



# MORGAN PARK COMMUNITY CENTER PARK - MASTER PLAN



DULUTH MINNESOTA - APRIL 2013

# Morgan Park Master Plan

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# Summary & Background

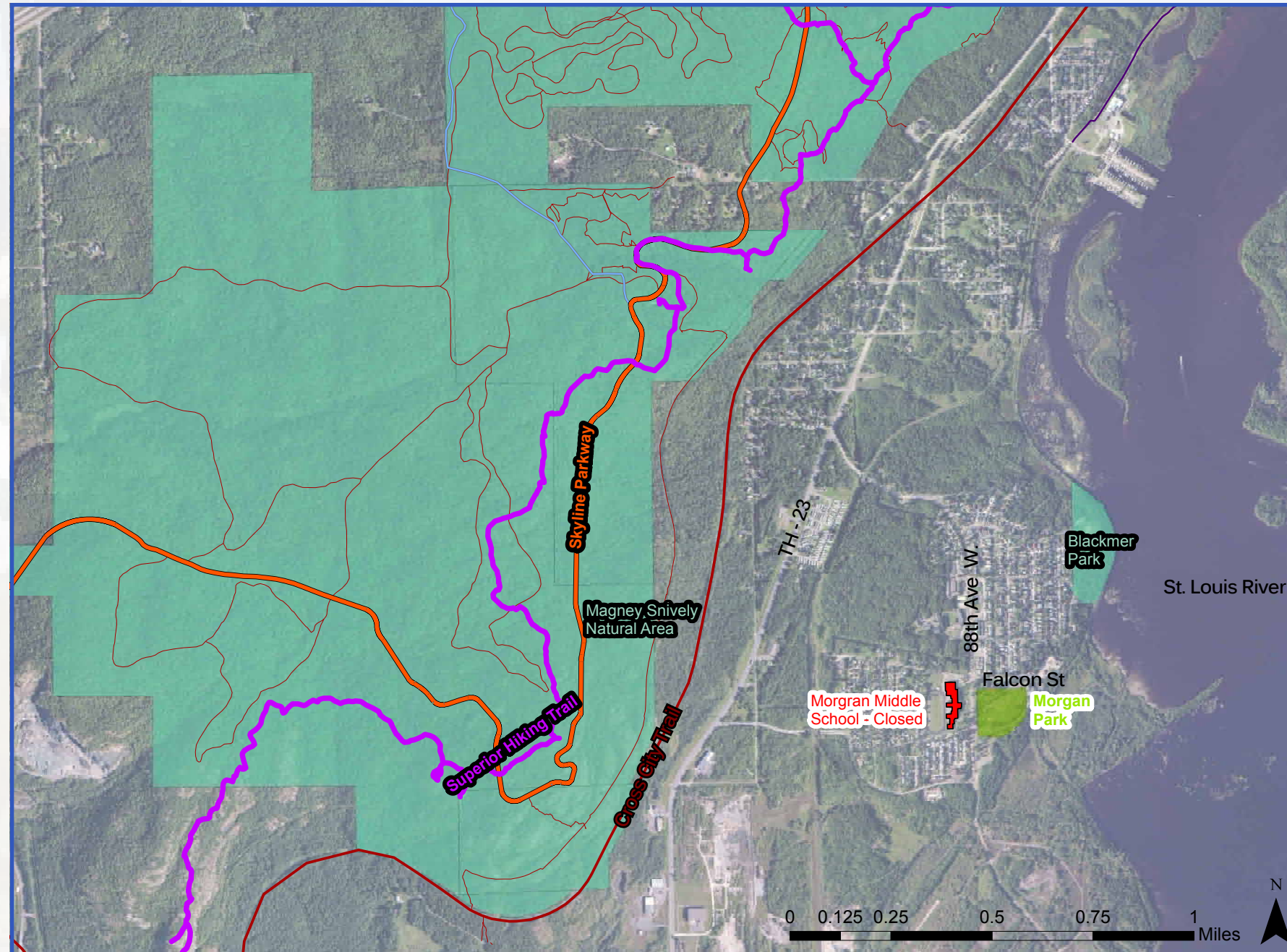
This master plan is a guide to future improvement of Morgan Park Community Center Park (Morgan Park), a nine acre park and community center located in the Morgan Park neighborhood in the western part of Duluth, Minnesota. The park is bounded by 88th Avenue W., Hilton St., Falcon St. and 86th Avenue W. The park is located across the street from the closed Morgan Park Middle School. The St. Louis River is 1/4 mile to the east of the park.

