

# Charting the Future of Fairmount Park

## Agenda

1. The Decision Before Us – Filby Williams – 7 Min
2. Process Review – Filby Williams – 3 Min
3. Two Zoo Options – Tom Martin, ConsultEcon – 15 Min
4. Three Non-Zoo Options – Bryan Harjes, HKGi – 15 Min
5. City Perspective – Filby Williams – 5 Min
6. Question and Answer – 15 Min

# The Area Under Discussion



**The Historical Fairmount Park**

# **The Big Question: What Should Fairmount Park Be?**

Should we improve, maintain, and subsidize Fairmount Park exclusively as a zoo for the next 30-40 years...

OR

Should we commit to transform Fairmount Park into a different kind of public place?

# The Dual Identity of Fairmount Park



1925



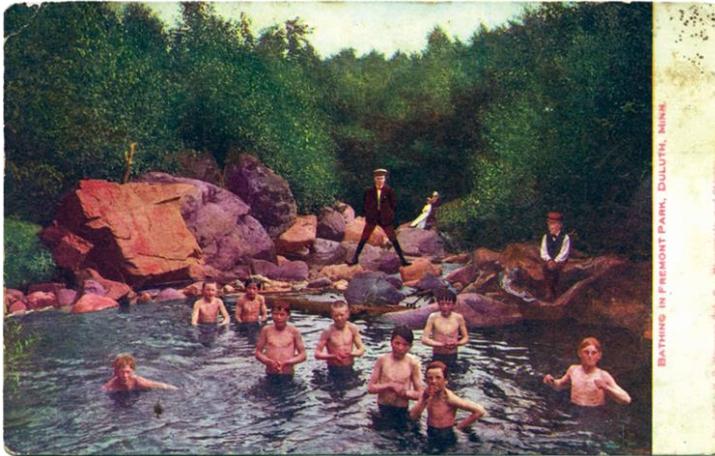
1965



2008

Lake Superior Zoo

# The Dual Identity of Fairmount Park



1900-1915



1939



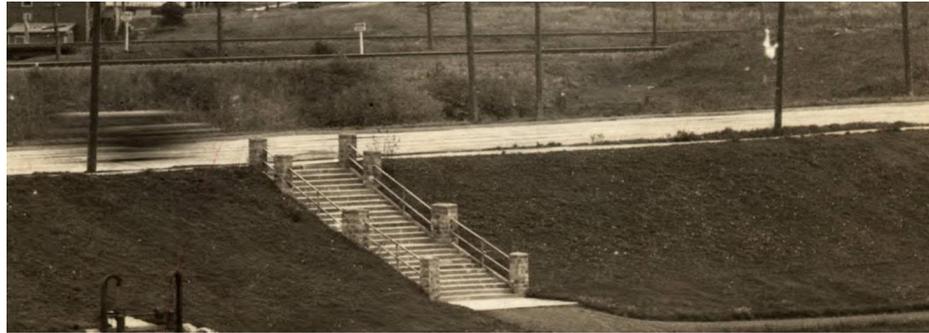
1925-1940



1975

**The River Corridor's Signature City Park**

# The Dual Identity of Fairmount Park



**Grand Avenue Entrance, 1939**



**The Same Location, 2010's**

**The River Corridor's Signature City Park**

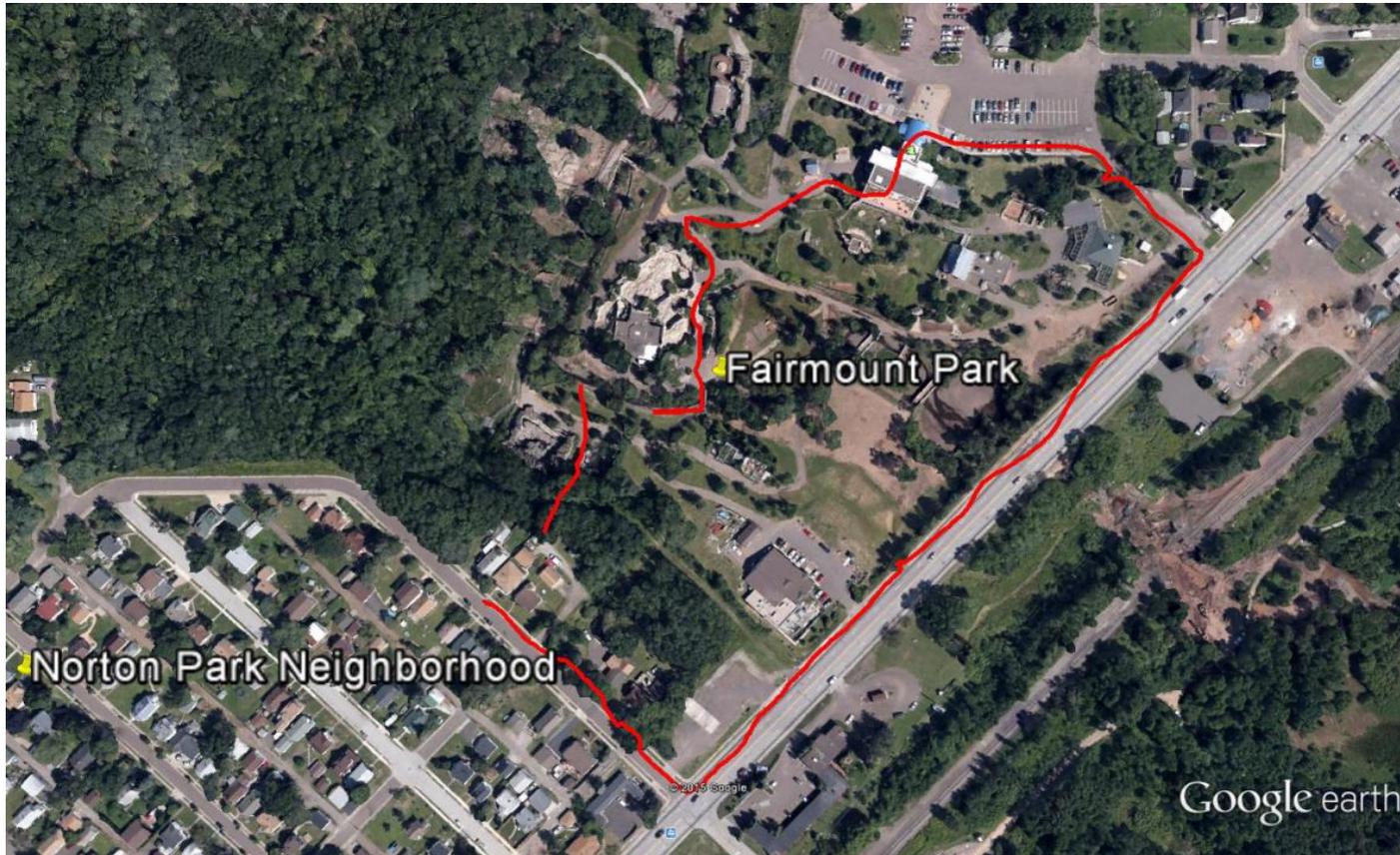
# Key Considerations

1. Wise Investment of City Funds
2. Contribution to Neighborhood  
Quality of Life
3. Attraction of Visitors

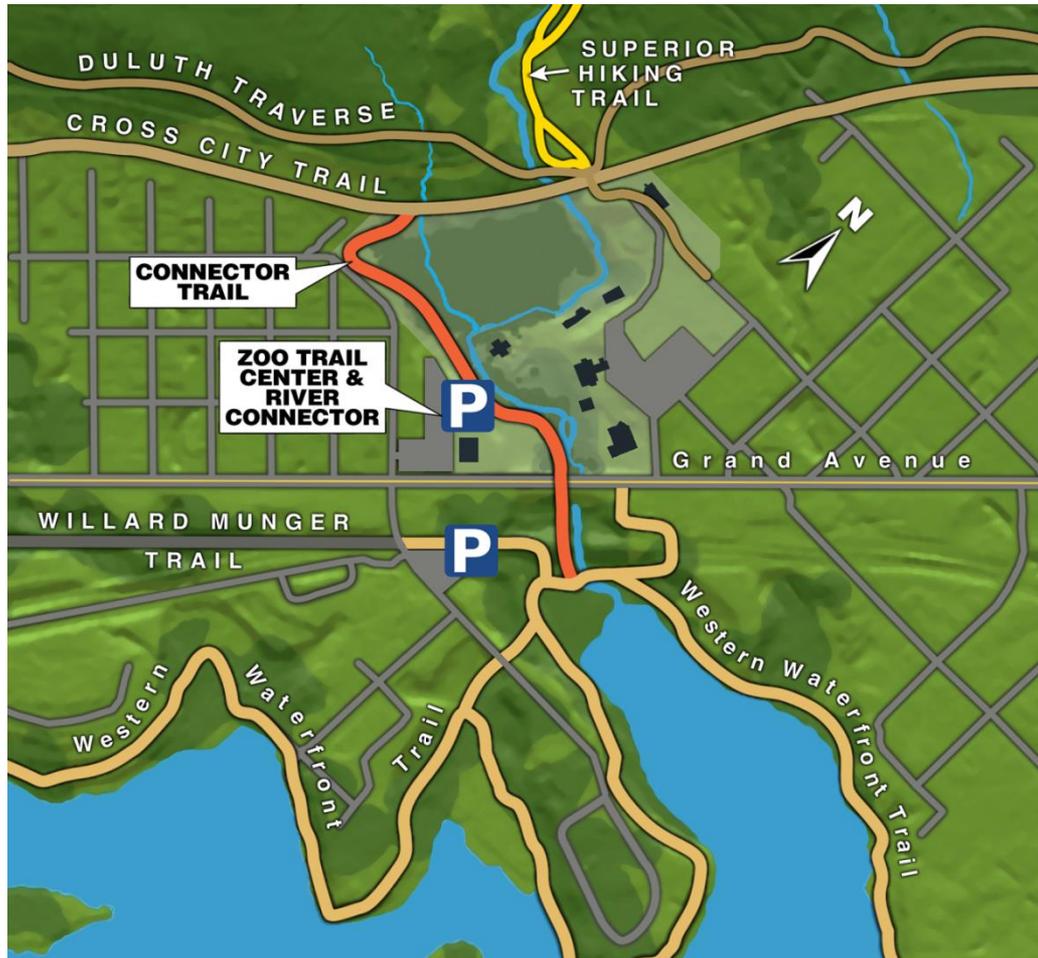
# **Wise Investment of City Funds**

Is it wise for the City to spend \$12-\$16 million up front, and half a million per year thereafter, to maintain Fairmount Park as a quality zoo?

# Contribution to Neighborhood Quality of Life



# Contribution to Neighborhood Quality of Life



**Kingsbury Creek River Connector**

# **Contribution to Neighborhood Quality of Life**

For neighborhoods in the River Corridor, is a zoo the most beneficial use of Fairmount Park?

