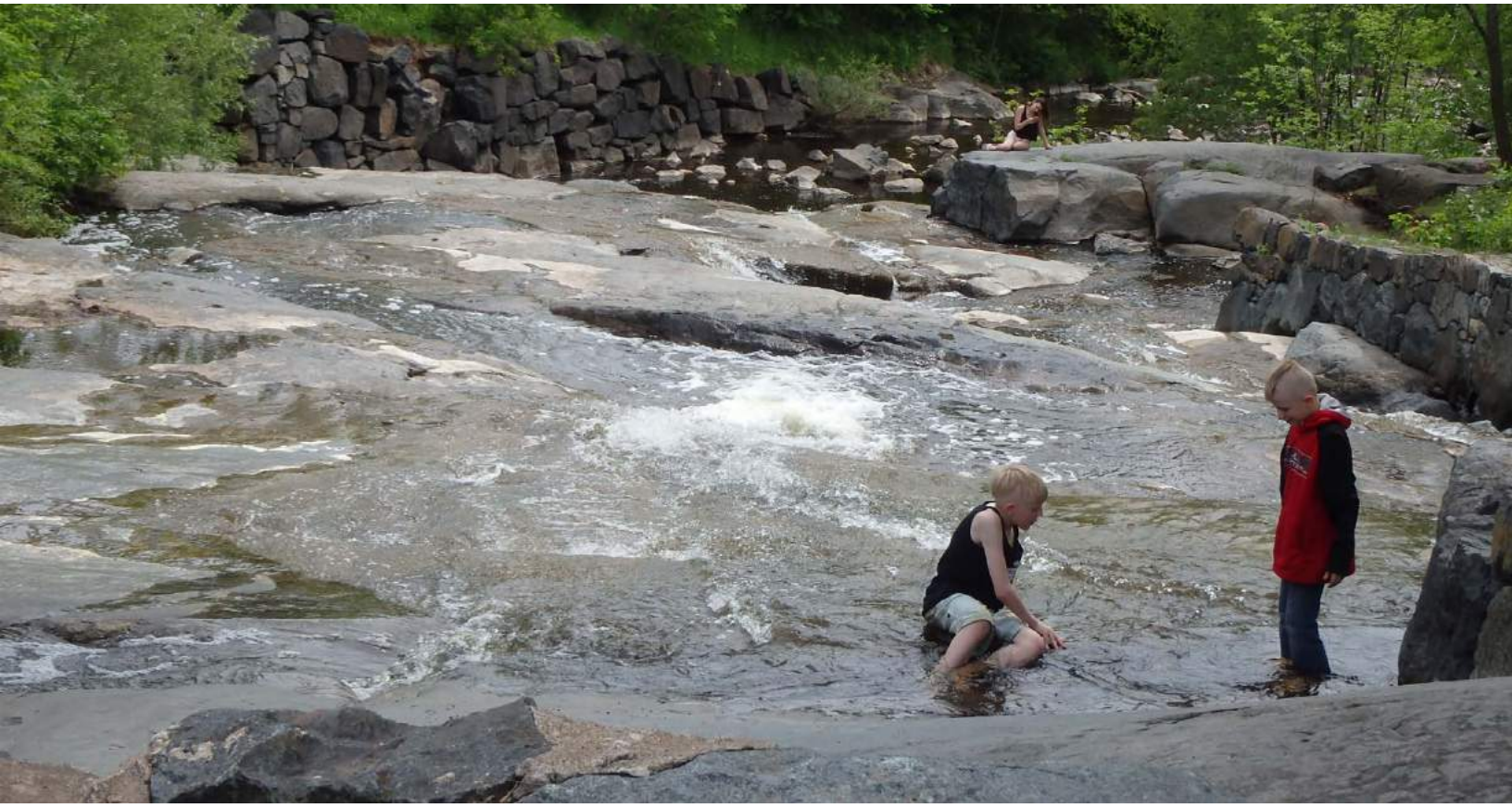
Lincoln Park | Mini Master Plan

City of Duluth | February 12, 2016



THE CITY OF DULUTH MINNESOTA

DULUTH PARKS
Fun Places. Great Spaces!

