



# Agenda

## Minnetonka Park Board

Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. Minnetonka  
Community Center - Council Chambers

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1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

\_\_\_\_ Student Member

\_\_\_\_ David Ingraham

\_\_\_\_ Korey Beyersdorf

\_\_\_\_ Ben Jacobs

\_\_\_\_ Ella DiLorenzo

\_\_\_\_ Katie Semersky

\_\_\_\_ Anne Hanley

\_\_\_\_ Chris Walick

3. Reports from Staff

4. Approval of Minutes

A) February 7, 2024

5. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda

6. Special Matters

7. Business Items

A) Natural Resources Division's 2024

Outreach, Education and Engagement Plan

B) Purgatory Park Master Plan Draft Review

8. Park Board Member Reports

9. Information Items

10. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

11. Adjournment

### Board Vision:

An inclusive city with outstanding parks and recreational opportunities within a healthy and biodiverse natural environment.

### Board Mission:

To proactively advise the city council, in ways that will:

- Conserve and enhance Minnetonka's natural environment
- Promote quality and inclusive recreation opportunities, natural amenities and facilities to meet the needs of all
- Provide a forum for public engagement regarding parks, trails, athletic facilities and natural resources
- Adhere to the goals and strategies of the Natural Resources Master Plan and the Parks, Open Space, and Trails Plan



**Minutes  
Minnetonka Park Board  
Wednesday, February 7, 2024**

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Roll Call**

Park board members present: Korey Beyersdorf, Anne Hanley, David Ingraham, Ben Jacobs and Chris Walick. Excused: Ella DiLorenzo and Katie Semersky.

Staff members in attendance: Kathy Kline, Matt Kumka, Kelly O'Dea, Sara Woeste, and Leslie Yetka and Officer Rachel Meehan.

Chair Walick called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**3. Reports from Staff**

Recreation Director Kelly O'Dea mentioned that there was an addendum that includes comments received after the distribution of the packet for business item 7A. There was an addition to the agenda under special matters; the Friends of Minnetonka Parks will give an update.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Hanley moved, Beyersdorf seconded a motion to approve the meeting minutes of Jan. 3, 2024. Jacobs abstained. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

**5. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda**

There were none.

**6. Special Matters**

Tom Stockert from the Friends of Minnetonka Parks (FoMP) gave a presentation on three areas of focus: restoration, education and public outreach. Stockert stated that our volunteers are working closely with staff to develop and implement science based park restoration plans consistent with the Natural Resources Master Plan (NRMP). From volunteers, park leaders hold monthly city staff park stewards meetings and participate in city sponsored, public engagement opportunities, their education efforts and public outreach are laid out in detail on the annual report, which can be found on their website or Facebook page. They will continue to hold public education events such as their 100 tickets sell out on Oaks, Fire and Climate Change, presented by Heather Holm with help from Matt Kumka earlier in 2023. Anyone interested in restoration should monitor their website or the city's natural resources website. Volunteers work side by side with Master Naturalists and can learn quite a bit about native plants and restoration. The slide presented shows the impact our 100 percent volunteer organization made in 2023 and that they are planning on exceeding these achievements in 2024. In 2024, they will also educate and train beyond basic and invasive restoration and focus on an overall site planning and restoration. In

December, their board members broke into two committees, one focused on growing volunteers and the other focused on what it means to be a FoMP member. During 2023, they grew their cash balances by over \$4,500 dollars to just over \$6,000. They don't spend much cash as volunteers really are what makes FoMP what they are. Their goal is to grow reserves so they can front money towards larger restoration projects ahead of public money grants. He would be remiss if he doesn't mention they have donation buttons on their website and their Facebook page at the very least, come and visit them at the Farmers Market during the summer. Thank you to the city council, the park board and city staff. You are a large part of the success as they celebrate.

## **7. Business Items**

### **A. Purgatory Park Master Plan – Preliminary Strategies Regarding Dogs**

Park and Trail Project Manager Matt Kumka gave the report.

Walick opened the floor for the park board to discuss.

Ingraham said he has spoken a lot about this issue in previous meetings, so he will try to keep it shorter than he usually does. He thinks all the input they are gathering is great because there is obviously a lot of people here to share their feelings. His background, he and his wife have used Purgatory Park with their dogs for the past 20 plus years. We are on our fourth golden there, the first two they spent a lot of time in the center of the park and on the perimeters in the woods. Their third dog was reactive and so it became very difficult for them to go to Purgatory Park on the formal trails, so they didn't even try to go in the center, but even on the formal trails it was very difficult. They didn't go back to Purgatory Park until they got their fourth dog. He loves Purgatory Park, it's a great place. About 15 years ago, he was where you are, he stood up in the audience and spoke in support of off-leash dogs in Purgatory Park. One of the reasons he did that was at that time, the primary concern was interaction with people on the primary trails and he pointed out then, and it is still true today, that we don't really need to do anything about that because dogs should not be on the maintained trails. If there is a problem with dogs on the maintained trails, it is covered under the current rules. The problem is that the current rules don't work and from his perspective, a lot of it comes down to the way the city ordinance is written, which is mirrored in the park regulations. There is a lot of attitude around what off-leash dog is and what under voice control is. When our community service officers tried to cite people in the past, no judge upholds any citations because our ordinance is so poorly written. He focuses a lot on the 20 percent of the people who feel unsafe, not uncomfortable, but 20 percent of the people feel unsafe in our parks because of off-leash dogs. That comes from the input on the Parks, Open Space and Trail (POST) Plan study that covers all of our parks, not just Purgatory Park. If you look at the results of what Kumka presented today, 40 percent of people are uncomfortable with off-leash dogs. He really thinks there needs to be something done around off-leash dogs in Purgatory Park. He would love it if it could stay the same but the problem is usually it's not the dogs problem, it is the owner having control of their dogs. A lot of the input he has seen is really good, like more communication, more enforcement and all those kind of steps. The city has done a lot of communication, there is signage, there has been information in Minnetonka Memos and it is written up in a lot of places. What he thinks hasn't happened is self-regulations, self-policing by the users. How many times when you have been at the park and someone opens up their car door in the parking lot and let's their dog run loose into the center of the park? Have you said,

“They are supposed to be leashed until they get into the park”? Or, if you are coming down the hill, across the bridge over the creek to go up the hill, and they are off-leash because they are only crossing the path. If you stop someone, just say “you really should leash your dog”. He thinks if we start to do that more it would help a lot but he thinks we really need to look seriously at the ordinance and how it is written. A lot of things that Kumka has laid out today are beneficial in the long-run for the park.

Walick opened the floor for public comments.

Chris Sullivan, 3506 Sunrise Drive West, Minnetonka. He noted that the survey didn't ask if people were disinclined to use the parks because the parks were too restrictive on dogs. Our problem arises because we have two groups of park patrons with mutually exclusive desires. Please consider separating the groups rather than separating parks into areas. Rather than making new rules, dividing parks into different area uses, erecting fences or considering disallowing dogs in whole parks; consider that patrons seeking to walk their dogs must be selective. It seems generally fair to oblige patrons who not want to deal with dogs are similarly selective. If you had the availability of parks where dogs are prohibited, provide those patrons options. As tax payers, they are entitled to getting exactly what they want at some parks. If Purgatory Park, for example is declared a dog-friendly park, patrons wanting to avoid interactions with dogs could go to a different park. That is a park that dog owners currently are obliged to do. Separating groups rather than splitting a park would relieve the city of the burdens of enforcement. Second, his impression is that most pet owners consider their pet's members of their families, as he does; they are also members of the Minnetonka community. He is here to advocate for two members of his family, Leonardo and Diva who are prohibited from even participating in this meeting and barking for themselves. Requiring him to keep them on leashes when he goes to a park degrades his experience of walking in the park but it completely clobbers their experiences. He questioned what claim do Leonardo and Diva have on this services provided in the city of Minnetonka.

Curtis Henry, 1901 Vernon Drive South, Minnetonka. He has been using Purgatory Park for approximately 20-25 years and he has never seen a major conflict between dogs or between dogs and people. There will be skirmishes but dogs police themselves and take good care of their own. Purgatory Park is much more than a park, it is Minnetonka's town square. It is where he and his neighbors get together and talk politics, talk sports, exchange recipes and it is an incredible community. At the fenced dog parks like at Bryant Lake, you get aggressive dogs because there are people there who can't control their dogs and that is why they are in a fenced in area. A majority of the people at Purgatory Park control their dogs very well but once in a while a dog will get away. Yesterday, he was walking in Purgatory Park heading through the big meadow area towards the Excelsior Boulevard parking area where a group of four mentally handicapped young adults around 20-25 years old and their caretaker were coming his coming his direction. One of them was lagging probably 30-40 feet behind the group. Henry's golden retriever ran through the group and went to this kid's feet and sat down and looked up at him so he could pet her. The kid sat down in the mud and pet his dog. Afterwards, the caretaker told him that the kid was having a really bad day and his dog made the kid's day.

Mark Jaffe, 5069 West Mill Road, Minnetonka. He has been a Minnetonka resident since 2006 and raised two kids here. One kid is done with high school and the other one is still in school. The biggest thing for him about the dog issue at Purgatory Park is community;

they bring their dogs there daily. He recognizes so many faces in this room because it is a community and they have genuinely become friends. It's a huge part of their daily life and it is a huge part of their quality of life. He has really never seen any serious negative interactions between dogs and people. He would love for the park to stay the same. It would be helpful to have better signage so people know what parts are the off-leashed areas and what parts aren't. It really is a huge part of their daily life and a huge part of this community.

Benjamin Fabel, 15017 Cherry Lane, Minnetonka. To his knowledge, Purgatory Park is the only place to let your dog's run off-leash in Minnetonka. They could possibly go to Lone Lake Park and do the same thing and nobody could do anything based on the way the rules are written, but nobody does that. He has lived in Minnetonka since 1987 except for moving away for a little while. The entire time he has lived here, Purgatory Park has always been the place you can take your dog. There isn't any other place to take your dog in the city of Minnetonka to run. He understands that the rules have to change because the policy is not clear and people can't be cited for being irresponsible with their dogs. However, for almost 40 years it has been that way. It seems every 10-15 years somebody gets scared of the dogs and they don't want to go to that park anymore. Dog fights happen but he has never seen a human get injured even while breaking up a dog fight there. He has seen people get injured and it has happened to him at a fenced in dog park but never at Purgatory Park.

Jackie Engelhart, 16411 Temple Drive North, Minnetonka. She moved to Minnetonka five years ago and they got a dog during the pandemic and started taking their dog to Purgatory Park on almost a daily basis. One of the things that struck her when she first started going there was that it seemed like a really well designed system. People could walk their dog on-leash around the outside of the park and there was a place for dog's to be off-leash through the middle of the park and on unmaintained trails. The only times when problems may develop are when people are unaware of the rules, they choose to ignore the rules, or they don't think of the consequences of their actions. She was walking her dog last summer through the middle area and went down by the creek where the dogs like to swim. There was a young woman sitting there with a pink blanket spread out with snacks all over the blanket. She asked the woman if she was aware that she was in an area of the park where dogs can be off-leash because they may run up and eat her snacks. She said she was aware of that but that is where her and her friends want to have a picnic. In the meantime, her dog had come back out from swimming and left paw prints on her blanket. She wondered if this young woman took the survey if she would answer that she felt uncomfortable in the park or had a bad experience. There are consequences to choices and if you choose to picnic in an area where dogs are allowed off-leash, there may be a consequence that you don't like. She doesn't think any of the rules need to be changed, but you need to make people more aware of what the rules are and what the consequences are from their choices.

Ed Hassler, 5516 Sanibel Drive, Minnetonka. He and Renee moved to Minnetonka largely because of the very nice off-leash dog rules here. They moved to Sanibel Drive which is right across from Lone Lake Park. Somebody mentioned something about going to Lone Lake Park and their walking dogs. He used to do that without any problems because the south side was completely laced with informal trails. However, the mountain bike trails were built and then it became too dangerous. One of the dogs was almost hit by a mountain biker who was flying through there so they stopped going to Lone Lake Park. That was around five years ago and that is when they started going to Purgatory

Park. He hasn't seen any major skirmishes between or amongst dogs there. They chase each other and bark but he has never seen a full-fledged dog fight. He has seen one or two dogs leave the middle area and go out onto the east side on the crushed limestone trail but it is very seldom. It would be a shame to change anything about Purgatory Park. Towns just don't have town squares anymore but Purgatory Park is the de facto town square for the city of Minnetonka. It is fine if it comes down to having fencing in the park to separate the walkers on the peripheral crushed limestone trail; it would simply be a fence along the inside. There could be another bridge where it crosses Purgatory Creek with another little switch back to get up to where the hilly area is. Then you could put up signage telling people to please leash your dogs if you are going to cross the crushed limestone trail.

Samantha Woodford, 5901 Covington Court, Minnetonka. Her house backs up to Purgatory Park and she has the pleasure of looking out her back window every day and sees the hills, a bench and the back trails. One of the things that both her and her husband noted is how rarely they see non-dog people on those back trails. She works from home and has two sheep dogs and they love to look out the back windows too. She sees people with their dogs every day so she is really hopeful that those trails could be left to the dogs regardless of the decisions made. Someone mentioned earlier, their experience out there watching dogs sniff, smell and explore is as much a part of their experience as it is our experience with being able to see the animals and hear the birds. She doesn't feel like anything should change beyond maybe a little more signage of saying, "here is where you can have your dog off-leash, here is where they have to be on-leash." She has witnessed too many dogs off-leash on the on-leash trails and it does make her sad because that is the stem of this problem. It could hopefully make a huge difference if we could make it more publically known or more obvious of where your dogs must be on-leash.

Tom Campbell, 15109 Glendale Road, Minnetonka. It is a community out there for dogs and for people to gather. He liked the idea of a fence on the east side to kind of buffer the walking trail. As dog owners, they have to do some self-policing. He has encountered people breaking the rules and didn't do anything, but he is going to start doing that now.

Richard Thompson, 5220 Lee Way, Minnetonka. He personally logged about 500 hours in the park last year. It showed on his iPhone that he has about 9,000 steps per day. In 2023, he didn't see any incidents in the dog park area and he walks every day. He thinks they do a fairly good job of policing themselves. People who come into town often ask him what the rules are and he explains the rules to them. The signs at the park are vague and fairly unclear. We would have a lot more success if there were better fencing, especially on the east side, and better signage. Those people who come into town are also supporting our community businesses because they ask where they can eat or where the local brew pub is. A really important thing that people aren't realizing is our community is being supported by people who are coming here from different cities. He's talked to a lot of people who didn't know the park rules. Regular park users should be the eyes and ears of the park by sharing the park rules with people who are unaware.

Kathleen Totushek, 18301 Covington Road, Minnetonka. She lives a block away and growing up this was her neighbor's farm (the Huber's) that became Purgatory Park. She happened to know that five acres were donated to the city by Christine Reily a number of years ago; she had two Bernese mountain dogs and the reason she donated the land

was for the dogs. She is interested to know the original purchase of Huber's farm and she believes it was from Mezzenga. Back in the 1980's, the city wanted to make that into a golf course and at one time you wanted to put a road through it but these ideas were shot down because people want that area. All the animals are gone now, they used to have owls nesting there and they are no longer there. The hills are being mowed down and she realizes you have to do something about the buckthorn but she wonders why you can't just leave the park alone.

Greg Rossi, 17925 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka. He moved here from Illinois in 1991 and he had a three year old son at that time. He used to go to the park with his dog and his three year old son and they were raised in that park. There was never an incident with his infant son and all the dogs that were there. The types of people who take their animals to that park are the type that are involved and they love their dogs. They go through a lot of training to have their dogs be direct and listen to what they say. He understands all the situations and that sometimes someone can look at a dog and maybe say they are afraid of dogs and don't want to be around dogs. There is always the opportunity for that person to stay on the path and not go where the dogs are. He has never seen anything in the length of time he has lived here where dogs have done anything with anyone.

Ed Wons, 6016 Pinewood Lane, Minnetonka. He is a therapy dog team with his dog Truman and he wanted to speak on why this park is so important to them. He can walk his dog on a leash for five miles and that doesn't quite do it for him; he really does need to run. Before they go to a therapy dog session, he takes him to Purgatory Park and they toss the ball around for about a half hour. They usually will go there for a couple of hours before they go to wherever they are going and it's really important to them. Some of Ingraham's comments were on point. He thinks as dog owners, they probably need to police themselves better. He's heard people say, "Fluffy, Fluffy, Fluffy" and Fluffy doesn't pay any attention to them. It's a privilege to him to be able to take his dog off-leash but with that privilege comes responsibility of following the ordinance. He thinks clarifying the ordinance, better education and maybe better policing by them would go a long way.

Wendy Holland, 5537 County Road 101, Minnetonka. She has been in Minnetonka for five years. This meeting alone has brought awareness to herself. She is guilty of being one of those people who lets her dogs out when they pull into the parking lot. Both of her dogs are incredibly excited just coming down the road into the parking lot that she opens the doors and out they go. She will now make sure they are on their leashes and wait until they are on the trail to let them run. She didn't know that was of concern because she hasn't ever seen it be a problem. She walks there all the time and she personally has never seen any dogs cross over to the sidewalk. She can see where a fence would be beneficial on the east side. Her first dog was a Pekingese and he had back surgery and his back legs had to be in a harness. He was a very happy dog that liked to walk but she had to help him. They couldn't go in the middle off-leash area because she couldn't have other dogs play with him. They walked on the outside, which was beautiful and she could control him and the other dogs were on leashes. People who walk their dogs on the leashed side have their reasons for being there. She hoped that people who are making major decisions about this are dog lovers or dog people themselves. She thinks people's fears of dogs have more to do with those people rather than the actual dogs. Just like, she doesn't recommend how to parent because she doesn't have any children. She hopes whoever is making the decisions have a love for dogs because they become family, are beautiful animals and they are so excited to be there and play together. She

hopes you only do what is necessary and not anything beyond that for them and the dogs.

Shannon Riley, 18069 Tamarack Drive, Minnetonka. She's a 15 year resident of Minnetonka and user of Purgatory Park. She is following up on a woman who spoke earlier who mentioned that she knew the people who donated land to the park. Her understanding was that there are covenants that run with the land that was donated to the city. She would like an opportunity to review the titles that go with the land and those covenants. Her understanding is that the city has tried to enforce the leash rules before and they basically have a choice to either let the dogs run free unrestricted or they lose the land.

O'Dea said staff would have to do some research on those items.

Karen Hansen, 17001 Stodola Road, Minnetonka. She has lived there for 24 years and lives on the property that her father-in-law built. Since 1970, they have lived on Stodola Road and they use that park at least twice a day. She religiously leashes her dogs while walking on the ridge of the park because her neighbors requested that. Every time she crosses a paved or gravel path, she leashes her dogs. We have a memorial bench in the park for her son. She calls it Mezzenga hill but she doesn't know if that is really what the name of the hill is. They have a memorial bench on the hill and they have a note from the bench box. Some people have seen that bench to memorialize her son. It has been actually a really beautiful, sacred and healing experience. Not only for herself but for many people who write in this journal about how this park has been so healing for them.

They have planted two trees in the park and that money has gone to promote the park. She would find it absolutely devastating if the south end of the park would not give her access to walk up to her son's bench. She got a rescue dog during COVID who has been very challenging. Some of the people in this room have helped her train her dog who is a difficult, reactive dog that she didn't know how to deal with. The park has saved her dog and going in the off-leash area of the park has been so healing for her dog. If her dog is on a leash, she goes crazy until she walks her on the ridge in her backyard. She requested that you consider how this really is part of our community and how the people use the park. Today, she walked in the south end of the park and she only saw one person, nobody is there. Almost everyone there has dogs and they are respectful and kind, and it really develops community for us in Minnetonka.

Kim McNiff, 6825 West 192<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Eden Prairie. Her family moved to the suburbs two and a half years ago and she has three kids ages 6, 8 and 2. They have a rescue dog that they got during COVID. Her name is Penny and she is a Jack Russell terrier in a Lab color, so imagine her confusion when this really adorable yellow dog had a tremendous amount of energy. We quickly learned that she needed to run off-leash. She is the sweetest dog but she has to get out and Purgatory Park is her happy place. Many of people here have probably met her dog, she literally runs with a smile on her face the entire time she is at Purgatory Park. She runs as fast as she can with all of her friends and she is just elated. Not only has it been Penny's happy place but it has been her children's. She takes her children there all the time and they walk together, play in the sand, and they take off their shoes and get muddy. They catch crickets and snakes, and they play with the other dogs in the park. It has really been a sanctuary for her entire family.



Greg Johnson, 18810 Kingswood Terrace, Minnetonka. He has been going there for 10 years with his dogs and they love it. He echoes everybody's sentiment out there. It seems like we have a lot of folks here who want to keep things the way they are. The PowerPoint they saw about the surveys taken didn't show how many respondents there were. He thought maybe a lot of people here might've not had the opportunity to take the survey. He wondered how many people who use the park often didn't know about the survey. Did you have a representative sample enough to base your decisions on when making a major change? He's concerned that there wasn't a large enough sample. He would love to have the actual survey published so you can say how many people took the survey. He uses the park every day and he heard about the survey by word of mouth and then he struggled through the website to find it so he could take it. He knows of a lot of people who knew nothing about it so he is worried that there was not enough people and he thinks some of the results were skewed. There are some things that they can do better out there but the numbers don't jive with his experience as a daily user. It is hard for him to imagine that things are so dire and it's probably a fraction of what you saw there. He just wanted to say that he thinks the survey could've been a much broader survey and something that you push out to the audience rather than having people fight to find it.

Karen Hroma, 5910 Creek Point, Minnetonka. The pink area on the map is designated as the temporary off-leash area, but she wondered if all the other trails along the creek and by some of the ridges are being proposed not to be off-leash in the short-term.

Kumka said this figure for discussion purposes has the pink area as the off-leash area.

Hroma questioned if everything else would be off limits.

Kumka responded if this figure was recommended.

Hroma was very nervous to talk and she wanted to wait until the end, but she knows a lot of the people here and she thought everyone would be talking about this. She wanted to start with talking about those areas not designated in the pink. She goes to the pink area sometimes to meet with her community because it is a great gathering place and a good place for a lot of dogs. However, she spends about 95 percent of her time outside of that pink area. She believes keeping just that pink area creates more of what we can consider a traditional fenced-in area and that doesn't work for a dog like hers. Her dog Kylo, is a short-haired German pointer and he could almost care less about people or dogs; occasionally he will play with some dogs but for the most part he wants to be on the trails sniffing the grasses. She is hugely disappointed that this is even proposed because she doesn't think this works for the vast majority of the people in this room. She wanted to make sure they understood this as they make their comments. She agrees with a lot of the things that were said earlier. This is such a community and she's met people that she couldn't have known otherwise. She wanted to reiterate people being unsafe. She would love to see incidents, facts for example from people saying they were accosted. When she was on the walking on the trail with her friends, there were 20 high school cross-country runners and her nose felt accosted by what she smelled. That can mean a lot of different things so she really wants to move forward with facts. After reading the notes, listening to some of the board members, and especially just seeing this pink area, it really feels like there is some bias amongst the members. This is a small part of the overall project, but really the most contentious piece in probably the area that needs to have the most time spent. What she would love to see is a sub-

committee of stakeholders that are truly there all the time. Those on all sides, people that live on the east side, those that walk their dogs daily, or those who walk the perimeter. She thinks getting those people who really use it every day together in the same room to talk about solutions, would be much better than what has been proposed. She believes everything should stay the same just with better education. If that doesn't work, she would be open to have a paid permit with required training. The training doesn't have to be significant. It could be something as simple as watching a five minute video that talks about how to get your dog into the park safely, which trails are for off-leash dogs and trails where they need to be leashed. The few incidents as minor as they are, she believes are from people who just don't know the rules and aren't daily users. Just the education piece could go far.

Rick Leighton, 6379 Chatham Way, Eden Prairie. He has been going to this park since 1995 and has probably missed going only 30 days; he is on his fourth golden retriever. Your treasure, your gem is actually everything south of that bridge off Stodola Road and west up into the hills. There are different kinds of people who come to the park. There are the coffee drinkers, and there are a lot of people who gather in the pink area who just socialize and it's a beautiful thing. He's gone in that area many times but if you look at the marsh area along the creek, to the west of that, that is a beautiful spot to take your dog off-leash during the various times of the year. The dangerous areas are on the east side of your pink area from the parking lot down to near where it comes to the south bridge. The area described by everybody here is where he goes for his morning wake up. He just retired after 44 years and that is his wake up spot with his dog. He had a heart attack in 2015 and this is where he gets his hills in for his workout. Plus, he meets some of the best people that you have in this town, who essentially all get along. At the lake with a fenced-in dog park is in fact where he finds the worst dog behaviors because you have people who don't really want to take the time. The shocking thing about this is you are talking about this being the only off-leash area when in fact you could almost make a fence along one side of it and you will protect the people. His wife goes on Nextdoor and talks about things at Purgatory Park and he has only had three incidents since 1995 of somebody being uncomfortable. As a former attorney, everything reminds him of an association meeting.

Garrett Gardner, 2953 Fairchild Avenue, Minnetonka. He has been going there for about 25 years with a couple of dogs that weigh about 25 pounds between the two of them. They've never had a problem with any dog and if there would, it would be them. They socialize and it is a community there. There is a gal here that could name every dog there. He noticed that there is a lot of grey hairs in the crowd, and people should realize that some people can't really walk the dog the amount that the dog needs. If they would have them on a leash and walk around for a little bit, the poor dog would wonder what they are doing. To put them all in this small area might start to create the problems that you are talking about. It is nice to walk there but if you do this, he wonders who would go there. Most people have dogs there so it appears to him that it seems to be a solution in search of a problem.

Jennifer Johnson, 18810 Kingswood Terrace, Minnetonka. She agrees with everything that people have said about the community and the importance of the park, and also the importance for the dogs who are part of our families. She is concerned as well about all of those trails which are not maintained trails. As part of the city ordinance, those are all supposed to be available for off-leash dogs and she is concerned with when this temporary solution is going to take place and when is it going to stop. She feels like once

you have told somebody they can't go someplace anymore, it's easy for it to just go away permanently. She is wondering what it would take to change the city ordinance that talks about all of the parks in Minnetonka and it says where there are unmaintained trails, dogs can be off-leash. If you need to change that ordinance to reflect, except in Purgatory Park that is not the case anymore. The city ordinance would have to be specific to Purgatory Park taking it apart from all the other parks where the unmaintained trails are supposed to be available for off-leash use. She is also very concerned with where the land came from to begin with, and taking a look at those titles or deeds to understand what was the purpose. She has heard from a number of people, not just here tonight that the original purpose of land donation was to leave it for the dogs. She would like to find out more about that and understand how that would impact changes we are even considering.

Beth Harries, 3527 County Road 101, Minnetonka. One thing she wanted to urge you to consider is to really think about what the long-term plan is because a lot of them have been going to the park for a long time. Her dogs love it and they have the best time, but demand is growing and our population is growing. Across from where she lives, they have 26 additional units coming up. She feels like we already have people mentioning COVID dogs and she feels like we shouldn't be restricting this amenity, but thinking about how to grow this amenity because it is great and they love it so much. When they leave Purgatory Park in particular, they are probably going to Dukes which is a dog-friendly restaurant, or stopping at Chuck and Don's to get dog treats, or they are going to UnMapped to get a beer. She feels like we should think about how to become a destination for dog lovers and have this wonderful amenity instead of constricting them to this little area. In last month's meeting minutes, she read a couple comments about dogs spreading buckthorn and she actually doesn't think they do because the berries and seeds are poisonous to dogs so they don't eat them. However, the birds eat the berries and spread it. A lot of the issues that have already been brought up is at the junction points where the off-leash meets the on-leash. It is when you get to the park and when you are crossing the water. It would go a long way and reduce the incidents that you talked about if you could provide an alternative area to get to the dog park or to cross the water where you aren't joining the on-leash and off-leashed dogs.

Dan Wingert, 5420 Spring Lane, Minnetonka. He has lived there for five years. He is an emergency veterinarian so he hears about dog attacks. When we talk to owners, most of the dog attacks are actually like house mates. The number one most common dog attack wounds are actually house mates. Of course you have the ones where a dog is being walked on a leash and it's a dog problem where maybe a dog runs up and breaks off its leash or off its tie out and attacks the dog. When you have a fenced-in dog park, you have a smaller area with dogs and there is more resource guarding there so you are going to have higher incidents of dog attacks in that area. In addition, if you fence that area in, there will be more dogs there. He heard snickering comments about how this is a preserve and if you want to lose a preserve, that is how to do it right there. If you fence in that small area and all the dogs will be right there, it is going to become a feedlot. It is just going to be dirt, mud and feces, and you are going to transmit more diseases that way, instead of having dogs spread out over this entire area. Infectious diseases spread out when you have confined spaces. When we talk about kennel cough or bordetella, we ask owners if they went to a dog park. If they say yes, then we ask them what dog park because they want to know if another dog comes in with a cough, if they went to the same dog park, because it could be the same infectious disease. He has yet to hear one case from Purgatory Park. Generally if they get fenced into a smaller area, they are likely

going to have an incident of passing infectious diseases than in a more spread out area. He heard in some comment from before that wildlife diseases and off-leash dogs can transmit diseases back and forth like rabies and distemper. He's been a vet for eight years and he is emergency in a specialty hospital, one of three in Minnesota. We haven't even had one case of where they are even concerned about rabies and he has the latest polished study. The only case of rabies in dogs in 2020 was one for the entire year. The other thing is that they have vaccines for rabies and distemper and if your dog is not vaccinated, they shouldn't be out here anyways. That really should not be a concern. He can only speak about things that he knows about like dog bites and infectious diseases but this is going to make things worse. In the terms of dog attacks, dog wounds, infectious diseases, and also soil conservation, that is going to tear up that little lot if every dog is confined to that one space.

Andrew Jennings, 4330 Windwood Way, Minnetonka. He has been taking his dogs to Purgatory Park for the best part of 10 years on a daily basis. He has read in the minutes that dogs seem to be the cause of all problems in respect to whether this can possibly be true or not. He sees no real analysis so far as to whether what they have been blamed for has any substance to it. Someone recently mentioned that they are spreading buckthorn, which clearly they don't do. They are also eating the vegetation and if you are worried about eating vegetation, maybe you should deal with the deer population, not the dog population. He understands the comments about dogs going onto private property up in the Nantucket region in the north east corner of the park, it is unacceptable. They shouldn't do it but so far he sees no evidence and it is highly unlikely to him. The dog's off-leash up there were being exercised off-leash in the central area of the park. It is almost certainly people who are not leashing their dogs while exercising them on the maintained trail, which goes right past that property. Anybody bringing their dog into the off-leash area is considerable distance from those properties and the dogs would have to go through some of the densest undergrowth you've got out there. He doesn't see it happening. Nearly all the dogs are way to the south and west of those properties. He questioned if anybody has done any analysis to where these dogs are coming from. He thinks you need to do that before you come to a solution that doesn't affect the problem. Putting a fence down the east side would not influence that situation at all because the dogs are already on the outside of it. Before you go any further, you need to carefully examine the issue. The dogs have been accused of causing erosion in the park, but the dogs aren't causing erosion, we are. To be quite frank, dogs do not dig up these big mud patches that are around, that is from people congregating there. He thinks the dogs do very little damage to the park. If you want to restore the park to its original state, you are going to have to eliminate the people first; anything else is going to have little or no impact.

Eric Moreira, 5554 Nantucket Place, Minnetonka. Lives at one of the properties that backs up to the park. Some people here probably know him because he has walked his dog there from 2006-2018 in the off-leash areas all the way in the back part. He now has a dog that is on-leash like Ingraham was talking about. He has had many instances when walking out there. They have cataloged in a month for approximately one hour a day about 63 occurrences of an off-leash dog on the maintained trail. It's not an incident and nobody got hurt, but at the same time, if you have an ordinance in which law enforcement can't enforce, then it is up to the people to make sure their dogs don't interact with people on the main trail. If you look back at the February meeting in 2023, Community Service Officer Deeann Bloom came in and spoke at length about the issues they have with enforcing these things. The back part they are talking about is very nice

and he does walk there without his dog. He can't take his dog there but it is very nice to walk and he walks back there with his nine year old. This is a great park everybody obviously loves it. He understands about the dog park thing as well. When you have a fence, it does turn into a feedlot like the other person mentioned. His dog is reactive but he just keeps walking. There has been plenty of times where he goes out there and like someone mentioned earlier, he hears, "Fluffy, Fluffy" and you know that Fluffy isn't listening. That's not a big deal but he gets that there are people who do think it is a big deal because they go up to them. His daughter has been jumped on by a dog and she is perfectly fine, but they are also dog people. This came up back in 2008 and he was at that meeting as well and thinks something needs to be addressed mostly from an ordinance standpoint. Don't take away everything from people but make it so the community service officers can actually do their job correctly.

Cory Miller, 3527 County Road 101, Minnetonka. Questioned how many total parks or outdoor sanctioned areas there are in Minnetonka. Let's just say we have 50. So there is one park, and one area that they can bring their dogs to be off-leash. He finds it unbelievable that they are even having a meeting and talking about abolishing the one park that they can take their dog's off-leash because a certain segment of people feel uncomfortable about it. They have 49 other parks to go to if they feel uncomfortable but they don't have anywhere else to go so he finds it ridiculous that we are introducing this small zone for off-leash when this is their only place they can go. The point of city hall is to represent the majority of people using the resources. To him, he doesn't see anyone here that has said anything dissenting or advocating about negative reasons for the off-leash dog park. He hopes city hall is listening and seeing the representation and the majority voicing their opinions about how strongly they feel about having an off-leash area because everyone else has 49 other parks to go to, but they don't.

Ingraham mentioned that our ordinance is such that you can go to any park in Minnetonka with unmaintained areas with your dog off-leash. You can go to Lone Lake Park, Big Willow Park or any other park where there is unmaintained areas and dogs can be off-leash but not on maintained park areas like athletic fields. Purgatory Park is not the only place you can take your dog.

Pamela Layton, 5538 Nantucket Place, Minnetonka. She is one of the people who has dogs in her yard from the center section, typically. They come out of the area where we are hearing this idea that a dog is under voice control. She loves dogs and she thinks it's kind of comical about a dog who sees a rabbit or hears another dog, and there is someone not paying a great amount of attention and that dog takes off when there is something of interest outside that zone. They have a lot of bird feeders and wildlife in their yard and dogs are in her yard three to five times a week and to her, that is significant. Regarding the comment made that people can go to other parks; she has lived there for 33 years and Purgatory Park is her park too. She is pretty passionate about that. As the number of dogs has increased, they have seen no pheasants, foxes, otters, salamanders, possums and brown thrashers. A lot of information she heard tonight is new to her. She feels like we are working very hard to restore this park and if we are going to allow it to become a dog park, then she wondered why are we spending time doing that. She questioned why all these people are working so hard on something that won't be able to be maintained over time. People have been asked whether or not they want it. When you say that you are the majority, she considers herself to be part of a different majority.

Dane Kromer lives in Minnetonka but is a little uncomfortable giving his address right now because he probably won't be getting the applause that the other speakers have gotten but he hopes people can be respectful. During the 25 years that he and his wife have lived in Minnetonka, they have always had at least one large dog, but typically they've had two dogs, usually either German short-hairs or greyhounds. In the past five years, they've fostered over 20 retiring greyhounds and they love their dogs. However, they recognize that not everyone in our community loves our dogs as much as they do. We take our dogs on frequent walks and they are always on six foot non-retractable leashes. He believes that most dog owners in Minnetonka feel the same way as they do based on what they see in their neighborhood because they also keep their pets on a leash. Dogs do not need to be walked or run off-leash to be happy and healthy. Off-leash dogs are detrimental to habitat restoration and wildlife. Most importantly, off-leash dogs do not mix well with other park users, and in fact, they discourage many residents from using the parks. It is interesting to hear from somebody that said 99 percent of the park users are here or are off-leash dog users; that should be clear evidence that something needs to be done. You need everybody to be able to use the parks. The current situation is in direct conflict with the POST Plan mission to provide a welcoming, comprehensive and balanced system of high-quality parks. This is because off-leash dogs do not create a welcoming environment. A permanent fenced dog area at Purgatory Park or wherever staff determines it should be makes sense. He believes a portion of the area currently occupied by the informal off-leash dog park, south of the parking lot would best meet this need. Unfortunately, with regards to the leash law in Minnetonka, dog issues at Purgatory Park are not unique. If it is solved there, it will become worse elsewhere. Too many Minnetonka residents do not use our parks because they have all become off-leash parks. We frequently ride our bikes on the maintained trails through Purgatory Park because it is part of the larger loop system. They've had countless interactions with off-leash dogs. They've been attacked twice by off-leashed dogs and these attacks have resulted in injuries to their pets. Therefore, the park board also needs to recommend that the city adopts a mandatory six foot leash law throughout Minnetonka. This action would align with most other cities in our area and would reduce the number of people coming to Purgatory Park and other parks from neighboring cities to take advantage of our lax leash law.

Joe Henry, 15001 Highland Lane, Minnetonka. He wanted to bring up what the other guy was talking about, bicycles. He thinks bicycles are a bigger danger in Purgatory Park than the off-leash dogs. They are coming up that hill way too fast and the e-bikes don't take any consideration for pedestrians. He doesn't take his dog off-leash there but he's here because he sees all the good interactions that people have there and all the people he's met while having his dog on a leash. Being uncomfortable about something is not an excuse to ban it. He didn't serve in the military for nine years to go to Iraq so we can say, "I'm uncomfortable". He's uncomfortable around bicycles, should we ban them. Keep saying we can go anyplace with our dogs off-leash but everybody's congregating at this one park, let's save it.

Cindy Eyden, 16824 Excelsior Boulevard, Minnetonka. There is a large group of people here who clearly love their dogs and she sees them in the park playing a lot. She spends time doing the restoration in the park. She cares about this park a lot and she been in this park since its inception. She has seen that it also has become quite degraded by overuse. At one point, the dogs were not an issue but it has gotten to be so many dogs. Certainly, COVID was a wonderful time for people to congregate there with their dogs and she could see that. She is one of the people who is not comfortable whether that

seems like it's an OK thing or not. She is not comfortable with off-leash dogs because of her experiences. She has had dogs charge her and she has had dogs hackles up. She's had to yell at their owners to call them off and they were telling her, "oh don't worry, they are friendly" while their dog has their hackles up, their teeth bared and they are charging her. She doesn't feel safe and people are not walking on the unmaintained trails as much because there are dog's off-leash and that is exactly where she had that experience. She lives very close to Purgatory Park and it's a park she has gone to many times. She loves the nature there and somebody referred to how the wildlife is not there anymore. Dogs have a huge impact on wildlife and she is very saddened not to have the wildlife there. She thinks we need to find a balance and she would hope that we don't just give the whole park over to the dogs. It has become degraded and we are hoping to restore it. The title of this park is not the Purgatory Dog Park, the title is a Community Park and Reserve. Preserves indicate that it also is protected area for wildlife, and off-leash dogs and wildlife do not mix.

Paul Quinn Davis, 4200 Winchester Court, Minnetonka. He was thinking we can all live together and it has to be a park for everybody. He is a proponent of the dog park and he agrees with the portals on the map. We have problems with the north and the south at the bridge of the portal. He agrees with the earlier comment about expanding maybe to the off-road trails to the west along the water side. He owned a house in South Minneapolis from 1981-1996 and he used to go running south of Lake of the Isles, but you can't take your dog's there anymore. It's bike paths with fences on both sides of the rail line and then they have a really bad fenced-in dog area. It's just a plot of mud and it's a piece of junk; he would never go in there with all the filth, dog poop and dirt on his boots. He doesn't think the dogs would have a very good time. He has been coming to Purgatory Park a lot, like three to five times a week for the last year and a half since he moved back here from Los Angeles. When you are talking about the problems at this park, he doesn't see that there are undoable problems for them to get all of what they want in this park. You have a gold mine in this park and it's one of the most beautiful parks he has ever been in. He supports having dogs in the park. He questioned if there was a larger area south of the bridge in the park. He agrees that nobody should be threatened by a dog but at the same time, you are talking about the park being overrun. It's overrun in a percentage of the park, it's not the entire park being overrun. When you talk about fences, he thinks there are ways to do that with landscaping. You don't have to have a fence, but if you do, he hopes you would do a wooden fence. He has seen an alarming rise of plastic fences going up all around Minnetonka. That is a Segway to potentially another suggestion of materiality and sustainability and people using natural materials and not putting up white plastic fences everywhere. On the east side, that could be mitigated with berm or tree plantings because that is a very close area and people are kind of coming in contact with each other. He thinks his dog loving friends probably want that whole river but maybe we can have the east side of the river and somebody else can have the west side of the river so we all have places to go. He thinks it's good that you are pushing the dog areas away from the two real intersection areas at the south and the north. There should be some sort of ceremonial kind of way to enter that kind of makes it feel like a natural gateway so that they are on their leashes.

Kris Kopicshke, 4528 Saddlewood Drive, Minnetonka. She doesn't think this should be banned so she is really grateful to have this opportunity to talk. She has damage to her leg and she can't run, can't run on a treadmill and she doesn't like to go to a club or anything like that. She has the opportunity to take her dogs and walk on the trails; she has met so many wonderful people there. Her specialist has said that it is really good for

her leg. She is doing this all by herself so if you take that away, she has to find another place to take her dogs. She wanted to comment on the wildlife because just last week she saw three deer. A couple of us were on what they call "owl watch" so they look and listen for where the owls are and they have seen a saw-whet owl and there are barred owls. They look for nature and they have their dogs under control so she really hopes you take that into consideration. There is so much passion here on both sides. Someone said it really well in that we are used to doing this, and if you take it away from us then you are taking them out of their routine and their dog's routine. She prays that you keep it the same and have better signage. She runs into people who come and visit because they hear it is a dog park but they don't know the rules. Help us, help them. When she interacts with people who don't have dogs, she always asks if they are ok with dogs. If they say, no, then she calls them over. She isn't trying to say she is the best at it because her dogs have selective listening but she has also seen kids out there with selective listening. She thinks we just have to weigh all of that and take it into consideration.

John Wallace, 1001 Horn Drive, Minnetonka. He has been a Minnetonka resident since 1963. He just wanted to reference some of these people talking about wildlife. First, he volunteers for the city and the restoration projects, but he also owns over 800 acres. Part of wildlife is that you have to have habitat. If you have a 20 acre park, that is not habitat, and that is why you don't have pheasants and a lot of other wildlife. If you are worried about adversity for wildlife, feral cats present a bigger threat than dogs do. He wanted to stand up and present a contrary view.

Heather Holm, 15327 Lake Shore Avenue, Minnetonka. She wanted to support some of the things that people have already said and things the park board has already discussed. She thinks one of the immediate issues is that the leash ordinance is unenforceable and that really creates a precarious situation in the park for park users. She really wants you to consider public safety as a whole when you gather and process all this feedback. She supports the short-term proposal by staff, in addition to, the temporary fence on the east side. It will really help with some of those dogs coming from the middle area onto the maintained trail. She frequently volunteers in the park and does restoration work. Today she was in the park for three hours and she observed several dogs on the main trail off-leash. She just wanted to say that it is a concern, but not necessarily for her. She absolutely loves dogs and has had a dog all her life up until three years ago. Her husband and her say they are between dogs; meaning we will eventually get another dog. In addition to the temporary fence, she really wants you to think about the existing ordinance language and what we can do in the short-term to address some of the concerns raised about safety. In addition to defining clearly what is a maintained area and not a maintained area. There has been some folks saying maintained trails but the ordinance language is maintained area. She would like to see signs posted that say, "maintained area, dogs must be leashed." This would help everybody better to find where dogs are allowed to be off-leash and where they should be leashed in the park. The really big thing to address here is public safety. She doesn't feel comfortable as a member of the community if we have a certain percentage of people who don't feel safe. She really thinks that is an immediate problem that we need to solve as a community. As a long-term restoration volunteer, she is putting in hundreds of hours into this park trying to restore the ecology and really making it a beautiful space for all park visitors to enjoy. She is really looking forward to reading the draft master plan that staff will be publishing sometime this month. She is also looking forward to that plan having a vision of a really defined trail system and clear guidelines for park visitors.



Which, will ensure that we no longer have continued environmental degradation, we have really defined ways and rules of how we expect people to come to the park, visit the park, and enjoy the park without impacting the natural resources. She firmly believes they can do both. She wants people to be in the park enjoying it but she doesn't want to put in so much time as a volunteer if our efforts were end game.

Maryna Chowhan, 4509 Woodhill Road, Minnetonka. She has been a resident of Minnetonka for about 25 years or more. This park is important for both residents and dog residents. What we need to consider as a short-term concept maybe is even shorter term by putting up signs. The people that she meets at Purgatory Park monitors themselves. If somebody's dog is not behaving, people will comment and kind of make sure they behave. If your dog isn't fixed, you are told you shouldn't be here because your dog isn't fixed. Put up signs so people who enter that park know where they should have their dog leashed and where they shouldn't. Put up signs at the entrances and exits and then couple times around where the path is paved. Put up signs and give people the benefit of the doubt. If they know what they should be doing, they will do it.

Tim Bjella, 2115 Morton Road, Minnetonka. He has been a resident of Minnetonka and has been walking his dogs for 30 years here. Purgatory Park is a treasure and there is nothing like it in all of Minnesota. If you go to the rest of the country, it is hard to find something that is even comparable to this. What he is hearing from people here isn't that they don't want to restrict this park, they want to open up more parks and have more dog access, not less. They don't want to be restricted more, they want to have places where they can run their dogs because they need to run and play with other dogs. It is getting narrower and narrower every year where they can do that. Having been there for 30 years, he hasn't seen degradation of the park that some people have claimed and that we are losing wildlife. They don't appear to be losing vegetation and they have a little bit more erosion. They would like to see less restrictions and more parks for the dog lovers and everybody else. If there are a few people who are uncomfortable, he gets that, but we can't please everybody and make everything happen for people. We have 49 other parks that people can go to. Let's make a few more like Purgatory Park.

Pete Brown, 5023 Mayview Road, Minnetonka. He agrees with most of the comments from people here. He recently retired a year ago October and his retirement present was two dogs. He is 69 years old and going to be 70 and these dogs get him out of the house in the winter time. It is a gem but he also wants to be devil's advocate for the people who live there too. He is sure these people on the east side have had many troubles. They are there for a couple of hours a day, two or three days a week, and these people live there so he is sure they have seen it. A compromise seems to be that fence along the east side. His dog goes to the creek and walks up and down it the whole way. If he can't get to the creek, what other park is there like that? Please leave the park alone. Somebody mentioned a fee and he paid money for Three Rivers at Eden Prairie and he goes there. His dogs are ok inside a fenced park but he likes it better at the other one. Have a fee for the conservation people, the volunteers, to help them buy more trees, seeds or whatever they need. Put a fee there because he would pay it to do that because this is a gem and one of the only two that he knows of. He'll go to Lone Lake Park or the other one on Minnetonka Boulevard and see if there are off-road trails for dogs that aren't maintained but he doesn't really know what other parks there are. He has met a community there; their dogs sniff each other and play, and the owners talk and move on. He has never seen a fight there but he is sure there has been some because dogs do fight. His dog has chased deer and he had to run after them, but he

scolded them and put them on a leash so they know they can't be doing that. It is the owner's problem and not the dog's. Please don't penalize our dogs for what they aren't doing right. He also hopes you don't mind if he sees you when your dog is off-leash on a paved place because he will start talking, please yell at him too if he is out of line. We will do our part, please leave the park alone.

