
VISION MASTER PLAN

FRED RICHARDS REPURPOSE STUDY



CITY OF EDINA

10/01/14



FOR LIVING, LEARNING, RAISING FAMILIES & DOING BUSINESS

VISION MASTER PLAN

FRED RICHARDS REPURPOSE STUDY

Prepared By:

Schoenbauer Consulting, LLC

5054 Drew Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55410



FOR LIVING, LEARNING, RAISING FAMILIES & DOING BUSINESS

Introduction and Acknowledgments

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC PROCESS

On April 22, 2014 the Edina City Council retained Schoenbauer Consulting, LLC to undertake a repurposing study for Fred Richards. This report summarizes the findings of the first step in the planning process and establishes a broad vision and baseline development program for the site. The main goal of this step is to establish the parameters for “highest and best public use” of the property, which will be used to guide development of a detailed master plan.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The general public, neighborhood residents, various stakeholders, and special interest groups were invited to participate in an open public process to ensure that pertinent planning issues were discovered and addressed by the study. The public process included:

- Public meetings – where all interested parties could provide input and perspectives
- Site walks – to give residents a chance to discuss site-specific issues and concerns
- Interviews, phone calls, and email exchanges – with defined stakeholder groups, special interest groups and nearby developers
- Social media – using the City’s web-based public access portal to gather additional information on community opinions

Public input into the planning process was insightful and central to establishing a core vision for the property as the City moves forward in making important decisions about repurposing the site.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The consultant team appreciated the opportunity to work with the City of Edina in undertaking an open public process for this challenging project. The team especially acknowledges input from the many residents and stakeholder groups that were involved. Their individual and collective insights and perspectives were instrumental in drawing reasoned conclusions.

The consultant team also thanks the Park Board and city staff. Their commitment to an open public process ensured that all opinions were duly considered. Their understanding of the larger planning context and how the site fits into the larger city picture was also of high value.

Sincerely,

Jeff Schoenbauer, Schoenbauer Consulting, LLC
Principal-in-Charge / Project Manager

CONSULTANT TEAM

Schoenbauer Consulting, LLC
5054 Drew Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55410
jaschoenbauer@gmail.com
612.578.1975

In collaboration with:

Genus Landscape Architects
325 East 5th Street
Des Moines, IA 50309



Table of Contents

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT GOALS	1 - 2
Overview/Background	1
Steps in the Repurposing Process	1
Project Goals	2
SETTING, TRENDS, AND PUBLIC OUTREACH	3 - 8
Overview	3
Planning Context and Park Setting	3
Park Use Trends and Facility Demands	4
Public Outreach Findings	6
Safety and Security	8
VISION MASTER PLAN	9 - 22
Overview	9
Creativity and Uniqueness a Core Value	9
Balancing Active Uses with Preserving Natural Areas and Sense of Place	9
Vision Master Plan Overview	10
Parkway Corridor	12
Regional Trail Corridor	13
Internal Park Trails, Promenades and Boardwalks	14
Community Activities and Events Area	15
Adventure Play Area	16
Field Games Area	17
Open Parkland Area	18
Naturalized Buffers	20
Repurposing the Maintenance Building	22
Urban Agriculture Area (Alternative)	22
IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS	23 - 26
Overview	23
Interrelationship and Collaboration with Pentagon Park Redevelopment	23
Technical Conditions and Challenges	25
Cost Projections for Repurposing Site	26





The 42 acres of open space land provides a unique park opportunity for the City.



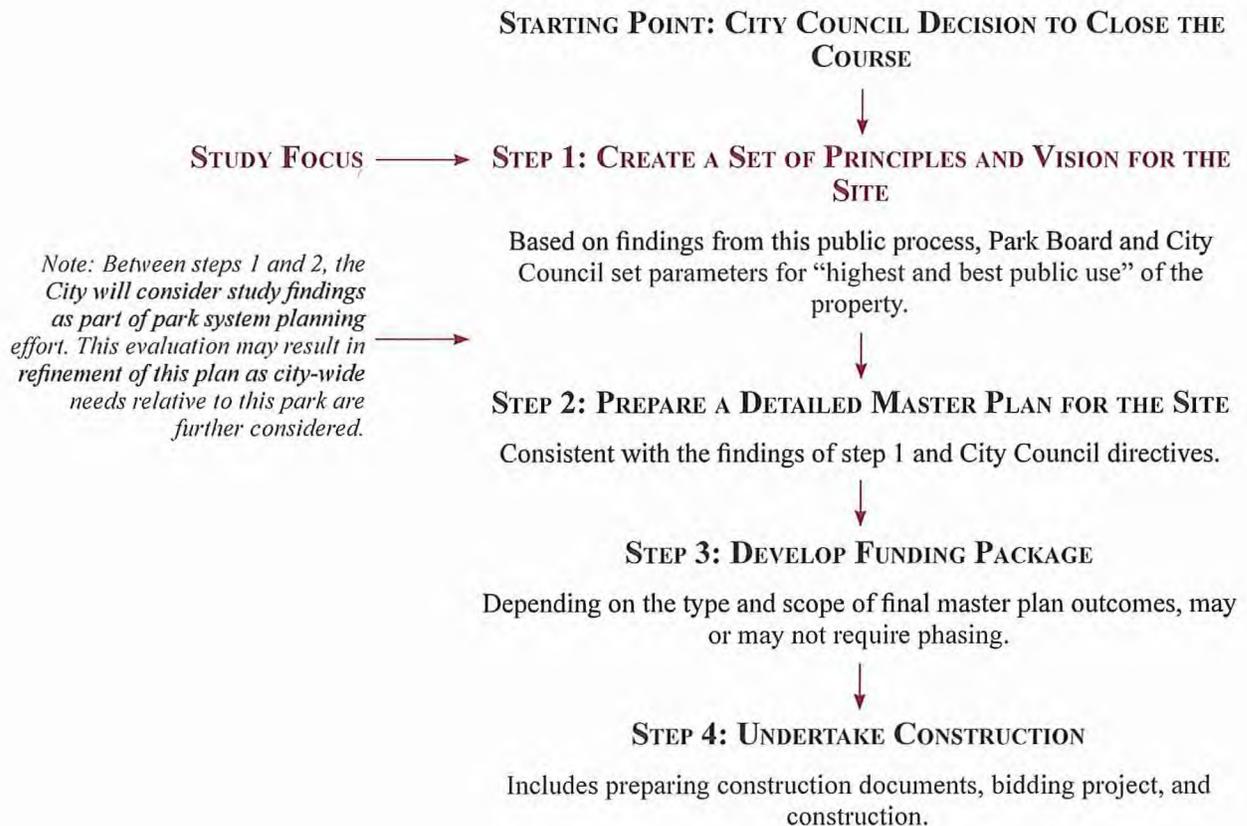
Background and Project Framework

OVERVIEW/BACKGROUND

On March 18, 2014, the Edina City Council accepted staff and Park Board recommendations to cease the golf operation. On April 22, 2014, the City Council authorized undertaking this repurposing study, which was to be forward looking and would not focus on revisiting the decision to close the golf course.

STEPS IN THE REPURPOSING PROCESS

This study is the first step in the process of repurposing the Fred Richards site for public use, as the following illustrates.



As illustrated, the public process is purposefully robust and allows the community numerous opportunities to refine outcomes through each of the outlined steps.



