

PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

Loring Park

Size: 33.94 acres

Address: 1382 Willow Street

Location: Loring Park is the centerpiece of the Loring neighborhood. Neighbors include the Walker Art Center and the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, Basilica of St. Mary, St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, and Minneapolis Community and Technical College.



History

The first name for the park was Central Park when it was purchased in 1883. In 1890 the park was renamed in honor of the first president of the MPRB, Charles Loring, known as the “Father of Minneapolis Parks.” He was appointed as a park commissioner in the February, 1883 legislation that created the MPRB and was elected by the other appointed commissioners to be the president of the new board. In 1906 Loring donated the shelter and warming house beside the pond in Loring Park, which still stands.

The park was expanded several times over the next few years. Loring and fellow commissioner and friend George Brackett were assigned by the Park Board to contract for the excavation of Johnson’s Lake to remove the bog in the lake and fill the surrounding marsh. The MPRB also vacated streets that ran through the newly acquired land and decided from the beginning that the park would be for pedestrians only.

Landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland was hired to create the initial plan for the park. His layout of the park was intended for rapid development and fast

growth of trees and shrubs that were transplanted mostly from nearby woods. Many of the original elms planted in the park had been grown from seedlings by Loring at his Lake Minnetonka property. Loring personally supervised the development of Central Park to H.W.S Cleveland’s plans.

The first winter after the lake was enlarged, in 1884, the MPRB created a skating rink on the pond, the MPRB’s first provision for active recreation in parks. Central Park was the center of park system activity from the beginning, with not only ice skating but also a bandstand built in 1886 and tennis courts in 1887. That Central Park was viewed as the hub of the park system was evident in the construction of parkways in the city. Initially, Hennepin Avenue was viewed as a parkway to connect Central Park to the parkway being built around Lake Harriet.

Minneapolis came close to losing Loring Park in 1895 when the Park Board voted to give the park to the state for the site of a new capitol building in hopes of luring state government from St. Paul. Instead, the state chose the present site for the capitol in St. Paul. Loring Park has always been coveted by others for civic buildings. In 1909, a group of citizens, including