Melanie Wolfe, 5739 Eden Prairie Road, Minnetonka. She has been a Minnetonka resident pretty much her whole life and is at Purgatory Park every day with her dog. She has a pitbull mix and she is really proud that she can be a breed advocate. She can bring him there, he is well trained and she put a ton of work into him. She absolutely loves Purgatory Park. She asked to review the stats because for her, it looked like it was about 50/50 in that the true majority of the survey says that most people feel safe. She wondered why the short-term concept is to restrict the dog's freedom to run around off-leash if the majority feels safe. She thinks the sample size is important but we are 50/50 saying the off-leash park rules should not change. Another slide mentioned things that discourage park usage and off-leash dogs was listed but 53 percent feel comfortable with that. She wondered why the short-term plan has restrictions. She thinks the solution would be education and better signage. It's also important to remember that when we are going to a park, whether it is with kids or with dogs, there is inherent risk with everything. If you are going into an off-leash area, you should know that and know that there is risk in that. Dogs are like kids and they are not perfect either. Hopefully the owners can take responsibility for that. She supports no changes.

Robert Bodeau has become a huge fan of Purgatory Park and the dogs. He spent most of his career as an attorney for one of the big companies in town and it was a wonderful career but he had to spend 30 years with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). MS as you may or may not know is a demyelinating disease that causes your brain to misfire and it is a nasty disease. In any event, that has forced him out of the practice of law, in fact, it forced him out of any sort of work. That kind of forced him to spend time with his dog. He spent time walking his dog at Purgatory Park and they would walk and go down to the creek. After a while, he came to the belief that most of the other people walking at the park were almost always trying to figure something out in their life. It wasn't always disease but he has met tons of people that have been diagnosed with some terrible disease. They are out walking their dog or maybe not walking their dog, but they are just trying to figure out that they have this disease and what the next step is. People use Purgatory Park for that and he would caution you to not do anything that would hurt that aspect of the park. He would also caution you not to do anything that would hurt other positive aspects of the park. Before he chose Purgatory Park as a place to walk, they did an informal survey of all the parks in Minnetonka. They literally went to Big Willow Park for a week to see what kind of people go there. They did the same thing with Lone Lake Park and they learned that park has the most traffic. Go to Lone Lake Park if you want to meet people, don't go there if you want to be alone.

Steve Schmirler, 5215 Forest Road, Minnetonka. He came in here thinking that there are no changes that should be made to the park. However, after hearing all the ideas that have come up through this session, there are a number of stellar ideas. For example, having a video training or putting up landscaping on the east side, that would make a big difference. He agrees with the rest.

Walick closed public input.

Walick commented that we've heard a lot of passionate comments and he thanked everyone who came up and spoke. You had a lot of great things to say and a lot of great information. He was taking notes as people were speaking to respect everything you had said. One of the big things that stood out for him is the sense of community amongst you. We aren't making any decisions tonight regarding ordinances, rules to the park, or leash laws but this is just to give city staff more information as they put together the Purgatory Park Master Plan. That is definitely something that should be considered as we move on.

Hanley feels like she needs to process this. She thought it was interesting hearing comments about fenced dog parks and how there is increased negative dog interactions and it makes dogs stressed. Also, that the poorly behaved dogs go to those places. She doesn't know what the whole story is, however, all the surrounding cities have fenced dog parks.

Jacobs said we are lucky we are in Minnetonka because of everyone that came tonight and he appreciated their feedback. Based on a lot of passionate feedback, it is clear that this area might not be enough or might not be sufficient. He thinks we need to establish much better signage first. As he looks at the short-term recommendations, we need to figure out what it means and what does voice control mean. We need to establish clear signage for the park and decide if this is our off-leash park. Saying that people shouldn't come here doesn't work for him because our parks are for everybody. However, if you say this is officially our off-leash dog park, it gives people the option to decide; it doesn't displace anyone that we don't want them there. With respect to the people who live there, he doesn't know if a fence is the right idea to go, that is more of a longer term. First step is recommending that we have stronger signage, we have a training of some sort, encourage dog owners who are there to spread the knowledge and enforce the park themselves, and police that. He thinks they can and he thinks they are right. He believes that most of the people here are responsible dog owners. Three years ago, the park board was on a park tour and a guy walked by them with his dog next to him on the leash. Two minutes later the dog went sprinting back the other way not on the leash, then 10 minutes later the guy came by and asked them if they have seen his dog. That guy is not here tonight but he might be the one percent that is causing an issue. He suggests making it really clear that this is our off-leash dog park, having stronger signs saying where the off-leash area ends, and having people monitor the park and telling others that their dog is out of line and what they need to do. Also, having a defined area that says where it begins so that dogs are not loose in the parking lot. He thinks they should recommend all of those things but also continue to explore. This is obviously a well-valued park for dogs for what it is and he doesn't think we need to change it. With that being said, we have to have some laws to abide by because right now they are not clear enough. Putting a leash on your dog does not make it a good dog. He has a reactive dog because when his dog was a 10 week old puppy, he was attacked while he was on a leash by a dog not on a leash so it doesn't make him safe because he was on a leash. When his daughter was two, she was knocked down by a dog, it wasn't her fault and they were on a trail. Having a clearer sense of rules and what they mean and having people who really abide by the rules is important. They've heard some negative feedback where people don't think the rules apply to them. Some people assume that when you see the people who live on the park without a dog, that they hate dogs but they actually have a dog and they are just saying please do not let your dog's run through their yard. He appreciates all the feedback and thinks some of the ideas were great and he really likes them.

Hanley was uncertain whether it's possible to spend a lot of time and money restoring habitat with people and dogs walking through that restored area. There would at a very minimum need to be some areas that were off-limits so that they can regenerate and the new plants can grow. Or else, we should just abandon Purgatory Park completely and not do any restoration. She's not sure if that is the right answer though.

Jacobs said one of the points somewhere in here was identifying areas that need restoration. He thinks they all want the park to look beautiful. He questioned how they could find areas that meshes restoring areas that need restoration with having dogs around. He asked if signs could be put up saying something like that area is under restoration and we need to keep the dogs out of here right now. Then to also have people respect that. Without trying it, we don't know and without any rules or restrictions, we also don't know.

Hanley added that if there isn't some maintenance done that it will be nothing but buckthorn in 15 years.

Ingraham stated he has made a lot of comments in the earlier meetings but he will repeat a couple of them here for the folks who weren't at those. He has been passionate about Purgatory Park and has spent a lot of time there. It's interesting that there was 20 percent who showed up in the city survey that felt uncomfortable and then 40 percent showed up on the survey for Purgatory Park. For those interested in all those materials, they are online. The POST Plan study is online and the respondent levels, all that stuff is online for the city so you can access it. He thinks the conflict area is always for people on the maintained trails. When he had the nonreactive dogs and took them into the center section, you don't see conflict amongst the dogs when they are running loose in that area. Dogs are being dogs and there might be a little scuffle but he has never experienced or seen anything. What you see are the examples from the people who live on Nantucket, who clearly have dogs from the center crossing over the path and going through their yards. Someone off Stodola mentioned her experience with her neighbor's dog being off-leash and running into her backyard and into her house, chasing her dog and attacking her and her dog; there was a police report filed. Things do happen but it is dogs being in the areas they are not supposed to be in. It's not that the dogs are fighting where they can be, it's when they intercept. He likes the idea of a barrier particularly in that bottom third of the pink area, where the maintained trail and the informal trail in the center are really close. It's unacceptable to think your dog isn't going to go that 20 feet up onto that little trail if a dog is there. When you exit the bottom of the area to cross the creek, to go up the hill is another area where a lot of times people may not leash their dog to go up the hill and you get an intersection there. Personally, having a reactive dog, where they had to restrict themselves to the exterior perimeter was where he experienced people walking their dogs' off-leash and telling him not to worry because their dog is friendly. His dog isn't friendly, so they should worry. People also don't care if you tell them that it is a \$130 ticket, they just say they will pay it. That is the kind of stuff that he experienced and he's sure he isn't the only one. In the center, you may not hear that but there are people walking their dogs' off-leash on that perimeter trail where they are not supposed and they are being disrespectful to other residents and our community service officers. That is a problem to him. His favorite part of the park is the area south of the ridge, and from the ridge down. It is the green area on the big map that has all the informal trails, the ridge, and the woods that doesn't really show up on the map because it is just off the bottom. He doesn't really agree with that being not available because

most of the people in that area are expecting dogs to be off-leash and you aren't really running into packs of dogs. Dogs tend to be running, sniffing and exploring and it is a great area and it's the most unique part of the park to him. He respects the sense of community of all the people who go because they are like members who meet there regularly. He used to know a lot of the dogs who went there but many of them have since moved on. The plan that is laid out is trying to strike that balance with having people feel safe in the park but also having people be able to exercise their dogs. Hopefully we can come up with a solution that people can respect. The most critical thing is the ordinance and how it is written. It really needs to be clarified, otherwise, the way it is written now, you can kind of do anything you want as long as you aren't in the maintained space. Holm brought up an interesting point that the actual ordinance doesn't say maintained trails, it says maintained areas. If it does say maintained areas, then it is even more of a grey area because we have a lot of areas that are off-leash or undeveloped that are actually being maintained for restoration purposes.

Beyersdorf appreciated hearing everybody's stories and she understands how passionate everyone is. She has grown up with dogs her whole life so she gets it. She doesn't personally have dogs but she understands what it is like to live with people who love dogs. She has always taught her kids that we should look at all sides of an issue. We don't just look at it from our perspective, so she hopes that everybody here tries to have the ability to look at it from the other side when they can. She really agrees that we need to make better signs for the park. Not only should there be clearer signs, but there should also be more signs in all areas of the park. She really appreciates hearing from dog owners saying that they will be better at policing their own dogs and policing other dog owners and taking responsibility. Personal responsibility is at the center of this as everybody needs to be taking ownership of this. If you care that much about your dogs, and you care this much about this park, than everybody should be taking part in figuring out how to come up with a solution for it. We are representatives of the city but we don't make the final decisions. They are given input from the city staff and they really appreciate their hard work on this issue. We will take everybody's information into consideration and they will take that back and create their revised draft for us to look at. Hearing everybody's side of this has been really enlightening and she really appreciates hearing what everybody had to say.

Kumka thanked everyone so much. He is hearing some very clear feedback about signage and suggesting in the draft master plan that we review the ordinance more closely. He also would like to get your feedback on sort of the inverse of this figure for the draft master plan. He would like to know where signage would relate to known areas of conflict and where we would potentially want to make it clear to folks that dogs are discouraged to be off-leashed in these areas. Highlighting the key trails, the parking areas, some of these sort of known potential tension areas. Rather than just this discreet blob, he was hearing that the southern part of the park was so wonderful. Rather than having two blobs, sort of an inverse of this figure that would highlight sort of the discreet tension areas that leashing would be required, something to that effect.

Beyersdorf said if she understands Kumka correctly, instead of our signage saying, "this is an off-leash area" saying, "this is where your dog needs to be on a leash". Then it tells people that their dog needs to be on a leash from the parking lot to the off-leash area. Then around the park you would have other signs that say, "This is an on-leash area" and it would make it very clear.

Kumka said that is what he is suggesting for this draft master plan.

Ingraham mentioned that signage at Meadow Park came up at their last meeting and that person sent them a picture. One interesting thing is if you look at the beige signs like when you exit the parking lot to go in, it talks about maintained/unmaintained. It is really referring to that part in the center, it's not referring to the trail because it implies the trail because it talks about maintained areas. If you look at Meadow Park, it is part of the loop corridor system, which he thinks the perimeter of Purgatory Park might be part of. That sign is really clear. It says, "On the trail, you have to have your dog on a six foot leash or less." Those kinds of signs might be useful to have around the perimeter because it not only would be enforced for people using the perimeter but for people on the center moving out. In a sense, you almost have in addition to having more signs but signs that kind of specify what the trail rules are and what is the possible interior rules.

Beyersdorf commented that it is basically saying that you are now entering an on-leash area, you must now put your dog on a leash.

Ingraham replied yes, because you are on the maintained trails.

Kumka commented that the signage out there is sorely outdated, and the trail mapping is looking pretty homely these days. That is going to be addressed so this would give us an opportunity to have more thoughtful, tasteful and appropriate signs related to all nature park use, not just the dogs.

Beyersdorf thought by looking at the map that there were four signs. There are two signs at each entrance but she thinks you need more signs.

Ingraham said there are more signs around the perimeter right now. There are about eight signs that he can think of that are around the perimeter. There are signs at Stodola which is a classic example because you naturally want to let your dog off-leash there, especially if you are going to go up the hill into the back. It is ambiguous at times and he comes back to the fact that our ordinance is very difficult to interpret.

Hanley said one interesting suggestion was to have a stakeholder group to see if they could come up with some other solutions. Is there time for that?

Kumka said it's not likely in advance of the draft master plan. We did talk about an overall city dog strategy. It says dog park strategy but perhaps a sub-committee of dog advocates could be part of a process related to the broader application of an updated ordinance or dog's throughout the system. That could be a result of the draft master plan.

Hanley said maybe a group of dog advocates, restoration community, plus people who are a little dog phobic so we are trying to include everybody instead of segments.

Jacobs echoed that idea. It's kind of like the mountain bike trail has trail bosses and some people who are willing to work with the restoration and make sure their interests are hear. He also suggested researching to see if there was a covenant or anything originally with the land document.

Kumka inquired early on with the city right-of-way and property coordinator related to the Riley parcel that was donated to the city in 2011. She informed me that there are no land use restrictions on the deed or within the council report related to the donation of that land. That is the Riley property and not the former Mezzenga property. He doesn't have any documents related to that parcel at this point.

Hanley asked if the Riley property was marked on any of the maps that they received.

Ingraham said it is in the south area.

Kumka said it's not marked on any of the maps because it is part of the park. It is south of the map and south of the oak ridge. There is still an asphalt driveway that enters the park there.

Jacobs requested looking into the Mezzenga property.

## **8. Park Board Member Reports**

Beyersdorf reminded everyone about the winter farmer's market this Saturday, February 10.

Ingraham was down by what he calls the city loop which is by the water treatment plant, it's where the trail goes to the creek. The interpretation signs there are really good.

Natural Resources Manager Leslie Yetka said those are new signs.

Ingraham said they are really good signs and it made him curious if there was an update on when the Lone Lake signs are going in.

Yetka responded that the signs you saw there were signs that we started to develop for Lone Lake. We were coordinating somewhat with the Friends of Lone Lake Park. One of the things that came out of that was a desire to wait until that park gets master planned. If you recall in the CIP, the large community parks will go through a master planning process, much like Purgatory Park. We don't anticipate that they will be as complicated as Purgatory Park. When Lone Lake comes, she thinks it is in 2025 or 2026. That will be the best time to look at interpretive signs or interpretive features. It is a little bit on hold.

Ingraham wanted to compliment the level of restoration again between the volunteers, city staff and contractors. Purgatory Park is hugely changed. Big Willow and Hilloway Parks look great and there is just a lot of good work and he wanted to compliment everyone. The ridge in Purgatory Park now has been sort of overhauled. If you haven't been to Wood-Rill in Wayzata, you need to go there. He thought Dayton's donated it, and it is naturally canopied without buckthorn. When you go there it is like wow that is what Purgatory should've looked like. Now, you can see that Purgatory Park has the chance to get there.

Hanley said she had the chance to walk through Meadow Park. It was really mushy but it was a nice walk and she could see all the work that's being done along the marsh. That's a lot of work and it will be great when it is reseeded.

## 9. Information Items

### 2023 Gray's Bay Marina Summary

O'Dea gave the report.

### 2023 Athletic Field Use Summary

O'Dea gave the report.

Ingraham asked if the capital piece was restricted to field use or if it's an overall capital plan.

O'Dea said he will have to report back. He assumes we would put it back towards the fields but he will double check.

Hanley mentioned that it looks like a lot of hours but she wondered if there are fields that aren't being used that could be allocated elsewhere.

O'Dea said we have the two non-dedicated fields that are Gro Tonka and Oberlin that are kind of more multi-use. The dedicated ones are specific to baseball or softball. The overall usage is really good. We actually had another community group ask if we have anymore baseball fields available. Unfortunately, a lot of the times the answer is no or we have a few hours here on a Sunday. In general, our field usage is really high. Obviously it is nicer to have fields that can accommodate multiple sports but we do have some that are dedicated for certain sports.

Hanley said it looks like the Glen Lake softball fields are hardly being used and wondered if that was true.

O'Dea said it looks like the hours, yes. He would have to follow up with Community Facilities Superintendent Mike Pavelka on the reason why but it looks like those fields have not been used the last three years.

Hanley thought they have been used because she lives sort of by there.

O'Dea said he will follow up with that answer.

Hanley said we seem to need space for stuff here and there like skate parks or dog parks so she was just asking.

## 10. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

O'Dea gave the report.

Hanley questioned the timeline about the master plan and giving the public 30 days to comment. If the plan will be floated out there for people in late February, and they will be seeing it at the park board meeting on March 6, it doesn't seem like 30 days.

Kumka said the presentation to you folks would happen in the midst of that open comment period. Where he would walk you through the contents of the document and all the areas of



concern. That would be during that open comment period. Then during the May 1 meeting, he would present the final version based on your feedback and he would also have a summary of comments from the public that were delivered during that 30 day period. He would be delivering another draft of the plan at that point that would be open to comment and review.

Hanley asked if there was still time to tweak things after the May meeting.

Kumka said it is up to the park board. He needs to set some discreet timelines for us and our consultants, but understanding that if we feel the discussion needs to carry on or more reviews are necessary, than we will take that direction.

Ingraham said given some of the interest in the deeding of the original park and any other purchases or donations in that area. He thinks it would be really good at a minimum to have an update at the next meeting from legal or whomever. He was trying to figure out when Purgatory even became a park and it's mysterious to him. He thinks it was in the 1980's which is actually later than he thought but it would be helpful.

Kumka can task our planning and city staff associated with that area to dig up the answers.

## **11. Adjournment**

Jacobs moved, Hanley seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathy Kline*

Kathy Kline  
Recreation Administrative Coordinator

**Minnetonka Park Board 7A  
Meeting of March 6, 2024**

<b>Subject:</b>	Natural Resources Division's 2024 Outreach, Education and Engagement Plan
<b>Park Board related goal:</b>	To Protect Natural Resources and Open Spaces
<b>Brief Description:</b>	Review the Natural Resources Division's outreach, education and engagement plan

**Background**

The Minnetonka Park Board has adopted goals and objectives that pertain to natural resources. These include creating awareness of our natural environment and supporting educational strategies.

The Park Board reviews topics and approves projects related to natural resources. These include the stewardship plan and restoration activities undertaken in the park system, updates on volunteer activities, emerald ash borer preparedness and reforestation of public land, water resource monitoring and protection initiatives on public land and review of outreach and education programs relating to natural resources.

**Summary**

Attached is a review of natural resources outreach, education and engagement work in 2023 and plans for 2024. It describes ongoing and new education, outreach and engagement efforts, such as publications, multimedia offerings, trainings and initiatives (many conducted with partner organizations), and technical assistance.

Staff use the *Minnetonka Memo* and electronic newsletter system as primary outreach tools. The e-bulletin currently reaches more than 6,600 subscribers, and the average engagement rate is 40 percent. Social media is used to promote events and engage residents on seasonal themes. Highway billboards inform passing motorists about broad goals for natural resource protection.

Infographics, storymaps and other multimedia materials are developed to help the public learn about natural resources wherever they are. In-person offerings – including tabling, trainings, workshops and walkshops – are also key parts of the engagement effort; many use hybrid formats that appeal to participants and some include technical assistance. Outreach and engagement of youth and other new or underrepresented audiences are also prioritized.

**Recommended Park Board Action**

Provide feedback to staff regarding the programmed items included in this report.

**Attachments:**

1. Natural Resource Education and Outreach Plan for 2024



# NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION

## Outreach, Education & Engagement Plan

The Natural Resources division works to inform and engage residents and other stakeholders about key environmental issues, increase their connection to the natural world, and empower them to take action.

### PRIORITIES & THEMES

- **Community resilience**  
Strategies that increase our individual and collective ability to prepare for, recover from and thrive after challenges posed by climate change and other sources of environmental stress
- **Stormwater management and water quality protection**  
Reducing runoff by limiting irrigation and employing best practices to increase infiltration, recapture and reuse; mitigate the impacts of water pollutants (road salt, pet waste, sediment, organic waste and more) and illicit discharge on surface water and groundwater (MS4)
- **Water efficiency**  
Promoting mindful use of water, primarily outdoors through technology and behaviors but also indoors and from indirect sources such as food production and manufacturing
- **Tree diversity, planting and protection**  
Emphasizing the benefits of trees—ecological, environmental, economic and aesthetic—and how to enhance those values on public and private property, especially where canopy cover is low
- **Diverse, resilient habitat and ecological function**  
Using diverse, native and resilient plants (often in place of turf or invasive species) to provide food and habitat for beneficial insects that pollinate plants, control pests, and support the food web including songbirds and other wildlife
- **Soil health and condition**  
Revealing the intersections between soil and water quality, plant health and diversity, and other aspects of a highly functional home landscape and natural environment
- **Invasive species identification, control and prevention**  
Early identification and control of non-native plants and other species that become invasive, causing environmental and economic damage and sometimes impacting human health
- **Diversity, equity and inclusion**  
Working to provide all Minnetonkans access to the information, resources, strategies and opportunities they need to build resilience and enjoy our natural areas

### AUDIENCES & PARTNERS

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Residents</li><li>● Visitors</li><li>● Businesses and workers</li><li>● School districts</li><li>● City staff</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Watershed districts</li><li>● Clean Water MN</li><li>● State and county agencies</li><li>● Ridgedale Library</li><li>● MetroBlooms &amp; Blue Thumb</li><li>● Minnetonka Bird Club</li><li>● Local businesses</li></ul> | <p><b>Growing relationships with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Youth and educators</li><li>● Underrepresented populations</li></ul> |
|---|---|--|

# 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

## Publications

- **Minnetonka Memo**—monthly articles, event notices, [annual four-page insert](#) (about lawn reduction)
- **Thrive/business bulletin**—salt reduction; illicit discharge detection and elimination
- **E-bulletin**—monthly Natural Resources mailing has more than 6,400 subscribers—a 90 percent increase over the past year
- **Handouts and infographics**—addressing common resident concerns and division priorities, including seasonal care of trees, pet waste reduction, soil health, and pollinator protection
- **Social media**—used for promotion of events, programs and seasonal themes (such as the Trees are for Everyone campaign during Arbor Month)
- **Interpretive signage**—four city-designed panels installed in Civic Center Park and at The Marsh, plus Spanish-language signs purchased from outside organization
- **Highway billboards**—15 seasonal messages run on eight billboards citywide

## Workshops, walkshops and presentations

- Buckthorn
- Garlic Mustard
- Forester's tree sale preview
- Resilient Yards (with Blue Thumb)
- Planting for Pollinators (with Ridgedale Library)
- Building Healthy Soils (with Ridgedale Library)
- Urban Soils: Challenges & Opportunities
- Minnetonka Bird Club: Food Webs
- Senior Garden Club: Food webs and plants
- Cargill: Less Lawn; Soil Health; Salt Reduction

## For youth & family audiences:

- Minnetonka High School: Bats 101; Conserving Pollinator Habitat
- Wayzata High School: Bats 101
- Plants & Pollinators kids' camp (with Recreation)
- Monarch & Pollinator Awareness Month (with Ridgedale Library): author reading; movie screening; arts & crafts
- Farmers Market (5)
- Spooktacular

## Video and multimedia

- [Winning the Battle Against Buckthorn learning module](#) (released March 2023—almost 1,000 views to date)
- [Blue Thumb learning modules](#): Resilient Yards; Turf Alternatives

## Initiatives and programs

- **Stormwater initiatives**: Adopt-a-Drain, Citizen Salt Watch; Smart Salting training for contractors and property managers; elementary school stormwater education (delivered by Bolton & Menck, with service learning activities from city staff with students in Minnetonka High School's Natural Resources Club)
- **Resilient Minnetonka program**: provides individualized education, technical assistance and incentives—including site consultations, buckthorn pickup, native plant sale with discount, and rebate—to build resilience on private property (192 participants, compared to 37 in 2022)
- [Mayors' Monarch Pledge](#): achieved third year as a Monarch Champion city

## Volunteer program

- Increased individual participation by 57 percent and total hours by 39 percent
- Expanded youth involvement and neighborhood participation
- Held a successful volunteer appreciation event
- Continued to improve tracking, reporting, education and communication

# 2024 GOALS

## Publications

- **Minnetonka Memo**—monthly articles, event notices, April insert (about wetlands)
- **Thrive/business bulletin**—at least one MS4-related article with a business focus
- **E-bulletin**—monthly articles and event notices; continue to build subscribership
- **Handouts and infographics**—salt reduction; general water quality protection
- **Social media**—use as appropriate for promotion of events, programs and seasonal themes
- **Website**—reorganize and brand Natural Resources websection, providing clear information and easier access
- **Interpretive signage**—work with Natural Resources Club on tree trek signage for Groveland Elementary and Minnetonka High School campuses
- **Highway billboards**—begin updating all billboard graphics

## Workshops, walkshops and presentations

- Buckthorn
- Garlic Mustard
- Forester's tree sale preview
- Marvelous Monarchs (for West Metro Master Naturalists—April 11)
- Resilient Yards (with Blue Thumb—April 18)
- Earth Day Fair (with Ridgedale Library—April 20)
- Douglas Tallamy—Bringing Nature Home (with Wild Ones Prairie Edge—May 15), with follow-up virtual book group (June 20) and in-person Urban Habitat workshop (with Ridgedale Library—July 11)
- Bird walks (with Minnetonka Bird Club)
- Bat walkshops (for Wild Ones Prairie Edge and city staff—September)
- Farmers Market (monthly in summer and once in winter)
- Others upon request or inspiration

## Video and multimedia

- New garlic mustard learning module
- Updates to buckthorn learning module
- Offer [Blue Thumb learning modules](#): Resilient Yards; Turf Alternatives

## Initiatives and programs

- **Stormwater initiatives**: continue ongoing offerings
- **Resilient Minnetonka program**: work with watershed districts to increase capacity and engage more residents to take steps for resilience on private property
- **Mayors' Monarch Pledge**: maintain leadership role in the program, including creating a community science program and building community partnerships

## Volunteer program

- Establish new volunteer roles: Tree steward, Community steward, Community liaison
- Maintain or increase individual participation and hours
- Continue to expand youth involvement and connection with neighbors and community groups
- Find meaningful ways to acknowledge individual volunteers and groups
- Continue to improve tracking, reporting, education and communication

**Minnetonka Park Board 7B  
Meeting of March 6, 2024**

<b>Subject:</b>	Purgatory Park Master Planning – Draft Master Plan
<b>Park Board related goal:</b>	To protect renew and maintain parks and trails
<b>Park Board related objectives:</b>	Review conditions of park facilities, fields, amenities and natural resources to inform park investment plan projects and priorities.
<b>Brief Description:</b>	Presentation of the Draft Purgatory Park Master Plan

**Background**

The Minnetonka City Council approved the updated Parks, Open Space and Trail (POST) System Plan at its April 25, 2022 meeting. The plan was developed over the course of 14 months with consultation from the Park Board and community engagement through extensive public outreach, surveys and feedback.

[Parks, Open Space and Trail \(POST\) System Plan](#)

The POST Plan provides a 15-to-20-year road map for planning and implementing park improvements. The plan helps the park board, city council and city staff prioritize park improvements and ensure that changes and investments to parks, trails and open spaces continue to serve the needs of the entire community. It offers guiding principles, recommendations, priorities and tools to help the city, its residents and partners keep Minnetonka’s parks, open space and trail system relevant and functional into the future. Key recommendations from the POST Plan include creating comprehensive master plans for all major community parks, beginning with Purgatory Park.

Purgatory Park Master Planning began in 2023. City staff contracted with Bolton & Menk and their team of park planners, landscape architects, outreach specialists, and engineers to engage with residents and use those findings to create a comprehensive master plan outlining future park improvements to pursue.

**Summary**

The first stage of master planning began in the spring of 2023. Through the summer, the team collected input from residents and park users to inform future recommendations.

Working with Bolton & Menk, City Staff including Communications staff, helped create an Outreach and Engagement Plan for the Purgatory Park Master Planning Process. This plan outlines a series of engagement opportunities ranging from formal in-person events, “pop-ups” in the park, and a thorough online engagement process including surveys. The City hosted a project website on Minnetonka Matters where project updates are being listed. Residents can sign up for project updates.

More information available here:

[Purgatory Park Master Plan | Minnetonka Matters](#)

At the December 7, 2023 Park Board meeting, staff presented major themes and summary pages of public feedback data to receive preliminary feedback prior to the draft master plan. Topics highlighted include reasons for coming to the park, frequency of

visits, distance travelled to the park, and preferences regarding potential changes to the park including off-leash dogs. In response to the Park Board discussion, staff presented a preliminary strategies document for further feedback at the January 3, 2024 meeting. The presentation was repeated at the February 7, 2024 meeting and public comments were received.

After the February 7, 2024 Park Board meeting, the city received two requests for data about possible deed restrictions related to land within Purgatory Park. Per the City Attorney, Purgatory Park is comprised of 20 separate parcels of record. Of the 20 parcels, one was dedicated by plat as a park and may only be used for park purposes. Another parcel was conveyed to the city for public park or recreational purposes. There were no restrictions on any of the parcels that would either prohibit or require the city to allow off-leash dogs on the property.

Recently, the draft master plan has been made available to the public for additional public comment. The presentation at the March 6, 2024 meeting will cover a summary of all the key elements included in the draft master plan and will allow for Park Board feedback for each.

A summary of the public feedback and a final draft plan based on public and Park Board comments will be presented at the May 1, 2024 meeting.

This master plan will outline short-term and long-term recommendations for potential park improvements and any future park improvements will be incorporated into future Capital Improvement Plans.

**Recommended Park Board Action**

Receive presentation and provide feedback to Staff

**Attachments**

Purgatory Park Master Plan – Draft Master Plan

CITY OF MINNETONKA

# PURGATORY PARK MASTER PLAN



Planning Our Parks  
PURGATORY PARK



02/29/2024



Real People. Real Solutions.





# PURGATORY PARK MASTER PLAN

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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City of Minnetonka

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### IN COLLABORATION WITH:

Minnetonka City Staff

### WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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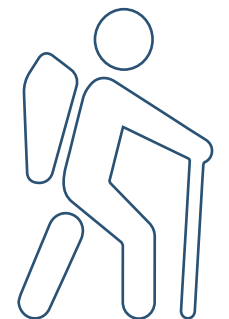
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# 01

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Located in the southwest corner of Minnetonka near the intersection of Excelsior Blvd and County Road 101, Purgatory Park's 155 acres of native prairie, dense woodlands and extensive wetlands make it the largest of the city's five community parks. Expansive open spaces and over two miles of primary trails in the park offer scenic views of the park's various ecological areas and provide a much-needed respite from the hustle-and-bustle of the Twin Cities Metro Area. In addition to its primary trails, Purgatory Park's many informal footpaths and iconic site features (e.g., the Red Barn) provide an opportunity for visitors to explore and fully immerse themselves in nature without having to leave the metro area. For many years, the park has served as one of the primary social hubs of the surrounding area.

On any given day, no matter the weather, it is quite likely there will be a number of friendly park visitors with their loved ones or furry friends on the trails or in open spaces. However, Purgatory Park is considered a community preserve, which means that special emphasis is placed on protecting and restoring the park's natural features (e.g., native prairies, woodlands, etc.). The city's staff and volunteers work arduously to protect and preserve its natural features through various restoration efforts, including controlled burns, the removal of invasive plants, seeding and planting, and forestry mowing.



# THE BIG PICTURE

Developing a master plan for Purgatory Park was identified as a priority in the comprehensive Minnetonka Parks, Open Space, and Trail Plan (POST Plan) completed in 2022. This master plan is conceived of as a tool for city staff and administrators to use in evaluating and standardizing park features, developing realistic budgets, and utilizing resources effectively to make improvements to the park that align with its nature preserve classification while catering to the needs of all park users.

Historically, Purgatory Park has not had a master plan in place to guide decision making and provide direction for park improvements and operations. Additionally, the city does not have a dedicated “parks department” to manage their facilities, track expenses and allocate resources specifically for the upkeep of the park system. These resources have been managed by public works staff with the budgeting and tracking

of park-related expenses combined with those of other public works projects and maintenance.

This plan is rooted in community input and considers both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of Purgatory Park. Extensive community outreach was undertaken to maximize stakeholder engagement in the process, providing citizens an opportunity to voice their needs, desires, and concerns around resource management and recreation in this well-loved, and well-used park. This robust engagement effort included a project website, community-wide online survey, a well-attended open house to kickoff the project, and a series of ‘pop-up’ events designed to intercept residents and park users around the community and within the park itself. Full documentation of community feedback received is included in the appendix of this document.

A handful of key topics are considered in this plan, both in documenting existing conditions and proposing recommendations for improvement. These include:

- Site Circulation and Access
- Dogs in the Park
- The Red Barn Site
- Natural Resource Management
- Programming and Facilities
- Partnerships

Another key theme addressed in the plan recommendations section is the idea of ‘sense of place’, or the intrinsic characteristics of Purgatory Park that make it unique and valued within the Minnetonka Park System. This plan strives to balance the varied concerns of all these topics to protect the integrity of this well-loved nature preserve park for generations to come.

# 02

## INTRODUCTION

Situated in the heart of Minnetonka, Purgatory Park - with its natural beauty and open spaces - is an urban oasis in the community and the greater Twin Cities Metro Area. At 155 acres in size, Purgatory Park offers visitors and residents plenty of space to immerse themselves in nature, where local flora and fauna flourish. For many years, the park's wooded trails and landscapes have provided a tranquil escape from the busyness of city life; it's no surprise that the park now functions as one of the community's primary social hubs.

Although the park's name may raise some eyebrows, the experience it offers is far from purgatorial; many describe the park as a haven for contemplation and connection with nature and appreciate the work the city has done to conserve and protect it. Whether one is using the park's primary or informal trails, observing local wildlife in the woodlands, or looking for a quiet spot to reflect, Purgatory Park is the place to be.

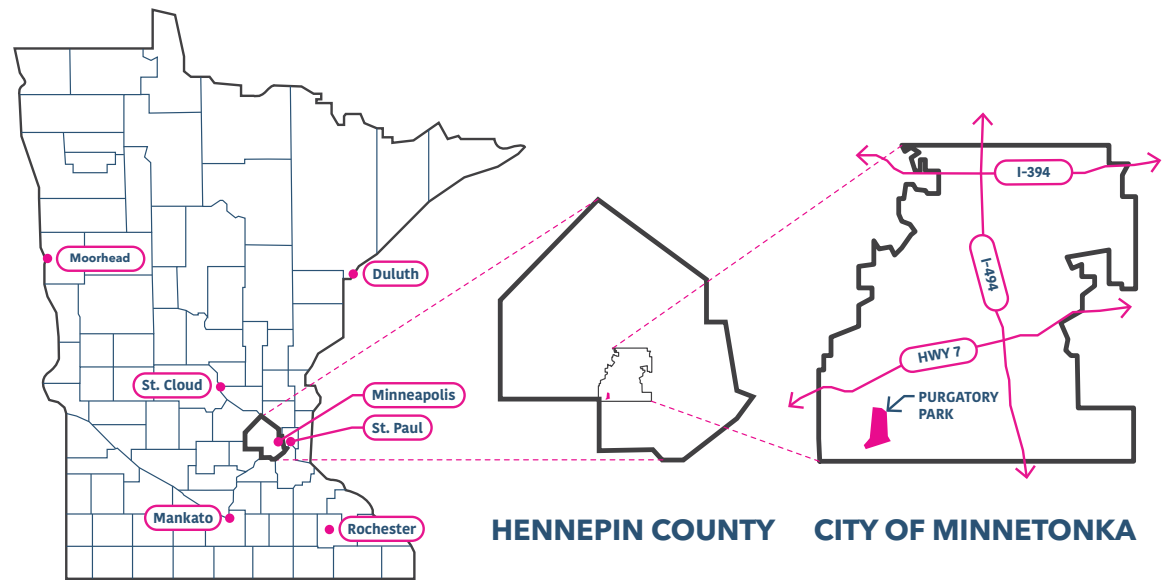




# PURGATORY PARK - IN CONTEXT

Purgatory Park is the largest of five community parks in the city of Minnetonka. Minnetonka is a western suburb of the Twin Cities with a population of 52,544 people (according to the most recent U.S. Census data). The city is located within Hennepin County and is home to many major corporate headquarters, including UnitedHealth Group, Carlson Companies and Cargill. Although Minnetonka is currently known for its thriving mix of diverse businesses, the land that makes up Minnetonka was once sacred land for the Dakota tribes, who used the area's dense woods, open prairies and many lakes for hunting and fishing. Today, more than 20% of Minnetonka's land area is made up of wetlands and lakes, and the city has over 50 parks, 100 miles of trails, and 1,000 acres of natural public open spaces that offer residents and visitors many active and passive recreation opportunities to take advantage of.

Since its creation and development, the city of Minnetonka has placed strong emphasis on protecting and preserving its natural resources, which have come to define the community's distinct character. However, over the years, extensive agricultural use and urbanization have greatly altered the city's natural resources by eliminating certain plant and animals species and degrading natural habitats for flora and fauna. Fortunately, city staff and volunteers have put an immense



amount of time and energy into stopping the degradation of the city's natural resources through various restoration efforts.

As mentioned, Purgatory Park, named after Purgatory Creek, is located within Minnetonka, just south of Hwy 7 and west of I-494. The park is surrounded on three sides by residential developments. Purgatory Park serves a special purpose in the community as a nature preserve, which is a protected area of importance for flora and fauna that is preserved and managed for conservation purposes. In Purgatory Park, visitors are allowed to use trails for walking, hiking and biking. They can also watch birds and wildlife, take photos and videos of the park's natural features, and go shoeshoeing. However,

similar to other city parks, visitors are not allowed to camp or create campfires, collect plants, animals, rocks or fossils, or host any organized athletic events. With its many acres of native prairie, dense woodlands and extensive wetlands, Purgatory Park is an important asset and regional destination in the community. The park falls within an area of wet prairie and oak savanna ecological communities and is therefore appropriately maintained by the city's staff, as well as local volunteers. As recommended in the city's Parks, Open Space and Trail (POST) System Plan, which supports and upholds the goals and objectives of the NRMP, conducting a master plan study for Purgatory Park (as well as other community parks) is an important next step for the city to take.

# THE PURPOSE

This master plan has been developed for use by the city to evaluate potential improvements to Purgatory Park, develop planning-level cost estimates of probable design and construction costs for those potential improvements, and identify and align resources effectively to make improvements to the park that caters to the needs of the community. During the production of the city's POST System Plan, a number of priorities for the city's park system were established. The highest priority issues/themes outlined in the POST System Plan include:

- Rediscovering the creek (and other important bodies of water)
- Connecting to nature
- Gathering and community building
- High-quality natural areas
- Environmental sustainability and resiliency
- Connections to parks and trails

Another priority for the city that was outlined in the POST System Plan was the development of master plans for each of the city's community parks, including Purgatory Park. This plan seeks to take into consideration the key takeaways and recommendations from the POST System Plan, as well as the city's Natural Resources Master Plan and other past planning efforts, to inform design decisions. Similar to the

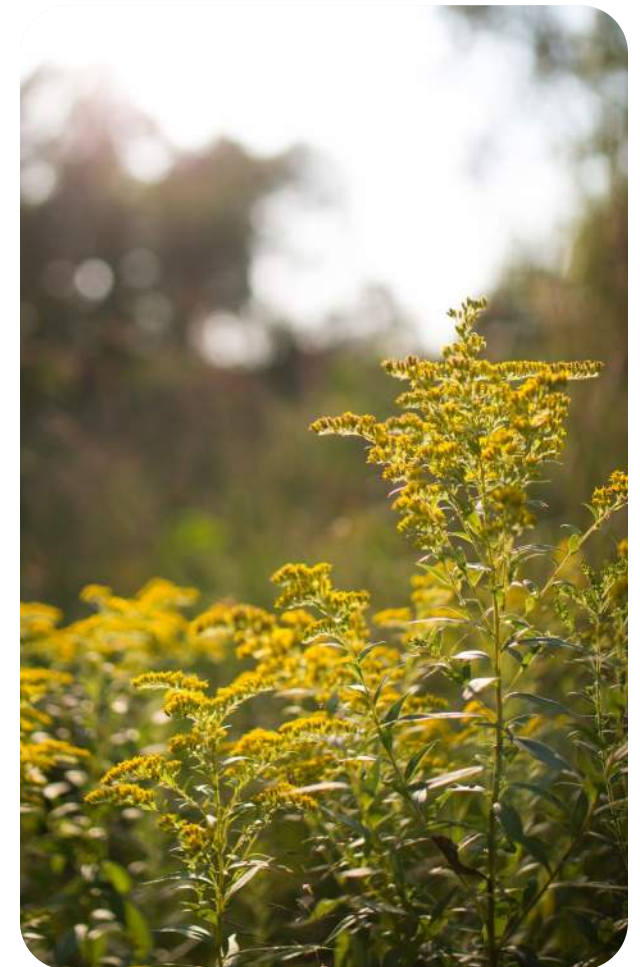
POST System Plan and Natural Resources Master Plan, the development of this plan is rooted in community input and considers both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the Minnetonka park system and the city's natural resources.

During the development of this plan, special attention and focus was placed on the following topics:

- Sense of Place
- Dogs in the Park
- Trails
- Park Access
- Natural Resources
- and the Red Barn Site

Each of the topics listed above plays an important role in the functionality and success of Purgatory Park. Using these topics/themes as a starting point, the ultimate goal of this plan is to identify and prioritize opportunities for improvement in Purgatory Park and to develop design standards for the park and future improvements. Taking into consideration the ever-evolving trends of park amenities and nature preserves, the recommendations and design standards included in this report will assist the city in making decisions pertaining to Purgatory Park's facilities' improvements. By adopting this plan, the city can proceed with progressing with initiatives that align with

the recommendations herein, whenever practical. Similarly, evaluating and tracking the progress toward implementation will allow the city to evaluate when it is time for an update and/or to revisit certain goals.



# THE PROCESS

## PHASE ONE: LAUNCH



- Includes tasks related to project kickoff, stakeholder analysis, existing conditions inventory and analysis

## PHASE TWO: ENGAGE



- Includes tasks related to building consensus for the project vision, design guidelines, and implementation strategies

## PHASE THREE: PLAN



- Includes production of the draft master plan documents, formal review, and finalizing deliverables

The city of Minnetonka administered a 12-month planning process that began with an in-depth inventory and analysis of the amenities and facilities within Purgatory Park. This visual analysis documented park amenities, site furnishings, and notable site features, in addition to the general condition of these items at each location. Accessibility was evaluated by means of noting missing sidewalks or trails, pedestrian ramps, general condition of the pavement and noting any obstacles or physical barriers present.

Discussions with city staff were facilitated by the consultant team to better understand the history of park improvements and evaluate the existing conditions of each park throughout the community. Several community engagement events, including pop-up events both in and outside of Purgatory Park, gave the planning team insight into how community members and visitors use the park, as well as relevant information about changes affecting the city and park's natural resources over the years.

Early in the planning process, community members were initially engaged through a community-wide input survey distributed online. Committee members circulated the survey over a 15 week period resulting in participation from over 600 community members. Input received through this

process was evaluated by the project team to establish a list of recommendation priorities for each topic/theme pertaining to the park.

In order to provide a technically sound, user-friendly, and sustainable planning document for Purgatory Park, the planning team, made up of landscape architects and community engagement specialists, had many discussions with city staff and in-house technical experts to find solutions to issues affecting the park's functionality, natural resources and aesthetic beauty.

The planning team's approach to this document is comprised of three overarching (and overlapping) phases, which are meant to provide a framework for a robust and resonant community engagement effort that is well integrated into the planning and design process. A summary of the key steps in the planning process are outlined to the right:

# THE TIMELINE



# RELATED PLANNING STUDIES

## PLANNING EFFORTS

There are a handful of past planning efforts that were considered during the creation of this report. Key plans, reports and standards that helped guide the development of this report, including the city's **Natural Resources Master Plan; Parks, Open Space and Trails (POST) System Plan; Capital Improvement Plan; Purgatory Park Habitat Restoration and Maintenance Plan**, and the **Exterior Sign Design & Standards**.

For the past few years, the city's staff has engaged in a long restoration process within the park - turning farmland back into prairie, performing controlled burns and eliminating invasive species (like buckthorn) that continue to choke out the native oaks, maples and basswoods in the woodland areas. These restoration efforts have been guided by the Purgatory Park Habitat Restoration and Maintenance Plan, which identifies target ecological communities for restoration and outlines a plan for invasive species control, planting strategies with species lists, cost estimates, continued maintenance steps for each ecological community in the park, and a phasing strategy with recommendations for prioritizing areas. Additionally, the city just revised their park signage standards and will update existing signage accordingly.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM RELATED PLANNING STUDIES

- **Natural Resources Master Plan**
    - » Improve the quality of habitat in Minnetonka parks and open spaces
    - » Create more resilient and sustainable ecological systems while still providing benefits to the community
    - » Manage and improve the community forest ecosystem on both public and private lands, including natural woodlands and the altered ecosystem of the traditional managed landscape
    - » Engage the public to support ecological restoration and management on public property
    - » Protect, diversify and expand the existing high quality ecological communities
  - **Capital Improvement Program (2024-2028)**
    - » Promote community health and wellness by providing a diversity of quality facilities and parks, open spaces and trails
    - » Promote equity and inclusion by supporting all users, celebrating diversity and embracing inclusiveness
    - » Support excellence and innovation by providing a variety of innovative, new or improved active and passive park amenities and programs
  - **POST System Plan**
    - » Advance environmental sustainability and resiliency by supporting environmental stewardship and conservation
    - » Provide connections to parks, trails and programs by improving accessibility to park features and reducing physical and financial barriers to entry
- \* Meeting legal mandates regarding public health and safety
  - \* Maintaining and improving efficiency of existing systems by coordinating with related projects
  - \* Expanding existing and new services, as well as community betterment
  - \* Promoting sustainability and natural resources
- » Identifies \$140 million in potential capital improvements

# HOW TO USE THE PLAN

This master plan is organized into seven sections, which include:

- **01: Executive Summary**
- **02: Introduction**
- **03: Inventory + Analysis**
- **04: Community Engagement**
- **05: Plan Recommendations**
- **06: Design Standards**
- **07: Appendix**

The contents of this park master plan are meant to provide a 15 to 20-year road map for planning and implementing park improvements in Purgatory Park. It also includes park inventory data, community input summary, analysis of all collected data, and recommendations and implementation strategies for Purgatory Park's open spaces, natural resources and trails. Also included are descriptions of why the recommendations found herein are relevant to the growth of Purgatory Park's amenities and facilities.