SRF LHB

Project Stakeholders & Contributors

City of Duluth Community Development

City of Duluth Parks and Recreation

Duluth Public Schools ISD 709

Duluth Police Department

Lincoln Park Business Group

Duluth Local Initiatives Support Corporation

St. Louis County Public Health & Safety Department

SRF and LHB

This plan was approved by the Parks Commission on 2/10/16 and the Duluth City Council voted to approve the final plan on 2/22/16.

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View in Lincoln Park at Twenty-fifth Avenue West.

History/Background

Lincoln Park is one of Duluth's oldest parks. It was established in 1896 and has remained one of the city's most naturalized community parks with Miller Creek and its scenic rock ravine being the signature feature of the park. The surrounding steep topography of the 35 acre park provides a buffer with the surrounding residential neighborhoods to further enhance its intimate feel.

In the early to mid 1900's, the park was a favorite place for picnics and large gathering events, and was a popular place to stroll along the secluded creek paths. It was one of the first parks in the city to begin to address meeting the recreational needs for children by offering a skating rink and playground.

Over the years, its popularity as a gathering place also attracted problems and unwanted after hours activities. The great depression in the early 1930's also provided challenges for maintaining the park. Through the Emergency Relief Administration and the Civil Works Administration a new stone pavilion was constructed near the south end of the park to support performances of the annual Midsummer Festival which was the signature event held in the park through 1949.

Subsequent years have provided more challenges for addressing maintenance needs in the park because of aging infrastructure and storm events which have caused extensive flood damage over the years. Recent sources of FEMA funding secured after the 2012 flood and volunteer efforts have helped maintained some of the soft surface trail systems and managing the spread of invasive plant material in the park.

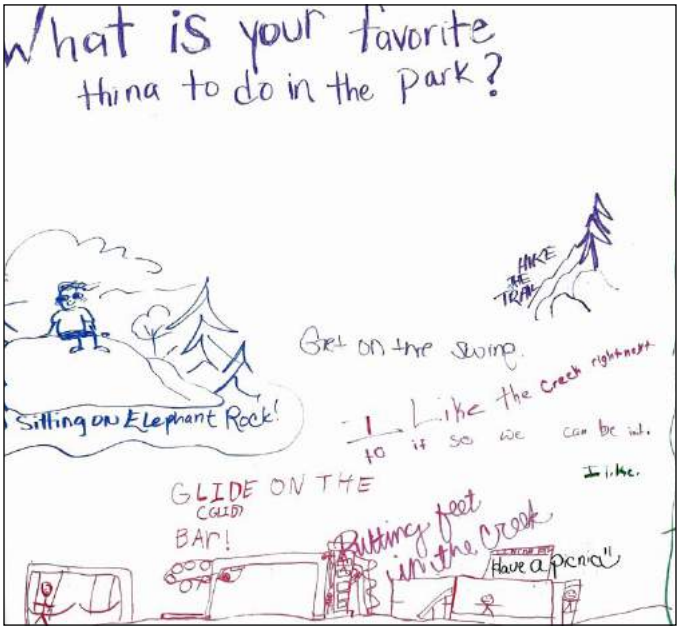
FEMA 2016 Restoration Plan

Recommendations in this mini master plan have taken into consideration construction efforts being implemented in 2016 from the 2012 flood which are focused on the shoreline restoration of Miller Creek, and it's associated flood plain. Master plan improvements have been proposed to complement and enhance these new improvement areas and avoid impacts after construction is completed. While future flooding will always be a threat to any new improvements being made in the park, avoiding constructing new improvements in the flood plain should minimize damage during any future flood event.

