



STAFF REPORT

Park and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting: June 3, 2024

To: Park and Recreation Advisory Board

From: Charlie Fredericks, Streets and Parks Manager

Subject: Park Update

Babcock Park:

- **Progress Update:** The installation of pavers is complete, and concrete flatwork around the exterior of the shelter is nearly done. Progress photos are included (see photos 1-4).
- **Interior Work:** The interior work is almost complete, with only the flooring material and a few finishing touches remaining.
- **Upcoming Work:** Restoration of turf areas, irrigation work, and other final touches will be addressed as the project nears completion.
- **Expected Completion:** Initially anticipated for late May or early June, weather delays have pushed completion to mid-to-late June. The contractor is working quickly to open the new space to the public as soon as possible.

Sechler Park:

- **Master Plan Process:** Staff have signed a proposal to work with Bolton and Menk, with assistance from Bruce Jacobson Landscape Architect LLC, on the master plan. A significant public engagement effort will take place, including an online engagement tool/map, pop-up events, Board and Council updates, an open house, and workgroup meetings with various community groups.
- **Park Activity and Maintenance:** With baseball, softball, and ultimate frisbee in full swing, staff dedicate 50-60 hours each week to maintaining fields, mowing, and painting lines.

General Parks:

- **Riverbank Restoration:** Prairie Restoration completed a controlled burn and invasive species spraying in Riverside Lions Park. They will soon plant native grasses and plants as part of the park's master plan.

Community Engagement and Notification Process Update:

- **Survey Findings:** We surveyed other cities for public engagement practices. Common methods included distributing flyers and hosting open houses or Park Board meetings.
- **Current Initiatives:** We are collaborating with the Communications Department to design yard signs with QR codes linking to project information and feedback channels. These will be placed in parks before any changes, ensuring feedback from park users.
- **Future Developments:** We are refining our engagement approaches and strategy. Specific outreach methods will be determined based on the project, such as holding an open house for playground reconstruction but not for replacing a basketball hoop.

- **June Update:** We are developing an interactive map of all park initiatives and projects in Northfield. Yard signs will direct users to project pages with surveys for feedback. Data collected will be reviewed by staff and presented to the Board. We are finalizing a survey for Meadows Park and the potential archery range relocation. Additionally, staff have drafted an internal SOP for public engagement related to park projects and changes. The draft SOP is attached for the Board's review and input.

Upcoming Items and General Updates:

- **Riverside Lions Park – 7th Street Playground Replacement:**
 - Identified in the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan, staff have started planning for the playground replacement. A consultant has been hired to expand the recently approved master plan into more detailed construction plans and cost estimate.
 - They will develop concepts for playground equipment that will be reviewed by the master plan work group, the public, and the Board. A final concept will then be approved by the Board and Council sometime this fall, so that staff can begin coordination of construction in the Spring/Summer next year.
 - The deliverable from consultant will also allow staff to apply for grant funding for other improvements identified in the master plan, primarily the picnic shelter, restroom buildings, and playground nearest 8th St. There is no update to this item for June, but staff expect to receive an update from the consultant soon and to continue moving this project forward.
- **Ames Park Master Plan:** This project is on hold pending clarity on the dam removal. The project, part of the Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan, will likely start late this year or next spring
- **Relocation of the Archery Range:** Due to a shift in the Water Treatment Plant timeline, the relocation of the archery range is less urgent. Staff will implement a full public engagement process before any work in Meadows Park. Relocation is likely to occur later this fall.
- **Disc Golf Course:** The Cannon Valley Disc Golf Club remains actively interested in bringing a public disc golf course amenity to Northfield. They are primarily interested in exploring Sechler as a preferred location and have met with the individuals from the Cannon River Offroad Cycling & Trails (CROCT) group regarding shared-use of the existing trails. Both groups will be involved in the master planning process of Sechler Park, and this proposed location will be intently explored as a possibility throughout the process.
- **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP):** Staff have updated the 2025-2029 CIP for park projects. Year 5, 2029, includes playground replacements at Tyler Park and Riverside Lions (8th St). The Cedar Meadows park development has been moved from 2025 to 2026. A draft version of the CIP is attached.
- **Community Group Presentations:** As Age-Friendly provided an overview of their services at tonight's meeting, if there are additional groups the Board would like to hear from, please let me know.
- Faribault Parks and Recreation Advisory Board is taking a tour of Northfield parks on June 26th at 6:00pm and invited Northfield PRAB to join. Transportation will be provided and the group will meet at Memorial Park/Pool at 6:00pm. The meeting will be listed as a public meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlie Fredericks, Streets & Parks Manager

Photo 1:



Photo 2:



Photo 3:



Photo 4:



City of Northfield Streets and Parks Division Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Subject:

Public Notification and Engagement for Park Amenity Changes or Major Park Improvement Projects

Purpose:

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to outline the procedures for public notification and engagement for park amenity changes or major park improvement projects undertaken by the City of Northfield Streets and Parks Division.

Scope:

This SOP applies to all park amenity changes or major park improvement projects initiated by the City of Northfield Streets and Parks Division that meet the criteria identified below in *Procedure 1 – Determining Need for Public Notification*.

Responsibilities:

1. **Streets and Parks Manager or designee:** The Streets and Parks Manager is responsible for overseeing the implementation of public notification and engagement measures for park amenity changes or major park improvement projects. This would be done in coordination with the Communications Division and the Communications Coordinator, or consultants as applicable.
2. **Communications Coordinator or designee:** The Communications Coordinator is responsible for facilitating community outreach efforts and managing public feedback received during the engagement process in coordination with the Streets and Parks Manager and or consultants hired to assist with the process.
3. **Streets and Parks Administrative Aide or designee:** The Streets and Parks Administrative Aide is responsible for assisting in the coordination of public notification activities and maintaining documentation related to the engagement process.

