

Park dedication fee recommendations for Greater Longfellow

Overall feedback

Please see accompanying data summary for details on survey responses.

When asked about general priorities for parks, natural spaces was the clear favorite, with support from 80% of all respondents. Gathering areas (49%) and playgrounds (47%) were next most popular. Athletic fields (27%) and athletic courts (25%) also saw good support. These levels of support were fairly consistent across all four of the Greater Longfellow neighborhoods.

Asked whether MPRB should use funds to acquire new park land or improve existing parks, 45% of respondents favored improving existing parks. 29% favored new park land, and 26% were indifferent.

One recurring theme from the free-form comments was a desire for MPRB to maintain existing park infrastructure. While park dedication fees cannot be used to pay for these types of projects, we want to take this opportunity to emphasize that our neighborhoods clearly view this as a priority for MPRB spending in general.

Cooper

Available park dedication fees: \$3,135

Parks considered: Brackett Park (eastern half)

Cooper has a small funding pool available, and limited options for allocating park dedication fees on the eastern half of Brackett Park. The option at Brackett most heavily supported by Cooper residents, an expanded skate park, would be located on the west half of the park and not eligible for Cooper park dedication fees. The next most popular option among Cooper residents was native plants for pollinators, and depending on the scope, the small amount of funds could be more impactful on such a project.

Recommendation: Allocate park dedication fees to native plantings on the east side of Brackett park if practicable. If not, save the park dedication fees until more funds and options are available.

Longfellow

Available park dedication fees: \$340,799

Parks considered: Brackett Park (western half), potential new park land

While Cooper residents expressed strong support for an expanded skate park at Brackett (71% of first-place votes), Longfellow residents expressed much less support (26% of first-place votes). Longfellow residents expressed more support for the other three items on the list, with native plantings proving most popular (38% of first-place votes).

Brackett Park is in an unusual situation as one continuous park geographically split between two neighborhoods and used heavily by residents of each neighborhood. While we feel the strong overall support for a skate park indicates MPRB should pursue this part of the master plan, the more tepid response from Longfellow residents suggests we should allocate Longfellow dedication fees elsewhere.

Longfellow residents appear to express strong support for new park land. While overall responses from all neighborhoods showed more support for enhancing existing parks (45%) than adding new parks (29%), the responses from Longfellow residents were evenly split between these two options. Asked specifically if MPRB should acquire new park land near Minnehaha and Lake Street, 76% of Longfellow residents expressed support.

Recommendation: Acquiring new park land has strong support from Longfellow residents. We recommend allocation of park dedication fees primarily to this purpose. A smaller amount might be allocated to native plantings on the western half of Brackett park, perhaps in conjunction with plantings on the eastern half funded by Cooper.

Hiawatha

Available park dedication fees: \$858,558

Parks considered: Adams Triangle, Hiawatha School Park, Minnehaha Regional Park

At Hiawatha School Park, a community garden area received strong support (67% of votes). This goal is in good alignment with the general priorities of natural spaces and community-focused areas.

At Minnehaha Regional Park, a stone restroom building received the most votes (47%), followed by picnic shelters (31%) and a play area (23%). As the regional park serves a much broader population than the neighborhood parks, and the results do not

demonstrate overwhelming demand for any one asset, we recommend that these projects be funded from sources other than park dedication fees.

Adams Triangle has many possible projects available. An outdoor gathering space was the clear favorite, with 49% of first-place votes and support from 83% of respondents overall. A water source was also popular with support from 66% of overall respondents, followed by a group shelter with 56%.

Recommendation: Given the large amount of funding available in Hiawatha, we expect that park dedication fees may be applied to several projects. We recommend an outdoor gathering space at Adams Triangle as the top priority, followed by a water source at Adams Triangle and a community garden at Hiawatha School Park.

Howe

Available park dedication fees: \$173,109

Parks considered: Longfellow Park, Mississippi Gorge Regional Park

At Mississippi Gorge Regional Park, there was strong support for both a new overlook area (42%) and new seating and benches (41%).

At Longfellow Park, support is distributed broadly across adult fitness equipment (25% of first-place votes), native plants (24%), a third tennis/pickleball court (20%), and plazas and group shelters (18%). These numbers vary somewhat when narrowing the votes to only Howe residents, but no clear favorite emerges.

Recommendation: We do not have a recommendation for the Howe neighborhood. A number of good options with support from the neighborhood exist, all of which support some combination of our overall and neighborhood-specific priorities. We recommend that park dedication fees be applied to whichever of these projects they are most impactful.