The popular park currently contains two hockey rinks, an informal ice skating rink, two newer play equipment sites and the Morgan Park Community Center building. The park and community center building are in good condition and are well used.

The Morgan Park Master Plan is based on input from City staff, school district staff, city officials and the public. The plan envisions an upgraded ice skating area that will be a high quality community hub for skating, a new picnic area and a trailhead at the park with future trail connection to the river and to the Western Waterfront Trail.

The 2010 Duluth Parks and Recreation Master Plan defined a vision for Duluth's parks. The Plan identified several key initiatives to improve the park and recreation system. Recommended actions included obtaining new sources of funding for parks and recreation, making park and trail improvements and enhanced maintenance and stewardship and working closely with Duluth School District 709 to assure community use of schools and seamless integration of parks and schools for community gathering and recreation.

In 2011, Duluth residents approved establishment of a \$2.6 million Parks Fund dedicated to parks and recreation facilities, recreation activities and for implementation of the



concepts addressed in the Duluth Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Parks Fund allowed the City to proceed with park, trail, recreation and maintenance improvements. A first step in the park improvement process is the preparation of master plans (like this Morgan Park Master Plan) for individual parks.

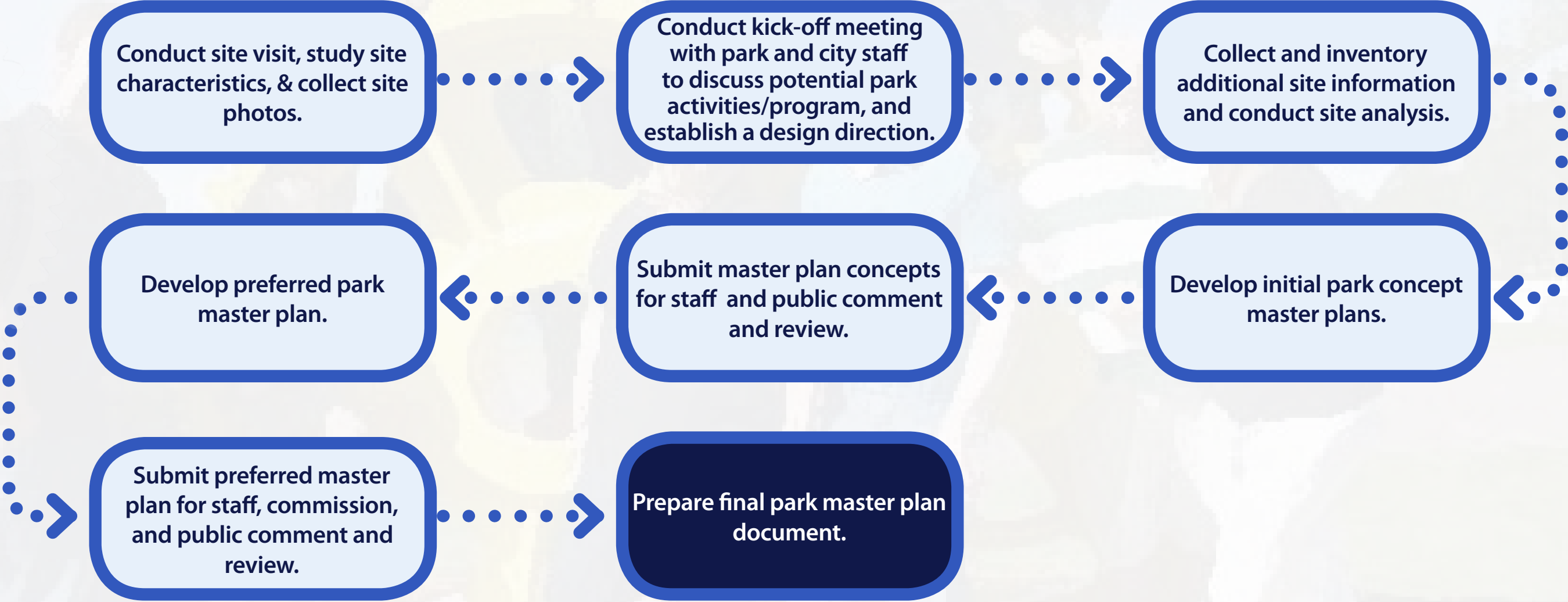
In 2012 the City hired Hoisington Koezler Group (HKGi) to prepare a master plan for Morgan Park that will improve recreation, social and environmental opportunities and improve connectivity to area trails and to nature.