# Attraction of Visitors

For our tourism economy, is a zoo the most beneficial use of Fairmount Park and the most productive recipient of \$670,000/yr in city support?

## Duluth Overnight Visitor Activities in Duluth

Activities	% Participation During Duluth Visit
Nature Activities	86%
Outdoor Sports	59%
Visit Waterfront/Beach	43%
Visit Zoo/Aquarium	7%

# Lake Superior Zoo/Fairmount Park Facility Planning Group Process

## Nine Member Planning Group

Name	Affiliation	Role
Dawn Mackety	Lake Superior Zoological Society	Chief Executive Officer
John Scott	Lake Superior Zoological Society	Board President
Maicie Sykes	Lake Superior Zoological Society	Director of Animal Management
Tom Albright	Community Representative	
Emily Larson	Community Representative	
Carol Newkumet	Community Representative	
Kathy Bergen	City of Duluth	Parks and Recreation Manager
Daniel Fanning	City of Duluth	Communications and Policy Director
Jim Filby Williams	City of Duluth	Director of Public Administration

# Facility Planning Group Process

**Purpose:** Agree on the purposes and parameters that will drive facility planning, develop and assess three facility options, then develop a single preferred option.

**Duration:** June 26 to September 24

**Meetings:** 9 group meetings, numerous additional City-Zoological Society meetings

# Facility Planning Group Results

## Consensus Purposes

1. Advance environmental learning goals
2. Achieve long-term financial sustainability for both parties
3. Meet professional standards and retain AZA accreditation.
4. Improve accessibility of the zoo and park and connectivity with the community
5. Strengthen the zoo and park as tourist attractions
6. Improve neighborhood quality of life.
7. Contribute to the development of a Corridor tourism hub.
8. Improve vehicular and pedestrian flow for visitors and staff.

