

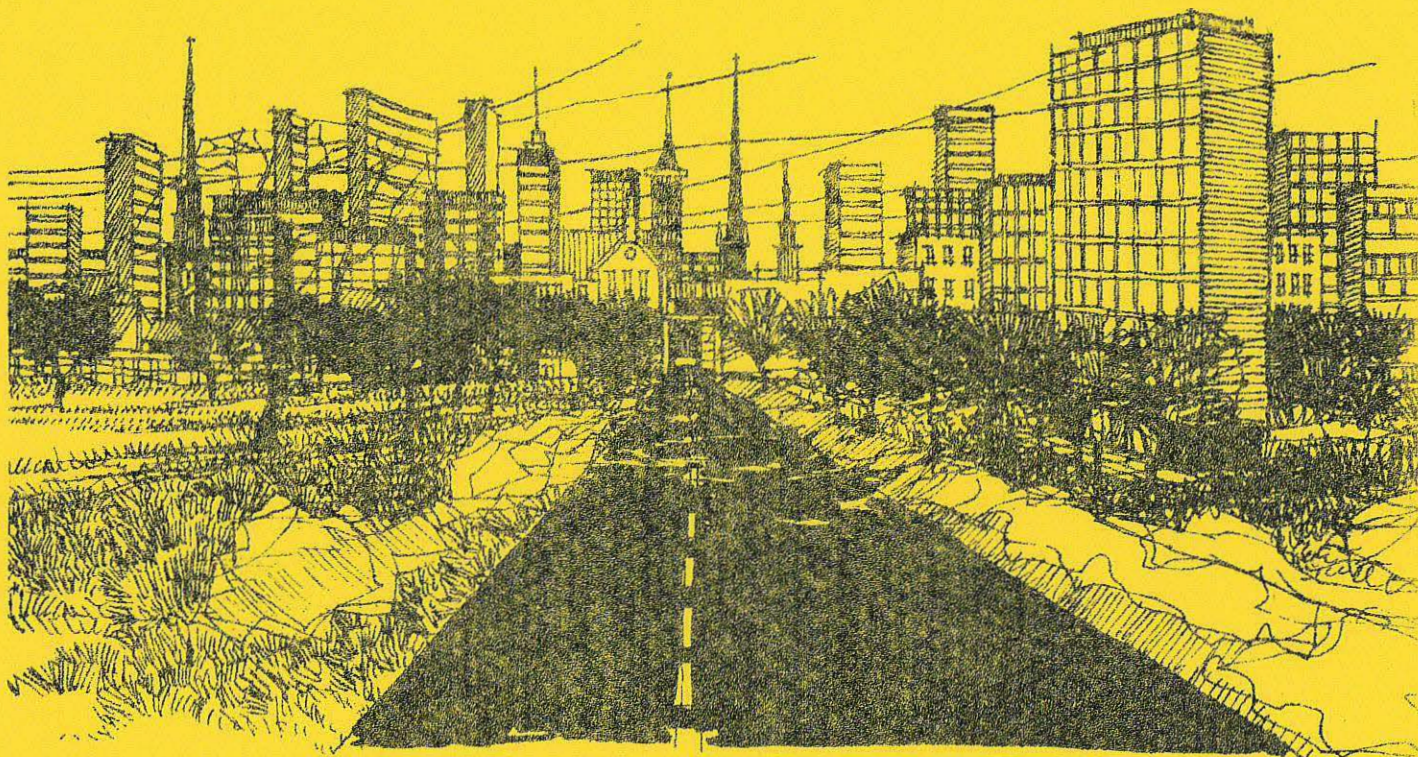
PARKS AND RECREATION IN MINNEAPOLIS

VOLUME I

POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES OF
THE MINNEAPOLIS BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

PART III

SUMMARY OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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The major considerations of this report are summarized below in recommendation form. Specific details, supporting information and technical data not included in this volume are to be found in Volumes II and III of the report.

1. The Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners should adopt a general policy statement setting forth its broad goals and objectives. The following statement is suggested for the board's consideration.

A Statement of Policy of the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners

Because public recreation and park services can contribute to the well-being of individuals and families, the attractiveness of neighborhoods and the social and economic progress of the city; because the people of Minneapolis have authorized the use of public funds, and their elected state and municipal representatives have enacted laws to support these services, it shall be the policy of the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners to establish, expand, and improve leisure opportunities which the citizens cannot supply themselves, or which it is in the best interest of the public for the board to provide.

It shall be the board's policy to establish and multiply those opportunities which will be personally satisfying, consistent with the varied interests, needs, and competencies of the changing population regardless of age, sex, race, creed, social or economic status. Insofar as it is able, such opportunities will be directed toward the self-fulfillment, physical and intelligent involvement, and cultural development of the individual. Respect for the dignity, autonomy and self-determination of each person will be paramount.

