

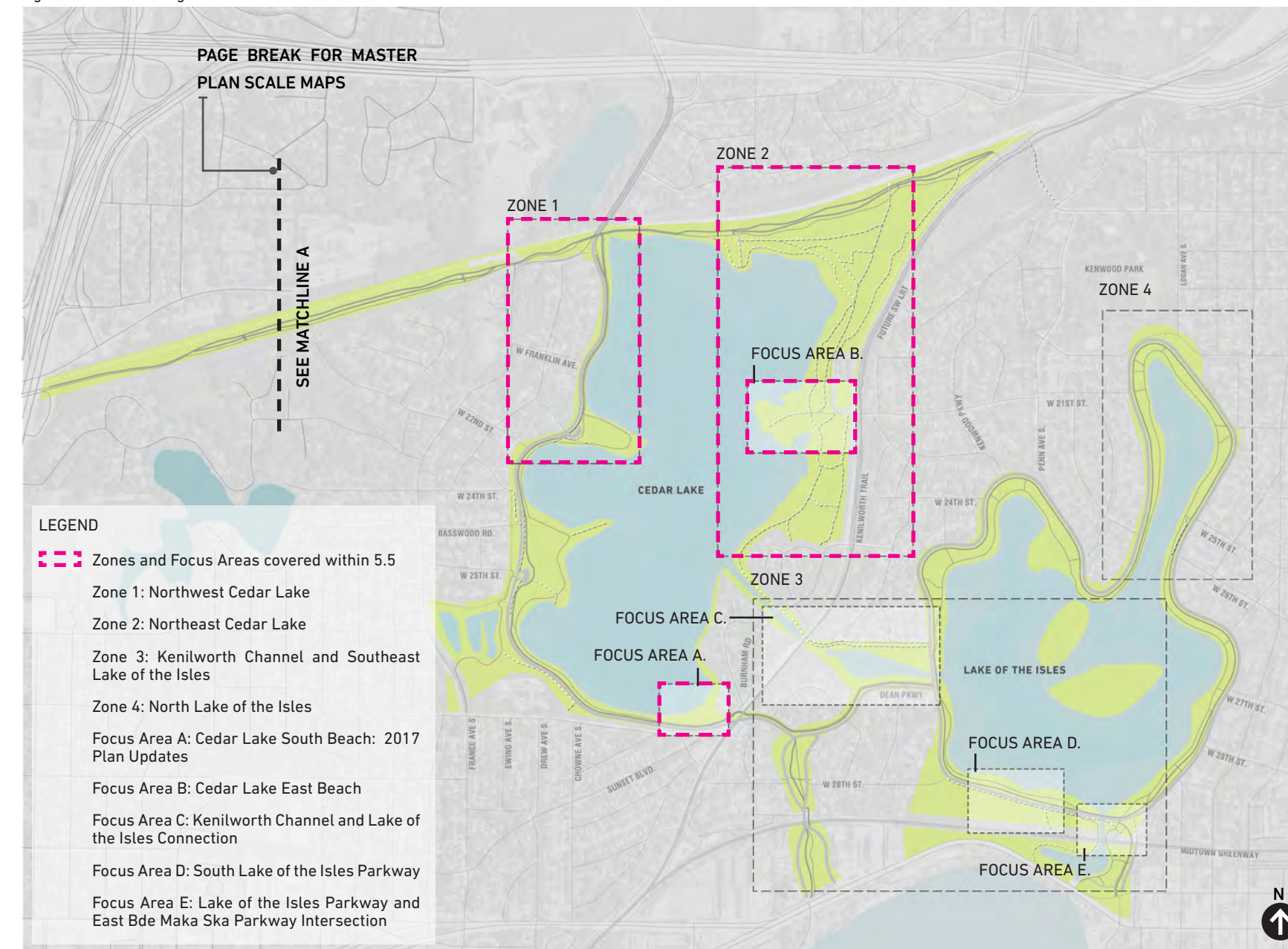
5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CEDAR LAKE

A place of respite within the city, Cedar Lake is known for its “wildness” and unique park features, including informal birding areas, beaches that are nestled away within a forest setting, and a wide array of creative programming and stewardship. The vision at Cedar Lake is to retain and preserve what is valued about the area while enhancing ecological, cultural, and social connections for both humans and wildlife.

OVERVIEW

This section provides a detailed look at improvements planned for Cedar Lake. Improvement projects described within the zones and focus areas include water quality, natural resources, access and circulation, and amenities.

Figure 5.12: Plan Enlargements Framework



CEDAR LAKE

ZONE 1: NORTHWEST CEDAR LAKE

Zone 1 includes the northwest section of Cedar Lake up to the tunnel to Brownie Lake, Cedar Lake Parkway and trails, a portion of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail with walking and biking trails and established prairie, and Cedar Lake Point Beach with surrounding forest and amenities.

WATER QUALITY

Within Zone 1, there are two formal and well-used water access locations: the small dock at the southwest corner of Cedar Lake Point Beach and the formalized boat launch south of the Cedar Lake Point Beach parking lot. Ad hoc trails connect to several informal access points used for swimming, launching watercraft, and fishing that dot the shoreline around the Cedar Lake Point Beach peninsula and the north and northwest shores of Cedar Lake. The plan proposes retaining both formal water access locations and formalizing additional water access points at the most popular locations.

The existing shoreline within Zone 1 generally has a steep grade, especially along the west side of the lake, and hosts unmanaged shrubs, trees, and plants. The north side of the lake includes a number of large boulders and rocks near the shoreline which may be from railroad construction during the 1880s. The plan enhances the shoreline buffer and adds a littoral edge to help stabilize the slopes and create a filter against stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces.

Due to the narrow width of parkland available to treat stormwater coming from Cedar Lake Parkway, an underground stormwater treatment has been proposed for a section of the parkway to capture stormwater from the parkway and adjacent parking lot. A new rain garden is also planned on the east side of the parking lot to filter additional water before entering the lake. Underground stormwater treatment should be constructed during the next parkway reconstruction project.



People at Cedar Lake Point Beach



Informal water access near Cedar Lake Point Beach parking lot

NATURAL RESOURCES

The forest in Zone 1 consists of many tree species, including ash, elm, and cottonwood. The understory includes invasive species such as buckthorn and non-native mulberry. The Cedar Lake Point Beach area consists of sand and turf, with areas on the south side of the beach that are eroded without vegetation. Volunteers actively manage much of the forest in this area, removing invasive species and planting native seeds, which adds to the ever-increasing forest health and visibility within the understory of the tree canopy.

The plan proposes mesic oak forest restoration of the forest areas in this location, including invasive species removal and planting trees, shrubs, and plants that will gradually bring the forest ecological community closer to a mesic oak forest. The plan also proposes maintaining and restoring the beach and turf areas that are regularly used by park visitors.

Maintained pockets of prairie along the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail are well established and will be retained and enhanced. The prairie should continue to be monitored and seeded to benefit an expanded list of animals and insects.

CIRCULATION AND ACCESS

Cedar Lake Parkway provides both recreational and commuter access for vehicles and bicyclists; it is one of the main routes to connect I-394 south to the Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood and adjacent communities, to the Grand Rounds, and Theodore Wirth Regional Park. The current walking and biking trails that run alongside Cedar Lake Parkway are narrow and are not typical MPRB trail widths. This is due to the limited available parkland for the trails and two-way parkway between adjacent properties and the steep slope along Cedar Lake. The intersection at Cedar Lake Road and

Cedar Lake Parkway serves as an important connection between the Cedar Lake Regional Trail (CLRT) and Cedar Lake for bicyclists and walkers. On the west side of the intersection, there are a set of stairs and sidewalk ramp to CLRT and on the east side is a split section of walking and biking trails leading up to the intersection and down to the underside of the bridge and trail. The trails are also well-used for dog walking, jogging, and leisure walking. During engagement, MPRB heard concern for the narrowness of these trails and a desire to widen them, however, there was also concern about how to accomplish this due to the narrow terrain and hillside. Proposed solutions such as, narrowing the parkway width, changing the parkway from two-way to one way, or building a boardwalk received mixed reactions from the community.