Loring Park Existing Conditions

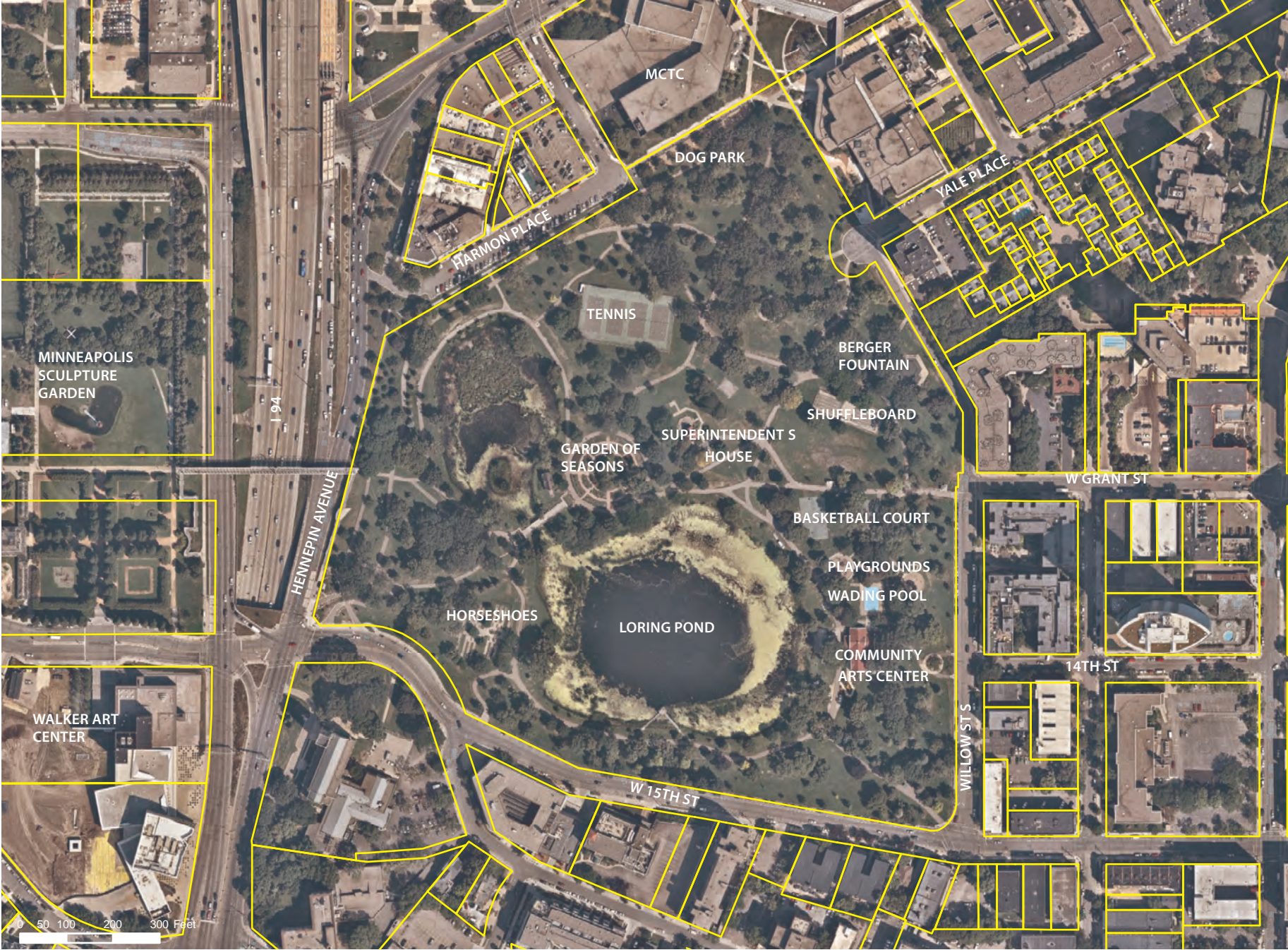


Figure 1.40 Loring Park Existing Conditions

Loring Park Proposed Plan



Figure 1.41 Loring Park Proposed Plan



Loring Park Existing Conditions

T. B. Walker, petitioned the MPRB to build a library in the park. In 1923, Loring Park was considered as the site of a new municipal auditorium.

Charles Loring's wish for playgrounds for children in parks was partially granted when the Park Board erected its first swings, teeter-totters and sand boxes in Loring Park in 1904. The first permanent recreation center in Minneapolis parks was built in 1906, when Charles Loring donated a heated two-story building next to the lake to serve as a recreation center, kindergarten and warming house for skaters. In early years Loring Park was also the center of floral displays in parks, and became the center for shuffleboard and pitching horseshoes in the city. Loring Park has been the site of dramatic and musical performances since its earliest days. It was not only the site of the first bandstand in a park, but it was the site of theatrical performances and community singing competitions.

Among Loring's many other notable firsts in park history, it was the first park to have a wading pool installed in 1940 to meet new state requirements that wading pools have continuously circulating water. In 1960, Loring Park was the first to provide programs specifically for senior citizens. Loring Park was also

one of the first places where the MPRB experimented with leasing a private concession area when in 1980 it leased space for Loring Picnic Place to sell sandwiches and refreshments.

Loring Park today is slightly smaller than it once was. Encroachments for transportation projects included the widening of Hennepin Avenue, 15th Street, and the construction of I-94.

Loring Park has undergone important renovations in the last thirty years, including dredging of the lake, renovation of the shelter and footbridge, expansion of the Loring shelter into a community art center, planting of the Garden of the Seasons, and the construction of the Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge, designed by Siah Armajani, to connect Loring Park to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and the Parade.

Existing Conditions and Character

Loring Park was the original "Central Park" of downtown Minneapolis and in many ways it acts as such today. The park hosts many of downtown's large festivals and events. The park is known for its unique pond, the Garden of the Seasons, and the iconic Berger Fountain.

This park is by far the largest, most fully developed and well-known of the Downtown Service Area parks. Two prominent landmarks within Loring Park are the statue of Ole Bull, a Norwegian composer, erected in 1897, and the Berger “dandelion” Fountain, built in 1975. The park has been the subject of several neighborhood plans and park master plans but not all of the elements of those past plans have been realized. This park is home to biking and walking paths that are part of the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway.

Issues

- » Overbuilt and confusing network of internal trails lacks path hierarchy and clear wayfinding
- » The original strolling, pastoral aesthetic has been impacted and diminished through the perceived random placement of recreation facilities throughout the park. This wide spacing also makes supervision of facilities difficult with limited staff
- » View and visual connection from Berger Fountain to Loring Pond and beyond is discontinuous and fractured

- » Lack of convenient accessible and staff parking has resulted in de facto parking along the entry path to the Community Arts Center. This is an undesirable eyesore, may have negative impacts on adjacent pond health, and causes damage to turf next to the path
- » There is not enough lighting, and existing lighting is outdated
- » Current location of full basketball court conflicts with tot lot location. Community has expressed concerns about crime and offensive language on the court near children. The community has requested several criteria for the future relocation of a full basketball court that include surveillance cameras, more programming and supervision from staff, that construction can't cause denigration to the landscape of the park, and that the noise level be manageable
- » The unmarked pedestrian and bicycle crossing at 15th Street and Oak Grove is currently inadequate for actual traffic speeds and feels unsafe. There also is no formal, welcoming entrance to the park at this intersection

- » Poor visual connections to the surrounding neighborhoods – there is a lack of unique entrances to the park and of entryway and internal wayfinding signage
- » Trails are often too narrow to comfortably accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians at the same time
- » Limited ability to connect directly with the water in Loring Pond
- » Lack of a sidewalk along the entire park perimeter means pedestrians on the south side must walk on turf or in the busy street. This can be unsafe and offers little chance to appreciate the extraordinary view or comfortably enter the park given the steep grade
- » Facilities are aging and include deteriorating trails and poorly functioning tennis courts
- » Current recreation needs are not being fully served. Some sports are overrepresented or overbuilt for current demand (horseshoes), while others not yet represented (bocce)
- » A lack of vegetative buffering on the west side results in noise and air pollution entering the park from busy Hennepin/Lyndale Avenues



