

CENTRAL GYM

LOCATION AND HISTORY

Central Gym Park shares a large block of public land with Richard R. Green Central Park School, operated by Minneapolis Public Schools. The park and school are bounded by 34th Street, 35th Street, 3rd Avenue and 4th Avenue. The MPRB operates the indoor gym, which is connected to the school, and also the northern half of the block, where the majority of the park amenities are.

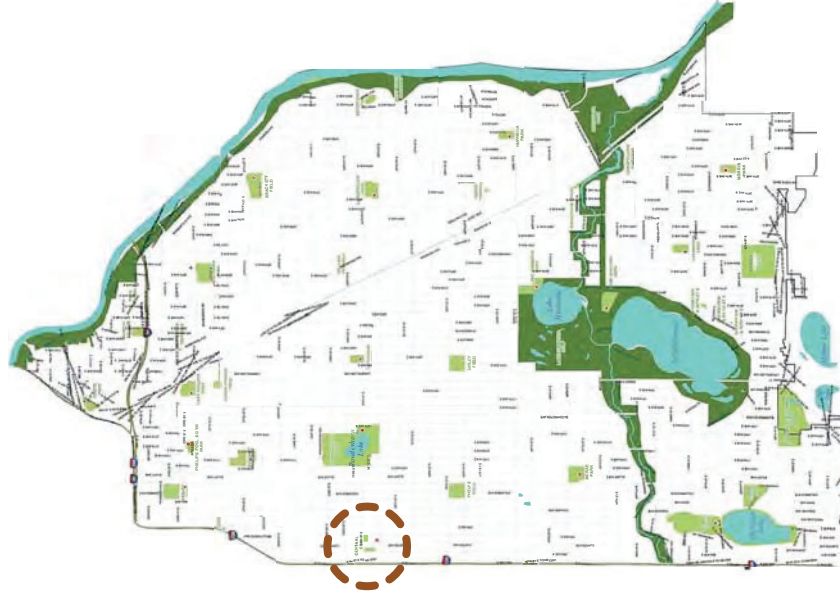
The park board's involvement in the Central Gym property began after Central High School closed in 1982. The park board had acquired an option to develop a park on the site if the school were ever to close as a part of an exchange of land with the school board at Shingle Creek elementary school in 1957.

In 1987 the park board agreed to convert the gym of the former high school for park use. The gym had been built only 11 years earlier. The rest of the school, which was built in 1922, was demolished.

For several years the park board had wanted to establish a park in the neighborhood, but the neighborhood was opposed to having homes razed for a park. The closing of the high school presented the park board with a way to offer recreation services in the neighborhood without removing houses. The gym was dedicated as a park facility in October 1988. A totlot playground was created outside the gym in 1989.

The park board officially named the property Central Park in June 1991. It was the second property in the city to have that name. From 1883 to 1890, today's Loring Park was named Central Park.

Eventually, however, the park board did purchase the land containing homes along 3rd Avenue South to create an outdoor park as well. The land was purchased in 1998 and 1999. The park board installed a softball field, soccer field and tennis courts.



EXISTING CONDITIONS AND CHARACTER

The main park space is arranged in a broad oval, with various amenities arranged within and just outside it. Three different play areas, a wading pool, restroom building, grassy seating area, two hard court games areas, and a picnic area occupy this space. To the west of this oval is a baseball field and open green space. A tennis court is located just south of the sports field. The shape of the wading pool is unique, with scalloped corners. A new temporary greenhouse operated by a community group occupies one of the green spaces within the oval.

Much of the land in this park is owned by MPS and managed by MPRB. Two additional small playgrounds—one on either end of the main school wing—are fenced off from the park and are not managed by MPRB. These were installed to serve previous uses in the school and are underutilized now.

Because of the presence of the school, the park gets heavy use during the school year and also in summer during out-of-school programs. The age range at the school is pre-K to 5th grade.

Overall, the park feels fairly open and has a lot of hard surfacing. Few mature, high quality trees exist in the park. Adding to the open feel is the fact that the surrounding streets also do not have many street trees. The large oval around which most amenities are arranged is an interesting layout, but may be getting in the way of the park's functionality.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARKS

Wayfinding and connections from Central Gym Park should focus on:

- The City of Minneapolis's bicycle and pedestrian route on 34th Street, which connects to Powderhorn Park and Corcoran Park.



Existing Conditions: Central Gym



THE PROPOSED DESIGN

The design for Central Gym Park eliminates the geometry of the large oval in favor of expanding green space. Instead of the oval, only the main central spine is retained, with the wading pool reconstructed in the same location, and the restroom building remaining in place. South of the restroom building is a new gathering lawn, with a stage at the northern end (the stage can use the restroom building as a backdrop). This gathering lawn can be used for park programming and by the school for events, assemblies, and classes. To the east of the main spine are the play areas, in two separate containers. Separation of younger- and older-age play areas is important to the school, as it allows more peaceful recreation areas for students with special needs. Path connections to 4th Avenue are maintained but revised.

East of the play areas along the frontage of 4th Street are two new amenities. In the northeast corner of the park is a designated urban agriculture area. The SSAMP does not prescribe what exactly will happen in such areas, but sets them aside for further discussion with partners. If the temporary greenhouse is successful, it is possible it could be moved to this location. This corner is currently an open area with few trees and good sun exposure. To the south of the urban agriculture area is a new skate park. Existing pathways in this area are revised to provide space for the skate park. Nestled under existing trees, this skatepark is the first such area anywhere near this part of town.

The area around and immediately adjacent to the school, around the courts area, and around the skatepark is naturalized with native pollinator-friendly plantings.

