Phalen – Keller Regional Park Long-Range Plan Amendment

Saint Paul, MN | 2024

DRAFT IN PROGRESS

SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA

Submitted by the City of Saint Paul
Parks and Recreation

SAINT PAUL Parks and Recreation

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Introduction

The City of Saint Paul completed a master plan for Phalen Park in 1975 and Ramsey County completed a master plan for Keller Park in 1977. In 1978, as a response to changing demands for parks and recreation activities, the City of Saint Paul, together with Ramsey County, completed a joint master plan for the Phalen - Keller Regional Park (Figure 1).

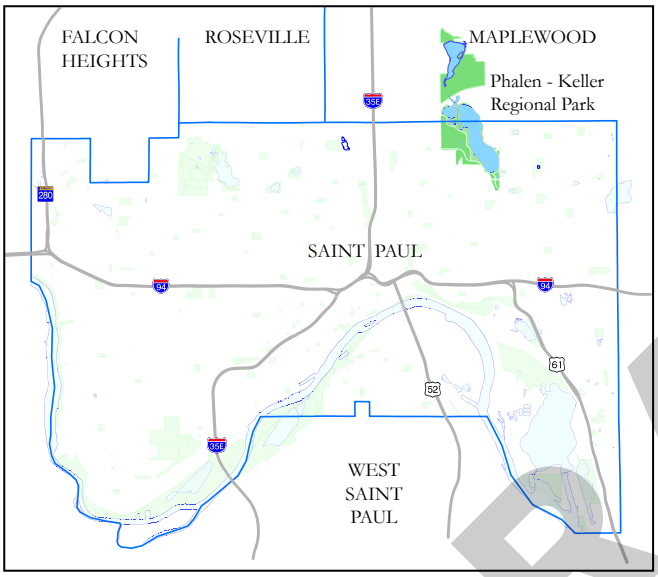


Figure 1: Phalen Master Plan (1975)

Though the plan combined the two recreational areas in this singular master plan, each jurisdiction continues to own and operate their respective portions of the regional park.

Previous Amendments

In 2011, an amendment to this plan was adopted by the Metropolitan Council. The Phalen - Keller Regional Park Master Plan Amendment (2011) addressed the goals of responding to changing demands in the regional park by highlighting specific sub-projects that the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County aimed to complete. These sub-projects included the expansion of native plant areas to be restored, the resolution of issues with trail connections, the addition of more picnic facilities, and the creation of additional cultural and historical amenities.[1]

Phalen-Keller Long-Range Plan Amendment (2024)

This document, the Phalen - Keller Regional Park Long-Range Plan Amendment (2024) will address the 11 elements identified for Regional Parks and Open Space Long-Range Plans in the Metropolitan Council Parks and Open Space Development Guide/ Policy Plan, and is specifically intended to meet the criteria required by the Metropolitan Council. Once adopted, the City will be eligible to apply for funding to implement Phase One of the Daylighting Phalen Creek project.

Daylighting Phalen Creek

Phalen Creek historically flowed from the south end of Lake Phalen and discharged where it met with the Mississippi River. This corridor is culturally and geologically significant, particularly to the Dakota communities of Saint Paul. In the 1930s the City, evidently concerned with the flooding risks to the surrounding land development, piped the creek by putting it underground into stormwater system. Today, the Creek's path weaves through residential neighborhoods, multi-modal transit-ways, light-industrial and commercial lots, as well as park land.[2]

Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi, formerly known as Lower Phalen Creek Project, is a Native-led environmental stewardship non-profit organization centered in Dakota Values. It was founded in 1997 by community activists. In 2011, the group gained 501c3 status and they partnered with Capital Region Watershed to solicit a feasibility study to detail a possible path to daylight the creek. This study was completed by Inter-Fluve and divided the project into eight reaches. Reaches Seven and Eight make up Phase One of this project and are the focus of this amendment document. See Figure 2: Daylighting Phalen Creek Map (2023)

The goals of the Daylighting Phalen Creek project are to bring as much of the creek above ground as possible to restore native aquatic, riparian, and upland ecosystems and habitats along the Phalen Creek Corridor.

[1]: Phalen - Keller Regional Park Master Plan Amendment (March 2011)

[2] : https://www.wakantipi.org/daylighting

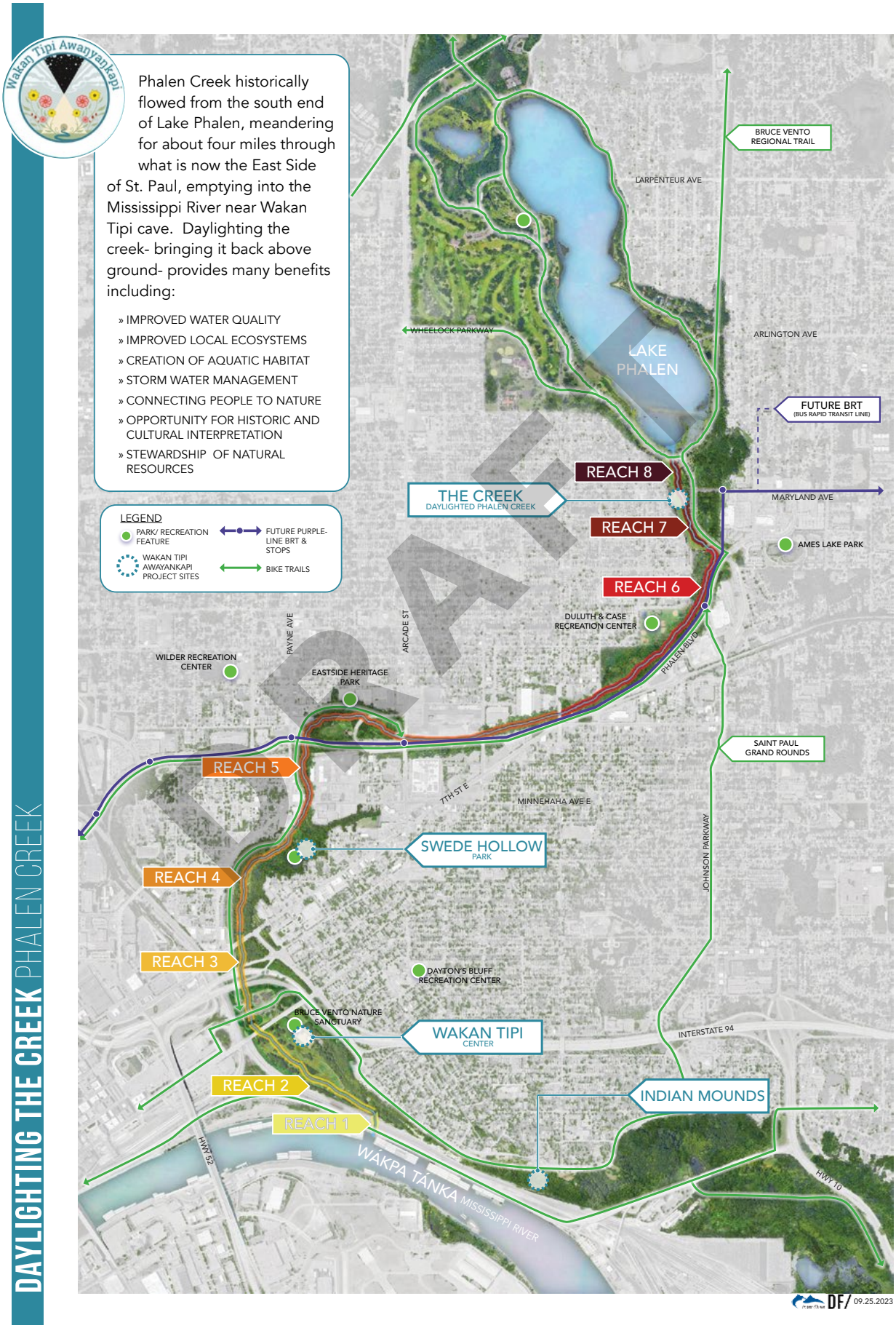


Figure 2: Daylighting Phalen Creek Map (2023)

