

BRYN MAWR PARK



LOCATION AND HISTORY

Bryn Mawr Meadows Park is located just north of I-394 in its namesake neighborhood. It is a large park with many athletic fields and diamonds. Bryn Mawr takes its name from John Oswald's farm, which once occupied that region of the city. Bryn Mawr means "great hill" in Welsh. As early as the 1860s, Oswald grew tobacco on his farm and also produced fruit wines there. Oswald was a commissioner on the first park board created by the legislature in 1883. In 1910 Oswald's heir offered to sell part of Oswald's estate to the park board, but Theodore Wirth's assessment of the property at the time was that it did not offer any "special advantage" except as part of a parkway to connect The Parade and Loring Park to Glenwood (Wirth) Park through Bassett's Creek Valley. He stated that compared with other needs in the park system it was of "little importance." Nevertheless, in 1911 the park board purchased 39 acres (leaving out the far western end that would have connected Bryn Mawr to Glenwood Park) without a promise to improve the land. The cost of the purchase was assessed on property in the neighborhood.

The first suggestions for improvement of the land were made in 1915 when Wirth recommended converting the land into an equestrian center, complete with horse-riding park and polo grounds. The park board did build a baseball field in 1922, but never moved ahead with the equestrian center. In 1929 Wirth presented a plan

to improve the 39 acres of "almost useless" land. The plan included the improvement of Bassett's Creek from Glenwood to Bryn Mawr. The Bassett's Creek Valley land was acquired in 1934.

The first building constructed at Bryn Mawr was a combined toilet building and storage shed to serve the athletic fields in 1953. In addition about 7,000 yards of clay were removed from the playing field areas and replaced with a good grade of black fill. A small part of Bryn Mawr was lost to freeway construction in 1966, but freeways ultimately resulted in the enlargement of the park. Seven athletic fields at The Parade were lost due to freeway expansion and the park board replaced some of that loss by expanding Bryn Mawr and building more playing fields there. Important renovations were made to Bryn Mawr's playing fields in 1992. Bryn Mawr was connected to the Luce Line bicycle trail in 2005, which connected paths from Wirth Park with the Cedar Lake Trail and links to downtown Minneapolis.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND CHARACTER

Bryn Mawr Park today is bounded by active rail lines on the north and southeast, the freeway to the south, and Morgan Avenue to the west. It is one of the city's primary athletic complexes, along with Northeast, Bossen Field, Lake Nokomis, and Nieman. As such, it is home to 13 ball diamonds of varying quality, lighting, and sizes. Most are arranged so their outfields overlap, so not all can be utilized at once. Several

soccer fields can also be found here, and cricket is avidly played—though the pitches overlap ball diamonds, paths, and trees. Batting cages used by cricket players are located in the northeastern portion of the park. A large parking lot adjacent to Morgan and Laurel serves the entire site, but parking spills out onto surrounding streets.

Near the center of the park is a grouping of more neighborhood oriented facilities: wading pool, play ground, and basketball and tennis courts. A restroom and storage building in this area also serves as a warming house for the significant broomball program at this park. In winter, the lighted ball diamonds near the warming room are flooded for broomball rinks.

Trails wind throughout the park, but it is difficult to make interconnected walking loops. The Luce Line passes through the northern portion of the park and connects to an overpass of the railroad, which then connects to the Cedar Lake Trail. Another connection to the Cedar Lake Trail (albeit rather convoluted) passes under I-394, up a helix ramp and along the freeway, then down to the trail.

A variety of trees are scattered throughout the park, some large, though overall the park is an open field. A more forested hillside is found in the eastern end of the park, where it comes to a point between railroads. In general, the park tends to be wet, and some fields are hard to keep from getting regularly soggy. For this reason and to improve Bassett's Creek water quality, the Bassett's Creek Watershed Management

Commission is collaborating with MPRB and the City of Minneapolis on a feasibility study for a major stormwater management facility in the park. That study took place in concert with the NSAMP planning effort, to ensure environmental and recreational goals are aligned.

THE PROPOSED DESIGN

The design for Bryn Mawr seeks to recalibrate the balance between neighborhood amenities and city-wide athletic facilities. This is a profound change for the park, and will undoubtedly take place over many years and implementation phases. The primary change is to reduce the number but improve the quality of ball diamonds in the park. Six diamonds are arranged at the outer edge of the park, with outfields facing the railroad and freeway. The diamonds have outfields that do not overlap, and, in order to accommodate the current softball program at the park, at least four of them are lit. In the outfields are full-size soccer fields. A new cricket pitch overlaps the northernmost diamond, but its entire extent is free of ball infields, trees, and pathways. By moving these fields to the outer edge of the park, they will have a reduced impact on neighbors.

