



CITY OF HOPKINS

PARK SYSTEM PLAN

2023

CREATING A 20-YEAR VISION FOR
THE HOPKINS PARK SYSTEM







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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHY

Hopkins is a Twin Cities first ring suburb with a small town feel. The city is in an era of growth. Three new light rail transit stops are currently being built which has ushered in a rush of residential and some commercial construction.

New apartments and residences are being built in semi-urban infill. With these new incoming residents the City's population is anticipated to grow by 10% in the next five years. Hopkins is becoming more diverse over time and that regional trend is anticipated to accelerate locally. Changing demographics typically include different park and recreation needs, which has been verified by community engagement feedback.

Current parks serve the community well from a location and distribution standpoint. The Trust for Public Land's ParkServe ranks Hopkins highly, indicating that 90.6% of the population is served by a walkable park.

The City's land area is 4 square miles, and renters make up over 65% of the housing units. As the population grows and the city becomes more dense and diverse, there are limited opportunities to expand and develop parks to meet the growing need. Existing parks need to do more work within their current space. Accommodate more users, a greater variety of activities, flexible for multiple events and uses, more durable, resistant to climate change, and more connected to Hopkins' residents. This Park System Plan outlines a vision and framework to make that happen.

The Park System Plan provides a **twenty-year vision** for Hopkins, serving as a guiding document for park system infrastructure and programming. It starts by exploring and identifying the recreational opportunities that citizens desire. The plan also includes implementation tools and schedules to establish priorities and timelines.

Hopkins Parks adequately serve the population now. But based on age of equipment, range of play and recreation opportunities, and the diversifying needs of a growing population, we know that the parks won't meet future needs. This plan seeks to envision what the future parks of Hopkins could be, inspire community support, galvanize action to improve the parks, and instill a sense of ownership and pride in the park system.

Future success will hinge on Hopkins' ability to raise funds and form partnerships toward these park improvements. We know that parks are an important part of a thriving community and this plan establishes goals and creates a framework to ensure they remain a vital part of the city moving forward. If done right, parks can be a source of community pride, nurture health and wellness, and add to quality of life.

HOW

Hopkins, like many cities, has a limited budget and multiple infrastructure and programming needs. Addressing every opportunity and issue in the parks is not feasible. This Park System Plan worked with the public to define clear **priorities**. These priorities will guide the City in making decisions as they start to evolve the park system to meet the needs of modern Hopkins. Public priorities were turned into **Key Themes**. When it is time to implement concepts and ideas from this report, these themes will be the guardrails to keep future choices in alignment with the plan. These themes are summarized and described on the next page.

A key concept of this Park System Plan is to treat the parks and recreation as an **essential city service**. Parks are vital to Hopkins high quality of life and the park system needs appropriate investment to ensure needs are met. Additionally, parks should be held accountable for decisions and funding choices such as, tracking spending and goal setting to evaluate outcomes. The intent is to maximize the highest cost-benefit of tax dollar spending on parks.

The Park System Plan includes **concept design drawings** for key parks that are based on the community identified priorities. This gives staff and the community a perspective on how their parks can evolve to be more essential for all of Hopkins' residents.

Lastly, a flexible Action Framework is included as a tangible guide for implementation that uses the key priorities and park concept plans as a goal. The Action Framework is organized around eight categories with flexible goals, strategies, timelines, and general cost impacts.

Action Framework Categories:

- Parks are Essential
- Basic Park Services
- Flexible Fields and Diamonds
- Courts and Sports
- Play for All
- Skateparks and All-wheel Facilities
- Green Resilience
- Investment in the Future



Figure 0.1: Community Engagement was a vital element in crafting the Park System Plan.

Key Themes



Racial Equity

Park facilities and programs are high quality and culturally relevant for BIPOC residents.



Park Accessibility

Reduce barriers to park amenities for all park users and mobility levels.



Gathering & Community Building

Build community with neighborhood and city-wide gathering facilities.



Parks for All

Provide opportunities for passive and active recreation that suit a broad range of users.



Focus on Quality

Revitalize existing fields, facilities, courts, and playgrounds.

VISION

Hopkins has high quality parks that serve all users and are equitable, accessible, and build community by bringing people together.

MISSION

Hopkins will prioritize parks as an essential city service that provides exceptional and accessible experiences for all residents in a sustainable manner by leveraging our uniqueness, dynamic community partnerships, and diversity.



HOPKINS PARK SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The Park System Plan is focused primarily on outdoor parks in the City of Hopkins. Facilities are analyzed as they relate to and support the overall system. There are no assessment or design recommendations for indoor facilities in this plan.

Trails, both local and regional, are analyzed as they support and connect to the overall system, or if there are gaps and deficiencies that need to be addressed. A separate alternative transportation or trails plan is recommended to complement the Park System Plan.

Partnering facilities are identified and analyzed as they support Hopkins' Park System, but are not individually approached in this document.

PARKS

- 1 ELMO PARK
- 2 HILLTOP PARK
- 3 MAETZOLD FIELD
- 4 CENTRAL PARK
- 5 DOWNTOWN PARK
- 6 BURNES PARK
- 7 HARLEY HOPKINS
- 8 OAKES PARK

- # = Park with Concept Plan
- 9 HIAWATHA OAKS
- 10 COTTAGEVILLE
- 11 INTERLACHEN PARK
- 12 BUFFER PARK
- 13 PARK VALLEY
- 14 VALLEY PARK
- 15 SHADY OAK BEACH

POTENTIAL SPACES

- 16 11th AVE SOUTH
- 17 HOPKINS LANDFILL

ACTIVATION AREAS

- A ARTERY / 8th AVE TRAIL
- B CLOCK TOWER PLAZA
- C CENTER FOR THE ARTS PLAZA

SCHOOL PARKS (PARTIALLY PUBLIC AMENITIES)

- D EISENHOWER ELEMENTARY
- E ALICE SMITH ELEMENTARY
- F UBAH ACADEMY
- G HARLEY HOPKINS EARLY CHILDHOOD BUILDING

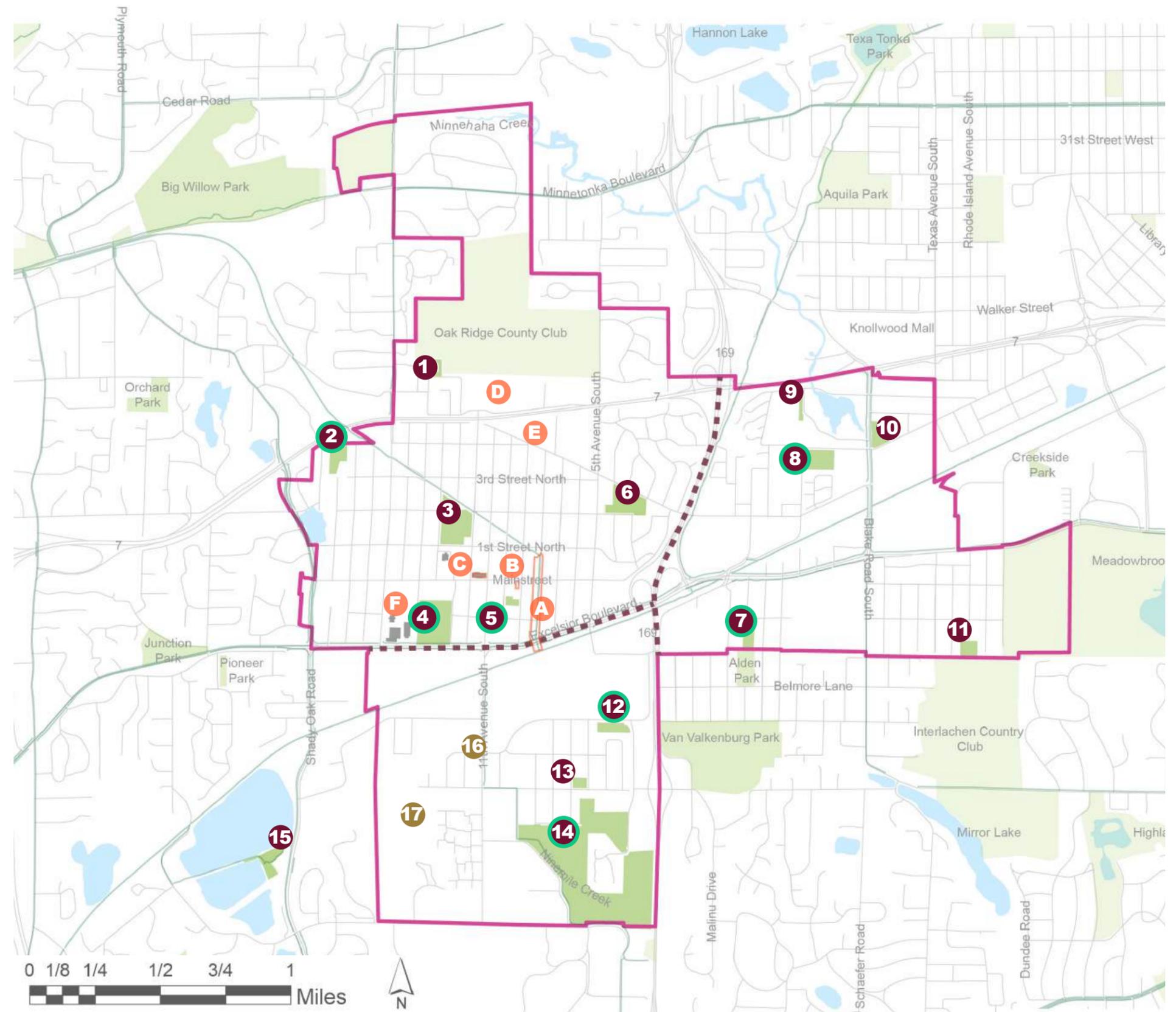


Figure 0.1: Park System Overview Map



01

PROJECT & PLANNING PROCESS

ENVISIONING THE NEXT 20 YEARS OF ENHANCING HOPKINS PARKS AND RECREATION

CHAPTER CONTENTS

INTRO + PURPOSE

THE DOCUMENT + PROCESS

RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

INTRO + PURPOSE

The City of Hopkins (“City”) is a tight-knit community with unique characteristics and needs. The city is perhaps best known for historic Mainstreet and the compact downtown, as well as the iconic raspberry festival. Hopkins is a compact and walkable community of four square miles. About ninety-one percent of homes are within a 10-minute walk to a park, which is above the US average and a great foundation for accessibility. Hopkins’s population is also growing with many new apartment buildings under construction. With these new incoming residents the City’s population is anticipated to grow by ten percent in the next five years.

This plan was developed in collaboration with city staff, and aims to comprehensively build consensus within the community on a shared vision. This Park System Plan provides guidance to city departments interacting with parks and the community to prioritize programs and projects to best utilize the City’s limited resources and bring the vision of this plan into reality. The Park System Plan complements and works with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and focuses fully on the valuable Park System in the City. This Plan address regulatory planning requirements for the Metropolitan Council and provides a Vision to transform the Park System into an essential city service that distinctly contributes to Hopkins’ high quality of life.



THE DOCUMENT + PROCESS

The Park System Master plan process was comprised of the following FIVE major phases:

THE PARKS HOPKINS HAS

Park System Inventory

In an effort of building knowledge and understanding existing conditions and the community of Hopkins, the project team completed a thorough inventory and analysis of existing facilities, community demographics, recreational programming, privately-owned public spaces (POPS). This included operations, maintenance, and administrative/ operations systems.

THE PARKS HOPKINS NEEDS

Park System Needs Assessment

The project team analyzed the Park System's amenities and services as related to benchmark communities, and the accepted national standards to identify where the current park system can be improved. Using the inventory as a basis, then community engagement and focus groups were carried out to better understand the needs of the community and park users.

An extensive community engagement strategy collected the needs, hopes, likes, and dislikes of the community. A broad range of data was collected from a series of focus groups, meetings with city staff, stakeholder dialogues, and virtual engagement opportunities.

These analyses examine the existing community and anticipated the next twenty years based on anticipated demographic, economic, and social changes and how this relates to park needs.

PARK SYSTEM VISION

Where do we want to go?

This understanding is then translated into priority themes and a vision for the Park System to transform.

The Vision establishes Vision and Mission Statements for the Park System and identifies Priority Themes to focus on in the near term to enact critical improvements for the Park System.



VISUALIZING HOPKINS' FUTURE PARKS

Park Concept Plans and Recommendations

The next phase translates the Vision into concepts for key Hopkins Parks in order to visualize what the transformed Park System could look like.

Hopkins wanted seven parks to be conceptually planned to show what the future of Hopkins parks could be and inspire support for investment in parks. These seven parks are a representative sampling of Hopkins Parks, and range from compact Downtown Park to mid-sized Central Park, to Valley Park, a community park with big potential. Additionally, Hopkins Center for the Arts plaza received a concept integrating key Placemaking concepts to activate this important spot on Mainstreet. Lastly, strategies for addressing

Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) to maximize contributions to the Park System were explored and identified.

HOW DO WE GET THERE

How do we get where we want to go? Implementation

Finally, this plan includes an implementation strategy that will guide decision-making, prioritize investments, and optimize maintenance of the park system.

The implementation plan provides a written framework for how to take the visions to reality. A critical part of implementation is developing funding strategies to enable Hopkins to finance these improvements.

For Hopkins, racial equity and an adaptive framework are particularly critical as the city is growing and diversifying. This plan will provide a flexible framework to ensure future park improvements are guided by an equity analysis that will help staff prioritize which parks need more attention from an equity standpoint. The priority themes and vision will help align investments with agreed upon priorities as well.

A racial equity analysis is included as part of implementation, and we anticipate that this will become an important part of how investments in parks are prioritized going forward.

The resulting vision identifies park development and capital investment priorities, and a strategic financial plan for implementation. Lastly, best practices are identified to ensure the park system is managed and maintained sustainably and equitably to meet the challenges of climate change and population growth.

PROJECT TIMELINE

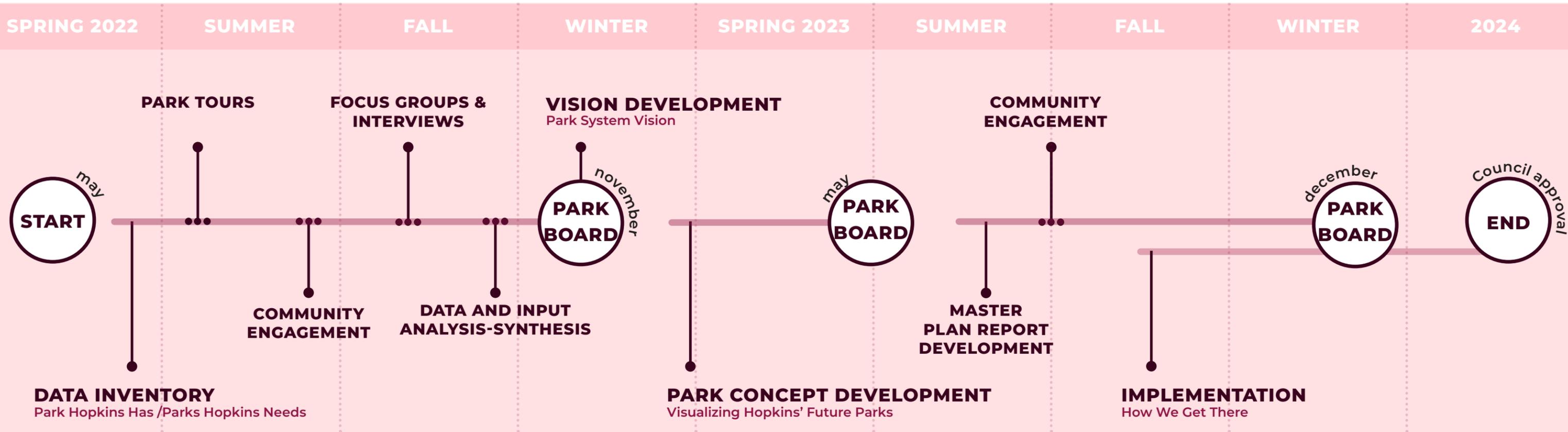


Figure 1.1. Project timeline graphic

RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

The Park System Plan does not exist in a vacuum. It is developed and informed by previous planning work and overall City Vision. The Park System plans integrates previously completed work throughout this document, identifies future studies and planning work that would benefit the Park System, and discusses integration with ongoing parallel plans. Previously completed studies impact the Park System Plan's recommendations and Vision at a planning and philosophical level, and at a physical level for park infrastructure like in the Hopkins Heat Vulnerability Study.

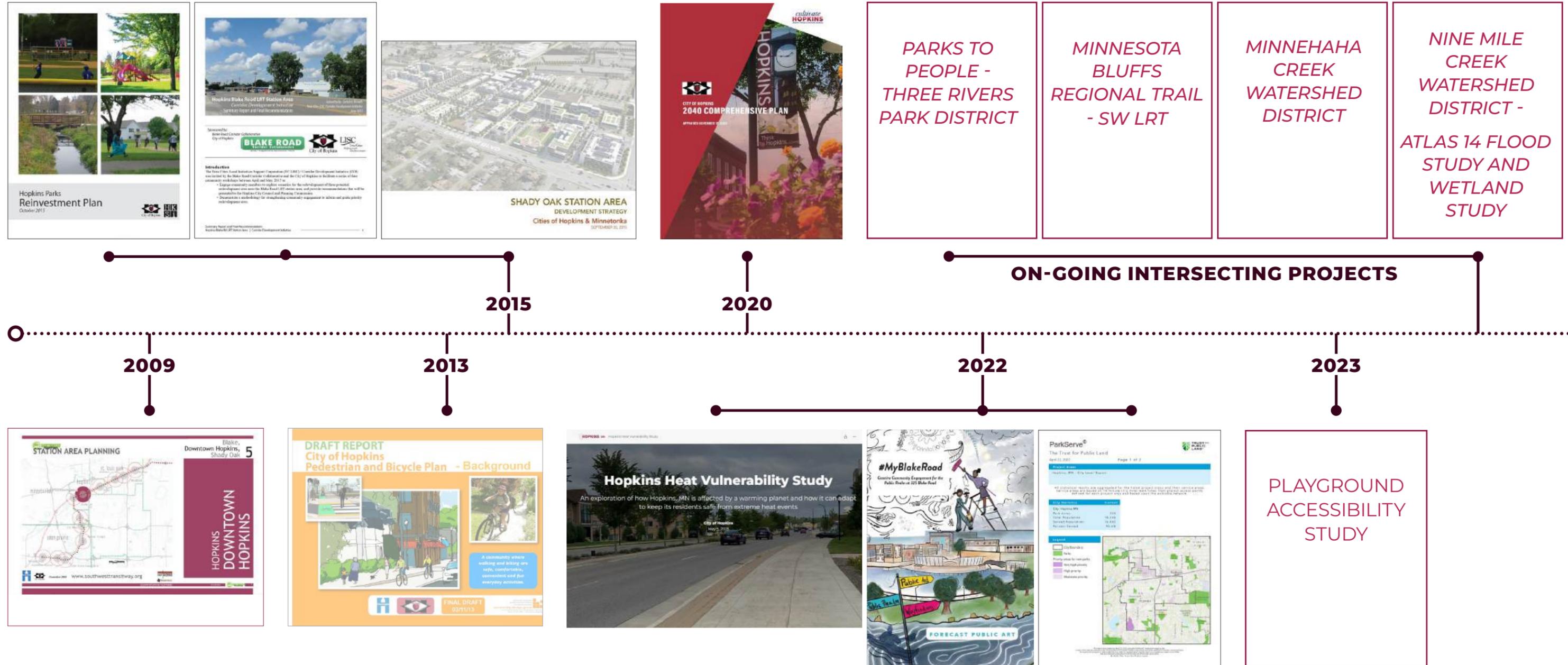


Figure 1.2. Related planning efforts timeline and information

DOWNTOWN HOPKINS STATION AREA PLAN (2009)

This plan outlines goals for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT)'s Downtown Station, the middle of the three stations within Hopkins, and highlights important existing attributes that should be enhanced relative to downtown/Mainstreet, 8th Avenue, and Excelsior Boulevard. The stated goal is "to create a rich mix of transit supportive uses rather than a scattering of automobile uses."

The station area is envisioned to become a hub or gateway to downtown, with a surrounding area that is family-friendly, full of activity, and a destination for dining, shopping, and the arts.

Buffer Park and Downtown Park, as well as the 8th Ave Artery are the nearest parks and POPs to this station.

<https://www.hopkinsmn.com/DocumentCenter/View/124/2009-Station-Area-Planning---Downtown-Hopkins-PDF>



CITY OF HOPKINS PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE PLAN

Provides useful background context of why a pedestrian and bicycle plan is necessary, and the mechanisms by which the network can be improved. This plan speaks to the three planned Southwest Light Rail Transit Stations in Hopkins and the importance of planning for multi-modal transportation connections around each station.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- "Hopkins has a good structure for pedestrian and bicycle mobility, with many short blocks and two-lane roads.
- Within the city, roads to consider for improved facilities include Mainstreet, 8th Avenue, Shady Oak Road, 11th Avenue, 17th Avenue / Hopkins Crossroad, Blake Road, and Oakridge Road. Emphasis should be given to the roads that directly connect into the planned SW LRT stations: 8th Avenue, Blake Road, and Shady Oak and the 17th Avenue extension south of Excelsior Boulevard." (Chapter 3, page 40)

<https://www.hopkinsmn.com/571/Pedestrian-Bike-Plan>



HOPKINS PARKS REINVESTMENT PLAN (2015)

This plan established a 10 year vision (2015-2025) for Hopkins parks. The inventory data was used as a basis for the new 20 year vision established in this report.

OUTCOMES:

- Since the Reinvestment Plan was developed, updates were completed at Burnes Park, Valley Park, Oakes Park, and Cottageville Park.
- The vision for Central Park but was not implemented.

<https://www.hopkinsmn.com/DocumentCenter/View/398/October-2015-Park-System-Reinvestment-Plan-Open-House-PDF?bidId=>



HOPKINS BLAKE ROAD LRT STATION AREA CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE SUMMARY REPORT AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS (2015)

This study examines three sites near the Blake Road LRT station and summarizes community input from workshops on the station area. One of the three sites has since been planned and is under construction. In the plan the site was called Cold Storage Site, but it is now referred to as 325 Blake

OUTCOMES:

Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) is a significant part of this development that will be functionally a part of the Park System for residents. Final programming and amenities were being established during the development of the Park System Plan.

<https://www.hopkinsmn.com/DocumentCenter/View/121/2015-Blake-Road-Station-Area---Final-Report-PDF>

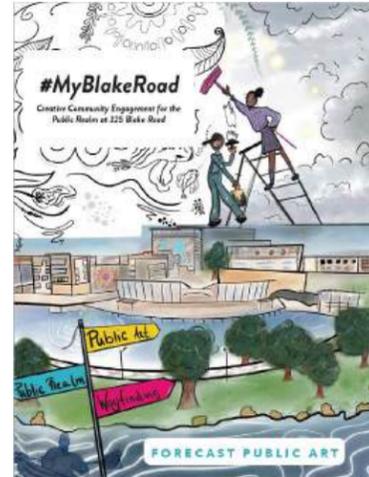
<https://www.alatusllc.com/portfolio/hopkins>



#MYBLAKEROAD - CREATIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR THE PUBLIC REALM AT 325 BLAKE ROAD (2022)

The 325 Blake redevelopment project encompasses a large area and provides an important opportunity for adding public amenities. This report summarizes the creative public engagement led by Forecast Public Art and summarizes the findings. Many community members wanted to feel explicitly welcome and safe in the new spaces under construction. Art in the new development should reflect multiple cultures and the people who live nearby.

<https://forecastpublicart.org/blake-road-community-engagement/>



SHADY OAK STATION AREA DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (2015)

The westernmost of the three LRT stations under construction in Hopkins, Shady Oak Station area offers development potential to bolster the economies of Hopkins and Minnetonka. This report illustrates the preferred development scenario for the station area including new streets and parcels.

Of particular note for parks are the proposed connections to the north that connect to Central Park - one along 13th Ave S, and the other along 17th Ave S.

The new district is envisioned to go beyond transit-oriented to be mobility-oriented and reduce car dependency. In the near term, the area will have park-and-ride lots but these are planned to be developed with a focus on creating an innovation district.

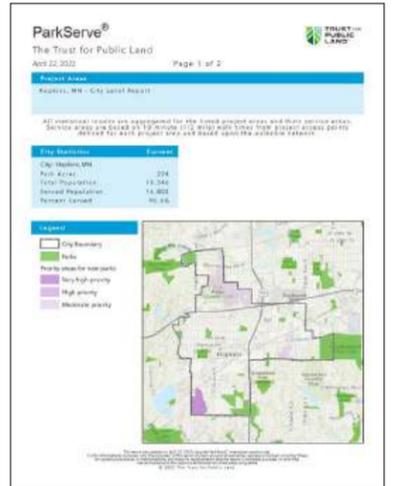
<https://www.hopkinsmn.com/DocumentCenter/View/122/Shady-Oak-Station-Area-Development-Strategy-9-30-2015-PDF>



TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND PARKSERVE

This nationwide database includes an analysis of Hopkins Parks. See the link below for more details. The ParkServe database shows that Hopkins residents are well served by parks, in that 90% of residents live within a 10 minute walk of a park. Two areas not served by a park are close to a private school (east) and a golf course (north). The third area to the south is a landfill that may require additional remediation, but could be converted into a park in the future. This data set is regularly updated.

<https://parkserve.tpl.org/mappingdev/#/?CityID=2730140>



CULTIVATE HOPKINS / 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

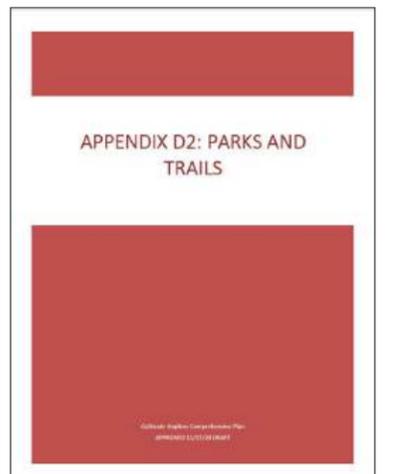
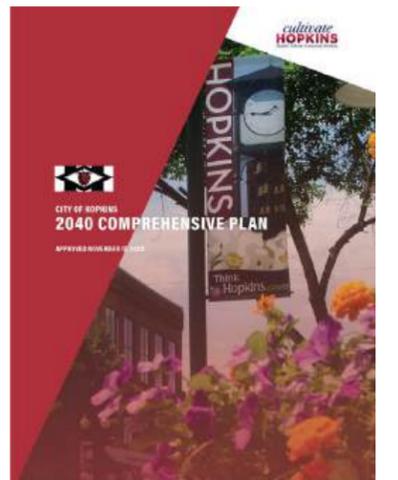
The Comprehensive Plan establishes a bold and achievable vision for Hopkins from now until 2040. It specifies a number of policies or goals for parks and trails, including:

- Major Factors: focus on improving existing systems; role as a regional trail hub; efficient use of space with multiple functions; equitable access; going beyond the park (e.g. to boulevards, plazas, pocket parks, and privately owned public spaces).
- Goal 1: Provide a range of public spaces, programs, and facilities that meet community needs for recreation and leisure.
- Goal 2: Support and improve overall accessibility of the park and recreation system to all residents.
- Goal 3: Use the park and open space system to protect and enhance natural resources.

The Parks and Trails appendix includes useful data on parks inventory and park categorization.

Of particular note is the recommendation regarding future growth of park facilities: "...closer examination of Hopkins reveals that the city probably does not need to add park areas to serve existing and future needs. Hopkins contains three public school sites that accommodate neighborhood park needs. ... The southern portion of Hopkins contains a landfill site that has been closed for a long time. At the present time the site has not been cleared by state agencies for any type of use.... At some point in the future, the property may become available for public use. When this occurs, the site could be developed as a community park. Additionally, there are existing golf course areas that could transition to more general parks and open space over time... Finally, the development of Minnehaha Creek Preserve (classified currently as a special use facility) provides passive recreational opportunities, particularly in connection with the recently completed Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail connection."

[\(Appendix D2-Parks and Trails - Comprehensive Plan, page 10\)](#)



HOPKINS HEAT VULNERABILITY STUDY (2022)

This study focuses on a range of tactics to reduce the effects of extreme heat within Hopkins. Parks have a large role to play in combating heat island effect. Per the story map below, “Historic underinvestment in green space and trees in communities of color and low-income communities has resulted in these communities to be more susceptible to heat-related danger due to the urban heat island effect.”

Furthermore, “the urban heat island effect can be addressed through natural strategies. These strategies generally involve increasing the amount of and access to nature, like trees and native plants. Increasing the tree canopy coverage and planting more vegetation provides shade and evapotranspiration — the process of plants absorbing and releasing water.”

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/8279b5ccc3e24b8199581d8cd0eaac85>



Recommendations for Action to Reduce Urban Heat Island in Hopkins and Reduce Impact on Human Health

	Actions	City Tools	Implementation Mechanism	Impact (1-5)	Resources Needed (\$, \$\$, \$\$\$)	Funding Opportunities
NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE	Expand green open space	Policy & Planning	Increasing green space fits into the Park System Master Plan that is in development, particularly prioritizing park access for communities vulnerable to extreme heat.	●●●●●	\$\$\$	
	Plant and maintain street trees	Policy & Planning	Fits with existing Complete Streets Policy – update plan to prioritize street trees in hottest, most heavily pedestrian-trafficked areas	●●●●○	\$\$	
	Eliminate parking minimums	Regulation	Eliminating parking minimums would require zoning changes	●●●●○	\$	
	Private tree planting	Incentives	Continue and expand tree sale program to increase tree planting on private land	●●●●○	\$	
	Expand green medians, boulevards, bioswales	Policy & Planning	Existing Complete Streets Policy includes boulevard landscaping, can expand to explicitly include medians and bioswales	●●●●○	\$	– IRA Neighborhood access and equity grant program funding
	De-paving municipal parking lots	Leadership & Innovation	Encouraging de-paving could be done in a municipal lot to demonstrate benefits	●●●●○	\$\$	– Urban and Community Forestry IRA Grants
	Education campaign on de-paving parking lots	Education & Engagement	Hopkins can lead an education and engagement campaign for businesses to understand the options and benefits of de-paving existing lots	●●●●○	\$	– Watch for state resilience grants through the MPCA – Watch for state climate planning and implementation grants through the MPC
	Encourage de-paving sections of existing, private parking lots	Policy & Planning	De-paving non-municipal lots can be encouraged through policy and planning initiatives, such as providing incentives for de-paving	●●●●○	\$	
	Require de-paving of existing, city-owned lots	Policy & Planning	When city-owned lots are repaved, require de-paving of city-owned surface lots in RFPs	●●●●○	\$\$	
	Increase access to public water	Policy & Planning	Ensuring access to clean water is part of the Water Resource Management Plan , including surface water. Increasing access to water in public spaces like misting fountains, public water fountains, and public drinking water stations keeps people cool and hydrated	●●●●○	\$\$	

Figure 1.3. Hopkins Heat Vulnerability Study (2022) summary table

PARALLEL PROCESSES



Figure 1.4. Typical playground accessibility challenges

PLAYGROUND ACCESSIBILITY STUDY

The City of Hopkins, MN worked with the accessibility consulting firm Julee Quarve-Peterson, Inc. (JQP, Inc.) on an accessibility report and transition plan.

This report was created after conducting site visits to parks and facilities in summer 2023. The following documents

were used as the basis for recommendations:

- Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II
- Americans with Disabilities Act 2010 Standards for Accessible Design
- Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act
- Minnesota Building Code, Chapter 1341 (Accessibility)

The purpose of the report was to assess the current level of accessibility and identify opportunities for improvement of the parks and facilities in order to support the programs and services offered by the City.

There is evidence throughout City of modifications being made to increase accessibility, such as:

- Remodeling toilet rooms and single-user showers in the Pavilion
- Identifying and designating accessible parking spaces
- Providing accessible surface material in defined play areas
- Providing playground equipment with transfer systems and ground level events

As expected, the greatest number of issues and the most significant barriers to accessibility were found in the older parks and facilities. Although the sites were constructed prior to accessibility laws and design standards, alterations over the years have addressed accessibility.

Many of the modifications/alterations have improved accessibility, although not all fully comply with the design standards. Details such as mounting heights and position of accessories in toilet rooms are a reoccurring issue identified in the report (grab bars are installed but not necessarily the correct configuration or mounted at the correct height).

In addition to providing physical access to sites and facilities, the report addresses other disabilities such as visual (providing signs with raised and Braille characters and directional signs with contrast) and hearing (providing assistive listening systems in assembly areas).

The following issues were identified and have been assigned the highest priority for corrective action and modification due to the high level of public use:

- Creating accessible routes up to and into defined play areas
- Modifications to accessible parking at parks
- Improvements to exterior accessible routes

ONGOING INTERSECTING PROJECTS

Parks to People - Three Rivers Park District

<https://www.letstalkthreerivers.org/parks-to-people-master-plan>

This study is examining the first ring suburbs west and south of Minneapolis in Hennepin County. The goal is to identify and fund opportunities for introducing programs and activities of regional parks to populations currently underserved in the first ring. Targeted populations overlap with Hopkins Priority Populations and could be a significant partnership opportunity in The future.

Minnesota Bluffs Regional Trail - SW LRT

<https://www.threeriversparks.org/location/minnesota-river-bluffs-regional-trail>

<https://www.swlrtccommunityworks.org/>

A significant regional trail running through the heart of Hopkins. This trail is impacted by the LRT construction.

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

<https://www.minnehahacreek.org/project>

Nine Mile Creek Watershed District - see especially Atlas 14 Flood Study and Wetland Study

<https://www.ninemilecreek.org/whats-happening/current-studies/>

Minnehaha Creek and Nine Mile Creek Watershed Districts are active organizations in Hopkins that are tasked with preserving and improving the water quality of their creeks. Both groups have funding available for green infrastructure projects and larger efforts with significant impacts to the City's infrastructure.



02 THE PARKS HOPKINS HAS

ANALYZING THE PARKS HOPKINS HAS NOW AND IDENTIFYING WHAT WORKS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE

CHAPTER CONTENTS

DEMOGRAPHIC & RECREATIONAL TRENDS
ANALYSIS

PARK SYSTEM: OVERVIEW

PARK SYSTEM: PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

PARK SYSTEM: AMENITY ANALYSIS

PARK PROFILES

The park system in Hopkins encompasses 18 parks and approximately 166 acres. A majority of the parks are smaller neighborhood parks that serve nearby residents. The largest park is Valley + Steiner Park Preserve at 66.34 acres combined, and the smallest is Elmo Park at 0.62 acres. There are also three golf courses associated with Hopkins that provide additional green space. Oak Ridge and Interlachen are private courses and Meadowbrook is public (private courses are not counted in the above acre totals). Minnehaha Nine Mile Creek corridors add additional open space.

The Needs Assessment forms the backbone of the system plan as it provides the analysis necessary to inform the Vision and becomes the starting point for the implementation plan. This chapter will focus on establishing a clear baseline status of Hopkins' Park System.

COMPONENTS

The needs assessment utilizes many factors to thoroughly examine Hopkins' parks. The analysis begins with the categorization and character of the parks. Next is a look at the distribution of park amenities across the city, followed by a Level of Service analysis. The Level of Service is based on an inventory of park contents and size, and shows recommended needs for new park acreage, new fields, facilities, or amenities based on population. Recommended service levels are metrics established by the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) and reflect standards for a typical park system based on population and density. These metrics are guidelines and not every park system will or should meet all standards; however, this is a valid method to understand how Hopkins compares.

The Level of Service is followed by a Benchmark Analysis that compares Hopkins to 5 peer cities. These peers were selected by the Consultant team and City staff and are comparable to Hopkins based on a similar climate, population, size, and proximity to a larger metropolitan city.

DEMOGRAPHIC & RECREATION TRENDS ANALYSIS

A key component of the Hopkins City Needs Assessment is a Demographic & Recreation Trends Analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to provide the City of Hopkins (“City”) insight into the general makeup of the population they serve and identify market trends in recreation. It also helps quantify the market in and around the City and assists in providing a better understanding of the types of parks, facilities, and programs / services that are most appropriate to satisfy the needs of residents.

This analysis is two-fold – it aims to answer the who and the what. First, it assesses the demographic characteristics and population projections of Hopkins residents to understand who the City serves. Secondly, recreational trends are examined on a national and local level to understand what the population served wants to do. Findings from this analysis establish a fundamental understanding that provide a basis for prioritizing the community need for parks, trails, facilities, and recreation programs.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The Demographic Analysis describes the population within Hopkins. This assessment is reflective of the City’s total population and its key characteristics such as age segments, race, ethnicity, and income levels. It is important to note that future projections are based on historical patterns and unforeseen circumstances during or after the time of the analysis could have a significant bearing on the validity of the projected figures.

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from U.S. Census Bureau and from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in August 2022 and reflects actual numbers as reported in both the 2010 and 2020 Census. ESRI then estimates the current population (2022) as well as a 5-year projection (2027). The Design Team then utilized straight line linear regression to forecast demographic characteristics for 10 and 15-year projections (2032 and 2037).

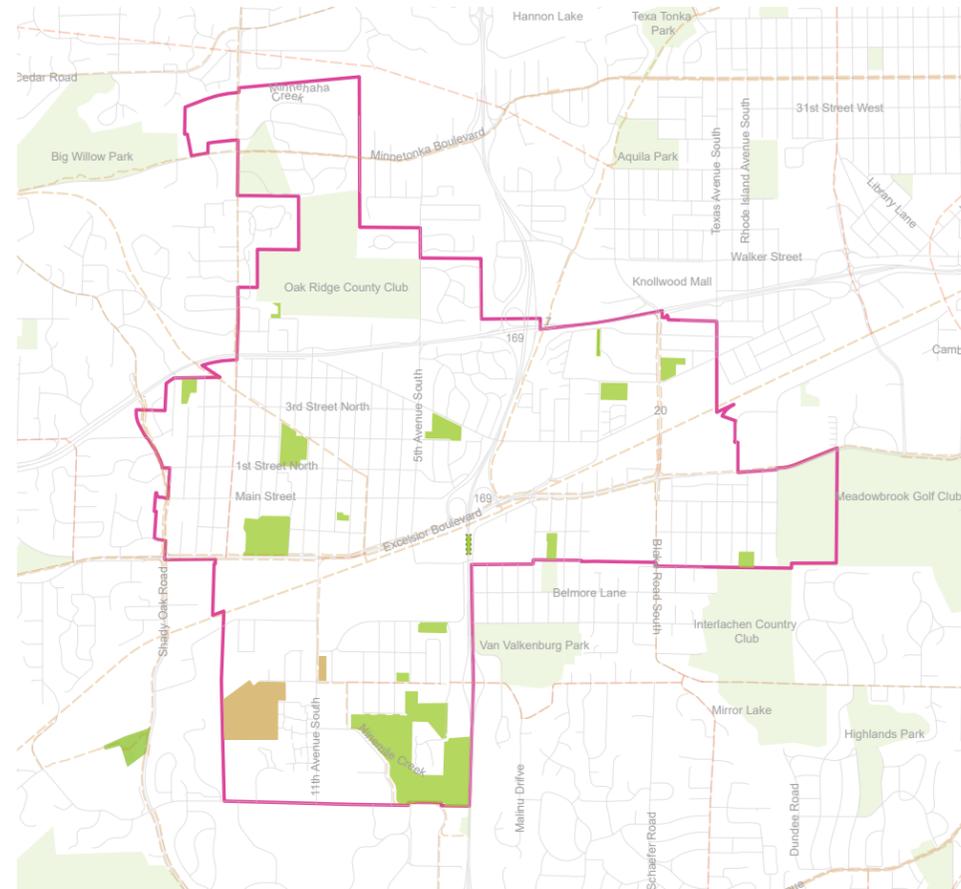


Figure 2.1. Hopkins boundary map

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS BOUNDARY

The City boundaries shown above were utilized for the demographic analysis.

POPULATION

The City’s population has been increasing since the 2010 Census, growing from 17,646 to 19,079 by 2020, or an increase of 0.81%. The population is expected to keep growing reaching 19,128 people in 2022, an increase of 0.13% in just two years. By 2037 the population is

expected to be 20,798 with an average annual growth rate of 0.58%. (See Figure 2)

The total number of households has increased in the City from 8,404 in 2010 to 9,110 in 2020, or an average increase of 0.84%. Households are expected to increase at an average rate of 0.40% from 2020 to 2022 for a total of 9,183 households. By 2037 households are expected to reach a total amount of 9,941 at an average growth rate of 0.61% over a fifteen-year period.

AGE SEGMENTATION

Evaluating the City’s age segmentation, the population exhibits an aging trend. The City’s current median age is estimated at 38.0 years old which is younger than the U.S. median age (38.8 years old), and it is expected that age will get older. Currently 29% of City residents are 55+ years old. By 2037 the 55+ population is expected to grow 33% percent of the City’s total population. This is expected to be a result of increased life expectancies and most middle-aged adult residents “aging in place” while their children move elsewhere.

Due to the continued growth of the older age segments, it is useful to further segment the “Senior” population beyond the traditional 55+ designation. Within the field of parks and recreation, there are three commonly used ways to partition this age segment. One is to simply segment by age: 55-64, 65-74, and 75+. However, as these age segments are engaged in programming, the variability of health and wellness can be a more relevant factor. For example, a 55-year-old who is struggling with rheumatoid arthritis may be limited to leisure recreation while a healthy 65-year-old may still be running 5K’s on an annual basis. Therefore, it may be more useful to divide this age segment into “Active,” “Low Impact,” and/or “Social” Seniors.

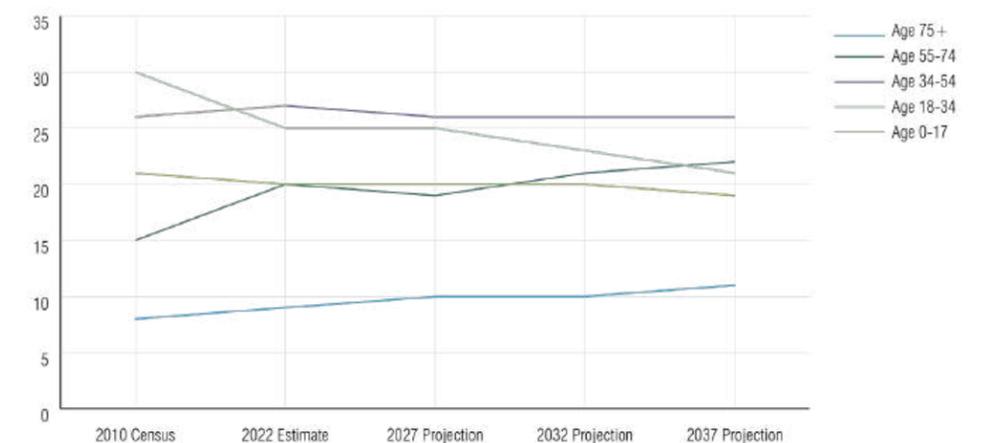
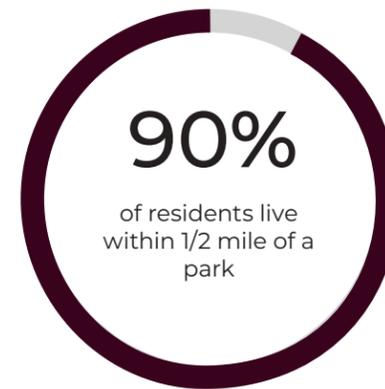


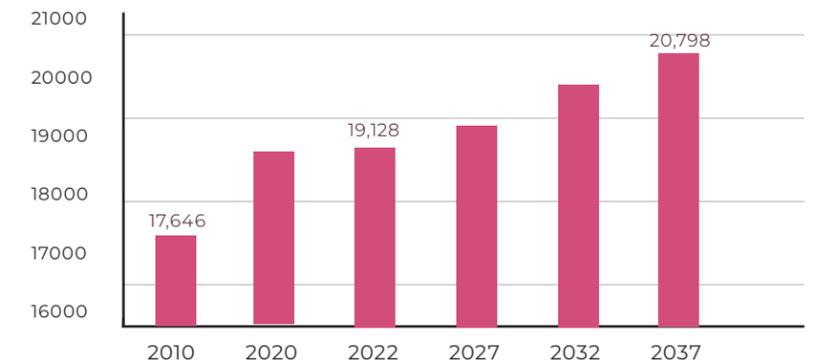
Figure 2.2. Projected age segmentation graph

A CHANGING COMMUNITY

WITH NEW MULTIFAMILY DEVELOPMENT OCCURRING AROUND THE CITY AND MORE RESIDENTS AGING IN PLACE, THE CITY OF HOPKINS IS EXPECTED TO BECOME LARGER, OLDER, AND MORE DIVERSE OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS.



POPULATION PROJECTIONS



The City's population has increased since the 2010 Census, growing from 17,646 to 19,079 by 2020. The population is expected to keep growing to reach 20,798 by 2037 - an average annual growth rate of 0.58%. Renters make up over 65% of housing units.

