

# Fairmount Park and Lake Superior Zoo Visioning

## *CONCEPTS*



## Fairmount Park / Lake Superior Zoo



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Fairmount Park / Lake Superior Zoo

2014 Google Earth imagery



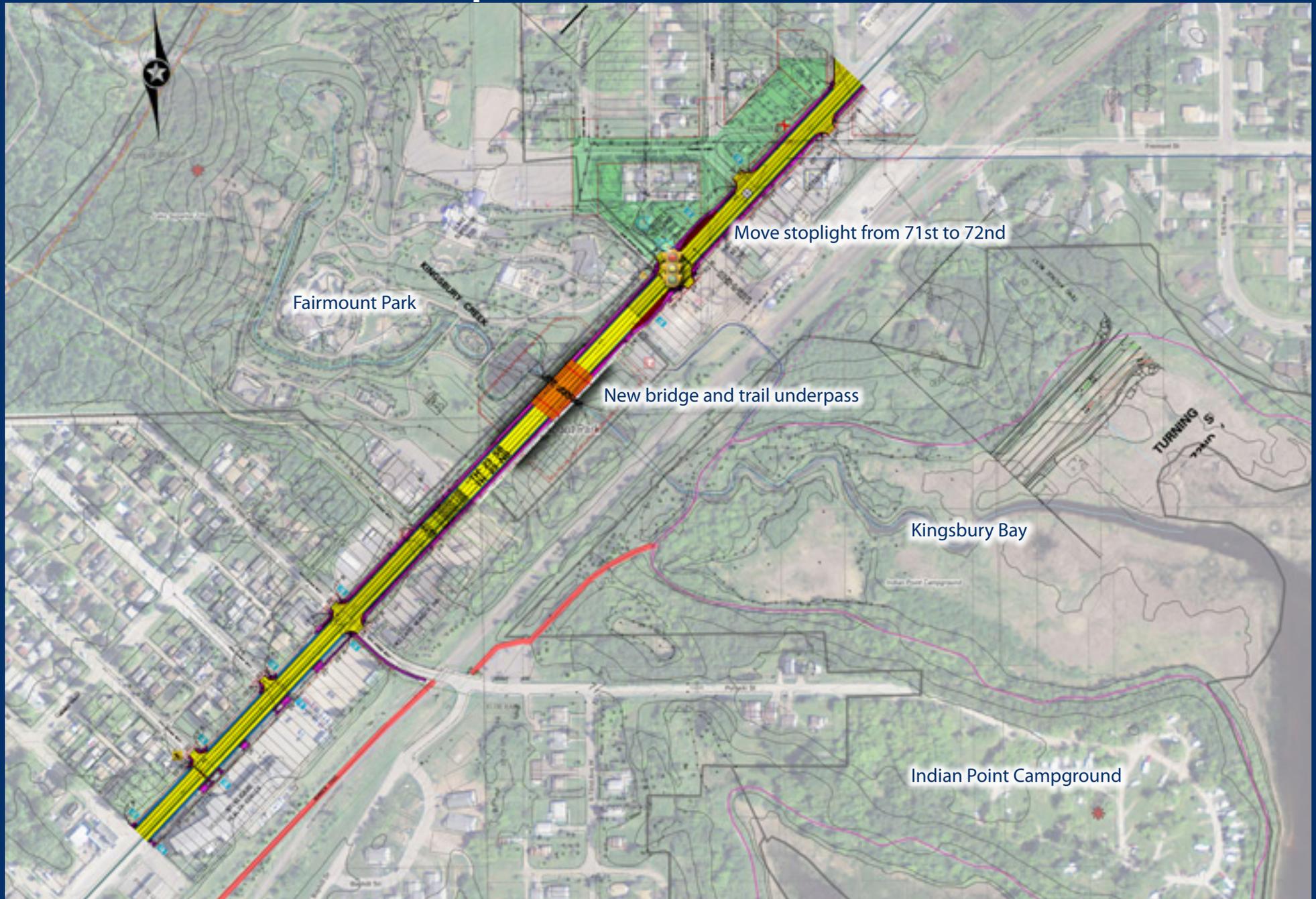
# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Indian Point Campground

