

DULUTH

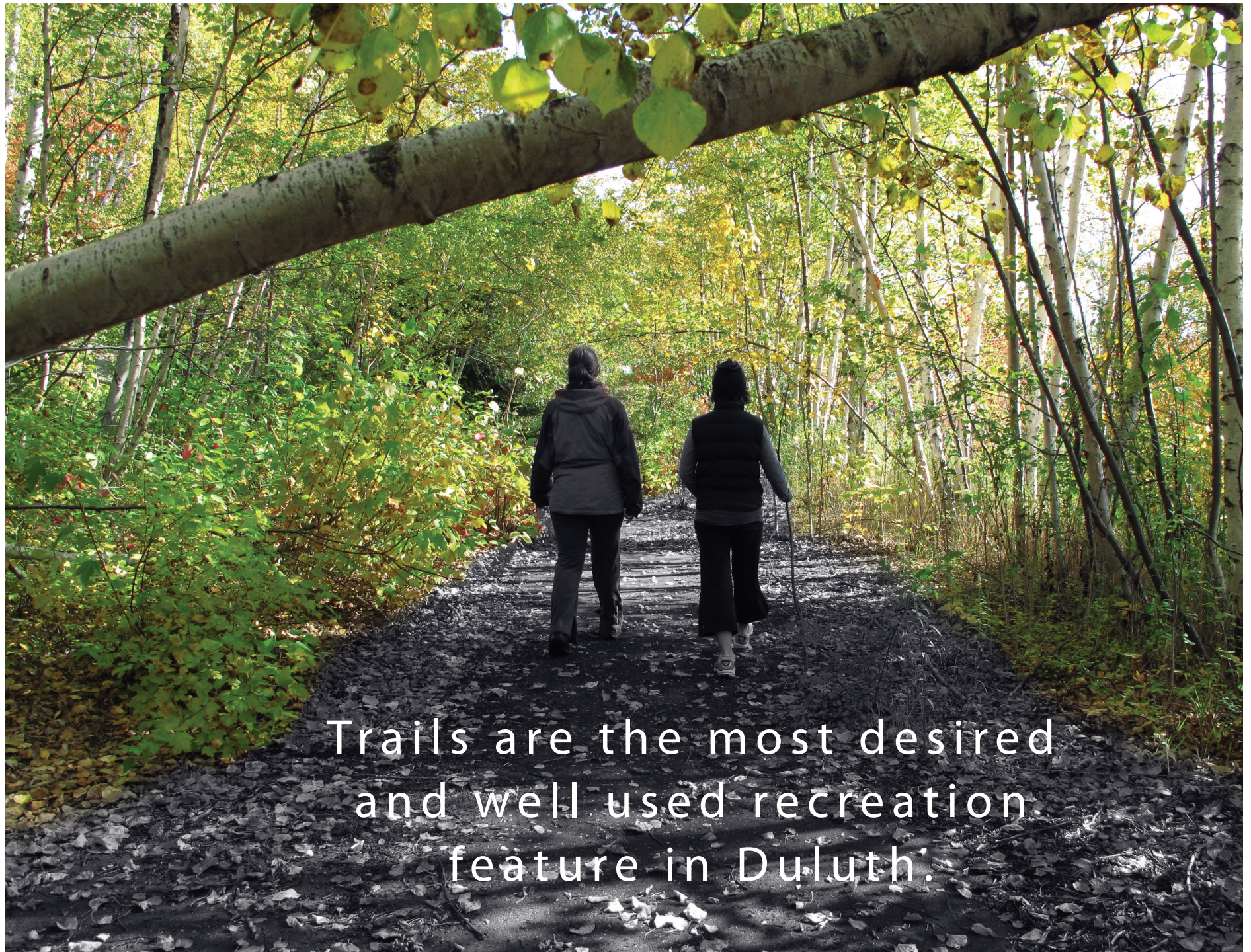
Parks and Recreation master Plan



CHAPTER 4

Principles and Objectives

... the Path to 2030



Trails are the most desired
and well used recreation
feature in Duluth.