Ultimately, the CAC recommended maintaining two-way vehicle access on Cedar Lake Parkway and widening the existing bicycle and pedestrian paths from West 21st Street to Cedar Lake Road along the northwest edge of Cedar Lake to meet increased user demand and improve safety. The trail should be widened using the least intrusive methods possible and reach a minimum of 8 feet for the two-way bicycle path and 6 feet for the pedestrian path, with 10 feet and 8 feet respectively desired. Design strategies may include, but are not limited to, paving to the curb line, introducing retaining walls, or, least desirably, boardwalks. The best strategy(s) will be defined during a future detailed design process and should take all possible care in preserving trees. Enhanced intersection improvements are proposed at 21st St. and Cedar Lake Road, providing easy and safe pedestrian and bicycle access to parkland and helping to slow traffic. In conjunction with the recommended redesign of the bicycle and pedestrian trails, where space allows, the plan proposes two viewing spots to allow parks users to safely pause separately from walking, bicycling, and vehicle traffic. These viewing spots may include seating, trail bump outs, and interpretation and will provide improved movement along the rest of the trail.

The walking and bicycle trails run adjacent to the parkway until they arrive at the Cedar Lake Point Beach peninsula. At this location, the trails separate, with the bicycle trail continuing south adjacent to the parkway road, and the pedestrian trail running along the edge of the shoreline. The general location and separation of these trails continues south until reaching the Cedar Meadows wetland area, where the trails combine along the shore again. From the Cedar Lake Point Beach parking lot and Basswood Road, the topography creates a steep slope of separation between the walking trail and bicycle trail. Several eroded connections exist in the grass to create direct pedestrian access to amenities and trails, including an ad hoc trail alongside the bicycle trail and additional connections from the Cedar Lake Point Beach parking lot to the walking trail and informal water access point.

The plan maintains the existing walking and bicycling trails and formalizes the existing ad hoc trails from the parking lot down to the walking trail and water access point. It also adds a direct pedestrian trail along Cedar Lake Parkway from where the bicycle and walking trails split near the parking lot south to W 21st to ensure people who would like to walk along the parkway don't have to use the bicycle trail or walk in the grass. The plan adds a new soft surface trail along a portion of the parkland median between W 24th Street and Basswood Road and strategically places an enhanced intersection improvement at Basswood Road to help improve the connection between the Reserve Block 40 neighborhood park and Cedar Lake.

Parking in Zone 1 includes a paid parking lot at Cedar Lake Point Beach and street parking along the parkway between W 21st and W 22nd, which will be retained. Parking is not allowed along most of the parkway in this area due to the narrow width of parkland.

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Participants in open swim club



Ad hoc trail from Cedar Lake Point Beach parking lot to pedestrian trail. EOR

PROGRAM AND AMENITIES

The main programmed space within this zone is Cedar Lake Point Beach, one of three beaches at Cedar Lake. Cedar Lake Point Beach is a popular destination for park visitors to gather, swim, fish, put in/take out watercrafts, and many other activities. It is also one of two locations in the park system that hosts the annual Open Swim Club program where folks swim between Cedar Lake Point Beach and East Cedar Lake Beach. Today, amenities in this area include a canoe rack, picnic area, year-round portable restroom, and dock. The plan retains all these existing amenities.

The plan also proposes an enhanced welcome entry point at the intersection of Cedar Lake Parkway and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail, which is a hub for people traveling to and through the park system. The enhanced welcome entry point, which could include increased signage, wayfinding, or other amenities, will help orient visitors from the north to Cedar Lake and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail.



People at Cedar Lake Point Beach



Canoe rack at Cedar Lake Point Beach



Viewing Spot. Carver County



Cedar Lake Point Beach. MPRB



Formalized Water Access



Enhanced Welcome Entry Point

Figure 5.13: Zone 1 Northwest Cedar Lake



- LEGEND
- Canoe Rack
 - Dock
 - Parkway
 - Parking Lot
 - Paved Pedestrian Trail
 - Picnic Area
 - Portable Restroom
 - Beach Water Access
 - Paved Two-Way Bike Trail
- PROPOSED**
- Enhanced Intersection Improvements
 - Enhanced Prairie
 - Enhanced Welcome Entry Point
 - Expanded Littoral Edge
 - Formalized Water Access
 - Improved Shoreline Buffer
 - Mesic Oak Forest Restoration
 - Paved Pedestrian Trail
 - Rain Garden
 - Underground Parkway Stormwater Treatment
 - Viewing Spot
 - Widened Separated Bike and Pedestrian Trails

FOCUS AREA A: CEDAR LAKE SOUTH BEACH: 2017 PLAN UPDATES

Focus Area A includes Cedar Lake South Beach, one of three Cedar Lake beaches, located on the southeast corner of the lake. South Cedar Beach is heavily used and visited by neighbors and regional park visitors alike to swim, fish, relax, and picnic, especially in the warmer months. This beach is the most visible of the three at Cedar Lake and has a visual connection from the Cedar Lake Parkway and Sunset Blvd intersection and nearby walking and biking trails.

Between 2014-2017, MPRB went through an extensive planning process for South Cedar Beach that included community meetings, design charrettes, and a community advisory committee (CAC) who made final recommendations on the concept plan. This work was completed in partnership with the Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association. The concept plan was approved in 2017 by the MPRB Board of Commissioners and many of the proposed improvements have been implemented, including the visitor shelter, concrete landing and stairs, and formal vegetation. Informed by community engagement during the park planning process, a few modifications to the concept plan have been made, which are described below and shown on the graphic.

WATER QUALITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

South Cedar Lake Beach is nestled between lawns on either side. The western lawn is smaller in size and less used by park visitors; it transitions to a dense forest area and shoreline. The lawn on the eastern side of the beach is used as a formal gathering area and includes an area to picnic and a variety of trees, such as sugar maple, cottonwood, crab apple, cherry, and hackberry. As the lawn continues east, several large shrubs, many of them invasive, create a buffer that informally deters public use to additional open park space north of the lawn. The beach provides a formal water access

point for swimmers, people using watercrafts, and fishing.

An enhanced shoreline buffer is proposed for a portion of the western lawn along with an expansion of the littoral edge which will increase habitat and will also filter pollutants and reduce impact from large rain events. The plan also proposes removal of the shrub buffer so that once the shoreline is established, visitors will have a better view of the shoreline ecosystem from the beach area. Additionally, the plan proposes protecting and enhancing the tree canopy, maintaining the beach, and restoring the formal lawn to help reduce erosion on the slope down to the lake.

CIRCULATION AND ACCESS

Within the last several years, much of the proposed circulation improvements that were approved within the 2017 concept plan were implemented, including reconfiguring and widening the bicycle and pedestrian trails along Cedar Lake Parkway to accommodate increased foot and bike traffic. A pedestrian landing was constructed north of the trails, providing a space for people off the trail to rest, sit, relax, and view the water. New trees, shrubs, and plants were planted as part of this work, as well.

To further support access to Cedar Lake South Beach, the Cedar-Isles plan has proposed an enhanced intersection improvement at Cedar Lake Parkway and Burnham Road, creating safer access people crossing Cedar Lake Parkway from the south.

PROGRAM AND AMENITIES

Amenities implemented from the approved 2017 Cedar Lake South Beach concept plan include a comfort station that provides seasonal access to a permanent restroom and drinking fountain, improved access to the beach, additional seating, and formal picnic area Park users shared their appreciation for these improvements during the Cedar-Isles engagement process.

The most recently completed improvement is a nature-inspired mural painted on the side of the comfort station, which was completed in partnership with the Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association. Some elements within the 2017 plan have not yet been implemented, such as a proposed outdoor shower. Some volunteer activities and events also take place here, including beach cleanup and sand raking.

The Cedar-Isles plan proposes to remove the canoe rack from the 2017 concept plan; recent conversations between residents and MPRB concluded that the installation of the canoe rack would create further conflicts between uses along with structural challenges to install a canoe rack on a slope. To alleviate further conflict of uses, the plan proposes moving the floating dock from the beach further east to the eastern lawn area, distancing fishing and watercraft access from beach goers.

An enhanced welcome entryway at Cedar Lake Parkway and Burnham Road is proposed alongside the enhanced intersection improvements to provide enhanced welcome to park users and guide new and existing park users to park amenities.