Each section of this report is color-coded for easy navigation. The sections that follow cover community demographics and background information, an in-depth inventory and analysis process, community engagement information, improvement recommendations for future implementation, and a series of design standards for park managers to utilize in future park projects.

## **01: Executive Summary**

- » Provides an overview of the plan's vision, guiding principles, goals, and objectives

## **02: Introduction**

- » Dives into important background information about Minnetonka, Purgatory Park, and the planning process and outcomes

## **03: Inventory + Analysis**

- » Provides an overview of the park's open spaces, natural resources and trails, as well as their current condition
- » Highlights issues with the park and trail system and discusses opportunities for improvement

## **04: Community Engagement**

- » Highlights important information from in-person meetings, pop-up events, and the community survey

## **05: Plan Recommendations**

- » Establishes improvement recommendations, goals, and initiatives to achieve the mission and vision of the master plan
- » Discusses implementation priorities and phasing strategies

## **06: Design Standards**

- » Establishes the recommendations for standard materials, construction details and policy language to be used as a user manual for park managers to consult on

## **07: Appendix**

- » Includes online community survey results

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# 03

## INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

An inventory of Purgatory Park's existing facilities, and its natural resources was completed in April of 2023. This on-site review of the park's existing features aided in establishing an understanding of the park's amenities, the condition of its various facilities, and identifying deficiencies within the park. Throughout the planning process, the project team referenced this information to make informed decisions and recommendations about the future of Purgatory Park.

A thorough analysis of information gathered during the on-site view, was combined with feedback collected through a robust community engagement process and meetings with City staff, to identify issues and opportunities that should be considered as future park improvements are undertaken. For more information on the recommendations derived from this analysis, see Section 5.



# OVERVIEW

The Purgatory Park master planning process began in March 2023. A critical step in this process was on site review and investigation of the park to better understand its existing conditions, issues and opportunities. Project team members conducted an on-site review with city staff on April 10, 2023. During this site visit, investigation focused on a variety of key topics related to the park, including **site circulation and park access**, **dogs in the park**, the iconic **Red Barn**, **natural resources and vegetative management**, **programming and facilities**, and **existing and potential future partnerships** in the community.

This section of the report documents on-site observations and discussions related to the existing condition of park features, as well as an analysis of the data gathered during the inventory.

## 1. SITE CIRCULATION + PARK ACCESS

There are many ways to access and move through Purgatory Park, whether it be by foot, by bike, or by car. In this section, we will discuss existing pedestrian circulation, vehicular circulation, park access points and connections, and parking in the park.

## 2. DOGS IN THE PARK

Purgatory Park has become a popular location for off-leash dog-walking over the years. However, issues with off-leash dogs in the park warrants further consideration of the topic. In this section, we will highlight the current policies and practices surrounding dogs and some of the existing issues and opportunities related to off-leash dogs in the park.

## 3. THE RED BARN

The Red Barn has always been an iconic landmark at the edge of Purgatory Park. With the city's recent acquisition of this property, new opportunities and uses for the Red Barn site will need to be investigated. This section will address the existing condition and structural issues with the building, as well as potential alternate uses for the Red Barn site.

## 4. NATURAL RESOURCES + VEGETATIVE MANAGEMENT

Over the last several years, the Minnetonka Natural Resources staff and park volunteers have worked hard to develop the Purgatory Park Habitat Restoration and Maintenance Plan, which provides a restoration vision for the park. In this section, we will touch on the existing ecology of the area, target plant communities and active restoration areas/zones, wildlife and habitat, and other projects (related to natural resources) to consider.

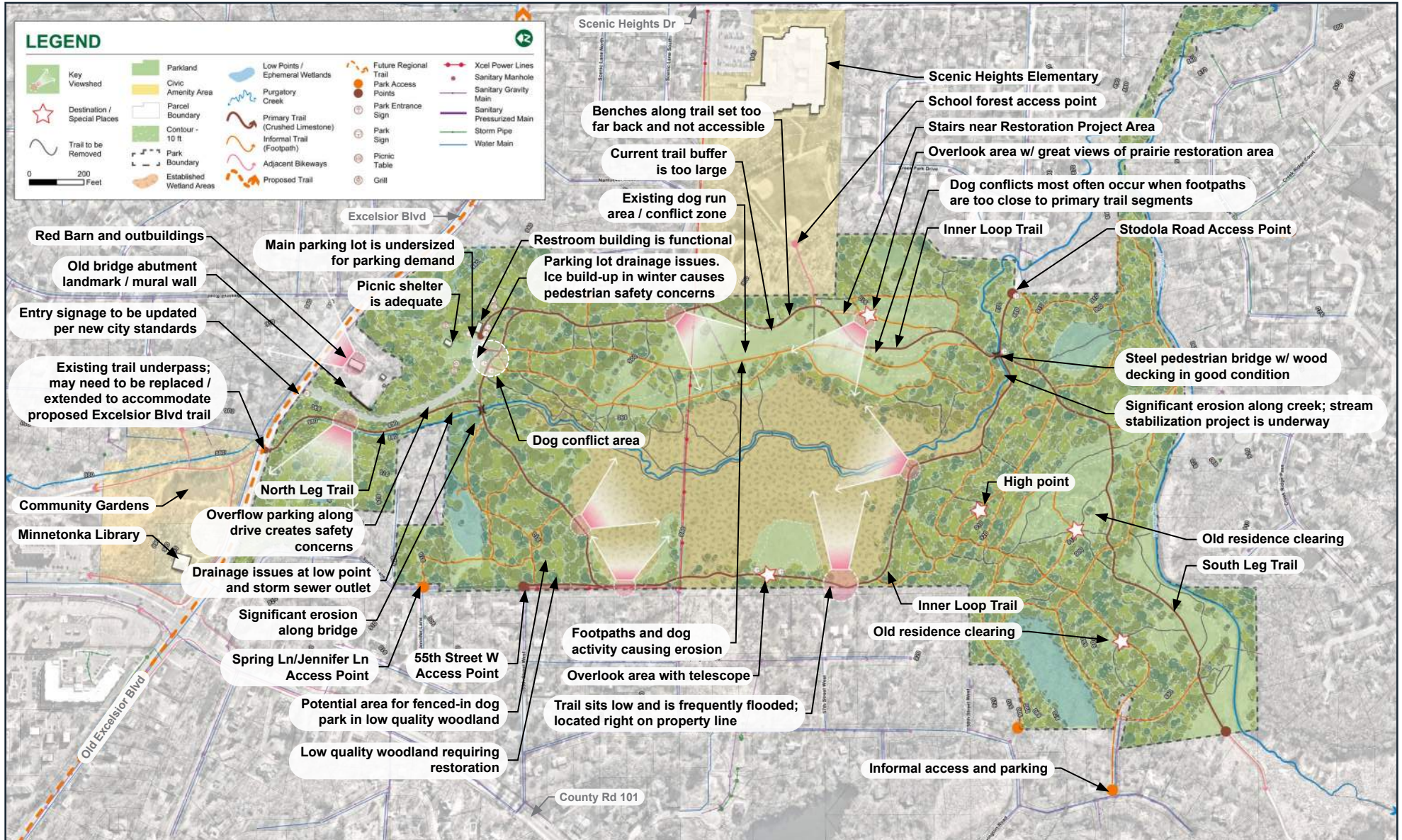
## 5. PROGRAMMING + FACILITIES

As Purgatory Park sees an uptick in usage, it will be important to consider establishing new programming and facilities in the park. This section will also highlight "special places" in Purgatory Park that make it particularly unique.

## 6. PARTNERSHIPS

In this section, we will discuss both existing and potential (future) partnerships between the city and other stakeholder groups for implementing and maintaining park improvements.

# INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS MAP



# 1. SITE CIRCULATION + PARK ACCESS

## SITE CIRCULATION

Purgatory Park offers two types of trails for visitors to use: primary trails and informal trails that make up an extensive and well used trail network that extends throughout the park. These trail types are summarized below, and on the table on the following page.

Primary trails within the park include approximately 2.2 total miles of trail, and are surfaced with crushed limestone or (in hilly/steep-sloped areas) asphalt pavement. The system is made up of an inner loop, with segments extending out from this loop on the north and south ends of the park. These trails are typically 10' wide with a mown buffer of around 4', though some variation exists, with some trails widening due to users migrating off trail, and maintenance practices. For the most part, the park's primary trails are well maintained and easy to navigate, although some segments are starting to show signs of wear and tear due to usage, erosion and off-leash dog walking. While on-site, observed uses on these trails included jogging/running, walking (both human and canine), and biking.

Informal trails within the park are typically unpaved footpaths of varying lengths and widths that extend out from the primary trail system. These trails have varying levels of difficulty throughout the park, and are

often located along steep slopes, in wetland areas or in densely wooded areas. The informal trail system is vast, and in many locations, somewhat redundant, with multiple routes leading to the same destinations. Maintenance on these trails is limited, focused on controlling erosion, and selective repairs to the trail surface. These trails tend to be popular with park visitors, and several people were encountered walking their dogs. Signage placed throughout the informal trail system indicates off-trail biking is prohibited. No cyclists were observed on the trails while on-site, but tire impressions were seen in various locations.

## PARK ACCESS

There are several ways to access Purgatory Park, but most visitors choose to use the main entrance road (south/off of Excelsior Boulevard) or Stodola Road (just south of Scenic Heights Elementary School and west of Scenic Heights Drive) to find parking and enter the park. Other commonly used access points include:

- the cul-de-sac at the end of Nantucket Road, the school forest, and the primary trail southwest of the park
- as well as entry points just east of Bell Circle, at the end of 55th Street W, and at the intersection of Spring Lane and Jennifer Lane

The primary entrance includes two paved

off-street parking lots that are often at capacity, regardless of the time of day, with five parking stalls near the intersection of Excelsior Boulevard and the main entrance road, and 19 parking stalls (18 standard stalls, 1 handicap-accessible stall) in the main parking lot at the end of the main entrance road. Visitors to the park also use the cul-de-sac at the end of Stodola Road for parking, although it is not a formalized parking lot and is quite small. Many visitors park along side streets (especially Stodola Road) and the main entrance road, causing some congestion and safety concerns within the park and in surrounding residential neighborhoods.

In keeping with the nature preserve designation of Purgatory Park, site furnishings and other structures are kept to a minimum. A handful of interpretive and informational entry signs exist throughout Purgatory Park, highlighting the current off-leash dog ordinance and various restoration efforts. This signage will be updated in the future per newly adopted city parks signage standards.



Off-trail biking signage

# GENERAL TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

## Primary Trails



### PRIMARY USES

- Hiking, cycling, walking, jogging, dog walking

### TYPICAL TRAIL EXPERIENCE

- Trails traverse native prairie, mown lawn, and wetlands and are generally in proximity to park facilities

### TREAD + TRAFFIC FLOW

- Wide and relatively smooth tread; width should accommodate two-lane travel; typically hardened

### OBSTACLES (NOT PRESENT)

- Minimal grade change; vegetation must be cleared outside of trailway

## Informal Trails



### PRIMARY USES

- Hiking, dog walking

### TYPICAL TRAIL EXPERIENCE

- Natural, unmodified surfacing; trails traverse through heavily wooded, prairie, and wetland areas

### TREAD + TRAFFIC FLOW

- Narrow and rough tread; few or no allowances for passing native materials

### OBSTACLES (PRESENT)

- Variety of grade change; vegetation may encroach into trailway

## 2. DOGS IN THE PARK

### EXISTING REGULATIONS + ON-SITE OBSERVATIONS

Dogs are more than welcome in Purgatory Park, as long as their owners adhere to the city's ordinances and regulations about when it is appropriate for them to be on- and off-leash. According to the city of Minnetonka's current park regulations, dogs are allowed on improved trails; maintained turf areas other than athletic fields; unimproved and unmaintained areas; and parking lots. When on improved trails, maintained turf areas or in parking lots, dogs must be kept on a leash no longer than six feet in length. Unless otherwise signed, dogs may be off-leash within areas of a park that are unimproved or unmaintained, provided the person responsible for the dog is within sight at all times, with a maximum of two unleashed dogs, and they can demonstrate that the dog will respond to the person's voice command on the first command given. No person will allow a dog to disturb, harass, or interfere with any park visitor, a park visitor's property or a park employee.

During our site visit, the planning team observed several signs in the park that reiterated the park's policies regarding

dogs. For the most part, these rules are followed, but there have been safety incidents with off-leash dogs that may warrant changes to the park's policies in the future. The planning team observed many off-leash dogs in the areas depicted on the next page (just south of the main parking lot, in wetland areas, and near the creek and pre-fabricated bridge in the southern portion of the park) while performing the site inventory. Although off-leash dogs are allowed in some of Purgatory Park's open spaces per city ordinance, there are concerns that dogs are too hard on the park's natural resources, including its wetland and creek areas, woodlands and grasslands, as well as some park amenities. Because of Purgatory Park's status as a nature preserve - and because it is the largest of the city's five community parks - its wetlands, creek, woodlands, and prairies must be protected and preserved so that future generations of visitors can enjoy the park's beauty and natural features.

Pet waste receptacles (Mutt Mitt dispensers) are available in several locations along the primary trail. City ordinance requires visitors with dogs to pick up after their pets in any natural and formal areas [City Ordinance 845.010.

Public Nuisances Affecting Peace, Safety, and General Welfare]. Currently, there are no fenced-in off-leash dog areas in Purgatory Park. There are, however, ecologically degraded areas of the park that are not currently serving an important ecological function. These areas, where buckthorn and other invasive plants have formed dense thickets, crowded out native plants, and displaced native shrubs and small trees, may have potential as future off-leash dog areas for park visitors to utilize.



*High-use off-leash dog area*

High use off-leash dog area

...to the wetland and prairie areas

from the main parking lot...



# 3. THE RED BARN



Existing Red Barn structure



Red Barn from Excelsior Blvd



Existing bridge abutment

## THE HISTORY OF THE RED BARN SITE

The Red Barn has been a prominent landmark in the city of Minnetonka for quite some time. Located just east of the main entrance road to the park, the Red Barn site (a 1.23 acre property) functioned as part of the Westburg farm many years ago. In the early 2000s, the residents approved a \$15 million referendum to fund parks renewal and open space preservation. As a result, the Red Barn site was identified by the Open Space Preservation Task Force as a “property warranting preservation.”

Although the property was approved for acquisition by the City Council in January 2013, the property has not been utilized as a park amenity and is not open to the public. A recently-conducted structural analysis of the barn showed significant issues that may make it difficult to preserve or modify the existing structure. Based on that analysis and general interest from the community, new opportunities for the site should be considered.

On the western edge of the Red Barn site (just east of the main entrance road), there is a concrete bridge abutment that supported a bridge that carried the Minneapolis-to-Excelsior streetcar line over Purgatory Creek. The bridge abutment has been tagged with

graffiti over the years but is still considered an important landmark in the park.

## FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Through the outreach process, concepts such as a ‘Climate and Nature Center’ have been identified and generally supported by survey results. Although a nature center would align with the park’s goals of educating visitors and showcasing opportunities for smart landscaping and even climate-smart building strategies, significant further study and design would be required.

Adjacent to the Red Barn site and Purgatory Park, the City is currently working with consultants to study redesign of Excelsior Boulevard. Preliminary plans for the corridor identify a regional trail connection being constructed along Excelsior Blvd. To support this trail and provide additional amenities within Purgatory Park, there has been discussion of development of a potential trailhead facility on the site, as well as additional parking for trail and park users.

# 4. NATURAL RESOURCES + VEGETATIVE MANAGEMENT

## NATURAL RESOURCES

In 2021, the city completed a Natural Resources Master Plan, which aimed to set community-wide direction and priorities for their Natural Resources Division. The plan not only touches on the benefits of improving and maintaining natural resources in Minnetonka, but also outlines goals and strategies that can be used to help protect those natural resources. The Natural Resources Master Plan was referenced by the planning team throughout the master planning process.

Documentation in the Natural Resources plan, and the Purgatory Park Habitat Restoration and Maintenance Plan (completed in 2022) shows the most prominent ecological communities in Purgatory Park include wet prairie and oak savanna. On-site observation confirmed this, and discussions with city staff provided insights on maintenance and restoration practices that are active and ongoing in the park, including forestry mowing to thin undergrowth and invasive species establishment in forested areas, and the prescribed burning of unwanted and invasive plant material in prairie areas.

A variety of wildlife were observed within the park, including birds, deer, small rodents and other critters. Bluebird houses have been placed throughout the park in strategic locations to offer nesting opportunities.

## VEGETATIVE MANAGEMENT

One of the most significant challenges to natural resources in Purgatory Park is buckthorn. The city and volunteers continuously remove buckthorn within the park's woodland areas to allow for more sunlight and less competition for resources. This process benefits tough and deer-resistant native woodland species, among other things. The Natural Resources Master Plan notes that bare soils, re-sprouting buckthorn, and garlic mustard pose a threat to the park's natural resources if they're not regularly managed.

Several ongoing uses and projects have the potential to impact Purgatory Park's natural resources in coming years, including:

- off-leash dog traffic and in primary trails that can trample existing vegetation, and spread invasive species seeds

- Reconstruction of Excelsior Boulevard and its encroachment into the park
- the replacement of the Xcel utility poles and other utilities throughout the park
- the Purgatory Creek restoration project
- Future redevelopment of the Red Barn site



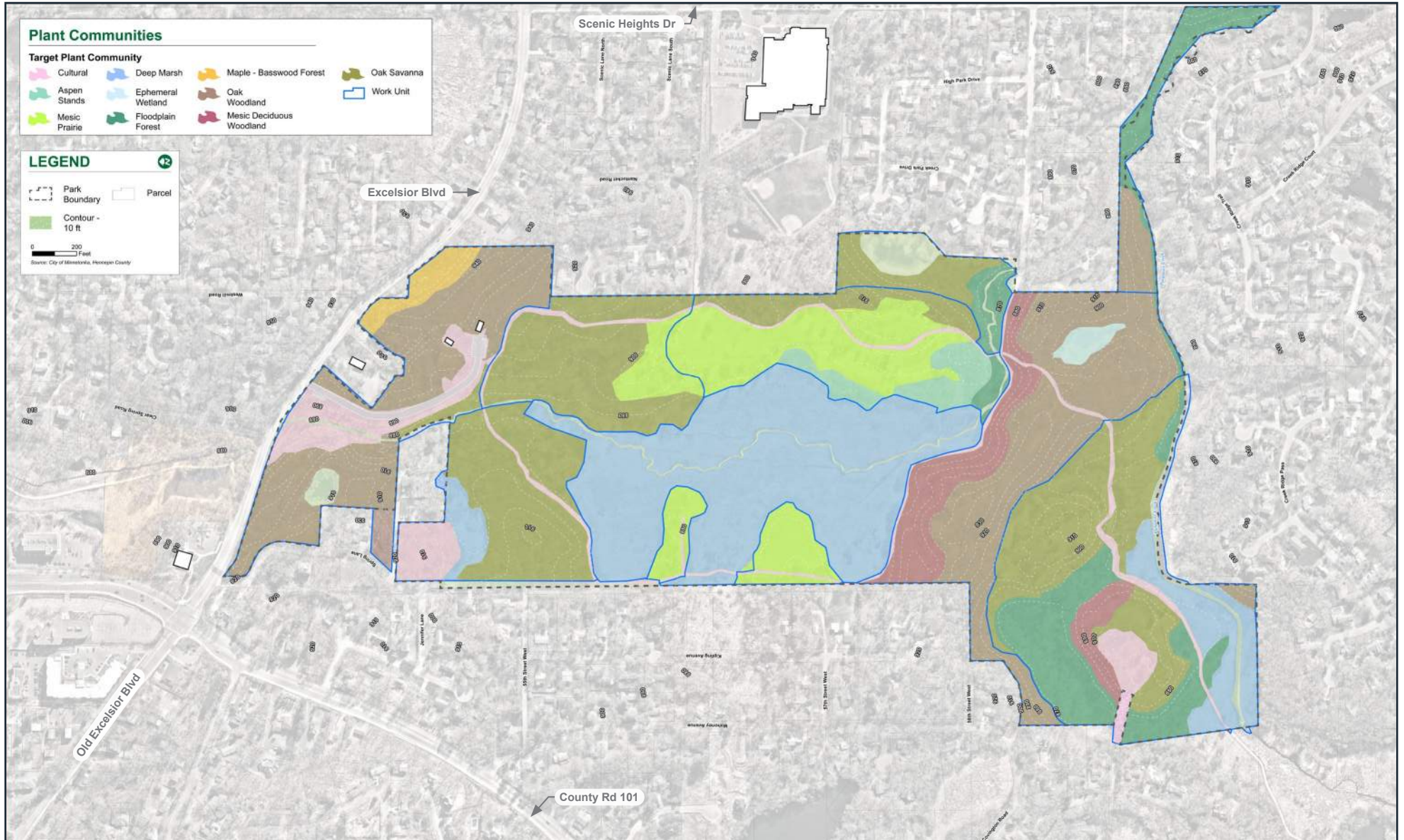
*Forestry mowing*



*Prescribed burns*



# NATURAL RESOURCES MAP



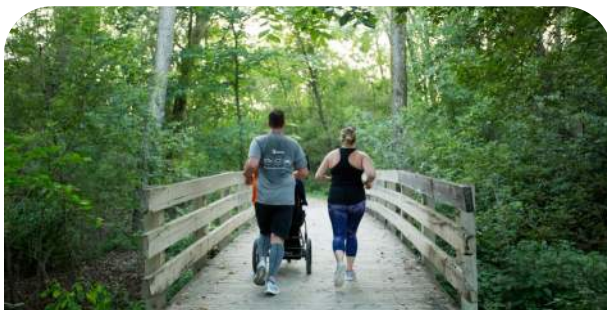
# 5. PROGRAMMING + FACILITIES



*Park visitors walking on a primary trail*



*Informal trail in wooded area*



*Family running over timber bridge*

## PARK PROGRAMMING

The popularity of hiking, walking/jogging, and off-leash dog use in Purgatory Park has begun to take a toll on the park's amenities and facilities. With this increased usage, the city must create a plan to protect the ecological integrity and natural beauty of the park while still allowing residents/visitors to use the park in the ways they'd like.

Most of the recreation available at Purgatory Park is relatively active but informal. Folks love to walk, jog, run, bike, and hike on the South Leg trail, North Leg trail, and Inner Loop trail. Because dogs are allowed off-leash (except when on primary trails and in parking lots), dog walking has also become a popular use in Purgatory Park. However, so many informal trails (or foot paths) have been created in the park over the last several years that programming in some spaces is not as clear as others.

The park also offers a variety of passive programming options. Some of the wooded areas within Purgatory Park are great for hammocking (e.g., woodland areas), while other portions of the park (e.g., open spaces) are perfect for picnicking, resting and quiet reflection. The diverse landscape features in Purgatory Park also offer opportunities for foraging and bird watching. Additionally, there are a few overlooks, high points, and other special places in the park that provide expansive vistas and viewsheds for park visitors to enjoy.

## EXISTING PARK FACILITIES

Most of Purgatory Park's existing facilities are in good working condition. The restroom building and picnic shelter near the main parking lot, for example, are well-used, require minimal maintenance, and are not in immediate need of replacement or repairs.

Besides the restroom and shelter building near the main parking lot, the park also includes both memorial benches and trees just off the primary trail. The memorial benches are often set back on disconnected concrete or gravel pads at a different grade than the adjacent trails, making them inaccessible to some users. Similarly, memorial trees are unmarked and often varieties that do not align with the ecological goals of the park. There were also several waste receptacles throughout the park, for both general and pet waste, although more may be needed to reduce littering.

There are a few facilities in Purgatory Park that could use updating. One such example is the wooden pedestrian bridge located closest to the main parking lot. During our site visit, we noticed significant erosion occurring along the sides of the bridge that may affect its longevity. Section 6 of this master plan includes proposed design standards for primary and informal trails, as well as other site features, that may be helpful for park managers to use in the future.

# 6. PARTNERSHIPS

## EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

Over the years, Purgatory Park has gone through many transformations. Although the land was originally used for farming and grazing by settlers, Purgatory Park has since become an incredibly special asset to the city of Minnetonka and its residents. It wasn't until the 1960s that neighborhood developments began to fill in spaces surrounding the park. Not long after those spaces were filled, several partnerships began to form to protect and preserve this valued green space.

Since 1969, the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (RPBCWD) has worked hard to protect, manage and restore local water resources on the watersheds of Riley, Purgatory, and Bluff Creeks. With Purgatory Creek flowing directly through Purgatory Park, the RPBCWD has played an important role in preserving the park's water resources.

The Friends of Purgatory Park "is a group of regular park visitors passionate about the natural beauty and diversity of wildlife found within the park boundaries." For years, the Friends of Purgatory Park have worked with the city to restore the prairie remnant and maintain the bluebird boxes

placed throughout the park. They are involved in many other initiatives and will continue to be a valuable partner to the park for years to come.

The Minnetonka Climate Initiative (MCI), a volunteer organization started by high school students who want to "take positive action to mitigate the worst effects of climate change" in their community, hopes to partner with the city to create plans for a "Climate Change Nature Center" on the Red Barn site, as mentioned previously in this section. Back in 2019, the MCI advocated for the creation of a climate action and adaptation plan (CAAP) in Minnetonka, which would lay the groundwork for how the community can decrease greenhouse gas emissions, protect the environment, and prepare for future climate impacts. Partially because of the MCI's advocacy toward climate change, the city is finalizing a CAAP plan in 2024.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to local community groups, there are two elementary schools nearby that Purgatory Park could partner with more frequently. They include Scenic Heights Elementary School (just east of Purgatory Park) and Clear Springs

Elementary School (just west of Purgatory Park). Scenic Heights Elementary School has a unique "school forest" adjacent to the park with outdoor classrooms and informational signage and a trail that connects directly to Purgatory Park's Inner Loop trail. Additionally, the Minnetonka Library (just north of the park) could be a potential partner to engage with for programming in the park in the future.



*Friends of Purgatory Park*

# 04

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No one knows the community better than the members who live in it each day.

In order to gain knowledge of the area and better understand the issues facing Purgatory Park, and opportunities for enhancement, community engagement tools were a critical part of the Park Master Planning process. A two-fold engagement strategy was utilized by the team that included both online and in-person engagement opportunities in an attempt to maximize feedback. Tools used include formal open house meetings, pop-up events at various community gatherings, an online survey, and online community comment forum.

The feedback gathered from the community was vital to the recommendations made by the planning team. The following section will cover how the community was engaged and what feedback was collected throughout this process.

# OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## COORDINATION WITH CITY STAFF

With an invigorated interest in completing park master plan documents to help guide the future of their community parks, the city decided to prioritize the development of this plan in 2023. Throughout the master planning process, the planning team has worked closely with city staff in the overall development of the plan, as they have been able to provide local expertise on the park, highlight potential deficiencies, and guide outcomes of the project (in conjunction with input collected through public engagement).

There were several meetings with members of the city staff during the development of this master plan. These meetings focused on topics ranging from existing conditions in the parks to potential improvement recommendations for the park.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

During the development of the park system master plan, the planning team held a variety of in-person engagement events, including an open house, pop-up engagement events in the park, and pop-up engagement events around Minnetonka. In total the planning team held six in-person engagement events in the Minnetonka community.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

The planning team launched the Purgatory Park Master Plan survey to the community of Minnetonka in July, 2023. The survey was live for approximately four months and was accessible online through a shareable web link. While the survey was live, city staff and the planning team spread the word throughout the city. Over six hundred participants provided input through the community survey.

In order to better understand the participants, the survey started by asking a series of introductory questions relating to participant demographics. A series of questions pertaining to dogs in the park, the red barn site, natural resources, trails, parking and park access, and special places within the park followed.

The following pages provide a summary of the community input received from the community survey and various in-person engagement events. A full report of results from both surveys can be found in the appendix of this plan.

## ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

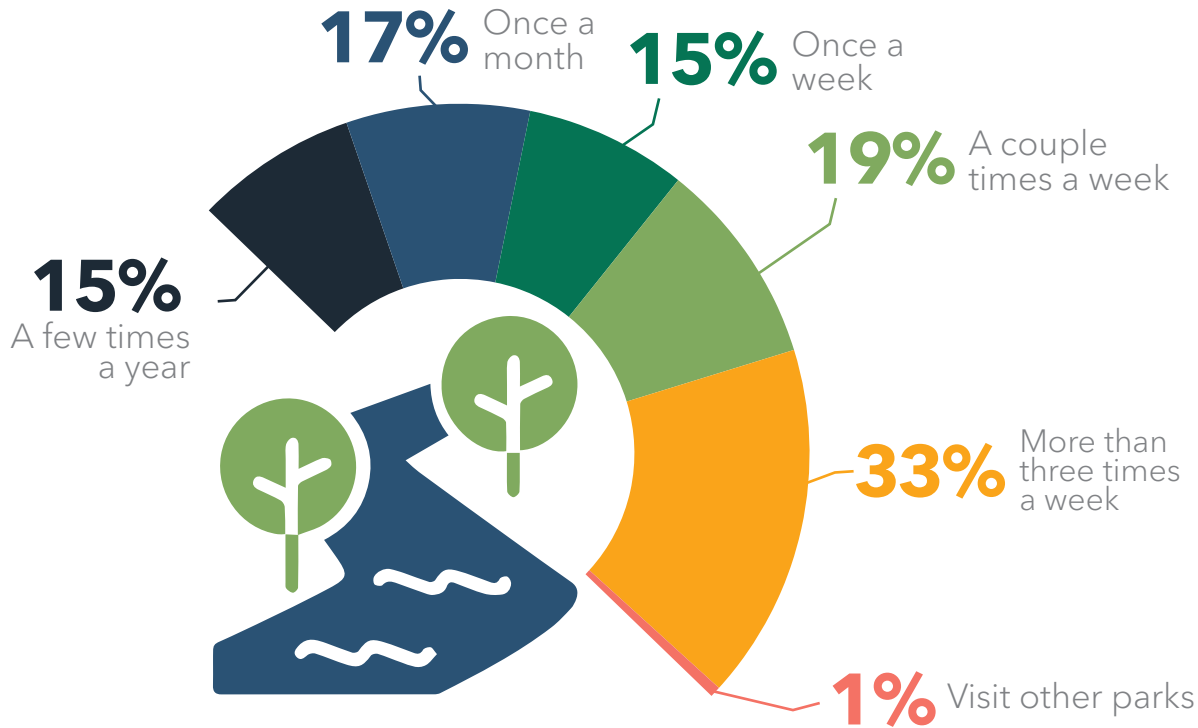
**JUNE - OCT.  
2023**  
ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

**624**  
SURVEY RESPONSES

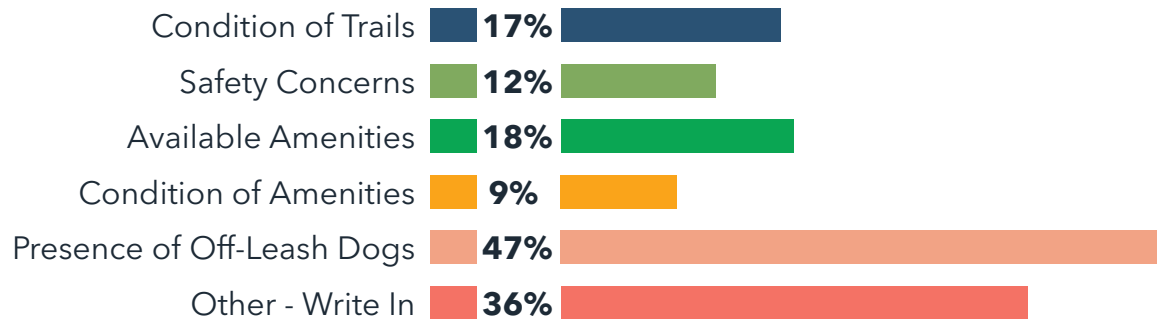
**6**  
IN-PERSON  
ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

**1,000+**  
WRITTEN COMMENTS

## HOW OFTEN PEOPLE VISIT PURGATORY PARK



## FACTORS THAT DISCOURAGE PARK USAGE



Most common write in reasons were:  
Dog Waste • Cyclist Presence • Icy Conditions • Lack of Youth Activities

## MOST POPULAR REASONS FOR VISITING PURGATORY PARK



**64%**  
Walking



**55%**  
Dog Walking



**24%**  
Hiking



**16%**  
Biking



**15%**  
Bird Watching

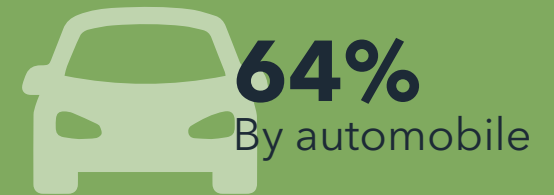
## TYPICAL TRAVEL DISTANCES TO VISIT PARK

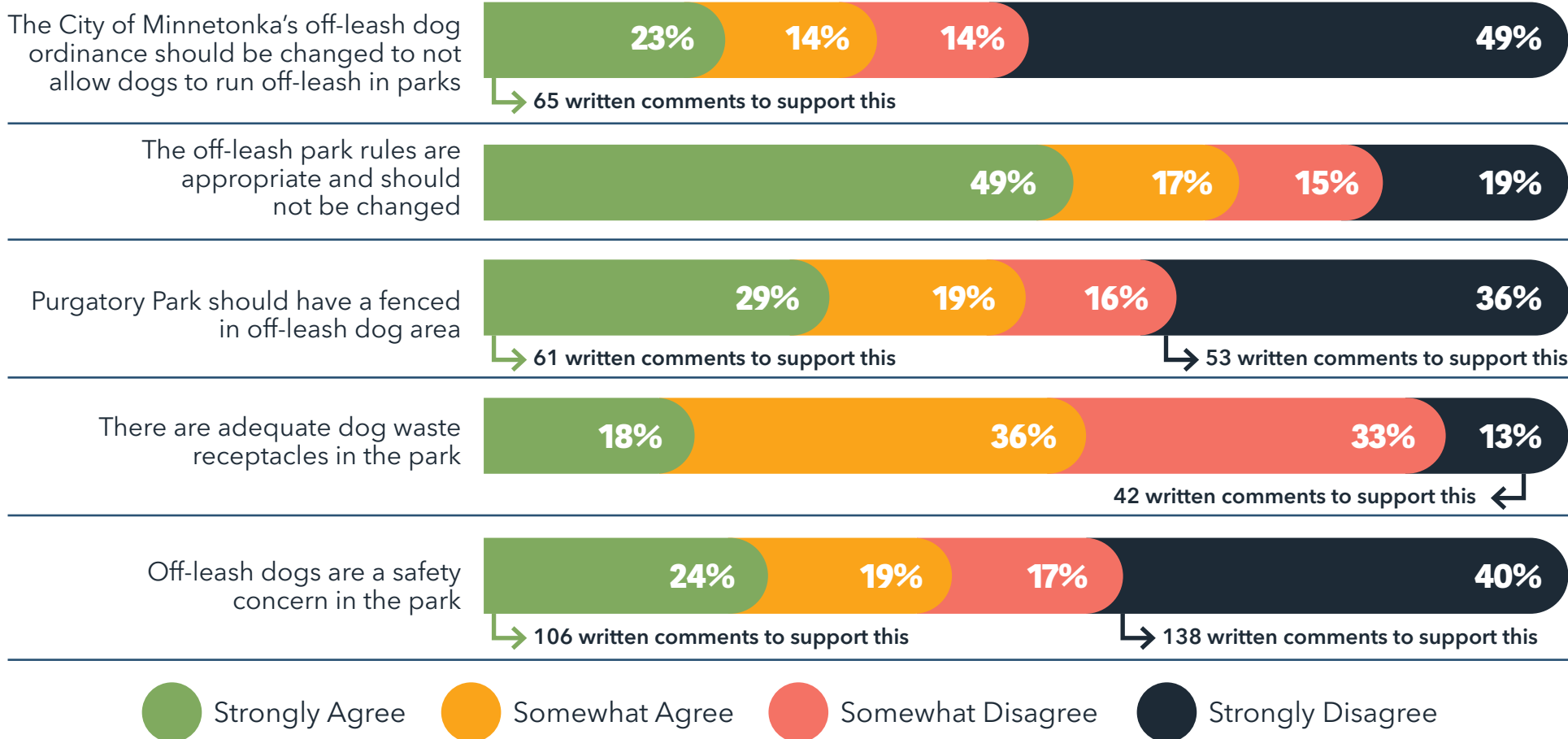


## MOST FREQUENTLY USED PARK ACCESS POINTS

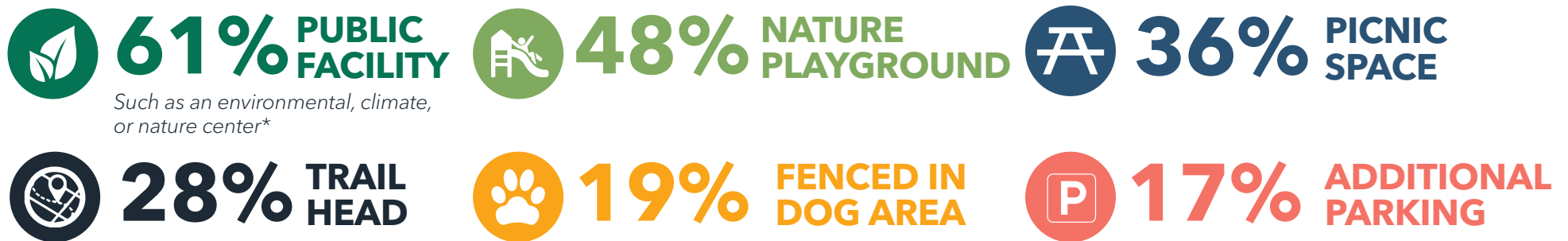


## TYPICAL MODE OF TRANSPORTATION TO PURGATORY PARK





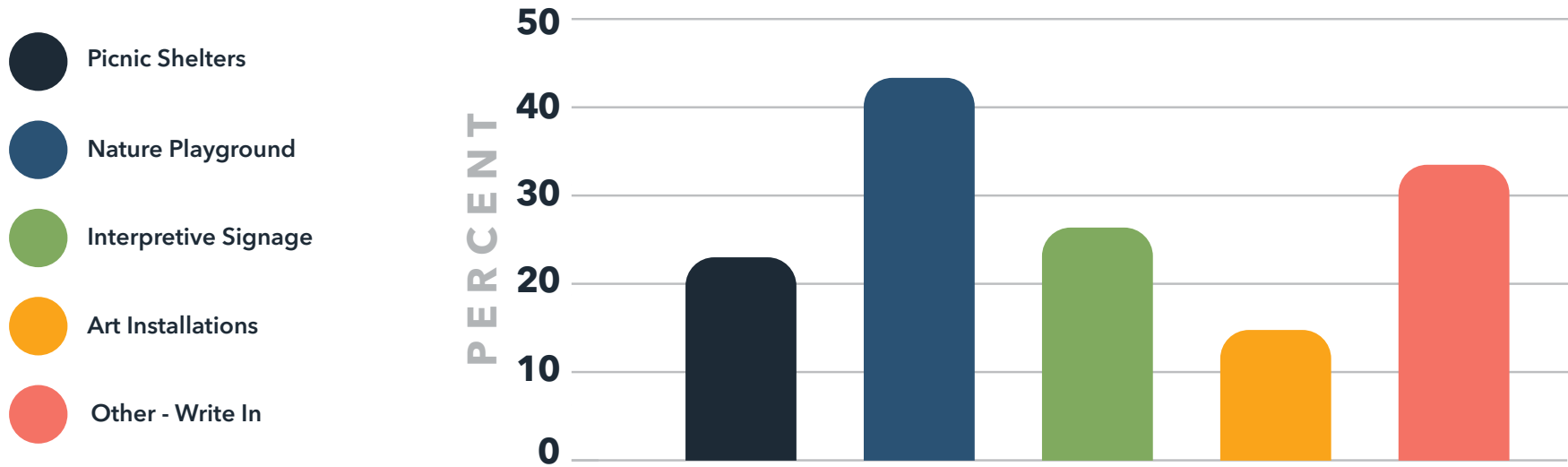
## TOP USES FOR THE RED BARN SITE



\* 32 written comments in support of use as a Public Facility (Environmental, Climate, or Nature Center)



## WHAT SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE PARK THAT IS CURRENTLY MISSING



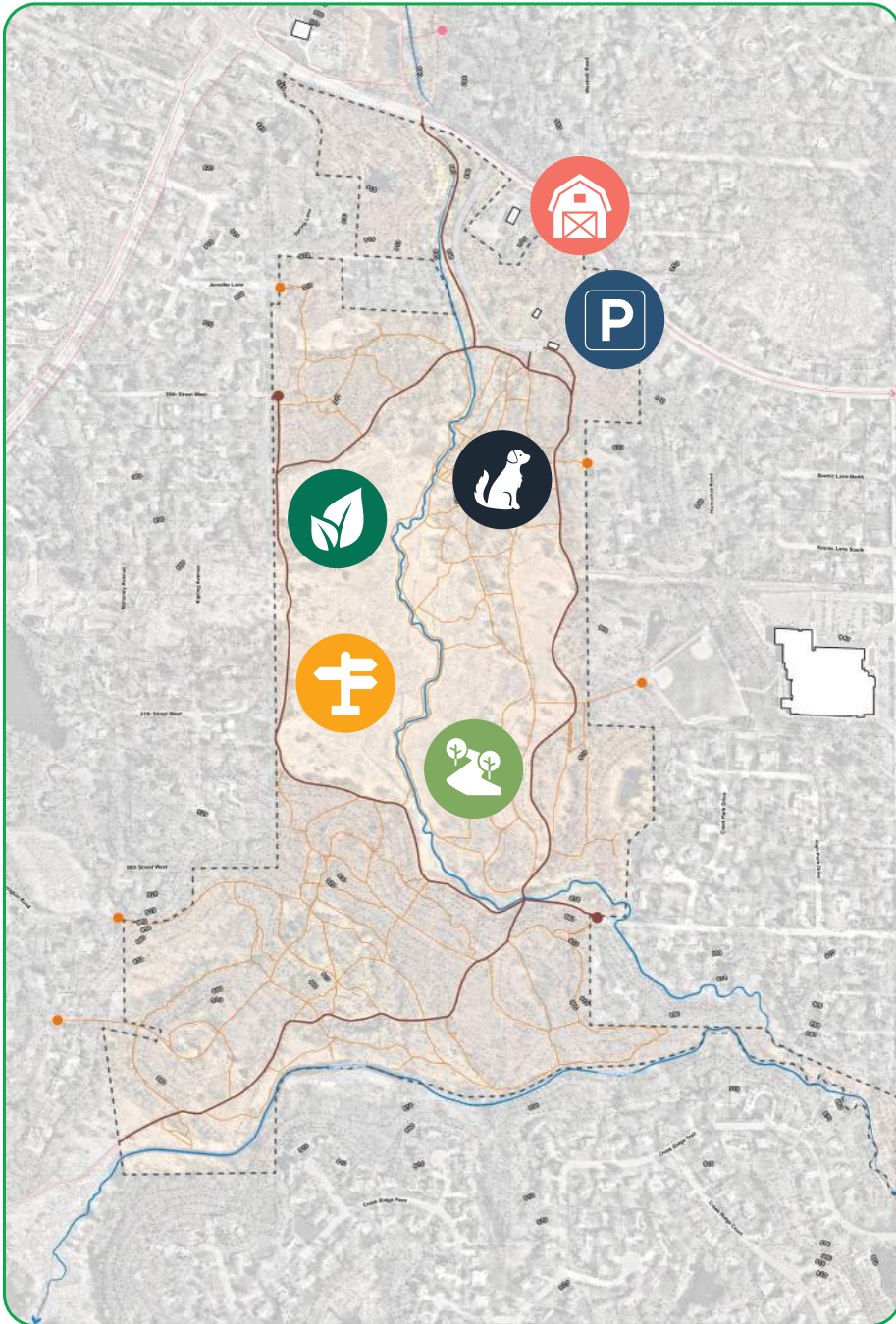
Most common write in answers were:

Nature Center • Dog Waste Receptacles/Trash Cans • Fenced Off-Leash Dog Area • Playground • Educational & Way-finding Signage

## ENGAGEMENT EVENT TIMELINE



# POPULAR AREAS OF COMMENT



## Dogs in the Park

Approximately **460 comments** about dogs in the park were received



## Parking & Park Access

Approximately **30 comments** about parking and park access were received



## Natural Resources

Approximately **64 comments** about natural resources in the park were received



## Trails

Approximately **129 comments** about trails in the park were received



## Special Places

Approximately **66 comments** about special places and facilities in the park were received



## Red Barn Site

Approximately **79 comments** about the red barn site were received

# ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY



Pop-up event at Unmapped Brewery



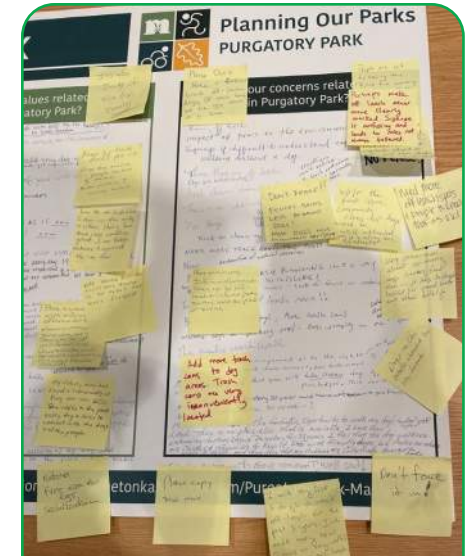
Pop-up event at Minnetonka's Farmer's Market



Community open house event



Roving in the park



Pop-up board post-it results

# 05

## PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommended improvement strategies for Purgatory Park were derived from community input, feedback from city staff and members of the Park Board, and an in-depth inventory and analysis of the park's natural resources and existing amenities. The recommended improvements outlined in this section are meant to provide a comprehensive approach to preserving, restoring, and enhancing Purgatory Park; additionally, they are meant to supplement and support the recommendations already established in the POST System Plan, Natural Resources Master Plan, the Capital Improvement Plan, the Purgatory Park Habitat Restoration and Maintenance Plan and the city's park signage standards. It is intended that the following improvements will be phased and prioritized, depending on available funding and partnership opportunities within the community. It should be noted that each recommended improvement/project will require additional exploration and design to refine project scoping and cost expectations.

# PARK IMPROVEMENT TOPICS

Several key topic areas emerged through the master planning process and discussions with various stakeholder groups including city staff, the public, and park users. These topic areas include: **Sense of Place**, **Dogs in the Park**, **Park Circulation** and **Access (both vehicular and pedestrian)**, the **Red Barn Site**.

Throughout the planning process, the planning team used these categories to identify and prioritize recommended improvements to the park. These recommendations are organized into three categories including short-term (improvements slated to occur within 1-2 years), mid-term (improvements slated to occur within 3-5 years, and long-term (improvements slated to happen within 5+ years). Recommendations range in scale and magnitude from site specific interventions aimed at addressing on-site concerns and conditions, to the undertaking of more in depth study of planning and policy related items like off leash dog ordinances.

## 1. SENSE OF PLACE

Although Purgatory Park already has a well-established sense of place, it is important to continue to build upon it in order to preserve the park's cultural and historical significance and promote ecological integrity and resilience.

