Minneapolis Parks on a National Stage

Superintendent’s Annual Report 2014

Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
Our Mission

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board shall permanently preserve, protect, maintain, improve, and enhance its natural resources, parkland, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board exists to provide places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate, and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment.
Celebrations, Challenges  For the second year in a row, the Trust for Public Land ranked our park system the best in the country among the nation’s largest cities. This enormous honor is shared by all residents of the city, the metropolitan area and the state. Our parks are not just a local treasure, but a regional and national treasure, too.

That was evident in a second celebration in 2014. When President Obama visited Minneapolis in June, the President’s only public events were held in Minneapolis parks: Minnehaha Falls and Lake Harriet. I am particularly proud of all my colleagues for their efforts to showcase our incredible park system while the nation took notice.

Our primary task of ensuring that parks are and remain a vital asset to the people of this city requires many difficult decisions, none more so than two in 2014. First, we declined to take on the Downtown East Park on land set aside – with many caveats – for public use in the deal to construct a football stadium. The Park Board was not included in negotiations between the City and groups involved in the deal. Due to the uncertainty of funding for development, maintenance and operation of the park, and severe restrictions on the use of the land, the Board determined that it could not participate in the management of that land without placing the management of all city parks at risk. Subsequent to this action, the Park Board was able to negotiate an agreement and lease for the Park with the City that protected the Park Board’s legal and financial interests. Second, we hired experts to investigate in greater depth all options for a Southwest Light Rail Transit corridor that crosses parkland and the Kenilworth Channel between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. As stewards of all park assets, the Park Board determined that it and other decision-makers did not yet have sufficient information on all corridor options to determine what option would be the least impactful to the affected parkland.

Despite these extraordinary events, and an ongoing battle against the emerald ash borer and unprecedented flood waters that shut down golf courses and parkways, we made clear progress on numerous fronts. Many of our accomplishments are noted in these pages. I hope that you see in initiatives from the Webber Park pool to the Minnehaha Park play areas to the exciting plans for the Central Riverfront a commitment to cutting-edge innovation and visionary leadership that we attempt to bring to work every day. What may not be as visible, but is every bit as real, is our continuing commitment to deliver exceptional park services to all citizens in every neighborhood of the city.

As we look forward to 2015, we do so with great pride and belief in our capabilities, but also the recognition that we face major challenges. Not least is the aging of our neighborhood parks including our recreation centers, most of which were built in the 1970s. A clear area of focus in the next year will be on making the investments essential to preserving our ranking as the nation’s premier urban park system.
**Goal: Sound management techniques provide healthy, diverse and sustainable natural resources**

**Big Weather Challenges.** Weather posed a serious challenge to park management in 2014. From record-breaking cold to excessive heat, wrapped around some of the wettest weather on record, parks and park users faced daunting extremes. Particularly damaging were the deluges that forced Hiawatha and Meadowbrook golf courses to close and caused millions of dollars in lost revenue and damage. A landslide on West River Parkway was the most serious and potentially dangerous of the weather-related damage. Engineering consultants were hired and applications submitted to receive reimbursements by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for reconstruction of damaged areas.

**One System, One World.** MPRB is working with the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization to create an Ecological System Plan intended to make parks and public lands friendlier to the environment. An appointed Community Advisory Committee (CAC) began efforts to compile, create and illustrate citywide data to guide the management of natural resources and public lands in the city and the watershed. Public meetings will be held in 2015.

**One of the Shadiest Cities.** Minneapolis didn’t get that way by accident, nor will it remain that way without effort and expense. In 2014, the Park Board began the Ash Canopy Replacement Plan in response to the threat of emerald ash borer. Eventually, 30,000 boulevard ash trees and another 10,000 ash trees in parks will fall victim to the deadly insect. Instead of waiting for the inevitable, the Park Board began an eight-year program to mark, remove and replace ash trees. The pre-emptive plan will replace a small percentage of ash trees with a diverse range of new trees each year. The plan is funded by a $1.2 million property tax levy that began in 2013 and must be renewed annually through 2020.

**Inspections Pay Off.** Inspectors were again deployed at public access boat ramps on city lakes from May through November to check boats and trailers for aquatic invasive species, especially zebra mussels. Inspectors found 19 violations, with 18 involving zebra mussels that if left unchecked, could contaminate city lakes.

**Fertile Ground.** Environmental Management staff began removing Oriental bittersweet and Japanese barberry from parkland, including areas around Theodore Wirth Regional Park, Diamond Lake, Parade Stadium and Lake of the Isles. Both species were staples of the nursery industry at one time, but have since been identified as invasive and destructive to native trees and shrubs.

