



Central Hill Community Park

Duluth, MN

Master Park Plan

November 4, 2014

Prepared by:

Frizzell Winter Associates

John Winter - Registered Landscape Architect

Erica Frizzell - Landscape Designer



FRIZZELL WINTER ASSOCIATES
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Acknowledgements

The City of Duluth would like to thank all of those who have supported the planning effort for Central Hill Community Park's Master Park Plan. This concept plan is the first step towards developing detailed construction drawings and priorities for developing an outstanding Master Park Plan. This effort will provide recreation opportunities for today's user and into the future.

Without the commitment of the community and its leaders, this plan would not be possible. We wish to publicly thank the dedicated citizens that participated in this planning effort, donating their time and energy. Through their leadership and ideas, this plan has been realized.

In addition, we would like to thank the City of Duluth City Council, staff and residents of Central Hillside community for their support in making this Master Park Plan possible.

Mayor, Don Ness

City Council Members

Zack Filipovich
Sharla Gardner
Howie Hanson
Jennifer Julsrud
Linda Krug
Emily Larson
Barb Russ
Joel Sipress

City Staff

Kathleen Bergen, Manager of Parks and Recreation
Dale Sellner, Manager of Operations
Bob Dunsmore, Operations Specialist

Central Hillside Community

Those people in the community that attended several public meetings to discuss the park. At the August 28, 2014 meeting, four alternative concepts were presented at the Central Hillside Community Center.

This Master Park Plan will provide the future direction for Central Hill Community Park and provide the information needed to apply for grants.

Background

The City of Duluth, working alongside the community of Central Hillside, saw a strong need to better organize and develop a design for Central Hill Community Park. The Inner City of Duluth uses this park that is centrally located in the old town area. It is agreed that there needs to be a redesign and improvements made to the park. The park plays a major role in the community by providing recreational opportunities within a walking distance for many residences and pulls the community together when a special event is held in the park. The community has a strong interest in the park and supports the need for improvements. An improved park will help draw new people in the community to the park. Our objective was to design a park that would stand out in the community, be safe and become an important part of the overall Duluth park system.

Process

The process undertaken to develop this plan required a combination of recreational design analysis and extensive public and staff involvement. At least two public meetings were held to receive community involvement and to develop the needs of the park.

Central Hill Community Park Pros & Cons

Pros:

Central Hill Community Park is located in the center of the old Duluth community area. It has a great deal of history in the community. The property was set aside for recreation and for special events that bring the community together. It would be impossible today to have such an important green space in the center of the old town of Duluth if this area had not been designated as park space so many years ago. The importance today is this area is being redeveloped with new community improvements. Keeping the old part of the city alive is so important to the overall city and quality of life for those residents in the inner city community of Duluth.

Cons:

As time has passed, the park facilities have gotten old and run down. The importance of the park has been overlooked until now. It is now becoming apparent that redevelopment of inner city areas is becoming more important to keep major cities alive. It will cost a substantial amount of money to redevelop the park and make it once again an important part of the community. A park that provides high quality recreational facilities helps attract users to the park. By improving parks, communities develop ways to save money on law enforcement issues, they create a safer place to live and the inner city becomes a more desirable place to redevelop and live as a community.