Procedures:

1. Determining Need for Public Notification:

- The Streets and Parks Manager, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall assess the scale and impact of proposed park amenity changes or major improvement projects to determine the need for public notification and engagement.
- Projects deemed to have a significant impact on park amenities or community use, such as playground replacements, trail expansions, or park renovations, shall require public notification.
- For smaller-scale projects with minimal impact, such as installing individual benches or minor landscaping updates, public notification shall not be necessary.

2. Posting Yard Signs with QR Code:

- Yard signs with a QR code linking to project information and feedback surveys shall be prominently displayed within the park for a minimum of 14 days prior to the commencement of work or decision by any public body (Park and Recreation Advisory Board, Council, etc.).
- The location of yard signs should be strategically chosen to maximize visibility and engagement with park users. Examples include, but not limited to: park entrances or parking lots, trail heads, major amenities (i.e. playgrounds), etc.

3. Sending Letters to Surrounding Residents:

- The Streets and Parks Manager, in coordination with the GIS Coordinator, shall identify residents residing within a 500-foot radius from the edge of the park boundary affected by the proposed project. Letters shall be sent to residents affected by the proposed changes or improvements within such radius.
- The letters shall provide information about the planned project, its scope, anticipated timeline, applicable links to more information, and contact information and or process procedures for submitting feedback or inquiries.
- The letter should be kept to one page in length and shall be translated to Spanish on the backside of the letter.

4. Posting Feedback Survey on City's Website:

- The Streets and Parks Manager, in collaboration with the Communications Coordinator, shall develop a feedback survey to gather input from the community regarding the proposed park amenity changes or major improvement projects.
- The survey shall be posted on the City's website and shared through social media channels to encourage broad participation.
- The survey shall be accessible for a minimum of 14 days to allow ample time for public participation.
- The feedback survey shall cover various aspects related to the proposed park amenity changes or major improvement projects. Questions may include inquiries about preferred park amenities, concerns about potential impacts, and suggestions for improvement. The survey should aim to gather comprehensive feedback from the community to inform decision-making and project planning.
- The survey and or engagement results shall be summarized and posted on the park project webpage of the City website. A summary of the feedback received shall also be presented to the Park and Recreation Advisory Board and or City Council as applicable. A summary of any changes or decisions as a result of the feedback received shall also be summarized and shared on the park project webpage. The results of the survey shall be saved electronically under the applicable park folder on the Public Works drive.

5. Additional Engagement Activities:

- Depending on the nature of the project and community preferences, additional engagement activities such as public meetings, focus groups, or virtual town halls may be organized to facilitate dialogue and gather input.
- The Streets and Parks Manager shall coordinate these activities in collaboration with the Communications Coordinator and other relevant stakeholders and or consultants.

6. Public Meetings/Open Houses:

- Public meetings or open houses may be organized to provide residents with an opportunity to learn more about the proposed changes or improvements, ask questions, and provide feedback directly to project staff.
- The format may include presentations by project representatives, interactive discussions, and opportunities for attendees to ask questions or share their perspectives.
- Meeting dates, times, and locations shall be communicated through various channels, including social media, press releases, and the City's website.

Documentation:

- Records of all public notification and engagement efforts, including copies of letters sent to residents, documentation of yard sign placement, survey results, and meeting minutes, shall be maintained by the Streets and Parks Division for future reference.
- Documentation should be virtually stored on the Public Works server (drive) under the applicable park folder, and eventually uploaded to Laserfiche for permanent record after the project is complete.
 - Public Works (T):\\Streets\\Parks_Parks by Name

Revision History:

- This SOP shall undergo review every two years to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and best practices in public engagement.
- The Streets and Parks Manager, in coordination with relevant stakeholders and City staff, shall initiate revisions as necessary.
- Upon approval, the revised SOP will be disseminated to all relevant personnel within the Streets and Parks Division and made accessible for reference as needed.

Distribution: This SOP shall be distributed to all relevant personnel within the Streets and Parks Division and made accessible for reference as needed.

Attachments:

- [Insert any relevant attachments, such as sample letter templates or survey forms]

DRAFT

City of Northfield, Minnesota

Capitol Improvement Plan

2025 thru 2029

PROJECTS & FUNDING SOURCES BY DEPARTMENT

Department	Project #	Priority	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Total
Park Division								
Riverside Lions Playground Equipment Replacement	P-2025-001	2	300,000					300,000
<i>Park Fund</i>			300,000					300,000
Dresden Hill Park Playground Equipment Replacement	P-2026-001	2		250,000				250,000
<i>Park Fund</i>				250,000				250,000
Central Park Playground Equipment Replacement	P-2026-002	2		185,000				185,000
<i>Park Fund</i>				185,000				185,000
New Park Development (Cedar Meadows)	P-2026-003	2		500,000				500,000
<i>Park Fund</i>				500,000				500,000
Oddfellows Park Playground & Gazebo Replacement	P-2027-001	2			415,000			415,000
<i>Park Fund</i>					415,000			415,000
Heritage Park Playground Equipment Replacement	P-2028-001	2				285,000		285,000
<i>Park Fund</i>						285,000		285,000
Washington Park Playground Equipment Replacement	P-2028-002	2				217,500		217,500
<i>Park Fund</i>						217,500		217,500
Tyler Park Playground Equipment Replacement	P-2029-001	2					175,000	175,000
<i>Park Fund</i>							175,000	175,000
Riverside Lions (8th St) Playground Replacement	P-2029-002	2					200,000	200,000
<i>Park Fund</i>							200,000	200,000
Park Division Total			300,000	935,000	415,000	502,500	375,000	2,527,500
GRAND TOTAL			300,000	935,000	415,000	502,500	375,000	2,527,500