



Staff Report

DATE: 02/18/2025

CONSENT

AGENDA ITEM: Parks Commission 2025 Work Plan
SUBMITTED BY: Adam Swanepoel, Assistant Public Works Director
REVIEWED BY: Marty Powers, Public Works Director

BACKGROUND:

Per Section 3.12.540 of the Lake Elmo City Code, the Parks Commission is tasked with developing an annual work plan, including a list of projects, maintenance items, programs and goals for the year. The 2025 Parks Commission Work Plan was created by staff using the 2024 work plan as a foundation

This work plan is intended to assess and then implement the overall goals of the parks division and outlines projects that the Commission and staff will work on throughout the upcoming year, yet the Commission has the flexibility to respond to priorities as they emerge. The projects are broken down into the following categories:

- **Planning / Project and Development**– This section addresses the larger long term park projects and funding opportunities. Projects that will be carried out in the upcoming year.
 - This would be limited to projects approved through CIP.
- **Maintenance & Refurbishing** – Projects in this category are carried out by public works staff, do not rely on the Park Dedication money for funding, and are based off the 2025 parks annual budget. Much of the maintenance performed by public works staff consists of daily operations along with weekly and monthly inspections.
- **Additional Park Initiatives** - Establishes goals and ways in which staff and the commission can increase the use of city parks and promote community engagement. Launch new and creative ways to reach park users and gain insight on future needs.
- **Finance** – How, specifically, does the Parks Commission want to spend and budget Parks and Recreation funds?
 - This will of course go hand-in-hand with planning and audit but this specifically should focus on next tasks to be carried out in terms of budget.

ISSUE BEFORE COUNCIL:

Would City Council like to accept the 2025 work plan as proposed?

DETAILS AND ANALYSIS:

Planning / Project and Development – Items in this section have been listed as a CIP item or have been identified as an item of consideration by the Parks Commission.

- Staff will work on the final preparation of Schiltgen park. This will include installation of benches, bike racks, signs and garbage receptacles.
- Two playground sets are scheduled to be replaced in 2025, staff will bring potential options and plans to be reviewed and implemented in Ridge and Kleis Park. Completion of Ridge Park will be subject to the proposed concept plan.
- Staff will present options for expansion of the parking lot at Sun Fish Lake Park and Pebble Park as well as the reconstruction of the Reid Park parking lot.

- Planning will begin on the 2026 Lions Park updates which will include a new playground and updates of the ice rink and pickle ball courts. Early planning of this project is essential to being construction in early 2026.
- Staff will review the current Park Reservation Policy and provide necessary updates to include courts, fields, shelters and additional parks.
- With the replacement of the Ridge Park playground set, staff will seek community feedback and provide future recommendations with a full concept plan for Ridge Park.

Maintenance & Refurbishing – The majority of this section focuses on maintaining current park amenities and what we already have. Public Works staff is assigned to do much of the maintenance and upgrades to park facilities as needed. Public Works staff conducts daily operations throughout city parks including weekly and monthly safety inspections. In addition, staff will review the park recommendations made in the 2025 Parks Master Plan and prioritize them with the Parks Commission.

Additional Park Initiatives

Items in this section focus on additional efforts by the commission and staff to continue the upkeep of our community parks to make them enjoyable for all users. The joint workshop with city council to review the 2025 work plan will assist in keeping the assigned goals on track for the upcoming year and provide guidance for future decisions. Staff will continue to support the efforts of conservation programs provided at the Sally Manzara Nature Center including the buckthorn removal project and present any future grant opportunities.

Tree planting within our parks has continued to be requested by users. Staff will work with volunteers of adopted parks to help plant additional trees throughout during our Arbor Day event.

Staff is currently working on updating the cities web page to a new vendor. A new parks web page will be generated using new pictures and maps. Staff will present ways to increase community knowledge of the city parks by adding wayfinding options to this page. Additional awareness to the cities parks will continue to be discusses as current and future improvements are done.

Finance

In June 2024 the Parks Commission approved the CIP and recommended it to City Council. Council approved the 2025- 2034 CIP in its December meeting. Staff along with the Parks Commission will again review the CIP in June 2025 and make appropriate adjustments for the upcoming year. Staff will provide commissioners updates of the Park Dedication Fund balance at scheduled meetings when funds may be considered.

OPTIONS:

1. Approve the Parks Commission 2025 Work Plan as presented.
2. Amend the Parks Commission 2025 Work Plan as presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal impacts are outlined and confirmed in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). CIP items are funded through the Park Dedication Fund while Maintenance & Refurbishing items are funded through the Public Works Operating Budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

If removed from the consent agenda staff recommends the following motion:

“Motion to adopt the 2025 Parks Commission Work Plan.”

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2025 Parks Commission Work Plan



2025 Parks Commission Strategic Work Plan

The City of Lake Elmo Park Commission has affirmed their overall goals to be:

- 1) Ensure that our parks and trail system are constructed / maintained.
- 2) Provide an expansive system of parks, trails, and open space with recreational amenities that will attract more users to the parks and visitors to the city.
- 3) Create a safe and enjoyable environment in all our parks.
- 4) Serve as a reviewing body to make sure the “open space” character development is preserved in new developments.

With the broader priorities defined, the 2025 Park Commission Strategic Work Plan has been broken down into three segments: Project and Development; Maintenance & Refurbishing and other Park Initiatives.

- Priority Levels (PL) are determined on a 1-5 scale with 1 being the highest priority and 5 being the lowest. This will serve as a guide to what tasks serve as a higher priority to staff and work allocation.
- Status is also indicated in order to better manage goals and objectives.

Key

Status	C – Complete IP – In Progress
PL	Priority Level (1-5 with 1 being the highest priority)

Planning / Project and Development	PL	Status
Planning and Policy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washington County Central Greenway Trail Plan - Assist Washington County when necessary for planning and funding opportunities 	1	IP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline options for additional Parking at Sun Fish Lake Park 	2	IP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional parking options for Pebble Park 	3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Klies Park Playset Replacement 	2	IP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ridge Park Playground Replacement 	2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ried Park Parking Lot Reconstruction/ Expansion 	1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and Review Park Reservation Policy 	2	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline Park options at new Northstar Development Park - Explore trail connectivity options to Sunfish Lake Park 	2	IP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and Develop 2026 Lions Park updates: Playground/Courts 	4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide concept plan for Ridge Park 	2	
Maintenance & Refurbishing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Needs Assessment 	3	Annual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asphalt trail Maintenance - Inspections, crack filling and inspections 	3	IP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground and Park Inspections 	3	IP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove infected Ash Trees from City Parks 	4	IP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline future park recommendations following 2024 PMP 	2	
Additional Park Initiatives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a joint Parks Commission / City Council work session 	2	IP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park Tree Planting 	2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee efforts of buckthorn removal and Sally Manzara Nature Center 	4	IP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new Parks Page on city site 	5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline options for park signage and wayfinding 	2	
Finance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Capital Improvement Plan 	1	Annual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Budget Updates as needed 	4	IP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline the need for a Parks Superintendent staffing following 2024 Parks Master Plan recommendation 	2	