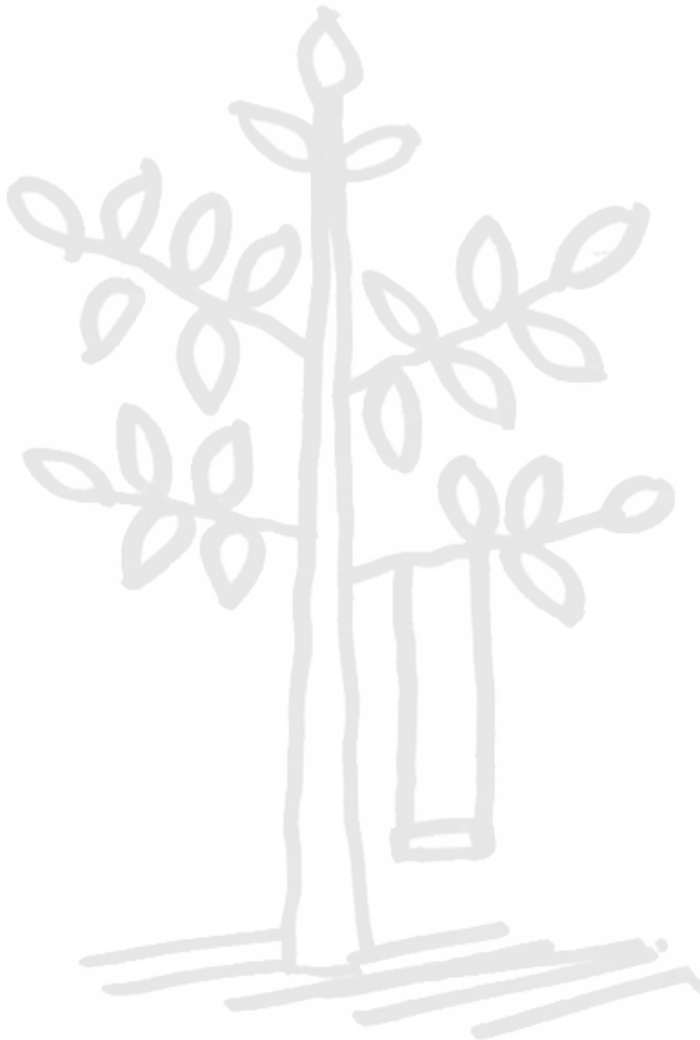
The Duluth Park and Recreation Master Plan's subtitle - The Path to 2030 represents a path to follow to realize the potential of the Duluth parks and recreation system. Much of the plan recommendations revolve around connections - not only connecting the community physically with paths and trails, but strengthening connections socially, economically and environmentally.

The Master Plan recommendations focus on eight basic principles for the Duluth parks and recreation system (parks, funding, partnerships, equitable access, trails, nature, recreation, and sustainability) that will help build Duluth as a more connected community. These principles and the associated objectives are based on community and stakeholder input, current plans such as the Duluth Comprehensive Plan, and a detailed evaluation of the tremendous opportunities and the pressing challenges facing parks and recreation in Duluth.



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Principle 1



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1. Provide Safe, Clean, Fun and Beautiful Parks

A fundamental municipal role is to provide parks that are safe, clean and user friendly. Due to budget constraints the conditions of some Duluth parks are not meeting residents expectations. Maintenance and renovation of park infrastructure is of fundamental importance to user safety and satisfaction and to maximize the benefits of the public investment in facilities.

Objective 1

- » **Park access and upkeep** - Increase the level of upkeep and improve the frequency of mowing and trash collection in parks. Improve access to bathrooms. Where appropriate, increase lighting in parks for safety and ease of access. Formalize maintenance expectations and expand outreach to volunteer groups for maintenance.

Objective 2

- » **Invest, not expand** - For park facilities, favor maintenance and reconstruction of existing infrastructure over infrastructure expansion.

Objective 3

- » **Park investment** - Prepare an asset management plan identifying priority renovation needs, schedules and funding for replacement and improvements.

Objective 4

- » **Enforcement and regulation** - Improve awareness and enforcement of park regulations.

Objective 5

- » **Four-season use** - Ensure year-round use of parks and recreation facilities.

