

A photograph of a frozen lake at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange glow and a long, shimmering reflection on the ice. Bare tree branches frame the top and sides of the image. The text is overlaid in the lower half.

THE MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD PLAN FOR CEDAR LAKE AND LAKE OF THE ISLES

A PORTION OF THE MINNEAPOLIS CHAIN OF LAKES REGIONAL PARK

DRAFT - JANUARY 2023

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board is grateful to the many community members, advisory committee members, organizations, consultants, MPRB staff, and partner agency staff who contributed to this park plan.

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INDIGENOUS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We collectively acknowledge that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board system is located on the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous people. This land holds great historical, spiritual, and personal significance for its original stewards, the Native nations and peoples of this region.

We also acknowledge that restrictive covenants were used to deny Black, Indigenous, Asian and in some cases Jewish individuals access to property in surrounding neighborhoods. This had an impact on who was and was not officially welcome in this area.

Cedar-Isles Plan Native land acknowledgment co-created by MPRB project staff and CAC members.



Dock at Lake of the Isles, TEN x TEN

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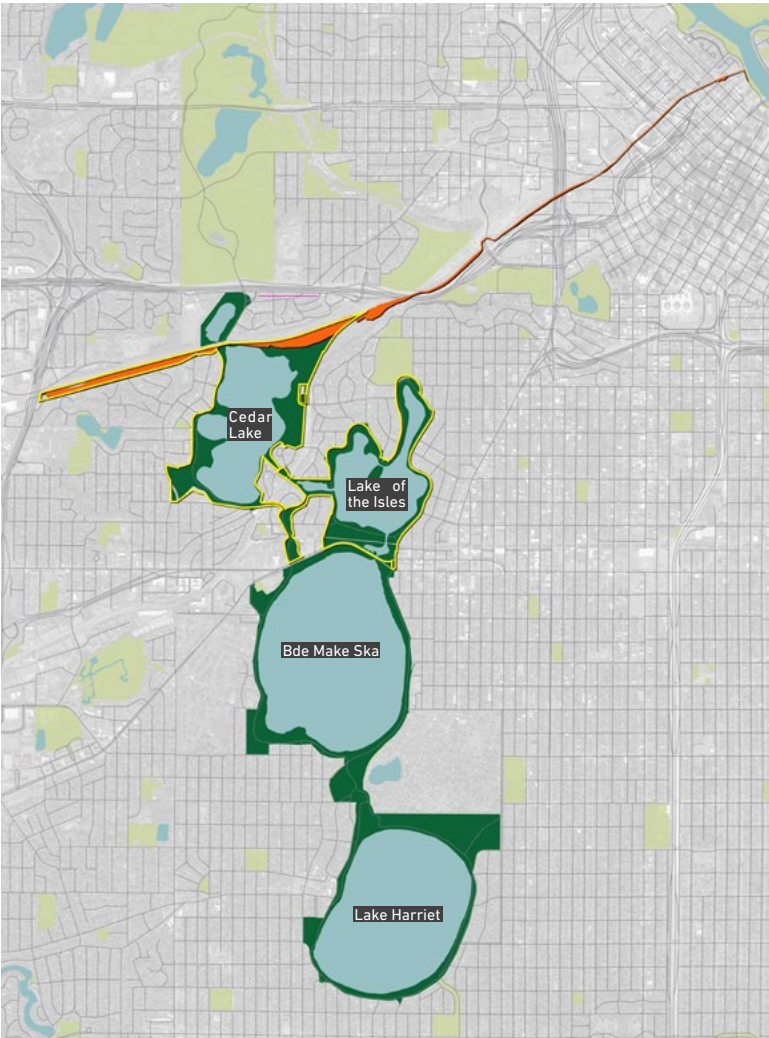
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

- 1.1 OVERVIEW
- 1.2 PLANNING FRAMEWORK
- 1.3 ABOUT THIS PLAN
- 1.4 RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

1.1 OVERVIEW

Cedar Lake, Lake of the Isles, Dean Parkway, the Kenilworth Channel, and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail are destinations to millions of local and regional of visitors each year. People who visit these parks enjoy a multitude of year-round activities that includes walking, biking, swimming, fishing, canoe/kayaking, cross-country skiing, ice skating, to name a few. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board spent over three years creating a community-vetted vision for this area of parkland to be implemented over the next 20 to 30 years.