# Master Planning Process

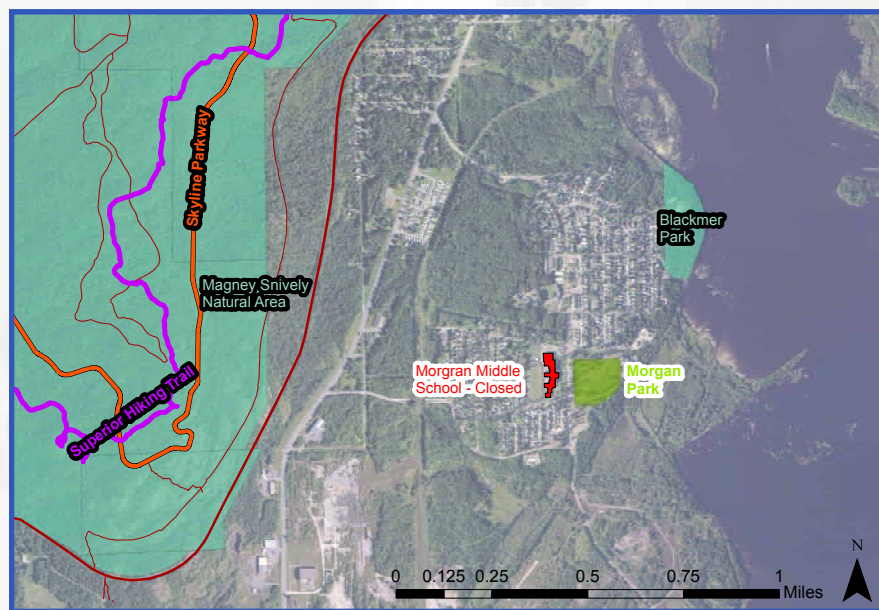
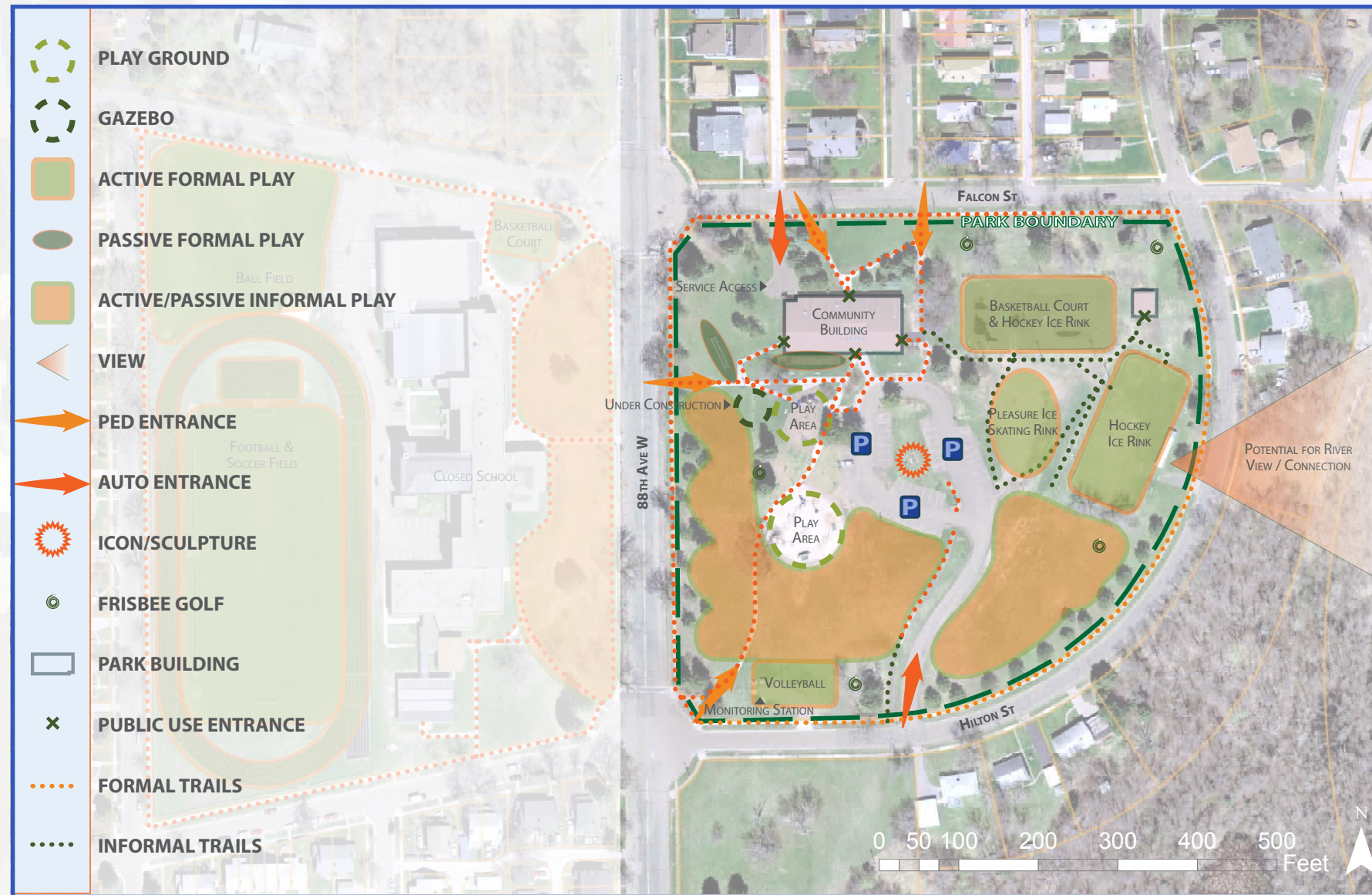
The planning process occurred in 2012 and was guided by city staff and included input from the community, school district staff, and city officials. The process included site analysis, programming (identification of desired activities and facilities), preparation of concept plan alternatives, community review of concept plans, selection of a preferred plan, design development and construction cost estimating. The master plan is a schematic design plan for the park and a guide to subsequent detailed design and construction documents.





