

FOLWELL PARK



LOCATION AND HISTORY

Folwell Park is a large (by neighborhood park standards) tract of land located south of Dowling Avenue between Humboldt and Knox Avenues. The land for the park was designated for acquisition by the park board in 1916. The park board purchased the land very quickly through condemnation, completing the acquisition by 1917 and assessing the purchase cost to property owners in the vicinity of the park.

The park was named in 1917 for William Watts Folwell, a park commissioner from 1889 to 1907 and president from 1895 to 1903. Before that the site was known as Highland Park. As president of the park board during a time of economic depression in the 1890s, Folwell kept alive Horace Cleveland's vision of the park system as a series of interconnected parks of natural beauty. He also championed neighborhood parks interspersed throughout the city. In 1891, he proposed the name "Grand Rounds" for Minneapolis's parkways and the name stuck. He was also a proponent of playgrounds for children and playing fields in parks before those activities were widely considered appropriate in parks.

The first plans for the park were published in the 1917 annual report. The plan showed the northern half of the park devoted to playgrounds, a wading pool and playing fields, with the southern half reserved for, in park superintendent Theodore Wirth's words, "general park effects," meaning woods and walking paths and lawns. Wirth noted

that the plan would provide one of the "most complete and attractive neighborhood parks in the country." However, at the time, the cost of all improvements in neighborhood parks was assessed against property in the neighborhoods. If neighborhood property owners were not willing to pay, no improvements were made, and that seemed to be the case at Folwell. Three years later Wirth complained in the annual report that the park needed development because, as it was, it had been of "no service to the people." It wasn't until November 1922 that residents of the area asked the board to improve the park—somewhat more modestly than Wirth's original drawings.

Work on the park began with grading and filling in 1923 and continued through 1925. The park included a shelter building and warming house built into the bank separating the higher southern half from the northern half of the park. The roof of the building formed a terrace from which the activities and games could be watched.

A pergola and permanent bandstand were added to the southern half of the park in 1927—the first permanent bandstand built in a park other than the pavilions at Lake Harriet and Minnehaha Park. Following World War II, Folwell Park was one of the first five parks (the others were Loring, Logan, Nicollet, and Sibley) that offered year-round playground programming and were equipped with lights for outdoor games at night. In the mid-1950s the skating rink at Folwell Park was by far the most heavily used in

the park system.

The Folwell shelter stood until 1970 when it was replaced by a community center and gymnasium, and the park was completely rehabilitated. By then, the practice of assessing property owners for improvements to neighborhood parks had ended; the new center was paid for by city bonds. From 1994 to 1998, a new playground was built, walkways and basketball courts were repaved, fields were re-graded and the community center was remodeled. The basketball court in the park was relocated in 2008 and security cameras were installed. The parking lot was resurfaced in 2010. In late spring 2011, a tornado caused extensive damage to trees in the park. With funds donated by businesses and civic groups, 270 new trees were purchased and planted that fall.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND CHARACTER

Folwell Park is large and sprawling, with a distinct rise separating the lower northern half of the park from the higher southern half. Active uses are mostly concentrated near the recreation center at the northern edge of the park along Dowling, though the play areas and wading pool extend southward in a line in the center of the park, rising upward as they head south. This placement—along with an existing shelter that blocks visibility from the recreation center and surrounding streets—creates some seclusion of these uses and leads to anecdotally lower use than such facilities at other parks.

Multi-use diamonds with multi-use fields

between them occupy the northern half of the park, with a total of five diamonds split into two areas. A single full-court basketball court sits between the recreation center and Dowling, enclosed by a high fence meant to prevent balls from going out onto the street. This fence, though not gated on the park side, creates the feeling of a cage, and its proximity to Dowling has raised safety concerns.

The higher southern portion of the park has excellent tree cover and a network of trails. Also here is a bank of four tennis courts in very poor repair. In the southwestern corner of the park, a former project to disconnect a drain from the sanitary sewer has created a seasonal wet area that often inundates nearby pathways with standing water.

Folwell is an active park with space for a very wide variety of activities. It is a center of community for the north central portion of the north side, and has the potential for even more use and excitement.