Cedar Lake South Beach. Source: MPRB

Figure 5.14: Focus Area B Cedar Lake South Beach: 2017 Plan Updates

CEDAR LAKE SOUTH BEACH: 2017 PLAN UPDATES



Eastern lawn at Cedar Lake South Beach. Source: EOR



Cedar Lake South Beach








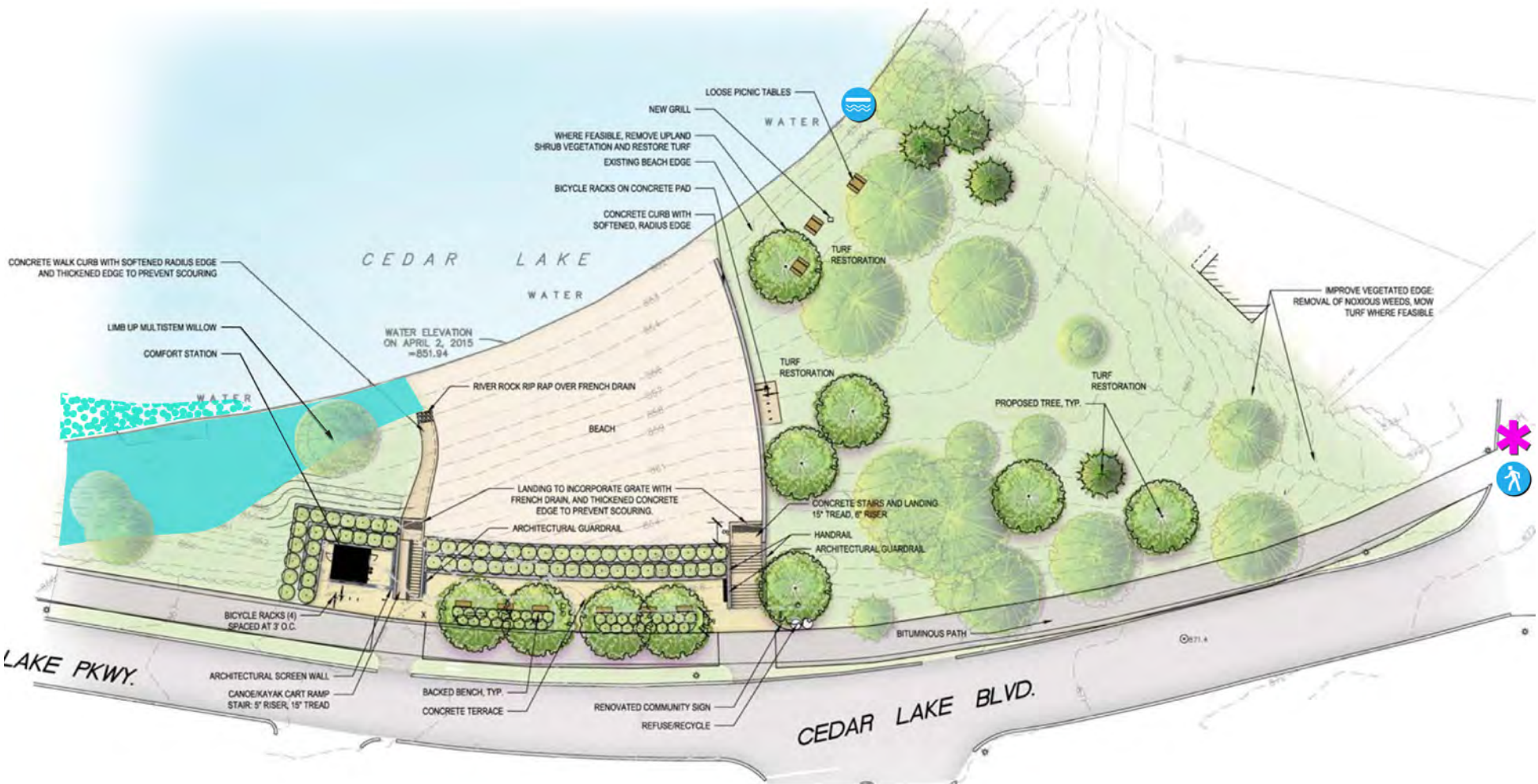
Cedar Lake South Beach benches and pedestrian landing



Cedar Lake Parkway crossing at Cedar Lake South Beach

LEGEND

- PROPOSED**
-  Dock
 -  Enhanced Intersection Improvements
 -  Enhanced Welcome Entry Point
 -  Improved Shoreline Buffer
 -  Expanded Littoral Edge



ZONE 2: NORTHEAST CEDAR LAKE
FOCUS AREA B: CEDAR LAKE EAST
BEACH

Zone 2 includes the northeast section of Cedar Lake, the prairie and trails within a portion of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail, and the forest along the eastern side of Cedar Lake running south to the mouth of the Kenilworth Channel. Zone 2 also includes Focus Area B: Cedar Lake East Beach, one of three beaches at Cedar Lake, located at the peninsula on the eastern side of the lake.

WATER QUALITY

The majority of shoreline in Zone 2 is naturalized. Existing tree species include bur oak, cottonwood, elm and green ash, with buckthorn and forbs and grasses within the understory. The largest existing marsh areas within the project area are located within Zone 2 to the north and south of the Cedar Lake East Beach peninsula. Currently, the beach is the only formal water access location within this zone. Informal water access points begin at the northern end of the map at a location known as the “mound” and additional informal access points dot the shoreline sporadically all the way to the southern edge of the zone near the mouth of the Kenilworth Channel. Although difficult to confirm the history behind the mound, it was most likely a soil dumping site during the railroad construction in the 1880s. The mound has become somewhat of a destination for folks to climb to the top for the view, access the water, and pause during a hike.

The plan retains the beach for water access and formalizes frequently used informal water access points, including an access spot at the mound and one at the mouth of the channel. The plan also proposes an enhanced and expanded shoreline buffer along the entire length of the eastern shoreline. This is followed by marsh restoration and an expanded littoral edge, which alternate along the edge of shore on either side of the beach. This combination of strategies will prevent continued erosion from informal water access while filtering pollutants and reducing impact from large rain events.

These areas will also provide critical bird and wildlife habitat to the species like the Blanding’s turtle, green frog, and yellow headed blackbird.

A proposed rain garden south of the Cedar Lake East Beach area will address runoff into Cedar Lake from a stormwater outfall. The rain garden is close to a common route for young people through the forest and is an ideal location for educational signage about the benefits of addressing stormwater runoff.



Mound at Cedar Lake’s northern shore



Top of the mound at Cedar Lake. EOR

NATURAL RESOURCES

The forest areas in Zone 2 currently include the largest amount of MPRB-identified “altered forest” within the project area. Much of this area is actively managed by volunteers. Plant and tree species vary in some areas and species are not all desirable, but during the project plant inventory, ecologists noted that the forest in Zone 2 is also home to some of the highest quality plant communities within the project area; this is due to the work of volunteers working in partnership with MPRB staff. Tree species include cottonwood, walnut, juniper, and boxelder and some recently planted basswood and bur oak which need adequate room to grow. Shrub species include sumac, buckthorn and tartatian honeysuckle. Other plants identified include big bluestem, walnut, bee balm, and poison ivy.

The northern portion of the forest will slowly be restored to an Oak Savanna community while the southern portion of the forst will be restored to a Mesic Oak community over time. Oak Savanna has more open areas and filtered sunlight than mesic oak forests and

includes both bur and northern pin oak trees. Restoration will involve removing invasive species and planting a diversity of tree, shrub, and plant species. Proposed restoration efforts will require years of phasing and should take ongoing volunteer efforts into account. This process will include formalization and removal of select existing informal trails, invasive species, and establishment of a tree canopy and understory species. Removal of unwanted informal trail connections will reduce erosion and help preserve areas of the forest for wildlife.

Cedar Lake East Beach is a unique beach within the MPRB system. The beach is shaded by an extensive tree canopy that includes established cottonwoods. In previous decades, the beach was informally known as “Hidden Beach” as it was hidden away behind a wall of invasive understory. Over the last ten years or so, active neighborhood groups and residents have worked to improve the safety for beach goers at this location in partnership with MPRB, which included clearing out much of the unwanted and invasive understory to improve sightlines and visibility. Volunteers planted additional trees and shrubs and made way for regular beach clean-ups and family-friendly programming. Remaining cottonwoods are at risk of harm and failure from erosion and compaction due to an expanded beach area and lack of protection. The plan proposes proactive protection of the cottonwoods, which may include signage, protective fencing and planting of additional cottonwoods and other tree species to ease natural life cycle transitions.

The plan also proposes improvements to the existing prairie that encompasses the Cedar Lake Regional Trail to the north, increasing prairie species diversity with additional seeding and establishing a healthy habitat transition zone between prairie and oak savanna restoration areas. Additionally, a parcel of land to the east of the forest area known as the “remnant lands” has been identified for future MPRB acquisition to be designated as a natural area. Refer to Chapter 6.4 for additional detail.