# Existing Conditions

Morgan Park is a well-used park and community center. The park has new play equipment and most recreation facilities are in good condition. The park currently contains two hockey rinks, an informal ice skating rink, a Zamboni storage building, a basketball court within the paved ice rink, a central parking lot and access drive, new play equipment, a small gazebo, a five hole disc golf course, a sand volleyball court and the Morgan Park Community Center building. One of the hockey rinks has a bituminous surface which is in poor condition. The large community center building is in good condition and is used by seniors, the general public and for ice skating. The community center has a kitchen, dining area, space for meetings and recreation programs, office space and bathrooms. The east side of the building contains a large warming area and locker rooms with doorway access to the ice rinks to the east.



## STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES: ISSUES:

- » Newer Park Building & Playground Equipment
- » Wide Assortment of Program Activities
- » Park Acts as a Community Hub
- » Close to St Louis River
- » Parking & Driveway Divide Park
- » Future Use of School Site?
- » Some Vandalism & Maintenance Issues
- » Lack of Ballfields in Park
- » Need for a Picnic Area

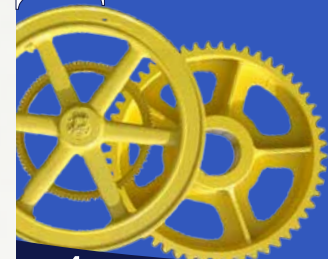




# Existing Conditions

## SITE PHOTOS:

- ① Existing Hockey Rink and Pleasure Skating Rink.
- ② Existing Park Building with Warming House and Community Kitchen .
- ③ New Ages 5-12 Playground with Gazebo Foundation Pad in the Foreground.
- ④ Combined Use Hockey Rink and Basketball Court.
- ⑤ New Ages 3-7 Playground Adjacent to Parking Lot.
- ⑥ Entrance and Ramp from Warming House to Hockey Rink and Pleasure Skating Rink.
- ⑦ Iconic Morgan Park Sculpture Harkening Back to the Town's Industrial History.





