

# SUMNER FEILD PARK



## LOCATION AND HISTORY

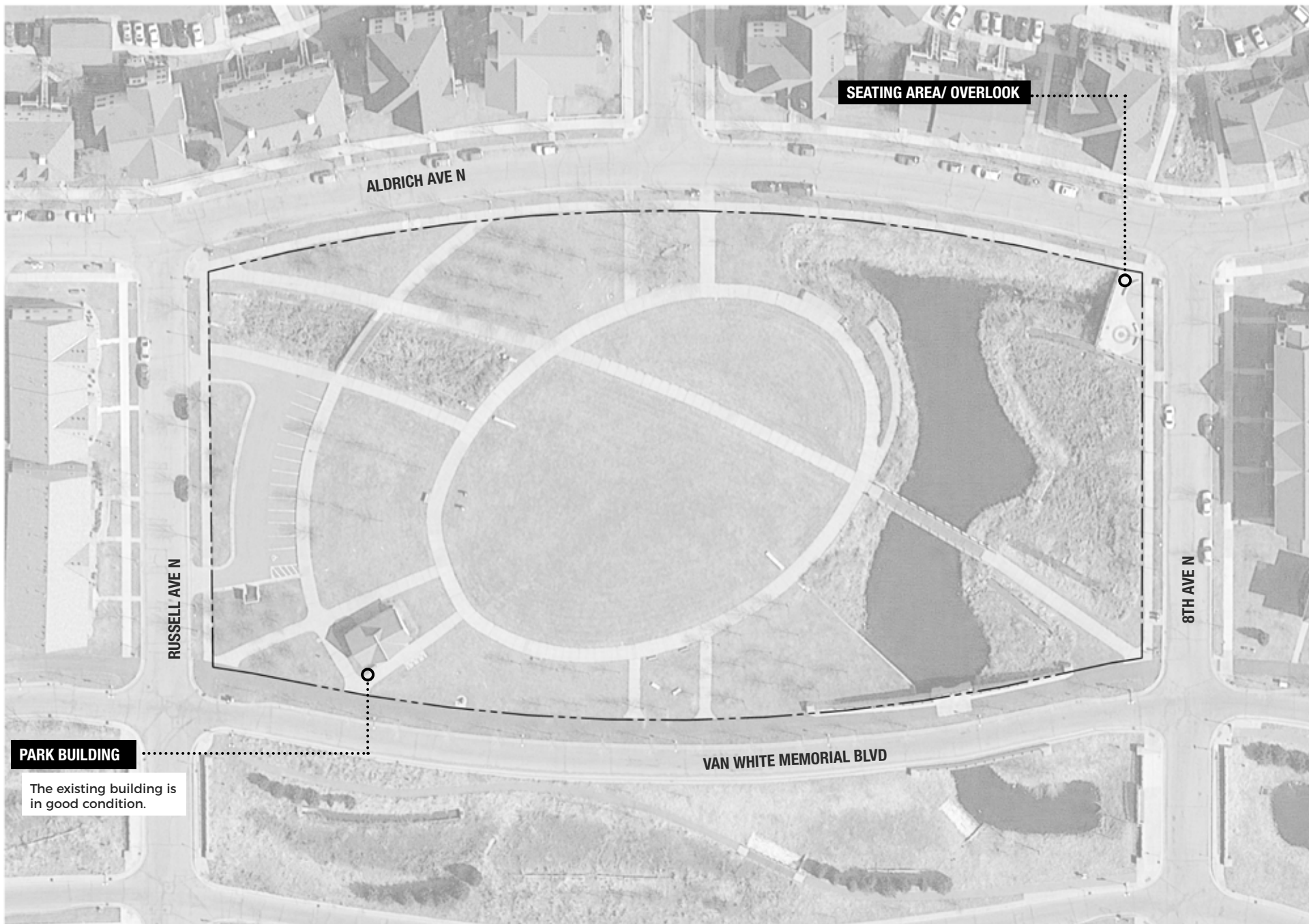
Sumner Field Park is located in the Heritage Park development area of near north Minneapolis. This area of the city has seen repeated and profound change throughout its history, and the current Sumner Field is at the center of the latest of a series of neighborhoods and housing developments. The first three acres of the park were purchased, mostly by condemnation, in 1911. The original purchase included the north half of the block between 8th and 9th, the whole block from 9th to 10th and part of the block north of 10th. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth wrote in his 1911 annual report that the park would need about 4,000 cubic yards of fill to raise it above the grade of the sewer. The next year the park board began filling the land and created a skating rink for the winter. The park board continued to improve the park gradually, adding tennis courts in 1914 and playground equipment and fencing in 1915. The park was named in 1911 for Sumner Place, a street that once went through the park. The street was named for Charles Sumner, a United States Senator from Massachusetts and ardent opponent of slavery.

