Marthaler Park Master Plan
West St. Paul, Minnesota

October 31, 2001
Credits & Contacts –

City Council
David Meisinger, Mayor
Vivian Hart, Ward I
Richard Vitelli, Ward I
Mark Tessmer, Ward II
Greg Whebbe, Ward II
Kevin J. Finnegan, Ward III
Timothy Haubrich, Ward III

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
Mike Petrasek, Chair
Boyd Bailey
Otto Christensen
Ron Deustermann
Joel Guseetti
Alan Ruvelson Jr.
Al Schliefl

Staff
Paul Hokeness, Parks & Recreation Director
City of West St. Paul
1616 Humboldt Avenue
West St. Paul, MN 55118

For further information about this plan contact:
Paul Hokeness (651) 552-4151
West St. Paul Parks and Recreation
1616 Humboldt Avenue
West St. Paul, MN 55118

Park Design Consultant:
Ingraham & Associates Inc.
1501 Como Avenue SE
Minneapolis. MN 55414
(612) 377-2500

Marthaler Park Master Plan
West St. Paul, Minnesota

October 31, 2001
Executive Summary -

Marthaler Park’s central location, pond, woodlands and recreation facilities make it one of the most unique parks in West St. Paul. The 2000 West St. Paul Parks Master Plan identified the need to prepare a master plan for improvements to Marthaler Park. The Plan established the need to create a master plan for Marthaler Park and to turn Marthaler into the “jewel” of the city park system.

The Marthaler Park Master Plan creates a “blueprint” to guide long-term improvements and to maximize the community benefits of the park. The Master Plan has identified key issues and opportunities for park improvements. Through meetings and personal contact, the citizens of West St. Paul guided the planning process.

The key proposed improvements are:

Trail Connections - Completing a loop trail around the pond and adding trail connections within and to/from the park.

Winter Sports Area – Create a winter sports area focusing on sledding and skating. Improve the safety of the sledding hill and add a warming house.

Performing Arts Area – Add a band shell and use the natural bowl for seating for an outdoor performing arts area.

Add Bathrooms, an Improved Picnic and Separate Play Areas – Replace two smaller picnic shelters with a single picnic shelter containing bathrooms and a food service area. Replace the existing play structure with two separate age appropriate play structures.

These improvements and others are described in further detail and shown on the Master Plan map – Figure D. The estimated cost of these improvements is $1,055,000. Funds for most of these improvements are listed in the city’s 2001-2004 Capital Improvement Plan. Portions of the park improvement are eligible for outside grants from the MnDNR and other recreation partners, such as Dakota County which could help fund trail improvements.
## Table of Contents

Executive Summary  2  
Introduction & Existing Conditions  4  
Site Issues & Opportunities  5  
Park Master Plan  6  
Recreation Facility Images  8  
Cost Estimate  8  
Implementation, Phasing & Funding  9  
Appendices  10  

### List of Figures

- Site location map - Figure A  
- Existing conditions plan - Figure B  
- Issues and Opportunities Plan – Figure C  
- Park Master Plan – Figure D  
- Potential Facility Images – Figure E
Introduction & Existing Conditions –

Marthaler Park is a 34 acre community park located at the southwest corner of Humboldt Avenue and Wentworth Avenue. The park is located across the street from the City Municipal Center. Single family residential property and Humboldt and Wentworth Avenues border the park. The park contains Marthaler Lake, picnic shelters, play equipment, parking, tennis, basketball and volleyball courts and a sliding hill. The park consists of rolling terrain with a large area of mature woods. There is a panoramic long-distance view to the east from the top of the hill.

The park is adjacent to existing and planned community and regional trails. The West St. Paul Parks Master Plan and the Dakota County Park and Trail Plan call for trail connections through Marthaler Park. Within the City, the trails would connect Thompson Lake County Park to Dodge Nature Center, which could be a vital link in the regional trail system. Within Marthaler Park, most of this trail route exists, but there are gaps and connections needed to establish the complete trail link.

The 2000 West St. Paul Parks Master Plan has identified the need to prepare a master plan for improvements to Marthaler Park. The city recognized that Marthaler Park could provide a greater benefit to the community and hired Ingraham & Associates to prepare a park master plan. The master plan is designed to be a guide to maximizing the public benefit of the park, retaining and enhancing the natural resource elements of the park and transforming Marthaler Park into a community focal pint.
Site Issues and Opportunities -

The park is well used, but has many opportunities for improvements: The following issues and opportunities were noted by city staff, the planning consultant and the public.

