



MEMO

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To: Plan Commission
From: Dave Kittel, Director of Planning and Community Development
Date: 7/30/2025
Re: Park Plan

Background information:

About every five years the city updates a plan to assist in the direction and development of the park system and related amenities. Staff have been working on creating a new plan which is included in this packet for review. Over the last year data has been collected through a community survey, listening sessions, and park inspections. Along with gathering this information, staff worked on looking at national data from the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) as well as looking at some surrounding communities' plans to help establish a base line of existing amenities. Overall, the city meets or exceeds many of the national averages for the number of parks per resident and acres of parkland per 1,000 people. From looking through information from NRPA, previous park plans, and survey results, staff established four focus areas that kept coming up in the survey results and in previous planning efforts. Those areas are maintenance, amenities, community, and beautification. From those four focus areas, tactics have been created to help address these areas using the information and comments from the survey. Chapter 8 in the park plan has the details of these items and a simple summary is listed below:

Maintenance

- **Issue:** Maintenance is a long-standing concern across the park system.
- **Tactics:**
 - Develop a **park conditions report** to prioritize updates and preventive care.
 - Create a **user reporting system** for maintenance issues.
 - Conduct **semiannual park inspections**.
 - Explore hiring a **park foreman and dedicated maintenance staff**.
 - Investigate **security measures** (e.g., cameras, lighting) to reduce vandalism.

Amenities

- **Issue:** Residents want more diverse and accessible amenities.
- **Tactics:**
 - Explore **small dog areas** in parks.
 - Implement a **public outreach policy** for park updates.
 - Provide **digital and paper trail maps**.
 - Improve **bike lanes** and **trail connector safety**.
 - Continue planning for **new trails**.
 - Use **national park standards** for amenity planning.
 - Build a **permanent stage** for events.
 - Develop a **Central Park redevelopment plan**.
 - Create a **service area map** to guide future park development.

Community

- **Issue:** Desire for more community events and engagement.
- **Tactics:**
 - Assess feasibility of **community gardens**.
 - Explore **beer garden events** in parks.
 - Increase **social media promotion** of parks.

Beautification

- **Issue:** Residents want more attractive parks.
- **Tactics:**
 - Use **native plantings** to reduce maintenance and enhance beauty.
 - Form a **beautification committee**.
 - Add **landscaping at park entrances**.
 - Introduce **public art** (e.g., murals).
 - Launch an **adopt-a-park/planter program**.
 - Host **community clean-up events**.

These focus areas and tactics are designed to be achievable and address many of the comments from residents. It should be noted the 1,000 Islands should be separate and have its own strategic plan due to the size and specific focus of that area. Below is a link to NRPA for additional information on national statistics for parks:

<https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/>

Strategic Plan:

This aligns with community of choice strategic objectives and the vision of the strategic plan.

Budget:

There is no direct budget items with this document but some of the individual items will have budget impacts that will be a part of the capital improvement plan and standard budget process.

Recommendation:

To review the park plan and recommend adoption of this plan to the Common Council.