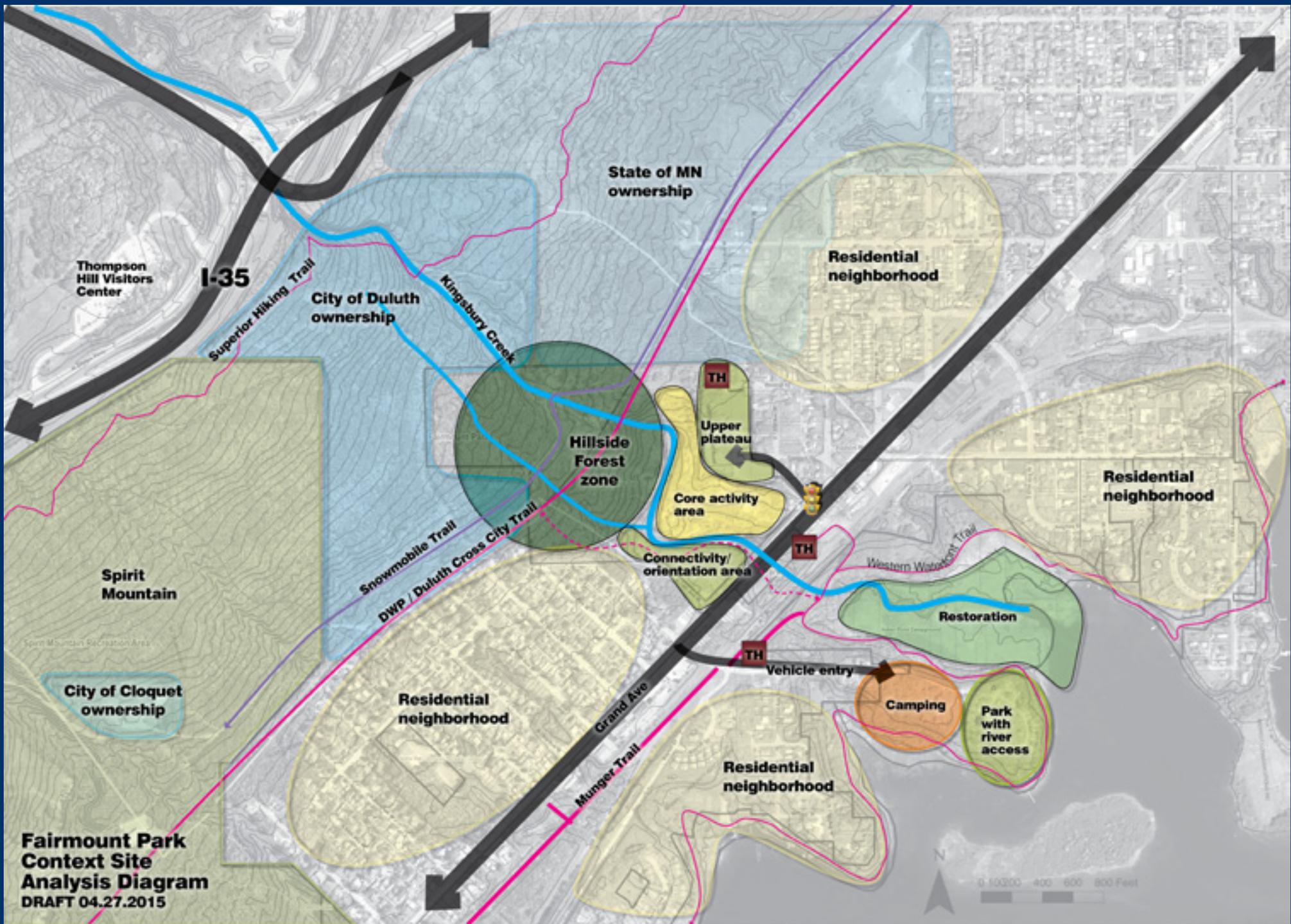
*2014 Google Earth imagery*



## Grand Avenue improvements



# SITE ANALYSIS

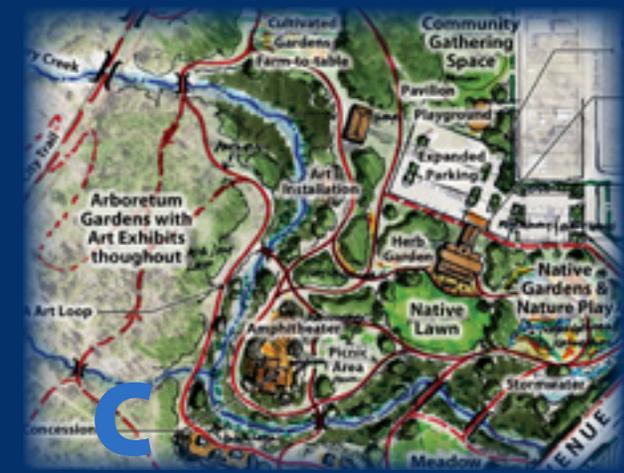


**Fairmount Park  
Context Site  
Analysis Diagram**  
DRAFT 04.27.2015

# SITE ANALYSIS



# Fairmount Park Concepts



## Adventure Park

- **Main building converted to interpretive center with indoor climbing/ play area, education, and small cafe**
- **Outdoor adventure playgrounds and nature play features**
- **Living History farm and petting zoo**
- **Hillside adventure canopy/ ropes course**
- **Animal Care Center integrated with St. Louis River Corridor trailhead**

## Nature Park

- **Main building converted to nature center with early childhood learning**
- **Outdoor nature play and garden house**
- **Extensive native plant and habitat restoration throughout entire park**
- **Animal Care Center integrated with St. Louis River Corridor trailhead**

## Central Park

- **Main Building converted to restaurant/ brew pub on upper level and terrace, with event center on lower level with expanded patio space**
- **Amphitheater and small concessions area at Polar Shores reuse**
- **Native arboretum and small scale nature play**
- **Farm-to-table experience emphasizing direct relationship between restaurant and farm/grower**
- **Integrate art and sculpture with the native arboretum program**

***\*Elements from each concept can be mixed and matched to create a new concept.***

# CONCEPT A - FAIRMOUNT ADVENTURE PARK

DRAFT



| LEGEND                           |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Existing - Superior Hiking Trail | Proposed Equestrian Trail (conceptual) |
| Existing - Munger Trail          | <b>Other Trails</b>                    |
| Other Existing                   | Proposed Mountain Bike Trails (COGG)   |
| Other Proposed                   | Proposed Trail                         |
| On Road Bikeways                 | Multi Purpose Trails                   |
| Existing Bike Routes             | Trail Access                           |
| Proposed Bike Lane               | Proposed City Trail Center             |
| Snowmobile Network               | Existing Trailhead                     |
| Existing                         | Proposed Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing  |
|                                  | Duluth Streams                         |