## 2. DOGS IN THE PARK

With the safety and wellbeing of both visitors and their furry friends in mind, recommendations for further discussion and studies on the topic will explore potential outcomes and outline a path forward for this contentious issue..

## 3. PARK ACCESS - PEDESTRIAN TRAILS

As Purgatory Park continues to evolve, park access points, trail conditions, park circulation and appropriate wayfinding signage must be taken into consideration. This section will include a series of recommendations aimed at improving the pedestrian experience on both primary and in primary trails.

## 4. PARK ACCESS - VEHICULAR

With limited parking available on-site, the city will need to consider options for improving vehicular access to the park, whether that be through the formalization of existing informal parking areas or the creation of additional off-street parking options in the park.

## 5. THE RED BARN SITE

The future of the Red Barn site is still to be determined. In the near future, the city will need to decide whether to move forward with various plans brought forth from local groups in the community or produce an alternate future for the site.

# 1. SENSE OF PLACE

Throughout the community engagement phase, the planning team received feedback regarding the special places and experiences that define the unique character of Purgatory Park. The large scale of the park, along with its classification and protection as a nature preserve, provides a chance to fully immerse oneself in nature. A lack of built features in combination with densely wooded edges reinforce this feeling of remoteness. The dynamic terrain offers a variety of different zones or 'outdoor rooms', with low wetland expanses, high prairie vistas, and wooded

ridges. Visitors primarily experience Purgatory Park's varied landscape through a densely braided system of intimate hiking trails, with creek crossings and memorial benches offering a moment to pause and reflect on the place.

The preservation and enhancement of this unique character should be integral to all future park improvements. Potential impacts and opportunities should be considered alongside other recommendations of this master plan, such as visual impressions from parking expansion, or the locating of new

signage and memorial trees. A few specific 'special places' and key view sheds are identified on the Site Inventory and Analysis Map in Section 3. These locations should be protected as-is or potentially enhanced with standard park amenities or even site-specific installations, such as bird blinds or interpretive exhibits where appropriate.

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



*I love that the identity of the park is centered around its natural features, like Purgatory Creek and its lush wetlands!*



*The variety of terrain and plant communities in the park make it feel intimate, open and wild. I also love using the trails and bringing my dog(s) on my adventures within the park.*

*Purgatory Park feels removed from the city because of its expansive interior open spaces and the woodlands/residences that surround it.*



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### SHORT-TERM

- Protect and reinforce designation as a nature preserve
- Adopt design standards

### MID-TERM

- Expand interpretive features throughout the park

### LONG-TERM

- Recognize and enhance 'special places' and scenic views

## SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Protect and reinforce designation as a nature preserve**

All built features and amenities within Purgatory Park should conform to the requirements of the nature preserve classification. Visual and environmental impacts should be considered with any improvement project, to protect the distinct natural character of the park. Low impact design practices should be utilized for any infrastructure projects, including but not limited to parking expansion, stormwater management, new structures, and trail standards. For example, If formal play facilities are considered for the park, the theming and materials should be nature-based, offering experiences to interact with natural processes and materials, such as sticks and branches to build with, rather than commercial playground equipment.

- **Adopt design standards**

Section 6 of this master plan describes standards for materials, construction details, and unit costs for park facilities in Purgatory Park. These standards have been developed as best practices to align with the goals and recommendations of this plan, including the effort to protect and enhance the park's natural character and sense of place. These standards should be adopted and used to guide future construction, maintenance, and operations in the park.



*Expansive view of native prairie*



*Native vegetation and primary trail*

## MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Expand interpretive features throughout the park**

Additional signage and interpretive features should be expanded throughout the park to educate visitors about local ecology and history, such as ongoing restoration efforts, plant communities, hydrology, and the designation and expansion of the park over time. Typical interpretive signage may work well in certain locations, but other opportunities should be considered to integrate story telling into future park improvement projects, such as text and artwork embedded in pavement, bridge railings or other structures. Such artfully integrated features can enrich visitors' experiences without 'cluttering' the park with too much signage.

## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recognize and enhance 'special places' and scenic views**

A handful of unique places in the park may warrant additional recognition and creative enhancements, such as utilizing the historic rail bridge abutment as a dedicated mural wall or adding low-impact amenities such as hammock supports in woodland clearings or near bridge crossings. Two high points offering expansive vistas occur in the park, one in the open prairie and one in the southern woodlands. More seating and bird blind structures should be considered to add destinations and moments of respite along the trail system. These site-specific installations could be created in collaboration with community service and school groups, or possibly as an expansion of the Scenic Heights school forest programming. When thoughtfully designed, these structure could enhance rather than detract from the park experience and natural context.



*Dog walker on an informal trail*



## 2. DOGS IN THE PARK

As noted in the inventory and analysis section of this report, feedback relative to dog activity (specifically off-leash dogs) in the park varies from strong support to strong opposition. Generally, those in favor indicate off-leash dog opportunities as an integral part of the park, its use, and experience - while those in opposition tend to express safety issues - and impacts on wildlife and ecological degradation as primary concerns. While the recommendations presented in this report do not resolve this conflict in its entirety, they do aim to work toward a viable solution for all park users.

Short-term recommendations associated with dogs in the park focus on policy-related review and low dollar interventions aimed at increasing usability and cleanliness of the park. Mid-term recommendations focus on site specific enhancements aimed at buffering dogs and dog-related uses from other patrons in the park. Long-term recommendations consider potential for a future off-leash dog facility in Purgatory Park.

### COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



I believe we need to find solutions for the following issues regarding off-leash dogs: safety, ecological damage, and the enforcement and regulation of the off-leash dog ordinances.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### SHORT-TERM

- Undertake a comprehensive review of current off-leash dog ordinance language and consider an off-leash dog park facility in the community
- Identify areas degraded/disturbed by dog activity and determine additional maintenance or repair that may be warranted
- Better define specific areas of the park where off-leash activity is allowable
- Expand signage related to off-leash dogs in the park
- Add additional pet waste stations and litter receptacles at strategic locations
- Install temporary fencing along the east side of area frequently used for off-leash dog activity to reduce conflicts with the primary trail (OPTIONAL)

#### MID-TERM

- Mitigate points of conflict between off-leash and on-leash dogs and other park users
- Formalize (pave) a connection between the parking lot and trail to the area frequently used for off-leash dog activity
  - » Also see trail system recommendations section

#### LONG-TERM

- If it is determined that a fenced-in dog park is warranted in the community, select a location for the facility
  - » If Purgatory Park is identified as the preferred location for an off-leash dog park, determine location and features to be implemented through coordination with stakeholders

NOTE: Communications regarding off-leash dog ordinances should be coordinated to ensure clear and consistent rules on the city's website, as well as other communication sources.

## SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Undertake a comprehensive review of current off-leash dog ordinance language and consider an off-leash dog park facility in the community**

Throughout the master planning process feedback gathered from park users, city staff, and law enforcement indicated that current wording of the City's off-leash dog ordinance leaves room for interpretation, and thus, potential for conflict, specifically in parks and public gathering spaces. To better understand and address these concerns, a comprehensive review of the current ordinance should be undertaken with the intention of clarifying ordinance language and understanding of where leash laws would apply.

- **Identify areas degraded/disturbed by dog activity and determine additional maintenance or repair that may be warranted**

Purgatory Park is categorized as a nature preserve, with an emphasis on preservation and restoration of native plant communities. While recreation and dog walking are encouraged, dog activity may have unintended harmful consequences to the habitat actively being managed by the City and volunteers. To work harmoniously toward the interests of both dog uses and restoration efforts, a comprehensive analysis of degraded/disturbed areas

frequented by off-leash dogs should be conducted (e.g., identify areas with excessive erosion), and additional maintenance efforts identified. While this plan provides a general understanding of the primary areas used for these activities, we recommend a more thorough on-site review be conducted.

- **Better define specific areas of the park where off-leash activity is allowable**

Feedback provided throughout the planning process, and on-site review by the project team, indicates most intensive off-leash dog activity occurring in the area east of Purgatory Creek, and west of the primary trail. While off-leash dogs are present throughout the park, this tends to be the location where a majority of dog owners congregate and dogs interact with one another. An interim step in addressing off-leash dog conflicts in the park would be to specify this location as an acceptable place for off-leash activity to occur. Dogs would be required to be leashed on primary park trails, near the main and secondary parking lots and entry drive, and in other locations of the park (e.g., near both of the bridges, at all major access points and entrances to the park, etc.). Off-leash activity should be limited to a certain setback distance of 100' from the main and secondary parking lot and entry drive, and 50' from any primary trails, as well as the park boundary.

- **Expand signage related to off-leash dogs in the park**

While dog ordinance signage is present in several locations throughout the park,

language on the sign can be hard to interpret, and signs are not necessarily present in areas most frequently used for off-leash dog activity. New signage should be provided at major entry points and locations that experience the most volume of dog activity. Language associated with this signage should be coordinated with any changes to city-wide dog leash law policies, and maps should be incorporated to define off-leash dog use areas.

- **Add additional pet waste stations and litter receptacles at strategic locations**

Purgatory Park has a few pet waste stations and litter receptacles. They can be found near the main parking lot and the Stodola Road cul-de-sac access point, as well as other locations. Feedback from the community indicated need for additional pet waste stations and/or litter receptacles at the end of the pre-fabricated steel bridge near Stodola Road, near the existing high-use off-leash dog area south of the main parking lot, and at all major access points and entrances to the park.

- **Install temporary fencing along east side of area frequently used for off-leash dog activity to reduce conflicts with the primary trail (OPTIONAL)**

As a temporary measure, until further study of leash ordinances and interest in an off-leash dog park can be undertaken, a temporary fence (approximately 1400 linear feet) could be placed along the east side of the area frequently used for off-leash dog activities.

## MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Mitigate points of conflict between off-leash and on-leash dogs or other park users**

Park users report that many confrontations between off-leash dogs/owners and other park users happen along the edges of the highest use off-leash area, along the primary trail, and at the parking lot. To reduce the frequency of these incompatible use conflicts, consolidate footpaths (informal trails) through the area frequently used for off-leash dog activity, and remove informal trails within 50' from the primary trail. Consider enhancing a vegetative buffer in these areas to create more separation along the primary trail.

- **Formalize (pave) connections between the parking lot and primary trail into the area frequently used for off-leash dog activity**
  - » Also see trail system recommendations section

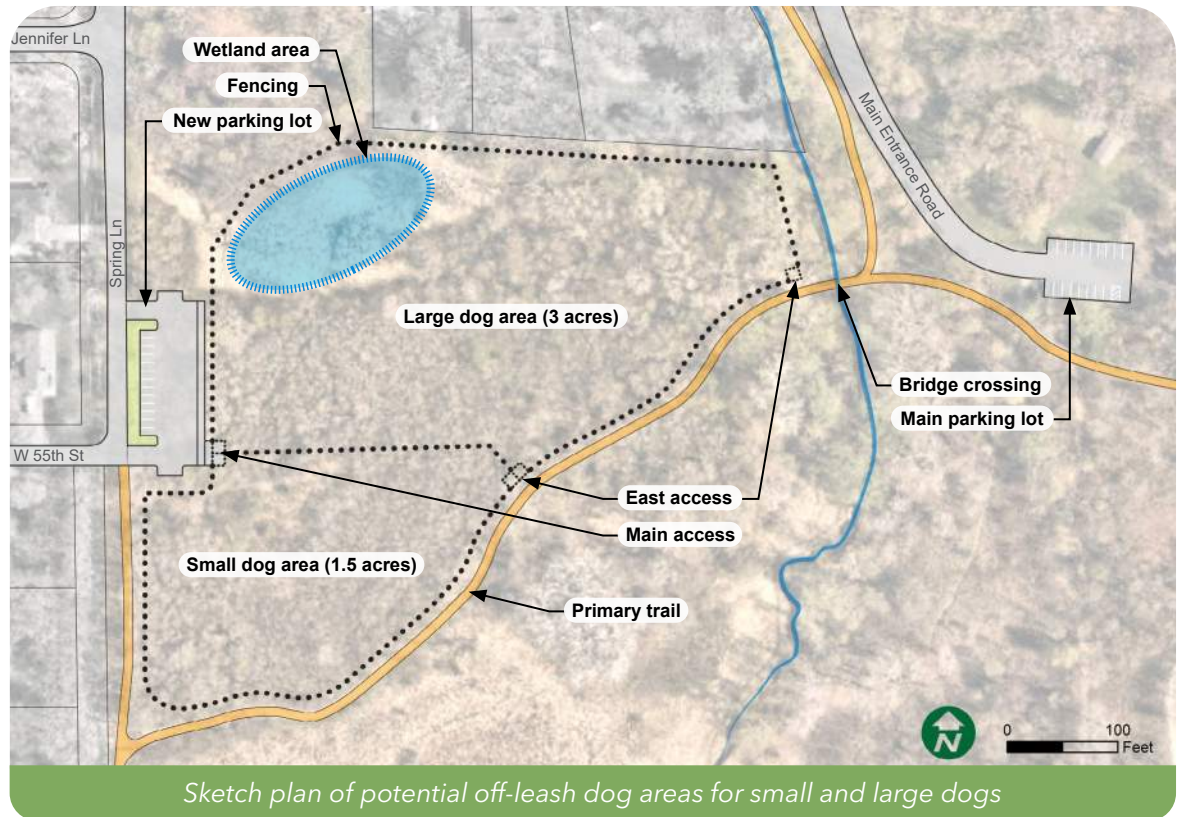
Currently, the area just south of the main parking lot, where the primary and informal paths meet up, is a conflict zone for dogs. Formal trails into the off-leash area will provide additional separation from other park users by identifying direct access points for off-leash dog owners, and reduce the ecological impact of redundant informal trails south of the parking lot.

## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

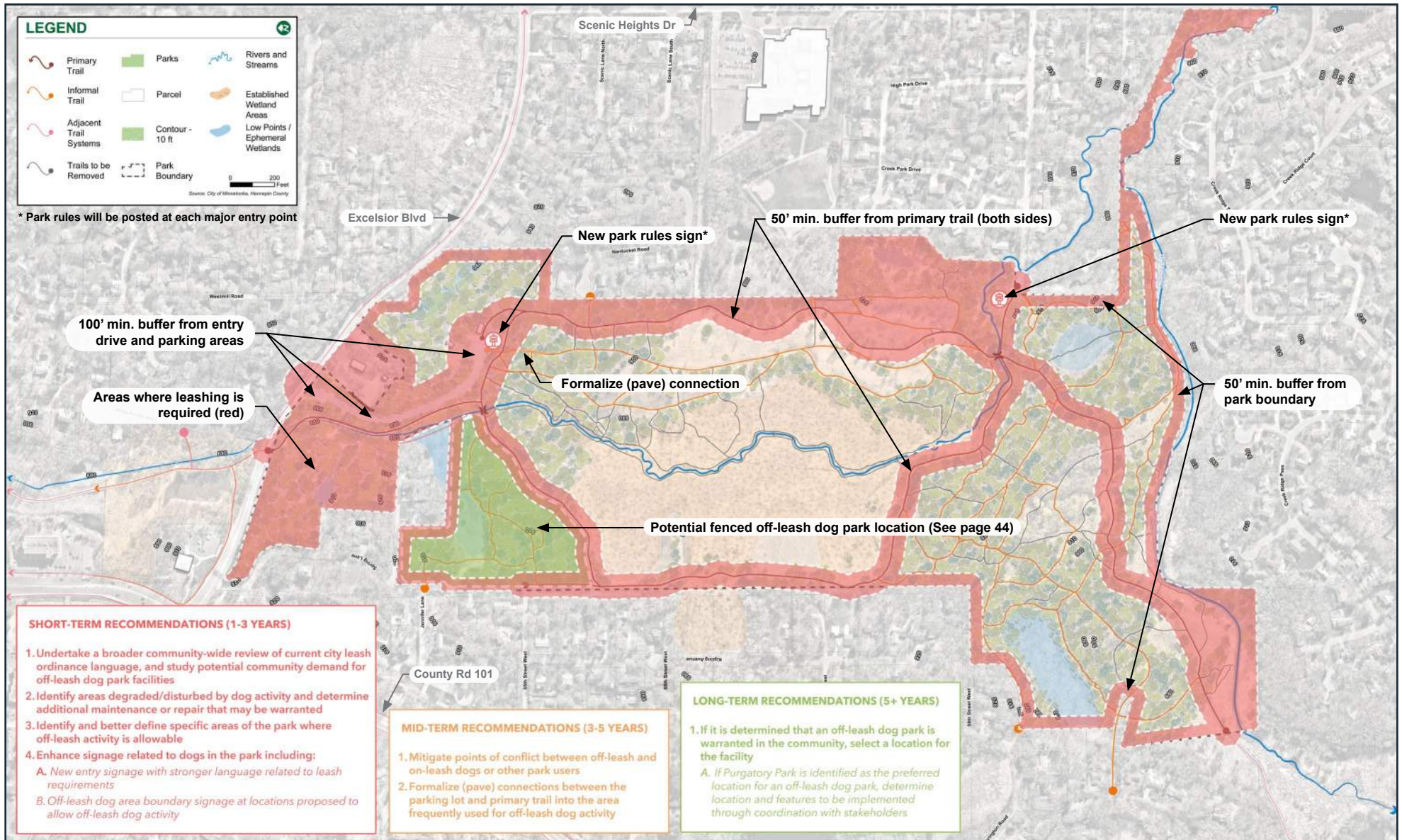
- **If it is determined that a fenced-in dog park is warranted in the community, select a location for the facility**
  - » If Purgatory Park is identified as the preferred location for an off-leash dog park, determine location and features to be implemented through coordination with stakeholders
    - \* Concept to right shows potential in the NW corner of the park

Pending outcomes of City review of leash ordinance language and need for a formal off

leash dog facility, consider whether Purgatory Park is the preferred location for such a facility. Based on management and restoration plans, existing on-site conditions (low quality woodland), access, and topography considerations, an area in the northwest corner of the park could be an opportune location for a fenced dog park. The diagram below shows a layout option for a facility in this location that would include fenced areas for both large and small dogs, and a new park entrance and off-street parking lot to accommodate dog park users. The diagram below is very conceptual in nature, and it is anticipated the City would undertake a thorough, collaborative design process with stakeholders to determine a final location and design for any future dog park facility.



# DOGS IN THE PARK MAP



# 3. PARK ACCESS - PEDESTRIAN TRAILS

Purgatory Park's trail system is one of the main draws for visitors to the park. Based on survey results, well over 60% of users who visit the park do so to walk/hike. As noted in the inventory and analysis section of this document, the parks trail system is comprised primarily of two types of trails: primary trails constructed with crushed limestone or asphalt surfacing, and informal hiking trails comprised of native earth surfacing. Design standards for the two types of trails have been developed as part of this planning process and are presented in Section 6 of this master plan document. These standards should be referenced and utilized to the extent possible when developing new trail segments or rehabilitating the existing trail network.

Feedback gathered during the planning process indicated that park users generally feel there are adequate trails in the park, and in some instances, too many informal trails. Recommendations related to the trail system are largely intended to enhance rather than expand on the existing system, providing a more enjoyable experience for users, and a more maintainable system for staff.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### SHORT-TERM

- Review informal trails and remove redundant/unnecessary/maintenance-intensive connections
- Modify maintenance practices related to mowing and maintenance of primary trail system based on proposed design standards
- Formalize connection between trail and main parking lot

### MID-TERM

- Replace existing timber pedestrian bridge on the north end of the park

- Provide signage (e.g, park identification, wayfinding, monument entrance) at park access routes, including both vehicular and pedestrian accesses

### LONG-TERM

- Use the trail design standards identified in this document for future trail system expansion projects
  - » Refer to Section 6 of this document for more information

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



*I enjoy walking and running on the many primary and secondary trails in Purgatory Park with my family, friends and dog!*

*I'm concerned with the erosion occurring along informal trails that may be negatively impacting the park's natural resources.*



## SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Review informal trails and remove redundant/unnecessary maintenance intensive connections**

Purgatory Park's current trail system includes miles of informal trails, some of which provide visitors with access to unique locations in the park or provide shortcuts to areas otherwise unseen from the primary trail system. At the same time, there is often a level of redundancy in the informal trail network, with multiple routes leading to the same location. While some of these trails were purposefully created, others have appeared over time through repeated encroachment by park users. Ultimately, it falls on the city to maintain these trails, including rectifying erosion issues, clearing debris, and other practices.

In an effort to streamline this trail system, and allow for these redundancies to be restored to the desired plant communities, a number of trails have been identified for closure and removal.

- **Modify maintenance practices related to mowing and maintenance of primary trail system based on proposed design standards**

The primary trail system throughout the park generally consists of a trail surface (either bituminous, or crushed limestone) with a

width of approximately 10', and a mown buffer edge ranging between 2-4' in width per side. Over time, these buffers and in turn, the trail surface itself, tend to widen. Mown trail buffers are required in areas where encroaching woody vegetation may create safety concerns along the trails. In areas of restoration, less frequent mowing should be performed to reduce weed intrusion. Mowing should be performed to reduce vegetation cascading or reducing the usable width of the trail surface. Regular assessments should be performed to determine trail buffer mowing locations.

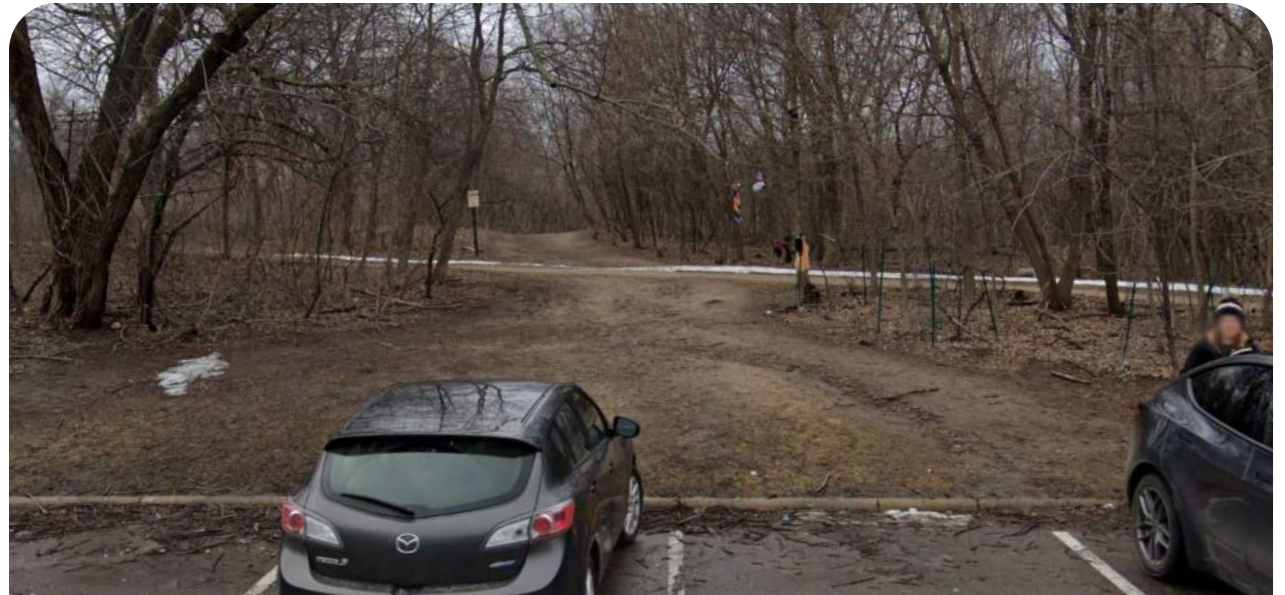
- **Formalize connection between trail and main parking lot**

Currently, visitors who access the park from the main parking lot traverse a dirt path to get from

the parking lot to the park's trail system. This foot traffic through the once established lawn has led to issues with erosion, degraded vegetation, and is not compliant with accessibility standards. To remedy the current conditions, a paved sidewalk connection should be implemented in this location.



*Informal trail in the park*



*Existing informal connection to nearby primary trail located just south of the main parking lot area*

## MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Replace existing timber pedestrian bridge on the north end of the park**

The current pedestrian bridge providing access across Purgatory Creek, constructed of timber framing and timber abutments, has experienced issues related to durability, and has been undermined due to erosion of the adjacent creek banks. This area has routinely seen issues related to stormwater release (both superficial and from piped water), use by dogs for recreation, and general bank erosion. When determined necessary, the existing timber bridge should be replaced with a weathered steel bridge that matches the bridge at the south end of the park near Stodola Road. Refer to the design standard section of this document for additional information.

- **Provide signage at park access points, including both vehicular and pedestrian accesses**

Appropriate signage is a key component of ensuring park users are able to safely navigate into and through Purgatory Park. Currently, signage available at the various park access points varies by location. Some locations include park identification signage, park rules, and wayfinding information, some locations lack any signage at all. Signage standards recently completed for the City's park system should be implemented in a consistent fashion, such that users from all access points are able to access the same information, and understand when they have

arrived at Purgatory Park.

## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Use the trail design standards identified in this document for future trail system expansion projects**

Consistency in trail design throughout the park is important from both a user and maintenance perspective. Consistency in design helps to establish a sense of place, and set the users expectations related to the park's trail facilities. Similarly, design consistency allows for simplified maintenance regimes for city staff. Design standards for the primary and informal trail systems in the park have been coordinated with City staff, and are included in Section 6 of this document. Any future trail expansion efforts should conform to these identified standards.

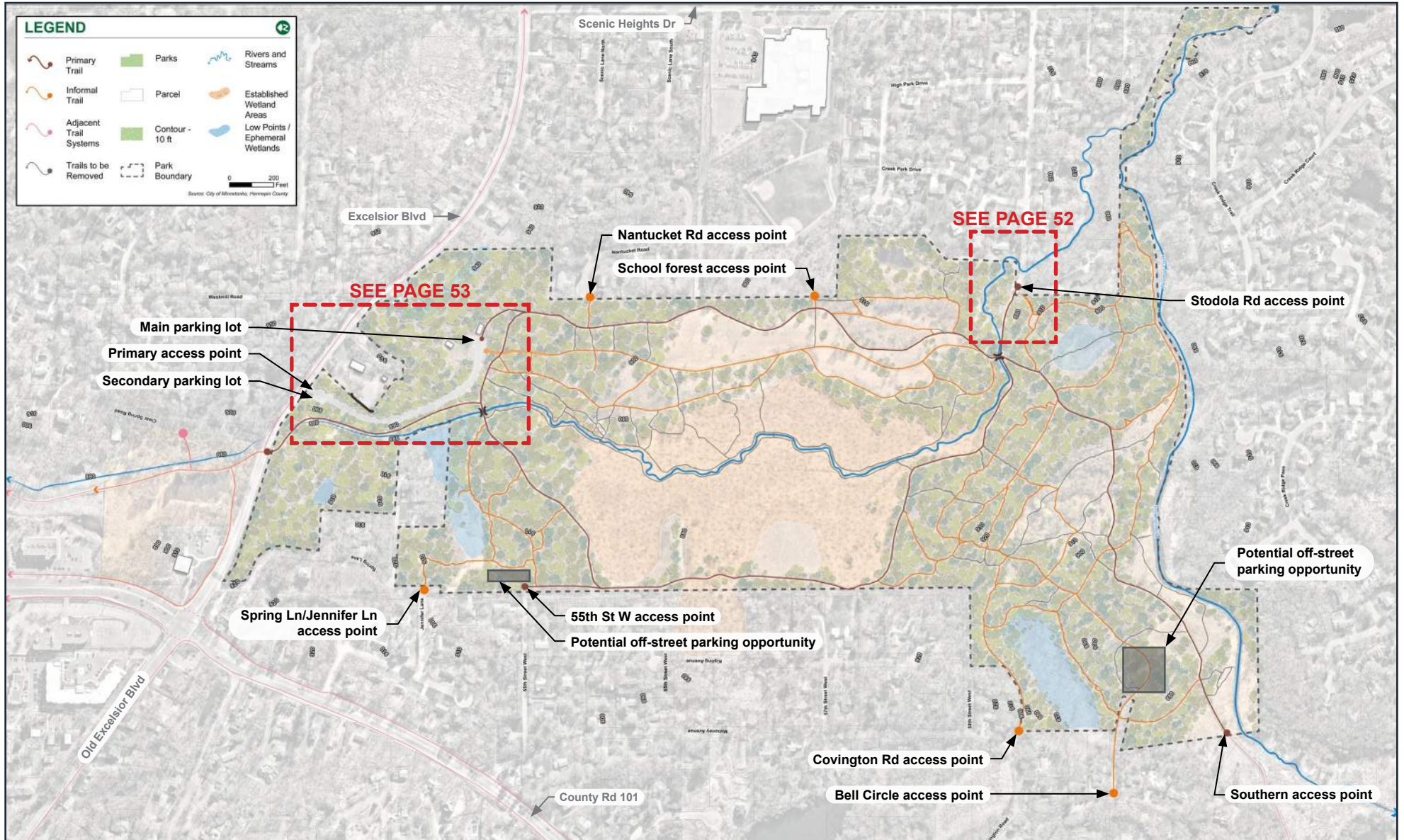


*Timber pedestrian bridge near main parking lot*



*Frequently flooded trail on west side of park*

# PARK ACCESS + CIRCULATION MAP





# 4. PARK ACCESS - VEHICULAR

Feedback collected during the planning process was generally split when it came to vehicular access and parking demand at the park. During several site visits, the project team observed that the main parking lot was routinely full, with cars often parking along the extents of the entry drive, presenting challenges for vehicular circulation, and emergency access. Similarly, the cul-de-sac on Stodola Road was observed to be heavily used for parking as well. As such, several measures were identified to improve circulation, expand parking offerings, and mitigate safety concerns.

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



I generally park along the entrance road or in the main parking lot. I feel there is adequate parking at Purgatory Park!

The informal parking area at the Stodola Road cul-de-sac should be made into a more formal parking lot for visitors to use.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### SHORT-TERM

- Undertake a formal study to reconfigure the Stodola Road cul-de-sac parking area

### MID-TERM

- Enhancements to the park's main park access off Excelsior Boulevard

### LONG-TERM

- Review and prioritize other park access points for potential parking expansion
- Expansion of parking at the Red Barn site
  - » See Red Barn site recommendations section



Stodola Road cul-de-sac parking area



Existing drainage issues along main entrance road adversely affecting nearby trails, vegetation and curbs

## SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Undertake a formal study to reconfigure the Stodola Road cul-de-sac parking area**

The terminus of Stodola Road on the east side of Purgatory Park, while not a formal park facility, routinely sees demand for parking for park visitors. The area, accessed through adjacent residential neighborhoods, is fairly confined by private property and driveway accesses, Purgatory Creek, wetlands within the park boundary, and adjacent slopes, leaving a relatively small footprint within to construct any formal parking areas. One concept for the area, as shown in the diagram on page 50, formalizes the cul-de-sac into a parking lot with a capacity of 11 vehicles. While purely conceptual, the City should further study demand for parking in this area, and initiate efforts to develop a parking area plan for the Stodola Access.

## MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Enhancements to the park's main park access off Excelsior Boulevard**

A number of issues were discussed related to the existing park access road, parking lot, and surrounding context. Concerns include a narrow driveway, dead end parking lot that is routinely at capacity, emergency vehicle access, access to amenities from the parking area, and stormwater treatment of parking lot runoff. The preliminary concept plan on page 51 shows a reconfigured main park access

that includes the following attributes that aim to alleviating these concerns:

- **Parallel parking bump-out areas along the main park drive** to allow overflow parking but maintain clear access for emergency vehicles. These bump outs would be strategically placed in locations where adjacent grade would allow. While not increasing overall parking counts, this measure would increase safety.
- **Expansion of the main parking lot further toward the park access.** This would be accomplished by expanding the parking area into adjacent turf areas, where grade allows. We estimate this would add 22 additional parking stalls.
- **Addition of a vehicular turnaround at the end of the main parking lot.** Currently, cars that enter into the full lot have to back out, or use ADA stall access areas to turn around causing an unsafe environment for pedestrians. The Red Barn site could be a potential area to relocate restrooms. Should that occur, the location of the existing restroom facility could be modified to include a vehicular turnaround at the terminus of the main park drive and parking lot. Sizing for emergency vehicle turnaround should also be considered.
- **Implementation of best management practices adjacent to the main parking lot.** During site visits, stormwater runoff was observed backing up into the entry drive, and also flowing directly into

Purgatory Creek, causing safety and environmental concerns. Reconfiguration of the parking lot should also include stormwater BMP's such as bioretention basins to provide storage capacity, and treatment prior to water release into Purgatory Creek.

## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Review and prioritize other park access points for potential parking expansion**

While not currently a priority, additional demand from park users and shifting programming in the park, may warrant additional off-street parking opportunities. Several other park access points have been discussed for potential additional park access and parking facilities. These would allow easier vehicular access to more remote areas of the park, that are currently accessible on foot. These areas and initial considerations include:

55th Street West: More dedicated parking facilities could be provided here. Access to this location is convenient and in close proximity to County Road 101.

Bell Circle: Located on the southern end of Purgatory Park, the site under consideration is relatively flat, and once housed a residence that has been removed. This area, accessible from city owned access off Bell Circle, could house a small secondary parking lot, providing more immediate access to

the parks features on the south end. Vehicular access to this area is more removed, requiring users to navigate from County Road 101, to Covington Road, and down Bell Circle. Due to the nature of access to this area, the existing road network, and quiet character of the neighborhood, this would be the lowest priority for additional parking.

- **Expansion of parking at the Red Barn site**

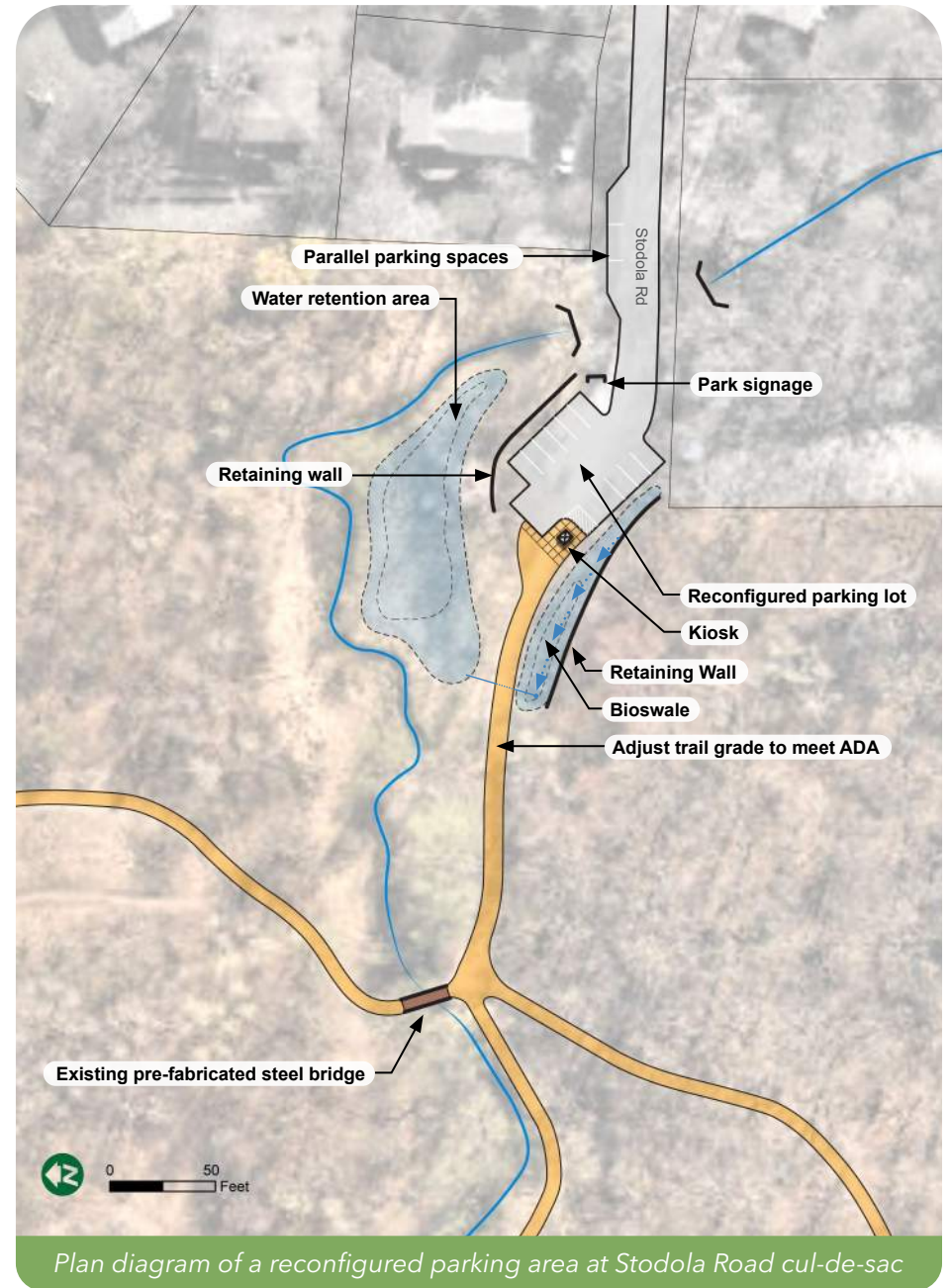
Additional parking at the Red Barn site is a viable option for parking expansion in Purgatory Park. This parking would likely be shared with users of the Excelsior Drive trail, and any other future facilities incorporated into the site.



*Trail to Stodola Road cul-de-sac parking area*

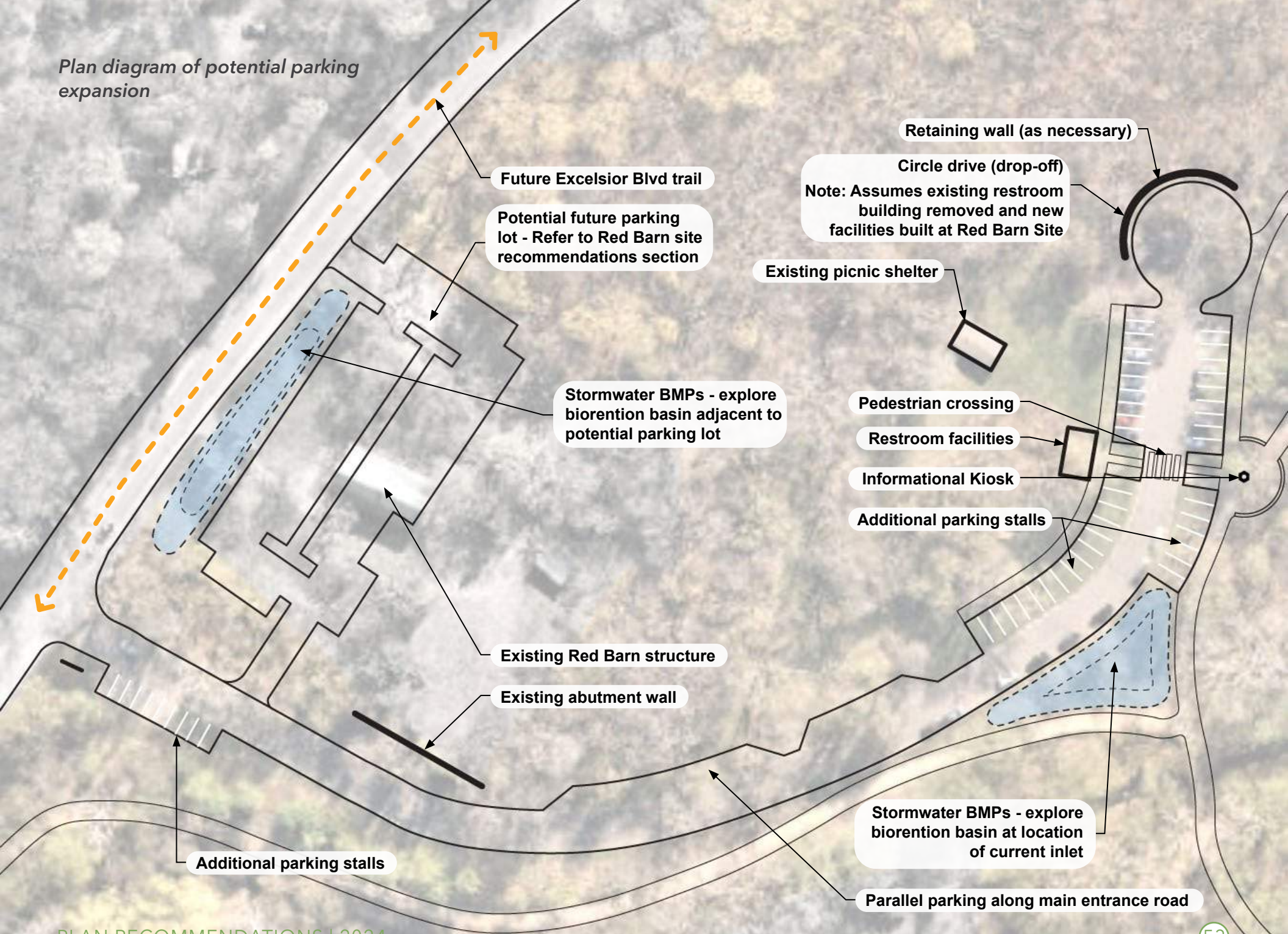


*Informal parking at the Stodola Road cul-de-sac*



*Plan diagram of a reconfigured parking area at Stodola Road cul-de-sac*

Plan diagram of potential parking expansion



# 5. THE RED BARN SITE

The Red Barn site encompasses approximately 1.23 acres of land directly adjacent to Excelsior Blvd, and the primary Purgatory Park entrance drive. The site is highly visible and well-recognized by the public due to its iconic red barn structure. As noted in the inventory and analysis section, initial review indicates the barn itself likely has structural deficiencies that preclude its reuse as a formal venue, however, further study is warranted to ensure condition.

A number of opportunities for redevelopment of the property came up during the project's public engagement process. Initial efforts related to the site should focus on comprehensive review of the barn structure, formally incorporating the property into the Purgatory Park boundary, and preparing the site for redevelopment. Long term, the site offers tremendous potential, with interests ranging from development of a Climate Center facility to development as a trailhead, parking lot and additional usable park space for visitors to Purgatory Park.

## Community Feedback



*For many years the red barn has been a landmark in Purgatory Park. I'd love to see the barn stabilized and repurposed in the future.*



*With Purgatory Park's status as a nature preserve, it would be beneficial to establish a nature center on the Red Barn site to educate visitors and provide additional volunteer opportunities.*

*Purgatory Park is in need of new parking opportunities. Because the Red Barn site is currently underutilized, a new parking lot in this area would be great!*



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### SHORT-TERM

- Formally incorporate the Red Barn property into the Purgatory Park boundary
- Undertake a comprehensive structural review of the red barn

### MID-TERM

- Further study of the development of the Red Barn site as a Climate and Nature Center

### LONG-TERM

- **Redevelopment of the site**
  - » **Redevelopment Scenario A:** Incorporation of Climate and Nature Center facility into Purgatory Park
  - » **Redevelopment Scenario B:** Develop property with additional park amenities including a trailhead, additional parking, and restroom/picnic facilities

## SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Formally incorporate the Red Barn site property into Purgatory Park**

The Red Barn property is owned and maintained by the City of Minnetonka but is not formally recognized as part of Purgatory Park. While there are several potential uses being considered, and interest from a number of community groups and residents, this initial step would ensure the property is managed to a similar level as the rest of the park.

- **Undertake a comprehensive structural review of the red barn**

Several years ago, the City hired a consultant to review the condition of the red barn structure. Results of this analysis indicated the barn likely had structural deficiencies that would ultimately preclude re-use of the barn as a public facility. While it is anticipated the structure is likely not usable, a more comprehensive review of the structure should be undertaken to confirm these assumptions and determine if there are components of the structure that could be salvaged and used for future work on the site.

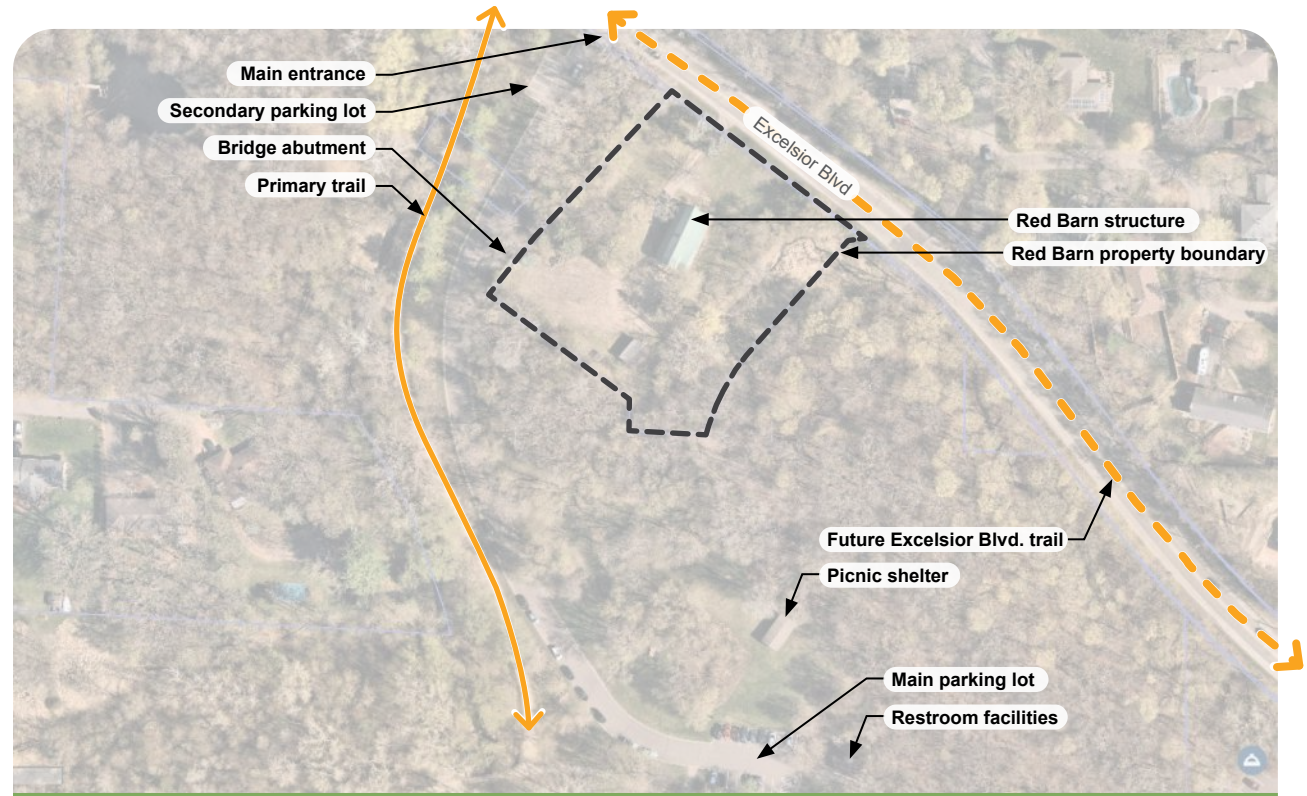
## MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Further study of development of the Red Barn site as a Climate and Nature Center Facility**

Based on feedback collected during the engagement process, there is strong interest in exploring use of the Red Barn site to house a public use facility such as a nature center. Feedback on this use referenced the site's location adjacent to Purgatory Park. Because the park is classified as a nature preserve, this facility would offer opportunities for education and opportunities to showcase sustainable management practices.



