

Friends of the Parks and Trails of Saint Paul and Ramsey County

5 Year Strategic Plan

2019-2024



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Vision

To support and promote the creation, preservation and revitalization of the parks and trails systems of Saint Paul and Ramsey County for the benefit of current and future generations

Mission

- To promote public support and appreciation for parks and open space
- To inform the public and examine the goals and priorities of park development
- To identify, protect and enhance environmentally significant areas
- To promote establishment and development of quality parks, trails and bikeways
- To provide a vehicle for citizens to examine public policies that affect parks, trails, and open space

Core Values

Environmental Stewardship

We believe our actions have lasting community impacts and therefore we must be responsible stewards of our planet for ourselves and for future generations.

Resiliency and Sustainability

We believe that our work can make substantial positive impacts on the ability of our local community to adapt to coming challenges.

Equity and Inclusion

We believe that we are part of a larger whole and everyone deserves to be heard and valued and that barriers in our parks and trails systems which prevent equal access and opportunity must be eliminated.

Collaboration and Partnership

We believe in partnering with others to build our own understanding, increase the quality of desired outcomes and provide leadership in the community.

The Community We Serve

Ramsey County and Saint Paul Parks and Open Spaces



Friends of the Parks and Trails of Saint Paul and Ramsey County primarily serves the communities of Saint Paul and Ramsey County. That said, we recognize that the parks and trails in this geography are part of a broad and vibrant Twin Cities metropolitan area and a diversifying Minnesota.

Ramsey County, according to the Ramsey County webpage, is the smallest county in the state but has the second largest county population at 540,649. It is the most fully and densely

developed county in the state. Nearly 22% of residents speak a language other than English at home. The county is on par with the national poverty average of 11%, but is lower than the national average in unemployment. The Ramsey County parks system is more than 6,500 acres and includes:

- Six regional parks
- Nine county parks
- Six regional trail corridors
- Nine protected open space sites
- 11 indoor ice arenas (13 ice sheets)
- Five golf courses
- Tamarack Nature Center
- Battle Creek Waterworks, a family water park

Around 300,000 (56%) of Ramsey County residents live in the **City of Saint Paul**. According to the Saint Paul City website, population growth in the city has been driven in recent years by smaller, ethnically diverse households. The City is forecasted to get older, more diverse, and with smaller household sizes in the coming years. The Saint Paul parks system includes:

- 179 parks and open spaces
- AZA-accredited Como Park Zoo and Conservatory
- 25 city-operated recreation centers
- more than 100 miles of trails
- an indoor and two outdoor aquatic facilities
- a public beach
- a variety of premium sports facilities
- municipal golf courses
- Great River Passage – which is the new identity for all proposed public development along Saint Paul’s more than 17 miles of Mississippi riverfront.

Program Goals

A. High Quality New and Existing Parks and Trails

Vision

Parks are fundamental building blocks in healthy, dynamic, economically-vibrant, livable communities. Policies in Saint Paul and Ramsey County should reflect that.

1. **Goal: A robust Parkland Dedication ordinance**

Strategies:

- a. Periodically review the Parkland Dedication ordinance in order to gauge effectiveness and comparability to other cities in the region
- b. Engage elected officials, community leaders and advocacy groups to improve the Parkland Dedication ordinance to maximize benefits to park systems

2. Goal: Saint Paul and Ramsey County will be in compliance with the “No Net Loss” provision

Strategies:

- a. Monitor the “No Net Loss” policy enforcement at city and county levels
- b. Build public awareness of the provision

3. Goal: Parkland zoning designated in Saint Paul (Note: Ramsey County already has such a designation)

Strategies:

- a. Engage elected officials and staff in Saint Paul to create parkland zoning
- b. Build public awareness of the importance of zoning for parks, trails, and open space

4. Goal: Highlight connections between parks and environmental, public health, and economic vitality

Strategies:

