

Columbia Heights

# PARK SYSTEMS MASTER PLAN

Columbia Heights, Minnesota

Huset Parkway



Prepared by



Planning | Landscape Architecture | Urban Design

Proposal for  
Planning Services  
FEBRUARY 13, 2026

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RENDERING FROM PARK SYSTEM PLAN FOR  
NISSWA, MINNESOTA



Ursula Brandt, Community Development Dept  
City of Columbia Heights  
3989 Central Ave, NE  
Columbia Heights, MN 55421

800 Washington Ave. N., #207  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
612-338-0800 | hkgi.com

RE: Proposal for Park Systems Master Plan for the city of Columbia Heights

Dear Ms. Brandt,

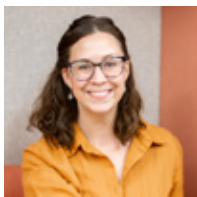
As a Columbia Heights resident for more than a decade, I have to say, I am so excited that the city is finally embarking upon a park system plan. Since I moved here, I have seen Columbia Heights make transformative investments in updated facilities like the library and City Hall, and have waited patiently for there to be funding for a proper visioning process for the parks. I have had the fortune of building relationships with city staff and city leaders through my involvement in the Sustainability Commission, volunteering, and attendance at city and school events, and am eager to mobilize all the passion and knowledge present in our community to plan for the next generation of the Columbia Heights park system.

HKGi is well-suited to lead this plan, not simply because of my personal connection or our work on the Comprehensive Plan, but because we are a firm of talented parks and recreation professionals. We have assembled a team who has deep expertise in park system planning, with folks who specialize in asset management planning, playground and park amenity conditions assessments, community engagement, park design, and implementation. Together, we'll be able to provide the city with the data-backed, consensus-built park system recommendations it needs to move into the next decade confidently. Knowing that the city is starting with very little data in place, we can help build the inventory and tracking tools you need to make smart decisions about new investments, operations, maintenance, and eventual replacement of amenities.

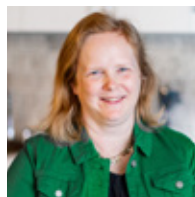
HKGi brings an outstanding reputation for conducting inclusive and thorough community engagement which combined with our local knowledge and specialized expertise, will result in a park system plan uniquely suited to Columbia Heights' residents, culture, staffing, and funding capacity.

Based on review of the RFP, we have provided a proposed approach, work plan, project team, experience, schedule, and fee proposal for the park system plan project. I appreciate the opportunity to submit our proposal. Knowing that this project is close to my heart, I prepared a work plan reflective of the type of process and product that I think will set the City up to properly implement meaningful park investments over the next ten years; however, we are a nimble and efficient group of park planning professionals and can revise the scope to meet whatever budget you identify. I am more than happy work through fee or scope reductions to better suit available funds. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our qualifications for this project in more detail, please contact me or Rita. We look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,



Sarah Evenson, PLA (MN)  
Project Manager  
262-391-7653 | sarah@hkgi.com



Rita Trapp, AICP  
Principal in Charge  
651-402-8045 | rita@hkgi.com

# PROJECT APPROACH

An aerial rendering of a park plaza. The plaza is paved with light-colored tiles and features several wooden structures, including a large pergola-like structure with a table and chairs, and a smaller structure with a table and chairs. People are walking, sitting at tables, and playing a game on a wooden board. The plaza is surrounded by green grass and trees. The text "PROJECT APPROACH" is overlaid in large white letters.

*IMAGE FROM PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM PLAN  
ALEXANDRIA, MINNESOTA*



# Our Understanding

Columbia Heights is a vibrant first-ring suburb beloved for its diverse community, naturally affordable housing, and a small town feel that belies its convenient proximity to Minneapolis. The past decade has seen an influx of investments and planning that has kickstarted the city’s modernization, from a new library, to a new mixed-use city hall building, to the upcoming Municipal Service Center project. Parks advocates have long recognized the need for a park system plan that would enable Columbia Heights to properly plan for the needs of the City’s parks into the next decade; however, patience in the face of the other pressing facility needs was warranted. Finally, parks planning is now on the docket!

Like many other communities HKGi has worked with, Columbia Heights is dealing with a park system that was built as the city grew and developed, and hasn’t had a proper plan to guide its development in thirty years. Now decades old in many cases, replacement of existing facilities and amenities presents economic and operational challenges. Embarking on this system planning process in conjunction with hiring the City’s first Parks & Recreation Director is an essential step in the right direction to shepherd the park system into its next generation. The value generated by this investment- from attracting and retaining residents, to bolstering community health, to strategically and efficiently delivering recreation amenities- will far outweigh the initial cost.

While Columbia Heights has made limited updates to select parks in recent years, it has not approached these updates within the context of broader recreation needs city-wide. Having a community-oriented system plan in place will ensure that investments are grounded in demographic and trend projections, are properly-sited with complementary facilities and amenities, and are able to be sustainably funded, maintained, and eventually replaced.

The city’s park system includes a diverse array of facilities and amenities, including a splash pad, wading pools, playgrounds, courts, athletics fields (although no dedicated soccer!), rinks, picnic shelters, a beach, boat launch, and multi-use trails. Community gardens also have a presence in the park system. Murzyn Hall and the Hylander Center both support recreational programming, while other park buildings like the warming house at Ostrander have been out of commission for years.

Columbia Heights’ parks largely serve local residents, but Huset Park, Sullivan Lake, Silver Lake, and Kordiak Park all attract regional visitors for various events. Many of the city’s neighborhood parks have playgrounds and other amenities that have reached the end of their useful life and will require strategic replacement. A detailed inventory and thorough assessment of the system’s existing amenities and their condition is necessary to prioritize replacement of these features.

# Approach & Work Plan

## OUR METHODS TO THE APPROACH

HKGi’s approach to Columbia Heights’ Parks System Plan begins with our belief that a high-quality and accessible parks, trails, and open space system provides essential cultural, health and wellness, ecological, and economic benefits to the community.

We will collaborate with city staff and community stakeholders to understand the needs of the city’s park system and develop guidelines for Columbia Heights to adapt and maintain its park system into the future.

Our approach places HKGi’s four core principles at the center of our practice: collaborate, listen, explore, and create. The work plan that follows is guided by these principles and designed to keep the focus on the city’s unique needs and opportunities.



Our work plan describes the process, methods, meetings, and deliverables we plan to use to meet the desires expressed in the RFP.

## Task 1: Project Organization & Kick off

(APRIL THROUGH MAY 2026)

1.1 **Project Management:** Sarah Evenson, proud Columbia Heights resident for more than a decade, will manage the project and ensure we stay on schedule and efficiently complete the deliverables. Sarah most recently lead the park system plan for the City of Stillwater, and her experience as a park planner and resident will combine with staff’s institutional knowledge and the desires of the community to inform the overall goals and direction of the plan.

1.2 **Kick-off Meeting:** The project will begin with a kick off meeting to review the project schedule, goals, deliverables, community engagement approach, communication preferences, and other logistics.