Master Planning Process

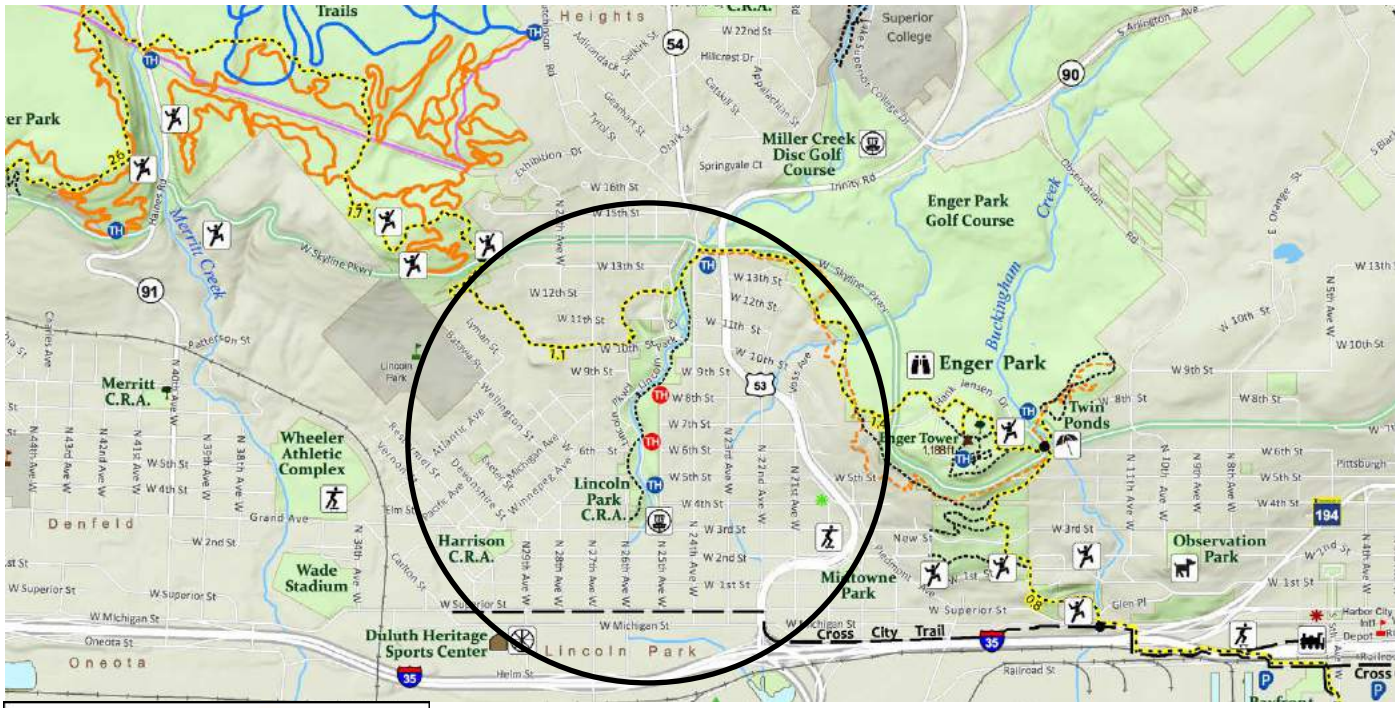
This master planning effort engaged a wide variety of stakeholders in the master planning process which included a City Staff task force and engaging the general public in two open houses to gather input and feedback during the planning process. Additional public outreach was solicited by City Staff during the Lincoln Park *Meet on the Street* event where ideas and input where provided on white boards held during the block part event. The following timeline of meetings were held during the master planning process:

- **June 10, 2015 – Task Force Meeting –** Site Visit Tour with City Staff
- **July 19th – Meet on the Street Event –** Public input solicitation at block party about what amenities and programming residents would like to see in the park
- **August 25th – Public Open House Meeting #1 –** Preliminary Park Ideas and Feedback
- **November 11th – Public Open House Meeting #2 –** Preliminary Park Recommendations and Feedback



Regional and Site Context

Lincoln Park is centrally located within the Lincoln Park neighborhood which is one of the largest residential districts in the City. The park is surrounded by mostly single family homes with some rental housing on the east side of the park. Lincoln Park Drive connects to West Skyline Parkway to the north and West 3rd Street to the south. The Superior Hiking Trail (SHT) is currently aligned through the north end of the park and the future Duluth Traverse Trail will also travel through the north end of the park with an alignment still to be finalized. The current proposed alignment for the future Cross City Trail does not intersect with the park but efforts should be made to establish a spur trail connection to improve pedestrian and bike connections to Lincoln Park from other areas of the City.