PROJECT GOALS

The purpose of the study was to engage the public to gather information and ideas about repurposing the Fred Richards site to position the City Council to make an informed decision about its future use. Key principles established for the study include:

- Maintaining an open and transparent public process
- Seeking creative ideas and options
- Providing context and background information to aid the City Council in analyzing and considering repurposing opportunities

The consultant spent considerable time gathering background information and listening to various stakeholders and members of the community. Specifically, the team's charge was to:

- Understand the community issues and perspectives associated with repurposing the site
- Provide a public conduit for generating ideas
- Define viable options for City Council consideration
- Undertake baseline development cost evaluation
- Provide perspective related to findings from the public process
- Recommend a plan of action for the City Council to further consider



Setting, Trends, and Public Outreach

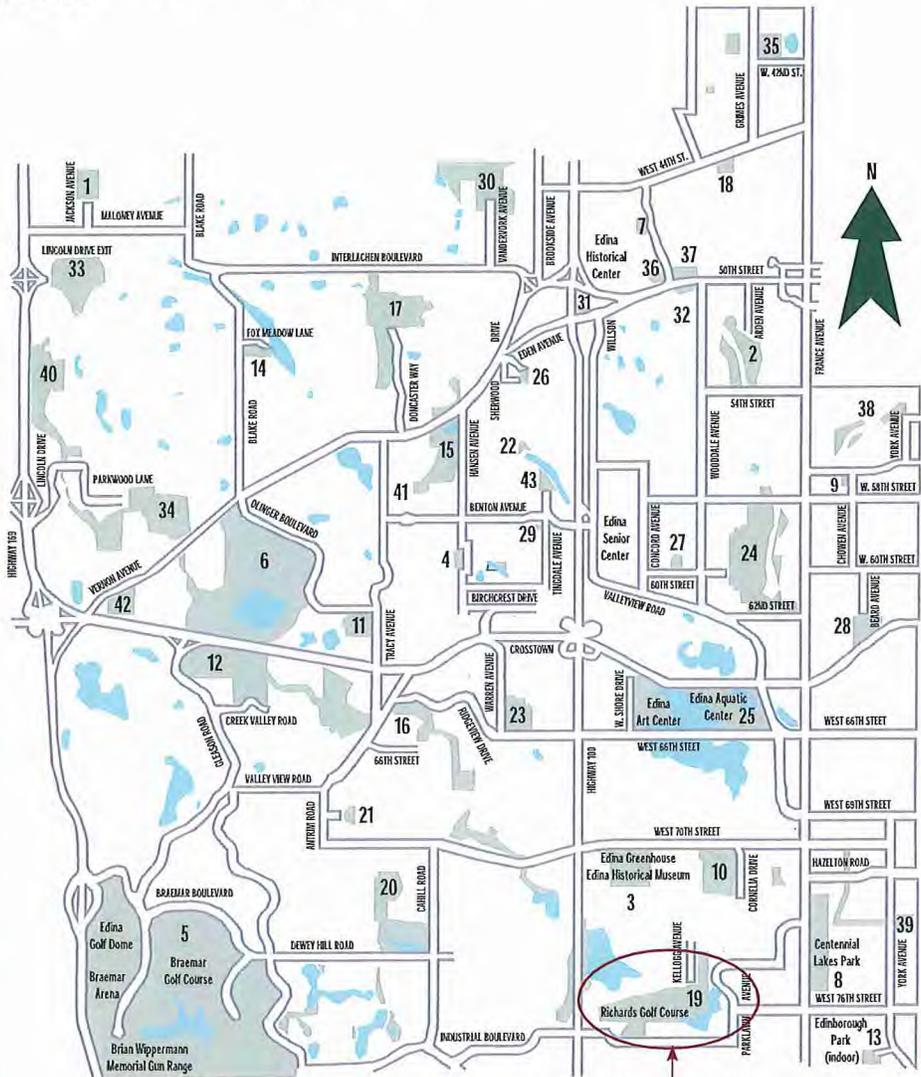
OVERVIEW

The following considers the setting for the park, local recreational trends and demands for facilities to meet community needs, and public input into the process. Collectively, these findings shaped planning outcomes and the vision for the park.

PLANNING CONTEXT AND PARK SETTING

The Fred Richards site is located in the southeastern part of the city, as the following park map illustrates.

1. Alden Park
 2. Arden Park
 3. Arneson Acres Park
 4. Birchcrest Park
 5. Braemar Park (Courtney Fields)
 6. Bredezen Park
 7. Browndale Park
 8. Centennial Lakes Park
 9. Chowen Park
 10. Cornelia School Park
 11. Countryside Park
 12. Creek Valley School Park
 13. Edinborough Park
 14. Fox Meadow Park
 15. Garden Park
 16. Heights Park
 17. Highlands Park
 18. Kojetin Park
 19. Lake Edina Park
 20. Lewis Park
 21. McGuire Park
 22. Melody Lake Park
 23. Normandale Park
 24. Pamela Park
 25. Rosland Park (includes disc golf course)
 26. Sherwood Park
 27. St. John's Park
 28. Strachauer Park
 29. Tingdale Park
 30. T. Lea Todd Park
 31. Frank Tupa Park
 32. Utley Park
 33. Van Valkenburg Park
 34. Walnut Ridge Park
 35. Weber Field Park
 36. Williams Park
 37. Wooddale Park
 38. York Park
 39. Yorktown Park (includes skate park)
- OPEN SPACE AREAS**
40. Lincoln Drive Floodplain
 41. Garden Park Addition
 42. Krahl Hill
 43. Moore Property



FRED RICHARDS SITE



As a starting point for the public process, baseline considerations included:

- Repurposing of the site is a very unique opportunity for a developed city
- General consensus that the site will become a park
- Size, location, and opportunity suggest the park falls under a “community park” classification, with this process being used to define how the site is best developed to meet community needs and fit into the local park system
- Outcome needs to be of high public value and serve a cross-section of residents (neighborhood and larger community)

Other key considerations include:

- Any park development needs to be compatible with, and complementary to, the adjoining land uses
- Connected, but not intrusive, to adjoining properties
- Accommodate the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail
- Be sensitive to environmental issues (e.g., Nine Mile Creek watershed and stormwater management concerns)

If done well, the general consensus is that the park will instantly become an important and perhaps cornerstone component of the local park system.

PARK USE TRENDS AND FACILITY DEMANDS

The Park Board provided insights into city-wide and site-specific park trends and facility demands. Overall, the common theme was to create a unique park experience focusing on getting children and families outdoors more, along with providing a pleasant place for nearby business employees to use during work days. Serving the park needs of the entire community versus a select group or neighborhood was also important to the Park Board.

Key considerations and observations include:

- **Sports fields** – addressing the need for field space, especially related to field games like soccer and lacrosse; focus should be on youth age groups; lighting is probably not needed
- **New forms of recreation** – be open to emerging forms of recreation, like Futsal, that would appeal to different age groups
- **Urban agriculture** – expanding on the community garden theme
- **Outdoor adventure and creative play** – providing unique and adventuresome play areas that go beyond typical play equipment; perhaps with a focus on natural play and/or outdoor adventure
- **Attract hard to reach groups** – emphasize a welcoming environment and facilities that appeal to the 15 to 18 year age group, a notoriously challenging group to engage
- **Develop the park for all seasons** – including winter activities, such as cross-country skiing, ice skating and snowshoeing; includes access to a warming house
- **Accommodate groups** – by providing areas for group gatherings and staging events; repurpose clubhouse to accommodate flexible group use; consider additional modest-sized shelters or structures for group use



- **Integrate the regional trail** – establishing trailhead amenities; establishing a “bike library” which makes bikes, trikes, and other peddle-power vehicles available for public use; perhaps include bike shop and/or offer repair classes
- **Buffering** – it is as important to buffer views from both inside and outside park
- **Provide adequate but not excessive parking** – includes meeting day-to-day parking needs; also includes collaborating with Pentagon Park developer to meet peak parking needs (i.e., evenings, weekends, and events) with off-site shared parking facilities in select locations
- **Be cautious about overbuilding** – larger scale features such as community center, indoor athletic facilities, competitive pool, youth center, etc. are not well-suited for this park

Over the years, the City has undertaken a variety of park and recreation focused surveys to help inform planning decisions *on a system-wide basis*. Since these surveys have a community-wide and not site-specific focus, caution is needed in applying these findings to individual parks. To that end, integrating the findings of these surveys and this study into the larger system-wide planning effort the City is undertaking (mid-2014/early 2015) is an important recommendation by the Park Board. This will allow the City to fully understand how Fred Richards fits into the larger system and help fine-tune the development program for the park within that context. (The steps in the repurposing process defined on page 1 purposefully accommodates this approach.) Of considerable importance in fine-tuning the master plan is accommodating pertinent demographic changes across the city and how that may affect final development decisions.

Within the system-wide context, the development program as currently envisioned for the site does in fact address many of the top priorities defined in the various surveys. For example, the 2006 *Community Attitude and Interest Survey* focusing on parks and recreation identified walking and biking trails as being very popular, as is creating and/or protecting natural areas and wildlife habitat. The amenities envisioned for the park that focus on families and youth sports are also consistent with survey results. For example, development of outdoor athletic fields was supported by a majority of households.

The 2013 *City of Edina Survey* related to use and rating of park and recreation facilities found 79 percent of household members reported using the trail system during the past year, with 84 percent reported using neighborhood parks. Nearly half (48 percent) of household members reported using the larger community playfields during the past year.

The 2014 *Grandview Resident Survey* finds that residents are very supportive of projects that foster a stronger sense of community. Residents also think the City should create more recreational opportunities, as well as cultural and arts opportunities for people of all ages and incomes.