By then Wirth noted that the park was “intensively used,” one of the “busiest fields in system.” He added that toilets were “absolutely necessary” and that the park was not large enough and should be expanded south to 8th

Street. In 1915, the board found the money to buy an additional 0.6 acre of land on the south end of the park. In his 1917 report, Wirth submitted a new plan for the park, noting that attendance at the park in proportion to its size was greater than for any other playground in the city. His plan was for a park stretching all the way from 8th to 11th streets.

Wirth did not attach cost estimates for his newest plan, suggesting instead that when the people of the district decided what accommodations were desired in the proposed field house, he would provide estimates. The “desires of the people” were critical to what type of building would be erected, because the only way it would be built at all was if property owners in the area agreed to assessments on their property to pay for it—they didn’t.

In 1921, the park was extended south to 8th Street. While improvements to other parks in the city—Folwell, Sibley, Phelps, Linden Hills and Nicollet—were scheduled for improvement in 1923 by assessing local property, the improvements at Sumner were to be paid for with some money from bonds and from selling the houses on the land purchased the year before. Most of the proposed improvements to parks that were not completed before 1929 wouldn’t happen for many years, due to the Great Depression. Sumner, however, was one of the few parks improved in the early 1930s, when the



SEATING AREA/ OVERLOOK

ALDRICH AVE N

RUSSELL AVE N

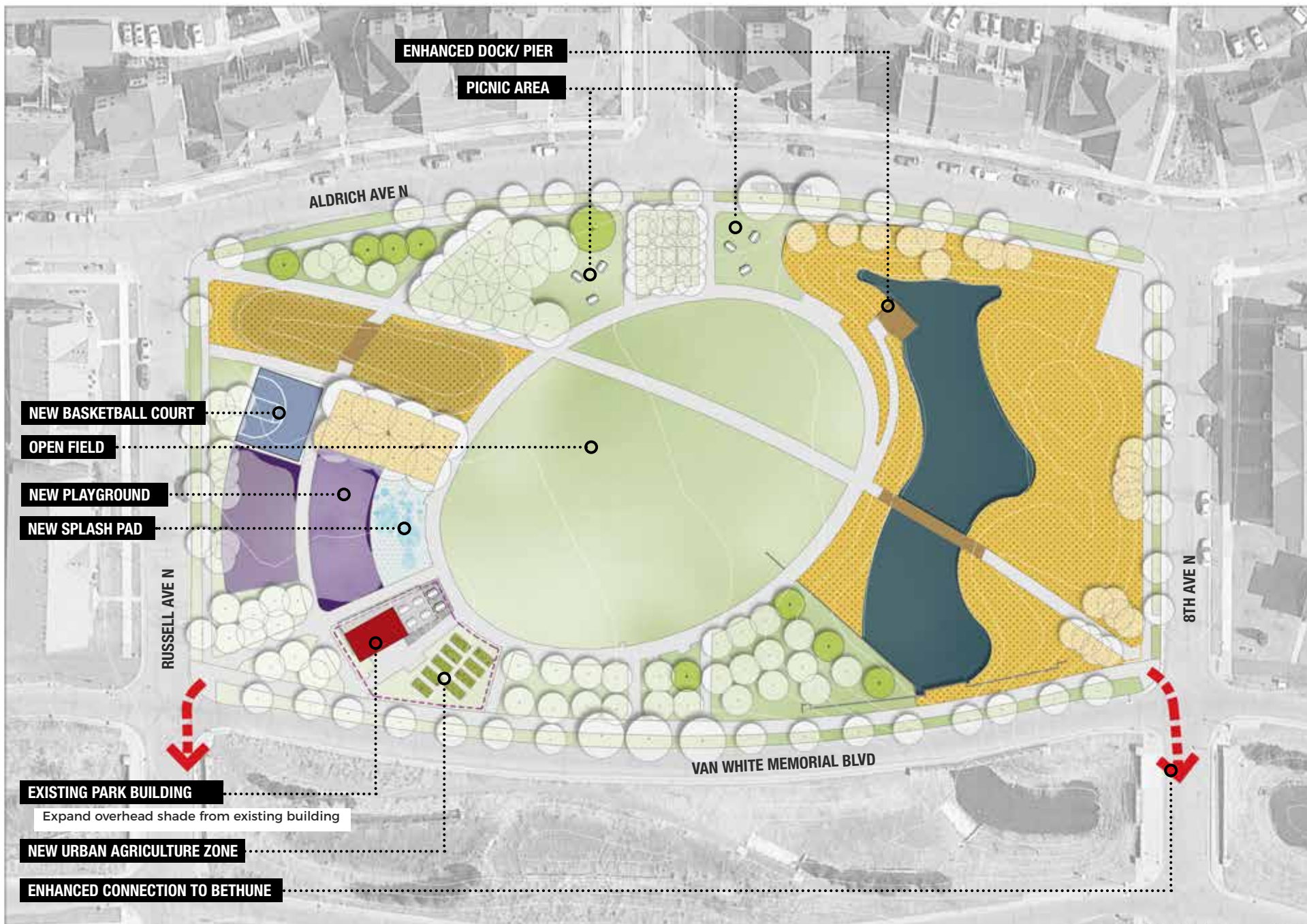
8TH AVE N

VAN WHITE MEMORIAL BLVD

PARK BUILDING

The existing building is in good condition.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS: SUMNER FIELD PARK**



**ALTERNATE PROPOSED PLAN: SUMNER FIELD PARK**

southwest corner of the field was regraded so a hockey rink could be built in 1931, and a wading pool was built and the gravel tennis courts were paved with concrete in 1932. In 1934 the playing fields were rearranged and enlarged as part of federal and state work-relief programs.