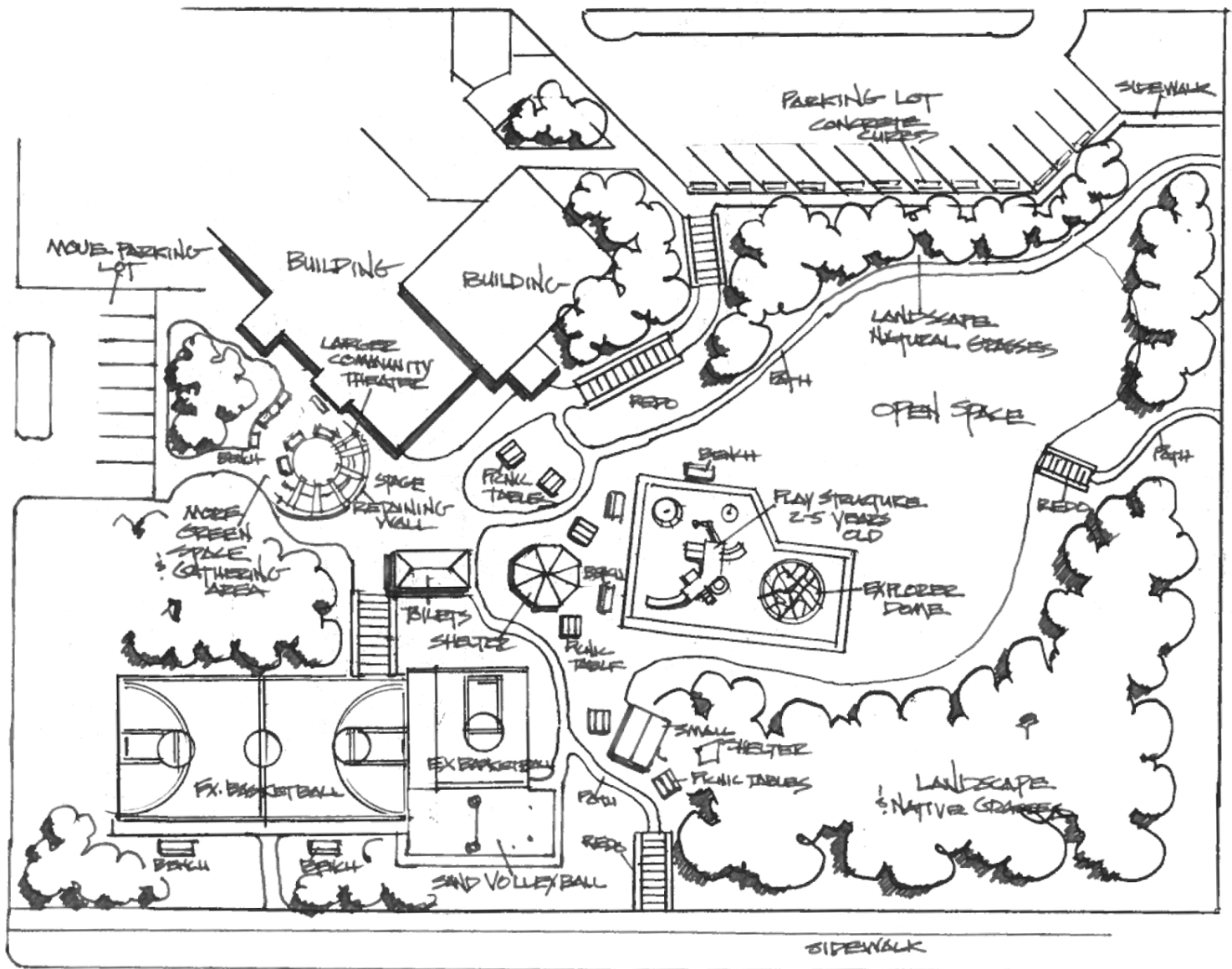
Four Concept Plans

City of Duluth park staff had held previous meetings with the community to find out what community members would like in a new park design. Frizzell Winter Associates reviewed those community comments and developed four concept plans that were reviewed at the August 28, 2014 meeting at Central Hillside Community Center with the public and park staff. The four concept plans designed are as follows:

Concept Design #2

What's different compared to Concept Design #1?