PUBLIC OUTREACH FINDINGS

The public process was open to all individuals and groups to ensure that everyone with an interest in the park had a chance to voice their perspectives. The public outreach process included:

- Open public meetings (including comment cards)
- Resident-focused site walks
- Online comment forms for repurposing Fred Richards
- Speak Up, Edina!
- Direct emails (to staff)
- Interviews with the Pentagon Park developer
- Interviews with a cross-section of nearby apartment and local businesses

The following captures the overall themes and sub-themes that came out of the collective process and helped shape the development program for the site.

COMMON THEMES FROM THE PUBLIC OUTREACH PROCESS

Participants uniformly agree that the site is an important community asset, with the vast majority feeling turning it into a park is the best way forward. There is absolutely no interest in selling the property for development or using the site for stormwater management associated with the commercial redevelopment south of the park.

Although individual perspectives vary, creating a well-designed community park that serves all residents best describes how the majority of residents envision the site being repurposed. A number of sub-themes also emerged through the public process, including:

- **Provide a diversity of uses** – offering a friendly and accommodating social environment that is inviting to all residents, with a particular focus on families and children’s activities (“kid” friendly)
- **Create a park that is unique and innovative** – go beyond typical features to make the park more interesting and different than a typical park; design for year-round use
- **Enhance natural qualities of the park** – including the appearance of ponds and using more natural buffers
- **Manage vehicular and pedestrian access** – to ensure ease of access and limit disruption to established neighborhoods

SPECIFIC ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

Residents in the surrounding neighborhoods have varying opinions on how the property should be repurposed, although there is fairly uniform agreement that a park is the most appropriate end use. As would be expected, residents also have specific and quite reasonable concerns that need to be duly considered as the planning moves forward. Most notable of these include:

- **Adequately buffer adjacent properties** – to minimize sense of encroachment and invasion of privacy; using a naturalized buffer is generally preferred



Site walks were used as a means to better understand specific concerns of adjacent residents.





Understandably, residents on the north side of the site are concerned about buffering between the park and private properties.

- **Prevent parking and vehicle access from disrupting the neighborhood** – which essentially means providing park access and parking on the south side
- **Locate active use area (game fields, play structures, etc.) away from residential areas** – such as on the south and east sides of the property; use trees and vegetation to help screen these areas
- **Keep the regional trail on the south side to extent possible** – focus on lower-volume and slower paced park-like trails within the park
- **Limit pedestrian access from the north to select locations** – most likely from the cul-de-sac at the end of Kellogg Ave.
- **Bury power line along the north property line** – to improve the aesthetic for the park users and homeowners
- **Limit lighting to critical areas** – do not provide field lighting, and make sure that lighting associated with roads, parking lots, and buildings on the south side of the park are not disruptive or excessive

PERSPECTIVES FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES AND PENTAGON PARK DEVELOPER

Interviews with local businesses and Pentagon Park developer reinforce or build upon the themes already described. For example, a nearby daycare provider would definitely use a community park, with having access to play equipment, splash pad, trails, community garden, nature-based activities, and even a simple grassy area for active play being very desirable. Adding more natural areas would be great for field trips.

Businesses also see much value from the park. Simple, well-designed features like trails, sitting areas, and picnic areas are important for lunchtime and breaks. The park aesthetic itself would lend itself to a pleasant place to go to think and work informally with coworkers in an out-of-office setting. Having easy access to small meeting spaces within the park would be beneficial.

Having access to active recreational facilities is also important to a growing number of employers as part of their wellness focus. Seagate, for example, has employee programs for walking, running, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, yoga, and boot camp, to name a few. The Pentagon Park development team also expects future employers and employees will use the park for personal and corporate wellness efforts. Easy access to the regional trail and trailhead facilities enhances bike and walk-to-work commuter programs.

Under the right circumstances, local businesses expressed an openness to collaborate on developing outdoor fitness facilities for mutual benefit. One example of this is putting a fitness course along a trail within the park.

(Note: Additional discussion related to the Pentagon Park development is provided on page 23.)



AREAS OF CONCERN AND CRITIQUE

Overall, the public process proved invaluable to identifying issues and defining opportunities, and ultimately shaping the vision master plan. For the most part, participants were respectful of each other, City staff, and elected officials, and participated in good faith in providing input.

In the context of good faith, residents found it important to document areas of dissatisfaction – most of which related to the closing the golf course. Key points of feedback include:

- Dissatisfaction with the process and timeframe associated with closing the golf course, with many feeling it was rushed and did not allow for real public debate
- Mistrust about the City's intent to allow the Pentagon Park developer to use the property for stormwater management
- Concern that the City really intends to sell the property for commercial development
- Lack of concern for those most affected by changing land uses, especially homeowners that have a lot invested in their properties and are concerned about impacts that reuses, parking, and access will have on them and the neighborhood
- Lack of clarity on how the City plans to fund any new park development

It also needs to be stated that some nearby residents simply do not accept the fact that the golf course should be closed and feel the City's approach here and in general is ill advised. Hopefully, this process (and the steps going forward) will help alleviate these concerns and build a higher level of trust between all participants.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

According to Edina Police, there is very little crime going on in local parks – with no robberies, assaults, or weapons violations being recorded. Edina Police feel parks are safe for residents and visitors.

Other related research draws similar conclusions. For example, research on trail-related crime conducted by Schoenbauer Consulting, LLC in 2010 yielded the following results:

- Respondents (law enforcement officers) consider trails to be safe, with the vast majority (87%) reporting that trails account for less than 5% of all unlawful activity in their jurisdiction, and nearly 50% saying that it is less than 1%
- Trespassing on adjacent property is considered low incidence, with issues of more serious crimes against persons or property being very infrequent

Police often cite parking lots as their biggest concern, where occasionally theft from cars can be an issue wherever the opportunity for a quick getaway exists.

While people's concerns about the security deserves due consideration, parks and trails are actually considered quite safe by police agencies and account for a relatively small percentage of unlawful activity and safety problems.



Vision Master Plan

OVERVIEW

The *vision* master plan is the first step in translating public input into an actual development program for the park. The following describes desired end uses and related physical features envisioned for the park as an outcome of step 1 of the repurposing process. The goal is to set forth a cohesive storyline for the park so that residents, Park Board and City Council have a point of focus for continued refinement as part of the next steps in this process.

CREATIVITY AND UNIQUENESS A CORE VALUE

Discussions during the public process often centered on the desire for a creative and unique design outcome for the park. Irrespective of individual opinion on many site issues, this perspective is clearly a shared and core value of participants.

This step in the process focused on defining the core vision for the site (i.e., community park) and describing the basic design intent associated with the individual functional uses. The detailed master plan phase (step 2) is where much more specific and detailed attention is given to finding creative ways to achieve the vision and creating a compelling high quality park experience. With this in mind, the goal with the forthcoming descriptions is to establish a baseline for discussions to come as the design process moves forward.

To further inform the next step in the process, a variety of photos and character sketches are provided to highlight design approaches and themes. While the final design for Fred Richards will be refined under the next step, these are provided to reinforce the importance of quality design in translating the individual elements described in this report into a truly inspired public amenity that will serve the community well for many decades to come.

BALANCING ACTIVE USES WITH PRESERVING NATURAL AREAS AND A SENSE-OF-PLACE

The vision master plan strives to balance active recreational uses to meet community needs with preserving open space and the site's sense of place and aesthetic qualities. While providing a variety of recreational and educational opportunities is a fundamental goal, showing restraint in the size and location of the built footprint is also an important public value. Under this plan, approximately 35 to 40 percent of the park is envisioned for active recreational uses, such as field games, play areas, and community gathering spaces. The remaining 60 to 65 percent is set aside for more passive, or "quiet," forms of recreation, open space, ponding areas, and buffers. Examples of passive uses include park trails, sitting areas, informal-use lawn areas, and wildflower gardens.



STRIVING TO BALANCE ACTIVE USES WITH PRESERVING NATURAL AREAS AND A SENSE-OF-PLACE



The vision master plan strives to find the right balance between meeting community needs for active recreational facilities ...



... while still preserving natural open space and the park's sense of place.

VISION MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW

The vision master plan describes a cross-section of features and amenities envisioned for the park to meet current and anticipated park and recreational demands. The following graphic illustrates the conceptual location of the major use areas and development features envisioned under the vision master plan.