Loring Park Existing Conditions

- » Lack of resilient lawn and continuous open space for large scale public events. There is also a need for additional electrical service, stronger and wider paths for heavy event vehicles to drive on, and a drop off location for small event and wedding suppliers. The community has requested reliable stock layouts for events so generators and toilets aren't located close to residential areas.
- » No formal connection/entrance to the park on the northeast side next to an important commercial and restaurant node and parking
- » Lack of reliable pond ice skating in winter
- » Current Superintendent's House is underutilized.
- » Persistent bike/pedestrian conflicts at the bridge crossing Loring Pond
- » Community desire for additional greening and garden spaces
- » Some projects haven't yet been implemented from the last master plan iteration(s)

Opportunities

- » Restore the original intention of the park's strolling, promenade aesthetic with fewer, wider paths, open lawn space, and consolidated areas of recreational activity
- » Contribute to the park's unique sense of place by enhancing entrances and wayfinding
- » Create continuous connections from Loring to other public spaces, green corridors and connector streets through downtown Minneapolis and surrounding neighborhoods
- » Incorporate art throughout, highlighting the creative energy of the neighborhood
- » Provide clarity and hierarchy to the trail network and increase park perimeter access
- » Provide access to water recreation in the heart of the city
- » Support public events with stronger and more resilient surfacing (turf and trails), additional electrical access and more effective and efficient lighting

Connections

Wayfinding and connections to and from Loring Park should focus on:

- » Main bicycle and pedestrian connections to Nicollet Mall via the Loring Greenway, to downtown and South Minneapolis via Hennepin Avenue, and to the west side of the city and the Chain of Lakes via the Cedar Lake Regional and Kenilworth Trails
- » The existing City of Minneapolis bicycle lanes on West 15th Street which connect the park to areas of east downtown including the Minneapolis Convention Center as well as west to residential neighborhoods

Proposed Design

The plan for Loring Park incorporates community priorities identified in earlier neighborhood and MPRB planning efforts, such as enhancement of a promenade through the park, the creation of signature gardens, and improvements to key park entries. This plan reflects the park's original design intent, which aimed to create a picturesque landscape for strolling, viewing, and relaxing. Recreation activities are aggregated in the southeast corner of the park, allowing most of the remainder of the park

to be populated with passive and un-programmed activities where the landscape and views dominate, much like the park's original design.

Recognizing the park's attraction for significant events, the plan establishes the Great Lawn stretching from near the Berger Fountain to the water's edge. The lawn would be constructed with engineered soil and turf that is more resilient to the impacts of events. Because the park first serves the neighborhood, it is important that the lawn be useable and inviting for casual gathering and play, but also serviceable for those few special events that temporarily occupy the park. In creating the Great Lawn, two park features—the basketball court and the shuffleboard courts—are proposed for relocation within Loring Park.

The plan anticipates several possible locations for the basketball court, noting that the current location is incompatible with the Great Lawn. In particular, a new location for the basketball court must be one that can be reasonably managed by park staff, includes passive observation of activity on the court, affords surveillance from streets, and is integrated into the landscape of the park.

Park entrances at Oak Grove and Hennepin Avenue and at Willow Street and 15th Street W are enhanced



Loring Park Existing Conditions



Precedents for Loring Park

following earlier design feedback received during a neighborhood-lead park design event. At 15th Street W and Oak Grove, the plan proposes changes to the street aimed at a safer pedestrian crossing and a landing on the park side in the form of a “balcony” as an integrated part of a walkway along 15th Street W. At Harmon Place, an entry extends along the axis of an alley across the street, stretching its playful character to the edge of the water as an artful overlook.

Desired Key Features

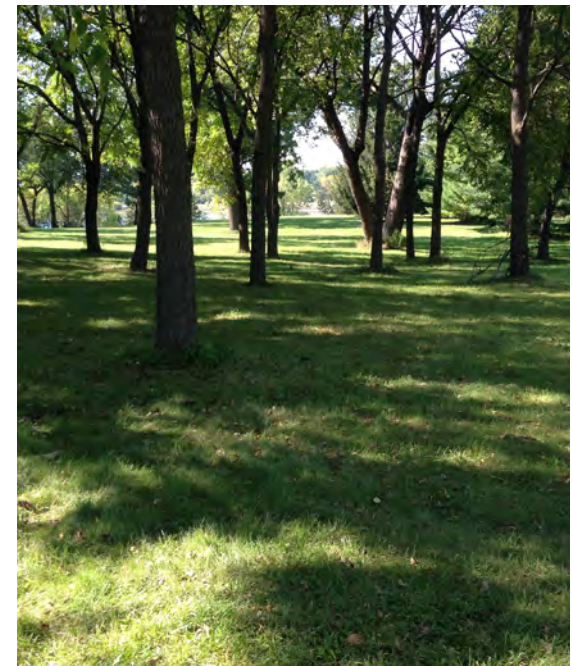
- » Reflection of the park’s original design character in any evolution, with a particular sensitivity to the introduction of new recreation features that pose the potential for diminishing a landscape first created for strolling
- » Establishment of the Great Lawn as a part of the promenade experience of the park, with a lawn surface engineered for resiliency and terraces that engage the water’s edge, including relocation or adjustment of existing features to ensure its size meets needs for gathering, event, and informal use, and ensuring broad views across the water to the opposite side of the park