THE PROPOSED DESIGN

The design for Folwell Park does not make wholesale changes to the park. It does re-arrange a few amenities for improved safety and accessibility, and it adds some new and exciting options for park users. The southern half of the park is retained as a wooded area perfect for a stroll. The pathways are reorganized to create more loops for walking within the park, naturalized areas soften the southern frontage

along 36th Avenue, and a fruit tree orchard offers pink-your-own food to neighbors. Along these wooded walkways is a collection of public art—either permanent or rotating. These works could be site specific or not, created by a combination of local and national artists. The southern part of the park, then, becomes a combination of arboretum, orchard, pollinator habitat area, and art gallery.

The drainage issue is solved by creating (slightly to the east of its current location) a restored wetland. This will further enhance habitat, improve the aesthetic of the park overall, and possibly offer an option for free ice skating in winter. In place of the existing wet area is a new multi-use field for either programmed games or unprogrammed play. The four tennis courts are upgraded in their current location.

The play areas and a new wading pool are relocated to the area right behind the recreation center. The proximity of these facilities to each other and to the recreation center will improve use. Also in this area is a small performance stage and terraced seating, taking advantage of the existing hillside. The basketball court is relocated from its current location and expanded to two courts. This strategic location near but not directly adjacent to the parking lot, very near the recreation center, but not adjacent to Dowling should improve safety and security. The courts will need to be buffered from the play area, likely both by distance and vegetation. The removal of the basketball court from the Dowling side of the recreation center would allow for a possible

expansion of the center to include a second gym.

The reorganization of play areas, courts, and the wading pool makes the current storage and restroom building—located in the center of the park—unnecessary. The restroom need will be served by the recreation center building itself. A new storage structure is located near the tennis courts and will house park maintenance equipment and athletic gear.

The parking lot is slightly reorganized to create an entrance on Knox rather than Dowling, and the drop-off circle is removed in favor of a stormwater management area with habitat plantings. A larger entry plaza makes the recreation center more welcoming. However, removal of the drop-off may raise concerns about accessibility. Revised accessible parking spaces and a new accessible route must be considered when the parking lot is renovated. The athletic fields are modified slightly, with the removal of two of the five diamonds to create more multi-use field space. A new all-wheel park (skateboards, BMX bikes, scooters) takes advantage of the hillside in the middle of the park to create a fun and exciting draw to the park. This multi-level park could have challenges for a variety of skill levels and should be a unique facility in the park system.

Overall, the proposed design builds on the existing natural and recreational assets of Folwell Park, and makes targeted improvements and modifications designed to make the park even more safe, active, and diverse with options.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARKS

The proposed Northside Greenway runs on Humboldt Avenue east of the park and connects through the park to Irving Avenue.