The total number of households is also increasing. Households went from 8,404 in 2010 to 9,110 in 2020. By 2037 households are expected to reach a total amount of 9,941 at an average growth rate of 0.61% over a fifteen-year period.

Regional demographic trends show an increasingly diverse community. This trend is exemplified in Hopkins. New multi-family development, transportation access and options will likely reinforce diversification in the City.

33%



of residents will be **55+** by 2037. This is up from 29% in 2023 and above the state average.

19%



of residents will be **under 17** by 2037. This is down from 20% in 2023 and below the state average.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

While the City's Per Capita income is higher than both State and National Levels, the City's Median Household Income is lower than County, State, and National Levels. This suggests a potential lack of disposable income at the family level and should be taken into account for parks program development.

DIVERSITY

28% of the City's current population identifies as a non-white racial group. This is projected to reach 44% by 2037. The City should ensure its growing and diversifying population is reflected in its offerings, marketing/communications, and public outreach.

AGE

The percentage of the community over age 55 is expected to steadily increase over the next 20 years as a result of increased life expectancies and most middle-aged adult residents "aging in place". The City's decreasing young population indicates a need to focus on the older population, as the community ages and looks for "Active Adult" recreational activities.



THE CITY'S LAND AREA IS ONLY **4 SQUARE MILES**. **RENTERS MAKE UP OVER 65% OF HOUSING UNITS**. WITH THE GROWING COMMUNITY AND LIMITED SPACE, CURRENT PARKS WILL BE ASKED TO DO MORE WITHIN THEIR CURRENT SPACE.

\$ 17 m

City General Fund Budget

\$ 1.3 m

Annual Park and Recreation Budget

\$22.36

Average cost per capita for Recreation (Hopkins and Minnetonka Joint Recreation Program)

SUMMARY OF BUDGET FOR THE COMMUNITY

COMPARISON TO OTHER CITIES CAN BE FOUND IN BENCHMARKING - CHAPTER 03

Figure 2.3. Community demographics overview graphic

PARK SYSTEM: OVERVIEW AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Hopkins parks are well located and accessible to most residents. While park access is important, condition and park amenities are what draw people in and make a park into an attractive place to visit.

Many of Hopkins parks have a similar form. The parks were built around the same time and have similar levels of wear and tear. This shows that they are well-loved but also that it is time for a strategic refresh. With the exception of major renovations at Burnes Park and Cottageville Park, and new play equipment at Valley Park and Hilltop Park, the majority of Hopkins other parks have not seen updates in a long time.

Shady Oak Nature Area and Minnehaha Creek Preserve are not included in this study. They are natural areas with no plans for development in the near future.

School properties with park facilities that are partially open to the public are included in the Level of Service and general analysis of the Park System.

PARKS

- 1 ELMO PARK
- 2 HILLTOP PARK
- 3 MAETZOLD FIELD
- 4 CENTRAL PARK
- 5 DOWNTOWN PARK
- 6 BURNES PARK
- 7 HARLEY HOPKINS
- 8 OAKES PARK

- # = Park with Concept Plan
- 9 HIAWATHA OAKS
- 10 COTTAGEVILLE
- 11 INTERLACHEN PARK
- 12 BUFFER PARK
- 13 PARK VALLEY
- 14 VALLEY PARK
- 15 SHADY OAK BEACH

POTENTIAL SPACES

- 16 11th AVE SOUTH
- 17 HOPKINS LANDFILL

ACTIVATION AREAS

- A ARTERY / 8th AVE TRAIL
- B CLOCK TOWER PLAZA
- C CENTER FOR THE ARTS PLAZA

SCHOOL PARKS (PARTIALLY PUBLIC AMENITIES)

- D EISENHOWER ELEMENTARY
- E ALICE SMITH ELEMENTARY
- F UBAH ACADEMY
- G HARLEY HOPKINS EARLY CHILDHOOD BUILDING

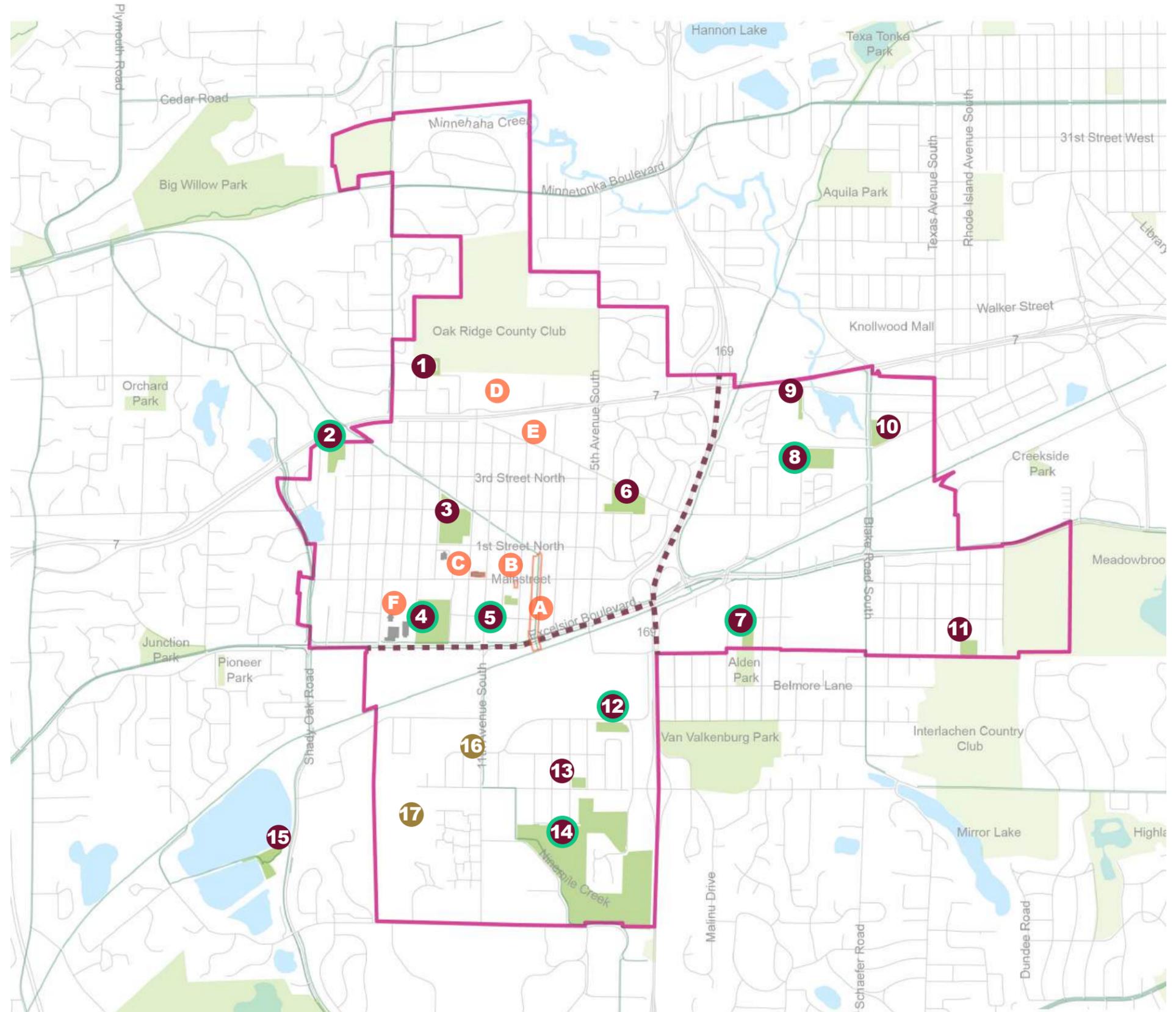


Figure 2.4. Hopkins park system overview map

CLASSIFICATIONS

To aid in analyzing the park system and to break down the parks into similar categories, the parks are classified in categories consistent with the Cultivate Hopkins 2040 Comprehensive plan. Each park class serves a function within the system.

Neighborhood parks are the most common parks in many park systems. They are smaller in size and are considered for planning purposes to not require parking because they are located so that residents can easily walk to them.

Hopkins has multiple schools with outdoor recreation areas and playgrounds. Three of these schools/ facilities are in the Hopkins School District, and the third is a charter school. For the purposes of this plan, Eisenhower Elementary and Alice Smith Elementary (both Hopkins School District) are factored as providing 1/3 access to their school park amenities because these areas are fully public on weekends and when school is not in session. The Blake School's facilities are not factored into this analysis because they are private.

Community parks serve a larger area and often have amenities that draw users from across the city (such as large community gardens, larger sports fields or tournament facilities, or destination playgrounds). These parks typically need increased parking compared to neighborhood parks to support intensive uses and visitors traveling via auto from further distances.

Special Use Park and Recreation Facilities are a broad category and include indoor and outdoor recreation amenities. Hopkins-owned buildings such as the Pavilion, the Hopkins Center for the Arts, and the Activities Center fall into this category. Additionally, Shady Oak Beach is a special use facility jointly operated with Minnetonka.

Natural Resource Areas or Preserves are parks that generally see less intensive development. Steiner Park Preserve is a good example, as it primarily consists of an archery range and some informal trails but it does not have any fixed structures or highly-maintained sports fields. Parks in this category are typically set aside for preservation or, on occasion, are generally not buildable (e.g. are wetland areas).

Classification	Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria
Neighborhood Park	Basic unit of the park system; serve as the recreational focus of neighborhoods; emphasize informal active and passive recreation	¼ to ½ mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers	Usually between 5 and 10 acres
School-Park	Combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks such as neighborhood, community, sports complex and special use	Determined by location of school district property	Variable
Community Park	Serves a broader purpose than neighborhood parks; focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs as well as preserving unique open space	½ mile to 3-mile distance and typically uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers. Determined by the quality and usability of the site	Usually between 20 and 50 acres
Special Use Park and Recreation Facilities	May be privately or publicly owned; private facilities can offer either indoor or outdoor recreation opportunities, usually on a membership or fee basis	Variable, depends on specific use	Variable
Natural Resource Areas (Preserves)	Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual aesthetics	Depends on resource availability and opportunity	Variable

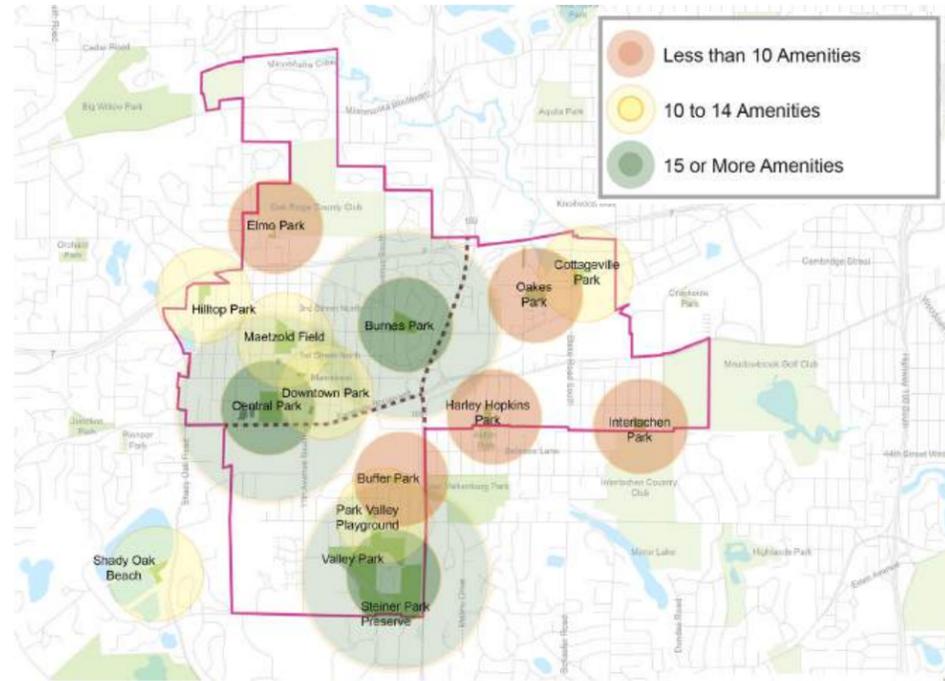
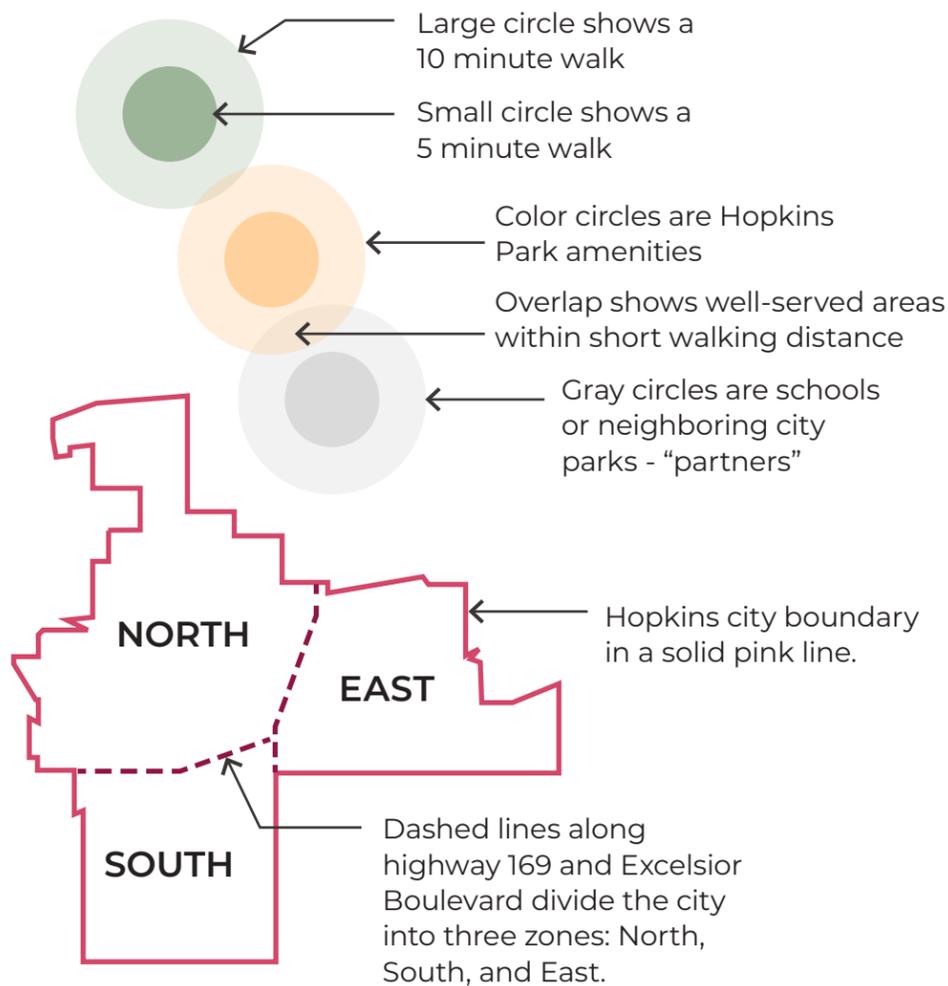
Figure 2.5. Table from Cultivate Hopkins - 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Appendix D2 Parks and Trails

PARK SYSTEM: AMENITY ANALYSIS

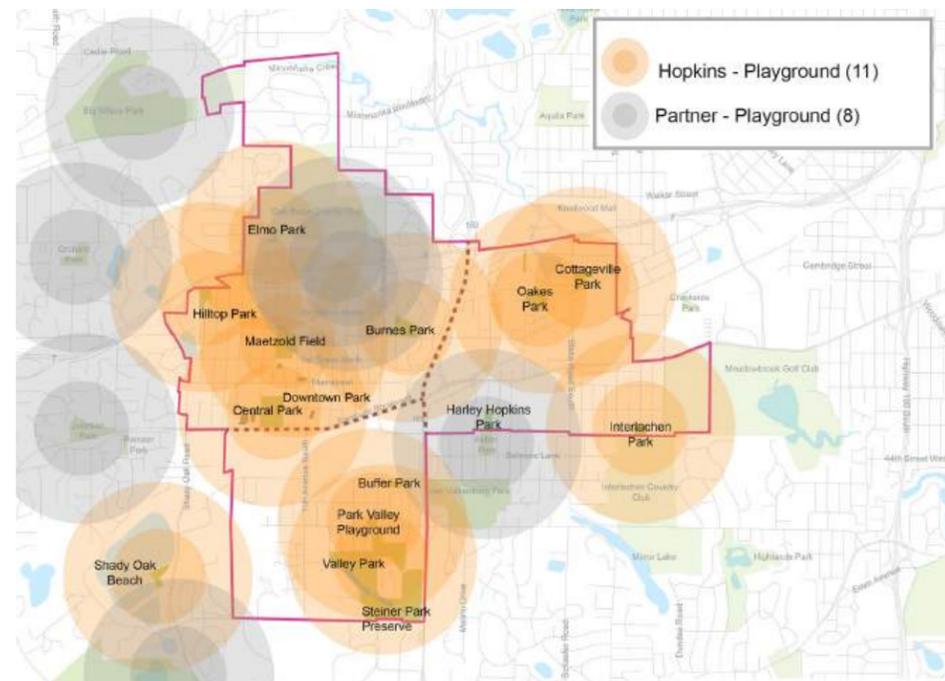
The following maps show distribution of major park amenities across the city. Amenities are not evenly distributed. However, Hopkins is 4 square miles in area, and people can get to most amenities in a short trip. There are significant pedestrian barriers that divide the city and impact resident mobility to parks.

- Valley Park has the most variation in amenities, followed by Central Park, and Burnes Park.
- The East portion of the city has no large park with 15 or more amenities. However, as this report is written, Cottageville Park will see a phase 2 improvements and the 325 Blake development will add significant amenities to the east side of Hopkins.

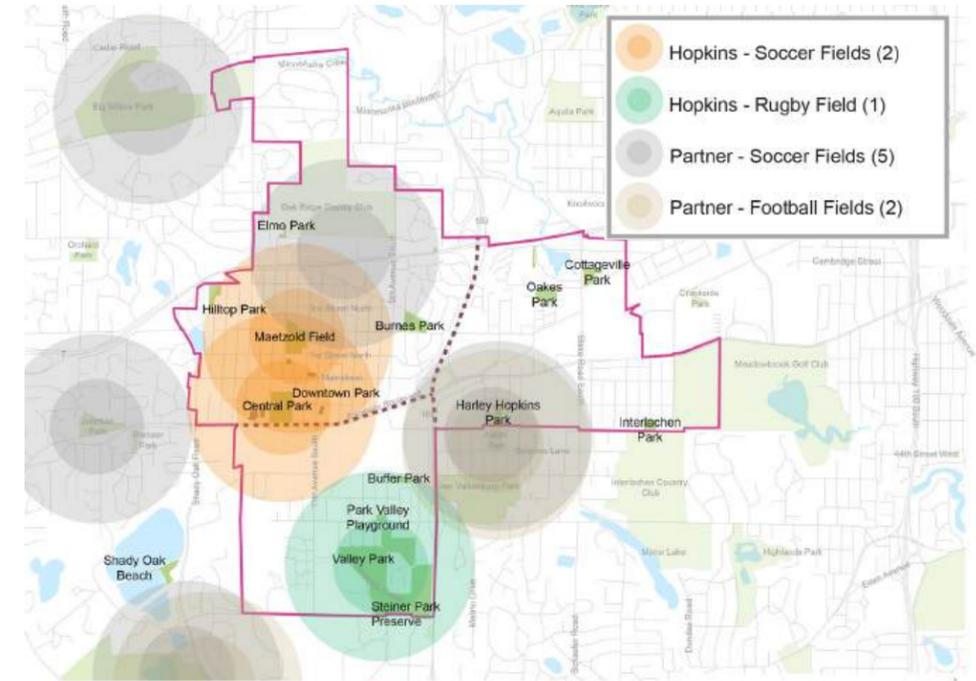
How to read these maps:



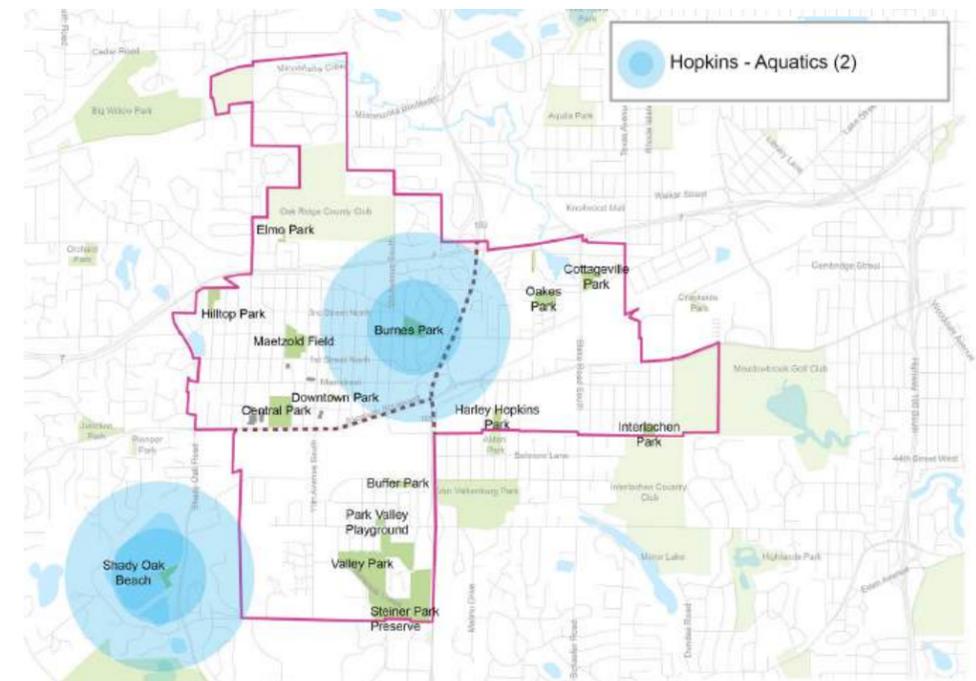
Existing Distribution of Park Amenities General quantity of facilities at each park in the Park System.



Existing Playgrounds are well served now, but will need additional playground space as population increases.

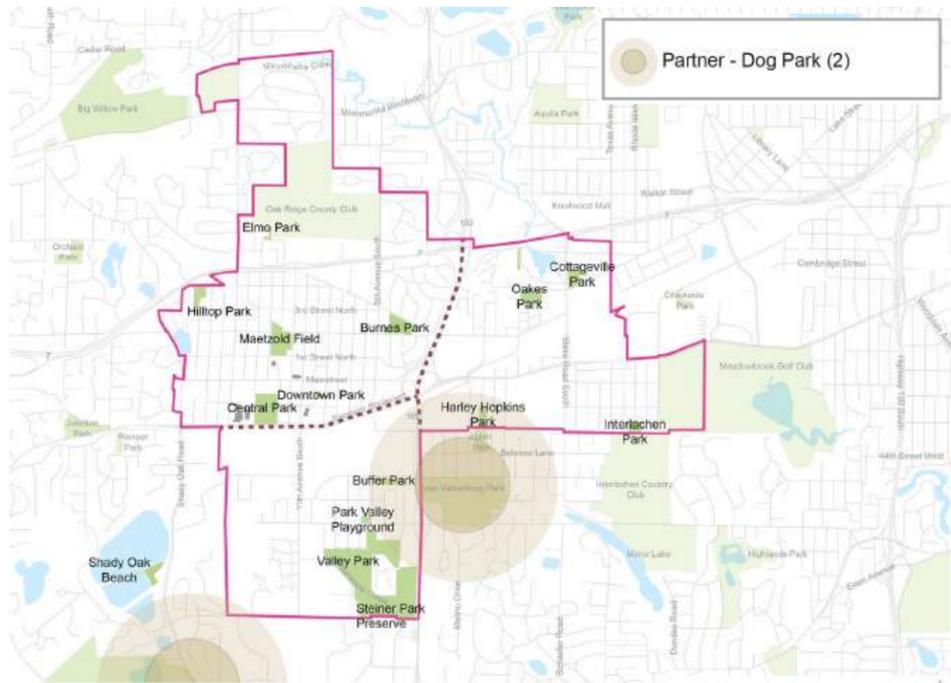


Existing Sports Fields Hopkins is below the NRPA Standard for soccer, football, and rugby fields.

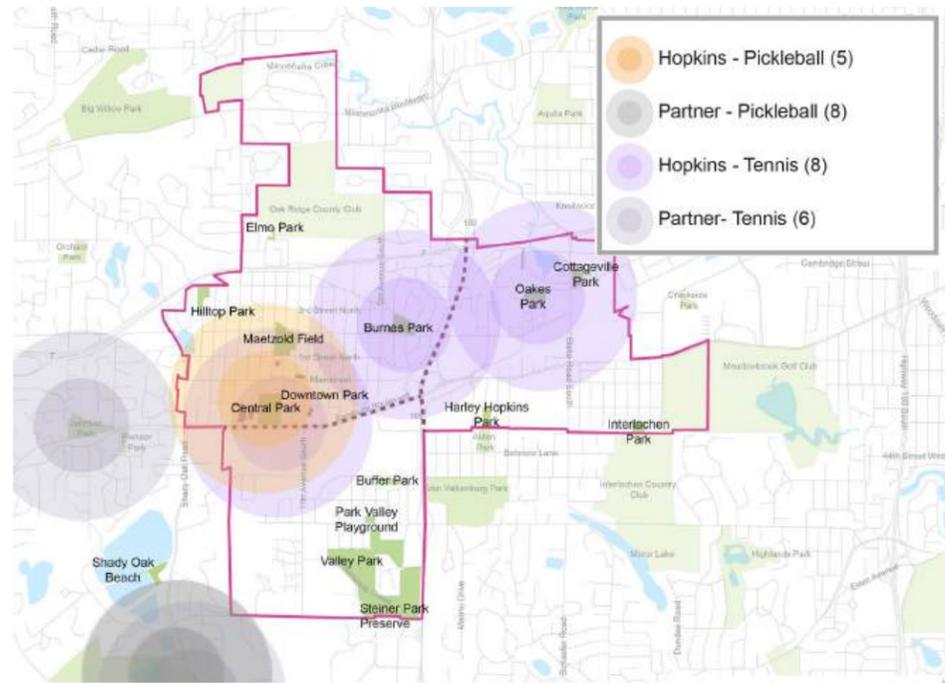


Existing Aquatics NRPA standards indicate similar sized cities have an indoor aquatic facility. Eisenhower Community Center has an indoor pool but is not typically open for public use. Minnetonka acquired The Marsh providing additional pool facilities.

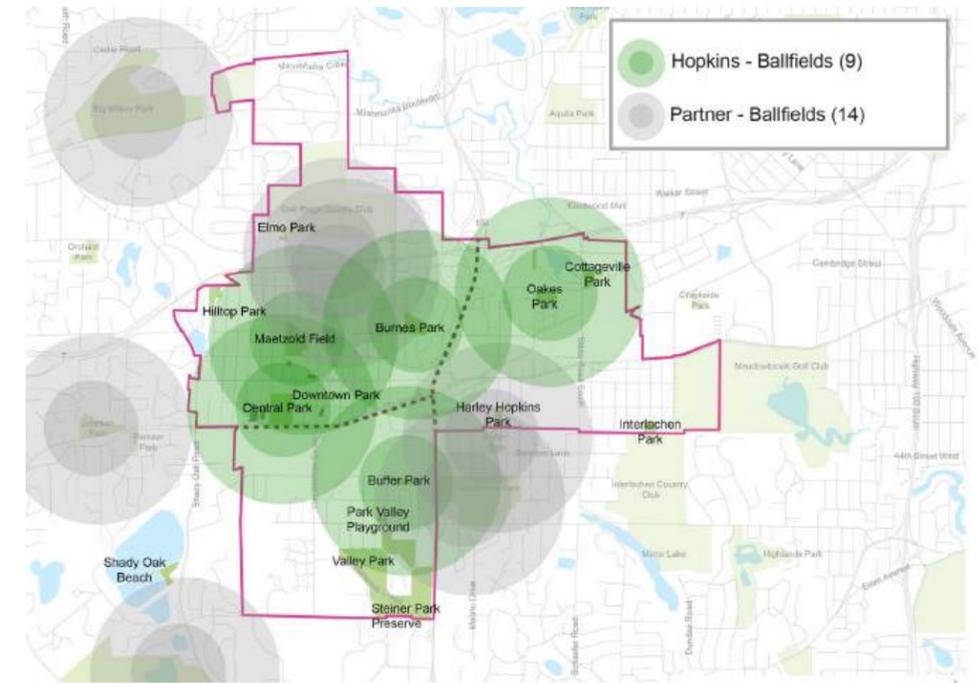
Figure 2.6. Park system amenity distribution analysis maps



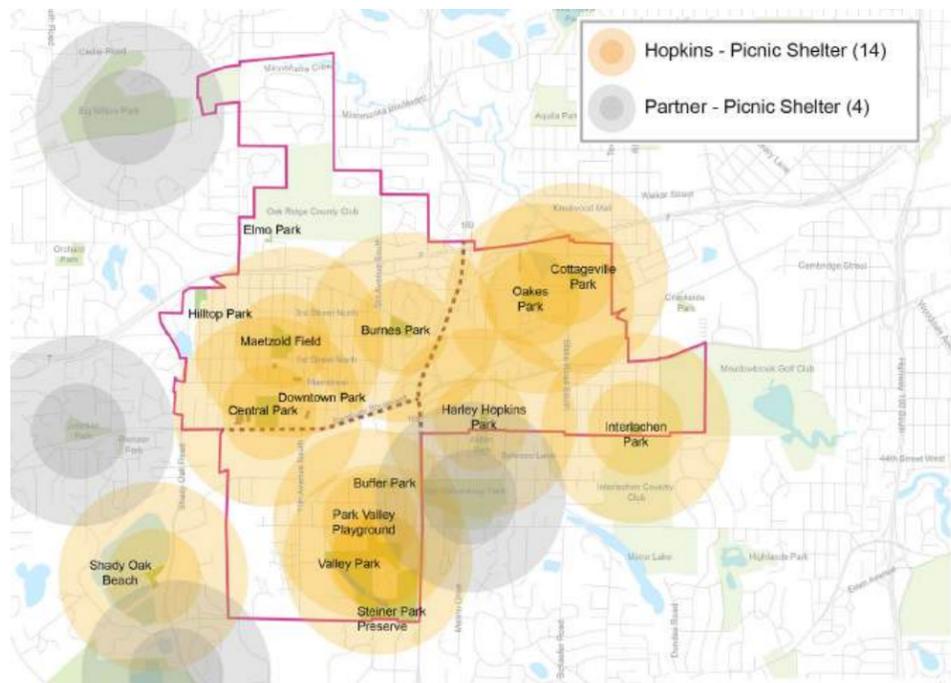
Existing Dog Parks There are no designated dog parks within city limits, but neighboring cities do have them.



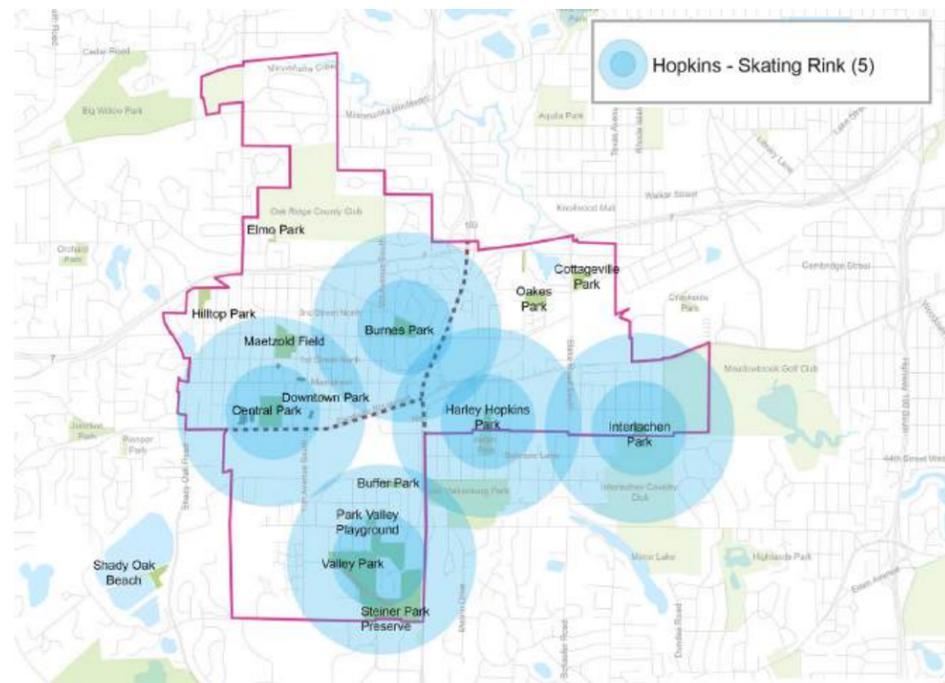
Existing Tennis & Pickleball the only pickleball courts are located in Central Park.



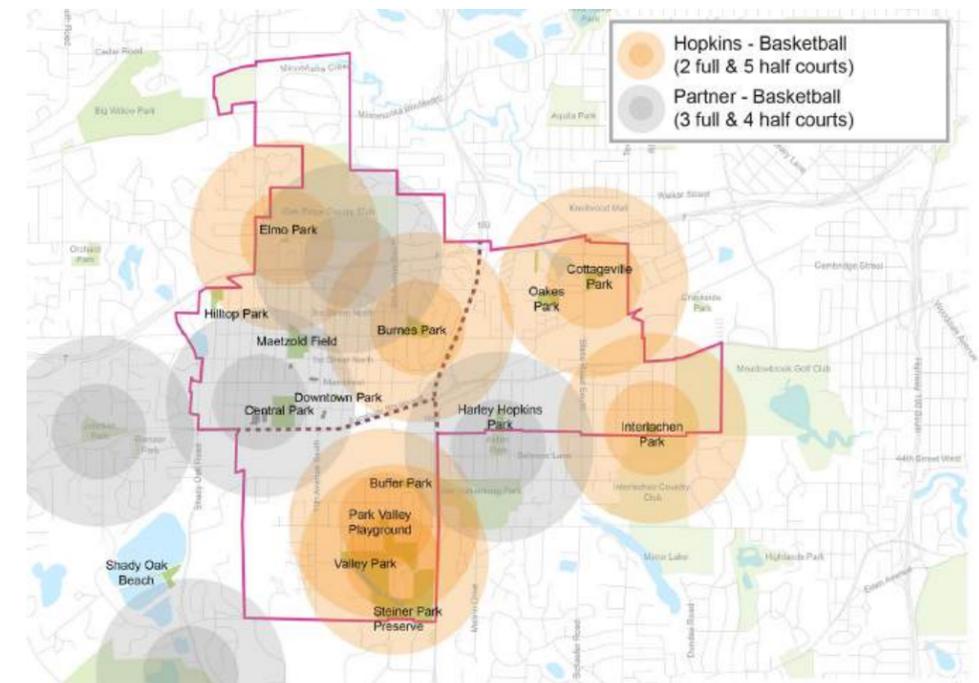
Existing Ballfields meets Level of Service standards even with increase in population



Existing Picnic Shelters are well distributed and should be considered at most parks in Hopkins.



Existing Skating Rinks are well distributed. Hopkins should focus on quality ice versus adding new rinks as population grows.



Existing Basketball Many of Hopkins parks have half courts, and Level of Service indicates need for an additional full court.

PARK PROFILES

The following provides a short summary of 15 parks within Hopkins as they exist today. Parks are listed generally in order from north to south and east to west, and categorized according to the Park Classification on the previous page. Each park has an individual character, shape, and layout. However, nearly all parks have a playground. Most playgrounds in the system are Burke brand play equipment. Parks often feature half-court basketball and a few benches. Most playgrounds have rectangular play containers that do not interact with the surrounding topography.

Accessibility of playgrounds and paved paths is moderate to poor. A separate accessibility study is being conducted at the time of this plan writing. Few playground containers have more than one point of wheelchair access (having one access ramp is technically compliant), and some have no paved path to the container. These aspects should be carefully considered as the parks are updated and renovated.

Furthermore, two recently renovated parks (Cottageville and Burnes) have water fountains and sand play areas but maintenance staff have noted that the drinking fountains near sand play areas are frequently clogged. While this design idea makes some sense from a nature-based play perspective, it does not work well from a maintenance standpoint, and a different water source or drinking fountain type is recommended should this design idea continue to be implemented in other parks.

ELMO PARK (0.62 ACRES, NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

A small, simply organized park adjacent to apartments and the Water Treatment Plant. The park's trail will connect to the Hopkins Crossroad Trail in the future. Elmo park includes a small playground, half court basketball, benches, and a small open lawn area. Apartments and the school nearby have recently invested in new playground facilities, so the immediate area is served by recreational amenities. The park can not expand due to future water treatment plan expansion needs.

HILLTOP PARK (3.5 ACRES, NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

A popular winter sledding destination with a large steep hill, Hilltop Park is surrounded by housing on three sides. Street frontage on 4th Street North has limited parking, and across the street is a senior residence. The park features mature coniferous and deciduous trees, and a grilling area with tables. The newer playground may meet

minimum guidelines but is technically not accessible because no paths connect from the street to the playground. The park lacks a sidewalk along 4th Street North. A ball diamond was recently decommissioned and the backstop fence remains. The park is located near two popular regional trails - Shady Oak Road Trail and Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail.

COTTAGEVILLE (4.1 ACRES, NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

Recently renovated with partnership of Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. Cottageville features a newer playground, a community garden area, a park shelter with restrooms and gathering area, and a small lawn area; additionally an older half court basketball, parking, and water access to Minnehaha Creek. Phase 2 of Cottageville Park is anticipated to be built along with 325 Blake Development. Cottageville breaks from the historical pattern of Hopkins parks and was informed by a robust engagement process. The shelter is architecturally significant and establishes a high quality community gathering facility that is well used by residents.

MAETZOLD FIELD (10.1 AC, COMMUNITY PARK)

The sports hub of Hopkins Area Little League (HALL), features baseball diamonds and a large soccer field. The park also includes access to regional trails and a small playground in the north west corner. This park has a significant parking lot and additional street parking surrounding the facility. Maetzold hosts multiple tournaments and games throughout the summer. The soccer field is one of a few lighted field facilities in the city and is highly programmed. The playground is located in a corner of the park that limits its use and accessibility.

CENTRAL PARK (18 AC, COMMUNITY PARK)

A large community-oriented park on the edge of Hopkins' downtown, Central Park is home to Hopkins Pavilion (indoor hockey rink or seasonal turf or dry land training). The park includes two baseball fields, tennis courts, an outdoor hockey rink that also serves as wiffleball enclosure in summer, pickleball courts, and a few shade structures. An aged playground sits on the east side. Central Park is adjacent to Ubah Academy and shares a very porous boundary where the school's facilities blend into the park and vice versa. Katherine Curren playground is used by the school and by park users when school is not utilizing. The tennis courts are technically a part of school district land. Central Park is located adjacent to



Figure 2.7. Cottageville Park - new picnic shelter and restrooms



Figure 2.8. Central Park pickleball courts



Figure 2.9. Downtown Park concert (August 2022)



Figure 2.10. Oakes Park recently replaced play equipment

Hopkins Fire Hall and the Public Works facility. This park is one of Hopkins' most popular, highly trafficked, and is heavily impacted by the Pavilion's visitors and traffic. Several adult leagues prefer Central Park due to its proximity to Hopkins' bars and restaurants.

DOWNTOWN PARK (0.91 AC, NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

A true urban park, Downtown Park's most prominent feature is the stage, amphitheater, and gentle surrounding mounds. The stage opens to a round paved area with honey locust trees dotting the audience area. Round benches surround and protect the trees, but discourage conversation. The benches do not consistently face toward the stage and are not movable - limiting the plaza's flexibility for different types of events. Maintenance staff note that the electrical for the stage needs an upgrade, and more storage is needed (beyond what currently exists in the stage structure). The drinking fountain should be assessed for replacement, or be updated when the park is renovated. Lighting is outdated and inadequate for a popular destination; limiting evening useage and event potential.

HIAWATHA OAKS (0.9 AC, NATURAL RESOURCE AREA)

A small park covered with a dense oak stand. The area was previously planned for townhomes that the neighborhood opposed, and is now maintained as a preserve. This area is not focused on in this plan but could be considered in future planning efforts to connect with Oakes Park and provide nature access.

OAKES PARK (5.7 AC, NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

A neighborhood park featuring year round activities. Summertime uses include the open sided pavilion and grilling, as well as a playground and open field areas. Winter activities include skating and sledding. A hockey rink was recently decommissioned due to poor ice quality issues. Recent investments were utilized to update the warming house and refresh the play equipment. The tennis courts are in fair condition will but need re-surfacing in the coming years. A lack of parking limits activities at Oakes currently. There are numerous multi-family housing facilities in close proximity to Oakes that should make it one of the more well used parks in the system. However, its facilities may not be meeting the needs of the surrounding residents. An example is a lack of basketball court - a popular amenity with youth. Through engagement it was discovered

that kids are passing Oakes to use the half court at Cottageville.

BURNES PARK (7 AC, NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

Burnes Park has received recent, popular updates, that has made it one of Hopkins' most liked and well used parks. The park is adjacent to neighborhoods and Zion Lutheran Church. The west parking lot is shared with the church through a formal agreement. Special features include a new splash pad and building with restrooms. Other recent updates include new planting beds, an outdoor skating loop, a new Rotary sponsored picnic shelter/ restroom building, and stormwater filtration area/rain garden. The North Cedar Lake Regional Trail is nearby.

HARLEY HOPKINS (2.89 AC, NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

A sunken park that regularly floods, Harley Hopkins park currently has few amenities. The park features an old warming house, short trail segment, and one hockey rink. A fence surrounds most of the park and blocks views and access. The lower elevation of the field relative to surrounding streets discourages people from seeing and accessing the open space. Two baseball or softball backstops have been decommissioned but backstops remain. The neighbors at



Figure 2.11. Park Valley Park - playground

the Harley Hopkins Family Center / Early Childhood Development (a Hopkins School District property) occasionally use the park. The park has no parking lot and the fence and street parking combination around the park make access challenging for users driving to the park. Stormwater inputs significantly limit the uses and development of this park. Edina's Alden Park is directly across the street and provides some of the recreational features that Harley Hopkins is missing, including a playground, soccer field, and basketball court.

INTERLACHEN PARK (2.4 AC, NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

The eastern most park in Hopkins, Interlachen is tucked away in a single family neighborhood near Interlachen Country Club and Meadowbrook Golf Courses. The park features a warming house, small playground, half-court basketball, a hockey rink with removable boards and picnic area. A remnant backstop appears to not see much use. The neighborhood bought an ice resurfer and store it in the park building. Resident volunteers keep this rink amongst the highest outdoor ice quality in the City.

BUFFER PARK (3.1 AC, NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

Located on the back side of an industrial area (behind the UNFI Distribution Main Office), Buffer Park is a small turf area with one baseball field and a mound used for sledding in the winter. Small trees were recently planted in a scattered layout on the western side of the park and there are few mature trees on the margins and at the top of the east side hill's plateau. While small, Buffer Park could support additional uses for the neighborhood. This plan recommends re-naming Buffer Park and utilizing a community engagement effort.

PARK VALLEY* (1.14 AC, NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

Situated in the southern area of Hopkins, Park Valley Park is a smaller neighborhood park. The primary features are a playground, shade structure, drinking fountain, and small sand box. The eastern half features an open field that is not big enough for a soccer or baseball game but is flexible for casual use. The playground may meet minimum guidelines but is technically not accessible because no paths connect from the street to the playground. The park lacks a continuous sidewalk. Park Valley is located close to Valley Park. Proximity and similarity in name has caused confusion for residents and contractors, and the Park Board has recommended renaming

this park Raspberry Park and will seek Council action to formally rename.

VALLEY PARK (33 AC, COMMUNITY PARK) + STEINER PARK PRESERVE (33.36 AC, NATURAL RESOURCE AREA)

Valley Park has many park amenities and natural areas. The adjoining Steiner Park Preserve includes wetland area along Nine Mile Creek connecting to highway 169 and Edina. The boundary between the two parks is not easily apparent and the parks function as one connected area. Natural surface trails run between both parks and this trail network could easily be clarified and expanded.

The north area of Valley Park contains most park amenities. This area includes sand volleyball, basketball, a playground, picnic pavilions, a hockey rink, recently updated warming house, outdoor skating area, and a hill for sledding. The Nine Mile Creek regional trail runs along its namesake creek on the western boundary of the park. A large, highly successful, community garden area anchors the southern half of this park.

Steiner Park Preserve includes wetlands along Nine Mile Creek, and an archery range that could easily be improved with accessible paths and a small shelter.

SHADY OAK BEACH (5.4 AC LAND, SPECIAL USE FACILITY)

This park and beach is within Minnetonka City limits. The City of Hopkins owns the park; Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation operates the park and charges a fee for access. Picnic pavilions are located outside of the fenced in area and are often rented. A larger parking lot accommodates heavy traffic in this popular facility. Inside the pay fence there are several park amenities including a variety of play spaces and playgrounds, shade areas, and gathering zones.