# Needs Analysis

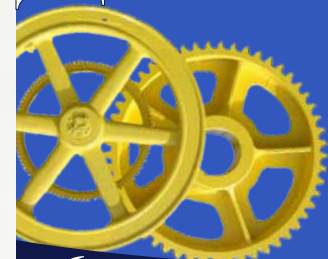
## A WELL-USED PARK THAT CAN BE AN EVEN BETTER COMMUNITY HUB

The park is in good condition and it is obvious that it is well loved and supported by the Morgan Park neighborhood. The park's play equipment and ice skating rinks are well used. The park lacks a picnic area, trails and access to nature. The centrally located parking lots and park access drive dominate the center of the park, but provide convenient access to the community center, playground and skating rinks. The park does not have any athletic fields and little open turf area for informal sports. The closed Morgan Park Middle School (across the street to the west) has athletic fields, a basketball court and a track. The school building has gyms and a swimming pool. There was interest in retaining public access to the pool and gyms, but that is unlikely as the pool is in poor condition and the District's overall plan (Long Range Facilities Plan) consolidates the number of schools and reinvests the savings into new and better facilities for the future. In accordance with the plan the School District intends to sell the middle school site. It is unknown at this time if the building or fields will remain after redevelopment. During the park master plan review process, additional athletic fields were not identified as a pressing need for this area. Blackmer Park is located ½ mile to the northeast of Morgan Park and it contains ball fields. It is possible that when US Steel land to the south is developed land may become available for future athletic fields.

While the park is close to the St. Louis River there is no formal access to the river or view of the river from the park. It is appropriate to work to create trail access to the riverfront and to extend the Western Waterfront Trail along the river. The Western Waterfront Trail currently ends approximately 1 1/3 miles north of the park.







# Concept Exploration & Direction

## CONCEPT DIRECTION:

The public and city staff review of the concept plan alternatives emphasized the importance of high quality ice skating at Morgan Park (two rinks plus a pleasure rink) and there was interest in better access to trails, nature and the river. There was also a desire for better picnicking and the ability to host community and neighborhood gatherings and events.

## ACTIVE PARK CONCEPT:

### Elements Include:

- A new softball and soccer field
- Regional trail connection
- Removal of the central parking lot and driveway and the addition of new parking along Falcon St.
- Removal of one hockey rink and the improvement of the remaining hockey rink.
- Expanded disc-golf course



## PASSIVE PARK CONCEPT :

### Elements Include:

- Native landscaping
- Regional trail connection
- Removal of one hockey rink and the improvement of the remaining hockey rink
- Expanded disc-golf course
- Improved pedestrian network
- An open turf area for informal play and community events
- A stage with a turf amphitheater/ seating area





# Preferred Master Plan

The master plan for improvement of Morgan Park is based on public and staff input and envisions the following improvements to the park:

- Renovate the ice hockey rinks and the pleasure skating rink. Remove the paved rink surface and basketball court. Relocate the pleasure rink. Add a new covered rink and a mites size rink. Improve access to water and circulation for use of the Zamboni. Add new high efficiency light fixtures.
- Create a picnic area by adding a picnic shelter, picnic table and shade trees.
- Move the sand volleyball court to the new picnic area.
- Reconfigure and expand the disc golf course to nine holes.
- Add community gardens near the community center building.
- Add a freestanding paved basketball court.
- Extend the Western Waterfront Trail south to Blackmer Park and Morgan Park.

