



# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

CITY OF DULUTH, MN

June 2026



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# 01

# Introduction

Park Point Recreation Area (Rec Area) is an approximately 55-acre destination park located on Minnesota Point in Duluth, Minnesota. Minnesota Point is the world's largest freshwater sand spit and divides Lake Superior from the St. Louis River Estuary and the Superior Bay. Minnesota Point is a place of cultural significance for many Indigenous Peoples, including Ojibwe and Dakota Tribes, who inhabited and stewarded the land for thousands of years.

The Rec Area was developed as a park by the City of Duluth beginning in 1936. Today, the Rec Area is a popular destination among locals and visitors alike, with a variety of recreational opportunities and public water access for a diverse set of water-based activities. The Rec Area serves as an entry point to the Minnesota Point Pine Forest, a DNR Scientific and Natural Area. Minnesota Avenue, which provides access to and through the Rec Area following the harborside shoreline, is the only land connection to the Sky Harbor Airport.

Unfortunately, the passage of time and changing climate patterns have visibly deteriorated the natural resources and built infrastructure within the beloved Rec Area. The park faces challenges with shoreline stabilization, accessibility, aging infrastructure, damage to sensitive habitat areas, and the loss of recreational amenities due to the landform itself slowly sinking over time. Shoreline erosion and increasingly heavy storms threaten to wash away Minnesota Avenue and harborside parking areas, sections of which have already begun to crumble into the bay.

To properly address these challenges, an intentional, coordinated, community-supported, and sustainably-minded plan is needed. Developed in collaboration with community members, various City departments, key stakeholders, and local user groups, this plan details current park conditions and offers a comprehensive guide for preferred improvements into the future. While funding for implementation has not yet been identified, the City will use this plan to seek project funding from a variety of grantors by clearly demonstrating project needs, preferred outcomes, feasibility, community support, and alignment with project goals.

This Park Point Recreation Area Plan is both bold and realistic, establishing a clear path towards preserving and enhancing the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of this cherished community space.



Figure 01.1 Project location map

## Planning Process

In 2023, the City of Duluth and Ramboll US Consulting, Inc. developed a Shoreline Mitigation Feasibility Study for a significant portion of the Rec Area's bayside shoreline. The study evaluated and scored various alternatives for reducing shoreline erosion and the associated risks to infrastructure. While the study provided a great amount of information, the scope was limited and did not result in a final selection or prioritization of improvements. This planning process is intended to pick-up where the study left off, to analyze the entire park space, and to develop a comprehensive and cohesive guide for future park improvements.

This guiding document is the result of a year-long planning process that relied heavily on community input and collaboration with key project partners.

### + Spring 2025: Discovery and Needs Assessment

- Preliminary community needs and priorities were identified through focus group meetings with user groups and area experts.
- Extensive analysis was completed on recreational opportunities, infrastructure, site history, park amenities, natural resources, site buffers and edges, site circulation, and coastal considerations (see Figure 01.2).

### + Summer/Fall 2025: Concept Development

- Community needs and priorities were tested and verified through a combination of public meetings, community surveys, and discussions with key stakeholders.
- Likewise, designed concept alternatives were developed and tested with the community and out in the field.

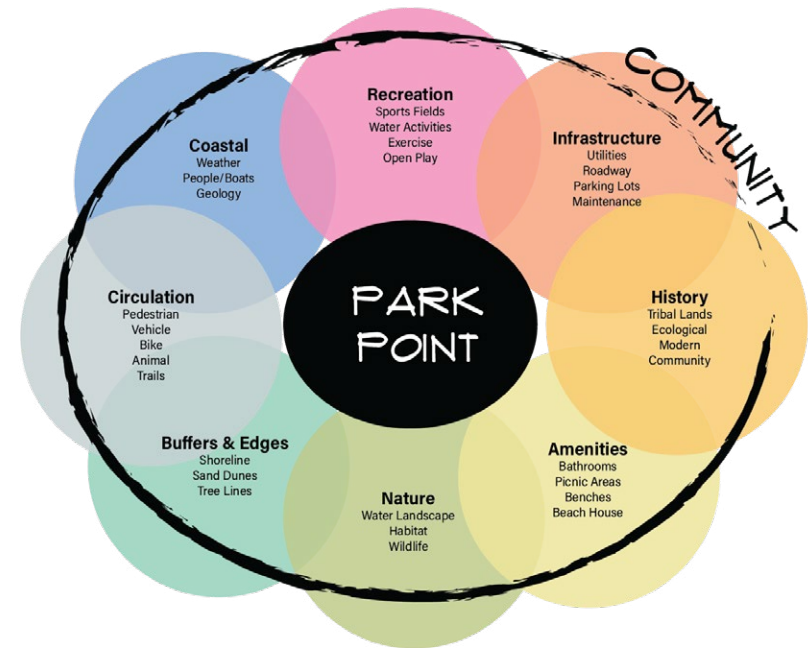


Figure 01.2 Project approach illustrating multiple layers and lenses representing the Rec Area

### + Winter 2025/2026: Park Plan Development

- A preferred design concept was established, and this report was created to document the plan process, findings, and recommendations.
- A draft plan was presented to Parks and Recreation Commission and was opened for public comment.

### + Summer 2026: Park Plan Presentation

- The final plan document returned to Parks & Recreation Commission for approval, before going to City Council for adoption.

## Regional Significance

Duluth is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the upper Great Lakes region, attracting approximately 6.7 million visitors annually. High-quality recreation and tourist destinations in Duluth include the Spirit Mountain Recreation Area, Lake Superior Zoo, Great Lakes Aquarium, Hartley Nature Center and Natural Area, the Superior Hiking Trail, Duluth Traverse, Waabizheshikana: The Marten Trail, the Lakewalk and iconic Aerial Lift Bridge, and the Rec Area.

The Rec Area is a destination unto itself as an innately appealing landscape, featuring ecologically rare habitats like the sand dunes and dune grass and providing public water access to both Lake Superior and the St. Louis River Estuary. The dunes on Minnesota Point and within the Rec Area are the only habitat in the state where beachgrass is found.

The Duluth-Superior Sailing Association (DSSA), a local non-profit organization, has maintained a community sailing program at the Rec Area for more than thirty years to provide low-cost sailing instruction, youth summer camps, and other water-based opportunities. The DSSA values inclusivity, partnering with Lighthouse Center for Vital Living, Twin Cities Blind Sailing Club and US Blind Sailing Club, Northland Adaptive Recreation, and the Wounded Warrior Project to further extend the joy of this natural-resource based recreational opportunity to as many people in the region as possible, regardless of income or disability status.

The Rec Area serves as a gateway to the Sky Harbor International Airport and the Minnesota Point Pine Forest Scientific and Natural Area. A seasonal bike lane connects the Rec Area to the Duluth Cross City Trail and the Lakewalk, which offer paved shared-use



**Figure 01.3** Aerial image of Canal Park tourist destination and Duluth's downtown hillside



**Figure 01.4** Minnesota Point's ecologically significant sand dunes and dune grass habitat

path connections to neighborhoods, Canal Park and Lincoln Park business districts, and downtown.

The Rec Area complements the region's outdoor recreation offerings, providing access to sandy beaches that contrast much of the North Shore's rocky terrain. The Rec Area provides significant public water access for swimming, sailing, paddling, fishing, and other water-based recreation activities. The Rec Area also offers sand volleyball, a multi-use field, multi-use paths, picnic facilities, and a wet meadow that has become a popular birdwatching destination. The Rec Area's public Beach House is a popular location for weddings and community events, and the sailing pier hosts DSSA's community-based sailing program. Additionally, the Rec Area holds unique cultural and historical significance, which is detailed in the following section.

## REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Rec Area provides 55-acres of high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities in a highly scenic, natural resource-based setting on Minnesota Point, attracting visitors from across the state. The Rec Area's regional significance is anchored in its special features, including its location on the world's largest freshwater sand spit, connection to other regionally significant destinations, rich history, and unique land features, plant species, and water-based community programming that are not otherwise available in the region.

GREATER MN REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS COMMISSION REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP

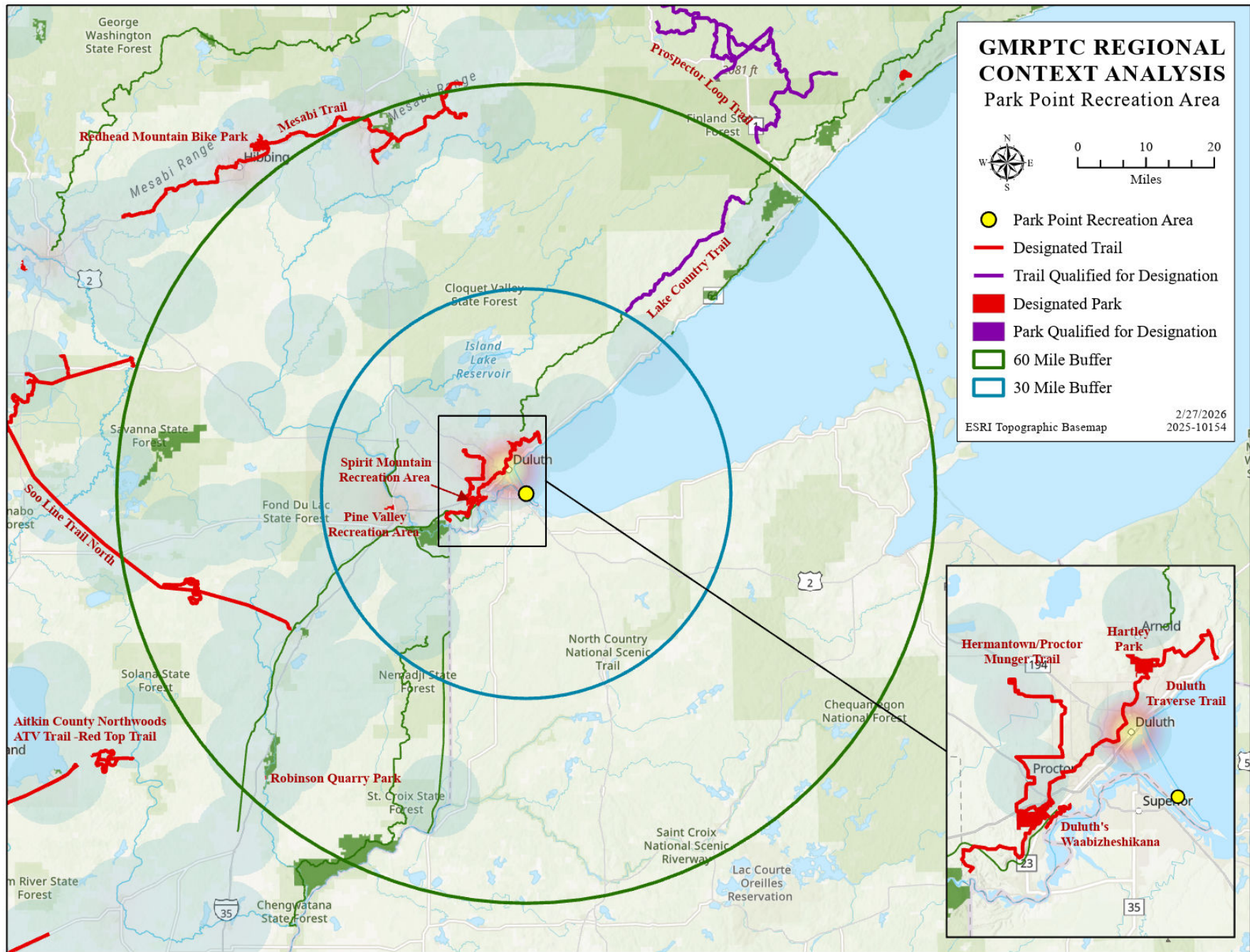


Figure 01.5 Context Map. Courtesy of Greater MN Regional Parks and Trails Commission

## Historical and Cultural Context

Historians from New History completed a historical evaluation of the Rec Area. Please see Appendix A for the full historical evaluation report.

### HISTORY OF PARK POINT RECREATION AREA

Minnesota Point has been a place of gathering and recreation for centuries. Long before Duluth became a city, Indigenous Peoples lived, stewarded, and gathered here. After the 1854 Treaty of La Pointe opened the region to Euro-American settlement, Minnesota Point evolved into a destination for leisure. By the late 19th century, Oatka Beach, located near today's 40th Street South, was the heart of summer activity, drawing visitors for picnics, swimming, and social events. Horse-drawn trolleys—and later, electric streetcars—carried crowds from the canal to the beach, and cottages began to dot the shoreline.

The early 20th century brought new attractions, including the short-lived White City Amusement Park and community spaces like Lafayette Recreation Center. Transportation improvements, such as the Aerial Lift Bridge in 1929, made Minnesota Point even more accessible. Despite its popularity, the area lacked permanent municipal facilities. That changed during the Great Depression, when federal relief programs, such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), transformed the landscape.

In 1936, the City of Duluth, aided by the WPA, began developing the Rec Area—a project envisioned as one of the largest in the region. The plan promised beaches, picnic grounds, athletic fields, and an amusement zone, all anchored by a striking bathhouse designed with Scandinavian architectural motifs.

Construction required massive earthwork, including hauling 150,000 yards of fill to raise the land above water level. By 1938, the park opened with rides, ball fields, and a growing reputation as Duluth's "Coney Island." The bathhouse, completed in 1939, offered modern amenities for thousands of bathers, while ornamental gates, landscaped picnic areas, and a boat dock rounded out the experience.

The postwar years saw the Rec Area thrive as a unique destination within Duluth's park system. Families flocked to its beach, organizations held annual picnics, and community events—from Fourth of July celebrations to sand modeling contests—became traditions. Yet by the 1960s, the amusement zone had faded, and in 1964, the rides were removed to restore the Rec Area's natural character. Federal and state grants in the late 1960s and 1970s funded new improvements, including boat docks, playgrounds, and bathhouse renovations, ensuring the park remained a draw for residents and visitors alike.

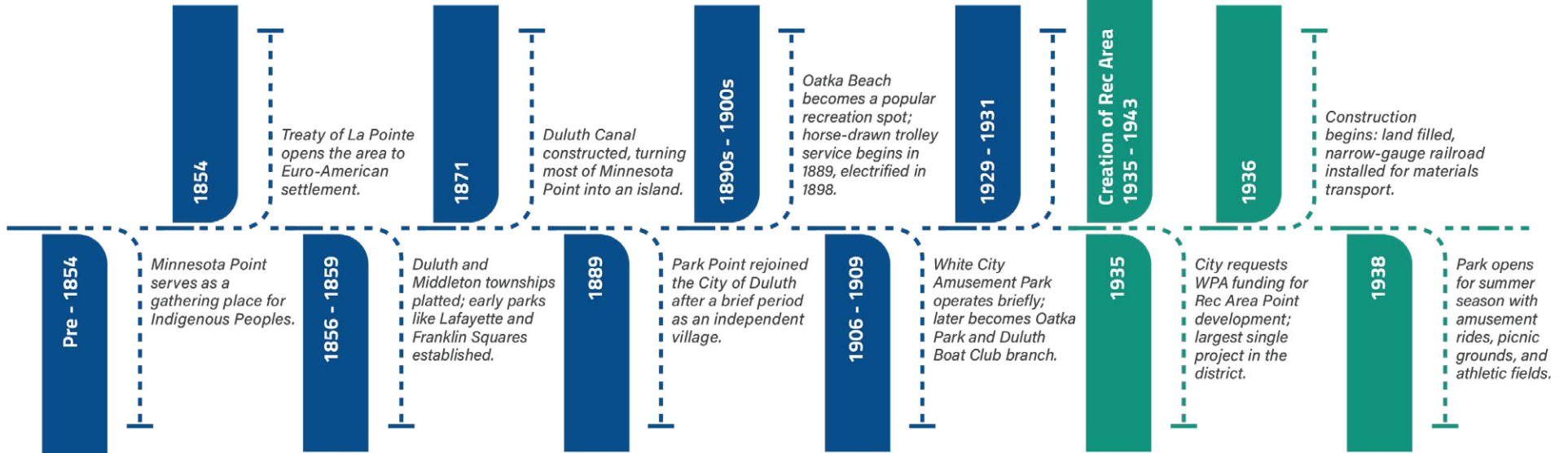
Over the past five decades, the Rec Area has continued to evolve. Additions such as picnic shelters, sand volleyball courts, and a boardwalk have complemented its iconic beach. The bathhouse, now known as the Beach House, still stands as a reminder of the WPA era—a testament to a time when public works reshaped Duluth's recreational landscape.

### TIMELINE

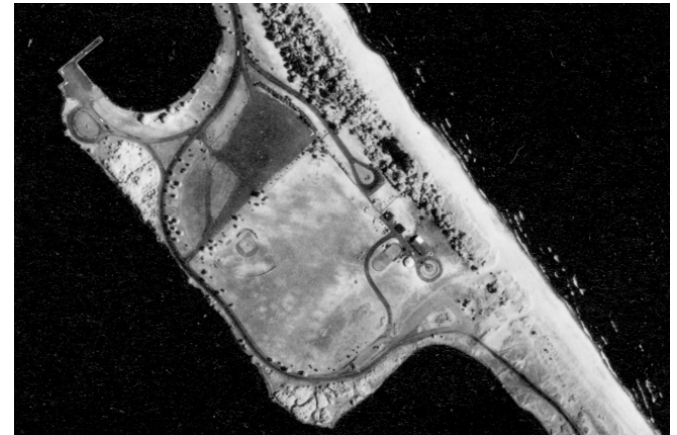
The following timeline highlights key points in time, from pre-1854 through present day, that influenced development of the Rec Area.



**Figure 01.6** View of the bathhouse, 1939. "New Park Point Bath House Opens", June 24, 1939 Duluth News Tribune, newspapers.com



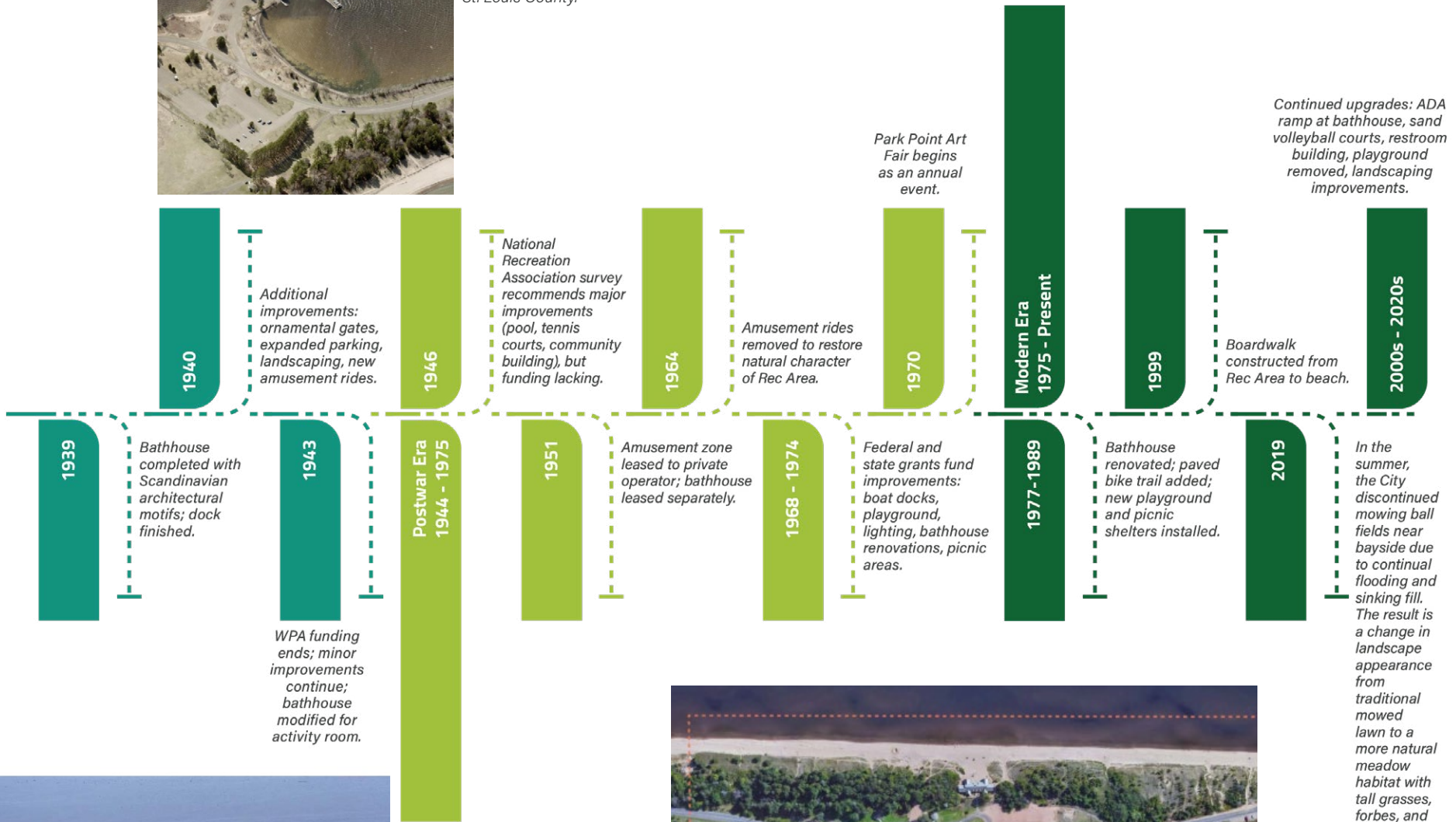
**Figure 01.7** Aerial of the recreation area, September 12, 1940. Image credit: Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online, John R. Borchert Map Library, University of Minnesota.



**Figure 01.8** Aerial of the recreation area, July 7, 1961. Image credit: Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online, John R. Borchert Map Library, University of Minnesota



**Figure 01.9** Aerial photograph of Park Point Recreation Area, 2025. Courtesy of St. Louis County.



**Figure 01.10** Aerial photograph of the recreation area, 1973. Photograph courtesy of University of Minnesota Duluth, Minnesota Digital Library



**Figure 01.11** View of the Park Point Recreation Area. Image courtesy of the City of Duluth

## Current Trends

### RECREATION AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

Duluth's comprehensive park plan, *Essential Spaces: Duluth Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan (2022)*, explored recreation trends and revealed a strong and growing demand for outdoor activities. Survey results from the *Essential Spaces Plan* show that Duluth residents are highly engaged with parks and natural areas, with 57% visiting on a weekly basis. Walking, hiking, and running on trails emerged as the most popular activities for Duluthians, followed closely by enjoying nature, relaxing, and biking. These activities are accessible, low-cost, and flexible, appealing to all ages and skill levels.

The *Essential Spaces Plan* also highlighted outcomes from statewide reports on outdoor activities, visitation rates, and economic impacts. The *2022-2024 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)* indicates that 70% of Minnesotans identify outdoor activities as very important, and that 77% of local recreation providers reported increased visitation to their parks. Increased park visitation and participation in outdoor recreation bode well for state



**Figure 01.12** *Duluth residents out enjoying parks and trails*

and local economies. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, outdoor recreation generated over \$8.4 billion in Minnesota in 2020.

### DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Duluth is the center of a growing metropolitan area where the population is expected to rise from 281,000 today to over 300,000 by 2040. Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2024 American Community Survey, the median age for the Greater Duluth Area is 41.4 years old, while Duluth alone skews younger with a median age of 35.2 years old. Comparatively, the median age for both Minnesota and the United States is 39.2 years old. The median household income for the Greater Duluth Area is \$69,309, which is about the same for Duluth alone at \$69,255. The median household income for Duluth and the Greater Duluth Area is significantly less than the median income for Minnesota, which is \$87,117. Both Duluth and the Greater Duluth Area have a greater proportion of persons living below the poverty line, at 15.8% and 12.6%, respectively, compared to Minnesota as a whole at 9.3%. The Duluth area's lower income levels highlight the need for safeguarding affordable and accessible recreation opportunities for all.

### CLIMATE AND SHORELINE TRENDS

The effects of climate change, such as increased storm event frequency and historic Lake Superior high-water levels, over the past few decades have had an adverse effect on many of Duluth's park spaces and waterfront shorelines, including the Rec Area. There are growing concerns for the continual loss of land, including soil erosion, embankment sloughing, and significant damage to infrastructure due to heavy wave action and large swings in lake levels.

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Today, the Rec Area remains what it has always been: a beloved waterfront gathering space that blends history and the natural beauty of Lake Superior. Because the site retains historic integrity and is potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places due to being a notable federal relief project and having a rich history of recreation, future improvements may trigger state and federal historic preservation reviews, including Section 106 compliance. This means project planning should incorporate early coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office, design documentation, and potential mitigation measures to avoid or minimize adverse effects on historic resources.

The modern park design should be flexible, adaptable, and should seek to accommodate a variety of needs and uses, now and into the future. Outcomes to be explored include, but are not limited to, flexible field and plaza spaces that serve a variety of programming and rental uses, gender-neutral and family-friendly restroom configurations, parking that accommodates diverse transportation options, and providing intentional experiences for both learning and play.

Recreation opportunities must be balanced with ecological resiliency. Practices that support resiliency include reducing mowed and manicured landscaping, retreating facilities away from vulnerable shorelines, and identifying solutions that work with, rather than against, human behavior and natural systems.

A successful plan is one that is rooted in the reality of day-to-day operations, park maintenance demands, and financial limitations. Options to reduce maintenance costs while providing a high-quality park experience should be explored, including the consolidation of recreational amenities into a smaller footprint, accounting for sand movement at all phases of the asset's lifespan, and removing or replacing aging infrastructure that has become cumbersome to maintain.



**Figure 01.13** *Examples of recent storm events and City infrastructure damage*

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# 02

## Existing Conditions

The Rec Area offers a unique landscape of sandy beaches, dunes, upland and wetland habitats, as well as patches of wooded terrain. This scenic natural setting features environmentally sensitive dune habitats that are vulnerable to erosion and damage from human activity. The Rec Area currently supports a range of recreational uses and experiences with heavy seasonal visitation that places stress on both natural resources and built infrastructure.

Existing facilities include parking lots, the Beach House, boat and paddlecraft amenities, picnic areas, and trails. Many of the facilities, however, are showing signs of aging and lack full accessibility. There is limited wayfinding signage, and circulation patterns are challenging for visitors to navigate. Environmental challenges such as shoreline erosion, invasive species, and stormwater management issues are evident, underscoring the need for careful stewardship. Overall, the Rec Area remains a popular destination, but its infrastructure and ecological systems require solutions that ensure safety, accessibility, and long-term sustainability.

The Rec Area can be divided into separate areas based on uses, management levels, and common challenges. The map in figure 2.1 highlights each use area discussed in this chapter which include site circulation and parking, a watercraft hub & harborside shoreline, a recreation and programming area, habitat areas, and Beach House and beach areas.



**Figure 02.1** Rec Area Graphic Base Map

# REC AREA HIGHLIGHT MAP

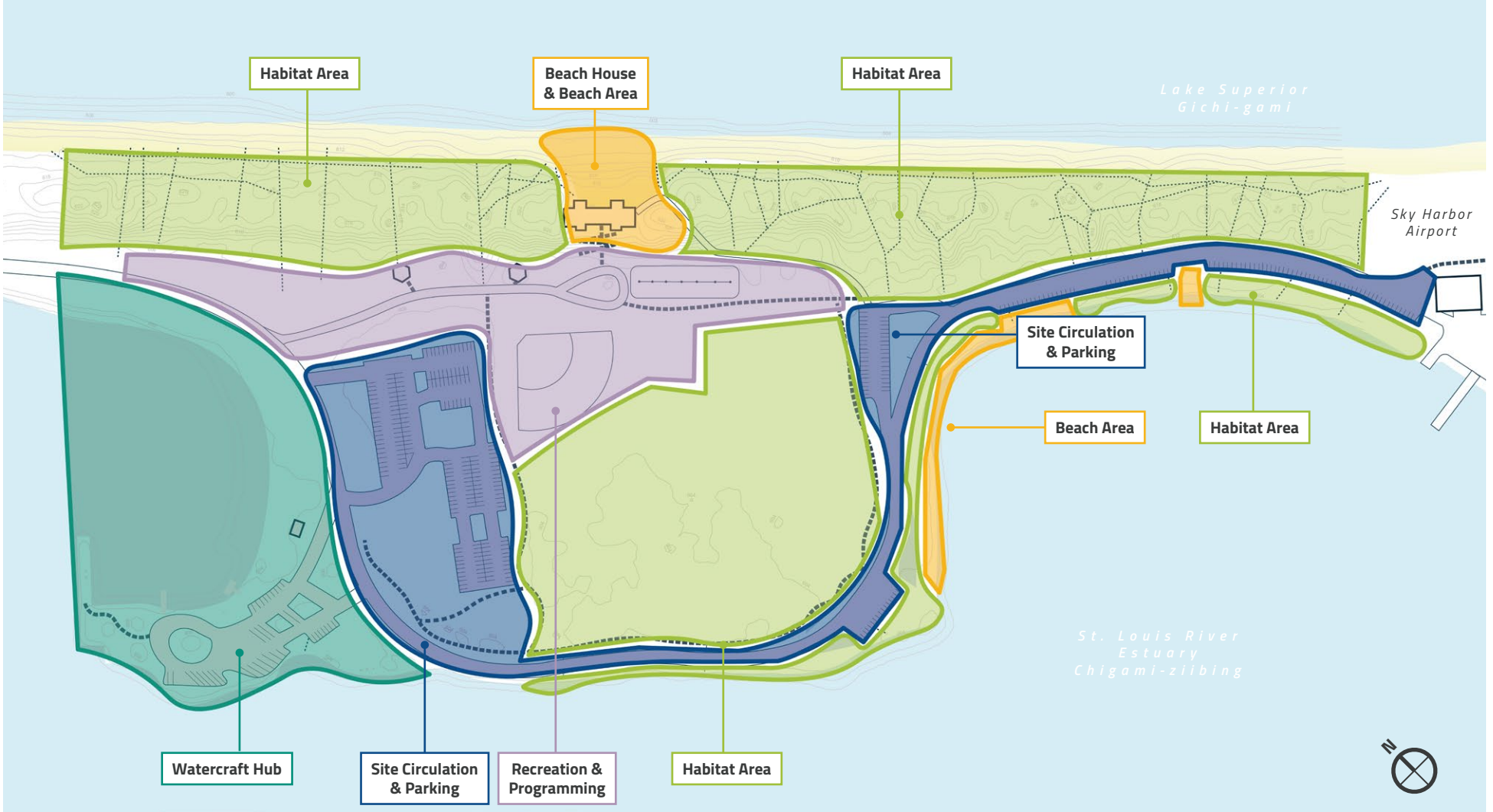


Figure 02.2 Rec Area with use area highlights

## Site Circulation & Parking

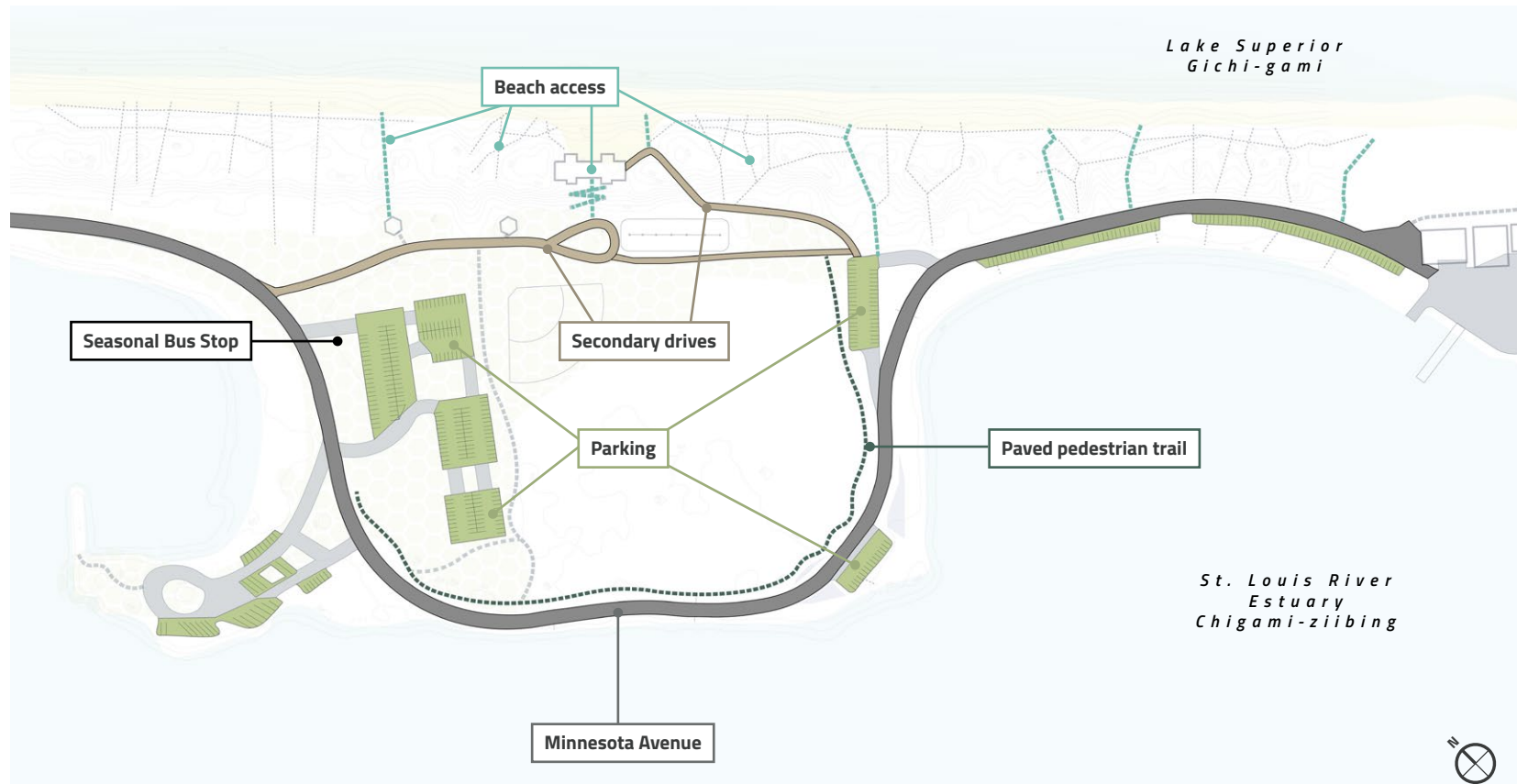


Figure 02.3 Overview of Site Circulation & Parking Highlights

### KEY COMPONENTS

- + Minnesota Avenue
- + Secondary drives
- + Parking
- + Paved pedestrian trail
- + Beach access
- + Seasonal bus stop

### KEY CONCERNS

- + Minnesota Avenue is at risk of additional erosion and wash-out, and is in poor condition
- + Parking areas are not well connected to key amenity spaces and are poorly designed
- + Some pedestrian paths are not accessible or continuous, some areas are in need of full replacement
- + Excessive informal beach access points put the dune and dunegrass habitat at risk and reduce coastal resiliency
- + Lack of intuitive site circulation and wayfinding throughout site

## MINNESOTA AVENUE

The Rec Area is organized around Minnesota Avenue, which provides vehicle access to parking areas and site amenities. There is no dedicated bike lane within the Rec Area boundary. However, the north shoulder of Minnesota Avenue is used as a seasonal bike lane between the canal and the Rec Area, with parking restricted to the south shoulder during the summer months. Minnesota Avenue was added as part of the original Works Progress Administration (WPA) project in 1937-1938 and was mostly dirt and gravel material. In 1971, the portion of Minnesota Avenue that runs through the Rec Area (from 40th Street to the airport) was paved with bituminous pavement. Over the years, the City has conducted various roadway improvement initiatives to other portions of the roadway, but no significant reconstruction or overlay projects have occurred in the past 55 years within the Rec Area. As a result, the roadway pavement is in relatively poor condition. The proximity of Minnesota Avenue to the water's edge, combined with increasing storm damage and changing climate patterns, puts the road at high-risk for eroding into the bay or being completely washed-out during a major storm event.



Figure 02.4 *Minnesota Avenue*

## SECONDARY DRIVES

The site circulation includes two secondary drives, both of which are gated and serve the Beach House. The drop-off loop in front of the building is primarily used for special events and unloading materials and equipment. The drive leading directly to the building is an important connection, with a primary purpose of providing access for maintenance vehicles. Yet, blowing sand frequently collects along the drive and requires regular clearing to maintain access.



Figure 02.5 *Secondary drives*

## PARKING

There are several parking lots in the Rec Area, which vary in size and layout, and that combined provide approximately 275 parking stalls for the Rec Area. The largest, primary lot has approximately 173 stalls and is notably far away from the Beach House, at 500 feet. Other parking lots provide vehicle parking for the watercraft launches and un-lifeguarded beach areas. At the southern point of the harborside is a small parking lot that provides informal access to the bay for ice fishing during winter months. Pull-in parking stalls along Minnesota Avenue are primarily used for overflow parking during times of peak park usage and to access the Minnesota Point Pine Forest Trail that extends beyond the

Rec Area to the end of Minnesota Point. The parking areas have limited lighting, wayfinding, and landscaping features that define circulation. Pedestrian connections from most of the parking areas are informal or non-existent. There is no bike parking within the Rec Area.