1.3 **Prepare the Community Engagement Plan:** The community engagement plan will outline the goals, audiences, methods, and schedule for engagement activities during the planning process. HKGi has been leading public and stakeholder engagement processes for several decades, and our methods and resources, including in-person, interactive, and online options, have evolved over the years to respond to changing preferences and interest in providing input. Given Operation Metro Surge’s impact on the people of Columbia Heights, engagement for this project may look a little bit different than past park system plans.

- 1.4 **Review Background Documents:** Relevant planning documents will be reviewed and summarized by the team in order to ensure that the park system plan's goals align with other determined direction for the city. These documents include the city's comprehensive plan, recent park planning at Huset and any development plans for the Medtronic site.
- 1.5 **Prepare Recreation Trends Presentation:** HKGi uses current studies and reputable parks and recreation organizations and resources, such as NRPA and MRPA, to keep an up-to-date catalog on what is trending in parks and recreation planning. A trends presentation customized to Columbia Heights will help staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission understand what park systems are incorporating to meet future demands.
- 1.6 **Review NRPA Standards/Metrics:** The National Recreation and Parks Association maintains a database of parks and recreation metrics from around the country. While HKGi and the NRPA recognize that every part of the country is different and a park system must fit the context of its unique location, these metrics provide a reference point to help Columbia Heights understand where it may exceed or fall short in comparison to other similarly-sized communities.
- 1.7 **Prepare Community Comparison:** We have done park planning work across the Twin Cities metro, and will harness the latest data on peer communities to evaluate how Columbia Heights stacks up, and what funding sources could be leveraged to support park investments.
- 1.8 **Demographics Analysis and Growth Projections:** In conjunction with our work on the Comprehensive Plan, we will analyze community demographics and growth projections to understand what the recreation needs of the population may be over the next 10-20 years.

- 1.9 **City Staff Check-in Meetings:** Bi-weekly staff check in meetings will be set at the beginning of the project and will begin two weeks after the kick off meeting. These meetings may be brief updates on the status of tasks, or may be longer as needed to discuss project deliverables, strategize our approach to certain items, and coordinate meetings. We anticipate 2 check-in meetings as part of Task 1.

## Task 2: System Inventory & Evaluation

(JUNE THROUGH JULY 2026)

- 2.1 **Park Tours and Asset Inventory:** The HKGi team will tour all of the city's parks and recreation facilities to understand their existing conditions and context. Data on quality and condition of capital assets (playgrounds, shelters, courts, etc.) will be captured and utilized to help predict replacement timelines and prioritize future investments. We will use ArcGIS Field Maps to create an accurate, geo-located digital inventory of park assets that can then be transferred to staff for future use.
- 2.2 **Prepare an ESRI Database and Dashboard:** The Field Maps inventory will be translated into an ESRI database with a Parks Dashboard (see example) that can be configured to easily review each park's assets, their condition, proposed replacement timeline, and other data useful for maintenance, implementation, and purchasing.
- 2.3 **Prepare Cost Analysis and Projections:** We will begin to populate the ESRI database with assumed capital replacement costs for existing park assets by projected year of replacement. Further along in the process, once park recommendations are established, we will add proposed amenities to this spreadsheet to assist in capital planning and asset management.

- 2.4 **Prepare Base Maps:** We will develop base maps of each park showing their existing facilities/amenities in order to guide future analysis and recommendations.
- 2.5 **Prepare Service Area Maps and Gap Analysis:** Service area maps will highlight access to parks and various types of facilities, including playgrounds, picnic areas, fields, courts, and other amenities in the system. Ideally, every city resident should be able to walk a half-mile or less (10 minutes) to a neighborhood park. We will take into consideration school facilities and facilities in adjacent communities that may contribute to recreational availability. A gap analysis will identify land use patterns and other barriers impacting access, and we will make recommendations on how these might be overcome in order to provide equitable access to all residents.
- 2.6 **Funding + CIP Analysis:** Capital and operational resources will be evaluated with city staff to determine where the money is going today and how future improvements may be funded. Existing resources, revenue, grants, partnerships, and other mechanisms will be discussed.
- 2.7 **Park Commission Meeting #1 to Present Inventory + Discuss Engagement:** We will present the inventory and analysis findings to the Park Commission. The trends presentation, NRPA metrics/service area maps, and peer communities comparison will help to ground the Commissioners in the current status of the parks system, and help them to understand future needs. Knowing that Commissioners are important community advocates, we will also discuss upcoming engagement opportunities with them so that they can be prepared to answer resident questions and spread the word.
- 2.8 **City Staff Check-in Meetings:** We anticipate 4 city staff check-in meetings in Task 2.

## Task 3: Needs Assessment & Engagement

(MID-JUNE THROUGH OCTOBER 2026)

- 3.1 **Prepare Promotional Materials:** Our graphic designer will develop attractive and informational promotional materials to help spread the word and encourage engagement in the planning process. Materials may include flyers for posting at parks and in civic areas, yard signs with links to online surveys and information, social media graphics, and copy for posting in newsletters and on the city website. We have several Spanish-speaking staff who can translate materials into Spanish as desired. A portion of our expenses are devoted to working with MINT, Minnesota Interpreters and Translators, who can provide translation services so that select materials can be produced in Somali, Hmong, or other languages as well. We will enlist the Park Commissioners to help spread the word to city residents through social media and other local channels.
- 3.2 **Prepare and Facilitate an Online Survey:** Our team has surveyed dozens of communities about their parks and we know which questions will give us insights into residents' experiences with the park system and their desires for the future. HKGi utilizes Survey Monkey and Maptionnaire to efficiently build online surveys and prepare summaries.
- 3.3 **Prepare and Facilitate Maptionnaire:** We will develop a complementary interactive map of the city's parks to solicit input on the system that is geographically-located. Users may place comments directly on an online map to pinpoint specific issues within the park system, or offer up ideas for certain areas.
- 3.4 **Pop-up/ Community Event attendance:** Now more than ever, we want to meet community members in settings that feel safe for them, which may mean smaller pop-ups catered

to specific groups whose feedback we want to make sure is included, rather than more traditional open houses that might not feel approachable for everyone. In conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan, we will plan three of these events, which can be decided upon with staff input once we formalize the community engagement plan. Regardless of event size, we can cater materials to suit the attendees and setting, including display boards, maps, handouts, or presentations. Because Sarah is engaged in the community already, she will likely be present at additional events, like the Jamboree, Monarch Festival, Pride, fall cleanup, or other celebrations throughout the duration of the project, and can further spread the word about the system plan.

- 3.5 **Stakeholder Outreach (City Commissions, CHPS, Anoka County, MWMO, HeightsNEXT, arts, athletics, etc.):** We will work with city staff at the kick-off meeting to identify the stakeholder groups that should be engaged during this process and the best methods. Sarah will connect with representatives from each stakeholder group during the initial needs assessment to get them familiar with the planning process and encourage them to participate in engagement opportunities. We'll offer in-person or virtual listening sessions to understand each group's thoughts on park opportunities and the potential for partnership. Then, once plan recommendations are drafted, our team will make sure interested stakeholders have an opportunity to review and comment on the plan before it is finalized.
- 3.6 **Prepare Summary of Input:** The park system plan document will include a graphical and narrative summary of what we heard during the engagement process and how it informs the recommendations in the plan.
- 3.7 **Prepare Summary of Inventory, Evaluation, and Needs Assessment, Challenges and Opportunities:** We will begin to assemble the front-end chapters of the park system plan with

the maps, graphics, tables, and narrative that summarizes the strengths and challenges of the system, along with the opportunities for the future.

