

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles Master Plan Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Walking Tour #1

5/17/2021 5:30-7pm
Cedar Lake Area

STOPS



TOUR

Stop 1:

Emma Pachuta, project manager, provided an introduction and overview of what the CAC is and their role in the master planning process. Emma then introduced the first guest speaker, Mark Schmidt, who is a natural resources volunteer at Cedar Lake.

After leaving the parking lot, the group moved north to a wooded area where work has been done to open it up through buckthorn removal and seeding of wildflowers. From there, north along the trail, there is a point where the trail goes east towards the lake. Along the pedestrian path, buckthorn has been cleared and flowers have been planted over the last four years. You can now see a view of the lake, which was not there before. Following the path towards the point, there's a wood duck house that was put in in the spring to the right of the path. Across the path from the wood duck house, there's a pilot project to remove buckthorn from the forest and restore native plants to the area.

Following the pedestrian path south along the lake, near the southwest segment of the lake there's a wood duck house near the pedestrian path and dock. This segment of Cedar Lake is partially cleared of buckthorn and will be completed in the spring/summer for a high school senior project.

The group moved from near the lake west towards the parkway road where it was noted the area needs an identity and that bike and pedestrian trails have been a common top in the master planning process and there is no formal crossing of the parkway road in this location (south of Cedar Shore Drive).

Stop 2:

The second guest speaker, Tiffany Schaffler from Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD), spoke to the group about Cedar Meadows Wetlands, a stormwater wetland feature. The landscape was different a century ago when this was wetland and a natural lake, early 1900s was a dustbowl and dry, and the 1950s the area became a lot denser. Water quality started to decline after development picked up and a partnership with many entities (Clean Water Partnership) was developed to clean Cedar Lake, Lake of the Isles, and Bde Maka Ska. The wetland takes in a lot of water, 56 miles of drainage from north, west, and east. Some of the water from St. Louis Park comes through a treatment train in Twin Lake, then comes to these stormwater wetlands. MCWD manages the wetlands, including dredging. The last dredge was in 2004, it will be dredged again in 2022, and will likely be dredged a few years after that. This wetland is significant to water quality of the lake because it takes a lot of pollutants and sediment out of the lake.

Water quality has external factors and internal loading factors that are likely both impacting the lake. Examples include: homes, record rain then two years of dry, and shallow wetland turned into a deep lake a century ago. The CAC could make recommendations around water quality. One way to improve water quality would be a recommendation around state use of chloride.

Stop 3:

Did not have enough time to make it to the third stop.

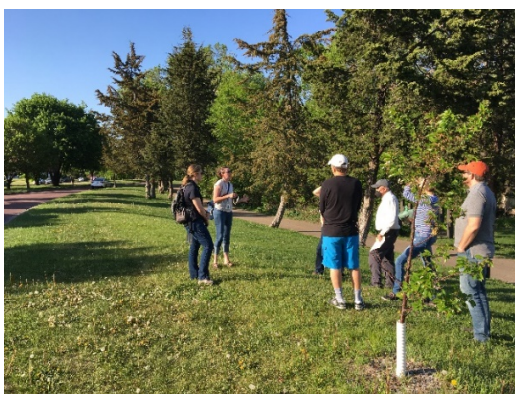
PHOTOS



Buckthorn removal area



Pedestrian path leading east to the point



Near the parkway road and Cedar Meadows Wetland



Cedar Meadows Wetland

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Cedar lake and Lake of the Isles Master Plan Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Walking Tour #2

5/25/2021 5:30-7pm

Lake of the Isles and Dean Parkway

STOPS



TOUR

Stop 1

Emma Pachuta, project manager, provided an introduction and overview of what the CAC is and their role in the master planning process. Emma then went through some of the amenities in the area. This location is one of two where canoe racks are on Lake of the Isles. The lakes are important from programming beyond the land. The lake also has informal fishing piers.

There was a question about where canoe racks are on Cedar Lake. There are two on Cedar Lake – one is near East Cedar Beach and the other is at Cedar Point Beach. There was interest in moving the canoe racks at East Cedar Beach to South Cedar Beach so there's more space for programming. Staff have raised the question about adding more canoe racks, which has pros and cons. An issue identified by the group was the number of informal entry points for canoes and kayaks and concerns regarding the shoreline. Questions were asked about the wait time for getting a canoe rack and whether there's a time limit for renting a spot. There was concern that if there is not a time limit, there is no access. Would there be other ways to offer equitable access to canoe racks? Seasonal racks?

