



SECTION 5: OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

Operations Overview

Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park is operated and managed by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) which budgets funds to operate and maintain the park. The MPRB provides park maintenance and oversight for facility operations, recreation, and educational programs. Staffing levels are increased in the summer, and as needed through the employment of seasonal staff. City of Minneapolis and MPRB police officers provide public safety services. Natural resources management services, including water resources and forestry/horticulture, and natural area management, are provided by the MPRB. Some natural areas within the park are cooperatively managed by the MPRB and other agencies (City of Minneapolis and MCWD) and by volunteer groups. Other operational and support services to the park include administrative services, marketing and communication, revenue handling and finance, human resources, planning and development, and research.

Operations & Management of Natural Areas

Historically, naturalized landscape areas have not constituted significant land area in traditional urban parks like Nokomis-Hiawatha, creating maintenance regimes primarily comprised of mowing large expanses of lawn. The habitat, water quality, and aesthetic improvements offered by the introduction of more naturalized landscape areas require a shift in landscape management. Maintenance workers may need, for example, plant identification training to learn how to properly manage natural areas. As restored landscapes become more common, the skills required for their proper stewardship will be increasingly in demand.

While it may require additional skills of MPRB workers (or additional contract management), natural area management can be targeted to very specific periods, making the overall time spent managing naturalized landscapes similar to or less than traditional maintenance efforts. Prairie, meadow, and savanna plantings are drought tolerant and need only to be mowed a few times per growing season. Proper timing of maintenance prevents weed species from seeding and unwanted woody species from establishing. In addition to mowing, mulch replenishment and monthly inspections for the removal of common weeds are the primary management tasks. Developing a written management plan that prescribes specific protocol for care of parkland is suggested as additional planting and construction of green infrastructure occurs. Managing and preventing the spread of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species should be included in such a plan, as invasives like zebra mussels are of particular concern to water quality and recreation in the lakes. Specialized management activities, like controlled burns or targeted invasive removal, may be contracted as needed. Ideally, contracted maintenance will be performed in conjunction with the management of nearby MPRB sites that require similar maintenance.



Maps of the park system help wayfinding



The park is a great place for family picnics



Swings at the Nokomis Main Beach

Boundaries, Acquisition, and Conflicts

Boundaries and Acquisition

The long-term vision for Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park is to maintain the park with its current boundaries both north and south of Minnehaha Parkway. There are no plans to acquire additional land or alter park ownership at the time of this Master Plan.

Conflicts

Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park exists within the context of Minneapolis neighborhoods with a mixture of uses. Generally, the Regional Park is compatible with and, in many cases, a benefit to existing uses. The proposed Regional Park boundary was developed largely as urban development in south Minneapolis was growing during the early 1900s. Care is taken in park development to ensure separation between park users and private property through either physical space or landscape features. Land-use conflicts within the Regional Park arise primarily from safety issues related to vehicle traffic and roadway crossings of Cedar Avenue and Minnehaha Parkway.

Ordinances

The Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB) has adopted a set of ordinances which define the rules and regulations for Minneapolis Parks in order to provide for the safe and peaceful use of the parks and corresponding facilities; for the educational and recreational benefits and enjoyment of the public; for the protection and preservation of the property, facilities, and natural resources; and for the safety and general welfare of the public.

A copy of the ordinances may be obtained from the MPRB web site (www.MinneapolisParks.org). Rules and regulations are also posted throughout Minneapolis Parks properties and facilities. Posted information includes park hours, permitted and prohibited activities, fees, maps of the park and/or trail, and whom to contact in case of an emergency. MPRB officers, along with City of Minneapolis police, regularly patrol all property and trails on foot, horse, bicycle and by motor vehicle. When necessary, ordinances may be enforced via citations.

The City of Minneapolis handles construction permitting and zoning where development is proposed on the property. Any development that may impact stormwater runoff and water quality triggers the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District to use its permitting authority as well.

Public Awareness

The urban context of Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park will help in making the public aware of park development as it progresses. As with other parks and facilities throughout its system, MPRB will publicize and promote Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park through a variety of established channels, including its website, publications, community newspapers, and other media. Grand openings, press releases, and integration of parks with school and recreational programs will also expand awareness. Within Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park, trails will be signed, and existing MPRB system maps will be updated as progress is made in extending trails within Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park.

Public Services

Infrastructure

Most of the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Master Plan can be developed without extensive investment in non-recreational public infrastructure, services, and utilities. Within its fully-developed urban context, there are sufficient electricity, gas, water, and sewer services to implement the vision.