**Goal: Healthy boulevard trees connect all city residents to their park system**

**Almost 8,000 New Trees, Including Elms.** Forestry planted 7,800 new trees in 2014 – more than 40 species – focusing on the reforestation of storm-stripped neighborhoods throughout the city. Among other notable plantings were 400 trees planted through a research partnership with the University of Minnesota, 150 trees provided by Tree Trust through a grant from Covanta Energy, and eight new elms planted in structural soil on 2nd Street between Chicago and Park avenues.

**Growing Greener Boulevards.** More than a third of Forestry’s annual budget is spent in winter to prune dormant boulevard and park trees. Routine pruning promotes good branching structure, which makes the trees stronger and more resistant to storm damage. Removal of dead or dying limbs also denies an entry point for harmful microorganisms and insects. The result is stronger, healthier, safer trees.

**Tree Failure Study.** The MPRB contracted with the University of Minnesota to investigate tree failures following the June 2013 windstorm. A study report was released in April 2014. The major finding is that having sidewalk replacement work done increased the odds of root failure, hence tipped trees, by 2.24 times. The report also noted factors of tree species, tree size and boulevard width.

**In Every Neighborhood.** All 10 Forestry vans got a makeover as part of the Park Board’s sustainability initiative. Each van features Elmer the Elm Tree reminding people to “Water Trees Weekly.”
**Goal: People and the environment benefit from the expansion and protection of natural resources**

**A Bridge Too Far?** The MPRB took the difficult, but necessary step of hiring engineers to take a closer look at options for a Southwest Light Rail Transit corridor that crosses parkland between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. At issue is whether there are feasible and prudent alternatives to the proposed bridge needed to cross the Kennilworth Channel between the lakes that will be less impactful to the park assets and the park experience.

**Lake Pollution.** The MPRB and the City filed lawsuits to stop a residential building at Knox Ave. and Lake St. from pumping water from its underground parking ramp into the lagoon north of Lake Calhoun. The warm water increased phosphorous in the lake and prevented ice from forming in winter.

**Goal: Residents and visitors enjoy and understand the natural environment**

**The Big Cleanup.** Earth Day was celebrated for the 20th year with a massive clean up at 40 sites. Earth Day has become the biggest community service project in the city. In 2014, 1,700 volunteers collected and disposed of 250 pounds of metal, 1,100 pounds of recyclable material, and 6,700 pounds of litter.

**Give It a Try.** National Get Outdoors Day was celebrated once again at Powderhorn Park. The day is designed to give people a chance to try new outdoor activities and there was no shortage of them: canoeing, standup paddle boarding, geocaching, fishing, birding, rock climbing, mountain biking, and archery. The event was organized with the help of REI, MN DNR, and the U.S. Forest Service.

**Royalty Celebrated.** The Monarch Festival continued the tradition of celebrating the annual migration of the butterflies to Mexico and the cultural heritage of Mexico. The event featured food, music, culture, art and education on butterfly habitat thanks to support from Nokomis East Neighborhood, Science Museum of Minnesota, the U of M Monarch Lab, the Mexican Consulate, Univision Minnesota, UCare, and the U.S. Forest Service.

**Bees Had a Party, Too.** The annual Pollinator Party at Lyndale Park Gardens celebrated the critical role of bees in our food chain. The party brought together bees, beekeepers, scientists and anyone who enjoyed good food, lively music and active learning. Partners in the event were the U of M Bee Lab, Bell Museum, Bee Squad and Bees Kneez. The party sponsor was KFAI Fresh Air Radio.

**Goal: Knowledgeable stewards and partners generously support the system’s natural resources**

**Green Team.** The Mississippi River Green Team – consisting of 20 teenagers and two leaders – engaged in restoration and conservation work in parks and stormwater treatment sites throughout the city. The program introduces young people to environmental careers, while they perform important tasks in parks. The Green Team is a partnership of the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization and MPRB’s Environmental Education program.

**Arbor Day at Webber Park.** Arbor Day has been a tradition celebrated in Minneapolis parks for more than 100 years. This year the celebration and the work focused on Webber Park and as a result, more than 300 new trees were planted throughout the park and along Shingle Creek.

**Perennial Generosity.** Five volunteer groups planted 1,500 perennials and spread 40 yards of mulch at Gateway Park to transform overgrown rose beds into the first downtown pollinator garden. Volunteers from Boy Scout Troop 100, ING/Voya and US Bank did much of the work.

**Eloise Butler has Many Friends.** Friends of Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden were extremely busy in the 107th year of the garden’s life. They donated $75,000 for a garden boardwalk and raised money to transport almost 3,000 students from 35 schools to the garden.

**Conservation at the Core.** The MPRB continued its relationship with Conservation Corps of Minnesota in 2014 to provide service on Urban Park Conservation Projects. Four adults led groups of young people in conservation-based education and service projects as part of YO! or Youth Outdoors. In 2014, teen participants came from Powderhom Park and North Commons.
**Goal:** People play, learn and develop a greater capacity to enjoy life

**Healthy Meals, Nutrition Education and a Congressman.**
Congressman Keith Ellison visited Farview Park in August to observe a USDA summer food program hosted at the park. The program provides low-income children with free healthy meals and nutrition education. There were 128,800 meals served in 35 parks in 2014.