Skyline Parkway
Lincoln Park
Duluth Traverse Trail
Superior Hiking Trail
Cross City Trail
W 3rd St
Lincoln Park Neighborhood
Image Landsat

Existing Conditions/Issues & Opportunities

While Lincoln Park remains a popular place to visit for local residents who live in close proximity to the park, it currently is not programmed to host large group social gatherings or events as it once did. Many reasons can be attributed to this including a lack of parking, inadequate restroom facilities, and limited operations and maintenance resources. However, the park still has many unique attributes including Miller Creek's cascading water features and the surrounding natural character which make the park a well known recreation destination in the City.

Many opportunities exist for improving the park to better meet the needs of park user groups. These include:

- **Repair existing park infrastructure to reduce short and long term maintenance**
- **Upgrade park destination areas to improve safety and meet ADA accessibility requirements**
- **Introduce updated park amenities to better serve the needs of children, adult, and senior park user groups.**
- **Increase visibility and improve access to the Duluth Traverse and Superior Hiking Trail system.**

NORTH
(Passive Use)
MIDDLE
(Passive Use)
SOUTH
(Active Use)
Incorporate proposed Duluth Traverse mountain bike trail
Establish bike/pedestrian trail loop circulation along 10th and Lincoln Parkway and connect to park trails
Maintain existing Miller Creek trail system, establish loop connections with new trail along road alignment
Establish bike/pedestrian circulation only between N 25th Ave W and Lincoln Parkway access
Maintain two way roadway connection from park entrance to Lincoln Parkway access. Provide better defined parking areas.
Identify opportunities for improving recreational programming on upper terrace
Create more visible and accessible pedestrian access from 25th Avenue
Identify opportunities for creating natural play area near Elephant Rock
Relocate larger destination playground structure to south side of park entrance road
Enhance park programming opportunities adjacent to park building
Restore shoreline edge along Miller Creek
LEGEND
Park Boundary
Lincoln Park Trail
Superior Hiking Trail
Miller Creek
Open Areas
Wooded Areas
Playground
Parkway Road Circulation
New Trail Circulation
Piedmont Ave
Piedmont Ave / Hwy 53
W 12th St
W 11th St
W 10th St
W 9th St
W 8th St
W 7th St
W 6th St
W 5th St
W 4th St
W 3rd St
N 22nd Ave W
N 23rd Ave W
N 24th Ave W
N 25th Ave W
N 26th Ave W
N 27th Ave W
Lincoln Park Drive
Lincoln Parkway
Superior Hiking Trail
Miller Creek
Pacific Avenue
Grand Forks Avenue
Wellington St

Existing Conditions | **North Segment**

Existing Conditions | **Middle Segment**

Existing Conditions | **South Segment**

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Park Infrastructure

Much of the park's existing aging infrastructure is in need of repair or replacement to help reduce its continual short and long term maintenance needs. The following site observations were made on some of the existing infrastructure in the park.

Roadway paving and shoulders in poor condition throughout park

Lack of wayfinding and well defined trail access points within park

Lack of defined parking areas and pedestrian circulation along Lincoln Park Drive

Retaining wall Infrastructure in need of tuck pointing repair or replacement

Poor approach sight lines for vehicular and pedestrian traffic at 10th Street bridge underpass

No operational restroom facilities in pavilion building

Accessibility

Many destination areas in the park do not meet ADA accessibility requirements and improvements should be made to meet the needs of physically challenged park visitors where possible. Identifying opportunities to improve access from parking areas and along walkways which provide access to park building facilities, playground, and picnic areas should be accommodated with all future site improvements.

Steep grades around perimeter of park limit ADA access opportunities from surrounding neighborhoods

Existing playground does not meet ADA accessibility requirements

Park Amenities

Many of the park's existing amenities have been retrofitted to be accommodated around the park's existing roadway circulation, challenging steep terrain, and Miller Creek flood plain. Efforts should be made to organize active and passive use areas in the park so conflicts can be minimized between pedestrian and vehicular traffic and park user groups and activities.

