

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

***CITY OF DULUTH - OPTION #3***

***JUNE 4, 2015***



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Fairmount Park / Lake Superior Zoo

2014 Google Earth imagery



# SITE ANALYSIS



**Fairmount Park  
Detail Site  
Analysis Diagram**  
06.04.2015

## *Fairmount Park Goals:*

- **Provide Top Quality Park for Corridor Neighborhoods:** Fulfill Parks Master Plan priority to create top- quality Corridor park space, like those in other areas of Duluth
- **Increase Access:** Enhance access to Fairmount by eliminating fences and admission fees for most of the park, creating new neighborhood access points, and creating new ADA accessible trails to and through the park.
- **Connect People to Nature:** Connect people to nature through environmental learning, up-close animal experiences, nature play, and outdoor exploration.
- **Achieve Financial Sustainability:** Decrease short term and long term City of Duluth costs for development, maintenance, and operation of facilities at Fairmount Park.
- **Support Destination Development:** Establish corridor as visitor destination by increasing visitation to Fairmount Park and contributing to a set of integrated Corridor experiences.
- **Sustain Zoo Tradition:** Sustain and reinvigorate proud Lake Superior Zoo and Lake Superior Zoological Society traditions.



## *Fairmount Park Features*

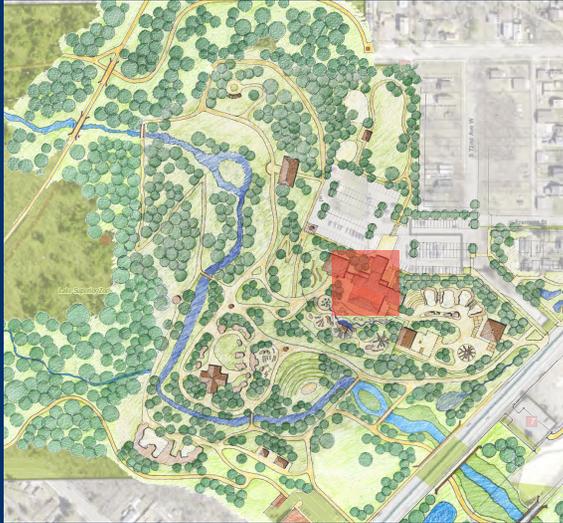
- **Main Building** - Museum-quality indoor exhibits, play space, and classrooms; cafe, gift shop, and central admission for KidZoo, indoor/outdoor play area, and amphitheater programs.
- **Indoor Playground** - New multi-story wildlife-themed indoor playground in 3,000 sq. ft. addition to the main building.
- **KidZoo** - Indoor/ outdoor zoo experience that uses parallel play and up-close animal experiences to connect children to the natural world.
- **Nature Play Areas** - New generation destination outdoor play area featuring climbing, water play, building, and pretend.
- **Creekside Signature Park** - Repurpose Polar Shores to include lawn amphitheater, picnic and event space, and new playground.
- **Accessible Nature Area** - ADA accessible trails through restored native forests and streams.

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## Main Building

Hub for all park activity with central admission for KidZoo, Indoor Playground, and Nature Playground.

- **Parking Lot Level** – Admissions, café, restrooms, educational/ small animal exhibits, existing lemur exhibit, upper terrace dining/ park viewing, access to indoor play area (new west wing).
- **Lower Level** – Educational/ small animal exhibits, classroom/ meeting space, restrooms, circulation out to outdoor nature play plaza (south), plaza area (west), Critter Connection & KidZoo (east).
- **Third Level** – Office spaces.
- Expand parking north of the building.
- Additional sidewalk/ trail connections.