Renovations from 2005-2009 were done to address extreme flooding. The renovations included: shoreline restoration, leveling turf, moving many of the paths, adding large divots to the landscape for protection of old growth trees with the intention to eventually fill them in. Now experiencing another round of flooding for trails and habitat. Shoreline restoration in the Lake of the Isles management plan was adopted. Some of the lawn in the northern arm was transitioned, it was overgrown.

In this area, there's a Nice Ride bike location. Staff selected this location and there have been community comments about the viewshed to the lake.

Does MPRB have a view on the addition of docks for shoreline access for putting in boats or fishing?

- No strong feelings against adding docks. Likely less community interest in canoe racks versus docks. Formalized access points will help to reduce shoreline erosion.

Would like to see a bike rack to lock wheels for those traveling with their boats.

Is there a tree plan to plant trees along the biking and walking trails?

- Not at this time but can be included within master plan.

Stop 2

Jeff Evenson, Director of Asset Management at MPRB, was the guest speaker and provided an overview of the trails system at the meeting spot between the channel and Kenilworth Place. Trails are typically 8 feet wide with most trails being separate for bikes and pedestrians. He shared that trails are typically 12 feet wide. MPRB currently doesn't have a great trail inventory, but we are in the process of collecting and developing a yearly maintenance lifecycle plan for trails and tennis and basketball courts. Funding is a challenge and there hasn't been a maintenance plan. Seal coating extends the life of paved trails.

Also developing a soft surface trails plan to inventory and track them. Most soft surface trails aren't formal trails.

Could there be mulch trails?

- Eloise Butler has them and they're managed by staff on site.

Do new trails have to be ADA accessible?

- New trails are not required to be ADA-accessible, but MPRB strives to be ADA-compliant in all areas of the park system. Additionally, main amenities need to be accessible. Maintenance is easier for paved trails, but soft surface trails are an option.

With the Kenilworth Restoration project, will it be easier or harder to add a path?

- The project won't impede the ability to add a trail.

After Jeff talked with the group about trails, Madeline Hudek, Cedar-Isles project team member, pointed out some of the features in the channel area near Kenilworth Place. In this area there are two sets of stone steps to access the water, one on each side of the channel. Additionally, there's a larger water access point on the north side commonly used by non-motorized watercraft. It was noted by a CAC member that it would be helpful to see property lines for this area at a future CAC meeting. A question was asked about the lily pads and whether they had always been there or were added to help with water quality?

Stop 3

At Dean Parkway and West 28th Street, Emma gave an overview of the Dean Parkway area. A question was asked about why Dean Parkway was added later/included in the project area. Improvements were made in 2014 and there were questions around if those improvements were adopted by the

Metropolitan Council. It was determined the area needs an adopted master plan, which is why it has been added to the project.

The 2014 improvements were a major renovation. Community feedback during that time included feedback that the path quality was poor, dangerous intersections, and safety at night. The paths and intersections were improved, but lighting was not improved. For the current community survey, local traffic and walking/biking are the uses that have come up. There were suggestions to add exercise equipment and benches.

The tour group had a few comments: speed of traffic isn't too fast, more of a through area; not a gathering area for the most part; extremely congested with vehicle traffic in evening rush hour; where would it be best to keep unencumbered space?

Water quality came up as a topic of concern for the tour group. Cedar Lake used to be clear and now isn't. There's very little power to change with water coming from the west in the watershed. If not in the master plan, where to focus the conversation? Subcommittee about water quality for the CAC?

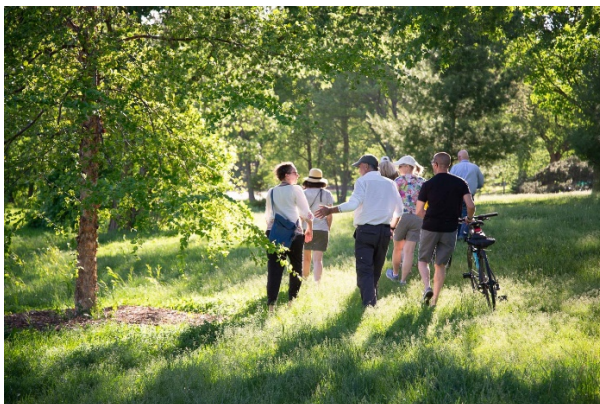
PHOTOS



Group at stop 1



Speaker, Jeff, talks with the group



Group walks from Lake of the Isles to stop 2



Group talks at area between Kenilworth Place and the channel

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles Master Plan Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Walking Tour #3

6/3/2021 5:30-7pm

Cedar Lake Regional Trail and Cedar Lake Area

STOPS



TOUR

Stop 1

Emma Pachuta welcomed the group and provided a brief overview of the CAC role in the master planning process. Keith Prussing, from the Cedar Lake Park Association, was the guest speaker for the evening. At the entrance to the East Cedar beach area, Keith provided an overview of some of the features. The trail north of the beach entrance is a trail maintained by the Loppet Foundation year-round. This area also has a school forest designation by the Department of Natural Resources. Current programming includes some art rocks that can be found along the trails. Overall, this area has minimal infrastructure: not a lot of parking, hand pump for a drinking fountain, portable restrooms. In 1976, homes that were formerly along the lake were torn down when the MPRB acquired the land in this area. It's a heavily planted area.