Figure 2.12. Buffer Park diamond backstop and infield



Figure 2.13. Shady Oak Beach swim facilities are popular





Figure 2.14. Valley Park bridge over Nine Mile Creek



Figure 2.15. Valley Park community gardens (May 2022)



Figure 2.16. Hilltop Park winter sledding hill is a popular winter activity



Figure 2.17. Harley Hopkins Park trail and hockey boards



Figure 2.18. Elmo Park half court basketball



Figure 2.19. Interlachen Park playground and basketball court



Figure 2.20. Burnes Park playground

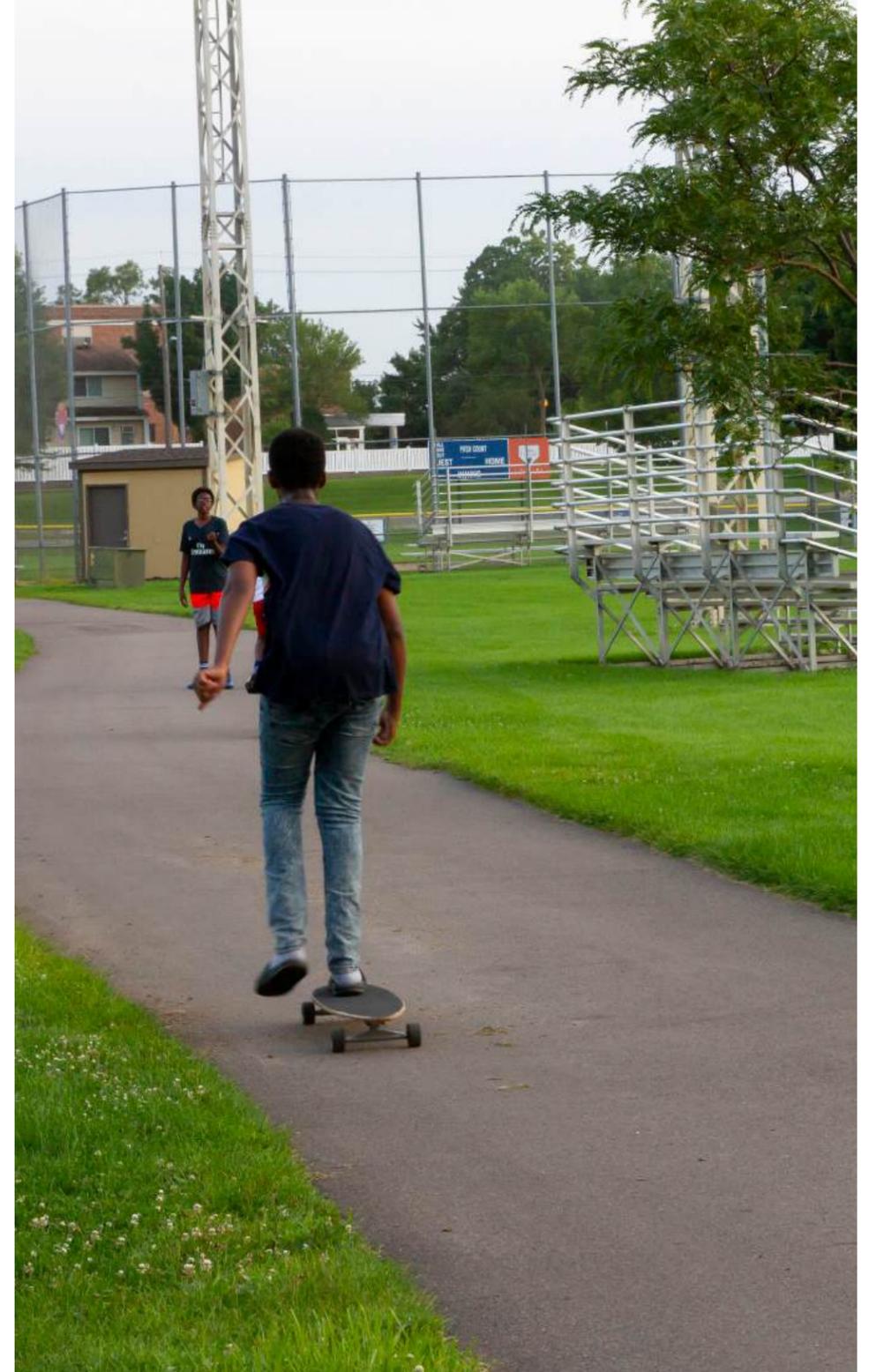


Figure 2.21. Maetzold Park trail between fields

03 THE PARKS HOPKINS NEEDS

ANALYZING THE PARKS HOPKINS HAS NOW AND IDENTIFYING WHAT WORKS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE

CHAPTER CONTENTS

RECREATIONAL TRENDS

LEVELS OF SERVICE

BENCHMARKING

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Needs Assessment forms the backbone of the system plan as it provides the analysis necessary to inform the vision and then is the starting point for the implementation plan. This chapter will focus on establishing a clear baseline status of Hopkins parks and recreation.

The needs assessment utilizes many factors to thoroughly examine the parks Hopkins has today. Analysis begins with the categorization and character of the parks. Next is a look at the distribution of park amenities across the city, which is followed by the Level of Service analysis. The Level of Service is based on an inventory of park contents and size, and shows recommended needs for new park acreage, new fields, facilities, or amenities based on population.

Recommended service levels are metrics established by the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) and reflect benchmarks for a typical park system based on population and density. These metrics are guidelines and not every park system will or should meet all benchmarks, however, this is a great way to understand how Hopkins measures up.

The Level of Service is followed by a Benchmark Analysis that compares Hopkins to 5 peer cities. These peers were selected by the Consultant team and City staff and are comparable to Hopkins based on a similar climate, population, size, and proximity to a larger city. The information provided by the benchmark agencies was evaluated and categorized to create a snapshot view of the data regarding the operations of the agencies so Hopkins can see how they relate overall for the type and size of facilities, financial data and other metrics outlined in the tables. Data from the Benchmark Analysis is to be used as a point of reference when evaluating Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation current operations and provide potential guidelines for the future of the system.

These comparative analyses highlight where needs exist across the system, but it is also important to get qualitative data to understand what residents and park users think about the parks. A multi-faceted process for community engagement was conducted in summer and fall of 2022. Engagement focused on reaching a broad array of park users and made specific efforts to get feedback from BIPOC populations. The feedback from the engagement informed development of concept plans shown later in this document.

Beyond the physical parks, Hopkins has a robust recreational program shared with the City of Minnetonka. The Recreational Program Assessment digs into what is working well with Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation and makes recommendations and suggests goals for keeping programming vibrant.

Engagement and assessment showed that park amenities are not evenly distributed, nor are they reflecting the changing needs of park users. The needs assessment shows that Hopkins Parks adequately serve the population now, and have plenty of potential to be even better as gaps are filled, needs are met, and parks are updated to meet the future needs of a growing and diversifying city.

RECREATIONAL TRENDS

Research by PROS Consulting

The following analysis discusses recreational trends on a national and local level. This data provides a basic understanding of what the population served wants to do and reinforces the community’s need for improved parks, trails, facilities, and recreation programs.

Data used for this analysis was obtained from Sports & Fitness Industry Association’s (SFIA) *Sports, Fitness & Leisure Topline Participation Report* (2022), National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI). All trend data is based on current and/or historical participation rates, statistically valid survey results, or NRPA Park Metrics.

Categories include sports, fitness, outdoor activities, aquatics, and other recreational activities. For this summary, aquatics and other activities are omitted but the full analysis is in the appendix.

Important definitions:

Core participants – higher frequency, engage in activity 50+ times a year (or team sports 13 times a year), more committed and less likely to switch to other activities

Casual Participants – lesser frequency, 49 or fewer times per year (or for team activities 1-12 times per year), and more likely to have numbers fluctuate

COVID-19 had an uneven affect on participation, but generally most activities had a decrease in number of core participants.

Sports Nationwide Trends

The top sports most heavily participated in the United States were Basketball (27.1 million), Golf (25.1 million), and Tennis (22.6 million) which have participation figures well more than the other activities within the general sports category. Baseball (15.5 million), and Outdoor Soccer (12.5 million) round out the top five.

Sports Nationwide – 5 year

Since 2016, Pickleball (71.2%), Golf- Entertainment Venues (51.3%), and Tennis (25.1%) have shown the largest increase in participation. Similarly, Basketball (21.4%) and Boxing for Competition (20.7%)

have also experienced significant growth. Based on the five-year trend from 2016-2021, the sports that are most rapidly declining in participation include Ultimate Frisbee (-40.4%), Roller Hockey (-26.1%), Volleyball (Sand/Beach) (-23.8%), Squash (-23.5%), Slow Pitch Softball (-21.9%), and Gymnastics (-20.7%).

Sports Nationwide – 1 year

The most recent year shares some similarities with the five-year trends; with Pickleball (14.8%) and Boxing for Competition (7.3%) experiencing some of the greatest increases in participation. The greatest one-year increases also include Fast Pitch Softball (15.3%), Gymnastics (10.9%), and Court Volleyball (8.1%).

Basketball (-2.2%), Flag Football (-1.6%), Indoor Soccer (-0.6%) and Baseball (-0.5%) have shown a five-year trend decrease, potentially a direct result of coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, other team sports such as Ultimate Frisbee (-5.8%), Slow Pitch Softball (-5.4%), Roller Hockey (-5%), Racquetball (-4.8%) and Beach/Sand Volleyball (-3.1%), also had significant decreases.

National Participatory Trends - General Sports					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2016	2020	2021	5-Year Trend	1-Year Trend
Basketball	22,343	27,753	27,135	21.4%	-2.2%
Golf (9 or 18-Hole Course)	23,815	24,804	25,111	5.4%	1.2%
Tennis	18,079	21,642	22,617	25.1%	4.5%
Baseball	14,760	15,731	15,587	5.6%	-0.9%
Soccer (Outdoor)	11,932	12,444	12,556	5.2%	0.9%
Golf (Entertainment Venue)	8,173	12,057	12,362	51.3%	2.5%
Softball (Slow Pitch)	7,690	6,349	6,008	-21.9%	-5.4%
Football (Flag)	6,173	7,001	6,889	11.6%	-1.6%
Volleyball (Court)	6,216	5,410	5,849	-5.9%	8.1%
Badminton	7,354	5,862	6,061	-17.6%	3.4%
Soccer (Indoor)	5,117	5,440	5,408	5.7%	-0.6%
Football (Touch)	5,686	4,846	4,884	-14.1%	0.8%
Football (Tackle)	5,481	5,054	5,228	-4.6%	3.4%
Gymnastics	5,381	3,848	4,268	-20.7%	10.9%
Volleyball (Sand/Beach)	5,489	4,320	4,184	-23.8%	-3.1%
Track and Field	4,116	3,636	3,587	-12.9%	-1.3%
Cheerleading	4,029	3,308	3,465	-14.0%	4.7%
Pickleball	2,815	4,199	4,819	71.2%	14.8%
Racquetball	3,579	3,426	3,260	-8.9%	-4.8%
Ice Hockey	2,697	2,270	2,306	-14.5%	1.6%
Ultimate Frisbee	3,673	2,325	2,190	-40.4%	-5.8%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	2,467	1,811	2,088	-15.4%	15.3%
Lacrosse	2,090	1,884	1,892	-9.5%	0.4%
Wrestling	1,922	1,931	1,937	0.8%	0.3%
Roller Hockey	1,929	1,500	1,425	-26.1%	-5.0%
Boxing for Competition	1,210	1,361	1,460	20.7%	7.3%
Rugby	1,550	1,242	1,238	-20.1%	-0.3%
Squash	1,549	1,163	1,185	-23.5%	1.9%

NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over

Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)
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Figure 3.1. National recreation trends



Figure 3.2. Market Potential Index of popular park activities

General Fitness Nationwide

Overall, national participatory trends in fitness have experienced rapid growth in recent years. The activities with the most participation was Fitness Walking (115.8 million), Treadmill (53.6 million), Free Weights (52.6 million), Running/Jogging (48.9 million), and Stationary Cycling (32.4 million).

General Fitness Nationwide - 5 year

Over the last five years (2016-2021), the activities growing at the highest rate are Trail Running (45.9%), Yoga (30.8%), Dance, Step & Choreographed Exercise (13.3%), and Pilates Training (9.6%). Over the same period, the

activities that have undergone the biggest decline include Group Stationary Cycling (-33.5%), Traditional Triathlon (26.4%), Cardio Kickboxing (-26.1%), Cross-Training Style Workout (-24.4%) and Non-Traditional Triathlons (-23.5%).

General Fitness Nationwide - 1 year

In the last year, activities with the largest gains in participation were those that can be done alone at home or socially distanced outdoors. The top increases were in Treadmill (7.6%), Cross-Training Style Workouts (6.4%) Trail Running (5.6%), Yoga (4.7%), and Stair Climbing (4.7%). In the same span, the activities that had the largest decline in participation were those that would take more time and investment. The greatest drops were seen in Traditional Triathlon (-5.3%), Aerobics (-5.1%), Non-Traditional Triathlons (-4.3%), and Cardio Kickboxing (-3.7%).

Local Sport and Leisure Market Potential

Source: ESRI

Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the probable demand for a product or service within the defined service areas. The MPI shows the likelihood that an adult resident will participate in certain activities when compared to the U.S. national average. Data is normalized so that 100 is the national average, and anything above 100 indicates Hopkins residents are more likely to participate, and values under 100 indicate lesser demand than average.

It should be noted that MPI metrics are only one data point used to help determine community trends; thus, programmatic decisions should not be based solely on MPI metrics.

Above average MPI scores show that the City's residents have a strong participation presence when it comes to recreational offerings, especially pertaining to General Fitness and Outdoor Recreation. This becomes significant when the City considers starting up new recreation programs or building new facilities, providing a strong tool to estimate attendance and participation.

The chart of Hopkins MPI is at right.. The complete report is included in the appendix for reference.

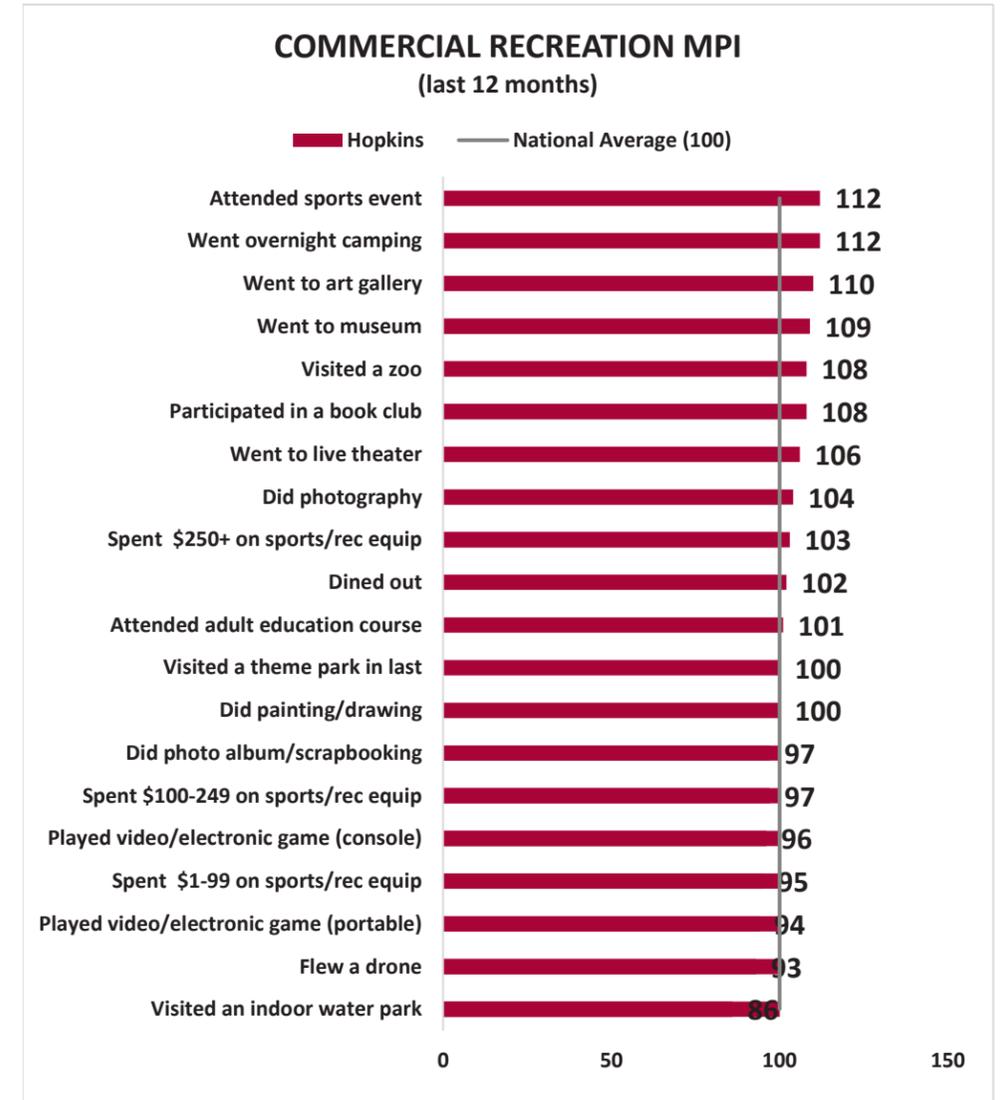


Figure 3.3. Market Potential Index of commercial activities

LEVEL OF SERVICE

A tool developed by PROS Consulting, the table below is a snapshot of how Hopkins parks meet national guidelines for park acreage and amenities. The left half of the table reflects existing Hopkins inventory. The center two columns show National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics and the recommended service level per NRPA data of communities that match Hopkins in size and density. The columns at right show where Hopkins inventory meets or does not meet the standard. The following table lists the current and projected future park amenities needed to meet the NRPA Standard. Communities can choose to meet the standard, or remain below, for a variety of reasons. This table is a tool to understand the park system and prioritize resources.

Hopkins, MN Level of Service Standards

PARKS: 2022 Inventory - Developed Facilities										Current Needs			5-Year Forecasted Need			18-Year Forecasted Need						
Park Type	Hopkins Inventory	Hopkins School District	Minneapolis Parks	Total Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population			NRPA Park Metrics Median Metric by Jurisdiction Population Less than 20,000			Recommended Service Levels; Revised for Local Service Area			Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed		Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed		Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	
Neighborhood Parks	38.16	-		38.16	1.99	acres per	1,000				2.10	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	2	Acre(s)	Need Exists	8	Acre(s)	Need Exists	13	Acre(s)
Community Parks	61.10	-		61.10	3.19	acres per	1,000				4.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	15	Acre(s)	Need Exists	26	Acre(s)	Need Exists	36	Acre(s)
Special Use Parks	5.44		65.60	71.04	3.71	acres per	1,000				3.65	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Need Exists	8	Acre(s)	Need Exists	18	Acre(s)
Natural Resource Areas	33.34	-		33.34	1.74	acres per	1,000				1.70	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Need Exists	4	Acre(s)	Need Exists	8	Acre(s)
School-Parks	-	11.48		11.48	0.60	acres per	1,000				0.55	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Need Exists	0	Acre(s)	Need Exists	2	Acre(s)
Total Developed Park Acres	138.04	11.48	65.60	215.12	11.25	acres per	1,000				12.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	14	Acre(s)	Need Exists	46	Acre(s)	Need Exists	76	Acre(s)
Undeveloped Parks	59.50	-		59.50	3.11	acres per	1,000						1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
Total Park Acres	197.54	11.48	65.60	274.62	14.36	acres per	1,000	12.9	acres per	1,000	12.00	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Need Exists	17	Acre(s)
TRAILS:																						
Trails (paved and unpaved)	0.89			0.89	0.05	mile per	1,000	3 miles of trails			0.25	mile per	1,000	Need Exists	4	Mile(s)	Need Exists	5	Mile(s)	Need Exists	5	Mile(s)
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:																						
Basketball Courts	4.00			4.00	1.00	court per	4,782	1	court per	3,750	1.00	court per	4,000	Need Exists	1	Court(s)	Need Exists	1	Court(s)	Need Exists	2	Court(s)
Tennis Courts	8.00			8.00	1.00	court per	2,391				1.00	court per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)
Pickleball Courts	5.00			5.00	1.00	court per	3,826				1.00	court per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)
Ball Fields	9.00	0.66		9.00	1.00	field per	2,125	1	field per	3,107 Youth Baseball - 3,107 7,954 Adult Baseball - 7,954 5,339 Youth Softball - 5,339 5,667 Adult Softball - 5,667	1.00	field per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)
Soccer Fields	3.00	0.33		3.00	1.00	field per	6,376	1	field per	4,362 Multipurpose - 4,362 3,504 Youth Soccer - 3,504 8,017 Adult Soccer - 8,017 12,962 Multipurpose Synthetic - 12,962	1.00	field per	4,000	Need Exists	2	Field(s)	Need Exists	2	Field(s)	Need Exists	3	Field(s)
Playgrounds	11.00	0.66		11.00	1.00	site per	1,739	1	site per	1,986	1.00	site per	2,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Picnic Shelters	13.00			13.00	1.00	site per	1,471				1.00	site per	2,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)
Football Field	1.00			1.00	1.00	field per	19,128	1	field per	8,004 Football Field - 8,004 7,102 Lacrosse Field - 7,102	1.00	site per	10,000	Need Exists	1	Field(s)	Need Exists	1	Field(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Skating Rink	7.00			7.00	1.00	site per	2,733	1	site per	7,997	1.00	site per	3,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Need Exists	0	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Skate Parks	-			-	1.00	site per	-				1.00	site per	25,000	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Dog Parks	-			-	1.00	site per	-	1	site per	11,100	1.00	site per	20,000	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Splash Pad	1.00			1.00	1.00	site per	19,128				1.00	site per	20,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Need Exists	0	Site(s)	Need Exists	0	Site(s)
INDOOR AMENITIES:																						
Indoor Aquatic Space	-			-	-	SF per person	person	1	site per	11,375 Aquatic Center - 11,375	0.50	SF per person	person	Need Exists	9,564	Square Feet	Need Exists	10,890	Square Feet	Need Exists	12,150	Square Feet
Indoor Recreation Space	42,959.00			42,959.00	2.25	SF per person	person	1	site per	8,504 Community Center - 8,504 9,126 Recreation Center - 9,126	1.50	SF per person	person	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet

2022 Estimated Population	19,128
2027 Estimated Population	21,779
2040 Estimated Population	24,300

Notes:
 School inventory has been reduce to a third based on availability to the general public
 Minneapolis Parks special use parks inventory includes acreage from the Meadowbrook Golf Course
 Hopkins Publis School's pool at Eisenhower Community Center was not counted in this inventory because of limited public use opportunities

Figure 3.4. Level of Service initial analysis results - excluding acreage outside of Hopkins

ADJACENT PARKS & SERVICE AREAS

Hopkins is a fully developed community so the City can look to its neighbors as partners in ensuring all residents have access to open space. The parks identified at right are in Minnetonka (Big Willow, Orchard, Junction, Pioneer, and Lone Lake), and Edina (Van Valkenburg and Alden). These parks, when counted toward the park acreage serving Hopkins in the upper portion of the Level of Service table, can be used to re-balance the need for park acres. Taking these parks into account, along with the five regional trails that run through Hopkins, changes the balance and shows that no new park development or trail miles are needed at this time.

Figure 3.05 shows how inclusion of this park acreage affects the Level of Service Needs to meet the national standard.

Additionally, there are some key amenities that serve Hopkins residents but are owned and operated by different entities. Aquatics facilities are a prime example. Eisenhower Community Center and The Marsh both have pool facilities that are used at times by Hopkins residents. These facilities were not included in the Level of Service due to their location and distance outside of the city limits or limited access to the residents of Hopkins.

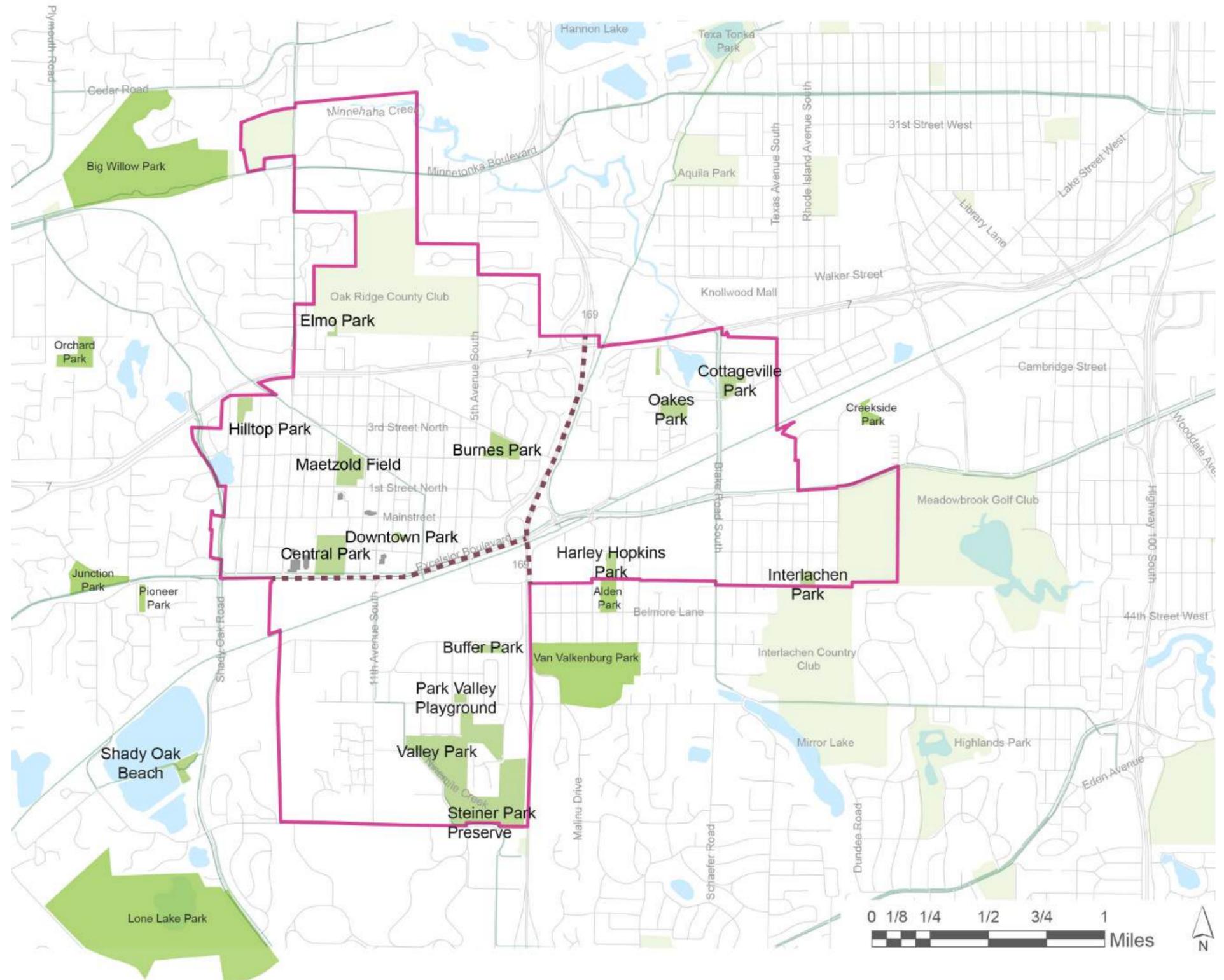


Figure 3.5. Hopkins parks and open spaces + nearby parks Hopkins residents are likely to use

LEVEL OF SERVICE - REVISED

The table below is revised to show the inclusion of neighboring parks to park and trail inventory. The pink boxes show where updates were made. By including the parks mapped at left, and the regional trails running through Hopkins, we can see that the table is rebalanced and more standards are met. We know that Hopkins has little or no undeveloped area that can fulfill the needs. There are possibilities of golf course conversion or that funding is identified to clean the former landfill to recreational standards, but neither of these is likely in the short-term. Privately Owned Public Spaces are not included in this analysis but have the biggest opportunity to complement and expand functions of the park system.

Hopkins, MN Level of Service Standards

PARKS: 2022 Inventory - Developed Facilities										Current Needs			5-Year Forecasted Need			18-Year Forecasted Need						
Park Type	Hopkins Inventory	Hopkins School District	Other Parks	Total Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population			NRPA Park Metrics Median Metric by Jurisdiction Population Less than 20,000			Recommended Service Levels; Revised for Local Service Area			Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed			
Neighborhood Parks	38.16	-	21.00	59.16	3.09	acres per	1,000	12.9	acres per	1,000	2.10	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
Community Parks	61.10	-	42.00	103.10	5.39	acres per	1,000				4.00	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
Special Use Parks	5.44	-	95.00	100.44	5.25	acres per	1,000				3.65	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
Natural Resource Areas	33.34	-	146.00	179.34	9.38	acres per	1,000				1.70	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
School-Parks	-	11.48	-	11.48	0.60	acres per	1,000				0.55	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Need Exists	0	Acre(s)	Need Exists	2	Acre(s)
Total Developed Park Acres	138.04	11.48	369.60	519.12	27.14	acres per	1,000				12.00	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
Undeveloped Parks	59.50	-	-	59.50	3.11	acres per	1,000							Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
Total Park Acres	197.54	11.48	369.60	578.62	30.25	acres per	1,000	12.9	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)			
TRAILS:																						
Trails (paved and unpaved)	0.89	-	5.67	6.56	0.34	mile per	1,000	3 miles of trails			0.25	mile per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Mile(s)	Meets Standard	-	Mile(s)	Meets Standard	-	Mile(s)
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:																						
Basketball Courts	4.00	4.00	-	4.00	1.00	court per	4,782	1	court per	3,750	1.00	court per	4,000	Need Exists	1	Court(s)	Need Exists	1	Court(s)	Need Exists	2	Court(s)
Tennis Courts	8.00	-	-	8.00	1.00	court per	2,391				1.00	court per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)
Pickleball Courts	5.00	-	-	5.00	1.00	court per	3,826				1.00	court per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)
Ball Fields	9.00	0.66	-	9.00	1.00	field per	2,125	1	field per	3,107 Adult Baseball - 7,954 Youth Softball - 5,339 Adult Softball - 5,667	1.00	field per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)
Soccer Fields	3.00	0.33	-	3.00	1.00	field per	6,376	1	field per	Multipurpose - 4,362 Youth Soccer - 3,504 Adult Soccer - 8,017 Multipurpose Synthetic - 12,962	1.00	field per	4,000	Need Exists	2	Field(s)	Need Exists	2	Field(s)	Need Exists	3	Field(s)
Playgrounds	11.00	0.66	-	11.00	1.00	site per	1,739	1	site per	1,986	1.00	site per	2,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Picnic Shelters	13.00	-	-	13.00	1.00	site per	1,471				1.00	site per	2,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)
Football Field	1.00	-	-	1.00	1.00	field per	19,128	1	field per	Football Field - 8,004 Lacrosse Field - 7,102	1.00	site per	10,000	Need Exists	1	Field(s)	Need Exists	1	Field(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Skating Rink	7.00	-	-	7.00	1.00	site per	2,733	1	site per	7,997	1.00	site per	3,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Need Exists	0	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Skate Parks	-	-	-	-	1.00	site per	19,128				1.00	site per	25,000	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Dog Parks	-	-	-	-	1.00	site per	19,128	1	site per	11,100	1.00	site per	20,000	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Splash Pad	1.00	-	-	1.00	1.00	site per	19,128				1.00	site per	20,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Need Exists	0	Site(s)	Need Exists	0	Site(s)
INDOOR AMENITIES:																						
Indoor Aquatic Space	-	-	-	-	-	SF per person	person	1	site per	Aquatic Center - 11,375	0.50	SF per person	person	Need Exists	9,564	Square Feet	Need Exists	10,890	Square Feet	Need Exists	12,150	Square Feet
Indoor Recreation Space	42,959.00	-	-	42,959.00	2.25	SF per person	person	1	site per	Community Center - 8,504 Recreation Center - 9,126	1.50	SF per person	person	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet

2022 Estimated Population	19,128
2027 Estimated Population	21,779
2040 Estimated Population	24,300

Notes:
 School inventory is reduced to a third based on availability to the general public
 Minneapolis Parks special use parks inventory includes acreage from the Meadowbrook Golf Course
 Some basketball courts are half court but are still counted as 1 court for this inventory
 Lone Lake Park in Minnetonka is counted as a Natural Resource area

UPDATED LEVEL OF SERVICE - By including adjacent parks on Hopkins boundary, fewer needs exist for park acres. The Outdoor Amenities are unchanged - we don't assume other communities intend to provide amenities to Hopkins residents, a city should strive to meet its own needs.

Added Regional Trail lengths in Hopkins to "Other Parks" category, now shows trails are well served.

Figure 3.6. Level of Service analysis - including acreage outside Hopkins



Central Park - June 30, 2022



Farmer's Market - July 30, 2022



National Night Out - August 2, 2022



Slow Roll Bike Ride (July 2022)

Figure 3.7. Images from in-person engagement events in the parks including city staff, park board, and consultant team members

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Outreach Goals and Process

City staff identified engagement objectives at the outset of this process. A major part of this engagement process focused on purposeful outreach to populations that are not broadly reflected by utilizing traditional engagement methods. Therefore, outreach for this project utilized three major approaches: 1) in-person information sharing and gathering at events (meeting people where they are, not asking people to attend meetings), 2) accessible virtual engagement, and 3) focus groups and dialogs. The following describes those three approaches, and the end summarizes the results broadly.

In-person at events and pop-ups in parks

City Staff identified specific events for in-person engagement and conversations with the public. Meeting residents where they are, in the parks, is a great method to connect with those that may not otherwise contribute to community engagement efforts. Events were selected that connected with a cross section of Hopkins residents such as the Farmer's Market, National Night Out, and the Walk of Art Hopkins (WOAH). City staff, including three interns during summer 2022 also provided in-person engagement at several summer activities including Park Adventures Day Camp, Slow Roll Bike Ride, dropping off door hanger advertisements for online engagement and process notification, and gathering input at the Fire Department Open House. Similar engagement materials were used at all in-person events. Large poster boards with information about the project and visual survey questions were asked. Participants were asked to place a dot sticker to represent their vote. A summary of the findings from this and from online engagement follows.

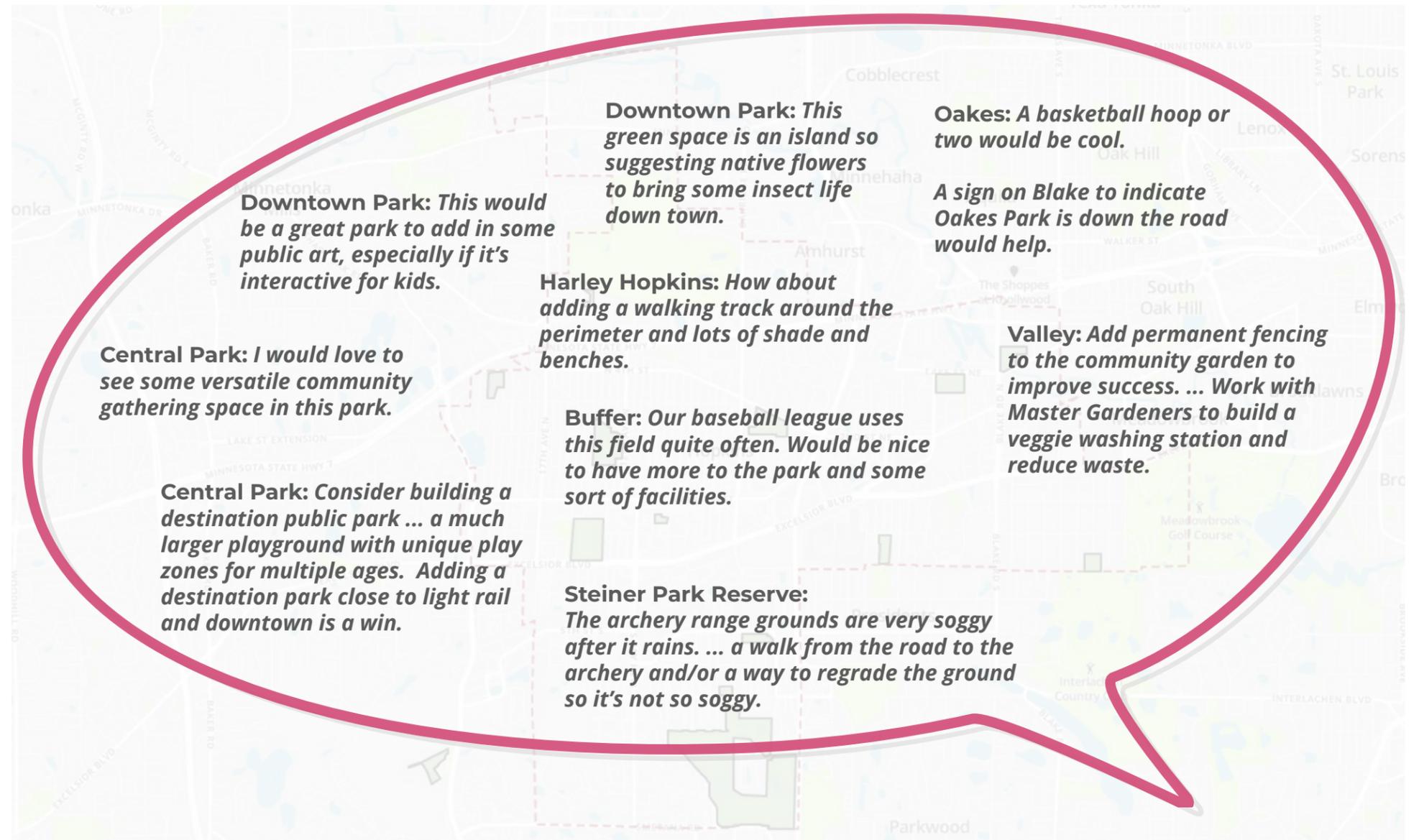


Figure 3.8. Map comments from Social Pinpoint specific to the parks with concept designs completed (Chapter 5)

In-person Events in 2022

- Pop-Up at Central Park – June 30, 2022
- Park Adventures – July 7, 2022
- Slow Roll Bike Ride - July 29, 2022
- Farmer's Market – July 30, 2022
- National Night Out – August 2, 2022
- Walk of Art Hopkins – August 4, 2022
- Fire Department Open House – October 10, 2022

In-person Events in 2023 with Park Concepts

- Flying during Raspberry Festival weekend
- 3 park pop-ups in July and August
- Sunset Series Concert



- Shaded benches for guardians and parents to watch children play
- More art in parks and not just downtown
- Improve the soggy surfacing at the archery range
- Desire for a free, permanent skate park connected to another park or open space
- Wish Hopkins had a dog park
- Expand Central Park's Pavilion so that it can act as more of a community center with a gym and fitness equipment, and indoor play space
- Desire for more invasive plant and weed control, balanced with a wish for less chemical use

To keep data consistent, the same six questions were asked in the online survey and in-person on poster boards. Those questions are listed below. Input from the online survey and in-person engagement was merged to summarize findings, and these results are shown in pie charts at on the following page. Results with the most votes are at the top (red, warm colors), and those with fewest votes are toward the bottom of the list (green, blue, and purple).

Priority themes form an important part of the visioning for the future of Hopkins Park System and will be explored further in Chapter

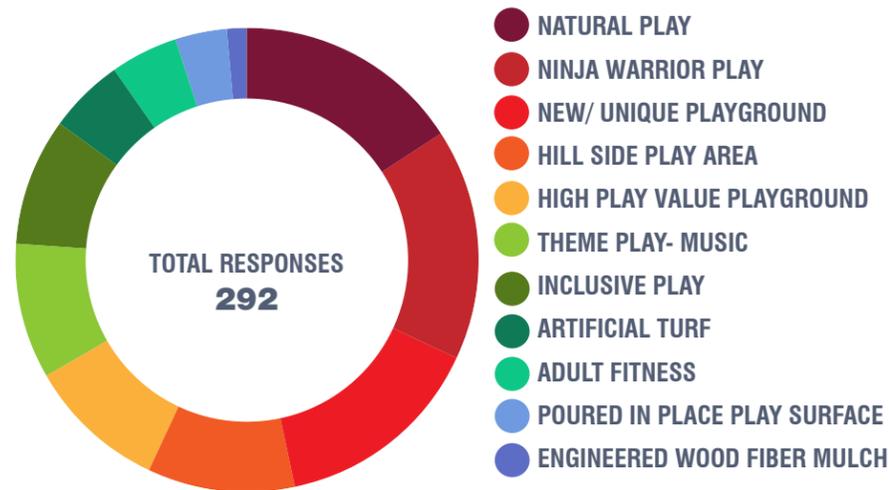
Questions asked in online survey and in-person on poster boards:

1. Vote for priority themes (6 votes, 12 total options)
2. What do you do in Hopkins Parks now?
3. What do you want to do in Hopkins Parks?
4. Which playground type do you prefer?
5. Which of these Downtown Placemaking examples do you recognize and visit?
6. What activities would encourage you to linger downtown?

04. Public engagement identified top themes for the Park System including; Natural Resources, Park Access, Focus on Quality, Winter Recreation, and Unique Parks. Parks for All and Racial Equity were close in popularity, followed by Resilient and Sustainable. Gathering and Community Building were prioritized next. The remaining themes received significantly less votes.

For question two - what do you do in Hopkins Parks now - most respondents utilized the playgrounds, bike trails, and splash pad. When asked what do you want to do in Hopkins Parks, the top cluster of answers was an All-Wheel Playground (bike skills course) (85), Dog Park (84), Climbing/Bouldering (81), Outdoor Movie (73). After that was Year-Round Outdoor Gathering (62), and Habitat & Restoration (59). The survey was conducted while Freeway Skate Park was operating. Skate Park received votes, highlighting the desire for a facility within Hopkins.

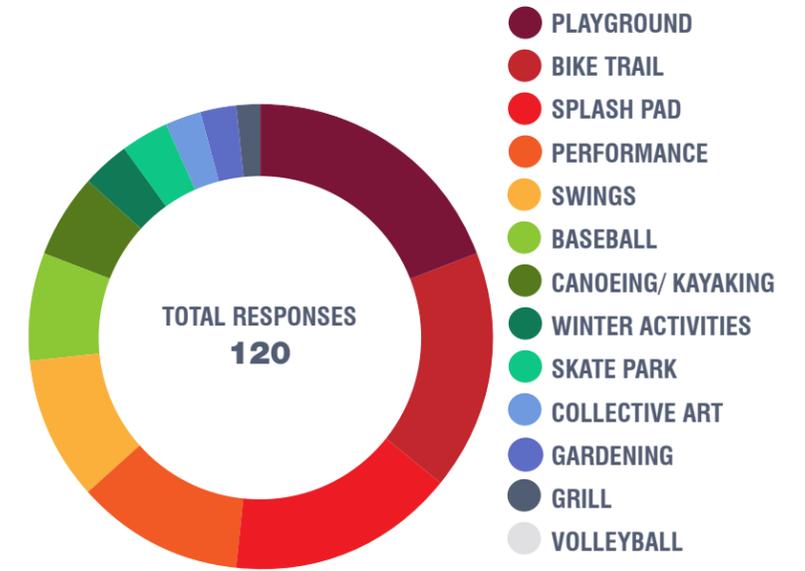
The community was also asked what type of playground they would most like to see in future Hopkins parks. The top three responses were significantly higher than all others. The top two results were tied reflecting a dual interest in Nature Play and Ninja Warrior (challenge course) both with 47 votes, and third was New/Unique Playground (43). The photos used for these playground types are shown below.



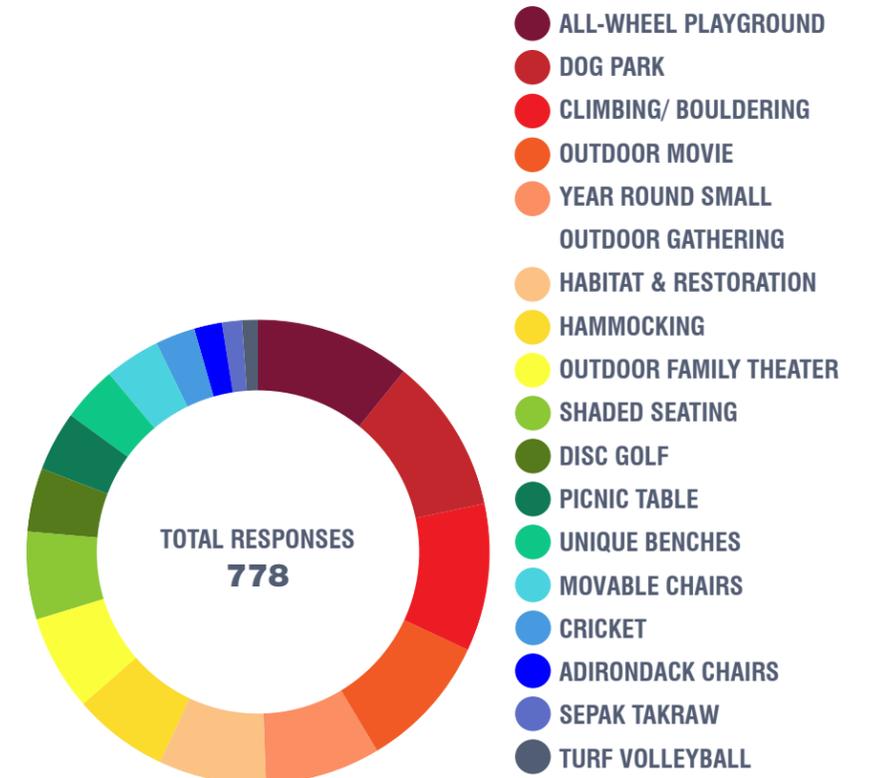
PLAYGROUND

Figure 3.10. Types of playgrounds desired in Hopkins

Legend in order from highest to least



WHAT DO YOU DO AT PARKS?



