

OF RESPONDENTS LEAVE
NORTH ST. PAUL FOR
WALKING PATHS AND
HIKING TRAILS

“Parks are a core backbone to a community. We need to stay focused on park improvement and update existing part with more modern equipment outside of swings and slides.”

How would you rate the physical condition of the parks in North St. Paul?



"We visit North St. Paul parks often but wish they had more amenities."

58%

OF RESPONDENTS
CONSIDER NORTH ST.
PAUL PARKS TO BE IN
GOOD CONDITION

3%

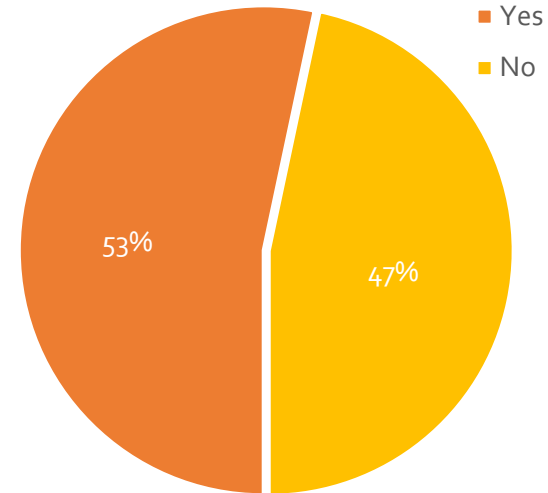
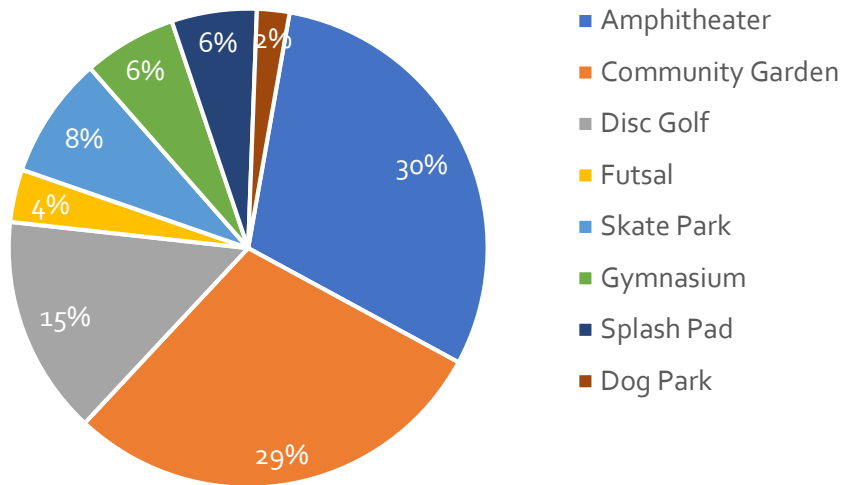
OF RESPONDENTS
CONSIDER NORTH ST.
PAUL PARKS TO BE IN
POOR CONDITION

What facilities do you use in North St. Paul?



What park facility would you most want in North St. Paul?

Would you support an increase in the tax levy for park and recreational i



As the city creates its park and open space master plan, what park facilities should the city prioritize?

1	Parks and trails most in need of maintenance
2	Neighborhood parks and trails
3	Parks and trails evenly throughout the city
4	The most heavily used parks and trails
5	Parks and trails in the downtown
6	Under-used parks and trails

“Overall, excellent maintenance yet lacking in comprehensive overview of the park system as a whole.”

SYSTEM GAPS

Level of Service

For many years, the accepted National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) practice was to adopt a uniform national standard expressed in total parkland acreage per 1,000 of the population. This methodology has been questioned because cities and agencies are as diverse as the communities they serve. Cities with high densities found the required amount of acreage needed over time to achieve the recommended standard was exceptionally challenging due to high land values and low availability. In response, NRPA established an annual agency performance review which provides metrics based on a survey of park and recreation agencies nationwide. The 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review presents data from more than 1,000 unique park and recreation agencies across the United States as reported between 2020 and 2022.