- LEGEND
- Cedar Lake Regional Trail
 - The Cedar-Isles Plan Area
 - Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park

Figure 1.1: The Cedar-Isles Plan Area within the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park

1.2 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) oversees neighborhood and regional parks in the City of Minneapolis. MPRB’s eighteen regional parks and trails received and estimated 24.2 million visits in 2021 according to Metropolitan Council Annual Use Estimate; its highest visitation ever. Parks range from local neighborhood play lots to large natural areas and includes the 55-mile Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway. MPRB provides administration, planning, development, maintenance, and protection for parks and recreational facilities in the system. Environmental, recreational, and other programs and services are provided for park users of all ages and abilities.

Established in 1883, MPRB is the governing agency responsible for improving, operating, and maintaining Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail. The nine-member Board of Commissioners is an independently elected body responsible for maintaining and developing the Minneapolis Park system to meet the needs of Minneapolis community members. Every four years, commissioners are elected to this Board: one from each of the six park districts within the city and three that serve at-large. This unique structure allows independent decision-making so the MPRB can efficiently oversee a diverse system of land and water.

REGIONAL PARK PLANNING

There are two agencies involved in approving regional park plans; they are the Metropolitan Council and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The Metropolitan Council guides regional parks in the seven-county Twin Cities area. These regional parks have many purposes, from preserving green space and wildlife habitat to providing a wide range of natural resource-based recreational opportunities. They are significant to their local and regional

communities. As a means of managing regional parks, the Regional Parks and Open Space System was established in 1974. It was created in response to state legislation and is supported by the Metropolitan Council in partnership with ten implementing agencies representing cities, counties, and special park districts who operate regional parks and trails.

The regional parks are funded in large part by the State of Minnesota and the Metropolitan Council. They are considered the state parks of the metropolitan region, and as such are meant to be enjoyed by everyone: people that live in the adjacent neighborhoods, people who live in Minneapolis and adjacent cities, and people visiting from outside of the region. As dictated by Minnesota Statute 473.313, the Metropolitan Council requires a plan to be developed and updated regularly for each regional park, park reserve, trail, and special recreation feature in the seven-county Metro Area.

The MPRB is the implementing agency for Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park and oversees its everyday operation and management. As the implementing agency, the MPRB is therefore responsible for developing this plan for this park. Plan approval is necessary to be eligible for regional parks system capital funding for land acquisition and development, as well as planning, funding, and advocacy support from the Metropolitan Council. The Brownie Lake Plan was adopted by the MPRB in 2012 and the Bde Maka Ska-Harriet Master Plan was completed and adopted by MPRB Commissioners and the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) in 2017. There have been several previous planning processes completed for portions of parkland within the project area, however, this will be the first officially adopted plan for the Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles area.

1.3 ABOUT THIS PLAN

PLAN PURPOSE

Park planning plays a critical role in the Park Board’s mission. Objectives of a park plan include the following:

- Set a vision to guide long-term development and improvements to a park or group of parks,
- Guide stewardship and help ensure that park features and amenities reflect the needs of the communities they serve,
- Help ensure long-term financial and ecological sustainability,
- Involve extensive engagement with individual and group stakeholders, other community partners and governmental entities, and
- Subject to review and comment by the public, as well as public hearings and approval by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) of Commissioners.

The completed park plan will direct policy and design implementation for the park land around both lakes for the next 20+ years.

RENAMING OF THE “MASTER” PLAN

Over the last few years, universities, organizations, and government institutions have begun to grapple with their role in institutional and systemic racism. One facet of this is the power of language. The term “master”, which is often defined as commanding control or being eminently skilled, has been identified as a word to remove in certain contexts due to its connection with the history of masters and slavery in the United States¹. As the MPRB takes initial steps to acknowledge its role in systemic racism, staff will no longer use the term “master” when referring to MPRB planning processes and final plan documents. This current plan is titled The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Plan for Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles.



Sunset at Cedar Lake, MPRB

¹ Christian Science Monitor, June 2021. “As English evolves, so too does the word ‘master’

STUDY AREA

The Cedar-Isles plan includes Cedar Lake and the surrounding parkland, Lake of the Isles and the surrounding parkland, Dean Parkway, the Kenilworth Channel that connects both lakes, and a portion of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail beginning at Highway 100 in Saint Louis Park and running east to where the trail connects to the Kenilworth Regional Trail (see Figure 1.3).

WATER QUALITY FOCUS

Water quality was consistently identified as a top theme and priority by the public throughout the planning process. During the spring of 2022 additional water quality specific CAC meetings were added to the schedule in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the health of the lakes and to establish robust goals. The final recommendations and plan were developed through the lens of addressing and improving water quality within the project area.