- There are no indoor bathrooms in the park.
- There is an opportunity to better use the “bowl area” for a community use such as a performing arts area.
- The shoreline is eroding around parts of the lake.
- There are gaps in the trails and no loop trail around the lake.
- The lake is popular for fishing, but water quality should be improved.
- The sledding hill is well used, but routes sledder’s into the parking lot and across the driveway.
- The woodlands are being compromised by invasive species such as Buckthorn.
- The lake offers an opportunity for skating and enhanced access.
- The play equipment has limited play value and does not meet the needs of a wide range of age groups.
- There are concerns about play equipment accessibility, safety, age appropriateness and playability.
- There are no facilities at the hilltop overlook area.
- The park has many positive environmental features, woodlands, native plants, shoreline and lake that should be protected and enhanced.
- Limited parking is an issue.
- Geese have become a nuisance to some park users.
Park Master Plan -

The Marthaler Park Master Plan is designed to address the issues and take advantage of the opportunities currently present in the park. The Master Plan is based on the input of city staff, Ingraham & Associates - the park planning consultants, the public, and city officials. The Master Plan is a long-range plan to improve the park and to maximize its recreation and environmental benefit to the community. The Master Plan focuses on trail connections, enhancing passive and cultural recreation and enhancing the environmental attributes of the park. The proposed park improvements are described below:

Recreation Facilities -

➤ Band shell and outdoor performing arts space – A 40’ x 19’ band shell is proposed for Marthaler Park with storage and changing areas. The structure is of Cedar construction with steel doors and a 4:12 pitch roof with fiberglass shingles. The existing slope is utilized for a 300-400 seat terraced seating area. The hillside is terraced into 10’ terraces with 3’ high dry-laid concrete block walls with a poured concrete central stairway and an accessible ramp from the top of the slope to the bottom. At the top of the slope is proposed an overlook/plaza from which the stairs and ramp begin. This plaza area will also be available as a seating area for persons with disabilities and seniors.

➤ New picnic shelter and bathrooms – The two smaller picnic shelters at Marthaler are proposed to be replaced by a 30’ x 68’ picnic shelter with a 24’ x 26’ enclosed area for bathrooms and serving window. The structure is of Cedar construction with steel doors and a 3:12 pitched roof with fiberglass shingles. A wall and stairs are proposed for the slope between the shelter and the existing trail.

➤ Loop trail and trail connections – Proposed for the Park is an additional 4000 lineal feet of bituminous trail, 920 lineal feet of concrete sidewalk to make a looped trail around the lake and a sidewalk along Humbolt Avenue and to the existing trail which runs to the corner of Wentworth and Humbolt; connecting to the Dakota County regional trail system.

➤ Expanded parking – 34 addition parking stalls are proposed for a reconfigured parking area on the southwest side of the lake.

➤ New play areas – Replace the existing play structure with two new age specific play structures. One for ages 2-5 years and another for 6-12 year olds.

➤ Fishing dock, aerator and water access – A DNR Fishing Dock and an overlook deck are proposed to improve access and use of the lake. The fishing dock is to be located near the parking lot. A wall would be constructed to stop the existing erosion and to make the structure accessible. The lake will be aerated to improve water quality and fishing.
Native plantings and erosion control – Throughout the Park, the use of native plants are recommended to minimize the competition from exotic species, to restore eroded shoreline and improve wetland habitat, and to educate/inform residents about the natural environment. The shoreland buffer will also restrict geese from access to the trail and grassy areas.

Winter sports area – sliding hill, skating and warming house.

To minimize interference between the sliding hill and the parking lot, recontouring and berming of the sliding hill is proposed to redirect sliders away from the parking and parkway. The recommendations are to light the sliding hill using directional lighting designed to light the hill, but shield light from spilling onto neighboring property.

To expand the winter use of the park, an open skating rink is proposed for the southwest bay of the lake. This skating area would be accessible from the parking lot and in close proximity to a new warming house structure.

The existing warming house is proposed to be replaced with a new 24’ x 34’ warming house structure located between the parking lot and the lake. The structure would be heated and will have an extended roofline and screen for a portable toilet. The warming house would serve skaters, sliders, and winter trail users.

Woodland management – To increase species diversity and to improve woodland habitat it is recommended that exotic species such as buckthorn, honeysuckle and mulberry be removed and the woodland be managed. This could be accomplished utilizing volunteers and an adopt-a-park program.

Lighting – In addition to the sliding and skating area lights, lighting is recommended for the pond loop trail, parkway and parking areas. These would be low voltage halogen lights that would improve security, lower vandalism and not be offensive to the neighbors.

Lake overlook - Near the new picnic shelter, an overlook deck would be constructed where there now exists foot paths to the lake shore. The deck structure would be constructed within the shore area and constructed around existing native vegetation.