### PAVED PEDESTRIAN TRAIL

A paved pedestrian trail follows closely along much of Minnesota Avenue. While this trail, in theory, links major use areas, the path is not accessible and is in poor condition. Much of the pavement is cracked and covered in vegetation or sand, some segments end without direct connections to other paths or facilities, and there is no trail signage. Other pedestrian routes connect parking areas to the Beach House, open field space, and volleyball courts.

### BEACH ACCESS

Pedestrians access the beach through a variety of formalized boardwalks and informal trails. Beach access points are not consistently integrated with the trail network. Informal paths are common, indicating demand for more intentional connections. These informal trails put the sensitive dune and dunegrass habitat at great risk while increasing maintenance costs. Providing formalized access points and adding fencing and signage may help reduce the number of informal trails and better protect the sensitive ecosystem. In 2025, the boardwalk closest to the south eastern parking lot was replaced with a new, accessible boardwalk. Other boardwalks in the Rec Area are in disrepair, nearly fully covered in sand, and in need of replacement as well. The Minnesota Point Trail can be accessed near the entrance to the Sky Harbor Airport to visit the Minnesota Point Pine Forest Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) and the eastern portions of Minnesota Point.

### SEASONAL BUS STOP

During non-winter months, buses servicing Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) route 113 travel into the Rec Area and drop riders off at the north end of the large lot near the Beach House. During winter months, buses stop just shy of the Rec Area, at a pull-off location near the park entrance.



Figure 02.6 *Paved pedestrian path*

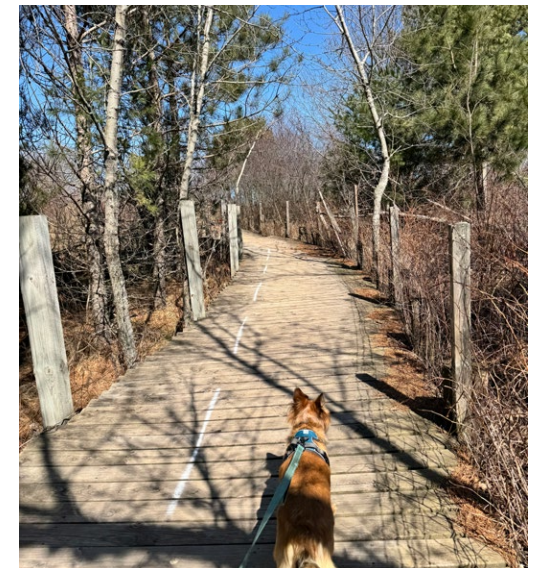


Figure 02.7 *Formal beach access*

## EXISTING SITE CONDITION PHOTOS



**Figure 02.8** Existing maintenance drive (left)



**Figure 02.9** Temporary DTA bus stop (right)



**Figure 02.10** Existing road conditions at park entrance (left)



**Figure 02.11** Existing maintenance drive (right)

## Watercraft Hub & Harborside Area



Figure 02.12 Overview of Watercraft Area Highlights

### KEY COMPONENTS

- + Public watercraft launches
- + Sailing Pier
- + Seawall
- + Shoreline edges and water depth
- + Vehicle and trailer parking

### KEY CONCERNS

- + Structural condition and replacement needs of the seawall and sailing pier
- + Parking lot eroding into the water
- + Parking capacity and lack of separation between vehicles and pedestrians
- + Lack of accessible pedestrian paths and adaptive watercraft launch opportunities
- + Capacity limits at the sailing pier
- + Shallow depth of water within the bay
- + Lack of amenities to support activities in this area
- + Shoreline erosion and long-term climate resiliency

## PUBLIC WATERCRAFT LAUNCHES

The watercraft area includes one motorized boat launch and one non-motorized accessible paddlecraft launch, providing access to the northwestern bay. The boat launches are owned and managed by the DNR, under an agreement with the City. The motorized boat launch area is functional but limited in size, accommodating small to medium watercraft only. The motorized boat launch consists of a dock and two concrete ramps that allows vehicles to back their motorized boats into the bay. Both launches are under-utilized primarily due to excess sediment accumulation resulting in shallow water conditions. On the lower, more southern section of the watercraft area is an informal, sandy natural surface launch space.

## SAILING PIER

Under an agreement with the City, the Duluth-Superior Sailing Association (DSSA) leases the pier space, offering summer camps and seasonal programming. The pier lacks modern amenities and the relatively small size limits DSSA's ability to expand programming opportunities. The pier consists of a concrete structure, approximately 12' wide, and can accommodate up to twelve sailboats total, utilizing parking on both sides.

## SEAWALL

The seawall and associated sailing pier are established features, though their condition is poor. At approximately 87 years old, the seawall has outlasted its design lifespan and further evaluation is needed to determine the best option for repair or replacement.

## SHORELINE EDGES AND WATER DEPTH

Aside from the seawall, the shoreline in this area is a combination of soft surfaces and naturalized vegetation. Shoreline conditions show signs of wear from repeated use and significant erosion from wave action and fluctuating water levels. The water depth in the dredged bay area has become more shallow over time due to sediment collection and now causes challenges for many watercrafts.



Figure 02.13 Motorized boat launch



Figure 02.14 Non-motorized, accessible paddlecraft launch



Figure 02.15 Sailing pier with seawall

## VEHICLE & TRAILER PARKING

There are approximately 18 vehicle parking stalls and approximately 18 trailer parking stalls in the watercraft area. Parking capacity is constrained during peak periods, and the circulation can be tight for vehicles with trailers. Sections of this parking area have experienced extensive erosion and are visibly crumbling into the bay. There is no dedicated boat storage space.

## AMENITIES

Amenities in this area include signage for the Duluth-Superior Sailing Association, one grill, two benches, a trash hub, and a rent-able paddlecraft rack. There is no covered shelter in this area. The watercraft area is also lacking public restrooms, as an outdated bathroom building was removed in 2025 due to its sinking foundation and poor condition.

## PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

While there is a gravel path extending from the end of the parking lot to the sailing pier, the watercraft hub generally lacks formalized pedestrian routes. There is no clear route from the Beach House and recreation area, where public restrooms and shelters are located, to the water craft area. The lack of pedestrian paths is a safety concern due to the lack of clear separation between pedestrian and vehicle movement. Additionally, informal paths have developed overtime, which do not meet accessibility standards and increase maintenance needs.



Figure 02.16 Vehicle & trailer parking lot conditions



Figure 02.17 Typical site amenities condition

## EXISTING SITE CONDITION PHOTOS



**Figure 02.18** Trailer parking flooding (left)



**Figure 02.19** Existing DSSA signage (right)



**Figure 02.20** Trail to sailing pier (left)



**Figure 02.21** Natural surface launch area (right)

## Recreation & Programming Area

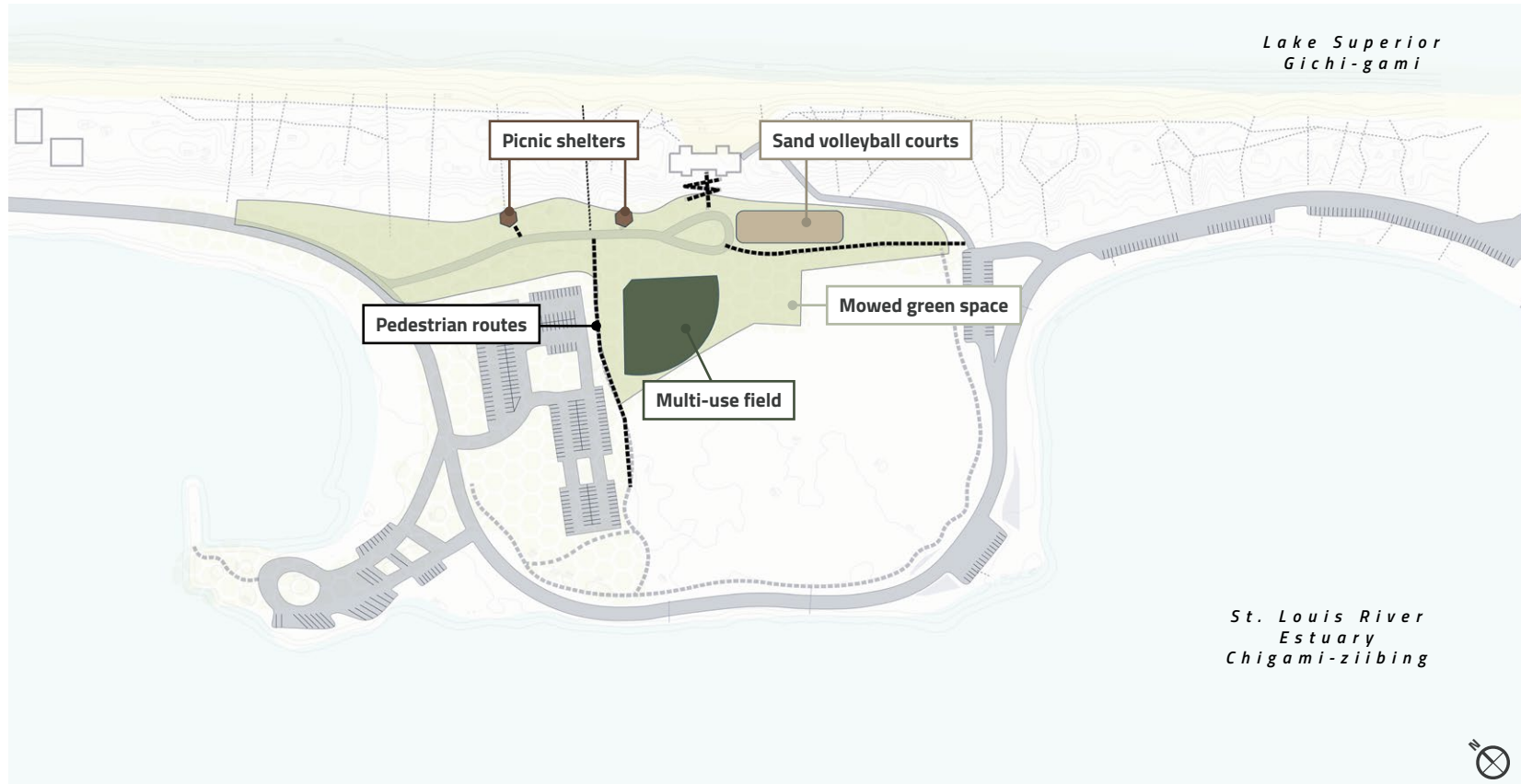


Figure 02.22 Overview of Recreation & Programming Area Highlights

### KEY COMPONENTS

- + Sand volleyball courts
- + Multi-use field
- + Other mowed green space
- + Picnic shelters

### KEY CONCERNS

- + Wind blown sand migration that increases maintenance responsibilities
- + Lack of dedicated, accessible pedestrian connection from the parking lot to the Beach House
- + Aging facilities and amenities that are more costly to maintain as they age without replacement
- + Extent of mowed green space that lacks a strong purpose and connection to other facilities
- + Ensuring the field space accommodates community needs without creating a maintenance burden

### SAND VOLLEYBALL COURTS

There are six sand volleyball courts in the recreation and programming area. These courts were established in the late 1980s in the former amusement park location and are heavily used. The courts lack proper barriers and separation from other spaces, allowing sand from the volleyball courts drifts into the pedestrian pathways, and allowing rocks and debris from the nearby service road to settle in the sand courts, causing safety concerns for users and maintenance issues for staff.

### MULTI-USE FIELD

The multi-use field is approximately 12,450 square feet and equipped with a backstop. This space allows for flexible programming opportunities and special events. The field is not formally leased nor used by any singular sports group or organization.

### OTHER MOWED GREEN SPACE

In addition to the open field space, almost three acres of green space are mowed and maintained by City staff. These areas provide open space between Minnesota Avenue and the dunes, around the picnic pavilions, and between parking areas and other park amenities.

### PICNIC SHELTERS

Two 800 square feet picnic shelters are available for public use and private rental space for large gatherings. In 2025, the picnic shelters were rented 84 times and generated \$12,040 in revenue. The picnic shelters are aging and not well-connected to the other recreational facilities on site.

### AMENITIES

The picnic shelters and other recreational facilities in this area are supported with three grills, nine or more picnic tables, three trash hubs, and pedestrian lighting. This area does not include a drinking fountain/bottle filler, wash-off stations, or permanent restroom facilities.



Figure 02.23 Existing volleyball courts



Figure 02.24 Existing picnic shelter

## PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

In this area, the gated drive and drop-off loop also serve as a pedestrian path, which can lead to conflicts when the gate is open. The drive connects to traditional pedestrian paths that extend towards the airport in one direction and towards the bayside in another. These routes connect to the major recreational facilities and are used annually to host the Park Point Art Fair, among other events.



Figure 02.25 Existing path to picnic shelter



Figure 02.26 Existing path in front of sand volleyball courts

## EXISTING SITE CONDITION PHOTOS



**Figure 02.27** *Informal access/compaction (left)*

**Figure 02.28** *Existing outdoor hazard signage (right)*



**Figure 02.29** *Erosion wear and tear along path (left)*



**Figure 02.30** *Maintenance drive with sand migration and volleyball courts (right)*



## Habitat Areas



Figure 02.31 Overview of Habitat Areas Highlights

### KEY COMPONENTS

- + Sand dunes
- + Pine forest
- + Naturalized field
- + Vegetated shoreline

### KEY CONCERNS

- + Informal, unimproved trails are threatening the fragile sand dune system, endemic beachgrass, and coastal resiliency
- + Protecting migratory bird habitat and other area wildlife
- + Protecting native species and controlling the spread of invasive species
- + Balancing low-maintenance naturalized spaces with recreational field uses for long-term success
- + Reestablishment of natural ecological processes (fire, herbivorous browsing)

## SAND DUNES & BEACHGRASS

Along the lakeside shoreline, onshore winds have formed low sand dunes across Minnesota Point, including within the Rec Area. The dunes act as a natural buffer and help to protect inland spaces from incoming waves and storm surges. The dunes on Minnesota Point are fragile and are the only habitat in the state where beachgrass is found. The dense root structure of beachgrass helps stabilize the dunes and improve coastal resiliency. However, beachgrass is easily damaged by human foot-traffic. The vast number of informal/social trails that cut through the sand dunes are a threat to the unique plant community, allow for invasive species to become established, and threaten the long-term stability of the sand dunes themselves.

## PINE FOREST

Just beyond the sand dunes is another natural buffer defined by the dominant pine tree plant community. This forested area offers shade, provides wildlife habitat, and acts as a transition zone between the developed park spaces and the waterfront. The pine forest here, and along other parts of Minnesota Point, serve as a critical stopover for migratory birds. This forest regime is a fire dependent woodland system that has not seen fire for over a century. It is showing signs of decline due to human impacts, such as development pressures and social trails that cross the forest footprint, and due to a lack of natural disturbances, such as fire.

## NATURALIZED FIELD

The naturalized field space, also known as a wet meadow, is approximately 9.5 acres. In the more recent past, this area was comprised of several dedicated athletic fields. However, because the filled land is slowly sinking overtime, it became too wet for sustainable recreational use. In 2019, it was determined that the most sustainable and cost-effective option was to allow the fields to remain wet and to naturalize. Since that time, the space has colonized with a diverse variety of native and non native species of grasses, forbes, and sedges. It is surprisingly diverse and has shown to function as a stormwater filtration buffer. This natural vegetated buffer is believed to be a significant factor in the reduction of goose based e.coli in the harbor. In recent years, the meadow has been invaded by woody tree and shrub species following expected habitat succession process to forest.



Figure 02.32 Sand dune fencing



Figure 02.33 Pine forest



Figure 02.34 Naturalized Field

## VEGETATED SHORELINE

The shoreline includes stretches of riprap and vegetated edges, interspersed with areas of erosion and sediment buildup. Vegetation consists of a combination of native grasses and invasive species, with some areas showing signs of overgrowth which obscure views of the bay. Some sections of the vegetated shoreline are very narrow and wind deposits sand on and across Minnesota Avenue, creating ongoing maintenance and user challenges.



**Figure 02.35** Existing narrow shoreline with erosion



**Figure 02.36** Harborside southbay shoreline

## Beach House & Beach Areas

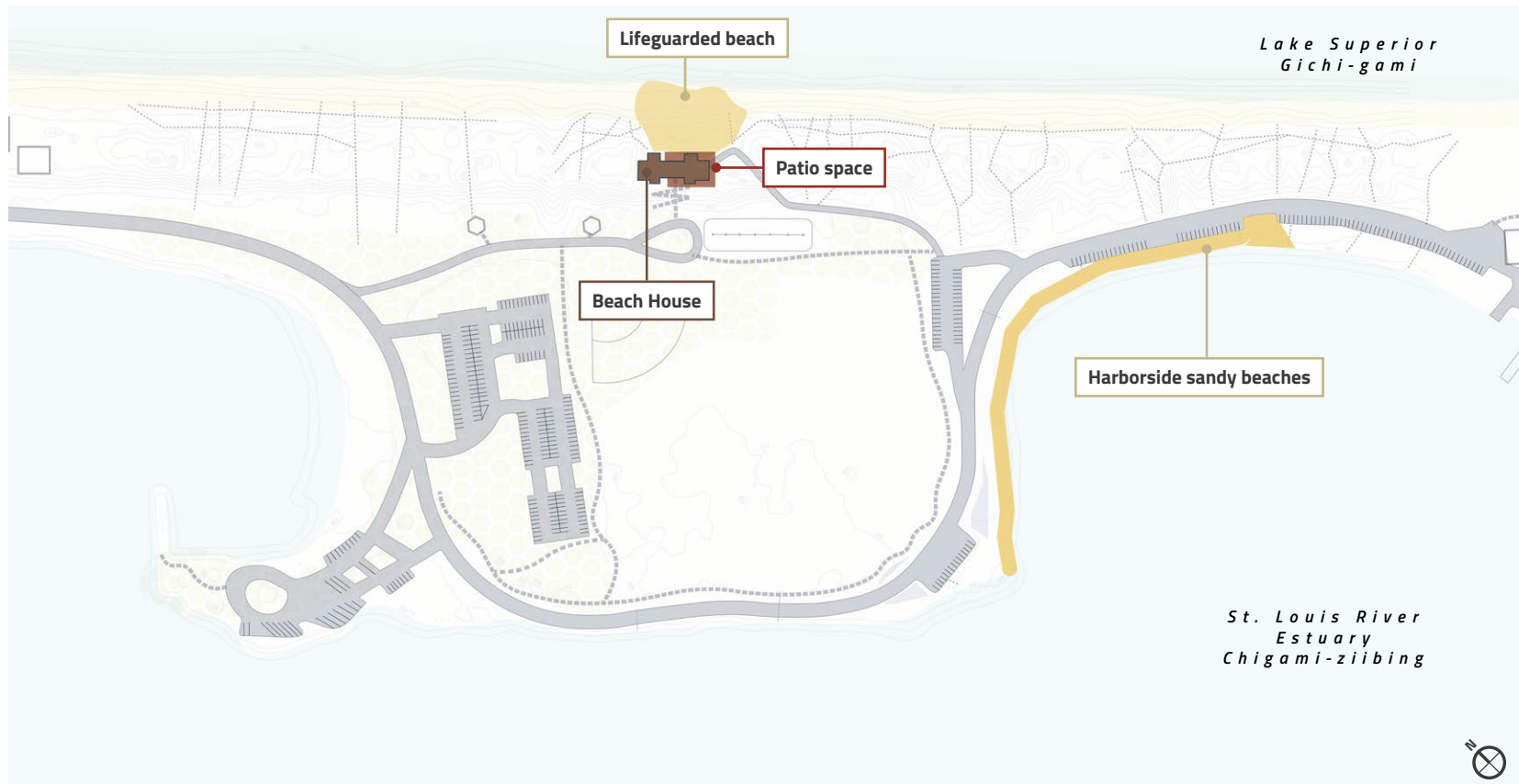


Figure 02.37 Overview of Beach House & Beach Areas Highlights

### KEY COMPONENTS

- + Beach House
- + Patio space
- + Lifeguarded beach
- + Harborside sandy beaches

### KEY CONCERNS

- + Failing retaining walls in need of replacement
- + Controlling wind blown sand movement to keep sand away from recreational facilities and reduce maintenance burdens
- + Ensuring safety and comfort of beach users

## BEACH HOUSE

The Beach House, which is 5,000 square feet and was constructed in 1939, is a popular rental facility for weddings and other special events. The Beach House is a centralized focal point of the park. A new grand staircase with accessible ramp was recently installed on the bayside which provides improved access to the building and beach area from the parking lots. The Beach House is the only location within the Rec Area that has public restrooms available, but the building is open seasonally and with limited hours. The Beach House is currently operated under a third party agreement for management of rental events from mid-May through the beginning of October. While specific building improvements to the Beach House are outside of the scope of this project, the areas directly surrounding the Beach House were analyzed.

## PATIO SPACE

A paved patio that surrounds the Beach House provides an accessible beach viewing area and is a popular space for programming and gathering. Retaining walls separate the patio and building from the sand dunes, managing sand movement and erosion. However, the timber retaining walls are visibly deteriorating and have become a safety concern and a maintenance burden. Swimmer rinse/shower stations were recently added to either side of the Beach House. There are no covered seating options in this space.

## BEACH AREA WITH LIFEGUARDS

The beachfront in this area is the only public beach in Duluth where lifeguarding services are provided. The City contracts beach safety services, inclusive of lifeguarding, from the Lake Superior YMCA. The YMCA staff utilize a small office space inside the Beach House.

## HARBORSIDE SANDY BEACHES

Along the harborside, there is an approximately 800 linear foot stretch of sandy beach area. This beach area is accessed directly off of Minnesota Avenue with parking bays interspersed throughout, although no formal access is designated. Many park users utilize this sandy beach area for walking and reflection as it is protected from strong lake winds. Although not a popular spot to swim due to sediment infill and frequent high-levels of E. coli, the beach



Figure 02.38 Beach party event



Figure 02.39 New accessible ramp at Beach House



Figure 02.40 Beach House lakeside photo

does provide quick access to public water for paddlecraft users. Public safety is a concern at this location because it is so close to the airport and a navigable shipping channel, while also containing water quality issues.

## Existing Conditions Summary

Key planning considerations that emerged from analyzing the Rec Area's existing conditions include:

- + Increasing climate resiliency in the Rec Area will require a multi-faceted approach. A combination of efforts including retreating Minnesota Avenue, shoreline stabilization, erosion control measures, stormwater management, formalizing access points/removing informal paths, invasive species removal, restoring native plant communities, and sand movement control measures, among others, should be explored.
- + Controlling sand movement is critical for reducing maintenance, including around and through the dunes, volleyball courts, harborside beaches, and the area around the Beach House.
- + Creating an integrated site circulation plan would improve parking capacity, accessibility, stormwater management, and pedestrian safety, while better protecting sensitive natural resources and reducing long-term capital improvement costs. Elements to consider include accessible pedestrian paths connecting to all key facilities, lighting, safe pedestrian crossings, bike parking, and wayfinding.
- + New or added amenities should be considered in the context of limited financial capacity. The cost of new amenities should be compared against their ability to generate revenue, short- and long-term maintenance needs, environmental benefits, and overall community benefits and safety. For example, a new picnic shelter with seating and grills will generate rental income that can be reinvested in the park system.
- + Additional levels of planning will be needed to resolve some key issues, such as seawall replacement options, and mitigation efforts may be required to accommodate any adverse effect findings related to the historic nature of the park.



Figure 02.41 Harborside Sandy Beaches

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# 03

# Community Engagement

The City of Duluth and LHB conducted extensive community engagement to help guide investment priorities and to better understand community needs and preferences for the Rec Area. The engagement process included four focus group meetings, two community input sessions, two online surveys, and discussions with key stakeholders and existing partners.

The following chapter summarizes each event, outlines emerging priorities that were generated as part of the process, and illustrates some of the early concept alternatives that were considered for the Rec Area.



**Figure 03.1** Lafayette Community Center meeting room

## Establishing Priorities

### Small Group Engagement

In May and June 2025, the City of Duluth and LHB hosted four focus group meetings with over 48 key stakeholders, including natural resource specialists, City staff, community and recreational ambassadors, and Tribal Historic Preservation Office specialists. Each group was asked to confirm our understanding of existing

conditions within the Rec Area, identify assets and opportunities, specify concerns and issues, and describe what a successful plan and improvement project would look like from their unique perspective.

Common themes that emerged from the focus group meetings included providing access for all, amending ecological health, cultivating a sense of place, improving sustainability, and the need for infrastructure reinvestment within the Rec Area. At the center of all the stakeholders desires for the Rec Area, it was agreed that a successful Rec Area Plan will harmoniously balance the common themes, without any one taking priority over another.

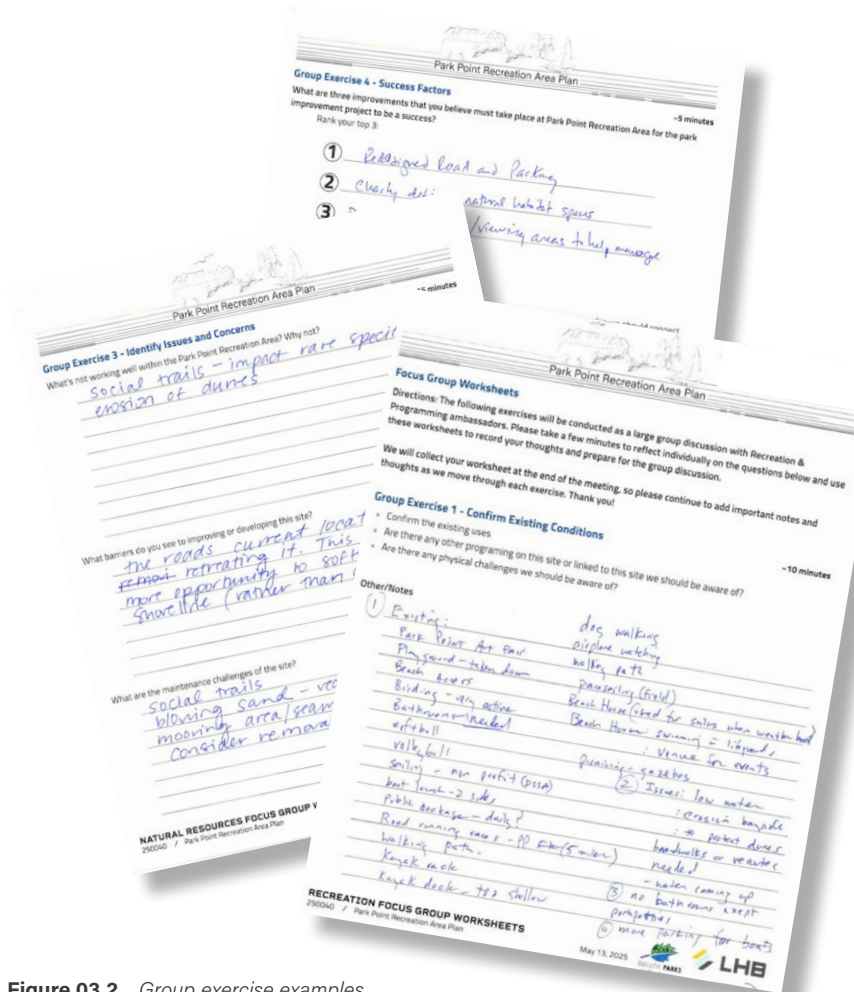


Figure 03.2 Group exercise examples

### Community-wide Engagement

To better understand what community members love about the Rec Area today, what they hope to see improved in the future, and to test the themes that emerged from the key focus group meetings, the team hosted one in-person community input session and published one online community survey.



Figure 03.3 Recreational ambassador working session at City Hall

### COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION 1

On June 18, 2025, a community input session was held. Community members were asked to provide feedback on the emerging priorities developed by the focus groups, and to share their preferences on park features and park improvements they would most like to see at the Rec Area. Approximately 15 people attended the in-person event.

### ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY 1

The online survey was open from May 30 to June 22, 2025, and gathered feedback from 459 people. Questions focused on visitation habits, such as how often people visit and who they visit with. Results showed that most visited several times a month, followed by a few times a year. Most respondents visit with family (65%), alone (50%), or with friends (47%), highlighting the area’s role as a family-friendly and social destination.

Another set of questions asked about activities and favorite features. The top activities included swimming and beach time (62%), enjoying nature and wildlife (62%), walking or running (56%), boating and paddling (31%), and picnics or gatherings (25%). Respondents valued access to water and beach most (169 mentions), followed by open space for recreation, natural beauty, proximity and accessibility, and birdwatching opportunities. These responses emphasize the importance of preserving the area’s natural character while supporting diverse recreational uses.

The survey also explored improvement priorities and future additions. Key needs included improved restroom access, better parking and signage, improvements to the existing multi-use trail and bike infrastructure, and restoring the removed playground. Desired additions included drinking fountains, shaded seating, food truck

spaces, and enhanced water access. Environmental stewardship emerged as a major theme, with calls for dune protection, invasive species removal, and habitat restoration. Overall, respondents envisioned a park that balances ecological health, accessibility, modern amenities, and community connection. See Appendix B for more detail on the survey results.

### Project Priorities

Five priorities emerged from the first phase of community engagement.

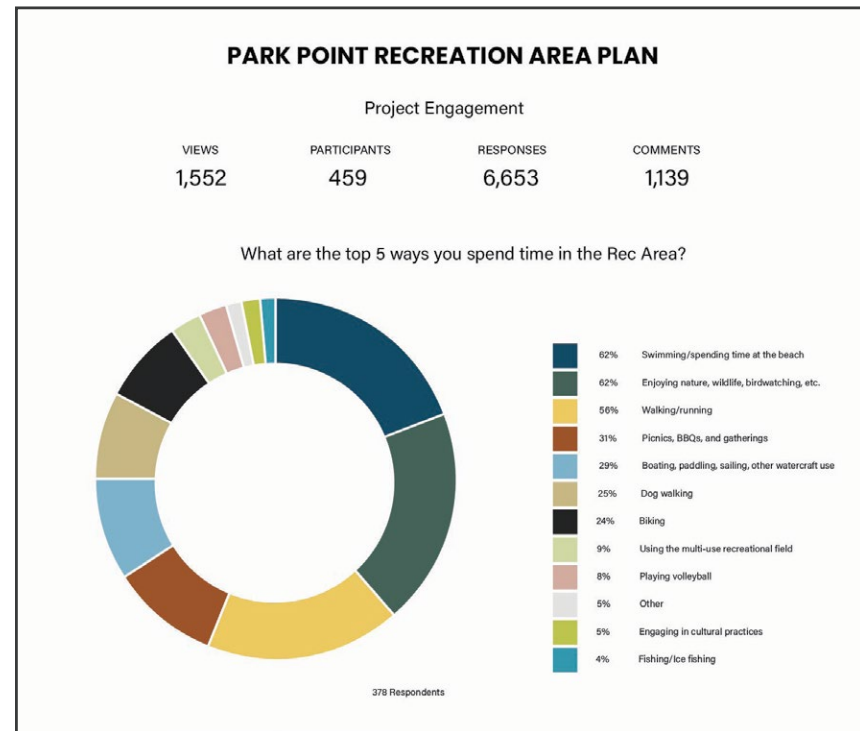


Figure 03.4 Sample of online community survey results

+ **Access for All**

- Provide accessibility to all park features for all persons and for all modes of transportation. Re-imagine locations and functionality of roads and parking areas. Improve lakeside and harborside water access for all users. Enhance bike and pedestrian experiences and safety.

+ **Ecological Health**

- Support a diverse and vibrant ecosystem. Inform users on local ecosystem through educational signage. Enhance and restore dune ecosystem, wetlands, shorelines, and migratory bird habitat.

+ **Sense of Place**

- Cultivate an identity that honors the unique culture, history, and environment. Create defined spaces for people to connect with each other and nature. Boost user experience with cohesive signage and wayfinding. Support cultural heritage and acknowledge indigenous lands.

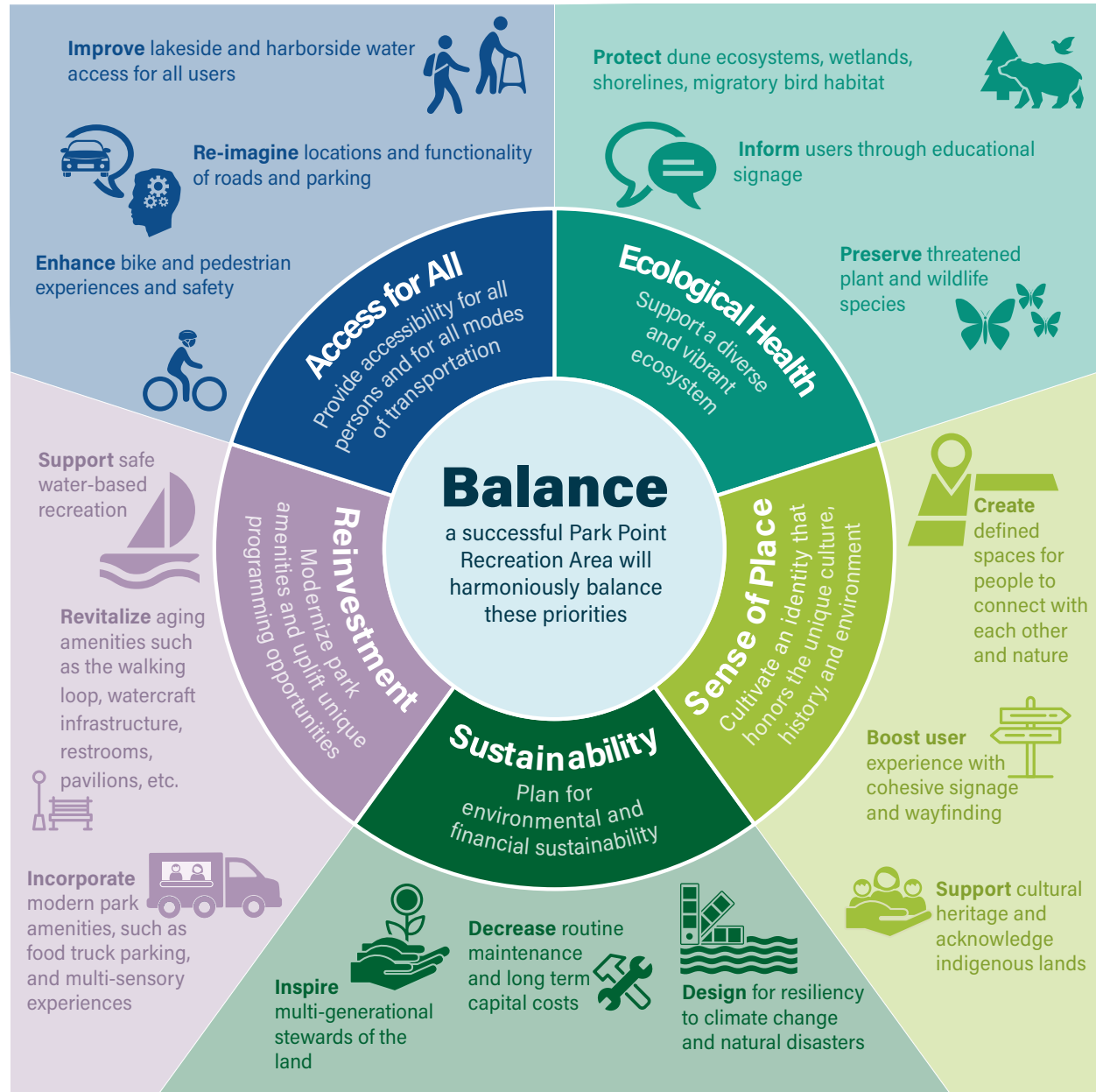


Figure 03.5 Emerging priorities developed with stakeholders and community members

## + Sustainability

- Plan for environmental and financial sustainability. Decrease routine maintenance and long-term capital costs. Design for resiliency to climate change and natural disasters. Inspire multi-generational stewards of the land.

## + Reinvestment

- Modernize park amenities and uplift unique programming opportunities. Support safe water-based recreation. Revitalize aging amenities, such as the walking loop, watercraft infrastructure, restrooms, and pavilions. Incorporate modern park amenities, such as food truck parking, and multi-sensory experiences.



Figure 03.6 Sustainable best practices

## Planning Considerations

Community input tells us that a successful park plan begins with protecting natural resources. This includes ensuring dunes, shoreline, and native habitats are preserved while managing erosion and minimizing human impact, encouraging environmental stewardship, and incorporating nature-based solutions and strategies that balance recreation with ecological health.