The Red Barn



Context map of Red Barn site and nearby amenities

Before committing to such a facility, it is anticipated the City would undertake a more comprehensive study of their existing facilities, demand, revenue potential and construction, operations, and management costs associated with a new facility. If constructed, it is anticipated the center could include trailhead facilities, including publicly accessible restrooms and supporting parking facilities on-site. An example facility referenced during the engagement process is shown to the right (Westwood Hills Nature Center, St. Louis Park).

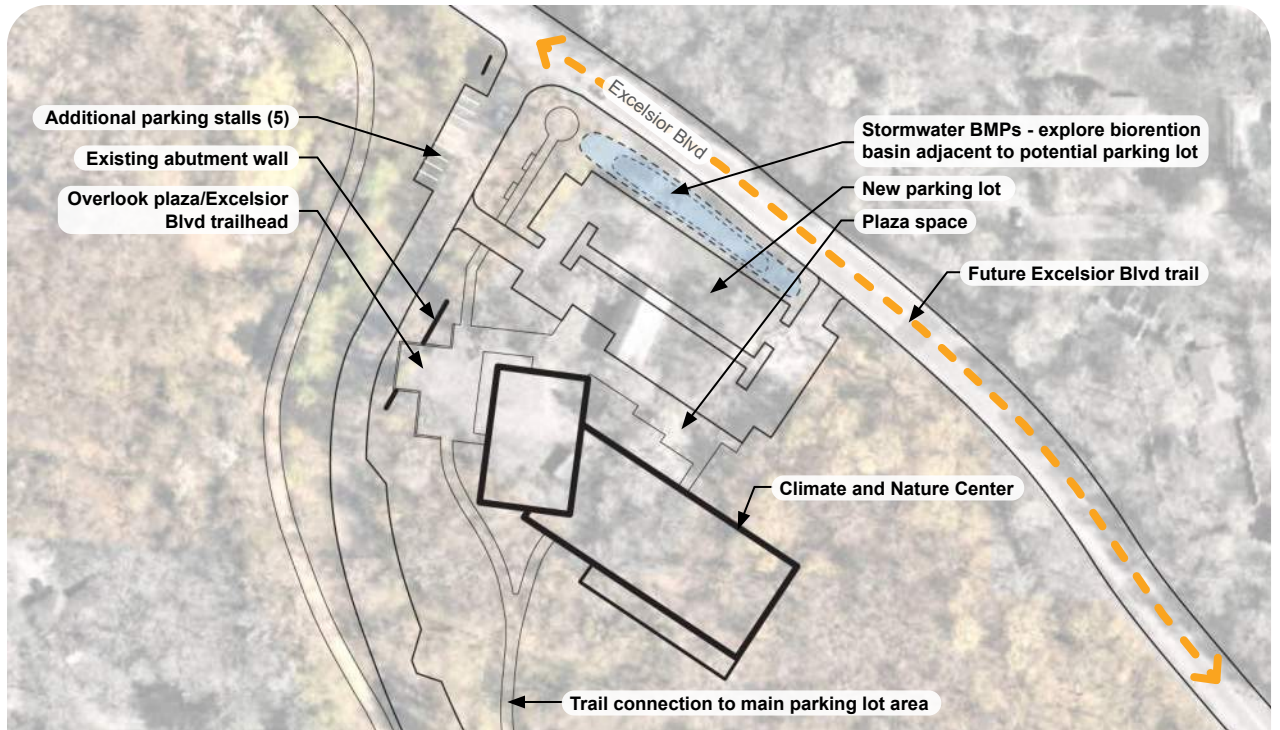


Westwood Hills Nature Center in St. Louis Park

## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Redevelopment of the site**
  - » **Redevelopment Scenario A:** Incorporation of Climate and Nature Center facility into Purgatory Park
  - » **Redevelopment Scenario B:** Develop property with a trailhead, additional parking, and restroom and picnic facilities

Based on outcomes of a future Climate and Nature Center study, the Red Barn site should be redeveloped in support of Purgatory Park and Excelsior Blvd trail users. Anticipated redevelopment of the site could include two potential options: Scenario A would involve the redevelopment of the site as a Climate and Nature Center facility, whereas Scenario B would involve the redevelopment of the site as a trailhead facility with parking, signage, public restrooms and other supporting amenities. While conceptual in nature, two scenarios for redevelopment of the site were generated and are presented to the right and on the next page.



Redevelopment Scenario A: Red Barn site plan diagram with Climate + Nature Center incorporation

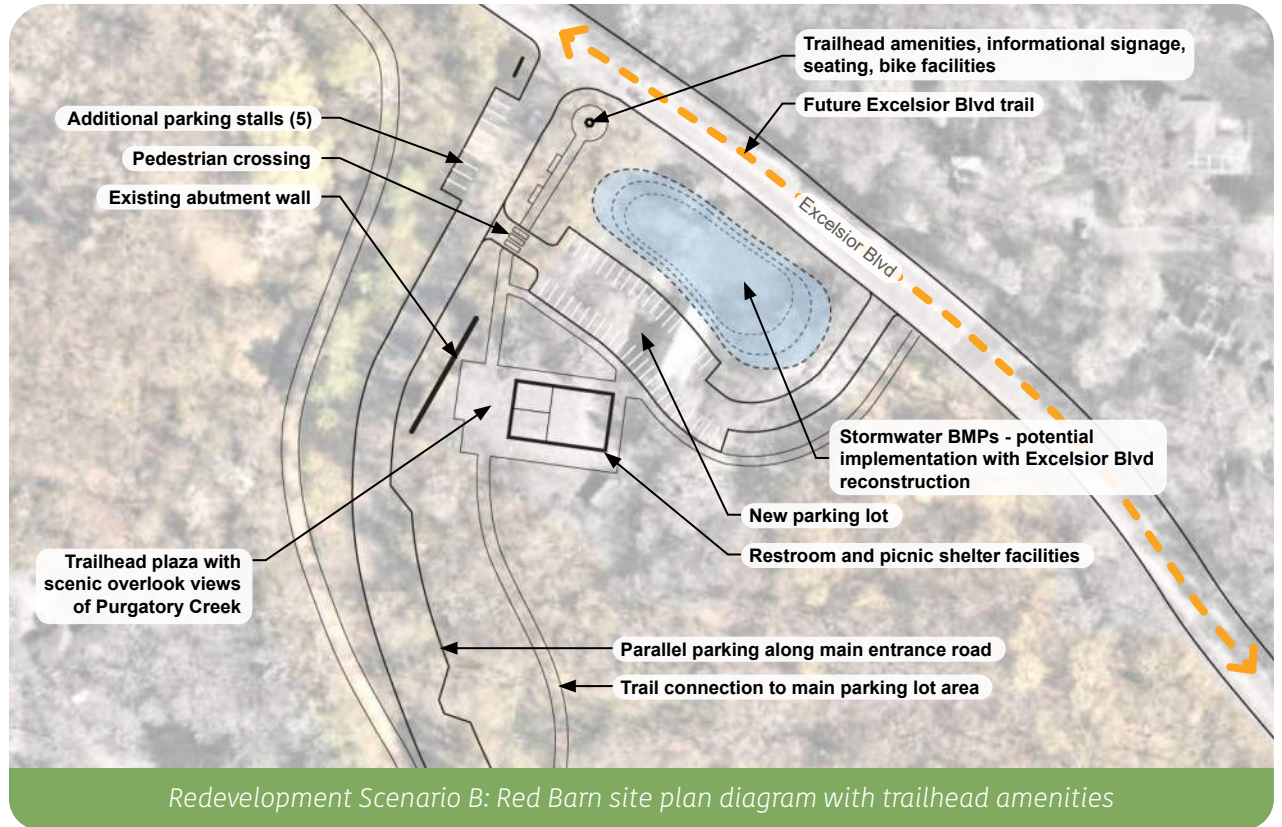
### Redevelopment Scenario A:

Incorporation of a Climate and Nature Center Facility into Purgatory Park

Redevelopment Scenario A envisions the Red Barn site being redeveloped into a Climate and Nature facility. While highly conceptual in nature, the concept on the previous page shows a potential configuration for the center and its supporting amenities.

The concept shows a large, shared-use parking lot situated between Excelsior Blvd and the Climate and Nature Center building. Constructed with sustainability in mind, the parking lot would utilize stormwater management practices, including bioretention basins around the parking lot's perimeter and large landscape islands internal to the lot. The building itself would be nestled into the existing slope, where the Red Barn site drops off into the park's main parking lot and trailhead area. The southern exposure of the building would allow opportunities for solar energy capture and passive heating of the facility during the winter.

With the potential construction of a trail along Excelsior Blvd, the building could also provide public restrooms, water fountains and other amenities needed by cyclists and pedestrians. The concept envisions a shared plaza space on the west side of the building that would incorporate bike parking, wayfinding signage, bike racks, and other amenities. This shared plaza would also provide a connection through the site into Purgatory Park and the park's trail network. As a nature preserve, the park offers a great



opportunity to demonstrate sustainable infrastructure design and management practices, and highlight the native plant communities of the region.

### Redevelopment Scenario B:

Develop property into a trailhead, additional parking, and restroom and picnic facilities

Preliminary plans for reconstruction of Excelsior Blvd indicate the potential for construction of a regional trail connection through the corridor, running directly adjacent to Purgatory Park and the Red Barn site. Development of a trailhead in

this location would provide additional amenities for trail and park users alike. Anticipated amenities at a trailhead include wayfinding signage, seating, bike racks, trash receptacles, and potentially public restroom facilities.



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# 06

## DESIGN STANDARDS

Since its inception, Purgatory Park has been committed to providing an accessible, sustainable and pleasing environment for its many visitors to enjoy. In order to fulfill and enhance the mission, values and historical integrity of the park, a series of responsible landscape design standards must be defined. These design standards, which are meant to act as a guideline for any future site work, restoration projects or new construction, will ensure that Purgatory Park remains both functional and visually aesthetic for many years to come.

The following section of this report provides a set of parameters to follow as park managers/staff make design decisions regarding hardscape surfaces, softscape elements and various site furnishings within the park. Not only will these design standards inform the location, installation and maintenance of existing and proposed site facilities, they will also serve as a user manual for park managers/staff to consult on recommendations for standard materials, construction details and policy language.

# OVERVIEW

To better protect and strengthen the legacies of environmental stewardship and low-impact recreation that make Purgatory Park such a unique asset to the Minnetonka community, design standards have been developed for the various site amenities present in the park. These include **primary and informal trails; boardwalks, bridges and timber stairs; parking; memorial trees and benches; and signage.**

Design standards are presented with a text summary, supporting graphics consisting of images, standard construction details or informational tables, anticipated unit costs for implementation, and estimated life cycles. This information is intended to help city staff maintain consistency of treatments throughout Purgatory Park, to budget and plan for improvement projects, and to provide a high quality park setting.

Implementation of these standards should be reviewed by appropriate agencies to ensure they conform to any regulatory requirements that may be present. These agencies include but are not limited to:

- City of Minnetonka
- Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



*Limestone trail and natural vegetation*

# 1. PRIMARY AND INFORMAL TRAILS

## TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

As park managers develop future primary and informal trails in Purgatory Park, it will be important to first identify activities to be conducted during the life cycle of the trail. The Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CUVA) Sustainable Trail Guidelines (2012) document is a great resource that provides a series of planning steps and activities to follow during trail development. They include:

### 1. Identify Trail Design Team

- The trail design team's primary purpose is to serve as advisors and reviewers during the trail planning, design and construction process
- Generally consists of park landscape architects, park engineers, natural resource and restoration planners, and trail maintenance supervisors

### 2. Determine Intent of Trail

- Determine the trail development level and its intended use to guide its planning and design

### 3. Perform a General Site Assessment for Trail Alignment

- Conduct a site visit at the potential trail area to identify challenges and opportunities for its general alignment

- Identify sensitive areas and pertinent issues specific to the site that will need to be addressed during its design and construction
- Identify and administer compliance requirements

### 4. Develop Initial Site and Trail Plan

- Develop an initial site trail plan as a result of assessment of general conditions, field surveys and consultation with the Trail Design Team
- Develop final general layout site plan and general cost estimate

### 5. Flag the Trail Alignment Corridor

- Flag the proposed trail layout in the field
- Review the layout for cultural and ecological considerations

### 6. Finalize Construction Plan

- Finalize specifications, cost estimates, construction techniques and equipment guidance

### 7. Construct Trail

### 8. Formalize Management and Maintenance Plan

- Identify the schedule and staffing/volunteers needed for maintenance and monitoring

## TRAIL PLACEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

According to the CUVA Sustainable Trail Guidelines (2012) document, it is important to avoid placing new and existing trails in the following areas/conditions:

- Sensitive areas where a rare and/or endangered plant or animal species may exist
- A habitat known for a rare or endangered species
- Seasonal nesting areas

If sensitive habitats exist within the trail planning area, the establishment of buffers based upon habitat sensitivity shall be developed where trails are excluded, where temporary seasonal closures would be required, and where limitations on seasonal construction exist.

When it comes to river and stream crossings, primary and informal trails will need to consider the wetland and creek buffer zones or setbacks during site planning and design. Trail locations should be established outside of the wetland and creek function buffer zone whenever feasible. In order to reduce negative impacts to rivers and streams, the number of trail crossings over them should be kept to a minimum or avoided whenever possible. When stream crossing is the only viable option, trails should be designed and

constructed on a gentle grade at no greater than 8%. Additionally, stream and river crossings should be located at riffle areas instead of pools or meanders, as riffles are relatively stable, have the coarsest substrate, and can best accommodate a crossing. Also, trails should not be located parallel to a stream/waterway for an extended distance; rather, the trail should move toward and away from the waterway at appropriate intervals. Any trail placement in designated wetland zones should be avoided whenever possible. If a trail is constructed within a wetland, a boardwalk system is recommended.

Another important consideration during trail development and placement is existing drainage patterns. If a trail is not placed in coordination with existing drainage patterns, it is likely that the trail will be damaged and widened over time as trail users attempt to avoid puddles and muddy conditions. Park managers should avoid placing trails on primary drainage paths and should instead utilize contour trail design when possible.

Additional considerations when developing new trails or improving existing trails include vegetation and disturbed/developed areas. New and existing trails should avoid areas under restoration or containing high quality ecosystems with high diversity and quality; the alignment of trails should reduce fragmentation of existing blocks of woodlands whenever possible. Where trails are proposed in disturbed or previously developed areas, there are a number of

Table 1: Design guidance for primary and informal trails

<b>DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR PRIMARY AND INFORMAL TRAILS*</b>			
<b>TRAIL CLASS</b>		<b>Informal Trails</b>	<b>Primary Trails</b>
<b>TREAD WIDTH</b>		12" - 18"	8'
<b>TREAD SURFACE/MATERIAL</b>		Native with limited or no grading	Crushed limestone, asphalt, or permeable stabilized materials where feasible. Stream crossings are typically structures to accommodate high trail volume including bicycles
<b>TRAIL GRADE</b>	<b>Target Range (&gt;90% of trail)</b>	< 18%	< 4%; where greater than 4%, alternative materials to aggregate should be considered in design and maintenance
	<b>Short Pitch Max. (up to 200' lengths)</b>	25%	8%
	<b>Max. Pitch Density</b>	< 5% of trail	< 3% of trail
<b>CROSS-SLOPE</b>	<b>Target Range</b>	5% - 10%	3% - 5%
	<b>Max.</b>	Up to natural side-slope	
<b>DESIGN CLEARING</b>	<b>Width</b>	6 - 12" outside of tread edge	24" outside of trail edge
	<b>Height</b>	6'	8' - 9'
<b>DESIGN TURNS</b>	<b>Radius</b>	No minimum	8' - 12'
<b>CONSTRUCTED FEATURES &amp; TRAIL ELEMENTS (BRIDGES, WALLS, RAISED TRAIL, STEPS, ETC.)</b>		Structures are minimal to non-existent; where they do exist, they are limited in size, scale and number. Structures where protection of trail infrastructure and resources are needed. Natural drainage and infiltration practices are utilized. Primitive foot crossing where applicable.	Structures are present and substantial. Trail infrastructure meets ADA requirements. Substantial trail bridges are used at water crossings. Drainage structures are present.
<b>TRAIL AMENITIES</b>		None/Limited/Infrequent for safety and resource protection purposes. Trailheads/Visitor Services limited.	Amenities exist for safety and resource protection and visitor services. Trailheads/Visitor Services are present with full amenities.
<b>TRAIL SIGNAGE</b>		Minimum for basic direction. Limited to resource protection. Limited interpretive signs.	Regulation, resource protection. Directional and park informational/interpretive signs
<b>TRAIL MANAGEMENT</b>		Low level use, trail challenging and typically for mid to highly skilled users. Limited accessible use.	High use, especially for users with minimal skill and experience. Easy travel with no/very limited challenges. Fully accessible.

\* Derived from the Cuyahoga Valley Nation Park (CUVA) Sustainable Trail Guidelines, 2012

considerations to keep in mind, including:

- Presence of utilities
- Established right of ways
- Remaining structures
- Cultural or archaeological significance
- Presence of hazardous materials or contaminated conditions

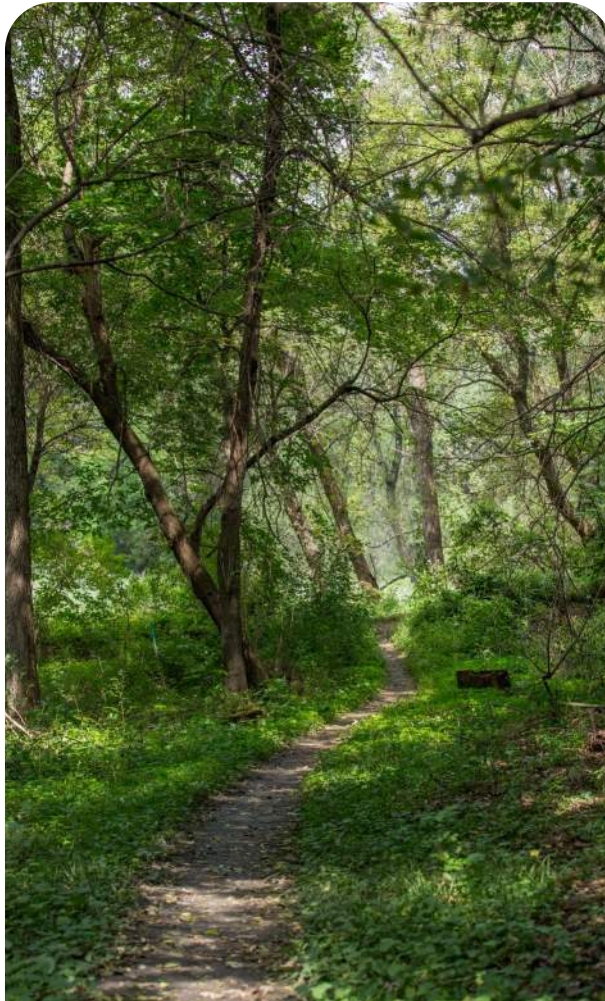
If a trail is to be closed or a section of it is to be relocated, the closed/old trail should be restored to a condition that is consistent with the site's natural resources. Included below are recommended steps to take when reverting a trail to a natural condition and avoiding the continued use of the trail:

- Tilling or scarifying the retired tread so that new plants can seed themselves (tilling at least 2" deep is recommended)
- Planting or transplanting from old route native species to avoid invasive plant issues
- Disguising and blocking the corridor with leaf litter or other natural material to eliminate the visual corridor and the risk of continual use on the closed section of trail.

The table on this and the previous page provides design guidance for the two main types of trails that exist in Purgatory Park, including informal and primary trails.

<p><b>TRAIL MAINTENANCE INDICATORS AND INTENSITY*</b></p>	<p>Routine annual maintenance. Maintenance in response to reports of unusual resource problems requiring repair/resource protection/trail safety</p>	<p>Routine annual maintenance. Condition improvement maintenance typically performed annually. Targeted high-level of accessibility. Trail prepared for earliest opportunity to use in-season. Maintenance in response to reports of unusual resource problems requiring repair/resource protection/trail safety.</p>
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\* Continued from previous page



Informal Trail in Purgatory Park



Primary Trail in Purgatory Park

## BITUMINOUS TRAIL (PRIMARY)



### UNIT COST

\$40/square yard

### ANTICIPATED LIFE CYCLE

15 years

## LIMESTONE/AGGREGATE TRAIL (PRIMARY)



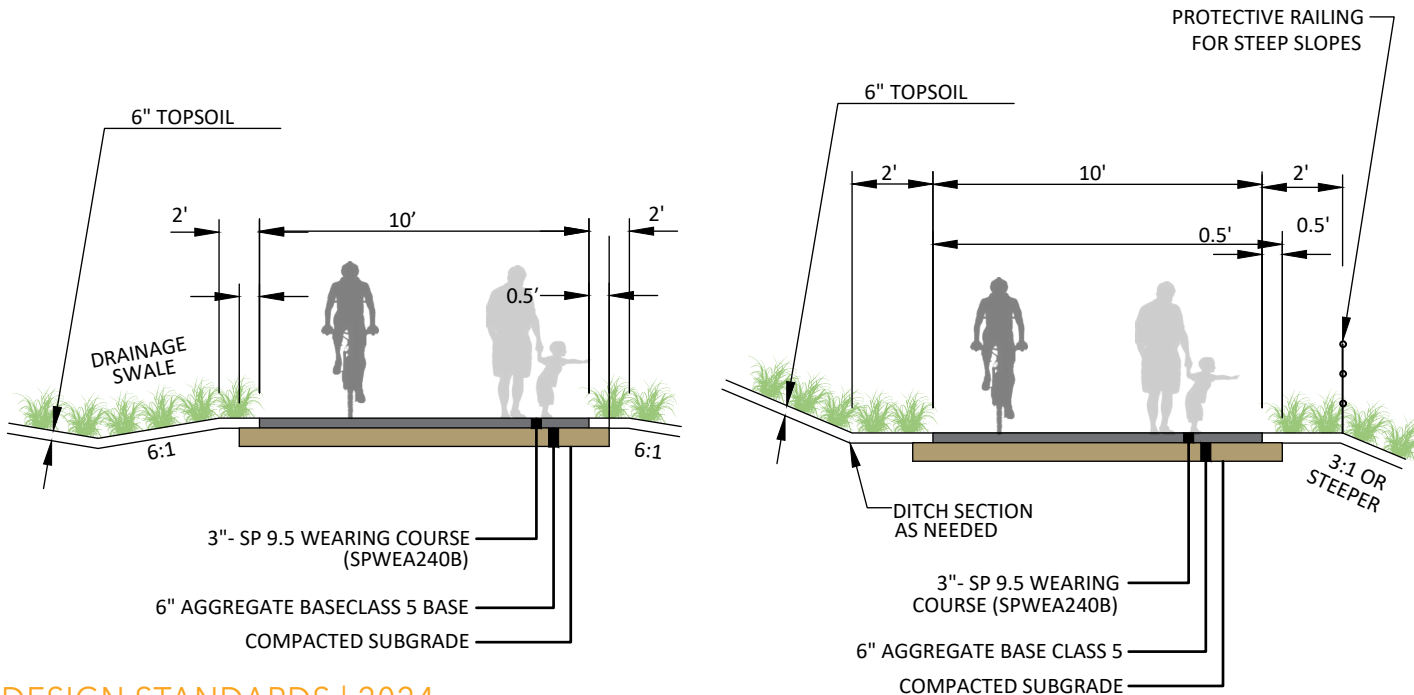
### UNIT COST

\$175/cubic yard

### ANTICIPATED LIFE CYCLE

10 years

## TYPICAL SECTIONS: TRAIL CONSTRUCTION IN FLAT AND SIDE SLOPE LOCATIONS



### NOTES:

PROVIDE 2' CLEAR ZONE ADJACENT TO TRAIL FREE OF FIXED OBSTRUCTIONS.

IF CRUSHED LIMESTONE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION, PLACE 3" CRUSHED LIMESTONE IN PLACE OF BITUMINOUS, AND CLASS A AGGREGATE BASE IN PLACE OF CLASS 5.

CRUSHED LIMESTONE TO BE 3/8" LIMESTONE SCREENINGS, COMPACTED TO 95%.

# 2. BRIDGES, BOARDWALKS + STAIRS

## BRIDGES

Bridges play a vital role in facilitating circulation through wet, muddy or marshy lands, as well as over streams, rivers and other waterways. Purgatory Park features two pedestrian bridge crossings over Purgatory Creek, both of which help visitors get from one area of the park to another. The first pedestrian bridge, located just west of the main parking lot and entrance road into the park, can be classified as a wooden bridge, whereas the second pedestrian bridge, located a few hundred feet west of the Stodola Road cul-de-sac parking area, can be classified as a pre-fabricated steel bridge. The pre-fabricated steel bridge was originally supplied by Continental, which has since been bought out by Contech Engineered Solutions.



Timber bridge near main parking lot

Table 2: Wetland evaluation for trails

WETLAND EVALUATION FOR TRAILS*		
WETLAND CATEGORY	DEFINITION**	RECOMMENDED ACTION
<b>CATEGORY 1</b>	Supports minimal wildlife habitat and minimal hydrological and recreational functions. Does not provide critical habitat for threatened, rare or endangered species and may have predominance of non-native species. Limited for restoration.	Use of boardwalk systems are required and designed with minimal impact to wetland.
<b>CATEGORY 2</b>	Supports moderate wildlife habitat and hydrological and recreational functions. Dominated by native species but typically do not support threatened, rare or endangered species.	Full restriction to trail installation is recommended. If the trail cannot support an alternative route and have high interpretive value, a trail within 25 feet of the wetland shall use a boardwalk system with minimal impact. Each Category 2 wetland should be evaluated on site by the park ecologist or wetland biologist to determine its impact and options for implementation.
<b>CATEGORY 3</b>	Supports high levels of diversity and high quality wildlife habitat, hydrological and recreational functions. Contains high levels of diversity, high proportion of native species and provides habitat for threatened or endangered species.	Full restriction to trail installation is recommended. If the trail cannot support an alternative route and has a high interpretive value, a trail within 75 feet of the wetland shall use a boardwalk system with minimal impact. Each Category 3 wetland should be evaluated on site by the park ecologist or wetland biologist to determine its impact and options for implementation.

\* Derived from the Cuyahoga Valley Nation Park (CUVA) Sustainable Trail Guidelines, 2012

\*\* Based on the Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3745-1-54 (C)(1)



## BOARDWALKS

Purgatory Park does not currently feature any boardwalks, although the park does have a number of wetland areas in which a boardwalk could be constructed to facilitate movement throughout the park that may help reduce damage to existing natural resources. The CUVA Sustainable Trail Guidelines document splits wetlands into three categories, differentiated by the amount of wildlife habitat and hydrological and recreational functions they support. See [Table XX](#) for more information on each category.

If a trail is constructed within a wetland, a boardwalk system is recommended. The design for the boardwalk should provide a layout that minimizes the following:

- The width of the boardwalk tread
- The number and size of pilings needed for excavation
- The use of best practices that minimize the size of excavation

If a boardwalk is to be constructed over streams or rivers, the crossings should span the channel of the stream or river and any boardwalk posts or fill should be kept above the ordinary high water mark of the channels.

Additionally, trail or boardwalk construction in or near wetlands should consider the following practices to minimize impacts to aquatic resources:

- Construct during winter if feasible
- Minimize width of temporary access roads for construction access

Based on the CUVA Sustainable Trail Guidelines, further considerations for the construction and implementation of boardwalks and bridges include:

- The scale, width and materials for structures should be compatible with trail use, trail experience and minimizing resource impacts
- Span of bridges should aim not to install piers or footers into waterway
- Spans greater than 24 feet should examine alternate material from wood to maintain its long-term sustainability
- A minimum bridge width should match the width of the trail
- Railings, materials and styles should be considered for the level of use, ADA requirements, proximity and characteristics of trail
- Cultural landscape and historic characteristics of the area should be considered

## TIMBER STAIRS

When site constraints prevent trail construction at or less than the maximum sustainable grade (assume 15%) by using curvilinear alignments or turns, steps can be an appropriate design solution. Additionally, steps may be a favorable design option when the existing ground material where trail construction is planned isn't stable enough to retain its form without containment, or where large obstacles such as tree roots and rocks must be built over, instead of through. Trail steps can be constructed in long continuous runs, or in shorter segments with standard

trail construction connections between.

Currently, an existing timber staircase is present in Purgatory Park near Stodola Road. This staircase, leading users from a primary trail at the base, to an informal trail network and lookout point at the top, uses timber construction, with aggregate treads. Concern has been expressed regarding this construction method, due to the aggregate material washing away or settling over time, leading to rutting and potential trip hazards. In lieu of this standard, a more comprehensive construction of timber risers and treads is proposed for the park.

While stairs are a viable solution to addressing grade issues on the park's trail system, it is recommended that trail alignment alternatives be explored that don't require this more intrusive and costly intervention. In addition to cost considerations, trail stairs are often seen as detracting from the natural environment that they are set in and intended to provide access to.



*Timber stairs on east side of park*

## PRE-FABRICATED STEEL BRIDGE



### UNIT COST

CONTECH CONTINENTAL PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE		
Options	40'x8' Span (Weathered Steel w/ Wood Decking)	\$50,000
	50'x8' Span (Weathered Steel w/ Wood Decking)	\$60,000
Abutments		\$20,000
Install		\$30,000

### ANTICIPATED LIFE CYCLE

Wood decking = 20-25 years  
Overall structure = 50+ years

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Jake Vogel - Senior Bridge Consultant  
Contech Engineered Solutions  
jake.vogel@conteches.com

### GENERAL BRIDGE DESIGN NOTES

- 1) Bridge design is Connector Truss style bridge with underhung floor beam
- 2) Ends are modified from standard design to include an angled member

## TIMBER STAIRS



Example of timber stairs with paver treads



Example of full timber construction

### GENERAL STAIR DESIGN NOTES

- 1) Where soils and site conditions allow for excavation, utilize timber construction with paver treads.
- 2) Where poor soils, or obstacles such as roots, rocks or other prevent on-grade construction, use a raised construction method using full timber construction.

### ANTICIPATED LIFE CYCLE

Wood framing and decking = 20-25 years

## BOARDWALK



MAC Nature Center Area in Crystal, MN

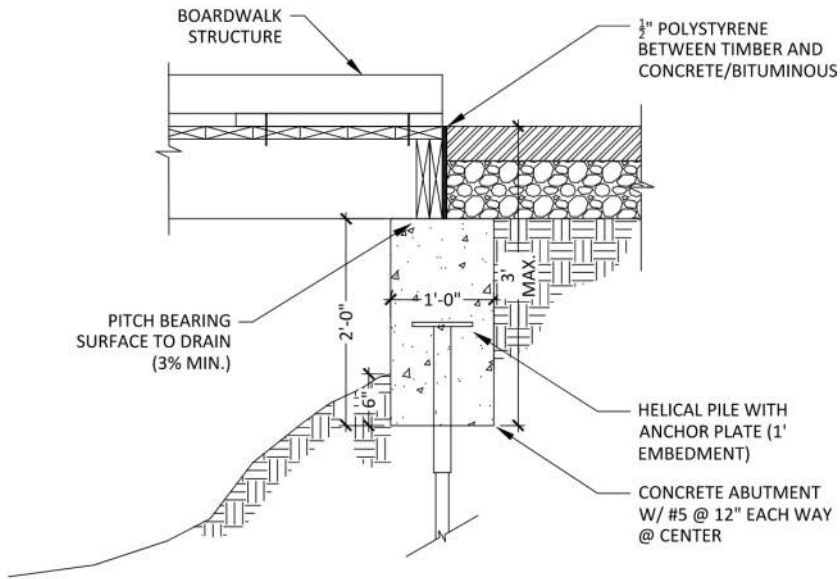
## UNIT COST

Helical Pier	EACH	\$1,500	Assume 2 piers every 10' of length
Concrete Abutment	EACH	\$7,500	At start and end of boardwalk segment
Boardwalk	SQ. FT.	\$40	Timber frame and decking construction, rated for lightweight maintenance vehicles/snow removal

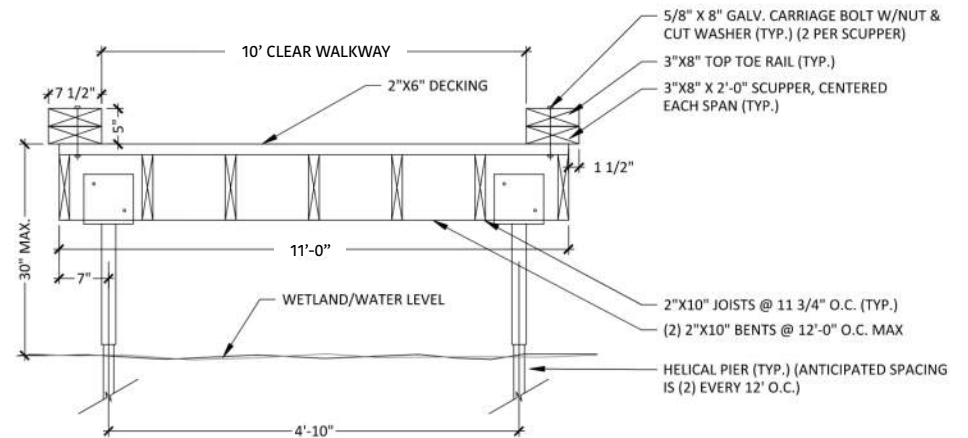
## ANTICIPATED LIFE CYCLE

30 years

## TYPICAL SECTION: BOARDWALK ABUTMENT



## TYPICAL SECTION: BOARDWALK STRUCTURE



### NOTES:

BOARDWALK DESIGN SHOULD BE REVIEWED BY A STRUCTURAL ENGINEER PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION. DESIGN MAY VARY BASED ON FIELD CONDITIONS.

# 3. PARKING

Parking lots in Purgatory Park, including the large primary lot near the restroom building, and small auxiliary lot adjacent to Excelsior Blvd. are constructed of bituminous surfacing, with concrete curb and gutter edge treatment, which is a standard practice in many park applications. These parking lots account for a significant percentage of the impermeable ground cover within the park, and present opportunities to incorporate BMP's in the design that can aid in reducing runoff (increasing infiltration). These paving enhancements can also be coupled with additional stormwater BMP's adjacent to the lots to further enhance water quality and reduce runoff volume and velocity adjacent to Purgatory Creek. Any parking lot improvements should conform to City and other jurisdictional requirements.

## STANDARD PARKING LOT W/ CURB + GUTTER AND BITUMINOUS SURFACING

### UNIT COST

CONCRETE CURB + GUTTER	LINEAR FT.	\$30
BITUMINOUS PAVING (WITH AGGREGATE BASE)	SQ. FT.	\$15

### ANTICIPATED LIFE CYCLE

15-20 Years

## PERMEABLE PAVER PARKING LOT

### UNIT COST

PERMEABLE PAVER (WITH SUBBASE PREP, DRAINAGE ROCK)	SQ. FT.	\$30
--	---------	------

### ANTICIPATED LIFE CYCLE

15-20 Years



Bituminous surfacing with curb + gutter



Main parking lot at the end of the entry drive



Bituminous drive w/ permeable paver parking

# 4. MEMORIAL TREES + BENCHES

## MEMORIAL TREES

Currently, there are several locations in Purgatory Park that feature memorial trees; however, the park does not follow any specific set of standards for their placement. In the absence of city-wide guidelines for the placement of memorial trees, the following standards and guidelines should be followed as new memorial trees are requested and implemented in Purgatory Park:

- Memorial trees can generally be planted throughout the extents of Purgatory Park, as long as the placement conforms to ongoing maintenance regimes and management plans for the selected location as identified in the
- City's Natural Resources Plan and Community Forest Management Plan documents.
  - » A City Forestry Technician will work with applicants on a case by case basis to identify an appropriate location for tree placement.
- Memorial tree species shall be selected from the approved tree planting list included in the City's Community Forest Management Plan (currently under development), and be reviewed by city forestry staff.

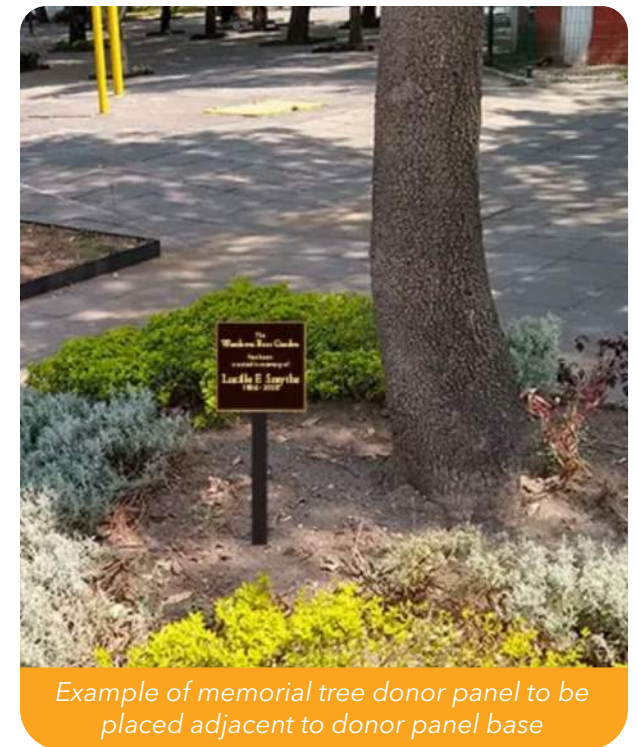
- Memorial tree size shall conform to city standards relative to new tree plantings, as described in the City's Community Forest Management Plan. Size standards are as follows:
  - » 2" caliper, balled & burlap for deciduous trees
  - » 6' height, balled & burlap for coniferous trees
- Memorial trees placed in mowed or maintained areas are eligible for

installation of a donor plaque at the base of the tree. At the time of purchase, applicants can include proposed plaque language for review by city staff

- Upon planting, memorial trees will be maintained by city staff for 10 years. After that period of time, the city reserves the right to change or remove any memorial tree.



Memorial tree (fully-grown) example



Example of memorial tree donor panel to be placed adjacent to donor panel base

## MEMORIAL BENCHES

Similarly, memorial benches are scattered throughout Purgatory Park, including placement adjacent to primary trails and more remotely along the extensive informal trail system. The condition of existing benches varies, with some nearing the end of their lifecycle. Existing benches will be replaced on a case-by-case basis when determined necessary by city staff. As existing benches are replaced and new benches are installed, the following standards shall be adhered to, to the extent possible:

- Generally, memorial benches shall be placed 2' off the edge of the adjacent trail surface. Installations shall include a concrete pad, bench, and where necessary, modular block retaining wall on the perimeter to retain either the back slope or the bench pad itself
  - » When installed adjacent to bituminous trail, the bituminous edge shall be sawn to provide a clean edge for installation of the concrete pad.
  - » When installed adjacent to crushed limestone trail, replace displaced trail surfacing upon completion of bench pad installation. Ensure trail surfacing is compacted to trail design standards.
- Memorial benches shall consist of recycled plastic slats, powder-coated brown framing, with attached donor plaque centered on back-rest.

Benches shall be surface-mounted to concrete pad.

- City staff will work with applicants on a case-by-case basis to determine placement of future memorial benches within the park.
- Upon installation, city staff will maintain memorial benches for 10

years. After that period of time, the city reserves the right to change or remove any memorial bench.

- Prior to bench removal, attempt will be made to contact the applicant via the contact information on file with the application.



*Example of memorial bench in the park*

## MEMORIAL BENCHES



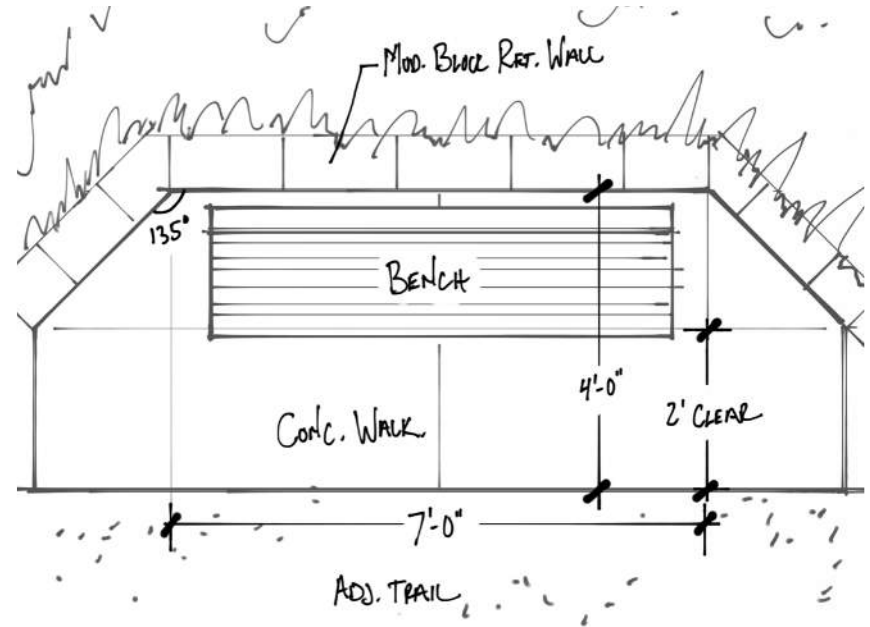
### UNIT COST

BENCH	EACH	\$1,800
CONCRETE PAD	LUMP SUM	\$500
RETAINING WALL	SQ. FT.	\$125
3-COURSE WALL	LUMP SUM	\$3,000

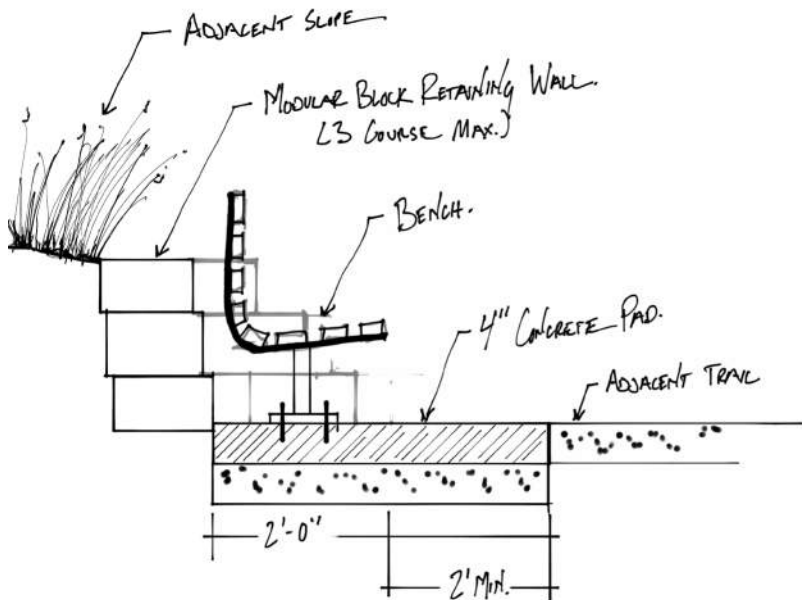
### ANTICIPATED LIFE CYCLE

20 Years

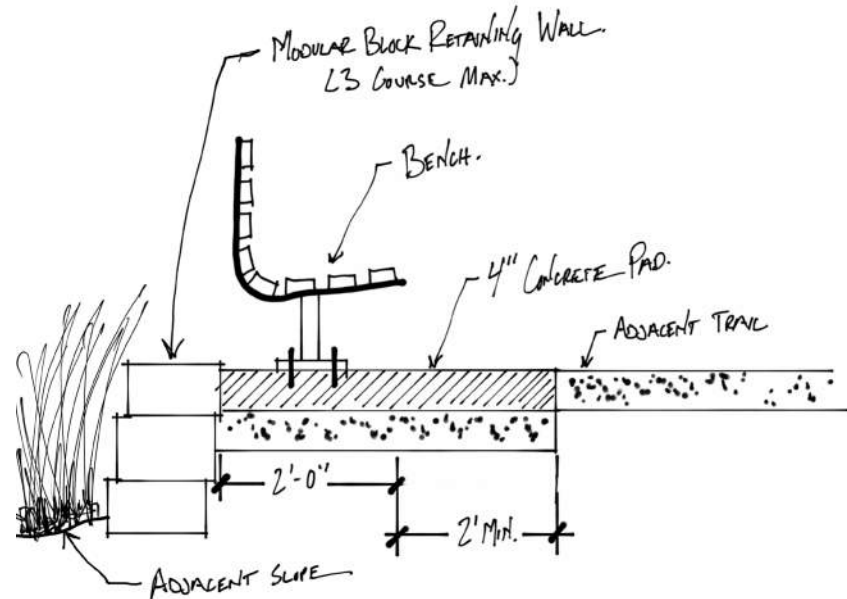
## TYPICAL SECTION: BENCH PLAN



## TYPICAL SECTION: BENCH ON PAD CUT INTO ADJACENT HILLSIDE



## TYPICAL SECTION: BENCH ON PAD FILLING ADJACENT HILLSIDE



# 5. SIGNAGE

Signage is often an afterthought in the planning of parks but can play an integral part in the usability and identity of a park. An effective park signage system provides adequate information and direction for people to navigate around the park, encourages interaction and learning experiences, communicates park rules, and helps to establish a consistent brand and identity for the park system, and specific park locations. Park signage can encompass a hierarchy of sign types, for differing applications depending on context including monument/entry signage, interpretive signage, informational signage, wayfinding signage, and other types.

In 2023, The City developed a comprehensive exterior park signage package for implementation throughout its park system. This package includes a variety of signage, and provides clear direction on when and where each type of signage should be implemented. This section of the design standards includes a selection of signage from that package that has specific relevancy to Purgatory Park. These signs should be implemented on a case by case basis, but generally adhere to the guidance laid forth in the signage design standards documents.