- » Perpetuation of the park’s significant tree canopy as one of its character-defining features, and the planting of an allee of trees at the 15th and Willow entrance
- » Creation of a native plant garden at the west end of the bridge to complement the formal garden at its east landing
- » Aggregation of most active recreation features in the park’s southeast corner, near the Community Arts Center building, where programming can be better managed and the intrusion of activities upon most of the park can be limited in favor of a park experience dominated by the landscape
- » Enhancement of entries to the park that more fully reflect its landscape and character including removal of utilitarian features from views along entry paths, the use of reconfigured space around the Berger Fountain as a key entry point from the Loring Greenway, the creation of a “balcony” as a key feature of the 15th Street W entry from Oak Grove, and the extension of the Harmon “alley” to terminate at an overlook at the water’s edge
- » Maintenance of the pond to create an open water environment within areas of emergent and aquatic vegetation occurring as part of a

- plan that imagines those features as extensions of gardens comprised of native plantings
- » Provide physical access to the pond through an improved dock near the Community Arts Center
 - » Establishment or removal of paths through the park to recognize a simplified hierarchy of movement, especially through reinforcement of the promenade and a circuit around the pond as the dominant pedestrian routes. Creation of a park perimeter path that more fully engages 15th Street W and other missing street edges
 - » Exploration of the use of the Superintendent's Building as a focus for concessions, with a plaza and seating opportunities that orient to the Great Lawn
 - » Resurfacing or reconstructing the tennis courts, with consideration of the potential dual use of a reconstructed tennis court as a winter ice skating rink using a refrigerated surface if additional funding becomes available, most likely through an outside source. However, an ice rink should not preclude a more expedient resurfacing or reconstruction of the tennis courts, which are currently in poor condition

- » Relocation of indiscriminate parking to less populated parts of the park while still providing accessible parking and limited staff parking. Existing parking spaces would be replaced with uses more appropriate to the water's edge and building front locations
- » Consideration of a new location for full-court basketball as the Great Lawn is implemented using these criteria:
 - It must have cameras attached to it
 - It must be in a location that can have surveillance (both directly and personally)
 - MPRB must have the ability to attach program staff to it
 - It can't cause denigration to the landscape of the park
 - It must be in a location where noise level is acceptable, especially if adjacent to residential neighborhoods
 - Final location to be determined in consultation with community members and organizations
- » Buffering of the western edge of the park from the noise and the visual distraction of the highway and streets

- » Incorporation of urban agriculture as appropriate within designated areas, using these criteria:
 - It must have access to a potable water source
 - It should have no or low impact on other park activities and park landscape
 - Final location to be determined in consultation with community members and organizations
- » Consideration of pickleball striping on tennis courts



Precedent for Loring Park

Processes - Loring Park

Initial Design Guidance and Ideation by Design Team	→ Design Week Products	→ Design Week Feedback	→ Final Design Product
Provide strong connections between street and park	→ Enhanced park entrances and street crossings at intersections	→ OK	→ Enhanced park entrances and street crossings at intersections
Entrances are pedestrian and bicycle focused	→ Enhanced park entrances and street crossings at intersections, benches at entrances and along trails, widen promenade path	→ OK	→ Enhanced park entrances and street crossings at intersections, widen promenade path
Increase bicycle and pedestrian safety	→ Hierarchy in path placement, enhanced street crossings at intersections	→ OK	→ Hierarchy in path placement, enhanced street crossings at intersections
Maintain pastoral quality and identity of Loring Park	→ Great Lawn, grouping of active recreation in SE quadrant, maintain turf grass with overstory trees	→ Too much deviation from existing Master Plan, too many impacts to existing mature trees	→ Existing high quality trees protected, Great Lawn, active recreation facilities reorganized
Enter park through series of gardens	→ Native and wetland gardens west of ponds, enhanced park entrances	→ OK	→ Native and wetland gardens west of ponds, enhanced park entrances
Create new experiences while maintaining historical elements	→ Existing gardens, buildings, and pastoral character of park protected	→ Bring historic winter uses to park	→ Existing gardens, buildings, and pastoral character of park protected. Ice rink on tennis courts
Maintain ability to stroll through park	→ Separate bike commuting paths and pedestrian paths, perimeter loops within park	→ OK	→ Separate bike commuting paths and pedestrian paths, perimeter loops within park
Continue to use native and ornamental plants for gardens	→ Native and wetland gardens west of ponds	→ OK	→ Native and wetland gardens west of ponds
Increase access to water and aquatic plants	→ Viewing platforms, docks, and bridge to island	→ bridge too invasive to habitat	→ Viewing platforms and docks
Create open flexible space for gathering and events	→ Great Lawn, performance space, and café/concessions	→ Too many impacts to existing mature trees	→ Existing high quality trees protected, Great Lawn, active recreation facilities
Protect turfgrass from dieback due to event overuse	→ Paths directly link to destinations, Great Lawn and performance spaces separate, enhanced maintenance, engineered turf	→ OK	→ Paths directly link to destinations, Great Lawn and performance spaces separate, enhanced maintenance, engineered turf
Maintain and enhance views across pond and park	→ Open view through Great Lawn, grass terraces at pond edge, recreation amenities moved out of Great Lawn	→ Too many impacts to existing mature trees	→ Protect trees in view corridors, grass terraces at pond edge, recreation amenities moved out of Great Lawn
Provide ADA access to park	→ Park entrances, paths, buildings, parking and other facilities meet ADA standards	→ OK	→ Park entrances, paths, buildings, parking and other facilities meet ADA standards
Minimize impervious surfaces	→ Relocated and minimized underused amenities, minimized hard surfaces near pond, increased native plantings near pond edge, trail network simplified	→ Don't block access to pond with planted shorelines	→ Relocated and minimized underused amenities, minimized hard surfaces near pond, increased native plantings near pond edge and pond access areas
Provide parking for recreation center	→ Parking lot and service access	→ Minimize number of stalls	→ Limited parking lot and service access