Community members would like to see modern, accessible facilities and amenities that create a welcoming park space and meet diverse visitor needs. This includes clean, reliable restrooms, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, and improved parking and signage. Gathering spaces, picnic shelters and other shaded seating options are desired amenities, while infrastructure upgrades like dredged boat launches and fish cleaning stations were requested to better support water-based recreation.

Finally, community experience, accessibility, and sustainability were identified as key considerations. The Rec Area should foster a sense of connection, and offer spaces for cultural engagement. Universal design principles will ensure safe, multi-modal access through bike lanes, walking paths, and accessible features. Long-term success depends on ongoing maintenance and resilient infrastructure, including resurfaced roads and trails, updated facilities, and ecological enhancements that inspire multi-generational stewardship.

## Concept Development

The project priorities identified through the initial community engagement informed the development of conceptual designs for the Rec Area.

### Design Charette

With the information collected from the focus group meetings, online survey, and community input session 1, the team began conceptualizing options for a renewed park plan. In July of 2025, a two-day design charette took place where a series of preliminary concepts were sketched out and presented to City staff to review, discuss, and provide feedback on. Charette participants included four LHB designers and fifteen City staff members with a range of areas of expertise including maintenance, recreation and programming, transportation, stormwater management, planning, facility management, and budgeting.

Key discussion topics included opportunities to reduce long-term maintenance burdens, ensuring consideration of sand control measures, the feasibility of realigning the road away from the water's edge, the preferred number of parking stalls, site circulation, pedestrian safety, and improved public access to the water. Emphasis was placed on the need to replace and enhance existing recreation amenities before adding new, providing flexible outdoor community spaces to accommodate diverse and changing recreational patterns over time, and protecting the Rec Area's assets from the effects of a changing climate. The ideas generated were then refined and used to create three conceptual park design options to be presented to the public. See Appendix C for more detail on the design process.



Figure 03.7 Design charette day 2 discussions

## Community Input

To better understand what the community wants included in the future Rec Area, and to test out the three conceptual park designs that emerged from the design charrette, a second in-person community input session was held, and a follow up online community survey was published.

### COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION 2

Three conceptual design alternatives were presented at an in-person community input session on August 18, 2025. The public meeting started with a brief project overview and summary of what the design team had heard so far, followed by a presentation introducing three design options and the major themes within each alternative. After the presentation, participants were invited to take a closer look at each concept plan, which were displayed on poster boards around the room, speak with project staff, and post their comments and ideas on each plan. Approximately 60 people attended the in-person event. In general, the conceptual designs were well-received by the community. Each concept alternative, along with community feedback are described in detail on the following pages. See Appendix D for more detail on Community Input Session 2.

### ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY 2

The second online community survey was open from August 19 – August 31, 2025. The survey asked participants to look at the three conceptual designs, identify what they liked most about each plan, what they wished were different about each plan, and to rank the three plans in order of preference. 188 surveys were completed. See Appendix E for more detail on Community Survey 2.



**Figure 03.8** Community input presentation and discussions

## Concept 1 | Central Commons

The Central Commons concept organizes the Rec Area around a central lawn and recreational amenities space, creating a more symmetrical and formal park design.



Figure 03.9 Concept 1 Plan

### BIG MOVES

- + Utilizes central axis to organize park, framing views of and from the Beach House
- + Utilizes a shared use pedestrian mall and vehicle drop-off loop to connect two primary parking areas with 350 stalls
- + Provides strong pedestrian connections to the Beach House and other recreational amenities, including a flexible field space, volleyball courts, playground, and flexible plaza space
- + Retreats the roadway approximately 400 feet, roadway acts as a divider between more active and passive park uses

- + Enhances the watercraft area, including renewed parking and restroom facilities, and a new shelter and fishing pier
- + Includes an access drive to the South Point shoreline and harborside beach encouragement

### COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The Central Commons concept was most liked by the community, though only by a slim margin.

The community most liked the:

- + Symmetry and centralized layout, particularly the centralized field space
- + Inclusion of a playground, picnic areas, and road replacement
- + Retreated road alignment and harborside beach encouragement
- + Flexible plaza space, opportunities for events and food trucks

*The community was most concerned with:*

- + Considerable size of parking areas; too much parking results in less natural space
- + Safety concern with proximity of playground to parking lot(s)
- + Bike access and pedestrian safety - desire for less car-dominant design
- + Roadway alignment and quantity of trails - concern that the road and trail network may fragment natural areas and disrupt habitat

## PARK MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Maintenance challenges for the Central Commons concept include:

- + Volleyball courts are far from natural sand areas and may cause additional maintenance burdens to control sand movement
- + Parking areas are near naturally sandy areas that will likely require additional sand control measure
- + Pedestrian paths and trails to be maintained in inc

Maintenance advantages include:

- + Overall lawn area to be maintained appears to be reduced from what is there today
- + Maintenance service drive to Beach House is maintained
- + Improved vendor spaces and rent-able pavilions will support earned income at the Rec Area

## Concept 2 | Harborside Connections

The Harborside Connections concept flips the current park layout, greeting visitors with open green space, and offers an expanded watercraft hub on the harborside.

### Concept 2 | Harborside Connections



Figure 03.10 Concept 2 Plan

### BIG MOVES

- + Flips parking lot and recreation space for better sense of place and entrance views
- + Centralized multi-use path provides direct bike/pedestrian connection from the Beach House to the harborside
- + Provides enhanced watercraft sports hub and expanded boat launch area and enlarged harborside beach
- + Retreats the roadway approximately 300 feet, roadway acts as a divider between more active and passive park uses

- + Utilizes one primary parking lot with approximately 320 stalls with a connected drop-off loop
- + Small reduction in number of dune crossings to reduce erosion and protect sensitive habitats

### COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The Harborside Connections was the least preferred concept overall but had specific qualities that were widely liked.

The community most liked:

- + The watercraft sports hub and expanded boat launch areas
- + Proximity of drop-off loop to Beach House and improved traffic flow
- + More centralized, closer parking opportunities and road setback
- + Preservation of naturalized area and that the design promotes a peaceful experience
- + Playground's size and proximity to the Beach House

### *The community was most concerned with:*

- + Size of parking area; too much parking resulting in less natural space and preference for two smaller lots over one dominate lot
- + Pedestrian safety due to the proximity of recreational amenities to parking lot and drop-off loop
- + The fragmentation of recreational facilities – request for volleyball courts to be closer to other amenities
- + Bike and pedestrian safety due to sharper road curves and visibility issues

## PARK MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Maintenance challenges for the Harborside Connections concept include:

- + The playground is within a naturally sandy area that will likely require excessive sand control measures and maintenance
- + Large playground size will increase long-term maintenance and replacement costs
- + Pedestrian paths and trails to be maintained have substantially increased
- + Recreational amenities that call for maintenance and trash services are disbursed, may result in unnecessary maintenance burdens and duplication of services
- + Areas requiring mowing are expanded and widely disbursed throughout site

Maintenance advantages include:

- + Volleyball court location aligns with natural sand movement, keeping maintenance needs lower
- + Maintenance service drive to the Beach House is maintained
- + Improved vendor spaces and rent-able pavilions will support earned income at the Rec Area

### Concept 3 | Linear Flow

The Linear Flow concept transforms the Rec Area into a linear park, with recreational amenities, parking, and the roadway organized along a longer, narrower corridor, maximizing naturalized areas and open green space.

Concept 3 | Linear Flow



Figure 03.11 Concept 3 Plan

### BIG MOVES

- + Linear parkway configuration with three separate parking bays, provides 375 parking stalls and parking close to each recreational amenity space
- + Roadway hugs active park space and is the furthest away from shoreline, retreated approximately 450 feet
- + Provides largest area for naturalized habitat
- + Creates multiple open lawn spaces for events/programming including a large field, small field, and festival lawn

### COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The Linear Flow concept was seen as the most nature-integrated and flexible design, but received the strongest set of mixed-reactions to key features.

The community most liked:

- + Maximization of natural space, green areas, and habitat preservation - feeling that nature and recreation are effectively integrated
- + Close parking to recreational activities and lack of an obtrusive parking lot
- + Large playground and proximity of playground to restroom facilities
- + Pedestrian and traffic flow - feeling that it would slow traffic and better support pedestrian movement

*The community was most concerned with:*

- + Unappealing nature of driving along a continuous parking lot and oversized parking
- + Pedestrian safety due to the proximity of recreational amenities to parking lot, particularly the playground
- + How the number of paths and roadway through the natural area fragments and disrupts natural habitats
- + Distance of some picnic shelters from parking and other amenities
- + The need to cross the road to access the multi-use field spaces
- + Pedestrian safety and traffic flow - the feeling that the design may cause visibility issues and encourage unsafe driving behavior

## PARK MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

### Maintenance challenges for the Linear Flow concept include:

- + Pedestrian paths and trails to be maintained appear to have increased
- + Recreational amenities that call for maintenance and trash services are disbursed, may result in unnecessary maintenance burdens and duplication of services
- + Areas requiring mowing are widely disbursed throughout site

### Maintenance advantages include:

- + Volleyball court location aligns with natural sand movement
- + Maintenance service drive to the Beach House is maintained
- + Improved vendor spaces and rent-able pavilions will support earned income at the Rec Area

## Key Take-a-ways

Collectively, the community did not gravitate strongly towards any one concept plan. Instead, specific elements and qualities of each concept plan stood out as highly desired, including:

- + Centralized recreational facilities that are within close proximity to parking areas, but not so close that they cause safety concerns, especially for families with small children
- + Diverse and accessible recreational facilities, including re-establishing a playground, maintaining an open field space and volleyball courts, and providing an improved and expanded watercraft hub
- + Inclusion of picnic facilities, flexible plaza space, and restroom facilities that support opportunities for community events and social gatherings
- + Reinvestment in multi-use paths to ensure accessibility, connectivity, and safety
- + Maximizing natural space and providing opportunities to appreciate the Rec Area's natural beauty without overly fragmenting and disrupting natural habitats and ecosystems
- + Retreating the road for long-term sustainability and climate resiliency, and designing the road to improve circulation, reduce congestion, and with bike and pedestrian safety at the forefront
- + Inclusion of a drop-off loop, right-sized parking areas, and safe pedestrian crossings

These key factors, along with maintenance and funding considerations, guided the development of a revised, preferred concept plan for the Rec Area, which is reviewed in detail in the next chapter.

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# 04

# Park Improvement Plan

This chapter describes the recommended improvements for the Rec Area, as shown in the Preferred Concept (Figure 4.2), and outlines strategies for implementation including preliminary cost estimates, project funding opportunities, and prioritized improvements. These recommendations are grounded in extensive community input, potential funding availability, maintenance capacity, and alignment with the park system’s comprehensive plan, Essential Spaces: Duluth Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails Plan. Ninety years after the development of this space, this park improvement plan intentionally reimagines the Rec Area as a more modern and sustainably-focused destination park design to serve the public into the next century.

These recommendations are intended to provide a general sense of direction, rather than specific design details, and to confirm that the community’s long-term vision of the park space has been accurately captured and understood. This park plan is intended to remain adaptable over time, allowing for flexibility as opportunities and challenges arise throughout the funding, design, and implementation processes.



**Figure 04.1** Park Point volunteers in action

# Preferred Concept

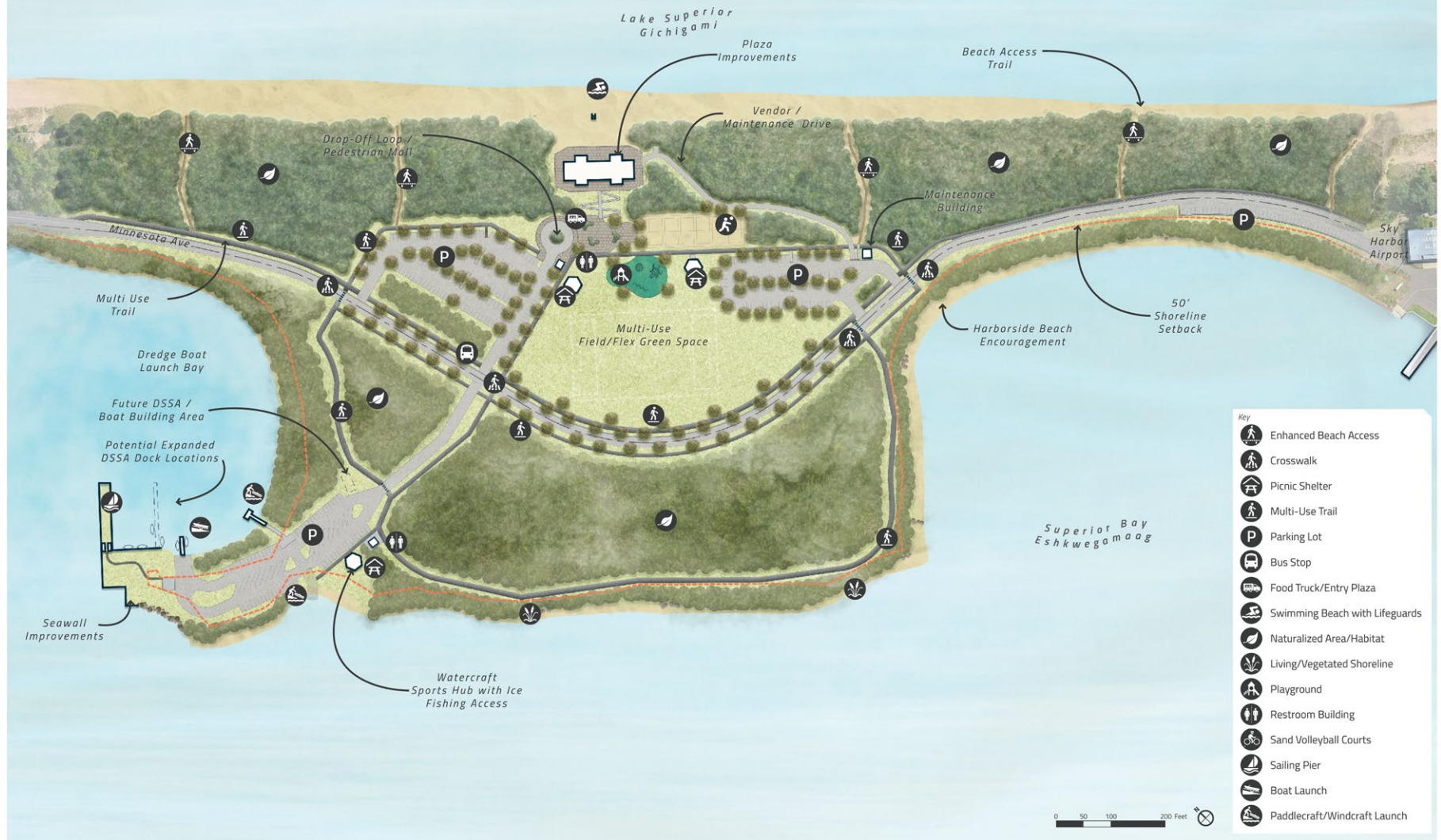


Figure 04.2 Park Point Rec Area Preferred Concept Plan

## Preferred Concept Overview

The Preferred Concept is a compilation of design elements and qualities that were most liked by community members and key stakeholders throughout the engagement and design process. The vision presented in the Preferred Concept is intended to be a balanced, realistic, and sensible approach to meeting the community's project priorities of providing access for all, supporting ecological health, cultivating a sense of place, planning for sustainability, and reinvesting in park amenities.

### BIG MOVES

- + Centralizes recreational amenities and flexible pedestrian-oriented spaces
- + Provides safe, uninterrupted, and accessible pedestrian connections throughout the park
- + Provides two appropriately sized parking lots for the primary recreational area, with a drop-off loop near the Beach House
- + Retreats roadway approximately 400 feet, roadway acts as a divider between more active and passive park uses
- + Enhances the watercraft area, including renewed parking and restrooms, a pavilion and an improved harborside beach area
- + Reduces the number of dune crossings to limit erosion and protect sensitive habitats
- + Provides a large, unfragmented naturalized area to limit habitat disruptions
- + Calls for partnering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to reuse up to 28,000 cubic yards of suitable dredge material to help raise significant portions of the site back to its original elevations

Revisiting the use areas outlined in Chapter 2, the following sections describe the recommended improvements for key park elements in each use area.

## Site Circulation & Parking



### MINNESOTA AVENUE

Perhaps the most significant recommendation of this plan – one that sets the stage for the rest of the park's redevelopment – is retreating Minnesota Avenue inland by approximately 400 feet, as well as raising the road grade and associated areas with a combination of dredge material and Class 5 gravel. Sustainability and resilient design are top community priorities for the Rec Area, and this critical move will better protect the roadway from on-going shoreline erosion and storm-induced damages.

This plan proposes two-way vehicular travel lanes on Minnesota Avenue, with shoulder space only. Because the parking lots have been adequately sized and after consulting with the City's engineering team, street parking is not recommended. Additionally, this plan recommends bicycle travel on a separated shared use path adjacent to the roadway, but an on-street bike lane could be considered and reevaluated during future phases of design. Low-impact, surface runoff stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as grassed swales and filter strips, are recommended.

### SECONDARY DRIVES

The drop-off loop at the Beach House was identified as an important and meaningful park element supporting special events, community programming, and accessibility needs. This plan recommends retaining the drop-off loop, but with an off-set location so that pedestrian uses, rather than vehicular traffic, are the central feature of the recreational area. This plan also recommends improving

the gated secondary drive that leads directly to the Beach House, providing necessary access for maintenance, vendor, and emergency vehicles.

## **PARKING**

Parking at a destination park, like the Rec Area, is an important consideration. This plan recommends right-sizing the parking areas, safer vehicular and pedestrian travel design, accounting for landscape and stormwater treatment requirements, shifting parking areas closer to amenities without creating conflicts with park users, and adding bicycle parking. This plan includes four parking areas with a combined 400+ parking stalls, compared to the existing 275 stalls. Two primary lots serve the beach/beach house area and the recreational area, one serves the watercraft area, and one serves the harborside beach and trails. Parking lot lighting and associated pedestrian lighting is necessary to accommodate frequent evening events that are held at the Beach House. Lighting is recommended to be wildlife friendly and to follow dark sky practices.

## **BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS**

This plan recommends continued considerations for expanded site connectivity and improved accessibility throughout the park. Ideal improvements would include a paved multi-use path along the north shoulder of Minnesota Avenue. This aligns with the existing use of the road's north shoulder as a seasonal bike lane and, if future road improvements allow, could act as a starting point for inclusion of a multi-use path along the entirety of Minnesota Avenue. Additionally, this plan recommends uninterrupted multi-use paths that connect parking areas to all amenities and replacement of the existing path around the naturalized area. These multi-use paths may vary in size and material depending on the location and maintenance

implications, but all should meet accessibility standards for a recreational facility. Finally, enhanced crosswalks with traffic calming techniques should be considered at all proposed crossings along Minnesota Avenue.

## **BEACH ACCESS**

Finding balance between recreational uses and protecting the Rec Area's ecological health was among the top community priorities. Improving formalized beach access routes and reducing the number of informal trails is imperative for protecting the park's sensitive pine forest and sensitive dunegrass habitat. This plan emphasizes the use of renewed boardwalks to provide accessible routes to the beach. To provide predictable and controlled access points, spacing between boardwalks is planned at approximately 350 to 400 feet, for a total of 5 boardwalks. The proposed beach access closest to the park entrance should be further evaluated for use patterns, as it may or may not be necessary to retain. Informal trails should be restored and replanted with habitat appropriate species, and entry points should be carefully obliterated and protected from re-opening. Appropriate signage should be added to direct beach users to formalized access points and encourage protection of sensitive habitats. While outside the scope of this plan, a future study is recommended to explore the feasibility of adding boardwalk through the pine forest, running parallel to the Lake and extending from the far edge of the Rec Area to the end of Minnesota Point, to further protect the dunes and old growth forest in this general area.

## **SEASONAL BUS STOP**

This plan retains a seasonal bus stop within the Rec Area. Based on discussions with Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) staff, the stop

is recommended near the far side of the first parking lot, near the multi-use field and the multi-use path that leads to the Beach House. Buses can use the half-circle drive of the second parking area or the watercraft area parking lot to turn around.

## SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

Cultivating a sense of place within the Rec Area was identified as a top community priority. Wayfinding and interpretative signage should be used to enhance user orientation, celebrate cultural identity, and deepen visitor understanding of the site. The City's Gate, Wayfinding, and Signage Plan should be implemented in the Rec Area, particularly for signage intended to welcome visitors, assist with site circulation, and provide rules and regulations. Existing signage that is redundant, unnecessary, or outdated should be removed. Additional interpretative signage should highlight culturally significant landmarks and stories, historic points of interest, and ecologically significant features. Interpretative signage should be developed collaboratively with input from tribal community members and historians.

## Watercraft Hub & Harborside Area



### PUBLIC WATERCRAFT LAUNCHES

Supporting water-based recreation in the Rec Area includes providing safe and accessible watercraft launches. This plan provides for more intentional use of the sandy beach area as a non-motorized watercraft hub in warmer months and an ice fishing access point in colder months. This plan also recommends maintaining a boat launch and an accessible, non-motorized paddle craft launch,

both with improved ramp access. As needed, the location of these launches may be adjusted during the final design phase to better accommodate the inclusive and expanding program offerings of the Duluth-Superior Sailing Association (DSSA).



Figure 04.3 DSSA programming on Sailing Pier

## SEAWALL & SAILING PIER

Seawall repairs are a major capital expense for communities with this type of public waterfront infrastructure. Due to unknown underwater conditions of the seawall, a dive inspection with associated bathymetric survey is recommended to fully assess conditions, identify obstructions, and determine potential dredging needs. Given the age of the structure, a partial repair or full replacement of the existing seawall with a new cantilevered sheet pile wall is likely needed. Collaborative fundraising efforts with community organizations may be necessary. Before final design documents are developed, the City and DSSA should evaluate the boundaries of the leased area to determine if additional space is needed

for DSSA programming. See Appendix F for more detail on the seawall analysis.

### **WATER DEPTH**

The recreation community has made it clear that, in order for successful watercraft activities to continue in the protected launch area, collected sediment must be removed to allow for an increased water depth. Dredging in the protected bay that provides access to the sailing pier and watercraft launches will alleviate water depth issues and help with overall water quality. Because this area is outside of the federal navigation channel that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for, dredging in this area will need to be conducted as a separate, individual project managed locally. The City and community organizations should work together to identify potential funding sources and fundraising efforts that could be used to complete this work in both the near- and long-term, as repeated dredging overtime will be necessary.

### **VEHICLE & TRAILER PARKING**

Currently, sections of the watercraft area parking lot are eroding into the water and there is continual parking capacity challenges. This plan recommends redesigning and slightly relocating the parking area. To the extent possible, parking is recommended to be located behind the 50' shoreline setback, and a vegetated buffer is recommended between the water and parking areas to better protect this infrastructure. Additionally, the lot should be redesigned to provide additional vehicle and trailer parking, allow for improved circulation, and provide better ramp access to launches.

### **AMENITIES**

Given the significant distance between the watercraft area and other recreational amenities on this site, it is appropriate and reasonable that this space have its own set of supporting amenities, such as a restroom, picnic shelter, grills, seating, and trash/recycling hub. Replacing and relocating the recently removed restroom facility will more safely and effectively support watercraft users, including youth participating in sailing programming. By co-locating the restroom with a new picnic shelter, duplicate trash/recycling hub services is eliminated. It should be noted that the picnic shelter will be a net add to the park system's current infrastructure. However, given the popularity of picnic shelter rentals in the Rec Area, and the likely support of outside funding for implementation, the revenue generated may result in a net-positive for the park system. One consideration for the City to explore, as a way to maintain this new set of amenities, is to collaborate with the DSSA or another third-party to manage and caretake this set of facilities. The City should evaluate the revenue generation trade-off with the maintenance expenses associated with this set of amenities.

### **FUTURE COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED PROJECTS**

In collaboration with DSSA, this plan supports and accounts for the future implementation of community-based and community-supported projects in the watercraft area. DSSA has indicated a desire to one day add a second dock location to allow for additional sailboat docking and help expand their programming capabilities. Additionally, DSSA has desire for an indoor classroom space. This plan provides a recommended, but flexible, location for that future building space. As fundraising efforts evolve, DSSA and the City should work closely to determine preferred investment

locations on Minnesota Point, and to develop detailed designs and implementation strategies for any community-supported projects.

### HARBORSIDE VEGETATED SHORELINE

To ensure the Rec Area is resilient to changing climate patterns and shoreline erosion, this plan recommends restoring grade and re-stabilizing the harborside shoreline with dredge material, where possible. Shoreline Best Management Practices (BMPs) should also be designed and implemented to improve shoreline stability, protect water quality, and increase the resilience of harbor-edge infrastructure. These BMPs may include a living shoreline, vegetated riprap, hard armoring, and toe armoring. Shoreline BMPs may be integrated with public access improvements, interpretive elements, and habitat enhancement measures to provide both functional and educational benefits, while reinforcing the Rec Area's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable design.

### HARBORSIDE SANDY BEACHES

To support more diverse recreational uses within the Rec Area, this plan recommends enhanced beach areas along the harborside. Much like the vegetated shoreline, there are shoreline BMPs that can be implemented to assist including stone bulkheads, rock sills, and more. See Appendix F for additional information on shoreline and beach protection BMPs.



**Figure 04.4** Successful implementation of shoreline BMPs at Brighton Beach Park, Duluth

## Recreation & Programming Area



### PLAYGROUND

Throughout the community engagement process, requests for bringing a playground back to the Rec Area were heard time and again. Given the destination quality of the Rec Area, a playground is a fitting amenity for this park space. This plan recommends a mid-sized playground, with accessible and multi-sensory features, that would act as the centerpiece of the recreation and programming area. The playground's location was selected with intention. The playground is located near restroom facilities and provides strong sightlines for caregivers from the picnic shelters, plaza space, volleyball courts, field space, and even the Beach House. To further increase safety, the playground is distanced from parking areas with other amenities in-between acting as a buffer. To reduce sand maintenance needs on the fall zone surface, the playground is

separated from the volleyball courts by a multi-use path. The addition of a playground, alongside other area improvements, will encourage and allow for more youth-oriented programming opportunities at the Rec Area.

In the context of the larger park system, the City currently has more park assets than it can afford to maintain over the long term. Because adding a new playground to the park system would only worsen this problem, this plan recommends that existing playgrounds on Minnesota Point be evaluated to determine which locations will provide the greatest community benefit. The evaluation should consider the removal of one or more of the other playgrounds on Minnesota Point at the end of their useful life in order to maintain or reduce the total number of playgrounds in the park system. A playground at the Rec Area is likely to receive higher usage than other locations on Minnesota Point and, by co-locating the playground with other recreational amenities, will allow for more efficient use of maintenance staff time.

### ENTRY PLAZA

A top community priority was to create a greater sense of place in the Rec Area, including providing more intentional and flexible gathering spaces for people to connect to one another. Today, the area directly in front of the Beach House is a drop-off loop that, while functional for vehicle travel and vendor drop-offs, is not an inviting space for people to rest, linger, or gather. This plan reclaims the area directly in front of the Beach House for a higher public use – a flexible community plaza space. The plaza is designed for small- to medium-sized events and to provide an enhanced entry sequence to the recreation and programming area and to the Beach House. The plaza should include flexible seating options and shade elements to



**Figure 04.5** *Example of a Duluth destination playground in Lincoln Park neighborhood*

encourage gathering and, with its proximity to the relocated drop-off loop, can be easily serviced by a variety of food truck vendors.

### BATHROOM BUILDINGS

Early in the process, it was clear that community members desired better restroom access at the Rec Area. This idea aligns well with the park system's comprehensive plan, which identifies restrooms as an amenity that should be provided abundantly at destination parks. A restroom facility is present at the Beach House, but the distance required to travel from the recreation and programming area to those restrooms is significant, particularly for children, and the building's public access can be limited due to private rentals. With a renewed focus on creating a more vibrant, community-oriented space within the programming and recreation area, including a playground, it is appropriate and reasonable that this space has a dedicated restroom facility. If funding and staff capacity allows, a

vault toilet is recommended. Additional amenities that would benefit community members include a drinking fountain and an outdoor foot-rinse station. It is worth noting that this would be a net addition to the restroom count in the park system and an increase to park maintenance burdens. Given limited park funding, the City will need to consider budget implications if a new location is added, or explore options for reducing the restroom count at other locations throughout the system.

### SAND VOLLEYBALL COURTS

The sand volleyball courts are heavily used by the community but are showing signs of age and accumulating debris. During the design phase, various locations were explored for the courts. After much discussion with maintenance staff about sand movement patterns, and hearing preferences from community members about centralized recreational facilities, this plan recommends generally retaining the existing location of the courts. It is recommended that the top 6-8 inches of contaminated sand be removed and replaced with fresh sand and that new nets and posts be installed. Sand control systems should be designed and implemented to limit excess sand deposits from the dunes and to limit sand movement from the courts into other recreation amenity spaces, such as the multi-use paths, playground, and picnic shelters.

### MULTI-USE FIELD

Many community members have fond memories of the extensive field spaces that once occupied the Rec Area and expressed that the current field space lacks a sense of purpose and connection to other recreational facilities. This plan recommends reconfiguring the multi-



**Figure 04.6** *Natural sand volleyball court example with new posts, nets and edge perimeter*

use field space to be a more centralized feature of the programming and recreational area, well connected to the playground, plaza, picnic shelters, parking, and multi-use paths. The field space is generously sized to accommodate a full-sized soccer field. The field is intended to be a multi-functional community space, accommodating formal or informal sports games, community events and fairs, and general public use for picnicking, playing, relaxing, and other activities. When the timeline for project implementation is more clear, the City should work closely with organizers of long-standing community events, such as the Park Point Art Fair, to address anticipated disruptions during the project construction period. Given the challenges with increasingly wet grounds in this portion of the Rec Area, grading modifications will be required to provide a healthy turf environment. This area should, once again, be considered for beneficial reuse of dredge material to increase elevation and ensure the long-term usability of this field space.

## OTHER MOWED GREEN SPACE

Today, to accommodate dispersed recreational amenities and parking areas, nearly three acres of green space outside of the primary field area are mowed by maintenance staff. This plan recommends consolidating recreational amenities and increasing naturalized field spaces, significantly reducing mowing burdens down to only 1.25 acres of mowed green space.

## PICNIC SHELTERS

Picnic shelters not only support the community's wishes for gathering spaces, they also act as a revenue generator for the park system. This plan recommends replacing and relocating the two picnic shelters in the programming and recreation area. By centralizing the picnic areas, users/renters will have greater access to recreational amenities, restrooms, and parking. Revenue that the City collects from these rentals is reinvested into park amenities for smaller maintenance and repairs overtime. This plan recommends that pattern continues with new pavilions.

## AMENITIES

As exists today, other amenities in the programming and recreation area should include appropriately placed grills, tables and seating, trash and recycling hubs, and pedestrian lighting. Additional amenities desired by the community, such as a drinking fountain/ bottle-filler station, permanent restroom facility, and a wash-off station, should also be considered. Should seating be incorporated into the final site design, the City should strive to utilize Memorial Bench waiting list inquires as a means of honoring requests for benches and aligning those with the actual need for this park space.



**Figure 04.7** Multi-use field/open green space provides space for general public use



**Figure 04.8** Current picnic shelter with amenities available for rental

## Habitat Areas



### SAND DUNES & BEACHGRASS

Protecting the dune habitat on Minnesota Point is a form of climate resiliency. As described in the Site Circulation & Parking section, the intentional placement of formalized boardwalks and the removal of informal trails is key to protecting the Rec Area's sensitive dune and dunegrass habitat. Alongside access improvements, this plan recommends the implementation of redundant sand control measures, utilizing a combination of vegetation and fencing placement to minimize sand migration, better protect the dune habitat, and reduce maintenance. Additionally, regular monitoring and removal of invasive species should occur to ensure the native dunegrass is not displaced.



**Figure 04.9** Existing sand dune revitalization area protection and education

### PINE FOREST

This plan recommends retaining the stretch of pine trees, allowing it to act as a natural buffer and dune stabilizer, supply shade, wildlife habitat, and as a stopover for migratory birds. The City and local community clubs should work together to fill any notable canopy gaps with appropriate species, ensuring plantings are located behind the primary dune ridge and not on the active dune face, which can destabilize the dune system. Additionally, regular use of fire in the pine stand is a best practice for maintaining this habitat as a resilient system. Traditional ecological knowledge and indigenous land management practices should be reintroduced in this space.

### NATURALIZED FIELD

During the community engagement process, community members expressed appreciation for the naturalized field space and saw an opportunity to create a peaceful, nature-focused user experience. Providing the opportunity to appreciate the Rec Area's natural beauty without overly fragmenting and disrupting habitat areas, this plan recommends placing the naturalized field space entirely on the lower side of Minnesota Avenue, with a multi-use path around the perimeter. The bayside portion of the multi-use path is intentionally located to mimic the original road alignment, so that it may serve as an interpretative trail that honors the history of the Rec Area. This type of thoughtful infrastructure planning may be necessary to receive state and federal grant funding, which typically includes significant historic preservation and mitigation efforts.

This plan recommends the reuse of beneficial dredge materials within the naturalized area to create vegetated berms, which can then be planted with pollinator-friendly species. While the initial establishment period may temporarily increase maintenance

needs, over the long-term this naturalized field space will be low-maintenance and provide a much needed balance to the higher-maintenance recreational field space. Once the naturalized field is reestablished, the City should consider this site for prescribed burns to reestablish natural ecological processes, potentially in partnership with the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.



**Figure 04.10** Existing wet meadow species naturalize around storm swale

## Beach House & Beach Areas



### BEACH HOUSE

Specific building improvement recommendations for the Beach House are not included in the scope of this plan. However, this plan does include recommendations that better support the use and functionality of the Beach House (improved parking, for example) and surrounding areas and activities. This plan also recommends exploring alternate models for managing, operating, and leasing the Beach House that may better serve the community and increase revenue generation.

### PATIO SPACE

This plan recommends upgrades to the pavement surfacing around the Beach House to improve accessibility, reduce maintenance burdens, and provide a more welcoming space for programming and community gathering. Like other spaces in the Rec Area, sand control measures are critical for improving user experiences and reducing maintenance needs of the patio space. To minimize sand entering the patio space, this plan recommends replacing the failing timber retaining walls at the dune side slopes and implementing other sand control measures based on repeated wind patterns. Covered seating options should be considered for this space to improve functionality and the comfort of beach users.

### BEACH AREA WITH LIFEGUARDS

Access to the beach and the lifeguarded area could be improved with better wayfinding signage. The City may wish to consider beach-oriented revenue opportunities, such as cabana rentals operated by a third party.



**Figure 04.11** Duluth Parks & Recreation event taking place during lifeguard hours

## Maintenance Considerations

### Maintenance advantages of the Preferred Concept include:

- + Retreating Minnesota Avenue will better protect the road infrastructure from damage, lessening maintenance and repair demands in both the near- and long-term
- + Overall lawn area to be maintained is reduced and consolidated, allowing for less and more efficient maintenance efforts
- + Recreational amenities that call for maintenance and trash services are more consolidated, allowing for more efficient use of time and the elimination of duplicated costs and services
- + Improved vendor spaces and rent-able pavilions will support earned income at the Rec Area
- + Volleyball court location aligns with natural sand movement, keeping maintenance needs lower
- + Maintenance service drive to the Beach House is maintained and improved
- + This plan will provide a complete reset for much of the Rec Area's infrastructure, which in turn will reduce deferred and on-going maintenance burdens by millions of dollars.

### Maintenance considerations to be further discussed during the final design phase include:

- + Multi-use paths: Balancing the amount and type of multi-use paths with maintenance capacity will be critical for moving this plan forward. The preferred concept shows an ideal, perfectly connected site with the understanding that concessions may be necessary.
- + Playground: A playground at the Rec Area is a net add to what is in the system today. This plan recommends an evaluation of the long-term need for other playgrounds on Minnesota Point, with the goal of maintaining or reducing the total number of playgrounds in the park system.
- + Restrooms: This plan recommends a permanent, vault toilet restroom building, rather than the use of portable toilets. Park maintenance may wish to further evaluate the long-term costs and maintenance needs both at this site and within the larger context of the park system.
- + Establishment Period: There is a potential for initial increases in maintenance costs/efforts as plant and site establishment takes place. However, after the establishment period, there should be a reduction in mowing and general landscape upkeep, as the naturalized area and the vegetated shoreline are designed to be largely self-sufficient and require minimal maintenance.

## Management & Operations

Before, during, and after implementation of this preferred plan, the City of Duluth is responsible for the management and operation of the Rec Area. The City will continue to offer programming activities, manage private rental requests for recreational amenities (e.g. picnic pavilions, event lawn, multi-use paths, and volleyball courts), hold agreements with third-party operators and community groups, and maintain the park space.