CIRCULATION AND ACCESS

A new transit stop planned at the intersection of the Kenilworth Trail and 21st Street for the Green Line, will increase projected visitors to this zone. While, historically, no formal trails have been developed in the wooded areas within the northeast section of Cedar Lake, there are numerous ad hoc soft surface trails created and maintained by community members. These ad hoc trails are not considered formal trails by MPRB and as such, are minimally managed. The ad hoc trails are mostly used for walking or hiking throughout the eastern side of the park. Cyclists using these trails primarily do so to connect to other bike amenities, such as the Cedar Lake Regional Trail, the Kenilworth Regional Trail, or the formal mountain bike trails at Brownie Lake or Theodore Wirth Regional Park. However, the trails are narrow and cannot accommodate both bicycle and pedestrian uses simultaneously. While there was consensus by the public and CAC group to address the existing walking and biking conflicts within the forest during the planning process, there was not consensus about how to accomplish this. One proposal was to eliminate all bicycling in the forest and direct bicycles to the paved Kenilworth Trail. Others believed that if bicyclists were barred from the forest altogether, they would continue to bike on hiking trails with continued conflict, so they requested a bicycle trail through the forest. Others requested formal mountain bike trails within the forest.

Design strategies outlined for northeast Cedar Lake and Cedar Lake East Beach aim to preserve and improve current uses, successfully manage an increase of visitors while preserving the current character of the beach and forest, reduce user conflicts, and improve the ecological quality of habitat areas. The plan formalizes the most used and enjoyed trails throughout the eastern side of Cedar Lake and formally designates them for hiking and walking, re-naturalizing less traveled trails. The soft surface trails will create connections throughout the eastern side of the lake to the Cedar Lake Regional Trail, East Cedar Lake Beach, and the trail along Kenilworth Channel. These improvements will be especially important with the forthcoming 21st Street light rail station. The existing trail that runs adjacent to the water’s edge was originally proposed to be removed

to help address erosion, however, the community made it clear it was one of the most well- travelled trails with the best viewing areas of the lake, so the advisory committee voted to preserve this trail. To help communicate that these are hiking trails, natural fences, signage, and other design elements may be used. The plan also provides bicyclists a separate two-way soft surface trail connection on the far east side of the forest by utilizing an existing ad hoc trail, beginning at the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and traveling south to the Upton Avenue dead-end. This connection will provide access to the new light rail station at 21st Street, create a forest-connection to enjoy, eliminates the danger of crossing the light rail tracks, and will eliminate further walking and biking conflict as it gives each mode separate trails. Since there are many unknowns related to visitor projections at this location, MPRB should assess whether the proposed circulation improvements adequately address impacts to parkland once the southwest light rail line is up and running.

At the entrance of Cedar Lake East Beach, there is a gravel road that connects from Upton Avenue to the beach area. The road is primarily used for MPRB vehicles to access the beach site; public vehicle access or drop-off is not currently permitted. The road has a chain link gate at the Upton entrance meant to prevent vehicles from driving down to the beach, however, MPRB vehicles often drive around the gate for ease, which has created erosion to the lawn on both sides of the entrance. Additionally, this metal gate creates an unwelcoming visual cue for visitors. The plan proposes formalization of the road down to the beach, with possible consideration of limited ADA parking spots or a drop-off area for programming and accessibility purposes. The gate will be redesigned to create a welcoming entrance for park visitors while providing clear vehicle and pedestrian access down to the beach.

There is no formal parking lot for Cedar Lake East Beach. Currently, vehicles may park on adjacent city streets and walk to the park. During engagement, some neighboring residents voiced concerns about the congestion during the summer months. The conversation about whether to add parking on parkland at this location was revisited several times during the planning process, but was ultimately decided against.



Ad hoc soft surface trail



Gravel access road to Cedar Lake East Beach

PROGRAM AND AMENITIES

Existing amenities within the northeast forest include nature and art features and some benches, usually near a viewing lookout spot. These amenities were added either in partnership with MPRB or independently by community members. Some of the larger or more well-known community features are included on the map, though there are many others not on the map that exist on site. About 12 acres of the forest was designated as a School Forest in 2018, a formal designation through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This designation ensures the area is programmed in a way that promotes outdoor activities and learning for young people. School and neighborhood partners implement nature education and programming for young people in this location each year. In the winter, ski trails are groomed by volunteers and the Loppet Foundation along the Cedar Lake Regional Trail, through the eastern forest, and on Cedar Lake. MPRB should continue to support and leverage opportunities for nature education and programming.

Cedar Lake East Beach amenities include a canoe rack, picnic area, year-round temporary restrooms, and an informal event space for programming located on near the southern shore near the existing canoe racks. Oftentimes, volunteers provide movable chairs for additional seating at the beach and event areas that are stored off-site during winter months.

During the warmer months, community members and organizations host a number of family-friendly pop-up events that have included yoga, music, nature art collections, open mic poetry, and plays. Currently, there is no formally designated area for programming or storage, though the south side of the eastern peninsula is often used. Some folks reported that they loved the area as is and were not interested in adding additional amenities to the beach. Others were interested in formalizing or adding additional amenities, which include a formal event and program area, permanent restroom, changing area, drinking fountain, and/or access to food and drink,

such as a coffee kiosk or food truck. There is also a funded park police presence at the beach during specified times and months of the year. The park police presence had mixed feedback during the community engagement, some reported an appreciation while others reported they felt less safe with them there.

A formal event and concert area has been proposed in the area where existing programming typically takes place. In the interest of maintaining the existing natural feel on-site, design may include natural log or stone amphitheater seating and other light-touch elements. To reduce current conflicts between watercrafts, swimming, and programming, the canoe rack will be relocated to the north side of the beach.

To better accommodate existing and future uses near Cedar Lake East Beach, the plan provides a small, combined permanent restroom and storage facility, with the storage facility helping accommodate on-site programming. Though there was not consensus from the public about whether to add a permanent restroom at this location during the engagement process, the majority of advisory committee members communicated strong interest in providing a permanent restroom within the project area to increase accessibility and sense of welcome for visitors. MPRB should identify design solutions that provide opportunities for the restroom to be open for as many months as possible throughout the year. Based on existing visitor numbers, uses in the area, and future visitor projections, Cedar Lake East Beach has been identified as the best location for this amenity. MPRB should take special care to utilize natural materials that feel in line with the rugged quality of the area and be sited carefully to avoid disturbing existing trees and vegetation.

An enhanced welcome entry point has been proposed at the entry of Cedar Lake East Beach to welcome beach goers and provide helpful information to direct users about the trails and promoting stewardship of the natural areas. The plan also proposes signage to delineate trail modes, information about the natural environment,

and the history of the site. An enhanced welcome entry point is also planned at the northeast corner of Zone 2 along the Cedar Lake Regional Trail, which will help orient and guide people to the project area from transit, trails, surrounding neighborhoods, and beyond. Design enhancements at this transition may include a water fountain, wayfinding signage or pavement markings, and bike racks.