**Day Camps.** A wide variety of camps were created to meet the Park Board’s new camp standards, and 1,600 kids aged 8-14 attended full- and half-day sessions. Camp activities featured culinary arts, urban exploration, chess, canoeing, biking, performing arts, visual arts, sailing, sports skills and more. Popular camps also continued, including the Whittier Language and Culture Camp featuring different languages and cultures through art, dance, stories, food and adventures.

**Teen Focus.** Youthline teen participants enjoyed several epic events including a Wilderness Inquiry canoe voyage on the river, a campout at Fort Snelling, and a historical sightseeing tour on Segways.

**Summertime Program, Lifetime Impact.** Folwell Park was home to a six-week summer program to promote literacy and learning. The Children’s Defense Fund Freedom School was attended by 50 elementary-school-aged children who were encouraged to read and learn through a reading curriculum and recreational activities.

**Scholarships.** The Recreation Division developed a new scholarship program to replace the former fee-waiver system to eliminate financial barriers to participation in park programs. The new program was approved in August for launch in December for 2015 programs.

**Fore!** The Golf Department developed a new First Tee program for the Columbia Learning Center. First Tee promotes positive youth development through the game of golf. First Tee Minneapolis now serves 10,000 kids at all five MPRB golf courses.

**Providing Teen Work, Building Teen Spirit.** More than 247 young people were offered summer employment and training through Teen Teamworks. Crews worked in parks throughout the city, on the Mississippi River Green Team, and at J.D. Rivers Children’s Garden. Work readiness workshops taught resume writing, interviewing and financial planning to 579 Minneapolis youth.

**Goal:** Residents, visitors and workers enjoy opportunities to improve health and fitness

**Games Kids Play.** Nearly 7,000 youth participated in organized youth sports. Basketball attracts the most teams — 156 — but soccer draws the most participants, nearly 1,500. Those sports are followed by baseball and football, with about 1,000 participants each. Between 400 and 500 kids participate in track, volleyball, softball and hockey. Smaller numbers give wrestling, tennis and gymnastics a try — but with equal enthusiasm.

**Adults Play, Too.** The most popular adult league is softball with nearly 13,000 participants on more than 630 teams. The next most popular are broomball, sand volleyball, kickball and soccer, followed by indoor volleyball, basketball, dodgeball, adaptive softball, football, pond hockey and tennis. In all, adult sports attract nearly 30,000 participants.

**Good @ Sports.** Congratulations to Youth Sportsmanship Award winners for the summer: Audubon Park gymnastics, Lyndale Farmstead track and field, Pearl 12U baseball and Logan Storm 14U softball. Winter sportsmanship awards were earned by Longfellow Bulldogs, 11U Open Basketball, Van Cleve Vipers, 11U Girls Basketball, North Commons Bulldogs, 11U Open Hockey, and Northeast, Wrestling.

**Individual Honors.** MPRB honored softball players with the Sandy Peterson Most Improved Player Award. 2014 winners were Ava Morrison, Lynnhurst Park 10U, Leah Thompson, Bottineau Park 12U, and Grace Smith, Lynnhurst Park 14U. Earning the Jordan Hold Most Improved Basketball Player Award were Jose Dominguez, Chloé Garcia Grafix, Caitlin Hyatt, Willie Hynes, Oliver Johnson, Niko Lopez, Malik Mestas, Glen Norvell and Olga Schierkolk. The Most Improved Hockey players were Tremayne Davis, Loudon Pearlman, Ean Laird and Savannah Guertin.
On the Waterfront. Aquatics staff comprised 137 people, including 88 American Red Cross Certified Lifeguards, 29 water park attendants and 20 sailing instructors. Beach attendance topped 120,000. Jim Lupient Water Park sold 1,000 season passes and served 30,000 people. Almost 800 youth received swim or water safety instruction.

Russian Kettlebell. Da! This new fitness trend uses Russian kettlebells to develop strength, resiliency and flexibility particularly in the lower back, legs and shoulders. Introductory and intermediate classes were offered at Pearl Park and Lake Nokomis.

Coaches Honored. To celebrate the 28th National Girls and Women in Sports Day in February, the MPRB honored Jo Batty, who coaches tennis at the Nokomis Community Center and Fred Wells Tennis Center, and Cassandra Meyering, gymnastics coach at Audubon Recreation Center.

Goal: People connect through parks and recreation

In a Festive Mood. Dozens of outdoor festivals at neighborhood parks were among the highlights of the year. Communities gathered and enjoyed music, culture, entertainment and food – mostly in the summer but in some cases winter, such as the Lake Harriet Kite Festival in January.

Honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In January, the life and dreams of Dr. King were celebrated at two parks with tributes, speeches and entertainment. The “Living the Dream” award was presented to Larry Fitzgerald, Jr., Arizona Cardinals wide receiver, for his dedication to the community and the parks in which he grew up. “Feeding the Dream” food drive collected about 1,500 pounds of food, which went to the Sabathani Community Center. In August, the Park Board and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park Legacy Advisory Council hosted a community celebration of park improvements surrounding the Freedom Form #2 sculpture in Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.

Flags Fly at Farview. Farview hosted an inaugural youth Hmong Flag Football Tournament. Organized by Farview staff to increase park utilization by the Hmong community, the tournament attracted five teams from Minneapolis and three from St. Paul.

Music and Movies. More than 250 free outdoor concerts and movies were provided at Lake Harriet, Nicollet Island, Father Hennepin Bluffs, Minnehaha, Bryant Square Parks and, new in 2014, Theodore Wirth Regional Park. “Movies in the Parks,” featuring film classics and new releases, were shown at 30 parks throughout the city.

Father Hennepin Bluffs. Owamni: Falling Water Festival was introduced in August as a celebration of indigenous Minnesota cultures. Owamni means “falling water” in the Dakota language, making it an apt name for a festival beside the only waterfall on the Mississippi River. American Indian artists, musicians, chefs and filmmakers were featured in the day-long festival made possible by a grant from the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board.

Red, White and Boom. The annual family-friendly July 4th celebration attracted more than 70,000 people to the Central Riverfront for entertainment, games, music and fireworks.

Goal: Volunteers make a vital difference to people, parks and community

Volunteers of the Year. More than 8,000 volunteers contributed about 130,000 hours of their time and talent to help make our park system the best in the nation. Volunteer of the Year awards were presented to Jenn Bennington, Wes and Dawn Chapman, Hollis Fricke, Lily O’Brien, David Rayson, Mary and Marcus Strong. Eric Tuck, Kenneth Yanish. Receiving the Rising Star award was teen Ethan Cunningham and a special Group Volunteer Award was given to The Men’s and Women’s Garden Club of Minneapolis.

Goal: Parks provide a center for community living

Audubon: Another Big Plus. The popular Rec Plus supervised before-and after-school childcare program was added at Audubon Park Recreation Center in August. The program for children in kindergarten through sixth grade is offered at 18 parks.
Goal: Parks shape an evolving city

Central Riverfront Plan Advances. The MPRB began a process of updating the master plan for the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park, including a proposed new name of St. Anthony Falls Regional Park. Public comment on the draft plan began in December and continued into January 2015. The plan will guide investment along both sides of the Mississippi River near St. Anthony Falls for many years.

Water Works, an Exciting Component. A proposed Water Works development in part of Mill Ruins Park comprises an essential part of the Central Riverfront master plan. Led by the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, the Water Works design features greater access to the river and the development of the former site of the Fuji-ya restaurant, which has been vacant for many years. Designs for this signature park were presented to the Park Board in October.

Sheridan Memorial Park. A Grand Opening culminated years of work by veterans groups and northeast residents to honor veterans and reinforce a commitment to ending armed conflict. The focal point of the memorial is a sculpture by Robert Smart. The memorial was made possible by donations and grants from the Sheridan Neighborhood Organization, the Minnesota legislature, and many individual veterans. A portion of the land for the park was donated by the Puzak family.

It’s Only Natural: Another MPRB First. Great progress was made on construction of the Natural Swimming Pool at Webber Park despite weather-related delays. When it opens in summer 2015, it will be the first public natural-filtration pool in North America. The new pool will provide zero depth entry, a wading pool, lap-swimming lanes and deep water area: triple the size of the former pool on the site. The pool was funded in part by a grant from Hennepin Youth Sports.

Nokomis-Hiawatha Master Plan. Thanks to the hard work of a Community Advisory Committee and community input sessions, a draft master plan for Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park was created. The plan includes designs for the 54th Street Triangle playground, Lake Nokomis Beach playground, biking and walking trails and the shorelines around Lake Nokomis and Lake Hiawatha. Work will continue on the plan in early 2015.

Goal: Park facility renewal and development respects history and focuses on sustainability, accessibility, flexibility and beauty

Constant Progress on a Local Scale. The MPRB is in a state of constant renewal at its dozens of neighborhood parks. In 2014, public hearings and planning were initiated for imminent renovations of park facilities at Stevens Square, Fuller Park, Van Cleve Park, Holmes Park, Bethune Park, Bossen Field, the Columbia Park picnic shelter, Hi-View Park, McRae Park, and Xcel Field.

Historic by Design. A new playground concept for play areas at Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park was developed and approved after extensive community input. The design theme celebrates and honors Dr. King and African American history. In 2015, playground colors will be selected and construction will begin in spring.