2. Ensure Adequate and Stable Funding

Appropriate funding and re-investment is needed to realize the benefits of the park system and to assure resident satisfaction. This includes maximizing the efficiency of the park and recreation system to help reduce operating and management costs and creating new sources of dedicated funds for parks.

objective 1

- » **Ensure stable and adequate funding** to meet system goals. Restore funding for system upkeep and for modest expansion to meet community expectations/needs.

objective 2

- » **Diversify funding sources** - Potential sources include creation of a park entity with its own taxing authority; park, trail and open space dedication requirements; State Legacy funding; Coastal grants; DNR grants; local foundation grants; direct donations/gifts from users; bequeaths from benefactors; etc.

objective 3

- » **System approach** - Make the recreation system more sustainable by reducing operating costs through a revised system of community recreation centers and prioritizing system investment through an asset management plan. This includes evaluating life-cycle cost when making facility decisions.
- » **Continue to create efficiencies** in the delivery of services and facilities, through partnerships, volunteers and sustainable practices.



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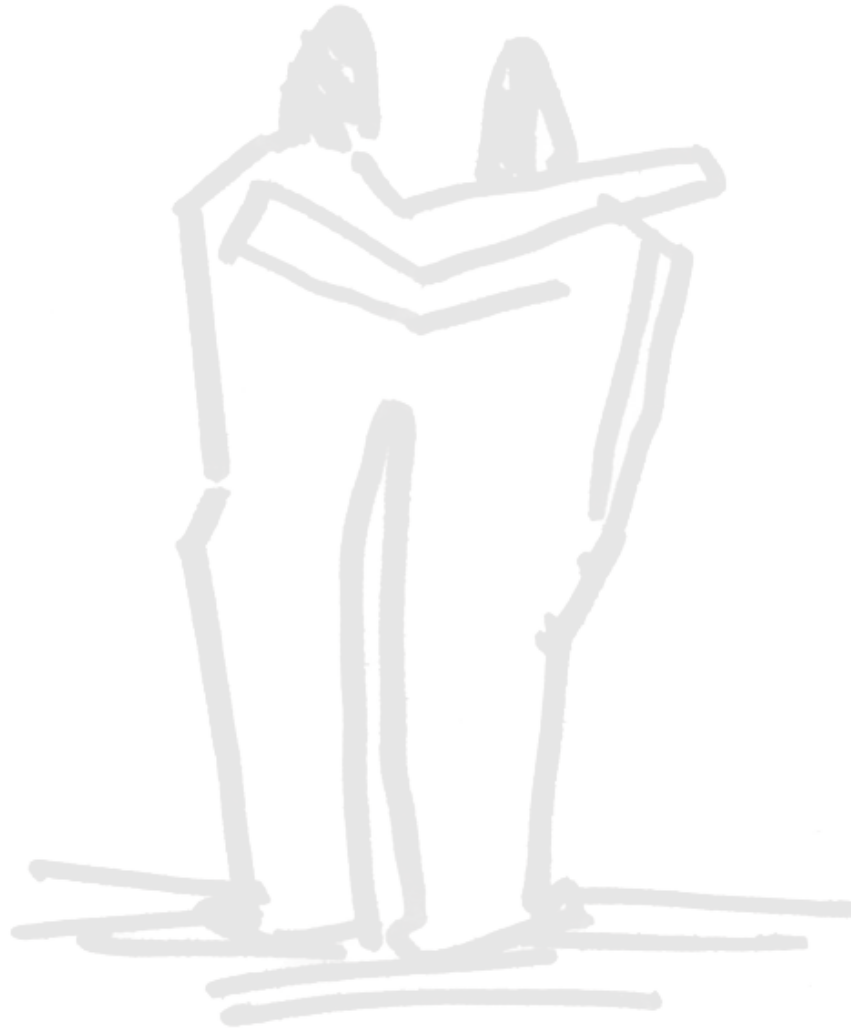
Principle 2



Principle 3



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3. Build Partnerships

Duluth has an involved community of organizations, groups and individuals who support parks and recreation. Maximizing the benefits of their efforts is a key to a successful park and recreation system. Additional City resources are needed to fully utilize partner and volunteer efforts.

Objective 1

- » **Empower volunteers** - Through an intentional, consistent effort to recruit, coordinate and recognize their efforts, volunteers should be utilized for park and trail maintenance, vigilance, and upkeep.