On the inner half of the park (nearer Morgan), a new arrangement of neighborhood focused amenities will both buffer the athletics from the neighborhood and provide enhanced options for non-athletic park use. These amenities center around a large grassy oval open for picnicking and impromptu play. A new and unique park

building curves around the eastern edge of the oval. This small glassy conservatory-like building will provide for extended year-round use of the park and offer a unique facility in the area. It also integrates closely with other park amenities, and allows for a phased approach to implementation. A new play area is located within the building footprint and could be built prior to the building construction. At the other end of the building, a basketball court could also be at first outdoors and then enclosed. In between, a vegetated, open area creates a lush atmosphere in winter for relaxing, play, reading, or indoor winter picnicking. It will also serve as the warming house for broomball and expanded free skating on the oval, which is flooded and lit in winter. At the play end of the building is an outdoor nature play area with water, possibly with spray jets and misters and running rivulets. Perhaps a large garage door at that end of the building could connect indoor and outdoor in summer. Perhaps the building is built in stages. Perhaps everything happens at once, creating a truly one-of-a-kind amenity for the park system. This conservatory is one of the four “big moves” identified in this plan and as such can only be implemented through significant collaboration, including financial. This new building cannot be implemented with MPRB funding alone, but will need investment from other community or private interests. It is for this reason that the play area and basketball court, which are critical elements of the park, can be built in place regardless of building implementation.

The 125+ stall parking lot is relocated farther into the park, between the athletic fields and conservatory. This location moves this heavy use away from adjacent neighbors, while still allowing visibility from Morgan Avenue. Access to the park remains at the intersection of Morgan and Laurel, though MPRB will take a more active role in traffic calming and management activities in the neighborhood.

A major stormwater feature including narrow channels and larger open ponds, all with naturalized edges, winds through the park between the conservatory and parking lot and near Morgan Avenue. This feature helps keep fields dry and improves water quality entering Bassett's Creek. By surrounding the conservatory, it contributes to a seamless indoor-outdoor experience in both summer and winter. The remainder of the non-sport area includes open air picnic shelters, paths through groves of trees, and naturalized landscapes.

Though the Luce Line no longer passes through the park, trails at the northern end of Bryn Mawr still connect to Bassett's Creek Park and on to Wirth Park. New trails connect throughout the park, creating a variety of walking loops of varying distances. Fitness stations make a training circuit through the park. Mountain bike training areas in the northern and eastern forested sections of the park are another unique draw to the park. The intent of these areas is to provide beginner options for learning the sport, and areas to practice tricks and stunts. These new bike play areas connect to Wirth Park's

many mountain biking options via the Luce Line Trail.

By shifting the balance between athletics and other activities in the park, Bryn Mawr will actually be used more frequently. With the reduction in ball diamonds, the current programs can still be accomplished—on higher quality facilities—while allowing space for exciting new developments. Parking and access may remain an issue without a perfect solution, but it is important to recognize that most Minneapolis parks—even athletic fields—are located within neighborhoods and surrounded by low-density residential areas. The proposed design mitigates some impact and encourages greater neighborhood use by moving athletics farther into the park and creating green buffers with neighborhood benefit.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARKS

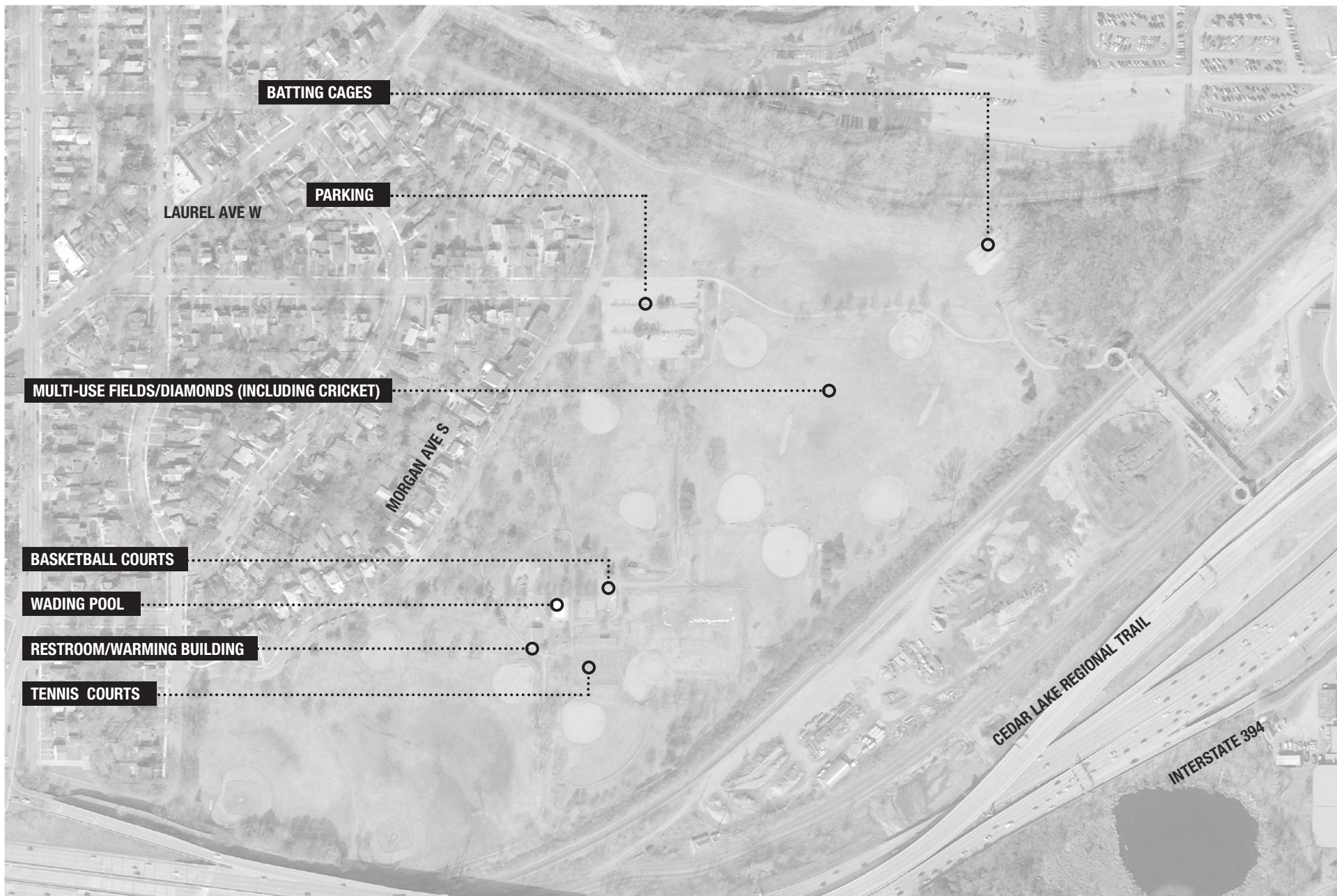
Though the Luce Line Trail is proposed to no longer pass through Bryn Mawr, a proposed trail connection from the northern corner of the park links to that trail, which travels westward through Bassett's Creek Valley to Wirth Park. City of Minneapolis proposed bikeway facilities on Cedar Lake Road connect northeasterly to Harrison Park and the trails along Van White Boulevard and southwesterly to Wirth Park via the I-394 frontage road.

KNOWN LAND USE AND COORDINATION ISSUES

Coordination with City of Minneapolis is necessary to implement safety improvements and traffic calming on Laurel Avenue.