Northeast Athletic Field Recreation Center. Initial planning for a new recreation center at Northeast, part of the recently completed Master Plan, began with the creation of a Community Advisory Committee.

Old Pools, New Pools. The replacement of wading pools at Waite Park and Harrison Park began in 2014. Both pools should be ready for the summer season of 2015. The pools will feature zero-depth entry and engaging play features.

Rain, Rain Go Away! A project at Brackett Field was completed to improve drainage and provide a better, safer path for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Brownie Lake Done. Many people gathered on a beautiful day in October to celebrate the completion of significant improvements at Brownie Lake. Trail improvements (enhanced by a trail easement donated by Target Corporation), a new canoe launch, pedestrian bridge, 75 new trees and other landscaping helped enhance the appeal and accessibility of one the city’s most secluded lakes. The project was funded by grants from the Minnesota Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, Federal Highway Administration and Metropolitan Council.

Kenwood Improved Access. The community center at Kenwood Park was improved primarily to provide more accessible, energy-efficient and appealing restrooms and to improve overall accessibility to the center. The Park Board extended the term of agreement with Minneapolis Public Schools for continued joint use of the Center.
Moving Earth at Elliot.
Construction began on a new synthetic turf field at Elliot Park in September. The NCAA-sized soccer field will provide a safer and more durable space for soccer, as well as youth football and baseball. The field will also be home to the soccer teams of neighboring North Central University, which helped fund-raise for the field. The skateboarding area in the park, originally built in 2004, will be relocated within the park when construction on the field is done.

Sculpture Garden.
The MPRB selected design team Oslund and Associates of Minneapolis for the reconstruction of the Sculpture Garden and Cowles Conservatory. The 26-year-old garden and conservatory, developed in partnership with the Walker Art Center, require replacement of deteriorating infrastructure to remain one of the most popular tourist sites in the city. Irrigation, drainage and stormwater systems will be brought up to date, physical accessibility will be improved, and energy efficiency will be greatly increased. The project will be funded by state bonds and the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization. Construction will begin July 2015 and be completed in 2016.

Hard Courts — and Smooth.
Tennis courts at Lynnhurst, Pershing and Pearl parks were resurfaced. Basketball courts at Pershing, Holmes, Powderhorn, Bohannon and Sibley parks were resurfaced. Pickleball lines and a new Pickleball program were added at Pearl Park.

Tennis Center Renovation.
A plan was developed through a public process to renovate the tennis center at Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. The buildings and tennis domes are owned by InnerCity Tennis Foundation on MPRB property. The proposed improvements will be privately funded and are part of a new lease between MPRB and the Foundation.

Goal: Focused land management supports current and future generations

Adding Land to Regional Parks.
Although no land purchases closed in 2014, the MPRB made offers to purchase several riverfront properties. At least two are scheduled to close in 2015, and negotiations continue with numerous others. This targeted land negotiation continues the policy of acquiring all northeast riverfront land as it becomes available.
Goal: Financially independent and sustainable parks prosper

Cheers! Sandcastle, the restaurant licensed to operate at Lake Nokomis beach, resumed serving beer and wine upon the completion of improvements to the restaurant’s beachside terrace.

Thanks, Hennepin County! In addition to funds for Webber Natural Swimming Pool described earlier, Hennepin County also made a grant to MPRB of more than $40,000 for athletic equipment at North Commons, Logan, Waite, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., East Phillips and Sibley parks.

Build It and They Will Come. The Minnesota Twins Community Fund contributed more than $100,000 to install irrigation at The Parade baseball field and install player benches and safety fencing at multiple fields in the park system. Improvements at Parade were enhanced by a donation of a new scoreboard by Augsburg College, whose baseball team plays at the field too.

All Around the Town. 3,200 bicyclists participated in their choice of a 16-mile ride along the Midtown Greenway, a 25-mile ride around the Chain of Lakes or a 32-mile ride through the city on a segment of the Grand Rounds during this year’s Minneapolis Bike Tour.

Goal: Easily accessible information supports enjoyment and use of the park and recreation system

Lift Off! The new www.minneapolisparks.org website will launch by March 2015, following design and production work in 2014. The new, mobile-friendly design and menu structure will improve user experience and feature a clean menu, vivid photos, enhanced search engine and a “Hidden Gems” section.

Loud and Clear. The ITS Department researched and determined a migration strategy to upgrade and replace the landline phone and messaging system. IT also finished upgrading 60 park locations to a new high-speed broadband network. Now a dedicated fiber-optic backbone enables recreation centers to receive Internet, phone and basic cable TV in one package.

A Wealth of Cultures. Cultural awareness training for employees continued in 2014. Latino/Hispanic Cultural Awareness Training began in April. A Somali/Muslim Cultural Awareness Resource Guide was produced as a follow-up to training initiated in 2013.

Easier Access from Anywhere. The number of email subscribers grew from 67,968 to 72,355 during 2014. With more than 100 topics to choose from, subscribers receive timely email updates on topics they select.