Table 13 reports the prevalence of various types of outdoor park facilities based on agency responses. While the NRPA report details data for jurisdiction of sizes, this table focuses only on the overall agency report and those with populations less than 20,000. As indicated in Table 13, NSP has a greater focus on baseball, basketball, and pickleball for its population compared to peer communities. Areas of potential deficiency include community gardens, dog parks, soccer fields, skate parks, swimming pools, and tennis courts. Notably, each of these facilities were noted in the community survey as reasons to visit parks outside of North

Table 12: Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities – Population per Facility

Type of Outdoor Facilities	Median No. of Residents per Facility			
	Percent of Agencies	All Agencies	Agencies w/ Population Less than 20,000	North St. Paul (Pop. 12,800)
Basketball	86	7,404	3,729	4,267
Baseball (adult)	55	20,228	7,627	12,800
Baseball (youth)	79	6,863	3,114	2,560
Community garden	52	31,395	8,178	0
Dog parks	68	43,532	11,100	0
Ice rink	18	17,741	8,045	6,400
Pickleball	31	13,922	3,252	4,267
Playgrounds	95	3,759	2,014	1,280
Soccer (youth)	50	7,228	3,600	0
Softball (youth)	62	11,384	5,079	2,560
Skate park	41	53,144	10,726	0
Swimming pool	51	38,635	9,745	0
Tennis courts	76	5,860	2,805	0
Volleyball	49	17,475	5,093	1,280

Source: 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review, National Recreation and Park Association

St. Paul or amenities that residents desire to have available in the city.

Other key findings from the NPRA 2023 Agency Performance Review, as well as the Trust for Public Land's Park Score, indicate that North St. Paul is providing greater value for residents than average for the following:

» **Number of Parks.**

There is typically one park per every 2,287 residents (average of all agencies). In cities with populations of less than 20,000 the median is one park per 1,225 residents. In NSP, there is one park per 753 residents.

» **Acres of Parkland.**

The typical park and recreation agency offers 10.8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents in its jurisdiction; NSP has 11.4 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

» **Distance to Parks.**

A distance of 1/4 to 1/2 mile is seen as representative distance of mobility or how far most individuals can walk comfortably depending on age, health, and other factors. According to the Trust for Public Land's Park Score, 100% of NSP residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park.



Programming, Staffing, and Operations Budget

As of 2023, North St. Paul does not formally offer any recreational programming, however, City staff does assist in coordinating with other local organizations to provide recreational activities in its parks throughout the year. All other recreational programming is provided by the school district and local sports groups and leagues. According to NRPA, operations and maintenance are the primary work responsibility of park and recreation professionals. But staff also devote their energies to other areas. On average, an agency's full-time park and recreation staff dedicate their time to the following general activities: operations/maintenance, programming, administration, and capital development.

According to the NRPA 2023 Agency Performance Review, the typical park and recreation agency has 8.9 FTEs on staff for every 10,000 residents in the jurisdiction served by that agency. In the 2023 and 2024 budget, NSP allocated 2.0 FTE to park and recreation positions and approximately 2.0 seasonal employees.

According to the NRPA 2023 Agency Performance Review, the typical park and recreation agency has annual operating expenses of \$94.77 on a per capita basis. Applying this figure to NSP's population would yield an annual operating budget of approximately \$1.2 million. North St. Paul's 2024 operating and maintenance budgets for parks and recreation is \$538,807. According to the NRPA 2023 Agency Performance Review, the median operating expenditure is \$7,388 per acre of park sites managed by the typical agency. NSP budgets \$3,690 per acre of parkland.

EQUITY

According to the National Park and Recreation Association, when people have just and fair access to parks, health and social wellbeing improve. Communities can also better recover from environmental, social, and economic challenges. As mentioned previously, NPS's population is increasingly more diverse. To stay relevant to the changing needs of the community, it is important to create a park and recreation system that is accessible to the entire community. When developing park design plans and funding construction projects, run an analysis

What is Equity?

Equity and equality are often used interchangeably, but they mean different things. Equality is when everyone receives the equal amount of investment. While that sounds fair, it assumes that all people start from the same place, which isn't true. Equity is about ensuring everyone receives the appropriate investment for where they are. Consider the bike image.



Source: National Park and Recreation Association

to determine how individual residents will be able to benefit from a system that is intended to benefit *all* residents.

PLAN REVIEW

As mentioned previously, this plan incorporates park and recreation-related recommendations of earlier city-approved planning documents. Key park improvements and park recommendations are itemized, below. Note that recommendations that have been implemented since the adoption of the parent plans are not included in the list.

