

City of Center City Comprehensive Plan – Parks Visioning Meeting
Thursday, July 9, 2009 7:00 p.m.

A “Community Parks Visioning Meeting” was held as a part of the Comprehensive Plan process in order to obtain input from the community on various aspects of the city’s future growth and redevelopment. sixteen people attended and three groups were formed with about five people in each group.

Participants included: Numerous citizens, members of the City Council and Planning Commission, Mayor Jill Behnke, Zoning Administrator Terrie Trudeau, John Olinger, City Administrator of Lindstrom and John Anderson of Municipal Development Group, Inc.

Those in attendance were asked to respond to a number of questions. Following are the responses:

1. The following are great things about Center City’s parks and recreation offerings...
 - The neighborhood parks and the great start on the park amenities.
 - The planning that the park committee is doing.
 - The lakes and lake access.
 - The community interest in the park system and the vision to move forward with the parks.
2. The following are things we need to work on to make Center City’s park and recreation offerings better . . .
 - More and better beaches.
 - More trails and parks.
 - Prepare a parks budget.
 - Continue the Swedish Immigrant Trail though Center City.
 - New playground equipment.
 - More parks amenities like benches, picnic tables resting areas.
 - Underpass on US Highway 8 for trail.
 - More money dedicated towards maintenance of the parks.
3. In 2035 I want people to say those who participated in this visioning effort for parks and recreation offerings. . .
 - They looked forward and planned.
 - We had good vision of what the future citizens would want and need to preserve the area.
4. In 2035 I want to describe Center City’s park and recreation offerings to my friends as . . .
 - We wanted the citizens to enjoy the beautiful surroundings.
 - One of the top tourist areas for Swedish visitors and many more amenities.
 - Well planned and maintained and totally well preserved open space.

The small groups also were asked to mark on the maps that were provided their opinions of the following items.

1. Locate & label future types of parks needed (i.e. mini park, neighborhood park, community park, specialized use, natural resource area, greenway).
2. Locate & label future types of trails needed (i.e. park trail, connector trail, on-street bikeways, special use trails (mountain bike, cross country ski trail, equestrian trail).
3. Locate & label areas to preserve in the future as open space or integrate within the park system (e.g. wetlands, mature stands of trees, wildlife corridors, steep slopes, unique views that make Center City what it is).
4. Locate & label most needed future park amenities & features.

Individual responses were given as to whether Center City has and needs the eight different types of parks, the four different types of trails and whether multiple park amenities and features are suitable for Center City and where they are or should be located. The following responses were received:

Mini Park:

- *Does Center City have this type of park?* Yes (13) No (1) No response (1)
- *Where?* Veterans Memorial Triangle (10), Water Tower Park (2), Near the Porter House, Lakeshore
- *Does Center City need this type of park?* Yes (11) No (1) No Response (3)
- *Where?* By the church were CSAH 9 turns east (2), Downtown (2), Behind Bayview, by the public dock on North Center Lake
- *Why need them?* Because they are resting spots, It is additional green space, Need a town square, Lot by Printing Express
- *Why not need them?* Do not need them at this time

Neighborhood Park:

- *Does Center City have this type of park?* Yes (14) No (0) No response (1)
- *Where?* I.G. Long (10), Water Tower (11), Loren's (4)
- *Does Center City need this type of park?* Yes (8) No (3) No response (4)
- *Where?* In neighborhoods (2), by the courthouse, east shore of North Center Lake, In future neighborhoods
- *Why need them?* So kids have a safe route, it is a good gathering or meeting place (3), east of town
- *Why not need them?* No space, not used so much, Existing parks just need to be maintained and improved

Community Park:

- *Does Center City have this type of park?* Yes (11) No (3) No response (1)
- *Where?* John Moody Field (5), Water Tower Park (2), Loren's Park (3), I.G. Long Park
- *Does Center City need this type of park?* Yes (9) No (0) No response (6)
- *Where?* On a lake, By the DNR fishing pier,
- *Why need them?* Only if growth occurs, For larger community events (4), For sports (3), So kids can run and play (2), The settings are beautiful, So you can incorporate wetlands into them, for recreation on the lakes
- *Why not need them?* None

Natural Resource Area:

- *Does Center City have this type of park?* Yes (6) No (5) No response (4)
- *Where?* Wetlands east of City (4), Wetlands (2), Loren's Park
- *Does Center City need this type of park?* Yes (8) No (1) No response (6)
- *Where?* Wetlands east of City (8), Trail land connecting green space,
- *Why need them?* I would love to see them, Only if City boundaries expand
- *Why not need them?* None