Coordination with the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County will be ongoing to address transportation infrastructure needs for crossing improvements made to Cedar Avenue or Minnehaha Parkway, or other vehicle circulation affecting the park.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater improvements, as they apply to the Master Plan area, are largely anticipated to occur as part of redevelopment projects, such as the expansion of existing or construction of new parking lots, the location of new wetlands, or the addition of native landscapes. These types of projects will be implemented by the MPRB in partnership with other organizations, such as the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) and the City of Minneapolis. Stormwater management upstream of the Master Plan area is essential to continued water quality improvements in Lakes Nokomis and Hiawatha, as not all issues can be addressed via best management practices (BMPs) within the park.

Recognizing that stormwater management technology is constantly evolving, the Nokomis-Hiawatha Master Plan does not identify specific features, but rather, provides a set of principles to guide the development of stormwater management infrastructure. These principles include:

- » Pursuing a range of stormwater BMPs in new development, including vegetated swales, rain gardens, wetlands, impervious surface reduction, underground treatment structures, green roofs, and others
- » Exploring ways to attractively integrate stormwater-management features into the public realm, as managing stormwater upstream of water bodies is the most effective method
- » Supporting retrofits of existing sites to bring them more into compliance with stormwater BMPs, including the addition of green roofs, reduction of impervious surface cover, and other strategies
- » Considering partnerships and coordination between private development, other agencies, and parks to maximize the efficiency of stormwater systems, explore shared solutions, and increase the greening of the public realm
- » Coordinating the provision of stormwater management facilities and open space to provide public realm connectivity and preserve scenic views



People enjoy swimming in the lake



Shoreline plantings provide habitat



View of downtown Minneapolis through the trees



The master plan proposes a fully ADA accessible pathway to the lake.



Accessible walkway at Wirth Beach



Stairs help users access park trails

Historic Resources

Much of the original vision set forth for the park in the early 20th century has endured. This master plan works to honor Theodore Wirth's original plan by retaining much of the park's arrangement of parkways, shoreline, trails, and activity areas. While early buildings and structures have long been removed or altered, this master plan recognizes the extensive efforts of the federal programs of the 1930s and the work they did to establish the park's aesthetic. By retaining original walkway alignments, highlighting key features from the era— such as the Nokomis picnic grounds— and making an effort to preserve or interpret WPA materials, the integrity of the park's heritage will be maintained.

Accessibility

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board continues to be committed to ensuring that park users are connected to the land and each other. To achieve this vision, the *2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan* identified the following three strategies that are specifically related to accessibility and special needs populations:

- » Build or renew facilities to meet or exceed standards for accessibility (pg. 27)
- » Ensure recreation opportunities are available for persons with disabilities (pg. 20)
- » Identify and reduce physical and financial barriers to participation in programming (pg. 20)

In developing new park elements within Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park, care will be taken to design facilities that meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as principles for universal accessibility. Some existing facilities that do not meet ADA requirements include steps at some trail access points. These will be rehabilitated to meet ADA standards as resources allow.

Cost can also be a barrier for park and recreation use. Most park facilities will not require a fee for public use, as is consistent with MPRB policy throughout its system. Amenities such as multi-use trails, community gathering places, and public water access points are generally provided free of charge. Some of the amenities proposed for Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park could have minimal associated user fees, for example, boat-storage at Lake Hiawatha, or rental fees for large gathering spaces or picnic pavilions. Users generally have the option of purchasing a permit or using meters for parking. Reduced fee arrangements are available for recreational programming.



SECTION 6: IMPLEMENTATION

Priorities and Estimated Costs

In order to execute the goals for Nokomis-Hawatha Regional Park, the Master Plan includes a list of park improvement projects for implementation over time. These projects relate to the recommendations outlined in Section 4 of this document and work to achieve the overall vision for the park. The table on the following page lists the projects and identifies each in relation to the Framework Plans or Activity Center Plans described within the Master Plan.