Utilities – Provide a hydrant for fire protection, rink flooding and a water supply line for a drinking fountain.

Future potential acquisition – There are five residential properties located to the north and west of the Park that could potentially be acquired to expand recreational opportunities and to enhance the natural areas of the park.
Recreation Facility Images –

The attached photos show potential images of proposed recreation improvements such as the fishing dock, play equipment, ice-skating, picnic shelter, band shell and outdoor performing arts seating area. The actual facilities will be determined during the detailed design phase.

Cost Estimate –

A cost estimate for the proposed improvements is attached. The costs are based on 2001 construction and material costs. The estimate shows an approximate improvement cost of $1,055,000. This is slightly higher than the amount identified in the West St. Paul Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Approximately $925,000 in improvements were identified for Marthaler Park in the 2001-2005 CIP.
Paul thanked the participants for their excellent input. Their comments will be used to revise and refine the Concept Plan. The concept plan will be presented to the Park Commission in September. The public is invited to that meeting. Once the Commission recommends approval of the concept plan, further detail will be added and cost estimates and phasing recommendations will be prepared along with a summary report and color presentation master plan. That will be presented to the City Council this Fall. Funding for the improvements has not been set aside, but that will be a topic of discussion with the City Council.
picnic shelter and warming house, lighting, fishing docks, aeration and additional parking. He asked for comments and suggestions regarding the draft plan.

Approximately 30 people participated in a discussion of the park opportunities and needs and provided input regarding the concept plan. The following is a summary of their input.

- The fishing pier and aerator are a good idea. It is a popular fishing area for children.
- Trail connections are needed to the existing and planned community trails.
- Consider aesthetics when making improvements. Emphasize native plant materials.
- Consider parking along Wentworth in the bowl area.
- Parking along Wentworth could be a conflict with neighbors and with turning movement onto Wentworth.
- Be sensitive to the shoreline environment when adding trails.
- Add a tow rope for the sledding hill, if the liability issues can be addressed.
- The performance arts area is a good idea.
- The trail improvements and loop trail are important.
- Solve the weed problem in the lake.
- Improve water quality from storm water runoff.
- Institute an organic fertilizer policy in the city.
- Solve the goose nuisance problems.
- Add plantings in the southeast corner of the park.
- Adding a separate toddler play area is a good idea.
- Improve the hilltop with an overlook, benches, trash can, landscaping and possibly prairie grasses.
- Add security lighting.
- Make sure the aerator and ice skating do not conflict.
- The winter sports concept is a good idea.
- Have a unisex bathroom in the new warming shelter.
- Shield lights from the adjacent neighbors.
- May need staffing for the performing arts programming and operation.
- Drinking/partying and loitering have been problems in the park.
- Plan to plow the trail for winter walking.
- Have an observation deck instead of a second dock near the new picnic shelter.
- Don't compromise the passive nature of the park with too much development.
- Maintain a natural feeling for new plantings.
- Use walls or other means to make seating areas for the performing arts area. Grass terraces are tough to mow and could erode.
- Have a more rustic/natural design for the band shell.
- The plan is a good one.
- Explore service club and corporate sponsors in addition to City funds and grant possibilities.
- Plating area buffer between the plaza and the play structure.
- Have a drinking fountain near the tennis courts.
Marthaler Park Master Plan - West St. Paul, MN

July 19, 2001
City Council Chambers

Community Open House Meeting

Paul Hokeness, West St. Paul Park and Recreation Director welcomed the meeting attendees. He explained the purpose of the meeting is to obtain public feedback and desires for improvements to Marthaler Park. The West St. Paul Parks Master Plan called for individual master plans for the large community parks. Marthaler is currently one of the larger community parks in the City, but it could be improved to really be a premier park for city residents and user groups.

Paul introduced Greg Ingraham and Stephen Wensman of Ingraham & Associates. Ingraham & Associates is the park planning firm hired by the City to prepare a master plan for Marthaler Park. The master plan is to act as a guide to potential renovation of the park.

Greg Ingraham reviewed the existing features of the park and stated that they were interested in hearing any issues with the current park and needs and opportunities for improvements. He summarized a site analysis diagram that was based on their visits to the park and discussions with city staff. A copy of that site analysis (titled Issues and Opportunities) is attached.

The major issues and opportunities identified were:

- Need to connect existing trails together.
- Create a loop trail around the lake.
- Re-configure the sledding area to prevent sledders from sliding into the parking lot.
- Create a winter sports area by adding a warming house and ice skating.
- Create a performing arts area and band shell in the natural bowl area.
- Create two age specific children's play areas for toddlers and for children ages 5-12.
- Replace the older picnic shelters and portable toilets with a new shelter with bathrooms.
- Add a fishing pier, aerator and open up views and access to the lake.
- Fix erosion areas.
- Remove the invasive Buckthorn and manage the woodlands.
- Create an overlook at the top of the hill.