Acronyms:

ADA 2018 ADA Transition Plan
 CP 2040 Comprehensive Plan
 PIP 2022 Park Improvement Plan
 RMP 2022 Redevelopment Master Plan

	Specific Park Improvement	Recommendations per Plan	Plan
	Casey Lake Park	» Extend the park and trail system along the south and west side of Casey Lake. » Redevelopment/replacement of some of the park amenities. » Prepare a master plan.	CP PIP
	Central Park	» Modify and upgrade consistent with changes on Seppala and downtown redevelopment. » Improve the park based on the Seppala conversion project (refer to the Redevelopment Master Plan).	CP RMP
	Colby Hills Park	» Replace playground equipment, fence, and retaining wall. » Develop a new neighborhood park plan. » Consider converting the street between the two park parcels to use as park.	CP PIP
	Country Club Park	» Consider alternatives including maintaining and upgrading the park or selling the land to build a house. » Evaluate and confirm community need prior to implementing new park amenities.	CP PIP
	Dorothy Park	» Maintain and make minor upgrades when the trail is constructed.	CP

	Downtown Park (2475 7 th Avenue)	» Prepare a master plan to meet the needs and desires of the growing population in the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.	PIP
	Downtown Park (2579 7 th Avenue)	» Establish a downtown plaza/urban open space.	RMP
	Specific Park Improvement	Recommendations per Plan	Plan
	Gateway State Trail	» Protect this trail, enhance its appearance by making it more parklike. » Use it effectively to support redevelopment. » Establish trail access improvements at Helen, Margaret, Henry, and Century Avenue	CP RMP
	Hause Park	» Maintain and upgrade to keep the park the neighborhood focal point.	CP
	McKnight Field	» Continue to provide a high level of maintenance and make improvements as appropriate. » Prepare a park master plan. » Replace existing amenities that are in poor condition.	CP PIP
	Northwood Park	» Maintain and upgrade the facilities and parkland on an ongoing basis. » Construct a new shelter building. » Redevelop most park amenities at Northwood and include proper trail connections.	CP PIP
	Polar Park	» Maintain and upgrade to keep the park the neighborhood focal point. » Continue to develop the park based on the 2020 concept plan, with the exception of the trail extending to the southern street.	CP PIP
	Rotary Park	» Maintain and upkeep park. » Install a wayfinding kiosk and interpretive maps to provide directions to the downtown and additional destination points. » Install gateway features.	CP RMP PIP
	Silver Lake	» Maintain and upgrade the park on an on-going basis. » Expand the park and extend the trail on the east shore (a segment of the Lakes Links Trail network) if the area is redeveloped/ re-platted. » Enhance connection between Silver Lake Park, Dorothy Park, and Joy Park. » When the playground on the eastern side is replaced, more unique or challenging pieces could be considered to meet the needs of varying demographics and ages. » The existing restroom building should be evaluated for code compliance to determine if improvements are necessary, or if complete replacement is a better value.	CP PIP
	Southwood Nature Preserve	» Maintain and upkeep park. » Install wayfinding and educational/interpretive maps. » Improve the creek bed by encouraging natural habitat and removal of debris.	CP PIP

	» Consider additional uses. » Prepare a plan to create a link between Cowern Elementary School and Southwood Park. » Improve the site by protecting the creek and natural amenity and construct a trail from Helen Street and the school site to Margaret Street.	
Specific Park Improvement	Recommendations per Plan	Plan
Tower Park	» Maintain and upgrade to keep the park the neighborhood focal point.	CP
Urban Ecology Environmental Learning Center	» Continue to implement the restoration plan. » Consider construction of a shelter/educational building. » Ongoing maintenance and replacement as needed in partnership with RWMWD with new educational / interpretive maps.	CP PIP
Veteran's Park	» Maintain and upkeep park.	CP
West End	» Develop a neighborhood park as residential development occurs in the West End Housing and Redevelopment District. » Establish a passive open space.	CP RMP
Overall Park System Improvements	Recommendations per Plan	
ADA Compliance Plan	» Develop a plan for all parks to comply with the American Disabilities Act and accessible for all.	CP
Park Buildings, Facilities, and Parking Lots	» Perform ADA evaluation as required by the state building code and ADA at the time of future improvements. » Install bicycle racks at city parks.	ADA
Park Equipment and Surfacing (All Parks)	» Upgrade and replace park equipment as necessary.	CP
Wayfinding and Navigation	» Design a strategy that provides better wayfinding and navigation to and from parks and trails.	CP