Under the plan, each area of the park addresses specific types of active and passive recreational uses to meet the needs of families and individuals. Active recreation refers to team sports or other activities that involves the use of playing fields and play areas. Passive recreation refers to the more personal and often “quiet” activities such as walking, observation, kite flying, yoga, and so forth. Taken together, the recreational features will provide a well-rounded palette of activities for families and individuals to enjoy.

The more active recreational uses are envisioned on the southern and eastern sides of the park, largely adjacent to the proposed Pentagon Park redevelopment area. This orientation offers several key benefits:

- Concentrates the more active uses where parking and vehicular access can be best accommodated, including the shared use of parking associated with future commercial development on the south and east side of the park
- Takes advantage of an existing larger open space, which is not available on the western side where the property is narrower and broken up by existing wetlands
- Leverages the repurposing of the clubhouse and maintenance facility to support active use facilities (i.e., group gathering space, restrooms, storm shelter, etc.)
- Limits concerns about disrupting existing residential properties along the north property line

The more passive recreational uses are envisioned on the northern and western sides of the park, largely adjacent to the established residential neighborhoods. With the existing (and perhaps expanded) ponds, rolling topography, natural and manicured green spaces, this area of the park is well suited for walking paths, overlooks and observation points, and other forms of casual recreation (e.g., kite flying, picnicking). A more passive approach to development also helps provide a distance buffer between the existing residential area and the more active park uses.

The design layout for the park includes numerous opportunities to integrate community art, sculptures and other forms of community expression for public display. These types of features are important to creating a unique sense of place in the park that goes beyond the individual recreational features.

The following provides an overview of the various development use areas within the park identified on the vision master plan. Each of these are subsequently defined in terms of the type and character of the various uses that would be envisioned within a given zone. *Importantly, these descriptions represent a starting point for detailed design.* Continued refinement of the ideas, amenity locations, and design approach is both expected and encouraged during step 2 in the process.



PARKWAY CORRIDOR

This corridor includes the parkway and associated parking areas to service the day to day needs of the park. The parkway is an important feature in ensuring ease of vehicular access to the park from the south (and east and west), where much of the use traffic will likely come from. Ease of access from the south is also vital to limiting the extent to which park users access the park from the north – where there is no real option to provide parking and local streets are not intended for heavier day to day traffic. The parkway also allows for shared use of parking lots with adjacent commercial properties during peak use times – most namely evenings and weekends.

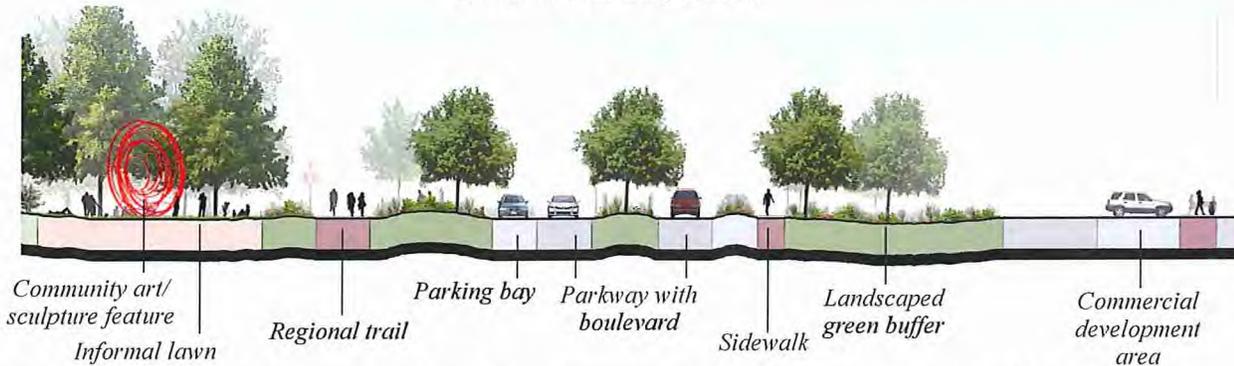


Example of a parkway design that creates a aesthetically appealing edge to a park.

The parkway is envisioned as a shared benefit amenity with the Pentagon Park development area, with encroachment into the park property being limited in order to preserve park space. Heavier traffic volumes (and truck traffic in particular) should be directed toward 77th Street to preserve the character of the parkway and keep traffic volumes lower.

The actual design of the parkway will evolve as part of a coordinated effort with the new developments south of the park. This includes determining the points of connection with 77th Street. (Note: through previous action, the City Council determined that a connection to 76th Street on the east side was not desirable.) The parkway will be built as phases of Pentagon Park are approved and developed.

Another important aspect of the parkway is its importance in establishing a “park-like” aesthetic edge along the south property line. The parkway also plays a key role in creating a much more appealing buffer between the site and commercial development than is currently the case. The following graphic illustrates the streetscape character envisioned for the parkway.



The parkway serves a functional purpose of providing park access and parking. The design character of the parkway is of equal importance in establishing a park-like aesthetic edge to the park, and creating an appealing buffer between the park and the commercial development to the south. Note that the boulevards and landscaped green buffers are envisioned as important landscape features along with being part of the overall stormwater management plan (i.e., bioswales and raingardens to filter runoff).

Onsite parking will be provided to meet day-to-day needs. Peak use (evenings and weekends) parking needs will be met by taking advantage of well-placed designated public parking areas associated with the commercial developments on the south side. (These will be defined as part of future development agreements with the Pentagon Park developer.)



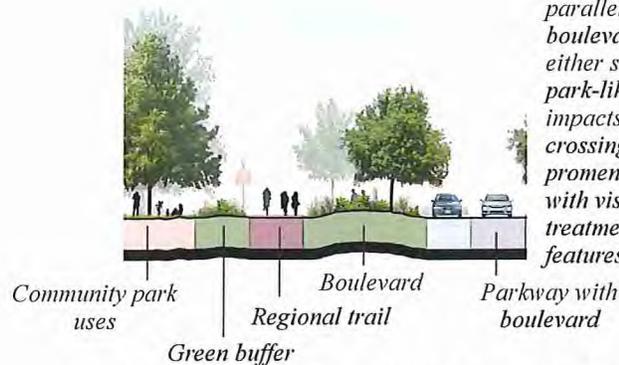
REGIONAL TRAIL CORRIDOR

The vast majority of park-dedicated parking will be accessed from the parkway. The largest parking lot within the park will be located near the active use zones. Additional more limited parking will be provided along the parkway in smaller bays that are integrated into the overall parkway and park design to be as unobtrusive as possible. A small to modest size public parking lot may also be needed off of Parklawn Avenue to service that area of the park.

As a regional facility, the regional trail serves a broad range of local and non-local users. The trail will be designed to meet regional standards, which is 10 feet wide and hard-surfaced (typically asphalt pavement). The corridor plan for the regional trail shows it entering the park area from behind the Burgundy Place development on the west side, and exiting along Parklawn on the east side. Between these two points, Three Rivers Park District is flexible as to where the trail is best located relative to the future development of the park and commercial area to the south. The main goal of the District is to ensure the trail through this area is as pleasant and safe a user experience as possible.

If well-located and designed, the regional trail will be a positive and important recreational amenity for park visitors and those living or working in the surrounding area. To minimize the potential for use conflicts with other park uses and activities, much of the regional trail will be located on the south side of the park along the parkway corridor. As the character sketch below illustrates, the goal is to create a pleasant trail experience while limiting the amount of park space it consumes. Keeping the regional use traffic on the south side of the park in this area also helps alleviate concerns about encroachment of the regional trail on residential properties on the north side.

On the south side of the park, the regional trail will primarily parallel the parkway. As shown, boulevards and green buffers on either side of the trail help create a park-like experience with minimal impacts on other park uses. All crossings with other trails and promenades will be designed with visual cues (e.g., pavement treatments, signage, landscape features) to minimize conflicts.



On the east side, the goal is for the regional trail to connect with (but stay on the periphery of) the community gathering, active use, and field games areas. Staying on the periphery of this active use zone is important to minimizing user conflicts. *(Note: The alignment through this area is conceptual and will be refined during step 2 – detailed master planning phase.)* Trailhead facilities would be integrated into an overall design for this area of the park. Design features that serve the park and regional trail include parking, access to restrooms, sitting areas, refreshments, and bike rental.



INTERNAL PARK TRAILS, PROMENADES AND BOARDWALKS

Internal park trails provide a stand-alone park amenity along with providing access to the various park uses. In contrast to the regional trail, these trails have a more intimate and curvilinear character. Although bike use is not prohibited, park trails are designed more for pedestrian-level and slower-paced use than is the case with the regional trail. Generally, an 8-foot trail width is envisioned, although wider segments may be needed in busy areas, such as near the active use areas. Narrower trail segments may also be suitable to access overlooks, sitting areas and natural areas.