TIMELINE

Park planning processes generally take 18-24 months to complete. Due to challenges outside of the project’s control, this plan process

took 36+ months with the longest timeline extension happening in 2020 to respond to statewide COVID-19 shutdowns (see Figure 1.2).

IMPACT FROM GLOBAL ISSUES

The Cedar-Isles planning process officially launched in December 2019, a few months before the Minnesota statewide COVID-19 shutdowns. The COVID-19 shutdowns, alongside the murder of George Floyd and racial reckoning that followed in May 2020, completely upended social norms and protocols throughout the city of Minneapolis and across the country. Due to these realities, MPRB staff adapted, delayed, and extended original timelines to better respond to current situations. These delays had their own impact, both positively and negatively, on who we were able to engage throughout the planning process.

The Cedar-Isles Community Advisory Committee (CAC) gave guidance to proceed forward virtually in the Fall 2020 and MPRB staff ultimately began the plan process virtually, which included all community engagement and meetings.

As COVID-19 guidelines continued to shift in 2021 and 2022, MPRB began to offer a combination of virtual, outdoor in-person, and eventually indoor in-person meetings and engagement to account for as many people’s comfort levels and safety concerns as possible.

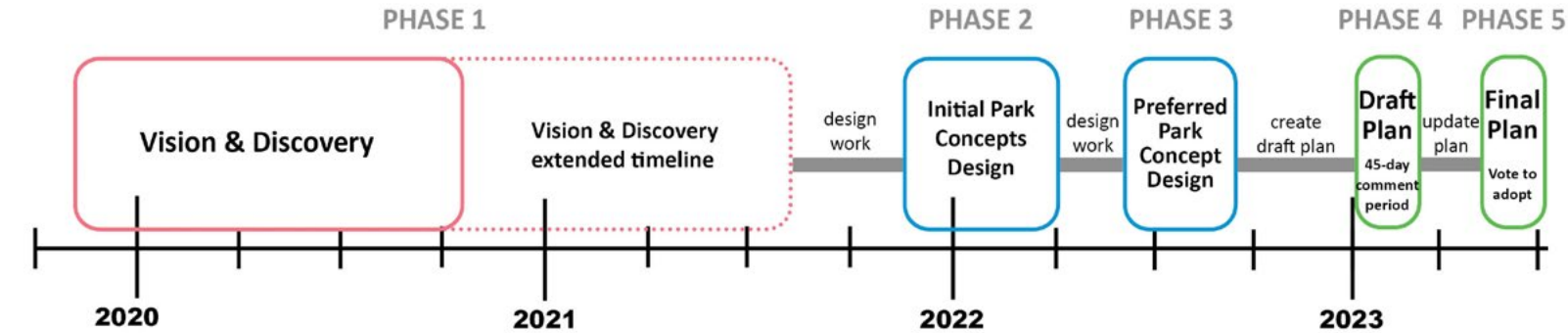
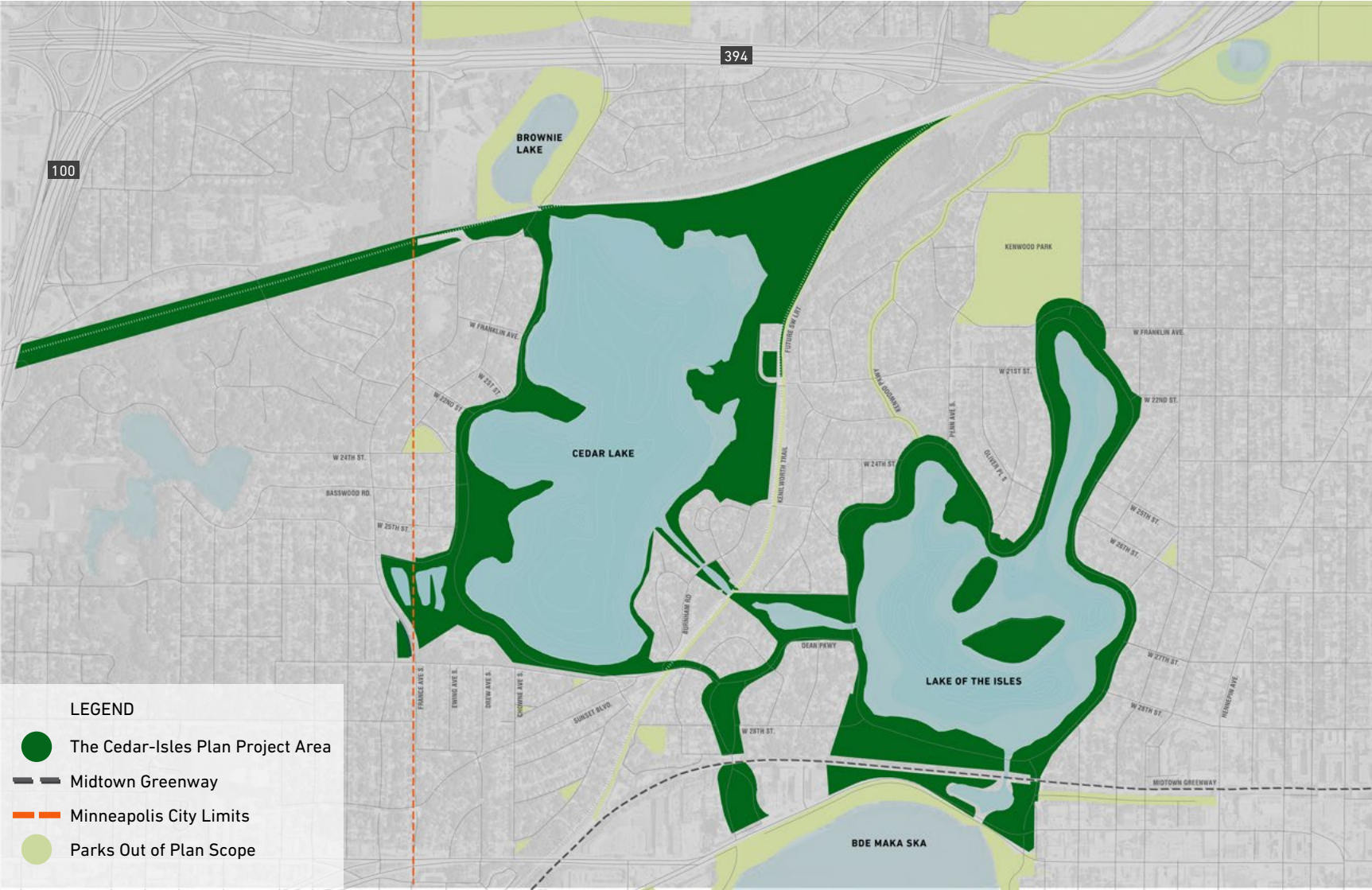