Redesign of Recreation Brochures. Seasonal activity guides were redesigned to increase the accuracy, and appeal of park and activity information. The guides were designed to new standards and templates that will help maintain a high level of usefulness in the future.
vision 4: **A SAFE PLACE** to play, recreate, contemplate and celebrate

**Goal: Positive recreation experiences and welcoming parks prevent crime**

*Eye in the Sky.* Park Police received an Urban Area Security Initiative grant from the federal government to purchase two mobile digital camera systems that can be deployed to provide bird’s-eye views of crowds. The wireless cameras, obtained in partnership with Minneapolis Office of Management will be used primarily to enhance security at special events.

*Where Kids Can Feel Safe.* The Recreation Division created a new Bullying and Hazing Prohibition Policy and the Board approved an action plan to improve staff skills, knowledge and access to information to deter bullying in parks.

*Parks Pop Up Everywhere.* A portable Pop-Up Park tent with music, art, games, crafts and dance appeared across the city six days a week. Aimed at youths 12-17, the initiative was supported by the MN Public Health Department, Park Board and City as a part of efforts to prevent violence and connect teens with community resources. Almost 2,500 youth enjoyed the Pop-Up Park.

**Goal: Intervention and communication reduces safety concerns**

*Outstanding Service.* Two MPRB Police Officers were recognized for their exceptional performance. Officer Troy Sandberg received the Minneapolis Police Department’s Medal of Commendation for his actions on May 24, 2014. On that date, he entered the Mississippi River at Boom Island Park and pulled a woman in the midst of a “psychiatric episode” from certain drowning. Park Police. Officer Chad Berdahl was selected by the MPRB Police Department as the 2014 Park Police Officer of the Year for his dedication, professionalism, strong work ethic and for furthering the mission of the Minneapolis Park Police Department.

*How to Save a Life.* Park police developed water emergency and drowning response drills and training, which was delivered to 130 employees on the aquatics staff. The training included classroom and on-the-beach sessions.

**Goal: Residents, park visitors and staff make safe choices in parks**

*The Kids are Alright.* MPRB conducted another very successful three-day Safety Camp for children in 3rd to 5th grades at Theodore Wirth Regional Park. Firefighters and police officers served as counselors teaching kids personal and social safety skills in a fun and friendly environment.

*Chainsaw Safety.* All arborists and crew leaders in the Forestry Department participated in a chainsaw safety class at Powderhorn Park. The class was conducted by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. The lecture and demonstration ended with the cutting of two ash trees. The class reinforced MPRB’s commitment to a culture of safety.
Visionary Leadership. Respect the vision and leadership that built the park and recreation system and recognize the need for ongoing leadership in achieving excellence.

Uncommon Downtown Commons. The Board passed a resolution in August declining to be involved in the development, maintenance or operation of the strip of land that will serve as a gateway to a new football stadium for the Minnesota Vikings. The Board cited the lack of control over the space—due to an agreement between Ryan Companies, the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority and the City of Minneapolis—and uncertain prospects for long-term funding of development, maintenance and operations as major obstacles. In December, the MPRB entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the City to establish a framework for how the City and MPRB will cooperate in the ownership and operation of the Property in order to promote the public interest and ensure compliance with state law and the City Charter, without financial investments or risk on the part of the MPRB during the terms of the existing covenants.

Parks Worthy of a Presidential Visit. When President Obama visited Minneapolis in June, the two major events were held in the parks. On June 26, an invitation-only Town Hall Meeting was held at Minnehaha Falls. On June 27, thousands of people gathered to hear the President speak at the Lake Harriet Bandshell. The parks provided a stunning setting for such extraordinary events. The last time a President made such a well-known appearance in the parks was almost 50 years ago when President Lyndon B. Johnson visited Minnehaha Falls.

Connecting Youth to Outdoor Careers. 90 Teen Teamworks’ youth employees and teens from other community agencies learned about outdoor careers at the Outdoor Career Exploration Day through hands-on experiences and conversations with Park staff about their education and experience in their field.

Safety. Work safely to support a thriving work environment and an outstanding park experience for visitors.

Be Safe. Continuing its emphasis on workplace safety, MPRB welcomed a new full-time Occupational Safety and Health Consultant.

**Sustainability.** Meet current park and recreation needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by balancing environment, economic and equity concerns.

Nicer Rides. The Park Board extended its agreement with Nice Ride for bicycle rental kiosks at the beach in Theodore Wirth Park and on Nicollet Island, bringing the number of park locations featuring Nice Ride rental kiosks to 16.

The Bike-Friendly City. Bicycle tire pumps were installed at 12 parks across the city: Lixton, Van Cleve, North Commons, Webber, Brackett, Powderhorn, Elliot, Loring, Nokomis, Pearl, Lyndale Farmstead and Lynnhurst. The durable pumps can be used year-round.