Recommendations of this plan increase accessibility to recreational facilities through universal design, prioritize operational sustainability by increasing rental opportunities and decreasing maintenance demands, offer improved facilities for future and expanded programming activities, and support ecological health and resource protection through resilient design. As the City moves through design and implementation of the preferred plan, strategies that reduce long-term maintenance and operation costs will continue to be a focal point, including incorporating energy efficient fixtures, utilizing easy to maintain materials, and effectively managing stormwater.

Maintenance activities for the Rec Area are anticipated to include, but are not limited to, mowing, invasive species removal and management, access route snow removal, trash removal, tree care, trail repairs, water access repair, and sign and site furnishings maintenance. Maintenance routines and cycles are based on on-going evaluated conditions, and maintenance costs are and will continue to be funded by the City, unless otherwise specified in a third-party agreement.

As necessary, the City will participate in the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission's data collection efforts

or other data collection processes that could help improve management and operations of the Rec Area. The City may also wish to increase promotion of the Rec Area through the use of park specific branding, an example of which is provided in Figure 4.12.



Figure 04.12 PPRA Branding Logo for future opportunities

PARK IMPROVEMENT		ESTIMATED COST
<b>SITE PREPARATION</b>		<b>\$975,000</b>
Pavement & infrastructure removals		\$300,000
Earthwork & grading modifications		\$250,000
Dredge Material Mobilization & Logistics		\$125,000
Erosion control, sand, & stormwater management		\$300,000
<b>SITE CIRCULATION &amp; PARKING</b>		<b>\$5,375,200</b>
Enhanced beach access points (4 new)		\$900,000
Retreat & reconstruct Minnesota Avenue (including Hub entrance)		\$2,450,000
Parking lots (4)		\$1,560,000
Accessible multi-use trail networks		\$465,200
<b>WATERCRAFT AREA</b>		<b>\$2,600,000</b>
Seawall improvements		\$1,850,000
Hub expansion launch improvements		\$100,000
Restroom building (vault)		\$90,000
Dredging of Boat Launch Bay		\$500,000
Picnic Pavilion		\$60,000
<b>RECREATION &amp; PROGRAMMING AREA</b>		<b>\$1,185,000</b>
Restroom building (vault)		\$90,000
Entry plaza		\$350,000
Playground		\$425,000
Sand volleyball courts enhancement		\$50,000
Picnic Pavilions (2)		\$120,000
Soil amendment & landscaping		\$150,000
<b>HABITAT AREAS</b>		<b>\$1,695,000</b>
Shoreline protection		\$650,000
Enhanced naturalization areas		\$845,000
Site restoration & establishment period maintenance		\$200,000
<b>BEACH HOUSE &amp; BEACH AREA</b>		<b>\$350,000</b>
Perimeter plaza and access improvements		\$350,000
<b>COMPREHENSIVE SITE AMENITIES</b>		<b>\$775,000</b>
Site lighting		\$450,000
Site furnishings		\$75,000
Wayfinding & signage		\$250,000
<b>TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST</b>		<b>\$12,955,200</b>

OTHER PROJECT COSTS	
Surveying, testing, additional studies, & tribal monitoring	\$550,000
Final design fees (10% of construction costs)	\$1,245,520
Permitting and regulatory work (5% of construction costs)	\$622,760
Contingency (20% of construction costs)	\$2,491,040
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$17,864,520</b>

## Opinion of Probable Costs

The estimated cost of implementation is based on the preferred conceptual plan, informed by pricing of similar recent projects, and assumes construction in 2031 with an anticipated inflation rate of approximately 3%. Actual costs may vary extensively depending on the project's timing, broader economic conditions, results from additional analysis and decisions made regarding materials, fabrication, and construction sequencing made during the final design process. These probable costs are intended to assist with further planning and financial decision-making regarding the future of the Rec Area and should not be interpreted as actual project costs.

## Project Funding & Partners

The City must develop a comprehensive, multi-faceted funding package in order to fully implement the preferred park improvements in the Rec Area. Development of a comprehensive funding package is likely to take 3 - 5 years, and should include support from a diverse set of community partners, local funding resources, and grant opportunities.

### PARTNERSHIPS

#### Multiple City Departments & Divisions

As has happened throughout this plan process, continued coordination between the Property, Parks, and Libraries Department, Public Works and Utilities Department, Planning & Economic Development Department, Finance Department, and Administration will be necessary to successfully fund and implement this project. In addition to having connections to various funding resources, these departments have staff experts in the areas of planning, roadway design, municipal code, stormwater management, programming, maintenance, and grant compliance among others, and should continue to be included in the funding and design process as it progresses.



#### US Army Corps of Engineers

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible for maintaining a safe water depth within the federal navigation channels of the Duluth-Superior Harbor, which requires annual dredging of sediment from the harbor. This sediment is generally suitable for beneficial reuse and has been used to support projects related to environmental remediation, beach



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

nourishment, and habitat restoration, among others. The USACE has a goal to beneficially reuse 70% of its dredge material, sometimes at no-cost to the placement site sponsor.

The City should work closely with USACE to coordinate the placement of dredge materials within select locations in the Rec Area. The dredge materials could be used to increase the ever subsiding land elevations, particularly in areas where recreation, transportation, and habitat improvements are proposed. The value of the dredge material, estimated at \$2.5 million, could then be used as in-kind match for other grant opportunities.

#### State Historic Preservation Office



Given the unique cultural and historical context of the Rec Area and the potential for substantial ground disturbance, early communication and coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will be essential. This coordination will help identify any historic or cultural resources within the project area and ensure that rehabilitation efforts avoid, minimize, or appropriately mitigate potential impacts in accordance with state and federal preservation guidelines. Mitigation efforts could result in increased implementation costs, which will be beneficial to know as early as possible the funding development process.

#### Tribal Historic Preservation Office



With the understanding that all of Minnesota Point is a place of cultural significance for tribal communities, coordination with local Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) staff, particularly with the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, will also be essential for this project. The City should

coordinate with THPO throughout the design and implementation phases of this project. THPO may wish to participate in the development of interpretative signage within the Rec Area. Additionally, THPO may wish to have cultural monitors on site during ground disturbing activities which, given the area of intended earthwork, will have significant budget implications that must be accounted for.

### **Duluth-Superior Sailing Association**



City staff should work closely with the Duluth-Superior Sailing Association (DSSA) to further develop plans and fundraising efforts for improvements in the watercraft area, including dredging, dock expansions, and future classroom space. If additional community support is needed to help fund the restroom, pavilion, and picnic amenities in the watercraft area, DSSA could be a key partner in that effort, as well.

### **Park Point Community Club and Minnesota Point 50**



Local community-led organizations, including the Park Point Community Club and Minnesota Point 50, may be pivotal for implementing improvements at the Rec Area through volunteering, fundraising, and advocacy efforts. The Community Club is an active and well-organized neighborhood group, and Minnesota Point 50 is a nonprofit organization that supports resiliency efforts for all of Minnesota Point, including the Rec Area.

## **Sponsorships**

The City should explore opportunities for private and corporate sponsorship of park elements, such as boardwalk dune crossings, picnic facilities, playground, volleyball courts, multi-use paths, and other amenity spaces.

## **City-Controlled Funding Sources**

### **THE PARK FUND**

The Park Fund property tax levy, established in 2012, is the primary local funding source for park improvements in Duluth. The levy collects a fixed dollar amount of \$2.6 million per year. While limited Park Fund dollars are available to support capital improvement projects, the City should consider allocating at least some Park Fund dollars to Rec Area improvements in order to better leverage outside grant funding.

### **LOCAL TRANSPORTATION SALES TAX**

0.5% of Duluth's 1.5% City sales tax is dedicated to local street improvements, generating approximately \$8 - \$10 million annually and improving approximately 15 miles of road each year. The City's Engineering division develops annual implementation plans, which are then reviewed by Administration and approved by City Council. City staff should continue to work collaboratively to determine if the proposed reroute and reconstruction of Minnesota Avenue within the Rec Area can and should be incorporated into an implementation plan for a future funding year. Funds dedicated from the local transportation sales tax could be used as match for other road improvement funding sources.

## Grant & Technical Support Opportunities

Due to the City's limited parks capital funding, leveraging grant funding will be vital to implementing a plan of this size and magnitude. The City should seek a variety of grant opportunities to support the diverse set of improvements proposed in the Rec Area. Grants that support recreation, natural resources, transportation, coastal resiliency, sustainability, and habitat conservation should all be considered. Key grants that should be evaluated and considered include:

- + City of Duluth – Community Development Block Grant
- + Federal Emergency Management Agency - Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities
- + Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative - Initiative for Resilient Great Lakes Coasts
- + Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission – Legacy Amendment Funds
- + Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources – Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
- + Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program
- + Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - ENRTF Community Grant Program
- + Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program
- + Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – National Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program
- + Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Outdoor Recreation Grant Program
- + Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Public Water Access Partnership Funding

- + Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – State Park Road Account
- + Minnesota Department of Transportation - Greater Minnesota Transportation Alternatives Solicitation
- + Minnesota Department of Transportation - Municipal State Aid
- + Minnesota Pollution Control Agency - Local Climate Action Grants
- + National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund
- + National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - National Coastal Resilient Fund

For a description of each of these potential grant sources, please see Appendix G.

## Putting It All Together

In addition to being awarded grant funds, it will also be necessary for the City to thoughtfully leverage grant funds against one another. Meaning, if the City can secure an initial, sizable grant award, those funds may be used as the required match dollars for another grant. Through carefully constructed combinations of leveraged grant funds, a fully funded project or subset of projects is possible. Considering relevant partnerships and potential funding sources, an ideal funding package for the Rec Area may look as follows:

- + Surveying, testing, and final design may be supported, in part, through technical services from the Initiative for Great Lakes Coasts, grant support from Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities and National Coastal Resilience Fund, City of Duluth Park Fund and Street Improvement Program dollars, and as a line item within the following grants listed.

- + Site circulation, including Minnesota Avenue and the accessible multi-use trail network, may be supported by a combination of State Park Road Account and Transportation Alternatives funds, with match from the local transportation sales tax.
- + The recreation and programming area, beach house area, general site amenities, and parking area would ideally be supported through a combination of the Outdoor Legacy Partnership Program grant funds, with match support from local storm water management funds, Community Development Block Grant funds, various DNR funds, and a portion of the value of beneficial reuse dredge materials.
- + Shoreline resiliency, stormwater management, and improvements to the naturalized field space could be supported through the Building Resilient Infrastructure Communities and Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, with additional match support from the Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund and the remaining value of beneficial reuse dredge materials.
- + Improved beach access points should continue to be improved using Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program funds, with reuse of materials from the former Lakewalk used as match. Alternatively, support may come from Building Resilient Infrastructure Communities or National Coastal Resilience funds.
- + Funding for seawall improvements requires additional research and funding resources. It will be necessary for local community groups to fundraise for matching dollars before this element of the project is able to proceed.
- + Where possible or necessary to fill unanticipated funding gaps, other grant sources, fundraising efforts, and sponsorships should continue to be explored and plugged into the project budget.

This funding package is intended to be a preliminary starting point and is anticipated to shift over time. As funding becomes available

and potential partnerships are formed, the next steps will include additional technical studies, detailed design, and developing a management plan for long-term maintenance of the Rec Area.

## Prioritized Park Improvements

As this project progresses into more detailed designs and more precise costs are determined, and as the funding package is more fully developed, it is possible the cost to implement the Preferred Concept will be greater than the funding available. To be prepared for that scenario, this plan identifies a set of prioritized improvements that seek to balance ecological, recreational, and community benefits, improve existing amenities before adding new amenities, and account for maintenance and wider park system goals.

### **PRIORITY 1: USE OF DREDGE MATERIAL AND SITE CIRCULATION FOR ALL USERS**

Placing dredge material on-site to raise the Rec Area's elevation and relocating Minnesota Avenue are foundational improvements that set the stage for all other park improvements. As the roadway adjusts, so must the parking areas, secondary drives, wayfinding, and accessible multi-use paths that connect the primary park amenities. These elements are critical for ensuring sustainability, safety, and accessibility within the Rec Area. With limited funding, the multi-use paths should be examined for potential reductions and/or sections where less expensive construction materials may be used. Understanding that multi-use path that follows the former road alignment may be necessary for funding and historical preservation purposes, it should remain included in the initial path development.

**PRIORITY 2: RECREATION AND PROGRAMMING IMPROVEMENTS**

Recreation is at the heart of the “Rec Area,” making improvements to the recreation and programming area a high priority. With limited funding, improvements in this area should focus on restoring existing amenities, including the multi-use field space, pavilions, and volleyball courts. Where additional funding allows, improvements to be added include the playground, restroom facility in the programming and recreation area, and pavilion and restroom facility in the watercraft area, respectively.

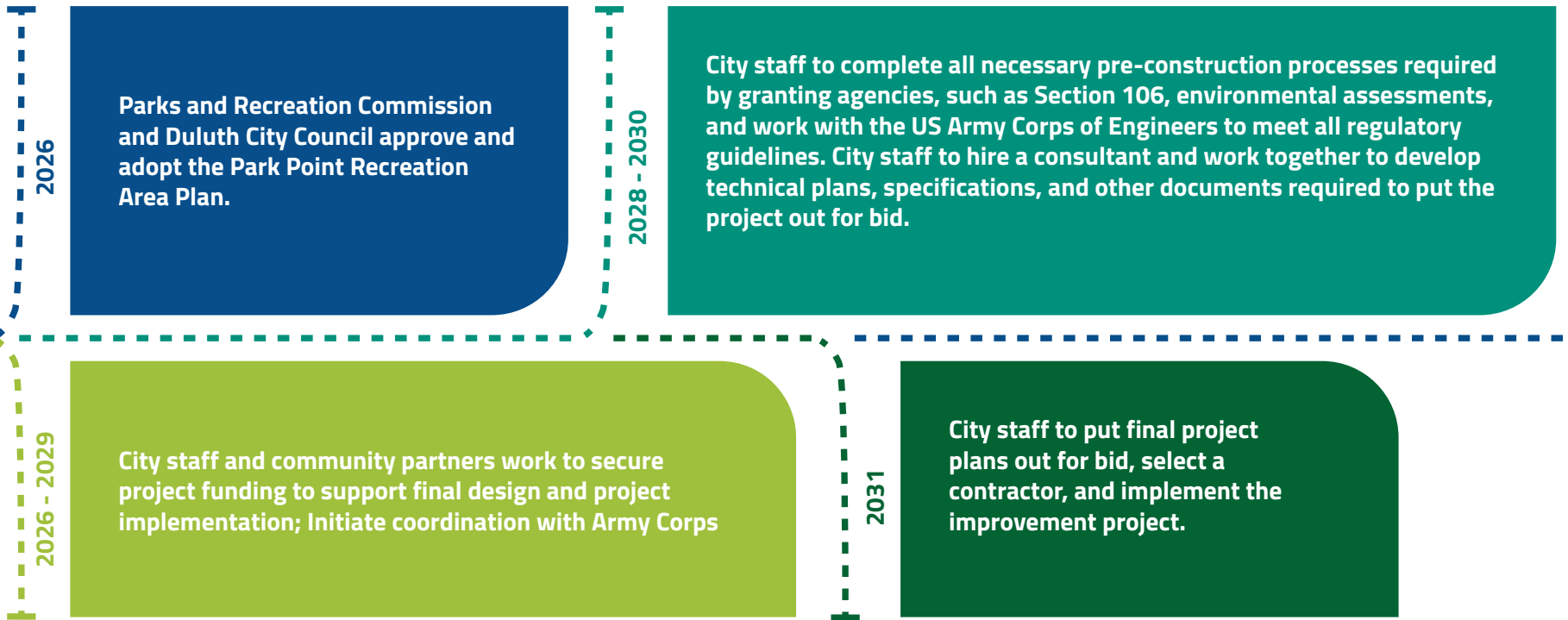
**PRIORITY 3: SHORELINE STABILIZATION AND ENHANCED NATURALIZED AREAS**

With the road relocated, the immediate threat to Minnesota Avenue is diminished. However, without intervention, the harborside shoreline will continue to experience erosion and shoreline loss that could threaten new circulation routes, infrastructure, and natural resources. The placement of dredge materials, enhanced vegetation along the shoreline and within the naturalized field, and implementation of shoreline Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be prioritized. The extent and type of BMP may be adjusted depending on funding availability. As the funding and design phases continue, the City should, simultaneously, continue to implement improved boardwalk dune crossings as on annual basis.

**PRIORITY 4: SEAWALL IMPROVEMENTS**

The seawall requires further investigation and study to determine the full extent of work needed. The cost is likely to exceed currently available funding resources, which may make it difficult to address at the same time as other park improvements. As funds are identified, the City should continue to study the seawall and develop a long-term capital plan, potentially in partnership with local community groups, to fund repair or replacement, as needed.

# Implementation Timeline



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# Appendix

- A. Historical Evaluation of Park Point Recreation Area
- B. Online Survey 1 Summary
- C. Design Charette Summary
- D. Community Input Session Summary
- E. Online Survey 2 Summary
- F. Coastal Memo on Bayside Beach Protection
- G. Grant & Technical Support Opportunities Descriptions
- H. Summary of Public Comments

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# **Appendix A**

## **Historical Evaluation of Park Point Recreation Area**



# NEW HISTORY

## HISTORICAL EVALUATION

Park Point Recreation Area, Duluth, MN

August 2025

Historical Evaluation  
Park Point Recreation Area  
4750 Minnesota Avenue  
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

**Prepared for:**  
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# Executive Summary

The Park Point Recreation Area (PPRA) currently addressed at 4750 Minnesota Avenue in Duluth, Minnesota was developed as a park by the City of Duluth (the City) beginning in 1936. The park consists of approximately 55 acres of land located near the south end of Minnesota Point, a peninsula and natural sandbar that extends approximately seven miles southeast from downtown Duluth into Lake Superior (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. View of the Park Point Recreation Area. Image courtesy of the City of Duluth.

The property is not currently locally designated as a historic landmark nor is it listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). In March 2025, the City engaged LHB, Inc. and subconsultants AMI Consulting Engineers and New History to complete a Park, Recreation, and Coastal Preservation Plan for the park. New History’s role was to provide a summary of the site’s history and a professional opinion on its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places, to inform planning for future improvements. This report 1) summarizes our findings on the park’s history and potential National Register eligibility and 2) provides information on potential state and federal historic preservation reviews that could be required for future park improvements. Our findings are based on historic archival research (including consulting materials provided by the City of Duluth, the Park Point Community Club, the University of Minnesota Duluth, and the Duluth Public Library) and a site walk completed on May 14, 2025.

Based on our research, the park is potentially eligible for the National Register as a notable recreational facility developed by the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) in Duluth during the Great Depression. It may also be eligible for its later history as a popular park within the city’s municipal park system. The park’s eligibility may have implications for future project approvals under certain state and federal programs, but does not mean that the park must be listed in the National Register.

# 1. National Register Eligibility

## 1.1 Property History

### 1.1.1 Background

#### Recreation on Minnesota Point

For hundreds of years, Minnesota Point was a summer gathering place for generations of Indigenous peoples, including the Ojibwe (for more information, see the 2015 *An Ethnographic Study of Indigenous Contributions to the City of Duluth*, which documents some of the history of the Point in the context of Ojibwe history and culture).<sup>1</sup> After the 1854 Treaty of La Pointe provided the premise for dispossession of Ojibwe land in northeastern Minnesota, Euro-Americans began to settle permanently in the Duluth area, including on Minnesota Point. Between 1856 and 1859, Duluth Township was platted at the northern end of the point and Middleton Township was platted at the approximate middle of the point (between approximately current-day 13th Street South and 39th Street South). The sand and pine forest south of today's 46th Street South (known as "the Barrens") operated as the St. Louis Military Reservation and was owned entirely by the federal government until the 1930s.<sup>2</sup> Minnesota was established as a state in 1858 and the Duluth and Middleton townships combined with other area townships to form the City of Duluth in 1870. In 1871, the construction of the Duluth Canal at the point's junction with the mainland effectively turned most of the point into an island; by 1881 this area south of the canal was known as Park Point. After a brief period of independent status as the Village of Park Point from 1881 until 1889, Park Point rejoined the municipality of Duluth in 1889.<sup>3</sup>

During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, recreational use and development on the Point increased. Two public parks were included in the original 1856 plat of Middleton (Lafayette and Franklin Squares), but it was Oatka Beach, a four-block area on the bay (west) side of the point at the approximate location of today's 40th Street South, that became the focus of summer activity on the Point during the nineteenth century. Beginning in the 1860s, visitors from Superior, Wisconsin and nearby Minnesota townships visited the area for its public picnic grounds; around 1889, the Minnesota Point Street Railway (MPSR) Company's horse-drawn trolley began transporting individuals from the canal to the beach for picnics, swimming, and special events at the beach pavilion.<sup>4</sup> Picnickers began using the Point for summer camping, erecting tents from the Duluth Canal south to the Barrens; wealthy residents of Superior and Duluth also built cottages near the south end of the Point beginning in the 1850s in an area that eventually became known as Peabody's Landing.<sup>5</sup> Access to the Point improved when the MPSR was electrified under

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<sup>1</sup> Turnstone Historical Research, *An Ethnographic Study of Indigenous Contributions to the City of Duluth*, July 2015, p. 46, 72, <https://duluthmn.gov/media/5867/duluth-ethnographic-study-final-july-2015.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Nancy S. Nelson and Tony Dierckins, *Duluth's History Parks: Their First 160 Years* (Zenith City Press, 2017), 173-177.

<sup>3</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 175.

<sup>4</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 174.

<sup>5</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 176-178.

the Interstate Traction Company in 1898 and was extended four blocks south in 1902 (to access a newly platted addition, the Oatka Beach Addition from 39th to 43rd Streets); the Aerial Transfer Bridge installed across the Duluth Canal in 1905 also made it easier to access Park Point.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, on the Barrens military reservation at the south end of the Point, the federal government closed the 1858 Minnesota Point Lighthouse in 1885 and constructed the U.S. Lighthouse Service Depot in 1905.<sup>7</sup>

In 1906, the Duluth Amusement Company opened the short-lived White City Amusement Park on the Oatka Beach Addition. Modeled and named after Chicago's 1905 White City Amusement Park, the park featured amusement rides, bathhouses, cafés, and restaurants. When the park was closed in the spring of 1909, the grounds became known as Oatka Park and the Duluth Boat Club established its Oatka Branch (in operation from 1909-1926) on the site.<sup>8</sup> Summer recreators began picnicking at locations further south in the Barrens, including groups from the YMCA, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts.<sup>9</sup> Other sites of recreation on Minnesota Point during the early 1900s included Desmond Park developed at 14th Street South with ballpark and swimming pool in 1911-1912 (today occupied by the U.S. Army Reserve Center).<sup>10</sup> At 31st Street South, the Radison School located in Lafayette Park was closed and utilized as a community center beginning in 1920, and renovated into the Lafayette Recreation Center in 1936.<sup>11</sup> Additional improvements to transportation to and on the Point occurred in 1929 when the Aerial Transfer Bridge was converted to the current Aerial Lift Bridge and in 1931 when streetcars were replaced by buses.<sup>12</sup>

In the 1930s, the City of Duluth acquired most of the Barrens from the federal government (with the exception of the southernmost military reservation) and developed the Park Point Recreation Area (PPRA) on a portion of this land, with the help of the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA; see Section 1.1.2 below). Around the onset of World War II, the Lighthouse Depot on the military reservation was decommissioned, and the federal government constructed a seventy-acre seaplane base which became Sky Harbor Airport in 1946. Around the same time, the City of Duluth obtained permission to occupy the remaining fifty acres of military reservation at the point's southern tip for recreational purposes, though intended use as a Sea Scout base never materialized and the land remains undeveloped today.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 179, 180; "Park Point: A History," June 2013, courtesy of the City of Duluth.

<sup>7</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 176-177.

<sup>8</sup> Today, the Duluth Rowing Club and Franciscan Health Center occupy most of the former White City site; much of the former bathing beach area is known as the Mira M. Southworth Lake Superior Wetlands Preserve. Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 181 – 182.

<sup>9</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 180-182.

<sup>10</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 184-185.

<sup>11</sup> Debra Kellner, *Historical/Architectural Survey: Lafayette Recreation Center, 3026 Minnesota Avenue, Duluth, Minnesota 55802*, May 22, 2013, SHPO Inventory No. SL-DUL-3138, Minnesota Statewide Historic Inventory Portal.

<sup>12</sup> Janet E. Olson, *Minnesota Point Timeline*, ca. 1999, p.29, on file at the City of Duluth.

<sup>13</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 176-177.

## City of Duluth Park System

The City of Duluth's modern day park system began with the establishment of platted urban parks, or squares, in the mid-nineteenth century within the several townships that were eventually absorbed into the City of Duluth. On Minnesota Point, these included Lafayette and Franklin Squares in the township of Middleton.<sup>14</sup> Development of the City's park system began in earnest in the late nineteenth century, following the City's adoption of an 1888 park plan prepared by William K. Roger. Duluth's first Board of Park Commissioners was established in 1889 to implement this plan through acquiring and improving land, and Duluth residents supported the Park Board's work through donations of land, money, and maintenance efforts. When the City adopted a new form of local government in 1913, the Park Board was dissolved and leadership for the park system passed to the Commissioner of Public Affairs (who was also the City mayor).<sup>15</sup> As author of the *Duluth Historic Contexts Study* Nancy Eubanks explains, "by 1920 the chief [Duluth] parks were Lester, North Shore, Lincoln, Cascade, Congdon, Chester, Fairmount, and Enger, which, in addition to many smaller squares, triangles, beaches, and other "cared-for open spaces" encompassed some 700 acres."<sup>16</sup> By 1928, the City's park system included 78 pieces of park property encompassing a total of 2,505 acres, including playgrounds, athletic fields and winter sports areas, parks devoted to special uses (such as a golf course), and less developed forest or ravine parks.<sup>17</sup>

With the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, the park department suffered significant budget cuts. However, funding from federal government relief programs like the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA, known as the Work Projects Administration beginning in 1939) provided the means for making significant improvements to the park system during the 1930s, under Park Superintendents F. Rodney Paine (superintendent from 1926 – 1937) and Earl H. Sherman (1937 – 1941) and Duluth Mayors Sam Snively (in office from 1921 – 1937) and Rudolph Berghult (1937 – 1941). According to a 1941 article in the Duluth News Tribune, by June of 1941 the WPA had invested \$26,923,513.42 in projects in St. Louis County. In the area of outdoor recreation, this work included the development of 17 new playgrounds and repairs to ten others, the development of 24 new athletic fields and repairs to seven others, repairs to 17 parks, and the development of four new parks – including the Park Point Recreational Area.<sup>18</sup>

### 1.1.2 The Creation of Park Point Recreation Area: 1935 – 1943

As noted above, Minnesota Point was a popular recreational area well before the development of the Park Point Recreational Area in the 1930s, but the PPRA was notable for

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<sup>14</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 3-11.

<sup>16</sup> Nancy Eubanks, *Zenith City of the Unsalted Sea: Duluth Historic Contexts Study* (prepared for the Duluth Heritage Preservation Commission, August 1991), 67-68, <https://duluthmn.gov/media/5750/zenithcityoftheunsaltedsea1991.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Duluth Park Department, "Annual Report: Park Department," 1928, p. 1, Box 1, Duluth Department of Parks and Recreation Records, S3689, Archives and Special Collections, Martin Library, University of Minnesota Duluth (hereafter cited as Duluth DPRR).

<sup>18</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 12; Gustaf A. Nordin, "WPA Birthday," *Duluth News Tribune*, June 29, 1941, newspapers.com.

bringing permanent municipal beach facilities to the Point. The project had been preceded by several failed plans for additional city recreational facilities on the Point, including a 1919 proposal by Park Superintendent Henry Cleveland for a city-maintained bathing beach.<sup>19</sup> Early beach management of Minnesota Point by the park department included supervised swimming and other water sports at the Duluth Water Sports Center from 1931 until 1933 (the former Duluth Boat Club facilities leased by the City after the Duluth Boat Club closed in 1926).<sup>20</sup> Beginning around 1928, the City also provided lifeguard protection for bathing beaches on Minnesota Point (see Figure 2) that appear to have been operated seasonally in varying locations each year (in 1931, two were established at 43rd Street and near the Coast Guard station; in 1935, one beach was established at 42nd Street). By this time, Park Point was well recognized as a prime swimming location. According to the *Duluth News Tribune*, “on Park Point Duluth has one of the finest sand beaches in the country. This long stretch of clean sand and pure, clean water could be made to rival in popularity and renown the nationally famous beaches at Coney Island and Atlantic City...this could be made a most valuable asset to Duluth, a boon to local people and a great attraction for tourists and summer residents.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 185.

<sup>20</sup> Duluth Park Department, “Annual Report: Park Department,” 1931, p. 5, 22, Box 1, Duluth Department of Parks and Recreation Records, S3689, Archives and Special Collections, Martin Library, University of Minnesota Duluth (hereafter cited as Duluth DPRR); Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 182.

<sup>21</sup> “Safe Swimming Places,” *Duluth News Tribune*, April 20, 1934, newspapers.com; “Bathing Beach Site Selected,” *Duluth News Tribune*, July 3, 1935, newspapers.com; 12.



**Figure 2.** Beachgoers enjoying a beach on Park Point, 1930. Photograph courtesy of University of Minnesota Duluth, Minnesota Digital Library.

By 1934, providing adequate summer beach facilities for city residents and tourists was a topic of conversation among Duluth residents. One editorial in the *Duluth News Tribune* complained that the City “has not even begun to provide for its own citizens and thousands of tourists accommodations on its beaches such as other cities now have,” like municipal locker house and showers and clearance of garbage and rubbish.<sup>22</sup> An April 20, 1934 article in the *Duluth News Tribune* noted that “the need for safe, sanitary swimming pools and bathing beaches in Duluth is already being emphasized by civic organizations and individuals and is being considered by the park department and safety officials.”<sup>23</sup>

The development of the Park Point Recreational Area from 1936 until 1940 was a logical outgrowth of the demand for substantial permanent municipal beach facilities on the Point. In 1935, Superintendent Paine filed a request for approximately \$2,175,000 in funding from the Public Works Administration (PWA) and WPA for improvements to the City’s recreational and park system. The list of 32 projects encompassed boulevards, park shelters, athletic fields, work at the Duluth Civic

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<sup>22</sup> “Park Point Swimming Beaches,” *Duluth News Tribune*, August 1, 1934, newspapers.com.

<sup>23</sup> “Safe Swimming Places,” *Duluth News Tribune*, April 20, 1934, newspapers.com.

Center, and other projects, including the area now known as Park Point Recreational Area (at that time simply referred to as the Minnesota Point development). At an estimated cost of \$528,697.87, the planned project was more than three times as costly as the next largest project included in the funding request (improvements to Skyline Boulevard for \$168,646.46). The project was also expected to generate the most employment opportunities. The *Duluth News Tribune* remarked that “the Minnesota Point development is expected to provide the largest number of working months per man, a total of 4,306 man months...”<sup>24</sup> In November, Paine traveled to Washington D.C. to personally present the Civic Center and Minnesota Point projects to the WPA, in the hope of receiving a quick approval.<sup>25</sup>

The scope of the Point project as initially planned was ambitious. Nelson and Dierckins note that “City leaders hoped to turn the point into one of the leading recreational and summer resort sites in the state. Representatives of local government and civic clubs, including the Park Point Improvement Association, worked for over a year to gain approval for the project.”<sup>26</sup> In December of 1935, \$423,697.00 of WPA funds were promised to the project, noted at that time as the “largest single project in this district.” According to the *Duluth News Tribune*, the project planned to “utilize the entire area south of forty-second street as a hay fever community, a camp for underprivileged children, public bathing beaches, picnic grounds, playfields, and parks. So pleased with the plan is the National Parks service in Washington that it has been recommended by it to other cities as a model.”<sup>27</sup>

An editorial in the February 25, 1936 edition of the *Duluth News Tribune* elaborated on the park’s potential benefits to Duluth residents, visitors, and the local economy:

the proposed development of Park Point into a modern recreational center is of far more than local importance, and has taken on the aspect of a state and federal project... An area of great scenic beauty and many natural advantages, the point will be a splendid summer playground for the thousands of visitors from all parts of the country who come here each year, as well as a haven of relief for hay fever sufferers. It is fitting that the state and nation should share in financing the recreational development of this attractive waterfront, since its benefits will extend to people from many states... The development work... will provide jobs for many persons. The project will bring new money into the community. The recreational center will be a permanent improvement of great value.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to WPA funds, the City also received \$90,000 from the Minnesota Executive Council for the development. The project included city acquisition of the area of the Barrens from 46th Street South to Peabody’s Landing as well as the rights to the lakeshore from the Duluth Ship

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<sup>24</sup> “\$2,173,934 Asked by City for 32 WPA Jobs Filed,” *Duluth News-Tribune*, September 17, 1935, newspapers.com.

<sup>25</sup> “Paine to Push City Projects,” *Duluth News Tribune*, November 13, 1935, newspapers.com.

<sup>26</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 185-186.

<sup>27</sup> “Fund Approved for Park Point Resort Center,” *Duluth News Tribune*, December 3, 1935, newspapers.com.

<sup>28</sup> “The Park Point Improvement,” *Duluth News Tribune*, February 25, 1936, newspapers.com.

Canal to Hartman Park, in effect creating a continuous public beach along the lake side of the Point from the canal to the Barrens.<sup>29</sup>

Plans for the project were slated for approval by city and WPA engineers in February of 1936, and construction started in April of that year.<sup>30</sup> According to an April 4, 1936 article in the *Duluth News Tribune*, the recreation area was planned to extend approximately three-quarters of a mile south from the end of the bus route, with the hay fever colony and vacation camp area further to the south.<sup>31</sup> Nelson and Dierckins note that one of the first tasks in the park's development was the hauling of "approximately 150,000 yards of fill to create additional land and bring the entire area above water level."<sup>32</sup> Another early task was the installation of four miles of track for a narrow gauge railroad, which stretched from the end of the bus line south towards the recreational area and was used to transport construction supplies (see Figure 3).<sup>33</sup>



**Figure 3.** Sand beach at Minnesota Point, ca. 1936. Photograph courtesy of Duluth Parks and Recreation Department, Minnesota Digital Library. Photo by F. Rodney Paine. Note the railroad tracks at left of photo.

By August of 1936, 232 individuals were employed on the project and \$82,800 had been expended.<sup>34</sup> The City noted that a bathhouse, two docks, and a recreational building were planned for the immediate future; other potential buildings included a service building, a boat house, and a

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<sup>29</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 186.

<sup>30</sup> "Hopes Buoyed for Point Job," *Duluth News Tribune*, February 6, 1936, newspapers.com; "Point Project Rated Highest on Work List," *Duluth News Tribune*, May 2, 1936, newspapers.com.

<sup>31</sup> "Point Project Development Plan Indorsed [sic]," *Duluth News Tribune*, April 4, 1936, newspapers.com.

<sup>32</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 187.

<sup>33</sup> "Narrow Gauge Road Built on Park Point," *Duluth News Tribune*, May 13, 1936, newspapers.com; Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 187.

<sup>34</sup> "Point Funds Are Assured," *Duluth News Tribune*, August 11, 1936, newspapers.com.

comfort station.<sup>35</sup> According to Nelson and Dierckins, a sketch of the proposed recreational area drawn by landscape architect Arthur Nichols and released by Superintendent Paine in March 1937 included a dock and boat launch as well as a swimming pool planned for future implementation.<sup>36</sup> In May of 1937, some workers were removed from the Point development in order to reallocate WPA labor to the Civic Center project. According to the *Duluth News Tribune*, work was slated to continue “on a comparatively minor scale” to include “construction of the bathhouse, installation of water lines, and filling of land in some sections.”<sup>37</sup> By mid-June, however, the project still employed 150 men (more than the Civic Center project’s 125 workers) and was still noted as one of the City’s major WPA projects.<sup>38</sup> Additional work during the summer of 1937 included the extension of Minnesota Avenue roughly three-quarters of a mile, installation of six inches of top soil for park athletic fields, and the beginning of bathhouse construction.<sup>39</sup> By November of 1937, WPA workers were also engaged in installing dock piling.<sup>40</sup>

In January of 1938, the City announced that the park would be ready for the 1938 summer tourism and recreation season. “Park Point will become a mecca for tourists and visitors who seek a diversified entertainment in Duluth this summer, with the park department ready to begin its operations on the Minnesota Point development project,” the *Duluth News Tribune* asserted. “With the modern bathhouse facilities available, Duluth for the first time will have a place for bathers to congregate under ideal conditions and under the care of lifeguards. The building, facing the lake, will provide locker and dressing rooms for men and women, check rooms and showers.”<sup>41</sup>

An article in the February 21, 1938 edition of the *Duluth News Tribune* provides a helpful summary of the recreational area’s development through a description of an “auto ride” through the area:

We enter the play area at Forty-third street, where the pavement on Minnesota avenue ends, and ride along on a graveled road 38 feet wide. The road is bordered by evergreens. It will be lighted at night by lamps on tall poles. The road will give room for three lanes of traffic.