## Main Building - Character Imagery



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

Small indoor animal exhibits



New admissions/ information desk



An enhanced terrace for special events



Space for café and gift shop

## Main Building - Character Imagery



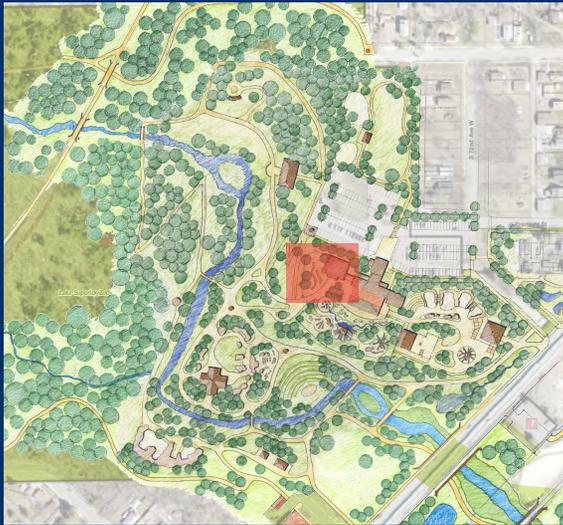
Education focus - develop habitat/nature exhibits for kids



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

Create small amphitheater or outdoor classroom area as an orientation or educational space for school groups on the east side of Critter Connection





## Indoor Playground

**Two-story indoor play area connected to the Main Building with North Shore/ North Woods theme.**

- New 3,000 sq. ft. footprint ( $\pm 50' \times 60'$ ), open 2-story building.
- Connection from main building as primary entrance (*allow access for service/ mechanicals below*).
- North Shore-themed play structures/ features.
- 2 small rental rooms for parties, etc.
- Restrooms.

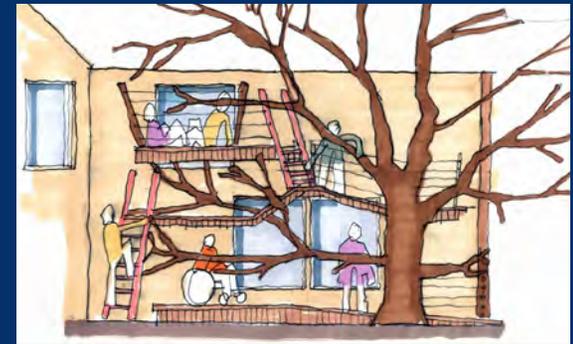
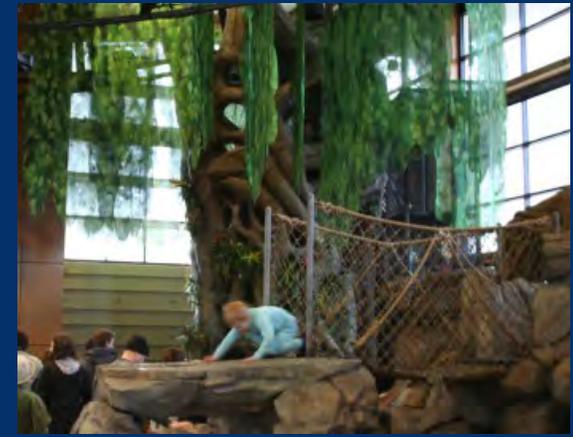


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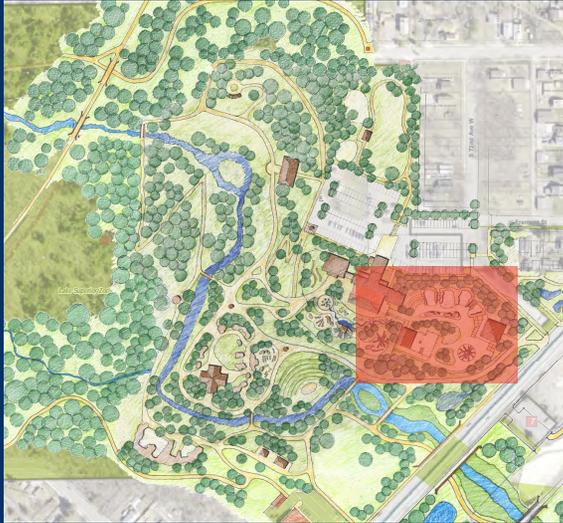
## Indoor Playground - Character Imagery