Greenway:

- *Does Center City have this type of park?* Yes (5) No (8) No response (2)
- *Where?* Trail to Lindstrom (5), Wetland east of City, Summit Avenue
- *Does Center City need this type of park?* Yes (12) No (0) No response (3)
- *Where?* Along Summit Avenue (3) The Swedish Immigrant Trail (3), Center City Loop (2), From Church to John Moody Field, Trails to connect all the parks, Grand Avenue right-of-way
- *Why need them?* Trail land connecting green space
- *Why not need them?* None

Special Use Park:

- *Does Center City have this type of park?* Yes (7) No (3) No response (5)
- *Where?* John Moody Field (6), Ice rink at I. G. Long Park (2)

- *Does Center City need this type of park?* Yes (6) No (1) No response (8)
- *Where?* By the DNR fishing pier, around the wetlands east of City
- *Why need them?* For beaches, For natural resources, For a ball field
- *Why not need them?* It should not be a top priority of the City

Regional Park:

- *Does Center City have this type of park?* Yes (9) No (4) No response (2)
- *Where?* Wild River State Park (4), Ki-Chi-Saga County Park, Interstate State Park (2), Chisago City Lions Park, DNR boat access
- *Does Center City need this type of park?* Yes (5) No (2) No response (8)
- *Where?* Wetlands east of City, John Moody Field
- *Why need them?* To bring people to the area for camping, for events and education
- *Why not need them?* Just enough now (2), Already have these types of parks, Preserve what is already there

Private Park:

- *Does Center City have this type of park?* Yes (9) No (3) No response (3)
- *Where?* John Moody Field (6), Water ski slalom course on Pioneer Lake, Westman Walkway
- *Does Center City need this type of park?* Yes (2) No (1) No response (12)
- *Where?* Church lot across from Church
- *Why need them?* Depends on what type of development would occur, Only if wanted by neighbors
- *Why not need them?* The City does not have the tax base for these

Park Trails:

- *Does Center City have this type of trails?* Yes (9) No (3) No response (3)
- *Where?* From Center City to Lindstrom, Wild River State Park (2), Loren's Park (5)
- *Does Center City need this type of trails?* Yes (13) No (0) No response (2)
- *Where?* Around the wetlands east of the City (8), Around Pioneer Lake Connection to Lindstrom, Around the whole City
- *Why need them?* They are currently very broken up nothing connects (2), community is into biking and walking, Current parks are too small
- *Why not need them?* None

Connector Trails:

- *Does Center City have this type of trails?* Yes (11) No (3) No response (1)
- *Where?* Trail to Lindstrom (5), Swedish Immigrant Trail
- *Does Center City need this type of trails?* Yes (10) No (0) No response (5)
- *Where?* Turn Summit Avenue into a trail, Swedish Immigrant Trail (4), Along Summit Avenue, Water Trail
- *Why need them?* The type of trail Center City needs most, Need a safe and continuous trail to get around City and between City (4), To improve the quality of life, Helpful for transportation needs
- *Why not need them?*

On-street Bikeway Trails:

- *Does Center City have this type of trails?* Yes (1) No (7) No response (7)
- *Where?* Streets and sidewalks are unofficial trails
- *Does Center City need this type of trails?* Yes (5) No (4) No response (6)
- *Where?* Summit Avenue (4), In parks
- *Why need them?* None
- *Why not need them?* Do not develop them on streets, most back street are quiet enough without them, They are not safe, Better to have trail separate from streets (3)

Special Use Trails:

- *Does Center City have this type of trails?* Yes (3) No (5) No response (7)

- *Where?* Snowmobile trail (4)
- *Does Center City need this type of trails?* Yes (6) No (0) No response (9)
- *Where?* Water trail for canoes (3), a cross country ski trail (3), snowshoe trail, snowmobile trails (2)
- *Why need them?* Only in regional parks
- *Why not need them?* None

Top Five Park Amenities/Features Needed:

1. **Biking/Walking trails**
2. **Beaches**
3. **Playgrounds**
4. **Hiking opportunities**
5. **Skateboard Park**
6. Open space preservation
7. Band Shell (tie)
7. Park Shelter (tie)
7. Nature parks (tie)
10. Connecting existing trails and sidewalks
11. Picnic spaces
12. Dog park (tie)
12. Historic Preservation (tie)
14. Mountain bike trails
15. Better park maintenance (tie)
15. Community parks (tie)
17. Fishing Piers (tie)
17. Splash pools (tie)

