

Nelson Park Master Plan

Decatur's Lakefront - A Community Vision





DECATUR'S LAKEFRONT

A community vision.

Nelson Park Master Plan

Decatur Park District
620 East Riverside Avenue
Decatur, IL 62521
217-422-5911

City of Decatur
1 Gary K. Anderson Plaza
Decatur, IL 62523
217-424-2700

September 2011

prepared by

AECOM

in association with

Edgewater Resources, LLC
BauerLatoza Studio
Innis Consulting

Acknowledgements

Decatur Park Board of Commissioners

Don Luy
Chris Riley
Jack Kenny
Bob Brilley II
Cindy Deadrick-Wolfer

Decatur Park District

Bill Clevenger
Rodney Buhr
Jim Kiefer
Lisa Gillen

City of Decatur

Mayor Mike McElroy
Ryan McCrady
Billy Tyus
Greg Crowe

Decatur City Council

Jerry Dawson
Larry Foster
Pat McDaniel
Patrick Laegeler
Julie Moore-Wolfe
Dana Ray

Planning Firm Selection Committee

Cindy Deadrick-Wolfer
Mayor Mike McElroy
Bill Clevenger
Ryan McCrady
Larry Livergood
Sue Neisslie
Jay Dunn
Beth Stringer

The Decatur Park District would also like to recognize the residents of Decatur and numerous community leaders for their attendance at the public meetings and their contributions to the Lakefront Master Plan.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	8
1.0 Nelson Park Vision	10
2.0 Community Outreach	14
2.1 Stakeholder Input	16
2.2 Design Charrette Process	18
3.0 Master Plan Overview	36
3.1 Master Plan Overview	38
3.2 Landscape Approach	38
• Flexible Green Space	
• Magic Hedge	
• Upland Prairie	
• Preservation of the Tree Canopy	
• Sustainable Design / LEED	
• Accessibility	
3.3 Vehicular Circulation / Traffic Calming	42
• Bicycle / Pedestrian Circulation	
• Regional Connectivity	
• Public Transit Access	
• Parking	
3.4 Public Safety	45
3.5 Water Quality	45
3.6 Lighting / Dark Sky	45
3.7 Roadway Infrastructure and Utilities	47
• Regional Destination Adventure Fitness Area	
• US Route 36	
• Park Interior	
• Nelson Park Fitness	
• Lakeview Waterfront Village + Amphitheater	
• Lakeshore Drive Area	
• Chandler Park Residential Area I	
• Chandler Park Residential Area II	
• Boat Launch	
• Scovill Trail	
3.8 Operation / Maintenance	50
3.9 Implementation / Phasing Considerations	51

Table of Contents

4.0 Master Plan Elements	52
4.1 Architecture Survey and Evaluation	54
• Beach House Restaurant	
• WPA Pavilion	
• Marina Building	
• Concession Building	
• Single Family Residence	
• Former Golf Club House	
• Picnic Pavilion	
• Gazebo	
• Pool Building	
• Pump House	
• Historic Resources	
• Picnic Pavilion Rehabilitation Options	
• Architecture Summary	
4.2 Enhancement of Historic Nelson Park Elements	67
• Native Landscape Restoration + Habitat Creation	
• Walking + Biking Trails	
• Existing Maintenance Building	
• Great Lawn	
• Pavilions #2	
• Sledding Pavilions + Sledding Hill	
• Restore Water's Edge Landscape	
• Pavilion #1	
• Lakeview Amphitheater	
• Lakeside Pavilion	
• Anna Bethel Fisher Rock Garden	
• Dog Park	
• Dog Park Parking	
• Running + Mountain Biking Trails	
• Disc Golf Course	
• Lakeview Overlook	
4.3 Regional Adventure Play Destination	76
• Mini-Golf + Batting Cages	
• Outdoor Waterpark + Wave Pool	
• Indoor Waterpark + Hotel	
• Ropes Course	
• Whitewater Course	
• Indoor/Outdoor Skate Park + Climbing Facility	

Table of Contents

4.4	Lakeview Waterfront Village	82
	• Existing Buildings	
	• Restaurants + Outdoor Dining	
	• Hillside Residential	
	• Reconfigured Marina	
	• Fountain Plaza + Waterside Stage	
	• Regional Playground	
	• Beach Restoration + Boardwalk	
4.5	Lakeshore Drive Linear Park	86
	• Linear Park Restoration	
	• Lakeshore Residential	
	• Reconfigured Fishing Pier	
4.6	Activation of Chandler Park	88
	• Chandler Park Residential	
	• Waterfront Boardwalk + Fishing Pier	
	• Reconfigured Marina	
	• Sailing Program	
	• Boat Launch Strategy	
4.7	Loop Trail Network	91
	• Pedestrian Bridge Connections	
4.8	Scovill Park	93
	• Scovill Park Lakeside Path	
	• Scovill Park Landing	
4.9	Marina Master Plan	94
4.10	Synergy of Elements	97
5.0	Implementation	98
5.1	Economic Feasibility	100
5.2	Funding Strategies	100
5.3	Phasing	103
5.4	Preliminary Costs	106

Executive Summary

Nelson Park and Lake Decatur have together served as the recreational centerpiece of the Decatur community, beginning in 1912 when land was first acquired along the Sangamon River, and 1921, when the river itself was dammed to create what is now a regional recreational amenity. Through our master planning process, it has become clear that these two legacy assets have the potential to do even more for the region, serving as catalysts that can transform the community, strengthen the local businesses and local economy, and serve as an attraction for the resource most in demand—people.

At the same time, Nelson Park today is a community treasure encumbered by aging facilities that no longer meet the needs of the community. While several historic WPA era structures and the Anna Bethel Fisher Rock Garden provide a glimpse of Nelson Park's history and serve as examples of timeless design, other more recent elements are functionally obsolete and consume space and resources that could be put to better use.

This master plan seeks to expand on the legacy and vision of park's creators to design a space that provides opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of the great outdoors. The purpose of this plan is to provide a clear vision and strategy for future Nelson Park improvements that make the most of limited financial resources while providing an effective tool that will support fund raising and grant applications. Further, this plan includes elements that will be supportive of property value growth, and directly generate revenue to continually improve both the park and the community as a whole.

Process

The first step in the design effort was an extensive community outreach process that involved an unprecedented level of participation from the community. This effort resulted in a series of guiding principles

and goals that framed expectations for the process. The plan was then developed through an iterative process that tested a wide range of ideas and strategies for achieving the goals and principles. Three initial framework plans were developed and presented with different approaches. Feedback collected at the meetings and online via Facebook and Decatur's Lakefront website (www.decaturslakefront.com) guided the decision-making process and helped mold the three initial plans into two concept alternatives. These two concepts provided a greater level of detail and were again reviewed with the community. Comments received from the public again influenced the shape of the plan as new elements were added and unpopular elements eliminated, finally leading to the draft master plan, which was then presented to the public again, and refined over a period of several months. The result of this effort was presented to a historic joint session of the Board of the Decatur Park District and the City Council of the City of Decatur in January 2011.

Elements

The Nelson Park master plan builds on the legacy of the existing park and proposes new elements in concentrated areas that will attract visitors and activate the area throughout the year. These elements will also generate revenues to offset the expense of non-revenue-generating elements and support the long-term care and maintenance of the park. Views of the lake from legacy elements like Pavilion #1 and the Rock Garden are enhanced by the removal of parking and the construction of compatible amenities that feel appropriate to these historic structures. The water's edge is reclaimed for pedestrians and park users from cut-through commuter traffic. The former Nelson Park Golf Course property is re-energized, and the area along Highway 36 will take advantage of its high-traffic, highly visible location, becoming a series of regional destination activities, including new mini-golf courses, indoor/outdoor skate and climbing parks, an outdoor water park, and an indoor water park/hotel complex.

These recreational activities will buffer the historic core of the park from State Route 36 and will provide year-round activities for visitors and community residents alike.

The underutilized Chandler Park space is the proposed location for a public/private residential project that will create new housing opportunities that appeal to younger buyers and are not available anywhere else in the community. While one benefit of this proposal is the property tax and revenues generated, more important is the activation of the park that will improve safety at all hours and support new activities in the future. The existing Beach House Restaurant will be at the very heart of an expanded lake view waterfront village that will transform the existing boat launch and parking areas into a vibrant, public waterfront with a beautiful pedestrian promenade, interactive fountain, new restaurants and a restored beach.

The benefit of the plan is that the interface between Nelson Park and Lake Decatur will be transformed from its existing state, a mix of service drives, parking lots, and random boat docks, fences and gates into a more beautiful, visible, and publicly accessible space. A new “Basin Trail” will create a safe pedestrian/bike route around the entire Lake Decatur Basin 2, linking outlying neighborhoods to the park without the use of cars. Vehicular cut-throughs will be eliminated, and pedestrian connections will be created. New residential projects will frame a public waterfront that today is hidden behind fences and gates. Park visitors will be able to walk along the water’s edge and see the lake without interruption along restored wetland edges, improved shoreline stabilization, and accessible fishing piers. Boating opportunities on Lake Decatur will also be expanded, and the existing boat docks will be replaced with modern marina facilities that are consistent, functional, durable, and beautiful.

The synergy of these new elements, along with existing successful attractions such as Scovill Zoo and the Children’s Museum will draw many more visitors than any one individual element and will create the excitement and energy necessary to revitalize our community’s image.

Vision

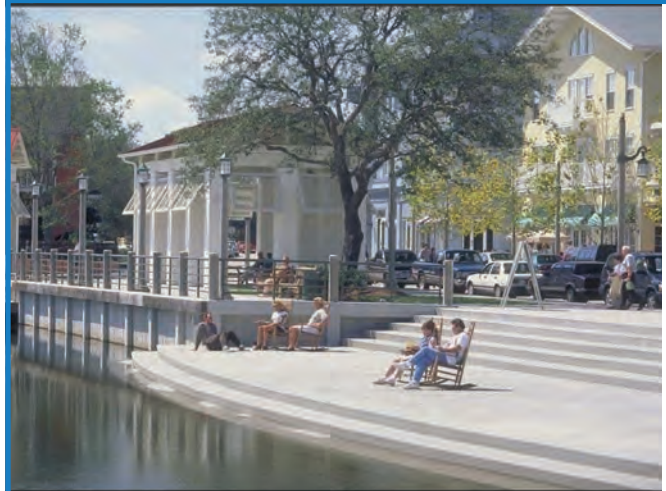
The Nelson Park Lakefront Plan is designed to enrich and expand upon the ideals of the community leaders who built Nelson Park and Lake Decatur 100 years ago. Living up to this vision requires clear goals:

- To create a park that is an important, integral component of Decatur’s future recreation, leisure, and open space opportunity
- To create an economic catalyst that draws visitors to Decatur to enjoy cultural and recreational resources and activities
- To make Decatur a place that young people want to return to, start a business, and call home
- To create a destination with outstanding amenities, housing, restaurants and attractions that businesses proudly display to recruits
- To create energy and momentum that encourage private and corporate philanthropy to complement the investments of the City and Decatur Park District

AECOM’s national research shows that neighborhood and community parks are proven economic generators, and signature parks like Nelson help establish the image and identity of the community. Most master plans live on the shelf and gather dust. This plan is different because, in addition to identifying program elements, construction costs, and funding sources, it also considers operating cost and revenue implications, as well as broader visitor industry benefits. The plan identifies an array of tools to support funding of key elements, some of which can pay for their own construction and long-term operation, as well as supporting other parts of the plan.

The plan recognizes that Decatur cannot continue to follow old funding approaches that no longer exist in our economy due to decreasing municipal budgets. It also acknowledges that success depends upon the collaboration between the Decatur Park District, the City of Decatur, and the support of the entire community. With funding from local corporations, individual donations, and challenge grants, other towns have undergone striking transformations. Private individuals have left a legacy of cultural and recreational resources for future generations to enjoy. This has happened in Decatur in the past, and in order for the lakefront plan to reach its full potential, the whole community must come together once again.

We create plans because nothing in this world stays the same. We either actively change for the better, or passively allow change for the worse.



Right: Existing Pavilion, Nelson Park, Decatur
Left Top: Celebration Town Center, Celebration, FL
Left Middle: Blackpool Climbing Wall, United Kingdom
Left Bottom: Charlevoix Municipal Marina, Charlevoix, MI

Nelson Park Vision

1.0



The vision of this plan goes far beyond enhancing Nelson Park and modernizing an already beautiful park. The vision of this plan is to create a catalyst for change across Decatur by making the community a more desirable place to live, work, start a business, and come home to.

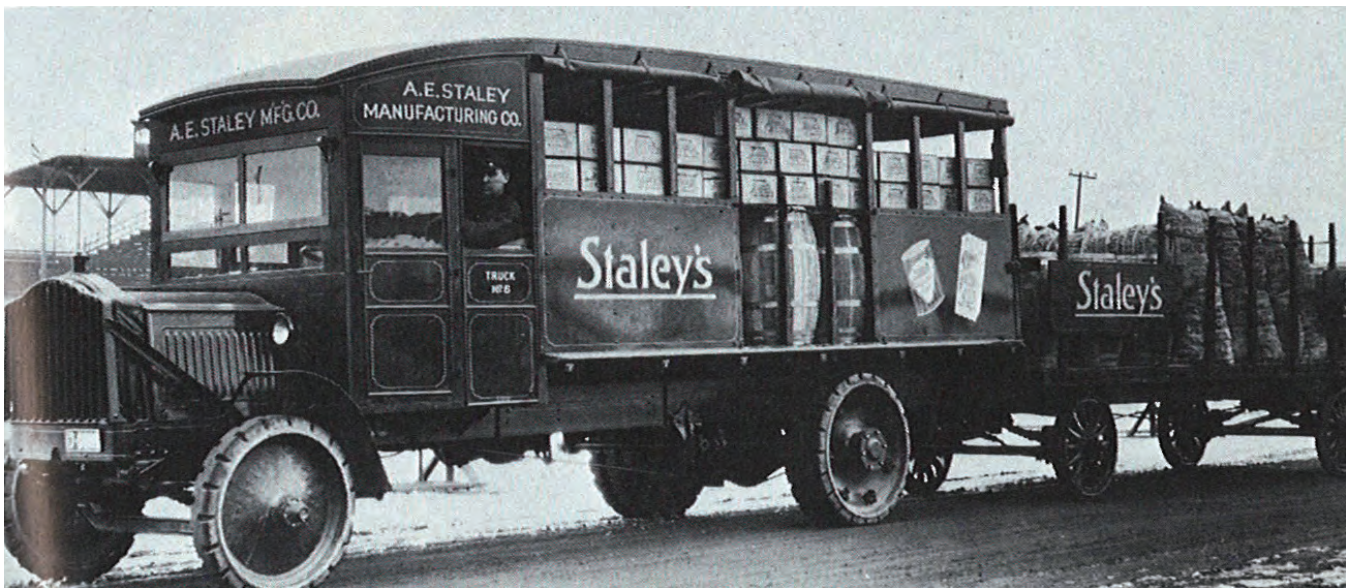
In 1921, Decatur was at a crossroads. The United States was “gravely imperiled by an ominous downturn, and many business institutions had been shaken by the tremors of a nationwide depression.” Yet, by 1922, Lake Decatur was immediately recognized as an important civic asset, lending new ambience, beauty, and recreational activity to a prairie region and “something for the city fathers to shout about”. – The Kernel & The Bean

In 1921, A.E. Staley challenged the City of Decatur to create Lake Decatur in order to save the local economy by creating the resources necessary for his and other local businesses to thrive. If the City had not been up to the challenge, there is little doubt that Decatur would now be a much smaller community that would not be home to major corporations or the people who work at them. All businesses have basic resources they need to thrive, and back then the resource was water. Today, the resource most in demand is a talented, educated work force. People are the resource

most in demand, and in order to grow and advance, Decatur needs the best and the brightest.

While people relocate to join companies, they move to communities. If the community is not a desirable place to live and it becomes too difficult to recruit new young talent, companies will eventually relocate or become irrelevant. When young people go away to college and live in vibrant communities, they constantly look for that type of community to call home after school. When the time comes to start a family or a new business, they look for the same thing. The population of Decatur has declined by more than 20% over the last thirty years. If Decatur does not reinvent itself and create the type of community that draws companies and people young and old, where will Decatur be in another thirty years?

The goal of this plan is to expand on the legacy and vision of the park’s creators. The goals: to create a park that is an integral part of the Decatur of the future; to create an economic catalyst that draws visitors to Decatur to enjoy the great cultural and recreational resources, and make Decatur the kind of place to which young people want to return and start a business; to create a place where local businesses can take recruits and proudly show off the great parks, amenities, housing, restaurants, and lake attractions; to create



Staley's Delivery Truck

The Kernel & The Bean

Dan J. Forrestal

a place that makes local businesses want to remain in the community; and to create energy and momentum that encourages private and corporate philanthropy to supplement the work of the Decatur Park District and City of Decatur.

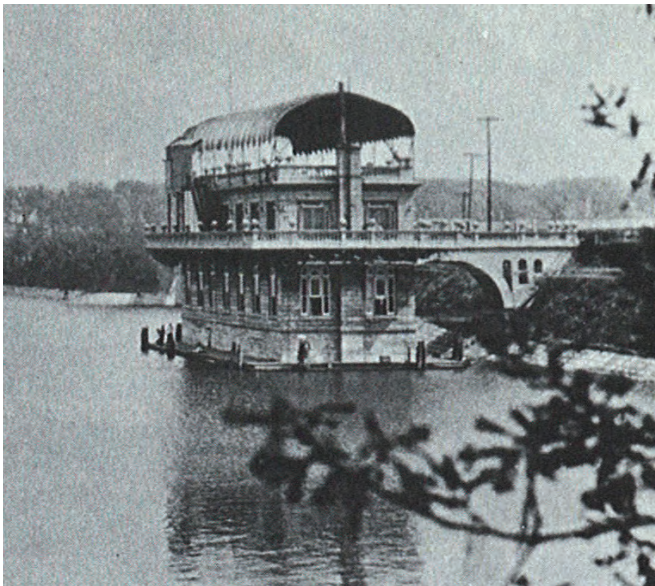
As an economic catalyst, the master plan will support local business recruiting efforts, encourage people to move home and start businesses that create jobs, increase property values and property tax revenues, draw more visitors to the community to shop in the stores, eat in the restaurants, sleep in the hotels, and buy gas at the service stations. All of these increase the success of individual businesses and associated tax revenues, allowing the park to become the economic catalyst that gets the roads fixed, the schools improved, and the new fire stations built.

Parks are proven economic generators, and signature parks like Nelson Park help establish the image and identity of a community. Most master plans live on the shelf and gather dust. This plan is different, because in addition to identifying program elements, construction costs, and funding sources, it includes analyses of operational expenses, revenues, and visitor projections. It is based in economic reality and includes financial plans for key elements. It includes

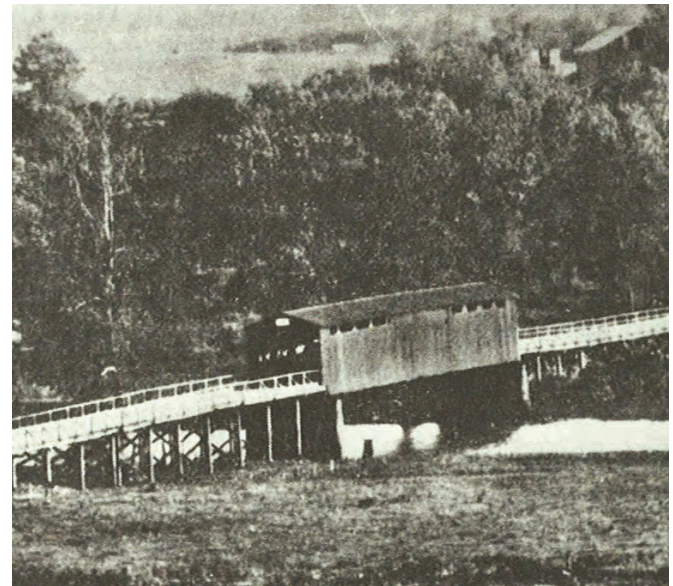
elements that can pay for themselves in terms of both construction and long term operation, as well as support construction of other parts of the plan. It is based in economic reality and recognizes that we cannot continue to follow old funding approaches that no longer exist in our new economy of constantly decreasing municipal budgets.

This plan also recognizes that the Decatur Park District cannot do it alone. In order for the plan to reach its full potential, the Park District is collaborating with the City of Decatur to share resources and revenues to make the plan a reality, and the City and the Park District will need the support of the community to make the most of this plan. Local corporations in other communities have literally transformed their hometowns through donations and challenge grants. Private individuals have left a legacy of cultural and recreational resources for future generations to enjoy. This has happened in Decatur in the past, and in order for this plan to reach its full potential, the whole community will need to come together again to make it a reality.

Decatur was not founded by the timid or the fearful. The leaders and residents of Decatur today are up to this challenge, and together will create the Decatur of tomorrow that would make its founders proud.



Lake Decatur
The Kernel & The Bean
Dan J. Forrestal



Lake Decatur
The Kernel & The Bean
Dan J. Forrestal

2.1 Stake Holder Input

2.2 Design Charrette Process



All Photos: Charrette Workshop

Community Outreach 2.0



2.1 Stakeholder Input

Community Outreach Process

The Nelson Park Master Plan was developed through a collaborative design process involving members of the design team, Decatur Park District management and operations staff, City of Decatur management and staff, and the general public. The design process began with a blank slate and no preconceived notions about what should be included or excluded from the plan, and the design team spent nearly two months interviewing stakeholders, local groups, neighborhood associations, and businesses before pen was put to paper.

The kick-off presentation of the project to the public occurred at the Community Leader's Breakfast on February 11, 2010. More than 800 members of the community attended the meeting, and the presentation was broadcast live on the radio as well. The presentation included more than eighty images of great park spaces from around the world, and was repeated three weeks later at a public meeting held at Scovill Golf Course. At that meeting, all of the images from the presentation were printed and hung on the wall. Meeting attendees were given five red and five green dot stickers each and asked to place green dots on the images of things they would like to see in Nelson Park and red dots on the images of things they did not want to see in Nelson Park. Additionally, index cards were handed out for attendees to write specific comments and suggestions, and members of the design team met individually with attendees.

The Decatur Park District also created a website for the master plan project at www.decaturslakefront.com, which provided timely information on public meetings schedules, digital (downloadable) copies of the plans and presentations, and a forum for submitting comments and suggestions online. They also created a Facebook fan page for the project, which grew to more than 1,500 fans and provided a lively forum where ideas were discussed. For those unable to attend the meetings, and those who wanted a closer look at the plans, these websites allowed complete access to the presentations at any time. For those who joined the process after the first few meetings, they were able to go back and see the evolution of the plans over time.

The Decatur Park District and City of Decatur made a concerted effort to reach as many members of the community as possible, and provided many ways for the community to participate in the design process. This included:

- Five public meetings, each attended by 80-100+
- Two Community Leader's Breakfast presentations, each attended by 700-800+
- www.decaturslakefront.com visited by more than 7,500 unique visitors
- Website suggestion box received more than 200 suggestions and comments
- Red dot / green dot visual preference survey
- Index cards for handwritten comments at public meetings
- Facebook fan page discussion thread, including more than 1,500 fans.
- Direct calls and emails to the Park District and design team
- Individual discussions with public meeting attendees
- Group discussions with more than a dozen boat clubs and more than 50 boaters
- Group discussions with six major employers, including Caterpillar, ADM, Tate & Lyle, Saint Mary's Hospital, Decatur Memorial Hospital, and Millikin University.
- Group discussions with community groups, including Nelson Park Neighbors, NAACP, 501 Club, Senior Citizens, Central Illinois Sportsmen for Outdoors Accessibility, and the Legislative Breakfast.

Summary of Stakeholder Input

The results of the stakeholder input process are outlined hereafter. While some elements received predominately positive responses, others received a mix of positive, negative, or neutral responses. Within the mixed response category, comments received from the public often identified variations that they considered more positively or negatively. For example, while large scale retail and retail that competes with downtown

destinations were viewed negatively, small scale retail focused on products relevant to the park and Lake Decatur were viewed more positively. Summary lists of elements that received a predominately positive response and elements receiving a mixed response include:

Predominately Positive

- Safe pedestrian / bicycle loop around the Basin 2, remove road
- Preserve the historic structures
- Fitness park activities, climbing, mountain bike trails, running trails
- Activated lake edge activities, boat rentals, beach, amphitheater
- Destination water park and wave pool
- Year-round activities, indoor activities, winter activities
- Arboretum, specialty gardens, green space
- Animated boardwalks, outdoor dining
- Entertainment district, public access pier, boating destinations
- Signature pedestrian bridges
- Things to do!

Mixed Reactions

- Sculpture gardens
- Signature fountains
- Aquarium – cost
- Retail destinations
- Small scale viewed more positively
- Large scale viewed more negatively
- Do not compete with downtown
- Residential
- Sale of Nelson Park property viewed negatively
- Single family / subdivision viewed more negatively
- Lake view ground lease housing (public lake edge) viewed more positively
- Marina development

- Individual private docks/inconsistent quality viewed negatively
- Consistent docks, improved quality viewed positively
- Expansion of boating opportunities viewed positively

This input from the community ultimately led to the establishment of five guiding principles to which all plans must adhere.