Processes (continued)

Initial Design Guidance and Ideation by Design Team	→ Design Week Products	→ Design Week Feedback	→ Final Design Product
Consolidate recreation uses in one area of the park	→ Horseshoe pits, shuffleboard, basketball, play areas, and community arts center located in SE quadrant	→ Too much deviation from existing Master Plan, basketball is a nuisance to other users, some amenities are still in good shape	→ Horseshoe pits resized in existing location, other recreation amenities located adjacent to community arts center, future basketball relocation search areas
Access pond island and create unique view of pond	→ Bridge pond to viewing platform on island	→ Keep island inaccessible and planted with native species	→ Island planted with native species, no bridge
Highlight Superintendent's House and Plaza	→ Repurpose building	→ OK	→ Repurpose building into a café with patio seating and connections to gardens with views to pond
Provide fitness opportunities	→ Dedicated paths for bicycles, looped walking and running paths	→ Need for outdoor fitness area	→ Dedicated paths for bicycles, looped walking and running paths, outdoor adult fitness area located near play areas
Reinforce park entries and provide resting spaces	→ Enhanced park entrances and street crossings at intersections, benches at entrances and along trails	→ OK	→ Enhanced park entrances and street crossings at intersections, benches at entrances and along trails
Reduce noise and air pollution from nearby roadways	→ Western buffer of evergreens, increased plant material in park	→ OK	→ Western buffer of evergreens, increased plant material in park
Reduce user conflict at basketball court	→ Move basketball court near other active recreation amenities	→ Basketball court should be removed to eliminate unwanted activities or relocated within park as an important amenity	→ Future basketball relocation search areas identified, improve surveillance of any relocated court
Return winter uses to park	→ Ice rink	→ Ensure consistent ice through winter	→ Refrigerated rink on tennis courts
Offer places to keep warm during the winter	→ Warming areas	→ OK	→ Warming areas

Cost Estimate - Loring Park (1 of 3)

Cost estimate updated to reflect cost of replacing existing elements as well as adding new ones

Project	Quantity	Units	Total Project Cost (2017)	Implementation	Prioritization Category
Berger Fountain	1		\$ 1,516,570	Stand Alone	Planned
Removals, new fountain mechanicals & basin	1	each	\$ 620,000		
Fountain winter cover	1	each	\$ 77,500		
Plaza paving	19600	sf	\$ 273,420		
Overstory trees	2	each	\$ 1,550		
Planters	5	each	\$ 6,216		
Entry signage brick/masonry wall	1	each	\$ 11,625		
Benches	10	each	\$ 13,186		
Perennial plants	4140	sf	\$ 89,838		
Garden irrigation system	500	sf	\$ 3,875		
Outdoor Light	8	each	\$ 63,292		
Raised ped. crossing on Willow*	1	each	\$ 114,390		
Splash pad	1	each	\$ 232,500		
Sod for plaza/path removal/restoration	1920	sf	\$ 1,428		
Drainage and grading improvements	1	each	\$ 7,750		
Tennis Courts			\$ 269,196	Stand Alone	Planned
Reconstruct tennis courts	4	each	\$ 238,196		
Enhanced lighting	4	each	\$ 31,000		
Enhanced Entrance on 15th & Willow	1		\$ 96,875	Stand Alone	Planned
Entry signage	1	each	\$ 11,625		
Entry plaza	1	each	\$ 54,250		
Allee of basswood trees	1	each	\$ 23,250		
Drainage and grading improvements	1	each	\$ 7,750		
Promenade (on/outside path, + GL path)	1		\$ 458,974	Package 1	Planned
Overstory trees	80	each	\$ 62,000		
Enhanced path	6720	sf	\$ 93,744		
Outdoor Light	10	each	\$ 263,716		
Benches outside path	20	each	\$ 24,858		
Sod for path removal/restoration	19700	sf	\$ 14,657		
Great Lawn (elements inside the path)			\$ 832,171	Package 1	Planned
Sod for path removal/restoration	12500	sf	\$ 18,600		
Concrete-edged grass steps- 270 x 30	8100	sf	\$ 150,660		
Enhanced soil profile	25500	sf	\$ 533,588		
Power pedestals & electrical connection*	4	each	\$ 124,000		Complete
Irrigation system	162	sf	\$ 352		
Planters	2	each	\$ 4,972		
Adult Fitness Area	2		\$ 49,910	Package 1	Planned
2 concrete slabs - total sq ft	800	sf	\$ 11,160		
Fitness equipment	10	each	\$ 38,750		