Waste and Recycling Improvements. Three new trash compactors were purchased to collect trash and recycling more efficiently in regional parks and software was installed to develop efficient collection routing. Trash and recycling collection at neighborhood parks was integrated into the City’s system.

Fleet Streets. The Fleet Maintenance Team worked to improve efficiency through performance metrics and improving the equipment repair process. The team also integrated the Park Board fleet with the City of Minneapolis MS fleet management system in order to streamline asset management.

From Humble Beginnings in Pearl Park. The Minnesota Solid Waste and Recycling Department in partnership with MPRB, and the Tangletown and Hale-Page-Diamond Lake neighborhood associations, opened an organic waste drop-off site at Pearl Park. By the end of July the site had collected more than 6,000 pounds of organic waste products. Due to that success, more park sites will open in 2015.

Energy-Efficient Paths. The electrical staff identified a new light fixture that is a replica of current path lights but could use LED bulbs and reduce power consumption by 75%. Installation costs would be about the same as current fixtures. The staff is planning a small-scale test of the fixtures and bulbs in real world conditions in 2015.
Responsiveness and Innovation. Anticipate and thoughtfully respond to the diverse needs of the city’s communities, continually seeking ways to better deliver park and recreation services

Boot Camp. Customer Service Boot Camp training sessions whipped 800 MPRB staff into customer service shape, because every staff member at MPRB is a customer service representative. New training was developed specifically for aquatics, golf and recreation staff.

Hola, Sidee Tahay, Hellow. Customer Service and Community Outreach developed a Bilingual Information Ambassador program which led to the hiring of Spanish and Somali speaking customer service staff. The bilingual staff conduct outreach at the MPRB Information Booth at both park and non-park events and provide customer service over the phone and by email to community members in their native language.

Commitment to Innovation. Park Leadership funds ($50,000) were allocated for staff to work directly with the community to enhance programs, pilot new ideas and respond to suggestions. The funds targeted underserved or underrepresented groups. Programming included Family Zumba, festivals, cultural liaisons, boys and girls groups, and archery.

Mobile Pollination Education. A new bike cart featured hands-on learning about pollinators and watersheds. The Minnesota Recreation and Park Foundation helped fund the project, which was also supported by Floodplain Collective, Wetland Habitat Restoration and People for Parks.

Fitness Focus in Phillips. At the Phillips Community Center, the Park Board took over operation of the former Running Wolf Fitness Center to ensure that a valuable community service remained viable. MPRB has partnerships at the facility with Native American Community Clinic, Indian Health Board, Minneapolis American Indian Center, Nawayee Center School, Kateri Residence, Eastside Neighborhood Services and Health Partners/Children’s Hospital.

Independence and Focus. Independence allows the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to focus on providing and obtaining the resources necessary to accomplish its mission and form effective, responsible partnerships.

The Best Park System in the Country. Excellence requires resources. For 2015, MPRB requested and was granted by the Board of Estimate and Taxation a 4.9% levy increase. More than half of the increase is dedicated to the care of Minneapolis’s urban forest, especially the removal of threatened ash trees.

Youth is Served. MPRB approved a new five-year agreement with the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, a collaborative effort of the MPRB, Minneapolis Public Schools, Hennepin County, City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County Library to promote the health, safety and education of Minneapolis youth.

Polished Diamonds. MPRB, the Minnesota Twins and Major League Baseball (MLB) celebrated the opening of two baseball fields constructed with donations in conjunction with the All-Star game held in Minneapolis. A new artificial turf baseball field was constructed in Xcel Park, a property leased for twenty years from Xcel Energy. The field was built with donations from the Twins Community Fund, the Pohlad Family Foundation, MLB, Hennepin County Youth Sports, Xcel Energy and Veit and Co. The field was named Rod Carew All Star Field in honor of the Minnesota Twins Hall of Famer. The same donors, as well as Scott’s, funded the renovation of a youth baseball field at Northeast Park, which was named Sid Hartman All Star Field in honor of the legendary Minneapolis sports reporter.

In a related action, MPRB named a field previously constructed by the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation at Farview Park in honor of Eddie Phillips.

Botanical Art. MPRB collaborated with the Hennepin County Library, Friends of the Central Library and the Minnesota School of Botanical Art to exhibit nearly 50 exceptional paintings of native plants found at the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden & Bird Sanctuary. The paintings were created by students of the school and donated to MPRB after a juried review and acceptance.
Superintendent’s Office

**Leadership, vision, direction** The Superintendent’s Office is responsible for the executive management of the highly diverse services and operations of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The Superintendent provides leadership and vision, implements Board policy, and crafts strategic and financial planning objectives. The Superintendent serves as an ambassador to the community and to other governmental agencies. The Superintendent’s Office oversees communications and marketing; community outreach; and park safety and security.