North Woods, nature-themed play space



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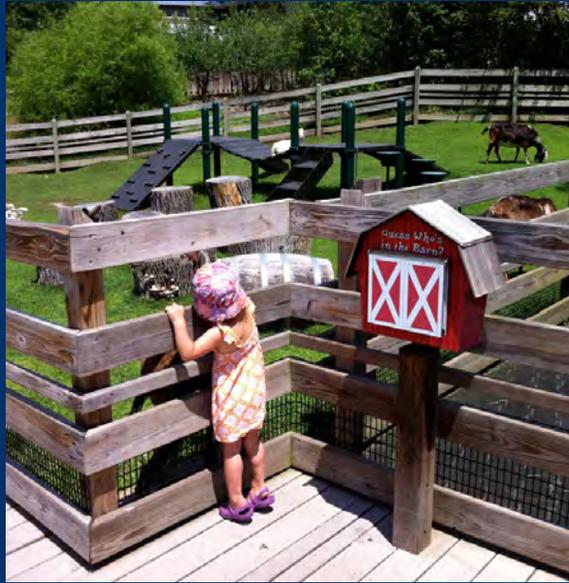
## KidZoo

2-acre, indoor/ outdoor zoo experience comprises four major exhibit areas:

- **Wild Neighbors** – Native Minnesota species such as bobcat, lynx, fox, and cougar. Exhibits focus on wild animals in the urban wilderness and how to coexist. Cat Climb outdoor parallel play space.
- **Primate Cousins** – Indoor primate exhibits focusing on the close kinship between people and wild primates. Monkey Tree outdoor parallel play space.
- **Critter Connection** – Indoor exhibits that provide hands-on animal experiences (in current Griggs building).
- **Farm Friends** – Indoor/outdoor farm animal exhibit featuring heritage livestock breeds adapted to cold northern climates.
- Small amphitheater for outdoor classroom and program space.



## KidZoo - Character Imagery



Maintain and enhance existing Primates exhibit



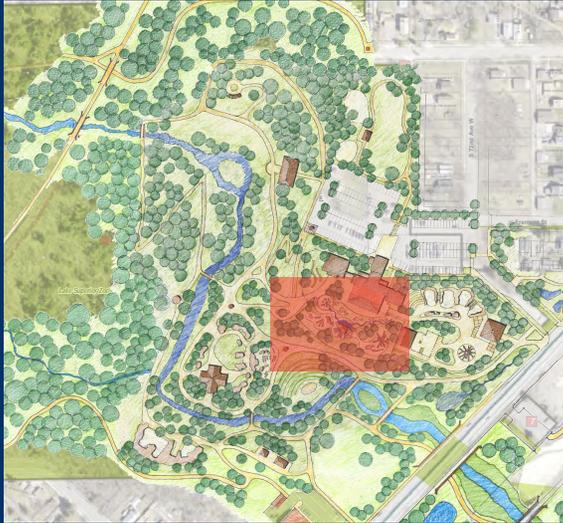
Petting zoo



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



Parallel play on themed zoo animals and habitats



## Nature Play Areas

An outdoor, North Shore-themed playground adjacent to the Main Building with water play features, climbing features, ropes, moveable natural elements, and hillside slides.

- Reuse portions of the tiger exhibit for play area and climbing structure.
- Create a water play feature (recirculating creek) with small splash pad at the headwaters
- Create a separate area for digging and building in sand with a hand water pump.
- Create a “logs and hollows” play area for moveable play elements (sticks, stumps, etc) to stack, build, etc.
- Create hillside slides adjacent to the indoor playground building



### Nature Playground

- Splash pad
- Recirculating Creek
- Climbing & Low Ropes
- Sand Digging/ Building
- Logs & Hollows Moveable Play Features
- Climbing Tree
- Climbing Rocks
- Hillside Slide



## Nature Play Areas - Character Imagery



Create a water play feature (recirculating creek) with small splash pad at the headwaters, hand pump, and sand area for digging and building.



Create an interactive stream area



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

## Nature Play Areas - Character Imagery



Natural materials and nature-themed play structures



Reuse the tiger exhibit for play area and climbing structure.

Utilize natural materials and nature-theme features.