*Funding provided by other entities

Cost Estimate (2 of 3)

Project	Quantity	Units	Total Project Cost (2017)	Implementation	Prioritization Category
Native Garden	1		\$ 1,034,706	Package 1	Planned
Overstory trees	17	each	\$ 13,175		
Perennial plants	40050	sf	\$ 869,085		
Water hook up*	1	each	\$ 18,600		
Path	3000	sf	\$ 18,600		
landing/dock	1	each	\$ 105,400		
Benches	6	each	\$ 7,911		
Sod for removal site restoration	2600	sf	\$ 1,934		
Community Garden	1		\$ 92,301	Stand Alone	Planned
Garden	1	each	\$ 92,301		
Community Center Dock	1		\$ 409,491	Stand Alone	Planned
Dock	1	each	\$ 224,159		
Fence/railing-230 l.f.	230	lf	\$ 53,475		
Gateway - Waterside Gazebo	1	each	\$ 131,858		
Loring Balcony	1		\$ 597,215	Stand Alone	Planned
Understory trees	5	each	\$ 2,325		
Concrete paving	7000	sf	\$ 97,650		
Retaining wall	1	each	\$ 41,664		
Planters/seating	5	each	\$ 77,500		
Fence/railing-240 l.f.	240	lf	\$ 55,800		
Stairs	660	sf	\$ 12,276		
Intersection improvements/crossings and islands*	2	each	\$ 310,000		
Superintendent's House Plaza			\$ 96,159	Stand Alone	Planned
Concrete plaza	4000	sf	\$ 55,800		
Repair sanitary sewer	1	each	\$ 38,750		
Bike rack	3	each	\$ 1,163		
Path/plaza removal & site restoration	600	sf	\$ 446		
Harmon Alley Overlook			\$ 208,186	Stand Alone	Planned
Path	2592	sf	\$ 16,070		
Fence/railing-375 l.f.	375	lf	\$ 87,188		
Overlook walk above water (base, piers)	720	sf	\$ 33,480		

Cost Estimate (3 of 3)

Project	Quantity	Units	Total Project Cost (2017)	Implementation	Prioritization Category
15th/Oak Grove	1	each	\$ 11,625		
Willow/MCTC	1	each	\$ 11,625		
Staff and Accessible Parking			\$ 36,611	Stand Alone	Planned
Overstory trees	2	each	\$ 1,550		
Parking Lot	4	space	\$ 16,740		
Path	2700	sf	\$ 16,740		
Sod for path removal/site restoration	1500	sf	\$ 1,116		
Stairs	25	sf	\$ 465		
Enhanced Entrance on Hennepin & 15th			\$ 57,350	Stand Alone	Planned
Entry signage with low wall	1	each	\$ 18,600		
Enhanced plaza	1	each	\$ 38,750		
Relocated Shuffleboard Courts			\$ 127,687	Stand Alone	Planned
Shuffleboard Court	8	each	\$ 73,840		
Garden fence/railing-210 l.f.	210	lf	\$ 48,825		
Sod for removal site restoration	6750	sf	\$ 5,022		
Removed Horseshoe Courts			\$ 9,374	Stand Alone	Planned
Sod for removal site restoration	12600	sf	\$ 9,374		
Bocce Ball Court			\$ 72,872	Stand Alone	Planned
Bocce Ball Court	2	each	\$ 26,372		
Garden fence/railing-200 l.f.	200	lf	\$ 46,500		
Relocated Full Basketball Court			\$ 79,825	Stand Alone	Planned
Basketball Court	1	each	\$ 24,800		
Retaining wall & seating area	1	each	\$ 50,933		
Sod for removal site restoration	5500	sf	\$ 4,092		
Elements Outside of Identified Projects			\$ 746,362	Stand Alone	Planned
Restoration of garden shed	1	each	\$ 155,000		
Sculpture*	3	each	\$ 158,230		
Perimeter park path	12060	sf	\$ 74,772		
Bike rack	20	each	\$ 7,750		
Overstory trees	10	each	\$ 7,750		
Western air-borne salt buffer of trees	60	each	\$ 46,500		
Enhanced lighting	36	each	\$ 279,000		
Site furnishings (drinking fountain, chess boards)	1	pkg	\$ 15,500		
Sod for path removal/site restoration	2500	sf	\$ 1,860		
			\$ 6,746,034.75		