- 3.8 **City Council Meeting #1 and Park Commission Meeting #2 to Present Inventory & Needs:** We will prepare a second presentation for the Park Commissioners and for Council to describe what we heard from engagement, how it might influence recommendations for the parks and recreation system, and where we see the system going in the future. We will conduct a visioning exercise with the Commissioners that will help to develop goals and objectives.
- 3.9 **City Staff Check-in Meetings:** We anticipate 6 city staff check-in meetings in Task 3.



## Task 4: Prepare Draft System Plan (NOVEMBER 2026 THROUGH JANUARY 2027)

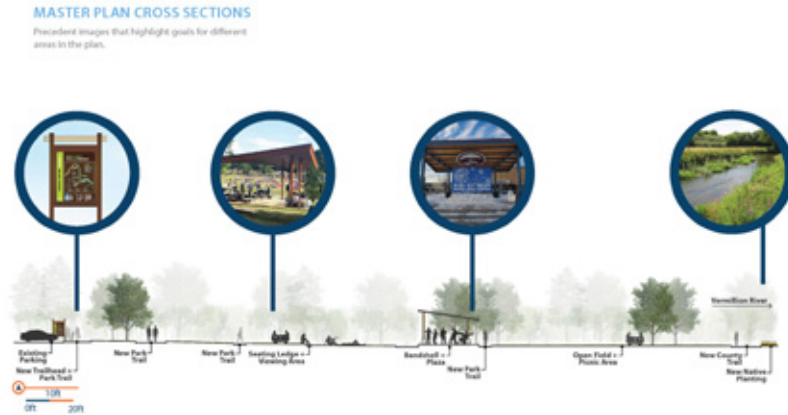
- 4.1 **Prepare Vision, Goals, and Objectives (Sustainability, Accessibility and Inclusion, Demographics and Growth):** Utilizing the criteria developed during Task 3.8, we will draft goals and objectives that meet the vision expressed by residents, visitors, stakeholders, city staff, and city officials. These will align with the vision for the city being developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

4.2 **Draft System-wide Recommendations:** While individual park improvements are important, identifying standard practices that should be included at all of the city’s parks and natural areas is essential to providing a coherent park system and level of service. We will identify recommendations related to maintenance of natural resources, consistent wayfinding and signage, ADA-accessibility, safe access to and from parks, and the relationships the city builds with partners for programming and recreation, among others.

4.3 **Draft Individual Park Recommendations:** Grounded in staff’s institutional knowledge and what we hear throughout engagement, a basic framework for future investments and recommendations suited to each park will be drafted. Two priority parks within the system will be designed in greater detail, with more refined projects, costs, and phasing identified.

4.4 **Engagement and Outreach for the Draft Plan:** A draft of the plan, including the vision, goals, objectives, system-wide recommendations, and individual park recommendations will be shared with staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission for their review and comment before being refined and made available to stakeholders and the general public for their input. HKGi utilizes easy-to-use online document review tools like Konveio to let various groups share thoughts and respond to each other’s comments on their own time, making collaboration more convenient for people’s schedules. HKGi staff can also respond to posted comments, clarifying questions and acknowledging suggestions directly rather than after the fact.

4.5 **Prepare Cost Analysis and Projections:** Each park recommendation will include a high-level cost estimate that will be added to the asset management database to assist in investment planning and prioritization. We will help staff



understand lifecycle costs and anticipated additional or ongoing maintenance costs as new investments come online. HKGi maintains a list of funding and revenue options and strategies, which we will review with staff and tailor an approach to fit the proposed projects and community capacity.

4.6 **Prioritization Exercises and Phasing Discussions:** Using the asset management database to explore different scenarios, we will draft priorities and phasing of recommendations with staff. Each recommended project will be associated with a near-term, mid-term, or long-term priority level.

4.7 **Draft Implementation Chapter:** Once we have a good sense of the plan’s direction, we will begin drafting the implementation chapter, clearly outlining the path forward by listing the priority projects, estimated costs, phasing, and funding options for the next decade of park system investment. Working with city staff, we will outline operations and maintenance practices across the park system, develop metrics to determine successful achievement of goals, and identify needs for maintenance equipment, staffing, or partnerships to help sustain the park system.

4.8 **City Staff Check-in Meetings:** We anticipate 6 city staff check-in meetings to coordinate on drafting the system plan in Task 4.

## Task 5: Prepare Final Plan & Deliverables

(FEBRUARY THROUGH MARCH 2027)

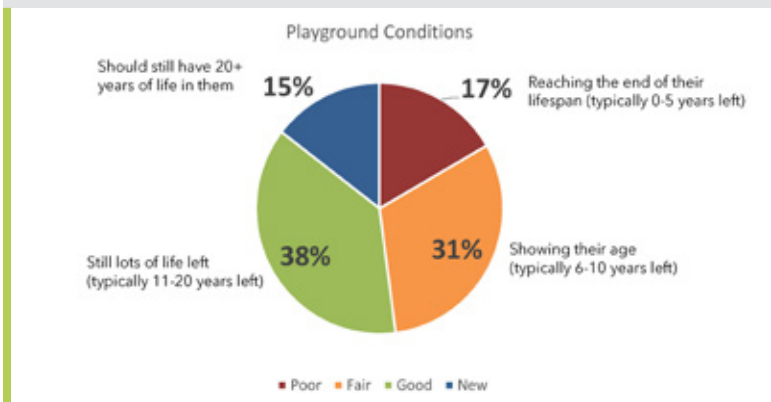
- 5.1 **Final Revisions to Plan:** Comments received on the draft plan will be incorporated into the final document, which will include the initial existing conditions evaluation, needs assessment, vision, goals, objectives, planning recommendations, and implementation approach. The full document will be an illustrative, detailed, and user-friendly guide to future projects, operations, and management of the Columbia Heights parks and recreation system.
- 5.2 **Finalize Asset Management Tools:** We will make sure proposed capital projects and phasing are updated in the Parks Dashboard and asset management database and familiarize staff with these tools so that staff can make smart decisions about future implementation.
- 5.3 **City Council Meeting/Work Session to Review Park System Plan:** We'll present a summary of the planning process, community engagement, and park system recommendations to City Council. Feedback will be welcomed from Council and folded into the final version.
- 5.4 **City Staff Check-in Meetings:** We anticipate 2 city staff check-in meetings as we prepare to finalize the plan document.
- 5.5 **Deliver Final Plan and Associated Files:** The final Park System Plan will be delivered to the city as a high-resolution PDF document and a printed and bound copy. Any asset management tools, including ESRI database files and ArcGIS Online content created as part of the plan will be transferred to the City for their continued use.