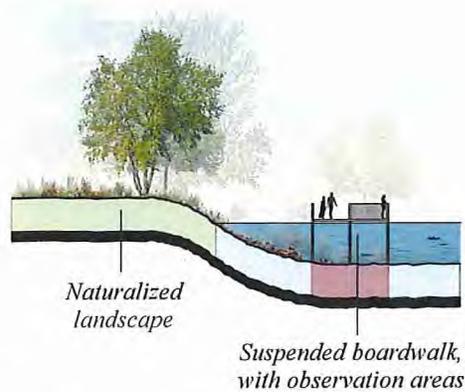
In general, park trails will be hard-surfaced for accessibility and durability, but the surface treatment could be different to distinguish them from the regional trail. In select locations, such as the north arm and in natural areas, narrower aggregate surfaced trails may be also be appropriate.

The vision master plan complements the park trails with promenades and boardwalks that add architectural elements and invite casual strolling in the park. These features also provide various opportunities to sit, observe, reflect, and gain access to a variety of activity nodes and park features. The following character sketches illustrate the general character of the park trails and boardwalks that would meander through the park.

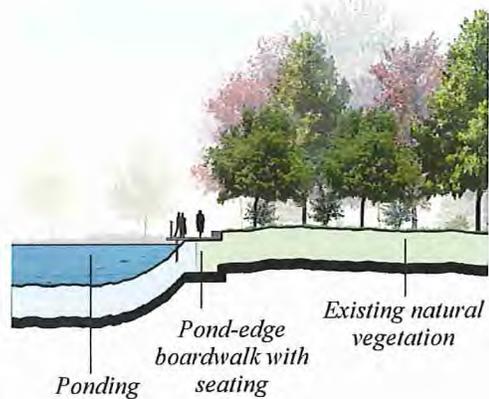
Park trail



Suspended boardwalk and observation platform



Edge boardwalk and sitting area



As these character sketches illustrate, a combination of park trails and boardwalks are envisioned to provide a variety of casual trail experiences throughout the park.



Access to the internal park trails will be primarily from the parkway corridor, south parking lots, and regional trail. More limited trail access from Parklawn (east side) and Kellogg Avenue (north side) is also envisioned.

Eliminating the cul-de-sac at the end of Kellogg is a possibility to help manage pedestrian access and reduce concerns about excessive parking along the street. Final determination as to the desire and practicality of this approach will be considered as part of the detail design phase. (Additional input from affected property owners along Kellogg will be needed.)



COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS AREA



The existing clubhouse is of good quality and can be reasonably repurposed for described park uses.

The main design goal of the community activities area is to repurpose the clubhouse and create compelling surrounding outdoor spaces to complement it. These indoor-outdoor spaces are envisioned to accommodate a wide-range of activities and user groups. Examples include:

- Special events
- Organized group gatherings
- Social gatherings, such as weddings and family reunions
- Theater or music in the park (small scale)

The community activities area is envisioned to be an appealing place to spontaneously gather, socialize, and simply hang out. In this context, the aesthetics of the area, sense of place, and viewsheds across the park are all important to creating a space people want to use all days of the week. The design theme established for this area will also influence the design character and quality expectation for the rest of the park.

The clubhouse is envisioned to be repurposed to a flexible-use and programmable community space for events and group gatherings. Day-to-day, the restrooms and possibly vending will be available to park users. In winter, the facility can be used as warming house or a place to organize for outdoor activities, such as informal skating, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. The facility will also serve as a de facto trailhead for the regional trail.

The clubhouse building is of good quality and well maintained. Architecturally, the aesthetics of the building warrant updating for park purposes. The color, exterior facade treatments, etc. will all evolve to be consistent with design themes that emerge for this area of the park, and the park in general.



The outdoor spaces in this area are of equal importance. Flexible outdoor spaces for gatherings, casual socializing, and just hanging out are imagined. Design features include arbors, ornamental planting, benches, etc. Art pieces, sculptures, and other forms of community expression are also appropriate design features as part of an overall high quality design theme. The graphic illustrates the general location of the design components and character of the community use area.



ADVENTURE PLAY AREA

The major objective of this use area is to robustly engage youth and teens in appealing non-programmed outdoor activities. This includes providing a variety of innovative play and outdoor adventure components that appeal to age groups from the very young through the 15 to 18 year old age group – the latter of which being a recognized challenging group to engage.



For the younger age groups, envisioned play components include theme-based adventure-type play structures at a community park-scale. The creativity of the design is key to making this a park feature that children will be eager to return to time and again. The vision master plan identifies the general location for the play area. Actual features, shape and size will be determined during detail design phase, with additional input being needed from targeted groups. The accompanying photos are just examples of how wide-ranging the possibilities are for imaginative approaches to play areas that goes beyond traditional play structures.

Character sketch illustrates the general location of adventure play area.



Imaginative play can be as simple as a small raft in a shallow pond (upper right) to site-specific designs that fit the overall design theme for the park (above). Incorporating “active participation” features (right) is also an increasingly popular approach to play areas.

All of these examples highlight the increasing sophistication of creating play areas that are fun, stimulating and educational.



Adding a splash pad for younger children would be another interesting play feature that expands the recreational value of the play area.

For older age groups, providing a challenging outdoor adventure-based recreational area space is envisioned. Although not an exhaustive list, examples of the types of features envisioned include:

- Slacklines
- Bouldering rock and/or climbing wall
- Ropes ladder and/or course, along with cargo nets
- Balance logs or beams



Slacklining is one those unique recreational activities that appeal to multiple generations, and can serve to bring people of various backgrounds and age groups together to have fun and socialize.

The proximity of the adventure play areas to one another and other park uses is an important design consideration. Providing adequate separation between age groups to avoid conflicts is obviously important. Conversely, the design should still allow for different age groups to observe the activities of other groups as part of the socialization aspect of the park experience. Designing these areas for ease of monitoring is also important, especially when a parent has children of varying ages and interests using different play features. Adequately buffering the noise from the play areas is also an important design consideration.

FIELD GAMES AREA



Youth-oriented fields for sports like soccer, are in demand across the city.

The field games area covers an area of 5 to 6 acres, with the final acreage being determined as specific community facility needs are refined through the design process. The final footprint of the field games area will also be influenced by the shape and size of adjoining elements, especially the play and outdoor adventure use and the north arm areas.

The field game area is envisioned as a well-maintained green space surrounded by trees and ponds. Field access, parking, and restrooms will all be on the south side of the field games area. Trees and natural vegetation will be used along the northern edge of this area to buffer adjacent properties and dissuade people from entering the field games area from the north side of the park.





Youth-oriented field games are one of the best ways to bring families together in a park setting.

As a baseline, the field games area is intended to address youth-oriented sports such as soccer, lacrosse, and perhaps football. Although not a full solution, providing field space on this site helps address the unmet demand for more sports fields throughout the community. For reference, space requirements for standard soccer field sizes include:

- Regulation full size – 1.75 to 2.0 acres
- Intermediate – 1.0 to 1.25 acres
- Junior size – 0.5 to 0.75 acre

Taking it a step further, accommodating other forms of established or emerging field activities is worthy of consideration. Examples of this include:

- Wiffleball (0.25 to 0.50 acre) – alternative to baseball and softball for smaller field spaces and oriented toward young children and family or group fun
- Futsal (0.25 to 0.50 acre) – game played on a hard surfaced, basketball sized court with a smaller, heavier low bounce ball
- Sand volleyball and footvolley (0.10 acre) – latter is sand volleyball without using hands
- Puckelball (from Sweden) – basically entails adding moguls or rolling grade to a soccer field to create a very unique dimension to playing a soccer ball



Puckelball is one example of one-off twist to a common game that would be unique to Edina, and likely Minnesota.

Other important design considerations related to the field games area include irrigation, field grades, and soil type (i.e. sand/peat or basic topsoil). Although considered, providing lighting was not widely accepted as appropriate for this community park setting.

OPEN PARKLAND AREA



The open parkland area is all about creating pleasant places for people to be outside doing casual recreational activities or just sitting in the park enjoying the day.

Providing quiet spaces for casual recreation and simply enjoying being outdoors in a beautiful setting is the theme for this area. Passive uses – such as walking along a well-designed trail or promenade, or sitting on a bench overlooking a pond – is a prime focus for this area, as is “quiet” active recreational and exercise uses. Examples of the latter include places for yoga classes, to toss a frisbee, or fly a kite.