# Facility Planning Group Results

## Consensus Planning Parameters

- 1. Capital Funding** – Assume \$0-\$12 million in capital funding from all sources over 6-year period.
- 2. Operational Funding** – Assume that city is not seeking to change the annual city subsidy.
- 3. Zoo Footprint** – Assume that the SW portion of the park shall no longer be within zoo fence.

# Facility Planning Group Results

## Consensus Facility Development Preferences:

- 1. Integrate diverse facilities** to function smoothly together and complement each other.
- 2. Design to reflect the zoo and park's unique place**
- 3. Design to engage diverse visitors via in diverse ways**
- 4. Provide flexible spaces** for new and travelling exhibits
- 5. Moderately reduce unprogrammed space.**

# **Summary of Lake Superior Zoo & Fairmount Park Planning Report**

Presented by: ConsultEcon, Inc.

April 27, 2015

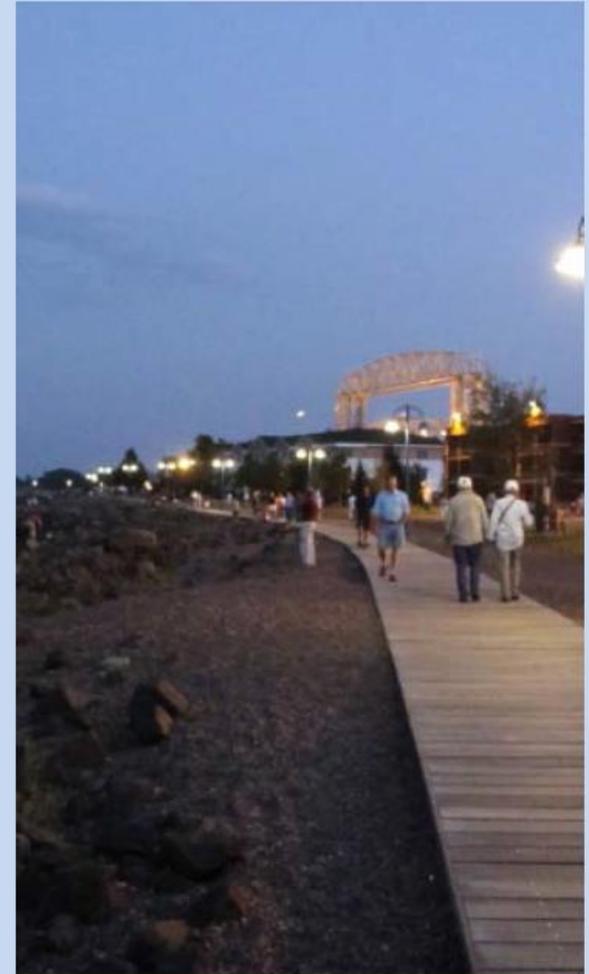
# Overview of ConsultEcon Assignment

- ◆ Develop a planning and alternative evaluation process for the Duluth Zoo and Fairmount Park.
- ◆ Develop and review alternative development plans.
- ◆ Evaluate the markets for the Zoo, the current operations of the Zoo
- ◆ Facilitate a two-day planning workshop to build consensus alternatives.
- ◆ Based on the work a number of consensus alternatives were developed and tested.