## Asset Management Database

As part of the system inventory, will translate the parks inventory and facilities assessment into a searchable GIS database. The database will include such information as the year a specific facility or amenity was installed, its lifespan, its projected replacement year, its condition, its location, and budget value. We will pair this with an excel spreadsheet of recommended individual city park projects that can be used to track planned expenditures and project long-term replacement costs for park facilities on an annual basis.

- Field Maps Inventory
- ESRI Database
- ESRI Dashboard [Example Here](#)
- Cost Analysis and Projections Spreadsheet (in excel file)



# PROPOSED PROJECT TEAM & EXPERIENCE



# Firm Profile



For more than forty years HKGi has helped communities throughout the Upper Midwest create great places for people to live, work

and play. HKGi's landscape architects and planners share their design expertise and passion with clients striving to create quality places. Our community-based approach to planning and design builds on the four key principles that have defined HKGi's practice since the firm's beginning: **collaborate, listen, explore, create.**

## PARK PLANNING & DESIGN

Park and trail planning has long been a core HKGi service, with the firm completing more than forty park system plans and needs assessments along with hundreds of park and trail plans and improvements. In our system planning work, we assist clients with prioritizing and planning for future improvements, including repair and replacement of existing assets, construction of new facilities and amenities, and planning for operations and maintenance costs for both existing and future assets.

HKGi's park planners also bring broader planning experience to their park system planning work, routinely contributing to community-wide planning such as comprehensive plans and bicycle-pedestrian plans. These efforts involve understanding how communities are evolving, identifying service needs and gaps, and creating shared community visions to guide long-range planning. These services facilitate holistic, well-informed decision-making among city leaders, staff, and community members and lead to system plans that better respond to the community and its future needs.

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## MAIN OFFICE

800 Washington Ave. N., #207  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

## SATELLITE OFFICE

Vernon County, WI

## PRINCIPALS

- Bryan Harjes, President
- Brad Scheib, Vice President
- Gabrielle Grinde, Vice President
- Rita Trapp, Vice President

## ASSOCIATES

- Jeff Miller, Senior Associate
- Jody Rader, Associate
- Kevin Clarke, Associate
- Sarah Evenson, Associate

## STAFF

- 5 Certified Planners
- 6 Licensed Landscape Architects
- 11 Planners/Urban Designers
- 2 Marketing Communications





**Sarah Evenson** PLA (MN)  
Project Manager  
sarah@hkgi.com

**Years of Experience: 15**

**Education**

Master of Landscape Architecture and  
Bachelor of Environmental Design -  
University of Minnesota

**Registration**

Landscape Architect, Minnesota  
License #53008

**Awards**

2025 ASLA-MN Merit Award for General  
Design, Grams Park Nature Play,  
Sherburne County

2021 ASLA-MN Honor Award in Planning  
and Urban Design, Minnehaha Parkway  
Regional Trail Master Plan, Minneapolis

2019 MN APA Excellence in Community  
Engagement Award, 2040 Community  
Plan, Red Wing

2015 MN APA Excellence in Community  
Engagement Award, Great River Passage  
Interpretive Plan, Saint Paul

**Introduction**

Sarah will serve as the Project Manager for the Columbia Heights Park Systems Master Plan. In this role she will provide day-to-day leadership for the planning team and will collaborate with City staff to conduct an inclusive, thorough community engagement process. She will work closely with the planning team from project kick-off through report development and approval.

Sarah has contributed to several park system planning initiatives and is currently leading a similar process in Stillwater. In addition to park system planning, she frequently leads individual park master plan and implementation projects. This experience provides her with insight into the up-front cost and ongoing operations issues that must be considered when conducting long-range planning for municipal park systems.

Sarah is a skilled communicator with excellent listening abilities and an emphasis on promoting sustainable design as a way to help communities create healthy places for play and gathering. As a proud Columbia Heights resident, her family frequently enjoys the community’s park and recreation programs and facilities.

**Relevant Project Experience**

- Park System Plan | Stillwater, MN
- Moore Lake Park Master Plan | Fridley, MN
- Thompson County Park Master Plan and Improvements | Dakota County, MN
- St. Louis River Corridor Neighborhood Park Master Plans | Duluth, MN
- Grams Park Nature Play Area | Sherburne County, MN
- Parks and Trails System Master Plan | Sherburne County, MN
- Natural Resource Management Program Plan | Duluth, MN
- 54th Street Triangle Park | Minneapolis, MN
- Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan | Minneapolis, MN
- Party on the Plaza Engagement Study | Burnsville, MN
- Watershed Management Plan Engagement Services | Vermillion River Watershed JPO



**Rita Trapp** AICP, LEED AP  
Principal in Charge  
rita@hkgi.com

## **Years of Experience: 23**

### **Education**

B.S., Land Use Geography and Economics, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

### **Registration**

American Institute of Certified Planners  
Certification #021555

### **Awards**

2018 MN APA Excellence in Community Engagement Award - Chanhassen Parks and Recreation System Plan

2017 National APA President's Council Leadership Award

2009 ASLA-MN Honor Award for Planning and Research - Saint Paul Park and Recreation Vision Plan

## **Introduction**

Rita Trapp will serve as Principal in Charge and 2050 Comprehensive Plan liaison throughout the project. As Principal, she will provide quality control services, leveraging her experience developing park and recreation system plans to ensure the HKGi has the resources it needs to conduct a thorough, efficient planning process. As the Project Manager for the City's 2050 Comprehensive Plan process, which will begin in 2026, she will coordinate the two planning processes, identifying potential efficiencies related to tasks such as engagement, data collection, and mapping. She will also ensure that the Parks chapter of the Comprehensive Plan meets Met Council planning requirements while encapsulating the critical elements of the Park Systems Master Plan.

Rita has twenty-plus years of experience providing planning services to Minnesota communities. Her work includes comprehensive planning, park and recreation system planning, park master planning, grant writing, park dedication ordinance writing, and zoning ordinance updates.

## **Relevant Project Experience**

- Parks System Plan | Maplewood, MN
- Parks and Recreation System Plan | Chanhassen, MN
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan | Rochester, MN
- Highway 96 Snail Lake Marsh Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment | Ramsey County, MN
- Rice Creek North Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment | Ramsey County, MN
- Comprehensive Plan | Fridley, MN
- Comprehensive Plan | Richfield, MN
- Active Living Grant Writing | Dakota County, MN
- Greenway Master Planning | Dakota County, MN
- Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan | Minneapolis, MN
- Soldiers Memorial Field Park Master Plan | Rochester, MN
- Community Recreation Study | Woodbury, MN



**Kevin Clarke**  
Planning Advisor  
kevin@hkgi.com

**Years of Experience: 15**

**Education**

Master of Landscape Architecture and  
Master of Urban and Regional Planning -  
University of Minnesota

B.A., Economics -  
Saint John's University

**Awards**

2017 MN APA Success Stories in  
Implementation Award - Downtown  
Master Plan and Streetscape Design -  
Chaska, MN

2015 MI APA Daniel Burnham Award for  
a Comprehensive Plan - Comprehensive  
Plan for the City of Ironwood

**Introduction**

Kevin will provide detailed guidance related to funding, asset management, and data analysis for this project. He has led several park and recreation system planning projects and has been a key contributor to developing HKGi's asset management tools and processes.