Each project is also given a preferred prioritization for implementation. Decisions about prioritization were made with recommendations from the CAC and MPRB staff. Issues taken into consideration during the decision process include identified needs, community desires, coordinating implementing agencies, and capital cost estimates. Prioritization categories include:

- » **Ongoing** = Implementation of these projects will continue each year as money is available for capital improvements and ongoing operations and management.
- » **Short** = These projects are planned for implementation within 6 years of the Master Plan's approval. Some of the projects in this category are identified as "major capital" projects, which require additional funding outside of annual capital funding in order for short-term implementation.
- » **Medium** = These projects are planned for implementation 6 to 12 years from the Master Plan's approval.
- » **Long** = These projects are planned for implementation more than 12 years after the Master Plan's approval.
- » **Dependent** = These projects require significant coordination, approvals, and funding from other agencies, such as the City of Minneapolis or Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. Implementation can only occur as a joint-project with the relevant partnering agency(ies). Cost estimates reflect expenditures expected for the MPRB only.

The total estimated cost for each project is calculated using previously known construction costs, example bids, and other similar example projects. All costs are completed in 2015 dollars and are subject to change. Several varying factors, including design and construction plans, may alter costs as the timing for implementation nears.

Unfold to see Nokomis-Hawatha Regional Park Priorities & Cost Estimate Table

Improvement Project	Framework/Activity Area	Preferred Prioritization	Total Cost	Cost Notes
Repair degraded paths	Circulation	ONGOING	\$675,000	Assumes resurfacing and repair of existing trails and bridge reconstruction on south side of the lagoon
conversion of lawn to habitat	Natural Resources	ONGOING	\$2,800,000	Costs dependent on grades, soil conditions, and type of habitat
Naturalized shorelines	Natural Resources	ONGOING	\$880,000	3000ft Hiawatha; 5800ft Nokomis
Additional drinking fountains	Recreation	ONGOING	\$185,000	Costs dependent on location and distance from water source
Additional restroom enclosures	Recreation	ONGOING	\$15,000	Includes enclosure only; portable restrooms cost excluded; installation by MPRB
Improved picnic grounds and additional shelters	Recreation	ONGOING	\$350,000	Assumes traditional shelters
Additional gates for winter access to golf course	Circulation	SHORT	\$24,000	Assumes installation by MPRB
Additional neighborhood connections	Circulation	SHORT	\$104,000	Includes bike connection from Community Center to Woodlawn, connections at 52nd and 55th Streets, and sidewalk at 54th Street Triangle Park, from 50th to Main Beach
Seasonal trail around Lake Hiawatha	Circulation	SHORT	\$5,000	To cover signage and marking; gate access cost in separate line-item
Removal of Art Walk	Recreation	SHORT	\$5,000	Removal of signs and restoration of landscape
Enhance the arboretum with signage	Recreation	SHORT	\$5,000	Plant tags and identification signage
Canoe/kayak launch and boat storage relocated to north end of lake	Nokomis Community Center	SHORT	\$5,000	Include relocation of boat storage; labor by MPRB
Revise trails to reduce ped/bike/vehicle conflict	Nokomis Community Center	SHORT	\$70,000	Trail removal and landscape restoration (700ft) and new trail construction (1400ft)
Accessible water access at Nokomis main beach	Nokomis Main Beach	SHORT	\$12,500	Trail construction and dewatering
Provide shade on and near Nokomis main beach	Nokomis Main Beach	SHORT	\$30,000	Assumes canvas single post struction; Cost with installation
Revised ped/bike trail routing to Cedar Avenue bridge	Cedar Avenue Crossings	SHORT	\$80,000	Includes new trail access to bridge only
Pedestrian-only loop around Lake Nokomis lagoon	Circulation	SHORT	\$92,000	New trail construction
Reconfigure trails to reduce conflicts at creek bridge	Lake Hiawatha	SHORT	\$28,000	Trail reconstruction only
New ped-only bridge over Minnehaha Creek	Lake Hiawatha	SHORT: major capital	\$300,000	Dependent on design and construction
Enhanced crossings of Cedar Ave at Nokomis/Edgewater, Nokomis/52nd Street, 50th Street, Minnehaha Parkway	Cedar Avenue Crossings	SHORT: major capital	\$200,000	Includes reconstruction of trail approaches to intersections, curb cut revision, sign relocation and striping
New playground near Nokomis Community Center	Nokomis Community Center	SHORT: major capital	\$250,000	Dependent on size and design
Ped/bike trails around Hiawatha golf course	Circulation	SHORT: major capital	\$785,000	Dual trail system: 1.6 miles of 10ft bike trail, 3400ft of 8ft ped trail; and 900ft on-street bike path along 27th Ave; new bridge over creek; Assumes coordination with City of Mpls
Expand Nokomis main beach to north and relocate rental vendor	Nokomis Main Beach	SHORT: major capital	\$150,000	Includes added sand, markings, and signage
Refurbished vita-course	Recreation	SHORT: major capital	\$150,000	Cost for 15 stations with installation
Convert overflow parking to picnic area	Nokomis Community Center	MEDIUM	\$180,000	Removal and restoration
Expand Nokomis Center parking lot	Nokomis Community Center	MEDIUM	\$100,000	Replace number of stalls at overflow parking
New amphitheater	Nokomis Community Center	MEDIUM	\$500,000	Assumes open stage and seating
New skate park	Nokomis Community Center	MEDIUM	\$500,000	Concrete design integrated with landscape
Add 3 sand volleyball courts near Nokomis Main Beach	Nokomis Main Beach	MEDIUM	\$30,000	New court construction
Add parking west of Nokomis Parkway near athletic fields	Nokomis Main Beach	MEDIUM	\$120,000	To include stormwater management
Reconfigure existing parking at Nokomis main beach	Nokomis Main Beach	MEDIUM	\$60,000	To include stormwater management
Revise pathway system near Nokomis main beach	Nokomis Main Beach	MEDIUM	\$90,000	Trail reconstruction
Upgrade and revise arrangement of athletic fields	Nokomis Main Beach	MEDIUM	\$2,000,000	Maximum Cost; Dependent on field configuration and design
Replacement of Hiawatha beach with nature, boardwalk, pavilion, and new boat launch	Lake Hiawatha	LONG	\$600,000	860ft boardwalk; new pavilion; beach removal; canoe launch
New beach house at Nokomis main beach	Nokomis Main Beach	LONG	\$4,000,000	Maximum Cost; dependent on building design, construction plans, and timing.
Dedicated bikeway on Cedar Bridge	Cedar Avenue Crossings	DEPENDENT	\$26,000	Include striping of existing trail on bridge
Pedestrian paths under Cedar Bridge	Cedar Avenue Crossings	DEPENDENT	\$84,000	Assumes trail foundations built with new bridge and structures by others
Ped/bike trails under 28th Avenue	Lake Hiawatha	DEPENDENT	\$25,000	Dependent on City of Minneapolis bridge replacement project; assume built with bridge and structures by others
Re-meander Minnehaha Creek	Natural Resources	DEPENDENT	\$170,000	Dependent on involvement and funding from Minnehaha Creek Watershed District; costs for collaborative habitat restoration
Expand Nokomis Community Center building	Nokomis Community Center	DEPENDENT	\$3,000,000	Maximum Cost; Dependent on full building design and construction plans
Upgraded tennis/pickleball courts	Nokomis Community Center	DEPENDENT	\$50,000	Assumes resurfacing, striping, and nets
Total			\$18,735,500	<i>(Maximum cost estimate)</i>