In 1962, the park board suggested reorganizing Sumner Field into just a playlot for children, under a plan with the Minneapolis Housing Redevelopment Authority to build a major new park facility to the west adjacent to Grant Elementary School. That project did proceed and eventually became Bethune Park in 1968. As part of that development, the park board was to give up Sumner Field to the housing authority in exchange for the Bethune Park land, and in fact approved a 40-year lease for what was then referred to as Sumner-Olson Field to the housing authority in 1975. But that second step in the trade never was finalized. The park board retained ownership of Sumner Field.

During the visioning and eventual construction of the Heritage Park neighborhood in the early 2000s, Sumner Field was re-formulated as part of a linear green space that is primarily managed by the City of Minneapolis for stormwater purposes. Sumner Field is the only aspect of that green space that provides an open non-naturalized recreation space. All the current facilities in the park date from that time period.

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS AND CHARACTER**

Sumner Field today is an open rectangle with

two curving sides. It sits amidst the Heritage Park redevelopment, so is surrounded by large single-family style multi-unit homes. It is home to a portion of the development's stormwater management system, so the southern third of the park is occupied by a pond with natural edges (perhaps fitting, because the original park area had been very low in elevation and needed to be filled). Sumner has a contemporary and well-organized design, with bold walkways defining different planting spaces. A grand oval of turf grass occupies the center of the park, edged with a walkway. Another walkway arcs from the northeastern to the southwestern corner. A restroom building sits near the northwestern corner of the site, and a small parking lot occupies the northern edge.