Concept A  
Fairmount Adventure Park

## Concept A

### *Fairmount Adventure Park*

- **Remodel the existing zoo main building with small café/ coffee shop, reading room/interpretive displays focusing on north shore animals/vegetation/history**
- **Create a new indoor adventure play park (similar to Edinborough Park in Edina, but smaller scale) with a focus on Duluth/ northshore/ northwoods themed play equipment**
- **Create an outdoor nature-themed, water play feature (recirculating creek) near the new indoor play area with surrounding native gardens, and small picnic areas**
- **Renovate Polar Shores to become a premier outdoor adventure play facility with rustic ropes courses, logs and hollows, climbing, slides, etc. – Convert the building into a play fort with rooftop overlook and provide indoor gathering spaces - potential for paid admission**
- **Keep tiger exhibit wall, convert to child climbing facility**
- **Develop a historically themed, Minnesota Farmstead and Petting Zoo on upper plateau portion of the park**
  - » Focus on early settler and Native American experiences
  - » Relocated farm animal building and petting zoo
  - » Create a new historic farmhouse and out buildings, move existing animal barn to site and renovate
  - » Create apple orchard – seasonal events
  - » Convert Australian building into greenhouse
  - » Historical demonstrations
- **Convert a portion of the Animal Care Center into a multi-use trail center/ orientation hub for the St. Louis River Corridor/ Estuary with connections to surrounding trail systems**
- **Reuse any existing animal exhibits as feasible; i.e. convert cougar/bear area into climbing walls, Asian Caravan to picnic pavilions, Lion exhibit into small amphitheater/ performance space**
- **Create forest adventure course in the western part of the park with varied difficulty levels – charge fee for staff-led experiences**
- **Create nature/hiking trails around the park, connect to north part of Fairmount Park and to Indian Point/Western Waterfront Trail**
- **Create a low impact park and camping program at Indian Point**
  - » New Kingsbury Bay Canoe and Kayak Center at gateway to Indian Point with new building, parking and launch points
  - » Central area for camper cabins and group camp sites
  - » Small pavilion and restroom building
  - » Large picnic grounds on eastern end with water views
  - » Destination swimming beach and larger fishing pier

# CONCEPT A - FAIRMOUNT ADVENTURE PARK

## Main Building Area



A renovated main building with a new focus on place, nature, active educational play, smaller interactive animal experiences, etc.



Build a new indoor play feature within the existing footprint of the 2-story portion of the main building



# CONCEPT A - FAIRMOUNT ADVENTURE PARK

## Main Building Area



Create an interactive stream area



Build toddler nature play area at base of main building

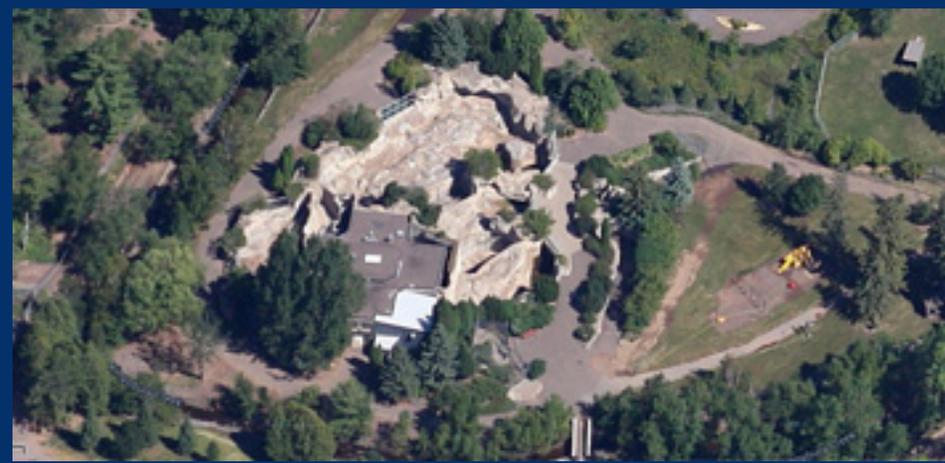
Develop an outdoor play zone with water play, digging, building, etc.



## Polar Shores Reuse



Low ropes course



Convert the building into a play fort with rooftop overlook and provide indoor gathering and restrooms - with surrounding fencing



Hillside slide



Adventure/ Nature Play



Climbing

## Hillside Forest Adventure Course



Forest Adventure Course (Canopy Climb, Zip Lines, Low Ropes, and Tree Fort Overlooks)



Tree Fort Overlooks



Canopy Climb



Low Ropes

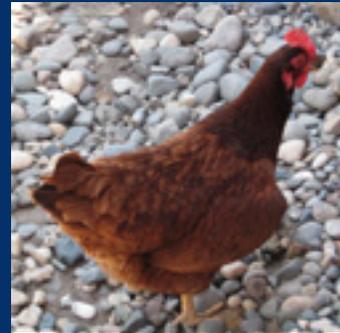


Zip Lines



# CONCEPT A - FAIRMOUNT ADVENTURE PARK

## Historic Farmstead and Domestic Petting Zoo



Living History Farm – relocate existing farm building, orchard, gardens, farmhouse gathering building



Community Event Area (Farmer's Market / Arts and Craft Fair, etc.)



Heirloom gardens

## Kingsbury Creek Restoration Area



Outdoor equipment rental (bikes, blades, snowshoes, kayak, canoes, etc.) out of the main building with trail connections to DWP and Western Waterfront Trail



Boardwalk and overlook in newly restored Kingsbury Creek.



