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**The City of Vadnais Heights**  
800 East County Road E  
Vadnais Heights, MN 55127

## *Memorandum:*

TO: Mayor Krachmer and City Council Members

FROM: Kevin Watson, City Administrator

DATE: August 19, 2025

SUBJECT: Park, Recreation, and Trails Commission Recommendations

### **Recommended Council Action**

Make a final decision on the recommendations made by the Park, Recreation, and Trails Commission to address short-term priorities identified in the Park Master Plan.

### **Background**

The Park Master Plan was approved by Council on April 1, 2025. At the June 17 Regular Workshop staff presented Council with the available funding for park projects, short-term priorities identified in the plan, and a list of potential projects. At that workshop Council decided to task the Park, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Commission with determining projects within a budget of \$600,000.

On August 6, Alexa Farah, chair of the commission, presented the recommendations from the commission and how the commission framed the discussion. The commission discussion was guided by:

- Following the plan as approved as a way to acknowledge the amount of community engagement,
- Improving all parks in some way,
- Showing improvements right away,
- Connecting park improvements to other projects and finishing projects that were already in progress,
- Increasing shade,
- Making improvements to create visible, meaningful improvements to kickstart the Master Plan and build trust and excitement,
- Choosing parks prime for investment, such as in the environmental justice area.

The advisory commission recommended the following improvements:

- Greenhaven Park - \$115,000
  - Mini picnic shelter and lawn
  - 0.7 looped trail
  - Shade Trees
- Wolters Park - \$171,000
  - Basketball court
  - 0.24 looped trail
  - Shade Trees
- Bridgewood Park - \$96,000
  - Picnic shelter

- Elmwood Park - \$93,500
  - Mini picnic shelter and lawn
  - Shade trees
- Investigate interpretive signage at Heritage Park, local art
- Remainder of funds (\$124,500 minus art and signage) for benches and shade trees at other parks as identified by staff through a needs inventory.

Adding the looped trail at Greenhaven as a part of the Street Improvements Project 2026-01 may result in the best price for that project which may lower the actual cost of that improvement. Councilmember Doll Kanne raised concerns about Oak Creek Park and lack of improvements beyond shade and benches. Specifically, her concern was related to the implication that the Oak Creek Park Playground listing in the CIP made the neighborhood believe the playground would be replaced sooner than later. Park items on the CIP were pulled due to the implementation of a Parks and Trails Master Plan. The CIP document ebbs and flows with the priorities of the City Council and budget constraints. The development of the Parks and Trails Master Plan created shifts in priorities of the parks system and the CIP document. City Council should consider their priorities as it relates to the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

City Council tabled the discussion of approval of recommendations at the August 6 Workshop. The ask of Council is to conclude the discussion of the advisory commission's recommendations and provide direction to staff on the improvements to pursue, with the goal of action in 2025 or 2026.

Outside of the funding sources identified in the budget given to the advisory commission, at the July 29 Budget Workshop discussion was given to a dedicating one or a percentage to park improvements. That question can be settled independent of the advisory committee's recommendations.

Enclosures:

August 6 Workshop Memo

Oak Creek Park Improvements from Master Plan

**Kaylin Clement**  
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**The City of Vadnais Heights**  
800 East County Road E  
Vadnais Heights, MN 55127

## *Memorandum:*

TO: Mayor Krachmer and City Council Members

FROM: Kaylin Clement, Assistant City Administrator

DATE: August 6, 2025

SUBJECT: Park, Recreation, and Trails Commission Recommendations

### **Background**

At the June 17, 2025, City Council Workshop, staff sought direction on how to proceed with the recently approved Vadnais Heights Parks & Trail System Plan. With no funding dedicated for 2025 projects (outside of the paying for the plan itself), staff identified two funding sources available that could be utilized to kick start things, outlined below:

- **Park Dedication Fund \$354,000**  
*Park Dedication Statute: Cash payments received must be used only for the acquisition and development or improvement of parks, recreational facilities, playgrounds, trails, wetlands, or open space based on the approved park systems plan. Cash payments must not be used for ongoing operation or maintenance of parks, recreational facilities, playgrounds, trails, wetlands, or open space. ([M.S.462.358 subd. 2b \(g\)](#))*
- **Gambling Fund \$280,000**  
*\*M.S. 349.12 subd. 25a (7): recreational, community, and athletic facilities and activities, intended primarily for persons under age 21, provided that such facilities and activities do not discriminate on the basis of gender and the organization complies with section [349.154, subdivision 3a](#);*

With a variety of projects identified in the first phase of the System Plan implementation that align with the aforementioned available funds, Council directed staff to seek recommendations from the Park, Recreation & Trails Commission (PR&T).