05

MAINTAINING WHAT WE HAVE, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

SECTION CONTENTS

- » Operations and Maintenance
- » Partnerships, Agreements, and Donations
- » Evolution of a Park Construction Project
- » Park System Funding
- » Park System Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Park Maintenance

The Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance of the City's infrastructure, which includes parks, open spaces, and trails. Our dedicated Public Works staff keep parks and recreation areas clean, safe, and functional. Routine maintenance relative to parks, open spaces, and trails include:

- Athletic field maintenance (mowing, dragging, trash disposal, set chalk lines, etc.).
- Turf management and urban forestry (mowing, planting, and pruning).
- Snow removal (remove snow from sidewalks and trails).
- Trail maintenance and upgrades (reconstruction and patching).
- Playground safety inspections (evaluate for durability of equipment, proper surfacing materials, ADA compliance, and safety).
- Park buildings and facilities maintenance (installation and repair of assets, such as park signs, surveillance equipment, HVAC systems, roof, etc.).
- Park maintenance (install and repair assets, such as playground equipment, picnic tables, shelter structures, etc.).

The Public Works Department aims to operate in a fiscally responsible way that does not exceed the approved maintenance and operations budget; however, doing so can be a challenge without park system expectations firmly established.

Operations and Maintenance Planning

The Public Works Department does not currently have an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) plan. An O&M plan establishes standards for the frequency of maintenance and rules and policies that affect management of specific parks. An O&M plan typically includes the following: maintenance responsibilities, maintenance schedule, inspection schedule, standards (level of maintenance), hiring policies for contractors, budget, and funding sources.



PARTNERSHIPS, AGREEMENTS, AND DONATIONS

As mentioned previously, the City of North St. Paul has partnered with other agencies over the years to purchase parkland and provide recreational facilities and programs. Some of these arrangements have been fairly informal, which can create issues down the line in terms of expectations and reciprocity. Moving forward, the City should enter into defined agreements that are approved by the City Council and the partner agency.

General Agreement Parameters

Shared-use agreements establish a mutually beneficial partnership that serves the community at large. While shared-use agreements have legal standing, it is important that they be written to be understandable and implemented. The following are general guidelines for shared use agreements associated with recreational facilities:

- Site Description. Clearly defines the property limits, including legal descriptions as appropriate.
- Lease Agreement. Clearly define the conditions of the lease arrangement.
- Operations and Maintenance Responsibilities. Establish each party's responsibility related to operation and maintenance.
- Scheduling. Define each party's use of the facilities and the manner in which they are scheduled, including which party or uses have priority status.
- User Fees. Define manner of collection of user fees, if collected.
- Rules. Clearly define the standard operational rules, such as time of operation, reservations, use of facilities, etc.
- Insurance. Define the level of insurance each party must carry; typically, each party carries liability insurance for the site and lists each other as "additional insured."

Donations

The City of North St. Paul accepts donations to its park fund from community members and business owners which help the City preserve and enhance the park system. Community members may also choose to donate trees, park benches, picnic tables, bike racks, and customized brick pavers to memorialize a loved one. All contributions to the North St. Paul Park Fund are tax deductible. All donations, per state statute, must be approved by the City Council. Donations should be accepted by resolution of the City Council with conditions of acceptance clearly identified and memorialized. For example, donations should become the property of the City without any commitment for further expenditure of funds toward its maintenance or repair unless stated and accepted by Council.

EVOLUTION OF A PARK CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Establishing a new park or redeveloping an existing park is a multistep process that can occur over many months and generally involves the following phases: Conceptual Design, Design Development, Construction Documents, Contract Bidding, Construction.

Conceptual Design

The conceptual design, sometimes called a master plan, defines project goals, the park use, identifies potential features, and includes schematic drawings to depict what it will look like when completed. This phase should involve public outreach to understand the park user's needs and desires for the space. During this phase, information from existing plans, documents, and input from the community informs an initial design. The final products of this phase may also document site constraints, initial cost estimate, and a project timeline.

Design Development

The design development phase refines technical details including materials and products, costs, and schedules. Final products of this phase may include a final site plan, product cutsheets, plant and material palettes, and revised cost estimates. As the design process proceeds and focuses on the more technical aspects of the project, the level of community input often decreases.