Sumner Field has little in the way of active recreational options, though it is an important green space in the area. The organization and form of the park are unique and encourage strolling, but additional activation is probably necessary.

## **THE PROPOSED DESIGN**

The proposed design for Sumner Field retains the “bones” of the park, altering neither the organized walkways, the stormwater pond, nor the large oval of turf. Most improvements take place at the northern end of the park. Here, the parking lot is removed in favor of other active amenities. The parking lot is little used and is unnecessary in this neighborhood of on-street parking and high walkability. Instead, a half-

court basketball court and a play area provide fun alternatives to car parking. Also in this area is a splash pad or spray plaza. Free of standing water, this aquatic facility complements the wading pool at Bethune Park just a few blocks away. The park building is enhanced with a shade awning for picnicking and gathering (even performances). A small community garden space sits adjacent to the building and Van White Boulevard.

The design for Sumner Field honors the careful and recent design of the park but inserts a few additional recreation options. The high youth population in the neighborhood will appreciate the additional activities.

## **CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARKS**

Existing bike trails along Van White Boulevard provide connections through the Heritage Park area and southward to the proposed new route of the Luce Line Trail. A proposed park connector extends west to Bethune Park and eventually to the Queen Avenue Bikeway.

## **KNOWN LAND USE AND COORDINATION ISSUES**

Because the southern portion of the site is part of the overall stormwater management system for Heritage Park, consultation with the City of Minneapolis is important for any park improvements.

## PROCESSES

	<b>1: General Input Spring-Fall 2017</b> <i>Input themes prior to initial concepts</i>	<b>2: Initial Concepts Winter 2018</b> <i>Input themes on initial concepts</i>	<b>3: The Preferred Concept Now</b> <i>Key elements of the concept</i>
aquatics	no comments	Support for splash pad	New splash pad / spray plaza near park building
play	no comments	Support for rock climbing play	New small playground near park building, utilizing a portion of the existing parking lot
athletics	no comments	no comments	Retained open lawn for unprogrammed games and activities
courts	no comments	no comments	New half-court basketball on existing parking lot
winter	no comments	no comments	No winter activities planned for this park
landscape	no comments	Support for orchard	Natural areas retained and enhanced New urban agriculture area near park building
other	no comments	Suggestion for public art	Expanded overhead shade on park building to allow for seating/gathering/picnicking Enhanced connection across Van White toward Bethune Park

## COST ESTIMATE

Park Name	Asset Type	Project	2019 ESTIMATED COST/PROJECT	NOTES
Sumner Field	Aquatics	Small splash pad	\$ 759,350	
Sumner Field	Play	Traditional Play Structure in new container, incl. parking lot demolition	\$ 806,809	
Sumner Field	Courts	Basketball Court (half court)	\$ 75,935	
Sumner Field	Landscape	Naturalized areas	\$ 56,951	Some naturalized areas maintained in collaboration with City of Minneapolis
Sumner Field	Landscape	Urban Agriculture Area	\$ 28,911	Urban Agriculture Areas will be implemented in partnership with specific programs or community members. Estimate includes water service
Sumner Field	Other	Picnic canopy on existing restroom building	\$ 104,411	
Sumner Field	Other	Renovate walking paths	\$ 561,919	
Sumner Field	Other	Misc. signs, trees, furniture	\$ 47,886	
Sumner Field	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 2,442,171</b>	

## OPERATIONS ESTIMATE

SUMNER			
FACILITIES	Total Per Unit Operations Cost	△ Qty	△ Cost
Splash Pad	\$ 35,000	1	\$ 35,000
Traditional Play Structure	\$ 7,500	1	\$ 7,500
Half Court Basketball	\$ 1,000	1	\$ 1,000
Trail Additons	\$ 5,000	1	\$ 5,000
Urban Agriculture	\$ 15,000	1	\$ 15,000
<b>Difference</b>			<b>\$ 63,500</b>