Guiding Principles

- The Water’s Edge Should Remain Public
- The Plan Must Reflect Economic Reality
- The Park Must Be Accessible To Everyone
- The Plan Should Incorporate Sustainable Design Strategies
- The Park Must Reflect Decatur’s History, Context, and Future

Community Outreach Calendar

- February 11, 2010 – Community Leaders Breakfast Presentation One
- February 11, 2010 – Internal Stakeholders, Staff, Board
- March 1, 2010 – Community Stakeholders
 - Tate + Lyle
 - Caterpillar
 - City Water Dept.
 - Realtors / Builders
 - Commodore Yacht Club
 - Nelson Park Neighbors
 - Saint Mary’s Hospital
- March 1, 2010 – Public Meeting One
- March 16, 2010
 - Millikin University
 - Decatur Memorial Hospital
 - 501 Club
 - Pete Paulin
 - Archer Daniels Midland

- March 29, 2010
 - Legislative Breakfast
 - NAACP
- March 30, 2010
- Senior Group
- March 31, 2010 – Charrette One Presentation
- May 11, 2010 – Charrette Two Presentation
- June 2010 – Boat Clubs
 - Spruce Boat Club
 - Chepan
 - Commodore Yacht Club
 - Decatur Boat Club
 - R Club
 - Mud Flats Boat Club
 - Lock Boat Club
 - Courage Yacht Club
 - Dolphin Club
 - Cat Boat Club
 - On Deck Boat Club
 - Portside Club
- August 10, 2010 – Preliminary Master Plan Presentation
- January 18, 2011 – Master Plan Presentation
- February 10, 2011 – Community Leader’s Breakfast Presentation Two

2.2 Design Charrette Process

Charrette One

After receiving a tremendous amount of input from the community, park users, and park operators, the design team prepared three initial framework plans during the first design charrette in March, 2010. The first three plans proposed distinctly different approaches for the future of Nelson Park and were reviewed with the public at Scovill Golf Course. Each of the initial plans was intentionally skewed towards a specific theme, identifying the potential impacts and public response to varying levels of program and a wide variety of elements.

The initial three framework plans were titled Adventure Fitness, Lakeside Village, and Passive Park. While each proposed a different approach for Nelson Park, all of them included a number of elements in common, including:

Common Elements

- Green space, playgrounds, picnicking, maintenance, dredging
- Safe pedestrian/bicycle loop around Basin 2, remove road
- Preserve the historic structures
- Activated lake edge activities, boat rentals, boating destinations
- Marina reconfiguration and enhancement
- Expanded beach
- Outdoor amphitheater
- Festival facilities
- Year-round activities, indoor activities, winter activities, sledding
- Animated boardwalks, outdoor dining
- Revenue generating components
- Fitness activities, walking trails, running trails
- Things to do!

Lakeside Village Framework Plan

The Lakeside Village Framework Plan created a mix of uses intended to increase the amount of activity in the park around the clock, creating an activated water’s edge that will be an attraction for the residents of Decatur as well as regional visitors. Destination attractions included a water park with a wave pool, a regional indoor/outdoor climbing facility, permanent amphitheater connected to the WPA Pavilion, and a lakeside village with restaurants, outdoor activities, and 36 holes of new mini-golf. Residential components included two-three story townhomes in Chandler Park, along Lakeshore Drive, and adjacent to the Lakeside Entertainment District. A Senior Housing component was proposed between the existing beach house and dockside restaurants. Other elements included an expanded beach and a new festival lawn in place of the existing pool house and parking area.



Lakeside Village Concept Plan



Regional Destination Climbing Facility

- A. Indoor climbing towers
- B. Corporate training high ropes course

Water Park

- C. Outdoor water park
- D. Lazy river
- E. Wave pool

Passive Area

- F. Native planting areas
- G. Disc golf

PGA Golf Training Facility

- H. Driving range
- I. Indoor winter training
- J. Putting/chipping

Amphitheater

- K. New amphitheater at water's edge
- L. Modification of WPA Pavilion #1 interior to amphitheater support facility
- M. Pervious paved parking area
- N. Grassing paved parking overflow

Lakeside Village

- O. Creation of boardwalk with outdoor dining, features, performance barge, and gathering spaces
- P. Four new restaurant / retail opportunities
- Q. Adaptive re-use of the existing boat house building
- R. Expanded / improved marina
- S. Improved pedestrian pier with ferris wheel
- T. Expanded beach
- U. Two-three story residential
- V. Senior housing
- W. 36 Hole mini-golf

Lake View Residential

- X. Two-story residential above parking, four units per building
- Y. Public pedestrian promenade
- Z. Public marina replacing individual private slips

Passive Lake Edge / Boat Launch / Sailing Clubs

- AA. Elimination of existing service drive and parking
- BB. Expansion of public green space
- CC. Relocation of public boat launch
- DD. Relocation of sailing clubs and marina expansion
- EE. Extension of Basin Two lakefront trail, connection to regional trail systems
- FF. Creation of two-three story residential village located around water feature
- GG. Improved connection to lake edge with new public pier

Community Feedback**Predominately Positive Responses**

The Lakeside Entertainment District was very well received by the public, as was the festival lawn, improved marina, climbing park, and water park. The improved and expanded mini-golf was well received, as was the amphitheater and elimination of Lakeshore Drive between the Dockside Restaurant and Highway 36.

Mixed Responses

The public response to the residential components ranged from "absolutely no residential" to "how soon can I buy one and move in?" The Chandler Park, Lakeshore Drive, and Lakeside Entertainment Residential components were more positively received. The Senior Housing component located northeast of the existing beach house restaurant was generally rejected, and the number of units proposed along Lakeshore Drive was considered too high. The Golf Training facility did not generate a significant amount of interest from the community.



Lakeside Village Perspective
Dennis Carmichael

Passive Park Framework Plan

The Passive Framework Plan converted the majority of Nelson Park into a regionally significant arboretum that incorporates a series of specialty gardens and educational facilities. While an arboretum of this type could potentially draw thousands of visitors to Decatur, it would not by itself generate the revenue needed to fund its construction or additional improvements to the lake edge. Therefore, creating a plan that is economically feasible required balancing the arboretum with higher intensity uses in the Animated Destination Waterfront and Lake View Residential Village.

Regional Destination Arboretum

- A. Visitor's center, event facility
- B. Specialty gardens:
 - Children's garden
 - Train garden
 - Healing garden
- C. Forest succession area, native plantings
- D. Regional amphitheater
- E. Education center

Animated Destination Waterfront

- F. Creation of boardwalk with outdoor dining, features, performance barge, and gathering spaces
- G. Four new restaurant / retail opportunities
- H. Adaptive re-use of the existing boat house building
- I. Expanded / improved marina
- J. Extended / improved pedestrian pier
- K. Expanded beach
- L. Two-three story residential village

Passive Lake Edge

- M. Relocation / replacement of existing private individual slips
- N. Elimination of existing service drive and parking
- O. Expansion of public green space

Lake View Residential Village – Public Edge

- P. Four 8-10 story residential buildings along public waterfront
- Q. Creation of new public promenade along the lake edge with expanded public green space
- R. Expansion of narrow lake edge condition by using fill from excavation of new marina basin
- S. Creation of new public marina

Chandler Park Enhancement

- T. Extension of Basin 2 lakefront trail, connection to regional trail systems
- U. Creation of healing garden, additional park programming to increase use of park
- V. Improved connection to lake edge

Sailing Clubs / Marina / Boat Launch

- W. Extension of public promenade and pier
- X. Relocation of sailing clubs and marina expansion
- Y. Relocated boat launch and associated parking

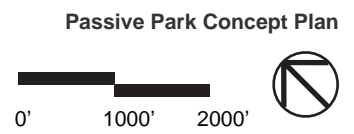
Community Feedback

Predominately Positive Responses

Some members of the community liked the notion of a very passive park with very little development. The animated destination waterfront was well received, as was the beach and amphitheater.

Mixed Responses

Overall, the response to this plan was lukewarm. While some liked the idea of a very passive park, a much larger segment of the community felt this concept lacked excitement, activity, and things to do. They expressed significant concern that the arboretum would not be financially self-sufficient, and the reduced number of boat slips would be a major issue. While they liked the beach and the amphitheater, many felt that both were too small. A number of people expressed concern that Chandler Park was left essentially unchanged, and would remain underutilized.



Adventure Fitness Framework Plan

The Adventure Fitness Framework Plan envisioned Nelson Park as a regionally significant destination for fitness and outdoor adventure enthusiasts. Destination facilities such as year-round indoor/outdoor water park, climbing, and skating facilities, as well as an activated waterfront and expanded marina facilities have the potential to generate significant revenue, which could reduce the need for residential uses. Running and Mountain biking trails activated the center of the park.

Regional Destination Adventure Fitness Area

- A. Indoor water park
- B. Outdoor water park / lazy river
- C. Wave pool
- D. Potential hotel expansion
- E. Indoor climbing towers/outdoor climbing
- F. Corporate training high ropes course
- G. Whitewater kayaking course

Outdoor Adventure Fitness Area

- H. Cross country race course
- I. Native successional planting
- J. Disc golf
- K. Urban mountain biking / running trails
- L. Potential regional destination expansion

Lake View Festival Area

- M. Sledding hill
- N. Festival lawn
- O. Expanded beach
- P. Festival venue
- Q. Permanent amphitheater

Animated Destination Waterfront

- R. Creation of boardwalk with outdoor dining, features, performance area, and gathering spaces
- S. New restaurant / retail opportunities
- T. Adaptive re-use of the existing boat house building

- U. Expanded / improved marina
- V. Extended / improved pedestrian pier
- W. Two-three story mixed use residential /restaurant / retail / office

Public Marina

- X. Public pedestrian promenade
- Y. Public marina replacing individual private slips
- Z. Marina parking

Passive Lake Edge / Chandler Park Enhancement

- AA. Elimination of existing service drive and parking
- BB. Expansion of public green space
- CC. Extension of Basin 2 lakefront trail, connection to regional trail systems
- DD. Creation of healing garden, additional park programming to increase use of park
- EE. Improved connection to lake edge
- FF. Relocation of sailing clubs and marina expansion
- GG. Relocated boat launch and associated parking

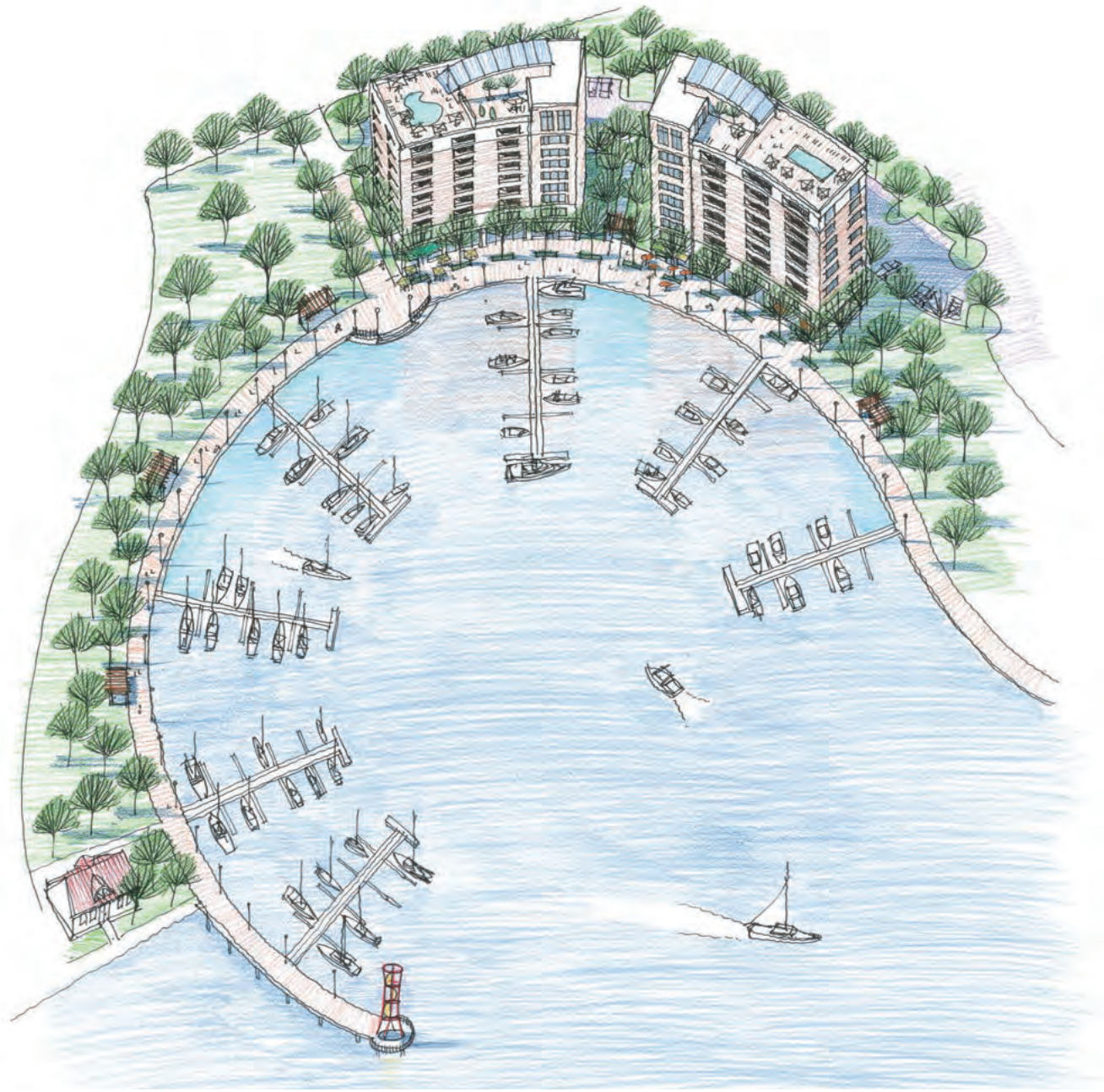
Community Feedback

Predominately Positive Responses

Overall, this plan was the most positively received concept of the three. The regional destination activities were very popular, as were the running and biking trails. The concentration of revenue generating activity adjacent to Highway 36 was well received. The indoor waterpark was very popular as a year round activity.

Mixed Responses

While this plan was well received, many people felt the destination waterfront was too small, and that there were too few activities to make the park a significant regional attraction. Concern was expressed that the proposed indoor water park hotel could compete with existing hotels. Concern was expressed that there are not enough year round activities shown in this plan.



Passive Park Perspective
Dennis Carmichael

Charrette Two

Following the public meeting and presentations of the framework plans outlined above, the plans and presentation were posted on the project website for public review. Over a period of five weeks, the Park District and planning team collected comments and suggestions via the initial public meeting, the web site suggestion box, and the Facebook page. These comments were reviewed and formed the basis of the next step in the process. In summary, the response to the initial framework plans was very positive overall, especially in reference to creating more things to do. The Adventure Fitness plan generated the most interest, along with improving the existing marinas. The residential concepts were predominately positively received, but the plans must include wide range of options. Finally, many people wanted to see the plans developed in much greater detail.

After reviewing all the feedback from the community, the planning team created two new concepts incorporating the best elements of the first three plans, and eliminating the least popular elements. The first plan was titled Arboretum Village Concept, and the second plan was titled Adventure Fitness Concept. These plans were presented to the public at Scovill Park Golf Course on May 11, 2010.

Arboretum Village Concept Plan

Arboretum Village was a concept that converted a portion of Nelson Park into a regionally significant arboretum incorporating a series of specialty gardens and educational facilities. While an arboretum of this type could potentially draw thousands of visitors to Decatur, by itself it will not generate the revenue needed to fund its construction or additional improvements to the lake edge. Therefore, creating a plan that is economically feasible required balancing the arboretum with higher intensity uses such as an indoor/outdoor water park and Lake View Residential Village. Chandler park was utilized as part green space and part residential on the water side.

Regional Destination Arboretum

- A. Visitor's center, event facility
- B. Specialty gardens:
 - Children's garden
 - Rain garden
 - Healing garden
- C. Forest succession area, native plantings
- D. Regional amphitheater
- E. Education center
- F. Parking and overflow grass pave parking
- G. Existing rock garden
- H. Existing WPA building

Regional Destination Water Play Area

- I. Indoor water park
- J. Indoor olympic size pool
- K. Outdoor water park
- L. Wave pool
- M. Open recreational space

Lake View Residential Village – Public Edge

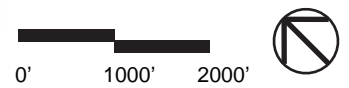
- N. Renovation of existing marina
- O. Creation of a new beach
- P. Creation of new public marina
- Q. Creation of public promenade with outdoor dining, features, performance area, and gathering spaces new restaurant / commercial opportunities
- R. Adaptive re-use of the existing boat house building
- S. Extended / improved pedestrian pier
- T. 36 Hole mini-golf

Lake View Residential

- U. Expansion of narrow lake edge condition by using fill from excavation of new marina basin
- V. Two story residential above parking, four units per building
- W. Public pedestrian promenade



Arboretum Village Concept Plan



Chandler Park Residential

- X. New marina basin
- Y. Creation of four, 8-10 story residential/commercial village located around new marina basin
- Z. Recreational open space

Village / Sailing Club / Boat Launch

- AA. Healing garden
- BB. Improved connection to lake edge with new promenade
- CC. Relocation of sailing clubs and marina expansion
- DD. Relocated boat launch and associated parking

Community Feedback**Predominately Positive Responses**

The animated destination waterfront was very positively received, as well as the reconfigured marina, waterfront promenade, fountain, fishing pier, and expanded beach. The smaller number of structures proposed along Lakeshore Drive was an improvement, and the inclusion of the indoor/outdoor water park hotel was seen as a positive.

Mixed Responses

While the inclusion of the water park was well received, the location adjacent to the residential areas near South 22nd and East Powers Boulevard was not well received. The neighbors expressed concern over the increased traffic and noise. While many people liked the idea of the arboretum, the need to incorporate additional regional destination attractions reduced the potential size by nearly half. This created concern that the arboretum would not have enough size to generate critical mass and be a regional quality destination at the smaller size. The lack of a through service drive behind the waterfront entertainment area was cited as a problem, and the proposed location of the amphitheater was too far from the parking.

Regional Destination Adventure Fitness Area

- A. Indoor water park / olympic size pool
- B. Outdoor water park
- C. Wave pool
- D. Future hotel
- E. Indoor climbing towers/outdoor climbing
- F. Corporate training high ropes course
- G. White water course
- H. Parking for the water park facilities

Outdoor Adventure Fitness Area

- I. Cross country race course
- J. Native successional planting
- K. Urban mountain biking / running trails
- L. Potential regional destination expansion

Lake View Festival Area

- M. Sledding hill
- N. Festival lawn
- O. Permanent amphitheater adjacent to existing WPA structure

Animated Destination Waterfront

- P. Expanded beach
- Q. Senior housing
- R. 36 Holes of mini golf
- S. Creation of boardwalk with outdoor dining, features, performance area, and gathering spaces
- T. New restaurant / commercial opportunities
- U. Adaptive re-use of the existing boat house building
- V. Expanded / improved marina
- W. Extended / improved pedestrian pier
- X. Two-three story mixed use residential / restaurant / retail / office

Public Marina/Passive Lake Edge

- Y. Public pedestrian promenade
- Z. Public marina replacing individual private slips



Adventure Fitness Perspective
Dennis Carmichael

Adventure Fitness Concept Plan

The Adventure Fitness Concept envisioned Nelson Park as a regionally significant destination for fitness and outdoor adventure enthusiasts, coupled with an activated waterfront with residential component in the Chandler Park waterfront area. Destination facilities are incorporated, such as year-round indoor/outdoor water park, climbing, and skating facilities, as well as an animated destination waterfront restaurant area and expanded marina facilities that have the potential to generate significant revenue.

Regional Destination Adventure Fitness Area

- A. Indoor water park / olympic size pool
- B. Outdoor water park
- C. Wave pool
- D. Future hotel
- E. Indoor climbing towers/outdoor climbing
- F. Corporate training high ropes course
- G. White water course
- H. Parking for the water park facilities

Outdoor Adventure Fitness Area

- I. Cross country race course
- J. Native successional planting
- K. Urban mountain biking / running trails
- L. Potential regional destination expansion

Lake View Festival Area

- M. Sledding hill
- N. Festival lawn
- O. Permanent amphitheater adjacent to existing WPA structure

Animated Destination Waterfront

- P. Expanded beach
- Q. Senior housing
- R. 36 Holes of mini golf
- S. Creation of boardwalk with outdoor dining, features, performance area, and gathering spaces
- T. New restaurant / commercial opportunities

- U. Adaptive re-use of the existing boat house building
- V. Expanded / improved marina
- W. Extended / improved pedestrian pier
- X. Two-three story mixed use residential / restaurant / retail / office

Public Marina/Passive Lake Edge

- Y. Public pedestrian promenade
- Z. Public marina replacing individual private slips

Passive Lake Edge / Chandler Park Enhancement

- AA. Marina parking
- BB. Expansion of public green space and elimination of existing road and parking
- CC. Restaurant / commercial opportunities
- DD. Aesthetic village amenity and community green space
- EE. Creation of three story residential village located around water feature
- FF. Improved connection to lake edge with new promenade

Sailing Clubs / Marina / Boat Launch

- GG. Relocation of sailing clubs and marina expansion
- HH. Relocated boat launch and associated parking

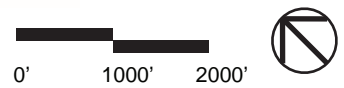
Community Feedback

Predominately Positive Responses

This concept was clearly the more popular of the two plans, with very few elements eliciting negative comments. There was very clear support for the regional destination activities located along 36, with particular support for the outdoor water park followed by a phased indoor water park / hotel component. The indoor/outdoor skating and climbing facility was also very well received. The location of the amphitheater adjacent to Pavilion #1 was clearly preferred, and the disc golf and mountain bike trail area was viewed positively. The animated waterfront restaurant area with residential and a loop service drive and expanded beach was very well received. The activation of Chandler Park



Adventure Fitness Concept Plan



with residential was viewed positively, with many residents asking when they would be built. The inclusion of taller waterfront structures was also a positive, as it creates additional types of housing that will be a draw to new residents to the community and support employee recruiting.

Mixed Responses

The Senior Housing project located northeast of the existing beach house was again rejected, and an overall concept for residential components was established. With the exception of a small number of units immediately adjacent to the waterfront restaurant entertainment area, Nelson Park should not have residential components. The lack of the Lakeshore Drive residential component was noted as a problem, and while the Chandler Park housing was viewed positively, the Lakeshore Drive area is closer to the restaurants. Also, several members of the community requested a dog park. While the whitewater park is clearly a stretch financially, it was felt that it should be included in the long term plan.

Preliminary Master Plan

Following the public meeting and presentations of the concept plans outlined previously, the plans and presentation were posted on the project website for public review. Over a period of ten weeks, the Park District and planning team collected comments and suggestions via the second public meeting, the web site suggestion box, and the Facebook page. Additional focus group sessions were held with many of the boat clubs.

These comments were reviewed and were incorporated into the completion of the preliminary master plan. In summary, the Adventure Fitness plan generated the most interest, along with improving the existing marinas. The plan incorporated the Lakeshore Drive residential and a regional children's garden along Highway 36. The Senior housing component was removed, and the waterfront restaurant area refined.

After reviewing all the feedback from the community, the planning team created a single preliminary master plan incorporating the best elements of the previous two plans, and eliminating the least popular elements. These plans were presented to the public at Scovill Park Golf Course on August 10, 2010.

Regional Destination Recreation

- A. Children's garden/water park expansion
- B. Outdoor water park
- C. Indoor water park
- D. Future water park hotel
- E. Indoor climbing / skating facility
- F. Whitewater rafting / kayaking facility
- G. High ropes course


Outdoor Fitness and Passive Park Area

- H. Native restoration
- I. Maintenance facility
- J. New picnic pavilion
- K. New playground
- L. Great lawn
- M. Existing pavilion
- N. Restored rock garden
- O. Restored pavilion
- P. Outdoor amphitheater



Preliminary Concept Plan

0' 1000' 2000'



- Q. Mountain bike / cross country running trails
- R. Disc golf course
- S. Vehicle overlook
- T. Rental pavilion
- U. Mini golf
- V. Improved amphitheater
- W. Expanded beach
- X. Reconfigured marina
- Y. Farmer's market plaza

Lakeview Waterfront Village

- AA. Adventure miniature golf
- BB. Adult mini-golf
- CC. Mini-golf clubhouse
- DD. Covered stalls
- EE. Farmer's market
- FF. Two-story residential
- GG. Single level parking deck
- HH. Converted boathouse retail
- II. Restaurant
- JJ. Accessible parking
- KK. Restaurant
- LL. Raised table crossing
- MM. Restaurant
- NN. Beachhouse restaurant
- OO. Restaurant/commercial/office
- PP. Central gathering space/fountain
- QQ. Transient basin
- RR. Joyland pier
- SS. Observation tower
- TT. Tour boat/water taxi mooring
- UU. Marina/boat clubs
- VV. Beach
- WW. Festival tents
- XX. Picnic area
- YY. Play area
- ZZ. Improved amphitheater
- AAA. Beach volleyball

Lakeshore Drive Residential

- BBB. Park overlook
- CCC. Lakeshore Drive residential

Chandler Park Residential

- DDD. Marina / boat clubs
- EEE. Sailing club
- FFF. Boat launch
- GGG. 6-10 story residential with public lake edge promenade
- HHH. Creation of three story residential village located around water feature

Scovill Park Lake Edge Enhancement

- III. Water taxi / hourly dock
- JJJ. Lakefront trail, open views to Lake Decatur
- KKK. Trail with picnic area, open views to Lake Decatur
- LLL. Restore zoo overlook, open views to Lake Decatur
- MMM. Multi-use trail loop around Basin Two

Community Feedback

Predominately Positive Responses

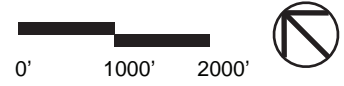
The response to the plan was overwhelmingly positive. Many of the elements from the previous Adventure Fitness concept remain, and all of the concerns identified were addressed. The addition of more regional attractions along Highway 36 reinforced that portion of the park as a regional destination that will support the existing Scovill Zoo and Children's Museum as regional attractions. The refinement of the waterfront entertainment area improved the function of the pedestrian and vehicular circulation. The removal of the Senior Housing was positively received.

Mixed Responses

It was suggested that the mini-golf would be more appropriately located along Highway 36 with the other destination attractions, and a regional play area be located on the former site of Joyland and the existing mini-golf site. The children's garden would require a major donation, and could be constructed elsewhere if that occurs. The parking deck proposed near the waterfront restaurants is likely too expensive, and alternate solutions were proposed.