A new satellite canoe/ kayak launch and storage racks at the mouth of Kingsbury Creek



Tow in trails for canoes/ kayaks

## Indian Point Campground



A new canoe/ kayak put-in site at the mouth of Kingsbury Bay with enhanced launch areas



Add camper cabins, and group camp sites at Indian Point - remove all RV spaces. Focus on family and group camping in coordination with the new adventure park, and allow winter camping



Add small playground and small open air shelter building



Convert eastern point to park with fishing pier, sand beach, and open views to the river, yet protecting views of surrounding uses

## *Income Potential:*

- **Indoor play area (paid admission)**
- **Concessions and vending (café in renovated main building)**
- **Rental space – private events, birthday parties, etc. (main building)**
- **Rental space – conferences, meetings (WPA pavilion)**
- **Outdoor Adventure Play Area at Polar Shores (paid admission)**
- **Historically themed Minnesota homestead petting zoo (feed the animals, take classes)**
- **Forest adventure course (paid admission)**
- **Equipment rental – bikes, blades, showshoes, canoes, kayaks (St. Louis River Orientation Center – former animal rescue building)**
- **Camping fees (Indian Point Campground)**

## *Potential Partnerships:*

- **Natural Resource Management Agencies:**
  - » Minnesota Department of Natural Resource (DNR)
  - » U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
  - » Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
  - » 1854 Treaty Authority
  - » Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD)
- **Environmental Organizations:**
  - » St. Louis River Alliance

- » Izaak Walton League
- » Duluth Audubon Society
- » River Corridor Coalition

- **Environmental /Outdoor Education Nonprofits:**

- » Hartley Nature Center
- » Hawk Ridge
- » Wildwoods Rehab Center
- » Great Lakes Aquarium
- » Lake Superior Zoological Society
- » River Corridor Coalition
- » University of Minnesota-Duluth
- » Proposed Kayak Bay Facility

- **Farming/Gardening Organizations:**

- » Duluth Community Garden
- » Lake Superior Botanical Society (native arboretum)
- » Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association (farmer's market)

- **Cultural Organizations**

- » The Nordic Center (living history)
- » St. Louis County Historical Society (living history)
- » Ojibwe Communities (living history)

## *Audience:*

- **Neighborhood residents, West Duluth and Duluth, Regional and National Tourism**
- **Young families, extended families (family reunions), school groups, Boy and Girls Scouts, YMCA**
- **Evenings and weekends – half to full days worth of family and kid's activities**

# CONCEPT B - FAIRMOUNT NATURE PARK



Concept B

Fairmount Nature Park

## Concept B

### *Fairmount Nature Park*

- **Convert the main zoo building to a nature center**
  - » Keep small zoo animals that are native to the upper Midwest, with a focus on northern Minnesota/Lake Superior - maintain the existing small animal expansion to east
  - » Develop museum quality, small indoor climbing/ interpretive area in existing 2-story exhibit space
  - » Develop classroom spaces in the lower lever for a nature-based early childhood learning program/ preschool
  - » Upgrade restrooms on upper and lower level
  - » Provide equipment rental and guided outdoor recreation experiences
- **Create small amphitheater/ gathering area as an orientation/ education space for school groups on the west side of the new nature center building**
- **Develop nature play areas adjacent to the main building with water play, digging, and building, and create a "garden house" out of the main Monkey House building for native plant/ gardening education and activities**
- **Retain the existing farm animal building for a domestic petting zoo experience**
- **Renovate polar shores to an outdoor nature play area (non fenced) and demolish 50% +/- of the building and convert the remaining to a shelter building**
- **Demo Australian Building and Lion's Den – Develop areas for nature gardens and smaller scaled interactive nature play and education**
- **Maintain animal care center, but renovate a portion of the building to become a combined trail head/ orientation building for the St. Louis River Corridor/ Estuary**
- **Focus on natural beauty, Minnesota-native plants, winding trails, contemplative spaces**
- **Reduce large areas of pavement, reduce trail network, pull trails away from creek for shoreline restoration and buffers**
- **Plant a natural stream buffer along entire length of Kingsbury Creek, with designed overlooks and alcoves**
- **Most of park is free and open to the public with trails and nature-based play areas - admission area near building**
- **Create a low impact park and camping program at Indian Point**
  - » New Kingsbury Bay Canoe and Kayak Center at gateway to Indian Point with new building, parking and launch points
  - » Central area for tent camping
  - » Small pavilion and restroom building
  - » Restored oak savannah with passive walking trails, strategic views to the water, and a council ring for interpretation
  - » Focus on Native American interpretation

## Main Building Area

Convert the main building to a nature center

- Keep small zoo animals that are native to the upper Midwest, with a focus on northern Minnesota/Lake Superior - maintain existing small animal expansion to the east
- Upgrade restrooms on upper and lower level
- Provide equipment rental and outdoor recreation experiences

Develop museum quality, small indoor climbing/interpretive area in existing 2-story exhibit space



## Main Building Area



Create small amphitheater/ gathering area as an orientation/ education space for school groups on the east west side of the new nature center building



Develop classroom spaces in the lower lever for a nature-based early childhood learning program/ preschool

# CONCEPT B - FAIRMOUNT NATURE PARK

## Nature Play



## Polar Shores Reuse

Renovate polar shores to an outdoor nature play area (non-fenced)