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE IN YOUR PARKS?

Figure 3.11. Engagement questions summary results



Figure 3.12. Nature Play

The last two questions focused on Downtown and ideas for activation. We asked the community to identify which existing Downtown areas they visited. Most votes went to Mainstreet restaurants (49), followed by Sculptures at Hopkins Center for the Arts, (27) and the Artery (23). The second question focused on activities that might encourage people to linger downtown. Of these responses, the highest was Food Truck Festivals (42), Large Festivals such as Raspberry Fest (34), Public Art (30), and Outdoor Games such as bag toss (27).



Figure 3.13. 'Ninja Warrior' course



Figure 3.14. New / Unique Playground



Figure 3.15. Downtown placemaking attracting residents

Themes were adjusted to reflect the broader community and include priorities derived from BIPOC focus groups. When looking purely at community votes, the top categories were Natural Resources, Park Access, Focus on Quality, and more opportunities for Winter Recreation as the top four.

In alignment with the Comprehensive Plan, and feedback from the focus group with specific populations, more priorities were added back to these four. Racial Equity, Parks for All, and Gathering and Community Building were seen as very important priorities, and these all were rated toward the middle of the total priorities.

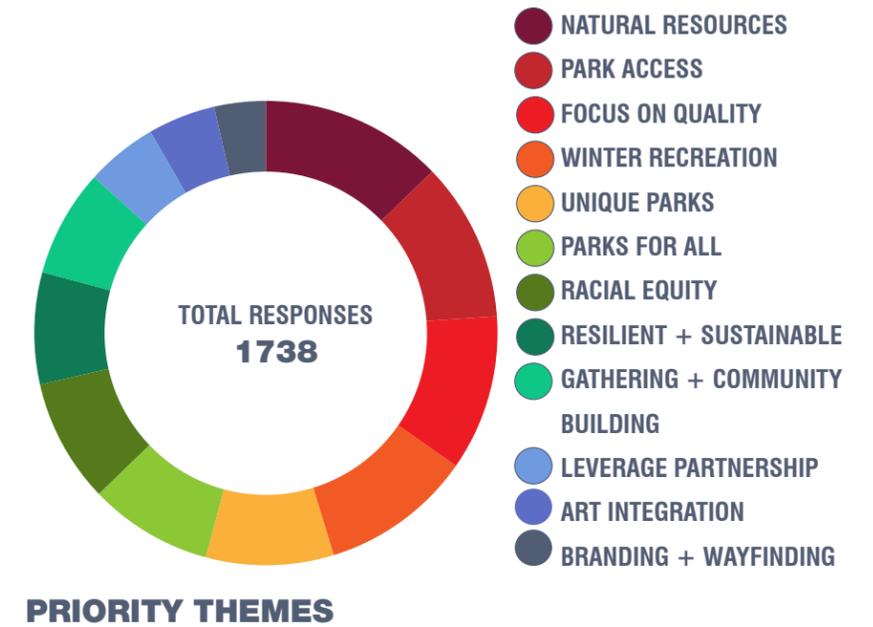


Figure 3.16. Summary of all input on Priority Themes from in-person and virtual engagement

PRIORITY POPULATION DIALOGS:

As an experienced convener of multicultural and BIPOC dialogs, Putting Change in Motion (PCM) utilized their extensive connections and experience to make connections to priority populations including Latino, Russian, Somali, Seniors, and people living with disabilities. This direct engagement with groups that are often missed with traditional planning engagement techniques is important to the process. A key objective of the dialogues was to bring out input that may not otherwise be shared, and to do so in way that made participants feel comfortable. PCM also believes some marginalized communities prefer to talk openly with people who are not connected with government.

A detailed summary of the Priority Population Dialogs and Stakeholder Interviews follows. The full text is included as an appendix.

The Park System Plan will provide a vision for community wishes and needs now and for the next 20 years. This plan will be equity-based and is intended to meet the interests of all Hopkins residents.

Putting Change in Motion (PCM) provided community engagement services to conduct Community Dialogues with identified Priority Populations. Engaging these groups in an inclusive manner means diverse voices were heard, participants were encouraged to provide their knowledge and shared key opinions and ideas regarding the park system. Community-driven opinions and ideas gathered in the dialogues will be integrated into the overall Community Engagement work completed.

Putting Change in Motion designed and conducted a series of dialogues with the Priority Populations, which included those who are under-represented. The specific groups ultimately selected by the city of Hopkins for PCM dialogues, after consultation with Confluence and PCM are:

- Latinos
- Russians
- Somali
- Multicultural Seniors
- Persons Living with Disabilities

SUMMARY OF PRIORITY POPULATION DIALOG KEY POINTS

PARKS ARE A PLACE FOR:

Family gatherings and friends' meetings

Recreation and games

Community activities and interactions

Receiving fresh air, be among trees and connecting to nature

A place that provides cultural events and access to all ages and abilities.

DESIRED ACTIVITIES:

Family gatherings and picnics where kids play and adults relax

Meditating and connecting to nature

Quietness and solitary outdoor activities

Walking, hiking, and biking

Games like tennis, frisbee, soccer and basketball

Grilling and picnics

BARRIERS:

Not ADA accessible

Not enough information about the parks in Hopkins

Lack of activities for teenagers

Not enough features like picnic tables, benches, bbq grills, restrooms, etc.

SUGGESTIONS:

Accessibility – accessible to all users – age and abilities

Rubberized walking surfaces

Adult friendly swings

Sensory activities for ADHD kids

Multiple activities to appeal all ages

Visibility and presence of park staffs for safety purposes

Restrooms at frequent intervals

Presence of trail heads and trail maps

HEALTH AND WELLNESS SUGGESTIONS:

Exercise equipment

Drinking water with bottle filler

Shaded trails

Concerts, exercise classes, and guided walks

Well maintained benches and picnic tables

Better trail signage

Park maintenance – surface of trails, trash and litter



The groups represented a wide range of ages from youth to the elderly, as well as a broad range of income levels. These are observations from PCM, as we did not quantify ages or incomes. The dialogue questions were developed by Putting Change in Motion with cultural competence in mind, and in collaboration with Confluence and Hopkins staff, who approved them.

Putting Change in Motion - Approach to Community Engagement

Putting Change in Motion utilizes a unique approach to community engagement, working from a framework which has been highly successful and yields superior results. The Principles of the Cultural Complementarity Model™ guide this framework. This framework operates on basic principles of a participatory democracy; is dynamic, asset-based and promotes respect and trust.

The approach is customized to each respective community, is egalitarian and participatory, creating an environment of trust which draws out participant's knowledge, ideas, interests, and concerns. Mutual learning is a valued outcome of the dialogues. PCM owner Victoria Amaris, a Cultural Engagement Specialist, has used this model for many years. Her methodology is unique and opens doors where other methods have not been successful.

The term "culture" is used in its broadest sense, to include not only ethnic, racial cultures but those of different ages, abilities, urban and rural, as well as national origin. Therefore, we identify facilitators, transcriptionists from each community, rather than employing interpreters. Particularly, in groups for whom English is a second language, or not spoken at all, the dynamic is more natural and comfortable without interpreters in the mix.

Data Limitations

Participants were not randomly selected but identified individually, or by groups and received invitations to participate in dialogues which were customized to each group linguistically and culturally.

Care must be taken in generalizing findings to other segments of the same communities. For example, what was heard from immigrant Latinos would not necessarily represent the voices of US born Latinos.

Mixed methodologies were employed to reach more community members from the Priority Populations groups. The data from dialogues was supplemented with interviews, and small group conversations.

Clearly, those who participated were very engaged and felt happy to contribute to this important project in their city. Indicating their voices were heard, noted, and valued.

Key Findings

What parks mean to the variety of dialogue participants often has to do with family, where they can take the children, have picnics, play sports. But for many, parks also have loftier meaning, as a place to meditate, relax, connect to nature. A place of beauty for some Latinos.

When asked of immigrants what parks were in their native country, the majority did not have positive feelings about the parks. Some Somalis described parks back home as just open spaces; Latinos said often the parks had high levels of criminality, so they rarely went to them. Russians reported the parks having few trees, few bathrooms and the local community is responsible for maintaining them.

Favorite activities and favorite Parks include walking, reading for the Multicultural Seniors group, which does frequent the parks. Some like to relax, meditate in the parks. Several groups, particularly, the Somali and Latinos share an interest in sports from tennis to soccer, basketball, and biking. People living with disabilities enjoy walking their dogs, attending music and movies. And they enjoyed a variety of parks based on what respective parks have to offer.

Across all the groups eating is a favored activity and mentioned were picnics, grilling, enjoying celebrations with friends and family. We learned from the Russian community that they like to go in large groups. They do take part in many activities all in large groups. And for the elders it is critical to have large groups.

Favored Parks

All dialogue participants have been to the parks in Hopkins. And they have favorites, which differ quite a bit across the groups. The Russians prefer the Burnes Park and Shady Oak; the Somalis like Cottageville Park; Latinos prefer Central Park; and Seniors preferred Valley Park because it is very accommodating; the folks in this community named 5 parks they favor: Burnes, Downtown, Central, Shady Oak Lake and Harley Hopkins Park.

Barriers to Using Hopkins Parks

Nearly all dialogue participants have a number of barriers to using Hopkins parks. The need for cleaner, better maintained bathrooms

is high on the list. Latinos stopped going to certain parks that don't have bathrooms, or which aren't maintained. Some parks only have portable toilets, and they are located far away, making it difficult to get a child or an elderly person, or someone in a wheelchair to them.

Accessibility is a critical issue that was raised in some groups. It was emphasized not only for persons in a wheelchair, but also, for mothers with small children, seniors, young families. The trails need to be improved for more people to be able to use them.

Lack of drinking fountains is a concern for many, and in particular near the trails. As is the question of safety. Participants talked about having police more visible in the parks. More lighting was mentioned by several people, particularly important in winter when it gets dark early. And only Latinos mentioned concern about the metallic playground equipment due to it heating up in summer, could possibly hurt a child. They would really like to see a different material used.

It was mentioned that it would be good to have a few places with emergency buttons if something happens. Some voiced concerns about bad behavior of young people, and intoxicated persons in the parks.

Creating a Welcoming Park

Participants did not hesitate to say what constitutes a Welcoming Park. Ideas flowed. One Russian said, "First, the community needs to know there are parks. And to offer entertainment and activities for all age groups and abilities is key." Across groups, repeatedly, accessibility improvements should be made for everyone using parks. Inclusivity and hosting cross-cultural events was identified as a priority that would be good for Hopkins as a whole. Suggestions to help create a welcoming park include better walkways on the trails; better lighting throughout the parks; more benches for older people; picnic tables for families to sit at and eat; a dog park; sensory activities for persons with autism; building ramps for certain parts of parks to make it easier to navigate. Public art and an amphitheater, food trucks, music were all mentioned. Two groups mentioned that more communication, and more effective information about the parks needed to be distributed to the community. And to not forget those that live in apartment buildings because they often don't receive as many flyers as single-family homes do.

How can parks and trails in Hopkins be a part of making life better for you, improve health, and build a feeling of community?

Most participants mentioned similar attributes of the park system that makes life better and improves health. The reasons being that in the parks you can exercise, or you can relax and even meditate, or you can meet new friends at the park when you are there with your children. And one Somali said “ parks are a place to build community”.

Communication with City

Multiple groups identified the best way for the City of Hopkins to communicate about the parks, trails and programs depends on ages. Seniors need printed material with bigger font. Other age groups will look to the internet and Facebook. Some follow local media and clubs (Russian members particularly). Flyers like Arts in the Park are immensely helpful. For many participants social media is an effective way to communicate.

How can the Natural Areas of Hopkins parks be best improved?

Almost all the groups were familiar with the natural areas, and felt they should be kept natural, and signage added to identify plants. People enjoy the quiet peacefulness in those areas.

Issues Unique to Specific Groups

Through the community engagement process, PCM found many commonalities across the groups but there were also unique perspectives and concerns about parks observed in groups.

Somali

Somalis stressed the importance of parks to children. Since many Somali residents of Hopkins live in apartments, parks provide children with needed places to play. They also said parks are a good place to meet new people when you are visiting with your children. Somalis also felt a very good way to distribute information about the parks is through the schools.

This group also felt one major barrier to using the parks was witnessing behaviors by other park users that made them feel unsafe such as: rowdy behavior, smoking marijuana and other drug use in the bathrooms, older kids fighting and using the parks after closing hours.

Russian

This group spoke about the unique needs and activities for each generation to enjoy parks. The elderly require more benches to relax, adults need more trails to walk, teens desire more entertaining activities such as skate parks and children enjoy playgrounds.

Russians also thought parks in Hopkins are well cared for. In Russia, the local community is responsible for maintaining the parks.

Latinos

The Latino group emphasized the belief parks should be inclusive for all members of the family – young and old- but also for the greater Hopkins community. They also would like events in parks to represent all cultures represented and believe that a variety of cross-cultural activities would benefit all Hopkins residents.

Multicultural Seniors

Seniors want more information on the plant and wildlife in the parks suggesting guided walks with park staff and poster-boards with information be available.

Most of the seniors also have a long history with park usage. Even if they came to the country as immigrants, they could cite using parks decades ago. They also stressed parks could help you learn about the history of the community.

People Living with Disabilities

This group said that they visit different parks based on the specific amenity or activity offered at each park.

Specific accessibility issues were emphasized with this group that were not identified in other groups. Examples stated: curbs around play areas create barriers that do not allow for wheelchair access. Wood chips and sand on paths make it difficult for wheelchairs and for those who use walkers. Also, the fact that not only are there not enough bathrooms but that there are not enough that meet the specific demands of ADA.

Unique suggestions for park improvements included sensory activities/areas for those with autism, adult size swings and adjustable basketball hoops.

Conclusion

The participants of the community dialogues provided excellent examples of community-driven thinking about the Parks. PCM views them as the experts and there was much to learn. They spoke so authentically, and they all had been to the parks.

It was good to hear how they want to see more inclusion and more cross-cultural opportunities in events. Many were remarkably busy but were generous in sharing their thoughts and ideas.

Hopkins Priority Populations Dialogue Questions

1. What does a park mean to you? (If immigrants: How were parks used in your native country?)
2. What are your favorite activities in the parks?
3. Have you been to any of the parks in Hopkins? If yes, which is your favorite? And why?
4. What are barriers to using Hopkins parks?
5. How do we create parks that are Welcoming to All? What does the Ideal Park for you and your family look like?
6. How can parks and trails in Hopkins be a part of making life better for you, improve health, and build a feeling of community?
7. What is the best way for the City of Hopkins to communicate about the parks, trails, and programs?
8. Trails – how can we make trails better?
9. Are you familiar with the “Natural Areas” of Hopkins parks? If yes, how could these open spaces best be improved?



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Ten stakeholder interviews were conducted, in addition to two open feedback sessions,. All of which were held as virtual meetings. Below is a list of the stakeholder interview groups and the following pages include a summary of what was learned.

- City of Hopkins Staff- Park and Recreation Facilities
- Government Agencies and Non-Profits
- Hopkins School District – Programs
- Hopkins School District – Athletics
- Chesterton Academy (St. Gabriel's) High School
- Hopkins Area Little League
- Hopkins Youth Hockey Association
- Lacrosse
- Open Session (2)
- Girls Softball

Common themes, wishes and needs that were expressed throughout the interviews include the following:

- Flexible multi use spaces were desired – varied by season, and able to host events/ programs like a second flexible arena with ice sheets in winter but turf in summer
- Need more rentable spaces to act as community hubs, for example to host community cooking classes. These spaces must be flexible and able to host different size events.
- Many athletic leagues asked for warm up spaces, and wish for home fields to host competitions and tournaments. These requests included more fields and facilities, such as lined lacrosse and soccer fields, girls softball fields, an additional futsal court, more turf fields
- Lights in playfields and picnic shelters; promote evening events
- Improved bathrooms/ restrooms
- A desire for outdoor covered ice/roller hockey/turf similar to St. Louis Park ROC; if not that, then new ice sheet with year round access like Plymouth
- Expansion of outdoor immersion program + outdoor learning
- Upgraded theater building with classroom, rehearsal, storage, and

multi-purpose rooms

- Wayfinding signage in downtown and Mainstreet
- Culturally relevant programs for youth and adults – teen appropriate spaces/ activities under supervision

CITY OF HOPKINS STAFF - PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

- Want to think bigger and more long term
- Flexible arena space needed
- Pavilion is rented for graduation parties, weddings, cat/dog shows, flower sale, clothing swap, etc. Could easily use more rentable space
- Want all year-round turf / walking loop / dry land training
- Fitness Gym
- Want an indoor playground or play space
- For largest events, the Activity Center's parking is not big enough, would be great to have more parking expansion options nearby
- Teen space with supervision, City Council has noted a lack of teen-focused programs
- Want to continue inter-generational aspect with running a daycare in the Activities Center (Senior Center)
- Upgrade Hopkins Center for the Arts to create more functional classroom space, rehearsal areas, storage, and multi-purpose rooms
- Wayfinding signage to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to downtown and Mainstreet
- Minnetonka needs more pool space for swimming lessons and more gym space
 - The Marsh was acquired by Minnetonka after interview was conducted. The Marsh has two pools

Top Five Facilities wish list:

1. Large indoor turf - year round access
2. Additional gym space including a facility with dryland training space and elevated walking track loop
3. Pool (The Marsh acquisition fulfills this wish).



Figure 3.17. Central Park near Chesterton Academy

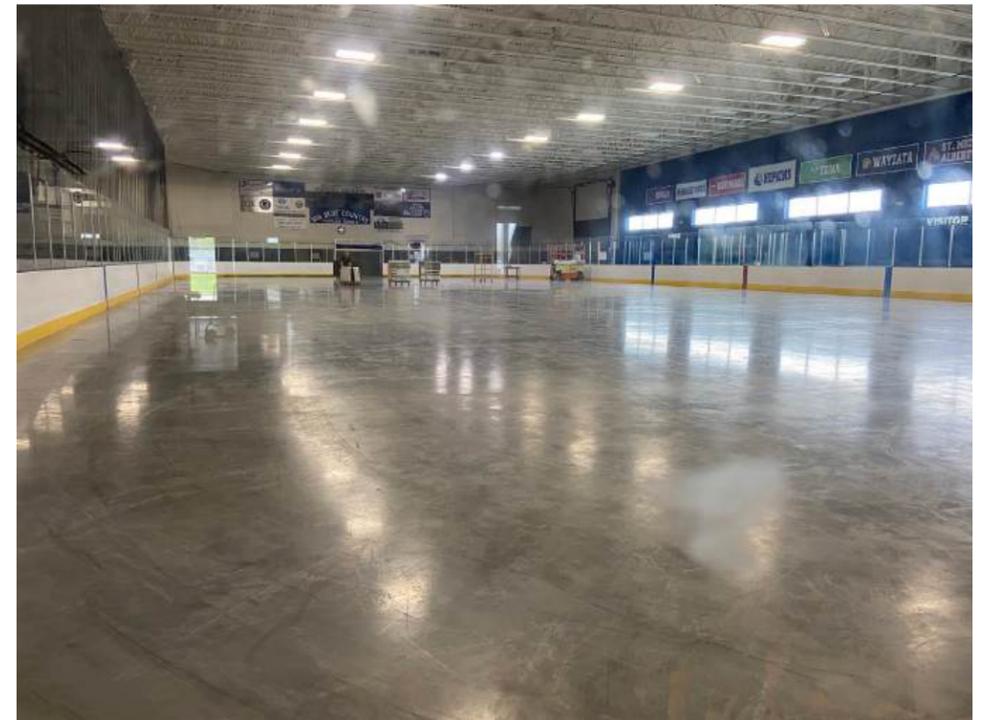


Figure 3.18. The Pavilion concrete floor and event preparation

4. Outdoor space capable of hosting events/ weddings (e.g. improvements to Downtown Park).
5. Expanded Pavilion that meets more needs (e.g. year-round ice, turf space, playground, and opportunity for revenue generation with concessions and/ or cafe space).

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND NON-PROFITS

Met with representatives from Three Rivers Park District, Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and City of Hopkins staff

- Nine Mile Creek - updated flood mapping in progress; also revising grant rules to be more equitable and better serve local communities; want to expand community engagement especially with residents who rent; interested in planning ahead with Hopkins on groundwater recharge, streambank restoration, and rainwater reuse especially in 2027 and beyond.
- Minnehaha Creek - actively involved with Cottageville Park and 325 Blake development - biggest opportunity is Cottageville and Gateway Parcel at 325 Blake for nature based play; working on Climate Adaptation strategies.
- Three Rivers - Parks to People study for “bridging facilities” to better serve 11 communities in the western metropolitan area including Hopkins; Currently focus on and maintain the regional trails and trail nodes in Hopkins.

Partnership opportunities that could be explored include

1. Outdoor Immersion Program (used to be at Hopkins Activity Center)
2. Gardening and nutrition program - could expand to partner with seniors
3. Envision new outdoor learning spaces
4. Demonstrate sustainable building features such as solar panels

HOPKINS SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRAMS

Run a year-round program called Kids & Company, and in the summer run a day program called Camp Royal. The School District programs also use Hopkins Parks for field trips. Partner with Activities Center for adult education.

- Desire shade shelter/pavilion with tables underneath. Most programs want a roofed shaded area close to playground and access to bathrooms.

- ECFE looking to expand programs with more classroom space.
- Frequently use regional park with a destination playground like French Regional Park, and wish there was a regional park closer to Hopkins.
- Wish for more spaces that can function as community hubs to bring more people together in casual gatherings.
- Would like a facility that can support a community cooking class.
- Notes a lack of culturally relevant programs for youth and adults.

HOPKINS SCHOOL DISTRICT - ATHLETICS

The School District rents school facilities to Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation for activities and youth sports; the District also rents the Pavilion for smaller programs and have in the past leased parts of the Activities Center.

- School District also partnered on building the park shelter building at Cottageville Park.
- High School Athletics use the Pavilion for many activities including Hockey, Rugby, Soccer, and Lacrosse.
- School District has been approached about building a dome or sports complex but do not have a location available. Multiple groups in the city want dome access, and it will be complicated to negotiate that shared use agreement.

CHESTERTON ACADEMY

- Students use Central Park for lunch recess (lyceum).
- Some teachers use Central Park as outdoor classroom space.
- Would be great to have more shade and outdoor roofed space in Central Park, ideally with a power supply.
- School is unable to contribute toward improving Central Park at this time, but is willing to continue the discussion
- Block is space constrained, but are looking to renovate a warehouse into a gym, ideally a space big enough to have a high school competition size field inside.
- Age appropriate space and equipment.
- May be willing to invest in more trash cans for Central, and technology upgrade for Downtown Park if the school is able to use that outdoor stage for performances.



Figure 3.19. Plant sale at Valley Park



Figure 3.20. Scoreboard at Maetzold Field





Figure 3.21. Outdoor youth ice hockey

HOPKINS AREA LITTLE LEAGUE (HALL)

Want to grow team the league. The youngest teams do not turn anyone away, also have three challenger teams that welcome anyone of any ability and pair players with older youth.

- Maetzold field used regularly and has good lighting. Saturdays at Maetzold is all about community.
- Improve batting cages in all locations
- Lights in picnic shelter
- Promote evening events
- Improvements to bathrooms
- Create better experience for players
- Warm up space
- Effective use of spaces – multi use (seasonal/ time of the day/ events/ programs etc.)
- HALL is interested in memorializing an agreement with City of Hopkins regarding maintenance and field usage

HOPKINS YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION (HYHA)

HALL desires more ice time, especially Monday thru Friday 5pm to 10pm. Other wants for HALL include the following.

- Want workout rooms, pre-game rooms, indoor/ sheltered walking rink, and more dryland training space, goal shooting, and practice bays.
- Would love a new or expanded recreation center with two sheets of ice – one all year round - and a jumbo tron screen with upgraded PA system
- Would love an outdoor roller hockey rink with roof that could be covered outdoor ice in winter
- Broomball played at Harley Hopkins and Valley Park

LACROSSE

- Age 8 to under 14, mainly boys teams currently. They lack a dedicated field, which is important to recruit and retain players. Currently they use the Pavilion Feb. to May, 2 nights per week. They use Central Park in the fall, but play with cones (no field lines painted).
- Want a lined field with lights, big enough to host tournaments - important for revenue generation

- Tournaments currently held in Farmington

GIRLS SOFTBALL

There are no available girls softball fields in Hopkins. They desire a home base to host tournaments and would prefer a wheel – 4 fields together in one location. This would allow them to accomplish the following.

- Get more diversity into the sport - the biggest barrier is travel
- Fields with concessions and revenue generation opportunities

TONKA UNITED (SOCCER)

Tonka United identified the following ideas that would help support their goals. They use the field at Maetzold regularly, but noted that field quality needs improvement.

- Outdoor field lights are important, but there's a lack of appropriately sized and striped fields
- If a new hockey rink is added, would appreciate having this be flexible and used for turf and soccer in non-hockey season
- Desire gym spaces for futsal
- Desire more turf fields - currently a lack of striped fields and fields for younger players. Fields next to each other ideal for games and tournament hosting are preferred and minimum size desired at least 110' x 60'. The Pavilion is the only Hopkins facility little kids use during spring ball
- Improved access to bathrooms, or opportunity to be involved in planning for portable toilet locations

OPEN SESSION

These sessions were not exclusive to a specific stakeholder group and encompassed general recommendations and requests for the Park System.

- Would like more access to drinking water and bathrooms
- Better trail connections to local destinations like the senior center
- Would use the Depot more if there was not so much construction in the immediate area
- Improve the trail along Excelsior Blvd
- Improve user registration system for Hopkins Activities Center



Figure 3.22. Soccer at Maetzold Field

BENCHMARKING

Introduction

This Benchmark Analysis compares cities of similar size, demographic, and social infrastructure cities. The analysis allows the City to compare and contrast park systems, identify trends, learn alternative approaches to issues, and generally evaluate how they compare to different communities. The analysis can highlight significant deviations from competition, such as funding or staffing being considerably lower than other cities; and the analysis can confirm that Hopkins approach to spending, staffing, and facilities is consistent with other communities. Hopkins is difficult to benchmark against because of its uniqueness in the Metropolitan Twin Cities. It has a smaller land

AGENCIES	METRICS (Parks Data)					
	Jurisdiction Population	Acres of Parkland	Annual Parks and Rec Expenditures	Parks and Rec Full Time Employees (FTE)	Average 5 Year Capital Budget Spending	Indoor Program Space
City of Hopkins Parks	19,079	97.9 Acres	\$1,317,978 (2021)	Parks Maintenance - 10 FTE Joint Recreation – 6.75 FTE Parks Division of PW – 12.12 FTE Total 16.75 FTEs	\$4,238,585 (2017-2021)	Pavilion - 22,327sq. Ft Activity Center - 7,806 sq. ft. Art Center - 5,826 sq. ft. Theater-4,300 sq. ft. Total: 40,259 sq. ft.
Deerfield Park District (Illinois)	19,002	205 Acres	\$13,544,036 (2022)	49 total; 12 Parks Dept, 19 Recreation, 6 Golf, 6 Finance, 2 Marketing, 4 Admin Total 49 FTEs	\$100,000 (average 2 million per year)	Community Center - 30,000 sq ft; Recreation Center 100,000 sq ft; Senior Center 19,000 sq ft Total: 149,000sq. ft.
City of Richfield (Minnesota) Recreation Services Department	36,527	453 Acres	General Fund 2022 (Rec Progs/Wood Lake): \$2,150,070 (Enterprise Facilities (Arena/Pool/Vets Shelter): \$1,595,920	Recreation Programs: 8.5 FTE Wood Lake Nature Center: 5 FTE Enterprise Facilities: 4 FTE Total 17.5 FTEs	\$2,500,000 (\$500k/yr liquor store revenue)	Community Center: 6,500 sq. ft. Wood Lake Nature Center:5,500 sq. ft. Total 12,000 sq. ft.
St. Louis Park Parks and Recreation Department (Minnesota)	49,158	750 Acres	\$6,871,710 (2021)	Organized Recreation & Nature Center - 13 FTE Park Maintenance/Fleet/Natural Resources - 17 FTE Total 30 FTEs	\$25,270,287 (2017 - 2021)	Park Buildings - 4,420 sq ft The Rec Center - 107,000 sq ft Westwood Hills Nature Center - 3,645 sq ft Total: 115,065 sq. ft.
Golden Valley Parks & Recreation (Minnesota)	22,000	454.10 Acres	\$1,000,500 (2021 actual recreation administration and programs only)	GV Parks Maintenance 7 FTE Recreation Staff 6.5 FTE (Does not include Brookview or Golf Staff) Total 13.5 FTEs	\$1,997,000 (2017-2021)	Brookview - Total: 38,000 sq. ft.
Robbinsdale Parks Robbinsdale Recreation Services (Minnesota)	14,245	110 Acres	\$1,279,773 (2021)	Robbinsdale Parks - 5 FTE Recreation Services – 3 FTE Total 8 FTEs	\$1,625,300 (2017-2021)	Robbinsdale Community Gyms & Fitness Center - Total: 12,800 sq. Ft.

Figure 3.23. Benchmark analysis summary table

area, greater density, and diversity that many cities in the region. Additionally, Hopkins is at the beginning of a significant time of change and growth due to the future Southwest Light Rail Project that will be adding three stops within the city. Despite its uniqueness, benchmarking is still a valuable analysis to evaluate how other cities support park systems that contribute to their high quality of life. Hopkins can evaluate cities closer to their projected population to identify resources needed to maintain a quality park system that meets the vision identified in this document. The benchmark analysis provides additional data to support findings and recommendations of this park system plan, most notably in Chapter Six that focuses on implementation.

Methodology

Data was obtained from five benchmark agencies that are similar in population, with the exception of two agencies that are somewhat larger than Hopkins, yet provided metrics that are valuable to the benchmarking process. Identifying similar communities to Hopkins is a challenge, but the selected cities key elements that overlap. Deerfield is a suburban community of Chicago with a similar population. Their park system is excellent and a good litmus test. Richfield, St. Louis Park, and Golden Valley are larger communities that surround Hopkins. These cities are competitors and provide park systems with different components, facilities, and programs that Hopkins could learn from. Robbinsdale is currently smaller in population, but close in acres of parkland and will be similarly impacted by completion of the SW Light Rail Project. Minnetonka was not selected as a reference city because of their size and current partnership with Hopkins and park programming.

Six questions were asked of the benchmark agencies and the five agencies answered most questions by providing data about their system. Any blanks in the tables indicate that particular agency did not provide information for that metric. It should be noted that all agencies obtain, record, and use data in various ways so the data may not translate precisely when looking from agency to agency.

The information provided by the benchmark agencies was evaluated and categorized to create an unbiased view of the data regarding the agencies' operations so Hopkins can see how they compare for the type and size of facilities, financial data, and other metrics as shown. The information provided is not meant to create a positive or negative comparison to the City of Hopkins and the operations of their system, nor how other parks departments operate their agencies more effectively or less effectively. Despite efforts to select

park agencies as similar as possible, those that are a reasonable distance from Hopkins or those that have similar park amenities. There are many differences if a contrast is considered with all benchmark agencies. The variables that may exist in the benchmark should not be misconstrued and used as a direct comparison, but only as a point of reference.

National Parks And Recreation Association References

To provide a point of reference with agencies throughout the nation, statistics are included from the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) in their annual NRPA Agency Performance Review. These statistics are shown at the bottom of tables where NRPA metrics are available to coordinate with agency data. The NRPA report is the most comprehensive resource of data and insight for parks and recreation agencies in the United States with over 1,000 park agencies contributing information to formulate statistics used in research and analysis for all park agencies and other sources.

Benchmarking Summary

Looking at the overall size of parks by acres, the smaller cities have less acres of parkland than the larger cities. A more accurate method for measuring park size for a city is to use park acres per 1,000 residents. This calculation provides a ratio of the population (per 1,000 residents) against the number of park acres. Hopkins has the least number acres per 1,000 residents (5.13 acres per 1,000 residents). The Deerfield Park District has nearly the exact population as the City of Hopkins, yet over twice the acres of parkland and also twice the acres per 1,000 residents, yet an effective way to understand the park size is using acres per Full Time Employee (FTE). Park systems with a smaller staff normally have a higher number of acres per FTE.

It would stand to reason that a larger park system would have larger annual operating expenditures. This is accurate within the benchmark agencies in this analysis with the exception of the City of Hopkins. St. Louis Park has the most operating expenditures of all benchmark agencies and the most acres. Facilities with indoor spaces encompass space used for aquatics, gyms, program rooms, community rooms, rental space or other recreational areas. Each community will have different recreational needs and a specific program or activity can require a larger facility than another community may need. Evaluating only square feet of indoor space, Hopkins is fourth (40,259 sq. ft) in agencies that have the most

square feet, and two of those agencies have indoor space over 110,000 sq. ft. However, a significant portion of Hopkins Center for the Arts indoor community space is occupied/ used by Stages Children's Theater.

There are three park systems with over 300 acres of parkland. Hopkins is the agency with the least number of acres (97), but they do not have the least number of FTEs per acre of parkland (16.75). St. Louis Parks and Recreation Department has 750 acres of parkland and 30 FTEs. Looking at the other benchmark agencies, it is apparent that a larger park system does not have the most FTEs.

Variables exist among all agencies and in all metrics researched for this benchmark analysis, and care should be taken to not misinterpret the data.



Figure 3.24. Adult wiffleball league at Valley Park



Figure 3.25. Adult volleyball league at Valley Park

RECREATIONAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

As part of the Hopkins Parks System Master Plan, the consulting team conducted a Recreation Program Assessment of the services offered by the Hopkins-Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation Services (“Department”). Currently, the City of Hopkins and the City of Minnetonka are partnered together in order to better provide recreational programming to the community. The assessment offers an in-depth perspective of program and service offerings and helps identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities regarding programming. The assessment also assists in identifying core programs, program gaps within the community, key system-wide issues, areas of improvement, and future programs and services for residents and visitors.

The consulting team based these program findings and comments from a review of information provided by the Department including program descriptions, financial data, website content, and discussions with staff. This report addresses the program offerings from a systems perspective for the entire portfolio of programs.

Framework

Hopkins-Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation Services “is dedicated to developing, promoting and providing programs and facilities that speak directly to the recreational needs and interests of our community. From athletic leagues and fitness classes to art workshops and special events -- we are proud to offer activities for all ages and abilities.” In order to help achieve this mission the community has dedicated facilities and spaces to host their program offerings, including: (13) neighborhood/community parks, (4) nature areas, (6) outdoor skating rinks, (2) indoor skating rinks, (2) fitness centers (in Minnetonka), (1) beach, community gardens, and several trails.



Figure 3.26. Outdoor youth hockey at Central Park



Figure 3.27. Community gardens at Valley Park



Figure 3.28. Archery range at Steiner Park Reserve



Figure 3.29. Fitness class at Downtown Park



Program Assessment Overview

Below are overall observations that stood out when analyzing the program assessment analysis:

- Overall, the program descriptions/goals do a great job of effectively communicating to the public key benefits and desired outcomes of each Core Program Area.
 - Age segment distribution is aligned with the community's current population and the age segments should be monitored annually by both entities to ensure program distribution continues to match the community's demographics.
 - Program lifecycles: Approximately 6% of the system's current programs are categorized in the Introduction Stage, while 7% of programs fall into the Decline Stage. A complete description of Lifecycle Stages is in the Appendix full report, in section 1.3.2.
 - Popular programs could set aside a number of spaces for raffle or other method to identify those that didn't sign up first. This will build and sustain interest for longer periods of time.
 - Currently the Department's volunteer program allows residents and organizations to get involved and give back to the community. However, it is recommended that the Department focus on marketing these opportunities to better recruit, diversify, and engage residents to give back. Moving forward, volunteer key metrics should be tracked and monitored to ensure predetermined outcomes are being met.
 - From a marketing and promotions standpoint, the staff utilizes a variety of marketing methods when promoting their programs including: printed and online program guides on the City's website, the park system's flyers/brochures, newsletters, direct mail, email blasts, in-facility signage, road sign marquees QR codes, and various social media channels as a part of the marketing mix. Providing additional languages and targeted outreach to Priority Populations should be attempted to reach new potential users.
 - The Department would benefit from identifying Return on Investment (ROI) for all marketing initiatives.
- Opportunity to increase the number of cross-promotions.
 - Currently, customer feedback methods are rather limited. Moving forward it is highly recommended that the Department begins collecting and incorporating user feedback on a more consistent basis as a key performance measure that can be tracked over time. Specifically, pre-program evaluation, lost customer surveys, and focus groups are all strong feedback tools that should be considered moving forward.
 - Pricing strategies are rather consistent but limited across all Core Program Areas. Currently, the most frequently used approaches are cost recovery goals and customer's ability to pay. These are both useful strategies in increasing participation as well as helping the Department become more self-sufficient and should be continued. Additionally, the Department should contemplate implementing some new pricing strategies which is in the Appendix full report, Section 1.3.5.
 - Financial performance measures such as cost recovery goals are currently being utilized for most programs. Moving forward staff should continue this best practice for all program areas. When doing so, the staff should factor in all direct and indirect costs pertaining to programming. A focus on developing consistent earned income opportunities would be beneficial to the Department's overall quest for greater fiscal sustainability.



Figure 3.30. Garden plots at Cottageville Park



Figure 3.31. Shade pavilion at Interlachen Park



04 PARK SYSTEM VISION

BIG IDEA FOR THE SYSTEM

ELEVATING THE ROLE OF PARKS

Hopkins Parks have historically focused on recreation and traditional sport activities for youth such as baseball and hockey. While this is still an important role for the parks, the city's demographics and land use patterns are changing rapidly and the parks must adapt in order to accurately reflect the people living around them. The Park System needs to support all Hopkins residents as the city changes.

This is challenging because limited opportunities for expansion or new facility development, which in turn means the existing bones of the park system cannot change much. To satisfy growth needs, the parks need to do more and be more than they currently are to meet the changing needs of the community.

The most successful and well loved Park Systems are vital to the community and are viewed as essential city services. Parks are critical elements to the quality of life, and are vital to attracting and retaining residents, businesses, and visitors. Significant research has identified the importance of parks and green infrastructure including positive contributions to:

- City image and civic pride
- Increased property values
- Significant air and water quality and urban cooling benefits
- Notable physical and mental health benefits
- Child development and learning is linked to exposure to nature
- Increased resilience to impacts from climate change

Investing in improving parks is investing in community on multiple levels. Parks should be viewed and treated as an essential city service in all aspects of the city's administration including planning efforts, budgeting, decision making, and investment opportunities.

REFLECTION OF THE CITY

The Park System should be a clear representation of the City's Vision and Mission Statements. When someone steps into a park in Hopkins - can they perceive the manifestation of the City's Mission and Vision?

City Mission: Inspire, Educate, Involve, Communicate

City Vision: Creating a spirit of community where...

- All people feel safe and respected, and diversity is celebrated
- Business growth is supported, and a vibrant downtown is maintained
- People enjoy exceptional government services, neighborhoods and outstanding schools

City's Vision for Equity

- The City of Hopkins is reflective and inclusive of our diverse community in all roles across the organization.
- The City of Hopkins makes decisions informed by equitable and authentic community engagement, genuine partnerships and relationships with the community.
- The City of Hopkins is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion in the development and evaluation of services and programs.

The consultant team feels there is opportunity to better align the existing park system with the City's Vision, Mission, and Goals. In order to effectively achieve this alignment, the park system needs to be viewed as an essential government service.

PARK SYSTEM VISION AND MISSION

The park system is an important part of the City's overall quality of life and impacts residents every day. A significant park system utilizes tax resources and should be held accountable to residents and decision makers. A vision and mission statement should be developed for the City to help guide decisions and priorities. These statements and themes are a guide for the future and should be referred back to as a gauge on how successful key decisions, priorities, and projects have been.

The Vision Statement for Hopkins Parks highlights what residents, staff, and leadership collectively wish for the future.

The Mission Statement is a guide for how the City will implement this Vision.

The statements build upon Hopkins overall mission, vision, and goals but apply directly to the park system. The statements were informed by extensive community engagement. Strong themes were identified in the engagement that should be prioritized during any future planning, design, infrastructure decisions and building/construction.

The Mission and Vision Statements were synthesized from a series of engagement exercises that identified themes important to the City's parks, and continued to prioritize those themes to discern the most vital for the Park System to be successful. The following narrative describes this process.

Key Themes



Racial Equity

Figure 4.1. Park facilities and programs are high quality and culturally relevant for BIPOC residents.



Park Accessibility

Figure 4.1. Reduce barriers to park amenities for all park users and mobility levels.



Gathering & Community Building

Figure 4.1. Build community with neighborhood and city-wide gathering facilities.



Parks for All

Figure 4.1. Provide opportunities for passive and active recreation that suit a broad range of users.



Focus on Quality

Figure 4.1. Revitalize existing fields, facilities, courts, and playgrounds.

VISION

Hopkins has high quality parks that serve all users and are equitable, accessible, and build community by bringing people together.

MISSION

Hopkins will prioritize parks as an essential city service that provides exceptional and accessible experiences for all residents in a sustainable manner by leveraging our uniqueness, dynamic community partnerships, and diversity.



Priority Themes

One of the key community engagement exercises asked the public to help prioritize themes to focus on during the Park System Plan. The themes selected were identified and synthesized from the City's Comprehensive Plan and previous planning documents (shown at right). These themes are all important to Hopkins. The Park System should attempt to support these themes in some manner; however, parks are competing with other city services for resources and priorities need to be defined.

We asked the public to help us identify which themes were most important. Online and in-person engagement opportunities were used to collect this input from a range of users by asking them to select their top 5 priorities. Similar questions were asked to staff and stakeholders and top park themes emerged. The Park Board assisted staff and the consultant team in refining the priorities and selecting the final themes described later in this chapter.



Communication & Awareness: provide directional and identification signage, create a recognizable identity for parks (branding). Enhance translation to better connect with non-English speaking communities.



Connections to Parks and Trails: Prioritize safe connections to all parks and trails including local and regional trails, sidewalks, transit access, and safe intersection crossings. Nexus of regional trails, connections to Main St.



Parks For All: Engage people of all ages and abilities by providing accessible facilities and creating programming for all residents. Maximize the health benefits of parks with focused programming and by providing passive and active uses.



Gathering and Community Building: Focus on bringing the community together through group gathering facilities and programming. Create neighborhood pride through parks and encourage neighborhood gatherings



Natural Resources: convert less used grass areas to native plants, encourage diversity of tree species and increase canopy coverage, small scale ecological improvements, water quality enhancement. Create landscapes that build resiliency for the park system and city.



Celebrate and Share History: Capitalize on Hopkins' downtown historic district and focus on preservation. Evolve interpretation and education programming to engage diverse populations and ages.



Art Integration and Partnerships: sustain park programs and infrastructure by developing creative public-private partnerships. Continue to integrate art into the fabric of the city.



Environmental Sustainability and Resiliency: Add facilities that are durable, affordable to maintain, and reduce energy consumption and waste. Ecosystem services provided by parks should be maximized through green infrastructure and environmentally focused park design.



Equity: ensure all residents have access to quality parks and programming, regardless of income, mobility level, or demographics. Provide opportunities that are inclusive to all though accessible infrastructure and affordable opportunities.



Leverage Partnership for Learning and Programming: build on existing partnerships to broaden programming, and learning opportunities. Provide diverse program options that encourage people to try something new.



Unique Parks: Ensure parks reflect the surrounding neighborhoods needs, provide non-traditional park facilities and activities. Parks are a major contributor to a strong community identity and are regional destinations.



All Season Recreation: Provide recreation opportunities all-year long and make winter recreation a priority. Provide both recreation opportunities and events to celebrate all-seasons.

Figure 4.1. Important park themes presented to the public for prioritization

Key Themes

Five key themes that follow were evaluated, identified, and prioritized based on a combination of the following:

- Public engagement
- Stakeholder engagement
- Priority Population dialogues
- Consultant experience and input
- Staff input
- Park Board input and evaluation of community engagement

Chapter 2 highlighted the existing park system's limitations and strengths, and how the community wants the park system to look in the future. The final selected themes all ranked in the top themes identified by the general public and priority populations. The Consultant and Staff provided input and verified prioritization based on their experience, inventory, and analysis of the park system and interpretation of engagement feedback.