Preliminary Concept Plan



- 3.1 Overview
- 3.2 Landscape Approach
- 3.3 Vehicular Circulation / Traffic Calming
- 3.4 Public Safety
- 3.5 Water Quality
- 3.6 Lighting/Dark Sky
- 3.7 Roadway Infrastructure and Utilities
- 3.8 Operation / Maintenance
- 3.9 Implementation / Phasing Considerations



Right: Nelson Park Master Plan
 Left Top: Muhammad Art Center
 Left Middle: Lena Meijer Children's Garden
 Left Bottom: Ocean Dome Water Park
 Miyazaki, Kyushu Island, Japan

Master Plan Overview 3.0



3.1 Master Plan Overview

The following pages provide an overview of the overall strategies and approaches proposed as part of the Nelson Park Master Plan. This section outlines a number of design strategies, requirements, and program elements that are found throughout the entire lakefront. Following the Master Plan Overview is the Master Plan Elements section, which lists specific plan recommendations for each section of the park, including a detailed plan graphic and description of the master plan elements for each specific portion of the park.

3.2 Landscape Approach

The master plan identifies main landscape themes within Nelson Park. These include flexible green space, magic hedge, and upland prairie. Each of these landscape types has a different function and maintenance requirements, and is used in specific areas for specific purposes. The primary goal overall for Nelson Park is to create a more functional ecosystem with a broader range of plant diversity, habitat, and varied aesthetic character. In general, the plants selected are native species that require less supplemental water, fertilizer, and maintenance than introduced species; however some introduced species that thrive in this area are included.

Flexible Green Space

The Flexible Green Space landscape is similar to what is currently found throughout the park. The essential character is open areas of green turf amid mature shade trees. There is typically little in the way of ornamental trees or understory plantings, which results in an ecology which is fairly sterile and not ideally suited for a wide variety of wildlife. This type of landscape is maintenance intensive, requiring regular mowing and application of fertilizers and weed control. However, what it lacks in habitat for wildlife is more than made up for by providing flexible areas for people to play, picnic, and relax. The general approach of the master plan is to maintain the flexible green spaces that are well used, while introducing other landscape types in areas where the existing green space is not well used. Additionally, distinct landscape “rooms” will be defined by buffers of Magic Hedge, Upland Prairie, existing topography, and park elements.

Magic Hedge

The magic hedge landscape takes its name from a bird sanctuary located near Montrose Point on the Chicago lakefront. The magic hedge was created nearly by accident as a leftover landscape edge to an Army Nike Missile Base located here in the 1950s and 1960s. The hedge grew up along the border of the base, and was left behind after the base was dismantled around 1970. The resulting landscape is a mix of native and adapted plant species that provide food and cover for a wide range of bird species. On a typical day more than 50 species of birds can be found, and experienced birders have reported sighting well over 100 species in a single day.

In addition to the wildlife, the magic hedge landscape offers a very diverse and beautiful landscape that can serve as a beautiful garden edge to more manicured flexible green spaces. Narrow paths through the low flowering shrubs create a very different experience, bringing visitors in closer contact with a wide variety of butterflies and flowering plants. This will also create the opportunity to provide educational programs for children and the community, such as public workshops on how landscape plantings can be used to attract wildlife to private residential properties.



Magic Hedge, Chicago, IL

Upland Prairie

The upland prairie landscape is made up of short to mid-height grass species that are native to central Illinois. The key advantages of this landscape are the beauty of the grasses as they change over the seasons, and reduced maintenance demands for mowing, weed killers, and chemical fertilizers.

In addition, this landscape provides a significantly more diverse range of plant species, providing habitat for a wider range of wildlife. While it is true that the establishment period for this style of landscape is labor intensive, over a two year period the plants will become firmly established and maintenance requirements will be reduced. The upland prairie landscape is proposed throughout the former golf course areas, Chandler Park, and along the linear portions of the waterfront, and the master plan proposes narrow informal trails through these areas to make them accessible. Additionally, bench seating located within these areas will allow park visitors to enjoy the wildflowers, butterflies, and birds.

Preservation of the Tree Canopy

Along with the rolling topography and views of Lake Decatur, one of the signature elements that gives Nelson Park its beautiful character is the mature tree canopy that provides shade, defines landscape rooms, and shapes views of the lake throughout the park. Significant expanses of the tree canopy are more than fifty years old, and susceptible to major damage from early ice storms that can occur before the leaves drop in the fall. An ice storm in the late 1990s hit the City of Omaha in early autumn and caused major damage to the tree canopy throughout their extensive park system. The loss of this canopy in Nelson Park would dramatically change the character of the park for the worse, and preservation and rejuvenation of the canopy is a key part of the master plan.

In order to preserve and rejuvenate the existing tree canopy in Nelson Park, the master plan recommends implementing a strategy of maintenance of existing trees, selective removal of damaged or diseased trees, and a yearly program of planting new native trees throughout the park. In a park as large as Nelson Park, it is important to establish priorities by identifying key

individual trees or groupings that are most important to the overall character of the park. The landscape created by the former golf course has left a number of prominent signature trees with excellent character that should be identified for additional care.

Maintenance of the existing trees is an ongoing process, requiring yearly inspection, pruning, and assessment. Removal of dead or damaged branches is good for the tree and reduces liability from potential falling branches. Signature trees should be inspected and receive pruning to ensure optimum health and growing conditions. Diseased trees, or tree species facing ongoing insect threats such as the Emerald Ash Borer, should be inspected yearly and aggressively treated or removed to prevent the spread of the disease or infestation.

The current tree canopy includes a wide variety of species, including native, non-native or exotic species. While exotic species have their place in the landscape, the master plan recommends a concerted program to plant at least one hundred new native trees every year. These trees should be planted throughout the park and intermixed among the existing tree canopy to ensure a consistent succession of younger trees as older trees die off. Where appropriate, selective cutting of damaged or exotic species within particularly dense stands of tree should be performed to open the understory to sunlight, allowing younger trees to thrive. This approach will ensure that the tree canopy in Nelson Park will be as beautiful in fifty years as it is today.

Sustainable Design / LEED

The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Rating system, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, is a voluntary, consensus-based standard for sustainable buildings. LEED establishes a set of specific design goals and strategies that can be implemented to earn varying levels of certification, including LEED Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Key strategies that could be incorporated in new or renovated structures within Nelson Park to achieve LEED Silver Certification are included in six different categories: Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy & Atmosphere, Materials & Resources, Indoor Environmental Quality, and Innovation & Design.

In the Sustainable Sites category, erosion and sedimentation control, access to public transportation, no additional parking provided, and extensive bicycle parking would be included. Incorporation of green roofs and bioswales near adjacent parking would reduce the stormwater surge created by impervious surfaces, while improving infiltration. Utilizing pervious paving materials for all new and resurfaced parking facilities will further minimize stormwater impacts. In the Water Efficiency category, we would consider either dual flush toilets or waterless urinals and composting toilets that use no potable water at all. Automatic controls on the faucets would further reduce water use.

In the Energy & Atmosphere category, we would propose installing low energy use LED light fixtures, which have the added benefit of an extremely long lamp life, reducing maintenance costs. Occupancy and daylight sensors would ensure that lights are not left on when not needed. For the Materials & Resources category, we would identify opportunities to reclaim existing building materials for these structures. The materials within the existing structures would be reclaimed or recycled wherever possible, with the goal of eliminating as much construction waste from entering the landfill as possible. For all new materials, we would specify products from within a 500 mile radius of the site. This reduces the embodied energy within each product, as fewer resources are consumed transporting the materials, while also providing economic benefit to the regional economy.



Stapleton Greenway Park, Denver, Colorado

In the Indoor Environmental Quality category, we would propose naturally ventilated structures that also incorporate natural daylight wherever possible. Materials within the structures would be selected for low volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and for minimal presence of other chemicals such as formaldehyde.

Accessibility

In 1990, Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act, which requires that all public facilities be made universally accessible to people of all abilities. The law, commonly known as ADA, affects a wide range of issues in the public realm, including access for wheelchair users, dedicated parking spaces for people with reduced mobility, and requirements for visual clarity and contrast for the visually impaired. Beyond these very general categories, the requirements of ADA cover a very broad spectrum of design details within building design, including everything from doorway widths, stair dimensions, slopes of paved surfaces, and railing sizes, locations and heights. The goal of ADA, and also the Illinois Accessibility Code (IAC), is to make the public realm readily accessible for people of all abilities, and these requirements carry the weight of federal law. In September 2010, the ADA standards were revised and updated to incorporate additional design standards covering recreational uses such as recreational boating facilities, fishing piers, and other recreational attractions.

As the master plan is implemented, one of the key goals is to make the entire park accessible wherever possible. Providing universally accessible routes to all areas and amenities of Nelson Park is a key component of the master plan. The concept of universal access is based on the notion that all elements of the public realm should be designed to allow seamless access for users of all abilities. This goes beyond providing special accommodations and focuses on eliminating potential barriers from the design altogether. Universal access is not simply for wheelchair users, but for people of all ages with permanent or temporary limitations to their mobility, such as an injury, pushing a stroller, or carrying a load of beach gear.

Universal access begins at the western edges of the park, where pedestrians may access the park from adjacent neighborhoods. The pedestrian crossings are proposed to incorporate special paving such as deeply scored concrete that clearly identifies the cross walk visually, as well as creating tactile and audible cues to the drivers that they are in a pedestrian zone. ADA compliant ramps will be provided at all crosswalks.

Dedicated accessible parking will be provided near the entry to each element in the park in off-street parking areas arranged in a head-in configuration with an eight-foot wide space adjacent to each accessible space. Designated accessible parking will also be provided at the boat launches, including accessible vehicle/trailer parking and ramp structures to make access to the boat easier. Additionally, hand rails located on the floating docks will assist boaters entering and exiting boats in the water.

Within the park, the Loop trail and neighborhood access trails will be paved with accessible hard surfaces such as concrete, crushed stone or asphalt. Slopes will be less than 5% along the length of the paths, and will maintain a 2% cross-slope. Where paths and roadways intersect, tactile warning strips will be provided in a color that highly contrasts with the adjacent paving to warn those with visual impairments. The beach will provide ADA compliant flexible decking to the water's edge and designated swimming areas.

All new and renovated structures will be fully ADA compliant. Site furnishings, such as picnic tables, will be selected that offer versions that allow seamless accessibility uses. Drinking fountains will provide basins at multiple heights and be sited to allow paved access. Bench pads located along pedestrian routes will include a 36" square space at one end to allow wheelchair users the opportunity to sit with friends out of the line of traffic.

3.3 Vehicular Circulation / Traffic Calming

The Nelson Park master plan calls for a number of changes to the existing internal roadway network within the park. The two most significant moves are eliminating two lengths of existing road along the waterfront. The first is the section of Lakeshore Drive within the park between the area near Dockside Restaurant east to the underpass with Highway 36. In this location, Lakeshore Drive, along with the adjacent parking areas, is reconfigured to curve to the north and become Nelson Park Drive. This eliminates a significant cut through in the park, as the majority of traffic in this section is not related to park destinations. It opens up the waterfront to pedestrians, and eliminates the conflicts between cars, bicycles, and pedestrians.

The second significant closure is of the existing road between Lost Bridge Road and the existing boat launch. At the south end of the park, a new connection is established connecting Lost Bridge Road with Highway 36 and serving the Chandler Park residential areas. At the north end, a reconfigured and narrow road provides access to the renovated fishing pier, marinas, and residential areas. Again, a significant expanse of lakefront is returned to primarily park users.

These changes are proposed to improve pedestrian safety, reduce vehicular conflicts with bicycles and pedestrians, improve unsafe intersections, and eliminate unnecessary traffic lanes and pavement where possible. These improvements will not only make the park easier to access, but will make the lakefront environment more attractive as well.

What has been proven to be effective in reducing average vehicle speeds is a concept known to traffic engineers as “creating friction”, which simply means creating a vehicular environment designed with lane widths and turning radii that are narrower and provide visual cues to the driver that increase their perception of speed. If a driver feels like they are going too fast, they will slow down without the need for police enforcement. According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), reduction in average vehicle speeds of 1% reduces minor accidents by 2%, serious accidents by 3%, and fatal accidents by 4%.

The plan also calls for ADA compliant ramps at all intersections and designated crosswalks where appropriate. Crosswalks should be constructed of a special paving material such as brick or heavily scored concrete, which not only create a visible crossing, but an audible sound and texture that can be heard and felt by the driver. In addition, a pedestrian connection between the lakefront plaza and the parking to the north in Lakeview Village is proposed, which utilizes a raised “table crossing”. A table crossing is similar to a traffic bump, but is much wider with gentle approaches. Vehicles slow down because the change in elevation and pavement texture lets them know they are crossing a pedestrian area. All of these elements create “friction”, and when combined are very effective in reducing average vehicle speeds.

Bicycle / Pedestrian Circulation

The master plan includes significant improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian circulation systems throughout the park, and is intended to encourage more people to visit the lakefront parks by walking or riding a bicycle rather than driving their cars. As outlined above, a variety of traffic calming measures are proposed to reduce traffic and traffic speeds in the park, and make it easier and safer to access the lakefront and park for pedestrians.

The pedestrian circulation system is designed to connect the various neighborhood street crossings with the lakefront and park amenities, as well as connecting the lakefront to the greater Decatur area by connecting the Loop Trail to regional trail networks. Seating areas with benches are proposed along the entire pedestrian route, spaced approximately every 300', which will provide ample seating and opportunities for pedestrians to rest. In areas adjacent to large concentrations of people, spacing of 100' between benches should be considered.

The pedestrian circulation routes will range from a typical width of eight feet wide throughout the perimeter access trails, up to ten feet for walks associated with special areas such as the Great Lawn. The pedestrian circulation routes will typically be paved with stabilized crushed stone or asphalt, with some areas paved in concrete. Distance markers are proposed at quarter mile intervals.

Regional Connectivity

A critical part of the park's bicycle and pedestrian access is how the proposed Loop Trail connects to the existing and proposed trails through Decatur and Macon County. Regional connectivity is very important for biking alternatives to be feasible and attractive, and is often a requirement for state and federal grant funding assistance.

There are several established trail connections within the City of Decatur, including Lincoln Park Trail, various linkages to the Rock Springs Conservation Area, and the Main Street downtown connection to Millikin University and Fairview Park.

There are opportunities for potential linkages from the Lincoln Park Trail to Nelson Park study area. These could include bike lanes on Lincoln Park Drive, Cleveland, Water, Marion to a dedicated trail on Lakeshore Drive.

Connecting downtown Decatur to Nelson Park will also be crucial to completing a regional system. This could include a dedicated trail on Lakeshore Drive and bike lanes on Martin Luther King, Wood and Main Street.

Neighborhood access from Nelson Park to downtown could be implemented by having bike lanes on 22nd Street, Wood Street to Main or utilizing Powers Blvd, Decatur Street, Webster, Wood, and Martin Luther King to Main Street.

Potential to link Nelson Park with several other parks with a bikeway/trail system is desirable. Connections to Lincoln Park, Greenwood Park, Mueller Park, Johns Hill Park, Lions Park, Sinawik Park and Chandler Park via bicycle network are feasible. Establishing Nelson Park as a regional trail network hub will help in creating a sense of continuity and provide residents with a variety of transportation options that will improve safety, accessibility and connectivity.

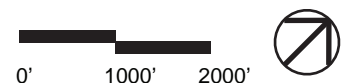
Public Transit Access

The Decatur Public Transit System uses a transit-center-based routing to facilitate bus-to-bus transfers in downtown Decatur. It has two local fixed routes that provide regular service to the Nelson Park study area. The routes are the St. Mary's Circulator (#22) and the Lost Bridge Wal-Mart East (#71). The #22 uses Wood and 16th Street to access St. Mary's Hospital and then



Parking Space Count

Parking Count Diagram



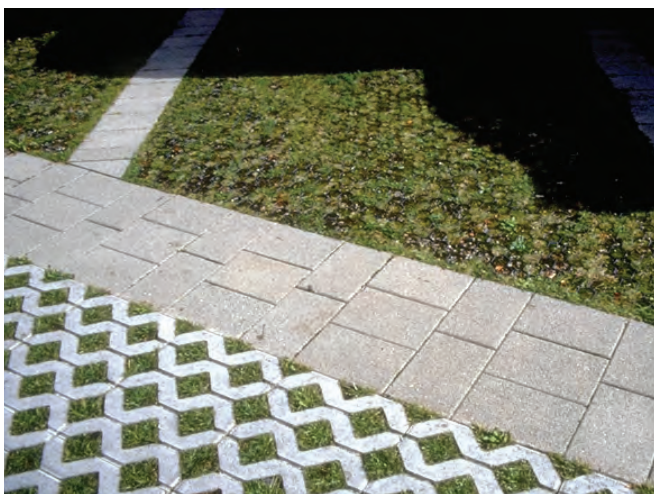
heads back to the downtown transit center. It operates on thirty minute headway. The #71 also accesses St. Mary's from Wood, 22nd, Cantrell and 16th Street. Then it utilizes Lost Bridge Road to cross Lake Decatur and head east to shopping destinations. The headway for the Lost Bridge Wal-Mart East (#71) is sixty minutes. Additionally, it should be noted that there currently is no direct transit access into Nelson Park.

DPTS also operates the Downtown Trolley. The main function of the trolley is to act as a shuttle to the existing parking garages. Downtown employees and visitors are encouraged to use the trolley as part of an overall parking strategy. The Downtown trolley circles Downtown Decatur every 15 minutes Monday thru Friday from 7:00 am to 6:15 pm; and Saturday from 8:00 am to 6:15 pm. The Downtown Trolley is scheduled to be at the Transit Center on the hour and at 15 minute intervals thereafter, starting at 7:00 am weekdays and at 8:00 am every Saturday.

There is currently little market demand for transit in the park, but that will likely change as the master plan is implemented. The Downtown trolley could provide transit link between the central business district and Nelson Park

Parking

The master plan proposes to generally maintain the existing parking approach of off-street lots located near elements for primary parking, with overflow parking occurring along interior roadways and on open lawn areas at peak times. The existing parking lots within the park are generally oversized relative to the number of cars they support, and less efficient than they could be if spaces were more clearly defined and organized. Bioswales are proposed to be installed adjacent to all of these areas, which will help collect and treat the stormwater runoff. Both the pervious paving and bioswale features will increase the amount of stormwater that percolates into the soil, which is good for the environment while reducing demands on stormwater infrastructure and treatment facilities.



USACE BMP Overview
http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/co-r/best_management_practices.htm



Capital One Master Plan
 Richmond, VA

3.4 Public Safety

In general terms, Nelson Park is very safe, with little in the way of serious crime or recurring safety issues. This is due in large part to the safety of the community as a whole, the Decatur Park District Police Force, and the popularity of the park. This popularity means there are usually a large number of “eyes in the park”, which is the single most effective deterrent to crime and vandalism.

One of the challenges in policing the waterfront is the size of the parks, and the distance of some areas from roadways. For example, interior portions of the former golf course area cannot be effectively surveyed from a police vehicle, and there are some areas that require officers to patrol on foot. While much of the remaining waterfront can be patrolled fairly easily by car, one potential solution for areas that are less accessible by vehicle would be to patrol by bicycle. The Loop Trail will be designed to accommodate police and emergency vehicles, which will also allow officers closer access to the shoreline.

3.5 Water Quality

The master plan calls for implementation of a number of strategies to reduce stormwater quantity and improve stormwater quality. These include consideration of replacing paved roadway and parking surfaces within the parks with pervious concrete, asphalt, or reinforced turf paving systems to reduce impervious surfaces. In combination with the pervious paving, bioswales are proposed near each large expanse of paving to collect and filter stormwater. This increases the amount of water that is absorbed by the soil, and the plant materials cleanse the water of contaminants. Third, “green” or vegetated roofs should be considered for all new structures within the parks. Green roofs capture and detain a large portion of stormwater that falls on a structure, they cleanse the water of contaminants, insulate and protect the structure and waterproof membrane, extend the life of the roof, create habitat for wildlife, and reduce heat island effects and cooling demand. For pitched roofs, water runoff should be extended to adjacent bioswales.

The quality of the water in Lake Decatur was raised throughout the planning process, particularly in reference to the existing volume of silt in the water. The source of the silt is runoff from the lands within the Sangamon watershed, and a permanent solution would require management strategies that reduce the volume of silt entering the waterway at the source. A short-term or on-going solution would include dredging of the lower basins of Lake Decatur. A long-term dredging plan is being implemented by the City of Decatur, and dredging of Basins 1 and 2 is proposed within the coming years.

3.6 Lighting / Dark Sky

The lighting design for the Nelson Park will be based on a design concept known as “dark sky”. The goal of dark sky lighting is to reduce light “pollution” and glare caused by poorly designed or located light fixtures. For example, when a light fixture shines upwards to light a building façade, much of the light is cast into the night sky, where it contributes to the night glow one sees over cities at night. This makes it more difficult to see the stars and wastes a significant amount of energy. Furthermore, contrary to popular belief, more lighting does not necessarily equate to a safer environment.



Waterfront Night View
Copenhagen, Denmark

The key to a safe evening environment is to eliminate sources of glare, provide relatively even light levels, and locate light fixtures to create an understandable sense of orientation in the parks. The human eye automatically focuses on the brightest visible point of light, and adjusts to that light level. When a source of glare is present in an otherwise dark area, the light seems brighter, and the dark areas seem much darker. This is because the eye adjusts to the glare, and we lose our night vision which creates a less safe environment. If the source of glare were eliminated, our eyes can adjust to low levels of light and still see quite clearly. We can also perceive greater ranges of color and depth perception, increasing the sense of safety.

Eliminating glare by selecting light fixtures identified as “cut-off” or “full cut-off” ensures that the brightest point of light is not visible unless one is directly under the fixture. This prevents light from spilling uselessly into the sky or neighboring areas, maximizes the

effectiveness of the light fixture and energy used, and focuses the light on the area we intend to illuminate. Spacing light fixtures between 80-120 feet apart and locating them at key intersections and interest points allows people to navigate effectively, while minimizing highly contrasting areas of light and dark.

In addition, this approach also saves energy. To make the most of these savings, the master plan recommends use of LED light fixtures that use dramatically less energy than conventional high pressure sodium or metal halide light fixtures. In addition to using less energy, these fixtures last much longer, significantly reducing maintenance requirements. In addition to LED fixtures, consideration of induction fixtures is proposed. Induction lighting is a technology that has similar desirable light quality characteristics to metal halide fixtures, but use less energy. In addition, induction lamps last 100,000 hours, or roughly 5-10 times longer than similar metal halide fixtures.

3.7 Roadway Infrastructure and Utilities

Regional Destination Adventure Fitness Area

US Route 36

US Route 36 (Illinois Route 121) is a major access route across Lake Decatur to this part of the City. It presently carries an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of 23,000 vehicles. In order to properly service the park, particularly the Water Park and the Events Venue, this project would add a stacking lane and signalized intersection to permit westbound traffic left turn traffic to queue without disrupting through traffic. Consequent to that, the local storm sewer system in US 36 would be reconstructed along the park boundary to the Lake.

- Widening, and construction of new stacking lane – approximately 0.65 miles
- Construction of new signalized intersection at water park entrance
- Improvements and reconfiguration of storm sewer system
- Improvements and reconfiguration of sanitary sewer system
- Improvements and reconfiguration of water system
- Improvements and reconfiguration of electrical power utilities
- Improvements and reconfiguration of telecom

Park Interior

Perimeter and interior roads, particularly E. Nelson Blvd and portions of Lakeshore Drive would be reconfigured and resurfaced to improve their driving condition. Water supply and sanitary sewerage would be accommodated by existing utilities in US Route 36. An interior stormwater collection system would be constructed. Depending on the discharge limits for Lake Decatur and details of the soil conditions, it is presently envisioned that much of the stormwater management would be accomplished using bioswales and rain gardens to infiltrate the rainwater into the soil.

- 12' wide multi-use loop trail – approximately 2,100LF
- 8' asphalt walkway – approximately 12,400LF
- Pedestrian lighting
- Resurfacing of interior roads – approximately 65,000SF
- Asphalt parking paving – approximately 295,000SF
- Rock revetment along shoreline – approximately 2,495LF
- Stormwater detention
- On-site stormwater management with bioswales and rain gardens

Nelson Park Fitness

Nelson Park Fitness Area is generally a low impact development accommodating a dog park and physical fitness activities. No interior roads would be constructed, and most of the circulation would be via asphalt and gravel paved trails. Parking in this area would be on concrete or reinforced turf, maintaining the low impact of the area. Utility construction would be minimal. Major existing sanitary sewage interceptors, force mains, and the East Side Booster Pump Station would remain, undisturbed.

- 8' wide asphalt walkway – approximately 4,600LF
- 4' wide crushed stone trail – approximately 10,300LF
- Asphalt roads – approximately 6,700LF
- Roadway lighting
- Turf ring parking – approximately 60,000SF
- Storm sewer system
- Water system
- Electrical power utilities

Lakeview Waterfront Village + Amphitheater

The Lakeview Waterfront Village and Amphitheater area is a high impact development area that includes construction of multiple restaurants, a regional destination play area, and construction of a new Amphitheater. Sanitary sewage would be collected into a pumping station and lifted to the existing 36 inch interceptor in S. 22nd Street. Stormwater would be collected and discharged into Lake Decatur. Water would be supplied from existing mains in Lakeshore Drive.