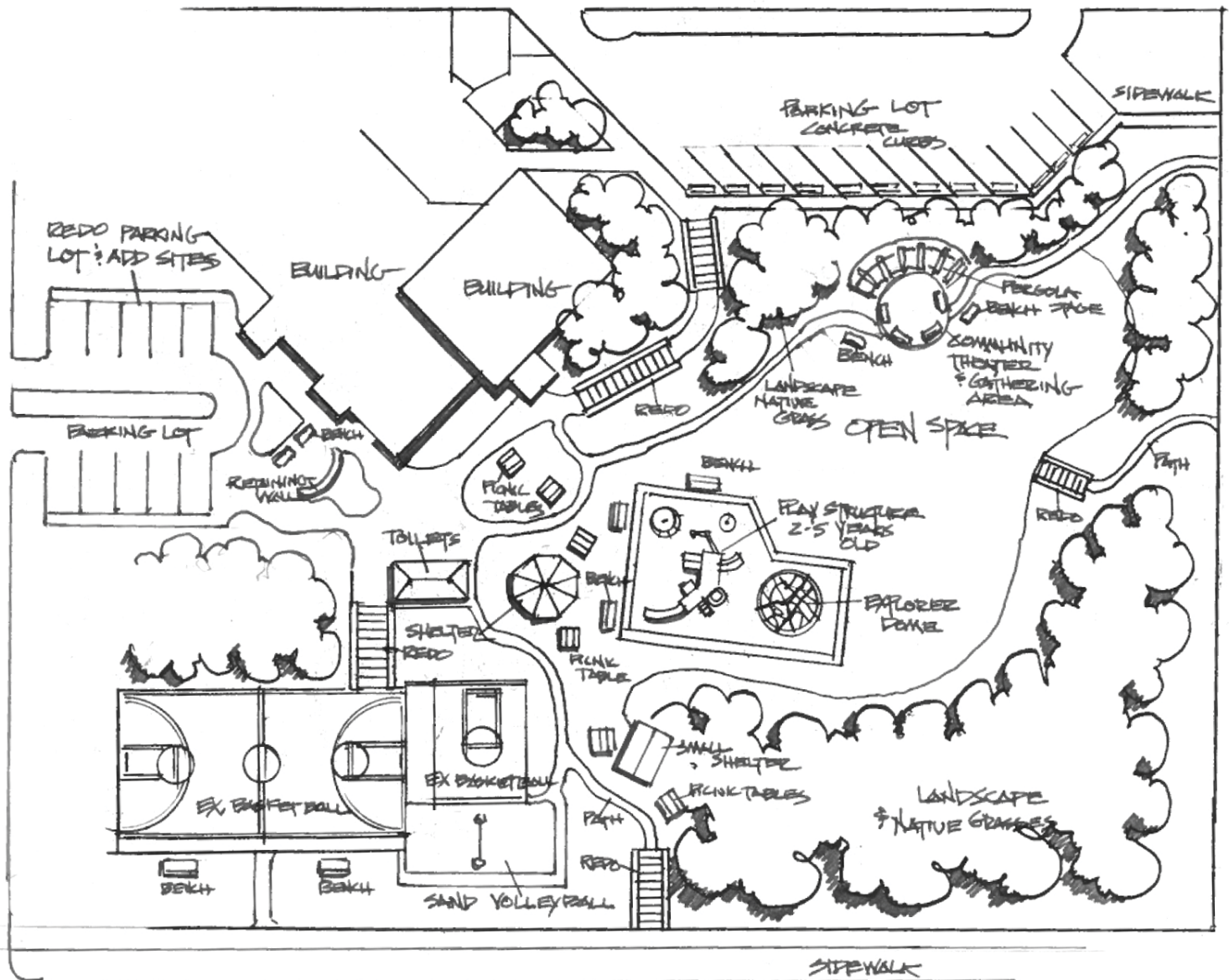
- Enlarged the theater area and redesigned the parking lot off of Lake Ave. – made more green space.
- No community garden. Utilized the space for a small shelter for picnicking with some benches.
- Added a sand volleyball court by the existing basketball court.



Concept Design #3

What's different compared to Concept Designs #1 and #2?