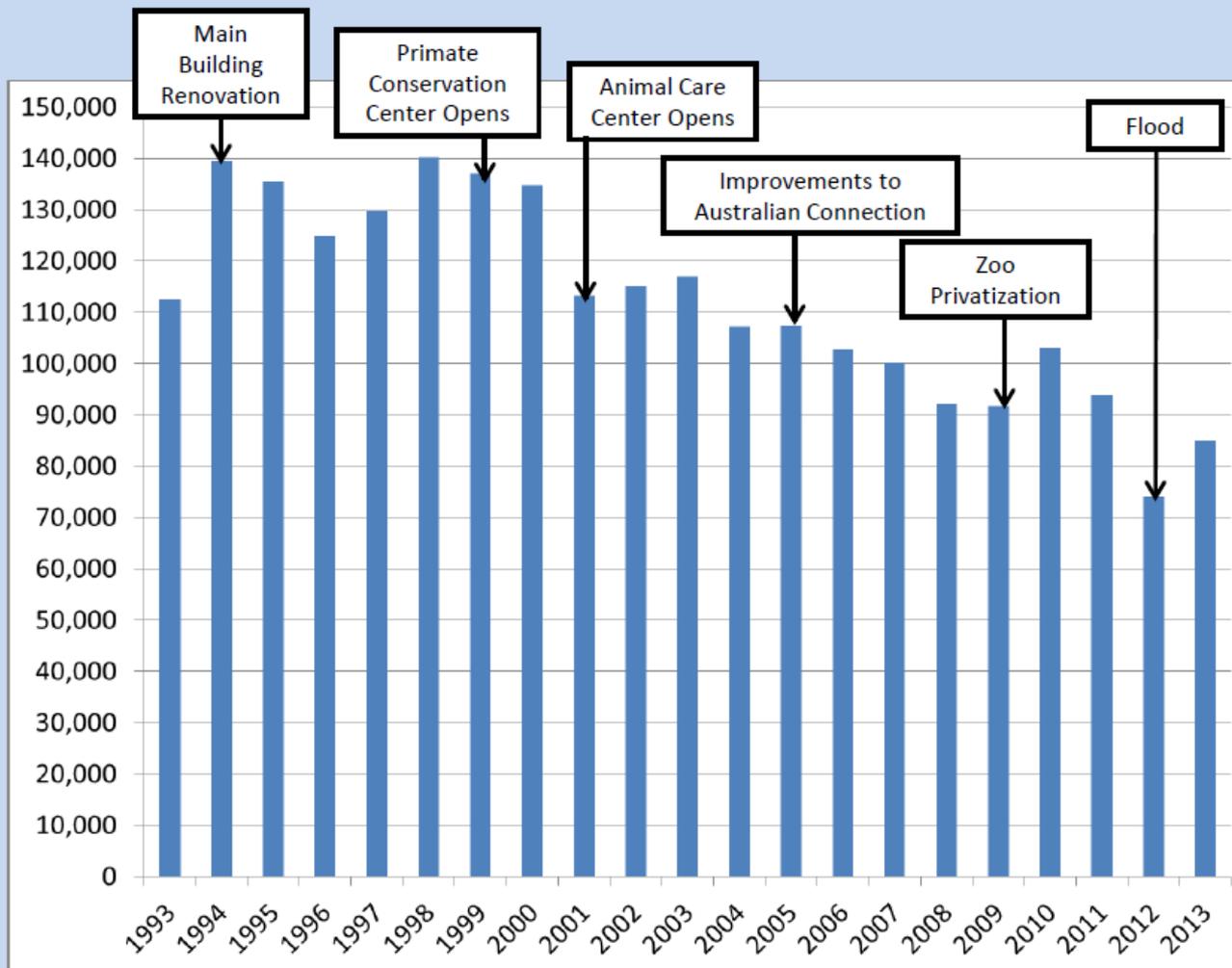
# Zoo Resident and Tourist Markets

- ◆ There are healthy resident and visitor markets to support the Zoo. Within a ninety minute drive of the Zoo there are just under 400,000 residents. The media market for Duluth is 425,000 people.
- ◆ There are an estimated 3.5 million visitors annually to Duluth with 55% visiting in the Summer; 20% in Autumn; 15% in Winter; and 10% in Spring.
- ◆ St. Louis County generated \$474 million in gross leisure and tourism sales in 2012.
- ◆ Duluth has emerged as a destination city with a wide range of attractions and events. Duluth is also getting more attention in the adventure tourism industry and the city is developing a major trail and bikeway infrastructure program.



# Zoo Visitation

Long Term Attendance Trend, 1993 through 2013, Lake Superior Zoo



# Zoo Operations

- ◆ Attendance to the Zoo is seasonal – peak months are May thru October – accounting for about 88% of annual attendance.
- ◆ About 45% of the \$2 million operating budget is earned income and 55% non-earned, including the subsidy from the City. City contribution has been stable; donations and memberships have increased. Currently there are over 2,000 memberships.
- ◆ The Zoo has 26 full time employees and 36 part time and seasonal employees. The Zoo occupies 23 acres in Fairmount Park.
- ◆ While there have been limited new exhibits over the last few years, the on-site and off-site educational programs, program revenue, and program attendance have increased significantly.



# Summary of Zoo Project Workshop

- ◆ Workshops held in September 2014
- ◆ Purpose was to develop consensus on a set of capital improvements that will best lead to an improved visitor experience and improved financial operating results.
- ◆ A key assumption in the workshop was that a capital commitment from the City would range from \$0 to a maximum of \$12 million, and that the maximum capital budget available from the City was not enough to execute all projects under consideration, in the recent Zoo masterplans at the highest level.
- ◆ Capital investment is needed both to improve core infrastructure and improve the visitor experience.
- ◆ It was determined that a zero investment scenario is not feasible as there are acute infrastructure issues that require investment.



# Key Findings From the Workshop

Proposed capital investments at the Zoo were prioritized based on:

- ◆ those projects which **remedy immediate infrastructure issues** either due to the flood and/or proposed City changes to the Zoo fence line which require relocation of exhibits, to allow for the introduction of trails and more public open space;
- ◆ projects which **complete those already underway** and enhance Zoo entrance visibility and arrival experience (e.g. Grand Avenue entrance project);
- ◆ projects that **already have funds committed** which fit with the strategic direction of the Zoo;
- ◆ projects which **improve and add indoor (four-season) exhibits/experiences** outside of the flood plain and in or near the main building (along the ridge);
- ◆ projects that can substantially **upgrade current successful exhibits with modest investment.**



# Key Findings From the Workshop

*Consensus capital projects that emerged from the workshop include:*

## **Zoo Visitor Experience Improvements**

- ◆ Forest Discovery Zone
- ◆ Repurposed Polar Shores
- ◆ New Brown Bear Exhibit along with Animal Infill Exhibits
- ◆ Main Building Renovation/Expansion
- ◆ Upgraded Primate Conservation Center
- ◆ Upgraded Farm

## **Zoo Infrastructure Improvements**

- ◆ Entrance/Access Improvements At Grand Ave.
- ◆ Zoo Parking Lot and Main Building Entrance Improvements
- ◆ Zoo Wide Signage, Pathway Improvements
- ◆ New Programming Supplies and Materials



## Forest Discovery Zone



## Repurposing Polar Shores



# Summary of Alternative Scenarios

ConsultEcon analyzed the potential operating impact of two different master plan investment scenarios (Scenario 1 and Scenario 2). Specifically the Capital Investment Scenarios would:

- ◆ **Reposition the Zoo** – leveraging the growing adventure tourism brand in Duluth and communicating to current and potential visitors that the experience at the Zoo is fun and entertaining. Several of the new attractions planned including Forest Discovery Zone and indoor and outdoor playgrounds, emphasize adventure/active play.
- ◆ **Address blighted areas of the Zoo**, including Polar Shores damaged by the 2012 flood.
- ◆ **Improve the overall visitor experience** and increase the appeal of a visit to the Zoo for a broader audience base.
- ◆ **Create repeatable experiences and programs** that appeal to both existing visitors and new visitors.
- ◆ Offer better indoor **opportunities for year-round visitation**.
- ◆ **Improve Zoo entrance visibility** from main access points.

# Summary of Alternative Scenarios

- ◆ Scenarios were developed to respond to opportunities and challenges at the Zoo, and within the regional and attraction industry marketplace, and to position the Zoo such that attendance, revenue and mission impact improve over time.
- ◆ For each scenario, attendance, revenue, and operating expense impacts were analyzed
- ◆ Scenario 1 represents a \$12 million capital investment and  
Scenario 2 represents a \$16 million over a period of 6 years.