Existing disc golf course is a popular activity for park user groups

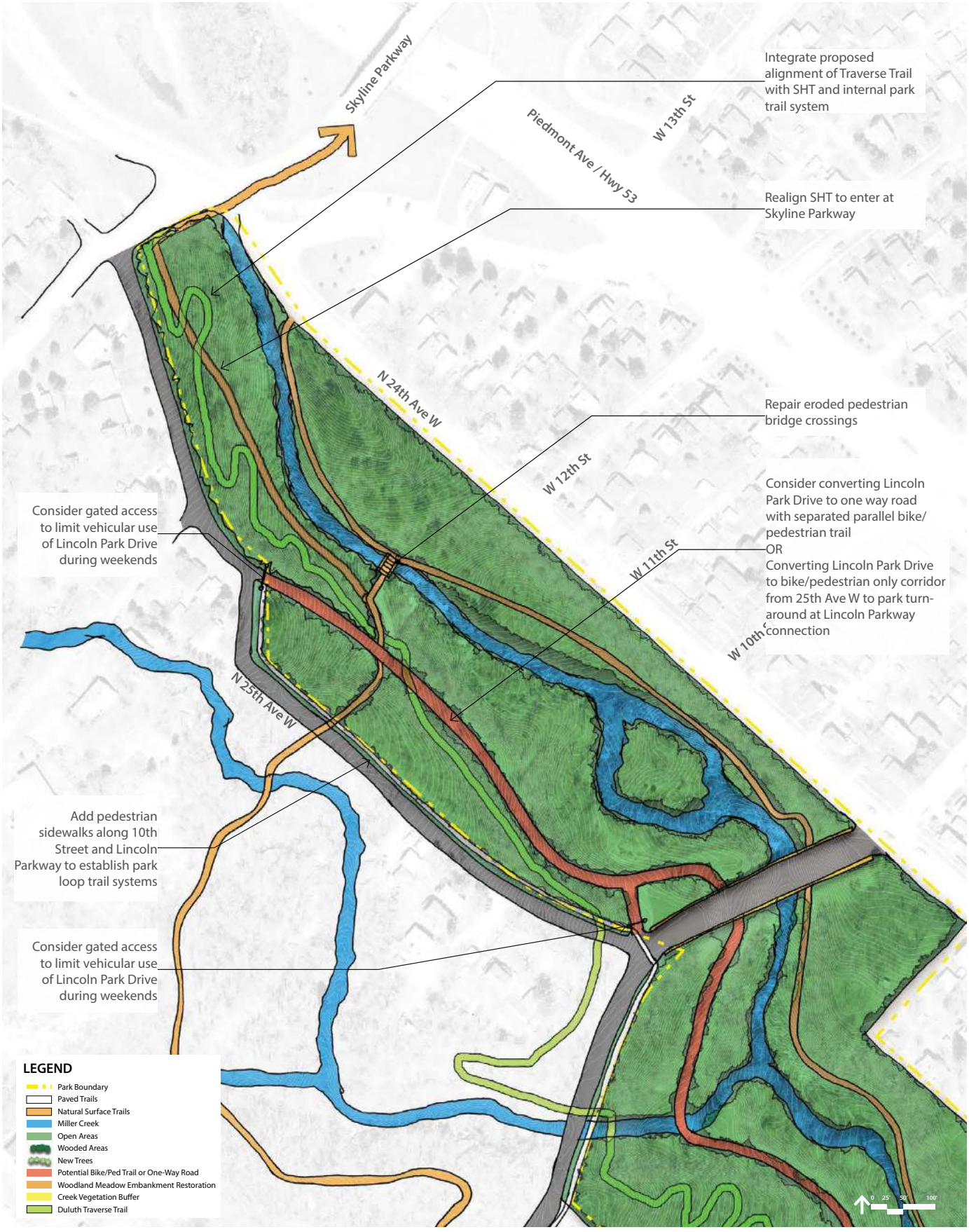
Upper terrace athletic field in poor condition and is disconnected from other park amenities and activities

Existing playground is separated from existing gathering and picnic areas

Continue to maintain easy access to Miller Creek bed for water play

Mini Master Plan Recommendations

North Segment



Middle Segment

South Segment

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Lincoln Park Drive Entrance Realignment and Off Street Parking Accommodations

A new off street parking lot is proposed in the location of the existing playground by completing a slight realignment of Lincoln Park Drive. This will provide a more defined arrival space for the park and include a way finding kiosk to orient visitors to picnic areas, trail systems, and new playground facilities without having to cross Lincoln Park Drive. A small boardwalk overlook is also proposed along the creek to provide better views of the Miller Creek outfalls. A smaller off street parking lot and turn around area is also proposed near elephant rock to serve the needs of the natural play and picnic area.