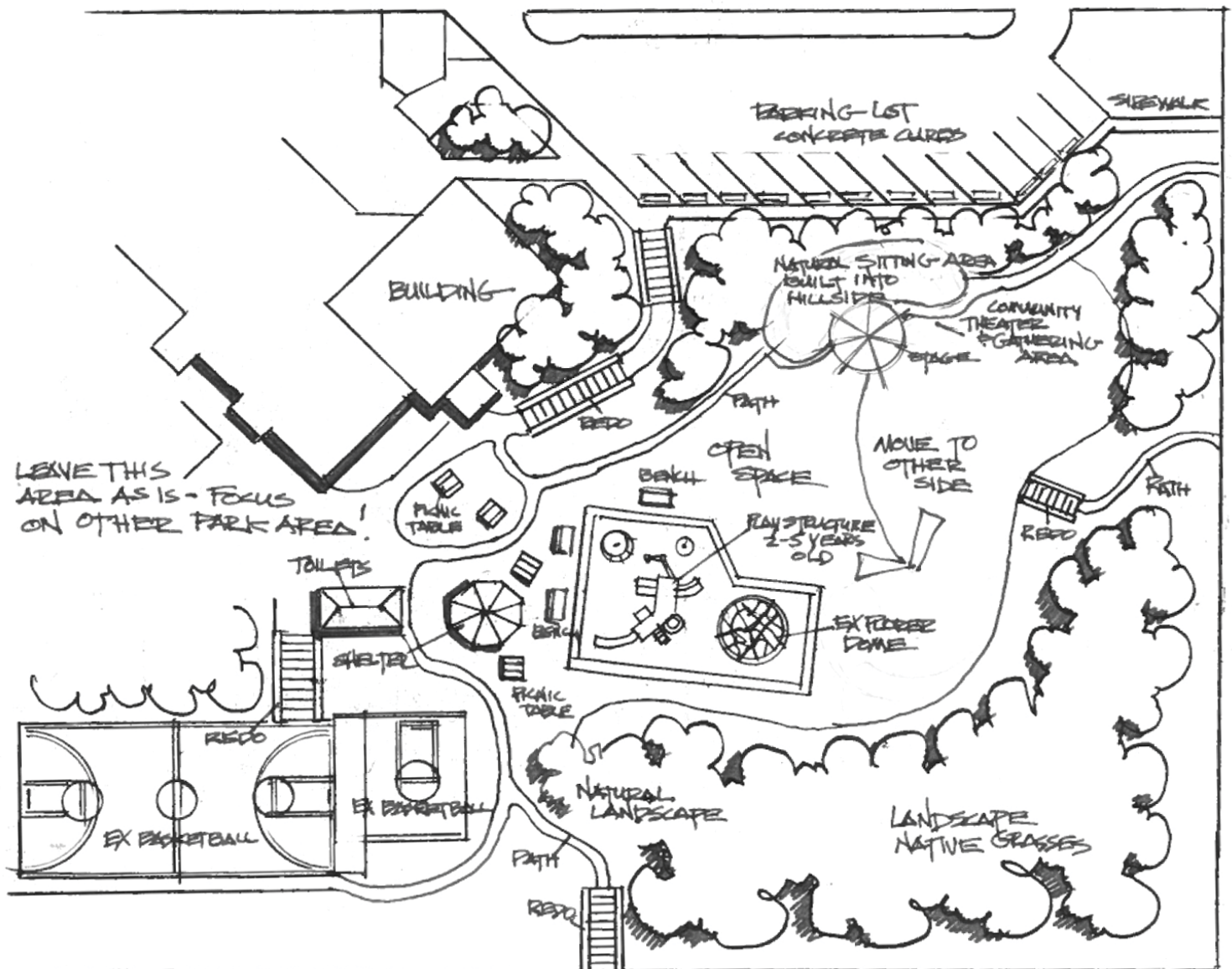
- Redesigned the parking lot off of Lake Ave. by the building that is at the main level to the main part of the park to provide more parking for the elderly and handicap accessibility. This will give easier access to the park for all people, especially parents with young children.
- Moved the community theater and gathering area into the park.
- Stage for community theater built into the hillside.



Concept Design #4

What's different compared to Concept Designs #1, #2 and #3?

- Basically only focused on improving the main park area.
- Keep the community theater and gathering area at the same location but have the sitting area built into the hillside.
- Other alternative would be to move the stage and theater to other side of open space.



Public Comments and Recommendations from August 28, 2014 Meeting

- The public basically received all concept plans very well.
- They liked the idea of improving the upper parking lot by adding curbing and removing old timbers and adding a sidewalk.
- They liked having a restroom building located in the center of the park with the main shelter and play area close by.
- They felt very strongly that a new play structure should be added and a new open shelter.
- They agreed that the old lower play structure be removed and a community garden and sculpture area replace it.
- They are very happy to have the park regraded and the old bridge removed.
- The new grading should open the park up, making more flat areas for open space and recreational use. By regrading the park it will become more ADA accessible.
- They felt that the idea of a stage and small theater area for musicals or special events was a great idea and that it should be located in the main park area.
- They agreed that a better trail system is needed that is organized and ADA accessible if possible and crisscrosses the park using existing circulation patterns.
- They want the park to have quality facilities, open and well landscaped. They agreed that difficult areas and hillsides should be planted with native grasses and not mowed to reduce maintenance costs.
- A nice park with active community participation will reduce law enforcement and gang type activities. Quality and community support is necessary for this park to be successful and to meet the community's recreational needs. A nice park that is well supported and watched over by community action groups will curb law enforcement issues and bring more quality redevelopment into the area that will help to strengthen the inner city.
- The community would like to see the park have lighting. The cost for lighting is expensive and depends on the type of light that is selected.
- All sidewalks and staircases need to be redone. When possible, try to remove the staircases when regrading the park.
- The park needs new benches and picnic tables.
- They like the idea of leaving the existing basketball courts alone and providing benches.
- The parking lot off of Lake Ave. can be redesigned to provide more parking and to make snow plowing easier.