## Nature Play Areas - Character Imagery

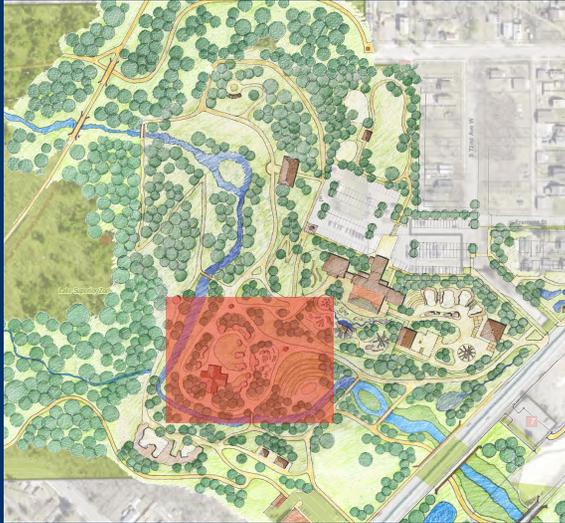


Create a "logs and hollows" play area for moveable play elements (sticks, stumps, etc) to stack, build, etc.



Utilize natural materials and nature-theme elements for a range of unique play features





## Creekside Signature Park

**A sloped grass amphitheater for outdoor gatherings, performance space and rentable shelters at former Polar Shores.**

- Repurpose Polar Shores exhibit for picnicking area. Retain portions of rock outcropping to frame picnic lawn and provide visual interest/ distinctive space.
- Demolish existing building and build new picnic pavilion as a rentable event space for 100-150 people.
- Add new playground nestled into the rock outcroppings on the east side.
- Create an open lawn amphitheater near the former playground/ picnic area to accommodate approximately 200-250 people.
- Add area for portable restrooms.



## *Creekside Signature Park - Character Imagery*



Transform Polar Shores into a distinctive, public gathering space



Reuse exhibit spaces for play areas where possible



Integrate new playground into east side remnant walls of former Polar Shores



New picnic pavilion/ building at former Polar Shores - 100-150 person capacity

## Creekside Signature Park - Character Imagery



Maintain a rustic and natural character to the small amphitheater



New nature-themed play structure for neighborhood use



Other gathering and event space is proposed through the park at picnic shelters, pavilions and event buildings.