- a. Seek out opportunities to build awareness among the public and civic leaders of the positive impact of parks on environmental sustainability, public health and property values
- b. Use studies and research to demonstrate the financial value of green space and the increased attractiveness for people to want to live, work, and raise families in areas of vibrant parks and open space
- c. Share stories of people who have chosen where to live based on access to parks

5. Goal: Participate in Saint Paul and Ramsey County long-range planning and plan implementation to ensure parks and trails are available and useful for all residents and visitors

Strategies:

- a. Promote new parks in developing and re-developing areas
- b. Protect existing parks to serve under changing conditions
- c. Promote the advancement of equitable park use
- d. Remind decision makers that parks are an expression of our civic values, communicating what we hold as important by how we prioritize our investments and activities
- e. Seek to ensure that plans are in compliance with adopted policies
- f. Work with community leaders and other organizations to increase public awareness of issues affecting parks and open spaces
- g. Serve as a liaison or member to other community groups advocating for parks and trails

6. Goal: Map all parkland within a park system to understand what assets exist and to prioritize the maintenance, improvement, and potential for growth.

Strategies:

- a. Work with elected officials and staff to prioritize mapping of parkland
- b. Encourage public access of maps

7. Goal: Fund maintenance and improvement of existing park and trail assets

Strategies:

- a. Review funding plans and reports
- b. Increase budget visibility
- c. Inform the public of funding bills
- d. Call for public actions
- e. Highlight where investments are being made and where they are not in order to generate visibility regarding prioritization of investment dollars
- f. Practice inclusivity in capital asset decisions

B. New and Community-Appropriate Recreational Activities and Opportunities

Vision

Recreational opportunities in Saint Paul and Ramsey County will meet current and future needs of the public.

1. Goal: Assist with efforts in the community to create, preserve and promote varied recreational activities

Strategies:

- a. Serve on task forces, committees and commissions working to advance recreational opportunities in Saint Paul and Ramsey County
- b. Partner with other organizations and groups in strategic alignment
- c. Mobilize residents to advocate for recreational opportunities to meet current and projected demand

C. High Environmental Quality and Restored Natural Landscapes

Vision

Protected and enhanced natural parks, trails, open space, and habitat in Saint Paul and Ramsey County, including the environs of the Mississippi River.

1. Goal: Participate in efforts to improve the ecological function and natural landscapes of parks

Strategies:

- a. Restore natural features
- b. Promote natural environment experiences for all residents
- c. Conduct tree sale
- d. Facilitate donations to parks and trails

2. Goal: Protect and preserve the parks and natural habitat in the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRRCA) and the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) National Park

Strategies:

- a. Work with community leaders, the public, and government agencies to create and enforce strong, environmentally protective rules
- b. Build public awareness of the existence of a National Park within our major metropolitan area
- c. Reiterate the importance of community members having access to nature

D. Equitable Open Spaces

Vision

Parks and trails in Saint Paul and Ramsey County no longer have disparities in use and access across race, ethnicity, gender, age, income and ability. Everyone in Saint Paul and Ramsey County feels welcome to enjoy the bountiful park and trail resources in a manner that befits their recreation preferences.

1. Goal: Eradicate existing disparities in park and trail access and use in Saint Paul and Ramsey County

Strategies:

- a. Contribute to efforts undertaken by partnering organizations working toward advancing equity in parks and trails
- b. Use an equity impact analysis in decision-making to ensure Board decisions do not inadvertently reinforce or perpetuate existing disparities
- c. Monitor public processes to ensure the voices of community members are both influencing and reflected in local decision-making
- d. Participate in parks and trails planning and development activities to ensure parks and trails benefit the needs and desires of community members

2. Goal: Promote equitable resource allocation throughout Saint Paul and Ramsey County to ensure investments do not reinforce or perpetuate existing disparities

Strategies:

- a. Monitor investments made in natural resources, such as trees, to ensure investments are made equitably across geographies

- b. Inform the community and membership on issues affecting equitable investment in parks and trails in Saint Paul and Ramsey County

Organizational Goals

A. Civic Engagement

Vision

Widespread community understanding of the importance of parks, trails, and open space in creating livable and prosperous communities.