Kevin brings a versatile skill set with both depth and breadth of parks planning experience to this team. In addition to his park and recreation system planning work, he has developed park master plans, led the design and implementation of athletic field projects, and conducted needs assessment studies to help other communities understand and adapt how their systems, programs and services compare to other peer communities and to national benchmarks.

**Relevant Project Experience**

- Parks and Recreation System Master Plan | South St. Paul, MN
- Park System Master Plan | Eagan, MN
- Park and Recreation System Master Plan | Maple Grove, MN
- Park System Plan | Inver Grove Heights, MN
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan | Nisswa, MN
- Parks and Trails System Master Plan | Alexandria, MN
- Athletic Fields and Greenspace Master Plan | Becker, MN
- Park System Master Plan | Elk River, MN
- Asset Management Plan | Carver County, MN
- Athletic Facility Needs Assessments | White Bear Lake School District, Chanhassen, Woodbury, MN
- Athletic Fields Feasibility Study | Maple Grove, MN
- Athletic Facilities Assessments and Master Plans for Campbell Lake, Spring Lake Park, and Ponds Park | Prior Lake, MN
- Athletic Field Utilization Study and Master Plans | Elk River, MN



## Jordan Hedlund

Asset Management Planning  
jordan@hkgi.com

### Years of Experience: 10

#### Education

Master of Landscape Architecture (2021) and Bachelor of Environmental Design (2016), University of Minnesota

#### Awards

2025 ASLA-MN Merit Award for General Design, Grams Park Nature Play, Sherburne County, MN

2024 On the Rise Alumni Leader Award from the University of Minnesota Alumni Association

2021 President's Student Leadership & Service Award, University of Minnesota

2021 ASLA-MN H.W.S. Cleveland Award

#### Professional Activities

College of Design Advisory Chair, University of Minnesota

Equity Planning Committee for Landscape Architecture

Past Director of Programs, ASLA-MN

Past Advocacy Chair, ASLA-MN

#### Introduction

Jordan will provide conditions assessment and asset management expertise for this project and will also assist in community engagement as a fluent Spanish speaker. Prior to joining HKGi, Jordan worked at a playground design/build firm, and he leverages this experience in conditions assessments for playgrounds and strategies for playground replacement. His knowledge of playground vendors, design possibilities, and procurement helps our clients get the best play experience for their budget. On long-range planning initiatives such as this one, he uses his experience conducting park improvement design and construction projects to inform accurate cost estimates and identify strategies for phasing investments.

Jordan is passionate about helping communities build and maintain excellent parks facilities that are welcoming places for all people to enjoy. He recently led the design of schoolyard improvements for the Red Lake Nation, and he has provided design services to park improvement projects in Minneapolis, Apple Valley, West St. Paul, Corcoran, Prior Lake, and Fridley.

#### Relevant Project Experience

- Parks and Trails Master Plan | Alexandria, MN
- Park and Trails Asset Management Plan | Carver County, MN
- Park and Recreation Master Plan | Cedar Falls, IA
- Nisswa Park System Plan | Nisswa, MN
- Park System Plan | St. Francis, MN
- Audubon Park Improvements | Minneapolis, MN
- North Commons Park Improvements | Minneapolis, MN
- Neighborhood Parks Design Improvements | Apple Valley, MN
- Grams Park Nature Play Area | Sherburne County, MN
- Endazhi-Nitaawiging Schoolyard Improvements | Red Lake, MN
- 28th Street Tot Lot Improvements | Minneapolis, MN
- Thompson County Park Improvements | Dakota County, MN
- Kennedy Park Improvements | West St. Paul, MN
- Commons Park Improvements | Fridley, MN



## Aimee Hackett

Parks Planning & Engagement

[aimee@hkgi.com](mailto:aimee@hkgi.com)

### Years of Experience: 7

#### Education

B.S., Landscape Architecture, Arizona State University

#### Awards

Williams Family Scholarship, received scholarship twice

Nominated for Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts Design Excellence Student Award

Selected for Student Presentation at 2016 ACEC Annual Roads and Streets Conference

### Introduction

Aimee will provide a variety of support services for this project, including park planning and design, graphic design services in support of engagement and public communications, and report design and assembly.

Aimee is a key contributor to many of HKGI's projects, with her design work frequently enhancing the ability of community members to easily understand and participate in engagement activities. She is also skilled in designing and producing reader-friendly report documents and communications materials that clearly and concisely convey key themes and messages to project stakeholders and decision-makers.

Aimee has contributed to park system plans in communities throughout the metropolitan region, including Stillwater, South St. Paul, and Eagan.

### Relevant Project Experience

- Park System Plan | Stillwater, MN
- Park System Master Plan | Eagan, MN
- Park System Plan | South St. Paul, MN
- Park and Recreation System Plan | Cedar Falls, IA
- Park and Recreation System Plan | Otsego, MN
- Park System Plan | Inver Grove Heights, MN
- Park and Open Space Plan | Watertown, WI
- Park Amenity Planning | Apple Valley, MN
- Athletic Facilities/Greenspace Master Plan | Becker, MN
- MOVE: Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan | Washington County, MN
- Grant Writing | Dakota County, MN
- Park & Recreation System Master Plan | Sherburne County, MN
- Park System Plan | St. Francis, MN
- Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan | Stearns County, MN
- Watershed Management Plan Engagement | Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization
- Park and Recreation System Plan | Wright County, MN



## **Analise Kruse**

Parks Planning & Engagement

[analise@hkgi.com](mailto:analise@hkgi.com)

**Years of Experience: 1**

### **Education**

Bachelor of Landscape Architecture,  
University of Minnesota

### **Introduction**

Analise will provide a variety of support services for this project, including data collection for the park asset inventory, community engagement, parks and natural resource planning, visual communications design, and report assembly. She is also available to provide Spanish language translation and engagement services as needed.

Analise is a landscape designer who has contributed to park and trail planning and design initiatives in Buffalo, Eagan, Apple Valley, and Minneapolis. Her work includes the design of visual communications materials, engagement activities, field research, and use of AutoCAD, Lumion, and other illustration and visualization applications.

Analise has worked in a variety of settings, including for a local watershed district and Eloise Butler Wildflower garden. She has designed educational and interpretive materials and conducted dark sky monitoring, stream monitoring, and tree assessments. She enjoys engaging with stakeholders and getting to know the communities in which she works.