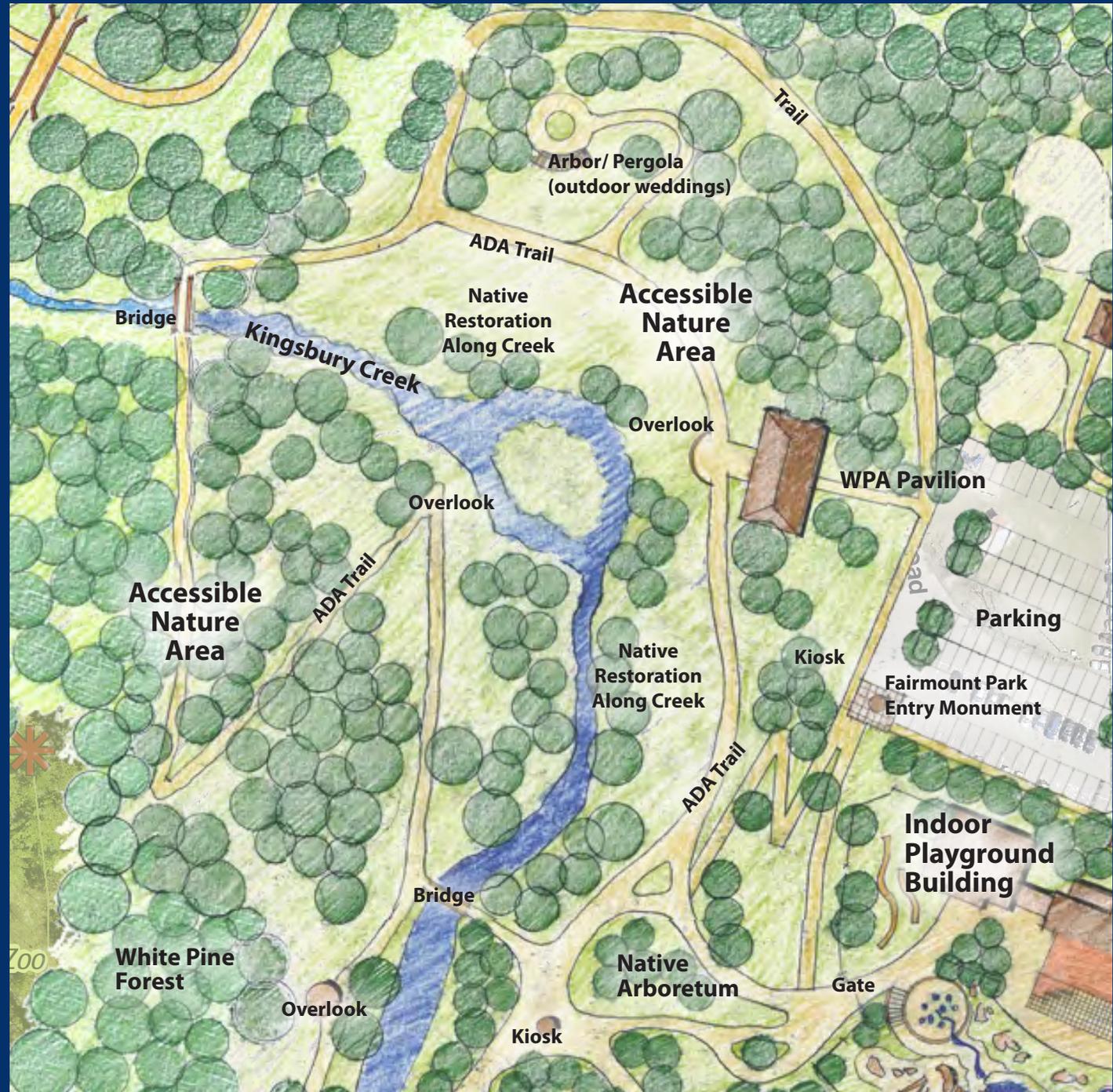




## Accessible Nature Area

**Develop a Minnesota-native arboretum program with interpretation.**

- Establish native trees, shrubs, and forbs and remove all non-native species.
- Create themed gardens based on micro climates and unique landscapes – e.g. river, prairie, big woods, white pine stands, wildflower meadows, etc.
- Reduce large areas of pavement, simplify trail network, pull trails away from creek for shoreline restoration and buffers.
- Plant a natural stream buffer along entire length of Kingsbury Creek, with strategic overlooks and alcoves for viewing.



## *Accessible Nature Area - Character Imagery*

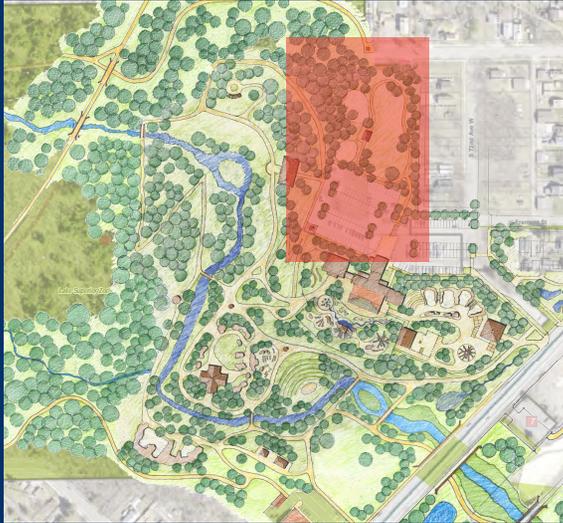


Showcase native Minnesota trees, shrubs and forbs and provide interactive experience through trails, walks, event space, interpretation, and art