An equally important objective will be to conserve nature and make natural beauty paramount. Recognizing that the harmonious relationship of man and nature is crucial to human life, the board will do everything within its power to help people enjoy, appreciate, protect, and strengthen their ties with the lands, waters, and plant and animal life. Above all, the board's services and resources will be evaluated primarily in terms of their worth to humans.

Opportunities for social, physical and cultural development, including sports, outdoor living, the performing, graphic and plastic arts, and all of the major leisure interests of the people will be encouraged and multiplied. Attention, however, will also be given to the need for privacy and solitude.

Whenever possible the board's resources will be used to mitigate anti-social behavior; to aid the ill, handicapped, retarded, maladjusted, dependent, unemployable and culturally deprived. But its main focus will be upon opportunities in leisure for the full personality development of all citizens, geared to a mission comparable to the finest in public education.

Finally, the board recognizes that its services do not stand alone, that they are closely related to urban and regional planning, to housing, to health and welfare, to the business, political, cultural and spiritual community, to education in all of its settings, and to all of the functions of government. Consequently, it shall be the continuing policy of the board to seek the cooperation and assistance of all such interests, and to make the public a continuing partner in its work.

2. So that the name of the Board of Park Commissioners will reflect to the citizens that it has a direct responsibility for recreation programming, it should include the word RECREATION in its title. It is recommended that the title be changed, by amendment of Chapter 16, Section 1 of the City Charter to the "Park and Recreation Board" or the "Department of Parks and Recreation".

3. The recreation program function of the Park Board should be expanded and diversified. Emphasis in the arts and sciences should be provided equal to that now given to sports and athletics. The instructional phases of the total range of recreation activities should be substantially increased.

4. In order to provide a more effective board, the number of members of the Board of Park Commissioners should be reduced, and the method of selection of board members should be changed.

The charter of the city of Minneapolis should therefore be amended to (a) provide for a board of seven park commissioners, (b) provide for the appointment of board members by the mayor for three year terms, and (c) require that terms of office be staggered to ensure continuity, while permitting periodic infusion of new appointees. For example, initial appointments could provide for three members to serve three years, two members to serve two years, and two members to serve one year. All subsequent appointments would then be for three year periods. Appointments would be confirmed by City Council.

5. The members of the Park Board should establish firm procedures which ensure that their policy-making function is clear-cut and well-defined; and that board members do not assume staff prerogatives through interference in the executive management of the board's operation which is in keeping with policy directives.

6. The Park Board staff should be augmented so that program planning, coordination with other agencies, and open space planning become a continuing and effective staff function.

The principal agencies affecting the Park Board's responsibility are CLIC, the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the Minneapolis Planning Commission, the Board of Education, and the Health and Welfare Council.

Secondary but important relationships are needed with the Hennepin County Park Reserve District, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Planning Commission, and the Minnesota State Parks Division. The Park Board desperately needs a counterpart unit in order to maintain these essential contacts, to undertake policy-oriented studies, and to engage in program planning. This function should be structured within the design and research division, and should be considered as the primary staff aid to the superintendent.

Three staff positions are needed, one in the area of capital improvements planning, one in the area of program planning, and one in the area of open space planning.

- a. A desirable qualification for the first position would be training in public administration. The incumbent of this position should be delegated the responsibility of preparing capital project requests and justifications. In cooperation with other members of the staff, he would begin to develop policy statements for the provision of park and recreation facilities. He would work most closely with CLIC, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the Board of Education, and the City Planning Commission.
- b. The incumbent of the second position should be held responsible for maintaining continuing relationships with the neighborhood councils, and for undertaking studies leading to the definition of recreation policies. This person should desirably be trained in the field of recreation and park administration.
- c. The third person should be trained in urban and regional planning. Since the citizens of Minneapolis are now to be taxed in support of the Hennepin County Park Reserve District, and since the Park Board is to have representation on the board of the district, the Minneapolis Park Board has some responsibilities for open space and recreation policies in the metropolitan area. This staff position should be created to provide technical guidance in

relating metropolitan programs to the city's policies. It would be desirable for this position to be on a joint appointment with the Park Board and the City Planning Commission.

7. In order for the Park Board to adjust its policies to the dynamic factors operating within Minneapolis, every effort should be made to remove the sources of budgetary inflexibility.

A primary factor in the inability of the Park Board to adjust to changing recreation needs is the fixed commitment to certain functions, some of which need not be Park Board responsibilities.