### **Relevant Project Experience**

- Park System Plan | Buffalo, MN
- Park System Master Plan | Eagan, MN
- Willard Park Concept Plan | Minneapolis, MN
- Neighborhood Park Design | Apple Valley, MN
- Fish Lake Park Master Plan Amendment | Chisago County, MN
- Mississippi River Greenway Long-Range Plan | Dakota County, MN
- Thompson County Park Improvements | Dakota County, MN
- City Park Pavilion Improvements | Detroit Lakes, MN
- Jordan Court Improvements | Red Wing, MN
- Landscape Inspection and Compliance | Lake Elmo, MN

# Our Experience

# 40+

## Park System Plans

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We have assisted clients at every phase of park planning and design, from planning at the system level all the way through construction design and administration. We use our knowledge and experience to help our clients identify a future vision for their systems and then find the right mix of initiatives and implementation strategies that work best for their communities. This depth of experience means we bring real-world knowledge about costs and implementation that aid us in developing feasible, action-oriented park system plans. Detailed examples of our park system planning work are included in this proposal beginning on the next page.



Learn  
Community  
Values



Benchmarking



Identify  
Service Gaps



Plan for  
Community  
Growth



Guide Future  
investments



Establish  
Priorities



# Parks Master Plan

## Stillwater, Minnesota



### LEGENDS PARK

#### PARK SNAPSHOT:

**Address:** 3380 Heritage Ct, Stillwater, MN 55082  
**Park Size:** 3.81 acres  
**Trail Mileage:** 0.24 miles

Legends Park is a neighborhood park at the intersections of Baron and Delano Way. Surrounded on all sides by single family homes, this park offers a somewhat dated play structure for kids aged 5-12 and a more recently updated play structure for little ones (age 3-5). A medium-sized picnic shelter, sports fields, a little free library, and a wooded wetland complete the offerings. Parking is on-street, and a city utility building is present on site.

#### EXISTING AMENITIES:

- Bench seating
- Picnic shelter (medium sized)
- Playground
- Baseball/softball diamond
- Soccer/lacrosse/football

#### WHAT WE HEARD

No specific comments about this park were placed on the interactive mapping tool during the community engagement process.

\*A note was left for a patch of land across the street that has been added to the recommendations

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 UPDATE PLAYGROUND (PLANNED FOR 2020)**  
Once it reaches the end of its life, consider replacing the play equipment with a more unique play set that offers a greater variety of experiences for multiple ages and abilities.
- 2 PICNIC TABLE SEATING**  
Add additional opportunities for picnicking near the playground with table seating that is accessible for wheelchairs.
- 3 ADA-ACCESSIBLE PORTABLE RESTROOM WITH ENCLOSURE**  
Add an ADA-accessible portable restroom near the playground, and screen with an enclosure.
- 4 EXPANDED NATIVE HABITAT AND BUFFER PLANTINGS**  
Reduce the amount of turf and mowing needed by seeding and planting underutilized lawn areas with pollinator-friendly native species. Add shade trees along Delano way to buffer the play space from vehicle traffic. Consider planting a native garden and adding interpretive signage in the triangular lawn space across Barons Way.
- 5 IMPROVE CIRCULATION**  
Add signage at other entrances to assist with legibility, and add crosswalk to improve safety of trail connection.

#### Existing Conditions



Image Caption

Image Caption



Image Caption



Image Caption



Figure 4.11 Legends Park

#### Precedent Photos



Native plantings

Planting interpretation

Following collaboration on several park and downtown improvement projects with the City of Stillwater, the city hired HKGI to lead their park system plan. The project began last August and follows a similar scope and timeline to what we envision for Columbia Heights. Sarah Evenson is the project manager, and Aimee Hackett conducted the park inventory, both collaborating on park recommendations and community engagement. The draft plan is currently under review by their Park & Recreation Commissioners and will be made available to the general public for review next month.

Similar to Columbia Heights, Stillwater is almost entirely built out, which makes replacement and transition of amenities to more relevant and desired features the primary focus, rather than creation of new or additional parks. Infusing the system with more unique play experiences has been a focus, as well as ADA-accessibility upgrades, safe park connections, park legibility, and partnerships with interested sustainability and urban agriculture groups. HKGI reached out to more than two dozen stakeholder representatives as a part of the engagement effort, and more than 150 people responded to the survey and interactive map to identify issues and share ideas.

### CLIENT

City of Stillwater

### HIGHLIGHTS

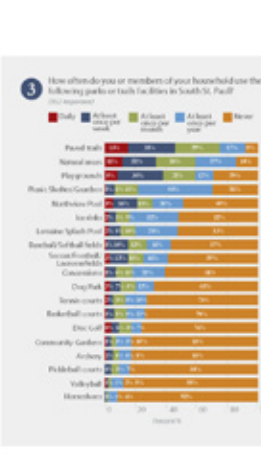
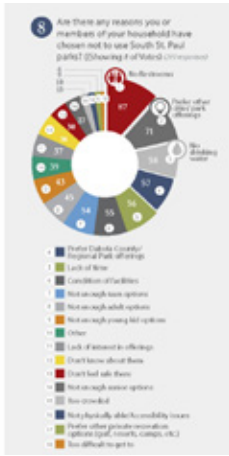
- Park System Planning on a very similar schedule to the proposed Columbia Heights Park System Plan
- More than 150 active participants in online engagement, over two dozen stakeholder groups engaged
- Park recommendations for more than 30 parks

### REFERENCES

Chad Rogness  
 Stillwater Public Works - Parks Superintendent  
 651-275-4102

# Park System Plan

## South St. Paul, Minnesota



### KAPOSA LANDING

**ABOUT THE PARK**  
TYPE: Community Park  
SIZE: 85 Acres  
Kaposia Landing is a large community park connecting to the Mississippi River and Trail. The park includes ballfields, a dog park, a playground, an inclusive playground, and open space.

FEATURE	CONDITION	RECOMMENDED LIFESPAN (YRS)
A. PLAYGROUND	NEW	20-25 YEARS
B. SOFTBALL	NEW	20-25 YEARS
C. ATHLETIC FIELD	NEW	20-25 YEARS
D. ATHLETIC FIELD	NEW	20-25 YEARS
E. ATHLETIC FIELD	NEW	20-25 YEARS
F. ATHLETIC FIELD	NEW	20-25 YEARS
G. ATHLETIC FIELD	NEW	20-25 YEARS
H. BUILDING	NEW	20-25 YEARS
I. PARKING	NEW	20-25 YEARS

### KAPOSA PARK

**ABOUT THE PARK**  
TYPE: Community Park  
SIZE: 65 Acres  
Kaposia Park features both natural spaces and opportunities for recreation. It is the largest park within the park system and features a golf course, various courts, a baseball field, and fire pits.

FEATURE	CONDITION	RECOMMENDED LIFESPAN (YRS)
A. PLAYGROUND	NEW	20-25 YEARS
B. FIRE PIT	POOR	10-15 YEARS
C. PARKING LOT	POOR	10-15 YEARS
D. COURT	POOR	10-15 YEARS
E. COURT	POOR	10-15 YEARS
F. ATHLETIC FIELD	POOR	10-15 YEARS
G. TRAIL	POOR	10-15 YEARS
H. BUILDING	POOR	10-15 YEARS
I. WHEELCHAIR	POOR	10-15 YEARS
J. FIRE PIT	POOR	10-15 YEARS
K. PLAYGROUND	POOR	10-15 YEARS

### BOAT LAUNCH

**ABOUT THE PARK**  
TYPE: Community Park  
SIZE: 10 Acres  
Boat Launch has space for launch and boat lift. There is also space for phone banking. The site ties to the City's community gardens and the City's use of a river trailhead to bring boats here.