Deputy Superintendent’s Office

**Supporting organization service delivery** The Deputy Superintendent’s Office provides support to the Superintendent and Board of Commissioners. The Deputy Superintendent provides strategic focus and leads performance management efforts. The Deputy Superintendent’s Office oversees customer service; finance; human resources; information technologies; and risk management.

Environmental Stewardship

**Caring for the system** Environmental Stewardship provides expertise for the care and maintenance of the park system. The division oversees the maintenance of the Minneapolis Park system’s physical infrastructure; equipment and fleet; natural areas and water resources; forestry; volunteer coordination; and environmental education.

Planning Services

**Developing the system** Planning Services provides expertise to lead, advise and guide the development and redevelopment of the Minneapolis Park system. The division oversees park system research and analysis, community engagement for park planning and design, park master planning, real estate services, design and engineering, physical development and redevelopment, and construction permitting.

**Permits processed:** 8,500 parking, 7,387 dog park, 1,054 picnic, 260 photo, 180 wedding, 170 event permits
**Technology increases:** 10 Terabytes disc space storage, 40 Megabytes faster connection to City

**Renovations Completed or Underway:** four playgrounds, three athletic fields, two wading pools, one recreation center, 3.5 miles of trail repaved, 4.5 miles parkway resurfaced
**Park Plans Completed or Underway:** five master plans, three activity plans, two service area plans

**Recreation Services**

**Providing visitor activities** Recreation Services provides expertise to lead, provide and create affordable recreational, cultural, educational, and leisure opportunities to benefit and enhance the lives of all Minneapolis residents. The division oversees recreation facility operations, including recreation centers, golf courses, aquatic facilities and beaches, ice arenas, cross-country skiing venues, and With Winter Recreation Complex; recreation, education, and interpretive programming; and athletic fields and complexes.

**Sport team participants:** 6,910 youth, 28,900 adults
**Non-sport recreation center class participants:** 208,481
**Golf rounds played:** 95,000
**Cross-Country Ski Passes sold:** 4,500
**Rec Plus locations:** 19
**Athletic facility rental permits issued:** 200 permits to 150 organizations, for 6,000 games

**Miles of city streets arborists plant and maintain trees:** 1,100
**Acres mowed or maintained:** 3,597
**AIS boat inspections:** 8,800
**Participants:** 15,000 Neighborhood Naturalist participants, 70,000 Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden visitors

**MPRB employees:** 486 full-time, 1,288 temporary
### Revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Taxes</td>
<td>$48,634,266</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enterprise</td>
<td>$10,863,839</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Projects</td>
<td>$14,741,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Government Aid</td>
<td>$8,977,319</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Revenue</td>
<td>$9,531,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td><strong>$92,747,575</strong></td>
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### Expenditures

#### Superintendent's Office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent's Office</td>
<td>$998,730</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of Commissioners</td>
<td>$664,568</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications and Marketing</td>
<td>$430,474</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>$1,576,121</td>
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<tr>
<td>Park Police</td>
<td>$5,096,092</td>
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#### Deputy Superintendent's Office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>$887,059</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Management Fee, Contributions and Other</td>
<td>$1,877,709</td>
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#### Environmental Stewardship

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Asset Management</td>
<td>$18,426,464</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Management</td>
<td>$6,018,906</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>$9,944,639</td>
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#### Planning Services

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<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design and Project Management</td>
<td>$1,424,715</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
<td>$805,591</td>
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#### Recreation Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Programs and Aquatics</td>
<td>$2,504,963</td>
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<td>Recreation Centers and Programs</td>
<td>$9,299,062</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>$3,015,376</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golf, Ice and Winter Programs</td>
<td>$7,722,586</td>
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#### Other

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Projects</td>
<td>$18,570,371</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debt Service</td>
<td>$915,874</td>
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</table>

| **Total Expenditures**             | **$91,838,935** |
Minneapolis Parks: #1 Park System in the U.S. – The Trust for Public Land Parkscore® Index, May

Minneapolis/St. Paul: America’s Fittest City – American College of Sports Medicine’s American Fitness Index, January

Minneapolis: #2, Top 10 Healthiest Cities in the U.S. – Wall St. Cheat Sheet, March

Minneapolis: #3, The 10 Best Cycling Towns – USA Today, April

Minneapolis: #4, Best Cities for Recreation – Wallet Hub, July

Lake Calhoun: Best Midwest Beaches – Travel Channel, August

Minneapolis: #3, The 16 Best Places to Live in the U.S. – Outside Magazine, August

Minneapolis/St. Paul: America’s Best Cities for Fall Travel – Travel + Leisure, August

Minneapolis: Top 50 Bike-Friendly Cities – Bicycling, August

Minneapolis: #1, The Friendliest Cities – Men’s Health, September

Minneapolis/St. Paul: #1 for Public Parks, America’s Favorite Cities – Travel + Leisure, November