Boundaries

Phase One is a 10-acre site located just south of Lake Phalen. It is bounded on the north and east sides by Johnson Parkway. The southern border terminates between Jessamine Avenue East and Magnolia Lane, along a privately-owned parcel (1275 Magnolia Avenue East). South of Maryland Avenue East, Phase One is bounded along the west by Burnquist Street. North of Maryland Avenue East, it is bounded by five privately-owned parcels (1190 Orange Avenue, 1205 Hawthorne Ave East, 1215 Hawthorne Avenue East, 1218 Hawthorne Ave East, and 1223 Maryland Ave East) as well as the terminus of Hawthorne Avenue East.

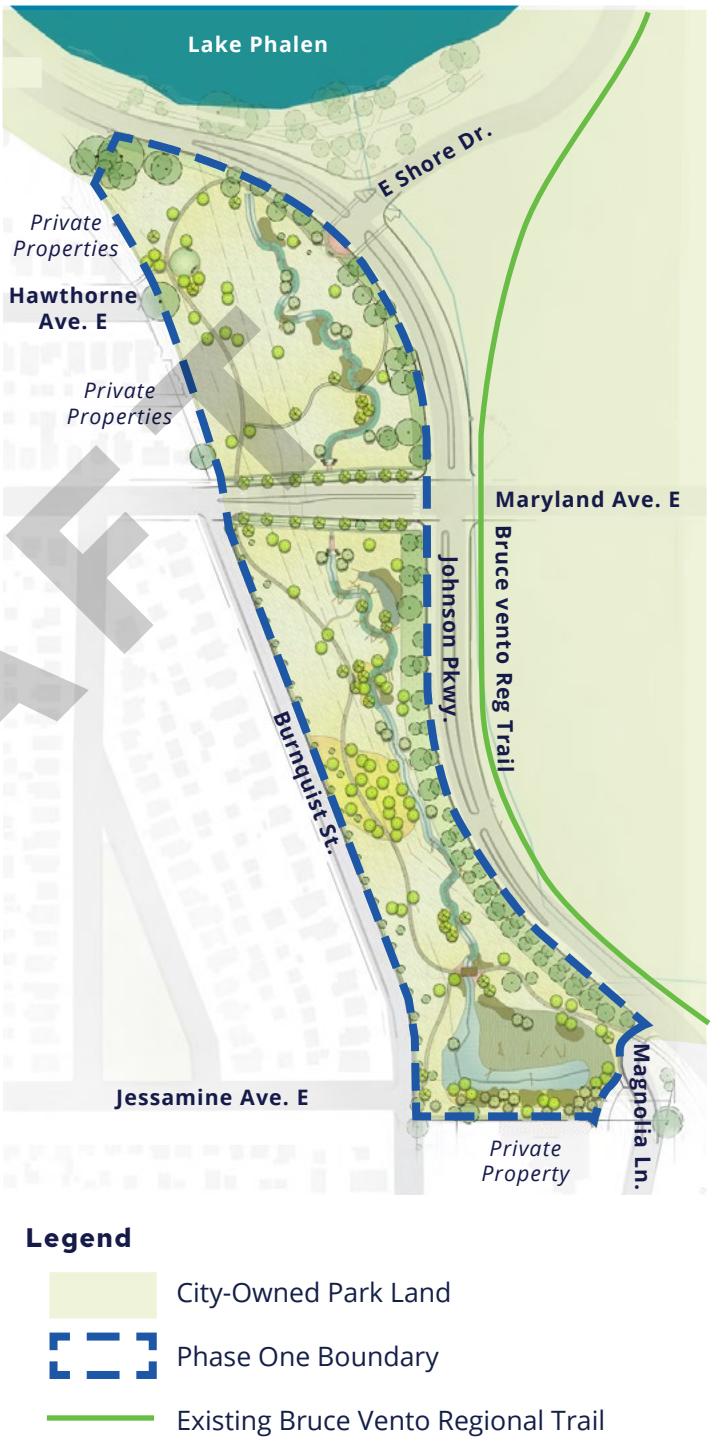


Figure 3: Phase 1 (Reaches 7 & 8) Boundary Map

Acquisition Costs

The entirety of Phalen - Keller Regional Park is nearly 750 acres in size, which includes the 10-acre area covered by Phase One of the Daylighting Phalen Creek project.

Phase One is on land owned by the City of Saint Paul, with the exception of one portion of Right-of-Way owned by Ramsey County that transects the site (Maryland Avenue), an existing Metropolitan Council (Met Council) Sewer Easement, and an existing Saint Paul Regional Water Service (SPRWS) Easement on the west side of the site along Burnquist Street.

The only expected acquisition costs for this project would be temporary construction easements and amendments to existing agreements with Met Council, SPRWS, and Ramsey County for the construction and maintenance. The cost associated with each new agreement would be approximately $100 for recording fees and certificates and completed in 2025, before construction.

Parcels and Property:

- Ramsey County: Maryland Avenue East between Burnquist Street and Johnson Parkway.
- SPRWS Tax Parcels: 212922440001
- Met Council: See Appendix A for sewer easement agreement and legal description.

The site is suitable for the proposed improvements as an existing open lawn space which is currently unprogrammed.

Stewardship Plan

The City of Saint Paul will own and maintain the Phalen Creek Daylighting project. Saint Paul Police and Saint Paul Parks & Recreation Security will be maintaining public safety in the park. There are no non-residential uses or collection of revenues from such uses planned at this time. Should such uses occur in the future, revenues will be utilized consistent with the adopted Recreation Open Space Development Guide/Policy Plan.

The project is in partnership between the City of Saint Paul and Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi and a development agreement has been approved to define roles and responsibilities of each party.

The parties will negotiate a separate, mutually acceptable Maintenance Agreement for phase 1 located in Phalen Regional Park. Construction of the Project cannot occur until a Maintenance Agreement is agreed to and fully executed by both parties. Among other elements, the Maintenance Agreement will cover maintenance, inspections, repair, and replacement of the following:

(1) restored Creek corridor and associated surface water infrastructure;
(2) storm water infrastructure;
(3) other utility infrastructure;
(4) restored native plant meadows, wetlands, and ponds;
(5) landscaping, including, but not limited to plantings, trails, and hardscapes; and
(6) management of aquatic life.

The Maintenance Agreement will further address responsibilities including: required notices; emergency response; cleanup, and disposal of contaminated materials; regular trash removal; monitoring of water levels of the Creek; sediment removal at inlet/outlet structures; mowing; and necessary vegetation establishment and maintenance. This includes subsurface infrastructure maintenance inclusive of Gopher State One Call (GSOC) locating.