Four blocks down the line we come to the huge play field, where six inches of top soil was laid down and grass planted last year... On this field will be soft ball diamonds, spots for other outdoor games and a parking lot for cars.

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<sup>35</sup> “Scandinavian Structures Planned for Park Point,” *Duluth News Tribune*, July 9, 1936, newspapers.com.

<sup>36</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 187.

<sup>37</sup> “WPA Will Order Termination of Park Point Job,” *Duluth News Tribune*, May 28, 1937, newspapers.com.

<sup>38</sup> “WPA Heads Here Answer Critics,” *Duluth News Tribune*, June 17, 1937, newspapers.com.

<sup>39</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 187.

<sup>40</sup> “Projects Are Listed: WPA Will Employ 1,400 Men Here This Winter,” *Duluth News Tribune*, November 17, 1937, newspapers.com.

<sup>41</sup> “Harbor Improvements, Modernization of City Urged As Tourist Aid,” *Duluth News Tribune*, January 14, 1938, newspapers.com.

The road swings off to the right to take us along the bay shore and to the dock for pleasure boats...The road swings to the left around the play field and we come to the bathhouse perched on a hill facing Lake Superior. It's nearing completion now and will be ready for use in the spring. The bathhouse is the first of two major buildings to be erected on the site. The second will be a pavilion on the play field for indoor picnics, dancing and other recreations. Work on this structure is schedule to get under way when the bathhouse is completed.

The house will accommodate 2,000 bathers who flock to the Point on warm days for a dip in Lake Superior. A shoot-the-chutes, toboggan slides and other paraphernalia will stand on the beach.

Built-up land south of the play field and near the "barrens" is being considered as a site for an amusement park with its riding gadgets and shows.<sup>42</sup>

By April of 1938, the City had developed plans for the amusement park south of the athletic fields. According to Nelson and Dierckins, "that June the council set aside over \$10,000 to develop the amusement park, expecting that revenues from the rides and parking fees would cover the expenses, which included salaries for a manager, ticket sellers, parking lot attendants, a caretaker, and two merry-go-round attendants."<sup>43</sup>

In June, the Minnesota Point development opened for the 1938 season with the amusement area as a key attraction. A *Duluth News Tribune* article from June 5, 1938 described the new park facilities: "developed as a Works Progress administration project, the huge beach area between the "barrens" and the end of the Park Point bus line is rapidly taking shape as a picnic ground, bathing spot, and amusement center." The park's picnic grounds fronted on the bay and featured a "lush growth of grass."<sup>44</sup> The amusement zone, which opened under the supervision of manager A. H. Muir, operated in the evenings and on weekends.<sup>45</sup> Initial rides included a carousel and "flying scooter" (a miniature railway and Ferris wheel were added the following year).<sup>46</sup> The boat dock for small watercraft was also completed in 1938.<sup>47</sup> According to the *Duluth News Tribune*, the dock had a 200-foot frontage and would be capped with concrete and equipped with mooring cleats.<sup>48</sup> Though the bathhouse was at 90% completion by August, it did not officially open until the following year.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, the park's initial 1938 opening appears to have drawn large crowds, with 10,000

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<sup>42</sup> John A. Magill, "Point Amusement Center to Be Ready This Spring," *Duluth News Tribune*, February 21, 1938, newspapers.com.

<sup>43</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 187; "\$10,825 Is Sum Set Aside for Amusement Zone," *Duluth News Tribune*, June 15, 1938, newspapers.com.

<sup>44</sup> "Duluth Will Open Rival to Coney Island June 18," *Duluth News Tribune*, June 5, 1938, newspapers.com.

<sup>45</sup> "Park Point Play Zone to Be Open Every Evening," *Duluth News Tribune*, June 15, 1938, newspapers.com.

<sup>46</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 187.

<sup>47</sup> "Funds Gone for Work at Park Point," *Duluth News Tribune*, June 17, 1938, newspapers.com.

<sup>48</sup> "Park Projects Would Extend Over 2 Years," *Duluth News Tribune*, August 16, 1938, newspapers.com.

<sup>49</sup> "Park Projects Would Extend Over 2 Years," *Duluth News Tribune*, August 16, 1938, newspapers.com.

individuals visiting on one Sunday in June.<sup>50</sup> While the area was officially open, it lacked an official name and was simply referred to as the Minnesota Point development.<sup>51</sup>

The ambitious original scope of work on the Point, with a hay fever colony and camp for underprivileged children, proved to be more than was possible using the initial allocation of WPA funds. In June 1938, the Park Point Development Committee announced that the project had used all of the WPA funding without having started work on either the colony or the children's camp. Several facilities planned for the recreation area had also not been constructed, including a general recreation building, a custodian's house, and the outdoor swimming pool.<sup>52</sup> In July, the City announced a planned \$800,000 in citywide park improvements over the following year. This improvement program included funding for "continuation of work on summer recreation development" at Minnesota Point, which was (in the words of the *Duluth News Tribune*) "expected to be one of the City's main tourist attractions."<sup>53</sup>

In December of 1938, the City announced that the WPA was anticipated to invest \$2,000,000 in 21 projects planned by the park and public works departments for 1939 and 1940, with the WPA paying wages and the City providing an additional \$290,000 in materials and supplies. This included \$100,000 for "further development of recreational facilities on Minnesota Point," including "completion of the bathhouse at the Park Point amusement beach, landscaping, enlargement of parking space, footpaths and other improvements."<sup>54</sup>

The bathhouse opened on June 24, 1939 (see Figures 4-6). The building included two lobbies, showers, locker rooms, restrooms, and area for beachgoers to wash the sand from their feet.<sup>55</sup> Its construction using heavy cedar timbers was consistent with the WPA practice of building with native materials. An article in the May 31, 1937 edition of the *Duluth News Tribune* on WPA structures noted that "in the northern part of the state, scores of fine log buildings have been erected" by the agency, and called out the Park Point bathhouse house as one of several "more outstanding of these structures," though construction was not yet complete.<sup>56</sup> A more unusual aspect of the building was its incorporation of features of traditional Scandinavian architecture. As early as 1936, the project had been planning to design buildings in the recreation area with "architectural motifs following lines of structures in Scandinavian countries." According to the *Duluth News Tribune*, "the type of architecture will be a new departure from the usual log cabin and pioneer American style followed in most resort and recreational buildings in the Arrowhead. Multiple colors and elaborate carvings will be stressed."<sup>57</sup> A July 1939 article in the *Duluth News Tribune* with photos of the bathhouse called

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<sup>50</sup> "Park Point Play Zone to Be Open Every Evening," *Duluth News Tribune*, June 15, 1938, newspapers.com.

<sup>51</sup> "Duluth Will Open Rival to Coney Island June 18," *Duluth News Tribune*, June 5, 1938, newspapers.com.

<sup>52</sup> "Funds Gone for Work at Park Point," *Duluth News Tribune*, June 17, 1938, newspapers.com.

<sup>53</sup> "General Park Improvement Plan Mapped," *Duluth News Tribune*, July 14, 1938, newspapers.com.

<sup>54</sup> "1,300 Will Get Jobs on Works Now Scheduled," *Duluth News Tribune*, December 31, 1938, newspapers.com.

<sup>55</sup> "New Park Point Bath House Opens," *Duluth News Tribune*, June 24, 1939, newspapers.com; "Pictorial," *Duluth News Tribune*, July 30, 1939, newspapers.com.

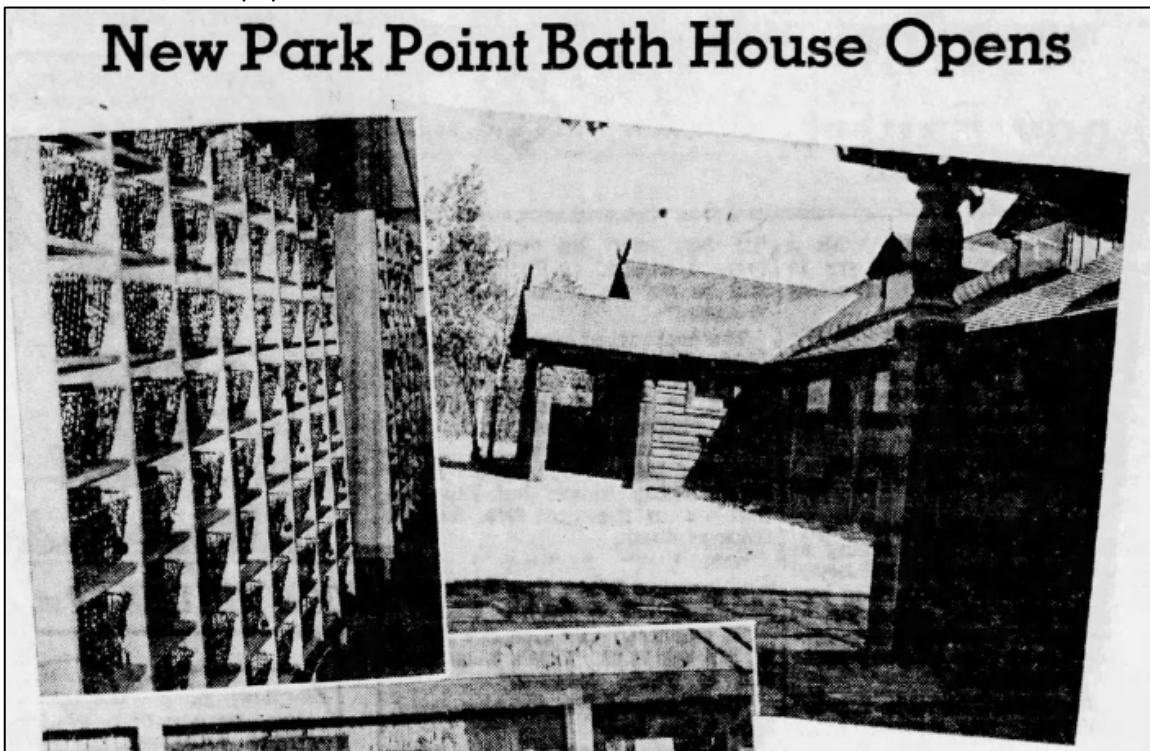
<sup>56</sup> "Waste Piles Are Utilized in Jobs of Administration," *Duluth News Tribune*, May 31, 1937, newspapers.com.

<sup>57</sup> "Scandinavian Structures Planned for Park Point," *Duluth News Tribune*, July 9, 1936, newspapers.com.

attention to the “dragon heads on the gables and the heavy cedar timber siding, distinctive features of Norwegian architecture.” Guests were charged 15 cents to access the bathhouse’s dressing and bath facilities, rent a towel, and store their clothing.<sup>58</sup>



**Figure 4.** View of the bathhouse, 1939. “New Park Point Bath House Opens,” June 24, 1939 *Duluth News Tribune*, newspapers.com.



**Figure 5.** Exterior of the bathhouse (right) and view of baskets (left; likely for checking clothing), 1939. “New Park Point Bath House Opens,” June 24, 1939 *Duluth News Tribune*, newspapers.com.

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<sup>58</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 188.



**Figure 6.** View of one of the bathhouse lobbies, 1939. “New Park Point Bath House Opens,” June 24, 1939 *Duluth News Tribune*, newspapers.com.

As summarized in the park department’s 1939 annual report, additional work on the recreational area in 1939 included:

- **Completion of bathhouse**, including stone steps at three approaches to the building
- **Blacktop surfacing** of roadways and **guardrail installation** along roadways and parking lot
- **Back stops and goal posts installed on the athletic field**, which by that time included two baseball fields, a football field, and “space for other group games and events”
- **Installation of walkways** and pathways connecting “various sections of the area” using discarded wooden paving blocks
- **Cleaning up of the picnic area**, including removing brush and filling in low spots to give the park “an extensive shaded picnic ground with tables to accommodate several hundred people”
- **Lawn seeding and planting**, including planting 300 Norway pine and many shrubs around the bathhouse and picnic grounds, sodding of all open areas around the bathhouse, and general landscaping around the bathhouse.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Earl H. Sherman, “Annual Report: Duluth Park Department,” 1939, p. 22, DPRR.

1940 brought additional improvements, including:

- **Construction of a second parking lot** adjacent to the existing, doubling the parking area
- **Construction of ornamental stone entrance gates and flower beds**, including ornamental gates and guard rails “placed at all entrances and roadways leading to the various sectors of the park”
- **Installation of guard stones** (“salvaged from blasting operations on the Skyline Parkway”) “along both sides of the entire roadway”
- **Addition of new lawn areas**, along with seeding, landscaping, and planting activities “carried on throughout the year”
- **Installation of additional picnic tables and benches**
- **Addition of a new ride** (the “Dodgem” ride) in the amusement area, expansion of miniature railway tracks, and installation of “new and colorful fronts” at other amusement rides<sup>60</sup>

An aerial photograph taken in September of 1940 (see Figure 7) clearly shows the recreational area as it existed at that time, with Minnesota Avenue skirting the perimeter of the property and the small watercraft dock on the bay (west) side and the bathhouse and beach on the lake (east) side. Where Minnesota Avenue turned west to ring the park, a drive branched off from the Avenue and ran along the lake side, terminating in a drop-off loop at the front of the bathhouse. The aerial image suggests that the northern third of the park consisted of parking lots, while the grass area to the south was used as the athletic fields. The amusement zone was located at the south end of the park; three structures visible in the aerial photograph were likely amusement rides. The area surrounding the bathhouse shows dense vegetation, likely including the Norway pines and shrubs planted in 1939, with what appear to be pedestrian paths running perpendicular and parallel to the shoreline.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Earl H. Sherman, “Annual Report: Duluth Park Department,” 1940, p. 35, DPRR.

<sup>61</sup> Aerial photograph of Minnesota Point, September 12, 1940, Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online, John R. Borchert Map Library, University of Minnesota, <https://apps.lib.umn.edu/mhapo/>.



**Figure 7.** Aerial photograph of the recreation area, September 12, 1940. Image retrieved from Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online, John R. Borchert Map Library, University of Minnesota.

Based on annual reports from the park department, 1940 appears to have been the last year that the park received WPA funding, and improvements over the next several years were relatively minor. In 1941, the “Flying Scooter” ride was removed and brush was installed “on the exposed areas along the lake shore to keep the sand from blowing. These areas were also seeded and planted.”<sup>62</sup> According to Nelson and Dierckins, an archery range, a giant checker board, outdoor Ping-pong tables, croquet, and quoits were also installed around this time.<sup>63</sup> The Ferris Wheel was removed the following year and shuffleboard and horseshoe courts installed.<sup>64</sup> By 1943, the park featured wooden “rustic signs and gates” (likely installed prior to 1943). In 1943, the bathhouse was also modified: the former checking room was converted into an activity room with a separate entrance.<sup>65</sup>

Though thousands of people used the area in the park’s first several years, the park was not initially financially profitable for the City.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, annual reports show that patronage of the rides increased from 71,424 rides in 1941 to 100,724 in 1945 and bathhouse usage from 2,661 tickets

<sup>62</sup> John V. Hoene, “Annual Report: Duluth Park Department,” 1941, p. 24, DPRR.

<sup>63</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 188.

<sup>64</sup> John V. Hoene, “Annual Report: Duluth Park Department,” 1942, p. 21, DPRR.

<sup>65</sup> John V. Hoene, “Annual Report: Duluth Park Department,” 1943, p. 21, DPRR.

<sup>66</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 188.

in 1942 to 8,333 in 1945.<sup>67</sup> 1943 was a particularly good year for operations. According to the park department's annual report, "Minnesota Point enjoyed the greatest attendance since its establishment. On one Sunday during July the attendance at the beach near the bath house was estimated as over 3,000 persons. The rides and other amusements were well patronized...and the operation of the concessions more than paid for the entire upkeep of the area."<sup>68</sup> The report added that "although many people in Duluth are not aware of the fine picnic facilities offered at Minnesota Point, it is becoming each year more popular for this purpose. In 1943 there were nine large organizations which reserved the picnic areas and there were many smaller groups and numerous family groups which used the picnic areas."<sup>69</sup>

### 1.1.3 Recreation at PPRA: 1944 - 1975

From the mid-1940s through the present day, Park Point has remained a unique amenity in the City's park system, providing recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors to Duluth. During the post-WWII ("postwar") era, there was an increased focus on outdoor recreation across the United States. Scholar George H. Siehl provides context for this trend:

The middle third of the 20th century was an era that transformed the US: an economic depression, a globe-altering war, rapid economic recovery and an unprecedented population explosion between 1946 and 1964 contributed to the changes. Outdoor recreation changed along with many other aspects of life. Personal mobility, children at home and disposable income – elements that research shows contribute to recreation participation – all grew in the post-war years and continued upwards until the present. The strength of these societal changes would cause the participation in and variety of recreation to virtually explode in the post-war years.<sup>70</sup>

In 1946, the City of Duluth commissioned the National Recreation Association to survey of the City's park and recreation opportunities. The survey noted that "the astonishing increase of leisure is a national phenomenon" and that Duluth's 103,000 residents alone had an estimated collective 257,500,000 hours of free time each year, not to mention the time spent in the City by tourists and vacationers to Duluth.<sup>71</sup> At this time, the topic of recreation was particularly relevant to the local economy. Duluth's iron ore mining industry was declining, and the 1946 report called out development of the "tourist-vacation industry" as "the most immediate prospects for maintaining the economy of Duluth and the entire northern part of the State of Minnesota."<sup>72</sup> The City's park department was one of the public agencies invested in recreation and "the constructive use of leisure

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<sup>67</sup> John V. Hoene, "Annual Report: Duluth Park Department," 1945, p. 6, DPRR.

<sup>68</sup> John V. Hoene, "Annual Report: Duluth Park Department," 1943, p. 2, DPRR.

<sup>69</sup> John V. Hoene, "Annual Report: Duluth Park Department," 1943, p. 23, DPRR.

<sup>70</sup> George H. Siehl, "U.S. Recreation Policies Since World War II," in *Trends in Outdoor Recreation, Leisure and Tourism*, W. C. Gartner and D. W. Lime, eds. (CAB International, 2000), 91.

<sup>71</sup> L. H. Weir, Field Secretary of the National Recreation Association, "Notes and Comments on Public Recreation in Duluth, Minnesota..." June-July, 1946, p. 3, Archives and Special Collections, Martin Library, University of Minnesota Duluth.

<sup>72</sup> Weir, "Notes and Comments," 8.

time” in Duluth. By this date, the department oversaw over 100 sites and nearly 6,000 acres of parkland, boulevards, and municipal forests.<sup>73</sup>

Of the ten large parks in the City at that time, Minnesota Point was unique in providing permanent beach and bathing facilities as well as an amusement park.<sup>74</sup> The point was noted along with the City’s two golf courses, sports stadium, the Fairmount Park Zoo, two tourist camps, and the Hay Fever Colony Area as one of the City’s “special recreation areas...devoted, more or less, to some special recreational activity.” According to the report, the Point Recreational Area “provides facilities for a varied recreation activity, including a playing field for baseball (hard and soft), swimming beach with bathhouse, sun and air bathing on the beach and sand dunes, picnic facilities for family and large group picnicking, refreshment building, and several amusement devices such as are found in some amusement parks.” The report recommended further development of the area, including an outdoor swimming pool; a community building with dancing, meeting, refectory and dining service facilities; and several hard surfaced tennis courts that could also be used for outdoor dancing and roller skating. Suggestions also included developing a boat livery (boat rental) at the dock and the “extension of the more simple [sic] forms of amusement devices” in the amusement zone.<sup>75</sup> According to the report, “this area promises to become a unique, citywide recreation center not only for the residents of the City but also for the thousands of tourists which frequent this region during the summer months.”<sup>76</sup>

These recommendations for additional improvements, however, came without the funding needed for implementation. While time for leisure and recreation was increasing, local funding for park development and maintenance was not – when the WPA was dissolved in 1943, the park department struggled to maintain all of the parks that the WPA had helped create.<sup>77</sup> It appears that few, if any, of the 1946 recommendations were implemented at the Point, and it was not until the late 1960s that serious discussions about substantial improvements began again.

Annual reports from the park department between 1944 and 1948 suggest that the amusement zone increased in popularity for these years of operation. In 1945, Minnesota Point Recreation Area was transferred to the park department’s newly created Bureau of Recreational Facilities. Under this bureau, the park “showed a very substantial increase in receipts.” By this time, there were five rides in the amusement zone.<sup>78</sup> The 1946 report noted that the Minnesota Point Recreational Area was “used more than in previous years despite closing two weeks earlier.”<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> John V. Hoene, “Annual Report: Duluth Park Department,” 1944, p. 25-31, DPRR.

<sup>74</sup> Weir, “Notes and Comments,” 45.

<sup>75</sup> Weir, “Notes and Comments,” 45, 93.

<sup>76</sup> Weir, “Notes and Comments,” 55.

<sup>77</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 13.

<sup>78</sup> John V. Hoene, “Annual Report: Duluth Park Department,” 1945, p. 1, 20, DPRR.

<sup>79</sup> John V. Hoene, “Annual Report: City of Duluth Park Department,” 1946, p. 1, DPRR.

Likewise, the 1947 report indicated that the area “showed a definite increase in picnics, bathing, and receipts over the previous year.”<sup>80</sup>

From the late 1940s to the early 1960s, however, the park department’s annual reports show a general decrease in rides purchased at the amusement zone. From 114,089 rides in 1948, ridership generally decreased to 75,155 in 1956. Use of the bathhouse also declined from 6,512 tickets in 1946 to hold steady at around 2,000 for the 1950s, though very hot weather drew a spike in attendance up to 8,000 in 1961. In 1951, the City leased the amusement zone to H. C. Onsgard and the bathhouse to W. W. Lemann, who continued to operate these facilities through at least 1961.<sup>81</sup>

While patronage of the bathhouse itself may have decreased, the beach appears to have remained popular. In 1954, an estimated 7,229 swimmers and 5,967 spectators used the Park Point beach.<sup>82</sup> 1961 was a particularly high attendance year, with an estimated 69,421 individuals using the beach during the months of June, July and August.<sup>83</sup> Beach attendance was estimated at 28,059 in 1963 and 8,116 in 1966.<sup>84</sup> Newspaper articles and annual park department reports suggest that PPRA and Twin Lakes (opened for supervised swimming in 1931 and located along Skyline Boulevard by the Enger Tower) were the two primary municipal beaches during the 1940s through the early 1960s, with PPRA being the more popular of the two.<sup>85</sup>

PPRA’s picnic facilities continued to be popular for use by large organizations, with 19 such picnics held during the 1951 season.<sup>86</sup> Annual picnics by various groups and organizations continued through the 1960s, including the annual picnic for schoolchildren sponsored by the Duluth police and the annual smelt picnic of the United Northern Sportsmen.<sup>87</sup> An article in the July 20, 1958 edition of the *Duluth News Tribune* asserted that “the Park Point recreation area is one of the City’s most popular picnic locations.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Gust A. Johnson, “Annual Report: City of Duluth Park Department,” 1947, p. 1, DPRR.

<sup>81</sup> Gust A. Johnson, “Annual Report: Park Department - City of Duluth,” 1951, p. 1, 19, DPRR; E. H. Hatch, “Annual Report: Park Department - City of Duluth,” 1953, p. 17, DPRR; Gust A. Johnson, “Annual Report: City of Duluth Park Department,” 1948, p. 18, DPRR; Gust A. Johnson, “Annual Report: Park Department - City of Duluth,” 1952, p. 1, 18, DPRR; S. I. Duclett, “Annual Report: Park Department - City of Duluth,” 1956, p. 14, DPRR; Harry W. Nash, “Annual Report: Recreation Department, Duluth, Minnesota,” 1961, p. 4, DPRR.

<sup>82</sup> “8,613 Swimmers Used City Beaches,” *Duluth News Tribune*, September 8, 1954, newspapers.com.

<sup>83</sup> Harry W. Nash, “Annual Report: Recreation Department, Duluth, Minnesota,” 1961, p. 11, DPRR.

<sup>84</sup> Harry W. Nash, “Annual Report: Parks and Recreation,” 1963, p. 8, DPRR; Harry W. Nash, “Parks and Recreation Annual Report,” 1966, p. 26, DPRR.

<sup>85</sup> “Swimming Care Urged,” *Duluth News Tribune*, July 7, 1946, newspapers.com; Duluth Park Department, “City of Duluth Park Department: Annual Report,” 1931, p. 5, DPRR; “Lifeguards Envy Duluth’s Record,” *Duluth News Tribune*, August 12, 1951, newspapers.com; “Swimmers Cautioned,” *Duluth News Tribune*, July 4, 1945, newspapers.com. “Swim Aids Are Engaged by City Council,” *Duluth News Tribune*, July 18, 1951, newspapers.com; “Beach Guards Save 15 Lives,” *Duluth News Tribune*, September 5, 1948, newspapers.com; “Twin Ponds Beach Closed,” *Duluth News Tribune*, August 19, 1960, newspapers.com.

<sup>86</sup> Gust A. Johnson, “Annual Report: Park Department - City of Duluth,” 1951, p. 1, 19, DPRR.

<sup>87</sup> “What Appetites!” *Duluth News Tribune*, June 8, 1952, newspapers.com; “Only 2 Smelt Found in Test Net,” *Duluth News Tribune*, April 15, 1955, newspapers.com; “Picnic Planned,” *Duluth News Tribune*, July 13, 1956, newspapers.com.

<sup>88</sup> “Let’s Go on a Picnic!” *Duluth News Tribune*, July 20, 1958, newspapers.com.

In addition to swimming and picnicking, PPRA was used for many community events and celebrations during the mid-twentieth century. These included Fourth of July celebrations. Fourth of July activities sponsored by Ed Braun American Legion in 1952 included fireworks, concert, model airplane exhibition, a dance and a motorboat race in the bay.<sup>89</sup> In 1956, the Point held one of only two public Fourth of July celebrations in the City, including tumbling exhibitions by Central YMCA performers and fireworks sponsored by the Industrial Club of West Duluth.<sup>90</sup> One of the park's classic annual events was the children's annual sand modeling contest. In 1961, over 500 children participated in the event.<sup>91</sup> Other types of events included a 1952 Boy Scout rally, a 1954 pow-wow sponsored by the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, an endurance swim held in 1960 as part of the City's Portorama celebration, an ice race course by the Minnesota Cup Race in 1971, a sailing regatta to kick-off the City's annual fall festival in 1959, and the Park Point Art Fair that was held annually on the Point beginning in 1970.<sup>92</sup>

By 1960, it appears that a lack of funds for park maintenance had affected Park Point as well as other Duluth parks. That year, City Councilmember Dwight Solberg voted against planned improvements to Minnesota Avenue on the grounds that the Park Point area had been neglected.<sup>93</sup> A 1961 aerial photograph shows the park with a similar layout to 1940, with an amusement zone, athletic fields, parking, dock, drives, and the bathhouse and beach in their 1940 locations (see Figure 8). A few additional structures, likely rides, were located in the amusement zone. Trees bordered portions of Minnesota Avenue and separated the parking area from the athletic field.<sup>94</sup> In 1964, Duluth Mayor George D. Johnson ordered the removal of the amusement rides from Park Point, drawing the outrage of some residents and circulation of petitions to remove the mayor from office. Nevertheless, the amusement park was closed and some ride equipment removed in May of that year. An article in the *Duluth News Tribune* noted that the mayor removed the rides "upon recommendation of the Duluth Parks and Recreation Board" who wanted to "remove the carnival atmosphere from Park Point and make it a natural scenic attraction."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> "Two Fourth Fetes Slated," *Duluth News Tribune*, July 3, 1952, newspapers.com

<sup>90</sup> "Duluthians Get Ready to Observe Holiday," *Duluth News Tribune*, July 3, 1956, newspapers.com.

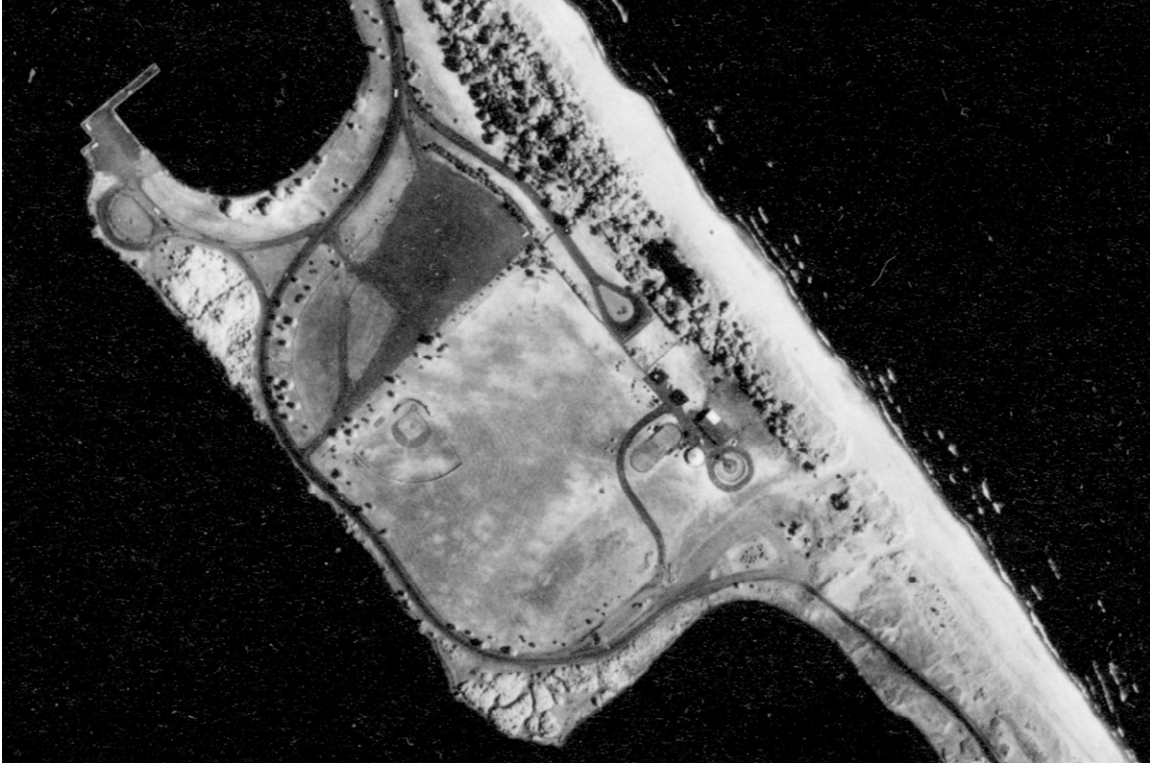
<sup>91</sup> Harry W. Nash, "Annual Report: Recreation Department, Duluth, Minnesota," 1961, p. 5, DPRR.

<sup>92</sup> "Boy Scouts Plan Rally Next Sunday," *Duluth News Tribune*, November 26, 1952, newspapers.com; "Chippewas Will Stage Pow-Wow," *Duluth News Tribune*, July 29, 1954, newspapers.com; Portorama Endurance Swim Set," *Duluth News Tribune*, July 27, 1960, newspapers.com; Ice Race Group Chooses Radisson As Headquarters," *Duluth News Tribune*, January 3, 1971, newspapers.com; Sailing Regatta to Kick Off City's Annual Fall Festival," *Duluth News Tribune*, September 3, 1959, newsapeprs.com; "Park Point Art Fair," *Duluth News Tribune*, June 29, 1974, newspapers.com.

<sup>93</sup> "Councilman Accuses Mayor of Poor Parks Program," *Duluth News Tribune*, October 14, 1966, newspapers.com; Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 14.

<sup>94</sup> Aerial photograph of Minnesota Point, 1961, Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online, John R. Borchert Map Library, University of Minnesota, <https://apps.lib.umn.edu/mhapo/>.

<sup>95</sup> Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 189; "Petitions to Ask Ouster of Mayor," *Duluth News Tribune*, May 28, 1964, newspapers.com; "Action to Oust Mayor Threatened" *Duluth News Tribune*, May 26, 1964, newspapers.com.



**Figure 8.** Aerial photograph of the recreation area, July 7, 1961. Image retrieved from Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online, John R. Borchert Map Library, University of Minnesota.

Based on information available in the *Duluth News Tribune*, the next substantial investment in the park appears to have begun in the late 1960s. In 1968, \$21,276 in federal and state funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund were dedicated to the park. Plans were made to “develop a modern playground, surface a parking area, provide underground electric service and construct boat launching ramps and mooring docks.” The proposal was part of a larger plan developed by the Duluth planning firm of Aguar, Jyring, Whiteman & Moser, Inc.<sup>96</sup> The firm’s 1968 site plan shows several planned amenities, including a swimming pool, parking lot, and picnic area in the former amusement zone; playlots and tennis courts to the west and north of the bathhouse; and additional docks, a boat launch, and parking in the dock area.<sup>97</sup>

While this entire plan was not implemented as proposed, incremental improvements were made to the park during the following decade, including improvements to the boat dock area, a kid’s play area to the north of the bathhouse, and additional parking at the south end of the park (see Figure 9 for a 1973 aerial view of the park). A new steel lifeguard tower was installed in 1969.<sup>98</sup> Another article in the November 18, 1970 edition of the *News Tribune* noted that a \$17,750 federal grant was approved to “pave the road leading to the area and to construct a parking lot for boat

<sup>96</sup> “City to Get Funds for Park Point,” *Duluth News Tribune*, September 20, 1968, newspapers.com.

<sup>97</sup> Aguar, Jyring, Whiteman & Moser, Inc., “Preliminary Development Plan for Park Point,” Job No. 1363, February 23, 1968, on file at the City of Duluth.

<sup>98</sup> Harry W. Nash, “Parks and Recreation Annual Report,” 1969, p. 6, DPRR.

launching facilities.” Matching funds equaling the amount of the federal grant were to be provided by the City.<sup>99</sup> In November of 1971, Nels Nelson and Sons Inc. was awarded a \$56,533 contract to construct boat launching and docking facilities at the park.<sup>100</sup> In early 1972, a \$1.8 million citywide park improvement program under consideration included “remodeling the pavilion, lighting and installing new equipment in the Park Point Recreation Area.”<sup>101</sup>

In spring 1974, the City announced that improvements at PPRA that summer would include “upgraded lighting to allow for night softball games, renovation of the bathhouse including installation of vending machines and indoor picnic tables,” and purchase of sailboats to be used for sailing lessons. The City noted a lack of maintenance in past years and that it hoped to make the park “a real drawing card for residents and visitors alike through major improvements.”<sup>102</sup> In August of that year, a kids play and picnic area developed by the Duluth Jaycees was installed to the north of the boathouse; it included large manmade replica of an ore boat (used as a sandbox) and the Duluth Aerial Bridge, as well as seven steel fireplaces and picnic tables on concrete slabs.<sup>103</sup> A 1975 article indicated that the City was again seeking federal and state funding (\$195,000) to further improve the PPRA, including dune protection, washrooms, tennis courts and park building remodeling.<sup>104</sup>

Through the mid-1970s, the recreation area appears to have continued to be a popular place for summertime recreation in Duluth. One article in the 1973 *Duluth News Tribune* noted that “the popularity of Park Point to outsiders goes without question – from the spring smelt run through sunny autumn days that embellish the blue of Lake Superior waters. Picnickers, swimmers, beachcombers and hikers visit Park Point daily – while motorcyclists, bonfire-burners and beer-busters travel there nightly.” Of the average daily count of 3,200 vehicles on Minnesota Avenue, one-third used the Park Point Recreation Area. The area’s “appeal as recreation grounds” was “reflected in the fact mid-day traffic volume during the summer season actually is greater than the morning rush-hour counts – probably the only city street in that unique situation.”<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> “Park Point Area Grant Approved,” *Duluth News Tribune*, November 18, 1970, newspapers.com.

<sup>100</sup> “Council Approves Taxicab Ordinance,” *Duluth News Tribune*, November 16, 1971, newspapers.com.

<sup>101</sup> “City Eyes \$2 Million Parks Aid,” *Duluth News Tribune*, February 29, 1972, newspapers.com.

<sup>102</sup> “Recreation Area to Be Improved on Park Point,” *Duluth News Tribune*, April 10, 1974, newspapers.com.

<sup>103</sup> “Largest Manmade Sandbox?” *Duluth News Tribune*, July 11, 1973, newspapers.com; “Park Point Play Area Dedication Thursday,” *Duluth News Tribune*, August 6, 1974, newspapers.com.

<sup>104</sup> “ARDC Project Applications Total \$2.5 Million,” *Duluth News Tribune*, August 16, 1975, newspapers.com.

<sup>105</sup> John Krebs, “Park Pointers Zealously Guard Their Way of Life,” *Duluth News Tribune*, October 10, 1973, newspapers.com.



**Figure 9.** Aerial photograph of the recreation area, 1973. Photograph courtesy of University of Minnesota Duluth, Minnesota Digital Library.

