

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Trails and Bikeways Master Plan and Parks Fund History

April 2009: Master Plan Consultant RFP

Parks and Recreation requested proposals from interested architectural, engineering, and planning design teams for professional services related to the Study, Development, and Implementation of a Master Plan.

July 2009: Master Plan Consultant Selected

After reviewing all the proposals it was decided to hire Hoinsington Kogler Group to assist in the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. City Council approved the contract in July of 2009.

August-December 2009: Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment

It was decided do a complete evaluation park and recreation system needs assessment. This was done by involving the following: Holding focus group sessions with the community, staff and Parks Commission meetings and work sessions and community open houses. Surveys were mailed to random community members to determine park use, satisfaction, needs, and preferences regarding park financing, park bond referendums, consolidation/improvements, communications, etc. In addition, an on-line questionnaire was posted on the City website to obtain additional feedback.

November 2009 Parks and Recreation begins Mater Plan public meetings

An invitation was extended to the public to share their thoughts and ideas regarding our parks and recreation opportunities in the city. Community participation helped efforts to coordinate plans for parks, trails, recreation facilities, and programs and would help identify priorities and partnership opportunities. Four community open house sessions were held in December for the purpose of receiving community input.

January-March 2010: Master Plan vision is developed

The vision, goals and standards were developed through a workshop including the Park Commission and staff. The City Council then was given an overview of the components of the Master Plan.

April-August 2010: Master Plan Draft presented

Draft Park and Recreation Master Plan: Preliminary Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Parks Commission and staff review, City Council informal review, Public review meetings, Web on-line review

September 2010: Refine Master Plan

Refine the Draft Master Plan based on input from the public at the Community Open House held on Monday, August 23, 2010 and from staff and Parks and Recreation Commission review.

October 2010: Prepare Final Plan

Work continued on the Final Master Plan and Action Plan and would include near term priority actions and project recommendations for park improvements, trail connectivity, recreation buildings, stewardship, park maintenance, funding, partnerships, volunteers and recreation programs.

November -2010-January-2011: Final Parks Master Plan Presented and Passes

The final draft of the Master Plan was presented to the City Council in early November. The plan was posted on the City Parks website for public comments and a community meeting was held in the Washington gym for the purpose of

additional public comment. The Parks Commission reviewed and approved the Master Plan in late November then the City Council unanimously passed the plan in January.

January 2011: Trails and Bikeways Master Plan process begins

Consulting Services Agreement Addendum-Hoisington Koegler Group Inc. will work with City staff, stakeholder groups and City officials to prepare a Draft Trail and Bikeway Plan for the City of Duluth. This work builds on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and creates a City-wide plan for off-road trails and bikeways. A trails advisory group (TAG) was created to help guide preparation of the Trail and Bikeway Plan. Their task was to develop a draft Trail and Bikeway Plan with a comprehensive integrated trail network, along with recommendations for priority actions and funding strategies, including positioning regional trails for Legacy funds.

December 2010 - January 2011: Data Gathering and Evaluation: First the group needed to obtain base conditions data and review/update the existing and planned trails map and look at field evaluation of trail routes, conditions, gaps and destinations

January – February 2011: Trails and Bikeways Master Plan Goals and Preliminary Routes were developed which served as the foundation of the plan.

March-April 2011: Trails and Bikeways Master Plan Framework Plan was completed with TAG members and public input.

April-May 2011: Trails and Bikeways Master Plan Preliminary Review Draft was completed in May and shared with the public at several community meetings. Feedback on the plan was incorporated into the draft.

May – July 2011: Draft Trails and Bikeway Master Plan was completed and posted on the Parks and Recreation web site for feedback along with public open house. We summarized community input and make Plan revisions as needed in preparation of the Final Draft of the Duluth Trail and Bikeway Plan.

September 2010: Stakeholder and City Review: TAG review of the Final Draft and recommendation. Route the Final Draft to the Parks and Recreation and Planning Commissions for review and recommendations. Make any revisions as needed based on Commission and TAG input. Prepare the Final Duluth Trail and Bikeway Plan. **Trails and Bikeways Master Plan Adoption:** Present the Trail and Bikeway Plan to the City Council for adoption at October 24, 2011 Council meeting.

Fall 2011 Parks and Recreation Referendum Facts

The Duluth City Council unanimously approved an Ordinance creating the Parks Fund and authorizes a Special Levy of \$2,600,000 to support the Parks Fund for the voters to decide at a Special Election on November 8, 2011.

November 2011

On November 8, 2011 Duluthians made history by voting “yes” to the establishment of an annual 2.6 million dollar Parks Fund dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of local parks and trails. After years of budget cuts to local parks and trails the “yes” vote boldly stated the passion of Duluth citizens for their coveted green spaces. Simply stated, voters recognized the past funding level for our city parks and trails could not properly maintain and or improve our recreational area.

January 2012

City Staff utilize the Parks Master Plan and Trails Master Plan as the guideline for establishing operational improvements and implementation of the Parks Fund 2012 monies. The Parks Fund will allow the City to raise the level of park maintenance programs so athletic fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, trails and gardens will be improved. The addition of seasonal maintenance staff and supplies will substantially improve the appearance and function of city parks in the first year of the Parks Fund.

March 2012

Maintenance and building projects for 2012 decided:

- Building of a new playground at Lester Park
- Continued development of the Duluth Traverse trail connecting the city from east to west.
- The hiring of summer temporary workers to maintain and improve our city parks and green spaces.
- Resurface the Lakewalk from Canal Park to Leif Erikson Park
- Upgrade the bathrooms at Indian Point Campground.
- Resurface several basketball and tennis courts throughout the city.
- Plant \$30,000 worth of trees throughout the city with the Re-Leaf Duluth program.
- Athletic fields, picnic tables and water fountains will be upgraded.
- Upgrade the electrical system at Indian Point Campground.
- Conduct mini- master plans for Gary, Stowe, Morgan Park, Memorial, Brighton Beach, Lower Chester and Chester Bowl with the purpose of building a better park for the community.
- Continue at Enger Park with an upgrade of the electrical system in the park and construction to begin on the addition of the new gazebo this spring.