Restoration of WPA pavilion

With a desire to attract more visitors, providing running water and flush toilet facilities should be addressed at the park. The existing restroom facilities located in the WPA pavilion have not been used since the 2014 arson fire and efforts should be made to complete repairs or incorporate new restrooms in a new picnic shelter adjacent to the playground. After the pavilion is repaired, efforts should continue to place the building on the National Register of Historic Places. To minimize risks for future vandalism at the restroom building, the addition of security lighting and highly visibile cameras will help prevent unwanted after hours activities in the park. Organizing volunteer neighborhood watch group patrols can also help deter crime and illegal dumping activities occurring in the park.

Playground and Picnic Area

A new and more expansive playground area is proposed on the south side of Miller Creek to better integrate it with the existing picnic open space and shelter, restroom facilities, and trail circulation connected to a new natural play area with climbing boulders, tree fort building area, and informal picnic area with a small shelter near elephant rock.

Upper Terrace Active Use Area

The upper terrace athletic field area on the east side of the park is somewhat disconnected from the rest of the park because of its higher elevation and primary access along 25th Avenue. The existing stone clad retaining wall is also failing and in need of short term repair or long term replacement. Other recommendations call for an expanded parking lot which can support overflow parking for the rest of the park, restoration of the athletic field turf area, the addition of half court basketball, and establishing a new, more direct stair connection to the lower parking lot and adjacent park amenities.

Disc Golf Course

Lincoln Park is host to a popular 9-hole Disc Golf Course. Suggested park improvements will alter the existing course. Parks staff, along with contractors working on the improvements, will work directly with the Duluth Disc Golf Club on the removal and relocation of the existing disc golf infrastructure. The user group and Park staff will work together to identify the optimal course reconfiguration.

Vegetation Restoration

With a majority of Lincoln Park maintained as a natural resource environment, continual efforts should be made for managing the removal of invasive plant material in the park and restoring its upland and floodplain native plant communities. Turf areas are only recommended to be maintained within active use areas around the pavilion, playground and picnic areas and steeper lawn embankments restored to native woodland and meadow plant communities to reduce operations and maintenance needs for the park.

Rethinking Lincoln Park Drive

As Lincoln Drive transitions to the north end of the park, it provides access to Lincoln Parkway, 10th Street, and 25th Avenue West which run parallel with the south boundary of the park. As a long term recommendation, several options were studied for how Lincoln Park Drive could be modified to better accommodate bike and pedestrian use and contribute towards establishing more looped trail systems within the park.