Greg also presented a draft Concept Plan (attached) that illustrates their initial ideas about park revitalization. The concept plan shows a loop trail around the lake, a grass terrace seating area around a band shell, a reconfigured sledding area and ice skating area, a new
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picnic shelter w/bathrooms</td>
<td>$185,000</td>
<td>Picnic shelter with bathrooms and serving window. 6 30'x 66' with 24'x26' enclosed area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails &amp; walls</td>
<td>$95,000</td>
<td>4,000 linear feet of bituminous trail, 920 lin. ft. of sidewalk, retaining walls and boardwalks sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandshell and seating</td>
<td>$290,000</td>
<td>Cedar band shell, architectural block wall/grass terrace seating and upper plaza area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play areas</td>
<td>$85,000</td>
<td>Two age-appropriate play sites (ages years 2-5 and 6-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter sports warming house</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Heated 24' x 34' shelter for sliding and skating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking lot reconfiguration &amp; expansion</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
<td>Revise layout and add 34 new spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sliding hill reconfiguration</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>Regrade to route sledgers away from parking area and add protective earth berm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>$85,000</td>
<td>Shielded lighting for sledding and ice skating, parking lot, parkway and loop trail around the pond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply, hydrant and drinking fountain</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>Water supply line, fire hydrant and drinking fountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aererator</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>To improve water quality and fish habitat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing dock</td>
<td>$16,500</td>
<td>With retaining wall and paved trail (seek Mn DNR grant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake overlook deck</td>
<td>$14,500</td>
<td>Next to picnic area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilltop overlook</td>
<td>$9,500</td>
<td>View point with seating and lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site furnishings</td>
<td>$11,000</td>
<td>Benches, picnic tables, trash cans &amp; signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland management</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>Invasive species control and tree trimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping &amp; erosion control plantings</td>
<td>$27,000</td>
<td>Restoration, new trees shrubs and native plantings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition and removal</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>Building removal, shelter relocation, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Estimate</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,055,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cost estimate based on draft Marthaler Park Master Plan dated October 31, 2001
Appendices --

The park master planning process included a public open house meetings, a park commission meetings, and staff meetings along with walking visits, analysis and photos of the park. Summaries of the public input meetings are attached.

A. Public Input Meeting Summary – July 19, 2001
B. Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting – October 2, 2001
C. Public Input Meeting Summary – October 2, 2001
D. Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting – November 6, 2001
E. Open City Council Work Session – November 13, 2001
Implementation, Phasing & Funding –

If funding is limited, the proposed improvements could be built over a number of years. Funding has been identified for Marthaler Park improvements in the five-year West St. Paul Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Approximately $925,000 in funding is tentatively planned for Marthaler Park for the 2001-2004 period. Funding could be allocated annually as part of the regular budget cycle, or there is also the option to conduct a special election for bond referendum funding, which could provide funds for all or part of the park improvements and perhaps other city-wide park and trail improvements.

It is likely that portions of the projects such as the fishing dock, restoration of the shoreline, aeration and trails would be eligible for matching funds grants from the MnDNR. Other grants, funding partners (such as Dakota County) and private funding may also be available to supplement City funds.

Phasing priorities –

Ideally, all the park renovation would be done at one time as one construction project. This would minimize disruption of park use, save money over individual contracts and projects and result in a finished product for West St. Paul citizens to use and enjoy.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission and city staff reviewed the proposed master plan and recommended the following phasing and implementation priorities, if the park renovation cannot be done all at once.

1. Build the loop trail and the north trail connection to the Dakota County regional trail system. Expand the parking lot.

2. Construct the new picnic shelter with indoor bathrooms and the two new play structures, observation deck and retaining wall.

3. Construct the winter sports area, consisting of a new warming house, lighting, water supply for the ice skating rink and re-grading the sliding hill. Re-grade the sliding hill to improve safety. Test the grading plan prior to regarding the earth by re-contouring the snow during the winter.

4. Repair the shoreline and erosion problems.

5. Pursue a MnDNR grant for the fishing dock and aerator.

6. Build the band shell and performing arts area.
Marthaler Park Features

Play structure 2-5 yrs

Play structure 6-12 yrs

Fishing Pier

Band Shell

Picnic Shelter w/ Restroom & Concession

Loop Trail Around Lake

Ice Skating / Winter Sports

Grass Terrace & Seating