Demolish 50% +/- of the building and convert the remaining to a shelter building

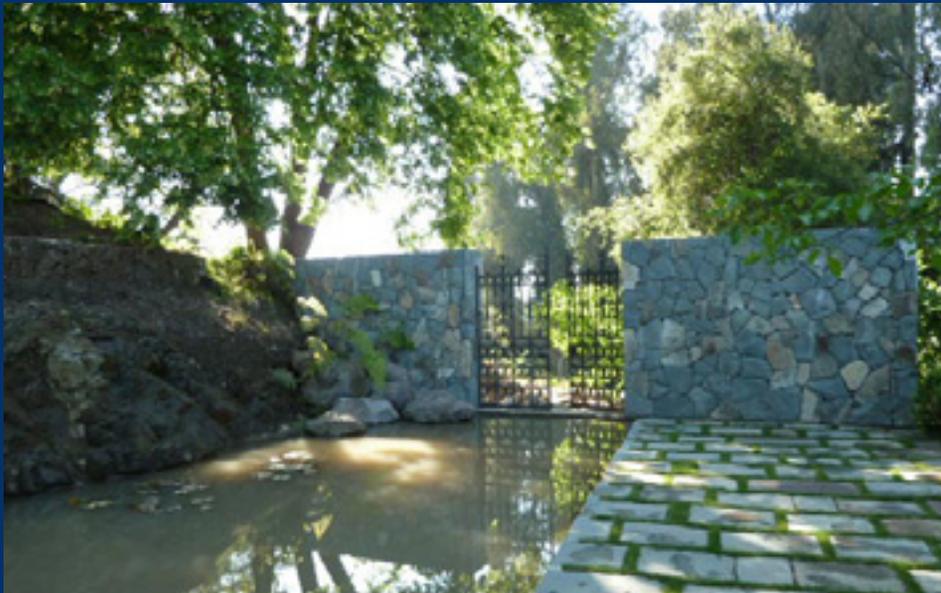


## Domestic Petting Zoo and Native Arboretum

Retain the existing farm animal building for a domestic petting zoo experience



Native gardens



Contemplative gardens



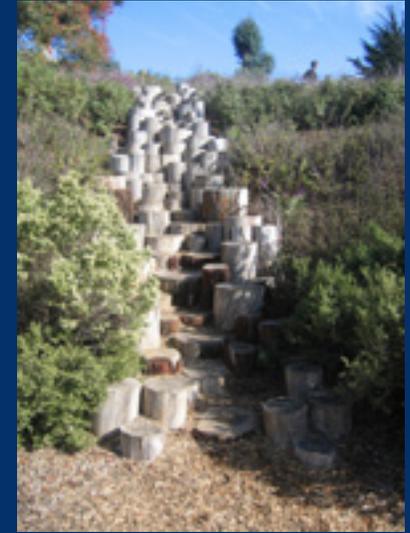
Outdoor education

# CONCEPT B - FAIRMOUNT NATURE PARK

## Throughout the Park



Hillside camper cabins



Low impact nature play, reuse of existing natural materials



Focus on natural beauty, Minnesota-native plants, winding trails, contemplative spaces

## Indian Point Campground



Restored oak savanna



Outdoor education programs



Council ring/ fire pits



Restoration of native vegetation



New canoe and kayak launch at Kingsbury Bay



Interpretation to highlight historical and cultural important of wild rice

## *Income Potential:*

- **Admission Fee - nature play (indoor and outdoor)**
- **Domestic Petting Zoo**
- **Rental space – small events, meetings, conferences (main building, WPA pavilion)**
- **Donations**
- **Vending in the main building and pop-up concessions**
- **Equipment rental – bikes, blades, showshoes, canoes, kayaks (main building and satellite orientation building at Kingsbury Bay)**
- **Camping fees (Fairmount Park and Indian Point Campground)**

## *Potential Partnerships:*

- **Natural Resource Management Agencies:**
  - » Minnesota Department of Natural Resource (DNR)
  - » U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
  - » Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
  - » 1854 Treaty Authority
  - » Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD)
- **Environmental Organizations:**
  - » St. Louis River Alliance
  - » Izaak Walton League
  - » Duluth Audubon Society
  - » River Corridor Coalition

- **Environmental /Outdoor Education Nonprofits:**

- » Hartley Nature Center
- » Hawk Ridge
- » Wildwoods Rehab Center
- » Great Lakes Aquarium
- » Lake Superior Zoological Society
- » River Corridor Coalition
- » University of Minnesota-Duluth
- » Proposed Kayak Bay Facility