Hopkins' Park Board reviewed the extensive community engagement collected in the summer of 2022. Through a workshop with the consultant team, the Park Board helped identify and prioritize these key themes and ranked them according to how important the community was telling them each theme was. Park Board members ranked each theme on a scale of 0-10 with 0 indicating the theme was not addressed at all, and 10 indicating that the theme was fully addressed. They first ranked how they thought the current park system treated each theme. Lastly they ranked where they thought the community was telling us about what level they wanted each theme addressed. A larger gap between current and desired levels indicates how much work needs to be done and what this plan should prioritize.

The following section will provide an analysis and framework for addressing these key themes in long range planning and upcoming improvement projects. These key themes are highly related and integrated. Working on one of the themes will have a ripple effect through many of them, building strength momentum for change that reinforces the city's larger goals.

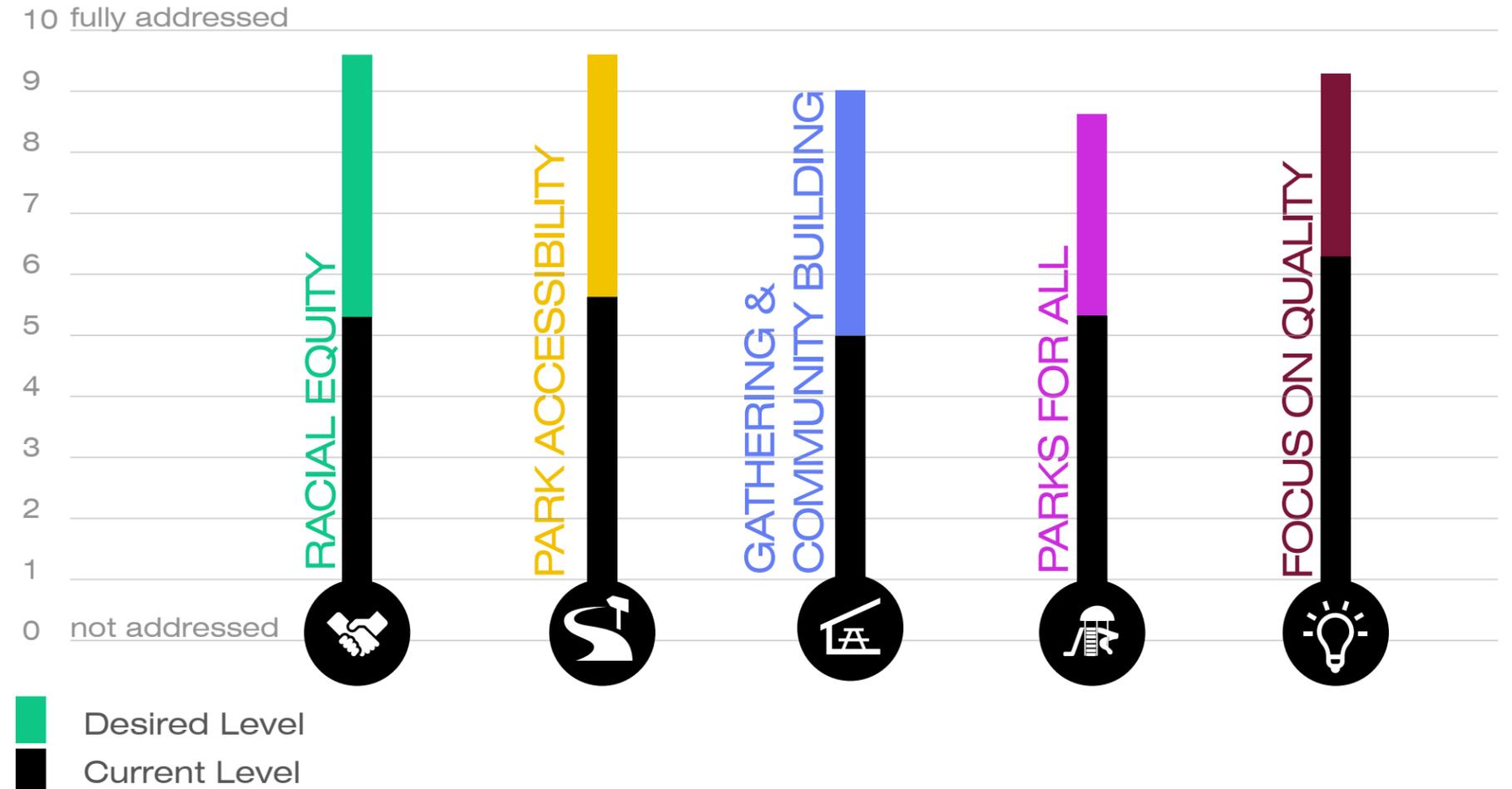


Figure 4.2. Park theme prioritization exercise w/ Park Board results

RACIAL EQUITY

Park facilities and programs are high quality and culturally relevant for Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), and other marginalized residents.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is the leading non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health of communities for all people through parks, recreation, and conservation. NRPA has conducted a number of studies and provided publications documenting the historical inequity in park access for BIPOC and other marginalized residents. They estimate that as many as 100 million people — 30 percent of the U.S. population — lack access to the lifesaving and life enhancing benefits parks and recreation provides.

Why It Matters

In the United States, people of color, low-income communities and Indigenous populations have been disproportionately exposed to environmental conditions that can harm their health. Across the country, race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, water or soil.

According to the *Landscape and Urban Planning Journal*, many communities of color and other marginalized groups, such as LGBTQ+, immigrants, people with low-income and people with disabilities, lack the opportunity to experience and engage in high-quality parks and recreation; because these resources do not exist near them. If there are resources nearby, they are often not safe, welcoming nor inclusive, and do not contain activities and facilities of interest to diverse communities. According to one study, non-white and low-income neighborhoods are 50 percent less likely to have one recreational facility in their community, as compared to predominantly white and high-income neighborhoods.

In Hopkins, BIPOC residents are more likely to be renters and do not have access to a yard or private property. Parks and recreation are their primary source of outdoor exposure and activities. Parks also provide key ecological services to improve resident quality of by improving air and water quality, temperature regulation, providing mental health benefits, and community gathering opportunities. Ensuring these benefits are accessible to all residents is a priority for Hopkins' Park System.

Identifying Inequities

Hopkins has a good distribution of park space and trails throughout the city that provide access to over 90% of residents. However, there are disparities in park and amenity quality in Hopkins.

Burnes Park has consistently had a higher level of quality, more amenities, and more innovative and expensive amenities than a majority of other parks in Hopkins. Burnes Park contains the city's only splash pad, architecturally unique restrooms, high quality basketball courts, and a unique skating rink that is frequently crowded. This dynamic follows similar national trends that place a majority of park improvements toward the most organized neighborhood groups, the most well connected, and generally wealthier neighborhoods. Parks in lower income, more dense and diverse areas often receive less investment because they are less connected, organized, wealthy, and politically influential.

Another local example includes the ballfields and related amenities at Maetzold Field. This park has a higher level of quality than most of Hopkins' similar parks. The Hopkins Area Little League (HALL) is well established and organized association that has provided significant resources to improve elements at Maetzold Park that go above and beyond the level of capital and maintenance improvements at similar parks in Hopkins. Maetzold and Burnes Park are primarily surrounded by lower density single family neighborhoods. The parks with the most investment are serving less residents.

These, often unintended, differences in quality and amenities are the result of decisions made in the past and the participation of partnering stakeholder groups for key infrastructure they desired. The baseball and hockey associations have an extensive history with Hopkins and provide significant funding and volunteer input to improve the facilities they use most. These partnerships have led to some of the highest -quality facilities in the park system. Contributions from partners are a common and positive way to improve a community's facilities when there are budget limitations. However, there is potential for actual and perceived imbalance with this approach; especially as diversity and density increases in the Hopkins in the near future.



Figure 4.3. Backstop, no benches, grass infield at Valley Park Maetzold



Figure 4.4. Field's maintenance is shared by HALL and Hopkins staff

Demographics & Recreation Needs

As the demographics of Hopkins continues to change, the recreation needs of residents will also shift. The city should continue to engage and monitor residents to understand these needs. The tennis courts and ball diamonds of Hopkins parks reflect the recreational trends that existed when the parks were originally built. These parks were primarily developed for white middle class residents. An understanding of current, and anticipated future, demographics and needs is crucial.

Planners, designers, and staff should note that while there are broader recreation trends occurring in the state and metro region laid out in Chapter 1, they may not match local trends and needs. For instance, girls softball is growing and attracting greater diversity than past populations and tennis is attracting a much broader diversity of users than it has in the past. Continual engagement and coordination with area programmers and associations will help the city remain current with the ever changing demographics and recreation trends.

There are consistent recreation trends that are occurring that could provide immediate impact on Hopkins' Parks and should be considered. Interviews with Priority Populations highlighted desire and need for the following:

- Basketball continues to be one of the most popular sports across many demographics
- Pickleball is consistently growing among several age groups
- Access to nature is a priority for all ages
- Bikes, scooters, skateboards, etc. are growing as a commuter and recreation activity - mountain biking has been the fastest growing high school sport in Minnesota for a few years
- Soccer, lacrosse, cricket, etc. are all growing and utilize similar field space
- Dog and pet ownership was growing before COVID and skyrocketed during that time period
- Gathering areas to host celebrations, picnics, events, etc. are highly desired



Figure 4.5. Bike skills and all-wheel facilities can improve riding skills and be integrated into smaller parks.



Figure 4.6. Low quality courts discourage use (Cottageville); higher quality basketball courts are well used (Valley)

The city should be mindful of these trends and their growth across the metro. Flexibility and thoughtful design of park spaces will allow the city to more efficiently and effectively respond to these changes and not approach things in a reactionary manner that will negatively impact the park or any future modifications.

Changing Approach

Hopkins should be conscious of its own park improvement history when working with partners and associations looking to make improvements in the parks. Hopkins should use the Park Board's Value, Mission, and Theme Statements to ensure the improvement projects are a positive addition for a majority of Hopkins' residents. A recent positive example of park improvement that informally valued equity, is the renovation of Cottageville Park. Significant community engagement with nearby residents led to the current well-used park that meets surrounding resident needs and adds positively to the neighborhood's quality of life.

Additionally, the city should have a plan for investment and reinvestment in park infrastructure that identifies priorities clearly to the public and doesn't rely on the loudest voices in the room to direct funding. Transparency is a critical element in addressing equity. Allocating dollars based on equity means allocating dollars to what a park and its residents need, and not simply spreading money equally to all parks.

Some parks need to do more with less. They are accessed by more people on less acreage, are located near larger populations of low-income residents, have higher neighborhood crime issues, and a multitude of other factors and pressures that would identify them as having a higher priority based on need. While the entire park system needs to be updated, there are some parks with greater needs. An analysis tool could help the city prioritize equity and need in allocating improvement dollars.

Parks that should be prioritized for capital improvement based on equity are typically parks in neighborhoods with the following characteristics:

- Higher populations and population density.
- Less adjacent parkland. They are more isolated.
- Lower income residents.
- Historic lack of investment.

Equity Analysis - Investment Prioritization

Addressing racial equity has been a primary goal of the Park System Plan from the beginning of the planning process. An analytical approach to assign equity values to each of the parks in this study was morphed from previous projects and processes to fit the City of Hopkins goals and resources. The results take 15 datasets into account and weigh each data source differently to derive a composite score. The parks are ranked by this weighted score, with the highest numbers needing the most attention from an equity perspective. Figure 4.8 graphically identifies the park improvement priorities based on this equity analysis.

Most of the parks at the top of the list for equity priority are in areas anticipated to receive significantly more new residents in the coming years. These areas are currently more diverse, heavily renter occupied, and projected to remain so in the coming years.

Cottageville Park was ranked high in the analysis. This justifies recent and continued investment in this highly used park. 325 Blake and Cottageville Phase 2 developments will be constructed in the next few years and require more park investment to help maintain the quality of the park .

Other parks with high rankings are located near Mainstreet or the proposed Light Rail Transit stations. Both of these areas are anticipated to experience significant population growth in the near future. A majority of new residents will be living in multi-family facilities with limited green space opportunities. There will be a higher need for quality park facilities and experiences in these areas, as well as heavier usage due to increased population.

The equity analysis park ranking map is a transparent tool to help staff and decision makers understand where park investment is needed most - looking through an equity lens.



Figure 4.7. New splash pad, building, basketball courts at Burnes Park vs. aged and outdated equipment at Harley Hopkins

EQUITY ANALYSIS RANKINGS

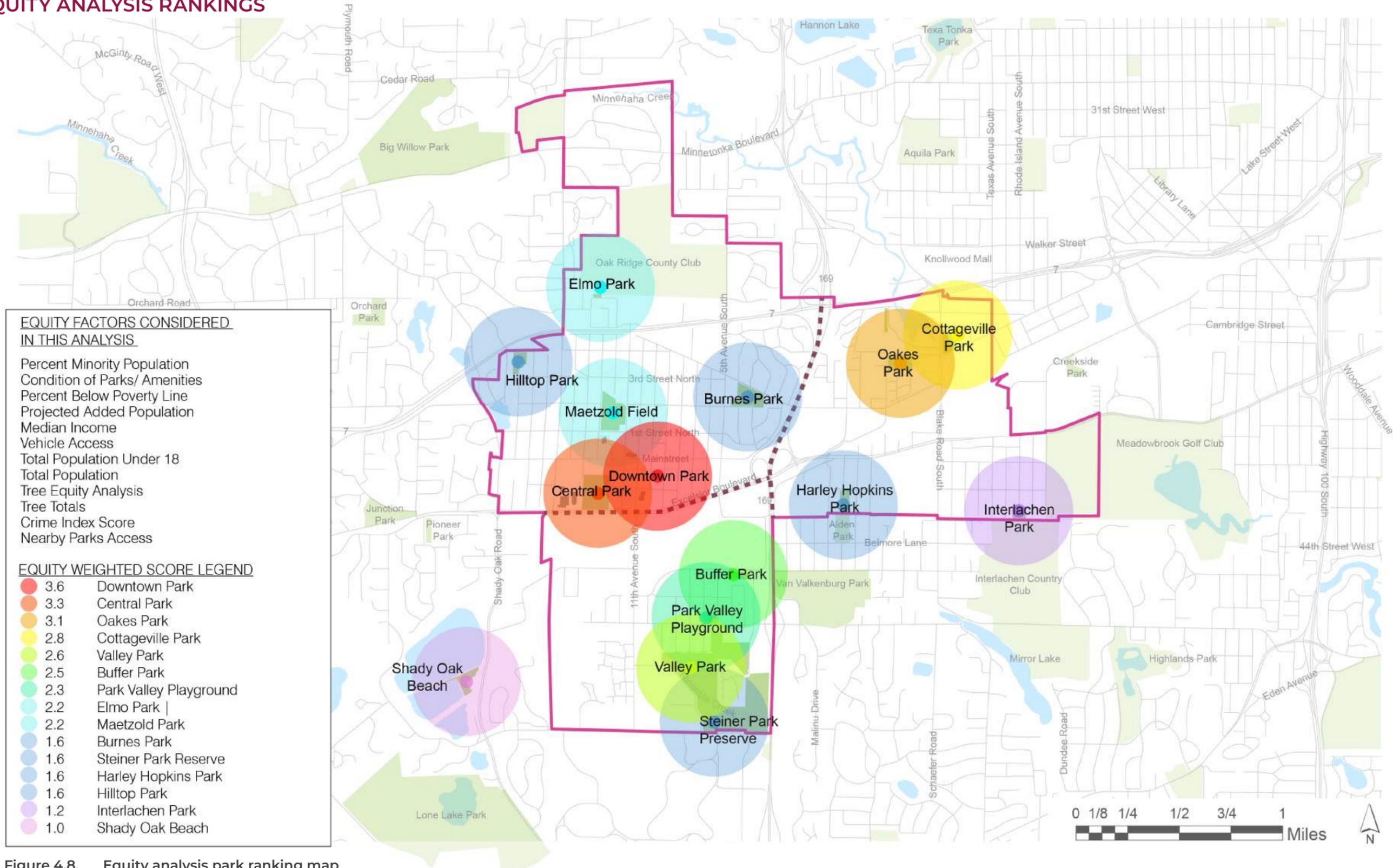


Figure 4.8. Equity analysis park ranking map

PARK ACCESSIBILITY

Reduce barriers to park amenities for all park users and mobility levels.

Barriers exist in Hopkins that prevent or diminish the accessibility of parks and specific park amenities. These barriers can be physical and/ or social/ mental. Hopkins can address a majority of barrier types with well designed and thoughtful infrastructure improvements. Parks should be open and used by all residents to maximize their benefits in the most cost effective manner. The impact of these improvements will directly promote equity throughout the city.

PHYSICAL

Within Parks

Universal design principles and practices can help maximize accessibility by reducing barriers for those with mobility challenges. Accessibility standards and universal design were not a priority of park systems in the past and typical parks constructed prior to these standards often have accessibility challenges. Hopkins has a number of these parks and is contracting with an independent consultant to provide analysis and recommendations to bring playground facilities into line with current accessibility standards and best practices. The city should anticipate implementing these recommendations as they are able once the study is complete.

Many cities in the Metropolitan Region are constructing inclusive playgrounds. These playgrounds are similar to a traditional facility except that they welcome children and adults of all abilities to a play experience where everyone can interact and play together. Central Park has a number of supporting amenities that would support an inclusive playground such as:

- Proximity to building and full restrooms
- Shade and water access
- Centralized location within the city
- Easy navigation from major roadways
- Accessible parking close to playground

Universal design principals apply to other amenities and should be included or retrofitted into new and existing park features as projects and budgets allow. Access to unique amenities such as the

archery range, skate or all-wheel playgrounds, and any new dog parks should be included as a baseline for the park.

Including key infrastructure can make a park much more usable by a broader and more diverse group of people with a range of mobility levels. Ample shade, benches for seating (in shade), water fountains, and accessible restrooms are a few key elements that can make a park more navigable, attractive, and enjoyable for all people. Persons living with disabilities are often brought to parks by a caregiver that may not be familiar with the area. Having clear wayfinding and accessible parking near the facilities will maximize usage at the park.

Connection to Parks

Safe travel to parks is another key ingredient in accessibility. Many parks lack accessible sidewalks or trails that connect the neighborhood to the park's amenities. The city's overall pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure are intimately intertwined with the accessible trails and amenities inside a park.

Hopkins is severed by highways, railroads, and major arterial roadways that create distinct sub-areas within the city. These dividers can be physical and mental barriers for pedestrian and bicycle crossing of fully mobile individuals. These barriers become more challenging and imposing for people living with mobility impairments. Because of these dividing lines, portions of the city can be isolated from other areas. The city needs to focus on the following to ensure that all residents have access to high quality park facilities that meet their needs:

1. Improve the physical safety and mental perception of crossings over the major pieces of traffic infrastructure.
2. Ensure amenities and activities are equitably divided in all areas of the city so residents can access without crossing major transportation corridors.

These strategies will need to occur over time and will require coordination with the city-wide bike and pedestrian plan. The light rail project, and anticipated redevelopment, provide an opportunity to dramatically increase the accessibility and connection from north to south in the center of the city. Focusing higher cost and higher impact amenities toward the center of the city will allow the most balanced accessibility from the north and south neighborhoods.



Figure 4.9. Accessibility improvements will help all residents.



Figure 4.10. The sand box and playground do not have paved paths to provide accessibility (Park Valley)

Central Park is an ideal location for these larger, shared facilities. Pedestrian connections across Highway 7 and Excelsior Boulevard should be explored to improve the function, safety, and desirability of all parks, but especially those adjacent to major arterials. These pedestrian improvements benefit the entire city and funding should be explored from sources that are strictly focused on parks - Safe Routes to Schools is an example

SOCIAL

Parks need to feel accessible and inviting to all. A visitor should feel welcome, accepted, and independent to use the park facilities, and that they are socially accepted. There are many reasons parks may not live up to this ideal and a number of factors can lead to negative experiences from a social perspective. The social accessibility of a park can be nuanced and specific to the surrounding demographics, history, and relationships surrounding a park. Every attempt should be made to understand and address these issues through park specific engagement activities when a park is slated for significant redevelopment.

Priority Populations

Putting Change in Motion (PCIM) talked to Priority Populations within Hopkins to understand what would make the parks more welcoming and invite others into the parks.

Residents first need to know a park exists, that it has facilities they would like to use, and that they are comfortable and understand how to use them. PCIM noted that a few groups mentioned that more communication, and more effective information about the parks needed to be distributed to the community. Communications and programming are strategies that can reduce these social barriers.

Communication elements/ strategies to socially include all residents:

- Clear, simple, integrated online parks information is a key strategy to inform residents what options are available
- An online inventory of park facilities and where they are located assists residents in finding key amenities and activities
- Clear signage and wayfinding at the parks, on the trails, and in key Mainstreet locations.
- Translation of critical information available for appropriate

demographics. Translations should exist in print/ signage and digital platforms to reach the broadest group of people.

- Programming that caters to non-English speaking residents that introduce a specific place or activity. Focus on introductory programs that expose residents to new opportunities.
- Create inclusive events in parks and communicate with Priority Populations.
- Focus on apartments as they often don't receive as many flyers as single family homes.

Providing core amenities can make a park welcoming and accepting to all residents. PCIM identified a number of key facilities residents mentioned that would make them want to use a park more:

- Clean restrooms and drinking fountains.
- Running water in restrooms - culturally important for some residents.
- Trail and accessibility improvements.
- Lighting improvements.

Another strategy to make parks more welcoming for Priority Populations is to focus on improvements for larger groups. Several groups that PCIM worked with noted that they gather at parks in large groups and desire infrastructure that helps enables this activity. See Gathering and Community theme for more information on specific facilities to encourage large group gathering.

Crime and Safety

Priority population focus groups identified crime, and the perception of crime, as a negative effect on feeling welcome in parks. The most common complaint was sharing park space with others drinking and using marijuana. Fights and late night use by teenagers and young adults was also negatively mentioned. The focus groups identified restrooms as places they noticed bad behavior. Finding a balance between privacy and safety is a common issue in public spaces. Some strategies for addressing throughout the parks include:

- Increased police presence and patrols.
- Signage posted with rules translated to major 2nd and 3rd languages of the neighborhood.
- Increased lighting in key areas.



Figure 4.11. Many playgrounds lack wheelchair access (Oakes Park)



Figure 4.12. Restrooms with running water are more appealing and highly desired by certain cultural groups.



GATHERING AND COMMUNITY

Build community with neighborhood and city-wide gathering facilities.

Parks are a place that brings community together. They are an important destination for neighborhood and city-wide gathering. Infrastructure should facilitate these formal and informal gatherings in order to build civic pride, identity, and a more connected community.

Infrastructure should focus on providing essential elements that improve park visits for the majority of users E.g.; clean restrooms, shade, drinking fountains, safe walkways and surfaces. Additional amenities that provide tools for outdoor food preparation and gathering are attractive to a variety of gatherings, e.g.; shade structures/ pavilions, grills, picnic tables grouped together, electricity, etc.. Providing this mixture of essential and additional amenities provides a functional space for celebrations, parties, family gatherings, holiday events, and a number of other outdoor gathering events. The elements discussed above, and under the Park Accessibility Theme, apply to a diverse set of uses, users, and demographics and should occur at all facilities throughout the system.

Gathering facilities were specifically identified by a number of neighborhoods during community engagement events across the city - and by a majority of demographic groups if Hopkins.

In focus groups with Priority Populations, Somali resident voices stressed the importance of parks to children. Currently, many Somali residents live in apartments and parks provide children with needed places to play and get outdoors. They also said that you can meet new people when you are at parks with your children. Somalis also felt that a very good way to distribute information about the parks is through the schools, because of the strong association between children and parks.

INDOOR GATHERING FACILITIES

Outdoor facilities is the focus of this park systems plan. However, indoor gathering facilities have an important role in cold weather climates. Hopkins is well served with certain types of large indoor gathering spaces like the Hopkins Center for the Arts and the Pavilion. These facilities are a regional draw and welcome visitors from surrounding communities and throughout the Metro. The city is lacking in smaller scale indoor gathering facilities distributed throughout the city. These facilities could host smaller scale neighborhood functions and gatherings and be available for rental to host neighborhood picnics, birthday parties, political or civic events and activities, as well as classes and programming opportunities. Buildings have a higher upfront capital investment but can provide significant cost/ benefit over their lifecycle if the right situation. The City should study the opportunities to include these facilities in key locations that provide critical community services and potential for revenue generation.

The city should explore the opportunity to integrate a larger covered facility that could support a number of community and recreation functions. This facility could be a simple roof structure over a large area that would provide shade and protect against weather. A structure like this will help Hopkins maximize their gathering and field space. The facility can be programmed extensively throughout the seasons and day. Lighting extends usage into the evening for a number of activities. The ROC in St. Louis Park and Edina's outdoor ice rink are examples the city should study. These facilities provide flexibility, reliability, and stability to cities that need to maximize the usability of their facilities. Hopkins could explore the potential to add a similar open air facility into the Pavilion. This feature would provide more reliable ice in winter and critical field space in the spring and fall seasons that are protected from weather. This facility could also be lighted to extend field use past sunset, and a shade canopy to provide summer spaces for gathering and sport that are protected from the sun and rain. See Central Park concept plan in Chapter 5 for a vision of how this type of facility could fit into the park.



Figure 4.13. Example multi-use structure in St. Louis Park - provides early spring field space



Figure 4.14. Example multi-use structure in Edina providing more consistent winter ice quality

OUTDOOR GATHERING FACILITIES

Picnic shelters or pavilions are the most common and simple form of gathering facility that can be integrated into a park. They provide shade, shelter from elements, enclosure, and a architectural destination that support gathering. These facilities can be scaled to fit the park space and desired programming and can contain supporting elements such as electricity, lighting, grills, tables, and sometimes water. These facilities are magnets for small scale picnics and parties as well as individuals resting or relaxing.

The city has high quality pavilions at several parks throughout the city including Burnes and Valley Parks. New pavilions should be added to neighborhood and community parks. Existing pavilions should be replaced at the end of their surface life. New and replacement pavilions should be sourced from a quality provider for aesthetics and maintenance reasons. The city should develop a visual language for these facilities and remain consistent as new and replacement pavilions are brought into parks. The architectural form should be simple and well proportioned with quality materials.

Pavilions and shade structures are universally desired and used by all demographics and support most active and passive activities in the parks. They should be fully connected with an accessible route so that all mobility levels can be included. Pavilions should be sited between activities and adjacent to walkways and trails so they are well used by a variety of people.

Community parks should have multiple pavilions in key areas of the park. They should support popular activities in addition to traditional sports. Examples include:

- Community garden pavilion at Valley - this facility would be used by many and encourage interaction among users.
- Archery range at Valley - provide critical shade to users and could be an anchor for accessibility at this popular amenity.
- New pavilions to support - dog parks, pickleball, playgrounds and bicycle play areas, skate parks, and trail rest stops.



Figure 4.15. Recently updated pavilion at Burnes Park



Figure 4.16. Aged pavilion at Central Park



Figure 4.17. A variety of seating and gathering choices at Downtown Park



Figure 4.18. Recently refurbished pavilion at Valley Park



LARGE GATHERINGS

The Priority Population focus groups identified gathering as a favorite activity in the parks and specifically identified facilities to host large groups. These large group facilities should be located in community parks so they are supported by other necessary elements such as parking, water, restrooms, adequate waste receptacles, and a variety of activities to support a range of ages. Restrooms are a key facility wherever gathering occurs and becomes more important as group size increases. Portable toilets can be overwhelmed by multiple large group gatherings. Quality restrooms with running water are important to support large groups and a more enjoyable gathering experience.

Downtown Park is a well loved and well used park that hosts multiple large gatherings throughout the year. Downtown Park does not have a permanent restroom. Clean bathrooms with running water would make the park experience better and more welcoming for families, seniors, and other cultures. Restrooms would make a good park great. See concept plan in Chapter 4 for ways to integrate restrooms into Downtown Park.

Cottageville Park includes a modern picnic pavilion structure with supporting infrastructure including restrooms and drinking fountains. The pavilion itself is architecturally interesting and provides shade and cover for the tables below. This pavilion is likely not replicable at all parks due to cost, but the scale and scope should be considered at other key Community Parks such as Central and Valley.

REVENUE GENERATION

The gathering facilities discussed in this section can provide revenue for the city if they are of high quality and desirable. These facilities can help their own operations and maintenance by collecting revenue for private events like weddings, birthday parties, religious celebrations, etc.. Supporting infrastructure is vital to revenue collection. Clean restrooms, parking, seating, shade, and ability to isolate the party are must have elements. These infrastructure pieces are relatively easy to incorporate into a park. Facilities that are unique, well cared for, and have a distinct sense of place are typically more desired by the public. Downtown Park is an example where the location, setting, and sense of place create a distinct environment that is unique to Hopkins and would be highly attractive to a number of users willing to pay rental fees. The city will need to balance the revenue generation potential of these facilities with the public benefit of having them open, available, and free to the general public.



Figure 4.19. A large-gathering shelter at Valley Park would better support events at the community garden



Figure 4.20. Cottageville Parks pavilion and restrooms provide spaces and infrastructure for successful large group gatherings



Figure 4.21. Downtown Park is a destination gathering facility and could generate higher revenue for the city

INFORMAL GATHERINGS

Parks are natural gathering spaces. They attract like-minded groups to participate in activities or rest in a natural setting. Simple, cost effective elements encourage gathering. Benches, tables, waste receptacles, and shade structures provide cues and create spaces attractive to gathering. Shade can be provided by trees and not more expensive shade canopies and pavilions.

Hopkins has a robust program of movable furniture in the downtown and Mainstreet area. This approach could be provided at key parks to facilitate flexible gathering that is accessible to all. This flexible seating should be a part of the existing program so that it is all branded and reinforces Hopkins' identity and approach to gathering. Mainstreet currently hosts several parklets that enrich the streetscape and provide additional seating for businesses. Public parklets and/or creative seating and gathering options should also be considered on Mainstreet, the Artery, Downtown Park, and Hopkins Center for the Arts plaza to create gathering nodes in those spaces and further reinforce Hopkins' commitment to the Arts and placemaking. These elements could be incorporated as a part of the Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) program in more urban areas and plazas.

Providing food or beverage is another way to encourage gathering. Carts and food trucks could be used at specific times to create destinations for residents that would have very little cost to the city. Bringing people together is the goal. Supporting facilities like tables and waste receptacles would make this approach more appealing and implementable from an operations perspective.

The city should think about all of the activities in it's parks as gathering facilities. Ballfields, ice rinks, community gardens, skate parks, dog parks, archery ranges, etc. all attract a community of like minded people. Supporting facilities should be provided to all activities equally to provide a range of community gathering spaces for all.

At a minimum these spaces should include:

- Shade - urban canopy or built structures
- Seating that accommodates multiple people - oriented to encourage discussion
- Waste receptacles
- Proximity to restrooms
- Open sightlines



Figure 4.22. Movable seating and options found throughout the City should be extended into park spaces.



Figure 4.23. Customized pods provide a sculptural feature and unique gathering spot. Parklets focused on lounging, bike repair, and gathering enrich the public realm and would complement Hopkins' current parklets on Mainstreet.

PARKS FOR ALL

Provide options and flexibility to reflect surrounding neighborhoods and serve a range of users

Parks should serve the residents that live around them. Amenities, programs, and ecosystem services should be present. Ecosystem services provide residents the opportunity to improve health, social connection, recreation, mental restoration, air and water quality benefits, and neighborhood pride.

Well used parks are well loved parks. A well used park needs to provide opportunities for all residents to engage in activities that are relevant and meaningful for their recreation needs. Park activities and amenities must adapt over time as recreation trends and the community's demographics change.

Hopkins parks need to do more with less in order to serve all residents and accommodate changing demographics and increased density. Parks are well distributed geographically and in close proximity to a majority of residents, but they lack diversity, variety, and energy. The framework exists for a rich park system - updating park amenities and programs is needed to evolve into a modern system that serves all residents.

Thoughtful, creative design by experienced Landscape Architects is critical to delivering parks that are dynamic, serve all residents, and match city resources. Contemporary parks need to balance recreation trends, variety, and flexibility to meet current needs and be adaptable for a changing city. New amenities should be provided to expand recreation offerings. Popular activities should be preserved and enhanced - a balance of new and foundational park elements is required for a successful park. Thoughtful park design that is driven by community engagement is the primary vehicle to achieve this vital balance.

BASELINE AMENITIES

A baseline of amenities for each neighborhood park should be established that include amenities a majority of park users consistently utilize. This list of included amenities is less likely to change than more trendy recreational amenities and facilities. The Level of Service in Chapter 2 highlights deficits in the system and should be used as a baseline for balancing system wide. There are specific amenities that should be included in a majority of parks in the system. This sets a baseline of expectation for visitors to any of Hopkins parks. This critical level of service should include:

- Playground(s) 2-12 year old age range
- Benches and seating
- Gathering structure with seating - sized accordingly
- Court activity - basketball, tennis, pickleball, etc.
- Accessible Trails - preferably trail loops where space allows
- Restrooms or portable toilets
- Open, flexible lawn

Focus on variety and flexibility

- Integrate new amenities in thoughtful manner
- Mix of active and passive uses at each park
- Trail loops as amenity
- Natural areas as a vital component
- Variety of ways to gather - not just focused around performance
 - dog parks as gathering
 - skateparks and all-wheel facilities
- updated facilities - shade, picnic, etc.
- Scaled facilities community level and neighborhood level in parks



Figure 4.24. Basketball is an activity that serves a broad age range - teens and adults both.

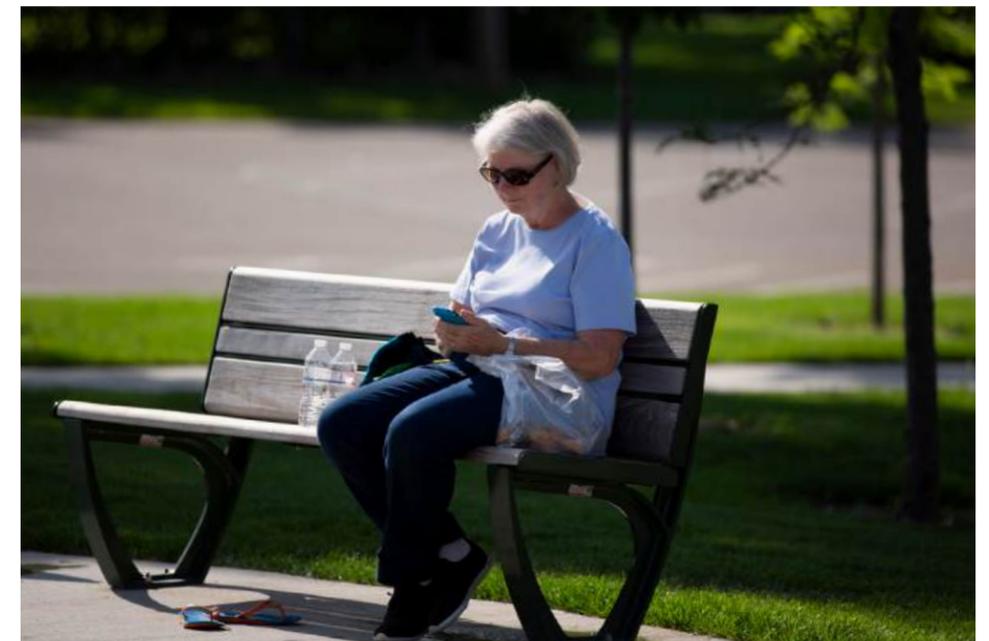


Figure 4.25. Seating and shade are important to give all users a place to rest.

KEY AMENITY ADDITIONS

Hopkins' parks have a limited footprint and opportunity for expansion. The existing acreage becomes more important as the population expands and traffic is increased. Increased diversity will require a greater diversity of park amenities and activities that Hopkins is currently lacking or is underserved. These facilities were not historically abundant but have become established elements that serve a broader user group beyond traditional athletics.

ALL-WHEEL/ SKATE PARKS

The closure of Underpass Skate Park has created a vacuum in facilities that serve skate boarders. These facilities are often created to serve other wheeled activities such as rollerblades, scooters, and bikes. This serves a broader range of users. These facilities were once seen as a negative element but have been shown to have the following benefits:

- Reduce illicit behavior
- Provide a safe environment for skateboarding and riding
- Create a safe social space for kids
- Reduce damage to private property
- Support physical and mental health benefits of skating/ riding
- Have a positive economic impact on surrounding areas

An all-wheel facility serves a common demographic and helps promote improved ridership, which can make streets and sidewalks safer throughout the city. A bike-centric all-wheel facility is proposed at Buffer Park. However, another skate-board centric facility should be considered in a more centrally located park within the city, or as a part of a future POPS facility.

DOG PARKS

Pet ownership has increased over time and dog adoption and purchases increased significantly during COVID. Dogs are often considered and treated as family members. Dog parks and exercise facilities are not only beneficial for the animals themselves, but they provide physical and mental health benefits for their owners. These amenities are social hubs for dog owners and provide a destination for active walks. Off-leash dog areas have become gathering areas in



Figure 4.26. All-wheel parks/ pump tracks can be used by bikes, skateboards, scooters, rollerblades, etc..



Figure 4.27. Dog parks are as social for people as pets.

some communities. Crime has decreased in many cities near the off-leash areas and people who normally would not talk to each other will start conversations when a dog is there to break the ice.

Hopkins does not currently have a sanctioned dog park in the city. This amenity was frequently requested by residents in community engagement events. Currently, general park spaces and open areas are used as informal dog parks, which can lead to user conflicts and issues. This informal usage does not capitalize on the social aspects of dog parks as the usage is typically off hours and sporadic.

The concept plans in Chapter 4 highlight key parks that could support a social dog park facility. Additionally, we recommend using off-season hockey rinks that keep the boards up year round to provide smaller neighborhood scale dog parks. These facilities are spread throughout the City and take advantage of an underutilized off-season space with simple and cost effective improvements.

These dog park locations are opportunities to provide education about the expectations and rules of dog ownership in Hopkins. Facilities such as dog waste stations should be provided at all dog park facilities and at popular dog walking areas throughout the City. Maintenance expenses for these facilities are significantly less than other athletic facilities.

SPLASH PADS

Splash pads have become a popular recreation amenity in parks. They are not meant to replace pools, but they do provide a fun aquatic experience at a reasonable cost. Splash pads typically do not have standing water so a lifeguard is not needed and generally require less supervision than a pool. They are typically more attractive to younger children and can be very interactive. Ongoing maintenance and cost of water can be an issue for systems that use city water but do not recirculate. Re-circulating systems are typically more expensive up front and do require more maintenance to ensure filters are changed out and safe water is provided. Splash pads located in parks typically do not have a use fee. Other components that are important with splash pads are access to restrooms and shaded seating areas for parents and caretakers.

Splash pads did not emerge as a high priority need based on community engagement. It is recommended that they are a lower priority item in the City, but still an important part of aquatics recreation.



Figure 4.28. Splash pads, like the one at Burnes Park, are highly used and don't require lifeguards. They are important as a cooling element.

PICKLEBALL

Pickleball is a fast paced game that is growing fast throughout Minnesota. It is a racket sport that combines elements of badminton, tennis, and table tennis. The rules are simple and it is an easy game for beginners to pick up. Advanced players play a fast-paced, competitive game. The courts at Central Park are well used with organized leagues and pick-up games at various times of the day.

Pickleball is very social sport. Numerous leagues and tournaments have developed to build on this socialization. Private businesses have integrated pickleball into restaurant/ bar developments to take advantage of this aspect as well. While significant growth has taken place in older segments of the population, pickleball is spreading among all ages. A significant part of the sports appeal is that it doesn't rely on highly technical skills, it can be learned with little practice and without expensive lessons.

Expansion of pickleball courts at Central Park would capitalize on the nearby bars and restaurants of Mainstreet and fit into the park's existing DNA of being a destination for adult sport/ activity leagues.



Figure 4.30. Pickleball at Central Parks is a social gathering activity.



Figure 4.29. Nature based play is proposed at the 325 Blake Road development. Small pockets of play are a good option for POPs.



Figure 4.31. Finding opportunities to connect to nature in Hopkins should be a priority (Minnehaha Creek canoeing shown).

NATURAL AREAS

Natural areas and native vegetation are highly desired by Hopkins residents and should be integrated into park areas that don't support active recreation activities. The benefits of nature to a majority of residents are increasingly understood to the general population. Natural areas provide valuable ecosystem services to the city such as; reduced flooding, heat island mitigation, air quality improvements, water quality improvements, mental health benefits, improved property values, and a number of additional quality of life benefits.

Hopkins has limited areas of high quality natural areas within the city and a lack of opportunity to acquire or expand. The primary areas exist around wetlands and tributaries to the Nine Mile Creek and Minnehaha Creek Corridors. These are important areas to the region's water quality and under developed local recreation opportunities. Patches of natural habitat are scattered and isolated throughout the city and will be difficult to connect. The habitat areas that remain are marginal quality with many wetland and streambanks infested with reed canary grass and woodlands choked with buckthorn. However, these pieces of land still have significant value and are worth investment for improvement. Parks and open spaces remain an area that could support more natural areas and native vegetation. Improvements to the tree canopy and conversion of turf grass to native prairie species and low to no maintenance groundcover could significantly contribute to the quality of natural areas in the city and provide more ecosystem services, while reducing maintenance.

There are 3 keys to improving natural area quality and experiences in Hopkins parks:

1. Partnerships
2. Increase Access
3. Improve the In-between

PARTNERSHIPS

The city should leverage partnerships with groups and entities with overlapping goals and objectives. This can occur on a large scale with grants and cost share programs at the State level to the local volunteer organizations and neighborhood groups that provide labor and small scale fundraising. Two key partners that the City

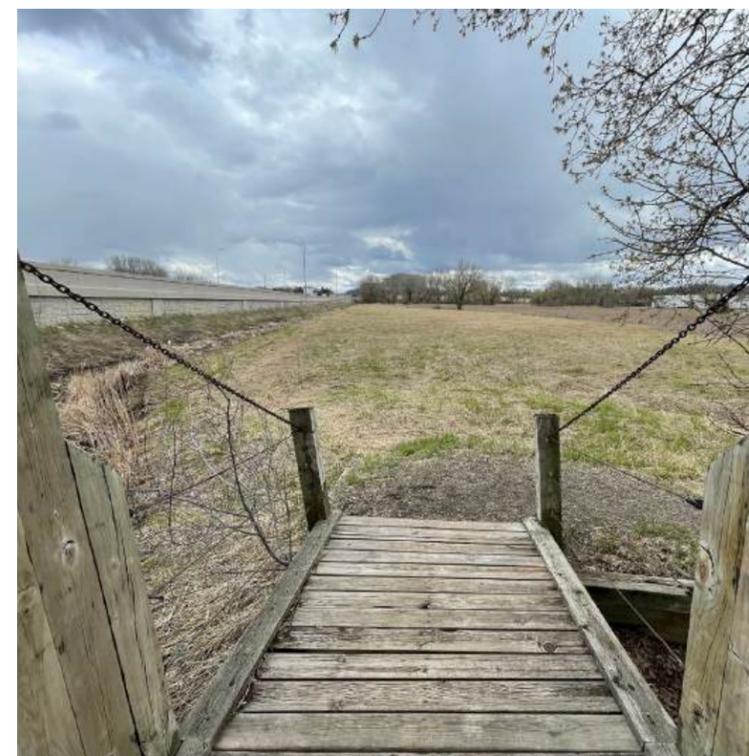


Figure 4.32. 9 Mile Creek at Valley Park is an opportunity to expand access to nature, improve vegetation quality, and extend natural surface trails into the environment.



should continue to foster relationships with are Nine Mile Creek and Minnehaha Creek Watershed Districts. Habitat preservation and restoration that supports water quality and flood reduction are significant overlapping goals. Both watershed districts have significant cost share, knowledge sharing, and grant opportunities for aligned projects. Additionally, Three Rivers Parks District (TRPD) is a regional park provider with a mission to support access to nature, environmental education, and improved natural area experiences. At the time of Master Plan authoring, TRPD was starting a Parks to People program that was investigating how to engage more visitors from underrepresented groups in the first ring suburbs of Hennepin County. Hopkins is an active participant in those discussions and should continue their relationship building following this project. Finally, Recreation Services of Minnetonka, who provides programming for Hopkins, could be utilized as a partner for resource sharing and connecting the City to other potential partners. Hopkins is an important part of their recreational offerings and helping to improve the parks would benefit their mission.

Smaller scale partners can also provide significant assistance in natural areas improvement. Volunteer groups focusing on invasive species removal or tree planting can provide real value for the city, educate residents, and provide opportunities to connect to natural areas and others with similar interests. Non-profit organizations such as Blue Thumb, Wild Ones Twin Cities, Metro Blooms, Great River Greening, and a number of other groups have programs to facilitate habitat improvements.

Outdoor recreation focused groups can also provide significant resources for the right project; Minnesota Off Road Cyclists (MORC) has a significant labor force of mountain bike riders that donate thousands of hours each year to maintaining facilities across the metro that include bike optimized natural surface trails. Boy and girl scout troops, the Isaac Walton League, Ducks Unlimited, and others are looking for events and projects for their passionate members. By working with volunteer groups like this, less resources need to be spent by city staff on recruiting and organizing volunteer efforts.