A parks survey was also distributed and the responses that were received are as follows:

1. How many times per year do you make plans to visit the following places? (total visits shown)

101	Loren's Park	44	Water Tower Park	6	I.G. Long Park
16	DNR Boat Launch	61	DNR fishing pier	6	Public dock by My Burger
21	Ki-Chi Saga County Park	3	Kost Dam County Park	11	Checkerboard County Park
1	Interstate State Park	19	Wild River State Park	5	John Moody Baseball Field

2. What is the one primary reason you visit a park or recreation area in Center City?

12	Enjoy nature/outdoors	0	Be active, exercise	0	Play organized sports
0	Play informal game/sport	1	Family outing	1	Picnic
5	Walk/bike	0	Don't use parks		

3. Which of the following three reasons best explain why you don't use park/recreation facilities in Center City more often?

6	Not enough time	1	They are too far away	1	Don't know where they are located
2	Doesn't interest me	1	Parks not safe	2	Parks poorly maintained

4. Which one of the following would most significantly add to the quality of life in Center City?

1	More playgrounds	1	More athletic fields	1	More parks
5	More trails within parks	9	More trails connecting parks	2	Don't know

5. Which of the following two benefits of parks, recreation areas, trails and open space are most important to you?

- 5 Opportunities to enjoy nature and be outside 0 To get away from day to day activities
- 5 Opportunity for family time 3 Opportunity for exercise, improve health
- 6 Opportunity to promote community 0 Opportunity to enjoy organized sports
- 7 Opportunity to protect open space, natural resources, and/or special places in town
- 4 Economic reasons – draw people into the community or increase real estate value of nearby property

6. Are all areas of the City served well by existing parks facilities?

YES (3) NO (7)

If NO, where are there deficiencies? The parks are poorly maintained, Paths to get to parks are dangerous, Not enough money put towards parks, Area by the courthouse, No bike trail through town, no beaches or tennis courts

7. How would you rank the quality of existing park facilities on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent (circle one)?

1 (1) 2 (4) 3 (3) 4 (3) 5 (0)

8. How many times per year do people in your household take part in the following activities? How many members of your household usually participate? (total times shown)

ITEM	# of times per year you or family take part in activity	# of family members participating	Don't Know
Go swimming – lake/river	102	8, 5, 2, 3, 2, 1, 2	
Go swimming – indoor pool	146	2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 6	
Go swimming – outdoor pool (public)	15	1	
Go swimming – outdoor pool (private)	21	3, 1	
Go tubing	39	2, 6, 3, 2	
Go fishing	89	5, 3, 1, 2, 2, 4	
Go RV camping	3		
Go camping – tent	13	5, 3, 2	
Go canoeing or kayaking	43	6, 5, 2, 2, 2	
Go bicycling – in town	143	5, 2, 2, 2	
Go bicycling – on trails out of town	87	2, 2, 6	
Go mountain biking	0		
Go ATV'ing	4	5	
Go for a leisure walk	832	5, 1, 2, 2	
Go for a brisk walk for exercise	1,266	4, 5, 2	
Go jogging	200	5, 1	
Go hiking	20	5	
Go on a nature walk	61	5, 2, 1, 2	
Go to nature park/natural area	60	5, 2, 2	
Go to playground with/for children	71	4, 4, 1	

Play basketball	0		
Play baseball (programmed/adult)	0		
Play baseball (little league, poppers, etc.)	0		
Play baseball (unstructured, pick up game)	0		
Play softball (programmed/adult)	0		
Play softball (unstructured, pick up game)	1		
Use open play areas (unstructured activities)	0		
Play volleyball (outdoors)	0		
Play football/soccer (outdoors, pick-up game)	10	1	
Play tennis (outdoors)	25	1, 1	
Golf	34	1	
Use programmed recreational centers	6	1	
Go to a fitness center	413	2, 1	
Attend picnics or parties in parks	30	2, 1, 2, 6	
Attend special events in parks	43	2, 2, 1, 2	

9. How should public open space/natural areas primarily be used?

- 0 Preserve for wildlife and natural benefits with very limited access
- 7 Balance preservation aspects with access to public for walking, viewing, and passive recreation
- 6 Respect natural area but allow some recreational use for picnicking, play features, etc.