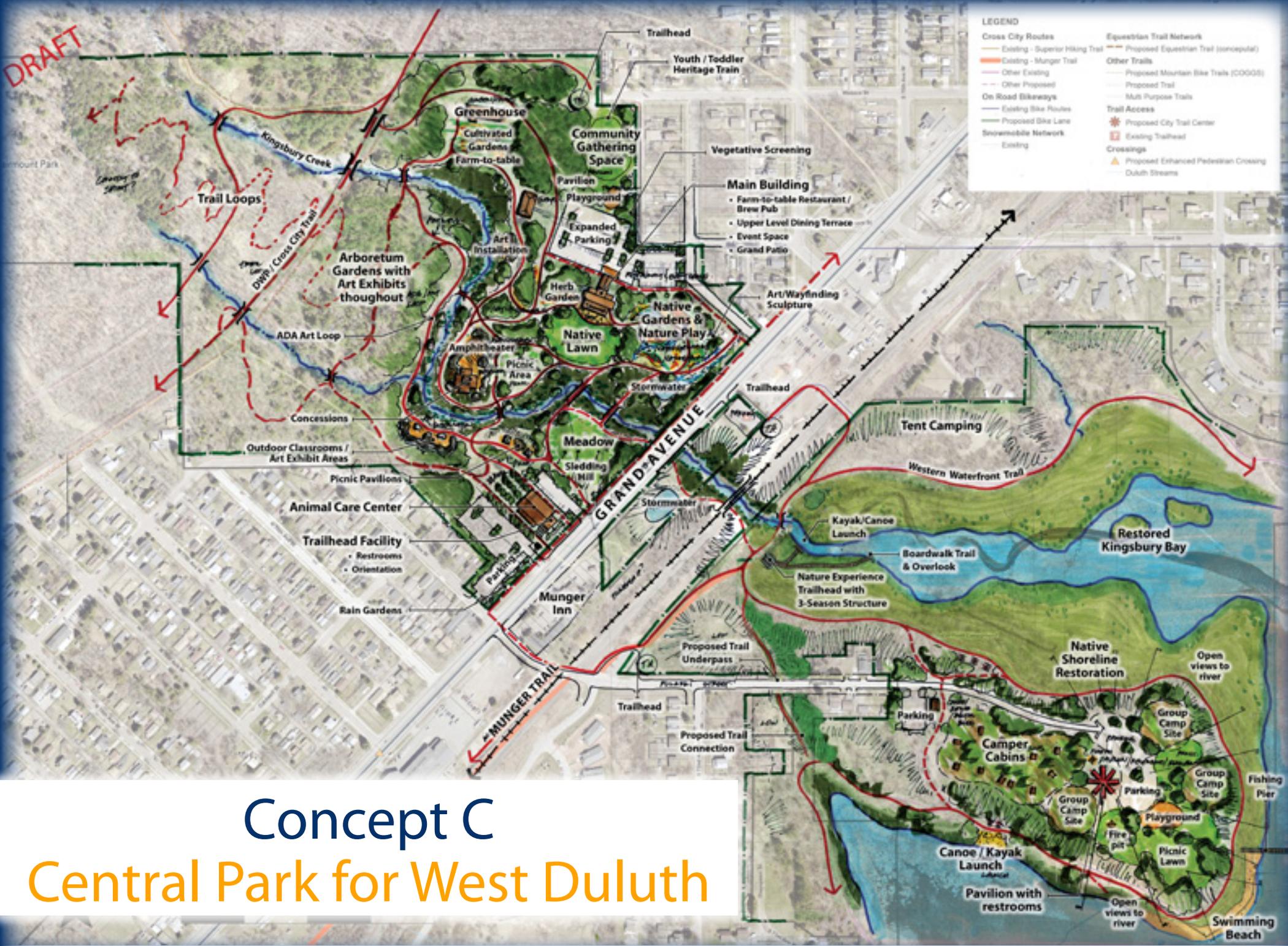
- **Cultural Organizations**

- » The Nordic Center
- » St. Louis County Historical Society
- » Ojibwe Communities (Indian Point Restoration and Interpretation)

## *Audience:*

- **Visitors and Locals**
- **Nature enthusiasts**
- **Young families (ECFE, Nature Center, Nature Play)**
- **Young adults/ active seniors**
- **Larger youth groups for education/ activities - Boy and Girls Scouts, YMCA, etc.**

# CONCEPT C - CENTRAL PARK FOR WEST DULUTH



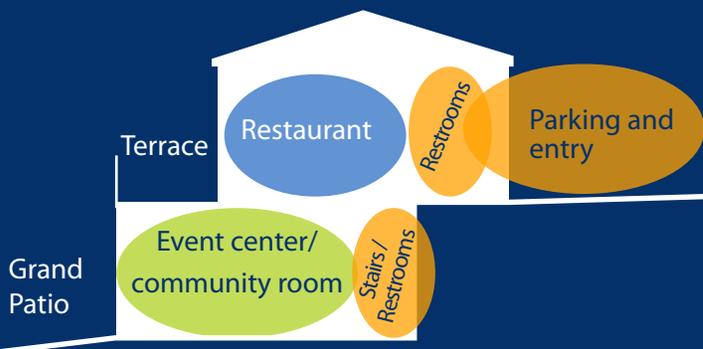
## Concept C

### *Central Park for West Duluth*

- **Renovate the existing main building into an event center with a farm-to-table restaurant/ brew pub as a premier tenant and income generator (Sea Salt @ Minnehaha Park) – restaurant on the upper level with outdoor seating on the terrace, event space on the lower level with grand patio overlooking the renovated park**
- **Renovate polar shores into a movies/ concerts in the park amphitheater with a small concessions/ food truck area and nearby picnic area**
- **Remove the majority of existing structures on site (Lion Den, Monkey House, Farm Building)**
- **Develop a new trailhead facility within a portion of the remaining Animal Care Center, separate parking uses**
- **Repurpose portions of zoo exhibits as picnic pavilions, educational classrooms, art installation opportunities (Asian Caravan, Bears, and Lions)**
- **Develop a Minnesota-native arboretum program (trees, shrubs, and forbs throughout the park; remove all non-native species, create themed gardens based on micro climates (river garden, iron range garden, prairie garden, big woods garden, white pine stands, wildflower meadows, etc.)**
- **Bring in local and national landscape artists to provide changing exhibits to attract visitors throughout the park, integrated with nature, and taking advantage of existing animal exhibit spaces**
- **Decorate the park in the winter and create a holiday winter walking tour**
- **Create an interactive farm to table area adjacent to main building and repurpose Australia building as greenhouse/ permaculture facility with surrounding area developed with a series of hardy, cultivated edible gardens, and restored native fruit and nut plants**
- **Renew and restore ADA accessible walking trails and bridges that provide access and accentuate the creek, cascades, mature pines, the mix of meadows and trees groves in the heart of the park. Consider pedestrian scaled lighting along the primary trail loop along the creek**
- **Maintain and enhance a community park space on the upper plateau portion of the park north of the existing parking lot; include a open air pavilion, playground and event lawn for community festivals for West Duluth Neighborhoods; maintain existing park boundaries**
- **Develop a child train ride in northern portion of park**
- **Maintain passive park areas up the slopes to the west and to the north with beginner and mid-level hiking loops connecting to the main trail network**
- **Provide an enhanced park space at Indian Point to include:**
  - » A camping program with camper cabins and group camp sites
  - » A satellite canoe/ kayak facility with two new launch points and storage racks
  - » Picnic lawn with open views to the St. Louis River
  - » Pavilion, restrooms
  - » Playground
  - » Fire pits
  - » Parking