## PRIMARY ENTRANCE PARK MONUMENT - SIGN TYPE A1



*"Primary entrance monument signs are intended to be used as major community parks entrance identification. Signs are placed at major entrance points along the roadways. In addition, primary entrance monuments can be placed at secondary or smaller parks where higher speed roadways require signage to be as large as possible in size for maximum visibility and readability due to high speed traffic or surrounding road clutter."*

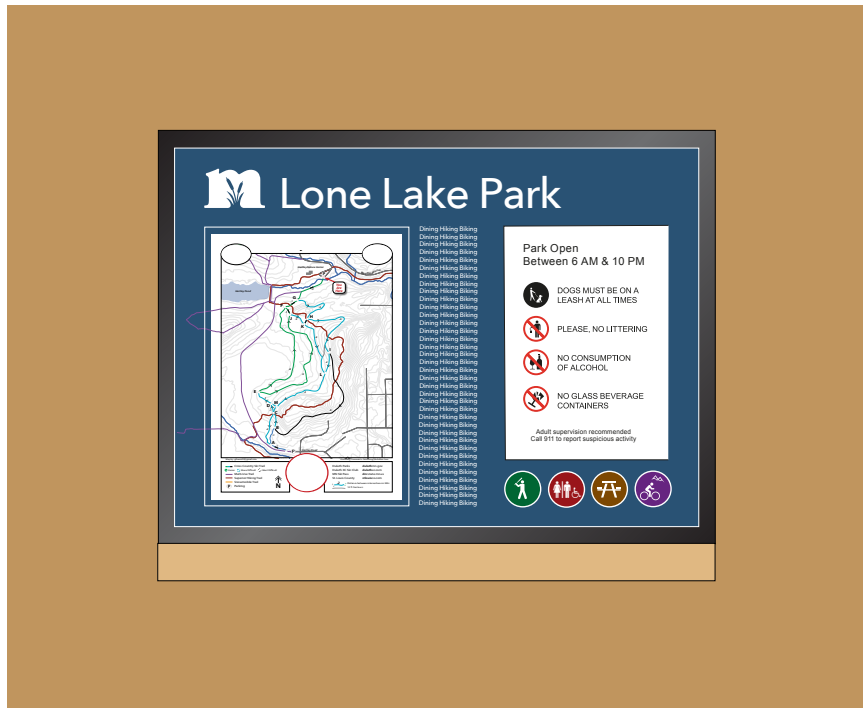


## WALL MOUNT EXISTING SIGNAGE RETROFIT - SIGN TYPE B5

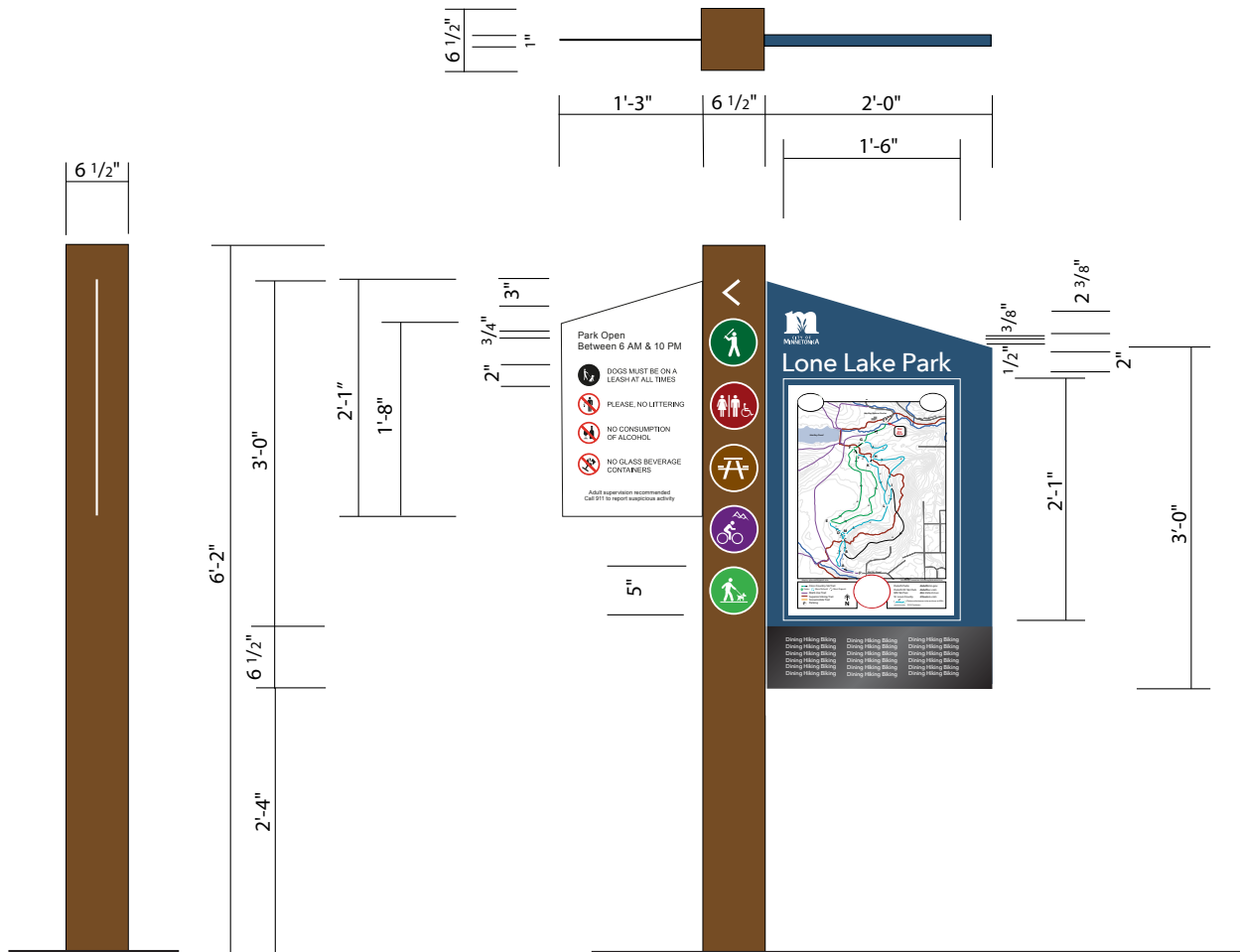


*“Provides a map of the area, with key destinations, park rules, trail, and natural area information and photos. In addition, activity pictograms are included and current activities and notices can be posted. These are placed on existing recreation structures, they are designed to be larger than the existing framed inset areas on buildings to be surface-mounted covering the areas.”*

EXISTING

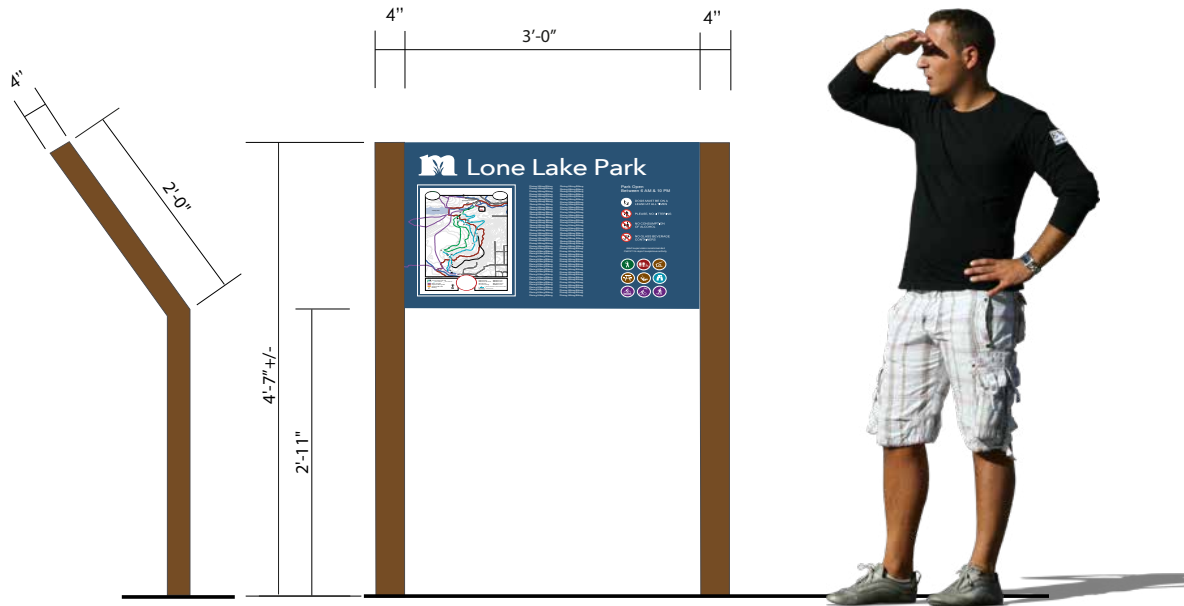
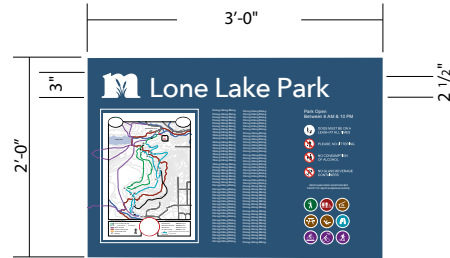


# DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE WITHIN PARK (TO NEIGHBORHOOD ENTITIES, PARKING, ETC.) - SIGN TYPE B6



"Directional and informational signage are to be used throughout the park and trails at decision points for both vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding."

## PRIMARY TABLETOP - SIGN TYPE E1



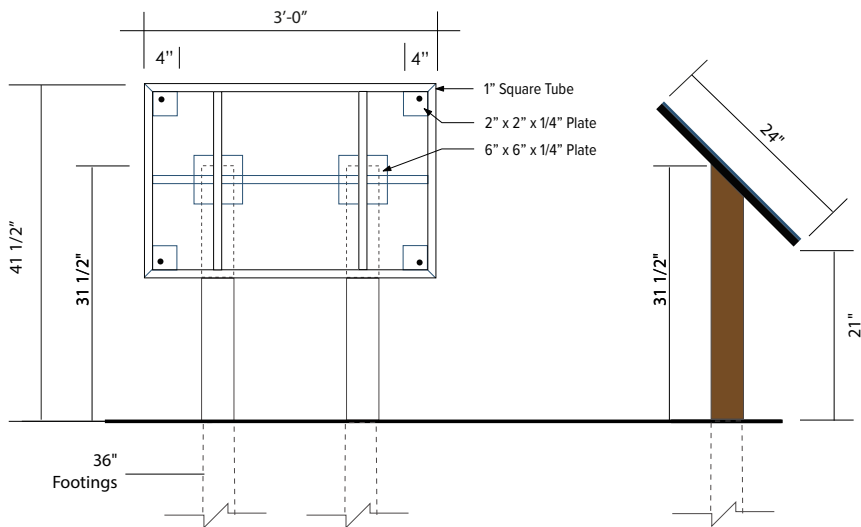
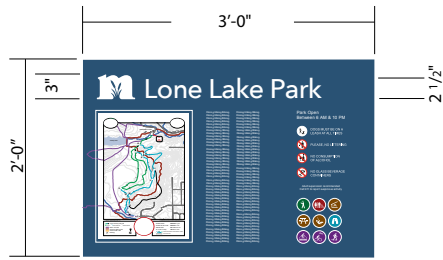
### INFORMATIONAL SIGNAGE

"Provide pertinent information regarding natural features or specialized information regarding a specific plants, habitat, wildlife, landscapes, gardens, and lakes or ponds. Informational signs should be located where information is to be highlighted. Pictograms and photography images can be digitally applied temporarily or long-term with vinyl."

### PRIMARY TABLETOP

"Utilize for high visibility and readability without obscuring landscape vistas."

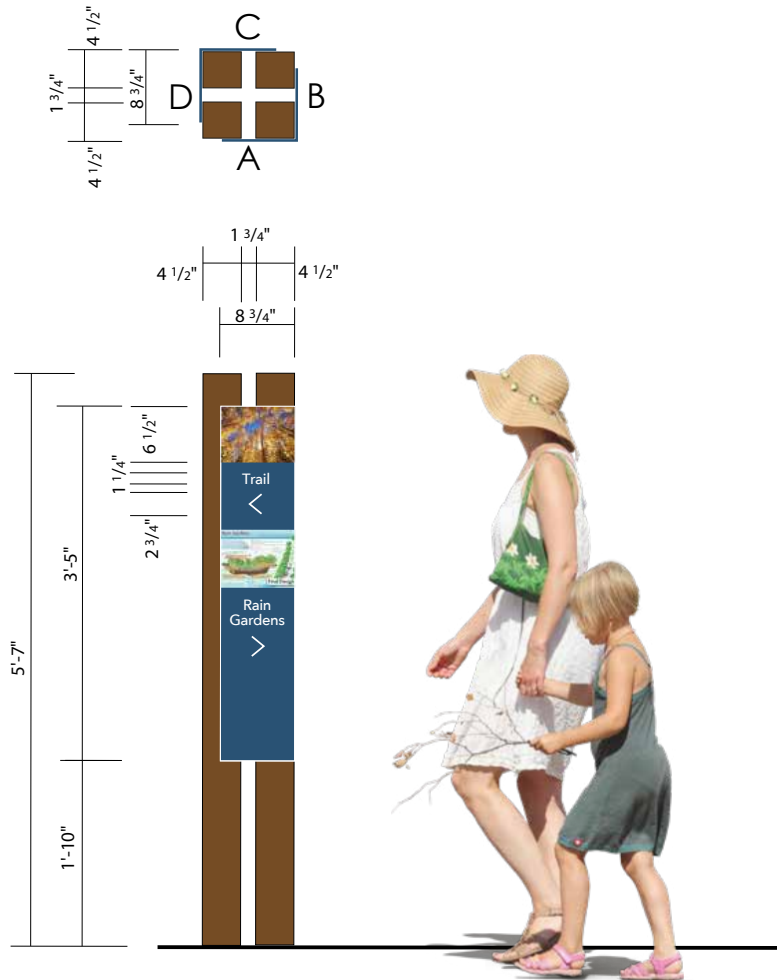
## SECONDARY TABLETOP (LLP SIGNAGE/POST) - SIGN TYPE E1B



### INFORMATIONAL SIGNAGE

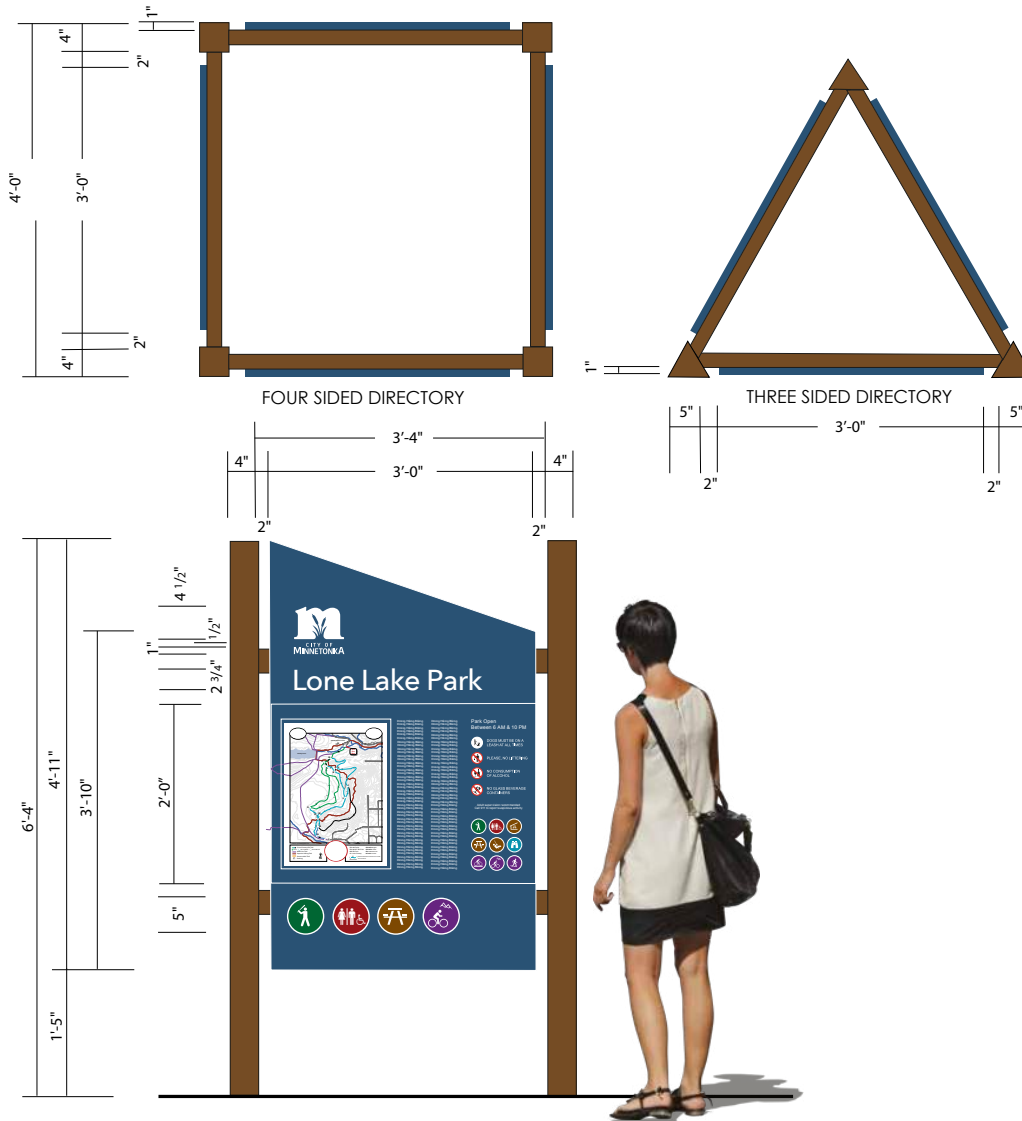
*"Provide pertinent information regarding natural features or specialized information regarding a specific plants, habitat, wildlife, landscapes, gardens, and lakes or ponds. Informational signs should be located where information is to be highlighted. Pictograms and photography images can be digitally applied temporarily or long-term with vinyl."*

## SECONDARY FLORA/TERRAIN MARKER - SIGN TYPE E2



*"Provides a map of the area, with key destinations, park rules, trail, and natural area information and photos. In addition, activity pictograms are included and current activities and notices can be posted. These are placed on existing recreation structures, they are designed to be larger than the existing framed inset areas on buildings to be surface-mounted covering the areas."*

## THREE TO FOUR SIDED DIRECTORY - SIGN TYPE E3



### INFORMATIONAL SIGNAGE

*“Provide pertinent information regarding natural features or specialized information regarding a specific plants, habitat, wildlife, landscapes, gardens, and lakes or ponds. Informational signs should be located where information is to be highlighted. Pictograms and photography images can be digitally applied temporarily or long-term with vinyl.”*

### THREE/FOUR SIDED INFORMATIVE DIRECTIONAL MARKERS

*“Informative directional markers are designed to be viewed in the proper orientation by viewers from multiple directions. Each surface can include arrows depicting to featured nature areas, flower gardens, trails, park amenities, areas of natural interest, etc.”*

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# 07

# APPENDIX





# Report for Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

## Response Counts

 Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

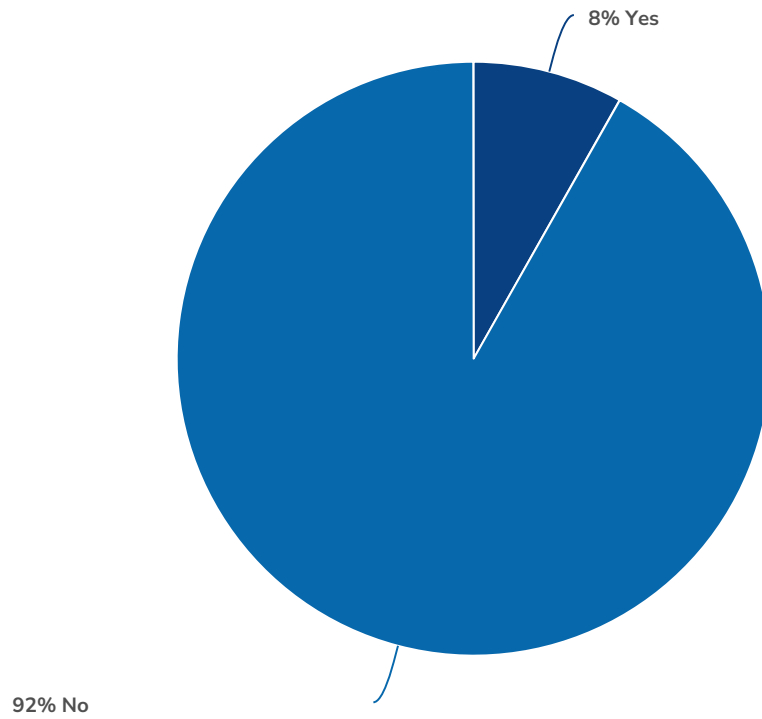


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Totals: 624

# 1. Have you previously given feedback on the Purgatory Park Master Plan?

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

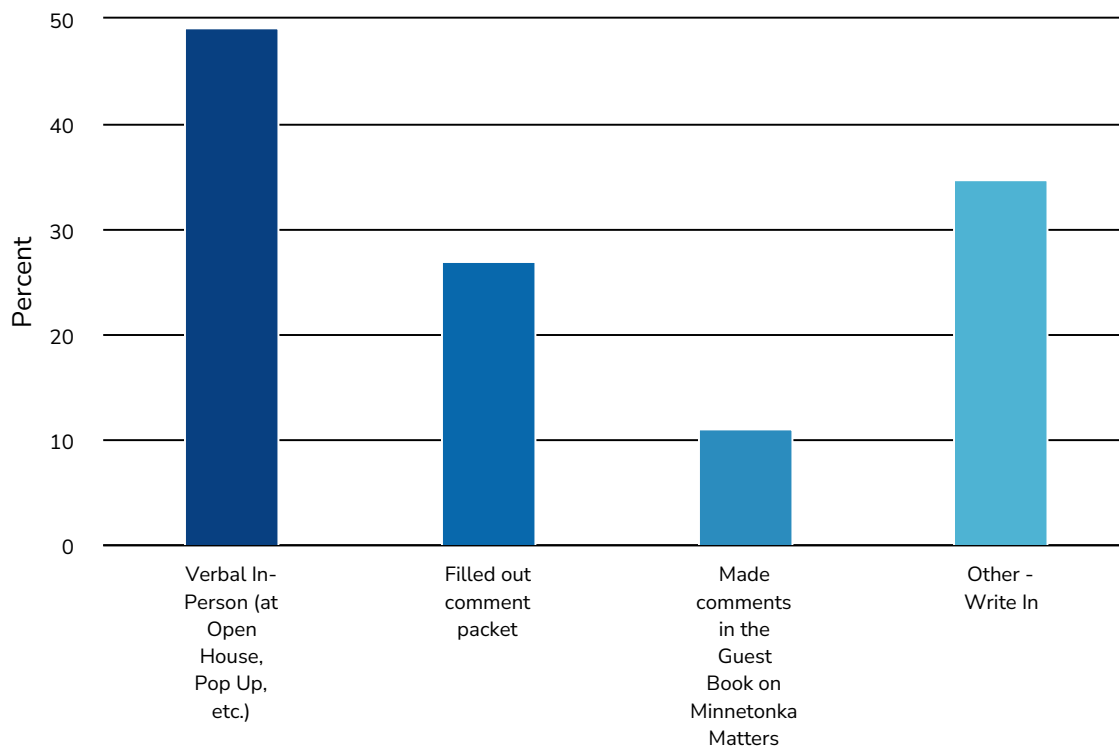



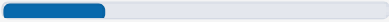
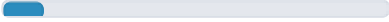
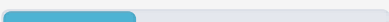
Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	8.2%	41
No	91.8%	461

Totals: 502

## 2. If yes, what type of feedback did you give?

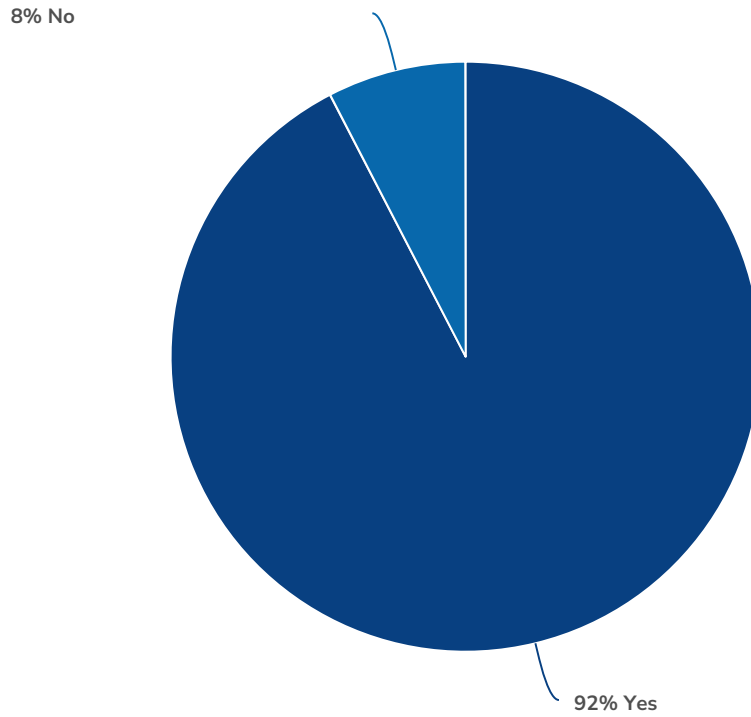
Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey



Value	Percent	Responses
Verbal In-Person (at Open House, Pop Up, etc.)	49.2% 	31
Filled out comment packet	27.0% 	17
Made comments in the Guest Book on Minnetonka Matters	11.1% 	7
Other - Write In	34.9% 	22

### 3. Are you a Minnetonka resident?

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

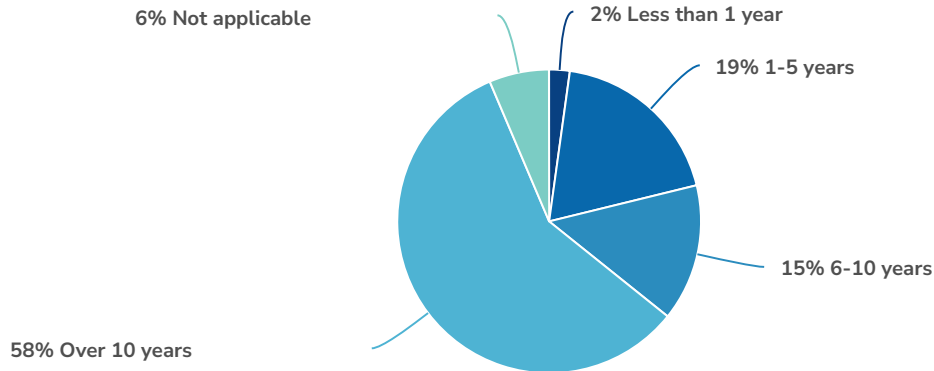


Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	92.4%	463
No	7.6%	38

Totals: 501

## 4. How long have you lived in Minnetonka?

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

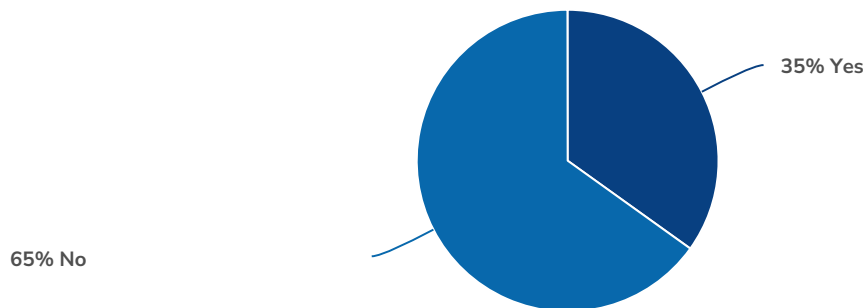


Value	Percent	Responses
Less than 1 year	2.2%	11
1-5 years	19.0%	95
6-10 years	14.6%	73
Over 10 years	57.9%	290
Not applicable	6.4%	32

Totals: 501

## 5. Do you work in the city limits of Minnetonka?

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

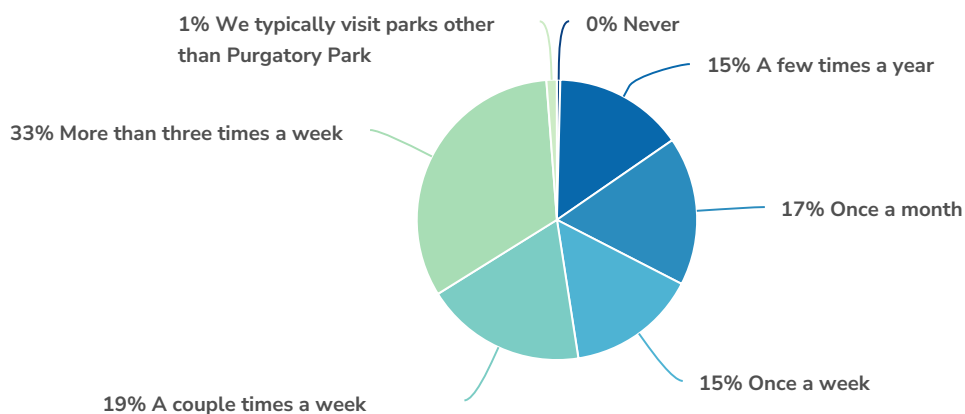


Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	34.9%	175
No	65.1%	326

Totals: 501

## 6. How often do you or a member of your household typically visit Purgatory Park?

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

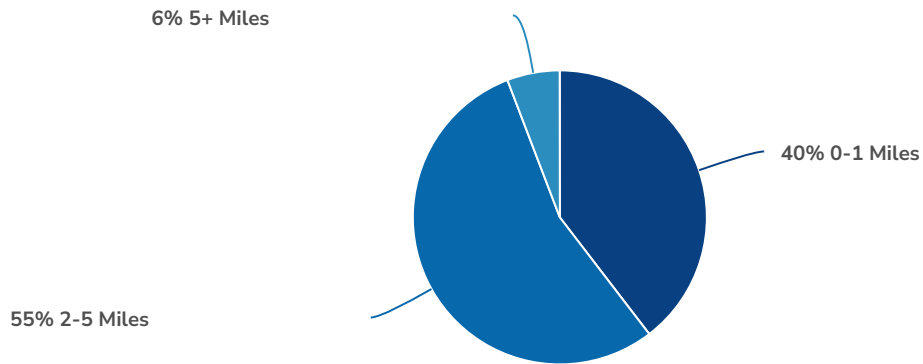


Value	Percent	Responses
Never	0.4%	2
A few times a year	15.0%	75
Once a month	17.2%	86
Once a week	15.0%	75
A couple times a week	18.6%	93
More than three times a week	32.7%	164
We typically visit parks other than Purgatory Park	1.2%	6

Totals: 501

## 7. How far do you typically travel to get to Purgatory Park?

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey



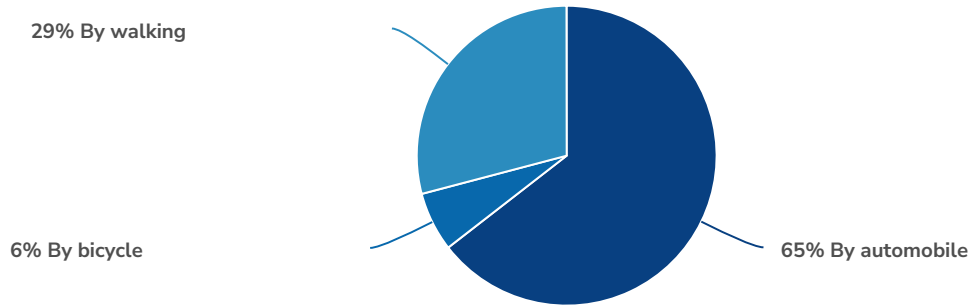
Value	Percent	Responses
0-1 Miles	39.6% 	199
2-5 Miles	54.6% 	274
5+ Miles	5.8% 	29

Totals: 502



## 8. How do you typically get to Purgatory Park?

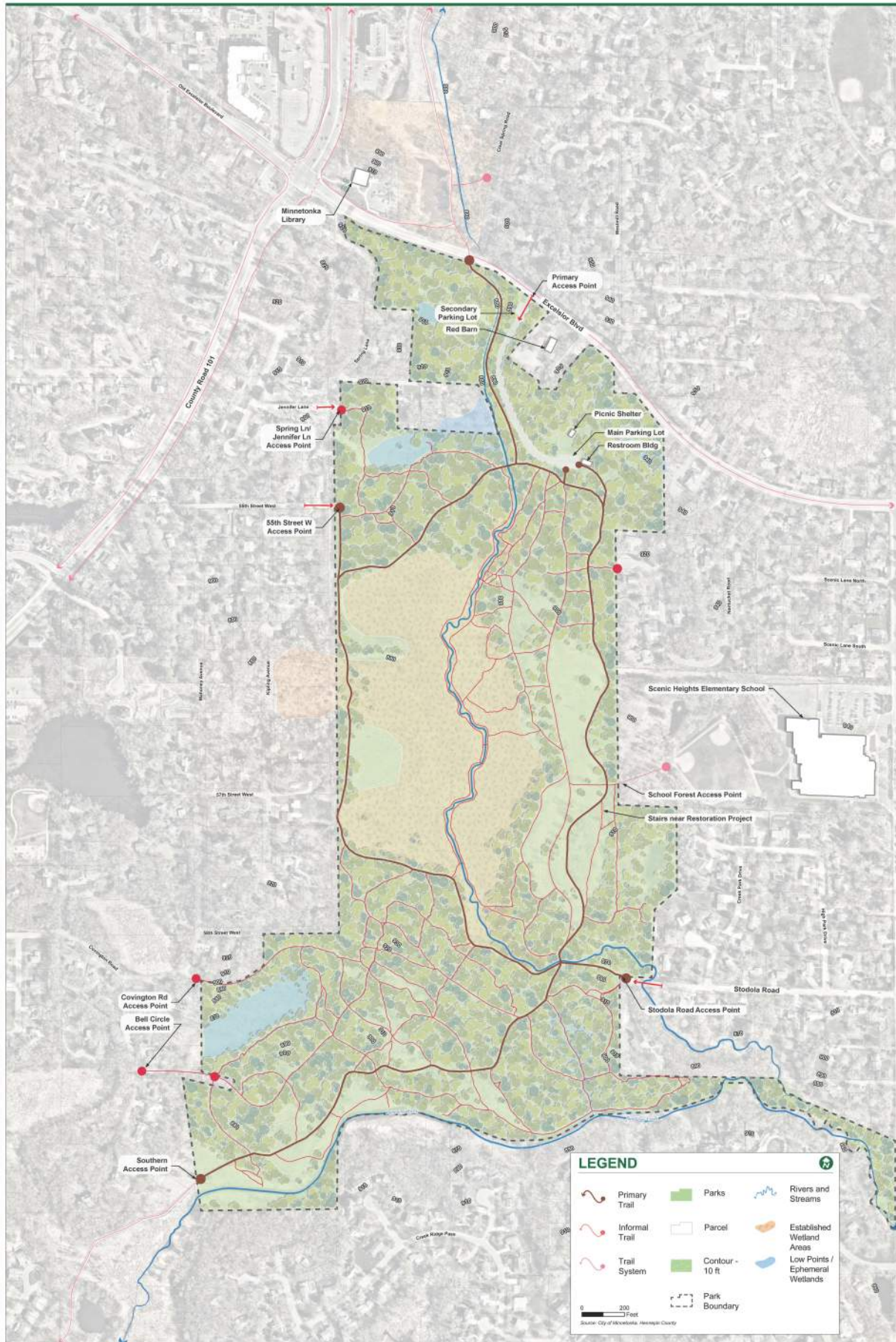
Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey



Value	Percent	Responses
By automobile	64.5%	324
By bicycle	6.4%	32
By walking	29.1%	146

Totals: 502

9. If you are going to visit Purgatory Park, what access point do you typically use? (Please rank in order)

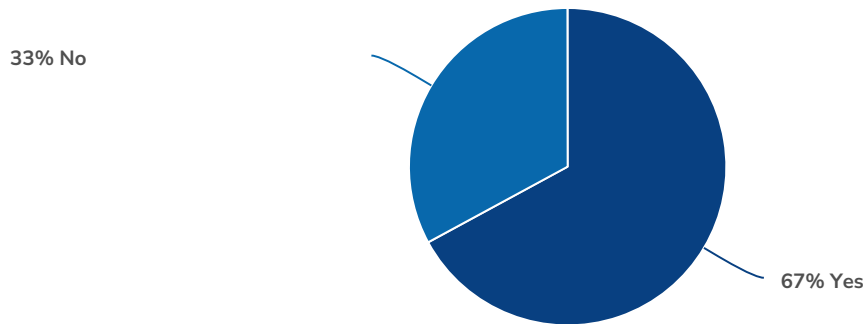


Item	Overall Rank	Rank Distribution	Score	No. of Rankings
Primary Entrance (Public Parking off of Excelsior Blvd)	1		3,373	379
Stodola Road Trail Access	2		1,429	167
North Trail Extension (Excelsior Underpass)	3		571	81
South Trail Extension	4		452	70
Covington Road (Street Parking)	5		445	62
Adjacent Residential Property	6		415	69
Nantucket Road (Street Parking)	7		333	48
Spring Lane & 55th Street Trail Access	8		318	50
Bell Circle (Street Parking)	9		290	46
Spring Lane & Jennifer Lane Walk-In	10		237	44



## 10. Do you feel there is adequate parking at Purgatory Park?

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

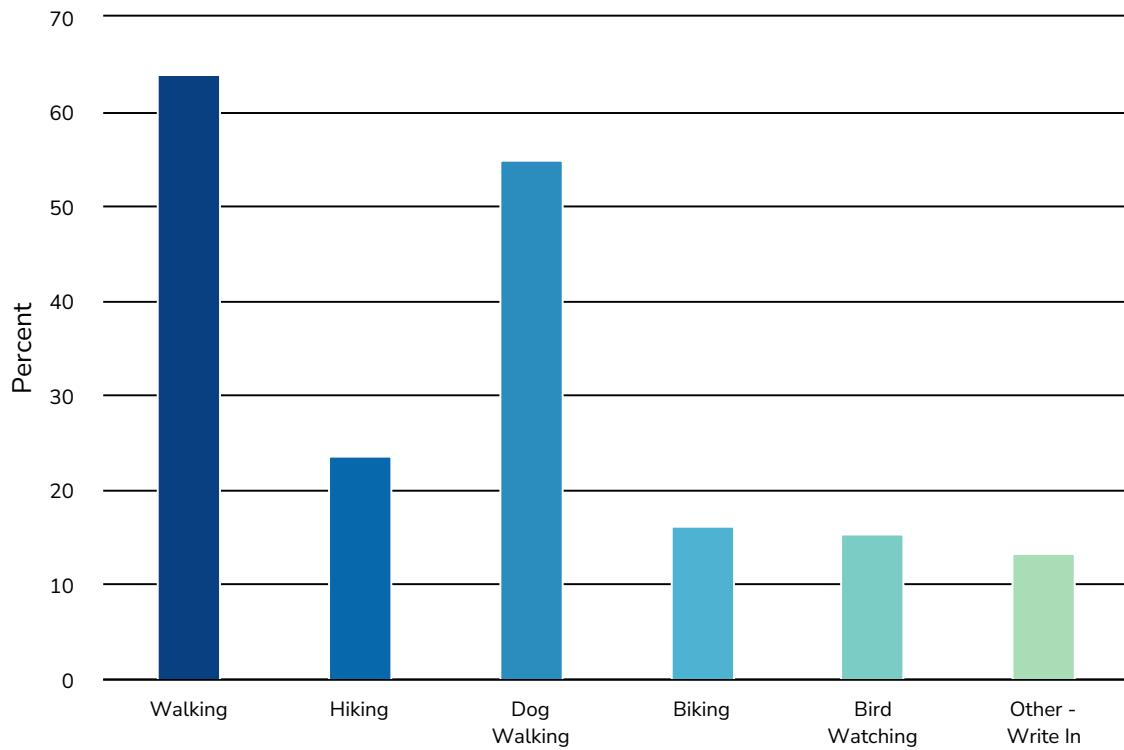


Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	67.1%	335
No	32.9%	164

Totals: 499

# 11. Why do you typically go to Purgatory Park?

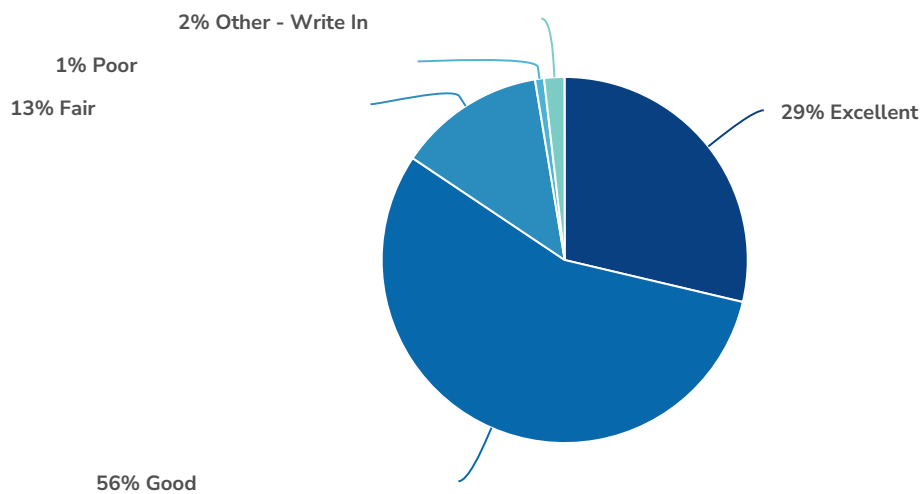
Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey



Value	Percent	Responses
Walking	64.1%	322
Hiking	23.7%	119
Dog Walking	55.0%	276
Biking	16.3%	82
Bird Watching	15.5%	78
Other - Write In	13.3%	67

## 12. How would you rate the overall physical condition of the park and facilities?

 Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

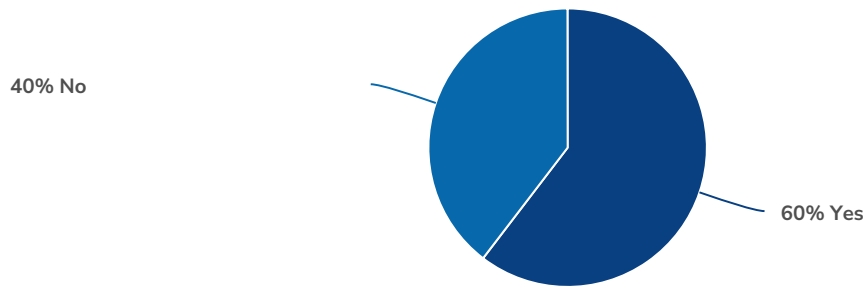


Value	Percent	Responses
Excellent	28.7%	143
Good	55.7%	278
Fair	13.0%	65
Poor	0.8%	4
Other - Write In	1.8%	9

Totals: 499

### 13. Do you walk your dog in the park?

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	60.4%	302
No	39.6%	198

Totals: 500



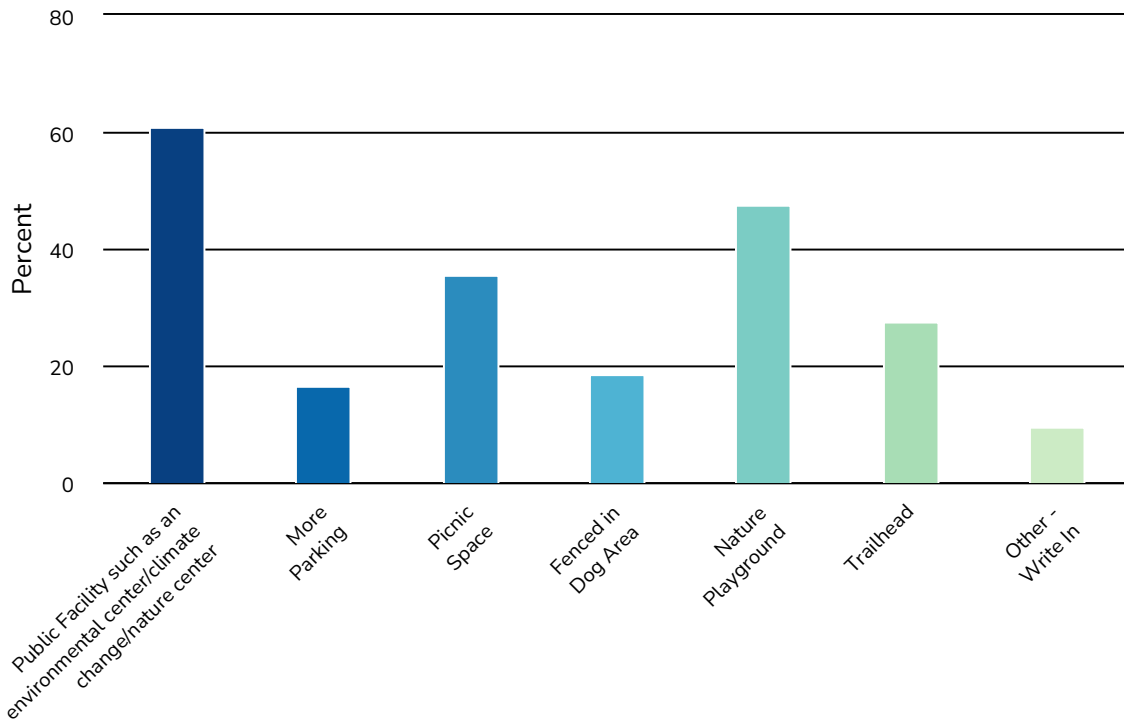
## 14. Please answer the following about dogs in the park:

 Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Responses</b>
The City of Minnetonka's off-leash dog ordinance should be changed to not allow dogs to run off-leash in parks Count Row %	109 22.0%	71 14.3%	71 14.3%	245 49.4%	496
The off-leash park rules are appropriate and should not be changed Count Row %	242 49.4%	81 16.5%	73 14.9%	94 19.2%	490
Purgatory Park should have a fenced in off-leash dog area Count Row %	139 28.5%	98 20.1%	78 16.0%	173 35.5%	488
There are adequate dog waste receptacles in the park Count Row %	87 18.1%	173 36.0%	159 33.1%	61 12.7%	480
Off-leash dogs are a safety concern in the park Count Row %	118 23.9%	95 19.3%	82 16.6%	198 40.2%	493
<b>Totals</b> Total Responses					496

# 15. What do you think is an appropriate use for the Red Barn Site? (Select three options)

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

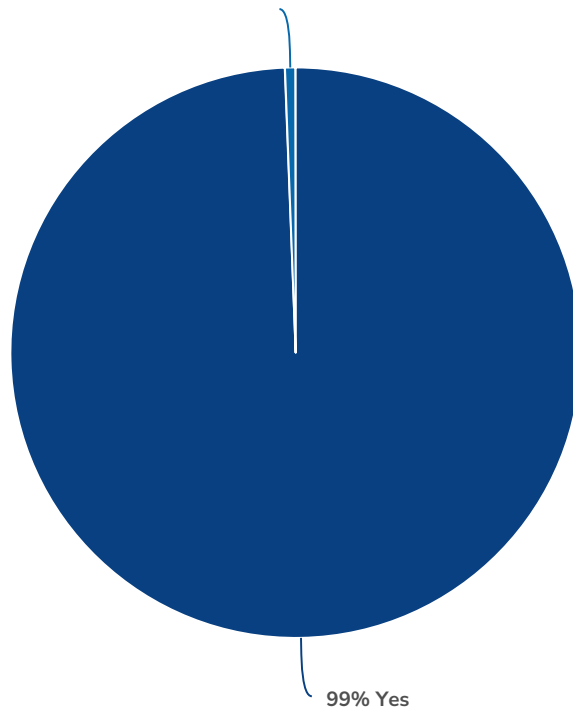


Value	Percent	Responses
Public Facility such as an environmental center/climate change/nature center	60.9%	293
More Parking	16.8%	81
Picnic Space	35.8%	172
Fenced in Dog Area	18.7%	90
Nature Playground	47.8%	230
Trailhead	27.7%	133
Other - Write In	9.8%	47

## 16. Do you use the trails at Purgatory Park?

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

1% No



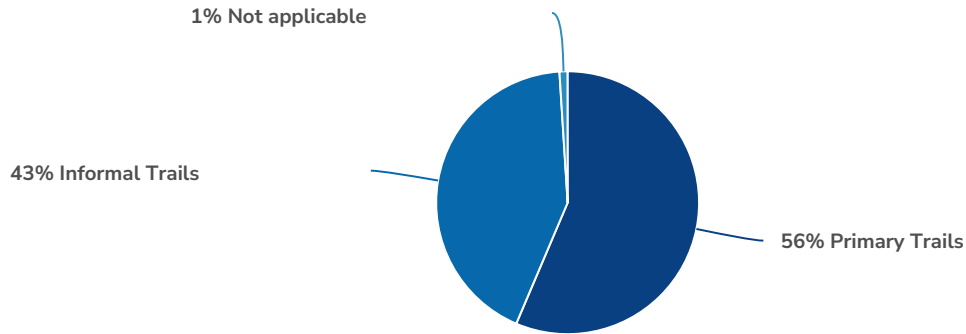
99% Yes

Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	99.4%	498
No	0.6%	3

Totals: 501

## 17. If yes, do you usually use the primary trails (paved and gravel) or the informal trails (dirt/'Cow Paths')?

 Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

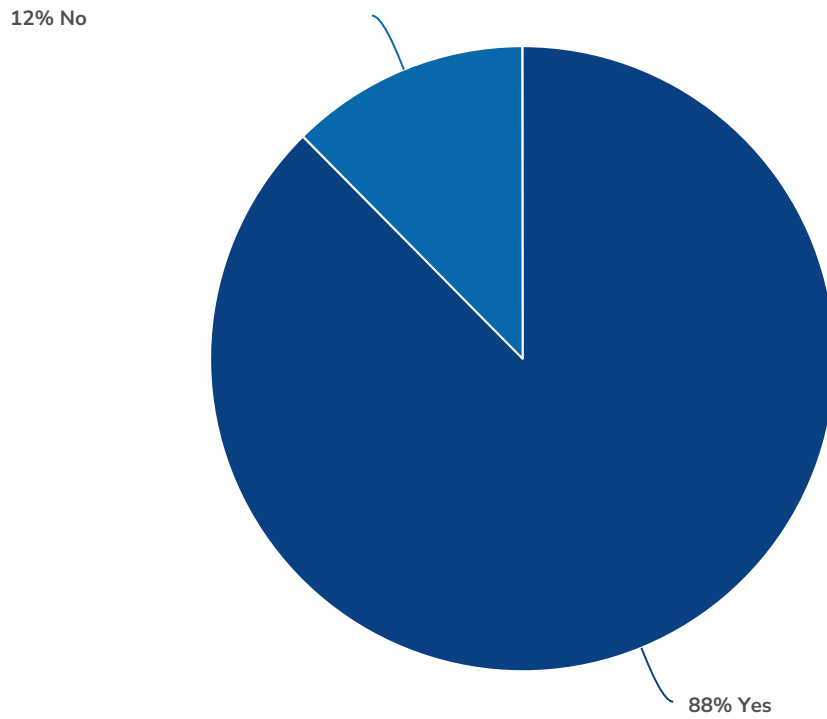


Value	Percent	Responses
Primary Trails	56.4%	283
Informal Trails	42.6%	214
Not applicable	1.0%	5

**Totals: 502**

# 18. Do you feel there are enough primary trails at Purgatory Park?

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	87.6%	437
No	12.4%	62

Totals: 499

## 19. Is there anywhere you would like to see primary trails added in the park?

 Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

### ResponseID Response

14 A prairie boardwalk would be cool

20 A primary trail from the Red Barn Site to the existing trails in Purgatory Park would be great.

24 No

26 No

30 No

32 No

33 More bike specific trails, better defined secondary trails that require leashes on dogs

37 No

38 No

40 Another loop trail in the southern section by 62 where there is currently only a primary trail

41 No

43 minimal mowed trails through the restored prairie and remediate/restore all the informal trails

46 Repair the bridges in The meadow

47 No. Keep the informal trails as is.

48 No

51 No

57 No, I love the off leach areas. Would love a garbage can for dog waste in the middle of the unplaced trail so people don't have to carry it throughout the center of the off leash area. Hopefully more would pick up after their pets that way.