Event on the beach at Cedar Lake East Beach



Ad hoc soft surface trail at Northeast Cedar. MPRB



Winter recreation on Cedar Lake. MPRB



Prairie along Cedar Lake Regional Trail. EOR



Cedar Lake Regional Trail

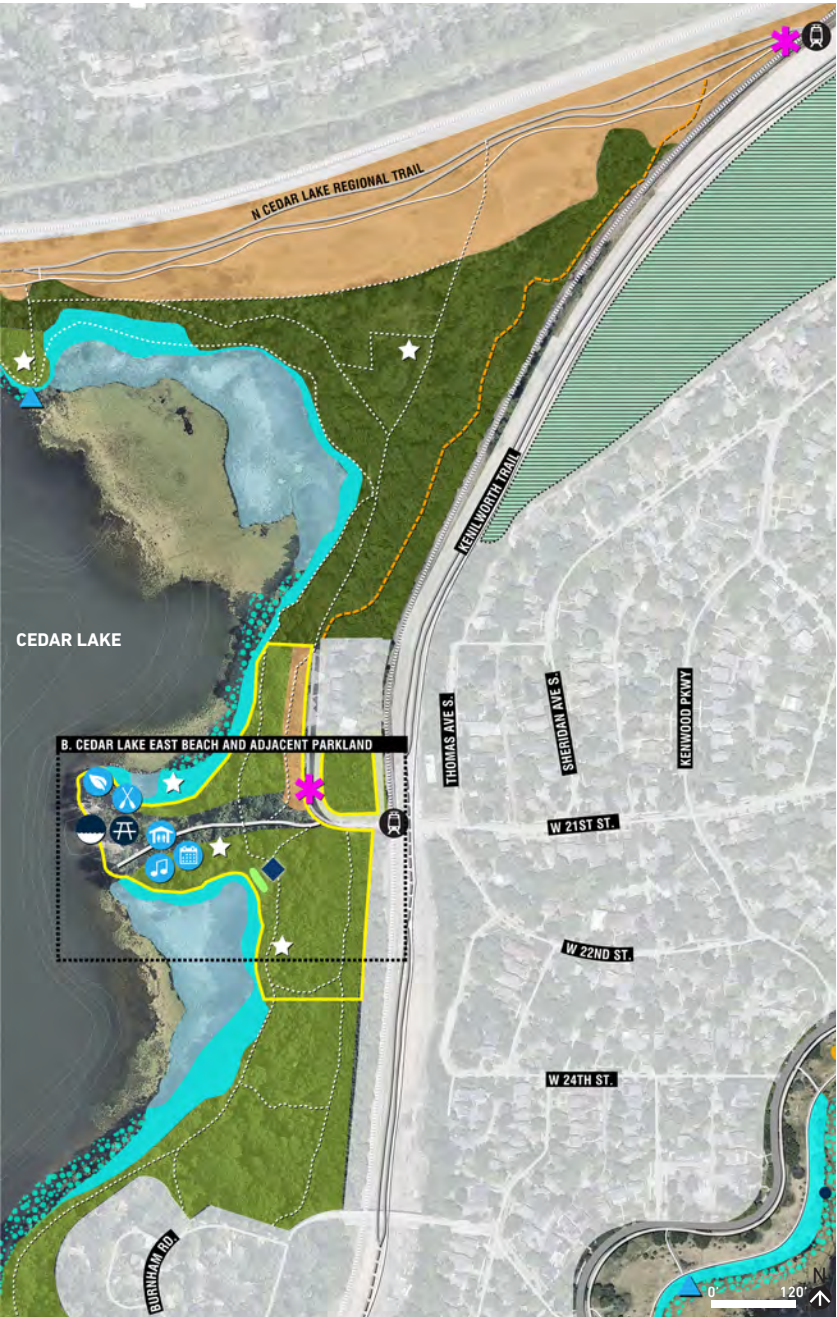


People biking through a forest. Minneapolis Bicycle Alliance

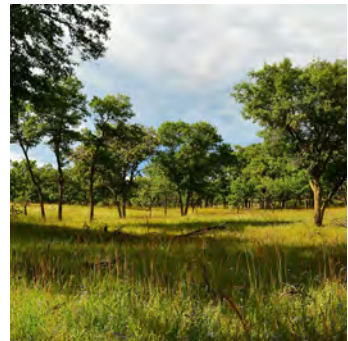


Soft surface trails

Figure 5.15: Zone 2 Northeast Cedar Lake



- LEGEND
- EXISTING**
- ☆ Community Feature
 - DNR School Forest Boundary
 - 🚆 Future LRT Station
 - ◆ Outfalls Treated in the Plan
 - Paved One-Way Bike Trail
 - Paved Pedestrian Trail
 - 🏠 Picnic Area
 - 🌊 Beach Water Access
 - 🚻 Portable Restroom
- PROPOSED**
- 🚣 Canoe Rack Relocation
 - 🌿 Cottonwood Protection Area
 - 🍂 Enhanced Prairie
 - ✳ Enhanced Welcome Entry Point
 - 🌊 Expanded Littoral Edge
 - Formalized Access Path
 - 🎵 Formalized Concert Area
 - 🏢 Formalized Event Area
 - 📏 Formalized Water Access
 - 🌊 Improved Shoreline Buffer
 - 🏠 Land Acquisition
 - 🌊 Marsh Restoration
 - 🌳 Mesic Oak Forest Restoration
 - 🌳 Natural Area
 - 🌳 Oak Savanna Restoration
 - 🚻 Permanent Restroom and Storage
 - 🌿 Rain Garden
 - 👣 Soft Surface Trail
 - 🚲 Two-Way Soft Surface Bicycle Trail



Oak Savanna



Formalized event and concert area potential feature



Permanent restroom



Cedar Lake East Beach



Shoreline restoration in progress



Marsh restoration

LEGEND

EXISTING

- DNR School Forest Boundary
- Future LRT Station
- Lifeguard Stand
- Outfalls Treated in the Plan
- Picnic Area

- Railroad Tracks
- Sand Beach Area

PROPOSED

- Formalized Access Path
- Canoe Rack Relocation
- Cottonwood Protection Area
- Enhanced Prairie
- Enhanced Welcome Entry Point
- Expanded Littoral Edge
- Formalized Concert Area
- Formalized Event Area
- Soft Surface Trail
- Gate Improvements
- Improved Shoreline Buffer
- Marsh Restoration
- Mesic Oak Forest Restoration
- Permanent Restroom and Storage
- Rain Garden

Figure 5.16: Focus Area A Cedar Lake East Beach



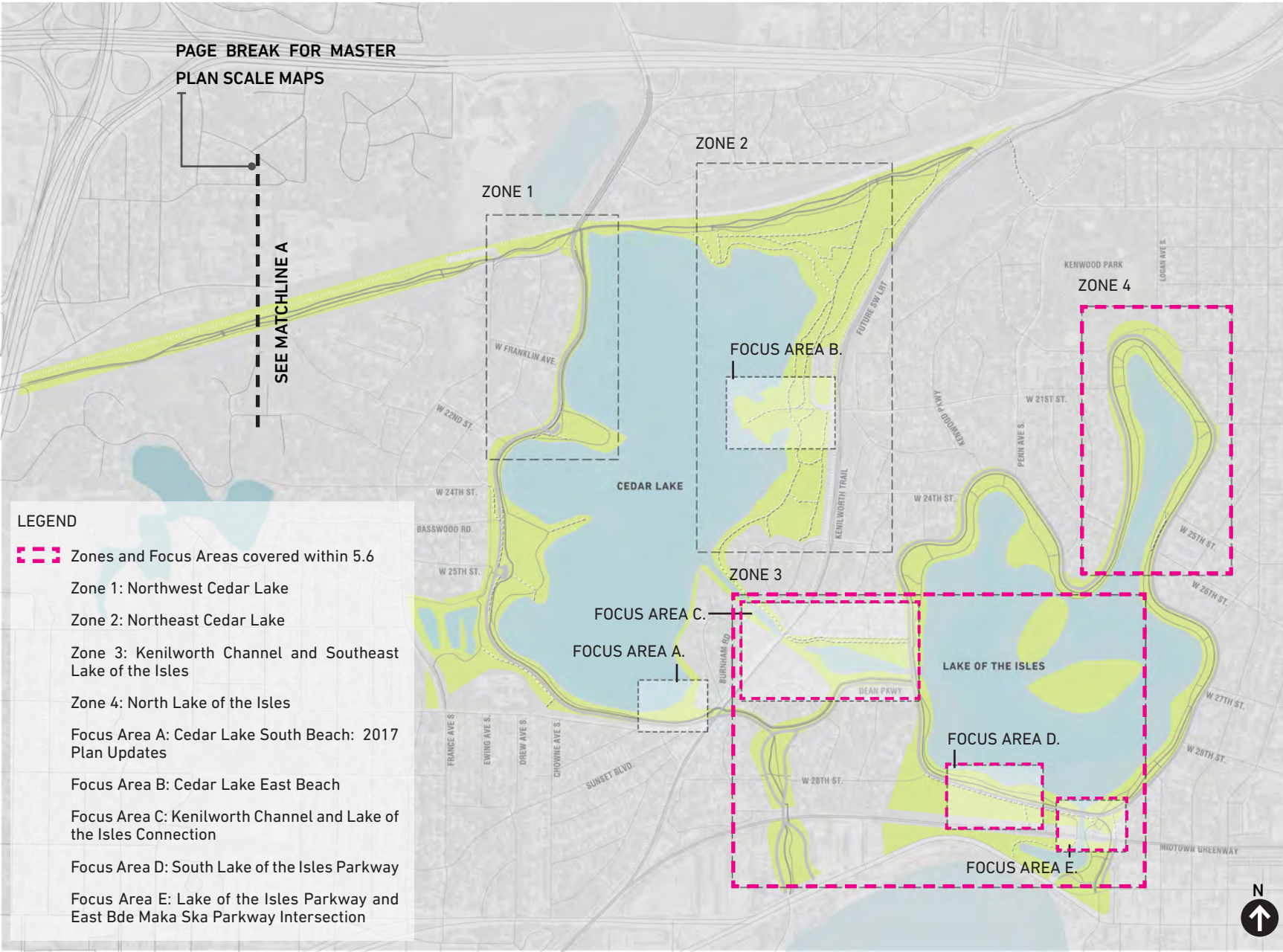
5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LAKE OF THE ISLES, KENILWORTH CHANNEL, AND DEAN PARKWAY

Lake of the Isles, reminiscent of a park era that once was with its formal paved parkways and trails that circumnavigate the lake, its great lawns that provide easy views across the water and informal gathering spaces. The vision at Lake of the Isles and surrounding parkland areas is to retain and preserve its current uses and ambiance, while enhancing its ecological footprint and honoring previous historical eras.