- Shoreline sheet pile wall – approximately 1,400LF
- Groin / pier reconfiguration – approximately 9,100LF
- Beach reconstruction – approximately 7,200CY
- Resurfacing existing roads – approximately 56,000SF
- Resurface new asphalt roads – approximately 3,200LF
- Roadway lighting
- 12’ wide multi-use loop trail - approximately 1,100LF
- Pedestrian lighting
- Plaza paving - approximately 7,900LF
- Concrete paving - approximately 50,000LF
- Beach boardwalk – approximately 6,000SF
- Asphalt parking paving – approximately 237,000SF
- Turf ring parking – approximately 19,500SF
- Storm sewer system
- Sanitary sewer system, pump station, approximately 875LF force main to existing 36 inch interceptor in s 22nd Street
- Water system
- Electrical power utilities
- Telecoms

Lakeshore Drive Area

The existing interior park road between Chandler Park and the existing boat launch is proposed to be realigned and interrupted, eliminating its status as a through street. Portions would be resurfaced and portions realigned and reconstructed. The existing water mains and major sewage force mains would remain in their present locations.

- Resurface new asphalt roads – approximately 1,700LF
- Roadway lighting
- 12’ wide multi-use loop trail – approximately 2,000LF
- Pedestrian lighting
- Concrete block retaining wall—approximately 10,400SF
- Storm sewer system
- Sanitary sewer system
- Water system
- Electrical power utilities
- Telecoms

Chandler Park Residential Area 1

Chandler Park Residential Area 1 includes seven multifamily units. To support this development, a sanitary sewage pumping station would be constructed along with approximately 2,500 feet of force main to deliver the sewage to existing Decatur Sanitary District interceptor sewer to the north and west of Chandler Park. In the event that Area 2 is constructed first, the pumping station would be constructed with that phase.

Water service would be from the existing main in E. Lakeshore Drive, part of which is considered as replaced. A loop main would surround the development to provide domestic and fire water capacity. Stormwater would be detained in ponds and rain gardens before discharging to Lake Decatur. Asphalt parking and concrete plaza paving would be constructed.

- Asphalt road paving – approximately 750LF
- Asphalt parking paving – approximately 110,500SF
- Roadway lighting
- 8’ wide concrete walkway – approximately 4,300LF

- Concrete paving – approximately 20,000SF
- Improvements and reconfigure storm sewer system
- Rain gardens and detention pond in central plaza
- Piped outfall to Lake Decatur
- Improvements and reconfigure sanitary sewer system
- Sanitary pump station
- Force main to Decatur interceptor sewers - approximately 2,500LF
- Improvements and reconfigure water system
- Onsite loop main – approximately 4,200LF 12 inch dip
- Offsite connection – approximately 2,500LF 12 inch dip
- Water system also supports Phase 2
- Improvements and reconfigure electrical power utilities
- Improvements and reconfigure telecom

Chandler Residential Area 2

Area 2 housing comprises housing two mid-rise structures. If the sanitary sewage pumping station, described above, has not been constructed, it will be constructed in this phase. The water system will be an extension of the Area 1 system. If the required improvements in E. Lakeshore Drive have not been constructed for Area 1, they will be constructed during this phase. Stormwater management will build off the Area 1 system and will include rain gardens and detention basins prior to discharge to the Lake. Asphalt parking lots will support the housing units.

- Sheet pile wall along shoreline – approximately 1,000LF
- Pedestrian pier – approximately 6,100SF
- Asphalt parking paving – approximately 32,200SF
- 8 foot wide concrete walkway – approximately 700lf
- Concrete paving – approximately 37,000SF
- Storm sewer system
- Piped outfalls
- Rain gardens

Boat Launch

The Boat Launch Facility requires little infrastructure support from Landside, other than the construction of parking areas and some associated stormwater drainage. The shoreline will be protected with a steel sheet pile wall.

- Shoreline sheet pile wall – approximately 1,000LF
- 12 foot wide multi-use loop trail – approximately 1,000LF
- Asphalt hardstand paving – approximately 22,500SF
- Asphalt parking paving – approximately 80,000SF
- Roadway lighting
- Storm sewer system
- Sanitary sewer system
- Water system
- Electrical power utilities
- Telecoms

Scovill Trail

The Scovill loop trail travels around part of Lake Decatur and crossing it at US Route 36 and Lost Bridge Road. The off-site portion of the loop trail comprises nearly 2.5 miles of 10 and 12 foot wide multi-use trail for pedestrians and bicyclists. Pedestrian bridges will be constructed at the gap in Lost Bridge Road, and adjacent to the US Route 36 highway bridge.

- 12' wide multi-use loop trail – approximately 12,500LF
- 4' wide crushed stone trail – approximately 7,800LF
- Pedestrian bridges – approximately 10,800SF
- Lagoon bridge – approximately 200SF
- Bridge lighting
- Pedestrian lighting

3.8 Operation / Maintenance

All aspects of the master plan are grounded in the fundamental requirement that maintenance and operational aspects be considered and the realities of financing and budget constraints addressed. The master plan proposes a number of elements that will improve the operational efficiency of the park, while also reducing maintenance demands of existing areas and minimizing maintenance demands of new elements.

One of the key benefits of the overall plan and emphasis on sustainable design is the fact that sustainable practices implemented correctly are generally more resource efficient, reduce maintenance demands, and save money. It is true that certain sustainable practices involve higher “first costs”, or the costs associated with implementing them versus traditional methods, but this is not true for all sustainable design approaches. In fact, first costs can actually be reduced in many cases, and when life cycle cost analysis is considered, sustainable practices are generally more cost effective over the long term as well as being better for the environment as a whole.

For example, the plan proposes replacing little-used areas of turf with native grasses. The maintenance regime required for large expanses of turf include weed control, application of pesticides and fertilizers, and weekly mowing. All of these activities are labor and resource intensive year after year, and contribute directly to reduced environmental quality through lake and groundwater contamination by chemical fertilizer and pesticide runoff, noise, fuel consumption, and vehicle exhaust emissions. On the other hand, native grasses require this level of effort only for the first two to three years of establishment. Once established, mowing demands are reduced to twice per season. Supplemental fertilizer and pesticides are rarely needed, and weeds are less able to compete with native grasses, significantly reducing weed control requirements. Finally, the cost of native seeding is less than half the cost of sod.

The proposed construction of new LEED Silver Certified structures will cost less to operate, and the buildings will last longer than traditional construction. For example, the implementation of a green roof costs roughly 50% more than a traditional roof, but since the green roof protects the waterproof membrane, the life expectancy of the roofing system is double or even triple that of traditional construction. Use of LED light fixtures in place of traditional systems reduces the need to purchase and install replacement fixtures from every two to four years to every fifteen to twenty years, while using significantly less energy throughout the life of the fixture.

Finally, the structures will be designed to reduce winterization maintenance requirements and provide the possibility of efficient year round operation if funding allows. Use of photo-voltaic technology could provide energy to maintain minimum internal temperatures, reducing the winterization requirements.

The reality of municipal maintenance budgets is that they have been going down in recent years due to increased demand for other important needs. While there are a wide range of grants and other funding opportunities available to construct new elements, there are very few sources of funding for ongoing maintenance. This fact underscores the importance of addressing these issues during design, and the role of the community in working with the Park District leadership to ensure that adequate funding of parks, maintenance, and programming remain a priority.

3.9 Implementation / Phasing Considerations

The master plan outlines a strategy for improving Nelson Park over a period of twenty or more years with a wide range of proposed improvements. These improvements will combine to create a place that takes best advantage of the lakefront setting, provides a wide range of activities for the community, operates at a high level of resource efficiency, and is easier to maintain in the long run. As the master plan addresses nearly every facet of the park, an implementation strategy and approach to phasing must make the most of every funding opportunity.

The first step in this process is to identify all current funding sources that could potentially be used to implement individual elements of the plan, such as the capital improvement budget, maintenance and operations budgets, private donations, permit revenues, and grants from local, state, federal, or private sources. Parallel with this effort is reviewing the existing fee structure of all revenue generating elements in the park and identifying all elements that are revenue positive that can service revenue bond debt. Partnership with the City of Decatur in determining revenue and tax sharing agreements will create a long term partnership that benefits the community as a whole.

Each of the sources should be analyzed to determine the types of elements they could provide funding for, and the level of matching support needed. Creative, integrated approaches will be necessary to make the most of every opportunity. For example, maintenance budgets are not typically used for new construction items. However, if a regular maintenance activity such as restoration of lawn damage exists, and the damaged area is proposed to be native grasses in the master plan, the maintenance funds could be better spent implementing the proposed solution instead of the repairing the existing condition. One of the best reasons to complete a master plan is to ensure that everyone is working towards a common goal, and that every dollar spent is invested in the implementation of a well thought out strategy.

Establishing a priority list for construction phasing must take into account a wide range of factors. Generating public support and enthusiasm for the plan can be significantly enhanced through early implementation of visible projects that show both progress and a commitment to follow through on the proposals made in the master plan. Construction of revenue generating elements that can support themselves and potentially other elements should be constructed sooner, and elements that generate tax revenue should be implemented as soon as practical. This progress and commitment will generate momentum that may entice private, corporate, and foundation philanthropic efforts, helping to sustain momentum and a sense of inevitability in the implementation of the plan.

Obviously, if a private donation or grant opportunity for a specific element becomes available, it makes sense to take advantage of those opportunities whenever possible regardless of the relative importance of that element. The strategy for investing yearly capital improvement budgets, however, should be based on a range of key factors. Most important is addressing areas of public safety, and achieving compliance with relevant codes such as ADA. Next on the list of priorities would be identifying irreplaceable elements of historic, cultural, or environmental value. These elements should be weighed in terms of the actual potential for quantifiable immediate loss, and not solely on the concerns of special interest groups.

Once these items are identified and addressed, the decision making process should be focused on identifying those elements that would most increase resource, maintenance, and operational efficiency, thereby increasing the effectiveness of available funds. These improvements could potentially be costly, however, so the value of the potential savings must be weighed against the cost of the improvement. The key to making the most of available funds and making good phasing decisions lies in open communication between everyone responsible for funding, operating, and maintaining the parks.

- 4.1 Architecture Survey and Evaluation
- 4.2 Enhancement of Historic Nelson Park Elements
- 4.3 Regional Adventure Play Destination
- 4.4 Lake View Waterfront Village
- 4.5 Lake Shore Drive Linear Park
- 4.6 Activation of Chandler Park
- 4.7 Loop Trail Network
- 4.8 Scovill Park
- 4.9 Marina Master Plan
- 4.10 Synergy of Elements



Right: Whirlpool Compass Fountain, St. Joseph, MI
 Left Top: Georgetown Harbor, Washington DC
 Left Middle: Blackpool Central Corridor
 Left Bottom: Lorne Pier, Lorne, Australia

Master Plan Elements 4.0



4.1 Architecture Survey and Evaluation

BauerLatoza Studio visited Nelson Park to survey the existing architecture on March 1, 2010. A follow up visit was conducted on March 30, 2010. All of the existing buildings within the park area were observed. Interior access was not provided to all the buildings, but the two primary historic structures were viewed both interior and exterior.

Beach House Restaurant

Originally constructed as a bathing pavilion for beachgoers, this WPA era building is currently used as a restaurant. It is a two story building constructed of a concrete frame with rubble-coursed limestone cladding. Some of the building's original architectural features have been removed and, some are still intact. A summary of the building components and their condition is as follows:

- **Roof:** A low-slope, hipped roof with non-original asphalt shingles in good condition. The original roof material was likely slate. There are a number of non-original mechanical units on the roof, installed to support the current restaurant use.
- **Exterior Walls:** Original limestone in good condition. The joints have been re-pointed and are also in good condition.
- **Windows:** Most of the original windows are no longer existing. The original upper level openings have been in-filled with wood siding and some aluminum framed windows of a smaller size than the openings. The wood siding and aluminum windows are in good condition. The upper story may have originally been a series of French doors leading to a balcony. Some lower level openings



Beach House Exterior



Beach House Rear



Beach House Entrance



Beach House Interior (original showers)

have been in-filled with concrete block or glass block, but a few maintain their original steel casement windows. These are in fair condition.

- Deck: The existing wood deck is not original, although there was likely some kind of upper balcony on the original building. The current configuration incorporates stair and ramp access to the upper level restaurant. The deck, which has wood post structural framing with poured concrete footings, is in good condition.
- Addition: There is small rear addition that houses most of the kitchen facilities for the restaurant. This addition is clad with wood siding which matches the window infill material. This addition has a concrete foundation and a hipped asphalt roof which frames into the original.
- Interior, Upper Floor: The upper level has a modern build-out for the restaurant use. There is no indication of the building's original use in these spaces.
- Interior, Lower Floor: This area is generally unfinished. It still retains much of the original bathing pavilion configuration with showers and changing areas, but is currently used for storage.
- Accessibility: The restaurant space has provided wheelchair access via a ramp which is incorporated with the exterior deck. There is no public space at the lower level, but it is accessible at grade from the beach side of the building.

WPA Pavilion

Originally constructed as a picnic pavilion, this WPA era building continues to serve its original purpose. Built in 1930 it also housed toilet facilities and a small 2 bedroom apartment on the upper level. The concrete and steel framed building is clad in rubble-coursed limestone of the same style as the Beach House building. A summary of the building components and their condition is as follows:

Roof: The hipped roof has existing slate shingles which were installed in recent years; they replicate the original material and are in good condition. The over-hanging eaves are accented with wood rafter ends which are in need of re-painting.

Exterior Walls: The original limestone is in good condition. The joints have been re-pointed and are also in good condition. There are areas of biological growth on the stone, particularly near the ground and along the sheltered north side of the building. There is evidence that the lower perimeter stones are being exposed to heavy moisture and the existing tree cover is not allowing adequate drying of the stone when it gets wet. A more permeable paving system at the perimeter of the building may help to reduce this effect. There is some graffiti on the exterior masonry. This should be removed using non-abrasive techniques to preserve the aesthetic qualities of the stone and joints.

Structure: There is some cracking visible in the concrete portions of the framing system, particularly the perimeter beams of the picnic pavilion area. These cracks should be further investigated to determine the extent, cause and corrective action. The exposed steel trusses of the picnic pavilion are in need of periodic painting to prevent corrosion and deterioration.

Windows/Doors: The original windows and doors no longer exist, and have been replaced with a variety of aluminum, steel and glass block components. These replacement windows and doors are in fair to good condition. Most do not replicate the historic configuration.

Pavilion Floor & Apron: The original terrazzo floor of the picnic pavilion is still largely intact and in good condition. Some localized areas have been patched with concrete and there are a few cracks, particularly around the perimeter. The original drawings indicate that this terrazzo extended beyond the pavilion creating a decorative paved apron. At some point this terrazzo apron was removed and replaced with concrete which includes area drains. The concrete is in very good condition, but the hardscape may be causing splashing and pooling at the stone perimeter leading to increased moisture and biological growth. This condition may be improved by introducing a more permeable paving system.

Stage: The original wood stage within the picnic pavilion is still intact. It is in good condition, but it is in need of refinishing.

Fireplace: The original stone fireplace within the picnic pavilion is still intact, active and in good condition.

Interior, Upper Floor: The upper level apartment is in disrepair due to some earlier roof leaks. These leaks appear to have been corrected by the recent roof replacement. The original apartment configuration is intact, as are many of the light fixtures and wood trim. It is currently unoccupied.

Interior, Lower Floor: Some of the original support spaces at this level are still intact, including an interior 'dining area' and a kitchen, although they are largely unused. The original women's room has been reconfigured to accommodate both men's and women's toilets at grade level.

Interior, Basement: This area is generally unfinished. It

houses mechanical space and has been retrofitted with a rifle range. The original basement level men's room has been abandoned following reconfiguration of the toilet facilities on the ground level.

Accessibility: The picnic pavilion and the newly renovated toilet rooms are at grade. The upper level and basement have rather difficult paths of access, via a narrow winding interior stair. If these spaces were to be used for public activities, then the accessibility would have to be improved, possibly with the addition of an elevator.

Lighting: Many of the original lighting fixtures are still intact at the interior spaces of the building. This is rare in buildings of this age and presents an opportunity for historically accurate renovations. The exterior has had modern site lighting added for safety and security.



Pavilion #1 Exterior



Pavilion #1 Rear



Pavilion #1 Exterior



Pavilion #1 Rear



Marina Building

The Marina Building was constructed in recent years to support the boating activities on the lake. The building is clad in rubble-coursed limestone and has a low-slope hipped roof, similar in style to the Beach House and the WPA Pavilion.

This building appears to be in good condition and continues to provide the services for which it was constructed.



Concession Building

This single story building is constructed of painted concrete block with a low-slope hipped, asphalt shingle roof. It has a wide, concrete deck with a roof for outdoor seating along the water side of the building.

The building houses seasonal concessions, providing services for summer-time visitors to Nelson Park. There is a secondary entrance which provides handicap access to the concession area and outdoor seating.

Although the concessions are a valid use and in a practical location, the building is nondescript, and inefficient for its current use.



Single Family Residence

This single family house is constructed of a brick exterior, with wood framing and an asphalt shingle roof. It appears to be in good condition and is currently occupied as a home.

The character of this building is sympathetic to the era of the historic structures within the park, although it is not remarkable. It is uniquely suited for continued use as a single family home. If adaptive reuse for a public purpose is considered, accessibility upgrades will likely be necessary.



Former Golf Clubhouse

This building is unoccupied and unremarkable. It appears to be in fair condition. It is a single story building and is likely to be at least partially accessible.

An adaptive reuse of this building would be largely dependent on the suitability of its size and location.



Picnic Pavilion

This outdoor picnic pavilion building is constructed of wood and steel framing, with stone masonry piers and an asphalt shingle roof.

The building is in good condition, although the wood and steel components are in need of periodic painting to prevent deterioration.

The continued use of this building would be largely dependent on the suitability of its size and location.



Gazebo

The gazebo is a small wood framed open-air shelter with concrete paving. It is octagonal in shape and has a wood shingle roof with copper accents.

The steel truss brackets on the wood framing are displaying surface rust and should be primed and painted to prevent further deterioration.

The continued use of this building would be largely dependent on the suitability of its size and location.



Pool Building

This building is unoccupied and unremarkable. It appears to be in fair condition. It is a single story building and is likely to be at least partially accessible.

This building was constructed specifically to support the adjacent outdoor pool which has been abandoned. Adaptive reuse of this building without a similar purpose seems improbable.

Pump House

Although outside the parameters of Nelson Park, this building is nearby and presents an interesting re-use challenge. The stone building, with a flat roof is obsolete and unused, and has been for many years.

It is a striking building, and uniquely situated within the water basin. Because of this location, reuse is a challenge due to access and parking. Furthermore, the original pump equipment is still intact within the building, although unused, so clearing this equipment presents another challenge.

From a historic perspective, this building possesses unparalleled integrity with many of its original interior and exterior components still intact.



Historic Resources

Among Nelson Park's varied buildings, two have notable potential for designation as historic structures: the Beach House and the WPA Pavilion. Most commonly this designation comes in the form of listing on the National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Park Service and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Generally, the criterion for listing includes one or more of the following attributes:

- Buildings/sites that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- Buildings/sites that are associated with the lives of significant persons
- Buildings/sites that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values

The Beach House and WPA Pavilion buildings would likely be eligible for listing based on their architectural character and cultural significance. In addition, the Pump House offers significant historic integrity with both its architecture and its connection to the history and development of the region.

Historic designation of any or all of these buildings provides a number of possible incentives, including eligibility for grants and other financial support for renovation. With the designation comes a requirement to maintain the property in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties.

Picnic Pavilion Rehabilitation Options

Three renovation options have been developed for the WPA Picnic Pavilion. Each option would include a base-line of exterior and interior renovation to the masonry, windows, and finishes; as well as some upgrades to the infrastructure and services (water, heat, etc).

The addition of an elevator may also be considered. This would allow the basement and second floor spaces to be available for public use. This may expand the available options for use of the space.

Conceptual plans have been provided for each option.

OPTION 1: Seasonal Picnic/Rental Pavilion, Seasonal or Event Based Concessions or Catering/Warming Kitchen, Limited Toilet Facilities, Rental Apartment

Repair and rehabilitate the building to improve its condition, but maintain its use similar to its current function. Improvements would focus on the kitchen facilities to better support concessions or catering, and allowing the apartment to again be rented to increase park security.

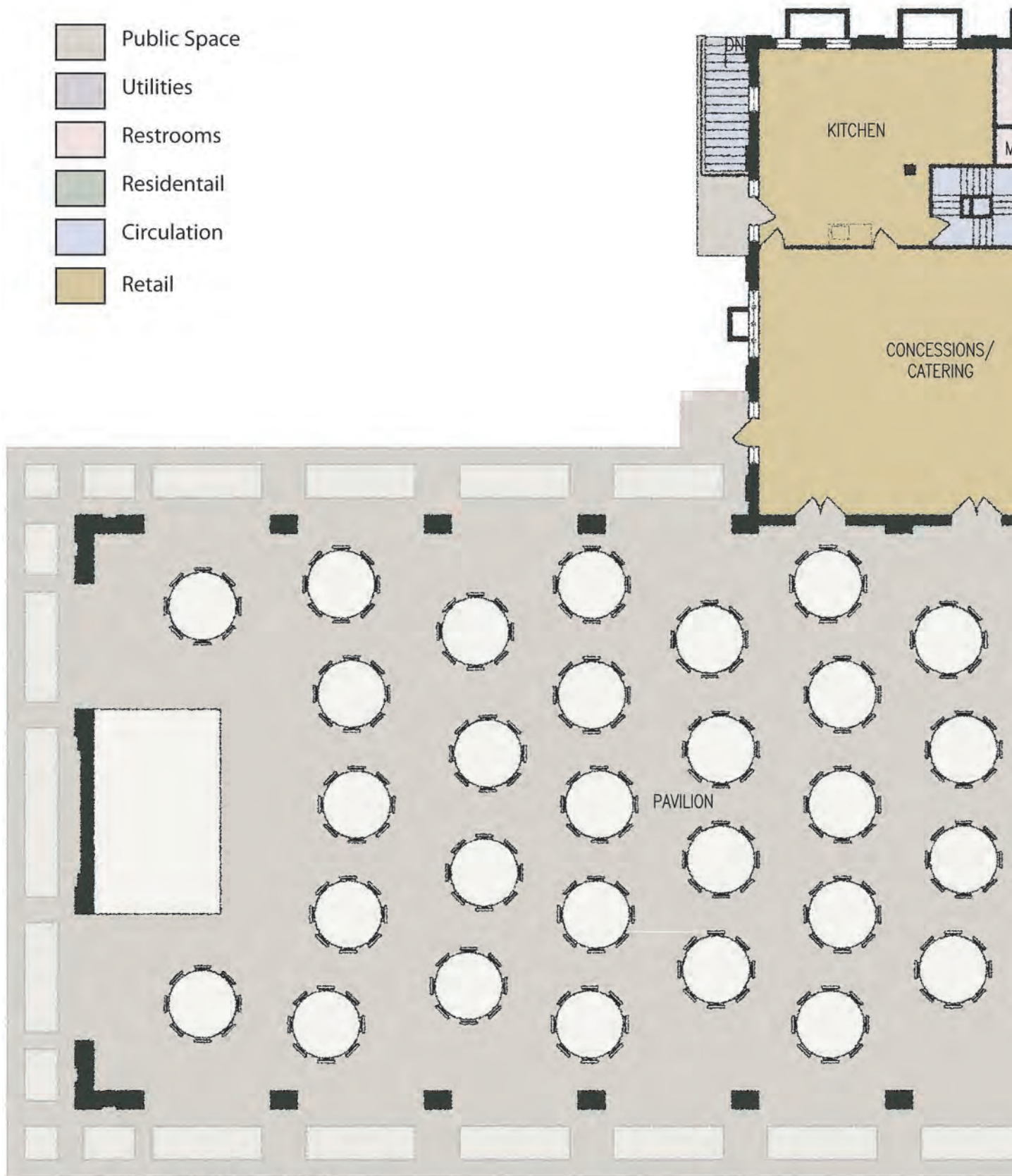
OPTION 2: Enclosed 3-Season Picnic/Rental Pavilion, Seasonal Picnic Pavilion, Seasonal or Event Based Concessions or Catering/Warming Kitchen, Limited Toilet Facilities, Rental Apartment

Enclosing the current outdoor picnic pavilion would permit its use for events and rental into the cooler spring and autumn months. Overall scope of work would be similar to Option A, but would also include glass enclosure of the covered picnic area.