# CONCEPT C - CENTRAL PARK FOR WEST DULUTH

## Main Building Area



Renovate the existing main building into an event center with a farm-to-table restaurant/ brew pub as a premier tenant and income generator (Sea Salt @ Minnehaha Park) – restaurant on the upper level with outdoor seating on the terrace, event space on the lower level with grand patio overlooking the renovated park



Remove tiger wall to open views to the park



Sea Salt, @Minnehaha Park - Minneapolis, MN



# CONCEPT C - CENTRAL PARK FOR WEST DULUTH

## Main Building Area



Open views to the creek and restored native habitat from the terrace and patio



Tin Fish - Lake Calhoun - Minneapolis, MN



An enhanced terrace or patio for special events



The "great lawn" of native fescue grass

# CONCEPT C - CENTRAL PARK FOR WEST DULUTH

## Polar Shores Reuse



Create a casual, outdoor seating area for small concessions or picnicking



Maintain a rustic character to the renovated amphitheater

### POLAR SHORES ADAPTIVE RE-USE

#### OVERVIEW

A transformative approach to the existing Polar Bear Holding Building will create a unique opportunity to convert, re-use, and preserve an important historical structure that has a rich history within the zoo and the local community.

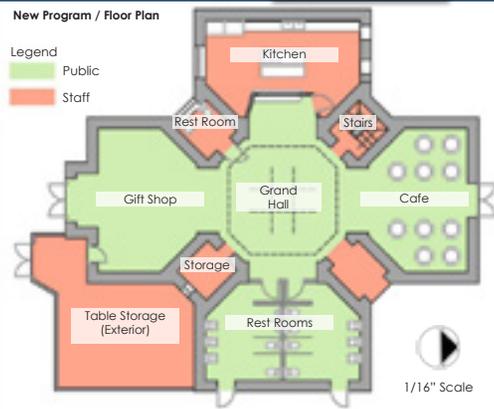
The depression-era structure was originally built in 1937 as part of the Works Projects Administration program (WPA) and housed a very popular elephant named Bessie. The structure was converted in 1990 into the present off-exhibit holding facility for the Polar Shores Habitat that primarily housed Polar Bears, harbor seals, and otters.

The structure is typical of WPA construction during the 1930's era, when simple and easily obtained building materials were utilized to construct public buildings. The building is massively constructed with reinforced concrete and locally quarried granite. Originally conceived as an animal holding facility and used in that capacity up until the 2012 flooding event, this structure would be difficult and expensive to upgrade to current AZA standards for off-exhibit animal holding needs.

#### A Guest Services Hub

While it does require giving up valuable animal habitat, converting the area into a special events center offers the zoo many benefits. The area could be used for public events such as small concerts, private and public functions, and other annual events that zoos across the country are realizing as new revenue sources.

This structure, themed to look like a National Park lodge, has the capacity to be easily converted and programmed to service these public events. A gift shop, food service area, cafe/dining space, and restroom facilities can all be easily accommodated within the existing building footprint.

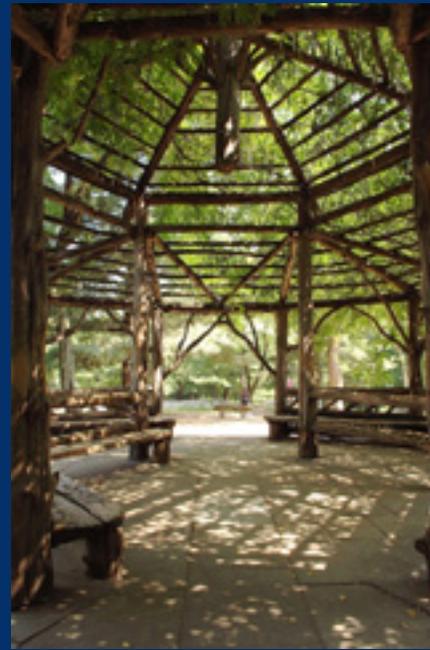


# CONCEPT C - CENTRAL PARK FOR WEST DULUTH

## Throughout the Park



Native gardens provide opportunities for small special events



Repurpose portions of zoo exhibits as picnic pavilions, educational classrooms, art installation opportunities (Asian Caravan, Bears, and Lion exhibit)



Decorate the park in the winter – holiday winter walking tour



Bring in local and national landscape artists to provide changing exhibits to attract visitors throughout the park, integrated with nature, and taking advantage of existing exhibits



# CONCEPT C - CENTRAL PARK FOR WEST DULUTH

## Farm-to-table/ Permaculture



Repurpose Australia building as greenhouse/ permaculture facility with surrounding area developed with a series of hardy, cultivated edible gardens, and restored native fruit and nut plants - classroom education opportunity



Create an interactive farm to table area adjacent to main building

# CONCEPT C - CENTRAL PARK FOR WEST DULUTH

## Enhanced Trails and Accessibility



Develop a new trailhead facility within a portion of the Animal Care Center

Renew and restore ADA accessible walking trails to create a central walking loop for the park - showcasing the historic bridges, the creek and cascades, mature pines, the mix of meadows and trees in the heart of the park



Community gathering space, art fairs, etc.