Objective 2

- » **Partner with others** - Continue to build effective partnerships with Duluth Schools, Colleges, Universities, and neighboring communities that foster system goals. The School District's Long Range Facilities Plan presents the opportunity to forge effective school-City partnerships for fields, buildings, facilities, and programs. Reach out to businesses for expanded sponsorships and partnerships.

Objective 3

- » **Share information** - Enhance access to information and increase communications with groups, schools, businesses and residents.

Objective 4

- » **Collaborate on promotion** - Expand promotion of Duluth parks for tourism, quality of life and economic development.

4. Ensure Equitable Access

Duluth has an extensive system of parks and recreation facilities that serve most residents well. However, There are gaps in the location of high quality parks and indoor recreation. There is a need to address not just physical access to parks and trails, but also address access to programs. In addition there is a need to provide access to large numbers of the non-traditional populations.

Objective 1

- » **Overcome economic limitations** - Partner with the School District and non-profits to fill recreation program gaps. Address socio-economic barriers as well as gaps in youth and senior program offerings and delivery.

Objective 2

- » **Address geographic gaps** - Insure equitable access to parks and recreation facilities by working to meet level of services standards in undeserved areas. Fill the recreation facility gap in the central part of the City and the gaps in park service coverage in the northwest part of the City.

Objective 3

- » **Ensure quality facilities** - Assure reasonable access to high quality parks and recreation facilities in all areas of the City. This will entail improving existing parks in areas without premier signature facilities (such as west Duluth) and enhancing access to community scale indoor recreation (gyms/pools/recreation program space).

Objective 4

- » **Overcome physical limitations** - Provide physical access to parks and trails for people with disabilities and/or health limitations. This will require accessible park and trail evaluation, and a reallocation of resources that supports universal design, ADA accessibility, and access to parks trails for users of all ages and abilities.

Objective 5

- » **Provide for multiple cultures** - Provide education and support of multi-cultural involvement in the planning and organization of park and trail activities in Duluth. Connectivity between trails and between trails and parks needs to be made more accessible and familiar to all types of users.

Principle 4



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Principle 5



5. Connect the Community

Duluth has many trails, but lacks a connected trail network. Facilities, as well as safe and pleasant routes for bicycle riding are lacking. Trails are the most popular recreation facility and warrant continued City investment.

objective 1

- » **Premier trail city** - Adopt a City-wide Trail Plan to make Duluth known as the premier trail city in the Midwest. Realize the potential of existing trails, stream corridors and Skyline Parkway with new connections, pedestrian and bicycling enhancements, trailheads and trail way-finding signage.

objective 2

- » **Hiking/walking** - Create an interconnected multi-use trail network and an interconnected hiking/walking trail network. Connect the Lakewalk to the Munger Trail and complete the Lakewalk connection east to Kitchi Gammi Park.

objective 4

- » **Biking** - Make the City bicycle friendly by creating “complete streets” (streets that function well for all users not just vehicles) and adding bike lanes and sharrows (shared marked bike lanes). Have a goal of Duluth becoming certified by the League of American Bicyclists as a Bicycle Friendly Community (national designation). Utilize the 2010 Comprehensive Bicycle Assessment Plan and trail groups; and make priorities for implementation.

objective 5

- » **Parkway** - Enhance the continuity of Skyline Parkway and foster implementation of the Skyline Parkway Corridor Management Plan to make the Parkway safe and friendly for bicyclists and pedestrians. Skyline Parkway has the potential to be a true parkway connecting the community and providing recreation for walkers, runners and bicyclists as well as drivers.

objective 6

- » **Partner on maintenance** - Improve trail conditions by enhancing maintenance, making trails more durable, and improving management of trail use. Trail groups and volunteers should be utilized to maximize the benefits.

6. Connect with Nature

Duluth is defined by its natural resources and scenic views. Nature is an amenity that attracts residents and visitors to the City. Continuing to enhance access to nature will improve livability and attract residents, businesses and visitors.