Demand Forecast

Based upon the 2023 Metropolitan Council Annual Use Estimates the City of Saint Paul Regional Park system anticipated 8,709,600 visits which is 12.5% of the overall visits within the 10 agency metro regional park system and the third most visited park agency. In addition, the City of Saint Paul park usage increased slightly from 2022 with a 0.2% increase.[1]

Saint Paul's population is expected to total 344,100 by 2040, a 10% increase from its 2020 actual population. In addition, Saint Paul's employment is expected to total 213,500 by 2040, a 24% increase from its 2020 actual employment. Consequently, population and employment growth in Saint Paul is expected to increase usage of the Phalen Regional Park further.

Previous Metropolitan Council Parks and Trails Survey indicated walking/hiking, jogging/running, boating (including sailing, canoeing, kayaking, rowing, and jet skiing), fishing, picnicking, and relaxing are the top activities occurring in Phalen - Keller Regional Park.

[1]: Metropolitan Council's annual parks and trails use estimates (July 2024)

Development Concept

Planned Developments and Capacity

The proposed improvements and natural resource management projects include the restoration of wetlands, wet meadows, stream banks, and savanna, as well as a variety of walking trails, seating opportunities, areas for nature play, gathering spaces, stream crossings, and interpretive areas.

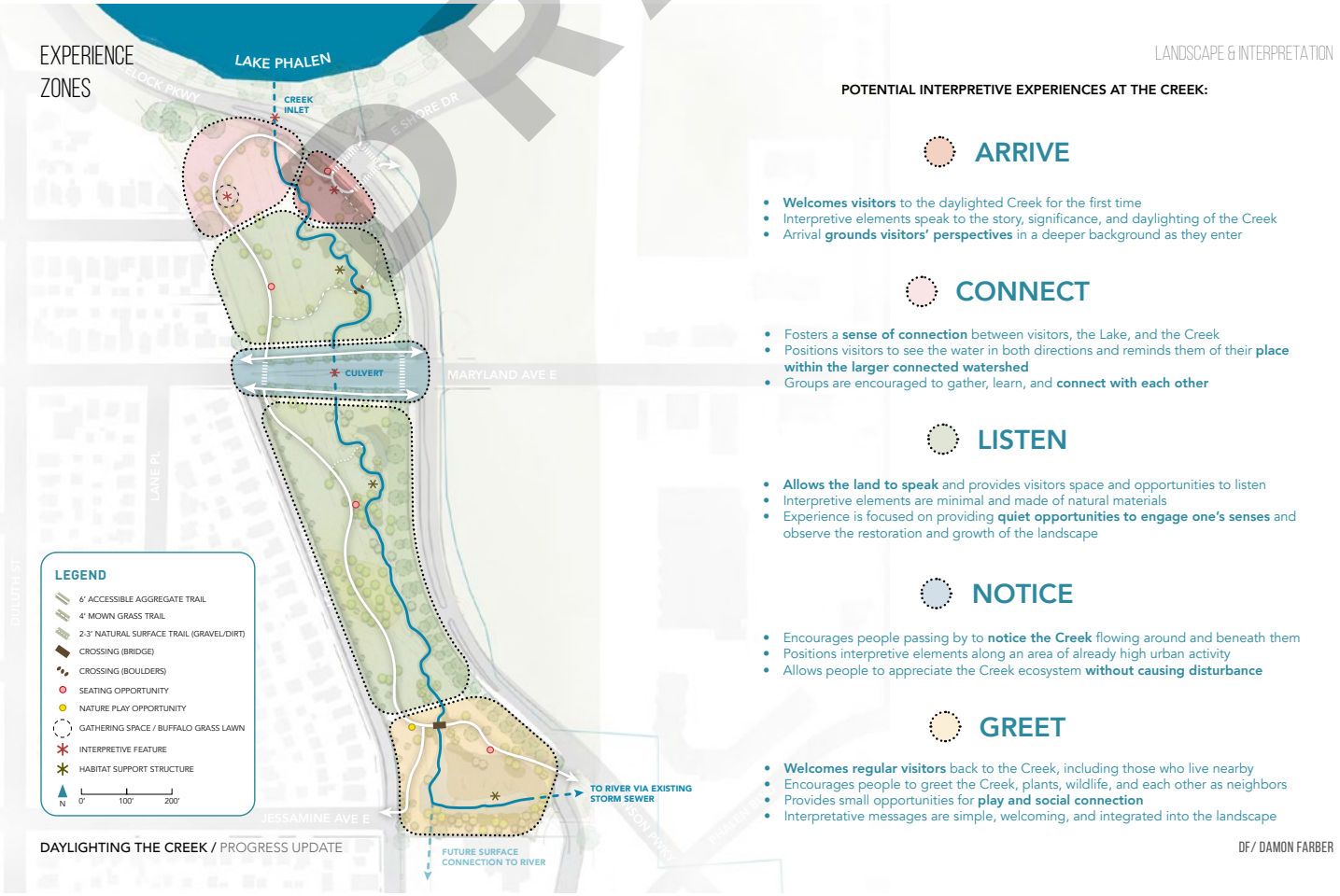
The proposed improvements are shown below on the Experience Zone Concpet Plan. Note: at the time of the amendment the project team was at 60% design.

Trail Connections & Pedestrian Crossings

The site's trail network seeks to:
A) Minimizes creek crossings to provide maximum habitat value,
B) Seeks to connect to existing crosswalks and sidewalk terminus in the surrounding neighborhood, and
C) Provide a varied, quieter trail experience through the site's varied plant communities as expressed in public engagement feedback heard from the 30% engagement event.

See Daylighting Phalen Creek - Trail Types & Seating (2023) graphic for locations.

TRAIL TYPOLOGIES:
Primary Trails are compacted, crushed limestone aggregate, 6' feet wide, natural edges with slopes not exceeding 5% for optimal accessible use and maintenance access. Primary trails are intended to support pedestrian use, and small utility vehicles for maintenance access. Secondary trails are aggregate surface, 4' feet wide, and may include both accessible and non-accessible features for pedestrian use.



Daylighting Phalen Creek - Concept (2023)

Development Concept

TRAIL ROUTES:
The primary local trail route begins at an entry point (trailhead) in the north at Wheelock Parkway and East Shore Drive immediately adjacent to the existing Bruce Vento Regional Trail. The trail moves west past the headwaters moment of the creek's daylighting—a likely desirable destination by trail users, and continues south to Maryland. Along this route, secondary trail spur creates an informal loop in the north half of the site back to the trailhead and crosses the creek with stepping stones at a 'rock hop'. Crossing Maryland via the existing sidewalk network, the trail continues on the west side of the creek southward where it connects to Jessamine St. at Burnquist on the west, and continues over a pedestrian bridge and meets Magnolia Lane at Johnson Parkway on the east. The primary trail location on the west side of the creek was determined preferable for the trail alignment because:

• North and south of Maryland, steep grades and existing trees east of the creek make trail grading challenging.

• It supports preservation the mature, existing double row of trees along Johnson Parkway that positively contributes to parkway character, site canopy, and sustainability and ecology of the site.

