

Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Throughout the history of parks in this country, people have expressed concern about the need, cost, benefit, amount, and location of parks, open spaces, and trails. In the late 1800s, when the City of Minneapolis struggled with these same concerns, HWS Cleveland (a landscape architect) told the Minneapolis Park Commission the following:

“Look forward for a century to the time when the City has population of a million, and think what will be their wants. They will have wealth enough to purchase all that money can buy, but all that wealth cannot purchase a lost opportunity, or restore natural features of grandeur and beauty, which would then possess priceless value, and which you can preserve if you but say the word and save them from destruction that certainly awaits them if you fail to utter it.”

Today, Minneapolis is known nationally for its outstanding park system. However, many of the City’s exceptional parks would have been lost to private development or poor planning had it not been for the wisdom and forethought of the Park Commission, government officials, and the residents of Minneapolis.

Although Mahtomedi is almost fully developed and the opportunities for acquiring additional parkland are limited, there is much that the City of Mahtomedi can and should do to ensure that its parks, open spaces, and trails are preserved and enhanced for the present and future generations. This Plan provides a strong vision for the future of Mahtomedi’s parks, open spaces, and trails and it sets goals, objectives, policies, and implementation strategies for attaining that vision. More specifically, the Plan serves the following purposes.



Dwinnell Nature Area in Mahtomedi

1. It addresses physical planning issues such as acquisition and development of parks, open spaces, and trails. Yet, it also considers related social and economic issues.
2. It ties together the park, open space, and trail components of the City into a system plan that reflects the interrelationship between these components and other components of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

3. It expresses a long-range vision that can serve the City through the year 2025, but it also provides specific policies and recommendations that address current issues.
4. It identifies key issues, sets goals, develops policies for achieving the goals, and describes actions needed to implement the policies. This provides the legal basis for land use control and it guides the City in budgeting for parks, open spaces, and trails.
5. It guides City Staff, the Park Commission, the Planning Commission, the City Council, landowners, and private developers in decisions relating to parks, open spaces, and trails in the City.

This Park System Plan is a general plan that brings together its various elements into a unified system. It is not intended to provide detailed development plans for individual parks or trails. Rather, it provides a framework that can guide the future development of Mahtomedi's park system. It is a dynamic Plan that the City should review and refine as Mahtomedi continues to evolve. The City should update this Plan by the year 2015.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARK SYSTEM PLAN AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Park System Plan builds on the "Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces" chapter of the City's 1999-2020 Comprehensive Plan, but it provides a more thorough analysis of the existing park system and a more comprehensive plan for addressing park system needs and desires. This Park System Plan fully replaces the Comprehensive Plan chapter on parks, trails, and open spaces. Any future update of the City's Comprehensive Plan should reference this Park System Plan.

USE OF THE PLAN

Several parties will find this Plan useful:

1. City Staff, the Park Commission, the Planning Commission, the City Council, and others can use the Plan to assist them with a variety of tasks including acquisition and development decisions, maintenance decisions, budgeting capital improvements, and communicating Mahtomedi's vision for parks, open spaces, and trails.
2. Other government entities (federal, state, regional, surrounding cities) can refer to this Plan to help determine how their parks, open spaces, and trails may relate to Mahtomedi's park system.
3. Clubs, associations, and special interest groups can use this Plan to determine how they might work with and complement the City's parks, open spaces, and trails.
4. Developers and property owners can use this Plan to develop an understanding of how existing and future development might relate to the City's parks, open spaces, and trails.
5. Residents can refer to this Plan to learn about parks, open spaces, and trails in Mahtomedi.

PLANNING PROCESS

This Plan represents the City's first "standalone" Park System Plan. However, it incorporates the Park Commission's past planning efforts as appropriate. The City gratefully acknowledges the work of all who participated in past and present planning efforts.

The following provides an overview of the process used to develop this Plan:

- 1. Park Commission Meetings.** The Park Commission met on a monthly basis with the City's planning consultant for roughly one year to help develop this Plan. The Park Commission provided broad-based representation of the City and included a representative from Mahtomedi School District, City Staff and a representative from the City Council also participated in the Park Commission meetings. The City publicly noticed all meetings of the Park Commission and the public and media were welcome to attend the meetings.
- 2. Website.** The City posted the draft Plan on the City's website to help solicit public input on the draft Plan.
- 3. Public Hearing and Plan Adoption.** On _____, the Park Commission formally recommended that the City Council approve the Plan. On _____, the City distributed copies of the Plan to all applicable neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions. The Planning Commission reviewed and recommended approval of the Plan on _____. The City Council approved the Plan on _____. The Metropolitan Council approved the Park System Plan as an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan on _____.



Park Commission Meeting