Assistant City Administrator, Kaylin Clement and Recreation & Facilities Manager, Katie Everett met with the PR&T Commission on Monday, July 21, 2025.

After much thoughtful discussion, Commissioners unanimously voted on the following recommendations for council consideration:

- Wolters Park – all short-term priorities (full basketball court and looped trail) **\$171,000**

- Elmwood Park – Picnic Shelter **\$93,500**
- Greenhaven Park – Finish planned improvements which began in 2022, including a looped trail, mini picnic shelter, and shade trees **\$115,000**
- Bridgewood Park – Picnic Shelter only **\$96,000**
- Remainder of funding toward other parks: benches and mature trees
- Investigate interpretive signage at Heritage Park (no initial cost)

With that said, Commissioners had the following rationale for the collective projects in which they have recommended funding for:

- Desire to improve every park in the system
- Connected improvement area on Greenhaven Drive with trail project (Greenhaven, Bridgewood, Heritage, etc)
- Finishing projects that have already been started
- Wolters – environmental justice area, teen amenities, community interest in courts – provides a new amenity
- Shade across system – biodiverse tree canopy, shade sooner than later to build climate resilience
- Follow plan as approved
- Visible, meaningful improvements to kick start the System Plan, build trust and excitement

Staff would like council to consider the recommendations from the Commission, and if in favor, weigh in on whether or not we are to begin executing those projects immediately.

Finally, with this \$600,000 allocation to kick start the System Plan, those funds will then be gone, and a larger discussion about future sustainable funding to continue executing the plan is necessary.

***Attachments:***

***Park Plan First Steps, Recommendation to Council (PR&T Commission Memo 7.21.25)***

***System Plan Concepts for PRT Recommendation***

**Kaylin Clement**  
*Assistant City Administrator*

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## *Memorandum:*

TO: Park, Recreation & Trails Commission

FROM: Kaylin Clement, Assistant City Administrator

DATE: July 21, 2025

SUBJECT: Park Plan First Steps, Recommendation to Council

### **Background**

At the June 17, 2025, City Council Workshop, Council allocated \$600,000 for park/trail improvements aligned with the Vadnais Heights Park, Recreation & Trails System Plan. Council would like recommendations from the PR&T commissioners ahead of the July 29 budget workshop.

Commissioners are asked to note, recommendations could fund one large project, several smaller projects, etc. Please see attached the memo item from that workshop meeting for context, within that you will find the Implementation Priorities that have been pulled from the System Plan. There, you can see estimated costs and items that were deemed short/medium/long-term priorities.

Also, if considering several smaller projects, be mindful that the footprint of a given park that may have larger projects slated as part of plan, could change to accommodate said larger project. However, in the document the order in which each park's priorities are listed should likely not impact future projects at a site.

Also within the memo, you'll see some options provided by staff that align with the System Plan's short-term priorities, while also finishing out a few projects that have already had elements completed (Elmwood and Greenhaven). These are options, but not limited to items you would recommend for funding with the allocated \$600,000 by any means.

The plan document and associated park design concepts can be found here:  
<https://www.cityvadnaisheights.com/parkplan>.

# Wolters Park Proposed Concept



Example of a full basketball court



Example of a small picnic shelter adjacent to playground

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address</b>                     | 1351 Willow Lake Boulevard                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Classification</b>              | Neighborhood Park                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Total Acreage</b>               | 2 Acres                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Active Use Acreage</b>          | 2 Acres                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Trail Mileage</b>               | 0.24 Miles                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Convenience Amenities</b>       |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Athletic Amenities</b>          |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Informal Amenities</b>          |   |
| <b>Winter Amenities</b>            |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Picnic &amp; Play Amenities</b> |   |

This park does not have enough street frontage to provide city-owned parking, but the potential to coordinate access to adjacent parking lots with surrounding property owners could be explored moving forward.