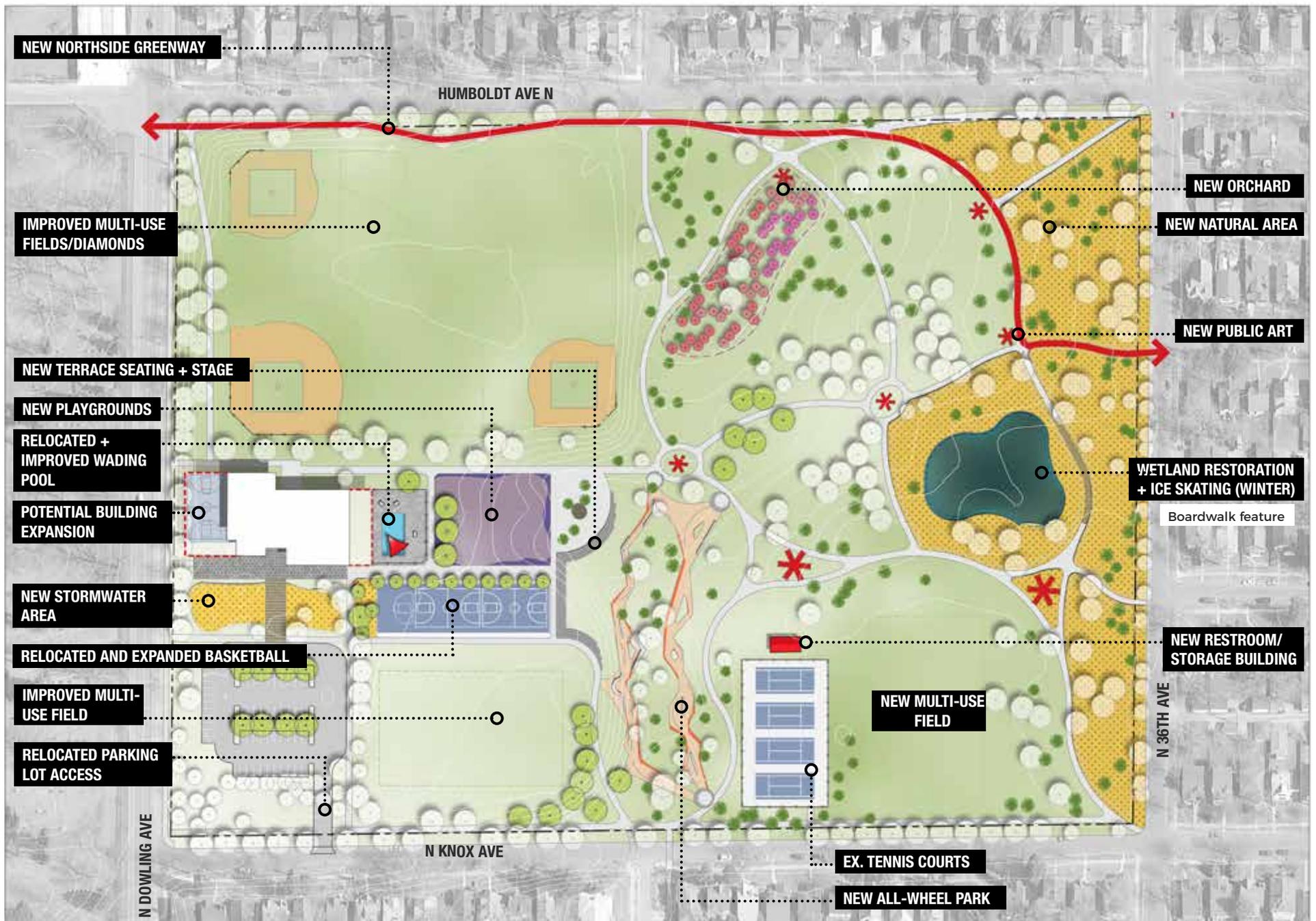
A proposed park connection on 37th Avenue would connect eastward to Perkins Hill Park and westward through one of the main north side park gap areas to Victory Parkway.

KNOWN LAND USE AND COORDINATION ISSUES

No known issues exist at Folwell Park.