#### **1.1.4 The Evolution of PPRA: 1975 – Present**

From 1975 to the present, PPRA has continued to evolve to serve the needs of the Duluth community. Park records and newspaper articles record improvements like the parking lot paving, regrading and improving lighting at the ballfield, renovating the beach house for wintertime use, and improvement of grass lawn and sand areas in 1977; construction of the Wally Byam “tot lot” in 1984; construction of a paved bike trail around the athletic fields in 1985; beach house alterations (removing dark stain and applying clear sealer to exterior walls, replacing the roof, adding windows to the long sides of the building, installing brick and wood patio areas, and interior renovations) in 1986; and construction of a boardwalk from the Recreation Area to the beach in 1999.<sup>106</sup> Other changes during the past 50 years have included constructing two picnic shelters, removing the kids play area and “tot lot,” installing sand volleyball courts at the former location of the amusement park, constructing a restroom building near the boat dock, removing lighting and sport facilities (like goal posts) from the former athletic fields, recladding the east (lake) elevation of the bathhouse, and

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<sup>106</sup> “Point Recreation Funds Approved,” *Duluth News Tribune*, June 2, 1976, newspapers.com; “Council Hires Firm to Plan Ramp,” *Duluth News Tribune*, July 26, 1977, newspapers.com; “Park Point Projects Underway,” *Duluth News Tribune*, September 12, 1985, newspapers.com; Bob Ashenmacher, “Park point Landmark Back in Vintage Shape,” *Duluth News Tribune*, August 8, 1986, newspapers.com; “Invitation to Bid” *Duluth News Tribune*, May 21, 1984, newspapers.com; “A Timeline History of the Point,” *Duluth News Tribune*, January 19, 2000, newspapers.com; “Just Hanging Out,” *Duluth News-Tribune*, June 12, 1995, newspapers.com.

replacing stairs at the primary west entrance to the boathouse with an ADA accessible ramp (see Figures 10 and 11).



**Figure 10.** Aerial photograph of Park Point Recreation Area, 2025. Courtesy of St. Louis County.



**Figure 11.** Aerial photograph of Park Point Recreation Area, 2025. Courtesy of St. Louis County.

## 1.2 Potential Paths to National Register Eligibility

### 1.2.1 Overview

For a property to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), it must 1) demonstrate **historical significance** by meeting at least one of the National Park Service’s (NPS) Criteria for Evaluation *and* 2) retain **historic integrity**.

The NPS Criteria for Evaluation define historically significant properties as properties:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.<sup>107</sup>

Historic integrity is a property’s ability to convey its historic significance through its physical materials and features. NPS defines seven aspects, or qualities, of historic integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. According to NPS, “to retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects.”<sup>108</sup>

### 1.2.2 Historical Significance

The Park Point Recreation Area is potentially **historically significant under NPS Criterion A as a notable federal relief project in Duluth**. The Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933–1941 (1991 and updated with amended documentation in 1994, 2002, and 2017) provides the framework for determining whether properties constructed by federal relief agencies like the Works Progress Administration (WPA) are eligible for the NRHP. According to the MPDF, to be eligible for the National Register under the historic context “Federal Relief Programs in Minnesota, 1933 – 1941,” social and recreational facilities like Park Point must have been “financed through a grant or loan from the federal government, or federal funds should have been utilized for materials, labor, or supervision” and been constructed by the end of 1941. Additionally, “a Social or Recreational Facility should be eligible under National Register Criterion A as a particularly important project through the size and scope of the work involved, or by the number of people employed; or the project should represent a significant contribution to the community by providing a new and modern facility which offered

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<sup>107</sup> National Park Service, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 1997, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB16A-Complete.pdf>, p. 37.

<sup>108</sup> National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, rev. 1995, p. 44, [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15\\_web508.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf).

programs, amenities, recreational activities, or community services which were previously unavailable...”<sup>109</sup>

The PPRA appears to have been an important WPA project in terms of its cost and the number of individuals employed, and also represented a significant contribution to the community by providing permanent municipal beach facilities that were previously unavailable on the Point; therefore, it appears to meet the MPDF requirements for significance as a federal relief project. **The level of significance for this property is local, and its Area of Significance is Government. The property’s historic period (“period of significance”) would likely be 1938 – 1940,** reflecting the date of the park’s opening in 1938 through its substantial completion and the last year of WPA-funded improvements in 1940.

The Park Point Recreation Area *may* also be locally significant under NPS Criterion A for its significant contribution to outdoor recreation in Duluth, under the Area of Significance of Entertainment/Recreation. The park appears to have provided a unique contribution to local recreation through its amusement zone and its beach and swimming facilities. Under this Area of Significance, a **potential period of significance could be 1938 until 1964,** the year that the amusement zone closed, **or 1938 – 1975,** fifty years from today’s date (based on the NPS’s “fifty-year” rule). In order to determine the park’s significance in this area, more research is needed to compare the PPRA to other Duluth parks and beach facilities that existed during the same time period. (This research is beyond the scope of the current project).

**PPRA is unlikely to be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion B.** The park’s development was supported by the well-known Park Superintendent F. Rodney Paine, who may have been a significant individual. However, PPRA is unlikely to be eligible for its association with Paine, given that Paine’s residence or workplace is likely a better representation of his overall accomplishments as the superintendent of the park department.

**PPRA is unlikely to be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C.** Some or all of the park may have been designed by notable landscape architect Arthur R. Nichols, who practiced in Minneapolis from 1909 until 1953 and was the first registered landscape architect in Minnesota. Nichols designed the site plan for the Capitol Approach in St. Paul, the University of Minnesota's Northrop Mall, Cambridge and Willmar (Minnesota) State Hospital grounds, and numerous college campuses, including St. Catherine's (St. Paul) and the University of Minnesota's Duluth campus. During his career, he worked as a consultant to the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Highway Department, and the Minnesota State Park system.<sup>110</sup> Newspapers provide few references to Nichols’ work on the PPRA, and no evidence was uncovered to indicate that this park is one of the best representations of his work; given Nichols’ extensive accomplishments, it seems unlikely that PPRA would be eligible as a representation of the work of this master landscape architect.

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<sup>109</sup> Rolf Anderson, “Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933 – 1943,” 1993, amended 1994, 2002, and 2017, F27-F28, [https://mn.gov/admin/assets/Federal%20Relief%20Construction%20MPDF\\_tcm36-445036.pdf](https://mn.gov/admin/assets/Federal%20Relief%20Construction%20MPDF_tcm36-445036.pdf).

<sup>110</sup> Morell & Nichols Papers (N 79), Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries, Minneapolis, accessed June 11, 2025, <https://archives.lib.umn.edu/repositories/8/resources/5799>; “A. R. Nichols, Landscape Designer, Dies at 89,” *Minneapolis Star*, January 24, 1970, newspapers.com; “Arthur Nichols,” The Cultural Landscape Foundation, accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.tclf.org/pioneer/arthur-nichols>.

PPRA is also unlikely to be eligible as an example of a specific architectural style or method of construction. According to the MPDF, social and recreational facilities can be “architecturally significant as outstanding examples of the use of native building materials in the construction process. These include significant examples of the Rustic Style as well as finely crafted masonry construction. Parks, parkways, and waysides are often significant for incorporating the principles of landscape architecture into the design process in an attempt to achieve non-intrusive and environmentally sensitive development.”<sup>111</sup> While the bathhouse’s heavy cedar timber construction is consistent with the WPA’s use of native materials, alterations to the building have diminished its ability to qualify as an outstanding example of this type of construction. Given its more unusual Nordic influenced design, the building also does not appear to be an outstanding example of the Rustic Style, especially when considering the large number (over 300) of Rustic-style buildings that were constructed in Minnesota State Parks during the 1930s.<sup>112</sup>

**PPRA is unlikely to be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D as this criterion relates to above-ground resources.** Historic research did not uncover any information that suggests that the above-ground resources on this site (the bathhouse and the dock) are likely to yield information important in history or prehistory. However, the authors of this report are not qualified archaeologists and cannot assess the potential of the park to yield information important in history or prehistory based on the potential for archaeological (below-ground) resources.

### 1.2.3 Historic Integrity

In order to qualify for the NRHP, PPRA needs to have not only historic significance but also historic integrity. In other words, the park needs to look similar to its appearance during its potential 1938–1940 period of significance. This potential period of significance means that buildings, structures, site features, and other resources on the site that were installed through 1940 would be considered historic (or “contributing”) resources. Any changes that occurred after 1940 would be considered non-historic (“non-contributing”) alterations. Evaluating the integrity of designed landscapes such as PPRA involves considering whether the site retains not only its historic *buildings and structures* (the bathhouse and dock) but also historic landscape and site elements like *spatial organization, water features, topography, circulation, vegetation, and site furnishings/objects*.<sup>113</sup> These elements impact the park’s integrity of **location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association**.

**While non-historic (post-1940) alterations have been made to PPRA, the park as a whole appears to retain sufficient historic integrity to communicate its historic significance as a federal relief project.** If the park is eligible for its later recreational history, it appears likely that it would also retain integrity to a 1964 or 1975 end date to the period of significance.

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<sup>111</sup> Anderson, “Federal Relief Construction,” F27.

<sup>112</sup> Anderson, “Federal Relief Construction,” E38.

<sup>113</sup> Charles A. Birnbaum and Christina Capella Peters, eds., *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 1996), 15-16, <https://www.nps.gov/Tps/standards/four-treatments/landscape-guidelines/index.htm>.

The information below summarizes our observations regarding the park's integrity based on a potential 1938–1940 period of significance.

**Location:** The park has not been moved and retains integrity of location.

**Setting:** The park retains integrity of setting.

- *Water features:* The park retains its historic relationship to Lake Superior, the site's key historic water feature and a key component of its setting.

**Design:** The park retains integrity of design due to retention of historic spatial relationships, circulation patterns, topography, and buildings and structures.

- *Spatial Relationships:* The park retains most of its historic spatial relationships, including the general locations of athletic fields, parking, beach, and dock areas. Non-historic alterations include changing the use of the athletic fields from active to passive recreation and removal of the amusement zone.
- *Circulation patterns:* The park retains most of its historic circulation patterns, including Minnesota Avenue at the perimeter of the site and locations of access drives to the boat dock, bathhouse and parking lot. Non-historic alterations include the addition of a paved bike trail around the athletic fields, removal of the access drive to the former amusement zone location, reconfiguration of the main parking lot, addition of parking areas to the south side of the site, and addition of a ramp at the west elevation of the bathhouse.
- *Topography:* The park appears to retain its general historic topography, primarily flat with a ridge at the sand dunes along the east (beach/lake) side. Some changes to the shoreline on the west (bay) side have occurred since 1940, presumably due to erosion.
- *Buildings and structures:* The park retains its historic bathhouse, the primary building on the site, as well as the historic dock. Non-historic alterations to the design of the bathhouse include recladding of the east (lake) elevation, window and door replacement, and addition of new window openings at the center of the east and west elevations. Non-historic buildings and structures include the two picnic pavilions, restroom building, and the boat launch. The removal of the amusement zone structures is another non-historic alteration.

**Materials:** The park has diminished integrity of materials due to removal of original site furnishings and objects, replacement of paving materials at historic circulation routes, and alterations to the bathhouse.

- *Vegetation:* Vegetation is one of the more unstable elements of historic landscapes, and it is constantly changing in response to not only human intervention but also natural forces. According to NPS, "originality of plant materials can increase integrity but absence of original materials does not automatically disqualify a designed landscape."<sup>114</sup> While the amount of tree cover has generally increased since 1940, the general concentration of trees and dense vegetation along the east/beach side and the presence of an open field over most

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<sup>114</sup> Charles A. Birnbaum, *Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment, and Management of Historic Landscapes*, National Register Bulletin 36 (National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 1994), 7.

of the site has been retained. Norway pines planted in the late 1930s are still present on the site. The sinking of the fill in the former athletic fields has changed the appearance of this area from a mowed lawn to a more natural meadow with tall grasses. Non-historic alterations to vegetation have included planting of smaller ornamental trees around the parking lot and along Minnesota Avenue and alterations to landscaping around the bathhouse.

- *Site Furnishings/Objects:* Most of the park's original site furnishings have been removed or replaced, such as ornamental stone gates; signage; guardrails; athletic field goal posts; and picnic tables and benches. A couple of light posts at the bathhouse may date to the period of significance.
- *Circulation:* While circulation routes remain in their historic locations, historic paving materials like wood paving blocks and stone steps generally appear to have been replaced.
- *Buildings and structures:* changes to historic materials at the bathhouse include recladding the east elevation, replacement of windows and doors, and replacement of roofing materials.

**Workmanship:** The park's buildings and structures as well as its topography allow it to retain integrity of workmanship, "the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people."

- *Buildings and structures:* While some of the park's historic handcrafted elements that would have helped to display historic workmanship have been removed (like rustic wood signs and ornamental stone gates), historic workmanship is still communicated through the heavy timber construction of the bathhouse and the steel sheet pile dock with concrete cap.
- *Topography:* Additionally, the land itself communicates historic workmanship, since it was shaped by human labor (i.e., the installation of 150,000 yards of fill) to create the current extent of the recreation area.<sup>115</sup>

**Feeling and Association:** The park retains integrity of feeling and association. Its historic topography, circulation patterns, spatial relationships, beach area, bathhouse, dock, and the general character of its vegetation help it to communicate its historic feeling as a municipal park and association with federal relief construction during the Great Depression.

#### 1.2.4 Conclusion

As a property that appears to meet NPS requirements for historic significance and integrity, Park Point Recreation Area may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the Area of Government with a 1938 - 1940 period of significance.

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<sup>115</sup> National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, rev. 1995, p. 45, [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15\\_web508.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf)

## 2. Historic Preservation Compliance

The property's historic significance and potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) may have implications for project approvals under state and federal programs.

### 2.1 Section 106 Review

If park improvements will receive federal funding or approvals (such as a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers, grants from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, etc.), it will be subject to compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 ("Section 106"). Section 106 requires that the federal government consider the impacts of its undertakings (projects that it funds, permits, or licenses) on historic resources, and requires that the federal agency (or its delegate, like the City of Duluth) consult with SHPO and other stakeholders to determine if a project will impact historic resources.

The Section 106 process includes four steps: initiate consultation with SHPO and other consulting parties, identify historic properties (properties that are listed in *or eligible for* the NRHP) within the project area, assess the project's effects on historic properties, and (if necessary) resolve adverse effects through mitigation. SHPO and consulting parties must review and concur with the federal agency/City's findings before the process is complete. Submissions to SHPO and consulting parties will include design documentation necessary to determine the project's effects. Given that this property may be eligible for the NRHP, the Section 106 process for park improvements would require the project team to explore ways to avoid and minimize adverse effects on this property and reach agreement with the SHPO and consulting parties on appropriate measures to mitigate any unavoidable adverse effects. Examples of mitigation include additional design review by the SHPO, historical research and archival photography, or adding interpretive elements to the project. The terms of mitigation are recorded in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA); once the MOA is executed, the Section 106 review process is complete.

The time and cost to complete a Section 106 review will vary depending on the project scope. If it becomes apparent that the project is likely to require federal funding, permits, or licenses, we recommend early integration of the Section 106 review process into the project budget and timeline.

### 2.2 State Environmental Review Processes

In Minnesota, some types of projects require an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), which is prepared by the project's Responsible Government Unit (RGU). The EAW includes the data necessary to evaluate a project's potential for significant environmental impacts, including information on historic properties in the project area. Once the EAW is completed, it is made available to the public and to state, federal, regional, and local units of government on the Environmental Quality Board (EQB's) official distribution list, including the State Historic Preservation Office and the Office of the State Archaeologist. Any substantive comments on the

EAW must be given a written response by the RGU. According to the EQB, “the purpose of the EAW, comments and comment responses is to provide the record on which the RGU can base a decision about whether an EIS [environmental impact statement] needs to be prepared for a project.”<sup>1</sup> Comments received from SHPO and the OSA relative to historic properties will inform this record and decision. Other state-level environmental review processes, including the Alternate Urban Areawide Review (AUAR), also involve consideration of historic properties.

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<sup>1</sup> Environmental Quality Board, *EAW Guidelines: Preparing Environmental Assessment Worksheets* (St. Paul, MN: Environmental Quality Board, 2013), 3, [https://www.eqb.state.mn.us/sites/eqb/files/documents/EAW%20guidelines%202013%20revision\\_0.pdf](https://www.eqb.state.mn.us/sites/eqb/files/documents/EAW%20guidelines%202013%20revision_0.pdf).

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# Appendix B

## Online Survey I Summary

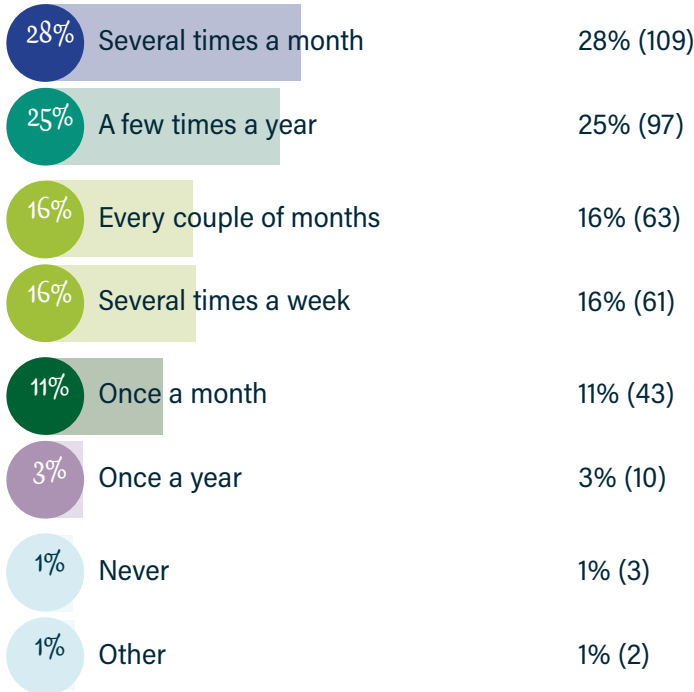


# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

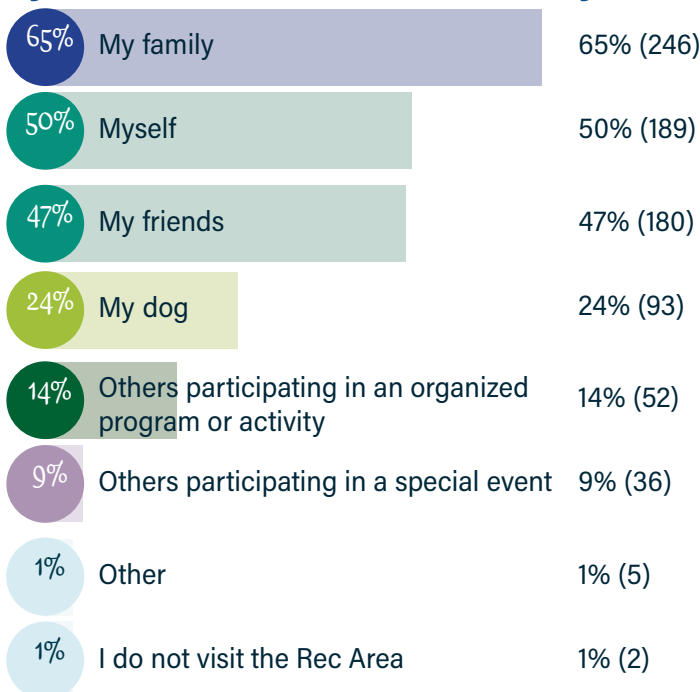
## Online Survey 1 Summary

The City of Duluth and LHB hosted an online survey to discuss existing conditions and future opportunities for the Park Point Recreation Area. The survey was open to the public from May 30 to June 22, 2025, with 459 participants responding. The following are results and common themes that emerged.

### 1 How often do you visit the Rec Area? (select one)



### 2 When you visit the Rec Area, who are you normally with? (select all that apply)





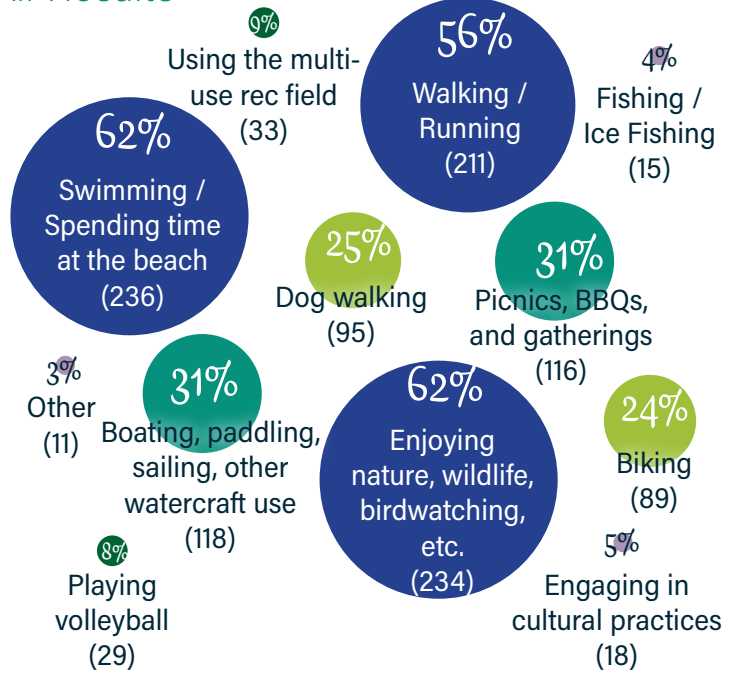
# Park Point Recreation Area Plan Online Survey 1 Summary

## 3 What are the top 5 ways you spend your time in the Rec Area? (select up to 5)

### Top 5 Current Uses

- 1 Swimming / spending time at the beach
- 2 Enjoying nature, wildlife, birdwatching, etc.
- 3 Walking / running
- 4 Boating, paddling, sailing, other watercraft use
- 5 Picnics, BBQs, and gatherings

### All Results



## 4 What do you like most about visiting the Rec Area? (open comment box)

### Top 5 Comment Categories

- 1 Access to Water and Beach
- 2 Open Space for Recreation
- 3 Appreciation for Natural Beauty
- 4 Proximity to Home and Accessibility
- 5 Birdwatching Opportunities

### Comments Summary

- Access to Water and Beach – 169 mentions
  - Visitors love the sandy beach, swimming, paddleboarding, and sailing.
  - Easy access to Lake Superior and the bay is highly valued.
  - The boat launch and lifeguard presence are appreciated.
- Open Space for Recreation – 94 mentions
  - The large open fields and trails are popular for walking, biking, running, and volleyball.
  - Many comments mention the playground (especially its removal) and picnic areas.
  - The space is seen as versatile and great for family activities and events.
- Appreciation for Natural Beauty – 78 mentions
  - The forest, dunes, scenic views, and peaceful atmosphere are cherished.
  - Visitors enjoy the sense of being immersed in nature and away from urban noise.
  - The area's unique landscape is often described as beautiful and calming.
- Proximity to Home and Accessibility – 88 mentions
  - Many users live nearby and visit frequently.
  - Easy access, ample parking, restrooms, and general convenience are appreciated.
  - The area is seen as inclusive and welcoming for all ages and abilities.
- Birdwatching Opportunities – 25 mentions
  - Park Point is recognized as a significant bird migration corridor.
  - Birdwatchers value the diversity of species and habitats.
  - Several comments highlight its global importance for birding and call for habitat preservation.





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 1 Summary

**5** Thinking about specific park features, area, amenities, programming, etc., Place a pin on the map and add a comment to share your vision on:  
• What is working well and should be preserved, protected, or featured;

### Comments Summary - Working Well

#### Beach & Water Access

- The beach is clean, well-maintained, and easy to access.
- The historic beach house is appreciated for its charm and functionality.
- The boat launch is well-designed and user-friendly.

#### Parking & Accessibility

- Ample parking is available and appreciated by visitors.
- The area includes accessible paths and facilities for people with mobility needs.
- The Duluth Superior Sailing Program is praised for providing inclusive access to sailing.

#### Natural Environment

- The natural habitat and wildlife, especially birdwatching areas, are valued.
- Visitors enjoy the preserved wild fields and dune areas.
- The space is seen as peaceful and important for ecological diversity.

#### Facilities & Amenities

- Volleyball courts are frequently used and well-liked.
- Trash and recycling stations are well-placed and maintained.
- Public restrooms and lifeguard services are appreciated when available.

#### Recreation & Programs

- Events like the Park Point Art Fair are easy to navigate and well-received.
- The sailing pier and DSSA facilities are seen as valuable community assets.
- Recreational spaces like frisbee fields and walking paths are enjoyed regularly.

“ Boat launch is easy to use and well designed. Beach is clean and well maintained.

“ Bathrooms year round by the boat landing. Maintenance on the paved trail around the park. The beach house public bathrooms are working well as long as they are open.

“ Plenty of parking currently.

“ Leave natural area for wildlife habitat.

“ Enjoyed Park Point Art Fair out here. Easy to navigate.





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 1 Summary

**5** Thinking about specific park features, area, amenities, programming, etc., Place a pin on the map and add a comment to share your vision on:  
• **What should be improved upon and how;**

### Comments Summary - Needs Improvement

#### Restrooms & Sanitation

- Many comments request more reliable, year-round access to restrooms.
- Concerns about restrooms being closed during events or lacking maintenance.
- Suggestions include adding secondary facilities and improving cleanliness and safety.

#### Parking & Access

- Frequent complaints about deteriorating parking lots and poor layout.
- Requests for clearer signage, especially in no-parking zones.
- Concerns about erosion and flooding affecting road access and safety.

#### Trails & Pathways

- Calls for repaving and widening walking and biking paths.
- Safety concerns due to overgrown or poorly maintained trails.
- Suggestions for better bike infrastructure and mowed paths for accessibility.

#### Playground & Children's Facilities

- Strong desire to restore or replace the removed playground.
- Interest in multi-use fields for youth sports and family activities.
- Requests for expanded lifeguard zones to better protect children.

#### Environmental & Landscape

- Concerns about shoreline erosion and the need for stabilization.
- Suggestions to convert underused fields into bird habitat or wetlands.
- Emphasis on preserving natural areas while improving usability.

“Public accessible bathrooms open longer in the year.”

“Add a water fountain and rinse station here, as well as the other two main parking lots.”

“This area is treacherous for folks with limited mobility. Connecting the path and creating a more passable path for foot traffic at this gate would be appreciated.”

“There is an opportunity for an additional gazebo and or children's play structure here.”

“The field seems really underutilized. I would love to see this turned into a marshland with trails for birding.”





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 1 Summary

**5** Thinking about specific park features, area, amenities, programming, etc., Place a pin on the map and add a comment to share your vision on:  
• What should be added to the Rec Area and why.

### Comments Summary - Additions

#### Playground & Children's Activities

- Strong desire to bring back the removed playground, especially the iconic wooden ship.
- Suggestions for splash pads and water play areas for younger children.
- Interest in multi-age play structures and unique, creative play spaces.

#### Accessibility & Infrastructure

- Requests for more sidewalks and paved paths, especially connecting key areas like the beach house.
- Calls for improved parking, including closer and more accessible spots.
- Suggestions for better transit access and facilities for people with disabilities.

#### Sports & Recreation

- Proposals for full-sized soccer fields with goals and lines for organized play.
- Interest in adding pickleball, tennis, and volleyball courts.
- Ideas for outdoor gym equipment and a bike skills park.

#### Water Access & Activities

- Requests for additional piers and docks for boating and water recreation.
- Suggestions for fishing areas, including a dock or wall on the bay side.
- Interest in expanding DSSA facilities for sailing and community programs.

#### Restrooms & Sanitation

- Strong demand for more permanent restrooms, especially near high-use areas.
- Frustration with reliance on port-a-potties and lack of year-round facilities.
- Emphasis on clean, accessible bathrooms for families and event-goers

#### Other/Uncategorized

- Environmental Enhancements: Erosion control, pollinator plantings, and tree planting for shade and aesthetics.
- Cultural & Community Features: Historical markers, public art, and food vendor permits at the beach house.
- Safety & Comfort: Speed bumps to reduce reckless driving, fenced dog play areas, and hammock-friendly infrastructure.

“ Playground is badly missed.

“ Sidewalk/ paved path needs completely redoing. Perhaps 2 – walking and bicycling paths.

“ Make a full sized soccer field that could be used for organized pickup groups. The sports could include soccer, ultimate frisbee, etc.

“ Another pier for boat docking & water activities.

“ Bathrooms year round by the boat landing.

“ Historical/cultural markers about the space would be a nice addition. Or public art.





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan Online Survey 1 Summary

## 6 What are the top 3 improvements you'd like to see for access and mobility within the Rec Area? (select up to 3)

### Top 3 Improvements

- 1 Improve beach access (Lakeside), including renewed boardwalks
- 2 Improve Sidewalks and walking paths to meet accessibility standards
- 3 Improved access to water's edge (Harborside)

### Other & Comments Summary

#### Accessible Beach and Facility Access

- Strong support for beach access mats to allow people with mobility challenges to reach the water.
- Requests for ADA-compliant paths from parking areas to the beach house and shoreline.
- Suggestions to replicate Wisconsin Point-style walkways for inclusive access.

#### Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure

- Calls for protected bike lanes along Minnesota Avenue and within the Rec Area.
- Desire for improved sidewalks and walking paths, especially for families and older adults.
- Suggestions to connect the Rec Area to Canal Park and the Lakewalk via safe, continuous bike routes.

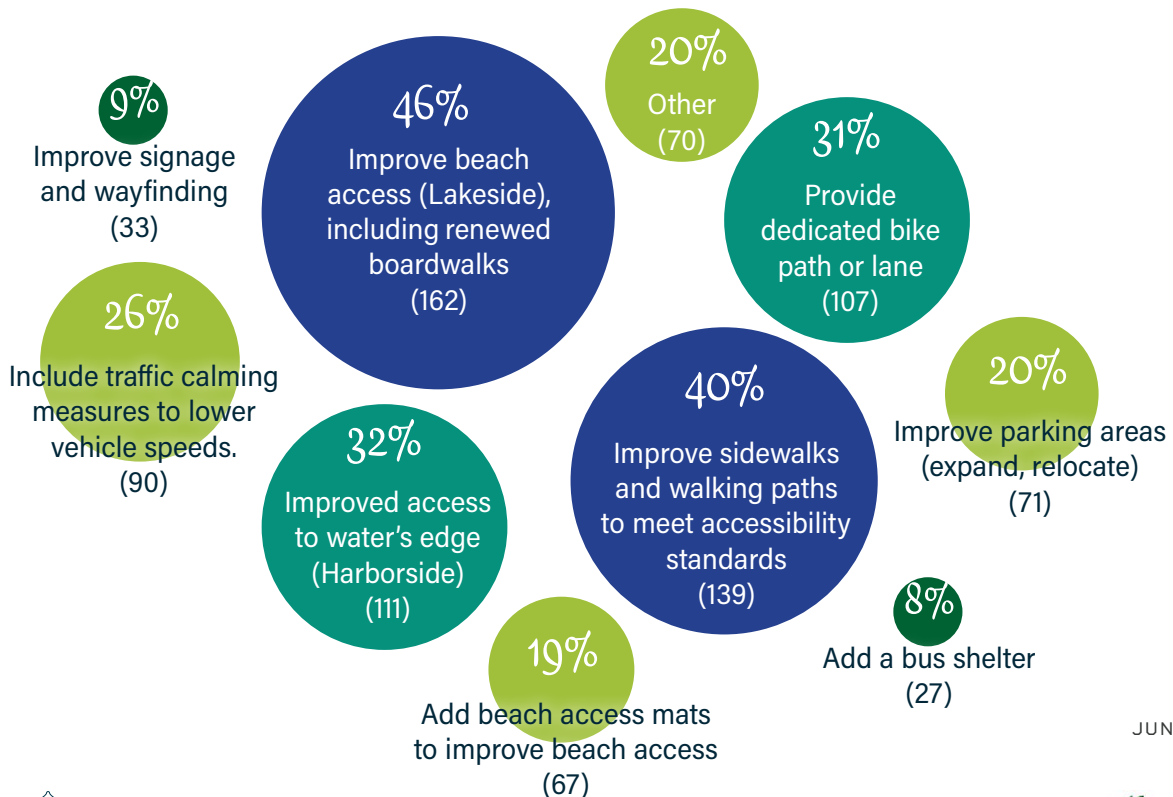
#### Transit and Non-Car Access

- Requests for better public transit options to reduce car dependency and improve equity.
- Suggestions to add DTA service to the end of Park Point, especially during peak seasons.
- Emphasis on multi-modal access to reduce congestion and improve sustainability.

#### Parking and Road Conditions

- Many comments highlight the need to repair roads and parking lots, especially near the beach house.
- Suggestions for more parking near the beach and improved layout for easier access.
- Concerns about road erosion and the need for safer, more durable infrastructure.

### All Results





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 1 Summary

### 7 Of the existing park elements, what are the top 3 you'd like to see improved at the Rec Area? (select up to 3)

#### Top 3 Improvements

1 Public restrooms

2 Naturalized open space (maintain, & increase plant diversity)

3 Walking path

#### Other & Comments Summary

##### Restrooms & Sanitation

- Strong demand for more restrooms, including permanent facilities with changing spaces and showers.
- Requests for gender-neutral and accessible bathrooms, including adult changing tables.
- Concerns about the overuse of porta-potties and the need for better placement and maintenance.

##### Accessibility & Mobility

- Calls to improve access for people with disabilities, including better paths and beach access.
- Suggestions to enhance mobility for small sailboats and kiteboarders.
- Emphasis on not restricting public access and ensuring the park remains inclusive.

##### Natural Environment & Habitat

- Support for restoring native ecosystems and planting pollinator-friendly vegetation.
- Interest in protecting bird habitats and softening the shoreline for climate resilience.
- Requests to balance recreation with environmental stewardship.

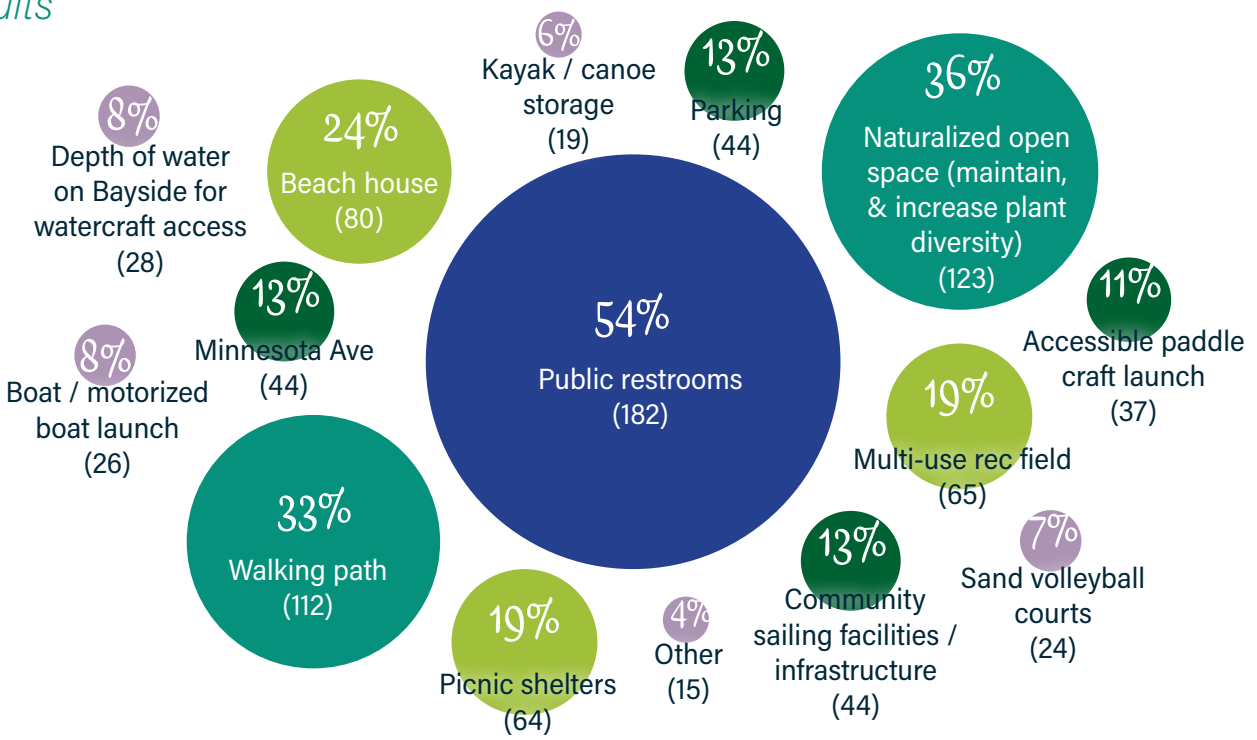
##### Recreation & Amenities

- Desire to restore the iconic playground, especially the large wooden boat structure.
- Requests for athletic fields, picnic shelters, and courts (e.g., pickleball).
- Suggestions to enhance the Beach House with food, beverage, and interpretive programming.