Public Comments and Recommendations from August 28, 2014 Meeting

Continued

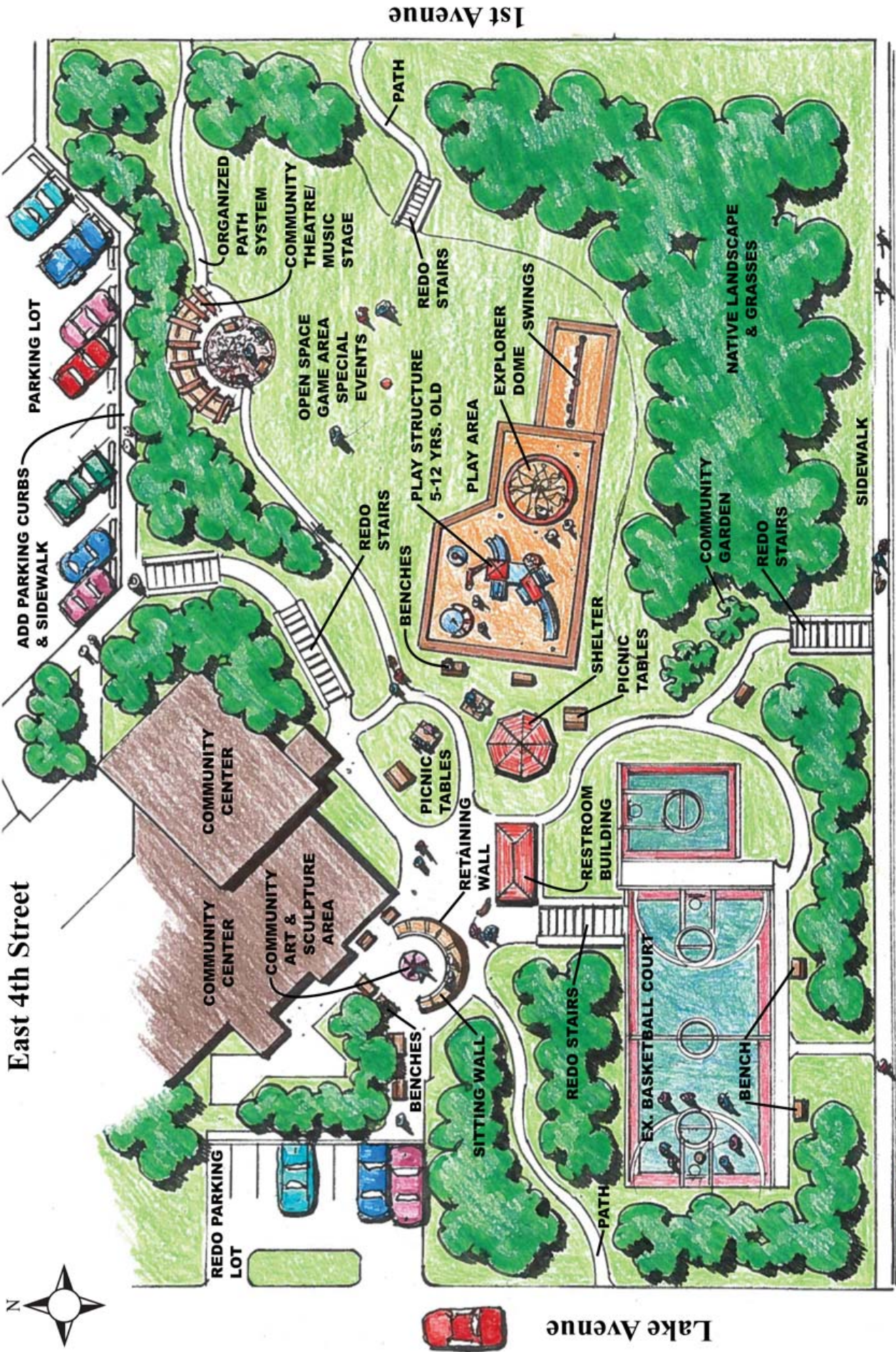
- The public area off of the parking area can be redesigned for better green space, sitting and a public sculpture and art area. This area could also be more of an entrance to the main park area providing park information and interpretation of the history of the park, community and City of Duluth.