10. Why should the City develop trails (select up to two)?

- 2 Give people options to using automobiles
- 0 Connect residential & business areas
- 7 Connect neighborhoods & parks
- 0 Connect parks
- 7 So people can enjoy nature
- 4 Provide rec. opportunity
- 8 Encourage exercise
- 2 Improve park access
- 1 Get children to/from school

11. Which of the following programs are most needed in Center City (select up to three)?

- 1 Organized recreation leagues
- 7 Outdoor/environmental programs
- 0 Aquatics
- 5 Fitness classes
- 9 Special events/gatherings centered in parks
- 2 Community Ed. Classes
- 1 General sports
- 0 Don't need any

12. Which of the following types of parks are most needed in Center City (select up to two)?

- 2 Smaller parks that people walk or bike to
- 1 More larger parks that people drive to
- 7 Greenway corridors connecting parks/recreation areas
- 3 Natural areas/open space
- 8 Trails adjacent to Lakes
- 0 Don't need any more
- 1 Athletic fields
- 3 Town square/village green

13. If you could create the ideal park for your neighborhood, what percentage of that park would be left open and natural? Please select one of the following ranges.

- Less than 10% (1)
- 10-20% (0)
- 20 – 30% (1)
- 31 – 40% (2)
- 41 – 50% (5)
- 51 – 60% (1)
- 61 – 70% (2)
- 71 – 80% (2)
- 81 – 90% (0)
- Over 90% (0)

14. Would you encourage the City to:

- a. Develop more, smaller parks used by neighborhood residents and primarily accessed by walking or bicycling. (8)
- b. Develop a few larger parks that are used by all City and area residents/tourists and typically accessed by car. (5)

15. Would you encourage the City to:

- a. Fix up and/or enhance existing parks and recreational areas. (9)
- b. Purchase additional parkland. (4)

16. Are there recreational activities that you or members of your family would like to participate in but cannot because of the following (please check all that apply):

- 1 Cost 2 Low quality facilities 10 Lack of available facilities 0 Inadequate skills

17. If you checked any of the items in the previous question (question #16) what recreational activities would you or your family participate in? Exercise, Playgrounds, Biking (3), Skating, Trail use (3), Tennis, Beaches, Picnics, Hiking, Nature Trails, Group gatherings

18. Would you encourage the City to spend more, spend less or spend about the same for the following:

ITEM	Spend more	Spend Less	Spend Same	Don't Know
Children's playgrounds	8	0	2	0
Tennis courts	2	1	3	2
Youth softball/baseball fields	1	1	4	0
Sand volleyball courts	3	0	4	1
Indoor volleyball courts	0	3	1	2
Youth soccer fields	4	0	3	0
Organized baseball complex	0	5	1	1
Ornamental plantings	6	0	3	0
Benches	5	0	2	0
Shelters	4	0	4	0
Pleasure skating	1	0	5	0
Hockey rinks	1	1	4	0
Warming houses	3	0	4	0
Preservation of historic sites	6	1	2	1
Native landscape preservation	8	0	1	0
Open space preservation	8	0	2	0
Bike trails	11	0	0	0
Walking trails	9	0	1	0
Trails in natural areas	10	0	0	0
Regional trails outside of City	10	0	0	0
Picnic areas	3	1	4	0
Open play areas/fields	3	1	4	0
Nature areas	4	1	3	0
Programmed activities	1	1	3	2
Recreation center	2	0	5	1

Making parks accessible	5	0	3	0
Off-street parking	1	1	4	1
Lighting for safety and security	2	2	3	0
Lighting outdoor sports facilities	0	1	4	1
Active park facilities	2	0	5	1
Passive park facilities	3	0	3	1

19. What area of the City or township do you live in? Summit Avenue, Downtown, By Loren's Park (2), North Side, Chisago Lake Township, On North Center Lake, By courthouse, Calendar Island (2), Historic District

20. What is your age range?

Under 10 (0) 10-20 (0) 20 – 25 (0) 26 – 35 (0) 36 – 45 (1) 46 – 55 (2) 56 – 65 (6) Over 65 (3)

21. How long have you lived in Chisago County (includes City of Center City)? 34 years, 25 years, 30 years, 40 years, 60 years, 49 years, 27 years, 16 years, 6 years, 10 years, 10 years, 42 years

22. How many members are in your household? 3, 2 (7), 5, 4, 1 (2)