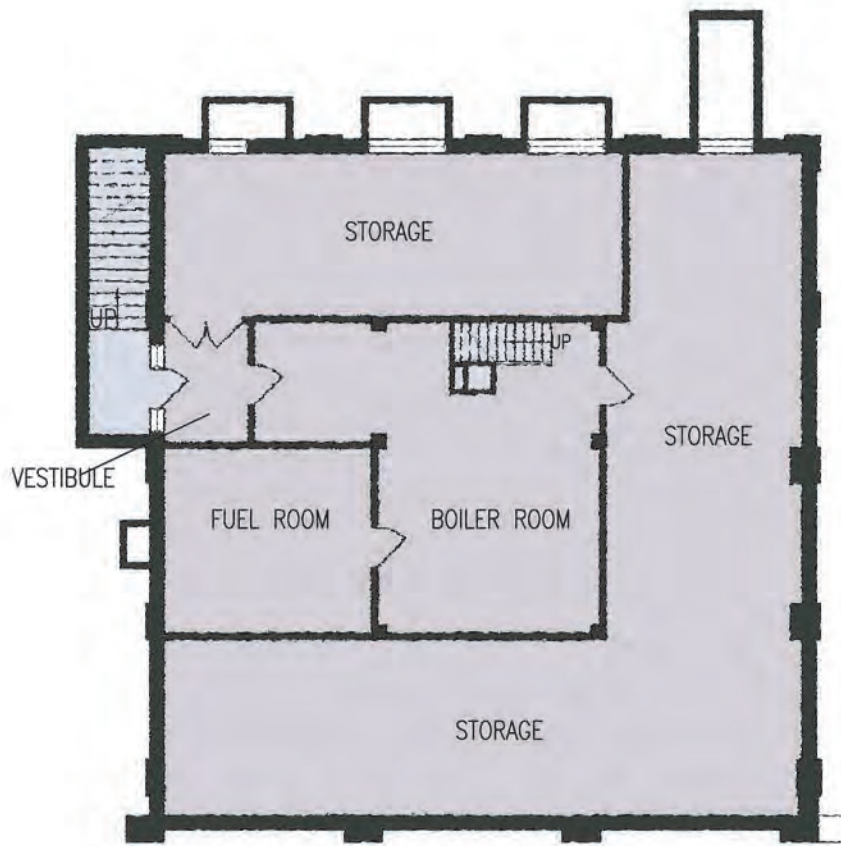
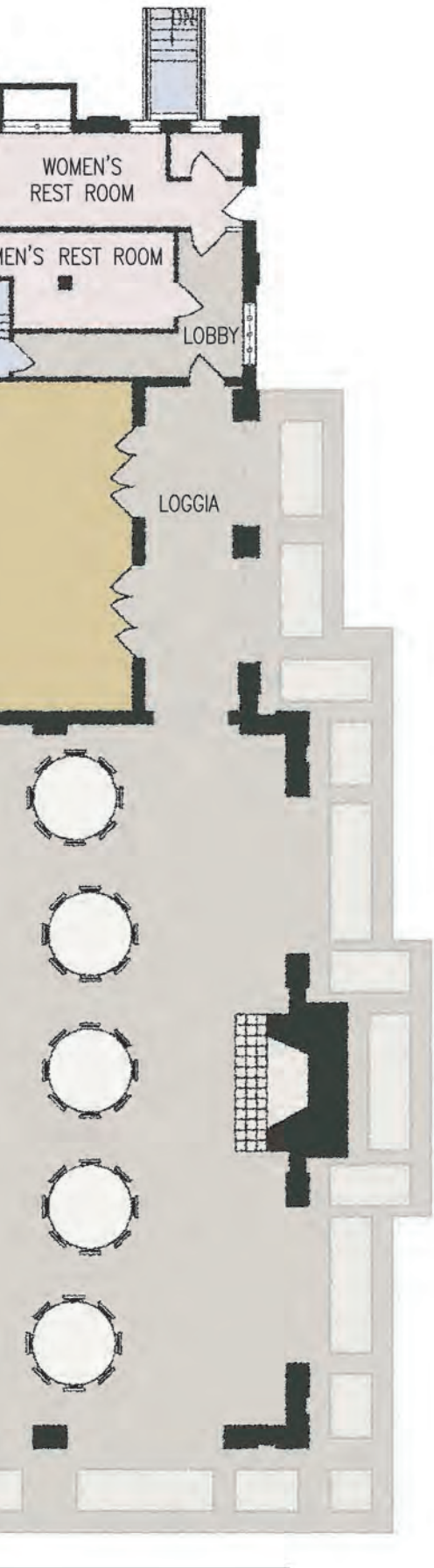
Option 2 could also be an extension of Option A. Or a second phase as demand suggests the need for a three season facility.

OPTION 3: Nature Center Educational Facility. Renovate all of the interior spaces to support an educational program, allowing use as a Nature Center or similar purpose. The picnic pavilion area would double as an outdoor classroom. Concession or catering facilities may not be available in this option.

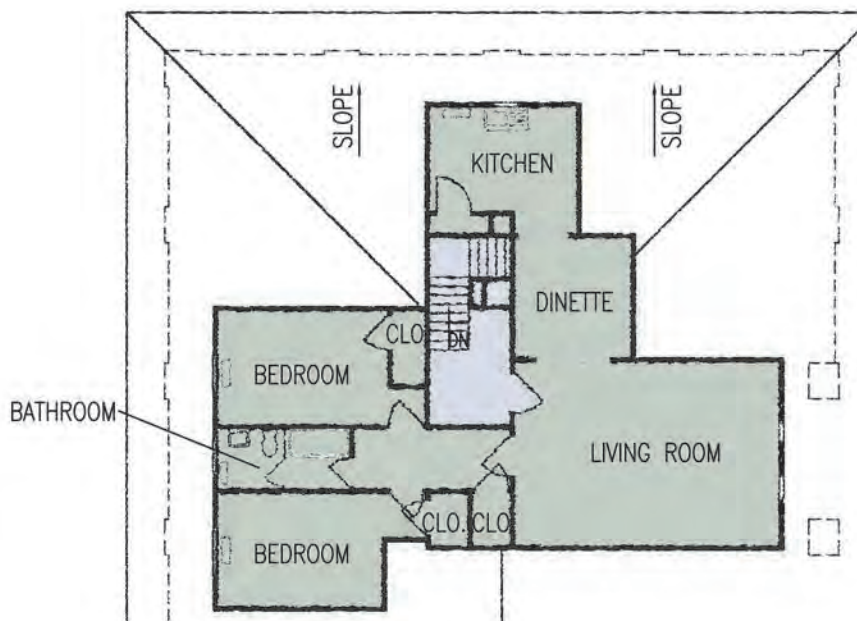
- Public Space
- Utilities
- Restrooms
- Residentail
- Circulation
- Retail



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1/16" = 1'-0"

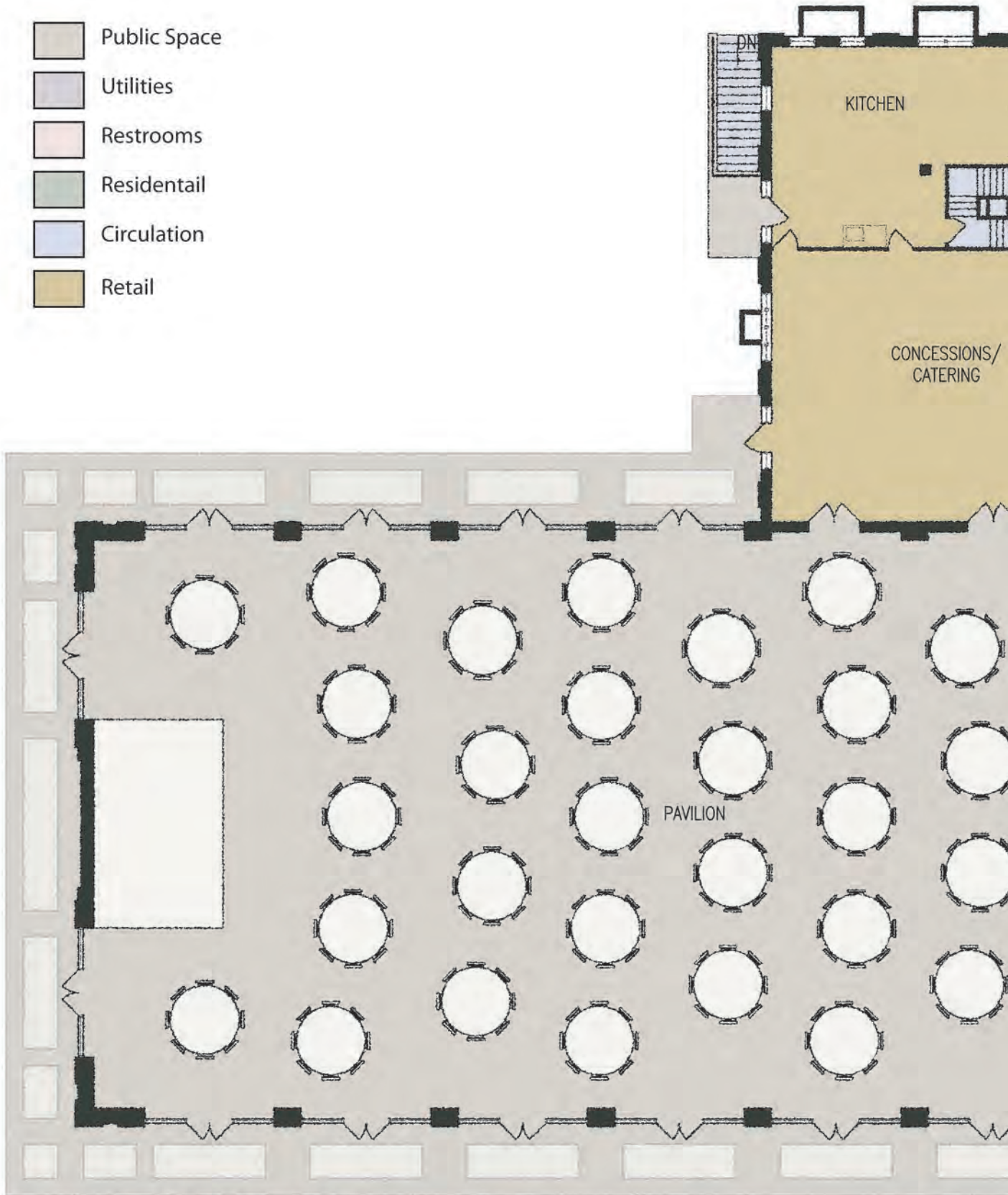


BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN
 1/16" = 1'-0"

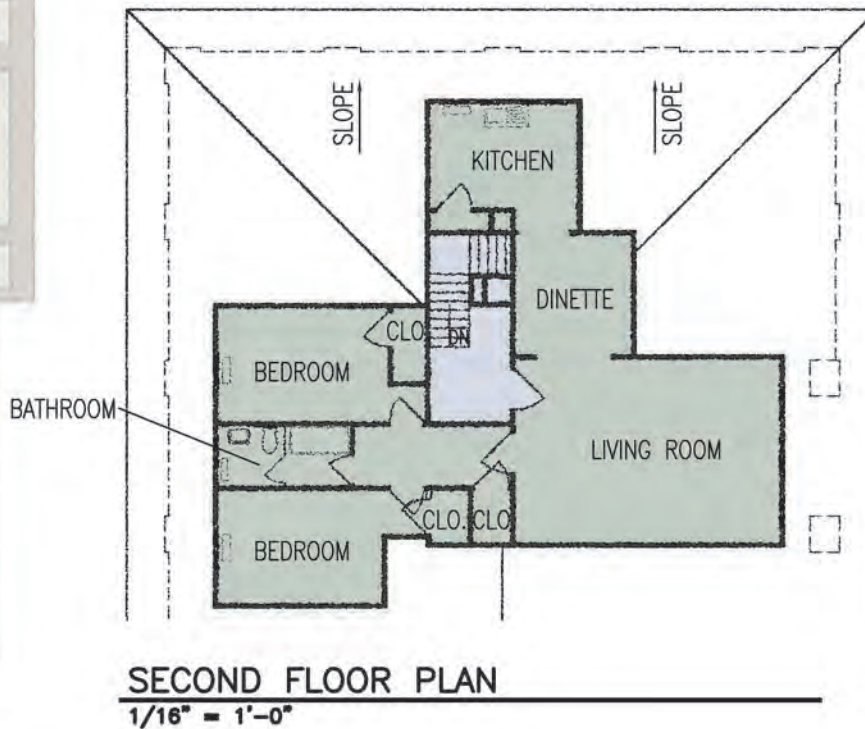
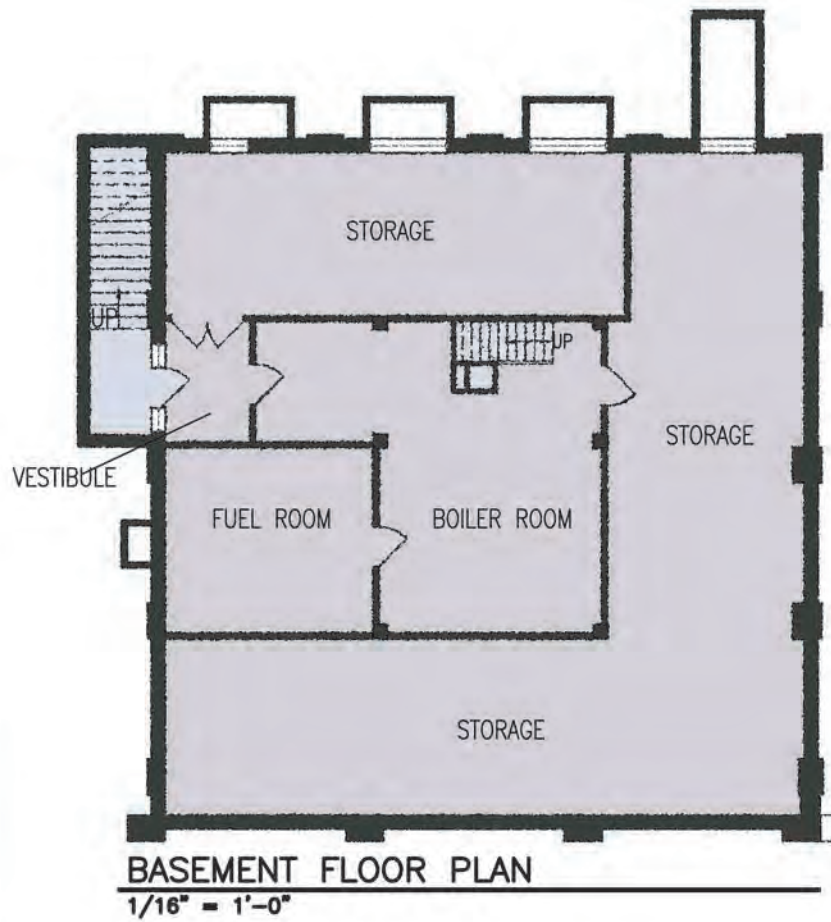
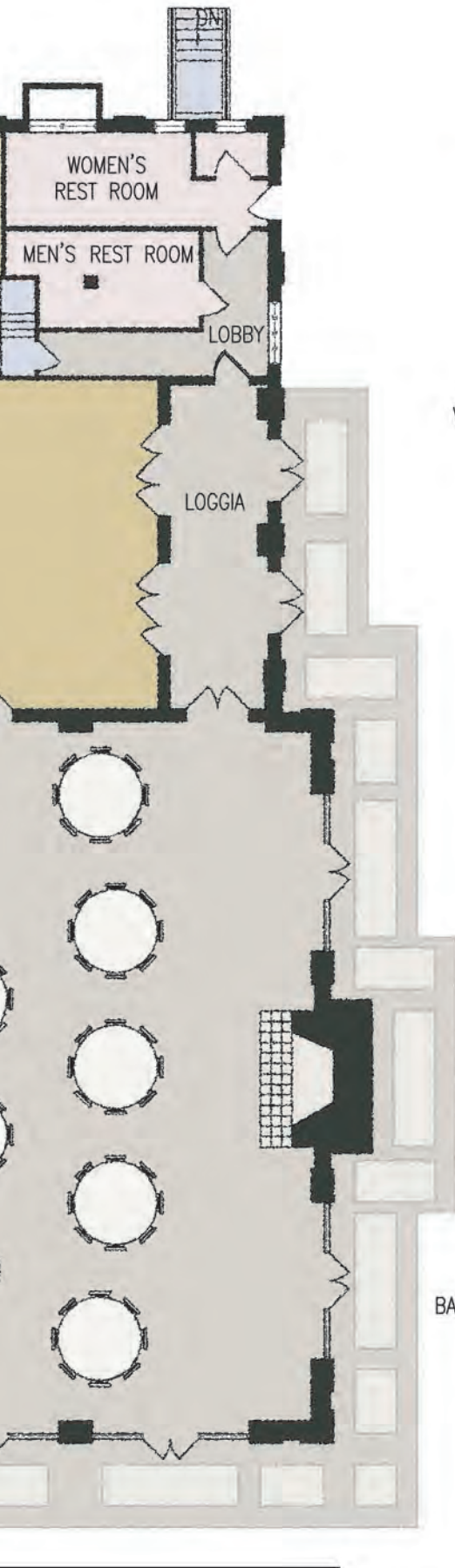


SECOND FLOOR PLAN
 1/16" = 1'-0"

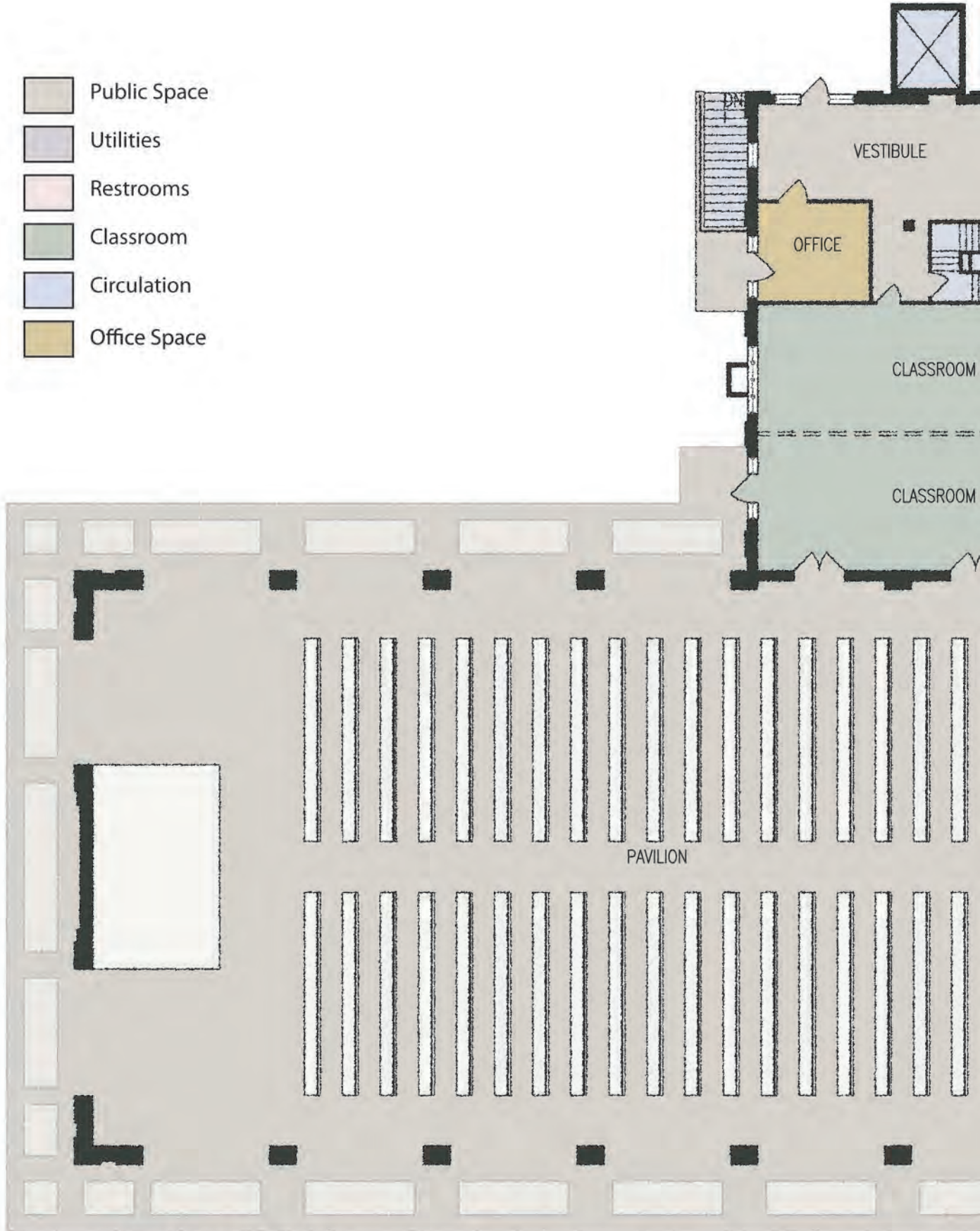
- Public Space
- Utilities
- Restrooms
- Residentail
- Circulation
- Retail



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1/16" = 1'-0"



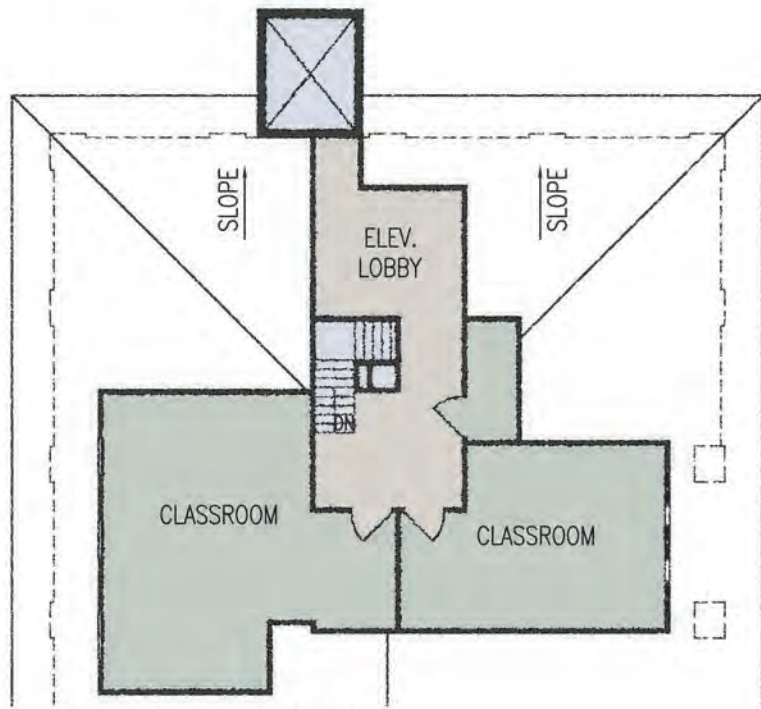
- Public Space
- Utilities
- Restrooms
- Classroom
- Circulation
- Office Space



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1/16" = 1'-0"



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN
1/16" = 1'-0"



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
1/16" = 1'-0"

DECATUR PARK DISTRICT + CITY OF DECATUR | NELSON PARK MASTER PLAN

Architecture Summary

The existing Beach House building has been successfully adapted for a new use as a restaurant. This new use is currently being supported by the historic architecture. In order to continue the stewardship of this characteristic building, design guidelines would help to steer future renovation toward more historically sensitive additions and alterations. These guidelines might provide suggestions for materials, aesthetics, scale, etc.

The existing WPA Pavilion continues to serve its original function in many ways. However, some portions of the building are underutilized, and there are some existing maintenance and repair needs. This building has potential to better serve the future needs of Nelson Park. Renovations to support these needs should consider the character of the existing architecture. Again, design guidelines may provide a framework for future improvements.

The Pump House is an interesting building, with unknown potential. An adaptive reuse of this building requires a separate focused review.

Historic designation for any or all of these buildings may offer funding potential that would be unrealized without a listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It may also affect the approach to exterior alterations. Since renovation work will have to continue to support the historic architecture, some additions may require a more creative approach.

The other existing buildings within Nelson Park have varying potential to support the future plans of the park as a whole, but none of them have specific notable architecture. Their continued use, or adaptation should be considered based on pragmatism and economy, rather than architectural significance.

4.2 Enhancement of Historic Nelson Park Elements

Throughout the planning process, the community expressed a very clear desire that Nelson Park retain the historic elements that connect the park to its past. Places in the park like the Anna Bethel Fisher Rock Garden, Pavilions #1 and #2, the views of the lake, and the wonderful passive character and mature trees around these spaces are critically important to the community.

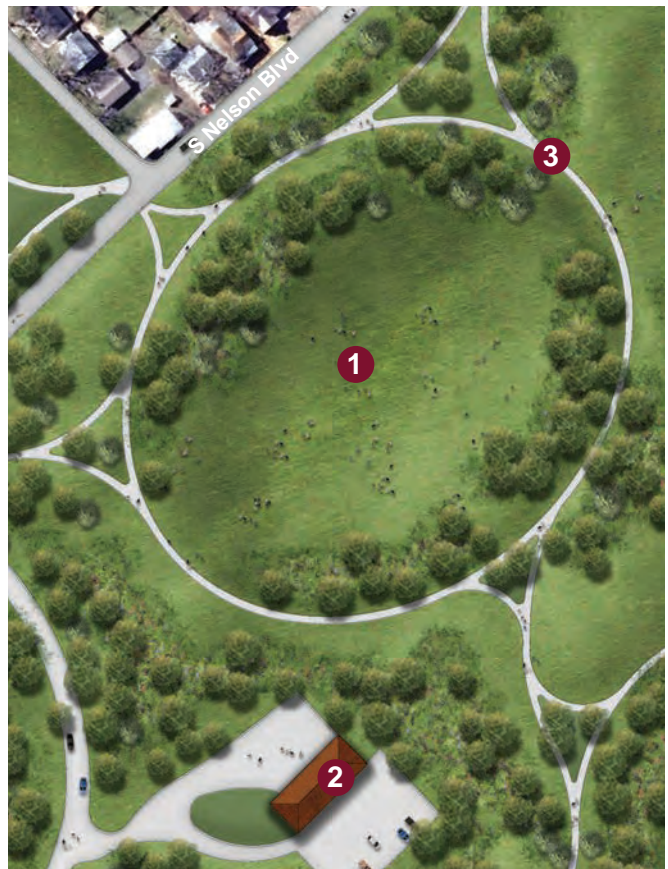
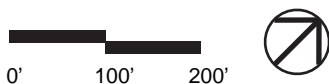
The master plan responds to these concerns by proposing a series of moves intended to strengthen what is so wonderful about these historic elements by identifying elements that are incongruous with the historic character and either eliminating, screening, or reducing them as much as possible. The goal is to restore the park to allow visitors to sit on the overlook at Pavilion #1 and look out on the lake and imagine what it was like when it was built eighty years ago. New structures proposed in the area, like the amphitheater will be designed to provide a mix of new and old, creating structures that complement the beautiful stone and handmade detailing of the WPA structures.

By eliminating unnecessary paving and reconfiguring roads, the park will be made safer, the lake more accessible, and the views as beautiful as ever. Cars will be removed from the water's edge and replaced with accessible trails and water cleansing landscape treatments. Sterile, underutilized turf areas will evolve into rich native prairies that create a functioning ecosystem of plants and animals that is beautiful, functional, and educational, while requiring less maintenance than today.

Paved and unpaved trails will make it all accessible and underutilized portions of the former golf course will now come alive with a dog park, disc golf course, mountain bike trails. The abandoned pool house and parking lot will be transformed into the Great Lawn, a place for picnicking, festivals, and play. The park will remain true to its original character, and the historic structures and places will be protected and their settings returned to a softer park setting.