# Budget Allocations for Alternative Scenarios

CORE PROJECTS	ILLUSTRATIVE CAPITAL BUDGET (\$)	
	Scenario -1	Scenario -2
<b><i>Zoo Visitor Experience (Core Product)</i></b>		
Forest Discovery Zone	\$1,750,000	\$2,000,000
Brown Bear Exhibit	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000
Renovation/Expansion of Main Bldg.	\$4,000,000	\$4,300,000
Multi-Story Indoor Playground		\$350,000
Primate Conservation Center & Nocturnal Bldg.	\$250,000	\$350,000
Farm	\$250,000	\$350,000
Outdoor Themed Destination Playground	\$250,000	\$500,000
Animal In-fill exhibits	\$500,000	\$1,300,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$9,000,000</b>	<b>\$12,150,000</b>
<b><i>Zoo Infrastructure</i></b>		
Repurposing Polar Shores	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Entrance Improvements (along Grand Avenue)	\$100,000	\$175,000
Zoo Site-Wide Improvements	\$200,000	\$200,000
Reconfigure Zoo Train Route		\$200,000
Visitor Arrival Improvements/Parking Lot Improvements	\$100,000	\$150,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,400,000</b>	<b>\$1,725,000</b>
<b><i>Programming</i></b>		
Programming Supplies & Materials	\$50,000	\$75,000
<b>Contingency at 15%</b>	<b>\$1,567,500</b>	<b>\$2,092,500</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,017,500</b>	<b>\$16,042,500</b>
<b>Rounded</b>	<b>\$12,000,000</b>	<b>\$16,000,000</b>

# Alternative Plans Operational Analysis

Plan Scenario	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Capital Investment	\$12,000,000	\$16,000,000
Attendance	112,907	121,418
Memberships	2,738	3,029
Per Capital Admissions Revenue	\$8.68	\$8.89

# Alternative Plans Operational Analysis

Plan Scenario	Scenario 1		Scenario 2	
Capital Investment	\$12,000,000		\$16,000,000	
Attendance	112,907		121,418	
Memberships	2,738		3,029	
Per Capital Admissions Revenue	\$8.68		\$8.89	
Earned Revenue	\$1,732,600	79%	\$1,933,100	86%
Contributed Revenue	\$521,900	21%	\$521,900	14%
Total Operating Expenses	\$2,197,200		\$2,238,400	
Net Income Before Exhibit Reinvestment (w/o City subsidy)	\$57,300		\$216,600	
Required Annual Revenue Capital Investment	\$575,000		\$575,000	
Net Income After Capital Reinvestment (w/o City Operating Subsidy)	(\$517,700)		(\$358,400)	

Source: ConsultEcon, Inc.

# Planning Group Impasse

- The Planning Group sought but could not achieve consensus on a third zoo facility option.
- The City embarked on an independent process to develop a third option for community and Council consideration.

# **Fairmount Park** and **Lake Superior Zoo** Visioning

## ***CONCEPTS***



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Fairmount Park / Lake Superior Zoo

2014 Google Earth imagery



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

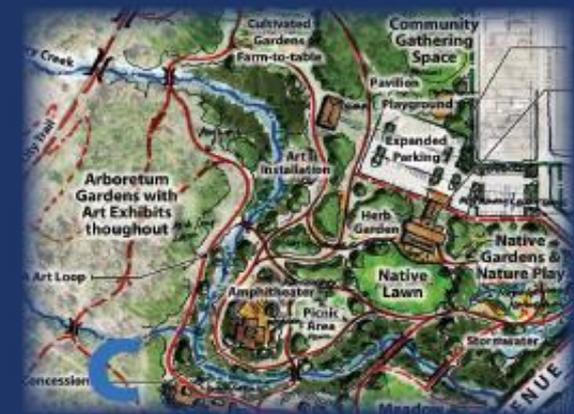
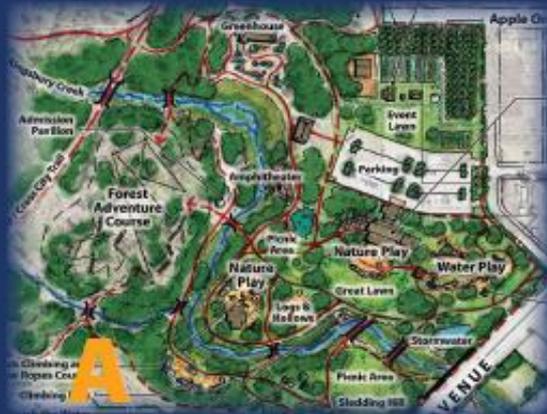
## Indian Point Campground

*2014 Google Earth imagery*





# 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*

- **Remodel the existing 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 northern part of Fairmount Park and to Indian Point/ Western Waterfront Trail**
- **Create a low impact park and camping program at Indian Point**
  - » 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
  - » New canoe/ kayak launch sites

# CONCEPT A - FAIRMOUNT ADVENTURE PARK

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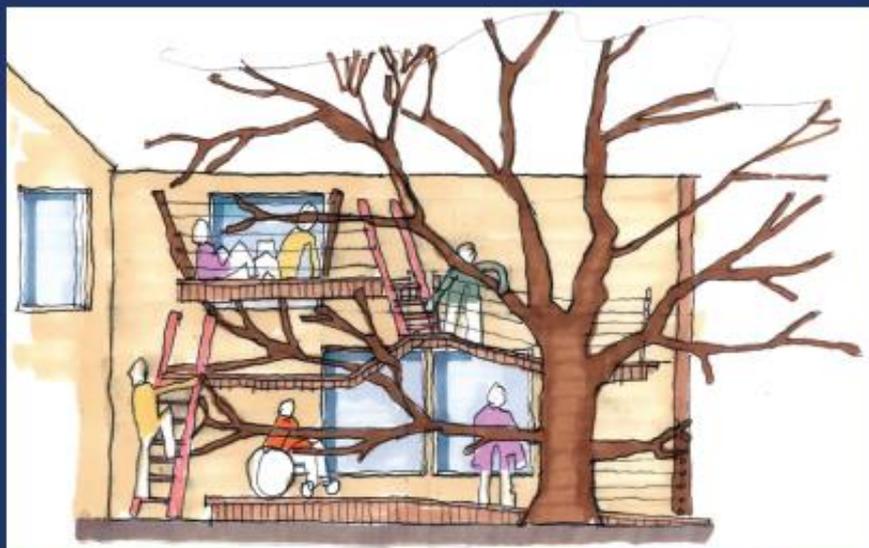


LEGEND	
<b>Cross City Routes</b>	<b>Equine Trail Network</b>
— Casting - Superior Hiking Trail	— Proposed Equine Trail (conceptual)
— Casting - Munger Trail	— Other Trails
— Other Casting	— Proposed Mountain Bike Trails (DOGGE)
— Other Proposed	— Proposed Trail
<b>On Road Bikeways</b>	— Multi Purpose Trails
— Existing Bike Routes	<b>Trail Access</b>
— Proposed Bike Lane	— Proposed City Trail Center
<b>Snowmobile Network</b>	— Existing Trailhead
— Existing	<b>Crossings</b>
	— Proposed Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing
	— Delist Streams

