

# EXISTING CONDITIONS WHAT WE HEARD



## DESIGN PRIORITIES

- 1 WALKABLE
- 2 BEACH
- 3 SHORELINE
- 4 PORT
- 5 BANDSHELL
- 6 RESTROOM/CONCESSION
- 7 PLAYGROUND

07.15.2017

# EXISTING CONDITIONS **WHAT WE HEARD**

## 1. Walkable

The Commons today has one sidewalk that parallels Lake Street, connecting the Port to the ballfield to the beach area. New walks could be introduced to create walking loops and allow for better ADA access to the shoreline.

## 2. Beach

The two beaches are beloved spaces within The Commons but are too often closed because of high levels of E coli. The plan has an opportunity to improve water quality by minimizing road runoff impact on water adjacent to the beaches as well as reducing runoff from lawns used by geese.

## 3. Shoreline

Erosion of the shoreline is evident in many areas of The Commons. Opportunity exists to fortify the existing rip-rap edges and introduce shoreline vegetation that is more resilient to the heavy wave action along the edges of The Commons.

## 4. Port

The Port represents an important connection to the historic downtown on Water Street. The functional requirements of servicing charter boats has driven much of the layout today and an opportunity exists to reorganize the Port to accommodate the functional needs but provide much needed community gathering space and public restrooms.

## 5. Bandshell

The existing bandshell has fallen into disrepair and does not take advantage of its relationship to the knoll behind it. The bandshell could be re-envisioned to accommodate more intimate events on the knoll and also large community events on the main lawn.

## 6. Restroom/Concession

The existing building does not meet current code and ADA, and is seldom used. It too could become more multi-functional to accommodate events on the main lawn as well as at the ballfield.

## 7. Playground

The existing playground is beginning to show signs of age and a refresh of some of the equipment would enhance accessibility as well as the overall aesthetics of the equipment.

## 8. Winter

The Commons is underutilized and it's design could be enhanced to better accommodate winter activity.

## 9. Gathering

The Commons accommodates a large variety of gatherings from large legacy events to smaller events like weddings. An opportunity exists to expand the flexibility of The Commons to reflect community consensus for unstructured use, picnics and smaller events.

## 10. Bike Friendly

The Commons does not currently have amenities that promote bicycle use and the City has seen significant expansion as a destination for cyclists. The Commons could add parking, and other bicycle friendly amenities to attract these users.

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES ECOLOGY



- 1 STABILIZATION
- 2 RESTORATION
- 3 INFILTRATION
- 4 INVASIVES REMOVAL
- 5 REDUCED TURF
- 6 TREE PRESERVATION
- 7 SUCCESSIONAL PLANTING

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES **ECOLOGY**

Members of the design team and City met with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District to review The Commons and discuss improvements that would enhance the overall ecology of The Commons but also reduce runoff impact to improve the overall water quality of the Lake. The diagram on the previous page illustrates a menu of improvements that could be pursued to improve the ecological function of The Commons.

## 1. Stabilization

The existing rip rap has eroded in some areas allowing for a significant amount of erosion into the Lake. Augmenting the existing rip rap edge will help to reduce erosion by minimizing impacts from the wave action seen in the bay.

## 2. Restoration

Once the shoreline has been stabilized, the reintroduction of resilient shoreline vegetation will improve the effectiveness of the buffer. Existing edges of the beach could also be enhanced to minimize erosion into the lake and improve water quality around the beaches.

## 3. Infiltration

Improved infiltration within the park will intercept runoff from road and grass areas used by geese. These infiltration areas provide important treatment of storm water prior to discharging into the Lake but also provide important habitat for pollinators and improved aesthetics for park users.

## 4. Invasive Species Removal

The preserved wooded hillsides on the knoll areas have become overrun with invasive species. The removal of these invasive species like buckthorn will improve views to the lake but, most importantly restore lost ecosystems that enhance the overall ecology of the Lake.

## 5. Reduced Turf

Many steep slopes and underutilized areas of the park are mowed today. Replacing turf with native vegetation will reduce long term maintenance, restore ecological function and enhance aesthetics.

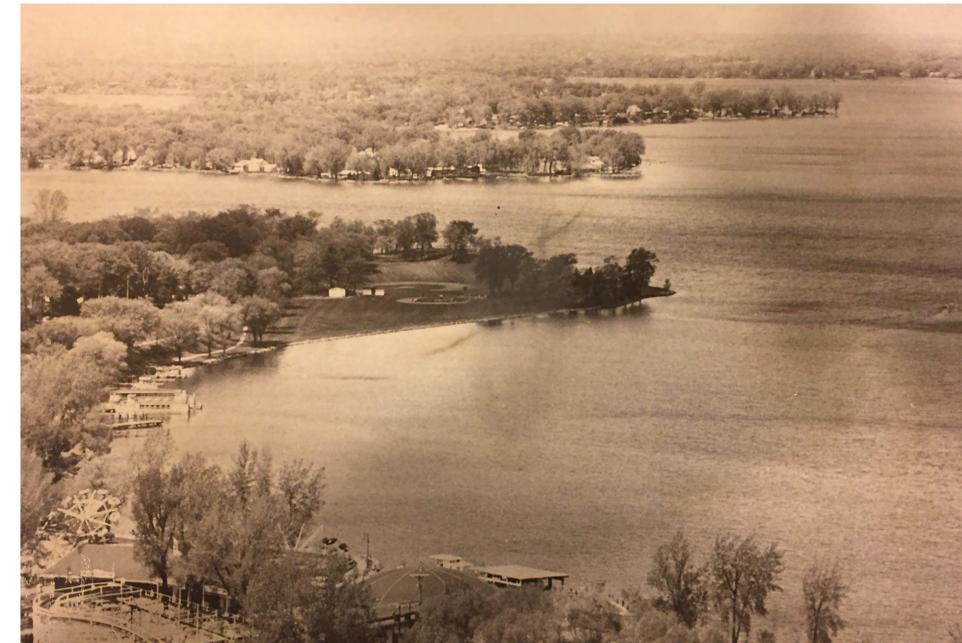
## 6. Tree Preservation

The Commons is home to a significant number of mature trees that are defining features of the park. The recommendations previously provided to the city in the Bartlett Tree Study should be followed to ensure continued health and enhancement of The Commons' tree canopy.

## 7. Successional Planting

Many of the trees within The Commons are fully mature with no young trees to eventually take their place. An overall strategy should be developed to ensure the tree canopy within The Commons is maintained for future generations.

# ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE



## Loosely Based On Historical Structures:

- Simple Wood "Lake Front" Structures
- Relationship of Buildings to Shore and Water
- Summer/Lake Culture

# ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE



DOCK/BOARDWALK



PAVILION



BUILDING

# ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE



CONCESSION / BATHROOMS  
PORT BATHROOM / REFUSE STORAGE



PAVILION / WARMING HOUSE



BANDSHELL

# MASTERPLAN EXCELSIOR COMMONS



# MASTERPLAN EXCELSIOR COMMONS



# MASTERPLAN EXCELSIOR COMMONS

The following pages focus on the three main areas of The Commons 1) The Beach & Picnic Area, 2) The Lawn and Ballfield Area, and 3) The Port. Analysis of the existing conditions, recommendations for improvement and before and after renderings illustrate the opportunities that exist and articulate a vision for the future. As this plan moves towards implementation, each phase will require additional due diligence, design, identification of funding support, and community engagement.