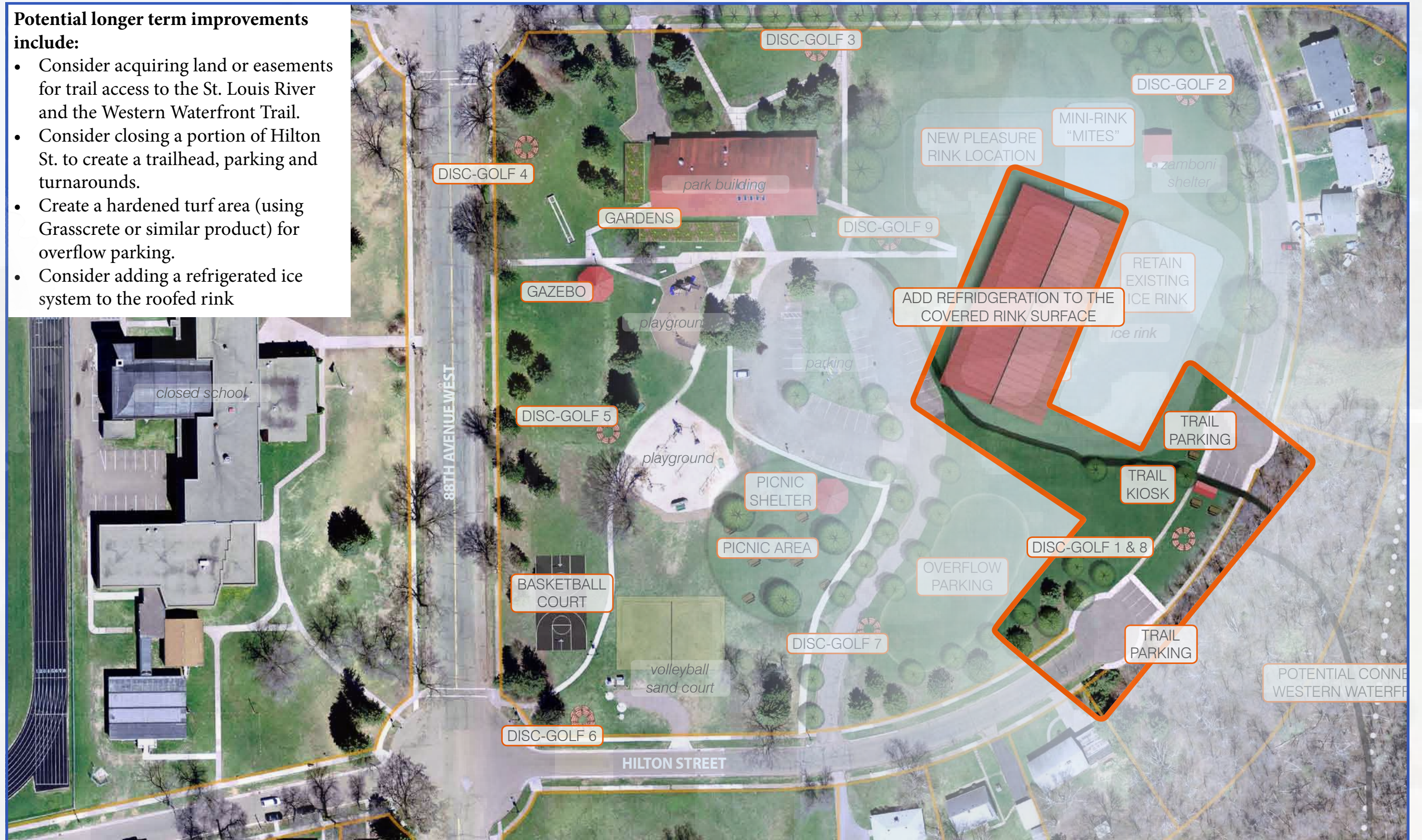




# Potential Future Improvements

## Potential longer term improvements include:

- Consider acquiring land or easements for trail access to the St. Louis River and the Western Waterfront Trail.
- Consider closing a portion of Hilton St. to create a trailhead, parking and turnarounds.
- Create a hardened turf area (using Grasscrete or similar product) for overflow parking.
- Consider adding a refrigerated ice system to the roofed rink





# Phasing

The park renovation can occur as a series of phased construction projects. Phasing is dependent upon available funding and in some cases trail and or easement availability. Logical phasing alternatives include:

- 1 Renovate the ice hockey rinks and the pleasure skating rink. Install a roof over the new 80' x 190' rink.
- 2 Create a picnic area by adding a picnic shelter, picnic table and shade trees. Relocate the sand volleyball court to the new picnic area.
- 3 Reconfigure and expand the disc golf course to nine holes.
- 4 Add community gardens near the community center building.
- 5 Add a freestanding paved basketball court.
- 6 Connect the park to the riverfront and the Western Waterfront Trail: Extend the Western Waterfront Trail south to Blackmer Park and Morgan Park. Consider acquiring land or easements for trail access to the St. Louis River and the Western Waterfront Trail. Consider closing a portion of Hilton St. to create a trailhead, parking and turnarounds.
- 7 Consider adding a refrigerated ice system to the roofed rink. Create a hardened turf area (Grasscrete or similar product) for overflow parking.











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Hoisington Koegler Group Inc.