- 1 Native Landscape Restoration + Habitat Creation
- 2 Existing Maintenance Building
- 3 Walking + Biking Trails



Native Landscape Restoration + Habitat Creation

The existing landscape of Nelson Park and the former Nelson Park Golf Course is a mix of mature tree canopy and extensive turf areas, with interspersed pockets and bands of taller grasses, ornamental trees, and occasional shrubs. Combined with the rolling topography, it is visually beautiful. However, this landscape is maintenance intensive and relatively sterile from an ecological perspective. The master plan recommends that this landscape be transformed over time to define specific areas of well used flexible lawns, defined by broad bands of upland prairie and shaped by pockets of magic hedge landscape (refer to Master Plan Overview, Landscape Approach for details).

The goals of this transformation are to preserve the beautiful tree canopy well into the future, ensure plenty of usable lawn spaces for active and passive recreation, reduce maintenance, and expand the diversity of plants and animals that live in the park to create a healthier and more functional ecosystem. This approach will benefit the users of Nelson Park by creating a more interesting and diverse landscape, and presents the opportunity to introduce educational elements such as species identification tags, interpretive signage, and programmed nature walks. Maps and details could be prepared and made available for download from the Nelson Park website, and local schools could use the park as an outdoor classroom.



Elmwood Grotto Restoration,
Omaha, Nebraska

Cooperative outreach with local universities or groups such as the Audubon Society could help shape the landscape to provide habitat for resident species. Careful selection of species can support migratory bird species by providing food, water, and cover. Species that bloom and/or fruit at times appropriate to support bird migrations will create both a beautiful park and a regional attraction for bird watchers.

Walking + Biking Trails

The landscape described above is not meant to be a nature preserve where people are excluded, but rather an outdoor environment where people interact with nature. Creating access to this environment is a series of path types that addresses the needs of a wide range of users, including fully accessible loop trails that link adjacent neighborhoods to the park, interior loops that provide access to the various elements throughout the park, and informal paths throughout the landscape to provide access to quieter interior landscape areas.

The loop trails that ring the park and connect to adjacent neighborhoods are proposed to be asphalt or concrete paved trails eight feet in width and designed to comply with the requirements of ADA. These types of paths provide an easy surface for walkers, runners, strollers, and low speed bicycling. They are designed to access all the major elements in the park, and should include benches, litter/recycling bins, and distance markers. Interior loop trails are generally designed to the same standards, and provide additional access to some of the interior spaces in addition to the major park elements.

Informal paths by nature are narrow soft surface trails that meander through the hills and valleys of the landscape. It is not practical to make all of these paths accessible and compliant with ADA, but efforts should be made to create portions of these trails that are more easily used by visitors of all abilities.

Existing Maintenance Building

The existing Maintenance Building is functional and well located to serve the maintenance needs of Nelson Park. No changes to the structure or grounds are proposed in the master plan, but the access drive is shifted slightly to accommodate the realigned Pavilion #1 access drive.

Great Lawn

The Great Lawn creates a significant new flexible green space of nearly two and one half acres overlooking Lake Decatur from atop a prominent landform currently occupied by the abandoned pool building, associated structures, and asphalt parking area. The views from the former pool deck are exceptional, and a new “Great Stair” connection links a proposed overlook structure to the Lakeview Loop Trail around Basin 2 of Lake Decatur. The Great Stair will create a variety of places to sit and watch the activities on and around the lake, including the fireworks, people on the Lakeview Loop Trail, the triathlon and other sporting events.

The primary use of the Great Lawn would be to expand the use of this area for multi-generational activities such as flexible play, picnicking, and shaded access and views of Lake Decatur. The Great Lawn would also provide space for cultural events, festivals, and activities, while supporting events such as the triathlon or running

events. The Great Lawn is defined by dense stands of mature trees and ringed with multi-use paved walkways that will allow older or less mobile park users access to the space with ease, in a shaded, comfortable environment. Located directly adjacent to the Great Lawn is vehicular parking for 100 cars, including a drop-off and accessible parking.

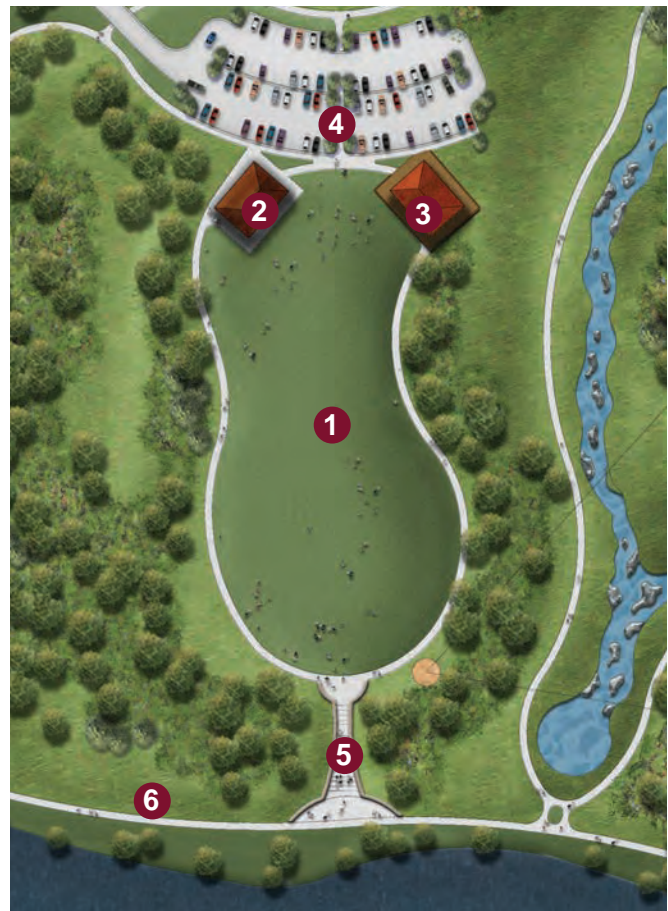
Pavilion #2

Pavilion #2 is an open air structure completed in the late 1930s and funded through Work Progress Act funded programs. The structure is used for picnics, gatherings and other functions, and can be reserved in advance. The structure is currently surrounded by asphalt on two sides, but will be enhanced significantly by the construction of the Great Lawn. When that is complete, Pavilion #2 will serve as a gateway element to the Great Lawn and see expanded use. The design of the structure is beautiful and should be maintained and preserved.



- 1 Great Lawn
- 2 Pavilion #2
- 3 Sledding Pavilion
- 4 Parking (100 spaces)
- 5 Great Stair
- 6 Lakeview Loop Trail

0' 100' 200'



Sledding Pavilion + Sledding Hill

One of the favorite wintertime activities in Nelson Park is sledding on the hill just northeast of Pavilion #2. With the transformation of the current parking lot into the Great Lawn, the master plan calls for a reconfigured parking area and new pavilion to support the Great Lawn in the summer, and the sledding hill in the winter. The Sledding Pavilion is similar in size and character to Pavilion #2, and flanks the entrance to the Great Lawn. Along the eastern edge of the Sledding Pavilion is a cantilevered deck overlooking the sledding hill and whitewater course below.

The Sledding Hill Pavilion should include year-round restroom facilities, and consideration should be given to support for winter activities such as a warming hut. In addition to the Sledding Hill, the Great Lawn could be the site for outdoor ice skating if weather conditions permit.

Restore Water's Edge Landscape

The current edge condition of Lake Decatur along the northeast shore of Basin 2 is a mixture of stone and concrete riprap and seawall structures. Combined with the existing alignment of Lakeshore Drive and the asphalt trail separated by a series of wood posts, the result is a very hard edge to the lake that is not very welcoming or as safe for park users as it could be. The master plan calls for the removal of this segment of Lakeshore Drive and a new alignment for the Lakeview Loop Trail. Rather than demolishing all of the existing paving and then constructing a new path, the plan calls for the new Loop Trail alignment to be carved out of the existing Lakeshore Drive road alignment where possible. The existing asphalt path and wood posts are to be removed, and the relatively recent paving on Lakeshore Drive will provide a good surface for the Loop Trail. In addition, the twelve foot wide loop trail will have sufficient structural strength to support emergency and maintenance vehicles.

The removal of all this asphalt will create the opportunity to provide a softer, greener landscape edge to the water, and over time the existing concrete seawalls should be replaced with stone rip rap or allowed to have a softer wetland edge if wave conditions allow. While a wetland

edge is ideal for creating habitat, the stone rip rap will also enhance the habitat value of the lake edge for a variety of species. A series of small accessible overlooks with benches along the Lakeview Trail will provide opportunities for fully accessible fishing.

Pavilion #1

Pavilion #1 is a large stone structure built in the 1930s under programs funded by Works Progress Act. It includes a large open air pavilion and a two story enclosed area with restrooms, kitchen, and upstairs apartment. Pavilion #1 is one of the most scenic elements in the park, and the structure is an icon of Nelson Park. It should be preserved and thoughtfully renovated to ensure it is actively used and cared for.

As part of the master plan, the design team included historic preservation specialists who have analyzed the structure and provided recommendations for future uses. Please refer to the Pavilion #1 Master Plan section of this document for additional details.

Lakeview Amphitheater

The Lakeview Amphitheater creates the opportunity for a new performance venue within Nelson Park that takes advantage of the best views in all of Decatur. The master plan calls for a permanent outdoor stage to be constructed, with sufficient power and infrastructure to support music, dance, theater and other performing arts throughout the course of a summer series of events. A fabric shade structure over the stage protects the performers and lighting/sound equipment.



Mission Creek Park
San Francisco, CA

The amphitheater is designed to accommodate from one hundred up to one thousand guests in the formal bowl adjacent to the stage, and an additional three to four thousand spectators on the lawn area. This size allows for a wide range of events to be held in the facility, from concerts by local groups or from Millikin University, up to modest touring events. It will also provide a venue for awards ceremonies for events in the park.

The formal amphitheater bowl is made up of a series of lawn terrace steps shaped by low stone walls. The stone walls are to be constructed to match and complement the stone work on the adjacent Pavilion #1, with the goal of the design to create the impression that the amphitheater could have been constructed as part of the WPA projects in the 1930s. A major part of the concert experience will be allowing guests to bring meals, low tables, candles, wine, and other alcohol into this portion of the park. This transforms the experience from simply watching a show to dinner in the park. This

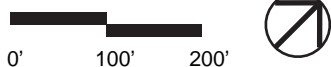
model has been a huge success in places like Chastain Park outside Atlanta, Georgia, and the Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park in Chicago.

The removal of the eastern portion of Lakeshore Drive and the existing parking lot to the south of Pavilion #1 allows the park and pavilion to reconnect with the water's edge, while trees and plantings screen views of cars and focus views on the lake. The asphalt paving is transformed into a gently sloping turf lawn that provides overflow lawn and blanket seating for three to four thousand spectators. The lawn links a new overlook plaza outside Pavilion #1 to the stone steps and lawn terraces below.

Parking for the Amphitheater is provided just to the west of the Amphitheater in new reconfigured parking areas on the site of the existing parking. Approximately 264 spaces are provided in the new lot, with another 60 spaces provided in an adjacent turf-ring paved overflow



- 1 Pavilion #1
- 2 Lakeview Amphitheater
- 3 Lakeside Pavilion
- 4 Rock Garden
- 5 Rock Garden
- 6 Parking



lot. This will serve between 800 and 1000 concert-goers very close to the amphitheater, accommodating most of the typical events anticipated. Larger events will require use of other lots throughout the park, as well as temporary overflow lots in lawn areas as occurs now.

Lakeside Pavilion

The Lakeside Pavilion is located on the water’s edge, at the intersection of the Lakeview Loop Trail and southern terminus of the reconfigured Amphitheater parking. It is intended to serve a variety of purposes, including providing restrooms and concessions for the Amphitheater; rental of paddle boats, kayaks, and rowboats; and rental of roller blades, bicycles, and possibly cross country skis in the wintertime. It also provides covered outdoor picnic tables and drinking fountains, as well as park information.

Anna Bethel Fisher Rock Garden

The Anna Bethel Fisher Rock Garden is a beautiful historic garden located just southeast of Pavilion #1. Built in 1927, the garden was once considered the focal point of the Nelson Park. Along with Pavilion #1, Pavilion #2, and the building that houses the Beach House restaurant – all constructed as Work Progress Administration (WPA) funded projects in the 1930s – the Anna Bethel Fisher Rock Garden is a one of the key historic elements in the park that call to mind the days when Decatur was a much smaller community and Lake Decatur was just a few years old.

Places such as the Rock Garden simply must be protected and preserved. It was fully renovated in 1992, and a new waterfall was built and dedicated in 2006. The master plan recommends that thoughtful maintenance and restoration of the garden structures continue, with consideration given to opening view corridors out onto the lake from key points within the garden. These views should be carefully framed to screen modern improvements to the park as much as possible, to preserve and restore the views that once existed from the garden when it was constructed nearly eighty-five years ago.



Lakewood Festival Area
Lakewood, CO



Alpine + Rock Garden
Denver Botanic Garden
Lakewood, CO

Dog Park

The Nelson Park Dog Park will be located along the east side of South 22nd Street, between Lakeshore Drive and East Powers Boulevard. At five acres in size, the Dog Park will have a minimum capacity of 125 dogs and their owners. The dog park will be defined by a high quality, four foot tall black PVC-coated chain link fence. Access for dogs and their owners will be through two “airlock” or double gates located near the new parking area. Airlock gates create a small contained area at the entry where people pass through one gate, close the first gate, and then pass through another to enter the dog park play area. This decreases the likelihood that dogs will accidentally escape from the dog park as people come and go. Maintenance access will be provided through a separate larger vehicle gate, which will allow large mowers easy access.

A separate “small dog/training” area within the park of approximately one half acre will be fenced off from the main body of the Dog Park. Small dog areas are for dogs less than twenty pounds, used for training puppies and normal play for smaller dogs that don’t mix well with larger breeds. While all breeds are welcome in the main Dog Park, creating a separate small dog area gives owners a choice if they’re uncomfortable around larger and faster breeds.



Greenway Dog Park
Denver, CO

The landscape within the dog park will be a mix of native grasses, turf, and existing trees. The existing rolling topography and planting areas will remain essentially untouched, which will create areas of interest and opportunities for exercise. Special elements that should be considered include benches, drinking fountains with dog bowls, litter/recycling bins, dog bag dispensers, and “pee posts” near the entries. Pee posts work with a dog’s natural instinct to sniff and leave a “calling card” for other dogs that enter the park. An artfully designed post or old fire hydrant is installed in a gravel pad near the entry, and dogs are encouraged urinate in that location rather than all over the park, reducing maintenance and turf damage.

Dog Park Parking

Immediately south of the proposed Dog Park is a 180 car parking lot, intended to serve the Dog Park, Disc Golf Course, walking and mountain biking trails, and to provide overflow parking for the Lakeview Waterfront Village. Access to the Waterfront Village is via 8’ concrete paths linking both vehicle entries to the Regional Play Area and other amenities to the south.

Running + Mountain Biking Trails

As part of the overall Adventure Fitness theme of Nelson Park, the plan includes a variety of path types and activities. The running and mountain biking trails are intended to provide an alternative to the paved paths that link Nelson Park to the surrounding neighborhood and the Lake Decatur Loop Trail that encircles Basin 2 of Lake Decatur. The running and mountain biking trails are three foot wide crushed stone or gravel paths that follow existing grades on a circuitous loop through the rolling topography of the park. They are intended to be shared by runners, walkers, and mountain bikers, who will enjoy nearly two miles of paths through the restored native landscape. The paths loop around and through the disc golf course, which must be designed to minimize conflicts and ensure safety.



- 1** Dog Park
- 2** Parking (180 spaces)
- 3** Running + Mountain Biking Trails
- 4** Disc Golf Course
- 5** Walking Trails



Disc Golf Course

The front nine area of the former Nelson Park Golf Course is a beautiful piece of land that now provides the opportunity for a variety of new park activities. Disc Golf is a sport similar to traditional golf, but which replaces balls and clubs with a variety of specialized flying discs, and putting greens and holes with targets. Targets are vertical metal poles with chain “baskets”, and tee boxes utilize a 5’x12’ crushed stone surface, reinforced with polyethylene equestrian grade turf reinforcing rings to minimize wear and maintenance requirements. Signs indicate hole locations and numbers, and course maps and scorecards should be made available for download and printing on the Decatur Park District web site or made available within the park.

The master plan designates an area of roughly twenty acres for a disc golf course, which will be shared with the running + mountain biking trails. Disc golfers use different discs categorized as drivers, mid-range discs, and putters. While similar in nature to traditional “Frisbees”, specialized discs for golf are not designed for catching. They are specially weighted for speed and distance, and the edges are narrower than traditional “catching” discs. This creates a potential safety hazard for other park users, so the course must be designed in conformance with the Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA) Course Design Standards by an experienced course designer, preferably recognized and recommended by the Course Design Committee of the PDGA. The course designer should attempt to make a contiguous portion of the course accessible to users of wheelchairs.



Lakeview Overlook

The Lakeview Overlook is created as part of the re-routing of the Lakeshore Drive/Nelson Boulevard Park loop drive. The existing Lakeshore Drive alignment as shifted to the north to remain atop the existing hill before shifting to a northward direction and becoming Nelson Boulevard. The Lakeview Overlook is strategically positioned to maintain a prominent overlook with views of the lake, beach and waterfront activities. Parking space for twenty-five vehicles allows great views of the lake from parked vehicles for people who either cannot or are not interested in walking along the waterfront.



- 1 Beach
- 2 Overlook Parking (25 spaces)
- 3 Lake Decatur
- 4 Lakeside Pavilion
- 5 Amphitheater

4.3 Regional Adventure Play Destination

The Regional Destination Adventure Play area is a collection of specialized activities and attractions meant to provide the Decatur community with high quality, year-round recreational amenities. These attractions include two mini-golf courses, an outdoor water park with wave pool, an indoor water park + hotel, whitewater kayaking and rafting course, high ropes course, and indoor/outdoor skating + climbing park.

Collectively, these elements combine to create an attraction of regional significance, drawing visitors from miles around to visit Decatur. These attractions will contribute to the overall synergy of regional attractions including the Scovill Park Zoo, Children's Museum, Lake, Amphitheater, and Waterfront Village to draw visitors for extended overnight stays. The Regional Destination Adventure Play is a critical component to the overall economic feasibility of the master plan, and will help serve as a catalyst for improving the overall economy of the Decatur region.

Location along Highway 36 provides ease of access for cars and busses, as well as high visibility. At the same time, this location is intended to keep cars and traffic away from the center of Nelson Park and the adjacent neighborhoods, buffering the passive historic core of the park and the waterfront from the highway traffic.

Mini-Golf + Batting Cages

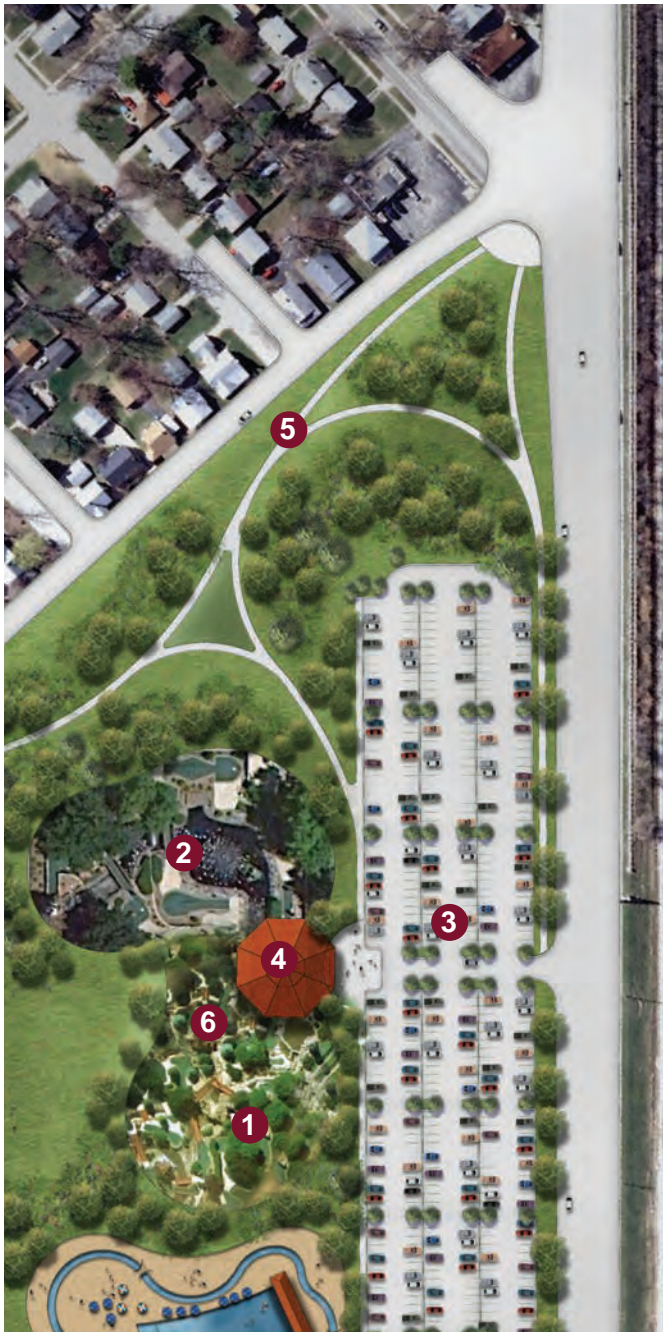
The Mini-Golf + Batting Cage center provides two individually themed 18-hole miniature golf courses, covered outdoor seating, and enclosed batting cages. The existing miniature golf course activities located near the intersection of Lakeshore Drive and East Cantrell will be relocated to this new facility, and reconstructed to contemporary standards.

The northern course would be designed as a miniature golf course potentially themed on actual golf course holes around the world, and is focused on challenging older players with difficult putting situations in a garden-like setting. The southern course, adjacent to the batting cages and water park would be a more youth-oriented adventure miniature golf experience similar in nature to the existing mini-golf course. This course could update many of the traditional holes on the current course, such as the "Cubs or Cardinals" hole.

The central pavilion feature would provide restrooms, concessions, covered picnic areas, and access to the batting cages. Admittance and use of the facilities would be on a fee basis.



Mini Golf
Janet Sharkey
Peoria, AZ



- 1 'Adventure' Mini-Golf
- 2 Mini-Golf
- 3 Parking
- 4 Central Pavilion
- 5 Path
- 6 Batting Cages



Outdoor Waterpark + Wave Pool

The Outdoor Waterpark + Wave Pool concept addresses the continuing trend away from traditional swimming pools towards more active water parks that include a wide range of activities, slides, and water jets. Activities proposed in the outdoor water park would be suitable for visitors of all ages, and would include ADA compliant accessible features throughout. Elements geared toward older children (and their parents) include a series of high tower slides, while an intersecting set of play pools with smaller slides is proposed for younger children, and splash pads are provided for toddlers. All of these elements are set in a continuous, shaded lounge deck environment with benches, loungers, and tables with umbrellas.

The wave pool is another major attraction which is not available at any other park in the region. Wave pools provide a zero-depth entry (much like a beach entry) and get progressively deeper as the pool reaches the wave generator at the opposite end. A large mechanical wave generator creates a variety of different wave sizes, and the varying water depth allows people to ride the waves on floats or splash in the waves at shallower depths.

The wave pool is ringed by a lazy river, which is a 750 foot long flowing river of water that visitors ride on floats. The lazy river is crossed by several bridges, helping to define different zones in the park, and bordered by additional lounge seating and umbrella tables. A central pavilion provides restrooms, concessions, and serves as the lifeguard office and lockers.

While a major investment, outdoor water parks of this nature have become standard features in park districts across Central Illinois. This park would be somewhat larger than most in the region, and when combined with the wave pool and lazy river would create a unique attraction in the region. The outdoor water park is proposed to be constructed and operated by the Decatur Park District.

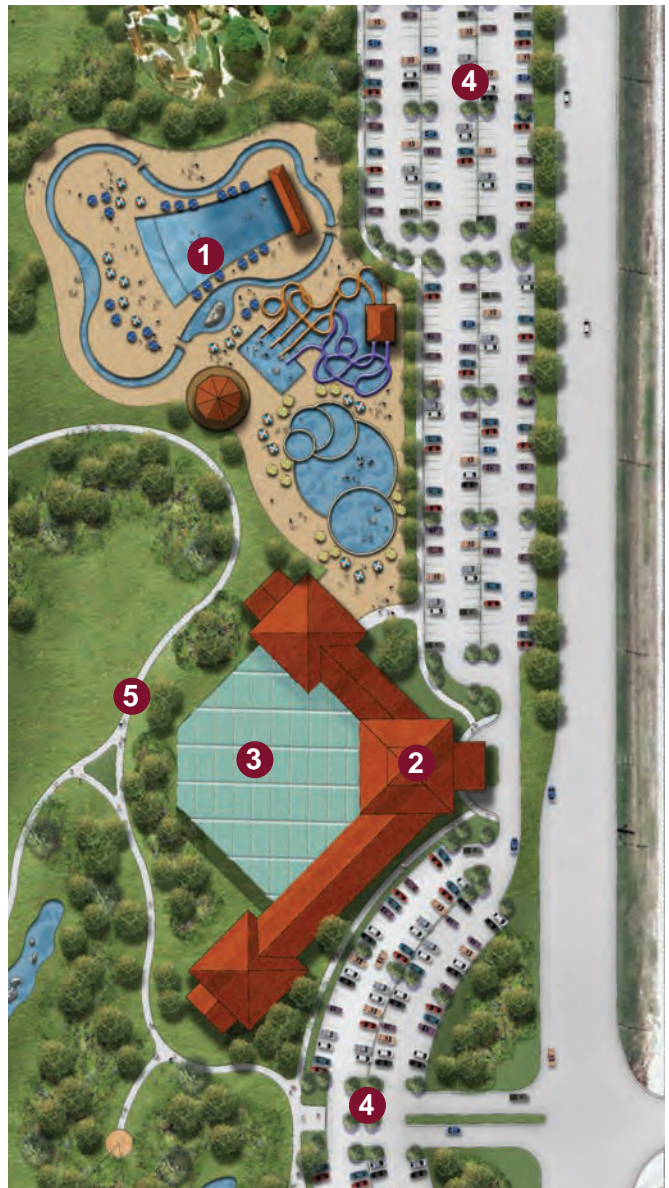
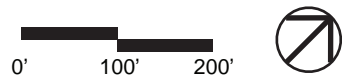
Indoor Waterpark + Hotel

The Indoor Waterpark + Hotel transforms the outdoor water park into a complete year-round destination, on par with Midwest regional attractions similar to the Dells in Wisconsin. The Indoor Waterpark + Hotel would be developed by a private entity in response to a Request for Proposal initiated by the Park District. While this would be a major investment by a third party, the location proposed, along with the adjacent outdoor water park, wave pool, and lazy river—as well as the other attractions—will help form the basis of a public-private partnership. Construction of the best outdoor water park in the region will demonstrate the Park District's commitment, and help entice developers to make private investments in the adjacent facilities.