Preliminary Recommendation

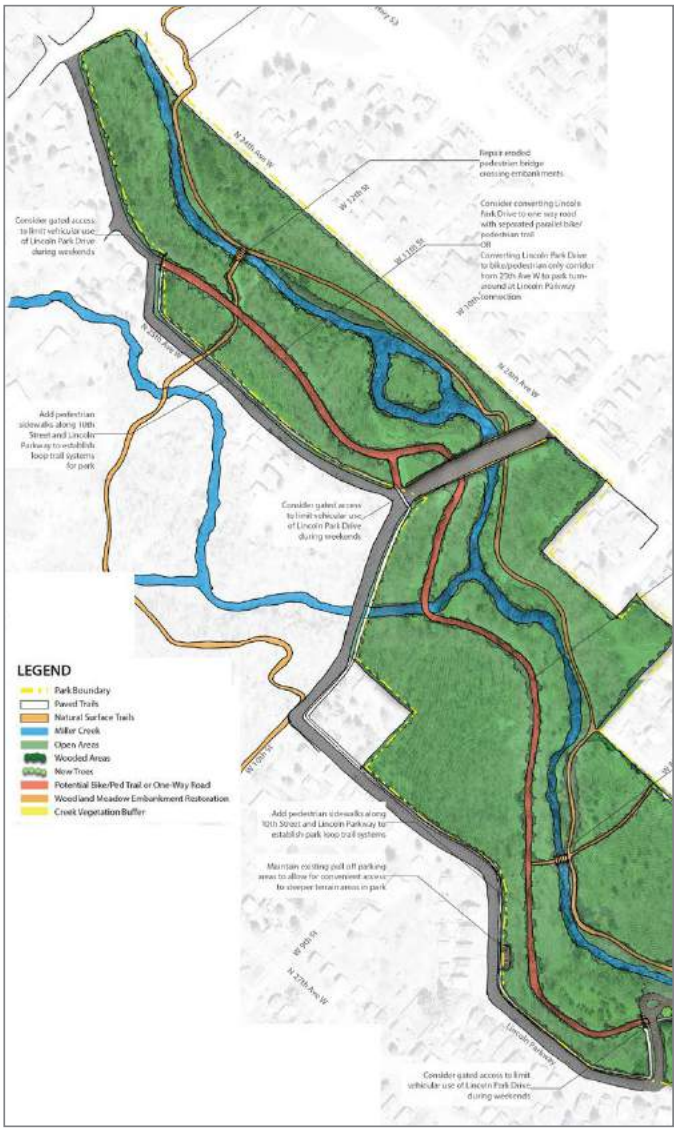
As a recommended first step to evaluating temporary closure of Lincoln Park Drive to vehicle traffic on the north end of the park, gates could be installed at the 25th Avenue W, 10th and 7th Street entries to allow for the drive to be closed for limited periods of time (time to be determined) and dedicated toward bicycle and pedestrian use. The installation of gates at these entrances could also help discourage unwanted after hours activities currently taking place in this area of the park.

Option A

This option considers converting Lincoln Park Drive to a one way road (direction to be determined by additional traffic study) and dedicating a separated trail to accommodate bike and pedestrian traffic.

Option B

This option considers converting Lincoln Park Drive to a designated bike and pedestrian trail system with the bike trail designed to accommodate police and fire emergency vehicle use.



OPTION A: *One-way vehicle traffic, vegetated buffer, and combined bicycle/pedestrian trail*

OPTION B: *Bicycle trail, vegetated buffer, and pedestrian trail*

Preliminary Phasing Plan and Cost Estimate

The following cost estimate and phasing plan is intended to be used as a long term strategy for planning and implementing site improvements at Lincoln Park as well as a tool for soliciting grant funding. Short and long term improvements are identified based on needs and priorities established for the park and efficiencies for implementing improvements in concentrated focus areas. Some variability in the sequence of site improvements may occur depending on how funding sources are secured. Estimates are preliminary and all identified improvements will require additional detailed review to generate more accurate construction costs. Estimates are based on 2016 construction costs. Add 5% inflation rate per year for construction costs beyond 2016.

PHASE 1 IMPROVEMENTS (1-3 YEARS)				
Structured Playground	1	LS	Pre K and K-5 play containers	$275,000
Natural Play Area	1	LS	boulder scramble, tree fort building area	$25,000
Concrete Walk Circulation (6' wide)	1,000	LF	connecting to structured playground	$36,000
Gravel Walk Circulation (6' wide)	600	LF	connecting to natural play area	$10,800
Site Furnishings	1	LS	benches and picnic tables	$15,000
Landscape Enhancements	1	LS	tree planting, seed, and sod restoration	$25,000
Repair Upper Terrrace Stone Face Retaining Wall	2,100	SF	mortar and tuck point repair	$63,000
Repair Modular Block Retaining Wall	250	SF	modular block replacement	$12,000
Repair Eroded Embankments at Pedestrian Bridge Crossings Along Creek Trail	1	LS	2 bridge crossing locations	$5,000
WPA Pavilion Restoration	1	LS	roof and restroom repairs	$125,000
Gate Entrance at 25th Avenue & W 10th & 7th	3	LS	manual gate	$15,000
Sub Total				**$606,800**
Contingency, Design, and Administration (25%)				$151,700
Total				**$758,500**