58 No.

60 No

## ResponseID Response

62 No.

69 Just about any of the secondary trails would be great.

71 The park hosts adequate primary trails. I would like to see more thought about how to make the trails more sustainable. There are a few sections that are paved due to location on fall lines and have erosion issues along the edges of the trails. I would also like to see how trail maintenance impacts the sustainability of the primary trails as that crushed gravel material continues to expand the trail width.

73 The thing that makes Purgatory park so great and different from from some other parks is the amount of different trails one can explore. And they all basically lead to or connect to the non-primary trails.

77 I think it might be helpful to have more small signs that say, which are the Off leash and on leash areas. I also think if the two trails, the on leash and off leash, never crossed, that might be helpful for the group that has issue with occasionally meeting a dog off leash.

79 I don't think it's necessary to create more paved/gravel trails just because that would eliminate more of the natural environment. Not everything needs to be "built up".

82 Around the wooded areas

83 No I enjoy the "hiking" feel of the oak ridges and creekside trails a lot.

86 No

87 No. Please don't change the trail system!

88 No, keep the off leash dog trails. Cover up the mucky mudd whole

94 No

100 No, I think there is appropriate amount. It is good to have the paved sections where there are steep grades.

102 We often enter the park through the gate on W 58th Street. The dirt path along the ridge top should be more formal, along with at least one route back to the lane connected to 58th, as well as down the ridge to the primary trail at bottom. Just as important as grading the trail somewhat would be buckthorn removal along the dirt paths that feature benches plus a connector to the main trail.

104 no

## ResponseID Response

107	It would be wonderful to have the primary loop completely paved, no gravel. The dirt paths up the hill from the bridge by Stodola are fun just as they are. Fence in the center area of the main park for off leash dogs. They've already worn paths there. Maybe those could be fixed up a bit.
116	I would like to see more single track mtn bike trails
117	I'd prefer that there not be any more primary trails; I'd prefer that the more remote spots of the park remain focused more toward wildlife than foot traffic.
122	No
125	No
126	A way to cross the park inside the big loop. I also use the dirt paths for this, even without my dog, but it would be nice if a primary trail were established. I prefer the crushed limestone to asphalt sections. They seem to hold up better over time
127	NA
134	N/A
135	Along one side of creek in the central park area.
149	We use both formal and informal trails.
152	Through the middle of the park
154	Nope
155	No- like the paths available, and wouldn't take non primary away from people using those
158	No
159	There is a section of trails that us usually flooded. If that area can be improved I would use the trails more frequently.
160	Our city spends too much money making trails for bikers.
161	No
162	I don't know
174	Buckthorn irradiation



## ResponseID Response

176 The current trails are beautiful but more primary trails would be great - not sure where you'd add them though.

179 No

182 No, purgatory is a beautiful & natural park that does not need any more urbanized pollution in the park. Leave it how it is.

190 I would like to see the primary trails paved completely, rather than a mix of paved and gravel. In the spring, when people want to get out, the gravel sections following snow-melt are a mess.

193 make the far western end a loop if possible.

197 South woods trails

201 No

203 No reduce the size and number.

204 Thru the center

211 No. Less should be the goal. Not more.

212 No Purgatory Park is a spot of heaven and should NOT be ruined by humans. I drive my dog Trixie from Brenwood to Purgatory every day for the joy of seeing her run free and maintaining good health. (for me too) Don't take that from us.

217 no

218 Crossing the mid section to access the swamp year round. Also more access points on the west side

219 No

222 No

223 Yes

231 No

242 No the formal trail is acquit.

243 More with a view of the creek

245 No

## ResponseID Response

246	No. I just want dogs leashed so that I can hike on all the trails, even the smaller trails. It seems lots of dog owners do not know that keeping their dogs leashed like I do is expected here at Purgatory.
250	No
252	No. I love it just as it is.
253	No. I am not a dog owner and walk the park at least 5 times a week. It gives me great pleasure to watch the dogs play and see their joy. Don't change the leash laws!
255	None needed
257	All paved trails could be 2-3 feet wider. A paved or gravel trail from the bench at the top of the stairs on the east side back to the trail to the bridge would be good.
274	The single large loop is sufficient in my opinion - and puts enough distance for walkers (without dogs) and leashed dog walkers as to not incur potential conflicts
275	It would be great if the southern trail to the crosstown was made into a loop.
279	No
280	It would be nice to bike a bigger loop. Especially in the more southern part.
283	Unsure
284	I'm a runner and like to combine a main loop of the park (main gravel trail) with some of the cow paths/informal trails. I would love if there were a couple more main trails that crisscross the park. These are often more accessible especially in the winter when the cow paths get muddy/icy/snow covered.
286	No
287	Current availability is sufficient
294	Would love there to be more winter maintenance—it's always iced over in the winter and we have to go to Centennial or Minneapolis for our walks
297	no
303	No. Leave the natural areas as is. Do not ruin the park with more development.
305	No, addition would diminish natural area as the people not using primary trails now would just make new trails for their dogs
311	No

## ResponseID Response

319	I don't have a good sense of what other areas exist since I stick to the primary trails so can't answer this. Definitely would like to see more children-focused space at Purgatory though.
320	No I think the park is a gem as is - the informal cow path trails that run throughout the park offer an escape to nature that is hard to achieve here in the city. I think the park is well utilized and great as is. A few additional dog waste receptacles throughout the park & perhaps some minor upgrades to the bathroom building - with improved access to water / drinking fountain-fill stations.
324	Closer to the schools so the xc teams can run them
329	Better signage and maps, I always get lost in the park.
330	Not sure, but I definitely prefer loops so I can keep walking and the current loops is very short
333	No
334	At this time, I realize there are unkept lesser worn trails that folks would prefer to hike and more so do some biking in the park. However, I do not have a full image of those specific trails so to identify where to expand them.
340	It would be great to add more trail options through the middle of the park, where the off leash dog area is
349	No
353	A secondary loop on the southern part of the park. It would also be nice to be able to mountain bike the cow paths :)
363	No
365	No
366	West side
374	N/a
378	I would like a better walking path/sidewalk from Westmill Rd to the primary entrance of Purgatory. The shoulder on Excelsior is a joke for people walking and biking. A designated crosswalk across Excelsior at Westmill Rd and lowering the speed limit on that road to 35 should also be considered.
380	No
383	I think the trail system is great the way it is.

## ResponseID Response

385

No

392

I think that the park should be left as natural as possible with no more pavement.

394

Yes on the major creek tributaries that are not maintained.

402

I keep my dog on a leash for walk but I love absolutely love a fenced in off leash area for my dog!

403

I like that there is one main trail and many little trails. Adding more main trails might effect the wildlife that makes purgatory do great.

405

Not sure what definition of "primary" trail is. I think the informal trails (1-2 person wide) are a good thing, but they have wildly over populated in the past few years. Some should be "closed" and "formal" 1-2 person wide trails in the woods/ridge should be adopted. Better for the environment, reduced erosion, etc.

412

No

414

The trails are too wide - they could currently have turn lanes painted in the center.

417

No

423

Overall more paths that can be accessed with strollers! We love going but bring our kids and need a stroller

429

I think that there is a good mix of primary trails and secondary trails. Will run on the primary and walk the dog on the secondary trails

434

Don't think people should use the "informal" off leash trail along creek. Intrusive to neighboring houses. Trespass on private property. Leave dog poop and trash.

435

No- thats not needed- I go tto thispark every day- often 2x a day with my pets. I rarely se congestion or need for more paved trails.

437

No

442

No

444

No

448

No

449

No we have enough. The woodland area has enough primary trails.

452

I think the amount of trails are perfect.

## ResponseID Response

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454 I think it's great as is

461 Only gravel, not paved!

462 No.

464 No. I really like it as is.

466 No...more natural hiking trails are the best to hike with my dogs!! That's what I love about purgatory! Please keep it an open off-leash dog nature hiking park!!! We deserve to have a park for those of us who love to give our pups the freedom to enjoy hiking, running & playing together!!! Leave it more natural like it is... Please!!! ☐☐☐☐

469 No

472 No

474 No

475 None should be added. If anything there needs to be less. The beauty of this park is its calm nature away from the city. If you bring heavy machinery and more man made elements into it, it'll ruin the escape from life it provides.

476 Wherever new trails are added, please do not pave them with asphalt! Leave the limestone paths - safer for wildlife (snakes, amphibians), slows down bikers.

478 No

482 Primary trails are sufficient. Informal trail locations prone to erosion and winter icing could be improved with fortifications, natural steps, and/or ground retaining foliage.

484 I don't have enough experience with the park primary trails to answer confidently answer where.

486 Wider trails would be nice.

487 Possibly extend the southern primary trail so it creates a loop back to the north.

490 No

494 Our family really enjoys both the primary trails and the dirt/cow paths

497 Somewhere there is space for it.

504 No, we really love the informal trails in the southwest corner of the park.

505 I usually keep to the most informal of the informal trails with the dogs.

## ResponseID Response

507	There could be some mileage walking signs and primary trails added in the areas closer to hwy 62 - there are some trail stubs being developed organically by walkers but it might be nice to make them a bit wider and "official" behind Scenic heights portion leading into the main park and loop system.
516	No - I love the amount of primary trails vs 'off-road' trails
521	Maybe from the Covington Rd access point, but I don't feel strongly about it
525	Paralleling the creek in the southeast,
530	First of all, I use the primary trails to avoid off leash dogs. Otherwise I would use other trails more. I would consider the addition of more "primary" trails, though perhaps not paved, along the ridge and towards the Bell Circle entrance, also in the meadow / prairie area and wooded area close to the ponds. I would like to see other trails limited in number to decrease the spread of invasive plants and allow more habitat for critters.
534	Close to the creek
537	I like to see more circles of the trails.
538	If new Red Barn area is attached a primary trail from primary trail main loop should be added. Sanding of icy areas, such as main parking area and main trail a distance in all directions from back bridge, especially slopes should be included. Impossible get to bathrooms in main parking area when conditions are icy. In icy conditions dog walker's account for almost all (probably close to 90 percent) the park use. People stay away because icy main trails and parking is so dangerous. Rest of year usage is also well over 50 usage by dog walkers. As a dog walker, I think waste pick up might be better enforced as well as leash usage on main trails and common areas. As an off leash dog walker we need to be considerate of non dog walkers rights and vice versa. But it's a privilege to be able to take my dog off leash. I'm on my third dog using this privilege. We don't really need to make that many changes if intent is to be a "natural area". Better understanding and enforcement of current r
542	Across Hwy 101 and continuing into to natural area on the other side
547	Perhaps add a half-circle of paved trail to the southern portion in order to make a second loop
550	No

## ResponseID Response

551	<p>NO!!!! I use both improved and unimproved and I think there are enough paths. You can walk for hours in this park and the best thing about the park that it is not overgroomed everywhere and it gives the visitor a feeling of being in nature up north . If people want to be entertained they should go to a different park. To me being in nature is Purgatory's biggest attraction for me. I go there to decompress and enjoy nature. More paths, more people less nature less enjoyment for the visitor. Nature and the wildlife should be the main event. All the animals have less and less habitat. Without the wildlife the park would not be the same retreat that is has been in the past. It was one of the perks of living in Minnetonka. and why I moved here in the first place. I feel there are less and less open spaces in the neighborhoods so the park is an ever more important green zone. PLEASE do not fix anything it is not broken. Maintain as is. Spend my tax dollar on something else!!!!</p>
552	<p>Not really. There's some informal trails that might be mapped more or something? There's more to the park than is immediately obvious. Maybe more of a signage issue.</p>
556	<p>In the middle where the off leash dog trails are located.</p>
560	<p>There are plenty of trails, and formalizing the informal trails may ruin their character. The biggest challenge is avoiding hitting dogs, and an off-leash area would make the trails clearer and safer.</p>
561	<p>No</p>
563	<p>Thru the center of the park. I know that one gets a lot of traffic and seems to have erosion issues. Stabilizing trails with erosion issues makes sense. I do really enjoy the singletrack type feel of the informal trails and don't want to lose that character throughout the park.</p>
572	<p>Maybe a cut through trail or some loops within the big loop.</p>
574	<p>Create a loop for the trail that leads to 62.</p>
576	<p>No</p>
596	<p>No</p>
603	<p>No, as little disruption to the unspoiled nature remaining in the park as we can muster is crucial.</p>
611	<p>Keep as is</p>
620	<p>No</p>
624	<p>No</p>
627	<p>No, I use the informal trails for dog walking and feel so grateful for the access.</p>

**ResponseID    Response**

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629                    More frequent emptying of trash cans. They are often overflowing. Community service presence on bikes for safety (haven't walked there alone since the attack in Big Willow Park this summer).

630                    Do not pave over the park for walking convenience The dogs have destroyed enough already

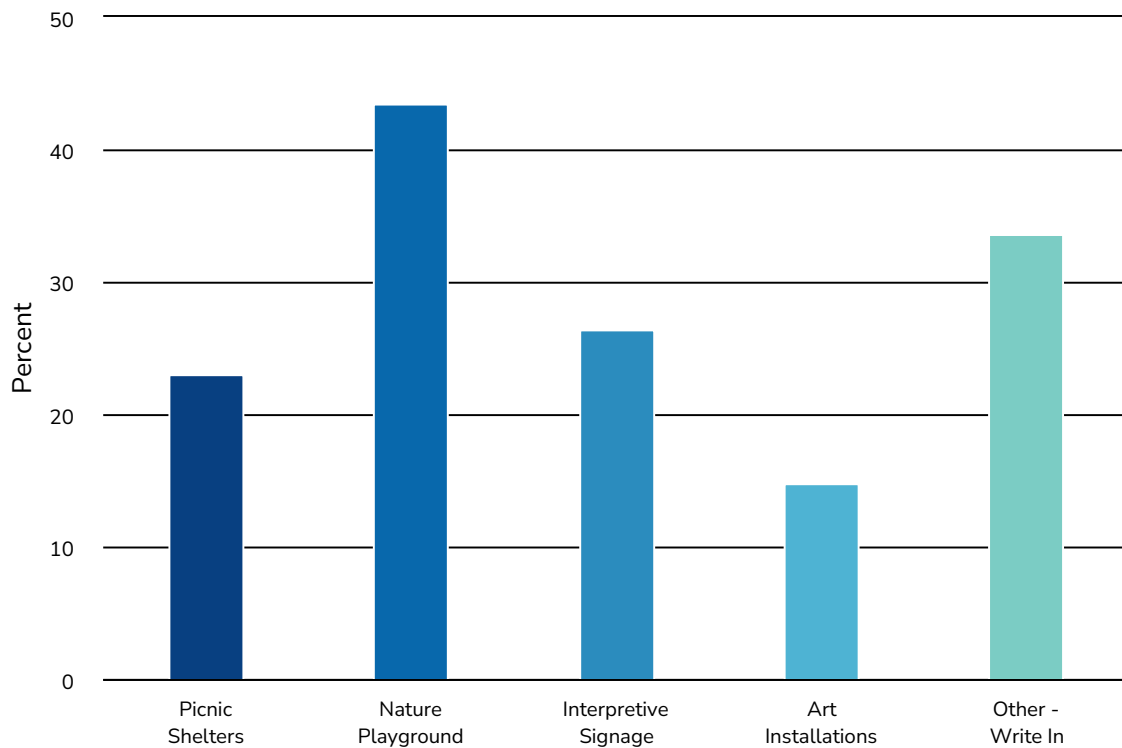
633                    Nowhere in particular. Not yet familiar enough with park but my young son uses a wheelchair and would love more places to explore via primary trail.

634                    No. I love the very natural feel of the park, but ruts are getting deeper and wider now.



## 20. What things do you feel the park is missing that you would like to see added?

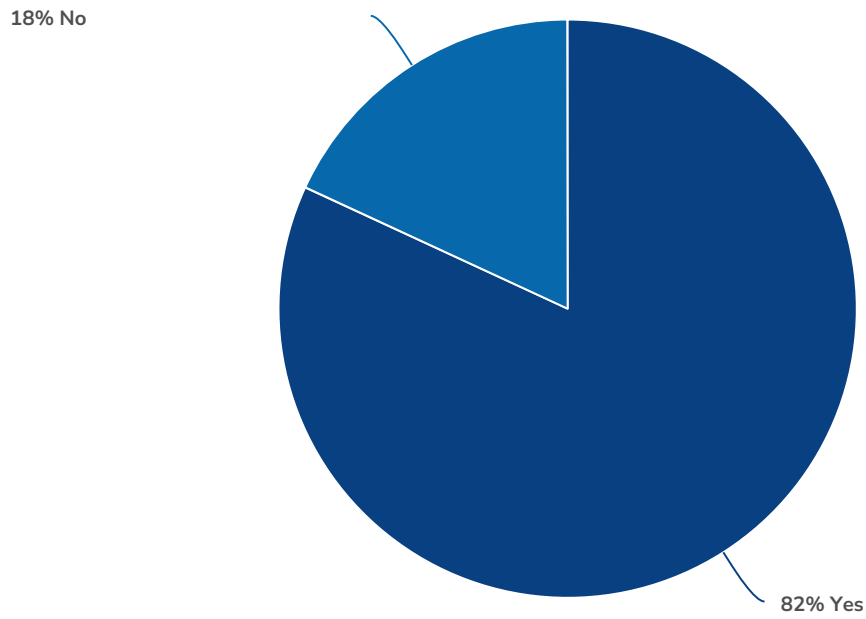
Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey



Value	Percent	Responses
Picnic Shelters	23.1% 	87
Nature Playground	43.5% 	164
Interpretive Signage	26.5% 	100
Art Installations	14.9% 	56
Other - Write In	33.7% 	127

## 21. Do you feel there are enough benches in Purgatory Park?

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

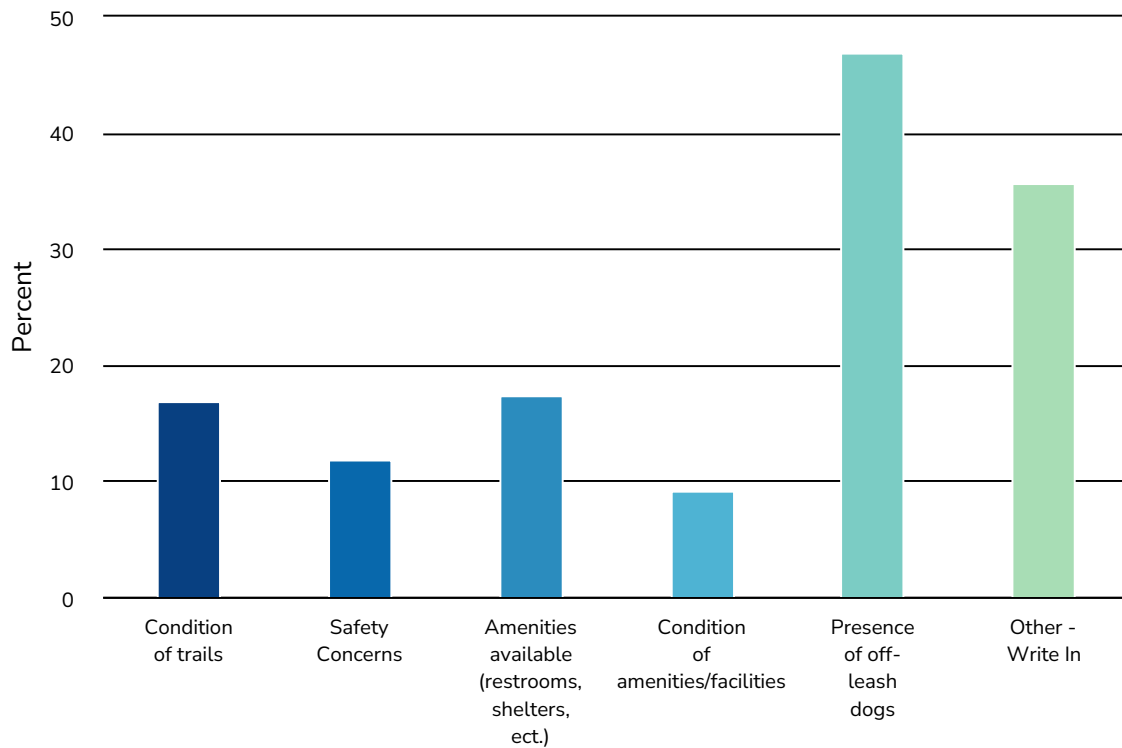


Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	81.9%	407
No	18.1%	90

Totals: 497

## 22. Is there anything that discourages use within Purgatory Park?

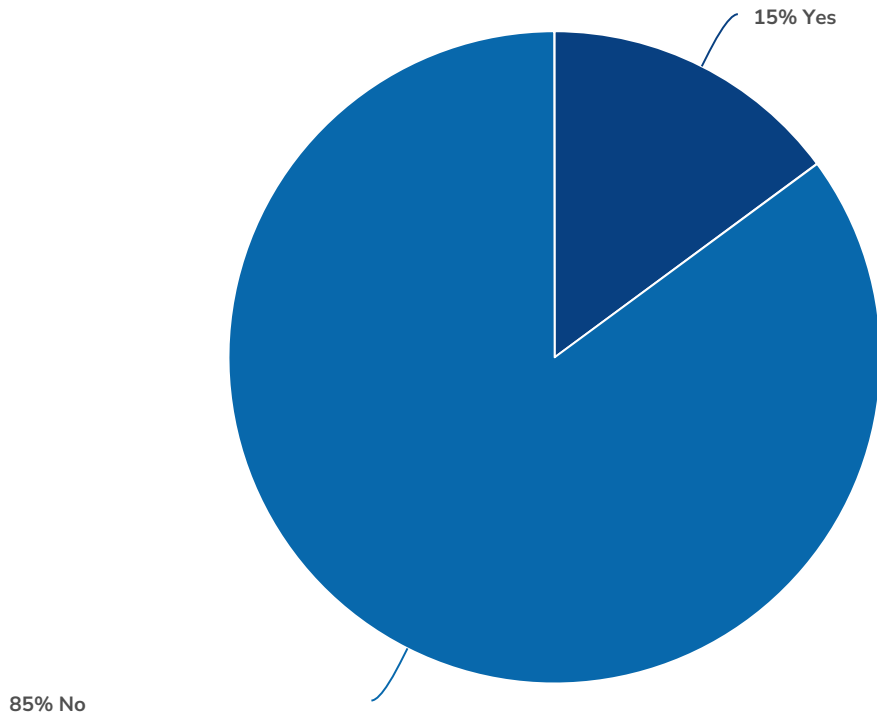
Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey



Value	Percent	Responses
Condition of trails	16.9%	51
Safety Concerns	11.9%	36
Amenities available (restrooms, shelters, ect.)	17.5%	53
Condition of amenities/facilities	9.3%	28
Presence of off-leash dogs	47.0%	142
Other - Write In	35.8%	108

23. Have you volunteered in the park on restoration projects, Adopt a Trail, Adopt a Sign, wildlife monitoring, or any other park volunteer opportunities?

Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

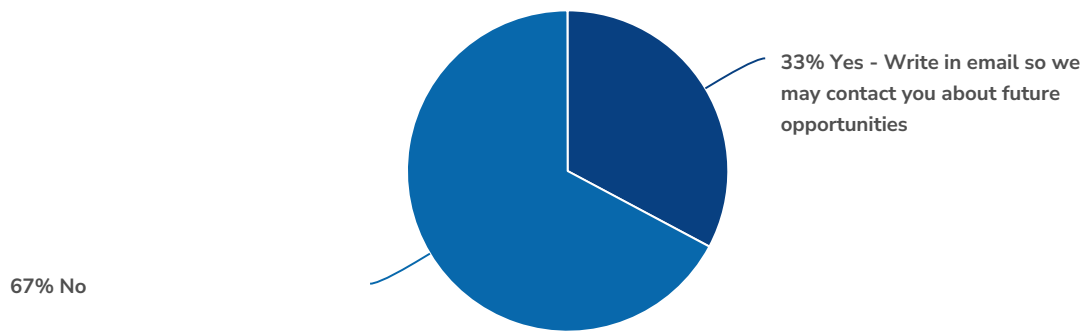


Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	14.9%	74
No	85.1%	424

Totals: 498

## 24. Would you be interested in volunteering for any of these opportunities in the park?

 Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes - Write in email so we may contact you about future opportunities	32.8%	152
No	67.2%	311

**Totals: 463**

## 25. Do you have any other comments or concerns about Purgatory Park?

 Purgatory Park Master Plan - Community Input Survey

### ResponseID Response

12 We love this park. My dog and I refer to it as our "Happy Place" I have never had a bad experience with other dogs or people. All the critters (dogs and humans) are always smiling.

14 I highly value the off leash dog part of the park, and I would be very sad to see it go. One of my greatest joys is walking my dog around that park. I have never had a negative encounter with a dog in this park, and I go there weekly. It is a truly unique and amazing amenity to have in Minnetonka, and very few parks in the metro even come close. Please do not make any major changes to the layout and overall feel of the park. I wouldn't want it to lose its charm.

15 Please consider that any efforts to "improve" or develop trails within the park will have a detrimental impact on wildlife and the local ecosystem. Please also consider that the vast majority of dog-walkers have pets who are safe, socialized and on voice command. Don't let the very small number of people who have not followed posted rules with their dogs result in a complete overhaul of what is a highly functional system. The beauty of the park is it's wild spaces and the freedom it affords its visitors, people and furry friends alike!

17 Some property owners around the park appear to be using park property as their own

20 Purgatory Park has beautiful wild flowers and birds. I hope that future development preserves a place for them.

21 I love the park and think it is a great asset as is. I personally don't think it needs to have a lot of things added, but I do like the fenced in dog area concept.

24 Keep off leash. Don't fence it in. I purchased my home because of the off leash area and use it every day. I've never had a problem ever with the dogs and I'm there every single day and have been for the past three years

25 Too many benches. They seemed be installed by whim rather than via a rational process. Memorials are important but can be accomplished thru a remembrance that doesn't clutter the park. Encourage people to provide a financial gift for restoration, for example, and list their names on a plaque at the park office site.

26 I think Purgatory is a truly wonderful place and we are so blessed to have this nature escape so close to home. I would like more posting of the off-leash rules so both types of folks understand them better.

29 I love purgatory park, the main trails and the dirt trails. It's a very neighborhood feel and such a community staple! Please keep the community feel!

30 No

## ResponseID Response

- 31 thank you for leading this initiative!
- 32 Use the off leash area daily. It is a great amenity in our city. Rarely have difficulty with other dogs.
- 33 Would love to see further removal of buckthorn and reintroduction of native plants
- 35 I am a huge fan of Purgatory Park. I find it to be a safe, fun, and beautiful park to walk my dog in all seasons. The only disappointing experience is when an older adult yelled at me aggressively about my dog that was off-leash in an off-leash area (not even remotely close to a paved path). It was disturbing, inappropriate, and ultimately ruined my day/moment. The condescending manner of this person was disrespectful. If my dog had barked at her I'm sure she would have reported me - why is she allowed to "bark" so rudely? thank you for listening.
- 37 I think some more doggy-doo bag dispensers might help to remind people to "pick up." Also more signage to remind people of their responsibility. I often pick up "extras" while picking up after my dog, especially in winter when people don't want to take their gloves off.
- 39 Ebike rules and dog off leash rules posted clearly and in more spots. Dogs are off leash everywhere and it's not clear to anyone where dogs can be off leash. It's been very dangerous and frustrating to see dog owners not care about the safety of other park guests and when approached, they are very disgruntled. Maybe more park patrol would help. The ice build up on the main trails is really scary in winter, even while wearing yack tracks.
- 40 I go to purgatory park every day. Please don't change anything. It seems from the questions that you want to change the off-leash area. As someone who goes to that area daily, there aren't concerns by users and dogs are well controlled. There are other trails (regional trails for example) for people who are are fearful of dogs. There are plenty of unused parks for kids all around minnetonka (I know, I used to go to those when my kids were young and we generally had them to ourselves). Don't add a kids area and wreck this space. Let it just stay as it is. Thank you
- 43 Too many benches and siting needs to be rectified so the bench location doesn't result in degradation of the park's ecology. Discontinue all trail side mowing to stop the spread of invasive plants and degradation of the park's prairies. Plow with a blower rather than a blade to limit damage to park. Return maintained trails to specified 6' width and change grading practices to stop trail width creep. Develop an 'official' trail system and map and restore and close unofficial trails.
- 44 Very nice trails, but I don't bring my young daughter to the park due to unleashed dogs (off and on trail).
- 46 We need more off leash parks not less. Fenced areas are not necessary, open spaces are better

## ResponseID Response

47 Keep off leash area in the foot hills. In the winter, dog walkers are the only people on the informal trails.

49 Love this park to walk my dog

51 Love my nearly daily walk in "purgatory"!

52 Off leash dogs are a concern and myself and a friend have both been jumped on by dogs in the park.

55 I used to run there 3-4 times per week, but the efforts to turn the park into a prairie resulted in the removal of the trail shade trees making it a hot run and less desirable for running, biking, and walking.

57 Love the off leash area! More benches would be nice to see as well as one trash in the middle area where people often have dogs chase around.

59 Keep it as a quiet nature area

60 It's really important to do high quality restoration here. Using burns, removing invasive species, planting native trees and plants and protecting them are all key.

62 The fact that the whole park is off leash is great for dogs to explore and sociaccess. Many people/dogs benefit from having this off leash access.

64 It is a nice compromise to allow unleashed dogs in the middle and leashed dogs on the trail; most follow the rules. Unfortunately, there are some dog owners who do not (especially on Sunday mornings). Some refuse to leash their dogs on the main trail even when asked nicely. Additional signage regarding the dog rules was added last year and that seems to have helped a bit. THANKS for adding those signs!

65 I love visiting Purgatory Park because I can see so many different aspects of nature and terrain -- gentle rolling prairies and what good be a beautiful oak knoll. The variety of native plants blooming at different time of the year are fun to watch.

67 As touched on, my only negative observation is frequent bag(s) of dog poop left on the trail. They city does an excellent job of providing receptables and even bags. They cannot expect the city to pick up their dog poop and toss it, too. I like the idea of allowing dogs run un-leashed in the central pasture.

68 Off leash dog's are not a problem at this park. For many residents (and non residents) that is the main appeal to this park. The lack of development within the park may be its greatest asset. Converting the red barn into some sort of community/nature center would be nice. Add one more thing, for Gods sakes no pickle ball courts

69 Overall it is a wonderful park. Great things are in the works, and there is still a lot of potential for more. Purgatory is one of my favorite Minnetonka parks with connections to more parks and trails to the north and south.



## ResponseID Response

- 70 Please keep the off-leash dog rules as they are. It's the only place nearby where us and our neighbors can reliably bring our dogs. It has become a neighborhood meeting place and I have gotten to know many neighbors due to the off-leash dog policies.
- 71 Purgatory Park is a gem and is a wonderful natural area that has become a favorite park for many Minnetonka residents. We need to take care that we continue to steward the reason that makes it special and not let unsanctioned activities ruin this beautiful park. Keep the focus on nature and nature based pursuits and do not add any recreation. Restore the park habitat, trails and creek to provide a little nature in our suburban city for our residents to enjoy. Provide a clear guideline for expected behaviors in a central location with wayfinding for sanctioned trails.
- 72 We love the trails and then off leash dog area so close to home!
- 73 This park is a gem. In my opinion, it "shines" best in the current state it's in. That doesn't mean perhaps some small improvements could be made. However, adding to many "things" and structures may detract from the natural sense of beauty this park provides. 98% of the dogs and DOG OWNERS that utilize this park are well trained and are courteous of the other dogs and people that they encounter. I agree with the rule of "dogs on leash on the main trails". I see that rule being broken most often. We, as rule abiding citizens of the park, always follow that rule and only let our dog off once off the primary path. The off leash areas and non primary trails are so beneficial to the dogs and humans that use them. I do know that if a "fenced in" dog area was created, that would immediately detract from the allure of this one a kind park. I would say that even if I didn't own a dog. This park is special and unique. I don't think it should be radically changed. Thanks for listening!
- 74 The off leash dog areas are fine as is, the problem is people don't leash their dogs on the paved trails as they're supposed to. Many people are dicks when you ask them to leash their dogs on the paved trails. Our leashed dog has felt threatened and my wife has been injured in these circumstances.
- 76 tricky balance-let's set a better example than the lone lake debacle.
- 79 It seems that this "Master Plan" is going in the direction of trying to eliminate dogs from being in the park. The only place so far where dogs have even been mentioned is in this survey. There should be more focus on the safety in the parking lots.
- 80 My husband and I no longer walk in Purgatory, although it is within walking distance from our home, due to irresponsible dog owners who let their dogs off-leash on the paved path & don't pick up their animals' poop. We don't want to have to bring bear spray to avoid being approached by an unfriendly dog.
- 81 The park is a treasure, and we think the city does a good job, especially on the main trails. We go there nearly every day in good weather.

## ResponseID Response

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82 Dogs will also be an issue. That being said, I appreciate that Purgatory Park is a place where owners can engage dogs in the environment instead of just being in a dangerous, closed, high-tension area. When I notice a tense dog, Purgatory Park allows space for me to walk elsewhere. I appreciate that without a fence, dogs MUST be under voice command. It typically enforces that dogs are trained and owners are more engaged than a regular closed-in park.

85 My only concern is that our off leash privleges get taken away, I do not want a smaller enclosed fenced in area for my dog to "exercise" in. Walking and socializing with dogs and people in purgatory is a huge part of my life.

87 Park is wonderful the way it is. Please do not change anything!

88 Love the off leash dog park!

90 None that I have not already commented on in the guestbook.

93 The South side of park trails are primarily used by off leash dog walkers with no problems. I use this daily with only positive interactions with community people. Please continue to allow off leash in these areas. There are ample trails for people to walk dogs on leashes or walk in these primary trails. This park is so special and over restrictions for dogs off leash will ruin the park. There are lots of parks around that can service people who are fearful of dogs or need to have dog on leashes. For example the Minnewasta fenced in dog park actually has more incidents and is crowded and small. People with dogs need free places to run their dogs versus fenced in with no exercise opportunities for the dog walkers. Please do not listen only to the loud complainers.

94 I love the park! Thank you for caring for it.

96 I appreciate the volunteer work in the park. I wish I had more time to help that effort.

99 Purgatory park is an amazing park, and offers fantastic opportunities for dog socializing and training that cannot be found at any other publicly available, free park. It would be a tragedy to lose the parts of purgatory that bring in the most amount of visitors, which would be the off-leash dog park. Additional enforcement/presence of park personnel may increase overall experience with all visitors. There are many individuals still riding bikes through the off leash dog area, despite the signage stating that the unmaintained trails are not authorized for bikes.

100 Please do not develop the interior of the park any more. To me this park is about being in nature. Any more development would decrease nature and the reason of the park. Leave No Trace. If an off leash dog park is created how will it be maintained? Will there grass restoration or will it become dirt/mud pit? Will a permit be needed? I am in favor of that to help defray the costs of maintaining the area which would include poop drop offs, fence maintenance, grounds maintenance (if the grounds get too high people stop picking up poop, ex is Columbia Park off leash area in NE Mpls). The presence of the cow paths are great for runners and hikers. Please ignore the requests to remove them.

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- 101 The best part of Purgatory Park is the fact that you can walk your dogs through the woods off leash. I have been walking there for over 10 years and NEVER have had/seen any sort of issue with off-leash dogs. The fact that you would even consider taking this away is ridiculous and I feel this is what makes Purgatory special!
- 102 The drainage pipe protruding from the creek bank near the south bridge is a terrible eyesore, and meanwhile there is a lack of functional drainage along the path on the whole southwest part of the main loop. Something should be done to alleviate the water and mud on the primary trail after rain and snowmelt that still allows flow from the ridge into the creek wetlands. The dirt paths up the ridgeline between the main loop and the connection to 58th Street are under appreciated and utilized. While not worth the space to make the trails the same width and quality as the primary ones, some amount of gravel, paver base or wood chips would be worthwhile. In parallel, buckthorn removal should be performed regularly along those trails. A "buckthorn brigade" for volunteers to work on their own time but with online instructions, and a place to log efforts and get assigned areas would help—even better if there were dedicated pullers to check out from a park locker. Can Purgatory be a site fo
- 104 I have noticed an uptick in owners not picking up after dogs. They just leave the bags on the trail when there is a bin close by. Also lots of dogs off leash on the trail.
- 106 The personality of the park is so lovely. My adult autistic son and I walk there fairly frequently, and the park attracts the most respectful, dignity-granting, friendly people. I can't even put my finger on it exactly, but it is, for us, one of the very safest places in the metro area.
- 115 No
- 117 It's really not fair for me to criticize the facilities in the park, but for the 28 years I've been visiting it I've never used the ladies' because it creeps me out from the outside.
- 119 Dog poop! I don't have a solution but dog owners need to do a better job cleaning up.
- 122 Please continue to allow Offleash sections of the park.
- 123 I have a dog but won't take him walking there bc there are so many off leash dogs at this park
- 124 Ive lived here all my life and am close to retiring, I will be able to sign up to volunteer when this happens. Thank you ! Your doing a great job !
- 125 Change nothing at Purgatory Park — friendly folks and happy dogs.

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- 126 My family is a close neighbor to the park. Please keep it as "natural" as possible. We have severe latex allergies and parks with rubber crumb flooring are NOT accessible to me and my kids. We appreciate the crushed limestone trails and think it adds to the character of the park. New areas of asphalt (which often contains latex/recycled tires) would also limit our access to the park. We LOVE nature playgrounds and frequently drive to them around the metro. It would be amazing to have one in our closest park
- 127 Please leave the deer / cow trails as they are
- 129 As a dog owner, there are very few places to let our dogs be dogs. Watching my golden run in the woods and through the fields is such a joy. We do not go to fenced in dog parks as my dog would rather run in the woods with me than play with an other dog. But an unfenced area requires a dog with some recall skills and a more involved owner. So perhaps an idea would be to have a fenced in area for those that want that experience and an area open/unfenced for those of us that value that experience.
- 130 Only safety with regards to theft. Dogs are not an issue unless the owner is ignoring the rules. Aggressive dogs should not be allowed off leash. I have never had an issue with aggressive dogs, but I know people who have.
- 134 I think the current leash rules should be enforced. I have gone nearly every day for the last 3 years with my dog and have only seen police or community service officers there once. And larger signage with rules and fines clearly stated.
- 135 You did not ask if I use both primary trails and natural/wooded trails. Both are great and both should be continued - much better birding on the small trails through the woods and often quieter. I probably use the natural trails more than the primary ones.
- 137 More parking
- 138 Please continue to allow "the middle" area to remain off leash for dogs. Please use community service volunteers to issue tickets to dogs that are on the circular trail. Make the tickets high value (\$50+) and enforceable. If a dog strays from "the middle" to the circular paved trail, issue tickets!
- 139 Great natural area. Keep it as "natural" as possible.
- 143 No enforcement of dog rules = no rules and how can you possibly try to enforce any of the rules. Over and over I get told it is an of leash area. No one can tell me any of the other regulations pertaining to of leash dogs because they don't know the rest of the rules There is a lot of erosion of the creek banks due to the dogs running in and out of the water. And the whole park is a dog waste receptacle. I pick up any that I see and there is a fair amount that is bagged but then left on the trail. The question about primary trails and informal trails. I use a lot of the primary tails to get to the many informal trails so I use a high percentage of both. Another park entrance I often use is through the Scenic Heights Elementary School Forest.

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144 Absolutely love the idea of the Red Barn site becoming a nature center AND nature playground! What a neat idea—could be a future site for school field trips!

147 Purgatory is a wonderful natural space, and its beauty is just that. Enhancements to the park should honor the Big Woods history, and have minimal impact on the overall ecosystem. Lone Lake is a great example, the city has done a great job balancing natural spaces with recreation.

149 We take our dog off leash in the center and on leash on paths. We have had great experiences. Fenced dog parks make it harder to avoid poorly behaved dogs. Also dogs have to be recalled trained so I feel the dogs at purgatory are better behaved than fenced in dog park dogs.

152 It would be great to have cross country ski trails in the park

154 No

155 Trail conditions in winter can be horrendous and dangerous, not sure what can be done about that. Also, love that there's an off leash dog area but people don't always stick to that area with their dogs- have seen people frightened of these dogs, I myself have been extremely annoyed/frightened by these dogs following my dog/I, I have seen other dogs attacked, I get annoyed by people yelling at their dogs who aren't well enough behaved to be off-leash. I come across people looking for their dogs that took off, and notice deer are getting chased into neighborhoods/roads by these dogs. My dog stays on a leash because I'm realistic about what I can expect from him, others seem to be over-confident or don't care about how their dogs impact others.

156 Thank you for this gorgeous park. We use it twice everyday to walk and run our happy dog!

157 We love the park and how it operates now but do feel that it could use some rejuvenation.

158 Leave it as is!

159 It's a great park!

160 We are concerned that Minnetonka focuses so much on trails and fitness centers. We now pay taxes on 2 member only fitness clubs and \$9 a month on our utilities to pay for trail upkeep. The fitness centers should be open to all residents, especially for kids swimming since Minnetonka has no public pool. Create trail passes to pay for trail upkeep. We are VERY frustrated how Minnetonka continues to waste tax payer money on select demographic, makes it exclusive yet charging all. Our family has no family playground park within biking distance. When we do drive to visit a park in Minnetonka, Mini Tonka, it is often closed or find there is no place to park due to contractors using it as a pit stop.. We usually end up just driving to other cities parks since we need to drive to get to a park anyway and Minnetonka parks do not engage our kids.

## ResponseID Response

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161 No

164 I don't like sharing the primary trails with cyclists. They go too fast and are a danger to pedestrians, especially to those with small children, and dogs. The mountain bike cyclists are also ruining the informal trails; they disregard the signage about not using those trails, and several have been very rude to me when I've encountered them while walking with my dogs. I know it's a great park to cycle, but something needs to be done about the inherent dangers when pedestrians share the trail with cyclists as well as the destruction of the natural environment by mountain bikes.

169 Just off-leash dogs. Dogs on leashes make no difference, but off-leash dogs concern me when bringing my toddler to walk on the main trail. There is a cross section where we regularly run into issues with dogs, including seeing one escape his owner and chase/catch a rabbit in front of our 1.5 year old. Of course this is something she would learn in the future, but it scared her very badly to see a dog viciously kill a rabbit on the trail right ahead of us. We love dogs, but they are not people. They should be on leashes or fenced-in in a city park like this.

172 Current rules about dogs in parking lots and main trails need to be respected by dog owners and enforced. This is what gives dog owners mainly a bad name. Also revive the alternative methods of encouraging dog pickup of poop- kids art- public services ce messages and opportunities- even possible signs (I know this is not a thing the public likes) reminding people where to leash dogs and maybe some facts about dog waste contamination etc

174 This park saved my mental fitness during Covid. It is my sanctuary and I hope you don't take away the off leash dog Park piece.

175 For those making decisions about change, I hope that it isn't only the few "complainers" who are heard. Suggestions are fine, but need to be well and truly investigated before any action is taken that might ultimately make the park less appealing.