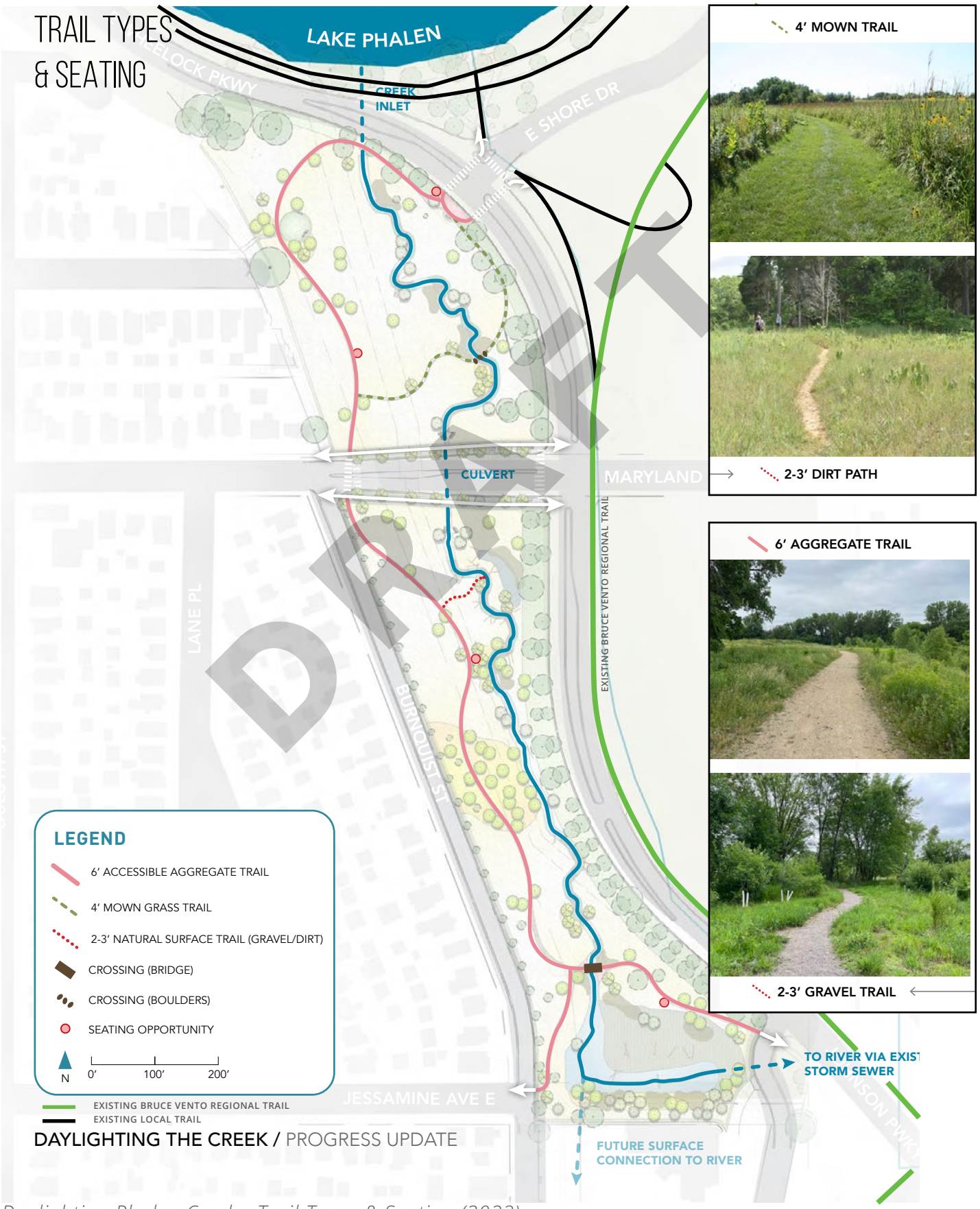
• Gently sloping grades and more ample space on the west side of the creek are conducive to a quieter, more immersive trail experience, less erosion potential on gentle slopes.

Drinking Water

There are not currently any planned drinking fountains in the development concepts for Daylighting Phalen Creek. An existing drinking fountain is located at the parking lot along East Shore Drive. There is a Saint Paul Regional Water Service line running through the segment of the site that is south of Maryland Avenue and thus drinking water could be made available.

Daylighting Phalen Creek - Bird's Eye Project Rendering (2023)

Development Concept



Daylighting Phalen Creek - Trail Types & Seating (2023)

Development Concept

Wayfinding Signage Plan

The identified trail network offers public access through the site and connections to key moments along the creek. Comments and preference voting gathered following 30% design emphasized an aesthetically and programmatically natural character through use of natural materials and low impact interventions, such as a natural play features such as fallen logs and boulders, and light touch, interactive signage. Appendix C illustrates more information on signage, trail networks, and human use elements throughout the site. Feedback based on the content presented in Appendix C has been incorporated into the current set of drawings presented in Appendix A. Public amenities across the site include the following key features:

• Site Entry: An accessible, small flagstone paved area serves as a site entry/ trailhead at Johnson & Wheelock Parkway. Stone seating elements and an interpretive signage feature overlook the creek. An accessible trail to the west leads to the headwaters while two stone steps connect a loop trail to a boulder hop creek crossing to the south.

o Signage type: Entry Sign

• Headwaters: Overlooking the moment the creek daylights, this limestone paved overlook area rests overtop of and conceals the concrete daylighting structure. Limestone boulders nested in the embankment provide slope retainage, serve as seating elements, and provide closer access to moment the creek daylights. Interpretive opportunities include a guardrail integrated features and a custom casting/ covering for the manholes required to access the concrete structure.

o Signage type: Custom Casting and Railing-integrated feature

• Gathering Area: Simple flagstone pavers mark the perimeter of a circular native turf gathering space on the west side of the site, easily accessed off Hawthorne Ave. This space includes a small aggregate area with natural boulder seating for small groups and overlooks the creek from an upland setting. Shaded by newly planted oaks, the space is a simple intervention for educational and cultural gathering.