West of the central spine is a large multi-purpose athletic field. The baseball diamond is removed (it is not heavily used and not significantly desired by the community), as well as portions of the oval, to achieve a near full adult sized soccer field, several youth fields, or

UPDATE EXISTING



Wading Pool



Traditional Play Structure



Multi-use Field



Stage / Bandshell



Restroom/Storage Building

general open space for school recess, pick-up games, kite-flying, etc. The tennis court is repurposed as a multi-use court with a focus on bike polo. Bike polo was recently played on the tennis court at Corcoran, which fell into disrepair. The local club is interested in a central location and this tennis court is not often used. This facility could still function for tennis, pickleball, or volleyball with removable standards. A half-court basketball court sits beside the multi-use court.

A new group picnic shelter is located between the athletic field and courts. This shelter will serve large groups gathering for a day of organized or pick-up sports on the field or could serve as an official area for bike polo tournaments. Between the school kids, community members, and sports enthusiasts, Central Gym Park will be a flurry of activity—with more green space, less pavement, and exciting new amenities.

KNOWN LAND USE AND COORDINATION ISSUES

Central Gym Park has a complex land use situation that will require coordination with Minneapolis Public Schools on any capital improvements. The western edge of the park is owned by MPRB but the rest is leased from MPS. An agreement with MPS covers management and maintenance of the property but does not address capital improvements.

NEW/ ADDED



Outdoor Gathering Space



Group Shelter



Multi-sport Court



Urban Agriculture Area

















Basketball Court



Skate Park

PROCESSES

1: General Input Spring-Fall 2015 <i>Input themes prior to initial concepts</i>		2: Initial / Preferred Concepts Fall-Winter 2015/2016 <i>Input themes on initial concepts</i>		3: The Preferred Concept Now <i>Key elements of the concept</i>	
aquatics	pool with sprayer very much used and desired 	no comments 	Wading pool in same general location		
play	would be used more if equipment was in better condition 	no comments 	Traditional play areas relocated to eastern side of central green and wading pool		
athletics	soccer field is small but gets a lot of use 	no comments 	Multi-use diamond removed to create larger multi-use field space. Reorganization of pathways and hard surface west of the central green and wading pool expands multi-use field to adult size.		
courts	want full-size outdoor basketball  Would like to play roller hockey	Not sure volleyball is important here  Want ability to host large bike polo tournaments. Like using tennis court for this plus year-round rink Tennis is never used here	Tennis court repurposed as multi-use court, with potential for permanent bike polo boards (no new year-round rinks will be built in the service area; a periodic specific tournament use could be accommodated on a larger bank of high quality tennis courts) Addition of half-basketball court		
winter	no comments 	no comments 	No formal winter facilities planned for this park		
landscape	urban agriculture and pollinator garden desired 	Urban agriculture would be a better option at northeast corner 	Urban agriculture area designated in northeastern portion of park		
other	want skate park  would like shady picnic area archery and/or vertical climbing would be good	Provide walking loop around park 	Walking loop accommodated on existing paths and sidewalks Addition of group shelter near multi-use field and multi-use court Addition of skate park on eastern edge of park		

COST ESTIMATE

Asset Type	Project	2017 ESTIMATED COST/PROJECT	Implementation Sequence	Prioritization Category	Applicable SSAMP Actions
Aquatics	Renovate Wading Pool in same location	\$ 739,226	stand-alone	PLANNED	11, 16
Play	Traditional Play Structures (2): one in existing container, one in new	\$ 698,158	before/with athletic fields	PLANNED	11, 16, 23b, 23d
Athletics	Athletic field renovation, incl. demolition of 1 diamond, demolition of hard surface areas, demolition of play containers	\$ 390,147	after/with play areas	PLANNED	11, 16, 20a, 20b, 20d
Courts	Basketball Court (half court)	\$ 65,709	stand-alone	PLANNED	11, 16, 22a
Courts	Resurfacing and Re-striping of tennis court as multi-use (bike polo) court	\$ 164,273	stand-alone	PLANNED	11, 16, 18, 22b
Landscape	Naturalized areas within park	\$ 2,053	with other projects	PLANNED	11, 26
Landscape	Urban Agriculture Area	\$ -	stand-alone	CONDITIONAL	11, 16, 19
Other	Outdoor gathering space	\$ 58,522	stand-alone	PLANNED	11, 16
Other	Skate Park	\$ 410,681	stand-alone	PLANNED	11, 16, 18
Other	Group picnic shelter	\$ 90,350	stand-alone, but ideally with athletic field	PLANNED	11, 16, 18
Other	Renovate walking paths	\$ 242,466	with other projects	PLANNED	11, 16, 17
Other	Misc. signs, trees, furniture	\$ 49,013	with other projects, as appropriate	PLANNED	9, 17
n/a	Modify agreement with Minneapolis Public Schools to address capital improvements on leased property	\$ -	before any capital improvement	PLANNED	11
TOTAL		\$ 2,910,599			

NOTE: Urban Agriculture Areas will be implemented in partnership with specific programs or community members.

OPERATIONS ESTIMATE

FACILITIES	Total Per Unit Operations Cost	Δ Qty	Δ Cost
Multi-use Diamond	\$ 20,000	-1	\$ (20,000)
Tennis Court	\$ 1,500	-1	\$ (1,500)
Half Court Basketball	\$ 1,000	1	\$ 1,000
Multi-Sport Court	\$ 1,500	1	\$ 1,500
Outdoor Gathering Space	\$ 10,000	1	\$ 10,000
Urban Agriculture Area	\$ 15,000	1	\$ 15,000
Group Shelter	\$ 4,000	1	\$ 4,000
Skate Park	\$ 7,500	1	\$ 7,500
Difference			\$ 17,500