Objective 1

- » **Manage it** - Emphasize management and improvement of access to existing natural resource-oriented parks for outdoor recreation (hiking, biking, cross country skiing, horseback riding, birding, rock climbing, boating, snowmobiling, etc.) Enhance recreation opportunities along and on the St. Louis River. Fully utilize the potential of existing natural resource park lands such as Magney-Snively, Fond du Lac, Enger, etc.

Objective 2

- » **Preserve it** - Preserve and protect priority natural areas such as stream corridors, the lake front, the St. Louis River, Park Point, and other significant woodlands and hillside areas.

Objective 3

- » **Coordinate and partner** - Work with the County to coordinate the preservation of the tax-forfeited lands identified as high priorities for recreation or natural resource protection (based on the Mayor's Task Force for Recommending the Re-Use and Development of City Land and Protection of Parcels of Public Significance study). Coordinate to use volunteers to enhance natural resources.

Principle 6



7. Continue to Meet Evolving Recreation Needs

The City of Duluth and its partners do a good job providing a diverse range of recreation opportunities, but there are some facilities that need improvement. Efforts should focus on creating a high quality indoor recreation system, better facilities and management of off-leash dog use, improving athletic fields and continuing to provide quality ice skating.

objective 1

- » **Indoor recreation** – Gymnasiums and indoor recreation spaces are key elements of a balanced recreation system, especially in a winter city like Duluth. Create a viable and efficient system of indoor community recreation facilities emphasizing quality over quantity. Partner with the School District to assure that elementary and middle schools are community recreation places. Supplement school sites, as needed, with City recreation center buildings or other partnership facilities to assure reasonable access across the community to indoor recreation. Seek opportunities for multi-use community recreation places, where feasible, by blending parks, schools, libraries and private enterprises. Evaluate the cost-benefit of enhancing Washington Center to meet community indoor recreation needs.

objective 2

- » **Athletic fields** – Plan for projected multi-use turf field needs (soccer, Lacrosse, rugby, etc.). Improve the durability and use of existing high use turf fields through the addition of irrigation and lighting. Evaluate the need for additional City fields based on shared use of proposed new school fields. Study the viability and future use of Wade Stadium and determine a strategic plan for use of the property.

objective 3

- » **Manage off-leash dog use** – Establish off leash dog park operating criteria to minimize City maintenance needs and provide sustainable facilities. Add additional off leash dog parks to serve the east and central parts of the City. Improve compliance with leash laws in other parks and trails.

objective 4

- » **Outdoor ice skating** – Continue to assist community and user groups to provide ice skating sites. Provide a high quality community skating rink at Bayfront Festival Park.

objective 5

- » **Recreation programs** - Improve access to recreation programs in underserved areas -East Hillside, Central Hillside, Duluth Heights and the east side; and to underserved populations - summer youth programs, winter skating and seniors in areas without active community programs.

objective 6

- » **Self directed recreation** - Emphasize supporting facilities for self directed recreation such as walking, bicycling, hiking, bird watching, fishing, picnicking, etc.

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Principle 7



8. Be Sustainable

A sustainable park and recreation system is one where the economic, equity and environmental aspects of recreation and stewardship are balanced with available resources to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Part of sustainability is the resilience to adapt to changing conditions, trends and needs. Duluth Parks and Recreation and the community at large have shown remarkable resilience and flexibility in the way that they have adapted to budget and service cutbacks. However, the long term effect of reduced park maintenance and facility replacement will compromise future generation's enjoyment and access to parks and recreation and natural resources. A renewed commitment to management of natural resources, energy efficiency, facility upkeep, and stewardship is needed.

objective 1

- » **Park stewardship program** - Active engagement in the care of parklands leads to a deeper appreciation of their value. A formal Park Stewardship Program is recommended where community and youth groups learn about the importance of public lands, while enhancing natural resources and using the park and trail lands as hands-on experiential classrooms. In addition to park and trail groups, Duluth colleges and high schools are excellent sources of motivated participants in natural resources management projects.

objective 2

- » **Sustainable trails** - Improve existing trails with erosion or surface quality issues. Construct new trails using sustainable standards.

objective 3

- » **Resource management** – Proactively manage natural resource areas.

objective 4

- » **Awareness and education** – Be the stewards and set positive examples of wise resource use.

objective 5

- » **Community gardens** – Encourage establishment of community gardens in suitable park sites.

Principle 8



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