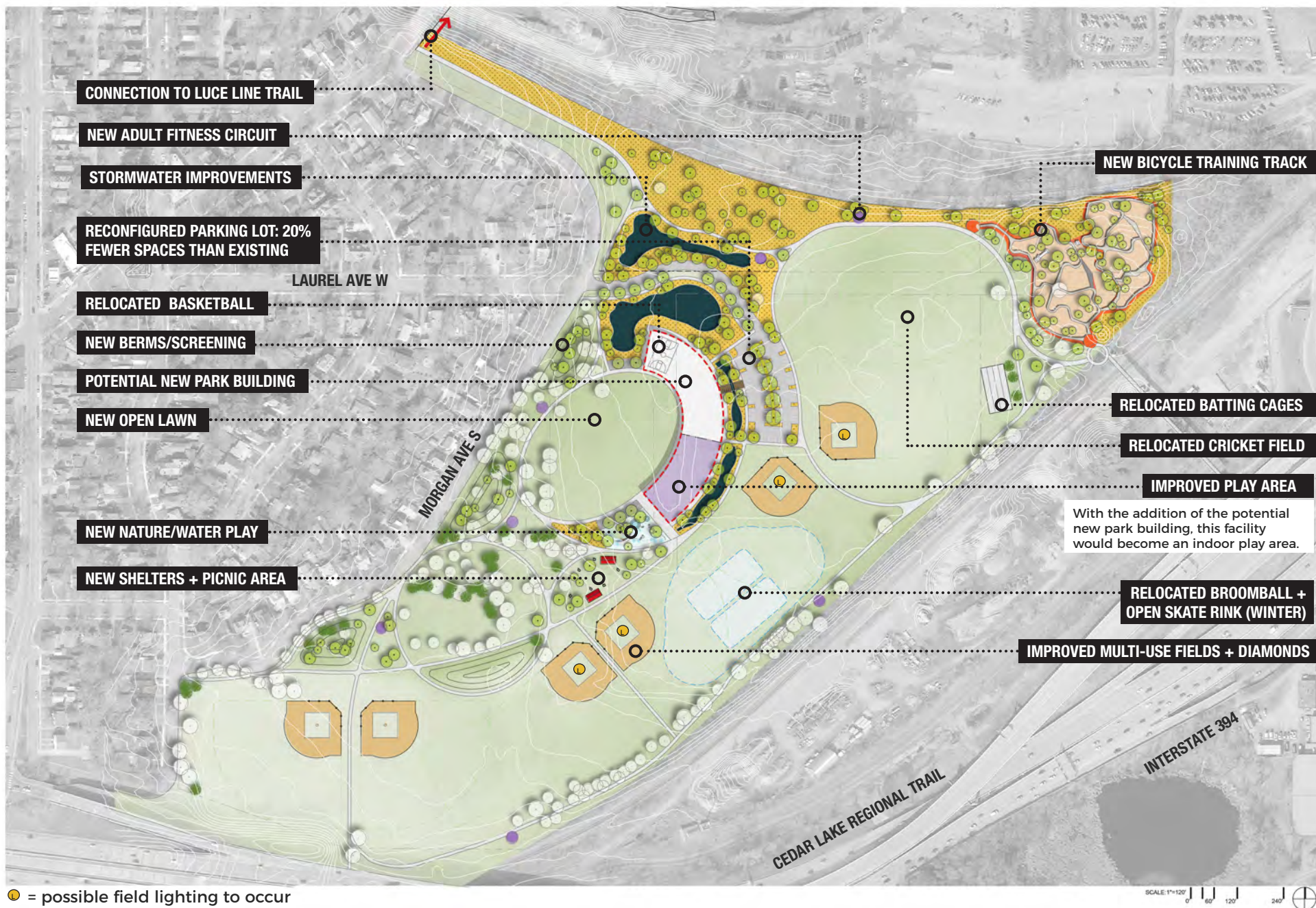
OPERATIONS ESTIMATE

BRYN MAWR				
FACILITIES	Total Per Unit Operations Cost	△ Qty	△ Cost	
Wading Pool	\$ 15,000	-1	\$ (15,000)	
Splash Pad	\$ 35,000	1	\$ 35,000	
Nature Play	\$ 7,500	1	\$ 7,500	
Outdoor Fitness	\$ 2,500	1	\$ 2,500	
Multi-use Diamond	\$ 20,000	-7	\$ (140,000)	
Tennis Court	\$ 1,500	-2	\$ (3,000)	
Half Court Basketball	\$ 1,000	-1	\$ (1,000)	
Skating Rink	\$ 30,000	1	\$ 30,000	
Bicycle Facility/Training Track	\$ 5,000	2	\$ 10,000	
Restroom/Storage Building	\$ 20,000	1	\$ 20,000	
Group Shelter	\$ 4,000	2	\$ 8,000	
Difference			\$ (46,000)	