INCREASE ACCESS

People are inclined to protect and cherish what they understand and what touches their daily lives. Increasing the access to natural areas in the city provides an opportunity for more people to enjoy the benefits of nature, diversifies the recreation opportunities in the city, and provides spontaneous/ unstructured education, play, and experiential opportunities. Increasing access can range from simple,

low cost natural surface trail expansion to more costly boardwalk trails and larger restoration projects. Opportunities for increasing access to natural areas in Hopkins includes:

- Accessible and natural surface trail expansion at Valley Park and Steiner Park Reserve.
- Native and natural planting within neighborhood and community parks - see concept plans in Chapter 4.
- Restoration and trail access opportunities at the landfill site.
- Accessible improvements to existing park facilities to remove barriers to outdoor recreation
- Accessible archery improvements at Steiner Park Reserve

IMPROVE THE IN-BETWEEN

The spaces between parks are an important part of connecting people to nature. Health and diverse urban tree canopies and tree-lined trails make walking and biking to parks more appealing and hospitable. Incorporating shrub and perennial planting into streetscapes and business provide habitat value, but also increase the appeal and visual interest of spaces. All of these improvements help make the overall City and parks more resilient to climate change, and increase residents' physical and mental connection to nature.

Urban tree canopy is vital to making the spaces between parks more appealing. Street trees help improve pedestrian and bicycle transportation by regulating summer temperatures, absorbing small rain events, and providing shelter and shade under the canopy. Perennial plantings and shrubs add layers of visual interest and beauty while creating critical habitat for pollinators and small mammals. Smaller scale understory plantings can turn into a larger feature when they are connected aesthetically. Planting around signage, in medians, raingardens, and more formal gardens is a simple way to beautify the City and provide cues to care that reinforce Hopkins brand. Smaller disparate natural areas can be stitched together to expand and connect larger habitat patches in parks.

All gardens and planting spaces don't need to be fully maintained as pristine prairie or woodland remnants. Adjusting maintenance to allow for higher growing grasses can provide value. Cues to care can be maintained by mowing strips along trails and sidewalks and placing educational signage.

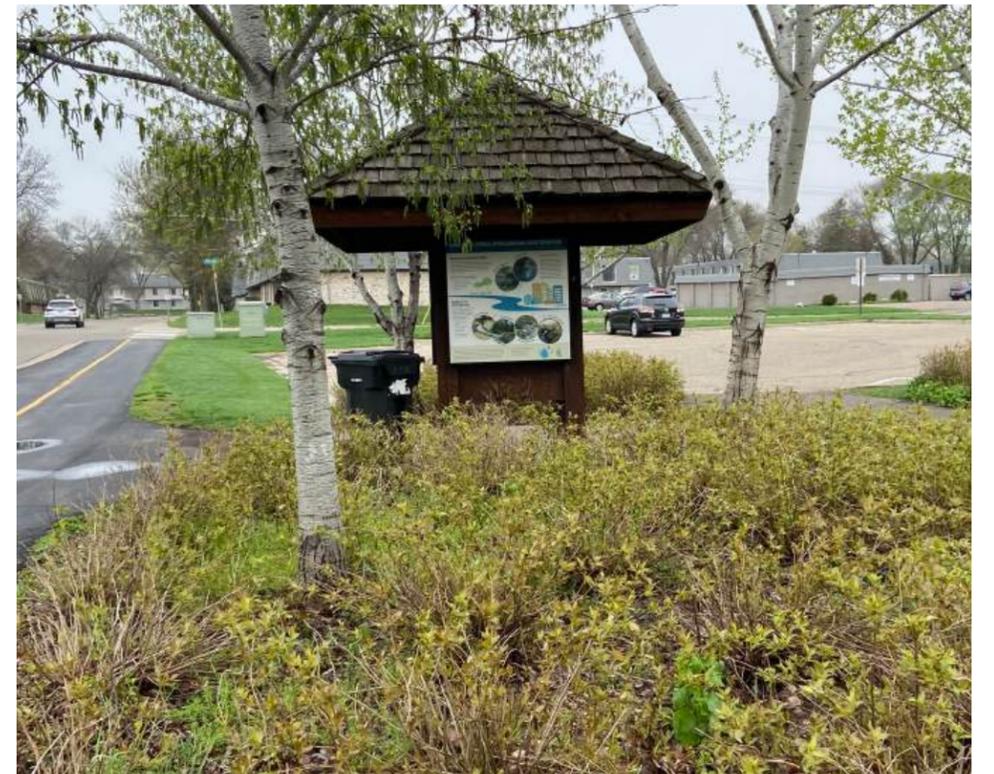


Figure 4.33. Trees, shade, native plantings, benches and seating along trails and sidewalks benefit park users and wildlife.

WINTER

Providing opportunities for recreation and exercise in Minnesota's long winter months is important for elevating residents' quality of life. Outdoor and indoor opportunities are important to accommodate resident needs in an affordable manner.

Expansion of indoor activities at the Pavilion is explored in the concept designs in Chapter 5. Additional hockey rinks, indoor walking tracks, basketball courts, an indoor play facility, and general court space to accommodate pickleball, or many other activities, is needed and would be highly utilized.

MAINTENANCE AND WINTER ACTIVATION

Outdoor activities are just as critical and provide opportunities to stay active in winter months. Winter programming can be added and supplemented through maintenance activities. Snow clearing on trails, sidewalks, and courts will encourage use when temperatures allow. Pickleball and basketball are examples of activities with devoted users that have been known to shovel on their own to use courts. Activating sledding hills could be accommodated by providing sleds in the warming houses at Oakes, Valley, and Hilltop for residents that don't have resources for sleds. Similarly, donated skates at rinks could be loaned to skaters on a first come first serve basis to provide opportunities for those without resources for skates or those that want to try it before they buy skates. These are simple ways to build community and encourage outdoor activity.

Hopkins, like many metro cities, has recently reduced the amount of outdoor rinks and is focusing more on quality of ice over quantity of rinks in the city. This strategy is crucial for balancing resources as climate change impacts winter activities. Hopkins should only consider new ice sheets if they are replacing existing sheets or are protected with a roof, covering, or artificial refrigeration. Ice time and quality are diminishing with climate change and staff should expect fewer opportunities for quality ice.

The facilities that have ice should try to incorporate a number of other activities to create winter hubs that attract a variety of people. This creates an energy that makes the sites more appealing than a single activity destination. Winter hubs should include skating, sledding, fire pits (as allowed), food trucks and concessions, creative lighting, music, sledding, snowshoeing opportunities, etc. to appeal to the greatest amount of people.

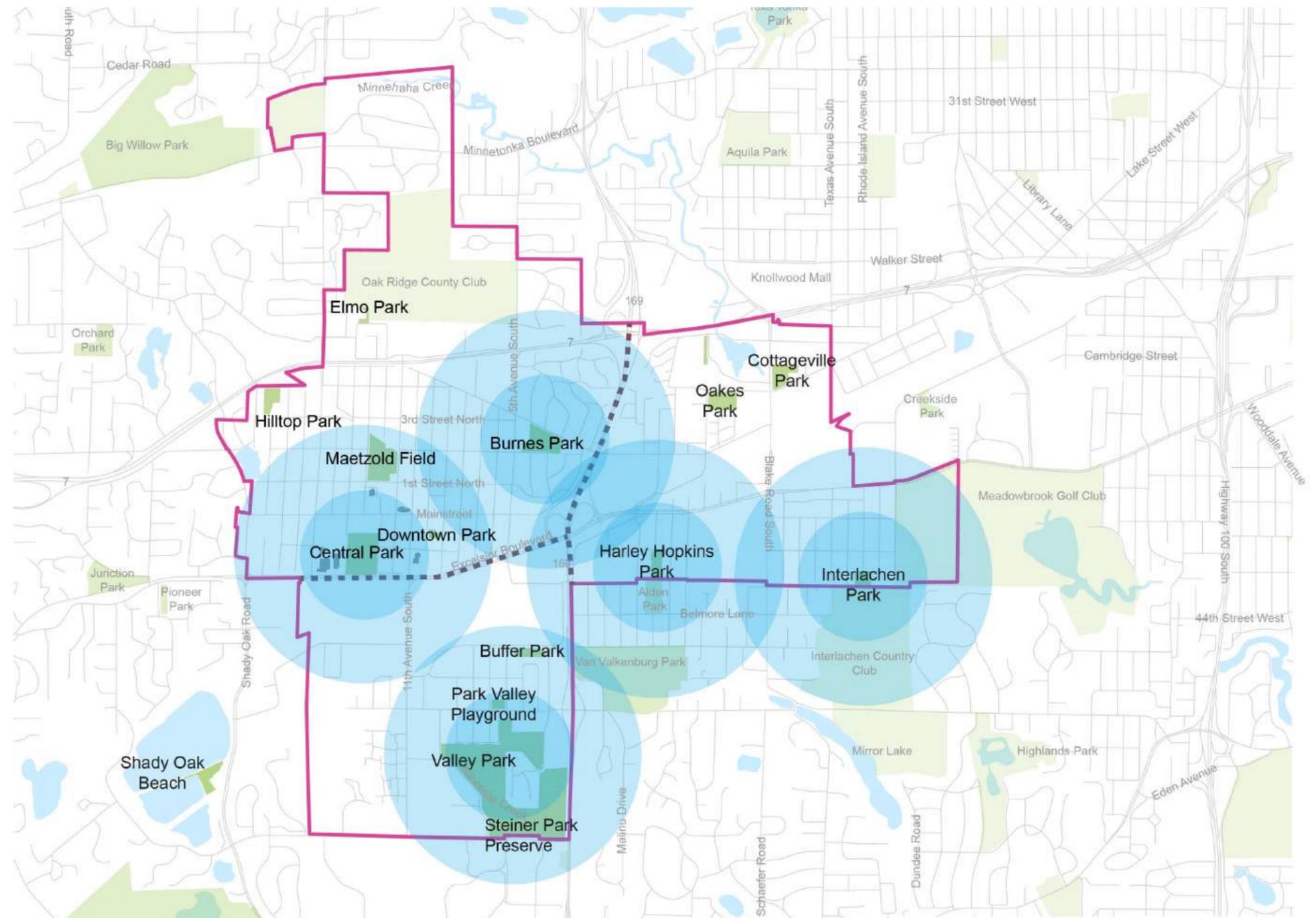


Figure 4.34. Existing ice rink distribution. Central Park contains an outdoor rink, pleasure skating, and indoor rink at the Pavilion.



POTENTIAL NEW ACTIVITIES

A number of activities would fit within Hopkins' parks with simple trail grooming or support infrastructure. However, many of these activities may be new to residents and require introductory programming and instruction. Hopkins should partner with organizations like Three Rivers Park District that are well versed in programming for beginner and intermediate instruction for the following activities:

- Cross country skiing, skjoring, etc.
- Snowshoeing
- Fat tire biking
- Ice fishing

These activities are flexible and have a low entry barrier in skill, meaning they can be enjoyed equally by beginners and more advanced users. Additionally, groups like fat tire biking often have volunteers that maintain trails with their collective membership.



Figure 4.35. Fat tire biking can share trails with snowshoes.



Figure 4.36. Snowshoeing can be done with or without trails.



Figure 4.37. Cross country skiing is accessible to and fun for beginners.



Figure 4.38. Ice fishing is a lifetime activity for the whole family.

FOCUS ON QUALITY

Revitalize existing fields, facilities, courts, and playgrounds.

Parks represent the neighborhoods and communities they are a part of. Appearance, quality, vegetation management, etc. can impact the attractiveness to potential users. Parks are a reflection of their community and it's pride in public space. Conversely, facilities and equipment that is in disrepair, aged, or outdated is likely to be used less frequently over time.

REFLECTION OF COMMUNITY

Hopkins parks are adequately maintained by staff. Lawns are regularly mowed, trees and shrubs trimmed and growing well, and perennial beds weed free and abundant.

However, much of the parks equipment is outdated, fading, and in disrepair. Playgrounds, courts and equipment, benches, signage, tables, grills, etc. have a lifespan for safety. These elements also have an aesthetic lifespan. Faded colors, chipping paint, and significant scuffing can be detrimental to the amenities usage and signify a lower level of care.

Hopkins multi-use fields and lawns are mowed and well maintained. However, many of them do not have a cross section of proper soils and drainage, or irrigation, that will support a higher level of field quality. Higher quality fields can support more regular use and greater programming in a variety of weather conditions. Quality fields are also more attractive to users, associations, and tournament organizers. The city's most active park, Central, has a large turf field area built over a historic landfill. This turf zone undulates significantly and prevents safe use of the fields for any activity - rendering the ball diamond useless. This issue should be addressed to support the increasing demand that Central Park will get as the population near light rail increases. This area will need to be repaired or re-calibrated with other more compatible uses.

New, well designed, facilities provide a significant boost to the image, desirability, and attractiveness of the parks. The new splash pad and building at Burnes Park, The Pavilion, pickleball courts at Central Park, and pavilion at Cottageville Park are examples of successful investment.

QUALITY SUPPORTS QUANTITY

Hopkins has limited acreage available for additional field and court space. Existing facilities will need to support greater use to meet the

anticipated need as the city's population grows. Improving the quality of fields and courts is vital to ensure programming and informal use are accommodated.

Key fields at community and select neighborhood parks that receive regular scheduled usage should be constructed as premier fields. These fields should have an adequate drainage base to ensure playability after storm events and spring thaw. Drainage is key to protecting the field surfacing from use before the root zone has had a chance to dry out. Good drainage minimizes cancellations due to weather. Natural turf premier fields should also have an irrigation system to ensure turf quality throughout the year. These improvements will maximize the use of facilities for play throughout the year. More people will be able to use the fields for a broader timeframe.

Additional improvements to premier facilities that will extend playability even further include lighting and artificial surfacing. Artificial surfaces maximize playability following weather events, earlier play in the spring, and later play into the fall. Damage to turf is eliminated and there is no 'rest period' needed to allow recovery from heavy use. Negative characteristics of artificial turf include, significantly hotter play surface during peak summer months, increased injury reports, concerns about exposure to crumb rubber infill and long term health effects, and the initial high capital costs. Hopkins should evaluate the use of artificial fields only at the highest use-age fields.

Lighting can help substantially improve field and court quality by extending the times that facility is able to be used. This is critical in spring and fall periods when reduced daylight hours restrict timeframes the facilities are able to be used. Lit fields and courts can increase programming opportunities. Newer lighting technology and fixtures can provide precise placement of light and minimize spillage and light pollution in surrounding neighborhoods.

LIFECYCLE REPLACEMENT & PLAYGROUNDS

Burnes and Cottageville Parks have recently been renovated. However, the remaining parks in the system need to be addressed. Nearly all of the playgrounds in the system are over seven years old. A replacement plan needs to be developed to update the system now and into the future so the city doesn't fall behind. All equipment in the system has a shelf and replacement life that should be the baseline for parks improvement. Scheduling updates, maintenance,



Figure 4.39. Low quality and outdated facilities requiring significant maintenance should be evaluated for replacement or removal - Harley Hopkins Shelter & Central Park Playground



Figure 4.40. Existing playgrounds are similar in age, style, and play value.

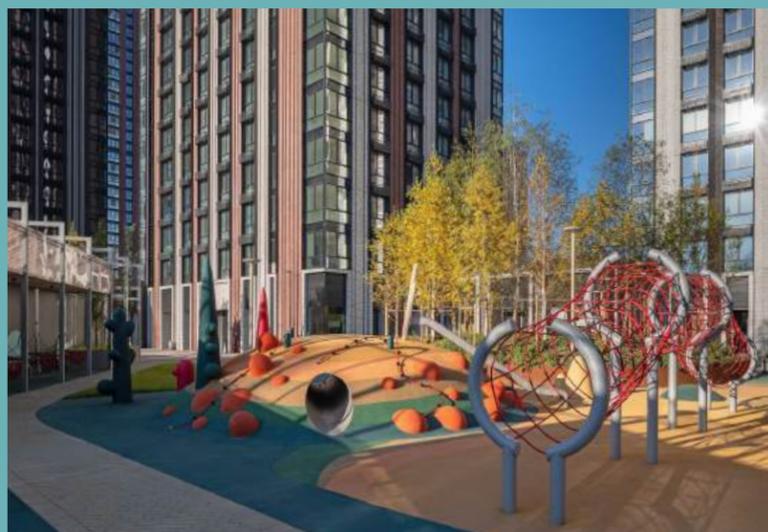


Figure 4.41. A variety of playground experiences and types to fit all of Hopkins parks, elevate the quality, and encourage travel to



and replacement is a way to ensure the system stays current and safe. Playground replacement strategies should encourage quality and variety. Choosing 2-3 well regarded vendors to work with will help assure the city finds the best combination of cost, variety, and quality. Working with a licensed Landscape Architect with park design experience can ensure the city is cognizant of playground and recreation trends, manufacturers, and integration of new equipment into the parks.

Playground creativity and development has expanded considerably in the last few years and Minnesota has a number of quality manufacturers to work with. Diversity in play experience is vital to a high quality play experience. Hopkins should be mindful of this when planning individual parks with neighborhoods. Getting input from the public and matching the play facility with the park setting is advised to diversify the play options over time. An example would be to match natural playgrounds in more natural parks and more active play options, like a ninja warrior course, in more active parks.

All other equipment should be tracked and replaced per recommendations and prior to equipment failure. Schedules spread distribute the cost burden over time. Significant investment should utilize the equity analysis framework to prioritize improvements.

MATCHING RESOURCES

Maintaining a high-quality park system requires money, time, and effort. Hopkins currently has sufficient staff for park maintenance but will need to adjust as the population grows and puts more pressure on park infrastructure. The city will need to identify new sources of funding for capital improvements, amenities, and general maintenance. The following methods should be utilized to match resources with need:

- Create a tiered fee structure for some amenities including dog parks to offset maintenance costs.
- Formalize a volunteer agreement for associations and general public maintenance.
- Implement maintenance standards and realistic staffing.
- Evaluate the long-term cost of investments - e.g. using sustainable and durable building materials.
- Parking lot, street reconstruction, and stormwater improvements associated with parks should be funded separately or jointly as appropriate.



Figure 4.42. Winter skating and summer pickleball at Central Park.

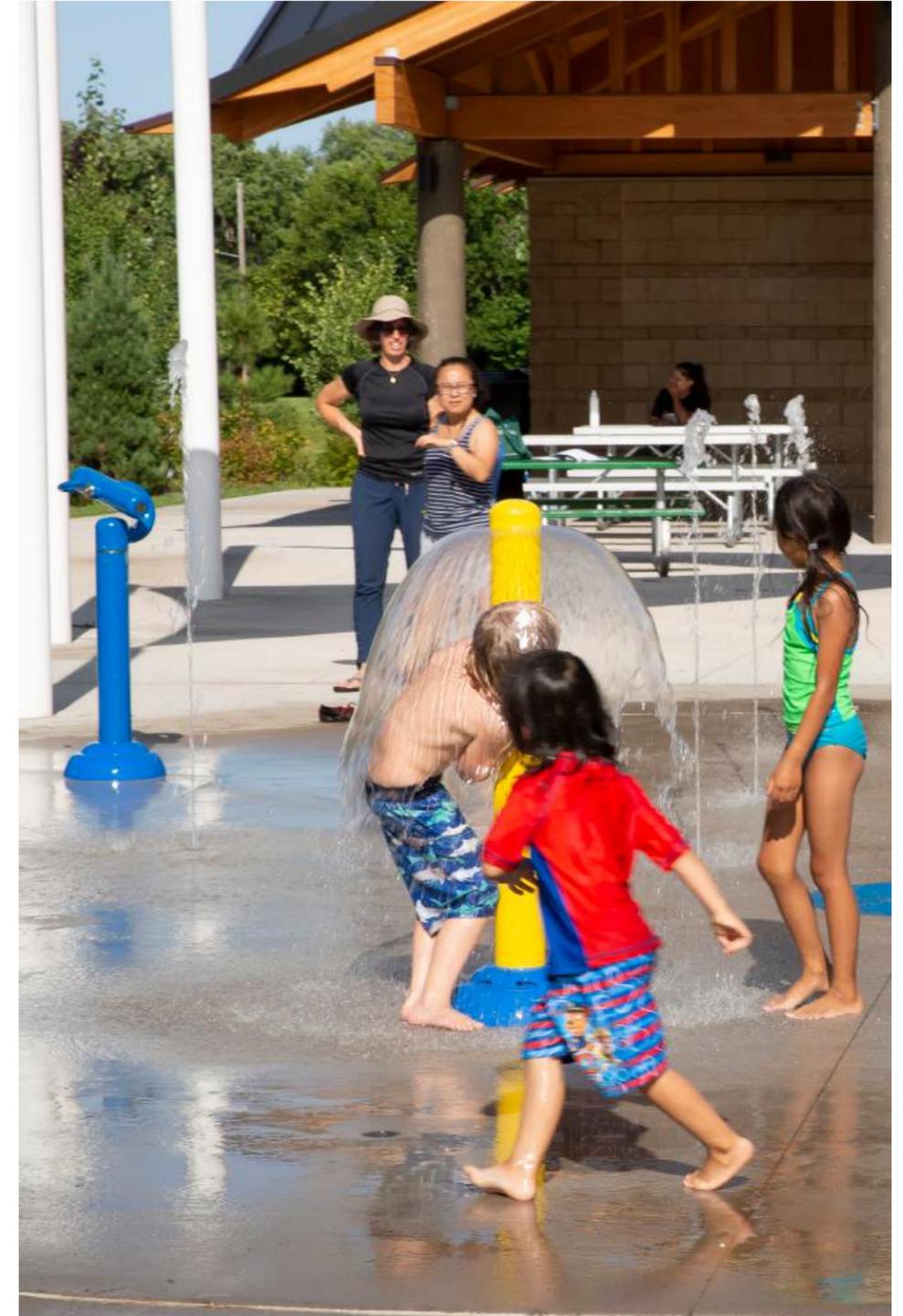


Figure 4.43. Burnes Park splashpad.



VISION CONCLUSION

The VISION of the park system is a vital tool for transformation. It provides the goal, direction, and check test for all consequential planning and construction work completed in the future. The VISION is comprised of Vision and Mission Statements with 5 Key Themes. Together they provide a flexible guide that captures the spirit of challenges and opportunities facing Hopkins in 2024. The VISION is a living document that should be updated and adjusted as the City and Park System grow and transform.

The VISION was developed with significant input from the public. This engagement focus is baked into the recommendations and processes found in this master plan and will ensure the Park System Master Plan continues to reflect the needs of Hopkins' residents.

Key Themes



Racial Equity

Figure 4.1. Park facilities and programs are high quality and culturally relevant for BIPOC residents.



Park Accessibility

Figure 4.1. Reduce barriers to park amenities for all park users and mobility levels.



Gathering & Community Building

Figure 4.1. Build community with neighborhood and city-wide gathering facilities.



Parks for All

Figure 4.1. Provide opportunities for passive and active recreation that suit a broad range of users.



Focus on Quality

Figure 4.1. Revitalize existing fields, facilities, courts, and playgrounds.

VISION

Hopkins has high quality parks that serve all users and are equitable, accessible, and build community by bringing people together.

MISSION

Hopkins will prioritize parks as an essential city service that provides exceptional and accessible experiences for all residents in a sustainable manner by leveraging our uniqueness, dynamic community partnerships, and diversity.



CHAPTER CONTENTS

BUILDING BETTER PARKS: INTENTIONAL DESIGN

PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC SPACES (POPS)

PLACEMAKING

AMENITY BALANCE

05 VISUALIZING HOPKINS' FUTURE PARKS

OF THE FIFTEEN PARKS, SEVEN PARKS RE-DESIGNED FOLLOWING THE VISION AND KEY PRIORITIES

The following plans illustrate how half of Hopkins' Parks could be improved. The plans were developed from public feedback, staff input, and known needs within the system. They show what a modern updated park could look like and are intended to inspire investment that is prioritized using the priority themes and equity analysis.

City staff selected the parks for these representative park concept designs. Concept plans for Elmo Park, Burnes Park, Cottageville Park, Maetzold Field, Hiawatha Oaks, Interlachen Park, Shady Oak Park and Beach are not included. However, all parks will be updated as equipment ages, and in order by equipment age and equity priority. The parks that are included are of high need from an equity standpoint, span a range of sizes, and provide good examples for how the entire system can be improved.

More engagement should be done prior to design and construction to determine the final amenities and configuration. This is especially important as needs may change in the time before implementation occurs.

Icons representing the main themes identified are provided to highlight the focus of each park concept in addressing these vital elements. Each park strives to address all of the vision priorities, but the icons highlight which are served in the highest capacity.

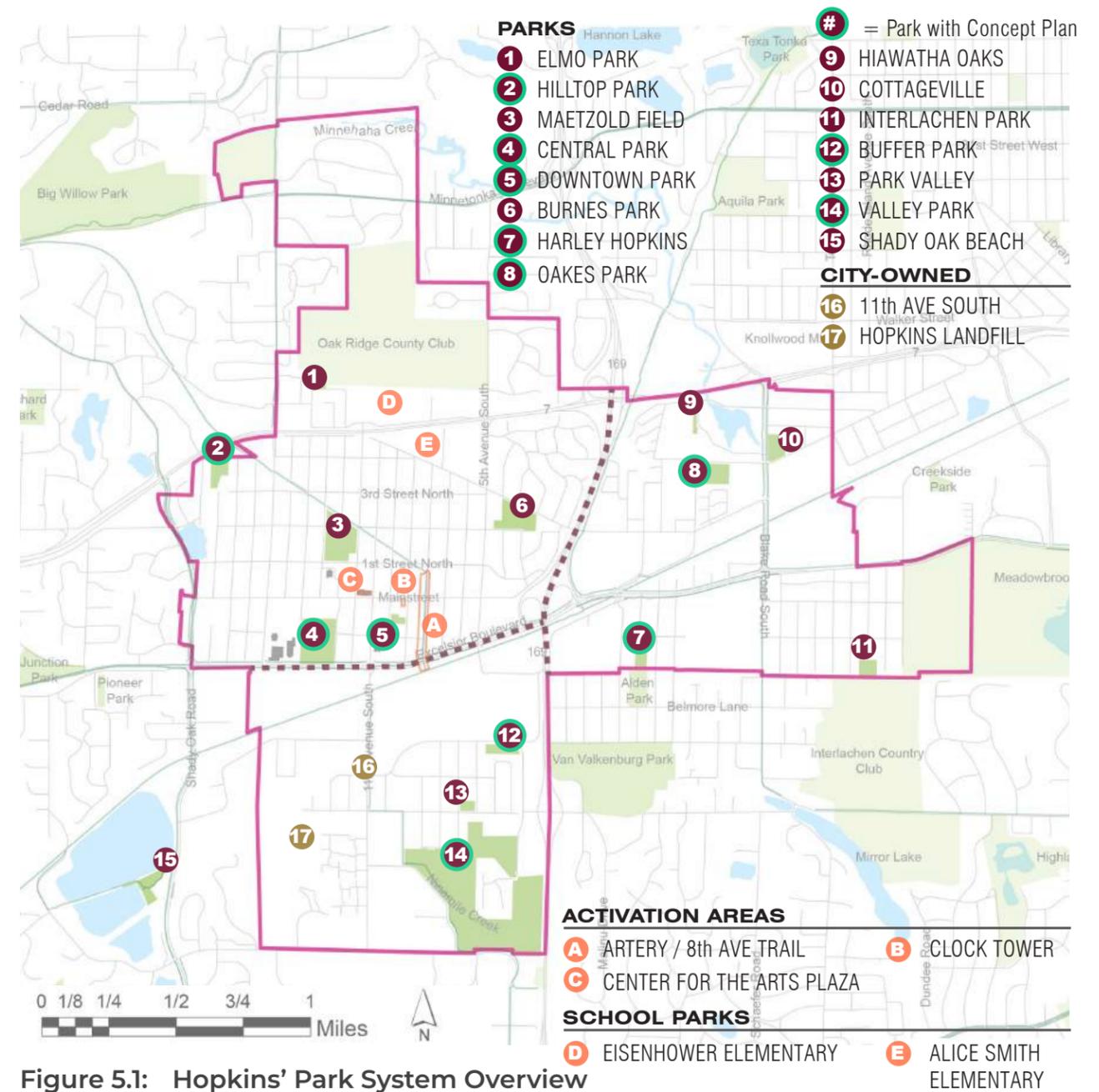


Figure 5.1: Hopkins' Park System Overview

BUILDING BETTER PARKS: INTENTIONAL DESIGN

The park system in Hopkins has several positive qualities that will allow for a smooth and positive transformation. Parks in Hopkins are:

- well located and distributed geographically;
- easy to access due to the community's scale - a majority of Hopkins is walkable and bike-able;
- well connected to a growing network of regional and local trails;
- and are sources of neighborhood identity - people naturally gravitate toward and identify with the park near their neighborhood.

Parks also provide:

- proximity and connections to surrounding community amenities, regional trails, and other cities' parks;
- recreation programming that utilizes a broader geographic spread of facilities to provide more options for Hopkins residents;

- proximity to transportation corridors and businesses for larger community parks that host league events and tournaments which benefit from:

- freeway access;
- access to bars and restaurants on Mainstreet;
- easy connections to future light rail station areas; and
- regional trail connections.

These existing qualities are a solid foundation to build upon. The city should focus on improving and updating the parks to better reflect the population they are serving. Improvements should be mindful of the entire system and increase an individual park's ability to provide more benefit to the community.

Community focused design and planning are crucial to achieve the highest cost/benefit for each park. Qualified Landscape Architects and park planners should lead a comprehensive community based design process to re-envision the parks as funding allows. Each

park's potential must be maximized to provide the greatest cost/benefit to the community. Design is the best tool that can achieve this lofty ambition.

Below is an example of a park transformation which is covered in detail in the following pages. Formerly lacking careful design, Buffer park is transformed by activating with varied activities primarily intended for younger ages. The park is enlivened with a tee ball or practice infield, two under 9 soccer fields, a tot track and basic bike skills area, as well as a shade structure for community gathering.

Parks should not be a place for individual pet projects and one-off facilities. The spatial, recreational, and green infrastructure needs and pressures of the community are too great to continue ad-hoc additions.

The following chapter provides a vision for how design and park planning can transform some of the key parks in Hopkins and how the system can be transformed. These transformations need to be based on community needs and thoughtfully designed to help achieve the city-wide vision and mission.



Figure 5.2: Buffer Park existing conditions



Figure 5.3: Buffer Park proposed concept



HILLTOP PARK



Proposed improvements at Hilltop Park focus on increasing accessibility and expanding uses. The current playground is not accessible, so this design proposes to expand the playground to add inclusive equipment and features accessible walkways that connect from the parking to the playground. Parking is slightly expanded, with room for a seasonal restroom enclosure at the parking lot edge. A new dog run is proposed, with berms and dense planting at the edges. The sledding hill is maintained.



- LEGEND**
- LAWN
 - NO-MOW
 - TREE
 - PATHWAY
 - SLEDDING PATH
-
- KEYNOTES**
- ① EXPANDED PARKING
 - ② EXPANDED PLAYGROUND
 - ③ BUILDING
 - ④ GRILLING AREA
 - ⑤ DOG RUN
 - ⑥ BERM & BUFFER PLANTINGS
 - ⑦ SLEDDING
 - ⑧ ACCESSIBLE PATH

Figure 5.4: Hilltop Park proposed concept

CENTRAL PARK



A re-imagined Central Park will have improved safety and easier circulation, made possible by relocating parking to the edges of the park and reopening the middle for a new playground, event lawn, and sports courts. The concept shows new outdoor amenities and a large expansion of the Pavilion that will cover the existing outdoor hockey and tennis court space. New indoor space in this expanded Pavilion includes a second sheet of year-round ice (middle, at current outdoor rink location), turf/ice rotating (similar to existing Pavilion rink) in the north end, and the existing southern field house becomes year-round turf. Outdoor amenities include new sand volleyball courts, full-court basketball, walking loops, an improved open field that can fit high-school soccer, and expanded pickleball.



LEGEND

- LAWN
- NO-MOW
- TREE
- PATHWAY

KEYNOTES

- ① DROP-OFF AREA
- ② ENTRY PLAZA
- ③ POTENTIAL EXPANDED PARKING
- ④ EXPANDED PICKLEBALL
- ⑤ DESTINATION PLAYGROUND
- ⑥ BASKETBALL & FUTSAL
- ⑦ LEAGUE VOLLEYBALL
- ⑧ HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER
- ⑨ SHADE STRUCTURE
- ⑩ INDOOR PAVILION EXPANSION

Figure 5.5: Central Park proposed concept

DOWNTOWN PARK

The stage and mounds are an important part of Downtown park and will stay, with minor improvements. Mounds are adjusted with terraced seat walls that orient toward the stage, and the round paved area in front of the stage will be adjusted with new surfacing and flexible seating. Seat walls can have memorial plaques. The connection along 9th Ave S will be enhanced with a wider sidewalk and boulevard, and opportunities for outdoor sculptures. New amenities for the park include a small playground, an open flexible lawn, a poetry walk, and garden trellis structures that will provide opportunities for hanging lights, swings, or kinetic sculpture. The concept also shows an enhanced restroom area with an attached storage cabinet for event supplies.



- LEGEND**
- LAWN
 - NATIVE/ NO-MOW
 - TREE
 - PATHWAY
 - ENHANCED RESTROOM w/ STORAGE

- KEYNOTES**
- ① FLEXIBLE LAWN GREEN/ ART
 - ② FOCUSED BOULEVARD
 - ③ ART/ SCULPTURE
 - ④ RECONFIGURED BERMS/ TERRACE
 - ⑤ MOVABLE TABLES AND CHAIRS
 - ⑥ SCULPTURAL PLAYGROUND
 - ⑦ EXISTING STAGE
 - ⑧ GARDEN TRELIS
 - ⑨ POETRY WALK

Figure 5.6: Downtown Park proposed concept

HARLEY HOPKINS PARK



To improve the park's usability, stormwater is collected into a rain garden where the current hockey rink is located. New paths loop through the park, providing accessibility. The warming house is removed and replaced with a shade structure and community gathering area with elevated and improved flexible lawn. At the southern end of the park, drainage is improved with additional rain gardens and swales. A soccer field for under twelve (U12) sports fits in the flat open lawn area. The slope from 2nd St S is opened and re-graded to provide a sloped seating area and enhance views into the park.



LEGEND

- LAWN
- NO-MOW
- TREE
- PATHWAY
- PARK BUILDING

KEYNOTES

- ① FIELD ACCESS
- ② ACCESSIBLE PATH
- ③ SHADE STRUCTURE
- ④ GATHERING AREA
- ⑤ RAIN GARDEN
- ⑥ SWALE
- ⑦ FLEX LAWN FOR GAMES
- ⑧ SLOPED LAWN
- ⑨ U12 SOCCER
- ⑩ HAMMOCK GROVE

Figure 5.7: Harley Hopkins Park proposed concept

OAKES PARK



The redesign of Oakes Park incorporates a range of amenities to cater to the diverse needs of the community. With existing facilities like a picnic shelter and tennis courts, the park maintains its charm while welcoming new features. A new park building, large enough to host classes and city voting, will replace the existing warming house.

An improved playground offers a safe and engaging space for children of all abilities, while dedicated basketball and futsal/mini-pitch courts provide opportunities for sports enthusiasts. A U12 soccer field adds excitement for young athletes, and a designated sledding area promises winter fun. Additionally, a community garden encourages residents to cultivate their own plants, fostering a sense of ownership and sustainability. To promote environmental consciousness, a wetland or rain garden is integrated, offering educational value and enhancing the park's ecological significance. This thoughtfully designed park becomes a vibrant hub for recreation, social interaction, and environmental appreciation.



LEGEND

- LAWN
- NO-MOW
- TREE
- PATHWAY
- PARK BUILDING
- SLEDDING PATH

KEYNOTES

- ① EXISTING PICNIC SHELTER
- ② EXISTING TENNIS
- ③ LARGE PARK BUILDING
- ④ IMPROVED PLAYGROUND
- ⑤ BASKETBALL & FUTSAL
- ⑥ U12 SOCCER
- ⑦ SLEDDING
- ⑧ COMMUNITY GARDEN
- ⑨ WETLAND/RAIN GARDEN

Figure 5.8: Oakes Park proposed concept





Figure 5.9: Sustainable park building renderings (proposed at Oakes Park and Valley Park)



An improved park building to better serve the community is an important proposed addition to Oakes Park. Envisioned to be similar in size to the warming house portion of the Pavilion, this new structure could fill an important need for the neighborhood. The existing warming house is too small to house larger civic functions such as voting, and this area of the city lacks a space for this function. The interior should be sized to house voting and any other civic functions that may be needed. The building serves the park as a warming house in winter and can also host recreational programs or be rented for activities such as birthday parties. Furthermore the structure can provide plumbed bathrooms, which was requested in engagement.

The views on the previous page and right show potential views of how this park building could look. Sustainability measures include a green roof, solar generation, south-facing windows, energy saving mechanical systems, and the structure should be built from low-carbon materials.



BUFFER PARK



Youth sports are the focus of planned improvements at Buffer Park. The baseball infield is reoriented and moved to fit two under nine (U9) youth soccer fields. The sledding hill is preserved, however, the plateau at the top of the hill features added paths, a shade structure with seating, and a new tot track (for all-wheel skills practice).

Additionally this plan recommends the city consider re-naming this park to something more meaningful to the community.



LEGEND

- LAWN
- NO-MOW
- TREE
- PATHWAY
- SLEDDING PATH

KEYNOTES

- ① ACCESSIBLE PATH
- ② GATHERING AREA
- ③ TOT TRACK
- ④ SLEDDING
- ⑤ U9 SOCCER
- ⑥ PRACTICE BALL FIELD/ TEE BALL

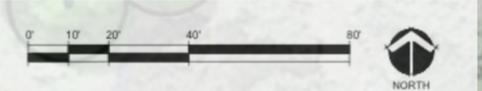


Figure 5.10: Buffer Park proposed concept

VALLEY & STEINER PARKS

Valley Park

The park design focuses on maintaining the open field while incorporating new elements to enhance inclusiveness and recreation. A dedicated dog run will be added, providing a safe and enjoyable space for furry companions to socialize and exercise. The park will undergo transformations and expansions to ensure accessibility and be inclusive for all community members. This includes incorporating features such as accessible pathways, seating areas, and inclusive play equipment in the playground. Additionally, to cater to basketball enthusiasts, the design includes both a bank shot court and a full court, providing opportunities for players of all skill levels to enjoy the game. This park design aims to create a welcoming and engaging environment that promotes physical activity, social interaction, and the joy of being outdoors for everyone in the community.

Steiner Park Preserve and Trails

New trails at Steiner Park Preserve prioritize connectivity and ecological preservation. An updated path network establishes better connections to nearby trails, encouraging residents to explore and enjoy the surrounding natural areas. Additionally, a newly restored wetland area becomes a focal point, providing valuable habitat for wildlife. To enhance the experience, wildlife viewing stations are strategically placed, allowing visitors to observe and appreciate the diverse species that call the wetland home. This park design seamlessly blends recreational opportunities with environmental stewardship, providing a harmonious and immersive experience for park-goers of all ages.



Figure 5.11: Valley Park and Steiner Park Preserve proposed concept

VALLEY PARK



LEGEND

- LAWN
- NO-MOW
- TREE
- PATHWAY
- PARK BUILDING
- SLEDDING PATH

KEYNOTES

- ① EXISTING PICNIC SHELTER
- ② EXISTING HOCKEY
- ③ LARGE PARK BUILDING
- ④ ACCESSIBLE PATH
- ⑤ INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND
- ⑥ BANK SHOT
- ⑦ BASKETBALL
- ⑧ HILLSIDE ROCKS & WATER PLAY
- ⑨ DOG PARK
- ⑩ NEW SHADE STRUCTURE & STORAGE
- ⑪ SLEDDING
- ⑫ BASEBALL PRACTICE
- ⑬ OPEN FIELD W/ ROOM FOR RUGBY



Figure 5.12: Valley Park proposed concept

PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC SPACES (POPS)

Hopkins will need additional park acreage as the population continues to grow. As development occurs, access to open space and public amenities will be at a premium. Open space is an important component of both economic development and quality of civic life. Some previous developments such as the Gallery Flats have been less successful at creating an open, welcoming Privately Owned Public Space (POPS). However, the City is working with developers at 325 Blake and Trilogy to better tailor public space within the development to the neighborhoods' needs. The Artery adjacent to the Moline is also a positive example of planning for POPS.

This plan recommends that Hopkins hire a consultant to research other local cities ordinances on Parkland Dedication and provide policy recommendations for POPS to ensure that developers do their part to contribute to the community's needs.

Such a policy should contain a definition of POPS or "private land maintained for public use" as well as requirements for access, maintenance, and that the land remain publicly accessible for a specified duration. This consultant should also make recommendations that planners and City officials can use in Permitting or Plan Review to make sure requirements are met, and ensure appropriate amenities within these new quasi-public spaces.

Shown at right is one example of how a new POP can be implemented. Should the City decide to partner in order to redevelop a parking lot near a park, the illustration shows how a building could provide amenities and additional space to complement the park. Residents and City staff both spoke of a need for a permanent public bathroom downtown, and this shows one design solution to realize this need, as well as activate the park space.

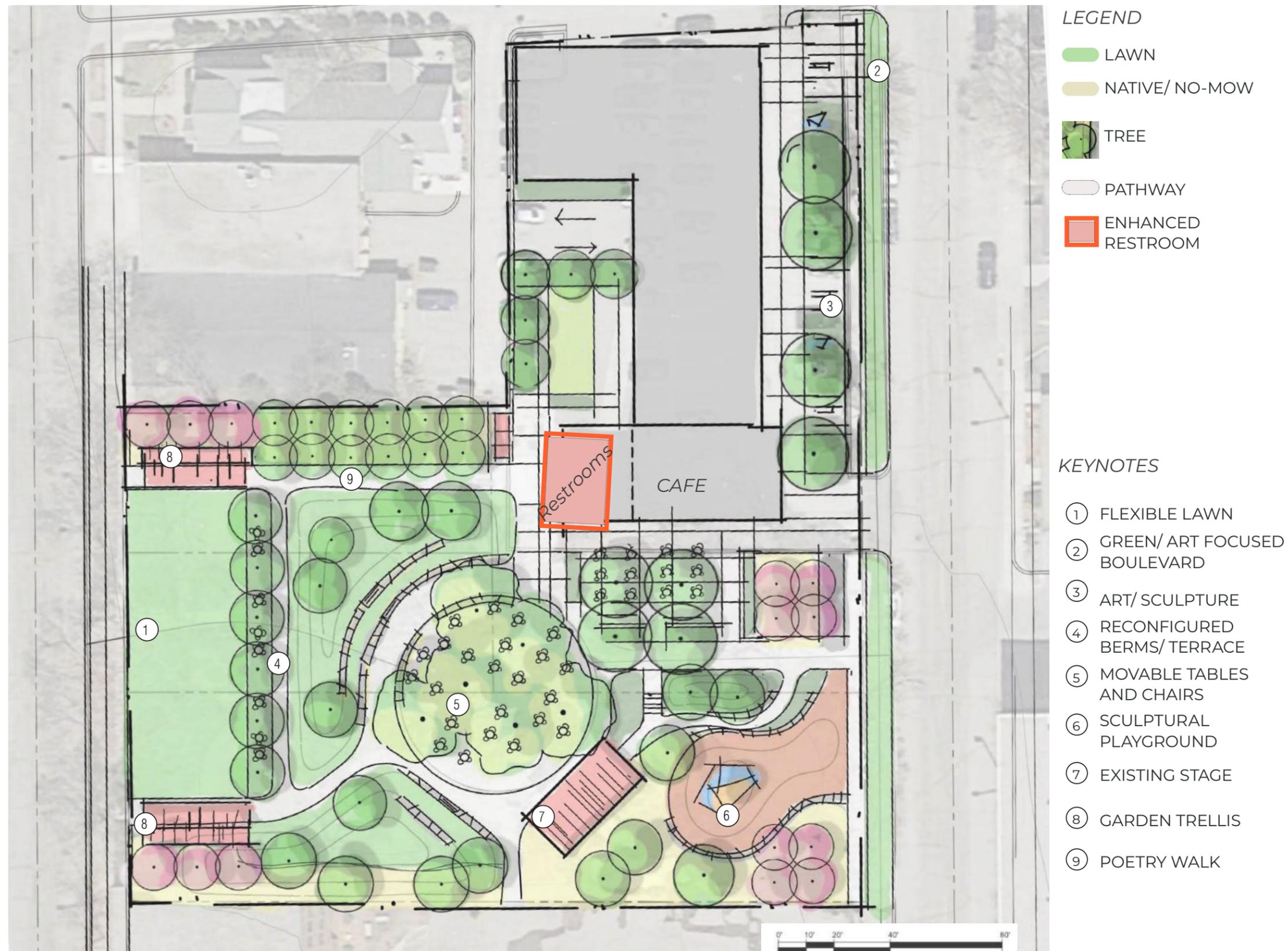


Figure 5.13: Privately owned public spaces proposed concept

Examples of Small Privately Owned Public Spaces

Future Forest at Osborn 370/ Ecolab Plaza

St Paul, MN

Temporary interactive information gathering art installation.