Construction Documents

The construction documents (CDs) are the technical drawings and specifications that are used to permit and construct the park. CDs are typically developed in stages to ensure that the evolution of the design in this phase remains true to the overall vision for the project. Final products of this phase include a complete set of technical drawings that are detailed enough for any contractor to build the project, written technical specifications for all materials and products, a final cost estimate, and a project construction schedule.

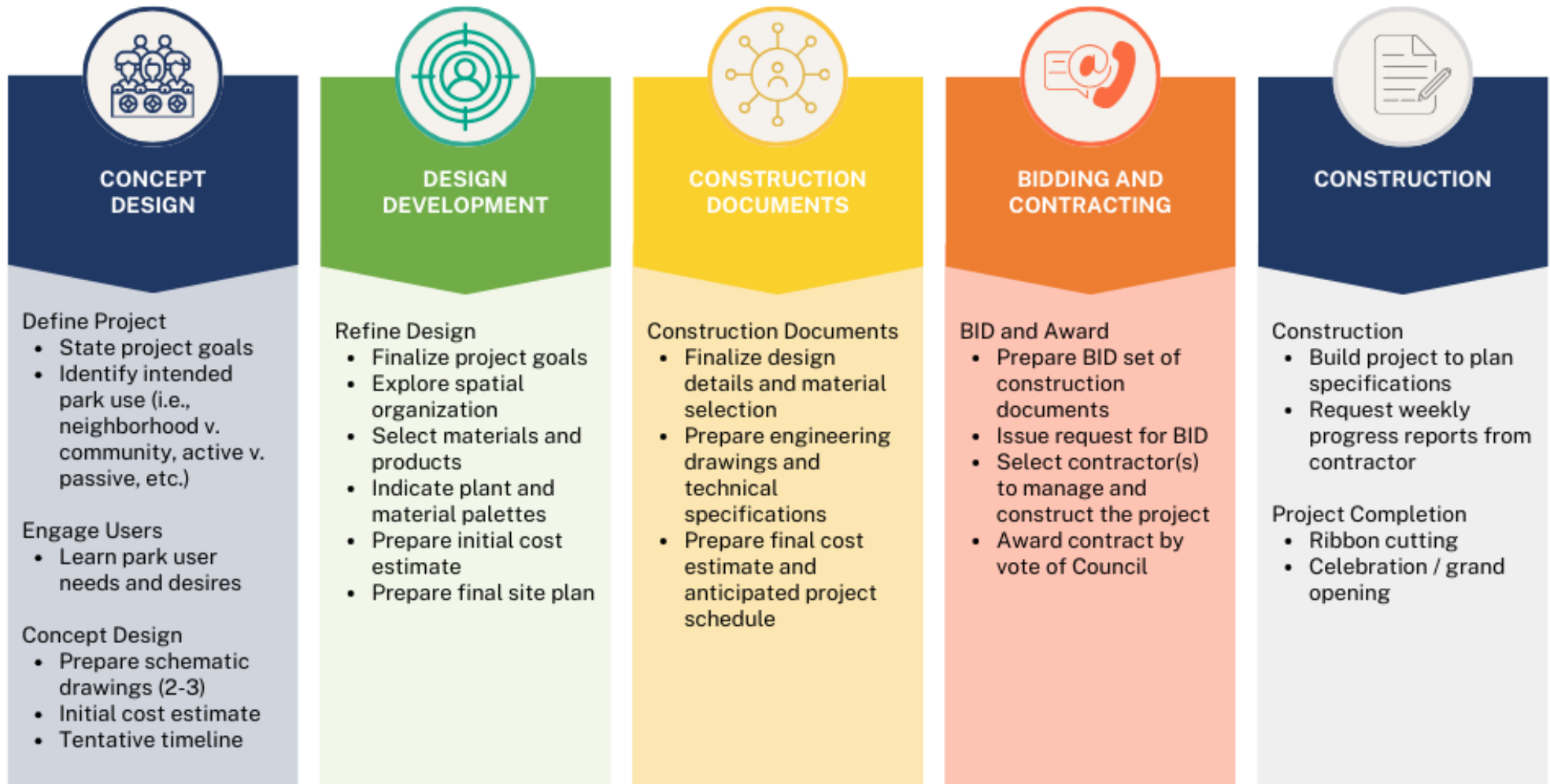
Bidding and Contracting

The bidding process allows the City to select the best contractor(s) for managing and constructing the project. In general, the bidding process includes the issuance of a Request for Bids and a bid set of CDs. In addition to the complete set of CDs, the materials provided to potential bidders may include the project purpose, scope of work, and attachments regarding other requirements of the jurisdiction.