Develop tree canopy overlooks with the extended network of passive hiking trails up the hillside

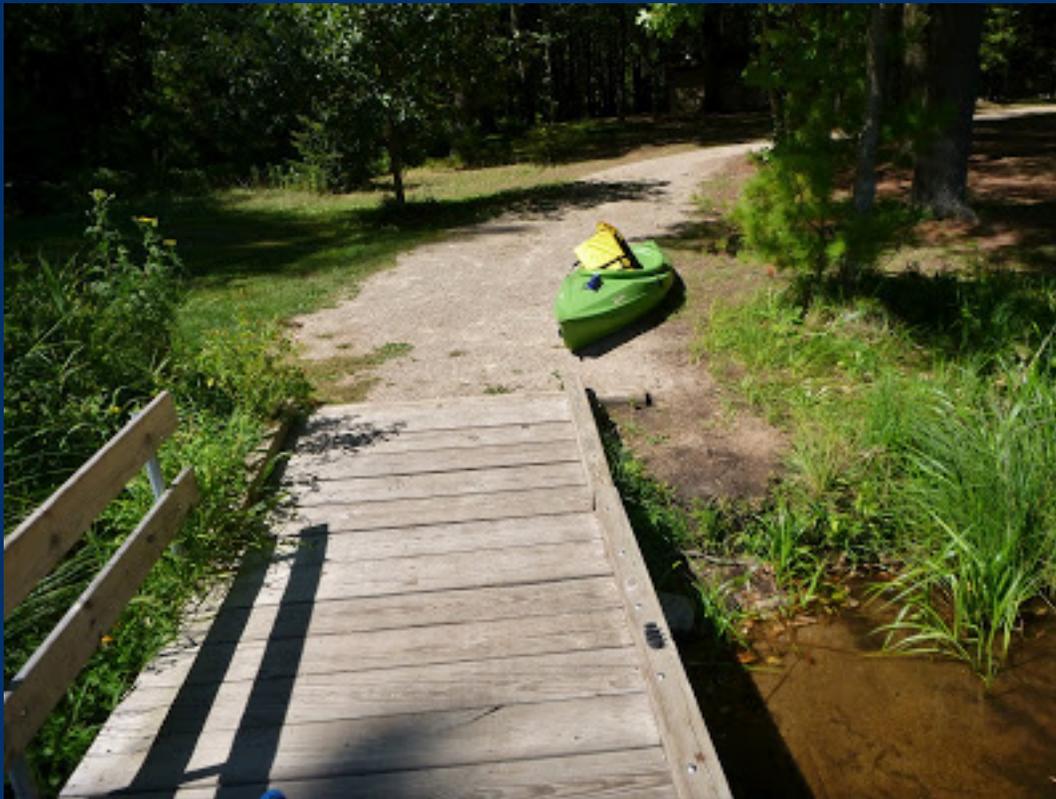
# CONCEPT C - CENTRAL PARK FOR WEST DULUTH

## The History of Fairmount Park



# CONCEPT C - CENTRAL PARK FOR WEST DULUTH

## Indian Point Campground and Park / Kingsbury Bay



Create a smaller, satellite canoe/kayak launch at Kingsbury Bay with boardwalks and interpretive signage and staging for institutional use



- Add camper cabins at Indian Point
- Keep some tent spaces
- Remove all RV spaces
- Focus on family and group camping in coordination with the new nature center
- Allow winter camping



## *Income Potential:*

- **Rental space (main building, event lawn, WPA pavilion, smaller pavilions throughout the park)**
- **Concessions and vending (restaurant, food truck/ pop-up for movie night and concerts at the shores)**
- **Equipment rental – bikes, blades, snowshoes, canoes, kayaks (new trailhead facility and satellite canoe/kayak building)**
- **Camping fees (Indian Point Campground)**

## *Potential Partnerships:*

- **Natural Resource Management Agencies:**

- » Minnesota Department of Natural Resource (DNR)
- » U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- » Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
- » 1854 Treaty Authority
- » Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD)

- **Environmental Organizations:**

- » St. Louis River Alliance
- » Izaak Walton League
- » Duluth Audubon Society
- » River Corridor Coalition

- **Environmental /Outdoor Education Nonprofits:**

- » Hartley Nature Center
- » Hawk Ridge
- » Wildwoods Rehab Center (to provide animal care and wildlife interpretation/programming)
- » Great Lakes Aquarium
- » Lake Superior Zoological Society
- » River Corridor Coalition
- » University of Minnesota-Duluth
- » Proposed Kayak Bay Facility (to provide boating instruction and rental with satellite site at Indian Point)

- **Farming/Gardening Organizations:**

- » Duluth Community Garden
- » Lake Superior Botanical Society (native arboretum)
- » Lake Superior Sustainable Farming Association (farmer's market, farm to table experience)

- **Cultural Organizations**

- » The Nordic Center
- » St. Louis County Historical Society
- » Ojibwe Communities

## *Audience:*

- **West Duluth, Duluth, and Regional Tourism**

- **Young families, extended families (family reunions and weddings)**

- **Evenings and weekends**

# Fairmount Park Concepts - Estimated Investment



*Adventure Park*

• **\$9,800,000**



*Nature Park*

• **\$10,250,000**



*Central Park*

• **\$9,825,000**

Area included in estimate is north of Kingsbury Creek, west of Grand Avenue, south of DWP trail

Estimate includes 10% contingency assumption

Estimate includes 12% design and engineering cost assumption

# Thank you!