Replacement of existing lighting to be assessed as part of larger lighting study and is not included in costs.

## Short-Term Priority Projects

### Full Basketball Court

- Install a full basketball court with a 10' perimeter fence.

### Loop Trail

- Add a loop trail and shade trees around park perimeter.

## Mid-Term Priority Projects

### Expanded Playground & Picnic Shelter

- Replace and expand playground.
- Install a small picnic shelter with picnic tables.
- Provide access with central trail connected to larger trail loop.

## Elmwood Park **Proposed Concept**



Example of native plantings



Example of a small picnic shelter

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address</b>                     | 3892 Elmwood Street                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Classification</b>              | Mini Park                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Total Acreage</b>               | 0.7 Acres                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Active Use Acreage</b>          | 0.7 Acres                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Trail Mileage</b>               | 0.10 Miles                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Convenience Amenities</b>       |                                                                                      |
| <b>Athletic Amenities</b>          |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Informal Amenities</b>          |                                                                                      |
| <b>Winter Amenities</b>            |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Picnic &amp; Play Amenities</b> |   |

### Short-Term Priority Project

#### Picnic Shelter

- Add mini-picnic shelter near playground.
- Create a picnic area with the open lawn.
- Plant shade trees.

# Greenhaven Park Proposed Concept



Example of a loop trail



Example of a small picnic shelter

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address</b>                     | 4470 Greenhaven Drive                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Classification</b>              | Mini Park                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Total Acreage</b>               | 0.7 Acres                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Active Use Acreage</b>          | 0.7 Acres                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Trail Mileage</b>               | 0.07 Miles                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Convenience Amenities</b>       |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Athletic Amenities</b>          |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Informal Amenities</b>          |                                                                                      |
| <b>Winter Amenities</b>            |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Picnic &amp; Play Amenities</b> |   |

## Short-Term Priority Project

### Picnic Shelter & Loop Trail

- Add a mini picnic shelter and associated picnic lawn.
- Plant shade trees throughout park.
- Add a loop trail around playground creating accessible connection to ramp into play container.

# Bridgewood Park **Proposed Concept**



Example of a full basketball court



Example of a shade structure



Example of a new playground

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address</b>                     | 4224-1/2 Bridgewood Terrace                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Classification</b>              | Neighborhood Park                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Total Acreage</b>               | 30 Acres                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Active Use Acreage</b>          | 3 Acres                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Trail Mileage</b>               | 1.35 Miles                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Convenience Amenities</b>       |                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Athletic Amenities</b>          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Informal Amenities</b>          |     |
| <b>Winter Amenities</b>            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Picnic &amp; Play Amenities</b> |                                                                                                                                                                           |

## Short-Term Priority Project

### Picnic Shelter & Playground

- Reconfigure and expand playground.
- Add small picnic shelter near playground.

## Mid-Term Priority Projects

### Full Basketball Court

- Expand court paving to include a full basketball court with a perimeter of 10' fencing.

### Loop Trails

- Create formal trail connections to Thornhill Lane and Centerville Road with associated wayfinding.
- Install informal hiking and snowshoeing trail loops in eastern area utilizing pervious pavement in areas within wetland buffer.

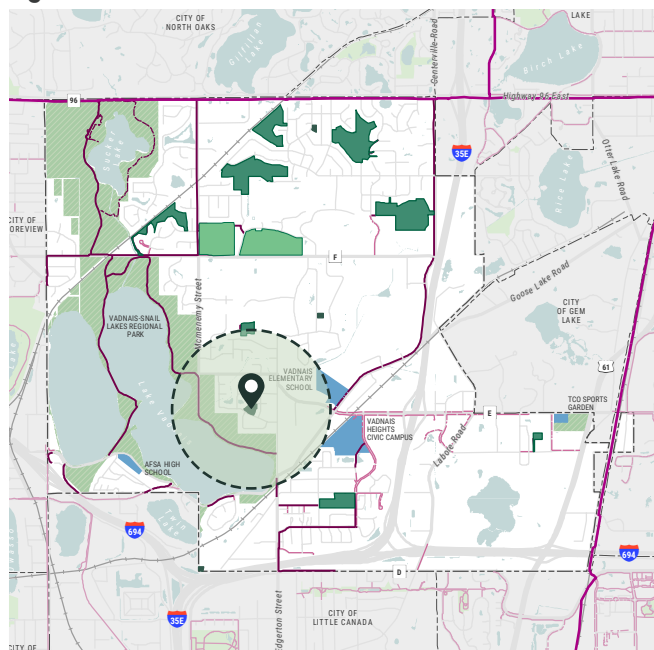
## Long-Term Priority Projects

### Shade Structure

- Install a small shade structure adjacent to the pickleball courts.