Construction

The construction phase is when the project is built. All construction is based on the requirements specified in the CDs. The construction work is often divided into different phases to help track progress, ensure the project is built to the plan specifications, and resolve any issues that may arise. Project managers are usually responsible for subcontractor approvals, submittals, change orders, and payments. Construction staff oversee daily operations of the project and should submit weekly progress reports to your agency or otherwise meet your agency's documentation requirements.

EVOLUTION OF A PARK CONSTRUCTION PROJECT



PARK SYSTEM FUNDING

The City's budget and capital improvement plan set annual priorities for operational and capital project spending. This plan is intended to help guide the City in making equitable decisions for park improvements. Once a need is identified, funding must be put in place through the annual budget and capital improvement planning process.

North St. Paul's park system is presently supported by three funds: General Fund, Park Fund, and Park Dedication Fund.

General Fund

Operations and routine maintenance, such as mowing grass, repairs, and trash removal, are funded by the General Fund.

Park Fund

The Park Fund is a capital project fund that is used for park improvements, such as new equipment, building remodels, and new infrastructure or amenities. The City generates revenue for the Park Fund through facility rentals, canoe rentals, advertising at McKnight Fields, and by accepting donations. In addition, in 2023 the City Council approved an annual 0.5% levy to contribute to the Park Fund.

Park Dedication Fund

Per MN statute 462,358, the City may collect park dedication fees for new lots created through subdivision of land. The City also collects park dedication fees for larger multifamily development projects where a development agreement is in place. Per statute, park dedication fees may only be used for the acquisition and development, or improvement of parks, recreational facilities, playgrounds, trails, wetlands, or open space based on an approved park system plan. These funds cannot be used for ongoing maintenance or operation.

Grants

Grants can also help fund park facilities. Below are some examples of grants that may be available to fund park improvements. Note that most grants will not cover the entire cost of a project; many grants have a matching requirement, which is often met by general funds.

- The Minnesota DNR provides funding for parks and trails and technical assistance to develop park or for trail amenities such as shelters, restrooms, lighting, and seating.
- Minnesota DOT offers funding for trail or bikeway improvement projects which may utilize a portion of federal dollars.
- The Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the Minnesota Constitution increases the state sales tax by three-eighths of one percent to fund clean water, outdoor heritage, arts and cultural heritage, and parks and trails. The program began in 2009 and continues until 2034.
- The Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund provides funding for activities that protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources for the benefit of current citizens and future generations.

VISION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS

The Parks and Recreation Commission's vision is to adequately provide for our diverse and growing population and equitably and thoughtfully apply City resources to provide quality park access for all residents wishing to utilize the park system.

When deciding how resources are allocated, tough decisions may be necessary. This plan is intended to provide a basic roadmap for decision makers but provides flexibility to pivot when other priorities or opportunities arise.

Goals

- Create a park and open space system that is accessible to and serves all North St. Paul residents.
- Preserve and invest in existing recreational spaces, parks, and lakes.
- Increase the variety and improve the quality of amenities and ensure amenities are well distributed across the overall park system.
- Ensure all park projects, including maintenance and new development, are fiscally sustainable.

Objectives

- Before investing in new improvements, answer the following key questions:
 - Who has access to the park?
 - Who are the primary or intended users of the park?
 - Are the proposed uses/amenities for the park desired by the primary users?
 - Is adequate funding available to build the improvement without eliminating key features (i.e. ADA requirements)?



Action Items

- Perform ADA evaluations for park improvements as required by the state building code and ADA.
- Prepare an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) plan to provide the Public Works department a guide for maintenance responsibilities, maintenance schedule, inspection schedule, standards (level of maintenance), hiring policies for contractors, budget, and funding sources.
- Revisit this document each annually to track progress, reaffirm priorities, and/or modify goals/priorities (if necessary).
 - Determine what progress has been made from prior years and what areas of focus are required for future projects. Specifically revisit Chapter 4: Needs Analysis to complete this analysis.
 - Prioritize plans, projects, and improvements based on the step above. This prioritization should be used to aid in the development of the budget and Capital Improvement Plan.
- When redeveloping or constructing new parks, following the evolution of a construction project process as indicated on pages 60-61.
 - Determine construction delivery method: in-house, design-build, or design-bid-build.
 - Secure funding sources for capital and operational costs before going out for bid.