Hopkins is already running a successful outdoor sculpture program, but this type of installation invites a different kind of interaction and provokes more dialog.

Future of futures: <https://amandalovelee.com/Future-of-Futures>



Figure 5.14: Art installation and photo by Amanda Lovelee

The Porch at 30th Street Station

Philadelphia, PA

Activation of a narrow area adjacent to a transit hub.

The Porch, located on the south side of 30th Street Station, is one of Philadelphia's premier public spaces. The Porch features pop-ups including food trucks and performances, lush landscaping, and plenty of places to relax.

University City District: <https://www.universitycity.org/events/porch>



Figure 5.15: The Porch, photo by University City District

JXTA Plaza

Minneapolis, MN

Skate park in tight urban plaza

City of Skate (CoS) partnered with Juxtaposition Arts (JXTA) on the JXTA Skate-able Art Plaza. JXTA students and staff designed the skate plaza with help from CoS. The plaza combines skateboarding, flexible open space, art installations, and sustainable stormwater management to create a unique public space in the heart of North Minneapolis.

City of Skate: <https://cityofskate.org/skateparks/juxtaposition-arts-skatepark-north-minneapolis/>



Figure 5.16: JXTA Plaza, photo by Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

Canadian Pacific Plaza

Minneapolis, MN

Tennis activation during Aquatennial annual summer celebration

A great example of using POPS space employing temporary activation. The tiered seating and plaza is available year around.

Business Journal: <https://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2014/07/18/aquatennial-tennis-classic-still-draws-minneapolis.html>



Figure 5.17: Canadian Pacific Plaza, before and during Aquatennial, photo by the business journals

PLACEMAKING

Placemaking is an Urban Design and Planning term that refers to strategies used to improve the quality of public spaces and make them more welcoming. Generally speaking Placemaking is a process to give a space an identity and vibrancy and can take the form of physical improvements and/or programming (activation).

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) defines Placemaking as “a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.” (<https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>)

Collaboration is important to emphasize, as the most successful placemaking efforts involve substantial community engagement. PPS reinforces this by saying that placemaking can improve health, happiness, and well-being when anchored by the community’s vision. In addition, we can measure the success of a placemaking effort by how well used and loved the space is. Success means a welcoming space that is full of people, offers seating and shade, is comfortably lit, conveys a sense of safety, and offers activities.

The Hopkins Center for the Arts (HCA) is a well-established cultural institution at the heart of Mainstreet. At right, an illustration provides suggested methods to activate and enhance the plaza along the primary facade of the HCA. Currently the plaza lacks amenities and shade, and does not encourage visitors to linger. The example design proposes new digital displays or projectors to enliven blank areas of the facade and provide information about upcoming events or theatrical performances. New platforms provide areas for street buskers (outdoor performers) or provide space to display sculpture. Additional bike amenities are provided, as well as increased shade, to provide easy access and comfort. Curb bump-outs at either end of the block increase safety for pedestrians along Mainstreet, and provide a better crossing experience to nearby businesses or attractions.



Figure 5.18: Existing conditions at Mainstreet and Hopkins Center for the Arts

Placemaking at Hopkins Center for the Arts

LEGEND

- ① SCULPTURE PAD/ BUSKING STAGE
- ② PLATFORM SEATING WITH INTEGRATED TREE
- ③ CURVED BENCH
- ④ STORMWATER PAVER TREE TRENCH
- ⑤ MULTI-FUNCTIONAL AUDIO/ VISUAL LIGHT COLUMN
- ⑥ WALL MURAL/ VIDEO PROJECTION SCREEN
- ⑦ PLACEMAKING ART INSPIRED PERGOLA
- ⑧ VERTICAL MARQUEE STYLE SIGN



⑧ Examples of marquee and building signage that could work with the facade

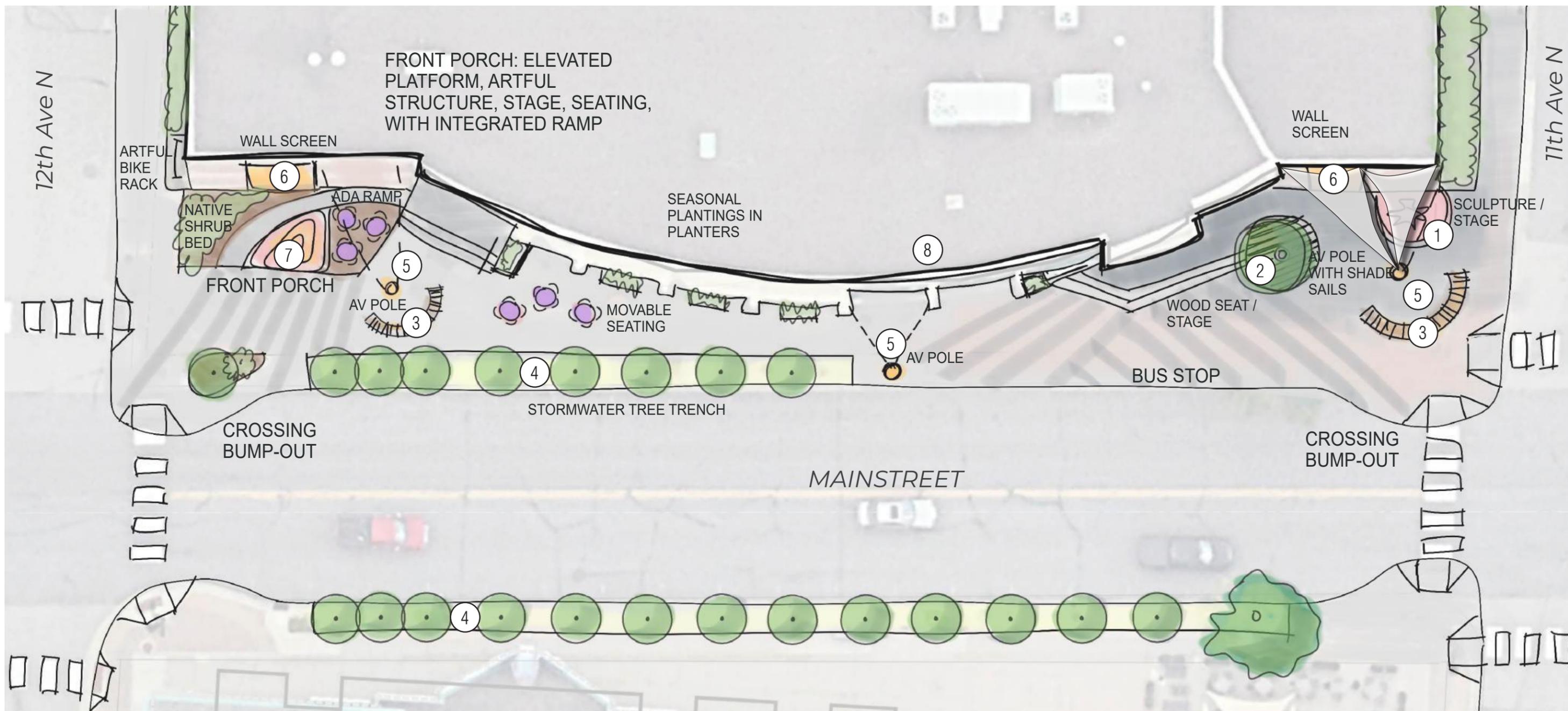


Figure 5.19: Proposed concept at Mainstreet and Hopkins Center for the Arts

KEYNOTE IMAGE REFERENCES

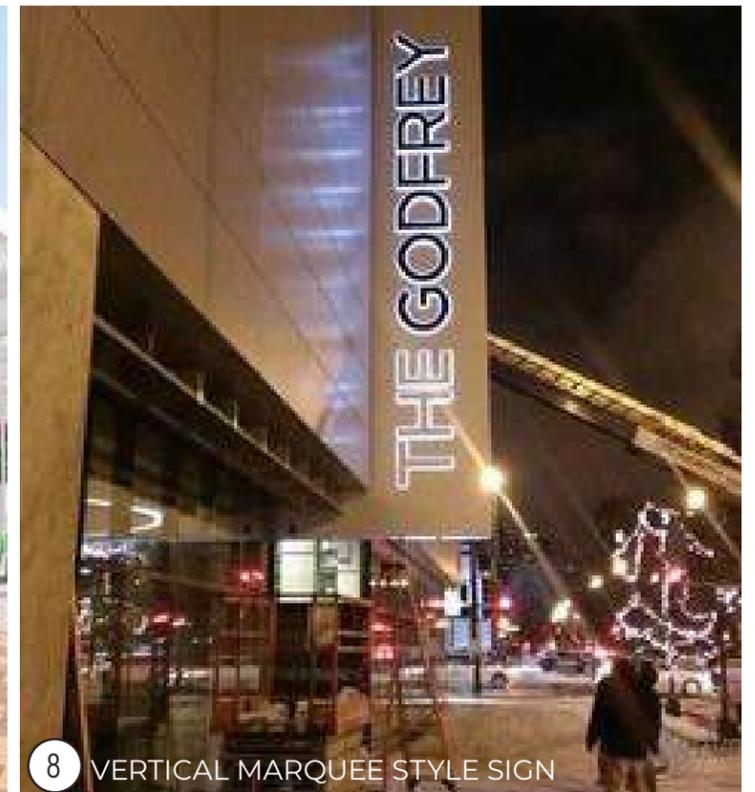
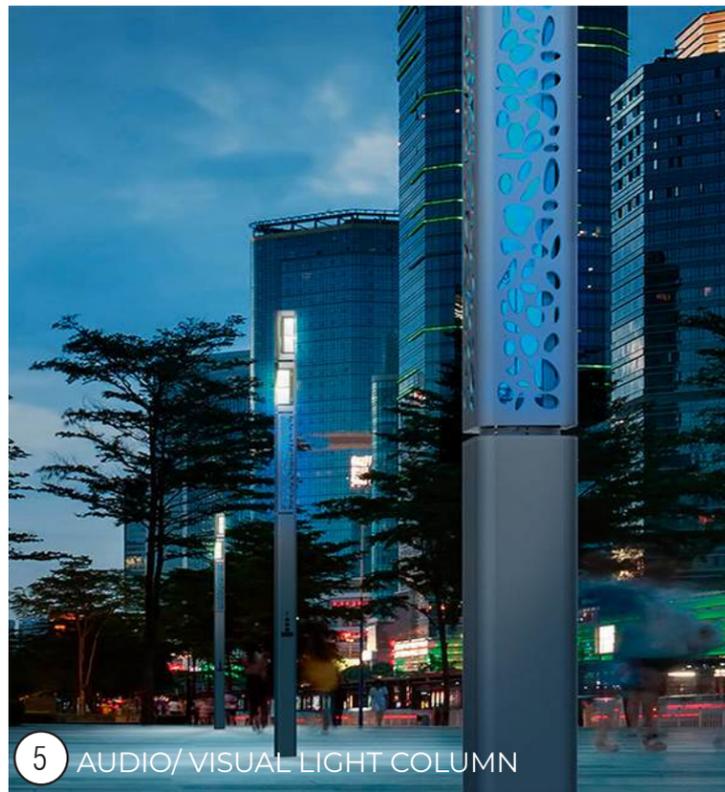
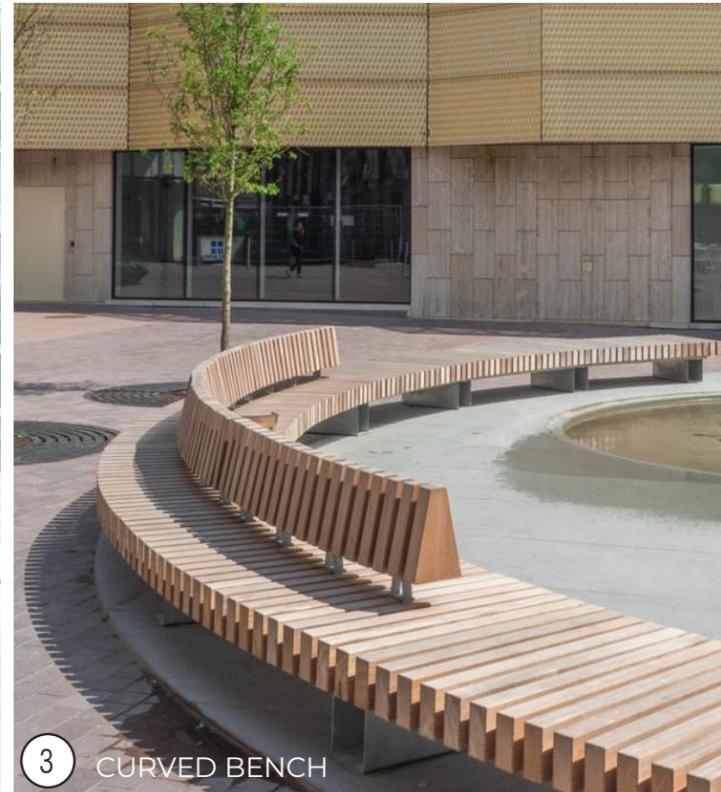


Figure 5.20: Hopkins Center for the Arts image references

AMENITY BALANCE

New or Improved Amenities - icons below indicate where new amenities are proposed to be added or improved in parks with concept plans

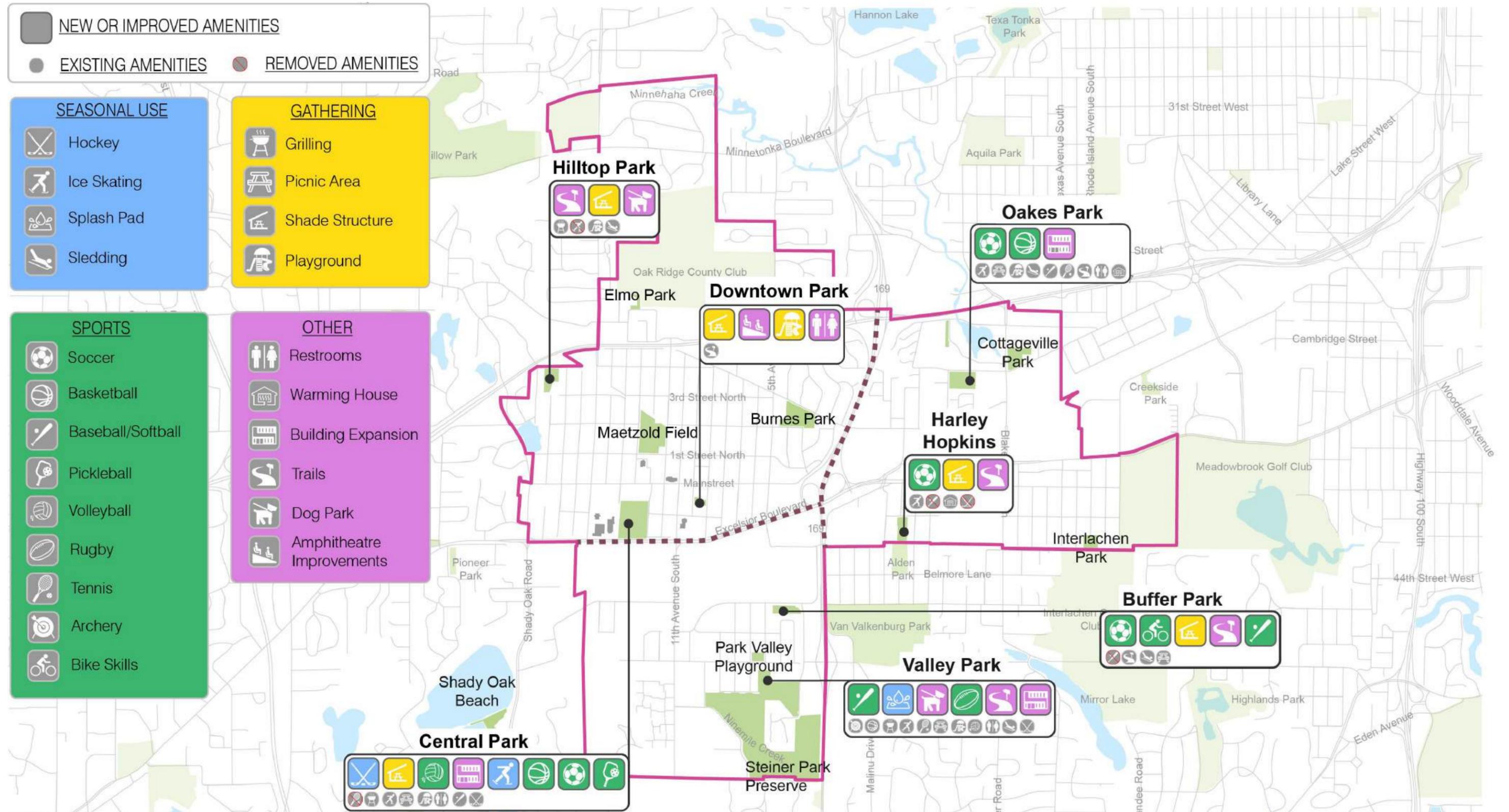


Figure 5.21: Hopkins Park System proposed and existing amenities

Amenities included in Concepts	Location
Building Expansion	Larger building at Valley and Oakes, Pavilion expansion at Central
Shade structure	Hilltop, Downtown, Harley Hopkins, Buffer
Splash pad	Valley
Basketball	Central, Oakes
Pickleball	Central
Volleyball	Central
Rugby	Valley
Dog Park	Hilltop, Valley
Soccer	Central, Oakes, Buffer, Harley Hopkins
Baseball / Softball	Valley, tee-ball at Buffer
Bike Skills	Buffer
Ice Skating	Central
New Playground	Downtown
New Trails	Hilltop, Harley Hopkins, Buffer, Valley
Amphitheater	Downtown

Other Needs Identified	Location	How to incorporate beyond parks
Softball Tournament Complex	no space currently	Leagues continue to rent from neighbors
Soccer Fields, Practice Areas	Central Park, Buffer Park, Oakes Park	
Hockey - Dome or Pavilion Expansion	Central Park	
Permit-able or Rentable Space	Downtown Park, Oakes Park, Valley Park	
Futsal Mini-Pitch	Central Park, Oakes Park	POPS
Increase shade canopy	Should be in all parks	POPS
Gathering areas	Should be in all parks	POPS
Bike racks	Should be in all parks	POPS
Drinking fountain	Should be in most parks	POPS
Seating areas	Should be in all parks	POPS
Accessible walking paths	Should be in all parks	POPS
Restroom (sewer connected or port-a-potty)	Should be in all parks	POPS
Signage and wayfinding	Should be in all parks	POPS
Translations - online and on signs	Should be in all parks	POPS
Update online inventory of facilities	Should be done for all parks	

Figure 5.22: Hopkins Park System amenities table



CHAPTER CONTENTS

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

PARK DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE
STANDARDS

FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

ACTION FRAMEWORK

06 HOW WE GET THERE

AN ACTION FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the recommended improvements in this plan will require significant time and effort. Considering the long-term objectives of this plan, it will be necessary to adapt over time. Economic conditions may change, development patterns may shift, and changes in technology or new recreational trends may reshape needs and priorities. This Action Plan and the recommendations herein are intended to be flexible and offer a guide that can be modified as needed.

Successful implementation of this Park System Plan will adhere to the mission and vision statements of Chapter 04. These statements seek to uplift the entire system and help Hopkins evolve into a city where parks are an essential city service. Acting on this plan will also require identifying new revenue sources to fund incremental improvements for parks across the city. Some structural changes will be required in terms of staffing and maintenance as well, especially as the population grows and parks need more maintenance.

As implementation progresses, the City will remain focused on the key themes and will maintain the commitment to deliver accessible, equitable, creative, and high-quality recreational experiences.

Future success will hinge on Hopkins' ability to raise funds toward these park improvements. We know that parks are an important part of a thriving community and this plan seeks to set goals and create a framework to ensure parks are a vital part of the city moving forward. If done right, parks can be a source of community pride and be a reason to retain families and residents of all ages.

The following pages include guidelines and design standards for parks. The intention of this is to provide resources for future maintenance and a starting point for design objectives to clarify the purpose and differences between park categories. Guidelines may be useful when developing requests for proposals on park redesign for example.

ACTION FRAMEWORK CATEGORIES

The Action Framework is the final element of the Park System Plan and provides a flexible process to transform Hopkins' parks following the vision identified earlier in this document. Eight key categories create the framework for this action plan. These categories address the most significant issues and opportunities identified in the Park System Plan process:

- Parks are Essential
- Basic Park Services
- Flexible Fields and Diamonds
- Courts and Sports
- Play for All
- Skateparks and All-wheel Facilities
- Green Resilience
- Investment in the Future

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Summary

The Operations and Maintenance Review conducted by PROS Consulting in Hopkins aimed to assess how the city maintains its parks and recreation facilities. The city has a unique approach, relying on neighboring Minnetonka for most programming while handling senior programs and kids' summer camps in-house. Maintenance is carried out by Hopkins Public Works with the assistance of one dedicated parks maintenance staff member. During site visits with the Director of Public Works and Parks and Recreation, staff observed several sites that require updated equipment or replacement of worn-out amenities. The growing community of Hopkins needs its parks to attract more families, more visitors and to create a welcoming atmosphere. In order to do this, our analysis underscores the need for refreshing park areas and introducing new amenities for a fresh look.

While parks are well distributed across the city, the park system in Hopkins faces significant challenges. Many amenities are worn and in poor condition due to minimal investments over the years. The City will need to expand funding sources and pursue new ones to update the parks. Only two out of fourteen parks have seen recent updates, leaving most of the inventory old. Additionally, the lack of a deferred maintenance plan and formal standards further worsens the situation. With small new park spaces developed by developers on private land, competition and privatization with Hopkins is increasing. Despite these challenges, the Hopkins Center for the Arts, Activities Center, the Pavilion, and other facilities are well-supported and used. Addressing these issues is crucial to ensure a vibrant and welcoming park system for the growing community in the coming years.

This report identifies several recommendations to improve the park system which are outlined below. Current funding sources should include provisions for both existing and new amenity replacements, while new funding sources should be actively pursued. A schedule must be developed for implementing ADA compliance, improvements, and upgrades. Updated master plans and replacement strategies are needed for certain parks with new amenities. A deferred maintenance plan should be created along with a rating system for amenities. For sustainability, a future access or membership fee for the dog park could generate revenue for maintenance purposes. Evaluating parking lot repairs and acquiring funding sources for them is also crucial. Each new amenity should have a life-cycle schedule in place, and if parkland is added and/or

new amenities are built, more maintenance staff will be required. Implementing these recommendations will help revitalize Hopkins' park system and provide residents with enjoyable and well-maintained recreational spaces.

Level 2 Maintenance Standards are advised and recommended for all parks in Hopkins. The Level 2 Maintenance Standards outline specific guidelines for the upkeep of various park amenities and areas. These standards are designed for parks with moderate to heavy usage, which is typical of most parks, and are outlined in detail in the full Operations and Maintenance section in the appendix. By adhering to these guidelines, Hopkins can ensure the proper upkeep of its park system, its appearance and safety of its park facilities, enhancing their appeal and providing a pleasant experience for visitors.

Recommendations

- Outdoor facilities (tennis courts, pickleball courts, basketball courts, and other outdoor areas) that are open all hours to the public need surfaces re-conditioned, relined and nets replaced
- Other parks may have available areas that could be used for natural spaces / preserves with little or no maintenance
- When new amenities are added to the parks or included in park updates, a life-cycle replacement schedule should be developed for the future to monitor the condition and plan ahead financially for replacement.
- Maintenance needs at City facilities will increase with additional use as the city grows. More staff will be required to meet these needs.
- Additional maintenance staff members will need to be added if more parkland is acquired, a maintenance standards plan is developed, and additional amenities are installed.
- New funding sources should be pursued outside of current resources to support the park system in the future.
- Develop a schedule for implementing ADA compliance, improvements, and upgrades.
- A deferred maintenance plan should be created and include inspection criteria and a rating system for each amenity in the parks.
- In the future, an access or membership fee should be implemented for the dog park. These fees generate revenue that

can be used for maintenance and upkeep of the dog park area

- Parking lot repairs / resurfacing needs to be evaluated and funding sources identified.

Resources for Pollinator Support

Bee City USA: <https://beecityusa.org/>

"Bee City USA affiliates make commitments to conserve native pollinators ... City staff and community members work together to carry out these commitments and make their city a better place for pollinators."

Pollinator Friendly Parks

- Xerxes Society - <https://xerxes.org/publications/guidelines/pollinator-friendly-parks>

"Pollinator-friendly parks are also human-friendly as they support physical and emotional benefits gained from time spent outdoors. They are excellent settings for guided group activities such as nature watching, whether that is for birds, butterflies, dragonflies, or bees. And they allow for quiet contemplation while sitting among flowers and the hum of insect life."

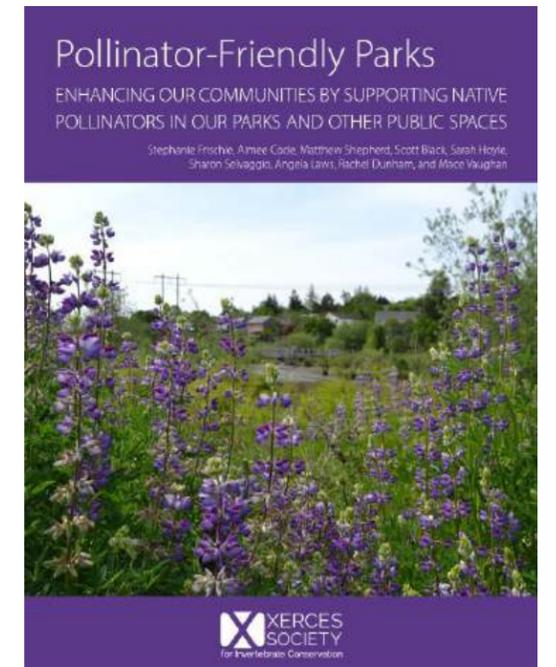


Figure 6.1. Resources for Pollinator Support

PARK DESIGN & MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

Hopkins' parks were grouped and categorized to assist in planning efforts, level of service expectation, as well as future planning efforts (e.g. facilities standards, maintenance needs, etc.). Park classifications, as was laid out in the Needs Assessment, can also be used to help establish a standard for the level of service to the residents and future recommendations on facility development or improvement.

As noted elsewhere, Hopkins is growing and the future added residents will need more open space and park-like amenities. When development scenarios arise, the City should pursue Parkland Dedication and Diversion where feasible, and also follow the ordinance for Privately Owned Public Spaces where dedication or diversion is not possible.

Hopkins should also keep a pulse on opportunities for Golf Course conversion and landfill remediation, as these two categories of redevelopment are most likely to provide new park acreage in the coming years.

Park Design Principles

In developing design principles for parks, each park must be programmed, planned, and designed to meet the needs of its service area and classification within the overall park and recreation system. The term programming, when used in the context of planning and developing parkland, refers to a list of uses and facilities and does not always include staff-managed recreation programs. The program for a site can include such elements as ballfields, spray parks, shelters, restrooms, game courts, trails, natural resource stewardship, open meadows, nature preserves, or interpretive areas. These types of amenities are categorized as lead or support amenities. The needs of the population of the park it is intended to serve should be considered and accommodated at each type of park.

Every park, regardless of type, needs to have an established set of outcomes. Landscape Architects design to those outcomes, including associated operational and maintenance costs. Each park classification category serves a specific purpose, and the features and facilities in the park must be designed for the age groups the park is intended to serve, the desired length of stay, and the uses it has been assigned. Recreation needs and services require different design standards based on the age groups that will be using the park. A varying number of age groups will be accommodated with the park program depending on the classification of the park.

The age groups are:

- Ages 2-5
- Ages 6-8
- Ages 9-12
- Ages 13-17
- Ages 18-24
- Ages 25-34
- Ages 35-44
- Ages 45-54
- Ages 55-64
- Ages 65-75
- Ages 76+

Park re-development should be considered in the context of the entire system and balance facilities and recreation and programming opportunities. Care should be taken with examining barriers to access parks and how that influences the mix of amenities in a particular area of the City. For example, if there are two neighborhood parks that are particularly close to each other, i.e. within a 1/2 mile walk, they should not contain similar facilities targeting the same age segments. A balance of facilities should be explored.

The City should invest in existing parks to serve redevelopment projects if the park is within the 15-minute walk radius without major barriers. All parks should be invested in to serve the larger future population by providing facilities and amenities that will meet the needs of the new residents. A public engagement process should be undertaken with a Licensed Landscape Architect to engage the community and redevelop the parks to accommodate much more intensive uses.

Additionally, trail and sidewalk connections from the surrounding neighborhoods should be prioritized. Park Design Principles in this document should apply to existing and future developments and those needing Master Plans or updated park plans.

Definitions used in the Park Design Principles:

Land Usage: The percentage of space identified for either passive use or active use in a park. A park master plan should follow land usage recommendations.

Programming: Can include active or passive (i.e., none). Active means it is organized and planned with pre-registration by the user. Examples of active programming include sports leagues, day camps, and aquatics. Passive programming is self-directed by the user at their own pace. Examples of passive programming include playground usage, picnicking, Disc Golf, reading, or walking a dog.

Maintenance Standards:

Maintenance Standards: Three maintenance levels are generally defined. The difference between levels is the frequency of maintenance as determined by funding availability. Maintenance Standards have these general characteristics.

Level 1 Maintenance - High profile areas where the entire area is visible to foot traffic such as entrances to community centers, signature facilities, and areas where funding accommodates a higher level of maintenance. Examples of maintenance activities include: Mowing twice per week, 95% turf coverage at the start of season with 5% weeds and no bare areas, edging once per week, tree pruning cycle once annually, and litter pickup twice per week.

Level 2 Maintenance - Moderate to heavy use is typical of most parks. Examples of maintenance requirement include: Mowing and edging once per week, 88% turf coverage at the start of the season with 8% weeds and 4% bare area, tree pruning cycle every seven years, litter pickup once per week.

Level 3 Maintenance - Typical low usage parks or when funding is limited. Examples of maintenance requirements for this level include: Mowing and edging every 10 days, 80% turf coverage at the start of season with 20% weeds, edging once per week or every 2 weeks in off-season,* tree pruning cycle every 10 years, litter pickup every other week.

*In areas where turf does not impact quality of experience (i.e., dog parks) or non-landscaped open space areas, demand-based maintenance is provided according to funding availability.

Figure 6.2. Maintenance standards

Park/Facility Classifications: Includes; Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Special Use Parks/Facilities, and Natural Resource Areas (Preserves).

Revenue Facilities: These include facilities that charge fees to play on them; access fee, player fee, team fee, or permit fee. These could include pools, golf courses, tennis courts, recreation centers, sport field complexes, concession facilities, hospitality centers, reservable shelters, outdoor or indoor theatre space, and special event spaces.

- # = Community Parks
- # = Natural Resource Areas

- # = Special Use Parks

PARKS

- 1 ELMO PARK
- 9 HIAWATHA OAKS
- 2 HILLTOP PARK
- 10 COTTAGEVILLE
- 3 MAETZOLD FIELD
- 11 INTERLACHEN PARK
- 4 CENTRAL PARK
- 12 BUFFER PARK
- 5 DOWNTOWN PARK
- 13 PARK VALLEY
- 6 BURNES PARK
- 14 VALLEY PARK
- 7 HARLEY HOPKINS
- 15 SHADY OAK BEACH
- 8 OAKES PARK
- 16 STEINER PARK RESERVE

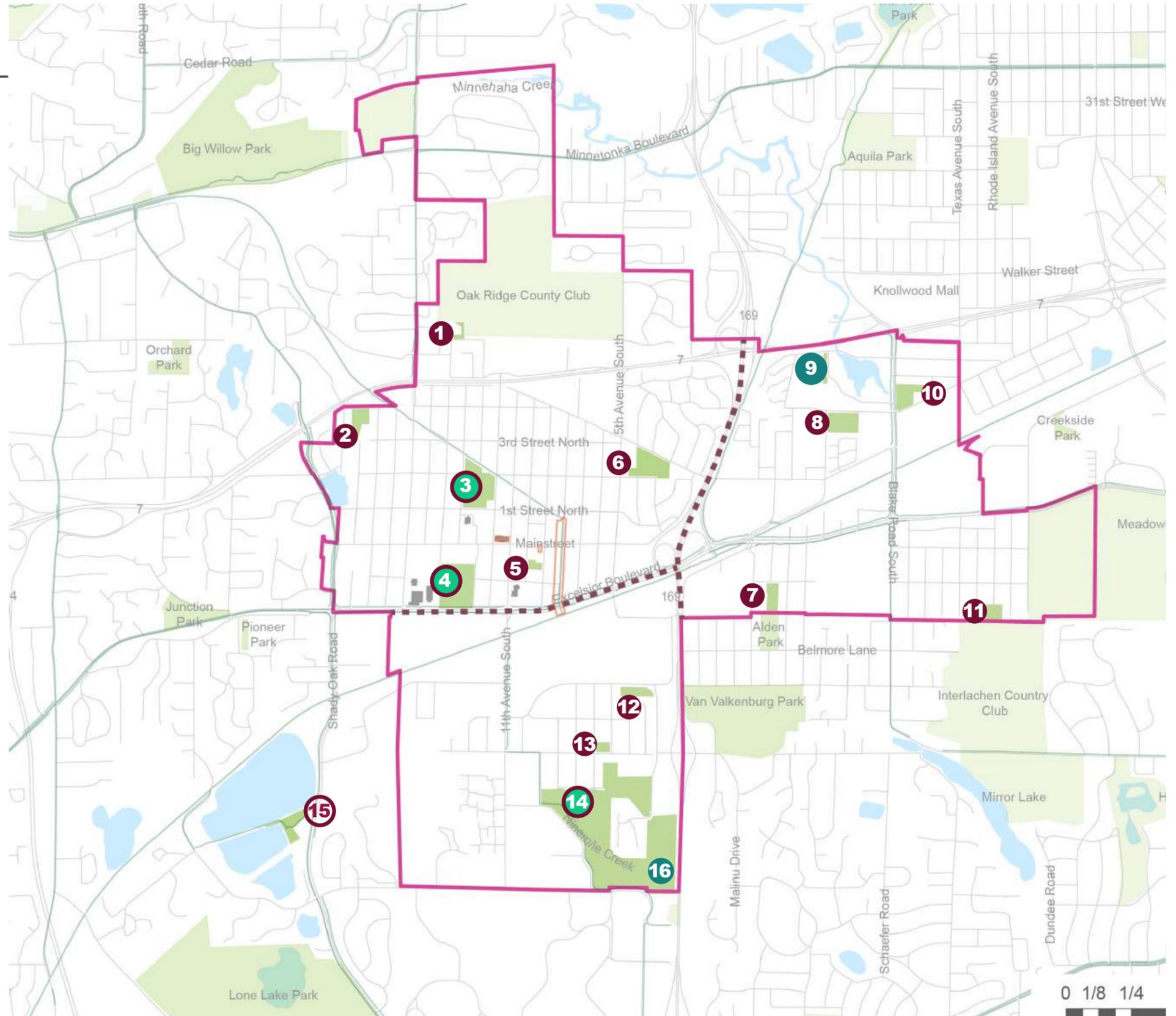


Figure 6.3. Hopkins Park System park type map

Neighborhood Park Standards

Neighborhood Parks serve the recreational and social focus of the adjoining neighborhoods and contribute to a distinct neighborhood identity. They should reflect the residents that live around them as they are the primary users that will visit often. Trail connections and neighborhood parks should be integrated as part of a comprehensive design that are consistent with this master plan, the Bike and Pedestrian Plan (or any updates or subsequent plans), and the Comprehensive Plan.

A neighborhood park should be three to 10 acres; however, some Neighborhood Parks are determined by use and facilities offered and not by size alone. The service radius for a neighborhood park is one half mile or six blocks. Neighborhood Parks should have safe pedestrian access for surrounding residents; parking may or may not be included but if included accounts for less than ten cars and provides for ADA access. See the park concepts for retrofit of a typical neighborhood park that updates activities and facilities.

Typical characteristics of a neighborhood park include:

Size: 3-10 acres (8 preferred)

Service radius: 0.5-mile radius (15 minutes)

Siting preference: local or collector street. Where possible, next to a school or other community gathering center. Encourage location to link neighborhoods and linked by trails and sidewalks to other parks.

Length of stay: One-hour experience or less is typical.

Amenities: One signature amenity (e.g. major playground, splash pad, sport court, gazebo); no restrooms unless necessary for signature amenity; may include one non-programmed sports field; playgrounds for ages 2-5 and 5-12 with some shaded elements; loop trails as possible; one type of sport court or multi-court; no non-producing/unused amenities; benches, small picnic shelters with shade located next to play areas. All amenities are ADA compliant.

Landscape Design: Native plantings/natural areas should equal a minimum 15% of park area and 20-35% typical. This will require converting turf areas to native in non-active use areas. Low maintenance turf could fulfill a part of this requirement. Range of turf conversion percentage will vary by park usage, park design, and overall design.

Land usage: 80 percent active/20 percent passive typical, but will be determined by each park.

Programming: Typically, none, but a signature amenity may be

included which could be programmed.

Maintenance Standards: Provide the highest-level maintenance with available funding. Seek a goal of Level 2 maintenance standards. Some amenities may require Level 1 maintenance.

Parking: Should include widened on-street parking area adjacent to park. Goal is to maximize usable park space. As necessary, provide 5-10 spaces within park including handicap spaces. Traffic calming devices are encouraged next to the park.

Lighting: Security or amenity only. Lighting on dual system with 50 percent of lights off at a set time and 50 percent on all night for security is ideal. Lighting level determined by park uses.

Other: Park designs should also utilize the following guidelines:

- Stormwater: Single-use stormwater facilities (traditional ponds, infiltration basin) should not take up more than 10% of active park space. Multi-functional Green Infrastructure (GI) is encouraged whenever possible. Parks should collaborate with Engineering to integrate GI into parks.
- Customize facilities and uses to demographics of neighborhood through community engagement;
- Safety design meets established Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards;
- Internet: city provided fiber at select parks. Typically at busier facilities or those with buildings or structures.



Figure 6.4. Hilltop Park - neighborhood parks are important for winter recreation



Figure 6.5. Cottageville Park - neighborhood park with native plant gardens

Community Park Standards

Community Parks are intended to be accessible to multiple neighborhoods and should focus on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. Community Parks are generally larger in scale than neighborhood parks, but smaller than regional parks and are designed typically for residents who live within a three-mile radius. When possible, the park may be developed adjacent to a school. Community Parks provide recreational opportunities for the entire family and often contain facilities for specific recreational purposes, such as athletic fields, swimming pool, tennis courts, extreme sports amenity, recreation center, loop trails, picnic areas, reservable picnic shelters, sports courts, permanent restrooms, large turf and landscaped areas and a playground or splash pad. Passive outdoor recreation activities such as meditation, quiet reflection, and wildlife watching also take place at Community Parks.

Community Parks generally range from 20 to 100 acres depending on the City. Community Parks serve a larger area – radius of one to three miles and contain more recreation amenities than a Neighborhood Park.

Typical characteristics of a community park include:

Size: 20 to 60 acres typical. Can be up to 100 acres (usable area measured).

Service radius: One to three-mile radius

Site Selection: On two collector streets minimum and preferably one arterial street. If near arterial street, provide natural or artificial barrier. Minimal number of residences abutting site. Preference is streets on four sides, or three sides with school or municipal use on fourth. Encourage trail linkages to other parks and transit routes.

Length of stay: Two to three hours experience

Amenities: Four signature amenities minimum: (e.g., trails, sports fields, large shelters/ pavilions, community playground for ages 2-5 and 5-12 with some shaded elements, recreation center, pool or family aquatic center, sports courts, water feature); public restrooms, ample parking, and security lighting. Amenities are ADA compliant. Sport Fields and Sport Complexes are typical for this park type (e.g. Maetzold). Loop trails should be typical.

Revenue facilities: One or more (e.g. pool, rentable kitchen, theater, meeting rooms)

Landscape Design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/

use/experience. Enhanced landscaping at park entrances and key areas throughout park. Natural areas desired at 30% min. unless a special use sports facility.

Land usage: 65 percent active and 35 percent passive is typical. Programming: Minimum of four essential program services (e.g. sports, day camps, aquatics) is typical.

Maintenance Standards: Provide the highest-level maintenance with available funding. Seek a goal of Level 2 maintenance standards. Some amenities may require Level 1 maintenance

Parking: Occupies no more than 10 percent of the park for special use facilities or 5% for traditional community parks. Design should include widened on-street parking area adjacent to park. Goal is to maximize usable park space. Traffic calming devices encouraged within and next to the park.

Lighting: Amenity lighting includes sport field light standards. Security lighting on dual system with 50 percent of lights off at a set time and 50 percent on all night for security.

Signage: Directional signage and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience. May include kiosks in high traffic or easily identified areas of the facility.

Other: Strong appeal to surrounding neighborhoods; integrated branding or color scheme throughout the park; partnerships developed with support groups, schools and other organizations; loop trail connectivity; linked to Regional Trail or recreation facility; safety design meets established CPTED standards. Internet should be typical at Community Parks with City-provided fiber.



Figure 6.6. Maetzold Park - community parks have regional facilities



Figure 6.7. Central Park - community parks contain most popular facilities

Special Use Park / Facility Standards

Special Use facilities are those spaces that don't fall within a typical park classification. A major difference between a Special Use facility and other parks is that they usually serve a single purpose whereas other park classifications are designed to offer multiple recreation opportunities. It is possible for a Special Use facility to be located inside another park. Special Use facilities generally fall into four categories:

Historic/Cultural/Social Sites – unique local resources offering historical, educational, and cultural opportunities. Examples include historic downtown areas, commercial zones, plaza parks, performing arts parks, arboretums, display gardens, performing arts facilities, indoor theaters, churches, and amphitheatres. Frequently these are located in Community or larger parks.

Golf Courses: Nine and 18-hole complexes. Oak Ridge and Interlachen Country Clubs are private courses within or immediately adjacent to the City. Meadowbrook is operated by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Indoor Recreation Facilities: Specialized or single purpose facilities. Examples include community centers, senior centers and community theaters. Frequently these are located in Community or adjacent to larger parks. Hopkins Center for the Arts, the Pavilion, and the Hopkins Activities Center are examples

Outdoor Recreation Facilities: Examples include aquatic parks, disk golf, skateboard, bike playgrounds and skills areas, and dog parks, which may be located within a park.

Typical characteristics of a special use park/facility include:

Size of park: Depends upon facilities and activities included. Their diverse character makes it impossible to apply acreage standards.

Service radius: Depends upon facilities and activities included. Typically serves special user groups while a few serve the entire population.

Site Selection: Given the variety of potential uses, no specific standards are defined for site selection. As with all park types, the site itself should be located where it is appropriate for its use.

Length of stay: varies by facility

Amenities: varies by facility

Revenue facilities: Due to nature of certain facilities, revenue may be required for construction and/or annual maintenance. This should be determined at a policy level before the facility is planned and

constructed.

Land usage: varies by facility

Programming: varies by facility

Maintenance Standards: Provide the highest-level maintenance with available funding. Seek a goal of Level 2 maintenance standards. Some amenities (i.e., rose gardens) will require Level 1 maintenance



Figure 6.9. Shady Oak Beach - a special use facility shared by Hopkins and Minnetonka.

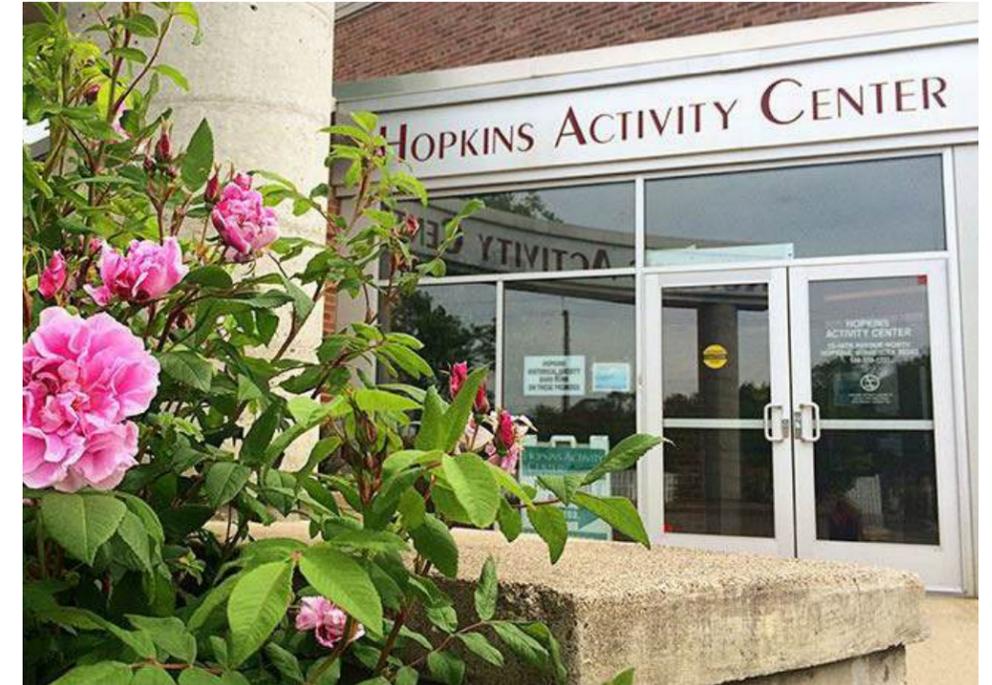


Figure 6.8. Activity Center - facility provides critical infrastructure and programming for seniors.