The community realizes that budgets are limited and that priorities must be determined. They state the follow priorities if budgets are available:

- First, a new play structure.
- Second, an open air shelter.
- Third, a stage and special events area.

There was a brief discussion on how the community would need to support the park and staff in future funding needs. They are very interested in helping out by starting up action groups that could go after grants and local funding to achieve the park goals.

Final Master Park Plan - Central Hill Community Park



East 3rd Street

Possible Actions for Central Hill Community Park- First Phase and Goals

Top Three Priorities: Budget is limited so these are the top three high priority items:

- Play Structure Area First Phase
- Open Air Shelter
- Community Theater and Special Event Site

Please note that the major grading effort for the park must be done before any improvements can be made. This effort would be done by the existing city staff and equipment. There will also be some dollars spent for landscaping and grading.

Estimated Cost of Landscaping & Grading = \$50,000

Future costs as stated in all cases are estimates to help in determining priorities and budget needs. It is unknown what the major grading effort and landscaping will cost. If the top three priorities, along with the landscaping and grading, were the city's focus for the next few years a budget of approximately \$200,000 might be able to achieve this goal. It is important to remember these figures are rough estimates that require detailed construction documents that go out to bid.

Play Structure Area First Phase:

The present play structure is old and doesn't meet many of the State and Federal certification requirements. It is badly located where people seldom use it and is not received well because there are no benches for parents to sit on, a shelter or restrooms nearby. It is hidden from the rest of the park and is not an exciting play structure to attract families with children. It is located where families with children are concerned for their safety. Remove the existing play structure and add a new Explorer Dome and swing sets next year at the new location in the center of park (see master park design on page 9 for location). The follow design by Kompan, Inc. was completed to show a possible new play structure. First effort would be to complete the Explorer Dome and swing sets.

Estimated Cost = \$75,000

See the play structure graphic example on the following page.



Possible Actions for Central Hill Community Park- First Phase and Goals

Continued

Open Air Shelter:

The park needs a fairly large shelter as a center for family picnics and special events. The shelter location is close to the future restroom building and play area. Picnic tables and benches would be needed to be part of this picnic area and play area. The park staff is considering a 24'-30' Charleston Shelter, hexagon design that is an all metal powder coated structure that is high quality and maintenance free by Classic Recreation Systems, Inc.

Estimated Cost = \$35,000



Charleston Model - Classic Recreation Systems, Inc.

Possible Actions for Central Hill Community Park- First Phase and Goals

Continued

Community Theater and Special Event Site:

The community really liked the idea of a small raised stage for musicals, theater, arts, weddings and special events. The stage would be rather small and have a pergola on one side to create a back drop. This will require more detailed design. An example of this type of structure is like the one at Beltrami County Courthouse and is heavily used by the community. The stage and sitting area has brick work and the pergola is a metal powder coated structure that can be manufactured by Classic Recreation Systems, Inc.

Estimated Cost = \$40,000



Project Example of Pergola and Stage at Beltrami County Courthouse

Other Actions to be Taken to Complete the Master Park Plan

The following actions were identified in the design that would be nice to complete but will take a strong effort by the community to support staff, fundraise from local businesses and apply for grants to raise money to achieve these goals. The following have not been prioritized and can be achieved in many different phases.

Complete Play Area:

The community would like to see a more rounded play area for young children and an age 5-12 play structure. The design by Kompan, Inc. shows additional play items that could be added to the original play structure.

Estimated Cost = \$35,000

New Restroom Building:

A new park restroom building is needed in the center of the park to eliminate people trying to use the Community Center restrooms. This restroom building could be a vault type building but most likely would be connected to the main city sewer system and be a flush system. The building will need to be designed for sustainability and vandalism and watched carefully by the community and park staff/law enforcement to assure that it is used appropriately and respected by park users. The building needs to be open to the public seven days a week or it does not serve its purpose.