EXISTING CONDITIONS: FOLWELL PARK

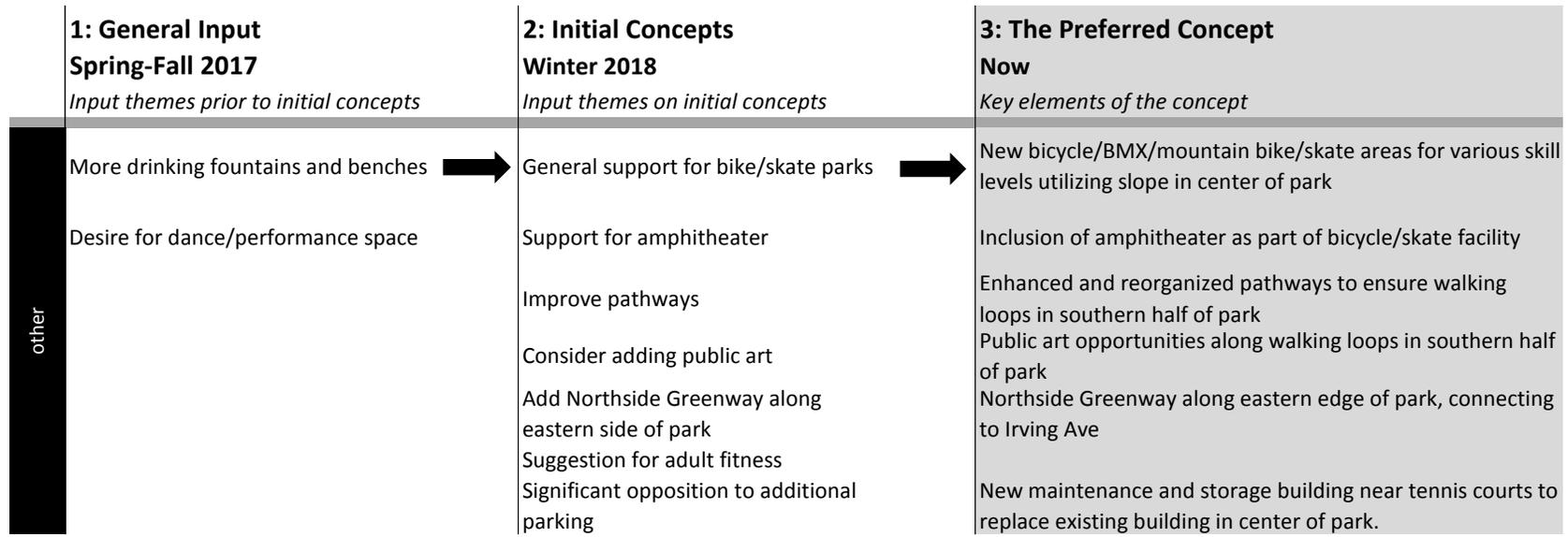


PROPOSED PLAN: FOLWELL PARK

PROCESSES

	1: General Input Spring-Fall 2017 <i>Input themes prior to initial concepts</i>	2: Initial Concepts Winter 2018 <i>Input themes on initial concepts</i>	3: The Preferred Concept Now <i>Key elements of the concept</i>
aquatics	Both liked and disliked, most people want larger pool →	Wading pool needs improvement, and probably better location →	New wading pool relocated adjacent to recreation center
play	Playgrounds are disliked due to equipment quality Desire for more "pick-up" games like 4-square, ping pong →	Play areas should not be reduced in size →	New traditional play areas consolidated and relocated nearer the recreation center
athletics	Multi-use diamonds are liked Suggestion that more field sports are played, like soccer →	Support for reduction of diamonds to create more field space →	Removal of a total of two diamonds to create more multi-use field space Additional new multi-use field south of tennis courts
courts	Basketball court universally loved, though location sometimes a concern → Tennis courts in very poor condition, but desire for them exists	Support for increasing basketball → Significant support for refurbishing tennis, but 4 courts, as existing	Basketball courts relocated within park: 2 full-court and 1 half-court Four tennis courts retained in existing location and improved
winter	no comments →	Support for pond to address water issues and provide skating →	Creation of new pond to manage drainage issue at southern end of park, with possibility of skating in winter
landscape	Desire for reforestation →	Support for pond to address water issues and provide skating → Expand natural areas amongst trails	Retain open forested area in southern portion of park, enhanced with flowering and fruiting trees

PROCESSES



OPERATIONS ESTIMATE

FOLWELL			
FACILITIES	Total Per Unit Operations Cost	△ Qty	△ Cost
Adventure/Climbing Play	\$ 7,500	1	\$ 7,500
Full Court Basketball	\$ 1,500	1	\$ 1,500
Half Court Basketball	\$ 1,000	1	\$ 1,000
Skating Rink	\$ 30,000	1	\$ 30,000
All-wheel Park	\$ 7,500	1	\$ 7,500
Amphitheater	\$ 1,500	1	\$ 1,500
Restroom/ Storage Building	\$ 20,000	1	\$ 20,000
Urban Agriculture	\$ 15,000	1	\$ 15,000
Difference			\$ 84,000

COST ESTIMATE

Park Name	Asset Type	Project	2019 ESTIMATED COST/PROJECT	NOTES
Folwell	Aquatics	Wading Pool, incl. demolition of existing wading pool	\$ 854,268	
Folwell	Play	Traditional Play Structure in new container	\$ 806,809	
Folwell	Athletics	Athletic Field renovation, east: 3 multi-use diamonds and multi-use field space	\$ 2,059,736	
Folwell	Athletics	Athletic Field renovation, west: 1 multi-use field, diamond decommissioned	\$ 180,346	
Folwell	Athletics	New athletic field, south: 1 multi-use field	\$ 180,346	
Folwell	Courts	Tennis Court (4)	\$ 493,577	
Folwell	Courts	Basketball Court (2 full court, 1 half court)	\$ 322,724	
Folwell	Landscape	Naturalized areas	\$ 213,567	
Folwell	Landscape	Reorganziation of existing parking lot	\$ 426,153	
Folwell	Landscape	Wetland restoration	\$ 85,205	
Folwell	Other	Potential building expansion	\$ -	NSAMP vision is for single additional gym; will be considered and cost estimated further by RecQuest.
Folwell	Other	Renovate walking paths	\$ 1,731,317	
Folwell	Other	New storage building near tennis courts	\$ 227,805	
Folwell	Other	All-wheel park	\$ 949,187	
Folwell	Other	Miscl. signs, trees, furniture	\$ 170,621	
Folwell	TOTAL		\$ 8,701,660	