

The Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Saint Paul is working with a landscape architecture consultant to create a new system-wide park and recreation facilities plan, and is asking the public to share their thoughts on recreation centers, parks, sports fields, ice rinks, trails, and other facilities.

The City of Saint Paul's Parks and Recreation System will look differently in the coming years, and to ensure the right decisions are made about various facilities, a comprehensive system plan will be constructed with significant public input. The City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department will host a series of public open houses to help gather public input to help shape the plan.

The Parks and Recreation System Plan will build upon the Parks and Recreation Vision Plan that was completed in 2008, and will help guide the difficult facility decision making process for making years to come. Mayor Chris Coleman and the Saint Paul City Council have expressed strong support for developing this comprehensive plan, but have emphasized the need for community input.

"We are in a time of great economic, environmental, and demographic change," said Mayor Coleman, "Saint Paul's Parks and Recreation System must also change. We need to ensure we are spending wisely, and that our facilities reflect the needs of our community. The system can either change in an incremental, piecemeal way, or we can plan the whole system for the future. We have chosen to plan for the future."

The City is asking the public to participate in this change and to help shape the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation system. Anyone may attend any of five planned community meetings. Attendees will be asked to participate in a series of individual and group activities designed to help the City understand community perspectives on existing facilities, improvement priorities, the geographic location of facilities, and how Saint Paul residents recreate.

All meetings will be held from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. with a short presentation at 7:15 p.m. The dates and locations for the open houses are:

- May 19th - Oxford Community Center/Jimmy Lee Recreation Center, 270 Lexington Parkway North
- May 24th - Wellstone Community Center/El Rio Vista Recreation Center, 179 Robie Street East
- May 26th - Phalen Recreation Center, 1000 East Wheelock Parkway
- June 3rd - North Dale Recreation Center, 1414 St. Albans Street North
- June 9th - Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1978 Ford Parkway

The content and activities will be the same at each of the meetings so community members can attend those that best meet their schedule and location. In addition, anyone can submit their input on-line at: stpaul.gov/parks.

Input from these open houses will help shape a plan for the future, which will be prepared from July through September. A draft Park and Recreation System Plan will be available for review on the web and in additional meetings to be held in October and November.