Ocean Dome Water Park
Miyazaki, Kyushu Island, Japan

- 1 Water Park Features
- 2 Hotel
- 3 Indoor Water Park
- 4 Parking
- 5 Path



Ropes Course

The Ropes Course is an attraction geared toward users of all ages, with elements suitable for corporate team-building retreats; ropes skills courses for younger scout groups; and specialized zip lines and other features suitable for all ages.

The Ropes Course will help achieve part the Park District's goal of supporting local businesses by creating opportunities for corporate retreats within the park. Corporate Leadership training and team building often use High Ropes courses led by groups such as Outward Bound to help build trust and communication skills, as well as problem-solving. High Ropes courses consist of specially designed ropes and rigging mounted atop tall

telephone pole type structures. Participants learn to use climbing harnesses and safety techniques, and to support one another to achieve team goals. The height of the structures, combined with blindfolds and other techniques takes nearly every participant well outside their comfort zone.

A series of zip lines cross above the proposed whitewater course in the valleys below three existing prominent landforms, the longest of which is nearly 500'. Zip lines are structures where a line is suspended between two towers, and riders wearing climbing harnesses clip into devices that allow them to ride the length of the line for a thrilling ride.



- 1 Ropes Course
- 2 Whitewater Course
- 3 Indoor/Outdoor Skate Park + Climbing Facility
- 4 Parking
- 5 Path



Whitewater Course

The proposed Whitewater Course is an element that would be a significant regional attraction, drawing people to Decatur from all over the eastern United States. The Whitewater Course is a man-made river of water with specially designed rock formations to recreate high quality whitewater kayaking and rafting opportunities. Properly designed courses can accommodate Olympic class competitions, drawing attention and visitors to the community.

In addition to kayaking, visitors can use tube floats to ride the rapids throughout the summer in a much more thrilling version of the lazy river described above. The nearest similar facility is located in South Bend, Indiana, and it regularly draws whitewater kayakers from all across the eastern seaboard and points north and west. The facility in South Bend is now somewhat dated, and is no longer usable for whitewater competition due to very specific length requirements, but it remains a wonderful amenity and attraction for the community. In addition to the recreational uses, fire departments and EMS crews from across the region train in swift water rescue techniques in the South Bend facility.

Construction of the whitewater course is a major financial investment that would require outside funding through public-private partnerships or other sources.



Blackpool Climbing Wall
United Kingdom

Indoor/Outdoor Skate Park + Climbing Facility

The Skate Park + Climbing facility continues the theme of providing modern, exciting recreation activities that can be accommodated both indoors and out for year round activity. Both skate parks and climbing facilities must be designed by certified professionals to ensure safety and a high quality experience.

The proposed skate park includes nearly an acre of outdoor skating area, which is integrated with the outdoor climbing tower and high ropes course elements. Outdoor skating is usable nearly year round, except when snow and ice cover the paving. Serious skaters will skate anytime then can, regardless of temperature. Operation and supervision of outdoor skating facilities is limited to inspecting the facilities for damage, and blocking off any areas that are not in the condition as designed and constructed until they are repaired. Beyond that, many outdoor skating areas are unsupervised by park staff. This transfers responsibility to the skaters, and so long as the park is maintained properly, limits liability for the owner.

The outdoor climbing park concept includes iconic concrete tower elements forty to fifty feet high, with climbing hand holds mounted specifically to provide a variety of climbing routes of differing levels of difficulty. The iconic element will be designed to provide a highly visible marker along Highway 36 as part of the regional destination, and will also provide stunning views of the lake and surrounding country side for those capable of climbing it. Additional outdoor climbing elements will include a “bouldering” wall along the exterior of the building. On bouldering walls, climbers practice climbing techniques by moving horizontally across a wall eight to ten feet high. Different areas will be provided to accommodate a variety of skill levels, and special climbing structures are proposed for toddlers to accommodate families with children across a range of ages who all want to play together.

The indoor portion of the skate and climbing park is a facility of approximately 25,000sf that will provide year-round climbing and skating activities, restrooms, concessions, and support for both indoor and outdoor parts of the park. Construction of the indoor facility may require public-private partnerships, or other funding sources.

4.4 Lakeview Waterfront Village

The Lakeview Waterfront Village will create an entirely new waterfront experience for Decatur, and will build on the existing strengths of the waterfront to transform the current parking dominated waterfront into a waterfront district of restaurants, homes, and a boardwalk plaza with a fountain and renovated pier. New marina facilities will transform the current hodgepodge of boat club facilities into safer, consistent, and far more attractive homes for the boaters. The existing boat launch is relocated to the southwest end of Basin 2, and the existing inefficient parking lots are transformed into safer and better organized lots with safe pedestrian paths linking all parking areas directly to the waterfront promenade.

The current site of the miniature golf course will be transformed into a regional destination playground, which will create activities for kids of all ages and be themed using a concept based on the Joyland amusement park that once occupied this site. The existing beach will be greatly expanded to recreate the historic beach activities along the water, and create new opportunities for a beachside boardwalk, volleyball, and starting and finishing areas for the swimming leg of the triathlon.

The centerpiece fountain will easily convert from a spray jet splash pad to a performance venue, or stage for a fishing tournament awards ceremony or even an ice rink in the wintertime. The fountain overlook plaza will be home to movies in the park, facing both the land and the lake so boats can moor in the transient basin and enjoy the “boat-in” movie theater experience.

Lakeview Waterfront Village will also have a few condominium homes built into the hillside behind the restaurants. Built on land leased from the Park District, the design of these structures will be carefully controlled to ensure views are preserved, and the occupants of these homes will provide 24/7 eyes and activity in the park.

When complete, the Village will be the heart of the waterfront on Lake Decatur, and a destination for boaters all over the lake.

Existing Buildings

Both existing structures housing the lakefront patrol offices and beach house restaurant will remain. The lakefront patrol office will be renovated into a boater services building to service the renovated and expanded marina, and will include restrooms, showers, a small ship’s store and harbor master offices. Additional amenities such as laundry, Wi-Fi, and PWC rentals may be provided. The beach house structure will remain in active use as the beach house restaurant, and is proposed to expand outdoor plaza dining service out onto the plaza via the lower level of the structure.

Restaurants + Outdoor Dining

In addition to the existing beach house restaurant, the master plan for the waterfront area proposes the addition of three new structures along the waterfront between the beach house and the Lake Patrol office structure. These new structures would be home to additional restaurants, and leased by tenants from the Park District or constructed on leased land via public-private partnership. These structures would be constructed one at a time, on a schedule determined by market conditions.

The plan recommends that the existing Dockside restaurant be relocated to the first of the new structures adjacent to the beach house restaurant and the proposed fountain plaza. This first of the buildings could be initially constructed as a three-season structure and later converted to year-round use as demand warrants.

A concerted effort to increase the market and demand for restaurants and outdoor dining along the waterfront should be predicated on the creation of a high quality boardwalk and fountain plaza, along with an improved marina. These facilities will transform the disorganized parking elements and create a space for outdoor dining to occur. Initially the outdoor dining could be serviced from the beach house or lake patrol office structures, or temporary tents along the waterfront. Temporary tents work well in park settings, and are regularly used in places like Millennium Park in Chicago. The notion of “ephemeral” dining that grows along with demand and is not reliant on expensive structures in the initial phases is a sound approach to increasing activity and support for more permanent structures.

Hillside Residential

A key element to a successful waterfront entertainment district is activity and “eyes on the park” around the clock. With people living in the area, safety and security will improve, and the park will be more active than ever. Activity draws people more effectively than anything else, and this type of residential product is currently unavailable anywhere in Decatur. Conversations with local businesses and young leaders groups indicate that this type of housing would support recruiting and retention of employees.

The Hillside Residential component is a long-term element of the plan that proposes a total of thirty-two two-story, 1000sf structures above one car garages on the ground floor. The units would be provided in two separate structures flanking the central access drive near the fountain plaza, and would be built into the existing hill sides. The upper levels of the units would have views of the lake over the restaurants, but would remain below the crests of the adjacent hills to avoid blocking views from the playground and park space.

Construction of the residential projects would occur on land leased and controlled by the Park District through a public-private partnership. A Request for Proposal would be issued by the Park District and developers respond with proposals, allowing the Park District complete control over the design and process. The revenue generated by the lease agreements and property taxes will be used to fund improvements to the adjacent waterfront.

Reconfigured Marina

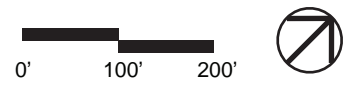
The existing boat clubs will remain, but the master plan calls for significant improvements in the overall quality, safety, and consistency of the dock structures. Currently the dock structures are constructed by individual boat clubs with no standards of any kind. The result is a wide range of dock types and designs that has created a disorganized appearance. Additionally, the lack of consistent waterside standards has created different approaches to fairway widths (the open water space between the docks), which often are substandard.

The Lakeview Village area and reconfigured marina will be mutually supporting, and the Park District or City will construct new docks to a consistent standard that will be made available for lease with the boat clubs and individual boaters. The goal is to organize the docks to be responsive to the boardwalk promenade, and to create transient areas where boaters from around the lake can visit the local restaurants and waterfront as a key destination. The revised marina will create more docks than currently exist in the area now, ensuring that all boaters who want to remain near their current location have the ability to do so. Please refer to the Marina Master Plan section for further details.

Fountain Plaza + Waterside Stage

The heart of the Lakeview Waterfront Village will be the Fountain Plaza + Waterfront Stage. The primary activity in the space will be a large interactive fountain with a series of rings of vertical jets of water shooting up from a beautifully patterned plaza. Similar to a splash pad in a water park, there is no permanent basin of water to be filled, drained or maintained. When the fountain is off, the plaza becomes a beautiful and functional space usable for concerts, shows, festivals, or as a stage. In the wintertime, the area can be the location of an outdoor ice rink, which will help support the waterfront restaurants and bring visitors to the water front during the off-season.

Adjacent to the Waterside Stage is two-hundred foot wide expanse of water where boats can moor or raft together during evening concerts or movies in the park. Imagine enjoying a takeout meal from one of the local restaurants on your boat, while listening to a band play or watching a movie with friends. The open water area will provide transient dockage so people can visit the waterfront on their boats. During fishing tournaments, this would be the location at the end of the day where the weigh-in and awards ceremonies are held before the fisherman enjoy the night out at the local restaurants.



- 1** Existing Buildings
- 2** Restaurant + Outdoor Dining
- 3** Hillside Residential
- 4** Reconfigured Marina
- 5** Fountain Plaza + Waterside Stage
- 6** Regional Playground
- 7** Beach Restoration + Boardwalk



Regional Playground

The Regional Playground transforms the current home of the miniature golf course and batting cages into a high quality play environment themed on the historic Joyland amusement park that once occupied this site. Regional Playgrounds differ from traditional neighborhoods primarily by their scope and size. Whereas a traditional playground often contains a series of different (but often predictable) play elements, a regional playground is more of a play environment meant to be explored and specifically designed to inspire thoughtful, creative play.

Where typical playgrounds are devoid of trees, the regional playground has nearly two acres of space so trees and play elements are interspersed, and trees become part of the play elements. Custom designed play sculptures help create the theme, and children's imaginations fill in the blanks in an endless variety of stories. Elements suitable for all ages are provided, but are less often divided into distinct geographic areas. Places where adults can interact and enjoy the space as much as their children make the playground fun for everyone.

Accessibility is paramount, and regional playgrounds offer unique opportunities to create learning and play experiences for those whose disability may not involve a wheelchair. Too often accessibility is defined simply as being able to access the space on wheels, whereas play opportunities for those with visual or hearing impairments also make a place more accessible. The regional playground is a good complement to the waterfront activities, and the views from the top of the slide will remind those who remember Joyland of the place that inspired this new play area.



Stapleton Central Park
Denver, CO

Beach Restoration + Boardwalk

Forty years ago, the beach house so named because it served a very popular swimming beach for more than twenty years. Around that time the swimming beach was closed, and a key part of Nelson Park's past was lost. The master plan proposes the creation of a new beach that links the Lakeview Waterfront Village with the Amphitheater via a new beachside boardwalk promenade.

The beach itself is wide enough for people to sun themselves and relax, or play beach volleyball with friends at one of three proposed courts. Kids can build sand castles at the water's edge and splash and swim, or just dip their toes. The swimming area is physically separated from the adjacent boats and marina by a floating dock structure at the west, and the reconfigured pier to the east.

The beach will serve as a much improved start and finish line for the swimming leg of the Rodney Miller Triathlon, and the existing small amphitheater will be improved to support beachside activities such as a music festival utilizing multiple stages throughout the park.



Bengbu Longzi Park
China

4.5 Lakeshore Drive Linear Park

Lakeshore Drive Linear Park is the linear park space between Lakeshore Drive and Lake Decatur, from the existing Sunfish Club Property north to the existing Boat Launch area. This stretch of Nelson Park is leased from the Park District by the City of Decatur and used primarily as access to the existing boat clubs and individual boat slips leased from the City of Decatur. This area is accessed by a two lane road located at the base of the slope below Lakeshore Drive, and the road occupies much of the usable park space along the waterfront. In the wintertime, many boat clubs and slip holders remove and store their lifts and floating docks along the edge of the lower access road.

Unfortunately, the current system of very low cost leases with no regulations or standards of any kind has resulted in a very poor quality space that is dominated by the relatively few boaters at the expense of the wider community of park users. Comments from the community indicate that the general public feels that the visual quality of the area is chaotic, disorganized, and simply not acceptable in a place like Nelson Park or on Lake Decatur. Further, the lease rates do not approach market rate compensation to the community for the use of the space, and the poor quality of many of the facilities are unsafe and diminish the value of Lake Decatur for all. Many members of the community were strongly opposed to the use of public space for storage of private docks and lifts, and several expressed frustration at the loss of the lakefront to a relative few. The existing fences “no trespassing” signs create an unwelcome atmosphere and a visual and physical barrier between the park and views of the lake.

The master plan recognizes both the value of providing access to as many boaters to Lake Decatur as can safely share it, and also the needs of the non-boating public to maintain access and views of the lake from the waterfront. As expressed in the guiding principles established early on in the project, the waterfront must remain public. The public must be fairly compensated for private use of the lakefront and park space, and limitations on storage of private docks and equipment in the park must be established.

As part of the marina master plan, the existing individual boat docks are replaced with new marina facilities managed by the City or Park District. All existing boaters will have the opportunity to lease slips in the new facilities near their existing slips, and lease rates on existing individual slips will begin a yearly transition to market rate from the current very low rates over a period of five years.

Linear Park Restoration

As part of the master plan, the existing service drive will be removed, and another vehicular cut through will be eliminated from the park and waterfront. The current edge conditions in this part of the park include a mixture of stone and concrete riprap, seawall structures, and unarmored edges. The master plan proposes to identify opportunities to provide a softer, greener landscape edge to the water, and over time the existing concrete seawalls should be replaced with stone rip rap or allowed to have a softer wetland edge if wave conditions allow. While a wetland edge is ideal for creating habitat, the stone rip rap will also enhance the habitat value of the lake edge for a variety of species. A series of small accessible overlooks with benches along the Lakeview Trail will provide opportunities for fully accessible fishing.

The removal of the existing road will create a second opportunity to carve out the new Loop Trail from existing vehicular pavement if the road is determined to be in acceptable shape. The landscape along the trail will be native trees, magic hedge habitat, and taller grasses behind the loop trail. Key pockets of flexible turf will be provided where concentrations of picnicking, fishing, and play make sense.

Lakeshore Residential

Activating this linear portion of the park and the adjacent Lakeview Waterfront Village as well as creating revenue generating amenities for the community that will support employee recruitment and retention led to the inclusion of the Lakeshore Residential component of the plan. The master plan proposes a public-private partnership where private entities lease public land and create up to twenty-four two-story units above a garage along a reconfigured access drive.

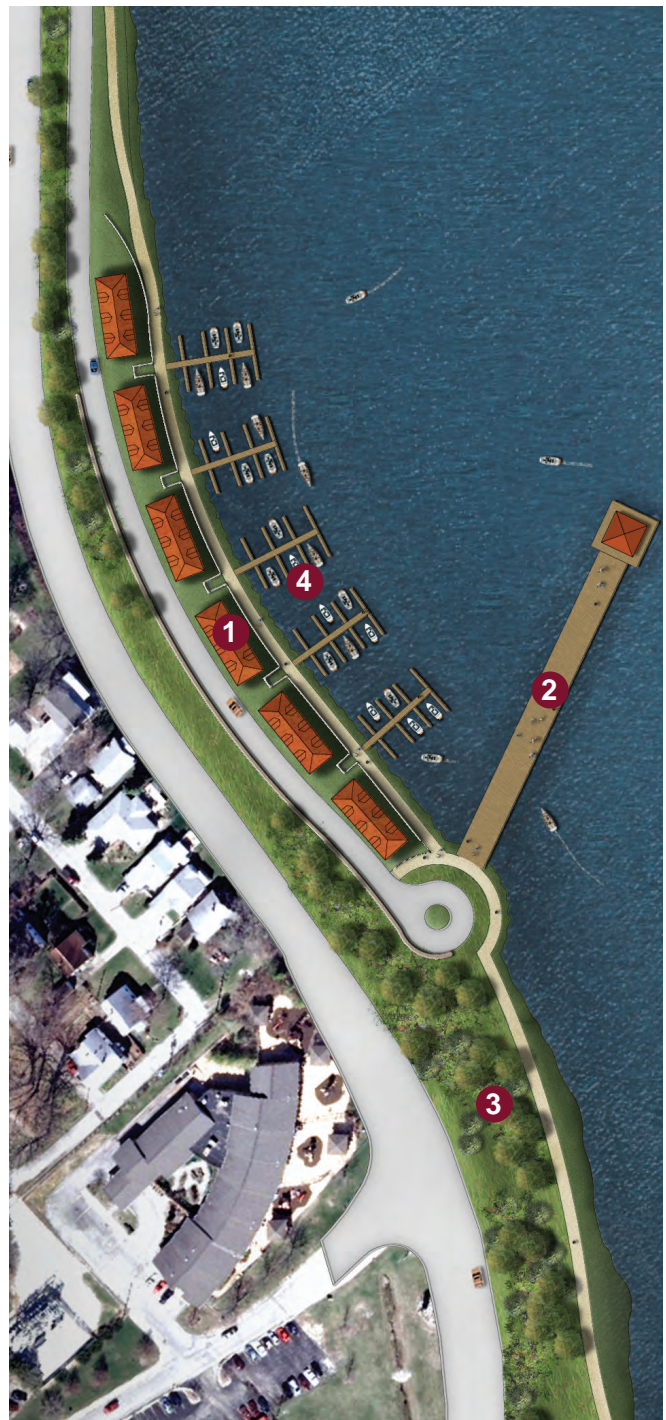
A critical distinction between the proposed residential structures and typical waterfront residential properties in Decatur is that the waterfront remains public now and forever. A public waterfront boardwalk will provide space for the Loop Trail immediately adjacent to the water, with views overlooking the reconfigured and reconstructed slips. Low 3' high landscape walls will create visual and physical separation between the residential buildings and the public waterfront, making the space comfortable for both users.

Our conversations with residents in the community interested in leasing residential properties such as this identified several key desires. First, they want the water's edge to remain public, which is part of the draw for this type of home. They want to sit on a balcony and watch people going by enjoying the lake and loop trail. Second, they want to be within walking distance of the restaurants and amenities of the Lakeview Waterfront Village. Third, they want to live close to their boats and would like to lease slips as well.

While the community outreach process identified the notion of residential in the parks as an issue people were either for or against, there is clearly strong support for inclusion of this element of the master plan equal to and greater than the voices opposed. Ultimately, the market will inform the Park District if this makes sense, as the projects must be financially beneficial to the Park District and wider community.

Reconfigured Fishing Pier

The existing rubble mound breakwater will be improved and converted to use as an accessible fishing pier. The existing rock and concrete rubble edges will be cleaned up and improved, and the asphalt roadway will be removed and replaced with a twelve foot wide access path. Asphalt will be replaced with softer landscape features, and lighting, benches, and a small shade structure are proposed.



- 1 Lakeshore Residential
- 2 Reconfigured Fishing Pier
- 3 Linear Park Restoration
- 4 Reconfiguration Marina

4.6 Activation of Chandler Park

Chandler Park is easily the least used property in any part of the study area. Throughout the community outreach process, the planning team was unable to identify a single user or group of users who consistently used the park. While it is a beautiful space, the fact remains that the park is expensive to maintain and it simply is not an effective use of resources for the Park District to continue maintaining the property in its current condition. As described in the Master Plan overview, the Nelson Park Master Plan must create year-round activity in the park and increase Decatur's competitiveness in employee retention and recruitment, as well as retaining existing businesses and attracting new ones. The guiding principles state that the plan must reflect economic reality, be accessible to everyone, and the water's edge must remain public.

The activation of Chandler Park and the adjacent lake front with two fairly significant residential projects addresses the fundamental economic reality facing the park district, and will create significant lease income and property tax value that will be used to make other major improvements described in the master plan.

Community response to the proposed project was divided, but a significant number of residents and members of the business community expressed support for the plans as a way to significantly improve the waterfront. While not everyone agreed with the proposed solutions, the need for the plan to be economically feasible and realistic was universally accepted.

Chandler Park Residential

The residential components proposed for Chandler Park include two distinct project types. Chandler Park Area One is generally located in the upland areas across the street from St. Mary's Hospital and bound by Lakeshore Drive and Lost Bridge Road. While the final plan layout, product mix, density, and project design will be developed through the Request for Proposal process

– and thereby controlled by the Park District – the master plan included construction of 168 units of 1500sf on average for planning purposes. These units would be accommodated in seven three-story structures. Surface parking would be provided, and all public spaces would remain open to the public. No type of gated community will be considered, and the edges for the project will include significant buffering and landscape.

Chandler Park Area Two includes two taller structures up to eight to ten floors on small 60' by 140' footprints. The plan proposed seven 1200sf units per floor for a range of units between fifty-six and seventy units per building. Parking would be a mix of surface and structured parking. All public spaces would remain open to the public, and no type of gated community will be considered.

Waterfront Boardwalk + Fishing Pier

Similar to the Lakeshore Drive area, the waterfront will remain open to the public now and forever. A public boardwalk promenade will be constructed, along with a new public fishing pier with shade structure. The Loop Trail links these waterfront park spaces to the rest of the park, and around Basin 2.

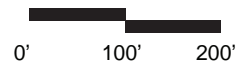
Two additional docks providing slips for up to fifty boats are proposed.

Reconfigured Marina

The existing Commodore Yacht Club and adjacent public sailing facilities are proposed to be reconfigured and reconstructed to the new dock standards near their current location. Landside facilities will include the existing hardstand area, and the existing public shade structure will be relocated and reconstructed to make way for an expanded parking area that can accommodate a mix of 90 cars and 72 vehicles with trailers.

Sailing Program

The existing sunfish club will be relocated to an area within the reconfigured marina, and program elements combined.



- 1 Chandler Park Residential
- 2 Waterfront Boardwalk + Fishing Pier
- 3 Reconfigured Marina
- 4 Trailer Parking
- 5 Boat Launch

Boat Launch Strategy

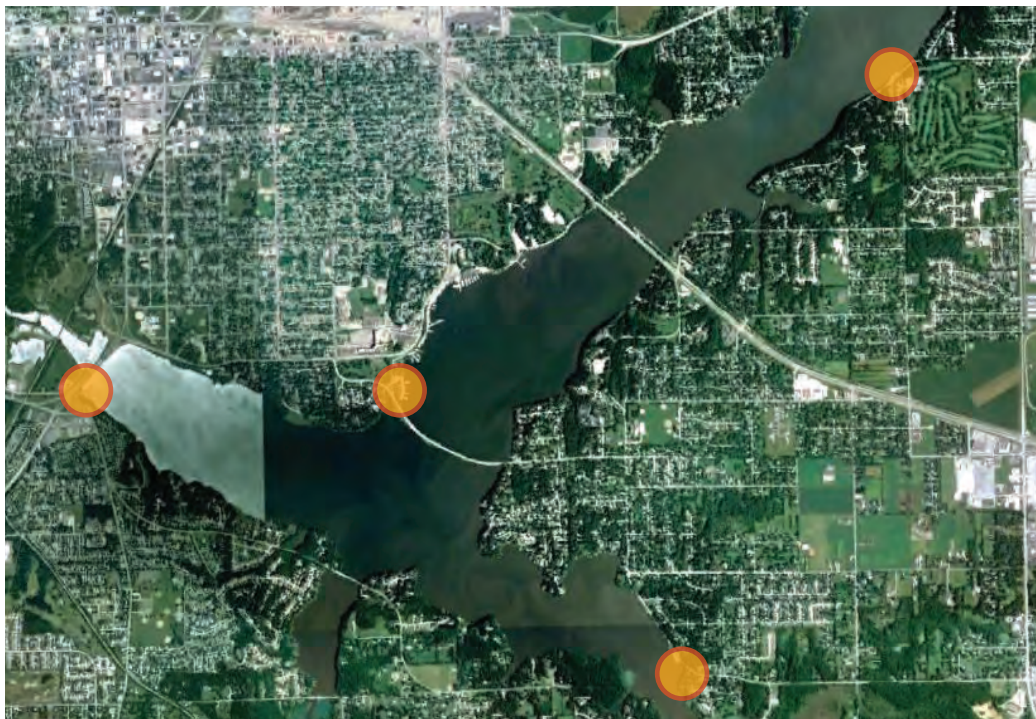
The existing boat launch near the Lake Patrol Building is vastly under-supplied with parking at only 28 spaces. ASCE design standards recommend a minimum of 25 parking spaces for every boat launch lane, so the existing launch area is short roughly 72 designated vehicle/trailer parking spaces. This is partially overcome by the use of the existing access road for parallel parking, but this is both very inefficient and contributes to the overall sense that this part of the park is for boaters only.