Concept A  
Fairmount Adventure Park

# 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

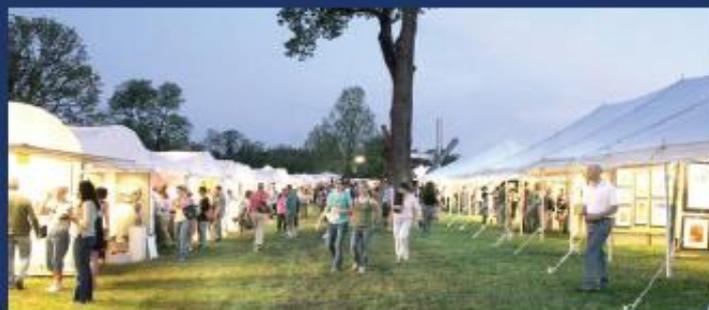


# CONCEPT A - FAIRMOUNT ADVENTURE PARK

## 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

## *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*

- **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 level 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 canoe and kayak 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

# CONCEPT B - FAIRMOUNT NATURE PARK

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**LEGEND**

<b>Cross City Routes</b>	<b>Equine Trail Network</b>
- Existing - Superior Hiking Trail	- Proposed Equine Trail (conceptual)
- Existing - Munger Trail	<b>Other Trails</b>
- Other Existing	- Proposed Mountain Bike Trails (COGGGS)
- Other Proposed	- Proposed Trail
<b>On Road Bikeways</b>	- Multi Purpose Trails
- Existing Bike Routes	<b>Trail Access</b>
- Proposed Bike Lane	- Proposed City Trail Center
<b>Snowmobile Network</b>	- Existing Trailhead
- Existing	- Crossings
	- Proposed Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing
	- Dashed Streams

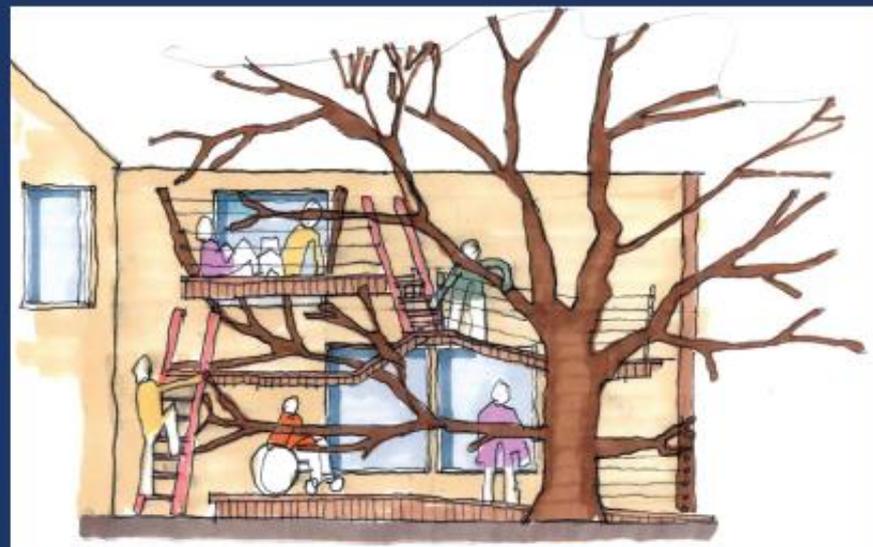
Concept B  
Fairmount Nature Park

## 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 level for a nature-based early childhood learning program/ preschool

## 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

## 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:**
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  - » U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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- **Environmental Organizations:**
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- » 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.**