OVERVIEW

This section provides a detailed look at improvements planned for Lake of the Isles, the Kenilworth Channel, and Dean Parkway. Improvement projects described within the zones and focus areas include water quality, natural resources, access and circulation, and amenities.

Figure 5.17: Plan Enlargements Framework



ZONE 3: KENILWORTH CHANNEL AND SOUTHEAST LAKE OF THE ISLES

FOCUS AREAS C: KENILWORTH CHANNEL AND LAKE OF THE ISLES CONNECTION

D: SOUTH LAKE OF THE ISLES PARKWAY

E: LAKE OF THE ISLES PARKWAY INTERSECTION

Zone 3 includes the Kenilworth Channel from Burnham Road running east to Lake of the Isles, Dean Parkway from Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles Parkways south to Lake Street, and the southern portion of Lake of the Isles including the Lake of the Isles Lagoon, and the intersection at Lake of the Isles and Bde Maka Ska parkways. Zone 3 includes three focus areas, “Kenilworth Channel and Lake of the Isles Connection”, “South Lake of the Isles Parkway”, and “Lake of the Isles Parkway Intersection”.

WATER QUALITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Kenilworth Channel

The Kenilworth Channel is a human-made water connection between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. The channel is often used to travel between the lakes, primarily by watercraft or skis depending on season, and is surrounded by a variety of wildlife and land covers. From the Kenilworth Regional Trail east to Lake of the Isles, the channel opens to a lagoon with well-established white water lily plantings, shoreline plants on both sides, and open lawn to the east of the Kenilworth Trail on the northern side. Tree species within the lawn area include river birch, sugar maple, and white pine. On both sides of the channel, among the lilies and shoreline plants. Water access points are often used for fishing or launching watercrafts such as canoes, kayaks, and SUPs.

The plan retains much of the lawn and shoreline areas, but widely expands the shoreline buffer width on both sides. All existing water access points have also been retained and a water access point primarily used for watercraft on the north side of the lagoon will be formalized.

Dean Parkway

Dean Parkway consists mostly of lawn, trees, paved parkways and trails, and serves as a connector to Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles for those traveling from Lake Street or the Midtown Greenway. The lawn at Dean Parkway consists of dozens of species of trees, both native and non-native. A recent volunteer initiative planted young to help diversify the tree canopy. Dean Parkway also experiences flooding with heavy rains, specifically at the Midtown Greenway entrance.

To address flooding and water runoff from the parkways, tree trenches are proposed along specified portions of the parkways

along with pollinator planting areas to increase the park’s ability to absorb and/or store and slowly release additional water from heavier rainfalls. A rain garden proposed near Lake Street serves as another way to capture stormwater runoff before it enters the lakes. The rain garden and pollinator plantings will also create rest stop points for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators to expand their range and available food sources. The design of these features will be integrated with the existing trees and trails.

South Lake of the Isles

A naturalized shoreline exists along the southern portion of Lake of the Isles. Plantings within the shoreline have grown taller than originally anticipated, both because original plantings and some invasive plants, like phragmites, are thriving. While this has reduced lake views in some spots, the shoreline plantings have generally worked as anticipated to address short-term flooding issues. A number of birds and other species have made their home along these shorelines, such as barn and tree swallows and ring billed gulls. Recently, MPRB completed a maintenance plan for the shoreline plants around the lake that aims to improve plant maintenance and in turn, improve viewsheds to the lake. The plan enhances and expands the shoreline buffer and littoral edge, providing additional water runoff filtration and habitat capabilities. These improvements will also address two outfalls, along W Lake of the Isles Parkway near Kenilworth Place and Bde Maka Parkway, that bring stormwater into the park from the larger watershed. During implementation, shorter plants (ie about one foot in height) are recommended to allow for increased visibility of the lake from the shore. The shoreline expansion will also address future projected flooding events.

Throughout the naturalized shoreline along the south side of Isles, there are a few of formal and informal water access spots, including stone steps, a dock near the canoe racks, and eroded informal access spots on the southwest side of the lake. The dock is used for launching watercrafts and as a fishing and casual seating spot.

The plan retains the existing stone steps and dock and proposes a formalized water access point near the intersection of W 28th St and Lake of the Isles parkway to accommodate existing use.

On land, some of the existing lawn areas along the trails will be converted to pollinator plantings and a rain garden to provide refuge to species such as the monarch butterfly and American bumble bee. The paved bump outs along the parking bays will become ornamental plantings and near Bde Maka Ska Parkway, the existing ornamental garden area, currently managed by volunteers, will expand next to a new lawn area.

There are two low lying areas with marsh-like conditions one directly south and east of the athletic fields and one between the dog park and lagoon. Marsh restoration has been proposed at both locations. To address stormwater runoff amidst minimal green space between Lake of the Isles Parkway and the lake, three underground parkway treatment areas are proposed near Kenilworth Place, 28th Street, and the dog park. Additionally, tree trenches are proposed near the athletic fields and dog park adjacent to the parkway.

CIRCULATION AND ACCESS

Kenilworth Channel

There are currently no formal walking and/or biking trails along the Kenilworth Channel between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. However, there are informal connections, via ad hoc trails, that have been created along portions of the channel through community use; one connection exists from Burnham Road and runs west to Cedar Lake, and ultimately north to Cedar Lake East Beach. The connection currently travels through a privately-owned parcel, adjacent to Burnham Road on the northwest side. The privately-owned land is designed for informal public use, supporting current access along the north side of the channel. Another connection exists from the intersection at Kenilworth Place and Upton Avenue and runs west up to the Kenilworth Trail. Most users access this currently eroded, gravel path by foot, although some bicyclists also use the existing connection. CAC and community feedback received during engagement, showed a desire for members of the public to access both Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles from the channel and Kenilworth Regional Trail.

The plan adds a formal soft surface trail between Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake, which would travel west along the channel, under the new light rail bridge, up to a crossing at Burnham Road, and again along the channel until it reaches the mouth of Cedar Lake. It’s possible that a boardwalk, or some other solution, may be necessary to connect a portion of the trail underneath the new light rail bridge. Additional study will need to be completed at time of implementation to identify the best solution. In order to provide a more direct connection from the Kenilworth Regional Trail to Lake of the Isles, a shared, paved bicycle and pedestrian trail will be built between the Kenilworth Regional Trail and Kenilworth Place, connecting to the new soft surface trail and bicycle boulevard. MPRB will work with the city on installation of the bicycle boulevard on Kenilworth Place as well as a new enhanced intersection at Kenilworth Place and Lake

of the Isles Parkway, as well as a new enhanced intersection at Kenilworth Place and Lake of the Isles Parkway.

Dean Parkway

Dean Parkway serves as a connector between Bde Maka Ska, Cedar Lake, and Lake of the Isles with two-way vehicle access and two-way walking and biking trails along its entire stretch. The northern portion of Dean Parkway between Cedar Lake Parkway and Lake of the Isles Parkway is an area where the bicycle and walking trails are adjacent to one another and none of the trails meet typical MPRB trail widths. The area of Dean Parkway that runs from Cedar Lake Parkway south to Lake Street has separated walking and trails through the entire length.

The plan proposes maintaining the parkway and trail network mostly as is in this area, but does recommend widening the trails along the northern section between Cedar Lake Parkway and Lake of the Isles Parkway, where possible, while also retaining all trees. Enhanced intersection improvements are also proposed at major connection points to support moving to and through the park.