The master plan proposes both a relocation of the existing launch, and a new overall strategy for handling boat launches throughout Lake Decatur. The new boat launch is located at the extreme southwest corner of Basin 2, and includes three launch lanes. With 72 designated parking spaces, the new launch provides two and one half times the parking with a much smaller footprint on the waterfront, and all of it within the guidelines and recommendations of ASCE Manual 50 – Guidelines for the Design of Small Craft Harbors standards.

In addition to the relocated boat launch at the southwest corner of Basin 2, the master plan proposes the

expansion of two existing boat launches, one in the eastern portion of Basin 1 and the second on the east shore of Basin 3. It also proposes construction of a new launch near the southwest corner of Basin 1. The Basin 1 launch expansions are predicated on effective dredging of Basin 1, and use of the dredge materials in the creation of additional land area suitable for doubling the current capacity of the existing launch.

The current strategy for boat launches drives the majority of boats to the Nelson Park launch, particularly guest boaters needing to physically enter the Lake Patrol headquarters to obtain a day pass. This approach puts too much demand on a single launch, and the day pass system is not particularly efficient. The master plan proposes a distributed approach where a series of smaller launches is located near each of the primary vehicular routes leading to Lake Decatur, leading to decreased traffic congestion and demand at any particular launch. The plan also proposes a revision to the day pass system to allow boaters to download passes and pay online. Boaters would be required to display the pass with a date or pattern distinctly visible to Lake Patrol officers. Overall, this should improve access to the lake and reduce congestion.



Boat Launch Strategy Diagram

4.7 Loop Trail Network

The Lakeview Loop Trail is a four mile continuous loop trail that circles Basin 2. Within Nelson Park, the Loop Trail is a twelve foot wide multi-use paved trail that follows the water's edge throughout the length of the park. At the northern end of the park, the loop trail climbs the embankment of Highway 36 and crosses the open water span on a new ten foot wide pedestrian bridge. The loop then follows Highway 36 until it reaches Country Club Road, and follows Country Club road past Scovill Park until it reaches Lost Bridge Road as a ten foot detached multi-use trail constructed with the Country Club Road reconstruction project. The trail continues northward as a ten foot detached trail along the east side of Lost Bridge Road. At the embankment within Lake Decatur, the path will either be elevated or the embankment will need to be widened on both sides of the vehicular bridge between Basins 1 and 2. A second matching pedestrian bridge links the north and south sides of the Lost Bridge Road embankment, and the Loop returns to Nelson Park near the intersection of Lost Bridge and Eastmoreland.

Pedestrian Bridge Connections

The pedestrian bridge connections proposed as part of the Loop Trail provide an integral link in the Loop Trail by providing safe crossings completely separate from the highway vehicular traffic. The bridges will be structurally separate from the existing highway bridges, and at least the same height above the water elevation to prevent introducing any new height restrictions on boats crossing from one basin to another.

The pedestrian bridges also create the opportunity to provide distinctive night lighting that will be visible at both ends of Basin 2 from the Lakeview Waterfront Village.

As part of regional multi-modal trail systems, the Loop Trail, embankment improvements, and pedestrian bridges may all be eligible for state and federal transportation enhancement grant funding.



4.8 Scovill Park

Scovill Park Lakeside Path

The Scovill Park Lakeside Path is a simple route intended to create pedestrian access to the steep embankment between Scovill Park Zoo and Lake Decatur. The path is proposed to be a narrow three to four foot wide crushed stone path, with a number of bench overlooks taking advantage of views of the lake. Additionally, select trees and undergrowth will be pruned to restore historic views of the lake from the Zoo and Children's Museum Property.

The long lost Zoo overlook discussed during the planning process will be implemented as part of the Scovill Park Zoo master plan, and the Lakeside Path will be integrated with its design.

Scovill Park Landing

Scovill Park Landing is a new landing for small craft, kayaks, rental boats, and a potential water taxi or dinner cruise vessel. The goal is to link the north and south sides of Basin 1 by boat, and further reinforce the synergy and connections between Nelson Park and Scovill Park. The Lakeside Path will provide access to the Zoo and Children's Museum.



- ① Scovill Park Landing
- ② Lakeside Path
- ③ Lakeview Loop Trail

4.9 Marina Master Plan

Currently, approximately 400 boaters occupy a range of public and private slips on Lake Decatur, either as individual leaseholders or as part of boat clubs. Over the years, access to the lake has been provided at very low prices, and a very wide variety of docks and slips have been constructed. While this has been successful in the sense of providing low cost access to the lake, it has also served to create a disorganized waterfront that in places is not compatible with the guiding principles of the master plan. In particular, the guiding principle that the waterfront should remain public cannot be met when a significant length of the water's edge is fenced off from the public, blocking both access to and views of the lake.

The relatively consistent message from the non-boating public is that the current appearance of many of the docks is unacceptable, and the fences, gates, and locks present a very unwelcoming lake edge. Additionally, the very low cost the City charges is well below market rate,

which is unacceptable for that level of impact on the quality of the lake, and there are too few slips on the lake, with very little chance for newcomers to get a slip. Further, a significant number expressed frustration specifically with the boat clubs and their ability to restrict access to their docks on public waterfront.

The relatively consistent message from the boat clubs agreed with the public that the current appearance and visual quality of many of the docks is unacceptable, and standards are needed to ensure a better experience for all boaters. They acknowledged that the current rates are indeed well below market rate, and paying “market rate” for access to Lake Decatur is a reasonable expectation. The most important element of the boat club “experience” is the social aspect of the clubs, and nearly all would consider an arrangement whereby the boat clubs lease dock space from a single marina manager allowing a “neighboring” group of boaters to remain together. Amenities desired in new slips included



security, boat lifts, community gathering platforms, electricity, water, and covers. The most common statement made regarding overall quality of the boating experience on Lake Decatur is the need for dredging of Basin 2 to improve water quality.

The master plan proposes a new management structure for slips and boating access within Nelson Park on Lake Decatur. First, the existing fee structure for current slip holders will increase over a five year period of time to market rate. Second, a moratorium on new lakefront slip construction by private individuals will be put in place, and the individual licensing structure for private slips will be phased out over time. The existing system will be replaced with a new system where new docks are constructed to consistent standards and managed by a single municipal entity. Third, management and

leasing of the new docks will consider block leasing to accommodate the desires of existing boat clubs to remain together.

The phasing of implementation of the new docks will occur at a measured pace dictated by market demand. Construction of the initial phases of the new marina will not displace any existing boaters, ensuring there will always be slips available as current dock structures are replaced with new. The transition to market rate will occur over a five year period, with transition rates influenced by the length of time an individual has leased a slip.

The market rate structure, marina program, and amenities list, were established through conversations with existing boat clubs and analysis of Lake Springfield



Marina on Lake Springfield, Clinton Lake Marina on Clinton Lake, and Sullivan and Lithia Marinas on Lake Shelbyville. Lake Decatur has several advantages over Lake Shelbyville and Clinton Lake, including proximity to the local population of Decatur, the adjacent park amenities, and the future amenities proposed. While Lake Springfield is reasonably close to downtown compared to Lake Shelbyville and Clinton Lake, there are no adjacent amenities like the beach house restaurant or anything like the proposed amenities in the master plan. This makes the proposed marina plan with new improvements at Decatur a premium location for a marina in our market area.

amenities will offset the lack of covered slips in areas where slip covers would significantly detract from the visual quality of the adjacent amenities. We would, however, allow bimini covers that are designed with the boat to be allowed on the boat/dock.

While there is clearly interest in covered slips, there is also a well occupied market for uncovered slips. We expect that adjacency to high quality restaurants and





4.10 Synergy of Elements

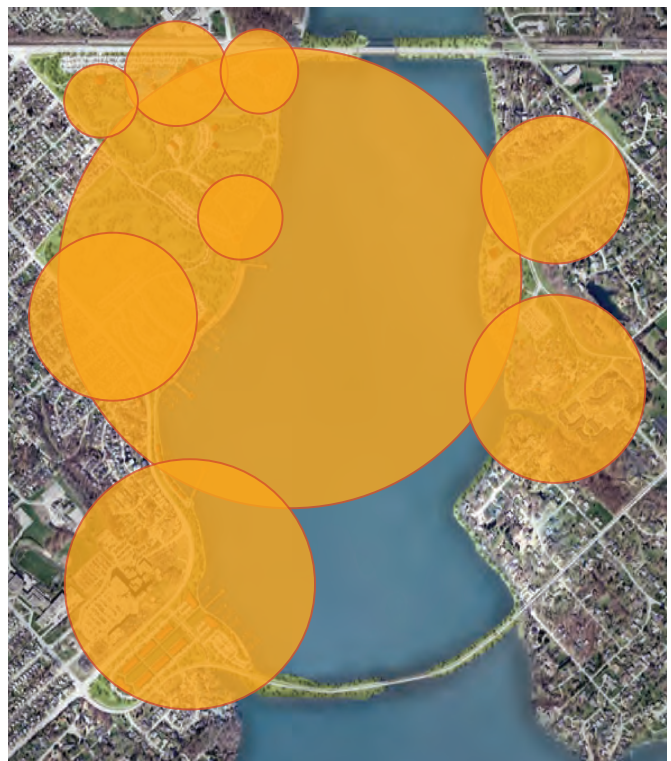
Increasing tourism interest and activity in the Decatur region to facilitate the growth of the local economy and improve Decatur's competitiveness in attracting businesses is a key goal of the plan. As outlined above, the plan proposes a wide range of new activities and destinations that are expected to draw significantly more visitors to the community. Please refer to the economic feasibility section of this document for further details.

While many of the destinations will attract visitors by themselves, including Lake Decatur, Scovill Zoo, the Children's Museum of Illinois, and the proposed water, skate, and climbing parks, the larger opportunity is the synergy created by these attractions as a group. For maximum economic benefit, the goal is to encourage overnight stays, and strategic partnerships among these attractions as a group could help facilitate that goal. For example, a visitor may initially be drawn to the region for a day trip to the proposed water park. If they learn that they can purchase a weekend package deal including admission to the Zoo and Children's Museum, along with a boat ride across the lake to Scovill Landing and back, and hotel stay at the Decatur Convention Center and Hotel, they may be much more likely to spend the weekend. Along the way they'll need dinner – at the Lakeview Village restaurants - and maybe a tank of gas from a local service station. As a whole, the value of the combined attractions is greater than the sum of the individual attractions.

While this section focuses on attracting regional visitors, these attractions will also serve to support the recruiting and retention efforts of local businesses, making Decatur more competitive in the race to keep existing business and recruit new businesses to Decatur. Expanding the number of things to do in Decatur will generate excitement on the part of people who may have been born and raised in Decatur, but moved away for college and didn't return. When the time comes start families, find a place to settle down, and think about where to start a business, they will be more likely to consider a Decatur that is moving forward and growing than one that hasn't changed at all since they left for school.

Also, by encouraging attractions that draw visitors from out of town, Decatur will be more capable of funding high quality facilities that are essentially subsidized by the visitors than would otherwise be possible simply relying on the local community alone as a target market.

Over time, additional attractions such as a Water Taxi or Dinner Cruise boat may become financially viable, adding to the list of things for residents and visitors alike to enjoy. In order to capitalize on the interest generated in Decatur as a destination, a concerted effort to expand program offerings should be considered. Building on the success of existing events such as the Rodney Miller Triathlon and fishing tournaments, new competitive events for disc golf, running, and sailing regattas could be established. Festivals such as yearly music, film, or arts festivals would help bring attention to the new waterfront, and create many new opportunities for local artists and musicians. Partnerships with local universities and organizations could participate and sponsor specific events, and all of these events collectively contribute to the overall synergy of activity at the park.



Synergy Plan

5.1 Economic Feasibility Analysis

5.2 Funding Strategies

5.3 Phasing

5.4 Preliminary Costs



Right: International Friendship Park, Cincinnati, Ohio

Left Top: Magic Hedge, Chicago, IL

Left Middle: Nelson Park, Decatur, IL

Left Bottom: Eastern Blue Bird, Magic Hedge, Chicago, IL

Implementation

5.0



5.1 Economic Feasibility

Throughout the course of the planning process, the planning team, City of Decatur, and Decatur Park District have remained true to the guiding principle that this plan must be grounded in economic reality. All of the elements proposed in the plan have been considered in the light of constructability, cost, operations, revenue generating potential, and overall value to the community. While some elements generate revenue sufficient to pay for themselves, others create value by drawing visitors to the community who support other local businesses and more indirectly pay for themselves by serving as an economic catalyst for the growth of the community.

Ultimately, implementation of the master plan will directly benefit the local economy, strengthen the business climate, improve the quality of life, and draw more people to Decatur. Arresting the slide in population requires a major change in the image of the community. The team reviewed preliminary business plan implications associated with key program components. The analysis started with revenues and expenses associated with existing Park District and City operations at Lake Decatur, which include leased restaurant and marina operations, mini-golf, batting cages, and shelter / pavilion rentals. To this baseline, we evaluated realistic market opportunities associated with proposed program components, including real estate development concepts as well as special event revenues, to help City and Park District finance staff understand preliminary revenue potentials and risk factors..

While we recognize the current budget challenges that many municipalities are facing as the great recession draws slowly to a close, it is important to recognize that just like building Lake Decatur in 1920, investments in projects that support the long term economic health of a community are worthwhile. While we recognize the need for investment in patching roads and fixing fire stations, those things by themselves will not change the long term economic viability of the community. Changing the image of the community, and creating amenities that make people want to move back to Decatur, however, will improve the strength of the local economy. As the community grows, everyone benefits, and ultimately this investment will generate the revenues necessary to patch the roads, improve the schools, and fix the fire stations.

5.2 Funding Strategies

Implementation of the Nelson Park Master Plan will harness a wide variety of funding mechanisms. The master plan will be implemented over a number of years, and the structure of future funding opportunities will likely evolve over time. Therefore, this section of the master plan documents a variety of funding sources applicable to financing public parks. Funding types summarized here include existing local budgets, government sources, private foundations and organizations, and private donations.

Existing Local Budgets

A variety of existing funding sources may be available, including existing capital improvement and ongoing maintenance and operations budgets for both the Decatur Park District and the City of Decatur. One of the key benefits of having a master plan is the ability of the Park District and City to make the most of these budgets by using the master plan as a road map to guide the investment of these funds towards a clear goal. Without a clear plan, it is more difficult to take advantage of smaller sources of funds to achieve small pieces of a larger goal. For example, a few small but significant investments in relatively low cost facilities such as disc golf, paths, or a dog park can make a big difference to the local community. If these efforts can be guided by the master plan in the future, they will contribute to the larger goal of completing the overall master plan.

State and Federal Government Sources

At the state level, a variety of funding and grant sources are available through the Illinois Department of Transportation, including the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program. Additional programs in support of stormwater best management practices, bicycle trails, habitat expansion, and naturalized shoreline protection are available from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Additional state agencies that provide a range of programs for community based conservation include Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation Grants, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and the Illinois Historical Preservation Agency. Open Space Lands and Development grants may also be available, and some elements may be eligible for funding from the Illinois Jobs Now program.

At the federal level, a range of programs are available, including The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, known as Tea-21, which is the primary source of federal funding for greenways.

Private Foundations

The Illinois Association of Park Districts provides an extensive list of grant sources, including private corporations and foundations. The list includes dozens of private and corporate foundations that focus on funding a wide variety of public recreational programs and infrastructure.

Corporate and Private Philanthropy

Given the prominence of Nelson Park and the contribution that the plan will afford in terms of overall quality of life, local corporate and private citizens may wish to support the efforts of the Park District and City leaders by funding major elements. Strategies that include naming opportunities have proven beneficial to both the community and the donor, and are an excellent way for a private donor to leave a legacy in honor of a loved one. The effects on recruiting and employee retention contribute to the overall return on investment for corporate donors.

Public Private Partnerships

Several of the more ambitious elements of the plan are best achieved through Public Private Partnerships, which are strategic partnerships between private entities and the Decatur Park District or City of Decatur. Public Private Partnerships are proven ways to implement complex residential, entertainment, or restaurant projects similar to those proposed in the plan. The municipal agencies provide access to land or resources otherwise unavailable to the private sector, while the private side generally provides outside funding capital and specific project development expertise. The municipal agency maintains an appropriate level of control to ensure the public interests are considered. The municipal agency often receives direct revenues in the form of lease payments, and the private side has the opportunity to create a profitable project, while also taking on much of the financial risk.

Revenue Generation

Many elements in the master plan have a proven track record of revenue generation potential, including slip leases, fuel sales, mini-golf, restaurant leases, and batting cages. These sources of revenue can be leveraged using revenue bonds to provide capital for construction of new and expanded versions of proven elements. In some cases, such as the proposed marina, anticipated revenues will be sufficient to cover the entire cost of the revenue generating elements, and potentially additional non-revenue generating elements in other parts of the park. In other cases, such as the outdoor water park, anticipated revenues will be sufficient to cover the cost of ongoing operation, but not initial construction.

Bonding Capacity

Both the Decatur Park District and City of Decatur have available bonding capacity to provide initial funding to show both commitment to the long term implementation of the project, and be a catalyst to bring about critical mass leading to the implementation of the plan. Revenue Bond funding strategies are bonds backed by ongoing revenue streams, such as Water Department revenues or marina slip leasing revenues.

Property Tax Revenue

The residential projects proposed in the master plan will generate both initial lease payments and ongoing yearly property tax revenue just like any other residential property. These revenues fund schools and other basic City funds. However, given their location within park property, a cooperative strategy to capture this property tax revenue for use in the implementation of the master plan will be necessary. Otherwise, the initial lease payments alone may not make the potential cost and impact to the park uses worth the effort to implement these elements. Cooperation and revenue sharing between the City of Decatur and the Decatur Park District is critical.

Broader Economic Impacts

In addition to the more obvious sources of revenue described above, implementation of the master plan will spur increased tourism, stabilize and/or increase property values in adjacent neighborhoods, and support the local business recruiting efforts and competitiveness compared to other regional communities.

The synergy created by the broader collection of attractions will make Decatur a more attractive destination across the region. The number of opportunities will increase the likelihood of overnight stays, increasing the demand for hotel rooms, meals, and fuel. The value of homes adjacent to these high quality amenities will stabilize and likely increase, creating additional value for both the homeowner and the City.

As a recruiting tool, implementation of the plan will make Decatur a more attractive place to live for young professionals. The value of keeping local businesses strong and keeping them in Decatur cannot be

overestimated. Just as important, after Decatur's young people have left for college, there comes a time when they decide where to raise their families and start businesses. Decatur must evolve to stay the kind of place where Decatur's best and brightest want to return.

Similar to the property tax revenues described above, many of the potential broader economic impacts generated by the implementation of the plan will more directly benefit the City of Decatur than the Decatur Park District. Investments in the park and waterfront will become significant drivers of tourism based tax revenues, so cooperation and revenue sharing between the City of Decatur and the Decatur Park District is critical.



Phase One Elements

5.3 Phasing

The master plan is a vision that includes elements that can be implemented immediately, elements that can be implemented over a five to ten year time line, and elements that will require identification of private partnerships or philanthropic partners to complete. Organization of the elements into project phases is based on a combination of factors including community impact, funding availability, cost, and revenue generated.

The key to implementation of the plan is remaining flexible and recognizing that the plan is a framework of elements that will take on a shape and configuration over time that will be influenced by market forces, donor wishes, and private partner needs. Funding opportunities are constantly evolving, and flexibility is the key to maintaining progress and building momentum while staying true to the vision of the plan.

Phase One Elements

Phase One addresses the first five years of plan implementation. The critical point to Phase One is to show immediate progress, a firm commitment to the implementation of the plan, a working partnership between the City and the Park District, and a broad set of elements that build a sense of inevitability in the ultimate implementation of the plan. This sense of progress, commitment, and inevitability will encourage corporate, institutional, and private donors to match the efforts and leadership of the Park District and City. The success of the plan will require a collaborative effort from the entire community of Decatur, and success builds on success.

Phase One should begin with a mix of elements that can be funded immediately using existing funding sources, such as trails, disc golf, a dog park, and reconfiguration of the roadway network to improve community safety and make a very visible statement about the priorities of the Park District. At the same time, implementation of highly visible revenue generating projects such as the first phase of the marina should commence. Since this project can essentially pay for itself through lease revenues, the only cost is in establishing the revenue bond funding program.

Adjacent to the new marina would be the first phase of the new waterfront promenade, which will also create the opportunity for the existing beach house restaurant to implement the first of the “ephemeral” restaurants. By creating the plaza, the Beach House restaurant will be able to expand and potentially double its capacity in the summertime when demand is highest, and scale back in the off season when demand decreases. This will help build momentum behind the restaurant offering along the waterfront and support the market for future restaurant expansion at a much lower cost than constructing new buildings in the near term.

Another major effort that should begin concurrently with the elements described above is securing federal transportation grant funding for the loop trail and pedestrian bridges. This is precisely the kind of project these funds target, and linking the loop trail with regional trail networks will make the park more accessible while providing safe alternative transportation routes.

Another longer term effort that should begin as soon as possible is the development of public private partnership opportunities for residential components in the Chandler Park area. The request for proposal process, including establishing the lease agreements, development of the proposals, and the review process can take a year or more, followed by a construction period of one to three years for initial phases. These important elements will create a funding stream for implementation of Phase Two efforts.

Identifying a corporate partner for the completion of the amphitheater is another major element that will transform the image of the park and replace paving and parking along the waterfront with park space and amenities for people instead of cars. Construction of the amphitheater will create more opportunities for local performing arts organizations in the park, and generate more activity in the park on a weekly basis.

Finally, completion of deferred projects such as the demolition of the obsolete pool structures and nearby paving will allow the construction of significant new elements like the Great Lawn that will transform currently underutilized parts of the park into revitalized spaces that are more active and useful to the community.

Phase Two Elements

Implementation of Phase Two elements will build on the improvements made in Phase One, and expand throughout the park over a period of three to ten years. The major elements of Phase Two are focused on revenue generating elements that could be constructed immediately, or several years down the road as market conditions warrant.

Continued implementation of the marina master plan should be based on the market absorption of previous phases. Each additional phase should include 50 – 100 slips based on demand and the waiting list created by implementation of the first phase.

Relocation of the existing boat launch and reconfiguration of the sailing activities would occur concurrently with construction of the waterfront Chandler Park residential projects, and relocation of the boat launch would allow reconfiguration of the existing waterfront near the new restaurants and completion of the public waterfront promenade. The beach expansion project and construction of new restaurants will complete this area of the park. Construction of the outdoor water park could be accompanied by relocation of the mini-golf and batting cage amenities.



Phase Two Elements

Phase Three Elements

Implementation of Phase Three elements will build on the improvements made in Phases One and Two, and expand throughout the park over a period of three to twenty years. The major elements of Phase Three are focused on major elements that require public private partnership or donor funding. As such, the timing and implementation of Phase Three elements will depend nearly entirely on identification of project partners and donors.

Construction of the outdoor waterpark in phase two, will almost certainly be a prerequisite for generating interest

from a private partner in the construction of the indoor water park and hotel. Construction of a regional children's play area or garden will most likely require corporate or private donations, and construction of the whitewater park will require a partnership of some sort.

The final elements of phase three will include residential components in the Lakeview Waterfront Village and Lakeshore Drive areas, as well as a potential mixed use structure and the third restaurants proposed.



Phase Three Elements

5.4 Preliminary Costs

A number of assumptions have been made in the preparation of the preliminary cost estimates, which are based on current construction methods, best construction practices, and the combined project experience in the design and construction of similar projects in Evanston and the surrounding region. These preliminary cost estimates are to be considered as order-of-magnitude costs only, with the intended purpose of providing guidance on planning and funding future improvements to the lakefront park system.

1. Land purchase will be minimal. All of the plans prepared in the master plan are for properties either currently owned by Decatur Park District of the City of Decatur, or are within existing roadway rights of way either owned by the City of Decatur or the State of Illinois.
2. A design contingency of 25% is included in the estimates, which is a typical contingency for concept level design estimates. The contingency should be viewed as part of the construction costs, and is intended to account for unknown conditions and additional design requirements as the program is refined.

3. Soft costs, including architectural, engineering, financing, legal fees are excluded from this estimate.
4. The unit prices are based on 2011 construction dollars. Given the need to approach the implementation of the master plan in phases, escalation costs should be factored into the estimates at approximately 2-4% per year.

The cost estimates are organized into seven geographic and programmatic areas, including Regional Destination Adventure Fitness, Nelson Park Active Fitness, Lakeview Waterfront Village, Lakeshore Drive Area, Chandler Park Residential Area One, Chandler Park Area Two, Boat Launch/Sailing Area Reconfiguration, and Scovill Park/Loop Trail. In all cases, the cost estimates are divided by construction activity.

In summary, the total construction estimate in 2011 dollars for the entire plan is approximately \$72.7 million. Detailed cost estimates are found in the technical appendices to this report.



North Shore Riverfront Park, Pittsburgh, PA