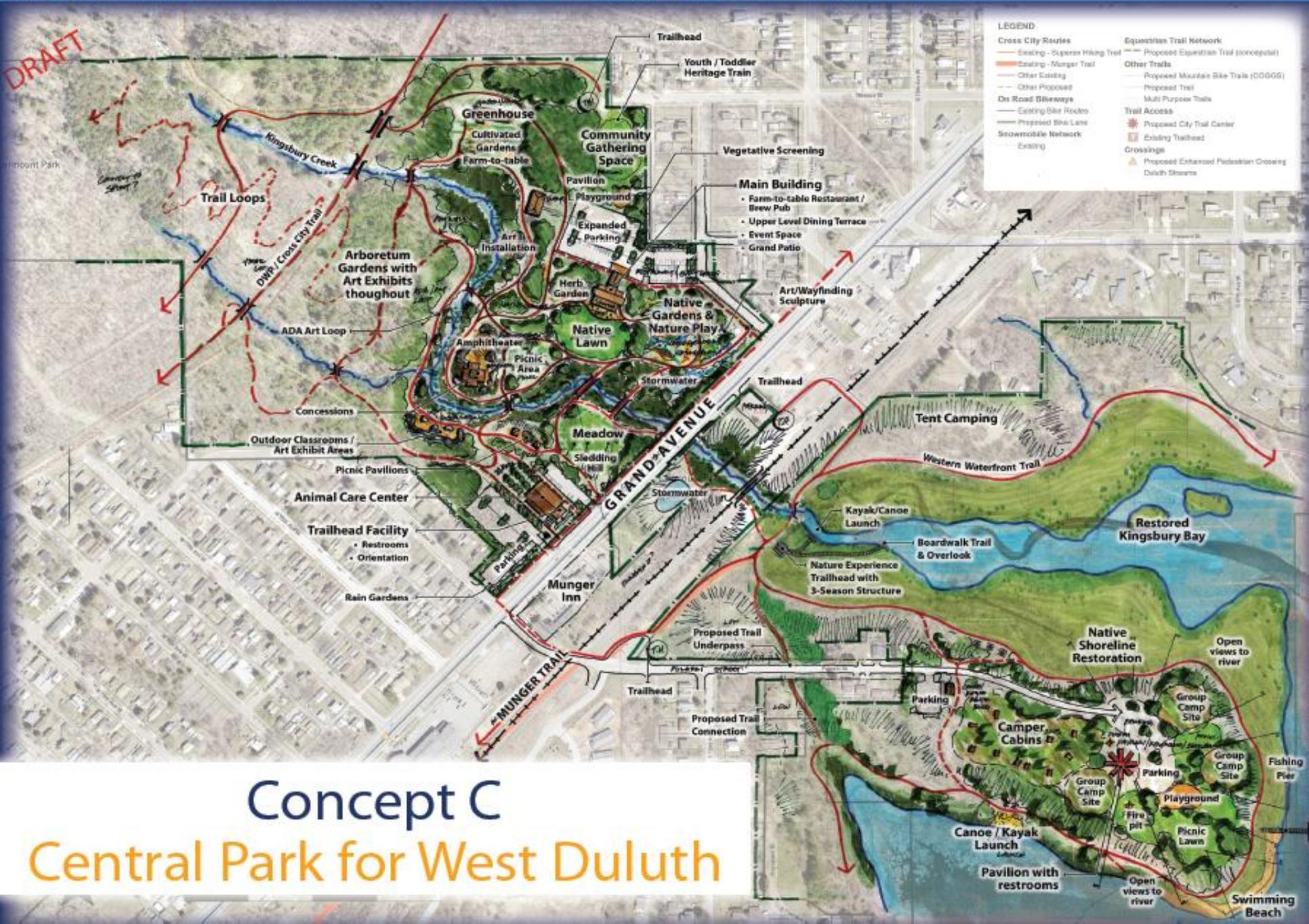
## Concept C

### *Central Park for West Duluth*

- **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

DRAFT



**LEGEND**

Existing - Superior Hiking Trail	Proposed Equestrian Trail (conceptual)
Existing - Munger Trail	Other Trails
Other Existing	Proposed Mountain Bike Trails (COOGS)
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	Crossings
	Proposed Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing
	Duluth Streams

Concept C  
Central Park for West Duluth

# 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

**Summary:**  
The adaptive reuse approach to reworking an existing building is a viable alternative, especially for historic buildings and structures. It is a more sustainable and cost-effective approach to reusing and preserving the historic structure.

The adaptive reuse of historic buildings is a key part of the West Duluth Adaptive Reuse Program (WRAP). The program is a public-private partnership between the City of West Duluth and the Polar Shores Foundation. The program will provide a framework for the adaptive reuse of historic buildings in West Duluth.

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#### A. General Overview

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# 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

## *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



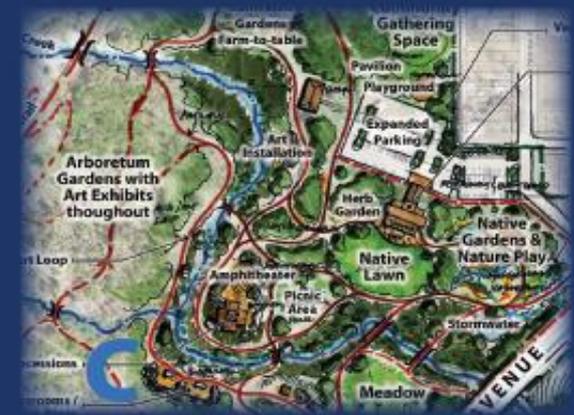
## Adventure Park

• **\$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

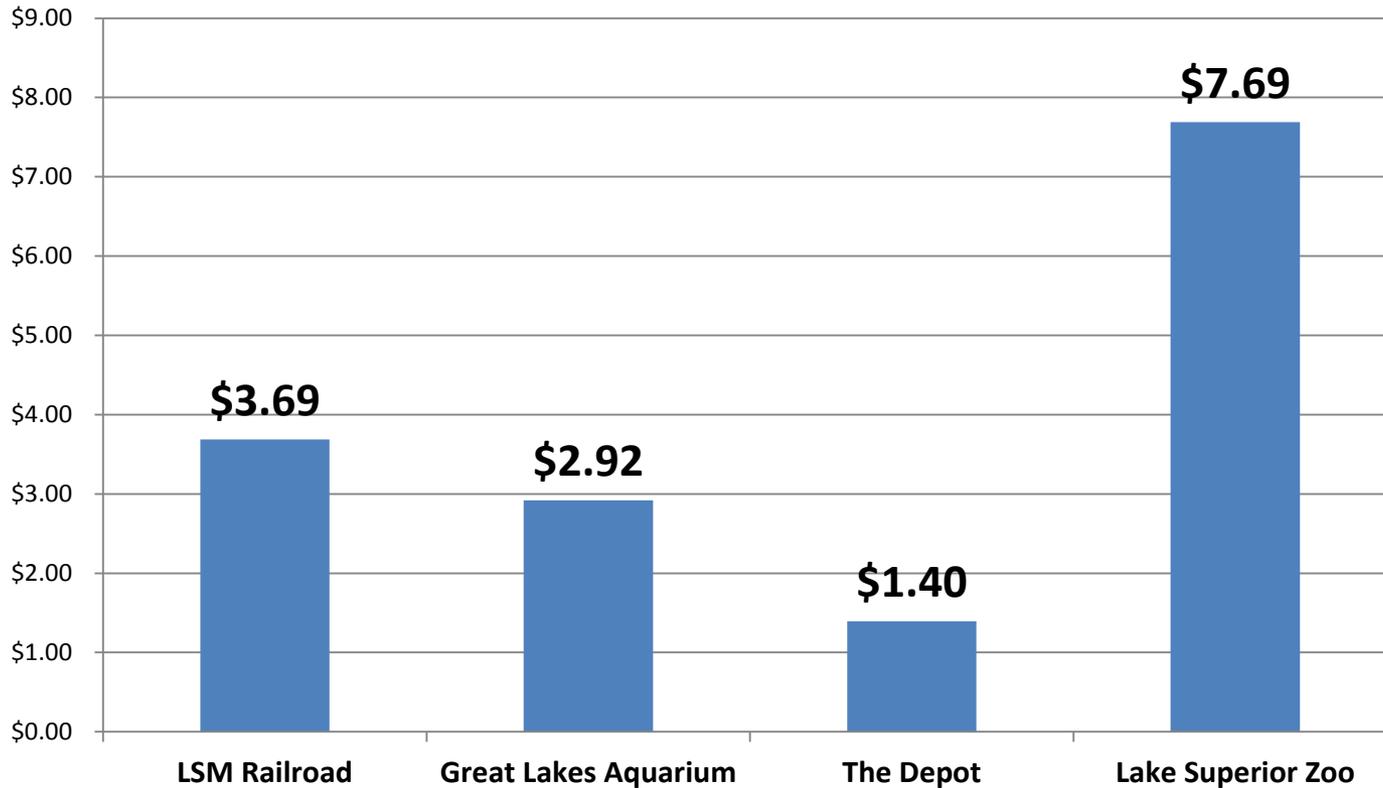
Estimate includes 12% design and engineering cost assumption

# Wise Investment of Public Funds

Is it wise for the City to spend \$12-\$16 million up front, and \$1 million per year thereafter, to maintain Fairmount Park as a quality zoo?