South Lake of the Isles

There are several community-created ad hoc trails within Zone 3. One of the most prominent ones is an eroded path adjacent to the south side of Lake of the Isles Parkway that connects the multi-use fields to the dog park and ultimately to the bridge over the Bde Maka Ska Lagoon. Ad hoc trails also connect from the dog park entrance through the forest to the east, and create a full connection around the west side of the Lagoon, exiting at W Lake Street. To better support and formalize these existing circulation patterns, a sidewalk will be added to the south side of Lake of the Isles Parkway, as well as a new soft surface trail connecting the Midtown Greenway to the dog park, and the existing partially paved trail that travels around the Lagoon will be completely paved. “Green” bump outs propsoed near the dog

park will slow vehicular traffic and provide additional ornamental planting space. A new enhanced crossing and paved connection down to the pedestrian trail near the dog park will provide a safer connection between the park areas on either side of the road. In addition to new pedestrian connections, a new on-street bike lane will travel in the opposite direction of the off-street bike trail around all of Lake of the Isles.

A significant redesign is proposed for the intersection of Bde Maka Ska Parkway and Lake of the Isles Parkway, including the bike and pedestrian ramps to the Midtown Greenway. At the intersection, the current design includes separated traffic lanes traveling north to Lke of the Isles Parkway and south to Bde Maka Ska Parkway. A large, planted boulevard separates the lanes on Bde Maka Ska Parkway. This configuration creates safety issues as it adds locations for pedestrians and bicyclists to need to cross, depending on which trail they are walking towards, and gives vehicular traffic the perception that there is not a need to make a full stop onto Lake of the Isles Parkway. The bicycle and pedestrian trails at this location can also feel confusing, as there are currently separate bicycle and pedestrian trails that connect from Lake of the Isles Parkway to the Midtown Greenway, and connect south towards the Lagoon and Bde Maka Ska Parkway. There are also several community-created ad hoc trails connecting to paved trails and amenities at this location, such as the kiosk and restroom.

To slow vehicular traffic and create safer crossings, a “T” intersection and enhanced intersection improvements are proposed for Lake of the Isles Parkway and Bde Maka Ska Parkway, creating one very visible crossing for pedestrian and bicyclists. Additionally, the plan separates bicycle and pedestrian traffic on the ramp to the Midtown Greenway and along adjacent sidewalks to provide a safer pedestrian experience. It also modifies the bicycle trail and adds pedestrian trail options to create direct connections and reduce the need to cross through the grass.



Ad hoc trail between doc park and multi-use fields. MPRB

PROGRAM AND AMENITIES

Kenilworth Channel

The Kenilworth Channel is primarily a connector between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles via watercraft or skis. This area is also used for picnicking and accessing the water for fishing or boating. No additional amenities are proposed.

PROGRAM AND AMENITIES

Dean Parkway

Dean Parkway is used primarily as a connection for different transportation modes. To support this, welcome entry points have been added where Dean Parkway connects to Lake of the Isles Parkway, Cedar Lake Parkway, and the Midtown Greenway. These locations are major entry points for visitors, whether they are walking, bicycling, rolling, or driving and provide opportunities for wayfinding, interpretation, and moments of pause and education. Design solutions may include interpretive signage focused on the historic elements of this portion of the project area, wayfinding signage, or improved ornamental planting. The park also has wide swaths of lawn areas utilized by neighbors for community events. There is interest in continuing to use the lawn areas in this way. Even with the additional tree trenches, pollinator plantings, and rain garden proposed in the plan, the parkway retains large areas of lawn for gathering and formal events.

South Lake of the Isles

The southern portion of Lake of the Isles includes some of the most actively used parkland around the lake. This includes the multi-use fields to the west, programmed through MPRB and community partners, the dog park that has frequent year-round use, and the Lake of the Isles and Bde Maka Ska Parkway intersection, that supports bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicle traffic.

The plan retains and supports these existing uses with strategic amenities and modifications. A temporary restroom will be added near the multi-use fields. The exact location will take all possible care to not interfere with existing Lake of the Isles views while still providing clear access. There will also be a new picnic area between the multi-use fields and dog park to accommodate visitors that frequent this location. At Lake of the Isles Parkway and Bde Maka

Ska Parkway, the temporary restroom will be relocated to better accommodate the updated trail network.

A welcome entry point near the intersection of Lake of the Isles and Bde Maka Ska Parkway will support the hub of activity. Design solutions may include interpretive signage focused on the historic elements of this portion of the project area, wayfinding signage, or improved ornamental planting.



On-street painted bike lane



Multi- use athletic fields at Lake of the Isles. MPRB



Dean Parkway separated bike and pedestrian trails. MPRB



Lake of the Isles shoreline. MPRB

LEGEND

EXISTING	PROPOSED
Multi-Use Fields	Enhanced Welcome Entry Point
Canoe Rack	Expanded Littoral Edge
Dock	Formalized Water Access
Dog Park	Improved Shoreline Buffer
Dog Park Boundary	Enhanced Intersection Improvements
Future LRT Station	Land Acquisition
Kiosk	Marsh Restoration
Paved One-Way Bike Trail	Mesic Oak Forest Restoration
Parkway	Natural Area
Paved Pedestrian Trail	On-Street Bike Boulevard (Two-Way)
Portable Restroom	One-Way On-Street Bicycle Lane (arrow indicates direction of travel)
Paved Two-Way Bike Trail	Parkway Reconfiguration
Water Access: Stone Steps	Paved Pedestrian Trail
Outfalls Treated in the Plan	Paved Two-Way Bike and Pedestrian Trail
	Picnic Area
	Prairie/Pollinator Planting
	Rain Garden
	Soft Surface Trail
	Portable Restroom
	Tree Trench
	Underground Parkway Stormwater Treatment

Figure 5.18: Zone 3: Kenilworth Channel and Southeast Lake of the Isles





Enhanced Intersection improvements



On-street bike boulevard



Informal water access. MPRB



Soft surface trail

LEGEND

EXISTING

- Parkway
- Paved Pedestrian Trail
- Paved Two-Way Bike Trail
- Water Access: Stone Steps

PROPOSED

- Enhanced Intersection Improvements
- Expanded Littoral Edge
- Enhanced Welcome Entry Point
- Soft Surface trail
- Formalized Water Access
- Improved Shoreline Buffer
- Land Acquisition
- On-Street Bike Boulevard (Two-Way)
- One-Way On-Street Bicycle Lane (arrow indicates direction of travel)
- Paved Pedestrian Trail
- Paved Two-Way Bike and Pedestrian Trail
- Soft Surface Trail
- Underground Parkway Stormwater Treatment

Figure 5.19: Focus Area C: Kenilworth Channel And Lake Of The Isles Connection





Picnic area



Lake of the Isles dog park. MPRB



Green Bump-Outs



Dock and canoe rack. MPRB

LEGEND

EXISTING

Canoe Rack

Dock

Dog Park

Dog Park Boundary

Paved One-Way Bike Trail

Parkway

Paved Pedestrian Trail

Water Access: Stone Steps

PROPOSED

Enhanced Intersection Improvements

Green Bump Outs

Improved Shoreline Buffer

Expanded Littoral Edge

Marsh Restoration

One-Way On-Street Bicycle Lane (arrow indicates direction of travel)