# Oak Creek Park Existing Conditions

**Figure 05.33** Oak Creek Park Location



|                                    |                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address</b>                     | 485 Oak Creek Drive S                                                               |
| <b>Classification</b>              | Mini Park                                                                           |
| <b>Total Acreage</b>               | 2 Acres                                                                             |
| <b>Active Use Acreage</b>          | 2 Acres                                                                             |
| <b>Trail Mileage</b>               | 0.01 Miles                                                                          |
| <b>Convenience Amenities</b>       |                                                                                     |
| <b>Athletic Amenities</b>          |                                                                                     |
| <b>Informal Amenities</b>          |  |
| <b>Winter Amenities</b>            |                                                                                     |
| <b>Picnic &amp; Play Amenities</b> |  |

“ Create a bit of screening and noise reduction for the surrounding neighborhood

“ I like that this park has open grass area for kids to learn to ride a bike, fly a kite, or play ball.

“ Would be nice to have new playground equipment, basketball court, walking path or even soccer nets.

## Overview & Observations

- Playground was installed in 2001 and is well shaded by mature trees.
- Majority of park is open turf lawn and is underutilized.

Figure 05.34 Oak Creek Park Existing Conditions



# Oak Creek Park

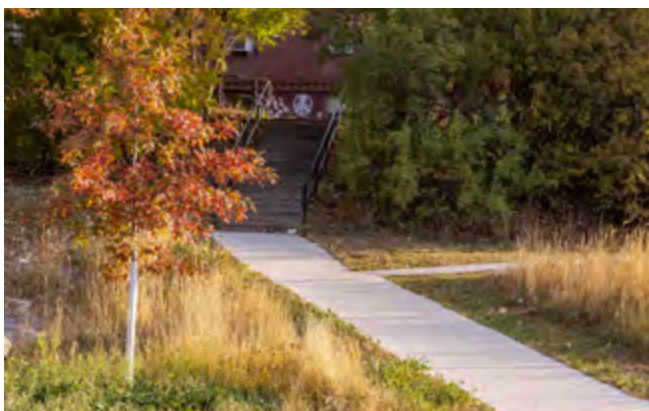
## Proposed Conditions



Example of nature play features



Example of a full basketball court



Example of native plantings and pathways

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address</b>                     | 485 Oak Creek Drive S                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Classification</b>              | Neighborhood Park                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Total Acreage</b>               | 2 Acres                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Active Use Acreage</b>          | 2 Acres                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Trail Mileage</b>               | 0.25 Miles                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Convenience Amenities</b>       |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Athletic Amenities</b>          |                                                                                      |
| <b>Informal Amenities</b>          |   |
| <b>Winter Amenities</b>            |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Picnic &amp; Play Amenities</b> |   |

### Short-Term Priority Projects

#### Loop Trail & Rectangular Field

- Add a loop trail with native plantings to buffer from adjacent residents and provide area for stormwater treatment.
- Create a rectangular field/flexible event space as part of the open lawn area.

#### Expanded & Updated Playground

- Update existing play equipment and expand container to include nature play elements.

### Mid-Term Priority Project

#### Picnic Shelter

- Add a small picnic shelter near playground with picnic tables.

### Long-Term Priority Project

#### Full Basketball Court

- Full basketball court with 10' fence and associated trail for access.

**Figure 05.35** Oak Creek Park Proposed Concept

- Existing Trail
- Proposed Park Trail
- Proposed Neighborhood Connector

- A** Picnic Shelter
- B** Full Basketball Court
- C** Native Plantings & Pathways

- D** Updated & Expanded Playground with Small Nature Play Elements
- E** Flexible Lawn/Event Space