FEATURE	CONDITION	RECOMMENDED LIFESPAN (YRS)
A. PARKING LOT	POOR	10-15 YEARS
B. BOAT LAUNCH	POOR	10-15 YEARS
C. TRAILING AREA	GOOD	20-25 YEARS
D. SHED	GOOD	20-25 YEARS

### GRANDVIEW PARK

**ABOUT THE PARK**  
TYPE: Pocket Park  
SIZE: 1.6 Acres  
Grandview Park has a playground and field space that contribute to the Mississippi Trail.

FEATURE	CONDITION	RECOMMENDED LIFESPAN (YRS)
A. SHED	POOR	10-15 YEARS
B. PLAYGROUND	POOR	10-15 YEARS
C. TRAIL	GOOD	20-25 YEARS

**Top row:** Community engagement summaries illustrate the ways in which community members use the system and what they need from their parks and recreation system. **Bottom row:** HKGI has conducted a detailed inventory and analysis of all the parks in the system to establish a baseline understanding of the system's current condition.

HKGI recently completed a Parks Master Plan for the City of South St. Paul. Like many older, fully developed suburban communities, South St. Paul's park system has a limited ability to expand and finances are also tight, making ongoing improvements or upgrades to existing equipment and facilities challenging.

The system plan HKGI developed with the assistance and input of City staff and community members provides the City with an asset management tool—an inventory of its current system and an assessment of the system's condition—that can be used to establish maintenance and improvement priorities and identify funding strategies and a timeline to methodically guide future investments and ongoing operations the park system.

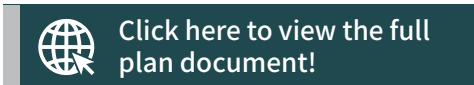
The Plan also includes a wide variety of other critical elements such as 12 system initiatives, concept plans for all 16 city parks, and strategies and priorities to guide future implementation initiatives.

### CLIENT

City of South St. Paul

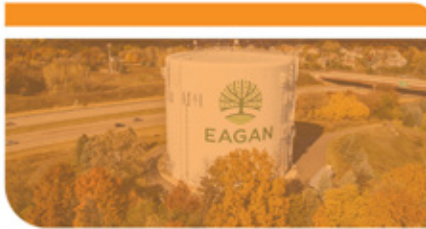
### REFERENCE

Shannon Young, Parks and Recreation Director  
City of South St. Paul  
syoung@sspmn.org  
651-366-6203



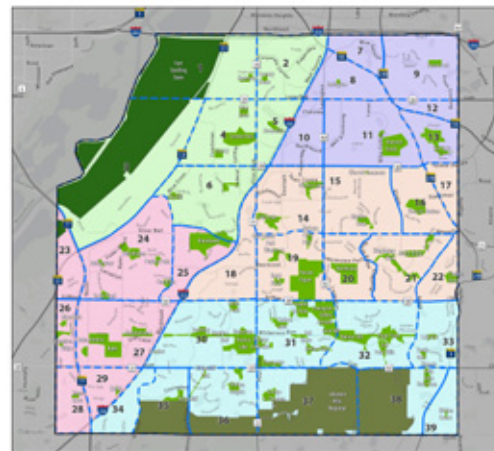
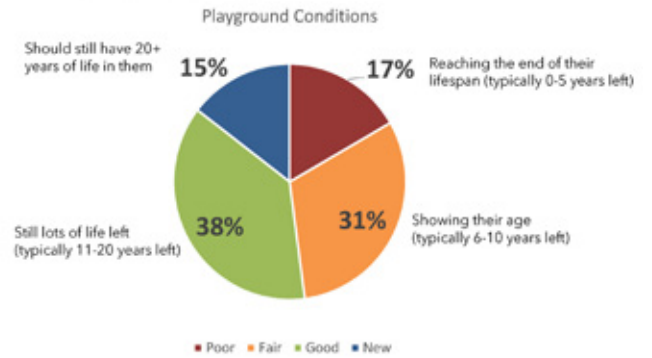
# Parks & Recreation System Plan

## Eagan, Minnesota



**DRAFT**

### CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT



HKGi is currently developing a new Parks and Recreation System Plan for the City of Eagan. This plan is intended to guide the City’s operations, maintenance, and investments in its parks and recreation system for the next 10 years. Because of Eagan’s growth and development pattern over time, many of the system’s features and facilities will reach the end of their lifespan in the period covered by this plan. One of the main objectives of this process, therefore, is to conduct a thorough inventory and assessment of the system’s assets and current conditions and help the City identify funding and replacement strategies for systematic replacement of aging facilities.

While replacement planning is a critical focus of this plan, other objectives such as serving an aging population and remaining an attractive place for families with children to live are likewise important to the community. Residents express a high degree of satisfaction with the parks and recreation system and cite its parks and programs as a reason they’ve chosen to live in Eagan. This plan is expected to identify methods for upgrading athletic facilities for youth sports, expanding the range of play options for all ages and abilities, and furthering the City’s sustainability goals.

#### CLIENT

City of Eagan

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- The planning process is currently in its 2nd round of community engagement with stakeholders reviewing potential plan recommendations

#### REFERENCE

Andrew Pimental, Parks & Recreation Director  
 City of Eagan  
 651-675-5500  
 apimental@cityofeagan.com

# St. Louis River Corridor Neighborhood Park Plans Duluth, Minnesota



FIGURE 2.1 HARRISON COMMUNITY RECREATION AREA SHORT-TERM IMPLEMENTATION

ACTION	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	COST
5	Demolition	Remove/Relocate Existing Horseshoes	\$-
6	Vegetation	Plant New Ornamental/Fruit Tree	\$2,800
8	Vegetation	Community Garden Plots	\$15,000
11	Vegetation	Add demonstration garden	\$15,000
13	Circulation	Install New Park Wayfinding Sign	\$2,000
15	Vegetation	Plant New Shade Tree	\$9,600
16	Demolition	Remove Existing Miscellaneous Fence Components	\$2,500
17	Circulation	Stripe On-Street Bike Path	\$1,800
19	Furnishings	New Picnic Tables	\$10,000
Total Short-Term Improvement Costs			\$58,700

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan HKGi developed for the City identified the St. Louis River Corridor as one of the city’s most underutilized natural amenities. The City subsequently retained HKGi to lead planning efforts to guide investments in parks and recreation facilities throughout the area. One of those initiatives consisted of mini-master planning for eleven neighborhood and multi-use parks in the Corridor.

For each park, HKGi created an overview of existing conditions; a needs assessment; an inventory of strengths, opportunities, and issues; a concept master plan; and short-and long-term phasing plans with cost estimates for each individual improvement action.

Because the neighborhood is in the St. Louis River Recreational Corridor, several regional parks and recreational destinations are in close proximity. Services and amenities provided by these regional resources were considered during the planning process for each park. HKGi staff drew on their experience developing plans for several of these regional destinations such as historic Wade Stadium, the St. Louis River National Water Trail, the West Duluth Trails, and Fairmount Park.