o Signage type: Botanical/ Language Signs

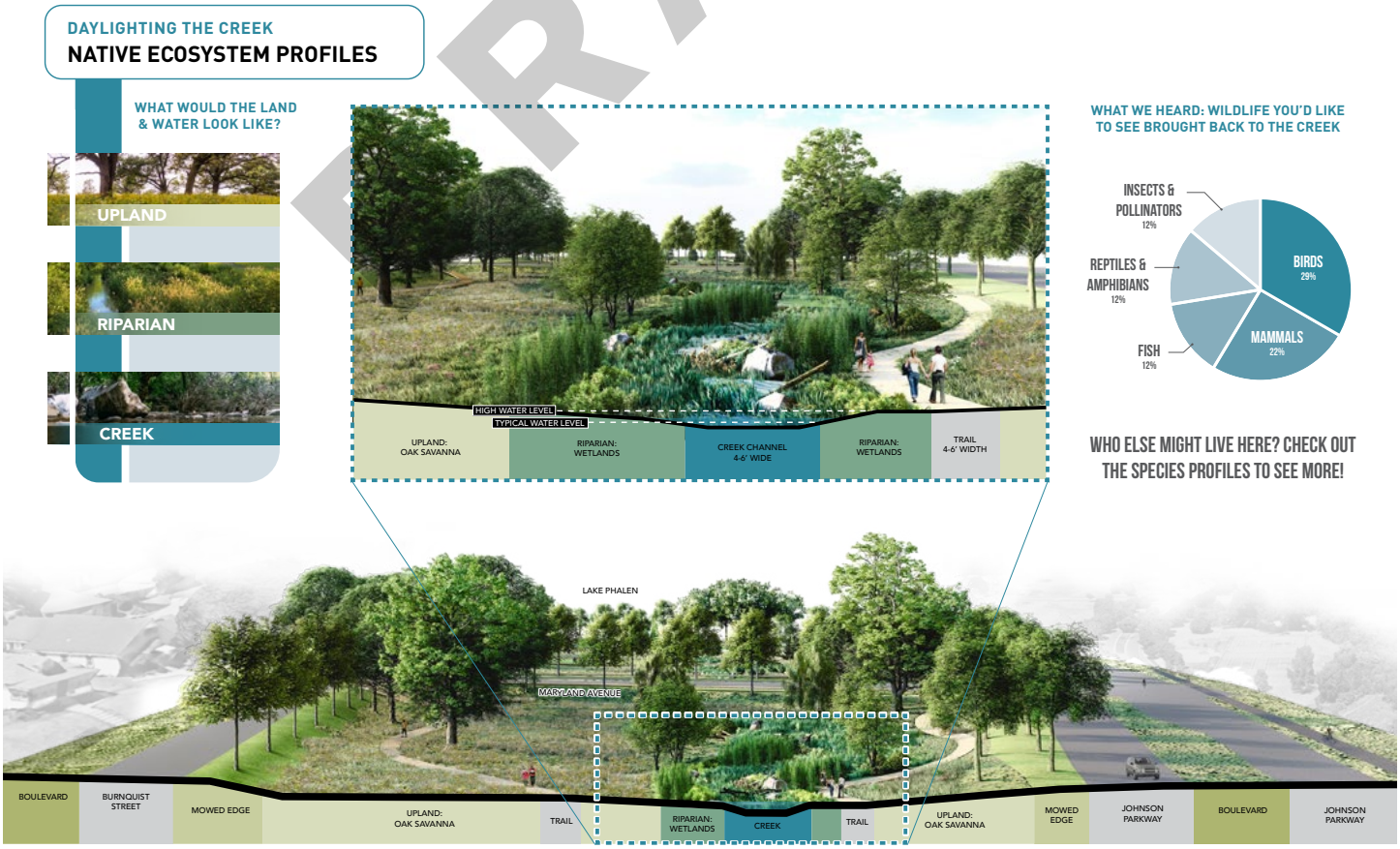
Development Concept

Habitat Features

Habitat features in the proposed design are intended to provide diverse habitat for a variety of macroinvertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, insects, birds, mammals, and plants. These features include a clay liner, bank treatments, large wood elements, wetland habitat, and revegetation plans. In general, while small mammals may occupy the restored site, due to the location within a dense urban environment, the anticipated primary ecological uplift will occur in bank treatments, large wood habitat structures, ephemeral wetland habitat and native vegetation plantings.

Revegetation plans aim to introduce native plant communities back to the site. Plant communities have been selected based on appropriate soil conditions and hydrology. Much of the site is proposed as an upland savanna/ mesic prairie community while the creek corridor contains riparian habitat suitable to periodic flooding and variable soil moisture. An assemblage of 40-60 species is targeted for both upland and riparian communities using a variety of planting strategies that include:

- Savanna/ Mesic Prairie Seeding Mix
- Streambank/Riparian Zone Seed Mix
- Wet Prairie Enhancement Planting
- Upland and Riparian Enhancement Planting
- Native Turfgrass
- Feature area planting: native perennials/shrubs
- Upland and riparian shrubs
- Upland and Riparian trees
- Existing Turf & Trees: The perimeter of the site is identified to retain existing turf and trees to preserve benefits of existing tree canopy and provide a maintainable and visible edge to the site along existing walks and roads



Development Concept

Cost Estimate

Professional Services	$ 1,400,000
Construction	$ 2,300,000
Landscaping	$ 720,000
Contingency	$ 230,000
Total Cost	$ 4,650,000

Note: Cost estimate preliminary and final cost will be determined through bidding.

Schedule

FALL 2024	DESIGN
WINTER 2024	PERMITTING
SPRING 2025	BIDDING
SUMMER 2025	CONSTRUCTION*

*PENDING FUNDING

Conflicts

There is a 20-foot wide sanitary sewer easement which grants access to the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission. There is also a Saint Paul Regional Water Service (SPRWS) main water Line running through the southwest portion of the site. The proposed design accommodates these utilities by positioning the creek and greater landscape improvements on the east side of the parcels. Continued coordination is needed with Met Council and SPRWS during design to ensure grading and construction activities do not affect the utilities.

There are no known conflicts between recreational and natural-resource management needs in developing the park/trail unit. The site is currently an existing open lawn space which is currently unprogrammed by Parks & Recreation which makes the site suitable for the proposed improvements. The site has been graded to accommodate access to the creek and created wetlands to allow for yearly vegetation management and sediment removal.

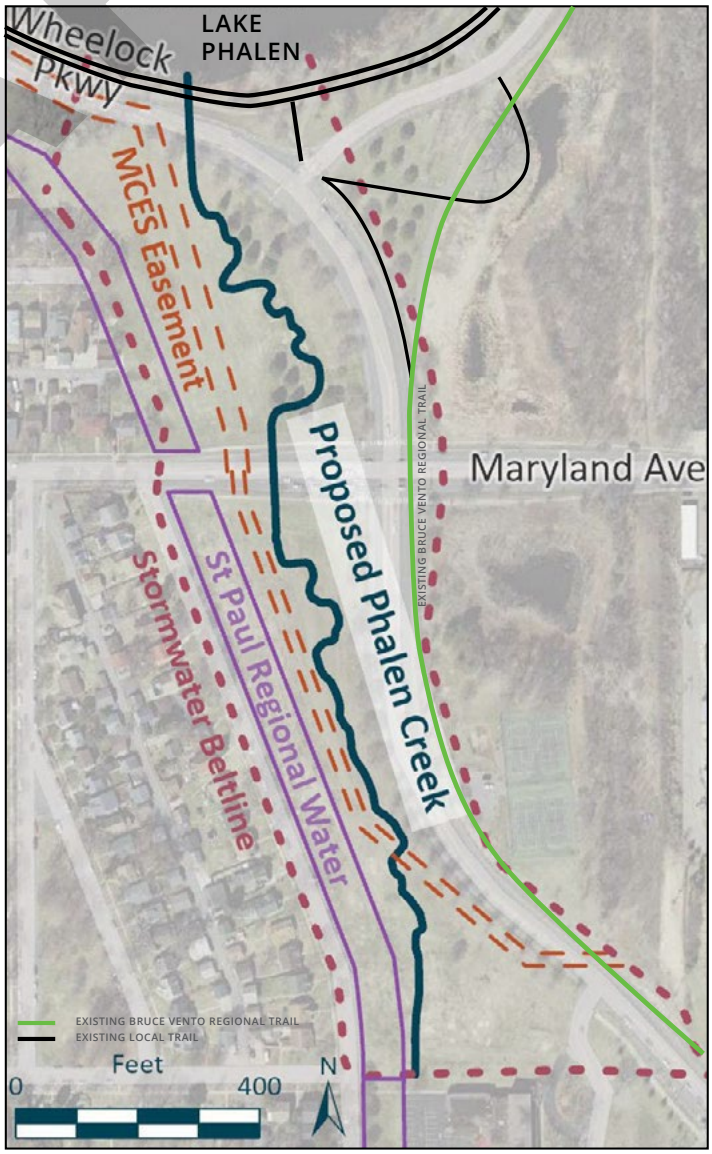
The 2011 Phalen-Keller Regional Park Long-Range Plan identified a tree grove to separate park uses from the residential properties. In addition, SPRWS planted several rows of trees on their property at the request of adjacent property owners to separate park uses. As a result, the project retains existing trees and proposes trees along the west side of the site to provide separation between the park and residential properties.