##### Roads & Infrastructure

- Many comments highlight the need to repair roads and address erosion.
- Suggestions to repave and improve walking routes, including restoring access to key areas.
- Calls for better infrastructure maintenance to support long-term use.

#### All Results





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 1 Summary

### 8 What are the top 5 park elements you'd like to see added to the Rec Area that are not currently there? (select up to 5)

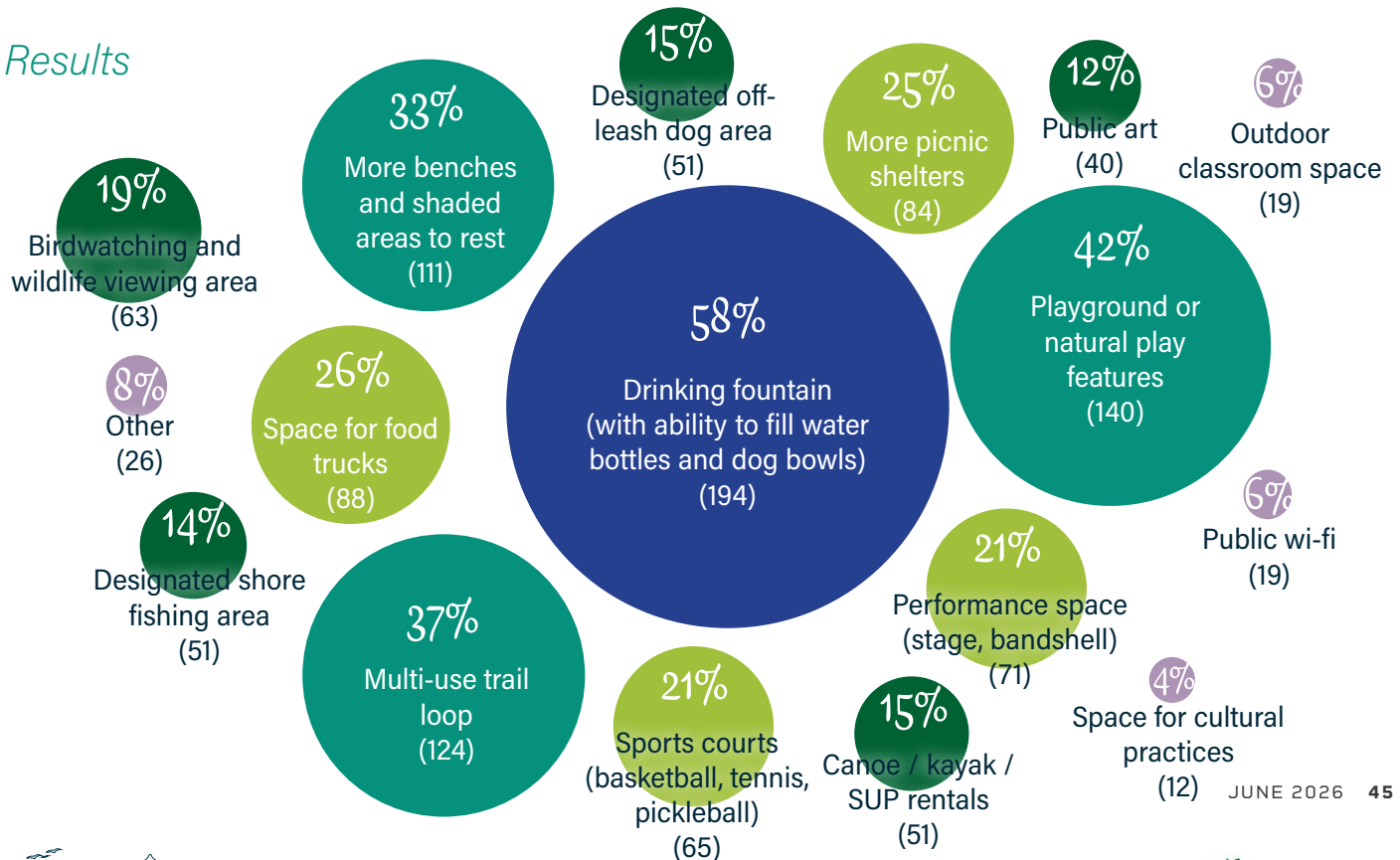
#### Top 5 Elements

- 1 Drinking fountain (with ability to fill water bottles and dog bowls)
- 2 Playground or natural play features
- 3 Multi-use trail loop
- 4 More benches & shaded areas to rest
- 5 Space for food trucks

#### Other & Comments Summary

- Dog Management & Off-Leash Areas**
- Strong interest in a fenced off-leash dog area to reduce conflicts on the beach.
  - Concerns about unleashed dogs disturbing wildlife and beachgoers.
  - Suggestions for better enforcement of leash laws and more signage.
- Nature, Education & Wildlife**
- Requests for educational signage about birds, pollinators, and natural resources.
  - Interest in outdoor classroom spaces and interpretive areas.
  - Emphasis on preserving native vegetation and wildlife habitat.
- Playground & Children's Activities**
- Calls for a new playground or playscape, especially for young children.
  - Suggestions for splash pads or youth water areas.
  - Desire to bring back the iconic ship-themed playground.
- Water Access & Amenities**
- Requests for showers or rinse stations to clean off sand.
  - Interest in a public sauna or year-round bathing experience.
  - Suggestions to enhance the beach house with more amenities.
- Recreation & Sports Facilities**
- Interest in pickleball courts, disc golf, and athletic fields.
  - Suggestions to maximize use of open space for low-cost, high-use recreation.
  - Emphasis on multi-age, accessible sports options.

#### All Results





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan Online Survey 1 Summary

## 9 Thinking about the Rec Area's natural resources, what are the top 3 improvements you'd like to see? (select up to 3)

### Top 3 Improvements

- 1 Create observation platforms or features (boardwalk through natural areas, etc.)
- 2 Improve dune habitat
- 3 More trees and landscaping

### Other & Comments Summary

#### Invasive Species Management & Native Plant Restoration

- Strong support for removing invasive species like purple loosestrife and poison ivy.
- Interest in prescribed burns and restoring native vegetation to improve soil health and biodiversity.
- Suggestions to increase educational signage about native plants and their ecological value.

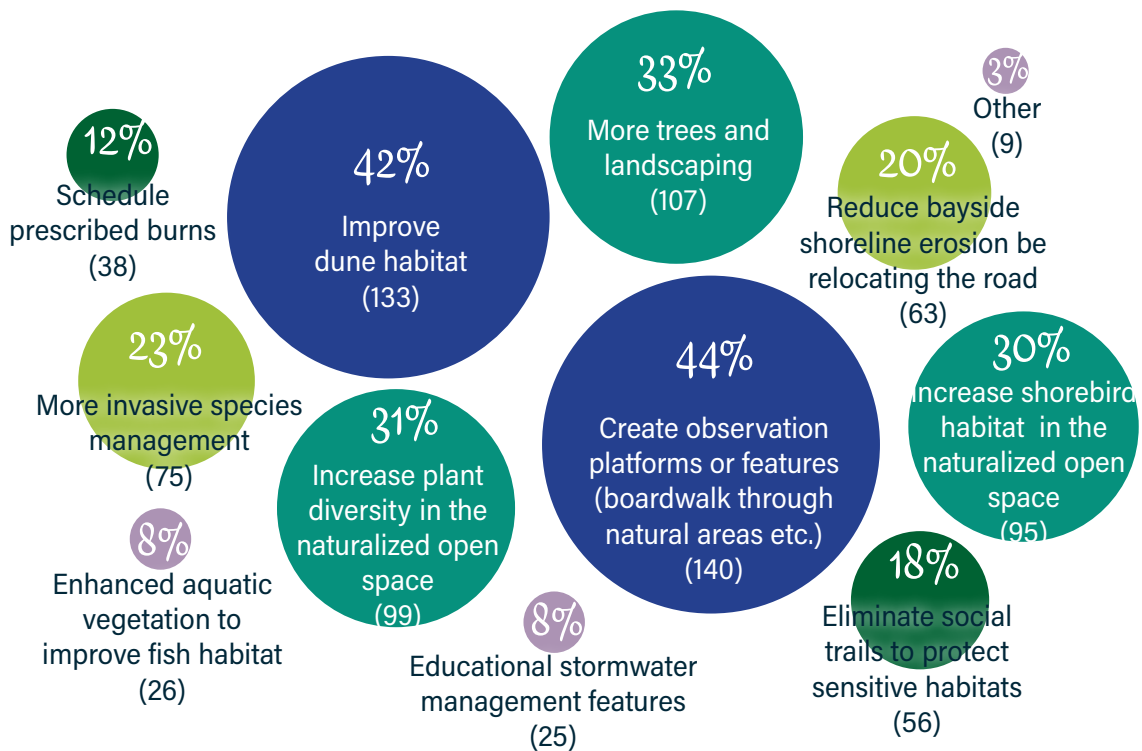
#### Erosion Control & Dune Protection

- Calls to relocate the road to reduce shoreline erosion on the bayside.
- Support for boardwalks and observation platforms to protect sensitive dune areas.
- Emphasis on preserving natural shoreline features as a climate resilience strategy.

#### Shorebird & Habitat Protection

- Requests for designated nesting areas and protected zones for species like the Piping Plover.
- Suggestions for a shorebird steward to enforce leash laws and educate visitors.
- Concern about off-leash dogs disturbing wildlife, especially during migration and nesting seasons.

### All Results





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 1 Summary

10 **In your opinion, what would success look and feel like for an improvement project at the Rec Area? What must be accomplished for this project to be successful? (open comment box)**

### Comments Summary

#### Natural Resource Protection (58 mentions)

- Success means preserving dunes, shoreline, and native habitat while managing erosion and human impact.
- Many want to see environmental stewardship prioritized, with minimal disruption to the natural landscape.
- Suggestions include relocating roads, protecting bird habitat, and integrating nature-based solutions.

#### Facilities & Amenities (51 mentions)

- A successful project includes clean, accessible restrooms, drinking fountains, and trash receptacles.
- Calls for improved parking, signage, and picnic shelters, as well as food options and water access.
- Infrastructure like dredged boat launches, fish cleaning stations, and shaded gathering areas are seen as essential.

#### Community & Experience (44 mentions)

- The Rec Area should feel welcoming, inclusive, and well-loved by both locals and visitors.
- Success includes community engagement, equitable access, and a sense of shared ownership.
- Many envision a space that brings people together while respecting the area's character and history.

#### Accessibility & Inclusion (37 mentions)

- A successful project ensures safe, multi-modal access for people of all ages and abilities.
- Includes bike lanes, walking paths, ADA-compliant features, and better access to water and restrooms.
- Emphasis on universal design that supports families, seniors, and people with disabilities.

#### Recreation & Programming (36 mentions)

- Success includes multi-use recreation spaces like playgrounds, sports courts, and open fields.
- Suggestions for pickleball, soccer, kite flying, and youth programming.
- The area should support year-round use and offer a variety of activities for all ages.

#### Maintenance & Infrastructure (27 mentions)

- A well-maintained park is key to long-term success.
- Priorities include resurfacing roads and trails, mowing fields, and updating aging infrastructure.
- Many want to see ongoing investment and upkeep, not just one-time improvements.

“ This is a gem for the entire city as well as visitors to Duluth. We need full community involvement and support... Success would be amenities for the entire city, of every economic background, to be able to enjoy equitably.

“ The open access of the place is wonderful. The infrastructure is ageing and the road is nearly dead. More upkeep would be nice and more signage to alert people to the sensitive areas might be helpful. By and large it is a little jewel and doesn't get as much attention as it deserves.





## Top 5 Priorities

The online survey success factors are in line with the priorities that emerged from the focus group meetings, providing a unified direction for the future of Park Point Recreation Area.

# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Focus Group Summary



1

### Access for All

**Provide accessibility for all persons and all modes of transportation.** Re-imagine locations and functionality of roads and parking areas. Improve lakeside and harborside water access for all users. Enhance bike and pedestrian experiences and safety.



2

### Ecological Health

**Support a diverse and vibrant ecosystem.** Inform users on local ecosystem through educational signage. Enhance and restore dune ecosystem, wetlands, shorelines, and migratory bird habitat.



3

### Sense of Place

**Cultivate an identity that honors the unique culture, history, and environment.** Create defined spaces for people to connect with each other and nature. Boost user experience with cohesive signage and wayfinding. Support cultural heritage and acknowledge indigenous lands.



4

### Sustainability

**Plan for environmental and financial sustainability.** Decrease routine maintenance and long-term capital costs. Design for resiliency to climate change and natural disasters. Inspire multi-generational stewards of the land.



5

### Reinvestment

**Modernize park amenities and uplift unique programming opportunities.** Support safe water-based recreation. Revitalize aging amenities, such as the walking loop, watercraft infrastructure, restrooms, pavilions, etc. Incorporate modern park amenities, such as food truck parking, and multi-sensory experiences.

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# **Appendix C**

## **Design Charette Summary**

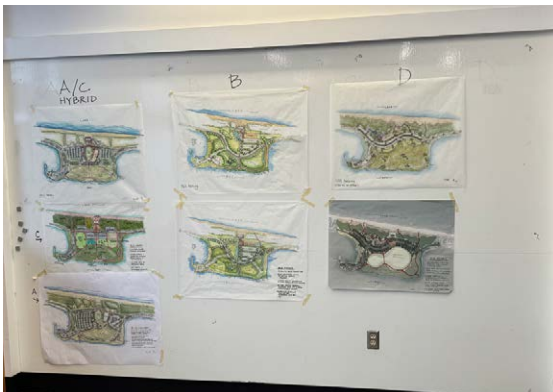




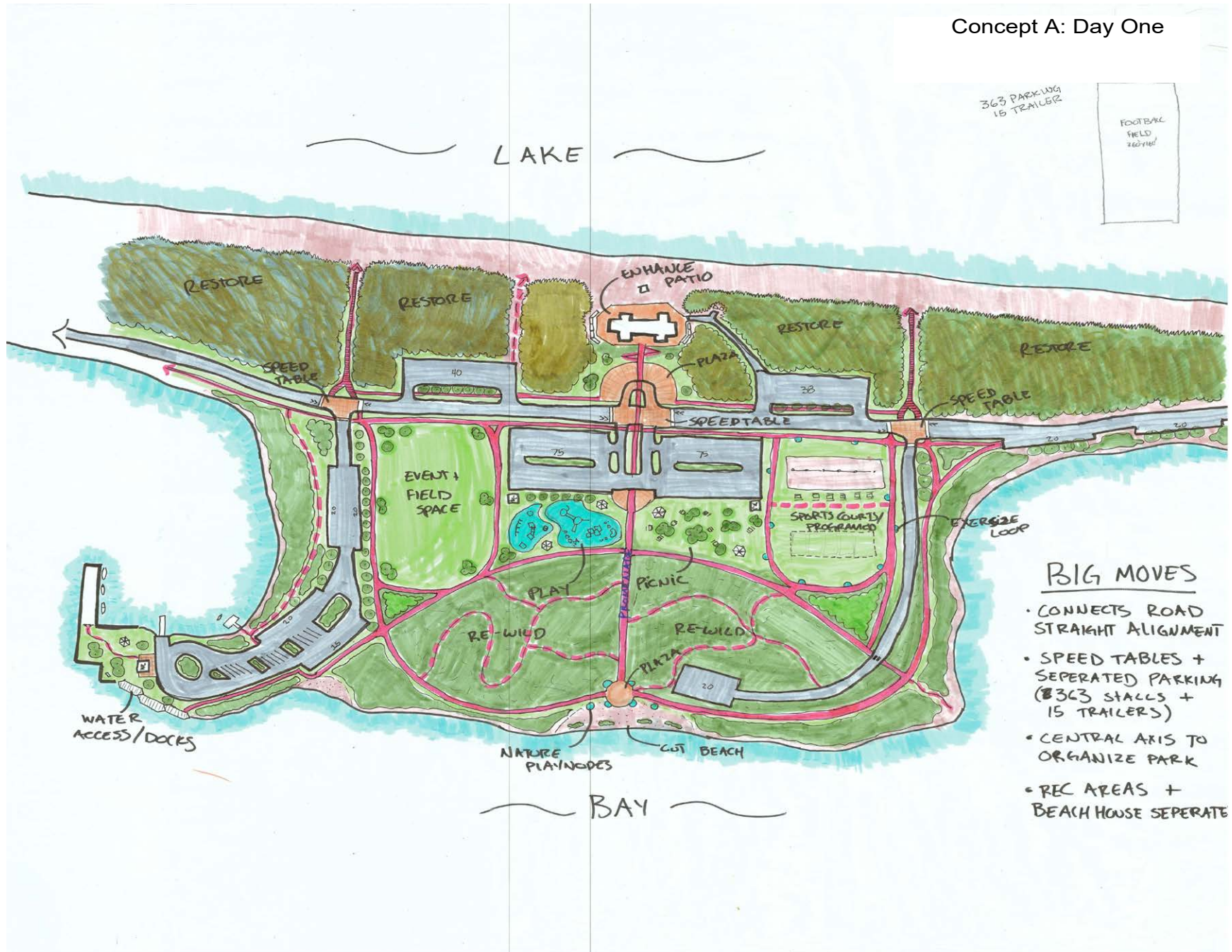


- Are there any other trail connections that need to be addressed?
- Trail surface options should include: crushed stone outside of road corridor, bituminous/paved within road corridor to justify transportation grant, clarify difference between ADA and ABA when on a slope. Sand migration is also an ongoing maintenance issue, especially near the Beach house. Hardscape surfaces should be strategically placed where blowing sand is less of a concern. A sand-washing/rinse-off station is warranted.
- Bike lane should be protected/further away from sand dunes.
- Please include a maintenance shed/storage garage in all concepts, ideally near the maintenance access road.
- Maintenance of all park elements should be considered. A conversation with park maintenance will need to occur to determine if all parking lots will be plowed during the winter, or if some portions will be closed off for seasonal use.
- Both plumbed and vault restrooms should be options in the concept(s). Recently installed vault toilets at Brighton Beach Park are a good precedent. Consider incorporating a changing area into the restroom facility. As the concept(s) are refined, funding opportunities should be noted and further explored.
- Stormwater management and drainage infrastructure should be low-impact and simple. There is ample space with the Rec Area to keep lawn space away from shoreline for improved water quality.
- Wayfinding/improved signage will need to be addressed in future design phases.
- As the preferred concept(s) is refined, funding opportunities for certain elements should be noted (i.e. playground, shoreline protection, etc).

### Additional Charrette Imagery



Concept A: Day One



363 PARKING  
15 TRAILER

FOOTBALL  
FIELD  
760x160

BIG MOVES

- CONNECTS ROAD STRAIGHT ALIGNMENT
- SPEED TABLES + SEPERATED PARKING (363 STALLS + 15 TRAILERS)
- CENTRAL AXIS TO ORGANIZE PARK
- REC AREAS + BEACH HOUSE SEPERATE

Concept B: Day One



BIG MOVES

- RETREATS ROAD INLAND 300'
  - ROAD DELINEATES ACTIVE VS NATURAL SPACES (BALANCE)
  - LARGEST HABITAT RESTORATION + LIVING SHORELINE/BEACH ENHANCE
  - RE-USES DREDGE MATERIAL, PRESERVES DROP OFF, V-BALL, + SAILING/BOAT LAUNCH
  - CENTRALIZES PARKING
    - MAIN LOT (335)
    - WATERCRAFT HUB (90)
- 1:100

Concept C: Day One



04-scan00002.pdf

Refined Concept A/C:  
Day Two



430 Parking



Refined Concept B:  
Day Two



380 Parking

Refined Concept D:  
Day Two



400 parking  
(520 w/ on-street)

1" = 100' 

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# Appendix D

## Community Input Session Summary



3. Crosswalks for trail?
4. Paths around the multi-use fields so when tents get set-up they are accessible
5. Long way to carry DSSA tillers and rudders
6. Where is the playground?
7. Paddle sports storage + staging building
8. Add gathering spaces along harbor side of launch
9. Could there be a spot for beach boat storage/seasonal rental for hobie-cats, etc? Would require tie-downs into the pavement for wind security. (Similar to Barker's Island)
10. Add additional fishing pier near the boating pier
11. Boat trailer parking far from launch
12. Clear signage and connectivity to end of point trail
13. Paved loop is a good idea
14. Any input from a shoreline engineer? Bay edge will continue to erode unless sand is supplemented
15. An EV charging station
16. Bandshell with back to lake
17. Paths/trails to beach should not be straight – sinous or at least not northeast
18. Traffic calming on road
19. Flip field with main lot
20. Make clear this is a plan, not a “blue print”

### Concept 3: Linear Flow

1. Need area for feet/body rinsing sand off from beach
2. Need potable water access
3. Add beach mats so wheelchair users + people with walker can get to the water (@ Lafayette too)
4. Need a protected and separated multi-use trail
5. Clarify bike and ped routes, hard to understand at this level
6. Connect trail all the way to airport
7. Parallel overflow parking is challenging for peds
8. Formalize trailhead for SNA
9. Too much distance between activity areas
10. Paved accessible routes!
11. Where could electrical hook-ups go?
12. Entrance sign needs an update
13. Make sure crossings are safe, this scheme pushes more crossings
14. Raise crosswalks to slow traffic
15. Like the harbor beach gathering areas
16. Like pocket parks along harbor/beach sides
17. Loves living shoreline idea to soften edge
18. Preserve existing pine trees along edge of parking lot
19. Add gathering spaces along harbor side shoreline
20. Add fishing pier next to the boat launch
21. Add seating near DSSA to stop and enjoy sunset
22. There is no trailer parking spaces?
23. Likes parking scheme – more extended
24. Erosion is key issue
25. Please bring back soccer field, need to tile it too
26. Minnesota Ave has designated bike/rec lane but confusing, should be all contiguous through this area

27. Parallel parking is not needed, turn into a protected trail/ped lane instead

### Existing Conditions/Aerial Image Board

1. I second sandy features need to be connected to sand dune (on lakeside)
2. LOVE harborside fishing docks, and beach options with platform and play element
3. Add picnic option on harborside?
4. Boat (temporary) storage
5. Need to incorporate a transit drop-off
6. I prefer the flowing nature of concept 3's streets, parking and trails. I think it fit the natural, wind and water-blown nature of the place.
7. Where is bike parking?
8. Connect trail from parking lot to hiking trail at end of point (the one that starts by the airport)
9. Add barrier (trees?) between playground and parking lot
10. Benches/seating!
11. Electric car or bike parking?
12. Please keep the mature trees as much as possible
13. Off-leash dog park beach
14. Designated off-leash dog area
15. How much parking is actually needed on a typical day?
16. Ice fishing access/ramp
17. Pickleball courts?

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# **Appendix E**

## **Online Survey 2 Summary**



# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 2 Summary

The City of Duluth and LHB hosted an online survey to gather feedback on three concept designs for the Park Point Recreation Area. The Survey was open to the public in August 19 - August 31, 2025, with 188 participants responding. The following are results and common themes that emerged.

**Q Please rank the concepts beginning with your favorite and ending with your least favorite** (112 votes were casted)

**1st** Concept 1 | Central Commons (received 45 votes for 1st place)

### Working Well

- Strong emphasis on centralized layout and symmetry.
- Frequent mentions of parking, playground, and multi-use field.
- Appreciation for road realignment and harborside beach encouragement.
- Comments highlight event space, food truck area, and accessibility.

### Wishes

- Balanced concerns across parking, field layout, and natural space.
- Strong interest in playground, picnic areas, and road placement.
- Moderate emphasis on bike access and safety.

**2nd** Concept 3 | Linear Flow (received 42 votes for 1st place)

### Working Well

- Strongest support for natural space, green areas, and habitat preservation.
- Appreciation for linear layout, spread-out parking, and traffic flow.
- Comments highlight largest playground, multiple fields, and trail connectivity.
- Seen as the most nature-integrated and flexible design.

### Wishes

- Strongest emphasis on access and road layout.
- High concern about parking, but slightly less than Concept 2.
- Lower mentions of playground and volleyball, but consistent interest in safety and trail connectivity.

**3rd** Concept 2 | Harborside Connections (received 25 votes for 1st place)

### Working Well

- High praise for the watercraft sports hub and expanded boat launch.
- Preference for single consolidated parking area.
- Positive feedback on drop-off loop and road setback.
- More mixed reactions, with some users preferring Concept 1.

### Wishes

- Highest concern about parking and traffic.
- Strong feedback on natural space, access, and safety.
- More mentions of bike lanes, volleyball, and playground placement.





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 2 Summary

### Concept 1 | Central Commons

## Q What do you like most about Concept 1?



## Top 5 Comment Categories

- 1 Beach Access
- 2 Parking
- 3 Centralized Design
- 4 Playground & Recreation
- 5 Natural Space

\* 15 of 146 comments didn't like it

## Comments Summary

### Beach Access — 54 mentions

- Strong appreciation for harborside beach encouragement and improved access to both lake and harbor sides.
- Multiple comments praised enhanced beach trails, canoe/kayak launches, and fishing piers.
- Users liked the multiple entrances to the beach and the rerouted road that improves pedestrian access.
- The central axis design aligning the beach house with recreational areas was seen as visually appealing and functional.
- Many noted that better beach access would benefit families, festivals, and water sports.

### Parking — 47 mentions

- Widespread support for expanded and strategically placed parking lots, especially near activity hubs.
- Comments emphasized the need for ample summer parking and appreciated the two-lot layout for traffic flow.
- Users liked that parking was broken up to avoid large vehicle fields and to allow proximity to preferred areas.
- Some noted the drop-off loop and parking near boat launches as particularly useful.
- Improved event parking and tree-covered lots were also positively mentioned.

### Centralized Design — 39 mentions

- Many users praised the symmetrical layout, centralized multi-use field, and cohesive flow of the design.
- The central hub concept was seen as intuitive, accessible, and ideal for events and family use.

- Comments highlighted how the beach house, playground, and bathrooms were well-aligned.
- The design was described as organized, balanced, and easy to navigate.
- Users appreciated the intentionality of space use and how it supports diverse activities.

### Playground & Recreation — 33 mentions

- Strong enthusiasm for the return of a playground, especially for families and children.
- Positive mentions of volleyball courts, basketball courts, and multi-use fields.
- Users appreciated the proximity of restrooms to play areas and the central location of recreational features.
- Some comments requested quality improvements
- The concept was seen as inclusive and family-friendly.

### Natural Space — 28 mentions

- Many users valued the preservation of green space, natural shoreline, and habitat areas.
- Comments supported tree coverage, birdwatching areas, and vegetative beach zones.
- The inland road realignment was praised for protecting vulnerable shoreline and enhancing nature.
- Trails through naturalized areas were seen as peaceful and beneficial for passive recreation.
- Users appreciated the balance between development and environmental stewardship.





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 2 Summary

### Concept 1 | Central Commons

## Q What do you wish were different about Concept 1?

### Top 5 Comment Categories



- 1 Parking Concerns
- 2 Playground & Recreation
- 3 Facilities & Amenities
- 4 Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure
- 5 Natural Space Preservation

## Comments Summary

### Parking Concerns — 54 mentions

- Widespread concern about oversized parking lots reducing natural space.
- Comments noted that two parking lots may cause confusion and underutilization.
- Many felt the design was too car-centric, with excessive pavement and impervious surfaces.
- Suggestions included downsizing lots, improving layout, and ensuring parking doesn't dominate the park's footprint.
- Some worried about road safety and traffic flow near recreational areas.

### Playground & Recreation — 22 mentions

- Requests for a larger playground, more active play areas, and basketball courts.
- Concerns about volleyball courts being too close to parking or exposed to wind.
- Desire for multi-use fields to be better utilized or reimagined.
- Suggestions to look at models like Chutes and Ladders Park or Oklahoma's Gathering Place for inspiration.
- Safety concerns about traffic near play areas.

### Facilities & Amenities — 14 mentions

- Requests for more restrooms, picnic tables, and dog parks.
- Suggestions for fishing piers, vendor spaces, and bus stop access.
- Desire for solar coverage over parking and better garbage management.
- Comments emphasized the need for clean, accessible bathrooms and lifeguards during summer.

### Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure — 14 mentions

- Strong support for protected bike lanes and grade-separated paths.
- Requests for accessible loop trails, boardwalks, and consistent bike paths.
- Desire for bike storage, sidewalks, and safe pedestrian crossings.
- Comments emphasized making the park less car-dominant and more walkable.

### Natural Space Preservation — 12 mentions

- Concerns about loss of green space due to parking and development.
- Requests to retain trees, reduce fragmentation, and protect habitats.
- Suggestions for stormwater retention, vegetation restoration, and minimizing construction.
- Comments emphasized the importance of maintaining the park's natural character.





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 2 Summary

### Concept 2 | Harborside Connections

## Q What do you like most about Concept 2?

Concept 2 | Harborside Connections



## Top 5 Comment Categories

- 1 Watercraft Sports Hub & Boat Launch
- 2 Parking Layout & Drop-off Loop
- 3 Natural Space & Green Areas
- 4 Playground & Recreation
- 5 Road Design & Flow

\* 8 of 117 comments didn't like it

## Comments Summary

### Watercraft Sports Hub & Boat Launch — 22 mentions

- Strong enthusiasm for expanded water-based recreation.
- Appreciation for improved access and layout of boat launch areas.
- Support for integrating DSSA and paddle sports facilities.
- Seen as a valuable addition for both locals and tourists.
- Viewed as a smart use of harbor-side space.

### Playground & Recreation — 13 mentions

- Positive feedback on playground location and size.
- Separation of active play areas improves safety and usability.
- Requests for quality improvements like better basketball courts.
- Recreation areas seen as family-friendly and inclusive.
- Layout supports diverse activities and events.

### Parking Layout & Drop-off Loop — 20 mentions

- Preference for a single, consolidated parking area.
- Drop-off loop praised for improving traffic flow and pedestrian safety.
- Parking layout seen as more logical and less intrusive.
- Design helps separate vehicles from recreational zones.
- Food truck access and turnaround areas are well-received.

### Road Design & Flow — 11 mentions

- Users liked the curved road design and inland setback.
- Road layout improves views and access to green space.
- Flow of traffic feels more natural and less disruptive.
- Design helps separate active and passive uses.
- Seen as safer and more aesthetically pleasing.

### Natural Space & Green Areas — 14 mentions

- Appreciation for preserving green space and vegetation buffers.
- Support for minimizing pavement and car-centric design.
- Naturalized areas seen as enhancing beauty and habitat.
- Users value the secluded, nature-focused feel.
- Design promotes a more peaceful park experience





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 2 Summary

### Concept 2 | Harborside Connections



## What do you wish were different about Concept 2?

### Top 5 Comment Categories

Concept 2 | Harborside Connections



- 1 Parking Concerns
- 2 Playground & Recreation
- 3 Natural Space & Environment
- 4 Traffic & Road Design
- 5 Accessibility & Trails

## Comments Summary

### Parking (Mentions: 56)

- Many feel the parking lot is too large, dominating the park space and reducing natural areas.
- Preference for two smaller lots over one large one to reduce congestion and improve flow.
- Concerns about environmental impact of flipping or expanding parking areas.
- Requests for ADA-accessible trailer parking and better layout for boat launch access.
- Desire to encourage alternative transportation and reduce car-centric design.
- Safety concerns where parking abuts roads or is too close to recreational areas.

- Requests to preserve existing trees and vegetation, especially in long-established areas.
- Desire for less blacktop and concrete, more emphasis on preservation and aesthetics.
- Comments on the park feeling desolate or unbalanced when large areas are unoccupied.

### Traffic and Road Design (Mentions: 17)

- Concerns about awkward traffic flow, sharp curves, and visibility issues.
- Suggestions for roundabouts, stop signs, and other traffic calming measures.
- Dislike of roadways cutting through the park, splitting open spaces.
- Requests to move roads away from playgrounds and recreational areas for safety.
- Comments on drop-off loops being too close to activity zones or feeling unsafe.

### Playground and Recreation (Mentions: 21)

- Requests for larger, modern playgrounds with more swings and nature-based elements.
- Desire to relocate volleyball courts closer to other recreational features.
- Suggestions to replace volleyball courts with pickleball or basketball courts.
- Comments on multi-use fields being too close to roads or feeling disconnected.
- Need for focal play areas for small children and better integration of recreational zones.

### Accessibility and Trails (Mentions: 14)

- Requests for paved, accessible loop trails and better beach access paths.
- Desire for bike lanes, walking trails, and ADA-compliant features.
- Suggestions to connect trails between key areas like the beach, playground, and airport.
- Comments on bus stop locations and need for public transit access.
- Interest in trailheads and raised paths for scenic views and safer navigation.

### Natural Space and Environment (Mentions: 18)

- Mixed opinions: some want more natural habitat, others feel it's underutilized space.
- Concerns about loss of green space due to expanded parking or roadways.





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 2 Summary

### Concept 3 | Linear Flow

#### Q What do you like most about Concept 3?

Concept 3 | Linear Flow



#### Top 5 Comment Categories

- 1 Parking
- 2 Natural Space
- 3 Layout & Design
- 4 Playground & Recreation
- 5 Traffic & Flow

\* 15 of 138 comments didn't like it

### Comments Summary

#### Parking (61 mentions)

- Overall layout allows parking close to desired activities.
- No large, obtrusive lots—parking is spread out and integrated.
- Minimally intrusive parking supports green space preservation.
- Linear parking design helps slow traffic and improve access.
- Visitors can park near their destination, improving convenience.

#### Natural Space (53 mentions)

- Strong emphasis on naturalized habitat and green areas.
- Design avoids large paved areas, preserving open space.
- Green space is maximized and feels less car-centric.
- Natural areas support wildlife and watershed health.
- Layout integrates nature with recreation effectively.

#### Layout and Design (37 mentions)

- Concept 3 praised for its linear, spread-out design.
- Better than Concept 2 in terms of flow and usability.
- Design supports multiple uses and feels cohesive.
- Parking and activity areas are well-distributed.
- Natural and recreational areas are balanced.

#### Playground and Recreation (32 mentions)

- Large playground is a major highlight for families.
- Multiple fields allow for diverse recreational use.
- Playground is well-placed near amenities and nature.
- Volleyball and basketball areas are appreciated.
- Recreation areas are accessible and thoughtfully located.

#### Traffic and Flow (32 mentions)

- Roadway design helps slow traffic and improve safety.
- Setback from shoreline enhances natural feel.
- Flow of travel is intuitive and efficient.
- Linear road layout supports better pedestrian movement.
- Reduced congestion and improved access noted.





# Park Point Recreation Area Plan

## Online Survey 2 Summary

### Concept 3 | Linear Flow

## Q What do you wish were different about Concept 3?

### Top 5 Comment Categories



- 1 Parking
- 2 Natural Space
- 3 Playground & Recreation
- 4 Accessibility & Connectivity
- 5 Traffic & Safety

## Comments Summary

### Parking (53 mentions)

- The parking lot divides the park and disrupts festival or event flow.
- Driving along a continuous parking lot is unappealing.
- Too many large parking lots; a parking lane should suffice.
- Parking near the road raises safety concerns for families.
- Lack of handicap drop-off zones near key areas like the beach house.

### Natural Space (12 mentions)

- Southern shore could use more beach access and a paved bike path.
- Picnic shelters in natural areas are too far from parking.
- Trails through natural habitat should be stroller-accessible.
- Some feel the habitat area is too large and underutilized.
- Preference for keeping open spaces wild and natural.

### Playground and Recreation (9 mentions)

- Playground and volleyball courts should be flipped for safety.
- More picnic tables and shelters requested.
- Basketball court should be included.
- Playground size and volleyball court usage questioned.
- Suggest converting one multi-use field into courts for various sports.

### Accessibility and Connectivity (8 mentions)

- Walking/biking paths are too close to driving lanes.
- Desire for protected bike lanes and multi-use paths.
- Need for accessible trails for disabled users.
- Crossings between lakeside and bayside should be safer.
- Harbor beach access could be improved.

### Traffic and Safety (5 mentions)

- Wiggly road design creates visibility and safety issues.
- Crossing the road to reach recreation areas is a concern.
- Road placement could be adjusted for better flow and safety.
- Speeding traffic and fast e-bikes are a hazard.
- Roadway design may encourage unsafe driving behavior.