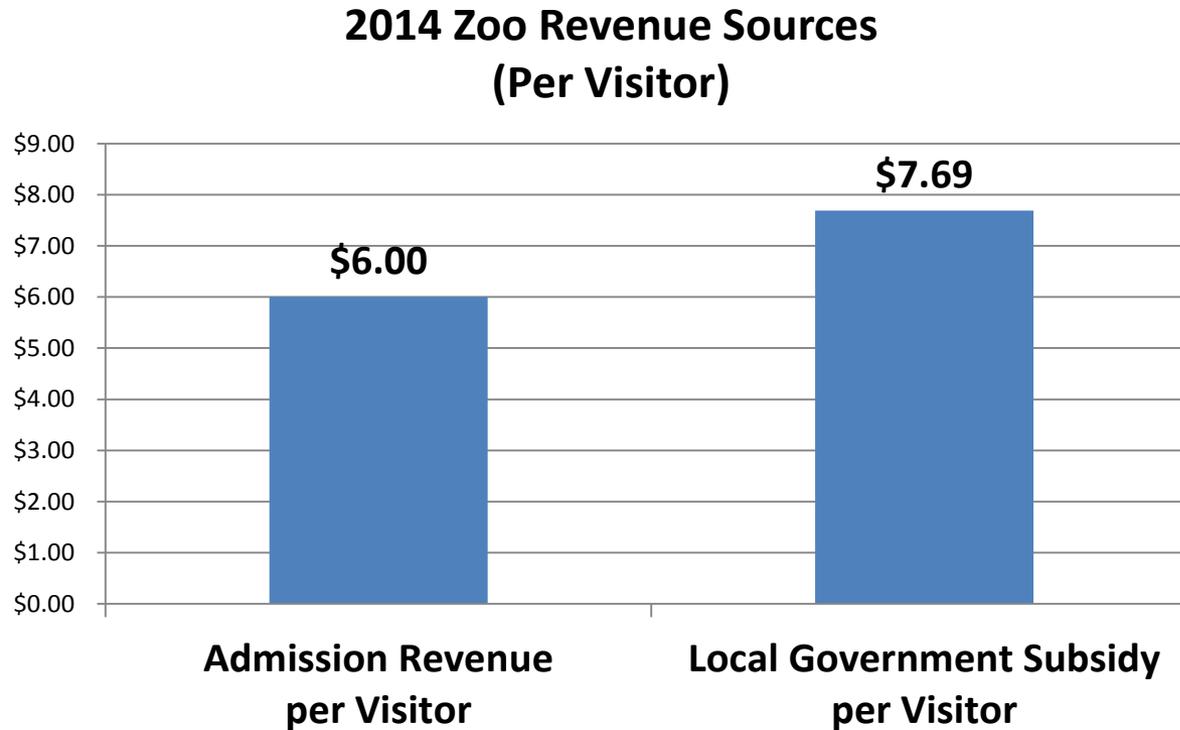
# Wise Investment of Public Funds

## Annual Government Subsidy per Visitor



**Poor Return-on-Investment**

# Wise Investment of Public Funds

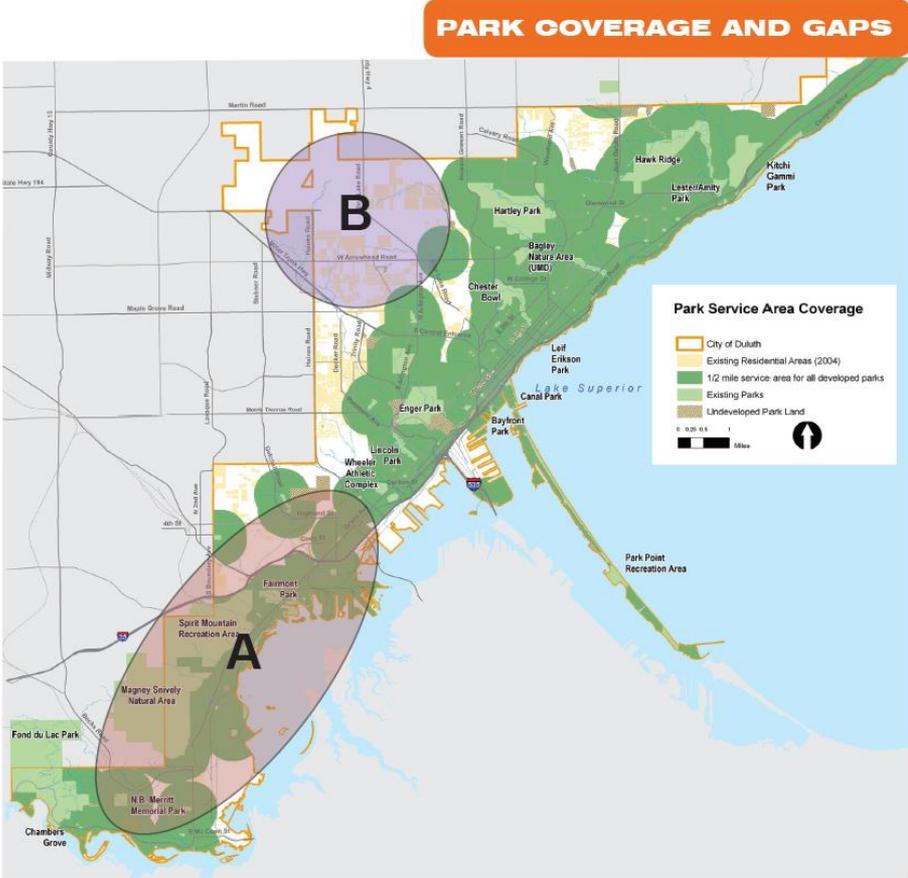


**Poor Return-on-Investment**

# **Contribution to Neighborhood Quality of Life**

For neighborhoods in the River Corridor, is a zoo the most beneficial use of Fairmount Park?

# Contribution to Neighborhood Quality of Life



The St. Louis River Corridor

# Attraction of Visitors

For our tourism economy, is a zoo the most beneficial use of Fairmount Park and the most productive recipient of \$670,000/yr in annual city support?

# Next Steps

1. Develop a single optimum facility option that will deliver maximum public benefit for our investment.
2. Submit the optimum facility option for public review and refinement throughout the summer.
3. Submit a final recommendation to Council.