Paved Pedestrian Trail

Picnic Area

Prairie/Pollinator Planting

Rain Garden

Soft Surface Trail

Tree Trench

Underground Parkway Stormwater Treatment

Figure 5.20: Focus Area D: South Lake of the Isles Parkway

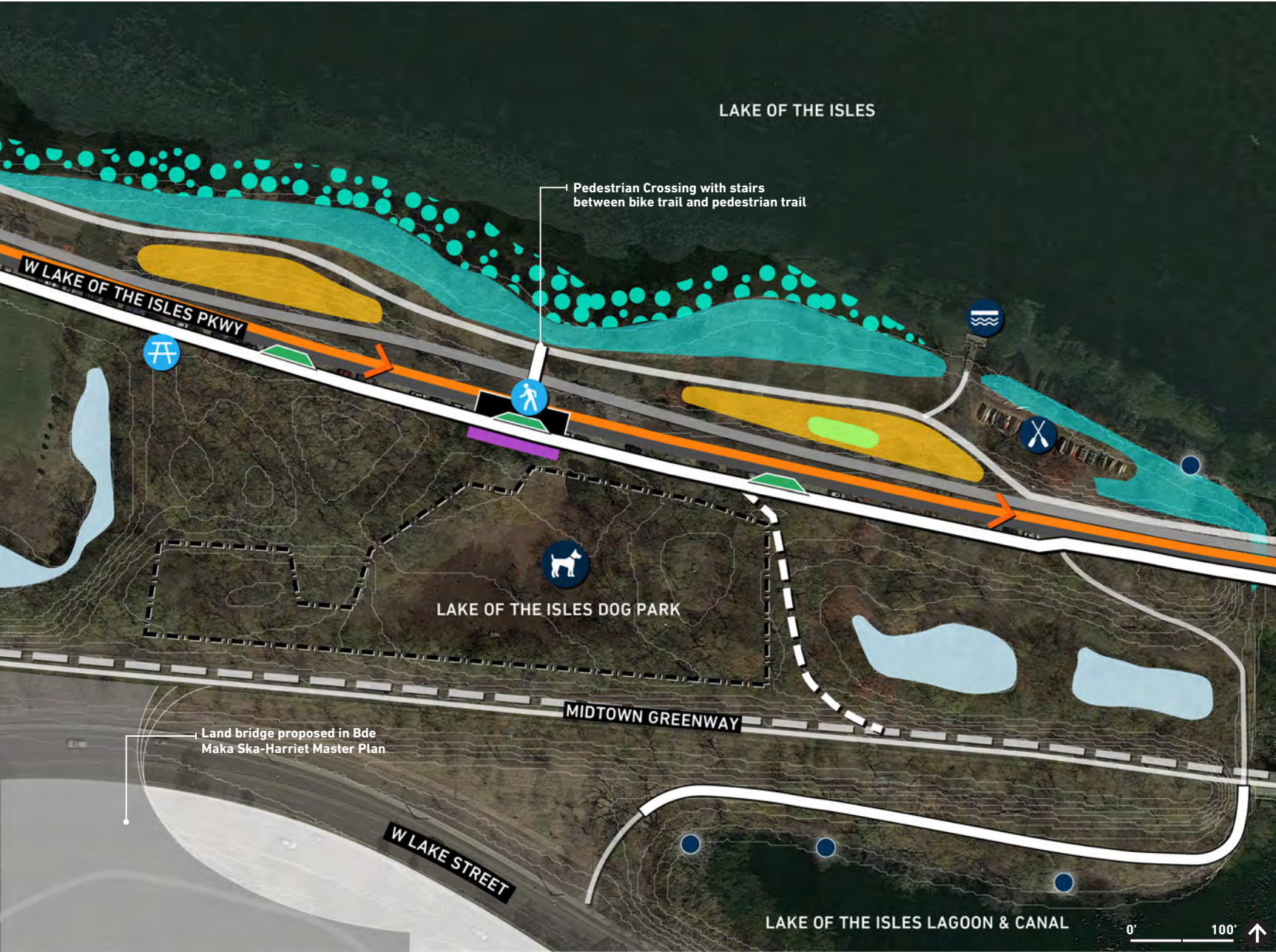


Figure 5.21: Focus Area E: Lake Of the Isles Parkway Intersection



Kiosk at Lake of the Isles. MPRB



Lake of the Isles shoreline. MPRB



Lake of the Isles Parkway intersection. MPRB



Pedestrian trail over bridge at Lake of the Isles. MPRB

LEGEND

EXISTING

- Kiosk
- Paved One-Way Bike Trail
- Parkway
- Paved Pedestrian Trail
- Paved Two- Way Bike Trail

PROPOSED

- Enhanced Intersection Improvements
- Enhanced Welcome Entry Point
- Expanded Littoral Edge
- Expanded Ornamental Planting
- Improved Shoreline Buffer
- Marsh Restoration
- One-Way On-Street Bicycle Lane (arrow indicates direction of travel)
- Parkway Realignment
- Paved Pedestrian Trail
- Portable Restroom
- Prairie/ Pollinator Planting
- Restored Turf
- Paved Two-Way Bike Trail



ZONE 4: NORTH LAKE OF THE ISLES

Zone 4 includes the northern arm of Lake of the Isles from the intersections of Newton Avenue South and Euclid Place with the Lake of the Isles Parkway in the south to the intersection of Franklin Avenue and Lake of the Isles Parkway in the north.

WATER QUALITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The shoreline of Zone 4 has a narrow strip of naturalized plantings that are relatively high in quality. The shoreline plantings were added in the 2000s to help address flooding issues, along with infill to level portions of turf around the lake and trails. Over the last few years, portions of the trails in this area are again experiencing flooding during high rainfall events. MPRB has received feedback to address flooding to both improve the trails, and to ensure that the shoreline ecosystem thrives. Aquatic species observed in this area include Lady’s Thumb, European Watermilfoil, and American White Water-lily. Rice and canary grasses cover some areas near the shoreline. Volunteers help to manage much of the shoreline around Isles, which includes trash pick-up and removal of invasive species. The plan proposes maintaining and expanding the already well-established shoreline buffer and littoral edge, which will help address future flooding and add additional habitat areas. Since this area of shoreline has fairly high-quality plant species established, this area can serve as a precedent for other areas with less established shoreline communities throughout the project area. This area also contains informal water access spots that have created erosion near the shoreline, and three sets of stone steps. A formalized water access spot is proposed at the intersection of W 21st St. and Lake of the Isles Parkway, providing improved access to the shoreline, and all stone steps have been retained. All other informal access spots will be restored to habitat.

A majority of green space in Zone 4 is lawn, or turf grass, which is used for informal activities including picnicking. Tree species include

green ash, hackberry, sandbar willow, and others. Large portions of the lawn have depressions that collect water during heavy rain events. These depressions are a biproduct of previous improvements that avoided infilling within a specified radius of established trees to avoid root damage. Rain gardens will take advantage of these existing basins, capturing and filtering stormwater, reserving surrounding turf for gathering and recreational uses. Where there are no existing depressions, rain gardens are strategically placed in areas less commonly used for gathering and recreation and where they will best be able to collect runoff from the parkway. Proposed pollinator plantings work in tandem with the rain garden to provide habitat and add visual interest. These plantings also serve as opportunities for interpretation and engagement and are placed around the rain gardens, expanding habitat opportunities. Tree trenches are proposed in a narrow strip of land near W 26th Street and an underground stormwater treatment is proposed near the Oliver Place S., capturing stormwater from the adjacent parkway.



Depressions in the lawn. MPRB

CIRCULATION AND ACCESS

Franklin Avenue is a major entry point for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians to access Lake of the Isles Parkway and Lake of the Isles park. There is currently no formal crossing across Franklin Avenue or Lake of the Isles Parkway for pedestrians or bicyclists arriving from the neighborhood, Logan Avenue, or Kenwood Park. Early design concepts proposed ideas such as closing portions of the parkway or reconfiguring the parkway and Franklin Avenue. Due to concerns about the impact to traffic and parking, these ideas didn’t move forward into the final plan. To improve safety and access, enhanced intersection improvements are proposed for crossing Franklin Avenue and Lake of the Isles Parkway, at the parkway entrance off of Franklin Avenue. An additional intersection enhancement is identified for 21st Street, another frequently used crossing for park visitors accessing the park.

Lake of the Isles includes a well-used pedestrian trail and one-way bicycle trail that circles the entire lake. The plan adds an on-street bicycle lane that would go in the same direction as the one-way vehicle traffic and would travel counter to the existing off-street bicycle trail. Currently, the Lake of the Isles temporary warming house is placed on top of the pedestrian trail, redirecting the pedestrian trail around the structure and creating an accessibility issue in the winter and early spring months. The plan modifies the existing pedestrian trail to move around the footprint of the temporary warming house and avoid user conflicts.

PROGRAM AND AMENITIES

The northern arm of Lake of the Isles is primarily used for informal uses, such as picnicking, fishing, launching a watercraft, and walking, bicycling, or driving around the lake. Two enhanced welcome entry points are proposed in Zone 4, one at the intersection of Franklin Avenue and Lake of the Isles Parkway and one at the intersection of Euclid Place and Lake of the Isles Parkway. These locations may include amenities to welcome and guide new and existing park users including bike racks, seating, water fountains, interpretation and wayfinding. Additionally, the existing informational kiosk will be relocated from near W 21St. Street to the parkway entrance off Franklin Avenue to serve a higher volume of visitors accessing the park. In this new location, the kiosk can be incorporated as part of the new enhanced welcome entry.

A temporary warming house and restrooms, supporting winter activities, are also located within Zone 4. Initial concepts proposed a permanent warming house and restroom at this location to create a year-round destination; this idea was well-received by some in the community but many were strongly opposed to adding new structures of any sort to Lake of the Isles. Based on CAC discussion and engagement, the plan maintains and upgrades the existing temporary warming house with improvements that could include a temporary or permanent deck structure for gathering and changes



Upgraded temporary warming house example



Prairie/Pollinator Planting Areas



Example of enhanced welcome entry point



Stone steps. MPRB

Figure 5.22: Zone 4: North Lake of the Isles