EXISTING CONDITIONS: BRYN MAWR PARK





PROPOSED PLAN: BRYN MAWR 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	Wading pool is in poor condition and needs upgrade →	Water play areas need shade Splash pad preferred to wading pool →	New water play / nature play area in community zone near building
play	Play areas in poor condition →	Support for play structure with climbing wall →	New water play / nature play area in community zone near building New play area with climbing within possible conservatory building (indoor year-round play)
athletics	Community and work group generally field there are too many ball diamonds in the park Ball diamonds are in poor condition, though they are important for recreational leagues → Need for improved facilities for field sports like soccer and cricket	Community tended to prefer concept with fewer ball diamonds Baseball fields (at western end) are not used, consider removing them → Need more soccer and multi-use fields, ideally with lighting Support for one large field to accommodate Australian rules football and cricket	Number of ball diamonds reduced to 6 from 13: elimination of three baseball, no overlapping outfields on 6 diamonds, lighting on at least 4 diamonds, all diamonds located along I-394 side of site Large and youth soccer fields overlap softball outfields, allowing for lighted fields New large-scale multi-use field (cricket and Australian football)
courts	no comments →	Need basketball hoops →	New basketball court located adjacent to or inside conservatory building
winter	Desire for general skating for the community in addition to broomball rinks →	no comments →	Broomball and skating included in outfields of new ball diamonds, with shared lighting

PROCESSES

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landscape	<p>Desire for more varied natural environment, including groves, forests, wetlands, and grasslands, to enhance character of park</p>	<p>Water feature generally supported, along with other naturalized areas and tree plantings</p> <p>Maintain large open green area for unprogrammed play (neighborhood-focused)</p>	<p>New stormwater wetland and ponds incorporated into design as natural habitat and to help keep fields dry</p> <p>Existing forested area near Morgan retained, new trees planted throughout park</p> <p>New large open oval near neighborhood, and associated picnic lawn with shelters</p>
other	<p>Interest in winter use indoor facility, like a conservatory: something unique for this park</p> <p>Desire for more walking trail loops throughout park</p> <p>Significant concern about parking, traffic, and after-hours adult use of park</p>	<p>General support for a conservatory-like building, once understood by the community</p> <p>Concern about placement of conservatory building in viewshed of neighbors</p> <p>Like walking path around outside of diamonds</p> <p>Opposition to additional parking at western end of park</p> <p>Remaining concern about parking access from Morgan/Laurel, including suggestions to move entrance to Van White or directly off Cedar Lake Road</p> <p>Support for the bike park and mountain bike trails</p>	<p>New glassy conservatory-like building to serve as indoor play area, seating/gathering area among tropical gardens, and warming/storage area for winter and summer sports</p> <p>Extensive walking loops throughout park</p> <p>Parking moved farther into interior of park and shielded from neighbors by building and natural areas with entrance retained off Morgan/Laurel. MPRB commitment to work more proactively with City around traffic calming and pedestrian enhancement on Laurel.</p> <p>New mountain bike trails and training area in eastern woods</p>

COST ESTIMATE

Park Name	Asset Type	Project	2019 ESTIMATED COST/PROJECT	NOTES
Bryn Mawr	Play	Nature Play area with some water (mini splash pad)	\$ 806,809	
Bryn Mawr	Play	Traditional Play Structure in new container (possibly indoor, if building implemented)	\$ 806,809	
Bryn Mawr	Athletics	Athletic Field renovation: 6 premier diamonds (at least 4 lit) with fields in outfield, additional multi-use field space for cricket	\$ 5,278,694	
Bryn Mawr	Courts	Basketball Court (1) (possibly indoor if building implemented)	\$ 123,394	
Bryn Mawr	Landscape	Naturalized areas	\$ 249,636	
Bryn Mawr	Landscape	Stormwater management water feature	\$ -	To be implemented by Bassett's Creek Watershed
Bryn Mawr	Landscape	New parking lot	\$ 923,183	
Bryn Mawr	Landscape	Open Lawn, high quality	\$ 631,209	
Bryn Mawr	Other	Adult Fitness Stations	\$ 47,459	
Bryn Mawr	Other	Conservatory-like Building	\$ -	Final building design and size not determined under NSAMP; will require collaboration for implementation
Bryn Mawr	Other	Group picnic shelters	\$ 208,821	
Bryn Mawr	Other	New walking paths	\$ 2,095,805	
Bryn Mawr	Other	Bicycle Training Track (2)	\$ 949,187	
Bryn Mawr	Other	Miscl. signs, trees, furniture	\$ 223,436	
Bryn Mawr	TOTAL		\$ 12,344,444	