Key elements envisioned for this area include:

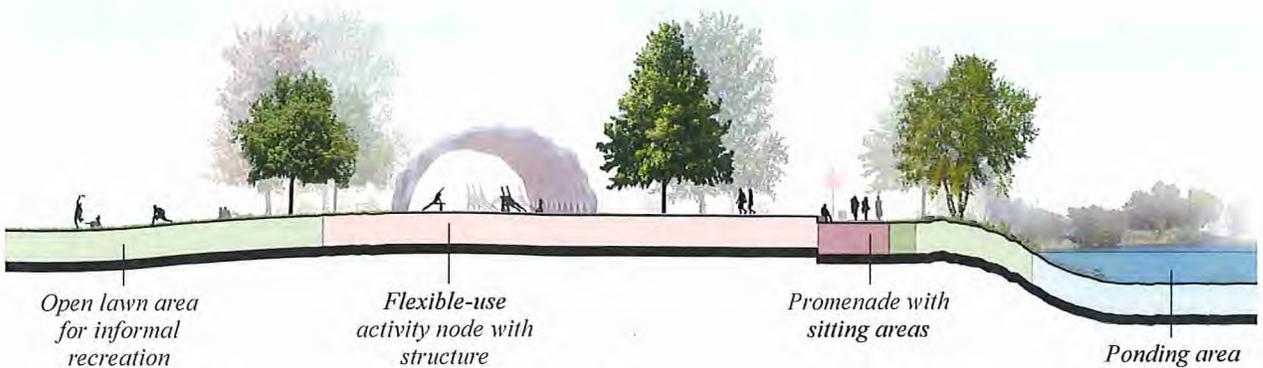
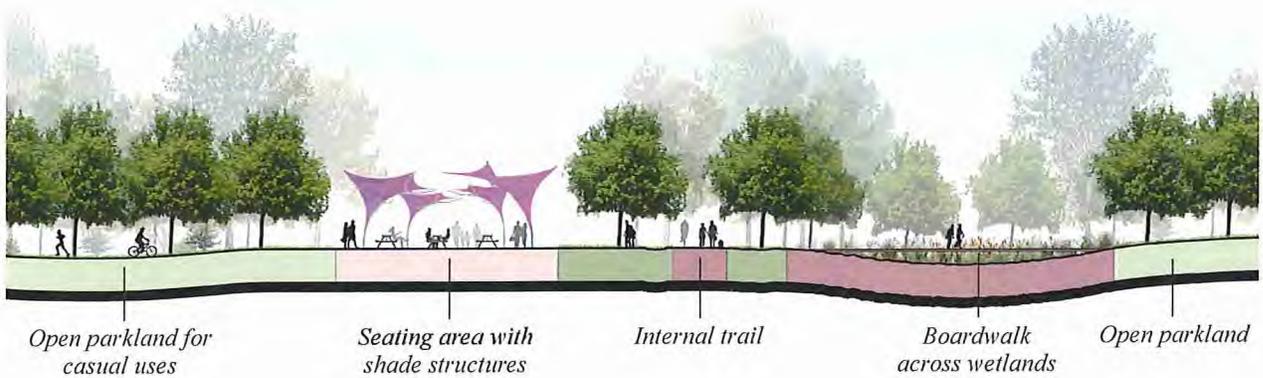
- Curvilinear walking trails (that are separate and distinguishable from the regional trail)
- Promenades with community art, sculptures, and other forms of community expression
- Sitting areas, with shade structures, arbors, and/or vegetation
- Lawn areas for casual recreation and informal play
- Flexible-use activity nodes and structures for outdoor recreation (e.g., yoga classes) and casual gatherings (i.e., senior groups, group picnicking)

The master plan view and character sketches on the next page conceptually illustrate how design creativity and the use of various design elements (i.e., promenades, community art, sculptures, etc.) are important to creating a unique park identity and high quality community park experience.





The vision master plan illustrates a diversity of park use areas, activity nodes, and features that can be incorporated into a final design to create a compelling and unique park setting.



As these cross-section character sketches illustrate, the park offers numerous opportunities to create a variety of compelling outdoor spaces to meet defined community needs and provide a diversity of park experiences.





In select locations, such as the far west end or north arm, using narrower, aggregate surfaced trails may be an appropriate alternative to paved park trails.

As the overall vision master plan illustrates, the western part of the open parkland area is envisioned as a naturalized passive use area with a limited palette of developed features. Key features in this area include ponds, expanded natural areas, and simple walking paths with sitting areas and observation areas – the latter of which being placed to take advantage of expansive views across the park.

Expanding the existing ponding areas is envisioned to enhance the park aesthetic and habitat for wildlife, along with improving stormwater management and better managing flooding concerns associated with the Nine Mile Creek watershed. (Note: this relates to addressing City of Edina water management concerns, and does not address any stormwater management issues associated with the Pentagon Park redevelopment. The latter is the responsibility of the developer.)



The north arm area of the park is currently an undefined and undeveloped space. Uses envisioned for this area are consistent with the larger open parkland area to the west, albeit focused on neighborhood play space and quiet walking trails. Features such as a butterfly or wildflower gardens or colorful prairie exhibits would add interest and provide a pleasant place to walk or sit and observe nature. Smaller open lawn areas would provide space for informal neighborhood use. Specific improvements envisioned for this area include:

- Continuation of the internal park trails – perhaps a bit narrower and soft-surfaced for those seeking a more casual, natural trail experience
- Adding to and improving buffering between the park and residential properties
- Addressing poor drainage and grade issues to make the central part of this area more usable and less prone to maintenance issues; perhaps use rain gardens to help manage stormwater in a more appealing manner
- Providing open lawn areas for casual outdoor play, with a neighborhood use focus
- Providing a smaller, neighborhood-focused play structure (would complement, not duplicate, the larger adventure play area)

(During the planning process, developing the north arm for urban agriculture was considered as a potential alternative use. This is considered in more detail on page 22.)

NATURALIZED BUFFERS

Naturalized buffers are envisioned along the entire northern property line to create an appealing edge to the park and demarcate the park from adjacent residential properties. The buffers will be designed to mutually benefit park users and adjacent homeowners. From a park user’s perspective, the goal is to preserve the park’s sense of place while walking along a trail, and to avoid feeling like one is intruding into someone’s backyard.

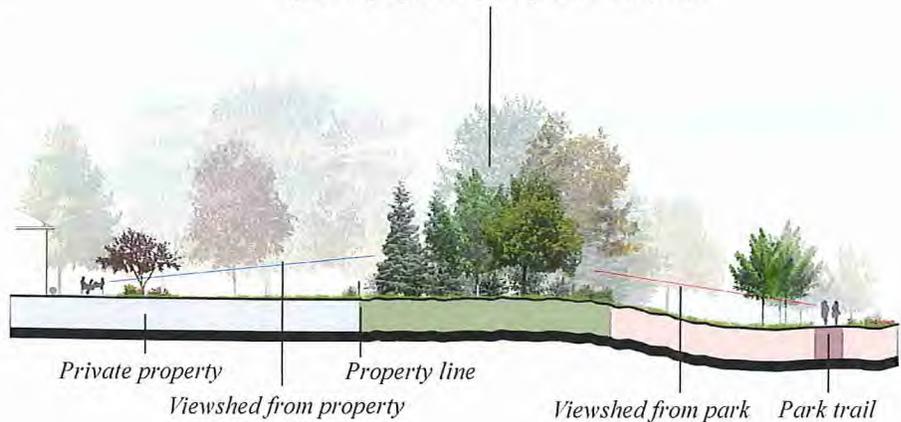


From a homeowner’s perspective, the goal is to maintain a sense of privacy while still providing select views of the park. Although a costly initiative, burying the power line running along the north property was supported by residents. Using vegetation to reduce the extent to which lights from the Pentagon Park area can be seen should be part of the buffer design.