Estimated Cost = \$100,000

New Benches and Picnic Tables:

The park plan shows many new benches and picnic tables throughout the park to be located in the picnic area, theater/stage area, along walkways and next to the play area.

Estimated Cost = \$15,000

New Parking Lot Off of Lake Avenue:

The present parking lot basically only services staff at the Community Center when it could be designed for more parking that better serves the public. It is the one parking lot where handicap persons could park and enter into the park on level ground and not have to take difficult staircases to get to the main park area. The proposed parking lot design is simpler which makes snow plowing more manageable and vehicles will have easier access into and out of the parking lot. It also opens the area up for the park as a main entrance and possible arts and sculpture area.

Estimated Cost = \$30,000

Other Actions to be Taken to Complete the Master Park Plan

Continued

Public Art/Sculpture/Information Area:

As mentioned earlier, this area could be one of the main entrances into the main park area. It needs to be redesigned to provide seating areas and small gathering places to view community art/sculptures and to just sit and relax. The site could have park and city information boards and interpretive information related to the history of the park and City of Duluth.

Estimated Cost = \$30,000

Redo Most Sidewalks and Staircases:

Most of the sidewalks throughout the park are in bad shape and need to be replaced. The plan has also identified a new circulation system within the park. The existing staircases have deteriorated to a point where they are dangerous for the elderly and mothers with young children.

Estimated Cost = \$30,000

Park Lighting:

During the August 28, 2014 meeting, the public felt that the park really needs to be well lit at night to help eliminate law enforcement issues and gang activity. There are many types of lighting that can be installed and needs to be carefully planned out because of its high cost. At this point, we are identifying the following cost for future budgeting needs.

Estimated Cost = \$30,000

**This master park plan has identified areas of improvement
in the park totaling approximately \$470,000.**

Strategic Park Improvement Efforts

Central Hill Community Park has strong community support but will need a strong effort from different special interest groups and individuals. The community will need to go after donations from local businesses and apply for grants for future funding to implement the parks improvements identified in this master park plan. It is recommended that the community works closely with the park staff to develop a strategic fundraising committee that is knowledgeable in grant writing and fund raising to focus on federal inner city community redevelopment grants. Examples would be HUD and major Duluth companies who care about the quality of Duluth's inner city and park system. It will be important that this strategic fundraising committee meets with local politicians and legislators to promote the park. They need the support of local businesses and foundations. They should use every opportunity to use the news media to keep the community fired up and informed about the park and its activities.

Grant and Local Fund Raising Opportunities

This community is in an excellent position with the city to obtain grants and local funding for the park. Improving urban parks helps revitalize communities in a variety of ways. It increases economic development opportunities, increases daily physical activity, reconnects children with creative play, reduces crime and gang activity which leads to a safer and healthier community. This area of town has had redevelopment housing efforts that attract low income, younger families in need of a quality park. This can help to assure that at-risk youth have an opportunity to succeed. A good contact would be to work with Duluth's Economic Development Authority.

Funding Requests To Investigate

Local Businesses and Industries to Request Funding From:

- Banks – Duluth is a regional banking center
- Food Processing Companies
- Woolen Mills
- Lumber Industry
- Cold Storage Plants
- Fisheries
- Grain Elevators - Industry
- Oil Refineries
- Hospital Industry
- Retail – Walmart, Target
- Hotel and Entertainment
- Shipping and Railroad

Funding Requests To Investigate

Continued

Grants Opportunities:

- The Foundation Center
- George W. Nielson Foundation
- Blandin Foundation
- Northwest Minnesota Foundation
- McKnight Foundation
- Minnesota Council on Foundations
- Duluth-Superior Area Community Foundation
- Supervalu Foundation
- Bush Foundation
- Otto Bremer Foundation
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation
- Cargill Foundation

State and Federal:

- Minnesota Department of Education
- Federal Grants Portal
- US Department of Education
- HUD
- HHS – Dept. of Health and Human Services
- Community Improvement and Development

It is very important to continue strong community support for the park and to strengthen this effort and interest of park users and interest groups. The community might want to develop a Central Hillside Park Friends Group that meets regularly to work directly with the city's park staff and the City Parks and Recreation Manager. This group could be a 501c3 that is able to raise money and do different things than the city park staff can do such as; recognition dinners, special event fundraising, and help in future development of interest groups in the park.