1. **Goal: Actively engage in civic discussions and promote informed decision making**

Strategies:

- a. Participate in official processes
- b. Testify at public hearings
- c. Attend council, commission, committee and other relevant meetings
- d. Join appointed bodies
- e. Foster discussion among decision makers
- f. Increase narrative framing and storytelling

B. Influential Leadership

Vision

To be recognized as an organization that empowers the community at all levels to channel and focus the passion that people have for parks, trails, and open space.

1. **Goal: Invigorate discussions with the passionate belief that parks, trails, and open space have intrinsic and immeasurable value in building and enhancing our quality of life**

Strategies:

- a. Initiate conversations with the public and decision makers to discover shared values
- b. Listen to community members in regard to parks, trails, and open space issues
- c. Participate in planning, development, and redevelopment
- d. Cultivate deeper relationships with individuals and groups

C. Outreach and Communications

Vision

Be a reliable and informed community resource for parks, trails, and open space issues and opportunities.

1. Goal: Be a trusted go-to source for information

Strategies:

- a. Post issue updates on the website and social media
- b. Participate in discussions of current issues and be mindful of issues on the horizon
- c. Cultivate relationships with the media

2. Goal: Create opportunities for community participation

Strategies:

- a. Promote membership in the organization
- b. Hold an annual membership meeting
- c. Organize projects and volunteer opportunities
- d. Inform the public on ways to take care of the environment such as city-wide cleanups
- e. Encourage participation in activities like the Saint Paul Bike Classic that enliven the community and foster a spirit of celebration
- f. Conduct the Annual Tree Sale with exhibitors

D. Inclusive Decision-Making

Vision

Everyone has an opportunity, and feels welcome, to influence decision-making toward building an equitable organization and a fair and just community.

1. Goal: Our internal decision-making proactively considers the community in which we live to ensure a broad spectrum of voices throughout Saint Paul and Ramsey County are reflected in our decision-making

Strategies:

- a. Use an equity impact analysis in decision-making
- b. Ensure that our decisions and activities consider who is not at the table
- c. Work to ensure barriers to participation are removed from organizational activities
- d. Partner with organizations involved in fostering inclusive decision-making
- e. Model inclusive decision-making by actively engaging with community members and ensuring our actions are a direct reflection of those voices

E. Board Development

Vision

A Board of Directors that is passionate about parks, trails, and open space and the vital role they play in building happy, healthy, resilient communities.

1. Goal: Recruit and retain leaders in the community who are willing to give of their time and talents to foster a strong and respected organization now and into the future

Strategies:

- a. Be constantly alert to emerging and experienced people of vision and passion as we interact with the community and encourage such persons to be active in the organization
- b. Hold monthly board meetings and an annual retreat to facilitate deeper understanding, discussion, and relationship building
- c. The Board of Directors will serve to represent the interests of the organization and pursuit of its mission

Timeframe

Goal	Strategy	short term, years 1-3	mid term, years 3-5	long term, years 5+
Program Goals				
A. High Quality New and Existing Parks and Trails				
1. Goal: A robust Parkland Dedication ordinance	a. Periodically review the Parkland Dedication ordinance in order to gauge effectiveness and comparability to other cities in the region			
	b. Engage elected officials, community leaders and advocacy groups to improve the Parkland Dedication ordinance to maximize benefits to park systems			
2. Goal: Saint Paul and Ramsey County will be in compliance with the “No Net Loss” provision	a. Monitor the “No Net Loss” policy enforcement at city and county levels			
	b. Build public awareness of the provision			
3. Goal: Parkland zoning designated in Saint Paul (Note: Ramsey County already has such a designation)	a. Engage elected officials and staff in Saint Paul to create parkland zoning			
	b. Build public awareness of the importance of zoning for parks, trails, and open space			

Goal	Strategy	short term, years 1-3	mid term, years 3-5	long term, years 5+
4. Goal: Highlight connections between parks and environmental, public health, and economic vitality	a. Seek out opportunities to build awareness among the public and civic leaders on the positive impact of parks on environmental sustainability, public health and property value			
	b. Use studies and research to demonstrate the financial value of green space and the increased attractiveness for people to want to live, work, and raise families in areas of vibrant parks and open space			
	c. Share stories of people who have chosen where to live based on access to parks			
5. Goal: Participate in Saint Paul and Ramsey County long-range planning and plan implementation to ensure parks and trails are available and useful for all residents and visitors	a. Promote new parks in developing and re-developing areas			
	b. Protect existing parks to serve under changing conditions			
	c. Promote the advancement of equitable park use			
	d. Remind decision makers that parks are an expression of our civic values, communicating what we hold as important by how we prioritize our investments and activities			
	e. Seek to ensure that plans are in compliance with adopted policies			
	f. Work with community leaders and other organizations to increase public awareness of issues affecting parks and open spaces			
	g. Serve as a liaison or member to other community groups advocating for parks and trails			
6. Goal: Map all parkland within a park system to understand what assets exist and to prioritize the maintenance, improvement, and potential for growth.	a. Work with elected officials and staff to prioritize mapping of parkland			
	b. Encourage public access of maps			

Goal	Strategy	short term, years 1-3	mid term, years 3-5	long term, years 5+
7. Goal: Fund maintenance and improvement of existing park and trail assets	a. Review funding plans and reports			
	b. Increase budget visibility			
	c. Inform the public of funding bills			
	d. Call for public actions			
	e. Highlight where investments are being made and where they are not in order to generate visibility regarding prioritization of investment dollars			
	f. Practice inclusivity in capital asset decisions			
B. New and Community-Appropriate Recreational Activities and Opportunities				
1. Goal: Assist with efforts in the community to create, preserve and promote varied recreational activities	a. Serve on task forces, committees and commissions working to advance recreational opportunities in Saint Paul and Ramsey County			
	b. Partner with other organizations and groups in strategic alignment			
	c. Mobilize residents to advocate for recreational opportunities to meet current and projected demand			
C. High Environmental Quality and Restored Natural Landscapes				
1. Goal: Participate in efforts to improve the ecological function and natural landscapes of parks	a. Restore natural features			
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<p>2. Goal: Protect and preserve the parks and natural habitat in the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRRCA) & the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) National Park</p>	<p>a. Work with community leaders, the public, and government agencies to create and enforce strong, environmentally protective rules</p>			
	<p>b. Build public awareness of the existence of a National Park within our major metropolitan area</p>			
	<p>c. Reiterate the importance of community members having access to nature</p>			
<p>D. Equitable Open Spaces</p>				
<p>1. Goal: Eradicate existing disparities in park and trail access and use in Saint Paul and Ramsey County</p>	<p>a. Contribute to efforts undertaken by partnering organizations working toward advancing equity in parks and trails</p>			
	<p>b. Use an equity impact analysis in decision-making to ensure Board decisions do not inadvertently reinforce or perpetuate existing disparities</p>			
	<p>c. Monitor public processes to ensure the voices of community members are both influencing and reflected in local decision-making</p>			
	<p>d. Participate in parks and trails planning and development activities to ensure parks and trails benefit the needs and desires of community members</p>			
<p>2. Goal: Promote equitable resource allocation throughout Saint Paul and Ramsey County to ensure investments do not reinforce or perpetuate existing disparities</p>	<p>a. Monitor investments made in natural resources, such as trees, to ensure investments are made equitably across geographies</p>			
	<p>b. Inform the community and membership on issues affecting equitable investment in parks and trails in Saint Paul and Ramsey County</p>			

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Goal	Strategy	short term, years 1-3	mid term, years 3-5	long term, years 5+
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	b. Hold an annual membership meeting			
	c. Organize projects and volunteer opportunities			
	d. Inform the public on ways to take care of the environment such as city-wide cleanups			
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	c. The Board of Directors will serve to represent the interests of the organization and pursuit of its mission			