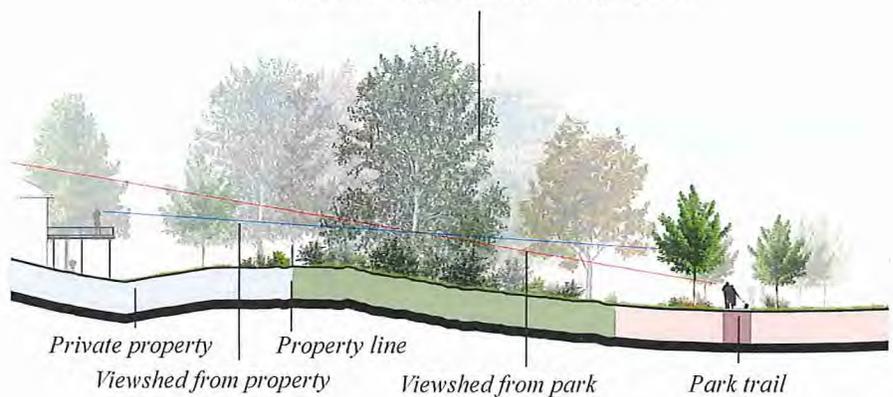
The following character sketches illustrate several options in terms of buffer treatments, which would be used based on actual circumstances and homeowner input.

As these cross-section character sketches illustrate, the goal is to adequately buffer adjacent properties from park activities for mutual benefit. The exact design treatment along the property line will vary depending on site-specific circumstances and preferences.

Dense natural buffer to more fully screen private properties from park development



Managed natural buffer to allow for select views into the park from private properties



As the cross-sections illustrate, maintaining separation between residential property lines and built features, like trails, is important for park users and homeowners. In general, 50 or more feet is a common baseline for minimum separation, but the exact distance is situational. Grades along the property line, density of vegetation, elevations of adjoining houses and decks, etc. all factor into final design decisions and separation requirements.



REPURPOSING THE MAINTENANCE BUILDING



A variety of options are available for repurposing the existing maintenance building. Using the building for storage, maintenance, and restrooms is a clear option. Providing space for other uses – such as bike rental, storage, and maintenance classes – also needs to be considered as the detail design for this area takes shape.

Using part of the building for an indoor-outdoor adventure play area offers some potential to expand play options. (Note: This approach needs more consideration as part of the City’s system-wide parks planning effort to determine need and viability.)

As with the clubhouse, the maintenance building is of good quality and in good repair. Here too the architectural aesthetics of the building warrant updating for park purposes. The color, exterior facade treatments, etc. will all evolve to be consistent with design themes that emerge for the clubhouse.

URBAN AGRICULTURE AREA (ALTERNATIVE NORTH ARM USE)



The urban agriculture idea builds upon the well-established community garden theme.

As previously noted, developing the north arm for urban agriculture was considered as an alternative use in lieu of open parkland. The following outlines that discussion.

The urban agriculture idea builds upon the community garden program that has taken root in many communities around the country. A community garden is essentially where a city provides small plots for residents to grow produce for personal consumption. The urban agriculture program takes this to the next level in which growing produce can be for personal consumption, resale at farmers markets (which could be held in the park), sold locally, or used for cooking classes. Adding an educational component, such as how to grow produce, is also commonly integrated into the urban agriculture theme.

Providing a space and/or structure for healthy eating cooking classes builds upon this theme. Accommodating organized farm-to-table events within the park is also an opportunity.

Specific elements and facilities related to this use area include:

- Fenced agricultural field area – 2 to 4 acres
- Shed and shelter structure for storing equipment and organizing activities
- Utility service – water, electricity, etc.

Taking this one step further, the shed and shelter structure could be upgraded to three-season shelter that could provide indoor/outdoor space for classes, farm-to-table events, and general group use.



Additional examples and ideas can be found at:

- foodtank.com/news/2014/02/capital-city-farming-10-urban-agriculture-projects-in-washington-dc
- csmonitor.com/World/Making-a-difference/Change-Agent/2014/0603/12-agrihoods-aim-to-make-farm-to-table-living-mainstream
- designtrend.com/articles/11703/20140314/argitopias-are-popping-up-all-over-the-place.htm
- jonesvalleyteachingfarm.org/our-story/our-impact/



Implementation Considerations

OVERVIEW

There are a variety of implementation considerations that will impact the repurposing of the Fred Richards site from a golf course to a community park. The following outlines the most predominant of these at a vision master plan level. Each of these, plus other considerations, will have to be more fully vetted and addressed during the detail master planning step in the process.

INTERRELATIONSHIP AND COLLABORATION WITH PENTAGON PARK REDEVELOPMENT

The City and Pentagon Park development team have been working together for some time on a redevelopment plan for the commercial area south of the park. The development team has also been engaged in this planning process to ensure mutual understanding of issues and desired outcomes associated with repurposing the Fred Richards site.

Discussions with the development team suggest a common vision of repurposing the Fred as a high-value community park is both achievable and mutually beneficial. This common vision is even reflected in the developer's overarching theme of "wellness" for the Pentagon Park redevelopment. The City's own tag line of Edina being a place for "living, learning, raising families and doing business" reinforces the importance of the private development area and public park be designed as complementary aspects of the larger community form.

The following outlines the key provisions of the City's resolution granting rezoning of the Pentagon Park redevelopment area, along with some key points of focus that came out of this process.

RESOLUTION GRANTING PRELIMINARY REZONING TO PUD FOR THE PENTAGON PARK REDEVELOPMENT AREA

A resolution granting preliminary rezoning to PUD and an overall development plan was approved by the City Council in March of 2014. The rezoning resolution extensively covers the findings and conditions of approval that will guide the development. Key provisions of the resolution include that the land use proposal will:

- Be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- Meet the intent of the PUD, with the site guided as "Office Residential" (which is a transitional area between higher intensity districts and residential districts); primary uses include offices, housing, limited service uses, limited industrial, parks and open space
- Create a more efficient and creative use of the property; this includes better vehicle and pedestrian connections, enhanced green space and ponding, a mixture of land uses, improved architecture and sustainability, and shared parking with the park



Under the resolution, the proposed project must also meet the pertinent goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, including:

- Design public open and green linkages that bring both amenity and positive image to neighborhoods, corridors, and business precincts
- Design public streets to serve not only vehicles but also pedestrians, people with mobility aids, and bicycles
- Create walkable streets that foster an active public life; streets that are energized by their proximity to a vibrant mix of activity-generating uses
- Preserve and make accessible natural areas and features as part of a comprehensive open space network
- Within larger redevelopment sites, promote a fine-grained and interconnected network of local streets and paths, encouraging pedestrian circulation and providing a choice of access points
- Encourage infill/redevelopment opportunities that optimize use of city infrastructure and that complement area, neighborhood, and/or corridor context and character
- Stay committed to the “podium” height concept, with podium being defined as the part of a building that abuts the street, or provides the transition to residential neighborhoods, parks, and other sensitive land uses; the intent with the concept is to create a consistent street wall envelope and a comfortable pedestrian environment

KEY POINTS OF FOCUS FOR CONTINUED COLLABORATION

With respect to the Fred Richards site, continued collaboration between the City and developer on infrastructure development and design of buildings and streetscapes is imperative. Key points of focus going forward include:

- Designing the parkway to provide ease of access to the park and development area, with the roadway being located on the southern edge of the park with minimal encroachment into park acreage; the aesthetic qualities of the parkway’s streetscape should complement the design themes and character established for the park
- Building facades in the new development should provide a aesthetically pleasant backdrop as viewed from within the park and along the parkway; this includes an appealing architectural style, ample trees and vegetation, and limiting lighting impacts on and across the park
- The park site and Pentagon Park development will *independently* manage their own stormwater – although this does not preclude seeking mutually beneficial stormwater management outcomes (as determined by the City to be in its best interest)

The provisions of the City’s rezoning resolution along with the key points of focus listed above provide a clear direction and set of expectations on the interrelationship between the park and the Pentagon Park development area to the south. The importance of the design for these two areas being of high quality and complementary cannot be overstated. Doing so is imperative for the park to retain a compelling sense of place.



TECHNICAL CONDITIONS AND CHALLENGES

(INCLUDES NINE MILE
CREEK WATERSHED RELATED
CONSIDERATIONS)



Although well-maintained and visually appealing, the poor soils across the park will have to be addressed as part of any park development.



Through insightful design, the aesthetic value, water quality and overall function of the site's wetlands and ponds can be much improved.

Aesthetically, the Fred Richards site offers a very appealing setting for a community park. Unfortunately, development of the site brings with it some significant technical challenges that will have to be addressed. Most pressing of these is dealing with poor site soils, protecting wetlands, and addressing stormwater management issues that go well beyond the site itself.