Does MPRB maintain the paths in this area? *Refers to the dirt trails*

- The paths in this area are created by park users and aren't maintained by MPRB outside of tree removal. There are volunteers that maintain trails.
- The trails are not currently mapped and staff are working on that. Unmanaged trails are not designated paths for pedestrians or bicyclists which has created some tension with park users.

Stop 2

As the group moved north from the East Cedar beach entrance, Keith pointed out a former railroad service road that ran to a gate leading to W 21st Street. In this area there was a former electrical power

pole that was used in the 1910s and 20s for ice box harvesting on the lakes. This area also has a lot of remnant wood, brick, and asphalt leftover from the railroad. Continuing along the trails north parallel to the lake, the group reached a bench facing the lake with a nice view. The bench is known as sunset bench and volunteers keep the “window” open to view the lake and sunset. The bench itself was originally built through a MPRB youth program.

As the group moved east away from the lake, Keith talked about the Cedar Lake Park Association stewardship agreement with MPRB, which formalized volunteer support help to manage natural areas in this part of the park. The area referred to as the Memorial Cedar Grove was planted in 1997; made of red cedars, planted in a spiral, each tree was purchased to represent a person to memorialize. After walking through the grove, the trail brought the group to a sandstone bench oriented to show a view of the prairie to the north. Buckthorn has been removed in the wooded area northeast of the lake.

Following one of the trails north, the group reached an opening to the Cedar Lake Regional Trail. The trail was the first “bike highway” and the adjacent prairie was established in 1995. The prairie has maintenance needs. The Cedar Lake Park Association has completed 20 years of outings and bought plantings. The ski trail maintained by the Loppet Foundation runs parallel to the trail on the south side. While at this spot, the trail connections in this area are noted (natural trails, ski trails, Kenilworth Regional Trail, Cedar Lake Regional Trail) and the group is asked to think about that in the context of two new southwest lightrail stations.

Following the trails back into the woods and heading southeast the group reaches a spot where the railroad line and future southwest lightrail line can be seen. It’s noted there’s community interest for MPRB to acquire land the Metropolitan Council currently owns near the southwest lightrail route and Kenwood Parkway entrance. MPRB is in conversations around the possibility of adding that area to the master plan as a future acquisition.

The group returns to the entrance of East Cedar beach with a few questions and comments.

Will there be facilities of some kind in this area (restroom, changing station, etc.?)

- We anticipate that may be included in one of the draft designs. Currently in the community engagement phase and have heard that as something people are interested in.

There was a suggestion to incorporate light shielding. For South Cedar Lake beach there was a note that it’s livelier and benches are used a lot more following the recent improvements.

PHOTOS



Former railroad service



Group stopped to talk about trails



Walking north along the trails east of Cedar Lake



View of the rail corridor

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles Master Plan Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Boat Tour #4

6/9/2021 5:30-7pm

Parts of Cedar Lake, Kenilworth Channel, and Lake of the Isles

STOPS



TOUR

Stop 1

The group was provided canoeing instruction before heading out onto the water. Once on the water, boats headed towards the Kenilworth Channel to travel over to Lake of the Isles. On the way to the channel, the three beaches on Cedar were pointed out (Cedar Point Beach, East Cedar Beach, and South Cedar Beach). Travelling into the Kenilworth Channel, the shoreline project was noted. Construction will start in the fall and include removal of the the wooden plank walls and replacing them with a more naturalized shoreline. Once through the channel, the group traveled under a set of bridges built for the future southwest lightrail line (under construction), existing hard rail line, and Kenilworth Regional Trail.

Stop 2

The group briefly stopped in the channel near Kenilworth Place before turning back to the start due to inclement weather. In the channel, the bridge near Lake of the Isles was noted as one of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) bridges in the channel near the Lagoon. The Kenilworth Channel and Southwest lightrail construction were also discussed briefly before returning to Cedar Lake.