176 Love the beauty and natural feel of Purgatory Park - wouldn't want to see any major changes to the already gorgeous primary trail system.

182 That attitudes of non dog owners are a vocal minority of park goers. I go to the park every single day as a dog owner and always see more people using the park with their dogs than people using it without dogs. There's a beautiful community of dog owners there that is the life of the park. This has been the best experience I've had at any park with my dog and it would be a shame if I was told I was no longer allowed. If I had to guess, you would lose 80% of park goers if you change the rules to not allow off leash walks. Minnetonka does not have a good off leash dog park besides Purgatory. All other good dogs parks exist outside of city limits. Changing the rules would simply have more of your local population leaving the city to walk their dogs and I think that would be a shame.

185 I come for the off leash dog park. We love bringing our dog there and meeting all the friendly other dogs and owners there

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- 195 We go to the off-leash dog walking areas nearly every day. We see the people using the park most often and on a regular basis being off-leash dog walkers. Please do not remove that environment. These areas are incredibly rare and vital. There are so many other walking paths and areas mentioned in this survey. I know some people have expressed being worried about off leash dogs but I have never experienced any concern or danger. I bring my young children there. Maintaining some separation between those individuals who feel uncomfortable is fine but please do not remove the off-leash open area because of a few anxious voices.
- 197 Great park. Maybe find a way to better identify uses for the water.
- 201 Please keep the off leash dog area off leash , it's the only place for humans and dogs to roam ... fenced dog park have too many dog fights and deaths... please let behaved dogs keep their freedom to be dogs
- 203 Study should include the adjacent Fire Station property/integration and consider removal of all barns and structures - they have no historical significance; including the corn crib which was purchased and move there by Penaz. Minnetonka Historical Society should be considered and consulted.
- 204 Would love to see more prairie grass and wildflower planting
- 205 Love this park
- 211 I was forced into Retirement/disability at age 47 when my ms got too bad. I have seen many people use the park to help them nurse themselves back to reasonable health. It really, truly is a very healing place. I also see a natural link between the park and the nearby high school. Specifically, I would inquire if the art department might want to use the whole bridge abutment canvases to a) keep current messaging somewhere, b) make other new messaging about art and it's use, and inquire with the archaeology teacher to see what else could be learned from the end of the tail-line and possibly locate the missing rail station or other learnings.
- 212 The above says it all !!!
- 214 The vast majority (99%) of dogs we have encountered over the past several years are well behaved and well mannered. The times when this is not the case on perfect weather days when the number of visitors are unusually high. For example, the first nice day in the spring. I would suggest that these are the days when community officer presence should be stepped up. I have encounter many more issues with leashed dogs lunging and jumping vs off lease dogs who much better behaved. Rather than making changes to the park, maybe to have a dog off lease in the park the dog should be able to have passed the Canine Good Citizen test. This is standardized test and the owner can get a certificate and is in line with the current ordinances. There are times when trash cans are overflowing and there are no dog pick up bags available for weeks at a time mostly in the winter months. This is when dog pickup compliance is low
- 215 other than keeping existing trails open (fallen trees, etc...) I would like to see no changes in Purgatory park!

## ResponseID Response

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217 main concern is off leash dogs on the trails.

218 As I've mentioned a few times already another access point or two on the west side would be great. We live on Vine Hill Road and accessing the park on foot or bike is a bit of a trek having to go a few miles north or south. An access on 57th or 58th street would be fantastic!

219 This park is one of the best parts of Minnetonka. Please take care in doing renovations, and don't change much

221 When I first moved to Minnetonka and discovered Purgatory I was thrilled. My Labrador and I walk it often in the back trails. I try and avoid the "hill" as the groups of dogs there are really playing together and having an older dog, she is not as interested in that, but rather walking in the wooded areas. I think both a fenced area, and non-fenced for walking with dogs in the woods would be a wonderful solution. It does get muddy in the spring it would be nice if the off-leash areas that get a lot of traffic had more gravel on them to help reduce that. Once you get into the woods it isn't usually that bad, I would think because there is less traffic. It would also be nice if there was a "swimming" are for the dogs. There are a couple spots in the early summer but when it's hot it would be nice to have something to cool them down in. Thanks for considering.

222 We've used the off leash trails for our dogs for 20+ years. We strongly disagree with fencing in the park. This off leash area has been a blessing to many dog owners for decades.

223 We use the trail often! Would hate to see a fenced dog area.

226 It is our family's favorite park because of the wild nature of it. My kids are in high school now and playing in/near the creek has been an essential part of their childhood, allowing them to develop a love of the outdoors in a way not as possible with more manicured parks. We go for the kids, but honestly what draws us most is a beautiful place to walk the dog. I love the ability to hike around a loop with a variety of scenery and not just stand in one spot. This is a draw in all seasons. We do use the paved trails but most of the time are off leash in the central part. There are a couple spots where the paved trails and off leash trail are too close and off leash dogs are tempted to approach leashed dogs on the paved path.

227 I visit purgatory park daily with my two dogs. There is a fantastic dog walking community. People who have been walking their dogs off leash here for decades. People even move house to live near this park for the amazing off leash dog area. We're extremely thankful for this space. The dogs in the dog park are all very well behaved. By not having the off leash area fenced in, you ensure only trained dogs enter as poorly trained dogs might run away. I understand some cyclists are upset with the dogs in the park.

228 NA



## ResponseID Response

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229 Do not restrict off leash dog area. Just put more signs up, for people that don't want off leash- walk around outside of park not in the middle.

230 Winter ice on steep hills.

231 I've been walking my dogs in the unleashes area for over 30 years. It is the best park for that service anywhere in the greater metro area. My dogs have always been voice command, never any uncontrolled incidents

235 We love walking our dog off leash at Purgatory. It has helped both my wife and I through very tough times. We love the community of off leash dog walkers we've met. It would be a shame to lose that aspect of the park and the joy it brings to so many people and families!

241 For the off leash area, more signage is needed to direct dog owners to leash their dogs when crossing over paved paths so as not to interfere or frighten walkers. Also, signage to tell dog owners their dog must be sociable with other dogs or they are not allowed to use the off leash area

242 I have been using Purgatory Park for over 25 years, I have not seen a problem with the dogs. Minor scuffle between dogs do happen that the dogs and owner work out quickly. Purgatory Park is Minnetonka's town square were citizen's meet. Without freedom for the dog most of the people that use Purgatory Park would not go to the park.

243 Love the atmosphere there. If there ends up being a fenced area it should include creek access for the dogs.

244 Is the park for dogs or people?

245 Crime, car break-ins, dog owners not controlling their dogs (even when on leash and certainly when off lease), dog owners not picking up dog's poop in middle area and even along groomed trails. We have enough benches. Refrain from adding more. Also, benches full of flowers as memorials are off-putting and cannot be used for the reason intended—to sit on. PLEASE put up signs warning visitors about crime and car break-ins. The policeman said it happens all the time but I had been coming here for 20 years and was not aware. Seeing multiple car break-ins on a sunny afternoon turned me off and I quit visiting Purgatory for many months. Bloomington posts signs warning visitors an out this and we should do the same here. Dog owners think they are responsible but walking with a friend (also a Minnetonka resident), she said she didn't need to pick up the poop in the middle "off-leash" area. I was appalled and quit walking in the center area because of this.

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246 While on the trail running this Sunday morning I saw 3 dogs off leash and the owner scrolling on her phone and oblivious to my wanting them out of my way and to NOT have my crotch sniffed during an otherwise pleasant summer run. Safety concerns. I have heard from several neighbors who either had their cats broken into at this park or witnessed the aftermath of it. Parking lot (and along main trails) needs better upkeep. Trash lying around, cigarette butts, etc. I pick up what I can but it looks bad. The project years ago to add the large stones along creek was a waste of money. Please don't spend money on things that won't be maintained. Dog-owners (like me) should know to keep their dogs leashes and city trails AND know to bring their own poop bags when walking their dogs. Do not spend tax money on adding more of these, please. Thank you.

247 The off leash informal trails are fantastic. I take my dogs there almost everyday, rain, shine, or freezing cold. It's great exercise for me and my dog as I have met wonderful people and dogs in the years I've been going there. People without dogs and people with dogs on leash can go almost anywhere to walk/run. Purgatory Park is a special place for dog owners who want to allow their dogs off leash. We can't go to other dog parks and have the same experience as Purgatory. I have been to other dog parks and people are actually less hands on with their dogs. The majority of the people I have met at Purgatory are so incredibly grateful for the park, they are good people and have well mannered dogs. Please, please, please, keep Purgatory Park a safe haven for people and dogs to be off leash. Thank you!

250 Purgatory Park has been a highlight and a regular part of my life for over 22 years. Please don't disrupt the natural beauty of this park. It will survive and thrive longer than any of us.

251 I firmly believe that the off leash dog rules are fine as they stand and should not be altered in any way. Also as far as "Developing " the park into something different to please the desires of the few is a bad idea. This park is very unique and valuable to many long time visitors. A park historically includes woods , wildlife and nature. Why does the park need to be changed to suit the desires of people who don't value these things. As Mtka residents we are very fortunate to have a good number and variety of parks - recreational areas. It would be a great disservice to ourselves and the park , in my opinion to "change" the park. Just for the sake of "change" and to serve the desires of those who truly don't value and maybe don't even know what nature is or means ! This park is a unique and valuable treasure and should stand , as is , forever. Our forefathers made mtka unique in regard to our leash laws for a reason and i believe in the strongest possible terms that these guiding ideas

252 I use the park almost daily, and almost everyone I encounter has a dog with them off-leash. It has become a wonderful community gathering place where we can all bring our dogs to enjoy the outdoors. I understand that some people may not want to walk where dogs are off leash. Therefore, I think it would be a great idea to help us in force leashing in certain areas, so everyone can enjoy the park and feel safe.

253 Leave the leash laws alone. I do not own a dog but love watching them play and their joyfulness. In the 20 plus years I have walked regularly in the park have NEVER witnessed an incident. Let it be! I'm

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- 254 this is the only off leash dog area we like to use as the dogs that go to non-fenced parks are better behaved and listen to recall commands. It is a wonderful community of the same people that use it daily. I have heard that people are complaining about it and don't understand why they simply stick to the leashed area and avoid the off leash area
- 255 Leave it as is, no need to spend city funds needlessly. Minnetonka has wonderful parks, trails for bikes, and hiking/walking opportunities for non pet owners and state wide too! Purgatory is a jewel to our family, we take our dogs here everyday!
- 257 Please don't over develop it. We need secluded green spaces. If you have to add trails, please put greenery like hedges or evergreens between them to break up the site lines.
- 260 We adore the opportunity to explore the park with and without our dog. However it is a really special place to let dogs play off leash and it draws a lot of people and families to the park. We feel really fortunate to have that in our community and would hate to see it change.
- 261 Off leash dog park is amazing, unique and a gift to our community. There are 100's of options for individuals not comfortable with it.
- 263 More trash cans please .... outside of the dog area. I used to be able to use the dog park area (LOVED it!), but my new dog I am worried about (100lb and not sure how he is with other dogs), so I socialize him at dog daycare, but walk him at Purgatory on leash and often hit the informal trails (less people/dogs), but I also would like more garbage cans (and on main trail is fine), so that I am not holding a dog bag for over a mile until I see one. I literally know where all of the trash cans are, and there are not many. Thanks - LOVE Purgatory and that I live in a great community with great parks!!!
- 269 I live in EP off 62 (I reside in the Minnetonka school District and my kids go to CSE). We walk in to the park via 62 access under the bridge almost daily. I walk the trails with our 4 year old lab and it's our favorite walk in the area. The ability to walk our dog off-leash and the inner trails is my favorite aspect of the park. Dog walkers are very respectful of each other and I've never experienced any issue. My kids often bike the trails to see friends. It's an easy, safe option to allow them a larger blue print to move around from our neighborhood.
- 270 Off-leash dogs on the main path has become an issue, I have neighbors that will not walk the paths anymore because of this. This morning there was a woman (on the paved path, not the "dog" path) with 4 dogs, all off-leash - and she was on her phone. I had to walk into the grasses to go by and a biker had to almost stop. Even enforcing leashes on main path so all can enjoy it would help.
- 272 love it as it is. if it ain't broke don't fix it

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- 274 I am aware of people concerned with off leash dogs in the park. I would LOVE to see a way where off leash dogs and their humans can respect one another and share the space. In my 12 years as a resident Ive been enjoying Purgatory's off leash areas responsibly and have never seen any incidents of attacks or dangerous situations. On a few occasions I have witnessed individuals in the space designated as off leash being hostile to those with dogs playing. It would be a shame to loose this local off leash area.
- 275 I think it is perfectly reasonable to restrict off leash dogs to the present off leash area. Perhaps this could be more strictly enforced with fines.
- 276 It is such a good place for dogs to be able to be off-leash - I say this as someone who hikes 5 miles in there almost every day. I've never found that to be unsafe. I also believe the beauty of Purgatory is how natural it is and I am concerned with all of the installation/picnic plans - isn't there enough of this in our town already? Thanks!
- 277 We live on the road to Purgatory Park (Stodola) and it is one of the best features of our home/neighborhood. I would love to feel safer bringing my leashed dog, but have had many, many encounters with off-leash dogs and their uncaring owners that leads me to not bring my dog as often as I would if I felt safer. I have been injured (fallen when caught up in the leash my dog is attached to when off lash dogs approach, multiple times) and it's really frustrating. I love the opportunity for dogs and their owners to have a space for them to run, but hate that it's at the sacrifice of my dog's comfort and my safety. I know you have a lot of interests to balance, but if there is any way to create clear boundaries and enforce park rules, we would be ever grateful.
- 279 I enjoy the informal trails. Although I keep my dog on Leah's I haven't had issue with any offleash dogs.
- 280 Several areas of the paved trail between Clear Spring Road and the tunnel under Excelsior Blvd have become quite damaged and are in need to repaving.
- 281 I live on Creek Park Dr. and access the trail from the Stodola rd. entrance. Over the last few years, we have seen an increasing amount of traffic to the park. This traffic drives fast down Stodola Rd. and is a concern to all of the families that live in the neighborhood. I would suggest making this entrance walking entrance only to avoid the extra traffic and parking at the end of the cult-a-sack. Is it possible to put no parking signs at this entrance? If you are driving to the park you should park at the main entrance where the parking lot is. Another concern is when the traffic is leaving this area there is a blind approach as you come up the hill and is concerning that traffic will not see our kids while they are playing on bikes in our neighborhood that we live in.
- 282 It is one of the biggest reasons we continue to live in the East Purgatory neighborhood off of Stodola Road
- 283 A beautiful park adjacent to our neighborhood. Sadly, we've stopped walking the Purgatory Creek trails due to unleashed and aggressive dogs. I would not recommend walking with children on these paths. Owners allow dogs to run ahead; bends in the paths don't give ample time to protect yourself, your children, or grandchildren.

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284 I think the worst thing that could be done is to "overdevelop" this natural space. I love how it feels like its nestled between neighborhoods and really a part of the community. This is a unique space because people/families can make the park a part of their regular routine and walk, bike, run from their homes. I think any future development/enhancement should be nature, education, or active-lifestyle focused and not on things like adding additional parking, or commercial spaces. #KeepPurgatoryWild

286 I enjoy the park as it is. It seems to be a natural area as opposed to a groomed park. Lots of wildlife to see and birds to hear. Nor is it overcrowded. The trail is great for walking and biking, no rollerblades or motorized vehicles.

287 Well done - the clearing out and planting of prairie grasses / wild flowers on the bluff area along the eastern portion of main acreage. More removal of invasive species etc.

293 Please, please don't change it to much. We love walking at this park and adding in art or paving a ton or other things will take away from the 'nature' feeling.

294 Overall love the park! I don't mean to be so harsh about off leash, but the issue is really owners walking their dog off leash in the areas that are only for on leash (primary trails).

296 Winter time it gets crazy icy even in the paved areas. We've had to move to other parks for walks when the heavier snows start.

297 Dogs should be allowed off-leash on all unpaved trails throughout the whole park and put on leash to cross paved trails.

298 I'm fortunate to live close-by. I appreciate the thought going into its future.

299 Bring in some more wildlife.. or goats..

300 There is too much traffic in our neighborhood. Stodola park entrance is 7 houses away from our home. There is a lot of traffic coming to park over here. We have a lot of new families with young children and it's best to keep all parking plans on the Excelsior Blvd side of the park where it belongs. We already have enough unnecessary traffic coming on our streets from Scenic Heights school, especially non residents of Minnetonka.

301 We love the park. We went every single week for a year during Covid and loved watching all the season change. I have a 4 year old who is afraid of dogs and they scare her on the trails. I personally love dogs but I have noticed how quickly they get in the face of little kids when left off leash. We like hiking the trails through the woods so we avoid as many dogs on the main trail.

303 Be more supportive of Boy Scout volunteer efforts and Eagle Scout projects.

305 Don't mess with the creek banks it only makes things worse when water rises. Enforcing dog leash and poop pickup w significant fines would be great. Saturday morning is terrible w people w multiple dogs off leash, coffee in hand and dogs out of site. No way do they pick up after their dogs

**ResponseID    Response**

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311            No

319            Would love to see more children-friendly spaces in Purgatory Park and in Minnetonka generally. This survey seems to prioritize dog owners (or dog haters) over parents and their kids. I don't have a dog but don't mind the people who bring theirs to the Park. But I'd really love to have a nature playground or nature center for my young family.

322            the off leash dogs present a safety concern for those of us who hike on the trails. Many are out of control and come running at us, with their owner nowhere in sight.

329            As a dog owner, I do not feel comfortable with the off leash dogs in the park. My dog is on leash and has had several off leash dogs charge at her and the owners are oblivious or tell me it's dogs just being dogs. It is not a safe situation and it prevents us from visiting the park more frequently.

331            We have been visiting the park for over 10 years. I have witnessed aggressive dogs attacking in the off-leash area and I had my small dog charged on one of the "cow paths" by a large dog that was off-leash and the owner had no control over. We do not go in the off-leash area because personally, I think it is too risky. Also, we have a bench in honor of our son at the park. I did speak with Darin at Public Works many years ago about the amount of trash that was being left on some of the memorial benches in the park. He was completely unkind, rude, and dismissive. My suggestion to the city is if you are going to continue the memorial bench donations, you put someone else in charge of the program who is better skilled at speaking compassionately to people who are donating benches. I spoke to the city of Minneapolis bench donation person and she was very kind and compassionate to my situation. She also told me that people are not allowed to leave garbage on their donated benches. That the

333            I have been a resident of Minnetonka for over 20 years . Throughout this time, I have had the opportunity to witness the evolution of our city parks.Over the years ,various groups have voiced their concerns about the parks, and it appears some of these voices have an agenda for change. In my opinion the city has done an outstanding job in considering the needs and desires of its residents while ensuring the parks remain an essential part of our citys core values.Our city parks have been a cherished gathering place for families and friends and have provided a place for community and belonging. In addition I would encourage the city to share the results of this survey and any relevant data as transparency is vital in community decision making.

334            Minnetonka kids deserve great natural parks and trails where they can slow down enjoy nature create memories with their families and friends. Purgatory trails are amazing for families because they are natures timeless opportunity for connecting, learning and conversation. Children should be able to trust that they are safe from known and unknown dangers in our cities natural areas.

## ResponseID Response

- 336 I go to Purgatory Park nearly every day and so many people choose to ignore the leash rules on the paved trails. I have had many altercations with owners who do nothing to control their dog. I've run into dogs on the unmaintained trails that growl at me with no owner in sight. The dogs that play in the center of the park do not cause issues. There should be signs where the park boundaries are such as "You are now leaving Purgatory Park". People sometimes wonder into my yard from the park and it creeps me out.
- 337 Thanks for the survey
- 340 We don't have dogs, and have never had issues with off leash dogs. We love the park!
- 343 We were ecstatic to discover this beautiful park when we first moved to Mtka, and walked our gentle LEASHED dog there often, until it became clear we could not. I cannot count how many times we have been approached and scared by off-leash dogs in Purgatory, nor how many reports I have heard and read about off-leash dog attacks in this park. Now it is our least-enjoyed park because of the constant fear of off-leash dogs. I will not walk there alone any more. Fence part of it in--maybe the large grassy area in the middle--for those who are arrogant enough to insist on off-leash dogs, and make the penalties for infractions stiff. Let the rest of us taxpayers and our kids/dogs enjoy the park in safety and peace! \*\*\*A public park is no place to test a loose dog's willingness to attack or bite a person or another dog.\*\*\* All Mtka parks need new rules about this. Thank you.
- 344 Off leash dogs have ruined this park for our family. A fenced dog park would make the park experience safer for all. People are often inconsiderate and inconsistent in their belief that their off leash dog will mind them and heel.
- 346 I stopped using the informal paths bcz too many dogs -- and owners do not control their dogs
- 347 Invasive plants, buckthorn
- 348 Patrol the parking. People pull in, drive past the overflow and stop in the lane. There W spots available but they don't even attempt to fake like they are looking for an open spot. Off leash dogs running rampant on the secondary trails likes they own the land. Owners don't try to control the dogs.
- 349 I enjoy the community of the people walking their dogs at the park. People care about each other and care about the park. I would really miss my daily walks with my dog if this was changed.
- 353 Can't wait to see your master plan!
- 354 Provide more signs to help find other trails besides the main one
- 356 Purgatory Park should be left organic and green. Playgrounds are located at other parks for families to use and same with picnic tables (none needed here). Keep this park as is and just add 2 more dog waste stations.

## ResponseID Response

365 Is there another park like Purgatory anywhere in Minnesota. This place is sanctuary for dog walkers everyday who comprise 90% + of the humans walking. Did you know that the average walk in a National Park is 1/4 mile out and then back. This is a park for people who walk. Don't think you can change it. Have any of you been to Carver Park in Waconia? It is a spectacular piece of land ruined by asphalt trails. It is vast and open. Yet when I ride there in my bike this park can be virtually empty. What makes Purgatory so unique is it's undeveloped feel. If you change this then it's gone forever and you might have an empty park.

366 Too many benches, some poorly sited too far off the main trail. People don't understand or follow the off-leash ordinance. I feel harassed by dogs because owners don't keep them away from me.

367 keep working on eliminating buckthorn and invasive plants!

369 Having the center of the Park be open to off leash dogs is a pure joy. Our family goes there daily with our dogs and has never had an issue. Yes, I have seen dogs off leash BEFORE entering the park. But it would be an incredible disservice to the community to make this space no longer open to off leash families. The majority of people that use the park are there with dogs, particularly in the winter. It would be a shame to make a small fenced in space elsewhere in the park. We would have no longer visit Purgatory. I encourage you to find a way to fence in the current area if you must, but please do not short change the main group of people that utilize this park and make that space no longer open to off leash dogs.

374 I love the off leash dog park- I wish more of it was dog friendly. The off leash dog park is a highlight to my day & my dogs

376 It would be a shame to lose the off leash areas for dogs and people to exercise. Our dogs desperately need this high energy outlet which they cannot experience through on leash human speed walks.

378 I understand how people are concerned about safety with off-leash dogs. Some owners are not vigilante with keeping their dogs under voice command. I think this is primarily an issue between the open field and primary trail on the east side of the park. Other than that area I've never encountered a dog approach me not on a leash except in the parking lot where the rules are already that dogs must be leashed.

380 I have been going to Purgatory Park for over 15 years and the dog park is absolutely amazing as is. I have never seen any issues. Please don't ruin the park with a fence! Please don't change the rules. Actually, I believe there's a covenant that runs with the land that allows the dogs to be off leash.

382 I live on Nantucket Pl. and occasionally loose off leash dogs run around my house and yard. I never see or hear their owners.

383 It would be nice to have a playground for the kids.



## ResponseID Response

385 Do not change anything The park is perfect and unlike any other park

392 I am concerned that the city is developing spaces that can be left more natural. I do not have a problem with the off-leash use of the park even though I do not walk a dog there. I do not want to see another dog "park". Leave as much dirt trails as possible and stop paving the grounds.

394 I would like more monitoring so park rules are followed, especially related to dogs in the park.

395 We love purgatory and love to bring our dogs it is always the highlight of our day when we go! Please keep it dog friendly! Some more waste receptacles would be nice.

403 Keep it the way it is. It's perfect.

405 I've been a regular visitor to Purgatory for over 25 years. It's a great park, love the "primary" and informal trails in the woods. Also love the increased access to the wetlands area when the ground is frozen. However, the impact to the natural features of the park have deteriorated over the past several years due to overuse. In addition, off-leash dogs on the primary trails have become a real problem for users of the park, and surrounding homes. It is a callous behavior on the part of some dog owners that creates this conflict. I am a dog owner, and love walking with my dog on the trails and in the woods - but it has become a challenge at times due to unruly dogs offleash. I know of several people that have abandoned walking or biking through the park as a result.

407 I cannot understate the value I have found and continue to place in off-leash dog policies at Purgatory Park. No other park compares to this experience, and I know many people that travel to Minnetonka just to use the park in this way. I've made friends, traded advice for dogs or children, trained my therapy dog, learned about Minnetonka, gotten exercise, watched birds and more in this park. My wife, dog and I come to Purgatory nearly every day. Loss of this benefit would entirely change our experience living in this great city. Purgatory regulars genuinely care about this habitat. I fear that changing this ordinance would completely prevent dog owners from visiting the park as well as greatly decrease overall usage or appreciation of this space. A fenced in dog area defeats the purpose of enjoying a well-preserved natural habitat.

408 Bathrooms need a real refresh. More trash cans throughout the park that actually get the trash picked up. KEEP THE OFFLEASH DOG RULES!!! :) it's our dogs happy place

410 Absolutely LOVE purgatory for hiking, a bringing my dogs. Keeping it just the way it is, will make me continue to visit. If someone is cautious or cannot have a dog off leash, the choice of visiting should be at their own discretion - go somewhere else that's fenced in or does not allow dogs. This place brings so much joy to dog owners.

412 Not at this time.

## ResponseID Response

415 My home is right next to the paved trail. We frequently (weekly at least) have off leash dogs chasing rabbits through our yard. Owners yelling for their dogs does not constitute "voice control." The majority of dog owners are friendly, but even though it is clearly indicated that dogs on the paved paths must be on leash, owners frequently do not have their dogs on leashes and when I say something about the dog needing to be on a leash they often say "oh yeah, but my dog is fine. Please, please, please find the resources to establish a dog park and return the park to its status as a park preserve.

417 Lack of leash rule enforcement on main trails.

420 it is a beautiful park and I love that we have that much open natural space close by

422 The gravel roads should be paved smooth so people can bike/rollerblade

427 We love the natural beauty of the park and especially appreciate the conservation, prairie restoration, and volunteer work done. Our dog was small and was always on a leash even on the informal trails. We worry about damage to the prairie and had several scary instances over the years with off-leash larger dogs running full speed at us and our dog. Fenced off-leash area seems like it would minimize those problems.

429 Try to keep it as close to nature as possible. No fences or buildings, etc.

434 Trails have become dangerous for walking with the uncontrolled off leash dogs and ebikes.

435 No- Thank you for taking a thoughtful approach to this master plan. I am surprised however that we have not been given any more info, as we signed up at the open house for updates. I would have thought a survey like this would be communicated to us, but i found out about it via word of mouth thru my Friends at the Park.

436 My young son doesn't want to go to Purgatory because of the number of off-leash dogs. He doesn't like energetic dogs jumping on him or licking him. The number of off-leash (and uncontrolled) dogs and the amount of dog poop on the trails is a strong deterrent for our family.

437 No

441 I LOVE LOVE LOVE the off leash dog area. What I don't love is when people are irresponsible with their dogs or not aware of their dogs not being able to behave themselves around other people or dogs. That was why I always answered "somewhat" in the off leash dog questions. I don't know how to fix it, but maybe signage to help people take time to think about their own dog and the decisions they make regarding the dog? Or some rules if there are offenses of dogs behaving poorly that those dogs not be allowed to return? Not sure how to "police" that either? Just spitting thoughts and ideas...

442 Please keep as natural as possible.

## ResponseID Response

- 444 Potentially adding more signage about rules and expectations on dogs so that there is a decrease in dogs off leashing who are not friendly.
- 447 I love the size of the park and the informal paths get me right into nature. I miss the artist who used to paint on rocks and spread them around the park. They were such fun and joyful finds. If you do art installations it would be amazing to integrate that person - Purgatory's original artist presence
- 448 Love it how it currently is!!
- 449 You are doing a great job getting input on this initiative
- 450 I've lived in Minnetonka for nearly 30 years. For 12 of those years we had a dog and I was not really aware of Purgatory Park is such a great resource. I pay every year for a permit to go to Van Valkenburg in Edina. We have a new puppy and I'm not sure I'll renew the permit for Van Valkenburg next year now that I have Purgatory Park, which is much closer to home and far is superior to the small fenced in facility in Edina.
- 451 I drive nearly 10 miles to the park so I can walk in a natural area with my small dog off his leash. I always leash him on the maintained paths, and wait until we are well away from the parking area to let him off his leash. The park is big enough that we can stay away from the maintained trails and other people and dogs that may not want to interact. This is a rare resource in the metro area. Please maintain this valuable resource. Thank you.
- 452 BUCKTHORN! I live on Spring Lane and have buckthorn backed up to the property line between my lot and city lot. I have wondered if we could remove it, but it is on city property. We see a ton of wildlife every day: Bucks, does, fawns, owls, hawks, coyotes, ect., and could help with wildlife monitoring. My husband and I would be willing to help out at Purgatory Park. We have been coming here almost every day for the past 20 years
- 454 Off leash ability is great for dogs and owners
- 455 Purgatory is unique in all the amenities it offers. I'd hate to see any further restrictions on dogs. Imposing on leash only will force me to drive to another city to use their dog-friendly parks. I'd be interested to know the # of complaints or concerns related to dogs and safety and if there have been any unsafe incidents. The dog park is unique- the walking park is not.
- 456 There is adequate physical separation between the informal and primary trails allowing for both walkers and bikers as well as hikers with off-leash dogs to have adequate separation. The exception to this is a small section of trail where the two merge briefly before diverging. The one suggestion I might have would be to close off the informal trail allowing for a full and complete loop for those walking off leash dogs so that there may be a more complete separation of the two trails (with the potential for a small path to connect the two).

## ResponseID Response

461 Please do NOT ban dogs from the park. There are so many dogs that play together off leash and if that gets taken away, that would be heartbreaking. They look forward to their time together.

462 I have noticed over the years a loss of the natural animals (i.e. squirrels, deer, rabbits, and snakes). I'm not a big fan of snakes, but the park's habitat is changing. This could be due to the number of dogs using the park.

463 Runners on secondary trails.

464 I really love the park the way it is. I typically take my walk starting with a paved trail and moving into the interior of the park so that my dog can get some time off leash. I'm so grateful that we have this beautiful park so close to our home.

466 I believe that the lady who left the land to our beautiful city was a dog lover & wanted it to be a more natural place for dogs & their owners to hike & have freedom!! I love Purgatory Park just as it is! Maybe a few more garbage cans & doggy bag receptacles would be helpful. Thanks!

468 The land was donated by a woman who intended it to be for dogs to be free and off leash. I would appreciate those who live on the park to get more say than people who don't live in property. Also those who live within walking distance should get more say as well. Serve the people whose park is their neighborhood park. I understand that it may be different than what I want to see the park as but at least it would serve the people who live there. Also those who have lived there for over 10-20 years should have more of a say.

470 I like to run and walk at the park. Very frequently I am confronted by off-leash dogs while on the main trails. I have been attacked by off-leash dogs in the past and do not like being approached by unfamiliar off-leash dogs. It is to the point where I don't feel safe using the park because of the off-leash dogs. I am open to there being an off-leash dog area at the park, but I would like it to be fenced off so I don't have to encounter off-leash dogs at the park when walking or running on the trails.

471 We walk pergatory park several times a week and are often approached by unleashed dogs. Our own dog does not always get along with other dogs and since there are so many unleashed dogs at Purgatory, we have never felt like it was ok to bring our dog on aleash to the park. I wish we could.

472 Glad to have the park there. Yes, dogs should be on leashes. Regarding volunteering, I work two jobs, so not a lot of spare time.

474 Great park. Please don't wreck it under the guise of progress.

475 Keep nature untouched. The essence of this park is beautiful nature.

## ResponseID Response

- 476 Grateful the city listens to its citizens - wouldn't have Purgatory Park if they hadn't! Please continue your thoughtful consideration of the need for natural areas within our city, that benefit people first, dog owners....oh fourth or fifth.
- 477 The off trail hills on the north side of park feel too closed in. We have found evidence of a meeting place for sexual encounters - i.e. condoms on ground, a dirty hammock. It feels a bit unsafe sections. Also, there are remains of a few structures in different parts of the park. Not sure if they should be cleaned up more or excavated (depending on age of materials). Who were these landowners that donated to the park? Maybe mention them with signage?
- 478 I love dogs but worry about a confrontation between an off leash dog way ahead of its owner coming upon my dogs that are leashed. I'm also concerned that wildlife is being impacted when dogs are freely running through the grassy areas with coyotes, pheasants, turkeys, and other birds and animals that can be disturbed. I think the beauty of the park is in its nature state and don't want conflicts to occur. That brings me to my next point, garbage that is left behind on trails and in the parking area. I don't know why over the past few years people have been abusing natural areas like our national parks, BWCA, etc. but it is rampant even at city parks like Purgatory. So many do not understand the leave no trace principals, or just don't care. I worry too much development in the park, like playgrounds, would bring more degradation. There are so many other parks with such facilities. I believe Purgatory should focus on nature and programs around the nature found historically in Minnetonka
- 480 Minnetonka needs MORE areas for off leash dogs. PLEASE do not take this away.
- 482 I volunteer extensively at Lone Lake Park but I could participate at Purgatory as well.
- 484 Glad to see the city is stepping through this process and looking at ways to preserve and expand on this very special piece of land.
- 486 It's a wonderful asset.
- 487 about a proposed nature/interpretive center... I'm not opposed, really, but I wonder what the goal is. Given the city's competing priorities, I would rather see \$\$ expended on educating EVERYONE re: climate change through increased, devoted monthly space in the Mtka Memo, rather than relying on people to come to the park to learn things. Time to quit "gently" teaching about the realities of climate change.
- 489 I would love to see the red barn become a nature center and have programming for kids like the Westwood hills nature.
- 490 I enjoy the plant restoration and bluebird houses. Thank you
- 491 I have used and greatly enjoyed the park daily with my dog off-leash in the informal trails since 1995. Experienced only two incidents with unhappy visitors in all those years. The park is wonderfully full of great experienced dog owners.

## ResponseID Response

492 While some people apparently have concerns about dogs in the park, during my years of rather frequent use I have never experienced nor seen a hazardous situation. They may occur, but seem to me to be infrequent. FWIW I am a former - but not current - dog owner and enjoy their presence. In contrast, I consider the long-lived and dangerous ice on the trails last winter a far greater hazard to me, even when using Yak Trax traction aids, and I ceased walking in the Park for many weeks due to that situation.

497 I don't want to lose the wonderful nature that is at Purgatory Park.

504 It's a wonderful place with great connection to the gardens to the north, nature playground/school, and informal playgrounds. Perhaps the Red Barn could expound/play into on these themes of nature connectivity, climate, and enviro/sustainability.

505 I love walking the dogs at Purgatory but I also recognize they may degrade the watershed and wonder if an enclosed area would be better for this precious resource and other visitors.

507 Bird watching education natural plants education other education or opportunities to partner with REI or other outdoor groups for "demo days" or education about outdoor activities of all sorts.

512 I would love to see a play structure added! It's hard to bring my kids here because they need a little something more than just walking around. A nature center, nature play area, or play spots along the trail would be amazing. Improved bathrooms would be great also. Thanks!

516 This park is a gem and we hope it can maintain how natural the majority of it is, with the addition of a few more things for kids (nature playground, sledding hill, etc) at the entrance/red barn site.

526 Dog owners not picking up and carrying dog waste to the receptacles. Always see filled dog waste bags lying around, as well as dog droppings not picked up.

528 Thank you for the work you do to keep Purgatory Park the beautiful place it is! I love it there and am so thankful for the City of Minnetonka staff!! I would love to see the park encourage more homeowners in the area to rewild their spaces and kill their lawns, and I think putting that kind of info in the park could be super beneficial :)

529 As a resident of Stodola Rd, the amount of traffic driving quickly past my house then parking in the cul de sac (especially in winter when it's key for plows to access this point) is discouraging. Most folks when approached don't seem to care that it's a residential street & state there's no more parking anywhere else & often let their unleashed dogs hop out & towards the creek/towards the deer often in the area (setting off my leashed dog walking from our home).

## ResponseID Response

530 If we added art installations or a "Nature Playground" I would want the area to be defined and not throughout the park. Perhaps a nature playground in conjunction with a climate/nature center off of Excelsior. Perhaps art wherever the parking ends up. Also, I would like stop adding "Memorial" benches and signage. It starts feeling like a cemetery.

531 We love Purgatory Park. Our primary concern, over the three years we've lived nearby, is the off-leash dog rule. Many people DO abide by this rule and are in the appropriate area. However, almost every time we are walking, running or biking the primary path, we encounter dog(s) off leash. One of my children has an intense phobia of dogs, due to having been bitten by a neighbor dog when he was 2. So, each time he encounters an off-leash dog in Purgatory, he is re-traumatized, yells, and it's become a reason he does not enjoy going through this park. I know people love to walk their dogs and many of them are well-behaved. But my child does not know these dogs, nor do I, and we are not comfortable with dogs off-leash and able to run up to us. It is scary and, unfortunately, has let to some very anxiety-filled bike rides as a family because our child does not feel safe. We should be able to walk or ride bikes on a trail without having a dog run up to us off-leash while in the leash-require

534 I have small children that I would like to bring to the park more but it's hard to predict how the walk will go with the off leash dogs. I do wish there was a dedicated area for them to run free. My daughter has been frightened a few times with dogs running up to her from out of nowhere. I also think the area is so beautiful in the winter, I wish you could rent skis or snowshoes.

538 Some of the police and community service officers need to know park rules. Most have been great. But in over thirty years of frequent visits I've been told: nobody allowed in park after 10pm, no dogs allowed in park(even on leash), no off leash in any area of park, by police officers.

540 Leave the park the way it is

542 Lovely natural area for walking, I hope it stays that way!

544 Make sure everyone who uses the park has their input heard.

545 Encourage the rock couple to keep those beautiful painted rocks coming.

547 Thanks for all the work you are doing to maintain and improve this lovely natural setting! I appreciate your requesting our input.

548 There are lots of "offshoot trails" and I am not sure - since there is no signage - if we should be using them or not. I would be interested in working on a bird list for the park with other interested birders.

549 Thanks for all of the snow plowing!

## ResponseID Response

551 It is perfect the way it is. It is a jewel and is a perfect mix of nature and public. Just keep it as is. This park is already very busy. It used to be an oasis. I think there are a lot of non Minnetonka users and I am not all that happy about how busy the park has become. We choose to live directly by the park and hope it will not become overcrowded. The wildlife needs some space too. There are so many bikes and they go fast. I have seen several almost accidents. I have a dog and therefore use wider section of the path, I get startled on a regular basis and have to jump over to the side. I appreciate the off leash rules in the unimproved paths in the park. I think fenced in dog areas are dangerous and spread disease for dogs. If dog owners are responsible there should be very little problem as is. The few bad apples should not ruin it for all dog owners and some enforcement with education of the rules would be appropriate That might also help with bikes which are the greatest danger

552 I love Purgatory Park but do think some of the infrastructure, especially the main parking restroom building, is in need of restoration. It seems there was painting which was good but it could use a facelift. I love the idea of a nature center at the red barn, maybe with a picnic option, or with small event rental in mind (birthday parties etc)

554 Would love a Splash Pad!

555 We moved near by specifically for the dog park. Please don't take it away.

556 I walk, bike or run in the park daily. It is a gem with natural beauty and secluded trails. I think the city should keep it as natural as possible without adding more building structures.

559 So glad to have this wonderful park near our house. We love it!!

560 As you consider the red barn area, I hope it's to preserve the barn and historic character of that site, and to make it more accessible/enjoyable to visit.

563 I think a fenced dog off leash area could be very helpful. There have been times that the bathroom area at the north entrance has felt unsafe, but that had seemed better in recent years. Overall the restoration efforts have been really nice. I work for Three Rivers Parks and know maintaining these restorations is an ongoing effort. I like the balance of formal and informal paths here. Really appreciate that it's a restored natural area first and balanced with public use, but not overdeveloped.

570 to many off trail paths are degrading the park. Dog poop is a problem!

572 Safety is a big concern on all trails in recent years with the high violent crimes and recent attacks on women. I no longer walk the trails alone :( I've encountered men sitting in or loitering in the woods along the trail, loitering on the trail so I end up turning around so as to not have to pass them. Not safe.

574 I love this park and it's natural feel. Would love to see more plant restoration. Do not want this to end up like a fully manicured park. Thank you so much in seeking public opinion. Please keep this park in its natural state.



## ResponseID Response

576 My only concern is angry bikers. Would like to see more signage for the bikers to slow down around the dog areas. Obvious dog area signage would be nice.

578 Problem with off leash dogs is on the trails - some people walk their dogs off leash on the trails. If dogs are well trained & stay within the dog park would be ok.

583 Absolutely love the off leash dog park and have gone for many years without ever any problems. Such a special place to share with you, and your canine ♥♥♥

585 The ability to walk to the park from my home on Nantucket with my dogs during every season adds great value to my home and life in Minnetonka. When I lived in other Minnetonka locations, I would drive there to offer my dogs an off-leash experience and enjoy the beauty of the area during every season. Please allow for this recreational gem to enjoy the solitude of the prairie and wooded areas along the creek to remain accessible for dog lovers like myself and my family.

586 More waste receptacles (garbage) would be helpful to dispose of dog waste. Specifically in the center portion off main parking lot where many dogs play off leash.

590 No

593 I have enjoyed the park for many years. But I have noticed more dogs (and their waste) on the main trails. I don't use the other trails because I have been confronted by unleashed dogs and their inconsiderate owners. Dogs seem to have taken over this park and they don't pay taxes!

594 Ensuring prioritization of preserving, maintaining and expanding natural areas should be prioritized, in my view, while also including recreational opportunities as possible. A nature/environmental education center would be terrific as well, esp. if coordinated to complement (not replicate) what Wayzata and other area cities are doing in this regard

596 I think the off leash trail system is a big draw to the park and should not be changed. I hi there often and have never seen a problem, just many dog owners using this feature.

599 Our family loves to bring our dogs to Purgatory for long hikes through the woods. It would be a shame if dogs were no longer allowed to be off-leash when not on the primary trails.

603 I am filling this out because my neighbor told me you're asking about off-leash dogs in Purgatory. It would be such a relief if that could end. I love that park so dearly but it's such an issue.

607 Winter ice makes some of the steep hills impossible to hike. It would be nice if the ice was somehow minimized. Thanks!

## ResponseID Response

608 It's a treasure and thanks for keeping it up so well! Minnetonka needs to create a dog park for the dog folks and it should not be in a natural area that supports birds and other wildlife. And, people just cannot seem to keep their dog on leash when in parking lot and some primary trails. They simply won't unless you direct them elsewhere altogether. Appreciate your asking the community about this!

609 The off leash dog area is an amazing benefit to dog owners, especially in the winter time when outdoor space to run is limited. The off leash area is much better than a fenced in dog park which results in too many dogs in close proximity. Please keep the wonder ability for dog owners and their dogs to enjoy the beautiful nature and exercise experience!

611 1. Add security cameras at park entrances. 2. Improve the condition of the restroom and keep it open through the winter. 3. When the primary trail turns to ice, and then it snows, don't plow the snow. Keep it for traction. 4. Discourage parking at neighborhood entrances such as Stodola road.

613 Love it exactly the way it is! It doesn't need a thing.

617 The off leash dog area has always felt safe and been a fantastic environment for humans and dogs alike. I travel from Minneapolis for this awesome opportunity to enjoy nature with my dog. All dogs and owners have been so nice.

619 The problem with the off leash dogs is that people refuse to follow the rules and allow their dogs to run loose on the maintained trails. Some of the people who oppose changing the off leash rules are the people breaking the rules. I would like to see a small dog fenced in area and a fenced in large dog area.

620 No, although happy to hear you are considering best accommodations for everyone.

624 Extraordinary place for our whole family to get out into nature. We have walked our dog there 2-3 times per week for 7+ years. The experience of exploring the trails with an off leash dog is really unique, something that can't be replicated anywhere else in the Metro. A respectful and responsible community of dog owners has ensured that these experiences have been positive for the dog and the kids.

627 I love purgatory. We bought a house near the park so we could continue to walk our dog in the park off leash. There is no park like it. We are so lucky. I hope the use of the off leash space remains. It is so valuable and gives our dogs such good exercise they can't get fenced in and on a leash.

629 Highly support a Climate and Nature Center to educate kids and community. Big Red Barn is perfect spot for this!

632 More off leash areas

634 It's the best! Thanks for taking care of it!



**Minnetonka Park Board Item 9  
Meeting of March 6, 2024**

<b>Subject:</b>	Information Items
<b>Park Board related goal:</b>	N/A
<b>Park Board related objective:</b>	N/A
<b>Brief Description:</b>	The following are informational items and developments that have occurred since the last park board meeting.

**Update on the Community Forest Management Plan**

City natural resources and forestry staff are continuing to work with our consultant (Bolton & Menk) to develop the city's Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP). This planning effort was identified as a high priority need in the recently adopted Natural Resources Master Plan, and is funded through the 2024 CIP. Information related to the CFMP plan and a community-wide survey was released last fall on the [Minnetonka Matters website](#) to gather input on forestry-related issues and opportunities. Staff also reached out to community members at various locations, including the city Farmer's Market, the 'Spooktacular' event, and the ICA Food Shelf. Two focus groups were held with residents, business owners, volunteers, and natural resource specialists to gather additional input on needs related to forestry programs, communication and outreach, sustainability and resilience. The consultant is currently working on draft goals and strategies that will lead to a more healthy and resilient community forest. Focus areas of the plan include:

- Monitoring, inventory and assessment - track current conditions and monitor for change in the community forest
- Tree care – life cycle care, including young/newly planted trees, pruning, disease management
- Replanting – species selection, locations
- Climate adaptation and resilience – urban heat island mitigation, climate adapted species
- Programs, policies, and resources – city operations, tree sale, pest and disease policies, assistance for private property owners
- Implementation – priorities, resources, and timeframes

More information on existing conditions and draft goals and strategies will be presented to the Park Board and be made available for public input and feedback in May. A draft plan is expected to be available in June for Park Board review and future adoption by the City Council.

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 10  
Meeting of March 6, 2024**

<b>Upcoming Meeting Schedule</b>				
<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting Type</b>	<b>Agenda Business Items</b>	<b>Special Notes</b>
<b>Wed</b>	4/3/24	Regular	• N/A	No Meeting
<b>Wed</b>	5/1/24	Regular	• Purgatory Park Master Plan Final Review	
<b>Wed</b>	6/5/24	Regular	• 2025-2029 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)	
<b>Wed</b>	7/3/24	Regular	• N/A	No Meeting

**Other meetings and activities to note:**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Special Notes</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	March 23	Spring Eggstravaganza	Minnetonka Community Center

**Items to be scheduled:**