*Funding provided by other entities

Annual Operations Estimate - Loring Park

Asset Type	Asset Name	Current Quantity	Units	Annual Operating Cost Per Unit	Park Plan Quantity	Park Plan Operating Costs	Change in Asset Quantity
Buildings	Recreation Center	5,164	sf	\$ -	5,164	\$ -	0
Buildings	Bandshell	572	sf	\$ 10	572	\$ 5,720	0
Buildings	Maintenance Building	504	sf	\$ 5	504	\$ 2,520	0
Buildings	Kiosk	1	each	\$ 500	1	\$ 500	0
Play	Playground	2	each	\$ 7,500	2	\$ 15,000	0
Play	Adult Fitness	-	each	\$ 2,500	1	\$ 2,500	1
Courts	Basketball	1	each	\$ 1,500	1	\$ 1,500	0
Courts	Half-Court Basketball	1	each	\$ 1,000	1	\$ 1,000	0
Courts	Horseshoes	12	each	\$ 100	6	\$ 600	(6)
Courts	Shuffleboard	8	each	\$ 50	8	\$ 400	0
Courts	Bocce	-	each	\$ 50	2	\$ 100	2
Courts	Tennis	4	each	\$ 1,500	4	\$ 6,000	0
Aquatics	Wading Pool	1	each	\$ 15,000	1	\$ 15,000	0
Aquatics	Splash Pad	-	each	\$ 35,000	0.3	\$ 10,500	0.3
Features	Decorative Fountain	1	each	\$ 80,000	1	\$ 80,000	0
Features	Public Art	1	each	\$ 1,500	3	\$ 4,500	2
Circulation & Gathering	Ped/Bike Bridge	1	each	\$ 500	1	\$ 500	0
Circulation & Gathering	Dock	1	each	\$ 3,000	1	\$ 3,000	0
Circulation & Gathering	Multi-Use Path	132,822	sf	\$ 0.20	132,822	\$ 26,564	0
Circulation & Gathering	Stage (open air)	1	each	\$ 1,000	1	\$ 1,000	0
Circulation & Gathering	Stairs	20	step	\$ 200	30	\$ 6,000	10
Circulation & Gathering	Service Area Paving	5,000	sf	\$ 0.20	5,000	\$ 1,000	0
Circulation & Gathering	Plaza	15,000	sf	\$ 1	30,000	\$ 30,000	15,000
Circulation & Gathering	Event Lawn	-	ac	\$ 20,000	0.60	\$ 12,000	1
Furnishings	Drinking Fountain	2	each	\$ 1,500	2	\$ 3,000	0
Furnishings	Lighting	29	each	\$ 200	84	\$ 16,800	55
Furnishings	Seating/Picnic Furnishings	30	each	\$ 25	66	\$ 1,650	36
Furnishings	Performance/Event Electronics	1	ls	\$ 2,000	1	\$ 2,000	0
Furnishings	Bike Rack	30	loop	\$ 20	60	\$ 1,200	30
Landscape	Tended Garden	0.50	ac	\$ 120,000	1.5	\$ 180,000	1
Landscape	Lawn - Unirrigated	18	ac	\$ 4,500	16	\$ 72,000	(2)
Landscape	Trees	300	each	\$ 25	420	\$ 10,500	120
Landscape	Shoreline	4,000	lf	\$ 2	4,000	\$ 8,000	0
Landscape	Tended Landscaping	3	ac	\$ 20,000	3	\$ 60,000	0
Landscape	Lake/Pond	1	each	\$ 10,000	1	\$ 10,000	0
Landscape	Urban Architecture Area		ac	\$ 15,000	0.17	\$ 2,479	0.17

Berger Fountain (Loring Park)

Location: The fountain is located on the northeast edge of Loring Park along Willow Street, where the Loring Greenway meets the park.

As part of a constellation, features that suggest connections to parks and park-like spaces beyond Loring Park are important. A refurbished Berger Fountain marks the downtown side of the park, surrounded by a more generous plaza that is more readily populated, gardens that—while smaller than others in the park—reflect one of its character-defining features, and tall trees offering shade for people and scale for the fountain. The portion of Willow Street near the fountain is conceived as a more pedestrian-focused crossing between Loring Park and the Loring Greenway.

Motivators:

Assembly (Civic)
Be Entertained
Competition/Sport
Explore/Learn
Family + Friends
Fitness+ Health
Get Away/Retreat/Rest/Relax
Study/Think/Work

History

The fountain was donated by former Park Board Commissioner Benjamin Berger to the Park Board in 1975. It is similar to a fountain Mr. Berger saw in Australia. It was initially intended for the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden but the Walker Art Center declined the installation because it was not an original artwork, so it was subsequently installed in Loring Park.

Existing Conditions and Character

The fountain is a beloved neighborhood landmark and a favorite location for wedding photographers and children. The plaza and surrounding trees create a cozy enclosed area with good views of the park and skyline. Pipes and parts function but are often failing and hard to repair, with the basin leaking water onto the plaza in several locations. Strong winds often blow fountain spray onto the nearby plaza benches. The Willow Street crossing to the Loring Greenway is not clearly defined and makes pedestrian and bike crossings challenging in that area.