With respect to site soils, peat and clay predominant across the site. These soils are prone to saturation and general instability, making it more difficult and costly to build structures and otherwise keep the park in top form. Even keeping the golf course in good playable shape required extensive use of soil-stabilizing fabric underlayment across much of the site. Going forward, accommodating site soils will undoubtedly be a factor in design decisions pertaining to the type and location of site features. Practical limitations on site grading will likely be one of the most pressing issues as development plans take shape.

With respect to wetlands, all of the current ponds and waterways found across the site are protected under wetland conservation laws. Depending on type and quality, any relocation requires mitigation, even if done onsite. Depending on independent value assessments, mandated replacement ratios can range from 2 1/4 up to 9 acres for every 1 displaced wetland acre. From a practical and philosophical standpoint, every attempt needs to be made to avoid displacing the existing ponds and wetlands.

Water management issues associated with the larger Nine Mile Creek watershed further complicates onsite stormwater and wetland protection issues. Succinctly stated, there is a need for additional stormwater management capacity throughout the watershed – including the Fred Richards site. This relates to both water quality and water volume. The increasingly routine occurrence of flooding across parts of the golf course illustrate that this issue is not going away and that this site needs to be part of the broader stormwater management solution.

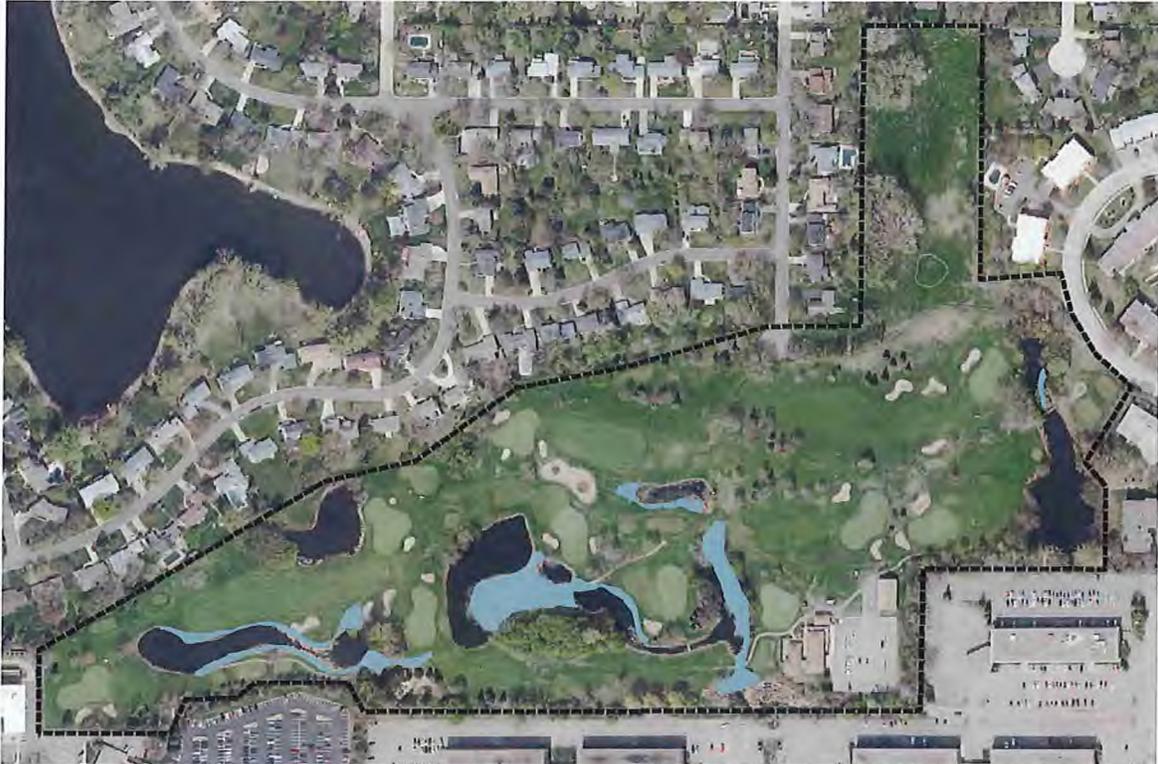
If done well, increasing the surface area of ponds within the park would be beneficial in several important ways. First, increasing the size and scale of the ponding areas would obviously help address the stormwater management issues previously defined.

Second, and of perhaps greater importance to the park user, a *well-designed* expanded system of ponds and wetlands could further enhance the aesthetic qualities of the park. Well-shaped and located ponds can provide additional “edges” to work off of when designing trails, providing sitting areas, and creating different spaces within the park.

Third, well-designed ponds and wetlands can dramatically increase the value of the wildlife habitat within the park. For example, providing wider naturalized buffers along the ponds over what is currently the case would greatly improve habitat quality and quantity. Typically, a higher quality buffer needs be 30 to 60 feet wide, depending on the site-specific circumstances.



Taken together, the potential benefits of adding ponding as part of an overall design can be significant – both at the park level and larger watershed level. For reference, the following graphic illustrates the extent to which existing ponds and wetlands have been expanded as represented on the vision master plan shown on page 10.



The blue areas represent expanded ponding relative to existing ponding and wetland areas. Note that the final shape and size of ponds will be determined during the detailed master plan phase of the project.

COST PROJECTIONS FOR REPURPOSING SITE

The forthcoming cost projections provide a range of potential costs associated with repurposing the site from a golf course to a community park. The projections are based on a combination of site-specific development issues and professional judgments based on developments of similar characteristics. The projections are based on 2014 dollars, which will require inflation adjustments over time. (Also note that 2014 was a volatile year in project bidding for similar work (i.e., bids have been coming in higher than expected), with a fair amount of uncertainty remaining in the marketplace going forward.)

At the vision master plan level, the level of plan detail combined with market uncertainties pose inherent limitations in projecting potential costs. The intended use of the cost projections is to aid the City in developing an overall funding and implementation strategy, including:

- Defining the magnitude of the investment needed to develop the park



- Comparing the relative cost of a basic level of development with that of a more robust approach that more fully achieves the vision as set forth in this plan
- Prioritizing and budgeting for capital improvement program

COST ESTIMATING CATEGORIES

For budgeting purposes, the cost estimate is broken down into categories. Several categories are associated with city-funded development, and several categories relate to work completed by others or the city acting in partnership with others. Others include the Pentagon Park developers, Three Rivers Park District, and Nine Mile Creek Watershed District.

City-funded development categories include:

- **Baseline park development package** – includes the core elements of repurposing the park from a golf course to a community park; generally, this includes the community activities and events area, adventure play area, and basic field games area; open parkland area development is limited to trails and a limited palette of other site amenities, such as sitting areas
- **Open parkland area enhancements package** – includes the major development elements in this area, such as the promenades, boardwalks, developed activity nodes, art and sculpture, etc.; also includes some enhancements to the community activities area
- **Field games area enhancements package** – includes upgrading the fields from topsoil surfacing to sand-based fields and related elements, such as underdrainage

Partnership or by-others funded categories include:

- **Parkway package** – includes the roadway and related streetscape elements; the presumption is that the Pentagon Park developer will be the lead and primarily responsible for this work
- **Regional trail package** – includes the regional trail and related development; the presumption is Three Rivers Park District will be the lead and responsible for this work
- **Pond expansion, stormwater management, and water quality improvements package** – includes expanding ponds and related; City may be responsible for costs, but as part of a larger Nine Mile Creek watershed planning strategy

COST ESTIMATE RANGES

The following summarizes the cost ranges associated with each of the listed categories. Cost ranges are provided due to pricing and quantity variabilities associated with this level of planning. Cost ranges include 15% add-on for testing, design and survey fees, along with 2% for geotechnical testing and permitting.



City-Funded Development Categories:

Baseline park development package _____	\$2,966,000 to \$3,559,000
Open parkland area enhancements package ____	\$2,897,000 to \$3,476,000
Field games area enhancements package _____	\$ 713,000 to \$ 855,000
 Total _____	 \$6,576,000 to \$7,890,000

Costs associated with partnership or by-others funded categories are more broadly considered since others play a lead or partnership role in developing design solutions. For planning context, it is expected that the parkway package will be in the \$2 million plus range. The regional trail package will be in the \$500,000 plus range (although this will be highly influenced by the need for bridges and dealing with soil conditions).

Pond expansion, stormwater management, and water quality improvements package is highly variable and dependent on overall size of the ponding expansion. For budgeting purposes, \$1 million is a reasonable starting point, with many factors influencing the final costs for this type of work.

Also note that setting aside a 10% to 20% cost contingency is recommended for each of the above categories to guard against unknowns in final design outcomes and changes in the bidding environment at the point of development.

