

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation System Plan

The City of Saint Paul is in the beginning stages of preparing a Parks and Recreation System Plan. The System Plan will be a comprehensive guide to physical improvements and changes to parks and recreation facilities (assets such as parks, athletic fields, recreation center buildings, trails, etc.). The Plan will help the Parks and Recreation Department balance investment in park facilities with available resources (staffing and funding). The System Plan will be the blueprint for a successful and sustainable future for Saint Paul's parks and recreation facilities.

Relationship between the Vision Plan and the System Plan

The 2008 Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Vision Plan set the direction for the future for parks and recreation - **Create active lifestyles, vibrant places and a vital environment by responding creatively to change, innovating with every decision and connecting the entire City.** The System Plan will help determine specific actions pertaining to parks, recreation buildings and trails to realize the goals and direction of the Vision Plan.

Vision Plan: *Where parks and recreation is going* - direction, goals and initiatives.

System Plan: *How parks and recreation will get there* - strategic action plan for parks, recreation buildings and trails including addressing how many facilities are appropriate and where they will be located.

Frequently Asked Questions – Saint Paul Parks and Recreation System Plan

1. What will the Parks and Recreation System Plan cover?

The Parks and Recreation System Plan will be a strategic plan for parks, recreation buildings and trails addressing how many facilities are appropriate and where they will be located. The Plan will look at the park and recreation system as a whole and will include specific recommendations for recreation centers and priority parks. The Plan will be a guide for facility investment and changes for the next 10-20 years with detailed recommendations for actions within the next 1-5 years.

2. Why is a System Plan needed now?

Parks and recreation facilities are key elements in community quality of life. The park and recreation system must be safe, clean, and attractive and meet the dynamic needs of Saint Paul's residents and visitors. Saint Paul has changed dramatically over the last 30 years. The park system needs to keep up with demographic, recreation, economic and environmental changes and be reshaped into a higher quality, more efficient system. The intent is to create a guide to ensure a high performing 21st century park and recreation system. Some of the key trends and influences behind the planning effort are:

- Declining city-wide budgets.

- High operating costs for recreation centers.
- Park and recreation facilities in need of repair and replacement.
- Changing demographic and recreation needs.
- Facilities that do not meet current needs.
- Increasing stewardship needs for natural areas and open spaces.
- Important to take a wise, planful approach to important facility decisions.
- Ability to make wise decisions based on an overall plan.
- Assure efficient, coordinated actions and avoid duplication.
- Plan is long overdue.

3. How will the Plan affect the park near me?

The Park and Recreation Plan will look at the whole park system and will gather community input to shape system-wide and individual park and recreation building recommendations. Some parks may see significant changes while others may not need any changes. It depends upon the condition and appropriateness of park and recreation facilities, the proximity to other similar facilities, community needs, and the ability to invest and maintain the future system. Those Plan recommendations will be developed during the planning and outreach process in 2010 (see the schedule below).

4. Will parks be closed or park land be sold?

Developed parks will not be closed or sold. Some undeveloped public land may be put to a better use, but there will be no net loss of park land.

5. How will recreation centers change?

The recreation system needs to be revised. It should be more relevant to residents and be more cost efficient. A goal is to foster quality over quantity. That is likely to mean repurposing some recreation center buildings to another use, closure and removal of some buildings and creation of new and better recreation centers (like Oxford/Jimmy Lee, Battle Creek and El Rio Vista/Wellstone Center) in some locations. The location of other public and private providers and facilities will shape the distribution of recreation centers and will help guide potential partnerships for facilities, programs and operations. The planning process will examine and help define/re-define the relationship between services and facilities with a goal of improving program access and quality while reducing facility operating costs.

6. How will the Plan be used?

The Plan will be a roadmap for park and recreation facilities in Saint Paul. City officials and staff will use the Plan when budgets and work plans are being prepared. The revamping of the park and recreation system will take several years and will depend upon resource availability and other factors.

7. How can I participate in the planning process?

You can help shape the Plan by participating in community open house meetings. A series of community open house meetings in May and June 2010 will gather input and help define park and recreation priorities. Community meetings will also be held in the Fall of 2010 to review the draft Plan. The Saint Paul Parks and Recreation web site www.tinyurl.com/systemplan contains information about the System Plan, Vision Plan and input opportunities.

8. When will the Plan be completed?

The System Plan is to be completed in 2010. The process has five main five tasks:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Data Gathering and Facility Inventory | January - May |
| 2. Community Outreach and Communications | May-December |
| 3. System and Facility Evaluation | June-August |
| 4. Draft System Plan | July – October |
| 5. Final System Plan and Action Plan | November - December |