Flooding was a concern by property owners on the west and south sides of the park. Flooding will be mitigated through the use of a weir at the Phalen outlet to control waterflow into the creek. In addition, the creek temporarily ties into a Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District beltline sewer until future reaches are funded, design and constructed. Concerns about the beltline sewer backflooding into the creek have been mitigated by designing a backflow preventer which allows the beltline sewer to function normally due high water flows.

Public Services

As part of the project, a new lake outlet structure is proposed at the south end of Lake Phalen and one structure connected to the Beltline Sewer located on the south end of the project. Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District has tentatively agreed to maintain the structure and a formal agreement will need to be established to understand ownership, roles and responsibilities.

Two culverts will be included as part of the project. One 24” culvert under Wheelock Parkway to convey the lake water to the creek. A second box culvert is needed under Maryland Ave to continue the creek south. Coordinate with Saint Paul Public Works Sewers and Public Works Street Design for maintenance and phasing during construction.



Daylighting Phalen Creek - Existing Easements

Operations

The City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, operates and maintains Phalen Regional Park. Patrolling of the facilities is provided by the Saint Paul Parks & Recreation Department. Under city jurisdiction, existing city rules, regulations, and ordinances for its operation and maintenance will apply.

Annual estimated costs for operations and maintenance are shown below:

Task	Hours	Cost
Wetland Maintenance	165	$12,500
Prairie Maintenance	150	$11,250
Trail, Site Furnishings, Utilities	100	$10,000
Litter Pick-up, Waste Disposal	50	$5,000
Turf Mowing & Leaf Mulching	32	$2,400
Total	**497**	**$41,150**

Partner Engagement

The complexity of the project has required frequent engagement in permitting efforts since the 30% design stage. Development in project permitting at the 60% stage has entailed ongoing communication with regulators, design updates based on feedback from regulatory agencies, and preparation for permit submittals at 90%.

This section outlines design success criteria identified by stakeholders, project partners, and the design team. A successful design will require the following conditions to be met:
• Creek Headwater elevation: 856.5-857.5 feet. To meet project goals, the elevation of the creek in Reaches 7 & 8 needs to support the eventual tie into downstream reaches and maintain a bed slope that will support stream function. Based on these criteria, preliminary design results identified a minimum headwater elevation in the range provided, given desired stream planform and an average stream slope of 0.1%.

• Water source: directly from Lake Phalen under all conditions in which lake elevations exceed permitted draw elevation. Sourcing water directly from Lake Phalen allows the project to restore a naturally flowing connection between Lake Phalen and Wakpa Tanka and establish a consistent water source to support native species, resilient habitat, and vibrant ecology. The creek must receive flow from Lake Phalen when lake elevations are above the outlet elevation permitted by the DNR. Currently the DNR permits discharge from the lake at the established Normal Water Level (NWL) of 857.5.

• Target creek flow rate: 0 to 6 cubic feet per second (cfs) from upstream source, requiring an inlet control structure capable of:
o Maximizing the flow rate and duration of flow to the creek at low lake level conditions
o Restricting the flow rate from the lake during high lake level conditions Target flow criteria were developed based on anticipated capacity of the proposed daylit Lower Phalen Creek Corridor and to support establishment of native species that ultimately meet the ecological and cultural goals of the Lower Phalen Creek daylighting project. Due to the permittable DNR draw elevation, the creek will not receive water during conditions in which the lake water surface elevation is below 857.5. Design should consider the impact of this limitation to lake discharge on habitat for key species, expectations for vegetation, and site resilience. Water supply to the creek may not be maintained during low lake level conditions, which will impact habitat viability in drought conditions.

The owner of the creek headwaters structure will need to be the entity who applies for the Department of Natural Resources permit. Based on ongoing conversations, the design team understands that the following project reviews and permit applications will be required for this project:

• Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi
• Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District – Development and Linear Permits
• Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Public Waters Work Permit and Water Appropriations Permit
• City of Saint Paul – Site Plan Review
• Metropolitan Council Environmental Services - Easement Encroachment Agreement
• Ramsey County – Site Plan Review and Excavation or Obstruction Permit (to be submitted by construction contractor)
• Minnesota Pollution Control Permit – NPDES Permit
• Additional agency coordination with Saint Paul Public Works and Ramsey County Public Works.

Public Engagement and Participation

Engagement Process

The project to Daylight Phalen Creek was developed through extensive community, partner, and stakeholder engagement over seven years beginning in 2017. See appendix for engagement documents.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Visioning and Discovery	**Feasibility Study**	**Fundraising for Phase One**	**10% Design**	**30% Design**	**90% Design**
2015-2018	2018-2019	2019-2022	May 2023	August 2023	December 2023
• More than 1,000 East Side Residents and Visitors	***• 20+ Stakeholder Groups Engaged***	***• 30+ Community and Neighborhood Presentations***	***• 8-member Indigenous Design Advisory Team***	***• 20-member Project Team***	***• 5 Partner Organizations***

Milestones

I. Swede Hollow Master Plan Community Engagement (2017-2018)

- 15 community events - Lower Phalen Creek Project (LPCP) engaged with the community and collected survey responses
  - » One is titled the *Phalen Creek Daylighting Survey: BVNS (Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary)* and asked about creek Reaches 5 and 7 that were identified in the initial technical feasibility as most technically feasible. (453 responses)
  - » The other survey is titled *Phalen Creek Restoration Survey: Swede Hollow Park* and asked about restoring steady stream flow within Swede Hollow Park. (117 responses)
  - » Community engagement events ranged from larger community events, tabling or speaking in academic spaces, and Indigenous community events
  - » Surveys were translated into Spanish, Karen and Hmong
- Approximately 1,344 people were engaged
- 570 survey responses
- 201 respondents indicated they would like to see the creek restored in Reach 7 (just south of Lake Phalen), 220 said they would like to see water flowing through Swede Hollow and 238 indicated they would like to see the creek restored at BVNS.
- Nearby residents (to Swede Hollow and BVNS) were the primary survey respondents (approximately 400 respondents)
- 62 respondents indicated they were part of the indigenous community, with 30 respondents indicated they are a member of the Dakota community
- Overall, 63% of respondents were European American/White, 18% Asian/Asian American, 10% indigenous, 4% African/African American, 4% Latinx/Hispanic
- 254 respondents were ages 30-54, about 160 respondents were ages 55+

Public Engagement and Participation

II. 2020-2022 Community Engagement

- 15 community events - LPCP engaged with the community online and in person with some surveys conducted at select events
  - » Go With the Flow of Phalen Creek! - 9.1.21 (2 responses), Emergence Festival - 7.24.21 (8 responses), Phalen Creek Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) Rendering Feedback (7 responses), Flower Power (35 responses), Go With the Flow of Phalen Creek! 6.26.21 (35 responses)
- Approximately 1,976 people were engaged
- 87 survey responses
- The survey responses mainly focused on questions related to future use and
- Importance of the creek daylighting, such as:
  - » Water quality and ecological impact
  - » How people see themselves interacting with the daylighting space
  - » What people would like to see for future signage
- 17 respondents were ages 35-39, 12 ages 40-60, 9 ages 60+
  - » *35 responses from the Flower Power event did not have any demographic questions
- 38 of respondents were European American/ White, 3 were Asian/Asian American, 2 were Indigenous, 1 African/African American, 1 Latinx/Hispanic
  - » *35 responses from the Flower Power event did not have any demographic questions
- It should be noted that most of the community engagement was done online during webinars and educational videos posted during the pandemic

