



'Where the biggies leave off...'

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## Improvements in store as Park Board SW Service Area CAC continues its work

By Michael Wilson

The members of the Park Board's Southwest Service Area Master Plan Community Advisory Committee (CAC) are off and running towards their daunting goal of developing capital improvement plans for all 42 outdoor neighborhood park properties in the southwest quadrant of the city.

The CAC has already met three times. (The third meeting was held on Thursday, July 26, just as this issue of Hill & Lake Press was being printed.) CAC #4 will be held in September. Go to the project page (google "mpls southwest service area") later in August for the date, time, and location. Time is always set aside for public comment.

Colleen O'Dell, SWSAMP project manager, says she is impressed thus far. "The volunteer members of the Southwest CAC have been providing valuable insights and ideas in planning for these SW parks," she says. "They are thoughtful and committed folks who care deeply about public space and amenities"

O'Dell states that the main goals for CAC #3 were to take a deeper dive on area data ("who are these parks serving now, and what do the data tell us?") and to do a level-of-service exercise ("what sorts of amenities could or should be where?").

The 20-Year Neighborhood Park Plan (NPP20) is providing an additional \$11 million annually through 2036 for increased maintenance, rehabilitation and capital investments in neighborhood parks, thanks to funding secured in April 2016 when the Park Board and City Council unanimously approved a joint ordinance to reverse years of underfunding and to transform the city's neighborhood park system. Our Ward 7 Council Member Lisa Goodman and our then-District 4 Park Board Commissioner Anita Tabb were the spark plugs behind this historic achievement, along with Park Board President Liz Wielinski, City Council President Barb Johnson, and Parks Superintendent Jayne Miller.

Capital improvement plans are being developed through the CAC process for neighborhood parks throughout the entire city. Regional parks, including Bde Maka Ska (formerly Lake Calhoun) Park, Cedar Lake Park, Cedar Lake Regional Trail, Kenilworth Regional Trail, and the Grand Rounds trails, are not included because they come under a different funding stream than do the neighborhood parks. Google "Park Board NPP20" and "Minneapolis Park Board SWSAMP" for more information.

### Improvements in store for Kenwood Park.

In order to keep the CAC to a manageable size, the 21 southwest neighborhoods were grouped into six clusters, with each cluster given one seat to fill. Jana Griffin, a Linden Hills Neighborhood Association board member, represents Cedar-Isles-Dean. Craig Wilson, long a vibrant part of our Hill and Lake neighborhoods, represents East Isles, Kenwood-Isles, Lowry



The Park Board hosted a tour on June 9 for Community Advisory Committee members, starting at Kenwood Park, of many of the 42 neighborhood parks in southwest Minneapolis which all will be getting improvement plans. From left: Asia Campbell, tour participant; Colleen O'Dell, project manager; Larry Moran; Craig Wilson; and Shaelyn Crutchley. (Photo: Kelly Wilcox. Caption: Michael Wilson.)

Hill, and Bryn Mawr.

Electeds get to appoint CAC members too. Lisa Goodman's appointee is longtime Kenwood stalwart Larry Moran. Park Board at-large commissioners Meg Forney and LaTrisha Vetaw appointed Tony Sterle and Shaelyn Crutchley, respectively. Cha'Foxey Mitchner is District 4 Commissioner Jono Cowgill's appointee.

The park most in need of substantial work in our four neighborhoods is Kenwood Park, which has gone for years without much attention. The CAC's improvement plan should result in a substantial refresh for this historic 101-year-old park, the jewel in the crown for generations of Hill and Lake residents.

All our other neighborhood (that is, non-regional) parks will also receive capital improvement plans:

**Cedar-Isles-Dean:** West End Triangle, Chowen Triangle, St. Louis Triangle, Alcott Triangle, and Park Siding Park;

**Lowry Hill:** Vineland Triangle, Thomas Lowry Park, Fremont Triangle, and The Parade;

**East Isles:** Joanne Levin Triangle, Smith Triangle, and The Mall.

Kenwood Parkway also made the list for an improvement plan. Dean Parkway did not, however, nor did the two lobes of green space north and south of the Midtown Greenway bridge, often informally called Dean Green.

The 2013 Cedar Lake/Dean Parkway Trail CAC, using regional parks funding, addressed the recreational trail that threads through these two "Dean Green" park spaces, but not the spaces themselves. Feeling that these green spaces were falling between the cracks, the CIDNA board wrote the Park Board on June 8 to ask that they be included in the SW Service Area Master Plan process.

CIDNA board members were pleased at their June meeting to learn from O'Dell that the Park Board has agreed to their inclusion in the upcoming Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Regional Park master plan process.

We all love our parks, and big improvements are afoot. Come to the next CAC meeting in September, learn more, and get involved.