Native gardens



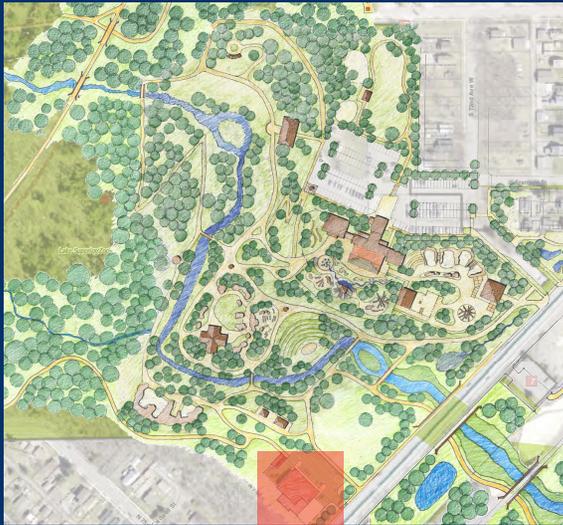


## Upper Terrace Picnic & Play Area

Establish unique areas for distinctive public event, picnic, and play space.

- North of Main Building, use open lawn for passive picnicking, pick-up games or neighborhood/ community events with surrounding trail loop and connection to Main Building.
- Relocate and upgrade the small playground.
- Add a 25-50 person picnic pavilion.
- Plant additional tree plantings along perimeter to buffer residential area.





## Trailhead & Animal Care Center

- Maintain Animal Care Center
- Create trailhead west of Animal Care Building with informational kiosk, event board, bike racks, waste receptacles, water source, etc.
- Expand parking on north and west side of building for shared Animal Care Center and trailhead use.
- Enhanced trail connections (DWP, WWT, Grand Avenue, internal Fairmount Park loops (along both sides of Kingsbury Creek)



## Other Features

- Enhanced entry to Fairmount Park at new signal on Grand Avenue and at the western parking lot entry.
- Expanded main parking lot with landscaping & lighting.
- Additional stormwater treatment facilities.
- Winter sledding hill (south of creek).
- Repurpose portions of zoo exhibits as outdoor educational classrooms or picnic areas with small open air pavilions (Asian Caravan, Bears, and Cougar).
- Renew and restore ADA accessible walking trails and bridges that provide access and accentuate the creek, cascades, mature pines, mix of meadows and trees groves in the heart of the park. Consider pedestrian scaled lighting along the primary trail loop along the creek.
- Decorate the park in the winter and create a holiday winter walking tour.
- Maintain passive park areas up the slopes to the west and to the north (Superior Hiking Trail & DWP Trail) with beginner and mid-level hiking loops connecting to the main trail network.



## *Other Features - Character Imagery*



Repurpose portions of zoo exhibits as educational classrooms or picnic areas with small open air pavilions.



Decorate the park in the winter – holiday winter walking tour



Community/ neighborhood gathering space for art fairs, festivals, etc.



Hiking loops

## Audience:

- Surrounding neighborhoods, West Duluth and greater Duluth residents
- Regional Tourism
- Young families with children, extended families (family reunions), school groups, Boy and Girls Scouts, YMCA
- Evenings and weekends – half to full days' worth of family and kid activities

## Income Potential:

- Kids Zoo (paid admission, feed the animals, special exhibits and events)
- Indoor play area (paid admission)
- Outdoor Nature Play Area adjacent to Kid Zoo (paid admission)
- Concessions and vending (café in renovated main building)
- Rental space – private events, birthday parties, etc. (main building, public picnic shelters and building)
- Rental space – conferences, meetings, wedding receptions (WPA pavilion)
- Amphitheater – concerts/ movies in the park, weddings
- 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:**

- Lake Superior Botanical Society (native arboretum)
- Duluth Community Garden
- 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)

## Project Cost:

- **\$10,250,000**
- Includes area north of Kingsbury Creek:
  - Main Building
  - Indoor Playground
  - KidZoo
  - Nature Play Areas
  - Creekside Signature Park
  - Accessible Nature Area
- Includes 10% contingency
  
- Does not include Upper Terrace Picnic & Play Area
- Does not include Trailhead & Animal Care Center Area