Stop 1

The group had to return to shore early due to weather and continued to ask questions about the Cedar Lake Park area on land. Topics were related to the narrower part of the trail north of the Cedar Point Beach parking lot, parkway roads and possible options as part of the master planning process, lake

access points (how many to have and where), erosion concerns, safety concerns at roadway crossing to the parking lot at Cedar Point Beach.

PHOTOS



Canoe Introduction and Paddling on the Lake

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Cedar lake and Lake of the Isles Master Plan Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Walking Tour #5

6/29/2021 5:30-7pm

Lake of the Isles and the Lagoon Area

STOPS



TOUR

Stop 1

Shane Stenzel, MPRB Customer Service and Events Manager, was the guest speaker for the tour. The first topic of the evening was the canoe rack locations. The park board receives frequent requests for more canoe racks. Shane shared that the lake has reached capacity for watercraft and would not recommend adding any more canoe racks.

The canoe rack on south Lake of the Isles blocks the view of the lake when approaching, would we be able to move it?

- Don't see a problem with moving the location of a rack

Canoe racks are popular. In the past, racks used to be for summer use only, renters would have to take boats off in the winter. MPRB gave renters the option to keep boats on racks over the winter for an extra fee and most people did. The racks tend to feel more like a storage unit with this structure. Could consider moving to a yearly lottery system and grandfather people in (guesses about ¼ of people decide not to renew each year), always a very long list of people waiting for a canoe spot.

The next topic discussed was Lake of the Isles programming. It was noted that the parkway has only been closed for an event 1-2 times in the past 20 years. There are so many curb cuts around the lake that it makes it challenging to program for road closures. The skating rink at Lake of the Isles is the most popular in the park system. The annual Loppet event is another top attraction at Lake of the Isles. The

MPRB has received requests for events on the islands, but it's not allowed; it's designated as a bird sanctuary.

The last topic addressed was boat access points.

Can we reinforce the lake edge in places where people are bringing in their own boats?

- Need to address erosion, difficult as lake levels rise and fall. May be able to formalize some entry points to the water. If all rentals and watercraft on racks were out on the water, there would be 1 watercraft per every 1/8 acre of water area

Can we add temporary docks in the summer to areas where people put in boats?

- Could be an option, however, there are mixed opinions on putting in watercraft with docks.

Concern over aquatic invasive species (AIS). AIS monitoring would have to have a say in adding more watercraft put in places

Stop 2

It was noted that the lagoon is included in the master plan project area.

Wheel Fun rentals are the most utilized in the park system. MPRB controls the inventory; if new rentals are introduced others are taken out.

The lagoon is a quieter place to launch boats than Bde Maka Ska, would the park board consider moving the rental location there?

- Interesting option but Works Progress Administration (WPA) walls in the lagoon will not change and are not ideal for putting boats in
- Another idea MPRB has discussed is putting half the rental stock on Cedar Lake and keeping the other half on Bde Maka Ska

Bde Maka Ska Refectory Rebuild: Restaurant is going into phase 2, next step is bidding for construction.

Forthcoming lightrail stop at Cedar Lake – need to prepare for light rail, will be the only park and beach on public transportation What does this mean for East Cedar Lake Beach?

- Need to protect areas south of East Cedar Beach, balance between access and protecting natural areas is possible
- If we do not plan for the light rail and increased users, we will run into issues
- There will be a need for a restroom, maybe a kiosk or concession/food truck area. Multi-use plazas are a great way to leave program open to future needs and let the community decide on needs.

Could we create soft surface mulch paths in natural areas?

- Currently don't have any soft surface ADA accessible paths in the system, but could add some into the master plan
- Ways to have soft surface paths that work with regulations, good to know exactly what impact paths will have if any on water quality

Looking at updating wayfinding kiosks that have not been maintained. Could we use QR codes on kiosks to provide more information on history, programming etc.?

Stop 3

The dog park is really the only year-round formal program on Lake of the Isles.

Southwest Service Area Master Plan CAC proposed beach volleyball courts near the lagoon.

- Some concern over introducing programs that may not be relevant for long periods of time

Observation that the parkway, transportation streams near the dog park are narrow. Do people feel like there are parking issues on Lake of the Isles?

- Generally no, plenty of available parking, but parking at Cedar Lake can be difficult.

MPRB is looking at possible ways to close/open the parkways or shift areas to pedestrian uses. Driveway curb cuts, encroachments on the parkway make closing Lake of the Isles difficult

There has been talk in the past of eliminating the double road at the top of Lake of the Isles, is this still on the table?

- Could free up more parkland.
- Can be difficult to cross the road at Kenwood, can we add crossings at Franklin?

PHOTOS



Lagoon area



Kiosk near southeast Lake of the Isles