- a. The major responsibility for maintenance of roadways in the park system should be transferred to the jurisdiction of the city engineer. Such a change might assist in qualifying some of this street mileage for state aid.
- b. The special tax limit of 6.74 mills should be raised. The park and recreation function should be provided with tax revenue sufficient to perform its functions in a manner acceptable to the public it serves. There is evidence that the public is willing to pay for the increased services it seeks.
- c. A strong effort should be made to increase service and augment tax revenue through a policy decision to increase the use of revenue producing facilities, and fees and charges for self-sustaining activities.
- d. A special effort should be made to secure donations, endowments, gifts, and bequests toward the support of area and facility acquisition and development, and program promotion.

- e. Consideration should be given to transferring certain properties that clearly serve a metropolitan function to the jurisdiction of the Hennepin County Park Reserve District.
8. The use of the Elwell Law to finance capital improvements should be minimized. As far as park and recreation policy is concerned, the city of Minneapolis would be better served if special assessment financing is used sparingly and selectively. This is a change that would encourage better program planning in the Park Board.
- a. The Park Board should establish firm policies for city-wide standards for park and recreation facilities, and all such facilities should be brought up to this standard through the use of full faith and credit bonds. That is, for the acquisition of property and provision of facilities up to a clearly-stated level, the use of the Elwell Law should be discontinued. No neighborhood should be deprived of suitable facilities simply because its residents are unwilling or unable to pay special assessments.
 - b. Special assessment bonds should be used only when neighborhood organizations want facilities of a higher or different quality than stipulated by the city-wide standard.
 - c. If this policy were to be adopted, it would require a collateral policy change on the part of CLIC. Under the present point rating system, a substantial number of bonus points are given to any improvement that is financed by outside funds, such as federal grants-in-aid or special assessments. Therefore, CLIC's existing policy penalizes facilities that ought to be constructed or acquired under the general bonding power of the city. CLIC policy should be changed so that a decision not to use the Elwell Law would not be penalized.

9. It is recommended that the Park Board intensify its program of facility renewal, consistent with the quality of the Powderhorn Park redevelopment program.

The maintenance of obsolete and worn-out areas and facilities is extremely costly and unproductive. The increasing necessity for such maintenance leads to deferred maintenance practices, and inconsistencies in maintenance quality throughout the system. This in turn leads to citizen unrest in areas where parks exist but are not adequately equipped or maintained for satisfying use and appearance.

10. The Park Board should intensify its efforts to acquire neighborhood park sites, preferably in cooperation with the Board of Education as a continuation of the joint policy of park-school development.

11. The Park Board should seek a more equitable cost sharing agreement with the School Board on new neighborhood park-school site acquisition.

12. The Park Board should increase the use of schools through policy commitment to the increased provision of supervisory staff. This increased use should be not only in the area of sports and athletics, but in a wide range of recreation activities in the arts and sciences, for which school facilities are suitable.

A clear statement on park-school cooperative arrangements for indoor use of schools should be given wide distribution throughout the community.

13. It is recommended that the recreation facility base of the Park Board be expanded and diversified through provision of a junior museum and science

center; a central facility for amateur drama; arts and crafts centers; increased swimming pool facilities, both outdoor and indoor-outdoor; artificial ice skating rinks; rifle range, and possibly a bowling green center and a children's fantasyland.

14. The number and size of indoor recreation centers should be markedly increased, and they should be programmed intensively on a year-round basis.

15. The Park Board Police Force should be reorganized as a Park Ranger Force, retaining its police powers but extending its function to include guidance and education in the use of park properties, and possible development of a junior park ranger program. This would require that the Park Ranger Force no longer have reciprocal responsibility for non-park police functions with the City Police Force.

16. A management consulting firm should be employed to conduct, over a sustained period of time, a study of the efficiency of the total operation of the Park Board.

17. The personnel policies and practices of the Park Board and the Civil Service Commission should be liberalized to permit the recruitment of personnel with the highest qualifications and potentials for professional service to the citizens of Minneapolis.

18. Staff development programs should be greatly expanded and intensified to maximize the abilities and potential of all personnel.

19. The Park Board, through its representatives on the Hennepin County Park Reserve District should encourage the expansion of the County Park Preserve District into a metropolitan district. This proposed district should have the same geographical area of jurisdiction as the Twin Cities Metropolitan Planning Commission.

20. The Hennepin County Park Reserve District should be encouraged to establish a classification system for its requirements, including criteria for parks of unit acreage substantially less than the one thousand acre minimum requirement it now shares with the State Park Division. This would enable parkland acquisition closer to the city and provide better distribution of park areas throughout the county, and hopefully in the future, the metropolitan area. This would provide an appropriate extension of the development concept established by H.W.S. Cleveland in 1883.