

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**City of Duluth - Parks and Recreation**

411 West First Street • Duluth, Minnesota 55802  
218-730-4309 • [www.duluthmn.gov](http://www.duluthmn.gov)

*For more information contact Kate Van Daele,  
Public Information Officer at 218-730-5309*

**DATE: 10/15/2020**

**SUBJECT: City to reopen three Park facilities for programs and rentals**

**BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer**

**City to reopen three Park facilities for programs and rentals**

[Duluth, MN] The City of Duluth Property, Parks, and Libraries Department has carefully started to reopen a small number of Parks and Recreation buildings that have been mostly or entirely closed since the start of the pandemic. This initial phase of reopening will be limited to three facilities – Morgan Park Community Center, Washington Center Gymnasium, and Portman Community Center. These buildings will be managed, used, and cleaned in accordance with disease prevention plans consistent with federal and state guidelines.

The City is reopening these buildings to establish a balance between providing Parks and Recreation services and facilities that are important for the community's emotional well-being this winter while restricting the kinds of indoor activities that contribute to disease spread.

To check on the availability of reservations at Portman or Morgan Park, as well as outdoor park spaces and pavilions, check our Reservations page: <https://duluthmn.gov/parks/reservations-permits/> or contact Chris Severson, Permits Coordinator, at 730-4305 or [cseverson@duluthmn.gov](mailto:cseverson@duluthmn.gov). To inquire about reservations at the Washington Center Gym and other athletic facilities, please contact Nick Budnik, Recreation Specialist, at 730-4314 or [nbudnik@duluthmn.gov](mailto:nbudnik@duluthmn.gov).

The Parks facilities will be open for rental purposes and will require a City-approved disease prevention plan outlining how the renter will work to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during their use. The plan must be consistent with federal, state, and city guidelines. Templates for required plans are available by calling the Parks and Recreation Division at 730-4300. Groups are also able to create and submit their plans by contacting the Parks and Recreation office.

To register for upcoming recreation programs, the schedule and registration information is available at <https://duluthmn.gov/parks/programs-events/general-programs/>. Fall programs will run through the end of the year and remain open for registration. Each program has been adapted to meet federal and state guidelines.

In addition to the three City-managed Parks and Recreation buildings that will remain open, the City will continue to permit organizations that lease City buildings and have City-approved disease prevention plans to open to the public as long as they strictly comply with plan requirements.

Park buildings that will remain closed through the winter include Grant Community Center, Lafayette Community Center, Harrison Community Center, Wade Stadium, and Wheeler Fieldhouse. City staff has begun winterizing and locking these buildings for the season. Due to temporary City workforce layoffs, there is an insufficient number of staff who can carry out the intensified pandemic cleaning regimen in all Parks buildings, which is why the buildings above will remain closed.

Public access to Park buildings may be further restricted if the COVID-19 spread continues to intensify. If necessary, reservations will be canceled and payments fully refunded.

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