## CLIENT

City of Duluth

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Development of mini-master plans for eleven neighborhood parks, including phasing plans and cost estimates for each set of park improvements

## REFERENCE

Jim Filby Williams, Director of Public Administration  
City of Duluth  
218-730-5430  
jfwilliams@duluthmn.gov



# Thompson County Park Master Plan & Phase 2 Improvements

## Dakota County, Minnesota



HKGi led a multi-disciplinary consultant team through the master planning process for Thompson County Park in West St. Paul. This popular 58-acre park includes a vibrant community building and active recreational amenities such as a fishing pier, play area, and a loop trail. The park also provides picnic facilities and features a variety of landscapes and natural resources such as wetlands, woods, and a savanna. The objectives for this master planning process focused on visitor needs and the visitor experience, natural resource management, cultural and historical interpretation, a business and operational analysis, and potential recreational development.

HKGi is currently leading the second phase of park master plan implementation. HKGi’s design team compiled cost estimates and supporting information on more than a dozen potential implementation projects and facilitated discussions to set priorities and make decisions about which projects to pursue in this phase.

After helping the client win an LCCMR grant, our team is now supervising construction of a new sensory garden trail, daylighted stream corridor, and pollinator plantings with interpretation.

### CLIENT

Dakota County

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Expanded community center and parking
- Recreational improvements include trails, community gardens, paddle launch, nature play
- Natural resource restoration and conservation initiatives are designed to also serve as passive recreational amenities

### REFERENCE

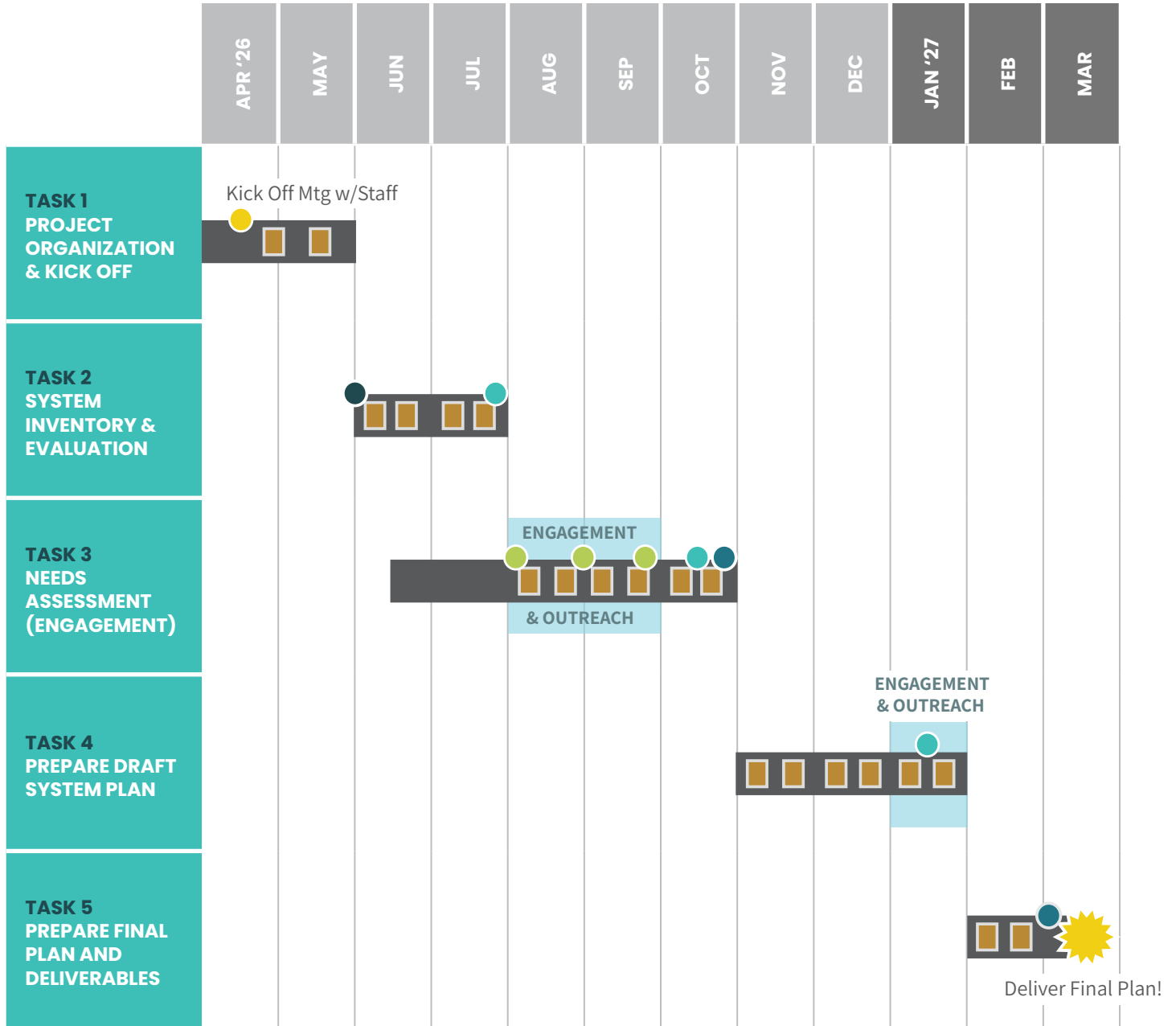
Christina Lundgren, Project Manager  
 Dakota County  
 christina.lundgren@co.dakota.mn.us  
 651-438-4672

# PROPOSED SCHEDULE



# Project Timeline

The table below outlines our anticipated timeline for conducting the work plan presented. If the HKGi team is selected to conduct this project, one of our first tasks will be to confirm this schedule or modify it to best fit the County's needs and the needs of the project. We will also work with staff to add or confirm detailed dates, as appropriate, for the milestones illustrated below.



## SCHEDULE KEY

- Project Milestones
- Parks & Rec Commission Meeting
- Pop-Up Attendance
- Check-in Meetings with Staff
- Tours/Inventory
- City Council Meeting



# Cost Proposal

## FEE PER TASK PROPOSAL

The table below contains our proposed fee per task to conduct the work plan contained in this proposal. We have also include cost estimates for the optional tasks included for consideration at the end of the work plan. Costs for the optional tasks will vary depending on the desired scope.

	FEE
<b>TASK 1</b> PROJECT ORGANIZATION & KICK OFF	\$7,600
<b>TASK 2</b> SYSTEM INVENTORY & EVALUATION	\$20,500
<b>TASK 3</b> NEEDS ASSESSMENT (ENGAGEMENT)	\$23,500
<b>TASK 4</b> PREPARE DRAFT SYSTEM PLAN	\$23,800
<b>TASK 5</b> PREPARE FINAL PLAN AND DELIVERABLES	\$7,200
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$82,600</b>
<b>EXPENSES (INCLUDING TRANSLATION SERVICES)</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>
<b>NOT-TO-EXCEED TOTAL FEE &amp; EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$85,600</b>

Planning | Landscape Architecture | Urban Design



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