Figure 1.2: Timeline of plan process

Figure 1.3: The Cedar-Isles Plan Project Area



1.4 RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

MPRB PLANNING EFFORTS

GRAND ROUNDS CANAL SYSTEM AND LAKE OF THE ISLES HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN (IN PROCESS)

This document sets policy direction for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board from 2021 through 2036. It includes an updated mission, vision, and values along with subsequent goals and strategies.

SOUTHWEST SERVICE AREA MASTER PLAN (2020)

A 20 to 30-year vision for the neighborhood parks located south of I-394 and west of I-35W that will guide park improvements, provides cost estimates for improvements, and includes operations and maintenance cost estimates. A number of the parks in the planning document are in the neighborhoods adjacent to the project area for this park plan.

PARKS FOR ALL: MPRB COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2021-2036 (2021)

This document sets policy direction for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board from 2021 through 2036. It includes an updated mission, vision, and values along with subsequent goals and strategies.

NATURAL AREAS MANAGEMENT PLAN PHASES 1 & 2 (2017 & 2021)

Phase 1 identifies a preliminary inventory and definition of plant communities throughout the 2,800+ acres of natural areas within the MPRB system. Phase 2 lays out methods and strategies to manage natural areas and the resources needed to accomplish this.

ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM PLAN (2020)

A plan that provides a framework for how environmental considerations can be addressed in ongoing planning efforts across the MPRB system and how MPRB can partner with other local, regional, and statewide organizations to achieve shared environmental goals.

SOUTHWEST SERVICE AREA MASTER PLAN (2020)

A 20 to 30-year vision for the neighborhood parks located south of I-394 and west of I-35W that will guide park improvements, provides cost estimates for improvements, and includes operations and maintenance cost estimates. A number of the parks in the planning document are in the neighborhoods adjacent to the project area for this park plan.

OTHER CURRENT PLANS OF NOTE

- Southwest Lightrail (SWLRT) Planning Process (currently underway)
- City of Minneapolis Transportation Action Plan (2020)
- Minneapolis 2040 (2018)
- The 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan (2018)
- Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Watershed Management Plan (2018)
- Bde Maka Ska-Harriet Master Plan (2017)
- Brownie Lake Plan (2012)
-

Figure 1.4: Image created for CAC Meeting #4 depicting how other MPRB plans inform the Cedar-Isles Plan