III. 2023 Community Engagement: 10% Design of Reaches 7&8

- 2 community events and 1 online engagement:
  - » 5/24/23 Community Engagement Session at Metro State University (24 responses)
  - » 6/2/23 Water Fest Tabling (6 responses)
  - » 42 online survey responses
  - » Survey posted on Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi (WTA) social media, newsletter and website
- Demographic Info:
  - » 66.67% of respondents are nearby residents of District 5 Payne Phalen Community Council or District 4: Dayton's Bluff Community Council.
  - » 50% of respondents are 30-54; 33.3% are 55+
  - » 76.4% of respondents are white/European American, 22.2% are
  - » Indigenous, 5.6% are Asian/Asian American
- Current use of space:
  - » 31.9% of respondents rarely visit the site; 27.8% visit monthly, 20.8% visit weekly
  - » 77.8% of respondents use the area to walk/ hike; 47.2% bird/wildlife watch; 38.9% bike ride; 37.5% for events
  - » 29.2% use the Bruce Vento Regional Trail to enter the area; 23.6% use Phalen Pavilion; 19.4% use Lake Phalen Trail parking

IV. 2023 Community Engagement: 10% Design of Reaches 7&8

- 2 community events and 1 online engagement:
  - » 5/24/23 Community Engagement Session at Metro State University (24 responses)
  - » 6/2/23 Water Fest Tabling (6 responses)
  - » 42 online survey responses
  - » Survey posted on WTA social media, newsletter and website
- Demographic Info:
  - » 66.67% of respondents are nearby residents of District 5 Payne Phalen Community Council or District 4: Dayton's Bluff Community Council.
  - » 50% of respondents are 30-54; 33.3% are 55+
  - » 76.4% of respondents are white/European American, 22.2% are
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Public Engagement and Participation

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V. Other

- Payne-Phalen Community Council Meeting (Feb 27, 2024)
- Daylighting Community Engagement: Session #2 (September 30, 2023)
- Sent survey to residents via mail (August 2023)

Summary of Themes

- Engagement supported future signage along the restored creek to learn about Dakota & Cultural Knowledge, Creek History, Nature/ Environment, Water Facts, and Maps/ Wayfinding.
- Aside from ecological enhancements, engagement supported nature based activities and passive recreation versus active recreation.
- Engagement revealed a desire to renaming Phalen Creek as a recognized Dakota space. This is not part of this master plan but it is being considered in a future discussion with the Department of Natural Resources.
- Engagement suggested retaining the open views for safety and comfort. The site is design to retain open views and utilize low native grass

Daylighting Phalen Creek - 2023 Daylighting Community Engagement Session #2

Equity Analysis

1. Project Data:

- A: Scope: What are the boundaries and demographics of the public engagement area? Please consider neighborhoods adjacent to the park or trail, travel sheds, and agency/regional boundaries.

As a regional park, the public engagement area ranged from a half mile radius of the project site in the Payne Phalen Neighborhood and along the future creek corridor including users and residents of District 4: Dayton's Bluff Community Council, Swede Hollow Park and Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.

As of 2021, the Payne-Phalen neighborhood has around 33,644 residents. Of those residents, around 33% are under 18, about 27% are ages 18-34, 23% are ages 35-54 and about 17% are 55+. The Payne-Phalen neighborhood is predominantly people of color (68.5%) and 27% are white. Asian/Pacific Islanders are around 41.8% of the neighborhood population, Black/African American are 14.5%, and American Indian/Alaskan Natives are at 2.2%.

- B: Context: What is known about future stakeholders, under-served populations, and how the region's history created present-day inequitable outcomes?

The 2024 Saint Paul Parks and Recreation System Plans identifies the entirety of the project (Reaches 7 & 8) are within an Area of Concentrated Poverty.

The entirety of Phalen Creek Corridor is within the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Disadvantaged Communities Map. The EPA IRA Disadvantaged Communities map *"determines whether a community is disadvantaged for the purposes of implementing programs under the IRA to provide funding for financial and technical assistance to carry out environmental and climate justice activities to benefit disadvantaged communities."* [1]

Phalen Creek is a long-buried waterway that once meandered through Saint Paul's East Side. Until the early twentieth century, Phalen Creek served as a thriving wildlife corridor and as a cultural resource for the Dakota people.

In 2019, the City adopted a Climate Action & Resilience Plan. In this plan, the City identified that the northern Payne-Phalen neighborhood was one of several neighborhoods identified as having the highest combined risk of negative impacts resulting from climate change.

2. Public Engagement and Participation:

- A: Participants: Which stakeholders discussed in 1b contributed to the planning effort? The following list is illustrative of stakeholders to consider including youth, Black, indigenous, and people of color communities, people with disabilities, low-income populations age 60 and over, and neighborhood/regional groups that participated as planning staff, community advisory committee members, outreach liaisons, and the general public.

Between 2017-2023, Approximately 3,320 people were engaged and 729 survey responses were received. The respondents identified as follows: 8.2% Asian/Asian American, 11% Indigenous, 1.5% African American, 1.5% Latinx/Hispanic.

Community engagement specifically targeted the Indigenous community events to gain perspective from the communities that historically inhabited the Payne Phalen neighborhood prior to European immigration. During this targeted engagement, 62 respondents out of 400 (15%) indicated they were part of the indigenous community and 30 respondents indicated they are a member of the Dakota community. The project team also presented the project to an Indigenous Review Committee for feedback on the design.

Community engagement specifically targeted the Asian/Asian American community by attending the Mid-Autumn Festival at the Saint Paul Changsha China Friendship Garden and tabling at Hmong Village Shopping Center.

Involvement by different age groups was generally good, except that the proportion of young adults (20-29) was noticeably lower than the other age groups. Any additional engagement should make specific effort to reach the young adult demographic.

- B: Engagement: What engagement, outreach, and communication was conducted for stakeholders described in 2a? Please identify the level of public impact on the International Association for Public Participation's Public Participation Spectrum and requisite engagement strategies for each stakeholder group. Please consider culturally competent and community representative staffing,

[1]: EPA Inflation Reduction Act Disadvantaged Communities Map: https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/inflation-reduction-act-disadvantaged-communities-map

training, locations, times, public awareness, and input approaches.

The project team organized a variety of engagement events between 2017-2023 and identified the level of public impact as defined on the International Association for Public Participation: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. [1]

2017-2018: Engagement ranged from large scale events, Indigenous events, tabling and academic spaces with the goal of consulting the public for general feedback on daylighting the historic Phalen Creek. Surveys were translated into Spanish, Karen and Hmong. The project team specifically targeted the Indigenous community by attending known Indigenous events. The team also presented the project to an Indigenous Review Committee that was comprised of people with a range of knowledge including cultural history, ecology, native plants and professional design.