Figure 6.10. The Pavilion - located within Central Park this facility has become one of Hopkins' premier park buildings.

Natural Resource Area (Preserve) Standards

Natural Resource Areas are parks that prioritize the preservation or conservation of the community's natural or historic character; and/or the conservation or preservation of a land or water area for the sake of recreational, ecological, environmental or aesthetic interests. They are areas of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, boating, camping, and trail uses. These parks will generally include fewer capital improvements than other park types. At least 80% of each park reserve should be managed as wild lands that protect the ecological functions of the native landscape.

Landscape Design: Generally, none. However, the primary objective of Open spaces should be to support natural or native vegetation to increase environmental value and lower maintenance costs. However, natural areas are not maintenance free areas. Their maintenance regimes are different than typical mowing operations. Natural areas take longer to establish than turf grass, but once established will reduce staff input needs and resources.

Typical characteristics of a Natural Resource Area (Preserve) include:

Size: Typically 20 or more acres, but varies by the landscape, habitat, or feature being preserved.

Service Radius: One to three-mile radius

Site Selection: Given the variety of potential uses, no specific standards are defined for site selection. As with all park types, the site itself should be located where it is appropriate for its use.

Length of stay: varies by facility

Amenities: varies by facility

Revenue Facilities: Due to nature of certain facilities, revenue may be required for construction and/or annual maintenance. This should be determined at a policy level before the facility is planned and constructed.

Land Usage: varies by facility

Programming: varies by facility

Maintenance Standards: Provide the highest-level maintenance with available funding. Seek a goal of Level 2 maintenance standards at public facing edges of Natural Resource Areas, however large portions of a preserve will be Level 3.



Figure 6.11. Steiner Park Reserve - natural area contains important water resources (Nine Mile Creek).

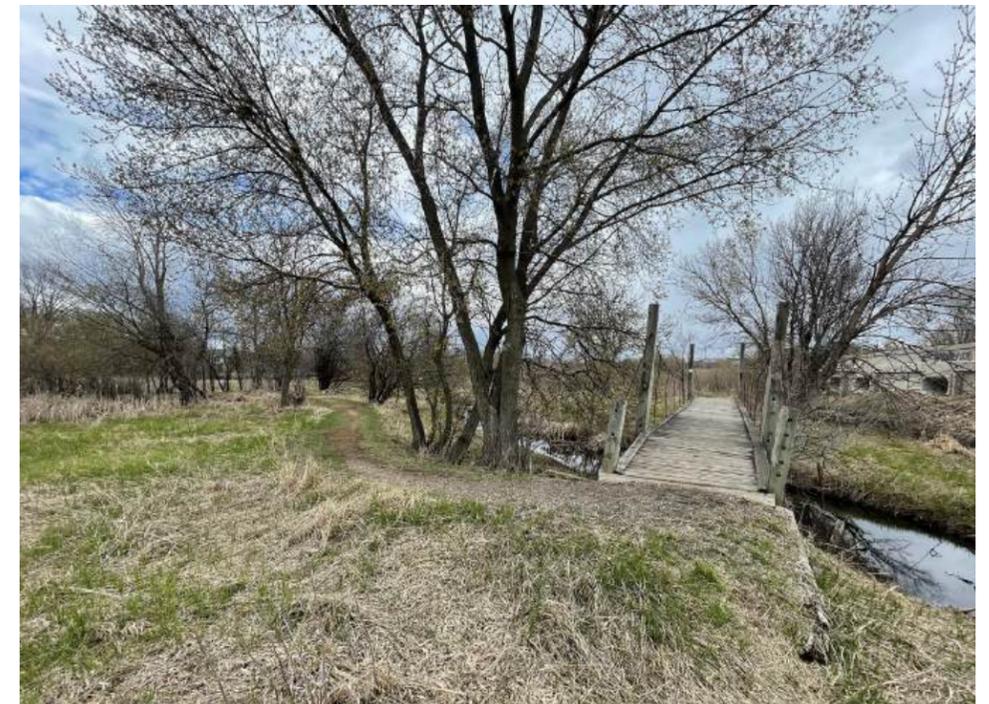


Figure 6.12. Steiner Park Reserve - trail improvements could expand accessibility for more users



FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

This section of the System Plan presents the financial assessment of the Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation Division of the City of Hopkins and the City of Minnetonka, as a part of the strategic plan process. As a key element of the Plan, available data was reviewed to assess the financial situation of the parks division. The revenues, expenditures and capital funds were analyzed to identify trends and assess the Division's financial integrity. Additionally, a review of park maintenance costs is provided.

Detailed cost and activity information was prepared by Division staff. Following is a list of the cost and activity data reviewed for the analysis:

- Adopted Budget for 2023
- Staff prepared revenues and expenditures for fiscal years 2021 and 2022
- Park maintenance cost provided by staff.

Operating Revenues and Expenditures

The cost of the joint recreation program is shared by Minnetonka (67%) and the City of Hopkins (33%). Revenues, expenditures, transfers, and cost recovery for the Fiscal Years ending 2020-2023 were calculated and compared. The cost recovery for 2021 and 2022 are 61.20% and 63.35% respectively. An average cost recovery of 60% is typical for similar types of operation.

A significant portion of Hopkins' parks budget goes to recreational programs. Cost recovery for recreational programs and sports leagues is better than typical. PROS analysis suggests that more of the budget (2 to 5%) should go to maintenance and capital improvements.

The distribution of expenditures is in line with other recreation operations budgets. However, there was a lack of capital expenditures identified. Recurring capital expenditures to support operations of 2% to 5% are normal for recreation agencies. The estimated investment per participant is \$22.36 and \$24.13 in the years 2022 and 2023.

Program Cost Recovery

The cost recovery for selected major programs was calculated and the highlights are summarized below:

- Shady Oaks Beach: demonstrates a strong cost recovery for beach operations. Cost recovery was 68.64% in 2022.
- Adult Sports recovered 140% and 158% of the program cost in 2021 and 2022. Typical cost recovery for Adult Sports is 80% to 100%.
- Youth Sports recovers 335% and 273% of the program costs in 2021 and 2022. Typical cost recovery for Youth Sports is 60% to 80%. The additional revenues may cover a portion of the Youth field maintenance.
- Parks and Forestry maintenance expenditures for Fiscal Year ending 2021 are low compared to similar agencies. The Park and Landscape Maintenance expenditures were \$838,000. This equates to \$45 per capita. Expenditures for similar agencies are typically \$100 per capita. The Park and Landscape Maintenance appears to be low considering the Division is serving 19 parks including 104 acres.
- The Forestry operations is responsible for all City trees including trees along 55 miles of boulevards. If one mile of boulevard equals 1 acre of land, then the boulevards equal 55 acres. The 104 acres of parks and 55 acres of boulevard equal 159 acres of trees to maintain. The Division is spending approximately \$2,500 per acre of land for forestry maintenance. This amount appears to be low considering the area served. Forestry operations should review the maintenance standards and consider the appropriate resource needs to maintain the forestry inventory.

IMPLEMENTATION: ACTION FRAMEWORK

Implementing a Park System Plan is a new endeavor for Hopkins. This chapter will provide a practical tool for city staff to guide the park system's future development, redevelopment, maintenance and recreation efforts. The following framework plan outlines key improvement areas that guide and inform more detailed Park System improvements.

The following Action Framework consists of actions in eight categories. The goal of this section is to provide a framework that outlines strategies to re-imagine and upgrade the park system in Hopkins to meet the evolving needs of the changing city. As implementation and city growth unfold, the City will assess and monitor these actions with an emphasis on adequate staffing, financing, and equitable resource allocation.

Hopkins recognizes the long planning horizon of the Park System Master Plan (PSMP) may require modifications to specific recommendations as conditions change. Shifts in development patterns, redevelopment, demographic changes, technology, or recreational interests can reshape needs and priorities, warranting new implementation approaches. The overall System Plan and this Action Framework are living documents that guide but do not prescribe. The framework is expected to be modified in the future. Implementation flexibility enables the City to adjust, refine, and improve strategies to deliver accessible, equitable, innovative, and high-quality recreational experiences.

The Action Framework supports all of the Key Themes of the Park System Plan identified in Chapter 4. However, each category of the Action Framework directly supports some Key Themes more than others. Those Key Themes support more directly are identified with the iconography below:



Racial Equity

Park facilities and programs are high quality and culturally relevant for BIPOC residents.



Park Accessibility

Reduce barriers to park amenities for all park users and mobility levels.



Gathering & Community Building

Build community with neighborhood and city-wide gathering facilities.



Parks for All

Provide opportunities for passive and active recreation that suit a broad range of users.



Focus on Quality

Revitalize existing fields, facilities, courts, and playgrounds.

Action Framework Key

Timeline		Resource Intensity	
0-5 years		Low	
5-15 years		Medium	
15-20+ years		High	



PARKS ARE ESSENTIAL

Parks are critical to a community’s overall quality of life. They provide numerous economic, environmental, and social benefits that directly contribute to the community. Parks significantly contribute to a community’s image and reputation, and are a key area that welcomes visitors to the city. Parks and trails need to be considered an essential city service – like roads and utilities. They provide that much value to the city but are often not tracked in a similar fashion. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has cataloged significant work and research on this topic and how parks positively impact property values, commercial and office business success, and overall improvement to the city’s tax base.

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
Parks are Essential	1. Elevate maintenance of existing parks	1. Develop formal maintenance standards to increase efficiency and effectiveness.		\$\$\$	Led by operations staff
		2. Continue following the deferred maintenance plan to address aged, outdated, and expired equipment as part of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process. The CIP should include existing and future equipment.		\$\$\$	
		3. Improve record keeping and tracking of equipment in the City’s digital records system, Cartegraph: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the existing park amenity inventory and bring it into Cartegraph. Include inspection criteria and a rating system for each amenity in the park which can be integrated with Cartegraph. 		\$	Consider intern/ entry level staff for bulk of field work
		4. Develop a schedule for implementing ADA Compliance, improvements, and upgrades as a part of the CIP.		\$	Refer to recently complete Evaluation for Accessibility
		5. Adjust maintenance staffing as park traffic increases due to projected population growth.			Ongoing as population grows
		6. Outdoor facilities (tennis courts, pickleball courts, and other outdoor areas) that are open all hours to the public need surfaces re-conditioned, lines re-painted and nets replaced in accordance with the CIP.			
	2. Reinvest in parks	1. Increase funding for planning and capital projects;		\$\$\$	
		2. Develop community-driven individual park master plans to plan for improvements that meet resident needs.		\$	
		3. Monitor recreation trends and continue engaging the community to meet their needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use surveys, online, and in-park feedback opportunities to connect with the public. 		\$	Ongoing with annual surveys, suggestion boxes, etc.
		4. New funding sources should be pursued outside of current resources to support the park system in the future (See Appendix for full list of potential sources): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider access, impact, or membership fees for specialized amenities like the dog park for continued upkeep. Leverage private investment through POPS Consider incorporating food and beverage into key park spaces for additional revenue. Utilize local options sales tax and property tax support for larger-scale parks and overhaul projects. Explore related grant opportunities at the State, County, and through private foundations. Pursue Special Legislation related to Park Dedication funding to provide more funding from private development 		\$	Work with Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation Services.

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
Parks are Essential	3. Programming to match community demographics	1. Continue to engage with residents and priority populations to understand changing recreation needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide input to Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation Services for program refinement. • Consider developing programs to fill gaps identified through surveys. • Collect post-program feedback for Senior and Art-based programs to improve and modify when needed. 		\$ ○ ○	Continue to connect with Priority Populations
		2. Continue to leverage existing and past partners to explore new opportunities to expand program offerings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) for environmental education and nature programming. • Athletic Associations for league play and instructional camps. • Continue engaging in TRPD's Parks to People program to identify infrastructure and programming . 		\$ ○ ○	TRPD Parks to People program completion expected summer 2024
		3. Continue to evaluate and refine pricing strategies to remove cost barriers to programming.		\$ ○ ○	

Figure 6.13. Park are essential

Timeline Key		Resource Intensity Key	
0-5 years		Low	\$ ○ ○
5-15 years		Medium	\$ \$ ○
15-20+ years		High	\$ \$ \$

BASIC PARK SERVICES

Parks should serve all residents, regardless of their income, race, geographic location in the city, and mobility level. Nature and recreation facilities provide significant physical and mental health benefits that are only realized with access. This plan’s primary focus is to evolve the parks into a reflection of the surrounding community by planning for how to provide activities and facilities that residents desire. Providing access to those improvements is equally critical.

Access is one of the most basic elements of successful parks. Additional elements are listed below that should be integrated into all neighborhood and community parks as soon as practicable. These elements are important to help users make the most of their visit and park experience. They serve basic needs, improve comfort, and support all users enjoying the parks to their fullest potential. Most of these basic park services are simple, low-cost strategies and approaches that provide significant benefit to the city’s residents. These basic park services and recommendations for improvement include

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
Basic Park Services	1. Improve circulation and access.	1. Prioritize accessibility with park improvements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Accessibility Evaluation Report. Develop raised garden beds at Valley and Cottageville Parks and any new community garden beds. Develop an accessible trail and shooting station at Steiner Park Reserve Archery Range. 			
		2. Provide internal loop trails where feasible in neighborhood and community parks. Trail loops are an inexpensive facility appealing to seniors, families, and a majority of park users. They create a distinct, low-impact activity.			Include in park redevelopment and planning
		3. Provide benches at key intervals along trail loops in community parks. Locate in association with shade. Prioritize areas that are frequently used by aging populations.			Sponsorship opportunity
		4. Provide accessible parking spots where feasible - including on-street parking. Prioritize parks with popular facilities that people drive to. Because of transportation barriers dividing Hopkins, lower mobility populations are likely to arrive via automobile.			Collaborate with Streets Dept. as street projects occur
		5. Improve access to parks through trail and sidewalk improvements. Prioritize the following to stitch the city together with bike and pedestrian infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connections to future Light Rail Transit stops and station areas. Enhance crosswalks and pedestrian safety at arterial roadways. Develop a comprehensive parks and trails wayfinding and branding package that is recognizable, functional, and graphically simple to minimize need for multiple translations. 			Integration with Planning and Street Departments required.
	2. Establish essential amenities	1. Provide drinking fountains where feasible. Include in all Community Parks and high-volume neighborhood parks. Conduct regular maintenance and replacement so fountains are reliable.			
		2. Provide sufficient recycling and waste receptacles in all parks based on user traffic. Leave a portion of receptacles out year-round. Maintain regularly to ensure parks appear well tended and cared for. Clearly distinguish between trash and recycling. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide community education on recycling to reduce contamination and make recycling viable. 			
		3. Increase shade options in community and neighborhood parks. Focus on popular amenities, (e.g. playgrounds, courts, etc.) trail intersections, and seating locations .			Donation, memorial, or sponsorship opportunities
		4. Maintain and increase healthy canopy cover throughout the City.			Diversify canopy

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
Basic Park Services	3. Welcome all cultures and users	1. When redeveloping parks, provide restrooms with running water at all community parks and popular neighborhood parks. Running water and sanitary restroom facilities provides an inclusive space for several religious and cultural groups, as well as families with young children and active seniors.		\$\$\$	
		2. Provide gathering areas at all parks where feasible to accommodate larger family/ group gatherings that are important to many BIPOC community members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include picnic tables and shade structures to accommodate large groups. • Provide grill and waste receptacles near gathering facilities. 		\$	
		1. Integrate translation materials for key park communications including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park signage with major rules, hours, emergency contact information. Communicate with icons and graphics where practical. • Online park resources, amenity locations, etc. • Online programming and registration instructions. 		\$	
	4. Provide structure for dog owners	1. Develop off-leash facilities distributed strategically.		\$\$\$	
		2. Consider providing dog waste stations along high traffic trails to supplement stations provided by Three Rivers Parks District, and include educational signage regarding dog waste and leash laws.		\$	
		3. Include human elements at dog parks to encourage socializing including shade, benches, and drinking fountains (for people).		\$\$	Dog parks are just as much social spaces for humans
		4. Provide a safe and reliable source of water for dogs at off-leash facilities and popular trail intersections.		\$\$	
		5. Consider working with partner organizations such as Three Rivers Park District and City of Minnetonka on finding locations for dog access.		\$\$	
	5. Enhance winter recreation opportunities	1. Evaluate the number of ice rinks in the city and consider reducing quantity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine location, number of users, quality of ice at each location, and cost for rink set up and maintenance. • Focus on ice quality over number of rinks in the city. Covered facilities maintain ice quality better. • Focus on quality experiences at ice rinks with adequate warming, parking, staffing, maintenance, etc. 		\$	City has already started this informally. Communication with public on usage and costs is critical when removing rinks
		2. Provide low-cost sleds for use at Oakes Park to eliminate barriers.		\$	Store in park building and leave out during weekends
3. Work with partners to expand programs around introductory classes on cross country skiing, snowshoeing, fat tire biking, kick sledding, broomball, ice fishing, winter camping, etc.			\$	TRPD Parks to People program	
4. Create winter destination hubs and events to promote gathering. Include food, drink, activities, creative lighting, art.			\$\$	Central Park is natural location - generate	

Figure 6.14. Basic park services

FLEXIBLE FIELDS AND DIAMONDS



According to athletic leagues, field and diamond space are at a premium in Hopkins' parks. The Level of Service shows that Hopkins is underserved in rectangular field availability. Additionally, high- usage pressure and low- quality of some facilities puts further stress on the overall system. The Level of Service highlights adequate to overserved diamond facilities. However, some existing diamonds are not adequate for competitive practice and would need to be upgraded with larger infields.

Multipurpose fields in the city are typically of a moderate quality level or lower. Usable fields are programmed by Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation Services and other associations for practices and games. A few fields are permanently or seasonally unusable due to significant uneven surfacing, size limitations, and/ or drainage issues. Fields that are poorly drained, un-irrigated, or lack turf grass cover are often not usable early in the spring, after rainfall and storms, following droughts, and after frequent play creates dead spots in high traffic areas. Addressing the quality of poor fields in Hopkins will help address the lack of field space by providing reliable options. Extending playable hours with lighting, artificial turf, and a covered facility will provide greater options for addressing the lack of quality fields. Lighting can extend play and programming opportunities for fields in the spring and fall when sunsets are earlier in the evening. Covered fields can be used in most weather conditions and provide the most reliable opportunities for scheduling games and practices.

Higher quality fields can support higher intensity, heavier use, and less down time. The city gets complaints about current field conditions regularly and this is a deterrent to use and a potential loss of revenue. Athletic leagues and tournaments are revenue sources and investing in courts and fields can improve and solidify this funding source. Because field space is limited in the city, Hopkins should maximize the usage and programming of existing fields and diamonds with the following strategies:

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
Flexible Fields and Diamonds	1. Balance diamonds and rectangular multi-use fields	1. Transition underutilized, poor quality, or undersized ball diamonds to flexible rectangular fields. This process has already occurred in parks throughout the system. Maintenance is typically lower for parks staff with rectangular fields compared to aggregate diamonds.		💰 💰 ○	City has already completed some of this work
		2. Evaluate opportunities to integrate higher quality practice diamond facilities and smaller sized diamonds into park areas (see concept plans). No existing parks in Hopkins can accommodate a full 4 wheel of softball fields without compromising other sports or amenities.		💰 💰 ○	See Buffer Park Concept Plan
		3. Integrate additional multi-purpose fields and diamonds in parks that can accommodate size needs and field quality improvements. The following is shown in concept plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One upgraded field at Valley is planned; two softball fields can fit but that would compromise Rugby and football. Buffer Park has an infield for Tee Ball, and this could be set up as an all-aggregate infield for softball practice. Harley Hopkins could be re-considered to keep one or two softball fields, but Level of Service showed a need for more Soccer and Football (rectangular) fields, and more multi-use fields in general. The level of service guidelines was followed, and the consultant placed Soccer at Harley Hopkins because it is one of the few places it can fit. 		💰 💰 ○	
	2. Improve field quality and increase use of fields	1. Develop an outdoor artificial turf field, or sand-based irrigated turf field, that can be used more frequently and intensely throughout the year. Maetzold is a candidate as lighting already exists.		💰 💰 💰	Significant investment. Look for potential partners.
		2. Provide lighting to existing higher quality diamonds and rectangular fields to extend the usable hours and allow more programming		💰 💰 ○	
		3. Improve existing drainage issues to maximize the programming of existing facilities, minimize weather impacts, and allow field usage to start earlier in the spring.		💰 💰 ○	Address as parks are refurbished

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
	2. Improve field quality and increase use of fields	1. Evaluate how the a Pavilion expansion could supplement fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future additional indoor space in the expanded Pavilion could accommodate indoor softball practices (City will need a design and floor plan before determining how many fields) If full expansion is not feasible, explore an outdoor, covered facility at Central Park that could be programmed all year. 			Significant investment. Search for partners. Facility should address other recreation and gathering needs beyond field space and ice time

Figure 6.15. Flexible fields and diamonds

Timeline Key		Resource Intensity Key	
0-5 years		Low	
5-15 years		Medium	
15-20+ years		High	

COURTS AND SPORTS

Community courts receive heavy use in most parks. Successful facilities become gathering areas for groups, neighbors, and visitors from outside the city. Basketball is one of the most popular park activities in the country, across most demographic groups including race and income. It is a popular activity that appeals to teenagers and young adults, who are consistently a difficult group to program for in parks. It is inexpensive to play with a low entry cost, easy to learn rules and techniques, and a flexible team and individual formats for play. Ensuring equity in the system requires that these amenities are distributed throughout the city and in good condition. These facilities contain concrete, bituminous, or specialized rubber surfacing and are often more expensive and require more maintenance than other park elements. Construction, design, replacement scheduling, and distribution of these facilities throughout the city is important to maximize the cost benefit and service value. The following facilities and recommendations are important to address in Hopkins.

Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in the country and Minnesota. It is becoming more appealing to younger users. Hopkins should build on the quality courts it currently has to support the growing population and demographic shift occurring in the city. Tennis courts were popular when the parks were initially developed. Tennis has ceded in popularity to pickleball in recent years. However, tennis has seen a growing trend in the Metro Region with programs focused on teaching to traditionally underserved populations. The City should be mindful when removing tennis courts or converting to pickleball specific facilities. Staff have received comments and complaints on the low quality of court conditions. Courts in poor condition are a direct deterrent to play and can become a safety issue if deterioration advances.

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
Courts and Sports	1. Enhance basketball in Hopkins	1. Hopkins has a fair distribution of basketball court and half-court facilities. Parks should have full-court basketball where feasible and requested by the community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community parks should have full court facilities. Most neighborhood parks should have a minimum half court Coordinate with school facilities containing full court facilities. 			Consider court/ facility at Oakes Park.
		2. Courts should be added with adjustable hoops for smaller kids and beginners. Hoops should be located with ease of access and surveillance for maintenance staff.			
		3. Locate basketball courts near adjacent streets or parking lots to encourage natural surveillance from adults, staff, and safety officers.			
		4. Add lights to courts where feasible in highly visible areas to extend play hours in the fall and spring. Include timers with automatic shutoffs to conserve energy and limit play in evenings.			
		5. Combine basketball with adjacent skate plazas or overlapping event hardscape to maximize programming.			
		6. Provide a Bankshot court in the city for accessibility and to serve younger children.			Community park location
2. Balance Pickleball and Tennis Courts	1. Increase pickleball opportunities in Hopkins through new facilities or partnerships with school districts and associations.				
	2. Consider expanding the number of pickleball courts at Central Park to encourage leagues, tournaments, and attract a consistent population.				
	3. Maintain and improve surfacing of multi-striped courts at Oakes and Burnes Park.				
	4. Promote pickleball and/ or tennis court construction as an allowable facility under the POPS program.			Noise evaluation should be considered near residential	

Figure 6.16. Courts and sports

PLAY FOR ALL

Playgrounds are the heart of neighborhood and community parks. They are the places where families gather, meet, and grow as neighbors. Playgrounds provide developing children a safe structure to grow physically, mentally, and socially. They have arguably become more important as opportunities for free play have diminished, and concerns about safety have increased in society. Playgrounds provide a space for children to play in an environment that caretakers accept as being safe. Historically playgrounds have been homogenous and similar, with traditional equipment and play structures primarily differing with color. Hopkins currently hosts a number of these facilities that provide basic play amenities. However, playground design and experiences have drastically improved and diversified within the last few decades and provide a variety of opportunities for creative play. The City of Hopkins should embrace this and diversify their play experiences throughout the city as facilities are replaced. Key recommendations for playgrounds for below.

Water features are an important play and recreation feature during Minnesota summers. Swimming is also an important life and safety skill. For households without air conditioning, aquatics becomes an equity issue during summer heat waves. Splash pads and aquatics facilities have higher initial costs and maintenance requirements. The distribution of these facilities should focus on balancing the higher capital and operational costs with the equity and recreation opportunities where they are needed most. Hopkins is adequately served with aquatics facilities with Shady Oak Beach and the splash pad at Burnes Park. The Burnes Park facility serves the neighborhoods north of Excelsior Boulevard and West of 169. The consultant recommendation is to provide an additional public splash pad to serve residents in the southern portion of the city without having to cross major arterial streets and freeways. This would provide less-mobile residents with safe and equitable access to aquatic features. Primary opportunities for expanding access to water in Hopkins include below:

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
Play for All	1. Continue making playgrounds accessible	1. Implement the recently completed Accessibility Evaluation.			
		2. Develop at least one fully inclusive playground within the city. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access to restrooms and parking should be a primary factor in selection – Central and Valley Parks are ideal candidates. 			Inclusive playgrounds quickly become the most popular with all users - a destination for all
		3. Balance poured-in-place rubber surfacing and/ or artificial turf surfacing with wood mulch to make playgrounds more accessible and desirable for all mobility levels.			
		4. Prioritize shade and seating at all playgrounds to accommodate caregivers.			Retrofit into existing parks
	2. Diversify play offerings throughout the city	1. Select 2-3 vendors to work with that provide high quality, creative approaches to play that can maximize different budget needs			
		2. Utilize community engagement and input to identify the type, style, theme, and amenities the neighborhood wants.			Specific park planning engagement
		3. Consider ways to provide more nature-based play within the park system.			
	3. Develop a signature playground that attracts regional visitors and becomes a source of city pride	1. Locate in Central Park (see concept designs). Availability of parking, restroom infrastructure, proximity to Mainstreet businesses, and access to public transit and arterial streets are factors for success at Central Park.			Could be partially or fully inclusive per 1.2 above
	4. Provide a new splash pad or water feature	1. Explore potential locations west of Highway 169 and south of Excelsior Boulevard. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An interactive water play feature is shown in the concept designs at Valley Park. 			Geographic area needs water feature
	5. List interactive water features as a recommended amenity in future POPS	1. Operations and maintenance by a private owner will place less burden on the city.			

Figure 6.17. Play for all

SKATEPARKS AND ALL-WHEEL FACILITIES

An emerging play feature that has gained popularity in the Metro are bike parks, skateboard parks, and features that can be utilized by a variety of wheeled vehicles including bikes, skateboards, scooters, rollerblades, etc. These facilities are typically paved to accommodate different wheel sizes. They allow recreational riding in a safe environment that improves the ability of those using the facility. Users become better bike riders, skateboarders, rollerbladers, etc. These users create a safer environment on the city's trails and streets because of their improved skill. The all-wheel facilities are more engaging and interesting to older kids, teens, and young adults, and can accommodate improved abilities as skills advance. Hopkins should develop these facilities to diversify the play experience and complement the existing network of regional trails that cross through the city. Skate parks and All-Wheel Facilities provide healthy recreation options for kids and adults that may not participate in traditional sports. These facilities are an important gathering place for socialization, in addition to active recreation. Opportunities within Hopkins found below.

Natural surface trails are another opportunity to integrate a cost effective facility to diversity recreation opportunities. Bike focused natural surface trail facilities like bike parks and bike playgrounds are increasingly popular and can be integrated into a variety of settings. These features are a subset of all-wheel facilities that focus on mountain biking. Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing high school sports in Minnesota and facilities are being developed throughout the state and metro. While Hopkins' parks generally do not have the acreage available for a traditional single track mountain bike trail, bike parks and playgrounds can complement the trails at Lone Lake Park in Minnetonka.

Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
1. Establish a publicly-accessible skateboard focused skate park	1. Facility should be designed and built by specialized professionals to maximize its usability.			
	2. Locate facility in an area visible and accessible to staff, safety officers, and residents to increase visibility that may deter undesirable activity.			
	3. The Depot site could be considered as a location for a skateboard-focused facility as it meets many factors stated above. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A vision should be developed for the site led by community engagement and builds on the synergy and missions of Hopkins, Minnetonka, Three Rivers Park District, and The Depot Coffee House. 			A major recreation facility currently missing in Hopkins
2. Integrate all-wheel facility Hopkins	1. Paved facility with berming and features intended for a range of skill levels but focused on beginner riders and kids learning to develop their bike, skateboard, and/ or scooter skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate near parking areas, trails, and areas visible from the street. Features are a popular recreation trend currently. 			See concept designs for integration into parks - Buffer Park
3. Include bike-optimized natural surface trails	1. The Hopkins Landfill site provides an opportunity for a specialized downhill facility that focuses on rollers, berms, jumps, and drops. Features should allow skill progression from beginner to expert for a range of users.			

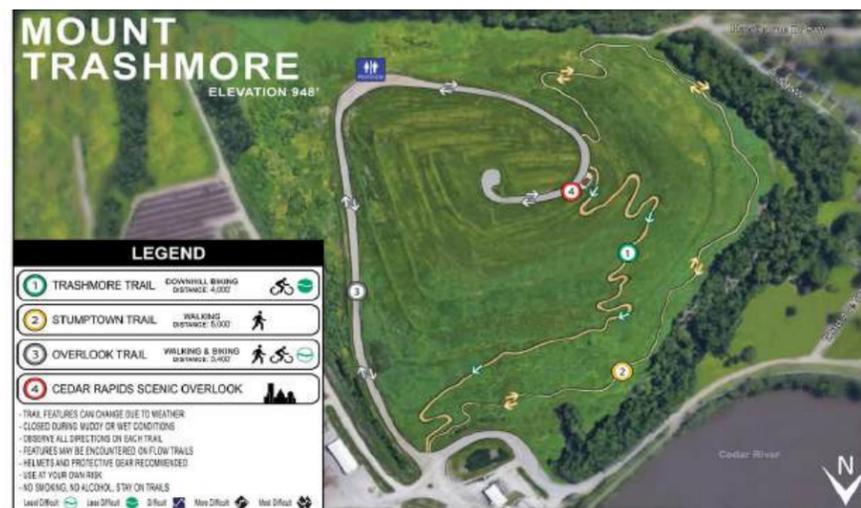


Figure 6.18. Skateparks and all-wheel facilities

GREEN RESILIENCE

Parks are a source of health for Hopkins due to the ecosystem services they provide. Urban cooling, flood control, water and air quality improvement, carbon capture and sequestration, wildlife habitat and biodiversity preservation, and numerous psychological and spiritual benefits for humans. Hopkins' Park System can be a leader in implementing sustainable strategies that help neighborhoods become more sustainable. The following strategies will help the park system be more resilient to the challenges of climate change.

Natural resources and vegetation management are a significant component of sustainability and resiliency. There are several other aspects of sustainability that Parks directly affect and should be addressed as the park system transforms. Park buildings are significant energy users. This energy use currently has a large impact on operating expenses and contributions to carbon and greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. Existing buildings should be audited, and new buildings should be constructed with sustainability and energy efficiency as a priority. Facilities can have a large impervious surface footprint that contributes to water quality and quantity issues. Turf grass maintenance with mowers has considerable impact on air quality and carbon emissions. Material choices in parks facilities can contribute to pollution by using unsustainable or toxic materials or production processes. Irrigation and aquatics require significant water resource consumption. Fertilizers and pesticides pollute waterways and harm beneficial insects.

The following recommendations are intended to enhance and complement the recently completed Hopkins Heat Vulnerability Study.

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
Green Resilience	1. Improve tree canopy and park vegetation	1. Commission city-wide tree canopy analysis and recommendations – focusing on climate change resiliency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing forest diversity and utilizing species more adaptable to climate change will make parks more resilient over time and reduce maintenance costs 		\$\$\$	Confirm if city has a similar plan already. Consider updating
		2. Diversify tree canopies in parks with adaptive species resilient to climate change. Create micro ecosystems within parks to battle urban heat island and improve air quality.		\$\$\$	
		3. Increase canopy cover in all parks and streets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use park concept designs as guidance for canopy locations and open space zones. Utilize an 'Adopt a Tree' program and/ or volunteer planting events to develop community ownership. Include local breweries in programs exchanging tree care for free beer. (Minneapolis Example). 		\$\$\$	Minneapolis example: https://www.brewingabetterforest.com/
		4. Identify areas in parks to naturalize and diversify groundcover, reduce mowing needs, and reduce chemical inputs. Create a tiered structure for naturalized vegetation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Areas: full restoration of turf grass to native grasses, forbs, and shrubs. Lower long-term maintenance inputs, higher environmental benefits, and diverse aesthetics. Use in areas difficult to mow, adjacent to existing natural areas, and targeted landscape beds (signage). Low/No Mow Areas: passive areas of the park that are mowed less often and allowed to grow higher than surrounding maintained turf. These areas could be re-planted with a fescue mixture or pollinator blend that has a similar appearance to turf but requires less maintenance, provides more environmental benefits, and starts to look like a well-controlled natural area. 		\$\$\$	See concept plans for proposed options.

Timeline Key		Resource Intensity Key	
0-5 years		Low	\$\$\$
5-15 years		Medium	\$\$\$\$
15-20+ years		High	\$\$\$\$\$

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
Green Resilience		5. Develop a program for tree replacement and major storm damage repair. Climate change is leading to more extreme growing conditions for park vegetation including longer periods of drought and more intense and frequent storm events. These conditions will require a diverse and resilient strategy to minimize and repair damage			Dependent on Natural Resource Manager/ Arborist on staff
	2. Parks as green infrastructure	1. Coordinate with local Watershed Districts on projects to reduce, reuse, and recycle stormwater runoff. Be mindful not to exchange critical park recreation functions for strictly Engineering uses. 325 Blake contains integrated green infrastructure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks can help the city control and clean stormwater, cool and clean the air, provide wildlife habitat, and capture carbon. Parks are working landscapes and should be enhanced. • Recreation fields shouldn't be abandoned for single-use stormwater volume practices, such as ponds. Underground storage beneath the field with irrigation reuse is a synergistic approach that maximizes the value for the public. 			
		2. Minimize impervious surfaces in parks. Utilize on-street parking and shared parking with adjacent businesses or institutions to keep parking lots out of parks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burnes Park shared parking is a great example. • Central Park's proposed improvements (concept designs) will require a comprehensive parking strategy for the area that includes available parking at Shady Oak Station. 			
	3. Healthy operations and maintenance	1. Dedicate staff to natural resources and urban tree canopy. Responsibilities should include prioritizing and addressing issues related to maintaining and improving. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional training to existing staff taking over this position; or • Hire a Natural Resource Manager. • Explore contractors to hire work. • Partner with organizations to complete work – e.g., 9-mile watershed district 			
		2. Consider developing a Natural Resource Management Plan to inventory and provide specific recommendations on improvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical NRMP's include comprehensive inventories, recommendations on projects, annual budgets, work plan priorities, and help to identify potential grant opportunities and funding strategies based on priorities. 			Dependent on Natural Resource Manager/ Arborist on staff to maximize benefit
		3. Develop a formal Integrated Pest Management Plan to be used in parks to control invasive species, vegetation disease, etc. This would require the hiring of a naturalist position.			Dependent on Natural Resource Manager/ Arborist on staff
		4. Continue migrating mowers and maintenance equipment to electric as technology improves and existing equipment needs replacement. Significant reductions in air and noise pollution could be achieved			

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes	
Green Resilience		5. Minimize mowing needs with strategies under Goal 1.		\$ ○ ○		
		6. Continue providing winter salting education to all staff responsible for snow clearing in parks. Salt pollution from over-salting is a significant threat to water quality.		\$ ○ ○		
		7. Educate the public about lower impact operations and maintenance strategies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeing Yellow Campaigns – stress the benefits of minimizing chemical inputs and allowing some areas of parks to receive less maintenance. Potentially growing more dandelions – which are an excellent early season food source for pollinators. Non-traditional lawns – pollinator lawns and native lawns are excellent ways to reduce maintenance costs but have an aesthetic that is different than the public’s expectations. 		\$ ○ ○		
	4. Lead by example with park development and buildings	1.	All new park building facilities and major park renovations should follow recommendations of the Hopkins Heat Vulnerability Study and align with City development standards at a minimum. State funded projects will need to follow the Buildings, Benchmarks, and Beyond (B3) Guidelines.		\$ \$ \$	
		2.	Consider pursuing LEED Certification for all new park building projects. LEED is a tool to maximize sustainability and reduce negative impacts of building construction and long-term use.		\$ \$ \$	Long-term energy and maintenance savings possible.
		3.	Consider using the Sustainable SITES Initiative for major park redevelopment projects. SITES is a tool, like LEED, for outdoor environments that helps create ecologically resilient communities and benefits to the environment, property owners, and communities.		\$ \$ ○	Long-term energy and maintenance savings possible.
		4.	Introduce sustainable infrastructure that showcases sustainability such as solar panels, wind turbines, geothermal heating and cooling, bee hives, bat houses, etc. in highly visible locations accessible to the public. Provide education opportunities and interpretive signs associated with infrastructure.		\$ \$ ○	
	5. Connect more people with more nature	1.	Prioritize Goals 1 and 2 above to incorporate more natural areas, vegetation, and healthier tree canopies in parks.		\$ \$ ○	See concept designs
		2.	Expand highly successful community gardening programs throughout the city. See concept designs for ideas at Oakes and Harley Hopkins Parks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create accessible gardening opportunities at Valley Park and new garden locations. 		\$ ○ ○	
		3.	Provide programming that connects kids and people with nature. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with existing partners including Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation Services and Three Rivers Parks District on environmental and nature programs. 		\$ ○ ○	Connect with TRPD Parks to People program
4.		Encourage nature-based activities in POPS where feasible. The water access proposed at 325 Blake is a good example.				
5.		Connect to natural areas with natural surface trails for both walking and biking.		\$ ○ ○		

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
Green Resilience		6. Educate the public about nature in their city. People are more inclined to protect what they cherish, and to cherish what they understand.		\$ ○ ○	Partnerships with Watershed District and TRPD
		7. Integrate interpretive signage into natural areas – provide translations as much as possible.		\$ ○ ○	
		8. Consider Organizing community-based volunteer events and programs focusing on nature such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buckthorn Busters – removing buckthorn on private property and in parks. • Adopt trees and parks – maintenance of key areas in a park. • Continue tree sale program – Expand program, tree fund, adopt a tree • Native plant swap or sale • Community events like Earth Day cleanups 		\$ \$ ○	Partner with groups like Great River Greening

Figure 6.19. Green Resilience

Timeline Key		Resource Intensity Key	
0-5 years		Low	\$ ○ ○
5-15 years		Medium	\$ \$ ○
15-20+ years		High	\$ \$ \$

INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

Developing Hopkins’ Park System into an essential city service that works for all citizens will require dedicated, sustainable, and equitable financing. A balanced investment approach to diversify recreational opportunities throughout the City emphasizes funding for the development of new park amenities, operations and maintenance investment, and partnerships with additional providers. The continued acquisition of new park spaces in redevelopment projects, new park experience creation, and the construction of new or refurbished recreation facilities is a critical element in meeting the recreation needs of existing and future populations.

As they age, parks require periodic reinvestment to maintain consistency, and deliver quality experiences. Efforts to upgrade assets, add recreational amenities and expand capacity increases the recreational opportunities available within existing parks. Ongoing, there needs to be adequate resources for operations, maintenance and staffing as the city’s population grows and diversifies. Increased park usage will require increased investment and staff attention.

improving equitable access to parks and recreation programs for everyone is a priority. Funding sources must be sufficiently flexible to address historical deficiencies and reduce gaps in recreational opportunities that have accumulated over time. Innovate equitable partnerships with private and other public not for profit entities along with new revenue generating opportunities can expand the resources to a create a system of tomorrow.

Increasing budgets in specific departments when overall City budgets are tight can be difficult. The city has not developed an economic impact assessment for Parks and Recreation services to the community. These analyses make the solid argument that parks, and recreation services are not a “spending” department but an earned income department. An analysis should include proximity values of homes to parks, health and wellness impacts to the community, economic impact of events and festivals to the City through increased food and beverage taxes and other economic elements.

Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
1. Identify dedicated capital improvement funding for existing park updates and added recreational facilities identified in this master plan.	1. Consider referendum and/or a local option sales tax to secure needed improvement dollars for community park facilities.		\$ ○ ○	
	2. Explore and apply for grants in multiple categories – natural resources, equity, stormwater, accessibility, etc. to implement master planning goals and objectives.		\$ ○ ○	
	3. Continue developing funding partnerships to achieve joint goals. Examples include watershed district funding at Cottageville Park.			
2. Study the economic impact plan for Hopkins’ Parks to analyze and communicate the benefits of parks to the city.	1. Include the approximate value of homes near parks, trails, and natural areas. Include business analyses with events and festival hosting in Mainstreet at community parks.		\$ \$ ○	

Timeline Key		Resource Intensity Key	
0-5 years		Low	\$ ○ ○
5-15 years		Medium	\$ \$ ○
15-20+ years		High	\$ \$ \$

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
Investment in the Future	3. Generate additional revenue in parks.	1. Explore food and beverage opportunities at key parks that complement, but don't compete, with local businesses. When possible local businesses should be explored as partners. Opportunities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, coffee, ice cream carts on Mainstreet, the Artery, and key park events. • Food truck festivals, weekends at popular parks, and special events. • Café or enhanced concessions at the Pavilion. • Mobile Beer Gardencart at Central, Downtown, or Valley Park. 			Rotate tap rights with local breweries and businesses to support existing
		2. Maximize the rental opportunities in parks. Pavilions and indoor rental space within parks to host parties, events, gatherings, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide amenities to improve the experience and marketability for weddings and formal celebrations at Downtown Park. • Rentable areas near any new destination feature like a playground, splash pad, etc. 			
	4. Track costs and revenues per amenity and program annually.	1. Meet annually with Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation to track and review programming costs and revenues.			Staff level
		2. Set pricing policies based on classification of core essential, important, and value-added services as well as the level of public and private good that exists. Coordinate with Hopkins-Minnetonka Joint Recreation on programming policies. These policies will also outline the cost benefit of the service provided.			
	5. Encourage other organizations to additional support for the development and maintenance of the park system.	1. Consider establishing a Foundation or encouraging not-for-profit partnerships that help raise funds and advocate for parks and open spaces. Partnerships should work toward the end goal of the Department financially and ensure all costs/ revenues are fair and responsible for the outcomes desired by each partner. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include individuals, associations, and businesses – focus on key areas or popular parks (e.g. Mainstreet and Artery or Central Park). The goal being to ensure premium maintenance and amenities. • Search for corporate sponsorship partners. 			Relies on initiative from community members

	Goals	Strategies	Timeline	Resources Needed	Notes
Investment in the Future	7. Ensure development and park renovation investments meet population increase needs	1. Hopkins currently collects \$5,000 per residential unit in alignment with statutory and City Park Dedication requirements. to help accommodate development that increases the number of units, proportionate to the additional need for parks created by the development. The consultant team feels has evaluated and believes this is currently appropriate and aligned toward the higher rates compared to similar sized communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When reviewing these fees, These analyses should provide recommendations on the balance of land dedication and impact fees for capital investments compared to Privately Owned Public Spaces program. 			
		2. Prioritize POPS activities and amenities that address a Citywide Level of Service need including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skatepark/ skatespot Courts - basketball, pickleball, tennis, etc. Aquatics play/ splash pads. Nature access (e.g., 325 Blake canoe/ kayak launch) 			(See Figure XX for more information)
	8. Streamline the organization to stretch the public's dollar.	1. Create asset management plans based on equity, efficiency, and effectiveness of resources.			
	8. Evaluate operations and financial performance of park system and organization to stretch the public's dollar.	1. Create asset management plans based on equity, efficiency, and effectiveness of resources. 2. Resource spending on operations and capital improvements should be tracked and recorded to assess and demonstrate fairness and equity in serving community needs. 3. Develop organization policies should be determined by industry best practices regarding personnel, work culture, training, and safety of staff to ensure the most efficient and effective service delivery. 4. Parks should conduct a service evaluation to gauge the community's satisfaction and assess operations, adequacy of staffing and budget, and response to resident needs. 5. Continue maximizing and updating business plans for revenue producing facilities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pavilion Hopkins Center for the Arts Activity Center The Depot (relies on agreements and partnerships) 			

Figure 6.20. Investment in the future







APPENDICES

DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

RECREATIONAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT