



PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Municipal Center Council Chambers

1616 Humboldt Ave, West St. Paul, MN 55118

Date

Time

1. Roll Call

2. Citizen Comments

3. Adopt Minutes

3.A. Approve December 12, 2023 Minutes

Documents:

[PRAC MINUTES 121223.PDF](#)

4. New Business

4.A. Parks System Plan Update - February 2024

Documents:

[MEMO - PARK SYSTEM PLAN UPDATE FEB 2024 PRAC.PDF](#)
[PARK SYSTEM PLAN - DRAFT TABLE OF CONTENTS.PDF](#)
[WHAT WE HEARD - ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY 2.8.24.PDF](#)
[PARKS SYSTEM INVESTMENT DECISIONMAKING TOOL - PHYSICAL ASSETS.PDF](#)
[PARKS SYSTEM PLAN WORKSHEET - PRAC FEB 2024.PDF](#)

4.B. Update To Inclement Weather Policy

Documents:

[MEMO - WEATHER POLICY UPDATE.PDF](#)
[WEATHER POLICY 2.8.24.PDF](#)

5. Old Business

6. Other

6.A. Commissioner's Park Updates

6.B. Environmental Committee Liaison Updates

6.C. Staff Updates

6.D. Council Updates

7. Adjourn

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www.wspmn.gov EOE/AA*

WEST ST. PAUL PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
6:00 PM, Tuesday, December 12, 2023
West St. Paul Council Chambers

Park & Rec. Members Present: Chair Dave Lynch, Luke Abrahamson, Bonnie Bellows, Sara Blair, John Cronin, Kelly Hagler, Emily Vergin, Nadine Wenzel

Non-Voting Members Present: Councilmember Wendy Berry; Parks, Recreation, & Environment Director Eric Weiss; Assistant Parks Director Dave Schletty;

Chair Lynch called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

2. Citizen Comments

3. Adopt Minutes

The November 14, 2023 minutes were approved by the committee.

4. New Business

a. Marthaler Park Construction Update

Assistant Parks Director Schletty presented a summary of the current construction project. The reconstructed park will feature a new shelter, parking lot, fishing pier, playground area, and bathroom building. The fishing pier and the new sewer system and electrical systems have recently been installed. The new shelter, restroom building, playground, and trails will be fully installed in spring. The construction end date is slated for mid-June, 2024; the date will hopefully coincide with the Explore West St. Paul Days events. Regardless of finish date, a grand opening celebration will be scheduled.

Committee members talked about restocking the pond with fish, the sledding hill, and the new light fixtures in the park.

West St. Paul citizens came forward to make comments regarding the reconstruction. Mary Beth Schmid, 57 West Kraft Road, spoke about the black plastic bins and the pipe/drainage ditch at the bottom of the sledding hill. Donna Lindberg, reported for Amanda Coleman, 1736 Humboldt Avenue; Coleman spoke to Lindberg about the poles at the bottom of the sledding hill and the location of the picnic shelter. Lindberg added a comment regarding the possibility of filling the pond.

Assistant Parks Director Schletty said the erosion control at the bottom of the sledding hill is temporary. City staff will install hay bales this winter to protect sledders in the off chance they reach the stormwater basin and picnic shelter. The City will explore long-term solutions after the project is complete and if concerns remain. Regarding the relocation of the pond, parking lot, or picnic shelter, Assistant Parks Director Schletty said it was a possibility; however, it would be very expensive, and the Department of Natural Resources would need to be consulted.

b. 2023 Recreation Review

Recreation Coordinator Sam Gray presented a summary of the highlights of the recreation programs for 2023. Programs were very successful with many waiting lists.

Committee members discussed the recreational activities. Chair Lynch asked about expanding pickleball and the Halloween event. Coordinator Gray said that staff has discussed partnering with Community Education in the winter to have pickleball leagues. Regarding the Halloween event, Coordinator Gray said that the event has become smaller with sponsorship and interest dwindling. Committee members complimented the programs, especially the 4–6-year-old summer playground activity and the summer staffing.

Coordinator Gray reported that one goal for next summer is to offer programs at apartment buildings. Committee member Wenzel asked if the city's goal was to generate revenue from the programs. Coordinator Gray responded that the programs mostly break even. Parks Director Weiss added the goal for programming in 2024 is quality. When the programs are rolled out, the goal is for them to be well done. The city will also consider equity in its programming. City staff members Sam Murphy and Sarah Haugen will head up a new initiative to improve the city's events, engagement, and communication.

5. Old Business-NA

6. Other

a. Commissioner's Park Updates

- a. Drinking Fountains** - Member Hagler asked if there were plans to have drinking fountains at the ballfields at Harmon Park. Parks Director Weiss said that he will follow up on this request. There have been problems in the park with vandalism. Bathrooms and access to water are very critical. The city has been spending a lot of money on the bathrooms and is working on how to offer the amenity in a way that is safe, clean, and accessible.
- b. Mud Lake** - Chair Lynch asked if any of the cattails in Mud Lake would be removed. Parks Director Weiss said he would ask Assistant Parks Director Schletty about a possible mechanical removal of the cattails.
- c. Ice Skating Rinks** - Member Abrahamson asked if there was a plan for Orme Park to be opened. Parks Director Weiss said it looks like the ice rink season would be short because of the unseasonably warm weather. If the weather gets cold, staff could expand out to Orme Park.
- d. Garlough Park** - Chair Lynch reported there are still trees laying down in Garlough Park, causing some disc golf players irritation. It is an opportunity for a shredder and to spread the wood chips around the park.

b. Environmental Committee Liaison Updates

Member Vergin reported that the Environmental Committee did not meet in November.

c. Staff Updates

- a. 150 Thompson Redevelopment** - Parks Director Weiss said the city received almost 200 responses to the online survey regarding ideas for the new Town Center. It is very good feedback that will be compiled into a report presented in January to the committee.
- b. Community Center Feasibility Study** - A study is being conducted to measure the feasibility of a community center. A focus group was held in the fall, and an online survey was closed yesterday. Almost 900 responses were received. The data will be cleaned up and sorted into resident and non-resident responses.
- c. Park System Plan** - The city is still working with the consultant, however, it is slow-going and it may require staff to take on some of the work. There may be an update in January.
- d. Parks Advisory Committee Openings** - Parks Director Weiss said that applications for committee membership will open soon. There will soon be an opening on the Parks Committee and there will be two openings on the Environmental Committee. Parks Director Weiss encouraged residents to apply, especially residents from Ward I or Ward II, for the Parks Committee. Chair Lynch said that Member Blair will soon be leaving the committee and thanked her for her contribution.

d. Council Updates - NA

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon G. Hatfield
Administrative Specialist

To: Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
From: Eric Weiss, Director of Parks and Recreation
Date: February 8, 2024
Subject: Parks System Plan Update

Requested Input and Guidance for the February Meeting

PRAC members are asked to provide input and guidance on several topics related to the Parks System Plan. To support the gathering of information, staff have prepared a worksheet PRAC members can complete. Worksheets are requested by Monday, February 26.

At the February meeting, we will cover the following topics:

- General timeline and approach
- Plan structure
- Community Engagement
- Goal areas
- Decision-making tool

Adjustments to Timeline and Approach

The city kicked off efforts to update its outdated Park System Plan about a year ago. A consultant, Mend Collaborative, was hired to lead the planning and engagement process. Unfortunately, the project has faced several delays, challenges, and transitions and city staff has decided to lead the effort from here on out. This will result in an amended timeline and a new approach. Staff feels this process and plan are too critical to rush and/or not get right and, while not ideal, this is the best path forward. Mend and their sub-consultants are still engaged in the project, and staff will utilize them when most appropriate.

We are proposing a revised timeline as outlined below:

- Draft Plan: January - March
- Parks and Recreation and Environmental Committee Review: February - April
- Community Engagement Round 2 and Open House: April - June
- Plan Refinement: April-July
- Parks and Recreation and Environmental Committee Review and Recommendation: June-July
- City Council Adoption: August

Proposed Plan Structure

We're proposing a document broken down into seven key sections, as listed below. A detailed table of contents is attached to provide more information as to the contents of each section.

1. Plan Overview
2. Existing Conditions
3. Needs & Priorities

4. Vision
5. Strategy Action Plan
6. Implementation
7. Appendices

Community Engagement

The vision and input of the community should be a primary driver of the new plan. We've summarized community input into a summary report. Please review and think about ways in which we can boost plan engagement moving forward.

Proposed Goal Areas

Under the Strategy Action Plan section (section 6 of the plan), staff are proposing nine broad goals that will drive the future of the parks system. Staff welcomes PRAC member's input on these goals and encourages members to consider if anything is missing or needs revision. Under each goal, there will be a list of strategies and tactics, which will be reviewed at future meetings.

- Goal Area 1. Organizational Excellence: Operate with transparency, efficiency, and a focus on impact
- Goal Area 2. Systems Thinking: Plan, invest, and operate the parks as a coordinated, cohesive, and unified system
- Goal Area 3. Belonging: Foster a strong sense of community, uniqueness, and inclusion
- Goal Area 4. Accessibility: Provide comprehensive amenities and safe connections that increase park equity, access, and use
- Goal Area 5. Recreation and Programming: Support play, well-being, and growth for all ages
- Goal Area 6. Natural Environment and Sustainability: Assemble a greener community and address climate change
- Goal Area 7. Stewardship: Maintain and operate a great park system
- Goal Area 8. Workforce Development: Invest in staff and their professional growth
- Goal Area 9. Financial Value: Operate the parks system in a manner that is financially sustainable and of high value to the community

Decision-making Tool

Staff are proposing the development of a tool to guide future capital and programmatic investments. This is proposed to:

- Weigh several and sometimes competing considerations, including expansion of system amenities and investing in existing facilities
- Reduce "squeaky wheel gets the oil" park planning
- Emphasize people, need, safety
- Align investments with the goals of the system plan

We want to develop a tool that:

- Guides but doesn't prescribe investments
- Uses quantifiable and easily accessible data
- Is easy to develop and manage

PRAC members are asked to review the attached document. The attachment is a scoring matrix for physical assets. In the future, we'll develop and review how policies, programs, and events can be assessed.

Proposed Next Steps

- Staff will continue to develop the draft plan, with support from consultants as needed, and with input from committees
- General timeline for PRAC involvement:
 - March:
 - Review needs assessment and conditions report
 - Finalize decision-making framework
 - Support development of Community Engagement Round 2 strategies
 - Review strategies and tactics
 - April
 - Continue review of strategies and tactics
 - Review proposed park improvements and timeline
 - Support community events
 - May
 - Continued review of draft document
 - Support community events
 - June
 - Open house, support community events
 - July
 - Final review and recommendation

Attachments:

- Proposed Table of Contents
- Community Engagement Summary
- Park System Investment Decision-making Tool - Physical Assets
- Input Worksheet

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What We Heard - Community Engagement Summary

What People Love About the Park System

- Amount of green space, number of parks, and proximity of parks in their neighborhoods.
- Using the parks to walk/ bike/run for exercise, to be in nature, and to use the playgrounds.
- Generally feel safe using the parks and recreation facilities in West St. Paul.
- Programs and special events offered in the parks.
- Parks and Green Space are top “what would you like to preserve” as outlined in the city’s Comprehensive Plan
- Desire for future: a good “community feel”
- 58% of residents rated the parks as Excellent or Very Good, only 10% rated poor

What the Community Thinks Could be Improved

- Parks could be updated and better maintained.
- New amenities could be added to the system, such as a variety of play equipment, public art, connections between parks, amphitheater, and gathering spaces.
- Crosswalks across busy streets, and multimodal paths connecting parks and surrounding green spaces.
- Restored native areas, naturalized areas, and native landscaping.
- More indoor recreation spaces for cold season activity
- Rentable pavilions and concert/ performance spaces are desired to hold cultural events.

Priorities

- #1. Equity and Access
- #2. New and Innovative Facilities
- #3. Natural Areas
- #4. Trails and Connections
- #5. Culturally Relevant Activities
- #6. Systems Thinking
- #7. Maintenance
- #8. Funding and Program Costs
- #9. Premium Athletics

1. Bathrooms
2. Paved paths
3. Benches
4. Natural landscape areas
5. Shade
6. Playgrounds
7. Lighting
8. Trash receptacles
9. Parking
10. Picnic tables

How People Get Information

1. Physical Mailing
2. Social Media
3. City email
4. Word of mouth
5. City website
6. Signs/Posters

Least important park features

1. Adult fitness equipment
2. Bike racks
3. Sports fields and courts

Top 10 most important park features

Desired Facility Needs

1. Paved trails
2. Natural areas

3. Soft surface trails
4. Indoor pool/aquatics
5. Community center/recreation center

2. Indoor athletic fields
3. Indoor ice rinks
4. Outdoor ice rinks
5. Outdoor athletic fields

Least Desired Facility Needs

1. Off-road biking trails

Other Bits of Information

- Majority of people will travel to the park that meets their needs or offers certain amenities
- 78% agree the trail system needs some type of improvement
- Most people are using the trails for recreation as opposed to utilitarian needs (shopping, work).
- Most visited parks:
 - o #1 Thompson County Park
 - o Harmon Park
 - o Marthaler Park
 - o Garlough Park
 - o Weschcke Park
- Least visited parks:
 - o Kennedy Park
 - o Albert Park
 - o Art Park
 - o Poolside Park
 - o Dodd Park
- Outdated equipment and a lack of things to do are the two biggest reasons why people view parks poorly
- People visit the parks to mostly walk, bike, and/or run, to be out in nature, and to use the playgrounds. Using the parks for sports/athletics was not a popular reason for visiting.
- People use a variety of public and private spaces to meet their recreation needs, including neighboring cities, faith organizations, schools, and private gyms.
- Most people walk or drive to parks.
- One third of people haven't visited any of our major facilities (pool, dome, ice arena)
- One in five have no need for the existing programming that is offered. Thirteen percent aren't aware of the programs. But 70% are participating in at least one event a year.
- Most feel program costs are about right.
- People are mixed about the programs offered. A plurality are neutral as to whether programs are diverse and meet their needs.
- Groups are evenly split as to whether existing park amenities and features are or are not meeting their needs. One-third are agree, one-third are neutral, and one-third disagree.
- Survey respondents were overwhelmingly white, middle-aged, homeowners, with children at home. This is not representative of the community as a whole and we have more work to do to better understand the needs of the full community.

Emerging Themes

- Elevate What We Have

- pool, playgrounds, facilities, programs, bathrooms, communications, partnerships, and maintenance
- Build a Cohesive System
 - Increased connections, reduced redundancies, wayfinding, and branding
- Connect Parks and Community
 - walking/trail loops, wayfinding, neighbors/neighborhoods, economic development/redevelopment
- Desire for New Facilities
 - gathering space, pickleball, dog park, community center, creative design, uniquely West St. Paul amenities
- Reduce Barriers to Use
 - transportation, universal design, feeling safe and welcome, winter, expenses, time
- Build Resiliency
 - connect to nature, shade, budgets
- Celebrate Community
 - bring people together, arts, plaza/gathering space

PARK SYSTEM INVESTMENT DECISIONMAKING TOOL - PHYSICAL ASSETS

FUNCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS 30

**All three under this section will require the development of an asset management system (in early stages), conditions assessment by staff, and the gathering of project-level data*

Criticality	Points
1. Non-essential to park or building function	0
2. Non-essential to park or building function but provides recreational opportunity, natural resource function, or aesthetic interest	2
3. Non-essential to park or building function but provides a unique recreational opportunity, community function, or natural resource function critical to the park's identity or meets a unique neighborhood or natural resource need	6
4. Critical to park or building function and safety. The loss of this asset could cause a hazard and/or would require the closing of another amenity in the park.	10

Expected Lifespan	Points
1. Lifespan expires within next 15 years	0
2. Lifespan expires within 6-14 years	2
3. Lifespan expires within 3-5 years	6
4. Lifespan expires within 1-2 years	8
5. Lifespan expired	10

Condition	Points
1. New Condition or recently rehabilitated. No defects and little maintenance.	0
2. Normal maintenance costs, good overall condition, functional and reliable.	2
3. Asset requires some attention and could benefit from rehabbing or replacement. Maintenance costs begin to rise.	6
4. The asset is approaching end of service life; condition is below standard, and a large portion of the asset exhibits significant deterioration. Risk of negative impact to service level increases.	8
5. Asset requires major refurbishment, upgrade or replacement. Service level may be negatively impacted.	10

USER CONSIDERATIONS **30**

User Experience **Points**

- 1. Negative user experience contribution: the asset has been found to deter park use. 0
- 2. Neutral user experience contribution: the asset neither adds or detracts from the user experience 2

- 3. Limited experiential contribution: some supporting amenities exist within park, asset provides access but requires additional high-cost equipment or skills. 4
- 4. Medium experiential contribution: some supporting amenities exist within park and asset provides access and interest to many community. May require limited equipment or skill. 8
- 5. High experiential contribution: supporting amenities exist within park and asset provides access and interest to the entire community 10

Seasonality **Points**

- 1. Asset can only be used during 1 season 0
- 3. Asset can be used during 2-3 seasons 3
- 5. Asset can be used year-round or can be transitioned between uses throughout the year 5

Usage in Season **Points**

- 1. Rarely or never used 0
- 2. Weekly basis use 2
- 3. Light daily use 3
- 4. Heavy use on select days 4
- 5. Heavy daily use 5

**Without some sort of tracking system, this may be difficult to calculate*

Accessibility **Points**

- 1. No ADA accessibility and no opportunity for improvement 0
- 2. Some ADA accessibility and no opportunity for improvement 2
- 3. No ADA accessibility and opportunity for improvement 3
- 4. Some ADA accessibility and opportunity for improvement 4
- 5. Full ADA accessibility 5

Mobility **Points**

- 1. Users must access the park primarily through a personal vehicle or via shared traffic (drive lanes and no separated walk/bike facilities) 0
- 2. The park is accessible by sidewalk/trail 3
- 3. The park is accessible by road, sidewalk/trail, and within a 10-minute walk of a transit station 5

SYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS	40
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Historic Investment	Points
----------------------------	---------------

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Major investments have been made at this park in the last 10 years | 0 |
| 3. No major investments made within the park in the past 11-19 years | 3 |
| 5. No major investments made within the park in the past 20 years | 5 |

System Redundancy	Points
--------------------------	---------------

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Redundancy exists within 10-minute walk | 0 |
| 2. Redundancy within 10-minute walk but the asset is either owned by another entity or the asset's redundancy is necessary | 2 |
| 3. Neighborhood Asset: no redundancy within 10 minute walk | 6 |
| 4. City Asset: no redundancy in city system | 8 |
| 5. Community Asset: no other redundancy in WSP | 10 |

**The determination of redundancy only applies to assets that are open and free to the public. This could include schools, county parks, or other community spaces*

Neighborhood Population	Points
--------------------------------	---------------

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Under 2,000 people within a 10-minute walk | 0 |
| 3. 2,001-3,000 people within a 10-minute walk | 3 |
| 5. More than 3,000 people within a 10-minute walk | 5 |

**Use Trust for Public Land's ParkServe. Calculated at the park level.*

Priority Neighborhood	Points
------------------------------	---------------

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Asset is not located in high-priority neighborhood | 0 |
| 3. Asset is not located within a high-priority neighborhood but is located within a 10-minute walk of a high-priority neighborhood | 5 |
| 5. Asset is in high-priority neighborhood | 10 |

**Will need to determine how high-priority neighborhoods are calculated. Others use a combination of income, race, % renter, age.*

System Plan Alignment	Points
------------------------------	---------------

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. The system plan does not explicitly mention the amenity and its impact on the vision is not explicitly clear | 0 |
| 2. The amenity is innovative/creative and meets the vision and goals outlined in the system plan | 5 |
| 3. The amenity is innovative/creative, meets the vision and multiple goals outlined in the system plan, and is explicitly identified as a big idea, catalytic project, or bold aspiration | 10 |

PARKS SYSTEM PLAN -PRAC WORKSHEET FEB 2024

TIMELINE AND APPROACH

- Draft Plan: January - March
- Parks and Recreation and Environmental Committee Review: February - April
- Community Engagement Round 2 and Open House: April - June
- Plan Refinement: April-July
- Parks and Recreation and Environmental Committee Review: July
- City Council Adoption: August

1. Do you have any concerns or questions about the proposed timeline?

2. Do you have any recommendations or edits for the proposed timeline?

PROPOSED PLAN STRUCTURE

1. Plan Overview
2. Existing Conditions
3. Needs & Priorities
4. Vision
5. Strategy Action Plan
6. Implementation
7. Appendices

1. Do you have any concerns or questions about the proposed plan structure?

2. Do you have any recommendations or edits to the proposed plan structure?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Do you have any concerns or questions about the community engagement summary?

- Goal Area 4. Accessibility: Provide comprehensive amenities and safe connections that increase park equity, access, and use
- Goal Area 5. Recreation and Programming: Support play, well-being, and growth for all ages
- Goal Area 6. Natural Environment and Sustainability: Assemble a greener community and address climate change
- Goal Area 7. Stewardship: Maintain and operate a great park system
- Goal Area 8. Workforce Development: Invest in staff and their professional growth
- Goal Area 9. Financial Value: Operate the parks system in a manner that is financially sustainable and of high value to the community

1. Do you have any concerns or questions about the proposed goal areas?

2. Do you have any recommendations or edits to the proposed goal areas?

3. Do you have any specific ideas as to how goal areas should be shared, analyzed, visually represented, or incorporated into the parks system plan?

DECISION-MAKING TOOL

1. Do you have any concerns or questions about the decision-making tool?

2. Do you have any recommendations or edits to the decision-making tool?

To: Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
From: Eric Weiss, Director of Parks and Recreation
Date: February 8, 2024
Subject: Weather Policy Update

As our climate and weather change, staff, participants, spectators, and organizers of programs, classes, and events have been faced with a growing number of weather-related threats.

Our existing policy handles typical storm-related events, but the past few summers have brought new and changing threats. The increase in extreme heat and poor air quality has presented staff with difficult situations, especially as these events affect people differently.

We're proposing an update to the policy to:

- Provide better clarity as to how weather-related events will be handled
- Include extreme heat and air quality
- Establish a tiered system of cancellations and decision points that acknowledges the various impacts of different weather events, protects the most vulnerable park users, and implements a practical approach to park operations
- Clarifies how events, programs, and classes held by others or co-sponsored by the city will be handled
- Clarifies operating procedures for certain weather events
- Updates language related to refunds

Attachments:

- Draft Weather Policy

CITY OF WEST ST. PAUL

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND

EVENTS WEATHER POLICY

Policy Statement

The City of West St. Paul reserves the right to cancel programs, classes, or events if inclement weather is forecasted or exists.

General

To protect the health and safety of participants, spectators, and staff, the City of West St. Paul will use the following guidelines and procedures during inclement weather scenarios. The Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to cancel or modify activities due to weather conditions. Inclement weather will affect programs and facilities differently based on field/location, availability of shelter, and the severity of weather. The City of West St. Paul will follow the general guidance of the National Weather Service (NWS) for weather-related incidences and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for air quality-related incidences.

Cancellations, Delays, and Relocations

Summer/Warm Weather Policy:

Level 1 – Cancellation, Pause, or Delay of All Outdoor and Indoor Events, Classes, and Programs

- Severe weather such as warnings for tornados, floods, and flash floods.

Level 2 – Cancellation, Pause, or Delay of Outdoor Events, Classes, and Programs Serving Primarily Young Children (under 13 years of age), Seniors, and Other Vulnerable Groups

- Excessive Heat: if the forecasted air temperature or heat index is expected to reach and sustain 105 degrees or more
- Air Quality: if the Air Quality Index (AQI) is expected to reach and sustain 'red – unhealthy' or index values of 151-200
- Outdoor programs lasting less than an hour, with access to shade and water may continue, or the ability to alter programming to lessen potential health impacts, may continue under the discretion of the program leader.
- Outdoor programs exceeding an hour may continue if an indoor location is secured and /or the period outdoors can be reduced to an hour.

Level 3 – Cancellation, Pause, Delay, or Change of Location or Other Protocols for Outdoor Events

In such events, city staff, using their best judgment, with the information available, and weighing alternative scenarios may determine to cancel, pause, delay, change location, or enact programmatic protocols.

- Forecasted weather that is not ideal for programming such as anticipated excessive rain, wind, snow, or storms
- Thunderstorms/lightning and severe wind
- Excessive Heat: if the forecasted air temperature or heat index is expected to reach and sustain 110 degrees or more, outdoor events lasting longer than one hour will be cancelled. Those renting outdoor facilities are encouraged to use their best judgment.
- Air Quality: if the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaches 'purple-very unhealthy' or 'maroon-hazardous'

or index values above 201, outdoor programs lasting longer than one hour will be cancelled. Those renting outdoor facilities are encouraged to use their best judgment.

- Impacts from weather events that have left parks and/or facilities in poor condition such as ponding, storm debris, or other damage

Outdoor Pool: The pool will close for the following reasons:

- If lightning is detected, the pool will close for 30 minutes
- If rain or other conditions limit the visibility of the pool by staff, the pool will close until conditions have improved
- If the temperature falls below or is forecasted to fall below 65 degrees, the pool will close or have limited hours
- If heat index reaches or is forecasted to reach 105 degrees, the pool will remain open at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Winter/Cold Weather Policy:

Level 1 – Automatic Cancellation, Pause, or Delay of All Outdoor and Indoor Events and Programs

- Blizzard or ice storm warning
- Wind chill warning or if wind chill index reaches -40 degrees

Level 2 – Automatic Cancellation, Pause, or Delay of All Outdoor Events and Programs

- The air temperature reaches -10 degrees or colder
- Wind chill warning or if wind chill index reaches -20 degrees

Level 3 – Potential Cancellation, Pause, Delay, or Change of Location or Other Protocols

- Winter Storm Warning or Snow: Snow event closings will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Cold: Length of time outdoors may be limited for certain programs, determined on a case-by-case basis.

Weather Updates and Communication

Weather events can change rapidly and forecasting can be difficult. As such, we encourage all participants to use their best judgment and emphasize safety.

Updates will be shared no later than 30 minutes before the event/program on weekdays and one hour prior on weekends. If the message is outdated, assume the activity you are inquiring about is on as scheduled. If conditions change after 4:30 p.m. on weekdays and less than an hour prior to weekend activity a decision will be made on-site.

City-sponsored programs, classes, events, or facility closings will be shared as quickly as possible in the following ways:

- Weather Hotline: 651-259-2671
- Website: <https://wspmn.gov/>
- Social Media: <https://www.facebook.com/cityofwsp/>
- Email to participants for registration-based programs, classes, and events

Refunds

Refunds will not be issued due to inclement weather.

Staff and organizers will make their best efforts to reschedule events and programs, however, this is not

always possible. Makeup information will be posted and shared as soon as known.

Events Hosted by Others

The Parks and Recreation Department is not responsible for events scheduled by the school district, State of Minnesota High School Sports, or other private groups that take place within city fields or facilities. Outside rentals, organizations, or school sports using city fields or facilities will be in charge of cancelling or managing their programs and notifying their audiences during weather events. If the city closes a facility to rental due to weather conditions, park facility renters, school sports, or groups using city parks or facilities will be responsible for notifying their participants and guests.

Co-Sponsored Events, Classes, and Programs

If West St. Paul is co-sponsoring an event, class, or program with another city or jurisdiction, the city will follow the weather procedures of the host. For example, if West St. Paul and Mendota Heights are co-sponsoring an event to be held in Mendota Heights, the weather policy and staff of the City of Mendota Heights will determine the operating procedures.

Operating Procedures

Listed below are different weather events and related procedures if inclement weather occurs during a program, event, or operation of a facility.

- Severe weather warning: In the case of severe weather sighting, the issuing of a severe weather warning, or a weather siren sounded, all unsheltered outdoor activities must be stopped. Participants must be out of the water at the outdoor pool. Participants at recreation programs and general park facilities are advised to seek shelter.
- Severe Thunderstorm Warning: Outside activities will cease or observe a delayed start, if necessary. Recreation programs and swimming in the outdoor pool will be suspended until the warning is ended.
- Lightning: Upon first sight of lightning or nearby detection by an electronic device, all outdoor activity must stop immediately. No outdoor activity can resume until 30 minutes after the last detection of lightning. Programs will be moved indoors, if possible.
- Tornado: In the event of a tornado warning or sirens, immediately seek the best possible shelter available. Indoor events will be moved to interiors or basements.
- Heat: If high temperatures are forecasted, activities will be moved indoors if possible. Programs may be altered to lessen physical exertion or to take more regular rest breaks.
- Snow: Snow event closings will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Some facilities may remain closed after a snow event until the facility has been appropriately plowed/shoveled.
- Extreme Cold: Outdoor rinks and warming houses will close if the temperature falls below -10 degrees and/or -20 degrees wind chill. Length of time outdoors may be limited for certain programs, determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Weather Watches: In the event a severe weather watch is issued, program organizers are asked to stay weather aware and to have a plan in place if weather conditions change.