## Park Point Recreation Area Plan Online Survey 2 Summary



### Other comments or questions

#### Working Well

- **Concept 1 commons** – appreciated for its community-focused design (17 mentions)
- **Natural beauty and green space** – strong support for preserving nature and minimizing development (13 mentions)
- **Linear layout and spread-out parking** – praised for improving flow and reducing congestion (33 mentions)
- **Bike lanes and multi-use paths** – valued for promoting non-vehicle access and recreation (9 mentions)
- **Playground and recreation** – interest in modern, engaging, and diverse play areas (21 mentions)
- **Accessibility and paved paths** – requests for ADA-friendly and stroller-accessible routes (3 mentions)
- **Support for Parks Dept and LHB** – recognition of planning and design efforts (3 mentions)
- **Harborside features and watercraft hub** – enthusiasm for seasonal boat access and water sports (9 mentions)
- **Picnic shelters and amenities** – desire for shaded areas, seating, and vendor spaces (4 mentions)
- **Affordability and functionality** – calls for cost-effective, inclusive design (3 mentions)

#### Issues & Concerns

- **Traffic and parking layout** – concerns about car dominance and poor flow (43 mentions)
- **Safety and speeding concerns** – worries about fast-moving vehicles and pedestrian risk (8 mentions)
- **Dog leash and waste issues** – health and cleanliness concerns on the beach (18 mentions)
- **Infrastructure and flooding** – issues with pipes, drainage, and water quality (3 mentions)
- **Tree removal and vegetation loss** – opposition to cutting existing trees (2 mentions)
- **Accessibility and ADA needs** – need for better access for disabled users (3 mentions)
- **Construction delays and usability** – fear of long-term disruption and slow progress (2 mentions)
- **Commercial development concerns** – resistance to business use of park space (3 mentions)
- **Lighting and signage aesthetics** – preference for low-impact, non-electronic options (5 mentions)
- **Playground removal and planning** – frustration with past removals and desire for better planning (12 mentions)



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# **Appendix F**

## **Coastal Memo on Bayside Beach Protection**



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## Consulting Engineers P.A.

October 20, 2025

**Re: Park Point Report Work**

AMI Project # 251028

Heidi,

AMI has reviewed the questions provided by LHB for the Park Point Plan. Please see the responses below covering the dredging, sheet pile wall, DSSA layout changes, and shoreline protection.

**Duluth Superior Sailing Association Layout Changes**

AMI considered the discussed bridged gap design for the DSSA sheet pile wall. It is hard to determine the efficacy of the design without data on the sediment issues in the marina basin. However, based on previous design experience and a thorough understanding of the hydraulics of the Duluth-Superior Harbor, AMI does not anticipate a significant beneficial impact from this design. Currently, most of the sediment appears to deposit on the east side of the bay where vegetation mats have developed in the past. Since sediment isn't depositing against the sheet pile wall, the flushing action of the proposed gap would not reduce sediment deposition and has the chance to increase deposition by the transport of sediment through the gap.

AMI also reviewed the new dock options that were proposed at the existing MN DNR boat launch. Based upon brief discussions with DNR staff, it is unlikely that an extension to the existing dock would be approved. As such, AMI recommends that the new dock option be pursued, though it is important to note that a permit for the dock will need to be received from the DNR prior to dock installation.

**Duluth Superior Sailing Association Seawall Assessment:**

Reviewing the site investigations of the existing seawall, it is likely that rehabilitation or replacement would be needed due to the age of the steel sheet pile (SSP) wall and notable pitting along the waterline from corrosion. Dock walls are typically designed for a service life of 50 -75 years. Based on available historical documentation, the existing steel sheet pile dock wall at this site was built in approximately 1938, aging the dock wall infrastructure to 37 years past the minimum recommended design service life. Historically, 3/16" thick steel sheet pile was installed in the Duluth-Superior Harbor at the time this dock wall was constructed versus now the traditional 3/8" thick sheets. The sheets will need to be tested for thickness to confirm if this is the case here.

In the early 2000s, research was conducted in this harbor regarding the advanced steel corrosion documented on marine steel structures due to a steel corroding micro-organism. Pitting has been

documented in diameters of 1/4" - 1" on the steel surface up to 10 feet below the waterline. With every winter as the harbor freezes, the micro-organisms get scrapped off by the ice and the steel is then exposed again allowing for the micro-organisms to reattach in the spring and restart the corrosion process. Rehabilitation has been completed on many marine structures in the harbor to add a 2-part epoxy coating system designed to protect new structures from steel corrosion, but is not recommended when the system is at the end of its design life. Other methods of repairs include installing steel plates to the exterior of the sheet pile to act as a sacrificial steel that will be corroded. These sheets are also only installed around the waterline where the corrosion is concentrated. The cost of these repairs is substantial though and does not make sense when the existing wall is far beyond its service life.

Current underwater conditions of the dock wall are unknown at this time. A dive inspection and a bathymetric survey is recommended to document the existing surface and locate any underwater obstructions that may interfere with construction operations. A bathymetric survey will also allow the owner to determine if dredging is required for continued use and provide critical information for the design phase of the dock wall structure. A dive inspection will provide an opportunity prior to construction to document the existing conditions of the sheet pile. Divers can also document any potential areas of sheet pile instability that may provide safety concerns during construction. Locating obstructions or sheet pile failures prior to the start of construction will provide the owner with an opportunity to mitigate any unforeseen costs during construction by developing a plan and minimizing risks. Estimated costs to perform the bathymetric survey and dive inspection are provided below.

	<b>UNIT</b>	<b>QTY</b>	<b>UNIT PRICE</b>	<b>TOTAL COST</b>
<b>Bathymetric Survey</b>	EA	1	\$4,000.00	<b>\$4,000.00</b>
<b>Dive Inspection</b>	EA	1	\$8,000.00	<b>\$8,000.00</b>

Based on the topside visual photographs of the wall, at this time AMI would recommend the existing seawall be replaced with a new sheet pile wall. The new wall would likely be built outside of the perimeter of the existing structure to eliminate the need for demolition of the sheet piles. AMI has generated an estimated cost to replace the current structure with a new cantilever steel sheet pile wall. The estimate and assumptions are provided below.

	UNIT	QTY	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL COST	Assumptions
SSP - TIEBACK	SF	9750	\$40.00	\$390,000.00	Assumes 30ft SSP, 15ft water depth
SSP - CANTILEVER	SF	14625	\$40.00	\$585,000.00	Assumes 45ft SSP, 15ft water depth
SSP COATINGS	SF	9750	\$25.00	\$243,750.00	Assumes 15ft coating on all sheets
TIE RODS	LF	520	\$150.00	\$78,000.00	Assumes tie rods @ every 9ft along pier section
WALE	LF	650	\$250.00	\$162,500.00	Assumes double channel wale along entire perimeter
DOCK CAP	LF	650	\$175.00	\$113,750.00	Assumes dock cap along entire perimeter
¾" Open Graded Aggregate	CY	2050	\$65.00	\$133,250.00	Assumes 4ft of aggregate at tie rod and wale install locations + 2ft x 12ft fill either side of SSP to fill between old and new SSP
EXCAVATION	CY	1120	\$45.00	\$50,400.00	Assumes 5ft excavation at tie rod and wale install locations
TOPSOIL	CY	230	\$75.00	\$17,250.00	Assumes 1ft topsoil at tie rod and wale install locations + pier
SEEDING	LS	1	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	Assumes seeded dock surface. If concrete or gravel is preferred, an additional cost will be evaluated
GEOTEXTILE	SF	3900	\$5.00	\$19,500.00	Assumes geotextile at pier location
CLEATS	EA	33	\$300.00	\$9,900.00	Assumes 12" cleats spaced at 20ft along entire perimeter. Does not account for bollards or bollard foundations
SAFETY LADDER	EA	3	\$7,500.00	\$22,500.00	Assumes 3 total safety ladders
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$1,835,800.00</b>	
<b>LF</b>				<b>650</b>	
<b>\$/LF</b>				<b>\$2,824.31</b>	

### Marina Dredging Options:

Options for dredging the marina and use of that dredge material will depend on the volume, sediment type, and presence of contaminants. Dredging activities in the harbor of Superior Bay will, at a minimum, require a permit from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) and coverage under a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Nationwide Permit (NWP). For larger quantities, fine materials, or contaminated material, a permit from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) may also be required for storage or reuse of the material.

Prior to dredging, sediment sampling will be required to test the dredge material for the presence of contaminants and to determine the soil gradation. These samples will be required for disposal/reuse planning and permitting. For 1000 cubic yards or less of material to be dredged, at least one (1) core sample location and three (3) sieve analysis locations are required. For 1000 to 30,000 cubic yards, three (3) core samples locations and six (6) sieve analysis locations are required. Core samples are analyzed for the baseline parameters, including heavy metals and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Additional parameters may be required based on the historic uses of the harbor near the site.

Sampling for dredging is estimated to cost between \$23,500 and \$38,000 depending on the quantity of dredge material. These costs include all analytical, collection, and reporting costs. It was assumed that all samples would be collected via vibracore sampling. A cost estimate cannot be provided for the dredging since the dredge quantity is unknown. However, a unit cost of \$20-\$40 per cubic yard is anticipated.

Depending on the volume of material and sample results, sediment could be handled in the following ways:

- If sampling results show that the material has concentrations contaminants higher than the Soil Reference Values established for the beneficial reuse site (residential/recreational versus industrial/commercial), the material would require disposal at a permitted landfill.
- Clean material could be reused as fill material for projects on Park Point. No permit is required if the volume is under 3000 cubic yards, however, a notification to the MPCA would be required. If the volume is over 3000 cubic yards of material, a permit would be required, which would require additional coordination and annual reporting.
- If no space is available or the material does not meet the requirements for direct beneficial reuse, the material can be brought to an existing dredge material management facility. For the Twin Ports area, the USACE Erie Pier facility is an option but may be limited in their capacity. Early discussion and coordination would be necessary to pursue this option.

If choosing to manage the dredge material locally for beneficial reuse, a location must be selected where the material could be stored and dewatered. The time required to dewater will depend on the material composition and the volume with finer material and larger quantities requiring more time to

dry. The dewatering site should not be located within 50 feet of the shoreline or wetland. Containment for the dredge stockpiles will be necessary to prevent the saturated dredge material and water from running untreated into the harbor. Berms to create the containment can be constructed of clay and geotextile fabric or concrete barriers and geotextile fabric. The location selected should allow the water to infiltrate naturally into the ground. Infiltration can be limited by native soil types and the depth to groundwater. Sites with low permeability due to clay soils or sites with a high-water table may not be suitable to dry the material in a reasonable timeframe.

### **Shoreline Armoring Options:**

There are a few designs that AMI would recommend to assist with maintaining a public space that is welcoming to the public, natural in appearance, and resilient in the face of erosion. AMI has developed three conceptual approaches to shoreline and beach protection that MN DNR will permit, utilizes on-site dredge material, and is resilient against long-term erosion. The conceptual designs developed by AMI are outlined below.

### **Shoreline Protection:**

1. **Hard Armor:** Hard armoring would extend from the toe of the bank to the top of the bank. This would fully eliminate erosion of the shoreline. Armor material would consist of stone and would require proper design and sizing.
2. **Vegetated Riprap:** This design involves the placement of riprap along the shoreline to prevent further erosion. The riprap will be designed and installed in a manner that allows for shrub and tree plantings in voids between the stones.
3. **Armored Toe:** Armoring the toe of the bank will prevent the undercutting and sloughing of the bank. The toe armor will extend from the lakebed to the ordinary high-water level (OHWL) with vegetation being placed above the OHWL. The armor material may be natural debris, such as root wads or other woody debris, or gray materials such as stone or concrete.



Example Photos of shoreline protection methods.

**Top:** Armoring on the North Shore

**Middle:** Vegetated Riprap in Stillwater

**Bottom:** Armored Toe in Michigan

**Beach Protection:** All designs include a landside revetment at the back of the beach.

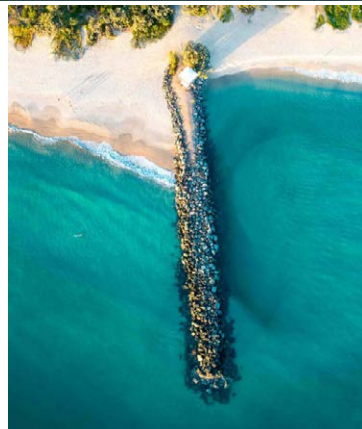
1. **Rock Groins:** Rock Groins are shallow breakwaters perpendicular to the shoreline and are often used to capture sand and provide protection to long stretches of beach. The incorporation of groins onsite would cut off the littoral sediment transport, thereby protecting the sections of beach located between each pair of groins.

2. Rock Sill: This concept involves the installation of a revetment offshore of the beach to provide a solid toe to the sand beach. This options would minimize visual impacts and would be in deep enough waters (5-6 feet) so as to not pose a hazard to any swimmers or others recreating at the site. This option would allow for the greatest variability in beach shape since no additional structures would be in place to keep the sand from moving. However, the stable toe that the offshore revetment provides would ensure that the beach will not erode away entirely.
  
3. Stone Bulkheads: This concept would involve the installation of stand-alone stone bulkheads that are located near the OHWL. The bulkheads would be roughly C shaped and would be generally parallel to the shoreline with additional sand placed behind them. This would result in a beach that undulates in both depth and elevation. The bulkheads, and the additional sand behind them, would ensure that the beach is still present during high-water periods and would provide a source of beach sand to address any erosion that occurs. With enough sand behind the bulkheads, littoral sediment transport can be reduced in a manner similar to the rock groin option.



Example Photos of beach protection methods.

**Top:** Submerged Sill  
(Courtesy of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science)



**Bottom Left:** Stone Bulkheads  
(Courtesy of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science)

**Bottom Right:** Stone Groin

Please review the responses above for completeness. We are happy to provide any additional responses or clarifications if needed. For any further questions regarding these responses, please contact AMI at 715-718-2193, Ext. 47, or via email at [Ryan.Dagger@amiengineers.com](mailto:Ryan.Dagger@amiengineers.com).

Sincerely,

**Ryan Dagger, PE**

*Assistant Coastal Engineering Manager*

AMI Consulting Engineers, P.A.

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# Appendix G

## Grant & Technical Support Opportunities Descriptions



## **PARK POINT REC AREA PLAN:**

### **GRANT AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES DESCRIPTIONS**

#### **City of Duluth – Community Development Block Grant Program**

The City’s Planning and Economic Development Department receives an annual allocation of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support affordable housing, public services, economic development, and public facilities improvement projects. A Community Development Committee reviews and awards all funding applications. Recent public facility improvement projects within Duluth’s park system have included support for the purchase of playground equipment and accessibility improvements on public infrastructure, with CDBG awards ranging from \$30,000 - \$90,000.

#### **Federal Emergency Management Agency – Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program to support hazard mitigation and resilient infrastructure projects across the country to reduce risk to people, property, and critical community services. There are two possible funding tracks: 1) Up to \$2 million can be allocated to each state, and local communities can apply for funding for smaller projects with a required 25% non-federal match requirement; or 2) A nation-wide competitive funding round where local communities can apply for large projects, also with a 25% non-federal match requirement.

#### **Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative – Initiative for Resilient Great Lakes Coasts**

A collaborative program between the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), this initiative provides training and technical assistance to communities for habitat-focused projects that improve coastal resilience. The Rec Area’s harborside has been selected to receive technical assistance in 2026, in the form of engineering and design support to approximately 60 percent construction-ready status.

#### **Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission – Legacy Amendment Funds**

The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC) administers grant funding under Minnesota’s Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment (Legacy Amendment). One priority of the Legacy Amendment is to support parks and trails that have been designated with regional or statewide significance. While the Rec Area is not currently designated as a regionally significant park, the City could apply to have it designated. If designated, the Rec Area would have access to GMRPTC’s Legacy Development Grant funds. There is no maximum grant request amount and, while match is encouraged and provides for a more competitive application, match is not required. The Legacy Development Fund has approximately \$12.5 million for projects across the state.



### **Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources – Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund**

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) is a constitutionally dedicated fund in Minnesota to provide financial support for activities that protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources. The Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) reviews project applications and makes funding recommendations to the legislature. There is no minimum or maximum funding request amount, and all capital construction projects require a 25% match.

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program**

The DNR administers grant funding under Minnesota's Legacy Amendment, specifically from the Outdoor Heritage Fund via the Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program. The CPL grant program funds projects that restore, enhance, or protect forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife in Minnesota. Grants from \$5,000 to \$500,000 are available and require a 10% match of non-state funds of cash or in-kind. Total project costs may not exceed \$1 million, meaning this funding could only be used as part of a project that addresses a sub-set of improvements at the Rec Area.

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - ENRTF Community Grant Program**

Funded by the ENRTF, the Community Grant Program will support projects that help communities respond to environmental degradation and preserve natural resources, among other priorities. There are no minimum or maximum funding request amounts, and no match requirement. During the 2025 session, lawmakers appropriated approximately \$28 million from the ENRTF to the Community Grants Program, and that funding is available until June 30, 2029.

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program**

The DNR provides grant funding through Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program (Coastal Program) to help communities protect Lake Superior's coastal resources. The Coastal Program offers administrative planning grants, as well as grants to support low-cost construction projects. The minimum funding request is \$25,000 and the maximum funding request is \$150,000, with a 1:1 match requirement. Previous Coastal Program awards to the City of Duluth supported the installation of a new beach access boardwalk in the Rec Area in 2025, and the development of this plan document! The City should continue to use this funding source to support additional boardwalk replacements within the Rec Area, using boards salvaged from the former Lakewalk as match.

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – National Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program**

The MNDNR solicits project proposals from local municipalities and submits selected projects to the National Park Service's National Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program. Projects must align with the State's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). ORLP awards a minimum grant amount of \$300,000 and a maximum grant amount of \$15 million, with a 1:1 match requirement of cash or in-kind

contributions. At the time of this plan publication, the ORLP Program was not actively funded. The City should continue to monitor the status of this program and be prepared to apply if it is reactivated.

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Outdoor Recreation Grant Program**

The MNDNR's Outdoor Recreation (Outdoor Rec) Grant Program provides grant funding for the cost of acquisition, development, and redevelopment of local parks and recreation areas. The maximum grant award is \$350,000 and requires a 1:1 match.

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Public Water Access Partnership Funding**

The Minnesota DNR provides funding through a Cooperative Agreement for public water access. Eligible projects include acquisition, development and/or improvement of public carry-in and trailer boat access sites including parking lots, docks, launching ramps, among others. Highest priorities are rehabilitation of existing facilities. Level of funding is dependent on the size and scope of the project, and match is not specifically required but the cooperative nature of this program assumes communities and the DNR are co-investing in these facilities with the DNR covering eligible items and the community covering ineligible items (i.e. picnic shelters, tables, benches, playgrounds, etc.).

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – State Park Road Account**

The State Park Road Account (SPRA) Program helps local governments improve access to state parks, trails, and scientific and natural areas, like the Minnesota Point Pine Forest located just beyond the Rec Area. Approximately \$5 million is available statewide each year. While the City is unlikely to receive an award from SPRA that will cover the full cost of road improvements, it may be a strong match source for other transportation-focused funding opportunities.

### **Minnesota Department of Transportation – Greater Minnesota Transportation Alternatives Solicitation**

The Transportation Alternatives Solicitation is a competitive grant opportunity for local communities and regional agencies to fund projects for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, historic preservation, Safe Routes to School, and more, with approximately \$12.5 million in available grant funding across the state.

### **Minnesota Department of Transportation – Municipal State Aid Street Program**

A number of Minnesota cities receive state assistance to construct and maintain streets within a state-aid system. Funding comes from transportation-related taxes and is distributed following a statutory formula.

### **Minnesota Pollution Control Agency - Local Climate Action Grants**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has dollars available for planning and implementation projects that help communities in Minnesota adapt to extreme weather events and challenges associated with a changing climate. At the time of this plan, maximum grant awards are \$50,000, with a 1:1 match requirement.

### **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund**

The Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund supports work that advances the conservation of the monarch butterfly and other at-risk native insect pollinators. Grant awards range from \$200,000 - \$300,000, and while match dollars are not required, a 1:1 match amount makes applications more competitive.

### **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – National Coastal Resilience Fund**

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)'s National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF) was established to protect coastal communities through projects that restore and strengthen natural infrastructure and mitigate the impacts of coastal hazards such as rising sea-levels, more intense storms, and changing rainfall patterns. Natural infrastructure supported under NCRF includes coastal marshes and wetlands, dune and beach systems, oyster and coral reefs, rivers and floodplains, coastal forest, and barrier islands. NFWF funds may be used to support planning, design, and implementation projects. There is no maximum limit on the award and while non-federal match is not required, it is encouraged to demonstrate local support for the project.

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# Appendix H

## Summary of Public Comments



DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT
8/6/2025	This seems like a great opportunity for the City to return land to the Fond du Lac Band. Knowing the history of the area and the details of the treaties, especially with the multiple burial sites along Minnesota Point, it is an excellent time to truly consider "Land Back". The Ethnographic Study of Indigenous Contributions to the City of Duluth by Turnstone Historical Research (2015) provides ample grounds for this logical choice. It can be found online at <a href="https://duluthmn.gov/media/5867/duluth-ethnographic-study-final-july-2015.pdf">https://duluthmn.gov/media/5867/duluth-ethnographic-study-final-july-2015.pdf</a> Thank you for requesting input. Lyz Jaakola
8/7/2025	Land back to the Fond Du Lac reservation for environmentally ethical stewardship.
8/8/2025	Duluth should stay Duluth, no need to add all the buzzwords like "Climate Change" and "Cultural". No need to try to make it "inclusive" either, its a public space its already inclusive. None of that useless equity bs either. I worry you people will try to use this opportunity to push your agenda or to punish wealthy residents you dont like, I will be watching closely and report any unsavory tricks to the Feds, hopefully they will rescind funds if you start going woke on a park plan. There should no translations of signs, ONLY in English, that should really be City Wide. Mandate that no annoying speakers can just play all day long. No craveouts for "special" groups. Theres no need for useless paintings or references to anything other than Duluth or the Lake. None of this should increase taxes, if you need extra money - cut those "feel good" programs that have zero measurable outcomes and are more or less fraud schemes to transfer wealth. No naming park or other places to satisfy DEI Requirements, no erasing other historical figures either. There should ZERO non-profit, outside attorney, or lobbists involvement as they are just leeches for funds. Kind of a dumb concept, you think you will control nature? Isnt Climate Change just a trick so you "leaders" can tax the population
8/9/2025	Aug 9 Park Point Fr Mpls All we know is we used to sun bathe and beach and sone swim and picnic at Park Point Duluth Last few tones beach sand full of every bug species you can imagine Nasty There is no real beach on the big lake but in Marquette No enjoyable exp We are fr originally the Iron Range Plenty of beaches there Esp McCarthy state park I think park point needs to be treated with white sand brought in and or build outdoor Waterpark with lazy River etc Cope maybe Como park St. Paul In and out- Shoreview com center, Shoreview mn Something other than that hotel there or dark school pool esp during longest season
9/4/2025	I like concept 1 for the Park Point Recreation Area. Otherwise, I would not mind seeing the area converted to a campground for families and individuals wishing to camp on rv's within the City of Duluth, Minnesota limits. The issue is that the chosen project whether a campground for people using rvs or concept 1, is that it would have to be done right the first time.
9/4/2025	A REALLY GREAT IDEA! Make the beach wheelchair accessible. Just put a concrete slab, or even more boards from the old beach, all the way to lake superior. Maybe even in it. My mom misses being able to go to the beach. It's been almost 6 years or so, she misses the lake. We've lived here going on 20 years. Would be nice for a place that people in wheel chairs can get close to the water, or even in it, with out worrying about getting sick in the sand or rocks.
3/13/2026	I feel there should be a dedicated bike lane. The ""summer bike lane on the lake side of Minnesota Ave" does not continue through the Rec area. Many drivers are distracted driving in that area putting bikers are risk.

DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT
3/13/2026	I attended the Parks & Rec Commission meeting where the draft plan was presented this past Wednesday night. I participated in both the natural resources workshop and the community user group workshop. I think the concept plan does an exceptional job of addressing the multitude of uses for the site while also very thoughtfully addressing the habitat needs for plants and wildlife. Thank you for creating very thoughtful ways for the community to contribute to this process and for very intentionally incorporating our contributions into the plan. This is really great work for a very special place in our community!
3/13/2026	Just want decent beach with less bug species Good sand and canteen There is no real beach up there
3/13/2026	Unleashed dogs are a serious problem at Park Point Beach—7 out of 10 dogs I see are off-leash, running through the beach grass, jumping up on people, and leaving waste behind, sometimes buried in sand, sometimes on the shoreline, which is a health hazard. Please consider making the beach a no-dog zone and creating a designated dog park on a nearby field. This would protect the ecosystem, keep the beach and our beautiful lake clean, and still give dogs a safe space to play.
3/13/2026	1. Zero commercial developments in this area. 2. Unleashed dogs and waste are a growing problem. Urge the City to create a designated dog park in the recreation area to give dogs a safe space to play while protecting the beach, lake, and ecosystem. 3. Speed camera?/speed bumps?/ speed enforcement?
3/13/2026	Please put in outdoor showers near parking so people can rinse off sand. Please. I think its a good idea. People would love it. Literally zero complaints. All praise. Please. I beg. I yearn. Take a second and think of how amazing it would be. It takes the experience to an 11/10. Please.
3/13/2026	I am in favor of the Preferred concept. I like moving the street away from the water’s edge on the bay side making it safer and adding more beach. Parking lots on each side are nice, and leaves the green space area more protected. I have lived on Park Point over 70 years, and although not thrilled about more traffic, I am happy to see the area revitalized and put to better use!!
3/14/2026	I would personally like to see the Rec area be open for more events and the bathrooms to be more accessible instead of being closed half the time. And hopefully getting rid of the poison ivy on the sides of the path a bit better.
3/14/2026	Current PP resident. The proposed improvements are fantastic. I’d prioritize the continuous and uninterrupted multi-use pathway to allow for safe walking and biking. Think/market a mini “lake walk.” Please include periodic garbage and pet stations.
3/14/2026	Could you please include a fenced in dog beach area? I lived in Chicago for a number of years and they have several dog beach areas. My dogs love the beach and it would be very nice to have a space where dogs are welcome to enjoy the beach, run, dig holes, etc. without disturbing other beach goers. Thank you!

DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT
3/14/2026	What I see missing is a good entrance to the park. The bridge at the park entry is too narrow to facilitate safe entry for pedestrians and bicyclists. Also there is inadequate space on either side of the road for safe passage.
3/15/2026	Hello! Thanks for all the work to create this plan. In general, I like it. I see that there are two different icons on the legend that are labeled "multi use trail", with one icon as a hiker and other icon with a bicycle. Is this a mistake, or are these multi use trails different from each other? Will these trails listed as multi use be for cyclists and walkers/pedestrians? Also, is there a separate and protected paved path from the entrance of the park to the airport on both sides of the street for walkers, runners, and cyclists who will use the same path? I live on Park Point and it's not completely clear to me on the map if I'll be able to run and ride my bicycle on a separate, protected pathway that is adjacent to the street from the entrance of the park to the airport. Also, will there be bicycle racks to lock up bicycles along the multi use trails? Thank you!
3/15/2026	The Park Point Recreation Area and MN Point Pine Forest Scientific Area are beloved natural resources. To preserve and protect them in their natural state is critical. Development seems counter intuitive to this natural treasure. Things like a robust airport and accompanying noise and air pollution (especially from helicopters) should not be encouraged
3/15/2026	Plan looks nice to me.
3/16/2026	Hello, What does this plan do to calm traffic into the park? I worry about speeding traffic all up and down Minnesota Ave, and it's really important to calm traffic in the park, where we expect children and families to be. Right now, the curvature of the road and the potholes and the road very near the water work to calm traffic, and changing some of these aspects (while great in some regards), may also no longer discourage speeding/reckless driving. Having specific traffic calming measures such as speed humps or bump outs sound like a good idea. Thanks.
3/16/2026	It would be helpful to name the tribes on page 5 instead of saying "Indigenous Peoples."
3/16/2026	Figure 01.1 on page 5 has the wrong area highlighted
3/16/2026	It'd be really nice to see the space devoted to a multi-use field "right sized" and addition of other recreational amenities. Particularly, the addition of basketball courts and tennis/pickleball courts would be very nice.
3/17/2026	there needs to be better bike parking as well as seasonal changing tents for people. it would be grand to have a designated bike path but that could be asking for too much, not to mention free and accessible drinking water.

DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT
3/18/2026	Hello, We had a Park Point Community Club meeting tonight, and at this meeting I became aware that many/most trees would be cut down in the park with this plan. I see trees that line the street and are in the parking lots with this plan, which is great, but it hurts my heart to cut down all of those trees. I don't have a more elegant solution to offer to keep the plan as is but cut down fewer trees, but it would be great to limit how many trees are cut down to the absolute minimum. I know others in the Park Point community share similar concerns. Thank you, Brian
3/19/2026	19 March 2026 As a Park Point resident of almost two years, I have three comments about this project. #1 - The city of Duluth needs to return Park Point to the Fond du Lac Band, as they are the ancestral and present stewards of this land. At the very least, consultation with the tribal nation should have been happening right from the start. If no consultation has occurred, I recommend putting the project on hold until the Fond du Lac Band has been consulted. #2 - The plan mentions "access for all" regarding bicyclists and pedestrians, but there is nothing whatsoever about wheelchair/walker users except a brief mention with the beach mats (pg. 65). The recreational area must be accessible for wheelchair users to get around freely... not just to the beach, the public bathrooms, or the multi-use trails. The principle is: wherever able-bodied folks go, disabled folks should be able to go too. This is not a "request"... this is a public use area, which automatically subjects Park Point and the city of Duluth to physical accessibility requirements (i.e., see the ADA laws for more details). I emphasize this as a resident who has a mobility disability. #3 - We seriously need a dedicated dog park with fences. Park Point has quite a number of residents with dogs, and some are high-energy furbabies who need to run/play around and get their energy out. Thank you, James Poteet
3/22/2026	I am really impressed with the planning, gathering of feedback, and production of these plans. Thanks for all your time and intentionality in this process. This includes the Ojibwe words for the lake, bay, etc - no small thing. I like nearly everything with this plan - the multiuse trails across and around the park, the location of parking, the road, the playground, fields, putting the volleyball courts where sand naturally blows, etc. I'd like to see some traffic calming measures on the road - either a median to narrow lanes or some speed humps - ideally at the pedestrian crossings to slow traffic down. Maybe one coming into the park too to slow cars down as they come in. I'd like to see accessibility to the sand emphasized with the mats that allow wheelchairs and walkers to roll across so folks can get down to the beach and water, not just watch from the beach house. Would like to see the vault toilet become a flush toilet, if at all possible. This is so much more desirable for users. And, if it's going to be near the picnic area reduces/prevents smell from ruining picnics. The potential DSSA expanded dock location seems like it'd make it challenging for power boaters using the boat launch. Better signage also seems like a worthy investment - especially around keeping people to formal, rather than informal trails across the dunes and around the bay water's edge (if desired) - wasn't quite sure what "Harborside Beach Encouragement" meant. Thanks for all the work you're doing!
3/23/2026	Figure 01.1 - the location identifier for the Rec Area is incorrect; the box is currently in Wisconsin

DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT
3/24/2026	I support the revised concept, with concern about any tree removal as part of construction or securing the area around the Beach House, and use of dredge materials as they can be problematic. No mention of increasing the number of trash receptacles which are critical for keeping the beach and park area clean. We will need to address rules/regulations/signage about dogs in the Park (leashed, pick up poop, etc.). Helpful to have funding sources identified; City along with local organizations will need to develop a fund development plan to underwrite this.
3/26/2026	Thank you for developing this plan for Park Point and soliciting input from the community. I have a couple of comments. 1. I believe the history annex to the plan misses a critical point. DSSA provides access to sailing on Superior Bay and Lake Superior to a vast array of individuals and organizations from local, regional and national level. From over 300 children in camps, and over 250 individuals utilizing the wide range of boats, DSSA is a major contributor year over year to the use of Park Point throughout the sailing season. 2. Individuals who own what is commonly known as beach boats, small dinghies and catamarans (Hobie Cats for example) are hampered from using their boats due to lack of a location to store their boats fully rigged to get quickly out on the water. Currently, owners have to rig and de-rig their boats for every sail which can add 3-4 hours to complete. These boats don't use a marina and can't be put on a mooring. a. Recommend permitting a limited number of beach boat owners to store them during the sailing season (at a fee) at Park Point.
3/26/2026	Please don't forget the DSSA and their valuable contribution to youth and adult sailing instruction on Lake Superior. Please be sure to include the DSSA in the plan
3/26/2026	I value having DSSA as a resource to get out and enjoy sailing on Lake Superior and Duluth Harbor. The Park Point Recreation Area Plan should recognize DSSA's significant contribution to the community — serving over 300 children and 250+ sailors every season. Our involvement with DSSA since we moved here a few years ago has been a highlight of living in Duluth.
3/26/2026	1. The planners have a done a great job thoughtfully incorporating input from multiple sources for the Rec Area Draft Plan. 2. My major concern is the apparent removal of most if not all of the trees that are not part of the pine forest on the dune. Multiple commentors expressed a desire to protect the trees in the rec area and I can find no mention in the draft that these concerns were met. It appears from the plan that they will be removed, Some of these trees are over 50 years old and were planted by volunteers. I would urge the planners to explain how many trees are being removed and why? 3. Some minor comments: poison ivy is not an invasive species, there is no bike lane from Canal Park to the rec area so the need for bike lanes in the rec area is moot at this time. I don't understand why a new playground in the rec area might require closing one of the two playgrounds on Park Point.
3/26/2026	I value having this great resource to get out and enjoy sailing with DSSA on Lake Superior and Duluth Harbor. As a beach boat owner, I strongly support allowing a limited number of sailors to store their rigged boats seasonally at Park Point. Having to rig and de-rig for every outing adds 3-4 hours of work and is a major barrier to enjoying the water.



DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT
3/27/2026	<p>I recommend the addition of elevated berms or hills (~6-20 ft in high) within the green space, possibly along the south or southwest side. These would provide wind protection and areas to view sports and music events as well as gathering spots that are less likely to collect water. They are also a good use of clean fill material the army corps dredges from nearby. Similar examples where flat park land has been elevated for simple recreation and viewscape include South Point Park and Flamingo Park in Miami Beach, FL and various coastal parks in New York City including on Governor’s Island. Birders use the area heavily. They would enjoy shore access with spots to set up scopes, and it would be helpful to consider the inclusion of low bushes or shrubs, with fruit like june berries, to attract small birds in the recreation and new habitat area.</p>
3/31/2026	<p>Hello- I was speaking with a colleague, David Grandmaison, and the topic of public water accesses came up. I supervise the DNR Watercraft Inspection Program for NE Minnesota and my staff work at the PWAs in the Duluth area. They also trailer and operate decontamination units. At some access that DNR has recently redone, they have considered our work by providing a designated parking space for our truck and decon unit as well as considering messaging and signage around aquatic invasive species. I’d love to connect with you during the planning to see if we could incorporate this into you plan if possible. We have done inspections are Park Point in the past, but it is pretty slow due to how shallow the launch currently is. With an improved access, there may be more traffic and a reason for us to work there more often. Thanks for your time, please reach out to discuss. Sincerely, Jessamyn Foley</p>
4/1/2026	<p>Hello there! I’m David, I dropped by a few days ago and spoke to Allison about some ideas for Canal Park. I asked why the new signage saying people can’t park at night was added, and was told it was to prevent overnight parking and illegal camping. The problem is, this prevents regular, law abiding folks from enjoying a nice, night time walk by the lake shore. I work 2nd Shift at the hospital, my favorite way to decompress after working in the ER was to drive down to Canal Park and go for a 30 to 40 minute walk, seeing the stars and moon over our beautiful Lake Superior. Sometimes I’ll even engage in night time photography. So I would suggest one or both the following compromises: 1. Allow night time parking but have it metered after dark. Meter parking has to be paid through the Duluth Parking app, so you’ll know exactly who’s there, their license plate, their name, and for how long they plan to be there. It will also generate revenue for the city that can be used to keep to park clean and healthy. I would gladly pay a dollar or two to be allowed to continue my short, nightly walks. 2. Make camping at Park Point legal but have people register, pay \$10 - \$15 per night and assign them designated camping spaces. Then you will be able to inspect to make sure they didn’t litter or disobey any rules and if they did, you can look them up by their registration and fine them for not cleaning up their campsite. You could even make people put down a deposit when they register, so you wouldn’t need to chase them down for fines if they broke the rules. This might be more trouble than it’s worth, but it’s just an idea. 3. Fire Pits. There’s nothing quite like a fire on the beach but the problem is a lot of people aren’t trained in fire safety, like I am, so it’s a hazard to allow it. But instead of banning it altogether, make a few designated spaces where people can have them, with metal fire pits. You could even charge a small fee for their usage, like \$5, and sell fire wood too, to generate revenue. Once in a while, you could have a park ranger or rec. official host special events at your beach fires, charge a small ticket price per person for it. You could even use those events as a way to educate people about fire safety while they’re attending.</p>

<b>DATE RECEIVED</b>	<b>COMMENT</b>
4/22/2026	There is so much land and space on park point and I am looking for a small place to beach a boat. Ideally this would be on the beachside by the beach house, I have a dolly that the boat can live on and can live high and dry out of the water. It is a sailboat on a beach which is such a common thing in beach towns. Secondly I would love permission to leave it on the grass by the boat the boat rack by the launch at DSSA. I know you have boat storage at Lester entry as well but this would be my last option as sailing the beach is my main interest.