Issues

- » Aging mechanicals and plaza infrastructure are in constant need of repair or replacement
- » Poor visual and physical connections to Loring Greenway, including lack of a safe bicycle/pedestrian crossing at Willow Street, a lack of a welcoming entrance and wayfinding signage, and a plaza that is too small to accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians while also providing areas to avoid fountain spray
- » Current winter cover is unattractive, inviting vandalism, and staff find the cover difficult to install

Opportunities

- » Create a grand entrance into the park from Loring Greenway
- » Provide an efficient and reliable water feature
- » Offer room for group gatherings of various sizes while still accommodating bicycle and pedestrian circulation
- » Reinforce views and visual connection between the fountain entrance, Loring Pond, and the rest of the park

Connections

Wayfinding and connections to and from Berger Fountain should focus on:

- » The pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Loring Greenway leading to Nicollet Mall and downtown.
- » Pedestrian and bicycle connections leading into the heart of Loring Park and across it to Lyndale/Hennepin Avenues and neighborhoods and parks farther west.



Berger Fountain

Berger Fountain Existing Conditions



Figure 1.42 Berger Fountain Existing Conditions

Berger Fountain Proposed Plan



Figure 1.43 Berger Fountain Proposed Plan



Precedents for Berger Fountain

Proposed Design

The proposed design features an organically shaped plaza with flowing lines that encourages pedestrian strolling through the space and into the park. Small garden spaces and new trees provide wind breaks and sheltered seating from fountain spray. A raised pedestrian table and on-street markings increase safety and access to the Loring Greenway. A simplified basin prevents plaza flooding and standardized replacement fountain parts reduce time and cost of fountain repairs. Introduction of a splash pad allows children and adults to access the water without climbing on and potentially damaging the basin. New plantings introduce color and a new signage wall creates a welcoming gateway to the park.

Desired Key Features

- » A more organic quality to the spaces surrounding the fountain, one that resonates with the natural character of the park and maintains the focus on the fountain as the primary feature of the space
- » Routes through the plaza area reflecting the “wandering” character of the Loring Greenway and the strolling nature of the park, eventually linking to the Promenade, one of the key directives of the former master plan for the park;
- » A low sign wall identifying the fountain from Willow Street and guiding pedestrians to proper crossing points at a raised roadway which facilitates pedestrian movements while slowing traffic on the street;
- » Fixed and flexible seating, recognizing the need to move with breezes that result in fountain overspray falling on various parts of the plaza
- » Garden features balancing “hard” surfaces of the surrounding plaza, with a plan for perpetuating the overstory trees that currently surround the fountain area

Processes

Initial Design Guidance and Ideation by Design Team	→ Design Week Products	→ Design Week Feedback	→ Final Design Product
Honor existing plans and original design intent for fountain	→ Keep dandelion head design, but upgrade to modern materials	→ OK, provide more detailed concepts of Berger Fountain and plaza	→ Keep dandelion head design, but upgrade to modern materials
Create strong connection to Loring Greenway, act as bridge between these two significant public spaces	→ Enhance crossing of Willow Street	→ OK, provide more detailed concepts of Berger Fountain and plaza	→ Enhance crossing of Willow Street
Create significant entry space that leads to but is separate from Great Lawn	→ Create plaza and seating at edge of fountain that connects street to Great Lawn	→ OK, provide more detailed concepts of Berger Fountain and plaza	→ Create plaza and seating at edge of fountain that connects street to Great Lawn
Design for wandering, create options for paths through	→ Multiple paths intersecting and passing through plaza space	→ OK, provide more detailed concepts of Berger Fountain and plaza	→ Multiple paths intersecting and passing through plaza space
Garden-like, shaded, protect old trees	→ Planters and shade trees over plaza	→ OK, provide more detailed concepts of Berger Fountain and plaza	→ Planters and shade trees over plaza
Variety of seating options	→ Planter seating, fountain edge seating, movable tables and seating	→ OK, provide more detailed concepts of Berger Fountain and plaza	→ Planter seating, fountain edge seating, movable tables and seating
Simple design highlights fountain and doesn't detract from it	→ Fountain is centerpiece of plaza	→ OK, provide more detailed concepts of Berger Fountain and plaza	→ Fountain is centerpiece of plaza
Welcoming entrances	→ Open views of plaza and fountain from street and adjacent paths	→ OK, provide more detailed concepts of Berger Fountain and plaza	→ Open views of plaza and fountain from street and adjacent paths

» Play features integrated with the fountain so that it becomes more than a visual feature and allows access to the water, but also recognizing the need to replace fountain components to make it more resilient to damage and easier to maintain

» An attractive winter cover designed with consideration for maintenance, especially one that is designed to be an attractive feature for the plaza space when the fountain is not in use

Costs and Operations Estimates

See Loring Park (beginning on page 4-68) for information on project cost estimates and park operations estimate that includes Berger Fountain.