NOTE: Estimates based on 2014 Dollars; costs are subject to change as project plans and designs are finalized at time of implementation
NOTE: "Dependent" projects rely on coordination with other agencies for implementation.

Estimated Operations and Maintenance Costs

Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park is maintained and operated by the MPRB. The existing MPRB budget therefore supplies equipment and staffing resources required to maintain and operate the park year-round. Annual operations, maintenance, and public safety costs are funded through the MPRB's budget and Metropolitan Council's operations and maintenance funds, as funding allows. The budget is administered by the MPRB's Superintendent and approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Some of the recommended improvements, such as reconstruction of trails, will reduce some of the maintenance costs in the near-term for ongoing repairs. Other improvements, such as the significant increase in naturalized plantings, will require a revision in maintenance regimes that are not currently staffed. As implementation of these plantings is realized over time, alterations to staffing and funding will be considered in order to accommodate the maintenance of newer features. Concerns about invasive species, both aquatic and terrestrial, could lead to increased costs for prevention, removal, and/or management. Some park improvements, especially those addressing stormwater, are typically funded and maintained in collaboration with partners, such as City of Minneapolis and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

Funding Sources

Development of Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park involves a number of partners. Partners already contributing to native plantings, park development, and water quality improvements include the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, City of Minneapolis, and citizen volunteers.

The estimated costs shown reflect the cost to MPRB if no outside funding is available. Projects within Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park are likely to be implemented with a variety of funding sources, both MPRB and outside. MPRB will actively seek grants, collaborative funding agreements, donations, volunteer projects, and multi-agency projects to reduce the total cost to the MPRB. This Master Plan sets forth an aggressive vision for the park over the next 25 years and opens doors to a greater variety of funding options. Implementation will require continued community advocacy and outside money.



Wading in the water at Lake Hiawatha