2020-2022: The project team engaged with the community online and in person. Surveys were posted on social media, newsletters and websites and some surveys conducted at several events. Note: most of the community engagement was completed online during webinars and education videos posted during the pandemic.

2023: The project team conducted two community events and 1 online event with the goal of involving the public to incorporate feedback into concept design. Online surveys were posted on Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi social media, newsletters and website. The project team specifically targeted the Asian/Asian American community by attending known cultural events hosted by other community organizations such as the Mid-Autumn Festival at the Saint Paul Changsha China Friendship Garden at Phalen Regional Park and tabling at Hmong Village Shopping Center in the Payne-Phalen Neighborhood of Saint Paul.

2024: The project team conducted one community event at the project site with the goal of consulting the public on 60% designs. The project team worked closely with a variety of technical stakeholders with the goal of collaborating and empowering the stakeholders to design technical aspects of the creek daylighting. Stakeholders included the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Ramsey County, City of Saint Paul departments, and Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD). The team held multiple reviews at 30% and 60% design, and attended the City of Saint Paul Public Works Design Review Forum to formally review the design with city departments. The project will be required to submit the project through the Saint Paul Department of Safety and Inspection's Site Plan Review at 90% design for city approval. The project team will continue to work with the DNR and RWMWD for final approvals and permitting.

- C: Public Participation: What did you learn from the engagement conducted in 2b? Please summarize the advice you heard into themes and identify the contributing stakeholder.

2017-2018: Total of 570 respondents. 201 respondents indicated they would like to see the creek restored in Reach 7 (just south of Lake Phalen), 220 said they would like to see water flowing through Swede Hollow and 238 indicated they would like to see the creek restored at Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.

Generally, respondents appear to favor all categories of benefits that would result from daylighting Phalen Creek, with a noticeably stronger overall preference for "more natural ecology and wildlife habitat." Aside from ecological enhancements, engagement supported nature based activities and passive recreation versus active recreation.

Respondents indicated the following creek uses in order of preference from highest to lowest: trail alongside creek, seating to view the creek, learning activities and programs, and wading in a shallow pool.

Engagement revealed a desire to renaming Phalen Creek as a recognized Dakota space with large support coming from the Indigenous community and supported by the greater community.

Engagement with the Payne-Phalen community suggested retaining the open views for safety and comfort.

3. Evaluation Summary:

- A: Transparency: How did the public participation from 2c impact the decisions and policies made? Please consider input that advances, supports, coincides, and diverges from the master plan.

Engagement supported ecological enhancements, nature based activities and passive recreation versus active recreation. The project team has design the project to account for passive recreation activities such as walking, bird/wildlife watching and educational opportunities.

[1]: International Association for Public Participation: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf

Respondents indicated the following creek uses in order of preference from highest to lowest: trail alongside creek, seating to view the creek, learning activities and programs, and wading in a shallow pool. All options received fairly strong responses, and it is recommended to consider most of these elements, but especially the trail and seating. Interaction with the water was a priority of the project and the creek depth and volume has been designed to provide opportunities to cross the creek and physically touch the water. Wading into a shallow pool is not recommended and the basin design accounts for public safety.

Engagement supported future signage along the restored creek to learn about Dakota & cultural knowledge, creek history, nature/environment, water facts, and maps/wayfinding. The project will incorporate these themes in future signage and wayfinding for enhanced visitor experience and written in multiple languages.

Engagement revealed a desire to rename Phalen Creek as a recognized Dakota space. This is not part of this long-range plan but it is being considered in a future discussion with the Department of Natural Resources, Ramsey County and City of Saint Paul.

Engagement suggested retaining the open views for safety and comfort. The site is design to retain open views and utilize low native grass plantings.

- B: Accountability: How will the planning effort create better outcomes? Please consider outcomes related to regional and local access, quality of experience, facility rules/policy, and reporting back about 3a to stakeholders discussed in 2a.

The City of Saint Paul and Phalen-Keller Regional Park sits on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Dakota homelands. Acknowledgment of this land and the legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement are important to recognize in the context of Phalen-Keller Regional Park.

The geography of this project helps address significant environmental justice needs. Daylighting waterways is a viable nature-based solution to mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing pollution from runoff, providing flood mitigation, improving urban areas for residents, and restoring environmental health and building ecosystem resilience to watersheds and local ecosystems. The overall goals for this project are:

1. Recognize and celebrate Phalen Creek's value to the Dakota people, the original stewards of this land and to whom Phalen Creek holds a unique value as a trade route and resource cache;

2. Improve access to natural spaces and water resources in a heavily industrialized area of the city; The daylighting project advances the State of Minnesota DNR's 2015-2025 Strategic Plan for Waters & Watersheds (MN WAP) by contributing to the goal of no statewide net loss in wetland acres;

3. Align with regional watershed management plans surrounding water quality, stormwater runoff, and flood risk mitigation;

4. Restore critical riparian habitat and extend existing migratory corridors for a range of wildlife and reconnecting waterways.

These goals align with the City of Saint Paul's Climate Action and Resilience Plan's natural infrastructure strategies to "protect natural infrastructure and enhance it to maximize its ability to mitigate weather and climate impacts". The proposed project centers an Indigenous-led meaningful community engagement strategy, youth and adult workforce opportunities, and is built on decades of collaboration and partnership between a community-based organization, a national organization committed to access to green space for all, residents, neighborhood partners, watershed districts, environmental partners, tribal partners, and the City of St Paul.

Accessibility

Points of connection along the trail route were established to prioritize connectivity to existing sidewalks and crosswalks, and create community entry points. The proposed interior trails will be ADA compliant for use by people with limited mobility. Similar to other non-regional interior park trails, Parks and Recreation will not maintain the trails during the winter. Key connections include:

- Wheelock Parkway & East Shore Drive & Johnson Parkway: A trailhead connects the site to Bruce Vento Trail and Lake Phalen trail. Crossings should include painted pedestrian crosswalks conforming to City of St. Paul standards on both sides of the intersection.
- Hawthorn Ave: A spur trail connection meets an existing sidewalk on the south edge of Hawthorn Avenue E to provide neighborhood access and ease of access for cultural use/educational events at the gathering area.
- Maryland & Burnquist St: North and south of Maryland, the trail connects into the existing sidewalk. These points serve as neighborhood access points. An additional marked, crosswalk across Maryland Avenue is being discussed with Ramsey County. The revised design may include a widened median to provide crossing refuge and allow a two-staged crossing of Maryland Avenue. This concept will require future coordination on potential revised lane widths and taper points. An existing safe, marked crossing opportunity is available at Johnson and Maryland via existing sidewalks along Maryland.
- Burnquist St and Jessamine Avenue E: A trail entry point at Burnquist and Jessamine creates a site connection on the north side of Jessamine. This location minimizes conflict with an existing staircase that aligns with Jessamine's southern sidewalk. No crosswalk markings or controls are anticipated.
- Magnolia Lane at Johnson Parkway: The trail connection creates a natural entry into the site from an existing sidewalk that currently ends at Magnolia. No crosswalk markings or controls are anticipated.

Appendix

2018 Metropolitan Council Sewer Easement Agreement

2024 Development Agreement (Daylighting Phalen Creek Project)

2017-2018 Phalen Creek Engagement Report

2020-2022 Phalen Creek Engagement Report

2023 Phalen Creek Community Engagement Plan

March 2023 Community Engagement Session #1 Flyer

Council/Commission Support


DRAFT