PHASE 2 IMPROVEMENTS (4-6 YEARS)				
Large Picnic Shelter Adjacent to Stuctured Playground	1	LS	accommodates 20-25 people	$75,000
Small Picnic Shelter near adjacent to Natural Play Area	1	LS	accommodates 10-15 people	$35,000
Site Furnishings	1	LS	benches and picnic tables	$10,000
Parking Lot on North Side of Lincoln Park Drive	870	SY	20-25 spaces adjacent to existing pavilion	$34,800
Parking Lot on South side of Lincoln Park Drive	200	SY	10-12 spaces adjacent to natural play area	$8,000
Boardwalk and Overlook Along Miller Creek	600	SF	north side of creek	$30,000
Gravel Walk Circulation along Miller Creek	500	LF	north side of creek	$9,000
Wayfinding Kiosk and Directional Signage	1	LS	locate at parking lot and along trail system	$15,000
Woodland Meadow Embankment Restoration	1.2	AC	at park entrance along Lincoln Park Drive	$18,000
New Trail Connection into Park from 3rd Street West	680	LF	connect to existing park trail system	$24,500
Landscape Enhancements	1	LS	tree planting, seed, and sod restoration	$25,000
Sub Total				**$284,300**
Contingency, Design, and Administration (25%)				$71,075
Total				**$355,375**

PHASE 3 IMPROVEMENTS (7-9 YEARS)				
Parking Lot on Upper Terrace Actrive Use Area	1,090	SY	20-25 spaces	$43,600
Half Court Basketball	2	EA	10' high hoop and 8' high hoop court	$44,000
Realigned Walk and Stair Access to Lower Terrace	200	LF	align with new lower parking lot location	$7,200
Fine Grade and Restablish Turf on Open Field Area	1.1	AC	does not include irrigation	$16,250
Replace Chain Link Fencing on top of Retaining Wall	330	LF	includes removals	$9,900
Sub Total				**$120,950**
Contingency, Design, and Administration (25%)				$30,328
Total				**$151,188**

LONG TERM IMPROVEMENTS (10+ YEARS)				
Repave Lincoln Park Drive (W 3rd Street to West 7th)	3,067	SY	includes removals 500' of road to be realigned to north side of main parking lot	$111,933
Turn Around Drive at Lincoln Parkway Entrance	1	LS	includes controlled gate entrance	$10,000
Repave Lincoln Park Drive (W 7th to West Skyline Parkway)	4,267	SY	includes removals	$155,733
Add 6' Walk Extensions Along W 10th and Lincoln Parkway	2,050	LF	connect to existing park trails	$73,800
Add 6' Walk Extension along 25th Ave W up to West 8th S	1,000	LF	connect to existing park trails	$36,000
Sub Total				**$387,466**
Contingency, Design, and Administration (25%)				$96,867
Total				**$484,3336**

TOTAL FOR ALL PARK IMPROVEMENTS				
				$1,749,396

Operations and Maintenance Costs

By beginning to repair and replace older park amenities and infrastructure, short and long term maintenance costs will initially begin to decrease in some areas of the park and then begin to increase again when life cycle costs will require new improvements to be made in the park. The restoration and management of natural resources will also require a long term investment strategy in order to improve the overall quality of vegetation and wildlife habitat in the park. The following base level operations and maintenance costs are anticipated to be expended at Lincoln Park on a yearly basis based on overall master plan recommendations.

ANNUAL OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE COSTS			
Washrooms	1	LS	$18,400
Porta Potties	1	LS	$4,871
Snow Removal	1	LS	$2,660
Trash Removal	1	LS	$4,200
Spring Clean Up	1	LS	-
Mowing	1	LS	$4,600
Tree Work	1	LS	$3,917
Stair Maintenace	1	LS	$3,172
Playground Maintenace	1	LS	$2,871
Site Furnishings	1	LS	$4,017
Trail Maintenace	1	LS	$5,130
Safety	1	LS	$3,497
Total			**$57,335**